RESEARCH

The silent argument of broad focus: Typology and predictions

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It is a commonly held view that, in the absence of an overt locative or temporal phrase, broad focus subject inversion in Romance requires a null locative in preverbal position, thus being comparable to locative inversion (Benincà 1988 and subsequent work). The (in)compatibility of a number of verbs and verb classes with this construction, however, has not yet received a principled explanation. Analysing the event structure of the predicates that occur in bare broad focus subject inversion in Italian, we argue that this construction requires a covert Subject of Predication, and this requirement can be satisfied by a thematic goal argument of the verb or a non-thematic situational argument that is inferred when a bounded eventuality is predicated. We explain which predicates take which type of Subject of Predication, and we make falsifiable predictions on the relative compatibility of different verb classes with the construction under investigation. Our predictions are cogent in the null-subject SVO languages that allow broad focus in VS order and rule it out in VOS/VSO order (Leonetti 2017). With our study, we shed light on the lexical-semantic underpinnings of this restriction. Following Bianchi (1993) and Bianchi & Chesi (2014), we propose that this is a thetic construction, in which the postverbal DP remains in its first-merged thematic position. In our analysis, the silent Subject of Predication takes Cardinaletti's (2004) SubjP position, satisfying Rizzi's (2005) Subject Criterion.

1 Introduction

Building upon Benincà (1988), several scholars have claimed that, in the absence of an overt locative or temporal phrase, broad focus subject inversion in Romance requires a null locative in preverbal position, thus being comparable to locative inversion (Pinto 1997; Tortora 1997; 2001; 2014; Sheehan 2006; 2010; 2016; Corr 2016). The covert locative argument is said to give a deictic interpretation to the sentence, expressing spatial and/or temporal relatedness to the speaker. Consider the Italian example in (1): this is an all-new statement, announcing the arrival of Maria at the location of the speaker.

(1)   È arrivata Maria.
       is arrived   Maria
       'Maria has arrived (here).'

At first sight, broad focus subject inversion might seem to correlate with unaccusativity (Perlmutter 1978; Burzio 1986). It is indeed traditionally assumed that VS is the unmarked word order in unaccusative syntax (Rizzi 1982; Burzio 1986). On closer scrutiny, however, it has been noted that at least some unergative verbs occur in this construction and, at the same time, can be claimed to entail a covert argument (Benincà 1988; Saccon 1993; Pinto 1997; Parry 2000; 2013; among others). Thus, the Italian example in (2) is

also characterized by speaker-oriented deixis: it means that Maria phoned the speaker or a location in some way related to the speaker.

(2)   Ha telefonato Maria.
         has phoned   Maria
         'Maria has phoned (here/us).'

Broad focus subject inversion is also sensitive to the contrast between stage-level states, whose event argument is claimed to provide a covert subject (cf. (3a)), and individual-level states, which lack such an argument and do not allow subject inversion (cf. (3b)) (Bianchi 1993; building on Kratzer 1989/1995).[1]

(3)   Bianchi (1993: 60)
         a.   Sono disponibili alcune guide   turistiche.
              are   available   some   guides tourist
              'Some tourist guides are available.'

         b.   *Sono poliglotte alcune guide   turistiche.
              are   polyglot   some   guides tourist
              'Some tourist guides are polyglot.'

To date no falsifiable predictions have been made on the classes of predicates that occur, or, conversely, are banned, from broad focus subject inversion. In this paper we address the question of how broad focus subject inversion is licensed in constructions that lack an overt sentence-initial locative or temporal phrase or a presupposed locative or temporal topic. Such *bare* constructions will henceforth be referred to as BFSI. In agreement with the previous literature on Romance, we claim that a silent preverbal argument is the key to the licensing of BFSI. Following existing conventions, we call this the *Subject of Predication* (henceforth SoP).[2]

   We identify two subtypes of SoP: (a) a thematic argument selected by the verb; for example, the locative goal of a subclass of verbs of motion, already identified as the licenser of BFSI by Tortora (1997; 2001; 2014); (b) a non-thematic situational argument, which is inferred when there is no thematic goal available to provide the SoP. We discuss theoretical and empirical arguments in support of the differentiation of the two types of SoP.

   With respect to the issue of which classes of verbs are compatible with BFSI, we observe that these are verbs of quantized change, i.e., verbs entailing a specific final goal on a scale of change (Beavers 2011). These can either have a locative goal argument (cf. (4a)) or a state goal in their constant (cf. (4b)). The former type of construction is characterized by the thematic SoP, the latter by the non-thematic situational one.

(4)   a.   Sono arrivati gli studenti.
              are   arrived the students
              'The students have arrived (here).'

         b.   Sono morti i   soldati.
              are   died   the soldiers
              'The soldiers have died.'

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[1] Kratzer's (1995) paper was circulating as a manuscript since 1989, as cited in Bianchi (1993).
[2] The silent SoP provides the situation about which an event is predicated, and, in this sense, it is comparable to Klein's (2008) *topic situation*. It is important to note, however, that the SoP of the bare constructions under investigation, which are uttered as out-of-the-blue announcements, is not given in a previous context or co-text. Rather, it is introduced with the utterance itself. In addition, in contrast with Klein's topic situation, which is a broader notion, this silent SoP only arises from a bounded event structure and is incompatible with unbounded states and activities.

Drawing upon Hay, Kennedy & Levin (1999), we argue that verbs of non-quantized change, which do not entail a specific goal, admit a situational SoP if a state goal is inferred as a conversational implicature. The latter arises on the basis of the scalar structure of the gradable property denoted by the adjectival base of the verb (cf. (5a)), which must be compatible with a maximum value, or, alternatively, on the basis of a conventional maximum value associated with the theme DP (cf. (5b)). If such an implicature does not arise, an SoP is not added and hence BFSI is deemed to be odd or altogether ungrammatical (cf. (5c–d)).

(5)   [Out of the blue announcement – no overt or understood presupposition]

a.   Si   è svuotato il   serbatoio.
      RFL is emptied the tank
      'The tank has become empty.'

b.   Si   è accorciata la   gonna.
      RFL is shortened the skirt
      'The skirt has become short.'

c.   ?Si   sono annoiati   gli studenti.
      RFL are   got.bored the students
      'The students have got bored.'

d.   ?Sono cresciuti i   gemelli.
      are   grown   the twins
      'The twins have grown.'

Finally, BFSI is licensed with a small group of activity verbs and semelfactives (cf. (6a–b)). These have a locative or benefactive goal argument in their thematic grid, which can satisfy the requirement of an SoP in BFSI.

(6)   a.   Hanno telefonato i   ragazzi.
              have   phoned   the kids
              'The kids have phoned (here/us).'

        b.   Ha   bussato il   postino.
              has knocked the postman
              'The postman has knocked (here/on our door).'

Unbounded activities and states are generally incompatible with BFSI. As for the syntax of BFSI, following Cardinaletti (2004) (see also Rizzi 2005; Bianchi & Chesi 2014), we assume that SoPs occupy a designated position labelled SubjP, thus satisfying the Subject Criterion (Rizzi 2005). We extend this analysis to the silent SoP of BFSI, claiming that SubjP is activated regardless of whether the SoP is overt. When a silent SoP occurs in SubjP, the overt DP argument remains in its first-merged thematic position, thus figuring in a postverbal position.

(7) $[_{SubjP}$ SoP $[_{TP}$ T + V ... $[_{vP}$ ...DP...]]]

Although we only analyse evidence from Italian, our claims are meant to have broader validity. In particular, they are meant to be valid for null-subject SVO languages in which BFSI is not entirely free, but rather limited to VS order and banned in VOS and VSO order (Leonetti 2017).[3] Our findings indicate that BFSI in these languages is not associated

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[3] Basic SVO order is detected in broad focus transitive predications (cf. (i)), which do not take VSO/VOS order in Italian (cf. (ii, iii)). For transitives see Note 11 and Section 4.3.

(i)   [Che è successo?] – I   bambini (S) hanno trovato (V) una volpe (O) (in giardino).
        what is happened   the kids   have   found   a   fox   in garden

with intransitive (VS) structures as such, but rather with VS structures which predicate bounded eventualities. We claim that these are thetic constructions, which have a silent SoP by virtue of their event structure properties.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2 we discuss two existing approaches, which we call *selectional* and, respectively, *event-argument* approach. We then examine the event structure of BFSI constructions in some detail, and we propose our typology of silent SoPs (§§3.1 to 3.4). On the basis of this typology, we make predictions on the relative compatibility of different verb classes with BFSI (§3.5). In Section 4, we discuss the syntax of BFSI constructions in relation to the thetic/categorical distinction. We then draw our conclusions (§5).

2 The null argument: selectional and event-argument approaches

The grammaticality of a postverbal subject in Romance broad-focus sentences has been attributed by several scholars to the availability of a locative or temporal argument in the argument structure of the verb.[4] For these scholars, BFSI is a type of locative inversion involving a null locative in a preverbal position (Benincà 1988; Pinto 1997; Tortora 1997; 2001; Sheehan 2006: 148). Thus, the contrast between (8a–c) and (8d) amounts to the covert and, respectively, overt realization of a locative argument of the verb.

(8)   a.   È entrata Beatrice.
             is come.in Beatrice
             'Beatrice has come in (here).'

        b.   È morto Fellini.
             is died   Fellini
             'Fellini has died.'

        c.   Ha telefonato Dante.
             has phoned   Dante
             'Dante has phoned (here/us).'

        d.   In questa casa   ha abitato Giacomo Leopardi.
             in this   house has lived   Giacomo Leopardi
             'Giacomo Leopardi lived in this house.'

The examples in (8), discussed in detail in Pinto (1997: 20–22), can occur out of the blue, involving no presupposition, or can be used in answering a question such as 'What happened?', which triggers a broad focus interpretation in the response. Examples (8a) and (8b) exhibit unaccusative verbs which, according to Pinto, lexically include a covert locative or temporal argument in their argument structure. Subject inversion in (8a) correlates with a specific meaning of the verb *entrare* 'come in, enter', which entails a speaker-oriented location: Beatrice entered here, this place. Similarly, the word order in (8b), featuring a postverbal subject, is said to suggest that the event of Fellini's death is relevant to the speaker or is news that has just reached the speaker. Importantly, the example in (8c) does not fall on the unaccusative side of the intransitivity split (Perlmutter 1978; Burzio 1986) and the same is true of the locative inversion in (8d). This indicates that subject

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(ii)   [Che è successo?] –*Hanno trovato (V) i   bambini (S) una volpe (O).
        what is happened   have   found   the kids   a   fox

(iii)   [Che è successo?] –*Hanno trovato (V) una volpe (O) i   bambini (S).
        what is happened   have   found   a   fox   the kids
        ['What happened?'] – 'The kids found a fox (in the garden)'.

[4] See Section 4.2 for a brief discussion of VS constructions with narrow focus on S, which, however, are outside the scope of this article.

inversion is not limited to unaccusative domains. At the same time, it is not admitted in all unaccusative domains, as is shown by the examples (9a–b), which are only acceptable with narrow focus on the postverbal argument.

(9) Pinto (1997: 21)

a. [Chi è impallidito? / #Che è successo?] È impallidito Berlusconi.
    who is turned.pale   what is happened is turned.pale Berlusconi
    ['Who turned pale?/What happened?']   'Berlusconi has turned pale.'

b. [Chi si è stufata? / #Che è successo?] Si è stufata Penelope.
    who RFL is bored   what is happened RFL is bored Penelope
    ['Who got bored?/What happened?']   'Penelope has got bored.'

Aiming at a unified account, Pinto claims that subject inversion is licensed in all cases by a covert argument in the thematic grid of the verb, which is not a defining property of unaccusative verbs. We shall call Pinto's proposal the *selectional approach*, since it attributes to selectional properties of the verb the necessary conditions to license a postverbal subject in broad focus.

   We should note that, for Pinto, the speaker-oriented deictic interpretation of the additional covert argument is derived from the utterance context. In fact, Pinto states that this interpretation also characterizes the overt preverbal PP of locative inversion.

(10) Pinto (1997: 32)

A: Perché mi porti   qui?
    why   me take.2SG here
    'Why are you taking me here?'

B: In questo albergo ha vissuto Maria Callas.
    in this   hotel has lived   Maria Callas
    'Maria Callas lived in this hotel.'

Pinto's (1997) analysis sheds light on subject inversion in broad focus, in that it draws attention to the requirement of either a covert preverbal argument or an overt locative phrase. In addition, this account has the clear merit of emphasizing the lack of a correlation between subject inversion and unaccusativity. However, the independent principle by which the verbs in (8a–c) are claimed to have an additional argument in their thematic grid, whilst those in (9a–b) are not, remains unclear. In addition, the claim that subject inversion, whether or not in the presence of an overt locative phrase, involves speaker orientation is too strong and ultimately untenable, as is suggested by the following examples, which are *not* oriented towards the speaker in any obvious sense.

(11) a. Sono morti i   coniugi Rossi.
        are died the spouses Rossi
        'Mr and Mrs Rossi have died.'

b. In una casa di quel paese hanno abitato i   coniugi Rossi.
    in a   house of that town have lived   the spouses Rossi
    'Mr and Mrs Rossi lived in a house of that town.'

Another selectional analysis is that of Corr (2016), who claims that the deictic interpretation of BFSI is not derived from the context, but rather syntactically encoded. In light of Ibero-Romance evidence, Corr suggests that BFSI is licensed by a null locative layered PP, which is c-selected by the verb and moves to SpecTP to satisfy the Extended Projection Principle (EPP). The null locative PP projects an internal structure whose

exact articulation depends on the locative features of the verb. While broad focus with 'arrive' is captured in terms of a null DeixisP, broad focus with 'die' has a GoalP. Different portions of this single articulated configuration are available in different languages. This, in Corr's view, explains the cross-linguistic variation in the verbs that are admitted in broad focus.

Although Corr (2016) captures the cross-linguistic variation in BFSI in Ibero-Romance, her analysis, on a par with Pinto's, does not provide a principled explanation of the contrast between, say, 'die' (cf. (8b)) and 'become pale' (cf. (9a)). Corr suggests that 'die' involves movement away from a state (being alive) towards another state (being dead). However, the same could be said of 'become pale', which is not as compatible with BFSI. Despite the unquestionable merits of the selectional approach, therefore, we conclude that it cannot alone account for BFSI.

A different approach is that of Bianchi (1993), which is inspired by Kratzer's (1989/1995) claim that stage-level states have an event argument (Davidson 1967). Bianchi explains the difference between (3a) and (3b), repeated in (12a–b) for ease of exposition, in terms of a Principle of Nonvacuous Predication, which requires that the predicate must have a preverbal subject. This principle is satisfied by the event argument of the stage-level state in (12a), but it is violated with the individual-level state in (12b). In order for the latter predication to be grammatical, the postverbal argument must move to a preverbal subject position (cf. (12c)).

(12)   Bianchi (1993: 60)
        a.   Sono disponibili alcune guide turistiche.
             are   available   some guides tourist
             'Some tourist guides are available.'

        b.   *Sono poliglotte alcune guide turistiche.
             are   polyglot   some   guides tourist

        c.   Alcune guide turistiche sono poliglotte.
             some   guides tourist   are polyglot
             'Some tourist guides are polyglot.'

Bianchi (1993) further argues that the distinction between stage- and individual-level states ought to be extended to two types of sentence, which she calls eventive and non-eventive (cf. (13a–c) and, respectively, (14a–c)). In Italian, only eventive sentences allow subject inversion in the absence of an overt preverbal PP (cf. (13c)), whereas non-eventive ones do not (cf. (14c)).

(13)   Bianchi (1993: 58)
        a.   Questo incidente è capitato   a Gianni.
             this   accident   is happened to Gianni

        b.   A Gianni è capitato   questo incidente.
             to Gianni is happened this   accident

        c.   È capitato   un incidente a Gianni.
             is happened an accident   to Gianni
             'This/An accident has happened to Gianni.'

(14)   Bianchi (1993: 58)
        a.   Questa casa   appartiene a Gianni.
             this   house belongs   to Gianni

    b.   A Gianni appartiene una casa.
        to Gianni belongs   a   house

    c.   *Appartiene una casa   a Gianni.
        belongs   a   house to Gianni
        'This/a house belongs to Gianni.'

For Bianchi, a key difference between eventive and non-eventive sentences is that the proposition expressed in the former type of sentence is true with respect to a single event or situation. In contrast, the proposition expressed in the latter type may be temporally bounded, but, crucially, is not true of a single situation. Thus, Bianchi notes that although the stative predicate in (15) is in the past tense, the sentence would be true in many different situations falling within the time frame denoted by the temporal adverbial *in 1987*. Therefore, (15) is not an eventive sentence.

(15)   In 1987, John owned a car.

Turning back to the examples in (13a–c), these do describe a single situation, similarly to stage-level states, and can thus be claimed to have an event argument. What is then the difference between the three distinct word orders in (13a), (13b) and (13c)? Bianchi (1993: 61) suggests that "the different word order in the sentences" in (13a–c) "corresponds to different mappings of the constituents in the subject/predication partition". Postverbal subjects are licensed when the event argument takes on the role of a semantic subject, or SoP, in preverbal position. Assuming that all sentences must have a SoP (Salvi 1988), we can take this function to coincide with the grammatical subject in (13a) (cf. (13a′)), but to be fulfilled by the experiencer PP in (13b) (cf. (13b′)). In BFSI, it is the event argument that functions as the SoP. This is specified by the verbal morphology as occurring in the past in (13c) (cf. (13c′)).

(13)   Bianchi (1993: 61)
        a′. [$_{\text{SUBJ}}$ Questo incidente] [$_{\text{PRED}}$ è capitato a Gianni]
        b′. [$_{\text{SUBJ}}$ A Gianni] [$_{\text{PRED}}$ è capitato questo incidente]
        c′. [$_{\text{SUBJ}}$ ($\exists e$) (past(e))] [$_{\text{PRED}}$ è capitato un incidente a Gianni in e]

We call Bianchi's (1993) proposal the *event-argument approach*. The principal strength of this approach is that, starting from the observation of the contrast between individual and stage-level states (cf. (3a–b, 12a–b)), it captures BFSI with predicates that lack a locative argument in their thematic grid (for example, *capitare* 'happen' in (13a–c)). In addition, Bianchi (1993) draws due attention to a key property of the predicates that allow BFSI, namely that they can describe events that are true of a single situation. We note, however, that to capture BFSI satisfactorily, this approach too needs to distinguish between different change of state verbs and explain why some, though not the others, allow bare VS order in broad focus (cf. (8a–b vs. 9a–b)).

   Summing up, the existing literature has argued that subject inversion requires a SoP in preverbal position. In the case of locative inversion (cf. (8d)), or indeed dative inversion (cf. (13b)), this argument is overtly realized. Relevant to our purposes, though, are the broad focus constructions in which a covert argument can be claimed to function as the SoP. It is to the investigation of these constructions that we now turn.

3 A typology of Subjects of Predication

The *selectional* treatments of BFSI discuss evidence from constructions with verbs of change. Consider the examples below.

(16) a. Sono entrati i   clienti.
          are   come.in the clients
          'The clients have come in (here).'

      b. Sono morti i   soldati.
          are   died the soldiers
          'The soldiers have died.'

The verbs in (16a–b) are telic, as is testified by the fact that their perfect is not entailed by their progressive forms (Dowty 1979: 60).

(17) a. Un cliente sta entrando. ≠ >Un cliente è entrato.
          a   client is coming.in   a   client is come.in
          'A client is coming in.'   'A client has come in.'

      b. Un soldato sta morendo. ≠ > Un soldato è morto.
          a   soldier is dying   a   soldier is died
          'A soldier is dying.'   'A soldier has died.'

In terms of Beavers' (2011) scalar notion of change as the transition of a theme along a scale (see also Rappaport Hovav 2008), these are thus events of *quantized change* because a specific final goal on the scale is entailed in both cases, regardless of the precise nature of this goal, which is defined by the nature of the scale. While (16a) describes change in a spatial dimension (outside > inside), (16b) describes change in a condition (alive > dead). Since the goal is a location in (16a), and a state in (16b), we shall call the former a location-g(oal) and the latter a state-g.

   In light of the default speaker-oriented deixis of (16a) (§§1–2), the location-g is the obvious candidate for the role of SoP, as was suggested by Benincà (1988), Pinto (1997), Tortora (1997) and many others. Observe in passing that the verb in (16a) belongs to the verb class that Levin (1993: 263) calls *verbs of inherently directed motion*. As was first observed by Tortora (1997) with evidence from Borgomanerese (a Gallo-Italian dialect spoken in Piedmont, Italy), only some verbs of inherently directed motion have speaker-oriented deixis in BFSI (*arrivare* 'arrive', *venire* 'come', *entrare* 'come in', etc.). Others are lexically specified for movement away from a location, which can – but need not – correspond with the location of the speaker (*partire* 'leave', *uscire* 'go/come out', *andare* 'go'). We shall call the former group *speaker-oriented,* and we shall return to this contrast in Section 3.3.

   Differently from (16a), (16b) is not speaker-oriented either in a locative way or in any other obvious sense. Thus, in agreement with Corr (2016), it could be assumed that the state-g serves as an SoP in this BFSI construction. We note, however, that the state-g is not an actant or a thematic argument of the verb, which can be projected to a syntactic position. Indeed, it cannot be expressed outside the verb in syntax. This is shown in (18a), which contrasts with (18b), where the locative goal argument of *entrare* 'come in' has an audible realization.

(18) a. Un soldato muore (*fino   alla   morte).
          a   soldier dies   as.far.as to.the death
          'A soldier dies (as far as death).'

      b. Un cliente entra   (nel   negozio / da noi).
          a   client comes.in in.the shop   to ours
          'A client comes into the shop/into our shop.'

Rather than being an argument of the verb, the state-g is a state on the scale of change that is defined by the constant in the predicate. In the next Section, we adduce further

empirical evidence in support of the theoretical distinction between predicates with a thematic locative-g and a non-thematic state-g, and we claim that BFSI is licensed in different ways in constructions with the two types of goal.

3.1 The role of the state goal

In addition to being characterized by speaker-oriented deixis, BFSI constructions with speaker-oriented verbs of inherently directed motion would seem to be incompatible with a sentence-final locative adverbial (Benincà 1988; Calabrese 1992; Sheehan 2006: 148). In (19a–b), the sentence-final locative expression forces the preverbal position of the subject.

(19)   [Out of the blue announcement – no overt or understood presupposition]
      a.   Sono arrivati i   ragazzi (*?alla   festa).
          are   arrived the   kids   at.the party

      b.   I   ragazzi sono arrivati alla   festa.
          the kids   are   arrived at.the party
          'The kids have arrived (at the party).'

To be sure, the acceptability of (19a) improves considerably if the postverbal DP is indefinite.

(20)   [Out of the blue announcement – no overt or understood presupposition]
      Sono arrivati dei   ragazzi alla   festa.
      are   arrived some kids   at.the party
      'Some kids have arrived at the party.'

The Definiteness Effect in (19a) is not found in BFSI constructions with other verbs of change. In fact, (21a) is the only option as an out of the blue announcement, whereas (21b) would be felicitous in a context that presupposes the preverbal subject or if the sentence-final location is in narrow focus (e.g. for contrastive purposes).

(21)   [Out of the blue announcement – no overt or understood presupposition]
      a.   Sono morti i   soldati al   fronte.
          are   died the soldiers at.the front

      b. #I   soldati sono morti al   fronte.
          the soldiers are   died at.the front
          'The soldiers have died at the front.'

Assuming that the locative-g is realized as a null speaker-oriented preverbal argument in (19a), the Definiteness Effect observed in this example could ultimately be the consequence of the θ-criterion, i.e., the condition by which the same thematic role (in this case, location) cannot be assigned twice. The same problem does not arise in (20) or (21a), where, we propose, BFSI is not licensed by a null locative.

   Importantly, an overt locative phrase can follow the DP in a construction with narrow focus on the definite DP and a dislocated locative phrase (cf. (22B)), or with narrow focus on the PP itself (cf. (23B)). These are not BFSI constructions, and, hence, they do not require a preverbal SoP. (We indicate narrow focus with small caps; the comma separating the focal DP from the following PP in (22B) indicates a prosodic boundary.)

(22)   A: Sono arrivate LE RAGAZZE, da voi?
            are   arrived the girls   to yours
            'Have THE GIRLS arrived to your house?'

B: No, sono arrivati I RAGAZZI, da noi.
    no are arrived the boys   to ours
    'No, THE BOYS have arrived to our house.'

(23) A: Hai   detto che sono arrivati i   ragazzi a casa?
          have.2SG said that are arrived the kids   at home
          'Did you say that the kids have arrived home?'

      B: No, sono arrivati i   ragazzi ALLA STAZIONE.
          no are arrived the kids   at.the station
          'No, the kids have arrived AT THE STATION.'

The hypothesis that BFSI is licensed in different ways with different verbs of change is supported by evidence from the dialect of Borgomanero (Tortora 1997; 2014), which was mentioned above. In this dialect, a locative clitic sequence *ngh… gghi* occurs in BFSI constructions with speaker-oriented verbs of inherently directed motion (cf. (24a)). The *ngh… gghi* sequence is claimed by Tortora (1997: 58) to be in a clitic-doubling relation with a covert preverbal locative goal argument. There is no counterpart of this clitic sequence in VS constructions with other verbs of change (cf. (24b vs. 24c)), which must be licensed differently.

(24) *Borgomanero, Piedmont* (Tortora 1997: 25, 56–57)
      a. Ngh è rivà-gghi   na fjola.
          LOC is arrived-LOC a   girl
          'There arrived a girl (here).'

      b. L' è fundà na nave.
          SCL is sunk a ship
          'A ship has sunk.'

      c. *Ngh è fundà-gghi na nave.
           LOC is sunk-LOC   a   ship

BFSI constructions are to some extent sensitive to sentential aspect (Bentley 2006: 378; Leonetti 2017: 896), in that they are hardly compatible with the simple present tense (cf. (25a–c)). However, this restriction does not apply when the verb is a speaker-oriented verb of inherently directed motion (cf. (26a–c)).

(25) a. (Guarda!) *?Muoiono i   soldati.
          look   die   the soldiers

      b. (Guarda!) *?Nascono i   bambini.
          look   are-born the children

      c. (Guarda!) *?Si   sciolgono i   gelati.
          look   RFL melt   the ice-creams

(26) a. (Guarda!) Arrivano i   ragazzi.
          look   arrive   the kids
          'Look! The kids are arriving.'

      b. (Guarda!) Tornano   i   ragazzi.
          look   come.back the kids
          'Look! The kids are coming back.'

      c. (Guarda!) Entrano i   clienti.
          look   come.in the clients
          'Look! The clients are coming in.'

The difference between (25a–c) and (26a–c) is evidenced in genuinely out-of-the blue contexts, for example if a speaker describes or announces what s/he sees at the time of the utterance. In neither case should there be any understood presupposition. For most native speakers, in these contexts the simple present tense in the examples in (26) has a progressive aspectual value.[5] By contrast, the same aspectual value can hardly be assigned to the examples in (25) because, we claim, too much must be inferred: not only the progressive aspect, but also the situation that allows BFSI with these verbs. Overt marking for progressive aspect with the examples in (25a–c) is in principle acceptable, as shown in (27), but these sentences are barely compatible with the out-of-the-blue contexts typically licensing BFSI, since in the progressive these examples describe ongoing eventualities, rather than bounded eventualities predicated of an inferred situation. For this reason, SV order would be more natural in the examples in (27).

(27)   a.   Stanno morendo i   soldati.
            are   dying   the soldiers
            'The soldiers are dying.'

       b.   Stanno nascendo i   bambini.
            are   being.born the children
            'The children are being born.'

       c.   Si   stanno sciogliendo i   gelati.
            RFL are   melting   the ice-creams
            'The ice-creams are melting.'

The above facts are reminiscent of Bianchi's (1993) claim that an eventive sentence describes a specific event, as opposed to an atemporal situation as in (25a–c) (see §2). In addition, if, as we tentatively assumed, the state-g could be projected as an argument and serve as SoP in BFSI, the contrast between (25a–c) and (26a–c) would remain unexplained, since a specific state-g is entailed in the event structure of verbs of quantized change regardless of sentential aspect. In other words, there would be no principled explanation for the failure of the state-g to serve as SoP in (25a–c). The contrast between (25a–c) and (26a–c), therefore, would seem to suggest that only with verbs of inherently directed motion can BFSI be licensed by an argument of the verb, which serves as SoP regardless of sentential aspect or any other contextual clues.

On the basis of the contrast between the location-g, which can be realized in syntax as a thematic argument selected by the verb, and the state-g, which cannot (cf. (18a–b)), and in light of the further evidence adduced in this section, we revise our initial hypothesis on the role of the state-g in BFSI. In particular, we propose that, with verbs of quantized change lacking a thematic goal argument, BFSI is not licensed by a component of the argument structure of the verb, but rather by a situational argument, which arises in all-new discourse contexts, when a specific bounded eventuality is predicated. The acceptability of (20) suggests that BFSI can also be licensed by this argument with verbs of inherently directed motion.

This argument provides the situation about which the bounded eventuality is predicated and against which the truth-value of the proposition is evaluated. It is thus comparable with Klein's (2008) *topic situation*, although it must be understood that the situational argument not given, but rather introduced with the utterance itself. Following Bianchi (1993), we represent (28a) as (28b), where *e* is the situational argument.

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[5] We acknowledge that these judgements are subtle. The progressive interpretation of the present tense with these verbs does not seem to be available to all speakers. This could be the reason why an anonymous reviewer deems the sentences in (25) and (26) to be equally ungrammatical.

(28)   a.   Sono morti i   soldati.
            are   died the soldiers
            'The soldiers have died.'

       b.   [$_{SUBJ}$ (∃e) (past(e))] [$_{PRED}$ sono morti i soldati]

To flesh out our hypothesis that a situational argument can arise with the utterance, we start from the observation that we are dealing with structures that are not articulated as subject/predicate (or topic/comment) oppositions, but rather as fully predicative – or thetic – sentences (see Kuroda 1972; Sasse 1987; Ladusaw 1994; a. o., and, for the related notion of presentational construction, Calabrese 1992; Lambrecht 1994; 2000). Together with the verb, the theme argument is part of the predication (Fuchs 1980: 449; cited in Sasse 2006: 258; Bianchi 1993; Zeller 2013; Bentley 2018). In such structures, the starting point of the predication – or the argument which the predication is about – must be identified (recall Bianchi's Principle of Nonvacuous Predication).[6] If a goal argument is available in the thematic grid of the verb, it can provide the information that is needed as the starting point of the predication (§3.3). If a thematic goal argument is not available, the situation about which the event is predicated has to be inferred. The situational argument thus arises inferentially with the utterance.

   Given that the state-g does not serve as SoP, the question that arises at this point is whether the entailment of a specific state-g in event structure is at all relevant to the licensing of BFSI. In other words, could a situational argument be inferred with any verb of change? Bianchi (1993) rules out the structure in (28b) for state predicates that are not stage-level states. Of the two stative predications in (29a–b), only (29b) is a stage-level state and, indeed, it exhibits subject inversion in broad focus.

(29)   a.   *Appartiene una casa   a Gianni. (Cf. (14c))
            belongs   a   house to Gianni

       b.   Sono disponibili alcune guide turistiche. (Cf. (12a))
            are   available   some   guides tourist
            'Some tourist guides are available.'

On the other hand, Bianchi does not compare different types of verb of change. However, even a cursory look at verbs of non-quantized change (Beavers 2011) – of which degree achievements (Dowty 1979: 88–90) or gradual-completion verbs (Bertinetto & Squartini 1995: 23) are a subclass – suggests that the entailment of a specific state-g is relevant to the licensing of BFSI. Indeed, the utterances in (30a–b) would normally only be felicitous in a discourse context where the subject alone is in focus.

(30)   [Who/what has verb-ed?/#Out of the blue announcement]
       a.   Sono ingrassati   / dimagriti   / invecchiati / cresciuti I   BAMBINI.
            are   become.fatter become.slimmer become.older grown   the kids
            'The kids have become fatt(er)/slim(mer)/old(er)/have grown.'

       b.   Si   sono rallegrati   / annoiati   / rattristati   I   BAMBINI.
            RFL are become.happier become.bored become.(more.)sad the kids
            'The kids have become happier/bored/(more) sad.'

Observe in passing that the definiteness of the postverbal DP is irrelevant to the acceptability of these examples: even if this is indefinite, the examples are not more easily interpretable as broad-focus structures. What improves their acceptability is the addition

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[6] In our syntactic treatment of BFSI (§4.2), we shall reformulate the Principle of Nonvacuous Predication in terms of Rizzi's (2005) Subject Criterion.

of a previous context (*this year the kids have grown…, at the party the kids got bored…*). In other words, these examples need the addition of an overt or understood aboutness topic to be acceptable.

Degree achievements are compatible with both *in* and *for* temporal adverbials (Dowty 1979: 89–90).

(31) a. Gianni è ingrassato   in / per un mese.
          Gianni is become.fat(ter) in for a   month
          'Gianni has become fat(ter) in/for a month.'

      b. Gianni si è rallegrato   in una serata   / per tutta la serata.
          Gianni RFL is become.happier in an   evening   for whole the evening
          'Gianni has become happier in one evening/happier and happier for the
          whole evening.'

Other diagnostics to identify these verbs are their being entailed by their progressive forms (cf. (32a–b vs. 17a–b)) and their compatibility with adverbials describing the extent of the change (cf. (33a–b)).

(32) a. Gianni sta ingrassando.   = > Gianni è ingrassato.
          Gianni is   becoming.fatt(er)   Gianni is become.fatt(er)
          'Gianni is becoming fat(ter).'   'Gianni has become fat(ter).'

      b. Gianni si   sta rallegrando.   = > Gianni si   è rallegrato.
          Gianni RFL is   becoming.happi(er)   Gianni RFL is become.happi(er)
          'Gianni is becoming happi(er).'   'Gianni has become happi(er).'

(33) a. Gianni è ingrassato   di parecchio.
          Gianni is become.fat(ter) by a.lot
          'Gianni has become a lot fatter.'

      b. Gianni si   è rallegrato   di parecchio.
          Gianni RFL is become.happi(er) by a.lot
          'Gianni has become a lot happier.'

Beavers (2011) claims that verbs of non-quantized change only entail that a goal exists. Unlike verbs of quantized change, though, they do not entail a specific final goal on the relevant scale of change. Given that verbs of quantized and non-quantized change contrast with respect to their interpretation in VS order, we conclude that the specific state-g entailed by the former class does play a role in the licensing of BFSI. We claim that the situation about which the event is predicated can only be inferred if the structure of the event is bounded. With verbs of quantized change, the boundedness requirement is satisfied by the attainment of the state-g. In the next section, we shall discuss how BFSI is licensed with some verbs of non-quantized change, contrary to initial expectations.

3.2 Inferred state-goal

A subclass of degree achievements turns out to be as compatible with BFSI as verbs of quantized change.

(34) a. Guarda! Si è raddrizzata l' antenna.
          look   RFL is straightened the antenna
          'Look! The antenna has become straight.'

      b. Guarda! Si è riempito il   secchio.
          look   RFL is filled   the bucket
          'Look! The bucket has become full.'

c. Guarda! Si è svuotato il   serbatoio.
    look   RFL is emptied the tank
    'Look! The tank has become empty.'

These verbs test out as degree achievements in terms of their compatibility with adverbials describing the extent of the change (cf. (35a–b)). However, their perfect is not entailed by the progressive form (cf. (36a–b)).

(35) a. L' antenna si è raddrizzata di parecchio.
          the antenna RFL is straightened by a.lot
          'The antenna has become much straighter.'

      b. Il   secchio si   è riempito di parecchio.
          the bucket RFL is filled   by a.lot
          'The bucket has become quite a lot fuller.'

      c. Il serbatoio si è svuotato   di parecchio.
          the tank   RFL is become.empty by a.lot
          'The tank has become quite a lot emptier.'

(36) a. L'antenna si sta raddrizzando.   ≠ > L'antenna   si   è raddrizzata.
          the antenna RFL is becoming.straight   the antenna RFL is become.straight
          'The antenna is becoming straight.'   'The antenna has become straight.'

      b. Il   secchio si   sta riempiendo. ≠ > Il   secchio si   è riempito.
          the bucket RFL is becoming.full   the bucket RFL is become.full
          'The bucket is becoming full.'   'The bucket has become full.'

      c. Il serbatoio si sta svuotando.   ≠ > Il serbatoio si   è svuotato.
          the tank   RFL is becoming.empty   the tank   RFL is become.empty
          'The tank is becoming empty.'   'The tank has become empty.'

Hay, Kennedy & Levin (1999) claim that, in this class, a bounded difference value is inferred on the basis of the adjectival base of the verbs. They call *difference value* the measure of the amount to which an argument of the verb changes with respect to a gradable property. The adjectival base is a *closed-range* adjective, i.e., an adjective associated with a property that has a maximum value, as witness the compatibility of English *empty* (adj.) with *completely*. The same compatibility characterizes the verb *empty*.

(37) a. The tank is completely empty.
      b. They have emptied the tank completely.

The bounded difference value that is inferred with the verb *empty* explains its telic behaviour (cf. (38)). Importantly, the bounded measure of the change is not entailed, but rather only inferred on the basis of a conversational implicature, which can be cancelled (cf. (39)).

(38) They are emptying the tank ≠ > They have emptied the tank.
(39) They have emptied the tank, but not completely.

On a par with English *empty* (v.), the verbs in (35a–c) and (36a–c) are compatible with both *completely* and *not completely*.

(40) a. L' antenna si è raddrizzata   completamente / ma non completamente.
          the antenna RFL is become.straight completely   but not completely
          'The antenna has become completely straight/has become more straight, but not completely straight.'

  b. Il secchio si è riempito completamente / ma non completamente.
    the bucket RFL is become.full completely   but not completely
    'The bucket has become completely full/has become more full, but not
    completely full.'

  c. Il serbatoio si è svuotato completamente / ma non completamente.
    the tank RFL is become.empty completely   but not completely
    'The tank has become completely empty/has become emptier, but not
    completely empty.'

By contrast, verbs of quantized change do not combine with the same adverbials. Since the attainment of a stage goal is entailed, it is not an inference and it cannot be cancelled by *not completely*. On the other hand, the combination with *completely* is odd because it is redundant (Hay, Kenney & Levin 1999).

(41) a. Il gatto è tornato (*completamente / *ma non completamente).
    the cat is come.back completely   but not completely
    'The cat has come back (*completely/*but not completely).'

  b. La pera è caduta (*completamente / *ma non completamente).
    the pear is fallen completely   but not completely
    'The pear has fallen (*completely/*but not completely).'

  c. Il soldato è morto (*completamente / *ma non completamente).
    the soldier is died completely   but not completely
    'The soldier has died (*completely/*but not completely).'

  d. Il bambino è nato (*completamente / *ma non completamente).
    the child is born completely   but not completely
    'The child has been born (*completely/*but not completely).'

The contrast between (40a–c) and (41a–d) indicates that the verbs in the former group are not verbs of quantized change (cf. also (35a–c)). The facts in (40a–c), however, suggest that these verbs can be telic by virtue of an inference of bounded change. We thus propose that, even though these verbs do not entail a specific goal on a scale of change, a state goal (state-g) can be *inferred* on the basis of the scalar structure of a gradable property with which they are associated by means of their adjectival base. The key feature of the said scalar structure is that it is compatible with the inference of a maximum value. The inferred state-g satisfies the requirement that the eventuality be bounded for a situational argument to be inferred and BFSI to be licensed (cf. (34a–c)).

 With degree achievements formed from *open-range* adjectives, i.e., adjectives associated with a property for which it is not possible to identify a maximum value on a scale, a goal is never actually reached, but it is approximated in an asymptotic way (Cruse 1986: 206). According to Hay, Kennedy & Levin (1999), the incompatibility with *completely* indicates, in this case, that the scalar structure of the relevant gradable property (cf. (42a–c)), and the related scale of change (cf. (43a–c)), are incompatible with a maximum value.

(42) a. La gonna è (*completamente) corta.
    the skirt is completely   short
    'The skirt is (*completely) short.'

  b. La strada è (*completamente) stretta.
    the road is completely   narrow
    'The road is (*completely) narrow.'

    c.   La buca   è (*completamente) larga.
           the pothole is   completely   wide
           'The pothole is (*completely) wide.'

(43)   a.   La gonna si   è accorciata (*completamente).
            the skirt   RFL is shortened   completely
            'The skirt has become (*completely) short.'

        b.   La strada si è ristretta (*completamente).
            the road   RFL is narrowed   completely
            'The road has become (*completely) narrow.'

        c.   La buca   si è allargata (*completamente).
            the pothole RFL is widened   completely
            'The pothole has become (*completely) wide.'

Nonetheless, Hay, Kenney & Levin (1999) note that a maximum value may be associated with a conventional property of the entity denoted by the theme argument: the maximum/minimum conventional length of a skirt, width of a road, etc.

(44)   a.   La gonna si   è accorciata, ma non completamente, solo un po'.
            the skirt   RFL is shortened but not completely   only a bit
            'The skirt has been shortened, but not completely, only a bit.'

        b.   La strada si è ristretta, ma si   può ancora passare.
            the road   RFL is narrowed but one can still   pass
            'The street has narrowed, but you can still drive through.'

Alternatively, there may be other contextual clues that give rise to the conversational implicature of a maximum value on a scale of change; for example, the maximum width of a pothole over which a car can pass with no damage to the wheels.

(45)   La buca   si è allargata, ma le ruote   passano ancora ai   suoi lati.
        the pothole RFL is widened but the wheels pass   still   at.the its   sides
        'The pothole has widened, but you can still drive over it.'

Therefore, the degree achievements under discussion can also have an inferred state-g, even though this arises from contextual clues. If there is such an inference, the event is bounded and a situational argument can be inferred, with BFSI being licensed as a result.

(46)   a.   Si è accorciata la gonna.
            RFL is shortened the skirt
            'The skirt has become short.'

        b.   Si è ristretta la strada.
            RFL is narrowed the road
            'The road has become narrow.'

        c.   Si è allargata la buca.
            RFL is broadened the pothole
            'The pothole has become wide.'

We note in passing that there are at least two non-deadjectival degree achievement verbs which admit an inference of bounded change on the basis of contextual clues: *aumentare* (intr.) 'increase' and *diminuire* (intr.) 'decrease'.[7] We suggest that BFSI (cf. (47c, 48c)) is

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[7] Rappaport Hovav (2008: 19) claims that *increase* and *decrease* need not be contextualized to receive a telic interpretation, in that scalar change is part of their lexical meaning. We do not dispute that these verbs

licensed with these verbs if the said inference arises and thus a situational argument is also inferred.

(47) a. Il numero dei presenti è aumentato di parecchio/ *completamente.
          the number of.the present is increased by a.lot   completely
          'The number of the people present has increased quite a lot/*completely.'

      b. Il numero dei presenti è aumentato, ma ci sono sufficienti posti a sedere.
          the number of.the present is increased but there are sufficient places to sit
          'The number of the people present has increased, but there are enough seats.'

      c. È aumentato il numero (dei presenti).
          is increased the number of.the present
          'The number of the people present has increased.'

(48) a. Il numero dei presenti è diminuito di parecchio / *completamente.
          the number of.the present is decreased by a.lot   completely
          'The number of the people present has decreased quite a lot/*completely.'

      b. Il numero dei presenti è diminuito, ma raggiungiamo comunque il quorum.
          the number of.the present is decreased but reach.1PL   nonetheless the quorum
          'The number of the people present has decreased, but we still reach the quorum.'

      c. È diminuito il numero (dei presenti).
          is decreased the number of.the present
          'The number of the people present has decreased.'

Turning now to the degree achievements that are hard to find in BFSI (cf. (9a–b, 30a–b, 49a–b)), observe that they do not combine with *completely* (cf. (50a–b)), which suggests they are not associated with a scale of change, or a property, with a maximum value.

(49) a. Il bambino è impallidito / cresciuto… di parecchio.
          the boy   is become.pale grown   by a.lot
          'The boy has become much paler/has grown quite a lot.'

      b. Il bambino si è stufato   / rallegrato…   di parecchio.
          the boy   RFL is become.bored become.happi(er) by a.lot
          'The boy has become a lot more bored/happier.'

(50) a. Il bambino è impallidito / cresciuto… (*completamente).
          the boy   is become.pale grown   completely
          'The boy has become (*completely) pale/grown (*completely).'

      b. Il bambino si è stufato   / rallegrato…   (*completamente).
          the boy   RFL is become.bored become.happi(er) completely
          'The boy has become (*completely) bored/happy.'

In this respect, the degree achievements in question behave like those based on open-range adjectives (cf. (43a–b)). In the absence of an inference of bounded change, BFSI is awkward. The question that arises is why an inference of bounded change does not arise on the basis of contextual clues. Our answer to this question is that such an inference

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entail scalar change as part of their lexical meaning, and indeed, similarly to verbs of quantized change (cf. (41a–c)), they are incompatible with both *completely* and *not completely*. We note, however, that they are compatible with additions specifying the extent of the change (cf. (47a, 48a)), thus testing out as degree achievements, and that the inference of a maximum value can be cancelled (cf. (47b, 48b)). Lastly, they are entailed by their progressive forms. For this reason, we suggest that the inference of bounded change depends on contextual clues. The key issue from our perspective is that these are verbs of non-quantized change that are compatible with a the inference of a goal and hence with BFSI.

can in principle arise, but the constant in the event of change described by these verbs, and hence the types of theme argument that such verbs select, do not lend themselves easily to it.

The conventional length of a skirt may be determined by a fashion, or a particular style, or the occasion in which it is worn. The width of a road may depend on the amount of traffic it has to cater for. Similar maximum values are not normally associated with the changes described by psych-verbs and verbs describing physical change, or with their experiencer/theme arguments. However, if, contrary to expectations, a maximum value is associated with the relevant event of change, or with a property of the argument, even these verbs allow the inference of a goal and, as a result, they can occur in BFSI. Imagine that a conventional height must be reached for a child to be admitted to a basketball training club. In this case, the BFSI structure in (51) would not be odd, at least for some speakers, although the counterpart with SV order would also be felicitous.[8]

(51)   [Context: What has happened?/What are you celebrating?]
        Sono cresciuti i   gemelli: li   possiamo iscrivere a   pallacanestro.
        are   grown   the twins   them can.1PL register   to basketball
        'The twins have grown: we can register them with the basketball club.'

Similarly, in particular situations, a maximum value may be associated with a psychological state. Imagine that a family with little children has been invited to someone's house and the parents are planning to leave as soon as the children seem bored enough to start behaving badly. In this context, the utterance in (52) would be felicitous.

(52)   [Context: Plan/unspoken agreement to leave as soon as…]
        Si   sono annoiati i   bambini: è ora di andare.
        RFL are   got.bored the kids   is time to go
        'The kids have got bored: it is time to go.'

The examples in (51) and (52) are announcements, stating that a conventional or predetermined goal has been reached in an event of growth and of psychological change, respectively. This bounded event structure is compatible with the inference of a situational argument and, hence, with BFSI. The addition of sentence-initial adverbs such as *finalmente* 'finally/eventually' or *adesso* 'now', highlighting the fact that the long-awaited goal has been reached, facilitates the bounded interpretation, although in the presence of such adverbs in sentence-initial position the relevant structures do not exemplify *bare* subject inversion.

3.3 Thematic Subject of Predication

We now return to verbs of inherently directed motion. Recall that these are verbs of quantized change, entailing a specific goal location on a scale of change (Beavers 2011).

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[8] An anonymous reviewer has suggested that the constraint that is responsible for the awkwardness of BFSI with *crescere* 'grow' is animacy, providing examples such as those in (i) below in support of this hypothesis.

(i)   È cresciuta la   rabbia / la povertà.
       is grown   the anger   the poverty
       'Anger/poverty has increased.'

We believe that *crescere* is synonymous with *aumentare* 'increase' in (i), which is compatible with BFSI (cf. (47c) and Note 7). We have discussed *crescere* in the sense of the physical growth of an individual, hence our choice of an animate postverbal subject. In this sense, *crescere* is really quite difficult – though not impossible – to combine with the inference of a maximum value. As suggested by the reviewer, animacy may well play a role in the licensing of BFSI, but, we believe, only to the extent that an inanimate argument coerces the 'increase, augment' reading, with which the inference of a bound arises more naturally than with verbs describing the physical growth or the feelings of an individual.

(53)   a.   I   ragazzi sono arrivati (a casa).
            the kids   are   arrived to home
            'The kids have arrived (home).'

       b.   I   nostri figli   sono entrati (a casa).
            the our   children are   entered to home
            'Our children have come in (the house).'

The lexical-aspectual properties of this class of verbs lend themselves to the inference of a situational argument. However, on the basis of the default deictic interpretation of BFSI (cf. (54a)), as well the Definiteness Effect illustrated in (54b) (cf. (19a vs. 20)), we suggested that the goal location of these verbs can provide the starting point of the predication, or what the predication is about, i.e., in our terms, the SoP. In agreement with Pinto (1997), we suggest that the deixis of the goal location points to the centre of the utterance situation (Vanelli 1972), namely the speaker. We represent (54a) as in (54a′).

(54)   [Out of the blue – no overt or understood presupposition]
       a.   Sono arrivati / entrati i   ragazzi.
            are   arrived   entered the kids
            'The boys have arrived / come in (to our house/here).'

       b.   sono arrivati / entrati i   ragazzi (*?qui / ?in classe)
            are   arrived   entered the kids   here   in classroom

(54)   a′. [$_{SUBJ}$ ($\exists loc$)] [$_{PRED}$ sono arrivati/entrati i ragazzi]

The proposal in (54a′) does not suit the verbs of inherently directed motion which, as was mentioned in passing at the beginning of Section 3, are lexically specified for movement away from a location: *partire* 'leave', *uscire* 'go/come out', etc. A key difference between these verbs and those that we labelled speaker-oriented is that they can exhibit a source, not a goal, location (cf. (55a)). In addition, BFSI constructions with these verbs are compatible with an overt sentence final location (cf. (55b)) and sensitive to sentential aspect (cf. (55c)). Therefore, these verbs behave like the verbs of quantized change discussed in Section 3.1.[9]

(55)   [Out of the blue – no overt or understood presupposition]
       a.   I   ragazzi partono *a / da   casa.
            the kids   leave.3PL to / from home
            'The boys are leaving *to/from home.'

       b.   Sono partiti i   ragazzi da   casa.
            are   left   the kids   from home
            'The boys have left home.'

       c.   Guarda! ?Partono / Stanno partendo i   ragazzi.
            look   leave.3PL are   leaving   the kids
            'Look! The boys are leaving.'

If the locative argument of the verb in (55b) served as SoP, we would expect this structure to be incompatible with an overt sentence final locative phrase. In turn, the simple pre-

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[9] As far as we can tell, the judgements in (55b–c) are not affected by the definiteness of the postverbal DP. As for the simple present tense, we only find it acceptable as part of a narration or if there is an understood context (*Today, at this/that moment*, etc.). We do acknowledge, however, that these judgements are subtle and are affected, among other matters, by regional variation in the functions of the simple present and the progressive present-tense forms.

sent tense should be acceptable in (55c). Therefore, we assume that, with the verbs that are lexically specified for movement away from a location, the predication is not about a location, but rather about a situational argument.[10] As is the case with the verbs of quantized change discussed in Section 3.1, this argument can be inferred because these verbs are telic, that is, they include a specific state-g in their event structure. Relevant evidence is provided in (56a–b), indicating that the perfect of *partire* 'leave' and *uscire* 'go out' is not entailed by the progressive forms.

(56)   a.   I   ragazzi stanno partendo. ≠ > I   ragazzi sono partiti.
              the kids   are   leaving   the kids   are   left
              'The kids are leaving.'   'The kids have left.'

        b.   I   ragazzi stanno uscendo. ≠ > I   ragazzi sono usciti.
              the kids   are   going.out   the kids   are   gone.out
              'The kids are going out.'   'The kids have gone out.'

The aspectual property tested in (56) is also shared by speaker-oriented verbs of inherently directed motion (e.g. *arrivare* 'arrive', *venire* 'come', cf. (17a)). The key difference between the two verb classes, therefore, depends on whether the location is a goal or a source. The reason why a source argument, differently from a goal argument, does not lend itself to the role of silent SoP must lie in the different roles that these arguments play in predicate composition. The goal is the final state in the predication, whereas this is not the case with the source. This difference, in turn, raises the issue of the status of the goal as part of the constant, or a templatic component of the predicate, or an actant argument. Given that the goal can be realized as an argument in syntax (cf. (18b, 53a–b)), we have considered it to be an argument. This important issue, however, requires further investigation independently of the study of BFSI.

Incidentally, our hypothesis on non-speaker oriented verbs of inherently directed motion is supported by the lack of the clitic sequence *ngh… gghi* in Borgomanererese BFSI constructions with these verbs, in contrast with their counterparts with the speaker-oriented verbs (cf. (24)).

(57)   *Borgomanero, Piedmont* (Tortora 1997: 56–57)
        a.   L'   è   partè na fjola.
              SCL is left   a   girl
              'A girl has left.'

        b.   *Ngh è partè-gghi na fjola.
              LOC is left-LOC   a   girl

To sum up, we have proposed that, with verbs of inherently directed motion which are lexically specified for movement away from a location, BFSI is licensed by a situational argument SoP, which can be inferred because these verbs are telic.

We conclude this section with a discussion of the few activity verbs that can be found in genuine BFSI, i.e., in VS constructions that neither exhibit nor presuppose a topic. Relevant examples are given here.

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[10] A member of this class which may have a locative SoP in VS order is *andarsene* 'go away', which obligatorily exhibits the locative clitic *ne* 'from (t)here'. Assuming that this is the case, the SoP is not silent in this structure, but rather expressed obligatorily by the clitic.

(i)   Guarda! Se   ne   sono andati tutti.
       look   RFL from.here are gone   all
       'Look! Everyone has gone away.'

(58)   [Out of the blue – no overt or understood presupposition]
    a.   Hanno telefonato i   bambini.
          have   phoned   the kids
          'The kids have phoned (here/us).'
    b.   Ha bussato il   postino.
          has knocked the postman
          'The postman has knocked (here/on our door).'
    c.   Ha chiamato la   nonna.
          has called   the grandma
          'Grandma has called (here/us).'

The conventional tests for activities include the compatibility with temporal *for*-adverbials and the incompatibility with temporal *in*-adverbials.

(59)   a.   Il   postino ha bussato per / *in un'ora.
          the postman has knocked for   in an hour
          'The postman has knocked for/*in an hour.'
    b.   I   bambini hanno telefonato per / *in un'ora.
          the kids   have phoned   for   in an hour
          'The kids have phoned for /*in an hour.'
    c.   La nonna   ha   chiamato per / *in un'ora.
          the granma has called   for   in an hour
          'Grandma has called for/*in an hour.'

Since Dowty (1979: 60–62) it has been known, however, that activities can have accomplishment readings, i.e., readings as bounded events, which are not lexically coded, but rather arise from contextual knowledge or clues. To give but one example, *phone* can describe the bounded event of making a phone call. In the bounded reading, conveyed below by the addition of *a sua madre*, lit. 'to his mother', *telefonare* does combine with the temporal *in*-phrase, as well as with the periphrasis *has finished V-ing*, where *finish* indicates completion, rather than interruption.

(60)   a.   Gianni ha telefonato a sua madre in 5 minuti.
          Gianni has phoned   to his mother in 5 minutes
          'Gianni called his mother in 5 minutes.'
    b.   Gianni ha finito   di telefonare.
          Gianni has finished of phone.INF
          'Gianni finished making his phone call(s).'

Similarly to *phone*, other activities can behave as accomplishments. Thus, the examples in (61a) describe unbounded eventualities, whereas those in (61b–c), which would at first be judged to be ungrammatical (cf. (59)), can be read as bounded events by virtue of knowledge that is not encoded in the clause. For example, in the case of *nuotare* 'swim', the bounded reading only makes sense if one knows that Gianni is in the habit of swimming a certain length a day.

(61)   a.   Gianni ha cucinato / cantato / nuotato per ore.
          Gianni has cooked   sung   swum   for   hours
          'Gianni has been cooking/singing/swimming for hours.'
    b.   Gianni ha cucinato / cantato / nuotato in 5 minuti.
          Gianni has cooked   sung   swum   in 5 minutes
          'Gianni did his cooking/singing/swimming in 5 minutes.'

    c.   Gianni ha finito   di cucinare / cantare / nuotare.
          Gianni has finished of cook.INF sing.INF swim.INF
          'Gianni finished cooking/singing/swimming.'

Importantly, the verbs in (61a–c) are not nearly as compatible with genuine BFSI as those in (58a–c). Unless a spatial or temporal topic is overtly or covertly added (*At the party…, Last night…*), the only natural reading of the sentences in (62a–c) involves narrow focus on the postverbal DP.

(62)   [#What has happened?/Who cooked/sung/swum?]
    a.   Hanno cucinato GLI STUDENTI.
        have   cooked   the students
        'THE STUDENTS cooked.'

    b.   Ha cantato IL   TENORE.
        has sung   the tenor
        'THE TENOR sang.'

    c.   Hanno nuotato I   NOSTRI FIGLI.
        have   swum   the our   children
        'OUR CHILDREN swam.'

The contrast between (58a–c) and (62a–c) suggests that the possibility of an accomplishment reading cannot alone explain the occurrence of some activities in BFSI.

   With specific respect to *bussare* 'knock' and *chiamare* 'call', we note that they are not mere activities, but rather activity-based semelfactives, describing repeated events of knocking and calling (Smith 1991: 55–57; Van Valin 2005: 42–45). Semelfactives are known to have punctual readings (Beavers 2013: 682), which should in principle make them compatible with the inference of a situational argument SoP. This expectation is not fully borne out, though, as we show here.

(63)   [What happened?/Out of the blue]
    a. ?Hanno brillato le   stelle. / Le stelle hanno brillato.
        have   shined the stars   the stars have   shined
        'The stars shined.'

    b. ?Hanno tossito i   bambini. / I   bambini hanno tossito.
        have   coughed the kids   the kids   have   coughed
        'The kids coughed.'

A distinctive property of all the verbs in (58a–c) is that they have a locative or benefactive goal argument in their thematic grid. (The second argument of *chiamare* 'call' can be realized as a transitive object, a point which is irrelevant here, see Note 11 and §4.3).

(64)   a.   Il   postino ha bussato (qui / da noi).
        the postman has knocked here at us
        'The postman has knocked (here/at our door).'

    b.   I   bambini hanno telefonato (qui / a   casa).
        the kids   have phoned   here to home
        'The kids have phoned (here / home).'

    c.   La nonna   ha chiamato ((da) noi).
        the grandma has called   at us
        'Grandma has called (us).'

In fact, the deixis of the BFSI constructions in (65a–c) (cf. (58a–c)) is speaker-oriented, and these examples are fairly incompatible with an overt locative phrase in sentence-final position. The same Definiteness Effect applies as with speaker-oriented verbs of inherently directed motion (cf. (19a vs. 20)).

(65) [Out of the blue – no overt or understood presupposition]
    a. Ha bussato il postino (*?qui / ?a casa).
       has knocked the postman   here   to home
       'The postman knocked.'

    b. Hanno telefonato i bambini (*?qui / ?a casa).
       have phoned the kids   here   to home
       'The kids phoned.'

    c. Ha chiamato la nonna   (*?qui / ?a casa).
       has called the grandmother   here   to home
       'Grandma called.'

(66) [Out of the blue – no overt or understood presupposition]
    a. Hanno bussato delle persone (a casa).
       have knocked some people   to home
       'Some people knocked (home).'

    b. Hanno telefonato dei clienti (in ufficio).
       have phoned some clients in office
       'Some clients phoned (the office).'

    c. Hanno chiamato dei vecchietti (da noi).
       have called some old.people.DIM to ours
       'Some old people called (us).'

The obvious explanation for the results in (65a–c) is that, similarly to the BFSI constructions with speaker-oriented verbs of inherently directed motion, the constructions in (58a–c) and (65a–c) have a silent locative SoP, which licenses BFSI. The silent SoP is the locative or benefactive goal argument of the relevant verbs, which takes speaker-oriented deixis in the utterance situation. The constructions can thus be represented as follows.

(65) a′. $[_{\text{SUBJ}} (\exists loc)]$ $[_{\text{PRED}}$ ha bussato il postino]

    b′. $[_{\text{SUBJ}} (\exists loc)]$ $[_{\text{PRED}}$ hanno telefonato i bambini]

    c′. $[_{\text{SUBJ}} (\exists loc)]$ $[_{\text{PRED}}$ ha chiamato la nonna]

The constructions in (66a–c) can, instead, be assumed to be licensed by a situational argument SoP, which is inferred by virtue of the bounded reading admitted by the verbs under examination and conveyed here by the overt locative goal arguments.

(66) a′. $[_{\text{SUBJ}} (\exists e)]$ $[_{\text{PRED}}$ hanno bussato delle persone a casa]

    b′. $[_{\text{SUBJ}} (\exists e)]$ $[_{\text{PRED}}$ hanno telefonato dei clienti in ufficio]

    c′. $[_{\text{SUBJ}} (\exists e)]$ $[_{\text{PRED}}$ hanno chiamato dei vecchietti da noi]

The generalization that can be drawn on the basis of our findings is that BFSI is not admitted with activities, which are unbounded, unless they also select a locative or benefactive goal argument, which plays a key role in the inference of a bounded reading and can serve

as SoP. The presence of this goal explains the difference between the verbs in (58a–c) and other activities (cf. (62a–c, 63a–b)).[11]

3.4 The Subject of Predication of bounded states

We now return to the predicates upon which Bianchi's (1993) event-argument approach is based, namely stage-level states (see §2). To begin with, we note that most adjectives describing stage-level states also allow individual-level readings, which require the argument DP to have wide scope and occur preverbally (Bianchi 1993; Bianchi & Chesi 2014: 533). For this reason the VS construction with a stage-level state is only grammatical when it is clear that the postverbal DP takes low scope (cf. (67a)), like the postcopular DP of an existential *there* sentence (Heim 1987). The adverb *solo* 'only' conveys precisely this reading to the construction (Beaver et al. 2005) and this is why (67a) is grammatical. Unambiguous individual-level states are rejected in VS order (cf. (67b)).

(67)   a.   Sono disponibili solo guide.
             are   available   only guides
             'Only tourist guides are available.'

       b.   *Sono coraggiose solo guide.
             are   brave   only guides

Stage-level states are also found in the coda of existential *there*-sentences (Milsark 1974; 1979), which deserve some discussion here.

(68)   Ci sono guide disponibili.
       PF are   guides available
       'There are guides available.'

Existential *there*-sentences are structures with non-canonical morphosyntax, which express a proposition about existence or presence in a context (McNally 2011; Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina 2015). Traditionally, they have been related to locatives (Lyons 1967; Clark 1978; Creissels 2014). In fact, according to Freeze (1992), they have the same initial underlying structure as locative predications; the VS order emerges whenever the locative predicate, in the form of either a PP or a proform, moves to the subject position (see also Moro 1997). This view has been challenged by those claiming that the existential predicate is neither the proform nor an optional locative phrase, but rather the postcopular DP, conventionally referred to as the *pivot* (Williams 1994; Hazout 2004; Francez 2007; Cornilescu 2009). In support of this analysis, Francez (2007) notes that the pivot is the only obligatory component of the existential construction cross-linguistically.

Assuming that the pivot is the predicate, the question must be addressed of what the subject or the argument of the existential predicate is. An answer to this question would be to consider the proform itself to be an expletive subject (see Burzio 1986; Williams 1994; Hazout 2004). However, this idea may be tenable for English, where the proform

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[11] We note here that the goal arguments discussed in this section are different from an incremental theme, say the theme argument of verbs of creation/consumption (*walk x miles, eat x, drink x, write x*, etc.). The event described by these verbs progresses in isomorphic fashion with the theme: every part of the event corresponds to a unique part of the theme and vice versa (Beavers 2011: 352). Because of this isomorphic relation the incremental theme cannot provide the goal location or the situation about which the whole event is predicated. Accordingly, verbs with an incremental theme are not found in BFSI. This may go some way towards explaining why in Italian transitive achievements and accomplishments are not found in this construction. Transitive states (*know x, see x*, etc.) are also excluded because they are unbounded, as are biargumental activities with a second argument that is a mass noun or a bare plural (*drink beer, tell lies*, etc.). We return to transitives in Section 4.3.

there figures in subject position, and inverts with the finite copula in interrogatives, but it does not suit other languages, where the proform cooccurs with an invariant subject pronoun (e.g. French *y*, which cooccurs with *il*, see Bentley & Ciconte 2016; Bentley & Cruschina 2016).

An alternative proposal comes from Francez (2007; 2010), who pursues the hypothesis that the pivot is the predicate of a contextual domain variable, which he calls an *implicit argument*. Key evidence for this variable comes from the truth conditions on existential sentences. Consider the examples below.

(69)   a.   Non c' è caffè.
            not PF is coffee
            'There's no coffee.'

        b.   Il   caffè   non esiste.
            the coffee not exists
            'Coffee doesn't exist.'

The context-dependent existential *there*-sentence in (69a) clearly means something different from the context-independent sentence in (69b). Crucially, the truth-value of the former depends on contextual information. This supports the view that a defining component of this construction is a contextual domain. As was mentioned, the existential pivot takes narrow scope and has no presupposition of existence. This is not true of the subject of (69b), *il caff*è 'coffee', which has wide scope and is presupposed to exist.

Importantly, existential constructions range from propositions expressing presence in a specific, albeit often understood, location (cf. (69a, 70a)) to propositions expressing existence in a much broader sense (cf. (70b)). Koch (2012) calls the former type *existentials of bounded existence* and the latter *existentials of generic existence*.

(70)   a.   In Africa ci sono leoni bianchi.
            in Africa PF are   lions white
            'In Africa there are white lions.'

        b.   Ci sono leoni bianchi.
            PF are   lions white
            'There exist white lions.'

Francez's (2007) contextual domain variable must, therefore, be understood to be an abstract argument, which can – but need not – be enriched by an overt modifier contributing to its identification (Francez 2009). The phrase *in Africa* in (70a) is a case in point.

Following Cruschina (2012), we claim that the existential proform (*ci*) is the spell-out of the contextual domain variable. The locative phrase in (70a), on the other hand, can be considered to be the SoP of the construction. Thus, in (70a) the presence or existence of white lions is situated in Africa. In the absence of a locative phrase, existentials could be claimed to have a silent situational SoP, which provides the situation about which they are predicated. While being entirely consistent with the semantics of existentials, which are states bounded by a contextual domain, this hypothesis is not economical. More to the point, the contextual domain variable is sufficient to provide the situational coordinates of the predication. Therefore, we opt for the hypothesis that the variable identifying or restricting the contextual domain serves itself as SoP. A key difference between the BFSI constructions discussed in previous sections, on the one hand, and existentials, on the other, is that the contextual domain variable is an obligatory component of the existential construction. In fact, existentials have obligatory VS order and do not allow SV

counterparts (see Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina 2015: 139 for some apparent exceptions). Thus, strictly speaking, they are not subject inversion constructions, even though the pivot may exhibit patterns of subject behaviour (see Bentley 2013; 2017 for an in-depth discussions of this point).

Returning now to stage-level states, the existential *there* sentence constitutes a syntactic environment in which the DP takes narrow scope and the adjective in the coda can be read as a stage-level state, as is shown in (68).[12]

3.5 Typology and predictions

We have constrained our analysis of subject inversion to out of the blue announcements (i.e., BFSI), where the verb and the postverbal DP are discourse new, and there is no overt or covert topic. In these constructions, the need arises to identify the starting point of the predication or the situation about which the event is predicated (Klein 2008). We have proposed that if a thematic goal argument is available in the thematic grid of the verb, it can provide the information that is needed as the starting point of the predication. In this case, the aboutness requirement is satisfied by a thematic SoP. If a thematic goal argument is not available, the situation about which the event is predicated must be inferred. A non-thematic argument thus arises inferentially with the utterance, providing the situation about which the event is predicated. We have called this a situational SoP.

We have identified two verb classes which can take a thematic SoP in BFSI: speaker-oriented verbs of inherently directed motion (*arrive, enter, come in, return*, etc.) and a small group of activity verbs and activity-based semelfactives (*phone, knock, call*). Apart from the locative goal of these verbs, we have not identified any other thematic arguments that serve as silent SoPs in BFSI. Although the search for such arguments remains an issue for future research, we have noted that the two subtypes identified in our analysis contribute to the boundedness of the event. Source arguments do not play this role in event structure and we have claimed that they cannot serve as SoPs. We thus propose that thematic SoPs must be goal arguments.

The situational SoP is not part of the thematic grid of the verb. In fact, it is not selected by the verb, but rather inferred in the utterance situation. However, this SoP is sensitive to the event structure of the predicate. Specifically, it is only inferred when a bounded eventuality is predicated. The bounded eventualities that we have identified are events of quantized change (see §3.1) and events of non-quantized change for which a bound is inferred (see 3.2). In addition, we have claimed that existential constructions are bounded stative constructions, where an implicit contextual domain variable serves as SoP. The predicate classes identified and the relevant SoPs are illustrated and exemplified in Table 1.

We can now spell out our predictions on the acceptability of BFSI. Aside from existential constructions, which have obligatory VS order and an obligatory contextual domain variable serving as SoP, if a language allows BFSI at all, it will allow it with verbs of quantized change. These include verbs with a locative goal, which can be projected as an expressed argument in syntax, or take on the role of silent SoP, and verbs with a state goal, but no goal argument. A situational SoP is compatible with the latter type because of their inherent telicity. With verbs of non-quantized change, a bound must be inferred in order for an SoP to be added situationally. Therefore, those among these verbs that are based on closed-range adjectives lend themselves more readily to BFSI than those that are based on open-range adjectives. Nonetheless, a number of contextual clues can arise

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[12] A modifier within the pivot DP, instead, can be individual-level. For example, (68) can predicate the availability of guides in a particular context, or, alternatively, it can mean that that there exist guides who are helpful by nature. In the latter case, which is irrelevant to our purposes, the adjective is syntactically within the DP.

Table 1: Predicate classes and relevant types of SoP.

Predicate type	SoP type	Example
Quantized change (a) (speaker-oriented verbs of inherently directed motion)	thematic	*Sono entrati i clienti.* 'The clients have come in (here).'
Activities with locative goal argument	thematic	*Hanno telefonato i ragazzi.* 'The kids have phoned (here/us).'
Quantized change (b) (telic verbs with state-g)	situational	*Sono morti i soldati.* 'The soldiers have died.'
Non-quantized change (a) (non-telic verbs with goal inferred from adjectival base)	situational	*Si è svuotato il serbatoio.* 'The tank has become empty.'
Non-quantized change (b) (non-telic verbs with goal inferred from contextual clues)	situational	*Si è accorciata la gonna.* 'The skirt has become short.'
Existential *there*-sentence	contextual domain variable	*Ci sono guide disponibili.* 'There are guides available (here).'

from, say, properties of the theme DP and provide the necessary bound. As a result, a situational argument is inferred and BFSI is licensed. In general terms, activities and states are not found in genuine BFSI because they are inherently non-scalar and unbounded and, thus, they are not readily compatible with the inference of a situational SoP. However, the activities (and semelfactives) that have a locative or benefactive goal argument can be admitted in BFSI. We have suggested that the goal plays a key role in an inference of boundedness and hence in the licensing of BFSI.

It is our contention that these predictions are valid in those SVO languages in which VS order is not entirely free. In his study of word order in Romance, Leonetti (2017) claims that subject inversion is not free in all null-subject languages. Rather, null-subject languages exhibit different degrees of flexibility in allowing broad-focus interpretations of verb initial structures. Thus, Italian and Catalan only allow broad focus in VS sentences, but not in VOS or VSO sentences, whereas Spanish admits broad focus in VS and VOS/VSO alike. From this point of view, Spanish is closer to Latin than Italian and Catalan. As a result of diachronic change, the last two languages exhibit stricter associations between word order and specific information structure patterns.[13] Our study indicates that the information-structure restrictions discussed by Leonetti are inextricably related to event structure constraints. Thus, BFSI is not limited to intransitive (VS) structures as such, but rather to the verb initial structures that allow the Principle of Nonvacuous Predication to be satisfied. The fulfilment of this Principle depends on the relative suitability of the predicate to the types of SoP identified in this paper. The picture that emerges, therefore, is one where a distinction must be drawn between two types of broad focus: the Italian one, which is only licensed by the SoP discussed above, and a more permissive one. We will be able to flesh out this insight after we analyse the BFSI constructions syntactically.

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[13] Lahousse & Lamiroy (2012) claim that in some cases a broad focus interpretation is also allowed in VOS sentences in Italian. An example is given here.

(i)   Prende   il   telefono   il   direttore tecnico   Ross Brown.
       picks.up the phone   the director   technical Ross Brown
       'The technical director Ross Brown picks up the phone.'

Such examples are highly constrained in terms of style or register: they could perhaps occur in the live commentary of an event, but not as an out of the blue announcement. Accordingly, they do require some kind of implicit presupposition that could satisfy the aboutness requirement (Ion Giurgea, p.c., 18/05/2018, has suggested to us that this may well apply to broad focus VSO/VOS in Romanian, as well). We also note that the postverbal DP is syntactically heavy in this example: with a lighter DP the structure would be unacceptable.

4 The syntax of broad focus subject inversion

Our in-depth analysis of BFSI and our typology of SoPs fit squarely, and indeed can help further refine, an existing syntactic notion of SoP. Following Cardinaletti (2004), we assume that the preverbal field comprises of several projections for subject elements, including a designated position for the SoP, labelled SubjP. Cardinaletti convincingly argues that SubjP is a proper subject position within the inflectional domain and that subjects occurring in this position must be kept distinct from left dislocated subjects sitting in higher (topic) projections within the complementizer domain. Among the types of XP, other than grammatical subjects, that can occur in SubjP are the dative experiencers of psych-verbs (Belletti & Rizzi 1988) and of other unaccusative verbs (see *capitare* in (13) above), locative PPs, and the fronted predicates of inverse copular sentences (in the sense of Moro 1997). According to Cardinaletti (2004), sentences with an overt SoP correspond to categorical judgements, whereas sentences in which no SoP is overtly realized in SubjP can either be categorical statements whose SoP is anaphorically construed in the semantic component on the basis of the SoP of the previous utterance or, alternatively, they can be thetic sentences (Cardinaletti 2004: 148).

Similar observations have been made based on evidence from languages that are typologically different from Romance. Thus, Aissen (1999) draws a distinction between two subject positions in Tz'utujil, a Mayan language of the K'ichean branch. A higher syntactic position, surfacing in SVO order, is dedicated to the semantic or logical subject of the predication, whereas a lower position, surfacing in VOS order, is the position of the grammatical subject. Typical logical subjects are external possessors and affected arguments of various kinds, which, in Aissen's view, only occur as the semantic subject (viz. SoP) of categorical judgements.

While we agree that the SoP is relevant to the distinction between categorical and thetic judgements, we propose a subtle, but important, revision of the assumption that SoPs are only found in categorical statements. Before we propose this revision, we must discuss the thetic/categorical opposition further.

4.1 The Subject of Predication and the thetic/categorical opposition

In line with recent claims, we maintain that all subjects originate within the vP. We further assume, following Bianchi & Chesi (2014), that the subject of a thetic sentence stays within the vP, while the subject of a categorical structure must raise from its thematic position to a higher position. Semantically, the postverbal subject of thetic sentences is interpreted as part of the description of an event *within* the predicative nucleus of the clause. By contrast, the subjects of categorical statements are compositionally *external* to the predicative part of the syntactic tree (Kuroda 1972; 2005; Ladusaw 1994). A consequence of this distinction is that, regardless of definiteness, the postverbal DP of the thetic structure is not presuppositional, in the sense that it is part of an eventuality whose existence is being asserted. By contrast, a categorical structure first posits the existence of the preverbal DP and then predicates something about it. In this sense, the preverbal DP of a categorical judgement is presuppostional (Bianchi & Chesi 2014: 532):

(71) a. $[_{IP} \ldots (\exists) \ [vP \ldots DP_{[-presupp]} \ldots]]$ (thetic structure)
      b. $[_{IP} \ldots DP_{i[+presupp]} \ [_{vP} \ldots t_i \ldots]]$ (categorical structure)

With this distinction in the background, the crucial questions that we now address is the following. Is SubjP completely inert or inactive in thetic sentences with a postverbal DP? In such sentences, what is the predication about?

4.2 The silent Subject of Predication in SubjP

According to Cardinaletti (2004: 151), "it is fair to assume that in thetic sentences, no XP in the clause checks the subject-of-predication feature". Our analysis diverges from this position. In agreement with Bianchi & Chesi (2014), we assume that the distinction between categorical and thetic structures is dependent on the position of the thematic DP: raising a constituent from its thematic position to SubjP yields a categorical judgement, while in a thetic configuration the subject will stay in its base position (see below for some observations on non null-subject languages). However, for us, lack of movement of the DP to SubjP, and the impossibility to retrieve and identify the SoP anaphorically, on the basis of the previous discourse, do not entail that SubjP is inert. Rather, we claim that the silent thematic or situational SoP activate and occupy SubjP.[14] The goal SoP is a thematic argument and hence it moves to SubjP from its thematic position (cf. (72a)). The situational argument SoP, on the other hand, is merged directly in SubjP (cf. (72b)). In existential sentences, the pivot predicate is within a Small Clause and the pro-argumental proform moves to Infl due to its clitic status (Cruschina 2012; Bentley & Cruschina 2016; Bentley 2017; to appear). As a spell-out of the contextual domain variable, it is in a doubling relation with the SoP in SubjP (cf. (72c)).

(72)   a. $[_{SubjP} \text{ SoP}loc_i [_{TP} \text{T} + \text{V} \dots [_{vP} \text{ .. DP } t_i \dots]]]$
          b. $[_{SubjP} \text{ SoP}e [_{TP} \text{T} + \text{V} \dots [_{vP} \text{ .. DP } \dots]]]$
          c. $[_{SubjP} \text{ SoP}e_i [_{TP} \text{T} + ci_i + \text{V(be)} \dots [_{SC} t_i \text{ DP}]]]$

This analysis has the advantage of unifying the conditions that license BFSI with different predicate types. In this account, the silent SoP plays a fundamental role: it allows the argument DP to remain in its thematic position. This is the basic configuration that yields BFSI in intransitive predications.

   Two aspects of our proposal deserve further clarification: first, the characterization of the SoP with respect to the notion of topic, and, second, the status of the SoP vis-à-vis the EPP and other syntactic requirements associated with the notion of subject. Our notion of SoP undoubtedly resembles similar concepts that make reference to the notion of *topic* (e.g. Erteschik-Shir's 1997 *stage topic*, Klein's 2008 notion of the *topic situation*) and have been considered to be crucial to an understanding of subject inversion in Romance (Lahousse 2007; 2011; Giurgea 2017; 2018; Leonetti 2017). Although our analysis builds upon these approaches, we must differentiate here between SoPs and topics proper. To being with, topics are characterized by a connection to the previous discourse that is *a priori* excluded with the SoP of BFSI (in the sense of *bare* BFSI, see §1). Drawing on Pesetsky (1987), Rizzi (2005) defines the latter property in terms of D(iscourse)-linking. Being D-linked, topics, but not SoPs, are infelicitous in out-of-the-blue contexts. On the other hand, SoPs share with topics the *aboutness* property, namely, their being 'what the sentence is about', which in SVO languages guarantees a prominent – typically, initial – position within the sentence. Therefore, while aboutness and D-linking are necessary properties of topics, only aboutness characterizes SoPs, as shown in (73) (from Rizzi 2005: 212).

(73)   a.   Topic: [+ aboutness]   b.   SoP: [+ aboutness]
                      [+ D-linking]

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[14] Bianchi & Chesi (2014: 546) mention in passing the possibility that Pinto's (1997) covert locative argument may be in SubjP in free inversion. However, in their view, this yields a categorical structure. We argue that the null argument is in SubjP in a thetic structure.

Observe that Erteschik-Shir (1999: 124) does point out that the stage topic of an utterance can be overt or implicit. It is the latter type of stage topic that resembles our silent SoP. Similarly to what we propose for the situational SoP, in presentational sentences the implicit stage topic provides the spatio-temporal coordinates of the described event (Erteschik-Shir 1997: 26–27).

Along the same lines, Klein (2008) proposes that all utterances are evaluated with respect to a specific situation, which he labels *topic situation*. The topic situation can be identified externally (i.e., pragmatically) or linguistically (i.e., by means of overt linguistic material). As noted by Klein (2008: 290), his notion of topic situation is distinct from the traditional notion of topic, generally defined in terms of givenness or aboutness: "Under [his] approach, the 'topic' is not a person or an object – it is always a SITUATION. This makes it different from all other approaches […]. The topic is the situation about which the sentence says something." In this view, the spatio-temporal coordinates provided by the SoP in BFSI will suffice to identify the topic situation of the utterance.

It is also important to disentangle the requirement of a SubjP from other syntactic requisites typically associated with subjects. For Cardinaletti (2004), movement of the logical subject to SubjP takes place in order to check the subject-of-predication feature. The same requirement was subsequently formulated in terms of Subject Criterion, which must be satisfied at the syntax-semantics interface (see Rizzi 2005; 2006; Bianchi & Chesi 2014 for details). The Subject Criterion can be viewed as a restatement in current theory of Bianchi's (1993) Principle of Nonvacuous Predication, and we thus assume that the SoP in SubjP satisfies the Subject Criterion.

The presence of a SoP in SubjP is *in principle* orthogonal to the satisfaction of the EPP or the need to check Case and φ-features. In current theory these are associated with lower subject positions, and, in null-subject languages, can be checked covertly by a *pro* (Rizzi 1986 and subsequent work) or in a long distance fashion (Cardinaletti 2004: 151–152; Quarezemin & Cardinaletti 2017). Evidence in support of the claim that the SoP in SubjP is independent of agreement comes from the observation that not all overt constituents sitting in SubjP control agreement on the verb, as is clearly demonstrated by the experiencer of some unaccusatives (cf. (13b, 13b′)). An anonymous reviewer suggests that, in BFSI, the EPP is satisfied by the SoP itself, otherwise the fact that the construction is not available with all verbs remains unexplained. In our account, some verbs are not found in BFSI because of their lexical-aspectual properties, which are incompatible with the thetic structure with a silent SoP in SpecSubjP. At the same time, we propose that in the constructions analysed in this paper the EPP may be dispensed with or substituted by the Subject Criterion.[15] This proposal raises the question of how the subject requirements are satisfied in narrow focus. Postverbal subjects licensed under narrow focus are outside the scope of our discussion (see Pinto 1997; Belletti 2004). We note, however, that such structures are not constrained to particular lexical-semantic verb classes, which suggests that they are not thetic in the sense discussed above (cf. (72a–c)): the subject is not *in situ* and there is no SoP in SubjP. Rather, we assume with Cardinaletti (2004: 151) that the subject of predication is the one of the preceding context. As for the EPP, it can be replaced by the Subject Criterion, as is the case with BFSI.

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[15] For the similar view that there is no EPP feature triggering subject movement to preverbal position in null-subject Romance languages, see also Barbosa (1995) and Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (1998). According to their analysis, though, preverbal subjects in null-subject languages are in a high, discourse-related, position in the clausal spine. Our account is crucially different with respect to this point, in that we assume, together with Cardinaletti (2004) and in the spirit of Rizzi's (2005) Subject Criterion, that the movement of the subject to a preverbal position – or the presence of an SoP – is not triggered by a topic-feature but rather by the subject-of-predication requirement.

In non-null-subject languages, for example English, subjects tend to move to a preverbal position independently of the categorical/thetic opposition. For these languages, we can assume that subjects generally move to a preverbal subject position for independent syntactic reasons, such as the EPP requirement or the checking of Case and φ-features. In particular, Cardinaletti (2004) and Quarezemin & Cardinaletti (2017: 394) suggest that the subject may check Case and φ-features in SpecTP, and then the Subject Criterion in SpecSubjP.[16],[17]

4.3 Thetic and non-thetic broad focus subject inversion

In Section 3.5, we tentatively suggested that it was necessary to draw a distinction between two types of broad focus subject inversion: the Italian one, which is licensed by an SoP, and a more permissive one, which is found in Spanish and other Romance languages. We now propose that these two types are revealing of a distinction between thetic and, respectively, non-thetic broad focus. Italian BFSI is thetic, and hence it is subject to the event structure constraints that have been discussed. The intransitives that do not abide by these constraints can occur in broad focus, but the relevant structures exhibit SV order because they are not thetic, i.e., they do not have a silent SoP in SpecSubjP and VS as the predication in the vP. As for transitives, we explained earlier why unbounded ones, as well as transitives with an incremental theme, are incompatible with the kind of SoP that we have discussed in this work (see Note 11). We have not identified any thetic transitive predications in Italian. We thus assume that in broad focus, transitives have the subject DP is in SubjP. The case of Spanish and the other Romance languages that allow VOS/VSO order in broad focus requires careful examination of the interplay of event structure with syntax, which has to be left to future research. Thetic structures ought to be subject to event structure restrictions in these languages, as is the case with Italian, following the predictions made in Section 3.5. The grammaticality of VOS/VSO order in broad focus, on the other hand, must depend on independent aspects of the syntax or the discourse-syntax interface in these languages. Our main point remains that the languages that only admit thetic BFSI constrain this structure to particular predicate types.

5 Conclusion

In this paper we have addressed the issue of how broad focus subject inversion is licensed in constructions that have neither an overt nor a covert topic. In agreement with previous literature, we have claimed that a silent preverbal argument is key to the licensing of such bare broad-focus VS constructions. Following existing conventions, we called this the Subject of Predication (SoP). In the existing literature there is no agreement on whether the silent SoP is an argument selected by the verb or an event argument, whether inherent in the argument structure of the predicate or contextually added. We have identified

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[16] Even in this case, it has been shown that the preverbal subjects of thetic sentences semantically behave as if they were in their thematic position at LF, for instance with respect to reconstruction effects and their semantic interpretation (Bianchi & Chesi 2014).

[17] A note on locative inversion proper is in order. With this expression we refer to VS constructions featuring an overt locative phrase in the preverbal position. The locative constituent in these constructions has also been assumed to be related to SubjP and hence to the role of SoP – either directly in Cardinaletti (2004) or indirectly in Rizzi & Shlonksy (2006). Is the presence of an overt constituent in SubjP a sufficient condition for the sentence to qualify as categorical? On the one hand, consistently with our previous assumptions about the SubjP position, we want to attribute the role of SoP to the preverbal locative. Indeed, crosslinguistically, in locative inversion constructions the sentence-initial locative expression exhibits properties typical of subjects, while the inverted subject has been analysed by some as an object (Lambrecht 2000). On the other hand, these constructions have been treated as possible implementations of the presentational or thetic structure (Lambrecht 1994; 2000). If the latter assumption is correct, one should then assume that only subject DPs can be categorical subjects yielding categorical judgements, while locatives in SubjP, be them covert or overt, implement a thetic configuration, similarly to the situational SoPs.

two principal types of silent SoP: on the one hand, a thematic goal argument selected by the verb; for example, the locative goal of a subclass of verbs of motion, already identified as a component of VS constructions by Benincà (1988) and Tortora (1997; 2001; 2014); on the other hand, a non-thematic situational argument, which can only be inferred when a bounded eventuality is predicated. We have discussed theoretical and empirical arguments in support of the differentiation of the two types of silent SoP, and we have explained which predicate classes take which SoP, making predictions on the relative compatibility of different verb classes with a silent SoP, and hence with bare broad focus subject inversion.

Our predictions are meant to be valid for the null-subject SVO languages that allow broad focus in VS order and rule it out in VOS/VSO order (Leonetti 2017). With our study we have argued that this restriction is not purely syntactic, or pertaining to the discourse-syntax interface, but rather it is due to event structure constraints on thetic broad focus constructions. Following Bianchi (1993) and Bianchi & Chesi (2014), we have claimed that, in such constructions, the postverbal DP remains in its first-merged thematic position and, hence, is part of the predicative nucleus of the clause. We have claimed that, in order for this structure to be licensed, a silent SoP must occur in the syntactic position that Cardinaletti (2004) calls SubjP, satisfying Rizzi's (2005) Subject Criterion. The silent SoP only arises with specific types of bounded eventualities, which we analysed in detail in this article.

Abbreviations

DIM = diminutive, LOC = locative clitic, PF = existential preform, PL = plural, RFL = reflexive, SCL = subject clitic, SG = singular

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Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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