



**Citation:** P. Lorusso, A. Moro (2020) The propredicative clitic in Italo-romance: a micro-parametric variation approach. *Qulso* 6: pp. 97-124. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13128/QULSO-2421-7220-9697>

**Copyright:** © 2020 P. Lorusso, A. Moro. This is an open access, peer-reviewed article published by Firenze University Press (<https://oaj.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-qulso>) and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution - Non Commercial - No derivatives 4.0 International License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited as specified by the author or licensor, that is not used for commercial purposes and no modifications or adaptations are made.

**Data Availability Statement:** All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

**Competing Interests:** The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

## The propredicative clitic in Italo-romance: a micro-parametric variation approach

*Paolo Lorusso and Andrea Moro*

NEtS Scuola Universitaria Superiore IUSS Pavia  
([pavlovlo@gmail.com](mailto:pavlovlo@gmail.com)), ([andrea.moro@iusspavia.it](mailto:andrea.moro@iusspavia.it))

### *Abstract:*

In this paper we describe the distribution of propredicative clitics in nominal copular constructions across different Italo-romance varieties. Different lexical items are recruited from the lexicon to cliticize the predicative NP, all of them either lack inflection or show a neuter inflection: the ‘uninflected’ status of propredicatives, in fact, is an available option among the categorial status of different pronouns. The characteristics of propredicatives across Italo-Romance confirms the predictions of the analysis of Moro (1997: 1) copular constructions allow only one agreement projection (agreement with the subject of the copular sentence and not with the predicate), 2) the proforms are generated in  $N^0$  rather than a  $D^0$ . This analysis challenges the ‘definite’ analyses of romance I-clitics (which date back to Postal 1966): such proposals often invoke the parallel between clitics and definite articles as a reason to treat clitics as belonging to the category D. We will also show that apparent counterexamples found in some varieties in which the proforms agree in gender and number with the nominal predicates rely on semantic restrictions and ellipsis. We will finally update the proposal of Moro (1997) in terms of the labelling algorithm (Moro 2009; Chomsky 2013; Rizzi 2016): the  $N^0$  cliticization involved in the propredicative items allows a  $D^0$  in situ within the small clause which label the small clause, which otherwise will be unlabelled and imply a crash in the derivation.

**Keywords:** *agreement, clitics, definiteness, nominal copular constructions, propredicatives*

### *1. Introduction*

In this paper, we provide a comparative overview of the distribution of propredicative clitics. Our research is based mainly on data from Italo-romance varieties, but we also include data from other Romance languages. Propredicative clitics are the proforms found in copular sentence to refer to either the predicative NP or the AP. In Italian the propredicative clitics are invariant in gender and number: for instance, also when they refer to a feminine predicative NP (1b) or to an inflected AP (2b).

- (1) a. Le ragazze sono la causa del litigio.  
The girls are the<sub>fem-sing</sub> cause<sub>fem-sing</sub> of the quarrel.
- b. Le ragazze \*la/ lo sono (la causa del litigio)  
The girls it<sub>fem-sing</sub> / it<sub>neuter-sing</sub> are (the<sub>fem-sing</sub> cause<sub>fem-sing</sub> of the quarrel)  
'The girls are the cause of the quarrel.'
- (2) a. Le ragazze sono belle.  
The girls are beautiful.
- b. Le ragazze \*le /lo sono (belle).  
The girls it<sub>fem-plur</sub> / it<sub>neuter-sing</sub> are (beautiful).  
'The girls are beautiful.'

We propose an analysis of copular constructions in which the predicative XP (NP, AP)<sup>1</sup> cliticizes in an invariant/uninflected form (1b, 2b). As for nominal copular constructions, the main idea is that, as Moro (1997) suggests, *lo* is generated in a N<sup>0</sup> rather than D<sup>0</sup>: the invariant form of the pro-predicative clitic does not imply a definite D description ([-referential] in the terms of La Fauci and Loporcaro, 1997), as the other *l*-clitics do, since it refers to the predicative element within the small clause. We report the data from different Romance varieties which uniformly show that the proforms for the predicative NPs are either invariant pro-predicative clitics or adverbs. These data on the one hand confirm that copular constructions allow only one AGR projection (which is activated for the chain of the raised subject NP), as predicted by Moro (1997), and, on the other hand, the element allowed to stand for the predicate can only be either a non-inflecting lexical item or a proform with neuter inflection so that "it seems that an inherent property of pro-predicative elements is that they do not have any features of their own [...] (Moro 1997: 66)".

Moreover, the N<sup>0</sup> generation of the pro-predicative clitics has clear implications at syntax-semantics interface: pro-predicatives do not refer to any argument or referent in the world (in the sense of definite expression) and since DPs are arguments and NPs are predicates (as argued by Stowell 1989; Longobardi, 1994), they refer to the mere N (the predicate) and they are, semantically speaking, constants (while other pronouns are bound variables). The predicate NPs, in fact, as Moro 1997 shows, can also be found with no determiners in nominal copular sentences (3).

- (3) a. Le ragazze sono (la) causa del litigio.  
The girls are (the<sub>fem-sing</sub>) cause<sub>fem-sing</sub> of the quarrel  
'The girls are (the) cause of the quarrel.'

Apparent counterexamples which show full inflected pro-predicative clitics (section 5) will allow us to update Moro's proposal in two directions: on the one side we will analyse the appearing agreeing pro-predicatives as a semantically and pragmatically restricted case of ellipsis and on the other side we will interpret the entire set of data as an effect of the labelling

<sup>1</sup> Although we will focus mainly on nominal copular constructions involving predicative DPs, APs will become relevant in the analysis of some varieties (Occitan in section 4.3) in which we find different proforms depending on the lexical category of the predicative item within the small clause: either a NP or AP.

algorithm involved in the small clause selected by the copula *be*. The crucial fact is that copular small clauses are unstable structures: the symmetry instantiated by the two XPs generates a conflict and the SC remains unlabelled. To solve this labelling problem, the symmetry must be broken: the raising of either XP provide SC with label (Chomsky 2013; Rizzi 2016 relying on Moro 2000, 2009). The small clause is labelled by the D of the predicative DP position which remains in situ, since both the subject and predicative NP (which undergoes cliticization) raise to the inflectional domain.

In section 2 we describe the general pattern of distribution of propredicative *-lo* in Italian and we highlight the most relevant characteristic also shared with many Romance languages. Section 3 addresses the issue on the D morphology attributed to 3<sup>rd</sup> person clitic: although in Italian propredicative clitics show *l*-morphology which is also found in definite determiner and in other clitics, propredicatives cannot be interpreted systematically as definite element; the propredicative elements, in fact, cliticizes N<sup>0</sup> and not D<sup>0</sup> (as originally proposed in Moro 1997). In section 4 we introduce the data on the different strategies to pronominalize the predicative DP in Italo-Romance: the pronominalizing operation can imply 1) a clitic (or a set of alternating clitics), 2) an adverb or 3) no expression at all. Section 5 introduces some apparent counterexamples to be included in the analysis of the distribution of propredicative expression across Romance: agreeing propredicative clitics. In section 6 we will present our syntactic account for which in nominal copular sentences there is only one agreement projection which is activated for the chain of the raised subject NP and the propredicative proforms refer to the mere N within the postcopular DP, that's why no overt inflection is found across all the varieties described. Section 7 is devoted to update the account in 6 through a 'labelling' approach (Chomsky 2013). In section 8 we present our concluding remarks.

## 2. On the distribution of propredicative 'lo'

In Italian the object of a verb can be cliticized onto it (by means of a full inflected range of clitics: *la* (fem. sing.), *lo* (masc. sing.), *le* (fem. plur.), etc.; see Burzio 1986).

- (4) a. La ragazza      riconosce      la      gioia      dei genitori  
 The girl            recognizes t      he<sub>fem-sing</sub>, joy<sub>fem-sing</sub>      of the parents  
 'The girl recognizes the joy of her parents.'
- b. La ragazza      la /      \*lo      riconosce      (la gioia dei genitori)  
 The girl            it<sub>fem-sing</sub> / it<sub>masc-sing</sub>      recognizes (the joy<sub>fem-sing</sub> of the parents)  
 'The girl recognizes it (=the joy of her parents)'

Object clitic movement (from a postverbal DP) targets an agreement position within the IP and VP layer for licensing its semantic specificity associated to its gender and number features (Roberts 2010).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>We will not refer here to the difference between the functional projection where clitics land (little *v* positions, m AgrOP, ClP) or whether they are the results of movement or base generated but see Sportiche (1992, 1996), Mavroyorgos (2010), Manzini and Savoia (2005), Manzini (2014). For the purpose of the present descriptive work, we are mainly interested in showing that there is a position, within the inflectional layer, where agreeing (object) clitics land which is not available in copular constructions.

However, as accounted for by Moro (1993, 1997, and subsequent works), in copular sentences involving either a predicative NP or an AP there is a special clitic, namely *lo*, which is invariant in gender and number (presenting overt masculine/neuter morphology-*o*) although it refers to a feminine predicative NP (4).

- (4) a. le foto del muro sono la causa della rivolta  
 the pictures of the wall are the cause of the riot
- b. \*le foto del muro la sono  
 the pictures of the wall it<sub>fem-sing</sub> are
- c. le foto del muro lo sono  
 the pictures of the wall it<sub>masc-sing</sub> are  
 ‘The pictures of the wall are the cause of the riot.’

(Moro 1997: 71)

The same *lo* clitic can be found in context where it resumes subordinate clauses: in this case, however, since clauses are not inflected for  $\phi$  features, we obviously expect the resumptive proform to present default agreement: this is actually the case of invariant *lo* in (5).

- (5) lo sapevo (che saresti venuto)  
 it<sub>masc-sing</sub> knew (that be<sub>COND-2sg</sub> come<sub>PAST-PARTICIPLE</sub>)  
 ‘I knew it = (I knew you would come).’

Similar pro-predicative clitics are found across Romance languages: both invariant proforms for predicate NPs (6a 6b, 7b) and for subordinate clause are found in Spanish and in French, but not in Portuguese (8) and Romanian (9).

- (6) a. Jean est un avocat, et François le sera aussi *French*  
 Marie is a lawyer<sub>fem</sub> and Jeanne it<sub>masc-sing</sub> will be too
- b. Marie est une avocate, et Jeanne le/ \*la sera aussi  
 Marie is a lawyer<sub>fem</sub> and Jeanne it<sub>masc-sing</sub> / it<sub>fem-sing</sub> will be too  
 ‘Marie is a lawyer and Jeanne will be a lawyer too.’  
 (Dechaine and Witschko 2002:487)
- c. Je le sapeis (que tu viendrais)  
 I it<sub>masc-si</sub> knew (that you come<sub>COND-2sg</sub>)  
 I knew it = (I knew you would come)’

- (7) a. este niño es la ruina de los padres *Spanish*  
 this child<sub>masc</sub> is the<sub>fem</sub> ruin<sub>fem</sub> of the parents.  
 ‘This child is the ruin of his parents.’

- b. este niño lo/ \*la es (la ruina de los padres)  
 this child<sub>masc</sub> it<sub>masc-sing</sub> / it<sub>fem-sing</sub> is (the<sub>fem</sub> ruin<sub>fem</sub> of the parents )  
 ‘This child is the ruin of his parents.’
- c. lo sabía (que ibas a venir).  
 it<sub>masc-sing</sub> knew<sub>1sg</sub> that go<sub>IMP-2sg</sub> come<sub>INF</sub>  
 ‘I knew it = (I knew you would come)’
- (8) a. essa criança é a ruína dos pais *Portuguese*  
 this child<sub>fem</sub> is the<sub>fem-sing</sub> ruin<sub>fem-sing</sub> of parents.  
 ‘This child is the ruin of his parents.’
- b. essa criança \*o/ \*a é (a ruína dos pais)  
 this child<sub>masc</sub> it<sub>masc-sing</sub> / it<sub>fem-sing</sub> is (the<sub>fem</sub> ruin<sub>fem</sub> of the parents )  
 ‘This child is the ruin of his parents.’
- c. eu (\*o) sabia (que vinhas)  
 I it<sub>masc-sing</sub> knew<sub>1sg</sub> (that come<sub>PRET-IMP</sub>).  
 ‘I knew it = (I knew you would come).’
- (9) a. fetele sunt cauza conflictului.  
 girls-the are cause<sub>fem-sing</sub> quarrel<sub>GEN</sub>  
 ‘The girls are the cause of the quarrel.’
- b. fetele \*îl /\*o sunt. (cauza conflictului)  
 Girls-the it<sub>masc-sing</sub> / it<sub>fem-sing</sub> are (cause<sub>fem-sing</sub> quarrel<sub>GEN</sub>)  
 ‘The girls are the cause of the quarrel.’
- c. \*O/ \*îl ştiam (că vei veni)  
 It<sub>fem-sing</sub> / it<sub>masc-sing</sub> knew<sub>1sg</sub> that<sub>beCOND-2sg</sub> come<sub>PAST PARTICIPLE</sub>  
 ‘I knew it= (I knew you would come).’
- (Bleotu, p.c.)

The data above show that in Romance there is a systematic pattern in the distribution of the propredicative clitics. So, except for Portuguese and Romanian, in nominal copular sentences both NP and AP predicate cliticize onto a proform with these main characteristics: 1) the propredicative clitic is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person Direct Object clitic; 2) it is invariant since it does not carry the morphosyntactic features of the predicate it stands for; 3) it shows a masculine singular inflection, that in the case of Spanish and Italian is commonly assumed to be a residual neuter inflection (found only in some lexical categories such as determiners and proforms; 4) last but not least, the propredicative clitics are syncretic with definite determiners. However, in section 4 we will see that the distribution of propredicative clitics across Italo-Romance is more complex than the general pattern sketched above: there are strategies which do not involve a clitic proform (as the Portuguese data show) or that have more than one proform at work (we will see the cases of Occitan and Catalan in section 4 and 5). Anyway, a general characteristic across the varieties we report is

that no agreeing elements are found as predicate proforms, confirming that copular sentences do not have an agreement position within the IP and VP layer. The fact that many varieties show a syncretism between the propredicative clitics and definite determiners seem to be in contrast with the morphological invariant status of propredicatives, since definite descriptions (D category) are commonly assumed to select nominal class inflections. Next section is devoted to examining this apparent contrast between definiteness morphology and clitic distribution.

### 3. *The definiteness morphology of 3<sup>rd</sup> person clitics and the clitic paradigm in Italian*

Accusative 3<sup>rd</sup> person clitics are commonly assumed to be different from other Romance pronouns: the main reason is that, morphologically, they are identical to definite determiners (Postal 1966<sup>3</sup>, and subsequent literature), and like them, and unlike the rest of the clitic paradigm of most of Romance, they have gender features (see Hinzen and Sheenan 2014 for a review).<sup>4</sup>

With respect to their interpretation, the idea that accusative clitics are linked to referential specificity is shared in many works (cf. Suñer 1988; Uriagereka 1995; Roca 1992, 1996; Sportiche 1996; Fernández-Soriano 1993; or Ormazábal and Romero 2007, 2010): concretely, 3<sup>rd</sup> person clitics are commonly assumed to be D category for the Definiteness morphology (*l-* in Romance) embedding an N, i.e. nominal class category, for its inflections (Kratzer 2009; Manzini and Savoia 2007; Manzini 2012).

In Romance, they have a recognizable lexical base *l-* followed by nominal class inflections *-o/-a*. The same lexical base *l-* turns up as the determiner of nouns, in which case its referential value is clearly definiteness, incidentally the nominal class endings *-o/-a* are the same seen on nouns (10).

- (10) a.      *l-o*                      *zi-o*                      b.      *l-a*                      *zi-a*  
           The<sub>masc-sing</sub>              uncle                      the<sub>fem-sing</sub>              aunt

For example, in the Italian clitic system at the morphophonological interface, separate lexicalizations for ‘speaker’ *m-*, ‘hearer’ *t-* and ‘definiteness’ *l-* are instantiated (Manzini 2012: 12).

- (11) a.      *mi/ ti*  
               *me/ you*  
           b.      *lo/ la*  
               *him/ her*

If we go back to 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative clitics, the definiteness *l-* combines with overt morphosyntactic features: “the alleged ‘3<sup>rd</sup> person’ features are in fact gender features, a variety of descriptive feature ... If [a descriptive feature] is to grow into a pronoun, it has to combine with

<sup>3</sup> Actually, Postal (1966)’s claim was that all pronouns (including strong pronouns) “are really articles, in fact types of definite articles” (Postal 1966: 203).

<sup>4</sup> In Italian, for example, while 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person accusative clitics are invariant for gender (*mi/ti* as in 11a), all indirect clitics are uninflected for gender. However 3<sup>rd</sup> person indirect clitic in standard Italian has two different forms *gli* for masculine and *le* for feminine, but while the feminine *le* is disappearing, the masculine *gli* is often used to refer to both masculine and feminine referents.

a feature [def] that turns it into a definite description. If [def] is the familiar feature that can also be pronounced as a definite determiner in certain configurations, it should head its own functional projection, hence be a D ... Descriptive features ... are nominal, hence NsKratzer (2009: 221 apud Manzini 2012: 12)."

At this respect Suñer (1988) suggests that 3<sup>rd</sup> person direct object clitics are semantically restricted to [+specific] arguments since they refer to negative phrases, nonspecific indefinites, or interrogative elements.<sup>5</sup>

A slight different account is the one of Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992), they propose that clitics and definite determiners denote *tokens*, but 3<sup>rd</sup> person direct object clitic can also be associate to an indefinite DP interpreted as non-specific or as a *type* (Vergnaud and Zubizarreta 1992, but also Roca 1992, 1996) or with a generic interpretation as in (12a), never as a regular indefinite (12b).

- (12) a. Una corbata, no me la pondría ni borracho *Spanish*  
 A tie, not me<sub>RF</sub> it<sub>fem-sing</sub> would.put-on.I not-even drunk  
 'A tie, I would not dress it not even if I was drunk.'
- b. \*Una corbata, me la puse ayer  
 A tie, me<sub>RF</sub> it<sub>fem-sing</sub> put-on<sub>1sg</sub> yesterday  
 'A tie, I dressed it yesterday.'

(Ormazabal and Romero, 2010: 10)

Similar considerations have been made also about the non-definite reading of *l-* articles. Dechaine and Wiltschko (2002) put down that the French *l-*article does not have a fixed interpretation. In some contexts it may be construed as a definite (13a) while in other contexts it is ambiguous between a generic and a definite construal (13b).

- (13) a. Jean a achete le vin. *French*  
 Jean has bought the wine  
 'Jean bought the wine.'
- b. Jean aime le vin.  
 Jean likes the wine  
 = i. 'Jean likes wine.'  
 = ii. 'Jean likes the wine.'

Similarly, in Italian a singular definite article introduces a generic (plural) reading (cf. Chierchia 1998; Delfitto 1998, 2002; Storto 2003; Zamparelli 2002; Falco and Zamparelli 2019).

- (14) a. Il dodo è estinto (=tutti I dodo sono estinti).  
 the dodo is extinct (=All Dodos are extinct).

So, *l-* articles do not have an uncontroversial and fixed referential value and in many cases they are not inherently definite. Longobardi (1994) accounts for this by the proposal that the

<sup>5</sup> Similar proposals have been made by Uriagereka (1995) and Ormazabal and Romero (2010).

definite construal reflects the presence of a null D position (15a). When the D superstructure is absent, the generic reading becomes available (15b).

- (15) a.  $[_D \emptyset [_\phi \text{le} [\text{NP vin}]]] = \text{'the wine'}$   
 b.  $[_\phi \text{le} [\text{NP vin}]] = \text{'wine'}$

Both 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative clitics and I-determiners, although often associated to definite reading, can also imply a generic reading. Another strong case in which we can not interpret the *lo*-clitic as definite is the case of *lo* pro-predicative clitics in copular constructions. The *lo* clitic can refer, in fact, either to a predicative DP (16) or to an adjective (17).

- (16) a. Elena è la causa della guerra  
 Elena is the cause<sub>fem</sub> of the war  
 'Elena is the cause of the war.'
- b. Elena lo è (la causa della guerra)  
 Elena it<sub>mascing</sub> is (the cause<sub>fem</sub> of the war)  
 'Elena is it (the cause of the war).'
- (17) a. le foto del muro sono interessanti  
 the picture of the wall are interesting<sub>masc-plur</sub>  
 'the picture of the wall are interesting.'
- b. le foto del muro *lo* sono (interessanti)  
 the pictures of the wall it<sub>mascing</sub> are (interesting<sub>masc-plur</sub>)  
 'The picture of the wall are (interesting).'

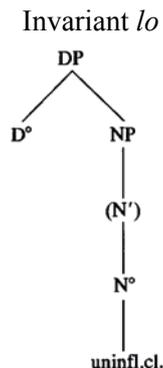
Consider that *lo* can refer to a bare predicative NPs (Moro: 1997): in the predicative NP in canonical sentences the D<sup>0</sup> can be left empty: (16) is equivalent to (18).

- (18) Elena è causa della guerra  
 Elena is cause of the war

Moro (1997) implements the account of Longobardi (1994) for which DPs are arguments and NPs are predicate: since *lo* refers to the predicate it cannot refer to a D element, but to a N.

- (19)
- Inflected / clitic  
 DP  
 |  
 (D')  
 |  
 D°  
 |  
 infl.cl.

(20)



In our respect, despite the fact that pro-predicative clitics show the *l-* morphology of definite determiners and 3<sup>rd</sup> person inflecting accusative clitics, these *lo* clitics found in Italian (but also *le* in French and *lo* in Spanish) refer to predicative NPs or adjective: they can never be associated to a referential meaning or a definite description.

The interpretation of pro-predicative clitics confirms that there is no one-to-one mapping between *l-* morphology and definite interpretation, as we have also seen in the cases of generic interpretation of both articles and clitics (11-14). The lack of definite [+def] interpretation is overtly characterized by the fact that the pro-predicative clitics do not show inflectional paradigms. Nevertheless, they are not uninflected forms but invariant forms: the -o termination is an invariant (neuter) inflection (actually it is syncretic with masculine singular). The distribution and the interpretation of pro-predicative clitics are captured by the analysis of Moro 1997: 1) *lo* refers to the predicate in the small clause from which, through raising, the copular sentences are derived; 2) more precisely *lo* refers to an N and not to a D. This analysis accounts for the invariant inflection of *lo* and for its non-definite interpretation and it will be useful (in section 4) to describe the microparametric variation found across Italo-Romance in the distribution of pro-predicatives. But, before proceeding to review the different varieties, we will introduce another lexical item which is used as a pro-predicative proform, namely *ci*.

### 3.1 '*lo*' and '*ci*' pro-predicatives

The clitic *ci* (there) is a locative clitic which refers to indirect arguments or location. It can also be used as a pro-predicative proform and can parallel the *lo*-structures, since *ci* is one of the ways in which natural language's syntax builds a predicative connection out of a DP (Moro 1993, 1997) as in existentials (21b). *Ci* is a raised predicate since if it were a null expletive (or a proform of an argument) (22b) would be grammatical but this is not the case.<sup>6</sup> So in the analysis of (21b) *scienziato* is the subject of the small clause and *ci* is the raised 'existential' predicate, being "the existential meaning a function that maps DP into a predicative structure where D<sup>0</sup> is the predicate of a set demoted by the NP (Moro 1992: 10)."

- (21) a. Gianni è uno scienziato  
Gianni is a scientist

<sup>6</sup>For a complete analysis of *ci* in existentials see Moro 1997 (Chapter 2).

- b        c'è uno scienziato  
          there is a scientist
- (22) a.     Gianni lo<sub>i</sub> è t<sub>i</sub>  
          Gianni lo is
- b.     \*ce lo<sub>i</sub> è t<sub>i</sub>  
          (there lo is)

(Moro 1997: 105)

Actually *ci* can overtly occur as a (nominal) pro-predicative element of a small clause in Italian substandard constructions (23).

- (23)    ci sei                    o ci fai?  
          ci are-2sg            or ci make  
          'Are you really like that or are you pretending to be like that?'

(Moro 1997: 275 ff.10)

*Ci* can be a lexical substitute, as we will see in Section 4, of the *lo* pro-predicative in some varieties with a reduced clitic paradigm.

#### 4. Distribution of pro-predicative elements across Italo-Romance

In this section we describe the distribution of pro-predicative clitics across Italo-Romance. In all the varieties we report the pro-predicative clitics are invariant just like the Standard Italian *lo*, however different elements are recruited from the lexicon to refer to the predicate DP. We will discuss mainly two descriptive dimensions: the lexical item found to refer to the predicate and the inflectional status of such element. The main descriptive criteria are: 1) the syncretism (or not) between the pro-predicative items and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative clitics; 2) the syncretism with *ci*-like clitics; 3) whether the lexical elements used to refer to predicates are proforms or lexical invariant/uninflected elements; 4) whether different lexical items are found to refer to different type of predicative element; 5) the characteristics of the inflectional (inflected/uninflected/invariant) status of the lexical items found to refer to the predicate. We identified three main groups of varieties in Italo-Romance (and Romance):

- 1) Varieties with *ci*: pro-predicatives that refers to NP or AP are syncretic with the existential/locative *ci*. In some varieties of these varieties *ci* is also found with 3<sup>rd</sup> person dative clitics.
- 2) Varieties with *adverbial* pro-predicatives: no pro-predicative proforms are found, as in Portuguese (8) and Romanian (9), some adverbials can appear to refer to predicates but they are never raised in preverbal position. Similarly to pro-predicatives, no clitic proforms are found for existentials, even if 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative/dative clitics are present in these varieties.
- 3) Varieties with *lo*- pro-predicatives: as in Italian, French and Spanish. In these varieties an l-clitic is generally used to refer to predicates. However, alternation with other types of clitics (different lexical items) is found to refer to different predicates (for instance, *ne* partitive clitics in Occitan, specialized form like *ho* in Catalan).

#### 4.1 Varieties with *ci*-like propredicatives

The first group of varieties we report is the one in which found a propredicative *ci*-there clitics. In (24-25) we found an example of Romanesco in which the propredicative *ci* refers to an AP.

- (24) a. Rosa è 'mbecille forte *Romanesco*  
 Rose is stupid strong  
 'Rose is really stupid.'
- b. (mbecille) Rosa c'è /\*lo è forte  
 (stupid) Rose there is / it is strong  
 '(stupid) Rose really is.'
- (La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997: 19)

- (25) a. Te sse' davvero er meio  
 You are really the best  
 'You are really the best.'
- b. (er meio) ce sse' davvero  
 (the best) there are<sub>2sg</sub> really  
 'You are really the best.'

The use of *ci* clitic is quite common in many Southern varieties (mainly Calabrian) to refer mainly to the an AP/NP predicate in copular construction (26) while *l*-masculine direct clitic is not allowed (26b).

- (26) a. Maria ε ttʃɔta *Northern Calabrian*  
 Maria is silly
- b. (ttʃɔta) Maria tʃ ε / \*(l)u ε  
 silly Maria there is / \*it is
- (La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997: 27)

In these varieties a *ci* proform (*tʃ*) is used also in locative constructions (27b) and to express oblique dative relation (27c), while Italian restricts the use of *ci* to existential and locative constructions.

- (27) a. Maria ε ddintʃa a kasa *Northern Calabrian*  
 Maria is inside the house
- b. (dintʃa a kasa) Maria tʃ ε / \*(l)u ε  
 (inside the house) Maria there is / \*it is
- (La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997: 27)
- c. tʃi detti nu libbru a Maria *Gioiosa Ionica*  
 her<sub>cl</sub> I gave a book to Maria  
 'I gave a book to Maria.'
- (Gioiosa Ionica: Ledgeway, Schifano, Silvestri 2017)

To capture the differences between Italian and other varieties on the use of *ci/lo*, La Fauci and Loporcaro (1997) proposed an analysis linked to the feature of referentiality [ $\pm$  referential]. They assume that locative and existential pro-predicatives are referential since they express respectively a location and a proposition about existence or presence of some entities in the world.<sup>7</sup> They resume their analysis in a table (we report as Tab.1): while Italian restricts the use of *ci* to existential and locative constructions and the use of *lo* to non-referential predicate, the varieties above allow the use of *ci* for both pro-predicative types.

	referential	
	-	+
Standard	lo	ci
Substandard and dialects	ci	ci

Table1. The distribution of *ci/lo* across Italian and substandard Italia adapted from La Fauci and Lo Porcaro (1997)

The descriptive generalization of La Fauci and Loporcaro (1997) seems to be an *ad hoc* generalization for pro-predicatives: the pro-predicative *lo*, in fact, is syncretic with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative masculine clitic in standard Italian (but a similar pattern is found crosslinguistically for example in Spanish and French) which is [ $\pm$ referential]: should we, then, assume that we are dealing with two different lexical entries for *lo*? It seems theoretically undesirable to assume a different lexical item every time there is a difference in referentiality for proforms which share the very same morphosyntactic root.

Furthermore, there are particular cases in which determining the referentiality of the pro-predicative *lo* is not trivial as in the famous Fregean classic example in (28). The two DPs are in a relation of identity<sup>8</sup>: the two ‘proper names’ are interchangeable in subject and in predicate position (28a/28b) and they are two descriptions of the same referent in the world (primary reference in the terms of Frege). The pro-predicative invariable clitics *lo* can refer to both DPs (28c/28d) since in nominal copular sentences one of the two noun phrases always plays the role of predicate.

- (28) a.  $[_{DP}$ la stella del mattino] è  $[_{DP}$ la stella della sera] *Italian*  
 the<sub>fem</sub> star<sub>fem</sub> of the morning is the<sub>fem</sub> star<sub>fem</sub> of the evening  
 ‘The morning star is the evening star.’
- b.  $[_{DP}$ la stella della sera] è  $[_{DP}$ la stella del mattino]  
 the<sub>fem</sub> star<sub>fem</sub> of the evening is the<sub>fem</sub> star<sub>fem</sub> of the morning  
 ‘The evening star is the morning star.’

<sup>7</sup> For a proper definition of the semantics of existential see Moro (1993, 2017) or McNally (2016).

<sup>8</sup> Remind that identity is not predicated by the copula or equivalently that one of the two noun phrases involved in a copular sentence always plays the role of a predicate. Whether or not the notion of identity can be employed to understand the relation between the two noun phrases is a different matter [...] (Moro 1997: 225 ff.33). See Moro (1988, 1997) for an empirical argument base on binding theory against the analysis of copula as an identity predicate.

- c. La stella del mattino lo/ \*la è ( la stella della sera)  
 the<sub>fem</sub> star<sub>fem</sub> of the morning it<sub>masc-sing</sub> / it<sub>fem-sing</sub> is the<sub>fem</sub> star<sub>fem</sub> of the evening  
 ‘The morning star is it (the evening star).’
- d. La stella dela sera lo/ \*la è ( la stella del mattino)  
 the<sub>fem</sub> star<sub>fem</sub> of the evening it<sub>masc-sing</sub> / it<sub>fem-sing</sub> is the<sub>fem</sub> star<sub>fem</sub> of the evening  
 ‘The morning star is it (the evening star).’

So, it seems to be a matter of Lexical Parametrization (in the sense of Manzini and Wexler 1987) that shapes the clitic paradigm for each variety on morphosyntactic dimensions. In 24-27, we have showed data from languages (mainly Southern varieties) which have a reduced paradigm for clitics. The same lexical item *ci* is used as a proform to refer to nominal predicate in copular constructions, existential predicates, location or even to indirect (dative) object (27c): clitic proforms which refer both to predicate and indirect arguments.

#### 4.2 Varieties with adverbial propredicatives

In the second group of Italo-Romance varieties (mainly Apulian varieties) no propredicative clitic is possible: the proform used can be a postverbal adverb which is not obligatory (similar data are described by La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997:ff 29 for the variety of Altamura). We report in (29) the variety of Conversano, where no propredicative is available: although 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative clitics are available (26b) they cannot refer to an NP predicate in copular constructions. Remind that in these varieties 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative clitics are syncretic with the definite determiners. In (29b) we can see that an adverb (*akksɛ* = so) can optionally be used as a proform to refer to the nominal predicate. The adverb is always postverbal, it is not allowed in preverbal position (between the subject and the copula).<sup>9</sup>

- (29) a. Maria iz u priʃə də la nonnə Conversano (BA)  
 Maria is the<sub>masc-sing</sub> joy of the<sub>fem ing</sub> grandmother
- b. Maria (\*u) ie  
 Maria (\*it<sub>masc-sing</sub>) is
- c. Maria (\*akksɛ) ie (akksɛ)  
 Maria (\*so) is (so)  
 ‘Maria is the joy of the grandmother (=her grandmother).’

Similar data are found also in Romanian: no clitics are available to refer to a predicate (30b), although a full set of inflected clitics is available to refer to argument DP (30e-f). Sometimes an adverb can be found in postverbal position, as *aşa* in (30c). In Romanian a demonstrative pronoun which agrees in gender with the nominal predicate can be found ‘in situ’ (30d), but not in a raised position before the copula (i.e. a clitic position). The fact that this demonstrative shows overt gender feature does not challenge the hypothesis that copular sentences have just one agreement projection, since the element is left ‘in situ’ and does not move to any preverbal functional position.

<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, it is allowed in root position but with a contrastive focus intonation.

- (30) a. fetele sunt cauza conflictului. *Romanian*  
 girls-the are cause<sub>fem-sing</sub> quarrel<sub>GEN</sub>  
 ‘The girls are the cause of the quarrel.’
- b. fetele (\*îl / \*o) sunt. (cauza conflictului)  
 girls-the it<sub>masc-sing</sub> / it<sub>fem-sing</sub> are (cause<sub>fem-sing</sub> quarrel<sub>GEN</sub>)  
 ‘The girls are (the cause of the quarrel).’
- c. fetele sunt (aşa)  
 Girls-the are this way  
 ‘The girls are in this way.’
- d. fetele sunt (aceasta) (=cauza conflictului)  
 girls-the are t his<sub>fem-sing</sub> cause<sub>fem-sing</sub> quarrel<sub>GEN</sub>  
 ‘The girls are so.’
- e. fata recunoaşte bucuria părinţilor.  
 girl-the recognizes joy-the<sub>fem-sing</sub> parents<sub>GEN</sub>  
 ‘The girl recognizes (=the joy of her parents).’
- f. Fata o/ \*îl recunoaşte  
 girl-the it<sub>fem-sing</sub> / it<sub>masc-sing</sub> recognizes  
 ‘The girl recognizes it (=the joy of her parents).’

(Bleotu, p.c.)

As for 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative clitics, although no form is found for pro-predicative use, we still find a full inflected paradigm for direct object clitic as in (31).

- (31) a. Mari vətə a iedd / iedd *Conversano (Ba)*  
 Maria sees to her / him
- b. Mari la/u vətə  
 Maria her / him sees.  
 ‘Maria sees her/him.’

However, a masculine singular clitic can be found in the variety of Conversano (as in other Apulian varieties) to refer to a subordinate clause, while this option is not available in Romanian (see 9c).

- (32) u sapevə (k' aviv a vənə) *Conversano (Ba)*  
 it<sub>masc-sing</sub> knew (that have<sub>IMP-2sg</sub> to come<sub>INF</sub>)  
 ‘I knew it = (I knew you would come).’

As for existential constructions there is no overt *ci* element: it is normally expressed through the use of a different lexical verb (‘stay’) and through verb subject inversion (33b). However,



- c. Maria est in dōmo  
 ‘Maria is at home’  
 Maria is at home
- d. (in dōmo) Maria \*lu este / bb este  
 (at home) Maria it is / there is  
 ‘Maria is there.’

(La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997: 27)

Within this group not all predicates are expressed by the same proform (as we have already seen in the example 1-7) the most widespread distinction is between clitic proforms which refer to nominal and adjectival predicates on one side and clitic referring to existential and locative predicates (or indirect arguments) on the other.

There is variation among these varieties on the type of predicate each proformative clitic can refer to. For example, Occitan patterns with the group of Italian since it selects a *lo*-like invariant proformative clitic (*o*) to refer to predicative NP (35). However, there is a difference in the proformatives used to refer to an AP: while the clitic *o* is used to refer to an NP (35), for AP we can find either the *o* clitic or the partitive clitic *en* (*n’* before vowels) in (36).

- (35) a. la filha es l’enveja dels vesins . Occitan  
 the girls is the envy of the neighbors
- b. la filha o es / \*n’es.  
 the girl it<sub>masc-sing</sub> is / it<sub>part-cl</sub> is.
- (36) a. La filha es polida  
 The girl is beautiful
- b. La filha o es / n’es.  
 The girl it<sub>masc-sing</sub> is / it<sub>part-cl</sub> is.  
 ‘The girl is beautiful’

(Sichel-Bazin, pc)

Among the range of possible microparametric variation, the morphosyntactic invariant status of the clitic selected to refer to predicates in copular constructions is preserved across all varieties. The domain of the variation is restricted to the type of predicate each lexical item can refer to, once more the microparametric variation seems to be limited to the lexical item as Lexical Parametrization predicts. This last group of varieties is characterized for having the highest range of specialization within the paradigm of the proformative clitics. However, there is a variety which apparently show an inflected proformative clitic which is used to refer to a predicative NP: Catalan. Next section is devoted to go through the Catalan data.

##### 5. Apparent counterexamples: agreeing proformatives in Catalan?

Catalan has a full paradigm of inflected 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative clitics (for gender masculine/feminine) which use the *l-* morphology and are syncretic with definite determiners (as all the varieties we have been reviewing so far). However, in Catalan there is a specialised neuter clitic

which has a lexical root different from *l*-clitic (Bonet 1995; Longa Lorenzo and Rigau 1998): the clitic *ho*; it can refer only to predicative DPs (37).

- (37) a. en Pere és mestre Catalan  
 the Pere is teacher  
 ‘Pere is the teacher.’
- b. En Pere ho /\*l<sup>11</sup> és  
 the Pere it<sub>neut</sub> /it<sub>sing-masc</sub> is  
 ‘Pere is (the teacher).’

The clitic *ho* can never refer to argumental DP (38a, b) but it refers to embedded CP (38c, d).

- (38) a. No entenc el tema  
 neg understand.1s the topic  
 ‘I don’t understand the topic.’
- b. No el/ \*ho entenc  
 ‘neg it<sub>sing-masc</sub> /it<sub>neut</sub> understand  
 ‘I don’t understand it.’
- c. No entenc el que vols dir  
 neg understand<sub>1sing</sub> the that want<sub>2sing</sub> say<sub>INF</sub>  
 ‘I don’t understand what you mean.’
- d. No \*el/ ho entenc  
 neg it<sub>sing-masc</sub> /it<sub>neut</sub> understand<sub>1sing</sub>  
 ‘I don’t understand it.’

(Hinzen and Sheenan 2014: 158)

Clausal complements, then, unlike referential DP complements, do not get pronominalized by means of accusative clitics, but rather only by means of the neuter clitic *ho*. However, there are copular sentences in which predicative DP can be pronominalized optionally by the means of an accusative clitic see (39) for masculine and (40) for feminine.<sup>12</sup>

- (39) a. En Pere és el mestre del poble  
 Pere is the teacher of the town
- b. En Pere ho/ l’ és  
 Pere l’ (*el* direct object clitic) is  
 ‘Pere is (the teacher of the town).’
- (40) a. La Maria és la mestra del poble  
 Maria is the teacher of the town
- b. La Maria ho /la és.  
 the Maria it<sub>neu</sub> /it<sub>fem</sub> is.  
 ‘Maria is (the teacher of the town).’

(Roca 1996: 106)

<sup>11</sup> *l’* is the form of *el* when followed by a vowel.

<sup>12</sup> Similar data are also found in the variety of La Spezia (Loporcaro, p.c.).

Roca (1996) accounts for the contrast between (37) where no inflected clitic is present and (39-40) where there is optionality between the neuter clitic and the inflected element depending on the definiteness of the NP: while in (37) there is a bare NP in (40) we have a definite [+specific] NP.

To understand the scope of the real use of inflected clitic in Catalan we can refer to examples like (41) in which the ‘inflected’ clitic refer to the DP in predicative position (in this case maybe it is correct to say the postverbal DP) (41b, d) and in which the two DPs are in a relation of identity (as the Fregean proposition in 28) so that their order can be inverted (41a, c) with no remarkable effect (as in the contrast between canonical and inverse copular sentences Moro 1993, 1997, 2017, 2018). Remind that the predicative postverbal DP can always be cliticized in *ho*.

- (41) a. la mestra del poble és la germana de la Montse  
 the teacher of the town is the sister of the Montse  
 ‘The teacher of the town is the sister of Montse.’
- b. la mestra del poble ho/la és  
 the teacher of the town it<sub>neu</sub>/it<sub>fem</sub> is  
 ‘The teacher of the town is (the sister of Montse).’
- c. la germana de la Montse és la mestra del poble  
 the sister of the Montse is the teacher of the town  
 ‘The sister of Montse is the teacher of the town.’
- d. la germana de la Montse ho /la és  
 the sister of the Montse it<sub>neu</sub>/it<sub>fem</sub> is  
 ‘The sister of Montse is (the teacher of the town).’

In our respect, we have been arguing that there is only one agreement projection within copular sentences, and the predicative can only cliticize if an invariant element is available in the lexicon, this element being a proform which refers to N<sup>0</sup> and no to D<sup>0</sup> like the other 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative clitics. In the cases like (41b, c) the proform *la* is a clitic marked for gender which is syncretic with the definite article *la*. What if that *la* is not a clitic but a determiner of a DP in which the NP undergoes a process of ellipsis? Or, since in ‘identity sentences’ both NP are interchangeable in subject and in predicate position, does the inflected clitic refer to the subject (the argumental DP) so it enters in an agree relation?

We propose that in these cases in which the two DPs are in a relation of identity within the small clause we are dealing with an elision strategy of the NP and the overt inflected determiners work as a deictic demonstrative (*this one, that one*)<sup>13</sup> to refer to the elided element which is present in the context of the discourse, remind that in Catalan there is a different clitic (*ho*) to refer to predicates. If we imagine a context like the one in (42) we can envisage the use of a copular sentences with an inflected determiner and the elision of the NP already introduced (or visible) in the context. So, the determiner works as a demonstrative, this is not surprising if we think that the inflected determiners introduce relative clauses (see the masculine

<sup>13</sup> For the purpose of the present work, we will not go into the issue of whether a BIG DP analysis has some advantages (Torrego, 1985 Ugriagreka 1995, Belletti 1999) in accounting for the data of elided NP.

determiner *el* in 38c).<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, we can also add that in the very constrained ‘identity’ interpretation between the two DPs, since subject and predicate are almost interchangeable the inflected clitic/determiner could refer to the subject of the small clause which is the only agreeing NPs in copular sentences.

- (42) A: Mira la mestra del poble!  
 look he teacher of the town!  
 ‘Look at the teacher of the town’
- B: la germana de la Montse      la      és!  
 the sister of the Montse      the<sub>fem</sub>      is  
 ‘That’s the sister of Montse!’

Since there is a specialized proform just for the predicate *ho*, in other cases in which the two DPs in the small clause complement of the copula are in a relation of identity, Catalan allows, only in deictic use, the elision of the deictic NP and determiner works as a dislocated demonstrative. In Catalan, in fact, all determiners work as pronouns in introducing relative clauses (38c). Since we can account for this apparent counterexamples (39-40) of agreeing pro-predicative clitics in Catalan in terms of deictic use of determiners (with the ellipsis of the nominal element) in identity copular sentences (where subject and predicate can be interchangeable), we can conclude that all Romance varieties have invariant pro-predicative clitics, although each of them can recruit different lexical item by the means of different morpho-syntactic relation.

## 6. Syntactic Analysis

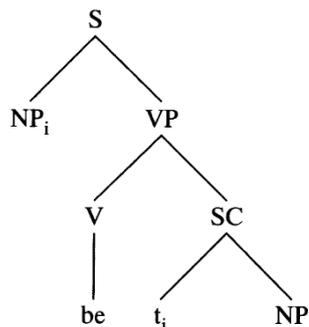
The extensive description we have been pursuing in the sections above about the pro-predicative clitics in nominal copular sentences across Italo-Romance is strictly linked to the analysis of the syntax of nominal copular sentences in Moro 1997.

Moro (1997) claims that copular sentences involve a raising predicate (the copula) which: 1) selects as it complement a small clause; 2) does not have any particular meaning, nevertheless the identity meaning in sentences like the one in (28) ‘*the morning star is the evening star*’. The small clause is the place where the predication occurs between two XPs: a subject and a predicate. The subject generated in the small clause raises to the higher position of the copula as in (43) while the predicates stays *in situ*: this configuration was defined by Moro (1997) as the *canonical* copular sentence.

<sup>14</sup>In the IEC Grammatica de la llengua catalana (2016: pp. 692) we find similar examples, always in context where the elided NP is deictic.

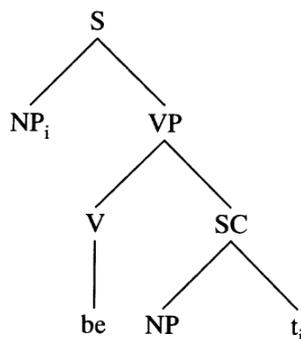
- A: Es el degà o no ho es aquest professor?  
 Is the dean or non it<sub>neu</sub> is this teacher  
 ‘Is this teacher the dean or not?’
- B: Si que l’ es, el degà  
 Yes that the<sub>masc</sub> is, the dean.  
 ‘Yes he is the one.’

- (43) [[Una foto del muro]<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP</sub>è [<sub>SC</sub>t<sub>i</sub> [la causa della rivolta]]]]  
 [[A picture of the wall]<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP</sub>is [<sub>SC</sub>t<sub>i</sub> [the cause of the riot ]]]]



The predicate generated into the small clause can raise to the higher position of the copula while the subject DP stays in situ (44): this configuration is what Moro (1997) calls *inverse* copular sentences.

- (44) [[La causa della rivolta]<sub>k</sub> [<sub>VP</sub>è [<sub>SC</sub>[una foto del muro]t<sub>k</sub>]]]  
 [[The cause of the riot]<sub>k</sub> [<sub>VP</sub>is [<sub>SC</sub>[a picture of the wall]t<sub>k</sub>]]]



We will not enter into all the syntactic differences (see Moro 1997) that the two configurations imply. In our respect this difference is relevant because only in canonical sentences we can find proforms which refer to the predicate NPs (45), while it is impossible in inverse sentences (46)

- (45) a. delle foto del muro sono la causa della rivolta  
 some pictures of the wall are the cause of the riot  
 'Some picture of the wall are the cause of the riot.'
- b. delle foto del muro lo sono (causa della rivolta)  
 some pictures of the wall it<sub>masc-sing</sub> are (the cause of the riot)  
 'Some picture of the wall are (the cause of the riot).'

- (46) a. la causa della rivolta sono delle foto del muro  
 the cause of the riot are some pictures of the wall  
 'The cause of the riot are some pictures of the wall.'
- b. \*la causa della rivolta lo sono (delle foto del muro)  
 the cause of the riot it<sup>masc-sing</sup> are (some pictures of the wall)  
 'The cause of the riot are (some pictures of the wall).'

In all this work we have been dealing mainly with canonical sentences, however existential are inverse copular sentences since the existential predicate is preverbal and the subject is postverbal (47).

- (47) Ci sono delle ragazze  
*There* are some girls  
 'There are some girls.'

In Italian and the majority of Romance varieties we have been describing in the present work, the copula agrees with the NP subject, albeit postverbal (as in the inverse in 46). This is the only agreement projection which is present in the copular sentences.

As for past participle agreement, Italian transitive sentences show a neuter inflectional morphology, but if the object clitic raises to a preverbal position the past participle agree with the raised object clitic (48).

- (48) a. Gianni ha scritt-o le lettere  
 Gianni has written<sub>neut</sub> the letters<sub>fem.plur.</sub>
- b. Gianni le<sub>i</sub> ha scritt-e t<sub>i</sub>  
 Gianni them<sub>fem.plur.</sub> has written<sub>fem.plur.</sub>

This does not happen in copular sentences. Consider the inverse copular sentence in (49). Past participles cannot be neuter in copular sentences: the past participle always agrees with the subject (as unaccusative verbs).

- (49) a. (la causa) *pro*<sub>i</sub> sono stat-i loro<sub>i</sub>  
 (the cause-<sub>fem.sing</sub>) *pro*<sub>i</sub> are been-<sub>masc.plur</sub> they<sub>i</sub> masc-plur  
 'They have been (the cause).'
- b. \*(la causa<sub>k</sub>) *pro*<sub>i</sub> sono stat-o/a loro<sub>i</sub>  
 (the cause-<sub>fem.sing</sub>) *pro*<sub>i</sub> are been<sub>-neuter / fem-sing</sub> them<sub>i</sub> masc-plur  
 'They have been (the cause).'

This becomes more evident if we see the contrast between transitive sentences involving an object clitic and a canonical copular sentence involving a propredicative clitic in (50/51).

- (50) loro<sub>le</sub> hanno scritte (le lettere)  
 they<sub>fem-plur</sub> them<sub>fem-plur</sub> have written (the letters<sub>fem-plur</sub>)  
 ‘They have written them.’
- (51) loro<sub>i</sub> lo<sub>k</sub> sono stati<sub>i</sub> (la causa<sub>k</sub>)  
 they<sub>masc-plur</sub> it<sub>k masc-sing</sub> are been-<sub>masc-plur</sub> (the cause<sub>k fem</sub>)  
 ‘They have been (the cause).’

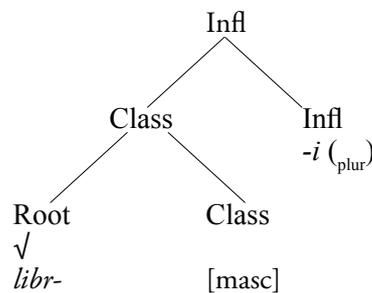
In (51) there is no effect of the raised clitic on the past participle agreement, since the only agreement projection available in copular sentences is for subject agreement. Moro (1997), in fact, argues that ‘from an abstract point of view, [...] the number of Agr<sup>o</sup>s is a function of the number of argumental DPs. If two DPs are related by a predicative relation, as in fact happens in inverse copular sentences, only one Agr<sup>o</sup> may occur [...] (Moro 1997: 240). Copular sentences have only one argumental DP, as existential *esserci* and unaccusative verbs, which is the subject of the small clause selected by the verb *be* (in copular and existential) or by the unaccusative verb.

Consequently, the proforms (either clitics or adverbs) that refers to the predicates of the copular sentences (which are monoargumental) can not be fully inflected and to not land to any agreement projection.

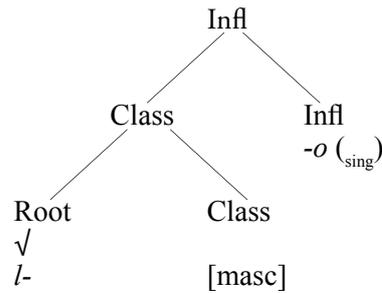
The Italian *lo* proforms are uninflected and not invariant since they present a masculine singular inflection in the majority of varieties. The *-o* is attached to the lexical base *l-* which identifies determiners and clitics. But what the neuter *-o* stands for?

We try to answer following the morpho-syntactic model proposed in Manzini and Savoia (2018), Savoia *et al.* (2017, 2018), specifically concerning nouns and clitic, for which inflectional structures are built in the syntax. Within this approach full nouns (52) are analyzed as involving a lexical root  $\sqrt{\text{alber}}$  (alber = tree) for the category-less root (Marantz 1997) with predicative content (Higginbotham 1985), an N Class to host gender and eventually number specifications and Infl, a label for the vocalic morpheme which in romance varieties externalizes gender and/or number in terms of inflectional class.

- (52) alber-i (tree-<sub>masc-plur</sub>)



Similarly, for clitics the functional *l-* root is combined with Class and inflection, as in (53), and it is not in an agree relation with the Class and Infl of the predicative N it stands for.

(53) *l-o* (it-masc-sing)

As for the masculine inflection, which work as a nominal class, we could argue that we are dealing in reality with a residual neuter inflection (although it might be the only case of neuter inflection within the variety). The neuter *-o* found in *lo*-like varieties, following Franco, Manzini and Savoia (2015), is an N class with a non-individual content in opposition to instances of individual denotation: the N class *-o* morphology, found robustly in some Central Italian varieties, *o* is associated with mass denotation (54a) while *-u* is associated with count denotation as in the Mascioni variety (54b).

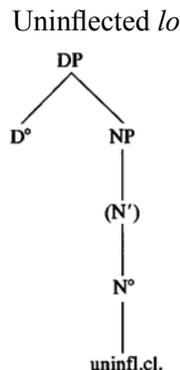
- (54) a. *l-o/kweft-o/*      *kwell-o vin-u*                      *Mascioni(L'Aquila)*  
           *the/this/*            *that wine*
- b. *l-u/*      *kwift-u jatt-u*  
       *th/*      *this cat*

The N-class is also compatible with propositional contents and with the invariable inflections *-o* found with perfect participles of meteorological verbs as well as of unergative/transitive verbs.

Another reason for recruiting an uninflected (neuter) form from lexicon it is the lack of referentiality at syntax-semantics interface: *lo* refers to a predicate NP and not to D element (as suggested by Longobardi 1994). Moro (1993, 1997) suggests that the propredicative clitic *lo* has to be analysed as being generated in  $N^0$  (20 repeated here as 56) rather than  $D^0$  (19 repeated here as 55), the latter being the loci of generation of the inflected 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative clitic found with transitives.

(55) Inflected *l*-clitics

(56)



What about the *lo*-*ci*-*ne* alternations for the proppredicatives in the three group of languages? Bearing in mind that just one agreement projection might be involved in copular sentences, we can adopt a lexical parametrization (Manzini and Wexler 1987; Chomsky 1995) approach to account for the alternations across and within varieties, the micro parametric difference is encoded in the lexical element which show different morpho-syntactic features and distribution. In each language we may have different lexical entries to cliticize different types of predicates, given the invariant computational component:

- 1) in the first group of languages, where only *ci* proppredicatives are found, the *ci* lexical element is found to cliticize nominal, adjectival, existential and locative predicates (in some cases also all indirect arguments).
- 2) in the second group of language while *l*-inflecting 3<sup>rd</sup> person accusative clitics are found to refer to direct arguments, no other proform are found to refer to predicates: only some adverbial and demonstratives can refer to predicates, they are found in situ and they are not raised in preverbal position.
- 3) in the third varieties specialised forms are found to cliticize different predicates: for example *lo* clitics for nominal and adjectival predicates (*ne* clitics just for adjective Occitan) and *ci* for locative and existentials. Particular identity relation between DPs within the small clause can imply other strategies such as N ellipsis plus an inflected determiner in varieties like Catalan.

Next section is devoted reformulate the structural analysis about the impossibility of having an inflected proppredicative clitics in copular constructions in terms of labelling algorithm.

### 7. A labelling approach

As for labelling, the crucial fact is that copular SCs of the type {XP,YP} are unstable structures: the symmetry instantiated by the two XPs generates a conflict and the SC remains unlabeled. To solve this, the symmetry must be broken: raising of either XP to provide SC with label since the raised element is a discontinuous chain and as such it cannot project from the lower copy (Chomsky 2013; Rizzi 2016 relying on Moro 2000, 2009 principle of Dynamic Antisymmetry). Formally, let  $\beta$  be the features of the head Y projecting YP which labels the small

clause and where XP is the raised element which does not label the small clause, the structure of a canonical copular sentence can be represented as follows (57).

$$(57) \quad XP_k V^\circ \{ \beta \text{XP}_k, YP_\beta \}$$

This solution also offers an explanation for the fact that no inflected clitic is allowed in nominal canonical copular sentences to refer to the predicative DP, as we have been arguing so far.

- (58) a. Maria è [<sub>SC</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [la causa del litigio]]  
 Mary is the<sub>f.sing.</sub> cause<sub>f.sing.</sub> of-the quarrel
- b. Maria lo<sub>j</sub> è [<sub>SC</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> D° [<sub>NP</sub> causa del litigio]<sub>j</sub>]]  
 Mary it<sub>neuter.sing.</sub> is
- c.\* Maria la è [<sub>SC</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> ~~la~~ causa del litigio]<sub>j</sub>]]  
 Mary it<sub>f.sing.</sub> is

A predicative DP can be cliticized only by the neuter, *qua* non-inflected, clitic *lo* as shown in the contrast between (58b) and (58c). As we have been arguing (section 3, 4, 6), Moro (1997) proposed that while *lo* must be associated with a bare N full inflected, clitics are rather associated with full D°s (paralleling the distinction between *what* and *which*). The fact that only neuter clitic (*lo*) can occur as propredicates can be explained in these terms: while N (within the predicative YP is cliticized onto the invariant Clitic, D° is still able to stay *in situ* to label the SC instantiating the symmetry breaking structure in (59).

$$(59) \quad XP_k lo_i V^\circ \{ \beta \text{XP}_k, YP_{[YP,t_i]} \}$$

So (58c) is ruled out because the entire DP is raised, thus depriving the structure with those features which could label the SC.<sup>15</sup> The considerations just sketched can account for the invariant status of propredicative clitic in nominal copular sentences without referring to the referential status (or the semantics) of the extracted element, but simply employing merge and the labelling algorithm.

## 8. Concluding Remarks

In this paper we have described the distribution of the propredicative clitics found in copular (and existentials) constructions across different Italo-Romance varieties. Each described variety consistently confirms that propredicative clitics are invariant lexical items, as predicted by the analysis of Moro (1997). The invariant inflection of the propredicative elements is linked to the fact that sentences involving the verb *be* have only one agreement projection (Moro 1997).

<sup>15</sup>As an anonymous reviewer correctly pointed out (58c) is apparently the case which is grammatical in Catalan (41bd). However, since we have been analyzing the Catalan apparent counterexamples as cases of ellipsis in deictic context in sentences implying an identity relation between the two DPs, the small clause may still be labelled by the DP predicates before any ' criterial' movement and or ellipsis takes place. Intuitively, if we adopt ellipsis as a mere deletion at PF (Chomsky and Lasnik, 1993) the licensing configuration of ellipsis (including the labelling of the small clause) is created before Spell-Out.

As for the distribution across Italo-Romance, apart from the invariant status, we found some differences in the morphosyntactic characteristics of the lexical items employed to refer to the predicates of the copular sentences. We recognized three types of varieties: 1) varieties in which the invariant clitic is mainly a *ci*, 2) varieties with adverbial pro-predicatives, 3) and varieties which shows *lo* clitics alternating with other invariant clitics (such as *ci*, *ne* in Italo-Romance varieties). We can account for this microparametric variation in terms of lexical parametrization (Manzini and Wexler 1988): that is, the morphosyntactic differences are encoded directly in the lexicon where the different lexical items (the clitics) are stored.

As for the varieties that show a *lo* clitic strategy, the definite D reading, sometimes associated with clitic involving a *-l* [+def], cannot be confirmed due: 1) to the basic statement that *lo* refers to a predicate and not to a definite description; 2) to the fact that the nominal predicate can be found without determiner (it refers to N<sup>0</sup> as in Moro 1997); 3) to case like Occitan where the pro-predicative clitic can also be rendered optionally through a partitive clitic; 4) to case in which *lo* can be rendered also by *ci*.

Although the invariant morphology of *lo* can be linked to a neuter nominal class (Franco Manzini and Savoia, 2015), in our respect its non-definite reading challenges the generalization about *-l*-clitic and definiteness (Postal 1966). Actually, instead of accounting for the invariant status of the pro-predicative only in terms of non-referentiality (predicative-status), we proposed an update of the analysis of Moro (1997) through the labelling algorithm: since both the subject DP and the predicate (expressed through clitics) raise from the small clause, in canonical copular sentences involving pro-predicative clitics, the derivation could crash because the small clause would be unlabelled. To prevent this crash in derivation only the N<sup>0</sup> is raised from the predicative DP in small clause, allowing the D (of the predicative DP) to stay in situ (never mind whether it is an expletive or null D) to label the small clause.

#### *Acknowledgements*

We would like to thank Diego Pescarini, Michele Loporcaro, two anonymous reviewers, the audience of CIDSMS 14 held in Prague and the audience of the workshop ‘FARM Challenge on clitics’ held in Barcelona for their comments. All errors are our own. A special thank goes to Adina Bleotu for helping us with Romanian data and to Rafeu Sichel-Bazin for the Occitan data. This work is the result of the collaboration of the authors in all respects. Nevertheless, for Italian administrative purposes Paolo Lorusso takes responsibility for Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, as well as for the redaction of Section 6 and 7.

#### *References*

- Belletti, Adriana. 1999. “Italian/Romance Clitics: Structure and Derivation.” In *Clitics in the Languages of Europe*, ed. by Henk van Riemsdijk, 543-579. Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bonet, Eulalia. 1995. “Feature Structure of Romance Clitics.” *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 13, 607-647.
- Burzio, Luigi. 1986. *Italian Syntax*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel publishing Company.
- Chierchia, Gennaro. 1998. “Reference to Kinds Across Languages.” *Natural Language Semantics* 6: 339-405.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2013. “Problems of Projection.” *Lingua* 130: 33-49.
- Chomsky, Noam, and Howard Lasnik. 1993. “The Theory of Principles and Parameters.” In *Syntax: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research* ed. by Joachim Jacobs, Arnim Von Stechow and Wolfgang Sternefeld, 506-569. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Cornilescu, Alexandra. 2009. “Restructuring Strategies of the Romanian Verb fi ‘be’ and the Analysis

- of Existential Sentences.” In *Proceedings of the Workshop Null Subjects, Expletives, and Locatives in Romance*, ed. by Georg Kaiser and Eva-Maria Remberger, 199-231. Konstanz: Fachbereich Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Konstanz.
- Déchainé, Rose-Marie, and Martina Wiltschko. 2002. “Decomposing Pronouns.” *Linguistic Inquiry* 33: 409-442.
- Delfitto, Denis. 1998. “Aspect, Genericity and Bare Plurals.” *Uil-OTS Working Papers, Utrecht University*, 1-72.
- Delfitto, Denis. 2002. *Genericity in Language. Issues of Syntax Logical Form and Interpretation*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso.
- Fernández-Soriano, Olga. 1993. *Los pronombres átonos*. Madrid: Taurus.
- Falco, Michelangelo, and Roberto Zamparelli. 2019. “Partitives and Partitivity.” *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics*, 4, 1: 1-49.
- Franco, Ludovico, M. Rita Manzini, and Leonardo M. Savoia. 2015. “N Morphology and Its Interpretation: The Neuter in Central Italian Varieties and Its Implications.” *Isogloss*, 1, 1: 41-67.
- Higginbotham, James. 1985. “On Semantics.” *Linguistic Inquiry*, 16: 547-621.
- Hinzen, Wolfran, and Michelle Sheehan. 2013. *The Philosophy of Universal Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Institut d’Estudis Catalans. 2016. *Gramàtica de la llengua catalana*. Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis Catalans.
- La Fauci, Nunzio, and Michele Loporcaro. 1997. “Outline of a Theory of Existentials on Evidence from Romance.” *Studi italiani di linguistica teorica ed applicata* 26, 1: 5-55.
- Ledgeway, Adam, Norma Schifano, and Giuseppina Silvestri. 2017. “Greek and Romance in Contact: When Finite Becomes Non-finite.” Paper presented at the workshop ‘Language Variation and Change in Contact Situations’, 5 September 2017, Stellenbosch University.
- Longa, V.M., Lorenzo Guillermo, and Gemma Rigau. 1998. “Subject Clitics and Clitic Recycling: Locative Sentences in Some Iberian Romance Languages.” *Journal of Linguistics* 34: 125-164.
- Longobardi, Giuseppe. 1994. “Reference and Proper Names: A Theory of N-movement in Syntax and Logical Form.” *Linguistic Inquiry* 25: 609-665.
- Kratzer, Angelica. 2009. “Making a Pronoun: Fake Indexicals as Windows into the Properties of Pronouns.” *Linguistic Inquiry* 40: 187-237.
- Manzini, M. Rita. 2012. “From Romance Clitics to Case: Split Accusativity and the Person Case Constraint.” In *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2010: Selected papers from ‘Going Romance’ Leiden 2010*, ed. by Irene Franco, Sara Lusini and Andrés Saab, 1-20. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Manzini, M. Rita. 2014. “Grammatical Categories: Strong and Weak Pronouns in Romance.” *Lingua* 150: 171-201.
- Manzini, M. Rita, and Leonardo M. Savoia. 2005. *I dialetti italiani e romanci. Morfosintassi generativa*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso.
- Manzini, M. Rita, and Leonardo M. Savoia. 2007. *A Unification of Morphology and Syntax. Studies in Romance and Albanian varieties*. London: Routledge.
- Manzini, M. Rita, and Leonardo M. Savoia. 2017. “Enclisis/Proclisis Alternations in Romance: Allomorphies and (Re)Ordering.” *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 115: 98-136.
- Manzini, M. Rita, and Leonardo M. Savoia. 2018. *The Morphosyntax of Albanian and Aromanian Varieties*. Berlin/ Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Manzini M. Rita, and Kenneth Wexler. 1987. “Binding Theory, Parameters and Learnability.” *Linguistic Inquiry* 18: 413-444.
- Marantz, Alec. 1997. “No Escape from Syntax: Don’t Try Morphological Analysis in the Privacy of Your Own Lexicon.” *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics* 4: 201-25.
- Mavrogiorgos, Marios. 2009. *Proclisis and Enclisis in Greek*. PhD. Dissertation, University of Cambridge.
- McNally, Louise. 2016. “Existential Sentences Cross-Linguistically: Variations in Form and Meaning.” *Annual Review of Linguistics* 2: 211-231.
- Moro, Andrea. 1988. “Per una teoria unificata delle frasi copulari.” *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa*, 13: 81-110.
- Moro, Andrea. 1992. “A Case Study in Linguistic Variation: The Semantics of Existential Sentences.” *University of Venice: Working Papers in Linguistics* 2, 1: 1-20.

- Moro, Andrea. 1993. *I predicati nominali e la struttura della frase*. Rivista di Grammatica Generativa Monograph Series 7. Padova: Unipress.
- Moro, Andrea. 1997. *The Raising of Predicates*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Moro, Andrea. 2000. *Dynamic Antisymmetry*. Linguistic Inquiry Monograph, Series. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Moro, Andrea. 2006. "Copular Sentences." In *Blackwell Companion to Syntax II* ed. by Martin Everaert, and Henk van Riemsdijk, 1-23. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Moro, Andrea. 2009. "Rethinking Symmetry: A Note on Labelling and the EPP." In *La grammatica tra storia e teoria: Scritti in onore di Giorgio Graffi*, ed. by Paola Cotticelli Kurras and Alessandra Tomaselli, 129-31. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso. <[http://www.ledonline.it/snippets/allegati/snippets19\\_007.pdf](http://www.ledonline.it/snippets/allegati/snippets19_007.pdf)>. (06/2020)
- Moro, Andrea. 2017. "Existential Sentences and Expletive There." In *Blackwell Companion to Syntax Revised Edition vol. II* ed. by Martin Everaert and Henk van Riemsdijk, 210-236. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Moro, Andrea. 2018. "Copular Sentences." In *Blackwell Companion to Syntax Revised Edition vol. II* ed. by Martin Everaert, and Henk van Riemsdijk, 1-32. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ormazábal, Javier, and Juan Romero. 2007. "The Object Agreement Constraint." *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 25: 315-47.
- Ormazábal, Javier, and Juan Romero. 2010. "Object Clitics and Agreement." Ms., Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea/ Leioa-Badajoz: University of the Basque Country and Universidad de Extremadura. <<https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/001032>> (06/2020).
- Postal, Paul. 1966. "On So-called Pronouns in English." In *Modern Studies in English*, ed. by David Reibel and Sanford Schane, 201-223. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Rizzi, Luigi. 2016. "Labeling, Maximality, and the Headphrase Distinction." *The Linguistic Review* 33, 103- 127.
- Roberts, Ian. 2010. *Agreement and Head movement: Clitics, Incorporation and Defective Goals*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Roca, Francisc. 1992. *On the Licensing of Pronominal Clitics: The Properties of Object Clitics in Spanish and Catalan*. MA thesis, Barcellona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
- Roca, Francisc. 1996. "Morfemas objetivos y determinantes: los clíticos del español." *Verba* 23: 83-119.
- Savoia, Leonardo M., Benedetta Baldi, and M. Rita Manzini. 2018. "Sigmatic Plurals in Romance Varieties Spoken in Italy and Their Interaction with -i Plurals." *LINGBAW*, 4: 141-160.
- Savoia, Leonardo M., M. Rita Manzini, Ludovico Franco *et al.* 2017. "Nominal Evaluative Suffixes in Italian." In *Di tutti i colori. Studi linguistici per Maria Grossmann*, ed. by Roberta D'Alessandro, Gabriele Innàccaro, Diana Passino *et al.*, 283-300. Utrecht: Utrecht UP.
- Sportiche, Dominique. 1992 "Clitic Constructions." Ms., Los Angeles: UCLA.
- Sportiche, Dominique. 1996. "Clitic Constructions." In *Phrase Structure and the Lexicon*, ed. by Johan Rooyck and Louise Zaring, 213-277. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Storto, Gianluca. 2003. "On the Status of the Partitive Determiner in Italian." In *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2001: Selected Papers from Going Romance 2001* ed. by Josep Quer, Jan Schrotten, Mauro Scorretti *et al.*, 315-330. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Stowell, Tim. 1989. "Subjects, Specifiers and X-bar Theory." In *Alternative Conceptions of Phrase Structure*, ed. by Mark Baltin and Anthony Kroch, 232-262. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Suñer, Margarita. 1988. "The Role of Agreement in Clitic-doubled Constructions." *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 6: 391-434.
- Torrego, Ester. 1985. *Pronouns and Determiners: A DP Analysis of Spanish Nominals*. Unpublished MA dissertation, Boston: University of Boston.
- Uriagereka, Juan. 1995. "Aspects of the Syntax of Clitic Placement in Western Romance." *Linguistic Inquiry* 26: 1-79.
- Vergnaud, J.R., and M.L. Zubizarreta. 1992. "The Definite Determiner and the Inalienable Constructions in French and in English." *Linguistic Inquiry* 23(4). 595-652.
- Zamparelli, Roberto. 2002. "Definite and Bare Kind-denoting Nouns Phrases." In *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2000; Selected Papers from "Going Romance" 2000* ed. by Frank Drijkoningen, Claire Beyssade, Paola Monachesi *et al.*, 305-342. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.