LOCATIVE INVERSION, PP TOPICALIZATION AND THE EPP

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0. Introduction

“Locative inversion” constructions in a language such as English which does not otherwise allow postverbal subjects are clearly distinguishable from PP fronting via topicalization, although the two constructions share the discourse constraint that the fronted PP represent relatively more familiar information in the discourse (cf. Birner 1994).£ Besides the difference in the position of the subject, locative inversion also differs from PP topicalization in that it is subject to a number of syntactic constraints: the verb must be intransitive (but not necessarily unaccusative, cf. Levin and Rappaport 1995), and the fronted PP must be an argument, not an adjunct. This is shown in the data in (1) and (2) ((1a,b,e,f) from Bresnan 1994):

\[(1)\]
a. Among the guests was sitting my friend Rose.
b. Toward me lurched a drunk.
c. In this office works the President’s personal secretary.
d. Here and there could be seen wild animal tracks.
e. *In this rainforest can find the reclusive lyrebird a lucky hiker.
f. *In this rainforest can find a lucky hiker the reclusive lyrebird.

\[(2)\]
a. In a corner sat little Jack Horner.
b. *In a corner laughed little Jack Horner.

£ The subject in an English locative inversion construction, unlike the subject in a PP topicalization structure, must be presentationally focused, which suggests movement at some point in the derivation to specifier position of some Focus Phrase (cf. Kempchinsky 1999, Kim 1999).
When we turn our attention to Spanish, however, a different pattern emerges. There is no obvious distinction between “locative inversion” and “PP topicalization” on the basis of subject position, given the general possibility of postverbal subjects, and no syntactic constraints on PP fronting can be readily detected:

(3) a. En el cuarto entraron tres extranjeros.
   “Into the room entered three foreigners”
   b. En esta oficina trabajan los contables.
   “In this office work the accountants”
   c. En esta sala escriben los estudiantes sus tareas.
   “In this room write the students their assignments”
   d. En el rincón estaba sentado Juan.
   “In the corner was seated Juan”
   e. En el rincón reía Juan.
   “In the corner laughed Juan”

At face value it would seem clear that at least some of the examples in (3) are cases of PP topicalization with optional subject-verb “inversion”, as shown by the examples in (4):

(4) a. En esta sala (,) los estudiantes escriben sus tareas.
   b. En el rincón (,) Juan reía.

I will propose that in fact PP fronting in Spanish is generally topicalization of the PP, rather than movement to “subject” position. More generally, I will argue that PP fronting corresponds to different syntactic derivations in different languages as a result of the interaction between language specific properties and universal requirements, specifically, the EPP. The paper will proceed as follows. In section 1 I give a brief analysis of the transitivity constraint in English locative inversion structures, which I show is the consequence of minimality constraints on movement to satisfy the EPP. In section 2 I argue that [Spec,TP] in Spanish is not needed for EPP reasons because the EPP is satisfied by head movement of Agr [+D]; hence, PP fronting is A’ type movement, subject only to the usual island constraints. In section 3 I examine constructions in Spanish which do have locative subjects which are distinguishable from topicalized PPs. Finally in section 4 I turn to Italian, which appears to have a transitivity constraint like English, but which nevertheless shows a different pattern of PP fronting with intransitive verbs.
I will argue that Italian “locative inversion” is either PP topicalization or fronting of a locative subject, but not movement of a locative argument PP to [Spec,TP].

1. *The transitivity restriction in English.*

   As a point of departure, I will start with Collins’ (1997) analysis of locative inversion, shown schematically in (5):

   (5) \[ [TP \ PP \ T^\circ \ [TrP \ V \ [VP \ DP_{Su} \ tv \ fPP \ ]]] \]

Collins assumes that all verbs allowing the construction are unaccusative, a point to which I will return. The PP and DP appear as arguments of the verb\(^2\); since they are in the same minimal domain (the unaccusative assumption), they are equidistant from [Spec,TP] and hence either one can satisfy T’s strong +D feature, assuming that a PP has a matching D feature. If the PP raises to [Spec,TP], then nominative Case checking of the postverbal subject is realized via covert raising of the subject’s formal features to T. The V raises to Tr, deriving the observed order.\(^3\)

Why should the PP be able to check the strong +D feature on T? Collins suggests that it is the DP object within the PP which fulfills this function, but this seems dubious. A more principled explanation is at hand if we adopt Grimshaw’s (1991) extended projection sets, according to which the nominal projection set is defined by the lexical feature +N and the functional feature +D, and the highest functional projection of this system is P. Therefore a PP will satisfy without further stipulation the EPP.\(^4\)

\(^2\) Collins differs here from analyses of locative inversion as a subcase of predicate inversion (cf. Hoekstra and Mulder 1990, den Dikken and Naess 1993), according to which the DP and PP form a small clause with the PP as predicate.

\(^3\) Collins assumes that TrP is the functional projection in which accusative Case is checked; it thus may appear somewhat unmotivated to have an unaccusative verb move to this projection. Part of the conceptual difficulty here may simply lie in the labelling of this functional projection. Borer (1994), among others, has argued that this functional category is Asp(ect) Phrase. Since unaccusative verbs are potentially telic, raising of the verb to Asp\(^{\circ}\) does not seem problematic. For another account of the position of the verb and the subject, see Kempchinsky (1999).

\(^4\) This leaves open the question of whether the PP moves to a topicalized position after movement to [Spec,TP], as proposed by several analyses (cf. Stowell 1981, den Dikken and Naess 1993, and, in a different framework, Bresnan 1994, among others). One piece of syntactic evidence in favor of this is the similar distribution of locative inversion and topicalization in English (Stowell 1981); however, it is not clear the locative inversion structures show the reconstruction effects characteristic of A’ movement.
Consider now the case of a transitive verb. On the assumption that locative adverbial phrases are generated as the innermost complement of the V (Larson 1988), the VP structure of (1e,f) is that of (6):

\[
(6) \ [v_P \ a \ lucky \ hiker \ [v \ find \ [v_P \ the \ reclusive \ lyrebird \ [v \ t_v \ [PP \ in \ this \ rainforest]]]]]
\]

If the PP raises to [Spec,TP] to satisfy the EPP, then the subject DP a lucky hiker must check its Case covertly, as must the object DP the reclusive lyrebird, on the assumption that in English overt object shift is not a possibility. In Chomsky (1995), where covert Case checking is viewed as covert feature raising, it is suggested that if a verb has two arguments which must check Case, then at least one of them must do so overtly, since otherwise the necessary c-command relation between the formal features of the subject and the formal features of the object will fail to obtain at the LF interface: once V has raised to T, either overtly or covertly, then FF(subject) will be closer to the V+T head, and thus adjoin first. If overt Case checking of the object is not an option in a given language, lacking the strong +D feature on the appropriate category, then the subject DP must raise overtly, blocking any other element from satisfying the EPP. This, it seems, is a ready explanation for the transitivity restriction.

Suppose, however, that the object DP does overtly check Case, leaving the possibility of the subject DP checking its Case covertly. Movement of the PP to [Spec,TP] will still be blocked by the EPP, since the closest XP with the feature value +D, and hence the only possible candidate, is the subject DP. The effect of raising the PP to [Spec,TP] is to create a minimality violation, however these are captured. Thus locative inversion is still ruled out in English transitive structures, regardless of whether there is overt Case checking of the object.

By this story, it must be the case that locative inversion in English is possible only when the DP subject and the locative PP are in the same minimal domain. Hence verbs such as work which otherwise are unergative do not project the upper VP shell (on the analysis of Hale and Keyser 1993 of unergatives as covert transitives) in a locative inversion construction, so that the VP structure of a sentence such as (1c) is that of (7):

\[
(7) \ [v_P \ the \ President’s \ secretary \ [v \ works \ [PP \ in \ this \ office]]]
\]
Taking theta roles as a function of a certain structural configuration between the V and its arguments, this means that in (7) the subject of work is not an agent but rather a theme, thus capturing Bresnan’s (1994) observation noted above that the subject in a locative inversion structure is the argument of which the location, change of location or direction expressed by the locative argument is predicated—the original definition of THEME in Gruber (1976). This apparently semantic restriction on the construction falls out as a consequence of the general operation of principles of the computational system. More precisely, if unergatives are analyzed as covert transitives, than the way to describe the apparent alternations with verbs like work is to say that locative inversion will be possible if the covert object is not syntactically projected. As in analyses which appeal to a process of reanalysis (cf. for example Hoekstra and Mulder 1990), this alternation must be lexically determined, in that not all unergative verbs can appear in the locative inversion structure, but unlike reanalysis, the variation is placed more directly in the lexicon rather than in the syntax.

Thus, the key to the transitivity restriction on locative inversion in English is the EPP. Let us now turn our attention to Spanish.


Various researchers, beginning with Goodall (1991), have argued that [Spec,TP] in Spanish is an A′ rather than A position; that is, it is a position in which P(eripheral) features rather than phi-features are checked (Chomsky 1998). I will adopt here a particular proposal, that of Ordóñez 1997. He analyzes the relation between Agr and the subject DP as a clitic-doubling DP relation, following Uriagereka’s (1995) proposal for clitics, as shown in (8), where (8a) represents the subject DP-Agr relation and (8b) represents the object DP-clitic relation:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(8) a. } & \quad [\text{DP } [\text{DP } \text{los estudiantes }] [\text{D/Agr } [1/2/3\text{PL}]]] \\
b. & \quad [\text{DP } [\text{DP } \text{a los estudiantes }] [\text{D } \text{nos/os/los}]]
\end{align*}
\]

Furthermore, these consequences remain unchanged if Attract is recast in terms of the T-associate (i.e. probe-goal) relation (Chomsky 1998): the three possibilities allowed in this system for satisfaction of the EPP are Merge of an expletive, Merge of the associate itself, or Merge of some element α closer to T than the associate. If the subject DP and the PP are in the same VP level, then minimally they are at least equidistant from T; otherwise, the subject DP will always be closer and thus PP can never satisfy the EPP.
Ordóñez shows that in cases of feature mismatches between the lexical DP and the D head, be it Agr or a clitic pronoun, coreference is determined by the phi-features of the D head, as shown by (9):

(9) a. Los estudiantes tienen/tenéis/tenemos mala memoria.
   “The students have (3PL/2PL /1PL) bad memory”

b. [Los estudiantes], salimos de la reunión después de que nos acusaron.
   “The students left (1PL) the meeting after they accused us”

c. *[Los estudiantes], salimos de la reunión después de que los acusaron.
   “The students left (1PL) the meeting after they accused them”

Now, if the D/Agr head alone moves to T to satisfy the EPP, then the lexical DP need not and hence by economy cannot, and so can remain in-situ in Spec position of the light v. I assume that as a doubling element with the lexical subject, it also checks nominative Case, since in effect D/Agr is the head of the subject DP in the configuration in (8a). Thus the lexical DP need not move to [Spec,TP] for any reason at all. Hence [Spec,TP] is ‘free’ to act as a landing site for topicalized elements.’ More generally, there is no need to postulate a different structure for, say, (3a) vs. (3f); “locative inversion” and topicalization, as cases of PP fronting for discourse purposes, differ only in their landing site as language-specific properties may dictate. In a sense, the unmarked case is fronting to [Spec,TP], if such a move does not otherwise prevent the derivation from converging. The interaction between the EPP, nominative Case checking and the nature of agreement derives the result that fronting to [Spec,TP] is possible in English only if there is no light v projection; hence only with verbs appearing in an unaccusative structure. In Spanish, on the other hand, the EPP is satisfied directly by Merge of the Agr head, so that [Spec,TP] is always available, all things being equal, as a

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6 This analysis is very close in spirit to that of Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1997), who draw a parallelism between languages allowing VSO and languages with clitic doubling. They propose that in VSO structures--by their assumptions, structures in which neither the subject nor the object check Case overtly--the AgrS-subject DP relationship is akin to the relationship between an object clitic and the doubled lexical DP.

7 This type of account, of course, entails that preverbal subjects in Spanish are in fact topics, as has been noted more than once. Goodall (1999), however, points out a series of empirical differences between preverbal subjects and topics, suggesting that movement to [Spec,TP] is not always movement of a topic or focus phrase. I think that a more fine-grained notion of topic (cf. Casielles-Suárez 1998) may explain some of these differences.
landing site for the fronted PP. As empirical confirmation, consider the different thematic properties of unergative verbs in fronted PP structures in the two languages. Since in English the upper vP structure must be absent, the subject may not receive an agentive reading, as shown by the ungrammaticality of agentive purposive clauses (10a); in contrast, these are perfectly grammatical in Spanish (10b):

(10) a. *In this office work the students (in order) to raise funds.
    b. En esta oficina trabajan los estudiantes para recaudar fondos.

Nevertheless, Spanish does have a class of what can be termed “PP subjects”, to which I turn in the next section.

3. Locative subjects vs. fronted locative PPs in Spanish

Fernández Soriano (1998) analyzes a set of constructions termed “impersonal clauses” in traditional grammars, exemplified by the data in (11):

(11) a. En esta casa/Aquí falta café.
    “In this house/Here is needed coffee”
    b. En este país ocurren cosas raras.
    “In this country happen odd things”

She notes that, unlike what is observed in sentences such as those in (3), the occurrence of the locative PP or adverbial in preverbal position in examples such as (11) does not alter the neutral information structure of the sentence, as shown by the contrasts in (12):

(12) ¿Qué pasa?
    a. En esta casa falta café.
    b. #Hacia la escuela van corriendo los niños.
    “Toward the school go running the children”
    c. #En la sala escriben los estudiantes sus tareas.

Fernández Soriano argues that verbs such as those in (11) have the locative PP as their external argument, proposing (13a) as the basic structure for an eventive verb such as *ocurrir* ‘to occur’ and (13b) for non-eventive verbs such as *faltar* ‘to be lacking/missing’:
Assuming that this analysis is correct, this entails that the locative subject will not appear in the ‘Agr-doubled’ structure of (8a), thus capturing the impersonal nature of these sentences. Like other PPs, it will check the EPP feature of T, and, as is the case for raising in general, can also raise to check the EPP feature of the higher clause, since the +D feature of the argument does not delete under checking.

Now note that this entails that in sentences such as (11), [Spec,TP] is not the landing site for a topicalized element, but rather for the XP which satisfies the EPP. This difference is even sharper in raising contexts. Fernández Soriano notes that in such contexts the locative subjects of these “impersonal” verbs are perfectly grammatical, while other preposed locatives are grammatical only with contrastive or focalized stress:

(14) a. En esta casa parecen faltar café.
   “In this house seems to be lacking coffee”
   #Hacia la escuela parecen correr los niños.
   “Toward the school seem to run the children”
   b.′ HACIA LA ESCUELA parecen correr los niños.
   c. #En esta sala parecen escribir los estudiantes sus tareas.
   “In this room seem to write the students their assignments”
   c.′ EN ESTA SALA parecen escribir los estudiantes sus tareas.

The derivation of a sentence such as (14c′), according to the analysis presented thus far, must proceed as follows: The complex DP subject of the lower clause, [DP [DP los estudiantes] Agr], merges to [Spec, vP], and then the ‘clitic’ Agr moves to T of that clause, satisfying the EPP there. Now for this Agr to also satisfy the EPP of the matrix clause, what has to be assumed is in essence a clitic climbing type analysis. The lexical DP los estudiantes need not and hence does not move for EPP purposes to the upper [Spec,TP]. Thus that upper Spec position is available as a landing site for topicalization, yielding sentences such as (14b′) and (14c′).

* This account would seem to predict that the lower [Spec,TP] is also available, contrary to what we find:
  (i) *Parecen en esta sala escribir los estudiantes sus tareas.
There are, however, cases of locative inversion in raising contexts which are not topicalization, but rather ‘true’ locative inversion. Torrego (1989) proposes that a preposed locative phrase licenses a shift of certain unergative verbs to unaccusatives, as evidenced by the fact that the postverbal argument can be a bare plural, a diagnostic which can serve in Spanish to distinguish usually unergative from usually unaccusative verbs:

(15) a. Han pasado camiones.
     Have passed trucks
b. *Han dormido animales.
     Have slept animals

(16) a. *(Aquí) han dormido animales.
     Here have slept animals
b. *(En este parque) juegan niños.
     In this park play children

She suggests that the locative phrase is interpreted as the external argument of the verb, and is structurally the subject of a predication consisting of the verb and its nominal argument, which therefore becomes an internal argument. A natural way of capturing this is to extend structure (13a) to these cases, as shown in (17):

(17) [Ev [Ev′ [VP duermen animales]]]

Raising of the locative argument should be possible, exactly as we find:

(18) En esta escuela parecen [ [e] estudiar adultos] (= Torrego’s (14a)
     “In this school seem to study adults”

Further, raising of the nominal argument is not possible, which is also what we find with the theme argument in sentences such as (11) without contrastive or focalized stress:

     b. *Dinero parece faltar en esta caja.
     “Money seems to be missing in this box”

Nevertheless, it is well known that in cases of object clitic climbing, the so-called restructuring contexts, no XP element can intervene between the two verbs, so whatever analysis accounts for this will also account for examples such as (i).
Clearly agreement in a sentence such as (18) is with the postverbal argument, as is also the case for raising in English locative inversion and existential structures; presumably all these cases of manifestations of long-distance agreement between T and its ‘associate’ as in Chomsky (1998). Crucially, there is no intervening nominal with phi-features.

Thus, Spanish locative subjects have a distinct derivation from topicalized PPs, both of which in turn differ from the derivation of locative inversion structures in English. Yet another pattern will emerge in Italian.

4. **PP fronting in Italian**

Italian shows a more complex pattern of PP fronting, as shown by the data in (20) (% indicates speaker variation with respect to acceptability):

(20) a. Nella stanza sono entrati tre uomi stranieri.
   “Into the room entered three foreign men”
b. In questa stanza lavorano i studenti.
   “In this room work the students”
c. *In questa stanza scrivono i studenti i suoi compiti.
   “In this room write the students their assignments”
d. %In questa stanza scrivono i suoi compiti i studenti.
e. Nell’ angolo era seduto Gianni.
   “In the corner was (IMPF) seated Gianni”
f. %Nell’angolo rideva Gianni.
   “In the corner laughed (IMPF) Gianni”

Let us start with (20c), which shows the order PP-V-S-O. As is well-known, Italian disallows the order V-S-O in general, independently of whether or not there is some sentence-initial element preceding the verb; it also lacks clitic doubling. Thus we must conclude that Agr in this language cannot satisfy the EPP (cf. Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulous 1997, Ordóñez 1997, Zubizarreta 1998). Hence, the EPP must be checked by an XP bearing a +D feature.9 In this sense, Italian is like English.

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9 If the analysis of null subjects in Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulous (1998) is on the right track, whether or not Agr can alone satisfy the EPP must be independent of whether it can be characterized as a +D element. They propose that ‘strong’ Agr, in the sense that it licenses null subjects, is +D, while Agr in non null subject languages is simply a verbal affix already present on the verb in the numeration. However, they allow for the possibility that Agr [+D] may be nominal or a verbal affix in the syntax. My interpretation here is that Agr [+D] suffices for the EPP when it heads the DP projection.
Nonetheless, Italian, unlike English, does allow V-O-S clausal orders, and at least some researchers (cf. Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulous 1997, 1998) have analyzed this order as arising from overt movement of the object past the subject to a Case checking position. Taking a sentence such as (20d), let us suppose that we have arrived at the point in the derivation shown in (21) (for purposes of exposition, I assume that the object checks its Case in the ‘outer’ Spec of vP, following Chomsky 1995, 1998):

\[
\text{(21) } [\text{T} V+T [\text{vP DP}_{DO} [\text{vP DP}_{Su} tV [\text{VP tDO tV PP}]]
\]

scrivono i suoi compiti i studenti in questa stanza

As we saw in the discussion in section 1, the PP cannot raise to [Spec,TP] to satisfy the EPP because the subject DP is closer. Thus the structure of (20d) cannot be that of (22):

\[
\text{(22) } [\text{TP in questa stanza } [\text{T scrivono } [\text{vP i suoi compiti [\text{vP i studenti tV [\text{VP tDO tV tPP}}]]]])}
\]

Now note that (20d) is not accepted by all speakers; furthermore, for those speakers for whom it is acceptable, the necessary context is in a type of ‘list’ reading, as for example in a guided tour context:

\[
\text{(23) } \text{In questa stanza lavorano i professori; in questa stanza scrivono i suoi compiti i studenti ...}
\]

“In this room work the professors; in this room the students write their assignments ...”

In this respect, this sentence has an interpretation very much like an English locative inversion sentence, where the fronted PP is context salient and the postverbal subject has a presentational focus (cf. Bresnan 1994). Independently of these considerations, Ordóñez (1997) and Zubizarreta (1998) argue that VOS structures in Italian are derived via overt movement of the subject to [Spec,TP] to satisfy the EPP and then to [Spec,FocP], with subsequent movement of the verb and the object past that position (although the details of their analyses differ). This captures the narrow focus interpretation on the subject in VOS clauses, as well as the varying constraints on the construction (for example, the subject generally needs to
be relatively ‘heavier’). I propose that sentences such as (21d) therefore have a structure along the lines of (24), with multiple topicalized phrases:

(24) \[ \text{TopP [PP in questa stanza]} \text{[TopP [TP \text{t}i \text{ scrivono [VP \text{t}i \text{ t}V \text{[VP i suoi compiti \text{t}V \text{t}PP ]]] [FocP \text{i studenti} \text{t}TP ]]]} \]

The unavailability of (24) in English, and hence the ungrammaticality of (1e), is due to the independent unavailability of multiple topicalization in this language.

If Italian is, apart from the derivation in (24), like English, then unergative verbs when they appear with a fronted PP must originate in a single-layer VP. The question, then, is why not all intransitive verbs can appear with a fronted PP, as shown by the contrast between (20b) and (20f). To examine this question, I want to examine a wide range of data, given below in (25):

   ‘Into the room entered three foreign men’

b. ?All’ angolo della strada stava una donna.
   ‘On the street corner stood a woman’

c. ?All’ angolo della strada fumava una donna.
   “On the street corner smoked a woman”

d. ?Nell’ angolo rideva Gianni.
   ‘In the corner laughed (IMPF) Gianni’

e. *?Nell’ angolo ha riso Gianni.
   ‘In the corner laughed (PRES PERF) Gianni’

All of the Italian speakers who I consulted said that sentences (25b) through (25d) could only be felicitously used in a kind of ‘setting the stage’ kind of context, which is reinforced by the effect on acceptability brought about by changing the verb form from imperfect in (25d) to present perfect in (25e). In contrast, (25a) needed less of a special context to be fully acceptable.

I propose the following: a verb such as entrare has an underlying structure like that proposed in (13a) for the so-called Spanish “impersonal” verbs, with the locative occupying the position of external argument, while

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10 Rizzi (1997) proposes that there can be interaction of TopP both before and after FocP; the structure in (25) is clearly compatible with this view.
an unaccusative verb such as stare normally has the usual ‘flat’ VP unaccusative structure. This is shown in (26):

\[(26)\]
\[\begin{align*}
&\text{a. } [E_{VP} \ [PP \text{nella stanza}] \ E\nu^o \ [VP \text{entrati tre uomini stranieri}] \\
&\text{b. } [VP \text{una donna} \ [V\ 'stava \ [PP \text{all’angolo}] ]]
\end{align*}\]

Indirect evidence for this claim comes from Tortora’s (1996) analysis of locative clitics in the northern Italian dialect of Borgomanerese; she shows that in this language unaccusative verbs such as ‘enter’, which are necessarily telic have a special type of locative ‘clitic-doubling’ when the subject is postverbal which is absent with unaccusative verbs which at most imply but do not entail the endpoint of directed motion:

\[(27)\]
\[\begin{align*}
&\text{a. } N \ ghi \ \text{è rivà-gghi na fjola} \\
&\quad \text{CL LocCl \ is arrived-LocCl \ a girl} \\
&\text{b. } L \ \text{è partè na fjola}.
\end{align*}\]

Suppose that we take the locative clitic ghi to be the ‘external’ argument, and assume that the same structural distinction is available in standard Italian, but without being distinguished by a special use of the locative clitic ci. Then in (25a) the PP nella stanza simply raises to satisfy the EPP feature of T. I would then claim that the presentational context required for locative inversion for the other verbs in (25) entails, in fact, a change in argument structure from (26b) to (26a). Again, the possibility of such change will be lexically determined and therefore lexically idiosyncratic.

If this line of reasoning is correct, then in fact ‘locative inversion’ in Italian is quite different from English. Rather than movement of PP to [Spec,TP] from a single VP-layer structure, as in English, Italian appears to require movement of a locative argument which is already the ‘external’ argument of the V. Otherwise, as shown in (24), PP fronting is topicalization, which may or may not co-occur with another topicalized element.

5. **Conclusion**

As noted in the introduction, “locative inversion” constructions in English have a number of special syntactic properties which set them apart from other clauses in this language, suggesting that this construction has a
special status. But one of the goals of syntactic research is precisely to show that constructions are epiphenomena. I have tried to show here that PP fronting for discourse purposes may correspond to a number of different syntactic structures, dependent on language-specific properties as these interact with universal requirements such as the EPP and minimality constraints on movement. Many—if not all—structures with PP fronting also involve “optional” features such as topic and focus, the syntax of which also shows crosslinguistic variation. Thus a deeper examination of these constructions may prove a fertile ground for teasing apart the effects of movement driven by EPP/phi features and movement driven by P(eriipheral) features.

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