

Grammaticalization and Parametric Variation

Edited by

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Preface

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Montserrat Batllori, Maria-Lluïsa Hernanz, Carme Picallo, and Francesc Roca

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Si and e as CP Expletives in Old Italian

CECILIA POLETTO

13.1 Introduction

In this chapter I examine the grammaticalization process of two CP elements in Old Italian: the particles *si* and *e*. *Si* will be claimed to have developed into an expletive occupying a Spec,Focus position (as originally suggested by Benincà 1984, 1996) in the low part of the CP layer, while *e* will be shown to license a null category with the properties of a null constant (cf. Rizzi 1992) in its specifier signalling the continuation of a Topic. More generally, this work contributes to shedding light on the complex phenomenon of V2 on the one hand and on the left periphery of the clause on the other, insofar as Old Italian represents the ideal case study to investigate how the V2 property interacts with a fully articulated left periphery.

In order to shed light on the two particles taken into account here, I will first address the question of the left periphery in some Old and Modern Romance languages in the light of recent developments of the CP structure that started with the seminal work of Rizzi (1997). I will first examine the V2 and V3 sequences in another, less studied, V2 language, Modern Rhaetoromance, and explain the peculiar distribution of V3 in Old Italian adopting the split CP analysis proposed in Benincà (2001, 2003), Poletto (2000, 2002), and further enriched in Benincà and Poletto (2003), where the left periphery of the sentence is split into three 'fields' each containing several projections, as illustrated in (1):

I am much indebted to Paola Benincà and Nicola Munaro for fruitful discussion, and to Lorenzo Renzi and Giampaolo Salvi, who asked me to write a chapter on sentence structure in the *Grammatica dell'Italiano antico*, which gave me the original impulse to write this chapter. The database used here is the one kindly provided by the OVI (*Opera del Vocabolario Italiano*) CNR Institute and available on the web.

- (1) [Hang. Topic [Scene Sett. [Left Disl. [List Interpr [[FOCUS.CP][_{w,h}-opCP]]]]
 └───FRAME───┘ └───THEME───┘ └───FOCUS───┘

In (1) the highest frame field contains a hanging topic position (HT) and a position for scene setting adverbials (Sc. Sett.). Left dislocated items (LD) are located higher than Focus, which is the lowest field of projections. Following Benincà's (2001) proposal for modern Italian, I will assume that no left dislocated element is located lower than Focus. More precisely, the following assumptions will play a central role in accounting for the peculiar distribution of multiple left dislocated constituents in Old Italian, and for the difference between Old Italian on the one side and Rhaetoromance on the other. Following Benincà and Poletto (2005) I will assume that:

- (2) a. No LD element is located lower than Focus.
 b. In Old Romance Informational Focus is located in the CP.
 c. Hanging Topic and Scene Setting are located higher than (Declarative) Force,¹ LD and Focus are lower.

The chapter is organized as follows:² in Section 13.2 I provide a description of the left periphery of Old Italian capitalizing on Benincà (1995)'s work; in Section 13.3 I discuss a possible analysis of the difference between Old Italian and Rhaetoromance and I propose that in Old Italian V2 applies in the Focus projection, while in Rhaetoromance the ultimate target is Spec,Force, a much higher projection;³ in Section 13.4 the particle *si* is examined in detail and it will be shown that it is an expletive deprived of any lexical meaning which saturates the Spec,Focus position; Section 13.5 deals with the particle *e*, showing that it is used in non-coordinated clauses, and can be interpreted as a morphological marker of continuation of the Topic already set by the discourse; finally, Section 13.6 concludes the chapter.

¹ What is meant here by Force is the position where the high declarative complementizer occurs in embedded inflected clauses, as originally proposed by Rizzi (1997).

² In this work I will limit myself to the domain of Romance languages, although Germanic languages are clearly the first comparison that comes to mind. The reason for this limitation is that it is not clear to me that German 'Linkversetzung' is the exact counterpart of Romance Left Dislocation, given that Romance languages have clitics, but German does not.

³ In this chapter I will not go into the problem of the trigger for V2. For the sake of the execution I will adopt Haegeman's (1997a) and Robert's (1999b) proposal that in V2 clauses the CP projection is endowed with EPP features. However, while these authors assume that the CP projection hosting the EPP feature is always the lowest one, I will try to capture the differences among languages by parametrizing the C° head containing the EPP feature.

13.2 The Left Periphery of Old Italian: V₂ in a Complex CP

As mentioned above I adopt here a layered structure of the CP component as the one originally proposed by Benincà (2001) and further developed in Benincà and Poletto (2001) already illustrated in (1). In principle, Old Italian should have the same left peripheral positions that Modern Italian displays, so the structure should be the same. However, Old Italian differs from Modern Italian because it shows some of the phenomena typically connected to the V₂ property: Old Italian displays subject inversion of the 'Germanic' type (i.e. the subject is found immediately after an auxiliary but in front of a past participle, of the direct object and more generally low adverbs in the sense of Cinque 1999):

- (3) a. perciò che primieramente avea *ella* fatta a llui ingiuria
because that for first had she done to him offence
'because firstly she offended him'
(*Rettorica*, p. 116, r. 15)
- b. quali denari avea *Baldovino* lasciati loro
which money had Baldovino left them
'how much money Baldovino left them'
(*Doc. Fior.*, 1272–8, p. 437, r. 29)
- (4) a. un giorno tolse *questo re* molto oro
one day took-away this king a lot of gold
'one day this king took a lot of gold'
(*Nov.*, 142)
- b. così ti manda *lo nostro signore* a dire
so you sends the our lord to tell
'our lord is sending you this message'
(*Nov.*, 138)

In (3) the subject is found between the auxiliary and the past participle, in (4) it is located before the object of IP complements, in a position that is ungrammatical in Modern Italian (which has in general very limited cases of VSO; see Belletti 1999).

Moreover, Benincà (1984) first noted that the system of *pro*-drop licensing in Old Italian depends on V to C movement,⁴ in the sense that when no V to C movement applies (in general in embedded contexts) a subject pronoun is obligatory for both argumental and expletive subjects,⁵ as (5c) shows:

⁴ The same holds for Old French (see Adams 1987 and Roberts 1993a).

⁵ Adams (1987) and Vance (1989) extend this analysis to Old French. Apparently Old Spanish does not share this property and *pro*-drop is licensed in the same way it is licensed in Modern Spanish.

- (5) a. lo figliuolo lil domandò tanto ch' *elli* l' ebbe
the son to.him.it asked so that he it got
'the son asked him so long that he got it'
(*Nov.*, 166)
- b. se lla natura domanda ciò ch' *ella* ha perduto
if the nature asks what that she has lost
'if nature is asking what she lost'
(*Nov.*, 135)
- c. ch' *elli* era meglio
that it was better
'that it was better'
(*FF*, 8)

Pro-drop licensed by V to C movement is possible both with expletives (6a) and with argumental subjects (6b,c).

- (6) a. Già è detto sofficiatamente dell' officio e della fine
already is said enough of.the work and of.the goal
di rettorica
of rhetorics
'I already talked about the reason and goal of rhetorics.'
(*Rettorica*, p. 53, r. 6)
- b. Figliul mio, non posso star più teco
son mine not can+1SG stay anymore you.with
'Oh my son, I cannot stay with you any longer.'
(*Nov.*, 294)
- c. ma va' sicuramente per via tra la gente.
but goes safely in street among the people
'but he goes safe in the street among people'
(*Tesoretto*, v. 1817–18)

However, V₂ is possible in embedded contexts on a more general basis than in languages like German and it is preceded by a complementizer (7), as in Scandinavian languages, and also in some *wh*-contexts (8):

- (7) a. e credo che di tutte le cose t' intendi
and think+1SG that of all the things yourself understand
'and I believe that you know everything'
(*Nov.*, 127)

- b. fuli detto che in sua pregione *avea* lo sovrano maestro
was.to.him told that in his prison had the king master
'they told him that the king had a master in his prisons'
(*Nov.*, 126)
- c. Disse mi che ad Alexandro *andava* perché li donasse
told.me that to Alexandro went because to.him gave+3SG
'He told me that he was going to see Alexandro to be given money.'
(*Nov.*, 132-3).
- d. e istabiliò che un pane intero li fosse dato per giorno
and established that a bread whole to.him was given each day
'and he established that he was give one entire bread every day'
(*FF*, 127)
- (8) a. Qual ragione ci mostri, che a colui che per sua
which reason to.us show+2SG that to the one that for his
bontà *aveva guadagnato* non desti e a colui che avea
kindness had earned not give+2SG and to the one that had
perduto per sua colpa e follia, tutto donasti?
lost for his fault and folly everything gave+2SG
'Which reason do you give us, that you did not give anything to the
one that had earned something because of his goodness but you
gave everything to the one that had lost everything because of his
folly and fault?'
(*Nov.*, 147)
- b. quando della pietra vi *dissi*...
when about.the stone to.you told+1SG
'when I told you about the stone...'
(*Nov.*, 129)
- c. Perché sì ti sconforte?
why so yourself discourage?
'Why are you so discouraged?'
(*Vita nuova*, 100)

In general, embedded V2 is also found in relative or temporal clauses. The case reported in (8c) is much less frequent and it is not found in embedded domains (see Benincà 2003).

In addition, Old Italian displays other properties that are found in other V2 languages, like scrambling (see Poletto forthcoming):

- (9) a. i nimici avessero già il passo pigliato,
the enemies had already the pace taken

- 'the enemies had already walked away'
(*Orosio*, 88)
- b. ch' egli avea il *maleficio* commesso
that he had the crime committed
'that he had committed the crime'
(*Fiore di rett.*, p. 31, r. 12-13)
- c. dice che poi àe *molto* de ben fatto in guerra et in pace.
says that then has a lot of good done in war and in peace
'he said that he has done a lot of good during war and peace'
(*Rettorica*, p. 26, r. 22)
- d. Quelli rispuose ch' avea *tutto* donato
he answered that had everything given
'He answered that he had given everything.'
(*Nov.*, 167)
- e. il quale da che ebbe *tutto* Egitto vinto,...
whom since had+3SG all Egypt won
'whom, since he won the whole Egypt,...'
(*Orosio*, 83)
- f. Allora il cavaleiro, che 'n sì alto mestero avea *la* mente misa,...
then the knight that in so high work had the mind set
'Then the knight, who had set his mind so high,...'
(*Tesoretto*, v. 1975)

An exceptional property displayed by Old Italian is that, as noted by Benincà (1984), it does not respect the V2 linear restriction on ordering. This is documented in the very early texts and is shown by the fact that V3 and V* cases are very massively present in the corpus:

- (10) a. sao ko kelle terre per tali fini trenta anni li
know+1SG that those lands for those limits thirty years them
possette Santi Patri Benedicti
owned Santi Patri Benedicti
'I know that those lands have been owned by the Santi Patri
Benedicti, for thirty years.'
- b. La reina così fece tutto
the queen so did everything
'So the queen did everything.'
(*Nov.*, 258)
- c. Quando lo Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo parlava umanamente
when the our lord Gesù Cristo talked humanly

con noi, in fra l'altre sue parole ne disse che...
 with us among the other his words of them said that
 'When our Lord Jesus Christ spoke humanly to us, he said, among
 other things, that...'
 (Nov., 177)

The situation seems at first sight paradoxical, as Old Italian possesses only some but not all the properties that are generally associated with the V2 phenomenon.

Old French is a much more 'well-behaved' language, as it shows inversion, *pro-drop* licensing only when I to C movement applies, and very rarely has V3 orderings. Roberts (1993a) notes that V3 is attested quite late and that it is generally found only in interrogatives:

- (11) L'aveirs Carlun est il appareillez?⁶
 the treasure Carlun is it made ready
 'Is the treasure of Carlun ready?'
 (Roland 1. 643; from Roberts 1993a: 10)
- (12) Cest nostre rei por coi lessas cunfundre?
 this our king why let+2SG overwhelm?
 'Why do you let our king be confused?'
 (Roland 1. 2583; from Roberts 1993a: 10)

In order better to understand which mysterious property makes Old Italian so peculiar among V2 languages, I will briefly analyse a Modern Romance language that has maintained V2: the Rhaetoromance dialect spoken in the High Badia valley in northern Italy.⁷

13.3 Rhaetoromance V2 and V3 Orders

The possibility of testing speakers' intuitions will provide insights into the opposition between Old Italian and other V2 languages. In Rhaetoromance the XP in first position in V2 clauses can only be an operator-moved argument or adverbial, while LD or HT cannot occur in a V2 construction:⁸

⁶ Note that this is apparently a V2 case, but on the standard assumption that yes/no questions have a null operator in the Spec,CP position, this case can be virtually assimilated to V3.

⁷ The data come from the dialect spoken in the village of S. Leonardo in the higher part of the valley.

⁸ This is unexpected given that even languages like German, which are rigidly V2, admit LD constructions of the type exemplified in (i):

- (i) Den Hans, den habe ich gesehen
 the Hans then have I seen

See Poletto (2002) for an analysis of this contrast based on the different X' status of the resumptive pronoun in German and Rhaetoromance.

- (13) a. L GIAT a-i odu.
 the cat have.I seen
 'I have seen THE CAT.'
 b. Duman vagn-el.
 tomorrow comes.he
 'He is coming tomorrow.'

The following sentences, in which the object is resumed by a clitic pronoun, are totally excluded:

- (14) a. *L giat, l' a-i odu.
 the cat it have.I seen
 'The cat, I saw it.'
 b. *Giani, ti a-i bel baiè.
 Giani to.him have.I already spoken
 'I have already spoke to Giani.'
 c. *De Giani, a-i bel baié.⁹
 of Giani have.I already spoken
 'I have already spoken about Giani.'

LD elements cannot be combined with V2 and are generally excluded also from V3 declarative contexts. As (15) shows, the left dislocated DP resumed by the clitic *l'* 'it' cannot be found in declarative clauses in either first or second position.

- (15) a. *Da trai a Giani l' ti a-i de.
 sometimes to Giani it to.him have.I given
 'Sometimes I gave a book to Giani.'
 b. *A Giani da trai l' ti a-i de.
 to Giani sometimes it to.him have.I given

However, V3 is possible with the following restriction: the first element is necessarily an HT or a scene setting adverb, and must be followed by V2:

- (16) ?Duman, GIANI vaighest?
 tomorrow Giani see.you
 'Will you see Giani tomorrow?'
- (17) L liber, A GIANI ti l' a-i bel dé.
 the book to Giani to.him it have.I already given
 'I have already given it to Giani.'

⁹ This sentence is impossible as a left dislocation. If the PP is focalized, the construction is grammatical.

- (18) *De Giani CUN PIERO a-i bel baié.
 of Giani with Piero have.I already spoken
 'I have already talked with Piero about Giani.'

Example (16), in which V2 has been combined with a scene setting adverb, is felt to be strange but possible. Example (17), where the XP in first position is in principle ambiguous between an HT and an LD constituent, is also possible. The ungrammaticality of (18) shows that LD is impossible and that, in consequence, (17) must be interpreted as a case of HT. This indicates that PPs are not grammatical even in V3 constructions. One of the major differences between HT and LD is precisely that LD reproduces the case or the preposition of the internal argument it is associated with, while HT does not. The ungrammaticality of (18) shows that the case copying procedure of LD is banned even from V3 structures. Hence, in V3 structures only hanging topics or scene setting adverbs are admitted.

The situation radically changes when interrogative clauses are taken into account: focus and *wh*-movement cannot be combined, as is the general case in V2 languages:¹⁰

- (19) *L LIBER a che ti a de, Giani?
 the book to who to.him has given Giani
 'Whom did Giani give the book to?'

Less expectedly, a *wh*-element can be preceded not only by hanging topics or scene setting adverbs, but also by LD elements (or a combination of these). Cases of PPs in first position followed by a *wh*-item¹¹ are perfectly acceptable in contrast to (18). In all these cases the *wh*-item must be adjacent to the verb, as (20c), (21b), and (22b) show:

- (20) a. De Giani, con che bai-la pa?
 of Giani with whom speak.she INT.PART.
 'With whom is she talking about Giani?'

¹⁰ Modern Italian, which is not a V2 language, also bans the co-occurrence between focus and *wh*-items in main interrogatives. This has led several authors to the assumption that focus and *wh*-items occupy the same position in the CP layer. However, Cinque (p.c.) and Rizzi (2002) point out that in embedded interrogatives the combination is indeed possible and the ordering in focus *wh*-element, as shown in (i):

- (i) Mi hanno chiesto A GIANNI chi farà questo regalo.
 me have asked to Gianni who will.make this present
 'They asked me who will make this present TO JOHN.'

¹¹ In yes/no questions LD, HT, or scene setting is obviously in first position. I assume here the standard view that yes/no questions have a null operator in the same position of overt *wh*-items.

- b. Giani, ci o-l pa?
 Giani what wants.he INT.PART.
 'What does Giani want?'
- c. *Ci Giani o-l pa?
 what Giani wants.he INT.PART.
- (21) a. L liber chi l tol pa?
 the book who it takes INT.PART.
 'Who is going to take the book?'
- b. *Chi l liber l tol pa?
 who the book it takes INT.PART.
- (22) a. Gonot ula va-al pa?
 often where goes.he INT.PART.
 'Where does he often go?'
- b. *Ula gonot va-al pa?
 where often goes.he INT.PART.

When possible, LD displays exactly the same features that it displays in Old and Modern Italian: it can be embedded (23e) and there can be multiple LD elements which do not display any fixed order, as (23a) and (23b) show:

- (23) a. Giani, inier, ci a-al pa fat?
 Giani yesterday what has.he INT.PART. done
 'What did Giani yesterday?'
- b. Inier, Giani, ci a-al pa fat?
 yesterday Giani what has.he INT.PART. done
 'What did Giani do, yesterday?'
- c. Giani, inier, l as-t ody?
 Giani yesterday him has.you seen
 'Did you see Giani yesterday?'
- d. Inier, Giani, l as-t ody?
 yesterday Giani him has.you seen
- e. Al m a demanee Giani, can c al vagn a ciasa
 he me has asked Giani when that he comes at home
 'He asked me when Giani is coming home'

We can summarize the properties of Rhaetoromance in the following way:

- LD and HT are ungrammatical in the V2 position.
- V3 instances are possible in declaratives only if the first constituent is an HT (or marginally a scene setting adverb) and neither the first nor the second is an LD.

- V₃ in interrogative clauses is possible if the first element is an HT, a scene setting adverb, or an LD item.
- Interrogative clauses also admit V₄¹² structures, given that it is possible to combine HT or scene setting with LD items and there are several LD positions.

We can adapt the basic layering of CP projections given in (1) to the Rhaetoromance data in order to explain the unexpected distribution of LD constituents and the asymmetry between declarative and interrogative clauses. Let us adopt the standard view for Romance languages (see among others Rizzi 1997 for arguments in favour of this view) that the position of declarative force is located higher than LD and Focus but lower than HT and Scene Setting, while the position targeted by *wh*-items¹³ is located lower than LD. At this point we just need to 'add' the V₂ feature to the picture and we obtain the Rhaetoromance pattern. Although the general claim in much recent work (see, among others, Haegeman 1997*a* and Roberts 1999*b*) is that V₂ is the effect of an EPP feature in the lowest CP projection, I will propose that the projection endowed with the EPP feature is not the same in all V₂ languages.¹⁴ That V₂ is not a unitary phenomenon is well known from the comparative work on Germanic languages (see Santorini 1989, Vikner 1995, Zwart 1997, among others). More specifically, Zwart proposes that even within the same language a subject in preverbal position is not located in the same projection as adverbials and objects. I would like to maintain Zwart's basic intuition that V₂ effects can be achieved by targeting different projections both cross-linguistically and language internally, although the technical execution proposed here is rather different.

Suppose that in Rhaetoromance the EPP feature that triggers V₂ in declaratives is located in declarative Force,¹⁵ as illustrated in (24).

- (24) [HT [Scene setting [Declarative Force V₂ [LD... [LD [Focus [Wh-op WH]]]]]]]]

¹² What is meant here by V₄ is not only V₄, but given that there can be more than one LD element, V₅, V₆, and more are possible as well.

¹³ For the sake of clarity the position targeted by *wh*-items is termed here Wh-op. This does not mean that the structure of an interrogative CP must be squeezed inside a single projection (see Poletto and Pollock 2003, 2004, and Munaro et al. 2002, for a more detailed analysis of interrogative clauses on the basis of a layered low CP-area).

¹⁴ V₂ could be also accounted for in terms of remnant movement and not as V to C°. Note, however, that the analysis presented here is tangential to this question, and goes through also within a theory that does not allow head movement at all.

¹⁵ However, focalized elements probably move to the Focus layer to check their Focus feature before reaching the specifier of Declarative Force.

This means that DeclP has to contain an XP in its specifier and the inflected verb in the head. Focalized XPs can move from Spec,Focus to Spec,DeclP,¹⁶ while scene setting adverbs can move through Spec,DeclP on their way to the Scene Setting position are always base generated inside the position where they occur, therefore they can never satisfy the V₂ constraint in DeclP. If virtually all elements can move to DeclP and satisfy the EPP there, why are LD elements ungrammatical? As DeclP is higher than the LD position, the order 'LD V₂' is always banned. However, the logical possibility that an LD element satisfies the V₂ by moving from LD to Spec,DeclP remains. The reason why this is excluded has to do with the fact that, as originally proposed by Rizzi (1997), LD positions have some features in their head which ban the movement of the verb through the LD head. Therefore, if an LD element is present, verb movement to Decl° is blocked (see Poletto 2002 for a detailed discussion on this subject).

In interrogative clauses there is no declarative Force. Therefore, unless there is another trigger for V₂, there should be no verb movement to the CP domain. However, it is also a well-known fact that residual V₂ targets in general interrogative clauses: this is true both in Germanic, where English has maintained I to C movement in (main) interrogative clauses, and in Romance, where subject clitic inversion (usually analysed as I to C) is possible only in a subset of contexts that includes (main) interrogatives (this holds both in French and in northern Italian dialects). Given that V₂ and residual interrogative V₂ are *ipso facto* dissociated in Modern Romance and in English, it is natural to assume that this is the case also in Rhaetoromance, where the projection involved in interrogatives is the lower Wh-op position and not Declarative Force. This is enough to derive the Rhaetoromance pattern seen above: in declarative clauses, the only cases of V₃ are those where the first of the two elements occurring in front of the verb are an HT or a Scene Setting. There can be no LD in front of V₂, because there is no LD position higher than Declarative Force. In interrogative clauses the *wh*-item and the verb target the lower Wh-op position, which is located lower than LD. Therefore, in front of the *wh*-item there can be LD elements, HT, scene setting adverbials, or a combination of these.

Notice that the structure in (24) is not an ad hoc assumption made to explain the V₂ pattern. It is just the structure proposed in Benincà and Poletto (2005) as a modification of Rizzi's split-CP on the basis of Modern Italian.¹⁷

¹⁶ Note that the movement from the criterial position Spec,Focus to Spec,DeclP is not banned by the freezing effect. As recently noted by Rizzi (2004), when the inflected verb moves creating a complex head (in this case Focus+DeclForce), the freezing effect is circumvented.

¹⁷ Recent work on French shows that this is probably true of French as well, with some minor modifications (see Mathieu 2003 and Deutjes et al. 2003).

The only additional assumption put forward here is one concerning the projection involved in V2 clauses in Rhaetoromance, an assumption that any theory on V2 has to make. Although it is tempting to extend this analysis of Rhaetoromance to Old French as well, I will not attempt to do it here, partly because Old French might have different grammars according to the period chosen for the investigation, and rather concentrate on Old Italian.

As originally noted by Benincà (1984), Old Italian differs from other Old Romance languages in admitting V3 and V4 in all clauses, although preserving the other typical features of Old Romance V2: 'Germanic' subject inversion and *pro*-drop licensing only when V2 has applied and no V2 in embedded interrogatives. I propose that Old Italian differs from Rhaetoromance (and probably from Old French) in targeting a different, much lower, projection for V2. In Old Italian the CP endowed with the EPP feature is not declarative Force but Focus: given that Focus is lower than LD, HT, and Scene Setting, it is always possible to violate the linear restriction and have V3 and V4 cases. Benincà (1984) convincingly shows that when there are cases of V3 or V4, the first XP located to the left of the inflected verb is always Focus, while the XPs located higher are always cases of HT, LD, and/or scene setting. The parameter distinguishing between Old Italian and Rhaetoromance (and probably Old French) thus concerns the projection endowed with the EPP feature, which obligatorily attracts an element in its specifier and the inflected verb in its head.¹⁸

If this is correct, we expect to find cases of Spec,Focus expletives: Benincà (1984) briefly mentions the possibility of having the adverbial form *sì* 'so' functioning as a Spec,Focus expletive in Old Italian and works this hypothesis out in Benincà (2003). Here the expletive usage of *sì* is contrasted with the non-expletive one and with the adverb *così*, clearly related to *sì* in terms of meaning. This will confirm our expectations and also provide a more detailed picture of how an adverb can become an expletive.

13.4 *Sì* as a Spec,Focus Expletive

In this section and in the following one I analyse two particles, *sì* and *e*. I will show that their original meaning and their formal properties can favour the reanalysis into markers of Focus (in the case of *sì*) and Topic (in the case of *e*).

¹⁸ Note that even inside a theory of V2 without head movement the basic intuition expressed here, namely that V2 in Old Italian is located lower than V2 in other Romance languages, remains valid, although the technical execution of the parameter would look different.

In Old Italian, the adverb *sì* has a number of usages and positions, some of which are the same as its homonym *così* 'so'.¹⁹ Before going into the expletive usage of *sì*, it is convenient to describe briefly the distribution of *sì* and *così*. In a number of cases the two elements seem interchangeable, but there are contexts in which only *sì* is possible and others where *così* is the only form found in the texts. *Sì* can occur as an adjectival or adverbial modifier:

- (25) a. fue *sì* giusto e guardò *sì* le mani da...
was so right and looked so the hands that
'he was so right and he looked at his hands that...'
(*FF*, 110)
- b. cominciò a tremare *sì* fortemente...
began to tremble so strongly
'he began to tremble so strongly...'
(*Vita nuova*, 6)

The same is true of *così*, as the following examples show:

- (26) a. quando io vi dissi del cavallo cosa *così* meravigliosa,
when I you told of the horse thing so marvelous
'when I told you such a wonderful thing about the horse'
(*Nov.*, 129)
- b. onde picciolo guiderdone diedi a llui di *così* ricco insegnamento
so small reward gave+1SG to him of so rich teaching
'I gave him such a small payback for what he had taught me'
(*Nov.*, 145)
- c. Cavaliere, che ha' tu misfatto a questi sergenti, che ti
knight what have you badly-done to these people that you
menano *così* laidamente
hit+3SG so strongly?
'Knight, what have you done to this people, that they are hitting you so much?'

This seems to be the basic context in which there is a free choice between the two particles. However, they are not completely interchangeable. First of all, *così* appears to be an adverb anticipating the context of the following sentence, while *sì* is not:

¹⁹ Although it would be tempting to connect the two homonymous forms to the same etymological origin and hypothesize that *sì* is a short form of *così*, Lorenzo Renzi (p.c.) pointed out to me that this is not the case, as *sì* is most probably derived from Latin *sic*.

- (27) a. Allora il lapidaro si rallegrò e prese l' una pietra
 then the stone-worker cheered up and took the one stone
 e miselasi in mano e disse così: ...
 and put.it in hand and said so
 'Then the stone-worker cheered up, took a stone, put it in his
 hand and said: ...'
 (Nov., 124)
- b. e disse così a colui che ritenne i bisanti: ...
 and said so to the one that kept the money
 'and said so to the one who kept the money: ...'
 (Nov., 151)

Second, *si* is also found in contexts where *così* is not: *si* is the only form used in the CP layer introducing a clause. Thus, it appears before *come* 'as' (28) and before *che* 'that' (29):²⁰

- (28) a. *si* come appare a chi lo intende
 so how appears to who it understands
 'so as it appears to those who understand it'
 (Vita nuova, 23)
- b. ... che *si* come tiranno distruggeva la terra
 that so like tyrant destroyed the earth
 '... who destroyed the earth like a tyrant'
 (FF, 103)
- (29) a. *si* che quasi dal principio del suo anno non apparve
 so that almost from.the beginning of.the his year not appeared
 a me
 to me
 'so that it did not appear to me since the beginning of the year'
 (Vita nuova, 6)
- b. *si* che li chiovi pareano 16 lettere
 so that the nails looked like 16 letters
 'so that the nails looked like 16 letters'
 (Vita nuova, 7)

Apparently, *si* can be used as a CP element combined with a complementizer *che* 'that' or *come* 'as', while *così*, although it can be moved to Focus

²⁰ Modern Italian has a single work in these cases, *siccome*, which is clearly a fusion of *si* and *come*. However, *siccome* corresponds to English 'as', not to 'so as', which is translated as *così come*. It is clear that *si* has completely disappeared from the language and it is only found inside complex complementizers. I will not go into the question of the correspondence between Old and Modern Italian complementizers, which is tangential to the question examined here.

(see (31) below), like all XPs, cannot be base generated in CP. It is precisely this property that makes *si* 'prone' to a reanalysis as CP expletive. Moreover, when *si* is generated in the CP layer of an embedded clause, it has the interesting property of climbing to an operator position inside the main clause:²¹

- (30) a. e ho *si* saputo fare che li sudditi miei
 and have+1SG so been able do+INF that the subjects mine
 m' hanno cacciato
 me have chased away
 'and I have been so good that my subjects chased me'
 (Nov., 143)
- b. a chi mi sa *si* pregare che io lo diparta dagli
 to whom me knows so pray that I him split from.the
 altri
 others
 'to whom who can pray me so much that I can split him from the
 others'
 (Nov., 167)
- c. Però quando mi tolse *si* il valore, che gli spiriti pare
 but when me took so the courage that the spirits seem
 fuggan via
 run+INF away
 'But when he took me my courage so that it seems that the soul is
 running away'
 (Vita nuova, 121)

Notice that in all these cases, *si* is found within the IP area of the main clause, in a scrambling position lower than the inflected verb but higher than objects (cf. (30c)). As shown above, Old Italian displays scrambling positions. Such a property has gone unnoticed up to now, but it is quite massively present in the texts, where both cases of objects preceding the past participle and cases of scrambling of one internal argument over the other are found. I will not go into this here (see Poletto 2003), but I would like to notice only that *si* seems to have the property of climbing from within the embedded CP (probably from Spec,CP) to a position located in the low portion of the IP layer of the main clause.²² This is never the case for *così*, which is also never found to the left of a complementizer.

²¹ As recently proposed by Belletti (2003) and Poletto (2003), the low phase of the clause (*vP*) is also associated to a left periphery including Topics and a Focus position, which is probably the target of the movement of *si* in these examples.

²² Cases like the following ones are also found in the texts:

Così can be found to the immediate left of the inflected verb, in a position that corresponds to Spec,Focus in the schema in (1) on a par with all adverbs:

- (31) E Guglielmo, vedendo che *così* era sorpreso, parlò e disse...
and Guglielmo seeing that so was surprised spoke and said
'And Guglielmo, seeing that he was so surprised, spoke and said...'
(*Nov.*, 225)

Notice that when Spec,Focus is occupied by *sì*, the adverb becomes void of any semantic import, as the following cases show:

- (33) a. onde lo ingannato amico di buona fede mi prese per la
hence the betrayed friend of good faith me took for the
mano, e traendomi fuori de la veduta di queste donne
hand and taking.me out of the sight of these women
sì mi domandò che io avesse
so me asked what I had
'hence the sincere friend who had been betrayed took my hand and
took me out from the sight of these women and asked me what was
wrong with me'
(*Vita nuova*, 58)

- b. E parlandomi *così*, *sì* mi cessò la forte fantasia
and talking.to.me like that so me stopped the strong fantasy
entro quello punto ch' io volea dicere...
within that point that I wanted say+INF
'and since he talked to me like this, my fantasy stopped just when I
wanted to say'...
(*Vita nuova*, 98)

- (i) a. 'Che è ciò, messer Rinieri, che voi non siete partito di Sardigna?' 'Certo' disse
what is this Sir Rinieri that you not have left for Sardinia sure said
messere Rinieri, '*sì* sono; ma io sono tornato per li scappini delle
sir Rinieri so am but I am come back because of.the laces of.the
calze'
shoes
'Why are you here, Sir Rinieri, why didn't you leave for Sardinia? I did, said Sir Rinieri,
but I came back because of the laces of my shoes.'
(*Nov.*, 305)

- b. Or se' tu ancor qui? non avestu la torta? Messer, *sì* ebbi.
now are you still here not had+2SG the pie Sir so had
'Are you still here? Didn't you have your piece of cake? Yes, Sir, I had it.'
(*Nov.*, 309)

I will not deal with these cases because they seem to be different from the usage of *sì* as an operator that we are examining. Probably this *sì* is the homonymous affirmative particle meaning 'yes', which in Modern Italian can be used as pro IP.

- c. Poi che detta fue questa canzone, *sì* venne a me uno,
then that said was this song so came to me one
lo quale...
who
'After this song, a man came to me, who...'
(*Vita nuova*, 133)
- d. E discacciato questo cotale malvagio desiderio, *sì* si
and chased away this really bad desire so
rivolsero tutti li miei pensamenti a la loro
themselves went all the my thoughts to the their
gentilissima Beatrice
very kind Beatrice
'and once I had chased that horrible desire all my thoughts went to
their kindest Beatrice'
(*Vita nuova*, 153)
- e. e contendendo col maestro, *sì* fece aprire la bocca
and discussing with.the master so made open the mouth
dello 'nfermo e, col dito estremo, li vi puose
of.the sick and with.the finger to-him there puts
l veleno
the poison
'and discussing with the master, he let the sick man open his
mouth and put some poison with his finger...'
(*Nov.*, 153)
- f. La volpe andando per un bosco *sì* trovò un mulo: e il
the fox going in a wood so found a mule and the
mulo *sì* li mostrò il piede dritto,
mule so to.her showed the foot right
'While the fox was walking in the wood, it met a mule, and the
mule showed it its right foot'
(*Nov.*, 182)

We can conclude that there are two main differences between *sì* and *così*: (i) when they appear in Spec,Focus *così* is never void of meaning, while *sì* is; and (ii) *sì* can be generated in the CP layer (and also raise to the main clause) while *così* cannot.

- (34) E lo re *così* fece: tolse di belle femine e mandolle
and the king so did took of beautiful women and send.them
in quel modo nel campo
in that way into.the camp

'And the king did so: he took a lot of beautiful women and sent them so into the camp'
(*Nov.*, 212)

Note that *sì*, due to its lack of semantic import, can be considered an expletive when it is located to the immediate left of the inflected verb, but not when it is found in the other contexts described, because it retains its original meaning as a manner adverb. This is perfectly in accordance with the behaviour of other expletive elements, such as German *es*, which is not only an expletive, but also the third person neuter pronoun and can be an argument,²³ or English *there*, which is also a locative pronoun. On the other side, we have seen that the property of being able to be merged directly in the CP layer crucially distinguishes *sì* from *così*. If this is so, it is not only the semantic endowment of an element that counts for its reinterpretation as an expletive; its formal features also play a crucial role in triggering the reanalysis.

The study of the distribution of expletive *sì* reveals a number of interesting properties which strengthen the idea that *sì* is an expletive located in the specifier of the Focus projection, which in Old Italian, differently from other Romance V2 languages, is endowed with EPP features. We comment on these properties in the following paragraphs.

A. When *sì* is void of meaning, it always occurs to the immediate left of the inflected verb. The only elements that can separate *sì* from the inflected verb are clitics and the preverbal negative marker:

- (35) a. *sì s'* abacinò degli occhi
so himself burnt the eyes
'he burnt his eyes'
(*FF*, 105)
- b. e, parlando specialmente alli spiriti del viso, *sì* disse
and speaking in particular to.the spirits of.the face so said
queste parole
these words
'and talking in particular about the spirits of the face, he said these words'
(*Vita nuova*, 8)

²³ I will not take a view concerning the position in which expletive *sì* is merged, whether it is in IP, and then moved, or whether it is directly merged in the position where it surfaces.

c. e dette queste parole *sì* disparve, e lo mio sonno
and said these words so disappeared and the my sleep
fue rotto
was broken
'and after he said these words, he disappeared so that my sleep was interrupted'
(*Vita nuova*, 24)

B. There are a number of elements that can precede expletive *sì*. They are instances of LD, HT, and/or Scene Setting adverbs. *Sì* very often occurs after an embedded clause or after a temporal clause indicating anteriority or simultaneity, or after a Topic or the subject. Furthermore, it often co-occurs with the particle *e* at the beginning of the structure (see below for an analysis of the particle *e*):

- (36) a. E, che avrà cuore nobile et intelligenza sottile, *sì* li
and that will.have heart noble and intelligence subtle so to.him
potrà simigliare per lo tempo che verrà
will.be able look+INF like for the time that will.come
'And who will have high and subtle intelligence, will look like him for the future'
(*Nov.*, 118)
- b. in questo Pittagora *sì* cominciò
in this P. so began
'In this moment P. began...'
(*FF*, 104)
- c. Lo mperadore Federigo stando ad assedio a Melano, *sì* li
the emperor Federigo being in siege of Milan so to.him
si fuggì un suo astore dentro a Melano
escaped a his hawk inside to Milan
'While the emperor Federigo was besieging Milan, one of his hawks escaped into Milan'
(*Nov.*, 177)

In (36a) there is an embedded clause preceding *sì*, in (36b) there are two XPs, a Topic and the subject (which is a topic itself), and in (36c) the preceding constituent is a clause expressing a contemporary event.

Both properties are captured by the analysis of V2 proposed above: the adjacency of *sì* to the inflected verb is straightforwardly captured by the fact that *sì* is in the specifier of the Focus projection where the verb occurs. Given the structure in (1), LD, HT, Scene Setting, more generally the Topic and Frame fields (where also embedded clauses are located; see Munaro 2002 for a

typology of the embedded clauses occurring in the Topic field) are located higher than Focus; therefore, they can only precede expletive *sì*, as (36) shows.

C. *Sì* can also occur in embedded contexts. In cases where it does, it maintains the properties seen above for main clauses:

- (37) a. ...che l ferro, se l' aopere, *sì* si logora, se no l' aopere
 that the iron if it use so is battered if not it use
 la ruggine il consuma
 the rust it destroys
 'that if you use iron, it breaks, but if you do not use it, the rust destroys it'
 (FF, 146)
- b. Leggesi del re Currado, del padre di Curradino, che,
 reads of.the king Currado of.the father of Curradino that
 quando era garzone, *sì* avea in compagnia dodici garzoni di
 when was boy so had in company twelve boys of
 sua etade, che li faceano compagnia.
 his age that to.him kept company
 'It is said that when the king Currado, father of Curradino, was a
 boy he had twelve boys to keep him company'
 (Nov, 232)

This is also expected since Old Italian shows V2 in embedded declaratives (see section 13.2).

D. The last, and most revealing, feature is that *sì* occurs only with proclisis:

- (38) e di ciò *sì* ne fue contenzione
 and of this so of.it was matter for discussion
 'and this was a matter for discussion'
 (FF, 106)
- (39) *sì* si ne diede questa penitenza
 so to.himself of.it gave this punishment
 'he gave himself this punishment'
 (FF, 108)

This fact can be explained in terms of Benincà's (1995) analysis: she claims that proclisis is triggered when the Spec,Focus position is occupied by an XP, otherwise the inflected verb has to raise higher than Focus and enclisis is required. Therefore, when the verb is in initial position or when it is only preceded by topicalized elements, enclisis is required. If *sì* is located in Spec,Focus, it is bound to occur with proclisis and never with enclisis. I will

not go into this topic any further here and refer the reader to Benincà (1995, 2003) for a treatment of enclisis and proclisis.²⁴

The hypothesis that *sì* is a Spec,Focus expletive also derives why Modern Italian has completely lost this element, which is only found inside complex complementizers: given that Modern Italian is not a V2 language, it does not have a V2 expletive.

Notice furthermore that the disappearance of expletive *sì* coincides with the disappearance of the adverb *sì*. Modern Italian only displays the adverb *così*. The form *sì* can be traced back only inside complex complementizers like (*sicchè* 'so' or *siccome* 'as') but is no longer an independent work on its own. Probably two different factors played a role in the disappearance of *sì*: (i) the fact that it had a peculiar status as a 'raising particle' also in non-expletive contexts, and (ii) the fact that there was another adverb, *così*, which was very close in terms of meaning to *sì*. The reanalysis of an element as an expletive and its successive disappearance when the syntactic system changed are, thus, the result of different factors, which do not only include their semantics. The formal properties of an element (in this case its capacity of being merged in CP and raised to the main clause) also play a crucial role in its evolution.

13.5 E as a Topic Marker

In the preceding section I proposed an analysis of expletive *sì* in Old Italian based on two assumptions, namely the structure of the split CP in (1), and the claim that Old Italian selects Focus as its V2 projection. We will see that, on a par with *sì*, the formal properties of *e* are decisive to understand why it has been reanalysed as a Topic marker.

Although *e* is the conjunction head, it occurs in a number of contexts where it is clearly not conjoining two phrases.

- (40) e quando avea forbiti i piedi ed elli tornava fuori
 and when had cleaned the feet and he came back outside
 e rinfangavalisi vie più e tornava a ricalpitare
 and got mudded more and more and came back to step on
 il letto. E partisi e disse a Platone: ...
 the bed and went away and said to Plato
 'and when he had cleaned his feet went back outside, put mud on
 them, came back inside and went up onto the bed. He left and told Plato':
 (FF, 124)

²⁴ Old French also has an element that looks suspiciously like Old Italian *sì*. Even if we consider that Old French selects a higher projection for V2, like Rhaetoromance, it still has an expletive which is located in Spec,Focus (like in Old Italian) and then moves to Declarative Force, while the inflected verb moves from the head of Focus to the head of Declarative Force. This would mean that in Old French two of the CP layer projections are endowed with an EPP feature: Focus and Declarative Force.

Examples like the one in (40) show that *e* has a function which is not the typical one of conjoining two phrases. First, every clause in (40) is introduced by the particle *e*, even though generally the conjunction head is only realized before the last member of a coordination when more than two XPs are coordinated. Second, if *e* were the conjunction particle, Old Italian would have the peculiar property of conjoining embedded and main clauses,²⁵ which is in general not an option in the most well-studied Romance and Germanic languages. Third, the particle *e* appears also in front of sentences which are separated by a full stop, which is not generally the case with conjuncts.²⁶ This type of *e* is extremely frequent in the texts.

- (41) a. Plauto fue uno grande savio, cortese in parlare. *E* scrisse
Plauto was a great wise kind in speech and wrote
queste sentenze
these sayings
'Plauto was a great wise man, who spoke very kindly. He wrote
these sayings.'
(*FE*, 104)
- b. Scipio Africano fue consolo di Roma e fue tagliato di
Scipio Africano was consul of Rome and was cut of
corpo a la madre e per ciò fue chiamato Cesare.
body from the mother and therefore was called Caesar
E dice uno filosafo che...
and says a philosopher that
(*FE*, 140)
'Scipio Africano was console in Rome, he was born with a Caesarean
cut and for this reason he was named Caesar. A philosopher says
that...'
- c. Stando lo 'mperadore Federigo- *e* faceva dare l' acqua
being the emperor Federigo and let give+INF the water
alle mani e, inebriato il pane dell' odore che n'
to.the hands and putting the bread in.the smell that of.it
uscita, del mangiare, e quelli lo mordea, e così il
came out of.the food and he it bite and so it
consumò di mangiare, ricevendo il fumo e mordendolo.
finished to eat getting the smoke and biting.it.

²⁵ The phenomenon is known as *paraiotassi* in philological studies of Old Italian.

²⁶ This is not very strong evidence, because in several cases the punctuation is inserted by the editor of the manuscript.

'While Emperor Federigo was standing there he commanded to
bring water for the people to clean their hands, and he was putting
the bread close to the smell which came out of the meal and ate it up'
(*Nov.*, 177)

- d. *e* poi, quando tutto ebbe dato, et elli si fece
and then when all had+3SG given and he himself let
vendere,
sell+INF
'and then when he had given everything he let himself be sold'
(*Nov.*, 162)
- e. quando entrò nella chiesa, et uno parlò *e* disse: ...
when got into.the church and one spoke and said
'when he entered the church one spoke and said...'
(*Nov.*, 189)

Some cases are particularly revealing: in (41c), *e* is found in front of both an embedded and a main clause, and the embedded clause is an infinitival one. Furthermore, there are cases like (41d) where two instances of *e* are realized and, at first sight, it appears that the conjunction head is doubled. However, if we assume that *e* can also have another function, these cases are not special doubling cases at all: the first *e* is the real conjunction particle, but the second one is clearly not.

A further test for this is the translation into Modern Italian. The first *e* in (41d) is perfectly grammatical, while the second is completely impossible:

- (42) (*e*) poi quando ebbe dato tutto, (* *e*) egli si fece
and then when had+3SG given all and he himself let
vendere (Modern Italian)
sell+INF
'and then when he had given everything he let himself be sold'

The same is true with respect to (41e), where the particle *e* would be completely excluded in Modern Italian. Although sequences like (42) are completely ungrammatical in Modern Italian, there are still residual cases of *e* which look similar to the Topic marker we are dealing with here for Old Italian. While *si* has completely disappeared from the language, Modern Italian has retained the Topic marker *e* when the CP layer is activated, as in interrogative clauses:

- (43) a. *E* io?
'What about me?'

- b. *E adesso?*
 'Now what?'
- (44) a. *E cosa potrebbe fare in un frangente simile?* RQ interpretation
 'And what could (he) do in such a case?'
 b. *E viene quando, allora?* non-echo *wh- in situ*
 'And come when, then?'

Moreover, the presence of *e* indicating the existence of a Topic favours the interpretation of the sentence as a rhetorical question, as in (44a). *E* can also trigger non-echo *wh- in situ* in Italian (cf. (44b)), which is probably only possible when a Topic is present. Hence, in non-echo *wh- in situ* clauses in Italian, *e* is necessary to license the null Topic. Gemma Rigau (p.c.) pointed out to me that the same is true in Spanish (for an analysis of these cases in Modern Italian; see Poletto forthcoming).

Apparently, the Topic marker *e* in Modern Italian can only be parasitic on an already existing CP layer. It would be tempting to assume that *e* can only represent the continuation of a Topic if there is a Focus layer active, which is always the case in Old Italian, being an 'I to Focus' language, while in Modern Italian this is true only of some structures. If this is so, we predict that *e* is possible also in any other case in which a *wh*-item is present, as in exclamative clauses:²⁷

- (45) *E che vestito che ti sei comprato!*
 and what dress that yourself are bought
 'What a dress you bought!'

Another construction involving focalization in the CP layer is the so-called 'anaphoric anteposition' (see Benincà 1988), where the Topic marker *e* seems to be obligatory. Consider the following example:

- (46) Speaker A: *Gianni voleva comprarsi un castello.*
 'Gianni wanted to buy a castle.'
 Speaker B: *E un castello si è comprato.*
 'And a castle he bought.'

Here the particle *e* cannot be a conjunction. It is pronounced by the second speaker and signals the continuation of the same Topic plus the focalization of the DP *un castello* 'a castle'.

²⁷ In some northern Italian dialects (i.e. Taglio di Po), the particle *e* has become a sentence type marker for exclamative clauses.

However, the Topic marker is excluded in contrastive focalizations, which are also analysed as involving a Focus projection in the CP layer:

- (47) ??*E IL VESTITO ha comprato, non il cappello.*
 and the dress has bought not the hat

Cases like (47) are very strange and difficult to interpret. They constitute a problem for the hypothesis that the Topic marker *e* can only be present when Focus has been activated. However, the contrastive Focus constructions might be excluded on independent grounds. For instance, they might already have a null Topic of a different kind. This could also be the case for Old Italian, given the lack of detailed studies on contrastive focus in this language (probably due to the difficulty of circumscribing the relevant contexts).

Therefore, I propose that the particle *e* occurring in these contexts is not the usual conjunction head, but a different element, which, as we will see, displays different properties. If it is not a conjunction, what is it? As anticipated above, the pragmatic context in which the particle occurs suggests that *e* is a form of Topic marker; more precisely it marks the continuation of the same Topic present in the preceding discourse. The first argument in favour of this interpretation is that this type of *e* never appears after a Topic element, but always at the very beginning of the clause. The only elements that can precede the particle are temporal clauses.

Moreover, if *e* is immediately followed by the verb, it obligatorily triggers enclisis. In the section about *si*, Benincà's analysis of enclisis and proclisis has been briefly illustrated: if Spec,Focus is occupied, there is proclisis; if Spec,Focus is empty and the only elements preceding the inflected verb are Topics or the verb is in first position, then enclisis is triggered. We saw that *si* being an expletive in Spec,Focus, it can only occur with proclisis. If *e* is indeed a Topic marker, and as such occurs in a Topic position, we expect to find enclisis when it is immediately followed by the verb (i.e. when Spec,Focus is empty). This prediction is borne out, as the particle *e* only triggers enclisis when it immediately precedes the inflected verb:

- (48) a. *e tenerlo*
 and keep.it
 (FE, 135)
 b. *e bevenne*
 and drank.of.it
 (FE, 134)

The properties of the particle *e* examined so far are thus the following:

- The Topic particle *e* only occurs at the beginning of a clause.
- The Topic particle *e* can occur in front of both main and embedded clauses (giving the impression of a strange coordination structure with a main and an embedded infinitival or gerundive clause).
- The Topic particle *e* can co-occur with the conjunction head *e* (giving the impression of 'conjunction doubling').
- The Topic particle *e* only triggers enclisis when it is immediately followed by the inflected verb, like all Topics.

At this point one might ask why just the item *e* is used to mark the continuation of a Topic. Is there any link between this usage and the coordination usage? In other words, are there two distinct items with different properties listed in the lexicon, or is there just one item and the different properties depend on other factors? In order to be more precise, I will adopt the analysis of conjunction structures originally proposed by Kayne (1994), namely that conjunction also conforms to X' theory in taking a conjunct as its complement and another conjunct as its specifier, with the restriction that the specifier and the complement must be the same type of category:

(49) [_{CoP} XP [_{Co°} *e* [XP]]]

The particle *e* is the head of the conjunction structure, taking the same type of XP in its complement and in its specifier position. Suppose further that when it is a Topic marker, *e* also takes the same structure:

(50) [_{TopicP} (Null)Top [_{Topic°} *e* [_{TopicP} [CP]]]]

The only difference between (49) and (50) is that the label XP has been substituted by TopicP. Thus, *e* maintains the property of taking a specifier and a complement which are of the same type. The complement TopicP is the highest projection of the whole clause occurring after the particle, labelled CP in (50). In the specifier position there is a null TopicP licensed by the particle *e*. This null Topic must be interpreted and recovers its features from the preceding discourse: the sentence is understood as having the same topic as the preceding one.

Therefore, the fact that *e* can function as a Topic marker depends on its original formal property of taking a specifier and a complement which must be of the same type, not only on its semantics or on some other independent mechanism which 'creates' new particles. In other words, the fact that *e* can be used as a Topic marker depends, on the one hand, on the formal properties of *e*, and, on the other, on general features of the language. In the case under

discussion, the relevant point is the fact that Old Italian was a V2 language in which the CP layer was always active.

An independent argument in favour of the idea that null Topics exist in Old Italian is provided by cases like the following ones, whose interpretation is different from the cases licensed by *e*:

- (51) Uno cavaliere pregava un giorno una donna d' amore e
 A knight was praying a day a woman of love and
 diceale intra l' altre parole com' elli era gentile e ricco e
 told her among other things how he was kind and rich and
 bello a dismisura, 'e l' vostro marito è così laido come voi
 very handsome, 'and your husband is so ugly as you
 sapete'; e quel cotal marito era dopo la parete della
 know'; and precisely that husband was behind the wall of the
 camera.
 room
 Ø Parlò e disse: 'Eh, messer, per cortesia:
 He spoke and said: 'Eh, sir, please,
 acconciate li fatti vostri e non isconciate li altrui'.
 mind your own business and do not spoil the others'
 (Nov., 231)
- (52) 'Iscrivi' disse quel re cortese 'ch' io obligo l' anima
 write said that king kind that I oblige the soul
 mia a perpetua prigione infino a tanto che voi pagati siate'.
 mine to eternal prison until that you paid are
 Ø Morìo. Questi, dopo la morte, andaro al padre
 died they after the death went to the father
 suo e domandaro la moneta
 his and asked for the money
 (Nov., 171)

The examples in (51) and (52) have a null category (represented with Ø) at the very beginning of the sentence, immediately followed by the inflected verb. Cases like these are completely ungrammatical in Modern Italian, where either the subject has to be repeated, or the subject can be null but there must be another element (preferably a temporal adverb) before the verb. Even more, to a native speaker of Modern Italian these cases seem rather opaque. (51) for instance is hard to understand if the whole context is not attentively evaluated. These kinds of cases strongly recall the phenomenon of Topic drop

in Germanic languages (like German), or at least one type of Topic drop typically involving the subject as discussed by Cardinaletti (1996).

As for the status of this entity, in the literature on null elements there is a category that has precisely the properties of the null Topic licensed by *e*: the null constant proposed by Rizzi (1992) for the *pro*-drop phenomenon of child language. This category can only occur in first position, its content is retrieved from the context, and it is never *c*-commanded by anything. The same is true for cases like (50): the null Topic occurs at the very beginning of a sentence, its content is retrieved from the context, and, although it occurs in embedded domains, the clause containing it is not a complement clause. All the examples examined correspond to temporal clauses or to gerundive or infinitival clauses that express contemporary events. If the temporal clause is placed before the main clause, in an anti-symmetric approach like the one adopted here, the null constant is clearly not *c*-commanded by anything. This would apply also to constructions where the non-finite verbal form follows the main clause. In these cases the infinitival or gerundive form is probably not *c*-commanded by elements internal to the main clause. At this point a cautionary note is in order: before we can decide whether the null Topic in structures like (50) is really Rizzi's null constant, we should know more about the way these sequences of clauses, which are not connected through selection but simply express contemporary events, are layered, a problem that cannot be solved here. However, for now the null constant is the best candidate to account for the distribution of null Topics in Old Italian.

13.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have compared the left periphery of Old Italian with the left periphery of Modern Rhaetoromance and proposed that V2 is not a unitary phenomenon in the sense that the projection targeted by V2 can change. More precisely, V2 can target Focus or Force: in the first case declarative clauses admit V3 and V4 with left dislocated constituents, in the latter case only interrogatives can have V3 or V4. On the basis of Benincà's idea that Old Italian V2 is quite low in the structure of the CP area, I have shown that the adverb *sì*, contrary to *così*, is an expletive of the Focus projection because it can be directly merged inside the CP layer. Such hypothesis derives the distribution of *sì* in Old Italian on the basis of its semantic and formal properties.

Another particle merged in the left periphery of the clause is *e*, which marks the continuation of a Topic by means of a null Topic in its specifier and the whole clause (headed by a TopicP) in its complement position. This Topic

marker has been lost in Modern Italian declaratives, although some restricted usages have been maintained when the CP layer is already independently active (i.e. interrogatives). Rizzi's null constant can account for the properties of the null Topic licensed by *e*, provided the sequences of clauses illustrated in the examples are not cases of complementation.

While the particle *sì* has been totally lost (and this loss probably also caused the disappearance of the corresponding adverbial), *e* has not only retained its meaning as a conjunction, but also its usage as a Topic marker when the appropriate structural conditions are met (namely the presence in the left periphery of a Focus layer containing some lexical material). This leads to the general conclusion that once the formal properties of an element meet the appropriate structural conditions (in our case V2), the reanalysis of that element as a Focus or Topic marker is straightforward.

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