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## OUTLINE OF A THEORY OF EXISTENTIALS ON EVIDENCE FROM ROMANCE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper\* outlines a novel theory of existential constructions, as instantiated by e.g. Italian (1a-b):

- (1) a. Ci sono molti gatti  
      'there are many cats'  
      b. Ada ci'ha molti gatti  
          Ada there has many cats  
          'Ada has got many cats'.

In our view, existentials are Union clauses consisting of a noun, which is a predicate, plus an auxiliary. Our proposal will be developed along the following lines: in §1 we first introduce the general theoretical framework. Based on this, in §2 we put forward our hypothesis concerning the structure of existentials. In that section, we will elaborate on Italian data, with special regard to the occurrence in existentials of the clitic proform *ci*, a topic which naturally leads to a discussion of alternative proposals in recent theoretical debate. Finally, in §3 we show that our theory of existentials accounts for the morphosyntactic properties of existential constructions in several Romance varieties.

#### 1.1. *Unions as Multi-Predicate Clauses*

A Union (cf. Davies & Rosen, 1988) is a clause which contains more than one linguistic element bearing predicate relation. A typical instance of Union is presented in (2a) and analysed in (2b)<sup>1</sup>:

- (2) a. Ada è svenuta  
Ada is fainted  
'Ada has fainted'
- b. 2 P  
1 P
- 
- 1 P Cho  
Ada è svenuta

This notion affords the following definition of auxiliary:

- (3) *Auxiliary* (definition):  
An auxiliary is a P which inherits its P-initial 1.

As is apparent from the diagram, in (2b) è 'is' receives its 1 from the preceding P(redicate)-sector (the set of strata in which each element bears the P relation)<sup>2</sup>.

### 1.2. Nominal Unions

A particular case of Union is Nominal Union, a clause in which there is a P-sector where the P relation is borne by a noun. When predicates, nouns are unaccusatives, i.e. they initialize their argument as a 2<sup>3</sup>. What traditional descriptive grammar labels 'object/subject predicative complement' constructions are also instances of Nominal Union (see Rosen, 1987b, 1990). E.g.:

- (4)a. (quando Ugo la accarezza) Eva diventa una gatta  
(when Ugo strokes her) Eve becomes a (she-)cat
- b. 2 P  
1 P
- 
- 2 P Cho  
1 P Cho  
Eva diventa una gatta

Note that **diventare** 'to become' does not qualify as an Aux by the definition in (3), since it does not inherit its 1. Rather, it is a serial predicate (re)initializing its argument as a 2. (See Rosen, 1993). Evidence for the predicate function of **una gatta** in (4) is offered by cliticization:

- (5) a. Eva diventa una gatta  
Eve becomes a (she-)cat
- b. (una gatta) Eva lo/\*la diventa  
(a she-cat) Eve it:msg/it:fsg becomes  
'Eve becomes such'
- (6) a. Eva vede una gatta  
Eve sees a she-cat
- b. (una gatta) Eva la/\*lo vede  
(a she-cat) Eve it:fsg sees

A 3rd person pronominal clitic whose source is a (non-predicative) noun (as the direct object in (6)), carries the number and gender features of its source. On the other hand the 3d person proredicate clitic **lo**, whose source is a predicative noun, always remains uninflected.

### 1.3. Copula as Auxiliary

Consider now (7):

- (7) a. Eva è una gatta  
Eve is a she-cat  
'Eve is a she-cat'
- b. 2 P  
1 P
- 
- 1 P Cho  
Eva è una gatta
- c. (una gatta) Eva lo/\*la è  
(a she-cat) Eve is it:msg  
'Eve is such'.

It follows from the above that (7) is a Nominal Union, in which the initial (unaccusative) predicate **una gatta** (see the cliticization test in (7c)) initializes the argument **Eva** as a 2. The copula è 'is', given (3), is formally defined as an auxiliary. Note that the occurrence of **essere** 'to be' as copula is correctly predicted by the same rule accounting for the distribution of perfective and passive auxiliaries in Italian (see Perlmutter, 1989:81; La Fauci, 1989:240): (The rule is presented here in a maximally simple formulation, which is sufficient, though, for our present purposes).

(8) *Auxiliary Selection in Italian:*

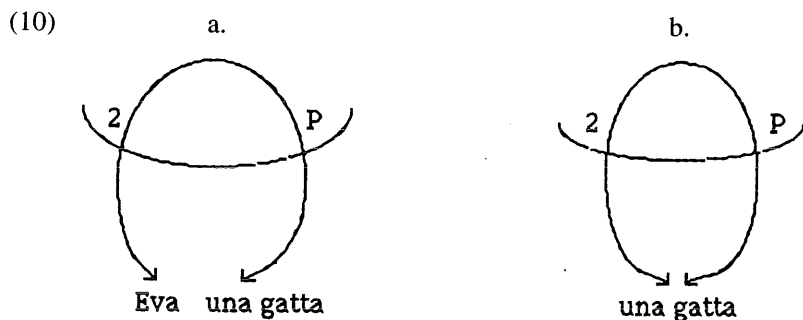
An auxiliary is **essere** 'be' if there is a nominal *a* which is a 1 and has been a 2 in the clause  
It is **avere** 'have' otherwise.

That the copula is an auxiliary, rather than a serial verb, can be shown by means of evidence from participial absolutes. Copulas cannot occur as participial absolutes (9b), like perfective auxiliaries (9a) and unlike serial verbs (9c) (See Rosen 1990 for more detail on the analysis of this construction):

- (9) a. \*stata svenuta, Eva ...  
been fainted:fsg Eve  
b. \*stata una gatta, Eva ...  
been a (she-)cat Eve  
c. diventata una gatta, Eva ...  
become:fsg a cat Eve  
'having become a cat, Eve ...'

1.4. *The Internal Structure of the Nominal*

The representation in (10a) displays the relational network of (7a)'s initial stratum; on the other hand, (10b) represents the internal structure of the nominal **una gatta**, following a proposal by Rosen (1987b):



According to Rosen, the internal structure of a nominal minimally consists of two arcs with the same head: a predicate arc and a nominal arc. The intuition underlying the representational difference between (10a) and (10b) is very simple: in (10a) the property of 'being a cat' is predicated of an inde-

pendent referential nominal, viz. **Eva**, while in (10b) the property of 'being a she-cat' is predicated of **una gatta** itself. In other words, the nominal **una gatta** is here both a referential argument and a predicate. The relational representation in (10b), thus, gives formal expression to a conception traditionally entertained in the logical-philosophical research - but scarcely reflected in (most recent approaches to) linguistic theory - viz. the fact that (common) nouns can both refer and predicate at the same time.<sup>4</sup>

1.5. *Existentials as Auxiliated Nominals*

The projection into clause syntax of (10a) (**Eva**, an argument + **una gatta**, a predicate), in a language such as Italian, entails the appearance of the copula (**Eva è una gatta**, as seen in (7), here repeated as (11)):

- (11) a. Eva è una gatta  
Eve is a she-cat  
'Eve is a she-cat'
- b. 2 P  
1 P  
-----  
1 P Cho  
Eva è una gatta

In a parallel fashion, we propose, the projection into clause syntax of (10b) (**una gatta**, both an argument and a predicate), gives rise to an existential construction<sup>5</sup>:

- (12) a. c'è una gatta  
there is a she-cat
- b. P,2  
2 P,Cho  
1 P,Cho  
-----  
1 P Cho  
D c'è una gatta

(11) and (12) differ not only in the presence vs. absence of an independent argument, but also at the surface, as to the absence vs. presence of the

proform **ci**, and structurally, because (12) is impersonal while (11) is not. Both of these distinctive features are dealt with in the following sections: respectively, the syntactic analysis of the **ci** proform is discussed in §2, and the structure of impersonals in §3.

## 2. THE **CI** PROFORM, AND SOME BASIC PROPERTIES OF (ROMANCE) EXISTENTIALS

Italian **ci** in existentials, as well as its Romance counterparts (French **y**, Catalan **hi**, Sardinian **kke/bbi**, etc.) is the mark signalling that the clause structure consists of an auxiliated noun phrase. In the next sections we will first discuss and reject some alternative analyses of existential **ci** put forward in current theoretical literature, viz. Burzio's (1986) idea that **ci** is a subject (or is bound to subject position) (§2.1), Freeze's (1992) proposal on the relationship between existentials and locative predications (§2.2), and Moro's (1993) idea that existentials are a sub-type of (inverted) copular sentences (§2.3). The refutation does not elaborate on theory-internal arguments: rather, it shows that Burzio's and Moro's claims are founded on unnecessary assumptions, which render their treatments more expensive and less in accord with the data than ours; and, as to Freeze (1992), it simply points to empirical evidence from Italian, crucially disconfirming his claims, to the extent they are non-vacuous. We next provide positive evidence to substantiate our starting claim about the syntactic nature of **ci** (§§2.4-2.5), briefly discussing a recent proposal by Kayne (1993). Finally, §§2.6-8 discuss the question of the relationship between existentials, (im)personality and (in)definiteness, and open up the way for the Romance comparison presented in §3.

### 2.1. *Ci* has Nothing to do with Subject Position

Burzio (1986) argues that Romance proforms like Italian **ci**, French **y**, Piedmontese **ye** (the examples selected there), occurring in existentials, are clitics co-indexed to subject position. The starting observation is that of the alternation between (13a) and (13b), two clauses which - it is argued - share the same underlying structure only differing in linear order at the surface:

- (13) a. molti clienti sono nel negozio  
'many customers are in the store'  
b. ci sono molti clienti nel negozio  
'there are many customers in the store'.

In Burzio's view, (13b) is basic and (13a) is derived via leftward movement of the NP. In the absence of this, the clitic **ci** appears, which is co-indexed with both the pivot NP and the empty category in subject position:

- (14) [<sub>i</sub>e] ci<sub>i</sub> sono molti clienti<sub>i</sub> nel negozio.

Given this co-indexation device, the unacceptability of (15) can be said to follow from a special condition (16), barring structures in which **ci** follows a non-empty category in subject position:

- (15) \*molti clienti<sub>i</sub> ci<sub>i</sub> sono nel negozio  
many customers there are in the store  
(16) \*NP<sub>i</sub> ci<sub>i</sub> ... (where NP<sub>i</sub> is not an *ec*).

While it is true that (15) is unacceptable, this is however not the optimal (i.e. the most elegant, economical and - into the bargain - intuitive) explanation for its unacceptability, as is easily shown by (17):

- (17) molti clienti ci sono  
many customers there are.

Burzio claims that (17) and similar structures are legal, because in those cases **ci** has a locative reading ('many customers are there', viz. 'in the store'), thus escaping condition (16). We may agree on that<sup>6</sup>. It is however difficult to see why the same argument is not to be used in order to explain the unacceptability of (15). In fact, **ci**, as a locative clitic, is subject to the general constraint ruling out any (non-dislocated) sentence in which a clitic co-occurs with its source. The constraint is illustrated by the examples in (18)-(21)<sup>7</sup>:

- (18) a. Ugo è corso a casa  
Ugo is run to home  
'Ugo has rushed home'  
b. (a casa) Ugo ci è corso  
(to home) Ugo there is rushed  
'Ugo has rushed there'  
c. \*Ugo ci è corso a casa  
Ugo there is run to home

- (19) a. Ugo ha visto Maria  
'Ugo has seen Mary'  
b. (Maria) Ugo l'ha vista  
(Mary) Ugo her has seen:fsg  
'Ugo has seen her'  
c. \*Ugo l'ha vista Maria
- (20) a. Ugo divenne ricco  
'Ugo became rich'  
b. (ricco) Ugo lo divenne  
(rich) Ugo became it  
'Ugo became such'  
c. \*Ugo lo divenne ricco  
Ugo it became rich
- (21) a. Ugo è appena arrivato da Cambridge (Mass.)  
Ugo is just back from Cambridge (Mass.)  
b. (da Cambridge, Mass.) Ugo ne è appena arrivato  
(from Cambridge, Mass.) Ugo from-there is just back  
c. \*Ugo ne è appena arrivato da Cambridge (Mass.)  
Ugo from-there is just back from Cambridge (Mass.).

Condition (16), posited on no other ground than the need to rule out (15), becomes devoid of empirical content as soon as it is recognized that the unacceptability of (15) actually follows from an independently needed and more general constraint, namely the one illustrated by (18)-(21). It is important to emphasize that this conclusion follows from Burzio's own correct admission (1986:123) that *ci* in (17) is a locative. There is no reason, hence, for *ci* in (15) not to be a locative just as well, since this perfectly accounts for the unacceptability of the clause. This renders (16) unnecessary: the only argument for *ci* to be co-indexed to subject position is thus lost. More generally, the basic shortcoming of approaches à la Burzio lies in the reversal of the correct perspective: they consider as problematic data the unacceptability of *ci* in (15) - which is only natural - drawing from there the incorrect argument for *ci*-subjecthood. On the contrary, the real problem is rather the *presence* of *ci* in (13b). In fact, in the above we have established an empirical criterion for the identification of locative *ci*:

- (22) *Diagnostics for locative ci*: A clitic *ci* is locative only if it cannot co-occur with its source locative prepositional phrase within the same clause (without intonational breaking, i.e. dislocation)

*Ci* in the existential (13b), however, freely co-occurs with a locative phrase. It cannot then be a locative: it must be something else, as argued in §1.5 above.

## 2.2. Existentials and Locatives: Freeze's (1992) Approach

The diagnostic criterion in (22) clearly shows that when we use the term locative we mean to refer to a positive, observable syntactic property. Our position hence cannot be put on a par with the one taken by Freeze (1992), who invokes an ad hoc category of "a [+LOC] feature in Infl" to explain the presence of locative proforms such as *ci* in Romance existentials like (13b). Freeze's (1992:557) starting hypothesis is that locative predications (such as (13a)) and existentials always share the same syntactic structure, diverging only functionally<sup>8</sup>. The difference is strictly determined by the (in)definiteness of the NP: a definite NP moves to [Spec, IP] (i.e. subject position) at S-structure, yielding a locative predication; an indefinite NP, on the other hand, remains in situ, so that an existential construction is derived.

This is an overly simplistic view, however, and does not account for the data. Italian, in fact, contrary to English or to other Romance varieties such as Spanish or French, allows not only indefinite but also definite NPs to occur in existentials, as in<sup>9</sup>:

- (23) a. *c'è* (la) guerra in Europa  
there is (the) war in Europe  
b. *c'è* (la) neve sui monti  
there is (the) snow on the mountains.

In a cross-linguistic perspective, Freeze (1992) distinguishes two classes of existential constructions: the Romance kind, where a proform (such as Italian *ci*) precedes the copula, and another more widespread construction, which is derived through simple movement to IP of the locative predicate. The latter pattern is exemplified by the Russian clauses in (24a) (existential) and (24b) (locative predication):

- (24) a. *na stole byli* (\*vse) *knigi*  
on table were (all) books  
'there were (\*all the) books on the table'  
b. *(vse) knigi byli na stole*  
(all) books were on table  
'(all) the books were on the table'

To derive this cross-linguistic distinction, Freeze (1992:569) first observes that locative proforms, in the languages where they occur, are always adjacent to the copula or to AGR/TENSE when the copula is not lexicalized. From this he draws the following conclusion:

“The simplest account [...] is that the proform is a spellout of a feature in Infl. The difference between languages with and without existential proforms, then, resides in PF [viz. Phonological Form: NLF-ML]. In languages with proform existentials, the Infl feature [+LOC] is spelled out as the existential proform. In languages without proform existentials, this [+LOC] feature fails to be lexicalized”.

This is however no explanation, rather it is a mere restatement of the starting observational facts, since it does not identify any independent reason for *ci* to appear than the “phonological spellout” of a “[+LOC] feature of Infl”, a feature which in turn is postulated on no evidence other than the occurrence of *ci* itself. Freeze’s proclaimed unification of existentials and locative predications, in the final analysis, is illusory.

### 2.3. Existentials and Copular Sentences: Moro (1993)

The idea that *ci* is a propredicate has recently been elaborated on by Moro (1993). His analysis, developed within the principles and parameters framework, includes a refutation of Burzio’s treatment of *ci*-structures paralleling the one presented above in §2.1. Despite seeming similarities with the analysis advocated here, Moro’s line of argument can by no means be equated with the present one, since its premises are entirely different. The basics of his proposal can be summarized commenting on the data in (25) (from Moro 1993:18-36):

- (25) a.  $[_{IP}[una\ foto\ del\ muro]_i\ fu\ [_{SC}t_i\ [la\ causa\ della\ rivolta]]]$   
a picture of the wall was the cause of the riot  
b.  $[_{IP}[la\ causa\ della\ rivolta]_i\ fu\ [_{SC}[una\ foto\ del\ muro]\ t_i]]]$   
the cause of the riot was a picture of the wall  
c.  $[_{IP}[_{IP}pro[ci\ 'erano]][_{SC}[_{DP}molte\ copie\ del\ libro]\ t_i]][_{PP}nello\ studio]]]$  there were many copies of the books in the office.

The argument nominal (DP) of a canonical copular sentence is represented as raised to [Spec,IP] from the argumental position of a small clause, as shown in (25a). Raising of the predicative, rather than the argumental, DP results in an inverted copular sentence, as in (25b). Existentials are represented as (a special case of) inverted copular sentences: in (25c) *molte*

*copie del libro* is the argument, while the predicative DP position within the small clause is occupied by the trace  $t_i$ , co-indexed with the proform *ci*. The latter is thus the clitic expression of an *abstract* existential predication<sup>10</sup>.

While Moro (1993:62) cleverly recognizes that “Una frase in *there* non è altro che il modo con il quale la sintassi di una lingua naturale costituisce una connessione predicativa a partire da un DP” [a *there*-sentence is nothing but the way in which a natural language’s syntax builds a predicative connection/link out of a DP]<sup>11</sup>, his framework forces him to resort to an ad hoc abstract predicate totally independent from the argument nominal of the small clause, in order to make a sentence out of a DP thus deriving an existential<sup>12</sup>. Actually, in any version of accounts developed within the principles and parameters framework, a nominal must be either argumental or predicative. In spite of the recent blooming of proposals concerning grammatical relations and (nominal) predication within the principles and parameters framework (e.g. Bowers, 1993; Holmberg, 1993), none of these proposals can possibly overcome this limit, which follows from one of the basic tenets of the theory. Given the configurational definition of grammatical relations characteristic of generative grammar, the choice between argumental function (*molte copie del libro* in (25c)) and predicative function (*la causa della rivolta* in (25a-b)) of a nominal falls out from the structural position occupied by the nominal itself<sup>13</sup>.

According to our proposal, in *C’è una gatta* ‘there is a she-cat’ the nominal *gatta* is simultaneously both an argument and a predicate: the nature of existential predication of (12a), thus, follows automatically from its structural representation, rather than having to be assumed independently, as Moro does.

### 2.4. Possessive ‘have’, *ci* Proform and Auxiliary Selection

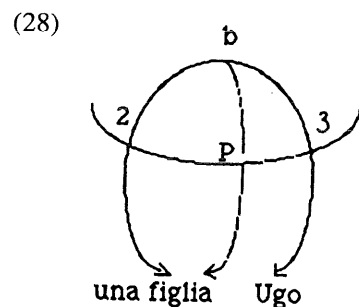
Referring back to the relational networks introduced above in (10a-b), we claim that *ci* is a clitic proform appearing on the auxiliary of a noun predicate which is also an argument. This was shown in (12), here repeated as (26):

- (26) a. *c’è una gatta*  
there is a she-cat  
b.
- |       |            |                  |
|-------|------------|------------------|
|       |            | P,2              |
| 2     |            | P,Cho            |
| 1     |            | P,Cho            |
| ----- |            |                  |
| 1     | P          | Cho              |
| D     | <i>c’è</i> | <i>una gatta</i> |

Existentials are not the only Italian clausal configurations in which an auxiliary is attributed to an argumental noun predicate. As is well known, in fact, in spoken Italian possessive constructions appear as follows<sup>14</sup>:

- (27) a. Ugo ci'ha una figlia in America  
 Ugo there has a daughter in America  
 'Ugo has a daughter in America'  
 b. (la figlia) Ugo ce l'ha in America  
 (the daughter) Ugo there her has in America  
 'Ugo has her in America'.

To the best of our knowledge, no convincing explanation has been offered for the occurrence of *ci* in (27), in spite of the data being mentioned rather often in recent theoretical literature. Freeze's (1992:568) claim, for instance, that *ci* is a 'locative' here, does not mean much in syntactic terms – if 'locative' must have a meaning at all – given the possibility for *ci'ha* to freely co-occur with a locative phrase, as shown in (27b).<sup>15</sup> In our framework, instead, the presence of *ci* in possessives is predicted. In Rosen's (1987b) proposal concerning nominal syntax, whose basics have been summarized in §1.4 above, the valence of a noun also includes an optional indirect object:



The relational network in (28) illustrates the initial stratum of the structural representation of (27), whose entire configuration is the following:

- (29)
- |       |       |            |
|-------|-------|------------|
| 3     |       | P,2        |
| 1     |       | P,2        |
| ----- |       |            |
| 1     | P     | 2          |
| Ugo   | ci'ha | una figlia |

(29) results from the simple projection into clause syntax of the nominal's syntactic structure also including the optional 3-relation. The nominal initialized as a 3 (indirect object) by the nominal predicate is the final 1 (via 3->1 advancement). This is the structure of possessives.

Given the definition in (3), Italian *avere* (possessive 'have') formally qualifies as an auxiliary. Its occurrence is predicted by the independently established rule on auxiliary selection, already given above in (8), since *Ugo*, the final 1, is not a 2 in any stratum<sup>16</sup>. On this auxiliary, which is attributed to a noun predicate which is also referential/argumental, clitic *ci* occurs much like on auxiliary *essere* in existentials.

Our analysis of auxiliary verb distribution, thus, proves capable of accounting for a much wider empirical domain than that of auxiliary selection in perfective verbal periphrastics, for which rule (8) was originally devised.<sup>17</sup> This empirical result, in our view, suggests that it is by far premature to state – as Kayne (1993:3) recently does – that "There is no auxiliary selection rule". Kayne maintains that the 'have'/'be' alternative should instead be predicted by attributing different structural representations to the sentence types in which either of the auxiliaries occurs. More specifically, 'have' is thought of as "identical to 'be' but for the incorporation of an abstract preposition", which is assumed to fill D° position at D-structure in all sentences in which the auxiliary surfaces as 'have'.

The value of this proposal does not transcend the framework in which it is formulated: it aims at modularity,<sup>18</sup> but it obtains modularity effects only at the cost of increasing structural complexity. No such complication is needed, on the other hand, to arrive at a satisfactory account of auxiliary distribution within the framework adopted here. Rules in RG are highly parametrizable, as La Fauci *et al.* (1993) have shown, so that an account of cross-linguistic variation falls out naturally from the multistratal format of syntactic representations, to which the rules refer. These are maximally simple – as abundantly evidenced by rule (8) – and account for the data without requiring any multiplication of (structural) entities: they thus conform to Occam's razor much better than Kayne's proposal.

### 2.5. Contrast vs. Neutralization of *ci/lo* Propredicates in Italo-Romance

Our analysis of existential *ci* is further supported by an interesting parallelism. It is beyond question that the Italian clitic *lo* is used as a pro-predicate. More precisely, as seen in (5b)-(6b) above, it is a non-referential nominal predicate (morphologically, a noun or an adjective) which can be the source of pro-predicate *lo*.

Once we analyze existential **ci** as a proredicate, we are in a position to recognize a striking parallelism between the propredicates **ci** and **lo**, which could not possibly be captured under competing analyses as those discussed in §§2.1-2.4. Consider the contrast instanced in (30a-b):

- (30) a. (una donna) Ada lo è  
(a woman)'Ada is such'  
b. c'è una donna  
'there is a woman'.

The clitics **lo** vs. **ci** are assigned to the auxiliary depending on the [ $\pm$ referential] nature of the source nominal. Of course, an obvious difference between (30a-b) is that the predicate source of **lo** in (30a) may be not only a noun but an adjective as well<sup>19</sup>:

- (31) a. Ada è bella  
'Ada is beautiful'  
b. (bella) Ada lo è  
'(beautiful) Ada is'.

That the same does not hold true for (30b) is only natural, since while an adjective can predicate, it cannot constitute a referential argument on its own:

- (32) \*c'è bella  
there is beautiful:fsg.

In fact, (32) would have no possible interpretation, consisting of a predicate with no argument<sup>20</sup>. The identification of a minimal contrast **ci** vs. **lo** in terms of [ $\pm$ referentiality] in turn provides a straightforward account for an otherwise unrelated fact observed in many dialectal varieties of Italian. For a nominal, it is undoubtedly the positive specification of the feature [ $\pm$ referential] which has to be considered the unmarked choice. Conversely, for a noun to be non-referential is definitely the marked case. It is interesting to observe, in this connection, that most Italo-Romance dialects and standard regional varieties of Italian indeed neutralize the contrast at issue. Predictably, given our premises, it is the clitic morpheme representing the unmarked function (viz. **ci** and its phonetic variants across dialects) which appears in the neutralizing varieties, where it combines both functions – distinguished in Standard Italian – of [+referential] and [-referential]. Some

examples from Romanesco are given in (33)-(34); the diagram (35) schematically represents the markedness relationship between the two related subsystems:

- (33) a. Rosa è 'mbecille forte  
Rose is stupid strong  
'Rose is really stupid'  
b. ('mbecille) Rosa c'è/\*lo è forte  
(stupid) Rose there is/\*it is strong  
'(stupid) Rose really is'

- (34) a. te sse' davvero bbono  
'you are really good-looking'  
b. (bbono) ce se' davvero  
(good-looking) there are:2sg really  
'(good-looking) you really are'

(35)

		- referential +	
a.	Standard	<b>lo</b>	<b>ci</b>
b.	Substandard and dialects	<b>ci</b>	<b>ci</b>

### 2.6. A Preverbal Argument is Never a Predicate

We have so far shown that Italian has both a locative and an existential **ci**. The presence of the latter, as distinct from the former, explains why (13), (27a) or the analogous (36a-b) are not ruled out by condition (22) in spite of **ci** co-occurring with a locative phrase:

- (36) a. ci sono tre macchine in garage  
'there are three cars in the garage'  
b. Ugo ci'ha tre macchine in garage  
'Ugo has three cars in the garage'.

By the same token, however, deriving the unacceptability of (15) or of the similar (37), could now pose some new problems:

- (37) \*tre macchine ci sono in garage  
three cars there are:3pl in garage



We have explained this fact, in §2.1 above, by means of condition (22), barring structures in which a locative *ci* and a locative phrase co-occur. But since we have now posited a distinct existential *ci* as well, we must ask why *ci* in (37) cannot originate from a nominal predicate, as in (36b). If the decision between the existential and locative analyses of *ci* were up to our choice, it would be rather ad hoc to assume that *ci* is locative in (37). The option is however constrained on independent grounds: it is in fact possible to state a general constraint on nominal predication, valid across languages:

(38) *Constraint on Nominal Predication.* A nominal which, in a given language, displays the morphosyntactic properties characterizing the subject in that language (control of finite verb agreement, occurrence in the unmarked subject position) never has a predicative grammatical relation in the clause.

The constraint states the cross-linguistic incompatibility of subjecthood and predicativeness. As for Romance,<sup>21</sup> the extensional validity of the generalization is apparent: in what the traditional grammar of Romance languages labels 'nominal predicates', the noun/adjective which is a predicate never occupies the canonical subject position, i.e. it never precedes the finite verb, be it an auxiliary (including copula) or a serial verb.

That (38) indeed is motivated independently of our starting evidence (concerning the non-existential nature of *ci* in (37)) is shown by some well-known facts about the relationship of linear order and informational structure. The notions of theme (old information, previously introduced into the context) and rheme (new information, which is predicated of the theme) have been becoming increasingly popular in syntactic research. As is well known, in Romance a nominal preceding the predicate in linear order - apart from cleft sentences or dislocated arguments - can never be rhematic (i.e. predicative), the only possibilities being those listed in (39a-c):

- |      |    |                                       |                                  |  |
|------|----|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| (39) | a. | mio fratello<br>theme<br>'my brother' | telefona<br>rheme<br>is phoning' | (context: Che fa mio fratello?)<br>'what is my brother doing?' |
|      | b. | telefona<br>theme                     | mio fratello<br>rheme            | (context: Chi telefona?)<br>'who is phoning?'                  |
|      | c. | telefona<br>rheme                     | mio fratello                     | (context: Che succede?)<br>'what's happening?'                 |
|      | d. | mio fratello<br>*rheme                | telefona                         | (context: Che succede?)<br>'what's happening' <sup>22</sup> .  |

From our generalization (38), in turn based on the syntactic account of predicate/argument relationship so far presented, the impossibility of an informational structure such as the one shown in (39d) follows straightforwardly: a nominal which, due to its morphosyntactic features (syntactic position, finite verb control), can only be an argument and never a predicate, can consequently never predicate any new information about anything else (i.e., it cannot be rhematic). The specific consequence of this for the existential issue is that a preverbal nominal, never being a predicate, never receives an auxiliary. Since the auxiliating of a nominal predicate which is also referential is the condition for existential *ci* to appear on the auxiliary, no existential *ci* can occur in clauses like (37). Hence the *ci* in such clauses must be locative, as previously argued, and the unacceptability of (37) and the like can still be predicted through (22).

### 2.7. Locative vs. Existential *ci*

Once condition (38) is introduced, we can make explicit the structural reason why we agreed (in §2.1) with Burzio on the locative (vs. existential) nature of (17) (or the similar (40a), whose structure is now given in (40b):

- |      |    |                                  |  |   |
|------|----|----------------------------------|--|---|
| (40) | a. | le macchine <i>ci</i> sono       |  |   |
|      | b. | 2                                |  | P |
|      |    | 1                                |  | P |
|      |    | -----                            |  |   |
|      |    | 1                                |  | P |
|      |    | le macchine <i>ci</i> sono [Loc] |  |   |

The argument **le macchine** in (40) cannot be a predicate, since it occurs in the canonical subject position and controls finite verb agreement: thus, the only possible source for *ci* is a latent locative phrase (say, **nel parcheggio** 'in the parking lot'), a claim supported, again, by the unacceptability of (37). There is still another relevant consequence following from the above. As we have seen, the combination of (22) and (38) constrains the structural representations of clauses such as (37) or (40). The same goes for (13a) and (13b), whose structures are here given in (41a-b):

- |      |    |               |      |             |
|------|----|---------------|------|-------------|
| (41) | a. | 2             |      | P           |
|      |    | 1             |      | P           |
|      |    | -----         |      |             |
|      |    | 1             | P    | Cho         |
|      |    | molti clienti | sono | nel negozio |

b.		2	P
		-----	
		P,2	Cho
2		P,Cho	Cho
1		P,Cho	Cho
		-----	
1	P	Cho	Cho
D	ci sono	multi clienti	nel negozio

In both (41a-b) there is a lexical locative. In (41b), unlike in (41a), the nominal fulfils the conditions for existential *ci* to appear: it is postverbal, predicative and argumental. This is why *ci* occurs in (41b). Now, the cancellation of the lexical locative in (41a) would result in a structure like (40), with the appearance of a locative clitic *ci*. But what could possibly be the consequence of the same cancellation in (41b), where a clitic *ci* is independently present? Given that a string like \**ci ci* is not allowed to occur at the surface, the resulting clause (whose structure is given in (42a)) would be empirically undistinguishable from a plain existential, such as (42b):

(42)	a.		2	P
			-----	
			P,2	
	2		P,Cho	
	1		P,Cho	
			-----	
	1	P	Cho	
	D	ci sono	multi clienti	[Loc]
	b.		P,2	
			-----	
	2		P,Cho	
	1		P,Cho	
			-----	
	1	P	Cho	
	D	ci sono	multi clienti	

2.8. Ne-Pronominalization, Existentials and Impersonality

There is another aspect as to which the analysis of existentials presented so far is open to further discussion. A feature shared by the two representations in (42a-b), as well as by all other existentials presented so far, is

that they both are impersonal<sup>23</sup>. However, a personal representation like the one in (43b) would be as well compatible with many of the overt morpho-syntactic features displayed by Italian existentials (selection of auxiliary 'be', finite verb agreement control by the nominal, etc.):

(43)	a.	ci	sono	multi/tutti i clienti
		'there	are	many/all the clients'
	b.			P,2
				P,1
			-----	
			P	1
		ci	sono	multi/tutti i clienti.

Moreover, as shown in (43), not only indefinite but also definite nominals can occur in Italian existentials. This fact has not been taken into account up to this point, as all instances of existentials analyzed so far contained indefinite nominals. Several questions can be raised at this point. It may be asked, first of all, which one of the structural representations (42b) vs. (43b) is to be chosen; and, secondly, whether there is a structural difference between existentials containing a definite vs. indefinite nominal; finally, in case such a difference can be shown to exist, how this relates to the issue of (im)personality. Given the diagnostic criterion introduced so far (i.e. the rule on auxiliary selection in (8)), both representations (42b) and (43b) yield the correct result, viz. selection of *essere*, since in either case there is a nominal in the clause which is a 1 (the final 1) and has been a 2 in a previous stratum. It seems, then, that we are facing another area of underdeterminacy.

This is however not quite so: actually, Italian syntax offers a cue which discriminates between existentials with a definite vs. indefinite argument and strongly suggests that they should be assigned two distinct structural representations. This can be argued basing on some well known (which does not imply well understood, at least in this respect) properties of constructions with *ne*-pronominalization:

(44)	a.	arrivano tre/tanti amici
		'three/many friends arrive'
	b.	(amici) ne arrivano tre/tanti
		'(friends) three of them arrive'
(45)	a.	lavorano tre/tanti operai
		'three/many workers work'

- b. (operai) \*ne lavorano tre/tanti  
(workers) of-them three/many work
- (46) a. arrivano tutti gli/questi amici  
'all/these friends arrive'  
b. (amici) \*ne arrivano tutti/questi  
(friends) of-them arrive all/these
- (47) a. tutti gli/molti amici sono arrivati  
'all the/many friends have arrived'  
b. \*tutti/\*molti ne sono arrivati  
all/many of-them are arrived<sup>24</sup>.

The rule on *ne*-cliticization in Italian, originally proposed by Perlmutter (1983:15), is reported here in the revised version put forward in La Fauci & Loporcaro (1993:184):

- (48) *Partitive ne in Italian:*  
A nominal can be the source of partitive *ne* if it is:  
a. a 2;  
b. not multiattached;  
c. not a final 1.

We will not discuss condition (48b) here, which is not relevant to our present purpose<sup>25</sup>. Condition (48a), which is the part of the *ne*-rule more easily recognized also in other theoretical frameworks, rules out (45b) (unergative), while allowing (44b) (unaccusative). But the rule also contains condition (48c), crucial to our present discussion in that it provides a diagnostic for final 1-hood. Now, combining this condition with the unacceptability of (46b) and (47b), we can build the following argument. It is beyond any reasonable doubt that the preverbal nominal is the final 1 in (47b), whether definite or indefinite (cf. (49a)): consequently, a preverbal nominal cannot be the source of *ne*, given condition (48c). By the same token, we can ascribe the contrast in acceptability between (44b) and (46b), where the nominal occurs postverbally, to the difference in the structural representations of the relevant sources ((49b-c)):

- (49) a. 2 P  
1 P  
molti/tutti gli amici arrivanoo

- b. P 2  
P 1  
arrivano tutti gli/questi amici
- c. P 2  
P 1  
1 P Cho  
D arrivanoo multi amici

In other words, the *ne*-diagnostic tells us that wherever a definite argument occurs, the structure is personal (i.e. it has a non-dummy final subject). Conversely, since only unaccusative clauses with postverbal argument allow *ne*-pronominalization, we have reason to conclude that the pivot is not a final 1 here: rather, the final 1 is a dummy, and the structure is consequently impersonal.

The same can be argued for existentials, given the contrast in acceptability between (50a-b)<sup>26</sup>:

- (50) a. (clienti) ce ne sono molti/tre  
'(customers) there are many/three of them'  
b. (clienti) \*ce ne sono tutti/questi  
(customers) there of-them are all:mpl/three.

The structural analysis, as shown in (51a-b), will therefore differ here too depending on whether the nominal involved is definite:

- (51) a. 2 P  
-----  
P,2 Cho  
P,1 Cho  
-----  
P 1 Cho  
ci sono tutti i clienti nel negozio
- b. 2 P  
-----  
P,2 Cho  
2 P,Cho Cho  
1 P,Cho Cho  
-----  
1 P Cho Cho  
D ci sono molti clienti nel negozio

Note that the unaccusative impersonal (49c) differs from impersonal existentials like (51b) in that the dummy subject enters the structure as a 1 in the former and as a 2, successively advancing to 1, in the latter<sup>27</sup>. This formal contrast has a clear functional correlate. Intuitively, the idea underlying it is that there is a difference in the 'depth' of impersonality. An initially unaccusative construction with an indefinite argument can optionally be turned into an impersonal: this optionality is reflected in the later entry of the dummy and by the fact that unaccusative advancement of the argumental nominal takes place in any case. If, after this advancement has taken place, a dummy subject is introduced, the initial 2 will surface postverbally as a pivot nominal since it is not the final 1<sup>28</sup>. Otherwise it will occur preverbally, giving rise to a personal clause.

On the contrary, the impersonality of an existential with an indefinite argumental/predicative nominal is no optional choice: rather, an indefinite nominal which is both referential and predicative (i.e. a P,2) is obligatorily projected into surface structure by means of an impersonal existential construction. The contrast between unaccusatives and existentials does not hold when the pivot nominal is definite: in this case, impersonality is neither an option nor a must. Rather, it is simply excluded: the definite pivot nominal must be the final 1.

A comparative study of Romance varieties (to be presented in §3) further confirms that the analyses proposed in (51a-b) for Italian existentials can be extended to Romance as a whole. There are in fact Romance varieties in which the twofold structural contrast here proposed, involving existentials with a definite vs. indefinite pivot ((51a-b)) and impersonal existentials vs. unaccusative existentials ((51b) vs. (49b)), is mirrored by more conspicuous empirical correlates.

### 3. A COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT OF ROMANCE EXISTENTIALS

In the preceding sections we have developed a theory of existential constructions as auxiliated nominals. In order to do so we have been discussing theoretical issues such as the internal structure of nominals, nominal unions, the notion 'auxiliary' etc. with reference to Italian data. We have not explicitly addressed Romance morphosyntactic variation thus far. Our claim now is that the analysis outlined above for Italian can be extended, in its basics, to account for Romance as a whole.

In only one case, so far, we have hinted at variation across Romance, when we offered (in §2.5) a principled account of the distribution of [±referential]

proredicate clitics in standard Italian and some substandard varieties. Romance languages, in fact, split into two groups with regard to the choice in propredicative clitic systems, choosing either of the two options shown in (35a-b). French and Logudorese Sardinian are like Italian, in that they contrast a [-referential] propredicate clitic (an outcome of Lat. ILLUM) and a [+referential] one (etymologically a locative clitic, from Lat. IBI):

- (52) a. Léa est jalouse  
 b. Léa l'est/\*y est  
 c. Léa est à la maison  
 d. Léa y est/\*l'est
- (53) a. maria ε̄l̄ fεa                      Logudorese Sardinian  
       'Mary is ugly'  
 b. (fεa) maria lu este/\*bb este  
 c. maria est in dōmo  
       'Mary is at home'  
 d. (in dōmo) maria bb este/\*lu este.

On the contrary, most southern Italian varieties instance the option (35b), displaying the merger of the [±referential] propredicate clitics in the unmarked form 'ci':

- (54) a. maria ε ttʃota                      Northern Calabrian (Cosenza)  
       'Mary is silly'  
 b. (tʃota) maria tʃ ε/\*(l)u ε  
 c. maria ε ddinʃa a kasa  
       'Mary is at home'  
 d. (dinʃa a kasa) maria tʃ ε/\*(l)u ε<sup>29</sup>.

However, Romance morphosyntactic variation in the domain of existentials has much more dramatic aspects. One of these – perhaps the most outstanding – is the cross-linguistic difference in the selection of the verb occurring in existentials: while 'be' is found in Italian, in other Romance varieties it is 'have' that is selected in existentials or, alternatively, either 'be' or 'have' depending on contexts. Given our starting hypothesis that the (final) verbal predicate in existentials is actually an auxiliary, we have to claim that selection of 'have' (or of 'have/be' in complementary distribution, respectively) can be shown to follow from an independently established auxiliary selection rule, which must differ, along some parameter, from the

Italian rule (8). This is a strong claim indeed, and an easy one to put to proof by means of a comparative study of existentials and auxiliary selection in Romance varieties other than Italian.

In the following sections we prove that our claim is actually borne out by the evidence. In §3.1 we discuss a variety of the former kind, viz. French, which has only **avoir** in existentials. In §3.2 we discuss a variety of the latter kind, viz. Logudorese Sardinian, which has either *àere* or *éssere* in complementary distribution. Our account correctly characterizes auxiliary selection in existentials even in varieties differing from Italian in this respect, without any ad hoc assumption having to be added to the explanatory framework introduced so far.

As is well known, a further major difference across Romance in the domain of existentials is generally held to be semantic in nature. Varieties such as French, Spanish or Portuguese display the so-called definiteness effect (henceforth **DE**): i.e. they build existentials exclusively out of indefinite common nouns<sup>30</sup>. On the other hand, varieties such as Standard Italian and most Italo-Romance dialects seem to lack (any overt manifestation of) such a restriction<sup>31</sup>. There is an obvious *prima facie* generalization here: Romance varieties displaying a DE in existentials are the same which form existentials by attributing auxiliary 'have' to the predicate nominal: e.g. French **il y a beaucoup de gens**, Spanish **hay mucha gente** 'there are many people' but \***il y a mes amis**, \***hay mis amigos** vs. Italian **ci sono i miei amici** '(literally) there are my friends'. While the correlation between DE and 'have' selection in existentials has often been focussed on in the theoretical literature, little or no attention was devoted, in this connection, to varieties in whose existentials 'have' and 'be' occur in complementary distribution. In discussing Sardinian data in §3.2, we will show that an interesting correlation holds in this variety between 'have'/'be' selection and the (in)definiteness of the nominal. The Sardinian facts, it will be argued, represent a privileged observational domain and offer a key to develop a syntactic characterization of the so-called DE facts, thus opening up a promising perspective for further research on this specific issue.

### 3.1. French

In the domain of existential constructions, a comparison of French and Italian leads us to observe three major contrasts:

- (55) a. the presence (in French) vs. absence (in Italian) of an expletive pronominal element;

- b. the finite verb form agrees:  
i) with the impersonal expletive subject in French;  
ii) with the pivot (postverbal) nominal in Italian;
- c. the auxiliary is:  
i) 'have' in French;  
ii) 'be' in Italian.

These contrasts are exemplified by:

- (56) a. *il y a deux solutions*  
b. *ci sono due soluzioni*  
'there are two solutions'.

In the theory we have been developing so far, these three contrasts are straightforwardly accounted for without adding any ad hoc consideration. Rather, they follow automatically from independently established general parameters of Relational Grammar:

- (57) a. the silent dummy parameter (Perlmutter, 1983);  
b. the BIL-agreement parameter (Perlmutter, 1983);<sup>32</sup>  
c. the parametric (Romance) rule on auxiliary selection, as established by La Fauci (1988), elaborating on Perlmutter (1978, 1989).

In his theory of personal vs. impersonal constructions, Perlmutter (1983) has proposed the two independent parameters we refer to in (57a-b), which are modularly combined in the languages of the world. In particular, within Romance, the dummy subject is overt (phonetically realized) in non-pro-drop languages (e.g. French), while it is silent in pro-drop languages, such as Italian:

- (58) a. *il pleut*  
b. *piove*  
'it's raining'.

As to finite verb agreement, the contrast between French and Italian is illustrated in (59a-b):

- (59) a. *il est mort trois oies pendant l'hiver*  
b. *sono morte tre oche durante l'inverno*  
'three geese have died during the winter'

c.		P	2
		P	1
	1	P	Cho
-----			
	1	P	Cho
	il	est	mort
	D	sono	morte
			tre oies ...
			tre oche ...

The contrast in (59a-b) follows from a parametric condition. This condition refers to the agreement vs. non-agreement of the finite verb form with the dummy's BIL (i.e. the pivot nominal, put *en chômage* by the dummy). In French the parameter is set on the negative option: whenever a(n) overt dummy is the final subject, it is this dummy which controls finite verb agreement (henceforth, FVF(s) stands for finite verb form(s)). Since the dummy lacks any person/gender features, the verb stays in the unmarked, 3rd singular form. In Italian, on the other hand, the BIL-agreement parameter is set on the positive option. Consequently, finite verb agreement is controlled by the final 1, provided that this is not a dummy; otherwise, it is controlled by the dummy's BIL (the pivot nominal)<sup>33</sup>.

What we have been saying commenting on (57a-b) will have by now made clear that the contrasts observed in the existentials (56a-b) as for these two features (presence vs. absence of an overt dummy subject and FVF agreement) follow naturally from the general tenets of the current relational theory of impersonal constructions. We come back now to our central issue, viz. auxiliary selection. Systematic differences between French and Italian are observed in the domains of passive and copular sentences. In both varieties 'be' is selected as passive auxiliary and as copula, but as far as the perfective auxiliary in these structures is concerned, French has consistently 'have', whereas Italian has 'be' as shown in the following examples:

(60)	a.	Léa a été absoute par le juge			
	b.	Lea è stata assolta dal giudice			
		'L. has been acquitted by the judge'			
c.	2		P		1
	1		P		Cho
-----					
	1	P		Cho	Cho
-----					
	1	P	Cho	Cho	Cho
	Léa	a	été	absoute	par le juge
	Lea	è	stata	assolta	dal giudice

(61)	a.	Léa a toujours été jalouse			
	b.	Lea è sempre stata gelosa			
		'L. has always been jealous'			
	c.	2		P	
		1		P	
-----					
		1	P	Cho	Cho
-----					
		1	P	Cho	Cho
	Léa	a	été	jalouse	
	Lea	è	stata	gelosa.	

Observing this contrast, La Fauci (1989:240) proposes a parametric auxiliary selection rule accounting for both French and Italian data, here presented in (62) with adjustments<sup>34</sup>:

- (62) *Auxiliary Selection in French and Italian:*  
 An auxiliary is **essere/être** 'be' if there is a nominal *a* which is a 1 and has been a 2:  
 a) [Italian] in the clause;  
 b) [French] in the preceding P-sector; and *a* is initialized by the auxiliated PP.  
 It is **avere/avoir** 'have' otherwise.

The final subject Léa/Lea in (60)-(61) is a 2 in the clause, but not in the P-sector preceding that of the perfective auxiliary (i.e. the P-sector of the passive auxiliary, to which the perfective auxiliary is attributed). Consequently, while **essere** is selected in Italian in similar constructions since condition (62a) is satisfied, **avoir**, rather than **être** is selected in French, given that condition (62b) is not satisfied.

The contrast in auxiliary selection observed at the outset for existentials (see (63)) does not escape this generalization. Rather, it is neatly predicted by rule (62), as soon as we extend to French the same structural representation of existentials already proposed in §1.5 above<sup>35</sup>:

(63)			P,2
	2		P,Cho
	1		P,Cho
-----			
	1	P	Cho
	il	y a	deux solutions
	D	ci sono	due soluzioni.

In (63) auxiliary **avoir** is selected since the dummy subject, which is the final 1, in spite of being a 2 in the P-sector of the auxiliated predicate (the predicative nominal **deux solutions**) is not initialized by it.

We have thereby shown that the morphosyntactic properties of French existentials are automatically accounted for by means of general and independent principles referring to several aspects of Romance grammar, without having recourse to any specific assumptions, or to any ad hoc differentiation of syntactic structures<sup>36</sup>.

### 3.2. Logudorese Sardinian

The Sardinian dialect of Bonorva has the following pattern of existential constructions<sup>37</sup>:

- (64) a. b a ppastorez in domo  
there has shepherds in house  
'there are shepherds at home'  
b. b ađ appiđu pastorez in domo  
there has had shepherds in house  
'there have been shepherds at home'
- (65) a. bi zun sos pastorez in domo  
there are:3pl the shepherds in house  
'there are the shepherds at home'  
b. bi zum bistađos sos pastorez in domo  
there are:3pl been:mpl the shepherds in house  
'there have been the shepherds at home'.

The two structural types in (64) and (65) respectively are distinguished by a series of regularly alternating morphosyntactic features. The independent variable determining the whole set of alternations is the (in)definiteness of the pivot nominal. If this is indefinite one gets the pattern in (64), if it is definite, on the other hand, the one in (65). This is an absolute constraint in this variety, as shown by the unacceptability of (66a-b), symmetrical to (64)-(65) as to the (in)definiteness of the nominal<sup>38</sup>:

- (66) a. \*b a ssos pastorez in domo  
there has the shepherds in house  
b. \*bi zum pastorez in domo  
there are:3pl shepherds in house.

There is an important asymmetry in linear order between the two existential patterns in (64)-(65). The position of the nominal relative to the verb is in fact free in the latter, as shown by the acceptability of (67b), whereas it is obliged in the former, as shown by the unacceptability of (67a), the counterpart of (65a) with the nominal in preverbal position<sup>39</sup>:

- (67) a. \*pastorel b ađa  
shepherds there has  
b. sos pastorel bi zunu  
the shepherds there are:3pl  
'the shepherds are there'<sup>40</sup>.

The morphosyntactic features alternating in (64) vs. (65) can be summarized as follows:

- (68) a. auxiliary choice alternation: 'have' vs. 'be' are assigned, both as existentials and as perfective auxiliaries, to (64) vs. (65);  
b. the finite verb does not agree with the nominal in (64), whereas it does in (65);  
c. the past participle does not agree with the nominal in (64), whereas it does in (65);  
d. the nominal obligatory follows the verb in (64), whereas (65a-b) have acceptable counterparts with reverse linear order.

The morphosyntactic features of Bonorvese listed in (68) are by no means peculiar to existentials. Rather, they define a regular contrast in the language between personal vs. impersonal constructions, as seen e.g. in (69)-(70)<sup>41</sup>:

- (69) a. k a bbenniđu đres pastoreze  
here has come three shepherds  
'three shepherds have come here'  
b. ke zum benniđos sos pastoreze  
here are:3pl come the shepherds  
'the shepherds have come here'
- (70) a. \*tres pastores k a bbenniđu  
three shepherds here has come  
b. sos pastores ke zum benniđozo  
'the shepherds have come here'<sup>42</sup>

In La Fauci & Loporcaro (1993) it was shown that the contrasts between (69a-b) follow straightforwardly from the general rules holding in Bonorvese for auxiliary selection, past participle and FVF agreement. It will be now shown that the parallel contrasts obtaining in existentials (64)-(65) also fall within the scope of these independently formulated rules. As to linear order, finally, we will demonstrate that the contrasts (69) vs. (70) and (64)-(65) vs. (67a-b) follow from the general condition on nominal predication stated above in (38).

3.2.1. *Personal vs. Impersonal Unaccusative Constructions*

The representations proposed for (69a-b) are those in (71a-b):

(71)	a.		P	2		Obl
		2	P	Cho		
		1	P	Cho		
		1	P	Cho	Cho	
		D	k a	bbénniðu	ðres pastóreze	Loc
	b.		P	2		Obl
			P	1		
		ke	zum	bénniðos	sos pastóreze	Loc.

The contrast in (im)personality between (71a) and (71b) is obliged, since no possible alternative analysis would account for the morphosyntactic properties of (69a-b). As a consequence, in La Fauci & Loporcaro (1993:§6), where we first tackled the Bonorvese facts<sup>43</sup>, we were led to refine Perlmutter's (1983) account of impersonal vs. personal constructions summarized above in §3.1. In his account, the postverbal position of the nominal is always a sign of the structure's impersonality. However, there is abundant empirical evidence that this is only true of intransitive clauses with an indefinite argument. That is, clauses such as (69b) containing a definite nominal are not impersonal in spite of the nominal following the verb: these is no (silent) dummy, and the nominal is the final 1.

That this is in fact the case is made apparent in French by the so called 'definiteness effect', barring definite nominals from any impersonal, both

unaccusative and existential:

- (72) a. \*il est arrivé Pierre et Marie/mes amis  
 b. \*il y a Pierre et Marie/mes amis.

The unacceptability of (72a-b) follows from the linearization rule of French, which requires that a final 1 be in preverbal position. On the other hand, the nominal argument in (72) must be the final 1, since it is definite<sup>44</sup>. The definiteness effect receives thus a straightforward syntactic explanation in our account. In Italian this effect is evidenced only by the *ne* diagnostic. Italian belongs in fact to the so-called pro-drop languages: there is no overt dummy subject, and the final 1 of an intransitive clause can freely occur in postverbal position. Consider (73a-b), analyzed as (74a-b):

(73)	a.	sono venuti tre pastori				
		are come:mpl three shepherds				
		'three shepherds have come'				
	b.	sono venuti i pastori				
		are come:mpl the shepherds				
		'the shepherds have come'				
(74)	a.		P	2		
		2	P	Cho		
		1	P	Cho		
		1	P	Cho	Cho	
		D	sono	venuti	tre pastori	
	b.		P	2		
			P	1		
		P	Cho	1		
		sono	venuti	i pastori		

Either of the structures (74a-b) is in fact compatible with all further morphosyntactic properties displayed by the clauses (73a-b): in Perlmutter's (1983) analysis, FVF agreement would be accounted for, given the representation in (74a), by the BIL-agreement condition (see above (57b)); given the alternative structural representation in (74b), FVF agreement is still predicted, since the nominal is the final 1. Auxiliary 'be' would be selected under both hypotheses, in compliance with the Italian auxiliary selection rule (8),



since in both (74a) and (74b) the final 1, either the dummy or the nominal, is a 2 in the clause. Likewise past participle (henceforth **PP**) agreement of **venuti** with the nominal **i pastori/tre pastori** would be accounted for under both hypotheses, since in both structures (74a-b) the nominal **i pastori/tre pastori** qualifies as a licensed PP agreement controller, given the Italian rule on PP agreement formulated in La Fauci (1988), here repeated as (75):

(75) *Past Participle Agreement in Italian:*

Let *b* be a clause and *p* a past participle of *b*.

*p* inflects for gender and number if:

- i) the final stratum of the P-sector of *p* is intransitive, and
- ii) a legal agreement controller exists.

A nominal is a legal agreement controller if it is a 2 in *b*.

Under both representations (74b-c), a) the nominal is a 2 in the clause, and b) the PP's P-sector is finally intransitive<sup>45</sup>.

As we said at the outset, Bonorvese, although a pro-drop language just like Italian – and thus lacking the clear correlation, which French displays, between presence of a dummy subject, posposition of the nominal and indefiniteness – offers more felicitous observational conditions than Italian. In fact, along the same lines we have followed for Italian while commenting on (74a-b), one might propose for Bonorvese (69b) the hypothetical analysis in (76), alternative to the one presented above in (71b):

(76)	*		P	2		Obl
			P	1		
		1	P	Cho		
		1	P	Cho	Cho	
		D	ke zum bbénniðos	sos pastóreze	Loc	

However, this analysis is incompatible with the Bonorvese data, since it fails to account for FVF and PP agreement as well as for auxiliary 'be' selection, all of which are observed in (69b).

FVFs in Bonorvese agree with the final 1 (see La Fauci & Loporcaro, 1993:170): *sos pastóreze* is the final 1 under the analysis (71b), whereas it is not under (76), which is then proven to be incorrect. In (76), nevertheless, the nominal *sos pastóreze* is the dummy's BIL: it could consequently be argued that, even given the analysis in (76), FVF agreement with *sos pastóreze* is still predicted by means of the BIL-agreement parameter (57b).

This is impossible though. Bonorvese, in fact, has no BIL-agreement, as shown by the lack of agreement in (69a), where the final subject is a dummy and the nominal *tres pastóreze* (the dummy's BIL) does not control FVF agreement. The Bonorvese evidence, thus, considerably enriches Perlmutter's (1983) comparative picture, by proving that the two parameters (57a-b) (silent vs. overt dummy and presence vs. absence of BIL agreement) are independent of each other:

			dummy (57a)		BIL-agreement (57b)
(77)	a.	overt	absent	absent	French
	b.	silent	absent	present	Bonorvese
	c.	silent	present	absent	Italian

PP agreement in Bonorvese obeys the following rule (originally formulated in La Fauci & Loporcaro 1993:163, here repeated with minor simplifications):

(78) *Past Participle Agreement in Bonorvese:*

Let *b* be a clause and *p* a past participle of *b*.

*p* inflects for gender and number iff:

- i) the final stratum of the P-sector of *p* is intransitive, and
- ii) a legal agreement controller exists.

A nominal is a legal agreement controller iff it:

- a) is the first 2 of *b*, and
- b) is not a *chômeur*.

As is shown by a comparison of (78) and (75), the Bonorvese rule is more restrictive than the Italian one: for a nominal to qualify as a PP agreement controller, in Bonorvese it must be not only a 2, but also the first nominal to bear the 2-relation in the clause, and must not bear the *chômeur* relation. The more restrictive conditions (78iia-b) of the Bonorvese rule rule out PP agreement in (79a), whose structure is given in (79c): (Contrast the Italian counterpart (79b), in which agreement is optionally possible with both nominals)<sup>46</sup>.

(79)	a.	manġedċċa z ađ iskritt/*-a/*-al	đual		litteraza
		M. REFL has written:/fsg:/fpl	two		letters:fpl
		‘Mariangela has written two letters to herself’			
	b.	Maria si è scritta/-e/*-o	due		lettere

	c.	1,3	P	2
		1,2	P	Cho
		1	P	Cho
		1	P	Cho
		manğedđā	z ađ	iskrittū
		Maria	si è	scritta
				Cho
				đual lřtteraza
				due lettere

Given rule (78), neither of the nominals *manğedđā* and *đual lřtteraza* qualifies as a licensed PP agreement controller: the former, although a 2 in the clause,<sup>47</sup> is not the clause's first 2 and consequently does not comply with condition (78iia); the latter, although a 2 as well (and the clause's first 2, into the bargain), is a final *chômeur* and does not thus comply with condition (78iib).

While Bonorvese differs from Italian in lacking PP agreement in (79), it displays PP agreement with the initial 2, just like Italian, in (80a): (Again, the Italian counterpart is given in (80b), and the structural representation of both in (80c)).

(80) a. (đual lřtteraza) *manğedđā* *zi* *laz* *ađ* *iskrittāza/*  
 (two letters:f) M. REFL them: f pl *\*iskrittū/\*iskrittā*  
 has written: f pl  
 written/ written:fsg

(two letters) 'M. has written them to herself'

b. (due lettere) *Maria se le è scritte*

	c.	1,3	P	2
		1,2	P	
		1	P	
		1	P	Cho
		<i>manğedđā</i>	<i>zi laz ađ</i>	<i>iskrittāza</i>
				3fpl

The initial 2 is here represented not by a lexical nominal but rather by an abstract pronominal feature matrix appearing on the verb as a direct object clitic. This feature matrix is the clause's first 2, hence complying with condition (78iia), and it is not a *chômeur*, thus complying with condition (78iib) as well.

In all other contexts except for (79a) and impersonals (such as (69a) above) PP agreement is found in Bonorvese in exactly the same cases as in standard Italian. To quote just one example, in both varieties a contrast is observed between presence of PP agreement in (81) vs. lack of PP agreement in (82) (This is the case, by the way, in most modern Romance varieties):

	(81) a.	mmanğedđā	a	bbiđu/*-a/*-os	sos	pastóreze
		M.	has	seen:/fsg:/mpl	the	shepherds
		b.	<i>Mariangela ha visto/*-a/*<sup>2</sup>-i i pastori</i>			
		c.	1	P		2
		1	P	Cho		2
		<i>mmanğedđā</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>bbiđu</i>		<i>sos pastóreze</i>

	(82) a.	(sos pastóreze) mmanğedđā	lōz	a	bbiđozo/*bbiđu
		(the shepherds) M.	them: mpl	has	seen: mpl/seen
		b.	<i>(i pastori) Mariangela li ha visti/*-a/*-o</i>		
		c.	1	P	2
		1		P	
		1	P	Cho	
		<i>mmanğedđā</i>	<i>lōz a</i>	<i>bbiđozo</i>	3mpl

In (81a-b) PP agreement is blocked because the PP's P-sector is finally transitive (condition (75i) and (78i)). In (82a-b), on the other hand, PP agreement is compulsory because all conditions provided for by the respective rules are met: the PP agreement controller is a 2 (necessary and sufficient condition for Italian) and it is also a non-*chômeur* first 2 (necessary and sufficient conditions on the controller in Bonorvese).

We now come back to Bonorvese initially unaccusative clauses in (69a-b), to which we have assigned the representations (71a-b), here repeated as (83a-b):

	(83) a.	P	2	Obl
		P	1	
		1	P	Cho
		1	P	Cho
		D	k a	bbénniđu
				đres pastóreze
		b.	P	2
			P	1
		P	Cho	1
		ke zum	bénniđos	sos pastóreze
				Loc

Given rule (78), the presence vs. lack of PP agreement in (83a-b) is

predicted. The nominal *trēs pastóreze* cannot control PP-agreement in (83a) since it is a *chômeur*; on the contrary, the nominal *sos pastóreze* does control PP-agreement in (83b) since it is the clause's first 2 and not a *chômeur*.

Just like the contrasts in FVF and PP agreement, also the contrast in auxiliary 'have' vs. 'be' selection is predicted under the analysis (83a-b) by the independently motivated rule on auxiliary selection in Bonorvese (La Fauci & Loporcaro 1993:164):

(84) *Auxiliary Selection in Bonorvese:*

An auxiliary is *éssere* 'be' if the final 1 is the clause's first 2.  
It is *áere* 'have' otherwise.

Auxiliary 'have' is selected in (69a) (cf. (83a)) since the final 1, the dummy subject, is not the clause's first 2. Conversely, auxiliary 'be' is selected in (69b) (cf. (73b)) since the final 1 nominal, *sos pastóreze*, is the clause's first 2. Again, assuming the alternative (impersonal) representation (76) for (69b) would have led to a wrong prediction: under that hypothesis, auxiliary 'have' should have been selected in (69b) as well, which is not the case<sup>48</sup>.

3.2.2. *The Representation of Bonorvese Existentials*

We are now in a position to explain the morphosyntactic contrasts (listed above in (68a-d)) between the two distinct Bonorvese existential patterns (64) vs. (65). It is now possible to combine the general theory of existentials as auxiliated nominals, which we put forward in §1 as a cross-linguistic analysis of existentials, with the language-specific rules independently established for Bonorvese, sketched above in §3.2.1. This combination strictly constrains the structural representation of existentials in this variety. We have no choice but analyze (64)-(65) as shown in (85a-b), respectively:

(85) a.

		2		P
		P,2		Cho
2		P,Cho		Cho
1		P,Cho		Cho
1	P	Cho		Cho
1	P	Cho	Cho	Cho
D	b ađ	áppiđu	pastórez	in dómo

b.

		2		P
		P,2		Cho
		P,1		Cho
	P	1		Cho
P	Cho	1	Cho	
bi zum	bistađos	sos	pastórez	in dómo

Both (85a-b) are Nominal Unions in which a nominal functions as a predicate of the clause. This is then assigned an auxiliary, the only overt element in the clause to carry finite verbal morphology. The crucial difference between (85a) and (85b) resides in the impersonal vs. personal character of the two structures, which is in turn a function of the indefiniteness vs. definiteness of the nominal. From this minimal syntactic difference (i.e., from the presence vs. absence of a dummy subject in the clause) all of the contrasts in (68a-d) follow naturally.

The difference between fixed vs. free linear order in (64)-(65) simply falls out from the linearization rule of a silent dummy variety like Bonorvese. The definite nominal *sos pastóreze* is a final 1, and is consequently allowed to freely occur pre- or postverbally, which is not true of the indefinite *pastóreze*. FVF agreement is controlled by the nominal *sos pastóreze* in (85b), but not by the nominal *pastóreze* in (85a), since the former is the final subject whereas the latter is not. PP agreement is controlled by the nominal *sos pastóreze* in (85b), but not by the nominal *pastóreze* in (85a), since the former is not a *chômeur* whereas the latter is.

Finally, and crucially, 'be' is selected both as existential and as perfective auxiliary in (85b), whereas 'have' is selected in (85a), because the clause's final 1 is the first 2 in the former, not in the latter, case.

We have shown that our theory of existentials as auxiliated nominals can account for the Bonorvese data without any ad hoc assumption being required.

3.2.3. *Existentials under Modals in Bonorvese*

Our account of Bonorvese existentials receives further confirmation from an independent piece of evidence, viz. the contrast in acceptability between the two modal constructions in (86a-b):<sup>49</sup>

- (86) a. bi    ʎeren            esse    ssos pastóreze  
 there want:3pl    be    the shepherds  
 'the shepherds want to be there'  
 b. \*bi    ʎereð    áe    ppastóreze  
 there wants have shepherds

The modal verb *kérrere* 'want' can only combine with *éssere* existentials, not with *áere* ones. Note that the same restriction does not hold for the other modals *póðere* 'can' and *tévere* 'must', as shown by the acceptability of (78a-b), which represent the *áere* counterpart to (87a-b):

- (87) a. bi    βóðen/ðεven            esse    ssos    pastóreze  
 there can:3pl/must:3pl    be    the    shepherds  
 'there can/must be shepherds-DEF'  
 b. bi    zun    póttidoz/tévidoz            esse    sos    pastóreze  
 there are:3pl can:PP:3mpl/must:PP:3mpl    be    the    shepherds  
 'the shepherds were able/had to be there'<sup>50</sup>

- (88) a. bi    βóðeð/ðεveð            áe    ppastóreze  
 there can:3sg/must:3sg    have    shepherds  
 'there can/must be shepherds'  
 b. b    a    ppóttiðu/ttéviðu    áe    ppastóreze  
 there has can:PP/must:PP have shepherds  
 'there were able/had to be shepherds'.

The contrast (86) vs. (87)-(88) is readily explained in our framework, as soon as we recall a general cross-linguistic property of the modal 'want'. Unlike 'can' and 'must', 'want' initializes its subject. This (re-)initialization is associated with specific semantic properties of 'want' not shared by the other modals. The former, unlike 'can'/'must', imposes selectional restrictions on its subject, which must refer to an animate being, as seen by the unacceptability of (89b):

- (89) a. peðru/su    ðrenu    nɔ    kke    ʎɔʎeð    a    bbonɔlva  
 P. /the train us LOC takes to Bonorva  
 'P. /the train takes us to Bonorva'  
 b. peðru /\*su    ðrenu    nɔ    kke    ʎere    ʎɔʎeð    a    bbonɔlva  
 P. /the train us LOC wants take-INF to Bonorva  
 'P. / the train wants to take us to Bonorva'

- c. peðru/su    ðrenu    nɔ    kke    βóðe/ðεve    ʎɔʎeð    a    bbonɔlva  
 P. /the train us LOC can/has to take-INF to Bonorva  
 'P. /the train can/has to take us to Bonorva'

The structural representations of the modal clauses in (86a-b), in the framework outlined so far, are the following<sup>51</sup>:

- (90) a. 

2,P		
1,P		
-----		
P	1	
-----		
P	Cho	1
bi ʎeren	ésse	ssos pastóreze

  
 b. \* 

2,P			
Cho,P			
Cho,P			
-----			
1	P	Cho	
-----			
1	P	Cho	Cho
D	*bi ʎereð	áe	ppastóreze

The structure in (90a) corresponds to the acceptable clause (86a), while the structure in (90b) corresponds to the unacceptable clause (86b). The unacceptability of the latter is predicted: while (90a) is a legal structure, (90b) is not. Being an impersonal clause, its final subject is by definition a dummy. However, once this has entered the structure, the modal predicate 'want' cannot be introduced any more because it inherits as 1 the dummy, which fails to meet the selectional restrictions (animacy) imposed by *kérrere* and cannot by definition be initialized being non-referential (see above, fn. 23).

#### 4. CONCLUSION: THE STRUCTURAL CORRELATE OF THE DEFINITENESS EFFECT

Our theory of existentials solves the two crucial problems, specifically concerning the so-called definiteness effect, which were left open in previous research on the topic.

The first problem is theoretical in nature and has cross-linguistic scope:

is the DE syntactic in nature? We have answered this question affirmatively.

The second problem arises in the analysis of individual languages. Previous literature, starting from the wrong assumption that Italian displays no definiteness effect, has posed the question whether such an effect should nonetheless be postulated. Actually, the question is infelicitous: Italian does not only have DE, but also empirical correlates to substantiate it. Namely, the *ne* facts, as we have seen. This has never been recognized before, although *ne*-cliticization is one of the most-debated topics in Italian syntax.

The difference made evident by *ne*-cliticization is represented as a contrast between different clause structures: clauses with a definite pivot are personal, clauses with an indefinite pivot are impersonal. This is, we argue, the syntactic correlate of the DE.

Many contributions, over the last decade or so, have searched for a structural correlate of the DE, along different lines. We have already discussed (see fn.9 above) Belletti's (1988) proposal, showing that it is not capable of accounting for data such as (23) (*C'è la guerra in Europa*), not considered in Belletti's paper. More promising, in this respect, is Moro (1993:66-70), who does take into account existentials with a definite argument. These pose some problems in his framework as well, however, since Moro too maintains that the DE in Italian is reflected in the impossibility for any definite DP to occur IP-internally. He overcomes the difficulty by arguing that the nominal in e.g. (91a) is indeed an IP-adjunct, via rightward movement, as shown in (91b):

- (91) a. *c'è Gianni (in giardino)*  
           there is G. (in the garden)  
       b.  $[_{IP} \text{pro}_i [_{IP} c'è] [_{SC} t_i t_j]]$  [*Gianni*]<sub>i</sub>

This line of reasoning may have a rationale in a strictly theory-internal perspective. What empirical evidence shows, however, is that both (92a-b) are existentials and that no surface difference exists such that a contrast in constituent structure might be inferred. The nominals occur in the same position, and no intonational cues are there to empirically substantiate the claim that in (92b) the nominal is extraposed:

- (92) a. *c'è un gatto in giardino/c'è guerra in Europa*  
           there is a cat in the garden/there is war in Europe  
       b. *c'è il gatto in giardino/c'è la guerra in Europa*  
           there is the cat in the garden/there is the war in Europe.

We have already hinted (in fn.10 above) at another shortcoming in Moro's analysis, viz. the disjunction of the explanations for existential form and meaning. The derivation of the latter is of course related to the derivation of the DE. Given that predicates must apply to a variable bound by the subject ( $\pi$ -principle), the argument of an existential is assumed to be split at LF via NP-extraction from the DP, so that the quantifier left in  $D^\circ$  can apply to the NP-trace, counting as a variable. Consider now the following contrast<sup>52</sup>:

- (93) a. girls are many/few/three  
       b. \*girls are every/the/most  
       c. there are many/few/three girls  
       d. \*there are every/the/most girls.

As Moro (1993:66) puts it, "Dal punto di vista dell'acquisizione del linguaggio [...] la possibilità di generare questa partizione è l'unica informazione che è necessaria al bambino per quanto riguarda l'Effetto Definitezza" [from the viewpoint of language acquisition (...) the possibility of generating this partition (i.e. (93a-c) vs. (93b-d)) is the only piece of information which the child needs as to the Definiteness Effect]. The presence of a definite determiner in  $D^\circ$  is incompatible with the split required for an existential to be grammatical. As for Italian, Moro (1993:67) quotes the contrast (94a-b) (The definite article preceding the noun in (iv) is considered as a default spell-out of an empty  $D^\circ$  in this context):

- (94) a. *le ragazze sono molte/poche/tre*  
       b. \**le ragazze sono ogni/le/la maggior parte*

However, Moro's generalization concerning the alleged correlation between acceptability of existentials and split at LF suffers many counterexamples:

- (95) a. *ci sono delle ragazze*  
           'there are some girls'  
       b. \*(le) ragazze sono delle  
       c. *ci sono tutte le ragazze*  
           there are all the girls  
       d. *le ragazze sono tutte*  
           'the girls are all (here)'.

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On the one hand, (1b) is unacceptable, even if its non-split counterpart, the existential in (95a), contains an indefinite argument. Conversely, (95d) is acceptable despite the definiteness of the nominal.

The very fact that so many problems arise from Moro's treatment suggests that he has invoked unsubstantial factors so as to give an unnecessarily complicated picture, and ultimately missed the point. Our theory of existentials is at once more parsimonious, more in accord with the Italian data, and more comprehensive, as it is couched within a broader Romance perspective.

It provides an answer to some very basic questions concerning existentials as well as other much-debated topics in Romance syntax, such as:

- (96) the relationship between:
- a. form and meaning in existentials
  - b. (im)personality and (in)definiteness
  - c. existentials, locative predications and copular sentences.

For these three issues we have one and the same solution, that ultimately reduces them to the interplay of two binary features: [ $\pm$ predicative], [ $\pm$ argumental].

As to form and meaning in existentials (96a), we have argued that an existential consists of the expansion into clause structure, via simple auxiliation, of a nominal which is [+argumental], [+predicative] (formally, is a P,2). This combination of the two features is in our view the syntactic face of existential meaning. The form of Romance existentials, on the other hand, is explained by the same token: the cancellation of the P-arc headed by the noun (which is [+predicative]) results in the surfacing of the clitic proform (It. *ci*, Fr. *y*, Sard. *bbi* etc.) characterizing existentials at the morphological level.

That (im)personality and (in)definiteness are indeed strictly related (96b), was indeed often suspected. We give a simple account of this relationship, again in terms of the two features [ $\pm$ argumental], [ $\pm$ predicative].

The functional idea underlying our account is simple.

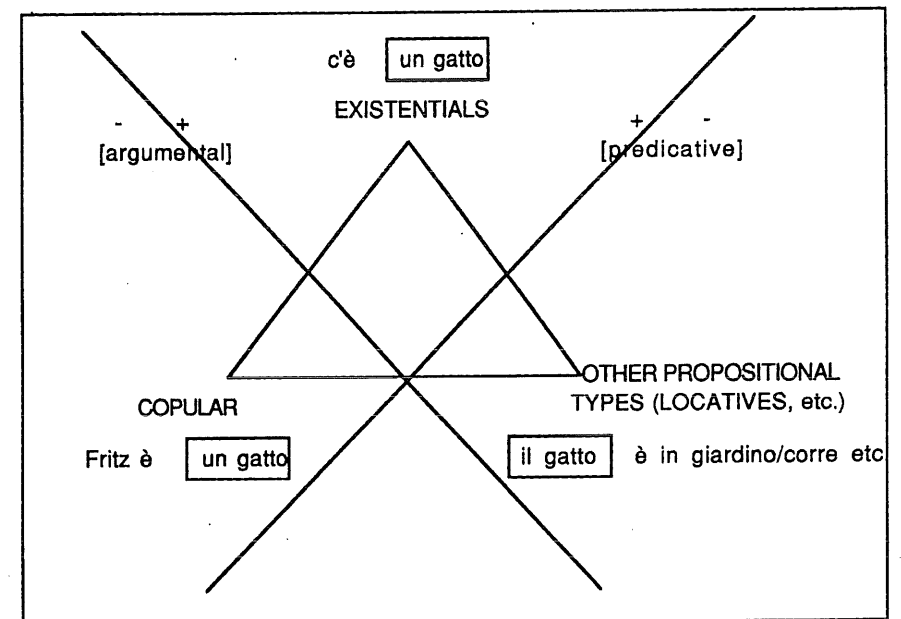
A definite nominal is prototypically an argument. This character naturally leads it – within an intransitive clause – to end up as the final subject. Hence, having obligatorily a referential nominal as its subject, no intransitive clause containing a definite pivot can ever be impersonal.

On the other hand, an indefinite nominal is not bound to be the final subject of an initially intransitive clause. It may, of course, if it occurs preverbally (in Romance: cf. (38)). But it cannot, when it is not in the canonical

subject position, the only brake that can counter its intrinsic tendency to non-subjecthood. An intransitive clause containing a postverbal indefinite nominal can either be copular (if the nominal is [+predicative], [-argumental]) or impersonal (if this is initially [+argumental], be it [-predicative], in which case we get a plain impersonal, or [+predicative], in which case we get an existential).

Finally the explanation of the relationship between existentials, locatives and copular sentences ((96c)) naturally falls out from the same principles. The question has been tackled in many recent contributions all ending up with unsatisfactory results, as we have shown in §2, as a consequence of a shared misunderstanding. They all strive to reduce existentials to either locatives (e.g. Freeze, 1992, cf. §2.2) or copular sentences (Moro, 1993, cf. §2.3), not realizing that there is indeed a sharp contrast between the three. The contrast is substantiated by solid empirical evidence, and is neatly analyzed theoretically, once more by means of the two basic binary features [ $\pm$ argumental], [ $\pm$ predicative]:

(97)



The joint explanation of the problems listed in (96) by means of such general and simple principles is hopelessly beyond the reach of a syntactic theory of the principle and parameters kind, whose format necessarily leads to unduly conflate lexical categories (V, N, A, P) and syntactic functions (predicate and nominal relations), ultimately reducing the latter to the former.

Predicativity and argumentality are the true basics of syntactic theory, as has long been recognized by Relational Grammar<sup>53</sup>.

NOTES

\* We are deeply indebted to Carol Rosen. Thanks to Ignazio Mirto for suggestions and comments on a previous draft of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> Other kinds of Union include causative and modal constructions, serial verb constructions etc.

<sup>2</sup> The notions 'P-initial x of y' and 'P-final x of y' (where y is a predicate, and x ranges over grammatical relations covered by nominals) refer to nominals which have the grammatical relation x in the first (and, respectively, in the last) stratum of the P-sector of y.

<sup>3</sup> The notion 'initialization' (Dubinsky, 1985) is defined as the attribution of an initial grammatical relation by a predicate to an argument entailing at the same time *th*-role assignment. This unification, established by hypothesis in our framework, is currently being pursued, in the principles and parameters framework, by many contributions trying to unify Case- and *th*-role assignment: cf. e.g. Bowers (1993). Not too different is the idea underlying Broekhuis & Cornips (1992), arguing that dative is to be analyzed as a structural rather than an inherent case, on a par with nominative and accusative: the three cases corresponding to term grammatical relations would then come to be treated in a parallel fashion, as has always been the case in Relational Grammar.

<sup>4</sup> This conception is found in J. Stuart Mill's *System of Deductive Logics* and is seconded by many modern logicians and philosophers (e.g. G. Frege, B. Russel). As Carol Rosen pointed out to us, an interesting fact concerning child language can be observed in this connection. Child language, in fact, does not seem to have a surface contrast between the two structures (10a-b): *gatta!* (pointing to x) "is ambiguous between assigning x to the class of cats and simultaneously announcing both existence and class membership".

<sup>5</sup> In (12b) and in the following relational diagrams D stands for 'dummy subject'.

<sup>6</sup> Actually, a more satisfactory way to state this observation is that *ci* may have a locative value in (17), whereas it cannot in (15) (see §2.7 below). It should be stressed, however, that an existential interpretation is by no means excluded for constructions such as (17): this is argued in fn.39 below, and is predicted through the structural contrast illustrated in (42a-b).

<sup>7</sup> The (c) examples in (18)-(21) become acceptable as soon as a pause is introduced before the source of the clitic, which is in this case right-dislocated.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. already Lyons (1968:§8.4) for a similar view.

<sup>9</sup> Belletti (1988) claims that the VP-internal argument of unaccusatives obligatorily has to be indefinite in Italian. Whenever there seem to be exceptions (as in (ia), her example (19a)), Belletti maintains that the definite nominal is indeed VP-adjoined, as shown in (ib) (Belletti's (22):

- (i) a.       verrà                   Gianni   a risolvere la questione  
          comes:FUT           G.       to solve the matter  
          'Gianni will come and settle the matter'
- b.       [CP[IP NP[VP[VP verrà][NPe<sub>i</sub>]][NP Gianni]<sub>i</sub>]][CP<sub>s</sub>a ...]].

Existentials, both in Italian and cross-linguistically, follow the same pattern, also displaying a definiteness effect according to Belletti. The data presented in (23a-b) crucially disconfirm her account: the NPs in (23a-b) must be within the VP according to Belletti's (1988:§2.2) own diagnostics for

VP-inclusion vs. extraposition, since they are followed by a PP and are consequently not extraposed; yet they can be definite.

<sup>10</sup> This abstract predicate is required for the copula to be lexicalized (Moro, 1993:§1.4.3); however, it has nothing to do with existential meaning, which in Moro's (1993:62) view is the product of a function linking D° and the NP within the DP (see §3.2.4 below for further discussion on this point). In our account, on the other hand, both form and meaning of existentials are explained by the same token, as shown in (12b) above. The existential proform *ci* appears on the auxiliary whenever a Union clause only consists of an auxiliated nominal: this is precisely the formal definition of an existential construction.

<sup>11</sup> Or, otherwise said, "il minimo contesto sintattico che produce una lettura frasale di un DP" [the minimal syntactic context determining a sentential reading of a DP] (Moro, 1993:63).

<sup>12</sup> Moro (1993:62) makes this point very clearly when he states: "Sebbene sia vero che il significato di un frase in *there* scaturisca solo da un DP, in nessun modo si può dire [...] che un DP contenga di per sé un legame predicativo". [although it is true that the meaning of a *there*-clause exclusively arises from a DP, it can by no means be argued [...] that a DP contains in itself a predicative link].

<sup>13</sup> Moro (1993:37f) claims that his analysis is superior to "current theory" (by this he refers to Burzio's analysis of *ci*-constructions) in that it is capable of accounting for data such as the following:

- (i) a.       molte copie del libro erano [SC<sub>i</sub> \*(nello studio)]  
      b.       c'erano [molte copie del libro (nello studio)]
- (ii) a.       molte copie del libro lo<sub>i</sub> erano t<sub>i</sub>  
      b.       \*ce lo<sub>i</sub> erano t<sub>i</sub>.

Such data do not pose any problem under our account: the absence of *nello studio* in (ia) would result in the loss of the initial locative predication, yielding an unacceptable structure since there would be no predicate left to initialize the argument. Recall that *essere* - always an auxiliary in our view - has no initializing power. Conversely, the optionality of the locative PP in (ib) follows from the alternative between a locative and an existential, already seen while commenting on (13b). The unacceptability of (iib), on the other hand, simply follows from the fact that there is no source for the proredicate *ci*, once another proredicate (viz. *lo*) already appears in the construction.

<sup>14</sup> See Pulgram (1978) for an early recognition of this data.

<sup>15</sup> It is of course well known that clitic *ci*, like all its Romance counterparts, historically derives from a Latin locative adverb. (See e.g. Rohlf, 1966-69:§474). However, this does not at all prejudice the issue concerning its synchronic syntactic status. *Ci* actually has quite many functions, in today's Italian, since its source can be not only a noun predicate or a locative, but also an instrumental (i), a comitative (ii), a 1st person plural pronoun (iii) or, in many substandard varieties, a 3rd person singular dative pronoun (iv).

- (i) a.       Ugo scrive con la penna                   'Ugo writes with the pen'  
      b.       (con la penna) Ugo ci scrive               'Ugo writes with it'
- (ii) a.       Ugo balla insieme con Maria           'Ugo is dancing with Mary'  
      b.       (con Maria) Ugo ci balla insieme       'Ugo is dancing with her'
- (iii) a.       Ugo dà il libro a noi                    'Ugo gives the book to us'  
      b.       (a noi) Ugo ci dà il libro                'Ugo gives us the book'
- (iv) a.       Ugo dà un libro a Lea                    'Ugo gives a book to Mary'  
      b.       (a Lea) Ugo ci dà un libro.            'Ugo gives her a book'

<sup>16</sup> The perfective verbal periphrastics in which the final 1 is never a 2 in the clause and in which auxiliary *avere* is consequently selected are those in which the auxiliated structure is unergative or active transitive:

- (i) a.       Lea       ha       lavorato  
          'Lea       has       worked'
- b.       1            P            Cho
- 
- 1       P       Cho
- Lea    ha    lavorato
- (ii) a.       Lea       ha       mangiato una mela  
          'Lea       has       eaten    an apple'

b.	1	P	2
	-----		
	1	P	Cho
	Lea	ha	mangiato una mela.

<sup>17</sup> The empirical scope of our auxiliary selection rule also includes passive auxiliary selection and copular sentences (see La Fauci, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> In Kayne's (1993:3) own words: "I will start from the assumption that we should expect the optimal theory of auxiliary selection to be highly modular".

<sup>19</sup> Actually, not only nouns and adjectives, but also prepositional phrases such as *al verde* 'penniless', *in gamba* 'skilful' share the same properties:

- (i) (al verde) Ada lo è  
(penniless) Ada is.

<sup>20</sup> The point is that the adjective, in itself, cannot be the nominal element of a clause which both predicates and refers at the same time. The only possible interpretation of a sequence such as (32) would imply the ellipsis of a predicate noun to which the adjective is attributed (as in (i)):

- (i) (la birra) c'è calda, non fredda  
(the beer) there is hot:fsg, not cold:fsg  
'there is a hot (beer), not a cold one'.

No interpretation at all, on the other hand, is available for (ii), parallel to (32) but containing a predicative prepositional phrase of the kind mentioned in fn.19 above:

- (ii) \*c'è al verde  
there is penniless.

<sup>21</sup> For SVO languages such as Romance, the generalization – put more simply and informally – is that a preverbal argument is never a predicate: nominals which both refer and predicate at the same time necessarily follow the verb (at least in the unmarked case). However, the formulation given in (38) has two advantages: on the one hand it captures facts concerning languages with different basic word orders; on the other hand, it correctly excludes inverted copular sentences, where the predicative nominal indeed precedes the verb whereas the subject follows:

- (i) la passione di Lea sono le cadillac nuove fiammanti  
'Lea's passion is brand-new cadillacs'.

Finite verb agreement with the following, rather than the preceding, nominal clearly shows that it is the latter, not the former, which qualifies as subject in (i).

<sup>22</sup> A rhematic reading of *mio fratello* in (39d) would be possible only with focussing (and/or contrastive stress) on the nominal:

- (i) - Chi telefona? - MIO FRATELLO telefona, non io.  
'who's phoning?' 'My brother, not I'.

<sup>23</sup> Following Perlmutter (1983), an impersonal construction is here defined as a clause whose final subject is a dummy (expletive subject). A dummy is a non-referential pronominal element which is not liable to be initialized by any predicate of the clause and, consequently, has to appear in a non-initial stratum. Its syntactic behavior is further constrained as follows: a dummy can bear only the grammatical relations 1 or 2, cannot be demoted and has to put a nominal *en chômage*. A crucial point in Perlmutter's (1983) account – to which we will return below, see (57) and (77) – is that dummy subjects may be either overt or silent: the latter is the case in Italian.

<sup>24</sup> (47b) is only possible when *multi* is focussed and/or under contrastive stress:

- (i) MOLTI ne sono arrivati, non pochi  
'many of-them have arrived, not few'.

<sup>25</sup> Given our present account of existentials, condition (47b) needs to be restricted as follows: 'is not initially multiattached, where multiattachment involves two term arcs'. Thus rewritten, the condition does not prevent the argumental/predicative nominal of an existential to occur in a *ne*-construction (e.g. *ce ne sono molti*, cf. (50a)) in spite of its bearing two GRs (viz. P,2) in the initial stratum.

<sup>26</sup> Note that fronting does not necessarily imply final 1-hood. Thus, *wh*-constructions display the same contrast in acceptability as (50a-b); *ne* is acceptable with the indefinite *quanti* 'how many' and unacceptable with the definite *quali* 'which':

- (i) a. quanti ce ne sono? ce ne sono tre  
'how many of them are there? there are three of them'

b.	*quali ce ne sono?	ce ne sono tutti
	which there of-them are?	there of-them are all'

<sup>27</sup> Note that the possibility for the dummy subject to enter clause structure as a 1 is not postulated ad hoc; rather, it must be admitted independently for impersonal unergatives (cf. Perlmutter, 1983:178):

- (i)

	P	1
	P	Cho
1	-----	
1	P	Cho
D	ha	telefonato un tuo amico.

The present analysis of impersonal unaccusatives ((49c)) has the advantage of unifying the syntactic behaviour of the dummy subject in the two impersonal intransitive types, as opposed to existentials.

<sup>28</sup> This does not imply that a final 1 *must* precede the verb in Italian intransitive clauses: in fact, definite final subjects can either precede or follow the verb, as shown in (43b) and (49b).

<sup>29</sup> Actually, a third option is also available: there are southern (Italo-)Romance varieties in which the omission of a [-referential] predicate nominal does not entail the appearance on the verb of any overt clitic. The dialect of Altamura (Bari) is one such variety:

- (i) a. marl nann e tsopp  
'Mary is not lame'
- b. marl nann e/\*na ll e/\*na nğ e  
Mary not is/not it is/not there is  
'(lame) Mary is not'.

<sup>30</sup> The presence of a definiteness effect barring definite nominals from existentials is characteristic of many languages, as abundantly argued in a rich literature: cf. e.g. Szabolcsi (1986), Reuland & ter Meulen (1987), Hoekstra & Mulder (1990), Freeze (1992) among the many.

<sup>31</sup> On northern Italian dialects, which allow definite nominals to occur in existentials, much like Standard Italian, see Benincà (1986:465), Loporcaro (1991:97).

<sup>32</sup> BIL (= 'brother-in-law') is the nominal put *en chômage* by the dummy.

<sup>33</sup> A major innovation by Perlmutter is the claim that a Romance pro-drop language such as Italian has just the same syntactic pattern as French, as for both impersonality and the restrictions on the linear ordering of the final subject with respect to the verb. Thus, (59b) (here repeated as (ia)) is assigned the impersonal structure in (59c), in spite of the fact that finite verb agreement with the nominal is observed much like in the personal counterpart (ib):

- (i) a. sono morte tre oche durante l'inverno  
b. tre oche sono morte durante l'inverno.

<sup>34</sup> In its original formulation, the condition included in the French rule read "if the final 1 is the 2 initialized by the auxiliated predicate". By the restatement in (62b), the rule is made more restrictive: the new version is still compatible, exactly like the original one, with *avoir/être* selection in perfective verb periphrastics, passive and copular sentences. Moreover, it is better than the original one in that selection of *avoir* in existentials also falls within its scope.

<sup>35</sup> This extension conforms to a general principle. The null hypothesis to account for parametric variation in related languages, in our framework, is that languages should be analyzed as not differing in syntactic representations: cross-dialectal (or cross-linguistic) contrasts should instead be accounted for by means of parametric differences in morphosyntactic rules operating on those structures.

<sup>36</sup> As we have shown in §2.4, things are exactly the other way round in most recent work in the principles and parameters framework. Kayne (1993) precisely accounts for the differences in the distribution of auxiliaries by assuming different underlying structures.

<sup>37</sup> The town of Bonorva lies in central-northern Sardinia (Bonorvese has some 5,000 speakers). The morphosyntactic pattern described in what follows is common to many other Sardinian dialects of the Logudorese subdivision (cf. fn. 41 below). We have chosen precisely Bonorvese since this variety has already received a morphosyntactic description (see La Fauci & Loporcaro 1993), concerning most of the features on which we will base, in what follows, our account of existentials (viz. auxiliary selection, past participle and FVF agreement, the structure of impersonal vs. personal constructions).



<sup>38</sup> Following a common practice in syntactic literature (some references in fn.29 above), we use the notion of (in)definiteness referring to a purely extensional definition. In Bonorvese, as in Romance and many other languages, nominals count as definite when they contain a definite article (e.g. *sos pastòreze* 'the shepherds') or determiners such as *kustu*, *kussu*, *kuççu* 'this, that', when they are universally quantified (*bi zun tottu zos pastòreze*, lit. 'there are all the shepherds') or consist of proper nouns, etc. On the other hand, bare nominals (see (64)) count as indefinite, as do nominals containing an indefinite article (*b ađ unu bastòre* 'there is a shepherd'), a numeral quantifier (*bi zun duos pastòreze* 'there are two shepherds') or such quantifiers as *međa* 'much/many', *paxu* 'few', *kalki some*'.

<sup>39</sup> (67a) is unacceptable as a plain declarative clause. It is however possible, with an appropriate intonational pattern, as a question. The existential interpretation of clauses such as (67b), containing a definite nominal, stands out clearly in appropriate contexts:

- (i) a. *le pecore mancano ma i pastori ci sono*  
'sheep are missing, but there are *the* shepherds'  
b. *quando sei in difficoltà, ci sono sempre i tuoi amici*  
'when you're in troubles, there are your friends after all'.

The same applies to Sardinian as well. It can further be observed that when an existential includes a definite argument *x*, the clause is often interpreted as recalling (rather than announcing) the existence of (the referent of) *x*:

- (ii) *non possiamo divorziare: ci sono i bambini*  
'we cannot divorce: there are *the* children'.

<sup>40</sup> The locative complement in *dōmo* is omitted in (59b) because its addition here would cause the clause to become unacceptable, exactly the same way as in the Italian clause considered above in (15).

<sup>41</sup> Parallel to (67a), also (70a) can occur as an interrogative clause.

<sup>42</sup> A description of similar data, along the same lines of La Fauci & Loporcaro (1993), concerning a Nuorese variety (dialect of Lula) can be found in Jones (1993:100-14).

<sup>43</sup> In La Fauci & Loporcaro (1993), actually, the structural representation for (69a) differs from (71a) in that the advancee is the dummy subject rather than the nominal argument. The refinement proposed here follows from the broadening of our analysis to include the data from existentials in a cross-Romance perspective. Given our null hypothesis of structural parallelism across (related) languages (cf. fn. 34 above), and given that French provides evidence in favour of the representation (71a), we extend this analysis to Bonorvese too, although Bonorvese does not in itself offer empirical data to discriminate between the two alternatives.

<sup>44</sup> The impossibility for the argument to pronominalize as a partitive clitic applies also here, much like in Italian, as a test for final 1-hood:

- (i) a. *\*il en est arrivé tous*  
b. *\*il y en a tous.*

<sup>45</sup> The notion '(in)transitivity' in our framework is formally defined as a property of strata, not of clauses or predicates. It is part of the following set of definitions (Perlmutter & Postal, 1984:95):

- (i) a. a stratum is transitive iff it contains a 1-arc and a 2-arc;  
b. a stratum is unergative iff it contains a 1-arc and no 2-arc;  
c. a stratum is unaccusative iff it contains a 2-arc and no 1-arc.

<sup>46</sup> Actually, while both PP agreement options are found (and indeed also prescribed) in standard literary Italian, many varieties of the spoken language, especially in central and northern Italy, tend to exclude PP agreement with the initial 2 in (79b) (cf. Loporcaro, 1993:§3.4.4).

<sup>47</sup> The 2-hood of the final subject in (79c) follows from the reflexive advancement hypothesis put forward in La Fauci (1984).

<sup>48</sup> Rule (84) differs from the Italian rule (8) in that in Bonorvese a stricter requirement is put on the final subject for auxiliary 'be' to be selected in the clause. This higher restrictivity accounts for 'have' selection in Bonorvese vs. 'be' selection in Italian, in (9a-b) above. In all other syntactic contexts not explicitly mentioned here, selection of 'have'/'be' coincides in the two varieties.

<sup>49</sup> For pragmatic reasons, a clause such as (86a) is hardly interpretable as a true existential: intuitively, *x* can hardly 'want' *x*'s existence, since volition implies existence. Rather, (86a) can receive a locative interpretation. As we argued in §2.7 above, however, this does not impinge on our

analysis: the structural representation of an existential and a locative only differ in that a first P-sector (corresponding to the locative predication) is inserted in the latter (see (42a) vs. (42b) above).

<sup>50</sup> Both (86a) and (87a-b) have acceptable (synonymous) counterparts with the nominal in preverbal position:

(i)	a.	sos	pastòrel bi	veren	éssere
		the	shepherds there	want:3pl	be
	b.	sos	pastòrel bi	βòðen/ðeven	éssere
		the	shepherds there	can:3pl/must:3pl	be
	c.	sos	pastòrel bi	zun	póttiðoz/téviðoz
		the	shepherds there	are:3pl	can:PP:3mpl/must:PP:3mpl
					be.

Contrary to what has been observed in fn.48 above, an existential reading is available for existentials under modals other than 'to want': e.g. *It. i pastori possono esserci, ma mancano le pecore* 'it may be that there are shepherds:(DEF), but sheep are missing'.

<sup>51</sup> They are obtained from (85b) and (85a), respectively, via the simple addition of a further P-sector corresponding to the modal verb (see Rosen, 1987a; Davies & Rosen, 1988; Rosen, 1990b on the representation of modal constructions as Unions). As already pointed out in La Fauci & Loporcaro (1993:195, fn. 30), Bonorvese modals are compulsorily Union predicates, as made apparent - in contrast to Italian - by the test of clitic placement:

(i)	a.	(a ttojeççja)	baìndzu	la	vere	bbazare
	b.	(Antonietta)	Gavino	la	vuole	baciare
			(A.) G. wants her	to-kiss		
			'G. wants to kiss her'			
	c.	*(a ttojeççja)	baìndzu	vere	lla	azare
		(A.)	G.	wants	her	to-kiss
	d.	(Antonietta)	Gavino	vuole	baciarla	
		(A.)	G.	wants	to-kiss-her	
			'G. wants to kiss her'			

Note that in Bonorvese a clitic occurring on an infinitive must precede the verb, as is the case in French and unlike in Italian:

(ii)	a.	(a ttojeççja)	appo	ðettsizu	e la azare
		(A.)	have:1sg	decided	her-to-kiss
	d.	(Antonietta)	ho	deciso	di baciarla
		(A.)	have:1sg	decided	to-kiss-her
			'I have decided to kiss her'		

<sup>52</sup> Data are Moro's. Our (American) English informants, however, agree on defining (93a) as absolutely unacceptable.

<sup>53</sup> The paper was developed jointly by the two authors. Nevertheless, NLF may be considered responsible for §§ 1, 2.1, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, and 3.2.1-2; ML for §§ 2.2-3, 2.5, 2.8, 3, 3.2, 3.2.3, and 4.

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