AGREEMENT IN ITALIAN IMPERSONAL *SI* CONSTRUCTIONS: A DERIVATIONAL ANALYSIS

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RESUMO

Construções impessoais com si *em italiano têm sido o foco de inúmeros estudos. Muitas análises, como as de Cinque (1988), Chierchia (1995) e Dobrovie-Sorin (1996, 1998, 1999), foram propostas para definir os intrigantes padrões de concordância das construções com* si. *Neste trabalho, mostro que todos os diversos padrões de concordância derivam da dupla natureza do* si *como um núcleo e como um DP (Chomsky 1995:249). Minha análise não postula propriedades especiais para o* si *que o tornariam peculiar com relação a outros clíticos. Pode-se considerar que o* si *age apenas ao nível sintático e não, como em outras propostas, no léxico.*

ABSTRACT

Impersonal si *constructions in Italian have been the focus of a number of studies. Many analyses, such as those of Cinque (1988), Chierchia (1995) and Dobrovie-Sorin (1996, 1998, 1999), have been proposed in order to define the puzzling agreement patterns of* si *constructions. In this paper, I show that all the various agreement patterns derive from* si*'s double nature as a head and a DP (Chomsky 1995:249). My analysis does not postulate special properties for* si *that would make it peculiar with respect to other clitics.* Si *can be considered to act only at the syntactic level, and not, as otherwise proposed, in the lexicon.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE
Pronomes impessoais, si *impessoal, concordância*

KEYWORDS
Impersonals, impersonal si*, agreement*

Introduction

Impersonal *si* constructions belong to the wider group of impersonal constructions, which are used to introduce a generic, unspecified subject in an utterance and to make general statements about groups of people. There are several strategies for obtaining these results in Italian, impersonal *si* being one of the most commonly employed. An example of a *si* construction is given in (1):

(1) *In Germania si   legge   molto*
   in Germany si reads-3RD SG   a lot
   'In Germany people read a lot'

The sentence in (1) is a statement about a property of a generic group of people; the absence of *si* would result in a sentence with a specific subject, as shown in (2). Italian is a *pro-drop* language. When the subject is a *pro*, as in (2), it needs to refer to somebody deducible from the context or already introduced in the discourse:

(2) *In Germania   pro legge   molto*
   in Germany pro reads-3RD SG   a lot
   'In Germany he/she reads a lot'

Impersonal *si* constructions show a number of puzzling agreement patterns. In the next section, I examine impersonal *si* with transitive verbs.

1. Impersonal *SI* with Transitive Verbs in the Present Tense

In the present tense, *si* constructions with transitive verbs show two main agreement patterns, exemplified in (3) and (4).

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

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

(3) and (4) have the same meaning, are made up of the same lexical items but display two different agreement patterns.

In this paper, I address the following question: what causes the difference in agreement patterns between sentences (3) and (4)? The difference in agreement patterns, I argue, is caused by the presence of *si*.

In the next section, I provide an overview of the theoretical background that I will use for the analysis of *si* constructions. In section 3, I first introduce Anagnostpoulou's (2000) model for the analysis of double object constructions. Then I discuss similarities between the agreement patterns in double object constructions and those in impersonal *si* constructions with transitive verbs. Next, I propose to extend Anagnostopoulou's model to the analysis of impersonal constructions. More explicitly, I propose to analyze *si* constructions with verb-object agreement as quirky subject constructions. In section 4 I present an analysis for impersonals with unergative and unaccusative verbs. Finally, section 5 contains my conclusions.

2. Theoretical background
2.1. Uninterpretable features

According to the model outlined in Chomsky (1995, 1999), syntactic expressions must be legible at the interface between the syntactic system and the other systems. This means that all the features which would not be interpretable by the other systems, e.g. by the phonological or by the logical system, need to be

eliminated before the interface levels are reached. More explicitly, Chomsky (1999) proposes a mechanism to eliminate uninterpretable features which can be briefly summarized as follows: Some features on lexical items have no value and need to be valued (and consequently eliminated) before the interface with other systems is reached, or the derivation will crash. The valuation takes place when a Match relation between *phi*-features on lexical items is established. Such a relation is established as soon as lexical items enter the derivation (i.e., are merged). The Match relation triggers an Agree relation; under Agree unvalued features can be valued and deleted from narrow syntax. Following Chomsky (1999), I assume that the Agree relation doesn't necessarily take place in a specifier-head configuration, but can be a long-distance relation, yet subject to locality conditions.

2.2. Phases and derivations

Chomsky (1995, 1999) outlines a strictly derivational model for syntactic structures. The relations between lexical items are not representationally defined (as in the Government and Binding framework) and are established during the derivation. Following the 'Derivation by Phase' approach, I assume that the relations between lexical items are established as soon as they are taken from the Numeration[1] and merged. However, the deletion of the features that are valued via Agree only takes place at the end of a phase.[2] According to Chomsky (1999), *v*P and CP are phases. Although the concept of phase doesn't play a crucial role for my analysis, I will follow Chomsky's 1999 model unless otherwise indicated.

The choice of a derivational approach implies a 'step-by-step' definition of the relations between lexical items. Therefore, the mere presence of *si* in the Numeration cannot justify the disappearance of a Theta-role or of Case. *Si* has to enter into Match and Agree relations with other items and interact with them syntactically. Such an interaction takes place locally.

2.3. The features of *si*

In this paper, I argue that *si* is not a special lexical item that absorbs a Theta-role or Case (contra Cinque 1988, Reinhart and Siloni 1999, Reinhart 2000; pro Dobrovie-Sorin 1998, 1999). I show that *si* does not have any special property, except the one deriving from its clitic nature. As a clitic, *si* exhibits a double status as a DP and a head (see Chomsky 1995:249).

I assume that Italian has two different *si*'s: an impersonal one and an anaphoric one. These *si*'s have different features, and different behavior with respect to Agree relations.

I assume that impersonal *si* is referential, and consequently can both value *phi*-sets and have its Case features valued. As shown by Chierchia (1995), impersonal *si* refers to an unspecified group of humans, which usually includes the speaker. Among the *phi*-features of impersonal *si*, the most relevant for this analysis is number. *Si* has a plural feature, as shown in (5):

(5) *Si$_i$ vuole*   *PRO$_i$ essere   simpatici*   *a tutti i   costi*
      si wants-3RD SG PRO to be   nice-PL MASC   at all the   costs
      'People want to be nice at any cost'

In (5), *si* controls PRO and triggers plural agreement on the adjective. Therefore, *si* can be considered as a plural.

The status of anaphoric *si*, exemplified in (6), is different from that of impersonal *si*.

(6) *Gianni$_i$ si$_i$ lava*
      Gianni himself   washes
      'Gianni washes himself'

Anaphoric *si* needs to be bound by an antecedent in order to have its phi-features valued (see Reuland 2001, Law 2002). In other words, it is not referential. For this reason, I propose that anaphoric

si cannot value phi-features, in contrast to impersonal *si*, which can. This also means that anaphoric *si* cannot act as an intervener in checking operations.

2.4. The argumental status of *si*

There is large disagreement about the argumental status of *si*. Many proposals have been made, among which the most relevant for the agreement problems I am examining are Burzio's (1986), Cinque's (1988) and Dobrovie-Sorin's (1996, 1998, 1999).

Burzio (1986) simply considers *si* as an argument. Cinque (1988), on the other hand, postulates the existence of two different *si*'s. *Si* is usually restricted to finite clauses. However, *si* is allowed in certain untensed clauses, namely in Aux-to-Comp (see Rizzi 1981, 1982) and Raising structures with transitive and unergative verbs. (7) is an example of an Aux-to-Comp construction with a transitive verb, and (8) is an example of a Raising construction with a transitive verb [from Cinque 1988, 524-525].

(7) *Non essendosi   ancora scoperto   il   vero colpevole,…*
    not being-si-GERUND yet   discovered-PP SG MASC the true culprit-SG MASC
    'One not having yet discovered the true culprit,…'

(8) *Sembra   non essersi ancora scoperto   il vero   colpevole*
    seems-3RD SG not being-si yet   discovered-PPSGMASC the true culprit-SG MASC
    'It seems one not to have yet discovered the true culprit'

Cinque proposes to consider these instances of *si* as argumental ones (+arg), which can be present in general only with verbs that project an external Theta-role. The other *si*, which can be present with any class of verbs, i.e. also with verbs that do not assign an external Theta-role, is a non-argumental one (-arg) [from Cinque 1988, 522, *si* with an unaccusative verb (*arrive*) and with a passive]:

(9) *Spesso si arriva in ritardo/ si è trattati male*
 often si arrives-3RD SG late si is -3RD SG treated-PP PL MASC badly
 'Often one arrives late/ one is often ill-treated'

According to Dobrovie-Sorin (1996, 1998, 1999), though, it is not necessary to postulate the ± argumental nature of *si*. What Cinque calls a +arg *si* is actually a passive *si*, which cannot be marked with Nominative. The only Nominative *si* is the one that Cinque defines as –arg. *Si* is not licensed in *non*-finite clauses because it is a Nominative clitic and in Italian Nominative clitics are not allowed in *non*-finite clauses. Transitive and unergative Aux-to-Comp and Raising structures allow *si* just because *si* in this case is not Nominative but Accusative. In other words, the *si* that is licensed in some *non*-finite structures (such as 7 and 8) is a middle-passive *si*, and not a Nominative one. Dobrovie-Sorin's analysis has several advantages, since it can be extended to other Romance languages, such as Romanian, which doesn't have Nominative clitics but has *si* constructions. In minimalist terms, however, one wonders why if there is a theta-position available for a DP and if there is exactly one DP present in the numeration, namely *si*, one should merge *si* in a *non*-theta-position and merge an expletive in subject position and let the chain formed by the two items absorb the external Theta-role. The considerations that led Cinque and Dobrovie-Sorin to discuss the argumental status of *si* were mainly related to the Projection Principle and to the division between D-structure and S-structure. In a model that doesn't make use of these levels of representation, most of the arguments necessarily disappear. For further discussion see Manzini & Savoia (2000), Embick (2000), McGinnis (1997, 1999), and Raposo & Uriagereka (1990), among others.

In my analysis, I postulate no restrictions on the merging sites of *si*, which will be merged in an argument position whenever such a position is available.

2.5. Theta-roles

Following Hale & Keyser (1993) and Chomsky (1995), among others, I assume that thematic roles are determined configurationally.

According to Burzio's Generalization, if a verb does not assign an external Theta-role it does not assign accusative Case. However, as has been 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 the analysis of the examples that follow I assume a structure in which external Theta-role and Accusative are not necessarily assigned by the same head, in the same projection.

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

3. The analysis

In this section, I present an analysis of impersonal *si* constructions that is based on Anagnostopoulou's (2000) analysis of double object constructions. After a brief overview of Anagnostopoulou's model, I show that this model accounts for a kind of double object construction in Italian, the so-called self-Benefactive, as well. I then propose to adapt Anagnostopoulou's model to impersonal *si* constructions, in order to account for the apparent mismatch in agreement patterns between transitive impersonals with verb-object agreement and transitive impersonals that don't show such an agreement. I also show how the past participle agreement patterns can be accounted for by using a strictly derivational approach.

3.1.1. Anagnostopoulou's proposal

Anagnostopoulou (2000) proposes a double structure for the analysis of double object constructions, which finds independent

motivation in the work of Marantz (1991, 1993). English double object constructions are well known for their alternation of a PP with a dative Benefactive:

(10) a. *I give a book to John/him*
      b. *I give John / him a book*

Italian doesn't have double object alternation with two DPs. Yet, there is a construction with personal pronouns that closely resembles the English double object alternation in (10). In (11) the Benefactive *a lui* is a PP. In (12), the Benefactive *gli* is dative:

(11) *Io compro   un libro   a lui*
      I   buy   a   book-MASC ACC to him- 3ᴿᴰ SG MASC ACC
      'I buy a book to him'

(12) *Io   gli   compro   un libro*
      I   him-3ᴿᴰ SG MASC DAT   buy   a book- MASC ACC
      'I buy him a book'

In both (11) and (12) *un libro* is Accusative. This can be shown by substituting a pronoun for the DP object *un libro*, as in (13):

(13) *Io lo   compro   a lui/   glielo   compro*
      I it-ACC   buy-1ˢᵀ SG to him-3ᴿᴰ SG MASC ACC /   him-3ᴿᴰ SG DAT -it-ACC   buy
      'I buy it to him'

In spoken Italian there is a very interesting kind of double object constructions, exemplified in (14):

(14) *Gianni si   legge   un   libro al   giorno*
      Gianni si-DAT   reads-3ʀᴅ SG   a   book at the day
      'Gianni reads (for himself) a book a day'

In this construction, which I call a self-Benefactive construction, *si* is anaphoric, and thus it is inflected according to the DP that binds it, as shown in (15):

(15) *Io$_i$ mi$_i$ leggo/   tu$_j$ ti$_j$ leggi   un libro al giorno*
      I me-DAT read-1ST SG you you-DAT read-2ND SG a book at-the day
      'I read (for myself) / you read (for yourself) a book a day'

In (14), though, *si* cannot alternate with a PP, as shown in (16):

(16) **Gianni$_i$ legge un libro a Gianni$_i$*
      Gianni reads a   book to Gianni
      'Gianni reads a book to Gianni'

The alternation between (14) and (16) is not blocked because of the impossibility of double object alternation in Italian, which is in fact possible, as (11)-(12) show. (16) is out because of anaphora constraints. The two instances of *Gianni* must corefer, and in traditional terms there is a Principle C violation.
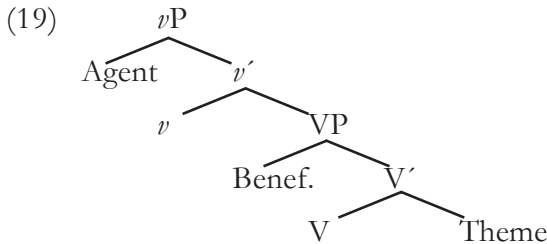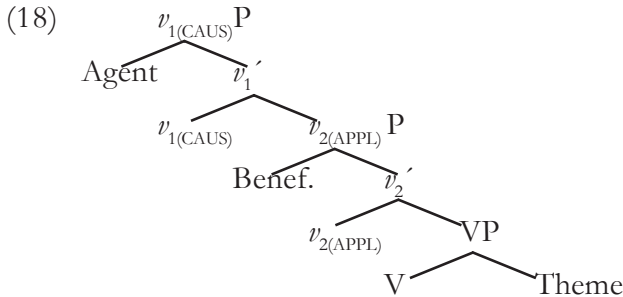
In (14) *si* is clearly dative, as can be shown by substituting for it a third person pronoun, which in Italian shows morphological case (see 17).

(17) *Gianni le/   *la/   *ella   legge   un libro   al giorno*
      Gianni her-DAT/ her-ACC / she-NOM reads-3RD SG a book   at the day
       'Gianni reads her a book a day'

Thus, (14) is a special double object construction in which *si* is a Benefactive dative clitic, coreferential with the subject *Gianni*.

Anagnostopoulou (2000) proposes two different structures to account for double object constructions: one with a double *v*, which includes a causative head (*v*CAUS, v_1) and an applicative head (*v*APPL, v_2) (see 18), and one with only one *v* (see 19). In the

structure with a double v, the applicative head introduces the Benefactive (see Marantz 1993, McGinnis 1998, Anagnostopoulou 1999), while the causative head, which is higher, introduces the external argument (see 18). In the second structure, the Benefactive is merged in the specifier of VP and the external argument in the specifier of v (see 19).

(18)

```
        v₁(CAUS)P
       /    \
   Agent    v₁′
           /    \
     v₁(CAUS)   v₂(APPL)P
              /      \
          Benef.     v₂′
                    /    \
              v₂(APPL)    VP
                         /    \
                        V     Theme
```

(19)

```
        vP
       /  \
   Agent   v′
          /   \
         v    VP
             /   \
         Benef.   V′
                 /   \
                V    Theme
```

In some languages, e.g. Spanish, Albanian and Icelandic the applicative head v_2 assigns morphological dative (see 20 for Icelandic):
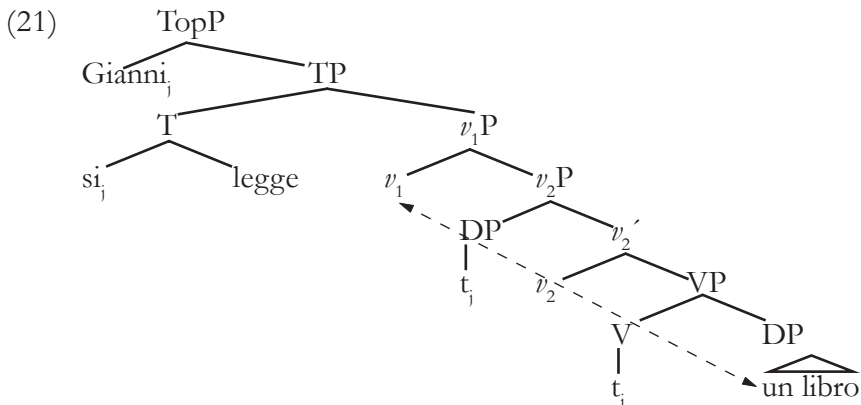
(20) *Hann   gaf   konunginum   ambáttina*   [Anagnostopoulou 2000]
     he-NOM gave the king-DAT the maidservant-ACC
     'He gave the king the maidservant'

Anagnostopoulou (2000) proposes that there is morphological dative on the Benefactive in this group of languages if and only if there is an

applicative head that can assign dative. As I have shown in (17), *si* in (14) is dative. *Si* also indicates a Benefactive in (14), and therefore Italian is one of the languages that mark the Benefactive with dative case.

Adopting Anagnostopoulou's proposal, thus, we can say that in (14) *si* is merged in the specifier of the dative assigning head v_2. Notice that for the analysis of self-Benefactive constructions with a double v I assume that v_2 in Italian doesn't assign accusative Case but only dative case. The derivation for the self-Benefactive construction in (14) is as follows:

- The DP object *un libro* 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. In this construction *si* is an anaphor, and therefore its phi-features are not valued. This means that it doesn't take part in valuing operations until its referent is established. Once this happens, *si* gets the Benefactive role in spec, v_2
- v_1 is merged. It Matches the object DP *un libro* and assigns it Accusative.
- T is merged.
- The subject DP is merged in the specifier of T. There it has its Case features valued (Nominative).
- The subject also enters a Match relation with *si*, whose phi-features it values according to the anaphoric mechanism proposed in Reuland (2001).

(21)

```
        TopP
       /    \
  Gianni_j   TP
       /         \
     T'           v_1P
    /  \         /    \
  si_j  legge  v_1     v_2P
               |      /    \
              DP     v_2'
               |    /    \
              t_j  v_2    VP
                   |     /   \
                  t_i   V     DP
                        |      |
                       t_i   un libro
```

Independent motivation for the claim that Benefactives are marked with dative in Italian (and thus that *si* is marked with dative in self-Benefactive constructions) is provided by a class of verbs that are inherently self-Benefactive, such as *riservarsi* (to keep for oneself), *accaparrarsi* (to hoard), *assicurarsi* (to secure), or *procurarsi* (to get oneself). Such verbs are most commonly used in the reflexive form, and have a self-Benefactive meaning. The *si* which appears on these verbs is an anaphor. In (22a) *si* refers to the subject *Maria*. In (22b) the self-Benefactive verb with *si* is located in an embedded sentence. *Si* still refers to Maria, but it has to surface as a pronoun because of anaphora constraints. It surfaces as a dative pronoun. I take this to show that Benefactive *si* is dative in Italian.

(22) a. *Maria può procurarsi   i   libri*
        Maria can get-herself-si   the   books
        'Maria can get herself the books'
     b. *Maria dice che   Carlo può procurarle i libri*
        Maria says that   Carlo can get-her-DAT the books
        'Maria says that Carlo can get her the books'

Observe that since impersonal *si* doesn't show any inflection, the morphological marker of dative does not surface on *si*. Despite this, I take (17) and (22) to show that dative is there.

3.2. Impersonal *si* constructions with transitive verbs

In the previous section we have seen how a self-Benefactive construction can be derived according to Anagnostopoulou's proposal. In this section, I propose to extend this analysis to impersonal *si* constructions with transitive verbs. Specifically, I propose to adopt the structure with two *v*'s for the derivation of impersonal *si* constructions with verb-object agreement of the kind exemplified in (3) and the structure with only one *v* for the structure with no verb-object agreement in (4).

As briefly shown in 1.1., impersonal *si* constructions with transitive verbs in the present tense display two main agreement patterns, exemplified in examples (3) and (4), here repeated as (23) and (24):

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

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

In (23) the verb agrees with the Nominative object. The object is a real object. This can be shown by substituting for it the partitive clitic *ne,* which can only be merged as an internal argument, as shown by Belletti and Rizzi (1981) and Burzio (1986) among others:

(25) *In Italia se³ ne   mangiano*
    in Italia   si of them   eat
    'In Italy people eat them'

In section 3.2.1., the construction in (23) will be shown to be a quirky subject one. Quirky subject constructions are a very well known phenomenon of Icelandic (Sigurðsson 1996, Tarldsen 1994, 1995). In such constructions, the Nominative DP has been proved to be an object (Alexiadou to appear, Zaenen, Maling & Thrainsson 1985, Sigurðsson 2000). The parallelism between (23) and quirky subject sentences in Icelandic provides further evidence for the objecthood of *gli spaghetti*.

A third consideration can be added about the object status of *gli spaghetti* in (23). Stardardly, objects are associated with the Theme Theta-role, or in general with the lower Theta-role of the thematic hierarchy (Grimshaw 1990). In (23) the verb *mangiare* (to eat) assigns

two Theta-roles: an Agent and a Theme. It is clear-cut that the Theta-role that is assigned to *gli spaghetti* is the Theme. Therefore, *gli spaghetti* is an object.

The object status of *spaghetti* in (24) is deducible along the same lines of reasoning followed for (23).

Observe that the Case of the object *gli spaghetti* in (23) is Nominative, while the Case of the object *spaghetti* in (24) is Accusative. This is shown in (26) and (27) respectively, where the DP object is replaced by a pronoun, which in Italian is marked for Case:

(26) *In Italia essi/   *li   si mangiano*
        in Italia they-3ʳᵈ PL NOM them-3ʳᵈ PL ACC   si eat-3RD PL
        'In Italy people eat them'

(27) *In Italia li/   *essi   si mangia*
        in Italy them-3ʳᵈ PL ACC they-3ʳᵈ PL NOM   si eats-3RD SG
        'In Italy people eat them'

(23) and (24) are thus two parallel constructions that mean exactly the same and vary only for their agreement patterns.

3.2.1. Verb-object agreement

In the previous section we have seen that there is a construction, namely (23), in which the verb agrees with the Nominative object. In this section I first show that a parallelism exists between (23) and the self-Benefactive constructions of the kind exemplified in (14), and then I extend the analysis of self-Benefactive constructions to (23).

Consider the following sentences:

(28) *Gianni e   Maria si leggono   dei   buoni libri*
        Gianni and Maria si read-3RD PL   some good books
        'Gianni and Maria read (for themselves) some good books'

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

(28) is a self-Benefactive construction, (29) is an impersonal one. These two constructions will be shown to have the same underlying structure. The structural case of the object *dei buoni libri* is not the same for (28) and (29). In (28) *dei buoni libri* is Accusative, as can be shown by substituting a pronoun for the DP (see 30); in (29), the DP object *dei buoni libri* is Nominative, as shown in (31)[4]:

(30) *Gianni e Maria   se li   leggono/   leggono   * essi*
      Gianni and Maria   si them-3RD PL ACC read-3RD PL / read-3RD PL them-3RD PL NOM
      'Gianni and Maria read them'

(31) *In Italia essi   si leggono/   *li   si leggono*
      In Italy they-3RD PL NOM si read-3RD PL   them-3RD PL ACC si read-3RD PL
   'In Italy people read them'

I argue that the different Case on the DP object is due to an intervention effect performed by the impersonal *si* in (29), which is not performed by the anaphoric *si* in (28). The impersonal *si* is, in fact, referential, while the anaphoric one isn't (see section 2.3). In (28) *si* is dative, as shown in section 3.1.1. Also in (29) *si* is dative. Therefore, a dative assigning v must be present. As we saw in 3.1.1., Anagnostopoulou (2000) proposes that dative is assigned in double object constructions (and self-Benefactive ones) by an applicative head (v_2). I propose to introduce a second v, which I will call v_2 to keep the parallel with self-Benefactive constructions, also for impersonal *si* constructions. v_2 assigns quirky dative. Observe that this v_2 is not an applicative head, but just a quirky dative assigning head. (29) is thus an example of a quirky dative construction.

The derivation of (29) is as follows:

● The DP *dei buoni libri* is merged with the verb, in the complement position, where it receives its internal Theta-role. Its structural case features need to be valued.

● v_2 is merged with the VP.

● *Si* is merged in the specifier of v_2, and gets quirky dative. I assume that although *si* is marked with quirky dative, it can still intervene in checking operations (see Zanen, Maling and Thrainsson 1985)[5]. In this position, *si* also receives the external Theta-role.

● v_1 is merged; *si* is a DP, has phi-features (see 2.3) and is still visible for Case assignment. Therefore, v_1 enters a Match+Agree relation with *si*, which is able to value the phi-features on v_1 because of its intrinsic referentiality. After this valuation, *si* becomes inactive for further syntactic derivations, and only moves because of its clitic nature.

● The direct object *dei buoni libri* stays without its Case feature valued.

● T is merged, and the verb raises to T.

● *Si* cliticizes on T.

● A Match+Agree relation takes place between T and the direct object, which gets nominative Case and values the phi-features on T, which agrees with it.

● The EPP on T is checked by an expletive *pro*, if present in the Numeration.

(32)   [TP *pro* [T si$_j$ –leggono$_i$ [$_{v1P}$ t$_i$ [$_{v2P}$ t$_j$ [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ dei buoni libri]]]]]

Basically, *si* performs an intervention effect, preventing the transfer of Accusative by v_1 to the direct object. Thus, the direct object has to wait until T is merged in order to receive its Case, which will be Nominative. Observe that this analysis suggests that v_1P does not constitute a phase, contra Chomsky (1999). If it did, it would not be possible for the object to go to Spell-Out without being assigned Case, and the derivation would crash.

(33)
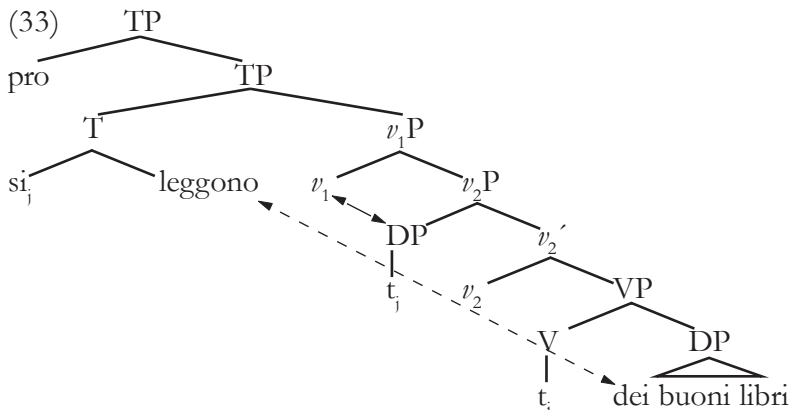
If no *pro* is present in the Numeration, the EPP on T is checked by the DP object *dei buoni libri*, which is the only DP available for raising, since *si* has cliticized and cannot check the EPP any longer. If the object raises, the sentence sounds as follows:

(34) *Dei   buoni libri   si leggono   in Italia*
       some good books si read-3RD PL   in Italy
       'In Italy people read good books'

Observe that when the object raises *si* has cliticized (i.e. has become a head) and hence doesn't block the object raising. Its trace doesn't block raising either.

(35) $[_{TP} [_{DP}$ dei buoni libri$]_k [_T$ si$_j$- leggono$_i [_{v1P} t_k t_i [_{v2P} t_j [_{VP} t_i t_k]]]]]$

The derivation in (32) shows that it is not necessary to postulate properties for *si* that would tell it apart from other clitics. The mere presence of *si* in the Numeration doesn't imply an absence (or an absorption) of the external Theta-role and of Accusative case. The external Theta-role is in fact assigned in impersonal *si* constructions. As a matter of fact, a *by*-phrase, which introduces an Agent, is

licensed in passive contexts, which lack an Agent role, (see 36) but not in impersonal *si* contexts (see 37), which have it assigned.

(36) *Un   libro   è   letto   da Gianni*
     a-SG MASC book-SG MASC is-3ʳᵈ SG read-PP SG MASC by Gianni
     'A book is read by Gianni'

(37) **Si legge   un   libro   da Gianni*
     si   reads-3ʳᵈ SG a-SG MASC book-SG MASC   by Gianni

Evidence that *si* checks Accusative in verb-object agreement constructions is provided crosslinguistically by Romanian (Dobrovie-Sorin 1996, 1998, 1999). In Romanian there is an impersonal construction that mirrors the Italian one, namely an impersonal *se* construction with verb-object agreement. In such a construction, *se* shows Accusative case. I take this as a piece of evidence that *se-si* actually gets Accusative, and does not block its assignment (Cinque 1988). The Romanian counterpart of (29) is (38):

(38) *In Italia se   citesc   carti   bune*
     in Italy si-ACC   read-3RD PL books-PL FEM   good-PL FEM
     'In Italy people read good books'

3.2.2. Quirky subjects in italian and icelandic

In 3.2.1. I have proposed that Italian impersonal *si* constructions are quirky subject constructions. This claim isn't ungrounded, as I will show in this section.

Icelandic quirky subject constructions, as the one exemplified in (39), show the following properties:

● A Nominative object agreeing with the verb
● A dative subject
● A restriction on the person feature on the object

(39) *Henni*   *leiddust*   *strákarnir*
      het-DAT   bored-3RD PL   the boys-PL NOM
      'She found the boys boring'

In (39), the verb agrees with the Nominative object. In addition to that, there is a person restriction on the object (Sigurðsson 1996), which can only be 3rd person, as shown in (40):

(40) **Henni*   *leiddust*   *þið/*   *leiddumst*   *við*
      her-DAT   bored-2ND PL you-PL NOM/ bored-1ST PL we-PL NOM
      'She found you/us boring' [Sigurðsson 1996]

Italian impersonal *si* constructions show exactly the same agreement patterns as Icelandic quirky subject constructions. In particular, they exhibit Nominative object-verb agreement. In addition to that, *si* constructions present a person restriction on the Nominative object, which can only be 3rd person (see 41-42). That impersonal *si* is dative will be shown in details in section 3.2.3.

(41) *Si vedono*   *sempre loro/*   *vede*   *sempre lei*   *in giro*
      si see-3RD PL   always they-3RD PL NOM/ sees-3RD SG always she-3RD SG NOM around
      'People always see them/her around'

(42) **Si vedo io/*   *vedi*   *tu/*
      si see-1ST SG I-1ST SG NOM/   see-2ND PL   you-2ND PL NOM

      vediamo   *noi/*   *vedete*   *voi*   *in giro*
      see-1ST PL   we-1ST PL NOM /   see-2ND PL   you-2ND PL NOM   around
      'People always see me/you/ us/ you around'

These striking similarities constitute crosslinguistic evidence for considering impersonal *si* as a quirky subject construction.

3.2.3. No verb-object agreement

The alternative agreement pattern for *si* constructions with transitive verbs was exemplified in (4) and (23), and is repeated here in (43):

(43)   *In Italia si mangia   spaghetti*
       in Italy si eats-3RD SG   spaghetti-PL ACC
       'In Italy people eat spaghetti'

In (43) there is no agreement of the verb with the object. The ending of the verb is the default third singular one. Like in (23), also in (43) the object is an internal argument, as shown in (44):

(44)   *In Italia se   ne   mangia*
       in Italy si of them   eats-3RD SG
       'In Italy people eat them'

(44) shows that in (43) the object is a real object, i.e. an internal argument. The tests applied for (23) in section 3.2. are also valid for (43). In addition to that, in (43) the object is Accusative, as shown in (21), here repeated as (45):

(45)   *In Italia li/   *essi   si mangia*
       in Italy them-3RD PL ACC they-3RD PL NOM   si eats-3RD SG
       'In Italy people eat them'

In (43) there is no V-O agreement: the verb exhibits the 3rd person singular default ending and the object bears Accusative. According to my proposal, if Accusative is assigned to the direct object no intervention effect of *si* can possibly have occurred. For this kind of sentences I assume in fact the second structure proposed by Anagnostopoulou (2000), namely the one with one single *v*. The existence of only one *v* means, in Anagnostopoulou's terms, that there is no dative assigning head (i.e. there is no v_2). Impersonal *si* doesn't show any inflectional morphology, and thus

it is hard to detect the case that *si* bears. Yet, I argue that *si* in (43) is not dative, and that the construction in (43) lacks a dative assigning head. This statement is not unsubstantiated. Anagnostopoulou (2000) shows that there is a strong correspondence between lack of the dative assigning head and presence of a bare noun object. Specifically, she shows that when there is no dative Benefactive (and thus when there is only one *v*) it is the Benefactive that checks the only Case available (i.e. Accusative) and the real object is licensed by (abstract) incorporation (see Baker 1996). In order to have incorporation, a bare object is required (see Baker 1988 and Van Geenhoven 2001). Anagnostopoulou's (1999) proposal is summarized in table 1.

Table 1.

| a. 2 *v*'s | DAT morph. on the Benefactive & DP object |
| b. 1 *v* | no DAT morph. on the Benefactive & bare noun object |

In other words, in some languages whenever the dative assigning head is missing the object of the construction must be a bare noun. This implication is bi-directional. (46) and (47) show that Italian is one of the languages for which this implication holds.

(46) *Che fai   oggi? Mangi   bistecche? / ???Ti   mangi bistecche?*
what do-2ND SG today eat-2ND SG steaks   you-DAT   eat-2ND SG steaks
'What are you going to do today? Are you going to eat steaks?'

(47) *Che fai   oggi? Ti   mangi una bistecca? / *bistecche?*
what do-2ND SG today you-DAT eat-2ND SG a steak / steaks
'What are you going to do today? Are you going to eat a steak/ steaks?'

Example (46) shows that the presence of a bare noun excludes the possibility of a dative Benefactive. Example (47) shows that if a Benefactive is present a bare noun is not licensed. Anagnostopoulou's equation: 'bare noun = no dative

assigning head' holds for Italian. No v_2 is present when a bare noun object is available.

The pattern proposed by Anagnostopoulou for double object constructions seems to hold for *si* impersonal constructions as well. In particular, (48) and (49) show that, in sentences with no agreement between the verb and the object, the object must always be a bare noun. According to Anagnostopoulou's equation, when the object is a bare noun (as in the sentences with no verb-object agreement) there is no dative. In (48), a no verb-object agreement construction, a bare noun object is required. Thus, there cannot be a dative in the sentence, and therefore *si* is not a dative. In (49), on the other hand, which is a verb-object agreement sentence, a bare noun object is very odd. There is a DP object that can license a dative. *Si* is dative in this case:
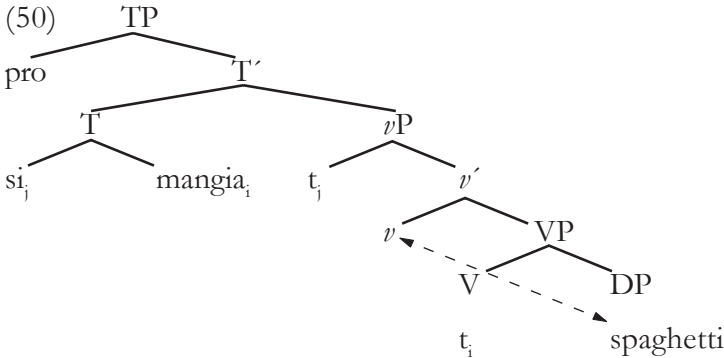
(48)   *In Germania si mangia   patate /   *le   patate*
     in Germany si eats-3RD SG   potatoes-PL FEM ACC/ the-PL FEM   potatoes- PL FEM ACC
     'In Germany people eat potatoes'

(49)   *In Germania   si   mangiano   le   patate/   ???patate*
     in Germany   si   eat-3RD PL   the-PL FEM   potatoes-PL FEM NOM/   potatoes-PL FEM NOM
     'In Germany people eat potatoes'

I conclude that Anagnostopoulou's equation is also true for impersonals, 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 (43) is thus as follows:

● The object *spaghetti* 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 gets the external Theta-role.

● T is merged; *si* immediately cliticizes on it; *si*'s Case features are valued by incorporation/cliticization on T. Note that this kind of incorporation/cliticization doesn't trigger agreement.
● An expletive *pro* is merged in the specifier of T to check the EPP.
● The verb in T shows the default 3rd person singular inflection because of lack of agreement with a DP (Benveniste 1966).

(50)

```
              TP
         ┌─────┴─────┐
       pro           T´
              ┌───────┴───────┐
              T               vP
         ┌────┴────┐     ┌─────┴─────┐
       si_j     mangia_i  t_j         v´
                               ┌──────┴──────┐
                               v             VP
                                        ┌────┴────┐
                                        V        DP
                                        t_i    spaghetti
```

3.3. Past participle agreement with transitive verbs

In the past tense (passato prossimo) of impersonal *si* constructions with verb-object agreement, the past participle shows agreement with the Nominative object:

(51) *Si è   mangiata   la   cioccolata*
      si is-3rd sg eaten-PP SG FEM the-SG FEM chocolate-SG FEM NOM
      'People/we have eaten the chocolate'

(52) *Si sono   viste   molte   macchine*
      si are-3RD PL seen-PP PL FEM   many-PL FEM cars-PL FEM NOM
      'People/we have seen many cars'

In particular, the auxiliary is plural if the object is plural, and the past participle agrees in number and gender with the object. Italian speakers do not perceive the non-agreeing form as grammatical (see 53).

(53) *Si è   *visto*   *molte*   *macchine*
     si is-3rd sg   seen-pp sg masc many-pl fem cars
     'People have seen many cars'

The phi-set on Italian past participle is incomplete, because the participle lacks person. Following Chomsky (1999), I will consider the past participle as having unvalued Case features. The direct object, which also has unvalued features, is phi-complete and can enter a Match relation with the participle. The derivation of (52) runs as follows:

● The direct object *molte macchine* is merged with the verb.
● The past participle head is merged, and the verb moves to it. From there, pp enters a Match relation with the direct object, which values the unvalued phi-features on pp, according to the mechanism proposed in Chomsky (1999). The direct object remains with its Case features unvalued, as pp is not phi-complete, *non*-referential and cannot value the object's Case. Both pp and the object still need to have their Case features valued.
● v_2 is merged; *si* is merged in the specifier of v_2. There it gets dative case and the external Theta-role. Despite this case, *si* can still intervene in checking operations.
● v_1 is merged. It enters an Agree relation with *si*, which gets its Case features valued and values 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 pp, whose features are still visible. The Case feature on pp is valued. However, the phi-set of pp is incomplete, and thus it cannot value the phi-features on T.
● T looks deeper down and Matches with the direct object, which is phi-complete and can value the phi-features on T. As a result, the direct object gets nominative Case.
● The EPP on T is checked by an expletive *pro*.

If the object is not a DP but a clitic, as in (54), the auxiliary shows the default third singular ending and pp agrees with the object clitic:

(54) *Le*   *si è*   *viste*
them-PL FEM ACC   si is-3RD SG seen-PL FEM
'People/we have seen them'

The sentence in (54) exemplifies a property of Italian, namely the fact that the past participle agrees with the object clitics. If this agreement is missing, the sentence sounds ungrammatical, as in (55):

(55) **Le*   *si è*   *visto*
them-PL FEM ACC   si is-3RD SG seen-SG MASC
'People/we have seen them'

Furthermore, in (54) the auxiliary must show the 3rd singular default ending. The plural ending, which would show agreement of the auxiliary with the object, is ruled out:

(56) ** Le*   *si sono*   *viste*
them-3RD PL   si are-3RD PL   seen-PL FEM
'People/we have seen them'

We are thus dealing with a construction with no verb-object agreement. Therefore, only one *v* is present. The derivation for (54) is the following:

● The direct object is merged with the verb.
● pp is merged and the verb raises to it and establishes and Agree relation with the direct object. The Case features of both pp and direct object are unvalued.
● v_1 is merged, and Agrees with pp.

● *Si* is merged in spec, v_1.

● v_1 values pp's Case features, but pp cannot value v's phi-features because it is phi-incomplete. Thus, v_1 establishes an Agree relation with the direct object and values its Case. The object gets Accusative.

● *Si* cliticizes, and so it cannot establish any relation with T. The direct object raises via clitic movement and cliticizes on the auxiliary.

● The EPP feature on T is checked by *pro*.

● The verb in T gets the third person singular ending as a result of lack of agreement with a DP.

3.4. An extra dative

In the previous sections I have proposed a model for the analysis of transitive *si* constructions. Before turning to other verb classes a further observation needs to be made. The core idea of my proposal is that *si* in V-O agreement constructions is dative. The following sentence seems to constitute counterevidence for my statement:

(57) *In Italia, mi   si sono   mangiati   tutti gli   spaghetti*
      in Italy   me-DAT   si are-3RD PL   eaten-PP PL MASC all   the   spaghetti-PL MASC NOM
      'In Italy, somebody ate all my spaghetti'

In (57), *mi* is clearly dative. How is it possible then that *si* is also dative? I can give a tentative answer by saying that *mi* in (57) is not a real dative, but a so-called ethical dative, which is not a real case. It is a well-known fact that a dative can always be converted into a PP of the form *a* +DP in Italian. This is possible for sentences like (58), where the dative is a Benefactive:

(58) *Gianni le   legge un libro / legge un libro   a Maria*
      Gianni her-DAT   reads a book / reads a book to Maria
      'Gianni reads a book to her / reads a book to Maria'

In (57), however, substituting a PP for the dative *mi* doesn't give

us the same acceptability as in (58):

(59) ??? *In Italia si sono   mangiati   gli spaghetti   a Maria*
      in Italy   si are-3RD PL eaten-PP PL MASC the spaghetti-PL MASC ACC to Maria
      'In Italy, somebody has eaten Maria's spaghetti'

This shows that the only dative pronouns can be sticked in an impersonal *si* construction. A characteristic of ethical datives in Italian is that they can only be realized by pronouns. Therefore, if (57) is indeed an instance of ethical dative, it constitutes no counterevidence to my proposal.

4. Impersonal *si* with unergative and unaccusative verbs

Unergative verbs show an interesting difference when compared to unaccusatives. The agreement patterns of the present tense in impersonal *si* constructions resemble those of unaccusatives. The past tense is instead different, for pp is also singular, and not plural as in the case of unaccusatives.

The present tense of an unergative impersonal *si* construction is shown in (60):

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

In (60) the verb shows the default 3rd singular ending. The past tense of (60) is (61):

(61) *Si è   telefonato*[6]
      si is-3RD SG called- PP SG MASC
      'People have called'

In (61), the auxiliary shows the default 3rd singular ending and

the participle shows the default singular masculine ending[7].

The present tense of an unaccusative impersonal *si* construction is shown in (62):

(62) *Si arriva   presto*
      si arrives-3ʳᴰ SG   early
      'People arrive early'

In (62), just like in (60), the verb is at the present tense and shows the default 3ʳᵈ singular ending. However, the past tense of an unaccusative impersonal is different from the past tense of an unergative construction, as shown in (63):

(63) *Si è   arrivati   presto*
      si is-3ʳᴰ SG   arrived- PP PL MASC early
      'People arrived early'

In (63), the auxiliary shows the default 3ʳᵈ singular ending while the participle is plural masculine.

In the previous section I have proposed an analysis for impersonal *si* constructions with transitive verbs. This section will be devoted to the analysis of unergative and unaccusative impersonals.

4.1. Impersonal *si* with unergatives

For the analysis of impersonals with unergative verbs I follow the lines proposed by Hale and 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.

As shown in the previous section, the agreement patterns of unergatives resemble those of unaccusatives only partially. In the present tense, the agreement patterns are the same as those of unaccusatives:

(64) *Si telefona*
      si calls-3ᴿᴰ sɢ
      'People call'

In (64) *si* is merged in the specifier of the only *v* available. The phi-features on *v* are valued by the 'null' direct object. *Si* doesn't trigger any Agree relation because it cliticizes on T as soon as T is merged.

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


(65) *Si è   telefonato*
      si is-3ᴿᴰ sɢ called-ᴘᴘ sɢ ᴍᴀsᴄ
      'People/we have called'

I argue that the inflection of pp is due to its agreement with the cognate object, which, being phonetically *non*-realized, triggers the default third singular agreement on the pp. The derivation of (65) runs as follows:

● The direct object is merged with the verb. The past participle head is merged, and it Agrees with the direct object, having its phi-features valued (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 on it. Its Case features are valued by incorporation/cliticization on the auxiliary.
● The EPP on T is checked by *pro*.
● The verb on T shows the default ending because of lack of agreement with a DP.

(66)   [$_{TP}$ pro [$_T$ si$_i$ –è [$_{vP}$ t$_i$ [$_{ppP}$ telefonato$_j$ [$_{VP}$ t$_j$ (DO)]]]]]]

The derivation of (65) is also illustrated in (67):

(67)
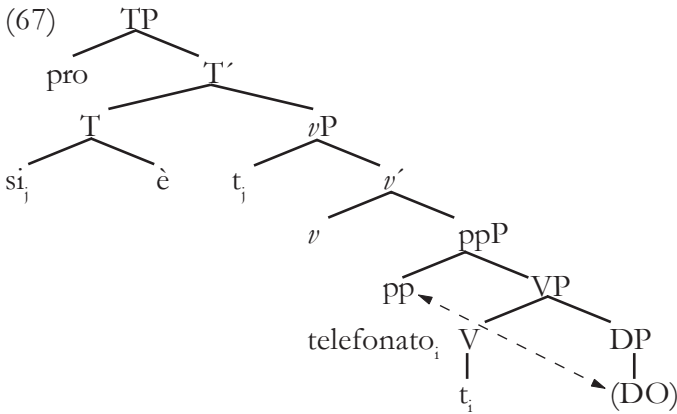
4.2. Impersonal *si* with unaccusative verbs

In the present tense, the finite unaccusative verb shows the default third singular ending, as in (62), here repeated as (68):

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

Following Kratzer (1994), I assume that unaccusative verbs have no *v* projection. *Si* is merged in the internal argument position. Evidence that *si* is generated in complement position is offered by the agreement patterns of unaccusative impersonals in the past tense, where the participle exhibits a plural masculine ending. This is not explainable in other ways than with a pp-*si* agreement. The derivation of (68) runs as follows:

● *Si* is merged with the verb.
● T is merged, and the verb raises there. *Si* cliticizes on the verb in T, and thus it cannot value the phi-features on T.

● The phi-features on T are the default ones.
● The EPP on T is checked by *pro*.
● The Case features on *si* are valued by the incorporation of *si* on the T head.

(69) $[_{TP} \textit{pro} [_T \text{si}_i -\text{arriva}_j [_{VP} t_j t_i]]]$

The derivation in (68) is also illustrated in (70):

(70) TP
pro   T′
        T
   si_j   arriva_i   VP
                        t_i   t_j
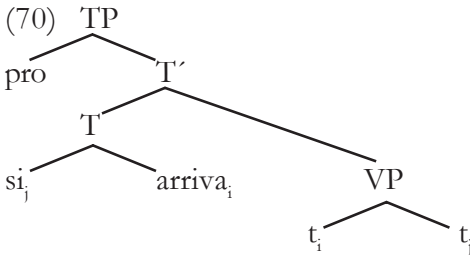
In the past tense, as I have already pointed out, there is a mismatch in number between the auxiliary and the past participle:

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

The plural ending on the past participle is given by its agreement with *si*. *Si* is merged in complement position, and (71) is derived as follows:

● The past participle is merged with *si*. *Si* Agrees with pp and values its phi-features, which get the plural masculine inflection. pp is phi-incomplete, though, and it cannot value Case on *si*.
● The auxiliary is merged on T.
● *Si* cliticizes on T and can no longer enter any Agree relation.

- The auxiliary shows the default ending as a result of lack of Agree.
- *pro* checks the EPP on T.
- The Case feature on *si* is valued by the incorporation of *si* into T.

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

(73)
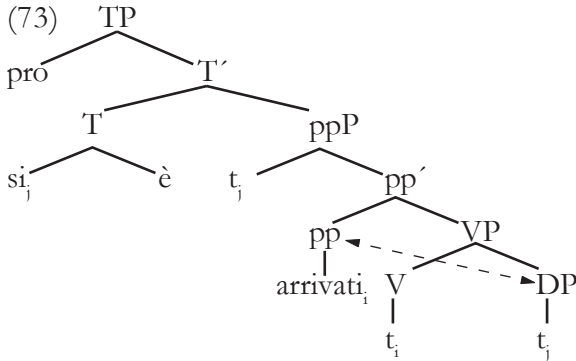
7. Conclusions

In this paper I have examined some peculiar agreement patterns for impersonal *si* constructions in Italian. I have suggested a strictly derivational analysis (Chomsky 1999), proposing that the syntactic structure of impersonal *si* constructions with transitive verbs can be analyzed according to the patterns outlined by Anagnostopoulou (2000) for double object constructions. What differentiates double object constructions with a Benefactive *si* from impersonal *si* constructions is the nature of *si*, which is *non*-referential in the case of anaphoric *si* and referential in the case of impersonal *si*. All the various agreement patterns derive from *si*'s double nature as head and DP (Chomsky 1995) and from locality conditions. There is no need to postulate special properties of *si*, such as absorption (or withdrawal) of Case or Theta-role, which are not shared by other clitics. Finally, I have examined the unergative-unaccusative puzzle, and I have proposed an analysis that accounts for the singular-plural alternation on the past participle in terms of lack vs. presence of agreement of pp with *si*.

Acknowledgments

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[1] For the definition of Numeration, see Chomsky (1998).

[2] For the definition of phase see Chomsky (1999).

[3] *Se* is an allomorph of *si*, which occurs when *si* precedes an object clitic. Other instances of this allomorph are *se lo* (si him)/ *se la* (si her)/ *se li* (si them-masc)/ *se le* (si them-fem).

[4] The difference in the location of the Accusative pronouns vs. the

Nominative ones is due to the fact that the Accusatives are clitic forms; the form *essi* is not very much in use in modern Italian, but it is Nominative. The form *loro*, which is the most used, has no distinction between Nominative and Accusative, and therefore wouldn't help in this context.

[5] This quirky case is a 'weak' case, that needs to be associated to another case. This happens possibly because *si* doesn't show morphological inflection that makes it visibly marked for case (A. Belletti, p.c.).

[6] Notice that the presence of *si* determines a switch in the auxiliary selection from 'have' to 'be'. A complete analysis of the auxiliary shift which also includes the phenomena under discussion in this paper is provided by Kayne (2000).

[7] For Italian, just like for many other languages, the default gender is masculine (see Corbett 1991).