

## 5 Proclitic vs enclitic pronouns in northern Italian dialects and the null-subject parameter

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### 1. Introduction

Since the seminal work by Brandi and Cordin (1981; 1989), Burzio (1986) and Rizzi (1986), the unstressed subject pronouns of northern Italian dialects (NIDs) have been considered (clitic) heads different from, for example, their French preverbal counterparts, which are considered maximal projections, namely ‘phonological clitics’ (Kayne 1983) or ‘weak pronouns’ (Cardinaletti and Starke 1999).<sup>1</sup> As these clitic forms have been considered to be realizations of Infl (or, in minimalist terms, T’s  $\phi$ -/D-features), NIDs have consequently been analysed as Null-Subject Languages (NSLs) on a par with Italian. Differently from Italian, however, subject clitics are needed (in some persons of the paradigm) to enrich Infl in order to license *pro*. More recent works, such as Poletto (2000; 2005a), Gorla (2004) and Roberts (in press), have essentially continued this type of analysis.

Language-internal, cross-linguistic, diachronic and neurolinguistic data have led us to reconsider the status of NIDs as NSLs. We claim that NIDs are not full *pro*-drop languages. They allow *pro* only in some persons of the paradigm, trivially those in which no clitic pronoun appears. In the other persons, the clitic pronoun is the true subject, and no *pro* occurs. For subject clitics we assume essentially the same analysis adopted for object clitics since Kayne (1975). Among other things, this novel approach allows us to analyse the different distribution of subject pronouns in proclisis and enclisis without resorting to the ‘two-paradigm’ hypothesis. We show that subject clitics compete with null subjects, and that competition is resolved in an intricate way across sentence types (and across dialects). This analysis of subject clitics raises a number of questions with regard to the properties of NSLs: the relationship between rich inflection and *pro*, the lack

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was presented in preliminary versions at the 25th *GLOW Colloquium*, Amsterdam, 9–11 April 2002, at the *Conference on Null Subjects and Parametric Variation*, Reykjavik, 18–19 July 2003, at the Third Workshop on *The Null-Subject Parameter and Related Issues*, University of Cambridge, 15 December 2003, and at the *First Cambridge Italian Dialect Syntax Meeting*, April 2006. We thank the audiences for questions and comments, and Paolo Chinellato and one anonymous reviewer for comments and criticism on a previous draft.

of overt expletives and the existence of subject inversion phenomena. Our analysis also shows that NIDs instantiate another type of NSL not discussed in Holmberg (2005). Using Holmberg's terminology, NIDs are neither consistent NSLs (Italian), nor partial NSLs (Finnish, Brazilian Portuguese, Hebrew). Since they are a subtype of consistent NSLs, we call them *non-consistent* NSLs.

## 2. The analysis of subject clitics

In most NIDs, subject clitic pronouns appear in preverbal position in declarative sentences (cf. 1a) and in postverbal position in (root) interrogatives (cf. 1b). The following is a typical paradigm ('to drink') taken from the dialect of Donceto, an Emilian dialect spoken in the province of Piacenza:<sup>2</sup>

1 a	(ə)-	'be:v	b	'be:v	-jə
	ət-	'be:v		'be:v	-ət
	əl-	'be:və		'be:və	-l
	(ə)-	bu'vum		bu'vum	-jə
	(ə)-	bu'vi		bu'vi:	-v
	i-	'be:vən		'be:vən	-jə

There are reasons to believe that the optional preverbal schwa in the 1sg., 1pl. and 2pl. is not a subject clitic, but the default realization of a clausal functional head (Cardinaletti and Repetti 2004). Whatever the analysis of this element, it is uncontroversial that when nothing appears in front of the verb, the subject is null. A sentence containing, for example, a 1sg. verb should be analysed as in (2), where *pro* occurs in SpecTP like overt weak pronouns:<sup>3</sup>

2 [TP *pro* be:v ... [VP ~~pro~~-be:v ]]

We follow Holmberg (2005) in assuming that what allows a null subject of the Italian type is an uninterpretable D feature on T, which must be valued by *pro*. We take Donceto T in (2) to be as in Italian: 1sg., 1pl. and 2pl. T has a D feature valued by *pro*.<sup>4</sup> In the 2sg., 3sg. and 3pl., we do not assume the current structure in (3), in which *pro* occurs in addition to the clitic:

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all data reported in this study are from field research. The patterns found in the Emilian dialects of Donceto and Gazzoli are common throughout Emilia-Romagna (see Repetti, to appear, and references quoted there).

<sup>3</sup> On the proposal that *pro* is a weak pronoun in SpecTP, see Cardinaletti (1997), Cardinaletti and Starke (1999: §3.4). We differ from Kayne (2001: 206f.), who assumes that 1st and 2nd person agreement suffixes are pronouns, and that no *pro* is present in these persons. NIDs like Donceto offer evidence that this cannot be true: if verbal endings were incorporated subjects, what are 1st and 2nd person enclitic pronouns in interrogatives (e.g. *bu'vum-jə?*) in (1b)?

<sup>4</sup> Holmberg (2005) points out that in the minimalist framework, the *pro*-licensing analysis can no longer be assumed. If functional heads have uninterpretable features that must be valued by categories with the corresponding interpretable features (Chomsky 2001), it is *pro* itself that values the uninterpretable features of T.

3 [TP pro  $\text{\scriptsize \textcircled{t}}$  be:v ... [VP  $\text{\scriptsize \textcircled{t}}$  be:v ]]

Instead, we take the subject clitic pronoun to be the true subject of the clause. In a derivational approach to clitic placement (Kayne 1975), a sentence containing, for example, a 2sg. verb can be represented as follows:<sup>5</sup>

4 [XP  $\text{\scriptsize \textcircled{t}}$  be:v [TP  $\text{\scriptsize \textcircled{t}}$  be:v ... [VP  $\text{\scriptsize \textcircled{t}}$  be:v ]]]

As in the case of object clitics, subject clitic movement is decomposed into XP-movement followed by head-movement (Sportiche 1989; Cardinaletti and Starke 1999; Belletti 1999). From the derivation it follows that clitic pronouns occupy a higher position than weak pronouns.<sup>6</sup> If weak subjects occur in SpecTP (2), clitic subjects must adjoin to a functional head higher than T, which we call X in (4). Following current proposals (see Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008) for a very recent discussion), we take person and number features to be encoded in clausal heads. As shown by the clitic doubling structure in (5), where the order is ‘full subject – clitic subject’, XP (PersonP) is located between TP and SubjP (i.e. the projection hosting full subjects; Cardinaletti 1997; 2004). These projections build the ‘subject-field’:<sup>7</sup>

5 [SubjP ly / l ɔm [XP  $\text{\scriptsize \textcircled{t}}$  be:və [TP...  $\text{\scriptsize \textcircled{t}}$  veŋ ]]]  
he / the-man scl.3sg.= drinks the wine  
‘He/the man drinks the wine’

Extending Roberts’ (in press) analysis of object clitics to subject clitics, cliticization is triggered by Agree. X contains the unvalued versions of the  $\phi$ -features that make up the subject clitic. The clitic incorporates into X to value its  $\phi$ -features. If Roberts (in press) is correct in assuming that clitic pronouns cannot incorporate into heads with an EPP feature, and if T has an EPP feature universally (Chomsky 1995; Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 1998: 518), it follows that T cannot qualify as the incorporation host for subject clitics.<sup>8</sup> From a typological perspective, languages with subject clitics activate the head X of the subject field, whereas the presence of EPP on T requires that the derivation

<sup>5</sup> Our proposal is not entirely novel. Kayne (2001: 207) also suggests that 3rd person clitics do not co-occur with pro.

<sup>6</sup> This is clearly shown by object pronouns. The Italian 3pl. dative clitic *gli* is higher than weak *loro*:

- |   |   |              |                                  |               |
|---|---|--------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| i | a | Maria        | ha dato loro                     | un libro loro |
|   |   | Mary         | has given to-them                | a book        |
|   | b | Maria gli    | ha dato gli                      | un libro gli  |
|   |   | Mary to-him= | has given                        | a book        |
|   |   |              | ‘Mary has given them/him a book’ |               |

<sup>7</sup> See Belletti (1999: 556) for the analysis of subject clitic doubling in terms of the big DP hypothesis. This is compatible with the derivational analysis of subject clitics assumed here.

<sup>8</sup> Gorla (2004: 96f.) discusses several arguments against Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou’s (1998) and Manzini and Savoia’s (2005) idea that subject clitics are EPP checkers.

proceed as in (4), where the clitic first moves to SpecTP as a maximal projection.<sup>9</sup> Roberts' proposal, in turn, implies that the XP projection does not have an EPP feature, a desirable result, since it would be unclear what would fill SpecXP in the presence of a subject clitic (expletive pro?). Lack of EPP on X, in turn, excludes *pro* as a possible goal for X.

On a par with T, X has V-features and attracts the finite verb. Following a proposal by Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008: 10), X-probing is activated by T-raising, that is, T cannot probe  $\phi$ -features unless it has joined X. Subject clitics end up in the same head as the verb, which explains: (i) their proclitic position; (ii) the traditional observation that clitics need a host; (iii) the empirical observation that nothing can intervene between subject clitics and the verb (apart from other clitics, which must have attached to the verb before T-to-X).<sup>10</sup>

In the following sections, we provide evidence for the proposal that NIDs are non-consistent NSLs and, consequently, that subject clitics cannot be analysed as inflectional morphology or elements realizing inflectional heads, but must be analysed as pronouns on a par with their object counterparts.

### 3. Language internal evidence: proclisis vs enclisis

As shown in (1), in interrogatives a pronoun appears also in those persons (1sg., 1pl. and 2pl.) that do not require one in declaratives. In the licensing theory of *pro*, this is surprising: why can a 1sg., 1pl. and 2pl. Infl license *pro* by itself in declaratives, but a subject clitic is needed in interrogatives? If clitics are taken to realize Infl and license null subjects, this is unexpected: the properties of Infl should not change from declarative to interrogative sentences. The same problem arises in more recent minimalist accounts. If what makes a language an NSL is a D feature on T (Holmberg 2005), Donceto 1sg., 1pl. and 2pl. T has such a feature: why should it lose it in interrogative sentences? To account for these cases, two series of subject clitics have been assumed: one for declaratives and one for interrogatives. We call this the *two-paradigm hypothesis*. This hypothesis has been phrased in various ways. The postverbal material has been analysed either as a separate paradigm from the preverbal series (Poletto 1993: 216; Munaro 1999: 11, 19) or as verbal affixes (Benincà and Vanelli 1982:

<sup>9</sup> By saying that incorporation is the most economical way of probing a head, Roberts (in press) implies the existence of Minimize Structure (cf. Cardinaletti and Starke 1999: §7).

<sup>10</sup> In declaratives, enclisis is prevented by cycle considerations. Furthermore, an enclitic would intervene between the verb and the probe head (cf. note 14). Proclisis in declaratives is not immediately explained by the traditional proposal that subject clitics realize (features of) Infl, given that V-to-T (left-adjunction, Kayne 1994) predicts the order 'verb – subject clitic'. A way of dealing with this issue is to assume that subject clitics realize functional heads higher than the landing site of the verb (Poletto 2000; Manzini and Savoia 2005) or that subject clitics are D heads adjoined to T (Goria 2004: 70).

17–18; Benincà 1983: 31; Fava 1993: 2496; Poletto 2000: 55; Gorla 2004: 215; Roberts in press). See Cardinaletti and Repetti (in press) for discussion.

We claim that these hypotheses are not necessary and that a single-series hypothesis can be assumed instead. The subject clitics used in proclisis and enclisis are one and the same lexical item, as can be seen in the 2sg., 3sg. and 3pl., where they are present both in declaratives and interrogatives with the same lexical form. In (6), we list the underlying forms that we assume for Donceto (see Cardinaletti and Repetti in press for the phonological account of the surface forms, which can be different in proclisis and enclisis depending on (morpho-)phonological constraints active in the language):<sup>11</sup>

6 Proclitic subject pronouns	Enclitic subject pronouns
-	i
t	v
l	i

In the 1sg., 1pl. and 2pl., subject clitics only occur in interrogatives, while in declaratives *pro* is found. In these persons, clitic subjects compete with null subjects. In the following sections, we discuss how the 1sg., 1pl. and 2pl. subject is chosen in the two sentence types: *pro* in declaratives, and an enclitic in interrogatives.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.1. *Clitic pronouns vs pro: clitic pronouns in interrogatives*

A 2sg., 3sg. and 3pl. clitic subject is found in both declaratives and interrogatives. To account for enclisis in interrogatives, we assume that the verb moves to a head preceding the subject clitic, which we call Y. Verb-movement is motivated by the need to check the inflectional [*wh*] feature on the verb (Rizzi 1996) against the Y head.<sup>13</sup> Verb-movement to Y followed by cliticization to X produces the verb-clitic order. We illustrate the derivation for the 2sg.:<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For phonological evidence against the status of enclitic material as inflectional affixes, see Cardinaletti and Repetti (in press). Similar restrictions hold on proclitics. While in Donceto, /*tr*/ is an acceptable onset cluster, [*tri*] ‘three’, proclitic /*t*/ cannot form part of a complex onset: /*t*/ + /*ronf*/ > \*[*t-rō*]:f] ‘you.sg. snore’, but must be syllabified as a separate syllable: [ə*t* *rō*]:f].

<sup>12</sup> An anonymous reviewer suggests that we can account for (6) in terms of optional PF realization of particular  $\phi$ -features: in the persons missing in declaratives, there would be ‘silent’ subject clitics. We cannot adopt this proposal since, as shown in Cardinaletti (2002), silent object clitics do not exist (see also, this volume, Manzini and Savoia, and Savoia and Manzini). The null hypothesis is to assume the same for subject clitics.

<sup>13</sup> Y is a head of the Infl layer. For arguments against verb-movement to C, see Cardinaletti and Repetti (2004). The [*wh*] feature does not have a morphological realization in Donceto, nor does it in other NIDs and Italian (see Rizzi 1996: 66) for languages where it is morphologically realized).

<sup>14</sup> In (7), the verb cannot adjoin to the clitic in X and raise with it to Y because the clitic would intervene between the verb and the probe head (see Belletti (1999: 550ff.) for a similar remark on object cliticization in Italian). This also holds for (9a). See Kayne (1989b) for the proposal that verb and enclitics are not in one and the same head.

7 [Y<sub>P</sub> be:<sub>V</sub> [X<sub>P</sub> *ət* be:<sub>V</sub> [T<sub>P</sub> *ət* be:<sub>V</sub> ... [V<sub>P</sub> *ət* be:<sub>V</sub> ]]]

In the 1sg., 1pl. and 2pl., things are different. As we have seen in (4) for the 1sg., declaratives contain the weak subject *pro* (cf. 8a) and cannot contain the clitic pronoun *i* (cf. 8b). In interrogatives, the clitic *i* becomes possible, surfacing as *jə* (cf. 1b), while *pro* is not possible (cf. 9a vs 9b):

8 a [T<sub>P</sub> *pro* be:<sub>V</sub> ... [V<sub>P</sub> *ɸ* be:<sub>V</sub> ]]

b \* [X<sub>P</sub> *i* [T<sub>P</sub> *i* be:<sub>V</sub> ... [V<sub>P</sub> *i* be:<sub>V</sub> ]]]

9 a [Y<sub>P</sub> be:<sub>V</sub> [X<sub>P</sub> *i* be:<sub>V</sub> [T<sub>P</sub> *i* be:<sub>V</sub> ... [V<sub>P</sub> *i* be:<sub>V</sub> ]]]]

b \* [Y<sub>P</sub> be:<sub>V</sub> [X<sub>P</sub> be:<sub>V</sub> [T<sub>P</sub> *pro* be:<sub>V</sub> ... [V<sub>P</sub> *ɸ* be:<sub>V</sub> ]]]]

The Donceto paradigm shows the correlation between the scope of verb-movement and the occurrence of clitic pronouns. If the verb does not raise to a head higher than T, as in (8), a clitic pronoun, which is the goal for the higher head X, is impossible (cf. 8b). Verb-movement to Y to check the interrogative feature (cf. 9a) activates X, and the structure with the clitic pronoun becomes possible. Not only is a clitic possible, it must be used. Once X is activated, it cannot remain unvalued, or the derivation crashes (cf. 9b).<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion, the competition between *pro* and clitic pronouns is a consequence of the syntactic derivation and in particular of the scope of verb-movement. The occurrence of enclitic 1sg., 1pl. and 2pl. subjects in interrogatives can thus be explained without resorting to the two-paradigm hypothesis.

### 3.2. *Clitic pronouns vs pro: pro in declaratives*

A welcome consequence of the analysis is that we can explain why in declaratives some persons are *pro*-drop (1sg., 1pl., 2pl.), while the other persons display a proclitic pronoun. We suggest that the correlation between the occurrence of subject clitics and verb-movement is the answer here too. When a proclitic pronoun occurs (2sg., 3sg., 3pl.), the finite verb moves to a higher head (X in (4)) than it does in those persons that display *pro* (1sg., 1pl., 2pl.). In (10a), we reproduce the derivation seen in (4). (10b) shows that the derivation crashes if a clitic pronoun does not value X; this explains the lack of *pro* in these cases (cf. interrogative sentences in (9b)). (10) should be compared with (8). In (8a) *pro* is allowed by Minimize Structure because it is the smallest available

<sup>15</sup> In Donceto and other NIDs, interrogative sentences can also be formed without T-to-Y. In this case, no enclitics appear, and the same structure is found as in declaratives: (2) and (4), respectively, in the two sets of persons.

structure: the clitic is independently ruled out by the lack of verb-movement to X (cf. 8b):

10 2sg., 3sg., 3pl.:

- a [XP ət be:V [TP ət be:V ... [VP ət be:V ]]]  
 b \*[XP be:V [TP pro be:V ... [VP *pro* be:V ]]]

In conclusion, Donceto is a non-consistent NSL: *pro* is allowed in those persons where the verb sits in T (1sg., 1pl., 2pl.). If the verb moves to a higher head (2sg., 3sg., 3pl.), a clitic pronoun becomes possible. In these persons, the language happens to be non-*pro*-drop. In interrogatives, the verb raises to a head higher than T for independent reasons, which makes a clitic pronoun the preferred option in the entire paradigm. Many NIDs display the same patterns as the Donceto dialect discussed here, and the same analysis can be extended to those NIDs. Other NIDs are minimally different from Donceto, in that different persons are *pro*-drop. The data are, however, not random, and many generalizations hold (Renzi and Vanelli 1983) that are consistent with, and in fact predicted by, the approach suggested in this paper (cf. Cardinaletti and Repetti in press).<sup>16</sup>

### 3.3. Competition between subject and object clitics

Fiorentino and Trentino (Brandi and Cordin 1989: 112), Donceto (cf. 11a) and Gazzoli (cf. 11b), as well as many other dialects, allow 3rd person subject clitics to co-occur with 3rd person object clitics:

- 11 a əl            lə    dizə  
     b ɔ̃            lə    dizə  
     scl.3sg.m.= it=    says  
     ‘He says it’

This is not the case in all dialects, however. In Venetian, only *pro* can co-occur with 3rd person object clitics (Paolo Chinellato, p.c.):<sup>17</sup>

- 12 a [XP El                            magna]  
     scl.3sg.m.= eats  
     ‘He eats’

<sup>16</sup> Evidence from different sources suggests that X should be decomposed into different person heads, serialized as 1sg./1pl. > 2pl. > 3pl. > 3sg. > 2sg. Read from bottom up, it expresses the implications on the persons that cross-linguistically display subject clitics (Cardinaletti and Repetti in press). Language variation in the occurrence of subject proclitics reduces to the well-known cross-linguistic variation in (overt) verb-movement (a similar variation is found with subject enclitics; cf. §4).

<sup>17</sup> The symbol [°] indicates the pronunciation of /l/ as semivocalic (so-called ‘*l evanescente*’). See Roberts (1993b) and Manzini and Savoia (2005, II: §4.6) for the same restriction in other NIDs.

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- b \* [<sub>XP</sub> El [<sup>°</sup>o] magna]  
 he= it= eats
- c [<sub>TP</sub> pro [<sup>°</sup>o] magna]  
 pro it= eats  
 'He eats it'

Since a subject clitic is independently ruled out by the presence of the object clitic (cf. 12b), weak *pro* becomes the smallest possible pronoun and is permitted (cf. 12c). These examples show that the existence of subject clitics in the language does not exclude the occurrence of *pro*. In Venetian, T has a D feature, like consistent NSLs, but *pro* may fail to occur (cf. 12a), since the numeration with a subject clitic is more economical (see note 9), though it implies the projection of X, as we have seen.

#### 4. Cross-linguistic evidence

Once subject clitics are correctly identified, there is remarkable similarity in their lexical forms across dialects. For instance, the Donceto forms in (6) are nearly identical to the Paduan forms in (13):

13 Proclitic subject pronouns	Enclitic subject pronouns
- -	i i
t -	t o
l i	l i ~ li

The pronominal forms are much more uniform across dialects than verbal morphology (as can be seen comparing the paradigms in (16) below), which supports the proposal that subject clitics are not Infl elements. Not only are clitic forms nearly identical across the NIDs, but they also have a remarkably similar distribution in the verbal paradigm, as pointed out by Renzi and Vanelli's (1983) 'Generalization 9':<sup>18</sup>

- 14 *If interrogative sentences are formed via subject-inversion* [namely, via V-movement to Y; A.C. and L.R.],
- (i) the number of enclitic pronouns found in interrogative sentences is equal to or greater than the number of proclitic pronouns in declarative sentences, and
  - (ii) the subject pronouns found in proclitic position are also found in enclitic position.

This is clearly illustrated in Donceto in (1). If enclitic elements were not pronouns but inflectional morphology or a different series of subject clitics (see §3), there would be no way to account for (14): we might expect fully regular

<sup>18</sup> Manzini and Savoia (2005, I: §3.6) discuss what they analyse as exceptions to this generalization.



paradigms (e.g. enclitic pronouns are always obligatory), or enclitic paradigms with arbitrary differences with respect to the proclitic paradigms, something that is not found across languages.

In §3 we provided a syntactic analysis of the distribution of clitic and null pronouns in the paradigm. Since the occurrence of enclitics depends on the scope of verb-movement, it is predicted that in enclisis the same pronouns are found as in proclisis or more (but not fewer). The former situation arises when in the persons without proclitics, interrogatives are obtained without verb-movement to Y, a possibility also found in some dialects in the persons that display proclitics (see note 15). The latter is due to verb-movement in interrogatives: pronouns of certain persons become available that are not found in declaratives. In dialects like *Donceto*, verb-movement to Y can take place in all persons, and enclitics are found throughout. In other dialects such as *Veronese*, verb-movement to Y does not take place in 1sg. and 1pl., where *pro* is found as in declarative sentences, but does take place in the 2pl. in addition to 2sg., 3sg., 3pl.; as a result, we find one more clitic in enclisis than in proclisis. Given the serialization of clitic heads seen in note 16, (14) reduces to the well-known language variation in (overt) verb-movement (see *Cardinaletti and Repetti in press*).

## 5. Diachronic evidence

Our discussion is also supported by diachronic considerations. As pointed out by *Vanelli (1987)* and *Poletto (1995; 2005a)*, in the 2sg., 3sg. and 3pl., Renaissance NIDs displayed weak pronouns and not Infl elements. In other words, the Renaissance varieties were not *pro-drop* in these persons (whereas they were *pro-drop* in the 1sg., 1pl. and 2pl., as they are nowadays).<sup>19</sup> Language change has thus occurred in the usual direction depicted in (15): Latin strong pronouns gave rise to weak pronouns (those attested in the Renaissance period), which turned into clitic pronouns in the modern varieties:

15 2sg., 3sg., 3pl.: strong > weak > clitic

There is no evidence to hypothesize that subject clitics have further evolved into affixes, as the analysis of subject proclitics as Infl elements implies and the analysis of subject enclitics as inflectional morphology explicitly states.<sup>20</sup> This, in turn, means that the 2sg., 3sg. and 3pl. have *not* changed from non-*pro-drop* (Renaissance) to *pro-drop* forms (modern varieties), as is instead implied by previous analyses and explicitly stated in *Poletto (2005a: 185)*.

<sup>19</sup> We disregard here the complication represented by embedded *wh*-clauses (*Poletto 2005a*), since in this context some non-NSLs like French also allow *pro*.

<sup>20</sup> However, there are cases in NIDs in which object enclitics are reanalysed as inflectional suffixes (*Loporcaro 2006*).

## 6. Neurolinguistic evidence

Neurolinguistic data also support our proposals (cf. Chinellato 2004 and references quoted therein, and Chinellato 2006). The forms produced by aphasic patients speaking Veneto dialects display a dissociation between verbal morphemes and subject clitics. Some patients have no problems with verbal agreement morphology, yet they do not produce subject clitics. If subject clitics were the realization of Infl, as assumed in previous works, we would not expect such differences in pathological productions. Furthermore, both proclitic and enclitic subjects (in declaratives and interrogatives, respectively) are damaged. If the two clitic elements were realizations of different paradigms or series of pronouns, we might expect a different behaviour, something that is not found in aphasic patients: subject clitics are damaged in both syntactic contexts. Finally, aphasic patients have problems with both subject and object clitics. If subject clitics were the realization of Infl, while object clitics were true clitic pronouns, we would need two different explanations for the two cases.

Assuming, as we claim, that subject and object clitics are one and the same syntactic entity, we can understand Chinellato's data by saying that aphasic patients have a deficit with the specific derivation of clitic pronouns and, in particular, with the head-movement step. Instead of clitics, they use either strong pronouns or *pro*, or else 'invent' overt weak forms like *elo* and *eo* 'he' by adding the support element *e* to the Schio and Venetian clitics *lo* and *o*, respectively (Chinellato 2003: 38f.).<sup>21</sup> Minimize Structure is again at work: if clitic pronouns are independently excluded, weak or strong pronouns are the smallest possible structures and are ruled in.

## 7. Considerations concerning the null-subject parameter

In this section we discuss some properties of NSLs to assess whether the behaviour of NIDs confirms the hypothesis that they are non-consistent NSLs. We mention some differences with Italian, without, however, providing a full account of them.

### 7.1. *The correlation with rich inflection*

It is widely observed that NSLs have rich agreement (Taraldsen 1978), although the exact characterization of this property is far from trivial (cf. Jaeggli and Safir 1989). The cross-linguistic variation observed in NIDs with regard to which persons are realized by *pro* or by a clitic (Renzi and Vanelli 1983) cannot be easily explained by the rich-agreement hypothesis. Different dialects may have

<sup>21</sup> For support morphemes, see Cardinaletti and Starke (1999: 193f.).

different verb paradigms, but the same distribution of null and clitic pronouns. In Bellunese (cf. 16a; Nicola Munaro, p.c.) and other Veneto dialects (e.g. Conegliano, Saccon 1993: 95), the distribution of proclitic pronouns seems to correlate with the poverty of inflection: subject clitics occur in the three persons of the paradigm that have the same verbal form (*magna*). This fact is, however, not replicated in Paduan (cf. 16b; Benincà and Vanelli 1982) and Donceto (cf. 16c): proclitic pronouns appear in the same three persons of the paradigm, while two or all three verbal forms are morphologically distinct: *magni*, *magna* and *læiv*, *læivə*, *læivən*, respectively.<sup>22</sup>

16	a Bellunese	b Paduan	c Donceto
	magne	magno	læiv
	te magna	te magni	ət læiv
	al magna	el magna	əl læivə
	magnon	magnemo	la'vum
	magné	magné	la'væ
	i magna	i magna	i 'læivən
	'I, you, etc. eat'	'I, you, etc. eat'	'I, you, etc. wash'

As discussed in §3 above, the cross-linguistic variation observed with respect to the persons of the paradigm realized by pro or clitic pronouns can be explained via the interaction of clitic- and verb-movement. Verb-movement to X is motivated by a rather abstract property that does not necessarily have a morphological reflex in verbal inflection.

## 7.2. Overt expletives

NSLs lack overt expletives. With weather predicates, postverbal subjects and extraposed clauses, pro occurs in Italian (cf. 17), while English (and French) displays overt expletives:

17	a	pro/	*Esso	piove		
		pro	it	rains		
				'It is raining'		
	b	pro /	*Esso	sono	arrivati	due uomini
		pro	it	are	arrived	two men
				'There arrived two men'		
	c	pro /	*Esso	è	chiaro	che ha ragione
		pro	it	is	clear	that he-has reason
				'It is clear that he is right'		

Non-referential subjects (non-arguments and quasi-arguments; Chomsky 1981) are restricted to SpecTP, where they check the uninterpretable features

<sup>22</sup> See Renzi and Vanelli (1983: §1.2.1) for the same observation for other dialects.

of T. Since they cannot qualify as ‘subjects of predication’, non-referential subjects cannot raise to SpecSubjP. The overt weak subject *esso*, which occurs in SpecSubjP, is excluded from non-referential usages (Cardinaletti 1997). Since English and French are non-NSLs, the overt counterparts of non-referential *pro* occur in SpecTP, and no violation is produced.<sup>23</sup>

- 18 a Italian [SubjP [TP *pro* piove]]  
 b Italian \*[SubjP *esso* [TP *esso* piove]]  
 c English [SubjP [TP it is raining]]  
 d French [SubjP [TP *il* pleut]]

Some NIDs display overt expletives. Consider the following data from the dialect of Trepalle (SO; Manzini and Savoia 2005, I: 174):

- 19 a **Al** plof  
 scl.3m.sg.= rains  
 ‘It is raining’  
 b Dopo **al** vegn i marcin  
 later scl.3m.sg.= comes the children  
 ‘The children are coming later’  
 c **Al** sarò megl klamel  
 scl.3m.sg.= will-be better call.inf.=him  
 ‘It will be better to call him’

If NIDs were full pro-drop languages, it would be unclear why they differ from Italian in this respect. In the licensing theory of *pro*, it is surprising that overt clitic expletives are necessary to license non-referential *pro*. The proposal that NIDs are non-consistently pro-drop makes the occurrence of overt expletives less mysterious: if no 3sg. *pro* occurs, it is the overt 3sg. clitic that is used as an expletive, as happens with 3sg. weak pronouns in non-NSLs like English and French.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Referential subjects occur in either position, depending on their syntactic status: weak subjects occur in SpecTP and full subjects in SpecSubjP (Cardinaletti 1997; 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Another instance of non-referential subjects is impersonal (quasi-existential) subjects. Italian (i.a) differs from English (i.b) and French (i.c) also in this respect:

- i a In quel negozio, *pro* / \*essi mi hanno venduto un vecchio libro  
 b In that shop, they have sold me an old book  
 c Dans ce magasin, ils m’ont vendu un vieux livre

As shown for Gazzoli, a 3pl. clitic is present in this case too:

- ii [In kula butiga la, i m an vendi:d əl paŋ vetS]  
 in that shop there they me= have sold the bread old  
 ‘In that shop they sold me stale bread’

In expletive usages, other NIDs, here exemplified by Chioggia (VE), display *pro* (Manzini and Savoia 2005, I: 179):<sup>25</sup>

- 20 a *pro piove*  
       *pro rains*  
       ‘It rains’
- b *pro vien i fioi*  
       *pro comes the children*  
       ‘There come the children’
- c *pro ze meglio ciamarlo*  
       *pro is better call.inf.=him*  
       ‘It is better to call him’

These NIDs look like a particular type of partial NSL, like German and Icelandic, in which expletive *pro* is possible (Rögnvaldsson 1984; Grewendorf 1989; Cardinaletti 1994). Partial NSLs display a poorly understood variation in the distribution of overt and null expletives: German only allows null non-arguments, Icelandic both null non-arguments and quasi-arguments. Similarly, NIDs display much variation in the occurrence of null and overt expletives in the relevant constructions (Manzini and Savoia 2005, I: §2.6–7). We believe that the comparison between NIDs and partial NSLs is fruitful and should be pursued to understand the observed cross-linguistic variation.

### 7.3. *Subject-inversion phenomena*

Free subject-inversion correlates with *pro*-drop (Rizzi 1982). If NIDs are non-consistent *pro*-drop languages, as claimed here, we expect inversion phenomena to be different from those attested in NSLs like Italian. This is indeed what is found: not all possibilities attested in Italian exist in NIDs.

7.3.1. *Italian free inversion vs restricted inversion in NIDs* Italian allows (definite, focalized) postverbal subjects with all verbs:

- 21 a *È arrivato Gianni*  
       *is arrived Gianni*  
       ‘Gianni has arrived’
- b *Ha parlato Gianni*  
       *has spoken Gianni*  
       ‘Gianni has spoken’

<sup>25</sup> Donceto is like Chioggia in that weather predicates do not occur with overt expletives: (\*ə) *pjθivə*. They can, however, optionally occur with schwa: (ə) *pjθivə*. This element is the realization of a clausal head like the optional schwa found in (1a).

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- c L' ha detto Gianni  
it= has said Gianni  
'Gianni said it'
- d Ha detto questo Gianni  
has said this Gianni  
'Gianni said this'

In NIDs, subject-inversion is possible with unaccusative and many intransitive verbs, but seems to be more restricted with transitive verbs. As discussed by Brandi and Cordin (1981; 1989) for Fiorentino (22a) and Trentino (22b), postverbal subjects are possible with unaccusatives (*venire* 'to come') and unergatives (*telefonare* 'to telephone'). The subject does not agree with the verb, and a non-agreeing subject clitic may be present, as in Fiorentino (22a):

- 22 a Gli è venuto / ha telefonato delle ragazze / la Maria  
scl= is come / has telephoned some girls / the Maria
- b È vegnù / Ha telefonà qualche putela / la Maria  
is come / has telephoned some girl / the Maria  
'Some girls/Maria have/has come/telephoned'

In a detailed study of postverbal subjects, Saccon (1993) replicated these results in the Venetan dialect, Conegliano. Postverbal subjects can occur with unaccusatives (cf. 23a) and unergatives with locative arguments (cf. 23b). They are not found with other unergatives (cf. 23b') and transitive verbs with full objects (cf. 23c vs 23d):

- 23 a El è riva la Maria  
scl.3m.sg.=is arrived the Maria  
'Maria has arrived'  
(Saccon 1993: 96)
- b El a dormist un bocia, in sto let  
scl.3m.sg.=has slept a kid in this bed  
'A child has been sleeping in this bed'  
(Saccon 1993: 210)
- b' \*El a ridest la Maria, al cinema  
scl.3m.sg.=has laughed the Maria, at-the cinema  
'Maria laughed at the cinema'  
(Saccon 1993: 211)
- c I fiori, li a portadi la Maria  
the flowers, them= has brought the Maria  
'Maria brought the flowers'  
(Saccon 1993: 104)
- d \*Me ha scrit un poema la Maria  
to-me=has written a poem the Maria  
'Maria wrote me a poem'  
(Saccon 1993: 223)

Bellunese (Nicola Munaro p.c.) and Venetian (Paolo Chinellato p.c.) exhibit similar restrictions. In order for the subject of transitive verbs to be focalized, a different structure (a cleft sentence) is used.

With transitive verbs (cf. 21d), the VOS order is obtained via object scrambling across the subject in SpecVP:<sup>26</sup>

24 [TP<sub>pro<sub>expl</sub></sub> ha [A<sub>sp</sub>P detto [Z<sub>P</sub>questo [V<sub>P</sub>Gianni detto-questo]]]]

(23d) shows that non-consistent pro-drop languages do not allow for this possibility. No such restriction exists in Italian varieties which do not display subject clitics and which are consistent NSLs, like Standard Italian and the central Italian variety spoken in the area of Ancona.

7.3.3. *Marginalization* In the so-called marginalization construction (Antinucci and Cinque 1977), Italian displays another type of postverbal subject: a destressed subject following a focalized item, such as the verb in (25) (capitals indicate the syllable with main sentential stress):

25 Non ha ancora telefonato Gianni  
not has yet called Gianni  
'Gianni hasn't called yet'

If marginalized subjects occur in SpecVP (Cardinaletti 2001; 2002), marginalization must also be taken to correlate with full pro-drop:

26 [TP *pro<sub>expl</sub>* non ha ... [A<sub>sp</sub>P telefonato [V<sub>P</sub> Gianni telefonato]]]

DP subjects in *wh*-questions are also marginalized. This possibility is not available in non-consistent pro-drop languages (Cardinaletti 2002: 53 n. 23). In Fiorentino, for instance, lack of subject-verb agreement is possible with postverbal subjects in declaratives (cf. 22a), but not in *wh*-questions (cf. 27a), where the subject always agrees in number (and gender) with the verb and the clitic (cf. 27b–c) (see Brandi and Cordin 1981 for Fiorentino and Trentino). In (27b–c), the subject is right-dislocated (Belletti 2004a: 40):

- 27 a \*Icché gl' ha portato, la Maria?  
what scl.3m.sg.= has brought the Maria
- b Icché l' ha portato, la Maria?  
what scl.3f.sg.= has brought the Maria?  
'What did Maria bring?'
- c Quando l' è venuta, la Maria?  
when scl.3f.sg.= is come, the Maria?  
'When did Maria come?'

Lack of number agreement in both declaratives and interrogatives is instead possible in the Ancona variety of Italian. Focused postverbal subjects (cf. 28a) and marginalized subjects (cf. 28b–c) behave alike:

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- 28 a Questo disegno l' ha fatto quei bambini li  
 this drawing it= has done those children there  
 'Those children did this drawing'
- b L' ha FATTO, i bambini, il disegno  
 it= has done, the children, the drawing  
 'The children did the drawing'
- c Cosa ha FATTO, i bambini?  
 what has done, the children?  
 'What have the children done?'

Although a full description and account of subject inversion in NIDs is still missing, these few examples show that the whole range of possibilities attested in Italian are not found in non-consistent NSLs.

## 8. Conclusions

In this chapter we have suggested that NIDs are non-consistent pro-drop languages. As we have seen in detail for Donceto, declaratives display pro only in some persons of the paradigm and clitic pronouns in the other persons. In interrogatives, the subject is a clitic pronoun throughout. We have accounted for this distribution in terms of the interaction between clitic- and verb-movement. This implies that a 'two-paradigm' hypothesis is not necessary to account for the different distribution of subject clitics in declaratives and interrogatives.

Our proposal has a number of consequences with respect to the properties related to the availability of pro. Firstly, since verb inflection may vary from one NID to the other while the distribution of pro and subject clitics in the paradigm remains constant, NIDs confirm the hypothesis that what allows verb-movement is a rather abstract property that does not necessarily have a morphological reflex in verbal inflection. Secondly, since NIDs are non-consistent pro-drop languages, we expect to find overt expletives, an expectation that is borne out. Finally, the full range of subject-inversion phenomena can be seen as a property that holds for full pro-drop languages like Italian, but not for non-consistent NSLs like NIDs.