

# Impersonal *si* constructions

## Agreement and interpretation

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*to my parents Gino and Nicoletta*

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chi nen pò, fa a zumbitte*  
[Abruzzese proverb]

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## List of Abbreviations

acc	Accusative
asp	aspect / aspectual
aux	auxiliary
cl	clitic
dat	dative
DbP	Chomsky's 'Derivation by Phase'
fut	future
gen	genitive
gn	syntactic gender
GN	semantic gender
imp	impersonal
impf	imperfective
ISC	Impersonal <i>si</i> construction
loc	location
neut	neuter
nom	Nominative
nr	syntactic number
NR	semantic number
fem	feminine
masc	masculine
pf	perfective
pl	plural
pp	past participle
ps	syntactic person
PS	semantic person
QDC	quirky dative construction

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This dissertation investigates the structural representation and the interpretation of impersonal *si* constructions in Italian.

The aim of this work is twofold: on the one hand, I attempt to provide an explanation for previously overlooked phenomena involving ISCs, such as the transitive agreement alternation, the person restriction on the object, and past participle agreement with unergative and unaccusative verbs and in copular constructions. On the other hand, I wish to contribute to the development of current syntactic theory by showing the necessity of considering additional syntactic features, which I call  $\sigma$ -features, that encode semantic/deictic information. I propose a ‘new’ syntactic operation: Concord, which targets precisely these semantico-pragmatic features and locally determines adjectival and participial agreement. Concord is a special form of Chomsky’s Agree, which targets a different feature set and is active on a phrasal domain. Thus, I distinguish between Agree, which targets the traditional  $\phi$ -features and may act long-distance to obtain subject-verb agreement, and Concord, which targets the semantico-pragmatic  $\sigma$ -set, and acts within a phrasal domain to obtain adjectival and participial agreement.

Up to now, verbal semantics or *Aktionsart* has been hardly taken into account in the literature on ISCs. The present work is framed in such a way as to capture

the contribution of verbal semantics for the agreement patterns of ISCs. More specifically, assuming that the verbal semantics is reflected in the syntax of a VP, I show that the semantic configuration determines the agreement patterns of ISCs.

A large part of this work is also devoted to the interpretation of ISCs: ISCs may be interpreted as generic, existential, or inclusive. The reference set that *si* selects may be a purely generic one (generic reading), or there may be a group of people satisfying the property expressed by the predicate (existential). This group may be specified for inclusiveness (inclusive), i.e. it may include the speaker, or it may not. This work is aimed at identifying the causes for the generic/inclusive alternation. A pragmatico-syntactic analysis for the phenomenon of inclusiveness is also provided.

## 1. Impersonal pronouns

Impersonal pronouns are used across languages to introduce unspecified subjects. Italian examples in (1) and (2) illustrate this phenomenon:

(1) *pro* mangia troppo  
 pro eats-3RD SG too much  
 ‘He/she eats too much’

(2) *Si* mangia troppo  
 IMP eats-3RD SG too much  
 ‘People eat too much’

Italian is a *pro*-drop language. A sentence like (1), without an overt subject, gets interpreted as having a definite subject. The subject of (1) is a specific person, somebody already introduced in the discourse or deictically indicated. The introduction of an impersonal pronoun such as *si* in (2) causes a change in the interpretation of the sentence: the subject is now an unspecified group of people. Impersonal pronouns are thus used when the intention of the speaker is to remain vague about the exact identity of the subject. We call (2) an impersonal *si* construction (ISC). *Si* is

an impersonal pronoun.

The use of a *se* form to convey an impersonal meaning is common to all Romance languages. Italian has several other strategies to create impersonality. These include the use of a 3rd person plural so-called arbitrary *pro*; the 2nd person singular empty pronoun, and arbitrary PRO. Such constructions are exemplified in (3) through (6):

- (3) In Italia *si* legge troppo poco  
 in Italy *si*-IMP reads-3RD SG too little  
 ‘In Italy people read too little’
- (4) In Italia *pro* leggono troppo poco  
 in Italy *pro*-3RD PL read-3RD PL too little  
 ‘In Italy people read too little’
- (5) Se *pro* vai in Italia *pro* impari a leggere  
 if *pro*-2ND SG go-2ND SG in Italy *pro*-2ND SG learn-2ND SG to read  
 poco  
 little  
 ‘If you go to Italy you get used to read little’
- (6) Per PRO leggere un libro ci vuole pazienza  
 for PRO to read a book there wants-3RD PS patience  
 ‘One needs patience to read a book’

Here, I will mainly consider impersonal *si* and overt pronouns in general, and will refer to *pro* and PRO only briefly, for reasons of comparison. The present study focuses on Italian impersonal *si*. An accurate analysis of the feature configuration of this pronoun will lead to a general classification of impersonal pronouns in terms of syntactic and semantic features, and will contribute to an explanation of the apparently unusual syntactic configurations in which it appears.

A lot of attention has been devoted to ISCs in the last two decades. My field of investigation is however restricted only to a small number of phenomena regarding *si* constructions, such as agreement patterns, the phenomenon of person restriction on the object, and interpretation.

This chapter is organized as follows: after an overview of the whole dissertation, I consider some general problems that have interested the syntactic community recently and that are to be taken into account for a theory of ISCs. I first present the old problem of the existence of one or more *si*'s, which has been a matter of debate since Napoli's (1976) dissertation, and is still alive today (see Embick 2000, Reinhart & Siloni 1999, and Folli 2001 among others). I then turn to consider *si*'s clitic nature, in section 2.1. In section 3, I sketch the main problems this work focuses on: agreement and interpretation of impersonal *si* constructions. Section 4 contains the theoretical assumptions that constitute the basis for my analysis and that more or less recognized as the standard (with some slight variations). Section 5 addresses instead the problem of semantic agreement as opposed to syntactic agreement. In this section, I propose the existence of two different syntactic  $\phi$ -sets: the 'traditional' one, which is involved in Agree operations, and an additional  $\phi$ -set, which is made up of syntactic features that encode semantico-pragmatic information. This additional set, which I call the  $\sigma$  set, is involved in the Concord operation, which determines adjectival and participial agreement, and provides deictic information about the actual participants in the event expressed by the verb.

### 1.1. Structure of the present work

The present work is organized in 6 chapters, which address different aspects of ISCs in Italian. This study is concerned with the agreement and interpretation of Italian ISCs, in particular with those aspects that have often been considered as accidental and not-so-relevant for understanding the problem as a whole. I wish to start from these 'secondary' phenomena and show how they help draw the general picture of ISCs. Moreover, the accurate analysis of agreement patterns and interpretation of ISCs also helps to shed some light on other issues that would not seem related to this at first sight, like the person restriction on the object in Icelandic quirky dative

constructions.

An outline of the present chapter, which deals with the theoretical background for my analysis, is given above. **Chapter 2** addresses the issue of agreement in transitive ISCs. The alternation between the construction with verb-object agreement and the one without verb-object agreement has often been considered as an idiosyncratic phenomenon, mainly due to optionality. In chapter 2, I reconsider the agreement patterns of transitive ISCs, and show that they are the result of the application of specific semantic constraints. In particular, transitive ISCs with and without verb-object agreement will be shown to be different with respect to their event structure.

In **chapter 3**, the so-called unaccusative-unergative puzzle is addressed. Unergative verbs present different agreement patterns compared to unaccusative verbs. In this chapter, it is shown that such agreement patterns are the result of different agreement operations, which involve syntactic as well as semantic features. Past participle agreement in transitive ISCs is also considered, as well as agreement in predicative ISCs.

The feature content of impersonal *si* is also the topic of **chapter 4**, where a solution for the problem of the person restriction on the object of transitive ISCs with verb-object agreement is proposed. Transitive ISCs with verb-object agreement undergo a constraint which makes them similar to Icelandic quirky dative constructions: their object cannot be other than 3rd person. After examining the features that Italian ISCs and Icelandic quirky dative constructions have in common, I show that ISCs cannot be considered as quirky dative constructions. The fact that a person restriction on the object holds in both constructions despite their syntactic difference provides us with a better understanding of the person restriction phenomenon as a whole. In particular, I argue that the person restriction on the object does not happen accidentally, but it is the systematic result of a specific syntactic configuration, namely Multiple Agree.

**Chapter 5** deals with the problem of interpretation of ISCs. It is well-known that ISCs do not have a unitary interpretation, but that their interpretation rather ranges from a universal one with no specification for inclusiveness to an existential one, which is specified for inclusiveness, i.e. which is specified as including the speaker. As already observed by Cinque (1988), the tense-aspectual specification of the clause influences the interpretation of ISCs. Taking Cinque's observation as a starting point, I try to detect all the possible causes of the interpretational variation. I show that boundedness is indeed responsible for the inclusive interpretation of ISCs. When the event is unbounded, a generic interpretation for the semantic person feature arises via binding with a generic operator. When the event is bounded, the event is linked to the speech act, which provides *si* with an inclusive interpretation.

**Chapter 6** contains my conclusions.

## 2. Types of *si*

In this study, impersonal *si* is considered from several viewpoints: the agreement patterns of the constructions it occurs in and the restriction imposed on other lexical items appearing in such constructions, and interpretation.

So far, I have been using the term impersonal *si* in a completely 'impressionistic' way, without isolating it from other kinds of *si*. In fact, *si* appears in several other contexts than the impersonal one, with different functions from the one considered so far. *Si* may:

- Mark reflexivity as in (7), or reciprocity, as in (8)
- Mark a middle reading, as in (9)
- Mark a passive reading, as in (10)
- Mark unaccusativity, as in (11)

- Convey a so-called inherent reflexive meaning, as in (12)
- Mark an ‘applicative’, or aspectual reading, as in (13)
- Mark inchoativity, as in (14)

- (7) Luigi *si* lava  
Luigi *si* washes  
‘Luigi washes himself’
- (8) Maria e Luigi *si* sono incontrati  
Maria and Luigi *si* are met  
‘Maria and Luigi have met each other’
- (9) Queste camicie *si* lavano facilmente  
these shirts *si* wash easily  
‘These shirts wash easily’
- (10) *Si* vendono delle auto  
*si* sell some cars  
‘People sell some cars’
- (11) La porta *si* è aperta  
the door *si* is open  
‘The door opened’
- (12) Luigi *si* è seduto  
Luigi *si* is sat  
‘Luigi sat down’
- (13) Maria *si* è mangiata il panino  
Maria *si* is eaten the sandwich  
‘Maria has eaten the sandwich’
- (14) Maria *si* sveglia  
Maria *si* wakes up  
‘Maria wakes up’

In the history of Italian linguistics, a lot of attention has been dedicated to the question whether there exists a unique *si*, which can absolve all functions listed

above depending on the environment in which it occurs, or there are rather two or more different *si*'s, which are substantially different and have nothing or little to do with each other.

The first attempt to provide an answer to the 'one *si*- many *si*'s' question dates back to Napoli (1976). Napoli (1976) proposes that there are two transformational sources for *si*: the REFLEXIVE (REF) and the SI-INSERTION (Si-I). REF is the transformation that operates on reflexives, reciprocals, inchoative and middles; Si-I applies instead to what we have just called impersonal and passive structures. Napoli claims that there are two semantically and syntactically distinct *si*'s, although they are etymologically related.

According to Manzini (1986), on the other hand, impersonal, reflexive-reciprocal and middle *si* are one and the same lexical item. The *si* item is a variable, which can be free or dependent. Provided that the passivizing property of *si* is optional, one can obtain four different combinations by matching the free/dependent with the passivizer/*non*-passivizer properties, as shown in (15):

(15)

	<i>Free variable</i>	<i>Dependent variable</i>
<i>Non-passivizer</i>	Impersonal <i>si</i>	Reflexive <i>si</i>
<i>Passivizer</i>	Middle <i>si</i>	Middle-reflexive <i>si</i>

[from Manzini(1986:259)]

When *si* is taken to be a free variable and the optional passivizer property is not realized, we obtain an impersonal *si* construction; if *si* is taken to be a dependent variable which realizes its passivizer property, we obtain a middle-reflexive *si* construction, and so on. However, Manzini observes that the other occurrences of *si*, such as in particular the unaccusative marking *si*, need to be distinguished from the other *si*'s. According to Manzini, unaccusative marking *si* operates in the



lexicon, while the ‘unique’ *si* operates in the syntax. Manzini’s analysis, although very tempting, generates some questions: what does it mean that one item may or may not be a passivizer? What creates this optionality? Isn’t this just another way of saying that we are dealing with two different lexical items?

Another influential contribution on ISCs was provided by Burzio (1986). Burzio draws the line between reflexive, unaccusative and inherent reflexive *si* on the one hand, and what he calls impersonal and passivizing SI on the other. According to Burzio, *si* marks the lack of assignment of a  $\theta$ -role to the subject position. While *si* is a mark of unaccusativity, SI is a mark of ‘impersonality’.

With the addition of several unavoidable subcategorizations, I basically follow Burzio’s approach, isolating the class of ‘impersonal’ *si*, which includes both the proper impersonal, and the so-called passive-*si*, from the other instances of *si*. Burzio’s approach constitutes the basis for Cinque’s (1988) seminal analysis of ISCs. Cinque refines the analysis of ISCs, deriving their agreement patterns from one basic property of *si*: its argumental vs. *non*-argumental state. I will come back in more details to Cinque’s analysis, which constitutes the starting point for my own analysis.

Despite the great interest of the issue I have just sketched, I won’t address the ‘one *si*/many *si*’s’ problem in this work, and will focus on impersonal *si* exclusively. However, in order to identify a category named ‘impersonal’ *si*, I am confronted with the ‘one *si*-many *si*’s’ problem, at least to some extent. The question here is: can we really identify an impersonal *si*, or is it better just to mention the ‘impersonal USE’ of *si*, presupposing the existence of only one *si*? My assumption regarding this point is that there exists an ‘impersonal *si*’ which includes both the passive *si* and the proper impersonal *si*. Such an assumption is mainly determined by morphological, distributional, and semantic reasons.

There are in fact several characteristics which connect impersonal and passive

*si*. A first characteristic that proper impersonal *si* and passive *si* share is the lack of morphological inflection. All the other *si*'s show an inflectional paradigm, which is of course restricted depending on the possible occurrence, but yet exists. (16) shows the morphological paradigm of reflexive, reciprocal, (middle), inherent, unaccusative and applicative *si*:

(16)

<b>mi</b>	1st ps sg
<b>ti</b>	2nd ps sg
<b>si</b>	3rd ps sg
<b>ci</b>	1rd ps pl
<b>vi</b>	2rd ps pl
<b>si</b>	3rd ps pl

Thus, impersonal and passive *si* are morphologically distinct from all the other instances of *si* in that the latter, but not the former, show morphological inflection. It is worth noticing that the 3rd person singular and plural forms for inflectional *si* are spelled out as *si*. I wish to argue that the absence/presence of inflectional morphology has to do with the feature specification of the two different *si*'s, which plays a crucial role in determining agreement of *si* constructions.

Syntactically, impersonal *si* occupies a different position with respect to the other *si*'s. The following example shows the position of reflexive/aspectual *si* and impersonal *si* with respect to an object clitic:

(17) Ce lo si è mangiato  
 si-REFL it-ACC si-IMP is eaten  
 'We have eaten it ourselves'

Semantically, both impersonal and passive *si* introduce an unspecified subject. In a sentence like (2) there is an understood unspecified subject, and in fact the English translation for this sentence is 'People eat'. This reading is not available with



- (20) Maria non mangia alle 7 del mattino  
 Maria NEG eats-3RD SG at the 7 of the morning  
 ‘Maria doesn’t eat at 7 in the morning’
- (21) \*L’ha visto si  
 it-ACC MASC SG-has-3RD SG seen-PP MASC SG si  
 ‘People have seen that’
- (22) L’ha visto Maria  
 it-ACC MASC SG-has-3RD SG seen-PP MASC SG Maria  
 ‘Maria has seen that’
- (23) Chi l’ha detto? \*Si/ Maria  
 who it-ACC MASC SG-has-3RD SG said-PP MASC SG si/ Maria  
 ‘Who said that? Some people/ Maria’

There have been two mainstream approaches to cliticization: one, started by Kayne (1975), which considers clitics as moving elements, base-generated (or merged) in a low position and then moved and cliticized after some steps; another, mainly represented by Jaeggli (1982, 1986) and Borer (1984), which considers clitics as base-generated in the slot they actually occupy, which for both the movement and the base-generation approach was considered to be left-adjacent to V in finite clauses.

The position which clitics occupy has also been a matter of debate: Kayne (1975), together with Borer (1984) and Jaeggli (1982) considered the landing site of clitics to be the VP projection, most naturally the V head.

A novel way to analyze clitics was proposed again by Kayne (1989 a, b). Kayne argued for the existence of an intermediate projection where agreement between object clitics and the past participle takes place. Crucially, the clitic moves through the specifier of such projection as an XP, and ends up adjoined to the verb, this time in Infl, as an  $X^o$ . This means that the verb and the clitic move along parallel paths, but do not move together.

Kayne's proposal opened the way to several other proposals, such as Uriagereka's (1995) and Sportiche's (1993, 1996, 1999). According to Uriagereka, clitics are D heads; in the case of clitic doubling, this amounts to saying that there is an NP in the specifier of the DP projection headed by the clitic. It is worth observing that such a DP is base-generated in an argument position. Clitics and their doubled NP obtain coreference by being in a Spec/Head configuration, as exemplified in (24):

$$(24) \quad [_{IP} lo_i \text{ vio}_j [_{VP} t_j [_{DP} a \text{ Juan} [ t_i ]]]]$$

According to Sportiche, a similar structure holds: only the doubled NP (if there is any) is generated in an argument position, while the clitic is base-generated or merged as an autonomous functional head, called Voice. Like Uriagereka, Sportiche assumes that the coreferentiality between the clitic and the doubled NP is obtained when the clitic and the NP are in a Spec-Head configuration.

$$(25) \quad [_{ClVoiceP} a \text{ Juan}_i lo [_{IP} \text{ vio}_j [_{VP} t_j t_i ]]]]$$

For Uriagereka, thus, the clitic moves along the lines proposed by Kayne's (1989b) theory. For Sportiche, on the other hand, the clitic doesn't move, but the full NP, be it a lexical NP or *pro*, always does.

In recent years, some analyses have been developed in the direction of identifying functional projections dedicated to clitics (see, among others, the work of Manzini & Savoia 2001, 2002 and Poletto 2000). In particular, Manzini & Savoia (2001) propose that clitics are base-generated in the position where they surface, and that hence the clitic string is organized as follows:

$$(26) \quad [D\_Op [D [Q [P [Loc [N$$

Where:

- D stands for Definiteness, and  $D\_Op$  is lexicalized by uninflected clitics
- Q stands for Quantifiers, Lexicalized by 3rd person plural clitics
- P stands for Person, lexicalized by 1st/2nd person clitics
- Loc stands for locative
- N stands for Noun, lexicalized by 3rd person singular clitics

Observe that the D domain is reserved for subject clitics, whereas the lower domain is reserved for object clitics. According to Manzini & Savoia (2002), *si* is located in Q, in virtue of its denotational properties, which are, according to Manzini (1986), those of a free variable.

Each of the previous positions constitutes a step forward in the direction of a specialized field for clitics.

As the present work is mainly focussed on the syntax of impersonal *si* and not on clitics in general, it is worth concentrating on those aspects of the theory which concern *si* in particular. One of the main decisions to be made is whether one should consider clitics as functional heads or as arguments. In fact, there are arguments in favour of each of the two approaches (see Uriagereka 1995 and Sportiche 1993, 1996, 1999). A good attempt at unification of the two hypotheses is sketched in Chomsky's (1995) Minimalist Program. In minimalist terms, nothing prevents something from being both a maximal and minimal projection (i.e. a head), as there is no more need to postulate an X' structure. Therefore, clitics are both heads and XPs. According to Chomsky, 'Assume [...] that a clitic raises from its  $\theta$ -position and attaches to an inflectional head. In its  $\theta$ -position, the clitic is an XP; attachment to a head requires that it be an  $X^o$  (on fairly standard assumptions). Furthermore, the movement violates the Head Movement Constraint (HMC) [footnote omitted], indicating again that it is an XP, raising by XP adjunction. Clitics appear to

share XP and  $X^o$  properties, as we would expect on minimalist assumptions' [from Chomsky (1995:249)]. In this work, I adopt Chomsky's view on clitics. In order to be very precise, however, one should say that *si* is a head, which gets the status of a maximal projection in the moment when it is merged with another element, according to the mechanisms proposed by Chomsky (1995). I will not repeat the whole story every time, however, and will simply talk about *si* as being merged in the specifier of some projection.

Minimalist assumptions can be taken even further for *si*. For instance, *si* can be taken to be merged wherever there is a free slot for an XP. If *si* has argumental properties, as I take it it does, this amounts to saying that *si* can be merged in any argument position available.

Although Chomsky's proposal seems very promising, there are a number of questions about clitics which remain open. The first question is the nature of cliticization. What exactly triggers cliticization? A very interesting proposal has been recently put forward by Bianchi (2001, 2002, 2003) (but see Di Domenico 2002, Sigurðsson 2001, 2002 and Speas 2000, 2001). According to Bianchi, cliticization of direct and indirect objects is an instance of person checking. She assumes that clitic pronouns are the morphological spell-out of person features, which get checked in some clausal functional head. I will partially adopt this proposal in chapter 5, where the relationship between *si* and the speech act is an issue.

### **3. Agreement patterns and interpretation of Impersonal *si* constructions**

ISCs present a number of puzzling agreement facts, which have been often overlooked in the literature. The literature on *si* has been mainly focussed on the problem of absorption of the external  $\theta$ -role and of the withdrawal of Accusative (see Rizzi 1976, Belletti 1982, Burzio 1986, Cinque 1988, Dobrovie Sorin 1996, 1998, 1999

among others). In other words, the main concern of those linguists working on ISCs in Italian has been so far the argument structure of such constructions. To my knowledge, agreement patterns have been put aside almost completely, with the exceptions of Belletti (1982) and Cinque's (1988) work, or have been only partially considered, as in Burzio (1986), Raposo & Uriagereka (1990), and Dobrovie-Sorin (1996, 1998, 1999). Most of the problems concerning agreement patterns with ISCs have been left as 'an open question'.

Impersonal *si* triggers quite peculiar agreement patterns, both in the present tense with transitive verbs and in the perfect tense<sup>1</sup> (*passato prossimo*). In the present tense, *si* constructions with transitive verbs show two main agreement patterns, exemplified in (27) and (28):

(27) In Italia *si* mangiano gli spaghetti  
 in Italy *si* eat-3RD PL the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL  
 'In Italy people eat spaghetti'

(28) In Italia *si* mangia spaghetti  
 in Italy *si* eats-3RD SG spaghetti-MASC PL  
 'In Italy, people eat spaghetti'

(27) and (28) have the same meaning, are made up of the same lexical items but display two different agreement patterns. In (27), the verb agrees with *gli spaghetti*, while in (28) there is no such agreement, and the verb shows a 3rd person singular inflection. I refer to (27) as a sentence with verb-object agreement, and to (28) as a sentence without verb-object agreement.

A second eccentricity of ISCs with respect to agreement is displayed in the past tense of unaccusative and unergative verbs, as illustrated in (29) and (30):

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<sup>1</sup>The Italian *Passato prossimo* is roughly equivalent to the English present perfect. The Italian preterit (*passato remoto*) has almost died out completely, and nowadays the *passato prossimo* also conveys the meaning of the preterit.



(29) Si è arrivati  
 si is-3RD SG arrived-PP PL  
 ‘Somebody/we have arrived’

(30) Si è telefonato  
 si is-3RD SG called-PP SG  
 ‘Somebody/we have called’

In (29), the past participle shows a plural ending, while in (30) the past participle is singular.

In chapter 2, I address the following question: what causes the difference in agreement patterns between sentences (27) and (28)? The difference in agreement patterns, I argue, is caused by the position in which *si* is merged, and by the interaction of *si*’s features with various functional heads. The agreement patterns of (29) and (30) are instead considered in chapter 3.

In addition to the peculiar agreement patterns just outlined, ISCs also present an interesting restriction on the object, illustrated in (31) - (33):

(31) Si vedono molte auto  
 si see-3RD PL many-FEM PL cars-FEM PL  
 ‘One sees many cars’

(32) Si vede Maria/ lui  
 si sees-3RD SG Maria/ he-3RD SG  
 ‘One sees Maria/him’

(33) \*Si vedo io/ vedi tu /vediamo noi  
 si see-1ST SG I-1ST SG see-2ND SG you-2ND SG see-1ST PL we-1ST PL  
 /vedete voi  
 see-2ND PL you-2ND PL  
 ‘One sees me/ you/ us/ you’

(31)-(33) show that the object in ISC with verb-object agreement cannot be other than 3rd person. The locus of discussion of this problem is chapter 4. In chapter 4, I propose that the person feature on *si* ‘saturates’ the person feature on the verb, thus

blocking any other person checking. Hence, T may only agree with a DP, which by definition lacks a person feature. Section 5 of the present chapter contains a more precise characterization of *si*'s feature set.

In his seminal work on *si*, Cinque (1988) observed how the interpretation of ISCs varies according to the time specification of the sentence. In fact, in examples (29) and (30), the introduction of the past tense brings in an inclusive reading. In other words, in (29) and (30), there is an additional indication that the speaker is included in the event. In chapter 5, I examine the interpretational variation of ISCs, and provide an explanation for the phenomenon of inclusiveness which capitalizes once again on *si*'s person feature. This person feature gets specified by imperfective aspect or by the speech act, according to a mechanism which will be presented in details in chapter 5. Chapter 5 and chapter 2 are strictly connected: In chapter 2, I propose that *si* in some cases may be merged in an inner aspectual projection, inside the VP. This projection encodes telicity. As I show in chapter 5, the interpretation of *si* strictly depends on the temporal boundedness and on the telicity of the event. Therefore, *si* can be considered as an aspectual element, whose interpretation varies depending on the aspectual specification of the clause and on the *Aktionsart* of the verb.

#### 4. Theoretical Assumptions

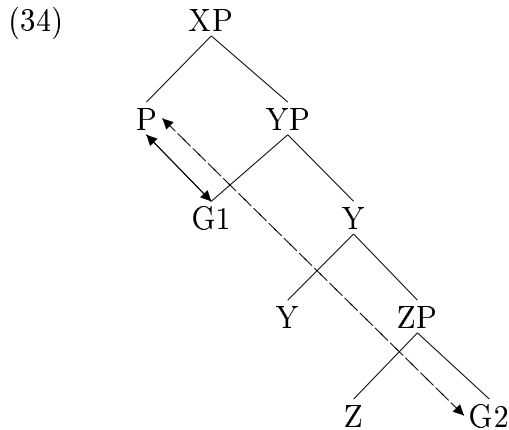
Before presenting my data and my analysis, I provide here an overview of the theoretical model I will make use of in subsequent chapters. This work assumes a basic familiarity with the minimalist approach to syntactic analysis as outlined in Chomsky (1993, 1995). The model I adopt is that outlined in Chomsky (1998, 1999). A central point of this model is that syntactic agreement is driven by uninterpretable  $\phi$ -features. The mechanics behind this syntactic agreement is presented in sections 4.1. and 5.1. below. For some parts of my analysis, however, the Derivation by

Phase (DbP henceforth) model as outlined in Chomsky (1999) will turn out to be insufficient. In that case, I will try and integrate the missing parts, still following the minimalist line of reasoning.

#### 4.1. Uninterpretable features

According to the model outlined in Chomsky (1995, 1999), syntactic expressions must be legible at the interface between the syntactic system and the other systems. This means that all the features which wouldn't be interpretable by the other systems, e.g. by the phonological or by the logical system, need to be eliminated before the interface levels are reached. Chomsky (1999) proposes a mechanism of elimination of uninterpretable features that can be briefly summarized as follows: some features on lexical items have no value and need to get valued (and consequently eliminated) before the interface with other systems is reached, or the derivation will crash. It is usually the case that  $\phi$  features are interpretable on lexical heads and uninterpretable on functional heads. The valuation of features takes place when a **Match** relation between  $\phi$ -features on lexical items is established. Such a relation is established between a **probe**, i.e. an 'attractor', in terms of Chomsky 1995, and a **goal**, i.e. an 'attractee', as soon as lexical items enter the derivation (i.e. they are **merged**). The Match relation triggers an **Agree** relation; under Agree, unvalued features can be valued and deleted from narrow syntax.

According to Chomsky (1998), the **domain** of a probe is its c-command domain. Agree takes place in this domain. As a result, a Spec-Head configuration is no longer necessary in order to obtain agreement, as Agree may act 'long-distance' in the domain, though subject to locality conditions. Locality reduces to 'closest c-command', as illustrated in (34)



Assume that G1 and G2 have  $\phi$ -sets that both potentially Agree with P; Agree between G2 and P is barred by G1, which is closer to P than G2. The definition of closest node goes as follows: given the domain D of a probe P, a matching  $\phi$ -set G2 is closest to P if there is no matching  $\phi$ -set G1 in D such that G1 c-commands G2. In the case of (13), Agree is impossible between G2 and P because there is a matching  $\phi$ -set G1 which is contained in the domain of P and c-commands G2. G1 is called an **intervening**  $\phi$ -set. For the sake of simplicity, I will talk of intervening nodes rather than intervening  $\phi$ -sets. Intervention is a crucial phenomenon in order to explain the agreement facts sketched in the above section.

In light of this system of feature matching, Case cannot enter into Agree. Case ‘assignment’ is a result of an Agree relation between the  $\phi$ -features of the probe and the goal. If there is match of  $\phi$ -features and Agree, there is valuation of the Case features of the argument by the functional head it Agrees with. Specifically, it is assumed that *v* assigns Accusative Case, while T Nominative. In other words, structural Case is parasitic on agreement. Therefore, Case-features are never responsible for driving syntactic derivations.

In the present work, I show that the notion of  $\phi$ -set as proposed by Chomsky and traditionally assumed is too weak in order to account for some agreement facts that Italian and other languages show, including ISCs. For my analysis, I introduce

another feature set which accompanies the standardly assumed syntactic  $\phi$ -set: a semantic set. This semantic set is made up of syntactic features encoding semantic information, such as gender. The mechanism of Case-checking also needs to be refined in the light of these additional assumptions. In particular, I assume that a  $\phi$ -complete set is not necessary for Case to be assigned if the element which bears Case is referential. The notion of referentiality plays a big role in the present analysis. The exact mechanism for Case assignment to referential DPs will be proposed in chapter 2, after the introduction of the complete feature sets that determine DPs.

The DbP model sketches a mechanism according to which deletion of uninterpretable feature is not the cause of syntactic movement. Moreover, if case assignment is ‘parasitic’ on Agree and Agree may take place long-distance, there seems to be no apparent trigger for syntactic movement. Chomsky proposes that the reason for movement is the existence on some functional heads of a feature called EPP, which requires the specifier of such a head to be filled. Of course, not any item is eligible for filling the specifier of a head. Therefore, there has to be a match between the  $\phi$  features of the head containing the EPP and the element that moves. Thus, the **move** operation is a result of the combination of Match of  $\phi$ -features and the existence of an EPP feature on a head. The EPP is an intrinsic property of certain heads: not all heads have an EPP feature.

#### 4.1.1. *Phases and derivations*

Chomsky (1995, 1999) outlines a strictly derivational model for syntactic structures. The relations between lexical items are not representationally defined (as in the Government and Binding framework) and are established during the derivation. Following the ‘Derivation by Phase’ approach, I assume that the relations between lexical items are established as soon as they are taken from the Lexical Array and merged. With Lexical Array (LA) I intend, with Chomsky (1998), the one-time

selection of Lexical Items from the LEXICON. In case such items are selected more than once, they are ‘numerated’. Therefore, the LA may be also called the Numeration.

The deletion of the uninterpretable features that are valued via Agree only takes place at the end of a **phase**. According to Chomsky (1999), the derivation of syntactic expression proceeds by phases, where each phase is determined by a lexical subarray (a sub part of the Numeration) which is placed in the active memory. Once the phase is completed, i.e. all the lexical items have been merged and a syntactic object has been formed, such a syntactic object is sent to **Spell-Out**, that is to interpretation. *vP* and *CP* are phases. Such phases are ‘natural syntactic objects’: they are reconstruction sites, and as such they are complete interpretational units, and have ‘a degree of phonetic independence’ (from Chomsky 1999:9). In chapter 5, I will make use of a more recent definition of phase proposed by Sigurðsson 2000. According to Sigurðsson, *vP* and *CP* are not phases. The event phrase *EP*, which encodes the event structure, and the speech act phrase, which encodes information about the actual participants in the event, are instead phases.

For *wh*- elements or for other elements that move from the *VP* to the *CP* domain, the existence of phases should not compromise the possibility to move. Consider for instance a sentence like *Who did you see?*. According to the model outlined so far, *who*’s features match and Agree with the unvalued  $\phi$  features on *v*, which is the head that assigns Accusative. As a result of this Agree, *who* gets Accusative case *in situ*. As *vP* is a phase, the verb with its complement should be sent to Spell-Out, and hence become invisible for the further steps of the derivation. This would make it impossible for *who* to raise to *CP*. In order to avoid this problem, Chomsky (1998) proposes the Phase Impenetrability Condition, here reported in (35):

- (35) *Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC)* In a phase  $\alpha$  with head *H*, the domain of *H* is not accessible to operations outside  $\alpha$ , only *H* and its edge are accessible to such operations. [Chomsky 2000:108]

Where the edge of a phase  $\alpha$  is defined as in (36):

- (36) Given  $HP = [\alpha [H, \beta]]$ , take  $\beta$  to be the domain of H and  $\alpha$  (a hierarchy of one or more SPECs) to be its edge.

Thus, a head H and its specifiers (its edge) are still visible in a subsequent phase. This permits the movement outside the phase. Specifically, an XP moves outside a phase by using the edge as an escape hatch.

#### 4.2. $\theta$ -roles

According to Chomsky (1995) and subsequent works,  $\theta$ -roles are not features, and are typically assigned within the VP projection.  $\theta$ -role assignment differs from other kinds of assignment, such as Case, in that it is not a consequence of feature checking.  $\theta$ -roles are thus not assigned parasitically on Agree, like Case, nor via a specific agreement relation. They are assigned configurationally, in the merging place of arguments. If an argument is merged in the complement position of a verb, it will get the lowest  $\theta$ -role the verb can assign, and so on.

Several studies have recently shown that a strictly configurational theory of  $\theta$ -role assignment is not enough to explain  $\theta$ -role-shifts or insertion of additional  $\theta$ -roles in a derivation (see Damonte 2003 for a theory of functional  $\theta$ -projections).  $\theta$ -roles appear to be assigned in a fixed order, and this has led some linguists to argue for a  $\theta$ -hierarchy, where some ‘higher’ arguments always receive a  $\theta$ -role which is higher in the hierarchy. Another way of seeing this is by saying that there are functional projections which are dedicated to specific  $\theta$ -roles, and that  $\theta$ -role assignment is just another form of feature checking. The assignment of  $\theta$ -role may take place through an operation which resembles Agree, which respects locality constraints but nevertheless is about feature checking (see Manzini & Roussou 1997, Hornstein 2001). Building on Hornstein (2001), I argue that  $\theta$ -role assignment is feature checking. As I show in the next chapter, I assume that arguments are merged in Event Phrases, and that they check their  $\theta$ -roles against different heads than the heads of the projec-

tions they are merged in. Contrary to Hornstein, I assume that this kind of feature checking does not force movement.  $\theta$ -feature checking obtains thus via an operation which resembles case assignment. DPs possess a  $\theta$ -feature which needs to be valued against the closest head which bears valued  $\theta$ -features. Following the traditional assumptions about  $\theta$ -role assignment, I assume that the transitive  $v$  bears a valued Agent feature, whereas V bears a valued Theme feature. Other thematic roles are assigned by different thematic projections (Benefactive, Recipient, and so on).

To conclude, for the present work I assume that Case is assigned parasitically on the Agree operation, which holds between valued features on functional projections and unvalued features on lexical ones.  $\theta$ -roles are also assigned this way, via an operation which values unvalued  $\theta$ -features (see Hornstein 2001 for a theory of  $\theta$ -roles as features).

## 5. Syntactic and semantic agreement

The complexity of agreement facts across languages has attracted the attention of many linguists. The so-called ‘pragmatic’ agreement phenomena are well known. In (37), for instance, ‘pragmatic’ plural agreement holds, although *the faculty* is morphologically specified as a singular noun:

(37) The faculty are voting themselves a raise [from Pollard & Sag (1994:71)]

*Faculty* usually triggers singular agreement, as the example (38) shows:

(38) The faculty is meeting on Friday .

The phenomenon of ‘pragmatic agreement’ is common to many languages. A well-known case of pragmatic agreement in Italian is gender agreement with names ending in -e, like *insegnante* (teacher), which triggers feminine agreement if the teacher is female, and masculine agreement if the teacher is male:



- (39) L'insegnante è brava  
 the-MASC/FEM-teacher-MASC/FEM is-3RD SG good-SG FEM  
 'The teacher is good'
- (40) L'insegnante è bravo  
 the-MASC/FEM-teacher-MASC/FEM is-3RD SG good-SG MASC  
 'The teacher is good'

The cases in (37)- (40) are quite straightforward: it is the semantics of the noun that determines syntactic agreement. But how does semantics determine syntactic agreement? I propose that the traditional  $\phi$ -set is not enough to account for cases like (39)-(40). Syntactic agreement is more complex than the simple application of Agree, and involves a larger number of features. In what follows, I first detect the syntactic  $\phi$ -set that characterizes impersonal *si*. Then, I move on to examine cases in which syntactic agreement is not the only form of agreement involved. I propose the existence of another set of features, which participates in the determination of agreement: semantic features (see Sauerland 2003). I finally proceed to identify the semantic features of impersonal *si*.

### 5.1. Syntactic agreement and the identification of syntactic features

The underlying assumption I intend to make for the present discussion is that syntactic categories are characterized by a unique feature composition on their components. Moreover, as a general rule, if a feature is morphologically or syntactically visible on one element of the category, this feature is present in all elements of the class. The opposite also holds: if a feature is never visible on any element of a category, this feature does not exist on that category. There are of course exceptions, like the gender feature on pronouns in Italian: only the 3rd person singular pronouns *lui* e *lei* show gender in Italian. Therefore, one can say that 1st and 2nd person pronouns in Italian do not have a gender feature.

Let us consider now the Italian verb *mangiare*, in its forms  $E_1 = mangio$  (1st

person) and  $E_2 = \textit{mangi}$  (2nd person). 1st and 2nd are **values**, which are assigned to the **dimension number**. A feature is a valued dimension (see Uriagereka 1999 for further details). Now, if an element ‘surfaces’ with a certain value, then the dimension must be present on that element, or the value wouldn’t be visible (morphologically). Let us consider again a verb like *mangiare* (eat). The form *mangio* (I eat) is morphologically marked as a 1st person form when compared with the other forms *mangi* (you eat-2nd person) or *mangia* (he eats-3rd person). In other words, one value is visible morphologically when other values of the same kind which contrast with it are visible. My conclusion is that if a value is visible, the dimension exists on that element.

The first agreement phenomenon that comes to one’s mind when one is thinking about agreement is subject-verb agreement. This kind of agreement usually only involves syntactic features, like in (41):

- (41) Gianni                    mangia  
       Gianni-MASC SG eats-3RD SG  
       ‘Gianni eats’

In (41), the noun *Gianni* shows number and gender inflection, while the verb *mangia* is inflected for person and number. Can we claim that the verb carries gender? Not at all, as becomes clear if we compare the Italian verb to the corresponding Russian verb *eat*, which in the past tense exhibits gender features, as (42) and (43) show:

- (42) Ivan s”el  
       Ivan ate-3RD SG MASC  
       ‘Ivan ate’
- (43) Nastja                    s”ela  
       Nastja-FEM SG ate-3RD SG FEM  
       ‘Nastja ate’

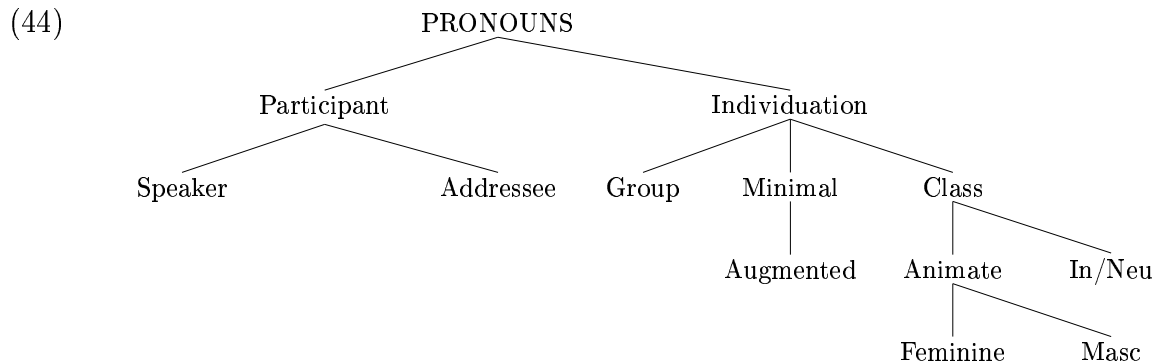
Can we claim that *Gianni* carries person? The answer to this question requires

an accurate consideration of the facts. As I have stated before, the underlying assumption to the present features-system is comparison.

Let us consider *Gianni*. We see that the category of nouns it belongs to does not have any value for person. There is no 2nd person noun, or no 1st person noun. The 1st and 2nd values are visible on pronouns for instance, but not on nouns. This entails that the person dimension is not present on the category of nouns.

For the sake of uniformity with the general framework, I will refer to what I have just called ‘dimensions’ as ‘features’, and to ‘features (with a value)’ as ‘valued features’. Moreover, I will refer to syntactic features as  $\phi$ -features.

In a recent paper, Harley & Ritter (2002) have shown that the characterization of pronouns is more subtle than the one linguists have been using so far. More precisely, they have shown how a system which is based only on person/gender/number features is insufficient to describe the feature configuration of morphologically complex pronouns. Harley & Ritter (2002) propose a feature geometry which accounts for the degree of markedness of features, reported in (44):



Quite obviously, the Speaker and Addressee nodes refer, in Harley & Ritter’s feature geometry, to 1st and 2nd person respectively. The 3rd person is, according to them, unmarked, and therefore corresponds to the absence of the Participant node. Moreover, according to Harley & Ritter, when only the Participant node or the

Individuation node are present without further specification, i.e. when the nodes are underspecified, they receive a default interpretation. The default interpretation for the Participation node is, according to Harley & Ritter, 1st person (i.e. Speaker), while the default interpretation for the Individuation node is singular (i.e. minimal).

Harley & Ritter's feature geometry doesn't consider however impersonal pronouns. As I show in the next section, impersonal *si* cannot be considered exactly coincident with a 3rd person pronoun. In the present work, I adopt Harley & Ritter's idea of a classification for syntactic features, expanding their feature set to include also some semantic features. In particular, I assume that a 'node' may have two specifications at the same time. The Participant node, for example, may be specified for both Speaker and Addressee. I therefore wish to introduce the notion of **disjunctive feature**, as proposed by Wechsler & Zlatic (2001):

- (45) A disjunctive feature is a feature that includes all the possible values for that feature.

In other words, a disjunctive number feature is a valued feature that has both values: singular and plural. I will use the term disjunctive feature in order to identify exactly this phenomenon: an element that has a doubly-valued feature.

It is worth remarking that my disjunctive feature is not included among the possibilities that Harley & Ritter propose. As an example, let us consider a disjunctive number feature, which has both the values singular and plural. According to Harley & Ritter, when both Minimal and Group are present (i.e. when both singular and plural are present), dual number obtains. In my terms, that the number feature is disjunctive does not mean that the Individuation node is underspecified (in Harley & Ritter's terms), nor that the node is specified for both Minimal-singular and Group-plural simultaneously. A disjunctive number feature is something else: it is a feature that embodies both values **alternatively**, depending on the semantics of the sentence. The actual realization of one or the other value on the feature is



## 5.2. Semantic agreement

Munn (1999), Wechsler & Zlatić (2001), and Costa & Pereira (2003) among others have often remarked that languages like Arabic, European Portuguese and Serbo-Croatian present agreement phenomena that are not easily analyzable with the mere notion of syntactic agreement. European Portuguese, for example, exhibits the so-called ‘mixed agreement’, exemplified in (48) for Portuguese:

- (48) A gente está cansados  
 a gente is-3RD SG tired-MASC PL  
 ‘People are tired’ [from Costa & Pereira (2003:1)]

*A gente* is syntactically a 3rd person singular feminine pronoun. Nevertheless, it triggers masculine plural syntactic agreement on the adjective. It is quite evident that such an agreement pattern is impossible to obtain if one considers simply syntactic agreement features. The same kind of phenomenon obtains in Italian ISCs, as in (49):

- (49) Si è belli  
 si is-3RD SG beautiful-MASC PL  
 ‘People are beautiful’

(49) presents what Wechsler & Zlatić (2001) define as a ‘dis-agreement’ between the number feature of the verb and that of the adjective. I wish to propose that the ‘dis-agreement’ in question is due to the interaction of syntactic and semantic features, according to a mechanism that I show below. One could of course argue that the choice of a plural masculine adjective is the default choice for Italian. I believe though that this is not the case, and that (49) is rather a case of semantic agreement, also in the light of the examples I am about to consider.

A clear-cut case of semantic agreement obtains in fact in example (37), here repeated as (50)

(50) The faculty are voting themselves a raise [from Pollard & Sag (1994:71)]

In (50) *the faculty* is clearly singular. Nevertheless, the verb shows plural agreement. A straightforward case of semantic/syntactic split emerges in Italian polite *voi* ('You') constructions, as exemplified in (51):

(51) Voi                      siete              bella  
 you-NOM 2ND PL are-2ND PL beautiful-FEM SING  
 'You are beautiful'

Cases like (50)-(51) cannot be explained with the notion of default agreement. I conclude therefore that something more complex is going on, and that there are two feature sets, one of which reflects semantics.

In order to explain the facts in (48)-(51), I postulate the existence of an additional feature-set, call it the  $\sigma$ -set, which is made up of semantic features, better of syntactic features that encode semantico-pragmatic information. By semantico-pragmatic information I mean information about the actual referent of a lexical item/pronoun. The syntactic and semantic inventory of the category noun is listed in (52):

(52)

$\phi$ -features	$\sigma$ -features
person	PERSON
number	NUMBER
gender	GENDER
Case	—
—	ANIMACY (Humanity)

The values for such features are the following:

(53)

	$\phi$ -features	$\sigma$ -features
<b>person</b>	1st, 2nd, 3rd	SPEAKER, ADDRESSEE, OTHER
<b>number</b>	singular, plural	ONE, GROUP-MANY
<b>gender</b>	masculine, feminine	MALE, FEMALE, NO
<b>Case</b>	Nominative, Accusative	—
<b>Animacy</b>	—	HUMAN, NON HUMAN

For the sake of simplicity, I will name the semantico-pragmatic feature values with the same name as their corresponding syntactic values. I will indicate semantic features in CAPITAL letters. The table in (53) is thus to be read as (54):

(54)

	$\phi$ -features	$\sigma$ -features
<b>person</b>	1st, 2nd, 3rd	1ST, 2ND, 3RD
<b>number</b>	singular, plural	SINGULAR, PLURAL
<b>gender</b>	masculine, feminine	MALE, FEMALE, NO GENDER
<b>Case</b>	Nominative, Accusative	—
<b>Animacy</b>	—	HUMAN, NON-HUMAN

As an example, let us consider the word ‘commissione’ (committee). Its feature sets will be:

(55)

$\phi$	$\sigma$
no person	3RD PERSON
singular	SINGULAR, PLURAL
feminine	NO GENDER
—	HUMAN



*Commissione* has no syntactic person like all nouns in Italian; it has a semantic feature ‘Other’, which means that we are not considering the Speaker nor the Addressee. It is syntactically singular, but semantically it may be considered both Singular and Plural; consider the following example:

- (56) La commissione è buona. Sono brave  
 the committee is-3RD SG good-SG FEM are-3RD PL good-PL FEM  
 persone  
 people-PL FEM  
 ‘The committee are good. They are all good people’

(56) shows that *commissione* may trigger both singular and plural agreement. This is due to the fact that one may consider the committee as a whole (collective reading), or as a group of single persons (distributive reading) (see Landman 2000 for a semantic definition of collective vs. distributive sets). When one considers the group as a whole, singular agreement obtains. When one considers every single person, plural agreement obtains. Therefore, we can conclude that *commissione* holds a disjunctive semantic person feature, which is alternatively singular or plural. The syntactic gender of *commissione* is feminine; semantically, *commissione* has no gender (see also Wechsler & Zlatic 2001 for a discussion on semantic gender). *Commissione* also holds a ‘human’ semantic feature.

Adjectives only possess a  $\sigma$ -set. Past participles, on the other hand, due to their double nature as verbs and adjectives, hold both sets: the  $\phi$ -set and the  $\sigma$ -set. I will return on this issue in details in chapter 3.

Turning now to agreement, it is clear that the simple Agree relation sketched in section 4 is insufficient to cover both sets of features. In particular, I propose that adjectival and participial (and determiner) agreement involves the  $\sigma$ -set, while verbal agreement involves the  $\phi$ -set only. Adopting Uriagereka’s (1999) terminology, I propose that adjectival/participial agreement obtains through Concord, while subject-verb agreement obtains through Agree. Concord targets the  $\sigma$ -set; Agree

targets the  $\phi$ -set. More specifically, Concord and Agree are complementary operations, that involve different feature sets and operate on different domains. They are however the same operation, and take place after feature Match to value unvalued features.

That agreement obtains via Concord does not amount to saying that adjectival agreement is a kind of semantic agreement which does not take place in the syntax. Concord also involves syntactic features. Such syntactic features are however not coincident with the  $\phi$ -set. They are different from the ‘basic’  $\phi$ -set in that they carry semantico-pragmatic information (see Sauerland 2003 for a similar definition of extra agreement features). To say it with Sauerland (2003:1) ‘the  $\sigma$ -set is made up of semantically contentful agreement features’, which are on the lexical item in addition to syntactic ones.

Let us consider a case of ‘normal’ agreement, such as the one in sentence (57):

- (57) Quella casa rossa è molto  
 that-SG FEM house-SG FEM red-SG FEM is-3RD SG very  
 bella  
 beautiful-SG FEM  
 ‘That red house is very nice’

In (57), the syntactic features on *casa* are: feminine and singular; the semantic features are SINGULAR and NO GENDER. The question is now how agreement on the adjectives and on the verb is determined. I wish to propose that agreement in both cases involves syntactic -features, but that the  $\sigma$ -feature set which enters adjectival agreement is not (necessarily) coincident with the  $\phi$ -set which is attributed to *casa* in the lexicon. In other words, there is division of labor between the syntactic and the semantic feature sets. As a general rule, the  $\sigma$ -set enters Concord, and the  $\phi$ -set enters Agree.

Let us consider first the adjectival agreement in (57). The semantic number of *casa* is SINGULAR, and the syntactic number of *casa* is singular. There is a



How is the gender on the adjectives determined then? The answer is quite straightforward on the light of what I have just proposed. *Insegnante* has a disjunctive semantic gender feature, which is alternatively MASCULINE or FEMININE. The resulting  $\sigma$  set will contain a disjunctive syntactic gender feature, which will receive a value depending on the sex of the actual teacher who is the subject of predication. Masculine or feminine agreement will thus be determined through Concord of the adjective with the noun. In the end, it is semantics that determines syntactic agreement here. The existence of examples like (58) and (59) offers support for the hypothesis that two feature sets exist on lexical items, one which is purely syntactic, and another one which is affected by semantics.

To summarize, I have proposed that DPs bear two distinct sets of features: a  $\phi$ -set, made up of proper syntactic features, and a  $\sigma$ -set, which is made up of semantic features, that are related to the semantic nature of the referent of the noun. Agreement between the DP and the verb is obtained via Agree; the features involved in this case are those of the  $\phi$ -set. Adjectival and participial agreement are obtained via Concord, and the syntactic set of features involved is the  $\sigma$  set.

### 5.3. The syntactic features of impersonal *si*

As we have seen in section 5.1., Italian pronouns show morphological inflection for person and number. The specific characterization of Italian pronouns (in the Nominative form) is as follows:

(60)

<b>mi</b>	1st ps sg
<b>ti</b>	2nd ps sg
<b>si</b>	3rd ps sg
<b>ci</b>	1rd ps pl
<b>vi</b>	2rd ps pl
<b>si</b>	3rd ps pl

In the discussion above, I have assumed that morphological inflection reflects syntactic features, such as number, person, and possibly gender (see Ritter 1993 and Masullo & Depiante 2003 for a discussion on whether gender is a syntactic or a lexical feature).

The feature composition of *si* is not so straightforward, because syntactic features are not reflected in the morphology of *si*, and because of the unusual agreement patterns the insertion of *si* in a clause generates.

### 5.3.1. *Si's syntactic number feature*

Since 3rd person inflection appears on the verbs that accompany *si*, it is usually assumed that *si* has a singular number feature (Napoli 1976, Belletti 1982, Burzio 1986):

(61) Domani si dorme un'ora in più  
 tomorrow si sleeps 3RD SG an hour in more  
 'Tomorrow people will have one extra hour of sleep'

However, Chierchia (1995b) shows that *si* is semantically plural, as it introduces a group of referents in the discourse. The issue is here the relation between semantic and syntactic plurality. The question is thus whether semantic plurality has a syntactic counterpart. Let us consider the following sentence:

- (62) Al giorno d'oggi si è simpatici solo se si è  
 at the day of today si is 3RD SG nice MASC PL only if si is 3RD SG  
 ricchi  
 rich MASC PL  
 'Nowadays one is nice only if one is rich'

(62) seems to show that *si* has a syntactic plural number feature, because *si* is the only element in the clause to which the adjective may refer. The following example, from Salvi (1991), however, is often reported (see Egerland 2003) as a counterexample to the claim that *si* is plural:

- (63) Quando si è il presidente degli Stati Uniti,...  
 when si is the president of the States United  
 'When one is the president of the United States, ...'

In (63), a singular noun is allowed in the predicative construction. If we take the copula *essere* ('be') to mean identity of features, as is usually assumed, we can conclude that *si* and *il presidente* carry the same singular features. Therefore, this shows that *si* is not syntactically plural. As an additional piece of evidence for the claim that *si* is not syntactically plural, it is worth noticing that the behavior of *si* isn't exactly parallel to that of a 3rd person plural pronoun like *loro*, as shown by examples (64) and (65) (for the assumption that *si* is 3rd person, see the next subsection):

- (64) Loro mangiano  
 they-3RD PL eat-3RD PL  
 'They eat'
- (65) Si mangia  
 si eats-3RD SG  
 'People eat'

In (64), the 3rd plural pronoun triggers plural agreement on the verb, while *si* in (65) triggers singular agreement. But if *si* were plural it should naturally behave

like all other plural pronouns. Let us consider the next two sentences:

(66) Loro hanno mangiato  
 they have-3RD PL eaten-PP SG  
 'They have eaten'

(67) Si è mangiato  
 si-IMP is-3RD SG eaten-PP SG  
 'People have eaten'

(66) contains a 3rd person plural pronoun, which triggers 3rd person plural agreement on the auxiliary. Evidently, *si* does not trigger the same kind of agreement on the auxiliary. If *si* were syntactically plural, one would expect to see a syntactic configuration like in (68), which is never the case:

(68) \*Si sono mangiato/i  
 si are-3RD PL eaten-PP MASC SG/PL  
 'People have eaten'

The difference between *si* and 3rd person plural pronouns becomes even sharper in (69) vs. (70):

(69) Loro sono arrivati  
 they are sc 3rd pl arrived-PP PL  
 'They have arrived'

vs.

(70) Si è arrivati  
 si is-3RD SG arrived-PP PL  
 'People have arrived'

Again, in (69) both the past participle and the auxiliary show plural inflection, while in (70) the participle is plural and the auxiliary is singular.

Recapitulating, there are different syntactic hints about *si*'s number feature: sentences like (61) and (67)-(70) seem to show that *si* is singular. Sentences like

(62) and (70) again seem to show that *si* is plural. (70), in particular, seems to show that *si* is both singular and plural at the same time.

In order to provide an solution for this puzzle, let me first present some observations: first, a verb which agrees only with *si* only always shows singular inflection. Second, the range of contexts where the singular and plural features appear are different. In particular, adjectival (and participial) inflection seem to reflect *si*'s plural number feature, whereas verbal inflection seems to reflect *si*'s singular number feature. A straightforward solution which reconciles both parts is to say that adjectival and verbal agreement are two different operations, which involve two different sets of features. As anticipated in the previous section, this is exactly my proposal: adjectival (and participial) agreement is determined via Concord, which selects a semantic set of features that is determined by the semantics of the noun. Verbal agreement selects instead the 'traditional'  $\phi$ -set (see Uriagereka 1999 and Hughes 2003). Concord is a local operation: it requires a spec-head or a head-complement configuration.

Following Egerland (2003) among others, I assume that *si* has no syntactic number. In chapter 3, I will show how adjectival agreement obtains without a syntactic number feature but with a semantic plural number feature.

An account for the agreement patterns presented in this section is provided in chapter 3.

### 5.3.2. *Si*'s syntactic person feature

The agreement ending on the verbs which appear 'in combination' with *si* is always 3rd person. As we have seen in the last section, however, agreement facts do not provide incontrovertible evidence of the feature composition of *si*.

A first attempt to classify pronouns according to person is due to Benveniste 1966. In his classification, Benveniste sets 3rd person pronominals apart from 1st



and 2nd person ones. He claims that 3rd person pronominals have ‘no person’.

A development of Beneveniste’s analysis is offered by Bonet (1991). The distribution of clitics in Barceloní Catalan shows how reflexives pattern with 1st and 2nd clitics, and are distinct from 3rd person clitics. Along the same lines, Kayne (2000) provides a detailed classification of clitics in Romance, showing how reflexive *si* patterns with 1st and 2nd clitics because of several reasons: morphological inflection, syntactic interaction with other elements in the clause and distribution.

Yet, impersonal *si* cannot be considered exactly like reflexive *si*. In fact, impersonal and reflexive *si* differ from each other in several respects:

- **Referentiality:** There is a difference between impersonal and reflexive *si* in referentiality: impersonal *si* is, at least partially, referential.
- **Morphological inflection** Impersonal *si* never shows morphological inflection, while reflexive *si* does. The table in (15) showed the inflectional paradigm of reflexive *si*; impersonal *si* doesn’t instead show morphological inflection.
- **Distribution** There are also differences in the distribution of reflexive and impersonal *si*, as shown in (71) and (72):

(71) Gianni e Maria se lo sono raccontato  
 Gianni and Maria si-REFL it-ACC are told  
 ‘Gianni and Maria have told that to each other’

vs.

(72) Lo si è raccontato  
 it-ACC si-IMP is told  
 ‘People have told this to each other’

As we can observe, the accusative clitic *lo* follows reflexive *si* and precedes

impersonal *si*. This is enough to doubt the possibility to apply Kayne's generalizations also to impersonal *si*.

The existence of an impersonal *si*'s person feature needs to be shown by other means.

In the literature, there are three main proposals about *si*'s person feature: Burzio (1986) proposes that impersonal *si* has no person feature. On the other hand, Manzini (1986) assumes that the person feature on *si* is unspecified. Third, Cinque (1988) proposes that *si* holds a generic person feature, which he calls *arb*. This feature is not a better defined syntactic marker for unspecified person, which needs to combine with a *personal* AGR head, i.e. with a finite verb. My assumptions on *si*'s person feature build partially on this last approach. However, differently from Cinque, I draw the distinction between syntactic and semantic person.

I assume that pronouns in Italian are all inflected for person, even 3rd person pronouns, which are usually considered to lack a person feature. Therefore, *si* also must hold a person feature.

The existence of a person feature on *si* can be independently shown by considering a particular restriction on the person feature of the object in ISCs. In a sentence like *Si vendono le macchine* ('people sell cars'), the object *le macchine* can only be third person. In chapter 4, I show how the person feature of impersonal *si* is responsible for this restriction. Therefore, I assume that *si* holds a person feature.

The question is then which person is it? One can exclude with an acceptable degree of certainty that *si* is 1st or 2nd person, because 1st or 2nd inflection never shows up on the verb when impersonal *si* is present.

It seems quite straightforward to conclude that *si* has a 3rd person feature. With this assumption, I depart from Harley & Ritter's definition of a 3rd person as a no-person feature. I assume instead that a verb shows 3rd person agreement when the DP it agrees with:

- lacks the person feature
- holds a 3rd person feature, i.e. a valued person feature with the value 3rd

To conclude, I argue that *si* is syntactically 3rd person, differently from DPs which do not hold a syntactic person feature, and similarly to other 3rd person pronouns. Both *si* (and 3rd person pronouns) and DPs trigger 3rd person syntactic agreement on the verb.

### 5.3.3. *Si*'s gender feature

The gender feature of *si* is also not clear-cut. If we take a look at agreement facts, we discover that *si* doesn't force one or the other gender agreement:

(73) Se *si* ha una Ferrari *si* è ricchi  
 if *si* has-3RD SG a Ferrari *si* is-3RD SG rich  
 'If one has a Ferrari, one is rich'

(74) Se *si* è incinte bisogna fare attenzione ai gatti  
 if *si* is-3RD SG pregnant needs make attention at the cats  
 'If one is pregnant, one should be careful with cats'

In (73), *si* triggers masculine agreement on the adjective. In (74), it triggers feminine agreement.

I assume that *si* has no syntactic gender feature. The agreement facts in (73) and (74) are determined by semantic agreement, according to the mechanism outlined in section 5.2.

So far, we have seen that *si* has no syntactic number feature, a 3rd person feature, and no gender feature.

A final remark is necessary here. If we apply Chomsky's definition to *si* as I have just described it, namely with neither syntactic gender nor syntactic number, *si* turns out to be a  $\phi$ -incomplete item. Yet, it may enter Agree and value unvalued features on functional heads, according to the mechanism proposed in Chomsky

(1999), which I have summarized in section 4 above. Departing from Chomsky's (1999) assumptions, I argue that referential expressions may enter Agree, and bear  $\theta$ -roles and Case. In section 5.4., I show that impersonal *si* is referential, thank to its semantic feature set. This allows *si* to behave as a syntactically  $\phi$ -complete item with respect to Agree and  $\theta$ -role assignment.

After defining the syntactic feature bundle which characterizes impersonal *si*, I can now move on to identify the semantic feature set which characterizes *si*.

#### 5.4. The semantic features on impersonal *si*

Italian pronouns bear syntactic information about number and person, and in some cases about gender and animacy (or humanity). Whether case, or what is usually called inherent case, is a semantic feature or not is a matter of debate. For the present discussion, I will leave the inherent case issue aside, and focus on the semantic features that are relevant for the identification of *si*.

##### 5.4.1. Animacy

It has often been pointed out that impersonal *si* identifies a group of humans. That is, its referential set is a group of human beings. This property has often been referred to as 'animacy' (Anagnostopoulou 2002, Ormazabal & Romero 2000) 'Animacy' is, however, not a precise definition, because of course also animals are animate and they are not included in *si*'s reference set. One might consider naming this feature 'Person', but this would yield confusion between the syntactic person feature and its possible 'Person = human' specification. Another possibility would be to identify this feature as 'human'. This is the term I am going to adopt, because I think it is the most iconic and it doesn't lead to misunderstanding.

Impersonal *si* bears the semantic feature 'HUMAN'. According to the model proposed by Chierchia (1995), impersonal *si* identifies a group of people performing

the action expressed by the verb. This ‘HUMAN’ feature is crucial for my analysis, because it helps draw the distinction between impersonal and anaphoric *si*.

Impersonal *si* may only be ‘human’. The following sentence may be only interpreted as ‘people bark’, never as ‘dogs bark’, despite the fact that ‘bark’ is - usually - something that only dogs do.

- (75) Qui si abbaia tutto il giorno  
 here si barks all the day  
 ‘Here people bark all day long’

When the predicate obviously refers to something ‘non-human’, the use of *si* is forbidden:

- (76) #Si è di plastica  
 si is of plastic  
 ?<sup>3</sup>

(76) is only acceptable with a figurative meaning, which does not interest us here.

Reflexive *si*, on the contrary, does not bear a ‘human’ feature. One can easily utter a sentence like:

- (77) Questa macchinetta del caffè si pulisce da sola  
 this machine of the coffee si cleans by alone  
 ‘This coffee-machine auto-cleans herself’

Impersonal *si* and reflexive *si* display a different syntactic behavior also because of their different feature-sets. In particular, what matters for the present analysis is that impersonal *si* is referential, and may thus bear a  $\theta$ -role and Case, and intervene in Case assignment, while reflexive *si* cannot. I will come back to the referentiality issue in the next section, after considering *si*’s semantic number feature.

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<sup>3</sup>I use the \* to indicate an ungrammatical sentence. # indicates that a sentence is syntactically good but uninterpretable.

5.4.2. *Si's semantic number feature*

Chierchia (1995b) argued extensively for the semantic plurality of *si*. That *si* is semantically plural is universally recognized. In sentences with no other ‘number’ specification, *si* serves as an identifier for a group, like in (78):

- (78) Si canta                    e    si balla  
       si sings-3RD SG and si dances-3RD SG  
       ‘People sing and dance’

(78) can never mean something like ‘I sing’, or ‘you sing’, unless a very strong pragmatic context forces the 1st person interpretation, like in (79):

- (79) Come stai?                Eh, si vive!  
       how are-2ND SG eh si lives-3RD SG  
       ‘How are you? Well, I try to go on’

I do not wish to consider these pragmatically very marked and marginal constructions here. My assumptions will be drawn on the basis of the ‘usual’, common interpretation that *si* obtains, which is that of a group of people. We can thus easily conclude that *si* bears a plural (Group) semantic feature.

The Human and Group features together provide impersonal *si* with a very important characteristic: referentiality, which permits *si* to bear  $\theta$ -roles or Case. Reflexive *si* is instead not referential, and as such it may not bear Case, nor intervene in Case assignment, unless it has been previously specified via an anaphoric relation.

It is well known that reflexive *si* has an anaphoric behavior: it needs an antecedent which binds it within a given domain in order to be able to get a referent. In the following example, reflexive *si* doesn’t have a referent until the antecedent *Gianni* is merged. At that point, *si*’s referent becomes *Gianni* himself:

- (80) Gianni<sub>i</sub> si<sub>i</sub> lava  
       Gianni si washes-3RD SG  
       ‘Gianni washes himself’

Impersonal *si*, on the other hand, has intrinsic referentiality. It doesn't need an antecedent in order to get its reference, but it identifies a group of humans. The referentiality of impersonal *si* is like the referentiality of *Gianni*: it is pragmatically established, and represented in the combination of the semantic 'human' and 'plural' features. Reflexive *si* doesn't have any reference at all before it gets bound by an antecedent, while impersonal *si* does have a reference set already provided by its semantic 'human' feature together with its semantic number feature. The referentiality of impersonal *si* is, however, not complete. *Si* only identifies a group of people which can -and needs to- be further specified. The reference group may, for instance, be specified for inclusiveness, i.e. may include the speaker. Such a specification is determined by several factors, such as the aspectual specification of the sentence or the *Aktionsart* of the verb, as we will see in chapter 5. The specification of *si*'s reference set comes about via the specification of *si*'s semantic person feature, as I sketch in the next subsection and explain thoroughly in chapter 5.

#### 5.4.3. *Semantic person*

The identification of *si*'s semantic person is not a straightforward issue, as *si* does not have a unique referent.

According to Cinque, *si* holds an arbitrary person feature, which provides the sentence with a generic or arbitrary subject. Cinque (1988) defines this *arb* feature as a syntactic person feature, which triggers 3rd person default agreement on the verb. Within the present framework, which considers two classes of features, one could affirm that Cinque's *arb* person feature is indeed a semantic feature, which correlates with the lack of specification of the referent group. In other words, this feature strictly correlates with the capability of *si* to identify an unspecified group of human referents.

This assumption is not unnatural, if one thinks about the syntactic and semantic

features of *pro* in a sentence like (81):

- (81) Se *pro* vuoi fare i soldi, *pro* devi  
 if pro-2ND SG want-2ND SG make the money pro-2ND SG must-2ND SG  
 fare il calciatore  
 do the football player  
 ‘If you want to make money, you need to be a football player’

In this case, the syntactic person feature of *pro* is clearly 2nd. This has nothing to do with the referent group that *pro* identifies. The sentence means in fact something like ‘If one wants to make money, one needs to play football’. ‘One’ has no exact referent, and does not identify the Addressee, or not necessarily. In fact, Jaeggli (1986) shows that languages apply some constant strategies in order to obtain an arbitrary reading, such as picking up the silent form of the pronoun. The arbitrary reading is thus determined in different ways, but it seems to have little to do with the syntactic person feature. The example in (81) clearly shows that syntactic and semantic features may be *non-coincident*.

*Si*'s *arb* feature as proposed by Cinque is thus a semantic feature, not a syntactic one. This semantic person feature has an unspecified value. This, together with the plural and human semantic features, leads us to the right conclusion that *si* identifies an unspecified group of people. The question at issue here concerns the level of lack of specification of the referent group. Is it really true that the group of humans identified by *si* is totally unspecified? Or does its interpretation vary? The answer to this question is provided by the following pair of examples:

- (82) In questa città si beve molto  
 in this city si drinks-3RD SG much  
 ‘In this city, people drink a lot’

- (83) Ieri si è arrivati tardi in stazione  
 yesterday si is arrived late in station  
 ‘Yesterday we arrived late at the station’

From the comparison of (82) and (83) it is clear that the reference group is not one



and the same in both cases. In particular, in (82), *si* identifies an unspecified group of people, which may or may not include the speaker. Were the speaker abstemious, the sentence would still hold. In (83), on the contrary, there is a specification for inclusiveness, i.e. the speaker is included among the people who arrived late at the station. Were the speaker not among them, the sentence would be false.

The issue of the identification of the reference set introduced by *si* is a very complex one. In chapter 5, I show that many elements co-occur in the identification of such a set, like *Aktionsart* and sentential aspect. In particular, I show that the boundedness of the event brings about the inclusive interpretation in (83).

To conclude, I assume that the semantic person feature on *si* is indeed unspecified, and that it needs to get a specification in order for the sentence to be interpretable. The mechanism according to which this specification takes place is presented in chapter 5.

#### 5.4.4. *Si's semantic gender feature*

*Si's* semantic gender feature may be identified quite easily by considering that *si* refers to a group of humans who hold semantic gender. In a sentence like (84), the referent group will be made up of women, and therefore *si's* semantic gender will be Female.

- (84) Se *si* è incinte                      bisogna                      mangiare poco  
 if *si* is pregnant-PL FEM needs-3RD SG eat                      little  
 'If one is pregnant, one needs to eat little'

In a sentence like (85), the referent group is either made up of men only, or of men and women together:

- (85) Se *si* è ricchi,                      *si* è simpatici                      a tutti  
 if *si* is rich-MASC PL se is nice-PL MASC to all-PL MASC  
 'If one is rich, everybody likes him/her'

Thus, *si* has a disjunctive gender feature: MALE and FEMALE. The mapping into  $\sigma$  is however in this case not one-to-one. Male sex is mapped into masculine, female sex is mapped into feminine, but a mixed group of men and women is mapped into masculine.

To conclude, I have argued that impersonal *si* is referential, and identifies a group of people. Its semantic features are summarized in (86): UNSPECIFIED person, GROUP, MALE+FEMALE, HUMAN.

(86)

	$\phi$	$\sigma$
<b>Person</b>	3rd	UNSPECIFIED
<b>Number</b>	NO	PLURAL
<b>Gender</b>	NO	FEMININE + MASCULINE
<b>Animacy</b>	NO	HUMAN

## Chapter 2

### Agreement patterns of transitive ISCs

#### 1. Introduction

Impersonal *si* constructions (ISCs) display peculiar agreement patterns. With transitive verbs, the verb may or may not show agreement with the direct object, which in turn bears Nominative or Accusative case, as shown in (1) and (2).

- (1) In Italia *si* mangiano gli spaghetti  
in Italy *si* eat-3RD PL the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL  
'In Italy people eat spaghetti'
- (2) In Italia *si* mangia spaghetti  
in Italy *si* eats-3RD SG spaghetti-MASC PL  
'In Italy, people eat spaghetti'

The agreement patterns in the perfect tense of (1) and (2) will be addressed in the next chapter.

The agreement patterns of ISCs have often been considered a 'secondary' phenomenon, derived from *si*'s special properties, such as the capability of absorption of a  $\theta$ -role or of Case. In this chapter, I provide arguments for the hypothesis that the agreement patterns of ISCs with transitive verbs reflect an aspectual difference. An ISC with verb-object agreement is not semantically equivalent to an ISC without verb-object agreement, contrary to what has often been assumed (Belletti 1982,

Burzio 1986, Cinque 1988, Dobrovie-Sorin 1998, 1999): an ISC with verb-object agreement usually encodes an accomplishment (i.e. an event with duration and an endpoint), while an ISC without verb-object agreement encodes an activity (i.e. an event with duration but no endpoint). In the case of examples (1) and (2), (1) is indeed an accomplishment, whereas (2) is an activity in the sense of Vendler (1967). The peculiar agreement patterns of such ISCs reflect their semantic difference, and are not imputable to special properties of *si*; they are rather determined by the interaction of *si* with the structure in which it is merged, and by its clitic status. I propose that in the case of verb-object agreement (1), *si* is merged in the specifier of a VP-internal projection, E<sub>2</sub>P (Travis's 1995 inner aspect; see also Kempchinsky 2000). From that position, which is only available for an accomplishment structure, *si* intervenes in the assignment of Accusative. Such an intervention does not take place in (2), where the inner aspectual position is not available for *si*. Consequently, Accusative is assigned to the direct object.

The fact that the construction in (2) lacks the definite article is a reflection of the activity type of the construction. Obviously, the lack of a definite article and the activity status go hand in hand. I will address the article issue in section 2.3.

Furthermore, I reject the hypothesis according to which *si* is a head by presenting evidence from Rumanian and from past participle agreement in Italian ISCs.

This section is meant to provide the general background for the analysis of ISCs. It is organized as follows: to begin with, some terminological issues are considered in 1.1.. In the second place, in section 1.3., the idiolectal variation in modern Standard Italian is examined. It is well known, in fact, that Italian regional varieties differ much with respect to the acceptability of ISCs. The data that I have collected show that, Florentine (and Tuscan in general) aside, the variation is not regional but rather idiolectal in nature. Next, section 1.3. is devoted to the presentation of two of the most relevant (perhaps the only systematic) proposals that have been made

to account for the agreement discrepancies between (1) and (2).

The present chapter is organized as follows: section 2 presents the theoretical background on the aspectual classes which (1) and (2) will be shown to belong to. Section 3 contains my analysis of transitive ISCs in the present tense. Section 4 contains my conclusions.

### 1.1. A terminological issue

In the literature, there is large disagreement about the status of (1) and (2): some linguists distinguish between a ‘passive *si*’ in sentence (1), and a proper ‘impersonal *si*’ in sentence (2). Such an approach is taken, for instance, by Salvi (1991). Some other scholars draw the line between an ‘impersonal passive *si*’, in (1), and an ‘impersonal active *si*’, in (2) (see, for instance, Belletti 1982). On another view, put forward by Cinque (1988), both (1) and (2) are impersonal *si* constructions. This view is also shared by Salvi (1988) and Roberts (1986) among others. Finally, Dobrovie-Sorin (1999) vacuously unifies the two sentences under the name of ‘middle-passive *se*’.

In this work, I use the definition ‘impersonal construction’ for both (1) and (2). With ‘passive *si* construction’ I indicate sentences like the one exemplified in (3), where *si* becomes the subject of predication:

- (3) Si è            visti                    da tutti  
       si is-3RD SG seen-PP MASC PL by everybody  
       ‘One is seen by everybody’

The sentence in (3) is very similar to a proper passive: while a *by*-phrase may (and, in fact, does) appear in (3), just as it may appear in proper passives, it may not appear in sentences like (1) and (2). A sentence like (4) is ungrammatical:

- (4) \*In Italia si mangiano gli spaghetti da tutti  
 in Italy si eat-3RD PL the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL by everybody  
 ‘In Italy spaghetti are eaten by everybody’

To my knowledge, the contrast between (3) and (4) was first observed by Cinque (1976).

A third kind of *si* which is relevant to our analysis, as it also introduces an unspecified subject, is the so-called ‘middle *si*’. The agreement patterns of middle *si* are not different from those of impersonal *si*, however, and therefore I do not make a distinction between impersonal *si* and middle *si* constructions in this chapter.

## 1.2. The data

ISCs without V-O agreement have often been considered as a variant of ISCs with V-O agreement. For most scholars, (1) and (2) involve the same structure, and only the realization of optional properties of *si* (such as the absorption of the external  $\theta$ -role) creates the difference between the two<sup>1</sup>. This approach is mainly followed by Belletti (1982) and Burzio (1986). Cinque (1988) argues instead for a difference in terms of the argumental nature of *si*. He proposes an elegant way to overcome optionality: only argumental *si* may absorb the external  $\theta$ -role, while *non*-argumental *si* may not. I will return to these analyses in more details in section 1.4.

In this section, I first present the synchronic data that I have collected; I isolate two ‘prototypical’ constructions, which will be the topic of my analysis in section 2. For the other ‘*non*-prototypical’ sentences, which I believe belong to a mixed type, I provide a tentative explanation later on, in section 4.1.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>I do not examine here those approaches which consider (2) as an idiosyncratic construction, such as Sánchez López (2002).

<sup>2</sup>The use of *si* as an impersonal pronoun developed in a very early stage of Italian. According to Wehr (1995), both the verb-object agreement form of the type exemplified in (1) and the no verb-object agreement form in (2) derive from Latin reflexive *se*. *Se* was exclusively used in reflexive sentences, where the subject and the object of a predicate were considered to be coincident. This

1.2.1. *Idiolectal variation*

It has often been observed (Lepschy & Lepschy 1977, Cinque 1988) that the use of the variant in (2), here repeated in (5), is not so common. More exactly, while all Italian speakers use the agreeing form in (1), not all of them accept (5).

- (5) In Italia si mangia spaghetti  
 in Italy si eats-3RD SG spaghetti-PL MASC  
 ‘In Italy, people eat spaghetti’

As the judgments on ISCs are not always clear, I collected data from 12 informants. I proposed 18 sentences to my informants, among which the ones that are relevant

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use has continued in Modern Italian, side by side with the newly introduced impersonal use.

The alternation between a reflexive pronoun and proper passive morphology began in the Late Latin period (see Brambilla Ageno 1964, Kemmer 1993, Monge 2002 and Vera Luján 2002). According to Kemmer, also in Late Latin, *se* was essentially confined to the reflexive use, but there were frequent alternations between the -r morphology of deponent verbs and passives and *se*.

Apparently, the impersonal construction in Romance began as a subjectless one, in which *se* signalled the suppression of the Agent  $\theta$ -role, or provided the verb with an additional stylistic flavor.

About the two main agreement patterns of ISCs with transitive verbs, Wehr (1995) claims that the first forms attested were those without verb-object agreement.

- (i) Qui si fa molti arnesi d’arme e da cavalieri  
 here is makes many tools of weapons and for knights  
 ‘Here one makes many weapons for battles and knights’ [Marco Polo, *Il Milione* 124, 166]

Also according to Wehr, however, the *non*-agreeing form was mainly used in Northern Italy, because the third person singular and plural of the verb were coincident. This is enough for one to doubt the antecedence of one or the other construction. If the singular and the plural forms of the verb were coincident, it is impossible to understand whether the verb did or did not agree with the object.

Ideally, the two forms (agreeing and *non*-agreeing) should show a difference in interpretation. Such a difference is not easily detectable from the data I have at hand though. I therefore leave this issue open for further research.

for this section are the following:

- (6) In Italia si mangiano gli spaghetti  
 in Italy si eat-3RD PL the-MASC PL spaghetti-PL MASC  
 ‘In Italy people eat spaghetti’
- (7) In Italia si mangia spaghetti  
 in Italy si eats-3RD SG spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘In Italy, people eat spaghetti’
- (8) In Italia si mangia gli spaghetti  
 in Italy si eats-3RD SG the spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘In Italy, people eat spaghetti’
- (9) In Italia si mangia gli spaghetti a tutto spiano  
 in Italy si eats-3RD SG the spaghetti-MASC PL continuously  
 ‘In Italy, people eat spaghetti all the time’
- (10) In Italia si mangia spaghetti a tutto spiano  
 in Italy si eats-3RD SG spaghetti-MASC PL continuously  
 ‘In Italy, people eat spaghetti all the time’

The acceptability judgements I collected are quite telling. It seems that the acceptability of the sentences above is not determined by regional/dialectal criteria. The variation seems to be idiolectal. The Florentine (Tuscan) speakers, however, do constitute a group on their own: for all of them all the sentences above are equally acceptable. This might be due to the fact that Florentine has lost the use of the 1st person plural verbal ending altogether (A. Belletti, p.c.), replacing it with the impersonal *si* construction. I examine the peculiar case of Florentine in section 4.2., and leave this problem aside for the moment.

Going back to our set of data: Unsurprisingly, (6) is accepted by all the speakers: it is the unmarked form with which Italian speakers realize the ISC. (7) is not as well accepted. There are a few question marks and 2 ‘non-acceptable’ judgements. (8) is also not so well accepted as (6). 5 speakers out of 12 consider the sentence



ungrammatical, 3 speakers consider it interpretable but ‘unutterable’. There are in fact only 3 speakers that accept this sentence as completely grammatical. (9) has been judged as grammatical only by one speaker, and slightly ungrammatical by 2 speakers. The rest of the group considers the sentence very weird or ungrammatical. Interestingly, the elimination of the definite article in (10) turns the ungrammatical sentence in (9) into a fully acceptable one: the judgements here are quite neat. The sentence is ungrammatical for 2 speakers, and for the rest of the group it is fully acceptable. In particular, a great role for acceptability judgements is played by the definite article. This is no surprise if one believes, as I do, that the construction without verb-object agreement is the instantiation of an activity. I will return to the issue of the definite article in section 2.2.1. It is also worth observing that (10) is obtained from (7) with the addition of a frequency/modal adverbial. The example (7) will be discussed in section 4.2.

For the moment, I wish to concentrate on the two sentences that have been recognized by most speakers as the most acceptable, namely (6) and (10). I consider (6) and (10) as the ‘prototypical’ types, and concentrate on their analysis. From now on, I will refer to (6) as an ISC with V-O (verb-object) agreement, and to (10) as an ISC without V-O agreement.

In what follows, I examine the two constructions in (6) and (10) in detail. I first present a short overview of the previous accounts of ISCs with and without V-O agreement that have been put forward over the years. After a short comment on such analyses, I introduce my own account in section 2.

### 1.3. Impersonal *si* with transitive verbs

In the present tense, ISCs with transitive verbs show the two main agreement patterns introduced in (6) and (10) [(1) and (2)]. Within the first pattern, exemplified in (1) and here repeated as (11), the verb agrees with the object DP:

- (11) In Italia si mangiano gli spaghetti  
 in Italy si eat-3RD PL the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘In Italy people eat spaghetti’

In (11), *gli spaghetti* is an internal argument. This can be shown by substituting for it the partitive particle *ne*, which can only be substituted for internal arguments, as shown by Belletti & Rizzi (1981), and Burzio (1986) among others, and exemplified in (12):

- (12) In Italia se ne mangiano  
 in Italy si of them eat  
 ‘In Italy people eat them<sup>3</sup>’

The other agreement pattern involves an object which does not agree with the verb. The verb ending is 3rd singular:

- (13) In Italia si mangia spaghetti  
 in Italy si eats-3RD SG spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘In Italy, people eat spaghetti<sup>4</sup>’

Also in (13) the object *spaghetti* is an internal argument, as shown by the fact that it can be substituted for by *ne*:

- (14) In Italia se ne mangia  
 in Italy si of them eats-3RD SG  
 ‘In Italy people eat them’

In (11), *gli spaghetti* carries Nominative case, while in (13) it carries Accusative. This is shown in (15) and (16) respectively, where the DP object *gli spaghetti* is replaced by a personal pronoun. Personal pronouns in Italian are morphologically marked for Case, and therefore help detect the Case of the DP in question.

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<sup>3</sup>*Se* is an allomorph of *si*, which occurs when *si* precedes another clitic. Such a phenomenon is common to other clitics as well, like in *ce ne, glielo* and so forth.

<sup>4</sup>I leave the adverbial phrase *a tutto spiano* aside for the moment and concentrate only on the agreement patterns. The role played by the adverbial phrase will result clearer in chapter 5.

- (15) In Italia essi/ \*li si mangiano  
 in Italy they-NOM 3RD PL them-ACC 3RD PL si eat-3RD PL  
 ‘In Italy people eat them’
- (16) In Italia \*essi/ li si mangia  
 in Italy they-NOM 3RD PL them-ACC 3RD PL si eats-3RD SG  
 ‘In Italy people eat them’

To conclude: ISCs with V-O agreement exhibit a Nominative object that agrees with the verb. ISCs without V-O agreement exhibit an Accusative object which does not agree with the verb. The verb shows a 3rd singular inflection.

### 1.3.1. ISCs with transitive verbs in the past tense

The agreement patterns of the past tense of ISCs resemble those of the present tense. There are two main patterns also for the past tense, but one of them is no longer in use. The past tense of (11) is (17):

- (17) Si sono mangiati gli spaghetti  
 si are-3RD PL eaten-MASC PL the-MASC PL spaghetti  
 ‘People/we have eaten spaghetti’

In (17), the auxiliary agrees with the object, just like the finite verb does in (11). The past participle (pp henceforth) also agrees with the object. It is important to bear in mind that the features that are responsible for past participle agreement ( $\sigma$ -features), however, are different from those that are responsible for auxiliary agreement ( $\phi$ -features), as I show in the next chapter.

The past tense for (13) is (18):

- (18) ?In Italia si è mangiato spaghetti  
 in Italy si is-3RD SG eaten-MASC PP SG spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘In Italy people ate spaghetti’

Surprisingly, for some speakers, also the version in (19) is acceptable:

- (19) Si è mangiati gli spaghetti  
 si is-3RD SG eaten-PP MASC PL the spaghetti  
 ‘People have eaten spaghetti’

The pp-auxiliary split in (19) reflects the division between syntactic and semantic features. I will return to the issue of the past tense agreement in chapter 3.

#### 1.4. Previous accounts

In this section, I introduce the main accounts that have been put forward in order to explain the V-O / no V-O agreement alternation in transitive ISCs.

This section serves as an introduction for the next one, and is indispensable if one wants to capture the essence of the ongoing debate on impersonal *si* constructions.

In the analysis of ISCs, two main lines have been followed in the literature. According to one view, *si* is a pronoun, and as such it may bear or withdraw Case and absorb or receive  $\theta$ -roles. According to the other view, *si* is a functional head, ‘more related to verbal inflection than to VP arguments’ (from Manzini & Savoia 2002). The former view is maintained by Belletti (1982), Burzio (1986), Cinque (1988) at least partially and Dobrovie-Sorin (1998). The latter one is maintained by Manzini & Savoia (2001, 2002), Kempchinsky (2000), Cuervo (2002). Crucially, all those analyses which consider *si* a functional head totally disregard the agreement puzzle presented by (1) and (2). This is simply due to the fact that if *si* is considered as a head, it cannot receive Case or  $\theta$ -role (but it can according to Roberts 1987 and Manzini & Savoia 2001). In addition to that, those approaches that consider *si* as a functional head cannot account for the Rumanian data exemplified in (20). In Rumanian there is an impersonal construction that mirrors the Italian one, namely an impersonal *se* construction with verb-object agreement. In such a construction, *se* is morphologically marked for Accusative<sup>5</sup>. I take this as a piece of evidence that *se-si* actually gets Accusative, and does not block its assignment (cf. Belletti 1982,

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<sup>5</sup>It is worth remarking that Rumanian also has a dative *se*.

Roberts 1987).

- (20) În Italia se citesc cărți bune  
 in Italy si-ACC read-3RD PL books-NOM FEM PL good-FEM PL  
 ‘In Italy people read good books’

The piece of data in (20), together with the general considerations outlined above, lead me to conclude that *si* needs to be treated as a pronoun. Evidently, this does not exclude a correlation of *si* with functional projections. In fact, the aim of this chapter is to show that *si* is related to the aspectual specification of the sentence it appears in, but nevertheless it is a pronoun, which may receive  $\theta$ -role or Case.

The sentences that I examine in this section are the following:

- (21) In Italia si mangiano gli spaghetti  
 in Italy si eat-3RD PL the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘In Italy people eat spaghetti’
- (22) In Italia si mangia spaghetti a tutto spiano  
 in Italy si eats-3RD SG spaghetti-MASC PL continuously  
 ‘In Italy, people eat spaghetti all the time’

The first attempt to solve the agreement/*non*-agreement puzzle dates back to Belletti (1982).

Belletti proposes that *si* can optionally be assigned or absorb Nominative case. Moreover, *si* may also absorb Accusative case. In particular, passive *si* absorbs both the external  $\theta$ -role and Accusative case. (21) is an example of a passive *si* construction. Impersonal ‘active’ *si*, on the other hand, gets Nominative, thus allowing the assignment of Accusative, as in (22). Belletti’s analysis signs the direction for all the research which will follow, and relies on the assumption that there are two *si*’s, or, more exactly, that *si* may or may not absorb  $\theta$ -role, and may or may not receive Nominative Case. In both constructions, *si* is generated under the INFL node. In one case, though, the ISC is an instance of passivization (21), and in the other it is



‘One not having died young, ...’ [unaccusative]

- (26) \*Non essendosi contenti del proprio lavoro, ...  
 not being si happy of the one’s work  
 ‘One not being happy with one’s work, ...’ [copulative]

Cinque considers the instances of *si* in (23) and (24) as argumental ones (+arg), which may be realized in a sentence only with verbs that project an external  $\theta$ -role. The other *si*, which may be present with any class of verbs, provided that they are finite, is a *non*-argumental one (-arg) [from Cinque (1995:122-123:1)]: *si* with an unaccusative verb in (27) and with a passive in (28)]:

- (27) Spesso si arriva in ritardo  
 often si arrives-3RD SG late  
 ‘Often one arrives late’

- (28) Spesso si è trattati male  
 often si is-3RD SG treated-PP MASC PL badly  
 ‘One is often ill-treated’

Argumental *si* withdraws the external  $\theta$ -role and blocks the assignment of Accusative, thus resulting in a construction with V-O agreement. To be more specific, consider (21). According to Cinque, *si* is +arg(umental) in this sentence. Its argumental status allows for it to withdraw the external  $\theta$ -role. As Burzio’s generalization states, there is a one-to-one correspondence between the assignment of Accusative and that of the external  $\theta$ -role. In particular, from the withdrawal of the external  $\theta$ -role it follows that the verb won’t be able to assign Accusative to the object. The object will therefore be assigned Nominative by being in a chain with an empty category in subject position. Moreover, Cinque presents evidence that the other *si*, the one which does not cause V-O agreement, is in a *non*-argumental position. In (22), the [-arg] *si* does not absorb the external  $\theta$ -role, so that the verb will be able to assign Accusative unproblematically. Cinque does not state explicitly

where the external  $\theta$ -role ends. Supposedly, it is assigned to an empty *pro* in subject position licensed by *si*, which behaves like a kind of verbal agreement.

Cinque's approach has the advantage of getting rid of the optional property attributed to impersonal *si* of absorbing the external  $\theta$ -role. He transfers this apparent optionality to a difference in the argumental structure of the two ISCs. On the other hand, Cinque's approach does not offer a clear explanation for the fact that a *by*-phrase may not be present in either of the TWO alternating ISCs, as shown in the introduction. Moreover, Dobrovie-Sorin (1998, 1999) points out that it is not necessary to postulate a difference in the the argumental status of *si*. What Cinque calls a [+arg] *si* is actually a passive *si*, which cannot be marked with Nominative. The other *si*, the one that Cinque calls [-arg], is instead Nominative. On the basis of Rumanian, Dobrovie-Sorin argues that *si* is an Accusative clitic in constructions with V-O agreement. Constructions like *se doarme* ('si sleeps') are only apparently the counterpart of Italian *si dorme*. In Italian, such constructions contain a Nominative *si*, which is absent in Rumanian. Such constructions thus involve a middle-passive *si* of the German kind in Rumanian. Dobrovie-Sorin argues that *si* is not licensed in Italian *non*-finite clauses simply because it is a Nominative clitic and Nominative clitics are not allowed in non-finite clauses. Transitive and unergative Aux-to-Comp and Raising structures permit of *si* just because *si* in this case is not Nominative but Accusative. In other words, the *si* that is licensed in some non-finite structures (such as (23) and (24)) is a middle-passive *si*, and not a Nominative one. Dobrovie-Sorin's analysis has several advantages, since it can be extended to other Romance languages, such as Rumanian, which doesn't have Nominative clitics but has *se* constructions. Her analysis does not solve the problem of the agreement/no agreement alternation because it is mainly built on the basis of Rumanian data. Rumanian lacks the no V-O agreement construction, and therefore Dobrovie-Sorin only concentrates on one of the two patterns.



A general problem that arises from all these analysis is imputable more to the GB model than to the single analysis: in minimalist terms one wonders why if there is a  $\theta$ -position available for a DP and if there is exactly one DP available in the numeration, namely *si*, one should merge *si* in a *non- $\theta$* -position, and merge an expletive in subject position, and finally let the chain formed by the two items absorb the external  $\theta$ -role.

Optimally, one should also avoid postulating restrictions on the merging site of *si*. This is what my analysis aims at doing: postulate no constraint on the merging sites of *si*. Such ‘freedom’ will give rise to different agreement patterns, among which the ones we are concerned with here.

For further discussion on the issue of argumentality and merging sites of *si*, see also Manzini & Savoia (2001), Embick (2000), Folli (2001) McGinnis (1997, 1999), and Raposo & Uriagereka (1990) among others.

The analyses that I have just presented are very important starting points for my own analysis. In particular, following Belletti, I assume that *si* receives Nominative in the no V-O agreement construction. In addition to that, in the spirit of Cinque, I argue that different syntactico-semantic configurations give rise to different agreement patterns. While standing on the shoulders of giants, though, I wish to depart from the traditional view which contemplates fixed position for specific lexical items, and turn in the direction of imposing as few restrictions on merging sites as possible, in conformity with the general requirements of minimal extra assumptions. My analysis is aimed at getting rid of all the extra assumptions that have been necessary for the previous analyses, such as the optional capability of *si* of absorbing the external  $\theta$ -role.

In the next two sections, I outline my analysis, which has the advantage of limiting the extra assumptions regarding *si*’s peculiar characteristics, and consequently to avoid considering it as a ‘special’ lexical item, which exhibits properties that no

other full DP has, such as the ability of withdrawing a  $\theta$ -role or of absorbing Case<sup>6</sup>.

To recapitulate: the problems which arise from a first look at ISCs are the following:

- What exactly is responsible for the alternation between ISCs with V-O agreement and ISCs without V-O agreement?
- Why is a *by*-phrase not admitted in either of the two ISC constructions?
- How can we justify the Accusative marking on *se* in Rumanian?
- If *si* is a head, where does the external  $\theta$ -role in ISC constructions without V-O agreement end up?
- If *si* is a head, and as such does not bear Case, what causes the alternations at issue here?

Additionally, another question never previously addressed arises:

- Why is it that the construction without V-O agreement is much less common than the one with V-O agreement?

As I have shown, most of the questions have been addressed by former analyses. However, the problem of the *by*-phrase and of the agreement alternation has not been addressed convincingly so far. In the next section, I examine the V-O /*non* V-O alternation in the light of Vendler's event theory. Such an approach leads us to the discovery of some previously unnoticed differences between the two constructions at issue. I argue that the different agreement patterns reflect such semantic differences.

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<sup>6</sup>A similar property has been proposed by Baker, Johnson & Roberts (1989) for the past participle inflectional ending. As Cinque (1988) observes, such property should be however weakened in the case of impersonal *si*. In ISCs, in fact, the external  $\theta$ -role may not be reassigned by means of a *by*-phrase as in the case of passives. Impersonal *si* would be thus the only lexical item bearing the property of 'withdrawing' the external  $\theta$ -role.

## 2. Transitive ISCs

The two sentences that have been considered as completely grammatical by most speakers are repeated here in (29) and (30)

(29) In Italia si mangiano gli spaghetti  
 in Italy si eat-3RD PL the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘In Italy people eat spaghetti’

(30) In Italia si mangia spaghetti (a tutto spiano)  
 in Italy si eats-3RD SG spaghetti-MASC PL flat out  
 ‘In Italy people eat potatoes (flat out)’

In this section, I wish to show that (29) encodes an accomplishment, while (30) encodes an activity in the sense of Vendler (1967). For this purpose, I first present a short summary of Vendler’s classification (section 2.1.). Then, I introduce some of the tests proposed by Dowty (1979) in order to identify the class to which a verb belongs. The analysis of (29) and (30) according to such tests reveals that (29) is an accomplishment, while (30) is an activity. In 2.3., I address the problem of the definiteness of the object. Next, in 2.4., I outline the syntactic background that I will use for my analysis, which will be presented in section 3.

### 2.1. Vendler’s aspectual classes

In 1967, Zeno Vendler identified four distinct categories (aspectual classes) of verbs, based on the restrictions they impose on the selection of time adverbials, tenses, and on the logical entailments they create. Vendler’s classification is referred to as the verb *Aktionsart*. Vendler distinguishes between *states* (31), *activities* (32), *accomplishments* (33), and *achievements* (34) [from Dowty (1979)]:

(31) *states*: know, believe, have, desire, love, ...

(32) *activities*: run, walk, swim, push a cart, drive a car, ...

- (33) *accomplishments*: paint a picture, make a chair, deliver a sermon, draw a circle, push a cart, recover from illness, ...
- (34) *achievements*: recognize, spot, find, lose, reach, die, ...

States have no internal structure or change during the time span over which they are true; activities are events with internal change and duration, but no necessary temporal endpoint; accomplishments are events with duration and an obligatory temporal endpoint; achievements have no duration and instantaneous endpoint (cf. Pustejovsky 1988, Tenny & Pustejovsky 2000). Vendler observed that states and achievements have in common the lack of duration (and consequently the lack of progressive tense in their conjugation), while accomplishments and activities both encode duration in their meaning. On the other hand, activities and states lack telicity, i.e. a result state, as opposed to both accomplishments and achievements, which hold it. Directly linked to this property is the fact that both accomplishments and achievements may select time adverbials with *in*, such as *in an hour*.

Under the view that verbs may be classified according to their *Aktionsart*, Dowty (1979) proposed a set of tests which help us identify which aspectual class a verb belongs to. Many of Dowty's tests are however not relevant here or do not apply to Italian. I therefore confine myself to listing only the relevant ones, which help to classify ISCs with V-O agreement and ISCs without V-O agreement.

## 2.2. Dowty's tests and ISCs

Due to their subtle (but existing!) difference in meaning, I propose that (29) is an accomplishment, while (30) is an activity. I summarize here the main tests collected by Dowty in order to categorize verbs into accomplishments and activities. I apply such tests to the sentences in (29) and (30). The results are very telling.

## 2.2.1. Dowty's tests for accomplishments and activities

In his 1979 book, Dowty proposed a large amount of tests with the aim of classifying verbs into Vendler's aspectual classes. I repeat here the tests that are relevant for the present analysis:

- **Test 1:** 'Whereas accomplishment verbs take adverbial prepositional phrases with *in* but only very marginally take adverbials with *for*, activity verbs allow only for *for*-phrases [from Dowty (1979:6)].

From the insertion of the adverbial phrases *in un'ora* ('in an hour') and *per un'ora* ('for an hour') within the sentences (29) and (30), the first distinction between these two sentences emerges. While (29) allows for *in an hour* and does not allow for *for an hour*, (30) does the reverse, as shown in (35) through (38). The sentences in (29) and (30) have been turned into the past tense in order to make them compatible with such adverbial phrases.

- (35) Si sono mangiati gli spaghetti in  
 si are-3RD PL eaten-PP MASC PL the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL in  
 un'ora  
 an hour  
 'The spaghetti have been eaten in an hour'
- (36) ?Si sono mangiati gli spaghetti per  
 si are-3RD PL eaten-PP FEM PL the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL for  
 un'ora  
 an hour  
 'Spaghetti have been eaten for an hour'
- (37) Si è mangiato spaghetti per un'ora  
 si is-3RD SG eaten-MASC SG spaghetti-MASC PL for an hour  
 'People have eaten spaghetti for an hour'
- (38) \*Si è mangiato spaghetti in un'ora  
 si is-3RD SG eaten-MASC SG spaghetti-MASC PL in an hour  
 'People have eaten spaghetti in an hour'

Note, incidentally, that (36) gets much worse if we change the word order:

(39)??#Gli spaghetti si sono mangiati per  
 the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL si are-3RD PL eaten-PP MASC PL for  
 un'ora  
 an hour  
 'Spaghetti have been eaten in an hour'

This is probably due to fact that the sentence acquires a middle reading after the word order change. Middle is usually employed to express a property of something. A property is an individual level predication, and not a stage level predication (Kratzer 1989, Diesing 1992), hence it does not admit 'short-period' time adverbials, i.e. stage-oriented adverbials. The sentence in (39) becomes acceptable if one substitutes 'for 2 years' for 'for one hour'. *Gli spaghetti si sono mangiati per due anni, poi non sono andati piú di moda* ('Spaghetti have been eaten for two years, but then they have come out of fashion') is much more acceptable than (39). In this case, in fact, the adverbial phrase matches with the middle reading of the sentence. Once again, the definiteness of the object goes together with the accomplishment reading. I discuss this issue in more detail in the next section.

According to the *in an hour/for an hour* test, (29) expresses an accomplishment, while (30) expresses an activity.

Let us now turn to another test:

- **Test 2:** Almost parallel to the *for-an-hour* sentences and the *in-an-hour* sentences are the forms *spent-an-hour V-ing* and *it- took s.one an hour to V* [from Dowty (1979:56)].

This test is hard to apply to our examples, as the same verb is involved in both sentences. The difference between the two constructions, moreover, reduces very much with the introduction of the infinitive, which makes it impossible to detect agreement. Plus, as shown by Burzio (1986) and Cinque (1988), *si* is only licensed

in a very limited number of untensed contexts. The contrast between (40) and (41) shows that the difference between (29) and (30) holds for their PRO counterpart, and seems to suggest that we are dealing with an alternation between accomplishment and activity which is independent of *si*.

(40) Ci è voluta un'ora per mangiare  
 for that is-3RD SG needed-PP FEM SG an hour for to eat-INF  
 gli spaghetti  
 the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL  
 'It took (someone) an hour to eat spaghetti'

(41) #Ci è voluta un'ora per mangiare  
 for that is-3RD SG needed-PP FEM SG an hour for to eat-INF  
 spaghetti  
 spaghetti-MASC PL  
 'It took (someone) an hour to eat spaghetti'

Observing (40) and (41), it is clear that the presence of the definite article on the object DP plays an important role for the identification of the aspectual class of the verb. I will return to this issue in section 2.3. below.

- **Test 3** Only accomplishment verbs can normally occur as complement of *finish* [from Dowty (1979:57)]:

(42) Si sono finiti di mangiare gli spaghetti  
 si are-3RD PL finished-PP PL of to eat the spaghetti-MASC PL  
 'People have finished to eat spaghetti'

(43) \*Si è finito di mangiare spaghetti  
 si is-3RD SG finished-PP SG of to eat spaghetti  
 'People have finished to eat spaghetti'

The grammatical/acceptable alternative for (43) is (44). *Smettere* ('give up') is in fact a verb which usually selects an activity. Some examples are *smettere di fumare* ('quit smoking'), and *smettere di studiare* ('quit studying').

- (44) Si è smesso di mangiare spaghetti  
 si is-3RD SG stopped-PP SG of to eat spaghetti  
 ‘People have quitted eating spaghetti’

- **Test 4** The adverb *almost* has different effects on activities and accomplishments: ‘*almost-activity*’ entails that the event described by the verb did NOT take place; ‘*almost-accomplishment*’ has two meanings:

- The Agent had the intention of performing the activity but he did not do it
- The Agent began to perform the activity but did not complete it

- (45) Si sono quasi mangiati gli spaghetti  
 si are-3RD PL almost eaten-PP MASC PL the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘People have almost eaten spaghetti’

(45) may have two entailments:

- *Spaghetti* have almost been all eaten
- People have almost started eating *spaghetti*

The former possibility is indeed not so straightforward. The double entailment is more striking with a different word order:

- (46) Gli spaghetti si sono quasi mangiati  
 the-MASC PL spaghetti-MASC PL si are-3RD PL almost eaten-PP MASC PL  
 ‘People have almost eaten spaghetti’

In (46) the double entailment is more straightforward.

In constructions without V-O agreement there is only one possible interpretation:

(47) only means that people have not even started eating spaghetti.

- (47) Si è quasi mangiato spaghetti  
 si is-3RD SG almost eaten-PP MASC SING spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘People have almost eaten spaghetti’



As expected, the V-O agreement construction gives a positive result for the accomplishment tests, while no V-O agreement construction is identified as an activity. The result of these tests suggests that ISCs with and without V-O agreement are not instances of a passive and an active *si* respectively: they are instances of one and the same lexical item, which is merged in structures that differ with respect to their sub-event specification.

### **2.3. Does the definite article determine the aspectual specification?**

In (40) and (41), the issue now has arisen whether the lack of the article in the no V-O agreeing construction is responsible for the interpretation of the VP as an activity. There clearly exists a correlation between the presence/absence of the definite article and the kind of event denoted. The question is now what determines what: does the article influence the aspectual properties of the VP or does the VP select an internal argument depending on the verb class? Both approaches are tenable. Zagana (1996) and de Miguel (1992) maintain that the aspectual properties of the verb select the definiteness of the object (i.e. decide for the use or the *non*-use of the definite article in Italian). On the other hand, Nishida (1994), following Krifka (1991), proposes that the properties of the object determine the properties of the predicate. In particular, he proposes that an object may contribute to the telicity of the predicate if it satisfies a condition of gradedness. In that case, the object may establish a homomorphism relation with the event. In the case of a gradable object, a one-to-one correspondence is established between each subpart of the object and each subpart of the event. The telicity of the event corresponds with the consideration of the object as a whole (as a finite unit). The definite article specifies the object as 'finite', and as such decomposable. The conclusion is that the definite article creates the conditions for the homomorphism to apply between the event and the object. In our case, the choice of the latter perspective is obligatory:

we are in fact dealing with one and the same verb in the two constructions. The presence/absence of the definite article, with the corresponding presence/absence of a definite object, clearly determines the aspectual classification of the VP. For further discussion on this issue, the reader is referred to Ramchand (1997) and Torrego (1998). However, it is worth observing that the definite article does not necessarily force the accomplishment reading of a VP. A sentence like (48), which is very well accepted in Tuscan, presents a direct object with a definite article. The VP represents, however, an activity, and not an accomplishment:

- (48) In Italia si mangia gli spaghetti  
 in Italy si eats-3RD SG the spaghetti-MASC PL  
 'In Italy people eat spaghetti'

I will return to Tuscan ISCs in the next chapter.

About the reverse option, where a bare plural agrees with the verb: this option is considered very weird:

- (49) ???In Italia si mangiano spaghetti  
 in Italy si eat-3RD PL spaghetti-MASC PL  
 'In Italy people eat spaghetti'

Very likely, (49) is not acceptable because of the mismatch between the accomplishment reading of the V-O agreeing sentence and the bare plural object, which would force an activity interpretation. The sentence is better accepted if one introduces an adverb of duration, like *in continuazione* ('all the time'). In this case, the mismatch is overcome in favor of an activity interpretation:

- (50) In Italia si mangiano spaghetti in continuazione  
 in Italy si eat-3RD PL spaghetti-MASC PL all the time  
 'In Italy, people eat spaghetti all the time'

That the choice of the direct object determines the aspectual class of the VP does not affect the present analysis in any way: each of the two constructions has specialized

to express a particular *Aktionsart*. In other words, it does not matter whether the verb selects a definite object or the definite object determines the aspectual class of the VP: what is interesting is that we are dealing with two different aspectual classes. Therefore, I can conclude that it is not a special property of *si* that determines the ‘weird’ agreement patterns in (29) and (30). Such agreement patterns reflect the nature of the VP, while *si* interacts with the structure it is merged in.

To sum up, in this section I have shown that (29) and (30) are instantiations of an accomplishment and an activity respectively.

At this point, we can address the question concerning the reason why the no V-O agreement patterns are less common than the V-O agreement patterns. The reason why (30) is less accepted and less used than (29) is attributable to a more general property of verb classes: transitive accomplishments are usually more frequent than transitive activities (Kempchinsky 2000). The frequency of occurrence is thus probably not related to the ISC constructions themselves, but rather reflects a general trend of verb classes.

#### 2.4. Translating *Aktionsart* into syntax: inner aspect

From what was presented so far, it is clear that the construction without V-O agreement is not derived from the one with V-O agreement, but that it has an independent status, and is less used only because transitive activities are less frequent than transitive accomplishments in general.

One of the most interesting questions to which linguists have tried to provide an answer in the last decades is whether semantic properties determine the syntactic configuration of a sentence or it is the other way around, that is syntax determines semantics. The former approach is taken from the so-called lexicalists: according to them, a verb is listed in the lexicon with its valence, and therefore the syntactic structure of a sentence is directly dependent on the lexical properties of the verb en-

try (see Chomsky 1982, Perlmutter & Postal 1984, Baker 1988, Levin & Rappaport 1995, Reinhart 2000 among others). The latter approach is instead proposed by Borer (1994, 1998), Travis (1994, 2000), Kratzer (1996), van Hout (1996), Marantz (1997), Ramchand (1997), Ritter & Rosen (1998), Harley & Noyer (2000) among others: it is not the lexical semantics of a verb that determines its syntax, but rather the functional-aspectual structure in which the verb appears that determines its semantics. In other words, it is the syntactic structure in which lexical items appear that determines the semantics of a sentence. According to this approach, if a verb alternates between an activity and an accomplishment reading, the different interpretations result from the different syntactic structures in which the verb appears. What varies among structures is the number and the nature of functional projections. Consequently, the merging site of arguments varies, leading to different interpretations of the verb. In the majority of the works cited above, such functional projections are defined as ‘inner aspectual’ projections. I therefore adopt the term ‘inner aspect’ to refer to the *Aktionsart* encoded by such functional heads. The role of such additional functional projections is not straightforward. According to most syntactic analyses, such projections are related to Case checking and contribute to the specification of the *Aktionsart* of the verb (cf. Borer 1994, Slabakova 1997, and Travis 1994, 1997). Schmitt (1996), Zagona (1999) and Kempchinsky (2000), on the other hand, consider inner aspectual projections as the locus of pure aspectual interpretation. This view contrasts with Chomsky’s (1995) bare output conditions: if the inner aspectual projections are not there to check Case then they should be eliminated from the syntax. Schmitt (1996) and Zagona (2000), however, propose that such inner aspectual projections are necessary to license aspectual ‘calculation’ (cf. Zagona 2000). In addition to that, such inner aspectual projections are the locus where arguments are linked to (sub-)events. Following Kempchinsky (2000), I assume that the locus of the linking of arguments to sub-events is the Event Phrase(s).

In an Event Phrase, no Case checking (or valuation) takes place. Accusative Case is in fact valued by *v* and Nominative by T. Thus, there is no functional projection in which both Case and aspectual features are checked. Differently from Kempchinsky, however, I do not assume that a specifier/head configuration is necessary for a link between arguments and events to obtain: an argument may be linked to a sub-event via long-distance Agree, which targets event features. According to Kempchinsky, arguments are not merged directly into EPs. I slightly depart from this view by assuming that arguments may be merged in EPs when their interpretation directly depends on the *Aktionsart* of the verb. Thus, impersonal *si* may be merged in an EP because its interpretation depends on the aspectual specification of the sentence. In chapter 5 I show that boundedness plays a big role in the specification of the semantic person feature on *si*. *Si*'s person feature is not specified in the lexicon, but is specified in the syntax by establishing a relation with the head that encodes boundedness. Such a relation is established when *si* is still in the specifier of the inner aspectual projection, which constitutes a phase (according to Sigurðsson 2000). I will address this issue in detail in chapter 5. I assume that a referentially independent DP may not be merged in such a projection, as its interpretation is in no way related to the *Aktionsart*.

It has been claimed that some bare plurals change their interpretation depending on the predicate they are used with. The following example, exemplifies the phenomenon:

(51) Pandas are facing extinction [from Carlson & Pelletier (1995:73)]

(52) Pandas were roaming the camp [from Carlson & Pelletier (1995:73)]

The fact that (51) is in the present tense probably determines the genericity of the reference set.

One could thus argue that also bare plurals might occur in an EP projection, as

their interpretation also depends on the *Aktionsart* of the verb. However, Italian may not have bare plural subjects (see Giorgi & Longobardi 1991) . This is an independent fact, which excludes the possibility of merging a bare plural in the EP.

#### 2.4.1. *Transitive accomplishments and transitive activities*

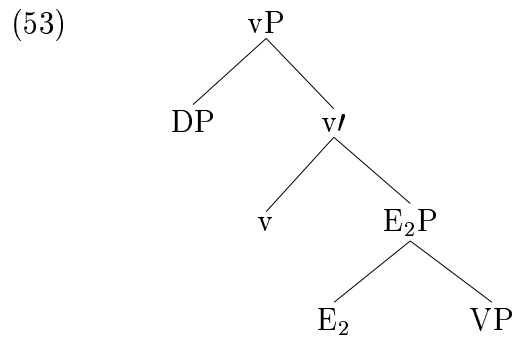
I assume that the syntactic structure of a sentence determines its semantic interpretation. Kempchinsky (2000), in the spirit of Travis (1994, 2000) and Zagona (1999) proposes that aspectual calculation is the linking of subevents to arguments. In other words, arguments need to be linked to sub-events, and the locus of such linking are the Event Phrases (EPs). I do not want to commit myself about the process of linking arguments to sub-events. One could imagine, however, an aspectual feature checking mechanism which requires that arguments check (inner-)aspectual features in order to be linked to sub-events<sup>7</sup>. In particular, one could imagine that a full DP object has an extra (+telic) feature which needs to be checked against a (+telic) head. Such a feature approach would capitalize on Nishida/Krifka's analysis: a semantic +finite/+completed feature might need to check a semantic +finite/+telic feature on an E head. I do not speculate further on this issue, and leave it open for further research.

Kempchinsky adopts the sub-event classification as proposed in Pustejovsky (1988), which classifies events into three main classes: **states**, **processes** and **transitions**. The transition class comprehends both accomplishments and achievements, whereas processes are more or less coincident with what Vendler classified as activities. For the present purposes, I do not need to devote myself to one or the other approach: both for Dowty and for Pustejovsky accomplishments are more complex in terms of sub-event structure than activities. For this reason, I adopt the structure

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<sup>7</sup>I diverge once again from Kempchinsky (2000), who assumes a weak-strong feature system in order to obtain the specifier-head configuration which is necessary, on her view, for the linking of arguments to sub-events.

proposed by Kempchinsky for transitive accomplishments reproduced in (53):



The  $E_2$  head is the RESULT/CHANGE OF STATE head; in other words, it is the head which encodes telicity. The  $v$  head encodes the PROCESS, i.e. the duration, and is common to both activities and accomplishments<sup>8</sup>.

Building on Kempchinsky, I propose the following:

- $Si$  is merged in the specifier of  $E_2P$  when this is present

$Si$  is merged in the specifier of  $E_2$  because it is the first position available for a DP. Such a position is only available for DPs which are not completely referential, and which rely on the sub-event structure to obtain their full reference. Another way of seeing this is considering that the specifier of  $E_2$  (or of any sub-event projection) is open to ‘defective’ DPs, which do not have a complete  $\phi$ -set. As shown in the introduction, this is the case for  $si$ , which is only partially referential, and whose  $\phi$ -set is not complete. A *non-completely* referential argument is strictly dependent on the event structure for its interpretation. Therefore, it may be merged in the specifier of an event projection, thus establishing a link with the event structure of the sentence. This hypothesis also finds independent evidence in the process of identification of

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<sup>8</sup>Kempchinsky actually postulates the existence of an  $E_1$  head that encodes the PROCESS. For my purposes, it is not necessary to distinguish between an  $E_1$  and a  $v$ . Therefore, I adapt Kempchinsky’s proposal into a structure where  $E_1P$  and  $vP$  are coincident.

*si*'s reference set. In chapter 5 I show how *si* identifies different groups of referents depending on the aspectual specification of the sentence it appears in.

Note, incidentally, that Manzini & Savoia (2002) among others propose that *si* is an object clitic, due to its distributional properties. According to Manzini & Savoia, *si* is alternatively able to encode the Origin and the Measure of an event (see the introduction). This intuition is captured by the model I propose by saying that *si* is merged in an 'object related' position, i.e. in a position which links the object to the TELICITY sub-event.

### 3. Impersonal and aspectual *si* in the specifier of $E_2$ : *ci si*

As shown in the previous section, V-O agreement constructions are accomplishments. Assuming that telicity and duration (process) are isolatable parameters encoded in specific functional heads, I follow the approach according to which the *Aktionsart* is syntactically represented in terms of functional projections that encode sub-events.

In particular, I propose that impersonal *si* constructions with V-O agreement have the VP structure proposed in Kempchinsky (2000) for transitive accomplishments reported in (53). I propose that impersonal *si* is merged in the specifier of the  $E_2$  (telicity) projection. Something similar has been proposed by Zagona (1996) for Spanish aspectual *se*, exemplified in (54):

- (54) El niño se comió la manzana  
 the child se ate the apple  
 'The child ate (up) the apple'

According to Zagona, *se* is a verbal operator. She claims that aspectual *se* expresses a subject/object relation at the culmination of the event. Such *se* is licensed only when the event is telic, and hence complete (in Zagona's terms it has a culmination). Zagona does not commit herself as to the merging site of *se*: she just assumes that



at some point *se* cliticizes on the verb. In this analysis, I wish to concentrate on the steps which precede the cliticization of *se*: assuming that *se* is both a maximal and a minimal projection (see Chomsky 1995), I propose that both aspectual and impersonal *se* (= *si*) are merged in the specifier of  $E_2P$ .

Zagona's analysis of the so-called aspectual *se* provides us with further support in favor of the hypothesis that ISCs with V-O agreement are accomplishments and ISCs without V-O agreement are activities. According to Zagona, in fact, accomplishments but not activities may license an aspectual *si*. If my hypothesis about ISCs holds, this amounts to saying that ISCs without V-O agreement do not allow for an aspectual *si*, while ISCs with V-O agreement do. This is exactly the case, as the following data show:

- (55) \**Ci si è mangiato spaghetti*  
 si-ASP si-IMP is-3RD SG eaten-PP MASC SG spaghetti-MASC PL  
 'People (we) have eaten (up) spaghetti'

(55) does not license an aspectual *si*. This shows once again that (55) (an ISC without V-O agreement) is an instantiation of an activity. ISCs with V-O agreement, on the contrary, do allow for an aspectual *si*, as shown in (56):

- (56) *Ci si sono mangiati gli spaghetti*  
 si-ASP si-IMP are-3RD PL eaten-PP MASC PL the-MASC PL  
 spaghetti-MASC PL  
 'People (we) have eaten (up) spaghetti'

(55) and (56) corroborate the hypothesis that the ISCs with V-O agreement and ISCs without V-O agreement are different in terms of their sub-event structure. The fact that (56) licenses an aspectual *si* shows that (56) is an accomplishment.

The question is now where the aspectual and the impersonal *si* are merged in (56). Building on Zagona, I propose that also impersonal *si* is merged in the specifier of the  $E_2$  projection in ISCs with V-O agreement. That is, the merging position

of impersonal *si* and aspectual *si* are coincident. This sounds like a contradiction in terms, given that both *si*'s are present in (56). If one observes the data carefully, however, one sees that it is not exactly true that two *si*'s are present in (56). The forms used are actually *si* and *ci*. (56) is an instance of the so-called *ci si* disambiguation.

*Ci si* disambiguation has been explained in different ways: According to Burzio (1986), *ci si* disambiguation was due to phonological reasons. The two *si*'s cannot be adjacent, and when this happens a phonological rule applies which changes one *si* into a *ci*. *Ci si* disambiguation, however, also takes place when the two *si*'s are not adjacent, as shown in (57):

- (57) Ce li si è scambiati  
 si-ASP them-3RD PL si-IMP is-3RD SG exchanged-PP MASC PL  
 'People have exchanged them (one another)'

Cinque (1995) has a different proposal: he claims that this disambiguation is due to a morphological constraint according to which only one instance of a lexical item may be present in a clitic cluster. Therefore, one of the two *si*'s has to be 'transformed' into something else. This 'something else' is a locative, or the dative form of the 1st person plural pronoun *noi*. Following Cinque, I propose that *ci* is the dative form of the 1st person plural pronoun. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that in particular tense-aspect configurations, ISCs receive an inclusive interpretation, i.e. an interpretation according to which the speaker is included among the referents of the impersonal pronoun. I will come back to this issue in detail in chapter 5.

Further support for the claim that *ci* is a pronoun and not a locative is provided by the following two examples: in (58) *ci* is clearly interpreted as a locative, whereas in (59) it is interpreted as a benefactive dative pronoun.

- (58) (Con le pere) ci si mangia il cacao  
 with the pears ci-LOC si-IMP the cheese

‘One eats cheese with pears’

- (59) Se *si* ha fame *ci si* mangia il cacio  
 if *si*-IMP has-3RD SG hunger *ci*-DAT *si*-IMP eats the cheese  
 ‘If one is hungry, one eats cheese’

In (56), *si* is thus the dative form of the 1st person plural pronoun. The question remains open however about the exact merging site of *ci*: If impersonal *si* is merged in the specifier of  $E_2$ , where is *ci* merged? I propose that when impersonal *si* is present, *ci* is merged in a higher Benefactive projection. In other words, because both *si*’s cannot co-occur in the same projection, one of them, namely the aspectual one, needs to ‘migrate’ to another projection, for example to a Benefactive one, as is the case in (56). The fact that aspectual *si* changes into a *ci* is a marker of the slip that has taken place.

Alternatively, *si* and *ci* may be merged in two specifiers of the same projection, and the morphological constraint proposed by Cinque (1995) would occur.

To sum up, I propose that the *ci si* alternation is due to the fact that both aspectual and impersonal *si* compete for the same projection<sup>9</sup>, namely Spec,  $E_2$ P. When both *si*’s are present in the Numeration, impersonal *si* is merged in the specifier of  $E_2$  and aspectual *si* is merged in the specifier of a Benefactive projection.

One last observation is in order here. The presence of *ci* forces the disappearance of the agreement ending on the verb. In other words, (60) is much better than (61).

- (60) (Se fa freddo) *ci si* mette i pantaloni  
 if it makes-3RD SG cold *ci*-DAT *si*-IMP put-3RD SG the-MASC PL  
 trousers-MASC PL  
 ‘If it is cold people wear trousers’

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<sup>9</sup>I am indebted to Luigi Rizzi for pointing out to me that *ci si* disambiguation might offer evidence for my analysis.

- (61) ???(Se fa freddo) ci si mettono i  
 if makes-3RD SG cold ci-DAT si-IMP put-3RD PL the-MASC PL  
 pantaloni  
 trousers-MASC PL  
 ‘If it is cold people wear trousers’

Furthermore, it is worth observing that (62) is also grammatical, and is semantically equivalent to (60):

- (62) (Se fa freddo) si mettono i pantaloni  
 if it makes-3RD SG cold si-IMP put-3RD PL the-MASC PL  
 trousers-MASC PL  
 ‘If it is cold people wear trousers’

(60) is not an instance of a no V-O agreement construction. It is a mixed paradigm, without V-O agreement and a definite article on the object DP, like those in use in Tuscany.

The fact that both (62) and (60) are acceptable but (61) is not <sup>10</sup> shows that the natural merging position for both aspectual and impersonal *si* in V-O agreement constructions is the specifier of E<sub>2</sub>P, and that the shift to another position for *ci* is avoided when possible. The reader is addressed to the discussion below about Florentine for a possible explanation of this problem.

The position where aspectual *si* has to be merged in case the inner aspectual position is ‘occupied’ is the specifier of the projection where it checks the Benefactive  $\theta$ -role. As explained in the introduction, I consider  $\theta$ -roles as special features which are valued on a DP by being merged or moving into some dedicated projections (see Hornstein 2001 and Damonte 2003).

As a matter of fact, the claim that aspectual *si* is only related to aspect is an understatement. A Benefactive reading is clearly present in those constructions which show an aspectual *si*. The present analysis does maintain that aspectual *si* is strictly

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<sup>10</sup>For some speakers (61) is actually acceptable. In any case, they find (60) much better.

related to the completion of the event, but also comprehends the benefactive reading, which was not taken into consideration by Zagona's analysis. The Benefactive reading of aspectual *si* is more evident when a 1st or 2nd person subject is present, like in (63):

- (63) Tu        ti        sei        comprato        una  
 you-NOM you-DAT are-2ND SG bought-PP MASC SG a-FEM SG  
 casa  
 house-FEM SG  
 'You have bought yourself a house'

The Benefactive  $\theta$ -role is well known to be optionally present in a construction. If we consider now aspectual *si* once again, as in (64), what strikes us immediately is its optionality. One can both say: *Giovanni mangia la mela* (Giovanni eats the apple) and *Giovanni si mangia la mela* (Giovanni eats the apple). In the past tense, the sentences are almost equivalent:

- (64) Giovanni ha        mangiato        una mela  
 Giovanni has-3RD SG eaten-PP MASC SG an apple  
 'Giovanni ate an apple'
- (65) Giovanni si è        mangiato        una mela  
 Giovanni si is-3RD SG eaten-PP MASC SG an apple  
 'Giovanni ate an apple'

The optionality of the Benefactive  $\theta$ -role extends to aspectual *si* as well. That is, the fact that aspectual *si* and the Benefactive DP are both optional is not an accident: aspectual *si* in fact bears a Benefactive  $\theta$ -role.

To sum up, in this section I have proposed that both impersonal and aspectual *si* in ISC with V-O agreement are merged in the specifier of an inner aspectual projection  $E_2P$ . This projection encodes the telicity of an event: its specifier may or may not be filled by one of the two *si*'s, either the Benefactive or the impersonal pronoun.

It is worth noticing that the difference between aspectual Benefactive *si* and impersonal *si* resides in their referentiality level. While Benefactive *si* is an anaphor, and as such it receives its reference via binding with an antecedent (for the mechanisms of binding, see Reuland 2000 and Fischer to appear), impersonal *si* is referentially independent, i.e. it identifies an unspecified group of people as its referent (see Chierchia 1995 and Mandikoetxea 2002 for a semantic analysis of impersonal *se* constructions). As I claimed in the introduction, referentiality is established according to the semantic  $\sigma$ -set. As observed in the introduction, impersonal *si* is  $\phi$  incomplete but partially referential, while anaphoric-Benefactive *si* is not referential at all. This might be responsible for the ‘competition’ between impersonal and aspectual *si* for the spec,  $E_2$  to be won by impersonal *si*. Complete referentiality is acquired by impersonal *si* at a sentential level, as I will show in detail in chapter 4.

### 3.1. *Si* in the specifier of $E_2$

In the previous sections, I have tried to present support for the following hypotheses:

- ISCs with and without V-O agreement are not instantiations of a passive and an active *si* respectively: they are instantiations of one and the same lexical item, which is merged in structures that differ with respect to their sub-event specification.
- ISCs with V-O agreement are actually accomplishments, and therefore their structure includes an ‘extra’ inner aspectual head which encodes telicity (or resultativity).
- ISCs without V-O agreement denote activities, and therefore lack the resultative inner aspectual head.
- Impersonal *si* in ISCs with V-O agreement is merged in the specifier of the inner aspectual head  $E_2$ , which encodes telicity

In this section, I wish to outline the derivation of ISCs with transitive verbs and V-O agreement. I show that merging impersonal *si* in Spec,  $E_2$ P creates an intervention effect in the assignment of Accusative, thus leading to the assignment of Nominative to the object.

Let us consider once again the ISC with V-O agreement in the present tense.

- (66) In Italia *si* mangiano gli spaghetti  
 in Italy *si* eat-3RD PL the spaghetti-PL  
 ‘In Italy people eat spaghetti’

The VP structure I am going to adopt is the one outlined in (53). Moreover, following the original proposal made in Kratzer (1994) and later adopted by Chomsky (1995, 1999), I assume that  $v$  is the locus of assignment of Accusative case and external  $\theta$ -role.

Before turning to the derivation, I wish to address the issue of present vs. past tense. One might argue that the sentence in (66) does not have a telic reading, but rather a habitual / statement one. This reflects however the behavior of accomplishments. Let us consider the contrast between (67) and (68):

- (67) John has read the books in an hour

- (68) John reads the books in an hour

While (67) expresses an accomplishment, (68) predicates of a ‘property’ of John, makes a statement, or has a habitual reading (*John reads the books in an hour every time he checks out some*). As observed by Dowty (1979), accomplishments in the present tense do acquire a statement/habitual reading depending on the context. Moreover, the past tense is the unmarked tense for *non*-statives (see Bickerton 1981).

Thus, telicity might not be ‘visible’ in the present tense of accomplishment verbs, but the fact that it is there in the past tense allows us to postulate its presence also in the present tense. This is different from claiming that a verb which may

in turn encode an accomplishment and an activity is representable by a unique syntactic structure, as Kempchinsky asserts. Such a statement presupposes the existence of a complex lexical entry, which encodes this alternation. Postulating such a lexical entry contradicts the basic assumption according to which the semantics of a sentence is determined by its syntactic configuration, and that each syntactic configuration corresponds to a different semantics.

Let us return to the sentence under examination, namely a transitive impersonal *si* construction with V-O agreement like (66). The derivation of such a sentence goes as follows (see also the tree diagram in (69)):

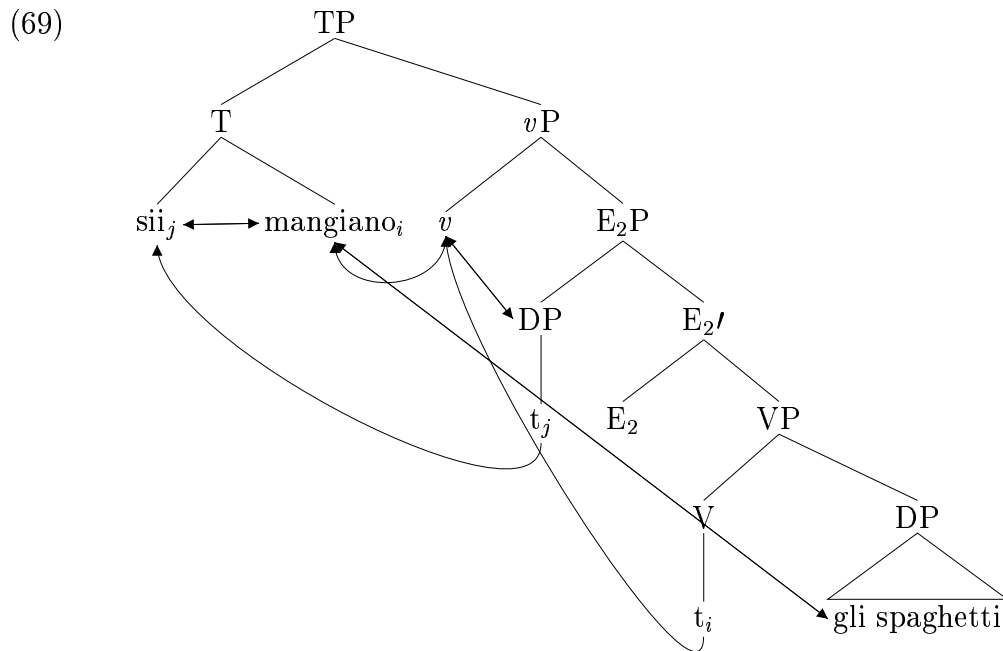
- The DP object *gli spaghetti* is merged with the V, and there it checks the internal  $\theta$ -role. It needs to get its Case feature valued.
- The E<sub>2</sub> head is merged with the VP.
- Impersonal *si* is merged in Spec, E<sub>2</sub>P.
- *v* is merged with the E<sub>2</sub>P.
- *v* needs to get its  $\phi$ -features valued, and therefore it looks down for a DP with which it Matches.
- *v* Matches with *si*, which is referential, and therefore values its  $\phi$ -features and gets Accusative Case<sup>11</sup>.
- The DP object stays without Case.
- T is merged.
- Right after the merging of T, *si* cliticizes on it.

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<sup>11</sup>In (69), *v* cannot check all its  $\phi$ -features on *si*, which is  $\phi$ -incomplete. I assume that the number feature of *v* is checked by default. Alternatively, the unvalued  $\phi$ -feature on *v* is checked by the verb, on its way to the T head.



- T enters a Match+Agree relation with the DP object, and values the Case feature on the object. This triggers valuation of the  $\phi$ -features on T, which agrees with the object.
- *Si* satisfies the EPP on T.



It is worth observing that *si* does not perform any defective intervention during Nominative assignment. According to Chomsky (1999), a defective intervention constraint is at work in syntactic derivations, which prevents long distance agreement when valued lexical items intervene in the agreement domain. The defective intervention constraint is stated as in (70):

- (70) **The defective intervention constraint**  $\alpha > \beta > \gamma$  (\*Agree ( $\alpha$ ,  $\gamma$ ),  $\alpha$  is a probe and  $\beta$  is a matching goal, and  $\beta$  is inactive due to prior Agree with some other probe) [from Chomsky (2000:123)]

(70) claims that the checked features, despite the fact that they are inactive, still matter for locality, blocking a further Agree relation at distance.

In (69), *si* might in principle perform a defective intervention in Nominative assignment. This does not happen, however, because *si* cliticizes on T as soon as T is merged. Thus, *si* is not in its initial position anymore, and cannot intervene between T and the DP object.

Moreover, notice that in this model the DP object stays without Case until the CP phase is concluded. In other words, if *v* were a phase (Chomsky 1999), the fact that the DP object is without case at the moment of Spell-Out would cause the derivation to crash. This problem arises every time we have a construction with V-O agreement, namely in Italian psych verb constructions of the *piace* type or in Icelandic quirky dative constructions. I do not wish to postulate, however, the existence of a defective *v* head which is sensitive to the presence of *si*. If the derivation were sensitive to the presence of *si*, this would mean that a different *v* would be selected depending on the presence or absence of *si*. This would in turn require a ‘mutual visibility’ of lexical items and functional heads in the numeration (or in the lexicon, before the numeration is selected), a result not really desirable.

The structure in (69) also straightforwardly accounts for the Romanian data in (20). *Si* bears Accusative case, which is overtly marked on *si* in Romanian. As noted above, Romanian lacks the no V-O agreement pattern.

### 3.2. *Si* in the specifier of *v*

As stated in the last section, for ISCs without V-O agreement I depart from what Kempchinsky proposes for transitive activities. According to Kempchinsky, if a verb may be in turn an accomplishment and an activity, its structure has to encode telicity even when an activity is instantiated: this hypothesis, as I said in the last section, contradicts the basic idea of different structures encoding different aspectual

classes. I depart from Kempchinsky's analysis by saying no  $E_2$  head is present on activity predicates. If we go back for a moment to the alternation between (67) and (68), we see that (68) is not an activity: it is still an accomplishment and behaves as accomplishments are expected to behave in the present tense. That is to say that while the nature of the object may affect the aspectual classification of a VP, tense usually does not.

I propose that the PROCESS sub-event is encoded on the  $v$  head. In ISCs without V-O agreement, *si* is merged in the specifier of  $v$ . It checks the external  $\theta$ -role by being merged in the specifier of  $v$ , being the highest argument. It does not intervene, however, in Accusative case assignment, as it is merged in a projection which is higher than  $v$ . As stated in the introduction, I assume that intervention obtains under closest c-command. Thus, the verb does not show agreement with the object, which is marked with Accusative.

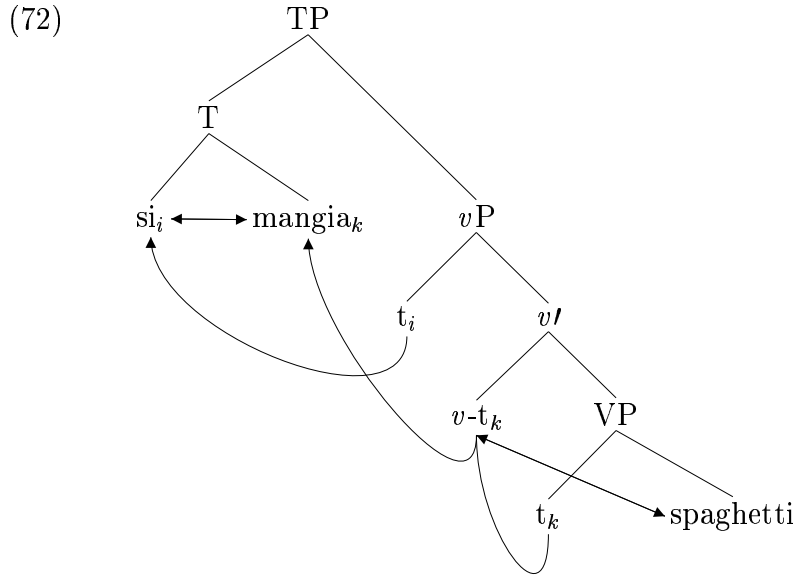
Let us consider again (30), here repeated as (71):

- (71) In Italia *si mangia spaghetti* (a tutto spiano)  
 in Italy *si eats-3RD SG spaghetti-MASC PL flat out*  
 'In Italy people eat spaghetti (flat out)'

As shown in section 1.3., in (71) the object is a real object, i.e. an internal argument. Nevertheless, in (71) there is no V-O agreement: the verb exhibits the 3rd person singular default ending and the object bears Accusative. According to my proposal, if Accusative is assigned to the direct object no intervention effect of *si* can possibly have occurred. In fact, *si* is merged in the specifier of  $v$ , and thus does not intervene in the assignment of Accusative. The derivation of (71) runs thus as follows:

- The object *spaghetti* is merged with the verb.
- $v$  is merged, and values the Case feature on the DP object.
- *Si* is merged in the specifier of  $v$  and checks the external  $\theta$ -role on  $v$ .

- T is merged; *si* cliticizes on it, thus also checking the EPP. As a result, the verb shows the 3rd person singular default inflection.



However, Accusative assignment in (71) may also take place through a different operation, namely syntactic incorporation (see Baker 1996). In order for incorporation to take place, a bare plural or unspecified object is required (see Baker 1988 and Van Geenhoven 2001). In this case, the DP object receives Case by incorporating into the verb. Such a proposal is not completely unnatural if one thinks of the meaning of ISCs without V-O agreement. It has been shown that they indicate an action. Therefore, the incorporation of the object into the verb makes perfect sense. In a sentence like (71), two possible meanings are available: the first one is given in the translation, and sounds like ‘In Italy people eat spaghetti’. The second one is something like ‘In Italy there is spaghetti eating going on all the time’. This second reading seems to reflect incorporation. For the moment, I leave the question open whether ISCs without V-O agreement are an instance of usual Accusative assignment or rather an instance of incorporation. The agreement patterns in the past tense, as we will see in section 4, however, seem to indicate that both solutions are equally likely. In other words, we could be in presence of two different syntactic

constructions that get to be coincident by chance.

To sum up, in this section I have shown that in ISCs without verb-object agreement no intervention takes place in the assignment of Accusative. The object is free to ‘check’ Accusative and *si* gets Nominative.

Let us return to the questions proposed in the end of section 1. In this section, I have provided the following answers for such questions:

- **What exactly is responsible for the alternation between ISCs with V-O agreement and ISCs without V-O agreement?** The different agreement patterns are due to the different *Aktionsart* definition of the two ISCs, and not to any special property attributable to impersonal *si*.
- **Why is a *by*-phrase not admitted in either of the two ISC constructions?** Because for both constructions *si* represents the external argument.
- **How can we justify the Accusative marker on *se* in Romanian?** By saying that *si* gets Accusative in ISCs with V-O agreement.
- **If *si* is a head, where does the external  $\theta$ -role in ISC constructions without V-O agreement end up?** *Si* is not a head but a clitic, thus both a DP and a head (a maximal and a minimal projection).
- **If *si* is a head, and as such does not bear Case, what causes the alternations at issue here?** See above.
- **Why is it that the construction without V-O agreement is much less common than the one with V-O agreement?** As already stated before, the reason why no V-O agreement constructions are less acceptable and less used than constructions with V-O agreement is attributable to a more general property of verb classes: transitive accomplishments are more frequent than transitive activities (Kempchinsky 2000). The frequency of occurrence is thus

not related to the constructions themselves, but rather reflects a general trend of verb classes.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have addressed the issue of agreement in transitive ISCs with and without V-O agreement.

For the analysis of ISCs with transitive verbs, I have proceeded as follows: First, I have isolated two 'prototypical' agreement patterns. Second, I have shown that such agreement patterns involve two independent constructions, and in particular that ISCs with V-O agreement encode accomplishments while ISCs without V-O agreement encode activities. I have shown that the agreement patterns of ISC are independent of *si*; more specifically, they are due to the different *Aktionsart* involved, and not to special and optional properties of *si*. Moreover, the agreement pattern taken into consideration clearly show that *si* cannot be considered as a head, but that it is rather a DP. *Si* may check Case and bear a  $\theta$ -role, and has the behavior of a pronoun. However, it is also sensitive to the aspectual setting of the sentence it appears in.

## Chapter 3

### Concord: past participle agreement and the unaccusative-unergative puzzle

This chapter focuses on the past participle (pp henceforth) agreement of transitive, unergative, and unaccusative ISCs, as well as on predicative ISCs.

The agreement patterns of the perfect (*passato prossimo*) of ISCs are very peculiar. With unergatives and unaccusative verbs, ISCs present a peculiarity with respect to pp agreement in the past tense: unergative verbs require a singular (masculine) past participle, while unaccusatives require a plural (masculine) pp, as shown respectively in (1) and (2):

(1) Si è telefonato  
si is-3RD SG called-PP MASC SG  
'People/we have called'

(2) Si è arrivati  
si is-3RD SG arrived-PP MASC PL  
'People/we have arrived'

With transitive verbs, the agreement patterns reflect the agreement patterns of the present tense: the auxiliary may agree with the object, and it may not. The 'standard' paradigm in use is reproduced in (3) below. In (3), both the auxiliary and the pp agree with the object. More precisely, the pp shows number and gender

agreement with the object, and the auxiliary shows number and person agreement with it.

- (3) Si sono mangiati gli spaghetti  
 si are-3RD PL eaten-MASC PL the-MASC PL spaghetti  
 ‘Somebody/we have eaten spaghetti’

(3) is the past tense for ISCs with V-O agreement. ISCs with no V-O agreement build their past tense as follows: neither the auxiliary nor the past participle agree with the object. Such a paradigm is shown in (4).

- (4) ?Si è mangiato spaghetti  
 si is-3RD SG eaten-PP MASC SG spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘Somebody ate spaghetti’

Surprisingly, for some speakers, also the version in (5) is acceptable. In (5), the auxiliary does not agree with the object while the past participle does.

- (5) Si è mangiati gli spaghetti  
 si is-3RD SG eaten-PP MASC PL the spaghetti  
 ‘Somebody has eaten spaghetti’

I take the pp-auxiliary split in (5) to reflect the division between syntactic and semantic features, as I show below.

Finally, predicative ISCs present an agreement pattern which mirrors that of unaccusative ISCs: the auxiliary shows singular default agreement, while the adjective is plural, as (6) shows:

- (6) Se si è belli, si è di solito anche  
 if si is-3RD SG handsome-MASC PL si is-3RD SG often also  
 ricchi  
 rich-MASC PL  
 ‘If one is handsome, one is usually also rich’

The ‘we/ somebody interpretation of *si* will be discussed in chapter 5.



In this chapter, a study of these agreement patterns is proposed, which makes use of the distinction between syntactic and semantic agreement. In section 1, an analysis of past participle agreement is proposed, is based on  $\sigma$ -features and the Concord operation. Sections 1.3 and 1.4 address the problem of past participle agreement in transitive ISCs. In section 2, an analysis of predicative ISCs is outlined. Section 3 addresses the peculiar agreement patterns of Tuscan. Section 4 contains an analysis of the unaccusative-unergative puzzle. Finally, section 5 contains my conclusions.

### 1. Past participle agreement in transitive ISCs

As shown in previous section, the perfect form (*passato prossimo*) of transitive ISCs is realized in various ways. In particular, three main agreement patterns have been presented:

- Both the auxiliary and the pp agree with the object, as in (3), here repeated as (7):

(7) Si sono mangiati gli spaghetti  
 si are-3RD PL eaten-PL MASC the-PL MASC spaghetti  
 ‘People/we have eaten spaghetti’

- Neither the auxiliary nor the pp agree with the object, as in (4), here repeated as (8):

(8) ?Si è mangiato spaghetti  
 Si is-3RD SG eaten-PP SG MASC spaghetti-PL MASC  
 ‘Somebody ate spaghetti’

- The auxiliary does not agree with the object, while the pp does, as exemplified in (5), here repeated as (9):

- (9) Si è mangiati gli spaghetti  
 si is-3RD SG eaten-PP PL MASC the spaghetti  
 ‘Somebody has eaten spaghetti’

The pp-auxiliary split agreement in (9) clearly reflects the syntactic-semantic feature split outlined in the introductory chapter.

In order to provide an explanation of the facts just outlined, let me first present some general observations about past participle agreement in Italian.

### 1.1. Past participle agreement in Italian

In a recent paper, Belletti (2001) enumerates the syntactic configurations that give rise to pp agreement in Italian. In this section, I reproduce Belletti’s data and present some considerations which open the path for the analysis of pp agreement in ISCs<sup>1</sup>.

Belletti (2001) shows that pp agreement in the past tense obtains in Italian in the following syntactic contexts:

- With unaccusative verbs:

- (10) Maria è partita  
 Maria-FEM SG is-3RD SG left-PP FEM SG  
 ‘Maria has left’ [from Belletti (2001:3:2)]

- With passive morphology:

- (11) Maria è stata assunta  
 Maria-FEM SG is-3RD SG been-PP FEM SG hired-PP FEM SG  
 ‘Maria has been hired’ [from Belletti (2001:3:3)]

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<sup>1</sup>For a more detailed description of pp agreement phenomena in Italian see also Burzio (1986), Kayne (1989a), La Fauci (1994), and Loporcaro (1998).

- Under direct object cliticization:

– obligatorily for the 3rd person:

- (12) L'ho vista/\*o  
 her-CL ACC FEM SG have-1ST SG seen-PP FEM/ MASC SG  
 'I have seen her' [from Belletti (2001:3:4a)]

– optionally with the other persons:

- (13) Mi ha vista/visto  
 me-CL ACC 1ST SG has-3RD SG seen-PP FEM SG  
 /seen-PP MASC SG  
 'He has seen me' [from Belletti (2001:4:5a)]

- With reflexive/reciprocal clitics:

- (14) Mi sono guardata allo specchio  
 me-CL ACC 1ST SG am-1ST SG watched-PP FEM SG at the mirror  
 'I have watched myself in the mirror' [from Belletti (2001:4:6a)]

- With impersonal passive *si*:

- (15) Si sono costruite molte case  
 si are-3RD PL built-PP FEM PL many-FEM PL houses-FEM PL  
 'People have built many houses' [from Belletti (2001:4:7)]

Based on the analysis of the data above, Belletti proposes a very important generalization, which is the starting point for my analysis:

- (16) **Belletti's generalization:** Past participle agreement involves arguments belonging to the lowest level of the VP projection, typically the direct object. It does not involve 'external' arguments. [from Belletti (2001:21)]

Moreover, building on Cinque (1998), Belletti provides elements that show that the passive pp remains low in the structure, inside the VP. The passive pp may follow the adverb *bene* ('good'), which, according to Cinque, signals the edge of the VP:

- (17) Questo genere di spettacoli è stato sempre bene  
 this kind-MASC SG of shows is-3RD SG been-MASC SG always well  
 accolto  
 received-MASC SG  
 'This kind of shows has always been well received' [from Belletti  
 (2001:22:44c)]

Belletti's generalization in (16), together with the last observation about the low position of passive pp, provides us with enough means to analyze pp agreement in terms of Concord.

## 1.2. Concord and the nature of the past participle

In the introduction, I proposed that Concord is an operation which selects semantic ( $\sigma$ ) features and determines adjectival and participial agreement. Following Uriagereka (1999) and Hughes (2003), I have defined Concord as a local operation, which takes place inside a maximal projection, between the head and its specifier or the head and its complement. Concord serves to satisfy a kind of 'uniformity of semantic features' requirement inside an XP. Concord acts exactly like Agree, in that it values unvalued features. It targets the  $\sigma$ -set, and takes place inside a maximal projection.

The Concord operation is not substantially different from Agree. One could say that we are talking about the same operation, and we distinguish only between domains of application and feature sets targeted: Concord is local agreement, inside a maximal projection, and targets  $\sigma$ -features; Agree is a longer distance operation, which has the Spec, Head configuration as its minimal domain, and targets  $\phi$ -sets.

The data presented above, as Belletti observed, show that pp agreement takes

place inside the VP, and that it involves the complement position. In our terms, pp agreement takes place under Concord.

Before proceeding with the analysis of pp agreement, let us consider the nature of the pp. It is traditionally recognized that the pp is both verbal and adjectival (see Alexiadou 2001 and Embick 2000 for a recent analysis of deverbal adjectives and adjectival participles). The pp is in fact related to the verbal paradigm, and is verbal in nature. However, it exhibits aspects that are typical of adjectives, such as gender inflection. As stated in the introduction, adjectives only possess a  $\sigma$ -set. Pps, however, are both verbal and adjectival in nature. This amounts to saying that pps hold both  $\phi$ -features and  $\sigma$ -features. Both the  $\phi$ -set and the  $\sigma$ -set are unvalued, and need to be valued via Agree and Concord.

If the hypothesis just outlined holds, then there should be situations in which Concord and Agree act distinctly from one another. Otherwise, the postulation of the extra  $\sigma$ -set would be redundant. It goes without saying that evidence for the existence of the two feature sets and the different application fields of Concord and Agree is provided by ISCs. I will return to this issue in the next section, dedicated to the derivation of pp agreement patterns with ISCs.

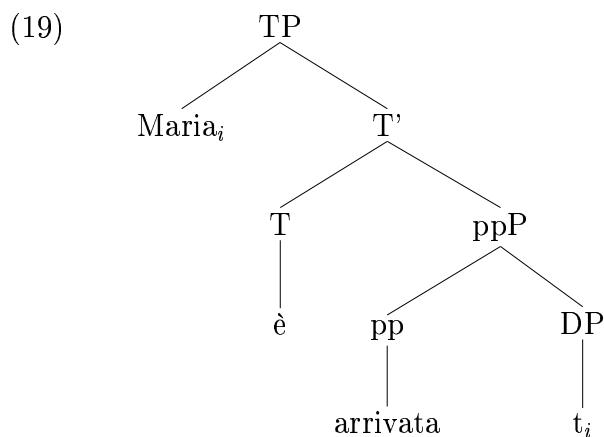
For the moment, I wish to concentrate on pp agreement in general, and show how Concord works. The data proposed by Belletti are quite easily analyzable in terms of Concord. As an example, let us examine (10), here repeated as (18):

- (18) Maria            è            partita  
 Maria-FEM SG is-3RD SG left-PP FEM SG  
 'Maria has left'

In (18), the verb *partire* ('leave') is unaccusative, and *Maria* is the internal argument. The syntactic derivation of (18) goes as follows:

- *Maria* is merged with the past participle.
- The pp has unvalued  $\sigma$ -features and unvalued  $\phi$ -features.

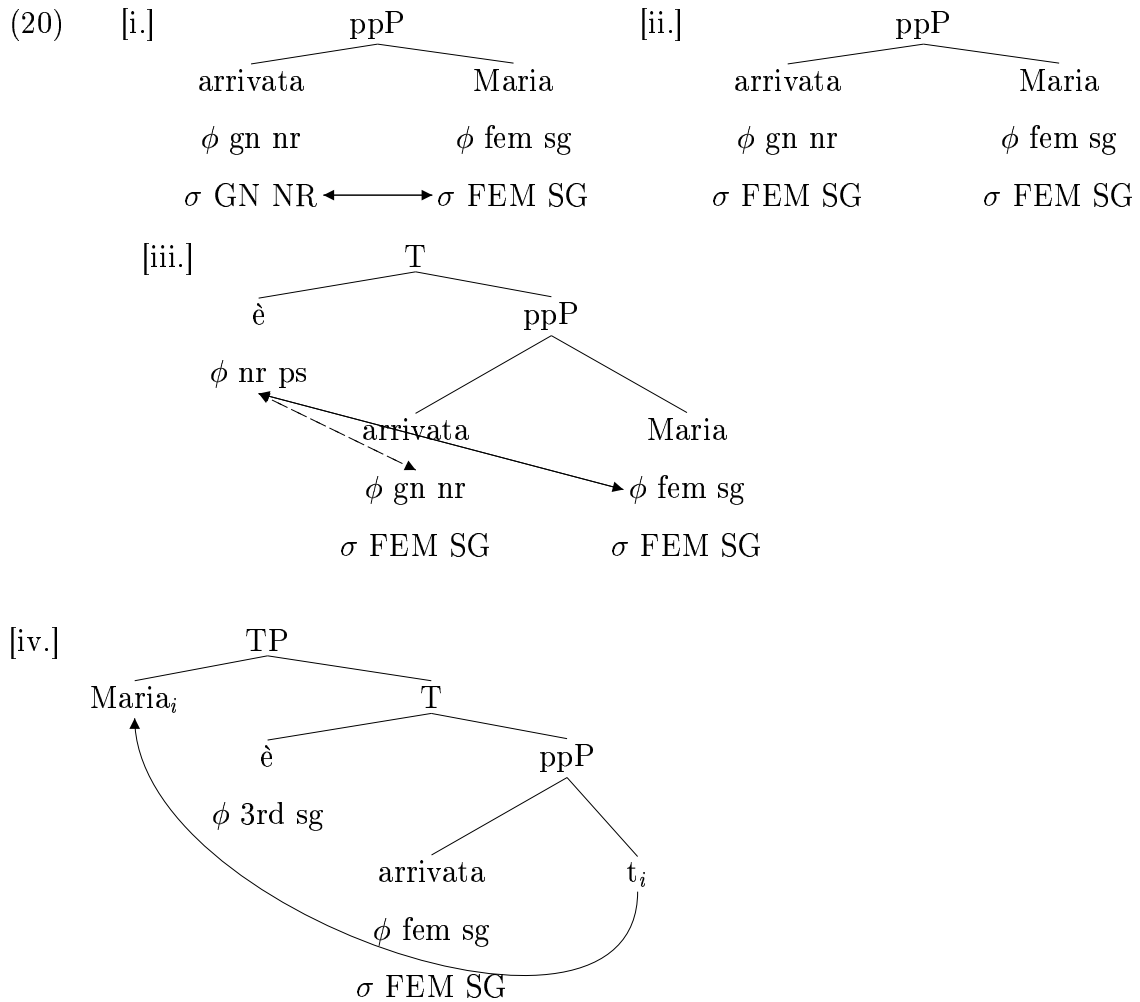
- The unvalued  $\sigma$ -features on the pp Match with the valued  $\sigma$ -features of the noun *Maria*.
- The pp gets  $\sigma$ -valued as FEMININE and SINGULAR.
- The auxiliary is merged in T. It has unvalued  $\phi$ -features.
- The auxiliary ‘looks down’ in order to find valued  $\phi$ -features. It Matches the  $\phi$ -set of the pp, which is however not valued, and therefore cannot value the  $\phi$ -set on T.
- The auxiliary Matches with the  $\phi$ -set of *Maria*. Agree takes place, and the auxiliary gets a 3rd singular specification.
- As a result of Match between the auxiliary and the pp, the valuation on T is ‘transmitted’ also to the pp.
- *Maria* moves to the specifier of T to check the EPP.



Step by step <sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup>The dotted arrow represents Match, the arrow Agree or Concord.



In (20)[i.], one might wonder why no Agree relation holds between the  $\phi$ -set of the pp and that of the direct object. *A priori*, nothing prevents this from happening. The fact that the pp results in having a feminine  $\phi$ -feature even if the T head does not hold a gender feature seems to show that also Agree between the pp  $\phi$ -set and the object  $\phi$ -set has taken place. In the end, the values that the T head provides to the pp are derived in turn provided by the DP object. However, Concord and Agree act in different domains and on different feature-sets, as stated in the previous section. Concord acts within a phrase, while Agree acts either in presence of a Spec/Head configuration, or long-distance.

With the Concord mechanism in mind, let us turn to consider the pp agreement

patterns of ISCs in Italian.

### 1.3. Pp agreement in ISCs with V-O agreement

As shown above, the pp agreement pattern of ISCs with V-O agreement is as follows: both the pp and the auxiliary agree with the DP object. An example of such an agreement pattern is (21):

- (21) Si sono mangiati gli spaghetti  
 si are-3RD PL eaten-PL MASC the-PL MASC spaghetti  
 ‘People/we have eaten spaghetti’

In the light of the discussion just outlined, it is clear that pp agreement involves  $\sigma$ -features, while T-DP agreement involves  $\phi$ -features. The derivation of (21) goes as follows:

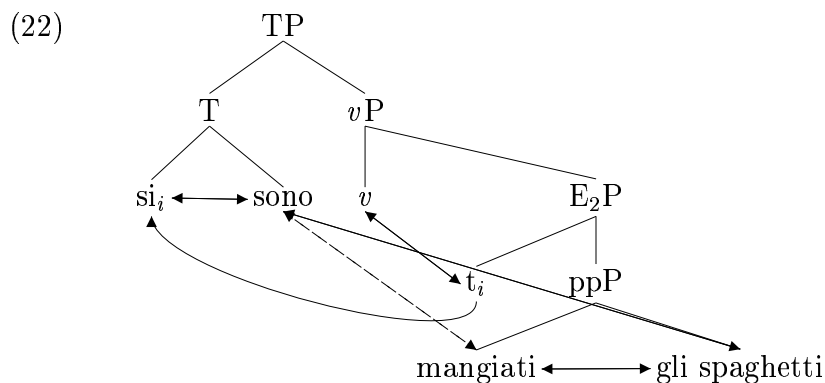
- The DP *gli spaghetti* is merged with the pp.
- *Gli spaghetti* holds valued  $\sigma$ -features (MASCULINE, PLURAL, and 3RD) and valued  $\phi$ -features (masc and pl).
- Match is established between the pp and the DP object. As a result, Concord obtains.
- The  $\sigma$ -features of the pp are valued as PLURAL and MASCULINE.
- The  $E_2$  head is merged.
- *Si* is merged in the specifier of  $E_2$ . It is referential. Its  $\phi$ -features are 3rd person, no gender, no number. Its  $\sigma$ -features are PLURAL, MASCULINE + FEMININE, HUMAN, and UNSPECIFIED PERSON. *Si* has an unvalued Case feature.
- *v* is merged. It has unvalued  $\phi$ -features.



- $v$  ‘looks down’ for a valuator of its unvalued features. It meets  $si$ .
- Match is established between  $v$  and  $si$ .  $Si$  values person on  $v$ . As  $si$  does not have syntactic number, default singular number agreement is valued on  $v$ <sup>3</sup>.
- As a result of Agree,  $si$  receives Accusative Case.
- The T head is merged.
- T establishes a Match relation with the pp first, which cannot value its  $\phi$ -features.
- T looks further and meets the DP object, which values its number feature.
- $Si$  cliticizes on the T head, and values its person feature. As a result, the auxiliary in T shows 3rd person plural inflection

The exact mechanism of  $\phi$ -valuation on T is explained in the next chapter.

As in the case of the present tense, the EPP on T is satisfied by  $si$ . The diagram of (21) is shown in (22):



<sup>3</sup>The default attribution of number on  $v$  may be allowed in contexts in which there is incomplete valuation of the features by a referential argument.

#### 1.4. Pp agreement in ISCs with no V-O agreement

The agreement pattern of an ISC with no V-O agreement in the past tense is exemplified in (4), here repeated as (23):

- (23) ?Ieri sera si è mangiato spaghetti  
 yesterday evening si is-3RD SG eaten-PP MASC SG spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘Yesterday evening somebody/we ate spaghetti’

In (23), no agreement takes place between the auxiliary and the DP object. As shown in section 3.2. of chapter 2, in the case of ISCs with no V-O agreement the  $E_2$  head is not present, and therefore no intervention effect may be performed by *si*. The DP object is normally assigned Accusative case, and the pp does not show agreement with the object. In (23), the DP object *gli spaghetti* is plural, the pp shows the default masculine singular ending. In addition to (23), another construction is also available, as shown in (5), here repeated as (24):

- (24) Si è mangiati gli spaghetti  
 si is-3RD SG eaten-PP MASC PL the spaghetti  
 ‘People have eaten spaghetti’

In (24), pp agreement with the object does take place. The auxiliary does not agree with the object instead, and shows a 3rd person ending.

These agreement patterns are quite unexpected, if one considers that Concord is supposed to take place between the pp and the DP object. In particular, (23) seems to contradict the general idea that Concord always takes place between the pp and the object. In section 3.2. of chapter 2, however, I have hinted at the possibility that ISCs with no V-O agreement are instances of syntactic incorporation. In particular, I suggested that ISCs with no V-O agreement are the result of two different syntactic configurations: a transitive one and an incorporation one, which converge into a unique result. If this were true, (23) and (24) would not look so unexpected any longer. In particular, the agreement patterns in (24) would embody

the former possibility, namely the transitive structure, while (23) would be a case of incorporation. This is exactly what I wish to propose: the peculiar agreement patterns in (23) and (24) are the reflex of two different syntactic configurations: an incorporation structure and a transitive one. That (23) might be a case of incorporation becomes evident if one inserts a determiner in the clause:

- (25) \*Ieri sera si è mangiato gli spaghetti  
 yesterday evening si is eaten the spaghetti  
 ‘Yesterday evening somebody/we have eaten spaghetti’

In (25), the insertion of a determiner leads to ungrammaticality. In the case of (23), the object, incorporating into the past participle, is not ‘visible’ for  $\sigma$ -valuation any longer. This is possibly due to the fact that the object becomes part of the verb, and its  $\sigma$ -features invisible for Concord.

(24) is thus a proper transitive structure. In (23), the pp shows the default agreement ending and the auxiliary agrees with *si* in person, and gets default singular number. In (24), the pp agrees with the object, while the auxiliary does not. To sum up, (23) and (24) are the result of different syntactic configurations. In (23), we are probably dealing with incorporation of the object into the verb. Therefore, the pp cannot Concord with the object, and shows the masculine singular default ending. (24) is instead a transitive construction. Concord holds between the DP object *gli spaghetti* and the pp. The pp results in having PLURAL and MASCULINE  $\sigma$ -features. In both cases, the auxiliary shows a 3rd ps singular ending as a result of agreement with *si*. The singular number is acquired by default.

## 2. Impersonal *si* in predicative constructions: *si è belli*

As shown in the introduction, one of the most puzzling properties of impersonal *si* is that of triggering plural agreement on the adjective and singular agreement on the auxiliary in copular constructions. An example of such a construction is offered

in (26):

- (26) Se si è ricchi, si è anche belli  
 if si is-3RD SG rich-MASC PL si is-3RD SG also beautiful-MASC PL  
 'If one is rich, one is also beautiful'

If the reference set involves only women, the sentence above can be uttered as follows:

- (27) Se si è ricche, si è anche belle  
 if si is-3RD SG rich-FEM PL si is-3RD SG also beautiful-FEM PL  
 'If one is rich, one is also beautiful'

The agreement paradigms in (26) and (27) follow quite straightforwardly if one thinks in terms of Agree and Concord. Notice that (26)-(27) involve a small clause. Costa & Pereira (2003) have shown in fact that a construction in European Portuguese that strictly resembles (26) involves a small clause. A general analysis of predicative constructions involving small clauses has been proposed by Moro (2000 and references given there).

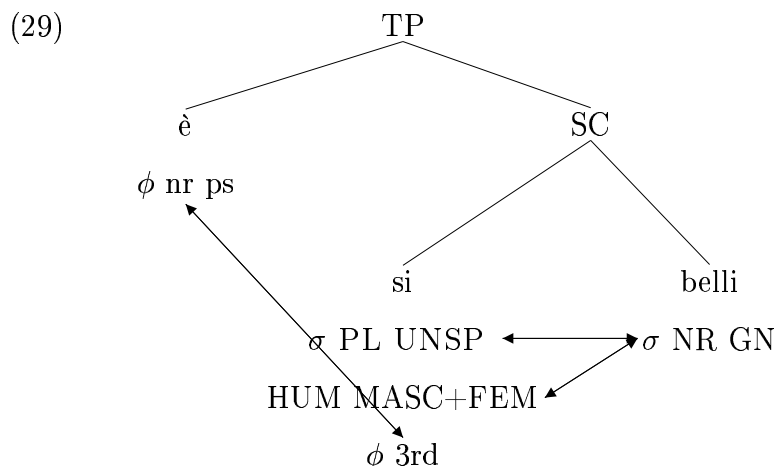
The *a gente* impersonal construction in Portuguese presents an agreement paradigm that mirrors exactly that of (26). In this construction, the subject is syntactically marked as a singular feminine, but the adjective in predicative constructions involving such a subject is marked as plural and masculine, as (28) exemplifies:

- (28) A gente está cansados  
 a gente-FEM SG is-3RD SG tired-MASC PL  
 'People are tired'

(28) behaves exactly like (26) with respect to agreement: the auxiliary shows syntactic agreement with the subject, but the adjective shows semantic agreement with it. Costa & Pereira propose an analysis for (28) which separates syntactic and semantic agreement, and state that semantic agreement between the adjective and *a gente* takes place in the SC. Following Costa & Pereira, I assume that (26) involves a small clause. I argue that also in this case different feature sets are involved in

the derivation. In particular, semantic agreement obtains between the adjective and *si*, while syntactic agreement obtains between the copula and *si*, exactly like in the case of *a gente* in European Portuguese.

The syntactic configuration of (26) is shown in (29):



### 3. Tuscan *si*

As shown in the introduction, Tuscan speakers accept sentences that for the rest of Italian speakers are unacceptable or very marginal. Examples of ‘marginal’ sentences are (30), and (31):

(30) Si è visto molte macchine  
 si is-3RD SG seen-PP MASC SG many-FEM PL cars  
 ‘People have seen many cars’

(31) In Italia si mangia gli spaghetti  
 in Italy si eats-3RD SG the spaghetti-MASC PL  
 ‘In Italy, people eat spaghetti’

The construction in (30) has been partially discussed in section 4.1. Both (30) and (31) involve no V-O agreement and a definite object. In other words, the object is not a bare noun, but despite this the sentence is a no V-O agreement one. Despite the apparent difference of these sentences from the ‘standard’ agreement patterns

examined so far, (30) and (31) do not constitute a big problem for the present analysis. In both cases, the VP does not seem to be perceived as an accomplishment. In chapter 2 I have discussed the interaction between the *Aktionsart* of a verb and the definiteness of the object. From several studies it has emerged that a definite object tends to force an accomplishment interpretation of the VP. (30) and (31) show that this is not always the case. Despite the presence of a definite object, the VP denotes an activity, and the agreement patterns that follow are those of an activity. In particular, both (30) and (31) lack the telicity head  $E_2$ , which forces *si* to be merged above the *v* projection. This results in a lack of intervention by means of *si* and in the assignment of Accusative to the DP object.

It is very important to remark that Florentine has lost the 1st person plural form of the verb altogether. This form has been replaced with the ISC. This is not surprising, if one considers that ISCs may receive an inclusive ('we') interpretation. This phenomenon will be analyzed in detail in chapter 5.

The fact that ISCs have replaced the 1st person plural constructions suggests that their use is more widespread than that of the 'standard' ISCs. therefore, like in Rumanian, the activity/accomplishment alternation has arguably been lost, and transitive ISCs are used with any kind of object. The activity/accomplishment pattern doesn't apply in Florentine, and the two constructions (with and without V-O agreement) are completely interchangeable.

#### 4. Impersonal *si* with unergative and unaccusative verbs

Unergative verbs show an interesting difference when compared to unaccusatives. While the agreement patterns of the present tense in both ISC with unergatives and with unaccusatives are the same, in the past tense they are different [see Belletti (2001)]. The pp is singular with unaccusative verbs and plural with unaccusatives.

The present tense of an unergative impersonal *si* construction is shown in (32):

- (32) Si telefona  
 si calls-3RD SG  
 'People call'

In (32) the verb shows the default 3rd singular ending. The past tense (*passato prossimo*) of (32) is (33):

- (33) Si è telefonato  
 si is-3RD SG called-PP MASC SG  
 'People have called'

In (33), the auxiliary shows the default 3rd singular ending and the participle shows the default singular masculine ending.

The present tense of an unaccusative ISC is shown in (34):

- (34) Si arriva (presto)  
 si arrives-3RD SG early  
 'People arrive early'

In (34), just like in (32), the verb is in the present tense and shows the default 3rd singular ending. However, the past tense of an unaccusative impersonal is different from the past tense of an unergative construction, as shown in (35):

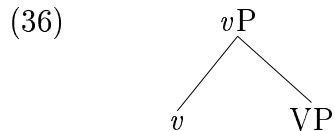
- (35) Si è arrivati presto  
 si is-3RD SG arrived-PP MASC PL early  
 'People arrived early'

In (35), the auxiliary shows the default 3rd singular ending while the participle is plural masculine. In the previous section I have proposed an analysis for ISCs with transitive verbs. This section will be devoted to the analysis of unergative and unaccusative impersonals.

#### 4.1. Impersonal *si* with unergatives

Unergatives are typically activities, i.e. they do not encode telicity. In this section, I wish to extend my proposal about pp agreement also to unergatives.

If unergative verbs do not express a result state, their structure is the one in (36):



Following Kratzer (1994), I assume that a *v* is present with unergative verbs, which contains an external  $\theta$ -role feature (see Hornstein 2001). Moreover, I follow the lines proposed by Hale and Keyser (1993), according to which unergatives are underlying transitives, with the direct object (Theme) incorporating into the root by conflation. I argue thus that the object is syntactically projected, but has no phonological realization.

In (32), *si* is merged in the specifier of  $E_1$ . The  $\phi$ -features on *v* are valued by the null direct object. *Si* does not trigger any Agree relation because it cliticizes on T as soon as T is merged. The verb on T shows the default 3rd person agreement ending.

In the past tense, the past participle shows a masculine singular ending, and the auxiliary is singular:

- (37) Si è telefonato  
 si is-3RD SG called-PP MASC SG  
 ‘People/we have called’

In (37), the  $\sigma$ -features on the pp are valued by the cognate object, which is by definition MASCULINE and SINGULAR. The derivation of (37) runs as follows:

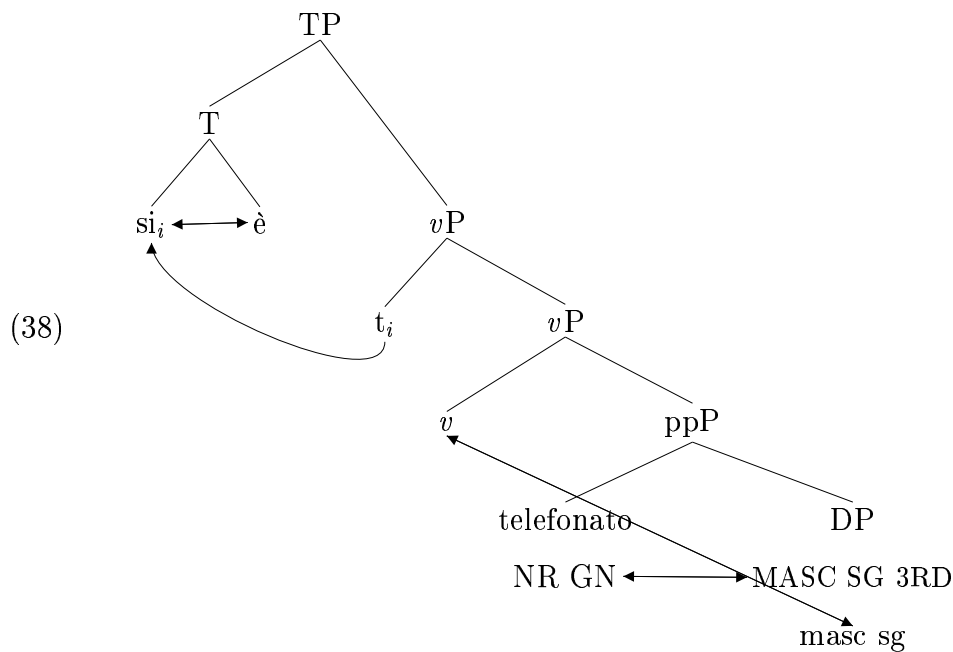
- The cognate object is merged with the pp. It has  $\sigma$ -features MASCULINE,



SINGULAR and 3RD.

- The pp's  $\sigma$ -features Match with the  $\sigma$ -features of the cognate object, which determine a masculine singular ending on the participle under Concord.
- The  $v$  head is merged. Its  $\phi$ -features are valued by the  $\phi$ -features of the cognate object.
- *Si* is merged in the specifier of  $v$ .
- The auxiliary is merged in T.
- *Si* cliticizes on it, and values the  $\phi$ -person feature on T. The singular number feature is attributed to T by default.

The derivation of (37) is also illustrated in (38):



#### 4.2. ISCs with unaccusative verbs

In the present tense, the finite unaccusative verb shows the default third singular ending, as in (34), here repeated as (39):

- (39) Si arriva presto  
 si arrives-3RD SG early  
 'People arrive early'

Following Kratzer (1994), I assume that unaccusative verbs have no *v* projection. *Si* is merged in the internal argument position. The derivation of (39) runs as follows:

- *Si* is merged with the verb.
- T is merged, and the verb raises there. *Si* cliticizes on the verb in T, and values the person feature on T.
- The number  $\phi$ -feature on T is the default singular.
- The EPP on T is checked by *si*.

In the past tense, as I have already pointed out, there is a mismatch in number between the auxiliary and the past participle:

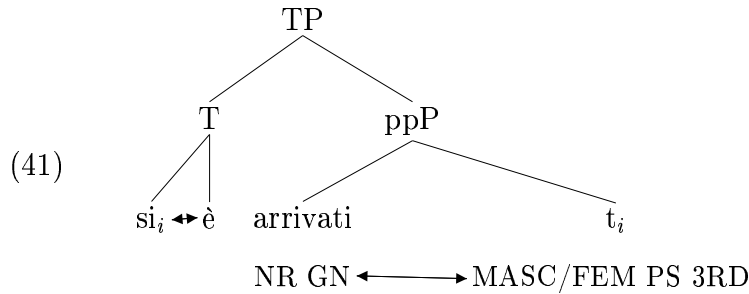
- (40) Si è arrivati presto  
 si is-3RD SG arrived-PP MASC PL early  
 'People arrived early'

The plural ending on the past participle is triggered by Concord with *si*. *Si* is merged in complement position, and (40) is derived as follows:

- *Si* is merged with the pp.
- The pp  $\sigma$ -matches with *si* and gets the PLURAL MASCULINE (if the referent set is masculine; otherwise FEMININE) agreement ending.
- The auxiliary is merged on T.
- *Si* cliticizes on T, and values the person feature on T.
- The auxiliary gets the singular number feature by default.

- The case feature on *si* is checked by T.

The tree diagram of the derivation in (40) is offered in (41):



For the analysis of unaccusative verbs, I have assumed that *si* is merged in the complement position of the VP. My assumption derives from two observations: the first one is that *si* is the only DP available in the Numeration. This implies that it will be merged in any position available for a DP. In this case, the first DP position available in the derivation is the complement of the unaccusative verb. The second observation concerns the fact that *si* obligatorily agrees under Concord with the pp. In the introduction, I have shown that *si* has a disjunctive  $\sigma$  gender feature. *Si* can have both a reference set of men or women. The pp participle agreement in unaccusative ISCs may show a masculine or a feminine agreement ending depending on whether the reference group is made up of men or women, as shown in (42) below. The only element in the Numeration that can trigger this double agreement is *si*. Hence, the pp must agree with *si*.

- (42) Si è arrivati/                   arrivate  
 si is arrived-MASC PL/ arrived-FEM PL  
 ‘People/us have arrived/ Some women/us have arrived’

## 5. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have addressed the issue of agreement in ISCs in the perfect tense and in predicative ISCs. I have examined ISCs with and without auxiliary-object agreement, and the past participle agreement patterns with unergatives and unaccusatives. Moreover, I have analyzed the predicative construction *Si è belli* which requires singular agreement on the auxiliary and plural agreement on the adjective.

For the analysis of the past participle agreement patterns, as well as for the analysis of the predicative constructions, I have assumed that there is a division of labor between two feature sets, the  $\phi$ -set and the  $\sigma$ -set, and two syntactic operations: Agree and Concord. I have argued that pp agreement, together with adjectival agreement, involves syntactic features that carry semantic information, and is triggered through Concord, that takes place inside a maximal projection. I have shown that the agreement mismatch between the auxiliary and the pp in unaccusative constructions and predicative constructions is due to the fact that two different feature sets are involved in syntactic computation. Therefore, the agreement ending on the pp and on the adjective is a result of Concord, which targets the semantico-syntactic set  $\sigma$ , while the agreement ending on the auxiliary is obtained through Agree of  $\phi$ -features.

## Chapter 4

### The Person restriction in ISCs

#### 1. Introduction

It has often been observed that ISCs with V-O agreement undergo a specific constraint: their object cannot be other than 3rd person (Burzio 1986, Cinque 1988). This phenomenon is known as the person restriction on the object, and is illustrated in (1)-(3):

- (1) In televisione si vede spesso Maria  
in television si sees-3RD SG often Maria  
'People often see Maria on the tv'
- (2) In televisione si vedono spesso loro  
in television si see-3RD PL often they-NOM 3RD PL  
'People often see them on the tv'
- (3) \*In televisione si vedo spesso io/ vedi spesso  
in television si see-1ST SG often I-NOM 1ST SG/ see-2ND SG often  
tu / vediamo spesso noi / vedete  
you-NOM 2ND SG / see-1ST PL often we-NOM 1ST PL / see-2ND PL  
spesso voi  
often you-NOM 2ND PL  
'People often see me/you / us/ them on tv'



the facts.

I follow two paths to explain the person restriction phenomenon: on the one hand, I examine constructions that have the same syntactic characteristics as Icelandic QDCs, such as Italian psych verbs of the *piacere* class. I show that such constructions do not present a person restriction, contrary to what most proposals (like Boeckx's 2003) predict. On the other hand, I compare Icelandic QDCs with Italian ISCs. I show that these two constructions are not syntactically equivalent, but nevertheless present the same phenomenon: a person restriction on the object. The comparison of Icelandic QDCs with Italian ISCs on the one hand and with Italian psych verbs on the other leads us to conclude that it is the presence of the Italian impersonal *si* and of the Icelandic *-st* suffix that determines the person restriction. When one of the two elements is absent in a clause, like in the case of Italian psych verbs of the *piacere* class, the person restriction does not arise.

The present chapter is organized as follows. In section 2 it is shown that the person restriction is not limited to Italian ISCs with V-O agreement. Very well-known data regarding Icelandic quirky dative constructions are presented, together with some phenomena recently observed about Spanish. In section 3 the main accounts on the person restriction in Icelandic are summarized. I do not know of any account for Italian ISCs facts. These analyses are then applied to Italian data, giving unsatisfactory results. In particular, it is shown that these analyses make the wrong prediction with respect to one category of psych verbs, namely the *piacere* subclass of psych verbs. In section 4, an analysis is suggested for Italian ISCs, which singles out *si* as responsible for the person restriction. Such an analysis explains both the Italian and the Spanish facts. For Icelandic the proposal is made in section 5 that the suffix *-st*, which is present on the majority of the verbs that undergo the person restriction, is responsible for such a restriction. Section 6 addresses the problem of lack of person restriction in ISCs without V-O agreement and psych

verbs of the *piacere* class. Finally, section 7 contains my conclusions.

## 2. The person restriction on Nominative objects: where and when

The aim of this section is to provide a detailed overview of the data on the person restriction phenomenon. Together with those Italian, Icelandic and Spanish constructions which do exhibit a person restriction on the Nominative object, a set of data is introduced illustrating the reverse phenomenon, i.e. the lack of person restriction on the Nominative object in some constructions which would be expected to present it. From the comparison of the two groups a very interesting profile emerges of the person restriction phenomenon.

The person restriction on the object is a phenomenon that only concerns constructions which involve an impersonal *si* in Italian. Specifically, ISCs with V-O agreement do not license a Nominative object other than 3rd person. In other words, 1st and 2nd person pronouns are excluded from the object position of ISCs with V-O agreement. To my knowledge, ISCs are the only constructions in Italian which undergo such a constraint. They are, however, not the only existing constructions which require a Nominative object in Italian. In particular, some Italian psych verbs also require a Nominative object, but crucially they do not exhibit a person restriction on it. The contrast between ISCs and psych verb constructions may thus indicate the direction to be followed in order to find an explanation for the person restriction phenomenon.

### 2.1. Italian ISCs and the person restriction

Italian ISCs with V-O agreement undergo a constraint regarding the person feature of the object: it cannot be other than 3rd person, as exemplified in (1) through (4), here repeated as (5)-(7).



- (5) In televisione si vede spesso Maria  
 in television si sees-3RD SG often Maria  
 ‘People often see Maria on the tv’
- (6) In televisione si vedono spesso loro  
 in television si see-3RD PL often they-NOM 3RD PL  
 ‘People often see them on the tv’
- (7) \*In televisione si vedo spesso io/ vedi spesso  
 in television si see-1ST SG often I-NOM 1ST SG/ see-2ND SG often  
 tu / vediamo spesso noi / vedete  
 you-2ND SG NOM / see-1ST PL often we-1ST PL NOM / see-2ND PL  
 spesso voi  
 often you-NOM 2ND PL  
 ‘People often see me/you / us/ them on tv’

Very interestingly, ISCs without V-O agreement do not undergo the same constraint, as (8)-(10) show:

- (8) In televisione li si vede ogni giorno  
 in television them-ACC 3RD PL si sees-3RD SG every day  
 ‘One sees them every day on the TV’
- (9) In televisione lo si vede ogni giorno  
 in television him-ACC 3RD SG si sees-3RD SG every day  
 ‘One sees him every day on the TV’
- (10) In televisione ti /mi /ci /vi si  
 in television you-2ND SG /me-1ST SG /us-1ST PL /you-2ND PL si  
 vede ogni giorno  
 sees-3RD SG every day  
 ‘One sees you /me /us /you every day on the TV’

On a first comparison, it appears that the object is required to bear Nominative case in order for the restriction to apply. This amounts to saying that the object needs to agree with the Nominative assigning head, T. If such an agreement does not take place, the person restriction does not seem to hold. Hence, we can argue

that an agreement relation between the object and T is a necessary condition for a person restriction to hold. This observation is crucial if one wants to make a choice between those analyses which regard the person restriction problem as a ‘feature hierarchy’ problem (see for example Bianchi 2003), and purely structural analyses. Under the former view, the person restriction is the result of a comparison of the object DP directly with the subject DP. Such a comparison does not affect T in any way. There is a direct comparison between the high part of the clause and the lower one, hence the agreement with T is not crucial. I do not consider this approach any further here. The reader is addressed to Anagnostopoulou (2003) for further discussion on this approach. The latter approach will be pursued in this chapter.

## 2.2. Person restriction in Icelandic quirky subject constructions

In the last few years, the syntax of Nominative objects has been the topic of intensive research [Sigurðsson (1996, 2000, 2002, 2003, to appear a, b), Taraldsen (1995), Schütze (1997), Boeckx (1998, 2000), Chomsky 2000, Hiraiwa (2001), Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir (2001), Haeberli (2002), Anagnostopoulou (2002, 2003), Bejar & Rezac (2003), Ormazabal & Romero (to appear), among others]

Icelandic quirky subject/quirky dative constructions share some traits with Italian ISCs. In particular, they also undergo the person restriction constraint on the object, and therefore they are eligible for a comparative analysis with Italian ISCs.

Let us examine the salient traits of Icelandic quirky dative constructions (QDCs henceforth). An example of QDC is given in (11):

- (11) Henni leiddust strákarnir/ þeir  
 her-DAT bored-3RD (2ND) PL the boys-NOM PL/ they-NOM 3RD PL  
 ‘She found the boys/them boring’ [from Sigurðsson (1996:1)]

In (11), the Nominative object *strákarnir* agrees with the verb, whereas the subject *henni* is marked for dative. Very interestingly, the Nominative object may not be

other than 3rd person, as (12) exemplifies:

- (12) \*Henni leiddust þið/ leiddumst við  
 her-DAT bored-2ND (-3RD) PL you-NOM PL/ bored-1ST PL we-NOM PL  
 ‘She found you/ us boring’ [from Sigurðsson (1996:28)]

A detailed summary of the properties of Icelandic QDCs is provided by Boeckx (2003) [see Boeckx (2003:1-2)] (the notes in parentheses are my own):

- Nominative objects are found only in the context of Quirky subject constructions.
- Quirky subjects, unlike Nominative subjects, do not trigger morphological agreement on the finite verb. This is illustrated in (13) [from Boeckx (2003:1)]:

- (13) Stelpunum var hjálpadh  
 the girls-DAT FEM PL was-3RD SG helped-SG  
 ‘The girls were helped’

- Agreement between the finite verb and the Nominative object is limited to number agreement. In particular, person agreement is excluded (i.e. a person restriction on the object holds).
- Finite verb agreement with the Nominative object is excluded if a Quirky element is within the c-command domain of the verb at Spell-Out (i.e. if a quirky element intervenes between the verb and the Nominative object), as shown in (14):

- (14) Mér fannst / \*fundust [henni leiðast  
 me-DAT seemed-3RD SG / seemed-3RD PL her-DAT bore  
 þeir  
 they-NOM  
 ‘I thought she was bored with them’

In addition to these properties, Andrews (1976) and Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson (1985) among others, have shown that Icelandic quirky datives behave like ordinary Nominative subjects with respect to various subjecthood tests or diagnostics. An Icelandic quirky dative may, for instance, bind a reflexive, as shown in (15):

- (15) Henni<sub>i</sub> leiðist bókin sín<sub>i</sub> / \*hennar<sub>i</sub>  
 her-DAT bores book the-NOM self's / \*her  
 'She finds her (own) book boring' [from Sigurðsson (to appear:5)]

What matters for us in particular is that Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson show that quirky datives land in the position usually occupied by structural subjects. Dative experiencers of the *piacere* class also exhibit a dative subject in structural subject position, as we will see in the next section. The dative DP of Italian psych verbs is a quirky dative, as shown by Belletti & Rizzi (1988) and Cardinaletti (2002) among others, and therefore Italian psych verbs are QDCs. Differently from Icelandic, however, Italian psych verbs do not present the person restriction on the Nominative object<sup>1</sup>.

Differently from psych verbs, Italian ISCs are not QDCs (as shown in D'Alessandro to appear:b, contra D'Alessandro to appear:a), but they do present a person restriction on the Nominative object.

### 2.3. Italian and Spanish psych verbs

The data illustrated in 2.1. show that Nominative case is a necessary condition for the person restriction to apply. The question is now whether Nominative case on the object is also a sufficient condition for the person restriction to apply. If it were so, any time we had a Nominative object, a person restriction should occur.

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<sup>1</sup>Masullo (1993) observes that Icelandic QDCs are different from Spanish QDCs in many respects. He does maintain, however, that quirky datives in Spanish land in a structural subject position, and this is what matters for the present discussion.

The answer to this question is quite simple, if one considers some data from Italian psych verbs. Italian psych verbs of the *piacere* class exhibit a Nominative object<sup>2</sup>. In their (1988) paper, Belletti & Rizzi show that psych verbs are underlying unaccusatives, and that therefore both their arguments are VP-internal. This amounts to saying that in a sentence like (16), the Nominative DP is an internal argument.

- (16) Mi                    piace            la cioccolata  
 me-DAT 1ST SG likes-3RD SG the chocolate  
 'I like chocolate'

The dative argument of psych verbs is shown to behave like a real subject, and thus differently from left dislocated elements. The discussion of these issues is presented below in this section. Interestingly, sentences like (16) do not exhibit any restriction on the person feature of the object, as the following example shows:

- (17) Gli                    piaci            tu/                    piaccio  
 him-DAT 3RD SG like-2ND SG you-NOM 2ND SG/ like-1ST SG  
 io/                    piace            lui/                    piacete  
 I-NOM 1ST SG/ likes-3RD SG he-NOM 3RD SG/ like-2ND PL  
 voi  
 you-NOM 2ND PL  
 'He likes you/ likes me/ likes him/ like you (pl.)'

In (17), the object may be 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person. Example (17) clearly shows that a Nominative object is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the person restriction to apply.

Italian psych verbs of the *piacere* type, also known as third-class psych-verbs, according to the classification proposed by Belletti & Rizzi (1988), present many characteristics in common with Icelandic QDCs. In particular, they exhibit a Nom-

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<sup>2</sup>From now on, with the label 'psych verbs' I will only indicate the subclass of psych verbs of the *piacere* type exemplified in (16) and (17).

inative object and a dative subject, just like Icelandic QDCs. Moreover, the dative DP bears an Experiencer  $\theta$ -role, just like most of the Icelandic quirky datives do.

In their seminal paper, Belletti & Rizzi (1988) address the question whether the structural position of preverbal dative experiencers is a ‘TOP position’ (i.e. a position in which the dative experiencer is focalized) or a structural subject position. They conclude that the order Experiencer-V-Theme is unmarked, and does not require contextual justification. This indicates that the dative Experiencer is not topicalized. The examples they present to support their hypothesis involve contexts in which a topicalized dative verbal complement is not permitted while a topicalized dative experiencer is allowed, such as (18) and (19), and (20):

- (18) Tutti sono preoccupati perché ho raccontato questa storia a Gianni  
 all are worried because I have told this story to Gianni  
 ‘Everybody is worried because I told this story to Gianni’ [from Belletti & Rizzi (1988:337)]
- (19) ??Tutti sono preoccupati perché a Gianni ho raccontato questa storia  
 all are worried because to Gianni I have told this story  
 ‘Everybody is worried because I told this story to Gianni’ [from Belletti & Rizzi (1988:337)]
- (20) Tutti sono preoccupati perché a Gianni piace la  
 all are worried because to Gianni likes-3RD SG the  
 linguistica  
 linguistics-FEM SG  
 ‘Everybody is worried because Gianni likes linguistics’ [from Belletti & Rizzi (1988:337)]

(20) is different from (18) and (19) in that the dative subject *a Gianni* is not topicalized in (20). In (18) and (19), the topicalization of *a Gianni* leads to ungrammaticality. (20) is grammatical because *a Gianni* is not topicalized, but it is located in a structural subject position.

Belletti & Rizzi also show that while a Wh-extraction across a topicalized dative is quite deviant, a Wh-extraction across a preverbal Experiencer is perfectly acceptable:

(21) ??I libri che a Gianni ho dato sono questi  
 the books that to Gianni have-1ST SG given-PP MASC SG are these  
 ‘The books I have given to Gianni are these ones’ [from Belletti & Rizzi  
 (1988:337)]

(22) I libri che a Gianni sono piaciuti sono questi  
 the books that to Gianni are liked are these  
 ‘The books that Gianni liked are these ones’ [from Belletti & Rizzi  
 (1988:337)]

The explanation that Belletti & Rizzi provide for the facts in (21) and (22) is that while the dative Benefactive in (21) lands in a TOP projection, which constitutes a barrier for wh-extraction, the dative Experiencer in (22) lands in a structural subject position. Structural subjects do not constitute a barrier for wh-extraction, as the following example shows:

(23) I libri che Gianni mi ha dato sono questi  
 the books that Gianni me-DAT has-3RD SG given-PP MASC SG are these  
 ‘The books that Gianni has given me are these ones’ [from Belletti & Rizzi  
 (1988:337)]

Belletti & Rizzi conclude that the dative Experiencer in (22) is in structural subject position. Further evidence that the dative Experiencer of psych verbs is a derived subject which lands in a structural subject position is provided by Cardinaletti (to appear). Cardinaletti shows that in Aux-to-Comp and complementizer deletion constructions, which do not allow for left-dislocated items, a dative Experiencer is grammatical, while the dative argument of a transitive verb, which is necessarily left-dislocated, is not:

- (24) Essendo a Gianni piaciuto molto il regalo, ...  
 being to Gianni liked much the gift  
 ‘The gift having been very well appreciated by Gianni,...’ [from Cardinaletti  
 (to appear: 11)]
- (25) \*Avendo(gli) io a Gianni dato questi libri, ...  
 having him-DAT I-NOM to Gianni given these books  
 ‘After giving these books to Gianni, ...’ [from Cardinaletti (to appear: 11)]
- (26) Credevo a Gianni piacessero queste storie  
 believed-IMPF 1ST SG to Gianni liked-SUBJ 3RD PL these stories  
 ‘I believed that Gianni liked these stories’ [from Cardinaletti (to appear:  
 11)]
- (27) ??Credevo a Gianni (gli) avesse dato questi  
 believed-IMPF 1ST SG to Gianni to him had-SUBJ 3RD SG given-PP these  
 libri  
 books  
 ‘I believed he had given these books to Gianni’ [from Cardinaletti (to appear:  
 11)]

These examples show that the fronted dative in psych verbs constructions is not in a left-dislocated position, but rather in a structural subject position, which I take for the moment to be Spec, TP.

Italian psych verbs have been thus classified as holding a dative Experiencer which lands in a structural subject position. They also exhibit a Nominative object.

Arguments for the fact that the non-dative DP is in object position are provided once again by Belletti & Rizzi (1988). In sentences with *piacere*, both orders: Experiencer-V-Theme and Theme-V-Experiencer are possible, as (28) and (29) show:

- (28) A Gianni è sempre piaciuta la musica  
 to Gianni is always liked the music  
 ‘Gianni has always liked music’





(31) contrasts with Icelandic QDCs (see D'Alessandro 2002:b, to appear b). Such a contrast has also been recently observed for Spanish psych verbs by Rivero (to appear). Spanish psych verbs of the *piacere/gustar* type do not show any person restriction on the object<sup>3</sup>:

(32) Yo sé que a Ana le gustan ellos  
 I know that to Ana-DAT her-DAT CL like-3RD PL they-NOM 3RD PL  
 'I know that Ana likes them' [from Rivero (to appear:2)]

(33) Yo sé que a Ana le gustais vosotros  
 I know that to Ana-DAT her-DAT CL like-2ND PL you-NOM 2ND PL  
 'I know that Ana likes you' [from Rivero (to appear:2)]

The data just presented show that Italian psych verbs of the *piacere* class, together with Spanish psych verbs of the *gustar* class, exhibit a dative DP which occupies the structural subject position Spec, TP, and do not show any agreement restriction on the Nominative object, which can be 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person singular or plural. Icelandic QDCs also exhibit a dative DP which also occupies the structural subject position Spec, TP. Differently from Italian psych verbs, however, they

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<sup>3</sup>However, some verbs like *antojarse* ('to fancy, to take a fancy to'), and *olvidarse* ('forget'), do present a person restriction on the object, as shown by the following example with *antojarse*:

(i) A Ana siempre se le antojan los mismos chicos/ ellos  
 to Ana-DAT always se her-DAT CL fancy-3RD PL the same guys/ they-NOM 3RD PL  
 'Ana always takes a fancy to the same guys/them' [from Rivero (to appear:3)]

(ii) \*A Ana siempre nos le antojamos nosotros  
 to Ana-DAT always we-1ST PL her-DAT CL fancy-1ST PL we-NOM 1ST PL  
 'Anna always takes a fancy to us' [from Rivero (to appear:4)]

(iii) \*A Ana siempre os le antojais vosotros  
 to Ana-DAT always you-2ND PL her-DAT CL fancy-2ND PL you-NOM 2ND PL  
 'Anna always takes a fancy to us' [from Rivero (to appear:4)]

Both in (32) and (33) and in (i)-(iii) the dative Experiencer *a Ana* occupies the specifier of the T projection (see Masullo 1992). I will come back to these data in section 6.3.

do show a person restriction on the Nominative object, which can only be 3rd person. I wish to suggest that the clue to solve this puzzle on the presence/absence of the person restriction on the object may be provided by Italian ISCs, which do not exhibit a dative subject and yet show a person restriction on the Nominative object. This means that the presence of a dative DP is not necessary in order for the restriction to hold. A multiple-agreement relation with the T head is instead necessary, according to the generalization proposed by Anagnostopoulou (2003). What creates the person restriction is not the dative DP, but rather the presence of *si* (in Italian), *-st* (in Icelandic), and *se* (in Spanish). In what follows, I summarize the main analyses that have been proposed to account for the person restriction on the object in Icelandic, and try to extend them to the wider picture I have just drawn. I show how Italian ISC data confirm the validity of Anagnostopoulou's thesis, and help identify some flaws in other theories.

### 3. Specialized *v* or Structural Constraints?

Several analyses have been put forward in order to account for the person restriction on the object in Icelandic quirky subject constructions. The most relevant proposals rotate round two axes: multiple agreement and a specialized *v*. According to the first line of reasoning, a multiple agreement relation is established between the T head and the two DPs involved in the derivation: the Nominative object and the dative subject. The second line of reasoning postulates instead the existence of a specialized *v*, which licenses the quirky subject and assigns Nominative to the other argument. In this section, I revise the two approaches and show how the facts I have outlined in the previous section provide evidence for the multiple agreement approach. The specialized *v* approach, on the other hand, may not be extended to explain the Italian facts.

### 3.1. Multiple agreement

The first systematic attempt to provide an explanation of the person restriction in Icelandic is in Sigurðsson (1996). Sigurðsson accounts for the person restriction in Icelandic QDCs relying on a structural constraint. He starts from the assumption that a head and its specifier cannot be both specified, i.e. that there can be either agreement features on the head or Case features on the specifier of a projection. In our words, it is not possible to have valued features both on the head and on the specifier of a projection. The quirky dative DP in Icelandic moves to the specifier of the AgrSP projection, that is to the position where the subject usually lands, as we saw in the previous section. Thus, the specifier of the AgrS projection is occupied by a DP which is specified for case (i.e. with a valued Case feature). This means that the AgrS head cannot bear valued agreement features, because it already holds a valued specifier. Hence, the AgrS which assigns Nominative needs to be underspecified for agreement. Underspecification for agreement means in particular lack of the person feature, and therefore agreement with a DP which has no person or is marked with 3rd person. 3rd person is in fact considered, since Benveniste (1966), as no person (see Roberts 2002 a, b for 3rd person marking in English as a ‘lack of person’-marker). Sigurðsson’s (1996) analysis relies on the idea that a structural constraint is responsible for the person restriction to take place.

A slightly different proposal is put forward in Taraldsen (1995); according to Taraldsen, datives have person features which permit them to enter checking against functional heads. In particular, the dative Experiencer agrees with the T head, but this agreement does not result in verbal inflection because verbs in Icelandic agree for both person and number syncretically. Taraldsen argues that the number of the verb is not checked against the dative DP, but rather against the Nominative DP. Since 1st and 2nd person do not combine with number, they are not possible specifications for the verbal ending. As a result, the verb shows a 3rd person inflectional ending.

Such a view is shared both by Boeckx (1998) and Anagnostopoulou (2003), who propose, in different terms, that the dative DP has a central role in causing the person restriction on the object. According to this line of reasoning, a multiple-agreement relation is established between the dative Experiencer and the T head on the one hand, and the DP object and the T head on the other. In other words, the T head agrees both with the Experiencer and with the Theme DP, which receives Case through this agreement relation. Following Taraldsen (1995), both Anagnostopoulou and Boeckx assume that datives have person features which permit them to enter checking against functional heads. The dative Experiencer holds a person feature due to its ‘intrinsic animacy’ (Anagnostopoulou 2003, Ormazabal & Romero to appear among others). However, according to Anagnostopoulou, it lacks number. The dative Experiencer agrees with the T head. Such an agreement is defective, because the dative DP lacks number. Assuming that the values 1st and 2nd must combine with the values [singular] or [plural], it is not possible to have a 1st or 2nd person value on the verb as a result of agreement with the dative DP, because this would also require number agreement. Under the assumption that 1st and 2nd person and reflexive pronouns are [+person] pronouns while 3rd person pronouns are ‘no person’ pronouns [Benveniste (1966), Postal (1966), Bonet (1991, 1994), Taraldsen (1995), Kayne (2000) among others], Taraldsen (1995), Anagnostopoulou (2003) and Boeckx (1998) conclude that only a 3rd person pronoun or a DP may agree with the T head. In other words, a double agreement relation with T is established: dative argument-T and Nominative object-T. The dative-T agreement provides the 3rd person specification, while the Nominative object-T agreement provides the number specification.

The analysis I propose of the person restriction on the Nominative object in ISCs with verb-object agreement follows the lines of the analyses outlined above. I propose a parallel mechanism for the valuation of the person and number features

on the verb, which also accounts for the person restriction. I show, however, that no dative DP is necessary in order for the multiple agreement to obtain. Specifically, I propose the following generalization:

- (34) Whenever multiple agreement holds, a person restriction on the (Nominative) object obtains.

This generalization accounts both for the facts outlined in this chapter and for the Icelandic facts. Moreover, it includes the Person Case Constraint, which was first formulated by Bonet (1991), and which is reported here as (35) :

- (35) **The Person-Case Constraint *Strong version* In a combination of a weak direct object and an indirect object [clitic, agreement marker or weak pronoun], the direct object has to be 3rd person. [from Bonet (1991:182)]**

This generalization is exemplified in the following Greek examples [from Anagnostopoulou (2003:3)]:

- (36) Tha mu to stilune  
 FUT cl-GEN 1ST SG cl-ACC NEUT 3RD SG send-3RD PL  
 ‘They will send it to me’
- (37) Tha su ton stilune  
 FUT cl-GEN 2ND SG cl-ACC MASC 3RD SG send-3RD PL  
 ‘They will send him to you’
- (38) \*Tha su me sistisune  
 FUT cl-GEN 2ND SG cl-ACC 1ST SG introduce-3RD PL  
 ‘They will introduce me to you’
- (39) \*Tha tu se stilune  
 FUT cl-GEN MASC 3RD SG cl-ACC 2ND SG send-3RD PL  
 ‘They will send you to him’

Examples (38) and (39) are ill-formed because of the co-occurrence of a genitive with a 1st and 2nd person Accusative clitic respectively. This phenomenon is quite widespread crosslinguistically, and involves weak elements only. Anagnostopoulou (2002, 2003) draws a parallel between the PCC and the person restriction on the Nominative object in Icelandic quirky dative constructions. I do not consider the PCC here as it only involves weak elements, and therefore it is not directly relevant for the analysis I am developing.

I will return to the multiple agreement and its development in the next section. For the moment, I wish to concentrate on a second analysis that has been recently proposed by Boeckx in order to account for the person restriction in Icelandic. Boeckx (2003) proposes the existence of a specialized *v* head, which licenses the dative Experiencer and assigns Nominative case to the object of a quirky dative construction. I present Boeckx's analysis in the following section.

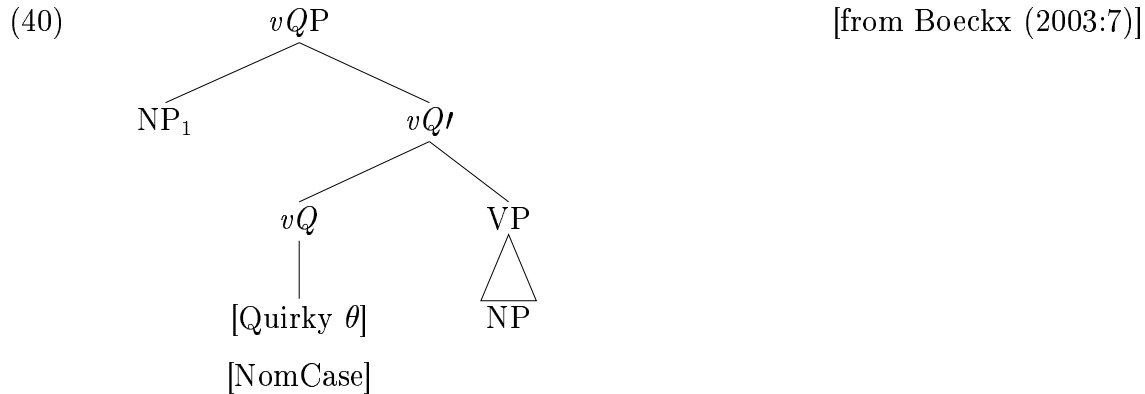
### 3.2. Specialized *v*

A recent analysis proposed by Boeckx (2003) reverses the point of view for the person restriction phenomenon. According to Boeckx, neither the dative nor the Nominative DP in Icelandic QDCs enter agreement with T. Nominative Case is assigned to the DP object by a specialized *v* which is only present in a derivation if an indirect  $\theta$ -role is to be assigned (see Alexiadou 2002 for a related proposal). This specialized *vQ*, i.e. 'quirky *v*', is endowed with the option of assigning Nominative case only if it also assigns an 'indirect'  $\theta$ -role to the quirky case NP in its specifier. In other words, whenever a  $\theta$ -role like Benefactive, Experiencer, Goal and the like is assigned to an NP in the specifier of this dedicated *vQ*, this head is also able to assign Nominative. Boeckx states that *vQ* sits between VP and *vP*, the head that introduces the external argument <sup>4</sup> Quirky elements are excluded from the specifier

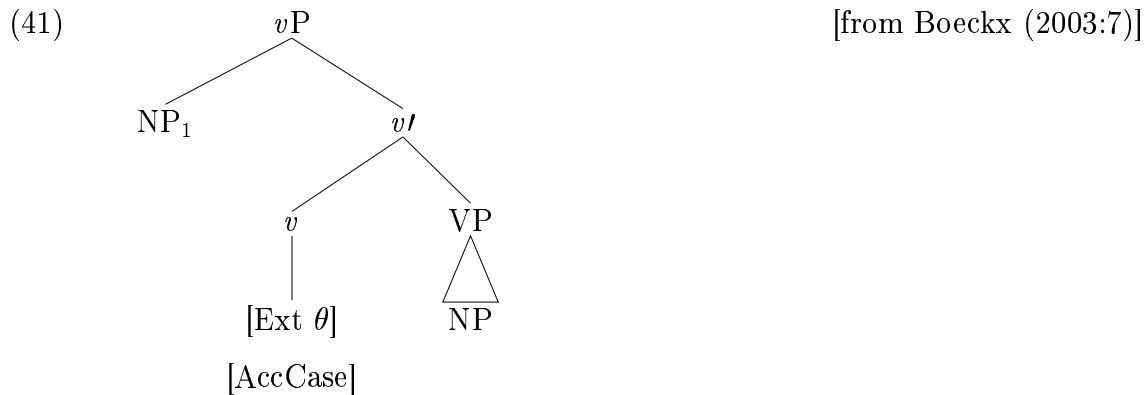
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<sup>4</sup>*vQP* corresponds to Pylkkänen's (2002) High Applicative projection.

of  $vP$ , which only hosts DPs with an Agent role. The structure proposed by Boeckx for Icelandic QDCs is reproduced in (40):



A transitive structure, with an Agent  $\theta$ -role, is represented in (41):



The structures above underline the parallelism between Accusative assignment by  $v$ , and Nominative assignment by  $vQ$ . Boeckx's analysis rejects the idea of a multiple agreement relation, and builds on the intuition that Nominative case may also be assigned by a head different from T (see also Alexiadou to appear). The person restriction on the object occurs because of a general constraint which languages undergo, namely the fact that person agreement does not hold with postverbal DPs in general. Thus, the person restriction has nothing to do with T, but is simply a



result of the application of a general constraint on languages.

According to Boeckx (2003), thus, any Quirky-Case marked element is introduced in the specifier of a dedicated *v*. This would entail, for Italian psych verbs, to postulate that one of the two arguments is merged in the specifier of this external projection. If any Experiencer DP is merged in the specifier of *vQ*, also the Experiencer of a verb like *piacere* is merged there. If this is the case, Boeckx's analysis predicts a person restriction on the object, which does not occur, as shown by the data in (17).

In general, Boeckx's proposal cannot be accepted as it is, as he states that the person restriction on the object is due to the general constraint which prevents person agreement with postverbal elements (such as past participle for instance). This generalization does not hold for Italian psych verbs, although it is a general property of Italian. Italian past participle, for example, does undergo the constraint just mentioned, as shown in (42):

- (42) Voi            siete            arrivati  
       you-2ND PL are-2ND PL arrived-PP MASC PL  
       'You have arrived'

The past participle in (42) agrees with the subject in gender and number, but not in person. There is no person ending on the past participle. In general, agreement inside the VP is limited to number (and, in case, gender), but it systematically excludes person. This is taken by Boeckx as evidence for the fact that the Nominative DP in QDCs, which stays inside the VP, may not agree for person, as person agreement is not licit inside the VP.

This constraint is, however, not universal, as the facts about Italian psych verbs show. In (43), the Nominative object agrees with the verb both in person and number, and does not undergo the person restriction constraint:



contrary to what Boeckx predicts. The fact that there is person agreement shows that the T head is involved. Boeckx's idea of a specialized  $vQ$  makes the wrong prediction regarding the Italian verbs of the *piacere* class.

In the next section, I take a closer look at ISCs with verb-object agreement, and show how a multiple-agreement approach explains both the person restriction on the object in ISCs and the lack of person restriction on psych verbs. I claim that impersonal *si* is responsible for the person restriction on ISCs, and that the lack of impersonal *si* corresponds to a lack of person restriction.

#### 4. The person restriction on ISCs: a multiple-Agree analysis

Boeckx (1998) and Anagnostopoulou (2002, 2003) propose that in Icelandic QDCs a double agreement relation is established between the dative DP and the T head on the one hand and the Nominative object DP and the T head on the other. I wish to build on this proposal but reverse the point of view, claiming that whenever multiple agreement with the T head is at work, a person restriction on the lower argument takes place. The higher argument checks person on T, while the lower one checks number on T, which is exactly what we see both in Icelandic QDCs and in Italian ISCs. Multiple agreement takes place in those cases in which one of the two argument may not check the whole feature bundle on a functional head, like in the case of Italian *si*. Observe that this proposal is very similar to Anagnostopoulou's (2003). She claims, however, that the person restriction arises in environments involving an indirect argument and a direct argument. I wish to extend this statement and show that the person restriction may arise whenever multiple agree takes place, and also with two direct arguments. I propose that the presence of a dative-indirect object DP is not necessary for the person restriction to hold. The person restriction may arise even with two direct arguments, i.e. the subject and the object DP, enter agreement with T. If the presence of a dative indirect object were necessary, the

person restriction would not be able to apply in Italian ISCs with V-O agreement. Italian ISC, in fact, do not exhibit a dative indirect object, as I show in the next section. Nevertheless, the person restriction on the object holds.

#### 4.1. Impersonal *si* is not a quirky dative

One of the possible options at hand for analyzing the person restriction on ISCs in Italian is to consider ISCs as QDCs. In fact, Italian ISCs with verb-object agreement and Icelandic QDCs have many features in common. This section addresses the question whether Italian ISCs contain a quirky dative or not. It will be shown that although many similarities arise between the two constructions, Italian ISCs cannot be considered as quirky dative constructions, in that *si* is not dative. Therefore, the person restriction also holds if the dative (i.e. the indirect object) is absent. The conclusion I draw is that a more general principle is at work, which not only regulates the person restriction on the object in quirky dative constructions, but also multiple agreement in general. The next step will be to claim that the dative Experiencer is not responsible at all for the person restriction in Icelandic. I will address this issue in the next section.

On a first comparison between ISCs with V-O agreement and Icelandic QDCs many similarities arise, as shown in D'Alessandro (to appear:a). Both Icelandic QDCs and Italian ISCs present an object which is  $\theta$ -marked as Theme and bears Nominative case, as shown in the introduction, and here exemplified again in (44) and (45):

(44) Henni leiddust strákarnir/ þeir  
 her-DAT bored-3RD (2ND) PL the boys-NOM PL/ theyNOM 3RD PL  
 'She found the boys/them boring' [from Sigurðsson (1996:1)]

(45) Si leggono i libri  
 si read-3RD PL the-MASC PL books-NOM MASC PL  
 'People read books'



another DP, in addition to the Nominative one, which is marked for dative. Were the two constructions exactly identical, such dative should have a correspondent form in Italian ISCs. The only DP available in Italian ISCs is *si*. Therefore, *si* should be dative for a complete parallelism to hold. If impersonal *si* is dative, the parallelism between the two structure is complete, i.e. we are dealing with one and the same structure.

Since impersonal *si* does not show morphological Case marking, one can easily postulate that it is marked for dative. There are however some facts which show quite straightforwardly that this is not the Case!

The most striking counterexample is found in Rumanian. The Rumanian counterpart of Italian *si*, *se*, is marked for Case. In Rumanian, SE may be marked both for dative and for Accusative. Very interestingly, as we already saw in chapter 2, Rumanian impersonal SE is marked for Accusative (see Dobrovie-Sorin 1998 among others):

- (49) În Italia se citesc cărți bune  
 in Italy si-ACC read-3RD PL books-NOM FEM PL good-FEM PL  
 'In Italy people read good books'

The construction in (49) is totally identical to an Italian ISC with V-O agreement, as shown by Dobrovie Sorin (1999). If impersonal *si*-SE were dative, it should bear double Case: Accusative and dative. This would be an unprecedented situation. Therefore, we are forced to conclude that SE - *si* is not dative marked.

#### 4.2. *Si* is not an indirect object

Another issue which is worth considering is the  $\theta$ -grid of Icelandic QDCs as compared to the Italian ISC one. Quirky dative constructions in Icelandic require a quirky DP which bears an 'indirect'  $\theta$ -role, such as Experiencer (most of the time) or Benefactive, Goal. Such kind of  $\theta$ -role constitutes the starting point for Boeckx's

(2003) analysis, as we saw. An indirect  $\theta$ -role is however almost never present in Italian ISCs. If we consider again (45), we see that *si* can be in no way interpreted as an Experiencer. *Si* is indeed an Agent. The fact that *si* is an Agent is independently proved by the fact that (45) resists the insertion of a by-phrase, as exemplified in (50):

- (50) \**Si leggono i libri da Gianni*  
 si read-3RD PL the-PL MASC books-PL MASC by Gianni  
 ‘People read books by Gianni’<sup>7</sup>

In (50), *si* carries the Agent role, as shown by the impossibility of inserting a by-phrase in (50). By-phrases are usually assumed to introduce an Agent. The fact that a by-phrase cannot be inserted in the clause shows that an Agent is already present in the clause. Thus, *si* is not an Experiencer (nor a Benefactive, nor a Goal etc.), but it is rather an Agent.

The fact that *si* is not dative and that it is not an Experiencer clearly indicates that Icelandic QDCs and Italian ISCs are two different constructions. Italian *si* may be an Experiencer, like in (51), but it does not have to be so. Icelandic QDCs require instead a oblique  $\theta$ -role.

- (51) *Si è spesso tristi*  
 si is often sad  
 ‘People are often sad’

If, as I think, the person restriction is attributable to a unique cause, then this cause cannot be the dative DP nor the Experiencer  $\theta$ -role.

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<sup>7</sup>This sentence is grammatical under an interpretation which is not relevant here: ‘People read books at Gianni’s place.’

### 4.3. Multiple Agree and the person restriction in Italian ISCs

In the previous section, I have shown that Italian ISCs are not QDCs. In particular, they do not hold a dative Experiencer. Nevertheless, as shown in (1) -(3), here repeated as (52)-(54), they present a person restriction on the object, which can only be 3rd person.

- (52) In televisione si vede spesso Maria  
 in television si sees-3RD SG often Maria  
 ‘People often see Maria on the tv’
- (53) In televisione si vedono spesso loro  
 in television si see-3RD PL often they-NOM 3RD PL  
 ‘People often see them on the tv’
- (54) \*In televisione si vedo spesso io/ vedi spesso  
 in television si see 1ST SG often I-NOM 1ST SG/ see-2ND SG often  
 tu / vediamo spesso noi / vedete  
 you-NOM 2ND SG / see-1ST PL often we-NOM 1ST PL / see-2ND PL  
 spesso voi  
 often you-NOM 2ND PL  
 ‘People often see me/you / us/ them on tv’

In section 3.2., I have shown that an analysis which postulated the presence of a specialized *v* would predict for the person restriction to hold also with Italian psych-verbs of the *piacere* class. This is not the case.

In this section, I wish to extend Anagnostopoulou’s (2003) analysis in order to be able to account for the data in (52)-(54). In particular, I propose that the person restriction on the object takes place whenever a Multiple Agree relation takes place with the T head, independent of the nature of the DP which enter this Agree. In other words, a dative DP is not necessary for the person restriction to take place.

A terminological clarification is in order before going on with the analysis. I use the expression ‘Multiple Agree’ to indicate the process according to which two DPs enter Agree with the same functional head. The expression ‘Multiple Agree’ usually



refers to the process according to which an unvalued feature may be valued by two elements at the same time (see Anagnostopoulou 2003), provided that they hold the same value. In other words, a ‘Multiple Agree’ relation involves a two-to-one feature valuation: two valued feature sets, belonging to two different DPs, Match with an unvalued feature set on a functional head. Such unvalued feature set receives its value from the two valued sets together. In order to avoid a feature mismatch on the unvalued set, Anagnostopoulou proposes the following condition on Multiple Agree:

- (55) Multiple Agree can only take place under *non*-conflicting feature specification of the agreement elements [from Anagnostopoulou (2003:20)]

The condition on Multiple Agree prevents two valued feature sets from entering Match with one unvalued feature if they don’t hold the same value<sup>8</sup>. Anagnostopoulou observes that ‘the ban against conflicting feature specifications of DPs in contexts of Multiple Agree is quite natural in a theory like the one advanced in Chomsky (1998, 1999), where checking leads to valuing of uninterpretable  $\phi$ -features of T and *v*. Two DPs that check and value the  $\phi$ -features of T and *v* cannot have conflicting feature specifications as this will lead to contradictory values for the features of T and *v*’ [from Anagnostopoulou (2000:20, fn. 11)]

The person restriction in Italian ISCs with V-O agreement can be explained with a Multiple Agree approach quite straightforwardly. Let us consider an ISC with V-O agreement like the one in (56):

- (56) Si leggono i libri  
 si read 3RD PL the books-MASC PL  
 ‘People read books’

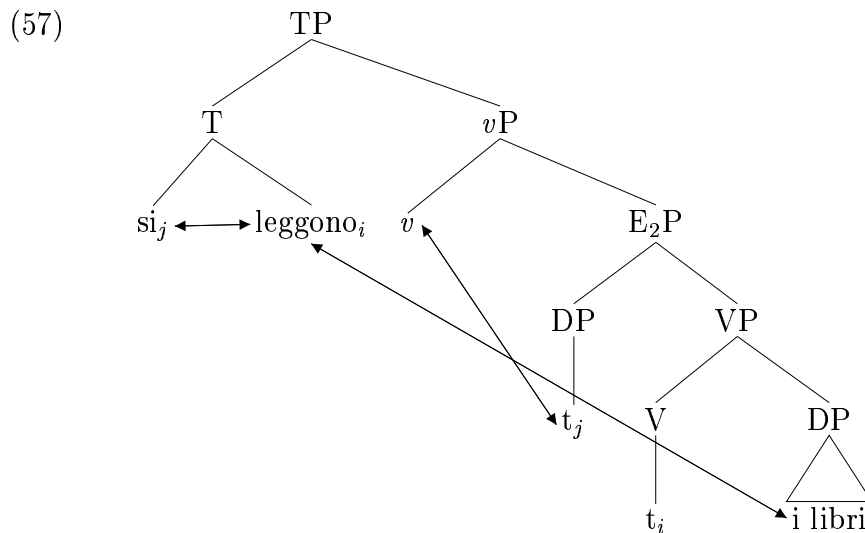
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<sup>8</sup>There is an exception to this general rule. The unvalued feature set on a pp may enter Multiple Agree both with a set containing a feminine DP1 and with a set containing a masculine DP2. In this case, the masculine set is conventionally selected for valuing the gender feature.

The DP object *i libri* has the following valued  $\phi$ -features: no person, masculine and singular. I will leave the  $\sigma$ -set aside for the moment, as we are dealing with Agree and not with Concord. As shown in detail in chapter 2, the DP object *i libri* enters Agree with the T head, thus receiving Nominative case. More precisely, the derivation of (56) runs as follows:

- The DP object *i libri* is merged with the verb and checks the Theme role.
- The E<sub>2</sub> head is merged with the verb and impersonal *si* is merged in its specifier.
- *v* is merged with E<sub>2</sub>P and Matches with *si*. As a result, *si* gets Accusative.
- The DP object stays without Case.
- The T head is merged.

At this point, two syntactic operations take place: *si* cliticizes on T and Matches with it and T Matches with the DP object *i libri*. In other words, a Multiple Match relation is established between the T head and *si* on the one hand, and the T head and the DP object *i libri* on the other.



The  $\phi$ -features on *si* are 3rd person, no number, no gender. The  $\phi$ -features on the DP *i libri* are no person, masculine and plural. The person feature is checked on T by impersonal *si*, while the number feature is checked by the DP object. No feature mismatch takes place. There is thus a Multiple Agree operation taking place, and the verb has its  $\phi$ -features valued as 3rd person plural.

The question is now why a 1st or 2nd person object may not enter the same Agree relation and obtain Nominative case from T. The answer is quite straightforward: when Multiple Match takes place between the T head and *si* on the one hand, and the T head and the DP object on the other, a person feature mismatch originates on the T head. The person feature on T is simultaneously valued as 1st or 2nd AND 3rd. This violates the condition on Multiple Agree. According to this condition, a feature cannot enter agreement with two differently valued features. In our terms, an unvalued feature may not turn disjunctive under Agree. Disjunctivity seems to be only permitted for  $\sigma$ -features, like GENDER, but not for  $\phi$ -features<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup>In principle, this feature mismatch could give birth to a disjunctive feature on T, assuming alternatively the values 3rd and 1st/2nd. This seems to be excluded as a result of Agree, or more precisely on  $\phi$ -features. Crosslinguistically, however, there are cases which could be interpreted as a violation of the condition on Multiple Agree. Some Multiple Agree phenomena do create disjunctive features. This is for instance the case described by Bonet (1994) as the Weak Person-Case constraint, which allows a 1st/2nd person weak direct object to appear together with a 3rd person weak indirect object. As shown by Bonet, this cluster is forbidden in many languages. In some languages, however, this cluster is not excluded (see also Bianchi 2001). The violation of the Person-Case Constraint (or the presence of a Weak Person-Case Constraint) might take place when the feature on the *v* head gets both person values, from both the direct and the indirect object. In other words, the person feature on *v* might turn out to be disjunctive after Multiple Agree.



Poletto (2000) and Manzini & Savoia (2002) have argued for a sentence structure which dedicates different positions to different clitics. In particular, according to Manzini & Savoia (2002), there are at least two clitic fields in the structure: one above the TP, which is dedicated to subject clitics, and one below it, for object clitics. On the basis of a large set of data from Northern Italian data, Poletto has shown that clitics occupy different positions in the structure, depending on their  $\phi$ -set.

For my analysis, there is no need to assume a particularly complex structure. I wish to focus on the Agree relation between *si* and the T head. Such an agreement relation may take place also if *si* does not cliticize on T. In particular, *si* occupies a special subject- clitic slot. From such a position, it can enter Agree with the T head. For the sake of simplicity I just assume that *si* cliticizes on T and Agrees with it. The intuition behind this Agree relation is that *si* is a kind of ‘person marker’ on the verb. Despite the fact that *si* has already received Case when it cliticizes, its  $\phi$ -set is still visible for Agree.

The fact that the  $\phi$ -set is still visible does not contradict our hypotheses: The  $\phi$ -features on *si* are valued and may enter Match with the T head. Moreover, *si* hasn’t been sent to Spell-Out yet, as *v*P is not a phase in ISCs with V-O agreement, as shown in chapter 2.

To sum up, in this section I have proposed an analysis of the person restriction in ISCs with V-O agreement according to which *si* is a person marker on the verb. A Multiple Agree operation with the T head is necessary for the person restriction to take place. I have shown that Italian ISCs are not equivalent to Icelandic QDCs, despite their similarities. The fact that the person restriction arises even in Italian ISCs, which lack a dative Experiencer, indicates that the dative Experiencer is not responsible for the person restriction to take place.

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would become invisible for person checking. Alternatively, one might think that *ne* cliticization takes place after Spell-Out, for phonological reasons.

## 5. Icelandic quirky dative constructions

In the previous section, I have argued that impersonal *si* is responsible for the person restriction in Italian ISCs with V-O agreement. In particular, I have shown that a quirky dative subject is not necessary in order for such a restriction to take place. In this section, I wish to show that also the Icelandic facts are explainable without the need to postulate an agreement relation between the dative subject and the T head. I wish to argue that the *-st* suffix is responsible for the person restriction in Icelandic QDCs.

Let us go consider again the Icelandic data in (44), here repeated as (61):

- (61) Henni leiddust strákarnir/ þeir  
 her-DAT bored-3RD (2ND) PL the boys-NOM PL/ they-NOM 3RD PL  
 ‘She found the boys/them boring’ [from Sigurðsson (1996:1)]

As shown in section 2.2., a Nominative object in Icelandic cannot be 1st or 2nd person if a dative subject is present in the clause. This is the case of (62), where a dative subject is present in the clause. The object is marked as Nominative and it can only be 3rd person. A 1st or 2nd person Nominative object is banned, as (63) exemplifies:

- (62) Henni leiddust strákarnir/ þeir  
 her-DAT bored-3RD (2ND) PL the boys-NOM PL/ they-NOM 3RD PL  
 ‘She found the boys/them boring’ [from Sigurðsson (1996:1)]

- (63) \*Henni leiddust þið/ leiddumst við  
 her-DAT bored-2ND (-3RD) PL you-NOM PL/ bored-1ST PL we-NOM PL  
 ‘She found you/ us boring’ [from Sigurðsson (1996:28)]

These examples have been examined Boeckx (1998), and Anagnostopoulou (2003) as involving a Multiple Agree relation between the dative subject and the T head on the one hand, and the Nominative object and the T head on the other. However, as Boeckx (2003) argues, the fact that the quirky dative Agrees with T is not

independently supported by other data. In particular, he shows that while quirky elements morphologically agree in number, they never seem to agree in person with other elements in the clause. In support of his claim, Boeckx presents the following sentences:

- (64) Strákunum leiddist öllum  
 the boys-DAT MASC PL bored-3RD SG all-DAT MASC PL/  
 /\*allir í skóla  
 all-NOM MASC PL in school  
 ‘The boys were all bored in school’ [from Boeckx (2003:4)]
- (65) Strákarnir sýndu kennaranum óvirðingu  
 the boys-NOM MASC PL showed teacher-DAT MASC SG disrespect  
 druknum  
 drunk-DAT MASC SG  
 ‘The boys showed the teacher disrespect (when he was) drunk’ [from  
 Boeckx (2003:4)]

In (64), the quirky element *strákunum* shows agreement in number, but not in person, with the floated quantifier *öllum*. In (65), the quirky element *kennaranum* shows agreement in number, but not in person, with the adjective ‘drunk’. Boeckx concludes that quirky datives do not agree in person with the T head, and that the person restriction is not due to Multiple Agree. Boeckx’s (2003) analysis has already been discussed in section 2.3. I would like to capitalize on Boeckx’s observation and claim that the quirky dative does not agree with the T head. However, there is Multiple Agree going on in Icelandic QDCs. More precisely, there is an element which values or ‘saturates’ the person feature on the verb: the suffix *-st*.

Sigurðsson (1996), Taraldsen (1994, 1995), and Jónsson (2002) have classified all verbs which may take a dative subject. The majority of such verbs ends in *-st*. The affix *-st* is historically an affixed reflexive pronoun. The form *-st* in fact derives from the Old Icelandic reflexive pronoun *sik*.

Taraldsen (1994) argues that *-st* originates as a syntactically autonomous head





The data in (66) and (67) show that a person restriction holds also with an Accusative Experiencer DP. Hence, a dative Experiencer is not necessary in order for the person restriction on the object to apply.

The person restriction on the Nominative object in (67) may be explained in two ways: either the Accusative DP agrees with the T head and something similar to Multiple Agree holds, or there is a person marker on the verb, which is 3rd person. I leave this very interesting issue open for further research.

If Multiple Agree between *-st* and T on the one hand, and the Nominative object and T on the other is necessary for the person restriction to apply, it goes without saying that the person restriction should not take place in Icelandic when no Multiple Agree takes place. In (68), for instance, the Nominative DP and the dative DP do not enter Multiple Agree with the T head. As a result, the verb shows the default 3rd person singular agreement ending, and shows no agreement with the Nominative object.

- (68) Henni leiddist ég  
 her-DAT like-3RD SG I-NOM 1ST SG  
 ‘She likes me’ [from Sigurðsson 1996:33]

The exact mechanism of attribution of Nominative to the DP *ég* is unclear. Nominative might be the default case in Icelandic (Sigurðsson 1996, Pannemann 2002).

The problem now arises about the person restriction in Icelandic on those verbs which do not show a *-st* ending and allow for a quirky dative subject, like *líka* (‘like’). I have no clear understanding of this phenomenon. The person restriction for those few verbs might be caused by analogy with the *-st* verbs. In particular, the presence of a dative might induce the speaker to think that a person restriction operates. In any case, such a set is quite small; the overwhelming majority of verbs that present a person restriction on the object end in *-st* (Ottosson 1992, Jónsson 1992, Taraldsen 1994).

To conclude: In this section, I have shown that an alternative explanation for the person restriction phenomenon in Icelandic is possible. Taking as a starting point the strong similarity between Italian impersonal *si* and the *-st* ending, I have proposed that this *-st* ending is responsible for the person restriction in Icelandic in most cases.

I now turn to address the problem of the lack of person restriction in Italian psych verbs and ISCs with no V-O agreement.

## 6. No restriction: Italian psych and ISCs with no V-O agreement

As shown in sections 1 and 2.2., Italian psych verbs and ISCs with no V-O agreement present no person restriction on the object. In this section, I show that the lack of person restriction is due either to a lack of Multiple Agree or to the lack of a person marker like *si*.

### 6.1. ISCs with no V-O agreement

Let us consider first the easiest case of ISCs with no V-O agreement, as the one in (10), here repeated as (69):

- (69) In televisione ti /mi /ci /vi si  
 in television you-2ND SG /me-1ST SG /us-1ST PL /you-2ND PL si  
 vede ogni giorno  
 sees-3RD SG every day  
 ‘One sees you /me /us /you every day on the TV’

(69) exemplifies the case of an ISCs with no V-O agreement. As shown in the introduction, such a construction does not present a person restriction on the object. As a general observation, in section 1, I have proposed that for the person restriction to hold one needs to have a Nominative object. In the light of what I have said so far, we can extend the analysis of (69) and claim that no person restriction holds in

(69) because the Accusative object and *si* do not establish a Multiple Agree relation with the T head. The person on T is valued by *si*, but the number on T is the default singular one, which shows clearly that no Agree between the object and T can possibly have occurred. In general, it would be quite unexpected that an Accusative marked DP entered Agree with the T head, which assigns Nominative. As shown in the introduction, Nominative case in Italian signals agreement with the verb in T. When such an agreement does not take place, no person restriction can occur.

## 6.2. Psych verbs

The case of psych verbs of the *piacere* type is more complex. As shown in section 2.2., psych verbs in Italian exhibit a Nominative object and a dative DP. Such a DP ends up in a subject position: Spec, TP, just like Icelandic quirky datives. If the dative agreed with the T head, a person restriction should arise. This is not the case, as exemplified in (17), here repeated as (70):

- (70)    Mi                    piaci            tu/                    piace  
           me-DAT 1ST SG like-2ND SG you-NOM 2ND SG/ likes-3RD SG  
           lui/                    piacete        voi  
           he-NOM 3RD SG/ like-2ND PL you-NOM 2ND PL  
           ‘I like you/like him/ like you (pl.)’

In (70), any object is licensed, independent of its person specification. The lack of person restriction in (70) is due to the lack of a person marker like *si*. In other words, no element in the clause may ‘saturate’ the person feature on the verb. For this reason, Multiple Agree may not take place.

According to Anagnostopoulou (2003) and Boeckx (1998), a quirky dative enters Agree with the T head and values its person feature. In the case of (70), the quirky dative does not value the person feature on T, and the person restriction does not hold. In other words, in (64), the person restriction does not hold because

no element like an impersonal *si* occurs in the sentence. Both the person and the number feature are valued on T by the object DP, which obtains Nominative as a result of such an agreement.

### 6.3. Spanish psych verbs of the *olvidarse* class

In section 2.2., some interesting data from Spanish were presented. It was shown that Spanish psych verbs do not usually present a person restriction on the object. A small class of psych verbs with dative subject, however, has been shown by Rivero (to appear) to present a person restriction on the object. I do not have enough data to be able to draw a parallel between Spanish and Italian psych verbs. I wish to underline, however, that the verbs chosen by Rivero to exemplify this phenomenon all have a *-se* ending: *antojarse* ('take a fancy on'), *olvidarse* ('forget about'). The presence of this *-se* ending should make us suspicious. It might be that precisely this *-se* ending causes the person restriction on this subclass of Spanish verbs. I do not wish to speculate any further, and leave this issue for further research.

## 7. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have examined the person restriction on the object in ISCs with V-O agreement. I have shown that such a phenomenon involves the operation Multiple Agree. Such an operation takes place when two DPs simultaneously Agree with a functional head, like T in the case of Italian ISCs and Icelandic QDCs.

The person restriction on the Nominative object is active both in Italian ISCs and in Icelandic QDCs. Despite their similarities, I have shown that Italian ISCs and Icelandic QDCs are not syntactically coincident. The fact that they both present a person restriction on the Nominative object is significant: given that Italian ISCs do not require a dative Experiencer in the clause, some other element must be responsible for the person restriction to apply. I have proposed that *si* is such an element.

*Si* enters Agree with T and values its  $\phi$ -person feature. T also Agrees with the object DP and values its unvalued Case feature as Nominative. The person feature on the Nominative object cannot be 1st or 2nd person because of the condition on Multiple Agree (Anagnostopoulou 2003), which states that Multiple Agree can only take place under *non*-conflicting feature specification of the agreement elements.

My analysis can easily be extended to Icelandic QDCs: it is not the dative Experiencer that causes the person restriction on the object, but rather the *-st* ending on those verbs which take a quirky subject. The analysis just proposed also accounts for the lack of person restriction in Italian ISCs with no V-O agreement and in Italian psych verbs of the *piacere* class. In one case, no Multiple Agree holds between the Accusative object and the T head. *Si* is in fact Nominative, and the object is Accusative. In the other case, no element like *si* is present in the Numeration. There is no element which may value the person feature on T but the Nominative object, which values all the  $\phi$ -set on T.



## Chapter 5

### The inclusive interpretation of impersonal *si*

#### 1. Introduction

The interpretation of impersonal *si* is not univocal. In Chapter 1, it was shown that *si* identifies a group of humans participating in the event expressed by the verb. This group is not, however, uniquely defined. *Si* may identify a generic group of human beings, as in (1), or an inclusive group of human beings, i.e. a group which forcedly includes the speaker, as in (2). The meaning of *si* in (1) is roughly equivalent to the English ‘people’. The meaning of *si* in (2) is roughly equivalent to ‘we’.

- (1) In quel ristorante *si* mangiava bene  
in that restaurant *si* ate-IMPF well  
‘People used to eat well in that restaurant’
- (2) Ieri *si* è arrivati tardi  
yesterday *si* is arrived late  
‘Yesterday we have arrived late’

The sentence in (1) has generic reference. Its subject is understood as generic, unspecified. (2), on the contrary, has a specification for inclusiveness: the reference set identified by *si* necessarily includes the speaker. It is important to note that also in (1) the speaker may be included in the reference set, just because the speaker is part of the universe. The difference between (1) and (2) is tangible, however, as

(2) is clearly specified for inclusiveness. ISCs may also have a third reading: this reading is called exclusive or existential, and is exemplified in (3):

- (3) Mi                    si è raccontata        una storia falsa  
 me DAT 1ST SG si is told PP FEM SG a    story false  
 ‘Somebody told me a false story’

(3) has an exclusive interpretation: the speaker is not included among those performing the action of telling the story.

In this chapter, I examine the interpretation of *si* in different contexts, mainly focusing on the generic/inclusive interpretation. I show that the interpretation of the ISC varies depending on whether the event is bounded or unbounded, i.e. whether it has temporal boundaries or not. As a general rule, if the event is bounded, *si* receives an inclusive interpretation. If the event is unbounded, *si* receives a generic interpretation. As observed in Cinque (1988), the tense-aspectual setting of an ISC strictly influences its interpretation. Starting from Cinque (1988)’s insights, I wish to propose an analysis which accounts for the inclusive reading of impersonal *si*.

In the next section, after a short introduction to the general problem, I list the main readings that ISCs may receive. Then, I show how different tense-aspectual combinations of the verb give origin to different interpretations. In section 3, after a brief summary of Cinque’s (1988) analysis, I propose some tests for inclusiveness. Such tests show that an inclusive reading is also possible with transitive and unergative verbs, contra Cinque (1988) and Mandikoetxea (2002). Moreover, I show some data that focus on the interpretational variation of ISCs. In section 4, I show that boundedness is indeed responsible for the inclusive reading, rather than specific time reference (Cinque 1988) or perfectivity (D’Alessandro & Alexiadou 2003). Section 5 contains my analysis: unboundedness provides *si* with a generic person specification of the  $\sigma$ -set. If the event is bounded, and the sentence is thus perfective, there is no person specification available. In order for the sentence to be interpretable, *si*



needs to get its person specification. *Si* gets its person feature valued via binding with the Speech Act head, which encodes information about the actual participants in the speech event (Bianchi 2002, 2003, Sigurðsson 2002, 2003, Speas 2000, 2001) . The Speech Act head encodes 1st and 2nd person values for semantic person. Thus, *si*'s person feature is specified as 1st/2nd , i.e. as inclusive. Section 6 contains my conclusions.

## 2. Interpretational variation for impersonal *si* constructions

As shown in the introduction, ISCs may have various interpretations. In this section, I classify the possible interpretations that ISCs may acquire. In section 2.1., it is shown that *si* behaves as an indefinite in some contexts, and as a definite pronoun in some others. Section 2.2. addresses the problem of inclusive-exclusive reading of *si*. In section 2.3., the peculiar case of Florentine is introduced. In Florentine, ISCs are always inclusive, independent of the aspect of the verb, of time reference specification, or event type.

### 2.1. *Si* as an indefinite subject

Impersonal *si* may have different readings depending on several factors, which we are going to identify in this section.

It is commonly assumed that an indefinite subject in the present tense is understood as a universal quantifier (Cinque 1988 and reference listed there, Chierchia 1995, Calson & Pellettier 1995). To exemplify this concept, Cinque (1988) uses the following example, taken from Jackendoff (1972:310):

(4) A rhinoceros eats small snakes

(4) means that:

(5) for every x, x a rhinoceros, x (characteristically) eats small snakes

(4) is a statement, or describes a characteristic that all elements belonging to a given set exhibit. Every individual that belongs the set exhibits the same characteristic.

When specific time reference is introduced in a clause, the indefinite subject cannot be interpreted as generic anymore. The interpretation is now is existential. Cinque examines the following sentence:

(6) A rhinoceros is eating small snakes

(6) may not mean that any rhinoceros has the property of eating small snakes, but rather that there exists a rhinoceros that is eating small snakes. In other words, under the existential interpretation, the sentence is true is there is one individual that satisfies the properties expressed by the predicate.

Chierchia (1995) shows that *si* behaves exactly like an indefinite in several respects; in particular, it presents the same behavior as indefinites with respect to the universal and existential reading: in the present tense, *si* receives what Cinque calls a quasi-universal interpretation, as in (7):

(7) In Italia *si* beve molto vino  
 in Italy *si* drinks much wine  
 ‘In Italy everybody/people drink a lot of wine’ [from Chierchia (1995:108)]

With specific time reference, ISCs receive a quasi-existential interpretation, as in (8):

(8) Ieri in Italia *si* è giocato male  
 yesterday in Italy *si* is played bad  
 ‘Yesterday somebody in Italy played poorly’

Cinque calls the two readings in (7) and in (8) quasi-universal and quasi-existential respectively. The behavior of *si* in (7) and (8) reflects quite straightforwardly that of an indefinite pronoun. If the event has a temporal limit, the generic interpretation of an indefinite is forbidden, because we are referring to a limited event, which re-

quires specific participants. With specific time reference, thus, an existential reading arises.

A behavior similar to that of *si* is pointed out by Egerland (2003) for Swedish impersonal *man*<sup>1</sup>. We will briefly address the inclusive interpretation of Swedish *man* in section 5.2.

To sum up, *si* behaves like an indefinite as it appears to be sensitive to temporal boundedness. If the event has no temporal boundary, *si* receives a generic interpretation. If specific time reference is inserted in the clause, *si* receives an existential interpretation. This existential reading may be further specified. In particular, an inclusive reading arises for ISCs in the past tense.

So far, I have used the terms ‘specific time reference’ and ‘past tense’ with no precise denotation. In section 3, I show that *si* is sensitive to temporal boundedness, and that the introduction of specific time reference or the use of the perfect are instantiations of temporal boundedness rather than phenomena independent from each other.

## 2.2. Inclusiveness and existentiality of impersonal *si*

ISCs may receive also an existential/inclusive interpretation, in addition to the purely existential and to the generic reading. Under the inclusive interpretation, the group of people identified by *si* necessarily includes the speaker, i.e. the person who utters the sentence. The example in (2), here repeated as (9), exemplifies this phenomenon:

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<sup>1</sup>Egerland proposes for the quasi-existential reading the label ‘arbitrary’, and for the quasi-universal reading the label ‘generic’. The term ‘arbitrary’ is used by Cinque with the rough meaning of ‘something that may be both existential and generic’. Following Chierchia, I adopt the terms generic and existential when referring to the interpretation of sentences like (7) and (8) respectively.

- (9) Ieri si è arrivati tardi  
 yesterday si is arrived late  
 ‘Yesterday we have arrived late’

In (9), the reference set identified by *si* includes the speaker. As observed by Cinque, such an inclusive reading obtains when the time reference is specified in the clause. In (9), thus, the introduction of specific time reference triggers existential closure, but *si* is further specified as being inclusive. In other words, the group of people who existentially close the predicate is specified as including the speaker. I will come back to the inclusiveness issue in more details in the next section, and show that time reference is not the only responsible element for the inclusive reading to obtain.

Impersonal *si* may also have an exclusive reading, i.e. a reading for which the speaker is excluded from the reference set. This is the case of (10), where the speaker may not be included among the people performing the action, but nevertheless the sentence is grammatical:

- (10) Mi si è raccontato che Maria ha riso molto ieri  
 me DAT 1ST SG si is told that Maria has laughed a lot yesterday  
 ‘People have told me that Maria laughed a lot yesterday’

Obviously, the speaker cannot be among those who tell the speaker that Maria laughed yesterday. The exclusive reading is often referred to as quasi-existential reading (Cinque 1988). I will therefore refer to the exclusive reading as existential. In (10), there is a group of individuals that satisfy the property of having told the speaker that Maria laughed.

The existential reading is not available with all verb classes. Cinque shows that the availability of the existential interpretation depends on the verb class. In particular, he shows that only transitive and unergative verbs allow for an existential

reading, as the following examples show <sup>2</sup> [all the examples are taken from Cinque (1995:148:43a-g)]:

- (11) Oggi, a Beirut, si è ucciso un innocente  
 today in Beirut si is killed an innocent  
 ‘Today, in Beirut, somebody killed an innocent’ [transitive]
- (12) Oggi, a Beirut, si è sparato tutta la mattina  
 today in Beirut si is shot all the morning  
 ‘Toda, in Beirut, somebody shot the whole morning’ [unergative]
- (13) #Oggi, a Beirut, si è morti inutilmente  
 today in Beirut si is died in vain  
 ‘Today, in Beirut, we have died in vain’ [unaccusative]
- (14) #Oggi, a Beirut, si è preoccupato il contingente ONU  
 today in Beirut si is worried the contingent UN  
 ‘Today, in Beirut, we have been worrying the UN contingent’ [psych-  
 movement]
- (15) #Oggi, a Beirut, si è sfiniti dalla fame  
 today in Beirut si is worn out by the hunger  
 ‘Today, In Beirut, we are worn out with hunger’ [copulative]
- (16) #Oggi, a Beirut, si è stati uccisi inutilmente  
 today in Beirut si is been killed in vain  
 ‘Today, in Beirut, we have been killed in vain’ [passive]
- (17) #Oggi, a Beirut, si è risultati non aver rispettato le convenzioni  
 today in Beirut si is turned out not to have respected the conventions  
 internazionali  
 international  
 ‘Today, in Beirut, we turned out not to have compelled with international  
 conventions’ [raising]

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<sup>2</sup># denotes syntactic grammaticality but semantic/pragmatic oddity or unacceptability

As examples (11)-(17) show, an existential reading is only possible with transitive and unergative verbs. We will come back to this issue in section 5.3.

Furthermore, according to Cinque the availability of this quasi-existential/arbitrary reading is restricted to sentences with specific time reference. In section 3, I will show that the whole picture is more complex and that also aspect and *Aktionsart* play a big role in determining the reference set.

To summarize, ISCs may have three possible interpretations:

- [1. ] a generic interpretation, which usually comes about when the sentence is in the present tense, as in (7);
- [2. ] an existential/exclusive interpretation, which usually comes about with specific time reference, as in (10) (only with transitive and unergative verbs);
- [3. ] an existential/inclusive interpretation, which usually comes about with specific time reference, as in (9).

### 3. Specific time reference, aspectual specification and inclusiveness

In his seminal paper, Cinque (1988) observes that the meaning of ISCs changes according to the time reference specification of the clause. In particular, he shows that a generic sentence turns into an inclusive/existential one when specific time reference is introduced in the clause. Let us consider the sentence in (18). With no time reference specification, *si* receives a generic interpretation, i.e. it has a quasi-universal reading in Cinque's terms:

- (18) A Beirut *si* uccide un innocente ogni minuto  
 in Beirut *si* kills an innocent every minute  
 'In Beirut an innocent is killed every minute (by somebody)'

If the sentence has specific time reference, it receives an existential interpretation, like in (19):

- (19) Oggi, a Beirut, si è ucciso un innocente  
 today in Beirut si is killed an innocent  
 ‘Today, in Beirut, one killed an innocent’ [from Cinque (1995:148:43a)]

With specific time reference, ISCs with unaccusatives, psych, movement, copulative, passive and raising verbs receive an inclusive interpretation. In (20), I repeat one of the example that Cinque uses to illustrate this phenomenon:

- (20) #Oggi a Beirut si è morti inutilmente  
 today in Beirut si is died in vain  
 ‘Today in Beirut we died in vain’ [from Cinque (1995:148:43c)]

In (20), the inclusive reading of *si* causes a pragmatically odd sentence. *Si* in (20) has an inclusive interpretation, due to the specific time reference of the clause. If *si* is inclusive, the speaker is among the participants in the event. The sentence in (20) is pragmatically odd because it is impossible that the speaker died today in Beirut and is now here telling us that he died.

According to Cinque, thus, specific time reference with unaccusative, psych, movement, passive, copulative, and raising verbs causes an inclusive reading of the sentence. He claims that the inclusive reading is not obtainable with verbs which project an external  $\theta$ -role, such as transitive and unergatives. As for the reason why exactly an inclusive/ ‘we’ reading is obtained, and not a 3rd person singular for instance, Cinque remains unsure. He suggests that a 1st person plural pronoun represents the best approximation of a referential pronoun to an arbitrary one. In particular, he proposes that ‘we’ is the most ‘complete’ among all pronouns, as it includes 1st, 2nd and 3rd person. This means that it is the most generic of the pronouns.

Building on Cinque’s observations, I would like to propose that the inclusive reading is determined by a valuation of the semantic person feature on *si*. When such a person is valued by the Speech Act head, the result is an inclusive reading.





- (22) \*[Als Hüter des Gesetzes] hat man mir  
 as guardian NOM SG/PL MASC the GEN law GEN has man me  
 erklärt, ich könne hier nicht wohnen  
 explained I could SUBJ here not live  
 ‘As guardians of the law, they explained to me that I couldn’t live here’  
 [from Kratzer (2000:4)]

Kratzer observes that in (21), the presence of a predicative NP related to the subject forces an inclusive reading for *man*. In (22), where an inclusive reading of the subject is not possible for pragmatic reasons, the use of a predicative NP causes ungrammaticality.

The predicative NP test is helpful for German *man* as well as for Italian *si*. The Italian translations of (21) and (22), in (23) and (24) respectively, present almost the same difference in grammaticality as (21) and (22):

- (23) Come guardiani della legge, si è stati obbligati a controllare l’osservanza di  
 tutti i regolamenti

- (24) ???Come guardiani della legge, mi si è spiegato che io non posso vivere qui

The ungrammaticality of (24) is indeed questionable. Many Italian speakers would accept it as grammatical. The reason why some Italian speakers accept (24) is that the reading of (24) is not only exclusive. As we will see in section 3.2., some classes of verbs display both an inclusive and an exclusive reading under some given circumstances. For those Italians who consider *si* in (24) as only exclusive, the sentence is ungrammatical. It is important to recall that Italian *si* is exclusive only in a very limited number of contexts, with transitive and unergative verbs. The fact that (24) may be acceptable for some speakers does not affect the result of Kratzer’s test, however, which is aimed at showing that inclusive pronouns admit a predicative NP. From the observation of (23), one can easily conclude that also for Italian impersonal *si*, a predicative NP is allowed when the interpretation is

inclusive.

Kratzer's test also draws the line between the exclusive and the inclusive reading of *si*, as sentence (25) shows. In (25), only an exclusive reading of the second *si* is pragmatically permitted:

- (25) Quando *si* è tornati alla pensione, *si* serviva già la zuppa  
 when *si* is returned at home, *si* served IMPF already the soup  
 'When we returned home, they were already serving the soup' [translation  
 of Kratzer's (1995:6) example]

In (25), the speaker may not be included among those serving the soup. According to Kratzer's test, a predicative NP should not be licensed as a modifier of the second *si*. This is in fact the case, as (26) shows:

- (26) \*Quando *si* è tornati alla pensione, da bravi camerieri *si* serviva  
 when *si* is returned at home, as good waiters *si* served IMPF  
 già la zuppa  
 already the soup  
 'When we returned home, as good waiters, they were already serving the  
 soup' [translation of Kratzer's (1995:6) example]

Kratzer's test, thus, helps to distinguish between the inclusive and the exclusive reading of impersonal *si*.

Cinque (1988), on the other hand, proposes to apply a pragmatic strategy in order to identify the inclusive reading of *si*. He selects a predicate which is pragmatically incompatible with an inclusive reading of *si*. Then, he creates the syntactic conditions which give rise to an inclusive reading. The result is a semantically/pragmatically odd sentence, as in (27):

- (27) #Oggi, a Beirut, *si* è morti inutilmente  
 today in Beirut *si* is 3RD SG died MASC PL in vain  
 'Today in Beirut we have died in vain' [from Cinque (1995:148)]

(27) is odd inasmuch as the speaker may not utter it, as he/she is included in the reference set identified by *si*, which is made up of people who died today. The fact that a pragmatically odd sentence is obtained shows that *si* (27) is inclusive.

In addition to the pragmatic oddity, Cinque uses other strategies to show that *si* is inclusive in contexts of specific time reference. Inclusive *si* [from Cinque(1995:159-160)]:

- is incompatible with 3rd person arbitrary elements like *se stess-* and *propri-*:

(28) \*?Amici! Un minuto fa si è stati abbandonati a se stessi  
 friends a minute ago si is been abandoned to oneself  
 ‘My friends! One minute ago we were left to oneself’ [ex. 60a]

- may occur with 1st person plural emphatic pronouns [from Burzio (1986:109-15)]:

(29) Si è stati invitati anche noi  
 si is been invited also we  
 ‘We too were invited’ [ex. 61]

- may resume a (left-dislocated or relativized) 1st person plural pronoun:

(30) Noi, ha detto che non si è stati invitati  
 we has 3RD SG said that not si is been invited  
 ‘He/she said that we have not been invited’ [ex. 62a]

- gives rise to disjoint reference effects with 1st person pronouns:

(31) \*Ieri sera, mi /ci si è stati presentati troppo in  
 yesterday evening me DAT us DAT si is been introduced too in  
 fretta  
 hurry  
 ‘Last night, si was introduced to me/us too much in a hurry’ [ex.  
 64a]

With the help of these tests, we can now proceed to identify whether ISCs with transitive and unergative verbs really do not allow for an inclusive reading.

### 3.2. Inclusive reading with transitive and unergative verbs

In section 2.2. we have seen that according to Cinque an inclusive reading is only available with verbs that do not project an external  $\theta$ -role. An inclusive reading is not available thus with transitive and unergative verbs. This statement is not completely true. The data I present below show that an additional inclusive reading is available for transitive and unergative verbs. As an example, let us consider the sentence in (32):

- (32) Da perfetti buongustai, ieri sera si è mangiato caviale  
 as perfect gourmets, yesterday evening si is eaten caviar  
 ‘As perfect gourmets yesterday evening we have eaten caviar’

The verb *mangiare* (‘eat’) is a transitive verb. Nevertheless, a predicative NP modifying *si* is licensed in the clause. According to Kratzer’s test, this shows that *si* is inclusive in (32).

The same holds for (33), which contains an unergative verb:

- (33) Da bravi cittadini, si è telefonato spesso alla polizia negli ultimi  
 as good citizens si is telephoned often to the police in the last  
 giorni  
 days  
 ‘As good citizens, we have often called the police in the last days’

Moreover, *si* in (32) and (33) is incompatible with a 3rd person arbitrary reflexive, like *propri-*<sup>3</sup>. The incompatibility of *si* with *propri-* in (32) shows that *si* also has an inclusive reading in addition to the exclusive one described by Cinque (1988):

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<sup>3</sup>In (34) and (35), the predicative NP has been left in the clause to make sure that the inclusive reading of *si* would be selected. An additional existential reading is in fact available for *si* in (32) and (33), as they contain verbs that project an external  $\theta$  role.

- (34) \*Da perfetti buongustai, ieri sera si è mangiato il proprio  
 as perfect gourmets yesterday evening si is eaten the one's  
 caviale  
 caviar  
 'As perfect gourmets yesterday evening each of us has eaten his/her own's  
 caviar'
- (35) ???/\* Da bravi cittadini, si è telefonato spesso alla propria centrale di  
 as good citizens si is telephoned often to the own's central of  
 polizia negli ultimi giorni  
 police in the last days  
 'As good citizens, we have often called our police station in the last days'

In (32) and (33), *si* may also occur with a 1st person plural emphatic pronoun, which shows once again that *si* is inclusive, as proposed by Cinque:

- (36) Noi, ieri sera, si è mangiato caviale  
 we yesterday evening si is eaten caviar  
 'Yesterday evening we ate caviar'
- (37) Noi, ieri sera, si è telefonato alla polizia  
 we yesterday evening si is called to the police  
 'Yesterday evening we called the police'

Thus, unergative and transitive verbs do permit an inclusive reading. Cinque's observation, however, is not completely unmotivated, as the data in next section show.

### 3.2.1. Interpretational variation of ISCs with transitive and unergative verbs

There seems to be wide variation among Italian speakers in the interpretation of ISCs. In order to clarify the inclusiveness issue, a test has been proposed to twelve informants. The test was aimed at understanding whether the existential reading is really the only available reading for verbs with an external  $\theta$ -role. The sentence in (38) was thus proposed to twelve Italian speakers. This sentence should be seman-

tically/pragmatically uninterpretable for those people who attribute an inclusive reading to *si*. It should be instead acceptable for those speakers who attribute a purely existential reading to *si*.

- (38) Ieri mi si è detto che Maria è malata  
 yesterday mi si is told that Maria is ill  
 ‘Yesterday someone/we told me that Maria is ill’

Under the inclusive/‘we’ reading of *si*, (38) is pragmatically impossible. More specifically, a disjoint reference effect takes place under this interpretation (see Stefanini 1982, Cinque 1988).

The results of the test are very telling. First, the two speakers from Tuscany consider the sentence as completely uninterpretable. This is very likely due to the fact that Tuscan *si* has undergone a process of reanalysis and presents nowadays only an inclusive reading. Five speakers claim that the sentence is utterable but not very likely, and that they can understand it but they would rather use the 3rd plural arbitrary *pro* if they want to convey an exclusive reading. Three speakers (in addition to the two Tuscan ones) consider (38) uninterpretable. Finally, two speakers consider the sentence as perfectly grammatical and interpretable. A summary of the grammaticality judgements for (38) is offered in table (1) below:

TABLE 1

judgment	number of speakers
*	3 + 2 (from Tuscany)
OK	2
?/??	5

The distribution of judgements is in no way relatable to regional varieties of Italian, with the clear exception of Tuscan. Tuscan speakers have been isolated, in

fact, because of the peculiar use they make of ISCs. We will return to this case in section 5.4. As for the remaining speakers, it appears that some of them do not accept the exclusive (i.e. the existential) use of *si* in contexts of specific time reference. The speakers who have mixed judgements are probably speakers who get both the existential and the inclusive readings. The degree of unacceptability shows the ‘level’ of inclusiveness of a sentence: the less acceptable the sentence, the more the speaker prefers the inclusive reading.

Finally, the speakers who accept the sentence as perfectly interpretable get the existential reading as the first (and perhaps the only) reading available.

The data in TABLE 1 show that for the majority of speakers the interpretation of (38) is inclusive. In section 4, I show how such an inclusive reading correlates with the boundedness of the event.

### 3.2.2. *Si always inclusive?*

The fact that all classes of verbs allow for an inclusive interpretations under some specific circumstances which will be discussed further on may be an indication that *si* is always inclusive. Chierchia (1995), for instance, claims that *si* ‘favours a speaker-oriented interpretation’ [from Chierchia (1995:126)]. In other words, *si* is mainly inclusive.

In order to get things clear, one needs to draw a distinction between a properly inclusive (speaker-oriented in Chierchia’s terms) reading, and generic one, which may include the speaker. In some contexts, *si* is always inclusive. Later on, I will claim that whenever perfective is marked on the verb, the ISC turns inclusive. This inclusive reading, as the data in TABLE 1 show, is always possible, with any class of verbs. Once again, by inclusive reading, I mean a reading which is specified for inclusiveness, which obligatorily includes the speaker among those who are affected by the event. An example of inclusiveness is in (2), here repeated as (39):

- (39) Ieri si è arrivati tardi  
 yesterday si is arrived late  
 ‘Yesterday we have arrived late’

It is important to recall that also the generic reading may be in some sense inclusive. If a property is true for everybody, it will be true for the speaker as well. In (40), the speaker may be included among those who perform the action of arriving, but there is no ‘specification’ for it. The sentence may be true also if the speaker has never been to Milano.

- (40) Si arriva sempre tardi a Milano  
 si arrives always late in Milan  
 ‘People always arrive late in Milan’

In section 2.2., however, it was shown that a third reading is also available for ISCs: the existential/exclusive one. Under this reading, the speaker is not included among those performing the action expressed by the verb. An example of an exclusive reading is (25), here repeated as (41):

- (41) Quando si è tornati alla pensione, si serviva già la zuppa  
 when si is returned at home, si served IMPF already the soup  
 ‘When we returned home, they were already serving the soup’ [from  
 Kratzer (1995:6)]

I conclude that *si* is not always inclusive.

Before going into the analysis of inclusive ISCs, I wish to examine the data in detail. From a careful observation of the data a characterization of inclusiveness as strictly related to boundedness emerges, as I show in the next section.

### 3.2.3. *Vagueness or double interpretation?*

So far, it has been shown that ISCs with transitive verbs present both an inclusive and an exclusive/existential reading when specific time reference is available in the



sentence.

The question now arises whether these two interpretations are really available or there is rather underspecification, vagueness of interpretation with transitive and unergative verbs.

A very good means for testing this is by applying coordination between two ISCs. If two sentences have the same unspecified subject, coordination is considered to select the same value for both subjects (cf. Zwicky & Sadock 1975). If one of the two subject is unspecified and the other is specified, the former subject will adopt the value of the specified one.

Let us consider the sentence in (42):

- (42) Mi            si è detto che Raffaella Carrà è in pensione  
 to-me-DAT si is said that Raffaella Carrà is in pension  
 ‘Somebody told me that Raffaella Carrà has retired’

(42) is clearly exclusive. Let us coordinate (42) with another ISC. Were the interpretation of the second ISC unspecified or vague, the second ISC would select the exclusive interpretation under coordination with the inclusive ISC in (42). This is however not the case, as (43) shows:

- (43) #Me            lo        si è detto e    si è andati a cena  
 to-me-DAT it-ACC si is said and si is gone to dinner  
 ‘People told me and we went for dinner’

(43) is odd because the second interpretation is inclusive and the first is forcedly exclusive. Therefore, there is a clash under coordination. This shows that the inclusive and the exclusive reading are really available, and that we are not dealing with semantic underspecification.

This said, let us now turn to analyze the triggers for inclusive reading.

#### 4. Aspect and boundedness

As shown in the previous section, Cinque claims that an inclusive reading is obtained on verbs that do not project an external  $\theta$ -role when a specific time reference is introduced in an ISC. The data presented in the previous section contradict in part this generalization. An inclusive reading is in fact available also with transitive and unergative verbs. According to Cinque, what causes inclusiveness or existentiality is specific time reference. My aim is to show that specific time reference is only one of the causes for inclusiveness. In this section, I show that what really triggers the inclusive reading is the boundedness of the event. Before addressing the core problem of inclusiveness and its relation with temporal reference, perfectivity, and boundedness, a brief introduction of the theoretical background I will make use of is necessary.

##### 4.1. Eventuality, boundedness and telicity

As seen in chapter 2, events may be classified into **states**, **accomplishments**, **activities** and **achievements** (Vendler 1967). Vendler proposed a classification of verb classes according to temporal duration, temporal termination and internal temporal structure. More specifically, Vendler distinguished between **states**, that have no internal structure or change during the time span over which they are true; **activities**, which have internal change and duration but no obligatory temporal endpoint; **achievements**, that have instantaneous endpoint and no duration; and **accomplishments**, that are events with duration and an obligatory temporal endpoint. The four classes have been organized by various authors into different subgroups. The main distinction is usually made between stative and *non*-stative verbs, which are sometimes called events. Bach (1981) proposes a classification according to which all aspectual classes may be called eventualities. Following Bach, I will adopt the term **eventuality** to describe both stative and eventive aspectual

types.

The property of an event of having or not having a temporal endpoint has been referred to in the literature as the **boundedness** of the event (Verkuyl 1972, Jackendoff 1990), the **culmination** of the event (Moens and Steedman 1988), the **telicity** of the event (Smith 1991), or the **delimitation** of the event (Tenny 1987, 1994).

The aspectual properties and classifications proposed by Vendler are often referred to as *Aktionsarten*. Nowadays, it is common assumption that one should talk about the aspectual properties of the VP or of the clause, rather than the aspectual properties of the verb, since many factors, like adverbial modification, interact with the *Aktionsart*. *Aktionsart* is thus often distinguished by grammatically expressed aspectual distinctions, such as perfectivity. I will refer to the latter as sentential aspect. For a fine-grained classification of *Aktionsarten* the reader is referred to Tenny & Pustejovsky (2000), Guerrero Medina (2001), and Smith (1991).

It is also clear that aspect and tense are encoded on different functional projections, despite the fact that they appear in portmanteau morphs in many languages (Comrie 1976).

In this section, I will keep sentential aspect distinct from *Aktionsart*. The two will be shown to interact in the case of ISCs. Moreover, I follow Depraetere (1995) by considering **telicity** as an inherent property of verbs related to the ‘potential actualization’ of a situation; **boundedness** determines instead the actual realization of a situation: ‘(A)telicity has to do with whether or not a situation is described as having an inherent or intended endpoint; (un)boundedness relates to whether or not a situation is described as having reached a temporal boundary’ [from Depraetere (1995: 2-3)].

## 4.2. Boundedness and the inclusive reading

On a first superficial look at the data, it appears clear that inclusive reading is somehow linked to the use of the past tense. I do not present a detailed description of Italian simple past and present perfect as compared with the corresponding English tenses (see Bertinetto 1997, Giorgi & Pianesi 1997, and Arosio 2003 for a detailed analysis of the Italian past tense). That specific time reference introduces an inclusive reading in ISCs is not accidental. In this section, I wish to show two things: first, specific time reference is not the only cause of inclusiveness, but inclusiveness is also conveyed by perfective aspect in general. Second, specific time reference and perfective are two sides of the same coin: they both create boundedness of the event. Boundedness is what brings about the inclusive interpretation of impersonal *si*.

The default reference point for events is the utterance time, or speech time. Hence, inclusiveness follows from the fact that *si* assumes a deictic reference. Under some circumstances, that will be outlined in section 5.2., the person feature does not have any other way of being interpreted but by establishing a link with the speech act. An interpretation which refers to the speech act is indeed quite natural, and is the most straightforward solution when other reference points are missing in the clause. A valuation of the semantic person feature with reference to the speech act will lead to a specification of such a semantic person as relating to speaker and addressee, i.e. to the participants at the speech act. An inclusive reading will therefore arise.

I expose the details of the specification for inclusiveness in detail in section 5.2. In this section, I just wish to concentrate on the notion of boundedness and on what the causes of inclusiveness are.

We saw that according to Cinque (1988, 1995), an inclusive reading is obtained in an ISC when a specific time reference is introduced in the clause. One of Cinque's famous examples is in (44):

- (44) #Oggi, a Beirut, si è morti inutilmente  
 today in Beirut si is dead in vain  
 ‘Today, in Beirut, we died in vain [from Cinque(1995:148)]’

According to Cinque, the introduction of *oggi* creates the conditions for an inclusive reading to arise. As shown in D’Alessandro & Alexiadou (2003:a,b), specific time reference is sometimes not enough for determining inclusiveness. An important role is also played by aspect, as the contrast between (45) and (46) below shows:

- (45) In quel ristorante si mangiava bene  
 in that restaurant si ate IMPF well  
 ‘People used to eat well in that restaurant’
- (46) In quel ristorante si è mangiato bene  
 in that restaurant si is eaten PF well  
 ‘Somebody/we have eaten well in that restaurant’

In (46), the use of perfective aspect forces an inclusive reading. (46) does not contain any time reference specification. Yet, *si* has an inclusive reading. Aspect thus plays a big role in the interpretation of the sentence. It is usually the case, though, that perfective aspect goes hand in hand with specific time reference. Both perfective and specific time reference introduce a boundary in the event time, and locate the event before the utterance time. It is usually assumed that perfectivity encodes ‘anteriority’ with respect to the speech time (but see Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Pancheva 2003 for an analysis of perfectivity as only introducing a time-span in the clause). Perfectivity creates (or goes together with) boundedness, i.e. completion of an event.

Bounded events are prototypically in the past tense. If an event is completed, it is usually assumed that it is completed in the past with respect to the utterance time. Undoubtedly, an event may be completed also in the future, but the prototypical bounded event is considered to take place in the past. Future tense requires some extra assumptions, as Smith & Erbaugh (2002) show. Thus, perfectivity and

boundedness are closely related, and take the utterance time as a reference point.

Boundedness may be conveyed both by introducing a specific time reference in the clause and by perfectivity. I argue that boundedness is responsible for the inclusive reading of ISCs.

If boundedness of an event is responsible for the inclusive reading, then one would expect that when boundedness is suspended the sentence should lose the inclusive reading. This is exactly what happens in ISCs, as Cinque also observes. Specifically, Cinque observes that in contexts of suspended time reference, like in (47), the inclusive interpretation disappears. However, it is not the suspension of time reference that creates genericity, but rather the elimination of time boundaries for the event. A sentence like (44), that was uninterpretable under an inclusive reading, suddenly becomes interpretable:

- (47) Se oggi a Beirut si è morti inutilmente, (ieri, a Belfast, non si  
 if yesterday in Beirut si is dead in vain yesterday in Belfast not is  
 è certo morti per una ragione sensata  
 is certainly dead for a reasonable reason  
 ‘If yesterday in Beirut people died in vain, today in Belfast people have not  
 died for a good reason’ [from Cinque (1995:150:45a)]

In (47), the time reference is ‘suspended’ in Cinque’s terms. This amounts to saying, in our terms, that the time boundaries are eliminated. Boundedness is thus the key to explain the generic/inclusive alternation.

Cinque’s observation about (44) and (47) indicates the path to be followed. ‘Suspended time reference’ is nothing else but creation of unboundedness. In (47), the temporal boundary is eliminated, and the event extends without an endpoint.

If the hypothesis I am trying to put forward here holds, then one should also expect that whenever an unbounded event takes place, inclusive reading is not allowed. This amounts to saying that the ‘suspension’ of inclusiveness arises not only in cases of suspended time references, but also in all cases which involve an unbounded event.

In order to see whether this is true, let us check three prototypical cases where unboundedness occurs: the present tense, the imperfective aspect, and the introduction of ‘always’ in a bounded event.

According to Smith & Erbaugh (2002) and Smith (2003), all simple present tenses express unbounded situations. This is called the Bounded Event Constraint, and is repeated in (48):

- (48) **The Bounded Event Constraint:** Bounded events are not located in the Present [Smith & Erbaugh (2002:4)]

The perspective of the present time is incompatible with boundedness. Smith & Erbaugh (2002) present a very clear explanation for such a constraint, provided by Kamp & Reyle (1993), here repeated in (49):

- (49) ‘A present tense describes an eventuality (situation) as occurring at the time at which the sentence is uttered, and thus at a time at which the thought is being entertained which the sentence expresses [...] A sentence which describes something as going on at a time - in the sense of not having come to an end when that time is up - cannot represent something as an event. For the event would have to be entirely included within the location time and thus would not extend beyond it’ [from Kamp & Reyle (1993:536-7)]

Thus, an eventuality in the present tense may not be bounded. If the correlation between boundedness and inclusiveness for ISCs holds, an ISC may never be inclusive in the present tense. This is in fact what we observe. If we take a clearly inclusive sentence, like (50), and we turn it into the present tense, such a sentence will receive a generic (not specified for inclusiveness) interpretation (51):

- (50) Ieri si è arrivati tardi in stazione  
yesterday si is arrived late in station  
‘Yesterday we arrived late at the station’

- (51) Si arriva tardi in stazione (se si prende quel treno)  
 si arrives late in station if si takes that train  
 ‘One arrives late at the station if one takes that train’

The same ‘transformation’ holds if one switches from perfective to imperfective. Imperfective is in fact also taken to realize unboundedness (see Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Pancheva 2003):

- (52) Ieri si arrivava tardi in stazione  
 yesterday si arrived late in station  
 ‘Yesterday people arrived late at the station’

As (50)-(52) clearly show, the use of the present tense or of imperfective aspect leads to the loss of inclusiveness.

Another clear case of ‘unboundedness’ occurs when modifiers such as *sempre* (‘always’) are introduced in a perfective clause (which is bounded by definition, as Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Pancheva 2003 point out). Let us consider, as an example, (46), here repeated as (53):

- (53) In quel ristorante si è mangiato bene  
 in that restaurant si is eaten PF well  
 ‘We have eaten well in that restaurant’

The introduction of *sempre* (‘always’) determines the cancellation of the inclusive reading:

- (54) In quel ristorante si è sempre mangiato bene  
 in that restaurant si is always eaten PF well  
 ‘One has always eaten well in that restaurant’

In (54), the ISC is not specified for inclusiveness anymore.

To sum up, in this section I have shown that a strict correlation between boundedness and inclusiveness exists. I have argued for an extension of Cinque’s statement according to which specific time reference introduces an inclusive reading in ISCs



with verbs that do not project an external  $\theta$ -role. It has been shown that an inclusive reading is actually introduced in all classes of verbs with specific time reference. Moreover, it has been shown that specific time reference is not the only cause for inclusiveness, but that also perfectivity introduces an inclusive reading. Perfectivity and specific time reference have been subsumed under the greater category of boundedness, which they both imply. It has been claimed that boundedness is responsible for the inclusive reading of ISCs.

In the next section, I propose an analysis aimed at explaining the reason why inclusiveness and boundedness are linked to each other.

### 5. **Generic vs. inclusive reading in ISCs**

In section 4, it has been shown that there is a strict correlation between boundedness and inclusiveness. Here, I wish to propose an explanation for the facts, which makes use of the Reichenbachian theory of tenses and of some syntactic-pragmatic functional projections, such as the Speech Act projection, as proposed by Sigurðsson (2003), Speas (2000) and Bianchi (2002, 2003).

In 1947, Hans Reichenbach proposed a theory of tenses which involves three primitives: the Reference Time, the Event Time and the Speech Time. According to Reichenbach, both the English simple past and present perfect express temporal precedence. In particular, the simple past expresses a temporal precedence of the Reference Time with respect to the Speech Time. The simple past tense is thus represented as in (55):

(55) E, R ... S

In the past tense, the Event Time and the Reference time are contemporaneous. The English present perfect has instead the representation in (56):

(56) E, ... S, R

Italian *passato prossimo* has some uses that are coincident with the English simple past, and some others that are like the English present perfect. I am not concerned with the definition of the past tense in Italian (for an accurate analysis of the past tense in Italian see Bertinetto 1997, and Giorgi & Pianesi 1997, and Arosio 2003). What matters for me is the idea that the event expressed by the verb needs to be in relation with the speech act.

It is commonly assumed that the interpretation of tense is deictic for single sentences (Kamp & Reyle 1993, Smith to appear among others). According to Reichenbach's theory, the past tense conveys the meaning that the Reference Time and the Event Time precede the Speech Act. This means that when no other reference time is available in the sentence (for instance in a reported speech), the event will be linked to the speech time. In other words, an event in the past tense will be considered to have taken place before the Speech Time. In the sentences proposed by Cinque, for example, the event was considered as taking place *ieri*, i.e. *yesterday*. *Yesterday* is a deictic adverb, which locates the event the day before the speech time. When no other specification is present in the clause, eventualities are interpreted deictically, with respect to here and now. This observation opens the path for the explanation of inclusiveness in ISCs.

### 5.1. *Si* as a variable

In 1995, a semantic analysis of *si* was proposed by Chierchia, taking into account various properties that impersonal *si* and indefinites have in common. Chierchia shows that impersonal *si* in Italian behaves -at least partially- like an indefinite. Indefinites are defined, according to classical DRT, as exhibiting the following properties [from Chierchia (1995:a:11)] (see Kamp 1981 and Heim 1982):

- [i. ] Indefinites have no quantificational force on their own. They are, in this respect, like free variables.

- [ii. ] The quantificational force of indefinites is determined by the first available binder, that is, the lowest c-commanding quantifying determiner (*every, no, most, ...*) or adverb of quantification (*always, usually*). These quantifying elements are *unselective*. They bind all free variables in their domain.
  
- [iii. ] A binder Q sets up a tripartite structure of the form Q[A][B], where A is the *restriction* of the binder and B its (*nuclear scope*)
  
- [iv. ] A rule of *existential closure* assigns existential force to indefinites that are not otherwise quantified.

According to Chierchia, *si* introduces a variable  $x_{arb}$  which ranges over a group of humans. In chapter 2, I have shown that *si* has an unspecified semantic person feature. In Chierchia's terms, one can say that *si* introduces a person variable  $x_{arb}$ , which ranges over humans.

The semantic person is thus a variable which needs to be bound (and thus receive a value) in order for the sentence to be interpreted (see also Manzini 1986 for an analysis of *si* as a variable).

According to Chierchia, the existential reading of *si* is obtained when the Gn operator is absent. Chierchia proposes the following example to exemplify his observation:

- (57) Che cosa è successo ieri in campeggio? Si è cantato  
 what is happened yesterday in camping si is sang  
 'What happened yesterday in the campground? There were people who sang'

Chierchia argues that the lack of Gn brings about the existential reading of *si*<sup>4</sup>. I will return to the existential reading of *si* in section 5.3. for the moment, I wish to

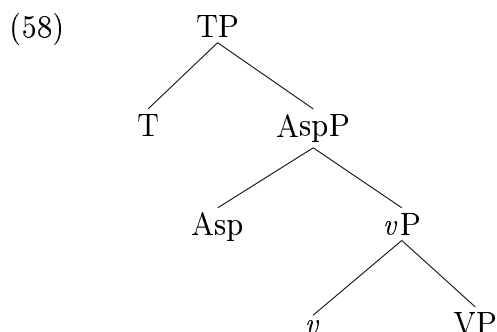
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<sup>4</sup>Chierchia's analysis is much more complex. He indeed shows that *si* behaves like an indefinite in some cases and like a pronoun in others, for instance with respect to anaphoric binding. Moreover, he shows that ISCs with a generic interpretation need to be further specified by means of a

concentrate on the generic-inclusive alternation.

According to Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Pancheva (2003), there exist a syntacticosemantic feature [unbounded] which is realized by progressive and imperfective morphology, and a syntacticosemantic feature [bounded] that is realized by the perfective morphology. Such features are present on the Aspectual head: when imperfective/progressive morphology is present, Asp presents an [unbounded] feature<sup>5</sup>. When the sentence is [bounded], no such an operator is present.

The structure I wish to adopt is in (58):



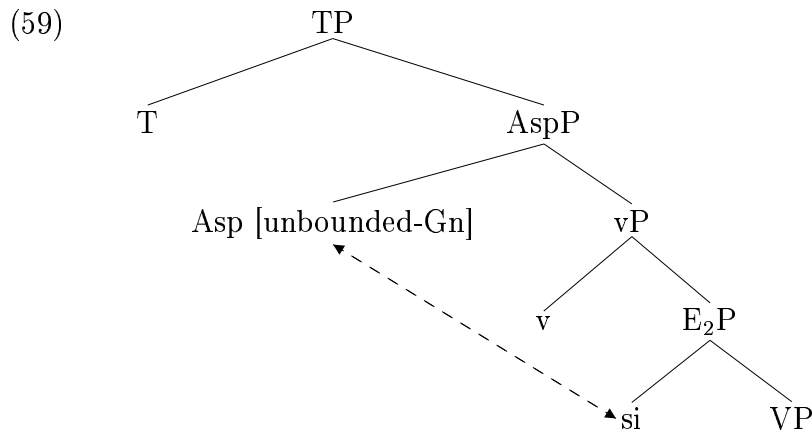
Building on Chierchia's analysis and on Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Izvorsky's proposal, I wish to propose that the unbounded feature acts as Chierchia's generic syntactically projected restricting property (see also Diesing 1992). If such a restricting property is missing, like in (i), the reading is hard to get:

- (i) Si canta  
 si sings  
 'People sing'

In (i), a context is necessary in order to create the restriction over the predicate. I will not enter into the discussion of restrictors here. The reader is addressed to Mandikoetxea (2002) for an analysis of the existential reading of *si*.

<sup>5</sup>Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Pancheva assume that imperfective is located on the Aspect projection, while perfective is located above it, in the Perfective projection. For my aim here, I assume a simplified version of Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Pancheva's analysis, and assume that both perfective and imperfective are located on the Aspect projection.

operator which binds *si*'s person feature. *Si* receives a generic interpretation when the [unbounded] feature is present: in the present tense, with imperfective aspect, or when time adverbials like *always* are present in the clause. When such an unbounded feature is absent, i.e. when the sentence is perfective or when an adverb introduces a specific time reference, i.e. introduces boundedness, *si* may not be bound by the generic operator [unbounded]. This forces it to be bound by the Speech Act operator, which is present on the Speech Act head, as we will see in the next section.



So far, I have argued that the [unbounded] feature proposed by Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou and Pancheva (2003) corresponds to the generic operator Gn proposed by Chierchia (1995:b). Such a generic operator binds *si* when the sentence is unbounded, thus providing a generic interpretation to the sentence.

## 5.2. Boundedness and speech act

When the predicate is bounded, the [unbounded-Gn] operator is not there. This means that the variable *si* may not be bound. It needs to receive its specification from elsewhere. In the past tense, i.e. when the event is bounded, *si* actually behaves as a definite personal pronoun (cf. Chierchia 1995). In order to show this, let us consider the inclusive-with-predicative NP construction. This construction

licenses a definite pronoun, but does not license an indefinite, as examples (60)-(61) show:

- (60) Noi, da bravi cittadini, abbiamo raccolto le firme contro la centrale nucleare  
 we as good citizens have collected the signatures against the plant nuclear  
 ‘We, as good citizens, have signed a petition against nuclear power plants’
- (61) #Qualcuno, da bravo cittadino, ha raccolto le firme contro la centrale nucleare  
 somebody as good citizen has collected the signatures against the plant nuclear  
 ‘Some people, as good citizens, have signed a petition against nuclear power plants’

Inclusive *si* is also licensed in these contexts:

- (62) Da bravi cittadini, si sono raccolte le firme contro la centrale nucleare  
 as good citizens si are collected the signatures against the plant nuclear  
 ‘As good citizens, we have signed a petition against nuclear power plants’

(62) shows that inclusive *si* behaves like a definite personal pronoun. If *si* is a personal pronoun in this context, it needs to identify its reference. In other words, it needs to have its semantic person feature specified. I argue that the person feature *si* receives its specification through a mechanism of ‘person valuation’ along the lines of that proposed by Bianchi (2003) and Sigurðsson (2002).

Very recently, several approaches to syntactic analysis have been proposed which focus on the notion of person checking rather than Case checking (Bianchi 2001, 2002, 2003, Di Domenico 2002, Sigurðsson 2001, 2002, Speas 2000, 2001). The main features of such approaches are summarized by Bianchi (2003) along the following lines:

- The person feature is intrinsically *deictic*. This means that it needs to be linked to the speech act for its interpretation.
- First person refers to the Speaker, second person to the Addressee, and third person to someone else, who does not participate in the speech act.
- It is necessary to anchor the lexical person feature of pronouns to a specific speech event/situation in order for the interpretation of a sentence to be possible.
- The speech event/situation is syntactically encoded in one or more functional heads in the clause.

According to Sigurðsson (2002), the person feature establishes the relationship between the participant of the speech event, encoded in the Speech Phrase, and the participants of the event (i.e. the verb's arguments). I wish to capitalize on this proposal in order to provide an explanation for inclusiveness in bounded ISCs.

When the Gn operator is missing, in order for *si*'s person feature to be interpretable, it needs to be anchored to the speech event. For the sake of simplicity, I will just assume a single Speech Act head, encoding both Speaker and Addressee (cf. Bianchi 2003). My system results thus highly simplified with respect to the system proposed by Speas (2000, 2001), where the participants in the speech act are classified according to the criteria of 'participation' and 'prominence'. The use of such fine-grained criteria would complicate this analysis considerably, and it would not add much to the general discussion<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>The participants nodes seem to have parametric distribution. Egerland (2003) shows that Swedish *man* may refer to the Speaker only. In a sentence like (i), *man* is interpreted as a 1st person pronoun ('I'):

- (i) I går            på eftermiddagen blev man avskedad  
 yesterday afternoon            was man fired

Differently from Bianchi, I do not postulate the existence of a 3rd person projection. The Speech Act simply encodes the Speaker/Addressee values.

The Speech Phrase encodes information about the actual participants in the speech act. If the argument of an event is a first person pronoun, such a pronoun will receive its specification by being anchored to the Speech Act projection.

Bianchi (2003) outlines a model of feature checking for such a specification. She proposes that the lexical 1st/2nd person feature on a pronoun needs to be checked against the Speech Act phrase in order for the pronoun to be deictically interpretable. I wish to follow these lines and propose that the Speech Act head has valued  $\sigma$ -features Speaker/Addressee. When a 1st person pronoun is present in a clause, it will be bound by the speech act head, which will assign to it the value ‘actual speaker’/‘I’. When a 2nd person pronoun is present in a sentence, it will be assigned the deictic value ‘actual addressee’/‘you’. Such a mechanism of person specification involves the semantic features of personal pronouns. The same happens with *si*. The unspecified person feature on *si* receives its value through Concord with the Speech Act head.

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‘Yesterday afternoon I was fired’

I take the difference in interpretation between Italian *si* and Swedish *man* to be the result of a different encoding of the speech act information into the syntactic structure. Swedish arguably has two different nodes for Speaker and Addressee, while Italian only has one.

Alternatively, the ‘we’ reading of *si* may be obtained through a split-antecedent binding. Italian might also have a head for Speaker and a head for Addressee, and these two heads might bind the personal pronoun together. This is similar to the so-called split antecedent phenomenon illustrated in (ii):

(ii) Peter asked Mary whether they could go to school together

Thus, *si* might receive its value via split binding by the Speaker and by the Addressee heads distinctly.

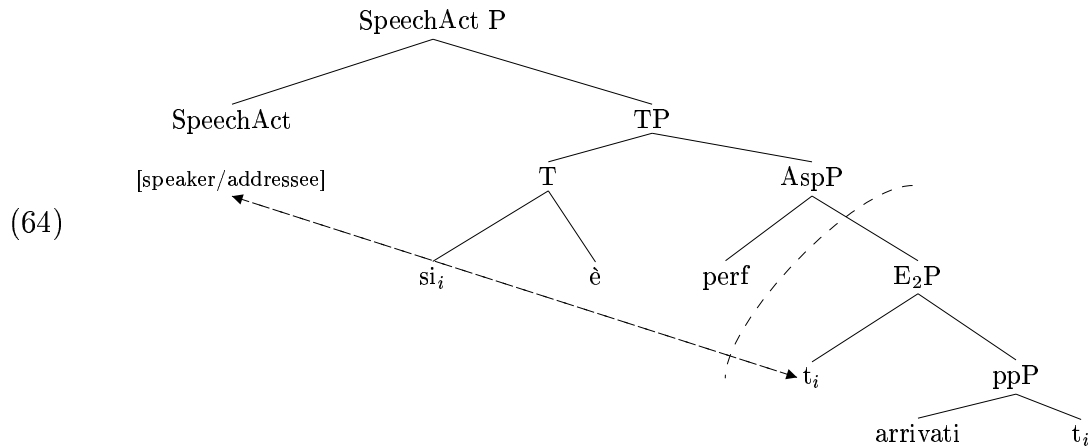


As proposed in chapter 1, *si* has an unspecified semantic person feature. When *si* behaves as an indefinite, it introduces a person variable which needs to be bound by an operator in order for the reference set to be uniquely identified. When *si* behaves as a pronoun, it needs to be bound by the Speech Act to be interpreted. We have seen how the reference set is identified as ‘generic’ when the [unbounded-Gn] operator is present in the clause. If such an operator is not there, *si* has its  $\sigma$ -person feature valued by the Speech Act. As a result, its semantic person feature is valued as speaker/addressee. Thus, *si* is interpreted as inclusive (because it includes the speaker and the addressee).

Let us consider the sentence in (63):

- (63) Ieri        si è arrivati tardi in stazione  
 yesterday si is arrived late in station  
 ‘Yesterday we arrived late at the station’

(63) has the structure in (64):



In (64), I have indicated the  $E_2$  as the site where *si* obtains its reference. This statement is not unmotivated. Sigurðsson (2002) suggests that phases of computation are not Chomsky’s  $v$  and CP, but rather the event phrase and the speech phrase. In chapter 2, I have shown that  $v$  is not a phase in ISCs. According to Sigurðsson, this

may be brought back to the general *Person Matching* requirement. It is not Case that determines ‘subjecthood’, but rather the person feature. Sigurðsson proposes that there is a featural relationship between *non-nominative* subjects and what he calls the ‘finite complex’ of the clause. Such a relationship is however not Nominative checking but rather person checking. The person checking domains are the event phrase, where person features are encoded, and the speech act domain, where the person features are valued, i.e. are assigned a referent. Sigurðsson’s proposal matches very well with the picture that I have drawn so far of ISCs. In particular, I take the valuation of the person feature on *si* to take place at the end of the Speech Act phase. As soon as the Speech Act head is merged, *si*’s semantic person feature is valued. This valuation makes *si* referential. This is most likely also the reason why it can receive Accusative case in transitive sentences with V-O agreement despite its syntactic ( $\phi$ -) incompleteness<sup>7</sup>.

To conclude: in this section I have shown that valuation of the semantic person feature on *si* takes place via feature valuation by Speech Act, which determines *si*’s reference set. This happens when the event is [bounded], and therefore when the Gn operator which corresponds to Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Izvorsky’s [unbounded] feature is absent, and *si* is not an indefinite. The Speech Act head encodes deictic information, i.e. attributes the value speaker/addressee to the pronouns according to the actual participants in the speech act.

The problems that remain now open are the following: first, we have seen that verbs who license an external  $\theta$ -role present an existential interpretation in addition to the inclusive one. Such an additional interpretation is not available for unaccusatives, psych verbs, passives, raising verbs, and all those verbs that do not have an external  $\theta$ -role. This problem is addressed in the next section.

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<sup>7</sup>It is worth noticing that in the case of anchoring to the Speech Act, Concord takes place long-distance. A short distance Concord requires that *si* moves on the Speech Act projection. This possibility is not excluded by the present analysis.

Second, there are some languages, like Tuscan, that never have an exclusive reading. For Tuscan speakers, *si* may never have an existential/exclusive interpretation. A possible explanation for this problem is provided in section 5.4.

### 5.2.1. *Logophoricity*

If the Speech Act is involved in the interpretation of inclusive *si*, one would expect that in cases of reported speech the ‘reporting’ speaker/addressee would be involved, but not the person who actually utters the sentence. Assuming that the Speech Act projection encodes information about the speaker and addressee in the reported speech, the prediction is thus that *si* in reported speech does not look for deictic reference but gets bound by the ‘reporting’ speaker/addressee. This prediction is borne out, as the following example shows:

- (65) Maria e Gianni hanno raccontato che *si* è mangiato bene in quel  
 Maria and Gianni have told that *si* is eaten well in that  
 locale  
 place  
 ‘Maria and Gianni have told that they have eaten well in that place’

The behavior of *si* in (65) is logophoric. *Si* refers back to the ‘reporting’ speaker, i.e. to the person who reports what happens, rather than to the person who utters the whole sentence.

(65) provides evidence for the fact that *si* receives its inclusive interpretation by being anchored to the speech act.

### 5.3. The existential reading of *si*

As shown in 2.2., *si* may receive an additional existential/exclusive reading with verbs that project an external  $\theta$ -role, under boundedness. As shown, Cinque attributes the possibility of acquiring an existential reading to the presence of the external  $\theta$ -role. Such an external  $\theta$ -role is compatible for some reason with an ex-

istential reading. Cinque (1988) follows Jackendoff (1972) by claiming that the existential interpretation of *si* requires that an element is in the specifier of the Infl projection at D-structure. The generic interpretation is instead obtained at S-structure. Once the internal argument of an unaccusative verb has moved to the subject position, it may only obtain a generic (or an inclusive) interpretation. The analysis of De Miguel (1992) for Spanish *se* is along the same lines.

Medikoetxea (2002), however, points out that both Cinque's and De Miguel's analyses only present descriptive generalizations, and that the real cause of the restriction on the existential reading remains unknown. She proposes an alternative analysis according to which the presence of an external  $\theta$ -role is not what makes the difference with respect to the possibility for ISCs to obtain an existential reading. She suggests that the possibility of obtaining an existential reading is rather connected to the individual-level vs. stage-level nature of predicates.

I wish to propose that the possibility of an additional existential reading is provided by the *Aktionsart* of transitive and unergative verbs. Transitive and unergative verbs usually denote activities, and therefore are inherently atelic, or unbounded. We saw that the introduction of a sentential temporal boundary triggers an inclusive interpretation, and in this case *si* behaves as a definite. The fact that activities are inherently unbounded forces the indefinite behavior of *si*. Unboundedness is in fact compatible with indefiniteness, but not with definiteness, as we have seen. An indefinite thus obtains a simple existential reading when it appears in a bounded sentence.

Unaccusative verbs are instead inherently bounded, and therefore they may not behave as indefinites and receive a simple existential reading, not specified for inclusiveness. This observation becomes more straightforward if one considers transitive accomplishments, like the one in (66):

- (66) Ieri si sono mangiate tutte e tre le banane rimaste  
 yesterday si are eaten all and three the bananas left  
 ‘Yesterday we have eaten the three bananas that were left’

(66) has a clearly inclusive reading, despite the fact that it is a transitive ISC. Thus, inner boundedness forces inclusiveness. Inclusiveness is equivalent to definiteness, as we have shown before. Transitive and unergatives are usually inherently unbounded, and this permits an indefinite interpretation for *si*.

#### 5.4. ‘Exclusively inclusive’ *si* in Tuscan

In order to have a clear picture on inclusiveness, it is worth taking a look at two languages that are totally unrelated to each other, but present the same phenomenon, namely the ‘exclusively inclusive’ reading of some impersonal constructions. The two languages at issue are spoken Finnish and Florentine. In spoken Finnish, an impersonal construction is used to identify a group of people including the speaker. Spoken Finnish does not allow for any exclusive or generic reading of impersonal constructions. The impersonal construction is interpreted as having ‘we’ as a subject, as exemplified by (67):

- (67) Me mennään kauppaan  
 we go IMPERS shop ILL  
 ‘We go to the shop’

Spoken Finnish has lost the 1st person plural ending of the verb. It only makes use of the so-called impersonal-passive form of the verb to convey an inclusive reading.

(67) may be compared with (68), an example taken from written Finnish:

- (68) Me menemme kauppaan  
 we 1ST PL go 1ST PL shop ILL  
 ‘We go to the shop’

In (68), the 1st person plural form of the verb is used in order to identify an inclusive reference set.

The same phenomenon takes place in the dialect of Tuscany in general. For Tuscan speakers, ISCs are always inclusive, as example (69) shows:

- (69) In quel ristorante *si è mangiato bene*  
 in that restaurant *si* is eaten well  
 ‘In that restaurant we have eaten well’

(69) only has an inclusive interpretation with specific time reference. The phenomenon of inclusive impersonal constructions is quite widespread. I wish to propose that *si* in Tuscan has undergone a reanalysis, having as a result the selection of only one of the available meanings for *si* (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993, Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994, and Roberts & Roussou 2003). Tuscan (and spoken Finnish as well, very likely) are the endpoints of a process which starts from the generic + existential + inclusive readings and selects the inclusive reading as the only available one. In other words, the inclusive use has generalized. In fact, the construction with the 1st person plural form of the verb is no longer in use in Florentine.

This re-interpretation might be a case of grammaticalization and as such it should involve a period where both forms (the existential and the inclusive) co-existed.

Interestingly, we find different stages of this process of reanalysis instantiated in the world languages, occasionally depending on the register.

In spoken Finnish, for example, the process of reanalysis is completed, while written Finnish is still in the stage of having two coexisting forms. Another interesting case is French, which is losing the 1st person plural form. This is almost always replaced by the impersonal *on* construction.

To sum up, Tuscan ISCs are not sensitive to the interpretational rules outlined in this chapter for Standard Italian. Impersonal *si* in Tuscan has undergone a reanalysis which has selected the inclusive interpretation as the only available one.

## 6. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have shown that the interpretation of ISCs is a very complex phenomenon. First, a very strong idiolectal variation afflicts the interpretation of ISCs.

Provided that some general interpretational rules are at work, I have shown that the variation mainly depends on the boundedness of the event. If the event is bounded, ISCs receive an inclusive interpretation. If it is unbounded, the interpretation they receive is generic. I have proposed that in unbounded events *si* introduces a person variable, which needs to be specified in the derivation in order for the sentence to be interpretable. When the event is unbounded, an [unbounded]-[Generic] operator is present on the Aspectual head (cf. Iatridou *et al.*). I propose that such an operator corresponds to Chierchia's (1995) generic operator which binds the variable introduced by *si* and provides it with a generic interpretation.

The inclusive interpretation is obtained when *si* behaves like a pronoun, i.e. in bounded events. In this case, the semantic person feature on *si* is valued by the Speech Act head. Through such valuation, *si* obtains a specification for Speaker/Addressee, and therefore the ISCs receives an inclusive interpretation.





## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

This study investigates the peculiar agreement patterns and interpretations of impersonal *si* constructions (ISCs) in Italian. The analysis of the agreement patterns of ISCs shows that the current syntactic theory needs to be expanded as to include cases of semantic agreement. In particular, from this analysis has emerged that an additional feature set exists in the syntax: the set of those features that encode information about the actual participants in the speech act. I called this set the  $\sigma$ -set.

Chapter 1 addresses the problem of semantic agreement and the definition of the semantico-pragmatic feature set.

In chapter 2, it is shown that the agreement alternations between verb-object agreeing and *non*-agreeing transitive constructions are not the result of idiosyncrasy or optionality, but that they are rather the result of specific semantic constraints. The syntactic structures of the two constructions reflect their inner aspectual structure, which in one case is that of an activity and in the other that of an accomplishment.

In chapter 3 the question of semantic agreement is addressed in detail. It is proposed that past participle and adjectival agreement take place under Concord, a syntactic operation that targets the semantico-pragmatic  $\sigma$ -set.

In chapter 4, the person restriction on the object in transitive ISCs is considered. First, it is shown that this phenomenon is common to Italian ISCs and Icelandic quirky datives. After showing that Italian ISCs are not quirky dative constructions, it is claimed that the presence of a quirky dative is not what causes the person restriction. The person restriction is rather triggered by a syntactic person marker, such as *si* in Italian and *-st* in Icelandic.

Chapter 5 considers the inclusive reading of ISCs. It is shown that ISCs acquire an inclusive interpretation when the event is temporally bound, and that the interaction of boundedness and *Aktionsart* determine the various readings that *si* may acquire.

The acknowledgment that an additional feature set is necessary in order to explain the cases in which agreement takes place semantically is one result of this dissertation. Furthermore it is extensively shown that the agreement patterns of ISCs are not idiosyncratic, but are explainable by means of the current syntactic theory if verbal semantics is taken into account. Furthermore, the interpretation of ISCs is addressed in detail. More data are considered than the ones presented in Cinque (1988) and Chierchia (1995). It is argued that the inclusive reading is obtained by means of syntactic anchoring to the speech act phrase, which encodes information about the actual participants in the speech event.

## Zusammenfassung

In dieser Dissertation wird im Rahmen des Minimalistischen Programms die Syntax unpersönlicher *si* Konstruktionen (im Folgenden ISC) im Italienischen untersucht, wobei ein besonderes Augenmerk auf das Kongruenzverhalten und die Interpretation dieser Konstruktionen gelegt wird. ISCs sind Sätze mit einem generischen, unspezifizierten Subjekt. Da das Italienische eine *pro*-drop Sprache ist, wird in Sätzen wie (1) ein spezifisches Subjekt mitverstanden, das entweder deiktisch identifiziert werden kann oder bereits im Diskurs verankert ist.

- (1)   Canta  
      *pro* sings-3RD SG  
      ‘He/she sings’

Fügt man einem Satz wie (1) ein unpersönliches *si* hinzu, so wird das Subjekt eines solchen Satzes als unspezifiziert interpretiert, wie in (2). Im Englischen erzielt ‘people’ als Subjekt einen ähnlichen Effekt.

- (2)   Si canta  
      *si* sings-3RD SG  
      ‘People sing’

Unpersönliche *si*-Konstruktionen weisen eine Reihe von Eigenschaften auf, die oftmals als idiosynkratisch oder zufällig angesehen wurden. Sie zeigen Besonderheiten bei der Kongruenz sowohl im Präsens als auch in der Vergangenheit, und ihre Interpretation unterliegt großer Varianz. Diese Arbeit hat zwei Ziele: einerseits möchte

ich eine Erklärung für einige bisher nicht erfasste Phänomene im Zusammenhang mit ISCs liefern, wie die transitive Kongruenzalternation (*transitive agreement alternation*), die Personenbeschränkung für Objekte und die Kongruenzmarkierung bei Partizipien unergativer Verben, unakkusativer Verben und in Kopulakonstruktionen. Andererseits möchte ich einen Beitrag zur Weiterentwicklung der aktuellen Syntaxtheorie leisten, indem ich die Notwendigkeit zusätzlicher syntaktischer Merkmale aufzeige, die semantische/deiktische Information enkodieren. Ich nenne diese zusätzlichen Merkmale  $\sigma$ -Merkmale. Außerdem argumentiere ich für eine ‘neue’ syntaktische Operation *Concord*, die für jene semantisch-pragmatischen Merkmale sensibel ist und lokal Kongruenzmarkierung an Adjektiven und Partizipien bewirkt. *Concord* ist eine Variante von Chomsky’s (1998) *Agree*, das für einen anderen Merkmalstyp sensibel ist und innerhalb einer phrasalen Domäne operiert. Ich unterscheide demnach zwischen *Agree*, das für die traditionellen  $\phi$ -Merkmale relevant ist und Subjekt-Verb-Kongruenz auch als nicht-lokale Beziehung ermöglicht, und *Concord*, das für die Menge der semantisch-pragmatischen  $\sigma$ -Merkmale relevant ist und innerhalb einer phrasalen Domäne Kongruenzmarkierung an Adjektiven und Partizipien bewirkt.

In der bisherigen Forschung und Literatur zu ISCs wurde die verbale Semantik -i.e. die Aktionsarten von Verben- praktisch nicht berücksichtigt. Diese Arbeit will die Bedeutung der verbalen Semantik für die Kongruenzmuster bei ISCs erfassen. Unter der Annahme, dass sich die Aktionsart von Verben in der Syntax der VP widerspiegelt, zeige ich, wie diese semantische Konfiguration die Kongruenzmuster bei ISCs bestimmt.

Ein großer Teil dieser Arbeit widmet sich den Interpretationsmöglichkeiten von ISCs: ISCs können entweder generisch, existentiell oder inklusiv interpretiert werden. In anderen Worten, die Referenzmenge, auf die *si* verweist, kann generisch einstellig sein (generische Lesart), oder sie verweist auf eine Gruppe von Individuen,

welche die durch das Prädikat ausgedrückte Eigenschaft teilen (existentielle Lesart). Diese Gruppe kann nun entweder den Sprecher einschließen (inklusive Lesart) oder auch nicht. Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es unter anderem, die Ursachen für die Alternation zwischen generischer und inklusiver Lesart zu bestimmen. Es wird außerdem eine pragmatisch-semantische Analyse des Phänomens der Inklusivität vorgeschlagen.

Die vorliegende Arbeit ist in 6 Kapitel unterteilt, die jeweils unterschiedliche Aspekte der ISCs im Italienischen behandeln. Wie oben dargestellt, beschäftigt sich die Studie mit Kongruenzmustern und der Interpretation von ISCs und im Besonderen mit solchen Aspekten, die bisher oftmals als zufällig oder nicht besonders relevant für das Verständnis der Konstruktion angesehen wurden. Ich möchte diese 'sekundären' Phänomene als Ausgangspunkt nehmen und zeigen, wie sie zu einem grundsätzlicheren Verständnis der ISCs führen können. Die genaue Analyse der Kongruenzmuster und der Interpretationen der ISCs führt zu Themen, die auf den ersten Blick nicht relevant erscheinen, wie beispielsweise die Personenbeschränkung für Objekte bei isländischen Konstruktionen mit *quirky* Subjekten.

**Kapitel 1** stellt den Inhalt der Dissertation und ihren theoretischen Hintergrund dar. Zunächst werden einige generelle Probleme der ISCs betrachtet, die in der einschlägigen Literatur Beachtung fanden, wie zum Beispiel die Frage, ob man von einem oder mehreren *si* ausgehen muss (vgl. Napoli 1976, Burzio 1986, Manzini 1986, Cinque 1988 u.a.). Unter dem Begriff 'unpersönliches *si*' fasse ich alle Vorkommen von *si* mit entsprechend gleichem morphologischen, distributionellen und semantischen Verhalten zusammen: unpersönliches *si* zeigt im Gegensatz zu reflexivem oder inchoativem *si* keine morphologische Flexion und hat eine andere Distribution. Außerdem führen alle *si*, die zur unpersönlichen Klasse gehören, ein unspezifiziertes Subjekt in den Satz ein. Auf Grundlage solcher morphologischen und semantischen Überlegungen fasse ich das sogenannte unpersönliche *si* und das sogenannte passivische *si* in einer Gruppe zusammen. *Si* ist ein Klitikum, und als

solches hat es nach der Definition in Chomsky (1995) eine Doppelnatur, ist also sowohl Kopf als auch maximale Projektion. Diese Eigenschaft wird sich für uns als wichtig erweisen, um die eigentümlichen Kongruenzmuster mit *si* zu erklären. Einige dieser Kongruenzmuster werden im Laufe des Kapitels untersucht werden.

Im ersten Kapitel werden desweiteren die theoretischen Annahmen eingeführt, die meiner Analyse zugrunde liegen. Die Arbeit bewegt sich im Rahmen des Minimalistischen Programms. Es wird jedoch gezeigt, dass die Menge der Merkmale, die typischerweise zur Definition von Pronomen angenommen wird, einige Unzulänglichkeiten mit sich bringt. Es zeigt sich, dass komplexere Merkmalsbündel notwendig sind, um unpersönliche Pronomen und Pronomen allgemein zu identifizieren.

**Kapitel 2** behandelt den Themenkomplex Kongruenz in transitiven ISCs. Es gibt zwei zentrale Kongruenzmuster: eines mit Verb-Objekt-Kongruenz (V-O-Kongruenz) und eines ohne V-O-Kongruenz. In transitiven ISCs mit V-O-Kongruenz trägt das Objekt Nominativ, während in transitiven ISCs ohne V-O-Kongruenz das Objekt Akkusativ trägt. Diese Kongruenzalternation wurde oftmals als rein idiosynkratisches Phänomen, als Fall von Optionalität angesehen. Wenn in Kapitel 2 die Kongruenzmuster bei transitiven ISCs rekapituliert werden, wird sich zeigen, dass sie auf eine spezifische semantische Regularität zurückzuführen sind; transitive ISCs mit V-O-Kongruenz enkodieren *accomplishments* und transitive ISCs ohne V-O-Kongruenz enkodieren *activities* (vgl. Vendler 1967). Unter der Annahme, dass Aktionsarten syntaktisch unterschieden werden, schlage ich vor, dass die Kongruenzalternation unterschiedliche syntaktiko-semantische Konfigurationen in der VP-Projektion reflektiert. Hierbei folge ich den Vorschlägen von Travis (1994) und Kempchinsky (2000), wonach ein *accomplishment*-Verb einen inneren aspektuellen Kopf einführt, der Telizität ausdrückt. Ist dieser Kopf in einer Struktur präsent (i.e. bei *accomplishments*), so wird das unpersönliche *si* als sein Spezifikator ‘gemerged’. Diese Konstellation bewirkt einen Interventionseffekt, so dass das Objekt keinen

Akkusativ ‘checken’ kann. Ist der aspektuelle Kopf nicht Teil der Struktur (i.e. bei *activities*), wird *si* im Spezifikator von *v* ‘gemerged’, und es entsteht kein Interventionseffekt.

Nach den transitiven ISCs betrachte ich die Kongruenzmuster bei unakkusativen und unergativen Verben im Perfekt: während man bei unakkusativen Verben ein Auxiliar im Singular und ein Perfektpartizip im Plural findet, treten unergative Verben sowohl mit einem Auxiliar im Singular als auch mit einem Perfektpartizip im Singular auf. Diese Daten und die Kongruenz bei Adjektiven in Kopulakonstruktionen sind Thema des **dritten Kapitels**.

Es wird sich zeigen, dass das Problem der unterschiedlichen Kongruenz bei unakkusativen und unergativen Verben leicht lösbar ist, wenn man wiederum die Unterschiede in den syntaktischen und semantischen Merkmalen in Betracht zieht. Ich schlage vor, dass die Kongruenz der Perfektpartizipien durch die Menge der pragmatiko-semantischen  $\sigma$ -Merkmale bestimmt wird, während sich die Kongruenz am Auxiliar aus der Menge der syntaktischen  $\phi$ -Merkmale ergibt. Die unterschiedlichen Kongruenzmuster bei ISCs mit unakkusativen/unergativen Verben sowie bei Kopulakonstruktionen werden allein aus diesen einfachen Annahmen abgeleitet.

Die Merkmalspezifikation des unpersönlichen *si* ist Thema von **Kapitel 4**. Hier wird außerdem eine Lösung für das Problem der Personenbeschränkung für Objekte in transitiven ISCs mit Objektkongruenz vorgeschlagen. Transitiv ISCs mit Verb-Objekt-Kongruenz unterliegen einer Bedingung, die sie ähnlich wie Quirky-Dativ-Konstruktionen im Isländischen aussehen lässt: ihre Objekte können nur in der 3. Person stehen. Nachdem die Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen den ISCs des Italienischen und den *quirky*-Subjekt-Konstruktionen des Isländischen untersucht worden sind, werde ich zeigen, dass ISCs nicht als *quirky*-Dativ-Konstruktionen analysiert werden können. Trotz der syntaktischen Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Kon-

struktionen erlaubt uns die Tatsache, dass beide Konstruktionen ihren Objekten jene Personenrestriktion auferlegen, ein tieferes Verständnis für das Phänomen. Ich werde dafür argumentieren, dass die Personenbeschränkung für Objekte kein Zufall ist, sondern sich als systematischer Effekt aus einer spezifischen syntaktischen Konfiguration ergibt, auf der *Multiple Agree* operiert.

**Kapitel 5** behandelt die interpretativen Probleme bei ISCs. Es ist allgemein bekannt, dass ISCs keine einheitliche Interpretation aufweisen, sondern dass sie ihrem Subjekt im Prinzip eine Reihe von Interpretationen ermöglichen, die von einer generischen Interpretation ohne Spezifizierung bezüglich Inklusivität bis hin zu einer inklusiven Interpretation, die den Sprecher im Referenzset einschließt, reicht. Wie bereits von Cinque (1988) beobachtet wurde, hat die tempus-aspektuelle Spezifizierung Einfluss auf die Interpretation von ISCs. Ausgehend von dieser Beobachtung versuche ich, die möglichen Ursachen für eine Variation in der Interpretation aufzufindig zu machen. Als erstes zeige ich, dass es eine strenge Korrelation zwischen der zeitlichen Gebundenheit eines Ereignisses und der inklusiven Lesart gibt. Wenn das Ereignis zeitlich ungebunden ist, verhält sich *si* wie eine Variable, wenn es gebunden ist, verhält sich *si* wie ein Pronomen. In Anlehnung an Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Pancheva (2003) schlage ich vor, dass bei einem ungebundenen Ereignis auf dem aspektuellen Kopf ein *unboundedness*-Merkmal angesiedelt ist. Solch ein Merkmal korrespondiert mit dem generischen Operator von Chierchia (1995), von dem ich annehme, dass er die Variable bindet, die dem unspezifizierten semantischen Personenmerkmal auf *si* entspricht. Wenn solch ein generischer/ungebundener Operator fehlt, wird das semantische Personenmerkmal auf *si* durch den Sprechaktkopf festgelegt (vgl. u.a. Sigurðson 2002, Bianchi 2002, 2003), der für *si* eine deiktische Interpretation festlegt, die den Sprecher einschließt. Das Ergebnis ist eine inklusive Interpretation.

**Kapitel 6** fasst die Arbeit zusammen.



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