

Towards a finer-grained theory of Italian non-finite clausal architecture

1. Introduction. On the basis of data from Borgomanerese (a Northern Italian dialect) and Romanian (see Savescu 2007), Tortora (2007) argues that Romance participial clauses have a relatively low (pre-VP) complement clitic placement site, compared to finite clauses (which have a relatively high one). The idea is that participial clauses are missing the higher Infl(ectio)nal Field (v. Poletto 2000), so that any material which would otherwise appear in the high field will be missing in participial clauses. In this paper, we provide evidence from Italian that participial clauses are missing the higher Infl Field, and give a fine-grained analysis of which portion of the structure is missing (thus contributing to our understanding of the structure of non-finite clauses). The novel evidence comes from the behavior of impersonal *si* and from the clitic *ci* in the verb *volerci* ‘to be necessary’.

2. Impersonal *si*. As Burzio (1986) noted, the morpheme *si* in Italian has several different uses, two of which he labels reflexive *si* (si_{refl}) and impersonal *si* (si_{imp}). This reveals that the morpheme *si* can serve multiple functions, and suggests that depending on its function, it may license distinct functional morphemes, and/or occupy distinct functional heads. Independent data from Borgomanerese show that si_{imp} occupies a different functional head from si_{refl} : as can be seen in (1), si_{imp} must be pre-verbal in this dialect, while si_{refl} must be enclitic. The example in (1b) in fact shows that si_{imp} must be a subject clitic (SCL) in Borgomanerese, since all object clitics in this dialect are always enclitic (Tortora 2002), while all SCLs are pre-verbal. These facts suggest that in Italian, too, si_{imp} , though perhaps not a SCL itself (as Italian does not otherwise have SCLs), licenses a high (silent) element that yields the si_{imp} interpretation. If this view is correct, then the si_{imp} interpretation should be impossible in past participial clauses, under the hypothesis that such clauses are missing the higher Infl Field. The data in (3) from Burzio (1986) show this prediction is borne out: as can be seen by the possible interpretations in (2), the *si* in the finite clause can be interpreted as si_{imp} (in addition to si_{refl}). However, as (3) shows, only the si_{refl} interpretation is possible in the participial clause. This fact is explained under the current hypothesis: with the higher functional field absent in such clauses, the high element associated with si_{imp} is not present.

2. The *ci* of *volerci*. Another piece of evidence that Italian participial clauses have a missing higher Infl Field comes from the Italian verb *volerci* (Russi 2006). *Volerci* consists of the verb *volere* ‘want’ plus the clitic *ci*, and translates roughly as ‘to be needed/necessary’ (see (4)). Note that the clitic *ci* has numerous functions in Italian, including the 1st person plural accusative/dative clitic and the locative clitic. Given the many functions of *ci*, we hypothesize that, depending on its function, *ci* may occupy (or license) distinct functional heads. For *volerci*, we propose that this verb’s meaning is derived compositionally from the meaning of the verb *volere* ‘want’, combined with a relatively high modal head encoding deontic semantics (which we label $Deon^0$), which is akin to the deontic modal head occupied by Italian *bisogna* (Benincà & Poletto 1994; Kayne 2007), and which is licensed by *ci*. There is evidence from Paduan that $Deon^0$ is not occupied by the clitic *ci*, but rather licensed by it. As can be seen in (5), Paduan has the equivalent of *volerci*, using instead the clitic *ghe* (which also functions as the 3rd person dative clitic and the locative clitic). While Paduan resembles Italian in its use of *volere* + *ci/ghe* to form a deontic verb, the two varieties differ in that in Paduan, a benefactive clitic is in complementary distribution with *ghe* (6b); in contrast, in Italian, a benefactive clitic occurs with *ci* (6a). The fact that in Paduan the deontic meaning of the verb is preserved, even when *ghe* is missing (as in (6b)), suggests that the clitic *ghe* does not itself morpho-syntactically instantiate $Deon^0$, but rather licenses it, occupying a distinct head (see (7)). The fact that *ghe* is absent when the benefactive clitic is present suggests that the latter also has the ability to license the deontic head in Paduan. Note that since *ghe* also functions as the 3rd person dative clitic, (5) is in fact ambiguous between the meaning ‘Two euros are necessary’ and ‘Two euros are necessary to him/her/them’ (with *ghe* being interpreted either as the equivalent of the *ci* of *volerci*, or as a 3rd person benefactive). On analogy with Paduan *ghe*, we propose that the *ci* of *volerci* appears in a relatively high functional head in the clause, where it licenses $Deon^0$ (see (8)). Interestingly, bilingual Italian-Paduan speakers who exhibit (5) (with both the benefactive and non-benefactive reading) also allow two readings for the Italian sentence in (4) (‘necessary’ and ‘necessary for us’), suggesting that for these speakers, the clitic *ci* in (4) is ambiguous between the *ci* of *volerci* in (8), and a 1st person plural benefactive *ci* (which, like Paduan benefactives, can also license $Deon^0$). What is important for us here is the following fact: when *volerci* is used in a past participial clause, only the benefactive reading is preserved (see (9)). We would like to suggest that this fact derives from the hypothesis put forth here: past participial clauses only have a lower structure (and thus a low clitic placement site). Like we saw for si_{imp} above, since the high clitic placement site of the licensing *ci* (which is higher than $Deon^0$; see (8)) is absent in such clauses, only the 1st person plural interpretation is possible.

Examples:

- (1) a. *Al vônga-si.* Borgomanerese Reflexive *si*
SCL sees-si
'He sees himself.'
- b. *As môngia bej chilonsé.* Borgomanerese Impersonal *si*
si eats well here
'One eats well here.'

Italian [finite clause] with *si*:

- (2) *Gli individui [che si erano presentati al direttore] furono poi assunti.*
the individuals that si were presented to.the director were then hired
'The individuals that one had introduced to the director...'
'The individuals that had introduced themselves to the...'
Impersonal *si*
Reflexive *si*

Italian [non-finite clause] with *si*:

- (3) *Gli individui [presentatisi al direttore] furono poi assunti.*
the individuals presented-si to.the director were then hired
* 'The individuals that one had introduced to the director...'
'The individuals that had introduced themselves to the...'
Impersonal *si*
Reflexive *si*

- (4) *Ci vogliono due euro.*
ci want two euros
'Two euros are necessary'
% 'Two euros are necessary (for us)' (for Italian-Paduan bilinguals)

- (5) *Ghe vole do euro.*
ghe wants two euros
'Two euros are necessary (for him).'

- (6) a. *Mi ci vogliono due euro.* Italian
me ci want two euros
'Two euros are necessary to me.'

- b. *Me (*ghe) vole do euro.* Paduan
me ghe want two euros
'Two euros are necessary to me.'

- (7) [AgrsP ... [FP1 ... [FP2 ... *ghe/me* [RootModP Deon⁰ [FP3 *vole*]]]]] Paduan

- (8) [AgrsP ... [FP1 ... [FP2 ... *ci* [RootModP Deon⁰ [FP3 *vuole*]]]]] Italian

- (9) *La pasta [volutaci] era troppa.*
the pasta wanted-ci was too much
'The pasta necessary *(for us) was too much.'

References: Benincà & Poletto 1994: "Bisogna and its companions: the verbs of necessity," in G. Cinque et al. (eds.) *Paths Towards Universal Grammar*; Burzio 1986: *Italian Syntax*; Ciucivara to appear: "Challenging the Person Case Constraint: Evidence from Romanian," in J. Camacho et al. (eds.) *LSRL36 Proceedings*; Kayne 2007: "Some English (and Romance) Auxiliaries," talk given at the *XVIIth Colloquium on Generative Grammar*, Girona; Poletto 2000: *The Higher Functional Field*; Russi 2006: "Italian *volerci*: Lexical Verb or Functional Head?" in N. Chiyo & J.P. Montreuil (eds.) *New Perspectives on Romance Linguistics*; Tortora 2002: "Romance Enclisis, Prepositions, and Aspect," *NLLT* 20.4: 725-757; Tortora 2007: "Making the case for low verbs and low clitics in Romance non-finite and imperative clauses," talk given at *LSRL37*.