

# Floating features in Syntax: Person, Deixis and Agreement in Italo-Romance

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## Strong Minimalist Thesis

- *Strong Minimalist Thesis*  
“Language is an optimal solution to legibility conditions” [Chomsky 2000: 96]
- The output of narrow syntactic operations must be readable/fully interpretable at the interface with PF and LF
  - How do we ensure readability?
  - How do we deal with apparent exceptions?

## Minimalist method

- Minimalist “method”
  - Occam’s razor: Postulate only what is conceptually necessary (if we are not sure something is really there, we are not allowed to postulate it)
  - *Inclusiveness condition*  
No new features are introduced by C<sub>HL</sub> [Chomsky 2000: 113]
  - Eliminate from Narrow Syntax everything that is not readable at the interface (see Agree and valuation/deletion)

## Φ heads

- Φ heads are a problem for legibility conditions
  - “[...]T, C, D, and Agr. The first three have interpretable features providing “instructions” at either or both interface levels. Agr does not; it consists of -interpretable formal features only. We therefore have fairly direct evidence from interface relations about T, C, and D, but not Agr. Unlike the other functional categories, Agr is present only for theory-internal reasons.” [Chomsky 1995:349]

## Chomsky's solution

- These heads don't bring any semantic content: they cannot exist.



## Outline

- $\Phi$  or no  $\Phi$  – theoretical issues
- Where is  $\pi$ ? Parametric choices
- Empirical issues:
  - Clitics
  - Deictic 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns
  - Person-driven auxiliaries
  - Person-driven *rafforzamento fonosintattico*
  - Person-driven DOM
  - Adverbial agreement
- Conclusions

## $\Phi$ or no $\Phi$

- Postulating a head with no interpretable features is not conceptually necessary > we don't do it
- Empirical evidence for these heads > It seems that these heads exist
- An alternative solution

## Clitics

- Subject clitics in Northern Italian varieties and clitic doubling:

(1)	La Maria	<b>la</b>	magna	[Venetan]
	the Mary-SG.F	SCL-3.SG.F	eats-3.SG	
	"Mary eats"			
(2)	<b>la</b>	drom- <b>la?</b>	[Oviglio, Piedmont]	
	SCL-3.SG.F	sleeps SCL-3.SG.F		
	"Does she sleep?" (Manzini & Savoia 2007:36)			
(3)	<b>Lo</b>	empujaron	a Juan.	[Spanish]
	CL-3.SG.M=pushed	to John		
	"They pushed John" (Torrego 1994:199)			

## Subject clitics

- SCLs and doubling clitics do not convey semantic information
  - Most Northern Italian subject clitics are not pronominal

Rizzi (1986): NID SCLs are inflectional features.

Evidence:

- agreement markers may follow preverbal negation, but not pronouns
- agreement markers are compatible with negatively quantified subjects, but not pronouns (left dislocation of neg Q: \*noone, he left)
- agreement markers must appear in both conjuncts of a coordinate structure, pronouns must not
- agreement paradigms may contain gaps; pronoun paradigms do not.

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## Subject clitics

- Trigger for cliticization? Agree [Roberts 2010]

What is the trigger for cliticization? [...] This is nothing other than Agree. Agree plus spell-out of features on the probe under specific conditions: cliticization

(4) a. *Trigger for Agree*  
v\* [Pers: \_\_, Num: \_\_]      D [Pers: a, Num:b], [Case: \_\_]

b. *Outcome of Agree*  
v\* [Pers: a, Num: b]      D [Pers: a, Num:b], [Case: \_\_]

Roberts (2010:59)

- Roberts's proposal is ok for argumental and SCLs. Problems with doubling/tripling.

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## Subject clitics

- What is cliticization? Agree [Roberts 2010]

SCLs in some NI varieties are nothing other than the Spellout of Agree.

Goals can be defective (subset of features of the Probe): Agree with defective Goal and Spellout of the higher copy of  $\phi$ .

Agree plus spell-out of features on the Probe: clitic effect.

(4) a. *Trigger for Agree*  
v\* [Pers: \_\_, Num: \_\_]      D [Pers: a, Num:b], [Case: \_\_]

b. *Outcome of Agree*  
v\* [Pers: a, Num: b]      D [Pers: a, Num:b], [Case: \_\_]

Roberts (2010:59)

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## Extra $\phi$

- Whichever way we go: we have some additional, extra  $\phi$  that are not there in other varieties
- Are they on a separate head? > later
- Let us assume they are: there is an alternative way

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## Condition on the Merger of $\Phi$ HEADS

### (5) CONDITION ON THE MERGER OF $\Phi$ HEADS

A purely  $\phi$ -head  $\pi$ , i.e. a head encoding only unvalued, uninterpretable  $\phi$ -features, can be merged into the syntactic spine; for FI conditions,  $\pi$  must be incorporated into/merged with a semantically non-empty head before the interface with the CI system is reached.

- **In other words:** Cliticization is conceptually necessary for Full Interpretability conditions

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## In the rest of the talk:

- There is an extra  $\pi$  Probe (uninterpretable  $\phi$  only) in Italo-Romance
- Each Italo-Romance language “decides” what to merge/incorporate it with
- $\pi$  can be merged as an agreement ending
- **$\pi$  can be also merged/incorporated in the stem of a word**
- If  $\pi$  is merged as the word stem or as an ending, it will still agree

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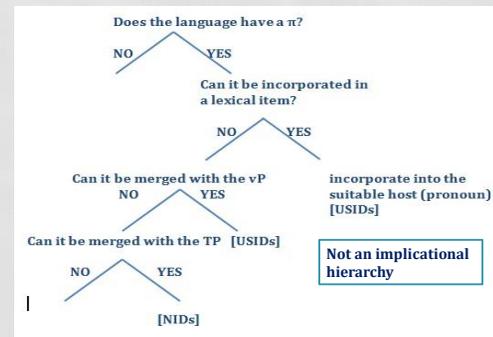
## Outline

- $\Phi$  or no  $\Phi$  – theoretical issues
- **Where is  $\pi$ ? Parametric choices**
- Empirical issues:
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## Where is $\pi$ ? Parametric choice

- Microparameter

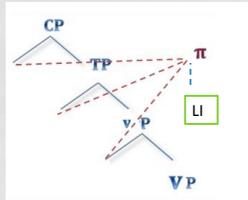
(6)



## “Autosegmental syntax”?

- Floating  $\pi$  can be merged /incorporated to several items

(7)



If Lexical Insertion is post-syntactic and Lis are built at NS, we don't really have a problem

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## A brief aside: Autosegmental phonology

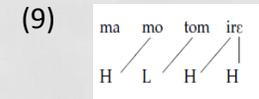
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SUBJECT	(OBJECT)	ROOT	TENSE
to 'we'	mo 'him'	rɔr 'look at'	ire PAST
ma 'they'	ma 'them'	tom 'send'	

to	ma	mo	ma	rɔr	tom	ire
L	H	L	H	L	H	H

- Association convention:** No floating tones are allowed on the surface, every tone needs to be linked to a vowel



(Goldsmith 1976)

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## Possible mergers of $\pi$

- We have a “floating  $\pi$ ” (recall, set of  $\phi$  features)
- No selectional properties! (No category)

(10)



- $\pi$  will have to incorporate/cliticize before Spell-Out
- This is first-Merge
- In what follows: landing site

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## How does $\pi$ get there?

- One or more  $\pi$  in the numeration of these languages
- Langs need to decide where  $\pi$  is “anchored”
- $\pi$  cannot be late-inserted at syntax (violation of the Extension Condition/No Tampering Condition)

“A natural requirement for efficient computation is a ‘no tampering condition’ NTC: Merge of X and Y leaves the two [syntactic objects] unchanged. If so, then Merge of X and Y can be taken to yield the set X, Y, the simplest possibility worth considering. (Chomsky, 2008)

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## Empirical evidence of extra $\pi$

- Clitics
  - Person-driven auxiliaries
  - Deictic 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns
  - Person-driven DOM
  - Person-driven *rafforzamento fonosintattico*
  - Adverbial agreement
- It is all a matter of agreeing probes

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## Subject clitics

Subject clitics

(1)	La Maria	la	magna	[Venetan]
	the Mary-SG.F	SCL-3.SG.F	eats-3.SG	
	"Mary eats"			
(2)	la	drom-la?	[Oviglio, Piedmont]	
	SCL-3.SG.F	sleeps SCL-3.SG.F		
	"Does she sleep?"			(Manzini & Savoia 2007:36)

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## Person-oriented auxiliaries

- Upper southern auxiliary selection patterns

(14)

a. (ji)So magnatə	BE	d.(nu) seme magnitə	BE
(I) am eaten.sg		we are eaten.pl	
'I have eaten'		'we are eaten'	
b.(tu) si magnatə		sete magnitə	BE
you are eaten.sg		are eaten.pl	
'You have eaten'		'you have eaten'	
c.(essə) a magnatə	HAVE	f.(jissə)a magnitə	HAVE
(s)he has eaten.sg		they have eaten.pl	
'(he) has eaten'		'They have eaten'	

[D'Alessandro & Roberts 2010, D'Alessandro & Ledgeway 2010]

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## In both cases

- We see agreement of some element with the subject. Extra  $\pi$  agreement.
- (Similarities btw SCLs and aux  $\rightarrow$ )

(15)

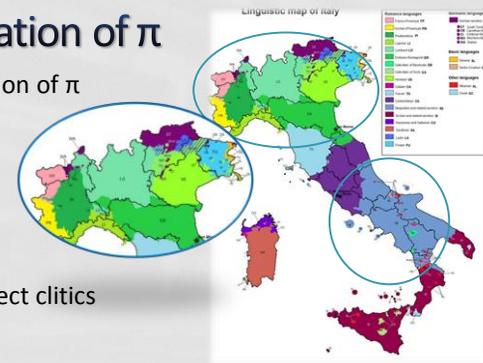
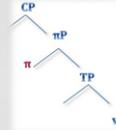
A (1/2) dormja [Semione]	So = s (BE=1/2) + -o (1.sg)
Ty (2.sg) dorm	si = s (BE =1/2) + -i (2.sg)
U/la (3.sg) dorm	a = a (HAVE =3) + a (3)
A (1/2) dormon	semə = s (BE =1/2) + -emə (1.pl)
A (1/2) durmit	setə = s (BE =1/2) + -etə (2.pl)
I (3.pl) dorm	a = a (HAVE =3) + a (3)

(Manzini & Savoia 2005:72)

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## Lexicalization of $\pi$

- Lexicalization of  $\pi$

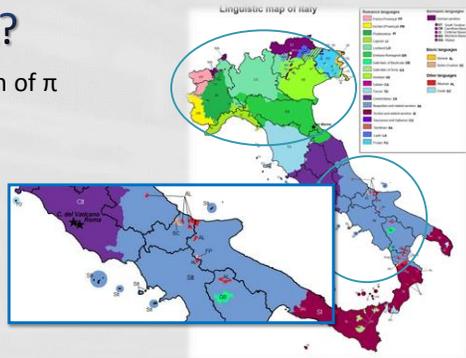
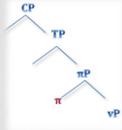


- Subject clitics

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## What is $\pi$ ?

- Lexicalization of  $\pi$



- Person-oriented Auxiliary roots

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## Deictic 3rd person pronouns

- Personal pronouns in USIDs

(16) Custù, cussù, cullù (Eastern Abruzzese)  
he he he  
'He next to me, he next to you, he far from both'

(17) Chistè, chissè, chillè  
she she she  
'She next to me, she next to you, she far from both'

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## Deictic 3rd person pronouns

- **Personal deixis** (i.e. reference to the participantsto a speech act) and person are usually considered to overlap in pronouns.

Benveniste (1966): le traitement du pronom personnel «je»: il y a deux «je», «deux instances conjuguées»: l'une est une instance formelle, «linguistique», l'autre est une instance «personnelle», une présence. Ce dernier «je» relève d'un prédicat de réalité. Il «signifie la personne qui énonce la présente instance de discours contenant je». (PLG I, p. 252)

**Grammatical person and deixis: are they the same thing?**

- Is 1st person the same as **speaker**?
- Is 2nd person the same as **addressee**?

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## 1st/ 2nd vs 3rd

- 1st person : [+ speaker]
- 2nd person: [+ addressee]
- 3rd person: [- speaker; - addressee]

**3rd person is actually the ABSENCE of person**

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## 3rd person = no person

- Third person pronouns do not refer to a speech act participant.**
- Third person pronouns need to be introduced: they either require a discourse antecedent or an ostensive act.
- Third person referents depend on the linguistic context, not on the utterance context. Thus they are anaphoric, not indexical.
- Once introduced, the referent of a third person pronoun can remain constant, independently of which interlocutor is using it.
- Third person pronouns can refer to both sentient and non-sentient individuals.  
Gruber (2013: 47)

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## 3rd person = no person?

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she she she  
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## Spanish demonstratives

- Same as Spanish?

(18) éste, ése, aquél } Pronouns  
ésta, ésa, áquella ... }

(19) este, ese, aquell } Adjectives  
esta, esa, aquella.... }

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## 3rd person = no person?

- Demonstratives

(20) Questə, quessə, quellə  
this, that that  
'This close to me, that close to you, that far from both'

(16) Custù, cussù, cullù

These pronouns are NOT demonstratives: they are personal pronouns with deixis

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## Deictic/locative information

- Adverbs

(21) Accuscì, (assocì) all'uscì  
this way, the way  
'The way I am doing it, the way you're doing it, the way they do it'

**Remember!**

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## 3rd person pronouns

- no person but a deictic/ locative feature

DEIXIS and PERSON are two different features



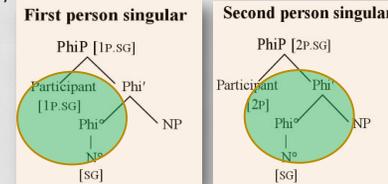
What is the structure of these pronouns?

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## Pronouns

- The inner structure of pronouns
- Pronouns have structure (Cardinaletti & Starke 1999, Déchaine & Wiltschko 2002, Harley & Ritter 2002, Van Koppen 2012...)

(22)

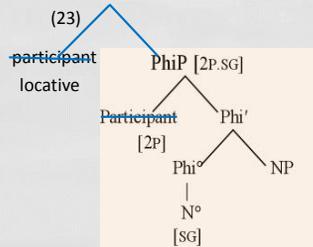


(Van Koppen 2012: 148)

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## 3rd person pronouns

- Is the 3rd person deictic equivalent to «no person» next to the addressee?



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## Possessives

- What is this locative/deictic?
- How is this different from possessives?

(21) La casa jè di lu me / mammà  
the house is of the mine / mother-me  
'The house is mine'

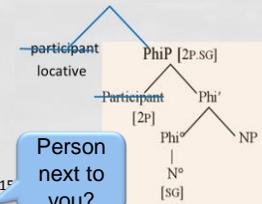
Object next to you

(22) (di) lu mè / (di) lu tè / (di) lu sé  
of the mine the yours the his

[3 rd person + deictic]?

[D'Alessandro & Di Sciullo 2008, D'Alessandro & Migliori 2011]

cussù



Person next to you?

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## Deictics vs Possessives

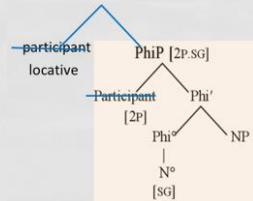
(22) lu tè  
the yours

Object next to you

(16) cussù  
he-next to you

Person next to you

There is no possessive reading in *cussù*



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## Person-oriented auxiliaries

- Upper southern auxiliary selection patterns

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a. (ji)So magnatə BE (I) am eaten.sg 'I have eaten'	d. (nu) seme magnitə BE we are eaten.pl 'We have eaten'
b. (tu) si magnatə BE you are eaten.sg 'You have eaten'	e. vu sete magnitə BE you.pl are eaten.pl 'You have eaten'
c. (essə) a magnatə HAVE (s)he has eaten.sg '(he) has eaten'	f. (jissə) a magnitə HAVE they have eaten.pl 'They have eaten'

[D'Alessandro & Roberts 2010]

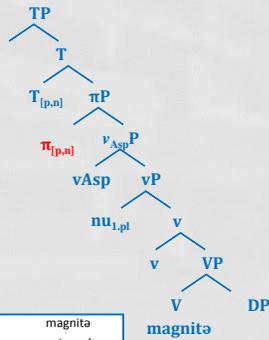
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## Person-oriented auxiliaries

(15) Nu s' avavemə magnitə  
we BE-1/2 had-1st.pl.impf.pst eaten-pl  
'We had eaten'

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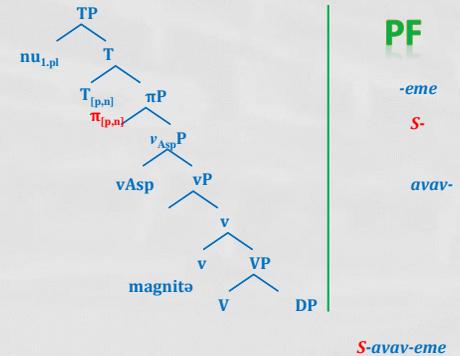
## Person-oriented auxiliaries



(15) Nu s' avavema magnita  
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## Person-oriented auxiliaries



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## Auxiliaries /raddoppiamento

(23)

Albidona (Northern Calabrian)			
a.	ɖʒə	ya'βa:tə/βə'nu:tə	H.pr.1sg washed/come
	ε	ya'βa:tə/βə'nu:tə	H.pr.2sg washed/come
	ε	gga'βa:tə/bbə'nu:tə	H.pr.3sg washed/come
b.	mə	ya'βa:tə/βə'nu:tə	H.pr.1pl washed/come
	a'βəsə	ya'βa:tə/βə'nu:tə	H.pr.2pl washed/come
	nə	ya'βa:tə/βə'nu:tə	H.pr.3pl washed/come

[Manzini & Savoia (2005), II: 784]

$\pi = \mu$

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## Person-driven *raddoppiamento*

(24)

Airola (Central Campanian)			
a.	addə	'vistə/ve'nu:tə	H.pr.1sg seen/come
	a	'vistə/ve'nu:tə	H.pr.2sg seen/come
	<b>a</b>	<b>v'</b> vistə/ <b>vve'</b> nu:tə	H.pr.3sg seen/come
b.	ammu	'vistə/ve'nu:tə	H.pr.1pl seen/come
	atə	'fatt/ve'nu:tə	H.pr.2pl seen/come
	annə	'fatt/ve'nu:tə	H.pr.3pl seen/come

Torcolacci (2015:104)

- Where  $\pi$  is expressed depends on the language!
- Airola e Arielli have the same  $\pi$

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## Person-driven DOM

- DOM (in Romance): animacy

(25) Hoy vi **a** tu primo/unos libros  
 Today saw-1.SG AT your cousin/some books  
 'I saw your cousin today/I saw some books today'

Prepositional accusative/DOM: animacy-driven

Richards (2008): The syntactic basis of these phenomena has been argued to be a single syntactic feature: **Person**. This feature is specified only on animate and/or definite arguments (since inanimates and indefinites are always inherently third-person), as part of the D head.

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## Person-driven DOM

- Specificity/animacy/telicity/affectedness

(26) So vistə a te /a vu  
 am seen to you to you.PL  
 'I saw you/you.PL'

(27) Si vistə a me/ a nu  
 are seen to me to us  
 'You saw me, us'

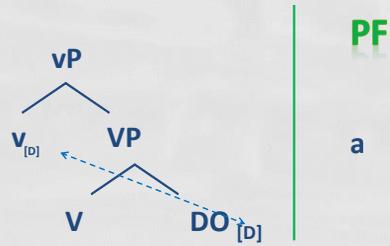
(28) Semə viste (**\*a**) Marijə /essə/ jissə  
 are seen to Mary him/her them  
 'We saw Mary, her/him, them'

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## DOM

- a is the exponent of a definiteness feature

(29)

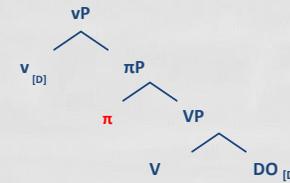


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## DOM

- a is the exponent of a D (categorial) feature +  $\pi$

(30)

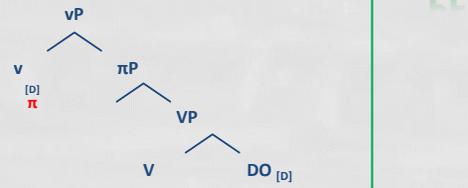


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## DOM

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(30)

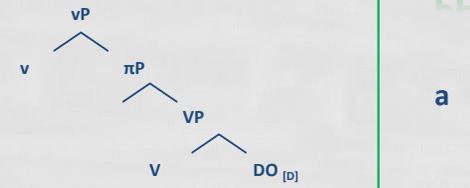


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## DOM

- a is the exponent of a D (categorial) feature +  $\pi$

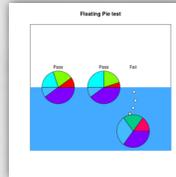
(30)



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## Deixis & person

- USIDs express DEIXIS more frequently than the rest of Romance.
- They also express PERSON more frequently than the rest of Romance.
- Another case of floating  $\pi$ s!



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## Adverbial agreement

- Ripano (agreement mismatch markers, gender marking on the finite verb...)

(25)

a.	I' ridu	('I laugh'-masc)	b.	ia ride	('I laugh'-fem)	[Ripano]
	tu ridu	('you laugh'-masc)		tu ride	('you laugh'-fem)	
	issu ridu	('he laughs'-masc)		esse ride ...		
	noja ridemi			noja ridema		
	voja rideti			voja rideta		
	issi ridi			essa ride		
c.	se ride	('it is laughed'-neuter)				[Rossi 2008: 31]

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## Adverbial agreement

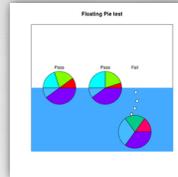
(26) *Issu/isse ha rispostu/e malu/e*  
 he-SG.M/F have-3.SG. answer-PPT.SG.M/F badly-SG.M/F  
 '(S)he answered badly'

(27) *le/li flachine/flachì va(/nnu) a spasse/i*  
 the-SG.F/MPL girl-SG.F/MPL go-3 around-SGF/MPL  
 'The girl goes around' 'The boys go around'

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## Adverbial agreement

- (28) a. *Magnu sembru*  
eat-1.SG.M always-M.  
'I always eat'  
b. *Magne sembru*  
eat-1.F.M always-F.  
'I always eat'



- Where does this extra gender feature come from?
- Floating  $\pi$

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## Recall

### • Adverbs

- (19) *Accuscì, (assocì), alluscì*  
this way, that way, that way  
'The way I am doing it, the way you're doing it, the way they do it'

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## Recall

*Accuscì, (assocì), alluscì*       $\pi$  in the root  
this way, that way, that way      Probes for the participant

*Magnu sembru*       $\pi$  in the ending  
eat-1.SG.M always-M.      Probes for the participant  
'I always eat'

- Abruzzese and Ripano both feature a deictic  $\pi$
- This  $\pi$  is merged in the vP (D'Alessandro et al 2016)

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## Outline

- $\Phi$  or no  $\Phi$  – theoretical issues
- Where is  $\pi$ ? Parametric choices
- Empirical issues:
  - Clitics
  - Deictic 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns
  - Person-driven auxiliaries
  - Person-driven *rafforzamento fonosintattico*
  - Person-driven DOM
  - Adverbial agreement
- Conclusions

## Conclusions

- There is an extra  $\pi$  in Italo-Romance
- Each language decides what to merge/incorporate it with
- This  $\pi$  can be merged/incorporated in the stem of a word
- If  $\pi$  is merged as the word stem or as an ending, it will still be able to agree
- Cliticization/incorporation are conceptually necessary

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## Grazjə a ssəgnərì!

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Per Massimo, in memoriam  
14-12-1972/1-4-2009

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