

**Arbeitspapier Nr. 123**

Proceedings of the Workshop  
*“Null-subjects, expletives, and locatives in  
Romance”*

Georg A. Kaiser & Eva-Maria Remberger  
(eds.)



**Fachbereich Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Konstanz**

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## Preface

This volume is a collection of papers given at the workshop *Null-subjects, expletives, and locatives in Romance* at the University of Konstanz in March 2008. This workshop was a joint conference organised by the projects A-19 (Evolution and Variation of Expletive and Neuter Pronouns in Romance Languages / Georg Kaiser) and A-27 (Romance Auxiliary Verbs: Status – Development – Variation / Eva-Maria Remberger) within the SFB 471 “Variation and Development in the Lexicon”, funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*.

The aim of the workshop was to bring together different views on the interpretation of null subjects, expletives and locatives in order to explore the syntactic, semantic and morphological correlations of these pronouns in Romance. The authors of the papers given at this workshop analysed empty and phonologically realised elements that show the typical behaviour and characteristics of expletives in all Romance languages, i.e. Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Catalan, Occitan, Sardinian and Raeto-Romance, and frequently also in their regional or diachronic varieties.

The correlation between non-null subjects and obligatory expletive pronouns is one of the best established parametrisations in Generative Grammar. However, it has been shown that both the null subject parameter as well as the presence or absence of overt expletives do not just depend on a simple binary parameter setting, but must be seen in a more complex system of interdependencies involving conditions such as deixis, topicality, person, referentiality, movement etc. The first seven papers published in this volume (Hinzelin, Oliviéri, Palasis-Jourdan, Zimmermann, Rinke & Meisel, Kaiser, Hack & Gaglia) adopt an analysis of null subjects and subject expletives from this point of view.

Yet, as far as overt expletive pronouns are concerned, there are (at least) two categorial types, one stemming from the form of a neuter pronoun (like English *it*, German *es*, French *il*, Dominican Spanish *ello*, Catalan *ell* etc.) and one having a clear locative origin (like English *there*, German *da*, Sardinian *bi*, Italian *ci*, French *y* etc.). Locative elements also play a role in existential as well as impersonal auxiliary constructions in several Romance languages and varieties, i.e. these constructions often show overt locative and expletive elements; however, where they do not (e.g. in Romanian), null or implicit locatives can be assumed. The elements of locative origin among the expletives, the role of locative features in existential and certain impersonal constructions, and the auxiliary selection involved are discussed in the last three papers (Ciconte, Cornilescu, Remberger).

Unfortunately, four papers presented at the workshop have not been included in this volume, either because they were published elsewhere or due to other purely technical reasons. These are the talks given by Gabriela Alboiu (*Null Expletives and Case Values*), Julie Auger (*Two neuter pronouns in Picard*), Maria José Ezeizabarrena (*Null and non-null subjects in the early acquisition of some pro-drop languages*), and Barbara Vance (*The evolution of subject pronoun systems in Medieval Occitan*). These talks were also extremely pertinent to the overall topic of our workshop.

The proceedings of the workshop will also be available online at the following URL:

<http://ling.uni-konstanz.de/pages/publ/arbeitspapiere.html>

or

[http://www.ub.uni-konstanz.de/kops/schriftenreihen\\_ebene2.php?sr\\_id=1&la=de](http://www.ub.uni-konstanz.de/kops/schriftenreihen_ebene2.php?sr_id=1&la=de)

On the technical side, we would like to especially thank Linda Maria Bauser and Florian Scheib as well as Christian Ferraro and Céline Lehnhoff (all at the Universität Konstanz) for their proficient help with the preparation of the manuscript.

Konstanz, March 2009

Georg A. Kaiser  
Eva-Maria Remberger



## ***Neuter pronouns in Ibero-Romance: Discourse reference, expletives and beyond<sup>1</sup>***

*Marc-Olivier Hinzelin*

### ***1. Introduction: uses of neuter pronouns in Ibero-Romance***

In this contribution, I want to show that neuter pronouns in Ibero-Romance lend themselves to different kinds of uses, implying the loss of some of their features or even their class membership as pronouns, and that neuter ‘personal’ pronouns in impersonal constructions which have been described as expletives fulfil a rather different role. In this section, I am presenting the different uses of neuter pronouns in Ibero-Romance, and then focus on a discussion of Spanish and Portuguese in the second section. A corpus study of neuter pronouns in Catalan is presented in the following section and afterwards their status as ‘true’ expletives and other possible analyses are considered. In the last section, my conclusions on this issue are presented.

Already the development of Romance 3<sup>rd</sup> person subject pronouns from the Latin demonstrative presupposes a grammatical and pragmatic shift by losing deictic force and even syntactic independence in the case of Gallo-Romance clitics (for a study of Gallo-Romance expletive (clitic) pronouns, cf. Hinzelin & Kaiser, to appear). A very similar change may also be observed in neuter Ibero-Romance demonstrative pronouns, which in some cases lose their deictic force and are reduced to mere sentence connectors like Catalan *per ço*, *per això*, *malgrat això*, Spanish *por eso*, and Portuguese *por isso* or even to expletives in copular constructions. This change is primarily triggered by the loss of neuter gender in Romance – the ‘neuter’ ‘personal’ pronouns and demonstratives, thus, must serve a different purpose in Romance. Especially the medial demonstratives are frequently used in new functions like sentence connectors. The system of demonstrative and / or neuter pronouns in Ibero-Romance (Catalan, Aragonese, Spanish, Asturian, Galician, and Portuguese) is shown in table 1, the medials are shaded in grey.

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<sup>1</sup> This study has been carried out as part of the research project “Evolution and Variation of Expletive and Neuter Pronouns in Romance Languages”, directed by Georg A. Kaiser. This project is funded by the DFG (German Research Foundation) within the framework of the Research Centre SFB 471 “Variation and Evolution in the Lexicon” at the University of Konstanz. I would like to thank the whole project team, especially Georg A. Kaiser and Philipp Flad. The responsibility for the contents of this study lies with the author.

Table 1. *System of neuter demonstratives and neuter ‘personal’ pronouns in Ibero-Romance.*

	proximal	medial	distal	‘personal’ pronouns
CAT	açò	això	allò	ell
ARA	isto		ixo	- (?)
SPA	esto	eso	aquello	ello
AST	esto / estu / isto	eso / esu / isu	aquello / -illo / -elo / -ilo	ello / ellu / illo, il / el
GAL	isto / esto	iso / eso	aquilo / aquelo	el / il
POR	isto	isso	aquilo	ele

### 1.1 Neuter pronouns in impersonal constructions

In non-null subject languages like French, German, and English, neuter or expletive pronouns are used in impersonal constructions (henceforth **ICs**) with e.g. weather verbs or impersonal expressions (1a-c). Their use is obligatory and they do not express any reference – they are semantically empty.

- (1) a. FRE **Il** pleut.  
 GER **Es** regnet.  
 ENG **It** rains.  
 b. FRE (coll.) **Ça** pleut.  
 ‘That rains.’  
 GER (coll.) **Das** regnet.  
 ‘That rains.’  
 c. FRE **Il** semble qu’il y a deux manières de classifier.  
 GER **Es** scheint, dass **es** zwei Arten zu klassifizieren gibt.  
 ENG **It** seems that **there** are two ways to classify.

The examples in (1a-c) illustrate the interchangeability of FRE *il / ça* or GER *es / das* in meteorological expressions and show the tight relation between expletive subject pronouns and neuter demonstratives in subject position.

In null subject languages which comprise all Ibero-Romance languages – I focus here mainly on Catalan, Spanish, and Portuguese –, the use of a subject pronoun in these constructions is impossible ((2a-c), for Catalan cf. also Todolí 1998:27 and Wheeler et al. 1999:459-461):

- (2) a. CAT \***El** plou.  
 SPA \***Ello** llueve.  
 POR \***Ele** chove.  
 b. CAT \***Això** plou.  
 SPA \***Eso** llueve.  
 POR \***Isso** chove.

- c. CAT \***Ell** sembla que hi ha dues maneres de classificar.  
 SPA \***Ello** parece que hay dos maneras de clasificar.  
 POR \***Ele** parece que há duas maneiras de classificar.

Haider (2001:285) comments on the *clustering* of properties of the null subject or *pro-drop* parameter that “*einzig die Korrelation von pro-drop mit dem Fehlen von Subjektsexpletiva ausnahmslos gilt*” (“only the correlation of *pro-drop* and the absence of subject expletives holds without exception”). However, occurrences of subject pronouns in precisely these ICs (2a-c) are found in null subject languages in non-standard varieties (colloquial / regional European Portuguese (EP), Galician, Dominican Spanish, and Balearic Catalan in (3)):<sup>2</sup>

- (3) EP **Ele** chovia tanto que as ruas eram ribeiras.  
 ‘It rained so much that the streets were rivers.’  
 (Academia das Ciências de Lisboa 2001:1340)
- GAL **El** chove.  
 ‘It rains.’ (Álvarez Blanco et al. 1986:169)
- DOM-SPA **Ello** estaba lloviznando un poco.  
 ‘It was drizzling a bit.’ (Jiménez Sabater 1975:165)
- BAL-CAT Si ‘m demànas ¿Qui n’ hora es? / et respòng; **éll** es estàda: / S’ hòra que seña jà ‘s passàda, / de mòdo que jà no ‘s res.  
 ‘When (you) ask me: what time is (it)? / and (I) answer:it has been: / the hour that (I) show already has passed, / in the way that (there) already is not anything.’ (quartet for a sundial) (Amengual 1858:609)

### 1.2 Neuter demonstratives in copular constructions

Apart from neuter ‘personal’ pronouns, also demonstratives may be used as impersonal subjects in certain impersonal constructions (usually involving the copula) in Ibero-Romance. This usage, however, contradicts the canonical definition of demonstratives which are considered to feature a deictic component among other relevant information like discourse referent / grammatical person, number, gender, etc. in their lexical entries:

Les *démonstratifs* sont des déictiques, adjectifs ou pronoms, servant à « montrer », comme avec un geste d’indication, les êtres ou les objets impliqués dans le discours. (Dubois et al. 1994:134)

It is difficult to perceive where the actual deixis manifests itself in the following examples (4) from European Portuguese, Andalusian Spanish, and Balearic Catalan:

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also the examples and the discussion in Silva-Villar (1998) and Kaiser (2003).

- (4) EP **Isso** era bom se elles se lembrassem de nós. (Spitzer 1917:714)  
 ANDAL-SPA **Aqueyo** está cada vez peor. (Spitzer 1917:714)  
 BAL-CAT **Això** és el mateix dianye en persona! (eiv, 20)

The examples in (4) show that neuter demonstrative usages maximally exhibit an ‘abstract’ discourse or textual deixis, a quite unspecific reference to something mentioned before in the discourse or to the situation in general. The deictic force of demonstratives, thus, depends to a large extent on the syntactic environment or rather the morphological form of the demonstrative.

### 1.3 Neuter pronouns in sentence connectors, etc.

Neuter pronouns are frequently used in sentence connectors, in this case they lose their deictic force entirely and are reduced to mere parts of sentence connectors like the former PPs Catalan *per ço*, *per això*, Spanish *por esto*, *por eso*, *por ello*, and Portuguese *por isso* meaning ‘therefore, thus, hence’ and Catalan *malgrat això* and Spanish *pese a ello* ‘nevertheless’. (Compare this development with Italian *però*, Spanish *pero*, and Catalan *però* < PER HOC where the Latin neuter demonstrative HOC has been reduced to form a sentence connector with *per* with adversative meaning ‘but’.)

## 2. Neuter pronouns in Spanish and Portuguese

### 2.1 Analysis of the usage of *ello* in Dominican Spanish

In the Spanish vernacular spoken in the Dominican Republic, the neuter pronoun *ello* is used more frequently and in different ways in comparison with standard Spanish usage. Recently, González Tapia (2001:146-147) has affirmed this usage:

Se trata del empleo del pronombre arcaico, considerado por don Pedro [Henríquez Ureña – MOH] como “fósil lingüístico”, pero que está vivo y coleando, con una amplia extensión diatópica [...].

‘It is about the use of the archaic pronoun *ello*, considered by Pedro Henríquez Ureña as a “linguistic fossil” but that is well and alive with a wide diatopic distribution.’

Especially, it is frequently used in Dominican Spanish in constructions unfamiliar to Iberian Spanish as already reported by Henríquez Ureña (1940:226-228):

- as impersonal subject (“sujeto impersonal”, (5a-c)):

- (5) a. **Ello** es fácil llegar...  
 ‘It is easy to get there.’  
 b. ¿**Ello** hay dulce de ajonjolí?  
 ‘Is there sesame cake?’  
 c. **Ello** hay maíz. ‘There is corn.’

- in order to express emphasis (“valor enfático”, (6)):
  - (6) – Ello veremos.  
‘WE’LL SEE.’
- concessive or evasive use (“*ello* concesivo o evasivo desarticulado de la oración”, (7a-c)):
  - (7) a. – **Ello**, quizás no viene.  
‘Maybe, probably he is not coming.’
  - b. – ¿Es usted verde, azul o rojo? [nombres de partidos políticos]  
– **Ello**, yo le diré ; yo soy... santiaguero.  
‘– Are you green, blue or red? [names of political parties]  
– Wait / You see, I am going to tell you; I am ... from Santiago.’
  - c. – **Ello**... Así decían.  
‘(You see,) so they say.’
- to express hesitation, probability or approval (“para indicar vacilación o probabilidad o aceptación”, (8a-d)):
  - (8) a. – ¿Vas al pueblo? – **Ello**... [= eso dependerá]  
‘Do you go to the village? – We shall see... / It depends...  
[= that will depend]’
  - b. – ¿Quiere bailar? – **Ello**... [= sí, ya que me invita]  
‘Do you want to dance? – Yes, why not... [= yes, since you invite me]’
  - c. – ¿Y usted cree que está muerto de verdad verdad? – **Ello**...  
‘And you believe that he is really really dead? – Who knows...’
  - d. – De modo que habrá otra barrida como la del año pasado. – **Ello**.  
Así parece.  
‘So that there’ll be another raid like the one last year – Yes. It seems to be the case.’
- to assure something emphatically (“aseveraciones enfáticas”, (9a, b)):
  - (9) a. **ello** sí  
‘Yes, surely.’
  - b. **ello** no  
‘No, never.’

### 2.1.1 *Ello*: a ‘true’ or an apparent expletive? – *Ello* as a discourse marker

The usage in (5a-c) suggests an analysis of *ello* as an expletive pronoun along the lines of the French, German, and English examples presented in (1a-c). Although this analysis is tempting, there are nevertheless peculiarities in its usage that do not quite fit: *ello* only appears in first sentence position, it does not show agreement when used for emphasis or evasive meaning (6, 7b), and it can occur without a verb before, e.g. a present participle, when it is used for emphasis (10):

- (10) **Ello** no obstante... ‘Even nevertheless...’ (Henríquez Ureña 1939:212)

Furthermore, *ello* is used before ‘yes / no’ questions and to strengthen affirmation or negation (9a, b). With concessive meaning, it may be encountered on its own or untied from the sentence (7a-c, 11a, b):

- (11) a. – **Ello**, po aquí no se ha sentío na.  
 ‘Maybe, around here one didn’t hear anything.’  
 (Henríquez Ureña 1939:225)
- b. – **Ello**... si la prima quiere...  
 ‘Maybe... if the cousin wants to...’ (Henríquez Ureña 1939:225)

In addition, *ello* is also used on its own when expressing uncertainty or hesitation (8a-d).

### 2.1.2 Survey in the Dominican Republic: investigation of variation in *ello* usage in ICs

To further investigate the different usages of *ello* and its status in the grammar of Dominican Spanish, the author undertook a fieldwork survey by administering a questionnaire on grammaticality judgements containing sentences with or without *ello*. The survey yielded the following results (for a detailed account, cf. Hinzelin & Kaiser 2006, 2007): the highest acceptability of *ello* is found in sentences like *ello hay que...*, *ello lo dijeron*, *ello parece...*, *ello llegan...*, *ello hay* + noun. But despite our expectations, *ello* is not frequently used with weather verbs – the prototypical expletive construction –, nor in copular constructions. Furthermore, *ello* is never obligatory and a sentence without *ello* is preferred by a majority of informants. There also seems to be a clear preference for *ello* in first sentence position.

### 2.2 Neuter demonstratives in Puerto Rican Spanish

Two corpora have been analysed for Puerto Rico, the first one, *cedro* is a literary one consisting of the writings of Meléndez Muñoz (1963). The examples (12a, b) given here are from the *Cuentos del cedro* in the I<sup>st</sup> volume:

- (12) a. **Aquello** está hecho el diablo. (p. 718)  
 b. **Aquello** es un maremán, como dise don Ture. (p. 718)

The second corpus, *san\_juan* (Morales & Vaquero 1990), contains data from educated speech (13 a-i):

- (13) a. O sea, **eso**... **esto** no respondía a nada, era una cosa individual, de que a mí me tiraron una piedra yo voy a tirar una y... en eso hemos progresado porque ya en los últimos meses hemos visto que se pueden controlar algunas cosas, pero en aquella época, **aquello** no se podía controlar, era... había que esperar que se extinguiera por su cuenta. (p. 12)

- b. El hecho es que yo recuerdo cuando, tras un foro en el Ateneo, alguien señaló que, nosotros, somos españoles, somos descendientes de españoles, que por qué esa tendencia de algunas personas a negar lo español en nosotros, y para mí **aquello** me parecía oír a alguien de ultratumba si somos españoles, porque nosotros no somos españoles, (...) somos descendientes de españoles y, las razas hispánicas. (p. 22)
- c. No sé si se acuerda de unos cuadros y de una serie que él hizo de... que expuso en el Museo de la Universidad, de ajos; la capacidad [que] que ese hombre trabaja era increíble, **aquello** era un cuadro completamente abstracto y uno podía sentir hasta el olor del ajo, [...] (p. 48)
- d. Pues en Chile... aquel libro se publicó como si no se hubiera publicado nada, porque no había un clima que ..v.. recogiese esa nueva influencia y allí.. allí esa semilla no podía dar fruto porque no había la tierra preparada, la cultura, ¿no? Este... cuando llega el librito ese a la Argentina, **aquello** causa un impacto tremendo. (p. 89)
- e. Nosotros sabemos que él no es de la ciudad y que es de un campo y que en ese campo vive su familia porque se dice eso, pero nada más. **Aquello** no tiene ninguna importancia en este ser como individuo que se va desarrollando ante esas circunstancias. (p. 107)
- f. Aquel verano fue divino. Eso es en septiembre pero ¡fíjate! en noviembre... veintialgo, o sea el día de Thanksgiving, ya cayó la primera nevada en Syracuse, y **aquello** no suspendió hasta abril. Todavía en mayo, cuando yo... terminaba el semestre, todavía se veían los...nieve. **Aquello** es tremendo allí pero...pero, de todas maneras pasé un año buenísimo, una experiencia buenísima [...] (p. 177)
- g. Ahora tú ves por qué el tribunal decidió así y no decidió así, cuando tú la primera vez que lo leíste, a lo mejor, pensaste que **aquello** era una injusticia, que cómo echaron afuera a un individuo que claramente se vio que le dio cuatro batazos a alguien, [...] (p. 188)
- h. **Aquello, aquello** era extraordinario. (p. 242)
- i. Porque yo me iba por ejemplo, yo me iba a esos bailes de... de... dos de la tarde a dos de la madrugada, y tocaban ocho, nueve sextetos y aquel, aquel orden ¡aquel! ¡aquellos bailes de carnaval, con carnet! ¡qué bonito era **aquello**! (p. 247)

In the above examples, the discourse function clearly prevails. The deictic function is eclipsed or, in the extreme case, even completely lost.

### 2.3 Neuter pronouns in European Portuguese

#### 2.3.1 Solitary use

In European Portuguese, there are a number of examples for a solitary use of the neuter demonstratives in Carrilho (2005:157, 159-162) (14) and in Spitzer (1918:69) (15-16b):

- (14) **Aquilo** o forno levava ali três ou quatro tabuleiros, não é, até três ou quatro fregueses, [...] ‘that the oven took there three or four trays, not is, till three or four customers [= the oven took three or four trays, isn’t it, so three or four customers...]’(AAL18) (p. 159)
- (15) **aquillo** n’aquella casa é uma republica, sabe? Falta alli uma pessoa de juizo e de temor de Deus ‘there in that house’ / ‘that – in that house’ (Diniz, 228)
- (16) a. **isso**, esperto é elle vs lá, esperto é elle ‘That, smart is he.’ vs ‘There, smart is he.’  
 b. **isto** será tarde ‘That will be late.’

#### 2.3.2 Use in combination with adverbs

Another interesting feature of neuter demonstrative pronoun usage in European Portuguese is their cooccurrence with adverbs, e.g. **isso** *hoje* ‘that today’, **isso** *agora* ‘that now’, **isto** *aqui* ‘that here’ or **isso** *ai* ‘that there’ and *lá* **isso** ‘there that’. Again, examples (17a-20b) are taken from Spitzer (1918:69)

- (17) a. então como vai **isso** hoje? (Queiroz)  
 b. ora viva a sociedade! **Isto** hoje está de truz! (Queiroz)
- (18) E a menina Amelia? perguntou por fim. – Sahiu. **Isso** agora todas as manhãs té a passeala. ([Queiroz?])
- (19) a. É um milagre, que **isto** aqui nunca ha peixe (Queiroz, 26)  
 ‘(It) is a wonder that there is never (any) fish.’  
 b. é que **isso** ahi em baixo é humido, como um charco. (Diniz, Casa mour. II, 178)
- (20) a. Eu nunca o disse, nunca o disse! Que lá **isso**, esta boquinha nunca se pôz em vidas alheias. (Queiroz, 311)  
 b. E o bruto do José Migueis! Não, lá **isso** Deus me mate com gente nova! (Queiroz, 86)

The discourse nature of these items clearly emerges. The usage together with adverbs suggests a similar function and meaning of the neuter pronouns in these contexts.



### 3. Neuter pronouns in Catalan: a corpus study

#### 3.1 Investigation: usage of the ‘neuter’ pronoun *ell* and the neuter demonstratives

A large corpus study has been undertaken for Catalan (for more details, cf. Hinzelin 2006). The purpose of this section is threefold: a description of the synchronic usage of ‘neuter’ *ell* in Balearic Catalan, a clarification concerning the existence and / or usage of ‘neuter’ *ell* and neuter demonstratives in Old Catalan corpora, and a thorough analysis of Balearic Catalan by means of a corpus study of five *rondaies* (folktales) collections and an account of the Christmas feasts.

Synchronic occurrences of ‘neuter’ *ell* are best known and most frequently documented in Balearic Catalan (21a-c). There are early modern attestations by Amengual (1835, 1858) and *ell* is frequently used in *rondaies* (folktales) and folk songs: it seems to be a feature of spoken language (in rural areas?).

- (21) a. **Ell** tanmateix és gros, **això!** (Men.)  
 ‘It still is big, that! (DCVB IV:701)
- b. **Ell això** no acaba mai! (Mall., Men., Eiv.)  
 ‘It that not ends ever! (= It never ends.)’ (DCVB IV:701)
- c. A Pollença vaig anar / a dur una pollencina, / i la volia fadrina; /  
 varen dir: **Ell** no n’hi ha! (cançó pop. Mall.) (DCVB IV:701)  
 ‘To P. (I) went / to take a girl from P., / and (I) wanted her  
 maidenly; / (they) said: there not of-it there has! (= There is not  
 anyone.)’

#### 3.2 Previous proposals for the analysis of the use of ‘neuter’ *ell* in impersonal constructions

An analysis as expletive pronoun has been suggested by Amengual (1835), Barnils (1991 [1916]:xviii), Spitzer (1917, 1918, 1920, 1941), and – using examples from these and other sources from the literature and in comparison to the other Ibero-Romance languages – Silva-Villar (1998). This analysis has stirred a passionate debate between Tallgren (1914:77-78, 1918:87-88, 1920) and Spitzer (1917:715-716, 1918:69-70, 1920, 1941) about the status of *ell*, which Tallgren analyses as an adverb.

#### 3.3 Catalan neuter demonstratives: etymology and use

There are four main neuter demonstrative pronouns in Catalan: *això*, *allò*, *açò*, and *çò*. Among the different possibilities in the use of *això* (< IPSÚM, *DECat* III:236 (entry *eix*)), there is one according to the *DCVB* (I:374-375, sub-entries *h* and *v*) as subject in sentence-initial position without referential meaning:

- h) Això és...: serveix per introduir una ampliació o formulació més explícita del que s’ha dit abans; cast. esto es, es decir. Baixàrem a St. Joan de l’Erm pel dret, això és [sic!], pel camí, Verdaguer Exc. 17. [...]
- v) Això era...: fórmula per iniciar la narració d’una rondalla (Mall.). També diuen «això era i no era...» o «això era una vegada...».

This last mentioned usage in Majorcan corresponds to the use of the expletive in folktales in non-null subject languages like German *es war einmal...* and French *il était une fois ...* vs Spanish *érase una vez...*

The demonstrative *allò* (< ILLÚD, *DECat* III:267 (entry *ell, ella*), *DCVB* I:586) shows less variation in its usage (with the main meanings *aquella cosa* ‘that thing’ or used to designate persons or animals). It occurs only rarely as a subject. *Açò* (< ECCE HOC, *DECat* III:719 (entry *est*), *DCVB* I:122) has the main meanings *aquesta cosa* ‘this thing’ or it is used to designate persons or animals, similar to *allò* (*DCVB* I:122). There has not been reported any use as a non-referential subject. *Ço* is the Old Catalan (functional) equivalent of *això*. Nowadays it mostly occurs in the combinations *per ço*, *ço de*, *en ço de*, and *ço que* (*DCVB* III:229-230, *DECat* III:720-721).

### 3.4 Analysis of three Old Catalan corpora

In order to explore the use and distribution of these pronouns, three Old Catalan corpora are studied here: the *Homilies d’Organyà* (abbreviated *hom*), from around 1203, the *Usatges de Barcelona* (*usatges*) with the Catalan manuscript, dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and the *Documents d’història de la llengua catalana* (*doc-hist*). The latter corpus is a collection of texts from different periods of the history of the Catalan language. The texts analysed here are texts 1-6, 8-9, 11-14, 16-22, dating from 1031 / 1035 until the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Table 2. *Neuter pronouns in Old Catalan texts.*<sup>3</sup>

Corpus	<i>ell / el</i>	<i>això / axò</i>	<i>allò</i>	<i>açò / a(i)zo</i>	<i>ço / zo</i>
<i>hom</i>	*	*	*	33	47
<i>usatges</i>	*	*	*	41	51
<i>doc-hist</i>	*	1	*	23	30
total	*	1	*	97	128

The unexpected results of this analysis (shown in tables 2 and 3) are that there is not a single occurrence of neuter *el(l)* nor are there any instances of the neuter demonstratives *allò* and *a(i)xò* (with the exception of one isolated occurrence of *axò* in *doc-hist*). Only the neuter demonstratives *açò* (variants *assò*, *ayçò*, *aico*, *azo*, *aizo / ezo*), and *ço* (variants *so*, *co*, *zo / zó*) are used. Only *ço* is used quite frequently in subject position (see table 3).

<sup>3</sup> \* = Form does not occur in the text.

Table 3. *Functions of neuter demonstratives in Old Catalan texts.*<sup>4</sup>

Corpus	<i>això / axò</i>				<i>açò / a(i)zo</i>				<i>ço / zo</i>			
	S	O	P	o	S	O	P	o	S	O	P	o
<i>hom</i>	*	*	*	*	7	7	17	2	15	9	20	3
<i>usatges</i>	*	*	*	*	3	11	25	2	24	*	4	23
<i>doc-hist</i>	1	*	*	*	10	9	4	*	2	*	21	7
total	1	*	*	*	20	27	46	4	41	9	45	33

The following examples (22-28) illustrate the occurrences of neuter demonstratives in the (apparent) subject position:

- (22) E jatsesia que **axò**·s pusca entendre [...] (doc-hist, 47; 2nd half of the 13th c.)
- (23) a. **Aizo** dona anos exemple qenos deuem [...] (hom, 6v, 1)  
 b. **Aizo** porta significanza de tot peccador qi esta [...] (hom, 8v, 15)  
 c. [...] Senniors **aizo** uol dir emostar (hom, 1v, 4)  
 d. **aizo** es laparaula de deu. (hom, 6r, 9)
- (24) a. [...] si tot **açò** fal, [...] (usatges, 149)  
 b. [**A**]çò són lo(s) Usatges dels usamens de la cort; [...] (usatges, 53)
- (25) a. [...] ja fos **ezo** que li prohome lo i dizien ben; [...] (doc-hist, 26; end of 12th / beginning of 13th c.)  
 b. — Ja, **azo** é En Blanc, e·n Talafer, e·n Guiamet es qui venen veer mo pare. (doc-hist, 34; 1250)  
 c. **Ayçò** ben se pot provar, Pere. (doc-hist, 44; 2nd half of the 13th c.)  
 d. [...] e **ayçò** s'esdevén a alscons a lur profit, [...] (doc-hist, 44; 2nd half of the 13th c.)  
 e. Per què apar que **ayçò** viu per nós, [...] (doc-hist, 45; 2nd half of the 13th c.)  
 f. **Assò** és carta feta entre [...] (doc-hist, 56; 1276)  
 g. Feit fo **assò** en Exàtiva [...] (doc-hist, 56; 1276)
- (26) a. **Zo** es qe noa cor emal afer. (hom, 2r, 20-21)  
 b. **zo** que asaber qe es la anima qi deu pregar [...] (hom, 8r, 14-15)
- (27) [...] e ab conseyl en totes coses, **ço** és assaber, pleyts tan grans com pocs; [...] (usatges, 97)
- (28) [...] **so** és per les ligas, [...] (doc-hist, 53; 1272)

<sup>4</sup> S = (apparent) subject, O = direct object, P = after preposition, o = other usage; \* = function does not occur in the text.

With respect to the functions of neuter pronouns in these texts, these examples show that they are almost always used referentially (with reference to the discourse or the situation). No clear non-referential usage has been detected but some examples with quite unspecific reference and with no clear deictic function or where the use seems to be unnecessary point in the direction of a future development where deixis is eventually lost. This especially applies to *açò* / *ço* in copular constructions (23d, 24b, 25a, b, f, g, 26a, 27, 28). Thus, my assumption is that the process of grammaticalisation and desemanticisation (i.e. semantic bleaching) starts here, resulting later in the usage of the pronoun in certain constructions with the copula (*és*)*ser* in Balearic.

### 3.5 Analysis of six modern Balearic corpora

The analysis of the modern Balearic corpora shows that there are strikingly frequent occurrences of *ell* in the *rondaies* corpus consisting of folktales. The examination of five *rondaies* corpora from all Balearic Islands (*mall* (Majorca), *men* (Minorca), *eiv* (Ibiza), *form* (Formentera), and *salom*, also from Majorca) and an account of the Majorcan Christmas feasts (*nadal*) prove that ‘neuter’ *ell* is used everywhere *though* not very often in the (apparent) subject position (see table 4).

Table 4. *Neuter pronouns in Balearic texts.*<sup>5</sup>

Corpus	<i>ell</i>	<i>això</i>	<i>allò</i>	<i>açò</i> / <i>ço</i>
<i>salom</i>	4 (1)	7 (4)	*	* / *
<i>mall</i>	56 (2)	81 (8)	36 (3)	3 (0) / *
<i>nadal</i>	29 (6)	14 (0)	9 (0)	7 (1) / *
<i>men</i>	31 (7)	1 (0)	7 (0)	52 (11) / 1 (0)
<i>eiv</i>	14 (2)	103 (10)	14 (0)	* / *
<i>form</i>	8 (3)	44 (4)	12 (1)	* / *
total	142 (21)	250 (26)	78 (4)	63 (12)

Summarising the results of the analysis of the six modern Balearic corpora, it is important to state that:

- neuter *ell* appears only rarely in the (apparent) subject position of ICs, i.e. in only 21 of 142 cases,
- *això* (in Minorca *açò*) is very frequent as the subject of ICs: an expletive-like usage in copular constructions is predominant, especially in the opening formula of the *rondaies*,
- *allò* and *açò* / *ço* rarely appear in the subject position of ICs.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> \* = Form does not occur in the text. In brackets: number of pronouns (of the total) in (apparent) subject position of ICs.

<sup>6</sup> Though *açò* replaces *això* in Minorca and is therefore very frequent in this variety.

Table 5. *Function of non-referential ell in Balearic texts.*<sup>7</sup>

	eS	nS	oS	na	na / opr
<i>salom</i>	1	*	*	3	*
<i>mall</i>	2	15	21	17	1
<i>nadal</i>	6	*	7	14	2
<i>men</i>	7	*	5	16	3
<i>eiv</i>	2	*	5	7	*
<i>form</i>	3	*	*	4	1
total	21	15	38	61	7

Examples (29-34b) show *ell* as an (apparent) subject in ICs which is very rare (cf. also table 5):

- (29) —*¡Jo 't posaré a sa presó! li diu es Bal·le.*  
 —*¡EII no hu provará! s' exclama En Salom. An es qui creu es Bal·le, no 'l posen dins sa presó.* (salom, 154)
- (30) *¿Què me'n direu? EII era sa mateixa murtera a on s'eren enredonides ses seues germanes; [...]* (mall, 133)
- (31) a. —*EII no hi haurà perill que patesca gaire fam!* (nadal, 102)  
 b. —*EII va de lo bo a millor!* (nadal, 153)
- (32) a. —*No, ell és ben cert –deia En Pere–; i si no, mirau.* (men, 20)  
 b. *EII no hi ha qui la confongui.* (men, 67)
- (33) —*EII és veritat!* (eiv, 74)
- (34) a. *EII era veritat, que a sa finestra n'hi havia un, que enguaitava!* (form, 20)  
 b. *EII va ser ver.* (form, 50)

These examples suggest a usage of *ell* as an (apparent) subject. But it has to be emphasised that these are indeed rare cases – only 21 instances out of a total of 142 tokens. Furthermore, it is almost always sentence-initial and *never* obligatory in ICs. Most of the time *ell* occurs in other constructions (35a-36c):

<sup>7</sup> eS = (apparent) expletive subject, nS = *ell* cannot be the subject of the sentence considering its meaning, even though the verb is in the third person singular and no other subject is realised, oS = other, non-pronominal subject realised, na (/ opr) = no agreement with the verb (or no (finite) verb present) (and another pronoun is realised). \* = Function does not occur in the text.

- (35) a. I comensa a fer-se en fora i en fora, i es pareier darrera ell; i **ell** revolts d' aquí i d' allà; i assetsuaixí sonava a rompre, [...] (salom, 151)  
 b. —[...] No he fet més que lo que vostè m' ha dit.  
 —¡**Ell** no poren fer una berba amb tu, segons veig! diu es Bal·le. (salom, 153)
- (36) a. **Ell** aquella dona no maltractà pus Na Catalineta; [...] (mall, 26)  
 b. —**Ell** ja torn esser jo, es descuidat! (mall, 43)  
 c. —**Ell** ja ho hauríem d'esser! — contesta Na Catalina. (mall, 145)

In these constructions, either a non-pronominal (36a) or pronominal (36b) subject is realised or *ell* does not agree with the verb (35a, b, 36c). Most importantly, *ell* is almost always – like in the ICs – sentence-initial. It occurs most notably in dialogues which suggests that it is primarily a feature of spoken language. Its adverbial character is obvious in the above examples and *ell* is used there to mark emphasis or the speaker's attitude. The true nature of *ell* is further discussed in section 4.

Table 6. *Functions of neuter demonstratives in Balearic texts.*<sup>8</sup>

Corpus	<i>això</i>				<i>allò</i>				<i>açò / ço</i>			
	S	O	P	o	S	O	P	o	S	O	P	o
<i>salom</i>	5	1	*	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>mall</i>	34	14	24	9	9	17	8	2	1	1	*	1
<i>nadal</i>	2	1	7	4	2	1	6	*	3	1	*	3
<i>men</i>	*	*	1	*	*	3	3	1	25	7	15	6
<i>eiv</i>	47	14	25	17	10	*	*	4	*	*	*	*
<i>form</i>	16	4	13	11	6	1	3	2	*	*	*	*
total	104	34	70	42	27	22	20	9	29	9	15	10

Considering the neuter demonstratives, *això* (which is replaced by *açò* in Minorca) occurs in copular constructions as non-referential subject, especially in the typical folktale beginning (37-40):

- (37) **Això** era un homo que li deien En Salom, [...] (salom, 150)
- (38) **Això** eren tres germanes fadrines, que estaven totes soletes: [...] (mall, 5)
- (39) **Açò** vol dir que era una viuda que tenia un fii que era de nom Pere. (men, 13)

<sup>8</sup> S = (apparent) Subject, O = direct object, P = after preposition, o = other usage, \* = Function does not occur in the text.

- (40) **Això** vol dir que era un ca pagès que mai havia baixat a Vila.  
(eiv, 7)

But *això* is also used referentially – most of the time with unspecific reference to the whole situation (41-42):

- (41) a. —Salom, no siguem al·lots, diu es Bal·le: que **això** acabarà malament. (salom, 157)  
 b. —No res, idò. A ca-meua t’ esper, i ¡com som Bal·le! que, si vens, no te ’n tornaràs viu!  
 —**Això** se veurà, diu En Salom. (salom, 157)
- (42) —**Això** és parlar com es àngels! –exclamà el rei, totcontent–. Endavant. (eiv, 46)

With respect to neuter demonstratives, the following results should be retained:

- *allò* in subject position is only rarely used and if it is used at all, then always referentially,
- *açò* is – apart from Minorca – used scarcely or not at all,
- *això* occurs in copular constructions as a non-referential subject and also referentially with unspecific reference.

#### 4. Are the neuter pronouns ‘true’ expletives?

##### 4.1 *Ello, ele, and ell* as discourse markers

Most examples of *ello*, *ele*, and *ell* with unspecific reference do not occur in ICs but in sentences where they cannot be analysed as subjects (and therefore not as expletives either), as the following examples for Dominican Spanish (43-44) taken from Henríquez Ureña (1939, 1940), European Portuguese (45) from Carrilho (2005:111), and from the *DCVB* IV for Balearic Catalan (46a, b) conveniently illustrate:

- (43) DOM-SPA **Ello** veremos  
 ‘Maybe, we shall see.’ (Henríquez Ureña 1939:224)
- (44) DOM-SPA – ¿Es usted verde, azul o rojo? [nombres de partidos políticos].  
 –**Ello**, yo le diré ; yo soy... santiaguero.  
 ‘Are you green, blue or red? [names of political parties]  
 –Wait / You see, I am going to tell you; I am ... from Santiago.’ (Henríquez Ureña 1940:227)
- (45) EP **Ele** eu fui aí a (...) uma boda, aí abaixo (COV14)  
 ‘expl I went there to a marriage there down [= I went down there to a marriage.]’ (Carrilho 2005:111)

- (46) a. BAL-CAT **Ell** tu saps que crides! (Eiv.)  
 ‘YOU KNOW that (you) (are) yell(ing)!’  
 (DCVB IV:701)
- b. BAL-CAT **Ell** sabeu quina al·lota que és!  
 ‘Surely, (you-pl) know what(-kind-of) girl that is!’  
 (Alcover Cont. 2) (DCVB IV:701)

Here, *ello*, *ele* or *ell* cannot function as subjects because they do not occupy the subject position, which is filled by another overt subject pronoun, or there is no agreement. Hence, my proposal here is the analysis of *ello*, *ele*, and *ell* as discourse markers or ‘topic expletives’ (cf. Faarlund 1990, Silva-Villar 1996, 1998). Trask (1993:84) describes a “discourse item” as having the following properties:

Any lexical item or grammatical form which typically serves to relate one utterance to another in a discourse, or to relate the utterance in a particular way to the discourse as a whole.

This description covers the functioning of *ello*, *ele*, and *ell* in (43-46) and suggests their analysis along these lines.

In a nutshell, my analysis of *ello*, *ele*, and *ell* as discourse markers is based on the following observations: In some sentences, the agreement of ‘pronoun’ and verb is missing, therefore *ello* / *ele* / *ell* cannot be the subject. Apparent agreement in other sentences is only the default agreement showing 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular marking on the verb. I assume that this ‘agreement’ is only superficial as these sentences would exhibit the same verb form without *ello* / *ele* / *ell*. Moreover, Spanish *ello* and Catalan *ell* behave like a German *Vorfeldexpletivum* that can be realised in the *Vorfeld* (i.e. the specifier of the CP) only – but not in the subject position (SpecIP) and that does not bear any personal features (cf. Brandner 1993 and the distributional analysis in Pütz 1986:12-15) (47a-d).<sup>9</sup> In German (47b, c, d) are ungrammatical, examples (48b) and (48c) are not attested in Balearic Catalan and supposed to be ungrammatical (in Dominican Spanish as well, only preverbal *ello* is attested (32a, b)).

- (47) a. GER **Es** war einmal ein König, der [...]  
 ‘There was once a king who...’
- b. GER \*Einmal war **es** ein König, der [...]  
 ‘Once was there a king who...’
- c. GER \*Ein König war **es** einmal, der [...]  
 ‘A king was there once who...’
- d. GER \*War **es** einmal ein König, der [...]?  
 ‘Was there once a king who...?’

<sup>9</sup> Portuguese *ele* is not included here because it shows a different behaviour with respect to this point: *Ele* can be used postverbally as Carrilho (2005:141-151) demonstrates. (In this position neuter demonstratives are excluded, cf. Carrilho 2005:162-164.)



- (48) a. BAL-CAT **Ell** era veritat, [...] (form, 20)  
           ‘It was true.’  
       b. BAL-CAT \*?Veritat era **ell**.  
           ‘True was it.’  
       c. BAL-CAT \*?Era **ell** veritat?  
           ‘Was it true?’
- (49) a. DOM-SPA **Ello** no sería malo estudiar. (Toribio 1996:422)  
           ‘It wouldn’t be bad to study.’  
       b. DOM-SPA **Ello** es mejor uno casarse joven. (Toribio 1996:422)  
           ‘It is better to marry young.’

The distribution of *ello* / *ele* / *ell* shows peculiarities in comparison with ‘true’ expletives in French, English, and German: it is almost always realised in sentence-initial position.<sup>10</sup> ‘True’ expletives also appear in other positions and in embedded clauses: Examples (51b) and (51c) are not attested and supposed to be ungrammatical in Balearic Catalan (the same holds true for Dominican Spanish):

- (50) a. GER **Es** gibt nicht viel davon.  
           ‘There is not much of it.’  
       b. GER Davon gibt **es** nicht viel.  
       c. GER Gibt **es** nicht viel davon?
- (51) a. BAL-CAT **Ell** no n’hi ha!  
           ‘There is not of it. (= It does not exist.)’ (DCVB IV:701)  
       b. BAL-CAT \*?No n’hi ha **ell**!  
           ‘Is not of it there!’  
       c. BAL-CAT \*?No n’hi ha **ell**?  
           ‘Is not of it there?’
- (52) a. DOM-SPA **Ello** hay maíz. (Henríquez Ureña 1940:227)  
           ‘There is corn.’  
       b. DOM-SPA ¿**Ello** hay dulce de ajonjolí?  
           ‘Is there sesame cake?’ (Henríquez Ureña 1940:227)

A realisation of *ello* / *ele* / *ell* in front of the subject is possible (44, 45, 46a). Then it is not verb-adjacent and does not agree with it (see above). Furthermore, the frequency of use of *ello* / *ell* does not correlate with the use of other subject pronouns. With weather verbs, the prototypical expletive construction, Catalan *ell* is not found in the analysed corpora. (The only example featuring *ell* from the DCVB IV:701 is at least extremely marginal if not dubious, cf. Hinzelin 2006:55-56 for a discussion.) *Ello* and *ele* are not more frequently used with weather verbs than in any other construction. In addition, *ello* / *ele* / *ell* is not obligatorily used in ICs, as the examples (53a) and (54a) illustrate. In languages with ‘true’ expletives, this is not possible as the German (and English) translations (53b, 54b) show:

<sup>10</sup> Only in extremely rare cases *ell* is not sentence-initial but occurs after other sentence-initial adverbs / discourse markers or extraposed at the end of the sentence (one example in *nadal*).

- (53) a. BAL-CAT [...] que \_\_\_ era un gust; [...] (men, 15)  
           b. GER [...] dass **es** eine Freude war.
- (54) a. BAL-CAT Però \_\_\_ no hi va haver remei; [...] (men, 20)  
           ‘But (there) was no remedy. (= That was not possible.)’  
           b. GER Aber **es** gab keine Abhilfe.  
           (= **Es** war nichts zu machen.)
- (55) a. DOM-SPA –¿ \_\_\_ Es difícil llegar? –**Ello** es fácil llegar.  
           ‘Is (it) difficult to get there? – It is easy to get there.’  
           (Henríquez Ureña 1939:223)  
           b. GER Ist **es** schwierig (dorthin) zu kommen? – **Es** ist einfach  
           (dorthin) zu kommen.

Table 7 summarises the discussion for Balearic Catalan, Dominican Spanish, and European Portuguese varieties in comparison to German Vorfeld-*es* (topic expletive) and ‘true’ expletive *es*.

Table 7. *Overview: discourse marker / topic expletive vs ‘true’ expletive.*

	BAL- CAT <i>ell</i>	DOM- SPA <i>ello</i>	EP <i>ele</i>	GER Vorfeld- <i>es</i>	GER expletive <i>es</i>
1) realisation with overt subject possible	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
2) absence of verb agreement possible	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
3) (almost) always sentence-initial	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
4) obligatory use	✗	✗	✗	○ <sup>11</sup>	✓ <sup>12</sup>
5) correlation of realisational frequency with that of other subject pronouns	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
6) frequent use with weather verbs	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
7) use without a verb possible <sup>13</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

Hence, the difference in sentences with or without *ell*, *ele* or *ello* consists in the speaker’s attitude to the described events (or his / her affectedness by the reported events), i.e. emphasis, surprise, consternation, doubt, etc. This is an evaluation or a comment of given information. All these are characteristics of a discourse marker. My conclusion is that *ello*, *ele* and *ell* are elements without pronominal features: their use depends on the information structure, not on the core grammar

<sup>11</sup> The pronoun *es* is obligatory in the first position main clauses and is obligatorily dropped in embedded clauses (*semi-pro-drop*).

<sup>12</sup> In German, it is possible to omit the first constituent of main clauses in informal speech (*topic-drop*).

<sup>13</sup> See the above examples (9) and (10) for Dominican Spanish, (35a) for Balearic Catalan, and Carrilho (2005:138) for European Portuguese.

or the syntax. Carrilho (2005) reaches similar conclusions for European Portuguese (see the quote below). This applies also to cases where an analysis as an expletive would be possible superficially. Here, they are only *apparent* expletives. Therefore, *ello*, *ele*, and *ell* are best analysed in all of their occurrences as discourse markers (cf. Hinzelin & Kaiser 2006, 2007; Hinzelin 2006). Henríquez Ureña (1939:223) already suggests a similar analysis when he describes one usage as “*Ello* fósil como mero elemento de énfasis” (‘Fossil *ello* as a pure element of emphasis’):

*Ello* subsiste como elemento mecanizado en determinados esquemas de construcción, pero ya no es sujeto, ni siquiera sujeto impersonal: de su función pronominal sólo le queda el lugar en la oración, pero su papel se reduce ahora a dar énfasis. Subsiste como fósil lingüístico. [My emphasis]

‘*Ello* survives as a mechanised element in determined construction schemes but it is not a subject anymore, not even an impersonal subject: Of its pronominal function only the place in the sentence remains but its role has been reduced now to that of an emphasiser. It survives as a linguistic fossil.’

Henríquez Ureña (1939:228) then further elaborates:

Pero en estos casos es probable que *ello* tenga valor enfático, sobrepuesto a su función pronominal, y que agregue el matiz que darían fórmulas adverbiales como *realmente*, *en verdad*. O bien sólo existe este matiz, y la función pronominal se ha desvanecido: *ello* se mantiene como fósil lingüístico.

‘But in these cases it is probable that *ello* has an emphatic value that has precedence over its pronominal function and that it adopts a coloring that adverbs like *realmente* (‘really’), *en verdad* (‘actually’) contribute. Or, only this coloring exists and the pronominal function has vanished: *ello* remains as a linguistic fossil.’

For Catalan, Veny (1999:89-90) also emphasises the use of *ell* to increase the ‘expressive force’: “És interessant l’ús d’*ell* introductor i d’oracions exclamatives per a augmentar-ne la força expressiva [...]”. (Cf. also Alcover / Moll (1951:701) who describe *ell* in the *DCVB* as an expressive particle: “partícula que s’usa al començament d’una frase exclamativa, per reforçar-ne l’expressió [...]”). Todolí (2002:1370-1371) adheres to the same analysis:

Finalment, en el dialecte balear la forma *ell* del pronom de tercera persona pot aparèixer en contextos com els exemplificats en (32), on no representa cap argument del verb, sinó que funciona com una partícula exclamativa [...]

A diferència dels pronoms de tercera persona acabats de descriure, el pronom que apareix en les oracions [...] és invariable i no realitza cap funció argumental. De fet, ocupa sempre una posició externa a l’oració i apareix

fins i tot amb verbs meteorològics [...], que es caracteritzen perquè són zeroargumentals i, per tant, no poden dur arguments.

Turning to European Portuguese, Carrilho (2005:257, 259) reports very similar findings in her exhaustive and accurate study. She scrutinised a large corpus (*Corpus Dialectal com Anotação Sintáctica – CORDIAL-SIN* ‘Syntactically Annotated Corpus of Portuguese Dialects’, Centro de Linguística da Universidade de Lisboa) and summarises her results:

Briefly, it is argued that the effect of expletive *ele* by and large operates at the level of the illocutionary force that a sentence may assume as a speech act. On the basis of the empirical data provided by EP dialects, it is shown that peripheral and impersonal expletive *ele* act as a kind of reinforcer of the expressive, command or assertive value that exclamatives or non-standard interrogatives, imperatives and declaratives, respectively, may assume. Postverbal *ele* in turn is shown to have the effect of adding a particular evaluative (expressive) value to any sentence where it occurs. (p. 257)

On the basis of such differences, it is argued that what has been called “expletive *ele*” is in fact an ambiguous element in EP grammar. First of all, the instances of peripheral/impersonal *ele* and postverbal *ele* must be distinguished from cases where *ele* appears to behave more like a typical subject. These are suggested to correspond to residual uses where *ele* would have a neuter demonstrative reading. (p. 259)

It seems that (neuter) demonstratives readily lend themselves to encode sentence pragmatics: in section 1.3, I have addressed their use as part of sentence connectors like the adversative conjunctions *pero* / *però* containing HOC. Latin HOC is also part of the French preposition *avec* (< \*ABHOC) and the affirmative particle *oui* (< *oil* < *o* + *il* < HOC ILLE (FECIT), see *FEW* 4: 445, entry *hoc*) where originally HOC was used emphatically very much like *ello* in Dominican Spanish *ello sí* and *ello no* and also on its own (as in Occitan *o(c)*) as shown in the examples (8d, 9a, b) above. In Balearic Catalan, *ell* is often used together with the negation like in *Ell no n’hi ha!* (21c; other examples 29, 31a, 35b) and also to express assertion as in (33, 34a, b). A use for affirmative purposes is reported for Sardinian *ello*, too (Blasco Ferrer 1994: 219-220 and Remberger & Hinzelin 2009 who propose an etymological relationship between Catalan *ell* and Sardinian *ello*).

#### 4.2 Neuter demonstratives as near-expletives in copular and existential constructions

Neuter demonstratives are used as what I term here near-expletives, e.g. Portuguese *aquilo* and *isto* in the following sentences: *aquilo não há casas para alugar [...]*, *aquilo aquilo agora há muita política lá dentro não é? [...]* (Brauer-Figueiredo 1999:441); *isto será tarde* ‘that will be late’ (Spitzer 1918:69). Also Catalan *això* (*açò* in Minorca) is encountered in copular constructions with a clear non-referential usage. This suggests the development of a near-expletive usage (only) in these constructions. In the beginnings of *rondaies*, its use is stylistically

obligatory. It exists also in non-sentence-initial position: *Vol dir que açò era...* Perhaps there will be a further development or grammaticalisation in the same direction as Portuguese *aquilo* yielding sentences like *\*això no hi ha pisos per llogar* (not attested), *\*això plou* (not attested). In Spanish *eso* and *aquello* without a deictic function are less frequently attested in these constructions but compare e.g. Andalusian Spanish *Aqueyo está cada vez peor* (Spitzer 1917:714). Is this more likely to be an instance of a near-expletive usage or should these demonstratives be also analysed as discourse markers? Further investigation is needed to determine the exact circumstances of their use and their specific meaning in these constructions.

### 5. Conclusions

In comparison with ‘true’ expletives like English *it*, French *il*, and German *es*, *ello*, *ele*, and *ell* in the initial position of certain constructions in Dominican Spanish, (colloquial) European Portuguese, and Balearic Catalan respectively have obviously a very different function: the encoding of sentence pragmatics. Sentences in which an overt subject is used or the verb does not agree with the apparent expletive suggest an analysis as a discourse marker. This analysis should be extended to superficially ambiguous sentences in which the ‘pronoun’ could be interpreted as an expletive as well as a discourse marker. The neuter demonstratives French *ça* and German *das* in *ça pleut* and *das regnet* as well as Dominican Spanish *ello* in *ello llueve* share their discourse function in encoding sentence pragmatics but whereas *ça* or *das* fulfil a double role by also checking the [EPP]-feature, *ello* has discourse meaning only and is not involved in feature checking at all, as this is still the job of *pro<sub>expl</sub>* as it is in all null subject languages: Cf. the French and German structures [CP  $\text{ç}_i$  [IP  $t_i$  pleut]] and [CP  $\text{das}_i$  [IP  $t_i$  regnet]] vs the Dominican Spanish one [CP  $\text{ello}$  [IP *pro<sub>expl</sub>* llueve]].

I have shown that the Old Catalan corpora indicate a frequent use of neuter demonstratives like *açò* / *a(i)zò* and *ço* / *zo*, sometimes with unspecific reference (in copular constructions) but they do not contain examples of *ell* with unspecific reference. However, certain uses of the demonstrative *això* (or *açò* in Minorca) in Balearic Catalan and *aquilo* in Portuguese exhibit characteristics of an expletive: the copular construction used in the beginning of Balearic *rondaies* like *això era...* (or *açò vol dir que era...* in Minorca) are clearly analogous to the French *il était une fois ...* and the German *es war einmal...*

In most grammatical descriptions, it is assumed that the lexical entries for ‘neuter’ pronouns, e.g. Spanish *ello* and the neuter demonstratives *esto*, *eso*, and *aquello*, display the features {3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, neuter} among others. I argue that these pronouns are underspecified for person, number, and gender, and surface as the default lexical items if none of the features in question has been specified in the derivation. Departing from this assumption – that there is not much semantic specification for *ello* (and the neuter demonstratives) to begin with – a shift from the default (demonstrative) pronoun to a discourse marker or discourse particle is easily achieved by reanalysing the scarce information present. This shifting of a pronominal entry to a less or even a blatantly non-pronominal one over time by loss of part (or even most) of its semantic and pragmatic

information is an instance of grammaticalisation (or, here, perhaps more adequately termed de-grammaticalisation or pragmaticisation).

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## ***Syntactic parameters and reconstruction***

*Michèle Oliviéri*

### ***1. Introduction***

Research within the generative framework has rarely been undertaken in a diachronic perspective despite the fact that, since the GB model, the introduction of the notion of parametric variation has provided a tool to grasp diachronic change in a new way. Indeed, if we consider that a change amounts to modifying the value of a parameter, it then becomes possible to parameterize diachronic change. Consequently, since the 'Null Subject Parameter' allows us to distinguish languages displaying subject clitics (French, English, etc.) from languages not displaying such clitics (Italian, Spanish, etc.), it should also account for the change from one stage to the other from a diachronic viewpoint. However, I also have reservations about this parameter. Indeed, besides its inappropriate appellation –what is 'null' is not the grammatical 'subject' function but the 'pro'<sup>1</sup>–, three additional main characteristics –it was devised as syntactic, binary and with a typological objective– can also be questioned.

First, it has already been mentioned in the literature (Auger 1995, Heap 2000, Cabredo Hofherr 2004, Oliviéri 2006, Palasis, this volume) that its syntactic aspect is not straightforward and that it could rather/also pertain to morphology. Secondly, as changes are never sudden, neither in space nor in time, such a parameter should rather be progressive instead of being binary. This has been particularly put forward by Heap (2000), Cabredo Hofherr (2004) and Oliviéri (2006). The third characteristic of this parameter is that it has been used as a descriptive, typological tool to classify languages and describe acquisition mechanisms. Obviously typology is an important step. However, I consider it as insufficient as it appears that comparison can provide more. This is why I will use the notion of parameter in a diachronic perspective with regard to change and *reconstruction*. The principle is that by comparing genetically related languages, one can determine their common origin and clarify the changes that have led to the modern languages. In phonology, this is a well known task, as it has permitted to reconstruct Indo-European for instance. More recently, Dalbera (2006) has developed this principle in other fields, those of lexical semantics and etymology. And his claim is that diatopic variation instantiates different stages of a change.

Assuming this point of view and going one step further, I wonder whether it is possible to do *syntactic* reconstruction in order to explain the syntactic changes. So the issues are: between the stage zero, i.e. without any subject clitics (Latin, most of the Occitan dialects, Italian), and the stage n, i.e. with all the subject clitics (standard French, northern French dialects), is there a regular spread? Is this spread universal?

Consequently, these matters lead us to also reconsider the status of these so-called 'subject clitics', an issue that has already caused a lot of ink to flow since

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<sup>1</sup> So we prefer the term 'pro-drop parameter'.

these elements have sometimes been considered as arguments and sometimes as affixes. Notice again the inappropriate appellation for these elements, since ‘subject clitics’ is a blend of a grammatical function (subject) and of a phonological characteristic (the clitic elements lean on, have no prosodic autonomy). In this contribution, I also propose to renew this debate. Dialects are the systems which display the broadest variation with regard to ‘subject clitics’. This is the reason why two dialectal corpora have been chosen to enlighten this matter, i.e. Savoia & Manzini’s (2005) data and the Nice dialectal database called THESOC<sup>2</sup>. We are hence going to examine the pieces of evidence which have led us to a new hypothesis, i.e. that these elements have a variable status and that the syntactic parameters can be refined and reformulated in order to explain also diachronic change<sup>3</sup>. We will then try to detail the mechanisms that allow such a co-occurrence of statuses, i.e. mechanisms that we refer to as cyclicity and motivation, borrowed from Dalbera’s (2006) new theory of etymology.

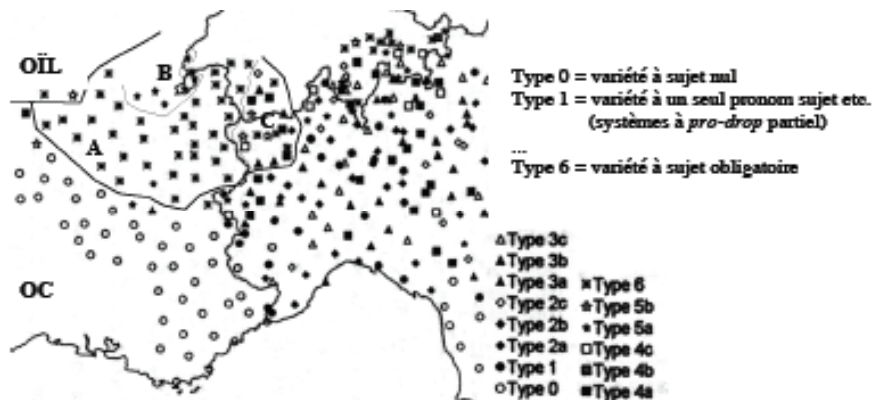
## 2. Dialectal data

### 2.1 The Roya Valley

A lot of well known work has been undertaken on the Northern Italian Dialects as Italian syntacticians are very productive and dialects are still alive in Italy –and so is their dialectology. However, it is often a comparison between two dialects that is referred to in the literature.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Savoia & Manzini (2005) have gathered data from many different dialects. We hence compare their data with ours.

Northern Italian Dialects display subject clitics whereas Occitan dialects are well known Null Subject Languages. Heap (2000) tried to show the limits of the areas, basing his analysis on the French *ALF* and the Italian *AIS*<sup>5</sup> and he established the map 1 hereunder:

Map 1. Heap’s (2000:114) typology: France-Italy boundary.



<sup>2</sup> Dalbera et al. (1992-): the THESOC is partly available at <http://thesaurus.unice.fr>.

<sup>3</sup> Also see Palasis (this volume).

<sup>4</sup> Brandi & Cordin (1989) or Renzi (1992) for instance.

<sup>5</sup> Gilliéron & Edmont (1902-10), Jaberg & Jud (1928-40).

We see that the limit is not clear-cut and that many variations and several mixed systems exist since some of them display subject clitics for some persons only. In Heap’s map, only three points correspond to the area I am going to consider now. Additionally, not all three points had corresponding data. Fortunately, further data have been collected and new atlases have been published since the *ALF* and the *AIS*. Moreover, these data are more precise thanks to a denser network and to extra questions. This latter work hence allows us to examine the boundaries and the zones of transition more closely. Let’s start with the Roya Valley near Nice, between France and Italy (in map 2 hereafter).

Map 2. *The Roya Valley.*



The data for the French side are displayed in tables 3 and 4.<sup>6</sup>

Table 3. *The French side of the Roya: present indicative paradigms (IPA).*

	MENTON	SOSPEL	BREIL	PIENE
<i>IndPrst</i>	<i>partir</i>	<i>chanter</i>	<i>partir</i>	
Pe1	p'art <u>u</u>	k'ant <u>u</u>	p'art <u>i</u>	f'y <u>mi</u>
Pe2	p'art <u>e</u>	k'ant <u>as</u>	<u>ti</u> p'art <u>e</u>	<u>ti</u> dʒ'ek <u>i</u>
Pe3	p'art <u>e</u>	k'ant <u>a</u>	<u>ar</u> p'aart	<u>e/a</u> f'y <u>ma</u>
Pe4	part' <u>ema</u>	kant' <u>aŋ</u>	part' <u>im</u> <sup>a</sup>	mən' <u>am</u>
Pe5	part' <u>e</u>	kant' <u>as</u>	part' <u>i</u>	dʒyɡ' <u>aŋ</u>
Pe6	p'art <u>aŋ</u>	k'ant <u>aŋ</u>	p'art <u>u</u>	m'and <u>u</u>
<b>It rains</b>	pj'ou	pj'ou	tʃ'ou	tʃ'ou

<sup>6</sup> The distinctive elements are in red while the non-distinctive ones are in green.

Table 3 shows that Menton and Sospel display no subject clitics at all. However, these two dialects differ slightly since Sospel displays six distinctive verbal forms within the present indicative paradigm whereas Menton presents non-distinctive forms for Pe2 and Pe3 (but still requires no clitics). On the other hand, Sospel and Piène –distant from only nine kilometres– display a striking contrast since clitics appear in Piène (and the very close Breil) with the Pe2 and Pe3 verbal forms despite the fact that these forms are distinctive.

Table 4. *The French side of the Roya: present indicative paradigms (IPA).*

	TENDE	SAORGE	LA BRIGUE
<i>IndPrst</i>	<i>chanter</i>	<i>comprendre</i>	<i>partir</i>
Pe1	(mi) k'antu	e kap'ijə	(e) p'aart
Pe2	ti k'anta	ti kap'ijə	ti p'artu
Pe3	aʀ/a k'anta	ə/a kap'ijə	əʀ p'aart
Pe4	kant'amu	e kapij'emə	(e) part'em
Pe5	kant'ai	e kapij'ei	(e) part'i
Pe6	li/le k'anta <sup>n</sup>	e kap'ijʉŋ	li p'artu
It rains	aʀ tʃ'ou	ə tʃ'ou	tʃ'ou

Table 4 shows that Tende displays another additional pattern, i.e. constant Pe2, Pe3 and Pe6 clitics along with a sporadic Pe1. Notice, as Dalbera (1994) points out, that the utterance of a Pe3 ‘subject clitic’ introduces Gender, and that this feature in turn entails Number, hence Pe6. And, as Kaiser & Hinzelin (to appear) pointed out, when we have a referential Pe3 clitic, we can also have an expletive one (which has the same form), e.g. in Tende, Saorge and Pigna. However, this implication is not systematic since other systems display the referential clitic only, e.g. La Brigue, Breil, Piène and Airole. It seems that Pe3 calls both for the expletive and Pe6, but that their order of appearance is not the same in all the dialects. In Saorge, the situation looks like the often described Northern Italian one, where there is always a clitic, but a non distinctive one, i.e. it is the same neutral vowel for Pe1, Pe4, Pe5, and Pe6. So the paradigm appears to have been completed with an element which is not a sign, an element with no signification, i.e. a dummy filler. And in La Brigue, where a proper Pe 6 clitic exists (as in Tende), optional and identical clitics are uttered for Pe1, Pe4, and Pe5. So, the same mechanism applies but it is still in progress, and not yet achieved.

What we see on the Italian side (table 5 hereunder) is not really different. Olivetta San Michele has the same system as Breil or Piène. Airole and Rochetta Nervina look like La Brigue. Pigna is between Saorge and La Brigue, with Pe6, the expletive and the generalization of a clitic to the whole paradigm.

Table 5. *The Italian side of the Roya: Data from Savoia & Manzini (2005) (IPA).*

	OLIVETTA SAN MICHELE	AIROLE	ROCHETTA NERVINA	PIGNA
<i>IndPrst</i>	<i>dormir</i>	<i>dormir</i>	<i>dormir</i>	<i>dormir</i>
<b>Pe1</b>	d'ørmi	d'ørmu	d'ørmu	e d'ørmu
<b>Pe2</b>	ti d'ørmi	ti d'ørmi	ti d'ørmi	ti d'ørme
<b>Pe3</b>	e/a d'ør̄m	a d'ør̄me	u/a d'ør̄me	u/a d'ør̄me
<b>Pe4</b>	dym'ema	durm'emu	dorm'emu	e dør̄m'emu
<b>Pe5</b>	dym'e	durm'ei	dorm'ei	e dør̄m'ei
<b>Pe6</b>	d'ør̄mu	in d'ør̄me	i d'ør̄me	i d'ør̄me
<b>It rains</b>	tʃ'əu	tʃ'ø:ve	tʃ'ø:ve	u tʃ'e:ve

Dalbera (1994) explained the evolution we see in the Roya dialects thanks to three main characteristics: (1) the fragility of the follower of the final –S, leading to the loss of the Pe2/Pe3 distinction; (2) the introduction of Pe6, due both to the emergence of Gender and Number and to the weakening of the final –N; (3) the need to distinguish Pe1 from Pe2 and Pe3, as Pe1 is distinctive only in indicative present and future. Hence, it is necessary to consider other forms than indicative present ones. Actually, we have just seen that there are no clitics in Menton. Nevertheless, an element appears in Pe2 and optionally in Pe1 in the subjunctive embedded clauses in order to distinguish Pe1, Pe2 and Pe3<sup>7</sup>, as shown by Dalbera's (1994) examples quoted hereunder:

- |                                      |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (1) se <i>ty</i> vware pur'ema...    | 'if you wanted, we could...'     |
| (2) kaɾɛɾ'ia ke <i>ty</i> u sabese   | 'you should know that'           |
| (3) se <i>mi</i> f'use vj'ej ...     | 'if I was old...'                |
| (4) vw'are ke ( <i>mi</i> ) tu d'ige | 'you want that I tell it to you' |

At this point, I would like to point out that the possibility of expressing Person thanks to a pronoun, in order to avoid an ambiguity or to focus for instance, has always existed. These elements did not appear only because we lost the endings; it's only one of the different options available within human language, as we will see later.

New maps for the Roya Valley can now be provided (maps 6 to 11, hereafter) which portray the presence of these elements (in blue) vs. their absence (in red) for each person.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Notice that the same happens in standard Italian.

<sup>8</sup> The blue stars indicate the presence of a preverbal clitic without a distinctive value.

Map 6. *Person 1.*



Map 7. *Person 2.*



Map 8. *Person 3.*



Map 9. *Persons 4 & 5.*

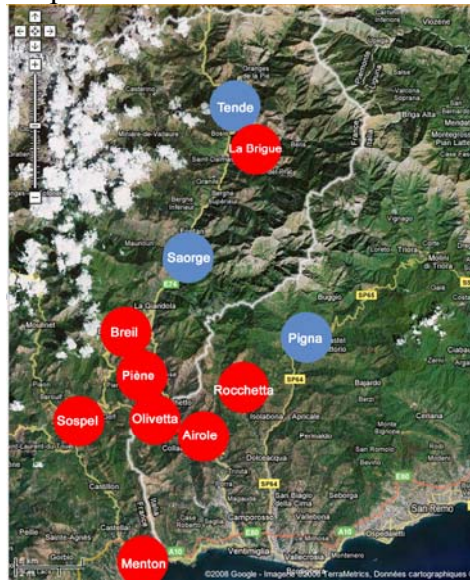




Map 10. *Person 6.*

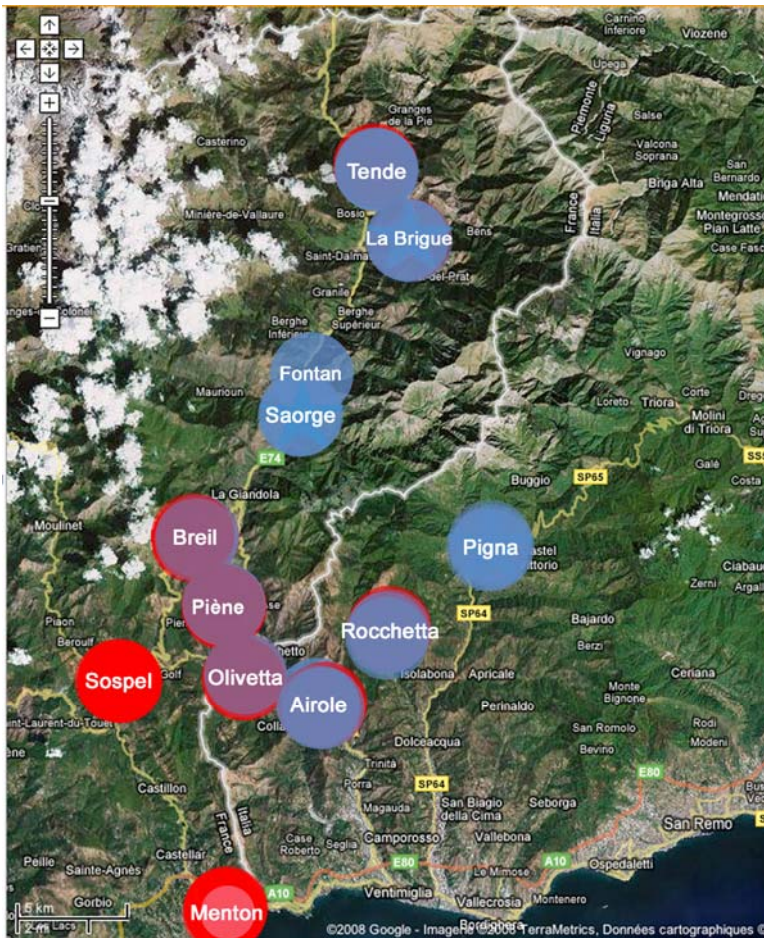


Map 11. *it rains.*



Superimposing all the maps and integrating Heap's data (with Fontan which is not different from Saorge) gives an idea of the dialectal distance in this area (see map 12):

Map 12. *Synthesis.*



Sospel and Menton display no clitics at all<sup>9</sup>. Breil, Piène and Olivetta constitute a group with only Pe2 and Pe3 clitics. In Airole, Rochetta Nervina and Tende, there are Pe2, Pe3 and Pe6 clitics while in Saorge, Fontan, Pigna and La Brigue (except for the meteorological verb in the latter dialect), the whole paradigm is completed.

Then, as proposed by others<sup>10</sup>, the parameter should be a morphological and gradual one. More precisely, it could be a refinement of the inflectional parameter showed by Palasis (this volume), the '(Distinctive) Suffix Parameter', which is then not binary but with a scale where the verbal ending is progressively replaced by an affix, as shown in table 13:

Table 13. *From a binary to a gradual parameter: attempt 1.*

step 0	<b>∅</b>	→ Sospel
step 1	<b>Pe2</b>	→ Menton
step 2	<b>Pe3</b>	→ Breil, Piène, Olivetta SM
step 3	<b>Pe6</b>	→ La Brigue, Airole, Rochetta N
step 4	<b>Pe1</b>	→ (Tende)
step 5	<b>Pe4 and Pe5</b>	→ (Saorge)

This fits Cabredo Hofherr's (2004) proposal (Pe2 > Pe3 > Pe6 > Pe1 > Pe4/Pe5), but not exactly others. Renzi & Vanelli (1983)'s scale is Pe2 > Pe3 > Pe6 > Pe5 > Pe4 > Pe1, while Heap's (2000) one is Pe2 > Pe6 > Pe3 > Pe4 > Pe1 > Pe5. Assuming this scale, let's now take a look at what could be the expletive's place. One could expect it to appear in step 6, which would correspond to the standard French case where it is presumably always present, but can be absent in sentences like *Faut voir*, *Suffit*, *Plevvra*, *pleuvra pas*, etc. The dialectal data under scrutiny show that this clitic is present in Pigna (despite the fact that this dialect is of La Brigue type), in Tende (which has also Pe6), in Saorge (where Pe6 is not distinctive). Furthermore, it can be noticed that it always has the same form as Pe3, and that in Old French, it appeared at the same time as Pe3 (even if it was not always realized). Hence, Hinzelin & Kaiser (to appear) propose to:

*établir une généralisation qui pourrait être cernée par un choix paramétrique: s'il existe une réalisation obligatoire ou très fréquente du pronom sujet à la 3<sup>e</sup> personne du singulier (l'accord par défaut), le pronom explétif est généralement employé en occitan et en francoprovençal.*

Our first scale displayed in table 13 can now be completed and we can insert the expletive in step 4 (see table 14).

<sup>9</sup> With the exceptions seen for Menton.

<sup>10</sup> Cabredo Hofherr (2004), Heap (2000) and Renzi (1992) for instance.

Table 14. *From a binary to a gradual parameter: attempt 2.*

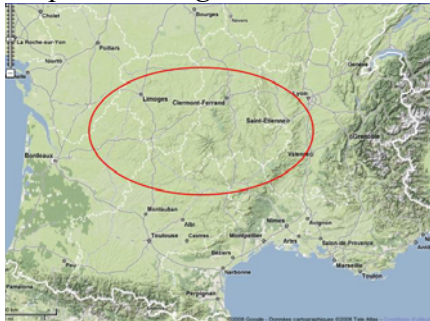
step 0	$\emptyset$	→ Sospel
step 1	Pe2	→ Menton
step 2	Pe3	→ Breil, Piene, Olivetta SM
step 3	Pe6	→ La Brigue, Airole, Rochetta N
step 4	Expletive	→ Pigna
step 5	Pe1	→ (Tende)
step 6	Pe4 and Pe5	→ (Saorge)

However, some problems remain. First, obviously, the relative order between step 3 and step 4 is not rigid as we can have the expletive without a distinctive form for Pe6 (e.g. Saorge). Secondly, Pe2 in Menton appears exclusively in subjunctive clauses; and so does Pe1, though only optionally in this context. Third, we know that in Old French, Pe3 and Pe6 appeared before Pe2 (and Pe1).

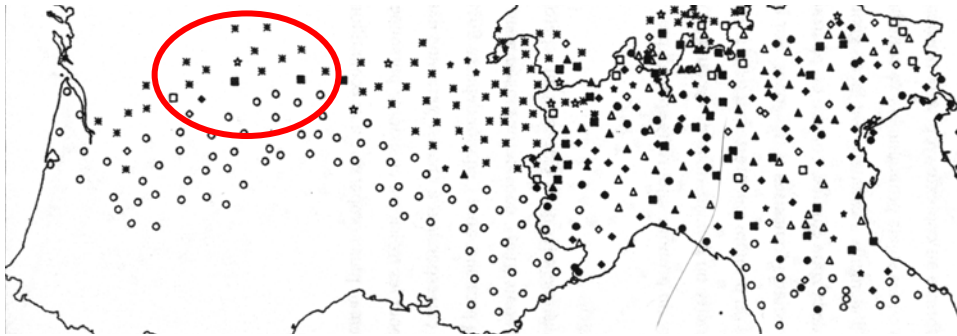
Moreover, if this scale is correct, it should be the same elsewhere. In order to test this assumption, let's now consider data from Northern Occitania, where there is also a boundary between 'Null Subject Languages' and 'Non-Null Subject Languages'.

## 2.2 Northern Occitania

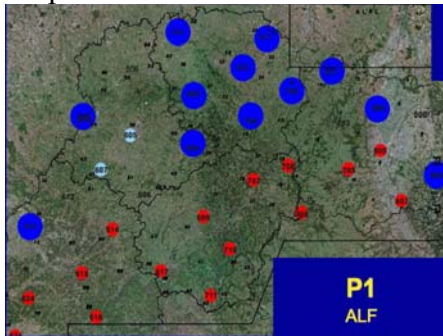
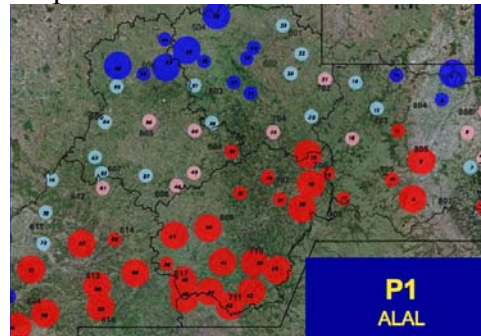
Maps 15 and 16 hereafter display the area under scrutiny, i.e. Auvergne and Limousin.

Map 15. *Auvergne and Limousin.*Map 16. *Auvergne and Limousin.*

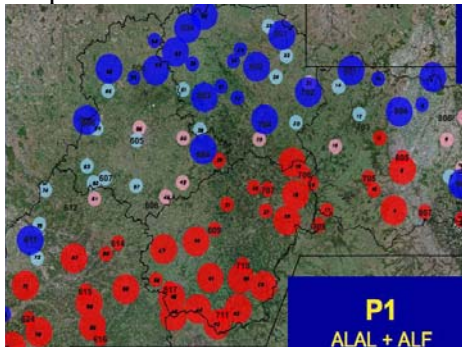
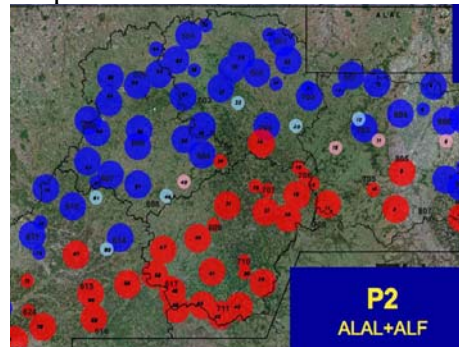
Again, the first work was Heap's (2000) who provided statistics thanks to the *ALF* data. We've just seen that Heap's analysis led to an inflectional parameter, but different than ours. His results for this area are displayed in map 17.

Map 17. *Heap's (2000:114) typology: Auvergne and Limousin.*

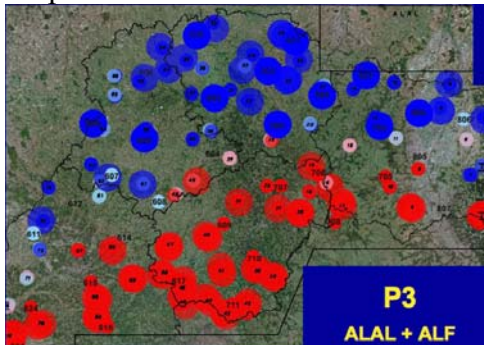
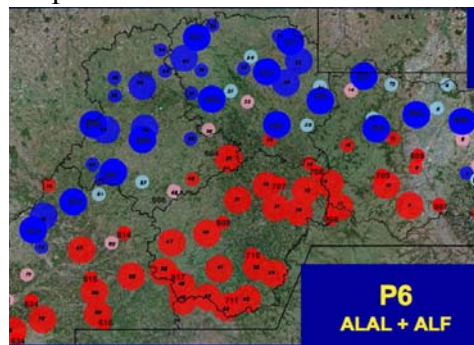
Although there are also mixed systems here (as shown by the variety of different symbols on the map), this map seems to show a relatively clear-cut boundary but it is only due to the too loose *ALF*'s network. Indeed, with the THESOC, we have additional data to compare, especially thanks to those that come from the Atlas of Auvergne and Limousin (*ALAL*)<sup>11</sup>. Let's then compare the *ALF* data with ours for Pe1: the higher the rate is, the bigger the circle is (blue representing presence, red absence).

Map 18. *ALF: Person 1.*Map 19. *ALAL: Person 1.*

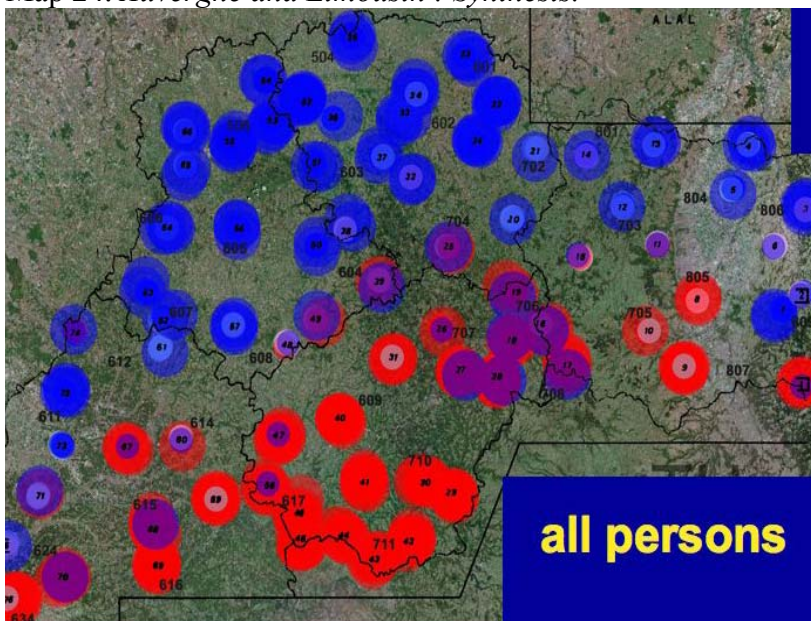
Thus, when we take both sources into account, we obtain a more complex mapping, as can be seen in maps 20 to 23.

Map 20. *ALAL + ALF: Person 1.*Map 21. *ALAL + ALF: Person 2.*

<sup>11</sup> Potte (1975-92).

Map 22. *ALAL + ALF: Person 3.*Map 23. *ALAL + ALF: Person 6.*

Then, crossing all the data, we obtain map 24 hereunder:

Map 24. *Auvergne and Limousin : Synthesis.*

From a geographical point of view, we observe an area of turbulence, of transition, shown by the nuances of violet. But this is not surprising, as we know that there are only continua, in space and in time. It can also be noticed that Limoges acts as an innovative centre, while the southern dialects are more archaic, more conservative. But from a diachronic point of view, this does not show the evolution of the systems and we do not see their internal dynamics. Let's examine several representative forms displayed in table 25<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> By convention, the localities are numbered in the atlases (bracketed numbers) and in the Thesoc (unbracketed numbers). The brackets within the table indicate that these forms are optional.

Table 25. *ALAL data (IPA)*.

Localities	584 (4)	590 (10)	588 (8)	605 (25)	595 (15)	628 (48)	589 (9)	630 (50)
Pe1	i	-	-	(jo)	(jœ)	(jɔ)	-	(jo)
Pe2	tœ	-	-	-	(tœ)	(ty)	-	tœ
Pe3 masc	u	(e)	(ɛ)	(u)	(ø)	(ɔ)	-	(o)
Pe3 fem	la	(e)	(ɛ)	(la)	(la)	(ela)	-	(la)
Pe6 masc	(i)	-	(ɛ)	(o)	(i)	(i)	-	i
Pe6 fem	la	-	-	-	-	-	-	la
meteo V	u	(ku)	kwa/ɛ	kɔ	ku	ko	ko	ko
Expletive	-	-	-	-	-	(ko)	(i)	ko

Some paradigms are incomplete due to lack of information<sup>13</sup>: Pe6 feminine is present on one single map and there are no maps in the *ALAL* for Pe4 and Pe5 but as these endings are stressed thus maintained (even in French: [ʃãtɔ̃], [ʃãte] vs. [ʃãt]), we know that these clitics appear later. Nevertheless, table 25 complies with what has already been noticed by other scholars<sup>14</sup> insofar as it displays no evidence for regularity. Indeed, from locality 584 where all the clitics are present to locality 589 with the one expletive, locality 590 with one optional Pe3, or locality 628 which shows a free variation, everything seems possible... Consequently, it appears that the scale established earlier cannot be maintained for this area and that other mechanisms could also well operate here.

### 3. Cyclicity and remotivation

#### 3.1 Variability

Variation is really a main characteristic of human language. However, it appears that this variation is often neglected, in particular when standard languages are investigated. Nevertheless, this notion is central, especially within diachronic research. Variations co-occur within one linguistic system and these variations can be studied from different viewpoints: (1) diachronic –old people do not speak like young people; (2) sociologic or stylistic –with different levels of language; (3) individual –a same utterance can be uttered by one person and seen as ungrammatical by another person. Linguistic reality turns out to be extremely diverse, displaying as many idiolects as there are speakers since each person probably has his own language structure in mind<sup>15</sup>. Each speaker is hence multilingual, uttering at least his own idiolect as well as a standard language.

This diversity in turn creates the internal dynamics of a language. An element becomes fashionable at a certain point and then it stays or not and, if it is

<sup>13</sup> Additionally, notice that some forms look suspicious and might not be clitics: [jo] (I), [ko] (see *ça pleut* in French); and that we have to distinguish what happens with meteorological verbs and the expletive found with verbs like *il faut*.

<sup>14</sup> Hinzelin & Kaiser (to appear) for instance.

<sup>15</sup> This point emerged with Starke (2007).

integrated to the system, each speaker then has his own interpretation of the novelty. The lexicon provides many examples of this phenomenon. Ainsî, French has borrowed the adjective *cool* from English, e.g. *elle est cool*, *une soirée cool*. Some French speakers have integrated this element in their idiolect, and have consecutively coined the new adverb *coolment*. On the other hand, other speakers would never accept such an adverb or even the adjective. The same happened when French created the verb *flirter* which is now very usual, or more recently the verb *zapper* (from *to zap*, with a little change of meaning). But what will happen for the *zappeuse* or *zappette* (for the *remote control*)? Will one of these words stay and replace *télécommande*? No one can predict the outcome since it comes under the human beings' freedom... And variability does not only apply to lexical semantics. In Section 3.2, we hence take a look at morpho-syntax and the case of the so-called 'subject clitics'.

### 3.2 Subject clitics

The reason why the status of the 'subject clitics' is so discussed and controversial in the literature probably stems from the variable morpho-syntactic status of these elements. More precisely, my hypothesis is twofold: (1) both the morphological and the syntactic status can coexist in synchrony; (2) and/or one status can follow another in diachrony.<sup>16</sup> Actually, the behaviour of these elements is in between V and N. They belong to the verbal system, as Person is attached to the verb and can be realized with verbal endings, but they are also in the nominal system as Gender (and perhaps Number) are D/N features and as their position can be the one of a DP. And this variation is amenable to the evolution of the rest of the system for each language. Generally speaking, loss of the verbal endings entails person confusion, but the level of confusion is variable from one dialect to another. However, in any case, the system reacts in order to preserve the balance of the system, to guaranty the relevant distinctions<sup>17</sup>.

How do the dialects react? They respond according to several possibilities offered by UG. Either new endings can be recreated in order to replace the lost ones and preserve the post-verbal information, e.g. in the west of the Alpes-Maritimes<sup>18</sup> or the Person information previously conveyed by distinctive verbal suffixes can be brought back into the system thanks to preverbal elements built from the Latin personal nouns or pronouns TU, ILLU, ILLA, etc., e.g. in the east of the Alpes-Maritimes. The latter possibility entails that these elements are (firstly) optional (e.g. Pe1 in Tende), that they can coexist with verbal endings (e.g. Pe2 in Breil, Rochetta Nervina, etc.), and that there are cases where some forms remain undistinguished (e.g. Pe2 and Pe3 in Menton).

### 3.3 Parameters

Let's outline the two options: (1) most of the Occitan dialects recreated verbal endings; (2) while, at the boundaries of the area, the dialects under scrutiny

<sup>16</sup> This is also true in acquisition (see Palasis, this volume).

<sup>17</sup> In the children's system (see Palasis, this volume), the same mechanism applies: one must assure the relevant distinctions to communicate properly in order to be understood.

<sup>18</sup> See Dalbera (1994): Pe1 is [-i] in Nice, while [-u] in Grasse for instance.

(Roya, Auvergne) adopted the use of a preverbal element. It thus appears that the parameter could be as in (5):

- (5) Option (parameter):  
*Recreate endings (suffixes) or introduce prefixes*

Consequently, the existence of these two possibilities instantiates the fact that a system can move from one to the other value of this parameter, or not. The parameter involved could then well be the '(Distinctive) Suffix Parameter', as proposed by Palasis (this volume). In diachrony, when a system recreates distinctive endings after having lost the previous ones, it keeps its positive value of the '(Distinctive) Suffix Parameter'. On the other hand, when a system uses preverbal elements after having lost its distinctive post-verbal ones, it means that the value of the '(Distinctive) Suffix Parameter' has changed to the negative value and that it then has to choose between morphology and syntax (the 'Prefix Parameter') in order to keep the balance of its system.

In the typology proposed by Palasis (this volume), standard and well-studied languages can appear because they seem to have unambiguously settled in one or the other configuration. This is mainly due to the fact that they have written grammars one can refer to when studying these systems. Similarly, some dialects, like the Nice or the Sospel one, also display a clear-cut system so their classification is quite straightforward too. Palasis has also classified early French in her table and oral French can be inserted: we analyse it as a system that sometimes uses the morphological value of the so-called 'subject clitics' and sometimes uses their syntactic value. The situation is probably the same for our border dialects for which, what is more, the value of the '(Distinctive) Suffix Parameter' is not fixed either since it is in the process of being changed. Table 26 summarises these results:

Table 26. *A completed typology of standard and dialectal systems.*

Languages	'(Distinctive) Suffix Parameter'	'Prefix Parameter'
Standard Italian	+	0
Nice, Sospel	+	0
Early French	–	+
Oral French	–	+/-
Roya, Auvergne	+/-	+/-
Standard French	–	–
English	–	–

Yet, the +/- value in table 26 highlights the fact that these parameters do not work on a pure binary basis. Their implementation should therefore be gradual in order to account for the micro-variation which can be found within some linguistic systems.



### 3.4 From diatopy (or diversity) to diachrony

Concerning the ‘(Distinctive) Suffix Parameter’, i.e. the appearance of the ‘subject clitics’, we have just seen that the scale we have tried to establish so far is not efficient enough. Consequently, in order to improve it, I propose to consider smaller units than the clitics. Moreover, we have observed that the trigger consists in distinguishing different persons, so what we must consider are not the actual marks but what is distinguished and how it is distinguished. When people need to distinguish Pe2 and Pe3 for example, they can either mark one of the forms or the other, or both. So the Pe2 clitic can appear before Pe3, *or the contrary*. Thus, what has to be parameterized is the *distinction*, not the clitic’s emergence itself.

It is well-known that these elements have been analyzed as bundles of features. In order to implement our suggestion, let’s assume the following features taken from Oliviéri (1994) and repeated in tables 27 and 28<sup>19</sup>:

Table 27. *Clitics features: description.*

[± Person]	This feature rests on Benveniste’s (1966) dichotomy between Pe1 and Pe2 on the one hand, and Pe3 on the other hand, that he called the <i>non-person</i> .
[± Speaker]	This feature distinguishes Pe1 from Pe2.
[± Feminine]	These features are relevant for the Pe3’s Gender and Number, and for Pe4 and Pe5’s Number
[± Plural]	

Table 28. *Clitics features: values.*

	[± Pers]	[± Speak]	[± Fem]	[± Plur]
Pe1	+	+	0	–
Pe2	+	–	0	–
Pe3 masc	–	0	–	–
Pe3 fem	–	0	+	–
Pe4	+	+	0	+
Pe5	+	–	0	+
Pe6 masc	–	0	–	+
Pe6 fem	–	0	+	+
Expletive	0	0	0	0

Now, let’s go back to the *ALAL* data, with these distinctions in mind. The problems were that Pe3 could appear before Pe2, contrary to the *Roya* dialects, and that the Pe1 clitic could also emerge before the Pe3 one. If we consider the features displayed here, we notice that the first distinction involves one single

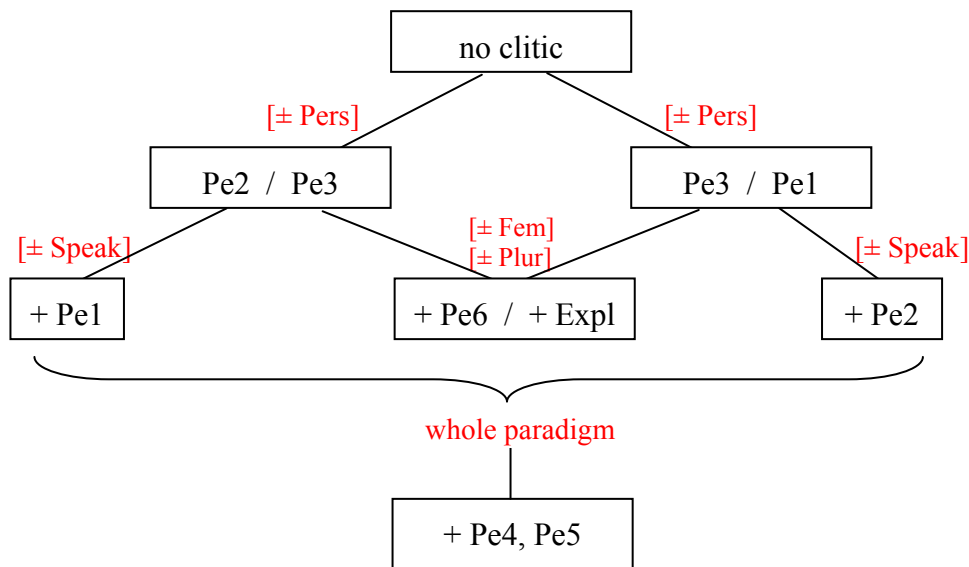
<sup>19</sup> I leave the Case feature aside here as it is not relevant (in French, it enables to distinguish Nominative *il* from Accusative *le* and Dative *lui* for instance).

feature: [ $\pm$ Person]. The Romance dialects have to distinguish Pe2 from Pe3: as we assumed, one *or* the other can be expressed first by a clitic, whichever, hence the diversity observed. Notice that in the children's system<sup>20</sup>, the first distinction involves Pe1 and Pe3, as they only have these two persons in their system: again, the relevant feature is [ $\pm$ Person].

Yet, when the Pe3 clitic appears, it introduces Gender and Number in the system, hence Pe6; and it also offers the possibility of expressing the expletive (relatively freely, hence the huge variation observed). The children follow this progression, as Gender and Number are acquired later. Then, the [Speaker] feature is inserted, later probably because the context is usually sufficient to disambiguate the wording. In the dialects, it's the Pe1 clitic that appears, while in the children's system, it's the Pe2 one. All the feature distinctions are then efficient and Pe4 and Pe5 can also be marked (or simply uttered in the case of children when they grow up), even if they are not necessary.

The (universal?) progression is difficult to parameterize as there is an interaction between the features concerned, the forms of the clitics and the choice of the speakers (the unpredictable mood or fashion). Obviously, [Person] is involved first, either for Pe2/Pe3 or Pe1/Pe3. Then, there is an option between the [Speaker] feature and the [Gender] and [Number] ones. They can apply concomitantly or successively. Figure 29 illustrates this evolution.

Figure 29. *Clitics features: the progression.*



But then, if the order of appearance of these features turns out to be universal ([Person]>[Speaker]>[?]), we can expect the process to be governed not by a parameter but by a universal principle.

<sup>20</sup> See Palasis (this volume).

### 3.5 *The motivational cycle*

An additional notion still needs to be detailed, i.e. the *motivational cycle*, developed by Guiraud (1967) and more recently by Dalbera (2006), since it could be transposed from semantics to morpho-syntax. The idea is that, contrary to Saussure's first assumptions, the sign is not only arbitrary but it starts with a motivation, then it becomes conventional, then arbitrary, and then the whole process starts again, i.e. the sign is remotivated, etc., endlessly.

One of the best examples of this mechanism is the word that means "today" in French<sup>21</sup>. The Latin word was the locution HOC DIE, which was motivated as it meant "this day". This locution became a single word, i.e. HODIE, in Vulgar Latin, which is the stage of the convention, and the phonetic evolution of this word then resulted in *hui* in Old French. At this point, the sign is demotivated and people do not recognize "day" in *hui*. The sign has consequently become completely arbitrary; nevertheless sufficient enough to express the required notion (see the Spanish *hoy*). Subsequently, it appeared that people needed to remotivate it. They then created *au jour d'hui*, literally "on the day of this day". Then, the word lived and became conventional again (as can be noticed thanks to the spelling which joins the different parts of the word together), and then arbitrary again (today, people can not segment *aujourd'hui* because *hui* is opaque). It is then once again remotivated and it is amazing to observe that the same device is used again, together with the same pattern, i.e. left adjunction. Nowadays people hence utter *au jour d'aujourd'hui*, i.e. "on the day of on the day of this day". There even is a variation within this remotivation since we now also hear *à l'heure d'aujourd'hui* which has the same meaning.

This mechanism of recycling things is very productive in language. It exists in phonology, in semantics, in lexicology, so why should it not exist in morphology and syntax? And indeed, it also operates within the mechanism we are dealing with. The first stage, *motivation*, is illustrated by the necessity of distinguishing Person further to the loss of the distinctive verbal endings and the choice went to an existing stressed pronoun, formally used for focus. At this stage, this element (let's call it *pro*) is an *argument*, e.g. *EGO*. This stage is represented first in Menton or standard Italian (where it begins with subjunctive clauses), then in Tende and Old French. The second stage, *convention*, is reached when the device is extended to other persons (with a possible double mark), like in Breil, Airole or Rochetta Nervina. Some sentences of Oral French and Early French are also representative of this state, where *pro* is then a *verbal affix*, with no prosodic autonomy, displaying forms like [ʒə] "I" or [ʃu'i] for *je suis* "I am". The generalization to the whole paradigm (even if not necessary) leads to the third stage, *arbitrary*, represented in Saorge, Pigna, and written or formal French. There, *pro* may become once again an *argument* and be stressed: [ʒ'ø].

This analysis provides new indications concerning the +/- value of the 'Prefix Parameter' in table 26 above. This value is fluctuant –of course, in oral languages– depending on the stage reached by *pro* within the motivational cycle in the speaker's system.

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<sup>21</sup> Dalbera (2006).

What about the *remotivation* stage? If we lose the Person distinctions again, will the process start again? One clue of this evolution is the fact that Gender and Number are not always distinguished in oral French. We can hear this in the young people's language as well as in older utterances (cf. Lambrecht 1981 for instance) and we can also observe this in dialects:

- (6) *I* vient les filles.
- (7) Qu'est-ce qu'*i* fait ? (*il* for *elles*: the girls)

Here, if *i(l)* is not an expletive, the Gender and Number features are lost. So, this is consistent with my analysis as the loss of these distinctions then follows the same process as in acquisition, but backwards. We cannot tell what will happen afterwards, but we have noticed other cases where, obviously, a remotivation is operating, in particular with the doubling phenomenon:

- (8) eh pousse *toi toi* !

and tripling can even be found:

- (9) *moi j'ai* vu un pélican *moi*.
- (10) euh *ça c'est* une mouche *ça*.
- (11) *moi perso je* pense que...

Another example is the plural mark in oral French: as we do not hear the final [-z] anymore, it can be uttered before the noun:

- (12) les ex-z-otages
- (13) quatre-z-euros

And the suffix becomes a prefix...

#### **4. Conclusion**

As we have just seen, our work on these so-called 'subject clitics' has led us to investigate many different fields and to hypothesize on several major topics in linguistics.

The theoretical choice to take into account all the kinds of variations, instead of neglecting them, turned out to be very productive. First of all, it led us to consider that the status of these elements is not the same in all the systems. Secondly, it allowed us to forward a finer parameterization and we have assumed with Palasis (this volume) that the utterance of these clitics is ruled by two parameters: the '(Distinctive) Suffix Parameter' and the 'Prefix Parameter' and that parameters have to be gradual. Third, it enabled us to show that the morpho-syntactic changes, thus the morpho-syntactic parameters, are relevant to the (motivational) cycle.

Then, as far as the dialects are concerned, I started with a question: is it possible to do syntactic reconstruction? The answer is 'definitely' but our

theoretical framework (generative grammar) raises many problems. Since the ‘Principles and Parameters’ model allows comparison, it could have been expected that it would have provided the adequate tools, but actually, *internal* variation is not taken into account and, as noticed also by Kaiser & Hinzelin (to appear), its analysis “pose néanmoins des problèmes manifestes dans le cadre de la grammaire générative”. Not only does the exclusively typological point of view make the diachronic study difficult, but it even becomes close to impossible. Indeed, the model does not enable us to deal with the variation when it exists within a particular system (language, dialect or idiolect) as it considers a language in a rigid way (e.g. pro-drop or non pro-drop). Nevertheless, all the languages display free synchronic variations and their internal dynamics imply linguistic changes, but not in a linear way. Some changes emerge in idiolects or sociolects and they are adopted or refused by the community. Choices have to be made, and I do not think, contrary to Kayne (2005), that a binary parameter can be responsible for a “cluster of properties”. On the contrary, at any time, a new change can entail a new choice, and then there is ‘*dialectalisation*’. Moreover, we know that there are only continua (in space and time), whereas the theory requires breaks. Nothing is straightforward in the language and the human being is also unpredictable.

Following Dalbera (2006), I am convinced that the *key to reconstruction* is the comparison between *a lot of* systems that must be *genetically closely related*, a point of view that is far away from the often forwarded comparisons, such as the one proposed by Kayne (2005) between the English *ready-ish* and the French *plus ou moins prêt*.

Finally, the architecture of the model does not enable us to account for the interaction between the different levels of the grammar despite the fact that these levels are interrelated. Here, phonology, morphology and syntax interact: a phonological change induces a morphological reaction which in turn leads to a different syntactic configuration. But to describe these interactions within this model, further research is still necessary, in order to redefine the different levels of analysis and their relations.

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***On the variable morpho-syntactic status of the French subject clitics  
Evidence from acquisition***  
*Katérina Palasis-Jourdan*

***1. Introduction***

The debate around the morpho-syntactic status of the elements called ‘subject clitics’ in the Romance languages is a long-standing one. Indeed, since Kayne’s (1975) seminal study on the French pronouns, this issue has been continually addressed, essentially on a binary basis, as these clitics have been analysed either as proper syntactic arguments or as verbal affixes. Consequently, a lot of work has been dedicated to this matter not only within the different Romance languages but within others too since Zwicky & Pullum’s (1983) often referred to criteria distinguishing clitics from affixes were devised on the basis of English data. At this point however, no unanimous settlement has been reached so the door remains wide open to additional research.

In this contribution, I propose to renew this debate by looking into what the acquisition of French can tell us on this matter. To this effect, two recently collected corpora of French monolingual child data (Palasis-Jourdan 2005, in preparation) have been analysed and a third point of view has come to light with regard to the status of these clitics, i.e. the possibility that these elements have a variable status within the speaker’s lifetime, emerging as verbal prefixes in the young child’s linguistic system and then bearing either this first morphological status or a second, syntactic one.<sup>1</sup> Section 2 hence traces the path towards this morphological analysis, briefly going back over my study of the child null subject phenomenon. Section 3 puts this morphological analysis to the test and demonstrates that it fares well as far as the child linguistic system is concerned. Section 4 confronts this morphological hypothesis with the syntactically devised Pro-drop Parameter, which is consequently recast, and with the adult linguistic system, to which the syntactic analysis can also apply.

***2. Towards the morphological analysis***

The work presented here with regard to the status of the subject clitics in French stems from my prior hypothesis on the child null subject phenomenon (Palasis-Jourdan 2008; Palasis-Jourdan & Oliviéri 2007). The latter also rests on the close study of the two above-mentioned corpora. The first set of data (henceforth Corpus 1) represents a total of 1.072 verbal sentences uttered during 5 recording sessions undertaken in 2003-2004 with 17 monolingual French children between 2;3 and 3;1 (data and details in Palasis-Jourdan 2005). The second set of data was recorded in 2006-2007 during 13 sessions with 22 other children between 2;5 and 4;0 (henceforth Corpus 2; data and details in Palasis-Jourdan in preparation).

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<sup>1</sup> Also see Oliviéri (2006, this volume) on variability.

Thanks to these numerous data, a close look was taken at the child entire verbal and pronominal systems.

### 2.1 The child null subject phenomenon

As far as their verbal system is concerned, it has been noticed that the children do not utter many different verbs. Indeed, a total of only 12 different verbs appear in Corpus 1.<sup>2</sup> These verbs and their respective rates are detailed in table 1 hereafter. It is hence observed that this verbal system is reduced in terms of different verbs compared to the adult system. Furthermore, it can be noticed that these verbs classify quite naturally under two groups since the mainly uttered ones all belong to the third conjugation group (94.9%) which displays more irregular forms than the two other groups. Scarce first conjugation verbs such as *manger* appear (5.1%) and absolutely no second conjugation verbs are uttered. The second important fact highlighted in table 1 is the number of the different uttered forms. Indeed, the child system appears to display only two main different forms, i.e. 3sg (60.9%) and 1sg (35%). This system is consequently overwhelmingly singular (with an additional 2.9% for 2sg, singular forms amount to 98.8%; the 1.2% plural forms are all 3pl).

Table 1. *The actual occurring verbal forms in the child system (Corpus 1).*

	Verbs	être	vouloir	faire	avoir	savoir	voir	1 <sup>st</sup> group
	Glosses	be	want	do	have	know	see	verbs
	%	48.7	17.2	16.2	7.0	3.6	2.2	5.1
3sg	60.9	<i>est</i>	veut	fait	<i>a</i>	sait	voit	mange
1sg	35.0	<i>suis</i>	veux	fais	<i>ai</i>	sais	vois	mange

Moreover, the italic print above points at the fact that the verbs *être* and *avoir*, which appear in a total of 55.7% of the children's sentences, display phonetically different forms in this system. This amounts to say that the 1sg and 3sg forms for these two verbs display rich agreement morphology insofar as the contrast between *suis* and *est* on the one hand and *ai* and *a* on the other hand enable the addressee to unambiguously identify the [Person] feature. This pattern is then exactly the same as the one traditionally found in the so-called pro-drop languages such as Spanish or Italian. Consequently, on a par with the pro-drop languages, it can be argued that such a reduced linguistic system also creates the adequate conditions for the application of the mechanism that licences null preverbal clitics. When a child like Alizée (2;8) says *\_ suis là* "(I) am here", I claim that, within the child's system, this type of sentence finds an explanation in the fact that the only other form that the child utters at this stage is distinctive, i.e. *est* vs. *suis*. Corpus 1 therefore shows us that the architecture of the French child system does not yet correspond to the one found in the adult system. The direct consequence of this discrepancy is that young children drop more clitics than adults do, hence the so-called 'null subject phenomenon' which occurs in approximately one fifth to one fourth of the young children's sentences.

<sup>2</sup> In order to be representative, verbs uttered by one single child are not taken into account.



It is well attested in the literature that this phenomenon is a passing stage and that it fades away when the children are around 3;0. Within my hypothesis, this disappearance is accounted for by the fact that the child system then gradually broadens in terms of different verbs – the child uses more and more first conjugation verbs which present more homophonic forms (see Table in section 3.10) – and in terms of different forms – more 2sg and plural forms. And this growth of the system entails that the verbal forms become more homophonic and hence require a higher rate of clitic presence. This hypothesis predicts that defective verbs for instance should display a high omission rate in the child system since the paradigm of such verbs only displays one form, e.g. *il faut*. And indeed, the verb *falloir* in Corpus 1 bears out this prediction. Uttered 11 times in the whole corpus by one single child, *falloir* presents an omission rate of 81% of the expletive *il*. This hypothesis is also consistent with the adult occurrences of this defective verb since *falloir* is also often uttered by adults without *il*, possibly for the same reason.

### *2.2 The null subject turns out to be a null prefix*

This hypothesis helps us to define more precisely what these clitics convey in the child system. In section 2.1 above, it is established that the children drop some of them because their verbal system often displays distinctive forms with regard to [Person], due to reduced paradigms in their particular system. It can hence be stated that these clitics convey grammatical information and, consequently, not referential information. Moreover, this grammatical information is tied to verbal agreement and more precisely to the [Person] feature. These observations lead us to argue in favour of an affixal and hence morphological status of these so-called ‘subject’ clitics rather than an argumental and syntactic status (following Kaiser 1994 for instance). This entails that these clitic elements, being dependent morphemes, can not bear a subject function. Their traditional ‘subject clitic’ appellation will henceforth be abandoned and these elements will be called either ‘agreement prefixes’ or ‘preverbal clitics’.

### **3. The morphological analysis to the test**

In order to put this hypothesis to the test, I have chosen to confront it with arguments forwarded by a proponent of the opposite, syntactic stance. De Cat’s (2005) work was chosen since she argues in favour of the fact that the French clitics should be analysed as arguments and she lists some of the consequences of a morphological analysis such as the one forwarded in the previous section, considering these consequences as obstacles to such an analysis. Some of the issues De Cat (2005) addresses are redundancy of the agreement, optionality of the clitics, prefixation, clitic inversion, the status of the elements that appear between the clitic and the verb, and doubling. In this section, I demonstrate that none of the forwarded arguments apply to the child system.

### 3.1 Redundancy of the agreement

“Why should subject-verb agreement ever be allowed to be marked twice, in an entirely redundant fashion?” (De Cat 2005:1198). The author provides the examples quoted in (1) hereafter.

- (1) a. je vais  
I.1.SG go.1.SG  
‘I go’  
b. vous pleurez  
you.2.PL cry.2.PL  
‘You cry’

First of all and generally speaking, redundancy is part of language. Gender for instance is a highly redundant feature, as can be seen in (2), and this type of redundancy has never been addressed as a linguistic issue.

- (2) la petite fille intelligente  
the.FEM little.FEM girl.FEM intelligent.FEM  
‘The intelligent little girl’

Moreover, redundancy is far from pervasive in the clitic-verb association in French. It is even quite limited in the French verbal system because of the existence of many homophonic verbal forms, as shown in table 2, for which the preverbal clitic consequently represents the only piece of agreement information.

Table 2. *Homophonic verbal forms in French.\**

Conjugation Types	Homophonic forms	Examples
1	1sg=2sg=3sg=3pl	je/tu/il/ils [parl]
2	1sg=2sg=3sg	je/tu/il [fini]
3	1sg=2sg=3sg	je/tu/il [li]
3	1sg=2sg=3sg=3pl	je/tu/il/ils [ri]

\* Except for *avoir*, *être* and *aller*.

Additionally, I have shown in my analysis of the null ‘subject’ phenomenon in section 2.1 above that the children decrease this redundancy even further by omitting approximately one fifth to one fourth of these preverbal elements. Consequently, it is concluded that (limited) redundancy can not be considered as an obstacle to the affixal analysis of the preverbal clitics in French.

### 3.2 Optionality of the clitics

“Why is the prefixal part of subject agreement markers omissible in some cases but not in others?” (De Cat 2005:1198). Her examples are quoted in (3).

- (3) a. Les convoyeurs attendent.  
the carriers wait  
‘The carriers are waiting.’

- b. Eux pourront t' aider.  
 them will you help  
 'THEY will be able to help you.'
- c. \*Attendent.  
 wait  
 '(They) are waiting'
- d. \*Moi pourrai t' aider.  
 me will you help  
 'I will be able to help you.'

Let's compare these examples with the child system. Leaving aside the null clitic sentences for which an explanation has been forwarded above, let's take a look at the rest of Corpus 1 thanks to table 3 hereafter.

Table 3. *The different types of grammatical sentences (Corpus 1).*

Types	Examples	Glosses	N	%
+PrC	Elle est grande	She is tall	459	42.8
+PoC			0	0.0
+PrN			0	0.0
+PrN +C	Le renard il a mangé	The fox he has eaten	16	1.5
+C +PoN	Il est là la galette	It is there the pie	30	8.1
+PrP +C	Lui i(l) s'appelle Raphaël	Him he is called Raphaël	87	2.8
+C +PoP	Je peux jouer moi ?	I can play me?	64	6.0
+PrP +C +PoP	Moi j'ai un grand vélo moi	Me I have a big bike me	6	0.5
Imperative	attends !	wait!	170	15.9
Subtotal for grammatical sentences			832	77.6
Subtotal for ungrammatical sentences			240	22.4
Total entire corpus			1072	100.0

\*Pr=Preverbal, Po=Post-verbal, C=Clitic, N=Noun, P=Strong Pronoun.

The above overview presents the different types of grammatical sentences uttered by the 17 children of Corpus 1. Apart from the imperatives for which we do not expect a preverbal clitic, we observe that six different patterns are uttered and that they all include a clitic. Two very interesting remarks therefore arise: the children do not utter the canonical (and hence expected) standard French pattern <Preverbal DP + V>, e.g. *le renard a mangé*; and consequently there are no sentences that do not include a clitic. The data therefore attest that clitics are not optional elements in this system. The second argument put forward by De Cat (2005), i.e. optionality, hence does not apply to the child system.

Data from Corpus 2 corroborate this observation. Indeed, an elicitation task undertaken with Alan (2;8.18) displays the same patterns (see (4) hereafter). The teacher utters and mimes a very short story about a snail going for a walk and the child is asked to repeat it.

(4) Elicitation task:

Teacher:

- a. L' escargot dort parc(e).qu' il fait beau dehors.  
 the snail sleeps because it makes nice outside  
 'The snail is asleep because it is nice outside'
- b. Un nuage arrive et fait tomber la pluie !  
 a cloud arrives and makes fall the rain  
 'A cloud turns up and makes the rain fall'

- c. L' escargot sort une corne deux cornes et  
 the snail gets.out one horn two horns and  
 s' en va se promener.  
 himself off goes himself walk  
 'The snail gets one horn two horns out and goes off for a walk'

Child:

- a'. L' escargot *i(l)* dort parc(e).qu' *i(l)* fait beau dehors.  
 the snail he sleeps because it makes nice outside  
 'The snail is asleep because it is nice outside'
- b'. Un nuage *il* arrive et xxx la pluie !\*  
 a cloud it arrives and xxx the rain  
 'A cloud turns up and xxx the rain'
- c'. *I(l)* s' en va se promener.  
 he himself off goes himself walk  
 'He goes off for a walk'

\* xxx=unintelligible words.

As can be seen in a, b, and c above, the teacher utters canonical standard French sentences, i.e. sentences with a preverbal DP subject, e.g. *l'escargot dort*, or a clitic, e.g. *il fait beau*, or an elided subject due to coordination, e.g. *un nuage arrive et fait*. On the other hand, we notice in a', b', and c' that the child does not utter some of these standard patterns despite the given targets. Instead, Alan spontaneously inserts a clitic in all of his sentences, e.g. *l'escargot i(l) dort*, *un nuage il arrive*. This elicitation task therefore represents an even more compelling piece of evidence that these preverbal clitics are obligatory in the child linguistic system.

### 3.3 Prefixation

"Subject clitics would be the only prefixal agreement markers in spoken French" (De Cat 2005:1198).

I will resort to my data again since they clearly highlight that the clitics display an array of affixal characteristics. First of all, historically, proclisis appears after enclisis in the Indo-European languages. A logical consequence of this phenomenon is that whenever the enclisis mechanism satisfies the linguistic demand, proclisis does not need to apply. Secondly, these preverbal clitics are extremely selective with regard to the grammatical category of the stem they attach to. Indeed, it is well attested that they are only found with finite verbs and, according to the often referred to criterion put forward by Zwicky & Pullum (1983), this high degree of selection pertains to dependent morphemes only, i.e. morphological affixes. Additionally, my data show that the accommodation of these clitics with regard to the phonological structure of the stems follows a strict pattern. For example, the full form of *il* is only found before verbs whose onset is a vowel, whereas it is the elided form *i(l)* without the *l* which attaches to a verb whose onset is a consonant. This dichotomy is illustrated in (5) hereafter.

- (5) Preverbal clitics and accommodation to their stems (Corpus 2):
- a. *i(l)* + consonant:
- Après *i(l)* mange du miel.  
 after he eats some honey  
 ‘Afterwards he eats some honey’ (Hector, 3;6.9)
- Oh attends *i(l)* s’ est fermé !  
 oh wait it itself has closed  
 ‘Oh wait it has closed itself!’ (Romane, 3;1.25)
- I(l)* faut piocher.  
 one must take  
 ‘one must take a card’ (Lucie, 3;2.18)
- Ben *i(l)* reste tout seul.  
 Well he stays all alone  
 ‘Well he stays on his own’ (Emma, 3;0.27)
- b. *il* + vowel:
- Regarde le petit poussin *il* a trouvé sa maman.  
 look the little chick he has found his mother  
 ‘Look, the little chick has found his mother’ (Romane, 3;1.25)
- Mon sac *il* est super mon sac.  
 my bag it is great my bag  
 ‘My bag is great’ (Antoine, 3;3.13)
- Où *il* est le poisson là ?  
 where it is the fish there  
 ‘Where is that fish?’ (Alan, 3;2.18)
- Oh *il* est à la poubelle !  
 Oh it is in the bin  
 Oh it is in the bin!’ (Téo, 3;7.1)
- c. Both:
- I(l)* veut sa maman parc(e).que *il* est tout seul.  
 He wants his mummy because he is all alone  
 ‘He wants his mummy because he is on this own’ (Noémie, 3;3.15)

Example c also demonstrates that accommodation is far from systematic in the child system as the corpus comprises quite a few elements that are not elided, i.e. conjunctions, articles as well as prepositions, as instantiated in (6).

- (6) Elision is not systematic (Corpus 2):
- a. *De* une carotte et *de* une tomate.  
 of a carrot and of a tomato  
 ‘(the story) of a carrot and of a tomato’ (Emma, 3;0.27)
- b. Non le coq il est rigolo par(ce).que il est  
 no the cock he is funny because he is  
 allé dans le gros pot.  
 gone in the big pot  
 ‘No, the cock is funny because it has gone into the big pot’ (Lucie, 3;3.22)

- c. Et ben moi il est ici le oiseau.  
 and er me he is here the bird  
 ‘Er, I see that the bird is here’ (Quentin, 3;5.29)

As elision is not overwhelming, the nearly systematic elision of the preverbal clitics attests of a very close relationship between these preverbal elements and the verbs. This fact also works in favour of the morphological analysis of these elements.

### 3.4 Clitic inversion

De Cat (2005:1199) claims that clitic inversion is a productive structure in spontaneous French (in Belgium, Canada and France). This claim implies that the clitics are manipulated in syntax independently from the finite verb and that consequently, these elements are proper syntactic items, i.e. arguments. Besides the fact that I do not fully agree with the way the different types of interrogative structures are counted within the adult systems investigated by the author (further discussion in Palasis-Jourdan in preparation), Corpus 1 and 2 attest again that this argument does not apply to the child linguistic system. Indeed, Corpus 1 includes absolutely no clitic inversions (as shown in table 3Table ) and Corpus 2 displays only one very tentative series of post-verbal clitics during a short conversation involving Hector (EKT, 3;5.8) and Quentin (QUE, 3;7.1). During the scene reported in (7) hereafter, the boys are left on their own for a few seconds in our usual interview room. However, they are surprised to find themselves on their own and they start the following conversation, clearly imitating adult intonations:

- (7) Tentative use of post-verbal clitics (Corpus 2, IV.19d):  
 EKT: \*euh 0 s(e).passe t il ?  
 er 0 happens EP\*it?  
 ‘Er, (what)’s happening?’  
 (\*EP=epenthesis)  
 QUE: \*qu.est.c(e).qui 0 passe t il ?  
 what 0 happens EP it  
 ‘What’s happening?’  
 EKT: \*oui non mais que s(e).passe t 0 ah !  
 yes no but what happens EP 0 ah  
 ‘Yes, no, but what’s happening?’  
 EKT: que s(e).passe t il ?  
 what happens EP it?  
 ‘What’s happening?’  
 QUE: \*qu.est.c(e).que s(e).passe t il ?  
 what happens EP it?  
 ‘What’s happening?’

These utterances clearly adduce evidence in favour of two facts. Firstly, post-verbal clitics are extremely rare at this stage of the children’s linguistic development. It can hence not be established that post-verbal clitics are manipulated as independent syntactic items, on a par with nouns for instance.

This, again, represents an argument in favour of the affixal status of these elements in the child early linguistic system. However, on the other hand, the tentative presence of these elements uttered post-verbally gives us a clue as to a prospective evolution of the status of these clitics in the child system and hence as to the possibility I will detail in section 4.2 with regard to the variability of their status during one's lifetime.

### 3.5 *The status of the intervening elements*

Following Zwicky & Pullum's (1983) criterion according to which "clitics can attach to material already containing clitics, but affixes cannot", De Cat (2005) claims that, within a morphological analysis, the elements between the 'subject' clitic and the finite verb would have to be considered as affixes too. The elements under scrutiny are the negative particle *ne*, the 'adverbial pronouns' *y* and *en* and the object clitics.

First of all, the criterion De Cat relies on was devised by Zwicky & Pullum in 1983 on the basis of English data. Since then, Heggie & Ordóñez (2005) for instance have applied this criterion to Romance languages and have come up with counterexamples in Caribbean Spanish and Portuguese, hence demonstrating that affixes can also attach to clitics. Secondly, hypotheses on the affixal status of the object clitics exist (see Kaiser 1994 for instance).

Furthermore, the data tell us, again, that these three categories of elements are not productively uttered by young children. The negative particle *ne* is extremely rare in child data as well as in adult oral data. As far as the pronouns *en* and *y* are concerned, the same observation applies: they are not uttered productively by young children. Corpus 1 displays only 9 occurrences of *en*, always uttered by the same child – Raphaël – and in the same type of what could be a rote-learned however often ungrammatically used structure *-y'en a*. Two of these occurrences are listed in (8) hereafter.

- (8) Occurrences of *en* (Corpus 1):
- a. Ben moi aussi chez moi y' en a.  
     well me too at me there some.of has  
     'Well at my place too there are some' (Raphaël, 2;6.12)
  - b. Y' en a plus de Père Noël.  
     there one.of has no.more of Father Christmas  
     'There isn't a Father Christmas anymore' (Raphaël, 2;8.11)

Object clitics are also often omitted by young children. This phenomenon is well attested in the literature and it has been shown that they appear after the 'subject' clitics in the development of the child (Jakubowicz & Rigaut 2000 for instance). An additional personal comment on the object clitics is that it is very difficult to attest to their presence since the target clitic is often the elided third singular *l'* and it is often uttered between the clitic *il* and a verb whose onset is a vowel, as shown in (9).

- (9) Object clitics (Corpus 2):
- a. Il l' [?] enlève.  
 he it takes.off  
 'He takes it [?] off' (Maxime, 2;8.8)
- b. Elle l' [?] a.  
 she it has  
 'she has it [?]' (Eloïse, 3;2.0)
- c. Oui il l' [?] a oublié.  
 yes he it has forgotten  
 'Yes, he has forgotten it [?]' (Lucie, 3;1.24)
- d. Pourquoi il l' [?] a laissé tout seul ?  
 why he it has left all alone  
 'why has he left him [?] on his own?' (Emma, 3;0.2)
- e. Il l' [?] attrape.  
 he it catches  
 'He catches it [?]' (Emma, 3;0.2)

### 3.6 Doubling

De Cat (2005:1205) claims that doubling, i.e. the co-occurrence of a non-dislocated DP and of a resumptive clitic, does not exist in spoken French as, if it existed, the corresponding structure would be  $[_{CP}[_{TP}DP[_{T'}\text{clitic}+T]]]$  with the DP in [Spec, TP] and the clitic in T. For De Cat, this structure is impossible because when a DP is in [Spec, TP], it is a focus, i.e. new information or the most informative part of a sentence, but she claims that a focus cannot be resumed by a clitic. For De Cat, when a DP is resumed by a clitic, the clitic is in [Spec, TP] – hence being a proper argument – and the DP is a topic, i.e. what the sentence is about – which is a syntactically dislocated element, base-generated in the left periphery of the sentence. Her example (which is in English) is quoted in (10) with the focus in capitals.

- (10) Question: Who's eaten my porridge?  
 Answer: GOLDILOCKS has.

Since Corpus 1 displays no sentences with a preverbal DP and no resumptive clitic (as shown in table 3), this would mean that children do not use focus. However, this is highly unlikely. In fact, they use other strategies – just as adults do – such as non-verbal phrases or clefts, as illustrated in the four dialogues in (11) initiated thanks to the same type of question as in De Cat's example above.

- (11) Children's focusing strategies (Corpus 2)
- a. KAT: Qui.est.c(e).qui mange à la cantine ? (27a)  
 who eats at the canteen  
 'Who eats in the canteen?'
- LUS: Pas moi.  
 not me  
 'I don't'



- b. KAT: Et qui.c.est.qui habite là dedans ? (40b)  
and who lives there inside  
'And who lives in there?'
- NOE: Unesouris !  
a mouse!  
'A mouse!'
- c. KAT: Qui.c.est.qui fait ça ? (34a)  
who does that?  
'Who does that?'
- EMA: C'est le oiseau qui fait ça.  
It is the bird who does that  
'It's the bird who does that'
- d. KAT: Qui.c.est.qui mange qui ? (27b)  
who eats who?  
'Who eats who?'
- EMA: Ben hm c'est le petit cochon qui le mange !  
er hm it is the little pig who him eats!  
'It's the little pig who eats him!'

Besides, children regularly introduce new information uttering sentences which include a DP and a resumptive clitic.

(12) New information (Corpus 2):

- a. Beginning of a conversation with Alan (I.2: 2;8.18):  
KAT: ça va Alan ?  
it goes Alan  
'Are you okay Alan?'
- ALA: mon papa i(l) vient me chercher.  
my dad he comes me fetch  
'My dad comes to fetch me'
- b. Antoine (XIII.49c: 3;4.21) wants to catch a token under a bed but the bed is too low:  
KAT: tu peux pas l' attraper ?  
you can not it catch  
'You can't catch it?'
- ANT: oui ma tête elle est trop grosse !  
yes my head she is too big!  
'Yes (instead of no), my head is too big!'

None of the mentioned arguments falsify the hypothesis which claims that the so-called 'subject' clitics bear a morphological status in the child linguistic system. Consequently, I maintain the morphological analysis forwarded in section 2.2.

#### 4. What about the Pro-drop Parameter?

The Pro-drop Parameter was devised as binary, typological and syntactic.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it is the presence vs. the absence of these preverbal clitics – considered as syntactic arguments within the generative framework at the time – which traditionally enabled the linguists to classify the different languages as pro-drop, e.g. standard Italian, or non pro-drop, e.g. standard French. However, it is now well attested that such a binary classification does not encompass all the effective linguistic complexities.<sup>4</sup> An ordinary example from standard French illustrates this fact. Indeed, the present indicative paradigms, as exemplified in table 4 hereunder, instantiate the negative value of the traditional Pro-drop Parameter, whereas the present imperative paradigms clearly display the opposite pattern.

Table 4. *Standard French instantiates both values of the Pro-drop Parameter.*

	Indicative		Imperative	
	Clitic	Finite Verb	Clitic	Finite Verb
1sg	je	parle		
2sg	tu	parles	∅	parle(s)
3sg	il	parle		
1pl	nous	parlons	∅	parlons
2pl	vous	parlez	∅	parlez
3pl	ils	parlent		

Indeed, on the indicative side, standard French requires the obligatory presence of the clitics, whereas the imperative forms impose their absence. It can also be noticed that the indicative paradigm in Table 4 displays poor verbal agreement morphology whereas the imperative paradigm presents three distinctive verbal forms. Consequently, it can be said that the imperative forms are self-sufficient as far as the [Person] feature is concerned whereas the indicative forms require an additional piece of information with regard to [Person]. A similar dichotomy was observed when comparing the child verbal system to the adult one in section 2.1.

Furthermore, a morphological analysis of the preverbal clitics hence forces to recast such a syntactically devised parameter. Consequently, bearing this morphological hypothesis in mind, let's now reclassify a few languages such as standard Italian, early French, standard French and standard English.

##### 4.1 Two parameters

Let's compare these languages for the utterance 'I speak'. Three categories of information are taken into account in the following order: distinctive verbal suffixation, verbal prefixation, and the presence of a subject argument (the brackets indicate its optionality).

<sup>3</sup> See Oliviéri (this volume) for further investigation on these characteristics.

<sup>4</sup> Precisely one of the central purposes of this Workshop on Null-Subjects, Expletives and Locatives in Romance.

Table 5. *A new Classification.*

	Syntax		Morphology	
	Argument	Affix(es)		
		Prefix	Verb	Suffix
Standard Italian	(Io)	∅	parl	o
Early French	(Moi)	je	parl	∅
Standard French	Je	∅	parl	∅
Standard English	I	∅	speak	∅

We see the application of two parameters here. The first one handles the verbal morphology with regard to [Person]. If the suffix checked by the verb provides distinctive information with regard to the [Person] feature within its paradigm, then the verb does not need any additional information and the [Person] feature is checked post-verbally. This is the case for standard Italian for instance. Subsequently, additional *referential* information can be brought in or not by an optional subject argument. On the other hand, if the suffix does not provide such distinctive information within its paradigm, then the verb needs to pick up the information elsewhere, i.e. preverbally. This is the case for early French, standard French and standard English. Consequently, it is claimed that there is a first parameter here and that this first parameter handles the locus of the [Person] feature with regard to the verb – the [Person] feature is either checked thanks to a distinctive suffix or not. This first parameter is hence a morphological one. It is identified as the ‘(Distinctive) Suffix Parameter’.

Subsequently, a second parameter deals with the category of the additional preverbal information required. If the language displays preverbal agreement affixes, the information is conveyed by these morphological elements and the verb then checks the [Person] feature thanks to a prefix. At this stage, the information is complete. The presence of an additional element, i.e. an argument, is hence optional; however, the prefix is obligatory. This is the case in early French with the exceptions due to the similarity with a distinctive suffix system (as detailed in section 2.1). On the other hand, if the language does not display such prefixes, the verb at this stage still lacks the [Person] feature and the derivation still requires a further merge with an element carrying the necessary information. And since morphology has not provided it, the language resorts to syntax. The still missing agreement information is hence brought in thanks to the merge with a syntactic argument. This is the case for standard English and standard French. So it is claimed that there is a second parameter here and that this second parameter handles the type of information that a language displays with regard to the preverbal [Person] feature, i.e. morphology either displays the adequate prefixes or not. This second parameter is hence a morpho-syntactic one insofar as it links morphology to syntax since, if the language does not display the necessary tools in its morphological toolbox, it then looks for them in its syntactic toolbox. This second parameter is identified as the ‘Prefix Parameter’.

Table 6 hereafter illustrates the application of these two parameters. It can be seen with the case of standard Italian that the second, Prefix Parameter does not need to apply when the agreement information is complete as early as the application of the first, (Distinctive) Suffix Parameter. Furthermore, these parameters enable us to distinguish early French from standard French – the

former displays morphological prefixes whereas the latter resorts to syntactic arguments, as English does.

Table 6. *A new typology.* \*

Languages	‘(Distinctive) Suffix Parameter’	‘Prefix Parameter’
Standard Italian	+	0
Early French	–	+
Standard French	–	–
English	–	–

\* See Olivieri (this volume) for an application to Occitan dialects.

#### 4.2 *From a unique morphological status to a dual morpho-syntactic one*

Moreover, table 6 allows us to move one step further with regard to the long-standing debate around the status of these preverbal clitics in French. Indeed, the analysis proposed here highlights the fact that these elements can in fact bear both statuses: they emerge as verbal prefixes within the child system and subsequently, under the pressure of the norm which has always favoured a syntactic status for these elements, they are then also uttered as arguments. De Cat’s (2005) work hence complies with the latter. The status of these clitics has been difficult to grasp because all the native speakers of French have de facto been children. So they can all manipulate these clitics as prefixes spontaneously and, due to the norm and schooling, they can also manipulate them as arguments. These preverbal clitics hence bear a variable morpho-syntactic status due to the fact that oral French is a blend of early French, which is spontaneous, and later French, which is more or less prescriptive, depending on the speaker’s personal background as well as on the speech situation.

The corpora display additional clues (which are currently under further investigation) in favour of this hypothesis. Indeed, it appears that, when a child happens to utter intervening elements such as the negative particle *ne*, under particular conditions such as a song, the clitic is then uttered in its full form, i.e. *il* instead of the usually found *i(l)*, despite the fact that it appears before a consonant. Emma (Corpus 2, XI.41d: 3;2.14) for instance utters a series of full clitics preceding the particle *ne* while singing, e.g. *il ne chante plus, il ne saute plus, il ne danse plus, il ne parle plus*. During the same session, Antoine (3;3.27) utters quite a few object clitics and concomitantly utters *il s’arrête* with a full form of the clitic. This pattern also emerges in the sentences I utter during the interviews. Clitics are overwhelmingly present; however, when they are absent, the rest of the sentence is also different. Example (13) hereafter shows that the pronoun *celui-là* is uttered in its full form, whereas it usually surfaces as *c(el)ui-là*.

(13) Corpus 2 (XIII.46b):

Celui.là s’ appelle ‘la campagne’ mais on verra après.  
 that.one itself calls ‘the country’ but one will.see afterwards  
 ‘That one (book) is called ‘the country’ but we will look at it afterwards.’

## 5. Conclusion

Collecting, transcribing and labelling child data are very time-consuming and demanding tasks. However, linguists should not hesitate to avail themselves of broad and reliable corpora. Indeed, Corpora 1 & 2 have shed new light on two often addressed linguistic issues – the well-known child null ‘subject’ phenomenon and the status of the so-called ‘subject’ clitics in French.

First of all, a hypothesis is forwarded in order to explain the children’s clitic omissions. It is hence established in section 2.1 that young children drop some of their clitics because their linguistic system is sometimes comparable to a pro-drop one. Indeed, their reduced verbal paradigms often provide distinctive forms with regard to the [Person] feature, e.g. *suis* vs. *est*. A consequence of this hypothesis is that the preverbal clitics are analysed as preverbal grammatical morphemes rather than syntactic arguments (in sections 2.2 and 3). This morphological analysis in turn forces to recast the syntactically devised Pro-drop Parameter that rules the occurrence of these preverbal clitics across the different languages. Two parameters are consequently conceived of the (Distinctive) Suffix Parameter, which pertains to morphology, and the Prefix Parameter, which links morphology to syntax (in section 4.1). Finally, this rationale permits to disentangle the intricate problem of the status of these preverbal elements in adult oral French as it is claimed in section 4.2 that these elements sometimes bear a morphological status and sometimes have a syntactic one because oral French represents a blend of early spontaneous French, where clitics are prefixes, and standard prescriptive French, where clitics are syntactic arguments. A third corpus, collected in 2007-2008, should provide additional information and a more fine-grained survey of the evolution of this status since the same children as in Corpus 2 were recorded again. They were then between 3;6 and 4;11 and a couple of children started reading. I should hence be able to observe if and how this direct access to prescriptive French interacts with the children’s utterances.

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## ***On the evolution of expletive subject pronouns in Old French***<sup>1</sup>

*Michael Zimmermann*

### ***1. Introduction***

Old French (OF), which is generally described as a null subject language, featured expletive subject pronouns throughout its period. In this respect, OF differs fundamentally from other Romance null subject languages such as Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. In this paper, I will present the outline of a new analysis for this highly puzzling phenomenon of OF.

On the basis of a processed data corpus comprising seven OF texts, I will in a first step illustrate the evolution of expletive subject pronouns in OF. I will then present generative analyses trying to account for the occurrence of expletives in OF by assuming that in this language, the realisation of pronouns in subject position was contingent upon a strict V2 constraint.

In the following, I will show on the basis of the processed data corpus that there are (at least) two strong empirical arguments against such an approach to OF expletives. In this respect, I will argue that in OF, the realisation of pronouns in subject position was *not* contingent upon a strict V2 constraint – which OF actually did *not* have.

Against this backdrop, an alternative approach to OF will be proposed: OF will be analysed as a *non*-null subject language, in which null subjects, interpreted as relics of an earlier language stage, could (still) be realised as long as certain specific structural conditions were met. These conditions will then be identified as those sanctioning the expression of Agr in Fin°, a component of Rizzi’s (1997) split C system, which will be adopted with respect to OF sentence structure.

Based on an analysis of a selection of OF finite declarative non-coordinated V1 and V2 matrix clauses with a null subject, one of the conditions licensing null subjects in OF will be identified: the insertion of one of the particles *si*, *ne*, or *et* into the syncretic, single head of the *Force-Finiteness* system.

### ***2. Expletive subject pronouns in OF***

In generative principles and parameters theory it is generally assumed that there is a parametrically established correlation between the so-called null subject property and the obligatory lack of lexically realised expletive pronouns as subjects (i.e. non-referential subject pronouns, which cannot be emphasised owing

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<sup>1</sup> This study was carried out as part of the research project A-19 “Evolution and variation of expletive and neuter pronouns in the Romance languages” run by Georg A. Kaiser. This project is part of the Collaborative Research Centre 471 “Variation and evolution in the lexicon”, which is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation) and is set up at the University of Konstanz. Thanks to Georg A. Kaiser and Sascha Gaglia for helpful comments. Thanks also to Katrin Krämer for checking my English. The author is responsible for any remaining errors.

to their semantic emptiness); it is also assumed that this correlation holds without exception (Haider 2001:285).

From a diachronic perspective, French, a non-null subject language, is generally described as being originally a null subject language because of its property to omit referential subject pronouns if these are not specially emphasised. Therefore, it can in principle be assumed that – at least as long as the assumed null subject property of French was valid – impersonal constructions occurred *without* a lexical subject “given that expletive constructions in general are considered to be typical of non-pro-drop languages” (de Bakker 1995:2).

However, as Arteaga (1994:142) notes, the emergence of expletive pronouns as subjects in impersonal constructions in OF *predates* the loss of the assumed null subject parameter at the end of the Middle French period (end of the 16<sup>th</sup> / beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) by several centuries. In fact, the first occurrences of expletive subject pronouns can already be found in texts dating from the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and the frequency of their use gradually increases in the course of the evolution of Medieval French until they become obligatory together with the other subject pronouns.

At this point, it must be noted that with respect to the status of expletive pronouns in impersonal constructions in OF, their distribution clearly indicates that these pronouns represent *true* subject expletives:

(a) OF expletive pronouns occur in different kinds of impersonal constructions, i.e. they occur both in constructions allowing so-called quasi-arguments as subjects and in constructions with non-argumental expletives in subject position:

- (1) OF expletive pronouns occurring in impersonal constructions with a quasi-argument as subject:
  - a. ... que il ne plúve pur lur pecchie ...  
because it not rains for their sin  
'... because it does not rain on account of their sin...'  
(*livre reis* 3, 8, 35, p.130-31)
  - b. ... tantost come il sera ajorné ...  
as soon as it will be dawn broken  
'... as soon as dawn will break ...' (*saint graal* 508, 27, p.322)
  
- (2) OF expletive pronouns occurring in impersonal constructions with a non-argumental expletive in subject position:
  - a. **Cio** fud lonx dis que non cadit ...  
this was long time that not he.fell  
'It was only after a long time that he fell ...'  
(*saint-léger* 231, p.176)
  - b. **Il** nen I ad chevalier ne barun ...  
It not there had knight nor baron  
'There was no knight nor baron ...' (*roland* 2418, p.453)
  - c. **il** m' avint ... une avision ...  
it to.me happened a vision  
'... I had a vision ...' (*saint graal* 482, 3, p.304)



- d. ... quant **ce** vint aus lances bessier ...  
 when this came to.the lances lower  
 ‘... when it came to lowering the lances ...’  
 (*conquête* 157, p.116)
- e. ... **il** fu acordé entour solleil couchant que ...  
 it was decided around sun sleeping that  
 ‘... it was decided around sunset that ...’  
 (*saint louis* 375, p.184)

(b) OF expletive pronouns only occur in impersonal constructions and do not occur in sentences in which they cannot possibly be analysed as subjects – i.e. in sentences where there is either another lexically realised subject or where the expression does not feature a verb;

(c) OF expletive pronouns occurring in impersonal constructions do not only turn up in the first position of the matrix clause but occur even predominantly in embedded clauses and occasionally postverbally in matrix clauses:

- (3) OF expletive pronouns occurring in impersonal constructions in embedded clauses:
- a. S’ **il** ad bataillie, ...  
 when it has battle  
 ‘When there is a battle, ...’  
 (*roland* 2607, p.477)
- b. ... ú **il** én í oút de la manne ...  
 where it of.it there had of the manna  
 ‘... where there was some of the manna ...’  
 (*livre reis* VIII, 9, p.129)
- c. ... se **il** te semble, au tuen avis, que ...  
 if it to.you seems in.the your opinion that  
 ‘... if it seems to you, in your opinion, that ...’  
 (*saint graal* 510, 37, p.325)
- d. ... que **il** lor anuita en une ... valee ...  
 that it to.them night.fell in a valley  
 ‘... that night was setting in on them in a ... valley ...’  
 (*saint graal* 508, 10-11, p.322)
- e. ... dont **il** estoit moult grant domache a ceuls ...  
 of.this it was very big damage to them  
 ‘... this caused a lot of damage to those ...’  
 (*conquête* 245, p.168)
- f. Quant ce vint le soir, ...  
 when this came the evening  
 ‘When it was dark, ...’  
 (*saint louis* 410, p.202)
- (4) OF expletive pronouns occurring postverbally in impersonal constructions in matrix clauses:
- a. ... de ce nos estuet **il** mout petit esmaier ...  
 of this us must.be it very little trouble  
 ‘... this must be very little trouble for us ...’  
 (*saint graal* 474, 14, p.300)

- b. Et quant ..., de la joie ... ne covient **il** mie parler...  
 and when ... of the joy not need it not speak  
 ‘And when ..., one need not speak about the joy ...’  
 (*conquête* 183, p.132)
- c. ...et pour ce vaut **il** miex ...  
 and for this is.worth it better  
 ‘...and therefore it is far better ...’ (*saint louis* 348, p.172)

Given this distribution of expletive pronouns in impersonal constructions in OF, I consider them to be true subject expletives which are exclusively conditioned by syntactical factors and are, therefore, inconsistent with the description of OF as a null subject language.

Against this backdrop, we are thus dealing here with a phenomenon which is “contrary to what one might expect from a null-subject language” (Arteaga 1994:152-153) and which is, among other things, responsible for the fact that “Old French differed from other null-subject languages” (Arteaga 1994:141-142) such as Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese.

### ***3. The evolution of pronouns in subject position in OF***

In this section I present data which result from a syntactical annotation of seven OF text corpora which were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- all texts to be selected should be edited;
- the respective edition of each text to be selected should be based on one single manuscript whose dating is relatively indisputable;
- the respective edition of each text to be selected should be a faithful reproduction of the relevant manuscript and should indicate any intervention on the part of the editor(s);
- all texts to be selected should have been written in OF in general and in the so-called français central in particular, which became the later français standard, both to make them comparable and to avoid (as far as possible) any sort of regional or dialectal influence;
- all texts to be selected should have been written in an unaffected and thus in a rather ‘oral type’ of language to represent as far as this might (ever) possibly be the spoken language of a given time;
- the intervals between the respective time of writing of the texts to be selected should be the same ( $\approx$  50 years) to allow for a uniform depiction of any possible evolution of the syntax of OF.

Some of the OF texts eventually selected fulfil these prerequisites to a very large extent (the four most recent ones) while others only do so to a minor extent (the three oldest ones) – admittedly an unsatisfactory fact which is due to the rarity of early OF texts. The selected seven OF texts are given in table 1:

Table 1. *Datings, titles, and literary genres of the selected seven OF texts.*

dating of the selected manuscript	title of the selected text	literary genre of the selected text
882	<i>Cantilène de sainte Eulalie</i>	poem
1000	<i>Saint-Léger</i>	poem
1125-1150	<i>La Chanson de Roland</i>	poem
1170	<i>Li quatre livre des reis</i>	prose text
1220	<i>L'Estoire del saint Graal</i>	prose text
1290	<i>La Conquête de Constantinople</i>	prose text
1330-1340	<i>Vie de saint Louis</i>	prose text

With the exception of the *Cantilène de sainte Eulalie* text as well as of the *Saint-Léger* text, which are both rather short and are therefore analysed in their entirety, an extract of 1500 clauses (matrix as well as embedded clauses) from each text was chosen for syntactical annotation.

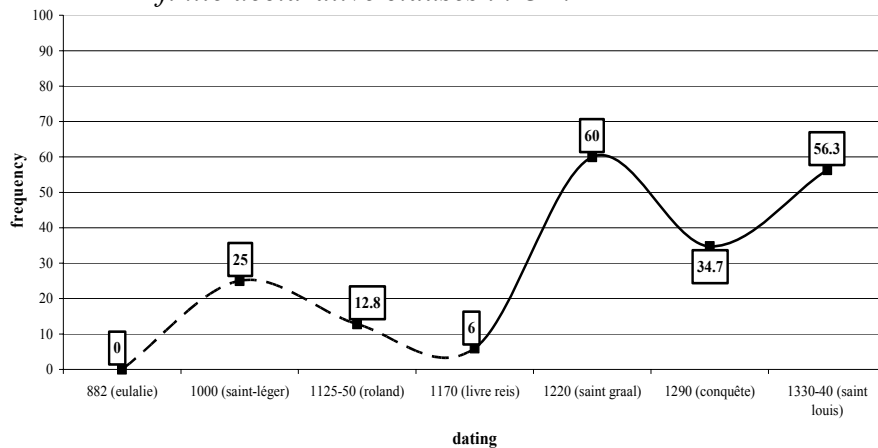
### 3.1 The evolution of OF expletive subject pronouns

Let us begin our observation of the evolution of pronouns in subject position in OF with the development of OF expletives. In this regard, we first look at the evolution of OF expletives in all finite declarative clauses<sup>2</sup>, i.e. both in matrix and in embedded clauses, to get an impression of the ratio of realised vs. unrealised expletives in OF:

<sup>2</sup> Note that in this section, the following types of clauses were discarded with respect to the analysis of the data: imperatives, relatives, exclamations, questions, incised clauses, coordinated clauses with a coreferential null-subject, fixed expressions with or without an expletive subject pronoun (e.g. *il y a* = 'ago', *peu s'en faut* = 'almost') as well as clauses where it was not possible to determine whether these featured a null expletive as subject or rather a full noun, e.g.:

- (i) Illec vint mon seigneur Phelippe de Monfort, et dit au roy que ...  
 there came my master Phelippe de Monfort and said to.the king that ...  
 'My master Phelippe de Monfort went there and told the king that ...'  
 (*saint louis* 308, p.152)

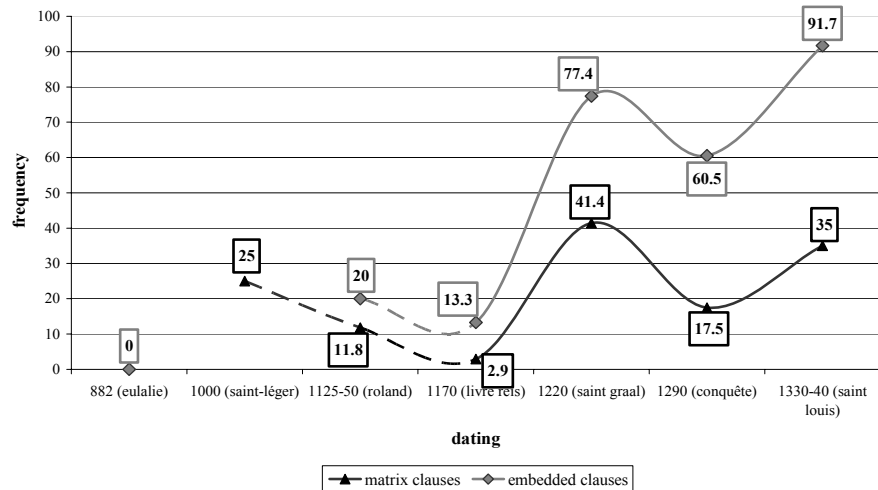
Diagram 1. *Percentages of the realisation of expletive subject pronouns in all finite declarative clauses in OF.*<sup>3</sup>



As the graph in diagram 1 shows, the evolution of OF expletives in finite declarative clauses is not a linear one, i.e. we are not dealing here with a development which shows a gradual increase in the realisation of expletives. Rather, increases as well as decreases in the occurrence of expletives can be observed.

Diagram 2 illustrates the evolution of OF expletives in all finite declarative clauses according to their (non)embeddedness:

Diagram 2. *Percentages of the realisation of expletive subject pronouns in finite declarative matrix clauses as well as in finite declarative embedded clauses in OF.*



Again, as in diagram 1, the evolution of OF expletives both in finite declarative matrix clauses and in finite declarative embedded clauses is not linear. As for the results of the poetic as well as of the prose texts, we can – with the exception of the *saint-eléger* text, where there are no data available regarding finite declarative

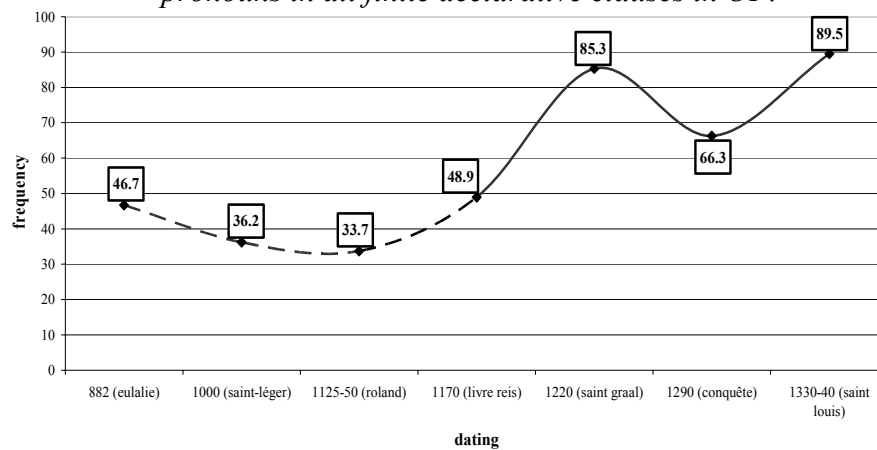
<sup>3</sup> Note that in this Diagram as well as in the following ones, the broken graph illustrates for the three poetic texts and the non-broken graph for the four prose texts.

embedded clauses – detect a relatively parallel development of OF expletives in both matrix and embedded clauses. What is particularly interesting in this respect is the fact that the realisation of OF expletives in embedded clauses is far more frequent than their realisation in matrix clauses.

### 3.2 The evolution of OF subject personal and demonstrative pronouns

In order to be able to better assess our results of the development of OF expletives, we now have a look at the evolution of the realisation of the subject personal as well as demonstrative pronouns in OF. Note in this regard that the latter also stand out due to their (non)realisation. Again, just as we did in the previous subsection, we begin with the examination of the corresponding evolution in all finite declarative clauses:

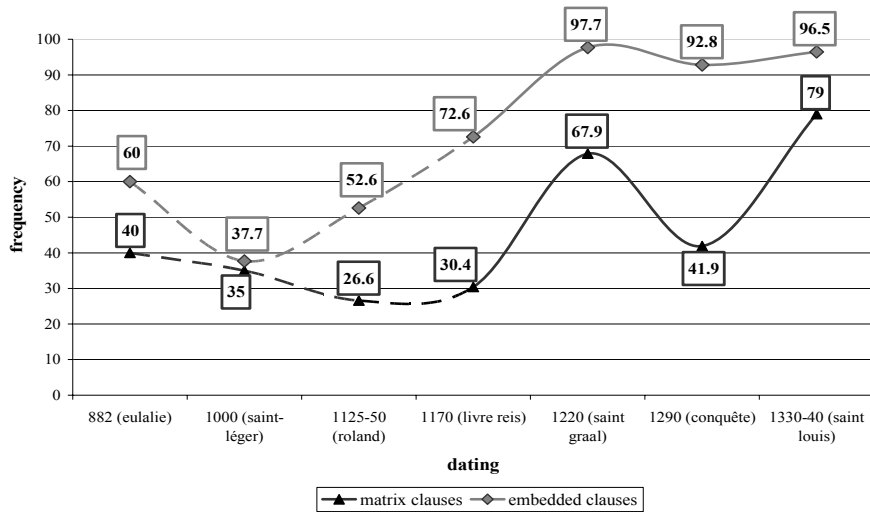
Diagram 3. Percentages of the realisation of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in all finite declarative clauses in OF.



As in the case of expletive subject pronouns, the evolution of OF subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in finite declarative clauses is not linear. With respect to the poetic texts, we observe a decrease, and with respect to the prose texts, we observe an increase interrupted by a sudden decrease.

The situation of the development of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in all finite declarative clauses with respect to their (non)embeddedness, illustrated in diagram 4, again resembles the situation encountered in the case of OF expletives (cf. diagram 2 in subsection 3.1) since, with the exception of the *saint-léger* text, the realisation of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in embedded clauses is far more frequent than their realisation in matrix clauses:

Diagram 4. *Percentages of the realisation of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in finite declarative matrix clauses as well as in finite declarative embedded clauses in OF.*

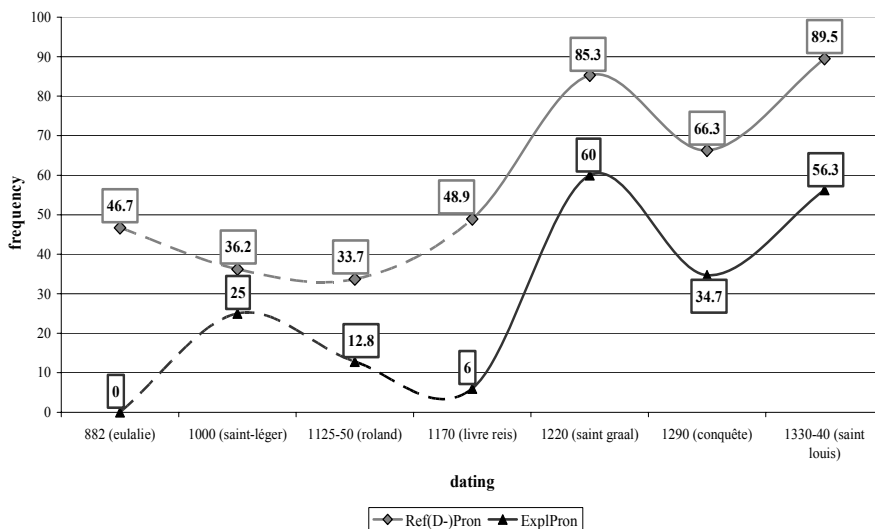


However, contrary to the respective developments of OF expletives given in diagram 2, the respective evolutions illustrated in diagram 4 show no distinct parallelism, which one might possibly have expected.

### 3.3 A comparison of the observed evolutions

Let us now illustrate and compare the evolution of OF expletives with that of OF subject personal and demonstrative pronouns, starting with the developments in all finite declarative clauses:

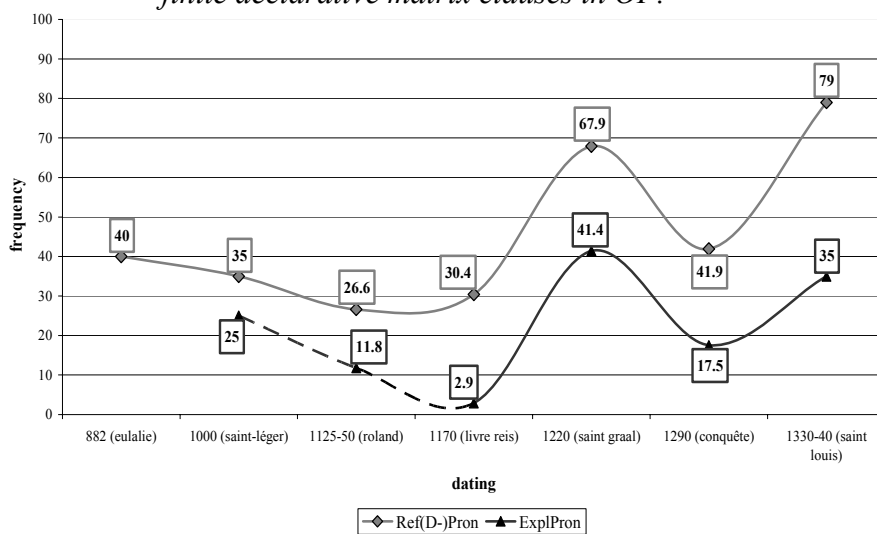
Diagram 5. *Percentages of the realisation of expletive (= ExplPron) as well as of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns (= Ref(D-Pron)) in finite declarative clauses in OF.*



As diagram 5 shows, the respective evolutions in two of the three OF poetic texts as well as in the four OF prose texts show a distinct parallelism. Furthermore, the respective results illustrate that with the exception of the very short *eulalie* text, the realisation of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns is far more frequent than the realisation of expletive subject pronouns.

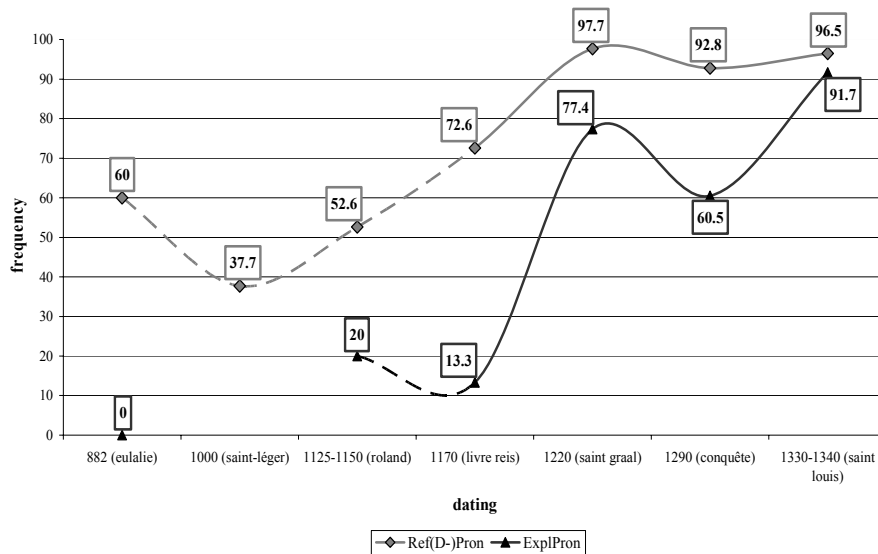
The situation of the respective developments of the realisation of expletive as well as of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in finite declarative matrix clauses in OF is very similar to the situation encountered in diagram 5, as diagram 6 shows:

Diagram 6. *Percentages of the realisation of expletive (= ExplPron) as well as of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns (= Ref(D-Pron)) in finite declarative matrix clauses in OF.*



However, as it follows from the respective results given in diagram 6, the realisations of expletive subject pronouns as well as of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in finite declarative matrix clauses are each far less frequent when compared to those in diagram 5. Obviously, this is due to their far more frequent realisations in finite declarative embedded clauses in OF, as the diagram 7 shows:

Diagram 7. Percentages of the realisation of expletive (= *ExplPron*) as well as of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns (= *Ref(D-Pron)*) in finite declarative embedded clauses in OF.



In addition to this difference in frequency, the situation here is also very different from those situations encountered in connection with the two previous diagrams 5 and 6 as the respective developments of the realisation of expletive as well as of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in finite declarative embedded clauses show no distinct parallelism.

### 3.4 Summary

To summarise, we can conclude that in OF, expletive subject pronouns were already realised in the oldest texts hitherto discovered<sup>4</sup> and that their realisation in the four OF prose texts selected increases. This increase, however, is not linear and is far more pronounced in embedded clauses.

As for subject personal and demonstrative pronouns, we can detect that these, too, were already realised in the three oldest OF texts hitherto discovered and that they also show an increase in their realisation in the four OF prose texts selected. Again, this increase is not a constant one and it is far more pronounced in embedded clauses.

Against the backdrop of the observed evolution of OF subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in general and of OF expletive subject pronouns in particular, the question now is: How do we deal with the results of this observation within a generative syntactic framework?

<sup>4</sup> Note that a single occurrence of an impersonal construction featuring a null expletive subject pronoun in a very short poetic text (*eulalie*) should not be interpreted as evidence against the existence of realised expletive subject pronouns at the respective time of writing.



#### 4. *Generative analyses of expletive subject pronouns in OF*

Generative analyses (cf. Haiman 1974, Arteaga 1994, de Bakker 1995, Arteaga & Herschensohn 2006) attribute the realisation of expletive subject pronouns in impersonal constructions to the often noted and highly frequent occurrence of the finite verb in the second position in OF matrix clauses. These analyses hereby build on the widespread assumption that OF, parallel to the Germanic languages with the exception of Modern English, was a verb second (V2) language (cf. Thurneysen 1892, Meyer-Lübke 1899, Foulet 1928, Adams 1987, 1989, Roberts 1993, Lemieux & Dupuis 1995, Vance 1997). In this regard, the realisation of any preverbal subject in OF is accounted for in the following manner:

Old French is a V2-language. In root clauses, the finite verb always has to be preceded by some constituent [...]. But the preverbal constituent cannot be a null subject. If no other element fills the first slot, there must be a lexical subject in preverbal position. (de Bakker 1995:6)

Against this backdrop, the generative analyses in question conclude that “impersonal subjects were, if not introduced, at least generalised, in medieval French specifically in order to keep the finite verb in second position in declarative sentences” (Haiman 1974:121). According to these analyses, the realisation of expletive subject pronouns in impersonal constructions is therefore a direct consequence of the V2 property assumed for OF: “[E]xpletives in Old French [...] were a function of its V2 word order and were independent of its status as a null-subject language” (Arteaga 1994:144) and are, as a consequence, analysed as “true CP expletives” (Arteaga & Herschensohn 2006:284).

Furthermore, it is assumed that the realisation of expletive subject pronouns in OF took place analogously with the realisation of the other subject personal pronouns: “[I]t is particularly gratifying to see that in medieval French [...], the appearance of subject personal pronouns, like that of impersonal pronouns, was subject to the V/2 constraint” (Haiman 1974:123).

#### 5. *Empirical arguments against the proposed generative analyses*

At first sight, the generative analyses just expounded seem to be an elegant solution to the puzzling question of why expletives should turn up in OF, a language generally described as *pro*-drop. However, there are at least two strong empirical arguments against such an approach to OF expletives. The first empirical argument is that there is strong evidence against the assumption that the realisation of subject pronouns was contingent upon the V2 constraint, i.e. necessary to keep the finite verb in second position in declarative matrix clauses. The second empirical argument is that there is strong evidence against the assumption that OF had a strict V2 constraint at all.

### 5.1 Is the realisation of subject pronouns contingent upon the V2 constraint?

In this subsection, I review – on the basis of the selected seven OF text corpora – the assumption according to which in matrix clauses, pronouns in subject position were realised in those cases only where the finite verb would otherwise end up in the first position.

To begin with, table 2 illustrates the results of the analysis of the positioning of all realised subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in finite declarative matrix clauses:<sup>5</sup>

Table 2. *Absolute numbers of occurrences and percentages of the positioning of all realised subject personal demonstrative pronouns (= SP) in finite declarative matrix clauses.*

text		position of the pronoun						total
		X1 SPV	X1 SPX...V	X2	X3	X4	X5	
<i>eulalie</i>	#	2	2	-	-	-	-	4
	%	50	50	0	0	0	0	100
<i>saint-léger</i>	#	19	2	5	1	1	-	28
	%	67.8	7.1	17.9	3.6	3.6	0	100
<i>roland</i>	#	61	1	5	16	1	-	84
	%	72.6	1.2	5.9	19.1	1.2	0	100
<i>livre reis</i>	#	52	11	6	-	1	-	70
	%	74.3	15.7	8.6	0	1.4	0	100
<i>saint graal</i>	#	84	-	28	64	13	1	190
	%	44.2	0	14.7	33.7	6.9	0.5	100
<i>conquête</i>	#	92	1	10	16	6	1	126
	%	73	0.8	7.9	12.7	4.8	0.8	100
<i>saint louis</i>	#	144	-	54	18	1	-	217
	%	66.4	0	24.9	8.3	0.4	0	100

As the results in table 2 show, there is clear evidence that the assumption that the realisation of subject personal as well as demonstrative pronouns is contingent upon the V2 constraint cannot be maintained. On the one hand, there are numerous instances where the realised subject pronoun is not in the first position of the matrix clause. On the other hand, there are many cases where the realised subject pronoun is actually in the first position – without, however, being directly

<sup>5</sup> Note in this respect that object clitic pronouns, reflexive clitic pronouns, adverbial clitic pronouns, non sentence-initial, clitic *ne*, and the coordinating conjunctions *car*, *et*, *mais*, and *ou* were not counted as independent constituents.

followed by the finite verb. In fact, these observations hold for each of the three OF poetic texts as well as for each of the four OF prose texts.

As for the analysis of the positioning of all realised expletive subject pronouns in finite declarative matrix clauses, table 3 illustrates the respective results:<sup>6</sup>

Table 3. *Absolute numbers of occurrences and percentages of the positioning of all realised expletive subject pronouns (= ExP) in finite declarative matrix clauses.*

text		position of the pronoun					total	
		X1 ExpV	X1 ExpXV	X2	X3	X4		X5
<i>eulalie</i>	#	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>saint-léger</i>	#	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
	%	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
<i>roland</i>	#	8	-	-	-	-	-	8
	%	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
<i>livre reis</i>	#	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
	%	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
<i>saint graal</i>	#	7	-	1	4	-	-	12
	%	58.3	0	8.3	33.4	0	0	100
<i>conquête</i>	#	5	-	-	4	1	-	10
	%	50	0	0	40	10	0	100
<i>saint louis</i>	#	7	-	4	2	-	-	13
	%	53.8	0	30.8	15.4	0	0	100

At first sight, the results in table 3 seem to be contradictory: Whereas three of the OF texts – namely the *saint-léger*, the *livre reis* as well as the *roland* text – suggest that the assumption that the realisation of expletive subject pronouns in matrix clauses is contingent upon the V2 constraint is borne out, three of the OF texts strongly contradict such a suggestion and rather indicate that the assumption in question should be rejected.

However, what must be noted at this point with respect to the three OF texts which seem to suggest that the assumption according to which the realisation of expletive subject pronouns in matrix clauses is contingent upon the V2 constraint is borne out is the fact that the absolute number of occurrences of expletive subject pronouns in these two texts is relatively small (*saint-léger*: 2 occurrences; *livre reis*: 1 single occurrence; *roland*: 8 occurrences). Against this backdrop and given that three out of the six relevant OF texts under scrutiny clearly present evidence against the assumption in question, we may here adopt the conclusion

<sup>6</sup> Cf. footnote 5.

drawn with regard to the positioning of all realised subject personal and demonstrative pronouns and may therefore infer that the assumption that the realisation of expletive subject pronouns is contingent upon the V2 constraint cannot be maintained either.

Against the backdrop of the insights gained so far in this subsection, we may thus conclude that the assumption according to which in matrix clauses, pronouns in subject position were realised in those cases only where the finite verb would otherwise end up in the first position should be rejected.

Note that as a further argument against the assumption in question, one could<sup>7</sup> refer to the observation that in embedded clauses, pronouns turn up in subject position – and that they do so highly frequently (cf. diagram 7 in subsection 3.3).

### 5.2 OF, a V2 language?

Let us now turn to the second empirical argument against the approach to OF expletives discussed above, namely against the assumption that OF had a strict V2 constraint.

Kaiser (2002) shows on the basis of an empirical analysis of OF prose finite declarative matrix clauses with a realised subject that the rigidity of the V2 constraint as argued for by Roberts (1993) cannot be confirmed. As Kaiser illustrates, this is due to the numerous cases of V>2.

Kaiser notes in this respect that all instances of V>2 taken into account do not show any characteristics which would justify an analysis of these structures as exceptions to the universally applicable restriction according to which no additional constituents may be adjoined to the SpecCP position. Against this backdrop, Kaiser argues that all detected V>2 matrix clauses are not compatible with a V2 grammar, in which the finite verb must obligatorily move to C°. Also, all V>2 matrix clauses taken into account are principally excluded in V2 languages.

Kaiser thus shows that the frequent instances of V>2 are incompatible with a V2 analysis of OF and, in this respect, represent clear evidence *against* the analysis of OF as a V2 language. Therefore, Kaiser concludes that in spite of the partly very frequently used possibility to construct a matrix clause with an XVS ordering, OF must be considered a *non* V2 language (cf. Kaiser (2002) for a detailed discussion).

In the remainder of this subsection I illustrate the results of an analysis of my own of declarative matrix clauses with a realised subject with respect to the

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<sup>7</sup> But note that some analyses (inter alia Adams 1989 and Côté 1995) of OF assume that this language was a *symmetrical* V2 language, i.e. both matrix and embedded clauses are considered to be V2.

positioning of the finite verb.<sup>8</sup> Once again, this analysis is based on the selected seven OF text corpora. The results for each of the seven selected OF texts are given in table 4:

Table 4. *Absolute numbers of occurrences and percentages of the positioning of the finite verb in all declarative matrix clauses with a realised subject.*

text		V1	V2 Subj V	V2 XV	V>2	total
<i>eulalie</i>	#	1	2	1	5	9
	%	11.1	22.2	11.1	55.6	100
<i>saint-léger</i>	#	1	36	10	31	78
	%	1.3	46.2	12.8	39.7	100
<i>roland</i>	#	45	232	123	69	469
	%	9.6	49.5	26.2	14.7	100
<i>livre reis</i>	#	27	250	101	67	445
	%	6.1	56.1	22.7	15.1	100
<i>saint graal</i>	#	2	154	95	63	314
	%	0.6	49	30.3	20.1	100
<i>conquête</i>	#	28	231	145	32	436
	%	6.4	53	33.3	7.3	100
<i>saint louis</i>	#	19	251	55	84	409
	%	4.7	61.4	13.4	20.5	100

As the results of the analysis in table 4 show, in each of the seven OF text corpora selected, instances of V>2 structures are frequent. However, what must be noted here first and foremost is that all instances of V>2 structures detected in the seven OF text corpora are incompatible with a V2 analysis of OF because it is not

<sup>8</sup> Note in this regard that object clitic pronouns, reflexive clitic pronouns, adverbial clitic pronouns, non sentence-initial, clitic *ne*, and the coordinating conjunctions *car*, *et*, *mais*, and *ou* were not counted as independent constituents. Note further that the following types of clauses were discarded with respect to the analysis of the data: incised clauses, as these always and at all times show an XVS order in French (cf. Kaiser 2002:140), and verb-third structures, in which an embedded clause and an adverb, which is coreferential with the embedded clause, precede the finite verb, e.g.:

- (i) *Quant mon non fu mis en escrit, si me mena l' amiraut dedans*  
 when my name was put in writing then myself led the admiral into  
 le paveillon ...  
 the tent  
 'When my name was written down, the admiral led me into the tent ...'

(*saint louis* 333, p.162)

As in German and Icelandic, both strict V2 languages, these verb-third structures represent the only licit exceptions to the general V2 word order rule (cf. Kaiser 2002:142-3).

possible to analyse these structures as exceptions to a universally applicable V2 word order rule.

Therefore, on the basis of the argumentation and analysis in Kaiser (2002) as well as on the basis of the results of my own analysis, I conclude with Kaiser that OF must rather be considered a *non* V2 language.

### 5.3 Summary

Let us quickly summarise our observations so far: Generative analyses account for the puzzling phenomenon that expletives turn up in OF, a language generally described as *pro*-drop, by assuming that in OF, a V2 language, expletive subject pronouns had to be used in impersonal constructions in declarative matrix clauses in those cases (only) where the finite verb would otherwise end up in the first position. As it has been shown in the two preceding subsections, there are (at least) two strong empirical arguments against such an approach to OF expletives: (1) Expletive subject pronouns, along with subject personal and demonstrative pronouns, do not only occur in the first position of a matrix clause where they are directly followed by the finite verb but in other positions as well; and (2) OF had no strict V2 constraint and should therefore not be analysed as a V2 language. This shows that the puzzling question of why expletive subject pronouns should turn up in OF, a language generally described as *pro*-drop, has not really been answered yet.

## 6. An alternative approach to OF

In this section, I will put forward an alternative approach to the issue in question, assuming that OF was, just like Modern French (ModF) is today, a *non*-null subject language. I will also deal with some of the consequences ensuing from such an alternative analysis.

### 6.1 OF, a null subject or a non-null subject language?

For any generative syntactic explanation of the evolution of OF pronouns in subject position as presented in section 3, it is imperative to take into consideration the two insights gained in the previous section: namely that the realisation of pronouns in subject position was *not* contingent upon a strict V2 constraint, which OF actually did *not* have. It follows from this that any such explanation must inevitably represent a radical departure from all other analyses hitherto proposed for OF. But what could such an alternative analysis for OF look like?

In order to be able to assess the situation in OF, let us have a look at the results reached so far:

- a. OF has the property to omit referential subject pronouns if these are not specially emphasised;
- b. in OF, the occurrences of pronouns in subject position are not contingent upon any word order constraint;

- c. OF has no strict word order – at least no strict V2 constraint as strong V2 languages;
- d. OF features frequent (*eulalie*: 40%; *saint-léger*: 35%; *roland* 26.6%; *livre reis*: 30.4%) and even highly frequent (*saint graal*: 67.9%; *conquête*: 41.9%; *saint louis*: 79%) occurrences of subject personal and demonstrative pronouns in finite declarative matrix clauses;
- e. OF features less frequent (*livre reis*: 2.9%; *roland* 11.8%) and even frequent (*saint-léger*: 25%; *saint graal*: 41.4%; *conquête*: 17.5%; *saint louis*: 35%) occurrences of expletive subject pronouns in finite declarative matrix clauses.

On the basis of the observation in (a), namely that OF featured the property to omit referential subject pronouns if these are not specially emphasised, OF has been described in the literature as a null subject language.

However, when we check the other observations in (b) – (e) for mutual compatibility with the general conclusion drawn on the basis of the observation in (a), i.e. with the conclusion that OF was a null subject language, we instantly detect a serious problem: Against the backdrop of (b) – the occurrences of pronouns in subject position are not contingent upon any word order constraint in OF – and (c) – OF has no strict word order – and given that it is generally assumed that the property to omit referential subject pronouns if these are not specially emphasised was only lost at the end of the Middle French period (end of the 16<sup>th</sup> / beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century), the assumption that OF was a null subject language is completely incompatible with (d) and, in particular, with (e), i.e. with the observation that OF featured frequent occurrences of referential and expletive subject pronouns in finite declarative matrix clauses. As the observations in (d) and (e) represent empirical facts which must not be ignored, it seems appropriate in this connection to call into question the general assumption that OF was a null subject language. In my opinion, it is advisable to adopt in this respect an alternative analysis for OF.

By assuming that OF was rather a *non*-null subject language, we can easily account for the empirical facts in (b), (d), and (e). Note that the observation in (c), namely that OF has no strict word order, does not affect such a proposal. However, what clearly stands in the way of such an analysis is (a), albeit slightly modified: As it is already apparent from the observations in (d) and (e), OF has the property to omit *both* referential *and* expletive pronouns in subject position. I claim, however, that this property of OF is, in fact, compatible with the analysis of OF as a non-null subject language by assuming that, as long as certain specific structural conditions were met, null subjects could (still) be realised in this non-null subject language. I attribute this somewhat unusual situation of possible, yet restricted null subjects in a non-null subject language to the limited maintenance of a formerly omnipresent null subject property in OF, i.e. to clearly sanctioned relics of an earlier language stage.

## 6.2 Consequences of the analysis of OF as a non-null subject language

As I assume that OF was a non-null subject language and the empirical data clearly indicate that OF was not a V2 language, something must be said about the

canonical derived word order in OF. I follow Adams (1987, 1989) and assume that just as in ModF, the underlying word order of OF was SVO and the canonical derived word order of OF was SVO, too. In addition, I assume that the canonical derived word order SVO featured the following surface structure in OF:

(5) OF surface structure for SVO clauses: [IP S V O]

The assumption that the canonical derived word order in OF should be analysed as SVO seems to be quite reasonable given the following results of an empirical analysis of the derived word order in finite declarative matrix and embedded clauses with a realised subject in the selected seven OF texts:<sup>9</sup>

Table 5. *Absolute number of occurrences and percentages of the derived word order in finite declarative matrix and embedded clauses with a realised subject.*

text	derived word order		total
	S V O	other than S V O	
<i>eulalie</i>	#	4	10
	%	28.6	71.4
<i>saint-léger</i>	#	58	49
	%	54.2	45.8
<i>roland</i>	#	296	316
	%	48.4	51.6
<i>livre reis</i>	#	495	277
	%	64.1	35.9
<i>saint graal</i>	#	655	355
	%	64.9	35.1
<i>conquête</i>	#	530	339
	%	61	39
<i>saint louis</i>	#	776	273
	%	74	26

As the results in table 5 show, the derived SVO word order in finite declarative matrix and embedded clauses with a realised subject has a frequency of around 50% in the poetic texts with the exception of the oldest text and shows up in about two thirds of all the clauses in question in the four prose texts. This points to the fact that in OF, the canonical derived word order was the same as the underlying word order, namely SVO.

<sup>9</sup> Note in this respect that object clitic pronouns, reflexive clitic pronouns, adverbial clitic pronouns, the coordinating conjunctions *car*, *et*, *mais*, and *ou*, relative pronouns, and *wh*-pronouns introducing an embedded clause were not counted as independent constituents.



As for the assumption in (5), it seems justified that in OF, sentences with the canonical derived word order SVO feature a surface structure with the subject and the finite verb in IP: Given the observation that OF was not a V2 language, there is simply no reason to assume that in cases of a derived SVO word order both the subject and the finite verb should be moved into the CP domain.

Taken thus together, my two assumptions with respect to OF – (1) OF was a non-null subject language; (2) the deep and the surface structures were identical in OF for SVO clauses – clearly indicate that OF was in these respects very similar to ModF. Still, OF differs from the latter with regard to the restricted possibility of null subjects. How and where these are licensed in OF is dealt with in the next subsection.

### 6.3 On the licensing of OF null subjects

The central claim of this paper is that OF was a non-null subject language. Still, the observed property of OF to omit both referential and expletive pronouns in subject position must be accounted for. I claimed above that I considered this property of OF to be compatible with the analysis of OF as a non-null subject language. I based this claim on the assumption that it was *only* when certain specific structural conditions were met that null subjects could be realised in this non-null subject language. In this respect, I take into account that OF featured the possibility to omit pronouns in subject position. At the same time, however, I assume that this possibility must be distinguished from the general possibility to omit pronouns in subject position typically assumed for null subject languages: In this connection I claim that in OF, null subjects are possible only under certain conditions. It is these very conditions that I deal with in this subsection.

However, before we turn to the specific licensing conditions for OF null subjects, a fundamental question must first be answered with respect to the structural syntactical representation of null subjects in OF: namely whether the empty pronominal subject *pro* is eliminated from the syntax and the licensing of null subjects is an inherent property of the agreement system itself, as proposed in minimalist analyses (cf. inter alia Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998, Kato 1999, and Rinke 2003 for OF), or whether the empty pronominal subject *pro* is in an empty pronominal category and the licensing of null subjects follows from structural requirements (government), as proposed in preminimalist analyses (cf. inter alia Rizzi 1986, and Adams 1987, 1989, Roberts 1993, Vance 1997 for OF). As a natural consequence of my current assumptions, I opt for the latter analysis.

Therefore, with respect to the licensing conditions for OF null subjects, I adopt Rizzi's (1986) proposal for the licensing of null subjects. I assume that in OF, an empty pronominal subject *pro* had to be governed by Agr which was able to identify *pro*. In an adaptation of Rinke (2003), however, I assume that both this identification and this government relation are strictly contingent upon the expression of Agr in the functional head  $Fin^{\circ}$ , i.e. upon the endowment of  $Fin^{\circ}$  with agreement.  $Fin^{\circ}$  being just one of an articulated array of X-bar projections in the C system proposed by Rizzi (1997), I follow Ferraresi & Goldbach (2003) and Rinke (2003) and assume that the sentence structure in OF, just like the one in Modern Italian, features Rizzi's split C system. Before tackling one of the conditions sanctioning the expression of Agr in  $Fin^{\circ}$  in OF, I will first give a short

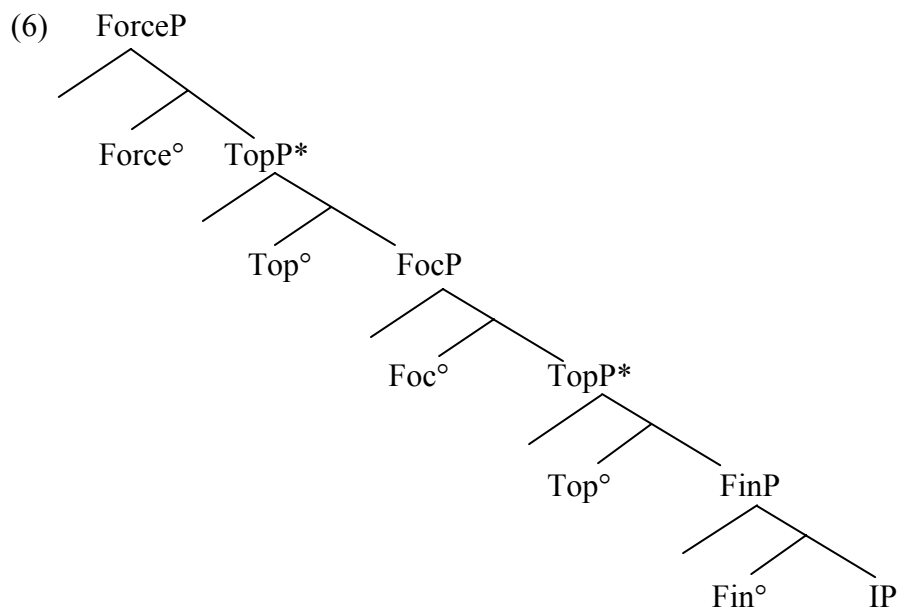
summary of Rizzi's main assumptions with respect to the fine structure of the left periphery and will then illustrate the functioning of the so-called *Force-Finiteness* system.

#### 6.4 Rizzi's (1997) fine structure of the left periphery

Rizzi (1997) suggests that the complementiser system (C system), i.e. the left (pre-IP) periphery of the clause, is not a single layer but rather an articulated array of X-bar projections. This multiple layered C system acts "as the interface between a propositional content (expressed by the IP) and the superordinate structure (a higher clause [when embedded] or, possibly, the articulation of discourse" (Rizzi 1997:283) when not embedded. Rizzi's C system minimally consists of a specification of *Force* ( $\text{Force}^\circ$ ), accessible to higher selection and expressing "the fact that a sentence is a question, a declarative, an exclamative, a relative" (Rizzi 1997:283) etc., and a specification of *Finiteness* ( $\text{Fin}^\circ$ ), selecting a finite or non-finite IP.  $\text{Force}^\circ$  and  $\text{Fin}^\circ$  are normally expressed as a syncretic, single head.

In addition, Rizzi's C system may also consist of a *Topic-Focus* system, i.e. a FocP surrounded by recursive TopPs, being in turn 'sandwiched' in between the ForceP and the FinP. A TopP contains a preposed element expressing old information in its specifier position whereas the FocP has in its specifier position a preposed element bearing focal stress and introducing new information. Rizzi emphasises that, within the 'last resort' intuition, no free, optional preposing and adjunction to IP is permissible as "all kinds of movements to the left periphery must be motivated by the satisfaction of some Criterion, hence by the presence of a head entering into the required Spec-head configuration with the preposed phrase" (Rizzi 1997:282). Rizzi also points out that the *Topic-Focus* system is present in a structure only when this very system is activated by an element bearing *Topic* or *Focus* features to be sanctioned by a Spec-head Criterion.

The relevant articulated structure of the C system as proposed by Rizzi is given in (6):



### 6.5 The functioning of the Force-Finiteness system

Rizzi (1997:311-315) illustrates the exact functioning of the *Force-Finiteness* system on the basis of subject extraction from embedded finite declaratives in English. Rizzi assumes for the latter the alternation of an overt complementiser *that* with a non-overt complementiser  $\emptyset$  in a syncretic, single head in order to be able to account for the ungrammaticality and the grammaticality of (7a) and (7b) respectively:

- (7) a. \*An amendment which they say [ $t'$  **that** Force $^\circ$ /Fin $^\circ$  [ $t$  will be law next year]].  
 b. An amendment which they say [ $t'$   $\emptyset$  Force $^\circ$ /Fin $^\circ$  [ $t$  will be law next year]].

In (7a) *that* is selected and, as a consequence, the trace  $t$  in subject position cannot be properly governed; this leads to an instant violation of the ECP. In (7b), however, the selection of  $\emptyset$  leads to proper government of the subject trace  $t$  because  $\emptyset$  is turned into a governor by the Agr specification licensed by the passage of the extracted subject through the specifier of the maximal projection of  $\emptyset$ .

From this, Rizzi constructs the following preliminary matrices for the two items in question:

- (8) a. that = +declarative, +finite  
 b.  $\emptyset$  = +declarative, +finite, (+Agr)

According to (8), both *that* and  $\emptyset$  express declarative force and finiteness while  $\emptyset$  can also optionally express agreement.

However, in sentences such as in (9):

- (9) An amendment which they say **that**, next year,  $t$  will be law.

where there is a topicalised adverbial, Rizzi states that, due to the activation of the *Topic-Focus* system, the *Force-Finiteness* system cannot be realised on a syncretic, single head “because either one or the other specification would not be adjacent to its selecting or selected domain” (Rizzi 1997:312). Rather, the *Force-Finiteness* system must split into two heads – *Force* and *Finiteness* – which ‘sandwich’ the *Topic-Focus* system.

From sentences such as in (9) Rizzi concludes that the *Force* specification must be manifested by *that* above the topic and that the *Finiteness* specification must be manifested by a zero head under the topic –  $\emptyset$ . This gives the following analysis for the sentence in (9):

- (10) An amendment which they say [**that** Force $^\circ$  [next year Top $^\circ$  [ $\emptyset$  Fin $^\circ$  +Agr [ $t$  will be law.]]]]

Against the backdrop this analysis, Rizzi proposes the following revision of the preliminary matrices given in (8):

- (11) a. *that* = +declarative, (+finite)  
 b.  $\emptyset$  = (+declarative), +finite, (+Agr)

According to this revision, “*that* expresses declarative force and may optionally express finiteness;  $\emptyset$  [on the other hand] expresses finiteness, and may optionally express declarative force (as well as agreement)” (Rizzi 1997:312). It is these specification matrices that I want to build on within the context of my analysis given in the next subsection.

### 6.6 On one condition sanctioning the licensing of null subjects in OF

In this final subsection, I illustrate how in OF, the expression of Agr in the functional head  $\text{Fin}^\circ$ , i.e. the endowment of  $\text{Fin}^\circ$  with agreement, may be conditioned. Due to lack of space and still ongoing investigation, this illustration is based on a selection of V1 and V2 matrix clauses with a null subject.

As for the V1 constructions, I only take account of those OF finite declarative non-coordinated V1 matrix clauses with a null subject, which are introduced by the coordinating conjunction *et* and which do not share the subject with the previous sentence.<sup>10</sup> And with respect to the V2 constructions, I merely capture those finite declarative non-coordinated matrix clauses with a null-subject, in which either *si* or *ne* is in absolute sentence-initial position.

As it is only in prose texts that no restriction is imposed on the number of syllables, the present analysis restricts itself to the instances of the relevant V1 and V2 constructions encountered in the four selected OF prose texts. In these texts, the constructions in question represent on average almost a fourth (22.1%) of all finite declarative non-coordinated matrix clauses featuring a null subject, as table 6 shows:

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Rizzi (1994) and Poletto (2005) for a possible analysis of non-coordinated V1 structures which are introduced by the coordinating conjunction *et* and which share the subject with the previous sentence.

Table 6. *Absolute numbers of occurrences and percentages of the positioning of the finite verb in declarative non-coordinated matrix clauses featuring a null subject.*

text	position of the finite verb in declarative non-coordinated matrix clauses featuring a null subject					total	
	V1	V1	V2	V2	V>2		
	<i>et</i> ≠	other than <i>et</i> ≠	<i>si/ne</i>	other than <i>si/ne</i>			
<i>livre reis</i>	#	9	12	31	119	46	217
	%	4.2	5.5	14.3	54.8	21.2	100
<i>saint graal</i>	#	2	3	17	56	34	112
	%	1.8	2.7	15.2	50	30.3	100
<i>conquête</i>	#	33	25	26	94	44	222
	%	14.9	11.3	11.7	42.3	19.8	100
<i>saint louis</i>	#	20	11	3	38	14	86
	%	23.2	12.8	3.5	44.2	16.3	100
<i>all four prose works</i>	#	64	51	77	307	138	637
	%	10	8	12.1	48.2	21.7	100

Those finite declarative non-coordinated matrix clauses which are introduced by *et* and which do not share the subject with the previous sentence but rather feature a different subject, as illustrated in (12), are V1 constructions:

- (12) a. ... ; *é* fist tut metre en sun paleis.  
 e made everything put in his palace  
 ‘... ; e he had everything brought into his palace’  
 (*livre reis* 3, 10, 17, p.136)
- b. Lors s’ esmut nostre galie, *et* alames ...  
 then itself moved our galley, *et* went  
 ‘Then our galley started moving, et we went ...’  
 (*saint louis* 389, p.190)
- c. ... et comença a plovoir et a venter et a toner ...  
*et* started to rain and to blow and to thunder  
 ‘... *et* it started to rain and to blow and to thunder ...’  
 (*saint graal* 473, 13, p.299)
- d. Et fu devise que il feroit l’ ariere garde.  
 et was decided that he would make the rearguard  
 ‘Et it was decided that he should be the rearguard.’  
 (*conquête* 153, p.116)

Declarative non-coordinated matrix clauses with a null-subject, in which sentence-initial *si* is directly followed by the finite verb, as illustrated in (13), have hitherto been analysed as V2 constructions:

- (13) a. *Si* estoit tant bele et tant avenant ...  
*si* was so pretty and so agreeable  
 ‘*Si* she was so pretty and so agreeable ...’  
 (*saint graal* 493, 14, p.312)
- b. *Si* fu tex leur conseil qu’ il envoierent ...  
*si* was such their advice that they would send  
 ‘Their advice was such that they sent ...’ (*conquête* 184, p.132)
- c. *Si* í out dous cenz, ...  
*si*.of.them there was two hundred  
 ‘*Si* there were two hundred of them, ...’ (*livre reis* 3, 7, 19, p.126)
- d. ... ; *si* nous couvendroit garder que ...  
*si* us needed to take care that  
 ‘... ; *si* we had to take care so that ...’ (*conquête* 130, p.104)

However, adopting, albeit in a more restrictive manner, Ferraresi & Goldbach’s (2003) analysis of OF *si*, which they do not, as it is usually done in the literature, analyse as an ordinary adverb occupying the first position of the sentence, but which they rather analyse as a declarative particle, I henceforth analyse all instances of sentence-initial *si* directly followed by the finite verb as V1 structures.

Note at this point that I do not only want to adopt Ferraresi & Goldbach’s analysis of OF *si* as a particle but that I want to extend their analysis both to the cases of sentence-initial *et* under scrutiny (which must then be regarded as a particle and, thus, as a homonym of the coordinating conjunction *et* ‘and’) and to the cases of sentence-initial *ne*, of which example sentences are given in (14):

- (14) a. *N’* est mie si cume tu diz, ...  
 not is not so as you say  
 ‘This is not as you say ...’ (*livre reis* 3, 3, 22, p.117)
- b. ..., *ne* sai se ce fu ou loing ou pres ...  
 not know if this was or far or near  
 ‘..., I do not know if this was far away or close ...’  
 (*saint graal* 477, 20, p.300)
- c. ..., *ne n’* avoit home en toute l’ ost qui ...  
 not not had man in whole the army who  
 ‘..., there was no man in the whole army who ...’  
 (*conquête* 181, p.132)
- d. *Ne* tarda gueres que nous veismes venir ...  
 not lasted hardly that we saw come  
 ‘It was not long before we saw coming ...’ (*saint louis* 318, p.156)

Just like sentences with sentence-initial *si*, sentences with sentence-initial *ne* have hitherto been analysed as V2. As a consequence of the present analysis, however, the respective constructions are henceforth considered to be V1, and sentence-initial *ne* is now analysed as a particle and, thus, as a homonym of the negation particle *ne* ‘not’.

That the sentence-initial *et* under scrutiny must be regarded as a homonym of the coordinating conjunction *et* ‘and’ and must indeed undergo a different analysis

can be concluded on the basis of the observation that the sentence-initial *et* taken into consideration here *never* co-occurs with either *ne* or *si* as well as on the basis of sentences such as in (15) which feature an *et*, sometimes called ‘*et explétif*’, and which clearly exclude the interpretation of this *et* as the coordinating conjunction *et* ‘and’:

- (15) « Por ce, faisoient il, que tu lés toz nostres *et* te  
 for this made they that you neglected all ours *et* you  
 metrons la ou nos voudrons ! »  
 will.put there where we will.want  
 “‘Because, they said, you neglected us all, *et* we will touch you where  
 we want it!’” (saint graal 4, 494, p.312)

As for the nature of the three postulated particles in question, I assume that

- (a) *ne* is a negative particle introducing a sentence which features, with respect to the previous sentence, a new, i.e. referentially different, subject;
- (b) *si* is an affirmative particle which is neutral with respect to ‘subject (dis)continuity’ (i.e. it introduces a sentence which either features the same, i.e. referentially identical, subject as the previous sentence (cf. van Reenen & Schøsler 2000) or which features a new, i.e. referentially different, subject);
- (c) the particle *et* comes sort of in between the other two particles as it is neither a negative nor an affirmative particle but ‘neutral’ so to speak, furthermore standing out, just like *ne*, due to the fact that it introduces a sentence featuring, with respect to the previous sentence, a new, i.e. referentially different, subject.

For the purpose of the present analysis, I once again extend Ferraresi & Goldbach’s (2003) analysis of OF *si*, which they assume, parallel to Roberts (2000, 2004) in his analysis of two Welsh root affirmative particles, to be inserted into  $(\text{Force}^{\circ+})\text{Fin}^{\circ}$ , to the other two assumed OF particles *et* and *ne* in sentence-initial position.<sup>11</sup> In addition, I will follow Roberts and assume, contra Ferraresi & Goldbach (2003), that the finite verb does not move into the C system when one of these three particles occurs but that it stays in  $\text{I}^{\circ}$ .

At this point, I want to point out once again Rizzi’s assumptions regarding the specification of the *Force-Finiteness* system: Only in those cases where the *Topic-Focus* system is activated is the *Force-Finiteness* system split. Against this backdrop, there is thus no activation of the *Topic-Focus* system when the verb is in sentence-initial position in finite declarative non-coordinated matrix clauses with a null subject. Consequently, the *Force-Finiteness* system is realised as a syncretic, single head.

For the purpose of the present analysis, I want to build on the insight given in Rizzi (1997) within the context of his illustration of the functioning of the *Force-Finiteness* system. In this respect, I assume, along the lines of Rizzi (see 6.5), that

<sup>11</sup> Note that with respect to *ne*, Roberts (2004) also assumes the existence of a root negative particle which is able to occupy  $\text{Fin}^{\circ}$  in Welsh.

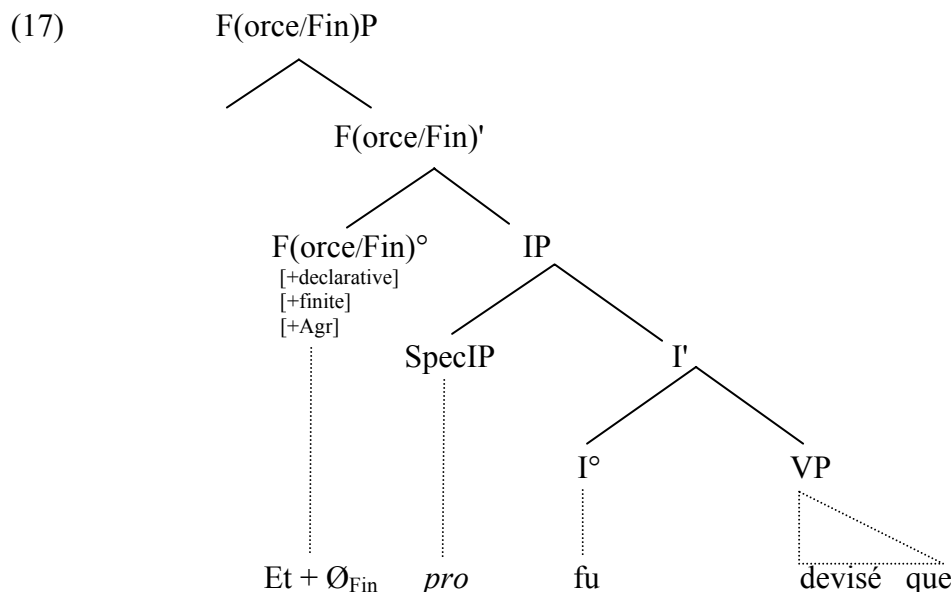
complementisers alternate in OF finite declarative matrix clauses. However, I assume that, contrary to English finite embedded clauses, OF does not feature a ‘simple’ alternation between a single complementiser manifesting the *Force* specification and a single complementiser manifesting the *Finiteness* specification. Rather, I argue that OF had an alternation between (at least) two alternating complementisers manifesting the *Force* specification, *et* ‘and’ and  $\emptyset_{\text{Force}}$ , and one complementiser manifesting the *Finiteness* specification,  $\emptyset_{\text{Fin}}$ . Adapting Rizzi’s revised specification matrices given in (11) for the alternating pair *that* /  $\emptyset$ , I propose the following specification matrices for OF finite declarative matrix clauses:

- (16) a'. *et* = +declarative, (+finite)  
 a''.  $\emptyset_{\text{Force}}$  = +declarative, (+finite)  
 b.  $\emptyset_{\text{Fin}}$  = (+declarative), +finite, (+Agr)

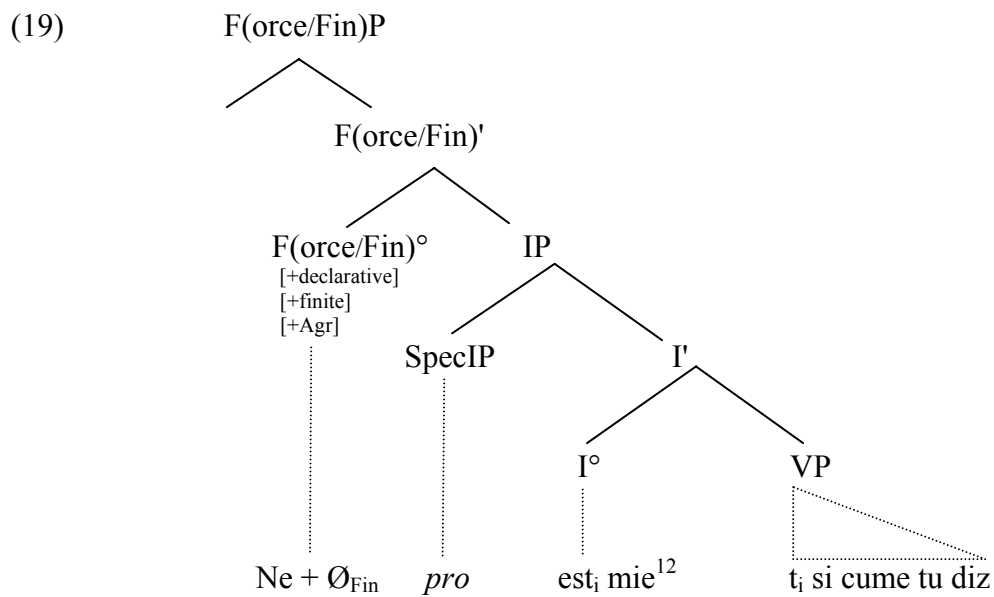
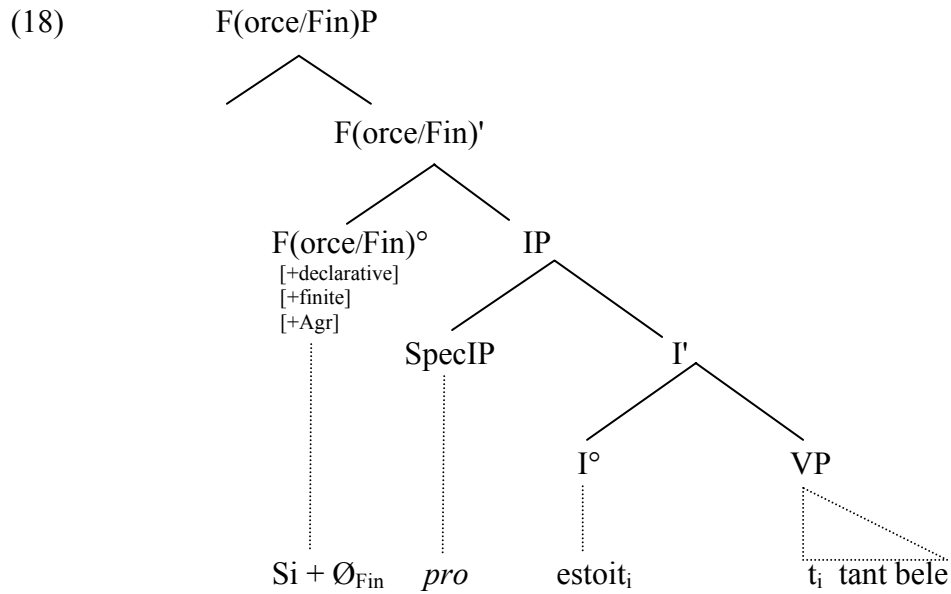
Note that the assumption of a twofold alternation is a necessary one: The alternation a' / a'' follows from the observation that a finite declarative matrix clause may either begin with *et* or without it; and the alternation a'/a'' / b is a direct consequence and an indispensable element of Rizzi’s split C system proposal.

Adopting Roberts’ (2000, 2004) analysis for Welsh root particles and extending Ferraresi & Goldbach’s (2003) analysis of OF *si*, I assume that the three OF sentence-initial particles *si*, *ne*, and *et* respectively are, when used, inserted into the syncretic, single head of the *Force-Finiteness* system. When inserted, each of the three particles in question induces the selection of  $\emptyset_{\text{Fin}}$  as well as the expression of Agr and, as a consequence, thereby enables the relevant structural condition needed for the licensing of null subjects in SpecIP in OF. We can therefore conclude that one of the conditions sanctioning the expression of Agr in  $\text{Fin}^\circ$  in OF is the insertion of either *si*, *ne*, or *et* into the syncretic, single head of the *Force-Finiteness* system.

Against the backdrop of this analysis, sentences such as in (12), (13), and (14) show the structures given in (17), (18), and (19) respectively:







So far, we have identified only one of the conditions sanctioning the expression of Agr in Fin° and licensing null subjects in OF, namely the insertion of either *si*, *ne*, or *et* into the syncretic, single head of the *Force-Finiteness* system. Obviously, the present analysis must be extended to capture all other structures featuring null subjects in OF, both in finite declarative matrix clauses and in finite declarative embedded clauses, and must thereby identify further conditions sanctioning the expression of Agr in Fin°. This, however, is a matter of future research.

<sup>12</sup> Note that with respect to the negative constituent *mie*, the tree structure given in (19) does not take account of the realisation of a NegP, as this is of no interest here.

## 7. Conclusion

Throughout the period of OF, a language generally described as *pro*-drop, expletive subject pronouns can be found. Generative analyses account for this puzzling phenomenon by assuming that in OF, the realisation of these pronouns was contingent upon its V2 constraint. However, it could be shown that in OF, expletive subject pronouns did not only occur in the first position but in other positions as well and that OF did not have such a strict V2 constraint and should therefore not be analysed as a V2 language.

Against this backdrop, an alternative approach to OF was proposed which took into account the evolution of OF expletives: OF is analysed as a *non*-null subject language in which null subjects, interpreted as relics of an earlier language stage, could (still) be realised as long as certain specific structural conditions were met. It was furthermore assumed that in OF, just like in ModF, both the underlying and the canonical derived word order were SVO and that the latter featured the surface structure [<sub>IP</sub> S V O].

The specific structural conditions sanctioning the use of null subjects were identified as those sanctioning the expression of Agr in Fin<sup>o</sup>, a component of Rizzi's (1997) split C system, which was in turn adopted with respect to OF sentence structure. Based on an analysis of a selection of OF finite declarative non-coordinated V1 and V2 matrix clauses with a null subject, one of the conditions which licensed null subjects in OF was identified, namely the insertion of either *si*, *ne*, or *et* into the syncretic, single head of the *Force-Finiteness* system.

By developing in this way an account of the realisation of expletive subject pronouns in OF, the present analysis enables us to answer in the affirmative the question of whether the well-established parametrical correlation between the existence of lexically realised expletive pronouns as subjects and the so-called non-null subject property can be maintained with respect to OF.

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## ***Subject-inversion in Old French: Syntax and information structure***<sup>1</sup>

*Esther Rinke & Jürgen M. Meisel*

### ***1. Introduction***

It is a well known fact that post-verbal subjects are much more frequent and syntactically less constrained in Old French than in modern French.

- (1) OF Lors monterent les barons aus chevaus.  
so get.on the barons on.the horses  
'So the barons got on their horses.' (Villehardouin, 13th century)

The occurrence of post-verbal subjects in Old French has been interpreted as reflecting a verb-second effect, with the finite verb generally occupying the second position in the sentence after a sentence-initial constituent. This tendency has already been mentioned in early work by Diez (1877), Meyer-Lübke (1899), and esp. by Thurneysen (1892). In structural terms, the finite verb moves to a high structural position in the clause (C° or Fin° if a split CP-category is assumed (Rizzi 1997)). The inverted subject is left behind in a lower position when a non-subject constituent occurs sentence-initially. According to this analysis, Old French has developed diachronically from a language in which the word order is grammatically determined by the verb-second property into a language in which the subject generally occupies a preverbal position and verb-third orders become possible (Adams 1987, 1988; Roberts 1993; Vance 1997 among many others).

Despite its supposed verb-second grammar, Old French texts show considerable word order variation including deviations from strict verb-second order. In contrast to proto-typical Germanic-type verb-second languages such as German, verb-initial and verb-third orders occur regularly (2a-b). It has therefore been questioned in the literature (e.g. Kaiser 2002) whether Old French should indeed be characterized as a verb-second language.

- (2) a. OF et tint sa voie chascuns  
and had his goal everyone  
'And everyone had his own goal.'

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- b. OF      *Maintenant touz les VI. Messages*  
           *now            all    the six messengers*  
           *s'    agenoillierent a leur piez moult plorant.*  
           REFL *kneed            to their feet much crying*  
           ‘Now all the six messengers sobbingly fell to their knees.’

Following this line of argumentation, the following questions need to be asked: First, what is the status of constructions exhibiting post-verbal subject placement as in example (1) and can they be explained without assuming a V2 effect? And, second, how should changes that lead to the loss of such structures in Modern French be characterized if the loss of the verb-second property is not an adequate explanation?

In this paper, we will argue that these questions can be answered in a satisfactory fashion if the relationship of syntax to information structure is taken into account. Based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data from two Old French texts from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, we argue that inversion in Old French is conditioned by the same factors as in a modern null-subject-language like Italian, Spanish or Portuguese. More precisely, as opposed to V2-languages, the occurrence of post-verbal subjects is claimed to be dependent on the *verb-type*, the *subject-type* and the nature of the sentence-initial constituent. We assume that the post-verbal subject occupies a low structural position and is interpreted either as being focused or as forming part of athetic or presentational sentence. Therefore, the occurrence of inversion structures is not related to a verb-second property of Old French but is rather information-structurally conditioned as in modern Romance null-subject languages. From a structural point of view, declarative main clauses show verb movement only as high as to the T°-head.

## ***2. What counts as evidence supporting a verb-second analysis?***

### *2.1 The notion of ‘verb-second’*

Before we can pursue these questions in more detail, it is necessary to explicitly define the kinds of constructions considered to constitute evidence in favour of or against a verb second analysis in Old French. Let us begin by discussing the notion of ‘verb-second’. The analysis of verb-second structures is a central issue in the study of the Germanic languages (see Thiersch 1978, Besten 1983, Platzack 1985, Diesing 1990, Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990, Santorini 1992, Haider 1993, Vikner 1995, Fanselow 2003, 2004, Müller 2004, Frey 2005, among many others). Although these analyses vary in some respects, we will briefly summarize the primary and mostly uncontroversial assumptions. In general, the notion of verb-second refers to generalised verb movement to C° (or a head within a Split CP-system (Rizzi 1997), Fin°) followed by movement of an XP to the sentence initial position (CP, or a Specifier position within a Split CP field (SpecTopicP; SpecFocP)). Languages like German represent proto-typical cases of verb-second languages. The following empirical observations have led to the verb-second analysis of German along the lines mentioned above:

- a) The subject occurs in the post-verbal position whenever a non-subject constituent occurs sentence-initially. Verb-third clauses are not licensed – the only exception being coordinating conjunctions that are analysed as not being part of the core sentence, see examples (3a-c);
- b) Verb-initial structures are not licensed either, except for in contexts in which Spec CP is assumed to contain an operator – e.g. yes/no-questions or Topic-drop contexts (4a-c).
- c) Finite verbs and subordinating conjunctions are complementarily distributed (5a-b) – a classical syntactic test indicating that they occupy the same structural position (C°).<sup>2</sup>

- (3) a. Ger. Das Buch liest der Mann.  
the book reads the man  
'The man reads the book.'
- b. Ger. \*Der Mann das Buch liest.  
the man the book reads
- c. Ger. Und der Mann liest das Buch.  
and the man reads the book  
'And the man reads the book.'
- (4) a. Ger. \*Liest der Mann das Buch.  
reads the man the book
- b. Ger. (OP) Liest der Mann das Buch?  
(Operator) reads the man the book  
'Does the man read the book?'
- c. Ger. (OP) hab ich nicht gelesen.  
(Operator; this) have I not read.
- (5) a. Ger. dass der Mann das Buch liest.  
that the man the book reads  
'... that the man reads the book'
- b. Ger. \*dass das Buch liest der Mann  
that the book reads the man

These observations can be explained assuming that the finite verb moves to C° in all finite contexts in which this position is not occupied by a subordinating conjunction. This movement is triggered by the fact that the verb needs to check formal features in C° (e.g.  $\phi$ -features). Verb-movement is followed by XP-movement of one (and only one) constituent to SpecCP. Verb-third structures like (3b) are excluded because adjunction to CP or the placement of multiple constituents within the Split-CP-field is not licensed. Verb-initial structures are not licensed because the preverbal specifier position must be filled.

<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, the latter point only holds for asymmetric V2 languages like German and not for symmetric V2 languages like Yiddish or Icelandic (Vikner 1995, Diesing 1990, Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990, Santorini 1992). We will come back to this issue in section 2.2.

## 2.2 *Some methodological considerations*

In the following we will further pursue the question of what counts as unequivocal evidence for a verb-second grammar. Since our hypothesis is that inversion in Old French is generally triggered by the same factors as inversion in modern Romance null-subject languages, we will compare Old French with these languages, although we are aware of the fact that they are not structurally identical in every respect. What matters here is that they can be argued to exhibit the same structural properties licensing inversion structures.

We start with the assumption that Romance null-subject languages cannot be analysed as verb-second languages. Although the verb possibly moves to the CP-field in some constructions, e.g. in the interrogative, it is generally assumed that the finite verb occupies a position within the TP-domain in declaratives. These languages nevertheless exhibit certain constructions that are superficially identical to word order patterns found in verb-second languages.

Firstly, SVO is the unmarked word order of both types of languages, see ex. (6a-b).

- (6) a. Ptg. O João comeu o bolo.  
The John ate the cake  
b. Ger. Hans aß den Kuchen.  
John ate the cake

Although SVO is the unmarked word order in both German and Portuguese, we assume that the finite verb moves to C° in German, whereas it moves only as high as T° in Portuguese and the other Romance languages previously mentioned.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, SVX-sentences do not represent evidence in favour of nor against a verb-second analysis, and therefore cannot be included in quantitative analyses assessing the proportion of V2-sentences in a text.

What about XP-V-S order? In the literature on Old French, such sentences with a non-subject sentence-initial constituent and a post-verbal subject are commonly analysed as representing typical instances of V2 inversion. However, they typically occur in verb-second as well as in null-subject languages, see (7a).

- (7) a. It. In questa università hanno studiato molti linguisti.  
in this university have studied many linguists  
(Pinto 1997:155)  
b. Ger. In dieser Universität haben viele Linguisten studiert.<sup>4</sup>  
in this university have many linguists studied  
'At this university many linguists have studied.'

<sup>3</sup> In fact, it has been proposed by Travis (1991) that SVX sentences in German are also TP structures. We will not discuss this option in further detail here.

<sup>4</sup> The examples differ with respect to the placement of the subject vis-à-vis the participle. This difference is not related to the verb-second option but follows from the fact that in Italian (and Spanish) the participle and the auxiliary may not be separated. As shown in example (7e), this restriction is not relevant for Portuguese and the subject may be placed to the left of the participle. We will come back to the issue of participle placement in section 3.



- c. Ptg. A tarte comeu a Joana.  
the tarte ate the Joanne (Ambar 1999:32)
- d. Ger. Die Torte aß Johanna.  
the cake ate Joanne  
'Joanne ate the cake.'
- e. Ptg. Nesse dia, tinha a Maria emprestado os seus  
that day AUX the Mary lent the her  
melhores discos ao Pedro.  
best records to Pedro  
'On this day, Mary lent her best records to Pedro.'  
Ambar (1992:80)
- f. Ger. An diesem Tag hatte Maria ihre besten Platten Pedro  
on this day AUX Mary her best records to.Pedro  
geborgt.  
lent

In fact, inversion is one of the core properties of null-subject languages (Rizzi 1982). Barbosa (1995) argues that null-subject inversion reflects derivational economy because rich agreement is pronominal in the sense that it has a nominal feature enabling it to check the EPP-feature of the T-head. Belletti (2004) relates the possibility of inversion to the availability of an empty pronominal element (*pro*) in the specifier position of TP. Economy considerations thus prevent the lexical subject from rising to SpecTP; it remains instead in its post-verbal base position (see Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998, Kato 1999 for similar proposals). In this context, the Specifier position of TP is assumed to be a possible landing site for non-argumental XP constituents such as pre-posed Topics, adverbial phrases and, according to some analyses, *wh*-phrases (Barbosa 2001). Given the fact that Old French is a null-subject language, the occurrence of XPVS in the texts as such tells us *nothing* about the possibility of verb movement to the CP domain.

The same is true for null-subject clauses. Sentences with a non-subject in initial position and a null-subject as in (8) cannot be regarded as evidence in favour of a verb-second analysis since a pronominal subject could theoretically occur pre- as well as post-verbally.

- (8) Sp. Ayer leí un libro.  
yesterday (I) read a book

Null-subjects are of course more likely to occupy a preverbal position because they usually constitute the topic of the sentence. In any case, such sentences cannot be regarded as evidence supporting a verb-second analysis, as has been claimed in some previous analyses of Old French which frequently analyze empty subjects as occupying a post-verbal position, e.g. Adams (1988:1); Roberts (1993:110); Vance (1997:204).

In the following section we will have a closer look at some Old French data and attempt to show how they fit into the picture drawn so far.

### 3. Analysis of verb placement in two Old French texts

#### 3.1 General considerations

The database of this analysis consists of two narrative texts, both from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. They were published in carefully prepared editions that are faithful to the manuscripts. The first text is the chronicle by *Villehardouin* and the second text is the prose novel *Les sept Sages de Rome*. With respect to the data analysis, we distinguish between different types of subjects (nominal, pronominal or empty). Clitic elements (object pronouns, *y*, *en*) are not counted as independent syntactic constituents. A total of 2253 main clauses containing a finite verb were coded with respect to clause type, position of the finite verb, position of the subject, subject type, (in)definiteness (of the subject), transitivity (of the verb), verb type, person (personal pronouns) and subject-object placement (if both existed).

Table 1. *General overview of the distribution of subjects in Villehardouin (first 1180 main clauses coded).*

Subject-type	V1	V2							V3	Total	%	
	(et-Vf)	Adv	Partic./ Infin.	DO	Pred.	Sub. clause.	IO	SV				
Preverbal DP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	263	28	291	24.7
Preverbal Pronoun	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	147	25	172	14.6
Postverbal DP	52	214	1	12	3	6	0	-	5	293	24.8	
Postverbal Pronoun	0	18	0	6	0	2	1	-	0	27	2.3	
Null-subjects	105 <sup>5</sup>	220	3	15	3	44	2	-	5	397	33.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1180</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table 2. *General overview of the distribution of subjects in Sept Sages (first 1073 main clauses coded).*

Subject-type	V1	V2							V3	Total	%	
	(et-Vf)	Adv	Partic./ Infin.	DO	Pred.	Sub. clause.	IO	SV				
Preverbal DP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	267	17	284	26.5
Preverbal Pronoun	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	292	29	321	29.9
Postverbal DP	3	47	0	0	0	0	1	-	0	51	4.8	
Postverbal Pronoun	4	31	0	6	0	9	2	-	1	53	4.9	
Null-subjects	144 <sup>6</sup>	168	0	6	3	34	3	-	6	364	33.9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1073</b>	<b>100</b>	

Both texts show verb-initial, verb-second and verb-third word orders. Subject initial main clauses with nominal and pronominal subjects as seen in (9a-b) represent the far most frequent word order pattern in both texts.

<sup>5</sup> 22 cases of *si/et si* with a null-subject.

<sup>6</sup> 110 cases of *si/et si* with a null-subject.

- (9) a. OF Li vallez respondi qu' il estoit en la vile.  
 the valet answered that he was in the town  
 'The valet answered that he was in the town.'  
 b. OF Il apela l' empereeur et li dist: ...  
 the called the emperor and him told  
 'He called the emperor and told him: ...'

Clauses are not found with the finite verb in sentence initial position, but this is typical of medieval texts in general. Sentences introduced by *clitics*, by *et* and by *si* (when fulfilling the same coordinating function as *et*) are subsumed under verb initial clauses. These clauses occur predominantly with null-subjects as in (10a), although there are also instances of post-verbal subjects as in (10b).

- (10) a. OF Et yrons et courrons en la terre de babiloine.  
 and (we) go and run to the land of babylonia  
 'And we leave and run to the land of Babylonia.'  
 b. OF et tint sa voie chascuns  
 and had his path everyone  
 'And everyone had his own path.'

Verb-second word order with a post-verbal pronominal or nominal subject typically involves a preverbal adverbial expression, although the sentence-initial constituent may also be an indirect or direct object or a subordinate clause, see (11a-c).

- (11) a. OF Lors pristrent li baron de l' ost et li dus  
 then took the barons of the East and the dukes  
 de venice ilec I parlement  
 of Venice there a parliament  
 'Then the barons of the East and the dukes of Venice called  
 a parliament there'  
 b. OF Avec lui ala jaque d'avesnes et baudoin de  
 with him went Jacques d'Avesne and Baudoiën de  
 biauveoir  
 Biauveoir  
 'Jacques d'Avesne and Baudoiën de Biauveoir went with  
 him.'  
 c. OF Et ausi conme li francois en furent lié  
 and also like the Frenchmen of.this were happy  
 en furent li grieu dolent.  
 of.this were the greek sad  
 'And the Frenchmen were happy about this like the Greek  
 were sad about it.'

Verb-third orders are also attested consistently in the data base. Sentences which are introduced by a subordinate clause followed by a subject represent cases of verb-third order almost without exception (12a), though we also find verb-third sentences with initial adverbs or adverbial prepositional clauses as in (12b-c).

- (12) a. OF Quant le lit fu fet, le valet se coucha.  
when the bed was made the valet REFL lied.down  
'When the bed was made the valet lied down.'
- b. OF Au terme que li dus leur mist il vindrent  
at.the term that the duke them set they came  
ou palés  
to.the palace  
'At the term that the duke had set to them, he came to the palace.'
- c. OF Maintenant touz les .VI. messages s'  
now all the six messengers REFL  
agenoillierent a leur piez moult plorant.  
kneed to their feet much crying  
'Now all the six messengers sobbingly fell to their knees.'

### 3.2 Discussion of verb placement options in our corpus

We begin our discussion by examining the extent to which our corpus contains evidence in favour or against a verb-second analysis. The following criteria favouring a V2-analysis were established in section 2.1: a) Verb-third clauses are not licensed; b) Verb initial clauses are only licensed when an operator can be assumed to occupy Spec CP; c) Finite verbs and subordinating conjunctions are found in complementary distribution.

With respect to the first point, the examples in (11) have already shown that verb-third structures occur in both texts. The total number of sentences with overt subjects represent approximately 7 % of all sentences, see table 3 and 4.

Table 3. *Distribution of subjects in Villehardouin without null-subjects.*

<i>Subject-type</i>	<i>V1</i>	<i>V2</i>							<i>V3</i>	Total	%
	(et-Vf)	<i>Adv</i>	<i>Partic./Infin.</i>	<i>DO</i>	<i>Pred</i>	<i>Sub. clause.</i>	<i>IO</i>	<i>SV</i>			
Preverbal DP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	263	28	291	24.7
Preverbal Pronoun	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	147	25	172	14.6
Postverbal DP	52	214	1	12	3	6	0	-	5	293	24.8
Postverbal Pronoun	0	18	0	6	0	2	1	-	0	27	2.3
Total	<b>52</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>100</b>
%	<b>6.6</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table 4. *Distribution of subjects in Sept Sages without null-subjects.*

<i>Subject-type</i>	<i>V1</i>	<i>V2</i>							<i>V3</i>	Total	%	
	(et-Vf)	<i>Adv</i>	<i>Partic./Infin.</i>	<i>DO</i>	<i>Pred.</i>	<i>Sub. clause.</i>	<i>IO</i>	<i>SV</i>				
Preverbal DP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	267	17	284	40.0
Preverbal Pronoun	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	292	29	321	45.3
Postverbal DP	3	47	0	0	0	0	1	-	0	51	7.1	
Postverbal Pronoun	4	31	0	6	0	9	2	-	1	53	7.5	
Total	7	78	0	6	0	9	3	559	47	709	100	
%	1.0	11.0	0	0.8	0	1.3	0.4	78.8	6.6	100		

It is difficult to assess the proportion of V3 sentences because the proportion of specific word order patterns in a text is obviously dependent on its content and its discursive structure. At first glance, the percentage of V3 constructions does not seem to be particularly high. On the other hand, some 50 sentences cannot simply be regarded as errors. Moreover, a similar percentage of verb-third sentences is highly unlikely to occur in Germanic texts, as is demonstrated by Kaiser (2002), who compares an Old French Bible translation of the *Quatre livre des Reis* with German and Icelandic translations of the same passage; the results are given in table 5.

Table 5. *Comparison of word order patterns in Old French, German and Icelandic (declarative main clauses with a realized subject)* (Kaiser 2002:166).

Language	Text	V1	V2		V>2
			SV(X)	XVS	
OF	Qlr	11.6	64.9	12.6	10.9
Ger	Ein	0.0	68.4	31.0	0.6
Is	Hei	4.1	62.1	31.3	2.5

Turning to the second type of evidence, one will recall that the realisation of a sentence initial constituent represents a crucial difference between verb-second and null-subject inversion. As for verb-second languages, one can argue that the post-verbal placement of the subject is an epiphenomenon of the placement of a non-subject constituent in sentence-initial position. This, however, is not necessarily true for inversion in null-subject languages, where post-verbal subjects typically occur in verb-initial sentences. As shown in examples (13a-b), sentences of this type are attested in both of the texts analysed here, most frequently in that of *Villehardouin*. The examples in (13a-d) demonstrate once again that inversion is not contingent on the realization of a clause-initial non-subject constituent, although constructions with a clause initial adverbial expression are certainly the most frequently occurring type. Importantly, however, this does not necessarily constitute evidence in support of a verb-second analysis. In fact, post-verbal subjects in non-V2 null-subject languages are perceived as more natural when the sentence starts with an adverbial expression or a topicalised object.

Verb-initial clauses in the Romance null subject languages preferentially show null-subjects. This is also the case in our Old French texts. In some cases, a post-verbal subject occurs.

- (13) a. OF et ala chascuns a son he/beriage.  
and went everybody to his hostel  
'And everybody went to his hostel.'
- b. OF Et fu grant la joie de l' enneur et de la victoire  
and was great the joy of the honour and of the victory  
que nostre sires leur avoit fete  
that our lord them has made
- c. OF Et le fist moult bien mahi de vilaincourt  
and it did very well Mahi de Villaincourt  
'And Mahi de Villaincourt did it very well.'
- d. OF et morut li quens.  
and died the duke  
'And the duke died.'

The post-verbal placement of subjects typically occurs in predicative contexts, with verbs of motion, and with intransitive verbs. Pinto (1997) analyses such sentences as involving a pre-verbal *Loco-temporal* argument. In non-null-subject languages like German, such sentences typically show an overt expletive – an option that is not available in a null subject language. Pertinent for the present discussion is the fact that if one postulates the presence of a silent expletive in these constructions, the existence of verb initial sentences does not constitute evidence opposed to a verb second analysis because the sentence-initial position is not, in fact, empty. On the other hand, such constructions – and especially those containing verbs of the types just mentioned – represent a sentence type which is very common in the Romance null-subject languages as well.

- (14) Sp. Aparecieron tres hombres.  
appeared three man (Suñer 1982)

With respect to the third point - the complementary distribution of subordinating conjunctions and verb-second structures – one must distinguish between *symmetric* and *asymmetric* verb-second languages. In German - an *asymmetric* verb second language with a right-headed TP - subordinating conjunctions are in complementary distribution with verb-second order, as illustrated by examples (5a-b). This is not the case, however, in *symmetric* verb second languages such as Yiddish, where verb-second inversion is not restricted to main clauses but can extend to subordinate clauses as well. With respect to Old French, it is not obvious which type of verb second language it actually constitutes. It has been characterized as an *asymmetric* verb-second language by Adams (1988) and as a *symmetric* verb-second language by Roberts (1993). We can, nevertheless, formulate an empirical prediction: If OF is an *asymmetric* verb-second language, we expect a complementary distribution of verb-second clauses (with a preverbal non-subject constituent) and subordinating conjunctions, i.e. post-verbal subjects should not occur in subordinate clauses. If, however, Old French is a *symmetric*

verb-second language, subject-verb inversion would be expected to be attested in subordinate clauses, whereas verb-third order should be excluded.

The subordinate clauses in our database demonstrate, in fact, that Old French can be characterized neither as an asymmetric nor as a symmetric verb-second language. The first reason leading to this conclusion is that, unlike in German, V2 inversion does occur in OF subordinate clauses, see example (15a). Old French thus cannot be an asymmetric verb-second language. On the other hand, verb-third constructions are also attested, see example (15b). These often involve the negative adverb *onques* and indicate that Old French cannot be a symmetric verb-second language, either.

- (15) a. OF Car il savoit que sanz cele ost ne pooit  
 because he knew that without this host not can  
 le servise dieu estre fet  
 the divine service be done  
 ‘Because he knew that without this host the divine service cannot be done.’
- b. OF ... Que onques gent sus mer ne  
 that never.before people on sea not  
 s’aidierent mieulz  
 themselves-helped better  
 ‘...that never before people helped themselves better on the sea’

Both kinds of structures - typically with verbs of saying - are possible in non-verb-second languages like Portuguese, as shown below in (16a-b).

- (16) a. Ptg. O João disse que esse livro leu a Maria.  
 the John said that this book receives the Mary  
 ‘John said that Mary receives this book.’
- b. Ptg. Dizem que esses livros, a Maria leu(-os).  
 say.3.PL that these books the Mary read(them)  
 ‘They say that Mary read these books.’ (Raposo 1996)

Based on the analysis of our corpus we conclude that Old French exhibits word order patterns which cannot be accounted for by a verb-second analysis, e.g. verb-third orders, especially with sentence-initial adverbial expressions and adverbial subordinate clauses. Verb-initial orders with null-subjects and post-verbal subjects are also attested, but it is not entirely clear whether they can be regarded as evidence against assuming a verb-second grammar. As for subordinate clauses, Old French exhibits word order patterns that are not expected to occur either in symmetric or in asymmetric verb-second languages. In the following we will have a closer look at the structural position of the post-verbal subject.

### 3.3 *The position of the post-verbal subject*

Two observations concerning the structural position of the subject emerging from the analysis of our corpus support previous findings reported on in the literature:

first, systematic differences can be observed between pronominal and nominal subjects; second, we find word order variation concerning the placement of participles.

With regard to the distributional difference between pronominal and nominal subjects, we observe that in contrast to nominal subjects, pronominal subjects are always adjacent to the finite verb and occur systematically to the left of short adverbs or of the negator (17a-b); (cf. Lemieux & Dupuis 1995, Skårup 1975, Vance 1997). Non-pronominal subjects are always placed to the right of these adverbs, see example (17c.-d).

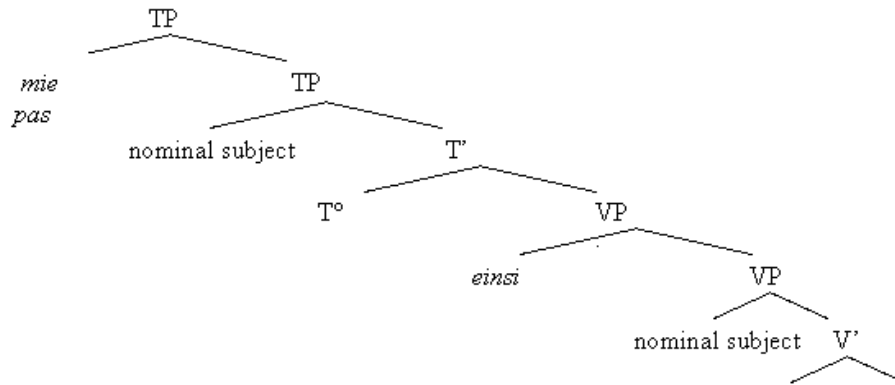
- (17) a. OF En la seue terre ne sont il mie entré.  
in the her land NEG are they not entered  
'They did not enter her land.'
- b. OF Et ce verroiz vous bien a ceuls meismes ...  
and this see you well in themselves  
'And you will see this well in them.'
- c. OF Car encore n' estoit mie venu le marchis  
because still NEG was not come the Marquis  
de monferrat  
of Monferat  
'Because the Marquis of Monferat had still not arrived.'
- d. OF Et le fist moult bien mahi de vilaincourt.  
and it did very well Mahi de Vilaincourt  
'And Mahi de Vilaincourt did it very well.'

These observations can be accounted for according to the general assumption that post-verbal pronominal subjects are cliticised to the finite verb (see also Kaiser 2008).

- (18) OF Dou tresor qui estoit en cel pales ne covient il  
of the treasure which was in this palace NEG proper-is it  
mie parler.  
not (to) speak  
'It is not proper to speak about the treasure that was in this palace.'

The post-verbal nominal subject occupies a structurally low position, which is identified as SpecVP by Lemieux and Dupuis (1995). Vance (1997) assumes two possible post-verbal positions for nominal subjects: SpecvP and SpecTP. According to Vance, the two positions are distinguished by the variable placement of nominal subjects with respect to the adverbs *ainsint* and *laienz*, as presented in Figure 1:



Figure 1. *Position for nominal subjects according to Vance 1997.*

- (19) a. OF Cele nuit demora laienz Perceval avec s' antain  
 that night stayed therein Perceval with his aunt  
 'That night Perceval stayed therein with his aunt'
- b. OF Et a l' endemain vint la novele laienz que li  
 and at the next.day came the news therein that the  
 set frere estoient ocis  
 sevenbrothers were killed  
 'and the following day came to them the news that the  
 seven brothers had been killed.' (Vance 1997:71)

Unfortunately, we are not in the position to verify this assumption empirically, since *einsi(nt)* systematically occurs sentence-initially in our corpus, and *laienz* is not attested at all in the approximately 2300 sentences analyzed here. We believe, however, that the variable position of *einsi* and *laienz* does not oblige us to assume that the subject to the right of *mie*, *pas*, *bien* and *puis* occupies SpecTP rather than SpecvP. In fact, the systematic placement of nominal subjects to the right of these adverbs in the Romance null-subject languages, as illustrated in (20), is generally interpreted as evidence in favour of the vP-internal position of the subject because it is commonly assumed that these adverbs mark the left edge of the vP-domain. In recent accounts, the structural position of the post-verbal subject in null-subject inversion is therefore generally identified as the thematic or base position of the subject in SpecvP (Ordóñez 1998 for Spanish, Cardinaletti 2004, Belletti 2004 for Italian, Costa 1998 for Portuguese)<sup>7</sup>. We think that this analysis also applies for Old French; see examples (17c-d).

- (20) a. It. ?Cpirà/spiegherà bene Maria (al direttore)  
 will.understand/explain well Maria (to the director)
- b. It. \*Cpirà/spiegherà Maria bene (al direttore)  
 will.understand/explain Maria well (to the director)  
 (Belletti 2004:19f.)
- c. Ptg. Comeu bem o Paulo maçãs.  
 ate good the Paul apples

<sup>7</sup> Belletti (2001) instead proposes a low Focus-projection above VP.

- d. Ptg. \*Comeu o Paulobem maçãs.  
ate the Paul good apples (Costa 1998:125f.)

Interestingly, another parallel can be found between Old French and the modern Romance null-subject languages with respect to the placement of pronominal subjects. In Italian, post-verbal pronominal subjects occupy a higher structural position in the middle field below TP. In VSO-sentences like (21a-b), which are only possible with pronominal subjects, the pronoun must occur to the left of the adverb, as in the OF examples (17a-b)

- (21) a. It. Di questo mi informerò io bene.  
of this myself will.inform I well  
b. It. \*?Di questo si informerà Maria bene.  
of this herself will.inform Maria well  
(Belletti 2004:31f.)

Subject placement with respect to short adverbs is, however, not the only argument mentioned in the literature in order to establish a parallel between OF and verb-second inversion and to justify two possible post-verbal subject positions for nominal subjects. Another indication is the variable placement of the subject with respect to participles. Examples (22a) and (22b) show that the participle may occur to the right or to the left of post-verbal subjects in Old French.

- (22) a. OF Et dedenz ces .VIII.jorz furent venuz tuit li vessel  
and within these eight days were arrived all the ships  
et les barons  
and the barons  
'And during these eight days all the ships and the barons  
had arrived.'  
b. OF Il est yver entré.  
it is winter come  
'Winter has come.'

It is generally assumed for Modern French that participles move out of the verb phrase (cf. Pollock 1989). A morphological reflex of this movement operation is participle agreement with pre-posed objects, as argued by Kayne (2000).

- (23) Fr. Je sais combien de tables ils ont repeintes.  
'I know how many tables they have repainted.'

According to the assumption that participle movement existed in OF, the variable placement of the participle vis-à-vis the subject could indicate two distinct post-verbal subject positions. The placement of the participle is, however, not a reliable test to support such a claim. First, participle agreement in Old French is not required categorically. Since agreement is dependent on the movement of the participle to a higher functional projection, one could also analyse the variable word order of past-participles and subjects in Old French as a reflection of the *optional* movement of the participle out of vP. More specifically, the subject

occupies the same structural position in S-pp as well as in pp-S-sentences, though the position of the participle is variable. Cross-linguistic differences can be observed when we compare the placement of the subject vis-à-vis the participle in different Romance languages. Participle and auxiliary are generally not separable in Spanish. In Modern French, auxiliary and participle may be separated by an adverb or an indefinite pronoun. In Portuguese, a post-verbal subject may be placed to the right or the left of the participle, depending on the context.

These observations suggest that the placement of the subject vis-à-vis the participle is probably not a reliable criterion for determining the structural position of the post-verbal subject and differentiating between verb-second and null-subject-inversion.

- (24) a. Sp. No he visto nada.  
not I.have seen nothing  
'I have seen nothing.'
- b. Sp. \*No he nada visto.  
not I.have nothing seen
- c. Fr. Ils ont tout vu.  
they have all seen  
'They have seen everything.'
- d. Fr. Ils ne l' ont pas vu.  
they NEG him have not seen  
'They have not seen him.'
- e. Ptg. Nesse dia, tinha a Maria emprestado os seus  
that day AUX the Mary lent the her  
melhores discos ao Pedro.  
best records to Pedro  
'On this day, Mary lent her best records to Pedro.'  
(Ambar 1992:80)
- f. Ptg. Tinha comido o Paulo maçãs.  
had eaten the Paul apples  
'Paul had eaten apples.'  
(Costa 2004:26)

In sum, we have argued that OF inversion is more similar to Romance null-subject inversion than to verb-second inversion and that some of the arguments adduced in favor of two different post-verbal positions for nominal subjects in OF are not compelling. We conclude that post-verbal nominal subjects in OF occupy their base position (SpecvP). In the following we will have a closer look at the information structure of post-verbal subjects in Old French, as null-subject inversion has been related to special discourse conditions.

#### 4. Information structure of subject inversion in Old French

##### 4.1 Interpretative effects of inversion in Romance

In section 2.2 we argued that inversion in languages such as Italian, Portuguese and Spanish is free insofar as it constitutes a grammatical option made available by the null-subject property. Following Barbosa (1995) and others, we assume that derivational economy allows the subject to remain in its base position, because a pronominal agreement system is able to fulfill the checking requirements in TP.

On the other hand, inversion in these languages is not completely *free* because it depends on certain discourse conditions (Ambar 1992). With respect to the modern null-subject languages Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, it is commonly agreed that *Free Inversion* correlates with a focus-interpretation of the post-verbal subject (Belletti (2001, 2004), Pinto (1997), Samek-Lodovici (1996) for Italian, Ordóñez (1997, 1998), Zagona (2002) and Zubizarreta (2001) for Spanish, and Ambar (1992), Costa (1998) and Martins (1994) among many others, see the examples in (25).

- (25) a. It. Chi ha pianto?  
           ‘Who cried?’  
           Ha pianto Beatrice.  
           has cried Beatrice  
           ‘Beatrice has cried.’ (Pinto 1997:38)
- b. Ptg. Quem comeu o bolo?  
           ‘Who ate the cake?’  
           Comeu o João.  
           ate the John  
           ‘John ate it.’ (Ambar 1992:185)
- c. Sp. Quién compró el coche?  
           ‘Who bought the car?’  
           Compró el coche María.  
           bought the car Mary  
           ‘Mary bought the car.’ (Zagona 2002:215)

The focus interpretation of the subject is possible for all types of verbs. A specific group of verbs additionally allows for an interpretation of the *whole sentence as* focused, as illustrated by the examples in (26).

- (26) a. It. Chi è arrivato? / Che cosa è successo?  
           who arrived / what happened  
           E’ arrivato Dante.  
           has arrived Dante (Pinto 1997:12)<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Versus: Che cosa è successo?/Beatrice ha pianto./#Ha pianto Beatrice. (Pinto 1997)

- b. Ptg. Houve telefonemas (para mim)?  
 were (there) calls (for me)  
 Telefonou a Joana.  
 called the Joanne (Martins 1994:396)
- c. Sp. Aparecieron tres hombres.  
 appeared three man (Suñer 1982)

Suchthetic or presentational sentences give a description of a situation without highlighting any single constituent. The verbs that allow for this interpretation are typically intransitive, particularly verbs of motion (e.g. *unaccusative* verbs such as *arrivare*, though not all unaccusatives), some *unergatives* (such as *telefonare*), and copula-verbs in predicative sentences.

An incompatibility of the post-verbal subject with an interpretation as information focus or as part of athetic sentence would cause the subject to move to the pre-verbal position. In other words, the pre-posing of the subject to the TP-domain serves as a repair strategy that allows the subject to escape a focus interpretation. The placement of the subject vis-à-vis the finite verb thus reflects the interplay of syntax and information structure. Inversion is therefore not a purely grammatical phenomenon, even in null-subject languages, but rather an interface phenomenon relating the grammatical computation and discourse conditions according to which a sentence can be uttered.

With respect to verb-second languages, it is less clear whether similar restrictions exist for the interpretation of post-verbal subjects. Two possible post-verbal positions have been postulated for German (Diesing 1992, Frey 2004). Post-verbal subjects may be interpreted either as topics or as focused elements, depending on which position they occupy. Frey (2004) illustrates this fact through the placement of focus-inducing adverbs like *wahrscheinlich* (possibly) in relation to the post-verbal subject. If the subject occurs to the left of these adverbs, as in example (27a), it may be interpreted as a topic. If in the scope of these adverbs it is placed to the right, it is not compatible with a topic interpretation, as shown in (27b).

- (27) Ger. Ich erzähle dir etwas über Maria.  
 ‘I tell you something about M.’
- a. Ger. Nächstes Jahr wird Maria wahrscheinlich nach London  
 next year will Mary probably to London  
 gehen.  
 go  
 ‘Next year Mary will probably go to London.’
- b. Ger. #Nächstes Jahr wird wahrscheinlich Maria nach London  
 gehen.

The difference between a null-subject language like Portuguese and a verb second language like German can be summarized in the observation that the subject may escape a focus interpretation by moving to an additional post-verbal position in German, whereas it must target a preverbal position in Portuguese.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> We do not address right dislocation, which of course constitutes another – but marked – possibility for topicalisation in these languages.

## 4.2 The interpretation of inversion in Old French

### 4.2.1 Clarifying some basic notions

We encounter the following problems in applying the criteria presented above for the Old French data: First, we do not have direct access to intonation patterns. This is problematic because depending on the respective language, focus and topic are linguistically marked by stressing, de-stressing or stress-shift constituents. The second problem concerns the unavailability of native speakers' judgments on question-answer-pairs like those in (25), (26) and (27). Third, the literature fails to agree on the definition of concepts such as 'topic', 'focus', 'old and new information', and so forth. Sentence topics tend to correlate with old or known discourse information, but do not do so consistently. At the lexical level, sentence topics tend to be represented by pronouns or definite noun phrases, but this is again not always the case. In the context of this confusing situation, we will attempt to briefly explain how we define some of the basic concepts of information structure. We will additionally indicate to what extent we believe they can be applied to historical records. In doing so, we focus on the sentence level, as we are mainly concerned with word order variation within the sentence.

With respect to information structure, several dimensions have to be taken into consideration. The first dimension concerns the sentence as a whole. According to Kuroda (1972), sentences can provide categorical orthetic judgments. Categorical sentences exhibit a topic-comment structure, while thetic sentences do not. The latter encode descriptions of situations, whereas the former serve to provide information about an established discourse referent. Martins (1994) illustrates this difference by means of the following examples:

- (28) a. Ptg. O gato está lá no jardim.  
           'The cat is there in the garden.'  
       b. Ptg. Está lá um gato no jardim.  
           'There is a cat in the garden.'

Sentence (28a) provides information about a referent (*the cat*), whereas sentence (28b) describes a situation.

The referent *cat* is the topic of the sentence in (28a). Therefore, *topic* can be defined in the sense of Reinhart (1981) as "what the sentence is about" (also "aboutness-topic") as opposed to *comment* – the information provided about the topic. On a discourse level, the topic referent is typically established in the preceding discourse.

Another dimension concerns the relative weight or prominence of a sentence constituent. The focus of a sentence is its informationally most prominent part (*focus – background-dimension*). Focus usually correlates with main stress on the prosodic level. On the discursive level, it usually correlates with *new* information.

We have to keep in mind that the discourse notions 'old and new information', which are generally related to the notions of topic and focus, are not necessarily relevant if we wish to identify the topic of the sentence, as pointed out by Reinhart (1981:61). She argues that old information being old is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for topichood: in making claims about a given topic, we may mention individuals that were already mentioned in previous

discourse. Therefore, it makes sense to consider the discursive context, though it should be kept in mind that it is of limited relevance.

On a lexical level, a topic or focus interpretation of a constituent correlates to its realisation as a definite or indefinite noun phrase as well as its realisation as a pronominal or nominal DP. We will come back to this issue in section 4.2.4.

In the following section we will have a closer look at the different sentence types with post-verbal subjects.

#### 4.2.2 *Verb-second clauses*

Marchello-Nizia (1999) argues that word order variation in Old French is thematically driven insofar as the sentence initial constituent always constitutes the theme of the clause (*theme* being the functionalist equivalent to the term *topic*). She argues that Old French developed from a verb-second language with topic-initial position („L’AF est une langue V2, à thème en tête“) into a language in which word order is grammatically determined and the subject generally occupies a preverbal position. Vance (1997) provides a structural formulation of the same assumption that Old French is a topic-initial language, also defining topicalisation as “picking out an earlier mentioned element to comment on”. According to her, verb-second inversion is the result of topicalisation targeting the CP in order to fulfil the topic-criterion. She attempts to emphasize the fact that subordinate clauses may also involve topics by assuming that the topic criterion may be fulfilled in IP. In light of our argumentation in the previous sections, we assume that topicalisation in Old French *exclusively* involves the TP-domain - in main clauses as well as in subordinate clauses. We therefore maintain that the apparent verb-second inversion in Old French is not the result of the movement of the verb or other constituents to the CP-domain.

With respect to information structure, the difference between Old French and verb-second languages lies in the fact that verb-second inversion in languages like German is typically not restricted to topicalisation (although topics also have a tendency to occur sentence initially in German), consider the examples in (29). In German, the sentence-initial constituent may be a topic, information focus, contrastive focus or an adverb that is neither the topic nor focus of the sentence. The subject occupies a post-verbal position in each of the cases in (29a-d).

- (29) a. Ger. (Ich will dir was über Karl erzählen.)  
 (‘I’d like to tell you something about Karl.’)  
 Karl hat einen wirklich netten Brief geschrieben.  
 Karl has a really nice letter written  
 ‘Karl has written a really nice letter.’ (topic)
- b. Ger. (Wen hat der Direktor für den Gastvortrag eingeladen?)  
 (‘Who did the director invite for the lecture?’)  
 Den Hans hat der Direktor dafür eingeladen.  
 the Hans has the director for.this invited  
 ‘The director has invited Hans for it.’ (information focus)

- c. Ger. Rot will Max die Haustür streichen.  
 red wants Max the front.door to.paint  
 ‘Max wants to paint the front door red.’ (contrastive focus)
- d. Ger. Leider hat Max dem Otto nicht geholfen.  
 unfortunately has Max the Otto not helped  
 ‘Unfortunately, Max didn’t help Otto.’  
 (neither topic nor focus)  
 (all examples in Frey 2005)

These observations indicate that the verb-second property is in fact a purely grammatical phenomenon with no direct observable correlation with the information structural interpretation of the sentence-initial constituent. In other words, if inversion in Old French is contingent on the topicalisation of a non-subject constituent, it differs from typical verb-second languages, where the sentence-initial constituent can be of any type (see Kaiser 2002 for a similar argument).

On the other hand, OF inversion again shows similarities to null-subject inversion, where the pre-posing of a topic-constituent clearly favours a post-verbal subject, as argued by Ambar (1992, 1999) with respect to Portuguese. According to Ambar, the realisation of an overt or covert topic constituent in preverbal position is a necessary condition for the grammaticality of inversion in Portuguese.<sup>10</sup>

- (30) a. Ptg. [OP<sub>i</sub> [comeu [o João]]]  
 OP ate the John  
 ‘John ate.’
- b. Ptg. [A tarte<sub>i</sub> [comeu [a Joana]]]  
 the tarte ate the Joanne  
 ‘Joanne ate the tarte.’ (Ambar 1999:32)

We conclude that verb-second order in OF generally correlates with a topic-comment structure, with a sentence initial preverbal topic constituent. This is indeed confirmed by the analysis of our corpus; see some examples in (31).

- (31) a. OF A ceste parole jeta la dame .I. cri  
 on this speech let.out the lady a yell  
 ‘Upon this speech the lady let out a yell.’ (Sept Sages)

<sup>10</sup> Ambar (1999) proposes that information focus always implies the realisation of a topic/focus category, where the finite verb checks the focus feature and a pre-posed topic in SpecTopic/FocusP the topic feature, see examples (21’a-b). (21’a) [<sub>Topic/FocusP</sub> OP<sub>i</sub> [<sub>Topic/Focus</sub> comeu [<sub>IP</sub> o João t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>i</sub> ]]], b. [<sub>Topic/FocusP</sub> A tarte<sub>i</sub> [<sub>Topic/Focus</sub>’ comeu [<sub>IP</sub> a Joana t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>i</sub> ]]] (Ambar 1999:32). Because of space limitations, we are not able to discuss Ambar’s proposal in more detail. As becomes evident, however, from the sentence structure she proposes, Ambar (1992, 1999) assumes, in contrast to Costa (1998) and others, that inversion in Portuguese involves the left periphery of the sentence (the CP domain).



- b. OF Li sage le commencierent à aprendre  
 the sages him started to teach  
 et à enseigner.  
 and to instruct  
 ‘The sages started to teach and to instruct him.’  
 (Sept Sages)
- c. OF Iceste chose volons nous que vous nous aseurez aussi.  
 this thing want we that you to.us assure also  
 ‘We want you to assure us of that matter.’ (Villehardouin)

Another typical context for verb-second order which we find in our corpus, one which cannot be easily subsumed at first glance under the topic-comment analysis, consists of verb-second clauses with pre-verbal adverbial constituents as in (32a-c).

- (32) a. OF Puis se croisa le conte hue de saint-pol.  
 thereafter arrived the conte Hugh de Saint Paul  
 ‘Thereafter the conte Hugh de Saint Paul arrived.’  
 (Villehardouin)
- b. OF lors conmenca mestres lantillus son conte.  
 then started master Lantillus his story  
 ‘Then Master Lantillus started his story.’ (Sept Sages)
- c. OF .I. jour apela li emperieres les. VII. sages  
 one day called the emperor the seven sages  
 par leur nons.  
 by their names  
 ‘One day the emperor called the seven sages.’ (Sept Sages)

Note, however, that these sentences mainly serve to advance the storyline. They describe a temporal sequence of events rather than elaborating on a topic. We will come back to these structures in the following section.

#### 4.2.3 Verb initial clauses and clauses with sentence initial adverbial expressions

In the previous section we argued that the sentence initial position in Old French serves mainly as a topic position. Given the fact that subjects preferentially constitute the sentence topic, we expect a preferential pre-verbal realization of the subject.

Table 6. *Proportion of pre- and post-verbal subjects in the two texts.*

	<i>Villehardouin</i>		<i>Sept Sages</i>	
Pre-verbal subjects	463	59.1 %	605	85.3 %
Post-verbal subjects	320	40.9 %	104	14.7 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>100 %</b>

In both texts, the total number of subjects in pre-verbal position exceeds the number of subjects found in post-verbal position. There are however quantitative differences between the two texts which need to be explained. More than 85.3 % of the subjects occur pre-verbally in the *Sept Sages*. In the text by *Villehardouin*,

the preference of the pre-verbal placement of the subject is less obvious (59.1 %). How can the difference between the two texts be accounted for?

Based on the assumption that post-verbal subjects in Old French reflect null-subject inversion, the difference between the two texts could be related to the occurrence of different types of verbs. As mentioned before, post-verbal subjects in null-subject languages are interpreted either as focused or as subjects ofthetic sentences. The latter option varies, however, depending on the finite verb present in the sentence. As pointed out by Pinto (1997), only a specific verb class allows for athetic interpretation with a post-verbal subject. She subsumes these verbs under the label *inversion verbs*. This means that the subject may occupy a post-verbal position when answering the question “What has happened?”, see (33a). This option is not available with non-inversion verbs, as illustrated by example (33b).

- (33) It. Che cosa è successo?  
 what is happened
- a. It. E' arrivato Dante.  
 is arrived Dante  
 ‘Dante has arrived.’
- b. It. #Ha pianto Beatrice.  
 has cried Beatrice  
 ‘Beatrice cried.’ (Pinto 1997:16)

According to Pinto (1997), this class of verbs involves an additional covert *loco-temporal* argument, as shown in (34a). *Loc* is a clitic and moves together with the finite verb to T in order to check the EPP-feature. This is assumed to be less costly than moving the subject to preverbal position. In sentences with a PP in initial position, *Loc* is syntactically linked to this sentence initial PP, as shown in example (34b).

- (34) a. It. LOC ha telefonato Beatrice.  
 [IP LOC<sub>i</sub>-V<sub>j</sub> [VP SUBJ t<sub>j</sub> t<sub>i</sub>]]  
 (us/this place) called Beatrice (Pinto 1997:139)
- b. It. IN QUESTA UNIVERSITÀ hanno studiato molti linguisti.  
 PP [IP LOC<sub>i</sub>-V<sub>j</sub> [VP SUBJ t<sub>j</sub> t<sub>i</sub>]]  
 in this university studied many linguists (Pinto 1997:155)

This analysis accounts for two empirical facts: first, that inversion is much more common and natural with some verbs than with others and second, that the realization of an adverbial phrase in sentence initial position can render inversion structures more acceptable or natural.

In considering the type of verbs involved in the inversion structures in the two Old French texts, we observe the pattern presented in table 7:

Table 7. *Inversion with DP-subjects according to verb-type.*

<i>Verb type</i>	<i>Villehardouin</i>	<i>Sept Sages</i>
Verbs of motion	85	7
Other intransitive verbs	44	16
Copula verbs	73	5
Passive verbs	21	4
Reflexive verbs	20	6
Transitive verbs	50	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>51</b>

Verbs of motion like (*venir* (to arrive), *aller* (to go), *revenir* (to return), *courir* (to run), *entrer* (to enter), *descendre* (to go down) and *issir* (to leave), together with other intransitive verbs like *mourir* (to die), *commencer* (to start), *finer* (to end), *durer* (to last) and *travailler* (to work) and the copula *être* (to be) represent very favourable contexts for inversion in the texts, especially in *Villehardouin*. Some examples are given below in (35a-d).

- (35) a. OF    avec lui ala grant partie des barons  
           with him went large part of the barons  
           ‘A large number of the barons went with him.’
- b. OF    et morut li quens.  
           and died the duke  
           ‘And the duke died.’
- c. OF    Einsint conmenca la guerre.  
           so started the war  
           ‘The war started like this.’
- d. OF    Lors fu a .I. diemenche une moult grant feste de  
           then was on a Sunday a very big holiday of  
           saint marc en l’ eglyse  
           St. Marc in the church  
           ‘Then, on a Sunday, there was a very big holiday of St.  
           Marc in the church.’

Getting back to the differences between the two texts, *Villehardouin* shows a significantly higher proportion of these contexts than are seen in the prose novel. In fact, sentences involving verbs of motion or copula constructions are very frequent in this text, as it is a chronicle reporting on a crusade. As such, it not only exhibits a large number of verbs of motion, it also contains many contexts withthetic sentences, as it mainly reports on ongoing events and situations, rather than commenting on referents. Consequently, we find a large proportion of sentences with post-verbal subjects that are introduced by sentence initial adverbs.

In addition, sentence-initial (scene setting) adverbial phrases may serve a special discourse function. According to Reinhart (1981), they can establish discourse cohesion by linking the sentence to the previous discourse. Preverbal adverbial phrases thus fulfill the same discourse function as preverbal topics. These adverbial expressions are therefore frequently found in sentences in which no topic is present that would normally assume the discourse-linking function.

In sum, since sentence-initial adverbials represent favourable contexts for post-verbal subjects, it does not come as a surprise that 232 out of a total of 320 sentences with inversion in the text by *Villehardouin* (72.5%) and 78 out of 104 sentences (75%) in the *Sept Sages*-text represent the pattern AdvP-finite verb-subject. Two examples showing a sentence-initial temporal adverbial phrase are shown in (36a-b).

- (36) a. OF Einsint revindrent li message en la vile  
 then returned the messenger to the town  
 ‘And then returned the messengers to the town.’  
 b. OF Et dedenz ces .VIII. jorz furent venuz tuit  
 and within these eight days were come all  
 li vessel et les barons  
 the ships and the barons  
 ‘And within these eight days came all the ships and the  
 barons.’

Such sentences often serve to introduce new discourse referents or to signal a change of speaker in a dialogue sequence in the respective discursive contexts, cf. the examples (37a-b).

- (37) a. OF après se leva li seconz ...  
 thereafter REFL stood.up the second  
 après se leva li tierz ...  
 thereafter REFL stood.up the third  
 après se leva li quinz ...  
 thereafter REFL stood.up the fifth  
 ‘Thereafter the second stood up.’ (Sept Sages)  
 b. OF Ci parle l’ empereriz.  
 thereupon spoke the Queen  
 ‘Thereupon spoke the Queen.’ (Sept Sages)

To conclude, the large proportion of post-verbal subjects with sentence-initial adverbials is no surprise given the discourse linking function of the latter and the fact that Old French was a null-subject language offering the mechanism described in section 2.2, enabling adverbial expression or a topic to check the EPP-feature of the TP (see also Sitaridou 2004 for a proposal along these lines).

#### 4.2.4 Properties of post-verbal nominal subjects

In this section we will take a closer look at the properties of post-verbal nominal subjects. It has been argued that post-verbal subjects may encode known as well as new information in Old French (Rickard 1962, Vance 1997). This could be interpreted as evidence of OF V2 properties, as V2 languages allow for this possibility. However, as argued above, the notions of old and new discourse information are not satisfactory for the identification of the status of the referent.

In addition, if inversion is indeed contingent on topicalisation in Old French, it follows that post-verbal subjects simply cannot function as a sentence topic because each sentence can only have one (Reinhart 1981:56). In other words, if it



- c. OF Dou duel ne covient il mie parler qui ilec fu fet.  
of.the duel NEG behoves it not speak that it was done  
‘It behoves not to say more about the duel than that it was  
done.’ (Villehardouin)

We already mentioned in section 3.3 that post-verbal pronominal subjects in OF are commonly assumed to cliticise to the finite verb. This characterization in itself already predicts that they cannot be focused, because clitic elements form a prosodic unit with their host and cannot be stressed. The occurrence of expletive pronouns in post-verbal position (38c) is another indicator supporting the assumption that post-verbal pronominal subjects are not associated with a focus interpretation.

Although we have observed in the previous sections that inversion in Old French resembles inversion in the modern Romance null-subject languages in many respects, it differs from these in the distribution and properties of post-verbal subject pronouns. In fact, the existence of a paradigm of clitic subject pronouns distinguishes Modern French from the majority of other Romance languages. We assume that it was precisely the emergence of this paradigm that triggered the subsequent diachronic developments ultimately leading to the loss of inversion in French. We will come back to this scenario of diachronic change in section 5.2.

## 5. Diachronic change

Returning now to our initial observation regarding the distributional differences between Old and Modern French, we wish to propose that the loss of inversion is related to the restructuring of the subject agreement system (see also Vance 1997 among many others). Modern French has lost the possibility of null-subject inversion, though it has retained some contexts in which post-verbal subjects may occur. We provide a characterisation of Modern French in the following section, arguing that even though post-verbal subjects occur in a number of limited contexts in Modern French, Old and Modern French differ syntactically with respect to the position of the post-verbal subject. More specifically, we claim that the post-verbal subject may not remain in its vP-internal base position in Modern French.

### 5.1 Post-verbal subjects in Modern French

Inversion is virtually non-existent in declarative clauses in spoken contemporary French. A post-verbal DP-subject is generally accepted when it is right-dislocated, as in example (39).

- (39) Fr. Elle mange le gâteau, ma mère.  
she eats the cake, my mother

In contrast to post-verbal subjects as exemplified in the last section, post-verbal subject sentences like (39) do not occupy a low structural position. It is clearly

interpreted as a topic, since it must be definite. Like a left-dislocated topic, it is doubled by a co-referential subject clitic in pre-verbal position. In the literature, right dislocated subjects of this type are analysed as occupying a right-adjoined position (De Cat 2002). However, the topic-like properties of the post-verbal subject suggest that it has been dislocated to a left peripheral topic position first, followed by remnant-movement of the rest of the clause via the subject (in the spirit of Cecchetto 1999).

In highly elaborated literary texts, inversion is possible in the context of *focus inversion* (or *Focus VS*) as defined by Lahousse (2006), see example (40):

- (40) Fr. L' Occident est piégé par le bon cœur qui lui a  
 the West is trapped by the good heart which to.it has  
 servi le drapeau quand ne le menaçaient que les  
 served as.a flag when NEG it menaced only the  
 combats des riches, entre soi.  
 fights of.the rich among themselves.”  
 (Lahousse 2006:443)

Lahousse (2006) analyses focus inversion as in (41). She argues that the post-verbal subject has moved to SpecTP and then further to a left-peripheral focus-position, followed by movement of the whole TP to a topic position to the left of the subject.

- (41) [TopP [TP tsubject [T° verb ]] [Top°] [FocP subject [Foc°] tTP]]  
 (Lahousse 2006:459)

This analysis is supported by the fact that other arguments may occur to the left of the subject, but not to its right. Another argument is provided by the distribution of floating quantifiers like *tous*. These occur to the left of the subjects and participles, indicating that the subject has moved out of its base position, see example (42):

- (42) Fr. Ont tous réussi ceux qui ont assez travaillé.  
 have all succeeded those who have enough worked

According to Lahousse, the post-verbal subject is interpreted as “exhaustive”, whereby “the subject exhaustively identifies the referents that satisfy the predicate” (Lahousse 2006:433). It is analysed as an identification focus that the author, in accordance with Kiss (1998), assumes to be located in the left periphery.

The third type of inversion – traditionally referred to as *Stylistic Inversion* and heavily discussed in the literature since Kayne (1972) and Kayne & Pollock (1978) – is mainly found in interrogative and extraction contexts and partially in subordinate contexts with a subjunctive verb, see example (43).

- (43) Fr. A qui a téléphoné ton ami?  
 to whom has telephoned your friend  
 (Kayne & Pollock 2001:107)

Inversion in interrogative clauses is clearly an option in Standard French, but it also occurs in corpora of Colloquial French (c.f. Bonnesen & Meisel 2005). *Stylistic Inversion* is restricted in a number of ways. It only occurs in questions that are introduced by a *wh*-operator, while it is not possible in yes/no-questions. Different accounts exist with respect to the structural position of the subject. Déprez (1988, 1990) and de Wind (1995) argue that the post-verbal subject remains in its base position within the verbal phrase. One central argument in favour of this claim is based on the distribution of subject-oriented floating quantifiers like *tous*. These elements can occur between auxiliaries and participles with pre-verbal subjects as in (44a), but not with post-verbal subjects as in (44b):

- (44) a. Fr. Les enfants ont tous fait leur travail.  
 b. Fr. \*Qu'ont tous fait les enfants? (Lahousse 2006:437)

This contrast can be explained by assuming that the quantifier in example (44b) is not properly c-commanded, as the subject has not moved out of its base position. This test is problematic, however, since the floating quantifier does not occupy a possible subject position in (44b). Moreover, *tous* (as a strong quantifier) is not a good candidate for vP-internal placement (see Diesing 1992).

Based on a number of syntactic tests, Kayne & Pollock (2001) argue that post-verbal subjects in contexts of *Stylistic Inversion* cannot occupy a low structural position within the clause; rather, they are claimed to share properties of dislocated constituents. First, quantitative *en*-clitization and the licensing of a determinerless *de*-NP by a quantifier such as *peu* show that subjects - in contrast to direct objects within the VP - are not c-commanded by the position occupied by quantifiers or by *en*, see the examples (45a-b) and (46a-c).

- (45) a. Fr. le jour où le juge en a condamné trois  
 the day when the judge of.them has condemned three  
 b. Fr. \*le jour où en ont téléphoné trois  
 the day when of.them have telephoned three
- (46) a. Fr. Jean a peu vu de linguistes.  
 Jean has few seen of linguists  
 'Jean has not seen many of the linguists.'  
 (Kayne & Pollock 2001:113)  
 b. Fr. \*De linguistes ont peu vu Jean.  
 of linguists have few seen Jean  
 (Kayne & Pollock 2001:114)  
 c. Fr. \*le jour où on peu téléphoné de linguistes  
 the day when one few called of linguists  
 (Kayne & Pollock 2001:114)



The examples show that a *de*-NP lacking a determiner is licensed by the quantifier *peu* in object position (46a), but not in preverbal (46b) or in post-verbal (46c) subject-position. The extraction properties indicate that the position of the subject cannot be within *vP*, because extraction from *vP* would otherwise be possible.

The interpretation of the subject also suggests that it does not occupy its base position. If the subject was in *SpecvP*, it should be compatible with a non-topic interpretation and not be subject to definiteness restrictions. However, as observed by Kupferman (1983), post-verbal subjects are necessarily interpreted as *specific*, thus resembling structures involving left-dislocation.

- (47) a. Fr. \*Je te dirai quand sera venu la voir un  
I you will.tell when will.be come her to.see a/some  
ami quelquonque.  
friend or.another
- b. Fr. \*Un ami quelconque, il viendra la voir  
a/some friend or.other he will.come her to.see  
demain.  
tomorrow

Another similarity between left-peripheral subject topics and post-verbal subjects in Stylistic Inversion contexts concerns the person feature of the subject, as shown by Kayne & Pollock (2001). Strong third person pronouns - in contrast to first and second person pronouns - may occur in pre-verbal subject position without being doubled by a clitic. The same holds with respect to post-verbal subject pronouns in Stylistic Inversion contexts, see (48a-b) versus (49a-b).

- (48) a. Fr. LUI a téléphoné.  
he/him has called  
'He has called.' (Kayne & Pollock 2001:116)
- b. Fr. Qu' a mangé LUI?  
what has eaten he/him  
'What has he eaten?'
- (49) a. Fr. \*Qu' as mangé TOI?  
what have eaten you (Kayne & Pollock 2001:116)
- b. Fr. \*TOI as mangé un gâteau.  
you have eaten a cake  
(Kayne & Pollock 2001:117)

Without addressing the precise structural description of post-verbal subjects in Stylistic Inversion contexts, we assume that the evidence supporting the claim according to which post-verbal subjects do not occupy the *vP*-internal base position in these constructions is indeed convincing.

Another context for inversion in Modern French is represented by such impersonal constructions as those in (50), where the presence of an expletive is obligatory, cf. (51).

(50) Fr. Il est arrivé une fille.  
 it is arrived a girl  
 'A girl has arrived.'

(51) Fr. \*est arrivé une fille.  
 is arrived a girl

This type of construction occurs predominantly with unaccusative and passive (as well as some unergative) verbs, as shown by the following examples from Lambrecht (1986):

(52) a. Fr. un beau soir il descend une des mes VOISINES  
 a nice evening it comes.down one of my neighbours  
 'one nice evening one of my neighbours comes down'  
 b. Fr. à Genève il s' est créé des  
 in Geneva it REFL is built  
 COOPERATIVES D'ENSEIGNEMENT  
 teaching cooperatives  
 'in Geneva, teaching co-ops were created'  
 (Lambrecht 1986:303)

We must assume for these verbs - in contrast to all of the previously discussed contexts of inversion in Modern French - that the subject occupies a low position within the verb phrase. This is supported by the fact that *en*-cliticisation is possible in these contexts:

(53) Fr. le jour où il en est parti trois  
 the day when it-EXPLETIVE of.them is left three  
 'the day when three of them have left'  
 (Kayne & Pollock 2001:112)

Another argument refers to the placement of post-verbal subjects with respect to negators and participles. Example (54) illustrates the fact that post-verbal subjects must be placed to the right of the participle. This is to be expected, given that participles move out of vP in Modern French (Pollock 1989).

(54) a. Fr. Il est arrivé beaucoup d' Américains.  
 it is arrived many of Americans  
 'Many Americans have arrived.'  
 b. Fr. \*Il est beaucoup d' Américains arrivé.  
 it is many of Americans arrived  
 (Eguzkitza & Kaiser 1999:216)

Following Burzio (1981), we wish to argue, however, that it is not the vP-internal *subject* position that the post-verbal subject occupies, but rather the structural object position within the verbal phrase. This could explain why the finite verb

does not agree with the post-verbal subject but instead with the preverbal expletive, as shown in (55).<sup>11</sup>

- (55) a. Fr. Il est arrivé beaucoup d' Américains.  
 it is arrived many of Americans  
 'Viele Amerikaner sind angekommen.'  
 b. Fr. \*Il sont arrivés beaucoup d' Américains.  
 it are arrived many of Americans  
 (Eguzkitza & Kaiser 1999:213)

Summing up our discussion of subject inversion in Modern French, we have seen that post-verbal subjects occur in four different contexts: (a) right dislocation, (b) Focus VS (in an elaborated register), (c) Stylistic Inversion and (d) impersonal constructions with certain types of verbs. We have argued that the first three structures involve the movement of the subject from its base position. This position may be characterised in (a) and (c) as a left peripheral topic position. In (b) it seems to be a left peripheral focus position. Only impersonal constructions (d) show evidence suggesting a vP-internal position of subjects. However, the post-verbal subject in Modern French impersonal constructions can be argued not to occupy the vP-internal subject position, but rather the structural object position. We conclude as a result that subjects in Modern French cannot remain in their vP-internal base position - an option available in Old French.

## 5.2 On the plausibility of the scenario for diachronic change

As stated above, we wish to argue that this diachronic process has been triggered by the progressive cliticisation of subject pronouns and the emergence of a paradigm of pronominal clitic subjects that already began during the Old French period. Pronominal subjects in OF, however, – especially those in pre-verbal position - were not yet clitics. They could be contrastively stressed (56a), coordinated (56b), modified (56c), separated from the verb by non-clitic elements (56d) or used in isolated positions (56e) (cf. Skårup (1975:430ff.), Kaiser (1992), Roberts (1993:112ff.), Rinke (2003), among many others).

- (56) a. OF Et je que sai?  
 and I what know  
 'And what do I know?'  
 (Tristan, 1.4302; Roberts 1993:112)

<sup>11</sup> A possible problem arises with respect to unergative verbs which are not passivized, as in the following sentence: Il a téléphoné le médecin de la revue. ('it has telephoned the doctor of the review').

- b. OF Cil de la ville nous ont molt méfait, et je et  
 that of the town us have much harmed and I and  
 mes hommes, nous voulons vengier d'eus se nous  
 my man we want revenge on them if we  
 povons.  
 can  
 'Those of the town have harmed us much, me as well as my  
 man, we want to take revenge on them if we can.' (Clari)
- c. OF En nom de Dieu le tout puissant, je, Jehan sire de  
 Joyngville, sénéchal de Champagne, faiz escrire la vie de  
 nostre saint Loos  
 'In the name of God the almighty, I, Jehan Sire de  
 Joyngville, sénéchal de Champagne, am writing the life of  
 our St. Louis ...' (Joinville)
- d. OF et que vous pour l'amour Damedieu preniez la croix.  
 '... and that you for love of God take the cross' (Clari)
- e. OF et qui I sera? jou et tu  
 and who there will.be? I and you (Roberts 1993:113)

The weak or clitic subject pronouns of Modern French have been repeatedly analysed as resembling null-subject agreement affixes (Lambrecht 1986, Roberge 1986, Kaiser & Meisel 1991, and especially Kaiser 1992). This analysis accounts for the fact that the vast majority of declarative clauses in colloquial French contain clitic subject pronouns. Nominal subjects not doubled by a coreferential clitic are extremely rare in colloquial speech. Strong pronouns (with the exception of the strong third person pronoun *lui*) never appear in pre- or post-verbal position without being doubled by a subject clitic pronoun.

The similarities between subject clitic pronouns and agreement affixes and especially the systematicity of subject doubling have been interpreted in favour of a null-subject analysis of modern French (Kaiser 1992). The problem is that such an analysis would predict that the subject can remain in a vP-internal subject position, which, as we have seen before, is clearly not the case.

A tentative solution to this problem of conflicting pieces of evidence is to assume that subject pronouns in Modern French are still in the process of turning into agreement affixes but have not yet fully grammaticised. Therefore, we can assume that modern French subject clitics, which occur in almost every utterance in colloquial speech, can be associated with an empty subject in SpecvP or with a topic but not with a referential DP in SpecvP.

Although we cannot elaborate further on this point, it should be obvious at this point that our analysis of Modern French implies that the diachronic word order change observed in French can be explained in terms of the loss of vP as a possible position for post-verbal subjects. According to this analysis, this change results from the loss of null-subject inversion triggered by the phonological and morphological weakening of pronominal subjects and the subsequent emergence of a paradigm of clitic subject pronouns. The latter function as agreement markers, though the grammaticisation process has not yet been fully completed. We believe that this diachronic scenario is more plausible than one postulating a parametric change from a verb-second to a non-verb-second grammar. According

to Adams (1988), SVO-clauses are structurally ambiguous because they can be interpreted as involving movement either to the CP-category or to the TP-category. She argues that the increasing number of SVO-clauses in children's input ultimately leads them to reanalyse SVO clauses as TP structures. Adams (1988) assumes that subordinate SVO clauses support this reanalysis, as OF is analysed as an asymmetric verb second language like German in which the verb only moves as high as  $T^{\circ}$  in subordinate contexts. Roberts (1993) also claims that the structural ambiguity of SVO clauses leads to the reanalysis of Old French as a non-V2-language. According to him, verb movement to  $T^{\circ}$  is more economic than movement to  $C^{\circ}$ . Children are said to follow a „Least Effort Strategy” in the acquisition process and to reinterpret ambiguous structures in favour of the more economic option (non-V2).

In our view, this approach is highly problematic for various reasons. First, if SVO sentences are indeed structurally ambiguous, it is not clear why V2 in German is a stable property in spite of the fact that SVO main clauses are frequent and unmarked, with subordinate clauses also showing verb movement to  $T^{\circ}$ . In viewing these facts, it is a mystery why German children still acquire the verb-second property, especially when verb movement to  $C^{\circ}$  is a non-economic option.

Second, syntax proper is relatively stable diachronically, especially as core syntactic properties of a language are concerned. Children generally acquire these properties without problem, possible structural ambiguities notwithstanding, see also Meisel (submitted). Longobardi (2001) proposes that syntactic change is contingent on previous changes in the areas of phonology, semantics or lexicon, as also predicted by our analysis.

Third, behind these phenomena lies the still more puzzling question of why Old French ever developed a verb-second grammar in the first place. It is often assumed that a long period of Romance - Germanic language contact was responsible for the incorporation of Germanic features into Romance grammar. The contact scenario, however, only applies to some sections of the Romance language-speaking society, e.g. people in the king's court and members of the military. This does not, however, allow for a generalization postulating a bilingual situation including all or most social groups, most importantly caretakers of children acquiring the language. But even if such a bilingual situation had existed, the question remains of what could have caused the incorporation of the verb-second property into the respective variety of Romance, especially when verb-movement to  $C^{\circ}$  was indeed less economical and required a greater processing capacity than verb-movement to  $T^{\circ}$ , as claimed by Roberts (1993). In L2 acquisition, the syntactic transfer of V2 into a non-V2-language is virtually non-existent.

Moreover, two additional problems arise when we seriously consider a potential Germanic-French language contact situation. Recent studies by Hinterhölzl & Petrova (2008) have shown that inversion in Old High German (OHG) was primarily determined by the discursive context and that the verb-second property was not yet fully grammaticised. If this is correct, Germanic influence cannot possibly be responsible for the emergence of the verb-second property in French.

Elsig (2008) compares Old French and Middle High German documents from Germanic-Romance contact regions. On the basis of a number of Eastern French

and Western Middle High German charters from the thirteenth century, he observes that verb-third clauses occur with a much higher frequency in OF than in German. Surprisingly, the Germanic texts also exhibit a greater number of verb-third and verb initial structures than expected, see table 9.

Table 9. *Distribution of word order patterns in German and French* (Elsig 2008).

	German				French							
	nominal subject		pronominal subject		TOTAL		nominal subject		pronominal subject		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>V1</b>	19	12.5%	27	8.8%	<b>46</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	7	5.1%	6	2.9%	<b>13</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
<b>SV</b>	33	21.7%	70	22.7%	<b>103</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	39	28.3%	40	19.3%	<b>79</b>	<b>22.9%</b>
<b>V2</b>	90	59.2%	180	58.4%	<b>270</b>	<b>58.7%</b>	33	23.9%	44	21.3%	<b>77</b>	<b>22.3%</b>
<b>V3</b>	10	6.6%	31	10.1%	<b>41</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	59	42.8%	117	56.5%	<b>176</b>	<b>51.0%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	152		308		<b>460</b>	<b>100%</b>	138		207		<b>345</b>	<b>100%</b>

The distribution of word order patterns in the German and French data provided by Elsig (2008) suggest that it is more likely that the Germanic varieties are influenced by the non-verb second character of the French varieties than the other way around.

## 6. Summary and conclusions

In this paper we have argued that the analysis of Old French as a verb-second analysis is not well-founded and should be abandoned for several reasons: Old French shows regular patterns of verb-initial and verb-third clauses, which are incompatible with a V2 grammar and lead to serious questions concerning the learnability of such a verb-second system during language acquisition. We propose that Old French inversion resembles inversion in Romance null-subject languages with respect to the structural position of the subject and its information structural interpretation:

- a) The subject occupies a low structural position in the clause (to the right of short adverbs).
- b) Inversion is not dependent on the realization of a sentence initial non-subject constituent.
- c) The sentence-initial (preverbal) position in OF is a topic or thematic position, but not a post-verbal position.
- d) Inversion occurs predominantly in presentational contexts with a specific class of verbs and with adverbial expressions in sentence-initial position when a non-subject constituent is topicalised.

As for the diachronic change from Old to Modern French, we have argued that the weakening and subsequent cliticisation of subject pronouns has led to a restructuring of the agreement system and the subsequent loss of vP as a possible position for post-verbal subjects in French.

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***Losing the null subject.***  
***A contrastive study of (Brazilian) Portuguese and (Medieval)***  
***French***<sup>1</sup>

*Georg A. Kaiser*

***1. Introduction***

This paper deals with the development and the use of subject pronouns in Portuguese and discusses the question of whether or not Brazilian Portuguese is a language which is losing its null subject property or which has already lost it. Given that French, which was originally a null subject language, lost its null subject property at the end of the Middle French period, the question will be discussed by comparing Medieval French with Brazilian Portuguese with respect to the use of subject pronouns and to related phenomena. The answer will be negative: although Brazilian Portuguese differs significantly from other Romance null subject languages when using subject pronouns, the paper provides evidence that Brazilian Portuguese still possesses the null subject property and that it is far from losing this property.

***2. The null subject property in Romance languages***

It is well-known that most Romance languages belong to the group of null subject languages. As illustrated for Portuguese, Italian and Spanish, subject pronouns are generally not used in unmarked contexts in these languages:

- (1) *(Ele)* fala português.
- (2) *(Lui)* parla italiano.
- (3) *(El)* habla español.  
'He speaks Portuguese / Spanish / Italian.'

Only two Romance languages, Modern French and Swiss Romansh, do not exhibit the null subject property, since they do not allow this kind of pronoun dropping:

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is a completely revised version of Kaiser (2006). It has been conducted within the research project "Evolution and Variation of Expletive and Neuter Pronouns in Romance Languages", Collaborative Research Centre 471 "Variation and Evolution in the Lexicon", University of Konstanz, funded by the German Research Foundation. My warmest thanks go to Franziska Hack and Michael Zimmermann for valuable comments on a previous version of this paper and to Bruce Mayo for his help with the English redaction. Needless to say that the author is solely responsible for any flaws in this paper.

- (4) \*(*Il*) parle français.  
 (5) \*(*El*) tschontscha romontsch.  
 ‘He speaks French / (Swiss)-Romance (Sursilvan).’

In addition, there are some Romance languages or rather dialects which seem to be somewhere between these languages with respect to the null subject property, since they appear to exhibit ‘partial’ pronoun dropping. This can be observed in most Northern Italian dialects as well as in dialects of Franco-Provençal and Occitan. In these dialects the possibility to omit the subject pronoun depends on the person marking of the finite verb. In the Dolomitic Ladin dialect spoken in Val Badia, for example, the subject (clitic) pronouns of the second person singular and first and second person plural are optional, while the pronouns of the other persons are obligatory. (Manzini & Savoia 2005:160, Thiele 2001:73; see also Hack & Gaglia, this volume):

- (6) a. *I* dormi.  
 b. (*Te*) dormes.  
 c. *Al / ara* dorm.  
 d. (*I*) dormjun.  
 e. (*I*) dormis.  
 f. *Ai / ares* dorm.

A crucial observation is that ‘partial’ null subject languages generally possess, in contrast to ‘normal’ *pro drop* languages, two series of subject pronouns, a series of clitic pronouns and a series of non-clitic (“strong”) pronouns. This is illustrated in table 1 which shows the paradigms of subject pronouns for two Northern Italian dialects, Fiorentino and Trentino (Brandi & Cordin 1981: 36f):

Table 1. *Subject pronouns in Fiorentino and Trentino.*

		Fiorentino		Trentino	
person		free form	clitic form	free form	clitic form
<b>1sg</b>		<i>io</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>mi</i>	-
<b>2sg</b>		<i>te</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>te</i>
<b>3sg</b>	masc.	<i>lui</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>lu</i>	<i>el</i>
	fem.	<i>lei</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>ela</i>	<i>la</i>
<b>1pl</b>		<i>noi</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>noi</i>	-
<b>2pl</b>		<i>voi</i>	<i>vu</i>	<i>voi</i>	-
<b>3pl</b>	masc.	<i>loro</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>lori</i>	<i>i</i>
	fem.	<i>loro</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>lore</i>	<i>le</i>

Note that the clitics in these dialects are special clitics, in the sense of Nida (1949:106) and Zwicky (1977): they are morphologically not relatable to the free pronoun forms and show a special syntax in comparison to them. Their distribution depends not only on the person of the verb, but is also sensitive to other factors, as for example the sentence type (interrogative, exclamative, etc.), the presence of a (nominal or pronominal) subject or the presence of oblique clitic pronouns or of a negative marker.

The status of these clitic pronouns is highly controversial. Many authors assume they are verbal agreement markers, expressing the agreement features of

the verb and therefore part of the verbal paradigm (cf., e.g., Rizzi 1986 for Fiorentino and Trentino, Oliviéri, this volume, for Occitan dialects). Given such an analysis, these dialects do not exhibit ‘partial’ null subject behavior but behave rather like ‘normal’ null subject languages: since the subject clitic is analyzed as an agreement marker, it is the unrealized non-clitic pronoun which would have to be considered as the null subject. Cases where the clitic is dropped or where its form is completely lacking (as it happens in Trentino in the first singular and in the first and second singular plural) would be analyzed then as the use of a null allomorph, i.e. as a morphological process which does not underlie syntactic or pragmatic conditions.

A similar analysis has been proposed for French. As it will be shown in section 3.2.3, subject clitic pronouns in (spoken) French show some typical characteristics of affixes and therefore behave in a similar way as subject clitics in the Northern Italian dialects. On the view that French subject clitics are agreement markers, it follows that French, too, ought to count as a null subject language. The ungrammaticality of the omitted subject clitic in a sentence like (4) would then be attributed to a missing verbal agreement marker. The sentence *il parle français* would thus be analyzed as a sentence containing a null subject, where the subject pronoun *lui* is dropped and where *il* represents the agreement marker for the third person singular. Given this analysis for French and given that such an analysis is not available for Swiss Romansh – since this language does not exhibit a proper series of subject clitic pronouns – it follows then that Swiss Romansh would be the only Romance language belonging to the group of non null subject languages. As shown for the two most important dialects, Swiss Romansh has only reduced forms of subject pronouns, which in general only cliticize to the finite verb when occurring in postverbal position (Hack 2007:23f., Kaiser & Hack 2008, Hack & Gaglia, this volume):

Table 2. *Subject pronouns in Sursilvan and Vallader.*

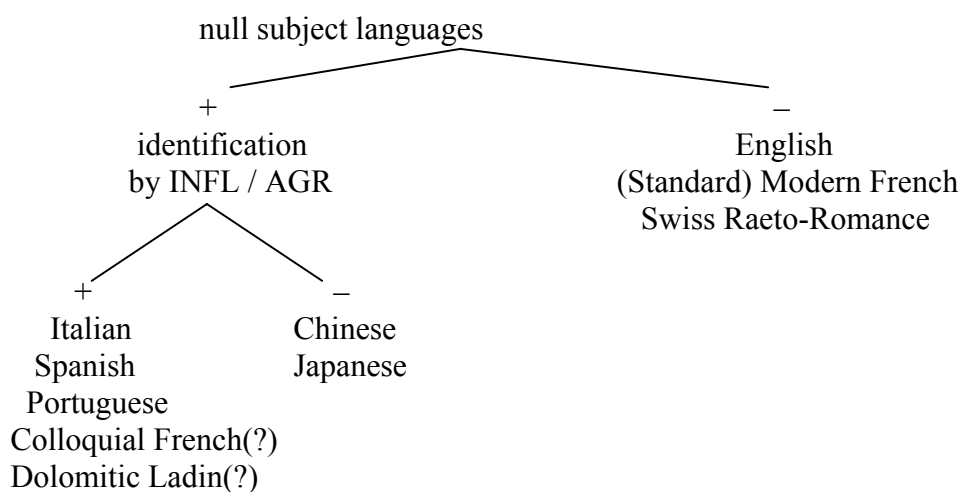
		Sursilvan		Vallader	
person		free	clitic	free	clitic
1sg		<i>jeu</i>	<i>-u</i>	<i>eu</i>	<i>e, -a</i>
2sg		<i>ti</i>	-	<i>tü</i>	-
3sg	masc.	<i>el</i>	<i>-l</i>	<i>el</i>	<i>-l</i>
	fem.	<i>ella</i>	<i>-la</i>	<i>ella</i>	<i>-la</i>
1pl		<i>nus</i>	<i>-s, -sa</i>	<i>nus / no</i>	<i>-a</i>
2pl		<i>vus</i>	-	<i>vus / vo</i>	-
3pl	masc.	<i>els</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>els</i>	<i>i, al, -a</i>
	fem.	<i>ellas</i>	<i>las, -las</i>	<i>ellas</i>	<i>i, al, -a</i>

One crucial observation concerning null subject languages is that many of these languages display a “rich” verbal agreement. In many descriptions and approaches, the “rich” agreement is considered to be a prerequisite for the null subject property. For instance, the grammar of the Real Academia Española (1973: 421) explains the null subject property in Spanish by pointing out that the personal endings in the Spanish conjugation are so “clear and vivacious” that the subject can be identified without the need to be mentioned. In the generative framework, the null subject property is accounted for in a similar way (see

Roberts 2007 for an overview). Approaches within the principles and parameters theory claim that the functional category INFL (or AGR) must contain “rich” agreement markers which enable it to identify the empty subject. More recent generative approaches in the minimalist framework posit that languages displaying a “rich” verbal agreement morphology contain (pro)nominal elements in the verb and are therefore able to check the so-called EPP features via verb-movement. As a consequence, the subject can be omitted, since there is no (subject) position where a subject would need to be lexically expressed.

Nevertheless, the existence of a “rich” verbal morphology does not necessarily imply that a language exhibits the null subject property. Swiss Romansh, for example, is a language which displays a morphologically “rich” verbal paradigm, but which belongs to the group of non null subject languages (Hack & Gaglia, this volume). The same holds for German, which also has “rich” verbal agreement markers, but which allows null subjects only in topic positions or in certain impersonal constructions (Eguzkitza & Kaiser 1999). In addition, there are languages which do not have rich verbal morphology, but which do allow null subjects. This is apparently the case in Chinese or Japanese. It seems that in these languages null subjects are identified via the linguistic context (Huang 1984). Adopting a classification by Kato (2000:8), we can summarize these observations by classifying languages with respect to the null subject property in the following subgroups:

Figure 1. *Types of languages with respect to the null subject parameter.*

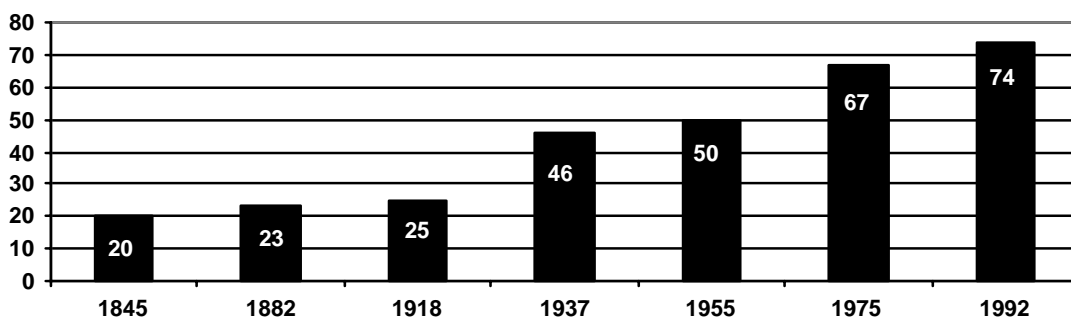


### 3. *Subjects and null subjects in Portuguese and in French*

#### 3.1 *The increase of lexical subject pronouns*

All diachronic studies on the use of subject pronouns in (Brazilian) Portuguese make the observation that there is an increasing tendency to use lexical subject pronouns. This is shown, in particular, by the empirical studies from Duarte (1993, 2000) summarized in table 3, where the frequency of the use of subject pronouns is analyzed in Brazilian popular theatre plays written in the 19th and 20th century:

Table 3. *Lexical subject pronouns in Brazilian Portuguese theatre plays.*

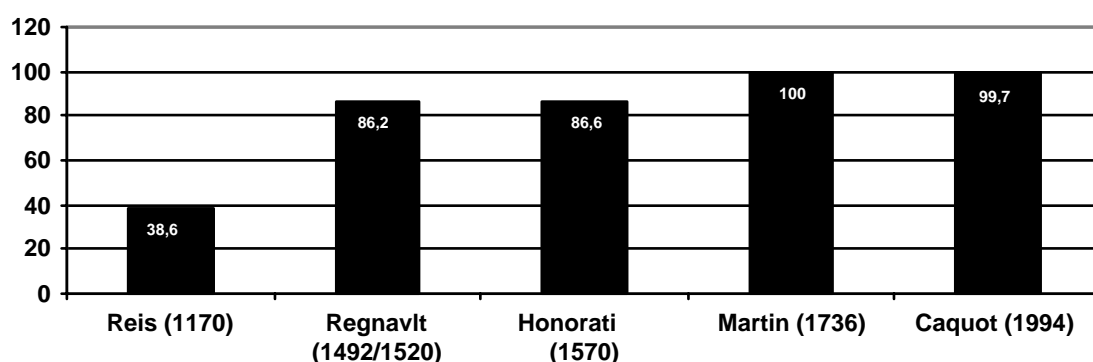


This growth in the use subject pronouns has been confirmed by many similar studies, e.g., by Tarallo (1993), Meyer-Hermann (1998), Lira (1996), Barne (2001), and by studies published in Kato & Negrão (eds.) (2000). From such results many authors have concluded that Brazilian Portuguese is on the way to becoming a non null subject language, undergoing a parametric change from a null subject to a non null subject language. Silva (2000:127) even assumes that Modern Brazilian Portuguese has already become “a partial pro-drop language making use of special strategies to identify the empty category whenever null subjects must be interpreted referentially” (cf. also Roberts 2007:43, fn 16). Other authors, however, reject this as a premature conclusion. And indeed, the single fact that subject pronouns are frequently used in Brazilian Portuguese, even if their occurrence is much more frequent than their omission, does not justify the claim that Brazilian Portuguese is losing its characteristics as a null subject language. Meyer-Hermann (1998) correctly states that before drawing this conclusion it would be necessary to identify significantly frequent subject pronouns whose usage could not be traced to semantic and/or pragmatic factors. In other words, one would need to be able to show that subject pronouns are used for the same purely grammatical reasons as is the case in non null subject languages. And in addition, one would need to provide evidence for the existence or emergence in Brazilian Portuguese of other properties which are typical of non null subject languages. In order to verify whether there is such evidence, I will compare, in the following, Brazilian Portuguese and its development with the development of French, one of the most prominent and most extensively discussed languages that has changed from a null subject language into a non null

subject language.

As has been noted in many diachronic studies, French is a language which originally retained the null subject property from Latin. This property, however, was given up at least by the end of the Middle Ages (Adams 1987, Roberts 1993, Vance 1997). This development is clearly confirmed by data from French bible translations from different periods of time collected for the purpose of a study on word order change in Romance languages (Kaiser 2002a). Table 4 summarizes the use of subject pronouns in finite declarative and non-coordinated sentences in seven bible chapters of five Bible translations dating from the 12th century to the 20th century:

Table 4. *Use of subject pronouns in French bible translations*  
(1 Samuel 1-3 and 2 Samuel 11-14).



The results clearly reveal a sharp increase of the use of lexical subjects between the translation dating from the Old French period (*Reis*) and the translations written at the end of the Middle French period (*Regnavlt*) and of the beginning of the Modern French period (*Honorati*), where very few subject omissions are attested. In the most modern translations (*Martin* and *Caquot*) there is only one example where the subject pronoun is omitted:

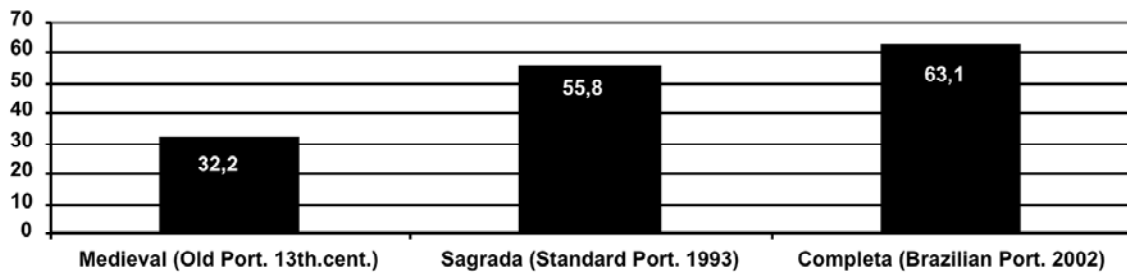
- (7)  $\emptyset$  mieux voudrait pour moi être encore là-bas.  
 better would.be for me to.be always under.there  
 (*Caquot*: 1 Samuel 14,32)

This sentence is an *expression figée*, representing an earlier stage of French, and therefore a nice example for the (rare) residual use of null subjects in Modern (standard) French.

Examining identical chapters in three Portuguese Bible translations (the Old Portuguese translation and two Modern Portuguese ones), we also observe an increase in the use of subject pronouns.



Table 5. *Use of subject pronouns in Portuguese bible translations*  
(1 Samuel 1-3 and 2 Samuel 11-14).



The data do not provide evidence for the existence of crucial differences between European and Brazilian Portuguese with respect to the use of subject pronouns. There are but few examples where in the Brazilian Portuguese translation (*Completa*) a subject pronoun is used while it is missing in the corresponding European Portuguese translation (*Sagrada*). One passage where this happens twice is given in (8):

- (8) a. Os inimigos do Senhor serão destruídos. Dos céus  $\emptyset$  trovejará contra eles. O Senhor julga a terra inteira,  $\emptyset$  dá poder ao seu rei e a vitória ao seu escolhido. (*Sagrada*: 1 Samuel 2,10)
- b. Os inimigos de Deus, o SENHOR, serão destruídos; *ele* trovejará do céu contra eles. O SENHOR julgará o mundo inteiro; *ele* dará poder ao seu rei e dará a vitória a esse rei que ele escolheu. (*Completa*: 1 Samuel 2,10)
- ‘The enemies of the Lord will be destroyed. He will thunder against them from heaven. He will judge the whole earth. He will give power to his king. He will give honor to his anointed one.’

Given the results provided by Duarte and others, which show an increase in the use of subject pronouns in Brazilian Portuguese, one might expect greater differences between the two translations. That this is not the case can surely be ascribed to the fact that we are dealing here with translations and with texts written in a quite formal style. Duarte’s data, however, from theatre plays, represent an informal style of speech, more representative of the spoken language of Brazil. However, it would not be correct to disqualify the Brazilian Bible translation as adhering to Standard (European) Portuguese, and hence not reflecting peculiarities of Brazilian Portuguese. At least in passages representing direct speech, the Brazilian translation crucially differs from the European one. For example, when second person object pronouns occur, we can observe in the Portuguese version the use of a clitic pronoun, while in the Brazilian translation the corresponding pronoun is the free pronoun.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Note that this example, too, shows a difference with respect to the use of the subject pronoun.

- (9) a. Não *te* chamei  
       not you called (Sagrada: 1 Samuel 3,5)
- b. Eu não chamei *você*  
       I not called you (Completa: 1 Samuel 3,5)  
       ‘I didn’t call you.’

The question now is, if one assumes that there is a tendency in Brazilian Portuguese to lose the null subject property, why there are so few differences between the two translations’ use of subject pronouns. As just suggested, a plausible answer is that the differences are visible only in passages of direct speech. Another explanation, however, might be that the tendency in Brazilian Portuguese to lose the null subject property is not yet so far advanced as has been assumed.

But maybe is there further evidence that Brazilian Portuguese is becoming a non null subject language? Let us compare Brazilian Portuguese with French, a language which already lost the null subject property and ask whether Brazilian Portuguese shows developments similar to those that appeared in French at the time when it was losing the null subject property. According to most diachronic studies of French, there are at least four concomitant developments which are held to be connected with the loss of the null subject property in French:

- (1) the decrease of verbal inflection
- (2) the decrease of verb second effects
- (3) the emergence of subject clitic pronouns
- (4) the emergence of lexical expletive pronouns

In the following section I will examine these four developments in French and compare them with Brazilian Portuguese, asking whether there is evidence for similar developments, and hence additional evidence for the claim that Brazilian Portuguese is losing its null subject property.

### 3.2 Related changes to the increase of subject pronouns

#### 3.2.1 The decay of the verbal inflection morphology

As already noted, one crucial property of many null subject languages is the existence of a “rich” verbal agreement morphology. As illustrated in table 6, Old French, too, exhibited such a “rich” morphology. It possessed an almost completely differentiated inflectional paradigm. This differentiation was given up in Middle French in favor of a system where most inflectional endings were reduced to a schwa, which is by and large lost in Modern French (Foulet 1928:107, 197, Roberts 1993:125ff, Kaiser 2002a:97):

Table 6. *Present indicative inflection in French.*

Person	Old French			Middle French			Modern French		
<b>1sg</b>	<i>je, jo, jou, gié</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[ø]</b>	<i>je</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[ø]</b>	<i>je</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[ø]</b>
<b>2sg</b>	<i>tu</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>es</b>	<i>tu</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[ø]</b>	<i>tu</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[ø]</b>
<b>3sg</b>	<i>il/ele</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>e(t)</b>	<i>il/elle</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[ø]</b>	<i>il/elle</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[ø]</b>
<b>1pl</b>	<i>nos</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>ons</b>	<i>nous</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[õ]</b>	<i>nous</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[õ]</b>
							<i>on</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[ø]</b>
<b>2pl</b>	<i>vos</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>ez</b>	<i>vous</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[e]</b>	<i>vous</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[e]</b>
<b>3pl</b>	<i>il/eles</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>ent</b>	<i>ils/elles</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[ø]</b>	<i>ils/elles</i>	<i>chant</i>	<b>[ø]</b>

As a result, spoken Modern French is characterized by the complete lack of any agreement marker for the present tense singular of all verb classes, except for the auxiliaries *être* and *avoir*, and in most verb classes for the third person plural of the present tense. Given that *on* may be used instead of *nous* in colloquial speech, it happens that the first plural form, too, often lacks a verb ending. Thus, the development of French is clearly characterized by the almost complete loss of verbal agreement markers.

Comparing this development with the development in Portuguese, we can observe that, in comparison with the Old Portuguese inflectional system, Brazilian Portuguese has lost the agreement markers for the second person singular and plural (Huber 1933:148f, 191, Duarte 1993:109, Barne 2001:52-70, Kaiser 2002b:202):

Table 7. *Present indicative inflection in Portuguese.*

Person	Old Portuguese			Modern European Portuguese			Modern Brazilian Portuguese		
<b>1sg</b>	<i>eu</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>o</b>	<i>eu</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>o</b>	<i>eu</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>o</b>
<b>2sg</b>	<i>tu</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a s</b>	<i>tu</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a s</b>	<i>você</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>-</b>
<b>3sg</b>	<i>el(l)e,el(l)/el(l)a</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a -</b>	<i>ele/ela</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a -</b>	<i>ele/ela</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a -</b>
<b>1pl</b>	<i>nos, nós</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a mos</b>	<i>nós</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a mos</b>	<i>nós</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a mos</b>
							<i>a gente</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a -</b>
<b>2pl</b>	<i>vos, vós</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a des</b>	<i>vocês</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a m</b>	<i>vocês</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a m</b>
<b>3pl</b>	<i>el(l)es/e(l)las</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a m</b>	<i>eles/elas</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a m</b>	<i>eles/elas</i>	<i>cant</i>	<b>a m</b>

In contrast to French, this loss is not due to a morphophonological decay of the verbal endings but rather to the fact that the use of the second person pronouns has been given up in favor of the use of the pronouns *você* and *vocês*, which require agreement with the third person. In addition, similarly to French, the first person plural pronoun *nós* may be replaced in Colloquial Brazilian Portuguese by *a gente* which again involves third person agreement. As a result, Brazilian Portuguese has two or – depending on the realization of the pronoun of the first person plural – three zero endings and it has identical agreement markers for the

second and third plural in the present tense of all verb classes. In other words, although triggered for different reasons, Brazilian Portuguese, too, undergoes a loss of verbal morphology similar to that observed in French.

### 3.2.2 *The decrease of verb second effects*

It has been generally claimed that French was originally a verb second language and lost this property at the end of the Middle French period. This assumption rests on the fact that in Medieval French verb second structures, i.e. sentences exhibiting an XVS order, are quite frequent (cf. Roberts 1993:95). The data of the analyzed Medieval French Bible translations confirm this observation in so far as they show a much higher rate of verb second structures than do the translations from Modern French, where this kind of structure is almost completely absent (Kaiser 2002a:146):

Table 8. *Verb order in finite declarative matrix clauses with realized subjects in French Bible translations (1 Samuel 1-3 and 2 Samuel 11-14).*

	<b>Old French</b>		<b>Middle French</b>		<b>Modern French</b>						
	<i>(Reis)</i> (1170)		<i>(Regnavlt)</i> (1492/1520)		<i>(Honorati)</i> (1570)		<i>(Martin)</i> (1736)		<i>(Caquot)</i> (1994)		
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	
<b>V1</b>	35	11.6	8	1.9	8	1.9	0	0.0	1	0.2	
<b>V2</b>	SV(X)	196	64.9	259	62.6	307	70.0	405	80.0	450	83.8
	XVS	38	12.6	111	26.8	15	3.4	4	0.8	8	1.5
<b>V&gt;2</b>	33	10.9	36	8.7	108	24.7	97	19.2	78	14.5	
<b>total</b>	302	100.0	414	100.0	438	100.0	506	100.0	537	100.0	

Interestingly, the Old and Middle French translations also contain a considerable number of clauses where the verb does not appear in the second position, but in the first, in the third, or in a higher position. Note that such clause forms are not compatible with a verb second grammar, where the finite verb obligatorily has to appear in the second position. In a verb second language like German, for example, such clauses are almost completely excluded or, at least, restricted to very specific contexts.<sup>3</sup> In any case, the crucial observation here is that French originally exhibited many verb second effects and lost them at precisely the same time as it lost null subjects (Adams 1987, Roberts 1993, Vance 1997).

A similar observation can be made with respect to Portuguese. The Old Portuguese Bible translation displays a considerably higher number of XVS clauses than the respective Modern Portuguese translations (Kaiser 2002a:154):

<sup>3</sup> Based on this observation, I defend in Kaiser (2002a) the assumption that Medieval French was not a verb second language, i.e. not a language where the verb obligatorily appears in the second position, and that therefore French did not undergo a parametric change from a null subject to a non null subject language.

Table 9. *Verb order in finite declarative matrix clauses with realized subjects in Portuguese Bible translations (1 Samuel 1-3 and 2 Samuel 11-14).*

		Old Portuguese ( <i>Nova</i> ) (13th century)		Modern Portuguese			
				European Portuguese ( <i>Sagrada</i> )(1993)		Brazilian Portuguese ( <i>Completa</i> )(2002)	
		abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
<b>V1</b>		79	42.7	12	3.8	9	2.1
<b>V2</b>	SV(X)	78	42.2	214	68.2	267	61.5
	XVS	22	11.9	9	2.8	19	4.4
<b>V&gt;2</b>		6	3.2	79	25.2	139	32.0
<b>total</b>		185	100.0	314	100.0	464	100.0

Drawing on this observation, it has been claimed that Old Portuguese, too, was a language with a verb second grammar, a feature which has been lost in Modern Portuguese (see, in particular, Ribeiro 1995). However, such a claim is confronted with the very same problem as the verb second analysis for Medieval French, since Old Portuguese also exhibits clauses which are incompatible with a verb second grammar. In our Old Portuguese Bible translation, we find a large number of sentences with the finite verb in first position, i.e., clauses with a V(X)S order, which are excluded in declarative sentences of a verb second language. Again, as already noted with respect to the French data, what is crucial here is that there is a higher number of XVS clauses in Old Portuguese than in Modern Portuguese (which probably decreases at the same time as the use of subject pronouns starts to increase).

Interestingly, we can also observe some differences between French and Portuguese with respect to the development of the order of the finite verb. This is the case in interrogative clauses. In these contexts, most Romance languages almost obligatorily display subject verb inversion, often considered to be a residual case of an earlier verb second period of these languages (Rizzi 1996). The Modern French Bible data clearly seem to confirm this finding: in interrogative sentences containing a *wh* word there is a very high number of clauses with a verb second order. In the Modern Portuguese translations, however, there is almost no evidence for the occurrence of this word order:

Table 10. *Verb order in wh matrix clauses in Modern French and Modern Portuguese bible translations (1 Samuel 1-3, 2 Samuel 11-14).*

		Modern French ( <i>Caquot</i> )(1994)		Europ. Portuguese ( <i>Sagrada</i> )(1993)		Brazil. Portuguese ( <i>Completa</i> )(2002)	
		abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
<b>V1</b>			0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>V2</b>	<i>wh</i> -SV(X)	5	21.7	1	11.1	2	12.5
	<i>wh</i> -XVS	14	60.9	0	0.0	1	6.25
<b>V&gt;2</b>	<i>wh</i> -X <i>est-ce que</i> <i>/ é que</i> SV(X)	1	4.4	8	88.9	4	25.0
	<i>wh</i> -X SV(X)	3	13.0	0	0.0	9	56.25
<b>total</b>		23	100.0	9	100.0	16	100.0

Apart from many *wh* clauses with subject inversion, as in (10a), French also exhibits sentences with verb third order. These are either sentences containing the interrogative marker *est-ce que* which excludes the VS order (10b) or sentences with complex inversion, a specific inversion type in Standard French where a preverbal subject noun is reiterated by a co-referent clitic pronoun in postverbal position (10c):

- (10) a. Qu' as- tu?  
 what have you  
 'What is troubling you?' (Caquot: 2 Samuel 14,5)
- b. Pourquoi est-ce que je jeûnerais?  
 why EST-CE QUE I should.fast  
 'Why should I fast?' (Caquot: 2 Samuel 12,23)
- c. Pourquoi tes serviteurs ont-ils mit le feu à la  
 why your employees have them put the fire on the  
 parcelle qui m' appartient?  
 field which to.me belongs  
 'Why did your employees put the fire on the field which belongs to me?' (Caquot: 2 Samuel 14,31)

It has been shown, recently for example by Bonnesen & Meisel (2005), that the types of subject inversion in (10) are almost completely absent in spoken, informal French. Instead, Colloquial French generally makes use of SV order in *wh* clauses. The explanation for the fact that we find a relatively high percentage of verb second effects in these sentences in the Modern French bible translation is certainly due to its conservative register.

The lack of any evidence for *wh* clauses exhibiting a VS order in the European Portuguese translation, however, is, at the first sight, quite surprising. In contrast to French, European Portuguese generally still requires subject verb inversion in interrogatives. There is one exception, namely when the interrogative marker *é que* is used which like *est-ce que* in French involves SV order. Since almost all interrogatives in the translation are formed with *é que* this explains the lack of sentences with a VS order. Another explanation relies in the fact that due to the null subject property the postverbal subject is often omitted in this context, as illustrated in (11a). (11b) and (11c) are examples for interrogatives with *é que*. The crucial observation is that there is no example in the translation for a sentence with a *wh*-XSV-order, i.e. where a *wh* pronoun is immediately followed by the subject.

- (11) a. Que tens?  
 what have.2ND-PRES  
 'What is troubling you?' (Sagrada: 2 Samuel 14,5)
- b. Como é que eu poderia ir para minha casa para comer  
 how É QUE I could go to my home for eat  
 e beber e para me deitar com a minha mulher?  
 and drink and for myself lie with DET my wife  
 'How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife?' (Sagrada: 2 Samuel 11,11)

- c. Por que é que os teus criados puseram fogo ao meu  
 why É QUE DET your employees put fire to.DET my  
 campo?  
 field  
 ‘Why have your servants set my field on fire?’  
 (*Sagrada*: 1 Samuel 14,31)

In contrast, the Brazilian translation contains interrogatives where *é que* is used to a lesser extent than the European Portuguese Bible ((12a)). There is only one sentence exhibiting a subject verb inversion ((12b)), but a relatively high number of verb third interrogatives where the subject immediately follows the *wh* pronoun ((12c)-(12d)). This is in clear contrast to the European Portuguese translation and reflects the situation in modern colloquial Brazilian Portuguese where verb second interrogative clauses are almost completely absent.

- (12) a. O que é que você quer?  
 what É QUE you want  
 ‘What do you want?’ (Completa: 2 Samuel 14,5)
- b. Como poderia eu ir para casa, comer e beber e dormir  
 how could I go to home eat and drink and sleep  
 com a minha mulher?  
 with DET my wife  
 ‘How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my  
 wife?’ (Completa: 2 Samuel 11,11)
- c. Até quando você vai ficar embriagada?  
 until.how long you will keep drunken  
 ‘How long will you keep on getting drunk?’  
 (Completa: 1 Samuel 1,14)
- d. Por que os seus empregados puseram fogo no meu campo?  
 why DET your employees put fire on my field  
 ‘Why have your servants set my field on fire?’  
 (Completa: 2 Samuel 14,31)

Given these results, we can state that both in declarative and interrogative clauses Brazilian Portuguese has almost completely given up any kind of V2 effects, a development which is claimed to be a side effect of the loss of null pronouns. A similar development, although not reflected in the Modern French Bible translation, has been observed in studies on Colloquial French, where most interrogative clauses are formed without subject verb inversion. Hence, both languages seem to behave in a similar way with respect to the loss of verb second effects.

### 3.2.3 The emergence of subject clitic pronouns

Another development which occurred quite simultaneously to the decrease of null subjects in French is the emergence of subject clitic pronouns. Old French only had one series of subject pronouns, listed in table 10 (Kaiser 1992:152):

Table 11. *Subject personal pronouns in Old French.*

Person	Forms
1sg	<i>je, jo, jou, gié</i>
2sg	<i>tu</i>
3sg	<i>il, ele</i>
1pl	<i>nos</i>
2pl	<i>vos</i>
3pl	<i>il, eles</i>

Applying the usual tests to examine the free or clitic status of an element, it is beyond doubt that these pronouns behave like free elements. They can appear in isolated position (13a), can be conjoined with other nominal elements (13b), and can be modified and therefore appear separated from the finite verb (13c) (Vance 1995: 300f, Kato 2000:232):

- (13) a. Et ce voil je que vos me tenés. –*Jo ?*  
 and these want.1SG.PRES I that you to.me hold I  
 fai[t] li peres  
 says the father  
 ‘And I want that you hold these (promises) – Me? says the father.’  
*(Aucassin: X,55-57)*
- b. Parole fud que tu é li tuens lignages servireit  
 word was that you and DET your family minister.3.SG.COND  
 devant me  
 before me  
 ‘I said that you and your family would minister before me.’  
*(Reis: 1 Samuel 2,30)*
- c. *Je meismes* preu i avrai  
 I myself advantage there have.1.SG.FUT  
 ‘I myself will have an advantage there’ *(Chevalier: 2140)*

However, already during the Old French period these subject pronouns start to lose their independence. When appearing in postverbal position, they already behaved like clitics in the Old French period, since they were bound to the preceding verb. This difference between preverbal and postverbal subject pronouns is already noted by Foulet (1928:150) in his seminal work on Old French syntax:

On notera pourtant que le pronom ne peut ainsi se séparer de son verbe qu’à condition d’être placé avant ce verbe. S’il est placé après, il doit au contraire suivre immédiatement le verbe; bien mieux, il fait corps avec lui et porte l’accent du groupe ainsi formé [...].<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> “One will note, however, that the pronoun can be separated from its verb only under the condition that it is placed in front of this verb. When it is placed behind, it must, on the contrary, immediately follow the verb; actually, it forms a body with it and bears the accent of the so-formed group.” [translation GAK]



Another piece of evidence for the fact that subject pronouns start to become clitics in the Old French period comes from the fact that we find examples where a subject pronoun cooccurs with another co-referent pronoun or noun (Foulet 1935:307f, Ewert 1943:158):

- (14) a. Renars respont : « Jou, *je* n' irai, [...] »  
fox answers I I NEG will.go  
'The fox answers: Me, I will not go.' (Renard: 599)
- b. Mais saives hom, *il* deit faire message  
but wise man he must make message  
'But the wise man must bring the message.' (Roland: 294)

By the end of 15th century, the preverbal subject pronouns also became clitic pronouns. And it is at precisely the same time that a new series of subject pronouns starts to emerge, developing from the originally strong oblique pronoun forms. This development leads to the following system of subject pronouns we find today in Modern French (Kayne 1975, Kaiser 1992):

Table 12. *Subject personal pronouns in Modern French.*

Person	Non-clitic forms	Clitic forms
1sg	<i>moi</i>	<i>je</i>
2sg	<i>toi</i>	<i>tu</i>
3sg	<i>lui / elle</i>	<i>il / elle</i> <i>on</i>
1pl	<i>nous</i>	<i>nous</i>
2pl	<i>vous</i>	<i>vous</i>
3pl	<i>eux / elles</i>	<i>ils / elles</i>

The different behavior between both kinds of pronouns can be illustrated when we apply the same tests we already applied for the Old French pronouns. The examples (15)-(17) show that both types of pronouns are in a complementary distribution here: the formerly free pronouns have lost their independence, not allowed in isolated positions, nor conjoined with other (pro)nouns, nor modified or separated from the finite verb. The newly formed free pronouns, on the other hand, are not subject to these restrictions:

- (15) a. \*Je veux que tu me tiennes—*Je ?* dit le père  
I will that you me hold I says the father  
b. Je veux que tu me tiennes —*Moi ?* dit le père  
I will that you me hold me says the father
- (16) a. \*mais si *tu et ta famille* s' en vont ...  
but if you and your family REFL away go  
b. mais si *toi et ta famille* s' en vont ...  
but if you and your family REFL away go
- (17) a. \**Il même* achète le livre  
he himself buys the book  
b. *Lui même* (il) achète le livre  
he himself he buys the book

As already noted above, the French subject clitic pronouns not only show all these typical properties of clitic elements, but also behave in some contexts like affixes. This happens, in particular, when they occur in postverbal position. In this case some pronouns can trigger morphosyntactic changes on the stem of the verb to which they attach, a process which is considered to be typical for affixal elements (Grevisse & Goosse 2008:1023, 1025, Kaiser 2008:314):

- (18) a. Que savait- *il*?      [kʁsavɛtil]  
           what knows-he  
           ‘What does he know?’  
       b. Me trompé- *je*?      [mʁtʁɔpɛʒ]  
           me mistake-I  
           ‘Am I mistaken?’

In (18a), the pronunciation of the final consonant of the verb is triggered through the presence of the postverbal clitic pronoun, otherwise the consonant would remain unpronounced. A similar rule applies in (18b) which concerns the pronunciation of the final vowel of a finite verb of the first conjugation class when it is in the first person singular. In the very particular and rare case of the postverbal attachment of the clitic pronoun *je*, the final vowel of the verb, which is normally mute, is then pronounced and receives the accentuation.

Another piece of evidence in favor of an analysis of French subject clitics as affixes comes from the fact that they may co-occur with co-referent pronouns or nouns. In Colloquial French this occurrence is almost always obligatory when the co-referent element is a (strong) pronoun. In sentences with NPs, though, there is no obligatory use of subject clitics. However, several empirical studies on Colloquial French show that there is a relatively large number of cases where NP and subject clitic co-occur (Sankoff 1982, Kaiser 1992):

- (19) a. Moi (*\*je*) arrive demain.  
           Me I arrive tomorrow  
       b. Lui (*il*) arrive demain.  
           he he arrives tomorrow  
       c. Ma mère (*elle*) arrive demain.  
           my mother (she) arrives tomorrow

The question in order to decide whether or not these clitics have been grammaticalized and have become affixes crucially depends on the analysis of these constructions. Many authors, like Rizzi (1986) and others, argue that these constructions are instances of Left Dislocation, claiming that these sentences are generally acceptable only with an intonation break after the lexical NP. Rizzi (1986:397) also provides syntactic evidence for his analysis. One argument relies on the observation that clitic doubling seems to be excluded with quantified subject NPs in French:

- (20) a. Personne n’ a rien dit.  
           nobody NEG has nothing said  
       b. \*Personne *il* n’ a rien dit.  
           nobody he NEG has nothing said  
           ‘Nobody hasn’t said anything.’

According to Rizzi, the ungrammaticality of (20b) can only be explained by assuming that the subject clitic is in the subject position and forces the quantified subject to appear in a topicalized position. If, however, the clitic would be analyzed as an affix, being generated in the inflection node, then (20b) should be grammatical, since the quantified subject could appear in the subject position.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, several studies defending an affix analysis for French clitics provide data from colloquial speech where a quantified subject co-occurs with a co-referent subject clitic:

- (21) a. *Personne i(l) m' aime.*  
 nobody he me loves  
 'Nobody doesn't love me.' (Zribi-Hertz 1994:137, Auger 1995:39)
- b. *Tout le monde il est beau.*  
 everybody he is beautiful  
 'Everybody is beautiful.'  
 (Cabredo-Hofherr 2004:105, Kaiser 2008:313)

In other words, there is conflicting evidence with respect to the analysis of French subject clitics. Note, however, that one crucial argument against such an affix analysis of French subject clitics comes from the fact that the object clitics almost never show clitic doubling effects in French. In other words, there is little evidence to analyze object clitics as agreement affixes. As a consequence, given that object clitics may appear in clitic clusters between the subject clitic and the finite verb, an approach treating subject clitics as affixes would have the undesirable result that a clitic element would be able to interfere between a prefix, i.e. the subject clitic, and a stem, i.e. the finite verb. Hence, it can be concluded that French subject pronouns (still) behave like clitics and are not (yet) grammaticalized as affixes (Meisenburg 2000, Kaiser 2008).

If we now compare the development of Brazilian Portuguese pronouns with that of French pronouns, there are crucial differences to ascertain. First, Brazilian Portuguese has only one series of subject pronouns, listed as standard forms in table 13. The application of the relevant tests clearly reveals that these pronouns behave in all respects like free, non-clitic elements:

- (22) a. *Eu quero que você me segure – Eu? diz o pai*  
 I will that you me hold I says the father
- b. *mais se você e a sua família vão embora*  
 but if you and the your family go away
- c. *Ele mesmo comprou o livro*  
 he himself bought the book

<sup>5</sup> Given the observation that in Northern Italian dialects sentences like (20b) are grammatical, as illustrated for Torinese and Fiorentino in (i), Rizzi (1986:396) assumes that in these dialects, in contrast to French, the subject clitics behave like affixes and are generated as part of the inflection node INFL:

- (i) (a) *Gnun l' a dit gnent.*  
 nobody he has said nothing  
 (b) *Nessuno l' ha detto nulla.*  
 nobody he has said nothing

Second, in addition to these pronouns there exists, at least in Colloquial Brazilian Portuguese, the possibility to reduce some of these pronouns. Their forms are listed in table 13 and their use is illustrated with some examples:

Table 13. *Subject personal pronouns in Brazilian Portuguese.*

Person		Standard forms	Reduced forms	Example for the reduced form
1sg		<i>eu</i>	<i>ô</i>	<i>Ô vô.</i> (child language) (Kato 1999:14) 'I go.'
2sg		<i>você</i>	<i>(o)cê</i>	<i>De que lado cê tá?</i> (Ramos 1997:44) 'On which side are you?'
3sg	masc.	<i>ele</i>	<i>el</i>	
	fem.	<i>ela</i>	<i>é [ɛ]</i>	
1pl		<i>nós</i> <i>a gente</i>	-	<i>Vocês, cês aprontam a maior bagunça.</i> 'You, you are doing a big mess.' (Ramos 1997: 48 and 56)
2pl		<i>vocês</i>	<i>cês</i>	
3pl	masc.	<i>eles</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>Es não me entendiam</i> (Ramos 1999:1) 'They didn't understand me.'
	fem.	<i>elas</i>	-	

Testing whether or not these pronouns behave like clitics leads to the following result. Taking *cê* as an example we can state that this pronoun shows some typical characteristics of clitic elements. It cannot appear in isolated position nor can it be conjoined with another nominal element (cf. Mioto, Figueiredo Silva & Vasconcellos Lopes 2007:20):

- (23) a. \**Você quer que eu te segure – Cê? diz o pai*  
           you will that I you hold      you says the father  
       b. \**mais se cê et a sua família vão embora*  
           but if you and the your family go away

At the same time, however, it shows behavior typical of independent elements, since it can be modified or be separated from the finite verb.

- (24) *Cê mesmo comprou o livro*  
       you yourself bought the book

In other words, *cê* is merely a reduced form of the full pronoun *você*, exhibiting only some of the typical properties of clitic elements. In addition, it does not display any special syntax, as happens with subject clitics in French or in the Northern Italian dialects. Note that while Brazilian Portuguese subject pronouns, reduced or not, may co-occur with preposed co-referent nouns or pronouns, this does not prove their status as clitics or even, as it has been claimed in several studies, as affixes (e.g. Galves 2000):

- (25) a. Eu, *eu* sinto demais isso, né?  
 I I feel too.much this don't.I  
 'I feel this too much, isn't that true?' (Cyrino et al. 2000:69)
- b. Você, *cê* não me pega!  
 you you not me catch  
 'You can not catch me.' (Cyrino et al. 2000:69)

Given, as just noted, that the reduced pronouns achieve only some of the tests for clitichood, there is no evidence at all that these pronouns behave like affixes. Although I do not know any empirical study analyzing the frequency of such doubled constructions, their number is not very high. More importantly, while in French there are cases where the doubling is (almost) obligatory, as in the case of free subject pronouns (cf. (19a) and (19b)), this is not true for Brazilian Portuguese. Sentences like (25) are also perfectly well-formed without the realization of the doubling pronoun.

The same observation holds for sentences like (26). They are mentioned in order to demonstrate the special character of Brazilian subject pronouns, as they provide evidence that in Brazilian Portuguese subject pronouns can co-occur with co-referent indefinite subjects or with quantified subject nouns:

- (26) a. Essa competência *ela* é de natureza mental.  
 this competence it.FEM is of nature mental  
 'This competence is of mental nature.' (Galves 1993:398)
- b. Qualquer pessoa que vai praticar um esporte *ela* tem que  
 any person who will practice a sport she has.to  
 se preparar  
 REF prepare  
 'Any person who will practice a sport has to prepare himself.'  
 (Duarte 2000:28)

Again, the – isolated – occurrence of such constructions does not allow us to draw the conclusion that the subject pronouns in these constructions are becoming affixes. In contrast to the Northern Italian dialects or to Colloquial French, for which such a conclusion has been drawn on the basis of such clauses, these pronouns do not display any properties of affixes. Therefore, they cannot be interpreted as agreement markers or as part of the inflectional node.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Note that the consequence of such an analysis would be that Brazilian Portuguese is not really undergoing a change into a non null subject language, but rather remains a null subject language, as has been assumed for French, as well (cf. Kaiser & Meisel 1991). The difference of Modern Brazilian Portuguese to former Brazilian Portuguese or to European Portuguese would be that the verbal agreement is expressed by prefixes rather than by suffixes.

### 3.2.4 The emergence of expletive pronouns

One crucial point in the discussion on null subject languages, initiated by Haiman (1974) and Perlmutter (1971) and later renewed by Chomsky (1981) and Rizzi (1982) in the framework of the principles and parameter theory, concerned the question of whether these languages are characterized by additional typical properties which do not exist in non null subject languages. In this discussion, several properties have been proposed, among others, the lack of expletive pronouns, the free subject inversion, the long *wh* movement or the violation of the *that* trace filter. During this discussion it turned out that this “clustering of properties“ (Chomsky 1981:240) does not seem to be sustainable, since either null subject languages lack some of these properties or non null subject languages show properties which are claimed to be characteristic for null subject languages (Roberts 2007, Gilligan 1987). Haider (2001:285), summarizing some of the results of this discussion, comes to the conclusion that only the correlation between the null subject property and the lack of subject expletives can be maintained without any exception.

Note that this observation is in accordance with traditional descriptions of null subject languages where it is assumed that in these languages subject pronouns are in general omitted, unless they are emphasized or there is a potential ambiguity to avoid (Real Academia Española 1973:421). Expletive pronouns are characterized – by definition – by the fact that they do not have any semantic content nor do they refer to something in the (linguistic) context. Hence, not being able to be used for emphasis or disambiguation, such pronouns should not exist in null subject languages. However, in a language which is losing its null subject property, one should expect lexical expletives to arise, since in such a language the use of lexical subject pronouns should no longer be restricted to emphasis or disambiguation. This is what can be observed in the diachronic development of French, where lexical expletive pronouns arise during the period of Medieval French. In Modern French, expletive subjects are almost always lexically realized, except in fixed expressions like (7) or in specific constructions, as for instance, in constructions with *falloir*, where in Colloquial French the expletive can be dropped under specific conditions (Kaiser 2008). What is puzzling, however, is that lexical expletives are attested quite early in Old French texts. One of the oldest examples is found in *La vie de Alexis*, a text from the middle of the 12th century (1150). Note that there is evidence for the occurrence of expletives in Old French in different types of impersonal constructions, namely in constructions with weather verbs, existential verbs and unaccusative verbs:

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Interestingly, there is one subject pronoun in Brazilian Portuguese whose use is obligatory. This is the case for *a gente*, as shown in (i):

- (i) a. *Eu e o Mário \*(a gente) vai casar logo*  
 me and DET Mário we will marry soon  
 ‘Me and Mario will marry soon.’ (Duarte 2000:28)
- b. *\*Vai casar logo*  
 will.3.SG marry soon  
 Reading: ‘We will marry soon.’

The examples show that *a gente* must obligatorily co-occur with subject nouns and cannot be omitted. In other words, *a gente* shows a behaviour typical of affixes. However, given that *a gente* is a polysyllabic constituent which can be independently stressed, such an analysis as affix cannot be adequate.

- (27) a. Quant li jurz passet ed *il* fut anuit(i)et  
 when the day passes and it was night.fallen  
 ‘When the day passes, it was night.’ (Alexius 51)
- b. *Il* n’ i ot el  
 it not there was he  
 ‘He was not there.’ (Yvain 203)
- c. Quant *ce* vint le soir  
 when it came the evening  
 ‘When the evening came ...’ (Louis 380, 186)

The problem here is that these examples date from a phase where null subjects are still allowed and are used to a relatively high extent, as illustrated in table (3). Zimmermann (this volume) tries to account for this contradiction by claiming that Old French already was a non null subject language where null subjects are only allowed under very specific conditions. In any case, the appearance of such pronouns in Old French seems to announce or maybe even seems to trigger the further development of French, namely the complete loss of its null subject property.

If we now look at Brazilian Portuguese, we find a completely different situation. There is no evidence at all for the existence of lexical expletives. According to all studies in this respect, impersonal constructions containing a subject pronoun are completely ungrammatical in Brazilian Portuguese (Kato 1999:5, Silva 2000:130):

- (28) a. (\**Ele* / \**Isso*) tá chovendo.  
 it that is raining  
 ‘It is raining.’
- b. (\**Ele* / \**Isso*) tem novidade.  
 it that there.is new  
 ‘There are news.’
- c. (\**Ele* / \**Isso*) parece que vai chover.  
 it that seems that will rain  
 ‘It seems that it will rain.’

Given the observation that there is a strong influx of subject pronouns in Brazilian Portuguese, it would be reasonable to assume that the use of these pronouns is not restricted to cases of emphasis or disambiguation, as happens to be the case in standard null subject languages. In particular, the assumption that Brazilian Portuguese is becoming or even has become a non null subject language is difficult to reconcile with the observation that it does not exhibit the other typical property of null subject languages, namely the existence of expletive pronouns.

This fact is even more difficult to explain when we look at European Portuguese. Remember that European Portuguese does not seem to be developing a non null subject property. However, what we find in colloquial European Portuguese is that in impersonal constructions apparent expletive subjects are used (Brito 2001: 223f, Mateus et al. 2003:283):

- (29) a. *Ele* choveu toda a noite.  
 it rained whole the night  
 ‘It rained the whole night.’

- b. *Ele* ha coisas.  
 it has things  
 ‘There are things (to do).’
- c. *El* veio aí um homem  
 it came there a man  
 ‘There came a man.’

One explanation for this quite surprising fact is to assume that the italic marked elements in (29) are not expletive pronouns, but rather discourse markers. This is supported by the observation that these elements do not show the distribution of ordinary expletive pronouns that one observes in non null subject languages. They are never obligatory, but their use apparently depends on certain contexts or factors. They are almost completely excluded in postverbal position and are also very rare in embedded clauses. In other words, they tend to be used in sentence initial position where they function as discourse markers (Hinzelin & Kaiser 2007).<sup>7</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the hypothesis that Brazilian Portuguese is losing its null subject property and becoming a non null subject language. Based on a comparison of Bible translations, it has been shown that although there is a tendency in Brazilian Portuguese to use subject pronouns to a higher extent than it was the case in Old Portuguese and than it is the case in Modern European Portuguese, there is little evidence for this assumption. Given this conclusion a comparison with French has been conducted in order to verify whether Brazilian Portuguese shows a line of development similar to that of (Medieval) French at the time when it was losing its null subject property. It is concluded that Brazilian Portuguese shows some similarities, namely the reduction of the verbal morphology and the decrease of verb second effects. On the other hand, however, crucial differences are detected: while in French, when losing its null subject property, clitic pronouns arose – which nowadays show a tendency to become affixes in Modern Colloquial French – and expletive pronouns emerged, there is no evidence for such a development in Brazilian Portuguese. As a result, we can state that Brazilian Portuguese shares some, but not all typical developments of a language which has completely lost its null subject property. At the same time it (still) lacks typical properties of non null subject languages, in particular the presence of lexical expletives; and, most importantly, it still allows null subjects.

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, a similar observation with respect to the occurrence of such discourse markers in impersonal constructions can be made in Caribbean Spanish, in particular in the variety spoken in the Dominican Republic. Here we can find data similar to that in European Portuguese (Hinzelin & Kaiser 2007):

- (i) a. Ello estaba lloviznando un poco.  
 it was drizzling a bit
- b. Ello hay muchos mangos este año.  
 it has many mangos this year
- c. Ello llegan guaguas hasta allá.  
 it arrive buses until there



In other words, the crucial difference to standard null subject languages, like Italian or (Standard) Spanish, is that Brazilian Portuguese has lost most of its verbal morphology. As a consequence, the verbal endings are in general no longer “clear and vivacious” enough to insert an adequate null subject pronoun. Thus, there should exist other mechanisms in Brazilian Portuguese allowing the identification of a null subject. A comparison with Chinese or Japanese probably could detect whether Brazilian Portuguese shows similar mechanisms as in these languages in identifying null subjects.

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## ***The use of subject pronouns in Raeto-Romance A contrastive study<sup>1</sup>***

*Franziska Maria Hack & Sascha Gaglia*

### ***1. Introduction***

In Raeto-Romance, the expression of subject pronouns is considered obligatory like in French and unlike in Italian (i.a. Meyer-Lübke 1899). However, subject pronouns may remain unexpressed in certain contexts in Raeto-Romance varieties. In this paper, we investigate the use of subject pronouns in Raeto-Romance. For this purpose we carried out a field study covering Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin. This field study will be extended to Friulian. The Friulian data analysed in this paper are based on a preliminary corpus study, which serves as a starting point for this field study.

We claim that the omission of subject pronouns in the Raeto-Romance varieties under consideration may be due to four main factors: discourse situation, syncretism, language contact and grammaticalisation.

The paper is organised as follows: section 2 gives a brief general introduction presenting the language areas of Raeto-Romance and certain syntactic properties relevant to subject pronoun usage in these varieties. After that, section 3 presents methodological aspects and the results of our field study on subject pronoun usage in Swiss Romansh, Dolomitic Ladin and Friulian. Section 4 summarizes the main results of our investigation. A further discussion follows in section 5.

### ***2. Raeto-Romance***

#### ***2.1 Language areas***

Since Theodor Gartner (1883), the notion “Rätoromanisch” (engl. “Raeto-Romance”) is used as an umbrella term for the varieties spoken in the three language areas of Swiss Romansh, Dolomitic Ladin and Friulian.<sup>2</sup> Swiss Romansh, which is further divided into the five subvarieties or linguistic idioms Sursilvan, Sutsilvan, Surmiran, Putér and Vallader, is spoken in the Swiss Canton

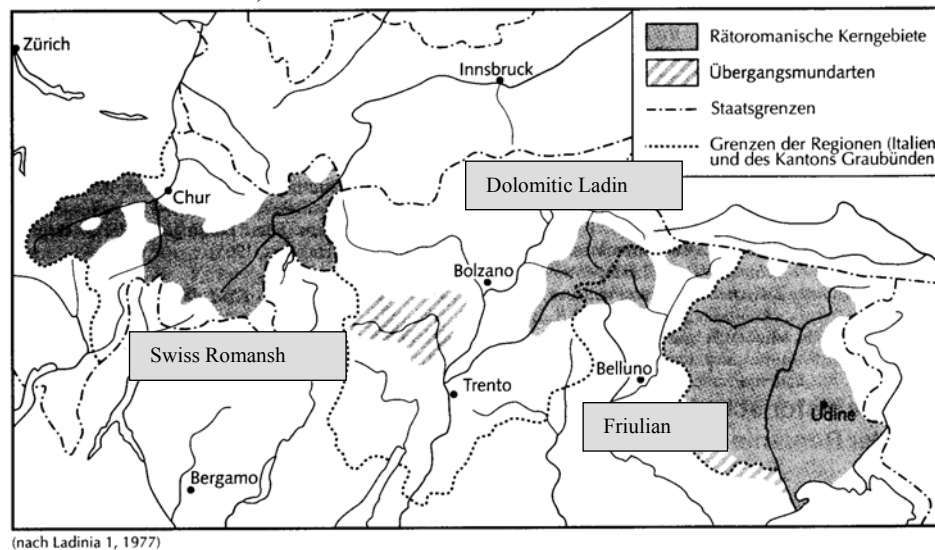
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<sup>1</sup> Our study has been carried out within the research project “Evolution and Variation of Expletive and Neuter Pronouns in Romance Languages” (directed by Georg A. Kaiser), Collaborative Research Centre 471 “Variation and Evolution in the Lexicon”, University of Konstanz, funded by the German Research Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> However, the question whether these three language territories can in fact be conceived as one linguistic unit is discussed controversially in Romance linguistics (Liver 1999:15-28). The motivation to subsume the three language areas in question under that term, were mainly phonological in nature. They share 1) the realisation of word final *-s* whereas the segment is deleted in Central Romance languages and varieties, 2) the conservative realisation of consonantal clusters of the type C+l (/kl-/ , /gl-/ , /pl-/ , /bl-/ , /fl-/), 3) the palatalisation of /k/ and /g/ in the environment of a following /a/ (Ascoli 1873; Gartner 1883; Liver 1999; Kaiser et al. 2001).

Graubünden.<sup>3</sup> Dolomitic Ladin, which comprises five main varieties around the Sella mountain, Gherdëina (Val Gardena), Badiot/Ladin<sup>4</sup> (Val Badia) with Maréo, Fascian (Val di Fassa), Fodóm and Anpezzo, is spoken in Northern Italy. Friulian is spoken in the administrative region Friuli-Venezia-Giulia in the North-East of Italy (cf. figure 1). The region shares its borders with Austria in the North, Slovenia in the East and the Veneto region in the West. The Friulian varieties are usually divided into three areas: a) *Central-Southern Friulian*, the most widespread variety, exhibiting koiné status; b) *Western Friulian*, the most innovative variety due to the close contact with the Veneto; c) *Carnic Friulian* which is spoken in the Alpine area (Francescato 1966:91-125; Frau 1984:14-16; Vanelli 1997:279). In the remainder of this article we refer only to Central-Southern Friulian (see section 3.5).

Figure 1. *The language areas of Raeto-Romance (adapted from Kristol 1998:938).*



## 2.2 Language contact

The Swiss Romansh varieties are in close contact with Alemannic and Southern German dialects. All speakers are bilingual in either Swiss Romansh and Swiss German or in Swiss Romansh and Italian. Dolomitic Ladin is influenced by language contact with Bavarian dialects as well as Northern Italian dialects. Depending on the variety considered, speakers are bilingual in Ladin and a variety of German or in Ladin and Italian or speakers are even trilingual.

<sup>3</sup> Jauer, a variety of Vallader spoken in Val Müstair, is almost uniquely spoken and hardly ever written.

<sup>4</sup> In fact, there are several varieties in Val Badia. *Badiot* refers to the variety spoken in the upper part of the valley (Alta Badia). *Ladin* designates the variety in the middle part of the valley. The term *Ladin* is not to be confounded with the term *Dolomitic Ladin* itself. We use the notation *Badiot/Ladin* when we consider both Val Badia varieties together. Maréo is spoken in Enneberg, which is a tributary valley to the Val Badia.

Friulian, too, is in close language contact with Northern Italian dialects, especially with Venetian varieties. Moreover, Slovenian varieties are spoken in some Eastern Friulian valleys (Val Canale, Val di Resia, Alto Torre, Valli del Natisone, Collio and Carso) as well as in the neighbouring Balkan area (Frau 1984:209-218; Vanelli 1997:33; Vicario 2005:26-28). German is spoken in Val Canale, as well as in Valbruna, Tarvisio and in Carnia, namely in the upper Bût valley and in Sauris (cf. Frau 1984:218-219).

### 2.3 Syntactic properties

#### 2.3.1 Subject pronouns

Most Romance languages like (standard) Italian (1a) or (standard) Spanish (1b) have retained from Latin the property to omit subject pronouns and to use them only to mark contrastive focus. These languages are so-called *null-subject languages* or *pro-drop languages*.

- (1) a. (Lei) dorme.  
b. (Ella) duerme.

By contrast, in *non-null-subject languages* like Modern French (2a) and Raeto-Romance (2b) (here exemplified by Sursilvan, a variety of Swiss Romansh), subject pronouns have to be used obligatorily.

- (2) a. \*(Elle) dort.  
b. \*(Ella) dorma.

But there is still a third group of languages, typologically in between the two other one and characterised by a partial null-subject property. This means that the subject pronoun paradigm of such a language only features subject clitics for certain persons, while for other persons there are no subject clitics in the paradigm. Above all, this is the case in Northern Italian dialects (henceforth NID), which show omission or overall lack of certain subject clitics in the paradigm (3).

- (3) *Cazzano di Tramigna, Verona*  
 Ø 'dɔrmo  
 te 'dɔrmi  
 el / la 'dɔrme  
 Ø dor'memo  
 Ø dor'mi  
 i / le 'dɔrme (Manzini & Savoia 2005:84)

As far as Raeto-Romance is concerned, the different varieties vary significantly with respect to the inventory and status of subject pronouns, a fact we will dwell on in section 2.3.3.

### 2.3.2 Word order

All Raeto-Romance varieties are characterised by a strict SVO word order. However, a characteristic distinguishing Swiss Romansh and two dialects of Dolomitic Ladin, Badiot/Ladin and Gherdëina, from all the other modern Romance languages is their strict verb-second (V2) property.

V2-languages are characterised by the fact that the finite verb must always occur in the second position in a declarative main clause. If a constituent other than the subject appears in the first position of the clause, these languages feature the so-called ‘V2-effect’, an inversion, which creates a XVS word order, with the verb appearing in second position avoiding ungrammatical V3.

In Swiss Romansh and the Dolomitic Ladin varieties with V2-property, this inversion takes place in questions or if an object or an adverb occurs in the first position of the clause (4). If the subject of the clause in these cases is an unstressed subject pronoun, it is directly attached to the verb in enclitic position entering in a close relation with the verb (5b).<sup>5</sup>

- (4) *Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan)*
- a. L’ onda va en vacanzas.  
The aunt go.3.SG on holiday  
‘The aunt goes on holiday.’
  - b. Gleiti va l’ onda en vacanzas.  
Soon go.3.SG the aunt on holiday  
‘Soon the aunt goes on holiday.’ (Spescha 1989:594)

- (5) *Dolomitic Ladin (S. Leonardo)*
- a. T vas gonoot a ciasa sua.  
You go.2.SG often at home his  
‘You often visit him.’
  - b. Gonoot vas-t a ciasa sua.  
Often go.2.SG=SCL at home his  
‘You often visit him.’
  - c. \*Gonoot t vas a ciasa sua.  
Often you go.2.SG at home his (Poletto 2000:89f.)

In languages with strict V2-property, V3 is ungrammatical.

- (6) *Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan)*
- \*Il cudisch cun plascher ha la dunna legiu.  
the book with pleasure has the woman read.PAST.PART  
‘The woman has read the book with pleasure.’ (Kaiser 2002-2003:314)

In contrast to Swiss Romansh, Gherdëina and Badiot/Ladin, the remaining Dolomitic Ladin varieties Fascian, Fodóm, Ampezzo and Friulian (7), do not feature the V2-property.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Throughout this paper, the glosses for the examples cited are our own.

<sup>6</sup> However, these varieties also form questions by means of inversion of subject and verb like the other Raeto-Romance varieties do. Because of this, the term “interrogative conjugation” has been proposed in the literature (i.a. Renzi & Vanelli 1983; Plangg 1989; Fava 1993).



(7) *Friulian (bible data)*

Ogni an, chest om al leve sù de sô sitât  
 each year this man SCL = went up from his town  
 ‘Each year this went up from his town.’ (La Bibie, 1 Samuel 1, 3)

V2 in Raeto-Romance plays a crucial role with respect to the use of subject pronouns. The idea that there is a “causal relationship between V2 word order and the presence of unstressed pronoun subjects” (Haiman & Benincà 1992:174) goes back to i.a. Thurneysen (1892), Foulet (1930) or Spiess (1956) who argued with respect to Old respectively Medieval French that V2 requires the presence of subject pronouns, i.e. subject pronouns are obligatory in sentence-initial position to keep the verb in the second position of the clause. Thus, the possibility to omit postverbal subject pronouns is often explained by the fact that in inverted word order the V2-restriction is fulfilled by another constituent in first position. But there is also a functional explanation for the possible omission of postverbal subject pronouns. This explanation assumes that the verb (respectively its inflectional morphology) already specifies the grammatical person and since it could not add any further information the pronoun in postverbal position becomes dispensable and thus can be omitted:<sup>7</sup>

C’est là un point fondamental de la syntaxe du vieux français: l’inversion du sujet entraîne facilement dans le cas du pronom personnel l’omission du sujet. [...] Il semble que le verbe une fois donné le pronom ne puisse guère apporter de précision nouvelle, et que devenu inutile il n’apparaisse pas.  
 (Foulet 1930:313)

Because of the V2-constraint, it is particularly frequent that subject pronouns appear in postverbal position in Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin. Given these circumstances we will not discuss the use of preverbal subject pronouns here but focus on postverbal subject pronouns.

### 2.3.3 Inventories of subject pronouns in Raeto-Romance

2.3.3.1 *Swiss Romansh*. Table 1 shows the inventory of free and clitic subject pronouns in Swiss Romansh. Whereas Sursilvan features only one single series of preverbal subject pronouns, which are free pronouns, Vallader, in addition to the free series disposes of proclitic subject pronouns in the 1SG and the 3PL. The free pronouns also occur in postverbal position. However, in this position, above all in spoken language, they are replaced by clitics (in 3SG as well as in 1 and 3PL), which are reduced forms of the free pronouns. Remarkably, there are no enclitic pronouns in 2SG and 2PL and in these grammatical persons the free ones generally are not used in postverbal position (cf. section 3).

<sup>7</sup> However, on the other hand, also preverbal subject pronouns may be omitted in V2 languages. As regards Raeto-Romance, this omission is often explained by imitation of (written) Italian or Latin (Linder 1987:21f.). Another factor to take into consideration here is *topic drop* (Guasti 2002), i.e. the constituent about which something is said in the discourse and which is situated in sentence-initial position may be dropped because it is already known and given in the discourse.

Table 1. *Subject pronouns in Sursilvan and Vallader* (Widmer 1959; Linder 1987:2-162; Haiman & Benincà 1992:131; Ebnetter 1994:754-757; Hack 2007:23f.).

		Sursilvan		Vallader		
person	free	clitic		free	clitic	
		proclitic	enclitic		proclitic	enclitic
1SG	jeu		-u	eu	e	-a
2SG	ti			tü		
3SG	M		-’l	el		-’l
	F		-’la	ella		-’la
1PL	nus		-s, -sa	nus / no		-a
2PL	vus			vus / vo		
3PL	M		-i	els	i	-a
	F		-’las	ellas	i	-a

2.3.3.2 *Dolomitic Ladin*. The Dolomitic Ladin varieties of Val Gardena and Val Badia feature two series of subject pronouns: a free one and a clitic series.

Table 2. *Subject pronoun paradigms in Gherdëina and Badiot/Ladin* (cf. Thiele 2001:51f.; Bernardi 1999:42,73; Anderlan-Obletter 1991:38).

		Gherdëina		Badiot/Ladin			
person	free	clitic		free	clitic		
		proclitic	enclitic		proclitic	enclitic	
1SG	ie		-i	iö	i	-i	
2SG	tu	te		tö	te	-te	
3SG	M	ël	l	-(e)l	ël	al	-el
	F	ëila	la / l’	-(e)la	ëra	ara	-era
1PL	nëus		-s	nos	i *	-se	
2PL	vo			os	i *	-e	
3PL	M	ëi	i	-i	ëi	ai	-i
	F	ëiles	les	-(e)les / -i	ëres	ares	-eres

\*dropped in Alta Badia

It is important to note that in contrast to Swiss Romansh, where the usage of free pronouns prevails, Dolomitic Ladin varieties normally use the clitics in preverbal as well as in postverbal position. In postverbal position, the use of the free pronouns is even banned.

As far as Gherdëina is concerned, there are no preverbal clitics in 1SG and 1 and 2PL. Equally, there are no enclitic forms in the second persons in postverbal position.

The variety of Val Badia, in contrast, features a complete paradigm of subject pronouns. But the different parts of the valley behave differently with respect to subject pronoun usage: in general, the upper part of the valley (Alta Badia) behaves quite similar to Gherdëina. For instance Badiot (the variety of Alta Badia) lacks 1 and 2PL preverbal subject clitics like Gherdëina.

2.3.3.3. *Friulian*. As mentioned before, Friulian varieties also exhibit a double series of subject pronouns, consisting of free subject pronouns and subject clitics. Subject clitics occur in pre- or postverbal position.

Table 3. *Free subject pronouns and clitics in Friulian*  
(see Gregor 1975; Marchetti 1977; Vicario 2005).

		Friulian	
person		clitic	
1SG		jo	o
2SG		tu	tu
3SG	M	lui	al
	F	jê	e
1PL		nô	o
2PL		vualtris	o
3PL		lôr	a

However, some Friulian varieties show defective paradigms, which means that some grammatical persons do not exhibit subject clitics (Frau 1984). But as mentioned before, we refer only to Central Friulian, which exhibits a complete series of subject clitics.

### 3. *The use of subject pronouns in Raeto-Romance*

According to grammars of Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin, amongst others Spescha (1989) for Sursilvan, Ganzoni (1983) for Vallader & Belardi (1984) and Anderlan-Obletter (1991) for Gherdëina, second person subject pronouns are generally omitted in postverbal position. Linder (1987:53) even considers this omission as the normal case.

- (8) *Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan)*
- a. Oz fas (ti) quella lavur.  
today do.2.SG (you) this work  
'Today you do this work.'
  - b. Vegnis (vus) lu in tec ad uras?  
come.2.PL (you) then a bit in time  
'Will you then arrive in time?' (Spescha 1989:563)

However, as regards Gherdëina, the term 'omission' is not adequate since free subject pronouns are banned in postverbal position (in all grammatical persons) and second person enclitic pronouns are not present at all in the paradigm.

- (9) *Dolomitic Ladin (Gherdëina)*
- a. Pona vënies Ø.  
then come.2.SG  
'Then you come.'

- b. Pona uniëis Ø.  
 then come.2.PL  
 ‘Then you come.’ (Anderlan-Obletter 1991:40)

Following Friulian grammars (see Gregor 1975; Marchetti 1977; among others), subject clitics other than 2SG may be omitted when object clitics (10a), reflexive pronouns (10b) and the negation particle (10c) precede the verb. The following examples are taken from a Friulian bible.

- (10) *Friulian (bible data)*
- a. il signôr Ø j veve sierât il grim  
 the Lord her.DAT had closed the womb  
 ‘The Lord had closed her womb.’ (1 Samuel 1, 5)
- b. I siei lavris Ø si movevin  
 det her lips REF moved  
 ‘Her lips moved.’ (1 Samuel 1, 13)
- c. Ane però no Ø lè sù  
 Hannah but NEG went up  
 ‘But Hannah didn’t go up.’ (1 Samuel 1, 22)

In consideration of the statements in grammars and studies of Raeto-Romance given above (and the results of our preparatory studies) several research questions arise:

- (a) In which grammatical persons and in which contexts can subject pronoun omission be attested in Raeto-Romance?
- (b) Is there any dialectal / diatopic variation?
- (c) How can the omission of subject pronouns in a non-null-subject language like Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin be accounted for, respectively which factors can trigger subject pronoun omission in a non-null-subject language?

### 3.1 Methodological aspects

In order to investigate if subject pronouns are used or not in Raeto-Romance we have carried out a field study covering three varieties of Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan, Vallader and Jauer) and three varieties of Dolomitic Ladin (Gherdëina, Badiot and Maréo). We used an especially conceived questionnaire with more than thirty sentences in two versions. Whereas the first version of the sentence contained the subject pronoun, the second version lacked it. 100 native speakers of Swiss Romansh and another 57 native speakers of Dolomitic Ladin were asked to compare these two versions and to judge which one they would use in a day-to-day situation.

The second part of this field study consists in investigating the three main varieties of Friulian (Western Friulian, Central Friulian, Carnic Friulian; see Frau 1984; Haiman & Benincà 1992; Vanelli 1997). Since this field study has not been carried out yet, we give rather a perspective on what we might expect on the basis of previous analyses (Haiman 1991), grammars (Gregor 1975; Marchetti 1977) and with respect to corpus data we collected from a bible written in the variety of

the Central Friulian koiné.<sup>8</sup> As regards this methodological aspect, and because of the fact that Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin (V2-property) on the one hand and Friulian (no V2-property) on the other hand present different contexts of interest with respect to the omission of subject pronouns, we divide the discussion into two parts.

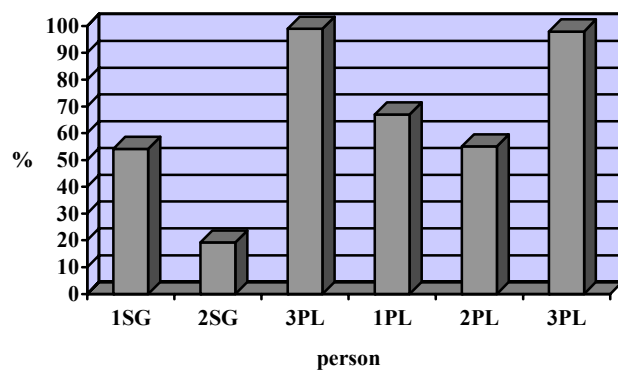
### 3.2 Results

#### 3.2.1 Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin

*3.2.1.1 Swiss Romansh.* Figure 2 shows the overall results regarding the frequency of postverbal subject pronouns in Swiss Romansh. Third person subject pronouns have to be used obligatorily, whereas the usage of the 1SG as well as the 1 and 2PL subject pronouns is significantly less frequent. These pronouns can be omitted to a greater or lesser extent according to the grammatical person.

The 2SG subject pronoun takes an exceptional position in that only around 20% of speakers affirmed to use it always. This was in fact what we expected given the statements concerning subject pronoun usage in Raeto-Romance grammars.

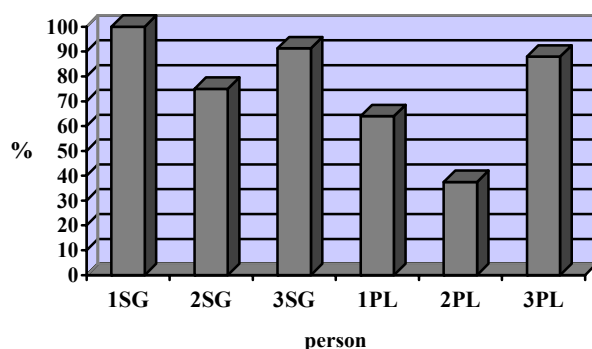
Figure 2. *Frequency of postverbal subject pronouns in Swiss Romansh.*



*3.2.1.2 Dolomitic Ladin.* As far as Dolomitic Ladin is concerned, the varieties under consideration behave quite differently. In fact, in Maréo, the usage of postverbal subject clitics is 100% obligatory in all grammatical persons.

In Badiot/Ladin postverbal subject clitics may be omitted to a greater or lesser extent according to the grammatical person. 1SG, 3SG and 3PL postverbal subject clitics are almost obligatory, whereas 2SG, 1PL and 2PL subject clitics may be omitted.

<sup>8</sup> The corpus data, taken from 1 Samuel 1-3, consists of 85 verses, 155 sentences and 2.649 words. Despite their status of being part of the verb, clitics were counted as words.

Figure 3. *Frequency of postverbal subject clitics in Badiot/Ladin.*

*3.2.1.3 Comparing Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin.* Comparing the results for Swiss Romansh (figure 2) and Badiot/Ladin (figure 3) with respect to the usage of postverbal subject pronouns, we observe similar trends in the 3rd persons as well as in 1PL and 2PL. The striking difference between Swiss Romansh and Badiot/Ladin concerns 1SG and 2SG: in Badiot/Ladin, the usage of these (enclitic) pronouns is much more frequent than it is in Swiss Romansh. Especially interesting is the usage of the 2SG subject pronoun: Whereas it is generally omitted in Swiss Romansh and in Gherdëina, 75% of the informants in Val Badia considered it obligatory.

In conclusion, Badiot/Ladin seems to behave like the NIDS whereas Gherdëina behaves like Swiss Romansh.

### *3.3 Comparison with other studies*

Renzi & Vanelli (1983) investigate the usage of subject pronouns in 30 Romance varieties, mostly NID – which exhibit clitic subject pronouns for some, but not for all grammatical persons – but also two varieties of each Francoprovençal, Swiss Romansh, Dolomitic Ladin and Friulian. Heap (2000) investigates subject pronoun usage in “Central” Romance varieties using geolinguistic maps from the *ALF* and the *AIS*.

Renzi & Vanelli (1983) reach the generalisation, confirmed by Heap’s (2000) study, that if a variety makes constant use of at least one subject clitic, then it is the one for second person singular:

Se una varietà fa un uso costante di almeno un pronome soggetto,  
questo è quello di 2. persona [singolare, FMH & SG].

(Renzi & Vanelli 1983:143)

Renzi & Vanelli (1983) and Heap (2000) also propose a hierarchy of subject pronouns with respect to the frequency of their usage. Table 4 shows the results of Renzi & Vanelli, Heap and Hack (2007) in comparison.

Table 4. *Synopsis of the hierarchy of subject pronouns according to Renzi & Vanelli (1983); Heap (2000) and Hack (2007).*

	<b>Renzi &amp; Vanelli (1983): 30 Romance varieties</b>	<b>Heap (2000): “Central Romance”</b>	<b>Badiot/Ladin</b>	<b>Hack (2007): Swiss Romansh</b>
<b>1</b>	2SG	2SG	1SG	-
<b>2</b>	3SG	3PL	3SG	3SG
<b>3</b>	3PL	3SG	3PL	3PL
<b>4</b>	1PL	2PL	2SG	1PL
<b>5</b>	2PL	1SG	1PL	2PL
<b>6</b>	1SG	1PL	2PL	1SG
				2SG

All Romance varieties under consideration share one general characteristic, namely the position of the third persons in the hierarchy: third person subject pronouns are almost obligatory in all varieties. However, the varieties differ with respect to which subject pronoun is most obligatory (or most frequently present in partial null-subject paradigms). Both in Renzi & Vanelli’s and in Heap’s hierarchies, the 2SG subject pronoun takes the first position, i.e. the pronoun has always to be used obligatorily and is never omitted. In the case of varieties with partial subject pronoun paradigms, the 2SG pronoun is the first one to be present. By contrast, as Hack’s (2007) investigation regarding Swiss Romansh shows, this pronoun is situated just at the opposite end of the hierarchy. Hence, there is a significant difference between the usage of the 2SG subject pronoun in Swiss Romansh on the one hand, and in the remaining Romance varieties on the other. Interestingly, in Badiot/Ladin it is the 1SG which has to be present with highest obligation – an observation for which we will provide an account in section 3.4.3.

In conclusion, comparing Swiss Romansh, Dolomitic Ladin and Northern Italian dialects reveals significant differences between the individual varieties which become evident in:

- the inventories of subject pronouns (and clitics).
- the 2SG: In Swiss Romansh, there is no enclitic subject pronoun present in the paradigm for this person and the postverbal subject pronoun is generally omitted. The same holds for Gherdëina<sup>9</sup> whereas Badiot/Ladin (still) features an enclitic form in 2SG. In the NIDs in contrast, the 2SG subject clitic is indispensable, i.e. the one to be expressed with highest obligation.

### 3.4 Explanatory Approaches

We claim that the observed omission of subject pronouns in Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin is due to four main aspects:

- discourse situation which brings about a split among the grammatical persons
- language contact
- syncretism in the verbal paradigm and

<sup>9</sup> With the difference, though, that the 2SG postverbal subject pronoun is not “omitted” as in Swiss Romansh but free pronouns in postverbal position are banned in all grammatical persons.

- the genesis of verbal desinences in the course of a grammaticalisation process, respectively the reinterpretation of postverbal subject pronouns as part of inflection.

#### 3.4.1 *Discourse situation*

A common result found in Renzi & Vanelli (1983), Heap (2000), Hack (2007) and in our own data from Dolomitic Ladin is the observation that 3rd person pronouns in general cannot be remain unexpressed. This might be due to their role in the discourse situation distinguishing between *vraies personnes* (“true persons”) and *non-personnes* (“non-persons”) (Benveniste 1966). Whereas the 1st and 2nd persons directly participate in the discourse situation, the 3rd persons are discourse-external entities whose identification requires a particular anaphoric reference. Hence, the omission of 1st and 2nd person subject pronouns in contrast to the obligatory usage of 3rd person pronouns could be explained by the fact that the former persons can be deduced from the discourse situation, while the latter cannot. However, this explanation is not completely satisfactory, given the prominent status of the 2SG subject clitic in NID and Friulian and the 1SG subject clitic in Badiot/Ladin. As will be shown in the following sections, syncretism in the verbal paradigm and grammaticalisation may be crucial to account for this. Furthermore, a feature geometrical approach along the lines of Harley & Ritter (1998, 2002) and Heap (2002), which we will not discuss in detail here (see also section 4), may provide an explanation in this respect. A main characteristic of that model is the assumption of universal morphosyntactic features. Thus, the prominence of the respective subject pronouns may be due to different marking of these features.

#### 3.4.2 *Language contact*

Language contact is another crucial factor as regards the omission of subject pronouns in Raeto-Romance. As already mentioned, Swiss Romansh is in close language contact with Alemannic (i. e. Swiss German dialects), and the Dolomitic Ladin varieties under consideration here are in contact with Southern German (Bavarian) dialects. What matters here, is that both Alemannic and Bavarian usually omit the 2SG subject pronouns in postverbal position, as has been observed for Swiss Romansh and Gherdëina. According to Lötscher (1983:94) one peculiarity of 1SG and 2SG subject pronouns in Swiss German is that they can be omitted in postverbal position giving rise to sentences like the following.

##### (11) *Swiss German*

- a. Woane gaasch Ø ?  
     where go.2.SG  
     ‘Where do you go?’
- b. Was hësch Ø ?  
     what have.2.SG  
     ‘What do you have?’
- c. Gòdsch Ø scho?  
     go.2.SG already  
     ‘You are already leaving?’



The above also holds for Southern German dialects, respectively Bavarian, which is in close language contact with certain varieties of Dolomitic Ladin.

Further evidence derives from the fact that NID, which are not exposed to language contact with neither Alemannic nor Southern German dialects, do not feature the possibility to omit the 2SG subject pronoun.

### 3.4.3 Subject pronoun usage and syncretism in the verbal paradigm

Traditionally, the fact that languages like standard Italian or standard Spanish do not use subject pronouns in unmarked contexts and only resort to them in order to mark contrastive stress or focus is considered to be related to a ‘strong’ or highly differentiated verbal inflection which exhibits distinct desinences for each grammatical person (Rizzi 1986, Benincà 1994:38f.). In most cases, the grammatical person can unambiguously be identified via its individual verbal ending.<sup>10</sup> Following this line of reasoning, we should expect that in the case of syncretism additional indications are used in order to unambiguously identify the grammatical person.

As table 5 shows, all varieties of Dolomitic Ladin exhibit a general syncretism in 3rd person singular and plural in their verbal paradigms which holds for all verbs and tenses.

Table 5. (Regular) verbal inflection in Dolomitic Ladin (Plangg 1989:655).

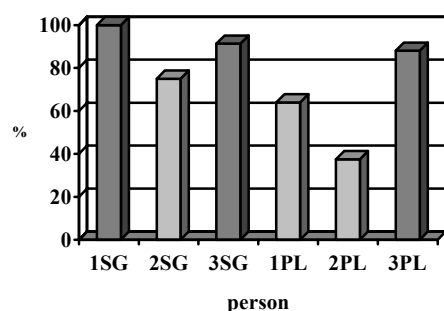
#### CANTARE > **cianté** (“to sing”)

person	Gherdëina	Badiot/Ladin	Fascian	Fodóm
1SG	ciante	ćiante	ćiante	ćiante
2SG	ciantes	ćiantes	ćiantes	ćiantes
3SG	cianta	ćianta	ćianta	ćianta
1PL	cianton	ćiantun	ćianton	ćianton
2PL	ciantëis	ćiantëis	ćiantéde	ćiantéi
3PL	cianta	ćianta	ćianta	ćianta

The peculiarity of Badiot/Ladin is that this general syncretism is extended to 1SG in many frequent irregular verbs such as *avëi* (“to have”), *orëi* (“to want”), *jí* (“to go”). In fact, in those grammatical persons exhibiting syncretic verbal desinences in Badiot/Ladin, the usage of subject clitics is most frequent and near obligatory (cf. the dark bars in figure 4).

<sup>10</sup> See Cordin & Calabrese (2001) for exceptions concerning syncretisms across the subjunctive forms of Italian.

Figure 4. *Correlation between subject pronoun usage and syncretism in the verbal paradigm in Badiot/Ladin.*



Hence, there seems to be a correlation between subject pronoun usage and syncretism in the verbal paradigm with 1SG, 3SG and 3PL subject clitics being obligatorily used to disambiguate syncretic verb forms.

Swiss Romansh, in contrast, shows highly differentiated verbal paradigms with distinct desinences for all persons and hence no syncretism at all.

Table 6. *(Regular) verbal inflection in Swiss Romansh.*

person	Sursilvan	Vallader
1SG	contel	chant
2SG	contas	chantast
3SG	conta	chanta
1PL	cantein	chantain
2PL	canteis	chantaivat
3PL	contan	chantan

Thus, the observed correlation between subject pronoun usage and syncretism in the verbal paradigm in Badiot/Ladin does not hold for Swiss Romansh and we can conclude with Benincà (1994:38f.):

La ricchezza della flessione potrà quindi essere considerata una condizione preliminare per l'assenza di soggetto nelle lingue che hanno questa caratteristica, ma non potrà essere considerata semplicemente come la causa di questa caratteristica.

#### 3.4.4 Grammaticalisation

Another crucial factor favouring the observed omission of subject pronouns in Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin is grammaticalisation. Thereby we mean the process in which lexical elements become functional elements. In fact, in both Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin certain verbal desinences are considered the result of a grammaticalisation process in the course of which subject pronouns in postverbal position underwent an evolution from free pronouns to clitics and in the end got absorbed by the verb (cf. Gartner 1883, Widmer 1959, Linder 1987, Plangg 1989, Haiman & Benincà 1992, Hack 2007).

The V2-property plays a decisive role here, since it causes the subject to appear after the finite verb if a constituent X is in the first position of the clause. In postverbal position, the free subject pronoun becomes weak and cliticises onto

the verb. In this situation, the clitic can further fuse with its verbal host in a way that it might be reinterpreted as part of inflection.

Evidence for this restructuring comes from two different observations: On the one hand, quite often an additional free pronoun is used, giving rise to the so-called phenomenon of „doubling“. On the other hand, the verb form (which has been created in inverted word order) is taken over into direct word order as well.

This grammaticalisation process is exemplified in (12) for the 1PL desinence of the verb *ir* ‘to go’ in Sursilvan and in (13) for the 2PL of the verb *avair* ‘to have’ in Vallader.

(12) *Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan)*

- |     |                     |                               |
|-----|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| a.  | nus mein ussa       | direct word order             |
|     | we go.1.PL now      |                               |
|     | ‘We are going now.’ |                               |
| b.  | ussa mein nus       | inverted word order due to V2 |
|     | now go.1.PL we      |                               |
|     | ‘Now we are going.’ |                               |
| c.  | ussa meinsa         | step 1: cliticisation         |
|     | now go.1.PL=SCL     |                               |
| d.  | ussa meinsa         | step 2: reinterpretation      |
|     | now go.1.PL         |                               |
| e.  | ussa meinsa nus     | step 3a: ‘doubling’           |
|     | now go.1.PL we      |                               |
| e.’ | nus meinsa ussa     | step 3b: take-over            |
|     | we go.1.PL now      |                               |

(13) *Swiss Romansh (Vallader)*

- |     |                             |                                  |
|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a.  | HABETIS: -ETIS > -ait > -ai |                                  |
|     | have.2.PL 2.PL              |                                  |
|     | ‘you have’                  |                                  |
| b.  | HAB- + -ai vo + -t > vaivat |                                  |
|     | have. 2.PL you 2.PL         |                                  |
| c.  | vaivat                      | step 1: subject clitic perceived |
|     | have.2.PL=SCL               |                                  |
| d.  | vaivat                      | step 2: reinterpretation         |
|     | have.2.PL                   |                                  |
| e.  | vaivat vo                   | step 3a: ‘doubling’              |
|     | have.2.PL you               |                                  |
| e.’ | vo vaivat                   | step 3b: take-over               |
|     | you have.2.PL               |                                  |

The 2PL verbal desinence derived regularly from Latin -ETIS (13a). The verb form *vaivat* is supposed to have originated in inverted word order, where the free subject pronoun in postverbal position cliticised onto the verb and got the suffix -t, which is the usual 2PL desinence in Vallader in other tenses and moods (13b). In step 1 (13c), the former pronoun – now incorporated into the verb form – maintains its pronominal function, which is still perceived by the speakers. Hence, this stage is crucial for subject pronoun omission since another postverbal

pronoun would be redundant. In step 2 (13d), in contrast, the clitic is reanalysed as an affix, i.e. part of inflection, the pronominal function is lost and the ending serves merely as verbal desinence. The development can go even further (providing evidence for the loss of the pronominal function): in inverted word order (step 3a in 13e), the free pronoun may appear (again) giving rise to “doubling” (a phenomenon often observed in NIDs). This can be interpreted as incapability of the verbal desinence to license a null-subject. Furthermore, as displayed in step 3b (13e’), the verb form may also be taken over into direct word order, hence appearing as a regular verb form with a preverbal subject pronoun. Similar grammaticalisation processes can be observed for 1SG and 2SG. What is crucial here is that grammaticalisation processes converting postverbal subject pronouns into verbal agreement markers occur in all the grammatical persons whose postverbal subject pronouns may be omitted in Swiss Romansh. We claim that it is in the stage in which the pronoun has cliticised onto the verb but still maintains its pronominal function that postverbal subject pronouns can be omitted.

Summing up, the free subject pronoun has undergone an evolution from the status of a postverbal pronoun through that of a clitic to become finally an affix and part of the verbal inflection where it has totally lost its pronominal function.

Dolomitic Ladin roughly shows a similar behaviour but differs in some crucial aspects from Swiss Romansh: first, in Dolomitic Ladin, unlike in Swiss Romansh, the free subject pronouns cannot be used in postverbal position and are completely superseded by the clitics. Second, the clitics seem to (still) maintain their pronominal function, i.e. the grammaticalisation process described above for Swiss Romansh, which turns postverbal subject pronouns into agreement markers and part of inflection has not taken place in Dolomitic Ladin. However, the fact that in the 2SG the free subject pronoun is added, thus giving rise to ‘doubling’, could be interpreted as the beginning of this grammaticalisation process.

### 3.5 *Friulian*

#### 3.5.1 *Free subject pronouns*

In Friulian, free subject pronouns may be preposed or postponed to the verb in declarative sentences (14a, b) as well as in interrogative sentences (14c, d). In interrogative sentences they are obligatorily postverbal (14c, d). Free subject pronouns and subject clitics may co-occur in preverbal as well as in postverbal position.

#### (14) *Friulian*

- |    |  |                 |
|----|--|-----------------|
| a. | jo o feveli<br>I SCL=speak<br>‘I speak’      | (assertive)     |
| b. | o feveli jo<br>SCL=speak I<br>‘I speak.’     | (assertive)     |
| c. | jo fevèli o?<br>I speak=SCL<br>‘Do I speak?’ | (interrogative) |

- d. fevèlio jo?  
 speak=SCL I  
 ‘Do I (probably) speak?’ (interrogative) (Marchetti 1977:222)

Free subject pronouns in Friulian behave like their Italian counterparts (Renzi & Vanelli, 1983). Their realisation is obligatory only under certain circumstances, which is also shown by our Friulian bible data (see also Gregor 1975; Marchetti 1977; Renzi & Vanelli 1983). In 1 Samuel 1-3, free subject pronouns are realised 34 times. 22 realisations (64.7%) are due to contrast or emphasis (15a), whereas anaphoric reference can be attested in 12 cases (35.3%; see 15b).<sup>11</sup>

(15) *Friulian (bible data)*

- a. jo no ti ài clamât  
 I not you have called  
 ‘I haven’t called you.’ (1 Samuel 3, 6)
- b. Ane e jevà su (...)./  
 Ane SCL=went up  
 jê e preave il Signôr  
 she SCL=prayed to.the Lord  
 ‘Hannah went up (...). / She prayed to the Lord.’  
 (1 Samuel 1, 9-10)

In Friulian, free subject pronouns are not obligatory in sentence-initial position. This is due to the fact that it is not a V2-language and thus it does not require sentence-initial free subject pronouns in order to keep the verb in second position.

### 3.5.2 *Subject clitics*

The realisation of subject clitics is almost obligatory. Hence they co-occur with nominal subjects (16a), which is not the case for the neighbouring Venetian varieties for example (16b). Subject clitics are always adjacent to the verb.

- (16) a. *Friulian*  
 Meni al ven (\*Meni ven)  
 PN SCL=comes  
 ‘Meni comes.’
- b. *Venetian*  
 Nane vjen (\*Nane al vjen)  
 PN comes  
 ‘Nane comes.’ (Benincà & Poletto 1991:8)

Our bible data confirms this finding with respect to Friulian, where 68 co-occurrences (100%) of nominal subjects and subject clitics were found but none where the subject clitic is not realised.

<sup>11</sup> For the same verse, the Italian bible translation (*La Nuova Diodati*) used also shows the realisation of the subject pronoun *io* which is clearly due to emphasis (*Io non ti ho chiamato*).

(17) *Friulian (bible data)*

- Penine e veve fruz  
 Peninnah SCL=had children  
 ‘Penninah had children.’ (1 Samuel 1, 2)

Nevertheless, in Friulian as well as in NID subject clitics other than 2SG may be omitted when they would co-occur with object clitics (18a) and reflexive pronouns (18b) (see Gregor 1975; Marchetti 1977; Haiman 1991 among others). Our Friulian bible data, instead, do not show optionality but indicate that subject clitics are *never* realised when they would co-occur with object clitics (64 examples) and reflexive pronouns (16 examples).

(18) *Friulian (bible data)*

- a. il signôr Ø j veve sierât il grim  
 the Lord her had closed the womb  
 ‘The Lord had closed her womb.’ (1 Samuel 1, 5)
- b. I siei lavris Ø si movevin  
 DET her lips REF moved  
 ‘Her lips moved.’ (1 Samuel 1, 13)

However, it is unclear if the co-occurrence of subject clitics other than 2SG with the syntactic elements in question in (18a, b) is ungrammatical or rather optional from an empirical perspective, regarding spoken Friulian. Marchetti (1977:225) justifies co-occurrences of this type as euphonicly motivated for example. In order to answer this question, we will undertake another field study methodologically similar to the ones we did for Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin. The gathered data should also help us to find out the factors constraining the relationship between subject clitics, object clitics, reflexive pronouns and negation.

While only subject clitics of 2SG co-occur obligatorily with object clitics and reflexive pronouns, the behavior of subject clitics differs with respect to negation (19a, b), where the 2SG subject clitic as well as the 3M.SG subject clitic must also be realised. In contrast to reflexive pronouns and object clitics, subject clitics do not precede negation but follow it. The example in (19c) shows that the realisation of subject clitics other than 2SG and 3M.SG is not obligatory.

(19) *Friulian*

- a. Tu no tu sâs  
 you NEG SCL=know  
 ‘You do not know.’ (Gregor 1975:122)
- b. Il rosôr nol passare parsore dal so cjâf  
 the razor NEG=SCL=pass above from his head  
 ‘No razor will (ever) be used on his head’ (1 Samuel 1, 11)
- c. Ane però no Ø lè sù (1 Samuel 1, 22)  
 Hannah but NEG went up  
 ‘But Hannah didn’t go up.’ (1 Samuel 1, 22)

The omission of subject clitics is independent from the realisation of free subject pronouns. Hence, the subject clitic may be omitted even if no free pronoun or nominal subject is realised (20b).

(20) *Friulian*

- a. Jo Ø mi viôt.  
 I REF see  
 'I see myself.'
- b. Ø mi viôt.  
 REF see  
 'I see myself.'

(Marchetti 1977:225)

In the next paragraph we give an analysis for the use of subject pronouns in Friulian including an alternative view on clusters consisting of the negation particle *no* and the 3M.SG subject clitic.

3.5.3 *Analysis of Friulian subject clitics*

As mentioned before, subject clitics in NID can be analysed as being part of the verb and hence, as inflectional affixes (Haiman 1991; Poletto 2000). Being inflectional affixes, they should not be sensitive to the sentence type. But this is exactly the case in Friulian. Consequently, Haiman (1991:139-140) defines Friulian subject clitics as agreement marking morphemes without bound affix status, which is also a characteristic of Romance clitics.

However, some other Friulian varieties do not show any sensitivity with respect to the sentence type. In these cases it is possible to analyse the subject clitics as bound affixes as can be seen in the following example where the subject pronoun is proclitic even in an interrogative sentence.<sup>12</sup>

(21) *Friulian (Passariano)*

- I pensi (tu) k a vol vinji?  
 SCL=think (you) that SCL=wants to.come  
 'Do you think she wants to come?'

(Haiman 1991:140)

The agreement morpheme status of Friulian subject clitics is due to a diachronic development from free subject pronouns to subject clitics and hence due to the result of grammaticalisation which led to subject marking affixes in NIDS instead (Haiman 1991:153; Vanelli 1998:23-49).

Haiman (1991) attributes the historical reasons of using subject clitics in NID to the grammaticalisation of subject pronouns, originally occurring in inverted word order. Remember that Friulian forms questions by means of inversions. These pronouns became enclitic and then, through takeover, proclitic to the verb in declarative sentences. A similar diachronic development has been shown as regards Swiss Romansh (see section 2.4.4).

Haiman (*ibid.*) claims that „this is the word order in which 2SG pronouns usually occur, for the simple pragmatic reason that (...) one asks questions rather than makes statements concerning one's interlocutor“, which at the same time

<sup>12</sup> This is also true for non standard French, e.g. *Où tu vas?* (Haiman 1991:139-140 following Lambrecht 1981).

answers the question of the prominent status of the 2SG subject clitic. The author gives also an example for Gorizian Friulian where the 2SG subject clitic occurs only in enclisis, even in declarative sentences.

(22) *Friulian (Gorizia)*

pjardis tu  
lose =SCL  
'You lose.'

(Haiman 1991:149)

From our point of view it is also important to investigate if syncretism plays a role in the conjugational system of Friulian to see if an alternative analysis to Haiman (1991) is also available from a morphological perspective, as we also did for Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin. The following examples show that all tenses and moods with the exception of the imperative exhibit syncretism, which particularly concerns 2SG = 2PL (23) and 3SG = 1SG (24).

- (23) a. ciantavis  
sing.IMPERFECT IND. 2.SG & 2.PL  
'You sing.'
- b. ciantâris  
sing.PERFECT IND. 2.SG & 2.PL  
'You sang.'
- c. ciantaréssis  
sing.CONDITIONAL 2.SG & 2.PL  
'You would sing.'
- d. ciantâssis  
sing.IMPERFECT SUBJ. 2.SG & 2.PL  
'You sang.'
- (24) a. tas  
be.quiet.PRESENT IND. 1.SG & 3.SG  
'I am/he/she is quiet'
- b. ciantaréssin  
sing.CONDITIONAL 1.SG & 3.SG  
'I/he/she would be quiet'
- c. cianti  
sing.PRESENT SUBJ. 1.SG & 3.SG  
'I sing/he sings.'
- d. ciantàs  
sing.IMPERFECT SUBJ. 1.SG & 3.SG  
'You/he sang.'

A possible solution would be to analyse the obligatory marking of 2SG in favour of a morphological contrast with respect to 2PL, spreading from the tenses listed in (23) to the present indicative. The status of the subject clitic of 3SG points into the same direction. Here, the subject clitic disambiguates 3SG and 1SG (24). But while the 2SG subject clitic is always obligatory this is not the case for other persons with the exception of 3M.SG which appears in combination with the preceding



negation particle *no* (19b). This becomes more evident, if we look at the phonological processes involved in clitic clusters.

The cluster *nol*, consisting of the negation particle *no* and the 3M.SG subject clitic *l* exhibits an interesting phonological shape, which differs from object clitic-clusters: an apparent phenomenon involved in Friulian object clitic clusters is the deletion of the nuclear vowel of the first clitic as the following examples show. The deletion of final vowels is also known as *apocope*.

- (25) a. mi + al → m'al  
           DAT.1.SG ACC.M.SG  
       b. mi + e → m'e  
           DAT.1.SG ACC.F.SG  
       c. mi + ai → m'ai  
           DAT.1.SG ACC.M.PL  
       d. mi + es → m'es  
           DAT.1.SG ACC.F.PL
- (Gregor 1975:112)

However, clusters consisting of the negation particle and the 3M.SG subject clitic do not exhibit apocope but *apheresis*. With apheresis we mean the deletion of an initial vowel. In this case the nuclear vowel of the subject clitic is deleted (*no + al* → *nol*). With respect to clitic clusters this is the only case of apheresis. Obviously this means that the vowel deletion of the second clitic is not a phonological process. Speakers must have learned the phonological surface form of that particular cluster. We therefore claim that the cluster *no + l* has the underlying representation /*nol*/. The consequence is that two negation particles must be stored in the lexicon. While /*nol*/ concerns 3M.SG, /*no*/ is the representation for all other grammatical persons. The fact that /*nol*/ is represented as a cluster in the lexicon is therefore responsible for the special status of 3M.SG. Hence its realization is not due to the requirement to be obligatorily expressed like in the other Romance varieties under consideration, but it appears automatically with the negation particle because of its lexical representation.

A look at diachrony corroborates our suggestion since *nol* can be treated as a remnant of an earlier stage in language history of Friulian from our point of view. Evidence is supplied by other Romance languages. *Nol* has also been attested for Old Italian, but as the result of an apocope (Goldbach 2007:69). In this case the nuclear vowel, which is the final vowel of the object clitic *lo*, has been deleted. In Old Italian, the object pronoun cliticises to the left.

- (26) *Old Italian*  
       no + lo > no = l > nol
- (Goldbach 2007:69)

Remember that cliticisation to the left was not restricted only to negation in Old Italian and Old French. While (27a) still represents a case of cliticisation through apocope, the examples in (27b) show cases of apheresis.

- (27) a. *Old Italian*  
       te + lo > te = l > tel

- b. *Old Italian*  
 e + il > e =l > e'l  
*Old French*  
 si + en > si =n > si'n (Goldbach 2007:69-70)

An alternative view on cliticisation with respect to the NEG=CL-Cluster would be to claim that the negation particle *no* itself is not a clitic but a stressed element and does therefore not exhibit apocope, whereas clusters consisting of two clitics do show vowel deletion within the first clitic (24a to d). We would then expect apheresis also within clusters, which consist of a free subject pronoun and an object clitic. This is exactly the case for the Western Friulian dialect of Erto. The following example shows that the vowel of the free subject pronoun (2SG) is not deleted. Instead apheresis occurs with respect to the object clitic *al*.

- (28) *Friulian (Erto)*  
 Tol                   lias  
 you=ACC.M.SG read  
 'You read it.' (ASIS)

Remember that Benincà (2005:48) states that the Friulian negation particle *no* is not stressed but clitic. Following her interpretation of *no*, a stress-based analysis would not capture the phonological shape of *nol*. Due to the lack of data we cannot give an answer to that. Testing whether the negation particle *no* is stressed or not goes clearly beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, future research including more data is needed.

Following Haiman (1991), we conclude that subject clitics in Friulian show clear evidence for grammaticalisation. Additionally we propose a morphological account of the fact that the 2SG subject clitic has to be expressed obligatorily: namely the need to disambiguate syncretic patterns. Moreover, we treat the 3SG masculine subject clitic in *nol* as a remnant of an earlier stage of Friulian and as part of the negation particle although *nol* may also be due to stress. Hence, the 3SG masculine subject clitic is not part of the verb neither from a phonological nor from a morphological point of view.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have investigated subject pronoun usage in Raeto-Romance. As our field studies so far undertaken show, postverbal subject pronouns can be omitted in certain varieties according to the grammatical person. We claim that this omission is due to four main factors, namely (a) discourse situation respectively differences in the marking of features specifying the grammatical person, (b) language contact, (c) syncretism in the verbal paradigm, (d) grammaticalisation.

Moreover, we showed that in contrast to the other Romance varieties, the obligatory expression of the 3M.SG subject clitic is only apparent in Friulian since it is stored together with the negation particle in the lexicon.

## 5. Discussion

Until now we pointed out that in Raeto-Romance and NID the subject pronouns of 2SG play a prominent role. As mentioned before, while in Swiss Romansh and Gherdëina this prominence is expressed by omission, for NIDs and Friulian the contrary is the case. The subject clitic of 2SG may never be omitted. We claimed that the special status of the subject clitic of 2SG is due to language specific markedness. But a problem arises in the contradictory behavior of the 2SG pronouns. From our point of view it is not clear how the marking of the feature specification of 2SG (Heap 2002 following Harley & Ritter 1998) arises and how it causes the omission of the subject pronoun in question in Swiss Romansh and Gherdëina on the one hand and the obligatory realisation in NIDs and Friulian on the other hand. Hence more research is needed regarding the relationship of morphosyntactic feature specification and the different realisation patterns of subject pronouns and clitics.

In the course of our study we have encountered three phenomena, which arise the question whether they are due to language contact or the manifestation of a parallel development of genetically related languages. This concerns a) the omission of the postverbal 2SG subject pronouns in Swiss Romansh and certain varieties of Dolomitic Ladin, b) the prominence of the 2SG subject clitic in Friulian and NIDs, and c) the grammaticalisation of free postverbal subject pronouns to inflectional affixes in Swiss Romansh and German varieties.

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## ***Pro-forms in existential constructions of early Italo-Romance vernaculars<sup>1</sup>***

*Francesco Maria Ciconte*

### ***1. Introduction***

I consider existential constructions in a fairly large corpus of early Italo-Romance texts, dating from C13<sup>th</sup> to C16<sup>th</sup>. In particular, I analyse the pro-forms, as their function within the existential construction seems to vary diatopically and diachronically. I claim that not all existential pro-forms are locative by definition.

In thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscan the pro-form occurs in complementary distribution with a locative phrase, e.g.: “*Uno re fu nelle parti d’Egitto*”, ‘A king was in some parts of Egypt’ (*Novellino*, V, p. 19) vs. “*Egli ci sono delle altre donne*”, ‘(Expletive) there are some other women’ (Boccaccio, *Decameron*, III, 3,13); the results of the scrutiny of the Tuscan existential constructions would seem to corroborate Freeze’s (1992) idea that all existential pro-forms are invariably locative, as existentials are locatives, assuming that, in the variety under consideration, a locative pro-form cannot co-occur with a locative phrase within the clause (La Fauci and Loporcaro 1993, 1997). The Tuscan data are compared with findings from the analysis of fourteenth-century Sicilian texts, where, as is the case with Modern Italian, the pro-form and the locative phrase do not occur in complementary distribution, e.g.: “*chi fu in Sicilia grandi fami*”, ‘There was in Sicily great hunger’ (*La conquista di Sicilia*, 18:25). The contrast between, on the one hand, the early-Tuscan data and, on the other hand, the early-Sicilian and Modern Italian data suggests that existential pro-forms are not necessarily locative, and thus the locative analysis of existential constructions must be reconsidered. The analysis is then expanded to include other early Italo-Romance varieties: Campanian, Roman, Venetian, Venetan and Lombard. The available evidence suggests that, in the early stages of the history of Italo-Romance, the existential pro-form exhibits diatopic discrepancies: whereas in Tuscan and in the northern varieties the pro-form appears to encode a locative argument, in Sicilian and in the southern vernaculars, as well as in Modern Italian, it can be said to be a marker of existentiality which joins with the copula to spell out an existential predicate (Bentley, 2006). Finally, some theoretical observations on the nature of the pro-forms are advanced. Tuscan and the southern varieties display the pro-forms *ci/vi*, whose etymological value, from the clearly locative HECCE HIC and IBI in Latin, seems to be preserved in early Tuscan, but lost in the other southern varieties. In contrast, the northern varieties display the pro-forms *ghe/gh/ge/g’*, whose etymological value can be traced in derivational contexts which are not necessarily locative (Benincà, 2007).

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## 2. *Tuscan*

In the thirteenth-century Tuscan text *Novellino*, existential constructions display the complementary distribution of the pro-form and the locative phrase. Observe the following construction:

- (1) a. Era una guasca in Cipri  
 be.3.SG.PAST a Gascon.FEM.SG in Cyprus  
 ‘(There) was a woman from Gascony in Cyprus’  
 [Copula + Noun phrase + **Locative phrase**]  
 [– Pro-form] (*Novellino*, LI, p. 60)

The structure in (1a) contrasts with:

- (1) b. V’ è questo costume  
 PRO-FORM be.3.SG this habit  
 ‘There is this habit’  
 [**Pro-form** + Copula + Noun phrase]  
 [– Locative phrase] (*Novellino*, LXII, p. 70)

Later evidence is found in the fourteenth-century Tuscan text *Decameron*, where existential constructions appear not to allow the co-occurrence of the pro-form and the locative phrase within the same clause. Observe the structure in (2a):

- (2) a. Fu già nella nostra città un cavaliere  
 be.3.SG.PAST already in.the our town a knight  
 ‘(There) already was a knight in our town’  
 [Copula + **Locative phrase** + Noun phrase]  
 [– Pro-form] (*Decameron*, II, 3, 6, p. 105)

This, again, contrasts with:

- (2) b. V’ è la copia maggiore  
 PRO-FORM be.3.SG the quantity major  
 ‘There is the major quantity’  
 [**Pro-form** + Copula + Noun phrase]  
 [– Locative phrase] (*Decameron*, I, Intr., p.24)

The contrast between the (a) examples and the (b) ones would seem to corroborate the view that the existential pro-forms in (1b) and (2b) are locative, assuming that a locative pro-form encodes a locative argument and thus cannot occur with a locative phrase within the same clause. In fact, in the data collected from the Tuscan texts<sup>2</sup>, there are no examples of existential constructions displaying both the pro-form and the locative phrase within the same clause. It can thus be assumed that (1a) and (1b) with, respectively, the pro-form *ci* in (1a) and any locative phrase in (1b) would be ungrammatical in thirteenth- and fourteenth-

<sup>2</sup> Further evidence of the complementary distribution of the pro-form and the locative phrase is also found in the vast collection of thirteenth-century Tuscan texts edited by Castellani (1952).



century Tuscan, i.e.: (\*c') *era una guasca in Cipri* and *v'è questo costume* (\*in Firenze).

Significantly, the order of the constituents does not seem to pose any constraint to the existential construction. Thus, the position of both the pro-form, be it proclitic or enclitic, and of the locative phrase does not alter the complementary distribution. The examples in (3a-d) illustrate various word-order possibilities in existential constructions with a locative phrase:

- (3) a. Nelle parti di Grecia ebbe<sup>3</sup> un signore  
 in.the parts of Greece have.3.SG.PAST a sir  
 'Somewhere in Greece (there) was a sir'  
 [**Locative phrase** + Copula + Noun phrase] (*Novellino*, III, p. 15)
- b. Era in costui signoria  
 be.3.SG.PAST in him lordship  
 '(There) was lordship in him'  
 [Copula + **Locative phrase** + Noun phrase] (*Novellino*, IX, p. 26)
- c. Era una guasca in Cipri  
 be.3.SG.PAST a Gascon.FEM.SG in Cyprus  
 '(There) was a woman from Gascony in Cyprus'  
 [Copula + Noun phrase + **Locative phrase**] (*Novellino*, LI, p. 60)
- d. Uno re fu nelle parti d' Egitto  
 one king be.3.SG.PAST in.the parts of Egypt  
 '(There) was a king somewhere in Egypt'  
 [Noun phrase + Copula + **Locative phrase**] (*Novellino*, V, p. 19)

Contrastingly, the examples in (3e-f) display the pro-form, which occurs in pre- and post-copular position:

- (3) e. V' è questo costume  
 PRO-FORM be.3.SG this habit  
 'There is this habit'  
 [**Pro-form** + Copula + Noun phrase] (*Novellino*, LXII, p. 70)

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this paper, which mainly focuses on the role of the pro-forms, I will not investigate whether there is any significant reason for the selection of either *essere* or *avere* in the existential constructions. In fact, it seems that neither *essere* nor *avere* pose any particular constraint to the complementary distribution. On the contrary, the selection of either *essere* or *avere* does seem to correlate with the type of pivot found in the existential constructions, i.e. whether the pivot is definite or indefinite.

- f. Vi            sarà,            e    saravvi            tanta buona  
 PRO-FORM be.3.SG.FUT. and be.3.SG.FUT.PRO-FORM many good  
 gente  
 people  
 ‘(There) are, and (there) will be many good people’  
 [**Pro-form** + Copula][Copula + **Pro-form** + Noun phrase]  
 (Novellino, LXIV, p. 75)

As a result of the complementary distribution of the pro-form and the locative phrase, it can be said that thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscan only allows three variants in the existential constructions:

[+ Pro-form][– Locative phrase]:

- (4) a. V’            era            la via  
 PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST the road  
 ‘There was the road’ (Castellani)

[– Pro-form][+ Locative phrase]:

- (4) b. Fu            in Perugia un giovane  
 be.3.SG.PAST in Perugia a young man  
 ‘(There) was a young man in Perugia’ (*Decameron*, II, 5, 3, p.120)

[– Pro-form][– Locative phrase]:

- (4) c. Uno medico fu,            lo quale...  
 a doctor be.3.SG.PAST who  
 ‘(There) was a doctor, who...’ (Novellino, XI, p.27)

The variant [+ Pro-form][+ Locative phrase], which characterizes the existential constructions of Modern Italian (e.g., *c’è un gatto in giardino*, ‘there is a cat in the garden’), is not found in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscan. Therefore, at this early stage, Tuscan seems to be rather conservative, both because it adheres to the Latin-type of existentials, (where the pro-form never occurs, e.g.: *est puellā in viā*), and because, in contrast with Modern Italian, the pro-form is exclusively locative, as it cannot co-occur with a locative phrase. This finding challenges somewhat the view of a Tuscan-centred formation of Modern Italian, at least insofar as existential constructions are concerned; the illustrious and literary model of thirteenth-century Florentine does not seem to have played a crucial role in the configuration of the existential construction as it appears nowadays in Modern Italian. It therefore remains to be ascertained if and when, in Tuscan, the pro-form has lost its exclusively deictic function to be reanalysed as a marker of existentiality, which is the role it has in Modern Italian.

In a sixteenth-century Tuscan text, which is a transcription into Tuscan from a Venetian *volgarizzamento* of the Latin *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*, it can be noted that not only does the pro-form start to occur increasingly in almost all existential constructions, but also, and most importantly, it can occur even in those existentials which display a locative phrase. In the Tuscan version, the types of existential construction [– Pro-form][+ Locative Phrase] and [– Pro-form][–

Locative phrase] are decreasingly attested. The type [+ Pro-form][– Locative phrase] is still attested, as indicated by the example below:

- (5) a. V'                    era                    la stanza di San Brandano  
 PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST the room of Saint Brendan  
 'There was the room of Saint Brendan'  
 (*Tuscan Navigatio*, 3, p. 51)

Crucially, the existential type [+ Pro-form][+ Locative phrase] is finally found:

- (5) b. E non v'                    era                    erba in niuno luogo  
 and NEG PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST grass in no place  
 'And there was no grass in any place' (*Tuscan Navigatio*, 7, p.73)

Diachronically, the data available suggest that, in Tuscan, the pro-form, which was exclusively locative in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was later reanalysed as a marker of existentiality. Although cautiously, the period of time from the C14<sup>th</sup> to the C16<sup>th</sup> can thus be fixed as the crucial moment in which the Tuscan pro-form underwent 'existentialization'. As is the case with Modern Italian (e.g., *ci vado*, 'There I go'), the same form can still have a deictic function:

- (5) c. La terra la quale dice Barinto [...], ò proposto nel mio cuore  
 d'andarvi  
 'The land Barinto is talking about, I in my heart decided to go  
 there' (*Tuscan Navigatio*, 2, pp. 47-49)
- d. Ch'io vi sarò  
 'That I will be there' (*Tuscan Navigatio*, 2, p. 49)

The diachronic stage identified by our investigation, therefore, is that in which the pro-form ceased to be exclusively locative in all constructions and uses.

The existential constructions of Modern Italian display the co-occurrence of the pro-form and the locative phrase. If thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscan is characterised by the complementary distribution, it remains to be ascertained where else, if anywhere, the pro-form was reanalysed as a marker of existentiality at an earlier stage than in Tuscan.

### 3. Sicilian

Fourteenth-century Sicilian already displays the co-occurrence of the pro-form and the locative phrase within the same existential construction:

- (6) a. Chi                    fu                    in Sicilia grandi fami  
 PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST in Sicily great hunger  
 'There was great hunger in Sicily' (*Conquista*, XVIII, 29, p. 85)

- b. In deo non ch' è magis et minus  
 in God NEG PRO-FORM be.3.SG most and least  
 'In God there is not most and least' (*Sposizione*, II, 32, 15)

Synchronically, it can be noted that, in contrast with thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscan, the complementary distribution of the pro-form and the locative phrase is not found in early Sicilian. This has significant consequences on the status of the Sicilian pro-form, that is to say whether it is locative or, as is the case with (6a-b), it already exhibits a distinctive existential markedness.

Fourteenth-century Sicilian data also provide examples of existential constructions in which the pro-form does not occur, if there is a locative phrase:

- (7) a. In Syragusa era unu grandi Sarrachinu  
 in Syracuse be.3.SG.PAST one great Saracen  
 '(There) was a great Saracen in Syracuse'  
 (*Conquesta*, XXI, 13, p. 96)
- b. In li tenebri foru chinqui miraculi  
 in the darkness be.3.PL.PAST five miracles  
 '(There) were five miracles in the Darkness'  
 (*Sposizione*, Prol., 27, p. 7)

It must be noted, however, that the type of existential construction illustrated in (7a-b) ([– Pro-form][+ Locative phrase]), is scarcely attested in early Sicilian. This variety thus contrasts with early Tuscan, revealing a tendency towards the use of the type of existential [+ Pro-form][+ Locative phrase], which is the norm in Modern Italian.

In the existential construction without a locative phrase, early Sicilian can, but need not, display the pro-form. This is seen in the contrast between (8a-b), on the one hand, and (8c-d), on the other:

- (8) a. Erachi unu signuri chi havia nomu...  
 be.3.SG.PAST.PRO-FORM one sir who have.3.SG.PAST name  
 '(There) was a sir, whose name was...'  
 [+ Pro-form] (*Conquesta*, V, 6, p. 10)
- b. Non ch' è Deu  
 NEG PRO-FORM be.3.SG God  
 '(There) is not God'  
 [+ Pro-form] (*Sposizione*, I, 8, p. 14)
- c. Era unu Sarrachinu, chi havia nomu...  
 be.3.SG.PAST one Saracen, who have.3.SG.PAST name  
 '(There) was a Saracen, whose name was...'  
 [– Pro-form] (*Conquesta*, XIX, 15, p. 85)

- d. Sunu alcuni poeti  
 be.3.SG some poets  
 ‘(There) are some poets’  
 [– Pro-form] (*Sposizione*, V, 23, p. 21)

This is also the case with Tuscan, whose existential constructions without a locative phrase, can but do not have to, display the pro-form:

- (9) a. Se pure alcuni ce ne sono  
 if even any PRO-FORM PARTITIVE (of them) be.3.PL  
 ‘Even if there are some of them’  
 [+ Pro-form] (*Decameron*, I, Intr., p. 23)
- b. Un medico fu, lo quale...  
 a doctor be.3.SG.PAST who  
 ‘(There) was a doctor, who...’  
 [– Pro-form] (*Novellino*, XI, p. 27)

The order of the constituents, and particularly the position of the locative phrase, do not pose any constraint on the co-occurrence of the pro-form, be it proclitic or enclitic, and the locative phrase within the same clause:

- (10) a. In quilli paysi chi fu unu grandi gentilomu  
 in those countries PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST one great gentleman  
 ‘In those countries there was a great gentleman’  
 [**Locative phrase** + Pro-form + Copula + Noun phrase]  
(*Conquista*, I, 12, p. 4)
- b. In Riggio erachi unu grandi giganti  
 in Reggio be.3.SG.PAST.PRO-FORM one great giant  
 ‘In Reggio there was a great giant’  
 [**Locative phrase** + Copula + Pro-form + Noun phrase]  
(*Conquista*, VII, 7, p. 22)
- c. Chi fu in Sicilia grandi fami  
 PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST in Sicily great hunger  
 ‘There was great hunger in Sicily’  
 [Pro-form + Copula + **Locative phrase** + Noun phrase]  
(*Conquista*, XVIII, 29, p. 85)
- d. Erachi in Castruiohanni unu grandi Sarrachinu  
 be.3.SG.PAST.PRO-FORM in Castroianni one great Saracen  
 ‘There was a great Saracen in Castroianni’  
 [Copula + Pro-form + **Locative phrase** + Noun phrase]  
(*Conquista*, XVII, 9, p. 76)

- e. Lo conti non ci era in la citati  
 the count NEG PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST in the town  
 ‘The Count (there) was not in town’  
 [Noun phrase + Pro-form + Copula + **Locative phrase**]  
 (*Conquista*, XI, 11, p. 46)

At this early stage, Sicilian appears to be more progressive than Tuscan, in that it shows the syntactic pattern which is the norm in the existential construction of Modern Italian, where the existential pro-form can co-occur with a locative phrase. By contrast with the existential pro-form of Modern Italian, however, that of early Sicilian is not obligatory, as witnessed by the examples in (8c-d).

The synchronic contrast between early-Tuscan and early-Sicilian allows a significant diachronic observation: at this early stage of Italo-Romance, it can be said that Tuscan, which displays the complementary distribution of the pro-form and the locative phrase, seems to be rather conservative and to contrast with Sicilian. This, turning out to be more progressive than Tuscan, already exhibits the patterns of the existential constructions of Modern Italian: it allows the co-occurrence of the pro-form and the locative phrase.

#### 4. *The ‘North-South divide’: other Italo-Romance varieties*

As thirteenth- and fourteenth century Tuscan, on the one hand, and fourteenth-century Sicilian, on the other hand, seem to display two different paradigms of the existential construction – the former being rather conservative and the latter already showing the patterns of the existentials of Modern Italian, it is worth expanding the analysis to other Italo-Romance varieties. Campanian, Roman, Venetian, Venetan and Lombard will be considered in the following sections. The scrutiny of the data available reveals a clear divide between the southern and the northern varieties: whereas Campanian and Roman seem to align with Sicilian and thus, progressively, with Modern Italian, Venetan, Venetian and Lombard appear to preserve the complementary distribution of the pro-form and the locative phrase which is noted in Tuscan.

##### 4.1 *Campanian and Roman*

Two fourteenth- and fifteenth-century texts from Campania, respectively *Libro de la destrutione de Troya* and *Ricordi de Loise de Rosa*, and one fourteenth-century Roman text, *Cronica*, offer examples of existential constructions in which the pro-form can co-occur with a locative phrase:

- (11) a. Dentro a quillo palazzo [...] nce fo una sala  
 Inside at that palace [...] PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST a hall  
 ‘Inside that palace [...] there was a hall’ (*Libro*, V, 37, p. 80)

- b. Infra lle alter ince nd' era una che...  
among the others PRO-FORM PARTITIVE be.3.SG.PAST one who  
‘Among the others there was one (of them) who...’  
(Ricordi, 13-14, p. 632)
- c. Anche ce erano fra essi moiti armati  
also PRO-FORM be.3.PL.PAST among them many armed  
‘Also there were many armed men among them’  
(Cronica, XIII, p. 78)

It must be noted that in these three texts the type of existential construction [+Pro-form][+ Locative phrase] is much less frequently attested than in the Sicilian ones. In fact, (11c) is the only example found in *Cronica*. The pro-form, however, be it proclitic or enclitic, occurs in a great deal of existential constructions without a locative phrase:

- (11) d. Certamente nce erano multe caverne  
surely PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST many caves  
‘Surely there were many caves’ (Libro, XXXIV, 18, p. 298)
- e. Et eranonce ancora multi aucielle  
and be.3.PL.PAST.PRO-FORM still many birds  
‘There still were many birds’ (Libro, II, 43, p. 56)
- f. Ince fo uno singularissimo omo  
PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST one peculiar.SUPERL man  
‘There was a very peculiar man’ (Ricordi, 33, p. 525)
- g. Et sonce le infornate  
and be.3.SG.PRO-FORM the batches  
‘And there are the batches’ (Ricordi, 6, p. 513)
- h. Anco ce fu lo puopolo de Bologna  
also PRO-FORM be.3.SG.PAST the people from Bologna  
‘There also was the people from Bologna’ (Cronica, V, p. 16)
- i. Erance uno nobilissimo baron de Francia  
be.3.SG.PAST.PRO-FORM one noble.SUPERL baron from France  
‘There was a very noble baron from France’ (Cronica, XIII, p. 79)

The data available also offer a conspicuous number of existential constructions with a locative phrase in which the pro-form does not occur<sup>4</sup>:

<sup>4</sup> Also in these cases, the order of the constituents, especially of the locative phrase, does not pose any constraint on the construction.

- (11) j. In questa isola de Citharea era uno tiemplo  
 in this island of Citharea be.3.SG.PAST one temple  
 ‘In this island of Citharea (there) was a temple’  
 (*Libro*, VII, 19, p. 97)
- k. In Firenze era uno grande ricco  
 in Florence be.3.SG.PAST one great rich  
 ‘In Florence (there) was a greatly rich man’ (*Ricordi*, 6, p. 564)
- l. Innella citate de Piacenza, in Lombardia, fu uno  
 in.the city of Piacenza in Lombardy be.3.SG.PAST one  
 nobile omo  
 noble man  
 ‘In the city of Piacenza, in Lombardy, (there) was a noble man’  
 (*Cronica*, IX, p. 35)

Finally, the type of existential [– Pro-form][– Locative phrase] is also attested:

- (11) m. Era adunqua uno antique hedificio  
 be.3.SG.PAST therefore one old building  
 ‘Therefore, (there) was an old building’ (*Libro*, XXXV, 13, p. 298)
- n. Fu uno capitano d’ arme che...  
 be.3.SG.PAST one captain of arms who  
 ‘(There) was an army captain who...’ (*Ricordi*, 20, p. 515)
- o. Era una chiesa antiquissima, la quale...  
 be.3.SG.PAST one church old.SUPERL which  
 ‘(There) was a very old church, which...’ (*Cronica*, XIII, p. 80)<sup>5</sup>

Campanian and Roman texts display all the variants of the existential construction which were identified above. The complementary distribution of the pro-form and the locative phrase seems to operate in most cases, but significant examples of constructions in which the pro-form can co-occur with a locative phrase are also found. Therefore, it seems that this early stage is that in which the pro-form is reanalysed as an existential marker in Campanian and Roman, as testified by the constructions without a locative phrase, which are increasingly attested. Even though a quantitative analysis of the examples collected shows the predominance of the existential construction in which the pro-form cannot co-occur with a locative phrase, examples (11a-c) allow us to observe the following: (i) the Tuscan complementary distribution of the pro-form and the locative phrase does not constitute the only paradigm for the existential construction in Campanian and Roman. Although to a lesser extent than Sicilian, these two varieties already exhibit the patterns of the existential construction which are found in Modern

<sup>5</sup> The examples given display the order of constituents [Copula][Noun phrase], but the type [Noun phrase][Copula] is also found, e.g., “*infinite femmine furono le quali...*”, ‘(there) were many women who...’ (*Cronica*, IX, p. 34).



Italian; (ii) Sicilian turns out to be the most progressive variety among the vernaculars under consideration.

#### 4.2 Venetan, Venetian and Lombard

Five texts from the North of Italy provide examples of existential constructions in which the pro-form does not co-occur with a locative phrase. Two texts are from Veneto: the fourteenth-century *Monumenti del dialetto di Lio Mazor*, which is written in Venetan, and the fifteenth-century Venetian *volgarizzamento* of the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*; three texts are from Lombardy: the fourteenth-century *Elucidario*, probably composed in Milan and the fourteenth-century Mantuan texts *Sette secoli di volgare e di dialetto mantovano*, edited by Schizzerotto (1985), and *Nuovi studi sul volgare monatovano di Vivaldo Belcalzer*, edited by Ghinassi (1965). Unfortunately, these texts do not offer as many and various examples of existential constructions as those found in the Tuscan and southern varieties, but the analysis of the data available reveals some distinctive features of the northern vernaculars.

The data available suggest that the northern varieties display the complementary distribution, as the pro-form does not occur in those few examples of existential constructions with a locative phrase:

- (12) a. In lo solo è tre cosse  
in the sun be.3.SG three things  
'(There) are three things in the sun' (Elucidario, I, 3, p. 88)
- b. In India è bove  
in India be.3.SG ox  
'In India (there) is (an) ox' (Vivaldo Belcazer, 38-39, p. 172)
- c. In ziascuna uva iera xii graneli  
in each grapes be.3.sg.past twelve acini  
'(There) were twelve acini in each grapes'  
(Venetian Navigatio, 20, p. 136)

The type of existential [– pro-form][– locative phrase] is also attested:

- (12) d. E era grando abondantia de tutte le cosse  
and be.3.SG.PAST great abundance of all the things  
'And (there) was great abundance of all sorts'  
(Elucidario, I, 93bis, p. 110)
- e. Et è molte maynere de queste bestie  
and be.3.SG many types of these beasts  
'And (there) are many types of these beasts'  
(Vivaldo Belcalzer, 30-31, p. 172)



- (12) k. E non gaveva raxon  
 and NEG CLITIC.have.3.SG.PAST reason  
 ‘And (he) had no reason’ (Sette secoli, III, 24, p. 16)<sup>8</sup>

In Modern Venetan, the non-locative clitic *ghe* can also have the argumental function of a dative:

- (12) l. Ghe lo gh’ ò dà  
 DAT it.OBJ CLITIC have.1.SG give.PAST.PARTICIPLE  
 ‘I have given it to him (or, I gave it to him)’<sup>9</sup>

Crucially, in the early northern varieties, the clitic *g’* is also attested in constructions with the verb *essere*, where, contrary to (12g-i), but rather as in (12k), it exhibits neither a locative nor an existential function:

- (12) m. El g’ è bon nar a Uenecia  
 EXPLETIVE CLITIC be.3.SG good go.INF to Venice  
 ‘It is good to go to Venice’ (Lio Mazon, 53, p. 34)
- n. Domandà chi g’ era  
 ask.3.SG.PAST who clitic be.3.SG.PAST  
 ‘He asked who he was’ (Lio Mazon, 12-13, p. 19)<sup>10</sup>

Albeit the pro-forms *ghe/gh/g’* might have originated, etymologically, as deictics – in fact, as allotropes of the Latin HIC/HILLIC/IBI/ILLI<sup>11</sup>, the examples given provide satisfactory evidence that they have lost their locative function both in the early northern varieties under consideration and in Modern Venetan. In the early northern varieties, the complementary distribution noted in (12a-c) is not as effective as in early Tuscan, where *ci/vi* remain exclusively locative, as the clitics *g/g’* are also synchronically attested without any locative function (12k and 12m-n).

The fact that “existentiality” can be instantiated without the support of any sort of pro-form is clearly testified by the types of existential construction [– pro-form][– locative phrase] found in *all* the early vernaculars under consideration. In contrast with Modern Italian, this is a distinctive feature of the early varieties and it relates to the temporal proximity of the early vernaculars to Latin, where the

<sup>8</sup> Although ambiguous out of context, the example is not an existential construction with the copula *avere*, as it has a clear nominative/subject in the previous line of the text: *el meso che ve’ doveva dar lo capello [...] l’à barata e non gaveva raxon, che s’aviva ben pagà...* ‘The courier, who had to deliver the hat to you, had it bargained and he had no reason (to do that), as he had been paid well’.

<sup>9</sup> There are certain constraints in the use of the *gh* as a non-locative clitic, i.e. whether it occurs with other clitics or partitives, or whether it is used with temporally marked forms of the verb. For the purposes of this article, however, such constraints do not interfere with the existential constructions and a very exhaustive explanation of their occurrence can be found in Benincà (2007).

<sup>10</sup> Again, the context excludes the possibility of interpreting the examples as an existential/locative construction, i.e. ‘he asked who was there’.

<sup>11</sup> Benincà, 2007, p. 34.

type of existential [– pro-form][– locative phrase] was the only norm, e.g. *est magister, (qui...)*.

Interestingly, the Venetian *Navigatio* poses an ambiguous case of existential. Observe the example:

- (12) o. E non iera erba senza flori  
 and NEG be.3.SG.PAST grass without flowers  
 ‘And (there) was no grass without flowers  
 (*Venetian Navigatio*, 1, p. 36)

It can be argued that the imperfect *iera* is the outcome of the incorporation of the locative clitic pro-form /j/ within the verb *essere*; if this holds true, example (12o) can therefore be classified as a type of existential [+ pro-form][– locative phrase]. Benincà (2007), however, suggests that /j/ is an internal morphological feature of the verb *essere*, since it is the result of Latin  $\check{E} >$  tonic /ɛ/ in Romance; in this case, (12o) would figure as a type of existential [– pro-form][+ locative phrase]. Whether /j/ is an original locative, which has been reanalysed, and even incorporated within the verb *essere*, or it merely is a morphological feature of the copula, it remains to be ascertained. If, however, /j/ was originally a locative clitic, then, as is the case with *ci/vi/ghe*, it must have been reanalysed as an “existential” clitic. This is confirmed by a great deal of existential constructions in which /j/ can co-occur with a locative phrase:

- (12) p. Una isola in la qual /j/era un bosco  
 an island in which CLITIC.be.3.SG.PAST a forest  
 ‘An island in which there was a forest’  
 (*Venetian Navigatio*, 24, p. 148)
- q. E dentro una compagnia e l’ altra j/era spazio  
 and within a group and the other CLITIC.be.3.SG.PAST space  
 ‘And there was space within a group and the other’  
 (*Venetian Navigatio*, 19, p. 128)
- r. In ziascuna uva iera xii graneli  
 in each grape be.3.SG.PAST twelve acini  
 ‘(There) were twelve acini in each grape’  
 (*Venetian Navigatio*, 20, p. 136)

The examples would also provide evidence that the complementary distribution of the pro-form and the locative phrase firstly noted in the northern varieties is no longer effective, at least in fourteenth-century Venetian.

With the exception of Tuscan, we have seen that in all the varieties under consideration the existential constructions can display, but do not have to, pro-forms which are not exclusively locative; in fact, as is the case with the existential constructions of Modern Italian, the pro-form is an existential marker which joins with the copula to spell out an existential predicate. The originally deictic role of the pro-forms has been maintained in other constructions, which, however, are not

existential, as seen in (5b-d) and (12k, 12m-n). This is also the case of Modern Italian. Observe the examples:

- (13) a. \*(Ci) sono due gatti nel giardino  
 PRO-FORM be.3.PL two cats in.the garden  
 ‘There are two cats in the garden’  
 [\*Sono due gatti nel giardino]
- b. (\*Ci) vado a scuola  
 PRO-FORM go.1.SG to school  
 ‘I am going (\*there) to school’  
 [\*ci vado a scuola, unless it is: ci vado // a scuola]

Note that the Modern Italian existential construction in (13a) contrasts with the locative one in (13b): whereas in (13a) *ci* occurs as a marker of existentiality, in (13b) it is clearly a locative pro-form, which cannot co-occur with a locative phrase within the clause.

An overall view of the existential constructions of all the varieties under investigation leads to the conclusion that in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscan the pro-forms *ci/vi* had not yet differentiated as a distinctive marker of existentiality but, rather, they preserved their locative function, which was still coinciding with their etymological value, i.e. Latin HECCE HIC and IBI. However, the early-Tuscan complementary distribution of the pro-form and the locative phrase is not attested in Modern Italian; this indicates that, in the history of the existential constructions, and, most importantly, ‘somewhere else’ outside thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscany, there must have been a reanalysis of the locative pro-forms *ci/vi*. This crucial moment towards the ‘existentialization’ of the pro-forms is witnessed by fourteenth-century Sicilian, where *ci/vi* seem to have lost their deictic function to become uniquely an existential marker of the construction. Although to a lesser extent than Sicilian, the pro-forms of the Campanian and Roman varieties also seem to have undergone, synchronically, the same process of existentialization. Locative *ci/vi* have remained in other syntactic constructions of both early vernaculars and Modern Italian, as it is shown, respectively, in (5c-d, 12k, 12m-n) and in (13b). In the northern varieties, the pro-forms *ghe/gh’/ge/g’* cannot co-occur with a locative phrase, but the complementary distribution, which would make these pro-forms locative, appears to be less effective than in Tuscan, as *ghe/gh’/ge/g’* are also attested without any locative function in both the early and the modern varieties (12k, m, n and 12j, l).

However, as far as the existential constructions are concerned, the contrast between, on the one hand, the early-Tuscan, Lombard and Venetan data and, on the other hand, the early-Sicilian, Campanian, Roman and Modern Italian data suggests that not all existential pro-forms are necessarily locative, and thus the locative analysis of existential constructions must be reconsidered. In the early stages of the history of Italo-Romance, the existential pro-form exhibits diatopic discrepancies: whereas in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscan and northern varieties it still appears to encode a locative argument, in fourteenth-century

Sicilian, Campanian and Roman it can be said to be already a marker of existentiality, which joins with the copula to spell out an existential predicate.

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## ***Restructuring strategies of the Romanian verb *fi* 'be' and the analysis of existential sentences***

*Alexandra Cornilescu*

### ***1. Background***

#### *1.1 Aim of the paper*

Restructuring is usually defined as “the process by which the scope operations associated with a lower predicate (cliticization, auxiliary selection) is extended to the domain of a higher predicate” (Cardinaletti & Shlonsky 2004:520). The aim of this paper is to investigate Romanian existential *fi* ‘be’ sentences, considering *fi* ‘be’ a *restructuring verb*. The verb *fi* exhibits two restructuring strategies: One strategy, cross-linguistically available, is Subject-to-Subject Raising. We focus on a second strategy, referred to as *Dative Raising*, apparent in Romanian copular and existential *fi* ‘be’ sentences. Dative Raising (=DR) is, for instance, manifest in (1), in the basic sentence pattern *Dative+ fi + NP*:

- (1) *Dative + fi + NP*  
(Mie) mi-e foame  
(to-me) me.Dat-is hunger  
'I am hungry'.

The Dative originates as the subject of the small clause complement of *fi* and ends up in the Spec, TP position of the main clause. Informally, DR is an instance of Move, whereby a Dative projected as the external argument of the lower small clause ends in the T- domain of the *fi* ‘be’ main clause (see a similar proposal for Spanish ‘sembrare’ in Haegeman 2006). The first part of the paper presents an analysis of simple and complex Dative constructions with the verb *fi* ‘be’, arguing that all of them exhibit DR. The Dative is analyzed as an inherent case, in the sense of Woolford (2006), that is, a non-structural, but also non-lexical Case, and it is uniformly interpreted as an Experiencer, or Mental Location (cf. Landau 2004).

In the second part of the paper The Dative Raising model is extended to the analysis of genuine existential *fi* sentences (=ES), the equivalent of English *There is NP* constructions, illustrated below:

- (2) SUNT monștri  
are monsters  
'There are monsters.'

We propose that the syntax of genuine ES involves a *silent locative phrase, the analogue of the raised Dative*, which holds the subject position, while plenty of evidence supports the claim that the post- verbal NP is a predicate. If this analysis is accepted, Romanian existential sentences, like their counterparts in other

languages, appear to be *inverses of locative constructions*, and they, moreover, *exhibit a sharp Definiteness Effect*, contrary to what has sometimes been claimed for Romance (cf. Moro 1997).

### 1.2 Assumptions on clause structure and argument licensing

The model of clause structure adopted for the present analysis is that of Roussou & Tsimpli (2006) for Greek, a language that shares many properties of Romanian, such as clitic doubling and clitic left dislocation, the unconstrained use of the VSO structure, and the null subject property. Their model incorporates the insights and comparative findings of Sportiche (1995) and Manzini & Savoia (2004) regarding the analysis of clitics, the views of Belletti (2004) regarding the existence of a lower,  $\nu$ P periphery and the general clausal skeleton proposed by Grohmann (2003). In Grohmann's analysis the clause divides into three basic domains, around the three main functional heads  $C > T > V$ . Arguments merge in thematic positions, but are licensed outside the thematic domain in nominal clitic phrases (CIP), which are available in all three domains, and, in the analysis of Roussou & Tsimpli (2006:317), can be lexicalized not only by clitics, but also by full DPs.

As well-known, with Sportiche (1995), clitics are generated in functional positions (CIPs) in the domain of Tense, characterized in terms of Case features (Nominative, Accusative, Dative, etc.) and match the corresponding AgrPs (AgrS, AgrO, AgrIO) immediately above VP. The idea that clitics correspond to designated positions in the clause structure has been further developed by Manzini & Savoia (2004), who argue that clitic heads form a cluster, 'a clitic shell' that can repeatedly occur above V, T and C as in (3) (cf. Manzini & Savoia 2004) where  $CL_1$  and  $CL_2$  stand for two clitic positions (subject, object, respectively).

$$(3) \quad [_{\alpha} CL_1 - CL_2 \quad C [_{\beta} CL_1 - CL_2 \quad T [_{\gamma} CL_1 - CL_2 V]]]$$

There can be more than two individuated clitic positions, hierarchically ordered and identified in terms of their feature specification, e.g. D (for subject clitics, subsuming EPP features), Loc (for Locative/Dative clitics), N for third person singular clitics, etc.; thus different clitics lexicalize different features. In fact, each clitic head position carries a set of nominal formal features: a category feature (D),  $\phi$ - features, and possibly Case. As mentioned, the recursion of the clitic shell involves not only clitics, but also *argument DPs*. In other words, the features associated with the clitic head positions can be lexicalized either by full DPs or by clitics. Importantly for doubling languages, the clitic and the double *should not be in the same domain*.

The occurrence of the clitic shell in the V domain ( $d_V$ ), the T domain ( $d_T$ ) and the C domain ( $d_C$ ), apart from its empirical motivation presented in Manzini & Savoia (2004), is consistent with independent proposals (see Platzack 2001, Grohmann 2003) regarding the tripartite division of the clause structure into the thematic domain above V (or as part of the VP-shell), the T-domain where grammatical relations are established, and the C domain where discourse properties and the information structure of the clause are represented.



For present purposes, we will use the generic labels  $Cl_1$  and  $Cl_2$ , for the two positions required in the analysis. The higher position is characterized by  $Cl_1[+D, +\phi, (+EPP), ]$ , with the  $\phi$ -features matching those on Tense. A DP realizing this shell in the  $d_V$  or  $d_T$  domain checks the  $\phi$ -features on T (by Move or Agree) and is the (Nominative) subject. The second, lower  $Cl_2P$  is headed by a Dative/Locative  $Cl_2$ , with the features [Locative, (+EPP)].

## 2. *Experiencer Dative sentences with the verb fi ‘be’*

### 2.1 *The simple impersonal fi ‘be’ construction*

This section presents the range of simple and complex *fi* ‘be’ sentences with overt Datives, paying particular attention to a class of impersonal sentences expressing “somatic experiences” (cf. Cuervo 2003). Throughout this discussion *fi* ‘be’ is taken to be an ergative one place verb, whose complement is a small clause; the predicate of the small clause is either a non verbal lexical head (in “simple” *fi* sentences (cf. Stowell 1983), or a full clause (i.e., an extended V projection) in “complex” *fi* ‘be’ sentences. The Dative is never part of the a-structure of *fi*. The Dative in the *fi* ‘be’ clause is the output of DR, from several possible sources. According to the source of the Dative, there are three types of simple Dative *fi* sentences:

a) sentences where the Dative is the subject of a nominal small clause; these express somatic experiences, more generally physical conditions of a person:

- (4) Mi / le -e foame / sete / frig / somn / frică.  
to-me / to-them is hunger / thirst / cold / sleep / fear  
‘I am / they are hungry / thirsty / cold / sleepy / afraid.’

b) sentences where the Dative is part of the a-structure of a lower adjectival predicate:

- (5) Ion mi-e drag.  
Ion to me-is dear  
‘Ion is dear to me.’

c) sentences with a Possessive Dative, where the Dative originates as an argument of a DP in a lower nominal small clause.

- (6) Ion mi-e cumnat.  
Ion to-me-is brother-in-law  
‘Ion is my brother in law.’

Our hypothesis is that whenever a Dative clitic is on *fi* ‘be’, the Dative originates as a subject, or at least as an *external argument* in the small clause and it is uniformly interpreted as an Experiencer (Mental Location). Through DR, the Dative targets the particular clitic position ( $Cl_2P$ ) hosting a [+locative] feature.

Such a projection is in principle available in the clitic shell of a predicate (i.e., the clitic shell of V or T), since a [+locative] feature may always be selected as a part of the (deictic) space-time co-ordinates of an eventuality.

## 2.2 Somatic experiences and the impersonal *fi*

The starting point of this description is the construction expressing somatic experiences or temporary physical states. In this case, *fi* selects a nominal small clause (an NP or, highly infrequently a DP, as in (8)). There is also one instance of prepositional small clause, illustrated in (9).

We argue that this is an “impersonal *fi* construction”, a structure which does not have a Nominative subject, even if the post-copular NP shows default Nominative morphology. It is in fact the Dative which has all subject properties. Through its frequency, this is a basic sentence pattern in Romanian. The nominal predicate of the small clause may have a prepositional internal argument, as in (7c, d). The Dative is the subject of the small clause, and it is assumed to undergo DR.

- (7) (Dative) + *fi* + NP(DP) /PP
- a. Mi / le -este foame / sete / frig / somn / cald / frică.  
to-me/to-them is hunger / thirst / cold / heat / fear  
'I am / They are hungry / thirsty/ cold / hot.'
  - b. Mi / le -e bine / rău / greață.  
to-me/to-them is good / harm / nausea.  
'I feel well / ill / nauseous.'
  - c. Mi /le -era poftă de cireșe.  
to me/To- them –was a craving for cherries/
  - d. Mi-este drag / urât de ei.  
to-me-is love / hate for them  
'I feel love / hate for them.'
- (8) Mi-e o foame de lup.  
to-me is a hunger of wolf.  
'I am as hungry as a wolf.'
- (9) a. Mi-e de el.  
to-me-is of him.  
'I care about him.'
- b. Mi-e de soarta recoltei.  
to-me-is of the fate of the crops  
'I care about the fate of the crops.'

In this type of sentence, the Experiencer is obligatory and cannot be a null inferred argument, as it may be with (some) psych verbs (Levin & Rappaport 1995).

- (10) \*E dor/ poftă de cireșe.  
(it) is longing/craving for cherries.

- (11) Filmul (mă) șochează  
 movie.the me (Acc) shocks  
 ‘The movie shocks (me).’

### 2.3 Properties of somatic experiences sentences

Our proposal is that in these sentences the Dative merges as the subject of the small clause under *be*, while the state-denoting NP, which heads the small clause complement of *fi* ‘be’ is in fact a predicate, acquiring a default Nominative form. If this proposal is correct, then the post-verbal is *non-referential* and has *predicate properties*, while the Dative should show subject properties. This is indeed the case.

#### 2.3.1 The Predicate

There are compelling reasons to analyze the post-*fi* NP as a predicate. In the first place, as shown above, this nominal is structurally a bare singular NP, except for cases when there is a post-modifier (8). Bare singular NPs are not felicitous as subjects in Romanian, generally. In exchange, they are excellent predicatives. Secondly, all the nouns in this construction are *gradable* and accept degree modifiers, behaving like adjectives (see (12)). This is a strong clue that these nouns denote properties.

- (12) a. Mi-e foarte sete.  
 to-me-is very thirst  
 ‘I am terribly thirsty.’  
 b. Mi-e teribil de foame.  
 to-me-is terribly of hunger  
 ‘I am terribly hungry.’

Thirdly, the post-verbal NPs accept substitutes typical of adjectival predicates, such as *așa*, ‘so’, and the typical question words for them are *cum* ‘how’, also typical for APs, much less frequently the nominal *ce*, ‘what’.

- (13) a. Cum îți este?  
 how to-you is  
 ‘How do you feel?’  
 b. Așa mi-a fost tot timpul. / Mi-a fost așa tot timpul.  
 so to-me was all time.the / to-me was so all time.the  
 ‘I felt so all the time.’

Finally, the post-verbal position these NPs exhibit is also in line with the hypothesis that they are predicates in the small clause complement of *fi* predicates which s-select an Experiencer subject. These somatic experiences sentences are “impersonal”, in as much as the Dative subject does not check the  $\phi$ - features of Tense and there is no DP that agrees with Tense. The verb acquires a default third person singular form.

### 2.3.2 The Dative subject

The Dative is understood as *a mental location which contains the state (property) denoted by the NP*. It merges as the *subject* of the state-denoting NP-predicate. There is ample evidence both for the interpretation and the subject-syntax properties of the Dative. In the first place, the mental location interpretation of the Dative is (also) visible in the fact that the Dative (14a) sometimes alternates with locative constructions, adverbial or prepositional (14b), the interpretation being that the state designated by the NP is contained in the physical location denoted by the adverbial.

- (14) a. Mi-e frig / cald.  
to-me is cold / heat.  
'I am cold / hot.'
- b. Este frig / cald în cameră/ aici.  
is cold / heat in the room / here.  
'It is cold / hot in the room / here.'

The Dative has *subject properties*. In fact, as shown by Landau (2004), Experiencers make the best quirky subjects cross-linguistically. Thus, the Dative may control into an adjunct purpose clause, a good clue that the Dative holds the highest structural position in the main clause (see (15)):

- (15) a. Mi<sub>1</sub>-e destul de foame pentru a *pro*<sub>1</sub> mânca toate prăjiturile.  
to-me is enough of hunger to eat all cakes.the  
'I am hungry enough to eat all cakes.'
- b. I<sub>1</sub>-a fost prea rău pentru a *pro*<sub>1</sub> nu merge imediat la spital.  
to-him was too much sickness for to not go immediately to hospital  
'He was too sick no to go to the hospital at once.'

Secondly, in this construction, the Dative is an obligatory overt constituent, as shown by (16). This is a rather unusual property for the Dative, which has often been claimed not to be part of the a-structure of predicates, but rather to be introduced by a functional Applicative head (e.g. Cuervo 2003 among many), an analysis which stresses the optionality of the Dative. In these sentences, the Dative is an obligatory s-selected argument. Notice also the existence of specialized pairs of state-denoting nouns, like *foame* 'hunger', *foamete* 'starvation', *sete* 'thirst', *secetă* 'drought', one designating a somatic condition, the other designating a state of the physical world. The former select Datives, that is, mental locations, the latter select prepositional or adverbial phrases, i.e. physical locations. Here are examples:

- (16) a. Mi-e somn. / \*E somn.  
to me is sleep / is sleep  
'I am sleepy.' / 'There is sleep.'
- b. Mi-e sete. / \*E sete aici / Este secetă aici.  
to-me is thirst / is thirst here / is drought here  
'I am thirsty.' / 'There is thirst here.' / 'There is a drought here.'

- c. Mi-e foame / \*E foame aici. / E foamete aici.  
to-me is hunger / \*is hunger here / is starvation  
'I am hungry.' / 'There is hunger here.' / 'There is starvation here.'

Word order also suggests that it is the Dative that has subject properties. It precedes the state-denoting noun, and moreover, the latter *cannot be pre-verbal*, unless it is prosodically stressed (as a contrastive Topic or Focus, in (17)).

- (17) SOMN nu mi-e, dar mi-e foame.  
sleep not to-me is, but to me is hunger  
'I am not sleepy, but I am hungry.'

In nominalizations, this Dative systematically correlates with a possessive Genitive (18). With state noun of (Dative or Accusative) psych verbs, the Genitive always codes the Experiencer subject of the verb, as apparent in (19). The correlation Dative/ Genitive with the state-denoting nouns occurring in this construction strengthens the hypothesis that the Dative is a configurational subject.

- (18) a. Mi-e o foame de lup. / foamea mea de lup.  
to-me-is a hunger of wolf / my hunger of (a) wolf  
a. Mi-e dor de el. / dorul meu de el.  
to-me-is longing for him / my longing for him  
b. Mi-e rău de mare. / răul meu de mare  
to-me-is seasickness / my seasickness
- (19) a. Îmi place muzica / plăcerea mea pentru muzică.  
To-me likes music / pleasure.the my for music  
'I like music.' / 'my love for music'  
b. Maria iubește arta. / iubirea Mariei pentru artă.  
Mary loves art / love.the Mary's for art.  
'Mary loves art.' / Mary's love for art

We conclude that the Dative merges as the *subject of the small clause* and undergoes Dative Raising, as shown in (21) below. Given that this Dative occupies a subject or external argument position (Landau 2004, Woolford 2006), it should be viewed as an Inherent Case, in the taxonomy proposed by Woolford (2006). She establishes a difference not only between Inherent and Structural Case (in terms of the Uniformity Condition), but also between Inherent Case and Lexical Case, a distinction which is relevant for the description of Romanian Datives. Lexical case is defined as idiosyncratic and lexically selected, but also, crucially, through the fact that it merges as an *internal argument* (of V, P, etc.). Lexical case is checked at Merge inside the lexical phase (cf. also Chomsky 1995).

Inherent case is more regular and systematic. It is associated with certain  $\theta$ -positions, an example is the inherent Dative associated with the Goal  $\theta$ -role in the English double object construction. Inherent Case always merges as an *external argument* and should be checked against some *functional head*. Functional heads





- (26) *Dative + fi + AP*
- a. Numele acesta **mi**-e complet necunoscut / bine cunoscut.  
name.the this to-me is completely unknown/ well-known.  
'This name is completely unknown / very well known to me.'
- b. Numele era complet necunoscut **tuturor celor de față**.  
name.the was completely unknown to all those present.  
'This name was completely unknown to all those present.'
- (27) a. **Mi**-e plăcut omul acesta. / Îmi sunt plăcuți oamenii aceștia.  
to-me-is pleasant man.the this / to-me are pleasant men.the these  
'This man is pleasant to me.' / 'These man are pleasant to me.'
- b. Sunetul banului e plăcut **urechii**.  
sound.the of money.the is pleasant to the ear.  
'The sound of money is pleasant to the ear.'

Since the MP does not allow for optional rules, we will adopt and adapt the analysis first proposed by Pesetsky (1995) for the English Dative alternation, and assume, like him, that this type of variation indicates different Merge configurations. Accordingly, the Dative which remains inside the AP merges as an *internal argument* and instantiates *Lexical* case, as in (29) (cf. also Czepluch 1988). It is case-licensed by the adjectival head (or nominal head), which c-selects this Dative (internal argument). In contrast, the raising Dative merges as an external argument and checks inherent Dative Case against a functional head (CIP) in the main clause, as shown above. Thus, an adjective like *plăcut* (pleasant), etc. realizes two configurations, illustrated in (27) to (30). In both (29) and (30) the Theme DP merges as a subject, introduced by a light adjectival head. However, under the Single Complement Hypothesis (Larson 1988), the subject need not be the only external argument of a predication; recall the English double object construction. It is therefore possible to treat the adjective as unergative, having an Experiencer Dative *specifier*, while the Theme continues to be introduced by the light adjectival head as shown in (30).

- (28) a. Acest sunet este [plăcut urechii mele / mie].  
this sound is pleasant to my ear / to me  
'This sound is pleasant to my ear / to me.'
- b. Mi-e plăcut acest sunet.  
to-me is pleasant this sound  
'This sound is pleasant to me.'

(29)	aP			
	DP	a'		
		a <sup>0</sup>	AP	
			A[+dat]	DP[+Dat]
	acest sunet	plăcut	<del>plăcut</del>	urechii/mie



- (30)
- |             |        |    |         |        |
|-------------|--------|----|---------|--------|
| DP          | aP     | a' | AP      | A'     |
|             | a      |    | DP[Dat] | A      |
| acest sunet | plăcut | mi |         | plăcut |

The external argument status is confirmed not only by DR, but also by the fact that the raised Experiencer Dative retains certain subject properties, such as the fact that it may control into an adjunct purpose clause (see (31)). Thus, with adjectival small clauses, Restructuring involves both Subject-to Subject Raising of the Theme, and DR of the Experiencer.

- (31) Ion<sub>1</sub> mi-e prea drag pentru [a *pro*<sub>1</sub> nu fi gata să-l ajut oricând].  
 Ion to-me is too dear PRO to not be ready SĀ(subj)-him help anytime/  
 'Ion is too dear to me for me not to be ready to help him anytime'.

The recurrence of the clitic shell in the three domains of the clause allows for a great deal of word order variation (partly illustrated below) regarding the Theme subject and the double of the Dative clitic.

- (32) a. **Ion mie** mi-e drag.  
 Ion to me to-me-is dear.  
 'Ion is dear to me.'  
 b. **Mie Ion** mi-e drag.  
 to me Ion to-me-is dear  
 'Ion is dear to me.'  
 c. **Ion** mi-e numai **mie** drag.  
 Ion to-me-is only to me dear  
 'Ion is only dear to me.'  
 d. **Mie** mi-e numai **Ion** drag.  
 to me to-me-is only Ion drag  
 'Only Ion is dear to me.'

### 2.5 The possessive Dative

Fi-clauses may also contain Possessive Datives. In this case, the Dative receives a Possessor reading, a thematic interpretation within the semantic range of the Experiencer (cf. Cornilescu 1987). Recall, for instance, that the subject of 'have' is an Experiencer, too. Possessor Datives alternate with Possessive Genitive constructions as shown in (34a, b) and merge as arguments of *relational nouns*, some of which are listed in (33). Interestingly, in Romanian (and Balkan languages, cf. Pancheva 2004), the Dative clitic may also be realized inside the DP, as in (32c), a fact which strengthens the hypothesis of Dative Raising (see Avram & Coene 2003) for an analysis of Romanian along these lines).

- (33) frate 'brother', soră 'sister', cumnat 'brother-in-law', nepot, 'nephew', soț 'husband', văr 'cousin', stăpân 'master', slugă 'servant', prieten 'friend', dușman 'enemy', șef 'boss', sfetnic 'counselor', rudă, 'relative', etc.
- (34) a. Ion **mi**-e frate / dușman.  
 Ion to-me-is brother/enemy
- b. Ion e fratele meu / dușmanul **meu**.  
 Ion is brother.the my / enemy.the my.  
 'Ion is my brother / enemy.'
- c. sora-**mi**  
 sister.the-to-me

Interestingly, just as with adjectives, though much less frequently and in slightly obsolete language, the Possessor Dative may also be realized as a strong Dative form or a lexical argument inside the small clause, behaving as an internal Dative argument (see (35b)).

- (35) a. Ion **mi**-e nepot / cumnat.  
 Ion to-me is nephew / brother-in-law  
 'Ion is my nephew / brother-in-law.'
- b. Ion e nepot **chiar împăratului**.  
 Ion is nephew even to emperor.the  
 'Ion is a nephew of the Emperor.'

The same analysis can be adopted as with adjectival small clauses. Whenever a Dative clitic is on *be*, the Dative originates as a subject, or at least as an *external argument* in the nominal small clause below *fi* 'be' (as in (36)) and raises to be Case-licensed in an appropriate CIP of the main clause, in  $d_V$  and then  $d_T$  (see (37)). When the Dative is realized inside the small clause, it merges as a c-selected internal argument of the relational noun.

- (36)
- |     |       |         |    |        |
|-----|-------|---------|----|--------|
|     | $nP$  |         |    |        |
| DP  |       | $n'$    |    |        |
|     | $n^0$ |         | NP |        |
|     |       | DP[dat] |    | N'     |
| Ion |       | mi      |    | cumnat |



(39) *Dative + fi + Subjunctive*

Mi-era să nu plece fără mine.

to-me was [SĂ not leave (subj.) without me.

'I worried that they should leave without me.'

(40) *Dative + fi + Infinitive*a. Mi-era [a *pro* pleca. / Mi-era a *pro* fuma o pipă.

To-me was [to leave] / To-me was [to smoke a pipe]

'I felt like PRO leaving.' / 'I felt like smoking a pipe.'

b. \*Era a fuma.

was to smoke

(41) *Dative + fi + de+ supine*

Nu mi-era de corectat teze.

Not to-me was [DE graded papers]

'I didn't feel like grading papers.'

## (42) vP

v	DP[dat]	PredP		
fi			Pred'	
		PredP		CP

Ignoring the differences between the different types of complement, the representation in (42) covers all these cases. The small clause in (42) is headed by a Predicative head (as in Baker 2003). In every case, the interpretation is such that the Dative subject expresses a *modal attitude* to the content of the complement clause (concern, feeling like, etc.) as apparent in the translations of the examples. The verb *fi* 'be' has become a propositional attitude verb. The structure and interpretation of the complex construction mirrors that of the impersonal somatic experience Dative construction.

(43) Mi-e foame.  
'I am hungry.'

(44) Mi-era [că pleacă toți fără mine].  
to-me was that leave all without me.  
'I worried that they will all leave without me.'

In both cases, the post-copular constituent is interpreted as a predicate, whether it is an NP or a CP, and it is interpreted intensionally rather than extensionally. *Mi-e foame* asserts that the *property* of 'hunger' is contained or instantiated in *me*, i.e. in the Experiencer as Location. *Mi-e că pleacă*, in spite of containing an indicative complement, is uttered only when the CP is *not* assumed to be true. The Dative Subject in (44) is contemplating the *proposition* that they will leave without him as a *possibility* and expressing an emotion to it. The verb *fi* is treated like a propositional attitude verb.

*Conclusion* Generalizing over simple and complex constructions, the following pattern has been established, where the Dative subject is a mental

location and the predicative NP or CP is interpreted in intension, expressing a *property* or a *proposition*, respectively.

- (45) *Dative* + *fi (be)* + *NP/CP*  
 Location      be              property/proposition

The main claim of our paper is that this pattern also underlies Romanian genuine existential sentences. The only significant difference is that the Location subject is a covert, phonologically null counterpart of the raised Dative. As will be seen, there are many overt clues (prosodic and distributional) which signal the presence of the null Location subject

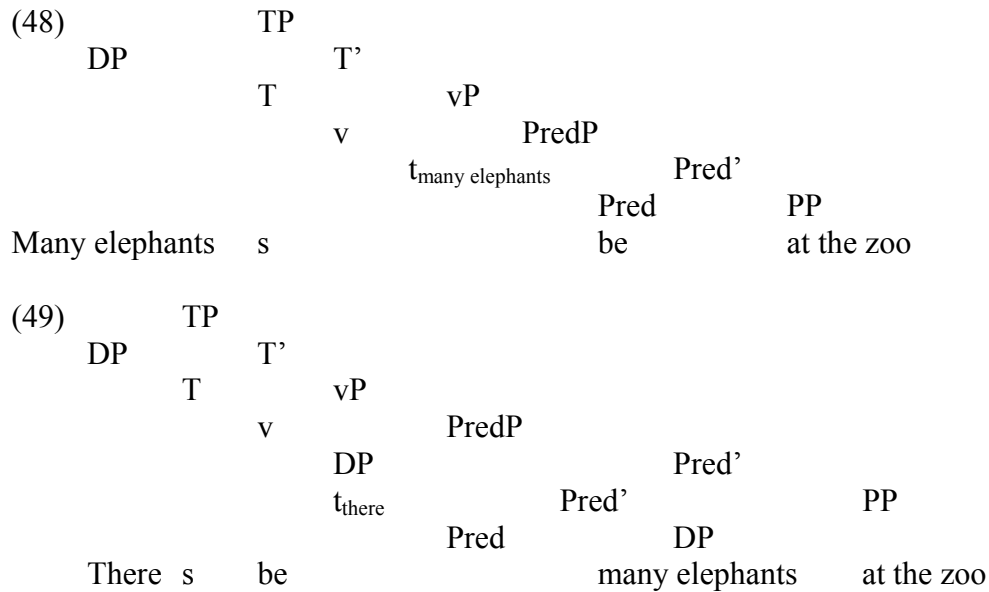
#### 4. Existential constructions

##### 4.1 Preliminaries: locative and existential sentences

The Dative Raising model may be extended to the analysis of true existential *fi* sentences, the equivalent of English *There is NP* constructions; we will call these *genuine existential sentences*. They are sentences that make *ontological claims*. There is a well-known and well-documented relation between existential and locative sentences, since existence is linguistically equated with *placement in some space* (cf. Lyons 1968, Freeze 1992). Despite this close connection, it has become important to distinguish between *locative sentences* (LS) and *genuine existential ones* (ES). Zamparelli (1995) is the first to notice that, regarding linear order, existential sentences look like *inverses of locative sentences*. Consider the examples below, where (46a) is a LS, and (46b) is an ES. The different linear order is accompanied by other distributional and semantic distinctions between ES and LS.

- (46) a. Many girls were there.  
 b. There were many girls.
- (47) a. Many elephants are at the zoo.  
 b. \*Many elephants are.  
 c. There are many elephants at the zoo.  
 d. There are many elephants.

From a distributional point of view, the locative phrase is an obligatory part of the predicate of a LS. If the locative phrase is missing, the LS is ungrammatical, as in (47b). In ES, the locative phrase is optional and is often missing, as in (46b) or (47d). Moreover, in an ES, the locative phrase, if present, is an *adjunct* (cf. Zamparelli 1995, Hazout 2004, Williams 2006, a.o.). Hazout (2004) respectively assigns the following representations to locative sentences (48), representing sentence (47a) and genuine existential sentences (49), representing (47c):



The difference between LS and ES may also be described using the notion of *perspective structure* proposed by Borschev & Partee (2002, 2007), and defined as “a structuring of a situation a sentence describes” (2002: 116), so that one participant is picked out and the rest is in effect predicated of it. The two authors claim that the basic structure of both existence and location situations involves some thing (THING) being in some LOCation, but the two types of situations have different perspective structure:

- (50) a. BE (THING, LOC)  
 b. BE (LOC, THING)

Representation (50a) is the perspective structure of a LS (e.g. *The doctor was in town*), while (50b) is the perspective structure of the corresponding ES, *There was a doctor in town*. The one characteristic of a sentence that gives rise to a perspectival structure with LOC as opposed to a THING as its center is simply the *absence of a referential NP/DP figuring as syntactic subject*. This type of shift is also present with “atmospheric predicates”.

- (51) a. The room is cold.  
 b. It is cold (in the room).  
 c. There is cold in the room.

Sentence (51a) has a referential subject. The predicate in (51a) does not change its meaning in (51b, c); in (51b), a LOC, either implicit or explicit, is chosen as the perspectival center and the situation is then viewed in terms of this LOC and what is in it (namely, the instantiation of the property *cold*). Sentence (51b) has no referential subject and this gives rise to a description of a weather condition. A similar insight is expressed by Zamparelli (1995:186), who makes the following comment about the pair in (52):

- (52) a. There is a man in the garden.  
 b. A man is there in the garden.

Sentence (52a) is *about a location* in space. A property is asserted of this location: the property that this space is or contains a man.” Sentence (52b) is *about a man*. We say that he is in a certain deictically determined location.” Therefore, *There is a man in the garden* can be paraphrased by saying that ‘A certain location which is in the garden is/contains a man’. Since in this kind of paraphrase, “there” functions as an argument, it is not surprising that in Germanic languages other than English a non-locative personal pronoun may be used as subject (*Es gibt /es ist ein Buch auf dem Tisch.*). *There* in the examples above expresses the LOC perspectival center, which is overt in English, French, Italian, Sardinian, etc.), while in other languages, like Hebrew (cf. Hazout 2004: 413) or, we claim, Romanian, the LOC center is *covert*, even if there are clear linguistic clues which signal its presence, suggesting an existential interpretation. The Hebrew example below is from (Hazout 2004: 413).

- (53) *pro* hayu [harbe beayot]  
 were many problems  
 ‘There were many problems.’

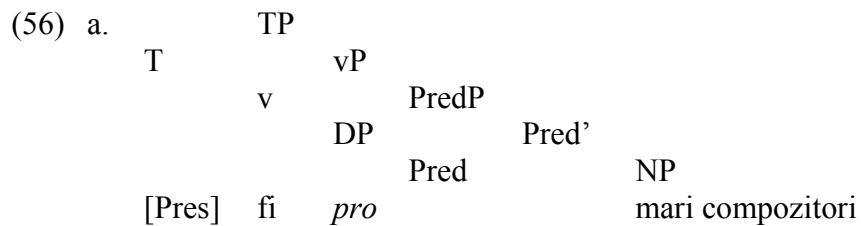
To conclude, we will adopt the theory of *existential sentences as inverses of locative sentences* for the description of Romanian ES. If this theory is correct, then one must show that in Romanian 1) the overt internal NP/DP of ES is a *predicate* and, moreover, 2) that there is a covert subject, expressing the LOCation center. In fact, if ES are inverses of locative sentences, then they are isomorphic with DR *fi* sentences (see (55)). ES are Dative Raising *fi* sentences, except for the fact that the Dative (location) is covert and it is interpreted as some *non-specific non-mental* space, while in the previous cases, the Dative was interpreted as a *mental location*.

- |      |                     |   |                         |   |                        |
|------|---------------------|---|-------------------------|---|------------------------|
| (54) | <i>Dative</i>       | + | <i>fi</i> ( <i>be</i> ) | + | <i>NP / CP</i>         |
| (i)  | Location (Mental)   |   | be                      |   | property / proposition |
| (ii) | Location (Physical) |   | be                      |   | property / proposition |

A good starting point in the description of Romanian ES is the minimal pair in (55a-b). Sentence (55b) looks very much like (55a), yet its interpretation is very different. The only audible difference is that in (55a) the verb is prosodically marked. This shows that in (55a) the verb is the focus or part of the focus, since “being” is at stake. The meaning of (55a) is that of an existential sentence, ‘There are great composers’, i.e., the same meaning as (55a’), with a verb lexically expressing existence. In contrast, (55b) is a null subject copular sentence, with a *pro* subject, as in (56) and with the interpretation in (56), i.e., ‘They are great composers’.

- (55) a. SUNT mari compozitori.  
 ARE great composers  
 ‘There are great composers.’

- b. Sunt mari compozitori. (not existential)  
are great composers  
'They are great composers.'
- a'. Există mari compozitori.  
exist great composers  
'There exist great composers.'
- c. Mari compozitori #? sunt / SUNT.  
great composers are / ARE  
'Great composers, there are.'
- c' Mari compozitori există.  
'Great composers, there exist.'



- b. Ei / Aceștia / *pro* sunt mari compozitori.  
they / these are great composers  
'They / These are great composers.'

An alternative form of the ES is (55c), in which the NP has been topicalized, while the verb continues to be stressed. Such sentences have a more limited distribution. Thus, sentence (55c) cannot be discourse initial. Rather it is felicitous as a continuation of a discourse where the existence of great composers was being denied or questioned, as in (57a). This strongly suggests that the preverbal NP does not occupy the canonical pre-verbal subject position Spec, T.

- (57) a. Muzica simfonică se află în declin, deși mari compozitori (mai) SUNT.  
music symphonic itself-finds in decline though great composers still are  
'Symphonic music is declining, although, great composers, there still are.'
- b. Încă sunt mari compozitori.  
still are great composers  
'There are still great composers.'
- c. Sunt pe lume mari compozitori.  
are in world great composers  
'There are great composers in the world.'

In the following sections, we will examine the properties of *Romanian ES*: trying to prove that, through its position and property interpretation, the overt NP/DP is a *predicate*, and that there is also evidence for the covert (Dative) Locative which is the subject of the sentence. The examination of the data shows that one means of signaling the ES interpretation is focus on the verb. Focus on the verb is indicated



intonationally, as well by means of negation and/or focusing particle like: *mai* ‘still’, ‘any more’, *doar / numai* ‘only’, *chiar* ‘really’, ‘even’, a.o.

We start however, by showing that if the class of ES is properly delimited, then these sentences exhibit the familiar Definiteness Effect (DE): in principle, the overt NP/DP should not be definite. It should be indefinite and represent new information.

#### 4.2 On the definiteness effect in Romanian existential sentences

Like other Romance languages, Romanian has been claimed to be an exception to the DE. At a closer scrutiny, however, once we tease apart LS from existential ones, *Romanian ES are subject to the definiteness effect, exactly like their English counterparts*. In the following, we will in turn discuss the behavior of several types of NPs in ES, namely, bare nouns (singular and plural), indefinites, weak definites, definite NPs (including definite descriptions, demonstrative descriptions, and (other) strong quantifiers (cf. also Milsark 1977, Zamparelli 1995, Moro 1997, McNally 1998, Bentley 2004, Beaver 2006). As already mentioned, the verb in ES is part of the focus so that pure ES exhibit different means of focusing the verb: stress, negation, focusing particles (*mai* ‘still’, ‘any more’, *doar / numai* ‘only’, *chiar* ‘really’, ‘even’, a.o.). In principle, in contrast with existential sentences, *locative sentences are quite unconstrained regarding their possible subjects*, as well as the position of the subject.

- (58) a. Studenții Mariei sunt în clasă.  
students.the Mary's are in classroom  
'Mary's students are in the classroom.'
- b. Ceilalți copii sunt la cinema.  
The-other children are at cinema.  
'The other children are at the cinema.'
- c. Unii copii sunt la cinema.  
Some children are at cinema.  
'Some children are at the cinema.'

We will start by examining ES where the NP is post-verbal, therefore in a position where the existential reading is favored.

4.2.1 *Bare nouns*, singular (53) or plural (54), are felicitous in ES. This is expected given that their basic denotation is that of kind or property. The verb *fi* ‘be’ may be bare and stressed, as in (59a, 60a); alternatively, it may be negated, (59b), or accompanied by focus particles, like *mai* ‘still’ in (59c) and (60c). It is also possible to have a focus particle on the (predicative) post-verbal NP, as in (60d). An optional adjunct may specify the interpretation of the silent Locative Dative, as in (59d).

- (59) a. ESTE progres, dar nu suntem conștienți de el.  
is progress, but not are aware of it  
'There is progress, but we are not aware of it.'

- b. Nu este dreptate.  
not is justice  
'There is no justice.'
- c. Mai este onestitate.  
still is honesty  
'There still is honesty.'
- d. În anul acela, era pace / razboi / epidemie de gripă.  
in that year, was peace / war / epidemic of flue  
'In that year, there was peace / a war / an epidemic of flue.'
- (60) a. SUNT probleme.  
are problems  
'There are problems'
- b. ÎNCĂ SUNT oameni căroră le pasă.  
still are people who care  
'There are still people who care.'
- c. Mai sunt lucruri ieftine, dacă ai răbdarea de a le căuta  
still are things cheap, if (you) have the patience to look for them  
'There still are cheap things, if you have the patience to look for them.'
- d. Sunt și profesori buni.  
are also teachers good  
'There are also good teachers.'

In sum, given their denotation, bare nouns are the standard DP type in existential sentences. As known, *indefinites* are DPs containing *weak determiners* in the sense of Milsark (1977). Indefinite determiners verify what Moro calls a characteristic property of existential sentences, the fact that in ES, "D has an *adjectival character*" [Moro 1997: 165]. In a sentence like *There aren't many girls*, *many* can have only the adjectival, not the quantificational reading." A sentence like *There aren't many girls* is interpreted as predicating the property of *not many* about the set denoted by *girls*. In other words, *the adjectival determiner* is *part of the focused predicate*, part of the *nucleus* of the sentence, therefore in the scope of negation. Moro had actually proposed that existential meaning is precisely a function that maps a DP onto a predicative structure where the D is the predicate of a set denoted by the NP. [...] A *there* sentence can be regarded as the minimal syntactic environment allowing the sentential reading of a DP. (For arguments against this position, see Zamparelli 1995). Here are examples of ES containing indefinite DPs in post-verbal position:

- (61) a. Sunt multi lingviști talentați.  
are many linguists talented  
'There are many talented linguists.'
- b. Sunt doar trei romancieri importanți.  
are only three novelists important  
'There are only three important novelists.'

The predicative interpretation of the weak determiner is visible in negative ES, where negation scopes *over the adjectival* determiner predicate. Thus sentence (62a) say that the number of talented linguists is not many (but few), and similarly for (62b).

- (62) a. Nu sunt multi lingviști talentați.  
not are many linguists talented  
b. Nu sunt doar trei scriitori de talent.  
not are only three writers of talent

Interestingly, for most weakly quantified DPs, stress on the verb becomes unnecessary, since weakly quantified DPs, with the exception of indefinite descriptions (63b), do not make good predicates in attributive *be* sentences (see the examples in (63)), so the potential ambiguity between the attributive and the existential reading discussed in (55) above does not arise:

- (63) a. \*Ei sunt **mulți** / **putini** muncitori.  
'They are many / few workers.'  
b. El este **un** om căruia îi pasă.  
'He is a man who cares.'  
c. #El este **cel puțin un** om căruia îi pasă.  
He is at least one man who cares  
d. #Ei sunt **cel puțin trei** dintre romancierii importanți.  
'They are at least three of the important novelists.'

In conclusion, Romanian confirms that weak determiners are felicitous in ES. In contrast, strong quantifiers, like definite, and demonstrative, descriptions are expected not to occur in ES, a prediction which is borne out. Consider the examples in (64) below; while some (even if not all) of the sentences below are grammatical, they cannot have an existential interpretation.

- (64) a. \*Sunt studenții.  
are students.the  
'It's the students.'  
b. \*ESTE profesorul de engleză.  
is teacher.the of English  
'The English teacher is around/ is available, etc.'  
c. ??Sunt copiii ăștia.  
are children. the these.  
These children  
d. \*SUNT studenții aceia.  
are students. the those  
'It's those students.'  
e. Nu sunt studenții (ci altcineva).  
'It's not the students, (but someone else).'  
f. \*Nu sunt copiii ăștia.(ES)  
'It's not these students.'

Thus sentences (64a, b) may probably be used as elliptical LS (see below), in answering questions like *Sunt studenții în clasă?* ('Are the students in the class?'), *Da, sunt studenții.* ('Yes, they are.'). They may also be interpreted as identificational (specificational) sentences, in answer to questions of the type *Cine este la ușă?* ('Who is at the door?') *Sunt studenții.* ('It's the students'). In either case, *studenții* 'the students' functions as a subject, it is a *referential phrase*, *presupposing* (not asserting) existence. The impossibility of obtaining an existential reading is even more obvious when the *fi* is negated. The only interpretations, if available, are the locative and the identificational (specificational) ones, as in (64e).

The exclusion of definite and demonstrative descriptions from ES may be interpreted as a pragmatic matter. Zamparelli (1995) remarks that definites and strong DPs are possible in *fi* sentences, "but cannot be interpreted as pure assertions of existence; a locative interpretation prevails". This is because with strong DPs, the referent of the DP is *presupposed* to exist and the new information about it concerns its location in space and time (locative sentences) or its identification (specificational sentences).

*Pre-verbal existentials* Passing to NP/DPs in pre-verbal position, their distribution in ES is largely the same as in post-verbal position, but ES with pre-verbal NP/DPs are more constrained; for instance, they are infelicitous as discourse initial. The pre-verbal NP/DP is usually interpreted as a *topic*, often separated from the verb by a pause, as in the following examples involving bare nouns.

- (65) a. Dreptate#nu este.  
Justice, there is not.  
b. Progres ESTE, dar nu suntem constienți de el  
Progress there is, but we are not aware of it.

Indefinite DP used in pre-verbal position also have interesting properties in ES. The description is again interpreted as a *topic*, part of the *restriction*, rather than the *nucleus* of the sentence, only the verb *fi* remains in focus. This is what happens in (66a-b). Alternatively, the interpretation is one which attributes a *counting role* to the indefinite determiner (in the sense of Beghelli and Stowell 1996). The D is stressed and is interpreted as a *contrastive focus*, as in (67):

- (66) a. Un om căruia să-i pese# AR FI.  
a man who would care would be  
'There should be a man who would care.'  
b. Multi lingviști talentați# SUNT, dar nu-i angajează nimeni.  
Many linguists talented arem but not-them hire nobody  
'There are many talented linguists, but nobody hires them.'
- (67) a. Exact UN lingvist de geniu mai este.  
exactly one linguist of geniur still is  
'There still is exactly one linguist of genius.'

- b. Cel mult DOI lingviști talentați mai sunt.  
at most two linguists talented still are.  
'At most two talented linguists are left.'
- c. Prea multi lingviști nu sunt.  
too many linguists not are  
'There aren't too many linguists.'

If the weak D is not explicitly focused, and/or the verb is not stressed to signal the existential reading, the existential interpretation is lost and the preverbal position is not felicitous. This distribution suggests that the pre-verbal DP must move to a periphery position contrastive topic or contrastive focus.

- (68) a. ??Câțiva compozitori sunt.  
a few composers are  
b. ??Niște compozitori sunt.  
some composers are
- (69) a. ??Puțini politicieni sunt.  
few politicians are  
b. ??Trei romancieri importanți sunt.  
three novelists important are

#### 4.2.2 Apparent exceptions to the DE

Several types of exceptions to the definiteness effect have been described, all of them noticeable in Romanian as well. *Lists* represent an important type of exception to the DE in Romanian. Lists may be explicit or discourse implicit, as seen in (70): i.e., the list reading may be induced by the use of particles which indirectly refer to earlier members of the list, such as *și* (also), *mai* (also, additionally); alternatively, one may use different conjuncts (*firstly*, *secondly*) which signal the list interpretation (as in (70b)).

- (70) a. Cine urmează sa meargă cu mașina? Păi, este Rectorul Universității, apoi un profesor invitat și cei doi doctoranzi.  
'Who is to go by car? Well, there is the President of the University, then a guest professor and the two doctoral students.'
- b. Ce trebuie să luam în seamă când intocmim planul? **În primul rând** sunt studenții, în al **doilea rând**, sunt normele colegilor.  
'What should one take into account when designing the curriculum? First, it's the students, second, it's the colleagues' teaching loads.'
- c. **Mai** sunt **și** studenții (cu problemele lor / de luat în seamă).  
'There are also the students (to consider, with their problems).'
- d. **Mai** sunt țările vecine, care au politici foarte diferite privind Kosovo și ne creează dificultăți.  
'There also the neighboring countries, which have very different policies with respect to Kosovo and create problems for us.'
- e. Sunt **și** studentii impertinenți, care reprezintă o problemă.  
'There are also the cheeky students, who represent a problem.'

The sentences may be described as containing lists. Sentence (70a) is an explicit list, since it contains an overt enumeration. Sentence (70b) is explicitly enumerative at discourse level, as shown by the introductory (bold-faced) adjuncts. Sentences (70c-e) are implicit lists; the presuppositional particles *mai* 'also', 'additionally' and *și* 'also' introduce previously mentioned discourse referents that are members of the list. Significantly, in all of these sentences it is impossible to stress the verb, and we have identified stress on the verb as a basic property of Romanian ES.

*Weak definites* represent a related (apparent) exception to the DE. Weak definites are mostly relational nouns and get the definite article not because their referent is known, but because they are anchored by a complement or modifier. A focus particle is required for the felicity of such sentences, which have a list flavor.

- (71) a. Mai e și fratele lui Ion.  
           'There is also the brother of John.'  
       b. Întotdeauna mai este și vecinul din colț / omul de pe stradă.  
           'There is always the neighbor on the corner / the man in the street.'

What should be explained in relation to lists and weak definites is the occurrence of a definite DP in predicative position in a non-equative sentence. If in ES the predicate is focused and introduces new information, how can definite DPs, which, largely, express given information, be accommodated in ES. An explanation is proposed by Hu & Pan (2007), who specifically wonder why the definite NP can occur when the focus particle is present. "A possible account is to assume that when the focus particle is introduced into the relevant sentence, what is asserted by the existential operator is not the existence of the referent denoted by the definite NP, but that of a *new relation associated with the relevant interpretation*". Similarly, in lists situations, it is precisely the fact that all the (definite) components are members of the list which is the new information. This is what makes these definites compatible with ES.

4.2.3 *Other strong Qs* (*toți* 'all', *ambii* 'both', *fiecare* 'every, each', *majoritatea* 'most') are excluded from ES *only* when their interpretation is *at token level* (for their type level interpretation see next section). In Romanian, their exclusion is natural since these strong Qs either take definite DPs as complements (*toți* 'all', *ambii* 'both', *majoritatea* 'most') or they themselves behave as definite DPs (*fiecare* 'each, every', cf. Cornilescu 2002), so they naturally fall under the DE.

- (72) a. \*Mai este fiecare doctor.  
           'There is also every doctor.'  
       b. \*Mai sunt majoritatea studenților.  
           'There are also most (of the) students.'

4.2.4 A quite different case is that of *elliptical locative sentences*, where the definite DP is a *subject*, in spite of its preverbal position. The (space, time) location is implicit in the context.

- (73) a. Vezi dacă mai sunt studenții (în clasă) sau au plecat. Nu mai sunt studenții.  
 ‘See whether the students are still in the classroom or have left’.  
 The students aren’t (there) any longer.’
- b. Afla dacă mai este problema de care am discutat sau s-a rezolvat.  
 ‘Find out whether the problem we talked about is still there or has been solved.’

*Conclusions* 1. Romanian ES sentences exhibit a sharp Definiteness Effect, like their counterparts in other languages. 2. ES countenance only weak Determiners, strong determiners are systematically excluded. 3. In ES, weak Ds are interpreted as adjectives, rather than quantifiers, therefore, as cardinality predicates. This is in line with the (non-referential) predicative interpretation given to the overt NP in ES.

#### 4.3 The ES-internal NP/DP is a predicate

If ES are indeed modeled on impersonal Dative *fi*-constructions, as we have hypothesized, then there must be evidence that the overt internal NP/DP is a predicate and that there is a null counterpart of the Dative. Recall that, according to Partee & Borshev (2007), the characteristic feature of the ES is that it does not contain a referential subject. Rather its perspectival center is an indefinite location (represented by *there* in English and by silent Dative in Romanian), assumed to contain (instantiations of) some property. The overt (post-verbal) NP/DP is a *grammatical predicate* and its denotation is that of property. There is considerable evidence in favor of this position for Romanian ES, reviewed below.

*The DE* In fact the DE itself may count as an argument that the ES-internal NP/DP is a predicate, since every good ES-internal NP/DP makes a good predicate, although the converse is not true. In particular, we have noted above in (65) that pre-verbal bare singulars are possible in ES (see more examples in (74a, b)), even if more constrained. In Romanian, bare singular nouns are generally disallowed as pre-verbal subjects (cf. (74c)) but make excellent predicates in and as such they may move to the left with a particular periphery interpretation. If these bare NPs are in fact inverted predicates, not subjects, it is also expected that their distribution is more constrained.

- (74) a. Om căruia să nu-i pese de fiii lui# nu este.  
 man who should not care about his sons, there is not
- b. Pasăre care să nu zboare# nu este.  
 (a) bird which should not fly, there isn’t
- c. \*Pasăre zboară. / Asta este pasăre  
 bird flies / this is bird.  
 ‘Birds fly.’ / ‘This is a bird.’

*Evidence from scope* The post-verbal NP/DP in ES, unlike other *vP*-internal NPs, must take *narrow* scope with respect to clause-level operators, such as negation.

- (75) a. N-au venit mulți studenți.  
not-have come many students.  
'Not many students came.'  
'Many students didn't come.'
- b. Nu sunt multe probleme.  
not are many problems.  
'There are not many problems.'

While in (75), the post-verbal DP is an argument (the subject) and it may scope above or below negation as seen in the two translations, in (74b), which is an ES, the post-verbal NP is understood only inside negation, functioning as part of the negated predicate.

*Sortal sensitivity* (McNally 1998) A relevant similarity between the internal NP/DP in ES and nominal predicates in copular sentences regards the behavior of type definite phrases. In understanding the semantics of the DE and of ES, one should make a difference between definites and other strong quantifiers. Definites are always excluded, while other strong Qs, are excluded only on their *token* reading, i.e., when they range over particulars. The relevant quantifiers, namely, *fiecare* 'each, every', *toți* 'all', *amândoi* 'both', *majoritatea* 'most' differ from definite and demonstrative descriptions in that they are necessarily quantificational, i.e., they have only the generalized quantifier interpretation (type  $\langle\langle e,t \rangle, t \rangle$ , unlike definite and demonstrative descriptions which may also have object-level,  $\langle e \rangle$ -type readings. Necessarily quantificational DPs may occur in ES sentences, provided that they range over *types of individuals* (i.e., with nouns like *kinds, sorts, varieties, types*), as seen in the examples below. Their distribution in ES is thus constrained by a *sortal* restriction (cf. McNally 1998). All and only quantificational DPs which *do not range over particulars* are acceptable.

- (76) a. \*Pe vremea aceea erau toți doctorii.  
at the time were all doctors.the.  
'At the time, there were all the doctors.'
- b. Pe vremea aceea erau toate felurile de doctor.  
at the time were all kinds.the of doctors.  
'At the time, there were all kinds of doctors'.
- c. \*Era fiecare întrebare pe test.  
was each question on test  
'There was each question on the test.'
- d. Era fiecare fel de întrebare pe test.  
was each kind of question on test  
'There was each kind of question on the test.'

Significantly nominal predicative in other types of *fi* 'be' sentences exhibit the same sortal sensitivity in the case of necessarily quantificational strong Qs. Again, such DPs may be predicates only if they range over types, not tokens:

- (77) a. \*Marta a fost toți doctorii.  
Marta has been all doctors.the



- b. Marta a fost toate felurile de doctor.  
'Martha has been every kind of doctor.'

This similarity between attributive *be* sentences and ES strengthens the view that the ES-internal NP/DP is *the predicate* of the sentence, not its subject.

The behavior of necessarily quantificational DPs in ESs shows that a purely pragmatic account of the DE is not adequate. It is true that the rejection of definites can be accounted for in pragmatic terms. Pragmatic accounts have insisted on two aspects: a) whether a new discourse referent is introduced by the post-verbal NP (Prince, 1981); b) whether the existence of individuals fitting the description is presupposed. (cf. Ward & Birner 1995, Zucchi 1995, Bentley 2004). Ward & Birner (1995) claim that an NP licensed in post-verbal position must introduce 'hearer-new information' and NPs that introduce hearer-new information are those that, in the sense of Heim (1982), carry neither the presupposition that their referent is familiar, nor that their descriptive content is satisfied by some entity whose existence is already entailed by the discourse model. This leads to the exclusion of definite and demonstrative descriptions, which are pre-suppositional DPs. However, as persuasively argued by McNally (1998), this analysis is insufficient. First, it does not directly speak of the behavior of necessarily quantificational DPs. Necessarily quantificational DPs do not introduce persistent discourse referents, and though they may be viewed as introducing referents into subordinate domains (in the sense of DRT), those referents qualify as novel only for technical reasons. Consequently a Ward-Birner style analysis either makes no predication about quantificational NPs or predicts that all of them are licensed. The always narrow scope of the overt NP, noticed in (75) is not explained either.

*Conclusion:* The ES-internal NP/DP is a predicate.

#### 4.4 *The silent locative*

##### 4.4.1 *The properties of the silent locative*

The silent locative provides a place holder for the subject, but is also required for interpretative reasons. Specifically, it signals the shift of perspective, from an object centered perspective on the situation to a location centered one, a shift which is the essential difference between the LS and ES and entails the treatment as a predicative of the internal NP/DP. The best characterization of the content of silent Locative is that offered by Zamparelli (1995) for the English "there": There is a much like **specific indefinite locative**, a certain abstract location. The indefiniteness of the silent locative imposes a novelty requirement, which extends to the predicate producing the Definiteness Effect.

The location referred to by the Dative locative is constrained by the optional adverbial locative or by deictic features of the speech situation. Compare the following examples:

- (78) a. E secetă în România.  
is draught in Romania

- b. E secetă.  
is-draught  
'There is a draught (in Romania).'

In (78a), the indefinite space denoted by the implicit Dative subject intersects with Romania. In (78b), there is an implicit deictic location present, 'here', producing the interpretation, 'There is a draught here.' When a deictic locative is supplied, there is no focal stress on the verb, as in all of the examples in (78). When a more general abstract space is envisaged so as to make a general ontological claim, stress on the verb is again required, as in sentence (79c), which says that there are places in the universe afflicted by hunger.

- (79) a. E foamete.  
'(There) is hunger.'  
b. E epidemie de gripă / război / pace.  
'(There ) is an epidemic of flu / a war / peace.'  
c. ESTE foamete.  
'(There) is (a) hunger'.  
d. Nu mai este dreptate.  
'There is no more justice.'

In conclusion, the locative operator, is a specific indefinite locative with a novelty requirement that extends to the predicate. Since this silent topic location exists, the objects contained in it may exist as well. Hence the *value of existential quantification* conferred to the sequence Locative + *fi*.

In the case of Romanian, an important question is that of how the existence of this silent constituent is inferred, and secondly that of how the silent Dative is learned. Regarding the first question, all the evidence reviewed above which shows that the overt internal NP is a predicate with property interpretation P forces the assumption that the subject/or topic must be a covert element, including property P in its property set. The null location is also typically signaled by stress and focus on the verb, as amply seen above. There are, therefore, many overt properties that indicate the presence of the covert Location. As to the acquisition problem, given the structural isomorphism of Mental Location (somatic) Dative sentences and ES, the former may serve as evidence in acquiring the structure of the latter.

#### 4.4.2 Sample derivations of an ES

Since the silent locative is a subject, ES sentences are restructured by a process analogous to DR. What attracts this silent operator is a [Locative] feature on T, checked in the appropriate clitic position (cf. also Landau 2004). The syntax of ES raises only one problem in addition to DR, *namely Agreement*. It is often argued that the post *be* NP is a subject since the verb *be* agrees in number with it. In fact, even if the overt internal NP is a predicate, Number may be transmitted to the verb by the mechanism of *subject-predicate agreement in the small clause* (cf. Hazout 2004, Rezac 2005, Williams 2006). The null Location DP contains a categorial D feature, a Case feature and an interpretable [+Location] feature. Unlike the overt Dative clitic, the null location is, however, *underspecified for  $\phi$*



- (84) A fost să fie așa. / Așa a fost să fie.  
has been [SĂ be(subj.3.SG) so]/ So has been [SĂ be(subj.3.SG)]  
'It has been fated for things to happen so.'
- (85) Când a fost să plec, am plecat.  
when has been [SĂ leave(subj.1.SG)], (I) left.  
'When I had to leave, I left.'
- (86) Era să întârziem la conferință.  
was [SĂ be(subj.1.PL) late at conference]  
'We were about to be late for the conference.'

By *hypothesis*, the only argument in the main clause (therefore the highest clitic position in  $d_T$ ) is the raised silent Dative. The silent Dative acquires a default third person singular feature by agreement with the clause in predicative position (as in structure (42) above). Thus, the verb in the main clause will show an invariable third person. The construction is again impersonal, since there is no Nominative subject.

An interesting phenomenon is that some of these constructions exhibit variation between an impersonal and an agreeing variant, without any other significant differences.

- (87) a. Eram să cad.  
was (1.SG) [SĂ fall (1.SG)]  
'I was about to fall.'
- b. Era să cad.  
was (3.SG) [SA fall (1.SG)]

This variation may easily be accounted for, as illustrating the two restructuring strategies typical of BE clauses: Subject-to-Subject Raising is present in the agreement construction, and Dative Raising produces the impersonal construction.

## 5. Conclusions

1. To express somatic experiences, Romanian uses a characteristic pattern: Dative + *fi* + NP. In these impersonal constructions, the Dative functions as a *quirky subject*, occupying the highest realized clitic position in the T-domain  $d_T$  of the main clause, through Dative Raising. The Dative is thematically an Experiencer or Mental Location, and the proposition expressed is that this mental location contains a particular somatic state (hunger, thirst, etc).

2. The DR analysis can be assigned to all varieties of *fi*-sentences, simple and complex, with the Dative climbing on the main verb by restructuring. Generalizing over these constructions, the following pattern emerges, where the Dative subject is a Mental Location and the predicative NP or CP is interpreted in intension, expressing a *property* or a *proposition*, respectively.

(88) *Dative* + *fi (be)* + *NP/CP*  
 Location        be            property/proposition

3. The pattern above also underlies Romanian genuine existential sentences. The only significant difference is that the Dative Location subject is covert, phonologically null. There are many overt clues (prosodic and distributional) which signal the presence of the null Location subject in existential sentences.

4. Like their counterparts in other languages, Romanian genuine existential sentences are *inverses of locative sentences*. Their perspective structure involves a Location center (the null Dative location); ES sentences assert that the indefinite Location center contains instantiations of the property expressed by the overt NP/DP. There is plenty of evidence that the overt NP/DP is a predicate.

5. Romanian existential sentences are subject to the Definiteness Effect.

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## ***Null subjects, expletives and locatives in Sardinian<sup>1</sup>***

*Eva-Maria Remberger*

### ***1. Introduction***

If we look at subtypes of expletive subjects, as identified by Svenonius (2002:5) for English, for example, we see that they can be pronouns, as is the case for extrapositional *it* or weather *it*, or they can consist of a locative element, like impersonal *there*. It is the latter in particular that will be at the centre of interest in this paper. The specific aim of this paper is to describe, interpret and analyse two subtypes of “subjectless” constructions in Sardinian that involve such a locative element, namely existential constructions and presentational impersonal constructions with intransitives. The paper will focus on the status and role of the locative element with respect to null subjects and/or expletives. More details concerning the relation between empty and overt expletives and overt locatives even in a null subject language such as Sardinian will be discussed in section 2.

Sardinian displays wide diatopic variation; nevertheless it is often stated that there are roughly two main dialect areas, although these are not clearly defined and have several transitional areas. One is Logudorese in the North of the island; the other is Campidanese in the South. Thus there is a variation of forms with respect to locatives or existentials in Sardinian. Here, only the clitic locatives will be considered, which can be *bi*, *bíe* / *ikke*, *ke*, *nke*, *ank*, *inchi*, for the Logudorese varieties, and *iddhoi*, *ddhoi*, *ddhui*, *ddhue*, *ddhu* / *inci*, *ci*, *ince*, *nce* for the Campidanese varieties.<sup>2</sup> All varieties, however, have null subjects. In what follows I shall principally use examples with *bi*, most of them stemming from the mailing list *Sa Limba* (cf. Sa-Limba 1999-2007). The occurrences of a locative or existential element are glossed with LOC. This, however, does not mean that *bi* always is to be interpreted as a true locative.

All examples at issue here arethetic sentences (cf. Sasse 1987) or so-called presentational clauses, i.e. constructions that do not have predicate focus, but sentence focus (Lambrecht 1994).<sup>3</sup> The data under discussion are given in the following examples:

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<sup>2</sup> From IBI, HINC(E), HICCE, ILLO(QUE) etc. (cf. also Puddu 2000: s.v.; Wagner 1960). There are, of course, slight differences amongst them with respect to their proximate vs. distal interpretation; e.g. *ke* maybe connected to the location of the speaker whereas this is not necessarily the case with *bi*, cf. Bentley (2004:65), Loporcaro (1998:51).

<sup>3</sup> Categorical constructions like Italian *Dio c'è* or Sardinian *Deus b'este* ‘God exists’, which also involve a locative and where the existential predicate is focussed whereas the argument is clearly a topic (and therefore in preverbal position) will not be discussed in this paper.

- (1) Poi **bi** aiat tantos amigos chi sunt scittos in custa lista.  
 then LOC HAVE.PAST.3.SG a-lot-of friends, who are subscribed to this list  
 ‘Then there were lots of friends, who are also subscribed to the mailing-  
 list.’ (Sa-Limba: Pattada)
- (2) **Bi** sunt cuddos chi ammistrant s’italianu cun su sardu a tot’andare.  
 LOC BE.PRES.3.PL who measure the Italian with the Sardinian at all go  
 ‘There are these who compare Italian to Sardinian whenever they can.’

The examples in (1) and (2) are locative-existential<sup>4</sup> constructions, containing an auxiliary plus a locative clitic (set in bold) as well as the DP whose existence (or location, cf. fn. 9) is encoded (the so-called pivot<sup>5</sup>, here underlined). However, as has been observed in previous studies (cf. Jones 1993, La Fauci & Loporcaro 1997, Loporcaro 1998, Bentley 2004, 2007) auxiliary selection is dependent on the definiteness of the pivot-DP: a (postverbal) indefinite DP like *tantos amigos* ‘many friends’ goes together with HAVE-selection and default (or missing) agreement, whereas a definite DP (also postverbal in this case) like *cuddos* ‘these’ results in BE-selection and agreement:

- (3) E **b’at** abarradu puru unos cantos francos pro un’ateru DVD o duos.  
 and LOC HAVE.3.SG also remained.PART some more francs for another  
 DVD or 2.  
 ‘And there is also some money left for another DVD or two.’  
 (Sa-Limba: Logudoro)
- (4) Da pustis de bint’annos chi ant segadu a fitas su monolite **b’est**  
 abbarradu semper in su cucuru sa moderina de su nuraghe chi sas minas  
 ant fatu tremare.  
 from after of 20 years that they-have broken down the monolith LOC  
 BE.3.SG remained.PART always in the top the heap-of-stones of the  
 Nuraghe that the mines have made tremble  
 ‘For 20 years now since they broke down the monolith, there on the top  
 has still remained the heap of stones of the Nuraghe that the mines  
 made tremble.’ (Sa-Limba: Pattada)

The examples in (3) and (4) are impersonal constructions with the lexical verb *abbarrare* ‘to remain’. In compound tenses the same correlation as for the locative-existentials in (1) and (2) can be observed, i.e. these constructions too show auxiliary selection conditioned by the definiteness effect<sup>6</sup> (and the position of the DP, as will be shown later).

The paper is organised as follows: In the next section, I will give a comparative overview of the correlation of null subjects, expletives and locatives

<sup>4</sup> As will be shown later, a distinction has to be made between locatives and true existentials. Whenever I write “locative-existential” this distinction is not (yet) made.

<sup>5</sup> This term was introduced by Milsark (1974).

<sup>6</sup> In this paper, I will use the term “definiteness” effect although the phenomenon is more intricate. A distinction between strong vs. weak determiners (cf. Milsark 1977 among many others) would be more appropriate for a crosslinguistic description of the respective data.



in some Romance languages. Section 3 contains a more detailed discussion of the Sardinian data at issue. In 4, a sketch of the current theory with respect to the interpretation of existentials is given. Section 5 introduces the framework I will rely on for the analysis that is proposed in 6. In section 7, the results will be summarised.

## 2. Null-subjects, expletives and locatives

A comparative view of French, Sardinian and Italian reveals that phonologically realised personal subject pronouns in non-emphatic contexts go together with phonologically realised expletive elements in null predicates such as meteorological verbs in French, whereas Italian and Sardinian have empty pronouns in both cases (for the French examples, cf. Lambrecht 1994):

- |     |        |                      |                                  |
|-----|--------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| (5) | French | a. <i>Il</i> pleut.  | <i>il</i> <sub>expletive</sub>   |
|     | Sard.  | b. Est proende.      | <i>pro</i> <sub>expletive</sub>  |
|     | Ital.  | c. Piove.            | <i>pro</i> <sub>expletive</sub>  |
| (6) | French | a. <i>Il</i> pleure. | <i>il</i> <sub>pronominal</sub>  |
|     | Sard.  | b. Est pranghende.   | <i>pro</i> <sub>pronominal</sub> |
|     | Ital.  | c. Piange.           | <i>pro</i> <sub>pronominal</sub> |

This correlation is well-established, found in all non-null subject languages and probably the most uncontroversial in the definition of the null subject parameter. As far as locative clitics in existential constructions are concerned, they seem to be phonologically realised in all three languages:<sup>7</sup>

- |     |        |                                |  |
|-----|--------|--------------------------------|--|
| (7) | French | a. <i>Il y</i> a trois hommes. | <i>il</i> <sub>expletive</sub> + <i>y</i> <sub>existential</sub>   |
|     | Sard.  | b. <b>B'</b> at tres òmines.   | <i>pro</i> <sub>expletive</sub> + <i>bi</i> <sub>existential</sub> |
|     | Ital.  | c. <b>Ci</b> sono tre uomini.  | <i>pro</i> <sub>expletive</sub> + <i>ci</i> <sub>existential</sub> |

In the French existential construction an expletive as well as a locative is phonologically realised. Thus, to keep the parallel with (5) and (6), we must assume that there is also an unrealised expletive pronoun in Sardinian and Italian where the French pronoun is realised.<sup>8</sup> Sardinian and Italian still behave in a

<sup>7</sup> This is not necessarily so in all languages, cf. e.g. Romanian, which has no overt locative in this case (cf. also Cornilescu, this volume), or Spanish, where the locative seems to be incorporated into an invariable verbal form of HAVE but only in the present tense indicative. Neither language possesses a locative clitic.

<sup>8</sup> There is something to be said here concerning the existence of expletive *pro* in these constructions: Boeckx (1999:61, fn.5), for example, assumes an expletive *pro* plus *ci* in preverbal position for Italian (see also Mensching & Remberger 2006:182 for other Romance varieties) whereas Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (1998) would certainly maintain that verbal inflection in Italian is strong enough to satisfy the EPP (i.e. the requirement for a subject in [Spec, TP]) by itself. In older Tuscan texts, there can be both an overt expletive (*egli*) and a locative (*ci*), cf. Ciconte (this volume); thus the assumption that there is a non-overt counterpart to both of these elements is reasonable.

parallel way. However, in (8), which exemplifies the presentational impersonal constructions introduced above (cf. (3) and (4)) the situation changes:

- |     |        |                                       |   |
|-----|--------|---------------------------------------|---|
| (8) | French | a. <i>Il est arrivé trois hommes.</i> | $i_{\text{expletive}} + \text{pro}_{\text{existential}}$          |
|     | Sard.  | b. <b>B'</b> at arribatu tres òmines  | $\text{pro}_{\text{expletive}} + \text{bi}_{\text{existential}}$  |
|     | Ital.  | c. Sono arrivati tre uomini.          | $\text{pro}_{\text{expletive}} + \text{pro}_{\text{existential}}$ |

French here has an overt expletive as in (7)a, Sardinian has an overt existential, as in (7)b, but Italian has neither. Again, to keep the parallel, one must assume that French should have an unrealised existential and Sardinian an unrealised expletive, whereas Italian should have both elements unrealised. However, this would mean that there are two types of “existentials” in Italian or French, a phonologically realised one, namely *ci* or *y*, and an empty one ( $\text{pro}_{\text{existential}}$ ), whereas in Sardinian both types are realised as *bi*.

Moreover, I claim that a distinction has to be made between existential and pronominal locatives, to account for those cases where they are both phonologically visible. An explanation for the latter assumption comes from Leonetti (2005). He argues that in Italian, as in the Sardinian examples (1) and (2), there is a definiteness effect in existential-locative constructions with the clitic *ci* (the examples in (9) are from Leonetti 2005:10):

- |      |       |  |  |
|------|-------|--|--|
| (9)  | Ital. | a. <b>C'</b> è la statua di Michelangelo, <b>in Piazza della Signoria.</b>   |  |
|      |       | b. ?? <b>C'</b> è la statua di Michelangelo <b>in Piazza della Signoria.</b> |  |
|      |       | c. <b>C'</b> è la statua di Michelangelo.                                    |  |
|      |       |  | LOC is the statue of Michelangelo ((,) in <i>Piazza della Signoria</i> ) |
| (10) | Ital. | a. <b>Ci</b> sono arrivata, <b>a Roma.</b>                                   |  |
|      |       | b. ?? <b>Ci</b> sono arrivata <b>a Roma.</b>                                 |  |
|      |       | c. <b>Ci</b> sono arrivata.  |  |
|      |       |  | LOC I-am arrived ((,) at Rome)   |

He shows that a definite argument in a locative-existential construction can only be combined with an explicit locative phrase if the latter is interpreted in a right dislocated position (cf. (9)a). When the locative phrase is argumental, i.e. VP-internal, then a definite argument is marginal in Italian (cf. (9)b). Thus, the clitic *ci* in (9) (i.e. with a definite DP) is always a pro-locative pronoun, since it explicitly (cf. (9)a) or implicitly (cf. (9)c) resumes a topical locative phrase. Leonetti calls this construction the “pseudo-existential locative” (Leonetti 2005:8). The *ci* here must be inherently locative itself since it is incompatible with a locative phrase which modifies the event situation in the same nuclear clause as in the parallel examples in (10) with *arrivarci* ‘to arrive somewhere’. *Ci* in these examples with a definite DP cannot be existential.

True existential *ci*, on the other hand, is compatible with a VP-internal locative phrase, but a prerequisite of these constructions is that the DP-argument whose existence is predicated is indefinite:

- (11) Ital. a. **C'è un uomo in Piazza della Signoria.**  
 b. **C'è un uomo.**  
 LOC is a man (in Piazza della Signoria)

Thus, in (11)a, the existential *ci* can co-occur with a locative phrase in the same nuclear clause and example (11)b is an existential construction with no implicit topical locative phrase.<sup>9</sup> It is rather the case that *ci* provides the context of existence for the pivot (cf. also section 4). The locative PP in the examples above is instead called the “coda” (cf. Zucchi 1995, Leonetti 2005:9): It is right-dislocated in pronominal-locative constructions as in (9) and an existential context provider in ‘true existentials’ with indefinite arguments as in (11). An adjunct-coda simply provides an explicit stage topic.<sup>10</sup> With a VP-internal coda, which still provides a stage topic, there is an “intersection of the coda and the NP denotation” (Leonetti 2005:9<sup>11</sup>); as Erteschik-Shir (1997:28) puts it, “indefinites predicated of stage topics are unique to that stage”<sup>12</sup>, i.e. the coda; this is independent of whether the stage topic is explicit or implicit.

To sum up: It was stated that there are different subtypes of “existential” constructions, and that locative constructions and existential construction can be clearly distinguished.<sup>13</sup> The Definiteness Effect<sup>14</sup> (or more accurately: the condition of Indefiniteness, but see fn. 6) only appears with “true” existentials and hence there are no definite existential constructions<sup>15</sup>, but only locative constructions with definite DP-arguments (like in (2), (4), (9) and (10)). Existential constructions can be further subdivided in two types, either type 1, where there is an existential auxiliary (HAVE in Sardinian, BE in Italian), as in (1), (7) or (11), or type 2, where a presentational clause involving a lexical verb is given, as in (3) or (8). The difference between *existential 1* and *existential 2* is that the first introduces entities (which need to be indefinite) and the second one introduces events (which need to host an indefinite argument) (cf. Leonetti 2005, also Boeckx 1999, Lambrecht 1994, La Fauci & Loporcaro 1997, Bentley 2004 etc.). Table 1 gives an overview over the results achieved so far:

<sup>9</sup> As will become clear in the forthcoming sections, cf. (26) and table 6, a locative interpretation is also available for indefinites, cf. (i):

(i) **C'è un uomo, in Piazza della Signoria.**

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Erteschik-Shir (1997:26ff); a stage topic is typically implicit in presentational sentences, which thus appear to have sentence focus.

<sup>11</sup> This approach is originally based on Keenan (1987).

<sup>12</sup> This is parallel to the claim that a pivot must be “novel” (cf. eg. McNally 1992) or “unanchored” (cf. e.g. Bentley 2004).

<sup>13</sup> The *Grande Grammatica Italiana di Consultazione* by Renzi et al. (1988) gives three types of locative *ci* in Italian: real locative *ci* (pro-PP), the presentational *ci* (here: true existential) and the existential *ci* in the *Dio c'è* construction, which will not be discussed here.

<sup>14</sup> I will not elaborate on a definition of the DE here; suffice it to say that there might be further distinctions as between ‘strong’ and ‘weak definites’ (cf. Milsark 1977) and that also languages like English, which show quite a clear DE, can also often have definite DPs in existential constructions (cf. Ward & Birner 1995).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also Freeze (1992:557): “Probably no language allows the existential to have a definite theme; if the theme is definite, the structure must be that of a predicate locative.”

Table 1. *Null subjects, expletives and locatives in French, Italian and Sardinian.*

	D-referential, topic (cf. (6))	expletive (cf. (5))	pronominal- locative (cf. (9) & (10))	existential 1 (cf. (7) & (11))	existential 2 (cf. (8))
French	il	il	y	y	<i>pro</i>
Sardinian	<i>pro</i>	<i>pro</i>	bi	bi	bi
Italian	<i>pro</i>	<i>pro</i>	ci	ci	<i>pro</i>

On the base of the definitions established in this section, in the next section the data from Sardinian, which show auxiliary selection, will be discussed in more detail.

### 3. The data: BI-constructions in Sardinian

The Sardinian data, which are particularly interesting with respect to auxiliary selection in compound tense locative and existential constructions, were first widely described and analysed by Jones (1993). As for the description of the data, I will give a summary of Jones's results here (for detailed Sardinian examples, the reader is referred to Jones 1993:100ff, 3.2.2, and 113ff, 3.2.4)<sup>16</sup>:

- (A) In existential constructions (with the existential clitic 1), the pivot is indefinite and in postverbal position. It cannot be established whether it is nominative or not, since indefinites have no overt Case marking, but it probably has partitive Case. Auxiliary selection is HAVE. There is no agreement (either with a finite verb or with a participle). In existential constructions, a locative phrase within the nuclear clause is possible.
- (B) In (pseudo-existential) locative constructions (with the pro-locative clitic), the pivot is usually definite and can be in a preverbal or postverbal position. It clearly has nominative Case. Auxiliary selection is BE. There is subject-verb- as well as participle-agreement. No other locative phrase within the nuclear clause is allowed.
- (C) In presentational constructions involving an existential (existential clitic 2), the single DP-argument of a unaccusative or unergative verb is indefinite and postverbal.<sup>17</sup> It cannot be established whether it is nominative or not, as in (A), but again it probably has partitive Case. Auxiliary selection is HAVE. There is no agreement (either with a finite verb or with a participle). The existential clitic is obligatory, but if there is an experiencer dative clitic in the same

<sup>16</sup> Jones's (1993) data are from the dialect of Lula, i.e. the central Nuorese area within the larger area of the Logudorese dialects. The data presented in this paper come from different varieties and sources, including the mailing list Sa-Limba (cf. *Sa-Limba* 1999-2007), but also folklore and literature as well as research literature on Sardinian. I also give the name of the village the speakers of the sample data come from, where available.

<sup>17</sup> It can be preverbal, cf. (i) but then it is no longer a presentational (thetic) construction any more but a categorial one. There are cases of postverbal DP with agreement, but they are not easily accepted, cf. (ii). I assume that in cases like (ii) the DP has moved to [Spec, PrP] and that in both positions, the [Spec, PrP] as well as the [Spec, TP] as in (i), the DP has a specific reading.

(i) Tres pitzinnas (bi) sun vénnitas. (Jones 1993:102)

(ii) ?(Bi) sun vénnitas tres pitzinnas. (Jones 1993:103)

position, it can sometimes be omitted. A locative phrase in the nuclear clause is possible.

- (D) In other constructions involving a locative and a lexical verb, but with a definite DP, the latter is in preverbal or postverbal position. It has nominative Case, which can be tested by nominative personal pronouns. Auxiliary selection is BE. There is subject-verb- as well as participle-agreement. No other locative phrase in the nuclear clause is possible. The pro-locative clitic is not obligatory.<sup>18</sup>

In the next two sub-sections, first *existential 1* (cf. 3.1) and then *existential 2* (cf. 3.2) will be discussed and some more interesting facts concerning the data will be added.

### 3.1 Existential 1

Definite DPs are clearly incompatible with auxiliary selection HAVE (cf. (12)) and indefinite postverbal DPs are not compatible with auxiliary selection BE + Agreement (cf. (13)):<sup>19</sup>

- (12) \***b** a ssos pastorez in dōmo  
LOC HAVE.3.SG the shepherds at home (La Fauci & Loporcaro 1997:32)

- (13) \***bi** zum pastorez in dōmo  
LOC BE.3.PL shepherds at home (La Fauci & Loporcaro 1997:32)

However, the latter, following Bentley (2004), would be grammatical when bearing contrastive stress:

- (14) **Bi** sun medas fiores in sa danca (ateros en su ortu)  
LOC BE.3.PL many flowers in the meadow (others in the garden)  
'There are many flowers in the meadow (there are others in the garden).'
- (Bentley 2004:64)

- (15) In Sardinnia non **bi** sunt duas linguas, ma duas tradithiones graficas.  
in Sardinia not LOC BE.3.PL two languages but two traditions graphic  
'In Sardinia, there are not two languages, but two orthographic traditions.'
- (Sa-Limba: Iglesias)

Contrastively stressed arguments are interpreted as subset instances of a presupposed set (Bentley 2004:74), and thus perhaps they are no longer 'true indefinites'.<sup>20</sup> Both examples seem to be clear locative constructions, (14) with

<sup>18</sup> If the PP coindexed with the pro-locative clitic is an argument of the predicate that cannot be left implicit then it is obligatory, of course; if it is an adjunct, then it is optional.

<sup>19</sup> Again, the locative phrase referring to 'at home' contained in the sentence focus must be included in the reference situation for to allow an existential reading (cf. Erteschik-Shir 1997:52); if it were a topic, the predication would be a locative one.

<sup>20</sup> i.e. they get a 'strong' interpretation, cf. fn. 7.

the locative phrase *in sa danca*, which should be right dislocated, and (15) with *in Sardinia* which is a left dislocated topic although these elements are not marked as dislocated by punctuation. Thus the rule conditioning auxiliary selection provided at the beginning of this subsection still holds.

In Sardinian pro-locative *bi* seems to be more clearly distinguishable from existential *bi* (here existential 1) than Italian *ci* since only the first always has auxiliary selection with BE (+ finite and participle agreement). Thus, the following construction must also be a locative construction, as indeed the locative adverb and relative pronoun (in bold face) indicate:

- (16) Nois ponimus **tottue** sa (L) **inue b'est sa** (R) saldigna invece de sardigna.  
 we put everywhere the (L) where LOC BE.1.SG the (R) Saldigna instead of Saldigna  
 'We always put the (L) where there is the (R), 'Saldigna' instead of 'Saldigna'.'  
 (Sa-Limba: Pattada)

With personal verbal forms too, which have a clearly definite covert (as *pro* in (17)) or overt (cf. *deo* in (18)) subject, the constructions have auxiliary selection BE and thus are always clearly locative and not existential; in (17) the locative phrase is explicit (*in Samugheo*), in (18) it is implicit:

- (17) su premi est una mandigada in Samugheo cando **bi** seo  
 the prize is an eating in S. when LOC BE.PRES.1.SG  
 'The prize is a meal in Samugheo when I am there.'  
 (Sa-Limba: Samugheo)
- (18) E sun fattos veros. Deo **bi** fiat.  
 and are facts true I LOC BE.PAST.1.SG  
 'And these are true facts. I was there.'  
 (Sa-Limba: Florinas)

As for the status of an indefinite DP in the constructions under discussion, the NE-cliticization test (cf. Burzio 1986) with the Sardinian counterpart of Italian *ne*, the partitive clitic *nde*, shows that in existential constructions the DP is in an internal argument position, cf. (19) and (20):

- (19) E poi, sos scientiados sunt comente de sos politicos: **bi nd'at bonos** e **bi nd'at malos**...  
 and then the scientists are like of the politicians LOC PARTITIVE  
 HAVE.3.SG good-ones and LOC PARTITIVE HAVE.3.SG bad-ones  
 'And then the scientists are like the politicians: there are good ones and there are bad ones.'  
 (Sa-Limba: Iglesias)

- (20) Non esistint duas “etnias” in Sardinnia. Forsis **bi nd’at una**, oppure **bi nd’at medas**.  
 not exist two ethnic-groups in Sardinia maybe LOC NE HAVE.3.SG or LOC HAVE.3.SG many  
 ‘There are not two ethnic groups in Sardinia. Maybe there is one, otherwise there are many.’ (Sa-Limba: Iglesias)

As an internal argument it could be assigned partitive Case (cf. Belletti 1988). In fact, it can never be clearly shown which case this internal indefinite argument might have, since in Sardinian, like in Italian, it is only with personal pronouns, especially those in the first and second person, that an overt case distinction between nominative, accusative or other can be made. But personal pronouns are always inherently definite, and as such do not appear in true existentials. In the example (18), the preverbal personal pronoun *deo* is nominative. Even a postverbal personal pronoun would be nominative.<sup>21</sup> The clitic *nde* can only resume partitives and thus the NE-clitization-test does not work for definite DPs in the construction at issue.

### 3.2 Existential 2

Existential *bi* type 2 appears in presentational clauses, introducing the existence of an event. These constructions are possible with unaccusative verbs (e.g. *arribare*) and unergative verbs (e.g. *ballare*), but not with transitive verbs:

- (21) \***B’at/ana** bidu unu film medas piseddas.  
 LOC HAVE.3.SG/PL seen a film many girls (Bentley 2004:65)

The NE-clitization test clearly indicates that the single argument is also in an internal and not an external argument position (cf. (22)b) with intransitive unergatives, as one would expect. This is parallel to the unaccusative construction (cf. (22)a). Finite agreement (cf. (22)c) is impossible (cf. also Bentley 2004:92/93):

- (22) a. **Binn’at** bennidu medas.  
 LOC-PARTITIVE HAVE.3.SG come many (Bentley 2006:234)  
 b. **Binn’at** balladu medas.  
 LOC-PARTITIVE HAVE.3.SG danced many (Bentley 2006:234)  
 c. \***Bin(d)’ana** balladu medas.  
 LOC-PARTITIVE HAVE.3.PL danced many (Bentley 2006:234)

Bentley (2004:94) claims that in this case the unergative verb changes its *Aktionsart* and must be interpreted as an accomplishment, and not as an activity (cf. Vendler 1967). Hence, the predicate in (23)b is not interpreted as a dancing activity, but as several dancing events:

<sup>21</sup> (i) mancu male chi **bi** semus nois  
 not bad that LOC BE.1.PL we.NOM  
 ‘thank God WE are there’ (Sa-Limba 1999-2007)

- (23) a. pro un'ora **bind'** at balladu medas  
 for one hour LOC-PARTITIVE HAVE.3.SG danced many  
 (Bentley 2004:93)
- b. ind'un'ora **bind'** at balladu medas  
 in one hour LOC-PARTITIVE HAVE.3.SG danced many  
 (Bentley 2004:93)

This must be in relation to the indefiniteness of the single argument (the pivot) of these impersonal constructions (thus they are monadic predicate structures): An indefinite argument makes the event in the perfect tense appear as not one definite event but as several indefinite events.<sup>22</sup> In absolute existential constructions, this argument is always in an internal argument position, namely [Spec, VP] as will be explained later.

As follows from what has been stated above, personal verbal forms cannot appear in event-introducing existentials, but only in locative constructions:

- (24) a. \***B'** appo arribatu.  
 loc have.pres.1.sg arrived
- b. **Bi soe** arribatu, **a domo**.  
 loc be.pres.1.sg arrived

The default form for event-introducing presentational clauses is the third person singular and auxiliary selection is HAVE. The DP in these constructions can only be in postverbal position whereas in locative constructions, the positions available to an overt subject are two, preverbal and postverbal, a point to which I will return in section 5.

#### 4. Interpretation of existentials and locatives: Current theories

In research literature, two mainstream interpretations of existential constructions have been proposed. One of them interprets existential constructions on a par with locatives (cf. 4.1), while the other makes a clear distinction between locative constructions and existentials (cf. 4.2). Researchers who analysed the Sardinian data at issue here (cf. 4.3) tend to favour the latter approach.

##### 4.1 Interpretation of existentials on a par with locatives

Two exponents of this approach to existentials are Freeze (1992) and Moro (1998). Following Freeze (1992), there has been assumed to be “a universal locative paradigm”. A locative particle such as *there* in English or *y* in French is a spell-out of a [LOC]-feature in the Inflectional head. Locatives, with definite arguments, and existentials, with indefinite arguments, (and also possessive

<sup>22</sup> Probably a collective event, as encoded in the German deverbal collectives with *Ge-*, e.g. *das Getanze* ‘the collective set of all dancing events’. Since the perfect tense gives the event an interpretation of boundedness, an indefinite (and inherently unbounded) event is accommodated as a (bounded) collective of (indefinite) events.



constructions with HAVE<sup>23</sup>) are based on the same underlying structure. In both, the predicate is a locative phrase. The locative particle is never a subject (cf. Freeze 1992:567). Variation in the languages of the world is language-specific: Either the locative phrase or the DP-argument can move to a preverbal position, sometimes depending on the definiteness effect. Some languages have an overt realisation of the [LOC]-feature in I, others do not. If there is a [LOC]-feature with a [+human]-DP than the copula can be HAVE etc. Freeze's (1992) basic claim is that in their underlying structure existentials and locatives are essentially the same, namely a locative predication with a thematic argument.

Moro (1998) starts from the same assumption but he equates locatives with copulative constructions in general and thus interprets existentials as inverted copular sentences (cf. Moro 1993, 1997). His approach also assumes that the locative element or phrase is the predicate of the clause and the DP-argument is the thematic subject in both existentials and locative copula constructions. In contrast to Freeze (1992), however, in his interpretation the element *there* in English or the element *ci* in Italian would be a locative pro-predicate (and not a spell-out of a [LOC]-feature in I). In Italian, if the DP does not move to check the EPP in [Spec, TP], an expletive *pro* must be merged into [Spec TP] since *ci* cannot check the EPP, as a result of its clitic status according to Moro (1998:157).

However, neither Moro's (1993) nor Freeze's (1992) approach are sufficient to account for the Sardinian data, which have auxiliary-selection dependent on the status of the clause derived from properties of the referential properties of an internal DP, i.e. HAVE-selection in existentials and presentationals and BE-selection in truly locative copula constructions. Although Freeze (1992:557) notes the interdependency between the definiteness effect and the position of a DP in locatives and existentials, he does not attribute different predicate-argument structures to them.

Table 2. *Existentials on a par with locatives.*

Existentials = locatives	Role of the DP	Role of the locative phrase	Role of the locative element
Freeze (1992)	subject (theme)	predicate	spell-out of locative feature in I
Moro (1998)	subject	predicate	pro-predicate

#### 4. 2 *Existential constructions are different from locative constructions*

Some of the researchers to certify a fundamental difference between locative and existential constructions are (among others) McNally (1992), Zamparelli (2000) and, recently, Cornilescu (2008). Their approach can be summed up as follows: Only true existentials show the indefiniteness effect. The apparent argument of true existentials is not a subject in its origin. It is the locative element like English *there* or Italian *ci* that occupies the subject position in existentials (sometimes also

<sup>23</sup> Cf. also Kayne's (1993) modular analysis of HAVE and BE.

experiencer datives, cf. Cornilescu 2008<sup>24</sup>) whereas in locative constructions the clearly referential argument is the subject of the sentence. The approaches in the interpretation of existential sentences differ only slightly as the following table shows:

Table 3. *Existentials are different from locatives.*

Existentials	Role of the DP	Role of the locative phrase	Role of the locative element
McNally (1992)	complement to BE <sub>exist</sub> (property)	semantic adjunct	expletive in [Spec, IP] (requires the definiteness restriction/ novelty)
Zamparelli (2000)	predicate	optional locative adjunct	specific indefinite locative with a novelty requirement
Cornilescu (2008)	predicate	adjunct (optional)	subject (external argument) specific indefinite locative

The syntactic role of the pivot-DP, the locative element and the optional locative phrase is parallel in all of these approaches. Differences are found mainly in the interpretation of the existential auxiliary (e.g. in comparison to the copula) or the formalisation of the logical structure of the pivot (its “indefiniteness”), which are of less interest for the main focus of this paper, namely the syntactic role of overt or covert locative expletive elements.

#### 4.3 *The interpretation of the Sardinian data*

The first interpretation of the Sardinian data is given by Jones (1993): he maintains that in Sardinian (or more specifically in the dialect of Lula which he investigates), there are two types of *bi*, one a locative clitic, and the other an existential operator. The postverbal pivot in existential constructions is not a subject, but an internal argument in object position. Although his approach to the data is mainly descriptive, Jones offers a very systematic picture of the data, including in a nutshell the interpretation of the approach described in section 4.2 (but interpreted in a Principle & Parameters approach).

La Fauci & Loporcaro (1997) and Loporcaro (1998) also identify two types of *bi* in Sardinian (their data are from Bonorva), one a locative clitic, which is a [+referential] pro-predicate, the other an existential, which is [-referential] and appears when a ‘union clause’ consists of an auxiliated nominal. The explanation refers to the model of Relational Grammar (RG) and says for existential constructions that the initial grammatical relation of the pivot is the one of a direct object (2) and a predicate (P) at the same time. Thus, it is [+argumental] and [+predicative]. According to their analysis there is a fundamental incompatibility between subjecthood and predicativeness. With no subject available in the structure, a dummy subject [+expletive] must appear in preverbal subject position. The presence or absence of a thematic subject can be expressed by the feature [±impersonal] which correlates with the [±definiteness] of the NP. An auxiliary

<sup>24</sup> As Cornilescu shows, Romanian existential constructions are “pure existential sentences”, since there is no overt existential particle in subject position, but the auxiliary, which is BE, is prosodically marked.

must appear because of the verblessness of the initial predicative-argumental nominal clause.

In Remberger (2002) and Remberger (2006:243ff), I analysed the data from Lula and Bonorva as well as from *Sa-Limba* along the same lines as Jones (1993), but using an early minimalist approach (MP): I identified two types of *bi*, one the locative clitic and the other an expletive, the first assumed to be an optional locative particle, the second inserted under T for EPP-checking. Furthermore, a “definite” expletive *pro* under T in complementary distribution with expletive *bi* was assumed. However, as will be shown below, this approach does not really explain the Sardinian data; besides the unusual assumption of a “definite expletive”, it particularly fails to explain why expletive *bi* should be able to check the EPP in T whereas locative *bi* usually cannot.

The analysis of Bentley (2004, 2007), which uses data from Lula, Bonorva, Bono and Buddusò is situated in still another framework, namely the one of Role & Reference Grammar (RRG). Bentley says that the pivot must be a “brandnew unanchored element”, that auxiliaries are verbal operators that encode information structure, and that HAVE-selection and lack of agreement depend on a pragmatically determined rule (a pragmatic constraint on the verbal operator), but are independent of syntax and semantics. HAVE is selected (in Sardinian) when the pivot is unidentifiable (Bentley 2004:61). Thus, in this approach, *bi* has no semantic/deictic content in the LS (= semantic representation); its role is neither that of an expletive, nor does it have subject properties, nor does it control agreement (Bentley 2004:69); it can, however, occur with overt subjects. Presumably, Bentley does not distinguish between two different elements *bi* in Sardinian: *bi* can but does not need to be referential and therefore it can also function as a marker of information structure, e.g. it is a grammaticalised marker in existential constructions. In this RLG-approach, which explicitly aims at a pragmatic mapping of denotata to sentence constituents, the clear correlation between definiteness, DP-movement, agreement and auxiliary selection seems to be non-syntactic: HAVE- vs. BE-selection depends on the cognitive status of the DP: all other phenomena follow from that.

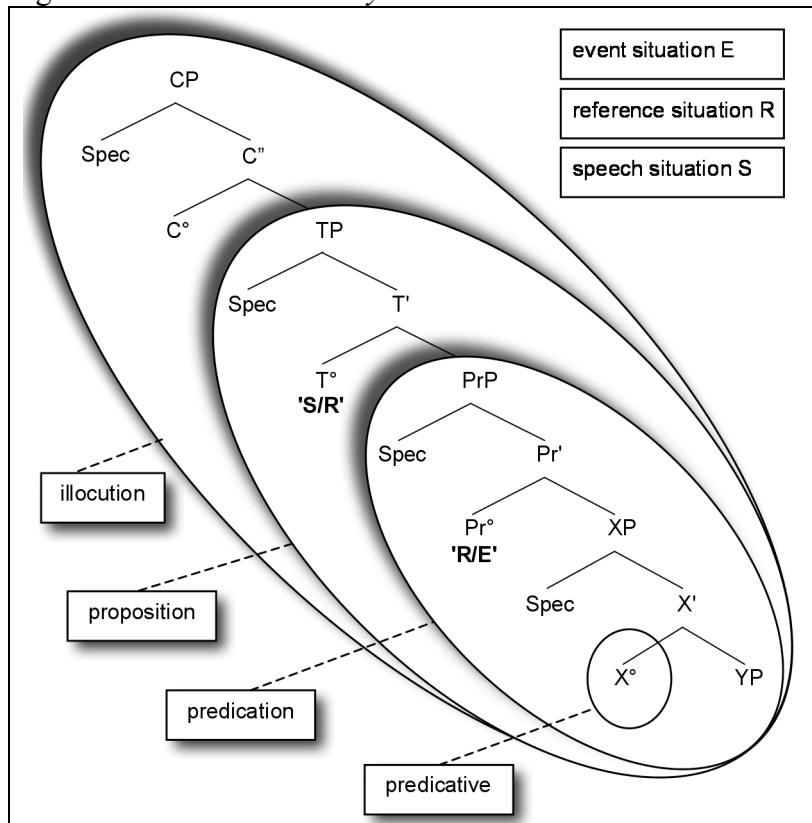
In the following table, an overview of the current theories concerning Sardinian existentials is given:

Table 4. *Approaches to Sardinian existentials with indefinite arguments.*

	Role of the pivot	Role of <i>bi</i>
Jones (1993)	internal argument in object position	existential operator
La Fauci & Loporcaro (1997), Loporcaro (1998)	[+argument] [+predicative]	expletive [-referential]
Remberger (2006)	internal argument in [Spec, VP]	expletive under T
Bentley (2004, 2007)	brandnew unanchored argument	grammaticalised marker of information structure

### **5. *The framework***

The framework adopted here is based on a Minimalist approach that considers only the Core Functional Categories (CFC, cf. Chomsky 1995) for the structural derivation of a full clause. The corresponding constituents are (apart from the DP) the Complementiser Phrase CP, the Tense Phrase TP and a generalised little vP following Bowers (1993), namely the Predication Phrase PrP. This syntactic structure is also the locus of the encoding of time-relations (the Speech time S related to the Reference time R related to Event time E) in the sense of Reichenbach (1947), or more precisely, in a neo-Reichenbachian elaboration of it consisting of two independent time-relations (S related to R and R related to E) as proposed by Vikner (1985) and implemented by Giorgi & Pianesi (1997) among others. Each of the CFCs is connected to a time-relational domain: The PrP encodes the event argument or event situation (cf. Davidson 1967, but syntactically implicit and compositional); it constitutes a predication by linking the event / the argument structure of the lexical predicate to a Reference Time R (= the inner time relation). T, hosting Tense, introduces a further time-relation, namely the one between R and the Speech Situation S (= the outer time relation); with the TP, the level of a proposition, i.e. a representation whose truth-value can be established as negative or positive is reached. Finally, C serves the anchoring of the proposition to the context (cf. Enç 1987), i.e. either directly to the Speech situation S or to the time-relational context given by a superordinate clause. The CP represents the illocutionary level. The representation of this extended shell-system is given in figure 1:

Figure 1. *Time relations + syntactic structure*<sup>25</sup>.

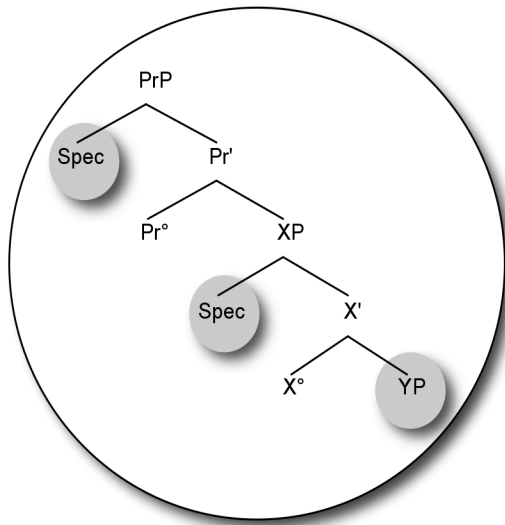
(cf. also González & Remberger 2005)

In this paper, I will further assume that every predication, including unaccusatives (cf. Remberger 2002, 2006), is a phase (contra Chomsky 2001), i.e. a syntactic probing domain which is handed over to Spell Out before a new phase is introduced into the derivation (cf. Chomsky 2001). It is important to notice that it is the complement of such a phase head that is spelled out and that is invisible for further syntactic processes, whereas the head itself as well as its specifier (the edge of the phase) are still visible and available for further syntactic operations. Thus, in this CFC-approach, the closure of the PrP represents the location (and contour) of E at R, and the closure of the C-T-phase represents the anchoring of R in S (or an equivalent context).

A closer look at the PrP shows that there are three different argument positions available in a predication, the specifier of the PrP, the specifier of the lexical predicate (be it a verb, a noun, an adjective, a preposition or an adverb), and the complement position of the predicative head, cf. figure 2:

<sup>25</sup> Most of the syntactic structures have been produced by GBX, see Lalande (1997).

Figure 2. *Argument positions within the predication phrase PrP* (cf. Bowers 1993).



The complement position, as well as the lower internal specifier, is a position typical of internal arguments (such as direct and indirect objects) whereas the highest specifier is the canonical position for an external argument. In what follows, I will argue that in the data under discussion here, it is the two specifier positions within the PrP that are responsible for the definiteness effect: A definite pivot always has to be inserted or move to [Spec, PrP], whereas an indefinite DP does not have to be. Further rising to [Spec, TP] is thus only possible for definite DPs in [Spec, PrP], a position from which they can be seen from outside the phase. In sum, there are three different subject positions as exemplified in (25):

- (25) a. Zubanne (b') est arribatu. (position 1)  
 b. (B') est arribatu Zuanne. (position 2)  
 'John has arrived (there).'  
 c. B'at arribatu tres pitzinnas. (position 3)  
 'There arrived three girls.'

Only in (25)c, is the element *bi* obligatory and thus an existential (existential 2). In (25)b and (25)c it can appear, but when it does then it is a pro-locative clitic. In position 1 and 2 the DP-argument is definite, there is agreement, and BE-selection; in position 3 it must be indefinite, there is no agreement and there is HAVE-selection. As for Case, definite arguments in these constructions can be proven to have nominative Case, whereas this is not obvious for arguments in position 3 which have been assumed to get partitive Case.<sup>26</sup> The properties of these different A-positions are summed up in table 5:

<sup>26</sup> Partitive thus is not a particular feature of unaccusatives in Sardinian, since there is an auxiliary split (as a diagnostics) inside the field of unaccusative constructions themselves, but of indefinite DPs in existential or presentational constructions. Thus the partitive can be found also with originally unergative verbs like *ballare*. In any case, a distinction has to be made between unaccusative verbs (or predicates) and unaccusative constructions.

Table 5. *Three possible A-positions for a DP in a structure like figure 1 (for Sardinian).*

	1: [Spec, TP]	2: [Spec, PrP]	3: [Spec, XP]
Position	preverbal	postverbal	postverbal
Definiteness	+def	+def	-def
Agreement	+agr	+agr	-agr
Case	nominative	nominative	partitive
Type of BI	<i>bi</i> locative	<i>bi</i> locative	<i>bi</i> existential (obligatory)

The possibility for position 2 and 3 to be clearly distinguished in Sardinian via auxiliary selection and agreement is not present in Italian, where, of course, a preverbal position 1 can be distinguished from a postverbal position (mainly for unaccusatives), but no syntactic distinction can be made between position 2 and 3. However, as Leonetti (2005:7) argues, on a semantic level, these positions can even become visible in Italian:

- (26) Ital. Non c'erano molte ragazze.  
 Interpretation 1: 'There weren't many girls.'  $pro_{\text{expletive}} + ci_{\text{existential}}$   
 argument in [Spec, VP] LOC/NEG > Q  
 Interpretation 2: 'Many girls weren't there.'  $pro_{\text{expletive}} + ci_{\text{locative}}$   
 argument in [Spec, PrP] Q > LOC/NEG

He argues that in a sentence like (26) there are two different interpretations, an existential one and a locative one (cf. also (11)b and fn. 9). The different subject positions can be tested by the scope of the quantifier which goes with the indefinite DP. In interpretation 1, the locative and the negation have scope over the quantified DP, which is thus in a lower position, whereas in interpretation 2 the quantified DP has scope over the existential and the negation and therefore is in a higher position. Both positions, however, must be postverbal and cannot be in [Spec, TP]. This means that the logically lower DP must be in [Spec, VP] whereas the higher DP must be in [Spec, PrP]. Moreover, the interpretation of the Italian examples in (26) also shows that it is obligatory for indefinites to stay in their VP-internal base-position only in case they appear in existential constructions, i.e. when they are "brandnew" DPs in existentials (in Bentley's 2004 terms), namely when they are [-specific].<sup>27</sup> DPs with a specific interpretation (as the interpretation 2 in (26)) can be raised not only to [Spec, PrP] but also to [Spec, TP] as the following example shows:

- (27) Ital. Molte ragazze non c'erano.  
 Interpretation 2: 'Many girls weren't there.'  $ci_{\text{locative}}$   
 argument in [Spec, TP] Q > LOC/NEG

In (27), the indefinite but specific DP has moved to a preverbal subject position. In this case, the EPP is satisfied and no extra expletive pronominal element needs to be assumed. The raised DP, although indefinite, must be specific and the

<sup>27</sup> As for the feature [ $\pm$ referential], these indefinite DPs can only be called [-referential] (cf. La Fauci & Loporcaro 1997) before they are processed in the existential construction. In fact, it is the existential construction that makes a [-referential] DP into one that can be referred to, i.e. an argument.

interpretation of the clause is clearly locative, not existential. Thus, the definiteness effect is in fact valid insofar as definite DPs are obligatorily raised whereas for indefinite DPs the rule must be refined, since there is an underlying specificity effect: An indefinite DP can be raised and as such acquires a specific reading. If it is not raised, it has an unspecific reading. With a raised indefinite DP the clause is not existential, but locative. This observation concerning specificity can also be made for Sardinian although these constructions are very rare.<sup>28</sup>

In light of these results, table 5 must be slightly modified as in table 6:

Table 6. *Three possible A-positions for a DP in a structure like figure 1 (for Sardinian).*

	1: [Spec, TP]	2: [Spec, PrP]	3: [Spec, XP]
Position	preverbal	postverbal	postverbal
Definiteness	±def	±def	-def
Specificity	+spec	+spec	-spec
Agreement	+agr	+agr	-agr
Case	nominative	nominative	partitive
Type of BI	<i>bi</i> locative	<i>bi</i> locative	<i>bi</i> existential (obligatory)

The interdependence on raising and interpretation of subjects has also been demonstrated by Diesing (1992) in her Mapping Hypothesis for bare plurals. She has shown that bare plurals are existentially quantified (hence specific) in a vP-internal position, whereas otherwise they are generally quantified in [Spec, TP]. Figure 1 above exemplified the syntactic structure of the CFC-approach, integrating it with two pairs of time-relations and their corresponding phase levels. To illustrate the referential closure for arguments, one further addition can be made, cf. the figure 3:

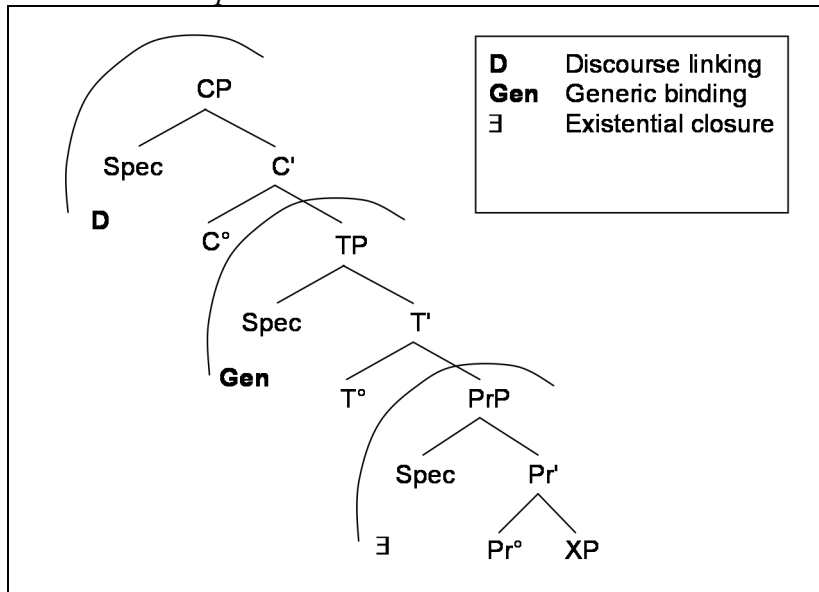
<sup>28</sup> But see this example from Bentley (2004:62):

(i) \*?Medas piattos sun in sa mesa.  
many plates BE.3.PL on the table

However, if the DP in [Spec, TP] is in a context where it could get a specific and topical reading (e.g. ‘a lot of the plates of the set of plates we know and we are talking about’), the sentence should be more easily interpretable in the same way as the Italian example (27).



Figure 3. *Existential / generic closure of arguments (cf. Diesing 1992), definite descriptions.*



Following Diesing's (1992) Mapping hypothesis it is licit to assume that existential closure generally takes place at the PrP-level, and generic (default closure) at the T-level. Furthermore, it can be assumed that for definite expressions, a kind of operator-raising to C (D-linking) takes place. These further assumptions illustrated in figure 3 are summed up in table 7:

Table 7. *Syntactic and logical domains.*

Domain	CP	TP	PrP	XP
Logical level	contextual anchoring	proposition	predication	predicate
Interpretation	deixis / d-linking	generic interpretation	existential interpretation	argument structure
Situation	S	R/S	E/R	E

One further observation must be added before the Sardinian data under discussion can be analysed within the framework proposed: As far as auxiliary selection is concerned I will follow the assumptions made in Remberger (2002, 2006), namely that in languages with auxiliary selection sensitive to argument structure, the insertion of the auxiliary happens under PrP; in languages without auxiliary selection in the active voice, the auxiliaries are merged under TP. Since in Sardinian auxiliary selection is sensitive to argument structure this must happen under PrP. As far as the copula (e.g. in English, Italian, Sardinian) is concerned, it is merged under TP; however, if there is a copula-distinction as in Spanish between an SLP- and an ILP-predication (e.g. *ser* vs. *estar* in Spanish), the copula is inserted under PrP (cf. González & Remberger 2005). I assume that the insertion of an auxiliary in existentials is usually parallel to the insertion of the copula, but not in Sardinian, where we have auxiliary selection HAVE in true

existential constructions, which is sensitive to properties of the argument and thus should happen under PrP.<sup>29</sup>

The basic assumptions discussed in this section are essential for the analysis of the Sardinian data in the following section.

## 6. Analysis

The analysis of the Sardinian data introduced above will concentrate on the existential and presentational constructions, hence the constructions involving the existential clitic *bi* 1 and 2. In section 6.1, the derivation of true existentials is demonstrated in two steps, which correspond to the phase of the PrP and the phase of the CP-TP-complex. Impersonal presentational constructions with unaccusatives (cf. 6.2) and unergatives (cf. 6.3) are also illustrated in these phase-based single steps. As for the “pseudo-existentials”, i.e. the constructions involving a pro-locative clitic *bi*, their derivation is finally provided in section 6.4. Feature compositions of all relevant heads, i.e. the clitic *bi*, the auxiliary, the tense head T and the predication head Pr are given in detail.

### 6.1 Existential constructions

In Sardinian, true existential constructions like (28) show the definiteness effect and auxiliary selection HAVE:

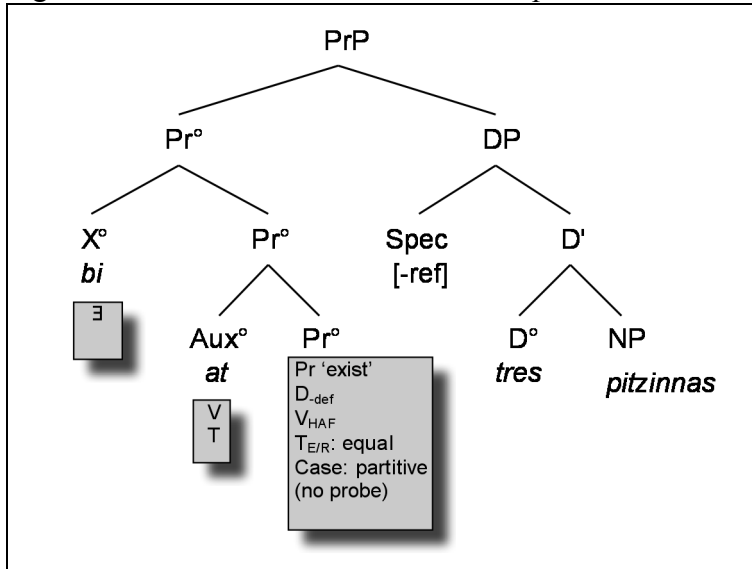
- (28) B'at tres pitzinnas.  
 LOC HAVE.3.SG three girls  
 ‘There are three girls.’

In the first phase of the derivation of an existential predication, an existential predicational head and an indefinite ([-referential] and on an interpretational level unspecific) DP are merged. The DP via selection by the predication head serves as a predicate/predicative (cf. La Fauci & Loporcaro 1997). The predicational head Pr<sup>o</sup> has the following properties: it requires an indefinite DP, it has partitive Case to assign, and it certainly has no probe (and no EPP-feature). Furthermore, an existential nominal predication also has a verbal *Head Attraction Feature* (HAF, cf. Pomino 2008), requiring the presence of a verb. To satisfy this HAF, a verb is needed. Since there is no verb in the derivation, a compatible auxiliary must be merged. This auxiliary is HAVE (which is compatible with an EPP-less Pr<sup>o</sup>, cf. Remberger 2002, 2006) and it has a V and a T-feature. The inner time-relation in this derivation is ‘E equal R’. However, the reference situation cannot be existentially quantified, since there is neither a quantified individual (the DP selected by Pr<sup>o</sup> is non-referential) nor a quantified event. Thus an existential quantifier such as the contextual stage topic *bi* (cf. also Jones 1993) must be merged. The existential quantifier can bind the indefinite DP, which now also

<sup>29</sup> There is also a clear distinction between locatives with BE and existentials with HAVE in other Romance languages, e.g. Catalan, cf. Leonetti (2005), Rigau (1997); Spanish would have STAY instead of BE in locatives, cf. also Remberger & González (2007).

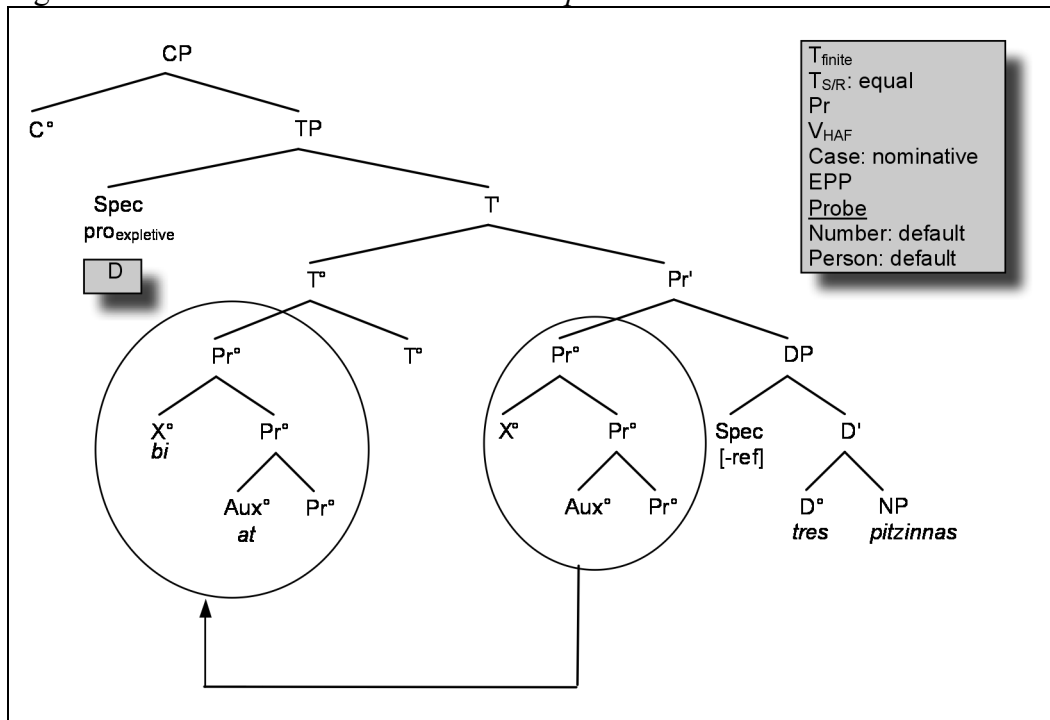
becomes an argument (it is still unspecific) in the sense of La Fauci & Loporcaro (1997). As an argument it needs and gets partitive Case from Pr°. Figure 4 illustrates the first phase of the derivation:

Figure 4. *Existential constructions: First phase.*



After the first phase has come to a conclusion, Spell-out takes place and the complement Pr° is transmitted to the interfaces. The complex Pr-head with incorporated *bi* and Aux° is still available for further syntactic operations. Now T is merged, in this case a finite T with present tense. As all finite T-heads in Sardinian it has a verbal and/or predicational HAF, an EPP, nominative Case to assign, and a probe with uninterpretable number and person features; furthermore it introduces the outer time-relation with the value ‘S equals R’. The probe in T needs to find a compatible (nominal) goal. However, since Pr is a phase, only the specifier of the head and the head itself would be accessible for probing. Thus, T finds nothing, since there is no specifier, and default instantiation of the unvalued features takes place;<sup>30</sup> although T has nominative, no Case is assigned. Finally, by moving the Pr-complex to T° both the Pr and the V-feature of T are satisfied. However, to satisfy the EPP in T it is necessary to merge an empty expletive.

<sup>30</sup> One could assume that T finds *bi* incorporated in the complex Pr-head, and could then instantiate 3.sg. However, *bi* and other existentials in their origin are clearly locative and not nominal and since the EPP requires a nominal feature, a locative would not be an appropriate EPP-checker. In fact, I believe that to be a fundamental difference between *bi* and traditional expletives like *it*, which indeed are EPP-checkers.

Figure 5. *Existential constructions: Second phase.*

### 6.2 Impersonal presentational constructions with unaccusative verbs

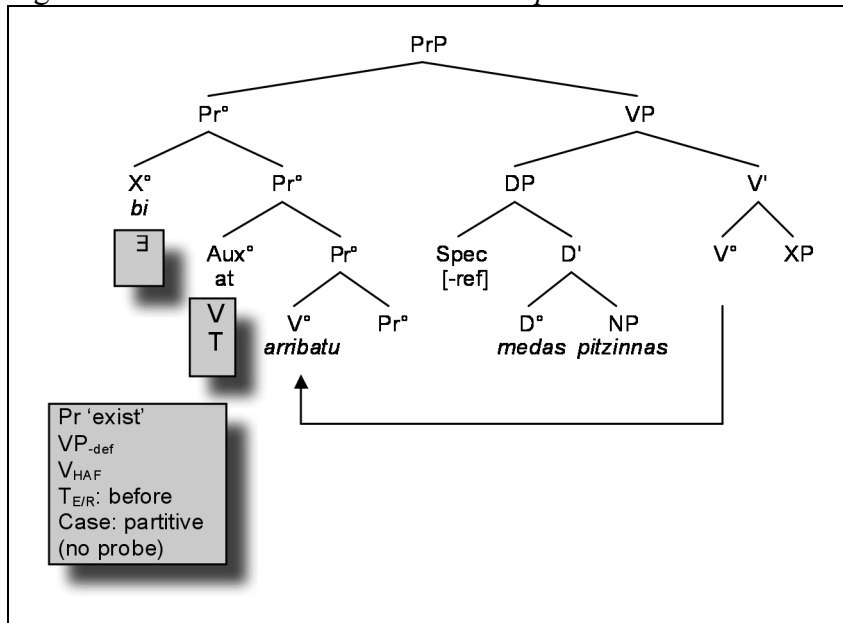
As has been shown above, impersonal presentational constructions in Sardinian exhibit the same behaviour with respect to auxiliary selection and definiteness effect as existentials. They are common with unaccusative verbs like *bénnere* ‘to come’ or *arribare* ‘to arrive’.

- (29) B’at arribatu tres pitzinnas.  
 LOC HAVE.3.SG arrived three girls  
 ‘There arrived three girls.’

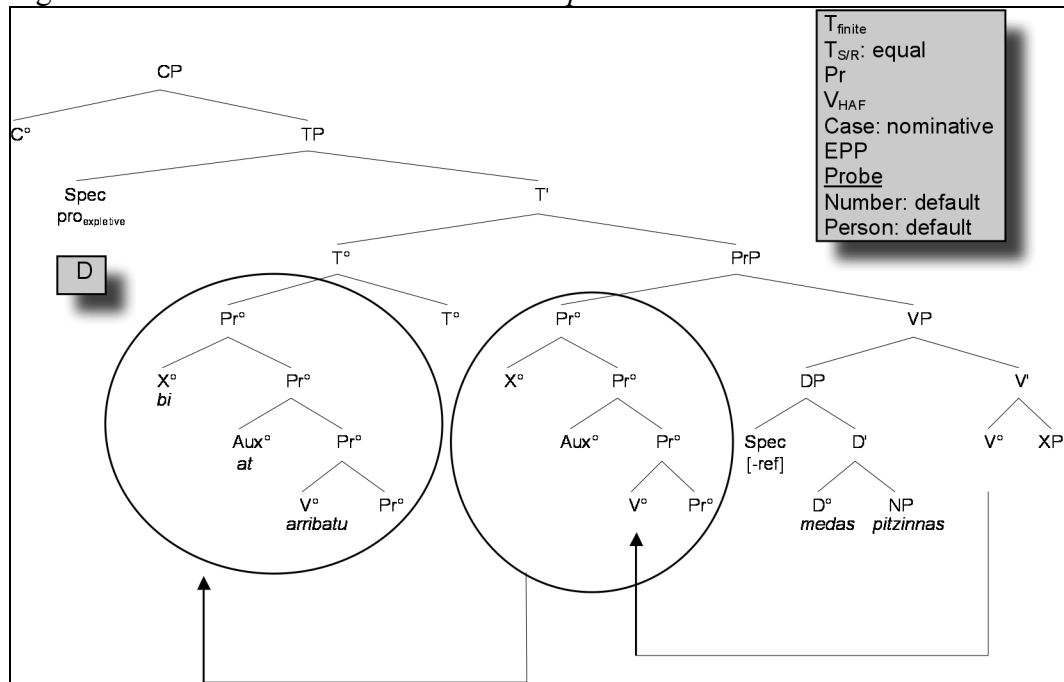
The first phase of the derivation is parallel to the existential construction with the difference that the existential predicational head selects a VP with an internal indefinite DP, i.e. a verbal event instead of a nominal entity. Since there is a verb in the derivation the verbal HAF of the existential P can be satisfied by V-movement under Pr°. However, since the first time-relation in this case is marked as ‘E before R’, a temporal auxiliary that locates the infinite verbal form that encodes the event (*arribatu*) before the reference time R needs to be merged (cf. Remberger 2002, 2006). In Sardinian, a temporal auxiliary for canonical unaccusative constructions would normally be BE, and not HAVE (cf. Remberger 2002, 2006). However, in presentational constructions, which introduce events, the auxiliary is the same as for existential constructions, which introduce entities. Yet, the reference situation introduced by the predication cannot be existentially quantified, since there is no quantified individual in the event; furthermore, an existential predication has no probe. Thus an existential quantifier like the stage topic existential *bi* must be merged. The existential quantifier binds the indefinite

DP in the specifier of VP and gives it argument status. As a consequence it then gets Case from  $\text{Pr}^\circ$ . Note that the lexical verb *arribare* ‘to arrive’ is unaccusative and as such unable to be found in a construction that assigns accusative Case.

Figure 6. *Existential constructions: First phase.*



After the first phase has come to a conclusion, Spell-out takes place and the complement  $\text{Pr}^\circ$  is transmitted to the interfaces. Once finite T is merged, the CP-TP-phase of the derivation proceeds as above: the probe in T needs to find a compatible (nominal) goal. However, since the Pr-phase is concluded, the probe in T finds nothing and default instantiation of the unvalued features takes place. No Case is assigned. By moving the Pr-complex to  $\text{T}^\circ$ , both the Pr and the V-feature of T are satisfied. To satisfy the EPP it is necessary to merge an empty expletive.

Figure 7. *Existential constructions: Second phase.*

### 6.3 Impersonal presentational constructions with unergative verbs

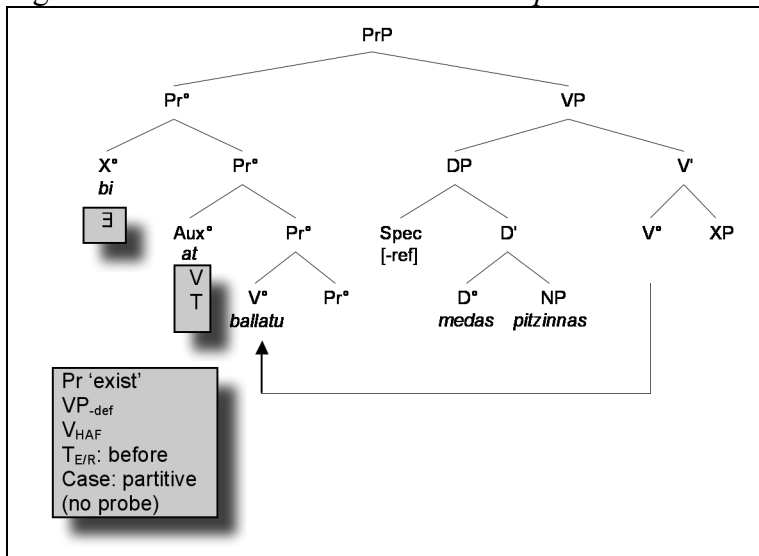
As has been stated in section 3, impersonal presentational constructions in Sardinian are not possible with transitive lexical verbs; interestingly, however, they can appear with intransitive unergative verbs like *ballare* ‘to dance’.

- (30) B’at ballatu tres pitzinnas.  
 LOC HAVE.3.SG danced three girls  
 ‘There danced three girls.’

These verbs normally do not have an internal argument, but one single external argument. In the presentational constructions however, the NE-cliticisation-test (cf. section 3) could show that the single DP present in the structure must be in an internal argument position. Thus the derivation is parallel to the presentational structures with unaccusatives: an existential predication selects a VP with an internal indefinite DP. A compatible auxiliary must be merged, because the verbal participle cannot satisfy the T-requirement of Pr°. Pr has no probe and the reference situation cannot be existentially quantified without the merger of the existential quantifier *bi*. The existential quantifier binds the indefinite DP in [Spec, VP] giving it an argumental status and assigning Case to it.<sup>31</sup>

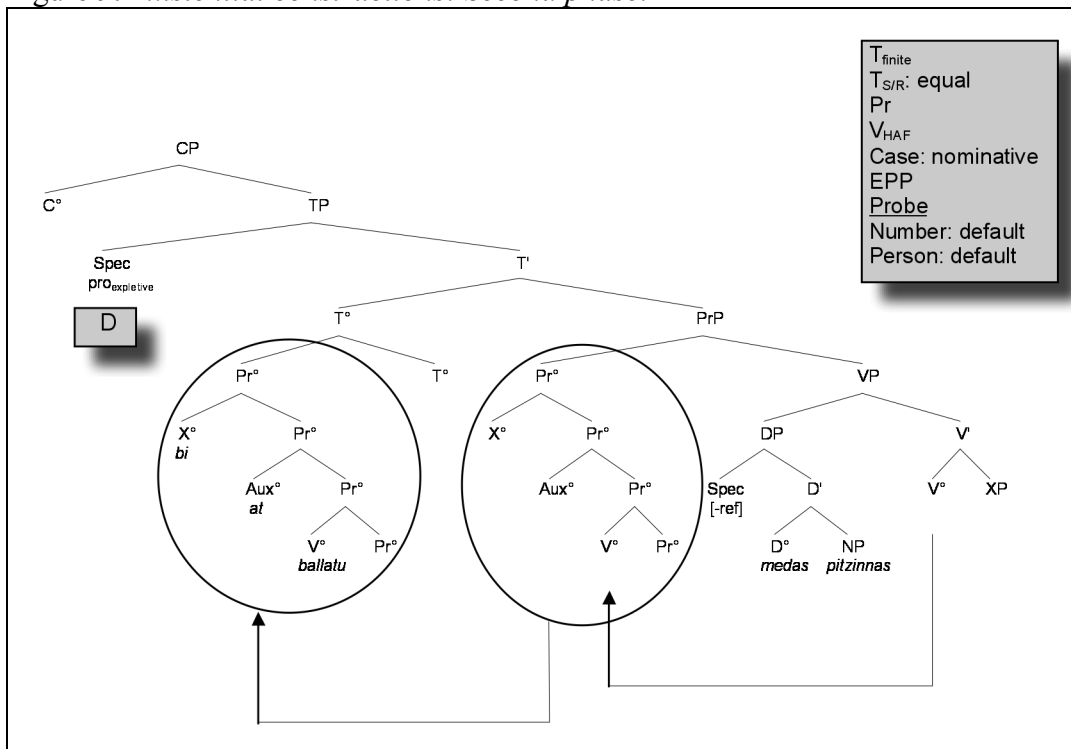
<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, following Bentley (2007), the event gets an accomplishment interpretation. This is probably so because of the accommodation of the perfect tense and an unspecified event that cannot be bounded.

Figure 8. *Existential constructions: First phase.*



The CP-TP-phase of the derivation proceeds as in section 6.2, cf. figure 9:

Figure 9. *Existential constructions: Second phase.*



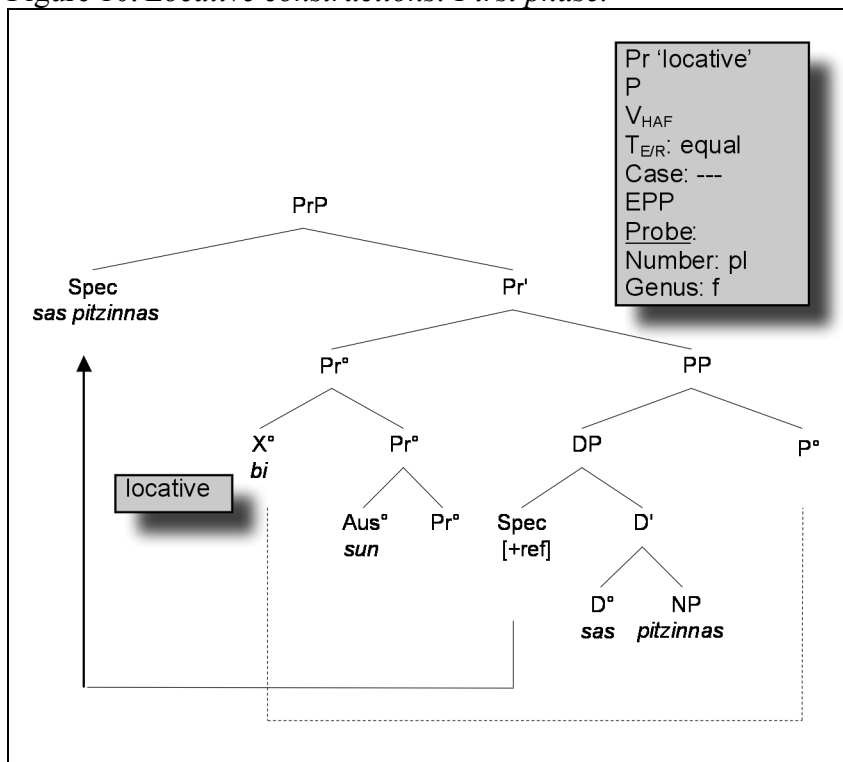
#### 6.4 Locative constructions

Whereas the constructions analysed in 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 are true existential constructions in which the locative element *bi* functions as an existential quantifier, the construction in (31) with a definite DP, auxiliary-selection BE and agreement is a locative construction:

- (31) *Bi sun sas pitzinnas.*  
 LOC BE.3.PL the girls  
 ‘The girls are there.’

Here, a locative predication phrase selects a locative phrase, e.g. a PP or a locative adverbial. The located element, the argument of the locative phrase, is in its specifier. The DP is also an internal argument position in the locative predication because non-verbal lexical predicatives behave like unaccusatives. However, a locative  $Pr^{\circ}$  has a feature composition that differs from that of an existential  $Pr^{\circ}$ . Like the existential  $Pr$  it has a verbal HAF and a T-feature, but it has no Case and it has a probe. If the selected locative phrase is implicit, or if it is in a dislocated position, a locative clitic coindexed with this locative phrase must appear. The probe in the locative  $Pr^{\circ}$  has uninterpretable number and gender features (cf. *Bi sun istadas sas pitzinnas*): On its search for an appropriate goal, the probe finds the referential DP in [Spec, PP] and instantiates its own numer and gender features with the values of the goal-DP. This DP then is moved to [Spec, PrP] because of the EPP as in other canonical unaccusative constructions (but not presentationals which may also involve unaccusative verbs, cf. Remberger 2002, 2006). Because of the verbal HAF in  $Pr^{\circ}$  a compatible auxiliary needs to be merged, since the locative phrase cannot satisfy a verbal feature. The auxiliary compatible with unaccusative constructions in Sardinian is BE.<sup>32</sup>

Figure 10. *Locative constructions: First phase.*

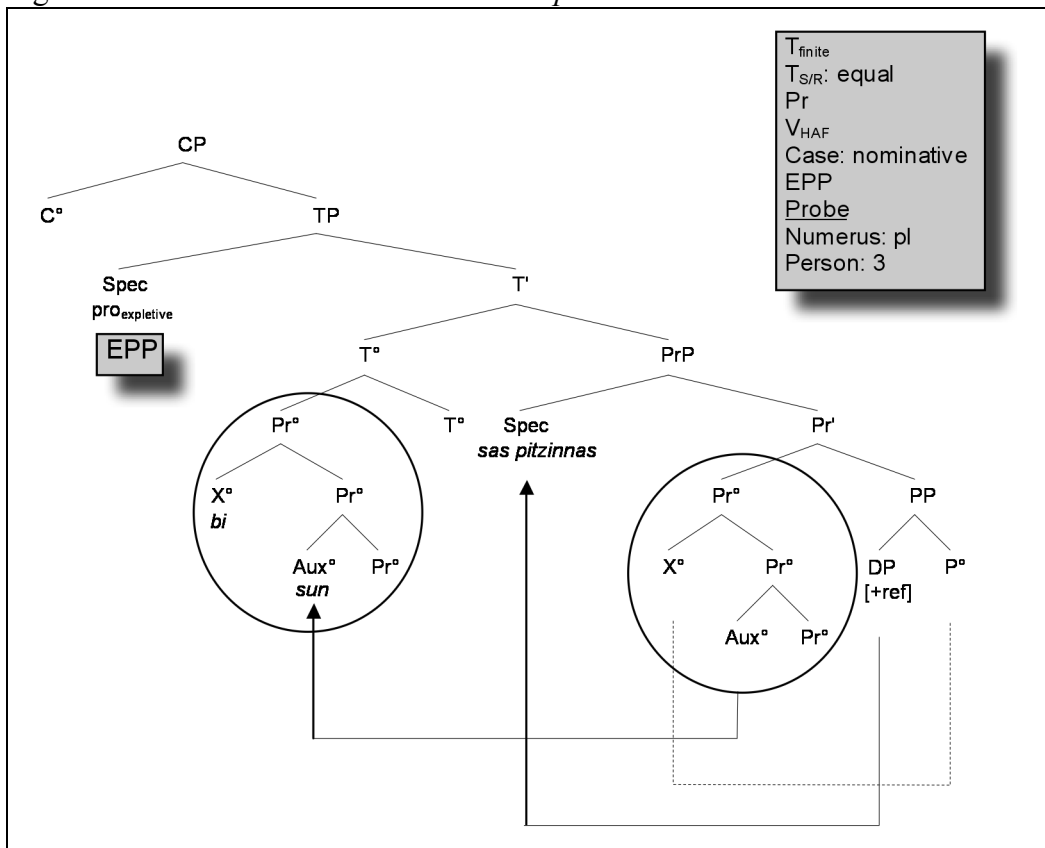


<sup>32</sup> An indefinite DP could also be found by a locative  $Pr$ -probe, but in this case the DP would receive a contrastive reading (cf. Bentley 2004 and the examples (14) and (15)) or a specific interpretation.



The PrP-phase is concluded and its complement (which in this case hosts only a trace and an implicit locative phrase) is spelled-out. In the next step, finite T comes into the derivation, provided with the same features as described in the derivation of the other constructions above. In contrast to the existential constructions, however, in a locative construction the probe in T does indeed find a referential DP in [Spec, PrP] (*sas pitzinnas* ‘the girls’); thus, the number and person features of T can be instantiated with the values of the goal, which in turn receives nominative Case. The DP in [Spec, Pr] now is activated for movement. But unless it is the topic of the sentence, it does not move; thus, to satisfy the EPP it is necessary to merge an empty expletive. If it moved, no expletive merger would be necessary. By moving the Pr-complex to T° both the Pr- and the V-feature of T are satisfied.

Figure 11. *Locative constructions: Second phase.*



## 7. Conclusions and outlook

This article started from the well-known assumption that non-null subject languages have overt pronouns for non-emphatic subject arguments and expletive subject pronouns in constructions which completely lack such a subject argument. Typical subject expletives usually stem from third person singular pronouns. In a parallel way, languages with non-overt subject *pro* also have a non-overt expletive *pro*. Sardinian is a null subject language and as such it has also null expletives.

However, there are other typical expletive elements stemming from locatives as in the existential and presentational constructions under discussion. Here, the null subject language Sardinian interestingly has an overt locative element in presentational constructions where the equally null subject language Italian does not. To explain the difference in parametrisation with respect to the two types of expletives – those stemming from a personal pronoun and those stemming from a locative element – in the analysis of this article it was assumed that the locative element is inserted into the derivation at an earlier stage, namely under  $Pr^{\circ}$ , i.e. in the first phase; it can be overt like Italian *ci*, French *y* or Sardinian *bi* or it can be phonologically empty like in Italian presentational constructions.<sup>33</sup> Its insertion is obligatory when existential closure is required for non-specific indefinite DPs or the events they are related to. The null subject expletive *pro* inserted under T because of the EPP is instead phonologically empty in both languages. Thus, the EPP in T is doubled by a quantification-related counterpart in Pr, and both are satisfied by the insertion of an expletive-like element, be it overt or phonologically empty. The function of these elements is not exactly the same: locative elements are related to the existential quantification within the PrP, which is required in agreement with Diesing's (1992) Mapping Hypothesis. The traditional EPP is instead related to the T-domain where the propositional level is reached:

(32) Expletives: Null-subjects and locatives

Pr-related existential expletives:  
quantification of E/R → locative elements

T-related propositional expletives:  
quantification of S/R → pronouns

Expletives are inserted in different positions for different reasons. Raising of a definite DP can satisfy both types of quantification. Definite DPs must always be “seen” by T to be interpreted; for indefinite DPs this is not necessarily the case. Indefinite DPs can be existentially quantified by Pr, and if not, generally quantified under T to become referential (e.g. in the case of bare plurals, cf. again Diesing 1992). Indefinite DPs which are non-specific must also be existentially quantified by Pr, but in contrast to their specific counterparts do not move to a syntactic position that would be within reach of T. This can be observed particularly in Sardinian where the structural position of definite and indefinite DPs has an overt syntactic reflex in the selection of the corresponding auxiliary: BE is selected by the Pr-head in the case of DP-raising, HAVE when the DP remains in situ. Agreement phenomena are assumed to be a natural consequence of the selection of a certain type of predicational head, i.e. a  $Pr^{\circ}$  with a probe or a probeless  $Pr^{\circ}$ . Thus language specific parametrisation in existential constructions is dependent on the availability of overt or phonologically empty existential elements on the one hand, but also on the feature composition of the relevant

<sup>33</sup> Another parameter for Italian is that there is always obligatory agreement, in true existential constructions as well. This must be due to an EPP and a probe in the Italian existential  $Pr^{\circ}$  (cf. also Remberger 2006:245).

functional Pr-heads. If we compare Sardinian existential and locative constructions with the Italian ones, this parametrisation becomes obvious:

Table 8. *Parametrisation in Pr-heads in Sardinian and Italian.*

		complement	locative/ expletive	EPP	DP- raising	Agreement	Aux- selection
Sardinian	Pr <sub>existential</sub>	DP	<i>bi</i>	-	-	-	HAVE
	Pr <sub>existential</sub>	VP	<i>bi</i>	-	-	-	HAVE
	Pr <sub>locative</sub>	PP/AdvP	( <i>bi</i> )	+	+	+	BE
Italian	Pr <sub>existential</sub>	DP	<i>ci</i>	+	+	+	BE
	Pr <sub>existential</sub>	VP	<i>pro</i>	+	+	+	BE
	Pr <sub>locative</sub>	PP/AdvP	( <i>ci</i> )	+	+	+	BE

Of course, this table requires further elaboration, especially for the integration of other varieties and languages with respect to their existential constructions.<sup>34</sup>

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