

# **Manual of Romance Morphosyntax and Syntax**

MRL 17

# **Manuals of Romance Linguistics**

**Manuels de linguistique romane**

**Manuali di linguistica romanza**

**Manuales de lingüística románica**

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Edited by

Günter Holtus and Fernando Sánchez Miret

## **Volume 17**

# **Manual of Romance Morphosyntax and Syntax**

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Edited by  
Andreas Dufter and Elisabeth Stark

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## ***Manuals of Romance Linguistics***

The new international handbook series *Manuals of Romance Linguistics* (*MRL*) will offer an extensive, systematic and state-of-the-art overview of linguistic research in the entire field of present-day Romance Studies.

*MRL* aims to update and expand the contents of the two major reference works available to date: *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik* (*LRL*) (1988–2005, vol. 1–8) and *Romanische Sprachgeschichte* (*RSG*) (2003–2008, vol. 1–3). It will also seek to integrate new research trends as well as topics that have not yet been explored systematically.

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The series will include approximately 60 volumes (each comprised of approx. 400–600 pages and 15–30 chapters). Each volume will focus on the most central aspects of its topic in a clear and structured manner. As a series, the volumes will cover the entire field of present-day Romance Linguistics, but they can also be used individually. Given that the work on individual *MRL* volumes will be nowhere near as time-consuming as that on a major reference work in the style of *LRL*, it will be much easier to take into account even the most recent trends and developments in linguistic research.

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As a whole, the *MRL* series will present a panorama of the discipline that is both extensive and up-to-date, providing interesting and relevant information and useful orientation for every reader, with detailed coverage of specific topics as well as general overviews of present-day Romance Linguistics. We believe that the series will offer a fresh, innovative approach, suited to adequately map the constant advancement of our discipline.

Günter Holtus (Lohra/Göttingen)

Fernando Sánchez Miret (Salamanca)

July 2017

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# Abbreviations

*	ungrammatical or unattested
#	semantically and/or pragmatically inappropriate
?	dubious form or usage
=	cliticized to
>	becomes
Ø	null element
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
A	adjective
A'-position	non-argument position
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
Acl	<i>accusativus cum infinitivo</i>
AD	Anno Domini
Adv	adverb
Ag	Agent
Agr	Agreement
AmSp.	American Spanish
AN	animate
AP	adjectival phrase
APPL	applicative
Arg.	Aragonese
ART	article
ASIt	<i>Atlante Sintattico d'Italia</i>
Ast.	Asturian
A-Topic	aboutness-shift topic
AUG	augmentative
AUX	auxiliary
BC	Before Christ
BPt.	Brazilian Portuguese
C	complementizer
Cal.	Calabrian
Cat.	Catalan
CAUS	causative
CC	cleft constituent, clitic climbing
CCl	cleft clause
CD	clitic doubling
CG	common ground
ch.	chapter
cl	clitic
CLF	classifier
CLLD	clitic left dislocation
CIP	classifier phrase
Clpro	clitic pronoun
CLRD	clitic right dislocation
CollFr.	Colloquial French

## XII — Abbreviations

COM	comitative
COMPR	comparative
COMP	complementizer
COND	conditional
Conj	conjunction
ConjP	conjunction phrase
ContrP	contrastive phrase
COP	copula
Cors.	Corsican
CP	complementizer phrase
C-Topic	contrastive topic
D	determiner
DAT	dative
DE	Definiteness Effect
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determiner
DIM	diminutive
DIST	distal
Div	divider
DM	Distributed Morphology
DO	direct object
DOC	double object construction
DOM	differential object marking
DomSp.	Dominican Spanish
DP	determiner phrase
E	eastern
ECM	exceptional case marking
ED	ethic(al) dative
Eng.	English
Enga.	Engadinese
EPP	extended projection principle
EPt.	European Portuguese
EQ	echo question
ESp.	European Spanish
EXPL	expletive form
f(EM)	feminine
FF	focus fronting
FI	<i>faire</i> -infinitive
FinP	finiteness phrase
Foc	focus
FocP	focus phrase
FP	force phrase, <i>faire-par</i>
FPr.	Franco-Provençal
FR	free relative
Fr.	French
Friul.	Friulian
FUT	future tense
Gal.	Galician

GEN	genitive
Gen	gender
GenP	gender phrase
Ger.	German
GP	Ground Phrase
Grk.	Greek
Gsc.	Gascon
G-Topic	familiar/given topic
HPSG	Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar
HT	hanging topic
I	inflection
IL	individual-level
IMP	imperative
IMPERS	impersonal
IMPF	imperfect
IND	indicative
INDEF	indefinite
INF	infinitive
Infl	inflection
IO	indirect object
IP	inflectional phrase
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
IPFV	imperfective
IS	information structure
It.	Italian
L1	first language (acquired)
L2	second language (learned)
Lad.	Ladin
Lat.	Latin
LF	logical form
LFG	Lexical-Functional Grammar
LIP corpus	corpus <i>Lessico Italiano Parlato</i>
L-movement	linearization-movement
LOC	locative
LPP	left-peripheral position
L-Topic	limiting topic
M(ASC)	masculine
Maj.Cat.	Majorcan Catalan
MidFr.	Middle French
Mil.	Milanese
ModFr.	Modern French
ModIt.	Modern Italian
ModSp.	Modern Spanish
MRK	marker
N	noun, northern
Nap.	Neapolitan
NE	nominal expression
NEG	negator
NEUT	neuter

NID	northern Italian dialect
NM	neutro de/di materia
NNSL	non null subject language
NOD	northern Occitan dialect
NOM	nominative
NP	noun phrase
NPI	Negative Polarity Item
NSL	null subject language
NSP	null subject parameter
Num	number
NumP	number phrase
n-word	negative word
O	object
OBL	oblique
OCat.	Old Catalan
Occ.	Occitan
OFr.	Old French
OGsc.	Old Gascon
OLeo.	Old Leonese
OIt.	Old Italian
ONap.	Old Neapolitan
OOcc.	Old Occitan
OPrv.	Old Provençal
OPt.	Old Portuguese
OSp.	Old Spanish
OTsc.	Old Tuscan
OVto.	Old Venetan
P	preposition
PART	partitive
PASS	passive
Pat	Patient
PCC	Person-Case Constraint
PEJ	pejorative
PF	existential pro-form
PFV	perfective
Pic.	Picard
Pie.	Piedmontese
PL	plural
PO	prepositional object
POSS	possessive
PP	prepositional phrase
PPI	Positive Polarity Item
PRED	predicative
pro	phonologically null subject pronoun in finite clauses
PRO	phonologically null subject pronoun in non-finite clauses
PRO <sub>arb</sub>	PRO with arbitrary reference
PROG	progressive
PRON	pronoun
PROX	proximal

PRS	present
PRT	preterite
PST	past tense
Pt.	Portuguese
PTCP	participle
Q	quantifier, question marker
Q-FR	question with a free relative structure
QP	quantifier phrase
REFL	reflexive
REL	relativizer
RelC	relative clause
Rom.	Romanian
RtR.	Rhaeto-Romance
S	subject, southern
SBJV	subjunctive
SCI	subject-clitic inversion
scl	subject clitic
sg	singular
ShiftP	aboutness-shift phrase
SI	subject-DP inversion
Sic.	Sicilian
SL	stage-level
Sp.	Spanish
Spec	specifier
Srd.	Sardinian
StFr.	Standard French
SUB	subject
SUPERL	superlative
Surs.	Sursilvan
T	tense
TAM	tense, aspect, mood
Top	topic
TopP	topic phrase
TP	tense phrase
UTAH	Uniform Theta Assignment Hypothesis
V	verb
v	light verb, highest head of the vP shell
V2	verb second
VP	verb phrase
vP	light verb phrase, highest functional projection below TP
Vto.	Venetan
W	western
WCO	weak crossover
WMP	WordMarkerPhrase
X	unspecified head element
XP	unspecified phrasal category





# 1 Introduction

**Abstract:** This chapter seeks to situate the contents of the volume within the larger context of comparative Romance linguistics, and with respect to cross-linguistic and theory-driven investigations into morphosyntax and syntax at large. To this end, the chapter will survey a selection of comparative Romance reference works and venture some remarks about Romance linguistics as a discipline. It will then take stock of some basic notions and widely accepted tenets of syntax and morphosyntax, before providing an overview of the structure and the contents of the volume. Finally, a number of acknowledgements will be made.

**Keywords:** Romance linguistics, syntax, morphosyntax, syntactic categories, syntactic relations, constituency, dependency, null subject parameter, left periphery, grammaticalization

## 1 Comparative Romance morphosyntax and syntax: remarks on the development of a discipline

Romance languages and dialects are obviously related, yet differ from each other in a plethora of ways. In the transition from Late Latin to the medieval varieties dubbed *volgari* or *romances*, linguistic change set these emerging Romance vernaculars apart from Latin, and yielded significant diversification within the Romance-speaking territories. This diachronic development has come to be known as *Ausgliederung* ‘fragmentation’ since Walther von Wartburg’s seminal study (Wartburg 1936). It affected not only phonology and the lexicon, but also, and perhaps most interestingly, “core” aspects of grammatical systems, and in particular morphosyntax and syntax. Ever since their earliest attestations, the varieties of Romance have demonstrably continued to evolve, and grammatical change has been ongoing and fostered grammatical variation. Of course, geographical and social differentiation may not come as a surprise in languages boasting large communities of speakers on different continents, such as Spanish, Portuguese and French. However, morphosyntactic and syntactic variation is equally pervasive in Italian and Romanian, and in regional languages such as Catalan and Sardinian, to give but two examples. At the same time, variation has traditionally been frowned upon by prescriptive grammarians and other language observers. At least since the early modern period, and in particular since the invention of the printing press, processes of standardization have been operative. Typically at least, the protagonists of standardization aimed at reducing variability in grammar, prescribing “correct” variants and condemning all

others. Nonetheless, the outcome of standardization has never been complete homogeneity. Rather, the situation of Romance languages in modern times is characterized by a co-existence of standard varieties, local and regional vernaculars, and emergent regional standard varieties, such as Regional Southern French. The implications for comparative Romance linguistics are clear enough: Ideally at least, it needs to investigate both variation between the individual Romance languages, i.e., cross-linguistic or “macro”-variation, and variation within individual Romance languages, i.e., regional (“diatopic”) and socio-stylistic (“diastratic” and “diaphasic”) “micro”-variation.

Such comprehensive coverage of variation certainly constitutes a daunting task for a handbook on comparative Romance linguistics. Back in the nineteenth century, the founding fathers of the discipline already needed several hundred pages of text for their reference works, at a time when systematic dialectological investigations were in their infancy, and other types of micro-variation barely taken into consideration: Friedrich Diez published his famous *Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen* (1836–1839) in three volumes, focusing on Italian, Romanian, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Occitan. Some fifty years later, Wilhelm Meyer-Lübke presented another four-volume *Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen* (1890–1902). Meyer-Lübke’s grammar provides an admirably clear and informative account which reflected the theoretical advances of historical and comparative linguistics in the wake of the Neogrammarians (see also Swiggers 2014).

The twentieth century, by contrast, is largely characterized by a relative scarcity of reference works devoted to the Romance language family as a whole. Mention should be made in this context of overviews such as Bourciez’s *Éléments de linguistique romane* (<sup>5</sup>1967, <sup>1</sup>1910), Lausberg’s *Romanische Sprachwissenschaft* (3 vol., 1956–1962) or Robert A. Hall Jr.’s *Comparative Romance Grammar* (3 vol., 1974–1983). While all these books offer structuralist accounts of phonology and morphology, they fail to describe morphosyntax and syntax in a systematic fashion. Other standard references, such as the widely cited volume *The Romance Languages* (Harris/Vincent 1988), provide a collection of portraits of individual languages rather than a pan-Romance perspective on the similarities and differences in their grammatical organization. To be fair, it must be acknowledged that a significant number of monographs and collected volumes on specific topics of comparative Romance grammar have been published since Lausberg’s and Hall’s times.<sup>1</sup> All these publications attest to the fertility of investigating close linguistic relatives. Many of them offer fresh data and original analyses, often with important implications for grammatical theory at large.

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<sup>1</sup> See, among others, the monographs by Thun (1986), Wanner (1987), Zanuttini (1997), Squartini (1998), Mensching (2000), Cruschina (2011), and Manzini/Savoia (2011), and volumes edited by Dahmen et al. (1998), Hulk/Pollock (2001), Stark/Wandruszka (2003), Kaiser (2005), Remberger/Mensching (2008), Stark/Schmidt-Riese/Stoll (2008), Dufter/Jacob (2009; 2011), and De Cesare/Garassino (2016).

However, it would probably be misguided to try and consult these volumes as introductory surveys of some subfield of the discipline.

At the same time, grammars of individual Romance languages and language varieties abound (see Dufter 2010 for a short overview of synchronic descriptive grammars in the Romania, and Seilheimer 2014 for historical grammars). As is to be expected, these grammars differ considerably in their theoretical ambition, empirical scope, and target audience. Some of them put a strong focus on syntactic theory, often within the generative framework,<sup>2</sup> whereas other authoritative grammars, albeit theoretically informed, may be more easily accessible to a larger readership.<sup>3</sup>

Against the backdrop of such increasing specialization, and an ever-increasing diversity of theoretical backgrounds and research agendas, an uneasy feeling was gaining ground that Romance linguistics as a discipline might be threatened by fragmentation (see contributions to Dahmen et al. 2006). This is, however, but one of the reasons why the encyclopedic *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik (LRL)*, 8 vol., 1988–2005), edited by Günter Holtus, Michael Metzeltin and Christian Schmitt, may well be considered a landmark publication: As a timely state-of-the-art reference work, it has offered orientation and guidance to a whole generation of scholars interested in Romance languages and dialects, from both synchronic and diachronic vantage points. As far as comparative Romance morphosyntax and syntax are concerned, the *LRL* boasts two chapters (Oesterreicher 1996a,b), which offer an informed, accessible and admirably comprehensive overview in only 83 pages of text. More generally, the *LRL* has also served to update the field as a discipline, to reaffirm its aims and scope, and to reinstate the importance of studying “minor” varieties such as Astur-Leonese, Corsican or Friulian. No less than seventeen Romance languages are recognized by the *LRL* and described, albeit with varying degrees of precision, one by one. As a consequence, four of the eight volumes are devoted to the presentation of individual languages (and their dialects), while only three adopt more general linguistic and comparative perspectives (and volume 8 comprises a number of indices). The languages of publication are German and the major Romance languages, a fact which

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<sup>2</sup> See, in particular, the influential monographs by Kayne (1975), Jones (1996) and Rowlett (2007) on French, Rizzi (1982), Burzio (1986), Cinque (1995) and Samek-Lodovici (2015) on Italian, Jones (1993) on Sardinian, Zagana (2002) on Spanish, Gupton (2014) on Galician, Costa (2004) on European Portuguese, and Dobrovie-Sorin (1993) and Dobrovie-Sorin/Giurgea (2013) on Romanian.

<sup>3</sup> For academic purposes, key references include Wilmet (<sup>5</sup>2010), Riegel/Pellat/Rioul (<sup>5</sup>2014) and Grevisse (<sup>16</sup>2016) for French, Renzi/Salvi/Cardinaletti (1988–1995) and Serianni (1988) for Italian, Fernández Ramírez (1951; 1985–1987), Bosque/Demonte (1999) and RAE/ASALE (2009) for Spanish, Castilho (2010), Raposo et al. (2013) and Cunha/Cintra (<sup>6</sup>2014) for Portuguese, Álvarez/Xove (2002) for Galician, Wheeler/Yates/Dols (1999) and Solà Cortassa et al. (2002) for Catalan, and Guțu Romalo (2005) and Pană Dindelegan (2013) for Romanian. In addition, there is a wealth of grammars written to fit the practical needs of language teaching, in particular second language learning. For reasons of space, we will only mention Mosegaard Hansen (2016) for French, Maiden/Robustelli (2000) for Italian, Butt/Benjamin (<sup>5</sup>2011) for Spanish, and Hutchinson/Lloyd (<sup>2</sup>2003) for Portuguese.

regrettably might have hindered somewhat the accessibility of the *LRL* in linguistics at large.

For historical Romance linguistics, the three-volume handbook *Romanische Sprachgeschichte* (RSG, Ernst et al. 2003–2008), published by De Gruyter, offers an impressive array of chapters, with a strong focus on external aspects of language use and language standardization in a historical perspective. Several of the chapters are devoted to the Romance language family as a whole, a few in volume 3 also address morphosyntactic and syntactic questions, though never in a comparative perspective. And, again, a majority of articles are written in German, the rest in either French, Italian, or Spanish.

For those who do not read all of these languages, the two volumes of the *Cambridge History of the Romance Languages* (Maiden/Smith/Ledgeway 2011/2013) may come in handy. This reference work adopts a comparative, pan-Romance perspective in all chapters. It thereby succeeds in providing an up-to-date survey of the field, not least so in its chapters on morphosyntactic and syntactic change, and persistence.

Finally, the most recent addition to the list of reference works is the *Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages* (Ledgeway/Maiden 2016). In one single large volume, this handbook contains chapters on individual Romance language varieties as well as comparative overviews, several of them pertaining to the domains of morphosyntax and syntax.

All in all, then, one might very well assume that those seeking an accessible overview of some key topics in Romance morphosyntax and syntax will manage to find something in existing grammars, handbooks and, possibly, other published sources. Why add yet another manual to the set of existing reference works?

To begin with, we strongly believe that Romance morphosyntax and syntax deserve – at the very least – a handbook volume of their own, comprising some 930 pages and 24 chapters, as happens to be the case with the volume at hand. There are probably many arguments to defend this point of view, but one of them is that over the last decades, grammatical descriptions of Romance varieties, including historical stages of the language and historical as well as present-day dialects, have had a significant impact on (morpho)syntactic theory at large. Conversely, theoretical and typological (morpho)syntax has inspired and guided new research into Romance varieties. In-depth investigations of older language stages have deepened our understanding of the mechanisms of grammatical change.<sup>4</sup> On a synchronic level, investigations into the syntax of dialects and other “vernacular” varieties supposedly un-

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<sup>4</sup> Representative publications include Klausenburger (2000), Salvi (2004) and Ledgeway (2012) for new theoretical perspectives on grammatical change from Latin into Romance, Arteaga (2013) on Old French, Jensen (1986; 1990) on Old Occitan and Old French, Salvi/Renzi (2010), Benincà/Ledgeway/Vincent (2014) and Poletto (2014) on Old Italian, Fischer (2010) on Old Catalan, Kato/Ordóñez (2016) on the evolution of Latin American Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese, and Pană Dindelegan (2016) on Old Romanian.

affected by normative pressure have loomed large over the last few decades. This seems to hold in particular for Italo-Romance, where research activities have been vibrant, typically within the generative approach.<sup>5</sup> In Europe, the *Going Romance* conference series has become a prominent annual venue. In a similar vein, the *Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages* constitutes an established conference series in North American academia in which issues pertaining to Romance morphosyntax and syntax have always enjoyed a prominent place. Such conferences are emblematic of the cross-fertilization of grammatical theory, new descriptive accounts of Romance varieties, and new methods of data collection, including sociolinguistic and experimental ones. Both the *Going Romance* and the *Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages* conferences regularly lead to publications of selected papers in edited volumes, published by John Benjamins. While it is true that a significant number of articles collected in these volumes concentrate on only one variety of Romance, the very fact that the entire family of Romance languages and dialects is accepted as an object of linguistic investigation may be taken as indicative of a shared interest in maintaining Romance linguistics as a discipline. In addition, there are a number of renowned journals such as *Probus* or *Revue Romane* which are exclusively devoted to the linguistic study of all Romance language varieties. Conferences and academic journals such as those mentioned have significantly promoted comparative investigations into Romance grammar, at a time when institutionalized academia would be more likely to encourage compartmentalized research agendas. The time is thus ripe, we would venture to say, to account for the results of this renewed interest, and for the new insights gathered in recent research, in an accessible handbook format.

As linguists working in Romance departments, however, we sometimes feel that there continues to exist something like a “cultural gap” between, on the one side, theoretically minded linguists, of both formalist and functionalist persuasions, and, on the other side, scholars trained in the time-honored philological traditions of research into Romance languages and dialects. It may not be much of an overstatement to say that for each side, there exist separate conferences, networks, book series and journals. Given this, it is perhaps not coincidental that academic publishers such as De Gruyter provide separate catalogs for linguistics and for Romance studies. As editors, it was our ambition to compile a volume that would contribute towards bridging this cultural gap. Therefore, we would be delighted if the volume were of interest for both sides, and possibly for researchers working in neighboring fields. In addition, our contention is that it should be of use not only for established scholars, but also for younger researchers, including graduate and advanced undergraduate students.

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<sup>5</sup> See, in particular, Poletto (1993; 2000) on Northern Italian dialects, Ledgeway (2009) on Old Neapolitan, and Tortora (2003), Manzini/Savoia (2005) and D'Alessandro/Ledgeway/Roberts (2010) on Italian dialects in general.

We endeavor to suggest, then, that this *Manual of Romance Morphosyntax and Syntax* is timely for a variety of reasons. From Diez' *Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen* to Ledgeway/Maiden's *Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages*, reference works need to cover much more than "just" morphosyntax and syntax. To the best of our knowledge, these fields have never received exclusive attention in a single-volume handbook. Even those whose own research interests lie outside the areas of morphosyntax and syntax would probably admit that a total of 83 pages (Oesterreicher 1996a,b) in a volume of several thousands of pages such as the *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik* is not a particularly fair share. While the *Romanische Sprachgeschichte* and the *Cambridge History of the Romance Languages* arguably fare somewhat better, they are by design limited to the historical dimension. Similarly, the *Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages* dedicates only about a fourth of its chapters to topics in Romance morphosyntax and syntax. In all likelihood, however, it is limitations of space rather than a presumed scarcity of interesting issues which preclude a more full-fledged presentation of these fields. As we said, those seeking information about individual language varieties of Romance have at their disposal a range of reference grammars, varying in their degree of theoretical sophistication and in the quantity of empirical observations they present. However, for those in search of overviews about cross-linguistic and cross-dialectal differences, and grammatical features characterizing the Romance language family as a whole, the *Manual of Romance Morphosyntax and Syntax* might be a welcome addition. It seeks to provide both theoretically informed and empirically grounded surveys of topics which have figured prominently in the field (see Sections 2 and 3). In addition to the "big five" in Romance linguistics, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian and Romanian, many chapters offer a variety of data from "smaller" languages, and from regional and local dialects. In light of all this, it may not come as a surprise that this handbook is somewhat hefty, probably more so than many other volumes within the *Manuals of Romance Linguistics* book series. In order to be accessible to a wide readership, all chapters are written in English. Furthermore, English glosses and/or translations of examples from Romance language varieties are offered throughout. Albeit with various degrees of detail, glosses generally follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules ([www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php](http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php)). All authors were encouraged to avoid framework-internal discussions, overly technical jargon, and abbreviations which may not be familiar to a non-expert readership. In any event, the reader will find a list of abbreviations used at the beginning of the volume, and an index of linguistic terms, languages and dialects at the end. In the next section, we will introduce some fundamental notions of syntax and morphosyntax, before giving an overview of the structure and the contents of the volume in Section 3.

## 2 Syntax and morphosyntax: some basic notions

Both syntax and morphosyntax are ambiguous terms, designating, first, components (or “levels” or “modules”) of linguistic organization and, second, those subdisciplines of linguistics which investigate these levels. In line with standard assumptions about the organization of language, we take *syntax* to be the component of linguistic systems that defines the set of grammatical arrangements of words, and of certain meaningful subparts of them such as inflectional morphemes. These words and morphemes combine into larger units of grammar such as phrases, up to the level of clauses and sentences. More specifically, syntax as a discipline investigates, first of all, grouping relations (*constituency*) and ordering relations (*linearization*).

An insight dating back to antiquity is that words may profitably be categorized into a small number of so-called *word classes* (also called “parts of speech”, echoing the Latin term *partes orationis*, in much of the older tradition). Linguistic typology has impressively shown that the inventory of word classes differs substantially across languages, and some formal accounts of morphology such as Distributed Morphology (Halle/Marantz 1993) even assume word classes to be syntactic products just like phrases. Yet probably no one would deny that at least on a descriptive level, nouns (N), verbs (V), adjectives (A) and possibly adverbs (Adv) may constitute fundamental lexical categories in Romance and Germanic languages. To these, we may add functional categories such as (at least some) prepositions (P), determiners (D), i.e., articles and their likes, and complementizers (C) such as Fr./Sp./Pt. *que*, It. *che* ‘that’ heading various types of subordinate clauses. Following Stowell (1981) and Williams (1981), the expression of morphosyntactic features of verbs is categorized as Inflection (I) or Tense (T), respectively. All lexical categories (N, V, A, Adv) and all functional categories (D, P, C, I, T) project, i.e., they can form the nuclei, or *heads*, of larger syntactic units. These larger syntactic units are formed according to a small set of abstract cross-categorial building principles, which became famous under the name of X-bar Theory (see Lasnik/Lohndal 2013, 41–47 for a concise overview). Without entering into details, we will only recall that those larger syntactic units which, intuitively, appear to be relatively complete and autonomous, are referred to as *phrases*. Phrasal categories, and their respective category symbols, are determined by their heads: Nouns head noun phrases (or NPs, for short), verbs head verb phrases (VPs), and so forth. A noun such as Fr. *maison* ‘house’, for example, can head a complex noun phrase of the type *grande maison de Pierre* ‘big house of Pierre’, with *grande* and *de Pierre* acting as adjectival and genitival *modifiers* of their head noun (see ↗21 Adjectival and genitival modification). Nominal groups introduced by a determiner, such as *la grande maison de Pierre* ‘Pierre’s big house’, lit. ‘the big house of Pierre’ are categorized as determiner phrases (DPs) in languages in which the presence of such a determiner before an NP is (near-)categorical in argument position (see ↗20 Determination and quantification). Moving on from NPs, DPs and VPs to the level of (simple) sentences, these have been analyzed as projections of their verbal

inflection or, alternatively, of their tense features (IPs or TPs). Finally, subordinate clauses such as *que Pierre a une grande maison* ‘that Pierre has a big house’ have been argued to be headed by their subordinating complementizer, thereby forming complementizer phrases (CPs). Taken together, lexical and functional categories and their projections constitute the set of *syntactic categories* of a language.

Many, if not most syntacticians would probably subscribe to the principle according to which syntactic structure is strictly *binary*, i.e., every complex syntactic unit contains exactly two *immediate constituents*. It needs to be acknowledged, though, that binarity is not always self-evident, especially in cases of (symmetric) coordination such as Fr. *Pierre et Marie* ‘Pierre and Marie’ (see ↗18 Coordination and correlatives).

Besides syntactic categories, traditional as well as many contemporary versions of syntactic theory make reference to a second set of notions, known as *syntactic functions* or, in other work, as *grammatical relations*. Many of these notions are familiar since primary school: *subjects*, *objects*, *predicates* and, possibly, *adverbials* may well seem concepts so obvious to the average language user that, so one might think, little needs to be said about them. On closer scrutiny, however, several issues connected to the exact definition of syntactic functions, as well as to their theoretical status and usefulness for language description, turn out to be anything but trivial (see ↗2 Subjects; ↗3 Objects).

More generally, it can easily be shown that syntactic units which co-occur within a larger syntactic constituent enter into different types of relationships. Perhaps the most conspicuous type is *dependency*, a relation in which one unit renders obligatory the presence of another unit within the larger syntactic context.

Other types may involve morphological categories with syntactic relevance, i.e., so-called morphosyntactic relations. In this volume, *morphosyntax* is understood not as the set union of morphology and syntax, but as the interface of grammar in which the components of morphology and syntax interact. There are reasons to believe that morphology constitutes a component of grammar in its own right, and not just a kind of word-internal syntax, as some researchers have maintained (see Selkirk 1982). Simplifying somewhat, we may say that morphosyntax typically makes reference to categories of inflectional morphology, such as person, number, gender, case, tense, aspect, and mood. The flip side of this conception of morphosyntax is that word formation, including compounding and derivation, does not fall within its purview, even if, at times, the boundaries between compositional, derivational and inflectional morphology may appear to be somewhat blurred (see Scalise 1988; Spencer 2000; Gisborne 2014).

A relationship encompassing the domains of inflectional morphology and syntax is *government*, a concept going back to ancient grammarians and that aims to capture the insight that certain features of grammatical form, such as case features, can be unilaterally “imposed” by a co-constituent which in turn does not possess these features. A related, but distinct, type of relationship is *agreement*. Syntactic units are said to stand in a relationship of agreement when there is a systematic interdepen-



dence with respect to grammatical features shared by both units. The example in (1) may serve as a simple illustration:

- (1) Fr. Pierre a déjà pardonné à son voisin.  
 Pierre have.3sg already forgiven to his neighbor  
 ‘Pierre has already forgiven his neighbor.’

In (1), the presence of *à son voisin* is rendered obligatory by the choice of the verb *pardonner* ‘forgive’, since *Pierre a déjà pardonné* constitutes an incomplete, ungrammatical sentence. *À son voisin* is therefore dependent upon the verb. More specifically, this verb imposes that the constituent expressing who is being forgiven be introduced by the preposition *à*. In other words, *pardonner* governs *à*-marking (arguably a kind of syntactic dative marking) of the “sinner argument.” Finally, the finite auxiliary verb *a* ‘has’ is marked as third person singular, thereby agreeing in person and number with the “forgiver argument” *Pierre*.<sup>6</sup>

Yet another relationship concept which has become influential, especially for the study of dependency relations between verbs and their complements, is *valency* (Tesnière 1959; ↗4 Argument structure and argument structure alternations). While the exact definition of valency may differ somewhat between different authors, it seems to be commonly accepted that valency is a complex notion, which combines syntactic dependency and government with semantic and pragmatic facets of interrelatedness between a verb (or valency-bearing noun or adjective) and its dependent clause-mates. The notion of valency has occupied center stage in a predominantly European-based tradition of *Dependency Grammar* (see contributions to Ágel et al. 2003/2006; see Perini 2015 for a recent book-length account based on data from Brazilian Portuguese).

By emphasizing the role of lexical information in clause structure, valency-based approaches may also be assimilated to theories advocating a continuum between grammar and the lexicon. This holds true in particular for a family of theories referred to as *Construction Grammar* (see Hoffmann/Trousdale 2013). Here again, the exact definition of what technically constitutes a construction varies between authors. In any event, constructions are “conventionalized pairings between meaning and form” (Goldberg 2006, 3), can be syntactically complex and display formal and/or semantic and pragmatic properties which are not fully predictable on the basis of their component parts alone. The identification of such constructions thus challenges, it has been claimed, the principle of compositionality according to which the meaning of complex

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<sup>6</sup> To be sure, a more comprehensive analysis of (1) would need to recognize additional types of inter-constituent relations, such as the interpretation of the possessive *son* as referring back to *Pierre*. This type of relationships, known as *binding*, will not be addressed in this manual. Many scholars argue that binding is not exclusively syntactic in nature, but an interface phenomenon, extending beyond syntax into discourse semantics and pragmatics in complex ways. The interested reader is referred to Büring (2005) and references cited therein.

linguistic signs, and in particular complex syntactic units, can be systematically computed from the meaning of the word forms it contains. By the same token, constructions have been argued to constitute counter-evidence to any linguistic framework which holds that the lexicon and the grammar of a language can be separated into distinct modules. Instead, proponents of Construction Grammar, in one form or another, maintain that the continuum between the lexicon and grammar in language calls for a non-modular, holistic theory of linguistic systems.

Despite its initial attraction, Construction Grammar has not been exempt from criticism either (see Adger 2013). To begin with, no commonly accepted operational definition seems to exist of what exactly counts as a construction in a given language and what does not. Second, while compositionality may indeed not hold in many cases of complex word formation, the number of demonstrably non-compositional constructions in syntax is perhaps less impressive than one might think. More often than not, proponents of Construction Grammar resort to a modest number of set examples from English, such as the famous case of *let alone* (Fillmore/Kay/O'Connor 1988).<sup>7</sup> Third, even if there are good reasons to attribute the status of construction to a given complex syntactic unit, this should be a starting point rather than an endpoint for linguistic analysis. Adding a complex unit to the list of constructions does not explain *why* this unit features just those idiosyncratic properties it features and not others. Nonetheless, the concept of construction may indeed have diagnostic and descriptive value, especially in cases of complex constructions which do appear to be hard nuts for compositional analyses to crack, such as clefts and pseudo-clefts (see 715 Cleft constructions).

In one form or another, however, many of the contributions to this manual are indebted to concepts of *Generative Grammar*. Since Chomsky's seminal earlier publications (see, e.g., Chomsky 1957; 1965) to Government-Binding Theory (Chomsky 1981) and the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995), Generative Grammar has witnessed an astonishing success in linguistics departments all over the globe, but also given rise to much debate, and radical criticism, especially from linguists and psychologists investigating the interplay of language and cognition. This is not the place to engage in theoretical discussion about the architecture of grammar. In our opinion, Generative Grammar has indeed provided a wealth of new insights into the structure of Romance languages and dialects. All we can do here, given space limitations, is to mention a few topics in which research conducted within the generative framework has contributed towards a deeper understanding of syntax, and comparative Romance syntax in particular.

To begin with, much work has been done, before and after the advent of generative syntax, on unexpressed or "null" subjects in finite clauses. Their differential

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<sup>7</sup> Recently, however, Romance languages have gained ground in Construction Grammar; see Bouveret/Legallos (2012), Boas/González-García (2014), and several contributions to Yoon/Gries (2016).

availability in Romance varieties, the interpretational restrictions associated to them, and the division of labor between morphology, syntax, and the lexicon in the expression of subjects have inspired various kinds of cross-linguistic and typological generalizations. While it is true that ambitious earlier claims about a categorical “pro-drop” or “null subject” parameter (Burzio 1986; Rizzi 1986) have not withstood empirical scrutiny, research aimed at refining the notion of null subject languages has considerably fostered our knowledge about the extent, and the limits, of co-variation between inflectional morphology and syntax (see contributions to Biberauer et al. 2010; Zimmermann 2014; ↗2 Subjects).

Second, the identification of unaccusative verbs, dating back to Perlmutter (1978), has become highly influential in coming to grips with the interplay of subject positions, semantic roles of subjects, the availability of passive and other impersonal constructions, auxiliary selection, and past participle agreement (Loporcaro 1998; ↗2 Subjects; ↗6 Voice and voice alternations; ↗7 Auxiliaries).

Moving on from subjects to objects, a third research topic in which Romance languages have played a prominent role is object and adverbial clitics. Their placement, their sequencing and their co-occurrence, in some varieties, with co-indexed non-clitic objects and adverbials, have figured prominently in generative work at least since Kayne (1975) and Rizzi (1982) (↗5 Clitic pronouns). Positions adjacent to the verb are also available for certain other, non-clitic adverbials, and for negating elements. There are, however, certain differences between languages such as English and French, when it comes to the ordering of auxiliaries, preverbal negation, adverbials such as *already* or its French counterpart *déjà*, and non-finite verbal forms such as past participles or infinitives.

Such ordering properties led Pollock (1989) to propose a more articulate structure for the functional category of Inflection. This “Split Inflection Hypothesis” set the scene for a fourth topic of investigation, the relative order of verbs and adjacent syntactic units, in particular object clitics, non-clitic adverbs and negators. Following up on this, Cinque (1999) developed a particularly elaborate syntactic proposal in order to account for the different positions available for different types of adverbs. His analysis is based to a significant extent on data from Italian and French. Very soon, research went beyond clauses with simple finite verbs to investigate linearization with complex verbal predicates and infinitival verbs (↗8 Causative and perception verbs; ↗10 Infinitival clauses).

Fifth, we should mention *wh*-movement, that is, the analysis of clauses which are introduced by a *wh*-element as being derived by long-distance movement. This analysis, originally developed by Ross (1967) and Chomsky (1977), has been instrumental in gaining a better understanding of the regularities, and constraints, observable in Romance *wh*-interrogatives and relative clauses (see ↗16 Interrogatives; ↗22 Relative clauses).

Finally, data from Italian and French have also been adduced as evidence for splitting up the clause-initial complementizer position into what has come to be known as the “fine structure of the left periphery” since Rizzi (1997). By introducing additional

functional structure above IP, the left periphery can accommodate elements related to illocutionary force by virtue of a Force Phrase (ForceP), such as Sp. *ojalá* and Pt. *oxalá* ‘hopefully’. More generally, the establishment of a “cartography” of syntactic structure at the left edges of syntactic units such as clauses and sentences has fostered research into the syntax of non-declaratives (see 716 Interrogatives; 717 Exclamatives, imperatives, optatives). By the same token, syntactic cartography has also invited new reflections on the impact of information structure on syntactic linearization. The provision of recursively available Topic projections (TopP), and of a (non-recursive) Focus projection (FocP), provide new avenues of research into preverbal constituents exhibiting focus or topic properties (see 713 Dislocations and framings; 714 Focus Fronting). Again, Romance languages and dialects have played a prominent role in cartographic approaches to syntax (see in particular, contributions to Cinque 2002; 2006; Belletti 2004; Rizzi 2004; Benincà/Munaro 2011; Brugé et al. 2012; Shlonsky 2015). At the same time, alternative, less articulate models of syntactic structure have also been proposed on the basis of data from Romance. In particular, it has been argued that prosodic structure needs to be taken into account in order to account for the relationship between information structure and constituent orders in the left periphery of sentences (see, Zubizarreta 1998; 2009 for Spanish, and Costa 2009 for Portuguese).

At least to some extent, the chapters in the present volume bear witness to the diversity of approaches. In the next section, we will outline the overall structure of the volume and briefly introduce the chapters one by one.

### 3 Structure, contents and leitmotifs of the volume

The volume at hand consists of five parts. Following this introduction (Part I, Chapter 1), it features chapters on topics related to the verbal domain (Part II, Chapters 2–9), the syntax of clauses and sentences (Part III, Chapters 10–18), and the nominal domain (Part IV, Chapters 19–22), before ending with two chapters on more general, typological aspects (Part V, Chapters 23–24).

By verbal domain, we are referring to a syntactic domain that roughly corresponds to the Tense Phrase (TP) in generative approaches, and to the French notion of *proposition* and equivalent notions in other Romance languages. As might be expected, Part II comprises chapters devoted to subjects and object complements of verbs (chapters 2 and 3, respectively). Several formal subtypes of verbal arguments are distinguished. In addition, dependency relations, including valency and government, as well as argument drop, agreement regularities and differential object marking (DOM) are discussed. Argument structures and argument structure alternations, and their semantic effects, are presented in chapter 4. As already mentioned, clitic pronouns have always attracted particular interest among Romance linguists. Their inventories and placement properties form the subject of chapter 5. In chapter 6, the syntactic expression of semantic arguments in passive and related constructions is

investigated, and a number of semantic and information-structural properties of such voice alternations are addressed. Auxiliary verbs, their inventories in Romance languages and dialects, the complex interplay of factors determining the choice of auxiliaries in analytic perfect tenses, and past participle agreement regularities are treated in chapter 7. Chapter 8 then provides information about the syntactic peculiarities of causative and perception verb constructions, which can display both monoclausal and biclausal properties. Part II concludes with chapter 9, on copular and existential constructions, which feature a gamut of different syntactic formats, each of which associated with specific interpretational characteristics.

As already mentioned, Part III scrutinizes the clausal and sentential domains, i.e., issues related to what is called *phrase* in French, or Complementizer Phrase (CP) in generative terms. In particular, several of the chapters in this part zoom in on phenomena related to the left periphery in the sense of Rizzi (1997) and his followers. The part opens with chapter 10 on infinitival clauses, both in syntactically embedded contexts and as independent sentential units. Following up on this, chapter 11 moves on to finite clauses and surveys the morphosyntactic categories of tense, aspect, and mood (TAM). In Romance languages at least, these TAM categories turn out to be intimately related. We chose to discuss these categories in Part III rather than in Part II because at the level of morphosyntax and syntax, TAM features of a clause may entertain a range of grammatical and semantic relations with those of other clauses, thereby interacting at levels higher than their respective proposition or TP. Given that TAM systems in Romance have constituted a hotspot of grammatical research for many decades, the chapter will inevitably not be able to do full justice to all the findings in all varieties of Romance, focusing instead to a large extent on French, Italian, and Spanish. Next, chapter 12 presents basic facts about the expression of negation in Romance languages, surveying the range of negative word items (or “n-words”, for short) and Negative Polarity Items (“NPIs”). By NPI, we are referring to linguistic expressions such as English *at all* which, while not carrying negative semantics by themselves, are typically restricted to environments under the scope of negation or other contexts of “scale reversal”. The chapter tackles cross-linguistic differences in the expression of negation in Romance from both diachronic and typological angles, by introducing the concept of the Jespersen Cycle, a showcase of grammaticalization theory (see below). Different types of displacements to the left periphery are introduced and analyzed in chapters 13 and 14. Chapter 13 first investigates phenomena known as clitic left dislocations (CLLDs, for short), such as in Fr. *Mon voisin, il a toujours été comme ça* (lit. ‘My neighbor, he has always been like that’), before examining other types of “displacements” (or External Merge) in which constituents are analyzed as occurring outside the “core clause”. Simplifying somewhat, we may say that dislocations and their likes tend to target constituents with topic properties, whereas a different set of rules and constraints applies for the fronting of focused constituents to a left-peripheral position. The distribution of focus fronting, and the interpretational characteristics associated to it, form the subject matter of chapter 14.

Information structure has also been argued to motivate the existence of biclausal syntactic formats such as Fr. *C'est mon voisin qui est venu* 'It is my neighbor who came' and *Ce qu'il lui faut, c'est de l'argent* 'What he needs is money'. These structures, known as clefts and pseudo-clefts, respectively, and some of their syntactic variants, form the topic of chapter 15. The next two chapters shift the focus from information structure to illocutionary force and its relation to syntax in sentence types such as interrogatives (chapter 16), exclamatives, imperatives, and optatives (chapter 17). Last but not least, chapter 18 studies coordination, distinguishing between copulative, disjunctive, and adversative semantic types, and correlative constructions such as Fr. *Plus on mange, plus on a faim* 'The more you eat, the hungrier you get'. Coordinated constituents and correlative clause pairs present interesting theoretical challenges to syntactic theory, many of which are addressed in the course of the chapter.

The four chapters which make up Part IV explore aspects of the nominal domain in Romance, i.e., the morphosyntax and syntax of determiner phrases (DPs) according to the standard generative view. To begin with, chapter 19 describes the categories of gender and number, and the morphosyntactic relations in which they engage. In particular, the chapter details types of nominal plural marking found within the Romance family, and develops a syntactic take on gender and number in DPs. Next, chapter 20 studies different subclasses of determiners and quantifiers, surveying their diachronic sources and their syntagmatic potential in modern Romance languages. The two remaining chapters of Part IV explore various types of adnominal modifiers, from adjectival and genitival ones (chapter 21) to relative clauses (chapter 22). Chapter 21 pays particular attention to issues of linearization, making reference to semantically grounded ordering principles wherever appropriate. Chapter 22, in turn, presents paradigms of relativizing elements found in Romance, and formulates a number of generalizations about categories of relativizers, agreement facts, and the presence or absence of resumptive elements inside the relative clause.

Finally, the two chapters in Part V seek to provide a broader typological perspective on the panoply of observations and findings presented in Parts II, III and IV. Chapter 23 investigates the division of labor between morphology and syntax, in other words, the degrees of analyticity (syntactic coding) or syntheticity (morphological coding) found in Romance languages, and in their common ancestor Latin. Most notably perhaps, this chapter critically assesses standard assumptions of a continuous diachronic evolution towards innovative analytic modes of expressing grammatical categories. The upshot of this discussion is that the changes observed can be more insightfully related to a change in the relative ordering of heads and their modifiers than to some inherent grammatical "drift" away from inflectional markings. To conclude the volume, the relative orderings of major constituents, i.e., subjects, verbs and objects, are discussed in chapter 24. As is well-known, subject–verb–object (SVO) orders constitute the unmarked case in Romance declaratives featuring both a lexical subject and a lexical object. However, other arrangements do occur, albeit with language-specific restrictions. Specifically, the chapter investigates the constraints on

OV and VS orders, capitalizing on information structure and discourse structure as determinants of variation in the linear arrangement of major constituents.

While this *tour d'horizon* may seem ambitious, the volume at hand cannot pretend to offer comprehensive coverage of all topics worthy of a chapter-length treatment.<sup>8</sup> In many ways, both the structure of the volume and the choice of contents reflect our indebtedness to Oesterreicher's (1996a,b) chapters on comparative Romance morphosyntax and syntax in the *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik* (see Section 1).

In line with Oesterreicher (1996a), we maintain that any analysis of morphosyntactic categories in Romance languages needs to take into account the following areas of semantics and pragmatics: reference to discourse participants (↗2 Subjects; ↗3 Objects), semantic roles (↗4 Argument structure and argument structure alternations; ↗21 Adjectival and genitival modification), deixis, definiteness, and quantity (↗20 Determination and quantification), temporal reference, aspectual perspectivization, and modality (↗11 Tense, aspect, mood; ↗17 Exclamatives, imperatives, optatives).

The way we conceive of syntax, in turn, is guided by Oesterreicher (1996b). Syntactic encoding implies a selection and combination of lexical and grammatical items. At the clausal and sentential levels, certain linear arrangements of major constituents qualify as unmarked and “basic” (↗24 Basic constituent orders), under a given mapping of semantic arguments onto syntactic roles determined by argument structure and grammatical voice (↗4 Argument structure and argument structure alternations; ↗6 Voice and voice alternations). Additional provisions must be made to account for the syntax of clauses featuring complex, non-finite and/or negated verbal predicates (↗8 Causative and perception verbs; ↗10 Infinitival clauses; ↗12 Negation and polarity), and predicates involving copular verbs (↗9 Copular and existential constructions). The impact of information structure on syntax is particularly evident in “non-basic” sentence variants, e.g. those involving “displacement” outside the core clause, fronting to the left clausal periphery, and splitting up clauses into biclausal cleft structures (↗13 Dislocations and framings; ↗14 Focus Fronting; ↗15 Cleft constructions). Syntactic movement operations are arguably also at play in clauses and sentences headed by interrogative, exclamative or relative items (↗16 Interrogatives; ↗17 Exclamatives, imperatives, optatives; ↗22 Relative clauses).

It follows that issues related to the *interfaces* that syntax entertains with both semantics and information structure recur throughout many chapters. However, the volume cannot attempt systematic descriptions of these interfaces. Instead, we refer the interested reader to the *Manual of Grammatical Interfaces in Romance* (Fischer/Gabriel 2016), another volume from the *Manuals of Romance Linguistics* series.

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<sup>8</sup> In particular, one may regret the absence of chapters specifically dedicated to adverbs and adverbial modification, both within the verbal and in “higher” clause and sentence level domains. Other lacunae we need to acknowledge include prepositional phrases, finite subordination and non-finite clausal units other than infinitival clauses, such as participial and gerundial constructions, as well as a chapter specifically dedicated to agreement facts.

A second leitmotiv which cross-cuts the volume at hand is *diachrony*. Chapter 6, for example, devotes an entire section to the re-organization of grammatical voice from Latin to Early Romance. In a similar vein, chapter 7 starts out with an outline of the uses of Latin HABERE ‘have’ and ESSE ‘be’ and their historical evolution as auxiliaries from Latin to Romance, before taking stock of auxiliary systems found in modern Romance languages and dialects. Auxiliarization is a subcase of grammaticalization, a cover term to designate grammatical changes in which individual linguistic units, and sequences of them, evolve from autonomous lexical and syntactic codings towards less variable, and ultimately rigid grammatical and morphological structures. The literature on grammaticalization is vast (see Narrog/Heine 2011; Detges/Waltereit 2016 for concise overviews). The grammatical changes observed in the evolution from Latin to Romance have always occupied center stage in the field, a fact almost inevitably reflected in this volume. Chapter 12, on negation, likewise insists on long-term diachronic trends, and on cyclical change instantiated by the famous “Jespersen Cycle”, going from simple to reinforced and back to simple expressions of negation (for cyclical change in general, see Gelderen 2009; 2011; 2016). Chapter 18, on coordination, traces the historical fate of formal coordinating devices from Latin into Romance, and chapter 19 and 20 do the same for categories and exponents of gender and number, and for Romance determiners and their Latin sources, respectively. Finally, diachrony looms large in chapters 23 and 24. Both chapters offer a survey of changes in inflectional morphology and syntax, and some critical remarks on traditional attempts at explaining *why* these changes occurred. Again, however, we need to emphasize that exhaustive coverage of historical Romance morphosyntax and syntax is beyond the scope of a single-volume handbook which is dedicated to the modern Romance varieties in the first place.

Last not least, the micro- and macro-variation observable within Romance has always been a privileged object of study for morphologists and syntacticians with an interest in linguistic *typology* (see Iliescu 2003; Jacob 2003; Ramat/Ricca 2016). Therefore, typological parameters and classifications constitute a third recurrent theme of this volume. In particular, a number of Romance linguists have argued for systematic correlations between different grammatical properties, with the ultimate aim of establishing more holistic types, and a typologically insightful classification of Romance varieties. Perhaps the most far-reaching claims were formulated by Körner (1987), who postulated the existence of two fundamental syntactic types in Romance, viz., “accusative” or “*de*-languages” such as French, and “ergative” or “*a*-languages” such as Spanish. In order to substantiate his claim, Körner adduces a range of phenomena which, ideally at least, should serve to establish the proposed dichotomy: In contrast to *de*-languages, *a*-languages exhibit differential object marking (DOM; see Bossong 1991; 1998; ↗3 Objects), clitic doubling (↗3 Objects; ↗5 Clitic pronouns), datives as agents of embedded infinitives (↗8 Causative and perception verbs; ↗10 Infinitival clauses), and inflected infinitives (↗10 Infinitival clauses). *De*-languages, in turn, are characterized by “partitive” articles (↗20 Determination and quantification), and past



participle agreement in compound tenses (↗3 Objects; ↗7 Auxiliaries). Proposals such as Körner's are certainly inspiring. Having said that, many chapters in this volume show that the actual range of syntactic variation between Romance varieties is considerably greater, especially when not only standard varieties, but also dialects are taken into account. Over the last decades, a number of more modest, but at the same time more "robust" correlative generalizations have been formulated, and explanatory accounts have been proposed.

On a more general level, the advancement of typological research has also given rise to reflections about whether or not there is such a thing as a global "Romance type". Posner (1996, 35) dismisses phonetic and phonological features as defining "Romanceness" and surmises that the best candidate for identifying a specifically Romance type of languages might be the lexicon. Indeed, a substantial number of lexical items are "shared" by many, or even all Romance languages. At the same time, many of these very same lexical items have also been borrowed into other languages, such as Albanian, Basque, and English. In morphosyntax and syntax, by contrast, a set of features does seem to exist which makes up a "typically Romance" language. This feature set should probably include binary systems of nominal gender (↗19 Gender and number; see Loporcaro forthcoming for a full-fledged account), certain recurring distributions of allomorphs in verb paradigms (cf. the notion of "N-pattern" in Maiden 2016), the grammaticalization of the definite article stemming from a Latin demonstrative (ILLE OR IPSE), as well as items of the "functional lexicon", such as other types of determiners, clitics and full pronouns (↗5 Clitic pronouns; ↗20 Determination and quantification; see Posner 1996, 35–96 for a more comprehensive discussion). A number of chapters in this volume offer such global typological perspectives on Romance, by comparing features of Romance morphosyntax and syntax with those found in languages beyond the Romance language family. As we said at the beginning, Romance languages are obviously related – yet pinpointing their grammatical relatedness in typological terms will probably remain an intriguing enterprise for generations of linguists to come.

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## The verbal domain



## 2 Subjects

**Abstract:** This chapter deals with two main topics: constituent order (focusing on the interaction between subject positions and interpretation), and null subjects. Both issues relate to case, agreement and expletives. The chapter discusses what motivates and licenses verb-subject orders in Romance non-*wh* sentences and identifies focalization, theticity and non-degree exclamatives as unifying factors across Romance languages. Focalization of the subject derives VOS order, whereas theticity and non-degree exclamatives display VSO order. On the topic of null subjects, the chapter offers a critical review of the assumption of a pro-drop parameter (also called the Null Subject Parameter) for Romance, considering different types of null subject languages (consistent and partial pro-drop languages). It provides evidence that the pro-drop parameter cannot be maintained as originally formulated since the richness of grammatical variation between Romance languages requires a more intricate, fine-grained parametrization.

**Keywords:** verb-subject order, null subjects, focus, theticity, exclamatives, case, agreement, pro-drop

## 1 Introduction

While it is generally agreed that in many languages subjects constitute a core element of grammar, there is no general agreement on how to define them in and across languages and linguistic theories (cf. Keenan 1976; Van Kampen 2005; Falk 2006).<sup>1</sup> However, Romance languages are not among the languages that make the notion of “subject” particularly difficult to handle, especially if one defines “subject” on morphosyntactic grounds. In this chapter,<sup>2</sup> we will make the simple assumption that Nominative Case and verbal agreement identify subjects in Romance languages, which typologically belong to the Nominative-Accusative type (cf. WALS 98A; 99A; 100A), and will then deal with apparent difficulties. We will further assume that every (well-formed) sentence has a subject, which in most Romance languages may be

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1 Keenan (1976) discusses the behavior of arguments in a number of typologically diverse languages in order to identify the “universal” properties of subjects. Among the criteria that he proposes for identifying the subjects of basic sentences in any language are morphological case, subject-verb agreement, controlling, reflexivization and omission on identity in second conjuncts and in controlled infinitives.

2 The authors’ names at the beginning of this chapter appear in alphabetical order. The first author is primarily responsible for Sections 4 and 5, the second author for Sections 1, 2, 3 and 6.

overtly realized or null (as shown in (1) below, where Standard French contrasts with the other languages in disallowing a null subject).<sup>3</sup>

Sentences displaying the Subject-Verb (SV) order, as exemplified in (1), show clear instances of Nominative, agreeing subjects. Hence in (1a-f) the verb displays plural inflection because the DP-subject is plural. Moreover, both full DPs and null subjects (the latter signaled with ‘pro’) can be replaced with a Nominative pronoun under a substitution test.

- |        |      |                                 |         |               |           |   |
|--------|------|---------------------------------|---------|---------------|-----------|---|
| (1) a. | Pt.  | {As crianças/ <i>pro</i> /eles} | já      | voltaram      | da        | escola.   |
|        |      | the children/–/they             | already | returned-3PL  | from-the  | school  |
| b.     | Sp.  | {Los niños/ <i>pro</i> /ellos}  | ya      | han           | regresado | de  |
|        |      | the children/–/they             | already | have-3PL      | returned  | from  |
|        |      | la escuela.                     |         |               |           |   |
|        |      | the-school                      |         |               |           |   |
| c.     | Cat. | {Els nens/ <i>pro</i> /ells}    | ja      | han           | tornat    | de l’escola.                                      |
|        |      | the children/–/they             | already | have-3PL      | returned  | from the-school                                   |
| d.     | It.  | {I bambini/ <i>pro</i> /loro}   | già     | sono          | tornati   | da scuola.  |
|        |      | the children/–/they             | already | are-3PL       | returned  | from-the school                                   |
| e.     | Rom. | {Copiii/ <i>pro</i> /ei}        | deja    | s-au          | întors    | de la   |
|        |      | children-the/–/they             | already | REFL=have-3PL | returned  | from  |
|        |      | școală.                         |         |               |           |   |
|        |      | school                          |         |               |           |   |
| f.     | Fr.  | {Les enfants/ <i>*pro</i> /ils} | sont    | déjà          | rentrés   | de l’école.                                       |
|        |      | the children/ <i>*–</i> /they   | are-3PL | already       | returned  | from the-school                                   |
|        |      |                                 |         |               |           | ‘The children have already got back from school.’ |

Postverbal subjects may behave exactly like preverbal ones as for case assignment and subject-verb agreement, as shown by the VS sentences in (2).<sup>4</sup> Further evidence for the subjecthood of the postverbal constituents is provided by their ability to bind anaphoric *se*, control the subject of an infinitival clause and identify the reference of a null subject in the second member of a coordinate structure (cf. Keenan 1976), as illustrated in (3-B). French does not usually allow the type of VS sentences exemplified in (2).

<sup>3</sup> European Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese differ from each other in regard to word order flexibility and the pro-drop property, as will be discussed in the ensuing sections. In (1a) and (2a), “Portuguese” stands for European Portuguese.

<sup>4</sup> The Case and agreement properties exhibited by ordinary subjects in Romance languages are inherited from Latin, which also licensed null subjects and displayed the alternation between SV and VS orders (cf. Bolkestein 1995; Devine/Stephens 2006; Pinkster 1990; 2015). Some of the Romance languages lost the null subject property and severely constrained the availability of postverbal subjects as a result of diachronic change.

- (2) a. Pt. Já chegaram {os rapazes/eles}.  
           already arrived-3PL the boys/they
- b. Sp. Ya han llegado {los chicos/ellos}.  
           already have-3PL arrived the boys/they
- c. Cat. Ja han arribat {els nois/ells}.  
           already have-3PL arrived the boys/they
- d. It. Già sono arrivati {i ragazzi/loro}.  
           already are-3PL arrived the boys/they
- e. Rom. Deja au ajuns {băieții/ei}.  
           already have-3PL arrived boys-the/they  
           ‘The boys have already arrived.’
- (3) Pt. A: Elas não se riram.  
           they-F not REFL laughed-3PL  
           ‘They (the girls) did not laugh.’
- B: Riram-se<sub>i</sub> eles<sub>i</sub> sem PRO<sub>i</sub> disfarçar  
           laughed-3PL=REFL they-M without disguise-INF  
           e pro<sub>i</sub> não pediram desculpa.  
           and not asked-3PL apology  
           ‘But they (the boys) laughed without hiding it and did not apologize.’

However, the postverbal constituent that surfaces in sentences with monoargumental verbs does not always behave as in (2) and (3) above. So in (4) below, the verb does not agree with the postverbal constituent (cf. (4a–b)) or agrees only partially (cf. (4c), where there is agreement in number but not in person),<sup>5</sup> and may not control the subject of an infinitival clause, as in (4d), to be contrasted with (4e). The Brazilian Portuguese (BPt.) examples in (4a–b) are taken from Kato/Martins (2016); the French example in (4c) is taken from Bonami/Godard/Marandin (1999), and the European Portuguese (EPt.) examples in (4d–e) are taken from Carrilho (2003).

- (4) a. Spoken BPt. *Chegou os ovos.*  
           arrived-3SG the eggs  
           ‘The eggs arrived.’

<sup>5</sup> The French pattern of agreement in (4c) differs from what is found in other languages. Thus in European Portuguese, for example, first person plural agreement is available in a similar sentence whereas third person plural is not:

- (i) Pt. o prédio onde habitávamos /\*habitavam a Maria e eu  
       the building where lived-1PL / lived-3PL the Maria and I  
       ‘the building where Maria and I lived’

- b. Spoken BPt.      Telefonou      uns      clientes.  
                                  called-3sg      some      clients  
                                  ‘Some clients called.’
- c. Fr.                    l’immeuble      où      habitaient/\*habitions      Marie  
                                  the-building      where      lived-3PL/lived-1PL      Marie  
                                  et      moi  
                                  and      I  
                                  ‘the building where Marie and I lived’
- d. Dialectal EPt.      Chegou      [muitas crianças]<sub>i</sub>      (\*sem      PRO<sub>i</sub>      dizer  
                                  arrived-3sg      many      children      without      PRO      say-INF  
                                  uma      palavra).  
                                  a      word
- e. Dialectal EPt.      Chegaram      [as crianças]<sub>i</sub>      (sem      PRO<sub>i</sub>      dizer  
                                  arrived-3PL      the      children      without      PRO      say-INF  
                                  uma      palavra).  
                                  a      word  
                                  ‘The/may children arrived without saying anything.’

The postverbal constituents in (4) have been designated in the literature as “objectivized subjects” (Lambrecht 2000), “accusative subjects” (Bonami/Godard/Marandin 1999) or just “objects” (Carrilho 2003) depending on the theoretical framework that supports the analyses of the different authors. But for theory-neutral, descriptive purposes, the postverbal constituents in (4) are also often referred to in the literature just as “subjects”, which allows us to make the link between them and their correlates in an SV sentence. The structures in (4) will be part of the present chapter. We will discuss how they satisfy the requirement that all sentences have a subject, and clarify the contrast between (3) and (4) in this respect. This will lead to introducing the notion of expletive subject, which may be covert, as in (4a) above, or overt as in (5) below. The sentences in (5) also show that expletives may be of different types and so induce different agreement patterns.

- (5) Fr. a.      Il      est      arrivé      des      milliers      de      personnes.  
                                  EXPL      is      arrived      ART.INDF-PL      thousands      of      people  
                                  ‘There arrived thousands of people.’
- b.      Ce      sont      des      milliers      de      réfugiés      qui  
                                  EXPL      are      ART.INDF-PL      thousands      of      refugees      who  
                                  frappent      à      la      porte      de      l’Europe.  
                                  knock      at      the      door      of      the-Europe  
                                  ‘There are thousands of refugees knocking at the door of Europe.’

All Romance languages used to be pro-drop languages, allowing both null referential subjects and null expletives, a property inherited from Latin. In the course of time,

French<sup>6</sup> lost the ability to license null subjects and Brazilian Portuguese severely restricted their availability. The varying behavior of current Romance languages with respect to the pro-drop property as well as their differences relative to the kinds of expletives they license have effects on word order. It is commonly said that pro-drop Romance languages allow “free” subject-verb inversion, while non-pro-drop Romance languages have lost such word order flexibility. In this chapter we intend to show that these claims are overly simplistic and highly debatable.

The chapter is organized in five sections besides this introduction. Section 2 discusses the word order alternation SV/VS in Romance, with a special focus on the interpretive effects of the verb-subject order (i.e. VOS and VSO) in simple non-interrogative clauses, across Romance languages. It will include three subsections, respectively on focalization (2.1), theticity (2.2) and non-degree exclamatives (2.3). Section 3 considers morphological subject marking in Romance, focusing on nominative case, subject-verb agreement, and their interplay with ordering and expletives. Section 4 offers a critical review of the assumption of a pro-drop parameter for Romance, considering different types of null subject languages (consistent and partial pro-drop languages), different types of null subjects available in Romance languages, and a brief glance at the diachronic change in the availability of null subjects in Romance languages. Section 5 covers some of the properties usually linked to null subject languages, in particular the “optionality” of dropping referential subjects and the availability of subject extraction from embedded domains. Finally, Section 6 will offer a brief general summary of the chapter.

## 2 Word order (SV/VS)

This section addresses the topic of constituent order, essentially focusing on the different types of subject-verb inversion that are found across Romance languages (↗24 Basic constituent orders). We use here the term *inversion* to refer to the order verb-subject because it is widespread in the literature. It may not be descriptively correct for Romanian and Spanish, if the basic/unmarked constituent order in Romanian is VSO (cf. Dobrovie-Sorin 1994; Motapanyane 1994; Alboiu 2002) and in Spanish both SVO and VSO (cf. Zubizarreta 1998; 1999; Zagona 2005 vs Vanrell Bosch/Fernández Soriano 2013). For discussion of the topic of basic constituent orders, see ↗24 Basic constituent orders. We will not tackle it here.

Nor will we deal with subject-verb inversion in topicalization, (contrastive) focus movement and *wh*-structures, since the issues related to these constructions will be addressed in later chapters in this volume (↗13 Dislocations and framings; ↗14 Focus

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<sup>6</sup> But cf. Zimmermann (2014) who argues that French was a non-pro-drop language from the beginning.





- b. It.            Q: Chi {è partito / ha parlato}  
                       who is left / has spoken  
                       ‘Who left/spoke?’  
                       A: {È partito / ha parlato} Gianni.  
                       is left / has spoken Gianni  
                       ‘Gianni did.’

Pattern II – VS in “reduced” clefts (Brazilian Portuguese, French)<sup>10</sup>

- (7) a. BPt.    Q: Quem (é que) cozinha o jantar?  
                       who is that cooks the dinner  
                       A: É o Alex ~~que~~ ~~cozinha~~ o jantar.  
                       is the Alex ~~that~~ ~~cooks~~ the dinner  
       b. Fr.     Q: Qui prépare le dîner?  
                       who prepares the dinner  
                       A: C’est Alex ~~qui~~ le ~~prépare~~.  
                       it-is Alex ~~that~~ it ~~prepares~~  
                       ‘Who cooks dinner? It is Alex / Alex does.’

Pattern III – SV, with (marked) prosodic prominence on the subject (Brazilian Portuguese)<sup>11</sup>

- (8) BPt.    Q: Quem que comeu o meu bolo?  
                       who that ate the my cake?  
                       A: O Ruben comeu.  
                       the Ruben ate  
                       ‘Who ate my cake? Ruben did.’

Pattern I, displaying simple VS, is the most widespread across Romance languages. The subject becomes prominent by receiving the sentence nuclear stress, in compliance with the information structure requirement that focus be prominent. Alternative strategies arise in the languages that have restrictions regarding the type of verbs that license VS order, namely non-pro-drop French and partial pro-drop Brazilian Portuguese (cf. Section 4). However, Brazilian Portuguese allows the order VS in answers to *wh*-questions if the verb is of the unaccusative type (like *cair* in (9a)), in contrast with

<sup>10</sup> Pattern II is also available in European Portuguese, but pattern I is the most common option in this language.

<sup>11</sup> According to Belletti (2005), pattern III is not a preferred option in French, but it is admitted by some speakers. Pattern III is the regular pattern in English.



- (11) a. It. Q: Pronto, chi parla?  
hello who speaks  
A: Parla Gianni / \*Gianni parla.  
speaks Gianni / Gianni speaks
- b. EPt. Q: Quem fala?  
who speaks  
A: Fala o Gabriel / \*O Gabriel fala.  
speaks the Gabriel / the Gabriel speaks  
'(Hello,) who is speaking? It is Gianni/Gabriel.'

- (12) a. It. Q: Chi è?  
who is  
A: a. Sono io.  
am I  
b. \*Io sono.  
I am
- b. Sp. Q: ¿Quién és?  
who is  
A: a. Soy yo.  
am I  
b. \*Yo soy.  
I am  
'Who is it? It's me.'

A sentence-final subject need not be narrow focus. It can display informational prominence within a broad focus sentence, whether such prominence is associated with contrast or not, as exemplified in (13) and (14).

- (13) EPt. Q: O que é que foi?  
the what is that was  
'What was it?'
- A: a. {Pousou / está pousada} no plátano uma águia.  
landed / is landed in-the maple-tree an eagle  
'An eagle has landed in the maple tree.'
- b. Vêm de férias connosco para o Brasil  
come-3PL on vacation with us to the Brazil  
os teus pais (não o teu filho).  
the your parents (not the your son)  
'Your parents (not your son) will come with us to Brazil on vacation.'

- (14) EPt.    Levantou-se    no        mar    uma    grande    tempestade    (não    um  
                  rose-SE        in-the    sea    a        big        storm        (not    a  
                  tsunami).  
                  tsunami)  
                  ‘A big storm (not a tsunami) rose out of the sea.’

In a very restricted way, French also uses the sentence-final position to give informational prominence to the subject in VOS sentences. Sentences (15a–b) illustrate the type of VS structures referred to in the literature as “heavy subject NP inversion” (Bonami/Godard/Marandin 1999), “elaborative inversion” (Kampers-Mahne et al. 2004) or “focus VS” (Lahousse 2006a). According to Lahousse (2006a; 2007) and Lahousse/Lamiroy (2012), from which the examples in (15) are taken, the order VOS appears in French mostly in administrative and legal texts (maybe as an “archaic” survival) and is only licensed when the sentence-final subject has an exhaustive identification reading.

- (15) Fr. a. Recevront        un bulletin de vote    les étudiants et  
                  receive-FUT-3PL a card        of vote    the students and  
                  le personnel académique.  
                  the staff            academic  
                  ‘Students as well as academic staff will receive a ballot paper.’  
       b. Paieront        une amende tous les automobilistes en infraction.  
                  pay-FUT-3PL a fine        all the drivers            in infraction  
                  ‘All drivers in breach of the law will pay a fine.’

Quotative inversion can also be analyzed as an instance of informational highlighting of the subject (cf. Matos 2013). So can locative inversion, depending on the discourse context. In both cases differences between Romance languages may not align with the split between pro-drop and non-pro-drop languages. For instance, inversion in quotatives is mandatory in both pro-drop European Portuguese and non-pro-drop “formal standard” French (Bonami/Godard 2008), while it is optional in partial pro-drop Brazilian Portuguese (Kato/Martins 2016). As for locative inversion, a constraint on verb-initial sentences separates Italian from other pro-drop languages, such as European Portuguese. Italian is subject to the V1 constraint with certain verbs (Pinto 1997; Belletti 2001; Corr 2012), whereas European Portuguese is not.<sup>13</sup> In the European

<sup>13</sup> The examples in (i) below are from Pinto (1997, 157). The Italian sentences marked as # are perfectly fine in European Portuguese.

- (i) It. a. In questo palazzo ha vissuto Dante.  
                  in this palace has lived Dante  
       b. #Ha vissuto in questo palazzo Dante.  
                  has lived in this palace Dante

Portuguese sentences in (16), the subject bears informational prominence in sentence-final position, no matter whether the locative argument precedes or follows the verb. Recall that informational prominence is not restricted to narrow focus.

- (16) EPt. Q: a. O que é que estás a fazer aqui?  
                   the what is that are-2sg to do here  
                   ‘What are you doing here?’  
               b. Quem vive neste prédio tão degradado?  
                   who lives in-this building so degraded  
                   ‘Who lives in this dilapidated building?’  
               A: c. Aqui/ neste prédio vive a minha filha.  
                   here/ in-this building lives the my daughter  
                   d. Vive aqui/ neste prédio a minha filha.  
                   lives here/ in-this building the my daughter  
                   ‘My daughter lives in this building.’

The fact that locative inversion may be used as a strategy to assign informational prominence to the subject is confirmed precisely by the VOS order it sanctions in languages that otherwise disallow VOS in the same contexts. Italian and Brazilian Portuguese, which are a case in point, make use of this syntactic strategy to license subject-verb inversion with transitive (and some unergative) verbs.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, both languages optionally allow the locative or spatio-temporal constituent to be a null deictic expression (cf. Pinto 1997; Belletti 2001; Pilati 2002; Kato/Martins 2016). The Brazilian Portuguese sentences in (17), taken from Pilati (2002), are to be compared with the Italian sentence in (18), taken from Belletti (2001). Crucially, all sentences display VOS order.

- (17) BPt. a. Tem a palavra a senadora Heloísa Helena.  
                   has the word the senator Heloísa Helena  
                   ‘Senator Heloísa Helena has the floor.’  
               b. Abre o placar o time do Palmeiras.  
                   opens the match the team of-the Palmeiras  
                   ‘The Palmeiras team opens the match.’

- 
- c. #Ha vissuto Dante in questo palazzo.  
           has lived Dante in this palace  
           ‘Dante lived in this palace.’

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the following observation by Lahousse (2008, footnote 21) in a paper where she discusses French “nominal inversion” and proposes to unify “locative inversion” and “unaccusative inversion”: “Indeed, the contrastive focalization of the subject is one of the factors that favor nominal inversion in contexts where it is otherwise not allowed”. Cf. also Lahousse (2006b).

- c. Ergue o braço o juiz.  
 raises the arm the judge  
 'The judge raises his arm.'

- (18) It. Mette la palla sul dischetto del rigore Ronaldo.  
 puts the ball on-the point of-the penalty Ronaldo  
 'Ronaldo puts the ball on the penalty spot.'

In answers to *wh*-questions, the VOS order regularly arises in some Romance languages if the verb is transitive, the object is overtly realized and the subject is narrow information focus, as exemplified in (19) and (20) below. Only when both the subject and the object bear narrow focus, as in example (21), does VSO become available.<sup>15</sup> But Romance languages appear to behave in diverse ways with respect to the naturalness of phonologically expressing the object in VOS answer-sentences. Portuguese, Spanish and Romanian are the Romance languages that most easily allow VOS, in contrast with Italian, Catalan and Brazilian Portuguese (cf. Wandruszka 1982; Costa 1998; Zubizarreta 1998; 1999; Alboiu 1999; 2002; Belletti 2001; Lahousse/Lamiroy 2012; Vanrell Bosch/Fernández Soriano 2013; Kato/Martins 2016).

- (19) Rom. Q: Cine a venit acasă?  
 who has come home?  
 'Who came home?'  
 A: a. A venit acasă mama.  
 AUX-3SG come home mother-the  
 b. #A venit mama acasă.  
 AUX-3SG come mother-the home  
 'Mother did.'

**15** Quotative inversion also displays VSO, because in the relevant syntactic configuration both verbal arguments fall under focus:

- (i) EPt. Q: O que aconteceu? – perguntou o leão à girafa.  
 the what happened? – asked the lion to-the giraffe  
 'What happened? – the lion asked the giraffe.'

Moreover, VSO order emerges as an exception when independent grammatical constraints block VOS, as discussed by Costa/Silva (2006). In (ii) below, binding requirements ban the subject from the sentence-final position.

- (ii) EPt. A: Quem recebeu os livros?  
 who received the books?  
 B: a. Recebeu [cada autor]<sub>i</sub> o seu<sub>i</sub> livro.  
 received each author the his book  
 b. \*Recebeu o seu<sub>i</sub> livro [cada autor]<sub>i</sub>.  
 received the his book each author  
 'Who received the books? – Each author<sub>i</sub> received his<sub>i</sub> book.'

- (20) EPt. Q: Quem pagou a dívida?  
 who paid the debt  
 ‘Who has paid its debt?’  
 A: Pagou a dívida a Grécia.  
 paid the debt the Greece  
 ‘Greece has paid its debt.’
- (21) EPt. Q: Quem encontrou o quê?  
 who found the what  
 ‘Who has found what?’  
 A: Encontrou o João o anel da Maria.  
 found the João the ring of-the Maria  
 ‘João has found Maria’s ring.’

## 2.2 Inversion as theticity

Kuroda’s (1965; 1972; 1992) work on Japanese introduced in the linguistics literature the conceptual distinction between sentences expressing *thetic* judgments and sentences expressing *categorical* judgments. Other authors have discussed roughly similar dichotomies while using different terminology. For instance: presentational/declarative (Suñer 1982, for Spanish); sentence-focus/predicate-focus (Lambrecht 1994 and 2000, for English and French); presentation/predication (Guéron 1980, for English); existential/declarative (Babby 1980, for Russian). Kuroda (2005) puts forth the terms *predicational/descriptive* as equivalents to *categorical/thetic*, but the latter have well-established usage and are less ambiguous than most of the alternative terminologies. Moreover, the term *theticity* was coined from *thetic* and gained space in the linguistics literature (cf. Sasse 1987; 1995; 1996; 2006; Lambrecht 1994; 2000; Matras/Sasse 1995; Leonetti 2014). In what follows “*thetic sentence*” will be used as a shorthand for “*sentence that conveys a thetic judgment*” and the same for “*categorical sentence*”.

Sentences expressing a categorical judgment attribute a property to an entity, which may be codified as *the subject* or *the topic* of the sentence.<sup>16</sup> In Romance languages, the unmarked order for simple declarative sentences of the *categorical*, or *predicational*, type is SV(O). A “*thetic*” sentence, on the other hand, describes a situation as a whole, in which no single entity is assigned a topic status or given any type of informational highlighting.<sup>17</sup> The preferred order for the *thetic*, or *descriptive*,

<sup>16</sup> In Kuroda’s terminology, *topic* is defined in semantic terms, not in pragmatic/discourse-theory terms. An *aboutness* relation is at the core of the concept *topic*, i.e. *subject of predication*, which must be “familiar” or “recognizable” or “presupposed” or “part of the common ground”, but need not be ‘old information’.

<sup>17</sup> Thetic sentences are all-new, “broad focus” sentences.

type can be VS(O).<sup>18</sup> That is to say, subject-verb inversion can be used as a syntactic strategy to make a sentence unambiguouslythetic, since it marks the subject as non-topic. Romance languages in general use it, but within the limits imposed on each of them by syntactic constraints on subject-verb inversion. In the languages with stronger limitations to the availability of VS order, alternative strategies may be used to grammatically express thethetic/categorical dichotomy, as will be clarified below.

Cross-linguistically, a number of syntactic and semantic factors may facilitate or block the VS order in sentences expressing athetic judgment. Monoargumental predicates, especially unaccusative verbs, indefinite subjects and, to a lesser extent, also oblique complements and object clitics are among the facilitating factors. Hence in French the VS order associated with theticity has been christened *unaccusative inversion* (Marandin 2001; Lahousse 2006a), because it is mainly licensed by unaccusative verbs. Also in Brazilian Portuguese unaccusative inversion constitutes the core of the VS order found inthetic sentences (a matter to which we will return). But, again, it would be simplistic to assume that non-pro-drop French and partial pro-drop Brazilian Portuguese group together against a cohesive group of pro-drop languages. Leonetti (2014) discusses data from Spanish, Catalan and Italian, three standard pro-drop languages, and concludes for a non-uniform behavior with respect to the availability of subject-verb inversion to express theticity:

“VSX is interpreted as a single informational unit, without internal partitions (topic-comment, focus-background); this typically results in athetic, wide focus interpretation, related to a stage topic. Languages like Italian and Catalan reject the processing of marked orders as non-partitioned units, which rules out VSX. More permissive languages, like Spanish, allow for the absence of partitions in marked orders.” (Leonetti 2014, 37)

Leonetti’s (2014) comparative investigation deals with restrictions on subject-verb inversion in sentences involving two-argument predicates, which, as we said above, do not constitute a facilitating factor forthetic inversion. Italian and Catalan thus seem to usually require monoargumental predicates to permit the relevant type of VS order (cf., for Italian, Wandruszka 1982; Benincà 1988; Sornicola 1994; 1995; Belletti 2001; and, for Catalan, Solà 1992; Vallduví 2002; Ordóñez 2007a; 2007b). On the other hand, Romanian (Ulrich 1985) and European Portuguese (Martins 1994; 2010; Kato/Martins 2016) are like Spanish in permitting the VSO order more easily.<sup>19</sup> In the remainder of this section, we will first exemplify VS order inthetic sentences using data from European Portuguese. Then, we will comment on the languages with more

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<sup>18</sup> Kuroda (2005) refers to sentences expressing categorical judgments as *topicalized* sentences in a semantic sense, i.e. they are predications of the form conforming to classical Aristotelian logic, hence involve an aboutness relation. Sentences expressingthetic judgments, on the other hand, are *non-topicalized* because they are not predications.

<sup>19</sup> We use here “O” in the broad sense of Larson (1988; 1990). Hence in this chapter “O” corresponds to Leonetti’s (2014) “X”.



restricted syntactic availability of VS order and show how they mark the thetic/categorical distinction.

Sentence (22) exemplifies the VS order with the copulative verb *estar*, or the unaccusative *entrar*, and a locative argument. The type of predicate and the prepositional object argument are both facilitating factors for VS (cf. Leonetti 2015 for copular sentences). The subject can be a definite or an indefinite DP without any effect on the grammaticality of the sentence and its thetic interpretation.<sup>20</sup> In the situation described in (22), the speaker is concerned about the cat. Hence *the/a dog* is not given discourse prominence, which it would acquire in the corresponding SVO sentence. That is to say, the VSO sentence in (22) is a non-topicalized sentence whereas an SVO sentence would have the subject as the aboutness topic of which the property of being in the garden is predicated. In the SVO sentence, a (non-specific) indefinite subject (i.e. *a dog*) would be odd, in contrast to the definite one (*the dog*), due to semantic/pragmatic constraints on what can be an appropriate aboutness topic.<sup>21</sup>

- (22) EPt.    Não    deixes    sair    o    gato.    {Está/entrou}    {o/um}  
               not   let-2sg   go-out   the   cat   is/entered   the/a  
               cão   no   jardim.  
               dog   in-the   garden  
               ‘Don’t let the cat out. The/a dog has come into the garden.’

The transitive verb *morder*, that can take an accusative or a dative object without changing its meaning, is used in (23) to show that the accusative object puts stronger limitations on VSO than the dative. This is the reason why there is a contrast of grammaticality between the sentences in (23B-a) and (23B-b). Cliticization of the accusative complement can rescue the ungrammatical sentence (23B-a), as illustrated in (23B-c).

- (23) EPt.    A: Porque   é   que   estás   a   chorar?  
               why   is   that   are-2sg   to   cry  
               ‘Why are you crying?’  
               B: a. \*Mordeu um cão o nosso gato. (pointing to the cat)  
                      bit   a   dog   the   our   cat  
                      b. Mordeu um cão ao nosso gato. (pointing to the cat)  
                      bit   a   dog   to-the   our   cat

<sup>20</sup> As for the inexistence of definiteness effects in unaccusative inversion, see Corr (2012).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Dobrovie-Sorin (1994), Motapanyane (1994), and Alboiu (2002) with regard to the semantic restrictions displayed by preverbal subjects in Romanian (in contrast to postverbal subjects), which leads the authors to claim that VSO is the basic/unmarked word order in Romanian and preverbal subjects are always topicalized/left-dislocated.

- c. Mordeu-o/lhe            um    cão.    (pointing to the cat)  
      bit-it-ACC/him-DAT    a     dog  
      ‘A dog bit our cat.’

It is not the case, however, that direct transitive verbs with a full DP object totally ban the availability of the VSO order, as shown in (24a). The sentence is a particular instantiation of the so-called narrative inversion, which also makes VS easily available to unergative verbs.<sup>22</sup> The matrix clauses in (24) display the verb in the imperfect indicative and are articulated with an adverbial subordinate clause that locates the situation described by the VS(O) root clause in the speaker’s perceptual field.

- (24) EPt.    a. *Subia            o    bombeiro    as    escadas    quando*  
               climbed-IMPF the   firefighter the   stairs    when  
               o   homem   se    atirou da            janela.  
               the man       REFL threw from-the window  
               ‘The firefighter was climbing the stairs when the man threw himself  
               out of the window.’  
               b. *Diz    que   não   dorme,   mas   ontem        quando*  
               says that not sleeps but yesterday when  
               cheguei    a   casa   dormia   ele a   bom   dormir.  
               arrived.1sg at home slept he to good sleep  
               ‘He says that he doesn’t sleep, but yesterday when I arrived home he  
               was lying fast asleep.’

With unaccusative and some other typically mono-argumental verbs, the alternation between SV and VS can be optional and dependent only on the speaker’s attitude or communicative intentions, as exemplified in (25) with the verb *telefonar* ‘contact by phone’. But this is not always the case, as shown in (26), where the discourse/pragmatic context induces topical salience on the subject, which induces the SV order. Furthermore, the fact that with verbs like *telefonar* (‘call’) or *chegar* (‘arrive’) the VS order is speaker-oriented, in the sense that the goal of the call or of the motion must be the (location of the) speaker (cf. Tortora 1997; 2001; Cardinaletti 2004; Martins 2010; Martins/Costa, 2016), contributes also to the ungrammaticality of (26B–b).

<sup>22</sup> But unergative verbs are less restrictive than direct transitive verbs concerning VS order associated with theticity. One further example with *dormir* ‘sleep’ is given below.

- (i) EPt.    A: *Mas se não havia camas, como é que fizeram?*  
               but if not had beds how is that did-3PL  
               ‘But if there weren’t any beds, how did you manage?’  
               B: *Dormiu o bebê no sofá e {eu dormi / dormi eu} no chão.*  
               slept the baby on-the sofa and I slept / slept I on-the floor  
               ‘The baby slept on the sofa and I slept on the floor.’

- (25) EPt. a. A mãe telefonou. Queria falar contigo.  
 the mother called wanted talk-INF with-you  
 b. Telefonou a mãe. Queria falar contigo.  
 called the mother wanted talk-INF with-you  
 ‘Mother called. She wanted to talk with you.’
- (26) EPt. A: A mãe ainda não telefonou para a clínica?  
 the mother yet not called to the clinic  
 ‘Hasn’t mother called the medical center yet?’  
 B: a. A mãe telefonou mas ainda não tinham o  
 the mother called but yet not had-3PL the  
 resultado dos exames.  
 result of-the exams  
 b. \*Telefonou a mãe mas ainda não tinham  
 called the mother but yet not had-3PL  
 o resultado dos exames.  
 the result of-the exams  
 ‘Mother called, but they haven’t got the results of the (medical)  
 exams yet.’

As said above, French and Brazilian Portuguese do not display the flexibility of European Portuguese concerning the availability of subject-verb inversion. In French, VS order is still an option in declarative sentences mostly with unaccusative verbs, as exemplified in (27). But French displays a strong restriction on verb-initial sentences, possibly associated with its non-pro-drop nature (thus with the lack of a null expletive subject that may license the structural position(s) where the subject moves in SV, but not unaccusative VS, sentences). Temporal and locative adverbs license unaccusative inversion hypothetically by filling the position that in the canonical SV order would be licensed by the subject (see (27a–c)). French unaccusative inversion also often appears in subordinate (adverbial, relative, complement, cleft) clauses (see (27d)).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See Lahousse (2003; 2004; 2008) on verb-initial sentences. The sentences in (i)–(ii) are taken from Lahousse (2008) and exemplify so-called *absolute inversion*. Lahousse (2008) suggests that “nominal inversion” in French is always licensed by an overt or covert stage topic, and unifies under her analysis what Bonami/Godard/Marandin (1999) consider two different types of inversion, namely “accusative inversion” and “locative inversion”. In all the attestations of absolute inversion collected by Lahousse (2008), “the event denoted by the absolute inversion construction immediately follows the event in the previous context; it denotes the occurrence of a new event or moment, or the appearance of a new person with respect to the immediately preceding spatio-temporal context” (Lahousse 2008, §56). The author thus concludes that “absolute inversion occurs in a context where the content of a covert stage topic can be recovered from the discourse context” (Lahousse 2008, §56).

- (27) Fr. a. Alors arriva Jean.  
           then arrived Jean  
           ‘Then, Jean arrived.’  
           (Lahousse 2006a)
- b. Odilon se leva soi-disant pour allumer la  
      Odilon REFL got-up supposedly to light the  
      terrasse. Dehors tombait une pluie venteuse (...)  
      terrace outside fell a rain windy  
      ‘Odilon got up, supposedly to turn on the terrace lights. Outside the  
      rain fell and the wind blew.’  
      (Queffelec, Lahousse 2008)
- c. Le silence se fit. Alors sont entrés deux  
    the silence REFL emerged then are entered two  
    hommes.  
    men  
    ‘Silence fell. Then, two men entered.’  
    (Marandin 2001)
- d. Dès que se lève le soleil, le coq chante.  
    since that REFL rises the sun the rooster sings  
    ‘As soon as the sun rises, the rooster crows!’  
    (Bonami/Godard/Marandin 1999)

Uncommonly, VS order can be found in French with transitive verbs, but only if the object is a clitic, as illustrated in (28) with an example taken from Lahousse (2006a). More often, French (especially spoken French) resorts to a presentational cleft structure as a syntactic strategy to place the subject-constituent of the corresponding SVO sentence in postverbal position (≥15 Cleft constructions). Lambrecht (1988; 2000) amply discusses the use of the (*il*) *y a* clefts illustrated in (29)–(30) as a means to conveythetic judgments. These clefts are interpretatively equivalent to simple VS clauses in the Romance languages that license VS(O) more extensively than French.

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(i) Fr. Elle sonne. *Arrive une infirmière*: ‘Ah! Mais madame, ce n’est pas l’heure.’

Lit. ‘She rings. Arrives a nurse.’

‘She rings. A nurse arrives: “Oh! But madam, it’s not time yet.”’ (Dolto)

(ii) Fr. Cecilia avec son violon, Marco avec sa clarinette, ils sourient, nous font signe avec leurs instruments, de loin... Flottements... Accords... Tout le monde s’assoit... *Arrive le chef d’orchestre, Eliahu Inbal, un Israélien...*

Lit. ‘Arrives the conductor, Eliahu Inbal, an Israeli...’

‘Cecilia with her violin, Marco with his clarinet, smiling, bob their instruments at us, far away... Stirrings... Tuning... Everyone sits down... The conductor, Eliahu Inbal, an Israeli, arrives.’ (Sollers)

- (28) Fr. La morne champagne du nord (...), dont les quais  
 the dreary country of-the north (...) whose the quays  
 semblent plus larges et plus vides qu' ailleurs,  
 seem more wide and more empty than elsewhere  
 quand les déserte la foule des champs de courses.  
 when them deserts the crowd of-the race-track  
 'The dreary north country (...), whose quays, when the race-track crowd  
 leaves them, seem wider and emptier than those anywhere else.'  
 (Gracq, Lahousse 2006a)

- (29) Fr. a. Y a Jean qui a téléphoné.  
 there has Jean who has called  
 'Jean called.'  
 b. Il y a le téléphone qui sonne.  
 it there has the phone which rings  
 'The phone is ringing.'  
 c. J'ai une voiture qui est en panne.  
 I-have a car that is in breakdown  
 'My car broke down.'  
 (Lambrecht 2000, 653)

- (30) Fr. a. Il y a mes voisins qui crient et j'entends  
 it there has my neighbors that yell and I-hear  
 tout.  
 everything  
 'My neighbors yell and I hear everything.'  
 b. Dimanche après-midi, je rentre en voiture avec mon  
 sunday after-noon I return by car with my  
 oncle, j'arrive à l'appart, il y a mon  
 uncle I-arrive at the-apartment it there has my  
 voisin qui est en train de réparer la porte ...  
 neighbor who is in the-middle of repair the door  
 'Sunday afternoon, I drive back with my uncle, I arrive at the apart-  
 ment, there's my neighbor who is repairing the door...'  
 (Google search, 23-06-2015)

Brazilian Portuguese freely permits VS sentences with unaccusative verbs and some other monoargumental verbs, such as *telefonar* ('call'), as exemplified in (31). Hence VS sentences can be used to express theticity. Because Brazilian Portuguese licenses null expletives, it does not require an overt constituent to precede the verb.

- (31) BPt. a. {Chegou / chegaram} três cartas pra você.<sup>24</sup>  
 arrived-3sg / arrived-3pl three letters for you  
 ‘There arrived three letters for you.’
- b. Nasceu o bebê de Kate Middleton.  
 is-born the baby of Kate Middleton  
 ‘Kate Middleton’s baby is born.’
- c. Desapareceu o iPhone da minha bolsa.  
 disappeared the iPhone from-the my purse  
 ‘My iPhone disappeared from my purse.’
- d. Telefonou uns clientes.  
 called-3sg some clients  
 ‘Some clients called.’

But Brazilian Portuguese can also resort to a different strategy to signal the distinction betweenthetic and categorical sentences, which maintains constant the SVO order. In this case, the subject of the categorical sentence is syntactically marked as the topic through subject doubling, as exemplified in (32a). Parallel structures are also found in French (see (32b); cf. Lambrecht 1981; 1994; Stark 1997; 1999), which like Brazilian Portuguese puts stronger constraints on VS orders than other Romance languages.<sup>25</sup>

- (32) BPt. a. Os policiais, eles chegaram de moto e armados.  
 the policemen they arrived-3pl on motorcycle and armed  
 ‘The police arrived on motorcycles and armed.’
- Fr. b. Les policiers, ils en ont contre nous.  
 the policemen they of-it have against us  
 ‘The police, they have something against us.’  
 (Google search, 25-02-2016)

## 2.3 Inversion in non-degree exclamatives

Marked VSO order is a characteristic feature of different types of non-degree exclamatives in Romance languages (≥17 Exclamatives, imperatives, optatives), as will be briefly illustrated in the present section.

Degree exclamatives involve some gradable property and often take the shape of *wh*-clauses. Unlike degree exclamatives, non-degree exclamatives do not include a

<sup>24</sup> Third person singular agreement is the ordinary option in spoken Brazilian Portuguese, but third person plural is found in written Brazilian Portuguese.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Berlinck (1996; 2000), Britto (1998; 2000), Kato (2000), Kato/Martins (2016) for further discussion of VS order in Brazilian Portuguese.

*wh*-operator. Structurally, non-degree exclamatives are compatible with comparative structures and do not impose limitations on the occurrence of ordinary negation, unlike *wh*-exclamatives (Gutiérrez-Rexach/Andueza 2011; Andueza 2011; Martins 2013). Semantically, while degree exclamatives comment on properties and express the speaker's emotive attitude towards their amount, extent or intensity, non-degree exclamatives comment upon a fact (or state of affairs) and express the speaker's emotive attitude towards its unexpectedness. As Gutiérrez-Rexach/Andueza (2011, 294) phrase it:

"[T]he content of an exclamative construction can be either a fact or a property, and the discourse contribution is the speaker's emotional attitude towards it. The difference between what we have called propositional [*i.e. non-degree*] exclamatives and degree exclamatives relies in the trigger of the associated emotional attitude: an unexpected fact, in the case of propositional exclamatives, and the high or extreme degree of a property, in the case of degree exclamatives."

The topic of non-degree exclamatives and its interaction with constituent order (especially, subject position) is insufficiently covered in the literature and is definitely in need of further investigation and insight. Here we will briefly address it by considering two particular types of VSO exclamative sentences, each found in a different language and apparently displaying quite different syntax. First we will identify coordination exclamatives in European Portuguese (cf. Martins 2013), then the Romanian Subject Pronoun Inversion Construction (SPIC), also a type of VSO non-degree exclamative (cf. Hill 2006). Despite apparent dissimilarities, there is a significant common feature in the analyses of European Portuguese coordination exclamatives and Romanian SPICs, proposed respectively by Martins (2013) and Hill (2006). In both analyses the sentential left-periphery is activated and the verb moves to a position in the CP field in order to license functional features with a pragmatic import, which has consequences for word order besides the interpretive effect of conveying the speaker's emotive attitude.<sup>26</sup>

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**26** In European Portuguese coordination exclamatives, coordination provides a configuration for comparison/contrast between two propositions and so makes explicit the unexpectedness relation that supports the speaker's emotive reaction in non-degree exclamatives. But other types of VSO non-degree exclamatives exist in European Portuguese which do not require the contribution of coordination, as exemplified below.

- (i) EPt.     A: A comunicação correu tão mal.  
                   the presentation went so badly  
                   'The presentation went so badly.'  
               B: Dizes tu (que correu mal)!  
                   say you (that went badly)  
                   'That's what you say!!' (implied: it was not a bad presentation)
- (ii) EPt.     Agora perdeu a Maria a carteira! (Já não bastava  
                   now lost the Maria the wallet still not sufficed

European Portuguese coordination exclamatives are illustrated in (33) and (34) below. They are indicative structures, show non-recursive coordination (expressed by *e* ‘and’) and display VSO order in the first member of the coordinate structure (normally with adjacency between the verb and the subject). Interpretatively, they add to the propositional content of the sentence an implicit evaluative/emotive comment conveying a speaker’s attitude of disapproval towards the described state of affairs. They share with *wh*-exclamatives the factivity property (cf. Grimshaw 1979; Portner/Zanuttini 2000; Zanuttini/Portner 2003; Gutiérrez-Rexach/Andueza 2011; Martins 2013).

- (33) EPt. a. Convidei eu a Maria para jantar e ela não  
 invited I the Maria for dinner and she not  
 apareceu!  
 appeared  
 ‘I invited Maria for dinner and she didn’t show up!’ / ‘Although I  
 invited Maria for dinner, she didn’t show up!’  
 (*Implied*: She should have shown up! or I shouldn’t have invited  
 her!)
- b. Leu o miúdo os livros todos e o professor  
 read the kid the books all and the professor  
 dá-lhe esta nota!  
 gives-him this grade  
 ‘The kid read everything and the teacher gave him this (low) grade!’ /  
 ‘Although the kid read everything, the teacher gave him this (low)  
 grade!’  
 (*Implied*: The teacher should have given the kid a better grade! or  
 There was no need to read everything after all!)
- (34) EPt. a. Convidei eu toda a gente para jantar e afinal  
 invited I all the people for dinner and after-all  
 ainda não recebi o ordenado!  
 yet not received the salary  
 ‘I invited everybody for dinner but I still haven’t received my salary!’  
 (*Implied*: I shouldn’t have invited everybody for dinner!)

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o João ter perdido ontem o casaco.)  
 the João have-INF lost yesterday the jacket  
 ‘Now, Maria has lost her wallet! (As if it wasn’t enough that João lost his jacket yester-  
 day.)’



- b. Não fomos nós ao jardim zoológico e estive  
 not went we to-the garden zoological and was  
 um dia de sol!  
 a day of sun  
 ‘We didn’t go to the zoo and after all it was a sunny day!’  
 (*Implied*: We should have gone to the zoo!)

The VSO order in the first conjunct introduces the counterexpectational flavor characteristic of these coordination exclamatives and anticipates the contrast between the two propositions. The sentences in (33) specifically convey an unexpected result relation, and their implied evaluative/emotive comment targets preferentially the second conjunct, although it may equally well target the first one. The sentences in (34), on the other hand, convey an unexpected time-coincidence relation and their implied evaluative/emotive comment targets the first conjunct.

The Romanian Subject Pronoun Inversion Construction (SPIC) is exemplified in (35) and (36) below. SPICs involve strong emphasis on the verb and display a subject pronoun that obligatorily follows and is adjacent to the verb. In SPICs a full DP subject may co-occur with the subject pronoun, as exemplified in (35), but its presence is not obligatory, as shown in (36). Moreover, the full-fledged DP may precede or follow the verb. In contrast to regular root clauses, the interpretation of SPICs “is speaker oriented” (Hill 2006, 157), i.e. “the peculiar intonation and word order of SPICs yield an interpretation of threat or reassurance that cannot be obtained from regular root clauses” (Hill 2006, 160).

- (35) Rom. DESCOPERĂ ea<sub>i</sub> Maria<sub>i</sub> mereu adevărul, că nu-i săracă  
 discovers she Maria always truth-the that not is poor  
 la minte!  
 at mind  
 ‘Maria will always discover the truth, because she’s not mentally challenged!’
- (36) Rom. ȘTIE ea tot!  
 knows she everything  
 ‘She knows everything!’

Hill’s (2006) analysis for SPICs departs from Cornilescu (2000) and demonstrates that SPICs are not instances of Subject Clitic Inversion as found in French. Crucially, according to Hill (2006), clitic doubling and overt clitic left dislocation chains are not available for subjects in Romanian declarative clauses: “This restriction follows from the status of the subject pronoun, which cannot act as a clitic or agreement marker doubling DP/NP subjects, in the way weak French pronouns do” (Hill 2006, 161).

## 2.4 Conclusion

Inversion is never free and all Romance languages, be they pro-drop or non-pro-drop, use it in quite similar instances. Variation is a matter of grammatical constraints that do not affect the discourse/pragmatically-induced general tendencies described in this section. The order VS signals narrow-focus on the subject (or focus-prominence on the subject in wide focus sentences), but it also signals sentences with a thetic interpretation (i.e. sentences that exclude an aboutness topic). Romance languages use the word order device to disambiguate information-structural configurations and the categorical/thetic opposition whenever possible. With monoargumental verbs, the order VS emerges in both cases. But with transitive verbs, focus on the subject derives VOS whereas theticity derives VSO. Variation between Romance languages results from independent syntactic differences. Particular constructions, such as some types of non-degree exclamatives, may also involve VSO, as the result of the verb requiring a high position in clause structure (cf. Hill 2006; Martins 2013).

## 3 Case and agreement

SV sentences, as exemplified in (37), generally display Nominative, agreeing subjects. Nominative Case here is overtly signaled by the personal pronoun *eles/ellos/ells/loro/ei/ils* (they-NOM) and the agreement pattern is expressed by the third person plural morpheme on the verb since the subject is also third person plural. Postverbal subjects may behave exactly like preverbal ones in regard to case marking and subject-verb agreement, as shown by the VS sentences in (38). Nominative case and verbal agreement thus appear as the morphological hallmarks of subjecthood in Romance languages.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The hypothesis that non-canonical, oblique subjects (comparable to Icelandic “quirky subjects”) can be found in Romance languages will not be addressed in this chapter (see, in support of this hypothesis, González 1988; Masullo 1993; Fernández Soriano 1999; 2000; Rivero/Geber 2003; Rivero 2004; Schäffer 2008; Fischer 2010; Fernández Soriano/Mendikoetxea 2013; and, against it, Gutiérrez-Bravo 2006). Hence, the italicized constituents in sentences (i)–(iv) below, which the authors from which the examples are taken classify as dative subjects, will not be discussed here. On the proposal that Brazilian Portuguese displays agreeing locative prepositional subjects as a diachronic outcome of contact with Bantu languages, see Avelar/Cyrino (2008), Avelar/Cyrino/Galves (2009), Avelar/Galves (2013) and references therein.

- (i) Sp.    A    *Juan*   no   le            gustan   las   rubias.  
              to   Juan   not   him-DAT   like-3PL   the   blondes  
              ‘Juan doesn’t like blondes.’ (González 1988)
- (ii) Sp.    *En Madrid*   nieva.  
              in   Madrid   snows  
              ‘It is snowing in Madrid.’ (Fernández Soriano 1999)

- (37) a. Pt. {As crianças/*pro*/eles} já voltaram da escola.  
 the children/–/they already returned-3PL from-the school
- b. Sp. {Los niños/*pro*/ellos} ya han regresado de la escuela.  
 the children/–/they already have-3PL returned from the school
- c. Cat. {Els nens/*pro*/ells} ja han tornat de l'escola.  
 the children/–/they already have-3PL returned from the-school
- d. It. {I bambini/*pro*/loro} già sono tornati da scuola.  
 the children/–/they already are-3PL returned from-the school
- e. Rom. {Copiii/*pro*/ei} deja s-au întors de la  
 children-the/–/they already REFL-have-3PL returned from  
 școală.  
 school
- f. Fr. Les enfants/*\*pro*/ils} sont déjà rentrés de l'école.  
 the children/*\*–*/they are-3PL already returned from the-school  
 'The children have already got back from school.'
- (38) a. Pt. Já chegaram {os rapazes/eles}.  
 already arrived-3PL the boys/they
- b. Sp. Ya han llegado {los chicos/ellos}.  
 already have-3PL arrived the boys/they
- c. Cat. Ja han arribat {els nois/ells}.  
 already have-3PL arrived the boys/they
- d. It. Già sono arrivati {i ragazzi/loro}.  
 already are-3PL arrived the boys/they
- e. Rom. Deja au ajuns {băieții/ei}.  
 already have-3PL arrived boys-the/they  
 'The boys have already arrived.'

As said in Section 1, further evidence for the subjecthood of the postverbal constituents is provided by their ability to bind anaphoric *se*, control the subject of an adjunct infinitival clause and identify the reference of a null subject in the second member of a coordinate structure, which again groups postverbal subjects together with preverbal ones, as illustrated in (39-B).

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- (iii) Sp. A Juan le pasa algo. / Aquí pasa algo.  
 to Juan him-DAT happens something / here happens something  
 'Something is going on with Juan/here.' (Fernández Soriano 1999)
- (iv) Sp. A Pedro se le quemó la comida.  
 to Pedro se him-DAT burned the food  
 'Pedro has (unintentionally) burned the food.'  
 (Fernández Soriano/Mendikoetxea 2013)

- (39) Pt. A:   Elas    não   se    riram.  
               they-F not   REFL laughed-3PL  
               ‘They (the girls) did not laugh.’
- B:   Riram-se<sub>i</sub>           eles<sub>i</sub>   sem    PRO<sub>i</sub>   disfarçar    e  
               laughed-3PL=REFL they-M without PRO   disguise-INF and  
               pro<sub>i</sub>   não   pediram   desculpa.  
                      not asked-3PL apology  
               ‘But they (the boys) laughed without hiding it and did not apologize.’

However, the postverbal constituent that corresponds to the subject-constituent of an SV sentence does not always behave as in (38) and (39) above. So in (40a–c) below, the monoargumental verb does not agree with the postverbal DP, which also does not bear Nominative Case, as demonstrated by the exclusion of the Nominative pronoun *eles* ‘they’ in (40a) and (40c). Moreover, as shown in (40d) versus (40e), the verb in the non-agreeing sentence (40d) may not control the subject of the adjunct infinitival clause.<sup>28</sup> However, the postverbal DP retains the same semantic relation with the verb as in the corresponding SV sentence. Hence it behaves as a logical subject but not as a morphosyntactic subject, which supports Lambrecht’s (2000) designation of the relevant nominal constituents as “objectivized subjects”.

- (40) a. Spoken BPt.    Já       *chegou*    os    *convidados* /    \**eles*.  
                           already arrived-3sg the    guests /        \*they-NOM  
                           ‘The guests have already arrived.’  
                           (Google Search, 01-09-2015)
- b. Dialectal EPt.    *Chegou*    as    cadeiras. /    *Fechou*    muitas fábricas.  
                               arrived-3sg the chairs /    closed-3sg many factories

**28** Dialectal European Portuguese data extracted from the corpus CORDIAL-SIN (<http://www.clul.ulisboa.pt/en/11-resources/314-cordial-sin-corpus-2>) are provided by Carrilho (2003) and Cardoso/Carrilho/Pereira (2011). A few examples are given below.

- (i) Dialectal EPt.    Nunca mais apareceu   esses   cardumes   aqui  
                           never more appeared-3sg those   fish-schools here  
                           ‘Those fish schools never appeared here again.’  
                           (CORDIAL-SIN, Vila Praia de Âncora)
- (ii) Dialectal EPt.    Veio       aqui (...)   umas   máquinas  
                           came-3sg here       some   machines  
                           ‘Some machines came here.’  
                           (CORDIAL-SIN, Porto Santo)
- (iii) Dialectal EPt.    Já       tem       pousado   lá   até   aviões   de emergência.  
                           already has-3sg landed   there even planes of emergency  
                           ‘Even emergency planes have already landed there.’  
                           (CORDIAL-SIN, Perafita)

- ‘The chairs arrived. / Many factories have closed.’  
(Costa 2001b, 8)
- c. Dialectal EPt. \*Chegou eles. / Chegaram eles.  
arrived-3SG they-NOM / arrived-3PL they-NOM  
‘They have arrived.’
- d. Dialectal EPt. Chegou [muitas crianças]<sub>i</sub> (\*sem PRO<sub>i</sub>  
arrived-3SG many children without PRO  
dizer uma palavra).  
say-INF a word
- e. Dialectal EPt. Chegaram [as crianças]<sub>i</sub> (sem PRO<sub>i</sub> dizer  
arrived-3PL the children without PRO say-INF  
uma palavra).  
a word  
‘The/many children arrived without saying anything.’  
(Carrilho 2003, 175)

The European Portuguese tripartite paradigm in (41) below, displaying respectively a SV, a VS and a VX sentence (where X is an “objectivized subject” in the sense of Lambrecht), has a clear correlate in the French paradigm in (42). As French is not a null subject language, the French paradigm makes it clear that the VX sentence (c) (in contrast to the SV and the VS sentences) is an impersonal construction with an expletive pronoun as morphosyntactic subject. That X is not a grammatical subject (although its semantic relation to the verb is the same as that of S in the examples (a)–(b)) is further confirmed by its inability to control the subject of the adjunct infinitival clause in (43b), in contrast to (43a) but similarly to (40d). We may thus conclude that the only difference between the two paradigms resides in the fact that European Portuguese, like most Romance languages, has null expletive pronouns while French has overt ones.<sup>29</sup>

- (41) EPt. a. As cadeiras chegaram.  
the chairs arrived-3PL  
b. Chegaram as cadeiras.  
arrived-3PL the chairs

<sup>29</sup> French impersonal constructions like (42c) usually display unaccusative verbs, although they are also possible under certain conditions with unergative verbs, as illustrated in (i) – see Cummins (2000), Carlier/Sarda (2010), and references therein. In European Portuguese, non-agreeing VX sentences like (41c) are also mostly found with unaccusative verbs. See Cardoso/Carrilho/Pereira (2011) for empirical evidence and discussion.

(i) Fr. Il nageait des enfants dans la piscine.  
EXPL SWAM-3SG ART.INDF-PL children in the pool  
‘There were children swimming in the pool.’

- c. Chegou as cadeiras.  
arrived-3sg the chairs  
'The chairs arrived.'
- (42) Fr. a. Les tanks fascistes arrivèrent.  
the tanks fascists arrived-3PL  
'The fascist tanks arrived.'
- b. Alors arrivèrent les tanks fascistes. (A. Malraux)  
then arrived-3PL the tanks fascists  
'Then came the fascist tanks.'
- c. Il arriva des voitures de munitions.  
EXPL arrived-3sg ART.INDF-PL cars of ammunition  
'Ammunition cars arrived.' (Erckmann-Cartier)  
(Examples taken from Carlier/Sarda 2010, 2063)
- (43) Fr. a. Alors survinrent pour  $PRO_i$  la huer [ces  
then came-3PL to  $PRO$  her-ACC jeer-INF those  
hommes]<sub>i</sub> qui adorent un crucifié. (M. Barrès)  
men who worship a crucified
- b. \*Alors il survint pour  $PRO_i$  la huer [ces  
then it came-3sg to  $PRO$  her jeer those  
hommes]<sub>i</sub> qui adorent un crucifié.  
men who worship a crucified  
'Then those men who worship a crucified man came to jeer at her.'  
(Examples taken from Carlier/Sarda 2010, 2063)

Besides the expletive pronoun *il*, French also displays the expletive pronoun *ce*, which behaves differently from *il* relative to case and agreement properties (cf. Cardinaletti 1997b). As exemplified in (44), the verb does not agree with the expletive *ce* (compare (44a) with (42c)) and concomitantly *ce* allows the postverbal constituent in (44b) to be assigned Nominative case.

- (44) Fr. a. Ce sont mes parents.  
EXPL are-3PL my parents  
'They are my parents.'
- b. Les stars du défilé Chanel, ce sont elles.  
the stars of-the défilé Chanel EXPL are-3PL they-F.NOM  
'They are the (real) stars of the Chanel fashion show.'  
(Google search, 01-09-2015)

Overt expletives are therefore of different types, which allows us to hypothesize that covert expletives may also be of different kinds. Under the assumption that all

sentences have a subject and a designated structural position for it (the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) of Chomsky 1982), the VS sentences in (38) above can be analyzed as containing a caseless, non-agreeing null expletive that licenses the preverbal subject position of SVO languages (see Corr 2012, for an updated overview of different perspectives on this issue). Variation between Romance languages in the availability of sentences departing from the canonical SV order may therefore be accounted for as a consequence of the types of expletives they license (overt/covert, with/without person-number features, with/without case, locative/non-locative, etc. – cf. ↗5 Clitic pronouns; ↗9 Copular and existential constructions). Besides lexical differences (i.e. (un)availability of a particular type of expletive), structural differences may also play a role (i.e. which positions in clause structure are accessible to particular types of subjects), which would explain, for example, why Romance null subject languages do not behave alike with respect to the (un)constrained availability of verb-initial sentences (cf. Sections 2.1 and 2.2; cf. ↗24 Basic constituent orders. See on these matters, among others, Cardinaletti (1997a; 2004; 2014), Tortora (1997; 2001), Mensching/Weingart (2009; 2016), Biberauer et al. (2010), Corr (2012), and references therein). Under Cardinaletti's (2004) approach to subjecthood, three different structural positions for preverbal subjects are identified as part of the Infl domain: [<sub>SubjP</sub> [<sub>EPP</sub> [<sub>AgrSP</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> SVO]]]]. SubjP bears a "subject-of-predication" feature (which attracts the aboutness topic subject of SVO categorical sentences, but not the non-topic subject of VSOthetic sentences), the EPP-related position requires filling of its specifier and AgrSP carries case and agreement features that must be checked. The three subject positions within the Infl domain are assumed to be universal, but languages differ on (i) how the EPP is satisfied (e.g. Spec,<sub>EPP</sub> can be filled by a null expletive in null subject languages, whereas non null subject languages do not allow for a true (overt) expletive to occur in that same position, since agreeing expletives occur in AgrSP), (ii) how case and agreement features are checked (e.g. overt movement of the subject to the preverbal position can be triggered by the need to check case and agreement features in non null subject languages, whereas in null subject languages movement of the subject to the preverbal position can only be motivated by the need to check either the EPP or the subject-of-predication feature), (iii) how the mapping between syntactic structure and categorical/thetic interpretations is achieved (e.g. when a null "location-goal argument" selected by an unaccusative verb fills Spec,<sub>EPP</sub>, null subject languages displaythetic VS sentences, but non null subject languages typically displaythetic SV sentences; the contrast arises because in the latter the subject moves to Spec,<sub>AgrSP</sub> to check case and agreement features while in the former these features can be checked long distance).

At this point we may wonder why French, in spite of being a language that does not license null expletives, allows inversion without overt expletives. Recall from footnote (22) above that Lahousse (2008) proposes to unify "unaccusative inversion" and "locative inversion" (Bonami/Godard/Marandin 1999) under the label "nominal inversion" and analyzes this type of subject-verb inversion as involving a stage topic

(cf. Gundel 1989; Erteschik-Shir 1997; 1999). The presence of the stage topic may constitute an alternative strategy to the regular licensing of the preverbal subject position in French, a speculation that allows different implementations (cf. Lahousse 2012; Mensching/Weingart 2016; Leonetti 2014). Moreover the stage topic may be covert, resulting in “absolute nominal inversion”, as illustrated in (i) in footnote 22, repeated here as (45). Cf. the availability of Topic-drop in non-pro-drop languages (Abeillé/Godard/Sabio 2008; Robert-Tissot 2015), which also creates an unexpected pattern in languages that essentially require an overt subject.

- (45) Fr. Elle sonne. *Arrive une infirmière*: “Ah! Mais madame, ce n’est pas l’heure.”  
 Lit. ‘She rings. Arrives a nurse.’  
 ‘She rings. A nurse arrives: “Oh! But madam, it’s not time yet.”’  
 (Dolto. Example taken from Lahousse 2008)

## 4 Null subjects

As mentioned above, the ancestor of Romance languages, Latin, was a consistent null subject language, that is, a language with rich verbal agreement where referential subjects could be omitted in finite clauses.<sup>30</sup> Most Romance languages (Portuguese, Galician, Spanish, Catalan, Italian, Romanian, Sardinian and Occitan) maintain this property, although there are differences between Latin and Modern Romance Languages in the distribution of overt subjects (Palermo 1997). Some Romance varieties, however, have undergone a grammatical change and are no longer null subject languages (French and Romansh dialects, cf. Kaiser/Hack 2010). Others seem to have become only partial null subject languages, behaving as split pro-drop or semi pro-drop languages (some Italian dialects, some Occitan and Franco-Provençal dialects, Brazilian Portuguese and Dominican Spanish). Each one of these partial null subject languages, as we will see, shows different restrictions on null subjects (Duarte 1995; Poletto 2006; Kaiser/Oliviéri 2012; Camacho 2013; among others).

The type of overt pronominal form that occurs in subject position is not the same in all Romance languages. Some languages have strong subject pronouns (Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, Romanian, Italian); others have also weak pronouns (French, Northern Italian dialects) that in some cases function as (phonological) clitic pronouns and in others as agreement markers (see Cardinaletti/Starke 1999, and ↗5 Clitic pronouns, for the criteria that distinguish strong pronouns from weak and clitic pronouns). Although the morphosyntactic status of subject pronouns is very clear in some languages, in other cases, the status of subject pronouns has undergone an extensive debate, in particular the status of weak pronouns as subject clitics or

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30 As we will see below, not all null subject languages have rich agreement.



agreement markers. The nature of weak subject pronouns (including in Standard French and in Colloquial French) and their diachronic path are discussed in 75 Clitic pronouns. In this section, we will just mention the phenomena that are relevant for the discussion on null subjects, in particular what concerns the emergence of subject clitics in languages where null subjects were syntactically more restricted in Old Romance (Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985–1986; Poletto 2006; among others).

#### 4.1 The pro-drop parameter and consistent pro-drop languages

Traditional analyses for null subjects attribute this language variation property to a binary parameter known in the literature as the *Null Subject Parameter* or *pro-drop Parameter* (e.g. Chomsky 1981; 1982; Rizzi 1982; Jaeggli/Safir 1989; Barbosa 1995), which distinguishes languages such as Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Catalan or Romanian from languages such as French or Swiss Romansh (e.g. Kaiser 2009):

- (46) a. Pt. (Ele) fala português.  
 b. It. (Lui) parla italiano.  
 c. Sp. (Él) habla español.  
 d. Cat. (Ell) parla català.  
 e. Rom. (El) vorbește românește.  
 ‘He speaks Portuguese/Italian/Spanish/Catalan/Romanian.’
- (47) a. Fr. \*(Il) parle français.  
 b. Romansh (Sursilvan) \*(El) tschontscha romontsch.  
 ‘He speaks French/Romansh.’

A cluster of properties was initially attributed to pro-drop languages (Chomsky 1981), including: i) rich verbal agreement; ii) so called free inversion; and iii) lack of *that*-trace effects, i.e. the possibility to move a subject from an embedded clause introduced by a complementizer.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Lack of overt expletives is usually also associated with pro-drop languages. There are languages that require overt argumental subjects but lack overt expletives (e.g. Capeverdean, Costa/Pratas 2013), but unexpectedly there are some null subject languages (such as non-standard varieties of European Portuguese) that allow overt expletives, although their status is arguably different from the one found in non-pro-drop languages (Carrilho 2005; 2008). In fact, overt expletives found in non-standard varieties of European Portuguese are different from expletive subjects found in English and French: they can co-occur with subjects and they can precede a *wh*-constituent. Carrilho (2005) argues that they are better analyzed as discourse particles that mark specific illocutionary values. We can also find partial null subject languages (such as Northern Occitan dialects) that have expletive subject clitics (see 75 Clitic pronouns).

Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, which are considered consistent pro-drop languages, all have a rich verbal system, with at least four (usually five) person distinctions in all tenses:

**Table 1:** Verbal paradigms of some Romance languages (simple present of the verb ‘to sing’)

	Portuguese	Spanish	Italian	Catalan	Romanian
<b>1SG</b>	canto	canto	canto	canto	cânt
<b>2SG</b>	cantas	cantas	canti	cantes	cânți
<b>3SG</b>	canta	canta	canta	canta	cântă
<b>1PL</b>	cantamos	cantamos	cantiamo	cantem	cântăm
<b>2PL</b>	cantais/cantam	cantáis/cantan	cantate	canteu	cântați
<b>3PL</b>	cantam	cantan	cantano	canten	cântă

French, however, in its spoken form, has lost most person distinctions (e.g. Riegel/Pellat/Rioul <sup>4</sup>2009):

(48) Fr.	je chante	[fãt]	on chante	[fãt]
	I sing		we sing	
	tu chantes	[fãt]	vous chantez	[fãte]
	you-SG sing		you-PL sing	
	il chante	[fãt]	ils chantent	[fãt]
	he sings		they sing	

Although there are differences in writing, in the spoken modality, for most verbs there is no person distinction in the singular and the verb form is identical to the third person plural, as is illustrated for the simple present of the verb ‘to sing’ in (48). For the first person plural, although the standard form *nous chantons* ‘we sing’ has a different ending, the colloquial form *on* ‘we’ is similar to the third person singular. Therefore, in colloquial speech, only the second person plural has a different ending.

The loss of person distinctions has been signaled as a possible cause for the loss of null subjects in the history of French. While an explanation resorting to the weakness of morphological distinctions may be valid for the transition to the Modern language, several authors have shown that changes in subject expression from Old French to Middle French correlate instead with word order changes (Adams 1987; Vance 1989; Roberts 2014; Prévost 2015) (see Section 4.6). Furthermore, there is an asymmetry in subject drop between subordinate clauses and main clauses in Old French: null subjects are much rarer in subordinate clauses than in main clauses. This

challenges an explanation that relates subject drop to morphological richness (Schøsler 2002; Zimmermann 2014).<sup>32</sup>

Consider now “free inversion”. Although it is true that pro-drop languages allow postverbal subjects more easily than non-pro-drop languages, exemplified by English and French in (49), as we have seen in Section 2, inversion in pro-drop Romance languages (cf. 50) cannot be considered “free”. Rather, it is conditioned by discourse factors and limited to some specific syntactic configurations. It is also not the case that non-pro-drop languages totally lack subject-verb inversion (see Section 2 and references therein for French).

- (49) a. Eng. Who has phoned? /\*Has phoned John.  
b. Fr. Qui a téléphoné? / \*A téléphoné Jean.

- (50) a. Pt. Quem telefonou? / Telefonou o João.  
b. Sp. ¿Quién ha llamado? / Ha llamado Juan.  
c. It. Chi ha chiamato? / Ha chiamato Gianni.  
d. Cat. Qui ha trucat? / Ha trucat en Joan.  
e. Rom. Cine a sunat? / A sunat Ioan.

The third property, lack of *that*-trace effects, refers to the ability to move an embedded subject out of a finite clause introduced by a complementizer. This property has been related to the fact that pro-drop languages can move their subject from a postverbal position, whereas non-pro-drop languages cannot (Rizzi 1982). Portuguese and Italian, for instance, allow subject extraction out of an embedded finite clause headed by a complementizer (51), whereas French disallows this type of movement, although for some speakers the structure is possible with *qui* introducing the embedded clause – see (52b) vs (52c) (cf. e.g. Rizzi/Shlonsky 2007):

- (51) a. Pt. Quem pensas *que* \_\_ escreveu este poema?  
b. It. Chi pensi *che* \_\_ abbia scritto questo poema?  
c. Cat. Qui creus *que* \_\_ va escriure aquest poema?  
d. Sp. ¿Quién crees *que* \_\_ escribió este poema?  
e. Rom. Cine crezi *că* \_\_ a scris acest poem?

- (52) a. Eng. \*Who do you think *that* \_\_ has written this poem?  
b. Fr. \*Qui crois-tu *qu'* \_\_ a écrit ce poème?  
b'. Fr. Qui crois-tu *qui* a écrit ce poème?

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<sup>32</sup> Notice that we can still find some cases of null subjects in sixteenth-century French texts, that some authors relate to the enunciative context (Taddei 2013).

This cluster of properties as a characteristic of pro-drop languages was shown, however, to be too strong: typologically, not all languages that allow subject omission display these properties (Gilligan 1987). We will come back to these phenomena in Section 5.

Although the classical distinction between pro-drop and non-pro-drop languages as a binary specification easily explained contrasts between French and the other main European Romance languages (Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Romanian), it soon became clear that it did not account adequately for other systems. Soon, it was found that this typological division was too simplistic, considering not only data from languages from other language families (Chinese, Finnish), but also data from Romance dialects (Biberauer et al. 2010).

Some Romance varieties, in fact, show a less clear-cut system, null subjects being restricted to some morpho-syntactic contexts.<sup>33</sup> We will first consider Romance varieties that only allow subject dropping in some grammatical persons (Section 4.2) and then varieties where the null subject seems to be restricted to some syntactic environments (Section 4.3). We will then consider special cases of subject omission in French, a language that usually does not allow pro-drop (Section 4.4). An interim summary is offered in Section 4.5. Finally, in Section 4.6, we will briefly mention possible correlations between loss of pro-drop in French and northern Italian varieties, changes in word order and the type of licensing of *pro*.

## 4.2 Partial pro-drop languages: “split pro-drop” languages

Although standard European Romance languages are relatively well behaved as far as the traditional dichotomy between pro-drop and non-pro-drop languages is concerned, there are several Romance dialects that show a split pattern of subject omission and properties that are unexpected in consistent pro-drop languages.

As mentioned in several studies, there are Romance dialects that exhibit mixed patterns of pro-drop: null subjects are licensed only in some persons of the paradigm. These mixed patterns have been found in some Occitan dialects from transition areas (Olivieri 2004; 2009; 2011; Kaiser/Olivieri/Palasis 2013), in some Franco-Provençal dialects (Olszyna-Marzys 1964; Heap 2000; Diémoz 2007; Hinzelin/Kaiser 2012; among others) and in some Italian dialects (mostly northern Italian dialects) (Manzini/Savoia 2002; Poletto 2006; Savoia/Manzini 2010; among others). Diachronically, some of these partial pro-drop systems seem to have originated from medieval

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<sup>33</sup> Languages like Chinese correspond to another type of null subject language. In this case, there is no verbal agreement morphology and null subjects seem to be licensed by discourse conditions (Huang 1984; Jaeggli/Safir 1989; Sigurðsson 2011). No Romance language follows this pattern, although some authors have considered that Brazilian Portuguese has properties typical of a “discourse-oriented language” (Negrão/Viotti 2000).

systems where pro-drop was allowed, but only under specific syntactic conditions (Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985–1986), and they share the property of having weak subject pronouns (see Section 4.6). We illustrate some of the paradigms with data from some northern Occitan dialects reported in Oliviéri et al. (2015):

**Table 2:** Verbal paradigms and obligatory subject pronouns of the verb ‘to be’ in some northern Occitan dialects

	Le Mont-Dore	Tayac	Eymoutiers	Coussac-Bonneval
<b>1SG</b>	s’e	sɛj	jo se	s’e
<b>2SG</b>	t s’e	tœ se	te se	ty se
<b>3SG</b>	‘e	ew ej	ej	u ‘e
<b>1PL</b>	sā	sɔ̃ <sup>ŋ</sup>	nu sū	nu s’ū
<b>2PL</b>	sɛ	vuzaw se	vu se	vu s’e
<b>3PL</b>	sɔ̃	zi sɔ̃ <sup>ŋ</sup>	sū	s’ū

Data from Northern Italian dialects point in the same direction. Since there is a very rich diversity of paradigms (Brandi/Cordin 1989; Poletto 2006; Savoia/Manzini 2010; among others), we cannot mention them all. We will just illustrate some cases, to show that the presence of the clitic subject can be required only in some grammatical persons. We illustrate some of the paradigms with data from the northern Italian dialect Venetian, taken from Poletto (2006, 179) and with data from Trentino and Fiorentino, taken from Brandi/Cordin (1989, 113).

**Table 3:** Verbal paradigms and obligatory subject pronouns of some Italian dialects

	Venetian	Fiorentino	Trentino
	‘to eat’	‘to speak’	‘to speak’
<b>1SG</b>	magno	(e) parlo	parlo
<b>2SG</b>	ti magni	tu parli	te parli
<b>3SG</b>	el magna	e/la parla	el/la parla
<b>1PL</b>	magnemo	si parla	parlem
<b>2PL</b>	magnè	vu parlate	parlé
<b>3PL</b>	i magna	e/le parlano	i/le parla

In the first case, there is no clitic in first person singular and first and second person plural, but subject clitics are required in second and third person singular and third



- (56) Fiorentino    a. Gl'è    venuto    la    Maria.  
                          it-is    come    the    Maria  
                          'Maria has come.'  
                          b. Gl'ha    telefonato    delle    ragazze.  
                          it-has    phoned        some    girls  
                          'Some girls have phoned.'  
                          (Brandi/Cordin 1989, 113, 115 and 118)

- (57) Fiorentino    \*La    canta    e    balla.  
                          she    sings    and    dances  
                          (Rizzi 1986, 406)

The Romance dialectal systems are quite diverse and complex and we cannot consider them all in detail. However, the cases we mentioned are sufficient to illustrate that there can be pro-drop languages that obey different restrictions in the persons that license null subjects.<sup>34</sup> These Romance dialects force us to reconsider a pure binary distinction for the Null Subject Parameter (even though we have to take into account the special status of the subject pronouns as agreement markers in many of these varieties). They also provide evidence against a direct association between rich agreement and pro-drop.<sup>35</sup>

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**34** As we will see below (Sections 4.3 and 4.6), there are also differences concerning the syntactic contexts where null subjects are allowed in different kinds of null subject languages.

**35** Another type of evidence for lack of a direct association between agreement and pro-drop comes from some Portuguese inflected infinitival structures where subjects are not licensed in spite of overt person agreement – see (i) below and Raposo (1989) – and from non-inflected non-finite structures from several Romance languages, such as so-called personal infinitives and adverbial gerunds, that license null subjects and full subjects – see (ii) and Brito (1984), Fernández Lagunilla (1987), Lobo (1995).

- (i) EPt.    a. Obriguei as crianças a (\*elas) lavar(em) os dentes.  
                          forced.1sg the children to (\*they) wash.INF(3PL) the teeth  
                          'I forced the children to brush their teeth.'  
                          b. A mãe observou as crianças a (\*elas) brincar(em).  
                          the mother observed the children to (\*they) play.INF(3PL)  
                          'The mother observed the children playing.'
- (ii) a. Sp.    Al llegar Juan, se asustó.  
                          to-the arrive Juan REFL scared  
                          'When Juan arrived, he got scared.'
- b. Pt.    Estando as crianças doentes, temos de ficar em casa.  
                          being the children sick have.1PL to stay at home  
                          'As the children are sick, we have to stay home.'

### 4.3 Another type of partial pro-drop languages: “semi pro-drop” languages

Another type of partial pro-drop language (or “semi pro-drop” language) corresponds to Brazilian Portuguese. Many authors have argued that this Portuguese variety is undergoing a progressive loss of pro-drop. Most studies relate this gradual change to impoverished morphology (cf. Duarte 1995; 2000). In fact, Spoken Brazilian Portuguese has an impoverished verbal system, partially induced by changes in the pronominal system, that lead to spreading third person morphological marking to other persons (Duarte 2000, 19).

(58) BPt.	eu	amo	a gente	ama
	I	love-1sg	the people	love-3sg ‘we love’
	você	ama	vocês	amam
	you-sg	love-3sg	you-pl	love-3pl
	ele/ela	ama	eles/elas	amam
	he/she	loves-3sg	they	love-3pl

Duarte (1995; 2000) observes a progressive tendency to use more full pronouns in theatre plays written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The loss is more substantive with first and second persons and more gradual with third persons (Duarte 1995), an expected fact if the loss of null subjects is directly linked to impoverished morphology.

In consistent null subject languages, such as Italian, Spanish or European Portuguese, null pronouns are the unmarked option and there is a “division of labor” between null and full pronouns. Although several factors may play a role,<sup>36</sup> third person null pronouns usually recover a subject antecedent or a salient topic (59a) and third person full pronouns recover preferentially a non-subject antecedent or signal focus or contrast on the subject (59b)<sup>37</sup> (Montalbetti 1984; Brito 1991; Carminati 2002; Lobo 2013; among others).

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<sup>36</sup> These are preferences and not categorical judgements. Several factors play a role in the overt or null realization of the pronoun, including information structure (in particular the type of topic marked by the pronoun), animacy restrictions or pragmatic constraints (see Alonso-Ovalle et al. 2002; Luegi 2012; Pešková 2014; among others). For first and second person, there may be different constraints and there can also be effects of grammaticalized structures (see Posio 2013).

<sup>37</sup> There seems to be, though, some crosslinguistic variation in the tendencies found in different pro-drop languages (Filiaci/Sorace/Carreiras 2013).



- (59) EPt. a. O chefe<sub>i</sub> disse ao amigo<sub>j</sub> que *pro*<sub>i</sub> precisava de  
 the boss told to-the friend that needed to  
 descansar.  
 rest  
 b. O chefe<sub>i</sub> disse ao amigo<sub>j</sub> que ele<sub>j</sub> precisava de  
 the boss told to-the friend that he needed to  
 descansar.  
 rest  
 ‘The boss told his friend that he needed to rest.’

In Brazilian Portuguese, the use of full pronouns is found in unexpected contexts for consistent null subject languages. Corpus data shows that the proportion of overt pronouns relatively to null pronouns is higher in Brazilian Portuguese than in other pro-drop Romance varieties and in European Portuguese in particular, and that full pronouns occur in unmarked contexts, unlike consistent pro-drop languages (Barbosa/Duarte/Kato 2005). In Brazilian Portuguese, thus, a full pronoun does not show the same obviation effects as in consistent pro-drop languages. A full pronoun can recover either the subject or another constituent, as shown in (60). Besides, overt pronouns can easily recover inanimate antecedents (Duarte 2000, 22), as exemplified in (61).

- (60) BPt. a. A Ana<sub>i</sub> disse à Rosa<sub>j</sub> que ela<sub>i/j</sub> precisava  
 the Ana told to-the Rosa that she needed  
 de descansar.  
 of rest  
 ‘Ana told Rosa that she needed to rest.’  
 b. [O povo brasileiro]<sub>i</sub> acha que ele<sub>i</sub> tem uma  
 the people Brazilian thinks that he has a  
 grave doença.  
 bad disease  
 ‘Brazilian people think that they are seriously ill.’  
 (Duarte 1993, apud Costa/Pratas 2013)

- (61) BPt. A casa virou um filme quando ela teve de ir abaixo.  
 the house became a movie when it-F had to go down  
 ‘The house became a movie when it had to be demolished.’

Furthermore, third person null subjects in Brazilian Portuguese have a more limited distribution than in European Portuguese, as they can only recover a c-commanding antecedent in the closest clause (62). In European Portuguese, as in consistent null subject languages, third person null subjects can recover a more distant antecedent (63a), a non c-commanding antecedent (63b), or lack a clausal antecedent as in (64).

- (62) BPt. a. \*A Lúcia conheceu alguns garotos na festa e  $\emptyset$   
 the Lúcia met some boys at.the party and  
 acharam ela bonita.  
 found her pretty
- b. A Lúcia conheceu alguns garotos na festa e eles  
 the Lúcia met some boys at.the party and they  
 acharam ela bonita.  
 found her pretty  
 ‘Lúcia met some boys at the party and (they) found her beautiful.’  
 (Negrão/Viotti 2000, 110)

(63) EPt./??BPt.

- a. Amália queria que os amigos dissessem que *pro* era  
 Amália wanted that the friends said that was  
 fadista.  
 fado-singer  
 ‘Amália wanted her friends to say that she was a fado singer.’
- b. O médico disse à Ana que *pro* estava grávida.  
 the doctor told to.the Ana that was pregnant  
 ‘The doctor told Ana that she was pregnant.’

(64) a. EPt./??BPt.

- O chefe está atrasado. Acho que *pro* perdeu o comboio.  
 the boss is late think-1sg that lost the train
- b. EPt./BPt.  
 O chefe está atrasado. Acho que ele perdeu o comboio.  
 the boss is late think-1sg that he lost the train  
 ‘The boss is late. I think he missed his train.’

Additionally, in Brazilian Portuguese subjects are frequently doubled by a full pronoun (Duarte 2000), as mentioned in Section 2.2 and illustrated in (65). This is unexpected in consistent null subject languages.

- (65) a. BPt. A Clarinha ela cozinha que é uma maravilha.  
 the Clarinha she cooks that is a marvel  
 ‘Clarinha can cook wonderfully.’  
 (Duarte 2000, 28)
- b. Spoken Fr. Paul, il est pas encore arrivé.  
 Paul he has not yet arrived  
 ‘Paul has not arrived yet.’

On the basis of these facts, some authors have argued that null subjects in Brazilian Portuguese behave as variables or as deleted topics (Negrão/Müller 1996; Negrão/Viotti 2000; Modesto 2000; 2008). Others analyze embedded referential null subjects as deleted copies of a movement chain (Ferreira 2000; 2004; 2009; Rodrigues 2002; 2004). For others (Silva 2000), there can be different types of null subjects in Brazilian Portuguese, including variable null subjects and anaphoric null subjects. The exact status of null subjects in Brazilian Portuguese is a complex matter that still deserves further investigation. On the other hand, Brazilian Portuguese has been progressively restricting the contexts of subject-verb inversion (Duarte 2000), setting it apart from consistent null subject languages, such as Italian, Spanish and European Portuguese. Holmberg/Nayudu/Sheehan (2009) attribute an additional property to this kind of partial null subject languages: the ability to have null arbitrary subjects. In this respect, Brazilian Portuguese resembles Finnish and diverges from European Portuguese, as exemplified in (66).

- (66) BPt.    a. É    assim    que    faz    o    doce.  
                  is this.way that makes the sweet  
                  ‘This is how one makes the dessert.’  
                  b. Nesse hotel não pode entrar na piscina bêbado.  
                  in.this hotel NEG can enter in.the swimming-pool drunk  
                  ‘In this hotel it is not permitted to use the swimming pool when drunk.’  
                  (Rodrigues 2004, 72)  
                  EPt.    c. É    assim    que    \*(se)    faz    o    doce.  
                  is this.way that SE-IMPERS makes the sweet  
                  ‘This is how one makes the dessert.’  
                  d. Nesse hotel não \*(se) pode entrar na  
                  in.this hotel NEG SE-IMPERS can enter in.the  
                  piscina bêbado.  
                  swimming-pool drunk  
                  ‘In this hotel it is not permitted to use the swimming pool when drunk.’

Thus, although Brazilian Portuguese still has null subjects, it does not manifest the typical properties of a consistent null subject language.<sup>38</sup>

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**38** Dominican Spanish seems to be undergoing similar changes, with a higher use of overt pronouns than in other Spanish varieties and use of full pronouns in unmarked contexts, not directly related to rich agreement paradigms (Toribio 2000). Toribio (2000) argues that there is a linguistic change in progress and speakers of Dominican Spanish acquire two grammatical systems with different parametric specifications.

Some authors consider that Brazilian Portuguese is at an intermediate stage in the change from a null subject language to a non null subject language, similar to an ancient stage of French (e.g. Kato 1999). But there is reason to believe that the changes that Old French has undergone are not of the same type as the changes that occurred in Brazilian Portuguese, as argued by Roberts (2014). First, while changes in French were triggered mostly by changes in word order, changes in Brazilian Portuguese were triggered arguably by strong syncretism in the verbal paradigm due to a change in the pronominal system.<sup>39</sup> Second, while the loss of null subjects in Old French correlates with the development of a system of weak pronouns (Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985–1986; Poletto 2006), the same does not happen (at least not so clearly) in Brazilian Portuguese.<sup>40</sup> There is arguably a reduced form of the strong pronoun *você* ‘you (sg)’ to a weak form *cê* (Kato 1999; among others), but the same reduction does not affect other personal pronouns.

Costa/Duarte/Silva (2006) show that subject doubling structures in Brazilian Portuguese do not have the typical properties of left dislocation: doubling may occur in contexts where the subject cannot be a topic, as in (67a), and there are instances of doubling with quantified subjects that cannot be topicalized, as shown by the contrast between (67b) and (67c).

(67) BPt./\*EPt.

a. Beginning of phone-call:

O	Edmilson,	ele	'tá?
the	Edmilson	he	is?

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<sup>39</sup> European Portuguese also shows some changes in the pronominal system, but to a lesser extent: in the central and southern varieties, the second plural pronoun *vós* [you-PL] is no longer used and has been replaced by *vocês*, which triggers third person plural agreement; for first person plural there is variation between *nós* ‘we’, which triggers first person plural verbal agreement, and *a gente* ‘the people’, which triggers third person singular verbal agreement (and for some speakers first person plural), but *a gente* is clearly socially marked as belonging to a non-standard or colloquial register. For second person singular, as in Italian, the familiar form *tu* [you-SG] coexists with polite forms of address that trigger third person singular verbal agreement.

<sup>40</sup> Kato (2000) makes the following generalization: languages with non-homophonous forms for subjects (nominative) and for stressed forms are non-pro-drop languages: “if the strong form is not nominative, then the language is [-null-subject]” (Kato 2000, 233). However, as Kato recognizes, the inverse is not necessarily true. Kato’s idea is that loss of null subjects and loss of subject inversion are a consequence of a change in the pronominal system: weak subject pronouns make the projection of the subject preverbal position obligatory, unlike in null subject languages. However, there are some problems with her account, since French subject pronouns are undoubtedly different from English subject pronouns: English subject pronouns can be coordinated, focused and separated from the verb (by an adverb, for instance), contrarily to French subject pronouns. The first behave as strong forms and the latter as weak forms. Also the phenomenon of subject doubling is much more frequent in French than in English, which suggests that subject pronouns have a different status in each language.

'Is Edmilson there?'

(Costa/Galves 2002, apud Costa/Duarte/Silva 2006)

- b. Cada criança ela leva seu livro para a escola.  
 each child she takes her book to the school  
 'Each child takes her book to school.'

- c. \*Cada criança, eu vi em sua escola.  
 each child I saw at her school  
 (Silva 2004, apud Costa/Duarte/Silva 2006)

The authors also show that subject doubling in Brazilian Portuguese and in French have different properties and a different frequency: in Standard French doubling only occurs when the subject is a topic and it is not possible with a quantified subject; in Brazilian Portuguese, however, as the examples above illustrate, doubling may occur with quantified subjects (67b) and non-topical subjects (67a).<sup>41</sup> Although the issue is debatable, it seems that Brazilian Portuguese (and possibly Dominican Spanish) is a partial null subject language different from the northern Occitan and northern Italian dialects.

#### 4.4 Other types of subject omission

When we look at some registers of French, we might think that null subjects may also be an option in this language:

- (68) Fr. a. M' accompagne au Mercure.  
 me accompanies to.the Mercure  
 'S/he accompanies me to the Mercure.'  
 b. Revient à l' affaire Alb ... Me demande si ...  
 returns to the business Alb ... me asks if ...  
 'S/he returns to the Alb business. S/he asks me if ...'  
 (Léautaud, P. *Le Fléau, Journal particulier*, 1917–1930, 69–70, 20.3,  
 apud Haegeman 2013, 90)

However, this type of subject omission (which can also be found in English) has been shown to be of a different kind. Subject omission in French (a non-pro-drop language) is clearly limited to some registers (it is christened as "diary-drop" by some authors) and is subject to specific syntactic constraints: i) there is no omission in embedded

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<sup>41</sup> In Standard French doubling seems to be a type of topicalization, where the topic is doubled by the subject pronoun (De Cat 2005). In non-standard varieties of French, however, sometimes called "Français avancé" ('Advanced French'), doubling may be closer to the Brazilian Portuguese construction (Zribi-Hertz 1994).

clauses, as illustrated in (69); ii) there is no omission in clauses with a left dislocated constituent, as shown in (70), although we can find examples with initial adjuncts, as (71). Because this kind of subject omission is excluded from typical embedded domains, it has been considered a root phenomenon resulting from the possibility of having a truncated clause (Haegeman 2013).

- (69) Fr. Maman lui dit que \*(je) suis malade.  
 Mommy him tells that \*(I) am ill  
 'Mommy tells him that I am ill.'
- (70) Fr. Son frère, \*(il/elle) l' accompagne au bistro.  
 his/her brother, \*(he/she) him accompanies to.the bistro  
 'S/he accompanies his/her brother to the bistro.'  
 (Haegeman 2013, 94)
- (71) Fr. a. puis \_\_ se colle à moi et me tend sa bouche.  
 then \_\_ REFL clings to me and me offers her mouth  
 'Then, she clings to me and offers me her mouth.'  
 (Léautaud 1933, 31, apud Haegeman 2013, 95)
- b. De nouveau \_\_ me tend sa bouche.  
 again \_\_ me offers her mouth  
 'She offers me her mouth again.'  
 (Léautaud 1933, 31, apud Haegeman 2013, 95)
- c. Tout de suite \_\_ m' a parlé de ma visite  
 immediately \_\_ me have.3sg talked of my visit  
 chez elle dimanche.  
 at her Sunday  
 'Immediately she talks to me about my visit to her on Sunday.'  
 (Léautaud 1933, 45, apud Haegeman 2013, 95)

Zimmermann/Kaiser (2014) mention another context where subject omission is frequent in spoken Colloquial French. The authors observe that beside cases of subject omission restricted to a subset of epistemic verbs (*connaître*, *croire*), as in (72a), expletive subjects are frequently omitted in colloquial spoken French, as exemplified in (72b). The authors show that, although the phenomenon can also be found in embedded clauses, such as (73), it is more frequent in root contexts.

- (72) Fr. a. connais pas  
 know.1sg not  
 'I don't know.'  
 (Gadet <sup>2</sup>1997, 70, apud Zimmermann/Kaiser 2014)

- b. faut voir  
must.3sg see.INF  
'We'll see.'

(Gaatone 1976, 245, fn. 1, apud Zimmermann/Kaiser 2014)

- (73) Fr. Quand faut y aller faut y aller.  
when must.3sg there go.INF must.3sg there go.INF  
'A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do!'  
(movie title, French translation for the Italian movie *Nati con la camicia*,  
apud Zimmermann/Kaiser 2014)

Zimmermann/Kaiser (2014) establish a parallelism between the phenomenon exemplified in (72)–(73) and data from older stages of the language, and they argue that expletive omission in Colloquial French seems to be a continuation of a grammatical trait of Medieval French. Culbertson/Legendre (2014), however, have a different view on the null expletives of Colloquial French. Based on experimental data, the authors show that omission of expletives is accepted at different rates for different kinds of expletives and for different kinds of verbs: non-argumental expletives are more likely to be omitted than quasi-argumental expletives (such as subjects of weather verbs), and expletive drop is more likely to occur with modal verbs than with non-modal verbs. Differently from Zimmerman/Kaiser (2014), they argue that this is an innovation of Colloquial French, related to the grammaticalization of the subject clitics as agreement markers (for further details on the status of subject pronouns in different varieties of French, see 75 Clitic pronouns; for a comparison between the French data in (69)–(73) above and subject deletion in non-pro-drop English, see Horsey 1998; Nariyama 2004; Weir 2009; Holmberg 2010; Stark/Robert-Tissot forthcoming).

## 4.5 Typology of Romance (non) null subject languages – summary

Summarizing, we can thus conclude that Romance languages provide interesting evidence in favor of a more refined typology of null subject languages, particularly when we take into account dialectal varieties. The typology of languages with respect to null subjects must take into account not only “rich” agreement morphology on the verb, but also different kinds of subjects with respect to argumental status (expletive/argumental), person features and anaphoric properties:

- i) *consistent null subject languages* – null subjects allowed in all contexts (referential, expletive, all persons) [Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Galician, Catalan, Occitan, Romanian]
- ii) *partial (split) null subject languages* – null subjects only allowed in some persons (and/or tenses) [some northern Occitan dialects, Franco-Provençal and northern Italian dialects]

- iii) *partial (semi) pro-drop languages* – null expletives but limited use of referential null pronouns, that seem to behave as bound variables or copies of movement [Brazilian Portuguese]
- iv) *non-pro-drop languages* – null subjects forbidden [French] (but with marginal cases of subject omission in Colloquial French)

## 4.6 Loss of null subjects and pro-drop licensing

What has caused the loss of null subjects in some Romance varieties?

Some studies have established a correlation between the morphosyntactic status of subject pronouns in Romance languages, word order restrictions in the medieval languages and the Null Subject Parameter (Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985–1986). According to several authors (Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985–1986; Roberts 1993; Poletto 2006), the availability of null subjects was more restricted in medieval French and in the medieval Northern Italian dialects than in the medieval Ibero-Romance languages. The languages with a more restricted system of null subjects were, according to the same authors, verb second (V2) languages, that is, languages where verbs occupied the second position in the clause and could be preceded by objects, adverbs or subjects, as illustrated by (74) from Medieval French. In those languages, null subjects were mainly attested in postverbal environments, as in (75). In these varieties licensing of null subjects seems to be restricted to this syntactic context (Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985–1986; Roberts 1993; Poletto 2006). (For other perspectives on Old French word order and the loss of null subjects, see Rinke/Meisel (2009), Meisel/Elsig/Rinke (2013), Zimmermann (2014), and references therein.)

- (74) Fr.     a. Autre    chose   ne   pot   li   rois   trouver.  
                  another thing not can the king find.INF  
                  ‘The king cannot find anything else.’  
                  (*M. Artu*, apud Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985–1986, 53)
- b. Et     ton     nom     revoel   ge   savoir  
                  and   your   name   want   I   know.INF  
                  ‘And I want to know your name.’  
                  (*Erec*, apud Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985–1986, 53)

- (75) Fr.     Sire,   nouvelles   vos   sei     —   dire   del     tournoient.  
                  Sir   news     you   know.1sg   —   say   from.the   tournament  
                  ‘Sir, I can tell you news of the tournament.’  
                  (*M. Artu*, apud Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985–1986, 53)

The loss of null subjects or the change into asymmetric pro-drop systems would thus correlate with changes in word order, with the consequent inability to license subjects



in the proper syntactic configuration (Roberts 2014; Poletto 2006). Furthermore, this change has been argued to correlate with the development of a system of weak subject pronouns, that in some cases (some northern Italian dialects and some colloquial varieties of French) then evolved into agreement markers (see 75 Clitic pronouns). In the medieval Ibero-Romance varieties, in contrast, null subjects were freer and could also be licensed in preverbal position. In these varieties, null subjects were maintained according to the Latin system and subject pronouns kept their status as strong pronouns (see 75 Clitic pronouns, and Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985–1986).

The case of Brazilian Portuguese seems to be different. In this variety, the raising in frequency of overt subject pronouns does not seem to follow from a change in word order and in the type of licensing of null subjects. It seems to be instead a consequence of changes in the pronominal system that induced a reduction in person distinctions in the verbal paradigm (Roberts 2014), although as we have seen it is difficult to establish a direct link between impoverished morphology and the use of overt pronouns (Negrao/Viotti 2000).

There seem to be indeed different kinds of partial null subject languages (Biberauer et al. 2010). So from the simple binary distinction established in the 1980s between pro-drop languages, like Spanish or Italian, and non-pro-drop languages, like French or English, we have now come to a system that must consider fine-grained distinctions between different types of licensing of null subjects and different types of null subjects.

## 5 Reconsidering properties of null subject languages

As mentioned above, traditional accounts of the Null Subject Parameter established a correlation between different properties: i) optional omission of pronominal subjects; ii) ‘free subject inversion’; and iii) lack of *that*-trace effects (Rizzi 1982). This correlation, however, seems to be too strong (cf. Gilligan 1987). In this section, we will reconsider some of these properties and some problems for the traditional view. See Section 2 above in regard to ‘free subject inversion’.

### 5.1 Are null subjects optional?

Although in consistent null subject languages overt pronouns are judged optional, in reality null subjects and full pronouns do not alternate freely (Montalbetti 1984; Rigau 1988; Calabrese 1980; Lobo 1995; 2013; Carminati 2002; Camacho 2013; among others). There are contexts where overt pronouns are obligatory, contexts where they are forbidden and contexts where the use of a null pronoun or of an overt pronoun induces different readings, without any changes in verbal agreement. Whenever the subject is focused or contrasted, it has to be phonetically realized, as shown in (76):

- (76) a. It. Chi è arrivato? / Sono arrivato  $\ast(\text{io})$ .  
 b. Pt. Quem chegou? / Cheguei  $\ast(\text{eu})$ .  
 c. Sp. ¿Quién llegó? / Llegué  $\ast(\text{yo})$ .  
 d. Rom. Cine a ajuns? / Am ajuns  $\ast(\text{eu})$ .  
 who (has/is) arrived / (am/have) arrived(1sg)  $\ast(\text{I})$   
 ‘Who arrived? / I did.’

Conversely, when the subject is a bound variable it is usually omitted (Montalbetti 1984):

- (77) a. It. Ogni bambino<sub>i</sub> pensava che lui $\ast_i$  / *pro<sub>i</sub>* avrebbe vinto.  
 b. Pt. Cada menino<sub>i</sub> achava que ele $\ast_i$  / *pro<sub>i</sub>* ia ganhar.  
 c. Sp. Cada niño<sub>i</sub> pensaba que él $\ast_i$  / *pro<sub>i</sub>* iba a ganar.  
 d. Rom. Fiecare copil<sub>i</sub> credea că el $\ast_i$  / *pro<sub>i</sub>* va câștiga.  
 ‘Each child<sub>i</sub> thought that he<sub>i</sub> would win.’

In other contexts, such as indicative complement clauses, like (78), or adverbial clauses, like (79), null subjects are preferred for coreferential readings and full pronouns are preferred for disjoint readings:

- (78) a. It. Il pittore<sub>i</sub> ha detto al meccanico<sub>j</sub> che *pro<sub>i</sub>*/lui<sub>j</sub> non poteva venire.  
 b. Pt. O pintor<sub>i</sub> disse ao mecânico<sub>j</sub> que *pro<sub>i</sub>*/ele<sub>j</sub> não podia vir.  
 c. Sp. El pintor<sub>i</sub> dijo al mecánico<sub>j</sub> que *pro<sub>i</sub>*/él<sub>j</sub> no podía venir.  
 d. Rom. Pictorul<sub>i</sub> i-a spus mecanicului<sub>j</sub> că *pro<sub>i</sub>*/el<sub>j</sub> nu poate să vină.  
 ‘The painter<sub>i</sub> told the mechanic<sub>j</sub> that he<sub>i/j</sub> could not come.’
- (79) a. It. Il pittore<sub>i</sub> ha sorriso al meccanico<sub>j</sub> quando *pro<sub>i</sub>*/lui<sub>j</sub> è arrivato.  
 b. Pt. O pintor<sub>i</sub> sorriu ao mecânico<sub>j</sub> quando *pro<sub>i</sub>*/ele<sub>j</sub> entrou.  
 c. Sp. El pintor<sub>i</sub> sonrió al mecánico<sub>j</sub> cuando *pro<sub>i</sub>*/él<sub>j</sub> entró.  
 d. Rom. Pictorul<sub>i</sub> i-a zâmbit mecanicului<sub>j</sub> când *pro<sub>i</sub>*/el<sub>j</sub> a intrat.  
 ‘The painter<sub>i</sub> smiled to the mechanic<sub>j</sub> when he<sub>i/j</sub> came in.’

In languages that do not allow null subjects, a subject pronoun is obligatory in these contexts and it has an ambiguous interpretation:

- (80) Fr. a. Chaque enfant<sub>i</sub> croyait qu’ $\ast(\text{il}_{i/j})$  allait gagner.  
 ‘Each child<sub>i</sub> thought that he<sub>i/j</sub> would win.’  
 b. Le peintre<sub>i</sub> a dit à l’ingénieur<sub>j</sub> qu’  $\ast(\text{il}_{i/j})$  ne pourrait pas venir.  
 ‘The painter<sub>i</sub> told the engineer<sub>j</sub> that he<sub>i/j</sub> could not come.’  
 c. Le peintre<sub>i</sub> a souri à l’ingénieur<sub>j</sub> quand  $\ast(\text{il}_{i/j})$  est entré.  
 ‘The painter<sub>i</sub> smiled to the engineer<sub>j</sub> when he<sub>i/j</sub> came in.’

So subject dropping in consistent null subject languages is not free. It is subject to specific discourse constraints.

## 5.2 Subject extraction and subject-verb inversion

Another property that has been related to the null subject parameter is the ability to extract a subject from a finite subordinate clause introduced by a complementizer (see examples (6) and (7) in Section 4.1). According to Rizzi (1982), this property follows from the ability to extract subjects from a postverbal position. This would be possible in null subject languages, in which a null expletive may occur pre-verbally, but not in non-pro-drop languages.

There are several arguments that support the hypothesis that subject extraction takes place from a postverbal position in null subject languages (Rizzi 1982; Burzio 1986; Rizzi/Shlonsky 2007). In Italian, for example, *ne*-cliticization is only possible when the clitic, which pronominalizes an NP complement of a quantifier, is moved from a postverbal position. As shown in (81a), *ne*-cliticization is possible with the internal argument of unaccusative verbs. However, when the internal argument occupies the preverbal position (81b), *ne*-cliticization is no longer possible. Crucially, when the internal argument undergoes *wh*-movement, as in (81c), *ne*-cliticization is possible. This suggests that the *wh*-subject is extracted from the postverbal position and not from the preverbal one:

- (81) Fr. a.    *Ne*        *sono*    *cadute*    *tre*.  
               of.them   are    fallen    three  
               ‘Three of them have fallen.’
- b.    \**Tre*    *ne*        *sono*    *cadute*.  
               three of.them are    fallen  
               ‘Three of them have fallen.’
- c.    *Quante*        *ne*        *sono*    *cadute*?  
               how.many of.them are    fallen  
               ‘How many of them have fallen?’

In French, a non null subject language, extraction of the subject out of a complement clause introduced by a complementizer is ungrammatical, but object extraction is possible (cf. (82a) vs (82b)):<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> But see example (52b') in section 4.1 and Rizzi/Shlonsky's (2007) discussion on subject extraction in French.

- (82) Fr. a. \*Qui crois-tu que va gagner?  
 who think.2sg-you that go win  
 'Who do you think will win?'  
 b. Qui crois-tu que Paul va aider?  
 who think.2sg-you that Paul go help  
 'Who do you think that Paul will help?'

In so-called impersonal constructions, with verbs that allow the subject to remain in a postverbal position and with an overt expletive in preverbal position (83), only the extraction of the postverbal position is grammatical (84):

- (83) Fr. a. Il est arrivé trois filles.  
 it is arrived three girls  
 'There arrived three girls.'  
 b. Trois filles sont arrivées.  
 three girls are arrived-F.PL  
 'Three girls arrived.'
- (84) Fr. a. Combien de filles<sub>i</sub> crois-tu qu' il est arrivé \_\_<sub>i</sub>?  
 how.many of girls think.2sg-you that it is arrived  
 b. \*Combien de filles<sub>i</sub> crois-tu que \_\_<sub>i</sub> sont arrivées?  
 how.many of girls think.2sg-you that are arrived.F.PL  
 'How many girls do you think have arrived?'

However, consideration of data from different languages has shown that the correlation between subject inversion and subject extraction is not as straightforward as initially thought (Gilligan 1987; Nicolis 2008). Some languages seem to allow subject extraction but disallow postverbal subjects, at least with the properties described for consistent null subject languages. In the Romance languages, Brazilian Portuguese has been argued to be one of these languages (Chao 1981; Rizzi/Shlonsky 2007). As mentioned in Section 2, Brazilian Portuguese has a limited use of subject inversion and usually does not like subject inversion with verbs that are not unaccusative. It allows, however subject extraction from embedded contexts. Although it has a more restricted use of subject inversion than consistent null subject languages, Menuzzi (2000) shows that even in Brazilian Portuguese subject extraction takes place from a postverbal position. This is visible when a floating quantifier is left behind, as in (85).

- (85) BPt. a. Que rapazes<sub>i</sub>, o Paulo desconfia que gostem  
 which boys the Paulo suspects that like  
 [todos \_\_<sub>i</sub>] de Maria?  
 all of Maria

- b. \*Que rapazes<sub>i</sub>, o Paulo desconfia que [todos <sub>i</sub>]<sub>j</sub>  
 which boys the Paulo suspects that all  
 gostem de Maria?  
 like of Maria  
 ‘Which boys does Paul suspect all like Maria?’  
 (Menuzzi 2000, 29)

In fact, extraction from a subject position of an embedded clause introduced by a complementizer seems to be possible in a language that has null expletives, as happens in Brazilian Portuguese (Nicolis 2008; Rizzi/Shlonsky 2007). Similar effects are found in Capeverdean, a Portuguese-based Creole that has null expletives but a very limited use of null argumental subjects (Nicolis 2008; Costa/Pratas 2013). So even in languages where there is no ‘free subject inversion’, subject extraction seems to be possible provided that the language has null expletives, which is the case of Brazilian Portuguese.

### 5.3 Summary

As we have seen, properties traditionally associated with null subject languages have to be weakened to a certain extent. In null subject languages: i) null subjects are allowed only in specific discourse conditions (Section 5.1); ii) lack of *that*-trace effects seems to be present even when the language does not have a wide use of subject-verb inversion, provided that it allows null expletives (Section 5.2); and as we have seen before subject inversion is not completely free (Section 2).

## 6 General summary

This chapter covers central topics in the morphosyntax of subjects. Discussion throughout the paper is theory-informed but kept as theory-neutral as possible, and substantial cross-linguistic empirical evidence is offered. The cornerstones of the chapter are word order, in particular subject-verb inversion, and null subjects, both issues relating to case, agreement and expletives. The chapter seeks to understand and systematize what motivates and licenses VS orders in Romance non-*wh* sentences (i.e. VOS and VSO) and identifies focalization, theticity and non-degree exclamatives as central ingredients (across Romance languages). On the other hand, the chapter provides evidence that the Null Subject Parameter (NSP) cannot be maintained as originally formulated since the richness of grammatical variation between Romance languages requires a more intricate, fine-grained parametrization. Some assumptions of the NSP relating to word order are also untenable.

## 7 References

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