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ON WH-DOUBLING IN LOMBARD VARIETIES:  
THE CASE OF TICINO AND COMO AREA

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## ABSTRACT

This piece of research outlines an analysis of wh-doubling questions in Lombard varieties. It falls within the Cartographic approach to syntactic structures. It suggests the existence of a silent Q(uestion)-particle à la Cable (2010) in Northern Italian dialects as proposed by Bonan (2019; 2021) in her theory concerning Wh-to-Foc movement in Trevisan. Empirically, I offer new data from varieties spoken in Ticino (CH) and Como areas, collected through surveys. Using these new samples, I analyse three different constructions of content questions: wh-fronting, wh-in situ, and wh-doubling configurations. The study about wh-doubling structure supports Bonan's (2019) proposal concerning the presence of a Wh-to-Foc movement, i.e., in wh-in situ questions wh-items move to Focus Projection in VP-periphery to check their features. Moreover, I stay with scattering features theory argued by Bonan (2021), namely Focus feature and Wh-feature are carried by two different elements, as suggested also by Manzini and Savoia (2005; 2011; 2014). This allows the fronting of one wh-item in doubling configurations. These statements contrast with remnant movement hypothesis, argued by Poletto and Pollock (2009), considering it more costly in terms of computation.

The new data collected within Western Lombard dialects arise two more proposals, both open to further research. First, the existence of an implicational hierarchy of wh-elements that are allowed to occur in wh-doubling configurations. Second, the presence of a *ma*-particle in some Lombard varieties that is used to strengthen the pragmatics value of non-standard wh-doubling configurations, or to substitute these constructions.



# NOMENCLATURE

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Cfv	can't find the value (questions)
Cl	Clitic
EPP	Extended Projection Principle
fRM	featural Relativised Minimality
I	ironic (questions)
i[foc]	Interpretable Focus feature
i[Q]	Interpretable Q-particle feature
LP	Left Periphery
NID(s)	Northern Italian dialect(s)
PART	particle
RM	Relativised Minimality
S	surprise (questions)
SP	Sentential Particle
Spec	specifier
t	trace
u[foc]	Uninterpretable Focus feature
u[Q]	Uninterpretable Q-particle feature

## PROJECTIONS

AgrSP	Subject Agreement Projection
Compl.	complement
CP	Complementiser Phrase
FinP	Finiteness Projection
FocP	Focus Projection
Foc <sub>HIGH</sub> P	Focus Projection in LP

Foc <sub>LOW</sub> P	Focus Projection (as in Belletti 2004 VP-periphery)
ForceP	Force Projection
IntP	Interrogative Projection
IP	Inflection Phrase
ModP	Modifier Phrase
Q <sub>emb</sub> P	Question embedded Phrase
TopP	Topic Projection
TP	Tense Phrase
vP	little VP
VP	Verb Phrase
Wh-P	Wh- Projection
X'	intermediate node
X <sup>0</sup>	head
XP	maximal projection

#### MISCELLANEOUS

*	ungrammatical / recursiveness (where specified)
§	section

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this piece of research is describing and analysing the wh-doubling structure in Northern Italian dialects (NIDs), especially in Lombard varieties. This syntactic configuration consists in the repetition of wh-elements accounting as single wh-word in content questions, in both standard and non-standard interrogative sentences. Wh-doubling seems a fairly widespread phenomenon according to previous data, collected by several scholars<sup>1</sup> for Venetan and Lombard dialects.

The wh-doubling construction will be analysed along with wh-fronting and wh-in situ configurations within the framework of Cartography. The reference hypothesis applied to these structures will be the one suggested by Bonan in her PhD dissertation published in 2019 concerning Wh-to-Foc movement, namely the existence of a Q-particle à la Cable and a [focus]-feature that allow wh-in situ configurations without having to resort to remnant movement.

With this purpose, I have collected data from seven different varieties, all spoken within Ticino and Como areas, i.e., the Southern region of Switzerland and the Northern part of Lombardy. All these dialects are considered Western Lombard varieties, belonging to Gallo-Italic type. Apart from the ones clearly specified, all the examples are mine, collected interviewing ten speakers. It results that, at least in these dialects, the wh-doubling strategy co-occur in free alternative with both wh-fronting and wh-in situ in building content questions.

This work consists of three chapters, each one divided into sections. Chapter one will be arranged as a theoretical introduction to the core arguments needed for the following data analysis and it will be separated in seven sections. It will start introducing briefly Cartographic approach to syntax, then it will continue defining specific concepts, such as Left and Low periphery, Focus and Wh-elements, and Wh-movement. In these paragraphs I will try to sketch a broad picture of these notions, recurring to hypothesis made by various scholars, all within Cartographic framework. Afterwards, the last three sections will turn to the topic of interrogative sentences, primarily classifying them, then

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<sup>1</sup> Among others, Bonan C., Manzini M.R., Munaro N., Poletto C., Pollock J.-Y., and Savoia L.M.

introducing the proposals of Cable and Bonan about the existence of a Q-particle in all languages of the world, including NIDs, and lastly defining the wh-doubling structure.

The second chapter will present the data I have collected. It will be composed by two parts. The first part will be a descriptive section in which the data gathered through surveys are displayed. I will distinguish two main sections, one about Ticino region dialects, the other one around Como area varieties. The two main sections will be further subdivided in two and four paragraphs, respectively. It will give me the opportunity to describe in each paragraph the data from single local idioms. The second part will consist in analysing the data described previously. I will organise them into three groups depending on their syntactic configuration, namely wh-fronting, wh-in situ, and wh-doubling. Based on the proposals made in literature, I will analyse my data showing these constructions using remnant movement hypothesis and wh-movement driven by features theory. I will conclude that the second suggestion seems less costly, so more desirable to the previous one.

The third chapter will show three main results arisen from the case study and it will be divided into three sections. In part one, it will be suggested to analyse wh-doubling structures according to the proposals made by Manzini and Savoia for doubling configurations and Bonan for wh-in situ constructions, i.e., I will consider the existence of feature scattering à la Bonan and movement of wh-elements to Left Periphery and VP-periphery as Manzini and Savoia suppose. I will exemplify this proposal via syntactic graphic representations. In second section, I will point out the occurrence of a *ma*-particle in non-standard questions, carrying pragmatics values, probably working as an alternative to wh-doubling configurations in some varieties and as a reinforcement for these structures in others. In the third part, I will suggest the existence of an implicational hierarchy for wh-elements that are used in wh-doubling configurations, according to my data.

In conclusion, the main topic of this work is wh-doubling structures, that would be analysed in detail along the whole dissertation through theoretical hypothesis, data, and graphic representations.

## CHAPTER 1

### THEORETICAL CORE ARGUMENTS:

#### WH-MOVEMENT, INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES AND Q-PARTICLES

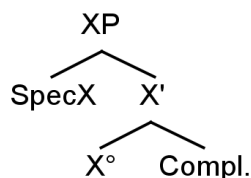
In this chapter, I introduce the theoretical framework this dissertation falls in, i.e., Cartography and I describe the core concepts needed to understand the following data description and analysis developed in chapter two and three. After briefly introducing Cartographic approach (§ 1.1), I present the configuration of Left and Low periphery (§ 1.2), then I continue pointing out the differences within Focus and Wh-elements (§ 1.3) and I deal with syntactic movement, focusing on Wh-movement (§ 1.4). Next, I talk about interrogative sentences (§ 1.5), highlighting their main characteristics and how they work. In the last two paragraphs, I suppose the existence of a Q-particle à la Cable (§ 1.6) and I briefly describe the wh-doubling structure in Northern Italian dialects (§ 1.7), the core argument of this piece of research.

#### 1.1. THE CARTOGRAPHIC APPROACH

The Cartographic approach to syntax assumes that syntactic structures are built using the same patterns in every natural language around the world. This method's aim is to draw maps of syntactic configurations as detailed as possible and has been theorised by Italian linguists Luigi Rizzi and Guglielmo Cinque in the 1990s. The structure proposed is articulated in a series of hierarchical projections, each with a specific meaning and function. Thus, the hypothesis is the existence of a common functional structure, proven applying it to a large number of different languages. The scholars claim that functional heads and Specifiers not overtly realized can be unused in specific languages, but still existing in the covert shared structure.

This approach is a branch of Generative Syntax and is considered belonging to the Principles and Parameters theory. Structural maps are drawn using the X-bar theory as a basis, that establishes phrases contain intermediate constituents (X') projected from XP maximal projection as in (1).

(1) Phrase represented in X-bar



Phrases are considered to be composed by a lexical layer (X<sup>0</sup> head and Compl.) and a functional layer (SpecX and X'). Before the development of the Cartographic approach, Chomsky<sup>2</sup> extended this statement to the functional elements of the clause and recognized the presence of three main functional components, i.e., the Verb Phrase (VP), the Inflection Phrase (IP) and the Complementiser Phrase (CP), as illustrated in (2).

(2) [CP SpecC C<sup>0</sup> [IP SpecI I<sup>0</sup> [VP SpecV V<sup>0</sup> ]]]

Subsequent studies have defined CP and IP as functional fields because they consist of more than one head, all respecting the hierarchical sequences of the X-bar scheme. For an extended list of works that have leading up to this result, see Bonan<sup>3</sup>.

## 1.2. ON THE LEFT AND LOW PERIPHERY

In paragraph 1, I have defined CP and IP as functional fields, that is phrases composed by more than one head. As there was evidence that IP should be split up in several projections, in 1997 Rizzi proposed to split up the CP phrase as well. His proposal is illustrated in (3) and it is known as the Left Periphery, LP, of the clause.

<sup>2</sup> Chomsky, N. (1986), *Barrier*, The MIT Press.

<sup>3</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, pp. 1-2.

(3) The Left periphery (as in Rizzi, 1997)<sup>4</sup>

[Force [Top\* [Focus [Top\* [Fin [IP ... [VP ...]]]]]]]

Basically, he classified two different systems: the Force-Finiteness system and the Topic-Focus system. The first one specifies what kind of clause it is, namely declarative, interrogative, comparative, and so on, and marks it as a main or embedded clause. ForceP, at the top, distinguishes between declarative and interrogative clauses. Finiteness (FinP), at the bottom and in direct contact with IP, establishes the main or embedded status of the clause. The Topic-Focus system, on the other hand, represents the landing site in which the left-dislocated elements appear. Briefly, Topics represent what the sentence is about and are recursive<sup>5</sup>, instead Focus denotes what is new in the sentence and is unique. The Focus projection (FocP) also hosts fronted wh-elements, as I will explain in the next paragraph (§ 1.3).

In recent years, Rizzi's LP has been extended due to deepening analysis of certain positions and thanks to cross-linguistic observations. Three more projections have been added: Int(errogative), Mod(ifier), and Q<sub>emb</sub> (Q in embedded contexts) Projections. The extended LP is reported in (4).

(4) The Left Periphery (as in Rizzi and Bocci, 2017)<sup>6</sup>

[Force [Top\* [IntP [Top\* [Focus [Top\* [ModP [Top\* [Q<sub>emb</sub>P [Fin [IP ... [VP ...]]]]]]]]]]]

IntP is described as an independent position, hosting interrogative complementizers, such as *se* in Italian and *if* in English, and wh-elements like *perché*, “why”, all inserted in head position. IntP is allowed to be surrounded by Topics and can co-occur with a following Focus position. ModP, on the other side, is dedicated to preposed adverbs, that result distinct from Topics and contrastive Focus, both for syntax and interpretation. These adverbs always follow Focused elements but are allowed to precede Topic ones. Lastly, Q<sub>emb</sub>P (called WhP in Rizzi 2004) has been added to incorporate wh-elements in embedded questions, because the co-occurrence of Focus and Wh-words is marginally

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<sup>4</sup> Rizzi, L. (1997), *The fine structure of the left periphery*, in L. Haegeman, *Elements of grammar*, Kluwer International Handbooks of Linguistics, ed. Springer, Dordrecht.

<sup>5</sup> Asterisks in (3) signal the recursiveness of Topics, i.e., indicating that more than one topicalized element can be hosted in each TopP.

<sup>6</sup> Rizzi, L., and Bocci, G. (2017), *Left Periphery of the Clause: Primarily Illustrated for Italian*, in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Syntax*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (eds. M. Everaert and H.C. Riemsdijk), John Wiley & Sons, p. 9.

possible in embedded contexts.  $Q_{emb}P$  is considered a very low position, “perhaps immediately higher than  $Fin$ ”<sup>7</sup>.

In 2004, Belletti posited the presence of a focal projection in VP-periphery, i.e., within IP and VP fields, as the host of postverbal Italian subjects. This suggestion leads to define a Low Periphery, partly parallel to the LP proposed by Rizzi and illustrated in (3). Besides hosting postverbal Italian subjects in Low FocusP, in the Low Periphery are placed two Topic projections, before and after FocP, as illustrated in (4).

(5) The Low Periphery (as in Belletti, 2004<sup>8</sup>)

[CP ... [TP ... [Top [Foc [Top [VP ...]]]]]

Further studies have shown that Low Focus Projection is targeted not only by focused elements, but also by *wh*-elements, as it happens for LP.

From now on, following Bonan, to distinguish the two projections in which Focus elements and *wh*-elements can fall in, I will refer to LP Focus Projection as  $Foc_{HIGH}$  and to Low Focus Projection as  $Foc_{LOW}$ .

### 1.3. ON FOCUS AND WH-ELEMENTS

As shown in the previous paragraph, Focus has proper high and low projections in which it sets rising from its first-merge position, generally an argument or an adjunct projection. Focus informs the interlocutor about what is new in the sentence, and it is a syntactic, semantic, prosodic, and pragmatics phenomenon, that shows three correlations. First, it is associated to an intonational pitch, i.e., the speaker rises his or her tone of voice pronouncing Focus elements. Second, semantically it opens a set of alternatives, and it predicates only one of them. Third, syntactically speaking, the Focus element is allowed to move to the Left Periphery or to stay in-situ, at least superficially. It can also be built as a cleft clause. Depending on its position in the syntactic spine and on the piece of information it gives to the interlocutor, we distinguish between contrastive Focus and Focus of new information. The latter is postverbal, while the former sets in LP. Focus is

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<sup>7</sup> Ivi, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Belletti, A. (2004), *Aspects of the low IP area*, in L. Rizzi (ed) *The Structure of IP and CP. The Cartography of Syntactic Structures*, vol. 2, Oxford University Press.

not recursive, so it is defined as unique, since in  $\text{Foc}_{\text{HIGH}}$  there cannot simultaneously be new and old information<sup>9</sup>. Then, it is supposed that a [foc]-feature exists, and it represents the reason why Focus elements rise the syntactic structure, i.e., to check this feature.

On the other hand, wh-elements are wh-words that introduce content questions matrix or embedded ones. They behave as quantifiers and relative pronouns, besides in a great number of languages are also used as indefinites. It is suggested that wh-elements have a [+wh]-feature to check, so they move from their first-merge projection to a higher landing site. Moreover, according to Rizzi<sup>10</sup> they have also a [q]-feature to check once they work as interrogative wh-elements.

Due to empirical observations about Standard Italian, Rizzi proposes that in direct questions the wh-element's landing site is  $\text{Spec Foc}_{\text{HIGH}}$ , so wh-words and Focus elements compete for the same spot and cannot co-occur<sup>11</sup>. Studying the prosody of wh-direct questions in Italian, Bocci, Bianchi, and Cruschina assume the existence of a syntactically active {wh-, focus} feature bundle. This bundle supports, then, the impossibility of focus-wh-phrase co-occurrence<sup>12</sup>. Their phonological experiments confirm “the hypothesis that prosodic structure is sensitive to a syntactically active [foc] feature<sup>13</sup> which triggers a successive cyclic derivation through every phase<sup>14</sup> edge intervening between the first-merge position of the wh-phrase and its final landing site”<sup>15</sup>.

To sum up, I claim the impossibility of co-occurrence of Focus and wh-elements due to the existence of both [+wh] and [foc] features, that must be checked in the syntactic spine. These features could constitute a {wh-, focus} feature bundle à la Bocci (2021), needed to be checked in that single  $\text{Foc}_{\text{HIGH}}$  position, that is unique. So, as Bocci suggests,

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<sup>9</sup> Rizzi, L. (1997), *The fine structure of the left periphery*, in L. Haegeman, *Elements of grammar*, Kluwer International Handbooks of Linguistics, ed. Springer, Dordrecht.

<sup>10</sup> Rizzi, L. (1990), *Relativized Minimality*, Linguistic Inquiry Monographs, The MIT Press.

<sup>11</sup> Rizzi, L. (1997), *The fine structure of the left periphery*, in L. Haegeman, *Elements of grammar*, Kluwer International Handbooks of Linguistics, ed. Springer, Dordrecht.

<sup>12</sup> Bocci, G., Bianchi, V., and Cruschina, S. (2021), “Focus in wh-questions. Evidence from Italian”, in *Nat Lang Linguist Theory*, 39 (2021), pp. 440-448.

<sup>13</sup> The status of [focus] as syntactically active feature has been proposed in previous literature, since Rizzi, L. (1997), *The fine structure of the left periphery*, in L. Haegeman, *Elements of grammar*, Kluwer International Handbooks of Linguistics, ed. Springer, Dordrecht.

<sup>14</sup> The concept of “phase” was introduced by Chomsky (2000). In each clause he identifies two different phases, i.e., the thematic phase (vP), and the syntactic phase (CP), that involves the whole clause. Each phase it is supposed to be formed by an internal domain and a phase edge. The elements attracted into the edge remain available for further computation in the next phase, instead the internal domain components are not, according to the Phase Impenetrability Condition (Chomsky, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Bocci, G., Bianchi, V., and Cruschina, S. (2021), “Focus in wh-questions. Evidence from Italian”, in *Nat Lang Linguist Theory*, 39 (2021), p. 406.

it could be a syntactically complex head Foc-Q formed, that attracts wh-elements, matching both their specifications<sup>16</sup>. But [+wh] and [foc] features could also be checked in two different positions, due to feature scattering and depending on the existence of a Q-particle according to Cable and Bonan, as it will be illustrated afterwards (§ 1.6).

#### 1.4. ON SYNTACTIC WH-MOVEMENT

Syntactic movement is an operation that permits to explain the displacement of constituents from their first-merge position to the site in which they receive important features interpretation. The following three are considered general conditions of movement:

- a. Movement must be motivated. Thus, this operation is feature driven, that is elements are moved to check specific features in higher projections<sup>17</sup>.
- b. Structure must be preserved, although constituents are displaced. So,  $X^0$  constituents can be moved only to another head position, making single short displacements, namely a constituent first-merged in head position would move through all the intervening  $X^0$  until its final target site. This is the Head Movement Constraint of Trevis (1984). On the other side, a component first merged in a Spec position is allowed to settle in a higher Spec, also making long-distance movements.
- c. Movement occurs always bottom-up, i.e., the landing site of the element displaced must C-command the position that hosted it initially.

Respecting general conditions of movement illustrated above, wh-elements are allowed to move up the structure, via short and long-distance movements. However, according to the principle of Featural Relativised Minimality (fRM)<sup>18</sup>, a constituent cannot be

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<sup>16</sup> Bocci, G., Rizzi, L. and Saito, M. (2018), “On the incompatibility of wh and focus”, *Gengo Kenkyu – Journal of the Linguistic Society of Japan*, 154 (2018), p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Chomsky, N. (1995), *The Minimalist Program*, The MIT Press.

<sup>18</sup> RM principle was first proposed by Rizzi in 1990, accounting for locality conditions on movement. Then RM has been revised as fRM. Based on Starke, 2001, and Rizzi, 2001; 2004, Villata, Rizzi, and Frank (2016) express the fundamental idea of fRM as follows (S. Villata, L. Rizzi, and J. Franck, p. 78): “In ... X ... Z ... Y... a local relation is disrupted between X and Y when:

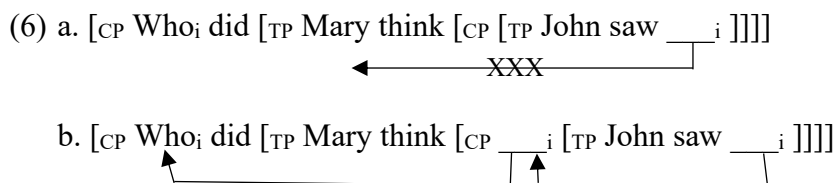
- a. Z structurally intervenes between X and Y
- b. Z matches the specification in morphosyntactic features of X.

Intervention is defined in hierarchical terms through c-command: Z structurally intervenes between X and Y when Z c-commands Y and Z does not c-command X.”



displaced over another element showing the same relevant features that trigger the movement. So, for example, a wh-element does not have the permission to get over another wh-word if both display identical trigger features of movement. Wh-elements are considered weak islands, i.e., they can rarely be extracted from their first-merge position because their extraction could determine the development of ungrammatical sentences.

Wh-movement is a A'-kind of movement for the reason that it displaces a wh-phrase into a position where fixed grammatical function is not assigned. Moreover, the wh-movement is considered cyclical since Chomsky, 1973. As Bonan clarifies, wh-phrases do not move to their landing site directly but following a sequence of local steps, in a successive cyclic way, as illustrated by her with the example reported in (6)<sup>19</sup>.



The cyclicity of wh-movement will be used in chapter two to support the short movement of Wh-to-Foc<sub>Low</sub> and the separate feature checking for Focus and Wh-feature, talking about the data I have collected for Lombard varieties. In the same chapter I will describe the different types of wh-movement as I use them to analyse my data.

As I have already mentioned in the first general condition, every kind of movement must be motivated by its need of checking features in higher functional projections<sup>20</sup>. Thus, the trigger of wh-movement should be the necessity of establishing features uninterpretable in wh-element first-merge position. According to Rizzi<sup>21</sup>, the so-called Wh-Criterion drives wh-movement and essentially requires that wh-phrase, carrying interrogative features, ends up in a Spec-head relation with the element T, carrying the same feature in interrogatives. So, T that has already moved to C attracts the wh-element in order to maintain the Spec-head relation within the two. Chomsky<sup>22</sup>, instead, makes a different proposal regarding feature checking: the probe-goal hypothesis, that has been

<sup>19</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, p. 56.

<sup>20</sup> Chomsky, N. (1995), *The Minimalist Program*, The MIT Press.

<sup>21</sup> Rizzi, L. (1997), *The fine structure of the left periphery*, in L. Haegeman, *Elements of grammar*, Kluwer International Handbooks of Linguistics, ed. Springer, Dordrecht.

<sup>22</sup> Chomsky, N. (1995), *The Minimalist Program*, The MIT Press.

suggested as an alternative to elements' displacement. In the Minimalist Theory, it is proposed that a head-probe-element lacking valued features searches in its c-command domain for a Specifier-goal-element, having those features valued. After finding it, the probe would evaluate its features without having to be in a Spec-head relation with its goal, i.e., without goal rising.

To conclude this brief section about syntactic movement, I should point out that movement can occur overtly or covertly. In the former kind of displacement, it is possible to recognise it for specific constituents in the sentence. Instead, the latter does not show the movement overtly, that is this has been done in deep structure and it apparently has not taken place, looking at the spelled-out sentence. Therefore, on the one hand, I would talk about wh-fronting as an overt movement, on the other hand I would define the wh-to-Foc<sub>Low</sub> movement as a covert one in wh-in situ configurations.

#### 1.5. ON INTERROGATIVES: CONTENT VS POLAR QUESTIONS AND NON-STANDARD QUESTIONS

Interrogative sentences are believed to be present in every language of the world. Two different types of questions are distinguished: content questions and polar questions. The former contains an interrogative phrase that elicits a specific answer other than yes or no. All languages have a set of interrogative words used in content questions, the so-called wh-elements, since in English the main wh-words begin with “wh-”. Wh-elements often consist of a single word. Polar questions, instead, are ones to which the expected answer is equivalent of “yes” or “no”, therefore those are also known as yes-no questions.

According to Dryer<sup>23</sup>, in content questions interrogative phrases occur in only two different positions: obligatorily at the beginning of the sentence or not compulsorily in that position. If interrogative phrase is considered clause-initial, it does not mean the first word would be the wh-element, because that phrase may be a larger constituent containing the interrogative word. Idioms like English or Standard Italian are considered obligatorily clause-initial languages, because in standard content questions require this

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<sup>23</sup> Dryer, M. (2013), *Position of Interrogative Phrases in Content Questions*, in Dryer, M. S. and Haspelmath, M. (eds.) *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, Leipzig, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology.

configuration. On the other hand, there exists a lot of not compulsorily sentence-initial languages, such as Chinese. In these idioms the interrogative phrase occurs in whatever position is natural for the corresponding non-interrogative phrase. Lastly, a small number of languages cannot be classified in one of the groups described above as either sentence-initial position is usual, but not obligatory, or the interrogative phrase location depends on the type of interrogative phrase used.

Polar or yes-no questions have their scope on the entire sentence and, in languages spoken around the world, Dryer<sup>24</sup> identifies six strategies utilized to build them. The first one involves the presence of a question particle which is added to a corresponding declarative sentence to point out that it is a question. Interrogative clitics are considered question particles as well. The second general strategy proposed is the use of a distinct verbal morphology via affixes or suffixes, not always easy to isolate. The third way of building polar questions have both question particles and interrogative verb morphology, either as two separate elements or occurring together in a single construction. A quite uncommon strategy described is the one used by English, that is a different word order from the one used in declaratives. Another option for coding polar questions is the absence of morphemes used in corresponding declarative sentences, a quite unusual way to build yes-no questions. The last strategy recognised is the use of a distinct intonation pattern, as Standard Italian does. Talking about languages that use question particles to identify polar questions, Dryer<sup>25</sup> suggests that in the most part of languages these particles occur at the beginning or at the end of the sentence. In a small part of them, question particles can be found in second position or with other position than initial, second, or final. An example of interrogative particle is the French *est-ce-que*, originally a cleft clause reanalysed as a question particle.

In 1991, in her dissertation *On the typology of wh-questions*, Cheng claimed the Clausal Typing Hypothesis, that she explained as follows: “Every clause needs to be typed. In the case of typing a wh-question, either a wh-particle in C<sup>0</sup> is used or else fronting of a wh-word to the Spec of C<sup>0</sup> is used, thereby typing the clause through C<sup>0</sup> by

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<sup>24</sup> Dryer, M. (2013), *Polar questions*, in Dryer, M. S. and Haspelmath, M. (eds.) *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, Leipzig, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology.

<sup>25</sup> Dryer, M. (2013), *Position of Polar Question Particles*, in Dryer, M. S. and Haspelmath, M. (eds.) *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, Leipzig, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology.

Spec-head agreement”<sup>26</sup>. So, the scholar states that wh-movement and the use of question particles are alternative strategies for clausal interrogative typing. Moreover, she assumes that no language uses both ways to type a wh-question, respecting Chomsky’s Economy of Derivation Principle (1989). The wh-particle located in C<sup>0</sup>, in her opinion, has a [+wh] feature, that indicates that the clause is a wh-question. The same feature should be taken in C<sup>0</sup> due to wh-movement. “This implies that in languages like English, there is no [+wh] Q-morpheme base-generated in C<sup>0</sup>”<sup>27</sup>. Cheng points out that idioms which appear to have both wh-in situ and wh-initial exist: “Egyptian Arabic, Bahasa Indonesian, and Palauan are examples of this type of so-called ‘optional movement languages’”<sup>28</sup>. I would add to this list some Northern Italian dialects I will describe in the next chapter, such as Davesco and Uggiate-Trevano varieties. For Cheng’s proposal, these cases of optional wh-movement seem as problematic as idioms which show multiple wh-movement. For this, I will propose the existence of a Q-particle, carrying wh-features, as it will be described in the next paragraph (§ 1.6).

In addition to distinguish content and polar questions, I shall point out that questions are classified into matrix and embedded questions and distinguished in standard and non-standard interrogative sentences. A matrix question, also called direct question, is an independent or main proposition. Instead, an embedded question is an interrogative sentence that is inside another question or statement, working as a dependent clause. Then, standard or canonical questions are real requests for information, whether they are content or polar ones. Conversely, non-canonical interrogative sentences are not aimed at obtaining a piece of new information, but rather at expressing “a certain attitude of the speaker regarding the propositional content”<sup>29</sup>. So, non-standard questions have specific pragmatics values. Talking about questions introduced by an *o-particle* in Fiorentino, Garzonio distinguishes five types of non-canonical interrogative sentences, that is surprise/disapproval interrogatives, “can’t find the value” (*cfv*) interrogatives, rhetorical questions, exclamative questions, and imperative questions<sup>30</sup>. In the surprise interrogative type, “the speaker expresses an attitude of astonishment toward the propositional

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<sup>26</sup> Cheng, L.L.S. (1991), *On the typology of wh-questions*, Thesis (Ph.D.), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> Ivi, p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> Ivi, p. 39.

<sup>29</sup> Garzonio, J. (2004), *Interrogative Types and Left Periphery: some data from the Fiorentino Dialect*, Quaderni di lavoro dell’ASIS, 4 (2004), p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Ivi, p. 2.

context”<sup>31</sup>. Analysing data from NIDs, I will show that some unusual syntactic structures, such as wh-doubling configuration, are connected to this specific non-standard value, such as the wh-doubling in Mendrisio variety, as exemplified in (7).

(7) *Se te di cusè?* (S question)  
 What you said what?  
 ‘What the earth have you said?’

In *cfv* interrogatives the speaker expresses his or her difficulty in defining the specific value assigned to the sentence, although he or she has tried to find a plausible answer to it. These questions can also be addressed to oneself. Rhetoric interrogative sentences have “an obvious answer, an answer the interlocutor is supposed to know”<sup>32</sup>. Within rhetorical questions are included ironic questions, that some speakers of the NIDs varieties I have studied build exactly as surprise questions in (7), i.e., using wh-doubling configuration. The last two types of non-standard interrogative sentences are exclamative and imperative, respectively characterised as surprised rhetorical questions, that do not ask for an answer, and as a command. So, in non-canonical questions pragmatics is predominant and alternative syntactic constructions are much more widespread than in standard interrogatives.

In the next paragraph I would claim the existence of a Q-particle, that should help in explaining non-standard syntactic configurations such as the free alternation within wh-fronting and wh-in situ, and the presence of wh-doubling constructions in NIDs.

#### 1.6. ON Q-PARTICLE: CABLE (2010) AND BONAN’S (2021) PROPOSALS

Cable studied wh-questions of Tlingit, developing a model “where wh-fronting is not directly triggered by any properties of the wh-word itself”<sup>33</sup>. Indeed, Tlingit, a Northern American language spoken in Alaska, shows the existence of an overt Q-particle *sá*, which presence is obligatory in building wh-questions. Then, *sá* must c-command the

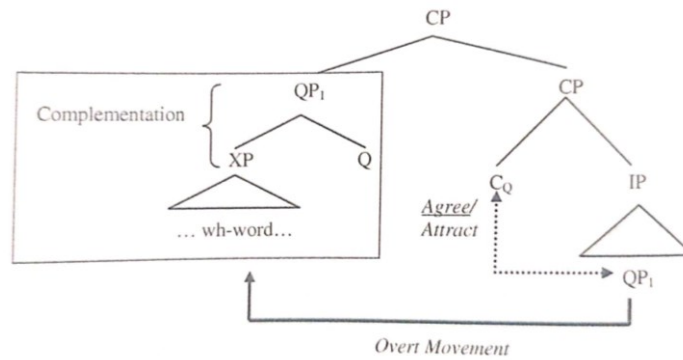
<sup>31</sup> Garzonio, J. (2004), *Interrogative Types and Left Periphery: some data from the Fiorentino Dialect*, Quaderni di lavoro dell’ASIS, 4 (2004), p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Ivi, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Cable, S. (2010), *The grammar of Q. Q-Particles, Wh-Movement, and Pied-Piping*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 6.

wh-word, which appears clause-initially. According to Cable, the Q-particle heads its own projection, called QP. Due to this c-command relation, QP must contain the wh-word. So, he claims that the wh-fronting depends on the movement of the QP, arguing that “nothing about the wh-word specifically enters into the rule at all”<sup>34</sup>. As a consequence of moving QP to the Left Periphery of the clause, wh-word appears in the LP as well. He formalizes an example of his proposal for Tlingit as follows in (8).

- (8) Fronting the wh-word in Tlingit wh-questions as a Secondary Effect of Q-Movement<sup>35</sup>. Having an overt Q-particle, the displacement to CP appears overtly in spelled-out sentences.



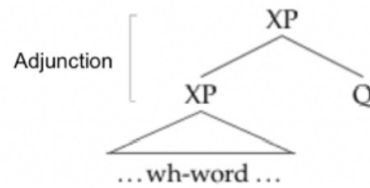
Assuming the existence of the QP, containing the Q-particle and the wh-word, Cable argues that his proposal must be applied to all wh-fronting languages. Then, he suggests employing it also in wh-in situ idioms and recognizes two distinct syntactic types of wh-in situ languages: Q-adjunction languages (9) and Q-projection languages. In the former, “Q adjoins to its sister node” (i.e., the wh-element), and move alone to the LP. Instead in the latter “Q takes its sister (i.e., the wh-element) as a complement, as in Tlingit, but QP-movement occurs covertly”<sup>36</sup> (10).

<sup>34</sup> Cable, S. (2010), *The grammar of Q. Q-Particles, Wh-Movement, and Pied-Piping*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 7.

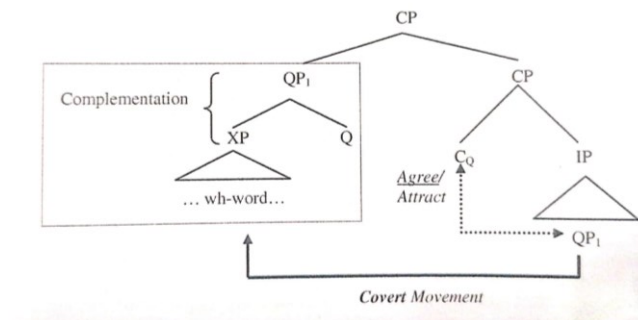
<sup>35</sup> Ivi, p. 38, fig. 53.

<sup>36</sup> Ivi, p. 84.

(9) Q-adjunction



(10) Covert QP-Movement as a source of wh-in situ. In the square, there is the representation of Q-projection<sup>37</sup>.



As a result, Cable suggests the existence of a universal Q-particle, that could be phonologically realised or not, depending on languages. Therefore, he distinguishes languages with a silent Q-particle and idioms with an overt one, saying that the existence of this Q-particle is true for all languages.

Bonan (2019, 2021) applies Cable’s proposal to Trevisan, a language that optionally use wh-in situ/wh-fronting in building wh-questions. She claims that the existence of a Q-particle permits to make both strategies available and implements Cable’s work on the syntax of Q-particle adding a third kind of language to the list: the “mixed Q-projection/Q-adjunction language”<sup>38</sup>, like Trevisan. After analysing the data gathered for this dialect, she suggests that these mixed Q-projection/Q-adjunction languages could be an intermediate stage in language evolution, so that the two types of Q- do not apply to all types of wh-elements homogeneously<sup>39</sup>.

On the basis of these proposals and others made previously, in chapter two I will try to analyse wh-in situ structures as suggested by Bonan. Then, the existence of a Q-particle

<sup>37</sup> Cable, S. (2010), *The grammar of Q. Q-Particles, Wh-Movement, and Pied-Piping*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 86, fig. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Bonan, C. (2021), “The periphery of vP in the theory of wh-in situ”, *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 6 : 1 (2021), p. 34.

<sup>39</sup> Ivi, p. 37.

and the possibility to consider as scattered<sup>40</sup> [q]- and [foc]-features, encoded respectively by the Q-particle and the wh-element, seems to me very useful for analysing wh-doubling constructions, as I will explain widely in chapters two and three.

### 1.7. WH-DOUBLING IN NORTHERN ITALIAN DIALECTS

Wh-doubling structure is a syntactic phenomenon quite widespread in Northern Italian dialects, especially in Venetan and Lombard varieties. “Wh-doubling configurations are not instances of multiple wh-questions: the two wh-words are in fact interpreted as a unit, hence the semantics of the question in which they appear is merely that of a regular single wh-question”<sup>41</sup>.

This construction involves content questions both matrix and embedded ones and it consists in inserting twice the wh-element in the interrogative sentence, although it must be interpreted as a unit. Examples of this configurations are illustrated in (11).

(11) a. Wh-doubling in matrix question

*Se te di cusè?* (Olgiate Comasco/Cuasso al Monte)  
 What-Cl you said what-FULL FORM  
 ‘What have you said?’

b. Wh-doubling in embedded question

*El m’ a dumandàa se te di cusè.* (Cuasso al Monte)  
 He to me has asked what-Cl you said what-FULL FORM

This structure can be composed by a wh-clitic and a wh-full form (11.a and b) or by two wh-full forms as in (12). The full forms will then be distinguished in two different types, a basic series and a -è series. So, three different types of wh-doubling constructions will be outlined in chapter two.

<sup>40</sup> Bonan, C. (2021), “The periphery of vP in the theory of wh-in situ”, *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 6 : 1 (2021), p. 28.

<sup>41</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, p. 12.



- (12) *Cosa*                      *te*      *dì*      *cosa?* (Davesco)  
 What-FULL FORM    you      said      what-FULL FORM  
 ‘What have you said?’

On the one side, there are varieties that use wh-doubling only in non-standard questions and their speakers assign to this configuration a surprise, *cfv* or ironic values, suggesting that the use of doubling can be explained via pragmatics. On the other side, some varieties employ it both in canonical and non-canonical questions, prompting scholars to find a syntactic motivation for the phenomenon. Moreover, not all the wh-elements can be used in this construction in every variety. In the results of this dissertation (chapter three), I will propose that wh-words appear in Lombard varieties following a sort of implicational hierarchy (§ 3.3).

Wh-doubling structure has been considered quite challenging for syntax, in terms of wh-movement, landing sites for wh-elements, and features that drive the wh-movement. A large number of scholars investigated it, among others Munaro, for Pagotto dialect<sup>42</sup>, Poletto and Pollock for various Venetan varieties, such as Illasiano and Monnese<sup>43</sup>, and for Mendrisio dialect<sup>44</sup>, then Manzini and Savoia<sup>45</sup> for several Lombard varieties. The analysis proposals developed until today will be briefly described in chapter two.

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<sup>42</sup> Munaro, N. (1997), *Proprietà strutturali e distribuzionali dei sintagmi interrogativi in alcuni dialetti italiani settentrionali*, PhD Dissertation, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia; Munaro, N. and Obenauer, H.-G. (1999), *On underspecified wh-elements in pseudo-interrogatives*, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 9 (1999), pp. 181-253.

<sup>43</sup> Poletto, C. and Pollock, J.-Y. (2004), “On Wh-clitics. Wh-doubling in French and some North Eastern Italian Dialects”, *Probus*, 16 : 2 (2004), pp. 241-272.

<sup>44</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, pp. 199-258.

<sup>45</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2005), *I dialetti italiani e romanci. Morfosintassi generativa I-III*, Ed. dell’Orso; Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2011), “Wh-in situ & wh-doubling in Northern Italian Varieties: Against Remnant Movement”, in *Linguistic Analysis*, 37:1-2 (2011), Vashon (WA).

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE DATA

In this chapter I describe and analyse the data I collected through surveys. In the initial part, “Data description”, I outline a complete image about interrogative sentences situation in the varieties I have studied, using examples taken from the results of those surveys. Primarily, I briefly describe the use of dialects in Ticino area (§ 2.1), then I start describing in detail the wh-questions configurations that can be found respectively in Davesco (§ 2.1.1) and in Mendrisio (2.1.2) varieties. Next, I move to Como area (§ 2.2): after a short introduction concerning the use of dialects in this province, I meticulously describe wh-questions in Olgiate Comasco dialect (§ 2.2.1), Cuasso al Monte variety (§ 2.2.2), Solbiate con Cagno local idiom (§ 2.2.3), and Uggiate-Trevano and Ronago languages (§ 2.2.4).

Following this descriptive part, I proceed analysing those data in the so-called “Data analysis” section. I classify the possible wh-questions structures in three groups: wh-fronting constructions (§ 2.3), wh-in situ structures (§ 2.4), and wh-doubling configurations (§ 2.5). In each section, using the examples I reported in the descriptive part, I analyse these possible wh-questions configurations, referring to different proposals of analysis made by other scholars in literature.

#### DATA DESCRIPTION

In this section I examine the data gathered through the surveys I submitted to a group of ten speakers of dialect. The survey has been composed of sixty sentences, all single wh-questions, direct and indirect ones. It shows more than one question made for each wh-element and negative interrogative sentences as well. The speakers had to translate them naturally in their own variety. I interviewed the speakers in presence or via videocall, due to the pandemic situation. To describe the data collected, first, I start showing samples

collected in Ticino region (§ 2.1), then I move to Como area (§ 2.2). For each area, I describe the main results of my surveys one town at a time. After, in the next section, I will analyse the data.

## 2.1 TICINO AREA

Canton Ticino is the Southern region of Switzerland, where over 350.000 inhabitants live. The 8.26% of Swiss population speaks Italian language or Ticino dialects<sup>46</sup> all over the country and the number of dialect speakers is decreasing year after year. Nonetheless, travelling around this region it is simple to hear people using local varieties to communicate in daily life. The analysis of the linguistic data collected by the government between 2010 and 2012 demonstrates that the use of local idioms is still pervasive and represents 30.7% of the population, who especially use it with family members and friends. Comparing these data to the ones gathered in the 90s, the decrease in the number of dialect speakers is slowing down in recent years.<sup>47</sup>

The dialects spoken in this area are all classified as western Lombard varieties, belonging to Gallo-italic type. The speakers interviewed for this study constitute a heterogeneous group in terms of age, nonetheless all claim to use their local varieties almost daily to communicate at least with family members and friends.

### 2.1.1. DAVESCO (LUGANO)

Davesco is a neighbourhood of Lugano, one of the most important cities in Ticino region. The variety spoken in Davesco shows the existence of more than one wh-word to express the same meaning: *se* and *cusè/cosa* for “what”; *ndu* and *ndua* for “where”; *cuma/cumè* for “how”. *Chi*, *quant*, and *perché* mean respectively “who”, “when” and “why” and do not have an alternative wh-word. As clitics, *se* and *ndu* consist of a

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<sup>46</sup> 2022, data collected by Ufficio Federale di Statistica in 2020 for its periodic structural survey about population and languages. *Lingue principali secondo il Cantone*, a study involving permanent resident population over 15 years old. Reference period: 2010-2020. <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/it/home/statistiche/popolazione/lingue-religioni/lingue.assetdetail.20964061.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Pandolfi, E. M., Casoni, M., and Bruno, D. (2016), *Le lingue in Svizzera: un primo sguardo ai dati dei Rilevamenti Strutturali 2010-2012*, Osservatorio linguistico della Svizzera italiana, Bellinzona.

monosyllabic base and cannot occur in complete isolation, they appear only on the left edge of the sentence, and they are accentless words, as illustrated in (1).

- (1) a. *\*Se?*  
 What?  
 b. *\*Ndu?*  
 Where?  
 c. *\*Te di se?*  
 You say what?  
 d. *\*Te se nai ndu?*  
 You have been where?

On the other side, the corresponding full forms can be found on the left or right edge of the sentence, respectively located in Left Periphery (2) and behaving as wh-in situ (3).

- (2) a. ***Cusè***      *che te di?* / ***Cosa***    *te di?*  
 What      that you said? / What you said?  
 ‘What have you said?’  
 b. ***Ndu***      *te se nai?*  
 Where you have been?  
 ‘Where have you been?’  
 c. ***Cuma/cumè***      *te se rivà?*  
 How you got there?  
 ‘How have you gotten there?’  
 d. ***Quant***      *che te se nai?*  
 When that you have been?  
 ‘When did you go?’  
 e. ***Perché***      *tal dumandi?*  
 Why to you-it (I) ask?  
 ‘Why did I ask you?’

- (3) a. *Te di cosa?*  
 You said what?  
 ‘What have you said?’

- b. *Te se nai ndua?*  
 You have been where?  
 ‘Where have you been?’
- c. *Te se rivà cumè?*  
 You have gotten how?  
 ‘How have you gotten there?’
- d. *Te se nai quant?*  
 You have been when?  
 ‘When have you been there?’
- e. *Tu pianget perché?*  
 You cry why?  
 ‘Why are you crying?’

The examples illustrated above show that all the five wh-elements can occur in both positions, and I would suppose that they occupy the SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> in LP and the SpecFoc<sub>LOW</sub> in VP-Periphery. So, as it will be exemplified during the analysis, wh-in situ elements would be situated in Low FocP, a projection set in the VP-periphery, amongst vP and the TP phrase, after moving to SpecFoc<sub>LOW</sub> from their first-merge position as verb argument or external elements. Several Lombard varieties have these two ways to build interrogative sentences, as will be shown later.

The most interesting case to describe in Davesco variety is the wh-doubling configuration, in which I can observe the co-existence of the wh-clitic and the wh-full forms or the contemporary presence of two wh-full forms that configure as a unit. In this dialect, the doubling happens in standard and non-standard direct questions with “what”, “where”, and “how” (4), and in non-canonical embedded questions with *se/cosa/cusè* (6).

- (4) a. *Se te fe cosa? / Se te fe cusè?*  
 What you do what / What you do what  
 ‘What have you done?’
- b. *Cosa te di cosa/cusè?*  
 What you said what?  
 ‘What have you said?’
- c. *Cosa te veu savè cosa?*

What you want to know what?

‘What do you want to know?’

d. *Ndu/ndua ca te se nai ogi ndua?* (S question)

Where that you have been today where?

‘Where on earth have you been today?’

e. *Ndu ca l finis ndua?* (S question)

Where that it finishes where?

‘Where on earth does it finish?’

f. *Ma cuma te fai cumè?* (S question)

PART How you do how?

‘How on earth do you do?’

Considering example (4.f), the presence of the particle *ma* is used to implement the surprise interrogative force of the sentence, already strengthened by the doubling of *cuma/cumè*. This particle appears similarly in surprise interrogative sentences with *perché* (5), a wh-element that cannot be found in doubling configurations. Therefore, at least in this specific variety, the particle *ma* seems to express surprise, assuming the same function of the doubling configuration.

(5) *Ma perché tu pianget?* (S question)

PART Why you cry?

‘PART- why on earth are you crying?’

In this variety, talking about non-standard embedded questions, wh-doubling configuration is merely used in surprise interrogative sentences, expressing the speaker’s attitude of astonishment toward the propositional content, as exemplified in (6).

(6) *Cosa te pensat che l’ a fai cosa?* (S question)

What you think that he/she have done what?

‘What on earth do you think he/she has done?’

This construction cannot be found neither in standard embedded interrogatives nor in indirect questions, in which the wh-element always introduce the indirect interrogative clause as in (7). In other varieties described below, this configuration is mostly used to

express irony and sarcasm. In negative wh-questions it does not seem possible to find doubling configurations, instead in only one dialect that will be described later on, I found wh-doubling configuration in standard indirect questions.

- (7) *Al ma dumanda cosa te di.*  
 He to me asked what you said.  
 ‘He asked me what you have said.’

Under no circumstances, *chi*, *perché*, and *quant* show wh-doubling configurations. Due to explanations given by speakers, I suppose the existence of a semantic reason to explain why *chi* can never be found in sentences like (8): in those dialects, *chi* means “who” and “here” at the same time, therefore the wh-doubling construction could confuse the interlocutor.

- (8) \**Chi ca l’ è sta chi?*  
 Who that he/she is been here/who?  
 ‘Who’s been here/who?’

On the other hand, for *perché* and *quant* speakers claim that doubling is ungrammatical and that it is possible to strengthen the interrogative force either inserting the particle *ma* at the beginning of the question or repeating the wh-word in isolation afterwards, as exemplified in (5) and (9).

- (9) *Perché tal dumandi? Perché?* (S question)  
 Why to you-it (I) ask? Why?  
 ‘Why on earth am I asking you? Why?’

Thus, in Davesco dialect wh-doubling configuration can be found only in direct questions with “what”, “where”, and “how”. For “where” and “how”, it is used in non-standard direct questions, expressing surprise value. In order to strengthen the interrogative force of “who”, “when”, and “why”, the speaker use the particle *ma* at the beginning of the sentence.

In the next part, I will discuss the case of Mendrisio dialect, where the use of the particle *ma* to express surprise and irony is larger and it nearly substitute the existence of wh-doubling configurations in my data.

### 2.1.2. MENDRISIO

As it has been shown for Davesco, in Mendrisio variety I have observed the use of different wh-words to express the same meaning for “what” and “where”, respectively *cusa/cusè* and the clitic *se*, and *ndua/nduè* and the clitic *ndu*. For the other wh-elements, only one wh-word exists (*chi*, *cuma*, *parché*, and *quant*). All the wh-words appear in the left edge of sentences, that is there are not examples of wh-in situ questions in this local language.

As in Davesco dialect, it results the existence of the particle *ma*, that has the same function described above: it introduces surprise questions (10).

- (10) a. **Ma**        *cusa*    *ta*    *pensat che*    *u*    *fai?* (S question)  
           PART        what    you    think    that    I        did?  
           ‘PART- what on earth do you think I have done?’
- b. **Ma**        *cuma*    *ta se*    *vestida?* (S question)  
           PART        how    you    dress?  
           ‘PART- how on earth did you dress?’
- c. **Ma**        *parché*    *tal*            *dumandi?* (S question)  
           PART        why            to you-it    ask?  
           ‘PART- why on earth am I asking you?’

Furthermore, in this variety *ma* seems to totally replace the wh-doubling configuration, except for the *se/cusè* double structure illustrated in (11), that gains an ironic value, as reported by the speaker.

- (11) ***Se***            *te*    *dì*    *cusè?* (I question)  
           What-Cl        you    say    what-FULL FORM?  
           ‘What have you said?’



In one case, then, the speaker added the *ma*-particle at the beginning of a direct question built with doubling structure as well, in order to further strengthen the ironic value of the sentence, as reported in (12).

- (12) ***Ma*** *se te capi cusè?* (I question)  
 PART what you understand what?  
 ‘What have you understood?’

According to the speaker, *ma* is a particle with specific pragmatic value, namely irony, at least in this variety, and I have only found it located at the beginning of the sentence. In my opinion, the *ma*-particle could be considered a sentential particle (SP), because it cannot occur neither in declarative clauses nor in embedded contexts, although it sets always at the beginning of the question, contrary to the cases described for Pagotto and Venetian dialects by Poletto and Munaro<sup>48</sup>. So, it could be inserted in a head high position within the CP layer, because it looks like the highest element in the sentence, and it can be removed, it attributes pragmatic value to the sentence, and it is followed by *se*, that occupies FocP. One of the possible analyses will be explained in the chapter three.

A different speaker, still speaking Mendrisio variety, does not use the *ma*-particle widely and prefers the wh-doubling configuration for surprise questions, employing it with *se/cusè*, *ndua* and *cum’è*, as in (13). In the following samples, the doubling configuration is made with two types of cleft clauses for “where” and “how”: in (13.a) the speaker uses a subject clitic and an inflected copula, (13.b) does not have a subject clitic but still has the inflected copula.

- (13) a. ***Indua*** *l’è che l finis indua?* (S question)  
 Where it-is that it finishes where?  
 ‘Where the earth does it finish?’  
 b. ***Cum’è*** *che te fai cum’è?* (S question)  
 How-is that you do how-is?  
 ‘How the earth have you done?’

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<sup>48</sup> Poletto, C. and Munaro, N. (2008), *Sentential Particles and Clausal Typing in Venetan dialects*, in B. Shaer, P. Cook, W. Frey, C. Maienborn (eds) *Dislocated Elements in Discourse: Syntactic, Semantic and Pragmatic Perspectives*, Routledge, New York, p. 173.

The use of cleft clauses seems wider than in other speakers and involves also direct (14.a, 14.c, 14.d) and indirect (14.b) questions without wh-doubling configuration, always using wh-full forms. It seems impossible to our speakers to build a cleft clause with clitic *se*, as illustrated in (15).

- (14) a. Cus'è      *che*    *te*      *dì?*  
           What-is    that    you    say?  
           ‘What have you said?’
- b. *La veur savè*                    cus'è            *che*    *te*      *dì.*  
           She wants to know        what-is        that    you    said.  
           ‘She wants to know what you said.’
- c. Quand'è    *che*    *set*                    *partì?*  
           When-is    that    you-have    left?  
           ‘When have you left?’
- d. Chi è        *che*    *riva?*  
           Who is     that    arrive?  
           ‘Who arrives?’
- (15) \**Se l'è che l'a dì?*  
           What that-is that    he-has said?  
           ‘What has he said?’

So, the clitic *se* can only be found in direct questions and in wh-doubling configurations clause-initially, expressing surprise, either alone or in coordination with the correspondent wh-full form.

- (16) ***Se***    *te*    *vorat savé?*    / ***Se***    *te*    *vorat savè*            ***cusè?***  
           (S question)  
           What    you    want    to know? / What    you    want    to know    what?  
           ‘What the earth do you want to know?’

The clitic *se* behaves as the other clitics described for Davesco variety, so it cannot occur in isolation, it always occupies the left edge of the sentence, and it is accentless.

Therefore, in Mendrisio variety the wh-doubling configuration is still widespread with “what”, but then for some speakers the use of particle *ma* in non-standard direct questions assumes the same function of wh-doubling and for everybody it substitutes the wh-doubling structure for specific wh-words, such as *perchè*.

## 2.2 COMO AREA

Como province is located right on the border between Italy and the Swiss region where Italian is spoken as first language. Historically, these two areas belong to Insubria region and since 1995 constitute the Regio Insubrica community, a political alliance that facilitate the cooperation between Canton Ticino and Italian Northern provinces, namely Como, Lecco, Novara, Varese, and Verbano-Cusio-Ossola. The relation with the neighbouring country is very close, socially and economically. The number of cross-border workers reach percentage between 40 and 50%<sup>49</sup> in towns in which the following data have been collected.

The last report about the percentage of use of dialects in Lombardy region dates back to 2017, it refers to data collected in 2015, and it notes that over 90% of population declares using only Italian language to communicate with family members<sup>50</sup>. The decrease in use of dialects involves mostly young generations, that do not learn local idioms anymore.

The dialects spoken in this area are all classified as western Lombard varieties, belonging to Gallo-italic type, as the ones used in Canton Ticino. The speakers interviewed for this study are all over 50 years old, proving the loss of dialect use within young people. Nonetheless, all of them claim to use their local varieties almost daily to communicate with family members and friends.

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<sup>49</sup> Bigotta, M. and Pellegrin, C. (2021), *Oltre le frontiere statistiche. Il mercato del lavoro transfrontaliero*, in *Extra Dati*, USTAT, Bellinzona.

<sup>50</sup> ISTAT (2017), *L'uso della lingua italiana, dei dialetti e delle lingue straniere*, reference data: 2015, Archives, 2017. [https://www.istat.it/it/files//2017/12/Report\\_Uso-italiano\\_dialetti\\_altrelingue\\_2015.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files//2017/12/Report_Uso-italiano_dialetti_altrelingue_2015.pdf)

### 2.2.1. OLGiate COMASCO

Talking about Como province, I first discuss data collected in Olgiate Comasco, a small town 5 kilometres far from the border between Italy and Switzerland. The variety spoken in Olgiate Comasco shows three different wh-words to say “what”, the clitics *se/sa* and the full form *cusè*. As in Ticino dialects described above, these two forms are contemporary present in doubling configurations as illustrated in (17).

- (17) *Se*            *te*    *dì*    *cusè?*  
What-Cl        you    said    what-FULL FORM?  
‘What have you said?’

The example in (17) is the same sentence illustrated in (11) for Mendrisio variety and has the same configuration of (4.a), recorded in Davesco. Nonetheless, (17) has a different use: it does not express surprise or irony, the speaker claims that she would employ it in standard direct questions. On the other hand, she would choose doubling configuration made with wh-full forms to express surprise as exemplified in (18) or add a *ma*-particle at the beginning of the sentence to make the surprise value even stronger (19), as seen for Ticino varieties.

- (18) *Cusè ca*    *te*    *dì*    *cusè?* (S question)  
What that    you    said    what?  
‘What the earth have you said?’
- (19) *Ma*            *se*    *te*    *se drè a fa*    *cusè?* (S question)  
PART        what    you    are doing    what?  
‘What the earth are you doing?’

The use of *ma*-particle combined with the wh-doubling configuration will be analysed later on, both for this variety and the one spoken in Mendrisio. This construction opens new interrogatives about the projection in which insert *ma*.

Having the wh-doubling configuration for “what” forms, I expect that this dialect can show this structure also for “where” and, perhaps, “how”. As the other varieties, speakers assert it cannot exist for “when” and “why”. In these cases, the surprise value is indicated by pragmatics or through the insertion of *ma* at the beginning of the sentence.

(20) *Nduè ca l finis nduè?* (S question)

Where that it finishes where?

‘Where the earth does it finish?’

(21) *Cumè che u fa cumè?* (S question)

How that I did how?

‘How the earth have I done?’

Contrary to what happens in other varieties described above and to what I expected, in this dialect it seems possible to find a doubling configuration with *chi*, “who”, if made by using a cleft as wh-in situ as in (22).

(22) *Chi ta credat ca l'è turnà chi è?* (S question)

Who you think that he/she-is came back who-is?

‘Who the earth do you think is back?’

So, this cleft appears necessary to distinguish *chi* meaning “who” and *chi* meaning “here”. It should be inserted then in VP-periphery, as I propose to do with wh-in situ forms following Bonan<sup>51</sup>, because this cleft does not behave as a real dependent clause.

Moreover, this variety shows the wh-doubling configuration in compound direct questions as in (23), a structure detected in Davesco only for non-standard direct questions with surprise value, as illustrated in (6).

(23) *Cusè che la veur savè cusè?* (S question)

What that she wants to know what?

‘What the earth does she want to know?’

(24) *Sa/se la cret che u fa cusè?*

What she thinks that I did what?

‘What does she think I have done?’

Conversely, the example in (24) proves that the wh-doubling configuration in Olgiate Comasco can be found also in embedded standard questions, provided that the first wh-

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<sup>51</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève.

element must be the clitic. That could be the reason why this construction can be made only with *se/sa* and *cusè*.

So, this dialect shows new data about the possibility to build wh-doubling configuration with “chi”, as long as it would be inserted in cleft constructions. Then, it can make wh-doubling in embedded standard interrogatives, provided that the clitic occupies the first position.

### 2.2.2. CUASSO AL MONTE

Governmentally, Cuasso al Monte belongs to Varese province, and it sets on the border both with Canton Ticino and Como province. For this reason and having the same characters of Como area dialects, it has been included in this section.

The variety spoken in Cuasso al Monte shows the same use of wh-doubling configuration in standard and non-standard interrogative sentences registered in Olgiate Comasco dialect, as illustrated again in (25) and (26).

(25) *Se te di cusè?*

What you said what?

‘What have you said?’

(26) *Se te fet cusè?* (S question)

What you did what?

‘What on earth have you done?’

According to the speaker, this kind of wh-doubling configuration is possible also with *indua/indùè*, the two wh-full forms for “where” (27), and *cume/cumè*, the two wh-elements for “how” (28). Moreover, this structure can be found in standard and non-standard questions.

(27) *Indua l è che te set andàa induè/indua?*

Where that is that you have been where?

‘Where have you been?’

(28) *Cume l è che te set rivàa cumè?*

How that is that you have came how?

‘How did you come?’

As in other varieties, the wh-doubling configuration cannot be made with *chi*, “who”, *quant*, “when”, and *perché*, “why”, that can be found only in LP.

Talking about the construction of embedded indirect questions, this survey shows the use of *se* as unique wh-word at the beginning of the subordinate interrogative clause, as illustrate in (29) and (30). The same structure is also used with negative main clauses, as in (31). This configuration seems possible only for “what”.

(29) *El m'a dumandàa se te dì.*  
He to me-has asked what you said.  
‘He asked me what you have said.’

(30) \**El vor savè cusè te dì.*  
He wants to know what you said.  
‘He wants to know what you have said.’

(31) *Vori minga savè se te fa.*  
I want not to know what you did.  
‘I do not want to know what you have done.’

The wh-doubling configuration is found also in embedded direct (32) and indirect questions only with *se/cusè*. That happens to be the first time I have detected this structure in indirect interrogatives and with standard value, as in (33) and (34).

(32) *Se te credet che abia fa cusè?*  
What you think that I-have done what?  
‘What do you think I have done?’

(33) *El m'a dumandàa se te dì cusè.*  
He to me-has asked what you said what.  
‘He asked me what you have said.’

(34) *El vor savè se te dì cusè.*  
He wants to know what you said what.  
‘He wants to know what you have said.’

Therefore, Cuasso al Monte variety behaves as Olgiate Comasco dialect, but extends the number of cases in which the wh-doubling configuration is present, at least with wh-elements meaning “what”.

### 2.2.3. SOLBIATE CON CAGNO

The variety spoken in Solbiate con Cagno, a town located as far as Olgiate Comasco from the national border, shows only two wh-doubling configurations, one made with “what” and the other one using “where”. This dialect employs two wh-words to say “what”, the clitic *se* and the wh-full form *cusè*, as we have already seen for the other varieties spoken in this area. Speakers claim to use wh-doubling constructions for “what”, employing a clitic wh-word and a full form element one as in (35). For “where”, instead, it uses the full form *indue*, that can be doubled only in non-standard questions, once again with surprise value (36).

(35) *Se te di cusè?*

What you said what?

‘What have you said?’

(36) *Ndue ca l finis ndue?* (S question)

Where that it finishes where?

‘Where the earth does it finish?’

In this local idiom, apart from these two cases, interrogatives get non-standard values only thanks to pragmatics, through the tone of voice of the speaker and his or her non-verbal communication.

### 2.2.4. UGGIATE-TREVANO AND RONAGO

The last examples I describe have been reported by native speakers from Uggiate-Trevano and Ronago, small towns right on the border with Switzerland. In both varieties I cannot find wh-doubling configurations except for (37), reported in Uggiate-Trevano,



the same construction used in other idioms described above. Speakers state they use it in standard and non-standard interrogative sentences.

(37) *Se te di cusè?*

What you said what?

‘What have you said?’

However, apart from this case of wh-doubling configuration, these varieties seem interesting because they are accustomed to construct interrogative sentences putting in free alternative to wh-elements either clause-initially or at the end of the sentence. In Uggiate-Trevano, speakers claim that in direct questions the location of the wh-full forms is indifferent for *cusè*, “what”, *nduè*, “where”, *cumè*, “how”, and even *chi*, “who”. Instead *quant*, “when”, and *parchè*, “why”, must be placed at the beginning of the sentence (39).

(38) a. *Cusè te set andàa a cumprà al mercaa?*

What you have been to buy at the market?

*Te set andàa a cumprà cusè al mercaa?*

You have been to buy what at the market?

‘What have you bought at the market?’

b. *Nduè l è andàa in feri ul to zio?*

Where he has been on holidays your uncle?

*L è andàa in feri nduè ul to zio?*

He has been on holidays where your uncle?

‘Where has your uncle been on holidays?’

c. *Cumè ca va si conusu?*

How that have you met? /

*Va si cunusu cumè?*

Have you met how?

‘How have you met?’

d. *Chi l’ a incuntràa la nona?*

Who she has met the granny?

*L’ a incuntràa chi la nona?*

She has met who the granny?

‘Who has the granny met?’

- (39) *Parchè*     *i to surell*     *a cantan?* /  
 Why            your sisters     sing? /  
 \**I to surell*     *a cantan*            ***parché?***  
 Your sisters     sing                    why?  
 ‘Why are your sisters singing?’

These samples of wh-in situ could help explaining afterwards the reason why I suggest these wh-elements should be inserted in Foc<sub>LOW</sub> Projection, displaced from their native first-merge external position. As a matter of fact, these wh-elements are followed by the subjects of the sentence (*ul to zio, la nona*) if 3<sup>rd</sup> persons. These varieties always need an explicit subject clitic, as *l* in (38.b) and (38.d), preceding the finite verb, a typical feature of Northern Italian dialects. *Parchè*, as proposed by Rizzi, is set in IntP, so it can never be found as wh-in situ<sup>52</sup>.

On the other hand, Ronago dialect does not show wh-doubling configurations at all. It has two wh-words meaning “what”, the clitic *se* and the full form *cusè*, as the most part of varieties I have already illustrated, but they cannot co-occur.

- (40) *Se*     *te*     *fai*     *ier?*  
 What    you    did    yesterday  
*Te*     *fai*     *ier*            ***cusè?***  
 You    did    yesterday    what  
 ‘What did you do yesterday?’
- (41) *Te*     *pensat de*     *ve*     *vist*     ***cusè ?***  
 You    think    that    have    seen    what  
 \**Cusè te*     *pensat de*     *ve*     *vist?*  
 What    you    think    that    have    seen  
 ‘What do you think you have seen?’

In these examples, *se* appears to be used only at the beginning of the sentence, in contrast with *cusè*, that can be found just at the end, functioning as wh-in situ as in (40). *Cusè*

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<sup>52</sup> Rizzi, L., and Bocci, G. (2017), *Left Periphery of the Clause: Primarily Illustrated for Italian*, in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Syntax*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (eds. M. Everaert and H.C. Riemsdijk), John Wiley & Sons, pp. 1-30.

cannot be seen in other positions, even in embedded direct interrogatives, as illustrated in (41).

Therefore, in these varieties the wh-doubling configuration is not present, but the use of wh-in situ is widespread, without this construction being mandatory or adding non-standard values to the sentence.

## DATA ANALYSIS

In this section I analyse the data described above in the framework of Cartography, already introduced in chapter one (§ 1.1). Initially, the *wh*-fronting constructions is briefly studied (§ 2.3), after I pass to *wh*-in situ structures (§ 2.4), and, at the end, I talk about my main topic: *wh*-doubling configurations (§ 2.5). All the examples considered in *wh*-doubling structures are single *wh*-questions, that is the two *wh*-elements are semantically accounted as a unit.

Northern Italian Dialects (NIDs) and Romance languages in general show *wh*-in situ structures and *wh*-fronting configurations alternatively, meaning that speakers can choose which construction to employ, and those constructions are not pragmatically marked. So, the use of insituness is optional and optionality, as Bonan reminds us, is “a problem per se in any theoretical account”<sup>53</sup>, but surely intriguing. That means that in analysing these configurations, we cannot easily find a single explanation that works neither for all Northern Italian varieties nor for different kinds of structures.

I consider the existence of three different types of *wh*-elements, all visible in the data described above, and I classify them as Donzelli and Pescarini do for Comun Nuovo dialect<sup>54</sup>. I identify *wh*-clitics, such as *se/sa* and *ndu*, that are restricted to the Left Periphery, either alone or in *wh*-doubling configurations, and can never be found in situ. Then, there are two other series, both tonics, that Donzelli and Pescarini call respectively basic series and *-è* series. *Wh*-elements such as *cosa/cusa*, *ndua*, *cuma*, *quant*, and *chi* belong to the basic series, instead *cusè*, *nduè*, and *cumè* fit in the *-è* series. The same distinction is done by Poletto and Pollock, naming members of basic series as “weak” *wh*-words, and *-è* series items as “strong” *wh*-words<sup>55</sup>. They suppose this difference can work well because they cannot find basic series forms at the beginning of the sentence in *wh*-doubling configurations, so they suggest those *wh*-elements behave as weak pronouns in the sense of Cardinaletti and Starke (1999). I choose to label these two groups as

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<sup>53</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> Donzelli, G., and Pescarini, D. (2019), “Tre tipi di *wh* in situ nei dialetti lombardi”, *Bollettino del Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani*, Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, p. 206.

Donzelli and Pescarini (2019) do, because, as Manzini and Savoia point out, both “weak” and “strong” wh-elements can occur in Left Periphery and *in situ* in Lombard varieties, not showing complementary distribution<sup>56</sup>. Moreover, in my data the *-è* series can also be found as LP item in wh-doubling configurations, not only as a right edge wh-element. I will consequently call them wh-full forms, then distinguish them in the two series named above.

As proposed by Manzini<sup>57</sup> and reported by Donzelli and Pescarini<sup>58</sup>, the internal structure of the following forms *cusè*, *nduè*, and *cumè* should be derived from the correspondent cleft phrase, as will be shown in the following lines. Considering morphology, the interrogative items (*cusa*, *ndua*, *cuma*) were associated to *-è*, that morphologically represents the 3<sup>rd</sup> person of the verb “to be” in those languages. So, the forms *cusè*, *nduè*, and *cumè* would result from the reanalysis of an original cleft phrase as reported in (42).

(42) <i>Cusa/ndua/cuma</i>	+	<i>l</i>	+	<i>è</i>
Wh-full forms	+	SCI	+	3 <sup>rd</sup> person of “to be”

The development of these forms from a morphological point of view looks clear, but it seems more difficult to understand and explain why those *-è* full forms can be found as wh-in situ. Indeed, syntactically speaking, shift phrases should stand before the matrix sentence they are linked to<sup>59</sup>. Moreover, *chi* and *quant* can be inserted in cleft phrases as the ones that have originated the *-è* full forms, but only *chi è* and in only one case, illustrated in (22) for Olgiate Comasco variety, can be found on the right edge of the sentences in my data. All the other examples of *quant è* and *chi è* occur in Left Periphery. According to Manzini<sup>60</sup>, in *cusè*, *nduè*, and *cumè* “the copula is grammaticalized as a focus particle in other languages”, so “observations of this type lead one to the conclusion that the *-è* morphology of Lombard varieties lexicalizes focus properties”. She proposes,

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<sup>56</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2011), “Wh-in situ & wh-doubling in Northern Italian Varieties: Against Remnant Movement”, in *Linguistic Analysis*, 37:1-2 (2011), Vashon (WA), p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> Manzini, M.R. (2014), “Grammatical categories: Strong and weak pronouns in Romance”, in *Lingua* 150 (2014), pp. 187-189.

<sup>58</sup> Donzelli, G., and Pescarini, D. (2019), “Tre tipi di wh in situ nei dialetti lombardi”, *Bollettino del Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani*, Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>60</sup> Manzini, M.R. (2014), “Grammatical categories: Strong and weak pronouns in Romance”, in *Lingua* 150 (2014), p. 187.

then, that *-è* is a bound morpheme “specialized for the lexicalization of Focus”, so *wh*- and Focus properties result lexicalized separately. This idea will be useful to explain the existence of *wh*-doubling configurations afterwards, nonetheless in our data the *-è* series forms are also located in LP.

Moreover, I consider the existence of two different types of movement: *wh*-movement and remnant movement. The *wh*-movement allow the displacement of *wh*-words to projections that permit to *wh*-elements checking interrogative features. The *wh*-results, then, to be moved from its first-merge position to split CP layer. Remnant movement, on the other side, involves the *wh*-movement of *wh*-words to CP layer, as above, followed by the displacement of the leftovers IP to a higher computational projection, that should be SpecForceP. These two kinds of movement are used by different scholars to explain the position assumed by *wh*-elements in NIDs. In both proposals, Rizzi’s Wh-Criterion is accepted as the reason why the *wh*-movement is required. According to him, the so-called Wh-Criterion drives *wh*-movement and essentially requires that *wh*-phrase, carrying interrogative features, ends up in a Spec-head relation with the element T, also carrying the feature [wh] in questions. So, the item in T should have moved to C, subsequently attracting the *wh*-elements, so that the Spec-head relation can be maintained<sup>61</sup>.

A problem that can easily be detected involves the landing projections of *wh*-words, in and out of CP layers. As Cartography proposes, the existence of a projection in the syntactic spine implies the presence of that projection in every syntactic spine built for any language. I start talking about the landing projection within the CP layer. Studying Italian language, Rizzi<sup>62</sup> suggests that interrogative *wh*-words (in bold in the examples), i.e., in direct questions, must follow topics (underlined in the examples), conversely relative *wh*-words have to precede them, as illustrated in (43) and (44).

(43) Il premio Nobel, **a chi lo** daranno?

The Nobel prize, **to whom** they will give it?

(44) Un uomo **a cui**, il Premio Nobel, lo daranno senz’altro.

A man **to whom**, the Nobel Prize, they will give it undoubtedly.

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<sup>61</sup> Rizzi, L. (1997), *The fine structure of the left periphery*, in L. Haegeman, *Elements of grammar*, Kluwer International Handbooks of Linguistics, ed. Springer, Dordrecht.

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem.

So, wh-words are compatible with Topics and that means the order of projections in CP layer must be the following:

(45) [ForceP [TopP [Wh-words Projection [TopP [FinP

The so-called Wh-words Projection could clearly sets where also Focus Projection is located. Analysing Italian sentences, Rizzi himself points out that Focus is incompatible with interrogative wh-words in main interrogatives, so he supposes both elements rest in SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub>. Moreover, in order to respect Rizzi's Wh-Criterion, Foc<sup>0</sup> will be the landing site of the verb form. As Rizzi confirmed in 2018, analysing data from Japanese: "Wh-elements are focal, the left-peripheral focus position is unique, therefore, wh and focus compete for the same unique position, whence the observed incompatibility."<sup>63</sup>

Thus, only one LP Focus projection can exist for matrix questions. On the other hand, this incompatibility is not strictly established for embedded questions: it is suggested that "the wh-element targets a distinct "pure Q" position, not necessarily a focus position"<sup>64</sup>. This second claim, speaking of embedded questions, raises a crucial question about Focus projection in LP: "is it a simple Foc position, or a featurally complex mixed position, involving both specifications?"<sup>65</sup>.

Considering it a "featurally complex mixed position" gives me the opportunity to introduce the claim that a Q-Particle à la Cable could drive the wh-movement to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub>, meanwhile also Focus driven movement to SpecFoc<sub>LOW</sub> occurs, as proposed by Bonan for Trevisan wh-in situ questions<sup>66</sup>. The landing FocP would be composed by Q plus Focus features in main questions.

Later, in 2001, Rizzi suggested the existence of a specific interrogative projection (IntP), that should fit the complementizer for yes/no questions, at least in Italian. In IntP

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<sup>63</sup> Bocci, G., Rizzi, L. and Saito, M. (2018), "On the incompatibility of wh and focus", *Gengo Kenkyu* – *Journal of the Linguistic Society of Japan*, 154 (2018), p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Ivi, p. 10.

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>66</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève.

seem to land also the wh-word for “why”, *perché*. So, the order of projections in split CP would be the following (46)<sup>67</sup>, yet proposed in chapter one (§ 1.2):

(46) [ForceP [Top\*P [IntP [Top\*P [FocP [Top\*P [FinP

Talking about the projection in which wh-elements would land out of CP layer, I suppose that this is the Low Focus Projection, located in Belletti’s VP- periphery (47).

(47) VP-periphery (Belletti, 2004)<sup>68</sup>

[CP... [TP... [TopP Top [FocLowP **FocLow** [TopP Top [vP...]]]]]]

This suggestion permits to consider  $Foc_{Low}$  the landing site of every kind of wh-words, included the wh-in situ forms, which would move from their first-merge position to  $SpecFoc_{Low}$ , as Bonan states for Trevisan<sup>69</sup>. Wh-elements would be attracted to  $SpecFoc_{Low}$  to check their Focus feature, while wh-features would be checked by a Q-particle, risen in the Left Periphery, landing in  $Foc_{High}$ <sup>70</sup>. Accepting this proposal, it seems possible to support the separation of [wh] and [foc] features, as Belletti already supposed<sup>71</sup>. Furthermore, it permits to propose that NIDs wh-elements are not Chinese-like wh-in situ.

Another problem to solve is explaining the reason that drives the movement, which must be linked to check interrogative and / or Focus features. We have already argued that these two properties are lexicalized separately, as Manzini<sup>72</sup> says describing the grammaticalization of -è series forms. But, if we believe that the landing site of wh-words and Focus elements is the same, we should assume that in these projections both features

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<sup>67</sup> Rizzi, L. (2001), *On the position “int(errogative)” in the left periphery of the clause*, in *Current studies in Italian syntax: Essays offered to Lorenzo Renzi*, Guglielmo Cinque and Giampaolo Salvi (eds), Elsevier, Amsterdam, pp. 267–296.

<sup>68</sup> Belletti, A. (2004), *Aspects of the low IP area*, in L. Rizzi (ed) *The Structure of IP and CP. The Cartography of Syntactic Structures*, vol. 2, Oxford University Press.

<sup>69</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève.

<sup>70</sup> Bonan, C. (2021), “The periphery of vP in the theory of wh-in situ”, *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 6 : 1 (2021).

<sup>71</sup> Belletti, A. (2004), *Aspects of the low IP area*, in L. Rizzi (ed) *The Structure of IP and CP. The Cartography of Syntactic Structures*, vol. 2, Oxford University Press.

<sup>72</sup> Manzini, M.R. (2014), “Grammatical categories: Strong and weak pronouns in Romance”, in *Lingua* 150 (2014), p. 187.



can be checked. As I have already mentioned above, the proposal of the existence of a Q-particle à la Cable made by Bonan<sup>73</sup>, according to me, is the most interesting and reliable.

In the following paragraphs I analyse three different configurations of wh-questions I have found in my data, trying to explain their existence on the basis of the theoretical approaches described above. I start with wh-fronting configurations (§ 2.3), then I move to wh-in situ structures (§ 2.4), and I conclude analysing wh-doubling constructions (§ 2.5).

### 2.3 WH-FRONTING CONSTRUCTION

As we have seen along the descriptive part, wh-words can appear at the beginning of the sentence, establishing the so-called wh-fronting structure. This configuration is widespread in standard questions of a great number of Romance languages and in NIDs as well. However, in Northern Italian dialects it can be found as a free alternative to wh-in situ and in some varieties, it coexists with wh-doubling, that will be both analysed afterwards.

I start talking about clitic forms, that are always located at the beginning of the interrogative clause. *Se* and *ndu* for Davesco dialect, and *se/sa* for the other varieties always occupy the first position in the sentence, whether they are direct or indirect questions. Those wh-elements can first-merge in SpecVP, being direct objects in the declarative sentence, then move to CP layer to check their wh-features in SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub>, or they can first-merge in an external position, then rise to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> in the LP for checking again their interrogative features. The process suggested is shown in (48) for direct questions, and in (49) for embedded interrogatives. The first example comes from Ronago variety, it is reported in (40), and given here. Only wh-elements movements are pointed out.

- (48) *Se te fai ier?*  
What you did yesterday

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<sup>73</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève.



As described in the previous example, *se* first-merge position is in SpecVP, being the direct object of the declarative sentence. It lands, then, in SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> in the Left Periphery of indirect interrogative clause to check its Q-features.

In the dialects I have collected data about, not only clitics can be found in this position: all the other wh-words, belonging to basic or *-è* series, can be located in LP, displaced from their first-merge projection to Foc<sub>HIGH</sub>P. In the examples, “what” wh-full forms merge first as arguments of VP, namely in SpecVP, then rise to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub>. The landing projection results to be the same also for the other wh-elements, although its first-merge position is different, i.e., mostly external.

- (50) *Cusa/cusè te di?*  
 What you said  
 ‘What have you said?’

Input: CP [IP [Spec TP [T° [Spec vP *te* [v° [Spec VP *cusa/cusè* [v° *di* ]]]]]]

A long wh-movement to the LP takes place and the wh-word lands in SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub>, as highlighted for the other examples above.

[ForceP Force° [TopP Top° [SpecFocP *cusa/cusè* Foc° [FinP Fin° [Spec AgrSP [AgrS° [Spec TP [T° [Spec vP *te* [v° [Spec VP *ti* [v° *di* ]]]]]]]]]]]]

The sample in (50) shows that *cosa/cusè*, “what”, are respectively used in Davesco and Uggiate-Trevano at the beginning of direct questions, so at least in those varieties they can be moved to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub>. This example supports my previous claim, that is that I cannot define *cosa* as “weak” wh-word as suggested by Poletto and Pollock<sup>75</sup> because it behaves exactly as *cusè*, and that also the *-è* series can rise to the Left Periphery.

The wh-fronting configuration can be found in standard questions and in non-canonical ones, as a free alternative to wh-in situ for specific wh-words, that can be different according to the variety considered. The wh-fronting structure seems to be made with all the wh-words I have investigated in the surveys, although their first-merge

<sup>75</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, p. 206.

position is different. For example, “who” can merge in SpecvP as Subject or SpecVP as direct object; “where” merges primarily in Complement, as indirect object of inaccusative verbs; “when” and “how” merge as adjuncts, out of vP phrase. All of them, anyway, are attracted to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> and leave their first-merge position due to their necessity to check a [wh]-feature. The following example (51) comes from Uggiate-Trevano dialect and displays a direct question in which the displaced wh-word belongs to -è series and merges first out of vP phrase.

- (51) *Nduè l è andàa in feri ul to zio?*  
 Where he is been on holidays your uncle  
 ‘Where has your uncle been on holidays?’

Input: [CP [SpecAgrSP I [AgrS° [SpecTP [T° è [SpecF1P in feri [F1° [SpecvP ul to zio [v° [SpecVP [v° andàa [CompIV' **nduèi** ]]]]]]]]]]]]

Wh- item moves to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> from its first-merge position in Compl.

[ForceP Force° [TopP Top° [SpecFocP **nduèi** [Foc° [TopP Top° [FinP Fin° [SpecAgrSP I [AgrS° [SpecTP [T° è [SpecF1P in feri [F1° [SpecvP ul to zio [v° [SpecVP [v° andàa [CompIV' **ti** ]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]

The same situation is detectable in embedded standard questions, involving *cosa* in the following example, which analysis is illustrated in (52).

- (52) *Al ma dumanda cosa te dì.*  
 He to me asked what you said.  
 ‘He asked me what you have said.’

Input: [CP [IP Al ma dumanda [CP [SpecAgrSP [AgrS° [SpecTP [T° [SpecvP te [v° [SpecVP **cosa**i [v° dì ]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]

Wh-element rises up to subordinate CP layer, landing in the internal-clause SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> to check its interrogative features.

[CP [IP Al ma dumanda [ForceP [Force° [TopP [Top° [FocP **cosa**i [Foc° [TopP [Top° [FinP [Fin° [SpecAgrSP [AgrS° [SpecTP [T° [SpecvP te [v° [SpecVP **ti** [v° dì ]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]

As demonstrated above, in Lombard varieties wh-fronting is a widespread structure. It is typical also of Italian language and other Romance idioms, but in dialects I have studied it seems a free alternative to wh-in situ configurations that will be analysed in the next section (§ 2.4). Wh-fronting is clearly used both in matrix and embedded questions.

Following Bonan<sup>76</sup> and considering the existence of a Q-particle à la Cable<sup>77</sup>, I suggest that the wh-movement is driven by the necessity of checking a [+Q]-feature in SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub>, so wh-words move up to CP layer, wherever its first-merge position is located. I assume that this wh-movement depends on the existence of two different features, [+Q] and [+foc], scattered between Foc<sub>HIGH</sub> and Foc<sub>LOW</sub><sup>78</sup> projections, and that is a probe-goal one.

## 2.4 WH-IN SITU STRUCTURE

Wh-in situ structures show the opposite configuration to wh-fronting, that is the wh-elements are placed at the end of the interrogative sentences. According to Dryer<sup>79</sup>, it seems that most part of languages around the world use a non-obligatorily occurrence of interrogative phrases at the beginning of the content question, mostly leaving the wh-words in the position they occur naturally in declaratives. As I have pointed out in the introduction of this section, the alternative use of wh-fronting configurations and wh-in situ structures is truly optional for several Lombard varieties, at least for the ones I have investigated. Considering Northern Italian dialects in general, optionality in building wh-questions appears widespread and the literature suggests three different ways to analyse the phenomenon of wh-in situ. These proposals would be briefly explained in the next paragraphs.

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<sup>76</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève.

<sup>77</sup> Cable, S. (2010), *The grammar of Q. Q-Particles, Wh-Movement, and Pied-Piping*, Oxford University Press, New York.

<sup>78</sup> Bonan, C. (2021), “The periphery of vP in the theory of wh-in situ”, *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 6 : 1 (2021), p. 37.

<sup>79</sup> Dryer, M. (2013), *Position of Interrogative Phrases in Content Questions*, in Dryer, M. S. and Haspelmath, M. (eds.) *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, Leipzig, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology.

First, following the assumption of Manzini and Savoia<sup>80</sup>, wh-elements do not leave their external first-merge position, therefore NIDs would behave as Chinese, Korean, and Japanese in these cases. So, this construction could be considered a case of wh-in situ *stricto sensu*, as suggested by Donzelli and Pescarini<sup>81</sup>. This type of configuration is illustrated using an example taken from my data, gathered in Davesco, and described in (§ 2.1.1). The sentence is repeated below (53).

(53) *Te di cosa?*  
 You said what  
 ‘What have you said?’

Input: [CP [IP [Spec vP Te [v° [Spec vP **cosa** [v° di ]]]]]]

While other components are displaced upwards to check their specific features, wh-element *cosa* does not move along the spine.

[CP [IP [SpecT Te<sub>i</sub> [T° d<sub>i</sub> [Spec vP t<sub>i</sub> [vP° t<sub>j</sub> [Spec vP **cosa** [vP° t<sub>j</sub> ]]]]]]]]]]

The case proposed in (53) represents a standard wh-question, built using a wh-element of the basic series, that is positioned superficially at the end of the direct question. The first-merge position for *cosa* is included in the thematic layer, as *cosa* represents the direct object of the sentence, thus it merges in SpecVP. As a result, it should not move to any other projection to check its features, therefore this configuration seems to maintain the word order of declarative sentences. Given that the wh-element *cosa* does not rise the syntactic spine, I account it as wh-in situ in *stricto sensu*<sup>82</sup>. Apparently, on the one hand this proposal could fit for every type of wh-element in Davesco, excluding wh-clitics, and including *perché*, that is generally thought to merge externally in IntP<sup>83</sup>, i.e., in the LP. On the other hand, for the further varieties investigated, it could only suit for wh-elements meaning “what”, “where”, and “how”.

<sup>80</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2005), *I dialetti italiani e romanci. Morfosintassi generativa I-III*, Ed. dell’Orso; Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2011), “Wh-in situ & wh-doubling in Northern Italian Varieties: Against Remnant Movement”, in *Linguistic Analysis*, 37:1-2 (2011), Vashon (WA).

<sup>81</sup> Donzelli, G., and Pescarini, D. (2019), “Tre tipi di wh in situ nei dialetti lombardi”, *Bollettino del Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani*, Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> Donzelli, G., and Pescarini, D. (2019), “Tre tipi di wh in situ nei dialetti lombardi”, *Bollettino del Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani*, Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Bocci, G., Rizzi, L. and Saito, M. (2018), “On the incompatibility of wh and focus”, *Gengo Kenkyu – Journal of the Linguistic Society of Japan*, 154 (2018), p.13.

Another proposal to analyse wh-in situ examples comes from Poletto and Pollock<sup>84</sup>. They claim wh-in situ in NIDs depends on remnant movement and it can be possible, in Mendrisiotto, only with *-è* series wh-forms. In fact, their speaker considers ungrammatical the presence of basic series wh-words at the end of the content question. Looking at my data, instead, it seems possible to find wh-in situ examples made with basic series wh-forms as well. Remnant movement is derived via wh-displacement of the internal wh-word to CP layer from its first-merge position, followed by the rising of the whole IP to a higher computational projection. According to Poletto and Pollock<sup>85</sup>, there exist two projections in which wh-words can check their interrogative features in LP, i.e., WhP1 and WhP2. These two wh-projections should be located respectively above ForceP and between GroundP<sup>86</sup> and IP, as illustrated in (54), and will be target sites for wh-elements in wh-doubling constructions analysed later on, in the next section.

(54) [<sub>WhP1</sub> Wh<sup>0</sup><sub>1</sub> [<sub>ForceP</sub> Force<sup>0</sup> [<sub>GroundP</sub> G<sup>0</sup> [<sub>WhP2</sub> Wh<sup>0</sup><sub>2</sub> [IP ... ]]]]]

The process suggested by those authors is developed for French<sup>87</sup>, but it can be applied to wh-in situ questions collected in NIDs, as in (55)<sup>88</sup>, in which is repeated the example collected in Uggiate-Trevano yet shown in (40). This sentence is a standard content question with an adjunct, *ier*, meaning “yesterday”, in which the wh-in situ configuration can be used in free alternative to the one analysed in (50). It shows only one wh-in situ element, so I will use just one WhP as landing site for the wh-word.

(55) *Te fai ier cusè?*  
 You did yesterday what

<sup>84</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, pp. 199-258.

<sup>85</sup> Ivi, p. 221.

<sup>86</sup> GroundP is a projection located in the split CP, between ForceP and TopP\*. It seems to be targeted by the NOM Subject Clitic. It results to be used also as a landing site for remnant-IP, together with SpecForceP.

<sup>87</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, pp. 219-236.

<sup>88</sup> This type of simplified analysis has been proposed for wh-in situ NIDs by Bonan, in Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, p. 10.

‘What did you do yesterday?’

Input: [CP [IP [Spec F1P *ier* [F1<sup>0</sup> [Spec vP *Te* [V<sup>0</sup> [Spec VP **cusè**<sub>j</sub> [V<sup>0</sup> *fai*<sub>k</sub> ]]]]]]]]]

- (1) First step: wh-movement to SpecWhP2, a functional projection higher than IP and contained in CP layer.

[ForceP [Force<sup>o</sup> [GroundP [Ground<sup>0</sup> [TopP [Top<sup>o</sup> [Spec WhP2 **cusè**<sub>j</sub> [Wh<sup>0</sup>2 [TopP [Top<sup>o</sup> [FinP [Fin<sup>o</sup> [IP *Te fai* [SpecF1P *ier* [F1<sup>0</sup> [Spec vP *ti* [V<sup>0</sup> [Spec VP *tj* [V<sup>0</sup> *tk* ]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]

- (2) Second step: movement of the remnant-IP to a higher functional projection, i.e., SpecForceP, while the wh-elements rests in SpecWh2.

[SpecForceP [IP **Te fai [ier [tj ]]] [Force<sup>0</sup> [GroundP [Ground<sup>0</sup> [TopP [Top<sup>0</sup> [SpecWh2 **cusè**<sub>i</sub> [Wh<sup>0</sup>2 [TopP [Top<sup>0</sup> [FinP [Fin<sup>0</sup> [remnant-IP ]]]]]]]]]]]]]**

According to Bonan, this proposal explaining wh-in situ represents a case of fake insituness, because “clause-internal wh-words are assumed to undergo wh-movement into a left-peripheral Spec, which is masked in the phonetic string because further movements take place, which displace the whole (remnant) IP to the LP of the clause”<sup>89</sup>, so the wh-element actually does not remain in situ, i.e., in its first-merge position.

The remnant movement hypothesis seems to work well also in indirect content questions’ analysis, as exemplified in (56).

- (56) *Tu penset ch l vora fa cosa?*  
 You think that he/she wants do what?  
 ‘What do you think he/she wants to do?’

Input: [CP [IP *Tu penset* [SpecVP of main clause [ForceP [Force<sup>0</sup> *ch* [GroundP [Ground<sup>0</sup> [TopP [Top<sup>0</sup> [Spec WhP2 [Wh<sup>0</sup>2 [TopP [Top<sup>0</sup> [FinP [Fin<sup>0</sup> [SpecTP [T<sup>o</sup> *vora* [Spec vP *l* [V<sup>o</sup> [SpecVP **cosai** [V<sup>o</sup> *fa* ]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]

- (1) Wh-element moves up to subordinate CP layer, landing in SpecWhP2. Then, it rises again to main CP, landing in the higher WhP2.

<sup>89</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, p. 10.

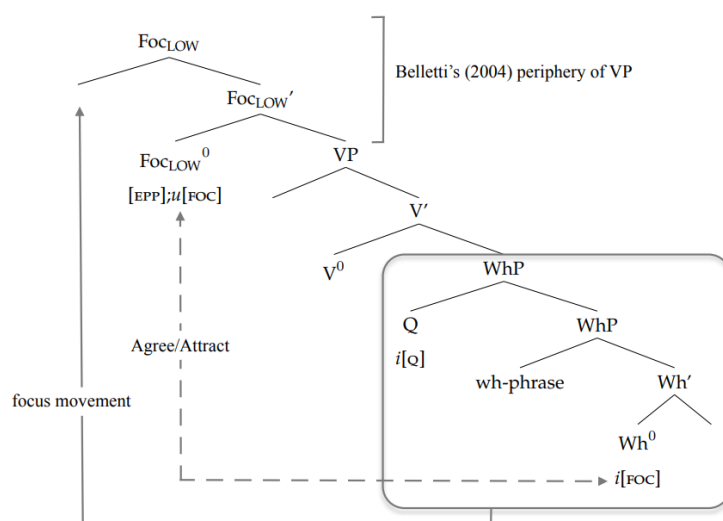




The third possible explanation for *wh*-in situ in NIDs has been suggested by Bonan<sup>93</sup> analysing data from Trevisan<sup>94</sup> and it implies a *Wh*-to-*Foc* movement of *wh*-elements that superficially appear to remain in situ. According to her, those *wh*-words move from their first-merge position to *SpecFoc<sub>LOW</sub>*, in Belletti’s *VP*-periphery<sup>95</sup>. She argues that this so-called *Wh*-to-*Foc* movement is a short movement, “not proper *wh*-movement but rather focus movement made under focus agreement”<sup>96</sup>. The [*wh*]-feature would then be checked in *CP* through the rise of a covert *Q*-particle à la Cable as in regular in situ *Q*-projection languages. Bonan points out that “robust empirical evidence in favour of focus-movement of clause-internal *wh*-phrases exists for *non*-Romance varieties”, although the only one who tried to propose it for NIDs before her has been Manzini<sup>97</sup>, lacking empirical proofs.

The scheme proposed by Bonan to explain this type of *Wh*-to-*Foc* movement is reported below<sup>98</sup>, in (57).

(57)



<sup>93</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève; Bonan, C. (2021) “The periphery of *vP* in the theory of *wh*-in situ”, *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 6 : 1 (2021).

<sup>94</sup> Trevisan dialect is a variety spoken in Veneto region and it belongs to Eastern NIDs.

<sup>95</sup> The following configuration is the *VP*-periphery à la Belletti, as proposed in Belletti, A. (2004), *Aspects of the low IP area*, in L. Rizzi (ed) *The Structure of IP and CP. The Cartography of Syntactic Structures*, vol. 2, Oxford University Press.

[*CP*... [*TP*... [*TopP* *Top*<sup>°</sup> [*FocP* *Foc*<sup>°</sup> [*TopP* *Top*<sup>°</sup> [*vP*...]]]]]]

<sup>96</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, p. 23.

<sup>97</sup> Manzini, M.R. (2014), “Grammatical categories: Strong and weak pronouns in Romance”, in *Lingua* 150 (2014), pp. 171-201.

<sup>98</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, p. 23.





## 2.5 WH-DOUBLING CONFIGURATION

In wh-doubling configurations the wh-element is apparently doubled, i.e., it appears twice in the interrogative sentence, but the two wh-words inserted account as one unit. For its characteristics, wh-doubling configuration results “unique in the Romance domain, and beyond”<sup>105</sup>. In NIDs it appears quite widespread, and it has been described especially for Venetan and Lombard varieties, such as Illasiano and Mendrisiotto<sup>106</sup>, Colognese and Strozzenese<sup>107</sup> among others. Along the first part of this chapter, in *Data description*, there are many examples of this configuration. One already illustrated in (3.b), collected in Davesco (Ticino), is reported again in (59).

- (59) *Cosa te di cosa?*  
What you said what  
‘What have you said?’

The sample above represents a standard content question, and the speaker claims to use it without pragmatics connotations. So, doubling the wh-element *cosa* in this dialect does not seem to add any more pragmatics information to the interrogative sentence.

In the varieties examined, the wh-doubling phenomenon is always found in alternative to wh-fronting or wh-in situ configurations, depending on the local idiom under investigation. Besides, this structure could be displayed by both standard and non-standard content questions and identified in matrix and embedded interrogative sentences. In addition to the variety spoken, this optionality in choosing which configuration to use depends on which wh-element is used to ask for evidence, i.e., in what-questions the phenomenon is pervasive, instead my data do not show cases of doubling in when- and why-questions. The reason for the necessary fronting of “why” has been proposed by

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<sup>105</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, p. 12.

<sup>106</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, pp. 201-217.

<sup>107</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2011) “Wh-in situ & wh-doubling in Northern Italian Varieties: Against Remnant Movement”, in *Linguistic Analysis*, 37:1-2 (2011), Vashon (WA).

Rizzi<sup>108</sup> and already explained above (§ 1.2). Talking about when-questions, there are examples in the data collected by Manzini and Savoia<sup>109</sup> for Sanrocchese and Strozzenese, both Lombard varieties.

In the following table, the results of my surveys about wh-doubling direct questions are reported. I distinguish between standard (S) and non-standard (NS) interrogative sentences. The order I use for the dialects depends on the one I have displayed them in the *Data description* section, instead the series of wh-elements is organised from the most pervasive to the less present in this configuration.

Table 1. Wh-doubling structures in direct wh-questions, standard and non-standard.

	What		Where		How		Who		When		Why	
	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS
Davesco	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mendrisio	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Olgiate Comasco	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cuasso al Monte	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Solbiate con Cagno	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uggiate-Trevano	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ronago	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

As displayed by Table 1, wh-doubling structure is remarkably used in non-standard direct questions and all the varieties investigated, except for Ronago one, show wh-doubling constructions with “what”-forms, both in standard and non-standard interrogative sentences. The presence of doubling structures is clearly reduced going from what-questions to why-questions, as along a hierarchical scale. In chapter three (§ 3.3) I will make a wider description of this statement.

In embedded questions and in indirect interrogative sentences, the data show that the wh-doubling constructions are acceptable only with “what”-elements, mostly with the first wh-item in clitic or basic series forms. These examples do not present non-standard

<sup>108</sup> Rizzi, L., and Bocci, G. (2017), *Left Periphery of the Clause: Primarily Illustrated for Italian*, in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Syntax*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (eds. M. Everaert and H.C. Riemsdijk), John Wiley & Sons, pp. 12-13.

<sup>109</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2005), *I dialetti italiani e romanci. Morfosintassi generativa I-III*, Ed. dell’Orso.

values. Moreover, in embedded context, there is the sole example with “who”-word doubled, identified in Olgiate Comasco. The second wh-element is a cleft-clause.

In addition to the variety spoken and the wh-element used in the interrogative sentences, the speaker’s habits, his or her intentions, and the specific context affect the selection of the structure to use. As will be shown below, the free choice made by the speaker determines that in one variety are present different kinds of configuration, all optionally available in similar contexts.

In Davesco, for example, the speaker interviewed considers the following sentences reported in (60) as endowed with the same value, i.e., direct content questions.

- (60) a. *Cosa*     *te*     *dì*     *-?*  
       b. -            *Te*     *dì*     *cosa?*  
       c. *Cosa*     *te*     *dì*     *cosa?*  
       d. *Se*        *te*     *dì*     *cosa?*  
           What     you     said     what  
           ‘What have you said?’

Instead, in other varieties and in Davesco for different wh-elements, such as “where” and “how”, the choice to use wh-doubling configuration permits to add a surprise or ironic value to the question apparently built to ask for information, as illustrated in (61).

- (61) a. *Se*        *te*     *dì*     *-?*     (standard question)  
       b. *Se*        *te*     *dì*     *cusè?* (I question)  
           What     you     said     (what)  
           ‘What have you said?’

According to Poletto and Pollock, in NIDs at least two different types of wh-doubling can be found, that is “one involving a [clitic wh-, wh-phrase] pair, the other a [‘weak’<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> I have called the “weak wh-elements” of Poletto and Pollock (2009) “basic series”, according to Donzelli and Pescarini (2019). The difference and the reason for the choice are explained in the introduction to *Data analysis*’ part.

wh-element, wh-phrase] pair”<sup>111,112</sup>. For Mendrisio variety, then, they propose a tripartite system, depending on the nature of the doubling elements involved, that is wh-clitics, wh-elements belonging to basic series or -è series ones.

Following Bonan<sup>113</sup>, I consider Type A as the “(Simple) Wh-clitic (doubling) configuration”<sup>114</sup>, that involves a [clitic wh-, -è series wh-] pair, as the one above in (61.b). For matrix questions and embedded interrogative sentences, type A has been identified in both Venetan and Lombard varieties. In long-distance wh-questions, this configuration has been identified in only two varieties, such as Borghese and Sanrocchese<sup>115</sup>, in which it is attested only with “who” and “where” forms, respectively. In my sample, I have found wh-doubling in long construals made with “what”-forms in Davesco, in (6), Olgiate Comasco, in (23) and (24), and Cuasso al Monte, in (32), which is repeated below in (62). This long distance wh-movement can be displayed in both embedded and indirect wh-questions.

- (62) *Se te credet che abia fa cusè?*  
 What-Cl you think that I-have done what-FULL FORM?  
 ‘What do you think I have done?’

Type B, on the other side, is named “Weak Wh-word (doubling) Configurations” and it is formed by a fronted wh-element belonging to basic series and an -è series one in situ, as illustrated in the example in (63). Types A and B seems to be restricted to the counterparts of “what”, “who”, “when”, and “how”, according to Poletto and Pollock. As displayed in table 1, in my data, instead, there are no examples of “when”-forms in doubling configurations and only one made with “who”, using a cleft in situ within an

<sup>111</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, p. 200.

<sup>112</sup> Ivi, pp. 202, 213-214. For wh-pairs, the authors consider elements merged in argument position and made of two components, i.e., a wh-clitic that sets in the head of the phrase and a null or lexical phrasal wh-word in the specifier. Talking about clitic pairs, those appear as following: [CIP WhP, wh-cl].

<sup>113</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, pp. 33-38.

<sup>114</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, p. 208.

<sup>115</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2005), *I dialetti italiani e romanci. Morfosintassi generativa I-III*, Ed. dell’Orso.



embedded clause, illustrated above in (22). On the other hand, I have found “where” as available for both type A and B, and “how” available only for type B, due to the non-existence of a clitic form for “how” in the varieties I have investigated.

- (63) *Cume l è che te set rivàa cumè?* (Cuasso al Monte)  
 How that is that you have come how?  
 ‘How did you come?’

Type B is attested in Sanrocchese and only with non-clitic wh-words for long-distance questions. Instead, it seems more productive in indirect wh-question, being visible in Illasiano and various Lombard varieties, as reported by Manzini and Savoia<sup>116</sup>, mostly with “what”, “when”, and “how” counterparts.

Finally, Type C is composed by an invariant wh-operator (*che*, in (64)) and a wh-pronoun, as in the example taken from Poletto and Pollock and reported by Bonan<sup>117</sup>, shown below in (64).

- (64) Mendrisiotto (adapted by Bonan 2019 from Poletto and Pollock 2015:147(29))  
*Che fè-t dàjel a chi?*  
 Wh do-you2PS give=it to whom  
 ‘To whom will you give it?’

Type C has been reported also for Passiranese and Olgiate Molgora matrix wh-questions<sup>118</sup>. In my survey, I have investigated only bare wh-elements, so I do not have these kinds of sentences to display as sample. But, contrary to which Poletto and Pollock claim, I have reported interrogative sentences formed by two basic series wh-words, as in (60.c), showing the acceptable presence of “weak” wh-elements also in situ.

Moreover, my data show the existence of wh-doubling configurations made with two *-è* series full forms, like in (65). In these kinds of sentences, the first wh-element

<sup>116</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2005), *I dialetti italiani e romanci. Morfosintassi generativa I-III*, Ed. dell’Orso.

<sup>117</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, p. 33.

<sup>118</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2005), *I dialetti italiani e romanci. Morfosintassi generativa I-III*, Ed. dell’Orso.

constitutes a cleft-clause with the complementizer *ca/che*, not needed with fronting basic series wh-forms.

- (65) *Nduè ca l finis nduè?* (S question) (Solbiate con Cagno)  
 Where that it finishes where?  
 ‘Where the earth does it finish?’

So, according to the data presented above, I would suggest the existence of two more possible configurations of wh-doubling structure in Mendrisiotto, and I would say in Lombard varieties in general. To type A, B, and C proposed by Poletto and Pollock and showed all by Mendrisio dialect, according to them, I would add types D and E. Type D could be constituted by a wh-clitic or a wh-element belonging to the basic series in first position, and another basic series wh-word at the end of the sentence, as reported in (60.c). Type E, instead, would be formed by a doubled *-è* series wh-element, as illustrated in (65).

To summarize, the following are the five types of wh-doubling configurations identified above:

1. Type A → [clitic wh-, *-è* series wh-] pair.
2. Type B → [basic series wh-, *-è* series wh-] pair.
3. Type C → [wh-operator, wh-pronoun] pair.
4. Type D → [clitic wh-/basic series wh-, basic series wh-] pair.
5. Type E → [*-è* series wh-, *-è* series wh-] pair.

In order to analyse wh-doubling structures, two different proposals have been made. The first one has been suggested by Poletto and Pollock<sup>119</sup> and it involves remnant movement, as for wh-in situ constructions (§ 2.4). They argue that “the two wh-words that make up the doubling pair do not have the same shape or status”<sup>120</sup>, that is they start out as a single complex element (as a big-DP) in their first-merge position, then they split and move to different projections, in order to check distinct features. This single complex item was first proposed by Kayne in 1972 and, talking about NIDs wh-doubling

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<sup>119</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, pp. 199-258.

<sup>120</sup> Ivi, p. 201.









substituted by *che* in case of wh-fronting configurations. Bonan’s instance is reported in (70)<sup>124</sup>.

- (70) a. *Me domando [ se te già magnà cossa ].*  
 Myself ask se<sub>WH</sub> you have eaten what  
 b. *Me domando [ cossa che te già magnà ].*  
 Myself ask what that you have eaten  
 ‘I wonder what you ate.’

Conversely, considering examples collected by Manzini and Savoia within Lombard varieties, Bonan adds that dialects in which the lower wh-element is clearly optional suggest that, at least in these varieties, *se* is a genuine doubling wh-item<sup>125</sup>. This analysis seems reliable also for my own data. Indeed, in addition to the example reported above in (69) that shows a wh-doubling made with *se-cusè*-items, in which *se* could be considered a that-COMP, in the same variety spoken in Cuasso al Monte I have found the following structure (71), in which *se* occurs alone in wh-fronting position within the indirect question.

- (71) *El m’a dumandàa se te di.* (Cuasso al Monte)  
 He to me-has asked what you said.  
 ‘He asked me what you have said.’

Consequently, I assume that this construction shows a real wh-doubling and *se* works as a what-clitic form also in embedded clauses.

To conclude this brief part about remnant movement hypothesis for wh-doubling structures, I would claim that there would not be any problems in applying this proposal also to indirect interrogative sentences, as shown in (70).

On the other side, Manzini and Savoia heavily criticize the hypothesis of remnant movement for wh-doubling structures, considering it “(at best) unnecessary to account for such evidence”<sup>126</sup>. They claim that “weak” wh-phrases can be found clause-internally

<sup>124</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève, pp. 31-32.

<sup>125</sup> Ivi, p.33.

<sup>126</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2011) “Wh-in situ & wh-doubling in Northern Italian Varieties: Against Remnant Movement”, in *Linguistic Analysis*, 37:1-2 (2011), Vashon (WA), p. 3.

in their data gathered for Lombard varieties (as in mine, actually), so these wh-phrases do not behave as clitics or weak-pronouns, as suggested in the previous proposal. Moreover, they point out that “strict copies are mostly not involved in doubling; in other words, the wh-element appearing in situ typically has different morphology from the one appearing in the Left Periphery”. The wh-items visible in the LP have clearly been moved up to check specific features, according to them. Considering the existence of fRM, they suppose that one of the items carries a [foc]-property, instead the other one works as scope marker. Given this feature distinction, the [foc]-characterized item would move to VP-periphery, while the other one would be allowed to rise higher<sup>127</sup>, probably to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> in LP, giving the sentence superficial linearization without applying remnant movement hypothesis.

In (72) I try to employ Manzini and Savoia suggestion, analysing the direct content question *Se te di cusè?*, already examined via remnant movement hypothesis in (67), in order to be able to compare the two proposals straightforwardly. I suppose that *cusè*-item show a [foc]-feature, instead *se*-element displays a [x]-feature, allegedly a [wh]-feature that must be checked in SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub>.

- (72) *Se te di cusè?*  
 What you said what  
 ‘What have you said?’

Input: [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> [<sub>TopP</sub> Top<sup>0</sup> [<sub>FocP</sub> Foc<sup>0</sup> [<sub>TopP</sub> Top<sup>0</sup> [<sub>Spec vP</sub> te<sub>i</sub> [<sub>V<sup>0</sup></sub> [<sub>Spec VP</sub> se<sub>z</sub> [x]-feature, **cusè**<sub>j</sub> [foc]-feature [V<sup>0</sup> di<sub>k</sub> ]]]]]]]]]]]

(1) First step: *se* moves up to the LP, landing in SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub>, while subject and verb check their features in other projections.

[<sub>ForceP</sub> Force<sup>0</sup> [<sub>TopP</sub> Top<sup>0</sup> [<sub>SpecFocP</sub> se<sub>z</sub> [x]-feature [<sub>Foc<sup>0</sup></sub> [<sub>TopP</sub> Top<sup>0</sup> [<sub>FinP</sub> Fin<sup>0</sup> [<sub>IP</sub> te<sub>i</sub> di<sub>k</sub> [<sub>TopP</sub> Top<sup>0</sup> [<sub>FocP</sub> Foc<sup>0</sup> [<sub>TopP</sub> Top<sup>0</sup> [<sub>Spec vP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [<sub>V<sup>0</sup></sub> [<sub>Spec VP</sub> t<sub>z</sub> [x]-feature, **cusè**<sub>j</sub> [foc]-feature [V<sup>0</sup> t<sub>k</sub> ]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]

<sup>127</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2011) “Wh-in situ & wh-doubling in Northern Italian Varieties: Against Remnant Movement”, in *Linguistic Analysis*, 37:1-2 (2011), Vashon (WA), p. 32.





utilize dialect mostly in informal situations, that is with family members and friends. Turning to Como area, the five speakers questioned are between sixty and eighty years old: young people tend to use Italian also at home, unless with their grandparents, and they speak local varieties that result very affected by Italian syntax, and grammar in general.

The subsequent analysis is based on the data illustrated in the initial part of the chapter. I start this section distinguishing the wh-elements in three different types, i.e., wh-clitic elements, basic series wh- and -è series wh-, following Donzelli and Pescarini<sup>130</sup>, questioning the hypothesis of differentiate those items in “weak” and “strong”<sup>131</sup>. Then, I claim that I would consider only two different types of movement: wh-movement and remnant movement. I have applied those two to the three different configurations I have identified in my sample. First, I have discussed the wh-fronting construction (§ 2.3), then I have moved to the wh-in situ structure (§ 2.4), and, finally, I have analysed the wh-doubling configurations (§ 2.5). For each structure I have suggested more than one possible analysis, proposed by different scholars, namely Poletto and Pollock<sup>132</sup>, Manzini and Savoia<sup>133</sup>, and Bonan<sup>134</sup>. Talking about wh-fronting, I have shown examples of single wh-movement to LP in content questions, both direct and indirect, matrix and embedded. I have considered SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> the landing site for wh-elements. My data suggest that all the varieties investigated can use this structure to build standard questions. Moving to wh-in situ configuration, I have stated that there are three possible different analyses. First, wh-in situ stricto sensu, i.e., the wh-element stays in its first-merge position. Second, the sentence achieves its configuration through remnant movement. Third, a Wh-to-Foc movement permits to have this specific sentence structure. According to this suggestion, made by Bonan<sup>135</sup>, I have assumed the existence of a Q-particle à la Cable that would be used in the next chapter to analyse wh-doubling

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<sup>130</sup> Donzelli, G., and Pescarini, D. (2019) “Tre tipi di wh in situ nei dialetti lombardi”, *Bollettino del Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani*, Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani, p. 2.

<sup>131</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, p. 206.

<sup>132</sup> Poletto, C. and Pollock, J.-Y., 2004; 2009.

<sup>133</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M., 2005; 2011.

<sup>134</sup> Bonan, C. 2019; 2021.

<sup>135</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève.

according to my proposal. In the last section, I have widely analysed wh-doubling constructions using remnant movement and Manzini and Savoia's proposal of wh-movement, both motivated by scattering [foc]- and [wh]-feature that are then checked in two different projections. I have applied these theories to my own data, and, for each hypothesis, I have sketched derivation schemes based on sentences I had collected.

In the following chapter, I will make two different proposals concerning wh-doubling questions. The first one supports Manzini and Savoia suggestion for analysing wh-doubling structures, although I suppose the existence of a silent [Q]-particle that drives the movement of the wh-element to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> in LP, and a [foc]-feature that attracts the second wh-item to SpecFoc<sub>LOW</sub>, in VP-periphery, as they have already suggested. In the second section, I briefly analyse constructions made with *ma*-particle. Therefore, I would conclude this dissertation offering proposals about the analysis of the main structure this work treats: wh-doubling configuration. The third one indicates the probable existence of an implicational hierarchy for wh-doubling questions depending on wh-items, i.e., where-questions can display wh-doubling structures only if the same variety shows wh-doubling configurations also with what-items.

## RESULTS OF THE STUDY CASE

The present chapter revolves around the results of this study case, concerning the wh-doubling structure, already analysed in (§ 2.5). The aim of this part of the work is to develop three main aspects about the core topic: the analysis of the wh-doubling structure, the description of an alternative way to strengthen pragmatics force, and the proposal of an implicational hierarchy for wh-items.

The first section (§ 3.1) proposes an analysis of doubling configurations in NIDs, given the existence of a silent Q-particle and the possibility to scatter [q] and [foc]-features, that would be carried by two different wh-elements. Therefore, each wh-item would rise the syntactic spine to check its own feature. The landing projections would be SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> in LP and SpecFoc<sub>LOW</sub> in VP-periphery.

The second section (§ 3.2) describe the *ma*-particle, used as alternative to wh-doubling constructions in some varieties. This results to be also inserted in sorts of tripling configurations, showing the *ma*-particle at the beginning of the sentence, followed by a wh-item in LP and the other one in VP-periphery.

In the third section (§ 3.3) an implicational hierarchy is proposed. This one involves at least three wh-elements, and it depends on the presence of those items in standard and non-standard questions in a specific dialect. It seems that it works building a hierarchical relationship between “what”, “where”, and “how”. “Why” occurs at the end of the scale.

## 3.1 HOW TO ANALYSE WH-DOUBLING STRUCTURES: A PROPOSAL

As I have already mentioned in the previous chapters, the wh-doubling structure is a configuration of interrogative sentences that involves two different wh-items counting as a unit. One wh-element is located at the beginning of the question, the other one at the end of it. This configuration appears to be a quite widespread phenomenon in Northern Italian dialects, especially in Lombard and Venetan varieties. It involves matrix and embedded interrogative sentences, standard and non-standard questions. The occurrence in standard questions gives me the opportunity to assume that wh-doubling configurations

do not aim only to add pragmatics values to sentences, i.e., in this construction syntax should have a role. Moreover, the possibility to add to this construction a *ma*-particle in some varieties supports this claim, as it will be outlined in the next section (§ 3.2).

The following example show a wh-doubling configuration in a direct content question. It has been gathered in Davesco and the doubling concerns the what-element *cosa/cusè*.

(73) *Cosa te di cusè / cosa?*

What you said what?

‘What have you said?’

In chapter two (§ 2.5), I have classified wh-doubling constructions depending on the nature of wh-elements, that is wh-clitics, basic series wh- or -è series wh-. Due to my data, I have introduced two more types in the categorization proposed by Poletto and Pollock<sup>136</sup>, i.e., type D and type E. The example in (73) represents a type B configuration using *cusè* in the end of the sentence, and a type D structure employing *cosa* as a second wh-item. Indeed, on the one hand type B is composed by a [basic series wh-, -è series wh-] pair, on the other hand type D shows [clitic wh-/basic series wh-, basic series wh-] pair.

In order to explain how it is possible to find a redundant wh-element within a standard interrogative sentence, scholars suppose that each wh-item displays a specific feature to check along the syntactic spine. This idea has been suggested as a basis of all the hypothesis I have mentioned in § 2.4 and it has been developed for Trevisan by Bonan<sup>137</sup>, to support her Wh-to-Foc hypothesis. She names it “feature scattering”, assuming that one feature, the [q]/[wh]-feature, must be checked in LP’s Foc<sub>HIGH</sub> and the other one, the [foc]-feature, in VP-periphery’s Foc<sub>LOW</sub><sup>138</sup>. An EPP feature would drive the wh-movement. Moreover, she proposes that a Q-particle à la Cable<sup>139</sup> exists for all languages of the world, being overtly available in some of them.

<sup>136</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, pp. 199-258.

<sup>137</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève.

<sup>138</sup> Bonan, C. (2021), “The periphery of vP in the theory of wh-in situ”, *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 6 : 1 (2021), pp. 32-33.

<sup>139</sup> Cable, S. (2010), *The grammar of Q. Q-Particles, Wh-Movement, and Pied-Piping*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Therefore, this Q-particle, amended by Bonan, would be real also for NIDs and it should occur in every interrogative sentence, moving up to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> silently, in order to check the [wh]-feature and to concede interrogative force to the question. The presence of this silent Q-particle allows to explain structures as wh-in situ questions in Trevisan, according to Bonan. Conversely, the feature carried by Q-particle, that I will call [q]-feature, it would be included in the single wh-element moving up to LP in wh-fronting constructions.

Given these assumptions, I would combine them with Manzini and Savoia's suggestion, that is one of the two wh-elements involved in wh-doubling configurations found in Lombard varieties carries a [foc]-feature and it drives the movement of the single element to SpecFoc<sub>LOW</sub> in VP-periphery. Besides, according to them, another nameless feature would attract the other wh-element to LP, working as the scope marker they identified<sup>140</sup>. This proposal has been made by Bonan as well, suggesting that [foc]-feature is attached to the wh-item that land in wh-in situ structures, so these elements are attracted to SpecFoc<sub>LOW</sub> in VP-periphery.

Thus, provided the possibility of scattering [q] and [foc] features, I would suggest that in doubling configurations one of the two wh-elements carries the [q]-feature mentioned above and moves to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> to check it, the other one holds the [foc]-feature that drives it to SpecFoc<sub>LOW</sub>. This means that fRM would not impede the wh-movement, because the two wh-elements differ for the trigger-to-move feature. Although one of these two wh-words cannot be considered a Q-particle itself, I suggest that it behaves as a Q-particle, marking the sentence as an interrogative and moving to check a [q]-feature. The following analysis, then, could work also for embedded clause questions, because, as Bonan suggests, in these kind of sentences the embedded wh-element introducer would land in SpecQ<sub>emb</sub>P rather than in SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub>P, using projections already described for LP in chapter one (§ 1.2).

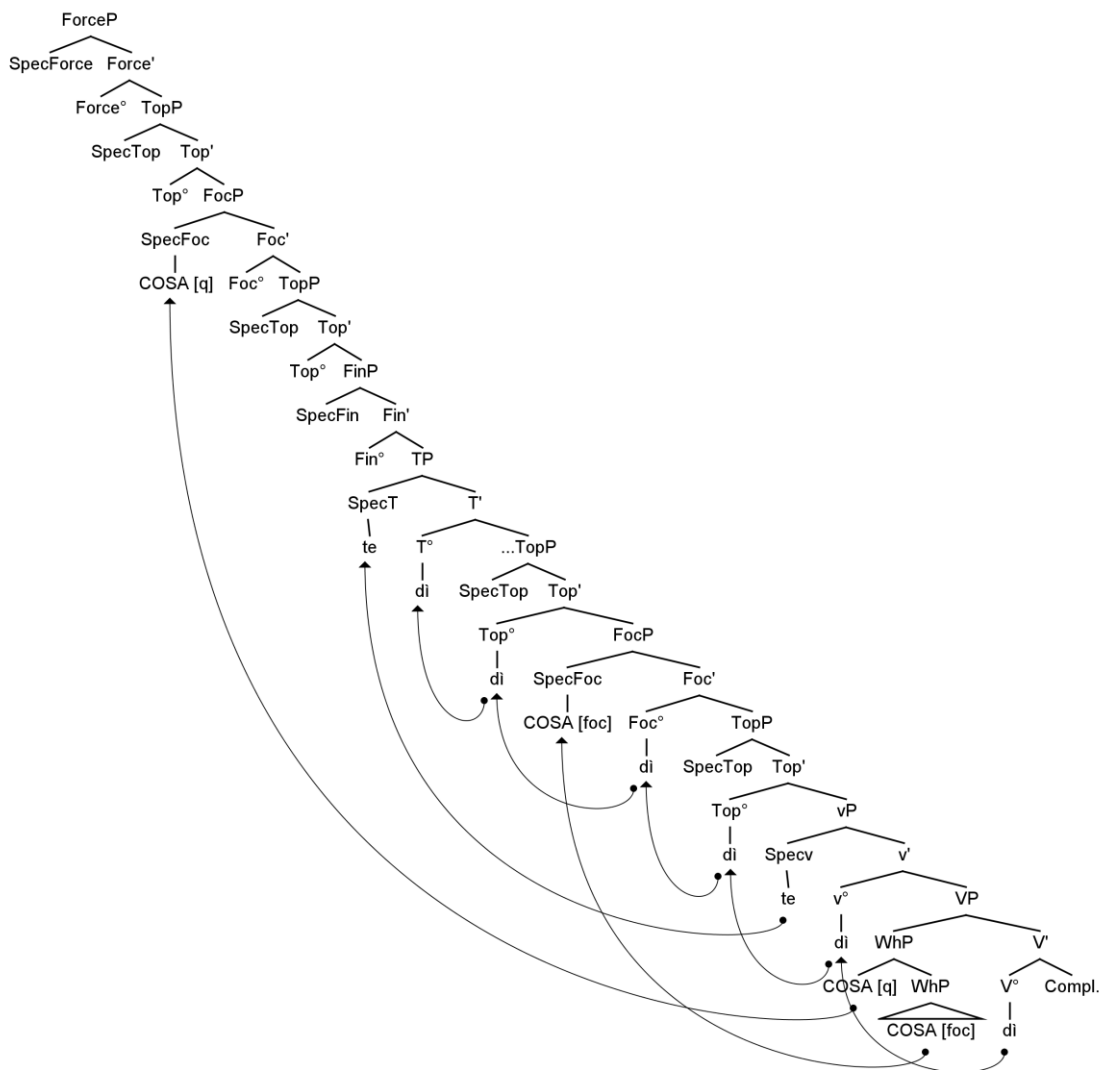
The proposal is exemplified through a syntactic spine in (74) for a type D matrix question. In (75) there is an example of an embedded content question that shows wh-doubling configurations, and the wh-movement is described subsequently, because a syntactic spine would be too big using graphic representation.

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<sup>140</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2011), "Wh-in situ & wh-doubling in Northern Italian Varieties: Against Remnant Movement", in *Linguistic Analysis*, 37:1-2 (2011), Vashon (WA), p. 32.

(74) Syntactic representation of wh-movements, displacing to SpecFoc<sub>HIGH</sub> the [q]-wh-element to check its [q]-feature and the [foc]-wh-element to SpecFoc<sub>LOW</sub> to check its [foc]-feature. In the sketch are visible also verb and subject movement, rising up to TP.

*Se te di cosa?*  
 What you said what  
 ‘What have you said?’



Using an example with a what-form, this wh-element first merge in argument position, i.e., SpecVP, being a direct object in the declarative sentence. If we would use indirect object or external complements wh-, those would respectively first-merge in Compl.

position and in adjuncts projections, then move to  $Foc_{HIGH}$  and  $Foc_{LOW}$ , depending on the feature they carry.

(75) *Cosa te pensat che l' a fai cosa?* (S question)

What you think that he/she have done what?

‘What on earth do you think he/she has done?’

In the sentence in (75), being an embedded content question, the wh-element carrying the [q]-feature moves first to  $Foc_{HIGH}$  in the subordinate split CP, then to the main sentence  $Foc_{HIGH}$ . Instead, the wh-item which carries the [foc]-feature is attracted up to  $Foc_{LOW}$  in VP-periphery of the subordinate clause and it freeze there, respecting Freezing Criterion proposed by Rizzi<sup>141</sup>. In both examples, the [foc]-feature wh-elements stop in  $Foc_{LOW}$  after probing their features in this projection, meaning that those wh-items carry only one feature, i.e., [foc].

Therefore, I claim that wh-doubling structures are allowed to be used in standard questions thanks to the features scattering. Their wh-movement is triggered by the counterpart uninterpretable feature, carried by Focus projections in LP and VP-periphery. I suggest using the feature scattering proposal and the Wh-to-Foc movement hypothesis made by Bonan to analyse wh-doubling structures. As she does, I also suppose that due to the existence of a silent Q-particle in NIDs, this kind of analysis could be proposed also for wh-in situ configurations found in Lombard varieties, without using remnant movement, that results more expensive in computational terms, not respecting Chomsky’s Economy of Derivation Principle<sup>142</sup>.

### 3.2 PRAGMATICS VALUE: THE *MA*-PARTICLE

Describing the data I collected, I have pointed out the existence of a particle, i.e., *ma*, that is available to give a non-standard value to content questions. There are examples of this pragmatics element in Davesco, Mendrisio, and Olgiate Comasco. According to speakers, this *ma*-particle is widely associated to non-canonical interrogative sentences,

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<sup>141</sup> Rizzi, L. (2001), *On the position “int(errogative)” in the left periphery of the clause*, in *Current studies in Italian syntax: Essays offered to Lorenzo Renzi*, Guglielmo Cinque and Giampaolo Salvi (eds), Elsevier, Amsterdam, pp. 267–296.

<sup>142</sup> Chomsky, N. (1995), *The Minimalist Program*, The MIT Press.



giving them a surprise or ironic value. It turns out to be allowed to be associated with wh-doubling constructions, establishing a sort of tripling configuration, as in (76).

- (76) ***Ma*** *cuma te fai cumè?* (S question) (Davesco)  
PART How you do how?  
'How on earth do you do?'

Moreover, its use could substitute wh-doubling constructions in non-standard questions, representing a possibility to avoid the repetition of wh-items and to build ironic/surprise questions with wh-elements that do not generally display wh-doubling configuration, such as *perché* and *quant*, as illustrated in (77).

- (77) ***Ma*** *perché tu pianget?* (S question) (Davesco)  
PART Why you cry?  
'PART- why on earth are you crying?'

I suggest considering it as a kind of Sentential Particle, SP, although they are quite problematic to analyse from a syntactic point of view. The *ma*-particle appears always at the beginning of the sentence, clearly placed in the highest projection of the syntactic spine, over LP. According to Munaro and Poletto, SPs share five common properties. As a SP, *ma*-particle never occurs neither in declarative nor in embedded sentences, and it must be followed by right emarginated constituents<sup>143</sup>, but it does not appear in the same position Munaro and Poletto describe for the SPs of Venetan dialects they analyse, i.e., usually in sentence-final position and immediately after the wh-element or in co-occurrence with a wh-item in isolation. *Ma* seems not to have a syntactic function, but a semantic-pragmatic one, like Discourse Markers. As stated by these scholars, there is “empirical evidence that SPs are heads, which obey the same restrictions holding for object clitics in Romance, as originally noted by Kayne (1975). The head status of SPs is suggested by the fact that they cannot be modified or focalized on a par with object clitics”<sup>144</sup>. So, as SP, I claim that *ma* should be analysed as head.

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<sup>143</sup> Munaro, N. and Poletto, C. (2008), *Sentential Particles and Clausal Typing in Venetan Dialects*, p. 174.

<sup>144</sup> Ivi, p. 185.

To conclude, I would suggest that the *ma*-particle first-merge directly in the position it sets over ForceP, i.e., out of the CP layer, not moving along the syntactic spine. It shows the ability to distinguish within pragmatics uses and to reinforce the non-canonical value of wh-questions. Given examples of co-occurrence of *ma*-particle and wh-doubling configurations and provided the presence of these structures also in standard questions, I propose that wh-doubling configurations show not only pragmatics motivations, at least in some varieties. Anyway, in order to find the location of this particle and to identify its exact use and value, further investigations are needed.

### 3.3 IMPLICATIONAL HIERARCHY FOR WH-DOUBLING

The data collected in Ticino and Como areas suggest the possibility to draw an implicational hierarchy for wh-elements available to build wh-doubling configurations in various varieties. Table 1, already presented in § 2.7 and reported below, shows this opportunity in detail.

Table 1. Wh-doubling structures in direct wh-questions, standard and non-standard.

	What		Where		How		Who		When		Why	
	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS
Davesco	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mendrisio	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Olgiate Comasco	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-
Cuasso al Monte	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Solbiate con Cagno	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uggiate-Trevano	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ronago	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

In arranging this table, I have distinguished between standard (S) and non-standard (NS) content questions, and I have displayed in the vertical column the varieties investigated respecting the order I used in describing them above, in *Data description* part in chapter two. Concerning wh-elements, the sequence I have chosen is connected to the hierarchy I would like to point out, moving from left side to the right one.

The what-column reveal that varieties in which wh-doubling is displayed use this configuration with what-forms, both for standard and non-standard interrogative sentences. According to my data, the most widespread doubling configuration involves a clitic form and a full form, belonging to basic or *-è* series, depending on the variety. The following type of question in (78) is available in all dialects reported, except for Ronago, which does not show wh-doubling at all.

- (78) *Se te di cusè?*  
 What you said what  
 ‘What have you said?’

So, if a variety shows this configuration, it can possibly make wh-doubling constructions also using where-elements. In this case, there are dialects that have a where-clitic, such as Davesco, and others that display only full forms, fitting both basic and *-è* series. In this context, the presence of wh-doubling is still quite extensive, but only in non-canonical questions. There is a single variety that permits to use it in standard interrogative sentences, i.e., Cuasso al Monte. Moreover, instead of six varieties that allow this configuration, only five do so.

The third wh-item I have identified as one of the most common is “how”. I found it in four varieties out of six, because Solbiate con Cagno does not show it. It is used in non-standard questions, except for Cuasso al Monte, and it does not the existence of clitics, but only basic and *-è* full forms.

The layout outlined until now enable me to propose the following implicational scheme:

- (79) What > where > how

Having what-elements doubled in a variety, the same could display where-doubling. Allowing the previous two permits to find also how-doubling configurations. The same kind of implication happens involving standard and non-standard questions: first, the variety must show wh-doubling in non-standard interrogative sentences, then it could present it in standard ones.

Contrary to what other scholars claim due to the data they have collected, I would add to this scale only one more wh-element: “who”. Although I found only one example

of who-doubling in Olgiate Comasco, I cannot consider it a pure wh-doubling configuration because the second item is other than a single-wh word, namely it is a cleft clause. The example is illustrated in (80).

- (80) *Chi ta credat ca l'è turnà chi è?* (S question)  
 Who you think that he/she-is came back who-is?  
 'Who the earth do you think is back?'

I suppose that the reason why who-elements cannot occur as sole wh-items in doubling structures is that in Lombard varieties, eventually, *chi* means “who” and “here” at the same time. So, the cleft appears necessary to distinguish between the two different uses of *chi*, although this cleft does not behave as a dependent clause. Moreover, it could represent the first stage in the development of cleft clauses in *-è* series wh-items, as proposed for *cusè*, *nduè*, and *cumè* by Manzini<sup>145,146</sup>.

So, with no data for when-elements and only one for who-items, I am unable to propose in what order these two components should be inserted in the scale. Surely, at least for these varieties, I affirm that “why” cannot display doubling constructions. The only way to strengthen the non-standard value of wh-questions involving *perchè* is adding a *ma*-particle at the beginning of the clause. So, it would be the last wh-word within the hierarchy. In order to describe a more complete picture of the situation, further data are needed.

In this last chapter, I have described the results my case study led to. For all three developments above, further data and studies are required. First of all, I have suggested an analysis hypothesis that avoid using remnant movement on the basis of Bonan's proposals. Then, I have talked about the *ma*-particle, that seems an interesting element, especially because it is inserted in kind of tripling structures, in which the *ma*-item is always set at the beginning of the question, and it has the function of strengthening the

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<sup>145</sup> Manzini, M.R. (2014), “Grammatical categories: Strong and weak pronouns in Romance”, in *Lingua* 150 (2014), pp. 187-189.

<sup>146</sup> Considering morphology, the interrogative items (*cusa*, *ndua*, *cuma*) were associated to *-è*, that morphologically represents the 3<sup>rd</sup> person of the verb “to be” in those languages. So, the forms *cusè*, *nduè*, and *cumè* would result from the reanalysis of an original cleft phrase as reported above in example (42), chapter 2, p. 37.

surprise/ironic value of non-standard interrogative sentences according to speakers. The last proposal displays the construction of a wh-items hierarchy, on the basis of the data I collected for Lombard varieties. It would be stimulating comparing these results to data from other dialects, both Lombard and non-Lombard ones.

## CONCLUSIONS

The main goal of this work was to analyse in detail wh-doubling structures in Lombard varieties through theoretical hypothesis, data, and graphic representations. I have provided evidence that these constructions are widespread in Lombard dialects, according to literature and data I have collected in Ticino and Como areas.

I have started showing a series of theoretical accounts necessary to analyse this structure, then I have moved to illustrate the data collected in Ticino and Como regions. After describing them, I have analysed wh-fronting and wh-in situ configurations, assuming that the former should develop as a wh-movement to the Left Periphery, having its landing site in the Specifier of Foc<sub>HIGH</sub> Projection. The latter, instead, should be derived assuming the theory of Wh-to-Foc movement suggested by Bonan<sup>147</sup>. This derivation results less costly than remnant movement proposal, claimed by Poletto and Pollock<sup>148</sup>, at least for wh-in situ configurations. Afterwards, I have explained widely wh-doubling structures, studying it from different points of view, namely Poletto and Pollock remnant movement hypothesis, and Manzini and Savoia<sup>149</sup> idea, associated to Bonan's scattering features proposal. In the last chapter, I have argued three possible consequences of the previous analysis, as follows. First, I have considered wh-doubling structure as built through scattering [q] and [foc] features attached to two different wh-items and their subsequent separate movement along the syntactic spine to check their own features. Second, in the varieties previously investigated, I have proposed the existence of an alternative construction to wh-doubling in non-canonical questions, namely the use of *ma*-particle. Third, I have suggested that there exists an implicational hierarchy within wh-elements that can occur in wh-doubling configurations.

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<sup>147</sup> Bonan, C. (2019), *On clause-internally moved wh-phrases: wh-to-Foc, nominative clitics, and the Theory of Northern Italian wh-in-situ*, Thèse (Ph.D.), Université de Genève.

<sup>148</sup> Poletto, C., and Pollock, J.-Y. (2009), *Another look at wh-questions in Romance. The case of Mendrisiotto and its consequences for the analysis of French wh-in situ and embedded interrogatives*, in L. Wentzel (ed) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 1. Selected Papers from Going Romance*, John Benjamins, pp. 199-258.

<sup>149</sup> Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2005), *I dialetti italiani e romanci. Morfosintassi generativa I-III*, Ed. dell'Orso; Manzini, M.R. and Savoia, L.M. (2011), "Wh-in situ & wh-doubling in Northern Italian Varieties: Against Remnant Movement", in *Linguistic Analysis*, 37:1-2 (2011), Vashon (WA).

Therefore, I have argued that remnant movement appears too costly in terms of computation to use it for analysing wh-doubling sentences, although it seems valid for accounting for a large number of configurations, and that is the advantage associated to this hypothesis. Moreover, I have suggested that a Q-particle à la Cable<sup>150</sup> exists covertly also in NIDs and it drives the wh-movement to the Specifier of Foc<sub>HIGH</sub> Projection in Left Periphery. On the other hand, the [q]-feature, typically associated to Q-particle, would be separated from a [foc]-feature, that attracts wh-elements carrying it to the Specifier of Foc<sub>LOW</sub> Projection, within the VP-periphery proposed by Belletti<sup>151</sup>. The analysis of the wh-doubling structures I have suggested depends on feature scattering between [q] and [foc], as proposed by Bonan<sup>152</sup>, and the possibility for wh-elements to rise one over the other, not being stopped by Feature Relativised Minimality constraints due to different features-that-trigger-movement they carry.

Furthermore, I have discussed the existence of an alternative construction to wh-doubling, the use of *ma*-particle at the beginning of the interrogative sentence. It has been difficult to classify this item and I have supposed it should be considered a Sentential Particle, which gives specific pragmatics value to content questions. Then, I have claimed that an implicational hierarchy within wh-elements available for wh-doubling configurations can be identified through the data.

Despite its limitations, the present study case suggests that further research is needed. More data could improve the proposal of the implicational hierarchy, involving in the scale a larger number of wh-items. Then, further studies are required to classify the *ma*-particle and analyse it from a syntactic perspective, i.e., to find a projection in which inserting this element.

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<sup>150</sup> Cable, S. (2010), *The grammar of Q. Q-Particles, Wh-Movement, and Pied-Piping*, Oxford University Press, New York.

<sup>151</sup> Belletti, A. (2004), *Aspects of the low IP area*, in L. Rizzi (ed) *The Structure of IP and CP. The Cartography of Syntactic Structures*, vol. 2, Oxford University Press.

<sup>152</sup> Bonan, C. (2021), “The periphery of vP in the theory of wh-in situ”, *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 6 : 1 (2021).

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