

# Existentials and locatives in Romance dialects of Italy

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EXISTENTIALS AND  
LOCATIVES IN ROMANCE  
DIALECTS OF ITALY

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DELIA BENTLEY,  
FRANCESCO MARIA CICONTE,  
AND SILVIO CRUSCHINA

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## Existentials and Locatives in Romance Dialects of Italy

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DELIA BENTLEY,  
FRANCESCO MARIA CICONTE,  
AND SILVIO CRUSCHINA

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# *List of abbreviations*

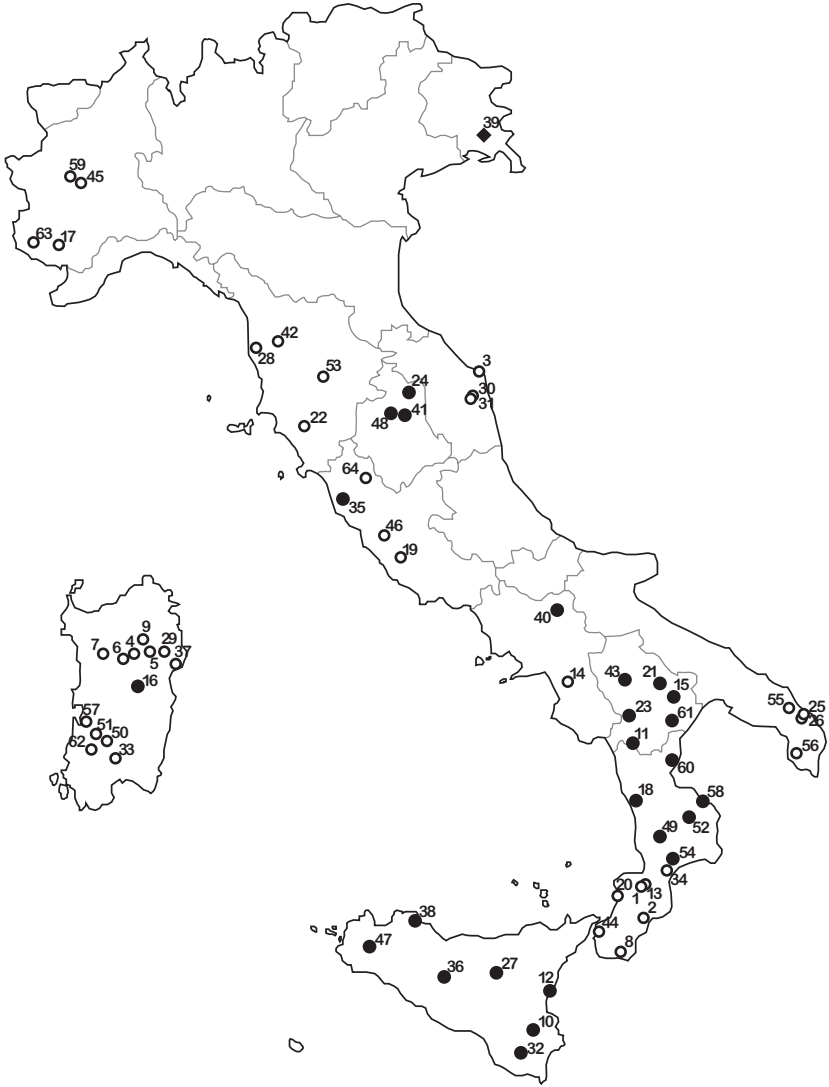
*	ungrammatical form or usage
??	dubious form or usage
>	indicates relative prominence on a hierarchy
#	grammatical form which is infelicitous in the given context
=	separates a cliticized form from its host
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
Ø	predicate which is unspecified in logical structure or displaced from the syntactic Nucleus
ACC	accusative case
ACS	accessible
ACT	active
ADE	adessive case
ADJ	adjective
agr	agreement
AGX	Agreement Index Node
arg	argument
ART	article
A <sub>T</sub>	actor of transitive
AUX	auxiliary
CL	clitic
COND	conditional mood
Contr.	controller of agreement
COP/COP	copula
CP	complementizer phrase
DAT	dative case
DEC	declarative illocutionary force
DEF	definite
DEIC	deictic
DIM	diminutive

DP	determiner phrase
d-S	derived subject of passive
ESCL	expletive subject clitic
EX.NEG	existential negation
EXPL	expletive subject
F	feminine
FOC	focus marker
FUT	future
GEN	genitive case
GER	gerund
IF	illocutionary force
IMP	imperative
IMPER	impersonal
INA	inactive
IND	indicative mood
INF	infinitive
Infl	Inflection position
INSTR	instrumental case
LDP/LDP	Left Detached Position
LINK	linker
LOC	locative
M	masculine
NEG/NEG	negation, negative
NOM	nominative case
NONPST	non past
NP	noun phrase
Nuc	Nucleus
OApul.	Old Apulian
OBL	oblique case
OCamp.	Old Campanian
OCat.	Old Catalan
OFr.	Old French
Old Abr.	Old Abruzzese
OLig.	Old Ligurian
OLomb.	Old Lombard

ONav.-Arag.	Old Navarro-Aragonese
OPied.	Old Piedmontese
OProv.	Old Provençal
ORom.	Old Romanesco
OSic.	Old Sicilian
OTusc.	Old Tuscan
OUmbr.	Old Umbrian
OVen	Old Venician
PA	verb class marker in Ulwa
PARAG	paragogic form
PART	partitive case
PASS	passive
p.c.	personal communication
Pd	possessed
Per	Periphery
PERF	perfective
PF	proform
PFP	perfect participle
PL	plural
PoCS	Post-Core Slot
POSS	possessive form
PP	prepositional phrase
Pr	possessor
PrCS	Pre-Core Slot
PRED/pred	predicate
PREP	preposition
pro	silent variable whose value is provided by verb inflection or by a controller, or otherwise is retrieved from discourse
PROP	propriative verb
PRS	present
PSA	Privileged Syntactic Argument
PST	past
PTCP	participle
QP	quantifier phrase
RDP/RDP	Right Detached Position

REFL	reflexive clitic
RRG	Role and Reference Grammar
RP	referential phrase
S	Privileged Syntactic Argument (subject) of intransitive
S <sub>A</sub>	actor of intransitive
SAP	Speech Act Participant
SBJV	subjunctive mood
SCL	subject clitic
SENT-KA	sentential <i>ka</i> marker in Ulwa
SG	singular
SM	subject marker
SS	same subject switch reference marker
S <sub>U</sub>	undergoer of intransitive
SVO	subject-verb-object order
TA	verb class marker in Ulwa
TAM	tense-aspect-mood marker
TOP	topic marker
U <sub>T</sub>	undergoer of transitive
UV	undergoer voice
V	verb
WOM	word order marker

## *Dialect maps*



- = dialects with proform
- = dialects with proform which also exhibit another pattern
- ◆ = dialects with no proform

MAP 1. ESSE +Agr



1. Acquaro (VV) ○
2. Agnana Calabria (RC) ○
3. Ancona (AN) ○
4. Benetutti (SS) ○
5. Bitti (NU) ○
6. Bono (SS) ○
7. Bonorva (SS) ○
8. Bova Marina (RC) ○
9. Buddusò (OT) ○
10. Buscemi (SR) ●
11. Castelluccio Inferiore (PZ) ●
12. Catania (CT) ●
13. Ciano (VV) ○
14. Eboli (SA) ○
15. Ferrandina (MT) ●
16. Fonni (NU) ●
17. Fontanelle di Boves (CN) ○
18. Fuscaldo (CS) ●
19. Genzano di Roma (RM) ○
20. Gioia Tauro (RC) ○
21. Grassano (MT) ●
22. Grosseto (GR) ○
23. Grumento Nova (PZ) ●
24. Gubbio (PG) ●
25. Lecce (LE) I ○
26. Lecce (LE) II ○
27. Leonforte (EN) ●
28. Livorno (LI) ○
29. Lula (NU) ○
30. Macerata (MC) I ○
31. Macerata (MC) II ○
32. Modica (RG) ●
33. Monastir (CA) ○
34. Montauro (CZ) ○
35. Monte Romano (VT) ●
36. Mussomeli (CL) ●
37. Orosei (NU) ○
38. Palermo (PA) ●
39. Palmanova (UD) ◆
40. Picerno (PZ) ●
41. Ponte Felcino (PG) ●
42. Pontedera (PI) ○
43. Potenza (PZ) ●
44. Reggio Calabria (RC) ○
45. Revigliasco (TO) ○
46. Roma (RM) ○
47. Salemi (TP) ●
48. San Marco (PG) ●
49. San Tommaso (CZ) ●
50. Sanluri (VS) ○
51. Sardara (VS) ○
52. Savelli (KR) ○
53. Siena (SI) ○
54. Squillace (CZ) ○
55. Squinzano (LE) ○
56. Taviano (LE) ○
57. Terralba (OR) ○
58. Terravecchia (CS) ●
59. Torino (TO) ○
60. Trebisacce (CS) ●
61. Tursi (MT) ○
62. Villacidro (VS) ○
63. Vinadio (CN) ○
64. Vitorchiano (VT) ○



- = dialects with proform
- = dialects with proform which also exhibit another pattern
- ◆ = dialects with no proform

MAP 2. ESSE -Agr (+Agr with 1st and 2nd person, or with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person)

1. Ancona (AN) ○
2. Azzano d'Asti (AT) ●
3. Badalucco (IM) ●
4. Bagnolo Piemonte (CN) ●
5. Belluno (BL) ◆
6. Bergamo (BG) ●
7. Bocca di Strada (TV) ◆●
8. Bologna (BO) ●
9. Bovolone (VE) ●
10. Canale (CN) ●
11. Casemurate (FC) ●
12. Cereda (VI) ●
13. Cesena (FC) ●
14. Crespellano (BO) ●
15. Felino (PR) ●
16. Ferrara (FE) ●
17. Firenze (FI) ●
18. Gallo (PU) ●
19. Gambettola (FC) ●
20. Gazzolo (VE) ●
21. Genova (GE) ●
22. Grosio (SO) ●
23. Grosseto (GR) ○
24. Lecce (LE) I ○
25. Lecce (LE) II ○
26. Limone Piemonte (CN) ●
27. Livorno (LI) ○
28. Milano (MI) ●
29. Mondovì (CN) ●
30. Montù Beccaria (PV) ●
31. Padova (PD) ●
32. Piacenza (PC) ●
33. Pieve di Teco (IM) ●
34. Pontedera (PI) ○
35. Premosello Chiovenda (VB) ●
36. Revigliasco (TO) ○
37. Rimini (RN) ●
38. Rocchetta Cairo (SV) ●
39. San Martino di Lupari (PD) ●
40. Scanzorosciate (BG) ●
41. Siena (SI) ○
42. Soffratta (TV) ◆
43. Taviano (LE) ○
44. Torino (TO) ○
45. Toscolano Maderno (BS) ●
46. Venezia (VE) ●



- = dialects with proform
- = dialects with proform which also exhibit another pattern
- ◆ = dialects with no proform
- ▲ = dialects with variable occurrence of the proform

MAP 3. STARE +Agr

1. Anacapri (NA) ▲
2. Arielli (CH) ●
3. Ascoli Piceno (AP) ●
4. Bisceglie (BT) ◆
5. Capri (NA) ▲
6. Castel Ritaldi (PG) ●
7. Castiglione Messer Marino (CH) ( ±Agr) ●
8. Chiauci (IS) ●
9. Colle Cottorino (FR) ●
10. Collebrincioni (AQ) ●
11. Eboli (SA) ○
12. Fano a Corno (TE) ●
13. Francavilla Fontana (BR) ▲
14. Genzano di Lucania (PZ) ◆
15. Genzano di Roma (RM) ○
16. Giuliano di Roma (FR) ●
17. Guardiafrede (CH) ●
18. Isernia (IS) ●
19. Lecce (LE) I ○
20. Macerata (MC) I ○
21. Macerata (MC) II ○
22. Marcianise (CE) ●
23. Massafra (TR) ◆
24. Pescara (PE) ●
25. Polignano a Mare (BA) ▲
26. Priverno (LT) ▲
27. Quarto (NA) ●
28. Riardo (CE) ▲
29. Rieti (RI) ●
30. Ripalimosani (CB) ●
31. Roma (RM) ○
32. San Lupo (BN) ●
33. San Marco in Lamis (FG) ●
34. Santa Croce di Magliano (CB) ●
35. Squinzano (LE) ○
36. Suio (LT) ●
37. Summonte (AV) ●
38. Terni (TN) ●
39. Torre Annunziata (NA) ▲
40. Trani (BT) ◆
41. Vico del Gargano (FG) ●
42. Vitorchiano (VT) ○



- = dialects with proform
- = dialects with proform which also exhibit another pattern
- ◆ = dialects with no proform
- ◇ = dialects with no proform which also exhibit another pattern
- △ = dialects with variable occurrence of the proform which also exhibit another pattern

MAP 4. HABERE -Agr

1. Acquaro (VV) ○
2. Agnana Calabria (RC) ○
3. Benetutti (SS) ○
4. Bitti (NU) ○
5. Bono (SS) ○
6. Bonorva (SS) ○
7. Bova Marina (RC) △
8. Buddusò (OT) ○
9. Ciano (VV) △
10. Fontanelle di Boves (CN) ○
11. Gioia Tauro (RC) △
12. Lula (NU) ○
13. Martano (LE) ◆
14. Monastir (CA) ○
15. Montauro (CZ) ◇
16. Orgosolo (NU) ● (+ Agr with 1st and 2nd person pronouns)
17. Orosei (NU) ○
18. Reggio Calabria (RC) ○
19. Sanluri (VS) ○
20. Sardara (VS) ○
21. Soleto (LE) ◆
22. Terralba (OR) ○
23. Villacidro (VS) ○
24. Vinadio (CN) ○



MAP 5. Survey points



- 
1. Acquaro (VV)
  2. Agnana Calabra (RC)
  3. Anacapri (NA)
  4. Ancona (AN)
  5. Arielli (CH)
  6. Ascoli Piceno (AP)
  7. Azzano d'Asti (AT)
  8. Badalucco (IM)
  9. Bagnolo Piemonte (CN)
  10. Belluno (BL)
  11. Benetutti (SS)
  12. Bergamo (BG)
  13. Bisceglie (BT)
  14. Bitti (NU)
  15. Bocca di Strada (TV)
  16. Bologna (BO)
  17. Bono (SS)
  18. Bonorva (SS)
  19. Bova Marina (RC)
  20. Bovolone (VR)
  21. Buddusò (OT)
  22. Buscemi (SR)
  23. Canale (CN)
  24. Capri (NA)
  25. Casemurate (FC)
  26. Castel Ritaldi (PG)
  27. Castelluccio Inferiore (PZ)
  28. Castiglione Messer Marino (CH)
  29. Catania (CT)
  30. Cereda (VI)
  31. Cesena (FC)
  32. Chiauci (IS)
  33. Ciano (VV)
  34. Colle Cottorino (FR)
  35. Collebrincioni (AQ)
  36. Crespellano (BO)
  37. Eboli (SA)
  38. Fano a Corno (TE)
  39. Felino (PR)
  40. Ferrandina (MT)
  41. Ferrara (FE)
  42. Firenze (FI)
  43. Fonni (NU)
  44. Fontanelle (CN)
  45. Francavilla Fontana (BR)
  46. Fuscaldo (CS)
  47. Gallo (PU)
  48. Gambettola (FC)
  49. Gazzolo (VR)
  50. Genova (GE)
  51. Genzano di Lucania (PZ)
  52. Genzano di Roma (RM)
  53. Gioia Tauro (RC)
  54. Giuliano di Roma (FR)
  55. Grassano (MT)
  56. Grosio (SO)
  57. Grosseto (GR)
  58. Grumento Nova (PZ)
  59. Guardiagrele (CH)
  60. Gubbio (PG)
  61. Isernia (IS)
  62. Lecce (LE) I
  63. Lecce (LE) II
  64. Leonforte (EN)
  65. Limone Piemonte (CN)
  66. Livorno (LI)
  67. Lula (NU)
  68. Macerata (MC) I
  69. Macerata (MC) II
  70. Marcianise (CE)
  71. Martano (LE)
  72. Massafra (TR)
  73. Mestre
  74. Milano (MI)
  75. Modica (RG)
  76. Monastir (CA)
  77. Mondovì (CN)
  78. Montauro (CZ)
  79. Monte Romano (RM)
  80. Montù Beccaria (PV)
  81. Mussomeli (CL)
  82. Orgosolo (NU)
  83. Orosei (NU)
  84. Padova (PD)

85. Palermo (PA)
86. Palmanova (UD)
87. Pescara (PE)
88. Piacenza (PC)
89. Picerno (PZ)
90. Pieve di Teco (IM)
91. Polignano a Mare (BA)
92. Ponte Felcino (PG)
93. Pontedera (PI)
94. Potenza (PZ)
95. Premosello Chiovenda (VB)
96. Priverno (LT)
97. Quarto (NA)
98. Reggio Calabria (RC)
99. Revigliasco (TO)
100. Riardo (CE)
101. Rieti (RI)
102. Rimini (RN)
103. Ripalimosani (CB)
104. Rocchetta Cairo (SV)
105. Roma (RM)
106. Salemi (TP)
107. San Lupo (BN)
108. San Marco (PG)
109. San Marco in Lamis (FG)
110. San Martino di Lupari (PD)
111. San Tommaso (CZ)
112. Sanluri (VS)
113. Santa Croce di Magliano (CB)
114. Sardara (VS)
115. Savelli (KR)
116. Scanzorosciate (BG)
117. Siena (SI)
118. Soffratta (TV)
119. Soletto (LE)
120. Squillace Lido (CZ)
121. Squinzano (LE)
122. Suio (LT)
123. Summonte (AV)
124. Taviano (LE)
125. Terni (TN)
126. Terralba (OR)
127. Terravecchia (CS)
128. Torino (TO)
129. Torre Annunziata (NA)
130. Toscolano Maderno (BS)
131. Trani (BT)
132. Trebisacce (CS)
133. Tursi (MT)
134. Venezia (VE)
135. Vico del Gargano (FG)
136. Villacidro (VS)
137. Vinadio (CN)
138. Vitorchiano (VT)

# Existentials and locatives in Romance dialects of Italy

## *Introduction*

DELIA BENTLEY

### 1.1 An overview of existentials and other *there* sentences

Despite the extensive literature on the topic, there is to date no agreement on how to define ‘existential sentences’ or ‘existential constructions’. Many scholars do not provide an explicit definition, focusing on particular aspects of the syntax, the semantics, or the discourse structure of these constructions. Others draw on Jespersen’s (1924: 155) definition of an existential sentence as one that asserts or denies the existence of something (see e.g. Feuillet 1998: 704). In the light of the findings of ninety years of scholarship, Jespersen’s definition is dated, as it does not capture fundamental aspects of the semantics and the discourse structure of existentials. It also fails to distinguish existential sentences with special morphosyntax, like existential *there* sentences in English, from other predications expressing existence, like sentences with the verb *exist* in this language. There are also scholars who define existentials with reference to locatives (Lyons 1967, Clark 1978), arguing for a unified account of the two types of predication (Freeze 1992), or claiming that existentials and locatives differ in terms of their perspective on a location and another participant (see Borschev and Partee 2002a, 2002b, Partee and Borschev 2007). Thus, Creissels (2014) maintains that existentials and locatives contrast in terms of their perspective on a relationship between a concrete entity conceived as movable (the figure) and another concrete entity conceived as being fixed in space or at least less movable than the former (the ground). Contrary to locative predications, existential sentences do not provide felicitous answers to questions about the location of an entity, while they can identify entities present at a given location.

Building upon McNally (2011: 1830), we define existential sentences as constructions with non-canonical morphosyntax which express a proposition about the

existence or the presence of someone or something in a context. Observe the examples in (1a,b).

- (1) a. There is one even prime number.  
b. One even prime number exists.  
(McNally 2011: 1830)

Although both (1a) and (1b) entail nothing else than the existence of a single even prime number, only (1a) has non-canonical morphosyntax, in particular VS order and an expletive (non-referential and invariant) form in subject position. In terms of the above definition, therefore, (1a) is an existential construction, whereas (1b) is not.

The choice of McNally's (2011) definition, to which we add a specific reference to context, is motivated as follows. First, while this definition may prove to be problematic vis-à-vis the morphosyntax of existential sentences in some languages (see §1.2), it fits squarely the evidence provided by the languages under scrutiny in this work. Secondly, our research projects on existential sentences (see §1.3.1) aimed to provide an analysis of the discourse–semantics–morphosyntax interface in existential constructions on evidence from a sample of closely related languages. Accordingly, we started from a semantic definition of existentials which also takes morphosyntax into consideration. We also relied on pragmatic approaches to *there* sentences (e.g. Lambrecht 1994) in our in-depth analysis of the focus structure of these sentences (see Chapter 2).

We should add that existential sentences need not involve a referential location (cf. 1a), a fact which we believe to be problematic for the definitions of existential constructions which make explicit reference to a location. In fact, in the light of our Romance evidence, we remain unconvinced of the benefits of a unified analysis of existentials and locatives, although we do acknowledge the need to capture the relatedness of these two kinds of predication (see §§3.2, 3.4.2).

Crosslinguistically, existential constructions are formed as in (2). As suggested by the bracketing, the 'pivot' is the only universally obligatory component of existential constructions (Francez 2007). This is the noun phrase (determiner phrase, quantifier phrase, or, in some languages, clause) which, in English, figures in immediately post-copular position.

- (2) (Expletive) (proform) (copula) pivot (coda).

The 'coda' can be a locative phrase or another kind of phrase, as in (3a–c). However, existentials need not exhibit a coda (cf. 3d).

- (3) a. There are mice in the cellar.  
b. There is help available.  
c. There are people suffering in vain.  
d. There is no justice.

An ‘expletive’ (non-referential and invariant) form can occur in subject position, exhibiting some of the behavioural and coding properties of the subject. For example, English *there* inverts with the copula in yes/no questions (cf. 4), while French *il* is a nominative form of the third-person pronoun, which also inverts with the copula (cf. 5a,b).

(4) Is there any soup left over?

(5) a. Il n’ y a pas d’ espoir. (French)  
 EXPL.3SG.NOM NEG PF have.3SG NEG of hope  
 ‘There is no hope.’

b. Y a -t- il un problème?  
 PF have.3SG LINK EXPL.3SG.NOM a problem  
 ‘Is there a problem?’

While English expletive *there* is also a locative expression, albeit devoid of its deictic function in the existential construction, in French the expletive pronoun co-occurs with an etymologically locative expression, *y*, in the existential construction. We refer to the latter expression as the ‘proform’.

The existential copula is *be* in English, and in many other languages, but other copulas are also found in existentials crosslinguistically. An example of a different existential copula, French *avoir* ‘have’, was given in (5a,b), and we provide further examples in due course. In section 1.2 we will also discuss existential constructions without a copula.

With respect to the semantic properties of existential constructions, we shall mention three principal ones here. To begin with, existentials are, by definition, context-dependent (Francez 2007), in that it is not possible to determine their content without information provided by the context. Thus, in the absence of contextual information, it is not possible to tell which proposition is expressed by (6a), whereas the same does not hold true of the proposition expressed by (6b). On a par with (1a), (6a) is an existential sentence, whereas (6b) is not (cf. 1b).

(6) a. There is no coffee.  
 b. Coffee does not exist.

Another property of existentials is known as the ‘predicate restriction’. This is a semantic restriction on the coda, which cannot express an individual-level predicate, but can express a stage-level predicate (Milsark 1979: 210–11; see Carlson 1977 for individual- and stage-level predicates). Consider the contrast between (7a) and (7b).

(7) a. There are students waiting (in the class).  
 b. \*There are students intelligent (in the class).

The difference in grammaticality between the members of the pair in (7a,b) depends on the semantic difference between the two codas, only the one in (7a) being stage-

level. Interestingly, the Romance dialects of Italy that alternate an individual-level copula with a stage-level one (compare Spanish *ser* ‘be’ and *estar* ‘stay’; see Pountain 1982) systematically exhibit the stage-level copula in existentials (see §3.2.1).<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, existentials are characterized by the definiteness effects, which can be defined as restrictions on definite pivots, in particular on proper nouns, personal pronouns, pivots with universal quantifier words (*the, all, each, every, both, etc.*), and expressions with a quantificational reading (Milsark 1979: 194–210), for example *most* or phrases like *n (a number) of the NP*.

- (8) a. \*There isn’t Louisa tonight.  
 b. \*There is each first year student in my Linguistics 101 class.

Some scholars consider the definiteness effects to be related to—or determined by—the discourse function of existential constructions, which is normally to introduce a new referent into the discourse world of the interlocutors. Specifically, some have claimed that the definiteness effects amount to a pragmatic condition on the pivot, which must be hearer-new, non-anaphoric, or non-presupposed (Rando and Napoli 1978, Lumsden 1988, Ward and Birner 1995, Zucchi 1995, Francez 2007). Others have maintained that the pivot must occur in a non-topical position or function in the clause (Mikkelsen 2002, Beaver et al. 2005). Definite noun phrases tend to encode topical or non-hearer-new information, and hence the restrictions on the occurrence of these phrases in pivot function. We introduce some putative counterevidence to the definiteness effects in section 1.2, and we deal with this issue in Chapter 4.

Since in this book we report the findings of a research project on existential constructions in Romance dialects of Italy, our principal focus is on existential sentences. At the same time, we contend that Romance existentials cannot be properly understood unless they are disentangled from other constructions that look similar on the surface. We thus provide an in-depth treatment of locative and non-locative *there* sentences. Following Cruschina (2012a), we call ‘*there* sentence’ a construction that is formed as follows.

- (9) (Adpositional phrase +) (proform +) copula + NP (DP, QP, CP) (+ adpositional phrase)

On the basis of Italian evidence, Cruschina (2012a) proposes a fourfold typology of *there* sentences: type (i), existential *there* sentences (cf. 10a); type (ii), inverse locatives (cf. 10b); type (iii), deictic locatives (cf. 10c); type (iv), presentational *there* sentences (cf. 10d).

<sup>1</sup> In very few cases *ESSE* and *STARE* are found in free alternation in the existential construction. See §1.1.1 for further discussion. Note also that exceptions to the predicate restriction are reported in the literature. See e.g. Czinglar’s (2002) discussion of German *es gibt* existentials.

- (10) a. Ci dev' essere una soluzione. (Italian)  
 PF must be.INF a solution  
 'There must be a solution.'
- b. C' è tua sorella, in cucina.  
 PF be.3SG your sister in kitchen  
 'Your sister is in the kitchen.'
- c. Guarda: c' è Maria.  
 Look.IMP.2SG PF be.3SG Mary  
 'Look: Mary is here.'
- d. C' è mia sorella che canta in chiesa stasera.  
 PF be.3SG my sister who sing.3SG in church tonight  
 'My sister is singing in church tonight.'

All of the structures exemplified in (10a–d) have non-canonical morphosyntax, in particular, a proform and VS order, which deviates from the canonical SV order of Italian. However, only the existential construction expresses a proposition on the existence of something in a context. Contrastingly, (10b,c) locate an individual into a presupposed or understood, salient location, and (10d) introduces a referent and a following predication, marking both as relevant to the current topic of conversation. In the chapters to follow we provide a comparative analysis of these four constructions in Romance dialects of Italy, paying particular attention to existentials and locatives.

### 1.1.1 Existentials: Romance and beyond

The existential sentences of many modern Romance languages differ from their counterparts in the ancestor language, Latin, insofar as they exhibit a proform (see Chapter 5 and Bentley and Ciconte forthcoming).

- (11) a. Només hi ha un home a la meva vida. (Catalan)  
 only PF have.3SG one man at the my life
- b. Il n' y a qu' un seul homme dans ma vie. (French)  
 EXPL NEG PF have.3SG than one only man in my life
- c. C' è solo un uomo nella mia vita. (Italian)  
 PF be.3SG only one man in.the my life
- d. Ghe zé solo che un omo nela me vita. (Padua, Veneto)  
 PF be.3SG only than one man in.the my life  
 'There is only one man in my life.'
- e. Nt'a vita mia nd'avi sulu na donna. (Agnana Calabria, Calabria)  
 in the life my PF have.3SG only one woman
- f. Ce sta solo na donna na vita mia. (Rome, Lazio)  
 PF stay.3SG only one woman in.the life my  
 'There is only one woman in my life.'

In some languages, the proform has lexicalized as part of a form of the existential copula, for example the third-person singular present of existential HABERE ‘have’ in Spanish and Galician. This is shown in (12a) and (13a), which contrast with (12b) and (13b), where the third-person past-tense forms of the same existential copula do not exhibit the lexicalized proform. In (14a,b) we show the third-person singular forms of non-copular HABERE, where the proform is missing.

- (12) a. Hay un solo hombre en mi vida. (Spanish)  
 have.3SG.PF a only man in my life  
 ‘There is only one man in my life.’  
 b. No había ningún problema.  
 NEG have.PST.3SG no problem  
 ‘There was no problem.’
- (13) a. Hai un home na miña vida. (Galician)  
 have.3SG.PF one man in.the my life  
 ‘There is one man in my life.’  
 b. Non había a menor intención de chegar a un acordo.  
 NEG have.PST.3SG the slightest intention of reach to an agreement  
 ‘There wasn’t the slightest intention to reach an agreement.’
- (14) a. No lo ha hecho. (Spanish)  
 NEG it have.3SG done  
 ‘S/he has not done it.’  
 b. Ha de estar canso. (Galician)  
 have.3SG of be.INF tired  
 ‘He must be tired.’

In Italo-Romance, one finds evidence of the lexicalization of *ghe* and *ndi* in forms of the paradigm of HABERE, regardless of its role as an existential copula, and of a much earlier lexicalization of a locative clitic in forms of the paradigm of ESSE (Benincà 2007: 38–9). The lexicalization of *ghe* in the paradigm of HABERE is exemplified in (15a,b), with evidence from the Venetan dialect of Padua, whereas (15c) illustrates the existential copula ESSE ‘be’ (cf. also 11d), which bears testimony of the lexicalization of a locative clitic.

- (15) a. Lori ga na machina rossa. (Padua, Veneto)  
 they have.3PL a car red  
 ‘They have a red car.’  
 b. Mi no spetavo nisuni e no go verto.  
 I NEG expected nobody and NEG have.1SG opened  
 ‘I did not expect anyone and I did not open (the door).’



- c. De Papa ghe ne zé solo che uno.  
 of Pope PF of.it be.3SG only than one  
 ‘Of Pope, there is only one.’

The lexicalization of *ndi* is exemplified in (16a) with evidence from the Calabrian dialect of Agnana Calabria, where HABERE is also an existential copula (cf. 11e, 16b).

- (16) a. Iji ndannu na macchina russa. (Agnana Calabria, Calabria)  
 they have.3PL a car red  
 ‘They have a red car.’  
 b. ‘I Papa nd’ avi unu sulu.  
 of Pope PF have.3SG one only  
 ‘Of Pope, there is only one.’

The two proforms (*n*)*che* (<HINC(E) ‘from here’, see Wagner 1960: 624) and *ddoi* (<ILLOC(QUE) ‘(to) there’, see Wagner 1960: 610–11) have deictic functions in Logudorese and Campidanese dialects, respectively. In accordance with the etymology of these proforms, the choice of (*n*)*che* is only grammatical if the deixis of the clause is speaker oriented, i.e. referred to the location of the speaker (cf. 17a vs. 17b), whereas *ddoi* indicates distance from the speaker (cf. 18a vs. 18b).<sup>2</sup>

- (17) a. In custu istradone (n)ch’ at una creža. (Bono, Sardinia)  
 in this road PF have.3SG a church  
 ‘In this road there is a church.’  
 b. In cussu istradone \*(n)ch’/ b’ at una creža.  
 in that road PF PF have.3SG a church  
 ‘In that road there is a church.’  
 (18) a. In custa (v)ia \*ddoi/ nci at unas cantus domus. (Villacidro, Sardinia)  
 in this road PF PF have.3SG some houses  
 ‘In this road there are some houses.’  
 b. In cussa (v)ia ddoi at unas cantus domus.  
 in that road PF have.3SG some houses  
 ‘In that road there are some houses.’

In the relevant Campidanese dialects, *ddoi* also appears to have acquired the function of an optional evidential strategy (Aikhenvald 2004: 38–9, 105–51) in combination with the copula HABERE (see Bentley 2011 for details). In particular, this

<sup>2</sup> The distal proform *ddoi* co-occurs with copula HABERE ‘have’ in conservative Campidanese, while ESSE ‘be’ is another existential copula, which co-occurs with the neutral proform *nci*. This is reminiscent of Zeitoun et al.’s (1999: 5) observation that Atayal, a Formosan language, has two existential copulas, which differ in terms of spatial and temporal remoteness vs. immediacy.

proform marks the absence of first-hand experience of the information being provided. Observe the contrast between (19a), which conveys reported information on a situation that does not concern the speaker directly, and (19b), which can convey first-hand information on a situation that affects the speaker.

- (19) a. **Ddoi at** medas problemas. (Villacidro, Sardinia)  
 PF have.3SG many problems  
 ‘There are many problems’, ‘They have many problems’ [hearsay]
- b. (N)ci funt medas problemas.  
 PF be.3PL many problems  
 ‘There are many problems’, ‘We have many problems’ [evidentially neutral or first-hand information]

While evidential marking is known to figure in existential constructions of other languages, in connection with the occurrence of posture verbs (see Koontz-Garboden 2009 for an example from Ulwa, a Misumalpan language spoken in Nicaragua), this evidential strategy was not found elsewhere in our survey.

Some Romance languages do not have an existential proform. This is shown here with evidence from Romanian (cf. 20a), European and Brazilian Portuguese (cf. 20b,c), as well as three Italo-Romance dialects (cf. 20d–f).

- (20) a. Fii atentă că în această fructă sunt multe semințe.  
 be.IMP.2SG careful that in this fruit be.3PL many seeds  
 (Romanian)
- b. Tem cuidado: nesta fruta há muitas sementes.  
 have.IMP.2SG attention in.this fruit have.3SG many seeds  
 (European Portuguese)
- c. Tome cuidado: tem muitos caroços nessa fruta.  
 take.IMP.2SG attention have.3SG many seeds in.this fruit  
 (Brazilian Portuguese)
- d. Sta atenta che te sti fruti qua l’ é tanti semi.  
 stay.IMP.2SG careful that in these fruits here SCL be.3SG many seeds  
 (Belluno, Veneto)
- e. Statte attenta ca intru a sta frutta ave tanti samenti.  
 stay.IMP.2SG.REFL careful that inside to this fruit have.3SG many seeds  
 (Soletto, Salentino, Apulia)
- f. Stattò attintò ca entò a sta frottò stannò tanta semò.  
 stay.IMP.2SG.REFL careful that inside to this fruit stay.3PL many seeds  
 (Genzano di Lucania, Basilicata)  
 ‘Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.’

The evidence in (11a–f) and (20a–f) suggests that the development of a proform is not connected to the establishment of a particular existential copula, since (with the exception of *TENERE* ‘hold, have’) the Romance existential copulas are all attested with and without proform.

French *il y a* existentials exhibit an expletive nominative pronoun in subject position (cf. 5a,b, 11b). The northern dialects of Italy normally exhibit a subject clitic in the existential construction. This is an invariant third-person singular (masculine) pronoun, when the inflection on the copula does not bear the agreement feature values of the pivot.<sup>3</sup> Examples (21a,b) exhibit a non-agreeing subject clitic, while (21c) provides evidence that the third-person plural subject clitic is *i*, in the relevant dialect. If, on the other hand, the copula does agree with the pivot, so does the subject clitic. This pattern is normally found with pivots that are personal pronouns (cf. 21d,e), since in the dialects of the north the overriding tendency with other pivots is towards the lack of agreement (compare Maps 1 and 2 in the introductory pages of this volume).

- (21) a. In sa frùta ch̀i u i è tante smenze.  
 in this fruit here ESCL PF be.3SG many seeds  
 (Rocchetta Cairo, Liguria)  
 ‘In this fruit there are many seeds.’
- b. U i è der pòsc-t per di otre cà int es pais ch̀i.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG some space for some other houses in this village here  
 ‘There is space for other houses in this village.’
- c. I scivamàgni i sun int’ u tiròt  
 the towels SCL.3PL.M be.3PL in the drawer  
 ‘The towels are in the drawer.’
- d. Non state a preocupè: a i sun mi.  
 NEG stay.IMP.2SG.REFL at worry.INF SCL.1SG PF be.1SG me  
 ‘Do not worry: there’s me.’
- e. I i sun chèi.  
 SCL.3PL.M PF be.3PL them  
 ‘There’s them.’

The correspondence of clitic and inflectional agreement fails to be manifested in the dialects in which the third-person singular and plural of *ESSE* ‘be’ are syncretic. In such cases, we rely on the morphological feature values of the clitic to determine whether the pivot controls verb agreement. Thus, we assume that the pivot does not control finite number agreement on the copula in (22a,b), but it does in (23a,b).

<sup>3</sup> For agreement feature values, see Corbett (2006: 113–22). Observe that the copula of (21a,b) could be said to agree with the pivot in person; we return to this point in due course.

- (22) a. Sta atenta che te sti fruti qua l' é tanti semi.  
 stay.IMP.2SG careful that in these fruits here ESCL be.3SG many seeds  
 (Belluno, Veneto)  
 'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- b. L' é posto par altre case te sto paese.  
 ESCL be.3SG space for other houses in this village  
 'There is space for other houses in this village.'
- (23) a. In questa fruta i zè tanti semi.  
 in this fruit SCL.3PL.M be.3PL many seeds  
 (Palmanova, Venetan, Friuli)  
 'In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- b. El zè spassio per altre case in questo paese.  
 SCL.3SG.M be.3SG space for other houses in this village  
 'There is space for other houses in this village.'

Another expletive form, which occurs both in existentials and in constructions providing information that is entirely new, is *a*, which does not have canonical subject clitic behaviour (Benincà 1983, 1994b, 1996, Bernini 2012). This expletive form appears not to be required obligatorily in the mentioned constructions (cf. 24b) and can co-occur with agreeing copulas, as shown in (24c), where the third-person plural clitic *i* marks copula agreement, as well as in (25B).<sup>4</sup>

- (24) a. A gh' è di pac ind'el magasi.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG some parcels in the storehouse  
 (Bergamo, Lombardy)  
 'There are some parcels in the storehouse.'
- b. (A) gh' è lé che la te da una man.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG her who SCL.3SG.F to.you give a hand  
 'There's her to give you a hand.'
- c. A i a picàt dù che conosce mia.  
 ESCL SCL.3PL.M have.3PL knocked two who know.1SG NEG  
 'Two people I do not know knocked (on the door).'

<sup>4</sup> In the glosses, we distinguish between, on the one hand, expletives, which exhibit patterns of subject behaviour (EXPL, e.g. English *there* and French *il*), and, on the other hand, expletive subject clitics, which belong to the subject clitic paradigms of the northern dialects of Italy, although they fail to exhibit the agreement feature values of the post-copular noun phrase (ESCL, e.g. Cairese *u* in 21a). Since it is not always possible to distinguish the clitic *a* occurring in (24) and (25) from a genuine subject clitic, we gloss *a* like the expletive subject clitics proper (cf. 24a–c, 25A,B).

- (25) A: A gh' è chi fiò? (Milan, Lombardy)  
 ESCL PF be.3SG those children  
 'Are those children there?'  
 B: Sì, a gh' in.  
 yes ESCL PF be.3PL  
 'Yes, they are there.'

In the northern dialects which do not normally exhibit subject clitics, these also fail to appear in the existential construction. We provide here an example from Canale D'Alba, a Piedmontese dialect.

- (26) a. Fa 'tension che en sta fruta sì j é tante smens.  
 do.IMP.2SG attention that in this fruit here PF be.3SG many seeds  
 (Canale D'Alba, Piedmont)  
 'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'  
 b. J é 'd spasio per d' atre cà en sto pais sì.  
 PF be.3SG some space for some other houses in this village here  
 'There is space for other houses in this village.'

Finally, in Ladin and Romansh dialects with patterns of V2 (verb-second) word order, the subject clitic occurs in post-verbal position if a locative phrase figures pre-verbally (Manzini and Savoia 2005: 40–42).

- (27) Ca fora é le mituns. (Calfosch, Trentino Alto Adige)  
 here out be.3SG ESCL children  
 'Outside there are children.'  
 (Manzini and Savoia 2005: 41).

Turning now to the copulas, each of the Romance copulas ESSE 'be', HABERE 'have', STARE 'stay', and TENERE 'hold, have' is attested as the sole existential copula of individual Romance languages.

- (28) a. C' è u locu. (Corsican)  
 PF be.3SG the space  
 'There is space.'  
 (Giacomo-Marcellesi 1997: 37)  
 b. A quantu pare ddrai ave la neve. (Soletto, Apulia)  
 at how.much seem.3SG there have.3SG the snow  
 'It seems that there is snow there.'  
 c. Cə stannə sulə dù pərsənə chə mə vunnə bənə. (Isernia, Molise)  
 PF stay.3PL only two people who to.me want.3PL well  
 'There are only two people who love me.'

- d. **Tem** duas soluções para esse problema. (spoken Brazilian Portuguese)<sup>5</sup>  
 have.3SG two solutions for this problem  
 ‘There are two solutions to this problem.’

The existential copulas can also alternate. Both *ESSE* ‘be’ and *STARE* ‘stay’ are found in alternation with *HABERE* ‘have’ in accordance with the definiteness of the pivot (see §§4.3.1, 4.3.3, and, for the dialects of Italy, Manzini and Savoia 2005: 50). In (29a,b) we exemplify the alternation of *ESSE* ‘be’ with *HABERE* ‘have’ in Logudorese Sardinian (see Maps 1 and 4), while in (30a,b) we illustrate the alternation of *STARE* ‘stay’ with *HABERE* ‘have’ in Spanish.

- (29) a. **B’ est** sorre tua. (Bono, Sardinia)  
 PF be.3SG sister your  
 ‘There is your sister.’  
 b. **Non b’ at** mancu iscolas.  
 NEG PF have.3SG even schools  
 ‘There aren’t even any schools.’
- (30) a. **No** podemos divorciarnos: **están** los niños. (Spanish)  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.REFL stay.3PL the children  
 ‘We cannot divorce: there’re the children.’  
 b. **No hay** problema.  
 NEG have.3SG.PF problem  
 ‘There is no problem.’

In addition, in a number of Italo-Romance dialects, we found evidence of seemingly free alternations of *ESSE* ‘be’ with *STARE* ‘stay’ or with *HABERE* ‘have’. In such cases, the existential pattern with *ESSE* ‘be’ would appear to be a more progressive one, which is advancing under pressure from standard Italian.

- (31) **Ng’ è** / nge **sta** u spazje p’ ati casə ində stu paese.  
 PF be.3SG PF stay.3SG the space for other houses in this village  
 (Eboli, Campania)  
 ‘There is space for other houses in this village.’
- (32) **No ndi** potimu spartira: **ava** / nci **sugnu** i figghiali.  
 NEG REFL can.1PL divorce.INF have.3SG PF be.3PL the children  
 (Ciano, Calabria)  
 ‘We cannot divorce: there’re the children.’

The examples above suggest that copula selection is tightly connected to agreement or lack thereof. Although agreeing *HABERE* ‘have’ is attested (see §3.3.3), this is usually a

<sup>5</sup> In other registers of Brazilian Portuguese, one still finds an older *STARE* vs. *HABERE* alternation.

non-agreeing existential copula (see Map 4). *STARE* ‘stay’, on the other hand, is usually an agreeing copula (see Map 3). As for *ESSE* ‘be’, this is an agreeing existential copula, when in alternation with *HABERE* ‘have’, while it may exhibit agreement or be invariant, when it is the sole existential copula of a given language (see Maps 1 and 2).

Broadening our horizons to variation outside Romance, we should first note that a great deal of languages appear to lack a dedicated construction with non-canonical morphosyntax which expresses a proposition about the existence or the presence of someone or something in a context. This is what Creissels (2014) refers to as the ‘non-universality’ of the existential predication. Many of the languages in question encode the existence or the presence of someone or something in a context by means of a locative construction (Clark 1978: 96, 103, Levinson 2000, 2006, Dryer 2007: 243, Koch 2012).

- (33) a. Mae ‘r car yma. (Welsh)  
       is the car here  
       ‘The car is here.’  
       b. Mae car yma.  
       is car here  
       ‘There is a car here.’  
       (Feuillet 1998: 691)
- (34) a. Thuarr ntia-pia pirrinha (ini). (Kalkatungu, Pama Nyungan)  
       snake rock-LOC up/on (sit)  
       ‘The snake is on the rock’, ‘There is a (/the) snake on the rock.’  
       b. Thuarr tjaa ntia-pia pangithi.  
       snake this rock-LOC that.LOC  
       ‘(There is) this snake (is) at/on/under that rock.’  
       (Barry Blake, p.c.)
- (35) Kémi kîgha kapî k:oo ka tóó. (Yéli Dnye, Rossel Island)  
       mango fruit cup in DEIC.TAM sits  
       ‘The mango is in the cup’, ‘There is a mango in the cup.’  
       (Levinson 2006: 165, 177)

The evidence in (33)–(35) challenges the definition of existential sentence provided in section 1.1, in that the constructions in question do not have non-canonical morphosyntax. Observe, however, that structures that appear identical in morpho-syntactic terms may differ in prosody. Regrettably, the literature does not provide much information on the respective prosody of locative and existential constructions of the kind exemplified in (33)–(35).

A number of languages can express existence and possession with the same structure (cf. 36), while others exhibit putatively possessive copulas in existential predications (cf. 37, 38).

- (36) a. Pöydällä on kynä. (Finnish)  
 table.ADE is pencil  
 ‘There is a pencil on the table.’  
 b. Liisalla on mies.  
 Lisa.ADE is man  
 ‘Lisa has a man.’  
 (Gaeta 2013: 490)
- (37) Éxi polí kósmo sto kédro. (Modern Greek)  
 has much people in.DEF centre  
 ‘There are a lot of people in the city centre.’  
 (Gaeta 2013: 490)
- (38) **Ima** nekih studenata (ovde) koji hoće samo diplomu. (Serbo-Croat)  
 has some students.GEN here who want just certificate  
 ‘There are some students (here) who just want the certificate.’  
 (Hartmann 2008: 226, cited in Gaeta 2013: 491)

The evidence in (33)–(35) may be thought to support the unified accounts of existentials and locatives, and that in (36)–(38) the unified approach to existentials and possessives. However, detailed analysis of putatively locative or possessive constructions reveals in some cases that, despite appearances, existential predications differ from their locative or possessive counterparts. A cogent example is provided by Koontz-Garboden’s (2009) study of Ulwa existentials, which convincingly shows that the same posture verb expresses posture in locative predications, though not in existential ones. This is shown by the two occurrences of *lau* ‘sit’ in (39), the first one, unlike the latter, being a non-postural existential verb.

- (39) Yaka yal-ka ya baka-ka makdâ-t-i **lau** ka katka **lau**  
 that woman-3SG the child-3SG watch-TA-SS sit SENT-KA but sit  
 at-sa/sa. Asna suh-p-i sâk ka. (Ulwa, Misumalpan)  
 be-NEG/NEG clothes wash-PA-SS stand SENT-KA  
 ‘That woman is (sitting) watching her child, but she is not sitting. She is standing, washing clothes.’  
 (Koontz-Garboden 2009: 259)

Therefore, Ulwa does have an existential construction, where *lau* is devoid of its postural meaning, presumably as a result of a process of grammaticalization. In this book we provide comparable evidence from Romance.

Importantly, the properties of the existential constructions of a given language must be related to general properties of the grammar of that language. For example, Partee and Borschev (2007: 147) note that the flexibility of word order in Russian,



combined with the absence of overt marking of definiteness and of a *there*-expletive, makes it difficult in some cases to identify existential constructions and tell them apart from locatives.

We thus argue that it makes little sense to propose unified analyses of existentials and locatives or possessives on the basis of surface correspondences such as those in (33)–(35) and (36)–(38). While one has to entertain the hypothesis that locative or possessive constructions figure in some languages in contexts where other languages exhibit existential sentences as a more natural alternative, in-depth language-specific analysis is needed at the discourse–semantics–syntax interface to identify any properties that may be peculiar to the existential readings of structures which would otherwise appear to be locative or possessive. This in-depth examination must make reference to the general properties of the grammar of the languages under investigation. In this book, we provide an example of this kind of analysis on evidence from Italo-Romance and Sardinian.

With respect to how existential constructions are formed, as was pointed out in section 1.1 (cf. 2), the pivot is the only essential component of these constructions. Thus, there are languages in which neither the copula nor the proform are (obligatorily) found in existentials. We provide an example from Tolai (Papua New Guinea) here.

- (40) A kilala-na-mulmulum. (Tolai, Papua New Guinea)  
 ART season-LINK-hunger  
 ‘There was famine.’  
 (Mosel 1984, cited in Dryer 2007: 244)

Crosslinguistically the pivot tends not to take the default syntactic position, or the marking, of subjects or topics. In the Romance languages that were the focus of our survey, the pivot takes the post-copular position, which, in these languages, is the default position of the object and of non-contrastive foci. In Japanese, an SOV language, the pivot follows the location in clause-initial position (cf. 41a), thus contrasting with the subject of locative predications (cf. 41b). It also takes the *-ga* marking, and rejects the topic *-wa* marking (cf. 41c).

- (41) a. Koko-ni hon-ga ar-u. (Japanese)  
 here-LOC book-NOM exist(inanimate)-NONPST  
 ‘There is a book here.’  
 b. Ano hon-ga koko-ni ar-u.  
 that book-NOM here-LOC exist(inanimate)-NONPST  
 ‘That book is here.’  
 c. \*Koko-ni hon-wa ar-u.  
 here-LOC book-TOP exist(inanimate)-NONPST  
 ‘There is a book here’ [intended reading]  
 (Kiyoko Toratani, p. c.)

In concomitance with negation, the pivot may take genitive case, as is notoriously the case with the Russian genitive of negation (Babby 1980, Borschev and Partee 1998, 2002a, 2002b, Partee and Borschev 2007).

- (42) Net deneg. (Russian)  
 NEG.(be) money.GEN.PL  
 ‘There is no money.’

Intransitive verbal predications where the noun phrase that realizes the main participant lacks subject properties (it does not take nominative case and occurs in object position, it does not control agreement on the verb, etc.) are sometimes subsumed under the label of existential construction. An example from Finnish is given in (43) (cf. 43b).

- (43) a. Anna ei enää tullut. (Finnish)  
 Anna.NOM NEG.3SG any.more come.PFP  
 ‘Anna did not come any more.’ [She stayed away]  
 b. Ei tullut enää Anna-a.  
 NEG.3SG come.PFP any.more Anna-PART  
 ‘Anna did not come any more.’ [Perhaps she died.]  
 (Kiparsky 2001: 348)

The crosslinguistic variation in the definiteness constraints on the pivot will be discussed in Chapter 4. In this context, we simply note that, while these constraints have been shown to be at work in many, unrelated languages, definite pivots are nonetheless admitted in existential constructions.

- (44) Àkwai mù cikin màganař. (Hausa, Chadic)  
 exist 1PL in matter.DEF  
 ‘There is us in the matter.’  
 (Newman 2000: 178, cited in Creissels 2014)

Importantly, definite post-copular noun phrases appear to be more readily available in some languages than in others. Compare the Italian data in (45a,b) with their ungrammatical English counterparts in (8a,b).

- (45) a. Stasera non c’ è Luisa. (Italian)  
 tonight NEG PF be.3SG Louisa  
 ‘Louisa is not here tonight.’ Lit. There isn’t Luisa tonight.  
 b. C’ è ogni matricola nel mio corso Introduzione alla linguistica.  
 PF be.3SG each fresher in.the my class introduction to.the linguistics  
 ‘Each fresher is registered on my Introduction to Linguistics class.’  
 Lit. There is each fresher in my Introduction to Linguistics class.

Evidence such as (44) and (45a,b) has engendered a great deal of debate, although, as noted by Beaver et al. (2005), the relevant discussions have focused on individual languages, thus failing to capture the crosslinguistic variation in the definiteness constraints. The main emphasis of our contribution to this topic will be on cross-dialectal and crosslinguistic variation.

In his survey of existential construction types, Creissels (2014) mentions a structure in which the pivot is treated as the possessee of an incorporating possessive construction (cf. 46a). The pivot is thus not the head of a noun phrase, but rather a one-place predicate meaning ‘be an N owner’ (cf. 46b).

- (46) a. Angut taana illu-qarpuq. (Kalaallisut, West Greenlandic)  
 man that house-PROPR.3SG  
 ‘That man has a house.’
- b. Nillataartarfim-mi tallima-nik manne-qarpuq.  
 fridge-LOC five-INSTR.PL egg-PROPR.3SG  
 ‘There are five eggs in the fridge.’  
 (Van Geenhoven 1998: 25, 27, cited in Creissels 2014)

This kind of evidence raises the question of whether the pivot should be considered to be a referential expression or a predicative one. This will be a central issue in our analysis (see §§3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.4.1, and 4.4.1).

As for the verb that appears in existential constructions, it should be noted that some languages have specialized existential verbs, which have virtually no function elsewhere in the grammar.

- (47) May libro-ng b<in>ili ng babae. (Tagalog)  
 exist book-LINK <PERF.UV>buy GEN woman  
 ‘There exists a book which the woman bought.’  
 (Latrouite and Van Valin 2014: 161)

Others exhibit locative, possessive, or attributive copulas (as is the case with Romance), posture verbs (cf. 35, 39), or other verbs, such as ‘find’ (Swedish) and ‘give’ (German).

Suppletive negative copulas are attested in existentials (cf. 48b, 49b). Alternatively, the negative marker has special phonosyntactic or morphosyntactic properties in existential sentences. For example, in Kannada, a South Dravidian language spoken in southern India, negation is normally expressed by the suffix *-illa* (cf. 50a). This appears as a free-standing form in negative existential sentences (cf. 50b) (Veselinova 2013).

- (48) a. Yau ʋiis. (Hsinshe Kavalan, Formosan)  
 exist mosquito  
 ‘There is a mosquito.’

- b. **Mai** **❧iis**.  
 NEG mosquito  
 ‘There is no mosquito.’  
 (abridged from Zeitoun et al. 1999: 5)
- (49) a. Su **vardı** (Turkish)  
 water exist.PST  
 ‘There was water.’
- b. Su **yoktu**.  
 water neg.exist.PST  
 ‘There was no water.’  
 (Veselinova 2013: 113)
- (50) a. Anil ka:le:jige ho:guvud=**illa**. (Kannada, South Dravidian)  
 Anil college.DAT go.NONPST.GER-NEG  
 ‘Anil won’t go to college.’
- b. Khaja:neyalli haNa **illa**.  
 treasury.LOC money EX.NEG  
 ‘There is no money in the treasury.’  
 (Veselinova 2013: 113)

Negation may trigger the use of the copula ‘have’ (cf. 51b), in place of the default copula ‘be’ (cf. 51a). This switch only occurs in the present tense in Polish (Feuillet 1998, Dahl 2010, Veselinova 2013).

- (51) a. Jest wiatr. (Polish)  
 is wind  
 ‘There is wind.’
- b. Nie **ma** wiatru.  
 NEG has wind.GEN  
 ‘There is no wind.’  
 (Feuillet 1998: 705)

Feuillet (1998: 705) observes that the ‘have’ vs. ‘be’ alternation can correlate with non-contrastive vs. contrastive negation, the former negating the expression in its scope in absolute terms, the latter contrasting it with another expression. Alternations between affirmative *there* sentences with ‘be’/‘stay’ and negative ones with ‘have’ are reported for Romanian (Lombard 1974: 273). In our survey, we found such alternations in Salentino (Apulia). The affirmative structures with ‘be’ predicate location, as witnessed by the obligatory occurrence of a locative phrase or adverb (cf. 52A,B.i, 53A,B.i), while the negated counterparts with ‘have’ can be read as existential sentences, since they lack the spell-out of a locative predicate and instead

involve quantification (cf. 52B.ii, 53B.ii). The accusative clitic figuring in the negated *there* sentences with ‘have’ marks quantification over a topic (see Longa et al. 1998 for comparative evidence from Iberian Romance). In other dialects, this kind of quantification exhibits a reflex of Latin INDE ‘of it/of them’, and we shall return to this in due course (see §§2.3.2, 3.3.3). Finally, the negated *there* sentences with ‘be’ can be construed contrastively (cf. 53B.ii).

- (52) A: Li sciucamani stannu intra lu cassettu? (Soletto, Apulia)  
 the towels stay.3PL inside the drawer  
 B. i: Sì, **stannu** ddrai.  
 yes stay.3PL there  
 B. ii: No, non I’ ave.  
 no NEG ACC.CL have.3SG  
 ‘Are the towels in the drawer?’ ‘Yes, they are.’ ‘No, there aren’t any.’
- (53) A: Li sciucamani stannu intra lu cassettu? (Martano, Apulia)  
 the towels stay.3PL inside the drawer  
 B. i: Sì, **stannu** ddrai.  
 yes stay.3PL there  
 B. ii: No, non **stannu** ddrai/non I’ ave.  
 no NEG stay.3PL there NEG ACC.CL have.3SG  
 ‘Are the towels in the drawer?’ ‘Yes, they are.’ ‘No, they are not (they are somewhere else)/No, there aren’t any.’

Some languages differentiate lexically between existence in an ontological sense, presence at a location, and availability. Thus, Creissels and Sambou (2013) list three different constructions of Mandinka (a Mande language spoken in Gambia). The different lexicalization of the location characterizes the two constructions in (54a) and (54b) as one with a focal figure and a non-referential ground—in other words an existential construction proper, and one that expresses ontological existence, respectively. Contrastingly, (54c) expresses availability.

- (54) a. Ñoo-súfáa fulá le bé jee. (Mandinka, Mande)  
 millet-variety two FOC COP LOC  
 ‘There are two varieties of millet.’  
 b. Ñoo-súfáa fulá le be kée-riŋ.  
 millet-variety two FOC COP LOC  
 ‘There are two varieties of millet.’ [Two varieties of millet exist—DB]  
 c. Ñoo-súfáa fulá le soto-ta.  
 millet-variety two FOC be.available  
 ‘There are two varieties of millet.’ [Two varieties of millet are available—DB]  
 (Creissels and Sambou 2013: 139)



dedicated existential construction (cf. 33–35), while other languages differentiate lexically between existence, presence at a location, and availability (cf. 54a–c).

## 1.2 Scope and objectives of the volume

This volume sets out to provide the first comparative treatment of existentials and other *there* sentences in Romance languages of Italy. We address key issues emerging from the relevant scholarship in the light of evidence from morphosyntactic variation in these languages.

The bulk of our evidence is drawn from two branches of Romance, Italo-Romance and Sardinian. Exception being made for Italian, which belongs to Italo-Romance, the languages of these subfamilies have very little, if any, official recognition in sociopolitical terms. This is why they are conventionally referred to as ‘dialects’. Importantly, these dialects are not varieties of Italian, but rather daughters of Latin, which are attested in written form since the Middle Ages (though in most cases the written tradition has now declined dramatically), and have developed alongside Italian (Rohlf’s 1966, 1968, 1969, Migliorini 1960, Meyer-Lübke 1972, Bruni 1984: 286–332, Maiden 1995). Our dataset includes most principal subgroupings that are part of Italo-Romance and Sardinian.<sup>6</sup> In Italo-Romance, these are Gallo-Italian (Ligurian, Piedmontese, Lombard, and Emilian-Romagnol), Venetan, Tuscan, Italian, the central dialects (spoken in three regions, Marche, Umbria, and Lazio), the upper southern dialects (Abruzzese, northern Apulian, Molisan, Campanian, Lucanian, and northern Calabrian), and the extreme southern dialects (Salentino, southern Calabrian, and Sicilian) (Pellegrini 1975, 1977, Maiden 1995: 233–5, Maiden and Parry 1997a, Savoia 1997). As for Sardinian, we considered Logudorese, Nuorese, and Campidanese dialects (Virdis 1988, Blasco Ferrer 1986).

The study of well-documented and closely cognate dialect families enables the researcher to analyse in depth the parameters of variation of individual grammatical phenomena. It also constitutes an ideal test-bed for the refinement of existing hypotheses because of the high degree of comparability of the languages under examination. To give but one example, within a broadly uniform existential pattern, the Italo-Romance dialects exhibit a wide range of microvariation in the behavioural and coding properties of the pivot. We take as our working hypothesis the idea that this kind of variation ultimately depends on the variation in the semantic parameters of subjecthood (see Bentley 2013, who draws on Mikkelsen 2002 and Beaver et al. 2005). Relying on the comparability of the diagnostics for subject in the languages under investigation, we are able to identify the parameters that are relevant to the dialects of our sample, and we explore in full the role that they play in the mapping

<sup>6</sup> Two of the Piedmontese dialects of our survey (Limone Piemonte and Vinadio) can be considered to be Gallo-Romance dialects. For Piedmontese see Telmon (1988).

from semantics to syntax, in particular in the realization of the pivot in morphosyntax.

The testing of influential hypotheses on existential constructions against our first-hand evidence is at the heart of our endeavour. In section 1.1 it was mentioned that existentials are believed to have the function of introducing a new referent into discourse. In fact, they are normally considered to be sentence-focus structures, in the sense of Lambrecht (1994). We investigate the focus structure of Italo-Romance and Sardinian existentials. While setting existentials apart from the other kinds of *there* sentence discussed in section 1.1 (cf. 10b,c), this investigation also reveals that a topic can be part of the makeup of existential constructions. Our analysis thus advances the current understanding of the focus structure of existentials, as well as that of the other types of *there* sentence.

We also assess the respective merits of the locative hypothesis, i.e. the unified analysis of existentials, possessives, and locatives (e.g. Lyons 1967, Clark 1978, Freeze 1992), and of the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis, i.e. the view that the predicate of existential constructions is not the coda or a silent predicate meaning ‘exist’, but rather the pivot (e.g. Williams 1984, 1994, La Fauci and Loporcaro 1993, 1997, Zamparelli 2000, Hazout 2004, Francez 2007, Cornilescu 2009, Cruschina 2012b). Although many correspondences are found in the morphosyntax of existentials, possessives, and locatives, our findings unequivocally challenge a unified analysis of these structures. Advancing a proposal that captures the said correspondences, we thus opt for the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis, pursuing Francez’s (2007, 2009, 2010) claim that the existential pivot is a property and that existential sentences have an implicit argument. Francez also argues that the coda is an optional modifier of the predication, which contributes to its contextualization. Lastly, he maintains that the existential pivot is by definition focal, and he derives the definiteness effect from this property.

While our findings suggest that the pivot is the predicate of an implicit argument, we are faced with the challenge of explaining how a predicate can control copula agreement (cf. 58), take accusative case (cf. 59), or be resumed by an accusative clitic (cf. 60B).

- (58) Ci su sulə dui cristienə ca mi vonə benə.  
 PF be.3PL only two people who to.me want love  
 (Castelluccio Inferiore, Basilicata)

‘There are only two people who love me.’

- (59) Pe stu problema m’ eri dittu ca avia a tie.  
 For this problem to.me were said that have.PST.3SG ACC you  
 (Martano, Apulia)

‘For this problem you had said to me that you would be available.’



- (60) A: Su quistu nonn' ave dubbi. (Martano, Apulia)  
 on this NEG have.3SG doubts  
 B: E invece sì, li dubbi l' ave.  
 and instead yes the doubts ACC.CL have.3SG  
 'There are no doubts about this.' 'On the contrary, there are some doubts.'

Constructions like (59) also exhibit highly definite pivots, which lend themselves to an analysis as individual variables rather than properties. Assuming that existentials introduce a new referent into discourse, we are also charged with the task of ascertaining what is meant by a new referent, in the case of the existential pivot—in other words, how a predicate can be referential.

It is not within the aims of our work to provide a new model-theoretic analysis of existentials or of *there* sentences in general. Rather, we seek answers to the above questions at the discourse–semantics–syntax interface, adopting a theoretical framework in which discourse, semantics, and syntax are independent levels of analysis which are linked by an algorithm (see §1.3.2). We develop a comprehensive analysis of predication and argument realization in existentials, whereby a distinction is drawn between two types of existential *there* sentence. In the one type, the pivot is merely a property of an implicit argument. It does not introduce a new referent into discourse or exhibit the argument behaviour illustrated in (58)–(60). In the other type, the pivot introduces a referent, or a set of referents, into discourse. This referent or set constitutes the only explicit component of the semantics of the construction, while it is also the provider of the implicit argument of the construction. We thus assume that the pivot takes the function of the predicate in semantics. In morphosyntax, the pivot can pattern as an argument because of its referentiality, which is a property of arguments. With respect to *there* sentences with highly definite pivots, we contrast inverse and deictic locatives (cf. 10b,c) with contextualized existentials (cf. 59) (Abbott 1992, 1993, 1997). The post-copular noun phrase of inverse and deictic locatives is not a predicate, but rather the focal argument of a locative predicate (Cruschina 2012b). As for contextualized existentials with definite pivots, while their pivot does not lend itself to be analysed as a property, these structures do fit McNally's (2011) definition of existential construction adopted in this work (see §1.1). In our analysis of the semantics–syntax linking, we assume that the definite pivot has the function of the predicate in semantic representation because it is the only specified element in the semantics of the construction and the provider of an implicit argument. The referentiality of this pivot motivates its encoding as an argument in syntax.

The definiteness effects are within the scope of our investigation. Our principal objective, however, is not to explore the conditions on the ban—or the licensing—of definite noun phrases in pivot function, but rather to capture the crosslinguistic variation in these effects. Our aim is not, therefore, to compete with the existing

accounts, but rather to complement them, and to highlight the close interconnect-  
edness of the definiteness effects with general properties of the languages under  
investigation. We consider two main facets of the variation in the definiteness effects.  
On the one hand, definites in post-copular position are licensed more readily in some  
languages than in others. On the other, some languages treat definite and indefinite  
pivots differentially. We capture both facets in terms of the crosslinguistic variation  
in the grammar and the meaning of the subject.

The analysis of the definiteness effects prepares the ground for our account of  
semantics–syntax linking in all types of *there* sentence. An original contribution of  
this account is that, pursuing Van Valin’s (2005) insight that discourse plays a role  
at every step in the linking, our analysis sheds light on the role of discourse  
on predication. In analysing the discourse–semantics–syntax linking in existential  
sentences, we revisit the impersonal hypothesis (Perlmutter 1983 and subsequent  
literature), and we propose that existentials are not impersonal by definition.

Existential sentences were originally chosen as the focus of our crossdialectal  
investigation because they constitute a fundamental construction of human language.  
The questions which arise from the study of these sentences are central issues in  
linguistic theory: (i) the typology and distribution of topics and foci, (ii) predication,  
and its interaction with reference, as well as (iii) the status of grammatical relations as  
syntactic primitives, derivatives of syntactic configurations, or interface constructs  
which grammaticalize discourse and semantic roles. Although the analyses developed  
in the chapters to follow deal specifically with existentials and other *there*  
sentences, with this book we also hope to provide an original contribution to these  
theoretical issues.

As should be clear from the discussion in section 1.2, the typological variation in  
existential constructions is broad. We thus make no claims to exhaustiveness in our  
treatment of such structures. We do, however, aim at originality in two respects. First,  
our analysis is based on an exceptionally rich set of data, which was collected  
expressly for our research projects (see §1.3.1), in a systematic way, and with the  
support of a network of local specialists of the various dialect areas (see §1.4).<sup>7</sup> Our  
treatment of existential, locative, and presentational *there* sentences is, in fact,  
the first microvariational analysis of these structures.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, we capitalize on  
microvariational evidence to offer a comprehensive account of the discourse–  
semantics–syntax linking in existential constructions, comparing these structures at

<sup>7</sup> The dataset which our claims are based upon is also publicly accessible (see §1.3.1).

<sup>8</sup> An invaluable source of data on existential constructions in the dialects of Italy is found in Manzini and Savoia (2005), a volume to which reference is often made in this book. The focus of Manzini and Savoia’s work, however, is not on these constructions in particular, but rather more broadly on the syntax of Italo- and Rhaeto-Romance dialects. Their analysis, therefore, does not emphasize the implications of the microvariation attested for the theory of existential sentences.

all levels of analysis with locatives and other types of *there* sentence. In both respects, this volume fills lacunae in the existing literature. To be sure, the finer details of our account of the linking to syntax are only intended to be valid for the languages under investigation here. An important reason for this is the wide range of typological variation in the grammatical relation subject (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 242–316, Van Valin 2005: 89–127). However, we do hope to provide new—and crosslinguistically valid—insights on key issues which arise in the discourse–semantics–syntax linking in existential and locative *there* sentences. We also discuss the historical context in which the present-day structures have developed, relying on the scrutiny of a selection of primary classical and late sources (see Appendix 2) and of a corpus of early Italo-Romance texts amounting to over 10,000 pages and dating from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries (see Appendix 1). Again, we expect the historical background which we outline here for Romance to be paralleled in the development of existential constructions of other language families.

The volume is aimed, on the one hand, at scholars in Romance linguistics and Italian dialectology and syntax and, on the other, at typologists and theoretical linguists. We hope that Romance linguists will welcome the wealth of data reported in the book, as well as the rigorous systematization of the evidence in accordance with a prominent theory of the discourse–semantics–syntax interface (Foley and Van Valin 1984, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997, Van Valin 2005). Since this framework is adopted by field linguists and typologists, the volume will also generally appeal to typologists who do not specifically work on Romance. Finally, in the light of the status of existential constructions as one of the fundamental constructions of human language, and the many theoretical issues which are addressed in the volume, we hope that it will also find an extensive and varied readership among theoretical linguists.

### 1.3 Authorship, methodology, theoretical underpinnings of the research

#### 1.3.1 *The Manchester projects on existential constructions*

The research expounded in this book was carried out within two research projects funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council: AH/E506011/1 and AH/H032509/1 (see §1.4). Project AH/E506011/1 (September 2008 to June 2009) was a pilot study, which prepared the ground for project AH/H032509/1 (November 2010 to June 2014). Delia Bentley was the grant holder and the principal investigator in both cases. Francesco Maria Ciconte and Silvio Cruschina were research associates on the latter project.

Fieldwork in loco was an integral part of both projects. The former project focused on Sardinian, a group of Romance dialects which has received some attention in the literature on existentials because of its interesting patterns of copula alternation and

agreement (see Jones 1993, La Fauci and Loporcaro 1993, 1997, Bentley 2004b). The Sardinian evidence was collected by Bentley in five Campidanese survey points, four Nuorese ones, and three Logudorese ones (see Bentley 2011). The latter project focused on Italo-Romance, although the researchers also visited Sardinia to administer the revised and more detailed version of the questionnaire adopted in this project. This time the evidence was collected by Cicone and Cruschina, who visited 138 survey points (see Map 5) over a period spanning nine months in 2011 and 2012. Most of the subgroupings that are part of Italo-Romance and Sardinian were included in the survey (see §1.2). For convenience, in this book we refer to the language represented by each survey point as a dialect, although in many cases the languages of neighbouring survey points could be considered to be varieties of a single dialect. It should also be noted that it is not unusual to find linguistic variation within individual dialects and individual survey points. For example, we found dialects where two existential patterns alternate, one being an older, indigenous pattern, the other (proform + agreeing *ESSE*) being promoted by pressure from standard Italian. While there is no guarantee that we recorded such variation in all the survey points in which it occurs, we are confident that, in our investigation, we recorded all the major existential patterns occurring in the Romance dialects of Italy.

The fieldwork consisted of questionnaire-based interviews with native speakers. Each interview usually involved a single interviewee, although on some occasions informants expressed a preference for small-group interviews, a request which we were happy to agree to. The interviews took place in the survey points under investigation, and were normally conducted with the assistance of a native speaker.

Our questionnaires were divided into two parts, one in the dialect being investigated and the other in Italian. Expert dialectologists in Italy (see §1.4) helped us with the preparation of the dialect sections of the questionnaires. After oral consent was obtained from the informants, they were asked for grammaticality judgements on sets of data provided to them both orally and in writing. Whenever available, the native speaker helpers read out the questions. The questions in the dialect sections involved multiple-choice exercises. For example, informants were asked to choose an appropriate answer for a given question, or an appropriate question for a given answer, among a set of alternatives provided. Alternatively, they were asked to select a statement that they deemed to be appropriate in a given situation. The questionnaire sections in Italian involved exercises of translation into the native dialect of the informant.<sup>9</sup> A suitable context of occurrence was provided for the majority of the questionnaire entries. While our informants were adult dialect native speakers of

<sup>9</sup> It is worth pointing out that our informants were adult native speakers of a dialect, who were also competent in Italian. Such bilingual speakers are still found in Italy, especially in rural areas, but also in parts of large cities, where native dialect competence is not as seriously compromised by the pressure from the national language as in other areas.

both sexes, and resided in the survey points under investigation, no effort was made to control the sample of speakers in terms of age, social class, or any other sociolinguistic variable.<sup>10</sup>

The recordings were transcribed shortly after the interviews, using orthographic transcriptions enriched with diacritics and phonetic symbols.<sup>11</sup> The transcriptions were later checked against the recordings several times. No effort was made to purify the responses of our informants of any traces of Italian influence. This influence mainly emerges in some lexical choices reported in the examples, as well as in the unsystematic absence of the article in female proper names in dialects of the north (for example, *Maria* instead of *La Maria*).

The data were entered in spreadsheets. This helped us to uncover correlations between patterns (e.g. agreement and specificity) in the analysis.

Both projects had empirical and documentation purposes, on the one hand, and theoretical aims, on the other. The dialects under investigation are gradually receding under pressure from the national language, Italian, and with the two existentials projects we hope to have contributed to their documentation for scientific purposes. We also produced a collection of dialect short stories and fairy tales (Bentley et al. 2013b), thus offering an original—albeit small—contribution to the fostering of dialect culture. In theoretical terms, the two projects aimed to develop a fully-fledged analysis of the discourse–semantics–syntax linking in existential and locative *there* sentences, using detailed evidence from a family of closely related languages.

As for the authorship of the chapters of this book, Delia Bentley is the author of Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 6, while Silvio Cruschina and Francesco Maria Ciconte authored Chapters 2 and 5, respectively. The ideas and analyses expounded in each chapter were conceived and developed solely by the chapter author, although fruitful discussion with the other project members enhanced the quality of the final result.

### 1.3.2 Role and Reference Grammar

Role and Reference Grammar (RRG)<sup>12</sup> provided an ideal framework to pursue the aims of our research, since its principal objective is to describe and explain the crosslinguistic variation in the interaction of syntax, semantics, and discourse-pragmatics, satisfying both typological and psychological adequacy. To achieve this objective RRG posits three levels of representation: (i) a representation of the

<sup>10</sup> The recordings of project AH/H032509/1 are available for downloading on the web pages of this project: <<http://www.existentials.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/resources/dataset>>.

<sup>11</sup> It must be noted that, for many dialects, there are no orthographic conventions. In addition, the existing orthographic conventions are not unified for all dialect groups. As a result, in our data, the same sound may not be spelled in the same way across dialects. An example of this is the case of rounded vowels in the northern dialects, which are spelled differently in different dialect groups.

<sup>12</sup> Foley and Van Valin (1984), Van Valin (1993, 2005), Van Valin and LaPolla (1997); see <<http://linguistics.buffalo.edu/people/faculty/vanvalin/rrg.html>>.

syntactic structure of sentences, (ii) a representation of the meaning of linguistic expressions, and (iii) a representation of the information structure of utterances. A set of rules, called the linking algorithm, relates semantics to syntax (in linguistic production) and syntax to semantics (in linguistic comprehension), while discourse is assumed to play a role at every stage in the linking. In the remainder of this section, we provide a synopsis of the descriptive tools and theoretical constructs of RRG, focusing on those which will be relevant to our analysis.

A distinction is drawn in RRG between relational and non-relational syntax. The former type of syntax is concerned with the relations between predicates and their arguments, while the latter is about the hierarchical organization of phrases, clauses, and sentences. We start with hierarchical syntax, limiting the discussion to clause structure. The Layered Structure of the Clause (Van Valin 2005: 3–8) is both non-derivational and devised to capture the interaction of syntax with the other two levels of representation, discourse and semantics. In addition, it seeks to differentiate between those aspects of clause structure which are universal and those which are not.

The Layered Structure of the Clause is thus based on the semantically motivated contrasts between predicating and non-predicating elements, and between those noun and adpositional phrases which are arguments of the predicate of the clause and those which are not. In the Layered Structure of the Clause, the locus of the predicate is the Nucleus, whereas the arguments of the predicate occur within the Core. Any noun and adpositional phrases which are not arguments in the semantic representation of the predicate occur in a Periphery of the Core.

(61) [<sub>Core</sub> Chris [<sub>Nucleus</sub> saw] Bill] [<sub>Per</sub> in the library.]

Whereas all human languages are assumed to have the syntactic layers shown in (61), there are a number of more external positions, which are not taken to be universal. These tend to be associated with specific constructions (e.g. *wh*-questions in which the *wh*-word does not occur *in situ*) or with discourse functions (e.g. topic and focus). The Pre-Core Slot is the locus of *wh*- words in English, as well as many other languages.

(62) [<sub>PrCS</sub> Where] did [<sub>Core</sub> Chris [<sub>Nucleus</sub> see] Bill]?

The Pre-Core Slot can have a counterpart after the Core, the Post-Core Slot, which has been argued to be the locus of post-nuclear contrastive foci in Italian (Bentley 2008: 280–81).

(63) [<sub>Core</sub> [<sub>Nucleus</sub> Vinse] il premio] [<sub>PoCS</sub> quello studente.] (Italian)  
 win.PST.3SG the prize that student  
 ‘It was that student that won the prize.’

The syntactic layer called Clause is formed by the Core, its Periphery (or peripheries), and the Pre- and Post-Core Slot. The positions which are external to the Clause typically host constituents which are topical in discourse (see the Left Detached Position in 64a) and afterthoughts (see the Right Detached Position in 64b). Every layer can be modified by adverbs or phrases in its periphery. In (64a), there is an adverb in a periphery of the Core.

- (64) a. [<sub>Sentence</sub> [<sub>LDP</sub> As for that book,] [<sub>Clause</sub> [<sub>Core</sub> I [<sub>Nucleus</sub> read] it] [<sub>Per</sub> yesterday.]]]  
 b. [<sub>Clause</sub> [<sub>Core</sub> I [<sub>Nucleus</sub> know] him,]] [<sub>RDP</sub> that boy.]

The Left and Right Detached Positions can be reiterated within the same sentence. In section 2.4.1, we will point out that the Left and Right Detached Positions are exhibited by the layered structure of inverse locatives (cf. 10b), hosting the topic of these sentences. The presence of a Left or Right Detached Position differentiates these *there* sentences from existential constructions—with one exception, to which we will return in due course.

The Layered Structure of the Clause provides the building blocks of a syntactic projection, called Constituent Projection. To obtain the Constituent Projection for a given clause, an appropriate syntactic template is chosen from what Van Valin (2005: 11–16) calls the ‘syntactic inventory’ of a language. The crosslinguistic variation in the patterns stored in the inventories of different languages depends on their relative flexibility or rigidity in word order. In the Constituent Projection, neither predicates nor arguments or adjuncts are labelled with reference to their lexical category (VP, NP, etc.). The locus of the predicate is called the Nucleus, and it can host verbal as well as non-verbal predicates, while the nodes to which arguments and adjuncts attach are called R(eferential) P(hrases) (Van Valin 2008a). This terminology captures the referential function of arguments and adjuncts without limiting this function to noun or determiner phrases, since there are languages which make extensive use of verb phrases in referential function. Like the Clause, each Referential Phrase has its layered structure, whereby the Nucleus (Nucleus<sub>R</sub>) contains the head, while the Core (Core<sub>R</sub>) contains the arguments of relational and deverbal nouns. Since the layered structure of the RP is not particularly relevant to our discussion, we shall not provide it in our syntactic representations. In Figure 1.1 we provide a first illustration of the Constituent Projection. We will illustrate and discuss further the Constituent Projection, in the context of the treatment of semantics–syntax linking.

The operators which mark illocutionary force, negation, tense, aspect, and mood are not considered to be part of the Layered Structure of the Clause, and do not figure in the Constituent Projection. Rather, they are claimed to be modifiers of the syntactic units in the Clause, and they are linked to a projection of their own, which is called Operator Projection. The rationale for positing two separate

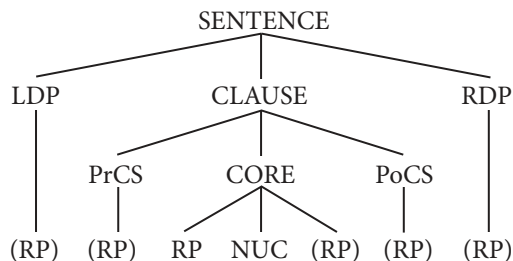


FIGURE 1.1 Layered Structure of the Clause with Constituent Projection

projections is that while the order of predicates, arguments, and adjuncts is subject to language-specific constraints, the respective order of operators depends on their scope. It is thus universal, albeit affected by constituent order, left- and right-branching syntax, and morphological typology. The Operator Projection will not be relevant to our analyses, and thus will not be discussed any further.

Before we move on to relational syntax, we must deal with the RRG theory of meaning representation and semantic relations. In RRG the semantic representation of clauses is based on the semantic representation of the predicates contained in them. This, in turn, is based on a theory of lexical decomposition. The semantic representation—or Logical Structure—of a predicate depends on its Aktionsart. RRG draws upon Vendler (1967) in distinguishing between the four Aktionsart types, state, activity, achievement, and accomplishment. To these, Van Valin (2005: 32) adds the non-Vendlerian class of semelfactives (Smith 1997: 55–8). In the theory of lexical decomposition adopted by RRG, state and activity are the basic types, which the other kinds of Aktionsart derive from. Both states and activities are [–telic] and [–punctual]. However, states describe static situations, whereas activities describe dynamic ones. Achievements and accomplishments are [+telic] and denote the attainment of a resultant state, the former type, unlike the latter, being punctual. Active achievements and active accomplishments are built on the basis of the logical structures of an activity and an achievement or an accomplishment, respectively.<sup>13</sup> There are standard tests to determine the Aktionsart of the predicate of a clause, which are based on Dowty (1979). We exemplify here each of the predicate types mentioned above.

(65) States

- a. **be** ' (x, [intelligent ']) 'intelligent'
- b. **see** ' (x, y) 'see'

<sup>13</sup> For the sake of simplicity, we abstract away from recent developments in RRG, which break down the accomplishment into a process, which is simultaneous with the activity, and an achievement.



- (66) Activities  
 a. **do'** (x, [**march'** (x)]) 'march'  
 b. **do'** (x, [**draw'** (x, (y))]) 'draw'
- (67) Achievements  
 INGR **explode'** (x) 'explode'  
 INGR **be-at'** (x) 'arrive'
- (68) Semelfactives  
 a. SEML **see'** (x, y) 'glimpse'  
 b. SEML **do'** (x, [**cough'** (x)]) 'cough'
- (69) Accomplishments  
 a. BECOME **frozen'** (x) 'freeze'  
 b. BECOME **know'** (x, y) 'learn'
- (70) Active accomplishments  
 a. **do'** (x, [**run'** (x)]) & BECOME **be-LOC'** (y, x) 'run to y'  
 b. **do'** (x, [**draw'** (x, y)]) & BECOME **created'** (y) 'draw y'

The argument positions are variables (x, y), which can be filled by arguments, usually displayed in the logical structure in the language under scrutiny. The constant, or idiosyncratic part (e.g. **march'**), and the operators (e.g. SEML for 'semelfactive') are conventionally represented in English.

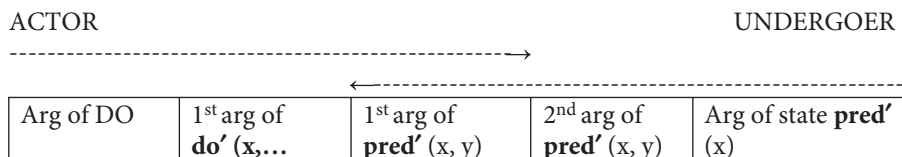
The arguments that figure in the semantic representation of the predicate are called core arguments, and a further distinction is made between direct and oblique core argument. The former type of argument is marked by direct case, in dependent-marking systems, and cross-referenced on the verb, in head-marking systems. The latter type of argument is marked by an adposition or by oblique case.

RRG posits two types of semantic relation: thematic relations and semantic macroroles. Thematic relations are defined in terms of the position of core arguments in the Logical Structure of the predicate (Jackendoff 1976, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 82–138). Five such positions are relevant to semantics-syntax linking.

- (71) Semantic positions which are relevant to the linking
- |        |                     |                    |                    |                  |
|--------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Arg of | 1st arg of          | 1st arg of         | 2nd arg of         | arg of state     |
| DO     | <b>do'</b> (x, ...) | <b>pred'</b> (x,y) | <b>pred'</b> (x,y) | <b>pred'</b> (x) |

The thematic relations in (71) play a crucial role in the linking from Logical Structure to syntax, in that a core argument is assigned a generalized semantic role or macrorole on the basis of the position it takes in (71). The relation between argument positions and macroroles is captured by the Actor–Undergoer Hierarchy.

- (72) The Actor–Undergoer Hierarchy and its mapping on to argument positions (Van Valin 2005: 61)



[‘→’ = increasing markedness of realization of argument as macrorole]

Actor and undergoer are the two primary arguments of transitive predications, while either one of them can be the single argument of an intransitive predicate. The macrorole assignment principles are defined as follows.

- (73) Default Macrorole Assignment Principles (Van Valin 2005: 63)
- a. Number: the number of macroroles a verb takes is less than or equal to the number of arguments in its logical structure.
    1. If a verb has two or more arguments in its logical structure, it will take two macroroles.
    2. If a verb has one argument in its logical structure, it will take one macrorole.
  - b. Nature: for verbs which take one macrorole,
    1. If a verb has an activity predicate in its logical structure, the macrorole is actor.
    2. If a verb has no activity in its logical structure, the macrorole is undergoer.

The macrorole assigned to a core argument determines its coding and behaviour in morphosyntax. For example, case and finite agreement are assigned on the basis of the macrorole held by an argument. At first, macroroles might thus appear to be syntactic—rather than semantic—relations. However, our analysis of *there* sentences (see §3.3.1) provides clear evidence that the role played by macroroles in morphosyntax depends on the semantic entailments (Dowty 1991) that are part of their make-up. Such entailments are provided by the predicate to the position in logical structure in which the argument figures.

The interface function of macroroles is clearly seen in relational syntax, in particular in the assignment of grammatical relations. In RRG, grammatical relations are neither primitives nor universals of syntactic theory. While most languages provide evidence of having grammatical relations, they differ in the grammatical relations that they have. The justification for positing grammatical relations in a given language is that there are syntactic phenomena in that language which neutralize the distinction between the two macroroles or, in some cases, the distinction between a finite set of thematic relations. Grammatical relations are

thus restricted neutralizations of semantic relations for syntactic purposes. In Italian, for instance, only macrorole arguments can normally control finite verb agreement, an exception being provided by existential constructions (see §§4.3.4.4.3.5). Dative and oblique arguments cannot be macroroles in Italian and do not control finite agreement.

Since grammatical relations are defined in terms of construction-specific neutralizations of semantic relations for syntactic purposes, RRG introduces the construction-specific notion of Privileged Syntactic Argument. This is defined as a syntagmatic relationship between a finite group of semantic functions, which can be involved in a given construction of a given language. There are two main principles in Privileged Syntactic Argument choice, which underlie accusative and ergative alignment. In accusative alignment (cf. 74), the Privileged Syntactic Argument can be the actor or undergoer of an intransitive structure (S), the actor of a transitive structure (A<sub>T</sub>), and, if applicable, the undergoer in the passive voice (d(erived)-S). An example from finite agreement in Italian is provided here.

- (74) a. I ragazzi (S<sub>A</sub>) hanno cantato. (Italian)  
 the boys have.3<sub>PL</sub> sung  
 ‘The boys sang.’
- b. I ragazzi (S<sub>U</sub>) sono morti.  
 the boys be.3<sub>PL</sub> died  
 ‘The boys died.’
- c. I ragazzi (S<sub>A</sub>) sono andati a scuola.  
 the boys be.3<sub>PL</sub> gone to school  
 ‘The boys went to school.’
- d. I ragazzi (A<sub>T</sub>) hanno mangiato la torta (U).  
 the boys have.3<sub>PL</sub> eaten the cake  
 ‘The boys ate the cake.’
- e. La torta (d-S) è stata mangiata dai ragazzi.  
 the cake be.3<sub>SG</sub> been eaten by.the boys  
 ‘The cake was eaten by the boys.’

The Privileged Syntactic Argument of finite agreement in Italian is thus defined by the syntagmatic relation [S, A, d-S], where d-S stands for derived-S in the passive (S<sub>A</sub> is an actor S, while S<sub>U</sub> is an undergoer S).

In ergative alignment, the Privileged Syntactic Argument can be the actor or undergoer of an intransitive structure (S), the undergoer of a transitive structure (U<sub>T</sub>), and, if applicable, the actor in the antipassive voice (d-S). The Privileged Syntactic Argument is thus defined by the syntagmatic relation [S, U<sub>T</sub>, d-S], where d-S stands for derived-S in the antipassive. The accusative and ergative systems represent different defaults in the choice of the Privileged Syntactic Argument in

semantics–syntax linking: the default Privileged Syntactic Argument is the highest-ranking direct core argument, in the accusative system, and the lowest-ranking direct core argument, in the ergative system. This is clearly indicated by transitive constructions, where the Privileged Syntactic Argument is the actor ( $A_T$ ), according to accusative alignment, and the undergoer ( $U_T$ ), according to ergative alignment. The passive and antipassive constructions, which ensure the selection of the marked Privileged Syntactic Argument, can be chosen for pragmatic reasons, and we shall provide some exemplification of this, in the discussion of the linking.

Whereas well-studied languages like English do not provide a great deal of evidence for the assumption that grammatical relations should be defined on a construction-specific basis, there is clear support for this assumption from lesser known languages (see Van Valin's 1981 study of Jakaltek). In our study of Romance *there* sentences, we shall provide evidence that the controller of agreement may fail to behave as a Privileged Syntactic Argument in cross-clausal control (see §4.3.5).

'Subject' in RRG is a generalized grammatical relation, which is only found in the languages where all the major constructions involve the same restricted neutralization of semantic roles. In all the major constructions of the dialects of our sample, the Privileged Syntactic Argument is defined by the syntagmatic relation [S,  $A_T$ , d-S]. Hence, it can be assumed that these languages have a subject, in the RRG sense.

The breaking down of the generalized syntactic function subject into construction-specific grammatical relations is of paramount importance in our analysis of the definiteness effects of existential constructions (see §§4.2, 4.3). We follow Beaver et al. (2005) in claiming that the rationale of the crosslinguistic variation in these effects is the variation in the noun phrase properties which count towards subjecthood across languages. At the same time, following Bentley (2013), we argue that the crosslinguistic variation in the definiteness effects cannot be fully captured unless subjecthood is analysed in construction-specific terms.

Moving on to the third level of analysis mentioned above, in the representation of the information structure of utterances RRG builds upon Lambrecht (1986, 1994, 2000). Topic and focus are defined in terms of presupposition and assertion. The proposition is construed and understood as being about the topic, and increases the addressee's knowledge of it (Lambrecht 1994: 131). The topic is part of the pragmatic presupposition, i.e. the set of propositions which are linguistically evoked in a sentence and can be taken for granted in discourse. In Chapter 2, we further differentiate between aboutness and referential topics (see also Cruschina 2012b and Bentley et al. forthcoming). By contrast with topics, foci do not belong to the presupposition, but rather to the assertion, i.e. the proposition which the hearer is expected to know as a result of a sentence being uttered (Lambrecht 1994: 52). The contrast between presupposition and assertion is reflected in focus structure, i.e. the conventional associations of focus meanings (the distribution of information) with sentence forms. Following Lambrecht (1994), three principal types of

focus structure are identified: predicate focus, argument focus, and sentence focus. These are discussed in section 2.1.2, and will not be discussed any further here. We simply note that, while RRG refers to the second type of focus structure as narrow focus, since it is possible to have narrow focus on information units that are not arguments, we shall use Lambrecht's terminology, which is better suited to the analysis of *there* sentences. In the analysis of focus structure, RRG distinguishes between the Actual Focus Domain, which is the part of a given sentence that is in focus, and the Potential Focus Domain, i.e. the syntactic domain in the sentence in which focus elements can occur in a given language. Thus, although in English the Potential Focus Domain encompasses the whole Clause (see the dotted line below 75), in (75) the Actual Focus Domain is limited to the information unit in the Pre-Core Slot.

(75) [Clause [PrCS What] [Core did you [Nuc do]] [Per yesterday]?]

The distinction of the Potential Focus Domain and the Actual Focus Domain will allow us to capture the contrast between English and Romance in the encoding of focus in locative predications (see §4.2).

The status of discourse participants in the minds of the interlocutors is also central to the RRG approach to discourse. Two concepts which will be relevant to our analysis are activation and accessibility. The activation of a discourse referent depends on its being in the current focus of consciousness (Chafe 1987). Accessible discourse referents, on the other hand, are situationally, inferentially, or textually available (Chafe 1987, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 200–201).

As already mentioned, discourse is assumed to play a role at every step in the linking (this is graphically represented in Van Valin 2005: 2). Thus, it has been noted that discourse affects the selection of the Privileged Syntactic Argument, as well as the choice of an appropriate syntactic template from the syntactic inventory. The pervasive role of discourse in semantics–syntax linking will be key in the analysis of our findings. An original contribution of this book will be to bring to light the effect of discourse on predication (see §4.4).

To conclude our overview of RRG, we discuss the linking from semantics to syntax. RRG assumes that there are universal and language-specific steps in this linking (Van Valin 2005: 129, 136). The universal aspects of the linking involve the construction of a semantic representation for a given sentence, based on the logical structure of the predictor(s), and the assignment of macroroles to the arguments. The language-specific steps involve the determination of the morphosyntactic coding and behaviour of the arguments, and the assignment of arguments to positions in constituent structure.

We will briefly illustrate the principles and constraints on the linking with an Italian example.

- (76) I dolci, Paolo li mangia (spesso). (Italian)  
 the cakes Paolo ACC.CL.MPL eat.3SG often  
 ‘Cakes, Paolo eats them (often).’

The first step in semantics–syntax linking is the construction of the semantic representation of the sentence, based on the logical structure of the predicator. This can be determined on the basis of standard Aktionsart tests (Van Valin 2005: 32–42), which are omitted here for the sake of brevity. The predicator of (76) tests out as a bi-argumental active accomplishment, and thus the logical structure of this example is as follows.

- (76') [**do'** (Paolo, [**eat'** (Paolo, dolci)])] & BECOME **consumed'** (dolci)

The linking algorithm assumes that the speaker is realizing a particular communicative intention in a particular discourse context. Thus, the illocutionary force of the sentence (declarative, exclamatory, or interrogative) figures in the semantic representation, and so does the activation status of the referential expressions.<sup>14</sup> Since proper nouns are linked to established discourse referents by a relation of identity (Enç 1991; see §4.3.3), we assume that *Paolo* is accessible, i.e. situationally recoverable. We further assume that *i dolci* is active, i.e. in the current focus of attention, a status that is fully compatible with its topicality. That *i dolci* ‘the cakes’ is a topic is suggested by its left-detached position and its resumption with the unstressed pronoun *li* ‘them’.

- (76'') <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <**do'** (Paolo<sub>ACS</sub>, [**eat'** (P.<sub>ACS</sub>, dolci<sub>ACT</sub>)) & BECOME **consumed'** (dolci<sub>ACT</sub>) >>

The next step is actor and undergoer assignment, which follows the principles in (73). Since the predicate has two direct core arguments, there will be two macro-roles in this sentence: the leftmost one in the logical structure will be the actor, while the rightmost one will be the undergoer (in the logical structure under discussion, each macrorole figures more than once, since this logical structure combines an activity with an accomplishment).

- (76''') <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <**do'** (ACTOR: Paolo<sub>ACS</sub>, [**eat'** (ACTOR: Paolo<sub>ACS</sub>, UNDERGOER: dolci<sub>ACT</sub>)) & BECOME **consumed'** (UNDERGOER: dolci<sub>ACT</sub>) >>

<sup>14</sup> In the interest of brevity we abstract away from the representation of the logical structures of each referential phrase in the example. In (76'') <sub>IF</sub>DEC stands for ‘declarative illocutionary force’, while <sub>ACS</sub> and <sub>ACT</sub> indicate accessible and active status, respectively.

The following step determines the morphosyntactic properties of the arguments, starting from the selection of the Privileged Syntactic Argument. Following the principle of accusative alignment, Italian selects by default the highest-ranking macrorole argument in the logical structure as the Privileged Syntactic Argument (Van Valin 2005: 100). In (76<sup>'''</sup>) this is the actor. The selection of the actor as the Privileged Syntactic Argument yields an active structure. Case assignment abides by the following rules: in accusative alignment, nominative case is assigned to the highest-ranking macrorole argument, while accusative case is assigned to the other macrorole argument (Van Valin 2005: 108). Default case assignment can take place since this is an active structure. Therefore, the actor is assigned nominative case, vacuously in this instance, since case is not overtly marked on lexical noun phrases, while the undergoer is assigned accusative case, as shown by the accusative form of the resumptive pronoun *li*.

Agreement, in turn, selects the Privileged Syntactic Argument as the controller, hence the third-person singular morphology on the verb. Again, it should be noted that this agreement pattern results from the default choice of Privileged Syntactic Argument (see below for the passive voice). The result of Privileged Syntactic Argument, case, and agreement assignment is thus as follows.

(76<sup>'''</sup>) ... **do'** (ACTOR: Paolo<sub>ACS</sub>, [**eat'** (ACTOR: Paolo<sub>ACS</sub>, UNDERGOER: dolci<sub>ACT</sub>]))&...  
                   [PSA: NOM]                   Active, 3sg                   [ACC]

The next step involves the choice of a suitable syntactic template from the syntactic inventory of the language. This has to satisfy the Completeness Constraint, which states that all of the arguments explicitly specified in the semantic representation of a sentence must be realized syntactically in the sentence, and all of the referring expressions in the syntactic representation of a sentence must be linked to an argument position in a logical structure in the semantic representation of the sentence. Accordingly, the syntactic template must have the same number of argument positions as the logical structure. A syntactic template with two argument positions is chosen for example (76).

In Italian, the default position of the Privileged Syntactic Argument is the pre-verbal position (the core-internal argument position which immediately precedes the Nucleus). This is the position of *Paolo* in (76). As for the position of the undergoer, this illustrates the role of discourse in semantics–syntax linking. In particular, although the default position of the undergoer would by default be post-verbal (the core-internal argument position which follows the Nucleus immediately), the topical role of the undergoer in discourse results in the selection of a syntactic template with an extra-clausal position, the Left Detached Position, which hosts topicalized referential expressions, in this case *i dolci* ‘cakes’. Topicalized undergoers require a resumptive pronoun within the Core in Italian (*li* ‘them’, in 76), which, on a par with the agreement affix on the verb, is linked to the Agreement Index Node, or

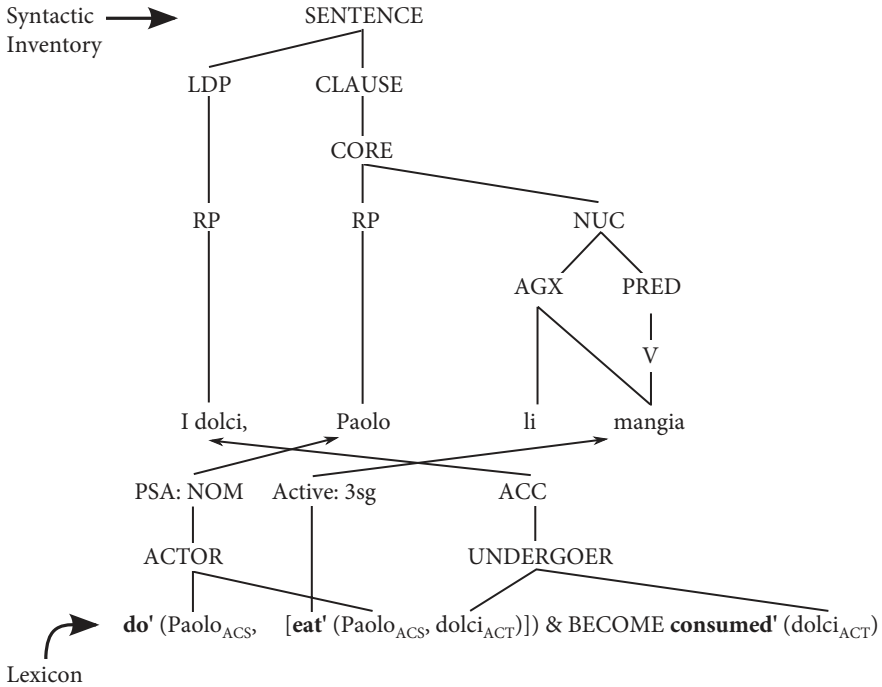


FIGURE 1.2 Semantics–syntax linking: transitive

AGX. This is a dependent of the Nucleus, which is concerned with the agreement specifications of all the core arguments (Belloro 2004).<sup>15</sup> We illustrate the linking of (76) from Logical Structure to the Constituent Projection in Figure 1.2, which is to be read from bottom to top. As was mentioned above, tense, aspect, and mood operators are mapped to a different projection, the Operator Projection, in RRG, although we need not discuss this mapping here. The reader should also note that, for simplicity, we do not represent the internal structure of the referential phrases in the Constituent Projection.

Let us now briefly consider the passive voice, which is characterized by the marked choice of Privileged Syntactic Argument in the linking. Starting from (76'''), the passive yields the structure in (77) and (77'), where macrorole assignment follows the same principles as above, but the undergoer is chosen as Privileged Syntactic Argument. As a result, the default case and agreement assignment rules are overridden by the requirements of the passive construction (see Van Valin’s 2005: 131–5). Thus, the undergoer takes nominative case and controls agreement on the verb, while the actor is marked by the adposition *da* ‘by’ as an extra-core actor.

<sup>15</sup> The resumptive pronoun is directly linked to the Core, if the RP has no overt lexical expression.



(77) I dolci vennero mangiati da Paolo. (Italian)  
 the cakes come.PST.3PL eaten.MPL by Paolo  
 ‘The cakes were eaten by Paolo.’

(77') ...do' (ACTOR: Paolo<sub>ACS</sub>, [eat' (ACTOR: Paolo<sub>ACS</sub>, UNDERGOER: dolci<sub>ACT</sub>)] & ...  
 Passive, 3pl [PSA: NOM]

The passive is relevant to our purposes because the choice of this voice construction can often result from the influence of discourse upon the linking. A topical activated undergoer may be topicalized and detached in an extra-clause position, as is the case with *i dolci* ‘the cakes’ in (76), or chosen as Privileged Syntactic Argument, as is the case with the same argument in (77). In this case, the syntactic template will have a single argument position in the Core. The actor optionally occurs in a peripheral position outside the Core. We represent this structure in Figure 1.3.

The marked choice of privileged syntactic argument is often found in series of clauses which share a common topical participant (Van Valin 2005: 102–5). This is what Dixon (1972) calls a ‘topic chain’. In topic chains, the passive voice avoids a change of topic. The passive thus provides an example of the role of focus structure in

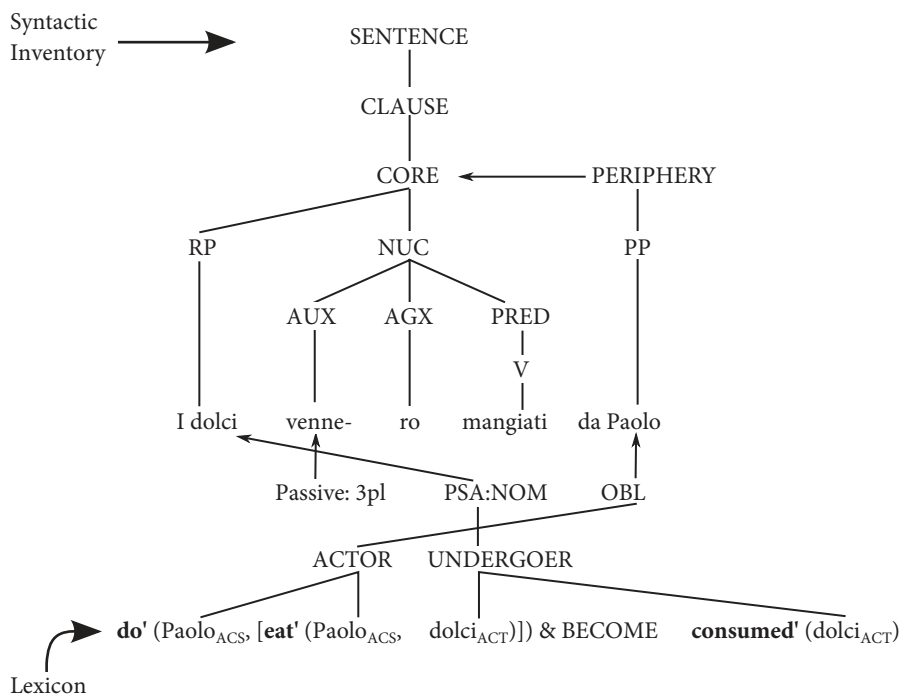


FIGURE 1.3 Semantics-syntax linking: passive

the linking from semantics to morphosyntax. Other such examples are provided by *there* sentences, and will be dealt with in sections 4.3.4, 4.4.1, and 4.4.2.

#### 1.4 Acknowledgements

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<sup>16</sup> <<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>>

<sup>17</sup> <<http://www.existentials.humanities.manchester.ac.uk>>

Delia Bentley is indebted to Robert Van Valin Jr., for unfailing inspiration and encouragement, and to her family.

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## 1.5 Outline of the volume

The interfaces between discourse, semantics, and syntax are at the heart of our investigation. We start from the interaction of discourse and syntax, which is dealt with by Silvio Cruschina in Chapter 2. In-depth investigation of the morphosyntax of *there* sentences in the dialects of our survey testifies to a contrast between existentials, which are typically sentence-focus constructions with a non-referential proform, and inverse or deictic locatives, which are argument-focus constructions with a referential proform. A further distinction must be drawn to capture presentational *there* sentences, which are pseudo-existential sentence-focus constructions flagging a statement as particularly relevant in its context of occurrence.

The semantics–morphosyntax interface is considered in Chapter 3, where Delia Bentley advances a proposal on predication and argument realization in the four types of *there* sentence identified by Cruschina (2012b). The dialect evidence points to a difference between two types of existential construction, which contrast in terms of whether the pivot is a referential phrase. The pivot is claimed to be the predicate in the logical structure of both constructions, while a locative phrase, or a proform, is the predicate of inverse and deictic locatives. These are thus further differentiated from existential constructions.

Chapter 4, also by Bentley, considers the definiteness effects at the discourse–semantics–syntax interface. While previous analyses have focused on the constraints which ban certain noun phrase classes from pivot function, Bentley focuses on the crossdialectal and crosslinguistic variation in the treatment of definite noun phrases in *there* sentences. Relying on Beaver et al.'s (2005) claim that the variation in the definiteness effects depend on crosslinguistic differences in the semantics of subjecthood, Bentley addresses two principal questions: first, why some languages admit definites in *there* sentences more freely than other languages, and, second, why some languages, while admitting definites in pivot function, treat them differently from indefinites. To resolve the latter issue, the author examines the wide range of microvariation in copula agreement which is attested in Italo-Romance and Sardinian *there* sentences. She is then able to examine in full the discourse–semantics–syntax linking in *there* sentences.

In Chapter 5, Francesco Maria Ciconte provides the historical background of the development of *there* sentences in the Romance dialects of Italy. After introducing existential sentences and other copular constructions in Latin, he discusses the results of the analysis of a corpus of early Italo-Romance vernacular texts (see Appendix 1). Ciconte pays particular attention to the rise of the proform in a subclass of locative *there* sentences, a change which he claims to be related to the overt marking of definiteness on noun phrases, and to the subsequent spread of the proform to existential constructions. He also analyses the diversification of existential copulas in early Romance and their respective distribution. Finally, he uncovers a distinction between two types of expletive pronoun in early Italo-Romance *there* sentences.

In Chapter 6, Bentley draws some conclusions on existentials and locatives in the Romance dialects of Italy, and on the contribution of the analysis of these structures to core issues in linguistic theory.

## Focus structure

SILVIO CRUSCHINA

### 2.1 Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that existential sentences have special discourse properties. These properties are at the basis of several pragmatic analyses which maintain that the discursive and pragmatic function of existentials is to introduce a new referent into the discourse world of the interlocutors (Lambrecht 1994, Ward and Birner 1995). This function has in turn been invoked as the ultimate motivation behind the definiteness effects to the extent that it imposes a restriction on the existential pivot, which must be construed as hearer-new. The condition that the pivot be hearer-new is considered to be a necessary condition for the well-formedness of the existential sentence, and pivots that do not satisfy this requirement are not acceptable as a result of a clash between their non-hearer-new status and the general pragmatic function of the construction itself. The same restriction has also been formulated in terms of a novelty condition (McNally 1998: 384), which similarly states that existentials only 'license the introduction of a novel, as opposed to a familiar, referent into the (relevant subdomain of) the common ground of the conversation'. Along the same lines, Zucchi's (1995) account of definiteness effects relies on the distinction between presuppositional and non-presuppositional determiners, and on a felicity condition according to which only non-presuppositional pivots are acceptable in existentials.

These pragmatic analyses share the core assumption that the pivot must be focal, in that it must convey new information into the discourse, in accordance with the primary pragmatic function of the existential construction. This assumption can certainly capture both the discourse role of existentials and its connection to the definiteness effects in languages like English, where such effects are particularly conspicuous (see §4.2). However, two main problems remain. First, the pragmatic account which is based on the condition that the pivot must be focal, hearer-new, or novel cannot account for the well-known set of exceptions to the definiteness restrictions. Second, these studies have all concentrated on the discourse role of the

existential pivot, paying little or no attention to the construction as a whole. An important exception is provided by Lambrecht (1994, 2000), who argued that existential sentences are sentence-focus structures in which the focus domain covers the whole sentence. A revised definition of focus, together with Lambrecht's classification of existentials as sentence-focus structures, will be our starting point in this chapter, where we are mainly concerned with the focus structure of existential sentences in Italo-Romance and Sardinian. Our principal aim is to investigate the variations in the Actual Focus Domain (see §1.3.2) that are possible in Italo-Romance and Sardinian *there* sentences, and their repercussions on the morphosyntax of these constructions. The focus structure variation will be viewed as a key factor to be associated with the special morphosyntactic features and behaviours found across the Italo-Romance dialects. More specifically, we will investigate how the extension of the focus affects word order and agreement phenomena, and how the marked information structures may be revealing in terms of the syntax and the semantics of the constructions under investigation.

### 2.1.1 *The notions of focus and topic*

Focus is an information structure category which is traditionally used to identify the sentential constituent which conveys new information not shared by the speaker and the addressee(s) (see e.g. Halliday 1967, Jackendoff 1972). This constituent is not derivable from the context and is being introduced into the discourse for the first time. The focus constituent of a sentence is generally highlighted as such against a presupposition or background, which contains material that is already present or active in the discourse. Question–answer pairs are standardly used to identify the focus constituent of a sentence on the basis of the assumption that the focus structure of an answer is determined by the semantics of the question that it answers.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. Who did you meet last night?  
b. I met JOHN.

The focus constituent of the answer (1b) corresponds to the unfilled variable, or the missing argument, in the *wh*-question (1a). The constituent *John* expresses new information with respect to the constituents contained in the rest of the sentence, which was already present in the question and hence active in the interlocutor's mind. In this sense, *I met* (i.e. the fact that *I met somebody*) is presupposed and conveys old information.

This definition of focus, however, turns out to be problematic and too simplistic in a number of cases, for the simple reason that the focus constituent of a sentence does not always convey information that is not already present in discourse.

<sup>1</sup> In the examples we indicate focus with small capitals.

- (2) a. Did you meet John or Peter?  
 b. I met JOHN (, not Peter).

In the answer to a question like (2a), the focus constituent does not express new information, as can easily be gathered from the fact that its referent has already been mentioned in the question and is therefore active in the discourse. The problem under discussion is the consequence of a definition of focus that is exclusively based on a referential dimension, whereas the relational level must be considered of primary importance when analysing the information structure of a sentence (Lambrecht 1994, Gundel and Fretheim 2004, Cruschina 2012a).

From a referential viewpoint, foci express new information with respect to the mental state and knowledge of the speaker or the hearer, according to whether they *refer* to individuals or entities that are already under discussion and active in the discourse, or rather to individuals or entities that are introduced into the discourse for the first time. In contrast, in a relational sense, what is new and what is old is defined on the basis of the speaker's assessment of the *relation* between the constituents of a sentence in a given discourse context, so that the focus constituent is highlighted against a background coinciding with the most emphatic element of the assertion (see also É. Kiss 2002: 77). Pragmatically, therefore, along a relational new-giveness distinction, foci represent the centre of attention, the constituent to which the speaker intends to direct the attention of the interlocutors (Erteschik-Shir 1997: 11). The two perspectives (referential and relational) correlate with one another, but they should not be equated. It is true that relational foci are in general referentially new, but this is not always the case. 'Contrastive focus', for example, need not convey new information (cf. 2a,b). According to some definitions of this focus type, contrastive focus is strongly dependent on the previous discourse insofar as it requires an antecedent with respect to which an explicit contrast is set by the speaker (Cruschina 2012a, Bianchi and Bocci 2012, Bianchi 2013). What needs to be new in a sentence with a contrastive focus is therefore not the referent of the focus constituent, but rather the relation between the individual or entity denoted by the focus expression and the previously uttered corrected statement.

A similar opposition concerns the notion of topic. Referentially, topics express old information, i.e. information that is active or accessible in the context. Relationally, in contrast, a topic identifies what the sentence is about, and the assertion will establish an aboutness relation between the topic and a comment (i.e. what is predicated of the topic). Following this distinction, we will call the latter type of topic 'aboutness topic', while the topic that is referentially given will be called 'referential topic'. These two notions of topic are not totally separate and distinct: a certain degree of overlap is in fact possible. A referential topic can restore the aboutness topic of the previous utterance, establishing it as what the sentence is about and determining topic continuity. The same topic can actually stay constant over longer stretches of discourse (in 'topic

chains': see Givón 1983). When a new aboutness topic is introduced into the discourse, a previous aboutness topic can still be represented in the sentence in the shape of a referential topic, which however will not keep any direct relation with the new topic-comment articulation. Being already active in discourse, irrespective of whether or not they are continuing or not a previous aboutness topic, referential topics are often omitted in several languages, including some Italo-Romance dialects (see the phenomenon of null subjects, whereby subjects that are relationally topical and referentially active must be omitted for the sentence to meet the relevant pragmatic felicity conditions).

Given that the identification of either topic type is often subtle and highly dependent on the context, we take the distinction between aboutness and referential topics to be pragmatic in nature. Such a distinction may appear somewhat weak, especially in the case of aboutness topics which are co-referential with an antecedent that is already part of the speakers' common ground. Insofar as these referents are reintroduced in the discourse as the 'subject matter' of a new piece of information, we claim that they qualify as aboutness topics. By contrast, referential topics simply involve the retrieval and repetition of presupposed referents or background information, without contributing to the update of the common ground and without affecting the conversation dynamics. Claiming that this is a pragmatic distinction does not amount to denying that it has syntactic consequences. For example, a sentence can have multiple referential topics, but only one aboutness topic. In addition, only referential topics can occur sentence-finally (see Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007, Cruschina 2012a). These syntactic differences, together with the distinct prosodic properties associated with the two topic types, have been analysed as the grammatical correlates of two syntactically distinct topic categories (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007, Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010). In our approach, on the contrary, pragmatics still plays a role in the interpretation of topics, mediating between linguistic structure and discourse conditions: even though specific syntactic restrictions and prosodic properties consistently correlate with one type of topic rather than with the other, the interpretive specifications (i.e. aboutness vs. referential) are pragmatically derived and context-dependent (see also López 2009).

Returning now to foci, the pragmatic analyses of the focal status of the pivot (and of its correlation with the definiteness effects) have implicitly adopted a referential definition of focus. Terms such as 'hearer-new', 'discourse-new', or 'novel' all pertain to the relationship between the referent introduced by the pivot and the knowledge or mental states of the interlocutors in a given discourse. A different line is taken in the pragmatic analysis defended in Abbott (1992, 1993, 1997). According to Abbott (1993: 41), the main function of existentials is 'to draw the addressee's attention to the existence and/or location of the entity or entities denoted by the focus NP'. Abbott does admit that pivots are focal elements that typically convey new information, and agrees that it is generally true that it would be infelicitous to assert the existence of something that is already presupposed to exist, giving rise to definiteness effects.



However, the referents introduced by pivots need not always be (referentially) hearer-new. They can simply be new in relation to a particular context: most exceptions to the definiteness effects in fact involve a specific, salient, and predetermined context, yielding what she calls ‘contextualized existentials’.

- (3) A: Is there anything to eat?  
 B: Well, there’s the leftover chicken from last night.
- (4) A: I guess we’ve called everybody.  
 B: No, there’s still Mary and John.

An entity which is presupposed to exist (and normally morphosyntactically encoded as definite) is not necessarily presupposed to exist in a particular context, so the function of contextualized existentials is to assert or to draw attention to (the existence/presence of) an entity in relation to some particular context/background—often as a reminder when this relation has been forgotten or overlooked—or with respect to a specific purpose or goal. In light of the new–givenness distinctions made above, it becomes clear that contextualized existentials do not represent a problem for the general idea that the pivot must be focal. Indeed, contextualized existentials can be said to involve focus pivots in a relational sense, allowing specific noun phrases to occur as pivots.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1.2 Focus structure types

On the basis of the extension of the focus in a sentence, in our terms the Actual Focus Domain of an utterance (see §1.3.2), Lambrecht (1994: 221–38) distinguishes between sentence-focus, predicate-focus, and argument-focus structures. In sentence-focus structures the Actual Focus Domain covers the whole sentence, so that there is no pragmatic binary partition of the type topic–comment or focus–presupposition. These structures generally obtain in out-of-the-blue contexts, where there is no reference to previous discourse, for example in answers to the question ‘what happened?’. In predicate- and argument-focus structures, the focus corresponds to the predicate or to an argument of the predicate, respectively. Predicate-focus structures typically feature a presupposed topic and a predicate that represents the assertive part of the sentence (i.e. the comment), while argument-focus structures highlight a focal argument with respect to a background or presupposition, which, in addition to the predicate, may also contain referential topics.

As discussed in the previous section, pragmatic analyses of existentials agree on the focal status of the pivot. The information structure of the whole construction is, however, often neglected. For instance, very little has been said on the discourse

<sup>2</sup> It must be clear that the adoption of a relational definition of focus does not provide an explanation to all definiteness effects or to the variation which is attested in these effects crosslinguistically (see Ch. 4 for further discussion of the definiteness effects).

status of the coda, and in particular of the locative coda. Lambrecht (1994, 2000) defines existentials as sentence-focus structures, although he emphasizes that existentials are different from other types of sentence-focus structures. According to Lambrecht,thetic predications (which he equates with sentence-focus structures) can be divided into event reporting, which report a new event, and presentational, which instead introduce a new referent into the discourse. Existentials belong to the latter type. Their pragmatic function is ‘to introduce the NP referent into the discourse world of the interlocutors by asserting its PRESENCE in a given location’ (Lambrecht 1994: 179). As pointed out by Lambrecht, existentials do not normally assert the existence of some entity, but a statement like that in (5) will be uttered to present and introduce the pivot’s referent into the discourse, thereby bringing it to the addressee’s attention:<sup>3</sup>

- (5) There are cockroaches (in the kitchen).

A note of caution regarding Lambrecht’s expression ‘in a given location’ is in order. As will be shown, the location, or in fact the locative coda, may or may not be part of the focus.

- (6) a. There are cockroaches in the kitchen.  
b. In the kitchen, there are cockroaches.

It can be within the focus domain (6a), or else its discourse status can vary from aboutness topic to referential topic (6b), according to context. In particular, even though we identify an unmarked information structure for existentials in Italo-Romance (at least for genuine existential *there* sentences: see §1.1), *there* sentences show as much flexibility in information structure as other constructions. Unlike languages such as English, where the same information structure distinctions would be marked prosodically, Italo-Romance, and Romance in general, exploit syntax for the linguistic realization of information structure: in these languages these distinctions are thus marked via word order permutations in accordance with the discourse properties of the constituents in the sentence.

In the rest of this chapter, we will consider all possible information structure types in Italo-Romance *there* sentences, distinguishing between sentence-focus existentials (see §2.2), existentials with an overt topic (see §2.3), and argument-focus *there* sentences (see §2.4). Evidence will be provided in favour of the associations of these focus types with different semantic and morphosyntactic properties. In Chapter 3, we will advance a proposal on how to represent these different types in logical (semantic) structure.

<sup>3</sup> The referent introduced into the discourse could denote an event, including meteorological events (e.g. *c’è la guerra* ‘there’s a war’, *c’era un temporale* ‘there was a storm’). Sentences of this type are nonetheless presentational, since they introduce an event-related referent into the discourse for the first time.

## 2.2 Sentence-focus existentials with no overt topic

Although Romance syntax can formally and explicitly emphasize the contrast between focus structure types, there is no strict one-to-one correspondence between information structure and syntactic word order, and some degree of ambiguity is possible. The SV(O) order can therefore be interpreted as either sentence-focus or predicate-focus according to the discourse status of S, which is a (referential) topic, in predicate-focus structures, and part of the Actual Focus Domain, in sentence-focus structures.

Several SVO languages (e.g. the dialects of our sample) resort to the VS order in a class of sentences to avoid focus initial SV order. This class includes sentences with intransitive predicates with a state in their logical structure (so-called unaccusatives: cf. 7a) or with intransitive predicates which lack such a component in their logical structure but are construed as involving an overt or silent locative/goal argument in certain contexts (a subclass of so-called unergatives: cf. 7b). The marking of sentence focus with VS order is the phenomenon which is usually referred to as ‘subject inversion’ (see Benincà 1988, Calabrese 1992, Saccon 1993, Pinto 1997, Tortora 1997, 2001, Sheehan 2006, 2010).

- (7) a. È arrivato Gianni. (Italian)  
 be.3SG arrived John  
 ‘John (has) arrived.’
- b. Ha telefonato Maria.  
 have.3SG telephoned Mary  
 ‘Mary (has) telephoned.’
- (8) a. Ai doa l’ é rivè al pà e la mama.  
 at.the two ESCL be.3SG arrived the Dad and the Mum  
 (Grosio, Lombardy)
- b. Al do l’ è arivé la ma e el ba.  
 at.the two ESCL be.3SG arrived the Mum and the Dad  
 (Gambettola, Emilia Romagna)  
 ‘At two o’clock Mum and Dad arrived.’

The question ‘what happened?’ normally triggers a sentence-focus answer, where no reference is made to previous discourse.<sup>4</sup> If this answer involves a construction of the unaccusative intransitive class, S must occur in immediately post-verbal position.

<sup>4</sup> The question ‘what happened?’, together with the so-called out-of-the-blue contexts, are generally considered to be typical pragmatic environments that trigger sentence-focus statements. It must be clear that we here refer to pragmatically neutral contexts, abstracting away from the possibility that speakers adapt or accommodate the context to the needs of successful communication by adding certain presuppositions.

Indeed, only the structures with an immediately post-verbal argument were selected as felicitous replies to the ‘what happened?’ question by our informants, whereas the counterparts with a pre-copular argument were deemed to be infelicitous. (We flag with the symbol # constructions which are grammatical but infelicitous in the given context.)

- (9) A: Se gh' è sucès? (Milan, Lombardy)  
 what PF be.3SG happened  
 ‘What’s happened?’  
 B: In pasà dü che se cunusen no.  
 be.3PL passed two that IMPERS know.3PL NEG  
 ‘Two strangers passed by.’  
 B': #Dü che se cunusen no in pasà.  
 two that IMPERS know.3PL NEG be.3PL passed
- (10) A: Chi successi? (Modica, Sicily)  
 what happened.PST.3SG  
 ‘What happened?’  
 B: Passaru ru strani.  
 pass.PST.3PL two strangers  
 ‘Two strangers passed by.’  
 B': #Ru strani passaru.  
 two strangers pass.PST.3PL
- (11) A: Còs l' è sucès? (Premosello, Piedmont)  
 what SCL be.3SG happened  
 ‘What happened?’  
 B: In pasà doi.  
 be.3PL passed two  
 ‘Two strangers passed by.’  
 B': #Doi in pasà.  
 two be.3PL passed
- (12) A: Co è sucès? (Felino, Emilia Romagna)  
 what be.3SG happened  
 ‘What happened?’  
 B: I èn pasè du furaster.  
 SCL.3PL.M be.3PL passed two strangers  
 ‘Two strangers passed by.’  
 B': #Du furaster i èn pena pasè.  
 two strangers SCL.3PL.M be.3PL just passed

- (13) A: Ch' è successə? (Santa Croce di Magliano, Molise)  
 what be.3SG happened  
 'What happened?'  
 B: So passatə dujə che nə canoscə.  
 be.3PL passed two that NEG know.1SG  
 'Two strangers passed by.'  
 B': #Dujə che nə canoscə so passatə.  
 two that NEG know.1SG be.3PL passed

According to Lambrecht (1994: 177–81, 2000), existentials should be included in this class. Significantly, in our findings, these constructions are characterized by the encoding of the focal pivot in the immediately post-copular position.

- (14) a. Gh' è spasi per alter cà in chel paés chì. (Milan, Lombardy)  
 PF be.3SG space for other houses in this town here  
 b. C' è largu ppi àutri casi nta stu paìs. (Modica, Sicily)  
 PF be.3SG space for other houses in this town  
 c. A gh' è pòst par di aut cà in sto paìs.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG space for some other houses in this town  
 (Premosello, Piedmont)  
 d. A gh' è al sit per fer d' altri cà.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG the space for do.INF some other houses  
 (Felino, Emilia Romagna)  
 e. Cə sta spazijə pe l' ati casə dend' e stu paese.  
 PF stays space for the other houses inside of this town  
 (Santa Croce di Magliano, Molise)  
 'There's space for other houses (in this town).'  
 f. C'è spazio per altre case in questo paese. (Italian)

ACTUAL FOCUS DOMAIN

These examples were produced as follow-ups to the protasis of a conditional construction of the speech act type (Sweetser 1990: 113–25): 'if you want to move here...'. They are thus sentence-focus constructions whose relevance in discourse is explained by the preceding utterance. The focal pivot 'space for other houses' immediately follows the copula.

Most of Lambrecht's (1994: 137–46, 2000: 653–4, 2001, 2002) discussion, however, does not concern existentials proper, but rather special types of presentational construction, which correspond to type (iv) of Cruschina's (2012b) typology (see §1.1; Lambrecht 1994, 2000, 2001, 2002; see also Leonetti 2008, Villalba 2013).

- (15) a. C' è il direttore arrabbiato oggi. (Italian)  
 PF be.3SG the director angry today  
 'The director is angry today.'
- b. Y a le téléphone qui sonne. (French)  
 PF have.3SG the telephone that rings  
 'The telephone is ringing.'
- c. J'ai une voisine qui fume. (French)  
 I have.1SG a neighbour who smokes  
 'My neighbour smokes (lit. I've got a neighbour who smokes)'
- (16) a. B' est su direttore ch' est arrennegato oje. Menzus a  
 PF be.3SG the director who be.3SG angry today better to  
 non brullare. (Lula, Sardinia)  
 NEG joke.INF  
 'The director is angry today. We'd better not mess about.'
- b. Maria, nc' è sirda a lu telefonu. Respunni. (Lecce, Apulia)  
 Mary PF be.3SG father.POSS at the telephone answer.IMP.2SG  
 'Mary, your father is on the phone. Pick it up.'
- c. (Ci) avi un cristianu ravanzi â puorta. (Palermo, Sicily)  
 PF have.3SG a person in.front to.the door  
 'There's someone in front of her door (lit. (S/he) has someone in front of the door)'

The construction exemplified in (15a–c) and (16a–c) is used to avoid SVO order, when the referent of the subject is being introduced in discourse. The placement in post-verbal position ensures that this argument is interpreted as part of the focus domain of a sentence-focus structure. Some problems arise, however, with respect to Lambrecht's (1994: 181, 2000) claim that existentials are comparable to intransitive constructions with VS order. First, while type (iv) or presentational *there* sentences (cf. 15a,b and 16a,b) always have an SV copular counterpart, it is not the case that all genuine existentials have such a counterpart (Francez 2007). Thus, (15a) is comparable to *il direttore è arrabbiato oggi* 'the director is angry today', but the existential construction *ci sono problemi* 'there are problems' does not have a counterpart with a pre-copular pivot. Second, although the pivot behaves like a subject—admittedly a non-canonical one because of its position with respect to the copula—in most Romance varieties with the existential copula *ESSE* (see Map 1 with particular respect to the dialects of Italy), in some varieties with *HABERE* the pivot is syntactically encoded as the undergoer of a construction with two macro-roles, i.e. a transitive construction (see §§3.2.1, 3.3.3, and 4.3). In fact, it has been claimed to be an object (Suñer 1982, Rigau 1994, 1997, Manzini and Savoia 2005:

69–70). The same holds true of the special possessive presentational constructions in (15c) and in (16c). This means that existentials, and *there* sentences in general, cannot be equated with VS intransitives which are the exact equivalent of SV intransitives but for their focus-structure properties.

Lambrecht's analysis presupposes that pivots are focal subjects. On the basis of crosslinguistic evidence, Lambrecht (1994: 169, 2000) argues that marking subjects as focal means treating them like objects, i.e. like the prototypical focal argument. Indeed, subjects in sentence-focus constructions, including pivots, are mostly encoded as subjects with undergoer properties, hence the mentioned analyses of the pivot of existentials with *HABERE* as an object. However, as already pointed out, for existentials it would be inaccurate to speak of a competition between SV and VS order, at least one which exclusively relies on the position of S. An additional problem arising from Lambrecht's analysis is that it implies that existential sentences involve some type of predicate that predicates over the pivot, and similar proposals exist in the literature.<sup>5</sup> Lambrecht does not develop explicitly the implications of his proposal as to what the predicate of an existential is, leaving a number of questions unanswered.

An alternative proposal comes from Francez (2007). Pursuing the hypothesis that pivots are predicates of contextual domains, Francez claims that the contrast between existential and copular sentences does not involve a contrast between types of subject, or between subjects and objects, but rather between subjects and predicates. According to Francez, existentials are sentence-focus structures consisting of a single noun phrase predicate which provides the focus of the sentence. This analysis is better suited to the findings of our investigation (see §3.3.2). It is certainly true that Italo-Romance existentials have a number of features in common with the subclass of intransitives discussed above, but while in the latter the position of the subject is determined by its information structure status alone,<sup>6</sup> existential pivots in

<sup>5</sup> McNally (1992, 1998), for example, claims that the main predicate in an existential is denoted by the proform + copula (i.e. *there be*), which is an intransitive predicate meaning 'to be instantiated'. As pointed out by Francez (2007: 31–5), several problems arise with this analysis. First, not all languages have an overt element (i.e. a copula) that could represent this type of predicate, and to assume that the predicate, which generally represents the core element in the proposition expressed, is non-overt or null in these languages would be a 'costly move'.

<sup>6</sup> SV order with these constructions is in fact only possible with definite NPs, given that indefinites are typically bad subjects, as well as bad topics:

- (i) a. È arrivato tuo padre. (*sentence focus, argument focus*)  
is arrived your father  
b. Tuo padre è arrivato. (*predicate focus*)  
your father is arrived
- (ii) a. È arrivato un pacco per te. (*sentence focus, argument focus*)  
is arrived a parcel for you  
b. ??Un pacco per te è arrivato. (*predicate focus*)  
a parcel for you is arrived

fact never alternate with similar types of nominal constituent in other constructions, and must always be focal.<sup>7</sup> This requirement presumably follows from the inherent pragmatic function of the existential construction, which is undoubtedly related to focalization.

### 2.2.1 Morphosyntactic properties

Special morphosyntactic properties are associated with sentence-focus existentials in Italo-Romance. Whereas in a number of dialects with the existential copula *ESSE*, primarily those of the centre-south, and in standard Italian, the pivot and the copula must agree in person and number, in most northern Italian dialects number agreement between the copula and the pivot systematically fails to show (see Maps 1 and 2).

- (17) a. A gh' è / \* in doi gent a la porta. (Premosello, Piedmont)  
 ESCL PF be.3SG be.3PL two people at the door
- b. U gh' é / \*sun dui ommi a a porta. (Badalucco, Liguria)  
 ESCL PF be.3SG be.3PL two men at the door
- c. L' é / \* i é do persone ala porta.  
 ESCL be.3SG SCL.3PL.M be.3PL two people at.the door  
 (Soffratta, Veneto)

'There are two people by the door.'

This pattern was also found in Florentine and, to varying extents, in other Tuscan dialects.

- (18) a. C' è / \*ci sono du persone alla porta. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 PF be.3SG PF be.3PL two people at.the door
- b. C' è / ci so' du' persone alla porta. (Grosseto, Tuscany)  
 PF be.3SG PF be.3PL two people at.the door  
 'There are two people by the door.'

In (17a–c) and (18a,b) the locative coda is part of the Actual Focus Domain, so that the whole existential construction is in sentence focus. Pragmatically, these structures

The alternation in (i) is semantically free, in the sense that it applies to the same type of noun phrase, but it is obviously pragmatically constrained in terms of focus structure. By contrast, in (ii) we see that an indefinite noun phrase only appears in VS order, unless it is in contrastive focus, in which case its position in syntax is not the position of the subject (see the 'antidefiniteness effect' of Beaver et al. 2005). In Italo-Romance, cases of SV vs. VS order free alternation, which are only dictated by information structure factors, are only possible with *there* sentences other than existentials, i.e. with inverse locatives (see §2.4.1).

<sup>7</sup> The existential construction is not the only construction that is inherently related to focalization. Cleft sentences are another type of construction with a similar but not identical function (cf. Lambrecht 2001). We will discuss the apparent exception of topicalized pivots in §2.3.2.



can be uttered in neutral contexts—e.g. to start a conversation—or in situations in which there is no reference to the previous discourse. In the northern varieties the lack of agreement can be reflected in the morphological form of the copula, when the third-person singular and plural of *ESSE* are not syncretic (cf. 17a,b), or else in the choice of the subject clitic (cf. 17c). The absence of agreement is manifested by the form of the copula also in Florentine and in the other Tuscan dialects, as shown by the singular/plural contrast in (18a,b).<sup>8</sup> There is a striking parallelism with the agreement patterns found in non-copular sentence-focus intransitive constructions, since, in a number of the dialects under discussion, these would similarly show agreement failure (Burzio 1986, Saccon 1993, Nocentini 1999) (though see §3.3.1 for further detail). Agreement is normally present in *STARE* existentials (see Map 3), while it is systematically absent when the existential copula is *HABERE* (see Map 4).<sup>9</sup>

In some Sardinian and southern Italo-Romance dialects of Salento and Calabria, in conjunction with copula *HABERE* pivots exhibit morphosyntactic properties which are usually associated with the undergoer (or object) of transitive constructions: invariant lack of agreement (cf. 19a–c), differential accusative marking by a preposition (cf. 19b), and clitic resumption via an accusative clitic (cf. 19c) (see §3.3.3):

- (19) a. B' at tantos anneos in sa famiglia nostra. (Bitti, Sardinia)  
 PF have.3SG many problems in the family ours  
 'There are many problems in our family.'
- b. Nd'avi sulu a du perzuni ca mi vonnu beni: mama  
 PF have.3SG only ACC two people that me want.3PL well mum.POSS  
 e patrima. (Agnana Calabria, Calabria)  
 and dad.POSS  
 'There are only two people who love me: my mother and my father.'
- c. Ave stranieri intra stu paese? – Sì, l' ave. (Soletto, Apulia)  
 have.3SG foreigners in this town yes ACC.CL have.3SG  
 'Are there any foreigners in this town? Yes, there are.'

<sup>8</sup> It must be clarified that in the dialects of the north, agreement systematically obtains with 1st and 2nd person pronouns—also with 3rd person pronouns in a few dialects. We return to this issue in Chs 3 and 4.

<sup>9</sup> Although we recorded no cases of existential *HABERE* with agreement, we note that this pattern is reported for Celle San Vito and Faeto (Apulia) by Manzini and Savoia (2005: 66). As for the copula *STARE*, its 3rd person singular and plural forms are syncretic in a number of dialects. In such cases, the presence of agreement is testified by the use of the same syncretic form in predicate-focus locative constructions (agreement is never missing in predicate focus in these dialects). In the dialect of Castiglione Messer Marino (Abruzzo), whether *STARE* agrees with the pivot is a moot point. This village is located at the border between a region with syncretic forms (Abruzzo) and an area where the distinction between 3rd person singular and plural is morphologically marked (Molise and other southern regions): the oscillation between agreeing and non-agreeing morphology may therefore be due to a consequential degree of variation or optionality. We thus abstract away from this individual case here.

Returning to the form and function of subject clitics in northern Italo-Romance dialects, it must be noted that several varieties consistently display non-agreeing subject clitics in the existential construction (cf. 20a,b–23a,b). In some dialects, the non-agreeing clitic coincides with the subject clitic for the third person masculine singular: it is morphologically identical to the agreeing subject clitic referring to a masculine singular referent (cf. 22a, 23a) and different from feminine or plural third-person subjects (cf. 22b–d, 23b–d). Despite the said homophony, these non-agreeing subject clitics are generally non-referential and thus considered to be expletive.<sup>10</sup>

- (20) a. No podon divorziar: I' é i bòce. (Belluno, Veneto)  
 NEG can.IPL divorce.INF ESCL be.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- b. Te sti fruti qua I' é tanti semi.  
 in these fruits here ESCL be.3SG many seeds  
 'There are many seeds in this fruit.'
- (21) a. E nu puremu divursià: u gh' é i mati.  
 SCL.IPL NEG can.IPL divorce.INF ESCL PF be.3SG the children  
 (Genoa, Liguria)  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- b. In sta frùta u gh' é tanti ossi.  
 in this fruit ESCL PF be.3SG many seeds  
 'There are many seeds in this fruit.'
- (22) a. Paolo I' é in giardino, Marco I' é de  
 Paolo SCL.3SG.M be.3SG in garden Marco SCL.3SG.M be.3SG of  
 sora. (Belluno, Veneto)  
 upstairs  
 'Paolo is in the garden, Marco is upstairs.'
- b. I sugaman i é te la casèla.  
 the towels SCL.3PL.M be.3PL in the drawer  
 'The towels are in the drawer.'
- c. Maria no la é sola.  
 Mary NEG SCL.3SG.F be.3SG alone  
 'Mary is not alone.'

<sup>10</sup> We should note that in many northern Italian dialects the phonological realization of subject clitics is amenable to a great deal of variation. In the Ligurian dialects, for instance, the subject clitics for different genders and numbers are all often realized as *l* before a vowel, and in some cases the supporting vowel becomes optional (cf. 23c) (see Browne and Vattuone 1975: 139, Poletto 2000, Ciarlo 2010).

- d. Le pantofole le é sot al let.  
 the slippers SCL.3PL.F be.3PL under to.the bed  
 ‘The slippers are under the bed.’
- (23) a. Ancheui Luigi ul’ é mortu. (Genoa, Liguria)  
 today Luigi SCL.3SG.M be.3SG died  
 ‘Today Luigi died.’
- b. I sciügamai i sun int a cantera.  
 the towels SCL.3PL.M be.3PL in the drawer  
 ‘The towels are in the drawer.’
- c. Maria (a)l’ è no sola.  
 Maria SCL.3SG.F be.3SG NEG alone  
 ‘Mary is not alone.’
- d. E savatte i sun suta a u letu.  
 the slippers SCL.3PL.F be.3PL under to the bed  
 ‘The slippers are under the bed.’

In several cases, the non-agreeing clitic is not only found in existentials (cf. 24a, 25a,b), but also in other sentence or argument focus constructions (cf. 24b, 25c,d). By contrast, in some Lombard dialects, the non-agreeing clitic *a* does not occur regularly in such constructions (cf. 24c) and, at least in some varieties, it displays the allophone *al* (25a,b) which may in turn lack its vocalic element before a vowel (cf. 25c,d).<sup>11</sup>

- (24) a. Am pöl mia fà ’l diòrsio: (a) gh’ è i s-çèç.  
 SCL.1PL can NEG do.INF the divorce ESCL PF be.3SG the children  
 (Bergamo, Lombardy)  
 ‘We cannot divorce: there’re the children.’
- b. A i a picàt dù che conosce mia.  
 ESCL SCL.3PL.M have.3PL knocked two that know.1SG NEG  
 ‘Two people I do not know knocked at the door.’
- c. Ai do gh’ è riàt papa e la mama.  
 at.the two PF be.3SG arrived Dad and the Mum  
 ‘At two o’clock Mum and Dad arrived.’

<sup>11</sup> On the basis of data from Paduan, Benincà (1983, 1994b, 1996) shows that the clitic *a* is not a true subject clitic, and suggests that it is an invariable clitic found in sentences that convey new information or in exclamative contexts (see also Poletto 2000). We also refer to Bernini (2012) for a study of the functions and the evolution of the clitic *a* in northern Italian dialects, esp. in Lombard dialects.

- (25) a. An po mìga divursièr: al gh' é i ràis.  
 SCL.1PL can NEG divorce.INF ESCL PF be.3SG the children  
 (Grosio, Lombardy)  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- b. In stu fruciàm al gh' é tènti suménzi.  
 in these fruits ESCL PF be.3SG many seeds  
 'There are many seeds in this fruit.'
- c. L' é pasè du furèst.  
 ESCL be.3SG passed two strangers  
 'Two strangers passed by.'
- d. Ai doa l' é rivè al pà e la mama.  
 at.the two ESCL be.3SG arrived the Dad and the Mum  
 'At two o'clock Mum and Dad arrived.'

The role of expletive subject clitics in northern Italian dialects has received different analyses (see Poletto 2000, Manzini and Savoia 2005, Cardinaletti and Repetti 2004, 2010, Floricic 2012). Here, we maintain that the function of these non-agreeing subject clitics is directly related to the information structure of the sentence, in that they only occur in sentence-focus (cf. 20, 21, 24, 25) or argument-focus structures (cf. 26) (see §§4.3.1, 4.3.3 for more discussion). The focus structure of *there* sentences like (26B) will be discussed in more detail in section 2.4. For the moment, it is important to note that *there* sentences of this type are argument-focus structures that clearly lack a topic-comment bipartition. What sentence- and argument-focus structures have in common is indeed the lack of a sentence-initial topic subject, which necessarily triggers the realization of an agreeing subject clitic (examples of this are given in 27 and 28). This subject sanctions the incompatibility between this type of predicate-focus sentences and expletive subject clitics (see Vattuone 1975, Browne and Vattuone 1975).

- (26) A: Chi gh' é-l in cucina? (Grosio, Lombardy)  
 who PF be.3-SCL.3SG.M in kitchen  
 'Who is in the kitchen?'
- B: Al gh' é la toa surèla, in cucina.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG the your sister in kitchen  
 'Your sister is in the kitchen.'
- (27) a. Paolo l' é in giardin. (Grosio, Lombardy)  
 Paul SCL.3SG.M be.3SG in garden  
 'Paul is in the garden.'
- b. I giugadur bravi in sta squadra i gh' é miga.  
 the players good in this team SCL.3PL.M PF be.3PL NEG  
 'The good players in this team are not here/there.'

- c. Una cucina la gh' é int ogni chè.  
 a kitchen SCL.3SG.F PF be.3SG in every house  
 'A kitchen is in every house.'
- (28) a. Paulu ul é in giardin. (Genoa, Liguria)  
 Paul SCL.3SG.M be.3SG in garden  
 'Paul is in the garden.'
- b. I sciügamai i sun int a cantera.  
 the towels SCL.3PL.M be.3PL in the drawer  
 'The towels are in the drawer.'
- c. Ina kujina al' é in tüte e cà.  
 a kitchen SCL.3SG.F be.3SG in all the houses  
 'A kitchen is in every house.'

Non-agreeing subject clitics, therefore, morphosyntactically contribute to the marking of the post-verbal noun phrase as non-topic in both sentence- and argument-focus structures, in opposition to structures where a topic subject is followed by a focal predicate, providing a novel comment to the topic.

### 2.2.2 Stage-level topics and contextual domain

It was pointed out above that the main characteristic traditionally associated with sentence-focus structures is the lack of a topic. According to some scholars, however, all sentences must have a topic, and the topic of sentence-focus structures is the spatiotemporal location of the event, the so-called 'stage' topic (Gundel 1974, Erteschik-Shir 1997: 26–9). With regard to existentials, several proposals have attempted to characterize further this silent topic. Francez's (2007) analysis includes a null spatiotemporal argument providing the contextual domain for the existential predication. Hazout (2004) and Kallulli (2008) identify this null argument with Kratzer's (1995) event argument. According to a number of studies investigating the syntactic and semantic properties of constructions featuring VS order in Italo-Romance, existentials involve a null locative argument (Benincà 1988, Saccon 1993, Pinto 1997, Tortora 1997, 2001, Sheehan 2006, 2010).

It is unquestionable that, in order to meet adequate conditions of pragmatic felicity, existential *there* sentences require some sort of contextualization evoking an either explicit or implicit scene or location in the speaker's mind.

- (29) a. (#)There is a boy.  
 b. (#)There are children.

The existentials in (29) would be pragmatically odd in a situation in which a reference to a context or to a location is missing entirely. On the other hand, the same pragmatic infelicity does not arise when existential sentences are used to express the mere existence or nonexistence of an entity:

- (30) a. There is a God.  
b. There are no ghosts.

This presumably happens when the sentence is ‘presupposed to be true in the context in which it is uttered, its (re-) introduction into the context is not accompanied by the instantiation of any discourse referent’ (McNally 1992: 164). In the examples in (30), therefore, the focus is on the truth value of the existential assertion.

This contrast is even stronger in Italian, where the equivalent of the lexeme <exist> normally expresses mere existence, while existentials generally make reference to a salient context (see §§3.3.2, 3.4.1). Thus, by contrast with (31b), example (31a) is pragmatically odd because its most natural interpretation is that God is or is not in a salient context, ‘here’ or ‘there’, in the absence of a more specific spatial reference. In an appropriate context, for example that of a religious ceremony, (31a) would not be pragmatically infelicitous.

- (31) a. (#) (Non) c’ è Dio.  
NEG PF be.3SG God  
‘There’s (not) a God here/there.’  
b. Dio (non) esiste.  
God NEG exist.3SG  
‘God (doesn’t) exist(s).’

An interesting piece of evidence in support of the assumption that existential *there* sentences involve a silent topical argument comes from the Piedmontese dialect of Borgomanero (Tortora 1997: 33).

- (32) Ngh è-gghi tre mataj int la stônza. (Borgomanero, Piedmont)  
SCL.LOC be.3SG-LOC.CL three boys in the room  
‘There are three boys in the room.’

In Borgomanerese, all object and oblique clitics are enclitic (see also Tortora 2010, 2014), so the doubling enclitic *gghi*, attached to the copula, is co-referential with the locative phrase *int la stônza*. This leads Tortora (1997: 128) to interpret the first locative clitic *ngh* as a locative subject clitic that signals the presence of a null locative subject or topic. Note that the structure in (32) is only possible with an indefinite pivot. With a definite noun phrase the locative subject clitic *ngh* is not acceptable, and the sentence ‘gets a ‘true locative’ (i.e. ‘referential’) interpretation’ (Tortora 1997: 128).

- (33) a. L’ è-gghi Mario. (Borgomanero, Piedmont)  
SCL be.3SG-LOC.CL Mario  
‘Mario is here/there.’  
b. \*Ngh è-gghi Mario.

This difference can be explained if we assume that (33) is not a genuine existential construction, but rather a deictic locative characterized by an argument-focus structure (see §2.4.1).

The pre-copular position of the existential proform is a generalized and consistent property of all dialects in our survey, including the Piedmontese dialects with object and oblique enclitics (see also Burzio 1986, Parry 2010). The proclitic position of the existential proform, in these dialects, thus strengthens the idea that the proform should not be assimilated to a locative clitic, and that it signals an abstract argument or topic (see the contrast between 34a and 34b–d, 35a and 35b–d).

- (34) a. In la fruta a j é tanta smens. (Revigliasco, Piedmont)  
 in the fruit ESCL PF be.3SG many seeds  
 ‘In the fruit there are many seeds.’
- b. (I siuaman polit) (a)l’ ei butàje (nt el tirul).  
 the towels clean SCL.1SG have.1SG put.there in the drawer  
 ‘I put the clean towels in the drawer.’
- c. Al’ a nen dimlu gnum.  
 SCL.3SG.M have.3SG NEG said.to.me.it nobody  
 ‘Nobody told me that.’
- d. A Paolo l’ ei daje mac en liber.  
 to Paul SCL.1SG have.1SG given.to.him only a book,  
 A Maria e Luca l’ ei daine tre.  
 to Mary and Luke SCL.1SG have.1SG given.of.them three  
 ‘To Paul, I only gave one book. To Mary and Luke I gave three.’
- (35) a. En sta fruta j é tante grumele. (Mondovi, Piedmont)  
 in this fruit PF be.3SG many seeds  
 ‘In this fruit there are many seeds.’
- b. Ent el casiòt i òe butaje i siuaman pulid.  
 in the drawer SCL.1SG have.1SG put.there the towels clean  
 ‘I put the clean towels in the drawer.’
- c. L’ a nen dimlu gnum.  
 SCL.3SG has NEG said.to.me.it nobody  
 ‘Nobody told me that.’
- d. A Paolo i é daje mac en libre.  
 to Paul SCL.1SG have.1SG given.to.him only a book,  
 A Maria e Luca i é dainu tre.  
 to Mary and Luke SCL.1SG have.1SG given.of.them three  
 ‘To Paul, I only gave one book. To Mary and Luke I gave three.’

The coda is not an essential constituent of the existential construction. Francez (2007, 2009) claims that codas do not play any role in the main predication expressed by the existential sentence, and that all types of coda (including locative or temporal codas) are contextual modifiers.

- (36) a. There was a war in Europe.  
b. There was a war in 1915.

According to Francez (2007), the core predication in existentials is the result of the functional application of the pivot predicate to its implicit argument. This entails that, even when codas apparently provide the contextualization needed for a felicitous interpretation of the existential sentence, in fact they do not contribute to the restriction of the core existential predication, but rather to the scope of quantification, i.e. the contextual domain. In case of a bare existential, i.e. an existential construction with no coda, no contextual modifiers are available and a process of ‘contextual closure’ operates: the pivot predicate is applied to a contextual set, retrieved, and construed from the context on the basis of a salient entity and a contextually salient relation (see Francez 2007 for more details). However, in the absence of contextual modifiers and contextually salient clues, a pragmatically successful interpretation is not always guaranteed (cf. 29a,b).

Besides codas and contextually salient elements, the implicit topic can also be delimited by the topic of conversation. Francez (2007: 118) discusses an example of contextualized existential with a definite pivot and no locative coda.

- (37) There’s my father.

Sentence (37) could be felicitously uttered as an answer to a question like ‘who can pick us up from the airport?’. Questions like this evoke a set of alternatives which become the topic of conversation, and hence the implicit contextual domain over which the existential pivot predicates. In this sense, the pivot is focal in *relation* to this implicit contextual domain, which thus corresponds to the pragmatic background for the focal predication.

From this discussion, it follows that the implicit topic (or the contextual domain in Francez’s 2007 analysis) is always restricted by the context, either by the coda, which may provide a spatial or temporal delimitation, or by the topic of conversation which usually makes reference to a purpose or a goal (Abbott 1992). The same analysis applies to existential constructions with copula *HABERE* and pivots exhibiting the properties of the undergoer of a transitive construction. In this case the implicit topic or the contextual domain could be interpreted as the abstract possessor of a pseudo-possessive construction, and pivots preserve the semantic function of predicating over it. Serving the role of contextual modifiers external to the core existential predication, codas do not directly participate in the pragmatic articulation and focus structure of the sentence, in spite of the position they occupy within the



sentence and irrespective of the aboutness/referential distinction. In syntactic terms, this property is straightforwardly captured by attributing them the role of peripheral adjuncts (see §4.4.1 and also Moro 1997).

## 2.3 Existentials with an overt topic

VS structures are ambiguous between a sentence-focus and an argument-focus reading. Similarly, existential sentences with an overt sentence-initial topic lend themselves to different information structure interpretations according to the type of topic. As already discussed (see §2.1.1), topics must be subdivided into two types: aboutness and referential. In this section, we will concentrate on existentials with overt topics and, more specifically, on locative aboutness topics and partitive topics. Since inverse locatives also involve overt topics, their information structure will also be addressed here, although it will be discussed in more detail in section 2.4. While an aboutness locative topic does not entail a predicate-focus structure, but is part of a sentence-focus domain, existentials featuring an overt referential topic are typically associated with a predicate-focus structure. The latter case corresponds to a canonical predicate-focus, topic-comment articulation of the sentence, while the former instantiates a case in which a topic-comment construction is associated with a sentence-focus structure. In this respect, our analysis deviates from Lambrecht's (1994) well-known analysis of sentence focus, according to which topics are indistinctly excluded from sentence focus. Since the sentence-initial locative aboutness topics of existentials are not presupposed, in our view they must be part of the new information provided in the sentence-focus structure of existentials.

### 2.3.1 Locative aboutness topics

The locative coda can either be part of the focus domain in a sentence-focus existential or be topical.<sup>12</sup> More precisely, in genuine existential *there* sentences, the locative coda can be an aboutness topic (Cruschina 2012b, Bentley at al. forthcoming). From a referential viewpoint, aboutness topics do not necessarily denote a referent that is familiar or known to the interlocutors, nor do they denote a referent that is active or presupposed in the discourse.

- (38) a. In the hallway there was a beautiful mirror.  
 b. In the brain there are billions of neurons.  
 c. On this tree there were no apples.

<sup>12</sup> We mainly discuss locative codas, but it should be noted that the same observations can be extended to other type of codas, such as temporal prepositional phrases and scene-setting adverbials in general.

- (39) [In questa frutta]<sub>ABOUTNESS TOPIC</sub> [ci sono tanti semi]<sub>COMMENT</sub>  
 in this fruit PF are many seeds  
 (\* in questa frutta) (Italian)  
 in this fruit  
 'In this fruit there are many seeds.'

The examples in (38) show that aboutness topics can be introduced into the discourse together with the existential proposition: these sentences can all be uttered to start a new discourse without making any reference to the previous context. As shown in (39), the Italo-Romance syntax requires an aboutness topic to be in a peripheral position to the left of the Core: the detached positions (see §1.3.2), whether preceding or following the clause, are only available to referential topics, which are however incompatible with the context just outlined, in that they must be presupposed in discourse.

According to our definition, an aboutness topic represents what the sentence is about. As argued in the previous section, the existential predication obtains by applying the pivot predicate to the implicit argument, of which codas, including aboutness topic codas, are simple modifiers: all codas are thus semantically external to the core predication. From a pragmatic viewpoint, on the other hand, aboutness topics are part of the focus domain, together with the existential predicate. This means that in existential sentences the comment of the topic–comment articulation built on a locative aboutness topic is not of the predicate–focus type. Rather, the whole structure is sentence-focus. Bearing this point in mind, we now need to clarify two tightly related aspects of this analysis: (i) in which sense the aboutness topic of existentials is a topic at all, insofar as it is not given or presupposed, and (ii) what type of focus characterizes the existential predication with a locative aboutness topic, once we exclude that it is predicate–focus structure.

That the sentence-initial locative phrase in (39) is a topic is shown by the fact that the equivalent sentence in English passes Gundel's (1974) 'as for' test and Reinhart's (1981) 'said about' test (40).<sup>13</sup>

- (40) a. *As for* this fruit, there are many seeds  
 b. Paul *said about* this fruit that there are many seeds

At the same time, this kind of structure does not fall within the category of predicate focus, since the topic is not 'pragmatically available as a topic of discussion' as required in Lambrecht's (1994: 226) definition of predicate focus. In a discourse context in which the referent of the topic expression *in this fruit* has been introduced for the first time together with the rest of the sentence, this is not presupposed, i.e. it cannot be taken for granted by the discourse participants. In light of these considerations, it seems clear

<sup>13</sup> These tests have been designed for English, so we are using English here for the sake of simplicity; but note that the equivalent tests would successfully apply to Italian.

that the locative aboutness topic of existentials is what the sentence is about. On more careful scrutiny, it becomes evident that the locative topic also serves the function of setting the scene or frame within which the sentence is presented, as typical of sentence-initial locative phrases. This additional pragmatic function as ‘scene setters’ (or ‘frame setters’: cf. Chafe 1976, Krifka 2007) is wholly compatible with their semantic function of contextual modifiers which do not contribute to the core predication. Indeed, Chafe (1976: 50) states that scene setters are used ‘to limit the applicability of the main predication to a certain restricted domain’. Whether scene setters should be understood as aboutness topics—or as topics at all—is controversial (see e.g. Jacobs 2001, Krifka 2007). We argue that, at least in existential *there* sentences, the two pragmatic functions (i.e. aboutness and scene-setting) can overlap, as long as, from a pragmatic viewpoint, the comment of the scene-setting aboutness topic is not viewed as the predicate of a predicate-focus structure, but rather as part of a sentence-focus structure that includes the locative aboutness topic.

An important implication of this analysis is that the topic–comment articulation does not always entail a predicate-focus structure, but whether this is the case depends on the type of topic involved in the sentence. In the case of existential sentences with an overt scene-setting aboutness topic, we claim that the topic falls within the Actual Focus Domain and, hence, that the focus structure of the whole construction is sentence-focus. On the contrary, when the sentence-initial topic is a referential topic, the topic–comment construction corresponds to a typical predicate-focus structure, whereby only the pivot belongs to the focus domain.

In morphosyntactic terms, existentials with an overt aboutness topic exhibit no difference with respect to the sentence-focus counterparts with a clause-final locative coda. Dialects showing lack of agreement with coda-final existentials, for example, exhibit exactly the same pattern in existentials with an initial coda.

- (41) a. En sta fruta a gh' è / \* in tanči giandit.  
 in this fruit ESCL PF be.3SG be.3PL many seeds  
 (Premosello, Piedmont)
- b. Inte sta früta u gh' é / \* sun tanti semi. (Badalucco, Liguria)  
 in this fruit ESCL PF be.3SG be.3PL many seeds
- c. Te sta fruta l' é /\* i é tante semenzhe.  
 in this fruits ESCL be.3SG SCL.3PL.M be.3PL many seeds  
 (Soffratta, Veneto)
- d. In questa frutta c' è /\* ci sono tanti semi. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 in this fruit PF be.3SG PF be.3PL many seeds
- e. In questa frutta c' è / ci sono tanti semi. (Pontedera, Tuscany)  
 in this fruit PF be.3SG PF be.3PL many seeds  
 ‘In this fruit there are many seeds.’

- (42) a. A gh' è / \* in di pac in magasin.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG be.3PL some boxes in storehouse  
 (Premosello, Piedmont)
- b. U gh' é / \* sun de scature int u magasin.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG be.3PL some boxes in the storehouse  
 (Badalucco, Liguria)
- c. L' é / \* i é dei pac (i)ntel magazhin.  
 ESCL be.3SG SCL.3PL.M be.3PL some boxes in.the storehouse  
 (Soffratta, Veneto)
- d. C' è / \* ci sono dei pacchi in magazzino. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 PF be.3SG PF be.3PL some boxes in storehouse
- e. C' è / ci sono dei pacchi in magazzino. (Pontedera, Tuscany)  
 PF be.3SG PF be.3PL some boxes in storehouse  
 'There are some boxes in the storehouse.'

Locative aboutness topics are not acceptable with definite pivots. According to our classification, definite pivots may only occur in contextualized existentials. More commonly, definite post-copular noun phrases appear in pseudo-existential *there* sentences that are better analysed as inverse locatives (type (ii) of Cruschina's 2012b typology: see §1.1) or as presentational *there* sentences (type (iv)). We will discuss the information structure of presentational existentials in section 2.5. Let us now consider contextualized existentials and inverse locatives, and their incompatibility with an aboutness topic. Both types of structure featuring definite NPs involve a pragmatic binary distinction between a focus constituent (the existential proposition in contextualized existentials, the post-copular subject in inverse locatives) and a background, but we need to distinguish between topic types. In contextualized existentials, the purpose or the goal associated with this type of *there* sentence can either be introduced together with the existential (cf. 43) or provided in the background as the topic of conversation (cf. 44).

- (43) a. Maria non è sola, ci sono io. (Italian)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone PF be.1SG I  
 'Mary is not alone, there's me.'
- b. Se ti serve un passaggio alla stazione, c' è Paolo.  
 if to.you need.3SG a lift to.the station PF be.3SG Paul  
 'If you need a lift to the station, there's Paul.'
- (44) A: Che cosa c' è per fermare la porta? (Italian)  
 what thing PF be.3SG for stop.INF the door  
 'What's there to stop the door?'

B: C' è il libro di Maria (per fermare la porta), usa quello.  
 PF be.3SG the book of Mary (for stop.INF the door) use.IMP.2SG that  
 'There's Mary's book (to stop the door), use that one.'

In both cases, the purpose or topic of conversation restricts the contextual domain of the existential predication similarly to existentials with aboutness topics, and hence contextualized existentials have a sentence-focus structure. Note in passing that in this type of structure no location is presupposed, so that, despite some apparent similarities with inverse locatives (see §2.4.1), a predicate-focus structure cannot be envisaged for contextualized existentials. Incidentally, since we assume that existentials require a contextual domain by definition, we shall henceforth refer to contextualized existentials as 'availability existentials'.

Inverse locatives have a totally different information structure. They are inherently bound to the previous context, in that they fill the variable of an open proposition with an argument (cf. 45).

(45) A: Chi c' è in cucina? (Italian)  
 who PF be.3SG in kitchen  
 'Who is in the kitchen?'

B: (In cucina,) c' è tua sorella, (in cucina).  
 in kitchen PF be.3SG your sister in kitchen  
 'Your sister is in the kitchen.' Lit. There's your sister in the kitchen.

In inverse locatives, the overt topic is a referential topic that plays the role of predicate in semantics, while the noun phrase has the status of a focal argument. As shown in (45B) the background material which anaphorically restores (part of) the presupposition in the shape of a referential topic can be omitted, and the referential topic can appear either in a Left Detached or in a Right Detached position. This information structure is incompatible with an aboutness topic, which typically introduces a new (or newly introduced) referent into the discourse, and therefore does not allow such a strong connection with the context. Hence, even when it appears sentence-initially, the detached topic of an inverse locative never qualifies as an aboutness topic. An example of contrast between the two types of topic in relation to the two types of sentence is discussed in Cruschina (2012b):

(46) a. Nel sistema solare ci sono otto pianeti. (Italian)  
 in.the system solar PF be.3PL eight planets  
 'In the solar system, there are eight planets.'

b. Nel sistema solare, c' è Venere.  
 in.the system solar PF be.3SG Venus  
 'Venus is in the solar system.' Lit. In the solar system, there's Venus.

Unlike the existential sentence (46a), example (46b) would prove pragmatically infelicitous in a context where the topic of the conversation has not been established. For instance, only (46a), but not (46b), could start a chapter or a section of a science manual devoted to the solar system. This indicates clearly that inverse locatives like (46b) are not compatible with those contexts that license an aboutness topic. The left-detached locative phrase of inverse locatives can therefore only be a referential topic. Sentence (46b) would indeed prove felicitous in contexts in which the detached coda is reintroduced as presupposed, after having been mentioned in the previous discourse (cf. 47). In this context, the locative phrase can be either left- or right-detached, as is typical of referential topics (cf. 48).

- (47) a. Quali sono i pianeti del sistema solare oltre alla Terra?  
 which be.3PL the planets of.the system solar besides to.the Earth  
 (Italian)  
 ‘Which are the planets in the solar system other than the Earth?’
- b. Non li ricordo tutti. Sicuramente, nel sistema solare,  
 NEG them remember.1SG all surely in.the system solar  
 c’è Venere.  
 PF is Venus  
 ‘I don’t remember them all. Surely, Venus is in the solar system.’
- (48) a. (Nel sistema solare,) c’è anche Venere (, nel sistema solare).  
 in.the system solar PF be.3SG also Venus in.the system solar  
 ‘Venus is in the solar system, too.’
- b. Sicuramente, (nel sistema solare,) c’è Venere (, nel sistema solare).  
 surely in.the system solar PF is Venus in.the system solar  
 ‘Surely, Venus is there (in the solar system).’

In (48a) the additive particle *anche* ‘also’ is inserted before the subject noun phrase, guaranteeing that the sentence presupposes that the predication holds for at least one other alternative to the constituent in focus.

We thus propose that the topic is part of the Actual Focus Domain only in existential *there* sentences with an aboutness topic, and not in inverse locative *there* sentences with referential topics. In the former structure, the topic is in a Periphery of the Core, whereas in the latter it is detached outside the clause.

- (46) a'. [<sub>Clause</sub> [<sub>Per</sub> Nel sistema solare] [<sub>Core</sub> ci sono otto pianeti]]  
 in.the system solar PF are eight planets

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- b'. [<sub>LDP</sub> (Nel sistema solare)], [<sub>Clause</sub> [<sub>Core</sub> c'è Venere,]] [<sub>RDP</sub> nel sistema solare)]  
 in.the system solar PF is Venus in.the system solar



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In sum, genuine existential sentences typically exhibit a sentence-focus structure, and they keep this focus structure type when an overt aboutness topic appears at the beginning of the clause. By contrast, if the sentence-initial topic is an instance of referential topic, the existential will have a predicate-focus structure. We thus maintain that the topic–comment bipartition of a sentence does not necessarily entail a predicate-focus structure: both sentence-focus and predicate-focus structures are compatible with such articulation. Availability existentials are a special type of genuine existentials and, as such, they are also sentence-focus, even though they require special contextual specifications and, often, a different kind of overt topical material. In contrast, the overt topic(s) of inverse locatives can only be referential, and thus part of argument-focus structures (see §2.4). In the next section we will discuss an apparent exception to the idea that pivots must be focal: the case of pivots with INDE cliticization.

### 2.3.2 Partitive topics and the split-focus structure

If pivots are predicates of contextual domains, they must be focal (Francez 2007). In fact, according to some approaches (Beaver et al. 2005, Bentley 2010a, 2013), the topicality of an argument *blocks* its occurrence as a pivot of an existential construction, and favours its encoding as the subject of a copular construction. Whereas this prediction is generally supported by the findings of our survey, we also found that pivots can be split in focus structure. This is the case with quantified pivots which consist of a focal quantifier, in post-copular position, and a noun which is detached in a Core external position and resumed via cliticization with an outcome of Latin INDE (for INDE-cliticization see e.g. Burzio 1986, La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997, Perlmutter 1978, 1983, 1989, Belletti and Rizzi 1981, Cardinaletti and Giusti 1991, Bentley 2004a).

- (49) A: Vidə cuante ove cə stannə n' a ieccerə.  
 see.IMP.2SG how.many eggs PF stay.3PL in the fridge  
 (Ripalimosani, Molise)  
 'Look how many eggs there are in the fridge.'  
 B: Penzə che cə nə stannə gotte.  
 think.1SG that PF INDE stay.3PL eight  
 'I think that there are eight (eggs).'

- (50) A: Guerda quant ov u i è int e frigo.  
 see.IMP.2SG how.many eggs ESCL PF be.3SG in the fridge  
 (Rimini, Emilia Romagna)  
 ‘Look how many eggs there are in the fridge.’
- B: A cred ch’ u i ne sia ot.  
 SCL.1SG believe.1SG that ESCL PF INDE be.SBJV.3SG eight  
 ‘I think that there are eight (eggs).’
- (51) a. Chestagnə quest’ annə nən gə nə stannə. (Ripalimosani, Molise)  
 chestnuts this year NEG PF INDE stay.3PL
- b. Al castagn, st’ an, n’ i gn’ è. (Rimini, Emilia Romagna)  
 the chestnuts this year NEG PF INDE be.3SG  
 ‘Chestnuts, this year there are none.’

In (49) and (50) the referent of the set is introduced in the question, and is therefore already active in the discourse. Hence, although it could be restated as a referential topic, it need not be repeated in the statement with INDE-cliticization. The type of topic–comment articulation at play in existentials with partitive pivots with a referential topic is indeed that of a predicate-focus structure, with the focus on the quantifier. By contrast, in (51), the partitive topic is being introduced for the first time, and it thus qualifies as an aboutness topic occurring in the Periphery of the Core (cf. 46a). Following Bentley (2004a), we assume that a null quantifier is present even when no quantifier is overtly spelled out (cf. 51). In both cases, what is actually topical is the omitted, detached, or peripheral noun phrase, while the quantifier still represents a focal information unit. In other words, only the *restrictor* constraining the set of entities concerning the quantification is topicalized, while the *quantifier* expressing a quantificational relation between the domain of quantification (i.e. the restrictor) and the scope of quantification (i.e. the contextual domain) preserves focal status in discourse.

Like the locative aboutness topics of existential sentences, partitive aboutness topics are introduced into the context together with the existential predication proper and are therefore part of a sentence-focus structure. However, an important difference between locative aboutness topics and partitive aboutness topics emerges in semantic terms. Partitive aboutness topics are not scene setters external to the predication, which serve the role of contextual modifiers. They are, in fact, part of the pivot and directly contribute to the core predication: indeed, they are not delimiting the context of applicability of the predication, but the domain of quantification of the quantified pivot. This is the case also with partitive referential topics. As with referential locative topics, in this case the referential partitive topic simply restores a previous aboutness topic (i.e. it functions as a continuity topic) and, to the extent that this topic is still active in the discourse, it can actually be omitted. In this particular case, the sentence is a predicate-focus existential.



The distinction between partitive aboutness and referential topics appears to be morphosyntactically encoded in dialects spoken in Marche and in Abruzzo. These dialects show a split between the two types of topic, in the sense that INDE-cliticization obligatorily obtains only with the latter type of topicalized partitive (cf. 52B,c, 53B,c, 54B,c), while it is optional, or must be absent, with the former (cf. 52d, 53d, 54d).<sup>14</sup>

- (52) A: Véde quanti òvi c' ène in frigoriferu. (Ancona, Marche)  
 see.IMP.2SG how.many eggs PF be.3PL in fridge  
 'Look how many eggs there are in the fridge.'
- B: Me pare che ce n' è/ène oto.  
 to.me seem.3SG that PF INDE be.3SG/PL eight  
 'I think that there are eight (eggs).'
- c. De Papa, ce n' è uno solo.  
 of Pope PF INDE be.3SG one only  
 'Pope, there is only one.'
- d. Le castagne st' ano nun c' ène / ce n' ène.  
 the chestnuts this year NEG PF be.3PL PF INDE be.3PL  
 'Chestnuts, this year there are none.'
- (53) A: Guarda quant' òe ce sta dendr'a lu frigoriferu.  
 see.IMP.2SG how.many eggs PF stay.3 inside.to the fridge  
 (Macerata, Marche)  
 'Look how many eggs there are in the fridge.'
- B: Credə che cə nə sta otto.  
 believe.1SG that PF INDE stay.3 eight  
 'I think that there are eight (eggs).'
- c. De Papa, ce n' è uno sòlo.  
 of Pope PF INDE be.3SG one only  
 'Pope, there is only one.'
- d. Castagne st' anno non ci (\*ne) sta.  
 chestnuts this year NEG PF INDE stay.3  
 'Chestnuts, this year there are none.'

<sup>14</sup> Topicalized partitive pivots are morphosyntactically encoded in a wide range of ways in Italo-Romance. Some dialects do not accept bare nouns and require a partitive preposition or adjective, others resort to an expletive definite article, namely, an article that is morphologically but not semantically definite. A correlation between the use of an expletive definite article and the occurrence of the INDE-clitic could be envisaged, but this would only be partially supported by our data: the definite article and INDE-cliticization appear incompatible in (54d), but not in (52d). Given that this is an issue independent from the constructions we are analysing in this book, we will not discuss it further.

- (54) A: Vedə quant' ovə ci stà lallu frəgurèfrə.  
 see.IMP.2SG how.many eggs PF stay.3 in.the fridge  
 (Fano a Corno, Abruzzo)  
 'Look how many eggs there are in the fridge.'
- B. Crodə chə ci nə stà ottə.  
 believe.1SG that PF INDE stay.3 eight  
 'I think that there are eight.'
- c. De Papə, ci nə sta unə sòlə.  
 of Pope PF INDE stay.3 one only  
 'Pope, there is only one.'
- d. Li castagnə uannə n' gi (\*nə) sta.  
 the chestnuts this.year NEG PF INDE stay.3  
 'Chestnuts, this year there are none.'

We leave for future research the task of a detailed comparison of the use of INDE in these dialects in contexts other than existentials.

#### 2.4 Argument-focus *there* sentences

If clause-internal topics occur in pre-verbal position, Italo-Romance foci tend to occur in a Core internal post-verbal position regardless of macrorole assignment or syntactic function (Lambrecht 1994, Belletti 2001, 2004, Bentley 2006). This is generally the case with SVO languages, especially those that are rigid in pragmatic terms, i.e. express focus by means of syntactic strategies (Van Valin 1999). Compare clauses with focal post-verbal subjects (cf. 7–13 in §2.2) with the following examples, where the focal verbal argument is not a subject. (Recall that we mark focus with small capitals.)

- (55) A Paolo g' u dà UN LIBER, a Maria e Luca ghe n'  
 to Paul to.him have.1SG given a book to Mary and Luke to.them INDE  
 u dà TRI. (Milan, Lombardy)  
 have.1SG given three  
 'To Paul, I gave one book. To Mary and Luke I gave three.'
- (56) A Paulu ci resi sulu NU LIBBRU, a Maria e Luca ci nni  
 to Paul to.him gave.1SG only a book to Mary and Luke to.them INDE  
 resi TRI. (Modica, Sicily)  
 gave.1SG three  
 'To Paul, I gave one book. To Mary and Luke I gave three.'

In this section, we discuss two further types of *there* sentence, namely Cruschina's (2012b) types (ii) and (iii) (see §1.1), which do not lend themselves to an analysis as

sentence-focus structures, but rather are argument-focus structures. We point out that argument-focus *there* sentences have the same morphosyntactic properties as sentence-focus existentials with respect to expletive subject clitics in northern Italo-Romance dialects, agreement, and VS order (see §2.2.1). This is not totally unexpected under the view that for ‘the purposes of grammatical coding of discourse functions the marking of the subject as a non-topic appears to be more important than the marking of the predicate as non-presupposed’ (Lambrecht 1994: 235). Of course, we would not expect that the predicate-focus existentials with a referential topic discussed in the previous section also display the same set of morphosyntactic properties. Crosslinguistically, sentence-focus and argument-focus structures tend to pattern together, displaying formal similarities, and to contrast with predicate-focus structures, from which they differ more clearly. Indeed, Lambrecht (1994: 235) states that ‘focus structure homophony seems to be more tolerable only between non-predicate-focus structures’. In Chapter 3 we will analyse the argument structure and the predication of existentials, and we will point out that, that despite their semantic role as predicates, pivots exhibit some patterns of argument behaviour in morphosyntax, while in Chapter 4 we will provide a full account of agreement, which captures the similarities between types (i), (ii), and (iii) of Cruschina’s (2012b) typology. Here we simply note that, *in pragmatic terms*, what we analysed as predicate-focus existential structures can be equated with argument-focus structures, with the focal quantifier behaving as an argument in focus.

As we will see in the next sections, the major difference between the two types of argument-focus *there* sentences—i.e. inverse and deictic *there* sentences, on the one hand, and existentials on the other—has to do with the proform, its referential value, and its degree of grammaticalization (see also §§3.4.1, 3.4.3, 5.3.4). This difference, in turn, is the main index of a distinct focus and predication structure.

#### 2.4.1 *Inverse locatives*

Inverse locatives are copular structures with a topical locative predicate. As a result of a focalization strategy which, as we have mentioned, is pervasive in Romance, the focal subject occurs in a post-copular position, and the topical locative predicate is detached in a clause-external position, and resumed by a locative clitic. Unlike the proform of existential sentences, this clitic has a locative referential meaning in that it has the same referent as the detached locative predicate.

- (57) a. Chi c’ è ’n cucina? (Gubbio, Umbria)  
           who PF be.3SG in kitchen  
           ‘Who’s in the kitchen?’

- b. C' è LA TU SORELLA, 'n cucina.  
 PF be.3SG the your sister in kitchen  
 'Your sister is in the kitchen.' Lit. There's your sister, in the kitchen.
- (58) a. Chie b' at in gabinetto? (Orosei, Sardinia)  
 who PF have.3SG in bathroom  
 'Who's in the bathroom?'  
 b. B' est SORRE MEA, in gabinetto.  
 PF be.3SG sister my in bathroom  
 'My sister is in the bathroom.' Lit. There's my sister, in the bathroom.

The argument-focus structure of inverse locatives is also confirmed by prosodic properties, as expected in Romance varieties where phrasal stress and tonal events neatly correlate with syntactic differences in the realization of a specific focus structure type. Although the precise phonological properties, including pitch accent types, are different from dialect to dialect, it is possible to draw some generalizations. In inverse locatives, the post-copular argument bears the main pitch accent, while the locative predicate (irrespective of its position) is significantly deaccented and, to varying extents, can be separated from the rest of the sentence by an intonational break (see also Bentley et al. forthcoming).

Significantly, alternative realizations of the replies in (57) and (58), with a different word order, were rejected by most of our informants and deemed to be infelicitous. If the argument can be presupposed by virtue of having been mentioned in the question, the felicitous answer is a locative copular predication with a topical subject in pre-copular position (cf. 59B, 61B, 63B). If, on the other hand, the locative phrase has just been introduced into discourse through the question, an inverse locative is the felicitous answer (cf. 60B, 62B, 64B).<sup>15</sup>

- (59) A: In du i in i sciugamai? (Premosello, Piedmont)  
 where SCL.3PL.M be.3PL the towels  
 'Where are the towels?'

<sup>15</sup> It must be reported, for sake of correctness, that the alternative reply was in fact accepted in approximately 20 dialects (out of 138). However, on the basis of other clues emerging during the discussion of the answers given, we attribute this choice to some misunderstanding of the task that led the informants to neglect the context given. There is no prosodic evidence suggesting that these are narrow-focus sentences in disguise, namely, sentences superficially identical to sentence-focus structures but with a narrow focus on the pre-copular element. The prosody is in fact that of sentences with an unmarked word order. It is also crucial to note that the deviation from the expected answer is always in favour of the unmarked word order, in contexts where a narrow-focus structure is being elicited, but the reverse never occurs: a marked word order is never preferred where a sentence-focus structure is expected. This seems to indicate that the speakers have simply chosen the unmarked version of the sentence, overlooking the context.

- B: I sciugamai in ant el caset.  
 the towels be.3PL in the drawer  
 ‘The towels are in the drawer.’
- B': # A gh è i sciugamai ant el caset.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG the towels in the drawer
- (60) A: Còs a gh' è sot al leč? (Premosello, Piedmont)  
 what ESCL PF be.3SG under to.the bed  
 ‘What’s under the bed?’
- B: A gh' é I PANTOFOL, sot al leč.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG the slippers under to.the bed  
 ‘The slippers are under the bed.’
- B': #I pantofol in sot al leč.  
 the slippers be.3PL under to.the bed
- (61) A: Indo èn-i i sugaman? (Felino, Emilia Romagna)  
 where be.3PL-SCL.3PL.M the towels  
 ‘Where are the towels?’
- B: I sugaman i èn int al caset.  
 the towels SCL.3PL.M be.3PL in to.the drawer  
 ‘The towels are in the drawer.’
- B': # A gh' è i sugaman int al caset.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG the towels in to.the drawer
- (62) A: Co gh' è sot al let? (Felino, Emilia Romagna)  
 what PF be.3SG under to.the bed  
 ‘What’s under the bed?’
- B: A gh' è AL PANTOFLI, sot al let.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG the slippers under to.the bed  
 ‘The slippers are under the bed.’
- B': # Al pantofli i èn sot al let.  
 the slippers SCL.3PL.M be.3PL under to.the bed
- (63) A: Dovə stannə i tuvagliə? (Santa Croce di Magliano, Molise)  
 where stay.3PL the towels  
 ‘Where are the towels?’
- B: I tuvagliə stannə dend' u taraturə.  
 the towels stay.3PL inside the drawer  
 ‘The towels are in the drawer.’

B': # Cə stannə i tuvagliə dend' u taraturə.  
 PF stay.3PL the towels inside the drawer

(64) A: Chə cə sta sottə u liettə? (Santa Croce di Magliano, Molise)  
 what PF stay.3SG under the bed  
 'What is under the bed?'

B: Cə stannə I ZAMBITTƏ, sottə u liettə.  
 PF stay.3PL the slippers under the bed  
 'The slippers are under the bed.'

B': # I zambittə stannə sottə u liettə.  
 the slippers stay.3PL under the bed

If we compare canonical locative copular structures with inverse locatives, it emerges that these two types do not differ in terms of argument structure and predication, but the relevant information structure categories are inverted. Canonical locative copular structures are standard predicate-focus structures in which the noun phrase encodes the subject in syntax and the topic in discourse, while the locative phrase is the predicate in logical structure and the comment in discourse. In inverse locatives, the locative phrase is still the predicate, but it encodes a referential topic, and hence it occurs in a detached position outside the clause, while the subject provides the focus (see the contrasts between 65 and 66, and 67 and 68). It is the locative clitic (if available in the language under examination) that acts as a pro-predicate within the clause, being co-referential with the detached locative phrase.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> In dialects with the existential copula *HABERE*, the same copula can figure in inverse locatives. Alternatively, in Soletano, pre-verbal focalization with the locative copula *STARE* (i.e. the copula of canonical locative copular structures) is more acceptable than post-verbal focalization with the same copula (cf. ii and iii). This is a general property of this dialect, which also holds true of contrastive focus (cf. iii) and goes beyond locative copular predications (cf. iv).

- (i) Ci stae intru la cucina? (Soletano, Apulia)  
 who stays in the kitchen  
 'Who's in the kitchen?'
- (ii) a. ??Stae/ Ave LA MARIA (intru la cucina).  
 stays has the Mary in the kitchen  
 b. LA MARIA stae (intru la cucina)  
 the Mary stays.3SG in the kitchen  
 'Mary is in the kitchen.'
- (iii) a. ??Stae/ ave SORMA intru la cucina, none lu Luca.  
 stays has sister.POSS in the kitchen NEG the Luke  
 b. SORMA stae intru la cucina, none lu Luca.  
 sister.POSS stays in the kitchen NEG the Luke  
 'My sister is in the kitchen, not Luke.'

(65) A: Due in i sügamàn? (Milan, Lombardy)  
 where be.3PL the towels  
 ‘Where are the towels?’

B: [Clause [Core I sügamàn [Nuc in INT EL CASÈT.]]]  
 the towels are in the drawer

ACTUAL FOCUS DOMAIN

(66) A: Cusa gh' è sota 'l lèt? (Milan, Lombardy)  
 what PF be.3SG under.to the bed  
 ‘What’s under the bed?’

B: [Clause [Core [Nuc Gh<sub>i</sub>' è ] I PANTÒFUL,]] [RDP sota 'l lèt<sub>i</sub>.]  
 PF be.3SG the slippers under.to the bed

ACTUAL FOCUS DOMAIN

(67) A: Unni su' i tuvagghi? (Modica, Sicily)  
 where be.3PL the towels  
 ‘Where are the towels?’

B: [Clause [Core I tuvagghi [Nuc su' NTÔ CASCIUÒLU.]]]  
 the towels are in.the drawer

(68) A: Chi c' è sutta ô lièttu? (Modica, Sicily)  
 what PF be.3SG under to.the bed  
 ‘What’s under the bed?’

B: [Clause [Core [Nuc Ci<sub>i</sub> su'] I TAPPINI,]] [RDP sutta ô lièttu<sub>i</sub>.]  
 PF are the slippers under to.the bed

The information structure properties of inverse locatives have not gone unnoticed in the literature. Rigau (1994, 1997) for Catalan (cf. 69) and Leonetti (2008) for Italian (70) have observed that a *there* sentence with a definite post-copular noun phrase cannot be uttered with the intonation which is typical of sentence-focus structures. Rather, the definite noun phrase attracts narrow focus, so that if a locative coda is

(iv) a. ??Va LA MARIA a la scola tutti li giurni, no iu.  
 goes the Mary to the school all the days NEG I

b. LA MARIA va a la scola tutti li giurni, no iu  
 the Mary goes to the school all the days NEG I  
 ‘It’s Mary who goes to school every day, not me.’

present, this is either right- or left-detached, as indicated by a comma in (69b,c) and in (70b).<sup>17</sup>

- (69) a. ??Hi havia el president a la reunió. (Catalan)  
 b. Hi havia el president, a la reunió.  
 PF have.PST.3SG the president at the meeting  
 c. A la reunió, hi havia el president.  
 at the meeting PF have. PST.3SG the president  
 ‘The president was at the meeting.’  
 (Rigau 1997: 396)
- (70) a. ??C’ è la statua di Michelangelo in Piazza della Signoria. (Italian)  
 b. C’ è la statua di Michelangelo, in Piazza della Signoria.  
 PF be.3SG the statue by Michelangelo in Piazza della Signoria  
 ‘Michelangelo’s statue is in Piazza della Signoria.’  
 (Leonetti 2008: 140)

The intonation contour of this kind of sentence is characterized by a primary pitch accent on the post-verbal noun phrase, signalling its status as the sole focus of the clause, namely, as the focal argument of an argument-focus structure. On the basis of these findings, Leonetti (2008: 142) formulates the following constraint.

(71) Coda Constraint

The presence of the locative coda inside the VP blocks the insertion of definite DPs: these are excluded unless the locative coda is itself (right-/left-)dislocated (or removed).

In terms of the Layered Structure of the Clause (see §1.3.2), the Coda Constraint states that the locative coda cannot occur in a clause-internal Periphery, if the *there* sentence exhibits a definite noun phrase, but rather must occur in the Left or Right Detached Position.

Our claim that the proform is locative in inverse locatives is supported by its incompatibility with a locative phrase within the Actual Focus Domain. In general, a locative resumptive clitic is only grammatical—and in fact required—with a detached topical locative phrase, but not with a focal one (see e.g. Rizzi 1997).

- (72) A: Ci sei andato, [a Roma]<sub>TOP</sub>? (Italian)  
 PF be.2SG gone to Rome  
 ‘As for Rome, have you been there?’

<sup>17</sup> There is general consensus in the literature that this restriction is contravened in a type of presentational *there* sentence which will be discussed in §2.6 (see also the discussion of ‘eventive existentials’ in Leonetti 2008 and Villalba 2013).



B: Sì, ci sono andato, [(a Roma.)]<sub>TOP</sub>  
 yes PF be.1SG gone to Rome  
 ‘Yes, I went/I have been there (to Rome).’

- (73) a. [Dove]<sub>FOCO</sub> (\*ci) sei andato?  
 where PF be.2SG gone  
 ‘Where have you been?’  
 b. (\*Ci) sono andato [a Roma]<sub>FOC</sub>  
 PF be.1SG gone to Rome  
 ‘I have been to Rome.’

Both in the question and in the answer in (72) the locative phrase is a topic, which is picked up by the locative resumptive clitic *ci* within the clause. In (73), by contrast, the locative phrase constitutes the focus of a question–answer pair. As is normally the case with *wh* questions, in (73a), the focal constituent is the *wh* phrase in the clause internal Pre-Core Slot. Both examples with *ci* are ruled out because they give rise to a clitic-doubling configuration whereby a locative clitic and the co-referential phrase co-occur within the clause: this configuration is not admitted in Italian.<sup>18</sup>

Being a resumptive clitic, the proform of inverse locatives is only compatible with topics and not with foci (Cruschina 2012b).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Clitic doubling is the co-occurrence of the clitic with the corresponding clause-internal constituent. It should not be confused with clitic resumption, which is instead the co-occurrence of the clitic with the corresponding *dislocated* constituent. Clitic doubling is found to varying extents in Spanish and Romanian, while it is generally considered to be absent in other Romance languages, with the exception of cases involving personal pronouns and/or dative arguments in several varieties (Jaeggli 1982, 1986, Benincà 1988, 2001, Dobrovie-Sorin 1990, 1994, Torrego 1998, Kayne 2000: 163–84) and locative (*n*)*che* in some Logudorese varieties (Viridis 2003, Bentley 2004b, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> For many speakers, the clitic *ci* becomes more acceptable with a D(iscourse)-linked reading of the *wh* phrase (Pesetsky 1987). The D-linked and non-D-linked interpretations can be kept distinct by means of prosody. In non-D-linked *wh*-questions, the main prosodic prominence is on the verb, while under a D-linked interpretation, the main pitch accent falls on the D-linked *wh*-phrase itself (Marotta 2000, 2002, Bocci 2013). Moreover, the D-linking reading can be ruled out by using an aggressively non-D-linked *wh*-phrase (see Pesetsky 1987) (e.g. *In quale diavolo di stanza (\*c) è tua sorella?* ‘Which bloody room is your sister in?’). Although we are not able to provide a full explanation for this contrast, it is worth noting that D-linked *wh*-phrases have been described as bearing a [topic] feature: they are similar to topics not only with respect to their interpretation but also with respect to extraction phenomena (see Rizzi 2001). A noticeable improvement in grammaticality can also be detected when the question continues with a pseudo-relative clause:

- (i) In quale stanza c’è tua sorella che dorme?  
 in which room PF be.3SG your sister who sleeps  
 ‘Which room is your sister sleeping in?’

It will be argued however that these are not cases of inverse locatives but rather of presentational sentences characterized by distinctive properties (see §2.5).

- (74) a. Dove (\*ci) sei tu? (Italian)  
 where PF be.2SG you  
 ‘Where are you?’  
 b. Dove hai detto che (\*c’) è lui?  
 where have.2SG said that PF be.3SG he  
 ‘Where did you say he is?’
- (75) a. Dove pensi che (\*ci) sia Gianni? (Italian)  
 where think.2SG that PF be.SBJV.3SG John  
 ‘Where do you think John is?’  
 b. Dove (\*ci) sono i fiori bianchi?  
 where PF be.3PL the flowers white  
 ‘Where are the white flowers?’
- (76) a. In quale stanza (??c’) è tua sorella? (Italian)  
 in which room PF be.3SG your sister  
 ‘Which room is your sister in?’  
 b. In quale cassetto (??ci) sono i piatti d’ argento?  
 in which drawer PF be.3PL the plates of silver  
 ‘Which drawer are the silver plates in?’

In the above examples the locative phrase is a *wh* phrase, which provides the focus of the question. The presence of a proform in these contexts yields the same type of ungrammaticality as we observed above for sentences involving a locative prepositional phrase (cf. 73b). By contrast, the proform does not affect the grammaticality of an existential *there* sentence with a locative *wh* phrase. In other words, the proform does not give rise to clitic-doubling effects because it is not referentially locative.

- (77) a. [Dove]<sub>FOC</sub> hai detto che ci sono problemi? (Italian)  
 where have.2SG said that PF be.3PL problems  
 ‘Where did you say that there are more problems?’  
 b. Ci sono problemi nel capitolo sul sistema solare.  
 PF be.3PL problems in.the chapter on.the system solar  
 ‘There are problems in the chapter on the solar system.’
- (78) a. [Unni]<sub>FOC</sub> ci sunnu cchiossà ciuri? (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 where PF be.3PL more flowers  
 ‘Where are there more flowers?’  
 b. Ci nni sunnu cchiossà [nn’u vasu ’ncapu u tavulu.]<sub>FOC</sub>  
 PF INDE be.3PL more in the vase on the table  
 ‘There are more flowers in the vase on the table.’

Another case of focal coda obtains when the locative phrase is part of the focus domain of a yes/no question. Interrogative sentences of this type are not compatible with inverse locatives, as indicated in (79a,b), where the locative phrase is not separated from the rest of the clause by a pause. As with *wh*-locative phrases, this structure is ungrammatical, as it would yield a case of clitic doubling, which is independently ungrammatical in Italian.<sup>20</sup>

- (79) a. ??C' è Gianni al mare? (Italian)  
 PF be.3SG John at.the sea  
 'Is John at the seaside?'  
 b. ??C' è tua sorella in ufficio?  
 PF be.3SG your sister in office  
 'Is your sister in the office?'

It is important to compare the above examples with their counterparts with a different intonational contour, as their grammaticality definitely improves if a pause is produced after the argument, signalling that the locative phrase is detached in syntax and outside the scope of the Actual Focus Domain in discourse.

- (80) a. C' è Gianni, al mare? (Italian)  
 PF be.3SG John at.the sea  
 'Is it John who is at the seaside?'  
 b. C' è tua sorella, in ufficio?  
 PF be.3SG your sister in office  
 'Is it your sister who is in the office?'

The fact that the interrogative structure under examination is not generally bad with copular constructions is proved by its acceptability with existential *there* sentences, here diagnosed by means of the indefiniteness of the pivot.

- (81) a. Ci sono turisti al mare? (Italian)  
 PF be.3PL tourists at.the sea  
 'Are there any tourists at the seaside?'  
 b. Ci sono clienti in ufficio?  
 PF be.3PL clients in office  
 'Are there any clients in the office?'

<sup>20</sup> With the intended information structure of the interrogative sentences (i.e. a predicate-focus structure), canonical locative predications would strongly be preferred.

- (i) a. Gianni è al mare?  
 John is at.the sea  
 b. Tua sorella è in ufficio?  
 your sister is in office

Among the Romance varieties under examination in our survey, the distinction between existentials and inverse locatives is mostly evident in the Nuorese and Logudorese Sardinian dialects, where the latter type of structure is signalled by the alternation of the copula and the associated agreement pattern (see Maps 1 and 4). Copula alternation in Sardinian existential sentences has long attracted the attention of linguists. It is generally related to the definiteness of the post-copular noun phrase, so that copula *HABERE* appears with indefinite noun phrases, while *ESSE* co-occurs with definite ones (Jones 1993: 113, La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997, Bentley 2004b, 2011, Remberger 2009).<sup>21</sup>

- (82) a. B' at metas froes in sa tanca. (Nuorese Sardinian)  
 PF have.3SG many flowers in the meadow  
 b. ?Bi sun metas froes in sa tanca.  
 PF be.3PL many flowers in the meadow  
 'There are many flowers in the meadow.'
- (83) a. \* B' at sos prattos in mesa. (Nuorese Sardinian)  
 PF have.3SG the plates in table  
 b. Bi sun sos prattos in mesa.  
 PF be.3PL the plates in table  
 'The plates are on the table.'

Jones (1993: 114) observes that the clitic *bi* has a tangible (i.e. referential) locative value, when it co-occurs with *ESSE*, acting as a pro-predicate in this structure. This idea is further developed in Remberger (2009), where it is claimed that Sardinian *there* sentences with copula *ESSE* are in fact locative structures.<sup>22</sup> The ungrammaticality of (84b), (85b), and (86) can therefore be attributed to clitic doubling between the locative clitic and the interrogative locative phrase. In these structures, *bi* acts as a pro-predicate: to the extent that it replaces a locative predicate, it is incompatible with a locative *wh* phrase.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Example (82b) becomes acceptable if the pivot bears contrastive focus.

<sup>22</sup> In §§1.1.1 and 3.2.1, we point out that there are Nuorese and Logudorese dialects where the proform *bi* contrasts with *nche*, in that the latter but not the former has a specific deictic value. These facts do not invalidate Jones's (1993) claim, since the proform is only argued to be referential insofar as it resumes a locative predicate in inverse locatives, whereas it is not referential in existentials.

<sup>23</sup> Observe that availability existentials with definite pivots exhibit copula *ESSE* and agreement despite being genuine existential *there* sentences.

- (i) A: Ite b' at pro ghiriare sa janna? (Bitti, Sardinia)  
 what PF have.3SG for stop.INF the door  
 'What's there to stop the door?'  
 B: B' est su libru de Maria.  
 PF be.3SG the book of Mary  
 Lit. There's Mary's book.

- (84) a. In ube b' at metas frores? (Lula, Sardinia)  
 in where PF have.3SG many flowers  
 'Where are there many flowers?'  
 b. In ube (\*bi) sun sos prattos?  
 in where PF be.3PL the plates  
 'Where are the plates?'  
 (Jones 1993: 114)
- (85) a. Inue b' at duos sindigos? (Buddusò, Sardinia)  
 where PF have.3SG two mayors  
 'Where are there two mayors?'  
 b. Inue (\*bi) son sos duos sindigos?  
 where PF be.3PL the two mayors  
 'Where are the two mayors?'
- (86) a. Inue (\*bi) ses tue? (Buddusò, Sardinia)  
 where PF be.2SG you  
 'Where are you?'  
 b. Inue (\*bi) son sos politicos onestos?  
 where PF be.3PL the politicians honest  
 'Where are the honest politicians?'  
 c. In cale calasciu (\*bi) son sos piattos de pratta?  
 in which drawer PF be.3PL the plates of silver  
 'In which drawer are the silver plates?'

A further piece of evidence in support of our analysis of inverse locatives comes from Italo-Romance dialects where narrow focus commonly involves fronting. By 'fronting' we mean the occurrence of a focal constituent in a pre-nuclear position, which can be internal or external to the Core (Bentley 2007, 2008, 2010b). As is normally the case with languages with SVO order, the pre-verbal occurrence of foci is restricted to a contrastive interpretation in most Italo-Romance dialects and banned in others (Cruschina 2012a). In Sicilian and in Sardinian, on the other hand, argument-focus constituents can be fronted to a pre-verbal position (Jones 1993, 2013, Cruschina 2006, 2010, 2011, 2012a, Mensching and Remberger 2010, Remberger 2010). This means that, while in other Italo-Romance varieties argument foci are

We must thus conclude that the correlation of *ESSE* with inverse locatives does not always obtain. Indeed, Italo-Romance and Sardinian, as well as Romance in general, bear testimony to a conflict between two tendencies: on the one hand, the tendency towards the overt marking of the semantic difference between existentials and locatives and, on the other, the tendency towards the marking of the subject properties of the pivot by means of agreement and copula selection, which can neutralize the distinction of existentials and locatives (see Ch. 4).

normally encoded in a post-verbal position, both in Sicilian and in Sardinian argument foci frequently figure pre-verbally.

- (87) a. TROPPU GRASSU est Juanne. (Lula, Sardinia)  
 too fat be.3SG John  
 ‘John is too fat.’  
 (Jones 1993: 19)
- b. A FREVI avi. (Sicilian)  
 the fever have.3SG  
 ‘He has a temperature.’
- (88) A: Ite est leghende (Juanne)? (Sardinian)  
 what be.3SG reading John  
 ‘What is John/he reading?’
- B: SU GIORNALE est leghende  
 the newspaper be.3SG reading  
 ‘He is reading the newspaper.’
- (89) A: Unni ti nni jisti airi sira? (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 where REFL INDE go.PST.2SG yesterday evening  
 ‘Where did you go last night?’
- B: AU CINEMA jivù.  
 to.the cinema go.PST.1SG  
 ‘I went to the cinema.’

In the light of these facts, we expect it to be acceptable for the focal argument of inverse locatives to be realized pre-verbally in these two dialect families. This is indeed what we found.<sup>24</sup>

- (90) A: Cu c’ è ntâ cucina? (Modica, Sicily)  
 who PF be.3SG in.the kitchen  
 ‘Who’s in the kitchen?’
- B: TA SUÒRU c’ è, ntâ cucina  
 your sister PF be.3SG in.the kitchen  
 ‘Your sister is in the kitchen.’

<sup>24</sup> Post-verbal focalization is still an option in both Sicilian and Sardinian, as has also emerged from our survey. In most cases, the version with post-verbal focalization was in fact the first option offered by the informant, especially for Sardinian dialects, in others the two versions were accepted as equally possible. We are not able to provide a sound explanation of this optionality and of the varying degrees of preference for one option or the other. We note, however, that focus fronting is typical of the spoken language. Our interviews were mostly based on written questionnaires. Although these were read aloud, the emphasis necessary to trigger pre-verbal foci as the first answer may have been missing. At any rate, focus fronting was accepted whenever it was elicited.

- (91) A: Chie b' at in su gabinetu? (Bitti, Sardinia)  
 who PF have.3SG in the bathroom  
 'Who's in the kitchen?'  
 B: SORRE MEA b' est.  
 sister my PF be.3SG  
 'My sister is (there).'

Depending on pragmatic and contextual conditions, the fronted focus can either be an instance of neutral focus or give rise to a special interpretation, which Cruschina (2012a) describes in terms of mirativity. In linguistic typology, mirativity is defined as 'a grammatical category whose primary meaning is the speaker's unprepared mind, unexpected new information, and concomitant surprise' (Aikhenvald 2004: 209). With a mirative interpretation, the inverse locatives in (90) and (91) convey the speaker's evaluation of the proposition as surprising or unexpected, giving rise to some kind of exclamative nuance.

By contrast with inverse locatives, existential *there* sentences do not lend themselves to this type of pre-verbal focalization, which in fact did not occur in our findings. This is because existentials are mostly commonly associated with sentence focus, which by definition involves no presuppositions or expectations. As has been argued, under certain conditions existential *there* sentences may have a predicate-focus structure; but even in those cases, since they plainly assert the existence or presence of an entity, they are not normally compatible with such a mirative interpretation and with the associated word order. In section 2.5 we shall point out that presentational sentences may express mirativity and thus exploit the pre-verbal focus position.

In our analysis, inverse locatives involve a focalized argument (i.e. the post-copular subject) and a referential topic (i.e. the locative coda). The defining property of inverse locatives is, however, the pro-predicate function of the proform, which resumes and stands for a detached locative predicate. This analysis has two important implications. First, inverse locatives with no anchoring to an explicit or implicit location, such as sentences involving entities which can hardly have a physical realization, are not admitted (Zamparelli 2000: 69).

- (92) a. ??Ci sono le due soluzioni di questa equazione. (Italian)  
 PF be.3PL the two solutions of this equation  
 Lit. There are the two solutions of this equation.  
 b. ??Ci sono i problemi complessi che conosci nella mia  
 PF be.3PL the problems complex that know.2SG in.the my  
 teoria.  
 theory  
 Lit. There are the complex problems which you know in my theory.

Second, even though the argument of inverse locatives is typically focalized, this is not a defining property of this type of *there* sentence. An information structure variant of inverse locatives is possible when this argument is topicalized and hence detached. The construction would still classify as inverse locative, insofar as it involves a pro-predicative proform.

- (93) A: Le touvajə sta dentrə a lu cassetə? (Guardiagrele, Abruzzo)  
 the towels stay.3PL inside to the drawer  
 ‘Are the towels in the drawer?’  
 B: Šine, cə STA.  
 yes.PARAG PF stay.3PL  
 ‘Yes, they are there.’  
 c. Li šiucaturə bunə a sta squadra nən cə STA.  
 the players good in this team NEG PF stay.3PL  
 ‘The good players, in this team, they are not there.’
- (94) A: I tuvajjə su ndo stipə? (Castelluccio Inferiore, Basilicata)  
 the towels be.3PL in.the drawer  
 ‘Are the towels in the drawer?’  
 B: Si, cə SU.  
 yes PF be.3PL  
 ‘Yes, they are’  
 c. I jucaturə bravə də sta squadra un cə SU.  
 the players good in this team NEG PF be.3PL  
 ‘The good players, in this team, they are not there.’

In (93) and (94) the locative phrase is a referential topic, which can be omitted when it continues a topic that has just been mentioned in the discourse (cf. 93B, 94B). What is in focus in (93B) and (94B) is the proform-plus-copula cluster (in small capitals). Observe that the same cluster cannot be focalized in an existential *there* sentence, confirming that the proform is predicative in inverse locatives but not in existentials.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> To a certain extent, it is possible to have a non-partitive indefinite topicalized pivot in existential sentences. As with sentences expressing mere existence (see §2.2.2), the existence of the entity denoted by the pivot is here presupposed and the focus is on the truth value of the existential assertion.

- (i) a. They told us there was a solution, and indeed a solution, there was. (McNally 2011: 1834)  
 b. Each had gone over the advantages which she might have over her rivals—and rivals there undoubtedly were. (from *The Finer Points of Sausage Dogs*, by Alexander McCall Smith, p. 121)

Similar cases in Italian (cf. ii) should rather be interpreted as locative *there* sentences (cf. §3.3.2).

- (ii) Non l’ ho notato prima, ma una spiegazione c’ è. (Italian)  
 NEG it have.1SG noticed before but an explanation PF be.3SG  
 ‘I didn’t notice it before, but there’s an explanation.’



- (95) \*(Molti bambini), CI SONO (, molti bambini), in giardino  
 many children PF be.3PL many children in garden

In existentials, the proform-plus-copula cluster can hardly be focalized because it has virtually no semantic content: the copula has a purely grammatical function, while the proform spells out an abstract unspecified argument. By contrast, as shown in the inverse locatives in (93B, 94B), this focalization works in contexts in which *ci* is locative and thus the focal cluster has a proper semantic correlate.

Inverse locatives with topicalized subjects are interesting with respect not only to the distinct role of the proform in existentials and inverse locatives, but also to the relation between topics and morphosyntactic agreement.

- (96) A: I sciugamai in int el caset? (Premosello, Piedmont)  
 the towels be.3PL in the drawer  
 ‘Are the towels in the drawer?’

B: Sì, i gh’ in.  
 yes SCL.3PL.M PF be.3PL  
 ‘Yes, they are.’

c. I zogador breu in sta squadra i gh’ in mia.  
 the players good in this team SCL.3PL.M PF be.3PL NEG  
 ‘The good players, in this team, they are not there.’

- (97) A: I sügamai i è ’ndel casèt? (Bergamo, Lombardy)  
 the towels SCL.3PL.M be.3PL in.the drawer  
 ‘Are the towels in the drawer?’

B: Sì, i gh’ è.  
 yes SCL.3PL.M PF be.3PL  
 ‘Yes, they are.’

c. I giugador brai, in chèla squadra ché, i gh’ è mia.  
 the players good in this team here SCL.3PL.M PF be.3PL NEG  
 ‘The good players, in this team, they are not there.’

- (98) A: Gli asciugamani son n’ i cassetto? (Florence, Tuscany)  
 the towels be.3PL in the drawer  
 ‘Are the towels in the drawer?’

B: Sì, (e) ci sono.  
 yes SCL.3PL.M PF be.3PL  
 ‘Yes, they are.’

c. I giocatori bravi in questa squadra (e) un ci sono.  
 the players good in this team SCL.3PL.M NEG PF be.3PL  
 ‘The good players, in this team, they are not there.’

The topicalized subjects of inverse locatives trigger agreement with the copula in all those varieties where agreement would normally fail to obtain with a post-verbal focal argument or pivot. On the other hand, the topicalization of partitive pivots in existential sentences results in split focus (see §2.3.2) and does not favour agreement where this would otherwise be missing. In fact, the opposite can be true (see §4.3.2).

- (99) a. Castegn quest an a g n' è mia. (Premosello, Piedmont)  
 chestnuts this year ESCL PF INDE be.3SG NEG  
 'Chestnuts, this year there are none.'
- b. (Furist int sto país), sì, a g n' è.  
 foreigners in this town yes ESCL PF INDE be.3SG  
 'Yes, there are (foreigners in this town).'
- c. (Iëu) a credi c' a g ni sia vot.  
 eggs SCL.1SG believe.1SG that ESCL PF INDE be.SBJV.3SG eight  
 '(Eggs)I believe that there are eight.'
- (100) a. Castegne st' àn a ghe n' è mia. (Bergamo, Lombardy)  
 chestnuts this year ESCL PF INDE be.3SG NEG  
 'Chestnuts, this year there are none.'
- b. (De stranier in chèl país ché), sì, ghe n' è.  
 of foreigners in this town here yes PF INDE be.3SG  
 'Yes, there are (foreigners in this town).'
- c. (Öf) crede che ghe n' è ot.  
 eggs believe.1SG that PF INDE be.3SG eight  
 '(Eggs) I believe that there are eight.'
- (101) a. Castagne, quest' anno, un ce n' è. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 chestnuts this year NEG PF INDE be.3SG  
 'Chestnuts, this year there are none.'
- b. (Stranieri in questo paese), sì, ce n' è.  
 foreigners in this town yes PF INDE be.3SG  
 'Yes, there are (foreigners in this town).'
- c. (Ova) (e) credo che (e) ce ne sia otto.  
 eggs SCL.1SG believe.1SG that ESCL PF INDE be.SBJV.3SG eight  
 '(Eggs) I believe that there are eight.'

All these findings are captured by the claim defended here, namely, the hypothesis that the *there* sentences under discussion should be not analysed as special types of existentials, but rather as inverse locatives. Inverse locatives are semantically equivalent to the corresponding canonical locative constructions, but have the reverse information structure: the argument is a topic in the canonical structure, but a

focus in the inverse locative; the locative predicate is focal in the canonical structure, but topical and detached or understood in the inverse locative.

#### 2.4.2 Deictic locatives

Deictic locatives are a subtype of inverse locative *there* sentences, characterized by a default deictic interpretation of the locative proform. As is the case with inverse locatives, the proform is the predicative element, while the focal argument occurs in the immediately post-copular position and is the subject of the clause. The sentences in (102) were solicited with the following question: ‘If you realize that Mary is here, how do you warn me about this?’

- (102) a. Varda: gh’ è LA MARIA. (Premosello, Piedmont)  
 look.IMP.2SG PF be.3SG the Mary
- b. Guerda: a gh’ è LA MARIA. (Felino, Emilia Romagna)  
 look.IMP.2SG ESCL PF be.3SG the Mary
- c. Guardø: ce stà MARÌJØ. (Santa Croce di Magliano, Molise)  
 look.IMP.2SG PF stay.3SG Mary  
 ‘Look: Mary is here!’

In this structure, the clitic proform is not co-referential with a locative phrase, nor does it redirect to a location that is salient or active in the discourse. It rather expresses a deictic function referring to the speaker’s proximal physical space. The immediately post-copular noun phrase is thus the argument of a speaker-oriented locative predicate, which is spelled out by the deictic proform. The argument of this predicate is in focus, bears the main stress, and is not separated prosodically from the copula.

An obvious question related to deictic locatives concerns the origins of this default deixis. One may argue that this interpretation could be linked to the abstract topic independently postulated for existential sentences (see §2.2.2), thus challenging the clear-cut distinction between existentials and deictic locatives defended here. However, in no dialect is such a deictic interpretation found with existential *there* sentences, where the proform has clearly lost its original referential locative meaning (exception being made for (*n*)*che* in some Nuorese and Logudorese Sardinian dialects: see §§1.1.1, 3.2.1). If a putative existential sentence with a pivot that requires location in physical space is uttered in a context similar to that of a deictic locative, a natural reaction of the interlocutor is to request a specification as to where the referent of the pivot is located. In other words, the interlocutor construes the structure as a deictic locative.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Any deictic interpretation of example (103A) should exclusively be attributed to the imperative verb *guarda* ‘look’, and not to the existential sentence *per se*.

- (103) A: Guarda, ci sono dei cani randagi! (Italian)  
 look.IMP.2SG PF be.3PL some dogs stray  
 Lit. Look, there are some stray dogs!
- B: Dove?  
 ‘Where?’

In deictic locatives, therefore, the proform plays a role which is comparable to that of a predicative proximal adverb. This is clear from the English translations, which have to resort to the adverb *here*, together with a focal pitch accent on the subject, in order to convey the equivalent meaning. A piece of evidence in support of this analysis comes from some northeastern dialects that do not have a locative clitic and, consequently, lack a proform in existential sentences. To render the type of sentences under discussion that do not present locative anchoring by a locative phrase (i.e. deictic locatives), these dialects overtly realize a locative adverb, in a construction which is otherwise identical to existentials and inverse locatives. Bellunese is one such dialect resorting to this strategy. Crucially, only the proximal adverb *qua* ‘here’ is grammatical in the context provided above (cf. 104a), whereas the distal adverb *là* ‘there’ would give rise to a marginal, if not ungrammatical, result (cf. 104b). A canonical locative copular structure would instead spell out the latter structure (cf. 104c).

- (104) a. Varda: l’ é Maria qua. (Belluno, Veneto)  
 look.IMP.2SG ESCL be.3SG Mary here  
 ‘Look: Mary is here!’
- b. ??Varda: l’ é Maria là.  
 look.IMP.2SG ESCL be.3SG Mary there
- c. Varda: la Maria la é là.  
 look.IMP.2SG the Maria SCL.3SG.F is there  
 ‘Look: Mary is there.’

Another characteristic that deictic locatives share with inverse locatives is their being argument-focus structures. The focus of the sentence has to be on the argument, which tends to be definite (specific), given that specific referents are more easily located in space and time. That deictic locatives are argument-focus structures is confirmed by the position of the argument in dialects with focus fronting (see §2.4.1).

- (105) a. Talia: MARIA c’ è! (Salemi, Sicily)  
 look.IMP.2SG Mary PF be.3SG  
 ‘Look: Mary is here!’
- b. Abbàita: SORRES TUAS bi son! (Orosei, Sardinia)  
 look.IMP.2SG sisters your PF be.3PL  
 ‘Look: your sisters are here!’

Unlike inverse locatives, however, deictic locatives do not admit topicalization of the argument. In a *there* sentence with a left-detached subject, the locative clitic must refer to a salient or implicit location, which is not necessarily in the proximity of the speaker, thus corresponding to an inverse locative.

- (106) a. Guarda: Gianni, c' è. (Italian)  
 look.IMP.2SG John PF be.3SG  
 'Look: John is here/there.'
- b. Castia: Francesco, non c' est. (Sardara, Sardinia)  
 look.IMP.2SG Francis NEG PF be.3SG  
 'Look: Francis is not here/there.'

Deictic locatives can therefore be considered to be a subtype of inverse locatives, the only difference consisting in the deictic function of the proform and in the more rigid focus structure with which they are associated. These differences correlate with distinct pragmatic and contextual conditions. The context that licenses a deictic locative is a context where no location is active or salient in the discourse; the proform does not refer anaphorically to a locative phrase, whether explicit or implicit, but rather it takes a strong deictic value, i.e. a default interpretation of 'here and now'. In contrast to inverse locatives, deictic locatives thus do not require any discourse background and are generally uttered in out-of-the-blue contexts.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, it must be noted that the correlation between each type of *ci* and definiteness should not be seen as indissoluble. Although existential sentences generally feature indefinite pivots, in section 2.3.1 we discussed availability existentials, which usually involve a definite pivot. Similarly, even though both inverse and deictic locatives typically exhibit definite post-copular noun phrases, they can also exhibit indefinites, which, however, tend to be specific (cf. 103 above).

## 2.5 Presentational *there* sentences

Lambrecht (1994, 2000) classifies existentials together with other sentence types as presentational constructions (see §2.2). The proposition expressed in presentational constructions is *thetic*. Accordingly, from the point of view of focus structure, they are sentence-focus structures. Lambrecht (1994: 143–4), however, clarifies that presentational sentences are different from other types of sentence-focus structure in

<sup>27</sup> At first sight, this may seem contradictory: argument-focus structures are generally incompatible with out-of-the-blue contexts. However, it is important to note that a surprise interpretation typically accompanies deictic locatives, which can be described with reference to mirative focus (see Cruschina 2012a, Bianchi et al. in press a, b).

that, unlike event-reportingthetic predications, they do not introduce a new event but a new referent into discourse. In this sense, presentational sentences should be distinguished from predicate-focus structures (equated by some to categorial predications), since ‘the basic communicative function of such sentences is not to predicate a property of an argument but to introduce a referent into a discourse, often (but not always) with the purpose of making it available for predication in subsequent discourse’ (Lambrecht 1994: 177).

It is undeniable that existentials share significant morphosyntactic features with the other constructions whose principal function is to introduce a referent into discourse. However, if properties concerning argument structure and predication are taken into consideration, a distinction must be drawn between existential *there* sentences and other *there* sentences which introduce a referent into discourse. We are therefore solely using the term ‘presentational’ to refer to a specific type of pseudo-existential *there* sentence, which is characterized by argument structure properties that distinguish it from proper existentials. That this type of *there* sentence should be distinguished from existentials proper appears to have been recognized in the specialist literature (Leonetti 2008 and Villalba 2013, where the name ‘eventive existential’ is used for this construction, Cruschina 2012b, Marten 2013, Latrouite and Van Valin 2014, Bentley et al. forthcoming).

Presentational *there* sentences consist of two parts. The first part introduces a new referent, while the second serves as the predicate (subsequent predication, in Lambrecht’s terms) of the newly introduced referent. This second part can be a clause, most typically a pseudo-relative clause (cf. 107a,b, 108a,b) (Lambrecht 2002, Casalicchio 2013), an adjective (cf. 107c), or a locative phrase (cf. 107d, 108c).<sup>28</sup>

- (107) a. C’ è Gianni che sta male. (Italian)  
 PF be.3SG John who stay.3SG sick  
 ‘John is sick.’
- b. C’ è mio figlio che ha la tonsillite.  
 PF be.3SG my son who have.3SG the tonsillitis  
 ‘My son has tonsillitis.’
- c. Oggi c’ è il direttore arrabbiato.  
 today PF be.3SG the director angry  
 ‘The director is angry today.’

<sup>28</sup> Presentational *there* sentences share significant similarities with other constructions. In particular, the pseudo-relative typical of presentational sentences resembles the pseudo-relative that occurs with perception verbs. For this construction, it has been independently argued that the pseudo-relative corresponds to a tensed CP that functions as the predicate of a small clause (see Guasti 1993, Cinque 1995, Casalicchio 2013; see also Belletti 2008 on cleft-sentences).

- d. Ci sono i piatti di porcellana nel lavandino.  
 PF be.3PL the plates of porcelain in.the sink  
 ‘The porcelain plates are in the sink.’
- (108) a. B’ est su direttore ch’ est arrennegato oje. Menzus a non  
 PF is the director who be.3SG angry today better to NEG  
 brullare. (Lula, Sardinia)  
 joke.INF  
 ‘The director is angry today. We’d better not play around.’
- b. C’ est su dottori chi s’ aspettatt. Sbrigeus! (Sardara, Sardinia)  
 PF be.3SG the doctor who us wait.3SG hurry.up.IMP.1PL  
 ‘The doctor is waiting for us, let’s hurry up!’
- c. Maria, nc’ è sirda a lu telefonu. Respunni! (Lecce, Apulia)  
 Mary PF is father.POSS at the telephone answer.IMP.2SG  
 ‘Mary, your father is on the phone. Pick it up!’

The similarity between presentational and existential *there* sentences is striking, especially when the second part of a presentational sentence is a locative phrase. On more careful scrutiny, the distinction between the two structures is nevertheless evidenced by a number of differences. First, presentational *there* sentences never predicate the existence or the presence of the referent which is being introduced into discourse. The post-copular noun phrase is typically definite or specific indefinite, and thus its existence is already presupposed. In terms of the dynamics of discourse, or the co-text within which they occur, presentational *there* sentences are tightly linked to a preceding or following statement, in the sense that they normally provide a justification for something that has just been said or is about to be said, or else an explanation for the previous assertion or for the next one (see Berruto 1986). They may also serve as preambles to an instruction or a request. The presentational sentence in (107d), for example, does not merely assert the presence of the porcelain plates in the sink, but requires a continuation of the type ‘you must wash them carefully’ or ‘they need washing carefully’.

Secondly, presentational sentences always have a semantically equivalent counterpart with SV order, and the contrast between the two orders is exclusively based on information structure and disambiguation purposes: in copular sentences with SV order, the extension of the focus is ambiguous between sentence focus and predicate focus, while the presentational construction ensures the inclusion of the subject within the focus domain.<sup>29</sup> We provide here the SV counterparts of the Italian examples in (107).

<sup>29</sup> As expected, these information structure differences are not syntactically encoded in English, which realizes Italo-Romance presentational sentences as canonical copular constructions.

- (109) a. Gianni sta male. (Italian)  
 John stay.3SG sick  
 ‘John is sick.’
- b. Mio figlio ha la tonsillite  
 my son have.3SG the tonsillitis  
 ‘My son has tonsillitis.’
- c. Oggi il direttore è arrabbiato.  
 today the director be.3SG angry  
 ‘The doctor is angry today.’
- d. I piatti di porcellana sono nel lavandino.  
 the plates of porcelain be.3PL in.the sink  
 ‘The porcelain dishes are in the sink.’

As already discussed in section 2.2, existential sentences do not normally involve such alternatives.

Returning now to the focus structure of presentational sentences, we have defined them as sentence-focus structures. As pointed out by Lambrecht (1994: 177, 2000), they have in fact a complex focus structure. To the extent that the focal post-copular argument functions as the topic of a following predicative comment, they could be said to be predicate-focus structures. At the same time, presentational *there* sentences introduce a new referent into discourse. The relation between this referent and the predicative comment constitutes new information. Accordingly, presentational *there* sentences should be treated as sentence-focus structures. As for the relational dimension, the introduced referent is new in relation to the discourse, while the predicative constituent is new in relation to the newly introduced focal referent. Presentational sentences are, therefore, formed by two independent information units, which are both simultaneously focal. These two information structure units, though, act as a single unit semantically and syntactically. This is confirmed once again by those dialects where the fronting of focal arguments is grammatical. In such varieties, both the subject and the predicative constituent of a presentational sentence must be fronted together as a single constituent.

- (110) a. TA PATRI A TELEFONU c' è, arrispunni. (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 your father at telephone PF be.3SG answer.IMP.2SG  
 ‘Your father is on the phone. Pick it up!’
- b. ??TA PATRI c' è a telefonu, arrispunni.  
 your father PF be.3SG at telephone answer.IMP.2SG

Fronting is not readily available with existentials (cf. 111a), where the pivot, but not the pivot and the coda, could be fronted only as an instance of contrastive focus, marked with bold capitals in the relevant example (cf. 111b).



- (111) a. ??NAPUACU DI CARUSI NT' A CHIAZZA ci sunnu. (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
           some     of kids     in the square   PF be.3PL  
       b. DU CARUSI ci sunnu nt' a chiazza, no tri.  
           two kids       PF be.3PL in the square   NEG three  
           'There are two children in the square, not three.'

In an appropriate context, an existential sentence may express mirativity and thus exploit the pre-verbal position, but in that case the sentence would be ambiguous between a genuine existential reading and a presentational one.

- (112) Minchia! DU CRISTIANI DAVANTI Â PORTA ci sunnu.  
           swear.word two people   in.front to.the door   PF be.3PL  
           Scappamu! (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
           run.IMP.1PL  
           '[Swear word!] There are two people in front of the door. Let's run!'

This word order must be associated with a mirative value. Example (112) would be pragmatically felicitous in a context in which two burglars have broken into a house and one of them notices two men at the door and shouts to the other to run. This context, and in particular its introductory character with respect to the main assertion (i.e. 'let's run!'), would favour a presentational reading.

As already noted, in Italian and in most Italo-Romance dialects, focal arguments cannot appear in a pre-verbal position, or can only do so if they bear a contrastive interpretation. Recent studies, however, have shown that focus fronting is not restricted to contrast, but is also allowed under other pragmatic and contextual conditions. In addition, the association with certain adverbs may license a pre-verbal focus constituent (Cruschina 2012a). For example, when the focus expression is associated with a focal adverb (i.e. adverbs equivalent to English 'also', '(not) even', 'only'), by virtue of their scalar meaning (Krifka 2007), pre-verbal focalization becomes acceptable. Nevertheless, if the information-structure unity typical of presentational sentences is disrupted, for instance by forcing an argument-focus interpretation through focus fronting, the clitic *ci* must be left out. Put differently, the construction is no longer presentational (in our sense), and the structure is an attributive copular construction (Cruschina 2012b).<sup>30</sup>

- (113) a. ANCHE GIANNI (\*c') è infuriato / malato. (Italian)  
           also John   PF be.3SG furious ill  
           'John too is furious/ill.'

<sup>30</sup> We call 'attributive' a copular construction which predicates an inherent or contingent property of an individual or an entity (*John is intelligent/ill, John is one of us*). Following Feuillet (1998: 673), we include copular constructions with a nominal or prepositional predicate under the attributive heading (*John is an artist, John is my brother, John is in trouble*).

- b. ANCHE GIANNI (\*c') è nei guai / in pericolo.  
 also John PF be.3SG in.the troubles in danger  
 'John too is in trouble/in danger.'

In examples (113a,b), the presence of the focalizing adverb *anche* requires argument focus on the associated noun phrase, allowing for focus fronting under either a contrastive or mirative interpretation. In such a structure, the adjectival predicate can be detached, but in this case it must be resumed by a clitic other than *ci*, i.e. by the pro-predicate *lo* (cf. 114).<sup>31</sup>

- (114) a. ANCHE GIANNI lo è, (infuriato /malato). (Italian)  
 also John it be.3SG furious ill  
 b. ANCHE GIANNI lo è, (nei guai/ in pericolo).  
 also John it be.3SG in.the troubles in danger  
 'So is John.'

Therefore, fronting is allowed by attributive constructions (e.g. *Anche Gianni è infuriato* 'John too is furious.'), but not by presentational *there* sentences. This explains the ungrammaticality of *ci* in the (b) sentences of the examples reported here.

- (115) a. C' è tua sorella in pericolo. (Italian)  
 PF be.3SG your sister in danger  
 b. SOLTANTO TUA SORELLA (\*c') è in pericolo.  
 only your sister PF be.3SG in danger  
 'Only your sister is in danger.'
- (116) a. Ci sono i politici italiani in cattive acque. (Italian)  
 PF be.3PL the politicians Italian in bad waters  
 b. ANCHE I POLITICI ITALIANI (\*ci) sono in cattive acque.  
 also the politicians Italian PF be.3PL in bad waters  
 'Italian politicians too are in deep water.'

<sup>31</sup> This distinction is lost in those varieties of Italian and in those dialects that use *ci* (or its equivalent) as pro-predicate, such as colloquial central and southern Italian and central and southern Italo-Romance dialects. See e.g. the following example from Romanesco (La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997: 19):

- (i) a. Te sse' davvero bbono. (Rome, Lazio)  
 you be.2SG really good-looking  
 'You are really good-looking.'  
 b. (Bbono), ce se' davvero.  
 good-looking it be.2SG really  
 'Good-looking, you really are.'

This contrast further supports our claim that presentational sentences are sentence-focus structures, thus contrasting with inverse locatives, which are argument-focus structures, i.e. narrow-focus structures. Importantly, inverse locatives do allow fronting.

- (117) a. C' è Gianni, in giardino. (Italian)  
 PF be.3SG Gianni in garden
- b. ANCHE GIANNI c' è, in giardino.  
 also Gianni PF be.3SG in garden  
 'John too is in the garden.'

We close this section on presentational sentences with a note on the proform. It is clear that in this sentence type *ci* does not play any role in the predication, nor does it point to a location in the external world or to the contextual spatiotemporal settings of the predication. The only possible analysis left is that this element has been lexicalized together with the copula BE as a marker of the presentational construction (Cruschina 2012b). In other words, the proform-copula cluster *c'è/ci sono* is now a grammatical device with a specific pragmatic and discourse-internal function, which allows the speaker to focus entire sentences and, hence, to mark them as relevant and pertinent to the discourse. This analysis implies that in presentational sentences *ci* has a different function. A great deal of evidence was already provided in sections 2.4 and 2.5 to differentiate between existential *ci* (a pro-argument) and locative *ci* (a pro-predicate). Presentational sentences involve yet another type of *ci* (a lexicalized element). The various functions of *ci* have long been observed in the literature on Italian, and must be seen as the result of divergence in the historical development of this form in different constructions (see §5.3.4, Berruto 1986, D'Achille 1990, 2001, Russi 2008).

## 2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have been concerned with the analysis of the focus structure of four types of Italo-Romance *there* sentence: existentials, inverse locatives, deictic locatives, and presentationals. In contrast with traditional approaches which have focused on the pragmatic role and the discourse status of the existential pivot, we have considered both the construction as a whole and its individual components. We have thus been able to shed light on a number of subtle differences between the four types of *there* sentence, which would otherwise have gone unnoticed. At the same time, we have suggested that the shared morphosyntactic properties of *there* sentences are motivated by their not being predicate-focus structures. In particular, we have claimed that existential sentences typically occur in sentence

focus, while inverse and deictic locatives are most typically associated with argument focus. Lastly, presentational *there* sentences share the sentence-focus character of existentials, but have distinct semantic and syntactic properties, and occur in different discourse contexts. In the following chapter, we will argue that the focus-structure differences brought to light in this chapter parallel differences in argument structure and predication.

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# Predication and argument realization

DELIA BENTLEY

## 3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2 we argued that the role of existential *there* sentences in discourse is to introduce a new referent, and that these sentences are not characterized by a topic vs. comment opposition, but rather classify as sentence-focus constructions (an exception must be made for a subclass of existentials with INDE-cliticization: see §2.3.2). At the same time, we pointed out that Italo-Romance and Sardinian provide evidence in support of the idea that all focus structure types, including sentence focus, involve a topic (Gundel 1974, Erteschik-Shir 1997; see §2.2.2). The topic of existential *there* sentences is an implicit argument providing the contextual domain for the existential predication (Francez 2007). The contextual domain can be modified by the coda, which, however, is not an essential component of existential sentences. Indeed, existential sentences can also be construed on the basis of contextually salient information.

Building upon these findings and analyses, in this chapter we analyse predication and argument realization in Italo-Romance and Sardinian *there* sentences. We begin by testing against our body of evidence two influential hypotheses on existentials, which we refer to as the locative hypothesis (§3.2) and the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis (§3.3). The locative hypothesis (e.g. Lyons 1967, Clark 1978), which underlies the unified analyses of existentials, possessives, and locatives (e.g. Freeze 1992), would at first appear to be supported by the fact that these constructions share a number of morphosyntactic features. In-depth crossdialectal investigation, however, suggests that the evidence on which the unified analyses are based is both too narrow, in that the same morphosyntactic features are shared by other copular constructions, and too broad, in that it does not capture significant morphosyntactic contrasts between existentials, possessives, and locatives. We claim that the shared morphosyntactic features of these constructions in Italo-Romance and Sardinian are the synchronic vestiges of a diachronic process which led to the formation of new existential structures in late Latin and early Romance. In synchronic terms, existentials may

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look similar to possessives and locatives because of shared properties of the focus structure and the logical structure of these constructions, which ought, nonetheless, to be distinguished pragmatically and semantically.

To put to test the second influential hypothesis, which states that the pivot is the predicate of the existential construction (e.g. Francez 2007), we compare existential *there* sentences with sentence- and argument-focus intransitive constructions with a verbal predicate rather than a copula. We place the main emphasis on sentence- and argument-focus intransitive constructions to factor out any contrasts which may solely be due to focus structure. Our working hypothesis is that, if pivots are predicates, they should lack some of the coding and behavioural properties of arguments, which instead characterize the arguments of the structures with verbal predicates.

An implicational pattern emerges from the analysis of verb–subject agreement, whereby  $S_A$  intransitives (intransitives with an actor subject) are the least likely to lack finite number agreement among VS structures, whereas existential *there* sentences are the most likely to lack such agreement. Starting from the assumption that the control of number agreement on the finite form of the verb is a behavioural property of core arguments which have been assigned a macrorole (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 359, Van Valin 2005: 108; see §1.3.2),<sup>1</sup> the implicational pattern found in our data suggests that the pivot of existential constructions is the least argument-like of the three types of candidate for the control of number agreement considered in our analysis ( $S_A$ : actor of intransitive,  $S_U$ : undergoer of intransitive, and pivot). Following Bentley (2013), we suggest that the poor argumenthood of the pivot of existential sentences is due to the lack of a predicate providing it with lexical entailments (Dowty 1991). We thus propose that the pivot does not bear a macrorole, and postpone to Chapter 4 a detailed account of agreement, where we explain why, in some dialects, the pivot does control agreement. We adduce further evidence in support of the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis from word order, existentials with adjectival pivots, and the contrastive analysis of existential *there* sentences and predications with the verb <exist>.

We then consider two major challenges to the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis, INDE-cliticization and case assignment. These would seem to suggest that the pivot is an argument. We propose that a subclass of pivots can behave as arguments in morphosyntax because they have a property of arguments, namely referentiality.

In section 3.4, we are then able to spell out our analysis of predication and argument realization in all the types of *there* sentence discussed in Chapter 2 (Cruschina 2012b): (i) existential *there* sentences, (ii) inverse locatives, (iii) deictic locatives, and (iv) presentational *there* sentences. We bring to light dialect evidence which suggests that, when in focus, arguments may lack lexical entailments much in the

<sup>1</sup> By ‘finite form of the verb’ we mean the form which would normally spell out the person and number agreement feature values of a controller (see *are* in *the boys are here*).

same way as the existential pivot. The conclusions of this chapter are drawn together in section 3.5.

### 3.2 The locative hypothesis

Since Lyons (1967) the relation between constructions expressing existence, location, and possession has been widely investigated (e.g. Kuno 1971, Clark 1978, Bickerton 1981: 244–6, Levinson 2000, 2006). Whereas some have claimed that the relevant constructions are related semantically, or derived from the same underlying syntactic structure (Freeze 1992), others have maintained that these structures are different semantically (Koontz-Garboden 2009), syntactically (La Fauci and Loporcaro 1993, 1997, Moro 1997, Cruschina 2012b), or in Construction Grammar terms (Koch 2012, see also Koch 1999, 2006). In this section, we investigate the relation between existentials, locatives, and possessives with evidence from our Italo-Romance and Sardinian corpus. As the starting point of our analysis, we take Clark's (1978) and Freeze's (1992) influential work, which capitalizes on morphosyntactic evidence to claim that existentials are locatives.

On the basis of findings from a sample of thirty languages, Clark (1978) uncovers a number of systematic correspondences between four constructions, which she refers to as existential (literally, *On the table is a book*, or *there is a book on the table*), locative (*The book is on the table*), possessive<sub>1</sub> (*Tom has a book*), and possessive<sub>2</sub> (*The book is Tom's*). Crosslinguistically, the verbs used in the four constructions relate them in pairs: existential and locative vs. possessive<sub>1</sub> and possessive<sub>2</sub>, or existential and possessive<sub>1</sub> vs. locative and possessive<sub>2</sub>. In terms of word order, the main patterns found by Clark are as follows: in most languages the order Loc Nom characterizes existentials, whereas the order Nom Loc characterizes locatives, with Nom being [–definite] in existentials and [+definite] in locatives. The most frequent pattern of word order found in both possessive<sub>1</sub> and possessive<sub>2</sub> is Pr (possessor) Pd (possessed), and Pr strongly tends to be [+animate], in fact, usually, [+human], in both structures. Clark (1978: 119) suggests that the word-order correspondences can be ascribed to two rules: (i) [+definite] nominals precede [–definite] nominals, and (ii) [+animate] nominals precede [–animate] nominals.

The emphasis of Freeze's (1992) analysis is placed on the three constructions which Clark (1978) calls existential, locative, and possessive<sub>1</sub>. Freeze claims that these constructions are derived from a single underlying syntactic structure ([Infl NP PP]). In terms of thematic structure, the three constructions have a theme and a location. The existential and the possessive construction, both having a locative subject, are differentiated from the locative construction by the definiteness effect. This applies to the theme argument, banning definite themes from the post-copular position. Indeed, definite themes have to move to the subject position, thus yielding locative structures with a theme subject ([NP Infl PP]). In existential and possessive

structures it is the locative PP that moves to subject position ([PP Infl NP]). To capture existentials with a proform, where the theme and the location occur in the same order as in locatives (compare *There is THEME in LOCATION* with *THEME is in LOCATION*), Freeze (1992: 564) points out that crosslinguistically the proform occurs in complementary distribution with a locative subject. He thus argues that the existential construction with a proform is derived from the same underlying structure as the locative subject existential, although in the former structure there is no movement, since the existential proform is locative. Specifically, the proform is the spell-out of a locative feature of Infl. The claim that the existential proform is locative is supported by the observation that the proform is lexically locative, i.e. synchronically consisting of—or diachronically derived from—a locative adverb. In some languages, the proform is formed by a locative preposition followed by a third-person singular pronoun (e.g. Palestinian Arabic *fih* ‘in it’: see §1.1.1). In addition, locative intransitives may exhibit the same proform as existentials, as is the case with *There arrived a stagecoach at the station* and *There is a stagecoach at the station*. To capture agreement in existential constructions where the copula agrees with the theme, as opposed to the locative subject (see *There are books on the table*), Freeze assumes that Infl may agree with the argument to which it assigns case, i.e. the theme. Freeze’s (1992) analysis does not explain the crosslinguistic variation in agreement in existential constructions, or the fact that in some languages the definiteness effect appears to be suspended, and thus existentials and locatives, or existentials and possessives, exhibit the same word order (see §1.1.1).

Clark (1978) places much emphasis on the correspondence of locative, possessive, and existential copulas and proforms. Freeze (1992), in turn, relies in his analysis on the locative-first vs. theme-first word-order patterns, which he explains in terms of definiteness, and on the basis of the assumption that the existential proform is the spell-out of a locative feature of Infl. It is on this basis that Freeze proposes a unified analysis of existentials, possessives, and locatives. We tested the hypothesis of the correspondence of copulas and proforms, and the definiteness effect on word order, against our Italo-Romance and Sardinian data, and we report below the results of our investigation.

### 3.2.1 *The correspondence of copulas and proforms*

Recall that, in the languages of our sample, existential *there* sentences are formed as follows.

- (1) (Adpositional phrase +) (proform +) copula + pivot (+ adpositional phrase)

In accordance with Clark’s (1978) findings, Italo-Romance and Sardinian existential *there* sentences exhibit reflexes of Latin *ESSE* ‘be’, *STARE* ‘stay’, or *HABERE* ‘have’ (see Maps 1–4), which are also the verbs found in locative (*ESSE* ‘be’ and *STARE* ‘stay’) and possessive, (*HABERE* ‘have’) constructions. Consider the following sets of examples,



illustrating the correspondence of the verb of existential and locative constructions (cf. 2a–c, 3a–c), and existential and possessive, constructions (cf. 4a,b, 5a,b), respectively.

- (2) a. In questa frutta ci so' tanti semi. (Siena, Tuscany)  
 in this fruit PF be.3PL many seeds
- b. 'N gheffa frutta cə sta furia semi. (Ascoli Piceno, Marche)  
 in this fruit PF stay.3 many seeds
- c. Dend' a chesta frutta cə stiannə tanta lövin. (Chiauci, Molise)  
 inside to this fruit PF stay.3PL many seeds  
 'In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- (3) a. L' asciugamani so' nel cassetto. (Siena, Tuscany)  
 the towels be.3PL in.the drawer
- b. L' asciugamani sta dendrə a lu cassetto. (Ascoli Piceno, Marche)  
 the towels stay.3PL inside to the drawer
- c. Lə tuaglə stiannə dend' al təraturə. (Chiauci, Molise)  
 the towels be.3PL inside to.the drawer  
 'The towels are in the drawer.'
- (4) a. Non b' at pinguinos in su Polo Nord. (Orgosolo, Sardinia)  
 NEG PF have.3SG penguins in the Pole North  
 'There are no penguins in the North Pole.'
- b. Nt'a sta frutta nd' ava tanta simianti. (Ciano, Calabria)  
 in to this fruit PF have.3SG many seeds  
 'In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- (5) a. Apo unu frate. (Orgosolo, Sardinia)  
 have.1SG one brother  
 'I have one brother.'
- b. Iji annu na machina russa. (Ciano, Calabria)  
 they have.3PL a car red  
 'They have a red car.'

A first glance at the proforms also supports the correspondence argument in support of the locative hypothesis. Etymologically, the existential proforms of our dialect sample would seem to be locative, although the relevant etymologies are by no means uncontroversial (see Blasco Ferrer 2003, Ciconte 2008, 2009, 2011, Bentley and Ciconte forthcoming, and §5.1). Synchronically, the proforms of existential *there* sentences have the function of locative resumptive clitics in other constructions. We provide here examples of the resumptive use of *ci* (<ECCE HIC, Rohlfs 1969, or HINCE, Maiden 1995: 167), *ilghe* (<*j*< HIC/ILLIC/IBI/ILLI, Benincà 2007), *bi* (<IBI, Wagner 1960: 610), and (*n*)*che* (<HINC(E), Wagner 1960: 624).

- (6) a. (A scuola) ci vò tutti i giorni. (Florence, Tuscany)  
to school PF go.1SG all the days  
'(To school) I go there every day.'
- b. (A scola) a i va tuti i dè. (Bologna, Emilia Romagna)  
to school SCL.1SG PF go.1SG all the days  
'(To school) I go there every day.'
- c. (A scola) ghe vago tuti i dì. (Padua, Veneto)  
to school PF go.1SG all the days  
'(To school) I go there every day.'
- d. Supra sa mesa, una tiázza de randa b' appo postu. (Lula, Sardinia)  
on the table a tablecloth of lace PF have.1SG put  
'On the table, I put a lace tablecloth.'  
(Jones 1993: 349)
- e. (Innoghe) ch' at telefonadu su collega dou. (Buddusò, Sardinia)  
here PF have.3SG phoned the colleague your  
'Here, your colleague has phoned.'

The locative resumptive clitics which figure in (6a–e) also occur as existential proforms in the relevant dialects.

- (7) a. (E) c' è i terremoto: c' è dei bambini in pericolo.  
ESCL PF be.3SG the earthquake PF be.3SG some children in danger  
(Florence, Tuscany)  
'There is an earthquake: there are children in danger.'
- b. A i è al teremot: a i è di puten in  
ESCL PF be.3SG the earthquake ESCL PF be.3SG some children in  
pericol. (Bologna, Emilia Romagna)  
danger  
'There is an earthquake: there are children in danger.'
- c. Ghe zé 'l terremoto: ghe zé (dei) putei in pericolo.  
PF be.3SG the earthquake PF be.3SG some children in danger  
(Padua, Veneto)  
'There is an earthquake: there are children in danger.'
- d. I su 1940 b' at istatu una gherra mala in Europa. (Lula, Sardinia)  
in the 1940 PF have.3SG been a war bad in Europe  
'In 1940 there was a bad war in Europe.'
- e. No nos podimus divertire ca ch' at appenas.  
NEG REFL can.1PL have.fun.INF because PF have.3SG problems  
(Buddusò, Sardinia)  
'We cannot have fun, as there are problems.'



*Ndi* also figures in the possessive<sub>1</sub> (cf. 11a), whereas elsewhere it encodes movement away from a location (cf. 11b).

- (11) a. Iddi **nd'** annu na machina russa. (Bova Marina, Calabria)  
 they PF have.3PL a car red  
 'They have a red car.'
- b. Ma perchì ti **ndi** vai cussì prestu?  
 but why REFL PF go.2SG so early  
 'Why are you leaving so early?'

In descriptive terms, therefore, we found a great deal of correspondence between the morphosyntax of existentials and locatives, on the one hand, and existentials and possessives, on the other. One could thus assume that the existential constructions attested in the majority of our dialects (see Maps 1–3) are subtypes of locative structures, whereas *HABERE* existentials (see Map 4) are subtypes of possessives. Assuming that the possessor of *HABERE* possessives is a location (Freeze 1992: 580), one could conclude that Italo-Romance and Sardinian existentials support the unified analysis of existentials, possessives, and locatives.

On further inspection, however, the evidence does not support this conclusion. Beginning with the copulas, the reflexes of Latin *ESSE* 'be' and *STARE* 'stay' are found not only in existential and locative constructions but also in attributive constructions.<sup>2</sup>

- (12) a. Era malato. (Siena, Tuscany)  
 be.PST.3SG ill  
 'He was ill.'
- b. Quelle so' donne.  
 those be.3PL women  
 'Those are women.'
- c. Ci so' du' persone alla porta: sono i genitori di Luca.  
 PF be.3PL two people at.the door be.3PL the parents of Luke  
 'There are two people at the door: they are Luke's parents.'
- (13) a. Stava malatə. (Ascoli Piceno, Marche)  
 stay.PST.3SG ill  
 'He was ill.'
- b. Chessə è femmənə.  
 those be.3PL women  
 'Those are women.'

<sup>2</sup> As was pointed out in §2.5, following Feuillet (1998: 673), we include copular constructions with a nominal or prepositional predicate under the attributive heading (*John is an artist, John is my brother, John is in trouble*).

- c. Cə sta ddó persò a la porta: è la mamma e  
 PF stay.3 two people at the door be.3PL the Mum and  
 lu babbə də Luca.  
 the Dad of Luke  
 ‘There are two people at the door: they are Luke’s Mum and Dad.’
- (14) a. **Steva** ammalatə. (Chiauci, Molise)  
 stay.PST.3SG ill  
 ‘He was ill.’
- b. Chelə **sunnə** femmənə.  
 those be.3PL women  
 ‘Those are women.’
- c. Cə stiannə du pərzon ala porta: **sunnə** lə gənəturə də Luca.  
 PF stay.3PL two people at.the door be.3PL the parents of Luke  
 ‘There are two people at the door: they are Luke’s parents.’

In a number of dialects, including those of Ascoli Piceno (Marche) and Chiauci (Molise) cited above, the copulas *ESSE* ‘be’ and *STARE* ‘stay’ alternate in accordance with the individual- vs. stage-level opposition (Carlson 1977). Thus, *ESSE* ‘be’ is selected in the attributive constructions in (13b,c) and (14b,c), since these predicate inherent properties, whereas *STARE* ‘stay’ is selected in (13a) and (14a), and in the presentational *there* sentences in (13c), (14c) (‘there are two people at the door’), as these predicate stages or contingent properties. In the same dialects, it is the stage level copula that also figures in existential constructions.

- (15) a. Nen petemə divorzià: cə **sta** li frechí. (Ascoli Piceno, Marche)  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF PF stay.3 the children
- b. Nən pətemə dəvurzià: cə **stiannə** lə uagliunə. (Chiauci, Molise)  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF PF stay.3PL the children  
 ‘We cannot divorce: there’re the children.’

Insofar as the copulas *ESSE* ‘be’ and *STARE* ‘stay’ are concerned, therefore, the correspondences found do not point to a correlation between existentials and locatives, but rather to a broader correlation between existentials, locatives, and attributives, in some dialects (cf. 2a, 3a, 12a–c), and existentials, locatives, and stage level attributives, in others (cf. 2b,c, 3b,c, 13a,c, 14a,c).

As for the existential copula *HABERE* ‘have’, although the evidence points to a correlation with possessives<sub>1</sub> in a number of dialects (cf. 4a,b, 5a,b), other dialects with *HABERE* ‘have’ existentials exhibit the verb *TENERE* ‘have’, lit. ‘hold’, in possessives<sub>1</sub>, suggesting that existentials and possessives involve two different kinds of predication. We illustrate the lack of correspondence between existential and possessive<sub>1</sub> copulas with evidence from Salentino (Apulia).

- (16) a. Nonn' **ave** mancu n' errore. (Soletto, Apulia)  
 NEG have.3SG even a mistake  
 'There is not a single mistake.'
- b. **Tengu** doi figli.  
 hold.1SG two children  
 'I have two children.'
- c. Quiddhi **tenene** na machina russa.  
 they hold.3PL a car red  
 'They have a red car.'
- (17) a. Nonn' **ave** mancu n' errore. (Martano, Apulia)  
 NEG have.3SG even a mistake  
 'There is not a single mistake.'
- b. **Tengu** doi figli.  
 hold.1SG two children  
 'I have two children.'
- c. Quiddhi **tenene** na machina russa.  
 they hold.3PL a car red  
 'They have a red car.'

As regards the proforms, these do not occur in complementary distribution with a locative phrase, as should be clear from the discussion of aboutness topics in section 2.3.1. In (18a,b) we show that a clause-initial locative phrase can co-occur with a proform.

- (18) a. Fa atension che anta chista frutsa la g' é tante asmans.  
 do.IMP.2SG attention that into this fruit ESCL PF be.3SG many seeds  
 (Limone Piemonte, Piedmont)
- b. Abbadə ca dentrə a ssa fruttə cə sta nu sacchə de sumentə.  
 pay.attention that inside to this fruit PF stay.3 a bag of seeds  
 (Arielli, Abruzzo)  
 'Be careful because in this fruit there are many seeds.'

To be sure, Freeze (1992: 555) claims that the complementary distribution between the proform and a locative subject phrase is observed across languages, rather than within single languages. Thus, while Hindi existentials have a locative subject (cf. 19a), French ones exhibit the expletive subject *il*, as well as the proform *y* (cf. 19b).

- (19) a. Kamree-mēē aadmii hai. (Hindi)  
 room-in man COP.PRS.3SG.M  
 (Freeze 1992: 555)

- b. Il y a un homme dans la chambre. (French)  
 EXPL PF have.3SG a man in the room  
 ‘There is a man in the room’

However, in a number of early Italo-Romance vernaculars, for example early Tuscan, the proform did occur in complementary distribution with a locative phrase in *there* sentences (cf. 20a,b; see Ciconte 2008, 2009, 2011 and §5.3.3 for details). The complementary distribution of the proform and the locative phrase is no longer observed by the sixteenth century. The example in (20c) is the translation of (20b) in modern Italian, a Romance language which derives from early Tuscan (specifically, from early Florentine).

- (20) a. Egli ci sono dell’ altre donne. (early Tuscan)  
 EXPL PF be.3PL some other women  
 ‘There are some other women.’ (*Decameron*, III, 3, 13)
- b. Nel reame di Francia fu un gentile uomo. (early Tuscan)  
 in.the kingdom of France be.PST.3SG a gentle man  
 ‘In the Kingdom of France there was a gentleman.’ (*Decameron*, III, 9, 4)
- c. Nel reame di Francia ci fu un gentiluomo. (Italian)  
 in.the kingdom of France PF be.PST.3SG a gentleman  
 ‘In the Kingdom of France there was a gentleman.’

The contrast between early Tuscan, where the proform never co-occurs with a locative phrase within the clause (cf. 20b), and modern Italian, where the proform occurs obligatorily in existential *there* sentences, requires an explanation. Following proposals by Ciconte (2008, 2009, 2011) and Parry (2013), we shall claim that the contrast exemplified in (20b,c) is the result of changes that occurred in Tuscan between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries (see §§3.4.1, 5.3.4). These changes involved a functional split in the proform, which retained its locative meaning in inverse and deictic locatives, but not in existentials.

As a result of processes of this kind, in the majority of the dialects of our sample the existential proform is not locative, and hence it is not sensitive to the deixis of a locative coda.

- (21) a. En costa strà a j è ëd le cà e na cesa. (Turin, Piedmont)  
 in this road ESCL PF be.3SG of the houses and a church  
 ‘In this road there are some houses and a church.’
- b. En cola strà a j è ëd le cà e na cesa.  
 in that road ESCL PF be.3SG of the houses and a church  
 ‘In that road there are some houses and a church.’

- (22) a. In sta strada qua ghe zé dele case e na cesa. (Padua, Veneto)  
 in this road here PF be.3SG of.the houses and a church  
 ‘In this road there are some houses and a church.’
- b. In chela strada là ghe zé dele case e na cesa.  
 in that road there PF be.3SG of.the houses and a church  
 ‘In that road there are some houses and a church.’
- (23) a. In questa strada ci so’ delle case e una chiesa. (Siena, Tuscany)  
 in this road PF be.3PL of.the houses and a church  
 ‘In this road there are some houses and a church.’
- b. In quella strada ci so’ delle case e una chiesa.  
 in that road PF be.3PL of.the houses and a church  
 ‘In that road there are some houses and a church.’
- (24) a. Nch’a sta strata nci sugnu / nd’ ava ciarti casi. (Ciano, Calabria)  
 in to this road PF be.3PL PF have.3SG some houses  
 ‘In this road there are some houses.’
- b. Nch’ a chija strata nci sugnu / nd’ ava ciarti casi.  
 in to that road PF be.3PL PF have.3SG some houses  
 ‘In that road there are some houses and a church.’

In the Logudorese dialects of Bono and Benetutti, however, there is a choice of two existential proforms: *bi* (<IBI ‘there’), and (*n*)*che* (<HINC(E) ‘from here’: Wagner 1960: 624). Despite the etymology of *bi*, the occurrence of a locative phrase within the clause does not interfere with the selection of this proform. By contrast, the choice of (*n*)*che* is only grammatical if the deixis of the clause is speaker-oriented, i.e. referred to the location of the speaker (see §1.1.1). The data in (25a,b) indicate that *bi* is neutral in terms of its deixis, on a par with the majority of the Italo-Romance proforms (cf. 21a,b to 24a,b), whereas (*n*)*che* is not.

- (25) a. In custa istrada (n)ch’ / b’ at carchi domo. (Benetutti, Sardinia)  
 in this road PF PF have.3SG some house  
 ‘In this road there are some houses.’
- b. In cussa istrada \*(n)che / bi sun sas cresias de Santu Juanne e...  
 in that road PF PF be.3PL the churches of Saint John and  
 ‘In that road there are the churches of Saint John and...’

In (25a) (*n*)*che* alternates freely with *bi*, whereas in (25b) the former proform is not a grammatical option, as it cannot combine with a locative phrase indicating distance from the speaker.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In Ch. 2 (§2.4.1) we discussed the hypothesis put forward by Jones (1993) and Remberger (2009) that Nuorese and Logudorese Sardinian *there* sentences with the proform *bi* and a definite post-copular noun



In the Campidanese dialects of Sardara and Villacidro, the existential proform *ddoi* (<ILLOC(QUE) ‘(to) there’, Wagner 1960: 610–11) denotes distance from the speaker (see §1.1.1), whereas *nci* (<ECCE HIC OR HINCE, Wagner 1960: 624, Maiden 1995: 167), which is predominant in the varieties spoken by the young generations, is compatible with any kind of deixis.<sup>4</sup>

- (26) a. In *custa* (v)ia *ci* / \**ddoi* at un*as* cantus domus. (Villacidro, Sardinia)  
 in this road PF PF have.3SG some houses  
 ‘In this road there are some houses.’
- b. In *cussa* (v)ia *ci* / *ddoi* at un*as* cantus domus.  
 in that road PF PF have.3SG some houses  
 ‘In that road there are some houses.’

Therefore, Logudorese *bi* and Campidanese *nci* are deictically neutral, whereas Logudorese (*nche* and Campidanese *ddoi* are deictically marked. In terms of Vannelli’s (1972) theory of deixis, Campidanese Sardinian *ddoi* ‘there’ and Logudorese Sardinian (*nche* ‘here’ are, respectively, negatively and positively marked with respect to the deictic centre of discourse, i.e. the speaker (Bentley 2011). Observe in passing that the Logudorese and Campidanese Sardinian dialects in question allow locative clitic doubling (Virdis 2003), i.e. the doubling of a locative phrase with a locative clitic within the clause (see §2.4.1, n. 18), and this is why the deictic proforms *ddoi* and (*nche* can co-occur with a locative phrase within the same clause, as long as the proform and the locative phrase are compatible in deictic terms.

A comparable pattern of alternation was found in the Calabrian dialect of Agnana Calabria, where, according to some speakers, the proform *ndi*, in combination with the copula ‘have’, can be distal (cf. 27b), whereas *nci*, in combination with ‘be’, is proximal (cf. 27a).

(Agnana Calabria, Calabria)

- (27) a. Nta sta strata *nc’ ennu* ancuni casi e na chiesa.  
 in this road PF be.3PL some houses and a church  
 ‘In this road there are some houses and a church.’

phrase are inverse locatives. The distinction drawn here between existential *bi* and *nche* does not challenge this hypothesis, and more specifically the idea that, in inverse locatives, *bi* (like *ci*, *ghe*, etc.) resumes a locative phrase. What is special about (*nche* in the relevant dialects is that it has a referential, speaker-oriented, deictic function in both existentials and inverse locatives.

<sup>4</sup> Deixis can also be encoded by the copula, *essi* ‘be’ being the proximal copula, and *ai* ‘have’ the distal one. According to some speakers, the proform *ddoi* is compatible with proximal deixis, if in combination with *essi* ‘be’. The Romance specialist should also note that *ddoi* should not be confused with *ddu*, which is a deictically neutral development of *ddoi/ddui* (Bentley 2011).

- b. Nta chija strata **nd'** avi tanti casi e tanti chiesi.  
 in that road PF have.3SG many houses and many churches  
 'In that road there are many houses and many churches.'

The generalized locative analysis of the existential proform, which is based on its etymology, is thus insufficiently supported by the synchronic analysis of the microvariation attested in Italo-Romance and Sardinian. In particular, the contrast between the majority of the existential proforms, which are not sensitive to the deixis of a clause-internal or external locative coda (cf. 21a,b–24a,b), and, on the other hand, a small number of existential proforms, which are only compatible with specific types of deixis, suggests that only the latter kind of existential proform is referentially locative, and should be differentiated from non-locative existential proforms. To be sure, in Freeze's analysis, the proform is only locative in the sense that it spells out a locative feature of Infl. Indeed, Freeze (1992: 562, n. 13) mentions in passing that the claim that the existential proform is locative does not entail that it should be deictic. The microvariation attested in Italo-Romance and Sardinian existential proforms is, thus, meaningless within his analysis. This is undesirable in terms of empirical adequacy.

A further challenge to the generalized locative analysis of existential proforms is provided by the dialects which have no existential proform (see §1.1.1). One such dialect is Bellunese (Veneto).

(Belluno, Veneto)

- (28) a. Pararia che fusse tante maniere de iutarlo.  
 seem.COND.3SG that be.SUBJV.3SG many ways of help.him  
 'It would seem that there are many ways to help him.'
- b. No podon divorziar: l' é i bòce.  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF ESCL be.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Maria no la é sola: l' é lori.  
 Mary NEG SCL.3SG.F be.3SG alone ESCL be.3SG they  
 'Mary is not alone: there's them.'

The existential constructions of Bellunese-type dialects challenge Freeze's (1992) idea that existential proforms and locative subjects occur in complementary distribution crosslinguistically, since these constructions do not exhibit a proform and they need not exhibit a locative phrase. Now compare (28a–c) with their counterparts in two dialects with existential proforms.

(Turin, Piedmont)

- (29) a. A smia che a i saria la manera 'd giutelo.  
 SCL.3SG seems that ESCL PF be.COND.3SG the way of help.him  
 'It would seem that there is a way to help him.'

- b. I podoma nen divorsié: a j è 'd le masnà.  
 SCL.1PL can.1PL NEG divorce.INF ESCL PF be.3SG of the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Maria al' è nen sola: a i son lor.  
 Mary SCL.3SG be.3SG NEG alone SCL.3PL PF be.3PL they  
 'Mary is not alone: there's them.'

(Padua, Veneto)

- (30) a. A pare che ghe saria tanti modi pa darghe 'na man.  
 SCL.3SG seems that PF be.COND.3SG many ways for give.him a hand  
 'It seems that there would be many ways to help him.'
- b. No podémo separarse: ghe zé i putei.  
 NEG can.1PL separate.INF.REFL PF be.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Maria no a zé da sola: ghe zé lori.  
 Mary NEG SCL.3SG be.3SG by alone PF be.3SG they  
 'Mary is not alone: there's them.'

Since the three sets of examples in (28a–c), (29a–c), and (30a–c) were responses to the same questionnaire entries, and were elicited in the same way, we assume that they are semantically comparable, which in turn suggests that the existential proforms of dialects such as Turinese and Paduan are not locative.

In Bellunese-type dialects, existentials are distinguished from type (iii) *there* sentences, i.e. deictic locatives, by the obligatoriness of a locative adverb in the latter type of structure (see §2.4.2). Comparable evidence from European Portuguese was reported in Bentley (2013).

- (31) Varda: l' é Maria \*(qua). (Belluno, Veneto)  
 look.IMP.2SG ESCL be.3SG Mary here  
 'Look! Mary's here.'

Unlike the examples in (28a–c), which do not predicate the location of the referent of the post-copular noun phrase but rather express a proposition about its existence or availability in a given context, the example in (31) would be a felicitous reply to a question like *who is here?*. Thus, (31) does predicate the location of the referent of the post-copular noun phrase. The comparison of example (31) and its Turinese and Paduan counterparts, shown in (32) and (33), suggests that here the proforms are locative.

- (32) Guarda: a j è Maria. (Turin, Piedmont)  
 look.IMP.2SG ESCL PF be.3SG Mary  
 'Look! Mary's here.'



- d. Waren noch zwei Blitzbirnchen.  
 be.PST.3PL still two flash-bulbs.DIM  
 ‘There were still two little flashlights.’  
 (Weinert 2013: 40–41)

Contrasts like the one illustrated in (34a,b) vs. (35a–d) do not emerge from our findings. According to Koch (2012), the Romance languages prioritize informational salience (i.e. focus structure) over propositional salience (i.e. semantic structure), spelling out in morphosyntax the contrast between predicate focus, on the one hand, and sentence and argument focus, on the other. As a result, argument-focus locatives (in our terminology, inverse and deictic locatives) share a number of morphosyntactic features with sentence-focus existentials. These languages contrast with German, which exhibits different lexical and morphosyntactic strategies in ontological existentials and, on the other hand, locatives, thus prioritizing semantic differences over information structure similarities. We conclude that the German evidence further challenges the idea of the correspondence of locative and existential forms, and, ultimately, the claim that existentials are locatives.

### 3.2.2 *The definiteness effect on word order*

In Freeze’s (1992) analysis, the underlying structure in (36a) is realized as (36b) in locatives and as (36c) in existentials. This is the result of a definiteness constraint, which, banning definite themes from the post-copular position, yields two patterns with a definite and an indefinite noun phrase in pre- and post-copular position, respectively (cf. 36b,c).

- (36) a. Infl NP PP.  
 b. NP Infl PP. [Locative structure]  
 c. PP/PF Infl NP. [Existential structure]

A serious challenge to the word-order argument in support of the locative hypothesis comes from the lack of this definiteness effect in Italo-Romance and Sardinian *there* sentences.

- (37) a. ‘Còs j è sota ’l let?’ ‘A j è le pantofle.’  
 what PF be.3SG under the bed ESCL PF be.3SG the slippers  
 (Turin, Piedmont)  
 ‘What’s under the bed?’ ‘The slippers (are under the bed).’  
 b. ‘Csa a i è sota ’l let?’ ‘A i è al pantofole.’  
 what ESCL PF be.3SG under the bed ESCL PF be.3SG the slippers  
 (Bologna, Emilia Romagna)  
 ‘What’s under the bed?’ ‘The slippers (are under the bed).’

- c. ‘Cossa ghe zé soto l’ leto?’ ‘Ghe zé le pantofole.’  
 what PF be.3SG under the bed PF be.3SG the slippers  
 (Padua, Veneto)  
 ‘What’s under the bed?’ ‘The slippers (are under the bed).’
- d. ‘Che cosa c’ è sotto il letto?’ ‘(E) c’ è le pantofole.’  
 what thing PF be.3SG under the bed ESCL PF be.3SG the slippers  
 (Florence, Tuscany)  
 ‘What’s under the bed?’ ‘The slippers (are under the bed).’
- (38) a. ‘Chie b’ at in bagno?’ ‘B’ est sorre mea, in bagno.’  
 who PF have.3SG in bathroom PF be.3SG sister my in bathroom  
 (Lula, Sardinia)  
 ‘Who’s in the bathroom?’ ‘My sister is in the bathroom.’
- b. ‘Ce ave sotta lu iettu?’ ‘Ave le pantofule, sotta  
 what have.3SG under the bed have.3SG the slippers under  
 lu iettu.’ (Martano, Apulia)  
 the bed  
 ‘What’s under the bed?’ ‘The slippers are under the bed.’

Admittedly, the *there* sentences in (37a–d) and (38a,b) are inverse locatives (see §2.4.1), i.e. argument-focus structures which presuppose a locative predicate. Assuming that the theme is not in the same syntactic position which Freeze proposes as the position of the existential pivot, these structures do not challenge Freeze’s claim. However, post-copular definites are also found in sentence-focus *there* sentences which do not presuppose a locative predicate. Relevant examples were given in (28b,c), (29b,c), (30b,c), and further evidence is provided here.

- (39) a. Per cost problema it l’ avie dime che  
 for this problem SCL.2SG CL have.PST.2SG said.me that  
 it j ere ti. (Turin, Piedmont)  
 SCL.2SG PF were you
- b. Par cal problema t’ al m’ avev det che ti  
 for that problem SCL.2SG CL me had said that SCL.2SG  
 sarev ste te. (Bologna, Emilia Romagna)  
 be.COND.2SG been you
- c. Pa sto problema te me gavevi dito che te ghe  
 for this problem SCL.2SG me had said that SCL.2SG PF  
 geri ti. (Padua, Veneto)  
 were you

- d. Per questo problema tu m' avevi detto che tu ci  
 for this problem SCL.2SG me had said that SCL.2SG PF  
 saresti stato te. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 be.COND.2SG been you
- e. Pe stu problema m' eri dittu ca avia a tie.  
 for this problem me be.PST.2SG said that have.PST.3SG ACC you  
 (Martano, Apulia)
- f. Pi stu problema m' avivi dittu ca c' avivi a  
 for this problem me have.PST.2SG said that PF have.PST.2SG to  
 essiri tu. (Leonforte, Sicily)  
 be.INF you  
 'For this problem you said you would be available.'

Although much of the literature on Romance proposes a locative analysis of *there* sentences with definite post-copular noun phrases (Moro 1997, Rigau 1994, 1997, Zamparelli 2000, Leonetti 2008, Cruschina 2012b), there is reason to believe that the sentence-focus *there* sentences under discussion here are genuine existentials.

To begin with, recall that Bellunese is a dialect that obligatorily encodes the location of deictic locatives by a locative adverb (cf. 31, 40a). Importantly, the structures under discussion are not subject to this well-formedness condition (cf. 40b).

- (40) a. Varda: l' é Maria qua. (Belluno, Veneto)  
 look ESCL be.3SG Mary here  
 'Look! Mary's here.'
- b. No podon divorziar: l' é i bòce.  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF ESCL be.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'

The contrast between (40a) and (40b) suggests that (40b) neither presupposes nor asserts a location. In addition, the fact that, apart from the copula, the pivot is the only obligatory component of this structure is a hallmark of existentiality (Francez 2007).

Secondly, existential *there* sentences with a definite pivot differ from locatives in that they do not readily combine with negation (Bentley 2013: 698). This incompatibility is easily detected in languages which exhibit the copula *HABERE* in existential sentences with definite pivots. We illustrate this point with Italo-Romance evidence from Calabrian and comparative evidence from French.

- (41) a. Che bellu! Stasira ndi potimu divertiri: ??non avi i  
 what nice tonight REFL can.1PL have.fun.INF NEG have.3SG the  
 to genitori.  
 your parents  
 (Bova Marina, Calabria)

- b. Che bellu! Stasira ndi potimu divertiri: i to genitori  
 what nice tonight REFL can.1PL have.fun.INF the your parents  
 non c' ennu.  
 NEG PF be.3PL  
 'How nice! We can have fun tonight: your parents are not here.'
- (French)
- (42) a. On peut s' amuser ce soir: \*il n' y  
 IMPERS can REFL have.fun.INF this evening EXPL NEG PF  
 a pas tes parents.  
 have.3SG NEG your parents
- b. On peut s' amuser ce soir: tes parents ne  
 IMPERS can REFL have.fun.INF this evening your parents NEG  
 sont pas la.  
 be.3PL NEG there  
 'We can have fun tonight: your parents are not here.'

The ungrammaticality of the negated *there* sentences with HABERE in (41a) and (42a) suggests that the post-copular noun phrase takes the narrowest scope, which is a defining characteristic of existential sentences (Heim 1987). Indeed, the negative sentences in (41a) and (42a) make no sense, since they negate the existence of an individual or an entity whose existence is already established in discourse, as is the case with specifics (Enç 1991). By contrast with the *there* sentences in (41a) and (42a), those with ESSE in (41b) and (42b) are locative constructions, where it is the locative predicate that is in the scope of negation, while the specific argument outscopes it. These sentences are thus grammatical and sensible.

The counterpart of the sentences in (41b) and (42b) obligatorily exhibits the proform in a number of dialects of Campania, Apulia, and Molise, which are otherwise characterized by the optionality or the absence of the proform. This contrast is shown in (43a) vs. (43b).

- (43) a. Che bello! Stasera putimmə parià: (Anacapri, Campania)  
 what nice tonight can.1PL have.fun.INF  
 nun \*(cə) stannə mammatə e patitə.  
 NEG PF stay.3PL Mum.POSS and Dad.POSS  
 'How nice! We can have fun tonight: your parents are not here.'
- b. Na vota stevanə i stessi problemi in Piemonte.  
 One time stay.PST.3PL the same problems in Piedmont  
 'Once there were the same problems in Piedmont.'



The presence vs. lack of the proform in (43a,b) suggests that a locative construal is required by negated *there* sentences with definite post-copular noun phrases (cf. 43a), while affirmative sentence-focus *there* sentences with definite pivots are genuine existential constructions, or availability existentials (Abbott 1992, 1993, 1997; see §2.3.1). In the last analysis, the generalized analysis of existentials as locatives fails to differentiate between inverse and deictic locatives on the one hand and availability existentials on the other. Availability existentials fall within the definition of existential sentence based on McNally (2011) which we have adopted in our work (see §1.1), as they express a proposition about the existence or the presence of an entity in a context. The Italo-Romance and Sardinian evidence, therefore, does not show the definiteness effect on word order, and does not support the unified analysis of existentials and locatives.

### 3.3 The pivot-as-predicate hypothesis

A second influential hypothesis on existential sentences states that the pivot is the predicate of these constructions (Williams 1984, 1994, La Fauci and Loporcaro 1993, 1997, Zamparelli 2000, Hazout 2004, Francez 2007, Cornilescu 2009, Cruschina 2012b). In this section we test the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis against our findings, starting from the assumption that, if the pivot is a predicate, it can be expected to lack coding and behavioural properties of arguments. In section 3.3.1 we report evidence from finite verb agreement, which suggests that the pivot is at best a bad argument, i.e. an argument which lacks the lexical entailments provided by a predicate (Dowty 1991). In section 3.3.2 we discuss further morphosyntactic evidence, which strongly supports the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis. In 3.3.3, we consider some challenges to this hypothesis. Some conclusions are reached in 3.3.4.

#### 3.3.1 *Finite agreement*

By ‘finite agreement’ we mean agreement on the finite form of the verb, i.e. the form which would normally spell out person and number agreement feature values (see *are* in *the boys are here*). We constrain our analysis to number agreement, since the copula of existential structures like those in (44a,b) can be argued to agree with the pivot in person (Manzini and Savoia 2005: 34).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Agreement by sole person is called ‘partial agreement’ by Manzini and Savoia (2005), thus being distinguished from ‘referential agreement’, or agreement in person and number. Although we frame our analysis of agreement in a feature-specific way, since a feature-specific approach to agreement is supported by theoretical and empirical arguments (Samek-Lodovici 2002: 63, Corbett 2006), in due course it will become clear that, in our analysis, there can be no agreement of any sort between the copula of structures like (44a,b) and the pivot (see §§4.3.5 and 4.4.1).

(Badalucco, Liguria)

- (44) a. A nu poremu divorzià: u gh' é i fiöi.  
 SCL.IPL NEG can.IPL divorce.INF ESCL PF be.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- b. De Papa u ghe n' é ün.  
 of Pope ESCL PF INDE be.3SG one  
 'Pope, there is only one.'

The copula of (44b) could also be said to agree with the pivot in number. However, the evidence of structures with a plural pivot (cf. 44a) indicates clearly that there is no number agreement between the copula and the pivot in the existential constructions of the dialect in question. In addition, the Italo-Romance and Sardinian dialects with a copula derived from Latin *HABERE* only exhibit this copula in existential constructions without copula-pivot agreement (for an exception to this robust finding see section 3.3.3). The occurrence of this copula is thus evidence of lack of copula-pivot agreement, regardless of the number feature value of the pivot. This pattern is illustrated with evidence from a Nuorese Sardinian dialect: the existential constructions in (45a,b) contrast with those in (46a,b) in copula selection (*HABERE* vs. *ESSE*), and hence in agreement.

- (45) a. Non b' at pinguinos in su Polo Nord. (Orosei, Sardinia)  
 NEG PF have.3SG penguins in the Pole North  
 'There are no penguins in the North Pole.'
- b. 'Ite b' at in cuss' aposentu?' 'Non b' at nudda.'  
 what PF have.3SG in that room NEG PF have.3SG nothing  
 'What's in that room?' 'There is nothing.'
- (46) a. In Italia non bi son prus sas iscolas de una vorta. (Orosei, Sardinia)  
 in Italy NEG PF be.3PL more the schools of one time  
 'In Italy there are no longer schools like before.'
- b. 'Carchicosa po firmare sa porta?' 'B' est su libru de Maria.'  
 something for stop.INF the door PF be.3SG the book of Mary  
 'Something to stop the door?' 'There's Mary's book.'

In our theoretical framework, the control of finite verb agreement is determined in terms of the macrorole status of core arguments (core arguments are arguments which are part of the logical structure or semantic representation of a predicate: see §1.3.2). In particular, the control of agreement is defined by the rule in (47) (Van Valin 2005: 108).

- (47) Finite verb agreement  
 The controller of finite verb agreement is the highest-ranking macrorole argument.

'Highest ranking' means leftmost on the Actor–Undergoer hierarchy, which was first introduced in section 1.3.2, and is repeated here for ease of exposition.

- (48) The Actor–Undergoer Hierarchy and its mapping onto argument positions (Van Valin 2005: 61)

ACTOR		UNDERGOER		
----->				
←-----				
Arg of DO	1 <sup>st</sup> arg of <b>do'</b> (x,...	1 <sup>st</sup> arg of <b>pred'</b> (x, y)	2 <sup>nd</sup> arg of <b>pred'</b> (x, y)	Arg of state <b>pred'</b> (x)

[ '→' = increasing markedness of realization of argument as macrorole]

If the control of finite verb agreement is assigned on the basis of the status of core arguments on the Actor–Undergoer hierarchy, it can be considered to be a diagnostic of argumenthood, or of the argument properties of the existential pivot. To test these properties, we compared agreement in existential constructions and in non-copular constructions, keeping constant the other independent variables that are potentially relevant to agreement—in particular, focus structure and putative number of macrorole arguments. Examples of the non-copular constructions which were compared with existentials are provided here.

- (49) a. Caspita! Son tombàme 'd piat. (Bagnolo Piemonte, Piedmont)  
 damn be.3PL fallen.me some plates  
 'Damn! I dropped some plates.' Lit. Some plates fell to/on me.
- b. A doi bòt son arivà mama e papà (e le masnà son calmase).  
 at two hours be.3PL arrived Mum and Dad and the children are calmed.REFL  
 'At two o'clock Mum and Dad arrived (and the children calmed down).'
- c. L' an batù a la porta doi persone che conòso pa.  
 SCL.3PL have.3PL knocked at the door two persons that know.1SG NEG  
 'Two people I do not know knocked on the door.'

On a par with existential constructions, the intransitive structures in (49a–c) do not presuppose a referential topic. They are thus sentence-focus structures. In addition, there is only one macrorole argument in (49a–c), which also makes these structures comparable to existentials, assuming for the sake of this discussion that the pivot is an argument.

In Aktionsart terms, the predicates 'fall' and 'arrive' of (49a,b) are achievements, since they test out as [–stative], [–dynamic], [+telic], [+punctual], according to Dowty's (1979) tests (see Van Valin 2005: 32–49). By contrast, 'knock' in (49c) tests out as an activity based semelfactive (Smith 1997), i.e. a repeated punctual event with no result state,

whereby the repeated sub-events are [+ dynamic].<sup>6</sup> The logical structures of ‘fall’, ‘arrive’, and ‘knock’ (49a–c) are given in (49a’–c’). In (50) we repeat the macrorole assignment principles, which were first introduced in section 1.3.2.

- (49) a'. INGR **fallen'** (x)  
 b'. INGR **be-at'** (x)  
 c'. SEML **do'** (x, [**knock'** (x)])
- (50) Default Macrorole Assignment Principles (Van Valin 2005: 63)
- a. Number: the number of macroroles a verb takes is less than or equal to the number of arguments in its logical structure.
    1. If a verb has two or more arguments in its logical structure, it will take two macroroles.
    2. If a verb has one argument in its logical structure, it will take one macrorole.
  - b. Nature: for verbs which take one macrorole,
    1. If a verb has an activity predicate in its logical structure, the macrorole is actor.
    2. If a verb has no activity in its logical structure, the macrorole is undergoer.

Adopting the macrorole assignment principles in (50b), the macrorole status of the single argument of (49a,b) is undergoer, since there is no activity in (49a'-b') and this is an argument-of-state-**pred'** in the hierarchy in (48). By contrast, the single argument of (49c) is an actor, since there is an activity in (49c') and this argument is a 1st-argument-of-**do'**. Following a tradition that draws upon Dixon (1972), we shall call the undergoer of (49a,b)  $S_U$ , and the actor of (49c)  $S_A$ .<sup>7</sup>

Four patterns arose from the comparative analysis of existentials and other sentence-focus intransitive constructions. These are shown in Table 3.1, where the shading indicates lack of number agreement with the post-verbal noun phrase.<sup>8</sup>

Although the majority of our dialects only exhibit pattern (i) (see Maps 1 and 3), while very few dialects (i.e. some Calabrian dialects and the two Salentino dialects in

<sup>6</sup> Van Valin (2005: 33) characterizes semelfactives as follows: [–static], [± dynamic], [–telic], [+punctual], the presence or absence of the [dynamic] feature distinguishing between state-based ones (e.g. *twinkle*, SEML (**twinkle'** (x))) and activity-based ones (e.g. *cough*, SEML **do'** (x, [**cough'** (x)])).

<sup>7</sup> In traditional terms, S is an intransitive subject. In RRG, it is a grammatical relation, neutralizing the semantic contrast between the actor and the undergoer of intransitive predicates (Van Valin 2005: 96).

<sup>8</sup> In our investigation, sentence-focus structures with verbal predicates were only considered for control purposes. Thus, we did not investigate the GOAL-entailing vs. non-GOAL-entailing contrast (Tortora 1997) or the significance of tense and aspect distinctions (Cennamo and Sorace 2007). Finally, further scrutiny of the effect of definiteness on agreement in sentence-focus structures with verbal predicates would be desirable (see e.g. Parry's 2013 results on northwestern Italo-Romance). This, however, would have been beyond the purposes of our investigation.

TABLE 3.1 Patterns of number agreement control in sentence-focus intransitives (–agreement = no number agreement with the post-verbal NP)

	Existentials	Intransitives with S <sub>U</sub>	Intransitives with S <sub>A</sub>
Pattern (i) (cf. 51)	+agreement	+agreement	+agreement
Pattern (ii) (cf. 52)	–agreement	+agreement	+agreement
Pattern (iii)	–agreement	–agreement	+agreement
Pattern (iv)	–agreement	–agreement	–agreement

Map 4) only exhibit pattern (ii), others combine two patterns. This is due to the fact that number agreement is sensitive to a definiteness scale, which, as we will point out in due course, is to be understood in terms of specificity (Bentley 2013). We shall capture the sensitivity of agreement to specificity in Chapter 4. In this context, we note that a number of dialects exhibit pattern (i) with first- and second-person— or first-, second-, and third-person—post-verbal pronouns, but another of the patterns shown in Table 3.1 with other potential controllers.

In (51) we provide an example of a dialect where we only found pattern (i), while in (52) we provide an example of a dialect where we only found pattern (ii).

- (51) a. *Mari nonn' é sola.* (Ferrandina, Basilicata)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone  
*Nge si tu. Ngə simə nu. Ngə so chiddə.*  
 PF be.2SG you PF be.1PL we PF be.3PL they  
 'Mary is not alone. There's you/us/them.'
- b. *Non putimə separà: ngə so lə criaturə.*  
 NEG can.1PL separate.INF PF be.3PL the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. *Stattə attjəndə ca nda chesta frutta nge so tanda səmmiəntə.*  
 stay.IMP.2SG careful that in this fruit PF be.3PL many seeds  
 'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- d. *A lə dójə so arrəvatə ji e lə crəaturə sə so calmatə.*  
 At the two be.1SG arrived I and the children REFL be.3PL calmed  
 'At two o' clock I arrived and the children calmed down.'
- e. *A lə dójə so arrəvatə mammə e papà e lə*  
 at the two be.3PL arrived Mum and Dad and the  
*crəaturə sə so calmatə.*  
 children REFL be.3PL calmed  
 'At two o' clock Mum and Dad arrived and the children calmed down.'

- f. **Onnò** tuzzalétò du frustìarò.  
have.3PL knocked two strangers  
'Two strangers knocked on the door.'
- (52) a. La Maria no stae sula. (Soletto, Apulia)  
the Mary NEG stay.3SG alone  
**Ave** a mie / a tie / a nui / quiddhi.  
have.3SG to me to you to us them  
'Mary is not alone. There's me/you/us/them.'
- b. No potimu divorziare: **ave** li piccinni.  
NEG can.1PL divorce.INF have.3SG the children  
'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Statte attenta ca intru a sta frutta **ave** tanti samenti  
stay.IMP.2SG.REFL careful that inside to this fruit have.3SG many seeds  
'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- d. A li doi **rrivài** iu e li piccinni se calmàra.  
at the two arrive.PST.1SG I and the children REFL calmed  
'At two o' clock I arrived and the children calmed down.'
- e. A li doi **rrivàra** la mamma e lu papà e li piccinni...  
at the two arrive.PST.3PL the Mum and the Dad and the children  
'At two o' clock Mum and Dad arrived and the children calmed down.'
- f. **Tuzzàra** doi forestieri.  
knock.PST.3PL two strangers  
'Two strangers knocked on the door.'

In (53)–(55), we illustrate the three combinations of patterns found in our investigation (see Map 2): patterns (i) and (ii) in Genoa (cf. 53), patterns (i) and (iii) in Canale d'Alba (cf. 54), and, lastly, patterns (i) and (iv) in Florentine (cf. 55).

- (53) a. Maria l' é no sola. (Genoa, Liguria)  
Mary SCL.3SG be.3SG NEG alone  
Ghe **semu** nui atri. Ghe **sun** gli atri.  
PF be.1PL we others PF be.3PL the others.  
'Mary is not alone. There's us/them.'
- b. E nu puremu divursià: u gh' é i mati.  
SCL.1PL NEG can.1PL divorce.INF ESCL PF be.3SG the children  
'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Sta atenta che in sta früta u gh' é tanti ossi.  
stay.IMP.2SG careful that in this fruit ESCL PF be.3SG many seeds  
'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'

- d. A due u(r)e **sun** arivau mi e i fijò se sun calmè.  
at two hours be.1SG arrived I and the children REFL be.3PL calmed  
'At two o'clock I arrived and the children calmed down.'
- e. A due u(r)e **sun** arivè mamà e papà e i  
at two hours be.3PL arrived Mum and Dad and the  
fijò se sun calmè.  
children REFL be.3PL calmed  
'At two o'clock Mum and Dad arrived and the children calmed down.'
- f. **An** picou du ignoti.  
have.3PL knocked two strangers  
'Two strangers knocked on the door.'
- (54) a. Maria é nen da sola. (Canale d'Alba, Piedmont)  
Mary be.3SG NEG by alone  
T' i sei ti. I soma nui. J é lor.  
SCL.2SG PF be.2SG you PF be.1PL we PF be.3SG they  
'Mary is not alone. There's you/us/them.'
- b. Podoma nen divorsiè: j é 'l masnà.  
can NEG divorce.INF PF be.3SG the children  
'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Fa 'tension che en tsa fruta sì j é tante smens.  
do.IMP.2SG attention that in this fruit here PF be.3SG many seeds  
'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- d. A doi bòt sò arivà mi e i masnà son calmase.  
at two hours be.1SG arrived I and the children be.3PL calmed.REFL  
'At two o'clock I arrived and the children calmed down.'
- e. A doi bòt j é arivaje mama e papa.  
at two hours PF be.3SG arrived.PF Mum and Dad  
'At two o'clock Mum and Dad arrived.'
- f. L' an tambusà doi frustè.  
SCL.3PL have.3PL knocked two strangers  
'Two strangers knocked on the door.'
- (55) a. Maria la unn' è sola. (Florence, Tuscany)  
Mary SCL.3SG.F NEG be.3SG alone  
Ci sono io. Tu ci sei te.  
PF be.1SG I SCL.2SG PF be.2SG you  
E ci siamo noi. E ci son loro.  
SCL.1PL PF be.1PL we SCL.3PL PF be.3PL they  
'Mary is not alone. There's me/you/us/them.'

- b. Un si può divorziare: c'è i bambini.  
 NEG IMPERS can divorce.INF PF be.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Sta attenta che in questa frutta c'è tanti semi.  
 stay.IMP.2SG careful that in this fruit PF be.3SG many seeds  
 'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- d. Alle due e sono arrivato io e i bambini....  
 at.the two SCL.1SG be.1SG arrived I and the kids  
 'At two o'clock I arrived and the children calmed down.'
- e. Alle due gli è arrivato la mamma e il babbo...  
 at.the two ESCL be.3SG arrived the Mum and the Dad  
 'At two o'clock Mum and Dad arrived.'
- f. Gl' ha bussato du sconosciuti.  
 ESCL have.3SG knocked two strangers  
 'Two strangers knocked on the door.'

Significantly, if the definiteness of the controller is kept constant, agreement never figures to the left of non-agreement in Table 3.1. Accordingly, the following implicational hierarchy emerged from our data.<sup>9</sup>

- (56) Control of finite number agreement in sentence-focus:  $S_A > S_U >$  existential pivot.

The hierarchy in (56) states that control of finite number agreement by one of the listed classes of controllers entails control by the classes to its left, but is not meaningful with respect to agreement with the classes to its right.

Optionality in agreement also abides by the hierarchy in (56). Thus, the Tuscan dialects of Grosseto, Livorno, Pontedera, and Siena have optional agreement in existentials (cf. 57a) and obligatory agreement elsewhere (cf. 57b,c). In Bolognese, we found lack of agreement in existentials (cf. 58a), but optional agreement with  $S_U$  (cf. 58b,c), and obligatory agreement with  $S_A$  (cf. 58d). (In all cases, first- and second-person pronouns obligatorily control agreement.)

<sup>9</sup> There are dialects in which two existential constructions (with different copulas, proforms, agreement patterns, etc.) compete because of pressure from the prestigious model of Italian or from a neighbouring dialect. This is the case with the Calabrian dialects where *nci* + agreeing *ESSE* alternates with (*ndi*) + invariant *HABERE* in accordance with sociolinguistic and stylistic principles (see Maps 1 and 4). No definiteness effects were detected with either pattern (see also Manzini and Savoia 2005: 50). These dialects have obligatory agreement with  $S_U$  and  $S_A$ , and hence they too fall within the generalization emerging from Table 3.1.



- (57) a. Non possiamo divorziare: c' è / ci sono i bambini.  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF PF be.3SG PF be.3PL the children  
 (Pontedera, Tuscany)  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- b. Alle due sono arrivati mamma e babbo.  
 at.the two be.3PL arrived Mum and Dad  
 'At two o' clock Mum and Dad arrived.'
- c. Hanno bussato du sconosciuti.  
 have.3PL knocked two strangers  
 'Two strangers knocked on the door.'
- (58) a. Nueter n' psem brisa divorziè: a i è i puten.  
 we NEG can.1PL NEG divorce.INF ESCL PF be.3SG the children  
 (Bologna, Emilia Romagna)  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- b. Al dau i è arivé i so genitur.  
 at.the two PF be.3SG arrived the his parents  
 'At two his parents arrived.'
- c. I en pasé du c' a n' cgnoss brisa.<sup>10</sup>  
 SCL.3PL be.3PL passed two who SCL.ISG NEG know NEG  
 'Two strangers passed by.'
- d. I an busé du c' a n' cgnoss brisa.  
 SCL.3PL have.3PL knocked two that SCL.ISG NEG know NEG  
 'Two strangers knocked on the door.'

Finally, in some Logudorese Sardinian dialects we found pattern (i) with definites, and variation with indefinites: no agreement with indefinite pivots, optional agreement with indefinite  $S_U$ , and obligatory agreement with indefinite  $S_A$ .<sup>11</sup>

- (59) a. Non potimos issire 'ora de pare ca bi son sos pitzinnos.  
 NEG can.1PL go.out.INF out of couple that PF be.3PL the children  
 (Logudorese Sardinian)  
 'We cannot divorce because there are the children.'

<sup>10</sup> 'Pass by' can test out as an achievement or as an active accomplishment. In the former case, its macrorole is an undergoer, while in the latter case it is an affected actor. Affected actors pattern with undergoers in Italo-Romance morphosyntax. See Bentley (2006) for detail.

<sup>11</sup> This finding departs from the better known Nuorese and Logudorese Sardinian pattern, whereby pattern (i) is found with definites, while pattern (iv) is found with indefinites, in all constructions (Jones 1993, La Fauci and Loporcaro 1993, 1997, Bentley 2004b).

- b. Ista           attenta ch' in custa fruttora b' at           tantos semenes.  
 stay.IMP.2SG careful that in this fruit PF have.3SG many seeds  
 'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- (60) a. Sun       colados duos chi no conoschia.       (Logudorese Sardinian)  
 be.3PL passed two that NEG know.PST.1SG  
 'Two strangers passed by.'
- b. B' at       colau duos chi no conoschia.  
 PF have.3SG passed two that NEG know.PST.1SG  
 'Two strangers passed by.'
- c. Ana       tzoccau /\*B' at       tzoccau duos istranzos.  
 have.3PL knocked PF have.3SG knocked two strangers  
 'Two strangers knocked on the door.'

Lack of agreement with the post-verbal noun phrase of existential and other sentence-focus constructions is very frequently attested crosslinguistically (e.g. Jespersen 1924: 155, Babby 1980, Burzio 1986: 122–6, Lambrecht 2000: 642–4, Corbett 2006: 185–8, 197–204, Cennamo and Sorace 2007, Parry 2013). Assuming, as we do, that the control of number agreement on the verb is a behavioural feature of macrorole arguments that is assigned as in (47), the findings illustrated in Table 3.1 would seem to suggest that the pivot of existential *there* sentences, as well as  $S_U$  and  $S_A$  in sentence-focus constructions, lack argument properties which license the assignment of a macrorole and ultimately the control of agreement. The argument properties that license macrorole assignment are the lexical entailments (Dowty 1991) provided by the predicate to the position in logical structure in which the argument figures (cf. 48, 50). Our findings thus suggest that the said entailments may be deficient—or altogether missing—in the case of the core argument of sentence-focus constructions. The implicational hierarchy emerging from Table 3.1 (cf. 56) further suggests that there is a difference between the three types of controller figuring therein, and that the existential pivot is the worst candidate for agreement control. In fact, pattern (ii) from Table 3.1, which was recorded alone (cf. 52) or in combination with pattern (i) (cf. 53), suggests that there is a clear-cut contrast in argumenthood between existential pivots, on the one hand, and  $S_U$  and  $S_A$ , on the other. Incidentally, the fact that in this case  $S_U$  and  $S_A$  behave alike, but differently from pivots, would seem to challenge an analysis in terms of a straightforward syntactic, unaccusative/unergative split.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> An analysis in terms of a split between underlying subjects and objects would predict the combination of patterns (i) and (iii), and could accommodate patterns (i), (ii), and (iv): pattern (i) would result from dialect-specific insensitivity to the syntactic split; pattern (ii), which *alone* is only found with copula HABERE, would be obtained with pivots that are vanilla objects of transitive structures; lastly, pattern (iv) would result from insensitivity to the syntactic split and sensitivity to other agreement parameters (definiteness and topicality). The combination of patterns (i) and (ii), however, supports a different kind of explanation, since in this case  $S_U$  and  $S_A$  behave alike, as subjects, and differently from pivots. We found

We thus opt for the hypothesis that agreement failure is the manifestation of the poor argumenthood of the potential controller. To argue that the lexical entailments of the predicate may be deficient or missing in sentence-focus constructions amounts to claiming that the predicate of these constructions is itself deficient in some sense. In turn, this claim is reminiscent of the observation that the predicate of VS constructions in English (e.g. *In the distance appeared the spires of a town*) is ‘informationally light’ (Birner 1992, 1994, Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995: 230). It does not provide information that cannot be inferred from the context, and its principal role is pragmatic, rather than semantic, i.e. to introduce a new referent into discourse. Levin and Rappaport Hovav’s (1995: 116–28) findings indicate that  $S_U$  intransitives more easily fit the discourse purpose of VS sentences in English than  $S_A$  intransitives, although some  $S_A$  intransitives are admitted in these sentences. Similar observations on the predictability, and the lack of semantic content, of the predicate of intransitive constructions without verb agreement are found in the literature on the Russian genitive of negation (Babby 1980, Borschev and Partee 1998, Borschev et al. 2010).<sup>13</sup>

If the hierarchy in (56) reflects the deficiency or the lack of lexical entailments contributed by the predicate, existential constructions could be claimed to have an informationally light predicate, which does not contribute proper lexical entailments to the pivot. The pivot could in turn be argued to be a bad argument, which fails to control agreement in patterns (ii) to (iv) from Table 3.1. In the next section, we shall refine this proposal and claim that, rather than being a bad argument, the pivot is itself the predicate in the logical structure of existential *there* sentences. The prediction is thus that it should not control agreement on the copula. In Chapter 4 we shall provide a unified account of agreement, which captures any deviations from this prediction.

### 3.3.2 Supporting evidence

In the discussion of agreement we relied on the assumption that if the pivot is a predicate it can be expected to lack coding and behavioural properties of arguments. In this section, we first provide further evidence that the pivot behaves differently from arguments, and then discuss data that directly support the analysis of the pivot as a predicate.

To begin with, the pivot is not found in SV/VS alternations (Francez 2007, and §2.2), i.e. alternations in the respective positions of S and V, which mark the status of

the combination of (i) and (ii) in Liguria (Genoa and Rocchetta Cairo) and Veneto (Venice, Gazzolo, Padua, and Soffratta). This is not a high proportion of the dialects which exhibit a relevant combination of agreement patterns (the dialects from Map 2 and the Sardinian dialects from Maps 1 and 4), but it is a non-negligible finding. We should add that, in a number of dialects, optionality revealed the same split, with non-pronominal pivots behaving differently from non-pronominal  $S_U$  and  $S_A$  (cf. 57a vs. 57b,c).

<sup>13</sup> For Borschev et al. (2010) the semantic bleaching of the predicate results from the addition of axioms deriving from common knowledge and contextually determined inferences. We return to these analyses in §§3.4.3 and 4.3.4.

S as topic (in SV order) or non-contrastive focus (in VS order). Italian and some dialects would at first seem to allow SV order in existential constructions, when the proform-plus-copula nexus is contrastively focused (cf. 61A,B, C,D) (we indicate contrastive focus with bold capitals).

- (61) A: Su questo non ci sono dubbi. (Italian)  
 on this NEG PF be.3PL doubts
- B: E invece sì i dubbi **CI SONO**.  
 and instead yes the doubts PF be.3PL
- C: N coppa a chistə nun ce stannə dubbi. (Quarto, Campania)  
 on top to this NEG PF stay.3PL doubts
- D: E invece certə dubbi **CƏ STANNƏ**.  
 and instead some doubts PF stay.3PL  
 ‘There are no doubts about this’ ‘On the contrary, the/certain doubts are there.’

However, structures such as (61B) and (61D) are not existential *there* sentences, since a locative phrase cannot follow within the clause (cf. 62B), thus indicating that the proform must be locative (see §2.4.1).

- (62) A: Non ci sono soldi. (Italian)  
 NEG PF be.3PL money.PL  
 ‘There is no money.’
- B: E invece sì. \*I soldi **CI SONO A CASA**.  
 and instead yes the money.PL PF be.3PL at home  
 ‘On the contrary, there is money at home.’
- C: E invece sì. I soldi **CI SONO**, a casa.  
 and instead yes the money.PL PF be.3PL at home  
 ‘On the contrary, there is money, at home.’

The reply in (62B) is ungrammatical because there is no break between the copula and the locative phrase, and the main pitch accent falls on the locative phrase. Contrastingly, the reply in (62C) is grammatical, in that the copula bears the main pitch accent, and the locative phrase is deaccented (we indicate a break in intonation with a comma). This suggests that the locative phrase is not within the Clause, i.e. in RRG terms, it is in the Right Detached Position, and thus the construction is an inverse locative.

To return to our main point, the pivot does not behave as a core argument, since it cannot occur in pre-verbal position. In RRG terms, it cannot occur in the core-internal pre-nuclear position.

We shall now move on to the evidence which directly supports the hypothesis that the pivot is a predicate. In section 3.2.1, it was pointed out that Italo-Romance and

Sardinian existential *there* sentences exhibit reflexes of Latin *ESSE* ‘be’ and *STARE* ‘stay’ (see Maps 1–3), which are also the copulas of locative and attributive constructions (cf. 2, 3 and 12–14). It was also noted that, in the dialects which mark the stage/individual-level contrast by copula alternation (cf. 13, 14), the existential copula corresponds to the stage-level copula (cf. 2b,c, 13a, and 14a). This evidence, we claimed, does not support the view that existentials are locatives, but rather testifies to a broader correlation between existentials and copular constructions, and, more precisely, existentials and stage-level copular constructions.

Romance copulas are markers of non-verbal predication. Clear evidence of this is provided by the Italo-Romance dialects which only have one perfect auxiliary, *HABERE* ‘have’. In these dialects, the perfect auxiliary *HABERE* ‘have’ alternates with the copula *ESSE* ‘be’ in participial constructions. When the participial predicate is an adjective, as testified by gender agreement, as well as other evidence for which we refer to Bentley and Ledgeway (2014), then the copula *ESSE* ‘be’ is selected (cf. 63a). When the participle is a verb, and lacks gender agreement, the auxiliary *HABERE* ‘have’ is selected (cf. 63b). We illustrate these facts with Sicilian evidence here.

- (63) a. Nisciuta jè(ni), Maria? (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 gone.out.FSG be.3SG Mary.FSG  
 ‘Is Mary out?’
- b. Ancora unn’ ha nisciutu, Maria?  
 yet NEG have.3SG gone.out Mary.FSG  
 ‘Has Mary not gone out, yet?’

As expected, *ESSE* ‘be’ is also found in locative predications (cf. 64a), as well as all attributive constructions with post-copular nouns and adjectives (cf. 64b–d).

- (64) a. Maria jè au spitali. (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 Mary be.3SG at.the hospital  
 ‘Mary is in hospital’
- b. Maria jè a direttrici.  
 Mary be.3SG the headteacher  
 ‘Mary is the headteacher.’
- c. Maria jè dottoressa.  
 Mary be.3SG doctor  
 ‘Mary is a doctor.’
- d. Maria jè intelligenti pi diveru / assà.  
 Mary be.3SG intelligent for real much  
 ‘Mary is really intelligent.’

In (64a–d’) we provide the logical structures of the above constructions, adopting Van Valin’s (2005: 48) conventions.

- (64) a'. **be-Loc'** (au spitali, Maria)  
 b'. **be'** (Maria, [the headteacher])  
 c'. **be'** (Maria, [**doctor'**])  
 d'. **be'** (Maria, [**intelligent'**])

**Be'** does not represent the copula, in (64a'–d'), but rather indicates that a property is predicated of an argument. Specifically, **be'** marks a predicative relation between two phrases, one of them bearing a macrorole and a grammatical relation (*Maria*), the other predicating a property of the former. Both in (64a') and in (64b'), the predicative phrase is a referential expression, which is why it is not in bold and it is not followed by a prime in logical structure (Pavey 2004, Van Valin 2005: 48, 63). By contrast, in (64c',d'), the predicative phrase is a non-referential expression, which is represented as a canonical predicate in logical structure (Schwartz 1993, Van Valin 2005: 48). In none of the constructions under discussion is the predicate verbal. Since non-verbal predicates cannot spell out person features in Romance, the copula *ESSE* 'be' spells out the person feature value of the macrorole argument. Crucially, the copula *ESSE* 'be' also figures in existential constructions.

- (65) a. Un ni putiemu spartiri: ci su' i picciliddri. (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 NEG REFL can.1PL separate.INF PF be.3PL the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'  
 b. Accura ca na sta frutta ci su' un saccu d' ossa.  
 careful that in this fruit PF be.3PL a bag of seeds  
 'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'

If the copula is the common denominator of the morphosyntax of constructions with a non-verbal predicate, existential *there* sentences are constructions with a non-verbal predicate. We thus have to ascertain whether this predicate is provided by the pivot, and its argument remains unspecified, in accordance with Francez's (2007, 2010) analysis followed in Chapter 2, or, vice versa, the pivot provides the argument and the existential predicate remains implicit. We use the term 'unspecified' for a variable that is not filled by a value in logical structure. The reader should note that this is not the same as a presupposed or understood argument or predicate, which may have no audible realization, but is nonetheless specified in logical structure.

To begin with, we note that the Romance languages provide ample evidence for unspecified arguments (impersonal *SE*, the missing argument of control constructions, etc.), but hardly any evidence for unspecified predicates.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, the

<sup>14</sup> Some such unfilled variables are nonetheless to a certain extent visible in semantics, and play a role in morphosyntax, whereas others do not have such properties, and must be controlled—or matrix-coded—by overt arguments in syntax. Thus, impersonal *SE* marks a human unspecified argument, which may allow or require a 1st-person plural referential reading, controls past-participle and adjectival agreement, and is not controlled by a higher argument (cf. (i.a) and see Cinque 1988, Bentley 2006: 158–64, 181–5). By contrast, the

contrast between existential *there* sentences and sentences with the lexeme <exist> also suggests that existential *there* sentences involve an argument that remains unexpressed (see §2.2.2). This lexeme expresses mere existence, whereas existential *there* sentences are context-dependent (Francez 2007). Thus, (66a) contrasts with (66b), in that the former is not a question on the existence of light, but rather a question on whether light is available in an implicit spatiotemporal domain. This example could be followed by expressions such as *ora* ‘now’, *qui* ‘here’, *in questo momento* ‘at this moment’, *oggi* ‘today’, *in salotto* ‘in the lounge’, which would enrich the implicit domain of the existential statement. By contrast, (66b) is a somewhat bizarre question on the existence of light, which becomes downright odd, if followed by such expressions as ‘at this moment’.

- (66) a. Non c' è luce? (Italian)  
 NEG PF be.3SG light  
 ‘Is there any (no) light?’  
 b. La luce non esiste?  
 the light NEG exist.3SG  
 ‘Doesn’t light exist?’

Assuming that the implicit domain of existential *there* sentences is an unspecified argument in logical structure, we thus opt for the hypothesis that it is the argument that remains unspecified in existential sentences.

Important evidence in support of the hypothesis that the pivot is a predicate is provided by some southern dialects, where we found alternations between attributive constructions with adjectival predicates and existential *there* sentences with the same adjective as their pivot.

- (67) a. Torinu è togu. (San Tommaso, Calabria)  
 Turin.FSG be.3SG nice.FSG  
 ‘Turin is nice.’  
 b. A Torinu c' è togu.  
 at Turin PF be.3SG nice.ADJ  
 ‘There is niceness in Turin.’

referent of the unexpressed argument of the infinitival predicate of control constructions must be provided by an overt argument (cf. i.b).

- (i) a. Oggi si è stanche. (Italian)  
 today IMPERS be.3SG tired.FPL  
 ‘Today we are tired.’ Lit. Today one is tired.  
 b. Il cane<sub>i</sub> cercò di pro<sub>i</sub> salvare il padrone.  
 the dog tried of save.INF the owner  
 ‘The dog tried to save the owner.’

- (68) a. A stazione è luarda. (San Tommaso, Calabria)  
 the station.FSG be.3SG dirty.FSG  
 ‘The station is dirty.’
- b. Alla stazione c’ è luardu (oje).  
 at.the station PF be.3SG dirty.ADJ today  
 ‘There is dirt at the station today.’

While the adjectives in (67a, 68a) predicate properties of individuals, their counterparts in (67b, 68b) predicate contingent stages of unspecified spatiotemporal domains. Thus, (67a) predicates of Turin that it is a nice city, whereas (67b) predicates niceness as a contingent property or a stage of an unspecified spatial domain which is modified by, i.e. located in the context of, Turin at a particular time interval. Similarly, (68a) predicates of the station that it is dirty, whereas (68b) predicates dirtiness as a contingent property or a stage of an unspecified spatial domain which is located in the context of the station. The adjectival predicates in (67a) and (68a) can thus be considered to be individual-level predicates, whereas those in (67b) and (68b) are stage-level ones. The same contrast is observed in the Italian pair in (69a,b), where (69b), which belongs to the substandard registers, predicates an unequivocally contingent property or a stage of an unspecified spatial domain that is located in a given context (‘here’).

- (69) a. (Qui) è pieno di gente. (Italian)  
 here be.3SG full of people  
 ‘It is full of people here.’
- b. (Qui) c’ è pieno di gente. (substandard Italian)  
 here PF be.3SG full.ADJ of people  
 ‘(Here) there are a lot of people.’

The Sicilian expression in (70) also exhibits an adjectival pivot, which does not predicate ‘beauty’ as an inherent property of an individual, but rather ‘fun’ as a stage of an implicit domain.

- (70) Ma sannò, chi bellu c’ è!? (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 but if.not what beautiful.ADJ PF be.3SG  
 ‘Otherwise, what fun is there in it?’

In the dialects that have adjectival pivots, adjectives which can only be read as properties of individuals are rejected as pivots.

- (71) a. (\*C’) è spiaru. (San Tommaso, Calabria)  
 PF be.3SG clever.ADJ  
 ‘He is clever.’



- b. (\*C') è zillicusu.  
 PF be.3SG pernicky.ADJ  
 'He is pernicky.'
- c. (\*C') è dilliveru.  
 PF be.3SG capable.ADJ  
 'He is capable.'

By contrast, result-state past participles figure prominently as adjectival pivots of existential *there* sentences, since they express stage-level states which result from events of change of state denoted by the same lexical roots (see Dixon 1982: 50 for resultant states, and Bentley and Ledgeway 2014 for this class of participles).

- (72) a. C' è apiartu. (San Tommaso, Calabria)  
 PF be.3SG opened  
 Lit. There is opened.
- b. C' è chiusu.  
 PF be.3SG closed  
 Lit. There is closed.
- c. C' è pulitu.  
 PF be.3SG cleaned  
 Lit. There is cleaned.
- (73) Nn' a cucina c' è vagnatu n' terra. (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 in the kitchen PF be.3SG wet(ted) in floor  
 Lit. There is wet(ted) on the kitchen floor.

That the participle of the structures in (72a–c, 73) really is adjectival is suggested by the fact that, if the participle has a thematic and an athematic form, the former is selected in the perfect (cf. 74), while the latter is selected in attributives (cf. 75) as well as in *there* sentences (cf. 72a–c).

- (74) a. Ha raperùtu. (San Tommaso, Calabria)  
 have.3SG opened  
 'S/he/it has opened.'
- b. Ha chiudùtu.  
 have.3SG closed  
 'S/he/it has closed.'
- c. Ha pulizzàtu.  
 have.3SG cleaned  
 'S/he has cleaned.'

- (75) a. A stazione è aperta. (San Tommaso, Calabria)  
 the station.FSG be.3SG opened.FSG  
 ‘The station is open.’
- b. A stazione è chiusa.  
 the station.FSG be.3SG closed.FSG  
 ‘The station is closed.’
- c. A stazione è pulita.  
 the station.FSG be.3SG cleaned.FSG  
 ‘The station is clean.’

Since pairs of sentences such as (67a,b) and (68a,b) are minimal pairs, differing in terms of the individual vs. stage-level reading of the adjective, the evidence from adjectival pivots supports the hypothesis that the pivot provides the predicate of the existential construction. The counterpart of the macrorole argument in (67a) and (68a) remains unspecified in (67b) and (68b). The contrast between the two members of the said pairs can thus be represented as follows in logical structure.

- (67) a'. **be'** (Torino, [**nice'**])  
 b'. **be-Loc'** (Torino, [**be'** (x, [**nice'**])])
- (68) a'. **be'** (a stazione, [**dirty'**])  
 b'. **be-Loc'** (stazione, [**be'** (x, [**dirty'**])])

The logical structures in (67a', 68a') are, of course, comparable to (64d'): **nice'** is the representation of a non-referential expression which predicates a property of the overt argument. By contrast, in (67b', 68b'), the pivot predicates a contingent property of an unspecified spatiotemporal argument, which is represented as *x* because it is an unfilled argument variable in logical structure. (The proform *ci* is not referential and thus cannot figure either in logical structure or in the Constituent Projection; see §§1.3.2, 3.4.1). The unspecified argument *x* is the implicit argument of existential predications identified by Francez (2007, 2010). The locative aboutness topic is a non-predicative, non-argumental modifier of the core predication, in accordance with the analysis proposed in section 2.3.1. We refer to Van Valin and LaPolla (1997: 159f.) for this semantic representation of adjunct modifiers of the core predication.

In conclusion, evidence from the lack of SV/VS alternations within the Clause, the occurrence in copular constructions, adjectival pivots, and the contrast between existential *there* sentences and predications with the lexeme <exist> strongly supports the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis of existential *there* sentences. The role of the pivot as the predicate in logical structure explains further why it tests out as a bad candidate for the control of agreement, as was pointed out in section 3.3.1, since the control of agreement is a behaviour of arguments and not of predicates (cf. 47).

## 3.3.3 Challenges

A serious challenge to the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis is the fact that quantified pivots can be cliticized with INDE (see §2.3.2). INDE-cliticization splits a constituent in syntax to mark a split in information structure: the quantifier of the pivot is focal, and occurs in post-copular position, while the noun, i.e. the restrictor constraining the set of entities being quantified, is topical, thus occurring in a pre-copular position (cf. 76B) or being omitted altogether (cf. 77B).

(76) A: Viri quanti uova ci su' nnu frigurifiru. (Palermo, Sicily)  
see.IMP.2SG how.many eggs PF be.3PL in.the fridge  
'Look how many eggs there are in the fridge.'

B: Uova, mi pari ca ci nn' è uottu.  
eggs to.me seem.3SG that PF INDE be.3SG eight  
'(Eggs,) I think there are eight.'

(Rimini, Emilia Romagna)

(77) A: Guerda quant' ov u i è int e frigo.  
see.IMP.2SG how.many eggs ESCL PF be.3SG in the fridge  
'Look how many eggs there are in the fridge.'

B: A cred ch' u i ne sia ot.  
SCL.1SG believe.1SG that ESCL PF INDE be.SBJV.3SG eight  
'I think that there are eight (eggs).'

Since the formulation of the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978), INDE-cliticization has received a great deal of attention because only a subclass of intransitive subjects can be INDE-cliticized. This is witnessed by the contrast between (78a) and (78b). In admitting INDE-cliticization, these subjects behave like transitive objects (cf. 78c) and unlike transitive subjects (cf. 78d).

(78) a. Giocatori bravi, ne arrivarono molti. (Italian)

players good INDE arrive.PST.3PL many  
'Of good players, there arrived many.'

b. \*Giocatori bravi, ne giocarono molti.  
players good INDE play.PST.3PL many  
'Of good players, many played.'

c. Giocatori bravi, ne vidi molti.  
players good INDE see.PST.1SG many  
'Of good players, I saw many.'

d. \*Giocatori bravi, ne videro la partita molti.  
players good INDE see.PST.3PL the match many  
'Of good players, many watched the match.'

In the light of this kind of evidence, INDE-cliticization has been claimed to be restricted to underlying objects (e.g. Belletti and Rizzi 1981, Perlmutter 1983, 1989, Burzio 1986, Cardinaletti and Giusti 1991, La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997). In RRG, INDE-cliticization is said to be restricted to the lowest-ranking argument of a state predicate (Van Valin 1990, Bentley 2004a, 2006). The logical structures of both (78a), an achievement, and (78c), a stative predicate, include a state, unlike the logical structure of (78b), which is an activity. Accordingly, (78a) and (78c) are grammatical, while (78b) is not. Although the logical structure of (78d) is also stative, INDE-cliticization is ungrammatical here because it targets the highest-ranking argument.

- (78) a'. INGR **be-at'** (molti ne)  
 b'. \***do'** (molti ne, [**play'** (molti ne)])  
 c'. **see'** (1SG, molti ne)  
 d'. \***see'** (molti ne, la partita)

Whether the distribution of INDE is captured in syntactic or semantic terms, this kind of cliticization is problematic vis-à-vis the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis because it suggests that the pivot is an argument (an underlying object or the lowest-ranking argument of a state).

La Fauci and Loporcaro's (1997) analysis of Romance existentials provides a clue to the solution of the problem of INDE-cliticization. In this analysis, La Fauci and Loporcaro maintain that the pivot is at the same time a predicate and an argument in syntax. To explain why, while being a non-verbal predicate, the pivot cannot be replaced by the resumptive clitic of adjectival and nominal predicates in Italian, La Fauci and Loporcaro (1997) claim that this clitic only replaces non-referential non-verbal predicates (cf. 79a). In their view, the pivot is referential, and thus it cannot be resumed by the clitic (cf. 79b).

- (79) a. Maria è una donna > Una donna (Maria) **lo** è. (Italian)  
 Mary be.3SG a woman a woman Mary CL be.3SG  
 'Mary is a woman' 'A woman, Mary is it.'  
 b. C' è una donna > Una donna **c'** / \***lo** è.  
 PF be.3SG a woman a woman PF CL be.3SG  
 'There is a woman' 'A woman, there is one (t/here).'

At first sight, La Fauci and Loporcaro's (1997) claim that the pivot is referential seems to clash with the evidence which we discussed in section 3.3.2. The adjectival pivots discussed there (cf. 67b, 68b, etc.) do not introduce a new referent into the discourse world of the interlocutors, but rather predicate a contingent property or a stage of an implicit spatiotemporal domain. Accordingly, we treated them as proper predicates in logical structure (cf. 67b', 68b'), thus capturing their relatedness to their individual-level counterparts (cf. 67a', 68a').

Unlike these adjectival pivots, however, the existential pivot normally does introduce a referent or a set of referents into discourse.<sup>15</sup> We thus argue that a distinction must be drawn between two types of existential pivot, a referential one and a non-referential one.<sup>16</sup> Anticipating somewhat the contents of the next section, we propose the logical structure in (80') for existentials with referential pivots.

(80) Ci sono due alternative. (Italian)  
 PF be.3PL two alternatives  
 'There are two alternatives.'

(80') **be'** (x, due alternative)

Similarly to the first position in the logical structure of locative predications (cf. 64a', **be-Loc'** (*au spitali, Maria*)), the second position in (80') is filled by a referential expression which takes the role of the predicate in semantics and semantics–syntax mapping, since it provides the argument x to the logical structure, and there is no

<sup>15</sup> Not only do pivots tend to introduce new discourse referents, but they also resist topicalization. Observe e.g. (i.B), where one would expect the pivot to be topicalized, since it has already been introduced in discourse. Contrary to expectations, pivot topicalization is not a grammatical option, and hence the pivot has to occur post-verbally.

(i) A: Tuqui nə c' en dubbi. (Ponte Felcino, Umbria)  
 on.this NEG PF be.3PL doubts  
 B: E invece sì, c' en dei dubbi.  
 and instead yes PF be.3PL some doubts  
 'On this there are no doubts.' 'On the contrary, there are some doubts.'

Other dialects were found to allow topicalization strategies, where the pivot would appear to be detached outside the clause, or omitted altogether. In (ii.a,b), the respective positions of the noun phrase and the prepositional phrase suggest that the former occurs clause-externally (in the Left Detached Position: see §1.3.2).

(ii) a. I zugadori bravi, te sta squadra, no i é. (Belluno, Veneto)  
 the players good in this team NEG SCL.3PL be.3PL  
 b. Li giocatori vrai, in questa squadra, non ci sta. (Macerata I, Marche)  
 the players good in this team NEG PF stay.3  
 'The good players, in this team, they are not there.'

However, as the reader will recall from the discussion in §2.4.1, the structures in (ii.a,b) are not existential sentences, but rather inverse locatives, and therefore the clause-external noun phrases in (ii.a,b) are not pivots. Accordingly, even the dialects which would at first seem to allow topicalization of the pivot in fact disallow it. Of course, it could be claimed that, while not being detached in syntax, the pivot of (i.B) does not introduce a new referent in discourse. This point does not invalidate the idea that a subclass of pivots is referential, since the pivot of (i.B) does refer to a discourse referent.

<sup>16</sup> In his analysis of the genitive of negation in Russian, Babby (1980) assumes that the existential pivot is non-referential by definition, since, he argues, negation is a quantification operation which imposes the condition that there is no referent for the expression in its scope. We use the term 'referential' in an information-structure sense, which is independent of negation. A referential pivot introduces a referent, or a referent set, into discourse regardless of whether its existence in a relevant world is already established in discourse (as is the case with specific pivots, which cannot be negated: see §3.2.2), is being established, or is negated.

other predicate available. However, given that it occupies the position of the lowest-ranking argument of a stative logical structure, this referential expression can be INDE-cliticized. (See §§3.4.1 and 4.4.1 for further discussion of this logical structure and its linking to syntax.)

- (81) Ce ne sono due. (Italian)  
 PF INDE be.3PL two  
 '(Of them,) there are two.'

- (81') **be'** (x, due ne)

It is helpful to return here to the non-referential adjectival pivots, and, in particular, the data first introduced in (73), which we repeat here with nominalization of the pivot. The participial pivot *vagnatu* 'wet(ted)', in Sicilian, can only be topicalized and INDE-cliticized as a result of nominalization (see its co-occurrence with the article *u* 'the' in 82a,b and the preposition *di* 'of' in 82c).

- (82) a. C' è u vagnatu n' terra. (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 PF be.3SG the wetness in floor  
 'There is wetness on the floor.' Lit. There is the wetness on the floor.  
 b. U vagnatu c' è.  
 the wetness PF be.3SG  
 Lit. The wetness there is.  
 c. (Di) vagnatu ci nn' è assà.  
 of wetness PF INDE be.3SG much  
 Lit. Wetness, there is much.

In contrast, the adjectival pivot *bellu* 'beautiful', which is not admitted in existential sentences in its nominalized form (cf. 83a), cannot be topicalized or INDE-cliticized (cf. 83b,c).

- (83) a. \*C' è u bellu. (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 PF be.3SG the beauty  
 Lit. There is the beauty.  
 b. \*U bellu c' è.  
 the beauty PF be.3SG  
 Lit. The beauty there is.  
 c. \*(Di) bellu ci nn' è assà.  
 of beauty PF INDE be.3SG much  
 Lit. Beauty, there is much.

Assuming that nominalized expressions are referential, the contrast between adjectival and deadjectival pivots (cf. 83a–c vs. 82a–c) suggests that only referential

pivots lend themselves to INDE-cliticization. This in turn supports the hypothesis that pivots are INDE-cliticized by virtue of their referentiality.

A further problem for the pivot as predicate hypothesis is that, in some dialects with HABERE existentials, the pivot takes accusative case and can be resumed by an accusative clitic. This would seem to suggest that the pivot is the undergoer of a transitive predicate, or an object, depending on the theoretical assumptions being made (Bentley and Cruschina forthcoming). In (84) and (85) we illustrate the case-marking pattern usually referred to as Differential Object Marking or prepositional accusative (e.g. Sornicola 1997, Bossong 1998, Aissen 1999, 2003, Fiorentino 2003, Ledgeway 2009). Accusative case is marked overtly on pronominal pivots (cf. 84a–c, 85a–d), though not on noun phrases (cf. 84f, 85f). The differential marking differs slightly in the two dialects considered, in that, in Martano (Salento, Apulia), third-person pronominal pivots are not marked overtly for case, whereas in Agnana Calabra they are (cf. 84d vs. 85d). A comparable crossdialectal split was found with the animate quantifier ‘nobody’ (cf. 84e vs. 85e).

- (84) a. No te preoccupare: ave a mie. (Martano, Apulia)  
 NEG REFL worry have.3SG ACC me  
 ‘Do not worry: there’s me.’
- b. Pe stu problema m’ eri dittu ca avia a tie.  
 for this problem me were said that have. PST.3SG ACC you  
 ‘For this problem you had said that you would be there.’
- c. Ave a vui cu me iutate?  
 have.3SG ACC you.PL LINK me help  
 ‘Are you there to help me?’
- d. No te preoccupare: ave quiddhu / quiddha cu te iuta.  
 NEG REFL worry have.3SG he she LINK you help.3SG  
 ‘Do not worry: there’s him/her to help you.’
- e. Nonn’ ave nisciunu.  
 NEG have.3SG anybody  
 ‘There is nobody.’
- f. No potimu divorziare: ave li piccinni.  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF have.3SG the children  
 ‘We cannot divorce: there’re the children.’
- (85) a. Non ti preoccupari: av’ a mia. (Agnana Calabra, Calabria)  
 NEG REFL worry have.3SG ACC me  
 ‘Do not worry: there’s me.’
- b. Maria non esta sula: nd’av’ a tia.  
 Maria NEG be.3SG alone PF have.3SG ACC you  
 ‘Mary is not alone (in life): there’s you.’

- c. Nd'av' a vui chi m' aiutati?  
 PF have.3SG ACC you.PL LINK me help.2PL  
 'Are you there to help me?'
- d. Non ti preoccupari: nd'av' a iju/a ija che t' aiuta  
 NEG REFL worry PF have.3SG ACC he ACC she LINK you help.3SG  
 'Do not worry: there's him/her to help you.'
- e. Non nd'avi a nui.  
 NEG PF have.3SG ACC anybody  
 'There is nobody.'
- f. Non potimu divorziari: nd'avi i figghioli.  
 NEG can.IPL divorce.INF PF have.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'

In (86B) we show the resumption of the pivot with an accusative clitic.

- (86) A. Avi nu dottori int' a stu paisi? (Bova Marina, Calabria)  
 have.3SG a doctor in to this village
- B. No, non l' avi.  
 no NEG ACC.CL have.3SG  
 'Is there a doctor in this village?' 'No, there isn't one.'

In our theoretical framework, case is assigned in terms of the macrorole status of core arguments (see §1.3.2). Indeed, the rules for assignment of nominative and accusative case, in accusative alignment, are spelled out as follows.

- (87) Case assignment rules for accusative constructions (Van Valin 2005: 108)
- Assign nominative case to the highest ranking macrorole argument.
  - Assign accusative case to the other macrorole argument.

The rules in (87a,b) explain why, in (88a), the first-person singular pronominal argument of *see'* takes nominative case (*ièu*), while its third-person singular argument takes accusative case (*la*). The former ranks higher than the latter in (88b), since the former is the first argument of *pred'* (x, y), while the latter is the second argument in the same logical structure.

- (88) a. (La nive,) ièu non la vitti. (Martano, Apulia)  
 the snow.FSG 1SG.NOM NEG 3FSG.ACC.CL see.PST.1SG  
 '(Snow), I did not see it.'
- b. *see'* (1SG, 3FSG)

The assignment of accusative case to the pivot is not captured by (87b), if the pivot is a predicate. One could, of course, assume that *HABERE* existentials are covertly transitive, i.e. they have a predicate *have'* and two macrorole arguments, the higher



one being a covert possessor, the lower one being the pivot. This assumption would be costly in theoretical terms, however, and ultimately insufficient to resolve all the issues raised by the argument behaviour of the pivot. We spell out here our objections to a transitive analysis of HABERE existentials.

First, the implicit argument of existential *there* sentences does not have the characteristics of a macrorole. It does not receive any of the lexical entailments which, in Dowty's (1991: 572) terms, characterize the highest protorole in a construction with two protoroles. It is not volitional or sentient, it does not cause an event of any kind, it is not involved in movement, and it does not exist independently of the existential predication, since it is, by definition, non-referential.

Secondly, we have no synchronic evidence of a two-macrorole verbal lexeme <have> in the Salentino dialects with HABERE existentials, since the possessive<sub>i</sub>, in Clark's (1978) sense, exhibits the verb etymologically meaning 'hold' in this dialect group (see §3.2.1).

Thirdly, when HABERE alternates with ESSE as the copula of existential *there* sentences (see the Sardinian dialects of Maps 1 and 4), the pivot is not assigned accusative case. The contrast in case assignment between (89a) and (89b) indicates clearly that only the latter structure is a transitive construction, with an undergoer that takes accusative case.

- (89) a. Maria no est sola. B' at Carminu. (Orgosolo, Sardinia)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone PF have.3SG Carminu  
 'Mary is not alone. There's Carminu.'
- b. Apo vidu a Carminu.  
 have.1SG seen ACC Carminu  
 'I have seen Carminu.'

Any transitive analysis of HABERE existentials must capture the lack of accusative case marking in constructions like (89a).

Broadening the empirical basis of the discussion, accusative case marking of the pivot is not rare crosslinguistically. Thus, one finds accusative pivots in German (in the construction with *es gibt*), Greek, and Bulgarian. However, in Serbo-Croat, 'have' existentials have a nominative singular pivot (plural pivots are marked with genitive, see Creissels 2013: 467). In Brazilian Portuguese, *ter* 'have, hold' existentials have nominative pivots (Bentley 2013: 678).

Therefore, the evidence does not support conclusively a transitive analysis of 'have' (as well as 'give', 'hold'...) existentials, i.e. an analysis which takes these structures to have two macrorole arguments, with the pivot being overt and the higher macrorole covert. An undesirable correlate of this analysis would be that the logical structure of HABERE existentials would differ from that of ESSE and STARE existentials. Clearly, a unified semantic analysis of ESSE, STARE, and HABERE existentials is desirable.

A clue to the conundrum of accusative case assignment to the pivot of HABERE existentials is offered by agreement. In particular, the Salentino and Calabrian dialects from Map 4, i.e. those dialects in which HABERE does not alternate with ESSE, consistently exhibit pattern (ii) from Table 3.1, which means that they lack agreement of the copula with the pivot in existential constructions, but they do exhibit agreement of the verbal predicate with the post-copular argument in other VS structures. In the context of the proposals made in section 3.3.1, this agreement pattern suggests that finite agreement in these dialects solely depends on the argument properties of the potential controller: the pivot fails to control agreement because of its poor argumenthood.<sup>17</sup>

In the light of the findings on agreement, we thus propose that the dialects which are maximally sensitive to the poor argumenthood of the potential controller of agreement deny the status of controller to the pivot and mark it with the case of non-controllers, namely accusative case. Accusative case marking of the predicative pivot is exceptionally licensed because of the referentiality of the pivot, which is a property of arguments, and its position in logical structure, which is lower than the position of the unspecified argument (cf. 80': *be'* (*x*, *due alternative*)). The result is a structure with a referential predicate which has argument behaviour in morphosyntax.<sup>18,19</sup>

Interestingly, Manzini and Savoia (2005: 66) report agreement between HABERE and the pivot in the existential constructions of the dialects of Celle San Vito and Faeto, Apulia.<sup>20</sup> For comparable patterns in central Catalan dialects we refer to Rigau

<sup>17</sup> By contrast, the Sardinian dialects with nominative case on the pivot of HABERE existentials exhibit either patterns (i) and (iii) or patterns (i) and (iv) from Table 3.1, since in these dialects agreement is also sensitive to specificity. See further §§4.3 and 4.4. The reader should note that the alternations of *nci* + agreeing ESSE vs. (*ndi*) + invariant HABERE mentioned in §3.3.1 (see n. 9) are entirely irrelevant to the above discussion, since these are two independent patterns, the prestigious Italian pattern and the autochthonous Calabrian pattern, which operate in parallel. The autochthonous pattern shows sensitivity to poor argumenthood, while the Italian one does not.

<sup>18</sup> In a theoretical framework where case is assigned in a syntactic configuration, it could be argued that accusative case is assigned by the covert preposition/complementizer which has been claimed to be part of HABERE by Kayne (1993), developing an idea put forward by Benveniste (1966) (see also e.g. Levinson 2011). However, this proposal would not straightforwardly account for the lack of accusative case of the pivot of HABERE existentials like (89a).

<sup>19</sup> Nominative case assignment is also licensed because of the referentiality of the pivot. As will become clear in due course, the Italo-Romance and Sardinian dialects which assign nominative case to the pivot are those dialects in which an overt subject is required regardless of the poor argumenthood of the controller. Thus, either pivots are indistinctly treated as subjects, both in terms of case marking and in terms of agreement control, or only those pivots that rank above the relevant specificity scale are treated as such. Nominative case assignment is illustrated in the following examples with pronominal pivots.

- (i) a. Mari nonn' é sola. Nge si tu. (Ferrandina, Basilicata)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone PF be.2SG you.NOM
- b. Mariæ nun è sola. Cə stai tu. (Quarto, Campania)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone PF stay.2SG you.NOM
- 'Mary is not alone. There's you.'

<sup>20</sup> In these dialects, 1st and 2nd person pronominal pivots co-occur with the copula STARE, which is indicative of sensitivity to specificity.

(1997). For several varieties of Spanish, we refer to Koch (2003: 164–6), Rodríguez Mondoñedo (2006), and Brown and Rivas (2012). We have no evidence on case marking in Celle San Vito and Faeto, while it is hard to gather relevant evidence from Spanish, since in this language the noun phrases marked with the prepositional accusative in transitive constructions do not co-occur with the copula *HABERE* in existentials, but rather with the copula *STARE*. However, Brown and Rivas (2012) noted that, in Puerto Rican oral Spanish, agreement on *HABERE* is incompatible with pivots spelled out by an accusative clitic.

(Puerto Rican oral Spanish)

- (90) a. **Hubo** / **Hubieron** fiestas patronales.  
 have.PST.3SG have.PST.3PL holidays management  
 ‘There were management holidays.’
- b. No **las** **hubo** / \*hubieron.  
 NEG 3FPL.ACC.CL have.PST.3SG have.PST.3PL  
 ‘There were none.’

The evidence in (90b) supports our analysis, where accusative case marking is strictly associated with lack of agreement (though the reverse does not necessarily hold true, because agreement is sensitive to factors other than the lexical entailments of the controller). In more general terms, the agreement on *HABERE* in the existential constructions of Celle San Vito, Faeto, and some Catalan and Spanish varieties further challenges the analysis of the pivot of *HABERE* existentials as the undergoer or the object of a transitive predicate. From our perspective, this pattern of agreement is licensed because of the referentiality of the pivot, which is a property of arguments, although the pivot has the function of the predicate in semantics. *HABERE* is thus a copula, on a par with *ESSE* and *STARE*, i.e. it is not a predicate or the provider of the argument(s) of the construction.

#### 3.3.4 *Synopsis*

In this section we have tested the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis against our findings. We have argued that this hypothesis is supported by evidence suggesting that the pivot of existential constructions is a bad argument (see §3.3.1) as well as evidence which suggests that the pivot is the predicate in a logical structure with an unspecified argument (see §3.3.2). The morphosyntax of existential constructions in Italo-Romance and Sardinian is not devoid of challenges for the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis (see §3.3.3). In particular, *INDE*-cliticization and case assignment would seem to suggest that the pivot is an argument. We proposed that while the pivot does not have the argument properties which derive from the lexical entailments of a predicate, a subclass of pivots do have one argument property, referentiality, which results in defective argument behaviour in morphosyntax. We conclude that the said challenges do not invalidate the claim that the pivot is, semantically, a predicate.

### 3.4 Predication and argument realization in *there* sentences

In the light of the results presented in the previous sections, we now discuss the logical structure of existential *there* sentences in more depth (§3.4.1), and propose a solution to the issue of the high degree of comparability between existential, locative, and possessive constructions (§3.4.2). We then consider the semantic representation of the other kinds of *there* sentence which were introduced in the previous chapters (§3.4.3), and, finally, we reach some conclusions (§3.4.4).

#### 3.4.1 *Two types of existential construction*

Above we distinguished between referential and non-referential pivots, and we proposed two different logical structures for existential constructions with each type of pivot.

- (91) Ci sono due alternative. (Italian)  
PF be.3PL two alternatives  
'There are two alternatives.'
- (91') **be'** (x, due alternative)
- (92) C' è togu. (San Tommaso, Calabria)  
PF be.3SG nice.ADJ  
'There is niceness.'
- (92') **be'** (x, [**nice'**])

In both logical structures there is a single argument, x, which is the spatiotemporal domain of the existential predication. This argument remains unfilled, or unspecified, because it is not referential and does not exist independently of the existential predication.<sup>21</sup> There is no referential expression in (92'), but rather an adjectival stage-level predicate, *togu* 'nice', which is predicated of an implicit argument. By contrast, in (91'), the lower position is filled by a phrase, *due alternative* 'two alternatives', which introduces a referent, or a referent set, into discourse. This phrase is thus a referential expression. At the same time, this expression provides the implicit argument with its sole lexical entailment, namely its lack of independent existence.

In his seminal work on lexical entailments, Dowty (1991: 572) lists existence independently of the event named by the verb as an entailment of proto-agents, and, conversely, lack of independent existence as an entailment of proto-patients. The implicit argument of the logical structure in (91') clearly has the latter lexical

<sup>21</sup> As will be seen in the analysis of the semantics–syntax linking, due to its non-referentiality this argument cannot link to syntax either.

entailment, in that it does not exist independently of the pivot. The pivot is thus a predicate, *qua* provider of this lexical entailment, and ultimately, *qua* contributor of the only argument in logical structure (x).<sup>22</sup>

Referentiality, at least in the sense intended here, is, typically, a property of arguments. The referentiality contrast between the two types of pivot explains why the pivot of the structure illustrated in (91') can exhibit patterns of argument behaviour (INDE-cliticization, case assignment, and, in some dialects, control of agreement on the copula), whereas the pivot of the structure in (92') cannot. On the other hand, the role of the referential pivot as a predicate, and ultimately the lack of another predicate providing lexical entailments to it, explains why some dialects deny the status of agreement controller to it, and mark it with the case of non-controllers, namely accusative.

The pro-argumental proform which figures in the existential *there* sentences of a great many dialects is the morphosyntactic marker of a structure with an implicit argument (Cruschina 2012b). At first, it could be thought that the deictic proforms of Sardinian introduced in section 3.2.1 are a spell-out of the implicit argument itself, and should figure in the argument position in logical structure. We do not pursue this analysis, because it would conflict with the idea that the argument of existentials is by definition non-referential and implicit. Rather, we treat the deictic proforms as locative modifiers of the core predication, similarly to locative codas.

(93) (N)ch' at problemas. (Bono, Sardinia)  
 PF have.3SG problems  
 'There are many problems (here/with us).'

(93') **be-Loc'** (nche, [be' (x, problemas)])

The question which arises at this point is how to represent the logical structure of existentials with definite pivots, or availability existentials.

(94) N ci potemo lassà: ci stanno gli gnigni. (Suio, Lazio)  
 NEG REFL can.1PL divorce.INF PF stay.3PL the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'

Availability existentials fall within the definition of existential construction adopted in our work (see §1.1): they express a proposition about the existence or the presence of an individual in a context. In section 3.2.2, we also adduced evidence in support of the existential analysis of these structures from the scope of the pivot under negation (cf. 95), and the lack of a proform or a locative adverbial (cf. 96), in the dialects which only mark inverse and deictic locatives with such a form (cf. 97B).

<sup>22</sup> The pivot in (91') also lends itself to a generalized quantifier analysis of the kind proposed by Francez (2007), while x can be considered to be Francez's implicit argument.

- (95) Oje sero nos podimus dispassiare! \*Non b' at babbu e  
 today night REFL can.1PL have.fun.INF NEG PF have.3SG Dad and  
 mamma tua. (Orgosolo, Sardinia)  
 Mum your  
 'We can have fun tonight. Your Dad and Mum are not here.'
- (96) Non nə pətéjmə spartə: stòunə i məninnə.  
 NEG REFL can.1PL separate.INF stay.3PL the children  
 (Polignano a Mare, Apulia)  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- (97) A: Ci stè jində a chella camera? (Polignano a Mare, Apulia)  
 who stay.3SG in to that room  
 'Who is in that room?'  
 B: Non cə stè nisciéunə.  
 NEG PF stay.3SG nobody  
 'Nobody is in the room.'

While definite pivots do not lend themselves to an analysis as properties, but rather are individual variables, we argue that they nonetheless take the predicative role in logical structure, contributing an implicit spatiotemporal argument to the construction. Indeed, all the arguments spelled out above in support of the assumption that existential *there* sentences involve an implicit argument are valid for availability existentials as well. For example, the *there* sentence in (98a) is a sensible statement in the context provided, whereas its counterpart with the verbal predicate <exist> (cf. 98b) makes no sense at all. This is because (98a) predicates *i bambini* 'the children' in a context-dependent way, while (98b) does not.

- (98) a. Non possiamo divorziare: ci sono i bambini. (Italian)  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF PF be.3PL the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- b. #Non possiamo divorziare: i bambini esistono.  
 NEG can.1PL divorce INF the children exist.3PL  
 'We cannot divorce: the children exist.'

Like existentials with a referential pivot, structures such as (94), (96), and (98a) introduce a referent into discourse. We thus propose the logical structure in (98a)' for (98a), i.e. the same structure as was adopted for existentials with referential pivots. In this logical structure a referential expression is predicated on an implicit argument.

(98a') **be'** (x, i bambini)

It is worth pointing out in this discussion of the logical structure of existential *there* sentences that, in our dataset, we did not find any counterparts of the lexical

alternations which distinguish ontological and presence existentials in other languages (Koch 1999, 2006, 2012, Veselinova 2013, Weinert 2013, Creissels 2014; see §§1.1.1, 3.2.1).

Marginal lexical differences emerged with pivots denoting events. In a Calabrian and a Piedmontese dialect, these require *ESSE*, instead of the default existential copula *HABERE* (cf. 99a,b), while in some Abruzzese dialects, these exhibit a verbal periphrasis with *STARE* ‘stay’ followed by *FARE* ‘do’, instead of *STARE* alone (cf. 100a,b).

- (99) a. *Nc’ esti u terremotu: nd’avi figghioli in periculo.*  
 PF be.3SG the earthquake PF have.3SG children in danger  
 (Agnana Calabra, Calabria)
- b. *J é u teramot: j a ëd matàt en pericol.*  
 PF be.3SG the earthquake PF have.3SG of children in danger  
 (Fontanelle di Boves, Piedmont)
- ‘There is an earthquake: there are children in danger.’

- (100) a. *Sta fa lu terremut: sta i quatrilə m periculə.*  
 stay.3SG do.INF the earthquake stay.3 the children in danger  
 (Arielli, Abruzzo)
- b. *Sta fa lu terremut: sta le cuatrərə in pericule.*  
 stay.3SG do.INF the earthquake stay.3 the children in danger  
 (Guardiagrele, Abruzzo)
- ‘There is an earthquake: there are children in danger.’

One may want to distinguish existentials which introduce events from other existentials by naming the former structure ‘eventive existential’ (though this term is used with reference to type (iv) *there* sentences by Leonetti 2008 and Villalba 2013). However, we fail to see any evidence for postulating a semantic contrast between these and the other existential constructions discussed above, given that these constructions express a proposition about the existence or the presence of the referent of the pivot in a context, the pivot takes the narrowest scope (to negate an eventive existential means to negate the eventive pivot), and there is no proform or locative adverbial in the dialects which lack such marking in existentials.

- (101) a. *L’ é al taramot.* (Belluno, Veneto)  
 PF be.3SG the earthquake
- b. *Stè u tramòutə.* (Polignano a Mare, Apulia)  
 stay.3SG the earthquake  
 ‘There is an earthquake.’

In the last analysis, while it seems imperative to distinguish between existentials with a referential pivot and with a non-referential one, the morphosyntax of Italo-

Romance and Sardinian provides no compelling reason for postulating any further subtypes within the existential construction.

Before we conclude, a brief note on the logical structure of sentences with the lexeme <exist> seems in order. These structures exhibit canonical morphosyntax: the noun phrase normally precedes the verb and controls agreement, as shown by the verbal inflection in (102a) and (102b).

- (102) a. La giustizia non esiste. (Italian)  
           the justice NEG exist.3SG  
           ‘Justice does not exist.’  
       b. I fantasmi non esistono.  
           the ghosts NEG exist.3PL  
           ‘Ghosts do not exist.’

In semantic terms, as we have seen, these structures do not involve an implicit argument (cf. 98b). In addition, the noun phrase outscopes negation, and, as a consequence, the construction can be negated even when the noun phrase is definite.

- (103) Babbo Natale non esiste. (Italian)  
           Father Christmas NEG exist.3SG  
           ‘Father Christmas does not exist.’

These facts point to clear differences between these constructions and existential sentences, suggesting that these constructions have a canonical predicate and a canonical argument. We thus propose Van Valin and LaPolla’s (1997: 115) logical structure for the sentences with the lexeme exist: **exist’** (x). In this logical structure, x is filled by a referential expression, which is a specified argument.

(103’) <NEG exist’ (Babbo Natale)>

### 3.4.2 *The correspondence of copulas and proforms revisited*

Having proposed a logical structure for existential *there* sentences, we can now return to the issue discussed at the beginning of the present chapter, namely the morpho-syntactic correspondences between existential, locative, and possessive constructions in the world’s languages. In section 3.2, we pointed out that the unified analyses of existentials, possessives, and locatives are not supported by Italo-Romance and Sardinian data. These analyses are too narrow—in that they do not capture the fact that the morphosyntactic features that are shared by existentials, locatives, and possessives are also shared by other copular constructions. They are also insufficiently fine-grained, in that they do not capture significant morphosyntactic contrasts between existentials, possessives, and locatives. In addition, we uncovered evidence which undermines Freeze’s (1992) claim that definite themes must move to subject position in *there* sentences. Despite the challenges which the languages of our sample pose to the



unified analyses of existentials, locatives, and possessives, it is undeniable that the correspondences which have long been noted between these structures are, at least imperfectly, also found in Romance. These correspondences require an explanation.

The hypothesis that existential *there* sentences with referential pivots are structures whereby a referential expression is predicated of an implicit argument allows us to advance a proposal on the morphosyntactic correspondences noted by Clark (1978) and Freeze (1992), among many others. In particular, we claim that, in some languages, existential *there* sentences exhibit the same morphosyntax as possessives or locatives because of shared properties of the logical structure of these three constructions. (The focus-structure similarities between these constructions are also relevant, as testified by the analysis expounded in §§2.2–2.4, which we will not return to here.)

The logical structures of locatives and possessives have two argument positions. The higher position is that of the location in locatives (cf. 104a and see Van Valin 2005: 46), and of the possessor in possessives (cf. 104b and Van Valin 2005: 52).<sup>23</sup> The lower position is that of a theme.

- (104) a. **be-Loc'** (location, theme)  
 b. **be-with'** (possessor, theme)

Observe that while occurring in the higher argument position of locatives, the location is not assigned a macrorole because it has a predicative function (Van Valin 2005: 42–9, 63).

On a par with (104a,b), the logical structure of existential *there* sentences with referential pivots has two argument positions.

- (105) **be'** (x, y/pivot)

Here the higher position is left unspecified, while the lower position is filled by a referential expression which, rather than being assigned a macrorole and serving as an argument in the semantics–syntax interface, takes the predicating role in semantics and behaves as a poor argument in syntax. The referential expression of (105) is thus comparable to the higher referential expression in (104a), in that it takes an argument position, but it is a predicate.

In diachronic terms, the morphosyntax of (105) can derive from that of (104a) or (104b), once the higher referential expression of either of these structures is reanalysed as an unspecified argument.<sup>24</sup> The mentioned development can be said to involve the three stages outlined here.

<sup>23</sup> RRG represents the logical structure of possessives as **have'** (x, y). We adopt the slightly modified logical structure in (104b) to place emphasis on the correspondences between locatives and possessives.

<sup>24</sup> According to Parry (2013: 533) the higher argument is reanalysed as a pragmatic topic, or the Subject of Predication, as a result of a number of word order changes which affected the early Italo-Romance vernaculars.

(106) I. **be-Loc'** (location, theme) → II. **be-Loc'** (x, theme) → III. **be'** (x, y/pivot).

(107) I. **be-with'** (possessor, theme) → II. **be-with'** (x, theme) → III. **be'** (x, y/pivot).

Starting from a locative or a possessive structure (stage I), the construal of the higher argument of this structure as a non-referential, unspecified, argument (stage II) results in the formation of a new, Romance, existential construction (stage III).<sup>25</sup> In this construction the presence of an implicit argument can be marked by an etymologically locative or possessive proform, which has lost its locative or possessive referential meaning. In the absence of a locative or possessive predicative relation between x and y, the referential expression y takes the predicating function, and is thus predicated of the unspecified argument x.<sup>26</sup>

In accordance with this account, the existential proform is neither locative nor possessive. The fact that, in many of the dialects of our sample, the same form is also found in locative predications, where it does retain its locative meaning (see §3.4.3), suggests that layering has occurred in diachrony (Hopper and Traugott 1993: 124–6). This is a process by which a form acquires new meanings and functions, while maintaining its older meanings. In the case of the proform, this lost its locative meaning in the existential construction, though not in locatives. As we mentioned previously, there are Sardinian and southern Italo-Romance dialects where the existential proform itself appears not to be entirely grammaticalized and thus retains deictic functions, taking the role of a modifier of the core predication. It seems clear that the two types of proform should be differentiated, and that existential proforms are not locative by definition. Our account, therefore, is not challenged by the evidence discussed in section 3.2.1, while it captures the correspondences which have led others to claim erroneously that existentials (and possessives) are locatives.

### 3.4.3 *Argument structure and predication in other there sentences*

We can now discuss the logical structure of the other types of *there* sentence which were introduced in section 1.1 (see also §§2.4 and 2.5). This is a necessary step in our treatment of existential constructions, in that these cannot be properly understood unless they are differentiated from semantically different *there* sentences.

We start with type (ii) of Cruschina's (2012b) typology, inverse locatives. Recall that in section 2.4.1 these were claimed to be constructions with a focal argument and a topical locative predicate. Evidence in support of this analysis comes from the

<sup>25</sup> As will become clear from the discussion in Ch. 5, the reanalysis of possessives as existentials must have occurred at a much earlier stage than that of locatives as existentials, since *HABERE* existentials are already attested in late Latin.

<sup>26</sup> See Gaeta (2013: 481) for a diachronic analysis of existentials which involves grammaticalization and reanalysis, on a par with ours, and Creissels (2013) for the diachronic development of possessives into existentials and existentials into possessives.

intonational break between the post-copular noun phrase and the locative phrase, and the fact that the main pitch accent is on the noun phrase, which suggests that the locative phrase occurs in a clause-external position (see Leonetti's 2008 *Coda Constraint*). In addition, inverse locatives do not occur in out-of-the-blue contexts, but rather in contexts whereby the locative phrase is part of the presupposition. Thus, the examples in (108a–d) were deemed to be felicitous in the context of the question 'Who is in the kitchen?', but not in the context of 'Where is your sister?'. (As the reader will recall, we indicate non-contrastive focus with small capitals.)

- (108) a. Ng' é            sORDƏ,            (nda cucina).            (Ferrandina, Basilicata)  
           PF be.3SG sister.POSS in.the kitchen
- b. L' é            TO SORELA, (in cusina).            (Belluno, Veneto)  
           ESCL be.3SG your sister in kitchen
- c. Ci sta            SORITA,            (tento la cucina).            (Suio, Lazio)  
           PF stay.3SG sister.POSS inside the kitchen
- d. Ave            SORUTA,            (intra la cucina).            (Martano, Apulia)  
           have.3SG sister.POSS in the kitchen  
           'YOUR SISTER is in the kitchen.'

The proform, where present (cf. 108a,c), must be assumed to be locative in these structures, in the sense that it resumes the topical, clause-external, locative phrase within the Core (detailed evidence was provided in section 2.4.1). Since this proform is co-referential with the locative phrase, it only needs to figure in logical structure if the locative phrase is not overt. In (108a'–d') we provide the logical structure of (108a–d), while in (108a",c") we provide the logical structure of corresponding sentences in which the locative predicate remains silent.

- (108) a'. **be-Loc'** (nda cucina, sordə)  
       b'. **be-Loc'** (in cusina, to sorela)  
       c'. **be-Loc'** (tento la cucina, sorita)  
       d'. **be-Loc'** (intra la cucina, soruta)
- (108) a". **be-Loc'** (ng, sordə)  
       b". **be-Loc'** (pro, to sorela)  
       c". **be-Loc'** (ci, sorita)  
       d". **be-Loc'** (pro, soruta)

In the dialects without a clause-internal spell-out of the locative predicate, the locative position is filled by *pro* (cf. 108b", d"). This means that the relevant semantic position is not linked to syntax but rather to a variable, which is assigned a value in discourse representation. The direct linking of semantic positions to discourse representation is a device which, relying on Discourse Representation Theory

(Kamp and Reyle 1993), ensures that the Completeness Constraint is satisfied in cases of discourse-driven anaphora.<sup>27</sup> We will consider the direct linking from discourse to semantics in section 4.4.2, where we discuss all the steps which are necessary in the semantics–syntax linking of *there* sentences.

The logical structures in (108a'–d') are identical to those of corresponding predicate focus constructions ('Your sister is in the kitchen'), in that they consist of two referential expressions, which take the roles of predicate and argument, respectively. The identity of predicate focus and inverse locative predications is a crucial assumption in Cruschina's (2012b) theory of *there* sentences, since he argues that inverse locatives solely differ from predicate-focus copular locatives from the point of view of focus structure.

Turning now to deictic locatives, i.e. type (iii) of Cruschina's typology, these were also analysed as structures with a focal argument and a topical locative predicate (see §2.4.2). In this case, however, the locative predicate is topical in the sense that it is understood due to its contextual salience. In fact, it is usually a speaker-oriented location.

- (109) a. Guardə:      ng' é      MARÌJE.                      (Ferrandina, Basilicata)  
           look.IMP.2SG PF be.3SG Mary
- b. Varda:      l' é      MARIA qua.                      (Belluno, Veneto)  
           look.IMP.2SG ESCL be.3SG Mary here
- c. Uarda:      ci sta      MARIA.                      (Suio, Lazio)  
           look.IMP.2SG PF stay.3SG Mary
- d. Guarda:      ave      la MARIA.                      (Martano, Apulia)  
           look.IMP.2SG have.3SG the Mary  
           'Look: MARY is here.'

Since the proform of deictic locatives is referential, and there is no prepositional phrase spelling out the locative predicate, the proform figures in the relevant logical structure (cf. 109a', c'). In Bellunese, there is no proform, but rather an overt locative adverb in this structure, which encodes the salient location overtly. This will also figure in the logical structure (cf. 109b'). Finally, in the dialects without a clause internal spell-out of the locative predicate, the locative position is filled by *pro* (cf. 109d').

<sup>27</sup> E.g. Van Valin (2005: 173–4) proposes this solution for discourse-driven anaphora in Mandarin, Thai, Japanese, etc., which does not involve a clitic or affixal spell-out of the omitted argument. The same analysis could be adopted for discourse driven anaphora in Latin. Recall from §1.3.2 that the Completeness Constraint states that all the arguments explicitly specified in the semantic representation of a sentence must be realized syntactically in the sentence, and all the referring expressions in the syntactic representation of a sentence must be linked to an argument position in a logical structure in the semantic representation of the sentence.

- (109) a'. **be-Loc'** (ng, Marije)  
 b'. **be-Loc'** (qua, Maria)  
 c'. **be-Loc'** (ci, Maria)  
 d'. **be-Loc'** (pro, Maria)

The morphosyntactic coding and behaviour of the post-copular noun phrase of inverse and deictic locatives normally matches that of the existential pivot. Compare the patterns of agreement in (108a–d) and (109a–d) with those in the following set of existential *there* sentences.

- (110) a. Nda chesta frutta nge so      tanda səmmiəntə. (Ferrandina, Basilicata)  
 in    this    fruit    PF    be.3PL many seeds  
 b. Te sti    frutti qua l'      é      tanti semi. (Belluno, Veneto)  
 in    these fruits here ESCL be.3SG many seeds  
 c. Tento chesta frutta ci stanno tanti cicci. (Suio, Lazio)  
 in    this    fruit    PF stay.3PL many seeds  
 d. Intra sta frutta ave      tanti samenti. (Martano, Apulia)  
 in    this fruit have. 3SG many seeds  
 'In this fruit there are many seeds.'

The post-copular argument in (108a–d) and (109a–d) solely controls agreement in the dialects where its pivot counterpart controls agreement (cf. 110a–d and see Maps 1–4). This finding is unexpected, given that arguments are endowed with lexical entailments and are predicted to be assigned a macrorole in semantics–syntax linking.

To be sure, we also found some minor discrepancies from the agreement correspondences between existentials, inverse locatives, and deictic locatives. In addition, there is free alternation of agreeing *ESSE* with non-agreeing *HABERE*, in dialects where the latter archaic existential pattern is in competition with the former pattern, which is promoted by the prestigious Italian model.

- (111) Cu c' è      nt o salottu?      Nci sugnu / ndavi      i  
 who PF be.3SG in the sitting room PF be.3PL PF.have.3SG the  
 figghi 'i Maria. (Gioia Tauro, Calabria)  
 children of Mary  
 'Who's in the sitting room?' 'Mary's children are in the sitting room.'

The said discrepancies are far from robust, though, and patterns of alternation exemplified in (111) are found both in existentials and in inverse/deictic locatives.

A possible solution to the problem of agreement would be to assume that the dialects where there is no agreement do not have inverse and deictic locatives, but rather exhibit existential structures in their place. More specifically, the agreement

facts of inverse and deictic locatives could be analysed as the result of a perspectival change, in the sense of Borschev and Partee (1998, 2002a, 2002b). In Borschev and Partee's analysis, an existence/location situation includes a THING and a LOCation, and it may be structured as either centred on the THING or centred on the LOCation. The term 'perspectival centre' refers to the chosen participant that is presupposed to exist. In existential structures, the perspectival centre is the LOCation, whereas in locative predications the perspectival centre is the THING. Assuming that inverse and deictic locatives involve a switch from a structure whose perspectival centre is the THING to a corresponding structure in which the perspectival centre is the LOCation, this could explain the lack of agreement only in the latter structure, where the post-copular noun phrase is not an argument, but rather an existential pivot.

The above solution would be unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, though. First, it would not capture the broader correspondence in agreement between existentials and inverse and deictic locatives, which was found across Italo-Romance and Sardinian. Of course, it could be said that all the dialects of our sample lack inverse and deictic locatives or, differently put, that inverse and deictic locatives are existential sentences. This proposal, however, would clash with clear evidence to the contrary, such as the different context of occurrence of existential *there* sentences on the one hand and inverse and deictic locatives on the other, and the other tests discussed in Chapter 2 (see §§2.4.1, 2.4.2). Significantly, inverse and deictic locatives differ from other VS structures that have been claimed to be covertly existential—for example, sentences with the genitive of negation in Russian (see Babby 1980, Borschev et al. 2010) and non-canonical INDE-cliticization in Italian (Lonzi 1986, Bentley 2004a, Calabrese and Maling 2009, Glushan and Calabrese forthcoming), in that their post-copular noun phrase is by default definite. In addition, the combinations of patterns (i)–(iii) and (i)–(iv) from Table 3.1 suggest that the agreement alternations do not solely concern *there* sentences, but rather other VS constructions with verbal predicates. These too admit post-verbal definites freely. Ultimately, an analysis in terms of perspectival change would not explain the rationale of the putative change in perspective. In this light, we shall not pursue an existential analysis of inverse and deictic locatives.

Importantly, predicate-focus locative predications invariably exhibit agreement of the copula with the precopular argument, which indicates that the argument of these constructions is indeed assigned a macrorole, in particular the macrorole undergoer.

- (112) a. Lə pacchə so già ando u magazzinə. (Ferrandina, Basilicata)  
 the parcels be.3PL already in the storehouse
- b. I pachi i é belche in magazin. (Belluno, Veneto)  
 the parcels SCL.M.PL be.3PL already in storehouse
- c. Li paccotti stanno già dentro o magazzino. (Suiro, Lazio)  
 the parcels stay.3PL already inside the storehouse

- d. Li pacchi stannu già intra lu magazzinu. (Martano, Apulia)  
 the parcels stay.3PL already in the storehouse  
 ‘The parcels are already in the storehouse.’

There is therefore a clear contrast between constructions which predicate existence and constructions which predicate location. Locative constructions may only lack copula agreement if the argument is focal, which suggests that focus structure plays a crucial role in the treatment of the post-copular noun phrase as an agreement controller or vice versa. This issue will be developed in our analysis of agreement as a subjecthood diagnostic (see §§4.3.4, 4.3.5, 4.4.1, 4.4.2). In this context we adhere to the locative analysis of inverse and deictic locatives, and hence to the logical structures proposed above in (108a'–d') and (109a'–d').

We finally come to type (iv) of Cruschina's typology, presentational *there* sentences (see §2.5). Recall that these constructions consist of two parts. The first part ((proform +) copula + NP) introduces a new referent into discourse. This is an argument of the core predication introduced by the second part. The latter can be a clause (cf. 113a,b), a locative phrase (cf. 113c), or an adjective (cf. 113d).

- (113) a. C' è su dottori chi s' aspettat. Sbrigeus! (Sardara, Sardinia)  
 PF be.3SG the doctor who us wait.3SG hurry-up.IMP.1PL  
 ‘The doctor is waiting for us, let's hurry up!’
- b. Ave soruma ca è malata. Non la possu lassare sola.  
 have.3SG sister.POSS who be.3SG ill NEG her can.1SG leave.INF alone  
 (Martano, Apulia)  
 ‘My sister is ill. I cannot leave her alone.’
- c. Maria, nc' è sirda a lu telefonu. Respunni!  
 Mary PF be.3SG father. POSS at the telephone answer.IMP.2SG  
 (Lecce, Apulia)  
 ‘Mary, your father is on the phone. Pick it up!’
- d. C' è/ avi me soru malata e non vogghiu m' a  
 PF be.3SG have.3SG my sister ill and NEG want LINK ACC.CL  
 lassu sula. (Bova Marina, Calabria)  
 leave alone  
 ‘My sister is ill and I do not want to leave her alone.’

Despite their non-canonical morphosyntax, involving the same patterns of word order, proform selection, and agreement as we find in existentials, presentational *there* sentences are not existential or locative constructions, since they do not express a proposition about the location, the existence, or the presence of an individual or an entity. Consider the following example, which is to be understood in the context of a game of cards.

- (114) A: Perché non va bene questo mazzo? (Italian)  
 why NEG go.3SG well this deck  
 B: C'è una carta che non c'è.  
 PF be.3SG a card that NEG PF be.3SG  
 'Why is this deck no good?' 'A card is missing.' Lit. There is a card that there is not.

Clearly, the reply in (114B) would make no sense, if it predicated the existence or the presence of a card and denied it at the same time. A locative reading would be equally nonsensical.

The proform of presentational *there* sentences is not deictic, nor does it signal that the predication has an implicit argument. Rather, together with the copula, it flags the statement as particularly relevant in the context of the preceding or following utterances. Thus, the statement in (114B) is relevant in the context of (114A) because one cannot play cards with an incomplete deck of cards. The proform-plus-copula nexus also ensures that the noun phrase spelling out a new discourse referent occurs in post-verbal position, the default position of foci in the languages of our sample. The whole statement is thus in the Actual Focus Domain (see §2.5). The sole predicate of these constructions is encoded in the clause, the adjectival phrase, or the locative phrase which follows the post-copular NP. Indeed, semantically, these constructions are equivalent to their counterparts with no proform or copula and default SV order (see Li and Thompson 1981: 131 for a similar construction in Mandarin Chinese, Lambrecht 1988, 2000 for English, Marten 2013 for German and Swahili, and Latrouite and Van Valin 2014 for Tagalog).

- (115) a. Su dottori s' aspettatt. (Sardara, Sardinia)  
 the doctor us wait.3SG  
 'The doctor is waiting for us.'
- b. Soruma è malata. (Martano, Apulia)  
 sister.POSS be.3SG ill  
 'My sister is ill.'
- c. Sirda è a lu telefonu. (Lecce, Apulia)  
 father.POSS be.3SG at the telephone  
 'Your father is on the phone.'
- d. Me soru è malata (Bova Marina, Calabria)  
 my sister be.3SG ill  
 'My sister is ill.'

In support of the hypothesis that the proform-plus-copula nexus is a lexicalized marker of the construction, observe that, in some dialects, presentational *there* sentences with past tense on the copula are ungrammatical. The examples in



(116a,b) were produced in the context of the question ‘How come you were not at work yesterday?’. In both cases, the informants sought alternatives to a presentational *there* sentence, since they did not deem this construction to be grammatical in the past tense. Type (iv) *there* sentences also turned out to be incompatible with pre-copular negation (cf. 117).

- (116) a. Lu Dariu tenia la frevi e rimasi a casa.  
 the Dario had the temperature and stay.PST.1SG at home  
 (Martano, Apulia)  
 ‘Dario had a temperature and I stayed at home.’
- b. Aviva Dariu cu a frevi e eppi mi staiu a casa  
 have.PST.1SG Dario with a temperature and had LINK stay at home  
 (Bova Marina, Calabria)  
 ‘I had Dario with a temperature and I had to stay at home.’
- (117) A: Perché non sei venuta al lavoro? (Italian)  
 why NEG be.2SG come to.the work  
 B: #Non c’è la macchina che funziona...  
 NEG PF be.3SG the car that works  
 ‘Why did you not come to work?’ ‘The car does not work...’ [intended reading]

These facts suggest that the proform-plus-copula nexus is not a productive grammatical construction, but rather a lexical device that places the whole construction in the Actual Focus Domain, marking it as particularly relevant in the given context. The post-copular noun phrase spells out an argument in the logical structure of the post-nominal predicate, and this argument is assigned a macrorole in accordance with the default macrorole assignment principles. The argument is then the controller of agreement on its predicate, as shown both by the Italian example in (118a) and by the Calabrian example in (118b), where the post-copular noun phrase controls agreement on ‘want’ regardless of agreement on the copula or lack thereof.

- (118) a. Ci sono i bambini che vogliono guardare la televisione. (Italian)  
 PF be.3PL the children who want.3PL watch the television
- b. Ava i figghioli chi vùannu mu guardanu a televisiùani.  
 have.3SG the children who want.3PL LINK watch.3PL the television  
 (Ciano, Calabria)  
 ‘The children want to watch TV.’

Given that the post-copular noun phrase is the argument of the following predicate, and the proform-plus-copula nexus has neither existential nor locative meaning, the logical structure of type (iv) *there* sentences must be identical to that of the corresponding constructions with SV order.

(Sardara, Sardinia)

- (119) a. C' è su dottori chi s' aspettatt. Sbrigeus!  
 PF be.3SG the doctor who us wait.3SG hurry-up.IMP.1PL  
 'The doctor is waiting for us, let's hurry up!'
- b. Su dottori s' aspettatt.  
 the doctor us wait.3SG  
 'The doctor is waiting for us.'
- (119) a'/ b'.wait' (dottori, 1PL).

#### 3.4.4 Synopsis

In this section we have discussed predication and argument realization in Italo-Romance and Sardinian *there* sentences. We have put forward an analysis of existential constructions which differentiates them from locatives and possessives, while capturing the morphosyntactic correspondences which characterize these constructions in Italo-Romance and Sardinian. We have differentiated between two logical structures for existential *there* sentences, on the basis of the referentiality of the pivot, although we have claimed that the pivot is not assigned a macrorole in either structure, given that it has the predicative function in the construction. Unlike the existential pivot, the post-copular noun phrase of inverse and deictic locatives, as well as presentational *there* sentences, is an argument, and can thus be assigned a macrorole. The failure of the post-copular noun phrase of inverse and deictic locatives to control agreement on the copula was tentatively ascribed to the effect of focus structure, a hypothesis which we will develop in Chapter 4.

### 3.5 Conclusion

After testing the locative hypothesis and the pivot-as-predicate hypothesis against our findings, we ruled out the former and adopted the latter. We distinguished between existential constructions with referential and non-referential pivots, and we advanced a proposal on the logical structure of each of these existential types. We then analysed the semantics of the other types of *there* sentence identified in Cruschina (2012b). An issue which we were not able to resolve in full is that of the crossdialectal variation in copula agreement in existentials, as well as in the other kinds of *there* sentence. This issue is key to the analysis of the Definiteness Effects in *there* sentences (Bentley 2013) and will be dealt with in the next chapter. Only after providing an exhaustive account of agreement will we be able to discuss semantics–syntax linking in *there* sentences in detail.

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# Definiteness effects and linking

DELIA BENTLEY

## 4.1 Definiteness effects: the Romance puzzle

This chapter provides an analysis of the definiteness effects, which are traditionally understood as constraints on the licensing of definite existential pivots. An example of a violation of the relevant restrictions in English is given in (1).

- (1) \*There are most students in my logic class.  
(Keenan 2003: 188)

The definiteness effects have dominated the debate on existential constructions. They have been attributed to syntactic properties of *there* sentences (Safir 1982, Belletti 1988, Freeze 1992, Moro 1997: 149–50), semantic or pragmatic properties of the pivot or its determiner (Milsark 1974, 1977, 1979, Heim 1987, Keenan 1987, 2003, Enç 1991, Zucchi 1995), the status of the pivot in the minds of the discourse participants (Rando and Napoli 1978, Ward and Birner 1995), the need for contextualization of pivots which presuppose existence (Abbott 1992, 1993), the organization of topical and focal information in discourse (Lumsden 1988, Francez 2007), or a combination of semantic and pragmatic factors (McNally 1992). The existing analyses either rely on constructed English examples (e.g. Milsark 1974, 1977, Zucchi 1995, Keenan 2003), or focus on elicited or naturally occurring data from individual languages (e.g. Ziv 1982 for Hebrew, Chung 1987 for Chamorro, Huang 1987 for Chinese, Enç 1991 for Turkish, Ward and Birner 1995 for English, Bentley 2004b for Sardinian, Cornilescu 2009 for Romanian).

While shedding light on the restrictions on the licensing of definite pivots, and the putative exceptions to these restrictions, these analyses fail to explain why, in some languages, definite post-copular noun phrases are more readily available in *there* sentences than they are in other languages (as noted e.g. by Moro 1993, 1997, Zamparelli 2000, Beaver et al. 2005, Leonetti 2008), and why some of the languages which admit definite post-copular noun phrases treat them differently from indefinite ones (see Jones 1993, La Fauci and Loporcaro 1993, 1997, Bentley 2013). Romance

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offers evidence of both kinds of deviation from the definiteness effects, defined in traditional terms. Example (2) shows that the ungrammatical English sentence in (1) has a grammatical and sensible counterpart in Italian, while examples (3a,b) illustrate the differential treatment of the post-copular noun phrase of *there* sentences in the Logudorese Sardinian dialect of Bonorva. Observe, in particular, the selection of a different copula in each example and the different patterns of copula agreement.

- (2) Nel mio corso di logica c'è la maggior parte degli studenti. (Italian)  
 in.the my class of logic PF be.3SG the greater part of.the students  
 'Most students are registered on my logic class.' Lit. In my logic class there are most students.
- (3) a. B' at pastores. (Bonorva, Sardinia)  
 PF have.3SG shepherds  
 'There are shepherds.'
- b. Bi sun sos pastores.  
 PF be.3PL the shepherds  
 'There are the shepherds', 'The shepherds are (t)here.'

Our starting point is the observation that a typologically adequate account of the definiteness effects ought to capture their crosslinguistic variation. It is on this variation that we focus in this chapter. In section 4.2 we consider the contrast between the languages which readily admit definite post-copular noun phrases in *there* sentences, for example Italian, and those which tend to reject them, for example English. We propose that this contrast depends on the way that the tension between the marking of focus and the encoding of the subject is resolved in different languages (Vallduví 1991, 1992, Grimshaw and Samek-Lodovici 1997, Van Valin 1999, Lambrecht 2000, Samek-Lodovici 2005). Italian readily accepts focal definites in post-copular position because it admits post-verbal subjects and requires post-verbal focus (in non-contrastive environments). By contrast, English can mark focus by means of the main pitch accent in any position in the clause (Ladd 1996), but it is less flexible in terms of the position of the subject in syntax. As a result, this language tends to exhibit in the pre-verbal subject position definite noun phrases that introduce new or focal information. This approach to the issue of the contrast between Italian-type languages and English-type languages does not predict that definites cannot be found in post-copular position in English. This is important, as an empirically adequate analysis must capture the occurrence of definite pivots in availability existentials (see §2.3.1). To predict when definites occur in post-copular position in languages of the English type, we adopt Beaver et al.'s (2005) approach to the definiteness effects, which relies on the insight that it is the subjecthood properties held by noun phrases that determine their realization as pre-copular subjects or as post-copular pivots.

The analysis developed in section 4.2 only accounts for the lack, in the dialects of our sample, of the restrictions that cause the ungrammaticality of examples like (1) in English. It does not explain, however, the differential treatment of the post-copular noun phrase of *there* sentences (cf. 3a,b). Given that there are genuine existentials with definite pivots, as was argued in section 3.2.2, this differential treatment is considered within our account of the definiteness effects of existential sentences.

We address this issue in section 4.3. In 4.3.1 and 4.3.2, we illustrate the range of agreement variation found in the *there* sentences of the dialects of our sample. Three principal patterns arise from this variation. First, there are languages—for example the Salentino dialects of Soletto and Martano (see Map 4)—which deny the control of agreement to both definite and indefinite immediately post-copular noun phrases of *there* sentences. A second group of dialects, including a number of Sardinian dialects and a great deal of northern Italo-Romance dialects, only treat a subset of post-copular noun phrases as controllers of verb agreement.<sup>1</sup> The subset of agreement controllers never includes indefinites to the exclusion of definites—a result which will prove to be relevant to our analysis. Finally, in the dialect of Palmanova (spoken in Friuli), standard Italian, the Nuorese Sardinian dialect of Fonni, some central Italo-Romance dialects, and the majority of the southern dialects, both definite and indefinite post-copular noun phrases are controllers (see Maps 1 and 3). In sections 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 we propose an analysis of agreement in terms of subject canonicity, taking into consideration the findings from non-copular VS sentences first introduced in 3.3.1. In section 4.3.5 we consider the implications of our analysis vis-à-vis the impersonal hypothesis of existential constructions and of other VS sentences (Perlmutter 1983, Reuland and ter Meulen 1987, Belletti 1988, La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997, Lambrecht 2000, Czinglar 2002). We conclude our treatment of the definiteness effects by arguing that these are not mere constraints on the *licensing* of definite existential pivots, as was previously assumed, but rather restrictions on both the *licensing* and the *coding* of existential pivots (see §4.3.6). These cannot be properly captured unless reference is made to subject canonicity, and they must be analysed at the discourse–semantics–syntax interface.

Having considered subjecthood in *there* sentences, we are then able to provide a fully-fledged analysis of semantics–syntax linking in these sentences (see §4.4). This is based on Van Valin's (2005: 128–49) linking algorithm introduced in 1.3.2. Starting from macrorole assignment and the morphosyntactic coding of the arguments, we proceed to the layered structure of *there* sentences and the linking to the Constituent Projection. In our analysis of Italo-Romance and Sardinian existentials, the pivot is not endowed with lexical entailments and is not assigned a macrorole. In fact, it is the predicate of the existential construction, since it provides the implicit

<sup>1</sup> The majority of the northern Italo-Romance dialects figure in Map 2 (ESSE –agreement) because they only exhibit agreement with 1st and 2nd—or 1st, 2nd, and 3rd—person pronominal pivots.

argument *x* to the construction. The pivot may nonetheless control finite number agreement on the copula by virtue of a property that it shares with arguments, referentiality. The mismatch between the predicative function of the pivot and its control of agreement is explained in terms of the syntactic requirement of a subject. Like existentials, inverse and deictic locatives have a referential phrase as their predicate. Unlike existentials, these structures do have a macrorole argument available for the control of number agreement on the copula. We explain the failure for this argument to control agreement, in the dialects of the first two groups mentioned above, in terms of the effect of discourse on predication. In particular, we claim that, since the locative predicate is defocused, it cannot properly endow the argument with lexical entailments. Our analysis sheds light on the pervasive role of discourse at all stages in the linking. Some conclusions are drawn together in section 4.5.

## 4.2 Subject canonicity and word order

It is well known that the position of the subject is more flexible in pro-drop languages than in languages that do not allow pro-drop. In the Chomskyan literature (e.g. Chomsky 1981, Rizzi 1982, Burzio 1986: 85–102), the rich verbal inflection of the former type of language is claimed to license *pro* in subject position. *Pro* can be interpreted as a definite pronoun. In contrast, the verbal inflection of non-null-subject languages like English does not license *pro*. Since *pro* satisfies the Extended Projection Principle (Chomsky 1982), i.e. the requirement of a syntactic subject in subject position, pro-drop languages allow subject inversion (cf. 4a, c), unlike non-pro-drop languages such as English (4b,d).

- (4) a. È arrivato Gianni. (Italian)  
       be.3SG arrived John  
       b. John (has) arrived. (English)  
       c. Ha telefonato Maria. (Italian)  
       have.3SG telephoned Mary  
       d. Mary (has) telephoned (here/us). (English)

In RRG, pro-drop is conceived of as partial head marking (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 331–2). Similarly to bound pronouns in head marking languages, the verbal inflection can cross-reference noun phrase arguments in pro-drop languages. Therefore, the subject can occur in a position that is not its canonical position, or be omitted altogether.

Subject inversion is known to be related to the expression of focus (Belletti 2001, 2004). Indeed, in Optimality Theory, the contrast between English and Italian illustrated above is claimed to result from the language-specific ranking of syntactic, prosodic, and focus-marking constraints (Samek-Lodovici 2005, and, for a previous proposal of the same kind, Grimshaw and Samek-Lodovici 1997).

Lambrecht (2000) points out that, across languages, the subject of sentence-focus constructions behaves differently from the subject of predicate-focus constructions, but similarly to the focal object of transitives. In some languages, for example English, sentence-focus constructions normally exhibit prosodic inversion: the subject is stressed, while the verb phrase is not. Compared with predicate focus, where the verb phrase is stressed and the subject is not, this is the reverse prosodic pattern. In other languages, for example Italian, sentence-focus constructions are characterized by syntactic inversion, with the subject taking the post-verbal position, and thus the default position of the transitive object, at least in terms of surface linear order.

Elaborating proposals by Vallduví (1991, 1992) and Lambrecht (1994), among others, Van Valin (1999) claims that English is syntactically more rigid and pragmatically more flexible than Italian. In particular, this language allows any position in the clause to be marked as focal by means of pitch accent (see also Ladd 1996: 179, 193–5). In terms of the Layered Structure of the Clause (see §1.3.2), in English, the Potential Focus Domain extends to the entire clause. Due to the possibility of prosodic expression of focus *in situ*, the focal status of S need not affect SV order. Importantly, this analysis does not predict that English will not allow word order variation for pragmatic purposes. In fact, examples of this variation are found in the constructions which are normally referred to as locative inversion (cf. 5a) and *there* insertion (cf. 5b) (e.g. Hoekstra and Mulder 1990, Birner and Ward 1993, Birner 1994, Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995: 215–77). In existential constructions (cf. 5c), the pivot takes the post-copular position.

- (5) a. In the distance appeared the spires of a town.  
 (Adapted from Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995: 218)
- b. There arrived many tourists at the station.
- c. There is no pasta left over from lunchtime.

In these structures, the focal noun phrase can occur post-verbally because the Potential Focus Domain includes the post-verbal portion of the clause in English.

By contrast with English, Italian limits the domain of non-contrastive focus to post-verbal syntax. In terms of the Layered Structure of the Clause, the Potential Focus Domain includes any clause-internal post-nuclear position. Accordingly, non-contrastive focus on S is expressed obligatorily by VS order. Similarly to Italian, the majority of the dialects of our sample have flexible syntax and rigid focus structure, in Van Valin's (1999) sense. Accordingly, they exhibit VS order in argument and sentence-focus *there* sentences (cf. 6a–c, 7a–c, and, respectively, 8a–c), as well as intransitive constructions with verbal predicates (cf. 9a–c).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> VS order is also found in transitive constructions with a pronominal object. As for transitive constructions with a non-pronominal post-verbal object, VS order is reported in the literature on some SVO languages, including some of the dialects of our sample (Vattuone 1975, Forner 1997: 251, Marten 2006).





The Sardinian and Sicilian dialects that allow non-contrastive fronting, i.e. non-contrastive narrow focus in pre-nuclear position (see §2.4.1), could be considered to be exceptional from this point of view. Indeed, the Potential Focus Domain must be assumed to include one or more pre-nuclear positions in these dialects (Bentley 2008, 2010b). However, pre-nuclear argument focus is not free, but rather associated with a number of prosodic, syntactic, and semantic or contextual restrictions, in these dialects (Jones 1993, 2013, Bentley 2010b, Mensching and Remberger 2010, Remberger 2010, Cruschina 2012a). For the purposes of the current discussion it should be observed that non-contrastive focus can also be marked with VS order in the dialects under discussion (cf. 6c, 7c, 8c, 9c). In fact, post-verbal focus is not associated with any of these restrictions. In addition, in sentence focus, the relevant dialects only admit VS order (see §2.4.1).

The fact that Italian and the dialects of our sample exhibit VS order in inverse and deictic locative *there* sentences (cf. 6a–c, 7a–c), while English does not (cf. 6d, 7d), can thus be explained in terms of the extension of the Potential Focus Domain in these languages, and their relative syntactic flexibility or rigidity. What is not captured by this approach is the rationale of the contrast observed in English between, on the one hand, locative predications with a focal definite subject in pre-copular position (cf. 6d, 7d) and, on the other hand, availability existentials with a focal definite pivot in post-copular position. An example of the latter type of structure is given here.

(10) If you want to get to Terminal 4, THERE'S THE AIRPORT SHUTTLE.

To explain this contrast, we draw upon Beaver et al. (2005). Pursuing an idea first advanced by Mikkelsen (2002), Beaver et al. (2005) argue that the definiteness effects are epiphenomena of markedness constraints on the subject. These constraints align the grammatical function subject with noun phrase properties that are normally spelled out by definiteness. On the basis of the results of quantitative corpus analysis of English and Dutch, as well as further evidence from Hebrew and Russian, Beaver et al. (2005) establish the following hierarchy of noun phrase classes, whereby each class is less likely to be found in pivot function than those to its right.

(11) Local pronouns > non-local pronouns > proportional NPs > definite descriptions > prototypical indefinites > downward monotone NPs

Local pronouns are first- and second-person pronouns, whereas non-local pronouns are third-person. In some corpora, proportional noun phrases (e.g. *the majority of NP*) rank as high as personal pronouns, the ranking illustrated in (11) pertaining to the analysis of the largest English corpus. By 'prototypical indefinites', Beaver et al. (2005) mean whichever indefinites are most common in a language. Finally, a clear case of low-ranking downward monotone noun phrase class is provided by *at most n*, and its equivalents in other languages.



in subject position, this argument tests out as a subject in Italian in terms of the control of number agreement on the verb, a point which we will discuss in section 4.3.

In the last analysis, the principal contrast between English and Italian does not concern existential constructions *strictu sensu*, but rather inverse and deictic locatives, i.e. types (ii) and (iii) of Cruschina's (2012b) typology. Availability existentials must be assumed to abide by comparable restrictions crosslinguistically (Abbott 1992, 1993). Thus, we pointed out in sections 3.2.2 and 3.4.1 (see also Bentley 2013) that availability existentials cannot be negated, as the pivot is in the scope of negation, and it makes no sense to negate the existence of an individual or an entity whose existence has already been established in discourse (Enç 1991). We take this to be a crosslinguistically valid restriction. The examples in (12a,b) suggest that this is true of English.

- (12) a. We can have fun tonight: \*there aren't your parents.  
 b. You need something to hold the door? \*Well, there isn't the heavy book that we used last time.

Beaver et al. (2005) claim that the crosslinguistic variation in the definiteness effects depends on the different extents that the properties held by the noun phrase classes in (11) count towards subjecthood across languages. From the above discussion it might seem that the hierarchy in (11) is irrelevant to our analysis of the definiteness effects. On the contrary, Beaver et al.'s intuition is key to the understanding of the differential marking of the pivot (cf. 3a,b), to which we now turn.

### 4.3 Subject canonicity and agreement

In the previous section we discussed the occurrence of definite noun phrases in the post-copular position of *there* sentences. We did not capture, however, the differential marking of the post-copular noun phrase of *there* sentences by means of agreement control (cf. 3a,b). In this section we address this issue, building upon Bentley (2013) and Bentley et al. (2013a). In 4.3.1, we illustrate the extent of variation in the differential marking found in the dialects of our sample. In 4.3.2, we discuss INDE-cliticized pivots, which in many dialects constitute a class of their own. In 4.3.3, we analyse this variation in terms of specificity effects in Romance *there* sentences. In 4.3.4, we propose a crossdialectal account of finite number agreement, revisiting Beaver et al.'s (2005) theory of the definiteness effects. In 4.3.5 we propose that lack of agreement with the post-copular noun phrase of existential *there* sentences amounts to agreement with the higher, implicit, argument. Our conclusions are drawn together in 4.3.6.

## 4.3.1 The differential marking of the post-copular noun phrase

Recall from section 3.3.1 that by finite agreement we mean agreement on the form of the verb that would normally spell out person and number agreement feature values (*are in the boys are here*). Recall also that we constrain the analysis to number agreement, in the light of Manzini and Savoia's (2005: 34) suggestion that lack of number agreement with a third-person post-copular noun phrase could amount to partial—or person—agreement. In accordance with Bentley's (2013) results on Romance, we found that the Italo-Romance and Sardinian dialects can be divided into three principal types on the basis of finite number agreement in *there* sentences. A group of dialects denies agreement control to all classes of post-copular noun phrase in *there* sentences, regardless of definiteness. We will call these type (i) dialects. Another group of dialects only exhibits agreement with a subclass of post-copular noun phrases, which can be defined in terms of definiteness. We will call these type (ii) dialects. Lastly, we identified a dialect group, which we will call type (iii), exhibiting agreement with all post-copular noun phrases, regardless of definiteness. Italian belongs to this group. These findings are illustrated in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1 Dialect typology based on copula agreement with post-copular NP in *there* sentences

Type	Number agreement
Type (i)	– agreement
Type (ii)	± agreement by class
Type (iii)	+ agreement

As the reader will have realized, on the basis of the results presented in Chapter 3, type (i) was found in the dialects of Soletto and Martano, spoken in Salento, Apulia. Some dialects of Calabria can be said to belong to the same type, in that the alternation of two copulas, agreeing *ESSE* and invariant *HABERE*, does not depend on the definiteness of the controller, but rather on the encroaching of a prestigious agreement pattern promoted by the Italian model (agreeing *ESSE*) on an autochthonous pattern (invariant *HABERE*). Type (i) is illustrated in (13) and (14). In (13a–c) the form of the copula is invariant *ave*, i.e. third-person singular *HABERE*, regardless of the number and definiteness of the post-copular noun phrase: *mie* ‘me’, *nui* ‘us’, *li piccinni* ‘the children’, *tanti samenti* ‘many seeds’, etc.

- (13) a. La Maria no stae sula. (Soletto, Apulia)  
 the Mary NEG stay.3SG alone  
 Ave a mie /a tie / a nui / quiddhi.  
 have.3SG ACC me ACC you ACC us them  
 ‘Mary is not alone. There’s me/you/us/them.’

- b. No potimu divorziare: ave li piccinni.  
 NEG can.IPL divorce.INF have.3SG the children  
 ‘We cannot divorce: there’re the children.’
- c. Statte attenta ca intru a sta frutta ave tanti samenti.  
 Stay.IMP.2SG.REFL careful that inside to this fruit have.3SG many seeds  
 ‘Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.’

By way of comparison, in (14a,b), we report two canonical—i.e. SV—copular constructions of the same dialect, where the copula *STARE* ‘stay’ agrees with the pre-copular noun phrase in number: *stannu*, third plural ‘stay’, agrees with *li sciucamani* ‘the towels’ in (14a), while in (14b) *stae*, third singular ‘stay’, agrees with *la Maria* ‘Mary’.

- (14) a. Li sciucamani stannu intru lu cassettu. (Soletto, Apulia)  
 the towels stay.3PL in the drawer  
 ‘The towels are in the drawer.’
- b. La Maria no stae sula.  
 the Mary NEG stay.3SG alone  
 ‘Mary is not alone.’

Type (ii) is defined by differential agreement: the copula only agrees with one subset of post-copular noun phrases, which can be defined in definiteness terms. The extent of the controlling subset varies across dialects, although the subset of agreement controllers never includes indefinites to the exclusion of definites. Thus, in many of the northern Italian dialects (see Map 2), only first- and second-person pronouns control agreement on the copula of *there* sentences (cf. 15) (see also Benincà 1997: 123, Manzini and Savoia 2005: 60). The same pattern was found in the Nuorese Sardinian dialect of Orgosolo (see Map 4) (cf. 16).

- (15) a. Maria no la è mia sola. (Bovolone, Veneto)  
 Mary NEG SCL.3SG.F be.3SG NEG alone  
 Te ghe si ti. Ghe semo nialtri. Gh’ è lori.  
 SCL.2SG PF be.2SG you PF be.1PL we PF be.3SG they  
 ‘Mary is not alone. There’s you/us/them.’
- b. No podémo mà divorsiar: gh’ è i butini.  
 NEG can.IPL NEG divorce.INF PF be.3SG the children  
 ‘We cannot divorce: there’re the children.’
- c. In sti fruti qua gh’ è tante miòle.  
 in these fruit.PL here PF be.3SG many seeds  
 ‘In this fruit there are many seeds.’

- (16) a. Maria no est sola. (Orgosolo, Sardinia)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone  
 Bi so eo, bi ses tue, bi semos nois, b' at issos.  
 PF be.1SG I PF be.2SG you PF be.1PL we PF have.3SG they  
 'Mary is not alone. There's me/you/us/them.'
- b. Non podimos isparzire: b' at sos pitzinnos.  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF PF have.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Ista attentu! In custa frutta b' at medas semenes.  
 stay.IMP.2SG careful in this fruit PF have.3SG many seeds  
 'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'

In (17) and (18) we report examples of canonical copular constructions in Bovolone and Orgosolo, respectively, where the pre-copular noun phrase controls agreement. In most northeastern dialects, the third-person singular copula is syncretic with the third-person plural one (see §1.1.1). However, agreement is spelled out on the subject clitic. Since the third-person masculine plural clitic *i* does not figure in *gh'è lori* in (15a), or in (15b), while it does occur obligatorily in canonical copular constructions (cf. 17a), we take the copula to be singular in (15a,b) and plural in (17a) (15c lacks the third-person feminine plural clitic *le*).

- (17) a. I sugamani i è nel caseto. (Bovolone, Veneto)  
 the towels SCL.3PL be.3PL in.the drawer  
 'The towels are in the drawer.'
- b. Maria no la è mia sola.  
 Mary NEG SCL.3SG.F be.3SG NEG alone  
 'Mary is not alone.'
- (Orgosolo, Sardinia)
- (18) a. Tzertas iscolas qi suni in Orgosolo non suni bonas.  
 Some schools which be.3PL in Orgosolo NEG be.3PL good  
 'Some of the schools in Orgosolo are not good.'
- b. Maria no est sola.  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone  
 'Mary is not alone.'

In the *there* sentences of some Gallo-Italian dialects (the Ligurian dialect of Rocchetta Cairo, Milanese, etc.) and in the Tuscan dialect of Florence (see Map 2), personal pronouns are agreement controllers, regardless of person variation, whereas other post-copular noun phrases are not. Outside Italy the same pattern is found in Catalan (Ramos Alfajarín 2002). This pattern is illustrated with Florentine data in (19a–c), while in (20a,b) we exemplify agreement in SV copular constructions in Florentine.

- (19) a. La Maria la unn' è sola. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 the Mary SCL.3SG.F NEG be.3SG alone  
 Ci **sono** io. Tu ci **sei** te  
 PF be.1SG I SCL.2SG PF be.2SG you  
 E ci **siamo** noi. E ci **son** loro.  
 SCL.1PL PF be.1PL we SCL.3PL PF be.3PL they  
 'Mary is not alone. There's me/you/us/them.'
- b. Un si pò divorziare: c' è i bambini.  
 NEG IMPERS can.3SG divorce.INF PF be.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Sta attenta che in questa frutta c' è tanti semi.  
 stay.IMP.2SG careful that in this fruit PF be.3SG many seeds  
 'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- (20) a. Gli asciugamani (e) **sono** n' i cassetto. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 the towels SCL.3PL be.3PL in the drawer  
 'The towels are in the drawer.'
- b. La Maria la unn' è sola.  
 the Mary SCL.3SG.F NEG be.3SG alone  
 'Mary is not alone.'

There are then dialects which exhibit agreement with all definite post-copular noun phrases, but not with indefinite ones. This pattern of differential agreement was first discovered by Jones (1993) and La Fauci and Loporcaro (1993, 1997) in Nuorese and Logudorese dialects of Sardinia, respectively. The results of our investigations corroborate these findings, indicating that the pattern in question is widespread in Sardinia and characterizes a number of archaic varieties of Campidanese (southern Sardinian; see also Bentley 2011), in addition to Nuorese and Logudorese dialects. On the other hand, the same pattern was not found in other dialects of our sample. Outside Italy, agreement alternation in accordance with the definiteness of the post-copular noun phrase is found in European Spanish, Galician, and European Portuguese (Bentley 2013). An interesting contrast emerges from the comparative analysis of Sardinian with the other Romance languages mentioned. In particular, in some Sardinian dialects, a subset of indefinite post-copular noun phrases controls agreement, on a par with definite noun phrases (cf. 22a,b). We provide relevant evidence from Bonese (Logudorese Sardinian) here.

- (21) a. Maria no est sola. (Bono, Sardinia)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone  
 Bi **so** eo. Bi **ses** tue. Bi **semus** nois. Bi **sun** issos.  
 PF be.1SG I PF be.2SG you PF be.1PL we PF be.3PL they  
 'Mary is not alone. There's me/you/us/them.'

- b. Non podimus bessire fora 'e pare: bi sun sos piseddos.  
 NEG can.1PL go.INF out of couple PF be.3PL the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Ista attenta ca in custa frutta b' at medas semenes.  
 stay.IMP.2SG careful that in this fruit PF have.3SG many seeds  
 'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- (22) a. Bi sun duos de cuddos paccos. (Bono, Sardinia)  
 PF be.3PL two of those parcels  
 'There are two of those parcels.' 'Two of those parcels are here.'
- b. B' est un' isveglia chi funtzionat in custa domo: sa mia.  
 PF be.3SG one alarm.clock which function.IND.3SG in this house the mine  
 'There is one alarm clock that works in this house: mine.'

The data in (21a–c) exemplify the definiteness split which also characterizes other Romance languages: definites are controllers, and hence co-occur with agreeing ESSE (cf. 21a,b), whereas indefinites are not, and hence require invariant HABERE (cf. 21c). The data in (22a,b) are at odds with a differential pattern that is purely determined in terms of morphosyntactic definiteness. Both *duos de cuddos paccos* 'two of those parcels' and *un'isveglia* 'an alarm clock' control agreement here, although they are not formally marked as definite. Observe also that, in the presence of a negation operator, agreement is not found in the structure in (22b) (cf. 23), as suggested by the selection of the invariant copula 'have'. We return to this pattern in section 4.3.3.

- (23) Non b' at un'isveglia chi funtzionet! (Bono, Sardinia)  
 NEG PF have.3SG one alarm.clock which function.SBJV.3SG  
 'There is not one single alarm clock that works!'

Type (iii) is defined by consistent agreement with all post-copular noun phrases, regardless of definiteness. This pattern was found in a Venetan dialect spoken in Palmanova (Friuli), in the Nuorese Sardinian dialect of Fonni, and in a great deal of dialects of central and southern Italy, with the copulas ESSE and STARE (see Maps 1 and 3). As was mentioned above, this is also the Italian pattern.

- (24) a. Maria nunn' è sula. (Modica, Sicily)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone  
 Ci si tu. Ci siemu niatri. Ci su(nu) iddi  
 PF be.2SG you PF be.1PL we PF be.3PL they  
 'Mary is not alone. There's you/us/them.'
- b. Nun ni putièmu spàttiri: ci su' i picciriddi.  
 NEG REFL can.1PL separate.INF PF be.3PL the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'





TABLE 4.2 Definiteness of NP and control of finite number agreement

Definiteness of NP	Dialect-specific finite number control threshold
	← Soletto (Salento, Apulia)
1st- and 2nd-person pronouns	
	← Orgosolo (Sardinia), Bovolone (Veneto)
3rd-person pronouns	
	← Florence (Tuscany), Rocchetta Cairo (Liguria)
Definite NPs (+ some indefinites)	
	← Bono (Sardinian)
Indefinite NPs	
	← Modica (Sicily), San Lupo (Campania), Italian

post-copular pronouns control agreement, regardless of grammatical person, while the other noun phrase classes fail to do so, and so on. Observe that the classes in the left-hand column of Table 4.2 correspond to the noun phrase classes identified by Beaver et al. (2005) on the basis of corpus analysis (though, admittedly, we do not have sufficient evidence on proportional and downward monotone noun phrases)—a result which can hardly be considered to be purely fortuitous.

While the majority of the dialects of our sample fit squarely one of the three types mentioned above, we also found some dialects with optional agreement in *there* sentences. Thus, in Tuscan dialects other than Florentine (Grosseto, Livorno, Pontedera, and Siena), we found obligatory agreement with personal pronouns (cf. 27a) and optional agreement with other post-copular noun phrases (cf. 27b,c). In SV copular constructions, on the other hand, agreement is always obligatory (cf. 28).

- (27) a. Maria unn' è sola. (Siena, Tuscany)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone  
 Ci siamo noi, ci so' loro.  
 PF be.1PL we PF be.3PL they  
 'Mary is not alone. There's us/them'
- b. Nn si pò divorzià: c' è / ci sono i figlioli.  
 NEG IMPERS can.3SG divorce.INF PF be.3SG PF be.3PL the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children'
- c. In questa frutta c' è / ci so' tanti semi.  
 in this fruit PF be.3SG PF be.3PL many seeds  
 'In this fruit there are many seeds'

- (28) a. L' asciugamani **so'** nel cassetto. (Siena, Tuscany)  
 the towels be.3PL in.the drawer  
 'The towels are in the drawer.'
- b. Maria **unn' è** sola.  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone  
 'Mary is not alone.'

Optional agreement with post-copular noun phrases was also found in the Abruzzese dialect of Castiglione Messer Marino, with the copula *STARE* 'stay' (cf. 29), and the Pugliese dialect which we refer to as Lecce II, with *ESSE* (cf. 30).<sup>4</sup> Personal pronouns control agreement obligatorily (cf. 31a,b).

- (29) Cə **sta** / cə **stannə** ddù crəstiean a la porta.  
 PF stay.3SG PF stay.3PL two people at the door  
 'There are two people at the door.' (Castiglione Messer Marino, Abruzzo)
- (30) Sutta lu liettu (n)c' **ete** /(n)ci **suntu** tre pacchi. (Lecce II, Apulia)  
 under the bed PF be.3SG PF be.3PL three parcels  
 'Under the bed there are three parcels.'
- (31) a. Cə **stəé** tu / cə **stemə** nu / cə **stannə** lórə.  
 PF stay.2SG you PF stay.1PL we PF stay.3PL they  
 (Castiglione Messer Marino, Abruzzo)
- b. Ci **sinti** tie / ci **simu** nui / ci **suntu** iddri su la foto.  
 PF be.2SG you PF be.1PL we PF be.3PL they on the photo  
 (Lecce II, Apulia)
- 'There's you/us/them (on the photo).'

Given that the dialects with optional agreement exhibit a split between pronominal and nominal controllers, these dialects can be considered to be a subclass of type (ii) from Table 4.1.

#### 4.3.2 The case of pivots with *INDE-cliticization*

As explained previously (see §§2.3.2, 3.3.3), *INDE-cliticized* pivots are split in syntax because they are split in information structure. When overt, the focal quantifier figures in the immediately post-copular position. The topical restrictor of the quantification figures in a clause-external position, if it is a referential topic, or in a Periphery of the Core, if it is an aboutness topic (cf. 32B and 33, respectively).

- (32) A: Vedi **quante** uova ci sono in frigo. (Italian)  
 see.IMP.2SG how.many eggs PF be.3PL in fridge  
 'Look how many eggs there are in the fridge.'

<sup>4</sup> We distinguish Lecce II from Lecce I because the former dialect does not exhibit *STARE*.

B: (Uova,) penso che ce n(e) siano / è otto.  
 eggs think.1SG that PF INDE be.SBJV.3PL be.3SG eight  
 ‘(Eggs,) I think that there are eight.’

- (33) Castagni auannu un ci nni su’ / è. (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 chestnuts this.year NEG PF INDE be.3PL be.3SG  
 ‘Chestnuts, this year there are none.’

Interestingly, INDE-cliticized pivots turned out to be the class of pivots that is the most resilient to the control of agreement in *there* sentences (see Bentley et al. 2013a and, with regard to the Nuorese Sardinian dialect of Fonni, Bentley 2011). Their failure to control agreement is expected in the dialects of type (ii), since post-copular indefinites do not control agreement in these dialects. In dialects with optional agreement, which we indicate below as type (ii.a), agreement is normally optional with post-copular INDE-cliticized noun phrases. In Lecce II, however, such noun phrases never control agreement.

- (34) Oe, intru lu frigu, (n)ci nn’ ete / \*(n)ci nne suntu uettu.  
 eggs inside the fridge PF INDE be.3SG PF INDE be.3PL eight  
 (Lecce II, Apulia)  
 ‘Eggs, in the fridge, there are eight.’

Our dialect sample does not offer much relevant evidence from type (i), since the dialects of Soleto and Martano lack INDE cliticization. However, in the Calabrian dialects where an autochthonous pattern of type (i) competes with a pattern of type (iii), the type (iii) pattern is not attested with INDE-cliticized pivots. Observe the contrast between (35A) and (35B): while agreeing ESSE figures in (35A), invariant HABERE is required with the INDE cliticized pivot in (35B).

- (35) A: Vide quant’ ova nci sugnu nt o frigu. (Acquaro, Calabria)  
 see.IMP.2SG how.many eggs PF be.3PL in the fridge  
 ‘See how many eggs there are in the fridge.’  
 B: Criju ca nd’ ava uattu.  
 believe.1SG that INDE have.3SG eight  
 ‘I believe that there are eight (eggs).’

To be sure, whether the bound form *nd* resumes the topic *ova* ‘eggs’, in (35B), is a moot point, given that this bound form is also attested as an existential proform, and it tends to be lexicalized as part of the verb ‘have’ in Calabrian (see §§1.2, 3.2.1). In Acquaro, however, we also recorded bare *ava*, lit. ‘has’, as the third-person singular copula in *there* sentences (cf. 36). This suggests that *nd* could be a resumptive pronoun in (35B).

- (36) Chi ava sutt’ o liettu? (Acquaro, Calabria)  
 what have.3SG under the bed  
 ‘What’s under the bed?’

As for dialects of type (iii), in the Lucanian dialect of Potenza, INDE-cliticized noun phrases obligatorily control agreement on the copula (cf. 37B). By contrast, in Italian, INDE-cliticized noun phrases optionally control copula agreement (cf. 32B above). In the Calabrian dialect of San Tommaso, a third dialect of type (iii), INDE-cliticized noun phrases never control copula agreement (cf. 38B).

(Potenza, Basilicata)

(37) A: Virə        quanda    ovə    ngə    só        ində    a    u    frigoriferə.  
 see.IMP.2SG how.many    eggs    PF    be.3PL    inside    to    the    fridge  
 ‘See how many eggs there are in the fridge.’

B: Penzə        ca        ngə    nə        só        ottə.  
 think.1SG    that    PF    INDE    be.3PL    eight  
 ‘I think that there are eight (eggs).’

(San Tommaso, Calabria)

(38) A: Vide        quant’    ova    ce    su        ntr’    o        frigoriferu.  
 see.IMP.2SG how.many    eggs    PF    be.3PL    in        the        fridge  
 ‘See how many eggs there are in the fridge.’

B: Mi        pare        ca        ci    nd’    è        uattu  
 to.me    seem.3SG    that    PF    INDE    be.3SG    eight  
 ‘I think that there are eight (eggs).’

Our results on agreement with INDE-cliticized pivots are summarized in Table 4.3. Since INDE-cliticization may hinder agreement in types (ii.a) and (iii), which would otherwise allow or require number agreement on the copula of *there* sentences, these findings suggest that INDE-cliticized noun phrases have properties which make them worse candidates for the control of agreement than their non-INDE-cliticized counterparts.

TABLE 4.3 Patterns of copula agreement with INDE-cliticized pivots

Dialect type	+ agreement	± agreement	– agreement
Type (i)			(Acquaro)
Type (ii)			(Florence, Bono)
Type (ii.a)		(Siena)	(Lecce II)
Type (iii)	(Potenza)	(Italian)	(San Tommaso)

In the next sections, we will explore the rationale of the variation in agreement introduced above, starting from the noun phrase properties that are relevant to the control of agreement.

4.3.3 *Specificity effects*

The evidence discussed above suggests that, in the dialects of our survey, finite number agreement in *there* sentences is sensitive to a definiteness hierarchy, which ranges from first- and second-person pronouns, at the maximally definite end, to indefinite nouns, at the maximally indefinite end (see the left-hand column of Table 4.2). Although the definiteness hierarchy has received much attention in the specialist literature (see e.g. Silverstein 1976, Comrie 1981, Wierzbicka 1981, Croft 1990: 128–32, Lyons 1999: 213–15, Aissen 2003: 445, Kiparsky 2008), there is no consensus on its semantic and pragmatic correlates. Following Bentley (2013), we take definiteness in Italo-Romance and Sardinian to correlate with activation, accessibility (Chafe 1987) and specificity (Enç 1991). First- and second-person pronouns refer to speech act participants (SAP), which are accessible, i.e. situationally available (Chafe 1987, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 200–201), and uniquely individuated in the discourse context (Benveniste 1966: 230). Third-person pronouns, while failing to refer to participants in the discourse context, nonetheless refer to active or accessible referents. These are arguments which are referred to by a pronoun because they are either in the current focus of attention or otherwise situationally, inferentially, or textually available (Chafe 1987, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 200–201). Both personal pronouns and definite noun phrases (proper names or noun phrases with a definite determiner) are subclasses of specifics (Enç 1991: 9), in that they are linked to a previously established individual or set by a relation of identity.

To test personal pronouns and definite noun phrases for specificity a simple compatibility test was run, following Bentley (2013: 687). Specifics in the sense of identity are not compatible with a question with ‘which’. For example, it makes no sense to reply to the statement in (39A) with the question ‘Which children?’ (cf. 39B), unless a genuine misunderstanding has occurred. Contrastingly, the same question is felicitous in the context of the statement in (40A), since ‘some children’ is not specific (cf. 40B).

- (39) A: Non possiamo divorziare: ci sono i bambini. (Italian)  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF PF be.3PL the children  
 ‘We cannot divorce: there’re the children.’  
 B: # Quali bambini?  
 which children  
 ‘Which children?’
- (40) A: Non possiamo guardare questo film: ci sono dei bambini. (Italian)  
 NEG can.1PL watch.INF this film PF be.3PL some children  
 ‘We cannot watch this film: there are some children.’  
 B: Quali bambini?  
 which children  
 ‘Which children?’

Another kind of specificity is defined as partitivity, or a relation of inclusion in an established set (Enç 1991: 10). Specificity in the sense of inclusion is the property of the Bonese Sardinian noun phrases which behave as controllers despite not being overtly marked for definiteness. Thus, in (41a) (cf. 22a), the post-copular numeral *duos* ‘two’ individuates a subset of the established set *cuddos paccos* ‘those parcels’, while the noun phrase *un’isveglia* ‘an alarm clock’ in (41b) (cf. 22b) is singled out among the set of alarm clocks in the house.<sup>5</sup>

- (41) a. Bi sun duos de cuddos paccos. (Bono, Sardinia)  
 PF be.3PL two of those parcels  
 ‘There are two of those parcels.’
- b. B’ est un’ isveglia chi funtzionat in custa domo: sa mia.  
 PF be.3SG one alarm.clock which function.IND.3SG in this house the mine  
 ‘There is only one alarm clock which works in this house: mine.’

Recall now that the counterpart of (41b) in (42) (cf. 23) exhibits no finite number agreement, as testified by the selection of the invariant copula ‘have’.

- (42) Non b’ at un’isveglia chi funtzionet! (Bono, Sardinia)  
 NEG PF have.3SG one alarm.clock which function.SBJV.3SG  
 ‘There is not one single alarm clock which works well!’

This result is explained in the context of the hypothesis that specifics cannot be negated because their existence in a relevant world is already established in discourse (see §3.2.2). In accordance with this hypothesis, *un’isveglia* ‘an alarm clock’ in (42) contrasts with its counterpart in (41b) in that it is non-partitive and thus non-specific, as is also suggested by the subjunctive mood on *funtzionet* ‘function.SBJV.3SG’ in (42), which contrasts with the indicative mood on *funtzionat* ‘function.IND.3SG’ in (41b). We refer to Lambrecht (1994: 81) for the Romance alternation of indicative and subjunctive mood to mark specificity or lack thereof. The lack of specificity of the pivot in (42) results in its failure to control agreement in Bonese.

Similarly, the post-copular noun phrases in (43a) and (43b) do not refer to a subset, or a unique member, of an established set, and thus they are not partitive. The result is lack of agreement.

- (43) a. B’ at duos fiores subra sa mesa. (Bono, Sardinia)  
 PF have.3SG two flowers on the table  
 ‘There are two flowers on the table.’
- b. B’ at un omine in sa ianna.  
 PF have.3SG a man in the door  
 ‘There is a man at the door.’

<sup>5</sup> This example was elicited in the following context: ‘Imagine that you are talking about the objects in this house and you want to say that only one alarm clock in the house works.’

TABLE 4.4 Specificity of NP and control of finite number agreement

Specificity of NP	Dialect-specific finite number control threshold
	← Soletto (Salento, Apulia)
Specifics: SAPs	
	← Orgosolo (Sardinia), Bovolone (Veneto)
Specifics: active or accessible	
	← Florence (Tuscany), Rocchetta Cairo (Liguria)
Specifics: identity and inclusion	
	← Bono (Sardinian)
Non-specifics	
	← Modica (Sicily), San Lupo (Campania), Italian

We refer to Bentley (2013: 688) for further evidence in support of the analysis of the class of non-definite controllers in Bonese as specifics in the sense of inclusion or partitivity.

The scrutiny of the noun phrase classes in the left-hand column of Table 4.2 leads to the conclusion that finite number agreement on the copula exhibits variation in accordance with the specificity of the post-copular noun phrase. In this light, Table 4.2 can be revised as shown in Table 4.4.

The bottom row of the right-hand column of Table 4.4 represents the dialects which require finite number agreement regardless of the specificity of the post-copular noun phrase, i.e. type (iii) dialects. The dialects listed in the intermediate rows are sensitive to specificity, thus representing type (ii) dialects. Importantly, we found no dialects which require agreement with a given class and no agreement with a higher class on the left-hand column. Finally, in the top row, we find the dialects which deny the control of agreement to the post-copular noun phrase of *there* sentences, regardless of its specificity.

We thus argue that the differential marking of the post-copular noun phrase of *there* sentences depends on the dialect-specific sensitivity to specificity as a property of the controller of agreement. This is responsible for the patterns shown in Table 4.4, with the exception of that found in Italian (Modica, San Lupo, etc.), since here we have agreement regardless of specificity, and that found in Salentino (as well as some Calabrian varieties), given that here agreement is absent regardless of the specificity of the post-copular noun phrase. We address this issue, as well as agreement in *there* sentences with INDE-cliticization, in the next section.



## 4.3.4 Beyond existential sentences

When we first discussed agreement (see §§1.3.2, 3.3.1), we pointed out that, in RRG, the control of finite verb agreement is defined by the rule in (44) (Van Valin 2005: 108), where ‘highest-ranking’ means leftmost on the Actor–Undergoer hierarchy.

## (44) Finite verb agreement

The controller of finite verb agreement is the highest-ranking macrorole argument.

Finite agreement is thus a behavioural property of core arguments which have been assigned a macrorole. In constructions with two macroroles, the controller of agreement is the actor (actor of transitive, or A<sub>T</sub>, cf. 45d), unless the passive voice licenses control by the undergoer (cf. 45e). The controller of agreement is thus defined by the syntagmatic relation [S, A, d-S], where d-S stands for derived-S in the passive. (The examples in (45a–e) are repeated from §1.3.2.)

- (45) a. I ragazzi (S<sub>A</sub>) hanno cantato. (Italian)  
 the boys have.3PL sung  
 ‘The boys sang.’
- b. I ragazzi (S<sub>U</sub>) sono morti.  
 the boys be.3PL died  
 ‘The boys died.’
- c. I ragazzi (S<sub>A</sub>) sono andati a scuola.  
 the boys be.3PL gone to school  
 ‘The boys went to school.’
- d. I ragazzi (A<sub>T</sub>) hanno mangiato la torta (U).  
 the boys have.3PL eaten the cake  
 ‘The boys ate the cake.’
- e. La torta (d-S) è stata mangiata dai ragazzi.  
 the cake be.3SG been eaten by.the boys  
 ‘The cake was eaten by the boys.’

Given that finite agreement is only controlled by S, A, and d-S, it identifies a Privileged Syntactic Argument, i.e. a construction-specific grammatical relation, in the sense of Van Valin and LaPolla (1997: 242–85) and Van Valin (2005: 94–115) (see §1.3.2). Since in all the major constructions of the dialects of our sample the Privileged Syntactic Argument is defined by this syntagmatic relation, it can be assumed that these languages have a subject, in the RRG sense. This is a generalized grammatical relation, defined by the syntagmatic relation [S, A, d-S], of which finite agreement is a specific instance.

Recall now that Beaver et al. (2005) claim that the definiteness effects correlate with subject canonicity. In their view, the higher a noun phrase class ranks on the

hierarchy shown in (11) above, the more likely it is to be found in subject position and to be rejected in existential pivot function. The crosslinguistic variation in the definiteness effects is due to the variation in the extent that the properties which characterize each noun phrase class on the hierarchy count towards subject status across languages. Since we found that the order of propensity for control of number agreement of any two noun phrase classes on the specificity hierarchy is the same across the dialects of our sample (see Tables 4.2 and 4.4), our result strongly supports Beaver et al. (2005), as long as the grammatical relation subject is not defined in terms of a single diagnostic, syntactic position, but also in terms of control of agreement. This operation is entirely legitimate in our theoretical framework.

In the light of Beaver et al.'s (2005) hypothesis, therefore, our findings are indicative of crossdialectal variation in the assignment of a grammatical relation, or a construction-specific realization of the subject. This depends on the extent that the defining properties of the relevant noun phrase classes count towards the canonicity of the controller of number agreement across dialects. While all dialects fail to place the pivot in subject position, on account of its focal role in discourse, we found different agreement thresholds in *there* sentences, which can be characterized as specificity thresholds.

Importantly, in Beaver et al.'s (2005) hypothesis, the noun phrase properties that are relevant to canonical subjecthood are expected not to be solely relevant to *there* sentences, but to be general properties of the given language. Accordingly, we shall now examine our results on agreement variation in existential *there* sentences (see Table 4.4) vis-à-vis the findings from other VS constructions which were introduced previously. We start with type (i) dialects.

Even the highest class on the specificity hierarchy shown in the left-hand column of Table 4.4 fails to control agreement in the *there* sentences of type (i) dialects. This suggests that specificity is not a relevant factor in these dialects. On the other hand, the comparison of *there* sentences (cf. 46a–c) with intransitive constructions with a focal  $S_U$  or  $S_A$  (cf. 47a–d) shows that type (i) dialects do license finite number agreement control by the post-verbal S in the latter type of structure. In fact, in section 3.3.1, we pointed out that the dialects under discussion only exhibit pattern (ii) from Table 3.1.

- (46) a. La Maria no stae sula. Ave a tie. (Martano, Apulia)  
 the Mary NEG stay.3SG alone have3SG ACC you  
 'Mary is not alone: there's you.'
- b. No potimu divorziare: ave li piccinni.  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF have.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Statte attenta ca intra sta frutta ave tanti samenti.  
 stay.IMP.2SG.REFL careful that inside this fruit have.3SG many seeds  
 'Be careful because in this fruit there are many seeds.'

(Martano, Apulia)

- (47) a. A li doi **rrivài** ièu e li vagnoni se calmàra.  
 at the two arrive.PST.1SG I and the children REFL calmed  
 ‘At two o’ clock I arrived and the children calmed down.’
- b. A li doi **rrivàra** la mamma e lu papà e  
 at the two arrive.PST.3PL the Mum and the Dad and  
 li vagnoni se calmàra.  
 the children REFL calmed  
 ‘At two o’ clock Mum and Dad arrived and the children calmed down.’
- c. **Bussàra** do sconosciuti.  
 knock.PST.3PL two strangers  
 ‘Two strangers knocked on the door.’
- d. Osci **morse** lu Luigi.  
 today die.PST.3SG the Louis  
 ‘Louis died today.’

From the analysis presented in sections 3.3.1 and 3.4, it follows that the constructions in (46a–c) and (47a–d) differ insofar as only in (47a–d) does the post-verbal noun phrase spell out an argument to which a macrorole is assigned. By contrast, the pivot of the existential constructions in (46a–c) is a referential expression, which is not endowed with lexical entailments, and which takes the role of the predicate in the construction. It would thus appear that the property which determines the control of agreement, or the failure thereof, in the dialects under discussion is argumenthood: in the dialect of Martano, and the neighbouring dialect of Soletto, arguments control agreement in sentence focus, thus testing out as subjects according to this diagnostic, whereas pivots do not. This result is expected on the basis of the agreement rule in (44).

If we broaden the scope of the investigation to inverse and deictic locatives, the above hypothesis would at first seem to be challenged. Indeed, apart from negligible discrepancies, these structures robustly pattern with existential *there* sentences across all dialects (see §3.4.3). Accordingly, we replace Table 3.1 with Table 4.5.

TABLE 4.5 Patterns of number agreement control in sentence- and argument-focus intransitives (– agreement = no number agreement with the post-verbal NP)

	<i>There</i> sentences	Other intransitives with S <sub>U</sub>	Intransitives with S <sub>A</sub>
Pattern (i)	+ agreement	+ agreement	+ agreement
Pattern (ii)	– agreement	+ agreement	+ agreement
Pattern (iii)	– agreement	– agreement	+ agreement
Pattern (iv)	– agreement	– agreement	– agreement



Secondly, being topical, the locative predicate of inverse and deictic locatives has already been introduced in discourse and is defocused. Indeed, the sole purpose of the construction is to introduce a new argument. We thus suggest that the lightness of the predicate (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995), due to its defocusing in discourse, results in its failure to provide sufficient lexical entailments to the focal argument. We represent the defocused predicate with the symbol  $\emptyset$ , which conventionally represents unspecified predicates in logical structure.<sup>7</sup>

(48) B': **be-Loc'** ( $\emptyset$ , le pantofule)

(49") **be-Loc'** ( $\emptyset$ , la Maria)

Assuming that in the Salentino dialects of Soleto and Martano the only condition on finite number agreement is argumenthood, in accordance with the rule in (44), the correspondence between existentials and inverse and deictic locatives is explained by the effect of focus structure on a non-canonical predication in semantics–syntax linking. Since the non-canonical predicate of inverse and deictic locatives is defocused, its macrorole argument is poor in lexical entailments, and this results in its failure to control agreement, on a par with the pivot of existentials (cf. 46a–c), which is not an argument. Our proposal elaborates Koch's (2012) view that the Romance languages prioritize informational salience over propositional salience (see §3.2.1). We claim that discourse has an effect on the semantics of the predicate and thus on the lexical entailments of the arguments.

The hypothesis that discourse has an effect on the lexical entailments provided to arguments is corroborated by the evidence offered by the dialects of type (ii). These show three combinations of patterns from Table 4.5. In particular, patterns (i) and (ii) are found in dialects where  $S_U$  and  $S_A$  control agreement, regardless of specificity, whereas agreement control by the pivot exhibits a specificity split. Observe the split in agreement in the existential patterns in (50a–c), which contrasts with consistent agreement in (50d–f).

- (50) a. Maria no zé sola. (Venice, Veneto)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone  
 Ghe **semo** nialtri. Ghe zé lori.  
 PF be.1PL we PF be.3SG them.  
 'Mary is not alone. There's us/them.'
- b. No podémo divorsiàr: ghe zé i putèi.  
 NEG can divorce.INF PF be.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'

<sup>7</sup> E.g. this symbol figures in the logical structure of causatives with an unspecified activity, as can be seen from the logical structure of 'show': ([do' (x,  $\emptyset$ )] CAUSE [BECOME see' (y, z)]) (Van Valin 2005: 62).



A number of Sardinian dialects also belong to this group, although lack of agreement with indefinite post-copular noun phrases contrasts with optional agreement with post-copular  $S_U$  arguments, and obligatory agreement with post-copular  $S_A$  arguments (see §3.3.1).

Finally, the combination of patterns (i) and (iv) is found in dialects where  $S_U$  and  $S_A$ , when in focus, exhibit the same specificity split as existential pivots. This pattern was found in the dialect of Florence (Tuscany), where the specificity split singles out first-, second-, and third-person pronouns as controllers (cf. 52a, d).

- (52) a. La Maria la unn' è sola. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 the Mary SCL.3SG.F NEG be.3SG alone  
 Ci sono io. Tu ci sei te.  
 PF be.1SG I SCL.2SG PF be.2SG you  
 E ci siamo noi. E ci son loro.  
 SCL.1PL PF be.1PL we SCL.3PL PF be.3PL they  
 'Mary is not alone. There's me/you/us/them.'
- b. Un si pò divorziare: c' è i bambini.  
 NEG IMPERS can.3SG divorce.INF PF be.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Sta attenta che in questa frutta c' è tanti semi.  
 stay.IMP.2SG careful that in this fruit PF be.3SG many seeds  
 'Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.'
- d. Alle due e sono arrivato io e i bambini...  
 at.the two SCL.1SG be.1SG arrived I and the kids  
 'At two o'clock I arrived and the children... (calmed down).'
- e. Alle due gli è arrivato la mamma e il babbo.  
 at.the two ESCL be.3SG arrived the Mum and the Dad  
 'At two o'clock Mum and Dad arrived.'
- f. Gl' ha bussato du sconosciuti.  
 ESCL have.3SG knocked two strangers  
 'Two strangers knocked on the door.'

In all of these dialects, inverse and deictic locatives exhibit the same agreement patterns as existential *there* sentences (cf. 53B, 54B, and 55B), thus contrasting with predicate-focus copular constructions with a locative predicate (cf. 56a–c).

- (53) A: Cossa ghe zé soto 'l lèto? (Venice, Veneto)  
 what PF be.3SG under the bed
- B: Ghe zé e papusse, soto 'l lèto.  
 PF be.3SG the slippers under the bed  
 'What's under the bed?' 'The slippers are under the bed.'

- (54) A: Cusa gh' è sota 'l lèt? (Milan, Lombardy)  
 what PF be.3SG under the bed  
 B: Gh' è i pantòful, sota 'l lèt.  
 PF be.3SG the slippers under the bed  
 'What's under the bed?' 'The slippers are under the bed.'
- (55) A: Che cosa c' è sotto il letto? (Florence, Tuscany)  
 what thing PF be.3SG under the bed  
 B: (E) c' è le pantofole, sotto il letto.  
 ESCL PF be.3SG the slippers under the bed  
 'What's under the bed?' 'The slippers are under the bed.'
- (56) a. I sugamani i zé in casèla. (Venice, Veneto)  
 the towels SCL.3PL be.3PL in drawer  
 b. I sügamàn in int el casèt. (Milan, Lombardy)  
 the towels be.3PL in the drawer  
 c. Gli asciugamani (e) sono n' i cassetto. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 the towels SCL.3PL be.3PL in the drawer  
 'The towels are in the drawer.'

The evidence from type (ii) dialects corroborates the analysis put forward in the light of Salentino, in that inverse and deictic locatives systematically pattern with existentials and differ from their predicate-focus counterparts in finite number agreement. We propose the same account as above for the lack of agreement with the post-copular argument of inverse and deictic locatives. Focus structure affects the semantics of the predicate, in particular the lexical entailments that it provides to core arguments. Accordingly, arguments that are assigned a macrorole by virtue of their position in logical structure (Van Valin 2005: 63) may nonetheless be deficient in lexical entailments, and behave as existential pivots, if they occur in a construction whose main purpose is to introduce a new referent into discourse.<sup>8</sup> In dialects of type (ii) which exhibit the combination of patterns (i) and (ii) (cf. 50a–f, 53B), the specificity hierarchy shown in the left-hand column of Table 4.4 determines the threshold between agreement control and failure thereof, when the potential controller is a poor argument, i.e. it is deficient in lexical entailments. Observe that specificity is known to be a property of subjects crosslinguistically (Beaver et al. 2005), and the controller of finite agreement is a Privileged Syntactic Argument, i.e. a phenomenon-specific realization of the grammatical relation subject. These dialects

<sup>8</sup> Macroroles which are poor in lexical entailments are not a peculiarity of *there* sentences in Romance. See e.g. Forker's (2013) treatment of non-prototypical (non-agentive) actors, in Hinuq, a Nakh Daghestanian language. In this case, it is case marking that distinguishes the non-prototypical actors from the prototypical ones.



thus provide evidence that, while being assigned in terms of the rule in (44), the control of agreement is sensitive to two semantic parameters: argumenthood and specificity. The specificity hierarchy is operative below a dialect-specific argumenthood threshold, which is determined by the lexical entailments provided by the predicate. These, in turn, are affected by focus structure.

It is appropriate to return briefly here to the analysis proposed in Chapter 2. In section 2.2.1, Cruschina argued that the non-agreeing subject clitics that occur in *there* sentences and other VS structures of the northern Italian dialects contribute to the marking of the post-verbal noun phrase as a non-topic.<sup>9</sup> We agree with this claim, which would in fact appear to be particularly cogent in the case of the dialects that exhibit the combination of patterns (i) and (iv) (see Table 4.5). However, in the light of pattern (ii), and the combination of patterns (i) and (ii), which show that there is a clear-cut contrast between *there* sentences, on the one hand, and VS structures with verbal predicates, on the other, we argue that the argument properties of the controller must be factored into the account of agreement. These are clearly affected by focus structure, as indicated by the contrast between inverse and deictic locatives and predicate-focus locatives. With respect to this contrast, recall that, in section 2.4.1, it was pointed out that an information structure variant of inverse locatives is possible when the argument is topicalized and hence detached or omitted altogether. In these structures, the argument does control agreement in type (ii) dialects.

- (57) A: I sùgamai i è int el casèt? (Bergamo, Lombardy)  
 the towels SCL.3PL.M be.3PL in the drawer  
 ‘Are the towels in the drawer?’
- B: Sì, I GH’ È.  
 yes SCL.3PL.M PF be.3PL  
 ‘Yes, they are.’

These facts support our view that the lack of agreement in inverse locatives depends on the defocusing of the predicate, and its repercussions on the semantic makeup of the controller, since in structures like (57B) the locative predicate encoded by the proform is focal, and hence does provide the topicalized argument with lexical entailments.

In the dialects that exhibit the combinations of patterns (i) and (iii) and (i) and (iv), specificity plays a role in the control of finite agreement in a wider range of constructions than is the case with the dialects with the combination of patterns (i) and (ii). This suggests that the Aktionsart of the predicate (see the combination of (i) and (iii)) and the focal role of the argument in discourse (see the combination of (i) and (iv)) are key in the assignment of this grammatical relation. Since our focus is on *there* sentences, we will not discuss agreement in these combinations of patterns

<sup>9</sup> Similar claims on agreement and lack thereof have been put forward in the literature on Tuscan (Nocentini 1999), Italo-Romance (Bentley et al. 2013a), and French and spoken Brazilian Portuguese (Bentley 2013).

in any more detail. What counts for our present purposes is that existential and locative *there* sentences pattern alike in these dialects, as they do in the other dialects, which supports our view that the macrorole argument of inverse and deictic locatives lacks properties that warrant control of agreement.

Turning now to dialects of type (iii), here agreement would at first seem to be unaffected by focus structure. These would thus seem to be dialects which require a subject at all costs, licensing copula agreement with the existential pivot, as well as with the argument of inverse and deictic locatives. Copula agreement with the pivot is explained in terms of its sole argument property, referentiality, which enables it to be pressed into service as the controller. Similarly to specificity, referentiality is also reported to be a property of subjects crosslinguistically (Keenan 1976: 317–18).

The evidence considered in section 4.3.2, however, suggests that the effect of focus structure can surface even in type (iii) dialects, specifically with INDE-cliticized pivots, which may fail to control agreement obligatorily (cf. 58B) or optionally (cf. 59B).

(San Tommaso, Calabria)

(58) A: Vide quant' ova ce su ntr' o frigoriferu.  
see.IMP.2SG how.many eggs PF be.3PL in the fridge  
'Look how many eggs there are in the fridge.'

B: Mi pare ca ci nd' è uattu.  
to.me seem.3SG that PF INDE be.3SG eight  
'I think that there are eight (eggs).'

(59) A: Talia quanti ova ci su' nt' u frigoriferu. (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
look.IMP.2SG how.many eggs PF be.3PL in the fridge  
'Look how many eggs there are in the fridge.'

B: Mi pari ca ci nn' è / ci nni su' uattu  
to.me seem.3SG that PF INDE be.3SG PF INDE be.3PL eight  
'I think that there are eight (eggs).'

While agreement is optionally or obligatorily missing with INDE-cliticized pivots, the same cannot be said of the INDE-cliticized argument of other intransitives, which obligatorily controls agreement in the same dialects.

(60) a. Dutturi un nd' \*arriva / arrivanu mai quandu servenu.  
doctors NEG INDE arrive.3SG / arrive.3PL never when serve.3PL  
(San Tommaso, Calabria)

b. Duttura un nni \*arriva / arrivanu mai quannu siarbinu.  
doctors NEG INDE arrive.3SG / arrive.3PL never when serve.3PL  
(Mussomeli, Sicily)

'Doctors, they never arrive when they are needed.' Lit. Doctors, (of them) never arrive when they are needed.

Bentley et al. (2013a) claim that agreement is missing with INDE-cliticized pivots as a result of constraints banning controllers which do not have a single role in discourse structure. This rules out INDE-cliticized pivots because they are split in focus structure, and are thus neither topics nor foci. This hypothesis can now be refined as follows. As a result of the focus structure split, the referentiality of INDE-cliticized pivots is reduced. In fact, the restrictor is defocused, similarly to the locative predicate of inverse and deictic locatives, and only its quantifier is introduced into discourse. Importantly, the restrictor is normally the controller of agreement in structures with INDE-cliticization, as is clearly shown in (61), where the perfect auxiliary and the past participle agree with the restrictor and not with the post-verbal quantified noun phrase.

- (61) Soldati, ne sono morti una grande quantità. (Italian)  
 soldier.MPL INDE be.3PL died.MPL a big quantity.FSG  
 ‘Soldiers, (of them) there died a big number.’

We represent the effect of the defocusing of the restrictor in logical structure in the same way as we represent the defocusing of the locative predicate of inverse and deictic locatives (cf. 58B”).

- (58) B': **be'** (x, uattu *nd*) (San Tommaso, Calabria)  
 B'': **be'** (x, uattu  $\emptyset$ )

The INDE-cliticized pivot is thus the worst candidate for the control of agreement, because not only does it lack lexical entailments, on a par with all pivots, but it is also low in referentiality. By contrast, INDE-cliticized arguments (cf. 60a,b) behave differently, as is expected on the basis of (44).<sup>10</sup>

In dialects of type (i) (the Calabrian dialects discussed in §4.3.2), INDE-cliticized pivots are predicted not to control copula agreement, since they are not arguments. In dialects of type (ii), INDE-cliticized pivots are expected not to be controllers because they are not high on the specificity scale. These predictions are borne out by the evidence.

To recapitulate, the analysis of *there* sentences reveals a conflict between the syntactic requirement of a subject (a controller of finite number agreement) and the semantic requirement that this should be the highest-ranking macrorole argument in the clause (cf. 44). Dialects of type (i) abide by the latter requirement. In fact, they even deny the control of agreement to the argument of inverse and deictic

<sup>10</sup> Observe in passing that since in type (iii) dialects the agreement alternations occur in structures with the same perspectival centre, namely existentials, these dialects support our claim that agreement in Romance *there* sentences should not be captured in terms of a perspectival change in the sense of Borschev and Partee (1998, 2002a, 2002b). The rationale of these alternations is clearly provided by discourse.

locatives, which is a bad argument as it is poor in lexical entailments. Dialects of type (ii) only satisfy the syntactic requirement if the controller, while being poor or lacking in lexical entailments, ranks above the relevant specificity threshold. We have noted that specificity is known to be a property of subjects crosslinguistically. Finally, dialects of type (iii) generally meet the syntactic requirement, although they may fail to do so with pivots that are not only poor in lexical entailments, but also low in referentiality. The latter is the argument property of pivots which, we claim, enables them to be pressed into service as controllers. Observe that, given that we understand referentiality as the property of phrases that introduce—or refer to—a discourse referent, this property is strictly related to specificity, in the sense of Enç (1991). Specific noun phrases, encoding individuals that are identical or included in previously established discourse referents, are a subclass of referential noun phrases. Type (iii) dialects admit as controllers post-copular referential noun phrases in *there* sentences, whereas type (ii) dialects only admit as controllers a subclass of referential noun phrases, in fact, normally, a subclass of specifics (only Bonese-type dialects admit all specifics as controllers, cf. 41–43).

#### 4.3.5 *Agreement and the impersonal hypothesis*

The discussion has so far focused on copula agreement with the post-copular noun phrase. The question that arises from this discussion is whether, in the absence of agreement with this noun phrase, the copula agrees with a covert argument or with a silent expletive. Traditionally, existentials are considered to be impersonal constructions, i.e. to lack a semantically meaningful subject. In the Relational Grammar literature, Perlmutter (1983) put forward the hypothesis that existentials have a dummy subject, which can control agreement. In languages like English, where the copula overtly agrees with the post-copular pivot, agreement is captured in terms of the ‘brother-in-law’ relation between the dummy subject and the pivot. In the Chomskyan literature, agreement, whether spelled out inflectionally or by a clitic, licenses *pro* in subject position, thus ensuring that Chomsky’s (1982) Extended Projection Principle is satisfied (Rizzi 1982, Burzio 1986, Belletti 1988, Brandi and Cordin 1989). In neither of the mentioned approaches is the post-copular noun phrase of VS structures considered to be a subject (see e.g. Burzio 1986: 88), although some have drawn a distinction between indefinite and definite post-verbal noun phrases. Thus, for Belletti (1988), indefinite inverted subjects, which are base-generated, are by definition objects internal to the VP. Definite inverted subjects, on the other hand, are not internal to the VP. La Fauci and Loporcaro (1997) also depart from the generalized impersonal analysis of existentials, claiming that only existentials with an indefinite pivot are impersonal constructions. In other words, in their analysis, definites are subjects, whether in pre- or post-copular position. For an impersonal analysis of German *es gibt* and Alemannic *es hot*, we refer to Czinglar (2002).

More recent proposals take VS structures to involve agreement with a covert argument. This is what Manzini and Savoia (2005: 58) claim with respect to the HABERE existentials that are found in dialects of Salento (Apulia) and Calabria. Parry (2013) puts forward a similar proposal with respect to *there* sentences of northwestern Italo-Romance dialects. In the case of non-copular VS structures, Parry (2013) argues that the controller is the implicit spatial argument that has been claimed to be part of the argument structure of a subclass of S<sub>U</sub> intransitives (Benincà 1988, Calabrese 1992, Saccon 1992, 1993, Tortora 1997, 2014). This argument can be spelled out by a proform (see §5.3.5).

Our account of agreement stems from the same fundamental insight as the impersonal hypothesis, in particular the idea that VS order in SVO languages indicates non-canonical subjecthood. In our theoretical framework, however, there is no universal requirement such that certain syntactic configurations must have a subject. Furthermore, the notion of subject is broken down into construction-specific grammatical relations, agreement being one such relation in the dialects of our sample. From this perspective, a covert controller of agreement need not be postulated, unless such an analysis turns out to be supported by empirical evidence and ultimately more coherent. We explore here the hypothesis that the patterns of agreement variation discussed above result from the tension between, on the one hand, overt agreement with the referential phrase in post-verbal position and, on the other, covert agreement with a non-referential, higher argument. Observe that covert agreement can only be controlled by a silent *argument* in our framework, since the notion of a silent expletive is unwarranted in a framework that does not define agreement—and subjecthood—configurationally.

We begin with existential *there* sentences. Starting from the agreement rule in (44), and from Beaver et al.'s (2005) analysis of the definiteness effects, we claimed that the crossdialectal variation in agreement depends on the dialect-specific sensitivity to the argument properties of the controller—in particular, the lexical entailments contributed by a predicate, and referentiality, including the special case of specificity. In terms of the hypothesis under discussion here, type (iii) dialects do not select as the controller the only argument found in logical structure (see *x* in 62a',b') because this is a non-referential unspecified argument. They therefore select the only referential expression as the controller (*problemi* in 62a and *io* in 62b), despite its lack of lexical entailments, thus spelling out agreement overtly. They also mark this referential expression with nominative case (cf. 62b). Agreement in these dialects is referential, as pointed out by Manzini and Savoia (2005).

- (62) a. Ci sono problemi. (Italian)  
 PF be.3PL problems  
 'There are problems.'
- b. Ci sono io / \*me.  
 PF be.3PL 1SG.NOM 1SG.ACC  
 'There is me.'



assignment to this pivot.<sup>12</sup> If the pivot ranks below the specificity threshold, agreement is controlled by the non-referential argument (cf. 66).

(65) E ci siamo noi. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 SCL.1PL PF be.1PL 1PL  
 'There's us.'

(65') **be'** (x, 1PL)

(66) C' è tanti problemi. (Florence, Tuscany)  
 PF be.3SG many problemi  
 'There are many problems.'

(66') **be'** (x, tanti problemi)

Inverse and deictic locatives pose a potential problem for the analysis of the lack of overt agreement as covert agreement, since the topical or understood location is not an argument, but rather the predicate of these constructions, while, crucially, the post-copular noun phrase is a macrorole argument. As we pointed out in section 4.3.4, the location is a defocused referential expression, which fails to provide proper lexical entailments to the post-copular argument. Indeed, we represented this location as  $\emptyset$ , on a par with unspecified predicates in logical structure.

(67) [Chi c' è in cucina?] C' è tua sorella. (Italian)  
 who PF be.3SG in kitchen PF 3SG your sister  
 ['Who is in the kitchen?'] 'Your sister (is in the kitchen).'

(67') **be-Loc'** ( $\emptyset$ , tua sorella)

<sup>12</sup> The disjunctive pronouns of the northern dialects are unmarked for case (Vanelli 1987, Parry 2005: 163). Sardinian dialects of type (ii), on the other hand, provide clear evidence of nominative assignment to the post-copular pronominal pivot, as can be seen in the following example from the Nuorese dialect of Bitti.

(i) Bi so jeo / \*mie. (Bitti, Sardinia)  
 PF be.3sg 1SG.NOM 1SG.ACC  
 'There's me.'

A clarification is in order. Although pivots that control copula agreement can be said to be marked with nominative case across dialects, nominative pivots that do not control copula agreement are found outside our dialect sample. Thus, in spoken Brazilian Portuguese, the invariant copula *tem* 'have.3SG/hold.3SG' co-occurs with nominative pronominal pivots (Bentley 2013: 678–9).

(ii) Tem eu. (spoken Brazilian Portuguese)  
 hold.3SG 1SG.NOM  
 'There's me.'

This suggests that in principle agreement and case assignment ought to be dealt with separately, and that the latter is not necessarily a subjecthood diagnostic, in accordance with the theoretical assumptions of RRG (Van Valin 2005: 107–8).

It is conceivable that the dialects that are sensitive to the poor argumentality of the post-copular argument select the topical location as the controller. Agreement with a topical location is known to characterize locative inversion constructions of other languages (Bresnan and Kanerva 1989). We note, however, that this analysis is at odds with our understanding of covert agreement as agreement with the highest-ranking argument, in partial fulfilment of (44), since the topical location is a predicate here. Furthermore, unlike existentials, inverse and deictic locatives do have a macrorole available for Privileged Syntactic Argumenthood. Accordingly, in the discussion of semantics–syntax linking (see §4.4.2) we will refrain from postulating covert agreement in these structures.<sup>13</sup>

The account developed above differs from the existing impersonal analyses of VS structures, insofar as it differentiates between controlling and non-controlling pivots and post-verbal Ss, treating controlling ones as non-canonical subjects. Perlmutter (1983: 147–50) cites the failure of cross-clausal control as evidence that S in VS structures is not a subject, regardless of whether it controls finite agreement within its clause. To give but one example, in Italian, this argument cannot control the missing argument of an infinitival adverbial clause (cf. 68). Comparable evidence can be provided from existential constructions (cf. 69).

- (68) Sono rimasti nel paese dei profughi ungheresi (\*senza  
 be.3PL remained in.the country some refugees Hungarian without  
 ottenere permessi di lavoro). (Italian)  
 obtain.INF permits of work

‘Some Hungarian refugees remained in the country without obtaining work permits.’

(Perlmutter 1983: 150)

- (69) Ci sono dei profughi nel paese (\*senza ottenere permessi  
 PF be.3PL some refugees in.the country without obtain.INF permits  
 di lavoro). (Italian)  
 of work

‘There are some refugees in the country who have not obtained work permits.’

<sup>13</sup> Further investigation of VS structures with verbal predicates might provide the needed supporting evidence for the hypothesis of covert agreement with the defocused locative phrase, if overt agreement is robustly found to be missing with the S<sub>U</sub> intransitives which are independently assumed to involve a silent locative in their semantics (Benincà 1988, Saccon 1992, 1993, Tortora 1997, Parry 2013) or to acquire such a silent locative under specific aspectual and discourse-structure conditions (Calabrese 1992, Tortora 1997). As was pointed out in §3.3.1, the array of patterns shown in Table 3.1 (see also Table 4.5) indicates that the lack of overt agreement is more widely found with intransitives with a focal S<sub>U</sub> than with intransitives with a focal S<sub>A</sub>. This result is *prima facie* evidence in support of the hypothesis of covert agreement with a silent locative. However, since S<sub>U</sub> and S<sub>A</sub> intransitives were only considered *qua* control structures in our investigation, we are not able to provide an in-depth analysis of agreement in all VS constructions here.



Apparently conflicting evidence is offered by French. Indeed, Legendre (1990: 118) points out that the argument of impersonal VS structures controls the omitted argument of clauses with *en* ‘by’ plus gerund as well as *sans* ‘without’, *avant* ‘before’, and *après* ‘after’ plus infinitive.

- (70) Il a sauté beaucoup d’otages par la fenêtre en hurlant.  
 EXPL have.3SG jumped many of hostages by the window in scream.GER  
 (French)  
 ‘There jumped many hostages through the window while screaming’.

From our theoretical perspective, the contrast between French and Italian is unproblematic. Grammatical relations are construction-specific, and thus the controller of finite agreement is not predicted to provide the missing argument in cross-clausal relations. In Italian the latter kind of control would seem to be restricted to topics.

- (71) Dei profughi sono rimasti nel paese senza ottenere  
 some refugees be.3PL remained in.the country without obtain.INF  
 permessi di lavoro. (Italian)  
 permits of work  
 ‘Some refugees remained in the country without obtaining work permits.’

In French, the post-copular noun phrase of (70) behaves as the holder of a grammatical relation insofar as it controls the missing argument of the following non-finite clause, while failing to classify as the subject of its own clause.

While stemming from the same key insight as previous impersonal analyses, the proposal developed in this section treats finite number agreement as a diagnostic of subjecthood in its own right. Our proposal captures the crossdialectal variation in agreement in *there* sentences in terms of the tension between the syntactic requirement of an overt realization of the grammatical relation subject and the semantic requirement that the controller of finite agreement be the highest-ranking macrorole argument, in accordance with (44). The dialects in which the former requirement outranks the latter opt for overt agreement with the referential phrase (though agreement with this noun phrase may not obtain in existentials with INDE-cliticized pivots, which are low in referentiality). Contrastingly, the dialects in which the latter requirement ranks above the former do not have overt agreement in *there* sentences. Finally, there are dialects in which the requirement of an overt controller is satisfied when the referential expression available in logical structure is highly specific, specificity being a property of subjects crosslinguistically. Our proposal is not challenged by the mismatches between clause-internal and clause-external control already discussed, since we adopt a construction-specific approach to grammatical relations.

Whereas we did not find a great deal of evidence in support of the hypothesis that lack of an overt controller amounts to covert agreement, the hypothesis under

discussion is coherent with the analysis of agreement proposed in our theoretical framework (cf. 44), insofar as it explains agreement in terms of the competition between two imperfect candidates, which have distinct argument properties. We will therefore adopt the hypothesis in question for existential *there* sentences, and in section 4.4.1 we will show how it is implemented in a step-by-step account of semantics–syntax linking in these sentences.

#### 4.3.6 *Synopsis*

Subject canonicity is relevant not only to the syntactic position of definite noun phrases in copular constructions, as claimed by Beaver et al. (2005) but also to the role of the post-copular noun phrase of *there* sentences as the controller of finite number agreement on the copula. Following Van Valin (2005: 108), we take finite agreement in Italo-Romance and Sardinian to be a construction-specific grammatical relation, which is held by default by a macrorole argument. The wide range of variation in agreement control brought to light by our survey testifies to the sensitivity of agreement to the argument properties of the controller, which, we claimed, are affected by focus structure. In our analysis, the existential sentences of Italo-Romance and Sardinian constructions are not impersonal by definition. Rather, they can have a non-canonical controller of agreement, with defective argument properties.

In the light of our analysis, the definiteness effects turn out to be constraints on the licensing and the behaviour of existential pivots. Although the restrictions on availability existentials which were mentioned in previous sections suggest that there is a construction-specific rationale to the definiteness effects, as is generally assumed in the literature, the crossdialectal and crosslinguistic variation in the definiteness effects cannot be captured without reference to general subjecthood properties of noun phrases, as was claimed by Mikkelsen (2002), Beaver et al. (2005), and Bentley (2013).

### 4.4 *Semantics–syntax linking in there sentences*

Having discussed the crossdialectal variation in agreement in *there* sentences, we can now proceed to a fully-fledged analysis of semantics–syntax linking in these sentences. The general principles and constraints on the linking assumed in our analysis were explained in section 1.3.2 (see Van Valin 2005: 136). The linking algorithm is bidirectional, in that it has to account for linking from syntax to semantics, in linguistic comprehension, and from semantics to syntax, in linguistic production. We will only be concerned with the semantics–syntax linking. In our treatment of the linking in *there* sentences, we start with existentials (see §4.4.1) and then move on to inverse and deictic locatives (see §4.4.2). Presentational *there* sentences are briefly contrasted with inverse and deictic locatives in section 4.4.2.

## 4.4.1 Linking in existential there sentences

In Chapter 3 (see §§3.3.2, 3.3.3, and 3.4.1), we differentiated between referential and non-referential existential pivots, and proposed that their representation in logical structure should reflect the contrast in referentiality. This is standard practice in the RRG representation of copular constructions. Therefore, we only represented non-referential pivots as stative predicates proper (cf. 72'), whereas we suggested that referential pivots are to be represented as referential expressions in an argument position, which have a predicative role, in that they provide the construction with its sole, implicit, argument (cf. 73').

(72) C' è togu. (San Tommaso, Calabria)  
 PF be.3SG nice.ADJ  
 'There is niceness.'

(72') **be'** (x, [nice'])

(73) Ave problemi. (Martano, Apulia)  
 have.3SG problems  
 'There are problems.'

(73') **be'** (x, problemi)

In (72') and (73'), x is the argument of the pivot, which is by definition non-referential and implicit. The existential proform, which we only find in some dialects (cf. 72 vs. 73), does not spell out this argument. Rather, it is the morphosyntactic marker of a construction with an implicit argument. Since it is not referential, this proform does not appear in semantic representation. On the other hand, the deictic referential proforms of Sardinian are to be represented as locative modifiers (cf. 74'), on a par with locative codas (cf. 75').

(74) (N)ch' at problemas. (Bono, Sardinia)  
 PF have.3SG problems  
 'There are many problems.'

(74') **be-Loc'** (nche, [be' (x, problemas)])

(75) Intra ddra famiglia ave problemi. (Martano, Apulia)  
 inside that family have.3SG problems  
 'In that family there are many problems.'

(75') **be-Loc'** (intra ddra famiglia, [be' (x, problemi)])

The retrieval from the lexicon of the information that is relevant to the building of the logical structure constitutes the first step in semantics–syntax linking. For the sake of argument, we assume that the illocutionary force of the examples under

discussion is declarative. The pivot is by default in focus and its status is inactive (note that the activation status is only marked on referential expressions, and hence only in 73" to 75").

(72") <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <be' (x, [nice'])>>

(73") <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <be' (x, problemi<sub>INA</sub>)>>

(74") <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <be-Loc' (nche<sub>ACS</sub>, [be' (x, problemas<sub>INA</sub>)])>>

(75") <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <be-Loc' (intra ddra famiglia<sub>ACS</sub>, [be' (x, problemi<sub>INA</sub>)])>>

Although the second step in the linking is macrorole assignment, this cannot take place because the only direct core argument (x) is unspecified in logical structure (for the lack of macrorole assignment to non-referential expressions, see Van Valin 2005: 63–4). The next step is the selection of the Privileged Syntactic Argument, which is normally a macrorole argument, and has the coding and behavioural properties of the subject, including the control of finite agreement. In (72") there is no macrorole argument, and indeed no candidate for the function of Privileged Syntactic Argument. In accordance with the hypothesis developed in section 4.3.5, the copula agrees covertly with the argument x as a result. We shall not call this controller a Privileged Syntactic Argument, because it is non-referential and unspecified. In addition, it has no agreement features. In fact, the copula takes default third-person singular inflectional marking, which carries no feature values. This is thus an impersonal construction.

To satisfy the Completeness Constraint (see §1.3.2), the syntactic template chosen for this clause will have only a single position, which links the predicative adjectival pivot to the syntactic Nucleus. The copula, which is necessary for Nucleus formation, will also be linked to the Nucleus. In particular, the copula spells out the Agreement Index Node (AGX), which is the dependent of the Nucleus concerned with the agreement specifications of all the core arguments. Neither the implicit argument x nor the proform are referential, and thus they do not figure in the Constituent Projection. See Figure 4.1 for the linking of this existential *there* sentence from semantics to syntax.

Turning now to the existential constructions with referential pivots in (73") to (75"), like the existential structures with a non-referential pivot, they do not have a macrorole argument or a Privileged Syntactic Argument because the only core argument position in logical structure is not specified. In Martano and Soletto, agreement can be claimed to be controlled by the implicit argument, in accordance with the proposal put forward in section 4.3.5 (see also Manzini and Savoia 2005: 58). The pivot, on the other hand, fails to behave as a controller on account of its lack of lexical entailments, as claimed in section 4.3.4. Since it takes the lowest position in logical structure, and it is a referential expression, the pivot is marked with accusative

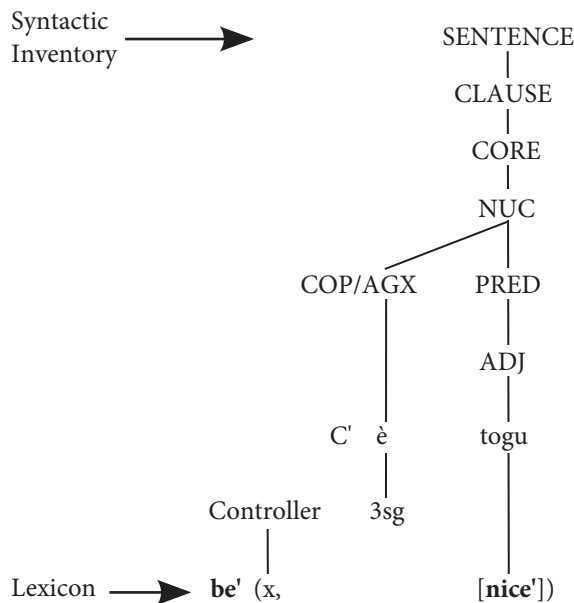


FIGURE 4.1 Semantics–syntax linking: non-referential pivot

case, like a non-controlling direct core argument. Accusative case marking is overt on personal pronouns.

- (76) No te preoccupare: ave a mie. (Martano, Apulia)  
NEG REFL worry.INF have.3SG ACC me  
'Do not worry: there's me.'

If the construction has a coda (cf. 75), the referential phrase in the coda is assigned case. Since this is not a key issue in our analysis, we simply label this as OBL(ique) case. We also abstract away from the inner structure of the prepositional phrase in the coda and of the referential phrase in the Nucleus (the same holds true for the other examples of linking provided in this chapter). Due to the presence of a coda, a syntactic template is required with a syntactic position for the modifier of the pivot. Following Van Valin's (2005: 21–2) syntactic analysis of locative adjuncts, we place the locative coda in a Periphery of the Core. The same position would be occupied by a deictic proform. The linking in (75) is shown in Figure 4.2.

We will now consider a dialect of type (iii), i.e. a dialect which only exhibits pattern (i) from Table 4.5. The first steps in the linking do not differ from those outlined above. Thus, starting from the logical structure in (77'), we add the information relating to illocutionary force and the activation status of the referential expressions, obtaining (77'').

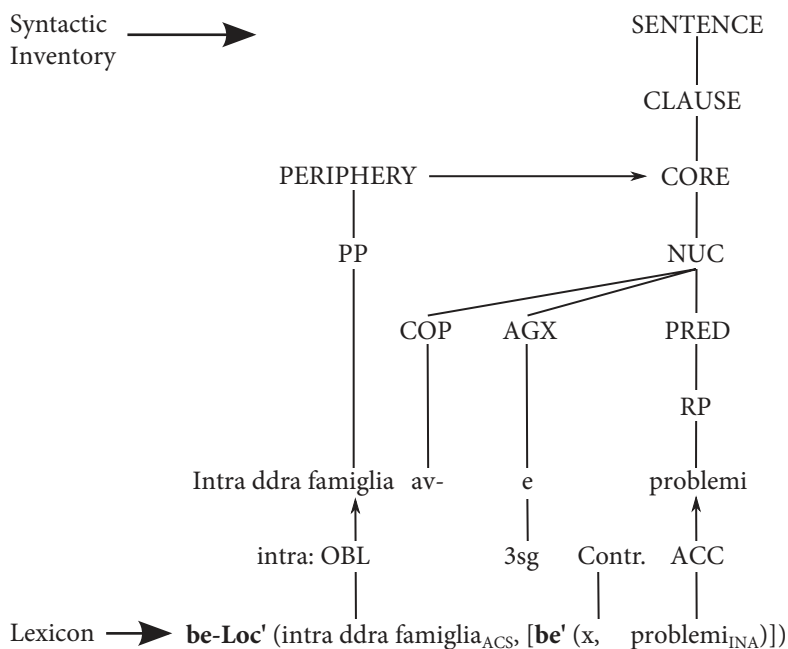


FIGURE 4.2 Semantics–syntax linking: referential pivot (HABERE –Agr)

(77) Cə stannə problema. (Isernia, Molise)  
 PF stay.3PL problems  
 ‘There are problems.’

(77') **be'** (x, problema)

(77'') <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <**be'** (x, problema<sub>INA</sub>)>>

Although macrorole assignment cannot take place, the referential pivot is assigned nominative case and selected as the controller of finite agreement on the copula. Nominative case assignment is vacuous in (77), but it can be seen on the pronominal pivot in (78).

(78) N' də preoccupà ca cə stenghə i. (Isernia, Molise)  
 NEG REFL worry.INF that PF stay.1SG 1SG.NOM  
 ‘Do not worry: there’s me.’

Copula agreement is evidenced by the variation in the form of the copula: *stannə* ‘stay.3PL’, in (77), vs. *stenghə* ‘stay.1SG’, in (78). How can a predicator be treated as the controller in the linking? Whereas in type (i) dialects agreement is not licensed, when a potential controller has no lexical entailments, in type (iii) dialects the lack of lexical entailments is not in itself sufficient to rule out the control of agreement. Thus, the

available referential expression is pressed into service as the controller, and the construction has a Privileged Syntactic Argument. We call this a Privileged Syntactic Argument because it is a referential expression that has the coding and behavioural properties of a subject.

In the following step in the linking, the referential expression is mapped to the Nucleus in syntax, since it is the predicate of the existential construction. The analysis of existential sentences with referential pivots thus suggests that these constructions have a predicator which, while linking to the syntactic locus of the predicate, also plays the role of controller in the linking. We represent the linking in this structure in Figure 4.3.

Turning now to type (ii) dialects, we shall discuss here those that combine patterns (i) and (ii) from Table 4.5 (see §4.3.4). These are the dialects where the macrorole argument of verbal predicates ( $S_U$  and  $S_A$ ) invariably controls agreement, regardless of focus structure, whereas agreement control by the pivot exhibits a specificity split. Again, the step in the linking that results in the contrast between this dialect type and the others is the selection of the controller of agreement. As is the case with dialects of type (iii), the lack of lexical entailments of the referential expression in the predicator is not in itself sufficient to rule out overt agreement (cf. 79a). In dialects of type (ii), however, only a subclass of referential expressions can control agreement in existentials, namely those that rank above the relevant specificity threshold. If the referential phrase falls below the said threshold, agreement will be controlled by the implicit argument, and the structure will lack an overt controller (cf. 79b,c) (see Figure 4.4).

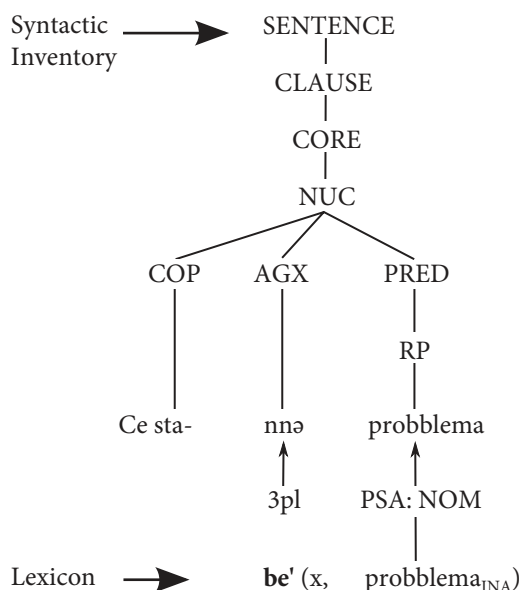


FIGURE 4.3 Semantics–syntax linking: referential pivot (ESSE +Agr)

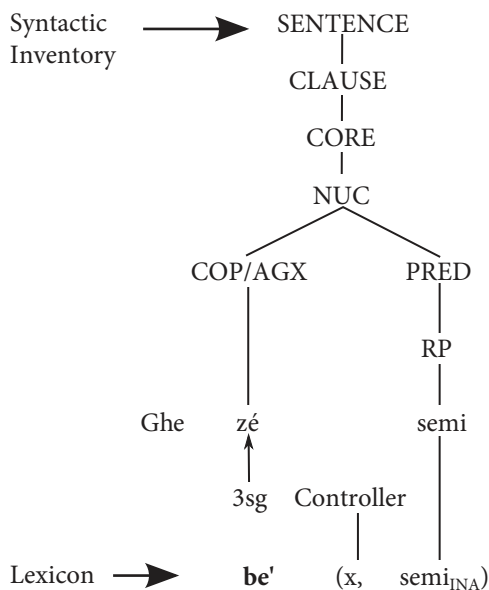


FIGURE 4.4 Semantics–syntax linking: referential pivot (ESSE –Agr)

- (79) a. Maria no zé sola. Ghe **semo** nialtri. (Venice, Veneto)  
 Mary NEG be.3SG alone PF be.1PL we  
 ‘Mary is not alone. There’s us.’
- b. No podémo divorsiàr: ghe zé i putèi.  
 NEG can divorce.INF PF be.3SG the children  
 ‘We cannot divorce: there’re the children.’
- c. Sta tenta che su sto fruto ghe zé tanti semi.  
 Stay.IMP.2SG careful that on this fruit PF be.3SG many seeds  
 ‘Be careful! In this fruit there are many seeds.’

#### 4.4.2 Linking in other there sentences

Like existentials, inverse locatives have a referential expression as their predicator. This is the locative phrase ‘under the bed’ in (80a–c).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Example (80) occurs in the context of the question ‘What is under the bed?’, while example (81) occurs in the context of the question ‘Where are the slippers/towels?’. The small capitals in the translations indicate focus.



- (80) a. Cə **stannə** lə ciavattə, sottə a ru liəttə. (Isernia, Molise)  
 PF stay.3PL the slippers under to the bed
- b. Ave le pantofule, sotta lu iettu. (Martano, Apulia)  
 have.3SG the slippers under the bed
- c. Ghe **zé** e papusse, soto 'l lèto. (Venice, Veneto)  
 PF be.3SG the slippers under the bed  
 'THE SLIPPERS are under the bed.'

Unlike existentials, however, inverse locatives do have an explicit direct core argument. In the linking from semantics to syntax, this argument is assigned the macrorole undergoer, on the basis of its position in logical structure (see §1.3.2). It is then available as the Privileged Syntactic Argument of the clause. This means that it is predicted to be marked with nominative case and to control finite agreement on the copula. This prediction is borne out in type (iii) dialects (cf. 80a), but not type (i) ones (cf. 80b). In dialects of type (ii), the undergoer of inverse and deictic locatives controls agreement under the same specificity conditions as the existential pivot. For example, in (80c), the undergoer does not control agreement because it is not a first- or second-person pronoun (see, by way of comparison, agreeing *semo* 'we are' in 79a). As was pointed out before, the undergoer of the predicate-focus counterpart of inverse and deictic locatives consistently controls agreement in all dialects (cf. 81a–c), which suggests that the absence of agreement in inverse and deictic locatives hinges on focus structure.

- (81) a. Lə ciavattə **stannə** sottə a ru liəttə. (Isernia, Molise)  
 the slippers stay.3PL under to the bed
- b. Le pantofule **stannu** sotta lu iettu. (Martano, Apulia)  
 the slippers stay.3PL under the bed  
 'The slippers are UNDER THE BED.'
- c. I sugamani i **zé** in casèla. (Venice, Veneto)  
 the towels SCL.3PL be.3PL in drawer  
 'The towels are are IN THE DRAWER.'

The predicted pattern of linking (cf. 80a) is outlined in (80a' to 80a'') and Figure 4.5. Since the locative phrase is a referential topic, a syntactic template is selected where this phrase occurs in a detached, extra-clausal, position, namely the Right Detached Position. Alternatively, the locative phrase can be omitted. This is indeed what tends to happen in naturally occurring examples of this construction. Whether explicit or understood, the locative phrase can be resumed by a pro-predicative proform within the Nucleus in the Core.

(80a') **be-Loc'** (sottə a ru liəttə, lə ciavattə)

(80a'') <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <**be-Loc'** (sottə a ru liəttə <sub>ACT</sub>, lə ciavattə <sub>INA</sub>)>>

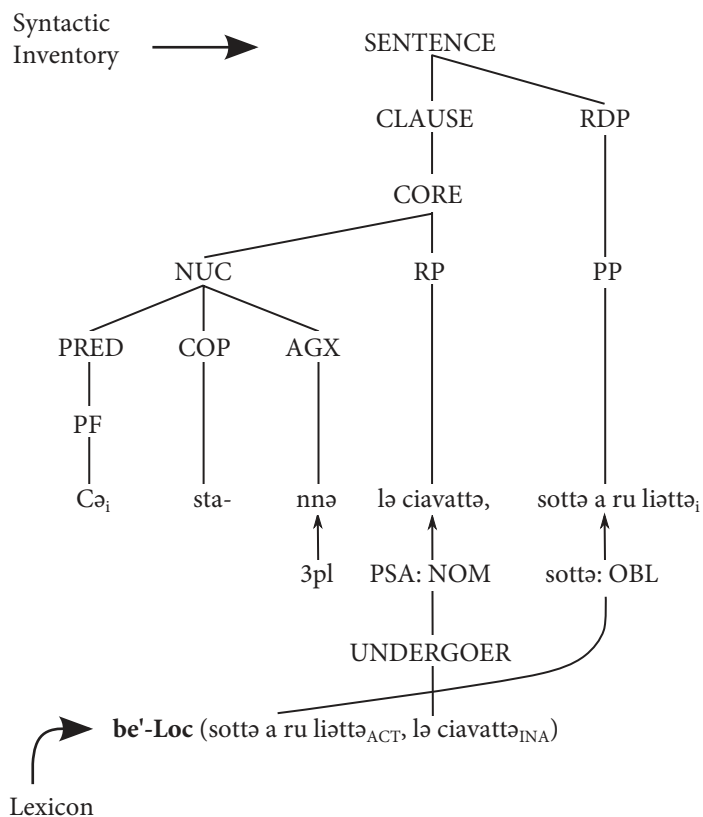


FIGURE 4.5 Semantics–syntax linking: inverse locatives (ESSE +Agr)

(80a''') <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <**be-Loc'** (sottə a ru liəttə<sub>ACT</sub>, UNDERGOER: lə ciavattə<sub>INA</sub>)>>

(80a''''') <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <**be-Loc'** (sottə a ru liəttə<sub>ACT</sub>, UNDERGOER: lə ciavattə<sub>INA</sub>)>>  
 [sottə: OBL] [PSA: NOM]

Let us now compare the inverse locative structure in (80a) with its counterpart in (81a). In terms of linking, (81a) differs from (80a) insofar as the activation status of the referential expressions is concerned. In particular, *lə ciavattə* ‘the slippers’ is active in (81a), while the locative predicate is not. In fact, the location is in focus in this construction, although the definite determiner suggests that its referential phrase is accessible. Compare (80a' to 80a''''') with (81a' to 81a''''').

(81a') **be-Loc'** (sottə a ru liəttə, lə ciavattə)

(81a'') <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <**be-Loc'** (sottə a ru liəttə<sub>ACS</sub>, lə ciavattə<sub>ACT</sub>)>>

(81a''') <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <**be-Loc'** (sottə a ru liəttə<sub>ACS</sub>, UNDERGOER: lə ciavattə<sub>ACT</sub>)>>

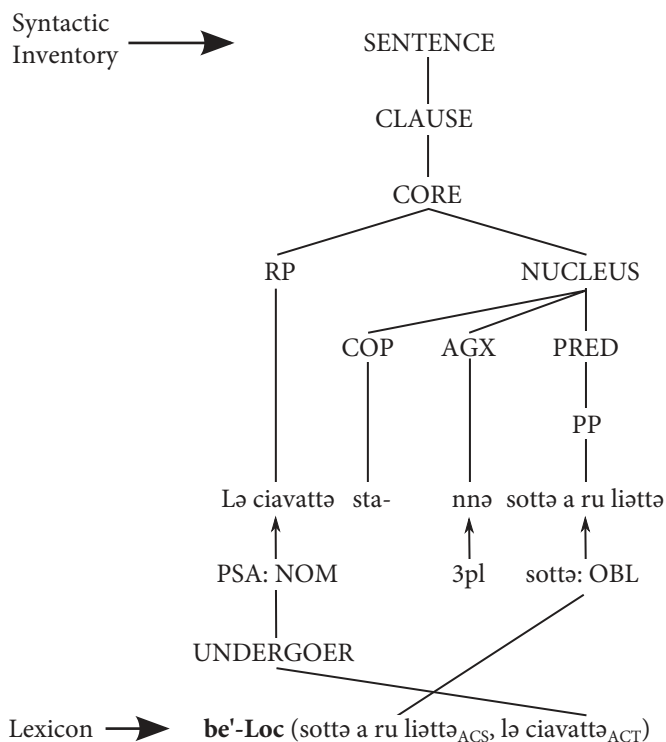


FIGURE 4.6 Semantics–syntax linking: predicate-focus locatives

(81a<sup>'''</sup>) <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <**be'-Loc'** (sottə a ru liəttə<sub>ACS</sub>, UNDERGOER: lə ciavattə<sub>ACT</sub>)>>  
[sottə: OBL] [PSA: NOM]

Given that the predicative phrase is not already activated, but instead is in focus, it is not omitted, nor does it occur in a detached position. A different syntactic template is thus selected for (81a), with the predicative locative phrase in its default position inside the Nucleus. There is no other difference in the linking of the two locative constructions in dialects of type (iii) (see Figure 4.6).

In dialects of type (i), agreement is sensitive to whether the controller is an argument receiving lexical entailments from a predicate. While inverse locatives have an argument, and this receives a macrorole on the basis of its position in logical structure, we argued in section 4.3.4 that the backgrounding of the predicate in discourse results in its failure to provide lexical entailments in the same way as in the predicate-focus counterpart of this structure (cf. 81). Put differently, this means that the constructions in question have the sole purpose of introducing a new referent into discourse, while the semantic contribution of the predicate is minimal. As a result of the poverty of its lexical entailments, the macrorole argument is treated as

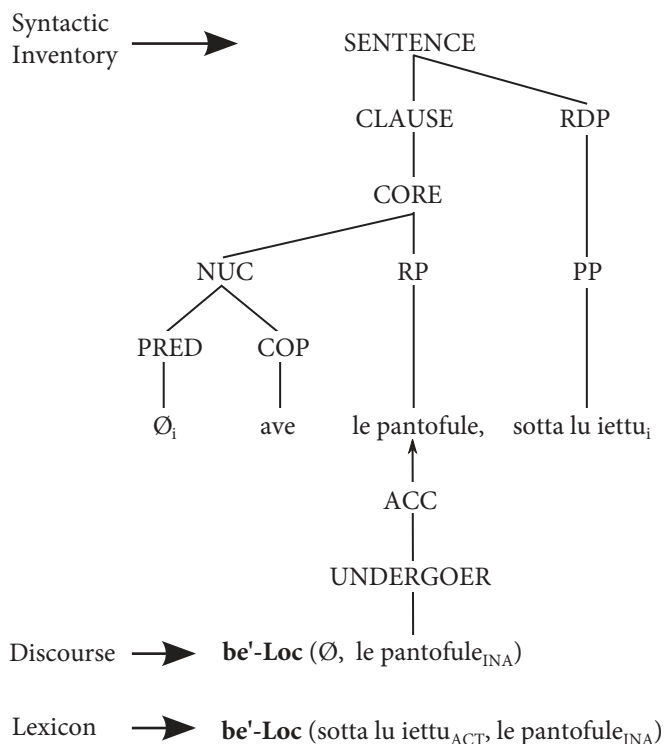


FIGURE 4.7 Semantics-syntax linking: inverse locatives (HABERE -Agr)

an existential pivot, thus bearing accusative case and failing to control agreement. By hypothesis (see §4.3.5), the defocused location might serve as controller of finite agreement. We do not pursue this idea, however, since in our analysis covert agreement is understood as agreement with the highest-ranking argument, and the defocused locative predicate is not an argument. Observe that we are not bound to postulate agreement, since this is not a universal well-formedness condition on a configuration in our theoretical framework. We represent the linking of (8ob) in (8ob') to (8ob''') and Figure 4.7. The step illustrated in (8ob''') shows the effect of discourse on predication. Needless to say, the role of discourse is not meant to vary across dialects. What varies is the dialect-specific sensitivity to it in the linking.

(8ob) Ave le pantofule, sotta lu iettu. (Martano, Apulia)  
 have.3SG the slippers under the bed  
 'THE SLIPPERS are under the bed.'

(8ob') **be-Loc'** (sotta lu iettu, le pantofule)



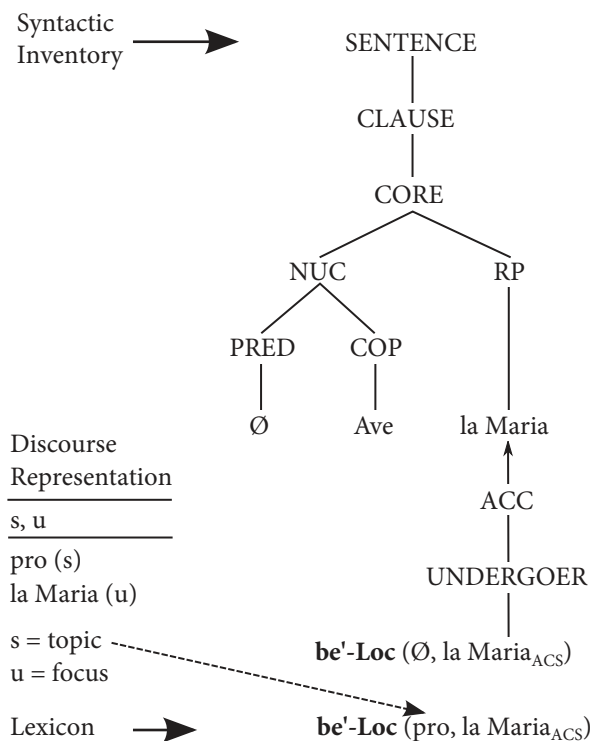


FIGURE 4.8 Semantics-syntax linking: deictic locatives (HABERE -Agr)

independently of syntax, where *pro* has no audible realization. However, since the locative expression is backgrounded, it fails to provide the argument with proper lexical entailments (cf. 82c<sup>'''</sup>). The argument *la Maria* is assigned the macrorole undergoer, because of its position in logical structure (cf. 82c<sup>'''</sup>), but it is not chosen as the Privileged Syntactic Argument because of the poverty of its lexical entailments. It is thus marked with the case of non-controllers, namely accusative (cf. 82c<sup>''''</sup>). Observe that HABERE 'have' signals agreement failure in this structure, since the agreeing copulas in the dialect of Martano are STARE 'stay' (cf. 81b) and ESSE 'be'. In addition, as the reader will recall, accusative case is only marked overtly on pronouns.

- (82) c<sup>''</sup>. <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <be-Loc' (s, la Maria<sub>ACS</sub>)>>  
 c<sup>'''</sup>. <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <be-Loc' (Ø, la Maria<sub>ACS</sub>)>>  
 c<sup>''''</sup>. <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <be-Loc' (Ø, UNDERGOER: la Maria<sub>ACS</sub>)>>  
 c<sup>'''''</sup>. <<sub>IF</sub>DEC <be-Loc' (Ø, UNDERGOER: la Maria<sub>ACS</sub>)>>  
 [ACC]

For the sake of brevity we shall not discuss in detail the linking of the other patterns in (82). The same analysis is proposed for deictic locatives as for inverse locatives in the respective dialects.

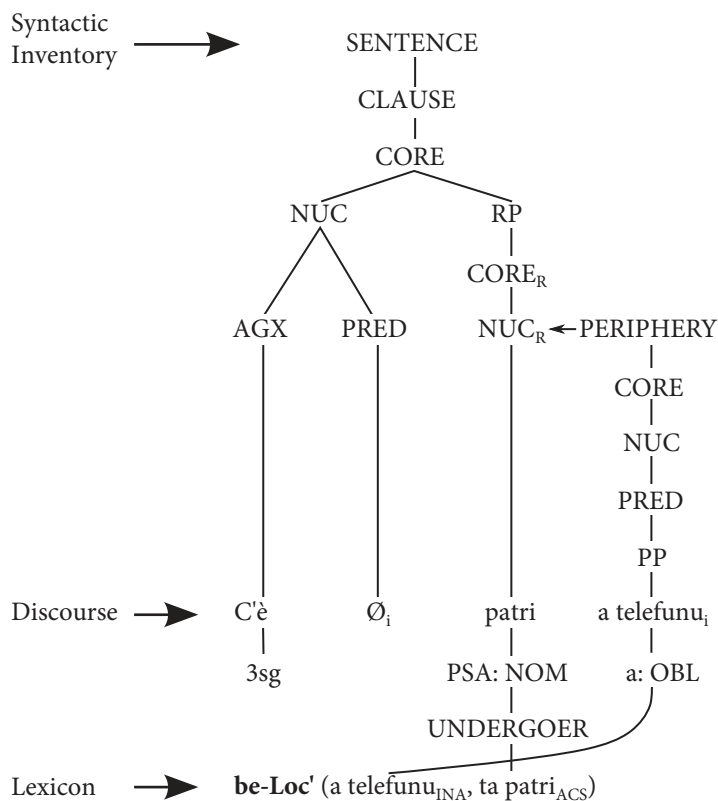
To conclude this section, we briefly turn to presentational *there* sentences (cf. 83a). In the light of the semantic analysis proposed in section 3.4.3, which takes the post-copular nominal to be the argument of the following predicate, one would at first think that, in presentational *there* sentences, the post-copular argument takes an argument position in the Core, whereas the following phrase will fill the Nucleus. However, we have evidence which suggests an unexpected feature in the syntax of these structures. In particular, as pointed out in section 2.5, the fronting of both the argument and the predicative constituent of presentational *there* sentences is allowed in the dialects where pre-nuclear focus is grammatical (cf. 83b). By contrast, the argument can hardly be fronted alone (cf. 83c).

- (83) a. C' è ta patri a telefonu. Arrispunni! (Mussomeli, Sicily)  
 PF be.3SG your father at phone answer.IMP.2SG
- b. Ta patri a telefonu c' è. Arrispunni!  
 your father at telephone PF be.3SG answer.IMP.2SG  
 'Your father is on the phone. Pick it up!'
- b. ??Ta patri c' è a telefonu. Arrispunni.  
 your father PF is at telephone answer.IMP.2SG

This evidence suggests that the argument (here *ta patri* 'your father') and the predicate (here *a telefonu* 'on the phone') must form a single RP node, where the predicate is at the same time the displaced Nucleus of the presentational construction and a modifier in a Periphery of the noun in the RP, similarly to a relative clause ('your father *who is* on the phone'). We illustrate this proposal in Figure 4.9 and (83'). In this proposal, the predicate is treated as a relative clause in syntax (relative clauses are modifiers in the Periphery of the Nucleus of an RP, Van Valin 2005: 260–62), but not in semantics.

- (83') [<sub>Core</sub> C'<sub>Nuc</sub> è Ø<sub>i</sub>] [<sub>RP</sub>[<sub>NucR</sub> ta patri] [<sub>Per NucR</sub> a telefonu<sub>i</sub>]]].  
 PF is your father at telephone  
 'Your father is on the phone.'

In presentational *there* sentences, the proform-plus-copula nexus marks the information being provided as new and relevant in the context of the previous or following statement (see §§2.5 and 3.4.3). This nexus figures in the audible spell-out of logical structure to satisfy the requirements of discourse. The post-copular referential expression is not a Privileged Syntactic Argument with respect to the proform-plus-copula nexus, but rather with respect to the following predicate.

FIGURE 4.9 Semantics–syntax linking: presentational *there* sentences

## 4.5 Conclusion

We started this chapter by highlighting two problems with the existing analyses of the definiteness effects: on the one hand, they do not explain why definite post-copular noun phrases occur more readily in the *there* sentences of some languages than in those of others; on the other hand, they do not capture the differential treatment of the post-copular noun phrase of *there* sentences. Although important proposals have been put forward on each of these problems (see e.g. La Fauci and Loporcaro 1993, 1997, Moro 1997, Zamparelli 2000, Leonetti 2008), the two issues have traditionally been treated separately. Starting from Beaver et al.'s (2005) analysis of the definiteness effects, and Bentley's (2013) elaboration of this analysis on the basis of Romance evidence, we proposed an account of the definiteness effects in terms of subject canonicity. In the spirit of RRG, the grammatical relation subject was broken down into two diagnostics: position and finite number agreement. In English, the default position of the subject is pre-verbal, and focus can be marked prosodically



in any syntactic position in the Clause (Ladd 1996, Van Valin 1999). Focal definites normally figure in pre-copular position because definiteness spells out properties of canonical subjects. An exception to this tendency is found with the definite pivot of availability existentials, which is a non-canonical candidate for subjecthood, in that it is not an argument, as it lacks lexical entailments. In many Romance languages, including the dialects of our sample, the default pre-verbal subject position is not a focus position. In fact, non-contrastive foci must occur post-verbally. Due to this restriction on the Potential Focus Domain, definites are found in post-copular position both in inverse and deictic locatives and in availability existentials.

While failing to test out as a subject in terms of its syntactic position, the post-copular noun phrase of *there* sentences may behave as a subject in terms of the control of number agreement on the copula. On the basis of number agreement in *there* sentences, we divided the dialects of our sample into the following types: (i) dialects which lack agreement with the post-copular noun phrase, (ii) dialects with differential agreement in terms of the definiteness of this noun phrase, and (iii) dialects with systematic agreement with this noun phrase. We analysed definiteness in terms of specificity (Enç 1991). The comparison of agreement in *there* sentences and other VS structures led us to claim, in support of Beaver et al. (2005) and Bentley (2013), that the attested agreement patterns testify to general properties of the subject in the dialects under investigation, in particular the dialect-specific sensitivity to semantic properties of the controller. Relying on Van Valin's (2005) claim that the controller of finite number agreement is by default the highest-ranking macrorole argument in logical structure, we proposed that failure to control agreement is due to poor argumenthood: the lack of the lexical entailments provided by a predicate and poor referentiality. Since specific noun phrases are a subtype of referential noun phrases, we proposed that type (iii) dialects license agreement with all post-copular referential phrases in *there* sentences, whereas type (ii) dialects only license agreement with specific ones.

In the analysis of the *there* sentences where the post-copular noun phrase does not control copula agreement, we entertained the hypothesis that the copula agrees covertly with the implicit argument of existentials or the defocused location of inverse and deictic locatives (see Parry 2013, who builds on Benincà 1988, Saccon 1993, Tortora 1997). We pursued this hypothesis in our analysis of existential *there* sentences, capturing crossdialectal agreement variation in terms of a competition between the syntactic requirement of an overt controller and the semantic requirement that the controller should be the highest-ranking argument. In-depth investigation of VS structures with verbal predicates is needed to ascertain whether agreement in these structures varies in accordance with the availability of an implicit argument, which is independently assumed for a subclass of intransitive predicates. If this is indeed the case, this evidence will support the hypothesis that the lack of overt agreement is to be analysed as covert agreement not only in the case of existential sentences, but also in other VS structures.

While the pervasive role of discourse in syntax is amply recognized in the literature (within our framework, we refer to Van Valin 2005: 170–82), much less is known on the effects of discourse on predication. We have explored these effects in our analysis of the semantics–syntax linking in *there* sentences. In particular, we hope to have shed light on the role of discourse in the very first steps in semantics–syntax linking. We started from the observation that, in dialect after dialect, inverse and deictic locatives exhibit the same agreement pattern as existentials. In the light of this robust result, we claimed that, although the logical structure of the predicate is drawn from the lexicon, the defocusing of the predicate in inverse and deictic locatives may result in its being impoverished semantically. This, in turn, affects the assignment of lexical entailments to the core argument, which may have repercussions on the behaviour of this argument as a controller of agreement in morphosyntax. The outcome is that this argument is treated as an existential pivot. In the analysis of existentials with INDE-cliticized pivots, we proposed that the defocusing of the restrictor of the quantification results in its being unspecified in the logical structure that is mapped to syntax. The result in most dialects is optional or no agreement with the INDE-cliticized pivot, since this lacks the two principal properties which define arguments and agreement controllers: the lexical entailments of a predicate and referentiality.

Our account of the definiteness effects is not meant to supersede the well-established view that such effects are due to semantic or pragmatic restrictions on the existential pivot. On the contrary, in previous chapters we pointed out that specific pivots are only admitted in availability existentials (Abbott 1992, 1993), although these cannot be negated, because it makes no sense to place within the scope of negation a referent whose existence is already established (Enç 1991). It is the crosslinguistic variation in the definiteness effects that cannot be analysed without reference to general properties of the languages under investigation. In this chapter we have analysed the microvariation attested in Italo-Romance and Sardinian in terms of the interplay of discourse, semantic, and syntactic constraints on subjecthood.



Whereas Latin does not exhibit a clitic proform in *there* sentences, many Romance languages do (Blasco Ferrer 2003, Bentley and Ciconte forthcoming).<sup>2</sup> In addition to the Latin copula ESSE ‘be’, the Romance languages exhibit HABERE ‘have’ (cf. 1c,d), STARE ‘stay’, and TENERE ‘hold’ (see §1.1.1 and Maps 1–4), in some cases alternating two of these copulas.<sup>3</sup> Copula alternation is related to variation in agreement (see §§ 3.3.1 and 4.3.1). Whereas in classical Latin the nominative post-copular noun phrase invariably controls number agreement on the copula ESSE ‘be’, in Romance the post-copular noun phrase may fail to control agreement. Lack of agreement usually characterizes the structures with HABERE (though see the exceptions cited in §3.3.3). This is shown by the Catalan and French examples in (1c) and (1d). Finally, Latin *there* sentences do not have the expletive pre-copular pronoun which is required in Romance languages like French (cf. 1d).

We were able to document some of the changes which led to the innovations mentioned above in the analysis of a corpus of early Italo-Romance vernacular texts (see Appendix 1), where a variety of patterns is simultaneously attested. Thus, the early Italo-Romance data show that the construction with ESSE tends to manifest the characteristics of Latin *there* sentences (cf. 1a, 2a), and yet there already appear some Romance innovations, namely the optional presence of a clitic proform (cf. 2b), variation in agreement (cf. 2a,b vs. 3), and the occurrence of an expletive nominative pronoun (cf. 3). Observe that the lack of agreement and the presence of expletives characterize the northern vernaculars, thus showing typological crossdialectal differences which anticipate those of the modern dialects.

- (2) a. Sunu multi altri dubii. (OSic.)  
 be.3PL many other doubts  
 ‘There are many other doubts.’  
 (*Sposizione*, VII, 17, 21, p. 132)
- b. Estinchi ancora un altru modu di cruchificari.  
 be.3SG.PF yet an other manner of crucifying  
 ‘There is yet another way of crucifying.’  
 (*Sposizione*, XXI, 3, 2, p. 232)

<sup>2</sup> The etymologies of the locative clitics cannot be determined with certainty. We follow the hypothesis that the proforms derive from three etymologically locative adverbs: HINCE (according to Maiden 1995: 167, but see also the etymology ECCE HIC proposed by Rohlf s 1969: 899, Tekavčić 1980: 189, Blasco Ferrer 2003: 61), IBI (Badia Margarit 1951: 266, Wagner 1960: 624, Wanner 1987: 40), and an allotrope of proto-Romance locative *j* (Benincà 2007: 34–5). While the latter is restricted to the early vernaculars of the north of Italy, the first two are found in the other early Italo-Romance varieties. Further locative etyma are provided for the proforms of other Romance languages: HINC in Logudorese, Campidanese, Aragonese, HIC in Provençal, French, ILLOC in Campidanese, INDE in some Italo-Romance varieties (Blasco Ferrer 2003: 61).

<sup>3</sup> Albeit rarely, FIERI can be read existentially in some contexts, e.g. *Fit magna caedes* ‘There was a great massacre’ (Caesar, *De bello gallico*, VII, 70), *Miserior mulier me nec fiet nec fuit* ‘There will not be, nor there ever was, a more miserable woman than I am’ (Plautus, *Mercator*, IV, 700). A reflex of FIERI is found in the Romanian copula *fi*.

- (3) El sera gran guerre. (OLomb.)  
 EXPL be.FUT.3SG great wars  
 ‘There will be great wars.’  
 (*Parafraasi*, 56<sup>b</sup>, 20, p. 84)

The proform is not obligatory at this stage, as is shown by the contrast between the examples in (2a) and (2b), which are drawn from the same early Sicilian text. The structures with the copula *ESSE* show crossdialectal differences in number agreement, though to a lesser extent than their modern counterparts (see Maps 1 and 2). Whereas the southern varieties exhibit consistent agreement, in continuity with Latin (cf. 2a,b), the northern dialects deviate from this pattern and may lack number agreement (cf. 3). The northern varieties, Tuscan, and one Pugliese vernacular text (the *Libro di Sidrac*) may also exhibit an expletive pronoun (cf. 3 and 4c).

The copula *HABERE* begins to appear in the *there* sentences of late Latin (Zamboni 2000: 106, Bauer 1995: 217). In early Italo-Romance this is found to alternate with the copula *ESSE* in early Tuscan, early Piedmontese, and in early Apulian.

- (4) a. Avea un vecchio, ch’ avea nome ser Frulli. (OTusc.)  
 have.PST.3SG an old.man who have.PST.3SG name sir Frulli  
 ‘There was a man whose name was sir Frulli.’  
 (*Novellino*, xcvi, p. 102)
- b. Fue uno re molto crudele.  
 be.PST.3SG a king very cruel  
 ‘There was a very cruel king.’  
 (*Novellino*, xxxvi, p. 48)
- c. El fo uno reis qui avea un anel d’ or (OPied.)  
 EXPL be.PST.3SG a king who have.PST.3SG a ring of gold  
 o’ avea una pera preciosa.  
 where have.PST.3SG a stone precious  
 ‘There was a king who had a ring of gold in which was set (lit. in which *had*)  
 a precious stone.’  
 (*Sermoni subalpini*, 251, 29–30 (Parry 2013: 519))
- d. Et à altre manere de angeli chi [...] (OApul.)  
 and have.3SG other manners of angels who  
 ‘And there are other kinds of angel who...’  
 (*Sidrac*, 4v, 36, p. 203)
- e. Et so’ altre manere d’ angeli.  
 and be.3PL other manners of angels  
 ‘And there are other kinds of angel.’  
 (*Sidrac*, 4v, 37, p. 203)

The alternation of the copulas HABERE and ESSE is also found in the *there* sentences of other early Romance languages, as can be seen in the Old French examples reported here.

- (5) a. A la cort avoit trios barons. (OFr.)  
 at the court have.PST.3SG three barons  
 ‘There were three barons at the court.’  
 (Bérout, *Tristan*, 581)
- b. Si fut un sire de Rome la citet.  
 WOM be.PST.3SG a sir of Rome the city  
 ‘There was a sir from the city of Rome.’  
 (*La vie de Saint Alexis*, 3, 3)

In the following sections we will discuss in more depth the characteristics of *there* sentences in classical and late Latin, as well as early Italo-Romance. We will not offer a diachronic analysis, but will instead provide an overview of the historical background of our findings from the modern dialects. After considering *there* sentences in classical Latin (§5.2.1), we discuss the contrast between existential, attributive, and locative constructions (§5.2.2), and present a number of changes that occurred in these structures in late Latin (§5.2.3). We then move on to early Italo-Romance (§5.3). In section 5.3.1 we provide a typology of early Italo-Romance *there* sentences. We then analyse the three main innovations which occurred at this stage: the emergence and reanalysis of the proform (§§5.3.2–5.3.4), a number of changes in copula selection and agreement (§5.3.5), and the emergence of expletive pronouns (§5.3.6). Our conclusions are drawn together in section 5.4.

## 5.2 *There* sentences in Latin

### 5.2.1 *Classical Latin*

We start this section with a discussion of classical Latin *there* sentences (see Appendix 2 for our sources).<sup>4</sup> A subgroup of these structures is formed with the copula ESSE and a nominative post-copular noun phrase, which controls agreement on the copula.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The changes which occur from archaic and early Latin to classical Latin (Adams 1976) do not significantly affect existentials. The discussion which follows can thus be considered to encompass archaic and early Latin.

<sup>5</sup> The Latin examples are taken from the original primary sources and have been checked within large portions of context (see Appendix 2). The translations are our own, although the Latin lexis and the English equivalents were verified on <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>>.

- (6) a. Erant enim leges, erant quaestiones vel de caede vel  
 be.PST.3PL indeed laws.NOM be.PST.3PL issues.NOM or on murder or  
 de vi.  
 on violence  
 ‘There were laws, there were issues regarding murder or violence.’  
 (Cicero, *Pro Milone*, v, 13)
- b. Est enim ulciscendi et puniendi modus.  
 be.3SG in.fact of.revenge and of.punish measure.NOM  
 ‘There is in fact a limit to revenge and to punishment.’  
 (Cicero, *De officiis*, I, 11)
- c. Est aliquid quo tendis.  
 be.3SG something.NOM towards.which tend.2SG  
 ‘There is something towards which you tend.’  
 (Persius, *Saturae*, III, 60)

The subtype of *there* sentence shown in (6) is that of existential constructions. The post-copular noun phrase is their only obligatory meaningful component, it is referential but normally not specific, and it is not the argument of a separate predicate. It can thus be considered to be the pivot—and hence the predicate—of the existential construction (see §3.3).

Because of the paucity of determiners, and since word order is, at least in purely syntactic terms, flexible, some putative *there* sentences can also be construed as attributive or locative constructions (in the sense of Feuillet 1998: 673). This is the case with (7a), if taken out of context, since the adjectival modifier of the post-copular nominal *leges* ‘laws’, *tabellariae* ‘vote-regulating’, can be read as the predicate of an attributive structure. Similarly, the numeral *quattuor* ‘four’ can be construed as the predicate of the construction. In (7b), on the other hand, the prepositional phrase could equally be the coda of an existential construction or the predicate of a locative copular sentence.

- (7) a. Sunt enim quattuor leges tabellariae.  
 be.3PL in.fact four laws.NOM vote-regulating.NOM.PL  
 ‘There are in fact four vote-regulating laws.’  
 ‘The four laws are in fact vote-regulating.’  
 ‘The vote-regulating laws are in fact four.’  
 (Cicero, *De legibus*, III, 35)
- b. Erat a septentrionibus collis.  
 be.PST.3SG from north.side hill.NOM  
 ‘There was a hill on the north side.’  
 ‘The hill was on the north side.’  
 (Caesar, *De bello gallico*, VII, 83)

We thus face two principal difficulties in the analysis of *there* sentences in classical Latin: the absence of determiners, which would normally signal properties that existential pivots typically lack (in particular, specificity; see §4.3.3), and the fact that word order is syntactically unconstrained. However, discourse plays a role in constraining Latin word order (e.g. Bauer 1995: 6, Vincent 1988, Salvi 2004, Devine and Stephens 2006, Ledgeway 2012a: 150–56, 2012b). Since different kinds of *there* sentence tend to be associated with different kinds of focus structure, word order allows us to discern the argumental or predicative role of the post-copular noun phrase. In the following section, we discuss how word order differentiates between existential, attributive, and locative constructions in Latin.<sup>6</sup>

### 5.2.2 *Existential vs. attributive and locative constructions*

Owing to the high frequency of Subject–Object–Verb (SOV) order in classical Latin, it is generally agreed that this verb–final pattern is the neutral, unmarked word order (e.g. Oniga 1988, 2004, Elerick 1992, Bauer 1995, Vincent 1988, Polo 2004, Salvi 2004, 2005, Devine and Stephens 2006, Magni 2009, Ledgeway 2012a, 2012b).<sup>7</sup>

- (8) a. Caesar copias suas divisit.  
 Caesar.NOM troupes.ACC his.ACC divide.PST.3SG  
 ‘Caesar divided his troops.’  
 (Caesar, *De bello civili*, III, 97)
- b. Ille e contrario peltam pro parma fecit.  
 he.NOM on contrary light-shield.ACC in.place.of Thracian shield make.PST.3SG  
 ‘He, on the contrary, made a small shield in place of the Thracian shield.’  
 (Cornelius Nepos, *De excellentibus ducibus*, Iphicrates, 1)

Other orders are also grammatical, but they serve to convey pragmatically marked interpretations (e.g. Pinkster 1990: 181, Bauer 1995: 6, Vincent 1998: 418–19, Salvi 2005: 436; Ledgeway 2012a: 59). Thus, pragmatically salient constituents, whether topical or focal, tend to be fronted, and this kind of fronting has been argued to be evidence of functional structure at the level of the clause (Vincent 1998: 422–3, Pinkster 1991, Salvi 2004, 2005, 2011: 356–8, Ledgeway 2012a, 2012b). In terms of the

<sup>6</sup> As pointed out in previous chapters, we subsume identificational and equational constructions under the cover term ‘attributive’. For a distinction in Latin see Devine and Stephens (2006: 204–8). We should further note that classical Latin has a possessive predication with the copula *ESSE*, e.g. *At Catoni.DAT studium.NOM modestiae [...] erat*, lit: ‘but to Cato was the pursuit of moderation . . .’ (Sallust, *Coniuratio Catilinae*, 54). However, the possessive construction is differentiated from the existential one by case, since there is no dative possessor noun phrase in existentials.

<sup>7</sup> The frequency of SOV order in Latin has also been correlated with sociolinguistic or stylistic factors (e.g. Adams 1976: 137, Ramat 1980, Panhuis 1982, Charpin 1989, Pinkster 1991: 70–74). In particular, Adams (1976, 2007, 2013) suggests that Latin did not have a neutral, unmarked word order. Rather, variation in word order ought to be explained in relation to sociolinguistic variation, literary genres, and authorial choices, which are specific to each source.





‘Divico replied that the Helvetii had been so trained by their ancestors, that they were accustomed to receive, not to give hostages; of that fact the Roman people were witness. Having given this reply, he withdrew. On the following day they [the Helvetii, *FMC*] move their camp from that place. Caesar does the same, and [sends forward] all his cavalry . . .’

(Caesar, *De bello gallico*, I, 14–15 <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>>)

In sentence (9c) it is *idem* ‘the same’, rather than Caesar, that bears pragmatic salience, and is fronted to be topicalized. The verb *facit* is also raised, thus signalling that the post-verbal subject Caesar is part of the rhematic content which conveys new information.

Given that verb fronting can mark sentence focus, we will now start from the position of the copula in order to distinguish existentials and attributives. Observe the contrast in (10).

(10) a. Sunt autem duo crimina.  
 be.3PL instead two crimes.NOM  
 ‘There are instead two crimes.’  
 (Cicero, *Pro Caelio*, 30)

b. Lesbia formosa est.  
 Lesbia.NOM beautiful.NOM be.3SG  
 ‘Lesbia is beautiful.’  
 (Catullus, *Carmina*, LXXXVI, 5)

In (10a) the core-initial copula *ESSE* marks a sentence-focus structure (cf. also 6a–c), and this can thus be construed as an existential construction. In (10b) the adjectival predicate *formosa* ‘beautiful’ is the comment of an established topical argument (*Lesbia*). This is thus a predicate-focus attributive construction, which exhibits the unmarked SV order.

Attributive copular predications can also exhibit a fronted focalized constituent. This can be an adjectival predicate, if it is more salient than the nominal argument.<sup>9</sup>

(11) Duae sunt praeterea leges de sepulchris.  
 two.NOM be.3PL furthermore laws.NOM on sepulchres  
 ‘Two are, furthermore, the laws on sepulchres.’  
 (Cicero, *De legibus*, II, 61)

On a par with attributive constructions, locative constructions normally exhibit a non-focal referential argument in core-initial position. The predicative locative prepositional phrase follows, and the copula is in core-final position.

<sup>9</sup> The copula can also occur in core-initial position in attributive constructions. In such cases, it is a fronted focalized constituent that attracts *ESSE* in the immediately following position, where the copula, as a Wackernagel element, can attach to a focal host (Adams 1994: 127, Ledgeway 2012a: 156, 256–7).

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- (12) Cicero meus in Formiano erat, Terentia et Tullia  
 Cicero.NOM my.NOM in Formiano be.PST.3SG Terentia.NOM and Tullia.NOM  
 Romae.  
 in.Rome  
 ‘My Cicero was in Formiano, Terentia and Tullia (were) in Rome.’  
 (Cicero, *Ad familiares*, XVI, 12)

One also finds inverse locative constructions, where a topical locative predicate (presumably occurring in a detached extra-clausal position) precedes the argument, which in this case is focal.

- (13) a. In eo flumine pons erat.  
 in that river bridge.NOM be.PST.3SG  
 ‘On that river (there) was a bridge.’  
 (Caesar, *De bello gallico*, II, 5)
- b. In Gallia [...] in singulis domibus factiones sunt.  
 in Gallia in individual houses factions be.3PL  
 ‘In Gallia ... in each house, (there) are factions.’  
 (Caesar, *De bello gallico*, VI, 11)

Observe that the focal argument is not specific in (13a,b) and thus these structures can also receive an existential interpretation, although the core-final position of the copula strongly suggests that this type of structure is locative. The patterns of prototypical locatives (cf. 12) and of inverse locatives (cf. 13a,b) can thus be represented as follows, in terms of the Layered Structure of the Clause.

- (14) Locative  
 [NP][LocPP][ESSE]  
 [Core Cicero meus [Nuc in Formiano erat.]]
- (15) Inverse locative  
 [LocPP][NP][ESSE]  
 [LDP In singulis domibus<sub>i</sub>] [Clause [Core factiones [Nuc  $\emptyset_i$  sunt.]]]

This evidence indicates that locative predications exhibit a clause-final copula regardless of whether they are canonical or inverse, the only difference between these two types of locative being the position of the nominal argument and of the locative predicate. In prototypical locatives the referential noun phrase is the topic, and is thus placed in the core-initial position, whereas the locative predicate follows. The same argument–predicate relation holds for inverse locatives, although the articulation of this relation is inverted for pragmatic purposes, i.e. argument focalization (§2.4.1).

What cannot be ruled out is that the locative predicate of inverse locatives, rather than being detached from the clause (cf. 15), is in the Pre-Core Slot (since the Pre-Core Slot can host topical as well as focal constituents, as is the case with modern German: see Diedrichsen 2008).

(16) In eo flumine pons erat.

[<sub>PRCS</sub> In eo flumine<sub>i</sub>] [<sub>Core</sub> pons [<sub>Nuc</sub> Ø<sub>i</sub> erat.]]

As already shown, the existential construction normally exhibits a core-initial copula, which marks the structure as sentence-focus. When the existential construction has a coda within its focus domain, this is placed between the copula and the pivot (adjuncts are claimed to occur clause-internally in classical Latin: see Devine and Stephens 2006: 79).

(17) a. Erant in quadam civitate rex et regina.

be.PST.3PL in one town king.NOM and queen.NOM

‘There were in a town a king and a queen.’

(Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, IV, 28)

b. Erat ea tempestate Romae Numida quidam

be.PST.3SG in.that time in.Rome Numidian.NOM one.NOM

nomine Massiua.

by.name Massiua

‘At that time there was in Rome a Numidian (man) by name Massiua.’

(Sallustius, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, 35)

c. Erat Orici Lucretius Vespillo et Minucius Rufus cum

be.PST.3SG in.Oricum Lucretius Vespillo and Minucius Rufus with

Asiaticis. navibus xviii.

Asiatic ships 18

‘In Oricum there were Lucretius Vespillo and Minucius Rufus with 18 Asiatic ships.’

(Caesar, *De bello civile*, III, 7)

The examples in (17) are existential constructions with a coda which is within the focus domain of a sentence-focus structure marked as such by core-initial ESSE. The prototypical existential pattern of classical Latin can thus be represented as follows.

(18) [ESSE][LocPP][NP]

[<sub>Core</sub> Erant [<sub>Per</sub> in quadam civitate] [<sub>Nuc</sub> rex et regina.]]

Actual Focus Domain

Although Latin lacks overt encoding of (in)definiteness, the contextually driven interpretation of the existential pivot is generally non-specific or new (cf. 17a, which is the first line of Apuleius’ fourth book). Indefiniteness may also be overtly expressed by a quantifier, as is the case with *quidam* ‘some, a certain’ in (17b). Specific pivots are not ruled out (cf. 17c), but normally require the availability reading which was discussed in previous chapters (Abbott 1992, 1993, 1997). Observe that in (17c) the third-person

singular *erat* only agrees with the first of two coordinated noun phrases. In classical Latin, exceptions to subject–predicate agreement only occur in sentence-focus, verb-initial constructions, where the post-verbal argument is focal.

A more rarely attested existential pattern is characterized by the occurrence of the coda in final position.

- (19) a. Est        modus            in rebus.  
           be.3SG measure.NOM in things  
           ‘There is a measure in things.’  
           (Horace, *Sermones*, I, 1, 106)
- b. Erat        vallis        inter    duas acies,        ut supra demonstratum  
           be.PST.3SG valley.NOM between two battle.lines as above demonstrated  
           est,        non ita magna.  
           be.3SG not so big.NOM  
           ‘There was a valley between the two battle lines, as is demonstrated above,  
           not so big.’  
           (Caesar, *De bello civili*, II, 34)

We can thus characterize the distinction between locative constructions, whether prototypical or inverse, and existential constructions in terms of verb position: whereas the copula is core-final in the former type of structure, it is fronted in the latter. We should, however, mention a construction in which the pivot precedes the copula, and there is no coda.

- (20) a. Cum pulvis        est,        tum maxime ab    aqua periculum    est.  
           when dust.NOM be.3SG then indeed from water danger.NOM be.3SG  
           ‘When there is dust, then indeed there is danger from water.’  
           (Cato Maior, *De agri cultura*, 155, 1)
- b. Si fistula        erit [ ... ]  
           if fistula.NOM be.FUT.3SG  
           ‘If there is a fistula ...’  
           (Cato Maior, *De agri cultura*, 157, 14)

Assuming that the examples in (20) are existential constructions, the pre-copular position of the pivot may be explained as a case of strong focalization. Another option is to account for the pre-copular position of the pivot in terms of the syntactic restriction whereby subordinate clauses (*cum ... , si ...*) tend to exhibit S(O)V order and do not allow fronting of a focused constituent (Pinkster 1991: 69, Bauer 1995: 91, Salvi 2004: 43, Ledgeway 2012a: 232). It could also be argued that the particularly conservative style of Cato favours the canonical SOV order. Lastly, *pulvis* ‘dust’, *periculum* ‘danger’, and *fistula* ‘fistula’ may be topical types rather than non-specific tokens, the structures thus being locative, as the core-final copula suggests.

Put differently, these could be examples of deictic locatives (see §2.4.2) with an understood, context-dependent, topical location. Attestations like these clearly show the complexity of the analysis of the interaction of syntax and focus structure in classical Latin, which cannot be supported by prosodic evidence.

### 5.2.3 *Late Latin*

In this section we briefly consider existential *there* sentences in late Latin, placing particular emphasis on two changes, which concern copula selection and the behavioural and coding properties of the pivot. These changes lead to the diversification of existential patterns in early Romance (§5.3).<sup>10</sup> Before we provide further detail, we note that the existential pattern of classical Latin is maintained and continued during the late period.

- (21) a. Fuit            quidam    rex            Antiochus    nomine.  
           be.PST.3SG   one.NOM   king.NOM   Antiochus    by.name  
           ‘There was a king by name Antiochus.’  
           (*Historia Apollonii regis Tyri*, 1)
- b. Est            in Oceani    arctoi [...]    insula            magna.  
           be.3SG    in Ocean    arctic            island.NOM    big.NOM  
           ‘There is a big island in the Arctic Ocean.’  
           (*De origine actibusque Getarum*, III, 16)
- c. Sunt            in suburbanis    loca            publica.  
           be.3PL    in suburbs    places.NOM    public.NOM  
           ‘There are public places in the suburbs.’  
           (*Commentum de controversis*, p. 67)

The above examples exhibit core-initial *ESSE* (cf. 21a–c) and a locative coda intervening between the copula and the pivot (cf. 21b,c). As was pointed out in the previous section, this is the default pattern for classical Latin existential *there* sentences (cf. 17a–c).

An important innovation that occurred in late Latin *there* sentences is the appearance of two copulas, *STARE* ‘stay’ and *HABERE* ‘have’. The former figures both in attributive and in existential *there* sentences (cf. 22a and 22b, respectively).

<sup>10</sup> Following Pinkster (1989), the classification of late Latin should not be envisaged as a purely chronological sequence of linguistic phases. Different registers, genres, or authorial styles do not fall within specific or limited periods, and can in fact extend, or be restored, over time. It is generally agreed that late antiquity and its language, late Latin, date from the 3rd to the 6th/7th centuries. For the purposes of this section, however, we use the expression ‘late Latin’ to refer to the chronological phase within which deviations occur from the classical model, at least as far as existential constructions are concerned. With the term ‘late Latin’ we also include medieval Latin, thus extending our investigation up to the 10th century.

- (22) a. Bernardus [...] stabat male.  
 Bernardus stay.PST.3SG badly  
 ‘Bernardus... was unwell.’  
 (*Gloss. med. et infim. lat.*, 584)
- b. In ipsia uia non longe a ciuitate stat columna marmorea.  
 in this road NEG far from city stay.3SG column.NOM marmoreal.NOM  
 ‘On this road not far from the city there is a marmoreal column.’  
 (*Antonini Placentini Itinerarium recensio altera*, 25)

To be sure, the example in (22b) could be understood as locative. However, the fact that the verb, *stat*, is not in the usual S(O)V final position of categorical sentences, and is followed by the noun phrase, suggests that the sentence is not a canonical locative construction. Furthermore, in the relevant context, *columna marmorea* is introduced for the first time and can thus be assumed to be indefinite. These characteristics normally favour an existential reading. (See Blasco Ferrer 2003: 56 for similar considerations on late Latin STARE.)

The copular uses of STARE ‘stay’ are claimed to have followed from the loss of its original meaning ‘stand’ (Pountain 1982: 144, Peral Ribeiro 1958: 149). Although STARE does not subsequently spread to all early Romance vernaculars, it is attested in early Provençal and Iberian Romance (Pountain 1982: 146–59, Ramos Alfajarin 2000: 355–62, Blasco Ferrer 2003: 57–9).

- (23) a. Com dins la mare sta l’ aygua vivens. (OProv.)  
 as inside the sea stay.3SG the water living  
 ‘As in the sea there is living water.’  
 (Cavalier Lunel de Monteg, 2, 17 (*Rialto* 289.2))
- b. En lo aleujament del rey stava una dona tota d’ argent.  
 in the lodge of.the king stay.PST.3SG a woman all of silver  
 (OCat.)  
 ‘There was an all-silver woman in the king’s lodge.’  
 (*Tirant lo Blanc*, LV)

Existential STARE is not as stable as ESSE and HABERE. It is lost, for instance, in the existential structures of the modern Occitan dialects and of Catalan. By contrast, STARE is found in some modern dialects of central and upper southern Italy (see Map 3), but is not attested in the early texts from this area.

In the transition from classical Latin, word order does not change in late Latin existentials. Thus, whether ESSE or HABERE or STARE, the existential copula is fronted and is followed by the noun phrase to mark sentence focus. Observe, however, that the coda need not intervene between the copula and the pivot (cf. 22b).

As for HABERE, although this copula is not as frequently attested as ESSE, the available attestations cannot be mistaken for possessive constructions (Hofmann and Szantyr 1972: 416–17, Zamboni 1998: 132, 2000: 106, Blasco Ferrer 2003: 56–7, Bauer 2006), as suggested by the larger contexts of occurrence of the examples, which we provide in (24).

- (24) a. In Hebraeo enim non habet hunc numerum.  
 in Hebrew in.fact NEG have.3SG this.ACC number.ACC  
 ‘In fact, in Hebrew, this number does not exist.’  
 (Hieronymus, *Commentarii*, in Ezechielem, 3, XI, 8)
- b. Habet in bibliotheca Ulpia in armario sexto librum elephantinum.  
 have.3SG in library Ulpian in case sixth book.ACC ivory.ACC  
 ‘There is an ivory book in the Ulpian library, in the sixth case.’  
 (*Historia Augusta*, Tacitus, 7)
- c. Unde ergo habet zizania?  
 from where therefore have.3SG darnel.weeds.ACC.PL  
 ‘From where, therefore, are there darnel weeds?’  
 (*Biblia Sacra Vulgata*, Matthaeus, 13, 27)
- (24a’) Levitico ad sacerdotale ministerium a viginti quinque annis eligantur; in Hebraeo enim non habet hunc numerum, qui in Septuaginta dicitur, sed tricenarium [...]  
 ‘According to the book of Leviticus, they would be elected to the sacerdotal ministry from twenty five years; in Hebrew in fact this number does not exist, which is mentioned in the Septuagint bible, but thirty...’  
 (Hieronymus, *Commentarii*, in Ezechielem, 3, XI, 8)
- (24b’) Ac ne quis me temere Graecorum alieni Latinorumve aestimet credidisse, habet in Bibliotheca Ulpia in armario sexto librum elephantinum, in quo hoc senatus consultum perscriptum est, cui Tacitus ipse manu sua subscripsit.  
 ‘And now, lest any one should consider that I have rashly put faith in some Greek or Latin writer, there is in the Ulpian Library, in the sixth case, an ivory book, in which this decree of the senate is written out, signed by Tacitus himself with his own hand.’  
 (*Historia Augusta*, Tacitus, 7 <[http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/L/Roman/Texts/Historia\\_Augusta/Tacitus\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/L/Roman/Texts/Historia_Augusta/Tacitus*.html)>)
- (24c’) Cum autem crevisset herba et fructum fecisset tunc apparuerunt et zizania; accedentes autem servi patris familias dixerunt ei domine nonne bonum semen seminasti in agro tuo unde ergo habet zizania?  
 ‘But when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then the darnel weeds appeared also. The servants of the householder came and said to him, “Sir,



didn't you sow good seed in your field? From where, therefore, are there darnel weeds?"

(*Biblia Sacra Vulgata*, Matthaeus, 13, 26–7 (World English Bible))

In none of the excerpts can a possessor be recovered from the context, as suggested by the lack of a potential controller in the nominative case for the invariably third-person singular *habet*.

In the examples in (24), the lack of a specified possessor hinders a canonical possessive reading and favours an existential construal. We thus take this to be evidence of stage II in the development of Romance existentials with HABERE, which was first introduced in section 3.4.2, and was represented semantically as in (25b). At this stage, the higher argument of this structure is the abstract argument of the predication. This construal, in turn, is the very source of the modern existential construction, which was represented semantically as in (25c), where the referential expression now takes the role of the predicate and is not provided with lexical entailments by a separate predicate.

- (25) a. Stage I: **be-with'** (possessor, theme)  
 b. Stage II: **be-with'** (x, theme)  
 c. Stage III: **be'** (x, y/pivot)

Having derived from possessive structures, the HABERE constructions contrast with prototypical classical Latin existentials insofar as the coding and behaviour of the post-copular noun phrase is concerned. First, this does not control agreement on the copula. This is clearly the case with (24c), where third-person singular *habet* 'has' does not agree with the plural pivot *zizania* 'darnel weeds' (that this is plural is clear from the previous sentence, where *zizania* controls agreement on third-person plural *apparuerunt*). Secondly, this noun phrase takes accusative case.

### 5.3 There sentences in early Italo-Romance

In the introductory section of this chapter we mentioned three features of Romance *there* sentences which constitute departures from the classical Latin pattern: the clitic proform (cf. 26a,b), the variety of copulas and the related variation in agreement (cf. 27a–c), and the presence of an expletive nominative pronoun (cf. 28a–c).

- (26) a. Nce èy lo procuratore. (OCamp.)  
 PF be.3SG the procurator  
 'The procurator is here.'  
 (*Ricordi*, 18v, 5, p. 561)

- b. **Hi foren** VII standards. (OCat.)  
 PF be.PST.3PL seven banners  
 ‘There were seven banners (here).’  
 (*Llibre de les Solemnitats de Barcelona*, 147)
- (27) a. **Sunu** alcuni poeti. (OSic.)  
 be.3PL some poets  
 ‘There are some poets.’  
 (*Sposizione*, Prol., 23, p. 21)
- b. Et à altre manere de angeli chi [...] (OApul.)  
 and have.3SG other manners of angels who  
 ‘And there are other kinds of angel who ...’  
 (*Sidrac*, 4v, 36, p. 203)
- c. E denant nos **estai** lo miradors (OProv.)  
 and before us stay.3SG.PF the mirror  
 ‘And in front of us there is the mirror’  
 (Gauceran de Saint Leidier, (Rialto 168.1a, II, 9))
- (28) a. Per ch’ **el** no gh’era arbori ne altra frescura. (OLomb.)  
 for that EXPL NEG PF be.PST.3SG trees nor other freshness  
 ‘Because there were no trees nor any freshness.’  
 (*Parafraasi*, 25<sup>b</sup>, 24–25, p. 31)
- b. **Egli** sono state assai volte [...] (OTusc.)  
 EXPL be.3PL been.F.PL many times  
 ‘There have been many times ...’  
 (*Decameron*, I, 1, 49, p. 40)
- c. **Elli** so’ tre manere de morte. (OApul.)  
 EXPL be.3PL three manners of death  
 ‘There are three ways to die.’  
 (*Sidrac*, 7r, 6, p. 212)

Observe that the expletives in (28a–c) have different behaviours. In Lombard the invariably masculine, third-person singular pronoun *el* appears to control number agreement on the copula. Accordingly, it can be said to anticipate the expletive subject clitics which are found nowadays in northern varieties, in the absence of copula agreement with the post-copular noun phrase. By contrast, the Tuscan and Apulian expletives do not agree with the copula or with the post-copular noun phrase (§5.4).

Although some of the mentioned characteristics of Romance *there* sentences emerge in late Latin (§5.2.2), the bulk of the relevant changes occur at a later stage. In particular, we were able to document these changes in the analysis of a fairly large corpus of early Italo-Romance vernacular texts (see Appendix 1 for the chronology of

these texts and some notes on textual typology).<sup>11</sup> No similar empirical scrutiny of *there* sentences has been carried out for any other early Romance varieties, although some useful insights are provided in the specialist literature either in a pan-Romance perspective (Pountain 1982, Blasco Ferrer 2003, Bentley and Ciconte forthcoming) or in historical grammars of individual Romance languages (see e.g. Badía Margarit 1951 for Catalan, Rohlf 1969 for Italo-Romance, Grevisse 1986 and Buridant 2000 for French, Ledgeway 2009 for Neapolitan). The evidence cited in this literature supports our hypothesis on the late development of the hallmarks of Romance *there* sentences. In this section, we first provide a typology of *there* sentences in early Italo-Romance (§5.3.1), and then we analyse the emergence and spread of the proform (§§5.3.2, 5.3.3, and 5.3.4), the establishment of new patterns of copula selection and agreement (§5.3.5), and the appearance of expletives (§5.3.6). In the analysis of these innovations we highlight the typological differences which arise amongst the early varieties through the span of time represented by our data, i.e. the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. We claim that the emergence of the proform is to be understood in the context of the overt marking of definiteness (Ciconte 2010, 2011), which is in turn part of a major change in the expression of nominal and verbal operators. This is dealt with in the literature as the rise of overt functional structure (see Benincà 1988, 2006, Salvi 2004, Ledgeway 2012a, 2012b).

### 5.3.1 Typology of *there* sentences in early Italo-Romance

Cruschina's (2012b) four types of *there* sentence are not all found in our early Italo-Romance corpus. In particular, while existentials proper (type i), inverse locatives (type ii), and deictic locatives (type iii) are attested, presentational *there* sentences (type iv) are not. Type (i) *there* sentences are characterized by a pre- or post-copular pivot, which is normally indefinite. In (29a–c) this is the only meaningful component of the *there* sentence.

- (29) a. E erano alcuni, li quali avvisavano che [...] (OTusc.)  
 and be.PST.3PL some who notice.PST.3PL that  
 'And there were some people who noticed that ...'  
 (*Decameron*, I, intr., 20, p. 14)
- b. Et è molte maynere de queste bestie. (OLomb.)  
 and be.3SG many manners of these beasts  
 'And there are many kinds of these beasts.'  
 (*Vivaldo Belcazer*, 30–31, p. 172)

<sup>11</sup> Following Vincent et al. (2003), the sources include literary texts, prose and poetry, *volgarizzamenti*, i.e. adaptations from Latin, religious florilegia, letters, testimonies of minute-books, deeds, and trial reports. The collection of the examples amounts to 2,532 constructions, of which 2,078 are *there* sentences and 454 are canonical locative predications.

- c. Altri son chi crean che [...] (OLomb.)  
 others be.3PL who believe.3PL that  
 ‘There are other people who believe that...’  
 (*Parafrasi*, 4a, 22, p. 4)

Existentials can also exhibit a focal coda, which normally occurs either in immediately pre-copular or in immediately post-copular position (cf. 30a,b). More rarely, i.e. in 2.8 per cent of the attestations of *there* sentences in our corpus, the coda is placed in final position (cf. 30c).

- (30) a. In Firencza era uno grande ricco. (OCamp.)  
 in Florence be.PST.3SG a great rich.man  
 ‘There was a very rich man in Florence.’  
 (*Ricordi*, 20r., 5, p. 564)
- b. Era in Francia uno nobile conte, lo quale [...] (ORom.)  
 be.PST.3SG in France a noble count who  
 ‘There was a noble count in France, who...’  
 (*Cronica*, cap. XIII, p. 86)
- c. Era allora un giovane in Pistoia. (OTusc.)  
 be.PST.3SG then a young.man in Pistoia  
 ‘There was a young man in Pistoia.’  
 (*Decameron*, III, 5, 5, p. 258)

In (30a) the occurrence of the locative phrase in first position is explained by the V2 syntax of early Romance, which allows the finite verb of main clauses to be preceded by one or more elements bearing pragmatic salience (Renzi 1985: 267–75, 1988, Vincent 1988: 62, Benincà 1994c, 2004, 2006, Salvi 2000, 2004: 107–11, Ledgeway 2012a: 65–6, Poletto 2014: 8–11). In terms of the Layered Structure of the Clause, V2 syntax is characterized by the placement of the Nucleus in core-initial position and of topics or foci in the Pre-Core Slot (Diedrichsen 2008, Bentley 2010b). Now observe that the sentence in (30a) sets the scene for a new section of the narrative. Accordingly, the pre-copular locative phrase must be part of the focal information. In (30b) the coda occurs in the same position as in classical Latin existentials, and is thus within the focus domain of the sentence. Finally, in (30c) the coda figures in a post-core Periphery, which we assume to be focal because the example is the first line of a new paragraph, and therefore serves to introduce all-new information. In the last analysis, in all three cases, the coda is an aboutness topic (see §2.1.1).

Type (i) *there* sentences can also exhibit a proform, although this is not obligatory in any of the dialects under scrutiny, and in fact is not found at all in Tuscan existentials.

- (31) Estinchi ancora un altru modu di cruchificari. (OSic.)  
 be.3SG.PF yet an other manner of crucify.INF  
 ‘There is yet another way of crucifying.’  
 (*Sposizione*, XXI, 3, 2, p. 232)

Turning now to inverse locatives, or type (ii) *there* sentences, these are structures with a focal argument and a topical locative predicate (see §2.4.1). The locative predicate can figure in an extra-clausal position or remain unexpressed, when it is contextually or situationally recoverable in discourse. Since the latter type is particularly frequent in our corpus of early texts, in this section we label as ‘type (a)’ the inverse locatives with a detached topical locative predicate, and as ‘type (b)’ the inverse locatives with a salient but unexpressed topical locative predicate.

In most Italo-Romance vernaculars, type (a) inverse locatives can exhibit a proform (cf. 32), although, as is the case with existentials, this is not obligatory (cf. 33).

- (32) a. In quela, çòè in la casa de lo pianto, l’ omo g’ è (OLig.)  
 in that that is in the house of the grief the man PF be.3SG  
 amonio de lo so fin.  
 warned of the his end  
 ‘In that one, that is in the house of grief, the man is (there) warned of his end.’  
 (*Dialogo di Sam Gregorio*, 225, 10–11)
- b. Nota chi lo Conti non ci era in la citati. (OSic.)  
 note.IMP.2SG that the count NEG PF be.PST.3SG in the city  
 ‘Note that the Count was not there, in town.’  
 (*Conquesta*, XI, 11, p. 46)
- c. Dentro a quillo palazzo [...] sì nce fo una sala. (OCamp.)  
 inside at that palace WOM PF be.PST.3SG a hall  
 ‘Inside that palace ... there was indeed a hall (there).’  
 (*Libro*, v, c. 21, 37, p. 80)

The focal argument of type (a) inverse locatives is typically definite (cf. 32a,b), although indefinite arguments can also be focalized in inverse locatives (cf. 32c). When there is a proform, the locative phrase is detached outside the clause, as is clearly the case with (32a,c), where the first position of the clause—i.e. the Pre-Core Slot—is occupied by a noun phrase or *sì*, thus allowing the proclisis of the proform.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> We abstract away from the possibility that the locative phrase is in a periphery of the Core. In modern Italian, the occurrence of a locative phrase in a Core Periphery prevents its doubling with a locative resumptive clitic. However, we are unable to determine with certainty if this is also the case with early Italo-Romance, in the absence of prosodic evidence.

This would otherwise be ruled out by the Tobler–Mussafia law (Mussafia 1886: 255–8, Sorrento 1951: 143, Ulleland 1960: 53–4, Wanner 1987: 157), which bans proclisis on a clause-initial verb (see §5.3.4).

Importantly at this stage, it is not the case that the detached locative phrase of inverse locatives obligatorily requires a resumptive clitic as its lexical copy in the Core. In the example in (33), pre-copular *si* suggests that the locative phrase occurs in an extra-clausal position. There is, however, no proform on the copula *era* ‘was’.

- (33) In questa insula de Colcosa si era in quillo tiempo  
 in this island of Colcosa WOM BE.PST.3SG in that time  
 una citate. (OCamp.)  
 a city  
 ‘In this island of Colcosa, there was indeed, at that time, a city.’  
 (*Libro*, II, c. 6, 34, p. 55)

Moving on to type (b) inverse locatives, these do not involve an overt locative phrase, but rather a salient topical locative predicate, which has been introduced in previous discourse.

- (34) a. Anco ce fu don Dionisi sio zio. (ORom.)  
 also PF BE.PST.3SG sir Dionsi his uncle  
 ‘Also his uncle sir Dionisi was there.’  
 (*Cronica*, XI, p. 53)
- b. E la contessa di Teti vi fue. (OTusc.)  
 and the countess of Teti PF BE.PST.3SG  
 ‘And the countess of Teti was there.’  
 (*Novellino*, LX, p. 68)
- c. Parea che nce fosse una torricciuola. (OCamp.)  
 seem.PST.3SG that PF BE.PST.SBJV.3SG a little tower  
 ‘It seemed that a little tower was there.’  
 (*Libro*, P, xxxiv, c. 154, 16–1, pp. 308–9)

The following passage provides the full context of the example in (34a).

- (34a') Taliffa se perdeva in tutto, se non se succurreva. Non se poteva recuperare. [...] Dicese che madonna santa Maria fussi nata in questa citate. [...] Ora non dorme lo re Alfonso. [...] Ben se sollicita lo re. Ben chiama tutta la Spagna. [...] Lo primo aiutorio fu quello de papa Benedetto [...]. Lo secunno aiutorio fu [...]. Lo terzo aiutorio fu lo re de Aragona [...]. Anco menao pedoni vinti milia. Anco ce fu don Dionisi sio zio con quelli della citate de Lisvona. [...] Mentre che lo assedio era sopra Taliffa, lo re Alfonso era in Sabilia con soa baronia.

‘The town of Taliffa would be lost, if it had not been helped. It could not rescue itself on its own. [...] It is said that the holy Madonna Maria was born in this town. [...] Now the king Alfonzo cannot sleep. [...] The king is well spurred on. He indeed calls all Spain. [...]. The first support was that of the pope Benedict [...]. The second support was [...]. The third support was that of the king of Aragon. He also brought twenty thousand infantry men. Also his uncle don Dionisi was there [in the besieged Taliffa, *FMC*] with those from the city of Lisbon. [...] While the siege was on Taliffa, the king Alfonzo was in Seville with his baronage.’

(*Cronica*, XI, p. 53)

The focal argument of type (b) inverse locatives is normally definite (cf. 34a,b), but in some cases it can also be indefinite (cf. 34c). Significantly, the available data indicate that in type (b) inverse locatives with a definite noun phrase the proform is obligatorily required (cf. 34a,b), whereas in those with an indefinite noun phrase it is not (see 35).

- (35) a. E seran tanti falci cristi e falci profeti e pricaor  
and be.FUT.3PL many false Christs and false prophets and preachers  
maligni e inganaor d’ annime. (OLomb.)  
wicked and deceivers of souls

‘And many false Christs and false prophets and wicked preachers and deceivers of souls will be there (at that time).’

(*Parafrasi*, 56<sup>b</sup>, 30–31, p. 84)

- b. E fo gran piouei.  
and be.PST.3SG great rains  
‘And great rains were there (at that time).’

(*Parafrasi*, 23<sup>b</sup>, 35, p. 28)

The example in (35a) is taken from the following excerpt.

- (35a’) Ma innance che-l uegnia l’ultimo çuixio [...], a-l tempo de l’Anticristo e abondera tanta iniquitate [...], e morra in molti e a penna se porra pu trovar fe uraxa in terra, e seran tanti falci cristi e falci profeti e pricaor maligni e inganaor d’annime [...]

‘But before the final judgment comes [...], at the time of the Antichrist and much wickedness will abound [...], and many will die and one almost no more will be able to find sworn faith on earth, and many false Christs and false prophets and wicked preachers and deceivers of souls will be there [...].’

(*Parafrasi*, 56<sup>b</sup>, 19–32, p. 84)

The time frame, *Ma innance che-l uegnia l’ultimo çuixio, a-l tempo de l’Anticristo*, as well as the location, *in terra*, are clearly established in discourse, and are contextually understood as the salient predicate of the sentence in (35a).

The example in (35b) is drawn from the following context.

(35b) Ma quel homo chi ogue queste mee parole e no fa le oure someglia a l'omo mato chi hedifico lo so casamento sul sabion e vegne gli fiumi e trete gran uenti e fo gran piouei e dan contra sta casa e vegne in gran ruina.

‘But that man who messes my words about and does not do the deeds resembles the crazy man who built his house on the sand, and there come the rivers and great winds crush [the house—*FMC*] and great rains are there [on the house built on the sand—*FMC*] and go against this house and it tumbles down in ruin.’

(*Parafrasi*, 56<sup>b</sup>, 19–32, p. 84)

The new referent *gran piouei* ‘rains’ is introduced in the context of the *casamento sul sabion* ‘house on the sand’, which we take to be the topical predicate of this *there* sentence. Observe that, by contrast with (35a), the copula of (35b) lacks agreement with the noun phrase. Agreement is frequently lacking in sentence- and argument-focus structures with a post-copular indefinite noun phrase, especially in the northern varieties. This pattern is found not only in *there* sentences, but also in presentative or event-reporting constructions with unaccusative verbs (e.g. ‘*vegne*(3SG) *gli fiumi*’, where ‘*fiumi*’ is a non-specific token) and even with transitives (e.g. ‘*trete*(3SG) *gran venti*’). By contrast, definite post-copular noun phrases tend to control agreement (Ciconte 2010: 130–33, Parry 2013: 522–5). We will return to agreement in section 5.3.5.

Type (iii) deictic locatives are very rare in our corpus of early written texts. In the formal narrative style of our sources, direct speech—where speaker-oriented, here-and-now, deixis is likely to occur—is generally avoided. Even the texts that exhibit use of dialogue only provide very few examples that can be considered to be type (iii) deictic locatives. Two of these are provided here.

(36) a. E il conte disse: – Che è ciò, Riccar? (OTusc.)  
and the count say.PST.3SG what be.3SG this Riccar

– Messere, io vo’ mostrare che io non ci sono per cacciare,  
Sir I want.1SG show.INF that I NEG PF be.1SG for pursue.INF  
né per fuggire.  
nor for run.away.INF

‘And the count said:—What is this, Riccar?—Sir, I want to show that I am here neither to pursue nor to run away.’

(*Novellino*, xxxii, p. 45)

b. Ma dicoti che non ci sono se non io e la fante mia.  
but tell.1SG.to.you that NEG PF be.1SG if NEG I and the servant my  
(OTusc.)

‘But nobody is here except myself and my servant.’

(*Novellino*, xcvi, p. 102)



In the next sections we will argue that the proform first enters type (b) inverse locatives, i.e. the locative *there* sentences without an expressed topical locative predicate, and from there it spreads to type (a) inverse locatives and type (i) *there* sentences.

### 5.3.2 *The emergence of the proform*

The analysis of early Italo-Romance *there* sentences points to a correlation between the definiteness of the post-copular noun phrase and the emergence of the proform. In particular, definite post-copular noun phrases consistently co-occur with a locative phrase, a locative adverb, or a locative *wh*-word (cf. 37a–d). Otherwise, they co-occur with a proform (cf. 37e).

- (37) a. In Napole era            la regina con duy figlie.            (OCamp.)  
       in Naples be.PST.3SG the queen with two daughters  
       ‘The queen was in Naples with two daughters.’  
       (*Ricordi*, 8v., 30–31, p. 535)
- b. Qui fo            l’ arra.            (OTusc.)  
       here be.PST.3SG the down.payment  
       ‘The down payment was here.’  
       (*Dugento*, 20v, 17–18, p. 162)
- c. In qual inferno erano    li iusti?            (OLomb.)  
       in which hell    be.PST.3PL the good.men  
       ‘In which hell were the good men?’  
       (*Elucidario*, III, f. 113r, 22, p. 190)
- d. Nella pianura canto mare dove fu            la citate antica. (ORom.)  
       in.the plain    next sea    where be.PST.3SG the city    ancient  
       ‘In the plain next to the sea where the old city was.’  
       (*Cronica*, cap. XIII, p. 75)
- e. Anco ce fu            lo puopulo de Bologna.            (ORom.)  
       also PF be.PST.3SG the people of Bologna  
       ‘Also the people of Bologna were there.’  
       (*Cronica*, v, p. 16)

*There* sentences solely formed by a copula and a definite noun phrase are never attested, whereas this structure is frequently found with indefinite noun phrases (cf. 38). These facts are summarized in Table 5.1.

- (38) Fu            alcuno che penzao [...]            (ORom.)  
       be.PST. 3SG someone who think.PST.3SG  
       ‘There was someone who thought...’  
       (*Cronica*, II, p. 9)

TABLE 5.1 Frequency of patterns with indefinite and definite NPs in early Italo-Romance *there* sentences<sup>a</sup>

Type	Attested (+) or not (-)	% in corpus
[copula ][INDEFINITE NP]	+	41.8
[INDEFINITE NP][copula]	+	11.2
[proform][copula][INDEFINITE NP]	+	11.8
[INDEFINITE NP][proform][copula]	+	10.3
*[copula][DEFINITE NP]	-	-
*[DEFINITE NP][copula]	-	-
[+ LOC. / + proform][copula][DEFINITE NP]	+	23.2
[DEFINITE NP][+ LOC. / + proform][copula]	+	1.7

<sup>a</sup> The percentages in Table 5.1 were calculated on the basis of the analysis of all the *there* sentences occurring in the early Italo-Romance corpus.

In example (37e), the proform spells out the locative predicate which is situationally understood in discourse, as is indicated by the context in which example (37e) is found.

(37e') Ferrara ène una longa terra, miglio uno [...] Per acqua e per terra staieva assediata [...] Anco ce fu lo puopulo de Bologna.

'Ferrara is a long territory, one mile [...] It was under siege from the river and on land [...] Also the people of Bologna were there [among the besiegers—*FMC*].'

(*Cronica*, v, p. 16)

The sentence in (37e) exhibits a definite, specific noun phrase, i.e. *lo puopulo de Bologna*, and a clitic, i.e. *ce*, whereas we have seen that type (b) inverse locatives with an indefinite noun phrase do not obligatorily require a locative clitic (cf. 35a,b). It thus appears that the locative clitic emerges first in type (b) locatives with a definite noun phrase.

Assuming as we do that the proform first occurs obligatorily in *there* sentences with definite noun phrases, this innovation in the history of Italo-Romance turns out to result from a broader typological change in the expression of nominal (and verbal) operators. We are referring here to the change concerning the rise of overt functional structure (Benincà 1988, 2006, Vincent 1998: 422–3, Salvi 2004, 2005, Ledgeway 2012a, 2012b). Being overtly referential, the definite noun phrases of Italo-Romance *there* sentences need to be located or 'anchored' in time or space (Ciconte 2009, 2010, 2011). They thus require an overt locative phrase or a locative clitic. Observe in passing that we revise here Ciconte's (2011) proposal, in that we do not claim that the proform emerges in existentials with a non-canonical pivot

(i.e. a definite pivot). Rather, we claim that it starts to appear in locative *there* sentences with a definite post-copular noun phrase. From there, the locative clitic spreads to existentials. In the generalization to the latter construction, the clitic loses its locative value to become the proform which is found in the existentials of the modern dialects.

Other early Romance languages also appear to require a locative clitic, when the post-copular noun phrase of a *there* sentence is definite.

- (39) a. Enaprés hi és l' affigurament del firmament. (OCat.)  
 then PF be.3SG the depiction of.the firmament  
 'Then the depiction of the firmament is here.'  
 (*Llibre de les Solemnitats de Barcelona*, 147)
- b. Est es el lignage de los reies de França. (ONav.-Arag.)  
 this be.3SG the ancestry of the kings of France  
 E vi fueron antes de Charle Mayne.  
 and PF be.PST.3PL before of Charles Great  
 'This is the ancestry of the kings of France. And they were here before  
 Charles the Great.'  
 (*Liber Regum*, 18, 1)

The examples in (39a,b) are type (b) inverse locatives. We may thus assume that it is in this type of *there* sentence that the reflexes of the Latin locative adverbs, e.g. *HINCE/ECCE HIC, IBI*, evolve into locative proforms, which spell out a predicate that is topical and active or accessible in discourse.

In the following section, we focus on evidence provided by Tuscan, the most conservative of the early Italo-Romance vernaculars (e.g. Migliorini and Griffith 1984, Renzi 1988, D'Achille 1990, Maiden 1995), which further supports our hypothesis that the proform enters *there* sentences as a locative clitic spelling out a topical locative predicate.

### 5.3.3 *Evidence from early Tuscan*

In early Tuscan *there* sentences, the proform never co-occurs with a locative phrase within the clause, intended here in the specific sense of the Layered Structure of the Clause (see §1.3.2). Thus, one finds either an aboutness topic (cf. 40) or a proform (cf. 41a,b) within the clause, but not both.

- (40) In quella Alessandria sono le rughe ove stanno i saracini. (OTusc.)  
 in that Alexandria be.3PL the alleys where stay.3PL the Saracens  
 'In that Alexandria there are the alleys where the Saracens reside.'  
 (*Novellino* IX, p. 25)

- (41) a. Come ci è l' astore, così ci fosse lo 'mperadore.  
 as PF be.3SG the goshawk so PF be.PST.SBJV.3SG the emperor  
 (OTusc.)  
 'As the goshawk is here, (let us pretend that) so is the emperor.'  
 (*Novellino*, XXII, p. 36)
- b. E la contessa di Teti vi fue.  
 and the countess of Teti PF be.PST.3SG  
 'And the countess of Teti was there.'  
 (*Novellino*, LX, p. 68)

In (40), *Alessandria* 'Alexandria' is a clause-internal aboutness topic, as suggested by the position of the verb, which follows the locative phrase immediately. Indeed, as we mentioned in section 5.3.1, the Nucleus strongly tends to figure in the core-initial position in V2 syntax, whereas topical or focal constituents can precede it in the pre-core slot. While there is a locative phrase within the clause, there is no proform in (40). In (41a,b), on the other hand, there is a proform, but no locative phrase. As can be seen from the contexts in which these examples occur, which are reported below, the proform resumes a clause-external locative topic. These are thus type (b) inverse locatives. The *there* sentence in (41a) could also be considered to be a deictic locative, given that it occurs within direct speech and refers to a here-and-now kind of topic. In either case, the proform spells out a topical location.

- (41a) Lo 'mperadore Federigo, stando ad assedio a Melano, sì li fuggì uno suo astore e volò dentro a Melano. [...] Un melanese, vecchio di gran tempo, consigliò alla podestà e disse così:—Come ci è l'astore, così ci fosse lo 'mperadore, ché noi lo faremmo disentire di quello ch'elli fa al distretto di Melano!  
 'While the emperor Frederick was besieging Milan, one of his goshawks escaped him and flew into Milan. [...] A very old citizen of Milan advised the authorities and spoke thus:—As the goshawk is here, (let us pretend that) so is the emperor, so we will make him regret what he is doing to the district of Milan.'  
 (*Novellino*, XXII, p. 36)
- (41b) Or avvenne che, nel mezzo de l'arringo, il destriere del conte d'Universa cadde col conte in un monte; onde le donne discesero delle logge e portarlon e in braccio, molto soavemente. E la contessa di Teti vi fue.  
 'Now it happened that in the midst of the field the steed of the count of Universa fell with the count in a heap; hence, the ladies descended from the tribunes, and bore him in their arms most tenderly. And the countess of Teti was there [in that situation—*FMC*].'  
 (*Novellino*, LX, p. 68)

Early Tuscan *there* sentences may not exhibit a proform at all, in which case they are existentials proper. The examples in (42a,b) are the first lines of two new tales of

the *Novellino*, which set the scene, conveying all-new information. These sentences can therefore be considered to be existential constructions.

- (42) a. Fue uno re molto crudele. (OTusc.)  
 be.PST.3SG a king very cruel  
 ‘There was a very cruel king.’  
 (*Novellino*, xxxvi, p. 48)
- b. Era una guasca in Cipri.  
 be.PST.3SG a Gascon in Cyprus  
 ‘There was a woman from Gascony in Cyprus.’  
 (*Novellino*, li, p. 60)

The examples from early Tuscan are rather copious. The scrutiny of over 2,000 pages includes the whole *Decameron*, the *Novellino*, and the vast collection of twelfth-century texts edited by Castellani in 1952 (see Appendix 1). In the analysis of the data, there is no evidence of co-occurrence of the proform with a locative phrase within the clause (in the sense of the Layered Structure of the Clause). The proform thus occurs in complementary distribution with the locative phrase (Ciconte 2008, 2009, Salvi 2010).

Assuming that early Tuscan, on a par with its descendant, modern Italian (La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997), does not admit locative clitic doubling, the complementary distribution shows that at this stage the proform is locative. The above examples further suggest that the locative proform is first introduced in type (b) inverse locatives (and, by hypothesis, in deictic locatives).

In early Tuscan, locative, resumptive *ci* is also attested in structures other than *there* sentences, where it resumes a locative topic.



- (43) a. Del seppellirlo è il modo presto qui *in questo giardino*, [...]   
 of.the bury.INF.him be.3SG the manner fast here in this garden  
 per ciò che niun sa ch’ egli mai *ci* venisse.  
 for this that nobody know.3SG that he never LOC come.PST.SBJV.3SG  
 ‘As for burying him, the fast way is here in this garden, [...] because nobody knows that he may ever have come here.’  
 (*Decameron*, iv, 6, 367)
- b. Il re David si mosse incontanente, e andò *nel*  
 the king David REFL move.PST.3SG immediately and go.PST.3SG in.the  
*campo* Aminadab, suo mariscalco. Domandoe: perché mi *ci* à’  
 field Aminadab his marshal ask.PST.3SG why me LOC have.2SG  
 fatto venire?  
 made come.INF  
 ‘King David immediately hurried and went to the camp of Aminadab, his marshal. He [King David—FMC] asked: why did you make me come here?’  
 (*Novellino*, xii, pp. 31–2)



- b. In killa silva chi era unu àrburu cavatu, e (OSic.)  
 in that wood PF be.PST.3SG a tree hollowed and  
 dintru kistu àrburu chi era amuchatu unu prisuni.  
 inside this tree PF be.PST.3SG hidden a person  
 ‘In that wood there was a hollow tree and inside this tree was hiding a person.’  
 (*Dialagu*, 146, 31–2)

Given that the examples in (45) exhibit the pattern [LocPP][PF][copula][NP], it could be argued that these are inverse locatives of type (a), where the proform is an anaphoric, referential clitic, resuming a detached locative phrase. However, the diagnostics derivable from the Tobler–Mussafia Law show that the locative phrases of (45a,b) are not detached and, in fact, occur within the body of the clause.

As was mentioned earlier, in early Romance, enclisis is obligatory when the clitic is hosted by a clause-initial verb (Mussafia 1886: 255–8, Sorrento 1951: 143, Ulleland 1960: 53–4, Wanner 1987: 157). Being proclitic, the proforms of (45a,b) indicate that the verb must be in second position, thus leaving the first slot available to a pragmatically salient element, as frequently occurs in the V2 syntax of early Romance (Benincà 2004: 261f., 2006).<sup>13</sup> The clitic is thus hosted by the verb in the core-initial but clause-second position. As it happens, the fronted element in this case is a locative PP, which can thus be assumed to occur in a position within the clause, i.e. the Pre-Core Slot. The layered structure of (45a,b) is represented in (46).

- (46) a. In quilli paysi ci fu unu grandi gintilomu.  
 [Clause [PrCS In quilli paysi]][Core ci [Nucleus fu unu grandi gintilomu.]]
- 
- Actual Focus Domain
- b. In killa silva chi era unu àrburu cavatu.  
 [Clause [PrCS In killa silva]][Core ci [Nucleus era unu àrburu cavatu.]]
- 
- Actual Focus Domain

While being core-external, the locative phrase is clause-internal, and is thus within the focus domain of this structure. The co-occurrence of the locative phrase with the


<sup>13</sup> According to Benincà (2004: 274, 2006), proclisis occurs when the constituent preceding the verb is in the Focus Field, i.e. in our terms, is clause-internal, whereas enclisis is required when the constituent is in the Topic or Frame (Benincà 2004: 275), i.e. it is in the Left Detached Position.

proform within the Clause suggests that the proform is not referential, i.e. it is not locative, and that these structures are existential.

The proform is also attested in inverse locative *there* sentences with an overt locative phrase, i.e. type (a), but its position and function are different in these structures. Observe the contrast between (47a) and (47b).

- (47) a. In lu qualj locu chi su multi acqui fride. (OSic.)  
 in the which place PF be.3PL many waters cold  
 ‘[...] in which place there are many cold streams.’  
 (*Dialagu*, 38, 22)
- b. In Rigiù erachi unu grandi giganti. (OSic.)  
 in Reggio be.PST.3SG.PF a big giant  
 ‘In Reggio, a big giant was there.’  
 (*Conquista*, VII, 7, p. 22)

The proclisis or enclisis of the proform distinguishes the existential construction in (47a) from the type (a) inverse locative in (47b). In (47a), the proclitic position of the proform signals that the verb is not in clause-initial position. The locative phrase is thus within the Clause, i.e. in the Pre-Core Slot, and this structure is an existential *there* sentence. By contrast, in (47b) the enclisis of the proform indicates that the verb is in clause-initial position, as the Pre-Core Slot is not filled. Accordingly, the locative phrase *in Rigiù* must be detached to the left of the Clause, the structure thus being an inverse locative in which the proform is referential and resumes the detached locative phrase (Parry 2010, 2013: 528–33). Since this is an argument focus structure, only the argument is focal in (47b). The structure of (47b) can be represented as follows.

- (48) In Rigiù erachi unu grandi giganti.  
 [LDP In Rigiù][Clause [Core [Nucleus era chi] unu grandi giganti.]]
-   
 Actual Focus Domain

Inverse locatives with an overt locative phrase can also exhibit a proclitic proform, provided that an element other than the locative phrase is placed in the first position of the clause, as is the case with *si* in the examples below.

- (49) a. Intre le quali si nce foy quillo veramente forte (OCamp.)  
 inside which WOM PF be.PST.3SG that very strong  
 e virtuoso homo.  
 and virtuous man  
 ‘[...] in which ones was that very strong and virtuous man.’  
 (*Libro*, I, c. 4, 3–4, p. 52)



- b. D'appressu sì nch' era unu ortu. (OSic.)  
 nearby WOM PF be.PST.3SG a garden  
 'Nearby there was a garden.'  
 (*Sposizione*, xxvi, 5, 6, p. 284)

In (49a,b), *si* occupies the first position, i.e. the Pre-Core Slot, thus shielding *nch* and *nch'*, which can occur pre-verbally (Parry 2013: 528–33). The structures are thus inverse locatives, whether the focal argument is definite (49a) or indefinite (49b).

The etymologically locative clitic is generalized also to type (i) *there* sentences without a locative phrase. In these structures the clitic does not resume a locative antecedent, and has thus lost its locative meaning to become the non-referential proform which is found in the existentials proper of the modern dialects (see §§2.2.2 and 3.4). Although this pattern is less frequently attested than its counterpart without proform (see Table 5.1), a number of attestations are found in all the early varieties of our corpus.

- (50) a. Ancora g' è una altra caxone. (OLomb.)  
 also PF be.3SG an other reason  
 'There is also another reason.'  
 (*Elucidario*, I, f. 58r, 119, p. 116)
- b. Foroci multi guay. (OAbr.)  
 be.PST.3PL.PF many troubles  
 'There was much trouble.'  
 (*Cronica aquilana*, 29B, CDXLII, v. 4, p. 103)
- c. Peio novella ince èy che chesta. (OCamp.)  
 worse news PF be.3SG than this  
 'There is some news that is worse than this one.'  
 (*Ricordi*, 30v, 16, p. 588)
- d. Chi non chi era spiranza di loru liberationi. (OSic.)  
 that NEG PF be.3PST.SG hope of their release  
 'That there was no hope for their release.'  
 (*Conquista*, xxix, 5–6, p. 138)

Finally, the proform is not yet obligatory in existentials and type (a) inverse locatives. Rather, existentials (cf. 51) and type (a) inverse locatives (cf. 52) are still largely attested without proform. Thus, the texts of our corpus testify to a chronological phase in which the locative clitic is not yet completely generalized to these constructions. Observe, by way of example, the contrast between (51b) below and (44a) above, which are drawn from the same text.

- (51) a. E fo ragione p(er) li iij fiorini. (OUmbr.)  
 and be.PST.3SG reason for the four fiorini  
 'And there was a reason for the four fiorini (coins).'  
 (*Terre di Civitella*, 12r, (α), 185, p. 188)

- b. Era in Sicilia unu ammiragliu. (OSic.)  
 be.PST.3SG in Sicily an admiral  
 ‘There was an admiral in Sicily.’  
 (*Conquesta*, VIII, 10–11, p. 31)
- c. Fu grandi altercacioni intra duy soy figlioli. (OSic.)  
 be.PST.3SG great quarrel inside two his sons  
 ‘There was a great quarrel between his two sons.’  
 (*Conquesta*, XXV, 3–4, p. 112)
- (52) a. Et inter questi fon sti santi pueri (OLomb.)  
 and among these be.PST.3PL these holy children  
 di quai nu parlo.  
 of whom we speak.1PL  
 ‘Among these people were these holy children whom we are talking about.’  
 (*Parafraasi*, 36<sup>b</sup>, 2–3, p. 49)
- b. Quando intra la hostia esti tuctu Cristu. (OSic.)  
 when inside the holy bread be.3SG all Christ  
 ‘When in the holy bread is the whole Christ.’  
 (*Sposizione*, VII, 2, 3, p. 103)
- c. In la festa de lo Corpo de Christo questo fone. (OAbr.)  
 in the celebration of the body of Christ this be.PST.3SG.PARAG  
 ‘In the celebration of the body of Christ was this (the king).’  
 (*Cronaca aquilana*, 64A, MXXXIII, v. 6, p. 239)

In the light of the evidence presented so far, we propose the following outline of the emergence and development of the proform in *there* sentences. In all the early Italo-Romance vernaculars under scrutiny, the proform first enters type (b) inverse locatives and, by hypothesis, deictic locatives. Its emergence is related to the overt marking of definiteness, which in turn correlates with the rise of functional structure in the transition from Latin to Romance. In *there* sentences, referential noun phrases need to be overtly located, and their coding is thus accompanied by a locative phrase or by a locative clitic. Thus, in early Romance type (b) inverse locatives, the reflexes of a number of Latin locative adverbs, HINCE, ECCE HIC, HIC, IBI, etc., develop into locative proforms to spell out a predicate which is contextually or situationally accessible in discourse. It follows that, at this stage, the proform is locative. This is clearly observable in the data from early Tuscan, where the proform occurs in complementary distribution with any other locative element within the clause, witness the absolute lack of *there* sentences in which the proform co-occurs with a locative phrase within the Clause.

From type (b) inverse locatives the proform extends to existentials and inverse locatives with an overt locative phrase. In entering these structures the proform

undergoes a process of *layering* (Hopper and Traugott 1993), which splits its role into two distinct functions. Whereas in inverse locatives the proform retains its locative meaning, this is lost in existentials. The functional split of the role of the proform is to be understood in the context of the encoding of logical structure. In type (a) inverse locatives, the locative phrase is the predicate, which needs to be resumed within the clause. The proform does precisely this, taking a pro-predicative role. By contrast, in existential *there* sentences, the coda is not an inherent component of the logical structure (see §§3.4.1, 3.4.3). Rather, it is a modifier of the contextual domain of the existential predication (Francez 2007). As such, the coda is not resumed by a proform. In this context, the proform is reanalysed, and marks the construction as an existential construction, with an unspecified argument.

In Tuscan too the proform ceases to be exclusively locative in all structures, although this happens at a later stage. To be precise, the co-occurrence of the proform with a locative phrase in existentials is attested in a Tuscan *volgarizzamento* of the Latin *Navigatio*, dating from the late sixteenth century (cf. 53). The period intervening between the fourteenth century and the late sixteenth century can thus be considered to be the stage in which the process of layering mentioned above occurs in Tuscan.

- (53) E non v' era erba in niuno luogo. (OTusc.)  
 and NEG PF be.PST.3SG grass in no place  
 'And there was no grass anywhere.'  
 (*Tuscan Navigatio*, 7, f.8r, p. 73)

### 5.3.5 Copulas and agreement

As is the case with modern Romance, among the early Italo-Romance varieties there are some crossdialectal differences in copula selection; *ESSE* is attested in all the vernaculars, whereas *HABERE* is found to alternate with *ESSE* in Tuscan, Piedmontese, and Apulian. We repeat here the relevant examples, which were first introduced in (4).

- (54) a. Avea un vecchio, ch' avea nome ser Frulli. (OTusc.)  
 have.PST.3SG an old man who have.PST.3SG name sir Frulli  
 'There was a man whose name was sir Frulli.'  
 (*Novellino*, xcvi, p. 102)
- b. Fue uno re molto crudele.  
 be.PST.3SG a king very cruel  
 'There was a very cruel king.'  
 (*Novellino*, xxxvi, p. 48)

- (55) El fo uno reis qui avea un anel d' or (OPied.)  
 EXPL be.PST.3SG a king who have.PST.3SG a ring of gold  
 o' avea una pera preciosa.  
 where have.PST.3SG a stone precious  
 'There was a king who had a ring of gold in which was set a precious stone.'  
 (*Sermoni subalpini*, 251, 29–30 (Parry 2013: 519))
- (56) a. Et à altre manere de angeli chi [...] (OApul.)  
 and have.3SG other manners of angels who  
 'And there are other kinds of angel who...'  
 (*Sidrac*, 4v, 36, p. 203)
- b. E v' à altre manere de gienti.  
 and PF have.3SG other manners of people  
 'And there are other kinds of people.'  
 (*Sidrac*, 15r, 11, p. 242)
- c. Et so' altre manere d' angeli.  
 and be.3PL other manners of angels  
 'And there are other kinds of angel.'  
 (*Sidrac*, 4v, 37, p. 203)

A reflex of *STARE* is not attested in the central-southern vernaculars which exhibit this copula nowadays (see Map 3). We thus have to assume that *STARE* enters the written registers of these varieties at a later stage, i.e. after the sixteenth century. Due to the literary nature of the central-southern texts, the use of *ESSE* may be a stylistic choice conforming to the literary canon, whereas the use of *STARE* may be confined to the popular registers.

Copula selection is closely related to agreement, as *HABERE*, by contrast with *ESSE* (cf. 56c), is invariably found in the third person singular (cf. 56a,b). Furthermore, contrary to the constructions with *ESSE*, in which the noun phrase is pre- or post-copular, as well as indefinite or definite, the structure with *HABERE* only exhibits post-copular noun phrases, which tend strongly to be indefinite. These facts suggest that *there* sentences with *HABERE* are primarily construed as type (i), i.e. as existential sentences.

We should note that the majority of the structures with *HABERE* (96.3 per cent of our attestations of *HABERE there* sentences) do not exhibit a locative phrase. If a locative phrase occurs in pre-copular position, this is not resumed by the proform, which indicates that the locative phrase is not detached, the construction thus proving to be existential.

- (57) Et sopra a chascuno fiume ave un ponte. (OApul.)  
 and above to each river have.3SG a bridge  
 'And there is a bridge on each river.'  
 (*Sidrac*, 12v, 27–8, p. 233)

The locative phrase is more frequently found in final position, in which case it may co-occur with a proform.

- (58) a. Ave altra gente socta a nuy che vegano lo sole? (OApul.)  
 have.3SG other people beneath to us who see.SUBJV.3PL the sun  
 ‘Are there any other people beneath us who may see the sun?’  
 (*Sidrac*, 20r, 4, p. 262)
- b. Eli v’ à altra gente in questa terraferma. (OApul.)  
 EXPL PF have.3SG other people in this dry.land  
 ‘There are other people on this dry land.’  
 (*Sidrac*, 14v, 34, p. 241)

The contrast between (58a) and (58b) (cf. also (56a,b)) indicates that, in the fifteenth-century Apulian text, the existential proform is not yet required in type (i) *there* sentences, as is the case with all the texts of our corpus.

Only 1.8 per cent of *there* sentences with HABERE in the whole corpus lend themselves to a locative interpretation. These are exclusively found in early Tuscan. We note, however, that the interpretation of these rare attestations is not straightforwardly deictic or locative, but could also be existential, in that the post-copular noun phrase is indefinite.

- (59) Èbbevi gran risa e sollazzo. (OTusc.)  
 have.PST.3SG.PF great laughter.PL and entertainment  
 ‘Great laughter and entertainment were there.’  
 ‘There was much laughter and entertainment.’  
 (*Novellino*, LXXVII, p. 88)
- (59’) Or giunse in Pisa [...] et, essendo con la nobile gente a tavola, contò il fatto com’era stato; poi diè questa lettera al siniscalco [...] e quelli la lesse, e trovò che li dovesse donare un paio di calze [...]. Avendole, ebbevi gran risa e sollazzo.  
 ‘Then he reached Pisa [...] and, being at the table with noble people, he narrated what had happened; then he gave this letter to the seneschal [...] and this man read it, and found that he was to give him a pair of socks [...]. When he got them, much laughter and entertainment were there/there was much laughter and entertainment.’  
 (*Novellino*, LXXVII, p. 88)

In (59), the proform *-vi* may spell out an understood locative predicate in the context of the scene set in Pisa, during the convivial gathering of nobles around the table, the *there* sentence thus being an inverse locative of type (b). On the other hand, the locative context is not particularly salient, and the excerpt reported in (59) follows a

lengthy narration. The example in (59) could thus be understood as an existential construction.

The divide between existential *HABERE* and (existential or) locative *ESSE* also transpires from the proforms which accompany the two copulas. Our findings suggest that the outcome of distal *IBI*, i.e. *vi/v'*, is consistently attested with *HABERE*, whereas proximal, strongly deictic *HINCE*, i.e. *ci*, is generally restricted to the structures with *ESSE*.<sup>14</sup> However, as we showed in (59), there are some examples with *IBI* which lend themselves to a locative interpretation.

As we have seen, agreement patterns are closely related to copula selection (cf. 56a–c). While *HABERE* is invariably found in the third-person singular, *ESSE* normally agrees with the post-copular noun phrase. With the latter copula lack of agreement only amounts to 3.2 per cent of the *there* sentences with *ESSE* and a plural pivot found in our corpus. Although this is a small number of examples, it is important to the extent that it anticipates the crossdialectal differences in agreement which characterize the modern dialects of Italy (see Maps 1, 2, and 4). In fact, lack of agreement is most frequently attested in *there* sentences of the northern varieties (see also Salvi 2010, Parry 2013: 522–4, 526), whereas in the southern dialects the post-copular noun phrase tends to control agreement on the copula. In the central vernaculars agreement occasionally fails to occur, though to a lesser extent than in the northern ones. The one result which contrasts with our modern findings is that of early Tuscan, where agreement on *ESSE* is consistent, whereas in modern Tuscan we have optional or no agreement with the same copula.

Interestingly, lack of agreement tends to correlate with a post-copular noun phrase.

- (60) a. In lo solo è tre cosse. (OLomb.)  
 in the sun be.3SG three things  
 ‘There are three things in the sun.’  
 (*Elucidario*, I, f. 40r, 3, p. 88)
- b. El no gh’era arbori. (OLomb.)  
 EXPL NEG PF be.PST.3SG trees  
 ‘There were no trees.’  
 (*Parafrasi*, 25<sup>b</sup>, 24–25, p. 31)
- c. Dannunca era alcuni. (OAbr.)  
 everywhere be.PST.3SG some.PL  
 ‘In every place there was someone.’  
 (*Cronaca Aquilana*, 44A, DCLXXXVIII, v. 6, p. 157)

<sup>14</sup> These facts are reminiscent of the patterns found in Campidanese Sardinian *there* sentences, where distal *ddoi at* contrasts with neutral *nci plus essi* ‘be’ (see §1.1.1, n. 2, and Bentley 2011).

- d. Anco ce fu li signori de Romagna (ORom.)  
 also PF be.PST.3SG the lords of Romagna  
 ‘The lords of Romagna were also there’  
 (*Cronica*, cap. V, p. 16)

We only found three *there* sentences in which the noun phrase is in first position and does not control agreement on the copula. These examples are reported in (61).

- (61) a. Tre cosse è: creatura, natura e facture. (OLomb.)  
 three things be.3SG created natural and made  
 ‘There are three types of things: created, natural and man-made.’  
 (*Elucidario*, II, f. 72v, 2, p. 138)
- b. E foresterj fo de fora. (OVen.)  
 and strangers be.PST.3SG of outside  
 ‘And there were strangers outside.’  
 (*Monumenti*, 28r, 18, p. 42)
- c. Denari non era in camera. (OAbr.)  
 money.PL NEG be.PST.3SG in room  
 ‘There was no money in the room.’  
 (*Cronaca aquilana*, 37A, DLX, v. 14, p. 126)

We note that the pre-copular noun phrases are indefinite in (61a–c), which suggests that these are existential constructions. In our corpus there are no equivalent attestations with definite noun phrases.

Lack of agreement does not seem to correlate with the occurrence or the choice of a proform. As for the post-copular noun phrase, this can be indefinite (cf. 61a–c) or definite (60d), although definite noun phrases are less likely to fail to trigger agreement than indefinite ones, especially in the early varieties of the northwest of Italy (Parry 2010: 202–7, 2013: 524). While the three agreement patterns which characterize modern Romance *there* sentences—consistent agreement, invariant lack of agreement, and differential agreement (Bentley 2013, Bentley et al. 2013a; see §4.3.1)—are not yet fully established in the early Italo-Romance varieties, the association of HABERE with lack of agreement and the tendency for definites and indefinites to contrast in terms of agreement control do prefigure the modern situation. The tendency for *there* sentences to exhibit agreement with ESSE, rather than lack it, may of course be explained by the influence of Latin and by the pressure of its literary canon on early written sources.

Finally, we observe that, in the northern vernaculars, *there* sentences which lack agreement may exhibit an expletive clitic in pre-copular position (cf. 62 and also 60b). By contrast, this expletive clitic is not attested in the structures in which the noun phrase controls agreement on the copula (cf. 63).

- (62) a. El sera gran guerre. (OLomb.)  
 EXPL be.FUT.3SG great wars  
 ‘There will be great wars.’  
 (*Parafraasi*, 56<sup>b</sup>, 20, p. 84)
- b. El no gh’ era arbori. (OLomb.)  
 EXPL NEG PF be.PST.3SG trees  
 ‘There were no trees.’  
 (*Parafraasi*, 25<sup>b</sup>, 24–5, p. 31)
- (63) a. In lo celo son sete armonie. (OLomb.)  
 in the heaven be.3PL seven harmonies  
 ‘In heaven there are seven harmonies.’  
 (*Elucidario*, I, f. 49r, 59, p. 101)
- b. In questa prima etay si fon 10 generacion. (OLig.)  
 in this first age WOM be.PST.3PL ten generations  
 ‘Ten generations were in this first age.’  
 (*Storia biblica*, cc. 3r–3v, prol., 8–9, p. 183)
- c. Et eran ghe dentro doe tauole de marmoro.  
 and be.PST.3PL PF inside two planks of marble  
 ‘And there were two marble planks inside.’  
 (*Parafraasi*, 26<sup>b</sup>, 28, p. 32)

The pattern in (62a,b) is comparable to the one found in modern northern Italo-Romance, to the extent that the non-agreeing subject clitics co-occur with a copula which does not agree with the pivot. The occurrence of the expletive *el*, however, is not obligatory in the early vernaculars.

- (64) E fo gran piouei. (OLomb.)  
 and be.3SG.PST great rains  
 ‘And great rains were there (at that time).’  
 (*Parafraasi*, 23<sup>b</sup>, 35, p. 28)

Parry (2013: 526–37) offers an insightful analysis of type (i) *there* sentences in the early northwestern Italo-Romance varieties, suggesting that the reanalysis of the proform ties in with the lack of agreement in the existential construction of these vernaculars. Parry suggests that the promotion of the locative clitic as the Subject of the Predication determines the singular on the finite form of the copula (p. 527). This process is described as a result of changes in word order which occurred in the V2 syntax of medieval Italo-Romance. At an earlier stage the locative clitic is syntactically and semantically argumental, resuming the topical, left-detached locative phrase (pp. 528, 533). In some structures, however, the locative phrase occurs in immediately post-copular position (cf. 44a,b and 51b), which in the V2 syntax of early



Romance is normally the position of canonical subjects. This word order may have encouraged the interpretation of the topical locative phrase as the Subject of Predication. In doubling the locative Subject of the Predication, the clitic is reanalysed as a subject marker on the verb (Parry 2013: 532–3). Furthermore, having lost its referential locative meaning, the existential proform is found to co-occur also with focal, pre-copular locative phrases in the Pre-Core Slot (in the Focus Field, in Benincà's 2006 terms; cf. 45a,b and 47a).

In Parry's view, the reanalysis of the locative clitic as the Subject of the Predication explains the lack of grammatical agreement between the verb and the post-copular noun phrase, as agreement is controlled by the locative subject clitic. By contrast, the southern varieties are less sensitive to the functional subject status of the clitic at the discourse/pragmatic level, and maintain verb agreement with all post-copular noun phrases (Parry 2013: 536). Finally, the grammaticalization of the locative Subject of the Predication into a subject clitic is compared with the syntactic reanalysis that yielded subject clitics in the dialects of the north. Indeed, these were originally clause-internal resumptive pronouns linked to dislocated subjects, but later weakened as agreement markers on the verbs (p. 529).

A number of facts uncovered by our investigation do not appear to be captured entirely by the hypothesis that the proform is reanalysed as a subject clitic expressing the locative Subject of the Predication. First, to be reanalysed as the Subject of the Predication, in the way outlined above, the clitic should have entered type (a) inverse locatives first. Yet our data suggest that type (a) inverse locatives do not obligatorily require a lexical copy of the detached locative phrase (cf. 33 and 63b), nor is the V2 subject position of the immediately post-copular locative phrase always doubled by a cataphoric locative clitic (cf. 51b). Rather, our data show the simultaneous generalization of the clitic both to existentials and to type (a) inverse locatives. To account for this, we posit a process of layering (see §5.3.4), which captures the concurrent appearance of the clitic in both inverse locatives with an overt locative phrase and existentials without assuming that the latter type of structure derives from the former. Spreading from type (b) inverse locatives, the clitic retains its locative meaning and referential function in type (a) inverse locatives, i.e. it is a pro-predicate, whereas in existentials the proform becomes a pro-argument. Within this account the logical structure of inverse locatives is kept distinct from that of existentials, even when these exhibit a locative phrase.

Second, if the clitic is a locative subject (Freeze 1992: 555, Parry 2013: 534), it remains to be explained why its appearance is also attested in the languages which need not overtly express the subject, and did not develop subject clitics, as is the case with the varieties of southern Italy. Our data show clear typological differences among the early Italo-Romance varieties over the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. This variation, however, concerns only agreement patterns, copula selection, and the optional presence of expletives, whereas the emergence, reanalysis,

and distribution of the locative clitic/proform appear to be comparable in the *there* sentences of all the early Italo-Romance varieties (with the chronological exception of Tuscan).

Finally, the appearance of the locative clitic can be accounted for as part of the general phenomenon of the emergence of clitic pronouns, and can be compared with the emergence of clitics as copies of lexical topics or the lexicalization of empty arguments recoverable from the context.<sup>15</sup> This is indeed what happens in type (b) inverse locatives, where the clitic appears to refer to a distant locative topic for semantic and discourse cohesion. In these contexts, however, the locative clitic recovers a discourse referent, i.e. a location or situation, which is not a syntactic subject. Subject clitics develop, too, as copies of lexical topics, but are restricted to the resumption of subject noun phrases. Being semantically and pragmatically motivated, the locative clitic lends itself to a variety of uses, not necessarily dedicated to the expression of syntactic subjecthood.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, subject expletives and subject clitics fulfil syntactic requirements. In fact, while these only appear in the dialects of the north and in Tuscan, the locative clitic/proform is attested in a variety of typologically different dialects, which never developed subject clitics.

In the next section, we will introduce a different kind of expletive, which appears to have been lost in modern Italo-Romance.

### 5.3.6 *Expletives*

The attestations of existential constructions with an expletive subject pronoun only occur in 1.3 per cent of *there* sentences in the early Italo-Romance corpus. Expletive subject pronouns in *there* sentences are not found in all vernaculars, but only in the early sources from some specific areas, namely Tuscany, the north of Italy, and Apulia. The expletive can co-occur with the proform and does not seem to correlate with the choice of copula. Significantly, it behaves differently across the vernacular areas mentioned.

As was anticipated in the previous section, in early Lombard we found a pattern whereby expletive *el*, which is a third-person masculine singular pronoun, appears to be in grammatical agreement with the third-person singular copula (see *sera* in (65a) and *era* in (65b)), though not with the pivot. This is shown in (65a), where *gran guerre* is feminine plural.

<sup>15</sup> We are grateful to the anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

<sup>16</sup> This also explains the multiple outcomes of the locative *ECCE HIC (> ci)* in early and modern Italo-Romance, e.g. 1PL personal pronoun, as in *ci parlano i dati* 'the data speak to us', or pronominal verbs such as *pensarci* 'to think about something', *contarci* 'to count on something', or type (iv) presentative *there* sentences, etc. All these uses retain to some extent the originally locative meaning, but do not fulfil the syntactic function of subjects.

- (65) a. El sera gran guerre. (OLomb.)  
 EXPL be.FUT.3SG great wars  
 ‘There will be great wars.’  
 (*Parafrasi*, 56<sup>b</sup>, 20, p. 84)
- b. Ch’ el gh’ era gran pouol.  
 that EXPL PF be.PST.3SG great people  
 ‘That there were a lot of people.’  
 (*Parafrasi*, 43<sup>b</sup>, 21, p. 61)

In most of the contemporary northern varieties, which consistently display agreeing subject clitics in SV sentences (cf. 66b), the existential construction exhibits a subject clitic that does not agree in number or gender with the pivot, but does carry the number feature value of the copula, which is invariably in the third-person singular.<sup>17</sup>

- (66) a. Al<sup>18</sup> gh’ é i sciuàti, sota ’l leč. (Grosio, Lombardy)  
 ESCL PF be.3SG the slippers.PL.F under the bed  
 ‘There are the slippers under the bed.’
- b. I sciuàti i<sup>19</sup> é sota ’l leč.  
 the slippers SCL.3PL.F be.3PL under the bed  
 ‘The slippers are under the bed’

The examples from early Lombard (cf. 65) thus prefigure the *there* sentences of the contemporary northern varieties (cf. 66a), to the extent that they exhibit an expletive form, which does not have the agreement properties of a subject clitic. This form, however, is optional in early Lombard, whereas the non-agreeing subject clitics occur obligatorily in the modern dialects.

In the data from early Tuscan the expletive appears to have a different behaviour, as suggested by the examples in (67).

- (67) a. Egli sono state assai volte. (OTusc.)  
 EXPL.MSG be.3PL be.PST.PTCP.FPL many times.F  
 ‘There were/happened to be many times.’  
 (*Decameron*, I, 1, 49, p. 40)

<sup>17</sup> We refer to §1.1.1 for the clitic *a*, which behaves differently from the other expletive subject clitics; e.g. it can co-occur with agreeing clitics.

<sup>18</sup> (*A*) is the 3rd-person masculine singular subject clitic, as is clear in non-existential sentences like *Incö Luis l’è mort* ‘Today Louis died’. For the form *a* preceding *l* we refer to Bernini (2012).

<sup>19</sup> In this variety *i* is 3rd-person plural subject clitic, which allows us to establish that the syncretic form of the copula, i.e. *é* ‘be’, is plural in this sentence (see §1.1.1).

- b. **Egli** ci sono dell' altre donne assai.  
 EXPL.MSG PF be.3PL some other women.F many  
 'There are many other women.'  
 (*Decameron*, III, 3, 13, p. 243)
- c. **Egli** ha gran pezza che io a te venuta sarei.  
 EXPL.MSG have.3SG great piece.F that I to you come be.COND.1SG  
 'I have been meaning to come to you for a long time.'  
 Lit. There has a long time that I would have come to you.  
 (*Decameron*, II, 5, 28, p. 125)
- d. **Egli** ci avrà mille modi da fare.  
 EXPL.MSG PF have.FUT.3SG thousand ways to do.INF  
 'There are many ways to do this.'  
 (*Decameron*, III, 1, 28, p. 231)

While being the third-person masculine singular pronoun, *egli* is not an agreeing pronoun, in that it agrees neither in number with the finite form of the verb nor in number or gender with the post-copular noun phrase (cf. 67a,b).

The *there* sentences of early Apulian exhibit a number of different expletive forms, which we list below. *Ello* and *eli* are masculine forms of the third-person singular pronoun. *Elli* is a masculine form of the third-person pronoun for both singular and plural. In the third-person masculine plural, the allomorph *illi* is also attested. *Elle* is the third-person feminine plural pronoun (for a comparison with the paradigm of the personal pronouns in the *Sidrac*, see Ciconte 2010: 234–6).

- (68) a. **Ello** so' più manere de gelosie. (OApul.)  
 EXPL.M be.3PL more manners of jealousies  
 'There are more kinds of jealousy.'  
 (*Sidrac*, 16v, 2, p. 248)
- b. **Eli** v' à altre manere de gienti [...] (OApul.)  
 EXPL.M PF have.3SG other manners of peoples  
 'There are other kinds of people...'  
 (*Sidrac*, 15r, 19–20, p. 242)
- c. **Elli** so' tre manere de morte. (OApul.)  
 EXPL.M be.3PL three manners.F of death  
 'There are three ways to die.'  
 (*Sidrac*, 7r, 6, p. 212)
- d. **Illì** so' altre ysole.  
 EXPL.MPL be.3PL other islands.F  
 'There are other islands.'  
 (*Sidrac*, 14v, 25, p. 240)

- e. **Elle** so' quattro manere de colere in corpo de l' omo.  
 EXPL.FPL be.3PL four manners.F of cholera in body of the man  
 'There are four types of cholera in the human body.'  
 (*Sidrac*, 32v, 18, p. 307)
- f. **Elli** v' à altre ysole.  
 EXPL.M PF have.3SG other islands.F  
 'There are other islands.'  
 (*Sidrac*, 14v, 29, p. 241)

The behaviour of the expletives in the *Sidrac* is puzzling. In (68c), *elli* may be third-person masculine singular, thus showing no agreement either with the copula *so'* (which is in third-person plural) or with the pivot *tre manere* (which is feminine plural). However, *elli* in (68f) could be masculine plural, thus exhibiting a different pattern whereby the expletive does not agree with the copula, but carries the plural form of the pivot. This is the case with the unambiguously masculine plural *illi* in (68d), which, however, agrees with the copula. In (68e), the feminine plural *elle* agrees in number with the copula, *so'*, and in number and gender with the pivot, *quattro manere*, which is feminine plural. Yet, in (68a–d, f), the feminine gender of the noun phrases is not spelled out by the expletive. Whereas in Tuscan and in the northern varieties the expletive is invariably the third-person masculine singular of the subject pronoun, in the Apulian text the attested pronominal forms are inflected, thus showing characteristics of subject clitics, even though *elo*, *eli*, *elli*, *illi*, and *elle* are tonic pronouns, and their morphosyntactic behaviour is not consistent. As Sgrilli (1983: 112) observes, the author of the Apulian text *Sidrac* may be influenced by the language of the Florentine literary canon. This may also explain the use of subject expletives, which never appeared (or were very rare) in the history of the southern varieties. In the text, the pronominal forms *elli* and *eli* may in fact come in from Tuscan.

Unlike early Lombard, early Tuscan and early Apulian expletives fail to prefigure the patterns found in the existential constructions of these dialects nowadays. In particular, the expletive attested in early Tuscan contrasts with the copula, which can be plural. In this respect, the Tuscan expletive fails to behave as a subject clitic, despite its pre-copular position. An explanation of this may be that at this stage the occurrence of the expletive is motivated in stylistic terms (Sornicola 1996, Ledgeway 2002), as a pragmatic pre-sentential particle, or a sentence marker (Bernini 2012). In fact, we note that the expletive is very often found in passages which report direct speech or dialogues.

- (69) a. Non c' è **egli** più persona che noi due? (OTusc.)  
 NEG PF be.3SG EXPL more person than we two  
 'Is there nobody else but the two of us here?'  
 (*Decameron*, III, 8, 59, p. 302)

- b. Oh! – Disse            ser Ciappelletto – cotesto vi        dico    io bene [...]  
 Ah    say.PST.3SG sir Ciappelletto    this    to you say.1SG I well  
 Egli sono state assai volte il di che io vorrei [...]  
 EXPL be.3PL been many times the day that I want.1SG.COND  
 ‘Ah! – said sir Ciappelletto – this I tell you clearly ... There have been many  
 times a day when I wish ...’  
 (*Decameron*, I, 1, 49, p. 40)

The examples in (69a,b) are marked in terms of their illocutionary force, (69a) being a question occurring in a dialogue, and (69b) occurring within direct speech in the first person. The occurrence of the expletive in early Tuscan would seem to be associated with this kind of dialogic style. See also the examples in (67), which are excerpts of speech uttered by the characters of the tales of the *Decameron*.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

In the transition from Latin to modern Romance, the primary components of *there* sentences undergo important changes. First, we observe the emergence of the proform, which is absent in Latin. This starts to appear in unmistakably locative contexts, i.e. in locative *there* sentences with a focal argument and an understood topical locative predicate. Our data suggest that the emergence of the proform is to be accounted for in the context of the overt marking of definiteness, which in turn correlates with the rise of functional structure in the transition from Latin to Romance. The generalization of the proform to structures with indefinite pivots testifies to a change whereby the proform is reanalysed as the pro-argument of existential *there* sentences, thus losing its referential locative function, although the locative meaning is retained in inverse locatives. Second, copula selection deviates from classical Latin in that, starting in late Latin, HABERE (and STARE) begin to figure in *there* sentences. Having derived from possessive structures, existential HABERE is restricted to constructions with an indefinite post-copular pivot, which does not control agreement on the copula. Finally, we note the emergence of expletives in some early Italo-Romance varieties. In Old Lombard, the expletive form prefigures the non-agreeing subject clitics of *there* sentences of the contemporary northern varieties, in that the expletive does not have the agreement properties of a subject clitic. In Tuscan and Apulian the expletives do not behave as subjects. Rather, their occurrence seems to be motivated in pragmatic or stylistic terms.

## Conclusion

DELIA BENTLEY

In this concluding chapter we summarize the findings of our comparative analysis of *there* sentences in Italo-Romance and Sardinian, highlighting our principal claims. Recall that Romance *there* sentences are formed as follows.

- (1) (Adpositional phrase +) (proform +) copula + NP (DP, QP, CP) (+ adpositional phrase).

Similarly to broad typological investigation (e.g. Clark 1978, Creissels 2014), examination of Italo-Romance and Sardinian dialects suggests that existentials are related to locatives. In particular, existentials and locatives exhibit striking morphosyntactic similarities, including the presence of proforms and copulas, and a number of patterns of copula agreement and word order. At the same time, our findings shed light on semantic and pragmatic differences between existential and locative *there* sentences. An important semantic difference is that existentials (cf. 2a), unlike locatives (cf. 2b), need not involve a referential location. This is clearly indicated by the morphosyntax of some Italo-Romance dialects, where a location is spelled out obligatorily in locative *there* sentences (see the locative adverb *qua* ‘here’ in 2b), but not existential ones (cf. 2a).

- (2) a. No podon divorziar: l’ é i bòce. (Belluno, Veneto)  
 NEG can.1PL divorce.INF ESCL be.3SG the children  
 ‘We cannot divorce: there’re the children.’  
 b. Varda: l’ é Maria qua.  
 look.IMP.2SG ESCL be.3SG Mary here  
 ‘Look: Mary is here!’

Existentials are by definition context-dependent (Francez 2007, 2010). Accordingly, it is not possible to determine the content of the existential *there* sentence in (2a) without information provided by the context. It is their dependence on the context that differentiates existential sentences from predications with the lexeme <exist> in the languages of our sample. Unlike (3a), the example in (3b) is odd, because it is not

a statement about an implicit context, but rather a generic statement about the non-existence of water, which clashes with common knowledge.

- (3) a. Non c' è acqua. (Italian)  
 NEG PF be.3SG water  
 'There is no water (here, now, etc).'
- b. #L' acqua non esiste.  
 the water NEG exist.3SG  
 'Water does not exist.'

In the light of the dialect findings, Bentley argued that while locative *there* sentences express a predicative relation between two referential phrases, a location and a theme (cf. 4a) (Van Valin 2005: 48), existentials express a predicative relation between a non-referential, unspecified argument (Francez 2007, 2010) and the pivot. The latter is usually a referential phrase (cf. 4b), although non-referential pivots were also found in our data (cf. 4c). In (5a–d) we provide examples for the logical structures in (4a–c): both (5a) and (5b) illustrate the logical structure in (4a), (5c) exemplifies the logical structure in (4b), and (5d) corresponds to (4c).

- (4) a. **be-Loc'** (locative, theme)  
 b. **be'** (x, pivot)  
 c. **be'** (x, [pivot'])
- (5) a. Il libro è sul tavolo. (Italian)  
 the book be.3SG on.the table  
 'The book is on the table.'
- b. C' è il libro, sul tavolo. (Italian)  
 PF be.3SG the book on.the table  
 'THE BOOK is on the table.'
- c. C' è un libro. (Italian)  
 PF be.3SG a book  
 'There is a book.'
- d. C' è togu. (San Tommaso, Calabria)  
 PF be.3SG nice.ADJ  
 'There is niceness.'

As for the pragmatic differences between existentials and locatives, Cruschina proposed that existentials are, typically, sentence-focus constructions that can exhibit an aboutness topic, whereas locatives are, typically, predicate-focus constructions (cf. 5a) or argument-focus constructions that can exhibit a referential topic (cf. 5b). Cruschina further differentiated between two types of argument-focus locative *there* sentence, which he called 'inverse' and 'deictic' locatives (cf. 6B and 7, respectively). In inverse locatives, the locative predicate is defocused, while in deictic



locatives it is salient and understood in the given discourse context. Indeed, it usually receives a here-and-now reading.

- (6) A. Che c' è sul tavolo? (Italian)  
 what PF be.3SG on.the table  
 'What's on the table?'  
 B. C' è il libro, sul tavolo.  
 PF be.3SG the book on.the table  
 'THE BOOK (is on the table).'
- (7) Guarda: c' è Maria. (Italian)  
 look.IMP.2SG PF be.3SG Mary  
 'Look: Mary is here.'

Romance existential constructions that deviate from the Latin existential pattern (ESSE 'be' + pivot) insofar as the presence of a proform is concerned (see Italian *ci*, French *y*, Catalan *hi*, etc.) can be claimed to have derived from locative *there* sentences, following a diachronic path attested in other languages (Creissels 2013, Gaeta 2013). Indeed, in his analysis of early Italo-Romance vernacular texts, Ciconte maintained that the proform, which was absent in Latin, first emerged in locative *there* sentences, and then spread to existential sentences. This spreading testifies to a reanalysis of locative patterns (cf. 4a) as existential patterns (cf. 4b), with concomitant bleaching and layering, i.e. the loss of the deictic function of the proform, which solely characterized the existential construction.

In synchrony, the morphosyntactic features shared by existentials and inverse/deictic locatives can be captured in terms of the shared properties of the logical structure and the focus structure of these constructions. While the shared copulas indicate that both existentials and inverse/deictic locatives have a stage-level non-verbal predicate, the proform manifests the highest component of the logical structure: the unspecified argument of existentials (x, in 4b,c), and the defocused or understood locative predicate of inverse and deictic locatives. The correspondences in copula agreement were claimed to depend on the dialect-specific sensitivity to semantic properties of the controller, which are in turn affected by focus structure. Importantly, existentials, inverse locatives, and deictic locatives are not predicate-focus constructions. Their pragmatic comparability is thus reflected in their morphosyntax (Koch 2012). Observe that, crosslinguistically, the tendency to mark overtly the split between predicate focus on the one hand and, on the other, the other types of focus structure is stronger than the tendency to mark any other kind of focus structure contrast (Lambrecht 1994: 235).

The existential constructions of a relatively small number of Romance dialects of Italy share morphosyntactic features with possessives. These features can be claimed to be the testimony of a diachronic process of derivation of these existentials from

possessives (Creissels 2013, Gaeta 2013), although this process must be assumed to have occurred earlier than the one mentioned above, since HABERE ‘have’ existentials are attested in late Latin. Synchronically, however, existentials are not possessives, as testified by a number of morphosyntactic differences between these two types of construction in the dialects of our sample, and by the lack of the semantic hallmarks of possession in pseudo-possessive existentials.

Our crossdialectal investigation clearly suggests that detailed prosodic, semantic, and pragmatic examination of superficially similar or identical constructions is needed to ascertain whether a unified analysis is warranted. Although we do not rule out a priori the possibility that some languages exhibit locative or possessive constructions in place of existentials (see §1.1.1), our investigation of a family of closely related dialects does not justify a generalized unified account of existentials, possessives, and locatives. This unified account is too narrow, in that it does not capture the relatedness of existentials, possessives, and locatives with other stage level copular constructions. At the same time, the same account does not go into enough depth, thus failing to capture subtle contrasts between these constructions.

Working with closely cognate dialects proved beneficial in the analysis of existentials vis-à-vis locatives and possessives, in that we based our claims on the observation of subtle differences between broadly similar patterns. For example, an important argument against generalized locative analysis of the proform was provided by crossdialectal comparison of proforms that retain vestiges of the deictic function of their etyma and proforms that do not. The claim that, synchronically, existentials are not possessives relies on the crossdialectal comparison of copula selection and case assignment in pseudo-possessive existentials and possessives proper. While the examination of a single dialect might have supported the possessive analysis of HABERE ‘have’ existentials, crossdialectal comparison of HABERE existentials yielded a much more complex picture, which unequivocally challenged the unified possessive analysis.

Crossdialectal comparison proved particularly fruitful in the discussion of the linking from semantics to syntax in *there* sentences, in particular the assignment of grammatical relations. The notion of ‘subject’ was broken down into construction-specific grammatical relations (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997, Van Valin 2005). The data required special attention to one such relation, namely the control of number agreement on the finite verb. Following claims by Beaver et al. (2005) and Bentley (2013), and relying on an exceptionally rich set of data, Bentley claimed that the variation in the control of finite agreement depends on the variation in the dialect-specific sensitivity to semantic correlates of subjecthood, in particular the lexical entailments provided by the predicate (Dowty 1991) and referentiality, understood as the encoding of a discourse referent. A subtype of referentiality which proved to be relevant to the variation attested is specificity. Following Enç (1991), this was defined as a relation of identity with—or inclusion in—an established discourse referent or

set. Three groups of dialects were identified: a group in which finite agreement is only controlled by arguments that are endowed with the lexical entailments provided by a predicate; a group where referentiality is sufficient to license the control of finite agreement; and lastly, a group where referentiality is only sufficient if a relation of identity or inclusion obtains. A deeper understanding of finite agreement was thus achieved than would have been possible without crossdialectal comparison.

The third dialect group mentioned above exhibits the most patent manifestation of the definiteness effects that was found in our data, in particular, a range of specificity effects in the control of finite number agreement by the post-copular noun phrase of *there* sentences. Definiteness effects were also detected in the ungrammaticality of negated availability existentials with definite pivots (see Abbott's 1992, 1993 notion of 'contextualized existential'), which was captured as an effect of specificity: it makes no sense to negate an expression encoding a discourse referent whose existence has already been established (Enç 1991).

Our investigation also offered food for thought in a broader theoretical perspective. As pointed out in Chapter 1, existential sentences were originally chosen as the focus of our research projects because they constitute a fundamental construction of language. The questions which arise from the study of these sentences are, therefore, central issues in linguistic theory. With our analyses, we hope to have offered a contribution to the theoretical debate on (i) the typology and distribution of topics and foci, (ii) predication and argument realization, and (iii) the status of grammatical relations as syntactic primitives, derivatives of syntactic configurations, or interface constructs which grammaticalize discourse and semantic roles.

We will briefly address each of these issues here. Cruschina's analysis of the focus structure of *there* sentences offers strong support for the differentiation between referential and aboutness topics (for a discussion of previous literature on these notions, see Cruschina 2012a: 18–21). Whereas the former type of topic is presupposed, and thus can be omitted or taken for granted, the latter is part of the assertion, i.e. the proposition that the hearer will be aware of as a result of a sentence being uttered (or the proposition that the reader will be aware of, when reading a sentence) (Lambrecht 1994). Sentence-focus existentials can, and in fact often do, include an aboutness topic. This can be the coda (see §1.1), which, while not being part of the core predication, is within the Actual Focus Domain of the utterance (see §1.3.2).

- (8) AL PIANO DI SOPRA CI SONO LE STANZE DA LETTO. (Italian)  
 at.the floor of above PF be.3PL the rooms of bed  
 'Upstairs there are the bedrooms.'

Whether they exhibit an overt topic, by definition existential *there* sentences involve an implicit topic, which differentiates them from predications with the lexeme <exist> in the languages of our sample (cf. 3a,b). Therefore, Cruschina's

analysis supports the view that sentence-focus structures have a topic (Gundel 1974, Erteschik-Shir 1997: 26–9).

Our analysis of Italo-Romance and Sardinian *there* sentences also offers a contribution to the study of predication and its interaction with argument realization. This contribution stems from Bentley's examination of crossdialectal variation in the behavioural properties of the post-copular noun phrase of *there* sentences. The following puzzling data were brought to light: the pivot of existential constructions, which is a predicate (*qua* property of and/or contributor of the implicit argument of the construction), is realized as an argument in terms of case assignment as well as, in some dialects, the control of finite agreement.

- (9) Non ti preoccupare: ci sono io. (Italian)  
 NEG REFL worry.INFL PF be.1SG 1SG.NOM  
 'Do not worry: there's me.'
- (10) Parə ca ngə so lə modə chə aiutərələ. (Ferrandina, Basilicata)  
 seem.3SG that PF be.3PL the ways that help.him  
 'It seems that there are ways to help him.'

Contrastingly, the post-copular argument of inverse and deictic locatives, which is a macrorole argument (see §1.3.2), fails to control finite agreement (cf. 11a) under the same conditions as the pivot (cf. 11b,c).

- (11) a. A gh' è i sibre, sóta 'l lèč. (Bergamo, Lombardy)  
 ESCL PF be.3SG the slippers under the bed  
 'THE SLIPPERS (are under the bed).'
- b. Am pöl mia fà 'l diòrsio: (a) gh' è i s-čèč.  
 SCL.IPL can NEG do.INF the divorce ESCL PF be.3SG the children  
 'We cannot divorce: there're the children.'
- c. Ghe sarès di mot de idàga.  
 PF be.COND.3SG of ways of help.him  
 'There should be ways to help him.'

Bentley captured case assignment in existential sentences in terms of the position of the pivot in logical structure as well as in terms of a property that pivots share with arguments, referentiality (note that only referential pivots, i.e. pivots like that in 4b, are assigned case). As for the control of agreement, Bentley claimed that the cross-dialectal variation observed in the data evidences a conflict between a syntactic well-formedness condition—namely the requirement of a referential, overt, controller of finite agreement—and, on the other hand, the semantic requirement that the controller be a macrorole argument (Van Valin 2005: 108), and hence be endowed with the lexical entailments of a predicate (Dowty 1991). If the former requirement outranks the latter, the post-copular noun phrase controls agreement. It is thus

realized as an argument—in fact, a subject—although the existential pivot is not an argument. If the latter requirement ranks above the former, the post-copular noun phrase does not control agreement, and the result is an impersonal construction. Our analysis departs from classical analyses of existentials and other VS structures, which consider these to be impersonal by definition (Perlmutter 1983). In the last analysis, existential constructions provide a prime example of a conflict between the requirements of semantics in the linking (each predication requires a predicate, the makeup of arguments is dependent on predication, in the sense of Dowty 1991) and those of syntax (the assignment of case and grammatical relations are key steps in semantics–syntax linking). This tension is resolved differently across dialects.

As for inverse and deictic locatives, the post-copular argument of these structures was claimed to be deficient in lexical entailments, as a result of the defocusing or salience of the predicate in discourse. This deficiency results in the failure of the argument to control agreement, in dialects where the semantic requirement on agreement outranks the syntactic well-formedness condition mentioned above.

This leads us to the third point listed above. We adopted a framework, Role and Reference Grammar, which treats grammatical relations as interface constructs that grammaticalize pragmatic roles and semantic macroroles. Some of our findings and analyses stretched this understanding of grammatical relations, as well as the semantics–syntax linking algorithm (Van Valin 2005: 128–49), since we claimed that the pivot behaves as a subject in a group of dialects, despite its being a predicate, while the macrorole argument of inverse and deictic locatives does not behave as a subject in other dialects. These challenges to the theory derive from the unique discourse and semantic features of existentials, which introduce a discourse referent, while predicating it of an implicit argument. As for inverse and deictic locatives, these are characterized by a semantically light locative predicate, which fails to provide its argument with proper lexical entailments.

These unique features can only be captured in terms of interface properties of grammatical relations, whether or not grammatical relations are conceived of in configurational terms. Similarly, the wide range of specificity effects which were found in a group of dialects would remain a mystery if they were not analysed in terms of the semantic parameters of subjecthood. Our investigation, therefore, fully endorsed the notion of grammatical relations as syntactic constructs that are sensitive to the interface with semantics. Our analysis also highlighted the role of discourse in linking, and raised intriguing questions about the role played by discourse in linking in non-copular presentational constructions. These questions will have to be addressed in the context of another research project.



# Appendix 1

## *Early Romance sources*

FRANCESCO MARIA CICONTE

The analysis provided in Chapter 5 relies on a collection of existential and locative constructions from twenty-two early Italo-Romance texts, dating from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century (Cicone 2010: 34–43). The text of this corpus, over 10,000 pages, was carefully scrutinized. Reading the full texts ensured both adequate examination of contexts and the understanding of the specific, stylistic, and narratological characteristics of each source.

The texts are representative of the main vernacular areas of Italy, from the north to the south, through most of the regions of the peninsula: Liguria, Lombardy, Veneto, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche, Lazio, Abruzzo, Campania, Apulia, and Sicily. Two additional texts were examined, to include the early varieties of Piedmont and Emilia Romagna. To obtain a stylistically varied corpus (Vincent et al. 2003), we made a heterogeneous selection of sources. We thus included literary texts, prose and poetry, *volgarizzamenti*, i.e. adaptations from Latin, religious florilegia, letters, testimonies of minute-books, deeds, and trial reports.

Below we group the early Italo-Romance texts by region. We provide a brief description of each source: the date of composition, the genre and literary type, a short summary, and details of the edition used. The abbreviations of the titles used in Chapter 5 are given in brackets.

The sources of the examples from other Romance languages are listed at the end of the Appendix.

### **Abruzzo**

*Cronaca Aquilana rimata di Buccio di Ranallo di Popplito di Aquila (Cronaca aquilana)*

Poetic composition of quatrains and sonnets. The text was written in the first half of the fourteenth century, and narrates the chronicles of the city of Aquila from its foundation to 1362. De Bartholomaeis, Vincenzo (ed.) 1907. *Buccio di Ranallo di Popplito di Aquila: Cronaca Aquilana*. Rome: Forzani e c. Tipografi del Senato.

### **Apulia**

*Il Libro di Sidrac salentino (Sidrac)*

Theological and natural history treatise in prose. The text was probably composed in the fifteenth century. Sidrac is the Shadrach of the Book of Daniel (1: 7), although this biblical character was often confused with the Sirach found in Ecclesiasticus.

Sgrilli, Paola (ed.) 1983. *Il 'Libro di Sidrac' salentino*. Pisa: Pacini.

*Existentials and Locatives in Romance Dialects of Italy*. First edition. Delia Bentley, Francesco Maria Cicone, and Silvio Cruschina 2015. Published 2015 by Oxford University Press.

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**Campania***Libro de la destructione de Troya (Libro)*

Adapted translation from the Latin *Historia destructionis Troiae* by Guido delle Colonne. The text was probably composed around 1350 by an anonymous author. This literary prose narrates the mythological events of the destruction of Troy.

De Blasi, Nicola (ed.) 1986. *Libro de la destructione de Troya*. Rome: Bonacci.

*Ricordi*

Prose text in the form of an account of some mundane and autobiographical episodes. As stated by the author, Loise De Rosa, the text was written in 1452.

Formentin, Vittorio (ed.) 1984. *Loise de Rosa: Ricordi*. Rome: Salerno.

**Emilia Romagna***Il laudario dei Battuti di Modena (Laudario)*

Collection of poems and prayers. The text was written in 1377. It is the eulogy of a religious confraternity based in the city of Modena.

Bertoni, Giulio (ed.) 1909. *Il laudario dei Battuti di Modena*. Beihefte zur *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 20.

**Lazio***Cronica*

Annalistic chronicle. The text was composed between 1357 and 1360 by an anonymous author, and reports the most important historical events of Rome from its origins to the fourteenth century.

Porta, Giuseppe (ed.) 1981. *Anonimo romano: cronica*. Milan: Adelphi.

**Liguria***Dialogo de Sam Gregorio composito in vorgà (Dialogo de Sam Gregorio)*

Adapted translation from Latin into Ligurian. The text was composed in the mid-fourteenth century and discusses some general issues concerning religion.

Porro, Marzio (ed.) 1979. *Dialogo de Sam Gregorio composito in vorgà*. Florence: Accademia della Crusca.

*Una storia biblica in antico genovese (Storia biblica)*

Abridged translation from the Latin Bible. The text was probably composed in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Cornagliotti, Anna (ed.) 1988. Una storia biblica in antico genovese: preliminari per una edizione. In A. Cornagliotti et al. (eds.), *Miscellanea di studi romanzi offerta a Giuliano Gasca Queirazza*, vol. 1. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, pp. 181–216.



**Lombardy***Elucidario*

Adapted translation into early Milanese of the Latin *Elucidarium* by Honorius Augustodunensis. The text was written in the fourteenth century and is the exposition of the most common Christian beliefs in the form of a maieutic dialogue between a theologian and his disciple.

Degli Innocenti, Mario (ed.) 1984. *L'“elucidario”*. Padua: Antenore.

*Nuovi studi sul volgare mantovano di Vivaldo Belcazer (Vivaldo Belcazer)*

Translation into the vernacular of Mantua of the Latin treatise *De proprietatibus rerum* by Bartholomew of England. The text was written by the notary Vivaldo Belcazer at the end of the thirteenth or the very beginning of the fourteenth century. This prose work discusses some philosophical and scientific questions concerning nature.

Ghinassi, Ghino (ed.) 1965. Nuovi studi sul volgare mantovano di Vivaldo Belcazer. *Studi di filologia italiana* 23: 19–172.

*Parafrasi del Neminem laedi nisi a se ipso (Parafrasi)*

Adapted translation from Latin of an old homily by John Chrysostom. This prose text was probably written in the fourteenth century, and discusses theological issues.

Foerster, Wendelin (ed.) 1880–1883. Antica parafrasi lombarda del ‘Neminem laedi nisi a se ipso’ di S. Giovanni Grisostomo. *Archivio glottologico italiano* 7: 1–120.

**Piedmont***Sermoni subalpini*

A collection of celebratory sermons written between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by an anonymous author.

Babilas, Wolfgang (ed.) 1968. *Untersuchungen zu den Sermoni subalpini*. Munich: Hueber.

**Sicily***La conquista di Sichilia fatta per li Normandi (Conquista)*

Translation from Latin into Sicilian of *De rebus gestis* by Goffredo Malaterra. The text was translated in 1358 by Simone da Lentini. This prose work is a detailed account of the Norman conquest of Sicily.

Rossi-Taibbi, Giuseppe (ed.) 1954. *Simone da Lentini: La conquista di Sichilia fatta per li Normandi*. Palermo–Florence: Leo Olschki.

*Libru de lu dialagu de sanctu Gregoriu traslatatu pir frati Iohanni Campulu de Missini (Dialagu)*

Adapted translation from Latin into Sicilian. The text was composed between 1302 and 1321. This prose work is of a religious nature, and is based on the literary tradition of the *Dialogues* of Saint Gregory the Great.

Santangelo, Salvatore (ed.) 1933. *Libru de lu dialagu de sanctu Gregoriu traslatatu pir frati Iohanni Campulu de Missini*. Palermo: Boccone del Povero.

*Sposizione del vangelo della passione secondo Matteo (Sposizione)*

Commentary on the Passion of Christ according to the Gospel of Matthew. As stated in the *explicit*, the text was composed in 1373 by an anonymous author. In this work, short Latin sections are followed by adapted translations and by lengthy theological remarks in Sicilian.

Palumbo, Pietro (ed.) 1954. *Sposizione del vangelo della passione secondo Matteo*, vol. 1. Florence: Leo Olschki.

Palumbo, Pietro (ed.) 1956. *Sposizione del vangelo della passione secondo Matteo*, vol. 2. Florence: Leo Olschki.

**Tuscany***Decameron*

Collection of 100 tales written by Giovanni Boccaccio between 1349 and 1351.

Branca, Vittore (ed.) 1999. *Giovanni Boccaccio: Decameron*, 4th edn. Milan: Mondadori.

*Navigatio Sancti Brendani: La navigazione di San Brandano (Tuscan Navigatio)*

Literary account of the voyage and adventures of St Brendan. The text was composed in the sixteenth century. This work was adapted into Tuscan from a Venetan translation of the original Latin text.

Grignani, Maria Antonietta (ed.) 1997. *Navigatio Sancti Brendani: La navigazione di San Brandano*. Milan: Bompiani.

*Novellino*

Collection of 100 tales of various literary motifs, e.g. biblical, mythological, historical, everyday. The text was written in Florence at the end of the twelfth century, although a well-established oral tradition probably preceded the written composition.

Conte, Alberto (ed.) 2001. *Il novellino*. Rome: Salerno.

*Nuovi testi fiorentini del Dugento (Dugento)*

The corpus of the assorted Florentine testimonies edited by Castellani (1952) is a copious source of texts which date from the twelfth century. The nature of the texts is primarily commercial and administrative, including deeds, contracts, and transactions enacted in the economically flourishing Florence of the twelfth century.

Castellani, Arrigo Ettore (ed.) 1952. *Nuovi testi fiorentini del Dugento*. 2 vols. Florence: Sansoni.

**Umbria***Discorso sulla Passione di Cristo*

This short religious treatise was composed in the fourteenth century and discusses some issues related to the Passion of Christ. This testimony is part of a collection of six early Umbrian texts, which also include works of administrative and chancery style.

Agostini, Francesco (ed.) 1978. *Testi trecenteschi di Città di Castello e del contado*. Florence: Accademia della Crusca.

*Libro d'amministrazione delle terre d'Uguicione di Ghino marchese di Civitella e dei suoi figli (Terre di Civitella)*

Administrative minute-book. The text was composed in the fourteenth century, and reports a number of legal deeds and resolutions concerning the lands of the Marquis Uguicione di Ghino of Civitella and his sons.

Agostini, Francesco (ed.) 1978. *Testi trecenteschi di Città di Castello e del contado*. Florence: Accademia della Crusca.

## Veneto

*I monumenti del dialetto di Lio Mazor (Monumenti)*

Collection of legal deeds. The text was composed between 1312 and 1319. Most parts of the collection are presumed to be the written transposition of asseverations and testimonies given in court or in notary offices.

Levi, Ugo (ed.) 1904. *I monumenti del dialetto di Lio Mazor*. Venice: Visentini.

## Old Catalan

*Llibre de les Solemnitats de Barcelona*

Agustí, Duran, and Sanabre, Josep (eds) 1930. *Llibre de les Solemnitats de Barcelona*, vol. 1. Barcelona: Patxot.

*Tirant lo Blanc*

Hauf, Albert, and Escartí, Vicent (eds) 1990. *Joanot Martorell/Martí Joan de Galba: Tirant lo Blanch*. 2 vols. València: Conselleria de Cultura de la Generalitat de València.

## Old French

*La vie de Saint Alexis*

Paris, Gaston and Pannier, Léopold (eds) 1872. *La vie de saint Alexis, poème du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle et renouvellements des XII<sup>e</sup>, XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Paris: Franck.

Rohlf, Gerhard (ed.) 1968. *Sankt Alexius: altfranzösische Legendendichtung des 11. Jahrhunderts*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

*Tristan*

Ewert, Alfred (ed.) 1939. *The Romance of Tristan by Béroul*. Oxford: Blackwell.

## Old Navarro-Aragonese

*Liber Regum*

Cooper, Louis 1960. *El Liber Regum: estudio lingüístico*. Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico.

**Old Provençal**

*Cavalier Lunel de Monteg*

Ricketts 2000.—*Rialto* 9.x.2004. <<http://www.rialto.unina.it/PLun/289.1> (Ricketts).htm>

*Gauceran de Saint Leidier*

Sakari 1963.—*Rialto* 25.x.2012. <<http://www.rialto.unina.it/GsrSt-Did/168.1a> (Paterson).htm>

# Appendix 2

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