

Scientific and general report

This report concerns grant no.: P2GEP1-184384

Last name and first name: Bonan Caterina

For the period from: 01.09.2019 **to:** 31.08.2021

Title of the research project: The fine structure of Romance interrogative it-clefts

Host institute: University of Cambridge (United Kingdom)

Nationality: Italian

Tel. direct line: +447983818663

E-mail: cb2098@cam.ac.uk

Date report was submitted: 31.01.2022

1. Scientific report

☐ Interim report

☒ Final report

The report is submitted via **mySNF** as a PDF file (it is not necessary to send it by mail). A report is regarded as a final report if the duration of the grant has ended. To avoid any misunderstandings, the responsible grantee is asked to answer all questions. The questions in the general report may be answered in German, French or in English. The scientific report must be written in the same language as the research plan.

Brief description (10 to 15 lines) of the achieved research results and their significance. This text can be made available to interested third parties.

This project aimed at investigating the availability and distribution of interrogative it-cleft structures with respect to their non-cleft counterparts in the Romance languages. Based on both primary and secondary data, the project's main goal was to build a theoretical and empirical basis to redefine the cartography of clefts proposed in Belletti (2009;2015). Our working hypothesis, which the synchronic data in our possession verify, was that the correlation between the availability of total focus fronting and absence of clefts in some of the Romance languages is due to a structural deficiency of the functional spine. During the project, we tested and validated our hypothesis in all major Romance languages, using secondary data, and in 52 regional varieties of regional Italian, using data gathered by ourselves by means of on-line surveys. Our main findings are that most restrictions in the use of clefts that are generally accounted for syntactically (as in Belletti's works) should rather be attributed

to pragmatics, i.e., to *exhaustiveness*, to the effect that a completely new understanding of the morphosyntax of Romance *it*-clefts is in order. These findings, which challenge the existing cartographic literature on the phenomenon, were presented at numerous international venues, and published in a research monograph, four research articles, a thematic volume and five additional articles in the late stages of writing. The project has a website (<https://cleftsinromance.wordpress.com>).

Summary (2-4 pages) of the results and their significance

1.1 Please describe the investigated research question in brief and list the most important research results.

1.2 If applicable, comment on the most significant changes to the approved research plan.

1.3 Publications in the context of the fellowship:

Please mention the planned or submitted research output here (e.g. publications, events, patents, etc.). Research output that has already been effected or published (e.g. publications accepted, published or in press) must be entered via the "Output data" platform.

Please create a separate document to answer 1.1 - 1.3 and indicate the number of pages: 3.

2. General report

All information is used only internally and treated as confidential in order to create optimum conditions for the SNSF grantees.

2.1 Questions on administration

Did you have any administrative problems (insurances, visa, embassy...)? If so, what were they?

No.

2.2 Taxes

Has your SNSF fellowship been submitted to taxes? ☐ yes ☒ no

If so:

- in Switzerland : please indicate in which canton
- abroad : please indicate in which country

Comment : I do not hold a Swiss permit anymore, and the UK did not tax my fellowship, as requested in the official documentation by the SNSF.

2.3 Old Age Insurance (e.g. AHV)

Did you deregister in Switzerland during the fellowship?

☒ yes ☐ no

Did you have the possibility to pay a contribution to a pension fund during the fellowship?

☒ no ☐ yes, in Switzerland ☐ yes, abroad

Comment: Not knowing where I will be at the end of my current mobility period, and especially whether I'll be able to go back to Switzerland, it was not convenient for me to set up a pension fund anywhere.

2.4 Fellowship rate

Please complete:

- Place of residence (town and country): Cambridge (United Kingdom)
- ☐ single ☒ married/cohabiting
- Children: 2.

2.4.1 Please summarize the costs that you had to cover with the grant

Rent (£980/month), council tax (£180/month), bills, groceries (£1200/month), full-time childcare (£1200-£1600/month) + the expenses for being a visiting researcher at the University of Cambridge and some travel expenses, as outlined in the financial report.

2.4.2 If you have children, did you use external child care? ☒ yes ☐ no

If yes, how much did you spent for these services (monthly costs, how many days a week, what kind of child care did you choose?)

My children attended the local public nursery full-time, five days a week. I spent £1200-£1600 a month. The UK is the second most expensive place for childcare costs in the world, something that I believe should be taken into consideration when giving a child allowance to a researcher.

If no, how did you organize yourself?

N/A.

2.4.3 Comments on the amount of the fellowship

Please provide a brief assessment of the financial support, especially compared to researchers with a similar profile who are funded by other organisations. Please specify, if possible, the net salary (after deduction of taxes) peers in a similar position at your host institute receive.

In addition, please indicate by checking one of the boxes whether you were rather dissatisfied ☐, rather satisfied ☐ or very satisfied ☒ with the amount of the fellowship.

I do not know how much a full-time researcher earns a year here in the UK. I know that early-career lecturers earn 39,000£/year, which is slightly less than the financial support that I received from the SNSF. However, the two are not directly comparable because if I was employed here in the UK, I would also be able to receive benefits for my children, universal credit, and possibly funded childcare hours. All of these amount to about an additional £1000/month (of course, these are unavailable to me and my husband now given that my SNSF fellowship includes a child allowance).

2.4.4 Third party funds

Did you obtain additional funds from other funding bodies, salaries regarding teaching assignments or other contributions during the fellowship period?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how much were you granted/paid and for what purpose (net amount)?

CHF 3838.

Purpose: Supervisions and evaluation of dissertations at the University of Cambridge.

2.5 Comments on the host institute

How do you rate the scientific support you received? Did you have access to enough consumables and other items as well as the necessary infrastructure? Did you receive financial support from the host institute for attending conferences, conventions, workshops, etc.? What other costs were covered by the host institute? Would you recommend the host institute? If not, please briefly give your reasons.

The University of Cambridge is an outstanding place for researchers of all career stages, also and especially for those who like me are in the field of linguistics. The department of linguistics organises 4 different cycles of weekly seminars, to which everyone is welcome, numerous lectures for all topics and levels (these can be attended freely by anyone in the linguistic community, just by contacting the lecturer before the start of the course), supervisions for undergraduate and graduate students, and annual

conferences. Because of my academic achievements, I was also awarded a College Research Associate non-stipendiary position by St John's college, which provided me with the opportunity to use all work spaces and the library at St John's, and to network with many world-renowned fellows of the College's.

I would recommend the host institute to anyone. The only complaint that I have is that the annual fees to be paid to be a visiting researcher are quite high, and I believe should not be asked to early-career researchers who do not have a permanent position yet (these fees cover the costs of being given office space, and one cannot opt out of having an office). Equally, we were asked to pay the fees also during the pandemic, when work from home was enforced by the government, which I believe is not fair. Regardless, I am more than pleased with the experience.

In addition, please indicate by checking one of the boxes whether you were on the whole rather dissatisfied ☐, rather satisfied ☒ or very satisfied ☐ with the host institute.

My 'rather satisfied' evaluation stems from the fact that, due to the pandemic and the government guidelines, I had to work from home for almost the whole duration of my fellowship (March 2020-August 2021). I still had regular meetings with my supervisor, Prof. Adam Ledgeway, and with a few colleagues, attended online conferences and seminars etc., but this was nowhere near the experience that I could have had in normal times. The possibility to do fieldwork was also highly affected by the pandemic, as outlined in the scientific report.

2.6 Activity after the fellowship and career prospects (only to be answered if this is a final report)

Will you continue your stay abroad? What will be your next career steps? Do you plan to return to Switzerland? Consider updating your address in mySNF.

I am at present working on a PostDoc.mobility fellowship awarded by the SNSF. My plan (and dream) is to go back to Switzerland, although this will not necessarily be possible because I do not hold a Swiss visa anymore. It is indeed my intention to apply for both an Ambizione grant and a PostDoc.mobility Return grant. I shall also apply to other, non SNSF funded positions in Swiss academies when these are advertised.

2.7 Further comments

Which are the advantages that resulted from the mobility gained through your research stay abroad? How useful do you think the research stay was for finding a new job and generally for your scientific and academic career?

In addition, please indicate by checking one of the boxes whether you were rather dissatisfied ☐, rather satisfied ☒ or very satisfied ☐ with the research stay.

Being awarded a prestigious fellowship such as the Early PostDoc.mobility which I received is certainly an excellent career booster. Working full-time on my own research project has also been marvellous career-wise, as I have been very productively writing and publishing in prestigious venues. I have so far submitted my application for five permanent positions in the EU, Canada and Switzerland, but unfortunately none has worked. I have nonetheless been granted an 18-month

PostDoc.mobility fellowship by the SNSF, and hopefully this will help me achieve my goal to find a permanent teaching and/or research position.

As stated in 2.5, the reasons for me to check the 'rather satisfied' box instead of the 'very satisfied' one are linked to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic and the resulting work situation, which was inevitable but not ideal.

Caterina Bonan