On impersonal *si* constructions in Italian

Roberta D'Alessandro

Italian impersonal *si* constructions show a number of puzzling properties, which have been largely examined by Cinque (1988), Chierchia (1995) and Dobrovie-Sorin (1996, 1998, 1999) among others. In this paper, I consider the agreement patterns of impersonal *si* constructions. I show how these patterns follow easily from locality and intrinsic properties of *si*, such as, for instance, its clitic nature. There is no need to postulate special properties of *si* which are not shared by other clitics. *Si* can be considered as acting only at the syntactic level, and not, as has been proposed, in the lexicon.

1.Introduction

Impersonal constructions introduce an unspecified, generic subject in an utterance. In Italian, one of the possible strategies for obtaining this is the so-called impersonal *si* construction:

(1) Al giorno   d'oggi   si mangia   troppo
    at the day   of today si eats   too much
    'Nowadays people eat too much'

   In (1), the subject is not specified. The sentence has a generic meaning, introduced by *si*.

2.The syntax of si

In this section, I provide an overview of the theoretical background which I am going to use. In section 3, I introduce the puzzle of agreement patterns with transitive verbs, for which I propose a syntactic analysis based on the intervention effect of *si*. In sections 4 and 5 I examine the case of unaccusative and unergative verbs, which are very different from each other with respect to their agreement patterns.

2.1. Theoretical background

Impersonal *si* constructions display complex agreement patterns, which vary depending on the verb class, as I will show in this section. In the minimalist framework proposed by Chomsky (1995, 1999), the only condition that syntactic expressions need to obey is legibility at the interface between the syntactic system and other systems (for instance, the phonological system or the logical one). In order to fulfil this requirement, all features which are uninterpretable on lexical items must be eliminated before the interface levels are reached. I adopt here the 'Derivation by Phase' framework, according to which features can be valued or unvalued, and the evaluation of unvalued features takes place under Agree if a Match relation of phi-features holds between an element with valued features and one with unvalued ones. Again, all the features need to be valued before the interface levels are reached, or the derivation will crash. Following Chomsky (1999), I assume that the Agree relation doesn't necessarily take place in as specifier-head configuration, but it can be a long-distance relation, though subject to locality conditions. Moreover, I assume that the evaluation of unvalued features takes place at the end of a phase (v_l, C).

In this paper, I attempt to show that *si* is not a special lexical item which absorbs theta-role or Case. I show that *si* does not have any special property, except the one deriving from its double status as DP and as head, provided by its clitic nature (see Chomsky 1995:249). Sticking to minimalist assumptions, it is not necessary to restrict the merging sites of *si*. In other words, if *si* is a DP, it is possible to merge it in any DP site. No extra restrictions need to be formulated. Furthermore, I assume that *si* is phi-complete, and consequently it can evaluate phi-sets, and it can get Case; more precisely, it can have is Case features evaluated. Among its phi-features, the relevant one for most of the derivations is number, which for *si* is plural, as shown in (2).

(2) Si$_i$ vuole   PRO$_i$ essere   ricchi
    si wants-3RD SING PRO$_i$ to be   rich-PL MASC
    'People want to be rich'

Given these basic assumptions, all the anomalous agreement patterns in *si* constructions surface as the result of syntactic derivations which involve *si*.

With respect to thematic roles, I assume, with Chomsky (1995) among others, that they are determined configurationally. According to Burzio's Generalization, if a verb does not assign a theta-role to the subject it does not assign accusative Case. There is a one-to-one relationship, thus, between external theta-role and Accusative. However, as pointed out by many linguists (cf. Marantz 1991, Burzio 2000, Reuland 2000), Burzio's Generalization has to be revised and decomposed, as it links very different properties of a predicate, such as structural Case and thematic roles. For my purpose, it is enough to

assume that external theta-role and accusative structural case do not need to be assigned by the same head, in the same projection.

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3. Impersonal constructions with transitive verbs
3.1. Agreement in the present tense

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In this section, I first introduce some data on agreement in impersonal *si* constructions with transitive verbs. For these sentences, there are two main syntactic constructions: one in which the verb agrees with the Nominative object, and the other in which the verb exhibits the default third person ending and the object is marked with Accusative. For the analysis of these constructions I adopt the model proposed by Anagnostopoulou (2000) for double object constructions. After introducing Anagnostopoulou's model in section 3.2. I discuss similarities between impersonal and double object constructions in section 3.3.; to account for the agreement facts in *si* constructions I propose an analysis similar to Anagnostopoulou's (sections 3.3. and 3.4.). Finally in section 3.5. I show how past participle agreement can be easily derived by adopting the structures I propose.

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3.1.1. The data

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Si constructions with transitive verbs, in the present tense, show two main agreement patterns, as in (3) and (4):

(3) Qui   si   raccontano   favole
    here   si   tell-3RD PL   fairy tales-PL FEM NOM
    'Here people tell stories'
(4) Qui   si   racconta   favole
    here   si   tells-3RD SG   fairy tales-PL FEM ACC
    'Here people tell stories'

In (3), the verb shows agreement with the object, which is Nominative, and in (4) it shows the default 3rd singular ending, and the object is Accusative. The Case of the object can be detected by substituting a pronoun for the DP object, which in Italian is marked for Case, as in (5):

(5) a. Le   si   racconta/   *raccontano
    them-PL FEM ACC   si   tells-3RD SG/   tell-3RD PL
    'People tell them'
    b. Esse   si raccontano/   *racconta
      they-PL FEM NOM   si tell-3RD PL   tells-3RD SG
    'People tell them'

Furthermore, in Italian agreement with a verb only takes place when a DP is Nominative.

In (3) and (4), the verb is transitive.[1] Despite its nominative Case in (3), the DP object 'favole' is a real object, i.e. an internal argument, in both sentences. This can be shown by using the *ne* test: *ne* is a partitive clitic, which can only replace an internal argument (cf. Burzio 1986):

(6) Se ne   raccontano/ racconta   spesso
    si of-them   tell-3RD PL   tells-3RD SG   often
    'People tell them often'

Several proposals have been made to explain the difference in agreement pattern between (3) and (4). In particular, Cinque (1988) has postulated the existence of two different *si*'s: an argumental one for (3), and a non argumental one for (4). This assumption is not necessary, as the difference in agreement is syntactic in nature.

3.2. The split-v

There is disagreement among researchers concerning the status of *si*. Among the different proposals, I briefly introduce those that are particularly relevant for the discussion of the agreement facts I am trying to explain: McGinnis's, Cinque's and Dobrovie-Sorin's.

McGinnis (1997) suggests that *si* is always argumental. Cinque (1988), on the other hand, shows that argumental *si* is only possible with finite verbs which project an external theta-role, namely transitives and unergatives. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that *si* in Italian is not allowed in untensed clauses, except in Aux-to-Comp and Raising structures with transitive and unergative verbs, where an external theta-role is assigned. However, as shown by Dobrovie-Sorin (1996, 1998, 1999), this problem can be solved in a different way: *si* is not licensed in non-finite clauses because *si* is a nominative clitic and in Italian nominative clitics are not allowed in these contexts. Transitive and unergative Aux-to-Comp and Raising structures allow *si* just because they can passivize. *Si* in this case is not Nominative but Accusative. In other words it's a middle-passive *si*. Thus, there is no need to postulate that *si* is argumental in these structures.

It has been suggested that the external argument is merged in a different projection from that of the main verb. In particular, Marantz (1993) and Kratzer (1994) have argued for the existence of a *v* head, the locus of assignment of the external theta-role and nominative Case. I adopt the model proposed in the Minimalist Program (henceforth MP), which is more in the spirit of Kratzer, and consider *v* as a transitive head.

Coming back to our agreement problems, let's compare the following sentences.

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[1] Leaving aside the question about the optional indirect object, I assume that *raccontare* is a 2-place verb.

(7) In Italia   si mangia una mela   al   giorno per   stare bene
    in Italy   si eats   an apple-NOM   at the day   for   stay   well
    'In Italy people eat an apple a day to keep healthy'

(8) Gianni si mangia una mela   al   giorno per stare bene
    Gianni si eats   an apple-ACC   at the day   for stay   well
    'Gianni eats an apple a day to keep healthy'

(9) In Italia si leggono   dei   buoni   libri
    in Italy si read-3RD PL some-PL MASC good-PL MASC books-PL MASC NOM
    'In Italy people read good books'

(10) Gianni si legge dei   buoni libri
     Gianni si reads some   good   books-PL MASC ACC
     'Gianni reads some good books'

   (7) and (8), (9) and (10), despite their various syntactic and semantic differences, have the same underlying structure, as I will show below. Observe that in (7) and (9) the verb agrees with the Nominative object, whereas in (8) and (10) there is no such agreement, and the object is Accusative.

   Sentences (8) and (10) are a kind of double object construction. *Si* is a benefactive dative clitic, which happens to be coreferent with the subject 'Gianni'. Anagnostopoulou (2000) proposes two different structures in order to account for this kind of sentences: one with a double *v* and one with a single *v*. The structure with the double *v* includes a *v*CAUS (v_1) head and a *v*APPL (v_2) head. In this structure, the indirect object is introduced by the applicative head (see Marantz 1993, McGinnis 1998, Anagnostopoulou 1999), while the external argument is introduced by the causative head, which is higher. The sentences in (8) and (10) can be analysed within this pattern. In these two sentences, *si* is a benefactive (or goal). Adopting Anagnostopoulou's proposal, we can say that in (8) and (10), *si* is merged in the specifier of v_2. According to Anagnostopoulou, in some languages, e.g. Spanish, the applicative head assigns morphological dative. Therefore, there is morphological dative on the benefactive if and only if there is an applicative head that can assign dative. Furthermore, I assume that v_2 in Italian, doesn't assign accusative Case but only inherent dative case.

   In (8) and (10), *si* is clearly dative. This can be shown by substituting *si* with a 3rd person non-reflexive pronoun, which shows morphological case in Italian:

(11) Gianni le/   *la   legge dei   buoni libri
     Gianni her-DAT   her-ACC reads some good books
     'Gianni reads her some good books'

   Thus, the benefactive in Italian is also marked with dative in this kind of constructions.

   Extending Anagnostopoulou's model, the derivation for the benefactive construction in (10), repeated here as (12), proceeds as follows.

(12) Gianni si legge dei   buoni libri
     Gianni si reads some   good   books-PL MASC ACC
     'Gianni reads some good books'

- The DP object 'dei buoni libri' is merged with the root verb.
- v_2 is merged with the VP.
- *Si* is merged in the specifier of v_2.
- *Si* gets dative case from v_2. There it gets also the external theta-role.[2]
- v_1 is merged. *Si* enters a Match+Agree relation with v_1, which evaluates its structural Case features. However, in this construction *si* is an anaphor, and therefore its phi-features are not evaluated; it needs to be bound by an antecedent in order to get its phi-features evaluated. For this reason, I propose that *si* cannot evaluate the phi-features on *v*, differently from the impersonal *si*. Thus, v_1 enters another Match+Agree relation with the direct object (henceforth DO), and it evaluates its structural Case features while getting its phi-features evaluated.
- The subject DP is merged in the specifier of v_1 and enters a Match relation with *si*, whose phi-features it evaluates, according to the anaphoric mechanism proposed in Reuland (2001).

Recall that in this construction *si* is anaphoric, and therefore gets inflected according to the DP which binds it.

(13) Io mi   mangio una   mela
     I I-DAT   eat   an   apple
     'I eat an apple'
(14) Tu   ti   mangi una   mela
     you you-DAT eat   an   apple
     'You eat an apple'

In impersonal constructions such as (7) and (9), on the other hand, *si* is not anaphoric, it is phi-complete and able to evaluate the features on *v*. This contrast is crucial, in that it determines the difference in agreement patterns between the benefactive and the impersonal construction, as I will show in the next section.

3.3. Si in the specifier of v_2

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[2] I assume that the external theta-role is assigned to *si* by the lower *v*, and that it is transmitted to its antecedent because of an anaphoric relation. Further elaboration needs to be done on this point.

In the previous section, I have presented the data concerning impersonal constructions with verb-object agreement. I would like to extend Anagnostopoulou's double-v structure to the analysis of these constructions too. It was shown in (11) that in these constructions, where *si* is an anaphor, it shows dative morphology. Therefore, the presence of a second v assigning dative is requested. I propose the same analysis for the sentences in (7) and (9), despite the difference in their agreement patterns. I argue that the structure for both of these constructions is the double-v one, and that the difference in the agreement patterns is due to the presence vs. absence of an intervention effect performed by the impersonal *si*. Regarding the distribution of theta-roles, I assume that the external one is assigned by the whole v shell. Specifically, I take the external theta-role to be assigned in v_2, when present, or in v_1, when no dative assigning v is available.

I repeat sentence (9), which is an impersonal *si* construction with agreement of the verb with the object, in (15). Observe once more that *si* in this case is phi-complete and can evaluate the phi-features on v.

(15) In Italia si leggono   dei   buoni   libri
    in Italy   si read-3RD PL   some-PL MASC good-PL MASC   books-PL
MASC NOM
    'In Italy people read good books'

The derivation of this sentence runs as follows:

- The DP 'dei buoni libri' is merged in the complement position, where it gets its internal theta-role. Its structural case features need to be evaluated.
- v_2 is merged with the VP.
- *Si* is merged in the specifier of v_2, and gets inherent dative case. As already mentioned, I assume that although *si* is marked with inherent case, it can still intervene in checking operations (see Zaenen, Maling & Thrainsson 1985). In this position, *si* also gets the external theta-role.
- v_1 is merged; it enters a Match+Agree relation with *si*, which gets its Case features evaluated and is able to evaluate the features on v_1. Thus, the direct object stays without its Case features evaluated. Basically, si performs an intervention effect, preventing the assignment of Accusative by v_1 to the direct object.
- T is merged, and the verb raises to T.
- si cliticizes on T. From this moment on, it is silent, both because it has all its features evaluated, and because it has cliticized, thus it doesn't have its DP status any longer.
- A Match+Agree relation takes place between T and the direct object, which gets nominative case and evaluates the phi-features on T, which agrees with it.
- The EPP on T is checked by an expletive *pro*, if present in the numeration.

(16) [TP pro [T si$_j$-leggono$_i$ [$_{v1P}$ ti [$_{v2P}$ t$_j$ [VP t$_i$ dei buoni libri]]]]]

- If no *pro* is present in the numeration, the EPP on T is checked by the DP object, which is the only available DP, since si has cliticized and cannot check the EPP any longer. An example of object raising is shown in (17):

(17) Dei   buoni libri   si leggono in Italia
       some good   books si read   in Italy
       'In Italy, people read good books'

However, the DP object is deeply embedded to be directly attracted by the T head. If we assume a phase-based derivation, then v_1 constitutes a strong phase, and is subject to the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC) (Chomsky 1999:9-10):

(18) The domain of H is not accessible to operations outside HP, but only H and its edge, the edge being the residue outside of H-bar, either Specs or elements adjoined to HP

The PIC states that only the head of a projection with its edge in one previous phase are accessible to the following phase. This means that the DP object is `not visible' from the T head, because it is not at the edge of the *v* phase. Chomsky (1999) proposes the existence of features which trigger movement to the edge of strong phases. This movement is called Indirectly Feature-Driven Movement (IFM). For the raising of the object to the specifier of T, there must be an intermediate step through the edge of v_1, which is a movement of the IFM kind. From the edge of v_1, the direct object is visible and can raise to check the EPP on T.

(19) $[_{TP}$ $[DP$ dei buoni libri$]_k$ $[_T$ si$_j$ -leggono$_i$ $[_{v1P}$ t$_k$ t$_i$ $[_{v2P}$ t$_j$ $[_{VP}$ t$_i$ t$_k$ $]]]]]$

3.4. Si in the specifier of v_1

The example in (4), as already shown, doesn't exhibit the same agreement patterns as the examples we have just examined. Let's consider the following example.

(20) In Italia si legge   libri   in continuazione
       in Italy si reads-ACC   books   in continuance
       'In Italy people read books all the time'

As shown in (5) and (6), in this kind of sentence the direct object is also as a real object, just like in (3), (7) and (9), but there is no agreement of the verb with the object, which bears Accusative.
   According to my proposal, if Accusative is assigned to the direct object, no intervention effect of *si* has occurred. In fact, for this kind of sentence, I assume

the second structure proposed by Anagnostopoulou (2000), namely the one with one single v. The existence of only v means, in Anagnostopoulou's terms, that the dative assigning head (i.e. the second v) is absent. If, though, in impersonal constructions it is impossible to detect dative morphology, how can I be sure that there is no applicative v? In order to give an answer to this question, it is necessary to take a closer look at Anagnostopoulou's proposal. Interestingly enough, Anagnostopoulou shows, among other things, that when there is no dative benefactive, and thus when there is only one v, it is the benefactive which checks the only Case available, and the real object is licensed by (abstract) incorporation (see Baker 1996). In order to have incorporation, a bare plural object is required; this means that if we have a DP object incorporation in not available. She observes that, in some languages, whenever the dative assigning head is missing, the object of the construction is a bare noun. This is a bidirectional implication, as the following examples show:

(21) Che fai   oggi? Mangi   bistecche/???Ti   mangi bistecche
      what do you today you eat   steaks   you-DAT   you eat steaks
      'What are you going to do today? Are you going to eat steaks?'
(22) Che fai   oggi? Ti   mangi una bistecca /*bistecche?
      what do you   today you-DAT   eat   a   steak   / steaks
      'What are you going to do today? Are you going to eat a steak/steaks?'

    Sentence (21) shows that the presence of a bare noun excludes the possibility of a dative benefactive. Sentence (22) shows that if a benefactive is present a bare noun is not licensed. Therefore, no v_2 is present when a bare noun object is available.
    The pattern proposed by Anagnostopoulou for double object constructions seems to work for impersonal constructions as well. In particular, these data show that in sentences with no agreement between the verb and the object, the object must always be a bare noun:

(23) In Germania si mangia patate /   *le   patate
      in Germany si eats potatoes/   the   potatoes
      'In Germany people eat potatoes'

    I conclude that Anagnostopoulou's equation: bare noun=no dative head is also true for Italian, and thus that there is no dative assigning v when the object is a bare noun. Moreover, following Baker (1988, 1996), the object can be taken to incorporate into the verb. The derivation of (20) is thus as follows:

- The object 'libri' is merged with the verb.
- v_1 is merged, and the object incorporates into the verb.
- *Si* is merged in the specifier of v_1, and it gets the external theta-role.

- T is merged; *si* immediately cliticizes on it; an expletive *pro* is merged in the specifier of T to check the EPP, which results in the verb showing the default 3rd person singular inflection.

Notice that an accusative object cannot raise unless it is a clitic, as shown in (24).

(24) *Patate/ le   si mangia in Germania
        potatoes them   si eats   in Germany
        'In Germany, people eat potatoes'

3.5. Past participle agreement with transitive verbs

With transitive verbs, the past participle shows agreement with the object.

(25) Si è mangiata   la   cioccolata
        si is-3RD SG eaten-PP SG FEM   the-SG FEM   chocolate
        'People/we ate the chocolate'
(26) Si sono   viste   molte   macchine
        si are-3RD PL   seen-PP PL FEM   many-PL FEM   cars-PL FEM
        'People/we have seen many cars'

These constructions also display verb-object agreement. *Si* is thus merged in v_2, and it intervenes in the assignment of accusative Case. In Italian, a past participle is phi-incomplete because it lacks person. Following Chomsky (1999), I will consider past participles as having unvalued Case features. The direct object, which also has unvalued Case features, is phi-complete and can enter a Match relation with the participle. The derivation runs as follows:

- The direct object is merged with the verb.
- The past participle (pp) head is merged, and the verb moves to it. From there, the past participle enters into a match relation with the direct object, which evaluates the unvalued phi-features on the participle, according to the mechanism proposed in Chomsky (1999). This evaluation takes place because the pp projection is a phase; otherwise, the evaluation would take place much later, after the v phase. The fact that the past participle is a phase also implies the eventual raising of the object via the outer specifier of ppP, in conformity with Kayne's (1989) observations. The direct object cannot have its Case features evaluated, because the past participle is phi-incomplete. So, both the pp and the direct object still need to have their Case evaluated.
- v_2 is merged; *si* is merged in spec, v_2. There, it gets inherent dative case and the external theta-role. Despite this inherent case, *si* can still intervene in checking operations.

- v_1 is merged. It enters an Agree relation with *si*, which gets its Case feature evaluated and evaluates the phi-features on v_1. The past participle and the direct object are still with their Case features unvalued.
- The auxiliary is merged in T. *Si* cliticizes on T and is no longer visible for any Agree relation. The auxiliary has unvalued phi-features.
- T establishes an Agree relation with the past participle, whose features are still visible. The Case feature on the past participle is evaluated. However, the phi-set of the past participle is incomplete, and thus it cannot evaluate the phi-features on T. T looks deeper down and matches with the direct object, which is phi-complete and can evaluate its phi-features. As a result, the direct object gets nominative Case. The EPP on T is checked by the expletive pro, as above.

If the object is not a DP but a clitic, the auxiliary shows the default agreement ending and the participle shows agreement with the direct object:

(27) Le   si è   raccontate
     them-PL FEM ACC   si is-3RD SG told-PL FEM
     'People have told them'

This construction is the same as the one in (4), with no verb-object agreement. The clitic exhibits Accusative inflection. In these constructions:

- The direct object is merged with the verb.
- The past participle is merged, and the verb raises to the pp head and establishes an Agree relation with the direct object. The Case features of both past participle and direct object are unvalued.
- v_1 is merged, and it Agrees with the pp. The past participle gets its Case features evaluated, but it cannot evaluate v's phi-features because it is phi-incomplete. Thus, v_1 establishes an Agree relation with the direct object, and it evaluates its Case. The object gets Accusative.
- *Si* is merged in spec, v_1; it cliticizes, and so it cannot establish any relation with T. The direct object raises, via the outer specifier of v_1 and cliticizes on the auxiliary.
- The EPP feature on T is checked by *pro*. T Agrees with pro, and it gets the 3rd person singular ending as a result of this agreement with pro.

4. Impersonal si with unaccusative verbs

A puzzle for everybody working on agreement is the peculiar behavior of the auxiliary and the participle in *si* constructions with unaccusative verbs. In the present tense, the verb shows the default 3rd person singular ending, as exemplified in (28).

(28) Si arriva   a   casa
     si arrives-3RD SG   at   home
     'People arrive at home'

Following Kratzer (1994), I assume that an unaccusative verb has no v projection. This means that there is no possibility for *si* to be merged other than in the only argumental position, i.e. the internal argument position.

- *Si* is merged with the verb.
- T is merged, and the verb raises there. *Si* cliticizes on the verb in T, and thus it cannot evaluate the phi-features on T because when the evaluation takes place, at the end of the phase, *si* has already cliticized.
- The phi-features on T and the EPP are evaluated by pro.
- The Case features on *si* are evaluated by the incorporation of *si* on the T head.

(29) [$_{TP}$ pro [$_T$ si$_i$ -arriva$_j$ [$_{VP}$ t$_j$ t$_i$]]]

In the past tense (passato prossimo), the auxiliary shows the default 3rd person singular ending, while the participle shows the default (for DPs) masculine plural ending (see Corbett 1991). That is, there is a mismatch in number between auxiliary and past participle.

(30) Si è   arrivati   a   casa
     si is-3RD SG   arrived-3RD PL   at   home
     'People/we arrived at home'

Once again, *si* is merged in the complement position. Then:

- The past participle is merged. *Si* Agrees with the past participle, and it evaluates its phi-features, which get the plural masculine (default) inflection.
- The past participle is phi-incomplete, though, and it cannot evaluate the Case on *si*.
- The auxiliary is merged on T. As I already said, the past participle projection is a phase: *si* must raise via specifier, ppP in order to be visible from T.
- *Si* cliticizes on T, and can no longer enter any Agree relation; the auxiliary then Agrees with the expletive pro, which is merged to check the EPP on T.
- The Case feature on *si* is evaluated by incorporation of *si* on T. Note that this kind of incorporation/cliticization doesn't trigger agreement.

(31) [$_{TP}$ pro [$_T$ si$_i$ - è [$_{ppP}$ t$_i$ arrivati$_j$ [$_{VP}$ t$_j$ t$_i$]]]]

5. Unergative verbs

Coming now to unergatives, I assume the analysis proposed by Hale & Keyser (1993), according to which unergatives are actually transitives with the direct object (theme) incorporating into the root by *conflation*. I argue that the object is syntactically projected, but it has no phonological realization.

In the present tense, the agreement patterns resemble those of unaccusatives:

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

In this case, *si* is merged in the specifier of the only *v* available. The phi-features on v are evaluated by the direct object. *Si* doesn't trigger any Agree relation because it cliticizes immediately on T, as soon as it is merged.

In the past tense (passato prossimo), agreement doesn't mirror the unaccusative case. The past participle shows masculine singular ending, and the auxiliary is singular:

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

The derivation for these verbs is as follows:

* The direct object is merged with the verb. The past participle head is merged, and it Agrees with the direct object, getting its phi-features evaluated (i.e. getting the masculine singular ending).
* *v* is merged, and *si* is merged in its specifier.
* The auxiliary is merged in T, and *si* immediately cliticizes. Its Case features are evaluated by incorporation/cliticization on the auxiliary.
* The EPP on T is checked by pro, which also evaluates the phi-features on T.

(34) [$_{TP}$ pro [$_T$ si$_i$ - è [$_{vP}$ t$_i$ [$_{PPP}$ telefonato$_j$ [$_{VP}$ t$_j$ (DO)]]]]]]

6. Conclusions

Impersonal *si* constructions show a number of puzzling agreement facts. Based on basic locality assumptions I have shown how these patterns can be derived. Thus the postulation of special properties of *si* which are not shared by other clitics is no longer necessary. In particular, *si*, being both a head and a DP, can take part in checking operations for Case assignment, and it can perform an

intervention effect in checking operations in the stage of the derivation in which it behaves as a DP. The various agreement patterns that I have taken into consideration can be accounted for straightforwardly.

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