RestrP and the left periphery: a case study on the distribution of restrictive relatives

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In this work we focus our attention on the position of DPs modified by restrictive relative clauses (RRC) in the left periphery in two Romance languages, Italian and Portuguese. We propose that DPs containing a RRC have access to a specific position inside the left periphery of the clause. We show that this position, which we tentatively call RestrP, is inaccessible to elements which have already been identified, as those modified by an appositive relative clause (ARC, see 2) or not identified at all, like those modified by kind defining relatives (ex. 2a., Benincà & Cinque 2013). A detailed analysis of RestrP will show that this position has to be distinguished both from TopP as well as from FocusP, although fronting of nominal expressions modified by a RRC display similarities with both left dislocation/topicalisation and Contrastive Focus Fronting. We will also show that RestrP is located inbetween the Focus and the Topic field.[1]

DPs modified by a RRC can be at the same time have a contrastive focus reading (as indicated by the focus particle *solo*) and be resumed by a clitic (1a.). This is clearly less acceptable, if the DP is *not* modified by a RRC (1b.) or modified by an appositive relative clause (1c.):

(1)a. Solo il **dolce che hanno fatto per il   tuo compleanno**, Linda l'ha   mangiato con
only the cake that have   made for the your birthday,   Linda it has eaten   with
piacere.
pleasure
'Linda ate with pleasure only the cake which they made for your birthday.'

  b. *Solo **il   dolce**, Linda l'ha   mangiato con piacere.
only the cake,   Linda it has eaten   with pleasure.

  c. *Solo **Mario, che hanno invitato per il   tuo compleanno**, Linda l'ha   visto con
only Mario, who have   invited for the your birthday,   Linda him has seen with
piacere.
pleasure.
`Linda saw only Mario, whom they invited for your birthday, with pleasure.'

Italian dative complements can be resumed by a clitic or not, which is reported to be just optional and related to the stylistic level. However, there is a subtle but rather clear contrast between a RRC and a kind-defining one (which typically has a subjunctive verb): the latter does not have clitic resumption (2a.), while restrictive relatives do (2b.).

(2)a. **A una segretaria che sia pigra**, non (**% le**) daremo il lavoro.
to a secretary,   who be lazy,   not (her) give   the job
'We won't give the job to any secretary who is lazy.'

  b. **A una segretaria che è pigra** non (**le**)   diamo il lavoro.[2]
to a secretary,   who is lazy, not (her) give   the job
'We won't give the job to a secretary who is lazy.'

It is important to note that the clitic in (2a.) is not ruled out because the DP does not refer to a specific referent. In (3) the QP modified by a RRC has no specific referent and the clitic is nevertheless optional as in (2b.).

(3) **A qualcuno che è pigro** (**glie**) diamo il lavoro.
to somebody, that is lazy, (him) give   the job
'We won't give the job to somebody who is lazy.'

In this respect it is important to note, that (3) would not be grammatical without the relative clause, since QPs cannot be clitic left dislocated (see Cinque (1990)). Also in Portuguese, as shown in (4a), quantifiers are excluded from topic positions. When modified by a RRC, the structure becomes grammatical (4b). This demonstrates the difference between TopP and RestrP in the left periphery.

(4)a.   ***A ninguém**, eu (não) vou contar essa história. (TOP, Martins & Costa 2011)
      to no-one   I   (not) go tell   that story
      'I'll tell that story to no one.'

   b.   **A ninguém que esteja lá na escola** eu (não) vou contar essa história.
      to no-one who is there in-the school I will tell   that story
      'I'll tell that story to no one that is there at the school.'

An additional observation shows that DPs modified by a RRC and DPs modified by an appositive relative clause have a fixed order if combined with each other: the [DP + appositive relative clause] is followed by [DP + RRC], cf. examples (5)a. vs. (5)b. This is not the case with "normal" dative/accusative objects.

(5)a.   [$_{TOPP}$ a Maria che é una brava ragazza], [$_{RestrP}$ il dolce che aveva fatto Piero],
        to Mary that is a   nice   girl   the cake that had made Piero
      gliel' ho dato   [ma niente di più].
      her+it have given   but nothing else
      'The cake that Piero had made I have given to Mary who is a nice girl.'

   b.   */??[$_{TOPP}$ Il dolce che aveva fatto Piero], [$_{RestrP}$ a Maria, che é una brava ragazza]
         the cake that had made Piero   to Mary that is a   nice   girl
      gliel' ho dato
      her+it have given

   c.   [$_{TOPP}$ Il dolce che aveva fatto Piero],   [$_{FocP}$ solo A MARIA che é una brava ragazza]
        the cake that had made Piero   only to Mary that is a   nice   girl
      gliel' ho dato.
      her+it have given
      'I have given the cake that Piero had made only to Mary who is a nice girl.'

Summing up; it looks like RestrP is on the border between the two domains of Focus and Topic, both from the point of view of the position, which probably reflects the type of semantic operation that is involved in its interpretation. On a par with Focus, a restriction requires exclusive identification of a member of a set (called *Contrastivity* by some authors, although it is also present in Information Focus, which is not contrastive). On a par with Topic, DPs in RestrP are elements on which something new is predicated. Hence, the commonality of usual Topics and RestrP is in the relation between the XP in the left periphery and the following clause, which is presupposed in the case of Contrastive (or information) Focus, and new in the case of Topics. This "mixed" behavior suggests that the projections in the left periphery are ordered according to the type of semantic operations they require to be performed: since identification of a member of a set is required, RestrP has to be placed in the area corresponding to this semantic operation. In addition, we will argue that the different internal structure of restrictive and appositive relative clauses contributes to an explanation of their divergent behavior when preposed to the left periphery of the clause.