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2 Subjects

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).¹ 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, 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 overtly realized or null (as shown in (1) below,

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.

where Standard French contrasts with the other languages in disallowing a null subject).²

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/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
the children/—/they already have-3PL returned from
la escuela.
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
the children/—/they already are-3PL returned from-the
scuola.
school
- e. Rom. {Copiii/pro/ei} deja s-au întors
children-the/—/they already REFL=have-3PL returned
de școală.
from school
- f. Fr. {Les enfants/*pro/ils} sont déjà rentrés de
the children/*—/they are-3PL already returned from
l'école.
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).³ Further evidence for the subjecthood of the postverbal constituents is provided by their

² 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.

³ 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). Some of the Romance languages lost the null subject property and severely constrained the availability of postverbal subjects as a result of diachronic change.

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).

- (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_i eles_i sem *PRO*_i disfarçar
 laughed-3PL=REFL they- M without *PRO* disguise-INF
 e *pro*_i 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),⁴ and may not control the subject of an infinitival clause, as in (4d), to be contrasted with (4e). The Brazilian Portuguese (BrPt.) examples in (4a-b) are taken from Kato/Martins (2016); the French example in (4c) is taken from

⁴ 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
 the building where lived-1PL / lived-3PL the Maria and
 eu
 I
 ‘The building where Maria and I lived.’

Bonami/Godard/Marandin (1999), and the European Portuguese (EurPt.) examples in (4d-e) are taken from Carrilho (2003).

- (4) a. Spoken BrPt. *Chegou os ovos.*
 arrived-3SG the eggs
 ‘The eggs arrived.’
- b. Spoken BrPt. *Telefonou uns clientes.*
 called-3SG some clients
 Some clients called.’
- c. Fr. *l’immeuble où habitaient /*habitions Marie et moi*
 the-building where lived-3PL / lived-1PL Marie and I
 ‘The building where Marie and I lived.’
- d. Dialectal EurPt. *Chegou [muitas crianças]_i (*sem PRO_i dizer uma palavra).*
 arrived-3SG many children without PRO say-INF
 a word
- e. Dialectal EurPt. *Chegaram as crianças (sem PRO dizer uma palavra).*
 arrived-3SG the children without PRO say-INF
 a word
 ‘The/many 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, French⁵ 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 lan-

⁵ But cf. Zimmermann (2014) who argues that French was a non pro-drop language from the beginning.

guages. 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; Alboui 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 Fronting; ### 15 Clefts; ### 17 Exclamatives, imperatives, optatives). Finally, we will in general disregard word order in subordinate clauses, due to space limitations.⁶

Across Romance languages, main clause preverbal subjects are preferably interpreted as topics whenever VS is an alternative available option for constituent order.⁷ Thus a common feature of VS sentences is the non-topichood of their subject. But VS structures are not a unitary phenomenon. In this section we will consider three different kinds of motivation for VS configurations, namely: (i) narrow focus or informational prominence on the subject; (ii) theticity, in the sense of Kuroda (1965; 1972; 1992; 2005), and (iii) particular instances of non-degree exclamatives. In root sentences with transitive verbs, focalization of the subject derives VOS, whereas thetic sentences and non-degree exclamatives display VSO order.

2.1 Inversion as Focalization

In answers to *wh*- questions where the subject bears narrow focus, three syntactic patterns can be found in Romance languages, as exemplified below in (6) to (8).⁸ Patterns I and II display VS order, hence place the subject in the sentence-final position where the (unmarked) sentence nuclear stress falls (Zubizarreta 1998;

⁶ On VS order in Spanish relative clauses, see Gutiérrez-Bravo (2005). On VS order in French subordinate clauses, see Lahousse (2003; 2006b; 2011).

⁷ We are not implying that preverbal subjects in Romance pro-drop languages are necessarily left-dislocated. On this highly debated controversial proposal, see Alexiadou/Anagnostopoulou (2001), Alexiadou (2006), Barbosa (1995; 2000; 2006; 2009), Cardinaletti (1997a; 2004; 2014), Corr (2012), Costa (1998; 2001; 2004), Ordoñez (2000), Sheehan (2006; 2010), among others.

⁸ Cf. Alboui (1999; 2002), Ambar (1992), Belletti (2001; 2004; 2005), Bonami/Godard/Marandin (1999), Costa (1998; 2004), Costa/Silva (2006), Dufter (2008), Kampers-Mahne et al. (2004), Kato (2000), Kato/Martins (2016), Lahousse (2003; 2006a; 2011), Marandin (2011), Mensching/Weingart (2009), Rizzi (1997), Ordoñez (1997; 1999; 2007a, 2007b), Zubizarreta (1998; 1999), among others.

1999; Costa 1998; 2004; Costa/Silva 2006; among others). SV order is only found in the rarer pattern III, which involves marked prosodic prominence on the preverbal subject.

Pattern I – Simple VS (European Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, Italian, Romanian)

- (6) a. EurPt./Sp. Q: Quem faz o jantar? / ¿Quién hace la
 who makes the dinner / who makes the
 cena?
 dinner
 ‘Who will cook dinner?’
 A: Faz o Pedro. / Lo hace Pedro.
 makes the Pedro / it makes Pedro
 ‘Pedro will.’
- 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)⁹

- (7) a. BrPt. 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)¹⁰

⁹ Pattern II is also available in European Portuguese, but pattern I is the most common option in this language.

¹⁰ 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.

- (8) BrPt. 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 transitive verbs (like *ver* in (9b)), or unergatives, which exclude Pattern I (cf. Kato/Martins 2016).¹¹

- (9) a. BrPt. Q: Quem caiu?
 who fell
 ‘Who fell?’
 A: Caiu uma criança.
 fell a child
 ‘A child fell.’
 b. Braz. Pt. Q: Quem foi que viu um gato?
 who was that saw a cat?
 ‘Who saw a cat?’
 A: *Viu uma criança.
 saw a child
 ‘A child did.’

We may therefore conclude that all Romance languages use the strategy of placing the subject in sentence final position in order to give it focal prominence (be it through Pattern I or Pattern II), within the limits that independent grammatical constraints define.

When the subject is focus, the order SV in answers to *wh*-questions is excluded by all the Romance languages that generally display Pattern I. This is because if placed preverbally the subject will be interpreted as topic, not as focus, leading to an infelicitous information structure configuration. The pragmatic oddity of SV in the relevant discourse context is exemplified in (10) below (cf. Alboui 2002). Moreover, examples (11) and (12) show that SV sentences can be ungrammatical

¹¹ French displays *unaccusative inversion*, like Brazilian Portuguese, but differently from Brazilian Portuguese does not allow null expletive subjects.

when contextual factors require narrow focus to fall on the subject (cf. Belletti 2001).

(10) Q: [Who has come home?]

- A: Rom. a. A venit acasă mama.
 AUX-3SG come home mother-the
 b. # Mama a venit acasă.
 mother-the AUX-3SG come home
 EurPt. c. Veio a mãe.
 came the mother
 d. #A mãe veio.
 the mother came
 VS: ‘Mother did.’
 SV: ‘Mother, (I know that) she did...’

(11) a. It. Q: Pronto, chi parla?
 hello, who speaks

A: Parla Gianni / *Gianni parla.
 speaks Gianni / Gianni speaks

b. EurPt. Q: Quem fala?

who speaks

A: Fala o Gabriel / *O Gabriel fala.
 speaks the Gabriel / the Gabriel speaks
 ‘(Hello,) who is speaking? It is Gabriel.’

(12) a. It. Q: Chi è?
 who is

A: a. Sono io.
 am I

b. *Io sono.
 I am

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

- (14) Eur.Pt. 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-3PL-FUT 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-3PL-FUT 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.¹² In the EurPt. 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) EurPt. 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 li-

¹² 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
 c. #Ha vissuto Dante in questo palazzo.
 has lived Dante in this palace
 ‘Dante lived in this palace.’

cense subject-verb inversion with transitive (and some intransitive) verbs.¹³ 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 BrPt. 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) BrPt. 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. 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 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.¹⁴ But Ro-

¹³ 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).

¹⁴ Quotative inversion also displays VSO, because in the relevant syntactic configuration both verbal arguments fall under focus:

- (i) EurPt. 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) EurPt. A: Quem recebeu os livros?
 who received the books?
 B: a. Recebeu [cada autor]_i o seu_i livro.
 received each author the his book

mance 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. Alboui 1999; 2002; Zubizarreta 1998; 1999; Costa 1998; Kato/Martins 2016; Belletti 2001; Lahousse/Lamiroy 2012; Vanrell Bosch/Fernández Soriano 2013; Wandruszka 1982).

- (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.’
- (20) EurPt. 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) EurPt. 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:

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- b. *Recebeu o seu_i livro [cada autor]_i
 received the his book each author
 ‘Who received the books? – Each author_i received his_i book.’

declarative/presentational (Suñer 1982, for Spanish); sentence-focus/predicate-focus (Lambrecht 1994, 2000, for English and French); predication/presentation (Guéron 1980, for English); declarative/existential (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; Matras/Sasse 1995; Lambrecht 1994; 2000; 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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ The preferred order for the thetic, or descriptive, type can be VS(O).¹⁷ That is to say, subject-verb inversion can be used as a syntactic strategy to make a sentence unambiguously thetic, 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 the thetic/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 a thetic 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 in thetic sentences (a matter to which we will return). But, again, it would be simplistic to assume that non-pro-

¹⁵ 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’.

¹⁶ Thetic sentences are all-new, “broad focus” sentences.

¹⁷ 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 expressing thetic judgments, on the other hand, are *non-topicalized* because they are not predications.

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 a thetic, 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 for thetic 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; Ordoñez 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.¹⁸ In the remainder of this section, we will first exemplify VS order in thetic sentences using data from European Portuguese. Then, we will comment on the languages with more 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.¹⁹ 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 defi-

¹⁸ We use here “O” in the broad sense of Larson (1988; 1990). Hence in this chapter “O” corresponds to Leonetti's (2014) “X”.

¹⁹ As for the inexistence of definiteness effects in unaccusative inversion, see Corr (2012).

nite one (*the dog*), due to semantic/pragmatic constraints on what can be an appropriate aboutness topic.²⁰

- (22) EurPt. 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) EurPt. 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 umcão ao nosso gato. (pointing to the cat)
 bit a dog to-the our cat
 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.²¹ The matrix clauses in (24) display the verb in the

²⁰ Cf. Dobrovie-Sorin (1994), Motapanyane (1994), and Alboui (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.

²¹ 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) EurPt. 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 bebé no sofá e {eu dormi / dormi eu} no
 Slept the baby on-the sofa and I slept / slept I on-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) EurPt. 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).

- (25) EurPt. a. *A mãe telefonou. Queria falar contigo.*
 the mother called wanted talk-INF with-you
- b. *Telefonou a mãe. Queria falar-INF contigo.*
 called the mother wanted talk with-you
 'Mother called. She wanted to talk with you.'
- (26) EurPt. 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?'

chão.
 floor
 'The baby slept on the sofa and I slept on the floor.'

- B: a. A mãe telefonou mas ainda não tinham o
the mother called but yet not had-3PL the
resultado dos exams.
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 (medi-
cal) 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)).²²

²² 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).

(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).

- (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. 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.

- (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, quand
 seem more wide and more empty than elsewhere when
 les déserte la foule des champs de courses.
 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 repairing the door
 ‘Sunday afternoon, I drive back with my uncle, I arrive at the
 apartment, 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 BrPt. licenses null expletives, it does not require an overt constituent to precede the verb.

- (31) BrPt.a. {Chegou / chegaram} três cartas pra você.²³
 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.’

²³ Third person singular agreement is the ordinary option in spoken BrPt., but third person plural is found in written BrPt.

- 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 BrPt. puts stronger constraints on VS orders than other Romance languages.²⁴

- (32) BrPt. a. Os policiais, eles chegaram de moto e
the policemen they arrived-3PL on motorcycle and
armados.
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, 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 *wh*- operator. They may (but do not have to) be factive, which is a distinctive property of *wh*- exclamatives since they presuppose the truth of the proposition they denote (cf. Grimshaw 1979; Portner/Zanuttini 2000; Zanuttini/Portner 2003; Gutiérrez-Rexach/Andueza 2011; Martins 2013). 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 com-

²⁴ Cf. Berlinck (1996; 2000), Britto (1998; 2000), Kato (2000), Kato/Martins (2016) for further discussion of VS order in Brazilian Portuguese.

ment 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 EurPt. 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.²⁵

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). Interpreta-

²⁵ In EurPt. 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) EurPt. 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) EurPt. Agora perdeu a Maria a carteira! (Já não bastava
 now lost the Maria the wallet still not sufficed
 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 John lost his jacket yesterday.)'

tively, 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*- exclamationatives the factivity property (cf. Martins 2013, 7-8).

- (33) EurPt. 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) EurPt. 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!)
- b. Não fomos nós ao jardim zoológico e
 not went we to-the garden zoological and
 esteve um dia de sol!
 was a day of sun
 'We didn't go to the zoo and/but 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 exclamationatives 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_i Maria_i mereu adevărul, că nu- i
discovers she Maria always truth-the that not is
săracă la minte!
poor at mind
'Maria will always discover the truth, because she's not mentally
challenged.'

(36) Rom. STIE 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 athetic 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.²⁶

- (37) a. Pt. {As crianças/pro/eles} já voltaram da escola.
the children/—/they already returned-3PL from-the school

²⁶ 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/Mendikotxea 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)
- (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/Mendikotxea 2013)

- b. Sp. {Los niños/*pro*/ellos} ya han regresado de
the children/—/they already have-3PL returned from
la escuela.
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
the children/—/they already are-3PL returned from-the
scuola.
school
- e. Rom. {Copiii/*pro*/ei} deja s-au întors de
children-the/—/they already REFL-have-3PL returned from
școală.
school
- f. Fr. Les enfants/**pro*/ils} sont déjà rentrés de
the children/**—*/they are-3PL already returned from the-
l'école.
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).

- (39) Pt. A: Elas não se riram.
they-F not REFL laughed-3PL
'They (the girls) did not laugh.'

B: Riram-se_i eles_i sem PRO_i disfarçar
 laughed-3PL=REFL they-M without PRO disguise-INF
 e pro_i 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 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.²⁷ 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 BrPt. Já chegou os convidados / *eles.
 already arrived-3SG the guests / *they-NOM
 ‘The guests have already arrived.’
 (Google Search, 01-09-2015)

²⁷ Dialectal EurPt. data extracted from the corpus CORDIAL-SIN (<http://www.clul.ul.pt/resources/212-cordial-sin-syntax-oriented-corpus-of-portuguese-dialects>) are provided by Carrilho (2003) and Cardoso/Carrilho/Pereira (2011). A few examples are given below.

- (i) Dialectal EurPt. 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 EurPt. Veio aqui (...) umas máquinas
 came-3SG here some machines
 ‘Some machines came here.’
 (CORDIAL-SIN, Porto Santo)
- (iii) Dialectal EurPt. Já tem pousado lá até aviões de
 already has-3SG landed there even planes of
 emergência.
 emergency
 ‘Even emergency planes have already landed there.’
 (CORDIAL-SIN, Perafita)

- b. Dialectal EurPt. Chegou as cadeiras. / Fechou muitas
 arrived-3SG the chairs / closed-3SG many
 fábricas.
 factories
 ‘The chairs arrived. / Many factories have closed.’
 (Costa 2001b, 8)
- c. Dialectal EurPt. *Chegou eles. / Chegaram eles.
 arrived-3SG they-NOM / arrived-3PL they-NOM
 ‘They have arrived.’ (Costa 2001b, 12)
- d. Dialectal EurPt. Chegou [muitas crianças]_i (*sem PRO_i
 arrived-3SG many children without PRO
 dizer uma palavra).
 say-INF a word
- e. Dialectal EurPt. Chegaram as crianças_i (sem PRO_i dizer
 arrived-3SG the children without PRO say-INF
 uma palavra).
 a word
 ‘The/many children arrived without saying anything.’
 (Carrilho 2003, 175)

The EurPt. 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.²⁸

²⁸ 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 the children in the pool
 ‘There were children swimming in the pool.’

- (41) EurPt. a. As cadeiras chegaram.
the chairs arrived-3PL
b. Chegaram as cadeiras.
arrived-3PL the chairs
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.
EXPLarrived-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_i 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_i 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 subject). 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 Clitics; ### 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: [_{SubjP} [_{EPPP} [_{AgrSP} [_{VP} 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,EPPP 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,EPPP, 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,AgrSP to check case and agreement features while in the former these features can be checked in 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 “accusative 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 (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.²⁹ 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 (Kaiser/Oliviéri 2012; Poletto 2006; Duarte 1995; Camacho 2013; among others).

²⁹ As we will see below, not all null subject languages have rich agreement.

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 Clitics, 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 agreement markers. The nature of weak subject pronouns (including in Standard French and in colloquial French) and their diachronic path are discussed in ### 5 Clitics. 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), that 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.
- (47) a. Fr. *(Il) parle français.
b. Romansh (Sursilvan) *(El) tschontscha romontsch.
'He speaks Portuguese/Italian/Spanish/Catalan/Romanian/
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.³⁰

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:

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

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

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

(48)	Fr. je chante	[ʃãt]	on chante	[ʃãt]
	I sing		we sing	
	tu chantes	[ʃãt]	vous chantez	[ʃãte]
	you-SG sing		you-PL sing	
	il chante	[ʃãt]	ils chantent	[ʃãt]
	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

³⁰ 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 ### 5 Clitics).

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).³¹

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):

³¹ 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).

- (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?

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.³² 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*.

³² 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).

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 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 Olivieri et al. (2015):

	Le Mont-Dore	Tayac	Eymoutiers	Coussac-Bonneval
1SG	◊ ɛ̃ ʎ	◊ ɛ̃ ɛʀ	ɛʀ □ ◊ ʎ	◊ ɛ̃ ʎ
2SG	◆ ◊ ɛ̃ ʎ	◆ ɛ̃ ◊ ʎ	◆ ʎ ◊ ʎ	◆ □ ◊ ɛ̃ ʎ
3SG	ɛ̃ ʎ	ʎ ◊ ʎ ɛʀ	ʎ ɛʀ	u ɛ̃ ʎ
1PL	◊ ɛ̃ ɔ̃ ɔ̃	◊ ɛ̃ ɔ̃ ɔ̃ ²	■ ◆ ◊ ◆ ɔ̃	■ ◆ s ɛ̃ ◆ ɔ̃
2PL	◊ ɛ̃	❖ ◆ ɛ̃ ɔ̃ ◊ ◊ ʎ	❖ ◆ ◊ ʎ	❖ ◆ ◊ ɛ̃ ʎ
3PL	◊ ɛ̃ ɔ̃	ɛ̃ ɔ̃ ◊ ɛ̃ ɔ̃ ²	◊ ◆ ɔ̃	◊ ɛ̃ ◆ ɔ̃

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

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).

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

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

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 person plural. In the case of Fiorentino, only the first person singular is optional. As for Trentino, the pronoun is required only in second and third person singular and in third person plural. These Italian dialects thus show asymmetrical pro-drop (Poletto 2006), that is, they only allow null subjects in some grammatical persons. The systems are somewhat complex, since the split does not correlate simply with verbal morphology and is not clearly divided between first and second vs. third person. To account for these systems, a finer-grained feature specification in terms of binary features [+/- speaker] and [+/- hearer] or some other kind of feature specification seems to be necessary (Poletto 2006; Oiviéri/Lai/Heap, forthcoming).

The status of subject pronouns (clitics) in northern Italian varieties is controversial. In many cases, it has been argued that subject clitics are really agreement markers (Brandi/Cordin 1989; Manzini/Savoia 1997; among others). If so, these varieties would be another type of pro-drop language. Several facts point to the status of the subject constituents as functional morphemes (syntactic clitics) and not pronouns: i) subject clitics co-occur with a DP subject; ii) subject clitics are obligatorily present in coordination contexts; iii) subject clitics co-occur with a quantified subject (Rizzi 1986; Brandi/Cordin 1989). Rizzi (1986) and Brandi/Cordin (1989), for instance, show that subject pronouns in Trentino and Fiorentino are obligatory even in the presence of a full subject (53) or a strong pronoun (54), they can occur with a quantified subject (55), subject-verb inversion is possible with all kinds of verbs with an expletive clitic in preverbal position (56), and the pronoun is obligatory in coordination structures (57). They therefore argue that those dialects are also pro-drop languages that mark agreement in some persons both by verbal ending and by a preverbal morpheme.

- (53) Fiorentino a. La Maria *(la) parla.
the Mary she speaks

- b. *(La) parla.
she speaks
'Maria/she speaks.'
- (54) a. Fiorentino Te tu parli.
you you speak
b. Trentino Ti te parli.
you you speak
'You speak.'
- (55) a. Fiorentino Nessuno gl'ha detto nulla.
b. Trentino Nisun l'ha dit niente.
nobody he-has-said nothing
'Nobody said anything.'
- (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.³³ 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.³⁴

³³ 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.

³⁴ 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 despite of overt person agreement – see (i) below and Raposo (1989) – and from non-inflected non-finite structures from several Romance languages, such

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)	BrPt.	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’

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) EurPt. 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 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.’

between null and full pronouns. Although several factors may play a role,³⁵ 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)³⁶ (Montalbetti 1984; Carminati 2002; Brito 1991; Lobo 2013; among others).

- (59) EurPt. a. O chefe_i disse ao amigo_j que *pro*_i precisava de
the boss told to-the friend that needed to
descansar.
rest
- b. O chefe_i disse ao amigo_j que ele_j 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) BrPt. a. A Ana_i disse à Rosa_j que ela_{i/j} 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]_i acha que ele_i tem uma
the people Brazilian thinks that he has a

³⁵ 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).

³⁶ There seems to be, though, some crosslinguistic variation in the tendencies found in different pro-drop languages (Filiaci/Sorace/Carreiras 2013).

grave doença.
 bad disease
 ‘Brazilian people think that they are seriously ill.’
 (Duarte 1993, apud Costa/Pratas 2013)

- (61) BrPt. 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) BrPt. 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) EurPt./??BrPt.
 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. EurPt./??BrPt.
 O chefe está atrasado. Acho que *pro* perdeu o comboio.
 the boss is late think-1SG that lost the train
 b. EurPt./BrPt.

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. Br.Pt. 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) BrPt. 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)

EurPt. c. É assim que *(se) faz o doce.

is this.waythat 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.³⁷

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.³⁸ 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.³⁹ There is arguably a

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ 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

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) BrPt./*EurPt.
- a. Beginning of phone-call:
O Edmilson, ele 'tá?
the Edmilson, he is?
‘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).⁴⁰ 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.

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.

⁴⁰ 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).

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
'He/she accompanies me to the Mercure.'
b. Revient à l' affaire Alb. . Me demande si. . .
returns to the business Alb. . . me asks if. . .
'He/she returns to the Alb business. He/she 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 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
'He/She 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 about my visit
 chez elle dimanche.
 to 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 (Gadet 1997, 70, apud Zimmerman/Kaiser 2014)
 know.1SGnot
 'I don't know.'
 b. faut voir (Gaetone 1976, 245, fn.1, apud
 must.3SG see.INF Zimmerman/Kaiser 2014)
 'We'll see.'

- (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 camici-
 cia*, apud Zimmerman/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 ### 5 Clitics; 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, 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 post-verbal 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 1985-86, 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 1985-86, 53)
- (75) Fr. Sire, nouvelles vos sei ___ dire del torneiement
Sir news you know.1SG ___ say from.the tournament
'Sir, I can tell you news of the tournament.'
(*M. Artu*, apud Vanelli/Renzi/Benincà 1985-86, 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 ###4 Clitics). 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 ### 5 Clitics, 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 (Negrão/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 *(io).
 b. Prt. Quem chegou? / Cheguei *(eu).
 c. Sp. ¿Quién llegó? / Llegué *(yo).
 d. Rom. Cine a ajuns? / Am ajuns *(eu).
 who (has/is) arrived / (am/have) arrived(1SG) *(I).
 ‘Who arrived? / I did.’

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

- (77) a. It. Ogni bambino_i pensava che lui_{*i} / *pro*_i avrebbe vinto.
 b. Prt. Cada menino_i achava que ele_{*i} / *pro*_i ia ganhar.
 c. Sp. Cada niño_i pensaba que él_{*i} / *pro*_i iba a ganar.
 d. Rom. Fiecare copil_i credea că el_{*i} / *pro*_i va câștiga.
 ‘Each child_i thought that he_i would win.’

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

- (78) a. It. Il pittore_i ha detto al meccanico_j che *pro*_i/lui_j non poteva venire.
 b. Prt. O pintor_i disse ao mecânico_j que *pro*_i/ele_j não podia vir.
 c. Sp. El pintor_i dijo al mecánico_j que *pro*_i/él_j no podía venir.
 d. Rom. Pictorul_i i-a spus mecanicului_j că *pro*_i/el_j nu poate să vină.
 ‘The painter_i told the mechanic_j that he_{i/j} could not come.’
- (79) a. It. Il pittore_i ha sorriso al meccanico_j quando *pro*_i/lui_j è arrivato.
 b. Prt. O pintor_i sorriu ao mecânico_j quando *pro*_i/ele_j entrou.
 c. Sp. El pintor_i sonrió al mecánico_j cuando *pro*_i/él_j entró.
 d. Rom. Pictorul_i i-a zâmbit mecanicului_j când *pro*_i/el_j a intrat.
 ‘The painter_i smiled to the mechanic_j when he_{i/j} 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_i croyait qu’*(il_{i/j}) allait gagner.
 ‘Each child_i thought that he_{i/j} would win.’
 b. Le peintre_i a dit à l’ingénieur_j qu’*(il_{i/j}) ne pourrait pas venir.
 ‘The painter_i told the engineer_j that he_{i/j} could not come.’
 c. Le peintre_i a souri à l’ingénieur_j quand *(il_{i/j}) est entré.
 ‘The painter_i smiled to the engineer_j when he_{i/j} 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):⁴¹

- (82) Fr. a. *Qui crois-tu que va gagner?
 Who think.2SG-you that will win
 ‘Who do you think will win?’
 b. Qui crois-tu que Paul va aider?
 who think.2SG-you that Paul will 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; crois-tu qu’ il est arrivé __i?
 how.many of girls think.2SG-you that it is arrived
 b. *Combien de filles; crois-tu que __i sont arrivées?
 how.many of girls think.2SG-you that are arrived.F.PL
 ‘How many girls do you think have arrived?’

⁴¹ But see example (52b’) in section 4.1 and Rizzi/Shlonsky’s (2007) discussion on subject extraction in French.

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) BrPt. a. Que rapazes_i, o Paulo desconfia que gostem
 which boys the Paulo suspects that like
 [todos ____i] de Maria?
 all of Maria?
- b. *Que rapazes_i, o Paulo desconfia que [todos ____i]_j
 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.

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