

Subjects, Expletives,
and the EPP

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Parameters of Subject Inflection in Italian Dialects

M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia

1. The null-subject parameter

In this chapter we consider the null-subject parameter, with the implications it has for Chomsky's 1995, 1998 theory of the EPP and agreement. We take the view that null-subject languages lexicalize the EPP feature through the finite verb (cf. Pollock 1996), while non-null-subject languages lexicalize the EPP feature through a D head or a DP. We further devise a derivation whereby a thematic feature (or, to be precise, an aspectual one) is attracted by D in accordance with the model of Manzini and Roussou 1999. This allows us to dispense with the empty category *pro*. We argue that in expletive constructions without agreement in Number and Gender, the associate nevertheless agrees in Person; this points to the conclusion that the associate always agrees with the verb and with the expletive. Therefore we propose a new model of agreement which relies on the same aspectual feature being attracted by several positions endowed with nominal features. Sharing of Person, Number, and Gender features in this model is a reflex of the sharing of the aspectual feature. Contra Chomsky 1995, 1998, we do not have recourse to noninterpretable features (cf. Brody 1997). Furthermore, while the classical conception of the null-subject parameter provides the canonical model of a macroparametric view (Baker 1996), the view that emerges from our study is strictly microparametric, in the sense that underlying structures and derivations are universal and only lexicalization choices can differ from language to language.

1.1. Background

Classical discussions of the so-called *pro*-drop or null-subject parameter (Taraldsen 1978, Chomsky 1981, 1982, Rizzi 1982) take as their starting point the behavior of subjects in two different types of languages: on the one hand, languages like English; on the other hand, languages like Italian. According to Rizzi 1982, there

are three properties concerning the syntax of the subject that differentiate these two types of languages, as summarized in (1).

- (1) a. Optional vs. obligatory presence of a preverbal subject
Italian: Gianni dorme.
Gianni sleeps
 Dorme.
sleeps
 Piove.
rains
English: John is sleeping.
 * (He) is sleeping.
 * (It) is raining.
- b. Possibility vs. impossibility of so-called free inversion of the subject
Italian: Arriva Gianni.
arrives Gianni
English: * Is coming John.
- c. Possibility vs. impossibility of extracting a subject across a *that*-type complementizer:
Italian: Chi pensi che telefoni?
who think that telephones
English: Who do you think (*that) is calling?

In the empirical domain that we are focusing on here, that of Italian varieties, the properties just observed for Standard Italian hold for all Southern Italian dialects, as exemplified in (2):

- (2) a. 'r addʒə arra'piərtə *Gallo*
it [I] have opened
 a ddur'mu:tə *Taranto*
[s/he] has slept
 mɪ 'viʃtuɾu *Catenanuova*
me [they] saw
- b. mə fau 'mɔlə rə 'piətə *Gallo*
to.me make pain the feet
 'My feet hurt'
 a və'nu:tə 'fiʝətə *Taranto*
has come your.child
 'ruəmmunu i pittʃi'riɖɖi *Modica*
sleep the children
 'rɔmmi u pittʃi'riɖɖu
sleeps the child
- c. ki ttə 'kri:ðə ka 'və? *Gallo*
who you believe that comes
 a kkə ttə 'krɛðəsə ka 'vɪnəðə? *Rocca Imperiale*
to who you believe that comes

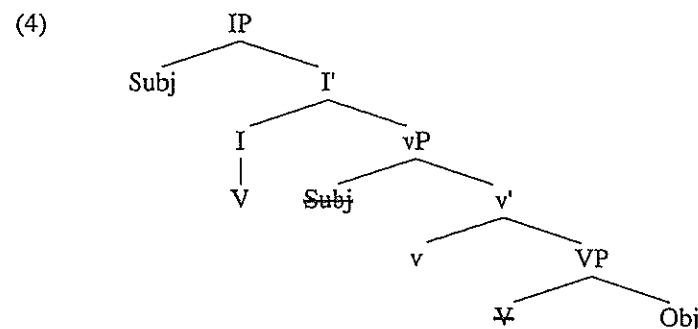
ku 'kriri ka 'veni?
 who [you] believe that comes

Modica

Within the framework defined by the parameter in (1), Northern Italian dialects pose some questions of considerable interest, as initially pointed out by Brandi and Cordin (1981, 1989). On the one hand, these dialects require the subject to be present, since in the counterpart to examples such as (2a) the subject is obligatorily realized in the shape of a subject. On the other hand, a comparison with non-null-subject languages such as English reveals at least one important difference with respect to them. Indeed, in Northern Italian dialects the subject clitic systematically doubles a preverbal lexical subject, as illustrated in (3), where each dialect corresponds to a major geographical region:

- (3)
- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| l to'zat l 'mɔɲdʒa 'dut
the child CLS eats all | Andràz |
| il ka'nai al 'duar 'puak
the child CLS sleeps little | Vito d'Asio |
| la Ma'ria la 'manga
the Mary CLS eats | Casaccia-Val Bregaglia |
| kel 'la al 'do:ɾmi 'semper
that one CLS sleeps always | Casorezzo |
| kli 'doni 'li li m 'tʃama
those women CLS me call | Revere |
| kal ta'baki aʃ e av'nudi a ka 'mi
those children CLS have come to home my | Alfonsine |
| la fi'ɔta ɛ 'dyɔrt
the child CLS sleeps | Mezzenile |
| 'kil ir 'beif
he CLS drinks | Castellazzo Bormida |
| a Ma'ria a 'duɔɾme 'puɔku
the Mary CLS sleeps little | Fontanigorda |
| la mi fi'a'ʔola la 'dɔɾme 'θɔɾppo
the my daughter CLS sleeps too.much | Firenze |

According to Chomsky 1995, 1998 the basic structure of the sentence is as in (4):

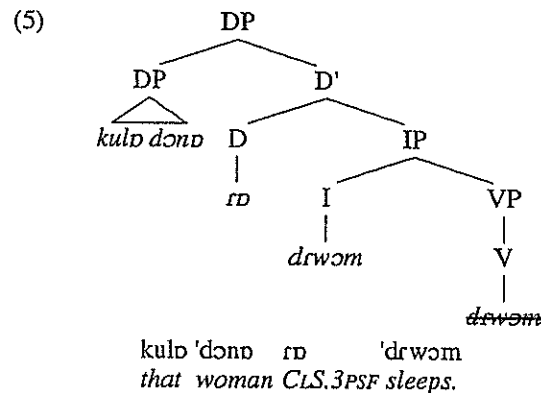


In such a structure, a lexical subject fills the position of SpecI. In Italian, according to Rizzi 1982, SpecI can be occupied by an empty category licensed by the rich

agreement morphology of the verb. Since this empty category has pronominal properties, Chomsky (1982) suggests the term *pro* to refer to it. By contrast, in a language like English the subject position must be lexically filled in that the ϕ -features of I are not sufficient to identify *pro*. Under these assumptions, the classical analysis of the null-subject parameter derives properties (1a) and (1b). Indeed, to the extent that *pro* is available in Italian but not in English, it is available to express both a subject pronoun with argumental properties, as in (1a), and a subject pronoun with nonargumental or expletive properties, as in (1b). For Rizzi (1982), furthermore, (1c) is just a by-product of (1b). In particular the grammatical Italian sentence is just a concealed expletive sentence, where the subject is extracted not from the preverbal but from the postverbal position.

Brandi and Cordin (1981, 1989) and Rizzi (1986) propose that Northern Italian dialects are essentially null-subject languages. The differences between languages like Standard Italian and these dialects are imputed to the existence of additional inflectional material realized by the subject clitic. Cardinaletti and Roberts (1991) identify the relevant inflectional position as an independent head AgrS. Chomsky (1995) criticizes the postulation of a category Agr whose sole contribution to the derivation is mediating an agreement relation between two other categories (i.e., the finite verb and the subject in the case of AgrS). Nevertheless, even taking this criticism of the category Agr into account, a number of facts point to the conclusion that the subject clitic of Northern Italian dialects is realized as an independent head. Perhaps the strongest argument is that in questions and similar V2 environments, raising of the finite V to C strands the subject clitic to its right (Manzini and Savoia 1998a and references quoted there). This means that the subject clitic cannot simply be adjoined to I, at least if we assume that excorporation is banned on grounds of restrictiveness of the theory.

Taking the evidence just mentioned into account, we postulate the existence of a functional category which immediately dominates I and is morphologically realized by the subject clitic; following Manzini and Savoia 1997 we refer to this category simply as D, as in (5). Note therefore that we do not assume the existence of a special inflectional category to host the D feature; on the contrary, D is the same category as we find in the highest position of nominals. Any differences between the two can be taken to be a consequence of the different environments they find themselves in.¹



In (5) the subject clitic appears as an independent inflectional head, while the lexical subject appears in SpecD. For the time being, the head-Spec relation can be taken to explain agreement in Number, Gender, and Person of the clitic with the lexical subject; we shall, however, return to the position of the lexical subject in section 1.3. As usual, the verb in (5) moves to the inflectional position I, attracted by a strong V feature. As for the agreement relation between the two inflectional heads, D and I, we can assume that it is the by-product of movement of the lexical subject through the SpecI position. Again we shall return to this mechanism in section 2. The null-subject character of Northern Italian dialects corresponds to the possibility of having sentences similar to (5) in all respects, except that the SpecD position is not lexically realized, as for instance in (6):

- (6) *ro* *'drwɔm* *Castellazzo Bormida*
 CLS.3PSF sleeps

1.2. Elimination of *pro* and formulation of the parameter

In terms of the classical analysis of the null-subject parameter, in (6) the SpecD position is filled by the empty category *pro*. Note, however, that in the case of Northern Italian dialects *pro* doubles the features Person, Number, and Gender independently present on the subject clitic. Assuming that the subject clitic, being an inflectional category, is unable to be associated with a thematic role, *pro* still has the function of bearing the thematic role itself; but even this is not true of expletive *pro* sentences (cf. Borer 1986).

In fact, proposals in Manzini and Roussou 1999 and Manzini and Savoia 1997 call into question this last remaining role for *pro*, as a conveyor of thematic properties. Remember that in the framework of Chomsky 1981, a level of syntactic representation, D-S, was postulated which was conceived as a pure representation of thematic relations, prior to any movement. Thus in such a framework, the architecture of the grammar itself required that an argument be inserted from the lexicon into each thematic position; from there it would be taken to its surface position by a subsequent operation of movement, to eventually produce another level of representation, S-S. Within the Minimalist model, however, there is no obstacle in the architecture of the grammar itself to assuming that arguments are inserted not in thematic position, but directly in the position where they surface. Indeed, abstract movement of a thematic feature to the domain of the argument is sufficient to ensure the correct interpretation of the sentence.

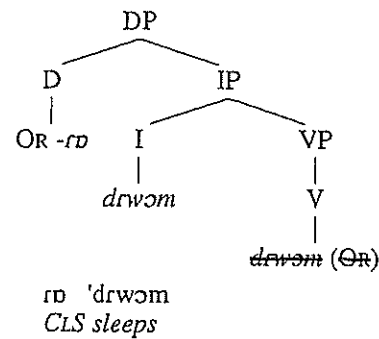
Concretely, within the framework of Chomsky 1981, 1986, the derivation of a simple sentence like *John sleeps* could proceed only as in (7a) for reasons inherent to the architecture of the system. At a first stage of the derivation, which does not include movement, there is a pairing of the argument with a vP-internal θ -position; at a second stage, the argument is moved to SpecI (i.e., copied into this position, given a copy theory of movement). Within the Minimalist framework, an alternative becomes available, as detailed in (7b). The argument is merged directly into the SpecI position in overt syntax, while an operation on features associates the thematic feature of V with the argument. We provisionally notate this operation as a feature movement operation.

- (7) a. [IP I [VP John [VP slept]]]
 [IP John I [VP ~~John~~ [VP slept]]]
 b. [IP John I [VP slept (θ)]]
 [IP θ-John I [VP slept (θ)]]

In Chomsky's 1995, 1998 grammar the derivation in (7b) is barred by additional assumptions, in particular the assumption that θ -roles are not features, but configurations; this in turn forces the principle that "Pure Merge in θ -position is required of (and restricted to) arguments" (Chomsky's 1998 (6)). But there is no empirical loss in assuming that θ -roles are features (Hornstein 1999) and that they can in principle be associated by an operation on features with an argument generated in θ -position; on the contrary, there is considerable empirical gain in making this assumption. Indeed, Manzini and Roussou (1999) argue that the difference between (7a) and (7b) can easily be tested at the interfaces, where the lexical material in (7a) is predicted to give rise to reconstruction effects at LF, and to the blocking of phonosyntactic processes at PF. That A-movement does not reconstruct is explicitly recognized in Chomsky 1995; that traces do not block phonosyntactic processes is a point variously made as part of the debate on *wanna*-contraction (cf. van Riemsdijk and Williams 1984 and references quoted there). Thus the available evidence argues in favor of (7b). In short, the choice between (7a) and (7b) was forced by the overall architecture of the theory within the first Principles and Parameters framework. However, it becomes a wholly empirical matter within the Minimalist framework. Following Manzini and Roussou (1999), we can conclude that empirical considerations favor (7b).

Following Borer 1994 and Arad 1998, we assume that thematic properties are aspectual in nature. In particular, we indicate with MEAS the *Measure of the event*, corresponding in thematic terms to the theme/patient, and with OR the *Originator of the event*, corresponding in thematic terms to the agent. With this background, we can then return to *pro*. On the basis of the model just proposed, the doubling of D by *pro* is not necessary to obtain an argumental interpretation for the inflectional head. To such end it is sufficient to postulate that an aspectual feature MEAS/OR is transformationally associated with D. Technically, the feature is ATTRACTED by D. As defined in Manzini and Roussou 1999 and Manzini and Savoia, forthcoming, the operation of attraction belongs to the same family as Chomsky's 1995 ATTRACT or Chomsky's 1998 AGREE, in that it is an operation at a distance on features. At the same time it differs from those rules in that we assume that it consists wholly in the formation of an ordered set of features, in the case at hand $\langle D, OR/MEAS \rangle$. This process of attraction is not meant to be added to Chomsky's Attract or Agree, but to entirely substitute for them; we shall argue below that the empirical consequences that this entails (in particular with respect to agreement) favor our move.²

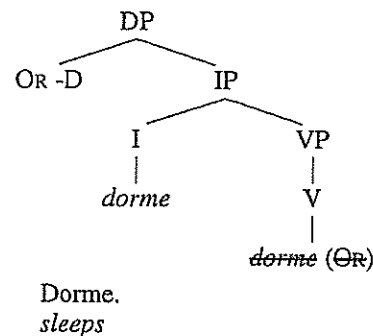
- (8)



Castellazzo Bormida

Northern Italian dialects do not differ on this point from classical null-subject languages like Standard Italian or Southern Italian dialects. Indeed, if we assume that the basic functional structure of the sentence is universal and does not vary across languages, as independently argued by Cinque (1999), then Southern Italian varieties also include a D position, though not an overtly realized one. If so, a standard null-subject sentence will be derived by attraction of an aspectual feature to D, as illustrated in (9):

- (9)



Italian

We have already seen that English also presents derivations of the type of (7b), in which the lexical subject is merged directly in its surface position and the aspectual feature is attracted to its domain. If the basic structure of the sentence is universal and D is therefore present in classical non-null-subject languages like English as well, then the derivation in (7b) need only be modified so that *John* is merged in SpecD, as in (10):

- (10) [_{DP} OR-John D [_{JP} I [_{VP} slept (Θ_R)]]]

In terms of Chomsky's 1995 theory of parameters, it is now possible to propose that D is strong in Northern Italian dialects as well as in English; by contrast, it is weak in Standard Italian and Southern Italian dialects, essentially as proposed by Platzack (1995). Classical non-null-subject languages such as English have a strong D but do not possess a specialized D element to check it. Therefore the strong D implies that a DP is merged into SpecD. In Northern Italian dialects, on the other hand, the strong D feature is checked by merger of the subject clitic (i.e.,

by a specialized D head). Suppose in turn that the strong/weak parameter of Chomsky 1995 reduces to whether D is realized at the PF interface or not (cf. Roberts and Roussou, this volume). As before, we predict the existence of languages that must realize D but do not possess a specialized D element to realize it. Classical non-null-subject languages such as English fall into this category. In such languages DP is merged into SpecD to realize D. In Northern Italian dialects, on the other hand, D is realized by merger of the subject clitic (i.e., by a specialized D head). Obviously enough, if the content of the D position reduces to the D feature, which is in fact the conclusion we reach in section 2, the parameter concerning the realization or not of D at PF can be stated for the position or for the feature equivalently. As suggested by Platzack (1995), classical null-subject languages such as Standard Italian and Southern Italian dialects represent the case in which D is weak or, as we can now also say, they need not be realized at the PF interface. This means, on the one hand, that DP need not be merged into SpecD position, contrary to English and similar languages; it also means that, contrary to Northern Italian dialects, there are no specialized subject clitics merged in D.

An alternative to the view just proposed, which also implies the elimination of *pro*, is set out in recent work by Pollock (1996), Nash and Rouveret (1997), and Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998). These authors assume, with Chomsky (1995), that the D feature of I is universally strong, or, in other terms, that the EPP is universal. The difference between languages like English and Italian is that in Italian raising of V to I is sufficient to check its strong D feature, while in English this is not the case. As Pollock (1996) acknowledges, this analysis represents a translation into Minimalist terms of the traditional idea that the null-subject parameter depends on the richness of verbal inflection. Classical theories of the null-subject parameter had obvious difficulties in maintaining the desired correlation between the morphological richness of I and the lack of realization of the subject (Jaeggli and Safir 1989). Pollock (1996) derives a different generalization from his theory, namely that only languages where V moves to I belong to the null-subject typology.

Within our theory, overt raising of I to D for purposes of feature checking can be excluded on empirical grounds. To see this, consider the negation clitic, which is generally agreed to correspond to an independent head NEG (Manzini and Savoia 1998b, and references quoted there). The Neg clitic clearly appears to the left of I and to the right of D in dialects which realize both (see (29)–(30) below for some examples); hence, in dialects which do not independently realize D, the fact that the finite verb appears to the right of Neg can be taken to mean that the verb has not raised to D. One way to maintain the universal EPP is to say that D is a category peculiar to Northern Italian dialects. But this would give up the highly restrictive assumption that the grid of functional categories is universal, for no apparent empirical gain.

There is, however, a way of maintaining what amounts to the traditional construal of the *pro*-drop parameter that we intend to adopt. At the same time we intend to put forward a view of parameters as lexicalization choices even more restrictive than the one sketched in adapting the strong/weak parameter of Chomsky 1995. There we suggested that the same position/feature may be lexicalized in one

language but not in another. We now suggest instead that *two languages can differ only as to how they lexicalize a given feature*.

We can assume that the null-subject parameter, as defined between Standard Italian and English, reduces to whether the D feature is lexicalized by the finite verb (Italian) or not (English). In the first case, normal economy principles dictate that the same feature should not be lexicalized again; we shall return immediately below (section 1.3) to the special problems posed by the apparently optional preverbal subject. In the second case, the D feature necessitates independent realization, in which case a language like English has recourse to the merger of a DP in SpecD. The similarity between Standard Italian and Northern Italian dialects suggested to early theorists that they should be treated alike from the point of view of the null-subject parameter. In the terms being suggested here, this amounts to saying that in Northern Italian dialects it is the finite verb that lexicalizes the D feature; but this directly contradicts the idea suggested so far that the subject clitic in these languages is nothing but a pure lexicalization of the D feature. Let us then continue to assume that subject clitics are as realizations of the D feature. Thus, contrary to null-subject languages like standard Italian, Northern Italian dialects do not lexicalize D through the finite verb; and contrary to classical non-null-subject languages they have a specialized element, namely the clitic head, to realize D. Again we shall return in section 1.3 to the problem posed by the doubling of the clitic by the lexical subject.

An interesting question that arises in connection with the null-subject parameter concerns the status of a language like (Standard) French, which is classically treated as a non-null-subject language of the same type as English, that is, in present terms, as a language where D is lexicalized by a DP in SpecD, be it lexical or pronominal. In reality, there are a number of reasons why this characterization should be doubted; in particular, French does have a set of elements that are at least superficially characterizable as subject clitics. Kayne (1975) proposes that the pronominal subjects of French are in fact clitics, but only at the PF interface; in other words, they are syntactically represented as DP and cliticize only in the phonology. The main obstacle to construing them as syntactic clitics (i.e., as pronominal heads rather than as pronominal DPs) is represented by their inability to be doubled by lexical DPs, in contrast with the behavior just described for Northern Italian dialects. A careful analysis of Northern Italian dialects, however, undermines this classical approach. In particular, it is interesting to note that a number of Ladin dialects of the Dolomitic area of Italy are characterized by conditions intermediate between those of typical Northern Italian dialects and those of French, as detailed in Savoia and Manzini, forthcoming, and as noted in Vanelli 1998:118. Thus, at Colfosco in (11) we find a different realization for subject clitic forms and full pronominal DPs in the first and second persons (though in the plural there is simply nonlexicalization of the subject clitic³). As expected, in the first and second persons the clitic and full forms can co-occur. In this respect, therefore, Colfosco is like a Northern Italian dialect. In the third person, however, we find a single form of pronominal subject. On the one hand, this does not double a lexical DP; on the other hand, it is obligatory in the absence of one, exactly as happens in French:

- (11) a. i 'dorme b. ju (i) 'dorme *Colfosco - Val Badia*
 tə 'dorməs tu (tə) 'dorməs
 al/ala 'dorm al/ala 'dorm
 dor'mjon nos dor'mjon
 dor'mi:ze os dor'mi:ze
 al/ala 'dorm al/ala 'dorm
 CLS *sleep(s)* PN (CLS) *sleep(s)*
- c. i mi'tɔŋs (*al) 'vaŋ de'do:
 the boys (CLS) come afterward

In other dialects of the same area, for instance at La Pli de Mareo, there are two different series of pronominal subjects, namely a subject clitic form and a full pronominal form; the two never co-occur, as can be seen by the comparison between (a) and (b) in (11'). What is more, the subject clitic never co-occurs with a lexical DP subject, as in (11'c); in questions, subject clitics appear to the immediate right of the verb in C while lexical DPs are in peripheral position, as in (11'd). In other words, this dialect reproduces the same conditions as French, except that the two series of pronominal forms for subjects unambiguously identify subject clitics with respect to full pronominal DPs.

- (11') a. i 'dormi b. ju 'dormi *La Pli de Mareo-*
 te 'dormes tø 'dormes *Val Badia*
 al/ara 'dorm el/era 'dorm
 i dor'mjuŋ nos dor'mjuŋ
 i dor'mi:s vos dor'mi:s
 ai/ares 'dorm ei/eres 'dorm
 CLS *sleep(s)* PN *sleep(s)*
- c. i mi'tuŋs 'dormia de 'la
 the children sleep in there
- d. a-i ðor'mi i mi'tuŋs?
 have-CLS slept the children

This set of observations leads us to conclude that languages like (Standard) French or the Ladin dialects in (11)–(11') are characterized by a realized D at PF. However, they represent the case in which this can be realized either by a specialized subject clitic in the D head or by a full DP in SpecD. On grounds of economy, we can assume that the PF realization of D by both the specialized clitic and by a full DP is not allowed. Indeed, in section 1.3 we shall modify our analysis of typical Northern Italian dialects to the effect that head-Spec configurations involving a subject clitic and a lexical DP are excluded. Thus, we shall uphold Koopman's 1996 Generalized Doubly Filled Comp Filter, according to which either a head X or its Spec can be realized, but not both.

Summarizing so far, our theory allows for four different types of languages, according to whether the D feature is lexicalized by the finite verb (Italian), by a specialized head (Northern Italian dialects), by a full DP (English), or by either a specialized head or a full DP (French). This theory can therefore be schematized as in (12):

(12) D lexicalized by:

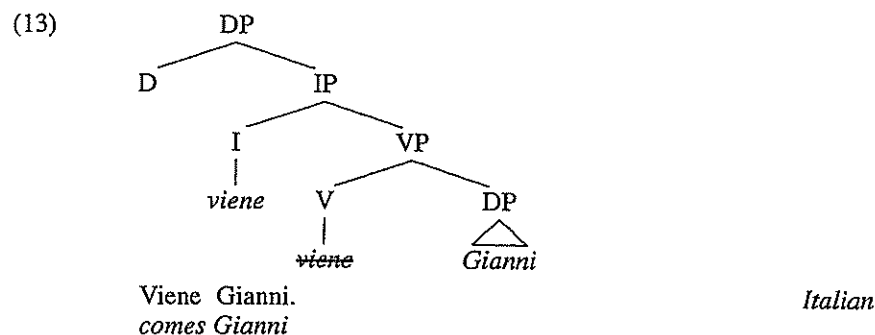
V	Italian
D	Northern Italian dialects
D, DP	Ladin dialects, French
DP	English

Manzini and Savoia, forthcoming, develops a finer-grained system of subject clitic projections (for a different system see also Poletto 1993, 1997), which we shall sketch in section 2. It is in terms of this system, which replaces D with a set of positions including P(erson) and N(umber), that the null-subject parameter is ultimately stated; thus the D feature can eventually be lexicalized (or not lexicalized) in each of the finer-grained inflectional positions in any given language (cf. note 3).

1.3. The position of the preverbal and postverbal subject

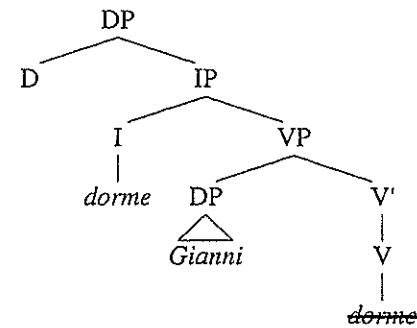
The systematization of the null-subject parameter in (12) leaves a number of questions open. The first one concerns the position of the lexical subject. Indeed, in English and similar languages the preverbal subject lexicalizes D and is therefore merged, in present terms, in SpecD. However, in Northern Italian dialects D is lexicalized by the subject clitic, while in Standard Italian and similar languages, D is lexicalized by the finite verb, excluding the merger of DP in SpecD under ordinary economy considerations. What is more, the position of the postverbal subject remains to be defined entirely.

We shall begin by considering standard theories of postverbal subjects in classical null-subject languages such as Standard Italian or Southern Italian dialects. According to the generally accepted theory, the unique argument of unaccusative verbs is an internal argument, similar to the object of transitive verbs. As proposed by Burzio (1986), therefore, its postverbal position can correspond simply to its thematic position, which we identify with the complement of V, as in (13):



By contrast, with unergative verbs, the unique argument has the properties of the external argument of transitive verbs. Once again, we can identify its postverbal position with its thematic position, if we take the latter to be SpecV, in accordance with the so-called VP-Internal Subject Hypothesis. This gives rise to structures of the type in (13'):

(13')



Dorme Gianni.
sleeps Gianni

Italian

Transitive verbs are more problematic if the postverbal subject essentially coincides with a thematic position. Indeed, transitive verbs display an SOV order, as in (14), while one would expect the VSO order if the subject is in SpecV and the object is in the complement of V:

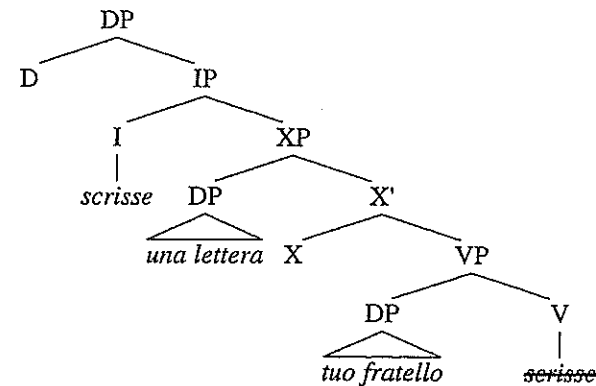
(14)

Scrisse una lettera tuo fratello.
wrote a letter your brother

Italian

To explain this kind of data, it is necessary to assume that the object in (14) is not in its thematic position, but in some intermediate position between I and V, as illustrated in (15):

(15)



Note that though postverbal subject sentences are truth-functionally equivalent to their counterparts with preverbal subjects, there still is an interpretive difference between them. The preverbal subject generally corresponds to the Topic, or one of the Topics, of the sentence, while the postverbal subject is either the Focus or part of the Focus of the sentence. This is consistent with the idea that the sentential Focus is the element or elements bearing main stress in a sentence, which in turn corresponds to the most deeply embedded constituent, or constituents, in the sentence itself (Cinque 1993, Zubizarreta 1998). If so, VP-internal subjects are in Focus position, while VP-external subjects are Topics. Given these basic facts, it is perfectly possible to suppose that the realization of the subject in VP-internal position corresponds to the realization of a F(ocus) feature rather than an aspectual one.

If this Focus feature is associated with a functional category, then the postverbal subject in (13)–(15) should be in the Spec of such a category. Independent evidence for a low Focus projection hosting adverbs is indeed provided by Cinque (1999).

As for the XP position in (15), our idea is that it can only be a Focus position once again. In effect, sentences of the type in (14) are felicitous answers to questions such as ‘What happened?’ that bear on the whole predicate. Thus the XP position in (15) is not to be assimilated to the target of object movement in proposals such as that of Johnson 1991. Though we agree with the latter that the object always surfaces in a position higher than its thematic position, we do not believe that this is the case because of the need to realize Agreement or Case or, in general, inflectional features. If the two DP positions in (15) are both inside the sentential Focus, there is no reason to exclude the possibility that the order of subject and object could be reversed. In effect, VSO orders are also found in languages like Italian, precisely with a double Focus interpretation, as for instance in (14’):

- (14’) Scrisse anche tuo fratello una lettera. *Italian*
 wrote also your brother a letter

The discussion that precedes presupposes that on grounds of economy, the same Focus position cannot be realized by two distinct elements; in other words, multiple Specs are an impossibility (contra Chomsky 1995, 1998). Thus the object cannot be merged inside the Focus projection in addition to the subject, but rather must be generated in its own projection, precisely as indicated in (15).

An analysis of the preverbal subject position of Italian is now also at hand. In particular we can assume that since the preverbal subject is topicalized, its position reflects the realization of a Topic feature. This and the previous analyses, though developed for Italian and more generally for classical null-subject languages, apply equally in Northern Italian dialects with subject clitics. In particular, nothing needs to be added to what has already been said about the postverbal position of the subject in Focus. As for the preverbal subject position, it is possible to argue that the subject clitic and the lexical subject never in fact appear in a head-Spec configuration, upholding Koopman’s 1996 Generalized Doubly Filled Comp Filter (according to which either a head X or its Spec can be realized, but not both). Thus Manzini and Savoia 1998a and 1998b, to which we refer for a more detailed discussion, identify the position of the preverbal subject with a Top(ic) projection (i.e., SpecTop). Merger of the lexical subject in this position is unrelated to the realization of D; rather, it responds to the need for a Topic feature to be realized. This last analysis extends to subject clitic languages and to classical null-subject ones. Only preverbal subjects in languages like English are thus a means of satisfying the EPP; preverbal subjects in Italian and Italian dialects are entirely unconnected to this property.⁴

As for the topicalization of an object, the normal means of accomplishing it is Clitic Right or Left Dislocation, in the sense of Cinque 1990. Indeed note that for all that we have said so far, there is a fundamental asymmetry between subject and object, in that there is an inflectional projection D for the former, but no inflectional position for the latter. This account is sufficient for the data considered here, but it quickly becomes inadequate if we consider the full spectrum of data concerning the

object; in particular the object, like the subject, can correspond to a clitic or it can be dropped. A theory of object inflections appears therefore to be required, parallel to the theory of subject inflections considered here but distinct from it so as to be able to account for various residual asymmetries between the two systems. Such a theory, which is discussed in Manzini and Savoia 1998c and Manzini and Savoia, forthcoming, is however outside the scope of the present article.

2. Agreement parameters with postverbal subjects

2.1. *The problems*

In all of the examples considered so far, the preverbal subject agrees in Person and Number with the finite verb and in Person, Number, and Gender with the subject clitic, when the latter is present. Thus agreement with the preverbal subject is obligatory, independent of the null-subject, non-null-subject, or subject-clitic status of the language. Consider, for instance, agreement of the preverbal subject with both the finite verb and the subject clitic in Northern Italian dialects. Under the construal of A-movement in Chomsky 1995, this presents no particular difficulty. Quite simply, one can assume that on its way to its surface position in SpecD, the DP subject is attracted by the intermediate SpecI position, where it enters agreement with the I head. As for Chomsky 1998, the specialized rule Agree applies between the noninterpretable ϕ -feature set of the verb and the uninterpretable nominative Case feature of the DP; movement can be seen as a consequence of this operation. The question then arises whether these derivations can be replicated in a system in which it is the aspectual feature that is attracted by the base-generated DP.

Before answering this question, it is worth considering the full range of agreement phenomena that characterize not only preverbal but also postverbal subjects. As is well known from Chomsky's 1995 discussion of English and French, in English postverbal subjects agree with the finite verb, as in (16), while in French the finite verb appears to agree with the expletive in the third-person singular rather than with the postverbal subject, as in (17) (the English examples also provide the translations of the French ones):

- (16) a. There comes a boy.
b. There come some boys.

- (17) a. Il vient un enfant. *French*
it comes a child
b. Il vient des enfants.
it comes of.the children

Again the agreement parameter observed in (16)–(17) is entirely independent of the null-subject parameter as defined in (12). Indeed, in Northern Italian dialects we often find an expletive subject clitic determining agreement in the third-person singular even in the presence of a plural postverbal subject; this nonagreement in Number is of course reminiscent of French (17). Some relevant examples are provided in (18):

- (18) a. i 'faptʃ i 'veʃan 'dopo
the children CLS come afterward
Casaccia
- b. 'dopo al 'veʃ i 'faptʃ
afterward CLS comes the children
- a. lir maz'næi i 'drwomu də 'lɔ
the children CLS sleep in there
Castellazzo Bormida
- b. də 'lɔ u i 'drwom ir maz'næi
in there CLS there sleeps the children
- a. kui ma'toti i 'venu tʃy 'tɔrdi
these children CLS come more late
Dego
- b. dop u 'veʃ kui ma'toti
afterward CLS comes these children
- a. i pu'te e 'dɔrmen
the children CLS sleep
Ciàno d'Enza
- b. de d 'la a 'dɔrma i pu'te
in there CLS sleeps the children
- a. i pu'tiŋ i a b'vest al 'la:t
the children CLS have drunk the milk
Masi S. Giacomo
- b. al 'la:t a l a b'vest i pu'tiŋ
the milk CLS it has drunk the children
- a. kwe ra'ʃattsi ʃʃ ɛnno ve'nuhi
those boys CLS have come
Dicomano
- b. ʃʃ ɛ vve'nuho de ra'ʃattsi
CLS has come some boys

Nevertheless, a number of Northern Italian dialects display agreement in Number, Gender, and Person of the postverbal subject with the finite verb and with the subject clitic; this is typically true of the dialects of the Friuli, as illustrated in (19):

- (19) a. i ka'nais ai duar u'i
the children CLS.3PP sleep there
Vito d'Asio
- 'ia a veʃ 'dopo
she CLS.3PSF comes afterward
- b. u'i ai 'duar i ka'nais
there CLS.3PP sleep the children
- 'dopo a veʃ 'ia
afterward CLS.3PSF comes she
- a. i ka'nais a soŋ vi'ɲu:s
the children CLS.3PP have come.MP
Pinzano
- b. a soŋ vi'ɲu:s dei ka'nais
CLS.3PP have come.MP some children

Thus the same agreement parameter illustrated by (16) and (17) is reproduced for the clitic subject languages in (18) and (19). What is more, classical null-subject languages also display the same parametric variation. In these languages the postverbal subject typically agrees with the finite verb, as illustrated in (1b) for

Standard Italian and in (2b) for Southern Italian dialects. However, some dialects belonging to this type, notably in the area of the North-Central Marche, lack agreement between the finite verb and the postverbal subject, as illustrated in (20):

- (20) a. ki bur'dei 'vɛŋne 'dɔ:p Urbino
 those children come afterward
 ki bur'dei 'dɔrmne de 'la
 those children sleep in there
 b. 'dɔ:p vjɛŋ ki bur'dei
 afterward comes those children
 de 'la 'dɔrmne ki bur'dei
 in there sleeps those children

The relevant empirical findings in (2) and (18)–(20) are summarized in (21):

- (21) a. +clitic, +agreement dialects of the Friuli
 b. +clitic, -agreement typical Northern Italian dialects
 c. -clitic, +agreement typical Southern Italian dialects
 d. -clitic, -agreement dialects of the North-Central Marche

The fact that all four possibilities in (21) are actually realized, as well as the two possibilities in (16)–(17), suggests of course that there are two completely independent parameters, namely the null-subject parameter already systematized in (12) and a parameter concerning agreement with the postverbal subject. As far as the second parameter is concerned, there exist two types of languages. In the first type, corresponding to English, Standard Italian, or Northern Italian dialects of the Friuli, the postverbal subject agrees in all features with I (and with D); in the second type, the postverbal subject does not display such agreement.

Chomsky (1995) argues for an account of (16)–(17) under which the agreement properties of the postverbal subject directly depend on the ϕ -features of the expletive. Indeed, *there* in English is not inherently specified for Number, Gender, and Person, while French *il* is specified as [third person, singular, masculine]. Thus, according to Chomsky 1995, in English the ϕ -features of the postverbal subject must delete its ϕ -features. The same operation, however, is not necessary, and hence not possible by economy considerations in French. As it turns out, this analysis cannot be straightforwardly translated into the framework of Chomsky 1998. Indeed, the presence on the postverbal subject of a nominative case feature means that the Agree operation involving it and the I position must take place in any case. This correctly predicts agreement as in English, but leaves us without an account for French.

As we saw at the outset of this section, our theory of the null-subject parameter, and more generally of the raising of aspectual features to D(P), forces a different analysis of the agreement between a preverbal subject and I/D from both Chomsky 1995 and Chomsky 1998. Indeed, there is no successive-cyclic raising of the DP itself with all of its features through the agreement positions, but only a successive-cyclic raising of the aspectual feature. At the same time the primitive operation Attract, which is meant to substitute for Agree, does not include any specific feature deletion mechanism. On the other hand, our theory also suggests an alternative

to the system for the raising of the associate in expletive constructions. As we shall argue in detail in what follows, there are empirical reasons to prefer our approach.

2.2. Agreement of the preverbal and postverbal subject

Let us consider first agreement of D with the preverbal subject, in a system in which it is not the preverbal subject itself that raises but rather an aspectual feature. In fact, the solution to this problem presupposes the solution to an even more basic one—that of the agreement between I and D, which are here conceived as separate heads on the functional skeleton of the sentence. We have proposed above that the subject clitic is generated in the position where it surfaces, and that an aspectual feature is attracted by it, providing it with an argumental interpretation. Since the subject clitic itself never passes through the domain of I, it is not clear under this analysis how it comes to agree with I. The problem cannot simply be solved by saying that its position selects the I position, thus giving rise to a feature-checking configuration indirectly, since, as we have already mentioned, the space between I and D contains a number of projections, such as the clitic Neg typical of several Italian varieties.

The solution that is effectively forced on us by the general form of our theory is that the aspectual feature itself is attracted by I. Agreement is essentially a reflex of the sharing of aspectual features by different positions. Thus the derivation of the simple example in (8) is to be further specified as in (22), where the OR role is attracted first to I, then to the subject clitic. Note that in accordance with what we shall suggest in section 2.3 below, the position of the subject clitic is identified in (22) with an N position rather than with D:

- (22) $[_{NP} \text{ OR} - \text{rd } [_{IP} \text{ OR} - \text{drwom } [_{VP} \text{ ~~drwom~~(\text{OR})]]] \text{ Castellazzo Bormida}$
 CLS sleeps

To be more precise, we can assume that I acts as an attractor of aspectual features in virtue of its nominal inflection features; the subject clitic will evidently attract it in virtue of its N and D features. The same mechanism also accounts for agreement between I and the preverbal subject in non-null-subject languages like English, on the assumption that the preverbal subject fills the SpecD position, as under the parameter in (12). In particular, derivations of the type in (10) are to be further specified as in (23), where the OR role passes through I on its way to D, whence the agreement between I and SpecD:

- (23) $[_{DP} \text{ OR} - \text{John } [_{IP} \text{ OR} - \text{I } [_{VP} \text{ slept } (\text{OR})]]]$

The derivation of examples like (9) for Standard Italian proceeds in a similar manner; the only difference is that D is not independently realized; therefore the features of I supply the entire feature content of D:

- (24) $[_{IP} \text{ OR} - \text{dorme } [_{VP} \text{ ~~dorme~~ } (\text{OR})]]$ Italian
 sleeps

We shall return at the end of this chapter (section 3) to the general question of the attraction exercised by any nominal feature on aspectual features, which is strictly bound up with the question of interpretability.

of these properties by elements associated by the derivation with the same aspectual feature can therefore be seen to fall out from interpretive necessity.

If we go on now to expletive constructions, there is a straightforward reason to call into question the analysis proposed in Chomsky 1995 with regard to English and French. Consider, indeed, dialects such as (18), which have been described as having an expletive subject clitic which does not agree with the postverbal subject. Crucially, these dialects do not restrict postverbal subjects to indefinites, contrary to French. Thus they allow full pronouns to appear in postverbal position, provided they are focused; in this case a plural pronoun still does not trigger plural agreement on the verb and the subject clitic, as illustrated in (26). It is worth noticing that according to Zucchi 1996, in the dialect of Piacenza there is a contrast between postverbal definite subjects, which are possible without agreement, and postverbal pronoun subjects, which are not possible. This distribution of data is not necessarily replicated by the dialects below, even if it is true that agreement with the postverbal pronoun is at least possible in all dialects. As we shall see in section 2.4, this agreement option extends to all definites, and therefore does not single out pronouns (for further elaborations on this point, see Manzini and Savoia forthcoming):

- (26) a 'vi:n sol 'le/'lo/'lor *Modena*
CLS comes only she/he/they
 dɔp a vjeŋ 'luri *Ariano Polesine*
afterward CLS comes they
 ɛ jə vy'nu 'lɔ *Mezzenile*
CLS has come they

Now, consider first- and second-person pronouns. By the discussion that precedes, there is no independent reason having to do with definiteness or with their pronoun status why they should be excluded from the expletive construction without agreement. Nevertheless, they are excluded from it. To be more precise, they can normally appear in postverbal position with a focused interpretation. In such case, however, both the verb and the subject clitic agree with them in all features, as exemplified in (27a); for the sake of comparison (27b) provides an example from the Friuli varieties which systematically present agreement:

- (27) a. t al di 'tɛ *Modena*
CLS it say you
 t vi 'tɛ *Alfonsine*
CLS come you
 a 'pəɾɛl 'mi *Viguzzolo*
CLS speak I
 tɛ 'drwɔmi 'ti *Fontanigorda*
CLS sleep you
 dʒ ɔu 'fau 'me *Mezzenile*
CLS it make I
 b. tu sos 'tu ko tu du'ars *Vito d'Asio*
CLS are you that CLS sleep

able to D in a sentence is already associated with an argument in predicate-internal position. If so, the aspectual feature will be shared by the expletive with the predicate-internal argument. Agreement in Person ensues from this hypothesis. Nevertheless it remains to be explained why agreement in Number and Gender does not ensue. In what follows, we shall begin by looking in more detail at the features involved, namely Person, Number, and Gender.

2.3. (Lack of) agreement in Number (and Gender) of the postverbal subject

The term ϕ -features employed by Chomsky (1981, 1995) to refer to Number, Gender, and Person suggests that they behave like a coherent class. Though Chomsky (1998) allows for the Person feature to be represented in the absence of other features (as on the expletive *there*), he maintains that the set behaves as a whole at least under the deletion operation, since the latter cannot apply selectively to a feature within it. Indeed, the presence of the sole Person feature on *there* is used to explain cases of full agreement (between the verb and the associate).

The phenomena just reviewed concerning agreement with the associate suggest, however, a fundamental split between the Person feature, which always induces agreement, and the Number and Gender features, which do not. Let us then consider how the split between Person and Number is to be construed. To begin with, a careful study of the subject clitic system, of the type pioneered by Poletto (1993, 1997), reveals the existence of two separate positions for first- and second-person clitics and for third-person clitics. In particular, there is a considerable number of dialects in which the Negation, which is itself a clitic, appears after the third-person subject clitic, but before the first- or second-person clitic, as illustrated in (29), with some verb paradigms. In all cases the Neg clitic *n* precedes the second-person singular subject clitic (and the second-person plural subject clitic in the Firenze dialect), while it follows the third-person subject clitics; other subject clitics are not differentiated for ϕ -features or not realized:

(29)	(e)	un	'ven	go	Firenze
	(e)	un tu	v'v	jeni	
	e/la	un	v'v	jene	
	(e)	un si	v'v	jene	
	(e)	un vu	vve'n	ihe	
	e/le	un	'ven	gano	
	CLS	CLS.3 not	CLS.1/2	come(s)	
	ne		'parlu		Fontanigorda
	ne te		'parli		
	u/a	ne	'parla		
		ne	par'lemmu		
		ne	par'lei		
	i	ne	'parlu		
	CLS.3 not	CLS.2	speak(s)		

a	n		'dormi	'mia	<i>Revere</i>
a	n	at	'dormi	'mia	
	al/la	n(a)	'dorem	'mia	
a	n		dur'mema	'mia	
a	n		dur'mi	'mia	
	i/li	n	'dorem	'mia	
<i>CLS</i>	<i>CLS.3</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>CLS.2</i>	<i>sleep(s)</i>	<i>not</i>
a	n		'drømu	'meja	<i>S. Sebastiano Curone</i>
a	n	te	'drømi	'meja	
	u	n	'drøma	'meja	
a	n		dru'muma	'meja	
a	n		dru'mi	'meja	
	i	n	'drøma	'meja	
<i>CLS</i>	<i>CLS.3</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>CLS.2</i>	<i>sleep</i>	<i>not</i>

These data fairly obviously motivate a split between a first- and second-person position and a third-person position for subject clitics. At the same time we are led to wonder whether first and second person vs. third person is the correct characterization of the split observed. An alternative view takes the third person to be absence of a positive value for the feature Person (cf. Benveniste 1966). Pushing this view further, we conclude that P(erson) is not a feature, but rather is a separate category which also has the property of attracting Asp features, and hence of being argumental. P contains whatever specifications individuate first and second person singular and plural.

By the same test employed in (29) (i.e., the position of the Neg clitic), at least one additional position can be identified in the inflectional clitic string. Indeed, in a number of dialects, exemplified in (30), the Neg clitic precedes all of the differentiated clitics, both P and non-P, while it follows the undifferentiated one, as illustrated in particular by Sillano. Note that the pattern whereby the Neg clitic is found before all differentiated clitics is often also seen in varieties, such as Zoldo Alto, which do not realize the undifferentiated clitic:

(30)	no		'ðorme	<i>Zoldo Alto</i>
	no	te	'ðorme	
	no	-l/-la	'ðorme	
	no		ðor'mjoŋ	
	no		ðor'mi	
	no	-i/-le	'ðorme	
	<i>not</i>	<i>CLS.2/3</i>	<i>sleep(s)</i>	
	(e)	n(o)	i	<i>Sillano</i>
	(e)	non	tu	'dorma
	(e)	non	le	'dorma
	(e)	non	sə	'dorma/dor'mjaŋ
	(e)	non		dur'middə
	(e)	non	le	'dorməŋ
	<i>CLS</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>CLS.1/2/3</i>	<i>sleep(s)</i>

The data in (30) suggest that both the P position occupied by first- and second-person clitics, and the position occupied by third-person clitics are distinct from the position occupied by undifferentiated clitics. It is fairly natural to identify the position of the third-person clitic with N (i.e., with the categorial signature of non-P arguments). As for the highest position in the string, we note that when realized, it is compatible with both P and N specifications. We therefore tentatively identify this position with our original D category; indeed, we take it that the suggestion contained in its name—that it is a specification of definiteness/indefiniteness properties—is correct, and that as such it can combine with both P and N.

The Neg test data also provide some evidence for a fourth position within the subject clitic string. Thus consider the Friulan paradigms in (31). At Vito, the Neg clitic precedes all differentiated forms, including *i* in the third person plural, while following the undifferentiated form *a*. At Montereale again the Neg clitic appears between the N form *l* and the D form *a* in the third person singular; however, in the third person plural it again follows *i*, which clearly is a differentiated form:

(31)	no	du'ar	Montereale
	no te	du'ars	
a	no -l	du'ar	
	no	dur'min	
	no	dur'mi:	
i	no	du'ar	
CLS	CLS.3 not	CLS.2/3	sleep(s)
	no	'duar	Vito d'Asio
	no tu	'duar	
a	no l	'duar	
	no	dur'min	
	no	dur'mi:s	
a	no -i	'duar	
CLS	not	CLS.2/3	sleep(s)

This pattern can be taken to indicate that the *i* form is in a higher position than the *l* form at Montereale, though both are differentiated for ϕ -features, as opposed to the undifferentiated form *a*. It is furthermore natural to identify the intermediate position between N and D occupied by *i* with the position Num postulated by Ritter (1991) or Bernstein (1991) for the structure of the DP. In short, our analysis of what are standardly considered the ϕ -features of D individuates at least three categories that are structurally ordered with respect to D itself, namely P and N corresponding to the feature Person, and Num corresponding to the feature Number. The schema in (32), which summarizes our conclusions, does not mention Gender. In fact, it is argued in recent studies (Ritter 1993, Di Domenico 1998) that even inside DP, Gender is always associated with one or the other of the categories already postulated; we will therefore disregard it from now on.

(32) [D [Num [N [P

Further support for the structural schema in (32) is provided by Manzini and Savoia, forthcoming; it is also worth noting that we agree with Poletto (1997) in individuating four subject clitic categories, though we disagree on their characterization.

We are now in a position to consider sentences where the postverbal subject agrees in all features with the verb in I and with the subject clitic in D when present. Let us first consider subject clitic languages, as illustrated in (19) by dialects of the Friuli. It is true that they can simply be claimed to represent instances of 'clitic doubling' that do not fall under a theory of expletive constructions. But if we succeed in showing that the present theory can provide a uniform treatment for 'clitic doubling' and expletives, as well as for 'resumptive clitics,' then straightforward simplicity considerations favor it.

We propose that in sentences of the type of (33) the OR feature of the lexical V becomes associated with the postverbal subject, which is closer to it than to any other D or DP. The derivation of the sentence then proceeds, eventually reaching the verbal and nominal inflections, which attract an aspectual feature in turn. Since the only available aspectual feature, namely OR, is already associated with the lexical argument *i kanais* 'the children,' it will be shared by it, by the verb in I, and by the subject clitic. In terms of the theory of agreement proposed here, the sharing of aspectual features in turn implies the sharing of inflectional features, which have referential import, and hence, in practice, agreement in all features (Person, Number, and Gender). Note that in the plural a subject clitic is realized in both D and Num, as in (33a) and (33b); on the contrary the masculine singular is realized only by a clitic in N, as in (33c), and the feminine singular by a clitic in D, as in (33d):

- (33) a. [DP OR-a [NumP ~~OR~~-i . . . [IP ~~OR~~-duar [VP ~~OR~~-i kanais Vito d'Asio
CLS CLS.3PP.M sleep the children
- b. [DP OR-a [NumP ~~OR~~-s . . . [IP ~~OR~~-duar . . . [VP ~~OR~~-las gardʒonas . . .
CLS CLS.3PP.F sleep the girls
- c. [NP OR- al . . . [IP ~~OR~~-duar . . . [VP ~~OR~~-il fantat . . .
CLS sleeps the boy
- d. [DP OR-a . . . [IP ~~OR~~-duar . . . [VP ~~OR~~-la gardʒona . . .
CLS sleeps the girl

Recall that, as already illustrated in relation to the table in (21), the parameters concerning agreement with the postverbal subject are entirely independent of the null-subject parameter. Therefore, languages of the type of Italian have essentially the same derivation as dialects of the Friuli, even if no nominal inflection is overtly realized, as illustrated in (34) for the dialect of Modica (Sicily):

- (34) a. [IP OR-rɔmmi . . . [VP ~~OR~~-u pittʃiriddɔ . . . Modica
sleeps the child
- b. [IP OR-ruəmmunu . . . [VP ~~OR~~-i pittʃiriddɔ . . .
sleep the children

We are now in a position to consider the parameter responsible for agreement or nonagreement in Number of the associate with the categories of verbal and nomi-

nal inflection. The same categories—D, Num, N, and P—that we have defined for the inflectional structure of the sentence constitute the functional skeleton of the DP as well. In the latter case, their logical, as well as morphological, relations have been carefully investigated. Thus standard semantic theories identify N with the predicative content of the DP; since N is nothing but a predicate, the referential properties of the DP reside in D. In effect, D is a quantifier and N represents its restriction. Thus we can assume that D attracts an N feature corresponding to its lexical restrictor. This latter feature could be seen as related to the argumental structure of the noun itself; in particular in the case of noneventive nouns it could be identified with the R role of Grimshaw 1995. Furthermore, assuming that the DP is embedded in a sentence, the D quantifier, while being restricted by the lexical content of N, also binds a variable within the structure of the VP; this we can take to correspond to the aspectual feature attracted by it.

In short, within the DP, D necessarily attracts both Asp and N. Analogously we can assume that it is a minimal requirement on inflectional D as well that it should be associated with an aspectual feature, even if it is not associated with a lexical restrictor. Let us then consider the sentence in (35) from a subject clitic dialect in which the associate does not agree in Num with verbal and nominal inflections. In the dialect under examination, that of Premana (Lombardy), the expletive takes the form of an N clitic, exactly like the expletive of French. As in all other cases we have seen so far, the nominal properties of the finite verb and of the subject clitic attract an aspectual feature. Let us suppose, however, that the verb and subject clitic, precisely in virtue of their nominal properties, can attract in addition to the aspectual feature a role R as well. If we apply this hypothesis to the example under consideration, we obtain a derivation of the following type:

- (35) [NP OR-al ... [_{IP} OR dzyge ... [_{VP} OR -R-i fiði ... Premana
CLS plays the children

In (35) the sharing of the aspectual feature leads not to the sharing of all features (Person, Number, Gender) with referential import, but only to the sharing of N/R features which correspond to the predicative content of the associate. The availability of this type of agreement in some languages, but not in others, can be expressed again as a lexicalization choice. It is not necessary, in other words, to assume that there is underlying variation in the derivation; thus the derivations in (33)–(34) can be refined along the same lines as (35) by introducing the R feature. The type of agreement seen in (33)–(34) lexicalizes the sharing of an aspectual feature through the sharing of all inflectional features that have referential import; it is in fact, as we shall say, a referential-type agreement. On the contrary, agreement with respect to the N feature only as in (35) can be characterized as a predicational-type agreement; indeed, sharing of aspectual features is lexicalized through the sharing of the inflectional N feature corresponding to the predicative properties of a nominal expression.

A derivation analogous to (35) characterizes languages without agreement in Num where the expletive is represented by an undifferentiated form in D, as illustrated in (36) with the Modena dialect (Emilia). Thus the languages that realize the expletive as an N form are only a subset of the languages without agreement; this

represents an argument against any theory (including Chomsky 1995, 1998) that tries to tie the agreement properties of the expletive construction to the feature composition of the expletive itself.

- (36) [DP OR-a ... [IP ~~OR~~-zoga ... [VP ~~OR~~-R i putsein ... Modena
CLS plays the children

In (37), finally, we have indicated the derivation for those languages where no subject clitic is realized. In this case as well predicative agreement results in sharing of the N feature only:

- (37) [IP OR - dorme ... [VP ~~OR~~-R ki bur'dei ... Urbino
sleeps those children

On these grounds, our model correctly predicts agreement in Person. Consider a sentence like (38a), from the Fontanigorda dialect (Liguria), in which we find a differentiated clitic realizing the inflectional P. As before, the verb and the subject clitic attract an aspectual feature, but contrary to what happens in (35)–(37), it is reasonable to assume that P forms do not have a predicative content. Rather, their interpretive content wholly reduces to referential features; in this respect they can be assimilated to D. The lack of a predicative, or N content, means that P pronoun associates can determine only referential agreement. Thus in (38a) the verb and the subject clitic attract an aspectual feature, which, being shared with the associate P pronoun, determines agreement in all features (in practice P) between the verb, the subject clitic, and the P pronoun itself. The same holds for cases like (38b–c) in which both a D and a P clitic are realized, or only a D clitic:

- (38) a. [PP OR - te ... [IP ~~OR~~ - drwomi ... [VP ~~OR~~ - ti ... Fontanigorda
CLS sleep you
b. [DP OR - a ... [PP ~~OR~~ - t ... [IP ~~OR~~ - dormi ... [VP ~~OR~~-ti ... Revere
CLS sleep you
c. [DP OR - a ... [IP ~~OR~~ - durmem ... [VP ~~OR~~ - nyalter ... Revere
CLS sleep we

A derivation analogous to that in (38) characterizes dialects in which clitic positions are not realized at all, as in (39):

- (39) [IP OR-parlen ... [VP ~~OR~~-no ... Urbino
speak we

Note that this theory is able to capture the fact that third-person pronouns can be treated as first- and second-person pronouns, triggering agreement in all features, or as lexical DPs, eventually triggering N-type agreement. In the latter case they are treated as having N-content; in the former they are treated as purely referential elements, without any predicative content.

We have now analyzed the agreement data we presented at the outset. In particular, concentrating on subject clitic dialects, we have accounted for the systematic agreement of P associates with verbal and nominal inflections. We have furthermore formulated the parameter responsible for the possibility for a DP associate to agree or not with nominal and verbal inflections in Number. This parameter can be schematically formulated as in (40):

- (40) If A and B share aspectual features (as a derivational property), they share
 (as a lexicalization property)
- a. all features with referential import
 - b. the predicative N feature

As we have argued more than once, the agreement parameter is entirely independent of the null-subject parameter. Thus classical null-subject languages present the same asymmetry with respect to agreement of the associate as subject clitic languages. We briefly mentioned in presenting the Friulan data that they can at least descriptively be characterized as cases of 'clitic doubling.' At the same time we stressed that obvious simplicity considerations favor a unitary treatment of such constructs and of expletive ones. Such a unitary treatment has in fact been provided in what precedes. What is more, we note that all cases descriptively labeled as 'clitic doubling' can now be theoretically characterized as expletive constructs with agreement, in which a clitic and a full DP argument share the same aspectual feature via attraction.

What is more, the data in (18) and (21) clearly show that nonagreement in Num between the associate and the verbal and nominal inflections is constrained to the case in which the former is plural and the latter singular. Thus in no Italian dialect (or any other language that we know of) is it possible to have a singular associate with plural inflections; in other words, the nonagreeing expletive form of nominal and verbal inflections is always singular. The fact that this important generalization is usually left implicit in syntactic treatments presumably reflects the idea that some morphophonological default mechanism is responsible for this state of affairs. It should be noted, however, that the notion of 'default' has no clear independent role in current theories, not even phonological ones. Similarly, a purely syntactic solution is in principle preferable to having recourse to a completely separate component, morphology.

Indeed, in the purely syntactic conception of features adopted here, singular is not the default value of the Num feature; on the contrary, singular and plural represent two completely independent specifications of the Num category. In particular, the plural corresponds to a realization of the Num category itself, while the singular simply corresponds to the case in which Num is not realized. Thus we explain why a nonagreeing expletive is always singular without having recourse to morphological default. Agreement with respect to the N feature simply excludes any realization of Num.

We have already indicated above that due to limitations of space, a discussion of Gender is impossible here (see Manzini and Savoia forthcoming). Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning briefly that expletive clitics in languages without agreement in Num can still be differentiated in Gender; thus the expletive is masculine in (35) above, but feminine in (55) below. This clearly casts doubts on the idea that the nonagreeing expletive realizes default values, or at least on the explanatory value of such an idea, since if default is at stake, its value for Gender is not universal. On the contrary, our syntactic representations clearly distinguish between Num, which has its own autonomous realization, and Gender, which does not, as briefly mentioned in connection with (32); Gender therefore could simply be represented in N (cf. Di Domenico 1998).⁷

These considerations lead us to clarify a further point. In languages of the type in (35)–(37), in which there is nonagreement in Num between the expletive and the associate, it is obvious that the nominal carries full Number (and Gender) specifications. This independence between the internal form of DPs and the agreement parameter is also as expected.

Going back now to (16)–(17), French appears to have all of the crucial properties of typical Northern Italian dialects from the point of view of the present theory, since raising of the associate fails to trigger agreement in Number with I and with the expletive. We shall return in the next section to the definiteness restrictions displayed not only by French but also by other languages. On the other hand, the agreement system of English does not have an exact parallel in any system examined so far. In particular, in English the postverbal lexical subject, which is generally taken to be indefinite, and hence by definition third person, agrees in Num features with the finite verb, hence with I; however, the expletive takes the invariable form *there*, which points to lack of agreement between the postverbal subject and the expletive.

In fact, there are subject clitic systems that are superficially similar to English. Thus in the Provençal dialect of Celle (Apulia) the associate agrees in all features with the verb in I, as illustrated in (41); however, the clitic subject takes an invariable form, not inflected for Number (or Gender), as is clear from the comparison with (42), where the lexical subject is preverbal. The alternation between *ɔ* and *aj* in (41) appears to be governed by the alternation between verbs beginning with consonant and vowel, respectively; in any event, both forms are clearly distinct from what we take to be the agreeing D clitics in (42), which alternate between *i* and *li*:

- (41) *ɔ* d'dɔrə l əŋ'fan
CLS sleeps the child
ɔ b'biʔʔə 'l ejə
CLS boils the water
ɔ 'vində ta ssə'rawə
CLS comes your sister
ɔ dur'mundə lɔs əŋ'fan
CLS sleep the children
ɔ və'nundə lɔs əŋ'fan
CLS come the children
a'j ettə və'ni muŋ fi'awə
CLS has come my child
ɔ 'sundə və'ni mɔ fi'awə
CLS have come my children

Celle S. Vito

- (42) l əŋ'fan i d'dɔrə
the child CLS sleeps
'l ejə i b'biʔʔə
the water CLS boils
ta ssə'rawə i 'vində da'pojə
your sister CLS comes afterward

lɔs əŋ'faŋ i dur'mundə/i və'nundə
the children CLS sleep /CLS come
 muŋ fi'awə 'ʎ ette və'ni a'jərə
my child CLS has come yesterday
 mɔ fi'awə i 'sundə və'ni a'jərə
my children CLS have come yesterday

It is worth noticing that while in English pronominal associates are independently excluded by the definiteness restriction, this is not the case in the dialect of Celle; thus, as expected, the *ɔ/aj* expletive appears with third-person pronominal associates, as illustrated in (43). Nevertheless the *ɔ/aj* expletive cannot appear with first- and second-person associates; in this case, the subject clitic is represented by the appropriate Person form, as again illustrated in (43):

- (43) mə 'sejə 'dʒi *Celle S. Vito*
 tə 'sejə 'ti
 a'j ette 'ijə
 nə 'suŋ 'nus
 və 'si 'vu
 ɔ 'sundə 'i:sə
 CLS am/are/is PN

Martin (1974) proposes an etymological derivation for Provençal expletives which assumes the Latin basis **ibi* for *i* and the Latin basis **hoc* for *ɔ*, hence two locative forms. This interpretation effectively extends that already proposed by Ronjat (1937) for the *la* form of the expletive in Provençal based on **illac*, another locative. These reconstructions are debatable as such, but interesting precisely in that they seem to follow not an independently motivated etymological sequence, but rather a semantic interpretation a posteriori of the relevant forms.

In present terms, there are good reasons to assume that *ɔ/aj* is in D, as is generally the case with undifferentiated subject clitics. Indeed, the differentiated subject clitic forms of the N/Num type are to be identified in this dialect with *i* and *ʎ*. Since the verb agrees in all features with the associate, including Num, we know that the aspectual feature of the associate is attracted by I. The same feature can then be attracted by inflectional D as well. But if *ɔ/aj* themselves lack morphological specifications for Num (and Gender), we predict that there will be no overt reflex of agreement on the expletive.

Let us then return briefly to English, with which we began the present discussion. The expletive of English, *there*, is actually a locative form rather than a D form. Though it must have at least a D feature, it lacks ϕ -features. The outcome is not substantially different from having an undifferentiated subject clitic. Thus the aspectual feature of the associate can be attracted all the way to D, triggering agreement with I on the way, but with no overt morphological consequence on *there* itself.

2.4. Definiteness effects

In (19) above we presented data from typical Friulan dialects, in which the associate agrees in all features not just with the finite verb in I but also with the subject clitic. In some dialects of the same region, as well as in other Northern Italian dialects, the associate agrees with I and the subject clitic when it is definite. When it is indefinite, however, the associate may lack agreement in Number (and Gender) with I and the subject clitic, along the lines already illustrated in (18) for the core Northern Italian dialects. In (44), the examples in (a) show forms with postverbal subjects and agreement in all features, those in (b) provide a comparison with preverbal subjects, and those in (c) show the lack of agreement with a postverbal subject when the latter is indefinite.

- (44) a. i 'veŋ i ɲo fi'oi Montereale
 CLS come the our children
 b. i ɲo fi'oi i 'veŋ
 the our children CLS come
 c. a 'veŋ ka'nais
 CLS comes children
 a. de 'le i 'droman i fi'ø Campodolcino
 in there CLS sleep the children
 i m eŋ kro'dɛ:t i 'pja:t
 CLS to.me are fallen the dishes
 b. i fi'ø i 'droman de 'le
 the children CLS sleep there
 i 'pja:t i m eŋ kro'dɛ:t
 the dishes CLS to.me are fallen
 c. a ka 'mia l e ve'ny:t di ma'tɛŋ
 to house my CLS is come some children
 a. 'dɔuppo i v'veppənə di /i f'fanti Gorfigliano
 afterward CLS come some/the children
 dɔ'la i d'dormən i f'fanti
 in there CLS sleep the children
 b. i f'fanti i d'dorməno
 the children CLS sleep
 c. j ɛ vʋə'nutə di f'fanti
 CLS is come some children

In at least some of these dialects, nonagreement with the indefinite associate appears to be possible rather than necessary, as illustrated most clearly by the dialect of Gorfigliano (northern Tuscany). These examples pose a particular problem within a Minimalist grammar because of the optionality they seem to display. Given the general theoretical arguments that hold against optionality, it is most natural to construe the alternatives in (44) as indicating ambiguity. In particular it is possible that agreement relates to the specific use of the indefinite associate, and lack of agreement to its nonspecific use.

As before, we do not expect the parametric choice represented by (44) to depend on a particular value of the null-subject parameter. In other words, we predict that the same sensitivity to definiteness can be found in classical null-subject and non-null-subject languages. The first prediction can be shown to be true. Indeed, we have seen in (2b) that in Southern Italian dialects, the postverbal subject typically agrees with the finite verb in all features. The same is true of Sardinian dialects. As exemplified in (45), however, Sardinian dialects typically do not display agreement with the postverbal subject when the latter is indefinite; the same is true of Central Calabrian dialects such as Iacurso:

- (45)
- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| ain'noi 'eniði | 'omminizi | <i>Orroli</i> |
| <i>here comes [some] men</i> | | |
| 'drommini zos pit'tsinnozo | | <i>Siniscola</i> |
| <i>sleep the children</i> | | |
| bi 'drommiti pit'tsinnozo | | |
| <i>here sleeps children</i> | | |
| 'vinne 'tanti 'himmini | | <i>Iacurso</i> |
| <i>came so.many women</i> | | |

On the other hand, many Northern Italian dialects of the core type in (18), which normally lack agreement of the associate with the expletive, allow such agreement if the postverbal subject is definite. This is illustrated in (46), where the examples in (a) illustrate the nonagreeing option for postverbal subjects and the examples in (b) their agreeing option. A more accurate description of the phenomenon can be arrived at on the basis of examples like those for the dialect of Castellazzo Bormida. These involve disagreement and agreement, respectively, with an indefinite postverbal subject. As already mentioned, indefinites can have both a nonspecific and a specific reading; under the latter they form a natural class with definites, which are always specific. It is therefore natural to speculate that the true generalization pertaining to agreement with the postverbal subject in dialects such as (46) is that it is restricted to specific arguments.

- (46)
- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. | al 'veɲ i ba'gai | <i>Casaccia-Val Bregaglia</i> |
| | <i>CLS comes the children</i> | |
| b. | i 'veɲan i ba'gai | |
| | <i>CLS come the children</i> | |
| a. | la a 'zøga i py'tlet | <i>Revere</i> |
| | <i>there CLS plays the children</i> | |
| b. | la i 'zøga i py'tlet | |
| | <i>there CLS play the children</i> | |
| a. | a 'perla i 'ɔ:m | <i>Modena</i> |
| | <i>CLS speaks the men</i> | |
| b. | i 'perlən i 'ɔ:m | |
| | <i>CLS speak the men</i> | |

- a. da'drɒ u i 'drwɔm di 'ɔmi *Castellazzo Bormida*
there CLS CLoc sleeps some men
- b. da'drɒ i 'drwɔmu dir maz'nai
there CLS sleep some boys
- a. me 'tʃamma i 'mie a'migi *Fontanigorda*
me calls the my friends
- b. i me 'tʃammu 'l atri
CLS me call the others
- a. a s ɛ a'pɛrtə 'd̥ ufo *Ortonovo*
CLS.F itself is opened the door.M
d̥ ɛ və'nu i 'biŋ
CLS is come the children
- b. i s ɛ a'pɛrtə 'd̥ ufo
CLS.M itself is opened the door.M
ʃ ɛm və'nu i 'biŋ
CLS are come the children

Our interpretation of the data in (46) is supported by the observation that in contexts favoring a nonspecific reading of indefinites, such as existentials, agreement is indeed ruled out, as illustrated by the contrast between (47a) and (47b). Existential contexts can also be used to rule out the possibility that agreement with the postverbal definite subject, as in (47c), depends on it being a Topic:

- (47) (ki 'g ɛ ?) *Modena*
(who there is?)
- a. a 'g ɛ di ra'ga:s
CLS there is some boys
- b. *i 'g e:n di ra'ga:s
CLS there are some boys
- c. i 'g e:ŋ ki ra'ga:s
CLS there are those boys

As before, we expect the typology illustrated here with subject clitic dialects of the core Northern Italian type to be found in null-subject varieties as well. Indeed, at least some of the dialects of the northern Marche allow for both agreement and disagreement with the postverbal subject. In (48) the (a) examples illustrate agreement with the preverbal subject, and the (b) and (c) examples, disagreement and agreement, respectively, with the postverbal subject:

- (48) a. i bor'dei 'vɛŋgne/'dɔrmne 'dɔp *Monteguiduccio*
the children come /sleep afterward
el bor'del 'dɔrmne/'vjen 'dɔp
the child comes/sleeps afterward
- b. dla 'dɔrmne i bor'dei
there sleeps the children
dɔp 'vjen i bor'dei
afterward comes the children

- c. dla 'dormne i bor'dei
 there sleep the children
 dop 'vengne i bor'dei
 afterward come the children

As far as the definiteness effects considered so far are concerned, they provide an argument in favor of the idea that agreement may depend on the the properties of the attractee, in this case the associate, instead of on the properties of the attractor, in this case the nominal inflections of the sentence. Remember that according to the agreement parameter developed here, lack of agreement in Num between the associate and the verbal and nominal inflections reflects agreement with respect to the predication N feature only; full agreement depends on the sharing of all features with referential import.

Consider then the dialects in (44)–(45). Descriptively speaking, whether the associate is definite or indefinite, agreement can be of the referential type; however, only if the associate is indefinite can it also be of the predication kind. It is natural to relate this difference to the different internal structure of definite and indefinite DPs. We can assume that D represents in any event the head of the DP; however, it is associated with different interpretive properties in the two cases. In terms of the present theory of features (as categories), this cannot simply depend on the presence in D of a two-valued feature $\pm$ definite, with -definite the default value. On the contrary, we can discriminate between definites and indefinites, assuming that D in all cases corresponds essentially to the variable that satisfies the R role of the Noun (as well as an aspectual role of the verb). Definites are then characterized by the presence of an individual variable whose value is typically assigned by a definite D; indefinites are characterized by the presence of a true variable, whose value is assigned by a quantification of some sort.

With this much background we can now propose that in dialects of the type in (44)–(45), agreement in all features that have referential import (including Person, Number, and Gender) is restricted to cases in which the D head of the associate does in fact have individual denotation (i.e., to definites), as in (49a). On the contrary, when the D head of the associate does not correspond to a definite individual (or set of individuals), dialects of the type in (44)–(45) lexicalize agreement with respect to the N feature only, corresponding to the predicate content of the associate itself, as in (49b):

- (49) a. [IP OR - drommini . . . [VP $\Theta_{R-R-ZOS}$ pittsinnozo . . . Siniscola
 sleep the children
 b. [IP OR - drommiti . . . [VP Θ_{R-R-D} pittsinnozo . . .
 sleeps children

Consider next the dialects in (46)–(48), which are characterized by a considerable amount of surface optionality, in that indefinite associates do not agree in Num but definite associates appear to be able to agree or not. The fact that N-type agreement (i.e., agreement with respect to the predicate N property) is possible with any kind of associate does not require any enrichment of the theory already given in section 2.3. It is simply a parametric choice of these dialects that the sharing of the aspectual feature can be lexicalized by agreement with respect to the predicative

Italian dialects as well. Her data relating to Friulan-type dialects, in which the subject clitic agrees with the associate, indicate that control of an adjunct is possible. On the contrary, data for the Padova and Belluno dialects would show that in non-agreeing expletive constructions, control of the adjunct by the associate is not possible (Cardinaletti 1997:528). However, this type of data is not replicated by our survey; thus Northern Italian dialects which lack agreement of the associate systematically allow for control into the adverbial, as illustrated in (53).

- (53) I e 'ju di ra'gass 'sēnsa 'dirmel Modena
CLS has come some boys without telling.me
 I e v'nu i mi fi'ul 'çēncs 'di 'nī:t Alfonsine
CLS has come the my children without telling.me anything
 ε 'ny i me fi'øi 'çençə 'dirəm 'ne:nt Revere
CLS has come the my children without telling.me anything
 ε 'ny di py'tlet a zu'gar
CLS has come some children to play

What is more, the possibility of control of an adjunct sentence by the associate in a nonagreeing expletive construction also characterizes null-subject varieties, such as, for instance, the Sardinian ones illustrated in (54). Incidentally, these dialects normally present the same distribution of *have* and *be* auxiliaries as Standard Italian, with *be* for unaccusatives and *have* for the other verbal forms; nevertheless they switch to auxiliary *have* in nonagreeing expletive constructions with indefinites (Savoia and Manzini forthcoming and references quoted there). Since this latter choice of auxiliary is observed in (54) as well, we can confidently exclude the possibility that the postverbal subject is construed as topicalized or in any other way independently capable of explaining its ability to control the adverbial.

- (54) qui a βe'niu pittʃok'keddʒuzə 'sentsa də mmi 'nai 'nuɖɖa Orroli
here has come children without of me tell anything
 a'ð enniu βittʃok'keddʒɔzə 'sentsa mi ddu 'narreðe Ardaùli
has come children without me it tell

Thus it appears that the constraint in (51) for French is to be studied in a different context from that suggested by Cardinaletti 1997 and Chomsky 1995. Not surprisingly, the same conclusion is implicit in the revision of the theory of agreement by Chomsky 1998.

It is worth noticing briefly that though Cardinaletti 1997 concurs with Chomsky 1995 on the conclusion that the associate raises only in languages where it agrees with the verb in all features, she arrives at a different formulation of the relevant parameter. Remember that according to Chomsky 1995, raising of the associate in English, with consequent verb-associate agreement, depends on the fact that the expletive *there* lacks features; on the contrary, *il* has such features in French, so that the associate does not raise and does not determine agreement. Cardinaletti 1997 notices that this generalization is invalidated by German, among other languages, since German expletive *es* does have ϕ -features but German expletive constructions have agreement of the verb with the associate. As an alternative Cardinaletti (1997:526) proposes that "those expletives that are unambiguously marked as nom-

inative trigger agreement with the verb"; on the contrary, expletives not unambiguously marked for nominative require the raising of the associate, which thus determines agreement with the verb. In fact, French *il* is unambiguously nominative, whereas German *es* is both nominative and accusative.

There are general reasons to doubt the theoretical status of the notion of abstract Case crucially involved in Cardinaletti's generalization (Manzini and Savoia 1998c and references quoted there); indeed, precisely because a form like *es* is morphologically not specified for case, its disambiguation can refer only to a notion of abstract Case. Nevertheless, it is interesting to consider whether there is any truth to the descriptive generalization itself. Our data concerning Northern Italian dialects undermine the empirical basis of this generalization. In particular, in some dialects the expletive takes a third-person singular form ambiguous between subject and object uses; however, it is still the expletive and not the associate that triggers agreement with the verb. This is true both in dialects where the expletive takes the masculine form, such as Casaccia (Alpine Lombardy), and in dialects where the expletive is feminine, such as Càsola (northern Tuscany), as shown in (55). The (a) examples illustrate the form of the subject clitic in preverbal subject constructions, the (b) examples illustrate its form in expletive-associate constructions, while the (c) examples illustrate the form of the object clitic.

- (55) a. (la ni'nina) la 'dorm /la 'veŋ Càsola
 (the little.girl) CLS sleeps/CLS comes
 (i ni'niŋ) i 'dormənə /i 'veŋnənə
 (the children) CLS sleeps /CLS comes
- b. dop la 'veŋ i ni'niŋ
 afterward CLS comes the children
 ndə kl əs'tantsa la gə 'dorm i ni'niŋ
 in that room CLS there sleeps the children
- c. i la 'laonə
 CLS her wash
- a. (al ba'gai) al 'veŋ 'dɔpo Casaccia
 (the child) CLS comes afterward
 (i ba'gai) i 'veŋan 'dɔpo
 the children CLS come afterward
- b. al 'veŋ i ba'gai
 CLS come the children
- c. al 'fa:-t?
 it do-you

3. Theoretical conclusions

The preceding discussion makes it clear that the theoretical interest of morphosyntactic variation in Italian dialects goes far beyond the precise definition of the parameters involved. Indeed, while remaining within the broad conceptual framework of Minimalism, we have made several proposals concerning Universal Grammar. These are worth summarizing briefly. To begin with, our discussion of

the null-subject parameter in section 1 has led us to part from the theory of Chomsky 1995, 1998 in two major respects: first, there is a set of nominal inflections (D, etc.) in addition to the verbal inflection I. Second, the nominal inflections attract an aspectual feature which contributes an argumental interpretation to it according to the model of Manzini and Roussou 1999; as a consequence of this, there is no need for an empty category *pro*, responsible for this same argumental interpretation. The null-subject parameter itself reduces to whether the D/EPP feature is lexicalized by a D head (subject clitic languages), by a DP (non-null-subject languages), or by the verb (null-subject languages).

In section 2 we introduced several innovations with respect to the theory of agreement. In our system, agreement of the verb with the preverbal subject is a by-product of the attraction of an aspectual feature by several positions, typically I and D. We consider it highly significant that our theory forces us to an analysis of expletive-associate constructions alternative to Chomsky's (1995, 1998). As we have amply motivated in section 2, Chomsky's 1995 theory, based on the agreement properties of the expletive, faces at least one major empirical problem. For, even limiting ourselves to traditional expletive constructions, the disagreement of the verbal and nominal inflections with the associate never involves N vs. P features and is instead limited to Num (and Gender) features. This implies, in movement terms, that the associate always raises, since the match of N/P features can be guaranteed only by movement.

In our system, the agreement of the associate is triggered not by the ϕ -features of I, but by the fact that nominal features in general attract aspectual features. By definition, in expletive contexts only an aspectual feature already associated with an argument is available. This aspectual feature being shared by the argument itself and by the inflectional positions determines their agreement in all features (Friulan dialects). The other value of the agreement parameter (typical Northern Italian dialects) depends on the possibility for agreement to involve just the predication N properties of the associate. In general, for Chomsky 1995, 1998, ϕ -features are one of the motors of syntactic derivations. In the present system, on the contrary, agreement is not treated as a motor of the derivation but rather as a reflex of derivations that happen independently of it. In other words, agreement has a status analogous to that of Case, which does not drive derivations, but provides a morphological realization for their product. This result seems to us intuitively correct and conceptually desirable, providing indirect support for our overall analysis.

The status of agreement in turn has wider consequences for the theory of grammar. According to Chomsky 1995, 1998, noninterpretable features act as probes for interpretable counterparts; indeed, being noninterpretable, they must be deleted before the derivation reaches the LF interface. This system is crucially modeled on the deletion of the noninterpretable ϕ -features of I by the interpretable features of DP, which yields subject-verb agreement. If our alternative construal of agreement is correct, however, this piece of empirical motivation for the system no longer stands.

As already emphasized, in our alternative model, nominal features attract aspectual features and agreement is just a reflex of the sharing of the same aspectual feature by several nominal positions. As pointed out in Manzini and Roussou 1999,

we can maintain terminological consistency with Chomsky 1995 by assuming that every D is associated with a noninterpretable aspectual feature, which needs to be deleted by an interpretable aspectual feature originating with the lexical verb. Nevertheless, from an empirical point of view this appears to be entirely equivalent to saying that two interpretable features (i.e., D and OR/MEAS) must be matched in a local configuration. If the two theories are empirically equivalent, it seems to us that simplicity considerations favor the one with the fewer assumptions, hence in this case the direct matching of two interpretable features, which does not require the extra notational richness associated with a noninterpretable aspectual feature on D. The general conclusion that the grammar contains only interpretable features has in fact been argued for in the literature (Brody 1997).

The last set of theoretical consequences that we wish to highlight concerns the theory of parameterization. While remaining within the bounds of the hypothesis that parameters concern lexical items or features, two broad models of parameterization have been developed within Principles and Parameters theory. The leading model in the Government and Binding framework has remained the one articulated by Rizzi (1982), precisely in connection with the null-subject parameter. In this model, which we may call *macroparametric* (Baker 1996), one parametric choice typically has consequences that involve a set of syntactic constructs. Within such a model it is possible to think that there is a limited number of parametric choices in Universal Grammar and that each parametric choice contributes a large chunk of the syntax specific to a given language. Such a model predicts a type of variation not unlike that envisaged outside the generative framework by typological studies.

The alternative approach, which can be termed *microparametric*, predicts on the contrary that each parameter has strictly local consequences; these strictly local parameters vary independently of one another and combine freely, up to Universal Grammar, giving rise to fine surface parametrization. Empirical investigation into the morphosyntax of Italian dialects both concerning the syntax of the subject and other domains (Manzini and Savoia, forthcoming) crucially supports this microparametric view. Though the view appears to be dominant in the Minimalist conception of Chomsky 1995, it had earlier proponents as well. In particular, Manzini and Wexler (1987) stress that microparametrization is actually what one might expect on learnability grounds. As already pointed out, in a microparametric model, each parameter is strictly local and independent of other equally local parameters; this means that the parameter can be decided on inspection of strictly local evidence, and without reference to the setting of any other parameter.

The characterization of the microparametric view can be sharpened beyond what may appear to be no more than common sense⁸ on the basis of the specific proposals advanced here on the null-subject parameter. Under the present view, not only is the structure underlying natural languages universal (cf. Cinque 1999), but so are the derivations resulting from the (universal) attraction properties of the various categories. The strictly local and independent character of the parameters derives from the fact that they effectively reduce to lexicalization choices.

Notes

This work is a result of the collaboration of the two authors in all respects. Nevertheless, Leonardo Savoia takes responsibility for the first part of the chapter, through section 2.1, and Rita Manzini for the second part, from section 2.2 onward. Both authors take responsibility for the theoretical conclusions in section 3.

1. The proposal of a D category will be modified below in section 2.2.
2. Needless to say, once A-movement is abandoned in favor of feature attraction, the same conclusion is forced, if at all possible, for other types of movement. This result cannot be argued for within this chapter, but all we say is compatible with it. In particular, the head-movement notation employed throughout is compatible with a reading under which the head is merged in the position where it surfaces, say the I position for the finite verb, and the relevant feature of its lower 'copy,' in V for the verb, is attracted by it. In line with what we have seen so far, this latter feature could also be seen as related to the argumental structure of the predicate; in particular it could be identified with the event argument, *e*, of Higginbotham 1985.
3. A principled problem for all discussions of the null-subject parameter is implicit in our discussion of the Colfosco dialect, where we indicated that the first- and second- person plural forms are effectively null subject. Note that the same problem arises in a large number of Northern Italian dialects, which do not present the extra complications of the Colfosco one. Space limitations prevent us from delving deeper into this matter in the present chapter, except for noting that a lexical approach to parametrization yields a particularly flexible instrument for dealing with cases like this one. Indeed there is no special problem involved within the present framework in claiming that a dialect like Colfosco simply lacks lexicalization for the D position (or for the P position in terms of the more articulated structure developed in section 2.2) in correspondence of the first- and second-person plural.
4. Rizzi (1986) tests the nature of the position occupied by the preverbal lexical subject in null-subject languages by taking into consideration the behavior of quantified DPs, in particular negative ones. The basic idea is that negative quantifiers and the like are incompatible with Topichood because of their intrinsic properties; therefore, if they occur in the preverbal subject position of null-subject languages, the latter must be the subject position proper, rather than a Topic. In particular Rizzi (1986) points to a contrast between Standard Italian examples such as (i) and (ii), where in his judgment the focalization in (i) is well-formed, while the topicalization (Clitic Left Dislocation, or CLLD) in (ii) is not:

- (i) Nessuno ho visto. Italian
nobody I.have seen
- (ii) Nessuno l'ho visto al cinema.
nobody him.I.have seen at.the cinema

In fact, it seems to us that by changing the pragmatic context (for instance, adding a separate focus), sentences of the type exemplified in (ii) become acceptable with CLLD, as in (iii); the same is true if the negative quantifier is given a specific reading, as in (iv):

- (iii) Qui nessuno l'ho mai visto vestirsi così. Italian
Here nobody him.I.have ever seen dress.himself like.this
- (iv) Nessuno (di questi) l'ho mai visto al cinema.
nobody of these him.I.have ever seen at.the cinema

As for subject clitic languages, Poletto (1993) concludes that preverbal lexical subjects doubled by a subject clitic are indeed in Topic position, since the doubling by a subject clitic is excluded in the case of negative quantifiers, at least in the central Veneto dialects she considers. A look at our data reveals that overall, Northern Italian dialects allow for two possibilities. On the one hand, negative quantifiers and the like can be doubled by a differentiated subject clitic as in (v); on the other hand, they can be immediately followed by the expletive (eventually a zero one) found in expletive-associate constructions as in (vi). The two possibilities actually alternate in the same dialect, as in (vii), showing that the choice is not parametric in nature:

- (v) ni'sun al 'veg Grizzo
nobody CLS comes
 ne'gy:ŋ ai m'mapdʒe Premana
nobody CLS eat

	ni'feun i m 'tʃema <i>nobody CLS me call</i>	S.Mauro Pascoli
	niŋ al 'maɲdʒa <i>nobody CLS eats</i>	Felizzano
	ni'gynne al 'meɲdʒe <i>nobody CLS eats</i>	Villa di Chiavenna
(vi)	de'guɲ a dor'mi <i>nobody has slept</i>	Andràz
	ni'suɲ me 'tʃame <i>nobody me calls</i>	Chioggia
	niŋ'cyɲ a 'maɲa <i>nobody CLS eats</i>	Revere
	ki ni'fɲiɲ 'maɲdʒa <i>here nobody eats</i>	Fontanigorda
	'ɲyɲ ɛ 'vint <i>nobody CLS comes</i>	Mezzenile
(vii)	ni'suɲ i 'maɲa <i>nobody CLS eat</i>	Stienta
	ni'suɲ a 'maɲa <i>nobody CLS eats</i>	

Examples of the type in (vi) in fact suggest an analysis under which the quantified DP is focused rather than topicalized, binding a variable in the same position in which we would find a postverbal lexical subject in expletive-associate constructions. But the cases in (v) suggest a topicalization analysis which in the terms of the discussion of (iii)–(iv) turns out to be equally unproblematic.

5. An analogous generalization is reached by Rouveret (1994) on the basis of Welsh data.

6. The anonymous reviewer for this volume suggests that French does in fact have expletive-associate constructions with a definite associate, and that such constructions do allow for first- and second-person pronouns, as in (i):

(i)	Il n'est venu que moi/toi <i>it not.is come that me/you</i> 'Only I/you came'	French
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For the argument in the text to go through, this example will have to be dismissed in some way as irrelevant. The basic problem seems to us to be that the structure of such an example is far from clear; the presence of the complementizer *que* to introduce the pronoun even suggests that two sentences may be involved (cf. Donati 1998 on phrasal comparatives). If this latter idea is on the right track, then it is not clear on inspection what the focus position occupied by the pronoun is, given the presence of massive deletion. In short, further work is needed to establish (i) as a bona fide counterargument to our line of discussion.

7. It is one of the recurrent claims of the treatment proposed here that 'resumptive clitic,' 'clitic doubling,' and expletive constructions are just three different ways in which the same phenomenon of sharing of one aspectual feature by an inflectional D position and a DP argument can be realized. One potential problem is created by the apparent asymmetry between the case in which the DP argument precedes the D inflection and the opposite case; thus in all of the examples seen so far, a DP agrees in all features with an inflectional D element that follows it ('resumptive clitic'), while there can be or not be agreement in the reverse case ('clitic doubling' and 'expletive,' respectively). This asymmetry does not extend to all examples even of the range of languages considered here, as shown by the following French example pointed out to us by the anonymous reviewer:

Des linguistes il en est venu beaucoup. <i>of.the linguists it of.them is come many</i> 'Many linguists came'	French
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Therefore the pattern that seems to emerge from the body of the text will have to be treated as an artifact of the particular type of data considered. This conclusion is consistent with evidence that N-type

agreement (excluding Number) can characterize not only VSO languages (e.g., Welsh, cf. Rouveret 1994), but also SVO languages (e.g., the Belfast dialect of English described by Henry 1995).

8. In the words of the anonymous reviewer, "the common-sense—and Joosian—view that languages can vary along all sorts of unpredictably independent dimensions."

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