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# Rethinking Verb Second

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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xi
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xvii
1. Introduction <i>Sam Wolfe and Rebecca Woods</i>	1
I. CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO GERMANIC VERB SECOND	
2. Objects in the German prefield: A view from language production <i>Markus Bader</i>	15
3. On the bottleneck hypothesis of Verb Second in Swedish <i>Anders Holmberg</i>	40
4. Frame setters and microvariation of subject-initial Verb Second <i>Ciro Greco and Liliane Haegeman</i>	61
5. Adverbial resumptive particles and Verb Second <i>Christine Meklenborg</i>	90
6. Rethinking 'residual' Verb Second <i>Craig Sailor</i>	126
7. Multiple Feature Inheritance and the phase structure of the left periphery <i>Phil Branigan</i>	150
8. The grammatical basis of Verb Second: The case of German <i>Horst Lohnstein</i>	177
9. Varieties of dependent Verb Second and verbal mood: A view from Icelandic <i>Hans-Martin Gärtner and Þórhallur Eyþórsson</i>	208
10. The distribution of embedded Verb Second and Verb Third in modern Icelandic <i>Ásgrímur Angantýsson</i>	240
11. The assertion analysis of declarative Verb Second <i>Marit Julien</i>	265
12. Verb Second declaratives, assertion, and disjunction revisited <i>Hans-Martin Gärtner and Jens Michaelis</i>	281
13. A different perspective on embedded Verb Second: Unifying embedded root phenomena <i>Rebecca Woods</i>	297

## II. DIACHRONY AND OTHER INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 14. Null subjects in Old Italian<br><i>Cecilia Poletto</i>  | 325 |
| 15. Rethinking Medieval Romance Verb Second<br><i>Sam Wolfe</i>   | 348 |
| 16. Relaxed Verb Second in Classical Portuguese<br><i>Charlotte Galves</i>  | 368 |
| 17. Object pronoun fronting and the nature of Verb Second in early English<br><i>Eric Haeberli, Susan Pintzuk, and Ann Taylor</i> | 396 |
| 18. Reconstructing the rise of Verb Second in Welsh<br><i>Marieke Meelen</i>  | 426 |
| 19. Verb Second and the Left Edge Filling Trigger<br><i>Mélanie Joutteau</i>  | 455 |
| 20. On a diachronic relation between the richness of Tense, Force, and<br>second-position effects<br><i>Krzysztof Migdalski</i>   | 482 |
| 21. On the syntax and prosody of Verb Second and Clitic Second<br><i>Željko Bošković</i>  | 503 |
| 22. Reassessing the historical evidence for embedded Verb Second<br><i>George Walkden and Hannah Booth</i>                        | 536 |
| 23. Embedded Verb Second in the history of German<br><i>Svetlana Petrova</i>  | 555 |

## III. VARIATION AND ACQUISITION

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 24. Rethinking Verb Second and Nominative case assignment: New insights<br>from a Germanic variety in Northern Italy<br><i>Ermenegildo Bidese, Andrea Padovan, and Alessandra Tomaselli</i> | 575 |
| 25. Parameterizing subject-verb inversion across Verb Second languages:<br>On the role of Relativized Minimality at the vP edge<br><i>Jan Casalicchio and Federica Cognola</i>              | 594 |
| 26. Verb Second is syntactic: Verb Third structures in Dinka<br><i>Coppe van Urk</i>  | 623 |
| 27. Verb Second and Verb Third in Modern Eastern Armenian<br><i>Alessandra Giorgi and Sona Haroutyunian</i>   | 642 |
| 28. The scope of embedded Verb Second in modern Yiddish<br><i>Molly Diesing and Beatrice Santorini</i>  | 665 |

29. Verb Third in spoken German: A natural order of information? <i>Heike Wiese, Mehmet Tahir Öncü, Hans G. Müller, and Eva Wittenberg</i>	682
30. Verb Second in Wymysorys <i>Alexander Andrason</i>	700
31. Expanding the typology of Verb Second VPE: The case of Kashmiri <i>Emily Manetta</i>	723
32. Second and first position in Tohono O'odham auxiliaries <i>Colleen M. Fitzgerald</i>	745
33. Verb Second in Norwegian: Variation and acquisition <i>Terje Lohndal, Marit Westergaard, and Øystein A. Vangsnes</i>	770
34. The role of variation of verb placement in the input: Evidence from the acquisition of Verb Second and verb-final German relative clauses <i>Emanuela Sanfelici, Corinna Trabant, and Petra Schulz</i>	790
35. The role of ambiguity in child errors: A comparison with Dependency Length Minimization <i>Isaac Gould</i>	810
36. Rethinking auxiliary doubling in adult and child language: How verb movement turns propositions into illocutionary acts <i>Rebecca Woods and Tom Roeper</i>	835
<i>References</i>	863
<i>Index of Languages and Language Families</i>	939
<i>Index of Corpora and Projects</i>	942
<i>Index of Names</i>	943
<i>Index of Subjects</i>	949

# Verb Second and Verb Third in Modern Eastern Armenian

*Alessandra Giorgi and Sona Haroutyunian*

## 27.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we consider some issues concerning word order phenomena in Modern Eastern Armenian, henceforth MEA. In particular, if we look at the inflected verb, we see that it can occupy various positions and that this variation correlates with differences in the information structure of the sentence. We argue that MEA is a *partial V2 language*, where V2 has the function of marking focus, both corrective/contrastive and informational, in the left periphery of the clause. We also consider long-distance focus, which is realized by means of a construal exhibiting properties that at first sight resemble those of clefts. We show, on the basis of both interpretive and syntactic properties, that this construal is indeed not a cleft, but a sort of *long-distance V2*. Moreover, we also explore the idea of a low vP left periphery. We argue that indefinites must appear there and that they trigger a *low V2* word order.

The aim of this chapter is twofold: on one hand, we want to provide a better theoretical analysis of MEA, a language not very much investigated so far from the point of view of formal linguistics. On the other, by means of this analysis, we want to shed light on the considerable variety of V2 phenomena, arguing that the same V2 pattern can be adopted in different syntactic environments to express a certain pragmatic value. We do not discuss here what the properties defining V2 are; on this we follow Holmberg (2015), who summarizes the most relevant studies on the issue. We show that the distribution of the inflected verb in MEA meets Holmberg's criteria for V2.

In Section 27.2 we present the basic data concerning the position of the inflected verb. In Section 27.3 we argue that MEA is a partial V2 language and discuss some cases of V3 word order. In Section 27.4, we analyse the syntax of long-distance focus, and discuss the differences between the apparent cleft structures in MEA and 'real' clefts in languages like Italian. In Section 27.5 we briefly consider the distribution of the inflected verb with indefinites. In Section 27.6 we draw some conclusions and propose some issues for future research.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the transliteration of the Armenian examples we prefer to adopt the system based on the works of the linguists Heinrich Hübschmann and Antoine Meillet as referenced in Meillet (1913: 8–9). However, in order to be closer to MEA pronunciation, the complementizer is transliterated as *wor* (instead of *or*) and the negation particle with *woč* (and not *oč*), as suggested by one of the reviewers. In this work we discuss only MEA examples. However, much of what is said here largely applies to Western Armenian as well.

## 27.2 The position of the inflected verb

MEA is a Subject-Object-Verb language, in that this is the order surfacing when there is no previous context, i.e. in informationally neutral cases.<sup>2</sup>

Consider, for instance, example (1):<sup>3</sup>

- (1) Siran-ə     salor-ə     ker-el     ē  
 Siran.ART plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Siran has eaten the plum.'

In MEA all indicative verbal forms, present tense included, are periphrastic, with the exception of the aorist. They are constituted by a participle plus auxiliary *be*. The participle is not inflected, whereas the auxiliary is inflected for person and number and is a clitic. In example (1) it is cliticized on the verb. Being a clitic, the auxiliary cannot be the first word in the sentence:<sup>4</sup>

- (2) \* ē             ker-el             Siran-ə     salor-ə  
 AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP Siran.ART plum-ART  
 'Siran has eaten the plum.'

The auxiliary can precede the participle and cliticize on non-verbs, and in this case the phrase the auxiliary cliticizes onto is focused. Consider, for instance, the following context, where speaker A utters sentence (3):

- (3) A: Mariam-ə     salor-ə     ker-el     ē  
 Mariam-ART plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Mariam has eaten the plum.'

<sup>2</sup> For a review of MEA word order in a non-generative framework, see Dum-Tragut (2002; 2009: 555–644). In a traditional grammar framework, see also Abelyan (1912) and Abrahamyan (2004). For a discussion of some V2 phenomena in MEA, see Giorgi and Haroutyunian (2018). Note that in example (1) the participle *kerel* (eaten) could also receive a focus interpretation, provided in the appropriate context. We discuss these cases in Section 27.2 below. Consider also that MEA is a scrambling language and the following word order, where subject and object are inverted, is also grammatical:

- (i) Salor-ə     Siran-ə     ker-el     ē  
 Plum-ART Siran.ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Siran has eaten the plum.'

In this work we are not going to consider the properties of scrambling. We are also not discussing the following word order:

- (ii) Salor-ə     ker-el     ē     Siran-ə  
 Plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG Siran.ART  
 'Siran has eaten the plum.'

In this case, the verb appears in between the subject and the object. It can be argued that the order in (ii) is a case of right dislocation, which is a very common phenomenon in many languages.

<sup>3</sup> In MEA the inanimate object is marked with accusative case, whereas the animate one with dative. Moreover, in MEA articles are post-nominal. For reasons of space, we cannot discuss the morphological structure of MEA in more detail.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of Wackernagel's law in relation to V2 phenomena, see Anderson (1993).



Speaker B can correct speaker A by means of the following sentence:<sup>5</sup>

- (4) B: SIRAN-n ē salor-ə ker-el  
 Siran.ART AUX.3SG plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Siran-foc has eaten the plum.'

*Siran* is a contrastive/corrective focus. Note that in this chapter for reasons of clarity we show the focus phrase in capital letters. However, it is very important to remember that in MEA focus does not involve contrastive stress in the same way as other languages such as English and Italian do. This issue will be addressed by the authors in further studies.<sup>6</sup>

The same considerations hold when the correction concerns the object:<sup>7</sup>

- (5) A: Siran-ə xnjor-n ē ker-el  
 Siran.ART apple-ART AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Siran has eaten the apple.'

This sentence creates an appropriate context for the answer in (6):

- (6) B: SALOR-n ē Siran-ə ker-el  
 Plum-ART AUX.3SG Siran.ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Siran has eaten the plum-foc.'

In this case *salorn* (the plum) is focused. Note also that the focus interpretation in these cases is obligatory, i.e. it is impossible to use the sentences in (4) or in (6) as out-of-the-blue assertions. It must also be noted that the word order in (4) and (6), as well as in the examples discussed below, is the only one allowing a focus interpretation, i.e., there is no other means, either syntactic or phonological, to provide a focus.

This construction can be obtained with any phrase in first position; for instance the participle can be focused, as a correction to sentence (7):

- (7) A: Siran-ə salor-ə lv-ac'el ē  
 Siran.ART plum-ART wash-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Siran has washed the plum.'

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of different types of focused structures, see Bianchi, Bocci, and Cruschina (2015). According to their terminology, this case is a *corrective* focus. Here we will use the term *contrastive/corrective*, without addressing the issue concerning a proper definition of focus. In the same vein, see also Jiménez-Fernández (2015b).

<sup>6</sup> To oversimplify the issue, it could be said that since in MEA focus is marked by means of the inflected verb, as will be more fully discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter, there is no need of a special focal stress. The question is, however, much more complex than that and further experimental and theoretical work is required. We thank Giuliano Bocci and Vieri Samek-Lodovici for discussion on this point.

<sup>7</sup> Similar word order properties with respect to focused sentences have been discussed for Kashmiri; see Manetta (2011); Bhatt (2009); Wali and Koul (1997). The similarities concern the obligatory adjacency of focus and the inflected verb. On the relevance of the analysis of Kashmiri for MEA, see Giorgi and Haroutyunian (2016). An anonymous reviewer points out that several languages instantiate a focus-verb adjacency condition; unfortunately, a cross-linguistic analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter. The same reviewer correctly points out that in sentence (5) the auxiliary appears in the third position. We are going to analyse these cases in Section 27.5 below. Here we are only creating the most natural context for example (6), without considering the structure instantiated in (5).



- (8) B: KER-EL ē Siran-ə salor-ə  
 eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG Siran.ART plum-ART  
 'Siran has eaten-foc the plum.'

Adverbs can be focused as well. Consider, for instance, example, (10), as a correction to sentence (9):<sup>8</sup>

- (9) A: Ays aravot Siran-ə salor-ə ker-el ē  
 This morning Siran.ART plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'This morning Siran ate the plum.'

- (10) B: YEREK ē Siran-ə salor-ə ker-el  
 Yesterday AUX.3SG Siran.ART plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Yesterday-foc Siran ate the plum.'

As it often happens in other languages, for instance in Italian, only one focus per sentence is possible:

- (11) \*SIRAN-ə SALOR-n ē ker-el  
 Siran.ART plum-ART AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Siran-foc has eaten the plum-foc.'
- (12) \*SALOR-ə SIRAN-n ē ker-el  
 plum-ART Siran.ART AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Siran-foc has eaten the plum-foc.'
- (13) \*YEREK SALOR-n ē Siran-ə ker-el  
 Yesterday plum-ART AUX.3SG Siran.ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Yesterday-foc Siran ate the plum-foc.'

All the examples above are ungrammatical, independently of the order and the nature of the preverbal focused phrases.

Let us consider now interrogative sentences. In this case the auxiliary has to appear in a position adjacent to the interrogative phrase, as in the following examples:<sup>9</sup>

- (14) Inč' ē Siran-ə ker-el?  
 What AUX.3SG Siran.ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'What has Siran eaten?'

<sup>8</sup> Note that in this case the order of subject and object can be reversed, as in the following example:

- (i) YEREK ē salor-ə Siran-ə ker-el  
 Yesterday AUX.3SG plum-ART Siran.ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Yesterday-foc Siran ate the plum.'

We will not address this issue in this chapter, since it is not immediately relevant for the analysis we are proposing for these structures.

<sup>9</sup> On the issue of multiple interrogatives, see Tamrazian (1991; 1994). For reasons of space we cannot address this issue in this chapter. An anonymous reviewer also points out that an analysis of stress would be relevant here. As pointed out on p. 644 above, the properties of MEA in this respect are quite different from the corresponding structures in English and Italian and a further study is needed.

- (15) Inč' mirg ē Siran-ə ker-el?  
 What fruit AUX.3SG Siran.ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Which fruit has Siran eaten?'

In these examples, the *wh*- is an object and the adjacency condition holds both with a simple interrogative, *what*, and with a complex one, *which fruit*. The same pattern is found with the subject:

- (16) Ov ē salor-ə ker-el?  
 Who AUX.3SG plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Who has eaten the plum?'
- (17) Vor tla-n ē salor-ə ker-el?  
 Which boy-ART AUX.3SG plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Which boy has eaten the plum?'

An interrogative phrase cannot coexist in the same clause with a focus, as shown by the following examples:

- (18) \*Inč' SIRAN-n ē ker-el?  
 What Siran.ART AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'What has Siran-foc eaten?'
- (19) \*SIRAN-n inč' ē ker-el?  
 Siran.ART what AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'What has Siran-foc eaten?'
- (20) \*Inč' SIRAN-ə ker-el ē?  
 What Siran.ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'What has Siran-foc eaten?'

Note that examples (18) and (20) also violate the requirement that the *wh*- be followed by the inflected verb. Furthermore, in MEA multiple *wh*-s are possible, contrasting with the cases in (18)–(20) above, as in the following examples:

- (21) Ov inč' ē ker-el?  
 Who what AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Who has eaten what?'

The reverse order is not possible:

- (22) \*Inč' ov ē ker-el?  
 What who AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Who has eaten what?'

It is also important to observe that the auxiliary in this case must be adjacent to the rightmost *wh*-, as shown by the following examples:

- (23) \*Ov ē inč' ker-el?  
 Who AUX.3SG what eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Who has eaten what?'
- (24) \*Ov inč' ker-el ē?  
 Who what eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Who has eaten what?'

Let us consider now the aorist verbal forms. The aorist, as said above, is a synthetic verbal form and exhibits the same distribution as the auxiliary. In out-of-the-blue assertions, it appears in clause-final position, as in the following example:

- (25) Mariam-ə hyut'-ə xm-ec'  
 Mariam-ART juice-ART drink-AOR.3SG  
 'Mariam drank the juice.'

Corrective focus obtains in the same way as above, i.e. by means of adjacency of the verb with the focused item. Suppose that speaker A utters sentence (25) above; then speaker B can correct A's assertion by means of sentence (26):

- (26) (Woč',) T'EY-ə xm-ec' Mariam-ə  
 No tea-ART drink-AOR.3SG Mariam-ART  
 '(No,) Mariam drank tea-foc.'

Moreover, the following sentence is possible as well:

- (27) (Woč',) Mariam-ə T'EY-ə xm-ec'  
 No Mariam-ART tea-ART drink-AOR.3SG  
 '(No,) Mariam drank tea-foc.'

In example (27) word order is the same as in (25), and the adjacency requirement is met.<sup>10</sup> Coherently with what we saw so far, the following example is ungrammatical:

- (28) \*(Woč',) T'EY-ə Mariam-ə xm-ec'  
 No tea-ART Mariam-ART drink-AOR.3SG  
 '(No,) Mariam drank tea-foc.'

In example (28) the focused phrase is not adjacent to the verb; hence, it cannot be used as a correction to assertion (25).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Example (27) might differ from example (25) also as far as its intonation is concerned. The prosodic issue, however, must be further studied, possibly experimentally.

<sup>11</sup> Again, intonational issues should be addressed in further work. Sentence (28) in fact could marginally be rescued by using extra-strong stress on the correcting phrase. It would be important to understand to what extent the two interpretations are disambiguated by intonation.

The pattern with interrogative phrases is the same as above:

- (29) Ov ker-av salor-ə?  
Who eat-AOR.3SG plum-ART  
'Who ate the plum?'
- (30) \*Ov salor-ə ker-av?  
Who plum-ART eat-AOR.3SG  
'Who ate the plum?'
- (31) Inč' ker-av Hakob-ə?  
What eat-AOR.3SG Hakob-ART  
'What did Hakob eat?'
- (32) \*Inč' Hakob-ə ker-av?  
What Hakob-ART eat-AOR.3SG  
'What did Hakob eat?'

The verb must be immediately adjacent to the *wh*-.

Interestingly, in MEA there is no difference between the syntactic realization of corrective focus and information focus. Let us consider question-answering, which is a context typically eliciting information focus:

- (33) Ov ker-av salor-ə?  
Who eat-AOR.3SG plum-ART?  
'Who ate the plum?'
- (34) Siran-ə ker-av salor-ə  
Siran.ART eat-AOR.3SG plum-ART  
'Siran ate the plum.'
- (35) \*Siran-ə salor-ə ker-av  
Siran.ART plum-ART eat-AOR.3SG  
'Siran ate the plum.'

The question in (33) concerns the subject, and (34) is the appropriate word order for answering it, whereas (35) is ruled out. Note that (35) is indeed the basic word order for MEA, but it is just ungrammatical as an answer to (33). The same happens with the object:

- (36) Inč' ker-av Siran-ə?  
What eat-AOR.3SG Siran-ART?  
'What did Siran eat?'
- (37) Salor-ə ker-av Siran-ə  
Plum-ART eat-AOR.3SG Siran.ART  
'Siran ate the plum.'

- (38) \*Salor-ə      Siran-ə      ker-av  
 Plum-ART    Siran.ART    eat-AOR.3SG  
 'Siran ate the plum.'

Even in this case, the order in (37) provides a good answer, whereas (38) would not be appropriate.

### 27.3 Modern Eastern Armenian as a partial V2 language

In this section we discuss the data presented above and argue that Armenian is a partial V2 language, i.e. a language exhibiting V2 only in certain structures. In particular, we propose that Armenian resorts to V2 to mark focus, both contrastive/corrective and informational focus. According to this hypothesis, the inflected verb moves to the focus head in the left periphery of the clause and the focused phrase moves in its specifier. Recall also that, as pointed out in Section 27.3.1 above, there is another possible way of focusing a phrase in MEA.

#### 27.3.1 The left-peripheral focus

According to Rizzi (1997), the left periphery of the clause in Italian has the following structure:

- (39) [Force [Top [Focus [Top [Fin]]]]]

Under this view, Force is a head marking the leftmost boundary of the clause, which in Italian hosts the complementizer *che* ('that') introducing tensed clauses, whereas Fin hosts complementizers like *di* (literally: 'of') introducing non-finite clauses. In between it is possible to have various topic heads, both on the right and on the left of focus, with the topicalized phrase occupying their specifier position, and one focus head, with the focused phrase in its specifier. Rizzi's (1997) original work considered mainly Italian and in this language the left-peripheral focus can only be a corrective one. Informational focus in Italian generally appears on the right of the verb and cannot occupy a left-peripheral position. Consider, for instance, the following question-answer discourse:<sup>12</sup>

- (40) A: Cosa    ha    comprato    Gianni?  
       What   has   buy            Gianni  
       'What did Gianni buy?'

<sup>12</sup> There is a vast literature on focus and Rizzi's theory has been discussed and challenged by several scholars on the basis of interesting considerations. See, among the many others, Brunetti (2004); Frascarelli (2000); Samek-Lodovici (2015). For the purposes of this work, however, his original proposal is able to capture the data we are discussing, with a minimum of further elaboration. For a recent analysis of the position of information focus, see Belletti (2009; 2014).



- (41) B: Ha comprato un libro  
 Has bought a book  
 'He bought a book.'
- (42) \*Un libro ha comprato  
 A book has bought  
 'He bought a book-foc.'

If speaker A asks a question such as that in (40), the order in (42) is not available.<sup>13</sup>

Note that in English as well there is only a partial V2, in that this word order is realized only in interrogative structures, or structures introduced by negative items:

- (43) Where did you put the book?
- (44) Not only did John win, but he also broke the record.

In order to describe these cases, Rizzi (1990; see also Holmberg 2015) proposed the term *residual V2*, meaning that the modern word order can be considered as a residue of a more widespread V2 in previous stages of the language.<sup>14</sup>

In Armenian, as seen in Section 27.3.1 above, there is no word order distinction between the structure instantiated by the various types of focus. Moreover, the same order obtains with *wh*- operators. The simplest hypothesis is, therefore, to claim that information focus, corrective focus, and *wh*- operators all appear in the same projection, whose head is filled by the inflected verb. We do not have here evidence for differentiating between these items, but it might well turn out, upon further scrutiny, that the positions are not exactly the same, even if they must certainly all lie in the left periphery and require adjacency with the inflected verb. The multiple *wh*- case illustrated above, in example (21), could be treated as a case of *absorption*, as proposed for similar cases by Higginbotham and May (1981).<sup>15</sup>

### 27.3.2 V3 order

The general wisdom, as discussed, for instance, in Holmberg (2015), is that V3 or V4, etc., orders are possible when the phrase preceding the one in V2 position is base-generated there.<sup>16</sup> With respect to MEA this means that V3, V4, etc. orders are possible, provided that

<sup>13</sup> In some languages, such as Sicilian and some varieties of Spanish, the situation differs from the standard Italian one, and sentence (42) is a possible answer. On Sicilian, see Cruschina (2006); on the Spanish varieties, see Jiménez-Fernández (2015a).

<sup>14</sup> Further research is indeed required for analysing word order in Grabar, i.e. in the old Armenian language.

<sup>15</sup> We will not further discuss multiple *wh*- here, since a thorough discussion of these cases would lead us too far away from the topic of this chapter.

<sup>16</sup> For reasons of space, we do not discuss here possible alternative theories of V3 orders, but we simply take it for granted. As far as this discussion is concerned, the theory we assume makes the correct predictions.

only one is focused, as we illustrated in Section 27.2 above. Indeed, such sentences are grammatical, as illustrated by the following examples:<sup>17</sup>

- (45) Siran-ə SALOR-n ē ker-el  
 Siran.ART plum-ART AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Siran has eaten the plum-foc.'
- (46) Salor-ə SIRAN-n ē ker-el  
 Plum-ART Siran.ART AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Siran-foc has eaten the plum.'
- (47) Yerek SALOR-n ē Siran-ə ker-el  
 Yesterday plum-ART AUX.3SG Siran.ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Yesterday Siran ate the plum-foc.'

The focused phrase must be the one adjacent to the auxiliary. In these cases, the phrase preceding the focus is interpreted as a given phrase. For instance, sentence (45) could be the answer by speaker B to sentence (48), uttered by speaker A, analogously to what saw above (cf. (5)):

- (48) Siran-ə xnjor-ə ker-el ē  
 Siran.ART apple-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Siran has eaten the apple.'

Note that (48) creates a context where the subject is given. Hence, it can precede the focus in sentence (45). Sentence (46) could be the reply by speaker B to sentence (49), uttered out of the blue by speaker A, analogously to what saw above (cf. (3)):

- (49) Mariam-ə salor-ə ker-el ē  
 Mariam-ART plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Mariam has eaten the plum.'

Finally, sentence (47) is an appropriate reply to the following sentence by speaker A:

- (50) Yerek Siran-ə xnjor-ə ker-el ē  
 Yesterday Siran.ART apple-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Yesterday Siran ate the apple.'

<sup>17</sup> Sentences with V4, etc. orders are also grammatical, as in the following case:

- (i) Yerek salor-ə SIRAN-N ē ker-el  
 Yesterday plum-ART Siran.ART AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Yesterday Siran-foc ate the plum.'

In this case both *yesterday* and *the plum* must be given in the context, i.e. must be topics already mentioned in the previous discourse. Here we only consider V3 orders, for simplicity.



Note that in a language like Italian these structures are usually realized as a Clitic Left Dislocation—henceforth CLLD—as in the following case:<sup>18</sup>

- (51) La prugna, GIANNI l'ha mangiata (non Mario)  
The plum Gianni it.CL has eaten (not Mario)  
'Gianni-foc ate the plum-top.'

CLLD is immune from weak-crossover effects, as shown by many scholars. Consider, for instance, the following example from Benincà and Poletto (2004, ex. 9):

- (52) Gianni<sub>i</sub>, suo<sub>i</sub> padre l<sub>i</sub>' ha licenziato  
Gianni<sub>i</sub>, his<sub>i</sub> father him<sub>i</sub> = has fired  
'His father fired Gianni-topic.'

In this case the left dislocated phrase *Gianni*, does not exhibit any weak-crossover effect. On the contrary, a focused phrase does (Benincà and Poletto 2004, ex. 9):<sup>19</sup>

- (53) \*GIANNI<sub>i</sub>, suo<sub>i</sub> padre ha licenziato t<sub>i</sub>  
Gianni his father has fired  
'His father fired Gianni-foc.'

In general, this is taken as evidence that the fundamental difference between CLLD and contrastive/corrective focalization is that the former is base-generated, whereas the latter is a movement phenomenon. This issue has been discussed at length in the literature—by Cinque (1990), Frascarelli (2000), and many other scholars—and here we are taking their arguments for granted.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> In Italian the sentences corresponding to MEA examples (45) and (47) do not have a clitic, even if the subject and the adverb occupy a left-peripheral position, preceding the focused phrase. In the case of the subject, as in the Italian equivalent of example (45)—see example (i)—this is so because, trivially, in standard Italian there is no subject clitic. The same happens in the Italian equivalent of example (47), given that there is no clitic possibly corresponding to time adverbs—see example (ii).

- (i) Gianni, LA PRUGNA ha mangiato (non la mela)  
Gianni the plum has eaten (not the apple)  
'Gianni ate the plum-foc (non the apple).'
- (ii) Ieri, LA PRUGNA Gianni ha mangiato (non la mela)  
Yesterday the plum Gianni has eaten (not the apple)  
'Yesterday Gianni ate the plum-foc (not the apple).'

We are not going to pursue the issue further here, because it is not immediately relevant to the purposes of this work. For a contrastive discussion of Italian CLLD and English topicalization, see Haegeman (1996).

<sup>19</sup> An anonymous reviewer points out that sentence (53) is grammatical in Spanish and suggests looking to Jiménez-Fernández and Miyagawa (2014) for a different analysis of weak-crossover effects. The analysis we refer to in the text, however, is quite successful in explaining the data under consideration and we postpone a full discussion of cross-linguistic differences to further work. See also n. 12, where we point out that some Italian dialects, such as Sicilian, have a different distribution of focus; hence we can expect differences in this respect as well.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. also the discussion in Rizzi (1997), where he claims that Focus is quantificational, whereas left dislocation, i.e. topic, is not. Note that there is ample evidence in the literature—cf. Cinque (1999) and Frascarelli (2000)—that in Italian in these cases the clitic is neither a resumptive pronoun nor an instance of clitic doubling. This is another important argument in favour of the idea that the left dislocated phrase is base-generated. We are not going to reproduce the relevant discussion about Italian here.



As a consequence, a possible hypothesis would be to say that the Armenian sentences instantiating a V3 order are exactly analogous to the Italian example (51), with the only difference being that in Armenian there are no clitics comparable to the Italian ones. If this is correct, then we expect something similar to weak-crossover effects to occur.

In Armenian we find a possessive pronoun, *nra* (his/her), and a possessive reflexive, *ir* ('self's').<sup>21</sup> In principle, therefore, we expect weak-crossover effects with the pronoun, when the object is focused, but not when it is topicalized. This prediction is only partially borne out. Consider the following examples:

- (54) \*SIRAN-i-n<sub>i</sub>      ē            nra<sub>i</sub> šun-ə      kc-el  
 Siran-DAT-ART    AUX.3SG    her dog-ART    bite-PRF.PTCP  
 'Her dog bit Siran-foc.'

Example (54) can only be interpreted as a focused sentence, given that the auxiliary occupies the second position and the sentence is strongly ungrammatical. However, the contrast with the sentence in which the verb does not appear in second position is not very strong:

- (55) ??Siran-i-n<sub>i</sub>            nra<sub>i</sub> šun-ə      kc-el            ē  
 Siran-DAT-ART    her dog-ART    bite-PRF.PTCP    AUX.3SG  
 'Her dog bit Siran.'

In this case, the auxiliary occupies its canonical position at the end of the sentence.<sup>22</sup> The phrase appearing on the left, *Siranin*, cannot be interpreted as a focus, because the verb does not occupy the second position, and therefore it is interpreted as a topic. The reason the contrast is not very strong is that the pronoun *nra* strongly favours antecedents outside the sentence. In other words, (55) would preferably mean, for instance, 'Anna's dog bit Siran'. In other words, in MEA the pronoun competes with the reflexive *ir*. Hence, the fully grammatical option for expressing the coreference in (55) is the following:<sup>23</sup>

- (56) Siran-i-n            ir            šun-ə      kc-el            ē  
 Siran-DAT-ART    self's    dog-ART    bite-PRF.PTCP    AUX.3SG  
 'Her dog bit Siran-topic.'

Given this consideration, we have to look elsewhere for relevant evidence to show that the phrase preceding focus is base-generated there.

<sup>21</sup> The reflexive *ir* exhibits several properties similar to those of Italian *proprio* ('self's'). *Proprio* can either be clause-bound or long-distance bound, in which case, simplifying a complex pattern, it refers to subjects. For an analysis of Italian *proprio* ('self's'), see Giorgi (2006; 2007). On the exact status of *ir*, however, further work is required. Here we will highlight only the properties relevant to our discussion.

<sup>22</sup> Note that the sentence in (55) exhibits the scrambled order mentioned in n. 1. This is so because we want to maintain a minimal contrast with the preceding sentence. Scrambling in MEA does not affect binding relations; the issue, however, deserves further work.

<sup>23</sup> Note that the issue here concerns the distribution of the pronoun with respect to the anaphora and not weak crossover per se. In MEA there is a strong preference for the antecedent of the pronoun to lie outside the sentence, independently of binding conditions. We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out a potential misunderstanding on this point.

We think that an interesting argument can be made on the basis of the distribution of the anaphoric possessive *ir* ('self's'). This anaphor can have an antecedent either in the same clause or in the higher one. Consider the following examples:<sup>24</sup>

- (57) Anna-n<sub>i</sub> ir<sub>i</sub> hor-ə barev-el ē  
 Anna-ART 'self's father.DAT-ART greet-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Anna has greeted her father.'

In this case the sentence has the standard word order and the anaphor *ir* refers to the subject of the same clause. As pointed out above, coreference cannot be expressed by means of the pronoun. Consider the following example:

- (58) Anna-n nra hor-ə barev-el ē  
 Anna-ART his/her father.DAT-ART greet-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Anna greeted his/her father.'

In example (58) the pronoun *nra* cannot be coreferent with *Anna* and must look for an antecedent outside the sentence. Consider now the long-distance cases:

- (59) Siran-n<sub>i</sub> as-ac' wor ir<sub>i</sub> mayr-ə mekn-el ēr  
 Siran-ART say-AOR.3SG that self's mother-ART leave-PRF.PTCP AUX.IMP.3SG  
 'Siran said that her mother left.'

In example (59) the antecedent of the anaphor is in the superordinate clause. The following example shows that the anaphor can refer either to *Anna* or to *Siran*:

- (60) Siran-n<sub>i</sub> as-ac' wor Anna-n<sub>j</sub> ir<sub>i/j</sub> mor-ə  
 Siran-ART say-AOR.3SG that Anna-ART self's mother.DAT-ART  
 handip-el ēr  
 meet-PRF.PTCP AUX.IMP.3SG  
 'Siran said that Anna met her mother.'

As pointed out above, the pronoun *nra* takes an antecedent not mentioned in the sentence, as shown in the following sentence:

- (61) Siran-n Anna-yi-n as-ac' wor du nra  
 Siran-ART Anna-DAT-ART say-AOR.3SG that you his/her  
 mor-ə handip-el ēir  
 mother.DAT-ART meet-PRF.PTCP AUX.IMP.2SG  
 'Siran told Anna that you met his/her mother.'

In this sentence, the antecedent of *nra* is neither *Siran* nor *Anna*.

<sup>24</sup> In example (64) the order is a scrambled one, and the object precedes the subject. As pointed out in Section 27.2 above, this is an option almost always available in MEA.



Note that, the superordinate dative is not a suitable antecedent for the anaphor, nor is a second person pronoun. As a consequence, the following sentence is ungrammatical:

- (62) \*Annay-yi-n as-ac'i wor du ir mor-ə  
 Anna-DAT-ART say-AOR.1SG that you self's mother.DAT-ART  
 handip-el ěir  
 meet-PRF.PTCP AUX.IMP.2SG  
 'I told Anna that you met his/her mother.'

Consider also that the antecedent cannot be embedded, as shown in the following example:

- (63) [Siran-i<sub>i</sub> usuc'ič'-n]<sub>j</sub> ir<sub>j</sub>/\*i<sub>i</sub> mor-ə barev-ec'  
 Siran-GEN teacher-ART her/\*self's mother.DAT-ART greet-AOR.3SG  
 'Siran's teacher greeted her mother.'

*Siran* does not qualify as a possible antecedent, whereas the whole subject does.

Having provided this minimal background, we can now analyse the crucial cases:

- (64) Ir<sub>i</sub> hor-ə Anna-n<sub>i</sub> barev-el ě  
 self's father.DAT-ART Anna-ART greet-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Anna greeted her father.'
- (65) Anna-n<sub>i</sub> ir<sub>i</sub> hor-ə barev-el ě  
 Anna-ART self's father.DAT-ART greet-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Anna greeted her father.'

Interestingly, these examples contrast with the following ones:

- (66) \*Ir hor-ə ANNA-n ě barev-el  
 self's father.DAT-ART Anna-ART AUX.3SG greet-PRF.PTCP  
 'Anna-foc greeted her father.'
- (67) ANNA-n ě ir hor-ə barev-el  
 Anna-ART AUX.3SG her father.DAT-ART greet-PRF.PTCP  
 'Anna-foc greeted her father.'

Example (64) is grammatical, contrasting sharply with the example in (66). In (64) the phrase *ir horə* ('self's father') is bound by the subject, the auxiliary being cliticized on the participle. Sentence (66), on the contrary, is a focused sentence. The subject *Anna* is focused, due to the position of the auxiliary immediately following it. The phrase containing the anaphor, *ir horə* ('self's father'), precedes it, giving rise to a V3 order.

According to our proposal, the left dislocated phrase can only be base-generated and cannot be moved in pre-focus position. According to this perspective, the ungrammaticality of (66) is actually the expected result: the anaphor must be c-commanded by its antecedent—as shown by the ungrammatical reading of (63), i.e. that in which *ir* refers to the non c-commanding *Siran*. C-command can only be possible if the sentence contains

a copy lower than *Anna*. If *ir horə* ('self's father'), being in the pre-focus position, is base-generated there, no such copy can exist; hence ungrammaticality follows.

Finally, as further evidence, example (67) contrasts with (66). *Ir horə* ('self's father') in (67) in fact does not precede the focused phrase; hence it can regularly be bound by the lower copy of *Anna*, under reconstruction. Moreover, there is no contrast between (67) and (65), because in this case focalization is irrelevant with respect to the binding of the anaphor.

Given these considerations, we can conclude that the distribution of the anaphoric possessive *ir* is a strong argument in favour of the view according to which a V3, V4, etc. order in MEA cannot be derived via movement, but only by means of base generation of the left dislocated phrase.

## 27.4 Further remarks on Focus

In this section we are going to address some further questions related to focus. In particular, we will consider long-distance focus, its semantic interpretation and its interaction with indefinites.

### 27.4.1 Long-distance Focus

In MEA, complement clauses are introduced by the complementizer *wor* ('that'). Word order in the embedded clause is the same as in main clauses. Consider, for instance, the following pair:

(68) Bolor-ə            git-en        wor    Siran-ə    salor-ə    ker-el        ē  
 Everybody-ART    know-3PL    that    Siran.ART   plum-ART   eat-PRF.PTCP   AUX.3SG  
 'Everybody knows that Siran has eaten the plum.'

(69) (Woč',)    bolor-ə            git-en        wor    KARINE-n    ē  
 (No)    everybody-ART    know-3PL    that    Karine-ART    AUX.3SG  
 salor-ə        ker-el  
 plum-ART    eat-PRF.PTCP  
 '(No,) everybody knows that Karine-foc has eaten the plum.'

Word order in the embedded clause in (68) is subject-object-participle-auxiliary. In example (69), where the embedded clause contains a corrective/contrastive focus, the order is Focus-auxiliary-object-participle. In both cases, this would be the order of corresponding main clauses.

Given the context provided by (68), the sentence in (70) is also a possible corrective strategy:

(70) (Woč',)    bolor-ə            git-en,        wor    KARINE-n    ē,  
 (No)    everybody-ART    know-3PL    that    Karine-ART    AUX.3SG  
 wor    salor-ə        ker-el            ē  
 that    plum-ART    eat-PRF.PTCP    AUX.3SG  
 '(No,) everybody knows that it is Karine that has eaten the plum.'



The embedded clause apparently features a cleft sentence, a device adopted by several languages to focalize phrases, as, for instance, Italian and English:

- (71) È Gianni che ha telefonato  
 Is Gianni that has called  
 'It is Gianni who called.'

- (72) It is Gianni who called.

In MEA as well, it is possible to have a cleft in simple clauses:

- (73) Karine-n ē, wor salor-ə ker-el ē  
 Karine-ART AUX.3SG that plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'It is Karine that has eaten the plum.'

In Italian, a focused phrase can appear indefinitely far away from its clause, as, for instance, in the following case:

- (74) MARIA tutti dicono che Gianni ha invitato alla festa (non Luisa)  
 Maria everybody says that Gianni has invited to-the party (not Luisa)  
 'Maria-foc, everybody says that Gianni invited (her) to the party (not Luisa).'

The cleft strategy is available as well:<sup>25</sup>

- (75) È Maria che tutti dicono che Gianni ha invitato alla  
 Is Maria that everybody says that Gianni has invited to-the  
 festa (non Luisa)  
 party (not Luisa)  
 'It is Maria that everybody says that Gianni invited to the party (not Luisa).'

In MEA the only possible strategy for long-distance focalization is the cleft sentence. Given the context provided by sentence (68), sentence (76) qualifies as a possible reply, whereas sentence (77) is ungrammatical:

- (76) (Woč',) KARINE-n ē, wor bolor-ə git-en,  
 (No) Karine-ART AUX.3SG that everybody-ART know-3PL  
 wor salor-ə ker-el ē  
 that plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 '(No,) it is Karine that everybody knows that has eaten the plum.'

- (77) \* (Woč',) KARINE-N ē bolor-ə git-en, wor  
 (No) Karine-ART AUX.3SG everybody-ART know-3PL that  
 salor-ə ker-el  
 plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP  
 '(No,) it is Karine that everybody knows that eaten the plum.'

<sup>25</sup> See below Section 27.4.2 for a brief discussion of the interpretation of focalization vs cleft.

Example (76) features a cleft sentence, whereas in sentence (77) the embedded auxiliary moves to the focus head next to the focused phrase *Karine*. This is impossible and the sentence is ungrammatical. The same happens with *wh*- operators:

- (78) Um ē, wor Karine-n as-um ē,  
 Whom AUX.3SG that Karine-ART say-PR.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 wor Siran-ə handip-el ē?  
 that Siran.ART meet-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Who is that Karine says that Siran met?'

- (79) \*Um ē, Karine-n as-um ē, wor Siran-ə handip-el  
 Whom AUX.3SG Karine-ART say-PR.PTCP AUX.3SG that Siran.ART meet-PRF.PTCP  
 'Who is that Karine says that Siran met?'

As shown by the ungrammaticality of sentence (79), it is impossible to move the auxiliary up to the focus position of the superordinate sentence and the cleft strategy is the only one available. This is the case with information focus as well:

- (80) HAKOB-i-n ē, wor Karine-n as-um ē,  
 Hakob-DAT-ART AUX.3SG that Karine-ART say-PR.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 wor Siran-ə handip-el ē  
 that Siran.ART meet-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'It is Hakob that Karine says that Siran met.'

The example in (80) is a possible answer to the question in (78). Again, movement of the embedded auxiliary is impossible:

- (81) \*HAKOB-i-n ē, wor Karine-n as-um ē,  
 Hakob-DAT-ART AUX.3SG that Karine-ART say-PR.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 wor Siran-ə handip-el  
 that Siran.ART meet-PRF.PTCP  
 'It is Hakob that Karine says that Siran met.'

Note also that the auxiliary agrees with the focused phrase:

- (82) DU es, wor Hakob-n as-um ē,  
 You AUX.2SG that Hakob-ART say-PR.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 wor mrc'uyt'-ə haft'-el es  
 that competition-ART win-PRF.PTCP AUX.2SG  
 'It is you that Hakob says that won the competition.'

In this case the superordinate and the embedded copula share person features, because the subject is in both cases the hearer. In the following example we also see that the superordinate copula expresses the same tense as the embedded one:<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See Section 27.4.2 for further discussion of these cases.



- (83) DU ēir, wor Hakob-n as-um ēr,  
 You AUX.IMP.2SG that Hakob-ART say-PR.PTCP AUX.IMP.3SG  
 wor mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-el ēir  
 that competition-ART win-PRF.PTCP AUX.IMP.2SG  
 'It was you that Hakob said that had won the competition.'

In the next section, we are going to consider again example (83).

#### 27.4.2 Towards a theoretical account

In Section 27.2 we proposed that MEA is a partial V2 language. The inflected verb is copied in the left periphery and pronounced there; the focused phrase, then, can occupy its specifier position. The data we discussed show that the left-peripheral position is relevant both for information focus and corrective/contrastive focus.

In this section we further investigate this issue, with particular reference to the role of the cleft. We argue here that the properties of the cleft in MEA are quite different from those found in Italian and discussed by Belletti (2009; 2012; 2015).

The semantic difference between left-peripheral focus and clefts is usually expressed in terms of *exhaustivity*, and this turns out to be correct with respect to Italian. Consider, for instance, the following examples:<sup>27</sup>

- (84) GIANNI ha telefonato, e dopo un po' ha telefonato anche Maria  
 Gianni has called, and after a while has called too Maria  
 'Gianni has called and after a while Maria called as well.'
- (85) È Gianni che ha telefonato, #e dopo un po' ha telefonato anche Maria  
 Is Gianni who has called and after a while has called too Maria  
 'It is Gianni who called and after a while Maria called as well.'

Example (84) is not (necessarily) exhaustive, so that the speaker can add *and Maria called as well*, whereas this is not the case with (85), which is infelicitous. In other words, the cleft with respect to the left-peripheral position expresses exhaustivity. The presence of *only* also gives rise to exhaustivity, as in the following case in Italian:

- (86) Solo Gianni ha telefonato, #e dopo un po' ha telefonato anche Maria  
 Only Gianni has called and after a while has called too Maria  
 'Only Gianni called and after a while Maria called as well.'

The sentence in (86) is infelicitous with the addition of *and Maria as well*, on a par with the cleft construals.

<sup>27</sup> On exhaustivity, see, e.g., Kiss (1998) and Zimmermann (2008). For a general discussion of focus and other phenomena, see Krifka (2008).



Let us now consider MEA. We saw above that in simple sentences both V2 focalization and the cleft strategy are available. Consider, however, that neither is exhaustive:

- (87) HAKOB-i-n ē, wor Siran-ə handip-el  
 Hakob-DAT-ART AUX.3SG that Siran.ART meet-PRF.PTCP  
 ē (ev nayeV Silva-yi-n)  
 AUX.3SG (and also Silva-DAT-ART)  
 'It is Hakob that Siran met (and Silva as well).'
- (88) HAKOB-i-n ē Siran-ə handipel (ev nayeV Silva-yi-n)  
 Hakob-DAT-ART AUX.3SG Siran.ART meet-PRF.PTCP (and also Silva-DAT-ART)  
 'Siran met Hakob-foc (and Silva as well).'

Both examples can express either contrastive focus or information focus; the adding of *and Silva as well* does not give rise to infelicity. Exhaustive readings must be made explicit by means of *only*, as in the following case:

- (89) Miayn Hakob-i-n ē Siran-ə  
 Only Hakob-DAT-ART AUX.3SG Siran.ART  
 handip-el (#ev nayeV Silva-yi-n)  
 meet-PRF.PTCP (#and also Silva-DAT-ART)  
 'Siran met only Hakob (and Silva as well).'

Hence, the evidence just discussed does not clearly distinguish between the cleft and the left-peripheral focus with respect to the point of view of the interpretation.

Furthermore, Belletti (2009; 2012; 2014) points out that in languages such as Italian and French, subject and object clefts are not felicitous in the same contexts. In particular, Belletti (2014) shows that subject clefts can express information focus, whereas non-subject clefts can only express corrective/contrastive focus. In other words, in these languages a non-subject cleft cannot be used for answering a question concerning a non-subject.

In MEA, however, such a constraint does not hold and subject and non-subject clefts do not differ with respect to question-answering. Consider the following pair:

- (90) Ov ē, wor salor-ə ker-el ē?  
 Who AUX.3SG that plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Who ate the plum?'
- (91) SIRAN-n ē, wor salor-ə ker-el ē  
 Siran.ART AUX.3SG that plum-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Siran-foc has eaten the plum.'

In this case the question concerns a subject, which is the case Belletti argues is possible in Italian and French. In the following pair, the question concerns an object:

- (92) Um ē, wor tfa-ner-ə handip-el en?  
 Whom AUX.3SG that boy-PL-ART meet-PRF.PTCP AUX.3PL  
 'Whom did the boys met?'

- (93) SIRAN-i-n ē, wor tša-ner-ə handip-el en  
 Siran-DAT-AUX AUX.3SG that boy-PL-ART meet-PRF.PTCP AUX.3PL  
 'The boys met Siran-foc.'

In example (93) the cleft contains an object and the sentence is grammatical.

Concluding these brief remarks, we can say that the Armenian construal differs from that illustrated by Belletti (2009; 2012; 2014) for Italian and French, i.e. from the real cleft. In what follows, we propose a theoretical account for these structures in MEA along different lines.

Poletto (2014) points out that in certain languages the left periphery is a layer which must be 'activated', i.e. which can play its role and host specifiers only when a head is moved there. Let us suppose that MEA is such a language, whereas Italian is not. Hence, in order to host a focus in its left periphery, a Verb must occupy the focus head. In general, this means that V2 must take place.<sup>28</sup>

There might be cases, however, where V2, i.e. movement of the inflected verb to the relevant focus head, gives rise to ungrammatical sentences. As we saw above in Section 27.4.1, this is the case with long-distance focus: it is obviously impossible to copy the auxiliary of an embedded clause in the superordinate one and pronounce only the upper copy.<sup>29</sup>

Our proposal is that the embedded auxiliary, or rather its features, are copied in the superordinate left-peripheral layer, where it licenses the focused phrase. Both copies are pronounced, so that it looks as if a cleft is realized. We would say, instead, that this is a *long V2 strategy*.

Let us add another remark: in example (83) we pointed out that in MEA the two copulas must be identical with respect to tense. In Italian, this is not the case in that tense can vary. Consider, for instance, the following long-distance cleft:

- (94) È Gianni che tutti dicono che aveva incontrato Maria  
 Is Gianni that everybody says that had met Maria  
 'It is Gianni that everybody says met Maria.'

In Italian the copula of the cleft appears in the present tense, whereas the embedded verb is a past. This shows that the two verbal forms are completely independent.

The equivalent of (94), on the contrary, is sharply ungrammatical in MEA, as shown by the following contrast:

- (95) \*Hakob-n ē, wor bolor-n as-um en,  
 Hakob-ART AUX.3SG that everybody-ART say-PR.PTCP AUX.3PL  
 wor Mariam-i-n handip-el ēr  
 that Mariam-DAT-ART meet-PRF.PTCP AUX.IMP.3SG  
 'It is Hakob that everybody says met Mariam.'

<sup>28</sup> See also Benincà (2004; 2006) for a similar intuition with respect to Medieval Romance languages. For reasons of space, we do not further investigate cross-linguistic variations in this work. It will be addressed in future research.

<sup>29</sup> The reason presumably is that the relation between the verb, i.e., the participle, and its temporal features must be local.



- (96) Hakob-n ēr, wor bolor-n as-um en,  
 Hakob-ART AUX.IMP.3SG that everybody-ART say-PR.PTCP AUX.3PL  
 wor Mariam-i-n handip-el ēr  
 that Mariam-DAT-ART meet-PRF.PTCP AUX.IMP.3SG  
 'It was Hakob that everybody says met Mariam.'

Only the sentence in (96), where the copula is a past verbal form, is grammatical.

Concluding this section, we propose that what appears to be a cleft in MEA is actually a *long V2*—i.e. a copy of the copula *i*. This strategy licenses the left-peripheral layer and permits a focus to be realized in the specifier of the copula. This is the only possibility for realizing a long-distance focus. When the focused phrase appears in the left periphery of its own clause, then both strategies are available. The copula is copied in the left periphery and the lower one can either be pronounced or not, according to the Minimalist theory of copying.<sup>30</sup> When both are pronounced, the lower one must agree in phi-features with the subject, whereas the higher one shares the phi-features of the focused phrase, if different from the subject; tense, however, must be same.

### 27.5 The low vP left periphery

In this section we briefly consider the low left periphery, i.e. the projection on the left of vP. Belletti (2009; 2012; 2014) points out that in Italian and French this layer hosts information focus.<sup>31</sup> We argued that this is not the case for MEA, where both types of focus are realized in the left-peripheral position.

The questions we are going to answer in this section are the following: is there a low left periphery in MEA? If there is one, what is it for? To answer this question, let us consider the pattern we find with indefinites:<sup>32</sup>

- (97) Siran-ə mi salor ē ker-el  
 Siran.ART a plum AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Siran has eaten a plum.'
- (98) \*Siran-ə mi salor ker-el ē  
 Siran.ART a plum eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Siran has eaten a plum.'

<sup>30</sup> In the examples discussed in this section, the copulas are both pronounced. In the examples discussed in the preceding sections, where focus is local, only the upper copy is pronounced. See also n. 29.

<sup>31</sup> See Giorgi (2016) for an analysis of the low left periphery in Italian, as relevant also for the distribution of epistemic and evaluative adverbials.

<sup>32</sup> For reasons of space, we cannot address here an analysis of the noun phrase in MEA and its morphological properties. A reviewer points out that *mi* might in certain contexts be a marked option for indefinites.

These examples show that when an indefinite, such as *mi salor* (a plum), is present, the auxiliary must be adjacent to it. Conversely, the basic order, where the auxiliary appears in verb-final position, is ungrammatical, as shown by (98).<sup>33</sup>

This pattern is reminiscent of the one we saw above for focused phrases. A possible way to explain this distribution is to say that the verb is copied in the head position of a projection on the left of vP, and that the indefinite moves into its specifier. If we conceive of focus as evoking a set of contextually identified alternatives, we can say that indefinites can somehow fit in this definition. Therefore, they trigger V2, with the difference that the projection exploited by the verb and the indefinite phrase is lower.<sup>34</sup> We know that the position occupied by the auxiliary in (97) is a low one by considering the simultaneous presence of a focus and an indefinite. Consider the following cases:

(99) SIRAN-n ē mi salor ker-el  
 Siran.ART AUX.3SG a plum eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Siran-foc has eaten a plum.'

(100) \*SIRAN-ə mi salor ē kerel  
 Siran.ART a plum AUX.3SG eat-PRF.PTCP  
 'Siran-foc has eaten a plum.'

(101) \*SIRAN-ə mi salor kerel ē  
 Siran.ART a plum eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Siran-foc has eaten a plum.'

In example (99) the auxiliary appears next to the focused phrase, even if the sentence contains an indefinite, *mi salor* (a plum). In this case, the auxiliary cannot stay in a lower position, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (100) and (101). We can argue, therefore, that in these cases the inflected verb moves from the low vP periphery, where it licenses the indefinite, to the higher one, where it licenses focus.<sup>35</sup>

Concluding this section, we can provide an answer to our initial questions: in MEA there is indeed a low left-periphery, which is not exploited for expressing information focus, but for licensing indefinites. On the basis of the observation that languages differ in this respect, we suggest that both peripheries universally contain a focus projection—under the assumption that indefinites do partake, at least partially, of the same properties of focus—and that each language specifies which type of focused phrase can appear in each one.

<sup>33</sup> The word order in (98) is that often used by small children and by adults when speaking *motherese*. This observation deserves further investigation in that it can help to shed light on the syntactic properties of these sentences.

<sup>34</sup> In general, in this chapter, we are not addressing the issues connected with the derivation of the various word orders in V-final languages. In particular, in the cases discussed in this section, the pre-vP position is actually lower than the alleged basic position of the auxiliary. In Giorgi and Haroutyunian (2015), we presented a proposal, which we are going to develop in future work, to deal with this and related issues. Importantly, this low position cannot be used in MEA only for indefinites. Belletti (2014) proposes that in Italian this position must be restricted only to certain interpretations, and in particular to information focus.

<sup>35</sup> Though it seems that in many languages indefinites require some kind of adjacency with the verb—as, for instance, in Old Dutch (van Kemenade p.c.)—it is not clear so far why in other ones, such as Italian, there is no need for a special licensing.



### 27.6 Concluding remarks

In this chapter we argued that MEA is a partial V2 language that creates V2 structures to mark focus. We show that MEA does not differentiate between information focus and corrective/contrastive focus, realizing both of them in the left periphery. We also argued that, besides the local, 'normal' V2 phenomena, in MEA we can identify a long-distance V2 and a low V2. Long-distance V2 marks long-distance focus and gives rise to structures that apparently look like clefts, but have different properties. Low V2 licenses indefinites.

There are several interesting questions worth investigating in further work. A very interesting issue concerns the evolution of modern Armenian from Grabar, the old language. Is the present word order of MEA a residue, or an innovation? Another very important issue concerns intonation: native speakers of MEA maintain that intonation does not play a very important role with respect to focus. This is certainly not the case in many other languages, for instance Italian. The question, therefore, is: to what extent is this intuition of MEA native speakers correct? Would a careful experimental analysis show some kind of intonational properties associated with focus sentences in an interesting way? Finally, some syntactic issues require further study from a comparative perspective, as, for instance, the syntax of indefinites and their word order properties.

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