Fronting and *verum focus* in Spanish*

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There are a number of constructions in Spanish with fronting of a (non interrogative) constituent that do not correspond with clitic dislocation nor with contrastive focus. In such structures a variety of grammatical expressions may be fronted, from indefinite NPs (*Algo debe saber*) to demonstratives (*Eso me dijo*). Their interpretation is "emphatic".

We claim that fronting triggers association of focus with sentence polarity, i.e., 'verum focus'. In these constructions, which we label Verum Focus Fronting (VFF), there is no informational partition in the explicit content of the sentence: 'verum focus' is taken as narrow focus on polarity and the rest is taken as background. Both their emphatic value and their constrained distribution in discourse follow from this particular focus structure.

1.   Introduction

For Romance languages, it is usual to assume that constructions in which non-interrogative constituents are fronted fall into two different types: they are instances either

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of clitic left-dislocation or of contrastive focalisation. The two structures are illustrated in the examples (1) and (2):[1]

(1)   Spanish
       El libro, ya *lo he   terminado.*
       the book already CL have.PRS.1SG finished
       'The book, I have already finished (it).'

(2)   Spanish
       EL LIBRO *he   terminado (no los   artículos).*
       THE BOOK have.PRS.1SG finished   not the papers
       'I have finished THE BOOK (not the papers).'

In clitic dislocation constructions, the constituent that occurs at the leftmost periphery (*el libro* 'the book') is interpreted as a topic, and is co-referential with the resumptive clitic *lo*. The dislocated constituent is typically deaccented; a comma is usually written to mark off the dislocated constituent from the rest of the sentence, but this is merely a graphic convention and does not necessarily indicate that there should be any kind of pause (though the pause is always possible). Clitic dislocation has well known syntactic properties, such as iterativity and ability to occur both in root and in embedded sentences (see Cinque 1990; Zubizarreta 1998, 1999; Frascarelli 2000; Vallduví 2002; Anagnostopoulou 2006 for details).[2]

Contrastive focalisation, on the other hand, is characterised by emphatic stress (indicated by small capitals) on the fronted constituent, which is interpreted as a highlighted element taken from a contextually given set and excluding other alternative members of the set. Focalisation differs from clitic dislocation in a number of syntactic properties: there are no resumptive clitics, there is only one contrastive focus slot, and the construction shows all the typical features of operator-variable configurations, such as sensitivity to island contexts and weak cross-over effects (see Zubizarreta 1998, 1999; Szendrői 2006).

However, there are constructions that do not fit in well with any of these two categories. Some relevant examples are gathered under (3)–(5):[3]

(3)   a.   ***Nada*** *tengo   que añadir a lo que ya   dije   en su día.*
             nothing have.PRS.1SG to add   to it that already say.PST.1SG in its day
             'I have nothing to add to what I said at the time.'

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1.   From now on, fronted constituents will be highlighted in boldface.

2.   In the literature, it is usual to distinguish a further class of topic construction, namely 'hanging topic' (see Cinque 1983). Since the difference between 'ordinary' dislocated topics and hanging topics is not relevant for our current purposes, we will use the term 'clitic dislocation' in a very general sense, intending to cover both kinds of topics.

3.   The idiomatic English translations usually do not render the special, 'emphatic' flavour of the corresponding Spanish examples.

b. ***Algo** debe saber.*
something must.PRS.3SG know
'S/he must know something.'

c. ***Poco** te puedo decir.*
little you.OBL can.PRS.1SG say
'Little can I say to you.'

(4) a. ***Lo mismo** digo (yo).*
the same say.PRS.1SG (I)
'I say the same.'

b. ***Eso** creía ella.*
this believe.PST.3SG she
'That's what she thought.'

(5) *Dije que terminaría el libro, y **el libro** he*
say.PST.1SG that finish.COND.1SG the book and the book have.PRS.1SG
terminado.
finished
'I said that I would finish the book, and finish the book I did.'

These constructions seem to have "mixed" properties: on the one hand, they resemble clitic dislocations in that the fronted constituent does not bear any emphatic stress; but, at the same time, like in contrastive focalisation, the construction does not include any resumptive clitic.

The structures in (3)–(5) can be found not only in Spanish, but also in other Romance languages:[4]

(6) Italian

a. ***Qualcosa** avrà fatto, nelle vacanze.*
something have.FUT.3SG made in-the holidays
'S/he must have done something during the holidays.'

b. *...e **questo** disse anche il Sottosegretario.*
... and this   say.PST.3SG also   the Subsecretary
'... and so said also the Subsecretary.' (Cinque 1990)

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4. It is unclear whether French shows this kind of fronting. Some of the examples mentioned in Abeillé, Godard & Sabio (2008) could fit in the general pattern we are describing. These are examples from spoken French like

(i) *Dix-sept ans il a.*
ten-seven years he have.PRS.3SG
'Seventeen years he has.'

(ii) *Deux cigarettes j'ai fumé.*
two   cigarettes I-have.PRS.1SG smoked
'Two cigarettes I have smoked.'

(7) Catalan
   a. ***Algú*** *hi* *trobarás,* *a la casa.*
      someone there find.FUT.2SG at the house
      '(For sure), you will find someone at the house.'
   b. ***Pocs col·legues*** *hi* *ha* *convidat, a la festa.*
      few colleagues there have.PRS.3SG invited to the party
      'S/he invited few colleagues to the party.' (Quer 2002)

(8) Portuguese
   Muitos libros *lhe* *ofreceu* *o* *Pedro!*
   many books him.OBL offer.PST.3SG the Pedro
   'Pedro offered him many books!' (Ambar 1999: 42)

Therefore, the examples in (3)–(8) suggest that there is a third kind of fronting, with a number of specific properties that have to be accounted for in an adequate way. Surprisingly, in the previous literature no general analysis is provided, and only some partial and fragmentary accounts can be found. For Spanish, Zubizarreta (1998) merely mentions examples like the ones in (3) as cases of 'emphasis', with no further explanation. Cinque (1990) deals with the Italian data in (6a) as cases of 'bare quantifiers as operators', and offers a different analysis for the examples in (6b), which are considered as instances of 'resumptive preposing'. Quer (2002) and Vallduví (1993) treat Catalan examples such as those in (7) as instances of 'quantifier fronting', and Gallego (2007) refers to them as 'mild focalization'. Ambar (1999) and Barbosa (2001) emphasise the 'evaluative' nature of examples like (8).

We believe that a more detailed characterisation is needed to account for all the grammatical and discourse properties of this third class of fronted constituents and the constructions in which they occur. In this paper, we will try to answer the main questions that arise, namely, how these structures can be characterised from a syntactic point of view, and how they are interpreted. More precisely, our aim is to provide a unified account for the whole range of examples in (3)–(8): we will argue that, despite their obvious differences, they can all be explained under a single analysis based on the information-structure status of the entire construction. Moreover, we will show that the analysis can be further extended to cover a wider domain of constructions.

The organisation of the paper is as follows. In Section 2, we will examine the grammatical properties of fronting, and review the previous literature. Section 3 presents the core assumptions of our proposal, which is built on the information structure status of the constructions under examination. In Section 4, we will consider the consequences of this proposal for interpretation and contextual adequacy. An extension of the analysis to other well known constructions is included in Section 5. Finally, our main findings will be summarised in Section 6.

2. A new class of fronting

2.1 Grammatical properties

The grammatical properties of the constructions in (3)–(5) indicate that these are not clitic dislocation structures. To begin with, resumptive clitics are systematically ruled out, as shown by the ungrammaticality of the sequences in (9):[5]

(9) a. ***Nada*** *(*lo)* *tengo* *que añadir a lo que ya*
         nothing (*CL) have.PRS.1SG to add to it that already
         dije *en su día.*
         say.PST.1SG in its day
     b. ***Algo*** *(*lo)* *debe* *saber.*
         something (*CL) must.PRS.3SG know
     c. ***Poco*** *te* *(*lo)* *puedo* *decir.*
         little you.OBL (*CL) can.PRS.1SG say
     d. ***Lo mismo*** *(*lo)* *digo.*
         the same (*CL) say.PRS.1SG

In other cases, the occurrence of the clitic does not result in bare ungrammaticality, but changes the structure and the interpretation of the whole construction into that of clitic dislocation:

(10) a. ***Eso*** *lo creía* *ella.*
         this CL believe.PST.3SG she
         'This, she believed (it).'

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5. The conditions governing clitic doubling can vary from dialect to dialect (cf. Suñer 1989). We are considering present day Peninsular Spanish only. We exclude fronted datives, for which – as noted by the reviewer – clitic resumption is compulsory for independent reasons and common to all Spanish dialects. Another point raised by the reviewer, and certainly worth a more accurate discussion, is the fact that clitic doubling is possible when fronting the universal quantifier *todo* 'all'. The following examples were mentioned by her/him:

(i)   ***Todito*** *te* *(lo) perdono,* *menos eso.*
      all.DIM you.OBJ (CL) forgive.PRS.1SG, but that
      'All I can forgive but that.'

(ii) ***Todo*** **(lo) tienes* *que hacer a tu gusto.*
      all *(CL) have.PRS.2SG to do at your pleasure
      'You have to do everything as you like it.'

The case of *todo* does not invalidate our generalisation concerning the absence of resumption in this kind of fronting: the presence of the clitic in (i) and (ii) is due to the particular conditions of clitic doubling with *todo* (see Suñer 1988), and not to the basic features of the construction.

b.   *... y   **el libro** lo he   terminado.*
      and the book CL have.PRS.1SG finished
    '... and the book, I finished (it).'

In addition, in the examples in (3)–(5) there is an adjacency requirement between the fronted constituent and the verb – a condition that does not hold for clitic dislocation structures, but is in force in interrogatives and focus movement; consider the contrast between (11)–(12), which shows that the subject cannot appear in a preverbal position, on the one hand, and the clitic dislocations in (13), where such requirement is not in force, on the other:

(11)   a.   ***Nada***   *tengo*   *yo que añadir a lo que ya*   *dije*   *en*
         nothing have.PRS.1SG I   to   add   to it that already say.PST.1SG in
         su día.
         its day
         'I have nothing to add to what I said in due time.'
    b.   ***Algo***   *debe*   *saber ella.*
         something must.PRS.3SG know she
         'S/he must know something.'
    c.   ***Poco*** *te*   *puedo*   *yo decir.*
         little you.OBL can.PRS.1SG I   say
         'Little can I say to you.'
    d.   ***Lo   mismo*** *digo*   *yo.*
         the same   say.PRS.1SG I
         'So say I.'
    e.   ***Eso*** *creía*   *ella.*
         this believe.PST.3SG she
         'That's what she thought.'

(12)   a.   *****Nada***   *yo tengo*   *que añadir a lo que ya*   *dije*
          nothing I   have.PRS.1SG to   add   to it that already say.PST.1SG
         en su día.
         in its day
    b.   *****Algo***   *ella debe*   *saber.*
          something she must.PRS.3SG know
    c.   *****Poco*** *yo te*   *puedo*   *decir.*
          little I   you.OBL can.PRS.1SG say
    d.   *****Lo   mismo*** *yo digo.*
          the same   I   say.PRS.1SG

(13)   a.   ***Esto,*** *yo lo tengo*   *que añadir.*
         this   I   CL have.PRS.1SG to   add
         'This, I have to add (it).'

    b.   ***Estas cosas,*** *ella las debe*   *saber.*
        these things she CL must.PRS.3SG know
        'These things she must know them.'

The intonation of the sentences in (3)–(5) is not the same as that of clitic dislocation constructions either: there is no deaccentuation of the fronted constituent, nor is it possible to have a pause between it and the rest of the structure. Finally, indefinite quantifiers, such as *nada* 'nothing', *algo* 'something' and *poco* 'little', can hardly be interpreted as topics (i.e., as the part of the proposition that is being talked about), and are indeed incompatible with clitic dislocation; the usual paraphrases with 'As for...,' or 'Speaking of...' are excluded:

(14) ****En cuanto a nada,*** *(lo) tengo*   *que añadir.*
       as for   nothing (CL) have-1SG to add

Taken together, all these facts show that the structures in (3)–(5) are not cases of clitic dislocation.

    There are, on the other hand, reasonable grounds for thinking that these structures are not cases of contrastive focalisation either (Quer 2002: 257–258). It is true that they share a significant number of features with them, such as the lack of resumptive clitics, subject-verb inversion, as illustrated in (11)–(12), and other defining properties such as sensitivity to islands, as shown in (15):

(15) a. ****Algo***   *tengo*   [*la sospecha de que debe*   *saber*].
         something have.PRS.1SG the suspicion of that must.PRS.3SG know
      b. ****Poco*** *hay*   [*gente que te*   *pueda*   *decir...*].
         little there.is people who you.OBL can.SBJV.3SG say

However, two crucial differences still remain. The first one has to do with intonation: the sentences in (3)–(5) always lack emphatic stress on the fronted constituent. The second one concerns the interpretation: while focalisation is the way to express contrastive focus, the fronted element in (3)–(5) does not indicate that the fronted element should be singled out from a discourse set of competing alternatives, and in fact cannot co-occur with an explicit mention of the discarded alternative:

(16) a. *Nada*   *tengo*   *que añadir, (*no algo).*
         nothing have.PRS.1SG to add   not something
         'Nothing more can be added (*not something).'
      b. *Algo*   *debe*   *saber, (*no nada).*
         something must.PRS.3SG know   not nothing
         '(There) must be something she knows (*not nothing).'
      c. *Poco* *te*   *puedo*   *decir, (*no bastante).*
         little you.OBL can.PRS.1SG say   not a-lot
         'There is little I can tell you (*not lots).'

    d. ***Lo mismo** digo,*   *(*no otra   cosa).*
        the same   say.PRS.1SG   not another thing
        'I say the same (*not something else).'

    e. *Dije   que terminaría   el libro,*
        say.PST.1SG that finish.COND.1SG the book
        'I said I'd finish the book,

        *y **el libro** he   terminado, (*no el   artículo).*
        and the book have.PRS.1SG finished,   not the paper
        and finish the book I did (*not the paper).'

Therefore, from a syntactic point of view, the form of the examples in (3)–(5) is basically that of focalisation; there are substantial differences, however, regarding the intonation pattern, their interpretation and their discourse functions, which are clearly diverse, so it has to be concluded that these must be cases of a different construction.

    The previous considerations exclude the possibility of analysing and interpreting the constructions in (3)–(5) as instances of clitic dislocation or focalisation. One could argue that there is still an additional possibility that we have not taken into account: that of regarding the fronted element as an informative (non-contrastive) focus. There are in fact some Romance varieties that resort to fronting as a means of marking new information. This is the case of Sicilian, Sardinian and Triestino, among Italian dialects:[6]

(17) Sicilian
      – *Chi scrivisti   airi?*
        what write.PST.2SG yesterday
      – ***N'articulu** scrissi.*
        a paper   write.PST.1SG
      '– What did you write yesterday?
      – A paper (I wrote).'

(18) Sardinian
      ***Custu libru** appo   lessu.*
      this   book have.PRS.1SG read
      'I have read this book.' (Jones 1988: 185)

In (17) and (18) the fronted elements represent the 'narrow focus', i.e., the new information that answers a previous question. However, it is quite clear that this is not the case in Spanish either: the examples in (3)–(5) could not be used to answer a question, and no element in the sentence can be assigned a 'narrow focus' reading. In Spanish, as in Italian, Catalan and French, it is impossible to place the informative focus of a sentence in the left periphery, as shown by the oddness of the Spanish dialogues in (19):

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6. See Cruschina (2006) for Sicilian, and Jones (1993) and Mensching & Remberger (in press) for Sardinian. A similar pattern is found in Czech, according to Lenertová & Junghanns (2007).

(19) a.   – *¿Qué   me   puedes   decir?*
              what   me.OBL can.PRS.2SG say
           – *#{Nada / eso}   te   puedo   decir.*
              {nothing / this} you.OBL can.PRS.1SG say
           '– What can you tell me?
           – #{Nothing / this} I can tell you.'
      b.   – *¿Qué   has   terminado?*
              what   have.PRS.2SG finished
           – *#El   libro he   terminado.*
              the   book have.PRS.1SG finished
           '– What have you finished?
           – #The book I have finished.'

The constructions we are examining definitely cannot be used in this way, i.e., as introducing new information as an answer to a *wh*-question.[7] The interpretation as an informative focus is thus excluded for Spanish.

   We have, then, examined the main grammatical properties of the constructions in (3)–(5). Nothing has been said till now about a crucial issue: What kind of constituents can be fronted? The examples that appear in the scarce literature on the topic are always argumental nominal expressions (cf. the examples in (3)–(8)). Direct object NPs are indeed the fronted constituents in the core examples of the construction under

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7.   The reviewer claims that Spanish can apparently express informative focus by leftward movement too, in the light of examples like the following dialogue:

      – *¿Y   qué   te   han   traído   a ti?*
         And   what   you.OBJ have.PRS.3PL brought to you.OBL?
      'And what did they bring to you?'
      – *UNAS ZAPATILLAS   me   han   traído.*
         SLIPPERS   I.OBJ have.PRS.3PL brought
      'A pair of slippers they brought me.'

The intonational contour would be the typical one in contrastive focus; the fronted phrase does not express any contrast, but carries the new information requested by the previous question. In our view, this is still a case of contrastive focalisation and represents a marked way to convey the additional idea that the new piece of information is surprising or unexpected, i.e., the example constitutes a case of contrastive focus used for the expression of informative focus. Such a strategy seems to be much more natural in Italian (cf. Brunetti this volume), in examples like the following one:

      – *Che   cosa   hanno   dato   al   vincitore?*
         What   thing have.PRS.3PL given   to.the   winner?
      'What did they give to the winner?'
      – *UNA   MEDAGLIA gli   hanno   dato.*
         A   MEDAL   he.OBL have.PRS.3PL given
      'They gave him A MEDAL.'

examination. However, it is not difficult to find cases of fronting with different syntactic categories and grammatical relations, as shown in the examples in (20)–(22):

(20)   Adjective Phrases

a.   – *Así que eres   de   Sevilla...*
     so that be.PRS.2SG from Seville...
     – **Sevillano** *soy,   sí señor.*
     from.Seville be.PRS.1SG yes sir
     '– So you are from Seville…
     – Sevillian I am, yes sir.'

b.   **Muy harto** *debe   estar para contestar de esa forma.*
     very fed.up must.PRS.3SG be to   answer of that way
     'Very fed up indeed he must be to answer you like that.'

(21)   Adverbials

a.   **Pronto** *te   has   cansado, ¿eh?*
     soon   you.OBL have.PRS.2SG got.tired
     '(So) soon you have tired yourself out, haven't you?'

b.   **Ahí** *lo   tienes.*
     there it.OBJ have.PRS.2SG
     'There you have it.'

(22)   Prepositional Phrases

a.   **Con la Iglesia** *hemos   topado.*[8]
     with the Church have.PRS.1PL bumped
     'The Church we have come across.'

b.   **De poco** *te   servirá   quejarte ahora.*
     of little you.OBL serve.FUT.3SG complain now
     'Little good will it do you to complain now.'

The grammatical properties of the constructions illustrated in these examples are not different from those described for the examples in (3)–(5). Any adequate account of this new kind of fronting must cover the whole range of data.[9]

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8.   As the reviewer points out, this example "is attributed to Cervantes, although what the genial author actually wrote is just *Con la iglesia hemos dado, Sancho* (*Quijote*, II, 9, p. 696 in Rico's 1998 edition), with no capital in *iglesia*, since a real, material church is meant in the passage". In the course of time both the main verb (from *dar (con)* 'to find' to *topar* 'to hit against something') and the nature of the church (from a building to a spiritual organization) have changed. The expression is nowadays used to convey that something meets a formidable obstacle.

9.   As can be observed in the examples, fronting can affect both arguments and adjuncts. Most of our data contain fronted arguments, mainly because the interpretive effects of fronting somehow dissolve with adjuncts, in particular with locative and temporal adjuncts. Such an asymmetry is probably related to the attraction of informational focus by adjuncts. This is what

The basic syntactic properties of the constructions in (3)–(5) and the equivalent examples in other Romance languages that we have examined so far can thus be provisionally summarised as follows:

–   They are operator-variable structures (no resumptive clitics, sensitivity to islands, weak-crossover effects).
–   They display subject-verb inversion (with the corresponding requirement of adjacency of the fronted constituent and the verb).
–   They cannot be considered as cases of focus movement (neither contrastive focalisation, nor informational focus fronting).
–   They involve different syntactic categories.

2.2   Some previous accounts

Some of these syntactic properties had already been discussed in Benincà (1988) and Cinque (1990) for Italian constructions like (23):

(23)   a.   ***Qualcosa*** *farò*   *(non preoccuparti).*
         something do.FUT.1SG not   worry
         'Something I will do (don't worry).'
       b.   ***Qualcuno*** *troverò*   *di sicuro, per questo compito.*
         someone find.FUT.1SG of sure   for this   task
         'Someone I will find surely for this task.'

Cinque (1990: 74) states that bare quantifiers like *qualcosa* 'something' and *qualcuno* 'someone' in left-dislocated positions qualify as proper operators that are able to bind an empty category as a variable in argument position – the object position in (23). As a consequence, such operators do not require that a clitic be inserted to identify the empty category: this would account for the absence of a resumptive clitic. In contrast, according to Cinque, quantified NPs fail to qualify as operators when they appear in left-dislocated positions, and thus require resumptive clitics, as shown in (24):

(24)   Italian
       Qualche sbaglio, *ogni tanto,* *(lo) fa*   *anche Gianni.*
       some   mistake   every such *(it) make.PRS.3.SG also   Gianni
       'Some mistake now and then, even Gianni makes it.'

Therefore, in Cinque's analysis bare quantifiers can be base-generated in a left-dislocated position (i.e., they can occupy such position without having been moved there),

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happens in polar interrogatives; for example, an interrogative like *Did she kill him with a gun?* tends to be interpreted as *Is it with a gun that she killed him?* How adjunct fronting differs from argument fronting is an issue that we will not pursue here.

but due to their operator nature, they display certain *wh*-movement properties, such as the absence of resumption.

Though the basic insights in Cinque's (1990) analysis are right, we think that there still remain several problems. First of all, Cinque is not clear about which bare quantifiers behave like operators in 'fronting without resumption' constructions. Quer (2002) points out that strong quantifiers like *all* or *both* are incompatible with this kind of fronting, and in fact most of our examples involve weak quantifiers: probably, not all quantifiers behave as operators.[10]   Second, Cinque is not explicit either with respect to the interpretation of the fronted constituents: Are they topics, or foci? He does not really address this issue, but he seems to maintain that bare quantifiers occupy the same position as left-dislocated topics – a claim we do not support, as shown in the previous section. In addition, there are some data that seem to challenge his predictions: as rightly pointed out by Quer (2002), quantified NPs (which according to Cinque are not operators) can however appear in a fronted position without requiring a resumptive clitic, at least in Spanish and Catalan:

(25) a. Spanish
        Bastante trabajo *tengo*   *ya.*
        enough   work   have.PRS.1SG already
        'Enough work I have already.'
     b. Catalan
        Pocs col·legues *hi*   *ha*   *convidat.*
        few   colleagues   there have.PRS.3SG invited
        'He invited few colleagues.'

This suggests that the crucial factor is not the contrast between bare quantifiers and quantified, complex NPs. A different explanation should be offered for the acceptability of bare and complex quantified expressions when fronted. We will not deal with this issue here, but the key notions probably are the compatibility of quantified NPs with a topic interpretation, and the possibility of assigning them a non-specific / non-referential interpretation – the only one that indefinite quantifiers can receive in fronting constructions (see Leonetti 2009 for further details). In any case, our claim is that 'fronting without resumption' is always an instance of (a particular kind of) A-bar movement; the nature of the landing site corresponding to this kind of movement is outside the limits of this paper.

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10. The constraint invoked by Quer (2002) makes 'fronting without resumption' a Definiteness Effect context. We believe that there is no real restriction against definiteness or strong quantifiers: they are simply less acceptable in this type of fronting, unless certain conditions are met (for instance, the availability of an immediate antecedent for the definite expression; cf. Sections 2.3. and 4.3). It seems that it is the connection between (non)specificity and focus structure, instead of definiteness, what is at stake in these cases. We will not pursue this issue further here.

Benincà (1988: 141–145) and Cinque (1990: 86–94) offered not only accurate descriptions of quantifier fronting in Italian, but very interesting remarks on another construction, which they dubbed *Resumptive Preposing* (*Anteposizione anaforica* in Benincà 1988). Their examples are reproduced in (26):

(26)   Italian
   a.   ***La   stessa proposta** fece   poi   il   partito di maggioranza.*
        the   same   proposal   make.PST.3SG then the   party   of majority
        'Then the majority party made THE SAME PROPOSAL.'
   b.   *...e   **questo** disse   anche il   Sottosegretario.*
         and this   say.PST.3SG also   the Subsecretary
        '... and so said also the Subsecretary.'
   c.   ***Allo   stesso modo** si   comportò   suo figlio.*
        to.the same   way   CL behave.PST.3SG his   son
        'In the same way, his son behaved.'

Two properties of Resumptive Preposing are clearly salient: on the one hand, we have again fronting without resumption, but involving mostly definite NPs instead of quantified NPs; on the other hand, the examples in (26) obey very strict conditions of use: as Cinque (1990: 87) notices, "the fronted phrase must either directly resume an identical phrase in the immediately preceding discourse or be inferentially linked to such a phrase". The presence of demonstratives or lexical items such as *stesso* 'same' in the examples is clearly related to the anaphoric nature of Resumptive Preposing. In systematic contrast to clitic left-dislocation, Resumptive Preposing shows every diagnostic of *wh*-movement: the fronted constituent has to be adjacent to the verb, which triggers subject-verb inversion, and it is incompatible with any other instance of *wh*-movement such as, for instance, Focus movement:

(27)   Italian
       *AI   NOSTRI COLLEGHI **le   stesse cose** ha   detto il
       to.the our   colleagues the same   things have.PRS.3SG said   the
       presidente.
       president

Although Benincà (1988: 142) points out that the examples in (26) are essentially of the same type as those of quantifier fronting, Cinque (1990) prefers to classify them as separate cases: according to him, Resumptive Preposing is actually a case of A-bar movement, while quantifier preposing seems to be a special case of left dislocation with operator-variable properties.

We believe that, from a syntactic point of view, there is no justification in keeping the two constructions separate and that all cases of non-contrastive fronting without resumption are essentially the same – here we depart from Quer (2002) and Cinque (1990). If this is true, there should be an independent way of accounting for the strict pragmatic conditions that hold for Resumptive Preposing. In fact, we will try to show

in Section 4 that such an account is feasible and can be built on the basis of the interaction between the syntax of this kind of fronting and the nature of the fronted phrase. We will argue that it is not necessary to distinguish Quantificational Fronting from Resumptive Preposing, because they are simply instances of a more general phenomenon: this move will have the obvious advantage of capturing their common features and avoiding the multiplication of different specific constructions.

2.3   Contextual restrictions and 'emphatic' interpretation

It is likely that fronting of definites and fronting of indefinites have not been considered as instances of the same construction due to the particularly salient restrictions mentioned in the previous section and that have to do with the need for some sort of anaphoric dependence. This is a restriction that does not affect the structures with fronted indefinites, which fit into a greater range of contexts. We want to argue that the syntactic and semantic properties of the construction are always the same and that the contextual restrictions that govern their acceptability in discourse can be explained as a result of the interaction between the semantics of the construction and the specific properties of definites and indefinites.

The idea that indefinites are not subject to the same contextual restrictions that are in force for definites does not mean, of course, that constructions with fronted indefinites are free from any contextual constraint. It is important to bear in mind that fronting is always optional, in the sense that the absence of fronting does not result in ungrammaticality; nevertheless, it has remarkable interpretive effects, as already shown with respect to the inadequacy of the answers in (19). Now, a comparison between the examples with fronting, on the one hand, and the corresponding examples without fronting, on the other, is in order to shed some light on the nature of such semantic effects. Consider the minimal pairs in (28):

(28) a.   {*Alguna cosa/algún ruido*} *debiste   oír.* /
            {something/ some   noise} must.PST.2SG hear
            Debiste   oír   {alguna cosa/algún ruido}.
            must.PST.2SG hear {something/some noise}
            'You must have heard {something/some noise}.'
      b.   ***Bastante   trabajo*** *tengo   ya.* /
            enough   work   have.PRS.1SG already
            Tengo   ya   bastante trabajo.
            have.PRS.1SG already enough   work
            'I have already enough work.'
      c.   ***Nada***   *tengo   que añadir.* / *No tengo   nada   que añadir.*
            nothing have.PRS.1SG to add   not have.PRS.1SG nothing to add
            'Nothing more have I to add. / I have nothing more to add.'

d. ***De poco*** *te*   *servirá.* /   *Te*   *servirá*   *de poco.*
of   little   you.ᴏʙʟ serve.ꜰᴜᴛ.3ꜱɢ   you.ᴏʙʟ serve.ꜰᴜᴛ.3ꜱɢ   of little
'Little use will this be to you / It will be of little use to you.'

e. *Pues **a eso** me refiero.* /   *Pues me refiero*   *a eso.*
so   to this ᴄʟ   refer.ᴘʀꜱ.1ꜱɢ so   ᴄʟ   refer.ᴘʀꜱ.1ꜱɢ to this
'Well that is what I'm talking about. / Well I'm talking about that.'

f. ***Por algo***   *será.* /   *Será*   *por algo.*
for   something   be.ꜰᴜᴛ.3ꜱɢ   be.ꜰᴜᴛ.3ꜱɢ for   something
'There must be ꜱᴏᴍᴇ reason for it. / There must be some reason for it.'

The difference produced by fronting is quite subtle, does not affect truth conditions, and is certainly difficult to grasp on intuitive grounds. Nevertheless, speakers agree in considering the version with fronting in some sense 'stronger', 'more marked' and 'emphatic', with respect to the alternative version with canonical order. 'Affective' and 'evaluative' are terms that usually emerge in the literature for the characterisation of fronting too (cf. Ambar 1999). It is well known that these are loose notions, not easy to define. However, they have been useful in grammatical description, and it is worth to look for an adequate way to cast them in more precise terms.

A first source of evidence for a linguistic treatment of 'emphasis' comes from the fact that the version with fronting shows in fact a more constrained distribution in discourse. Take, for example, the minimal pair in (28a). If inserted in a dialogue like (29), both sentences (with and without fronting) are equally acceptable:

(29)   A: – *Yo no oí nada.*
      B: – *Pues tú estabas allí.* {***Alguna cosa** debiste oír. / Debiste oír alguna cosa.*}
          '– I didn't hear anything.
          – Well you were there. {You must have heard SOMETHING / You must have heard something.}'

On the contrary, if inserted in a different context, like the one in (30), only the sentence with the canonical word order sounds natural:

(30)   A: – *No sé por qué, pero hoy me he despertado a las cinco de la mañana…*
          '– I don't know why but I woke up at five o'clock this morning…'
      B: – {*Debiste oír algún ruido.* / #***Algún ruido** debiste oír.*}
          '– You must have heard some noise. / #You must have heard SOME noise.'

In the context introduced by A's utterance, the fronting construction is no longer felicitous, so this difference has to be related to the way in which fronting drives the interpretation and the connection to the previous discourse.

Let's look at a different minimal pair. Imagine that speaker B has just launched a business.

(31)   A: – *¿Qué tal te va el nuevo negocio?*
        B: – *Bien.* {*Tengo ya bastante trabajo.* / #***Bastante trabajo*** *tengo ya.*}
              '– How's your new business going?
              – Fine. I have quite a lot of work now. / #I already have ᴇɴᴏᴜɢʜ work
              (I have enough work as it is).'

Here, in B's reply the sentence with the canonical word order reinforces the idea that business is going well and having a lot of work is presented as a positive outcome. The version with fronting, on the other hand, is clearly odd in this context, because it diverts the interpretation towards the negative consequences of having a lot of work, so it sounds rather like a complaint, which would not fit in with the previous positive response *Bien*. The version with fronting instead would be adequate in a totally different situation, for instance, one in which B has been offered additional work and wishes to communicate that s/he has already too much work to do and s/he cannot take on any more.

The same remarks about the 'emphatic' flavour of these constructions extend to the interpretation of sentences with fronted definites, for example, in the contrast between the two versions of (28e). Notwithstanding, when the fronted constituent is a definite NP, the use of the construction is subject to additional constraints. In order to analyse them, two main classes of definite expressions have to be distinguished: on the one hand, non-lexical, anaphoric, pronominal definites (the cases of Resumptive Preposing with demonstratives and expressions like *lo mismo* 'the same'); on the other hand, lexical definites, i.e., definite descriptions and proper names (such as the example in (5)).

As for non-lexical definites, it has been claimed (see Cinque's quote above) that they require an explicit linguistic antecedent. The requirement of an antecedent is, however, a general property of pronominals, which is totally independent from fronting; so, this fact is not to be taken as a significant feature of fronting constructions. Therefore, we have to establish in a more detailed way what the contextual restrictions are that operate on structures with fronted definites.

Let's begin by considering the examples in (4), repeated here as (32) for convenience, in which 'neuter' forms like *lo mismo* 'the_same.ɴᴇᴜ' and *eso* 'this.ɴᴇᴜ' occur:

(32)   a.   ***Lo   mismo*** *digo*   *(yo).*
              the   same   say.ᴘʀs.1sɢ (I)
              'I say the same.'
        b.   ***Eso*** *creía*   *ella.*
              this believe.ᴘsᴛ.3sɢ   she
              'That's what she thought.'

In (32) the speaker uses the anaphoric NP to retrieve an antecedent, which can be any previously mentioned proposition. Apart from this requirement, which is an obvious consequence of the pronominal nature of the NPs, there are no further specific con-

textual restrictions due to fronting. So, for example, (32a) can be uttered as a reply to a previous turn in which the interlocutor has put forward his opinion on a given topic.

Things seem to be more complex when non-neuter anaphoric pronominals are involved, such as *ese* 'this.MASC one' and *esa* 'this.FEM one', which can pick antecedents referring to human entities. Consider the example in (33):

(33) (*Sí, sí,*) ***a   esa   vimos.***
      yes yes to this.FEM see.PST.1PL
      'Yes, yes, that's the one we saw.'

To be adequate in discourse, the example in (33) has to find not only an accessible feminine antecedent for the pronominal *esa*, but also a sort of "antecedent" for the whole proposition in which the fronted constituent appears; put in other words, the whole proposition has to be evoked in the previous discourse, as in the following dialogue:

(34) A: – *Pues el otro día vimos a esa actriz que hacía de hermana de la protago-*
           nista en la película…
      B: – *Pero ¿cuál? ¿esa a la que entrevistaban ayer?*
      A: – *Sí, sí, **a esa** vimos.*
          '– The other day we saw that actress who was the main character's sister
          in the film…
          – But which one? The one they interviewed yesterday?
          – Yes, yes, THAT's the one we saw.'

In the case of fronted lexical definites, there is also a strong requirement that the propositional content has been made accessible in the immediate context. Thus, a sentence like (35), uttered out of the blue, with no connection to any previous relevant information, is quite difficult to contextualise:

(35) ᵀ***El   libro** he   terminado.*
        the book have.PRS.1SG finished

The example in (35) is not adequate as introducing new information either, as shown in (36):

(36) A: –*¿Qué   hiciste   ayer?*
           what do.PST.2SG yesterday
          'What did you do yesterday?'
      B: –#***El   libro** terminé.*
           the   book finish.PST.1SG
          'I finished the book.'

But once an adequate context is supplied, like the one in (5) – repeated as (37) –, in which the propositional content is previously introduced, it sounds perfectly natural:

(37) *Dije   que terminaría   el libro,*
      say.PST.1SG that finish.COND.1SG the book
      *y   **el libro** he   terminado.*
      and the book have.PRS.1SG finished
      'I said that I would finish the book, and finish the book I did.'

Consider now the following set of examples:

(38) a. *Tenía   que leerse   el Quijote, y **el Quijote** se leyó.*
          have.PST.3SG to   read.CL the *Quijote* and the *Quijote* CL read.PST.3SG
          'S/he had to read the *Quijote* and read the *Quijote* s/he did.'
      b. *#Tenía   que leerse   el Quijote, y **el Quijote***
           have.PST.3SG to   read.CL the *Quijote* and the *Quijote*
          tradujo.
          translate.PST.3SG
          #'S/he had to read the *Quijote* and translate the *Quijote* s/he did.'
      c. *#Tenía   que leerse   una novela de Cervantes,*
           have.PST.3SG to   read.CL a   novel of Cervantes
          *y   **el Quijote** se leyó.*
          and the *Quijote*   CL read.PST.3SG
          #'S/he had to read a novel by Cervantes and read the *Quijote* s/he did.'
      d. *#Tenía   que leerse   la novela más famosa de Cervantes,*
           have.PST.3SG to   read.CL the novel   most famous of Cervantes
          *y   **el Quijote** se leyó.*
          and the Quijote   CL read.PST.3SG
          #'S/he had to read Cervantes' most famous novel,
          and read the *Quijote* s/he did.'
      e. *#Tenía   que leerse   el Quijote, y   **La regenta** se leyó.*
           have.PST.3SG to   read.CL the *Quijote*, and *La regenta* CL read.PST.3SG
          #'S/he had to read the *Quijote* and read *La Regenta* s/he did.'
      f. *Tenía   que leerse   el Quijote, y   se leyó   La regenta.*
          have.PST.3SG to   read.CL the *Quijote*   and CL read.PST.3SG *La regenta*
          'S/he had to read the *Quijote* and s/he read *La regenta*.'

Only (38a), where the construction with fronting literally reproduces the words in the
first sentence, is an acceptable sequence. Examples (38b–d) show that no deviation
from this condition is allowed if the structure is to fit in adequately; neither the entail-
ment relation holding between *una novela de Cervantes* and *el Quijote*, nor even the
coreferentiality between *la novela más famosa de Cervantes* and *el Quijote*, are enough
to license the second sentence. The contrast between (38e–f) indicates that the condi-

tion on the previous mention affects only structures with fronting, but not the same sentence with canonical order.[11]

The examples discussed in this section show that the use of the version with fronting is pragmatically more constrained because it is 'stronger', in the relevant sense, being loaded with a specific argumentative orientation, a property that is informally included in the notion of 'emphasis'. What has to be explained now is, first, why a modification in word order gives rise to these interpretive effects; and second, why fronted definites and indefinites obey partially different contextual restrictions. A detailed answer will be provided in the following sections.

3.   Fronting and information structure

The first problem we have to address is, therefore, that of properly defining the kind of fronting operation instantiated in (3)–(5) and its interpretive properties, namely what has been called 'emphatic' interpretation. Our proposal will build on the idea that the relevant answer lies in the informational status of the construction.

Clitic dislocation and focalisation, though very different from each other in many respects, share a crucial property: they both establish an informational partition in constituent structure. Clitic dislocation detaches the topic from the comment, and places it in a peripheral position; focalisation, on the other hand, separates the contrastive focus from its background. Therefore, they are both operations that not only single out a constituent from its syntactic environment (as heavy stress on *in-situ* focus does), but specifically do it in a linear way, by placing it in a detached position.

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11. The reviewer notices that when using demonstratives and anaphoric expressions the conditions on use are not always as strict as we assume. In fact, in a sequence like (i) fronting does not require a previous mention of the proposition in the context (an antecedent is obviously required by the demonstrative *esta* 'this'):

(i) *No previeron el descenso demográfico, ni hubo una planificación rigurosa. Y **en esta situación** estamos ahora.*
'They didn't foresee the demographic decline, and there was not a rigorous planning either. And **in this situation** we are now.'

Moreover, the example does not seem to fit in the discourse functions of fronting that we discuss in Section 4. Two alternative solutions for examples of this kind are (a) analysing them as a different type of fronting construction, not exactly the same one we are dealing with here, as suggested by the reviewer; and (b) maintaining a unified analysis, while deriving the peculiar properties of (i) from some intervening additional factor, possibly related to the grammatical function of the fronted phrase: notice that it is not a direct object that is being fronted in (i), but a locative predicate; recall our *caveat* with respect to arguments and adjuncts in Footnote 9. The issue is certainly relevant for a fine classification of fronting strategies and we leave it open for future research.

The proposal we want to put forward with respect to the examples in (3)–(5) is based on two related assumptions:

a.   this construction represents a case where fronting, together with other grammatical mechanisms, forces an interpretation of the sentence with no informational partition among its constituents;

b.   the resulting informational structure is a case of 'polarity focus' or 'verum focus'.

These two assumptions will be discussed with more detail in the next two sections.

3.1   Fronting as a means of avoiding informational partition

As for the first assumption, we already showed that the fronted element cannot be interpreted as a topic: this is due to the lack of resumptive clitics and to the intonational contour (which is different from that of a clitic dislocation). On the other hand, the fronted element cannot be interpreted as a contrastive or an informational narrow focus either, for the reasons already mentioned: the syntax of information structure in Spanish does not allow placing an informational focus on the left side of a sentence, and the absence of heavy stress blocks the possibility of having a contrastive reading. In addition, subject-verb inversion also has a central role as a way of avoiding the interpretation of the subject as a topic (even if it is pronominal or null), given that in Spanish (as in other Romance languages) postverbal or internal subjects are never topics. Thus, fronting and subject-verb inversion both converge to force an interpretation in which no constituent is singled out, so every possible informational partition is excluded: the syntax does not seem to allow any kind of split between topic and comment, nor between focus and background.[12] This is the first key factor for an adequate understanding of the interpretive properties of the construction we are considering.

This proposal can be related to Erteschik-Shir's (2007) idea of 'altruistic movement'. She argues that in some languages fronting an element which does not function

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12. The absence of an informational partition is not incompatible with the possibility of adding an external topic (left or right dislocated), as illustrated in (i) and (ii):

(i)   [*A   ella*], **poco** *le   puede   haber contado.*
      to   her   little she.OBL can.PRS.3SG have   told
      'To her there is little that he can have said.'

(ii) **De poco** *servirá,   [que te   sigas   quejando*].
      of   little serve.FUT.3SG that you.OBL keep_on.SBJV.2SG complaining
      'Little good will it do for you to keep complaining.'

This is completely independent of the fronting mechanism, and does not contradict the claim that there is no topic/comment (or focus/background) distinction inside the construction with fronting.

as a topic can be a way to impose a 'thetic' or 'all-focus' interpretation.[13] This sort of phenomenon can be found in German and Danish in examples like the ones in (39) and (40), in which adverbs are fronted:

(39) German
      Leider   hat   keiner   dem alten Mann geholfen.
      unfortunately have.PRS.3SG nobody   the old   man helped
      'Unfortunately, nobody has helped the old man.'

(40) Danish
      Desværre   kom   Hans ikke til selskabet.
      unfortunately come.PST.3SG Hans not   to party
      'Unfortunately Hans didn't come to the party.'

Erteschik-Shir (2007: 124) points out that this kind of movement is 'altruistic', in the sense that the fronting of the adverb is not triggered to satisfy a particular semantic or informational requirement of the moved element itself, but to induce a particular interpretation of the whole construction by forcing a 'broad focus' reading. Thus fronting of non-topical and non-focal constituents can have a bearing on the information structure of the sentence: "Fronting such elements may render a thetic focus structure with a stage topic" (Erteschik-Shir 2007: 124).

Though Romance examples of fronting are different from Erteschik-Shir's in the sense that fronted elements also include arguments, adjuncts and predicates, her idea can be extended and adapted to capture some Romance data. In fact, Sardinian seems to instantiate some version of this 'altruistic fronting'. According to Jones (1993: 356), a sentence with a fronted predicate, in addition to the interpretation in which the preposed constituent is interpreted as narrow focus, is also compatible with a 'broad focus' interpretation, with "emphasis on the truth value of the sentence as a whole."[14]

However, Erteschik-Shir's and Jones' data are only partially comparable to the Spanish ones, because thetic or 'all-new' readings are actually excluded in our examples of fronting. The Sardinian example in (41), again from Jones (1993), is perfectly acceptable as a thetic utterance:

(41) Sardinian
      Manicáu   appo.
      eaten   have.PRS.1SG
      'I have eaten.'

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13. The occurrence of a constituent in a non-canonical position and the de-topicalisation of subjects by means of word order are indeed a hallmark of sentential focus constructions across languages (Lambrecht 2000). See also Lambrecht (1994), Krifka (2007), Féry (2007) for the notion of 'thetic' or 'all-new' utterances.

14. Mensching & Remberger (to appear) explain this effect in syntactic terms, as the result of the need to move the finite verb to Foc° whenever SpecFocP is filled.

In Spanish, on the contrary, sentences with fronting cannot be used as answers to questions introducing all-new contexts, as shown by the oddness of the dialogue in (36),[15] repeated here as (42) for convenience:

(42)   A: – *¿Qué   hiciste   ayer?*
                   what   do.PST.2SG   yesterday
             'What did you do yesterday?'
         B: – #*El   libro   terminé.*
                   the   book   finish.PST.1SG
             #'The book I finished.'

One could argue that *El libro terminé* is always unacceptable except in particular contexts like the one in (5). This is due to the fact that fronting of definite NPs severely constrains the contextual compatibility of the construction, by requiring some sort of linguistic antecedent, as already mentioned for Resumptive Preposing (cf. also Section 4.2). Thetic constructions, on the other hand, are not subject to this sort of contextual requirements. In fact, if *El libro terminé* had a thetic interpretation, one would expect that it should be acceptable in (42), which is not the case. This raises a further question: why do Spanish fronting constructions lack a thetic reading?

Thetic readings in Romance are usually obtained by means of subject inversion (as in *Llegó el tren*, lit. 'Arrived the train.'), but they are not excluded with a SV(O) word order (as in *María recogió sus juguetes* 'María picked up her toys.'). The crucial point is that fronting of a constituent is never needed to get a thetic interpretation. Fronting is always a costly operation if what is to be obtained is merely a thetic reading that could be perfectly expressed by a simpler, more economical syntactic structure. As mentioned above, this is also consistent with some general pragmatic principles, according to which marked interpretations tend to be reserved for formally marked expressions (cf. the 'markedness principle' of Levinson (2000), or the 'principle of paradigmatic contrast' of Lambrecht (2000), or the idea of 'interface economy' suggested by Reinhart (2006)): optional operations in the grammar are marked, in the sense that they increase processing effort; as a consequence, they are performed only if they derive an interpretation that would not otherwise be available. To sum up, economy principles prevent fronting constructions from getting unmarked thetic readings.

In addition, considering Spanish fronting constructions as thetic structures does not provide an appropriate explanation of their emphatic nature, which is their most salient property on the interpretive side, since thetic utterances are not usually emphatic. Thus, the notion of 'thetic' or 'all-focus' is not the most appropriate tool for dealing with the linguistic properties of our construction. This is where our second assumption comes into play.

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15. As the reviewer points out, this was possible in earlier stages. A diachronic analysis is, however, far beyond the scope of this paper.

3.2   Fronting as the trigger of 'verum focus'

Our second assumption is that the informational structure of the constructions with fronting is not that of a thetic construction, but a case of 'verum focus', i.e., of focus on the truth value of the sentence (also called 'polarity focus') (see Höhle 1992; Krifka 2007; Féry 2007). The obvious connection between 'thetic' and 'verum focus' is the intuitive idea that focus covers the whole sentence. Nevertheless, the two notions should not be confused. Some brief remarks on the semantics of focus and on the notion of 'verum focus' are in order here.

Höhle (1992) noticed that in German a pitch accent on the finite verb is used to emphasise the truth of the whole proposition expressed, rather than the content of a particular constituent:

(43) a. *Hört   sie   dir   zu oder nicht?*
          listen.PRS.3SG she you.OBJ to or   not
          'Does she listen to you or not?'
      b. *Sie HÖRT   mir   zu.*
          she listen.PRS.3SG me.OBL   to
          'She DOES listen to me.'

As shown by the translation, the equivalent of 'verum focus' in English is obtained by means of prominence marking on the auxiliary. The natural paraphrase for (43b) is (44):

(44)   It is true that she listens to me.

In order to integrate the notion of 'verum focus' into our analysis, the standard view of focus in the framework of 'alternative semantics' (see Rooth 1992; and also Krifka 2007) has to be borne in mind. Focus is accounted for by adding an extra semantic value $[[\alpha]]^f$ to the ordinary semantic interpretation of the sentence $[[\alpha]]^o$. This focus semantic value represents a set of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation:

> Informally, the focus semantic value for a phrase of category S is the set of propositions obtainable from the ordinary semantic value by making a substitution in the position corresponding to the focused phrase.   (Rooth 1992: 76)

Now, if what is in focus is a whole sentence p, whose ordinary semantic meaning is a proposition $[[p]]^o$, the focus semantic value, $[[p]]^f$, is the set of propositions which potentially contrast with it. In the present case, this means considering the set of relevant alternatives to the proposition expressed, which must themselves be of a propositional nature and must include all the constituents (and not only part of them). The obvious alternative to the proposition expressed is the proposition with the inverse polarity: for a proposition p, the relevant alternative is its negation, $\sim p$; the default alternative focus set of p, $[[p]]^f$, is therefore $\{p, \sim p\}$. The focus on the whole sentence points to the contrast between the two members of the set, i.e., the two mutually

exclusive propositions. Now, considering that the propositional content is identical in both propositions except for the polarity sign, it is no surprise that what is in focus is the sentence polarity itself.

Some authors consider 'verum focus' as "a further special case of narrow focus, namely on the affirmative part of a declarative sentence" (Féry 2007: 167), and suggest representing it as an independent operator (Höhle 1992; Romero & Han 2002; Romero 2006). This could seem contrary to our initial claim that fronting prevents the sentence from receiving an informational partition. We think that both ideas are compatible and can be maintained at the same time: what fronting of a non-topic and non-focus constituent does, together with subject-verb inversion, is to prevent the overt constituents of the sentence from being split into two informationally different regions. When focus affects the polarity, the rest of the sentential constituents forms a single informational region (in this case, the background), so that there seems to be no 'topic–comment' or 'focus–background' distinction affecting the overt components of the sentence, though there actually ɪs a 'focus–background' partition represented by narrow focus on polarity. If this idea of 'verum focus' as a class of narrow focus is adopted, the immediate prediction is that the propositional content would have to be considered as background; i.e., it has to be known or given to some extent. This is, in fact, what Höhle (1992: 113) suggests: for him, 'verum focus' indicates that the information is not new for the speaker, who emphasises the truth of a contextually known proposition. This prediction, which is a crucial piece in our account, is in fact borne out, as we will see later (cf. Section 4.3).

Furthermore, we want to argue that 'verum focus' is not merely a possible reading for Spanish fronting constructions, but the only available possibility whenever fronting of non-topics/non-focus and subject-verb inversion occurs. Whereas canonical word order can be ambiguous between the interpretation of narrow focus on a constituent and that of sentential focus, fronting gives rise to a construction that has unequivocally a 'verum focus' reading, and that is different from all the rest of competing focus constructions.

To sum up, the steps leading to the 'verum focus' interpretation are the following. Once an informational partition is excluded, the most immediate solution would be extending the focus to the whole sentence to get a thetic reading. However, as we already pointed out, that kind of reading is excluded too for economy reasons, given that (a) a thetic reading is easily obtained "for free" in unmarked SV or VS sentences; (b) fronting always produces marked structures, which call for marked readings, according to well-known economy principles in interpretation; and (c) as a consequence, thetic readings are not optimal interpretations for fronting constructions. In such a situation, the only remaining way to assign a plausible interpretation is 'verum focus', an interpretation that is consistent with both the non-informational partition requirement and the marked status of the fronting structure. As a result, what can initially be conceived of as an inferential path inexorably leading to a last resort interpretation has probably turned into a conventional grammatical meaning associated with a marked construction.

In what follows we will call 'verum focus fronting' (hereinafter, VFF) the fronting construction we have been analysing so far. The notion of 'verum focus' is crucial for an understanding of fronting constructions and their 'emphatic' interpretation, as will be shown in the next section.

4. Interpreting Verum Focus Fronting

4.1 Emphasis and Verum Focus Fronting

According to our proposal, the whole range of interpretive properties of the VFF constructions, in particular their 'emphatic' nature, can receive a straightforward explanation based on the notion of 'verum focus'. More specifically, we would like to suggest that 'verum focus' is indeed the most appropriate tool for capturing the intuitive idea of 'emphasis' in a theoretical way.

As mentioned before, when the polarity of a proposition is in focus, it is highlighted in contrast with its alternative. This is why informal paraphrases of 'verum focus' sentences typically involve the explicit indication that the content is true or sure (cf. example (36); see Höhle 1992; Romero & Han 2002; Romero 2006). In fact, in Spanish the most natural paraphrase of a VFF structure consists in a construction in which the propositional content is embedded under the affirmative particle *sí* 'yes' or under the adjectives *seguro* 'sure' or *cierto* 'true', as shown in (45):

(45) a. ***Algo*** *has* *visto.* → {*Sí / seguro*} *que* *has* *visto*
   something have.PRS.2SG seen → {yes / sure} that have.PRS.2SG seen
   algo.
   something
   'You have seen SOMETHING. →Yes / surely you have seen something.'

   b. ***A alguien*** *encontrarás.* → {*Sí / Seguro*} *que encontrarás* *a* *alguien.*
   to someone find.FUT.2SG → {yes / sure} that find.FUT.2SG to someone
   'You will find someone.' → 'It's sure that you will find someone.'

   c. ***Lo mismo*** *creo* *yo.* → *Es* *cierto* *que* *yo*
   the same believe.PRS.1SG I → be.PRS.3SG true that I
   creo *lo* *mismo.*
   believe.PRS.1SG the same
   'That's what I think, too.' → 'It's true that I think so too.'

   d. ***Miedo*** *me* *da* *pensarlo.* →
   fear   I.OBL give.PRS.3SG think_it
   {*Sí /* *es* *cierto*} *que* *me* *da* *miedo* *pensarlo.*
   {yes / be.PRS.3SG true} that I.OBL give.PRS.3SG fear   think_it
   'Afraid as I am to think so.' → 'Yes / It's true I'm afraid to think about it.'

   e.   ***Sevillano***   *soy.*   → *Sí*   *que soy*   *sevillano.*
       from.Seville   be.PRS.1SG → yes that be.PRS.1SG from.Seville
       'Sevillian I am.'   →   'Yes I am Sevillian.'

   f.   ***Muy harto*** *debe*   *de estar.* → *Sí*   *que* *debe*   *de estar*
       very fed.up must.PRS.3SG be   → yes that must.PRS.3SG be
       (muy) *harto*
       very   fed.up
       'Very fed up he must be.' → 'Yes he [certainly] must be (very) fed up.'

These paraphrases make explicit the partition between the propositional content and the polarity: only the polarity is in focus and the proposition stays in the background. We claim that what is perceived as 'emphasis' is the result of focus on sentence polarity. On the one hand, focus overtly marks the assertion of a propositional content, and, at the same time, it rejects any alternative proposition; as a consequence, the propositional content is asserted in a very strong way. On the other hand, the fact that the proposition is treated as background information (i.e., as already present, in some sense, in the common ground) and the fact that this background information is both introduced again and asserted contributes to reinforcing the strength of the assertion (cf. Section 4.3). Thus, 'emphasis' is the effect of reasserting background information and removing from the context any competing assumption.

An interesting consequence of this approach to the emphatic nature of VFF constructions is that 'verum focus' and 'emphasis' cannot be treated merely as implicatures of the utterance. They are in fact triggered by the syntax and cannot be cancelled, as shown by the oddness of sequences such as (46):

(46) ***#Alguien*** *encontrarás,* *pero* *no* *es*   *seguro.*
       someone find.FUT.2SG, but   not be.PRS.3SG sure
       #'(It is true that) you WILL find someone, but it is not sure.'

VFF in the first sentence is semantically incompatible with the content of the second sentence, and no pragmatic mechanism is able to rescue such a contradiction.

Additional evidence for the emphatic nature of Spanish VFF can be found in word order patterns in traditional proverbs and idioms. VFF is a characterising feature in most of them, which reinforces their typical flavour of "old-fashioned" sententious assertions conveying indisputable and irrefutable truths:

(47) a.   ***A la fuerza*** *ahorcan.*
         to the force   hang.PRS.3PL
         'Hanging is done by force. (= No surprise that one is reluctant to do unpleasant things.)'

     b.   ***De casta*** *le*   *viene*   *al*   *galgo*
         from cast it.OBL come.PRS.3SG to.the greyhound
         (tener *el*   *rabo* *largo).*
         have   the tail   long

'From its cast it comes to the greyhound to have a long tail.
(= You cannot modify someone's nature.)'

c. *No por **mucho** madrugar, amanece   más temprano.*
not for much get.up.early dawn.PRS.3SG more early
'It is not so that getting up early brings forth the dawn.'

d. *Quien **mucho** abarca,   **poco** aprieta.*
who much embrace.PRS.3SG little grasp.PRS.3SG
'He who embraces much grasps little.'

e. ***Menos** da   una piedra.*
less give.PRS.3SG a stone
'Less would a stone give. (= Better than nothing.)'

f. ***Doctores** tiene   la Iglesia.*
doctors have.PRS.3SG the Church
'The Church has its doctors. (= Leave the explanation of difficult matters
to the real experts.)'

g. ***Poderoso caballero** es Don Dinero.* (Quevedo)
powerful knight is Sir Money
'Sir Money is a powerful knight. (= Money can get everything.)'

h. ***Más** se perdió   en Cuba…*
more CL lose.PST.3SG in Cuba
'More was lost in Cuba. (= You have to relativise things.)'

Now, our next claim is that all the interpretive properties of VFF constructions can be derived, without further stipulation, from the interaction between the semantics of 'verum focus', on the one hand, and the specific semantic features of each kind of fronted elements (namely, definites *vs* indefinites), on the other.

4.2   Exhaustive and contrastive readings

In an alternative semantics approach, focus is conceived of as having two main functions, 'exhaustive' and 'contrastive'. These are not inherent features of focus constituents or of focus constructions; the labels rather refer to the way in which focus interacts with the previous discourse and modifies the common ground. Focus is 'exhaustive' when it indicates that the focused constituent α is, among the set of possible alternatives, the only one that gives rise to a true proposition. Focus is 'contrastive' when used to contrast a constituent α with a constituent β (typically, a previously mentioned expression), which belongs to the alternative focus set of α, i.e. $\beta \in [[\alpha]]^f$. In the cases under examination, the exhaustive reading arises when the context provides a contrast set; and the contrastive reading is obtained when a contextually accessible proposition q belonging to the focus set of $[[p]]^f$ is refuted; given that the focus set of $[[p]]^f$ is limited to the set $\{p, \sim p\}$, it has to be assumed that $q = \sim p$, and therefore it is the polarity that is contrasted.

Exhaustive readings represent the first kind of interpretation available for focus constructions. Since the focus is on the polarity, and given that for the same propositional content there are only two possibilities (affirmative and negative), the alternative focus set contains two members only. The 'background' nature of the propositional content requires, in this case, that the whole array of possibilities be contextually accessible, so the VFF construction can be used to choose the true one.

There are a number of environments particularly well suited to obtain this result. An obvious context that satisfies this requirement is a *yes/no* interrogative (also called a 'polar interrogative', precisely because the unknown variable concerns the polarity), a structure in which the propositional content is mentioned:

(48)   A: – *¿Encontrarás a alguien?*
      B: – ***A alguien*** *encontraré,*   (*estoy*   *seguro*).
           to someone find.FUT.1SG   (be.PRS.1SG sure)

The question in the first turn introduces a possibility, that the interlocutor can find someone (to help her), without asserting any of the available alternatives. The VFF construction in B's reply is used to choose the affirmative possibility and to emphasise that this is the only proposition the speaker considers to be true – the negative alternative being discarded at the same time. Notice that in (48) a reply without VFF (i.e. with canonical order, as *Encontraré a alguien* 'I will find someone'), though perfectly grammatical, is not the optimal linguistic strategy, since it does not contribute any additional information to the more economical solution *sí* 'yes', unless it receives a marked intonation (one corresponding to 'I WILL find someone'). The VFF, on the contrary, directly provides the extra content – emphasis, i.e., affirmation of a proposition plus rejection of other competing propositions –, which justifies using it as an alternative to a simple affirmative answer.

The same explanation works with VFF constructions with fronted lexical definites:

(49)   A: – *¿Conociste por fin al presidente?*
      B: – ***Al*** *presidente* he   conocido.
           to.the president   have.PRS.1SG known

Both in (48) and (49), the propositional content in the question is reproduced in the answer. The interrogative encodes a split between the unknown polarity (*yes/no*) and the propositional content, which is exactly the same split that can be found in the VFF construction: the information structure of the answer matches that of the question.

A further discourse environment that can trigger the exhaustive reading of a VFF construction is one in which the propositional content is presented as a possibility, an intention, a duty or a belief. This is what can be found in the example in (5), repeated here as (50):

(50)   *Dije*   *que terminaría*   *el libro, y* ***el libro*** *he*
       say.PST.1SG that finish.COND.1SG the book and the book have.PRS.1SG

terminado.
finished
'I said that I would finish the book, and finish the book I did.'

In Section 2.3, we informally discussed the requirement that VFF with definites is acceptable only if the propositional content has been previously mentioned. Now, we can offer a more principled explanation in terms of the requirements of 'verum focus'. Recall that 'verum focus' is a kind of narrow focus on the sentence polarity, and the propositional content is presented as background information. In this case, the whole propositional content, including the definite NP, must be contextually given and salient: a previous explicit mention is needed. The first sentence of the example provides exactly the kind of context that VFF needs: it introduces the speaker's intention to finish the book, so that the second sentence – the VFF structure – can be used to confirm the truth of the positive alternative.

This also explains the acceptability of (38a), *Había que leerse el* Quijote*, y el* Quijote *se leyó* 'He had to read the *Quijote*, and read the *Quijote* he did', and the overall pattern illustrated in the rest of the examples discussed in (38): the VFF construction is accepted only when its whole propositional content is background information, i.e., has been mentioned in the previous discourse.

The exhaustive reading seems to be the only possible interpretation for VFF with definites. This does not entail that VFF with indefinites cannot receive an exhaustive interpretation as well. In fact, the examples in (51) contain indefinites and receive an exhaustive interpretation:[16]

(51) a. *Dije   que traería   a   muchos amigos,*
          say.PST.1SG that bring.COND.1SG to   many   friends
          *y   **a muchos amigos** he   traído.*
          and to many   friends have.PRS.1SG brought
          'I said that I would bring many friends, and bring many friends I did.'
      b. *La echadora de cartas pronosticó   que ganaría   bastante*
          the card-reader   predict.PST.3SG that win.COND.1SG a.lot.of
          *dinero, y   **bastante dinero** he   ganado.*
          money and a.lot.of   money have.PRS.1SG won
          'The card reader predicted I would win quite a lot of money, and quite a lot of money I have won (and win quite a lot of money I did).'

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16. The reviewer notes that, in addition to definites and indefinites, whole sentences can also be fronted:

*Os   dije   que iríamos   a comer a la   playa, y   **a comer a la   playa***
you.OBL tell.PST.1SG that go.COND.1PL to eat   to the beach and to eat   to the beach
vamos.
go.PRS.1PL
'I told you that we would go to the beach for lunch, and go to the beach for lunch we will do.'

Other examples of contexts that illustrate the same discourse articulation between a previous mention of a propositional content and VFF are the following:

(52) A: – *Parece   que escapas   del   diablo.*
          seem.PRS.3SG that escape.PRS.2SG   from.the devil
      B: – *Y **del   diablo** escapo.*
          and from.the devil   escape.PRS.1SG
          '– You seem to be escaping from the devil.
          – And from the devil I'm escaping.'

(53) a. *Me   amenazaron   con que me   quitarían   el*
          I.OBL threaten.PST.3SG with that I.OBL take-away.COND.3PL the
          *trabajo, y **el trabajo** me   han   quitado.*
          job   and the job   I.OBL have.PRS.3PL taken-away
          'They threatened to take away my job, and take away my job they did (and my job they have taken away).'
      b. *La echadora de cartas pronosticó   que aprobaría   **el examen**,*
          the card-reader   predict.PST.3SG that pass.COND.1SG the exam
          *y **el examen** he   aprobado.*
          and the exam   have.PRS.1SG passed
          'The card reader predicted I would pass the exam and pass the exam I did.'

Polar interrogatives and propositional objects depending on verbs of possibility, intention, belief, etc. are, therefore, two discourse environments that give rise to exhaustive interpretations. What do they have in common? By now it should be evident that the relevant generalisation is the following: they all introduce in the discourse a propositional content that is mentioned, but not asserted, i.e., the propositional content is merely presented as a possibility, not as a piece of the accepted common ground. The absence of assertion is the result either of presenting a proposition as the content of a *yes/no* interrogative, or of embedding it under a predicate that does not entail the truth of its complement clause. The discourse function of the VFF construction is that of selecting and emphatically asserting the positive option.[17]

If this is right, an immediate prediction is that the propositional content embedded under factive predicates, which is presented as true, will not be a suitable candidate for being reproduced in a VFF construction, and in fact this is the case, as shown by the incongruity of (54):

17. According to the reviewer, examples with indefinites "are most suitable in a counter-to-expectation communicative context where VFF stresses (by emphatically affirming) the nonspecificity of the referent in prior speech (or the common background). It has therefore something of a metalinguistic or quotational use." We agree that this is indeed the effect one obtains in these constructions – an interpretive effect that is perfectly compatible, we think, with our claim that the function of VFF is that of selecting and emphatically affirming the positive option.

(54) #*Lamenté   que perdieras   tu   empleo,*
       regret.PST.1SG that lose.PST.SUBJ.2SG your job
       *y **tu   empleo** has   perdido.*
       and your job   have.PRS.2SG lost
       'I was sorry you lost your job and lose your job you did (and your job you have lost).'

A further prediction has to do with the acceptability of VFF constructions as responses to interrogatives. Fronting is acceptable in answers to polar interrogatives (provided that the VFF construction "copies" the form of the question), but not to *wh-* interrogatives: first, because the fronted phrase in the VFF structure cannot be the informational focus corresponding to the *wh*-phrase; second, because other question-answer pairings with *wh*-interrogatives do not allow an adequate connection between the VFF and the context. Consider the contrast between the acceptability of (49) and the oddness of the following examples:

(55) a. – *¿Qué ha   pasado?* – #***Al   presidente** he   conocido.*
           what have.PRS.3SG happened to.the president   have.PRS.1SG met
           '– What happened?   – #The president I have met.'
      b. – *¿A quién has   conocido?* – #***Al   presidente** he   conocido.*
           to whom have.PRS.2SG met   to.the president   have.PRS.1SG met
           '– Whom have you met?   – #The president I have met.'
      c. – *¿Qué pasó   con el   presidente?*
           what happen.PST.3SG with the   president
           – #***Al   presidente** he   conocido.*
           to.the president   have.PRS.1SG met
           '– What happened with the president? – #The president I have met.'

The question in (55a) calls for an 'all-new' answer, in which no part of the expressed propositional content can be treated as background information. According to our proposal, VFF structures are characterised specifically by presenting the content as given, so they are odd in this context. In the questions in (55b–c), the content is split into focus ('whom' and 'what happened') and background ('You have met someone' and 'Some event took place having to do with the president'); in both cases, the answer is expected to offer new information on the interrogative variable, a possibility that is excluded again for VFF constructions. Only in (49) the information structure of the question and that of the answer perfectly match.

The existence of this kind of identity restriction in question-answer pairs does not mean, of course, that a VFF structure can never work as an adequate reply. Take the example in (19), repeated here as (56a), and compare it with (56b):

(56) a. – *¿Qué me   puedes   decir?* – #***Nada   te   puedo   decir.***
           what I.OBL can.PRS.2SG say   nothing you.OBL can.PRS.1SG say
           '– What can you tell me?   – #I can tell you NOTHING.'

b.   – *¿Qué sabes?*   – **Nada**   *te*   *puedo*   *decir.*
    what know.PRS.2SG   nothing you.OBL can.PRS.1SG say
    '– What do you know?   – There's nothing I can tell you.'

In (56a) answering with a VFF structure is odd because the question requires an answer in which *nada* 'nothing' can be understood as bearing narrow focus on the newly presented information – a possibility that is not available for VFF constructions in Spanish. The situation is radically different in (56b), where the VFF is not an answer that satisfies the unknown variable of a question, but a reply: it does not provide new information about the variable *what*, but rejects the underlying prerequisite of the act of questioning itself, namely, that the hearer can give the answer. In this sense, the reply in (56b) patterns with other possible replies such as *I don't want to talk about it*, *You know it better than I do*, *No comments*, and the like.

    The previous discussion on exhaustive readings can be summarised as follows. Some discourse environments introduce a propositional content without asserting it, i.e., they overtly present the alternative focus set as open for consideration: this defines two basic environments, namely *yes/no* interrogatives and non-factual clauses. In such contexts, VFF constructions are used to choose the affirmative proposition as the only one that is true, and to discard the competing negative proposition. So-called 'exhaustive readings' correspond to this interpretive pattern.

    The second main kind of interpretation available for focus constructions is represented by 'contrastive' readings, in which a member of the focus set is highlighted in order to reject, replace or correct a previously presented element of the same set of alternatives. Recall the example in (29), repeated here as (57) for convenience:

(57)   A: – *Yo no oí nada.*
        B: – *Pues tú estabas allí. {Debiste oír alguna cosa. /Alguna cosa debiste oír.}*
           '– I didn't hear anything.
           – Well you were there. You must have heard something. / You must have heard SOMETHING.'

In the first turn, the speaker conveys the assumption that s/he could not see or hear anything when a certain event took place. In the reply of this dialogue, both versions of the second sentence are adequate. The sentence without fronting (*Debiste oír alguna cosa*) seems to convey a 'neutral' observation, where 'neutral' means 'compatible with any discourse environment' and 'devoid of any particular argumentative orientation', so it will fit in well with any kind of context. The sentence with fronting (*Alguna cosa debiste oír*), on the contrary, is particularly well suited to refute the other speaker's conveyed assumption, since it goes in the opposite argumentative direction with respect to the partner's utterance, in which the opposite idea ('I haven't heard anything') is salient: the idea that speaker A has not heard anything is explicitly communicated in his utterance and is therefore contrasted with B's assertion *Alguna cosa debiste oír*, which emphatically rejects it, by asserting that it is true or it is sure that he must have heard something.

Example (57) might suggest that the contrastive interpretation should only arise when the competing proposition has been made explicit in the immediate discourse. This is obviously not the case. Consider the dialogue in (58):

(58)   A: – *Tengo   mucho trabajo y   estoy   sola…*
          have.PRS.1SG much   work   and be.PRS.1SG alone
   B: – *No te preocupes,   a alguien   encontrarás que pueda ayudarte.*
          not CL worry.SUBJ.2SG to someone find.FUT.2SG that can   help.you
         '– I've got a lot of work and I'm all alone…
         Don't worry, you'll find someone that can help you.'

In this dialogue, A complains about her current situation; B's comment contains a VFF (*a alguien encontrarás que pueda ayudarte*) emphasising the idea that she will find someone to help her. Although A's utterance does not explicitly convey the assumption that she will not find anyone to help her, B's reply is perfectly adequate in this situation. How does our proposal account for this kind of examples? What is needed for a contrastive interpretation to arise, we claim, is not that the alternative proposition should be explicitly expressed, but rather that it be accessible and compatible with the context. In the present case, the relevant proposition can be derived from the immediate discourse, so what the VFF construction does is to reject an implicit contextual assumption obtained from the previous utterance by default reasoning, and to cut off the possible argumentative line based on it, as shown in the schema in (59):

(59)   I am alone → I won't have anyone who can help me.
    VF-You will find someone to help you.

In this process, an extra inferential step in the derivation of the interpretation is needed – that of taking into consideration one of the possible contextual implications of the first utterance.

Now, one could think that our proposal yields the right predictions in those cases in which the VFF sentence contradicts a previous assumption, be it explicitly expressed or not, but cannot account for the examples in which no such contradiction appears. In fact, there are a number of cases in which the VFF construction seems to be used precisely to confirm a previous statement by adding a proposition that goes in the same argumentative direction. This is typically the case in the examples involving fronted definites and anaphoric pronouns (Cinque's examples of *Resumptive Preposing*). So, in a dialogue like the one in (60), the second turn seems to run in the same argumentative direction as the first one:

(60)   A: – *Pepe dijo   que era   demasiado tarde.*
         Pepe say.PST.3SG that be.PST.3SG too   late
         'Pepe said it was too late.'
   B: – {*Lo mismo / eso*} *dijo   Juan.*
         the same   this say.PST.3SG Juan
         'Juan said the same thing.'

The explanation goes as follows. According to our analysis, if *p* is *Juan dijo {lo mismo / eso}*, the contrastive interpretation should amount to eliminating ~*p*, i.e., *Juan no dijo {lo mismo / eso}*. Now, although ~*p* has not been directly uttered in the previous discourse, it nevertheless can be derived as an entailment arising from the exhaustive reading of the previous utterance. Recall that assigning an exhaustive interpretation to an utterance is a common interpretive strategy, which consists in strengthening the explicitly communicated content as a means to obtain an optimally relevant interpretation. So, from A's statement ('Pepe said it was too late'), it could be possible to infer an exhaustive reading ('only Pepe said that it was too late'), according to which this proposition is the only one that is true regarding the state of affairs. The corresponding focus set of this enriched interpretation would contain the whole range of contrasting propositions with respect to the possible entities falling under the scope of *only*. The first obvious entailment of the exhaustive interpretation is 'No one else said the same', which in turn entails 'Juan did not say the same', which happens to be ~*p*. In this way, the discourse connection between the two utterances in (60) is inferentially retrieved on the assumption that A's statement can be assigned an exhaustive interpretation, which is precisely what B intends to reject. The inferential process corresponding to the dialogue in (60) involves additional steps, and can be summarised in the schema in (61):

(61)   Pepe said it was too late.
  → Only Pepe said that. → No one else said the same.
             ↓
            Juan didn't say the same.
            VF: Juan said the same.

Therefore, in (60) the VFF has a contrastive value, since it emphatically asserts a proposition and rejects its negation, which in turn is one of the possible entailments of an exhaustive reading of the utterance in the previous utterance. The additional effect that is obtained is that of preventing the proposition expressed by the previous speaker from receiving an exhaustive reading, i.e., being understood as the only one yielding a true proposition.[18]

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18. The reviewer contests our explanation and suggests that "other syntactic or discourse-governed phenomena, such as scope broadening or connectivity through encapsulation and textual anaphora (…) foster frontings that may result in emphasis…" In the particular case of fronting of expressions with anaphoric features, s/he argues that what we have is focus on the constituent, which can be expressed by the insertion of focal adverbials such as *exactamente* 'exactly' and *precisamente* 'precisely'. No doubt, this suggestion is worth considering. What we were trying to do in our explanation is to dissociate the contribution of the anaphoric constituent from that of the whole construction. More specifically, we were envisaging the anaphoric expressions as imposing a further interpretive restriction in the search-space for the alternatives, given that the entity they refer to must be identical in both cases. This gives rise to the interpretive effect that the anaphoric expression falls out of the polarity scope, and that it is the anaphor that is highlighted or emphasized.

What these last examples show is that the VFF construction exhibits the properties of grammatical (or procedural) meaning: it imposes a particular path of interpretation, one in which not only the propositional content is overtly asserted, but crucially the alternative content is overtly rejected. In other words, it induces an interpretation in which a certain state of affairs and its entailments and implications are excluded or blocked. If the alternative is present or salient as a result of having been mentioned in the previous discourse or entailed by some (set of) previous propositions, the interpretation just proceeds by discarding it; if the alternative is not present in either way, the structure of the construction itself compels the hearer to accommodate it (that is, to derive it and consider it), before discarding it. In this way, the implications that could arise if such a move was not taken are "deactivated". There is no need to have a previously established context that includes the relevant proposition: if it is not already present, the VFF structure will force its derivation.

This does not mean that it will be possible to accommodate just any VFF construction. As mentioned before, they have restricted conditions of discourse adequacy. Recall now the example in (30), repeated here as (62):

(62) A: – *No sé por qué, pero hoy me he despertado a las cinco de la mañana...*
'– I don't know why but I woke up at five o'clock this morning…'
B: – {*Debiste   oír   algún   ruido.* / #**Algún ruido** *debiste   oír.*}
must.PST.2SG hear some noise   some noise must.PST.2SG hear
'You must have heard some noise. / #You must have heard SOME noise.'

In the initial utterance, no hypothesis about the reason why the speaker woke up is put forward, and the second speaker merely suggests a possible explanation, without opposing any implicit assumption derivable from the first utterance. In such a situation, only the sentence with the canonical word order is acceptable; the version with fronting sounds clearly inadequate. Why is accommodation not able to "rescue" the acceptability of VFF in this context? An answer can be suggested along the following lines: there is no inferential path connecting the opposite proposition ('You should not have heard any noise') to the previous utterance, nor to its implications and entailments. No relevant interpretation is reached by forcing the accommodation of such a proposition into the context.

To sum up, a number of VFF constructions fit into their contexts as a means to express a refutation or a correction of a previously accessible proposition with the opposite polarity. Their role is to ensure that such a negative proposition is definitively removed from the common ground and replaced by its corresponding affirmative one.

All the examples of contrastive reading examined so far involve VFF constructions with fronted indefinites and pronominal definites. The reason is that lexical definites are totally excluded when the discourse function of VFF is to reject a previously stated assumption, as shown by the following contrast:

(63) A: – *No encontraré   a   nadie   que   me ayude…*
            not find.FUT.1SG to   no.one   that   me help.SUBJ.3SG

      B: – ***A alguien***   *encontrarás…*
            to   someone   find.FUT.2SG
          'You WILL find someone…'

(64) A: – *Hoy es jueves, así que no encontraré al director…*
            'Today is Tuesday, so I won't find the director…'

      B: – #***Al***   ***director***   *encontrarás.*
            to.the manager   find.FUT.2SG
          #'The director you will find.'

The construction with the fronted indefinite in (63) can be used to reject the negative proposition in the previous turn (i.e., it has a contrastive interpretation). The possibility to refute a negative statement is not available, however, for the VFF construction with a fronted lexical definite. This is the main difference that can be found between fronted indefinites and fronted lexical definites: the latter cannot be used if the speaker intends to correct or reject a previous assertion.

Definites clearly obey stronger conditions than indefinites: in addition to being incompatible with corrections and rejections, they require a previous explicit mention of the proposition expressed. Indefinites are compatible with both exhaustive and contrastive readings, and do not need a previous mention of the proposition when used in environments that force a contrastive reading. A challenging question is why there should be such differences between definites and indefinites in VFF constructions. In the next section we will try to offer some tentative ideas that could account for this difference.

4.3   Fitting into the context

Dealing with these contextual restrictions, in particular with the reason why VFF with lexical definites obeys stronger constraints than VFF with indefinites, implies taking into careful consideration one of the major implications of 'verum focus', namely, the requirement that the propositional content be in the background: a feature shared by all the examples we have examined is in fact that the propositional content should be present in the common ground. VFF constructions reproduce an accessible propositional content and affirm it emphatically. Since 'verum focus' means emphasis on the polarity value of a background assumption, the expectation is that the contextual restrictions holding for VFF should be related to (1) what counts as background information and (2) what the rationale is behind emphasising background assumptions in certain contexts.

As happens with all focus constructions, the set of alternative possibilities is a crucial aspect of the semantics of VFF. A way of accounting for the relation between VFF constructions and their context is examining how the context contributes to the

identification of this particular set. According to our hypothesis, this can be done in two different ways:

– by overtly presenting the alternative set {*p, ~p*} under the form of a non-asserted propositional content;
– by overtly presenting a proposition that belongs to the alternative focus set of *p*, i.e., by introducing either *p* or *~p*.

In addition to these two ways of introducing the alternative set there is also a third possibility: that the context does not directly provide any direct clue for the identification of the alternative set. Let's consider these different situations in detail.

The first one is by overtly presenting the alternative set under the form of a non-asserted propositional content, i.e., when it is questioned or embedded under a modal element or an indicator of propositional attitude. In this situation, the requirement that the propositional content has to be given is satisfied by evoking a propositional content, without affirming it. This is in fact the kind of context that gives rise to exhaustive interpretations of VFF constructions (cf. Section 4.2), both with lexical definites and indefinites (see examples (48)–(53)). When the proposition is evoked, the context introduces the alternative set, that is, the possibility that the content could be finally affirmed by the speaker or not, and the discourse function of VFF is precisely that of affirming it. Emphatic affirmation is felicitous and informative because it communicates the speaker's commitment about the truth of the proposition in a context where the propositional content counts as given but unasserted information. Why does this process require an almost literal reproduction of the propositional content, regardless of whether the fronted element is a definite or an indefinite? As mentioned, the role of the VFF construction is simply to pick out one of the two possibilities (the positive one). The reason why not even synonyms or coreferential expressions are allowed (cf. the examples in (38)) is that any change in the form of a constituent would divert the interpretive process towards a contrast between the previous content and the content of the VFF construction, leaving the polarity contrast in the background. This will prevent the identification of the two contrasting propositions involved and will trigger additional inferences to explain why an extra contrast has been made salient. In this context, interpreting VFF requires the selection of a value for some given propositional content, and any intruding factor will give rise to unacceptability. The condition on literal reproduction, thus, can be explained in purely pragmatic terms.

The second way in which the context contributes to the identification of the alternative set is that in which a proposition that belongs to the alternative focus set of *p* is asserted, i.e., by introducing either *p* or *~p*. This situation gives rise to two different scenarios. If *p* is asserted, considerations of relevance require that the repetition should add some extra content; otherwise, it would seem redundant. Among the reasons for repeating content without resulting in a redundancy, we can find confirming a previous statement (typically one that has been previously uttered by a different speaker) and providing some further content to a previous statement. Now,

a remarkable discourse property of VFF constructions is their incapacity to reinforce a proposition that has already been asserted. The unacceptability of (65) and (66) shows that the restriction holds for emphatic affirmation both with definites and indefinites:

(65)   A: – *Veo que tienes demasiado trabajo.*
              'I see you've got too much work.'
       B: – #***Demasiado   trabajo*** *tengo.*
                 too.much   work   have.PRS.1SG
              '#Too much work I have.'

(66)   *Mi hijo aprobó   el   examen. #Y   **el   examen** aprobó.*
       my son pass.PST.3SG the exam   and the exam   pass.PST.3SG
       'My son passed the exam.   #And the exam he passed.'

It seems that only a particularly strong grammatical device is able to affirm an already asserted proposition again and override the risk of producing a redundant affirmation. In these cases a specific syntactic formula must be used to mark the explicit reinforcement, as in (67)–(68):[19]

(67)   A: – *Veo que tienes bastante trabajo.*
              'I see you've got much work.'
       B: – ***Sí   que*** *tengo   bastante   trabajo.*
                 yes that have.PRS.1SG   much   work
              'Yes, I have got much work.'

(68)   *Mi hijo aprobó   el   examen. Y   **vaya si** aprobó   el   examen:*
       My son pass.PST.3SG the exam.   And PART   pass.PST.3SG the exam
       sacó   un sobresaliente.
       get.PST.3SG an A!
       'My son passed the exam. And did he ever pass the exam: he got an A!'

It should not be surprising, however, that in (67) the second speaker resorts to constructions that overtly indicate a split between polarity and propositional content. Such a manifest formal split makes them stronger than VFF constructions, which explains why they appear in environments that require a marked reinforcement device. The conclusion is that a previous affirmation of a proposition does not make a suitable context for VFF.

    If what has been previously introduced is the opposite proposition ~p, VFF is used to affirm its positive counterpart p, thus correcting, rejecting or refuting the negative proposition. As pointed out in the previous section, this kind of context gives rise to contrastive interpretations and to the aforementioned asymmetry between in-

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19. See Hernanz (2006) for a detailed analysis of Spanish constructions with *sí* 'yes' and *sí que* 'yes that'.

definites and lexical definites (see Section 4.2): definites are subject to stronger conditions of use in VFF constructions since they cannot appear when the speaker rejects a given propositional content. Why are VFF constructions with definites unable to connect with an overt negative proposition? The key factor is probably the fact that in negative sentences definites tend to be interpreted as referential expressions, falling outside of the scope of negation: for instance, in *No se leyó el Quijote* ('S/he didn't read the *Quijote*'), the negation does not affect the object NP. Once a definite NP has been introduced in an asserted proposition, it tends to be processed as old information, when it has to reappear in the subsequent discourse. This informative status favours a 'topic–comment' articulation of the proposition, thus blocking the possibility of matching with the 'verum focus' structure of VFF. Thus, what gives rise to the exclusion of definite NPs is an incompatibility in informative status between such NPs and the VFF construction. No similar effect is obtained when the proposition in the background is simply evoked: in this case, the referent of the definite NP is merely mentioned, but not established as a potential topic. If this approach is right, it can also explain why indefinite NPs are not subject to the same restrictions: they can hardly be interpreted as topics and old information, so they do not favour informational partitions and do not collide with the conditions imposed by VFF constructions.

Finally, there is still the possibility that the context does not provide any overt indication about the alternative set of the proposition expressed in the VFF construction. How is the requirement that such propositional content has to be treated as given or background information satisfied in this situation? Our proposal is the following: when the context offers no overt alternatives for consideration, the whole "responsibility" of identifying the set entirely falls on the VFF construction, which overtly asserts the affirmative proposition and evokes (and rejects) the corresponding negative one. It is the VFF construction that triggers the search for a contextual assumption that is contrary to the proposition expressed, in order to remove such an assumption from the common ground. If the negative proposition has not been expressed in the discourse, it will have to be inferentially retrieved, the only limitation being that of establishing a consistent match with the context. Thus, there is no need to have a previous mention, since the construction itself will induce the accommodation of the proposition into the context. This is what we get when the negative proposition can be recovered as an implicature of the previous discourse (cf. examples (60)–(61)). Only when it is not possible to establish this match, the construction sounds odd (cf. example (62)). When this process is completed, VFF receives an adequate interpretation. We take this to be the basic, default situation.

In contexts where no alternative set has been overtly presented, VFF constructions containing fronted definites are never acceptable. We think that this is due to the properties of definites and the discourse requirements they impose, more specifically, to the topicality of definite NPs and the way it collides with the ban on informational partitions imposed by VFF.

4.4   Indefinites and scalar effects

As shown above, sentences with fronted indefinites receive an emphatic interpretation that can be explained as an effect of 'verum focus'. As a further specification to this general semantic content, the constructions involving indefinites give rise to some additional interpretive effects that derive from the fact that indefinites typically have scalar properties. As it is well known, indefinites can be ordered on a scale, as for instance: *muchísimo > mucho > bastante > poco > poquísimo* 'very much > much > enough > some > little'. Let's take again some of the basic cases of VFF, with indefinites like *mucho*, *poco* and *bastante*, to illustrate this point:

(69)   a.   ***Mucho dinero*** *debe   tener.*
much   money must.PRS.3SG have
'S/he must have lots of money.'

b.   ***Poco más*** *te   puedo   decir.*
little   more you.OBL can.PRS.1SG say
'There's little more I can tell you.'

c.   ***Bastante trabajo*** *tengo   ya.*
enough   work   have.PRS.1SG already
'I've got ENOUGH work already.'

According to the general mechanism for the interpretation of VFF, uttering (69) not only amounts to emphatically asserting the propositional content and rejecting the corresponding negation, but in addition it rejects also all the propositions obtained by substituting the indefinite quantifiers with other quantifiers representing lower (or higher) values on a scale. Thus, uttering (69a) excludes '(S)he has some money', '(S)he has little money' and '(S)he has no money'; uttering (69b) excludes 'I can tell you much more'; and uttering (69c) excludes 'I have little work'. This is due to the usual attraction of focus by indefinites.[20] Polar interrogatives – which crucially involve sentence polarity – containing indefinite quantifiers represent a nice example of this kind of attraction of focus. As shown in (70) and (71), the most natural answer for them takes the indefinite as the focus bearer:

(70)   A: *– ¿Conocías   allí   a alguien?*
know.PST.2SG there to someone
'Did you know anyone there?'

B: *– A   Juan.*
to   Juan
'Juan.'

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20. This is the reason why one has to resort to prosodic emphasis on the indefinite in most of the English translations in order to capture the adequate interpretation of the Spanish examples.

(71) A: – ¿*Vino   mucha gente?*
          come.PST.3SG much   people
          'Did many people come?'
      B: – *Cuarenta y   cinco personas.*
          forty   and five   persons
          'Forty-five people.'

Given this, it is no surprise that scalar focus appears in (69): the alternatives are ordered, and the focus denotation is the lowest or highest element on the scale. Focus thus marks a cutting point on the scale that determines which values produce true propositions. A series of ordered alternatives are thereby rejected. As a result, VFF constructions with indefinites typically receive scalar interpretations that can be rendered by expressions like 'at least', 'even' or 'at most':

(72) a. S/he must have at least a lot of money.
      b. I can tell you {at most very little / almost nothing more}.
      c. I have {at least enough work / a lot of work}.

Scalar readings with indefinites are therefore simple effects of the interaction between 'verum focus' and the semantic properties of the fronted elements.

5.   Some extensions

5.1   Negative Preposing

Our treatment of VFF constructions with indefinites can be extended to gain a better understanding of an old grammatical issue, *Negative Preposing*. For Spanish, the relevant examples are in (73), taken from Bosque (1980: §2.2):

(73) a. ***De nada***   *carece.*
          of nothing lack.PRS.3SG
          'There is nothing s/he lacks. (= S/he has it all.)'
      b. ***De ninguno de esos problemas*** *trató   la   reunión.*
          of none   of those problems   deal.PST.3SG the meeting
          'Not one of those problems was the meeting about. (= None of those
          problems were addressed in the meeting.)'
      c. ***A nadie*** *le   dijo   nada.*
          to no.one s/he.OBL say.PST.3SG nothing
          'To no-one did s/he say a word.'

The essential features of Negative Preposing in English are equivalent to those of the Spanish examples: a constituent containing a negative quantifier (or a downward entailing expression) is preposed, and as a consequence subject inversion takes place:

(74) a. ***With no job*** *would Mary be happy.*
     b. ***On no account*** *should you go there.*

Haegeman (2000) claims that the preposed constituent is in focus, and cannot be taken as a topic. Our proposal, as should already be obvious from the preceding discussion, takes Negative Preposing as a particular instance of VFF. On the formal side, this accounts for the operator-variable properties of the syntax of Negative Preposing, as well as for subject inversion; on the interpretive side, it provides a plausible account both of the semantic contribution of Negative Preposing, and of the resulting contrast between sentences with preposing and sentences with negative constituents *in situ*, as exemplified in (75):

(75) a. ***On no account*** *should you go there.*
     b. *You should not go there on any account.*

The basic difference lies in the stylistically marked, emphatic status of the first ones, vs. the unmarked, neutral status of the *in situ* versions, as expected if Negative Preposing is an instance of VFF. Finally, the fronted phrase is obviously not a topic, but it cannot be given a (contrastive/informational) focus reading either, so 'verum focus' seems to be an adequate way to account for the cluster of properties associated to Negative Preposing. It is worth discussing the contrast in (76), taken from Jackendoff (1972: 364), and slightly adapted for Spanish in (77), in the light of our hypothesis on VFF:

(76) a. *With no clothes, Mary could be attractive.*
     b. ***With no clothes*** *could Mary be attractive.*

(77) a. *Con   muy   poca   ropa,   María   podría   resultar   atractiva.*
        with   very   few   clothes María   can.COND.3SG look   attractive
     b. ***Con   muy   poca   ropa***   *podría   María resultar atractiva.*
        with   very   few   clothes can.COND.3SG María look   attractive

While in the (a) examples the scope of the negative element is reduced to the preposed constituent (which is a dislocated topic), in the (b) examples negation takes scope over the whole sentence ('Mary could not be attractive with any clothes'), and the preposed constituent cannot be a topic. Haegeman (2000) points out that in English only the (b) version – the one with Negative Preposing – admits tags with *neither* and licenses negative polarity items, which suggests that negation is in fact working in two different ways in (a) and (b). Instead of assuming that fronting moves a constituent towards a Focus Phrase in (76b), as argued in Haegeman (2000), we claim that fronting places the negative constituent in an unspecified preverbal position in order to trigger 'verum focus'. The interpretation of (76b) follows the same pattern we already

described for VFF in Spanish: the opposite proposition ('Mary could be attractive with certain clothes') is rejected, as well as any other alternative proposition obtained by substituting the negative phrase with a quantifier. This strong assertion of the explicitly communicated proposition gives the sentence its typical emphatic and stylistically marked flavour. Both (76b) and its Spanish version in (77b) fit in the previous discourse, in their basic, default use, giving rise to a contrastive interpretation: they indicate that an accessible contextual assumption is to be refuted. If our perspective on Negative Preposing is right, a number of apparently unrelated constructions will reveal as particular cases of a single general pattern.

5.2   VFF and VP Preposing

It is not difficult to perceive a strong similarity between Spanish VFF, particularly in examples like (5), (51)–(53), and English VP Preposing (hereinafter, VPP). We believe that VPP is simply a particular instance of VFF in English. This should be enough to get a straightforward account of the discourse functions of VPP. Ward (1990: 742–744) claims that VPP performs two functions: first, "it may serve to affirm a speaker's belief in a salient proposition explicitly evoked in the discourse", and second, "it may serve to suspend a speaker's belief in an explicitly evoked and salient proposition". As the second discourse function is clearly dependent on the presence of the connective *if* introducing the preposing (cf. *I know why Ellen said that, if say it she did*), we will concentrate on the first function, illustrated by the following examples from Ward (1990):

(78) a.   *It was necessary to pass, if I was to stay at Oxford, and* **pass I did**.
      b.   *We went to Canada to learn, and* **learn we did**.
      c.   *I don't clean quite so fanatically as you, but* **clean I do**.

Ward (1990: 743) makes a distinction among three different types of proposition affirmation: 'Independent proposition affirmation' affirms a proposition that is neither semantically entailed by nor presupposed in the prior discourse; 'Concessive affirmation' affirms a proposition that stands in rhetorical opposition to another proposition conceded in the prior discourse; and 'Scalar Affirmation' affirms a proposition whose predicate is construable as a scale upon which the subject represents a high value. The parallelism between the discourse functions of VFF and those of VPP (as Ward presents them) is not perfect, as most cases of 'Scalar Affirmation' could not be translated into a Spanish VFF construction.[21]   However, leaving aside the case of 'Scalar Affirmation', the discourse functions of VFF and VPP are essentially the same, as can

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21. What Ward (1990) labels 'scalar affirmation' corresponds to a 'verum focus', emphatic construction, which is different from VFF, and stronger, as shown in the examples:

(i) *Smith errs – and err he does! – by assuming that…* (Ward 1990: 744)

(ii) *Smith se equivoca – ¡y vaya si se equivoca! – al suponer que…*

be inferred from all the previous discussion. Proposition affirmation in VPP is the equivalent of exhaustive interpretations in VFF: it involves propositions that are first explicitly evoked in the discourse and then non-redundantly (and emphatically, we would add) affirmed by the speaker (see also Horn 1991).

Ward does not provide any principled explanation for the fact that VPP has precisely this kind of interpretive effects. An extension of our account of Spanish VFF is all we need to obtain such an explanation. Suppose that a sentence like …*learn we did* is in fact an instance of VFF (we will not discuss the nature of the syntactic node hosting the fronted VP): first, the VP cannot be interpreted as a topic nor as a contrastive focus, and there is no informational partition, so that focus falls on sentence polarity; second, according to the usual pattern of VFF, the proposition *we learnt* is strongly affirmed as a result of the rejection of the opposite proposition *we did not learn*, an effect of 'verum focus'. The constraint on explicit evocation of the proposition in the preceding discourse is the same one we observed in Spanish VFF with definite NPs, and can be derived from 'verum focus' too.

5.3   Topics for future research

A number of puzzling issues concerning VFF have yet to be investigated. We will not be able to deal with them here, but they deserve a brief mention.

a.   VFF seems to be incompatible with negation,[22] as illustrated in (79), and with imperatives (and directive speech acts), as illustrated in (80).

(79)   a.   ***Algo**   (*no)   debe   saber.*
           something (*not) must.PRS.3SG know

       b.   ***Bastante   trabajo** (*no)   tengo.*
           enough   work   (*not) have.PRS.1SG

       c.   ***Poco más** (*no)   te   puedo   decir.*
           little more (*not) you.OBL can.PRS.1SG say

       d.   ***Lo   mismo** (*no)   digo   yo.*
           the same   (*not) say.PRS.1SG I

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22. There are apparently some counterexamples to this generalisation. They include quantifiers as *mucho* 'much' and *demasiado* 'too much/too many', as in (i) and (ii):

(i)   ***Mucho dinero** no   ha   ganado.*
      much   money not have.PRS.3SG won
      'S/he hasn't won much money.'

(ii) ***Demasiado** no   contribuyes,   con esa actitud.*
      too.much   not contribute.PRS.2SG with that attitude
      'Your attitude is not helping us at all.'

Maybe such constructions are not to be analysed as real VFF cases.

e. ***Con la iglesia** (*no) hemos topado.*
with the Church (*not) have.PRS.1PL bumped

(80) a. **Algo dime.* (Cf.^OK ***Algo** dijo.*)
something tell.IMPR.2SG.me   something tell.PST.3SG

b. **Nada más añade.* (imp) (Cf. ^OK ***Nada** más añado.*)
nothing more add.IMPR.2SG   nothing more add.PRS.1SG

c. **Eso dime.* (Cf. ^OK ***Eso** dice.*)
this tell.IMPR.2SG.me   this tell.PRS.1SG

d. **A buenas horas llegad.* (Cf. ^OK ***A buenas horas** llegáis.*)
to good hours come.IMPR.2PL   to good hours come.PRS.2PL

The fact that this behaviour is found as well in other 'evaluative' and exclamative constructions (see Hernanz 2006) suggests that a more general semantic incompatibility is operating here. The constraints operate, for instance, on *Locative Inversion* in English (cf. *Here comes the sun* vs **Here does not come the sun*, *Come here!* vs **Here come!*), which shares some properties with VFF: it is optional, marked, and the preposed locative is not a topic constituent.

b. The analysis of VFF constructions opens a way to a better understanding of the grammar of irony in Spanish (Beinhauer 1958; Bosque 1980; Hernanz 2001). A significant number of constructions that can only have an ironical interpretation seem to be further cases of VFF.

(81) a. *¡A **buenas horas** llegas!*
to good hours come.PRS.2SG
'A fine time for you to arrive!

b. *¡**Bonita faena** me has hecho!*
nice chore me.OBL have.PRS.2SG done
'A nice chore you've done for me!'

c. *¡Sí, hombre, **el coche** te voy a prestar!*
yes man the car you.OBJ go.PRS.1SG to lend
'Sure, man, my car I'm going to lend you!'

The striking fact is that it is obviously syntax that forces the ironical reading of (81), and the syntax in these examples shows all the defining properties of VFF: optional fronting of a constituent, subject-verb inversion, lack of resumptive clitics, unavailability of a narrow focus reading. Moreover, these sentences all have an emphatic/exclamative value. Adding them to our list of VFF constructions has some obvious advantages, the most interesting one being the possibility of deriving irony from 'verum focus', if we

assume that VFF affects sentence polarity and irony is the expression of a certain attitude towards the truth (or the felicity) of an utterance.[23]

c.   Another group of Spanish fronting constructions that also display the typical features of VFF have been recently analysed by Hernanz (2001, 2006): they include cases of fronting of adjectival, prepositional and adverbial expressions, among them adverbs like *bien* 'well' and *sí* 'yes', sometimes optionally followed by the complementiser *que* 'that'.

(82)   a.   ***Honrado*** *que es   uno…*
             honest   that be.PRS.3SG one
             'Honest (as) one is…'

       b.   ***Salado*** *que es   el   niño.*
             lovely   that be.PRS.3SG the boy
             'Lovely, that child is.'

(83)   a.   *¡**A la playa** que nos fuimos!*
              to the beach that CL   go.PST.1PL
             'To the beach we went!'

       b.   ***Allá*** *que se   quedó…*
             there that CL   stay.PST.3SG
             'There s/he stayed…'

(84)   a.   *¡Pues **bien** te apresuraste   a contárselo!*
              so   well CL hurry.PST.2SG to tell.him/her.it
             'Well you were certainly in a hurry to tell him/her!'

       b.   ***Bien*** *que le   gustó   el jamón ibérico…*
             well   that him/her.OBL please.PST.3SG the ham   Iberian
             'S/He certainly liked the Iberian ham…'

(85)   ***Sí*** *(que) hemos   estado en Egipto.*[24]
        yes (that) have.PRS.1PL been   in Egypt
        'Yes we HAVE been to Egypt.'

These sentence patterns are all emphatic, and parallel interrogative, exclamative and Negative Preposing constructions in several ways. Most of Hernanz's accurate observations reproduce the same features we noted in VFF. As for *bien* fronting, for instance,

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23. The reviewer points out that these are not instances of 'verum focus', but rather of 'scalar focus'. As in the cases of indefinite quantifiers, our idea is to derive the scalar effect from the interaction of 'verum focus' on the one hand, and the properties of indefinites, on the other. We agree that the grammar of irony and the properties of fronted nouns are topics that deserve a more articulated discussion.

24. Notice that this construction is just the basic paraphrase for VFF that we mentioned in previous sections.

she claims that "*bien* is used to indicate that the event denoted in the sentence REALLY took place" (Hernanz 2006: 108) and that it reinforces the positive value of the sentence by canceling "an implicit negative expectation" (2006: 110), which equals the usual effects of VFF; moreover, she notices that this kind of fronting is incompatible both with negation (cf. **Bien no viene a verme cuando lo necesita* 'But (s)he does not visit me when (s)he needs me') and with directive speech acts (cf. **¡Bien harás lo que te diga!* 'You will do what I will tell you!'). Finally, Hernanz (2006) argues that *bien* is associated to functional nodes like Polarity Phrase and Focus Phrase in the left sentential periphery. We would like to suggest that a comprehensive account of *bien* fronting should be based on our analysis of VFF constructions. The same would work for the rest of sentence patterns in (82)–(85).

6.   Conclusions

In the preceding sections we have presented an analysis of a scarcely studied kind of fronting constructions in Spanish. Such constructions have revealed as a productive testing ground for the study of the interaction between grammar and pragmatics. We think that our main findings are the following.

We have argued for the existence of a third class of fronting constructions that must be distinguished from both Clitic Dislocation and Contrastive Focalisation. This new class shows a syntactic pattern almost equivalent to Focalisation, but with different phonological and semantic properties. From a syntactic point of view, this kind of fronting is an instance of A-bar movement. We leave for future research the precise nature of its target position, as well as the crosslinguistic variation of the phenomenon.

This third class of fronting constructions is characterised by the absence of any informational partition between the overt constituents of the sentence. The fronted element cannot be interpreted as a topic nor as a contrastive focus or an informational focus. A thetic (all-new) reading of the sentence is also discarded, probably for economy reasons, given that it could be obtained in a simpler way, without fronting.

Only one particular type of information structure is compatible with all the mentioned grammatical features: 'verum focus', with focus limited to polarity and the rest of the propositional content taken as background. We labelled the construction 'Verum Focus Fronting' (VFF). Analysing fronting as a grammatical mechanism for the expression of 'verum focus' has some important consequences: it allows us to derive all the interpretive properties of the construction from its information structure, and so to provide a principled explanation for its emphatic value and its constrained distribution in discourse.

In particular, the requirement that all the propositional content be part of the background severely restricts the number of contexts where the VFF construction can be used felicitously. In fact, these can be reduced to two kinds of environments. The first one is a context that overtly presents the alternatives of the polarity focus set

{*p*, ~*p*} without asserting any of its members, as happens in polar interrogatives and non-factual contexts; the VFF construction is then used to assert the positive alternative and reject the negative one. The second environment is one where the negative proposition ~*p* is salient in the immediate context, either as a directly asserted proposition or as a manifest implicature; the VFF structure is used to reject it and to affirm its positive counterpart. Thus, the VFF construction gives rise to both exhaustive and contrastive readings as a result of its interaction with available contextual assumptions. The fact that definite NPs show a more constrained distribution in discourse than indefinites can be explained in terms of their referential status: once introduced as part of an assertion, a definite NP becomes a potential topic and favours an informational partition, which is incompatible with the requirements imposed by VFF that the propositional content be treated as background information. Only the contexts that make it possible to take the whole propositional content as given are suitable environments for VFF constructions.

The properties of 'verum focus' offer also a sound explanation for the intuitive idea that VFF constructions are "emphatic": what is perceived as emphasis is the result of reintroducing a propositional content (treated as) already present in the discourse in order to assert the affirmative proposition while at the same time rejecting its negative counterpart.

We hope that our proposal can make a contribution both to grammatical description and to a better understanding of the principles that govern the interaction of grammar and context. In fact, the heterogeneous group of fronting constructions that grammarians have described reduces to a well motivated triad that covers a variety of language-specific constructions:

1.   Preposing of Topics (Clitic Dislocation)
2.   Preposing of Contrastive Foci (Focus Movement)
3.   Preposing of unmarked constituents in order to force 'verum focus' (VFF, 'Negative Preposing', 'VP Preposing'…)

Much work remains to be done on several related issues, such as the syntactic patterns of VFF across languages, the relations with other mechanisms that mark 'verum focus', and the place of VFF within a general picture of crosslinguistic variation in information structure.

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