PRO-DROP AND INVERSION PHENOMENA OF ROMANESCO

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0. Introduction

The use of texts, both literary and practical, has proved especially valuable in terms of recent linguistic research of typological emphasis Texts have provided the only key that demonstrates the passage of a language from one era to another in morpho-phonological terms, and with the more recent work in linguistic typologies and universals (Greenberg, 1963, Comrie, 1981), these same literary and historical texts are proving beneficial to the study of language change with regard to syntactic typology It is for these reasons that the analysis of texts from the Italian dialects written during the early part of this millennium hold such importance in terms of modern linguistic research

The typological classification of languages can be at once quite precise and methodical yet quite arbitrary and whimsical Rigorous statistic figuring often enters into the picture of a syntactic typological investigation, as whim and imagination can enter into the mind of the linguist devising new systems upon which to investigate The most superficial linguistic typologies--those that govern word order and the status of the subject--are those which are of most concern in this paper This paper's emphasis will, therefore, concentrate itself upon the typology of Basic Word Order, and the movement operations thereto pertaining to derive surface structures, and the typology of optional explicitness of the subject (that is, whether the language is *pro*-drop or non *pro*-drop), which itself often plays a role in the concept of most basic, or most neutral, word ordering An analysis of the phenomena which often accompany an investigation of the nature of the subject--inversion of the Subject Noun Phrase with the verb--will also be herewith pursued Both typologies and subsequent topical investigation shall be examined here through *La Vita di Cola di Rienzo*, a Roman chronicle in prose (Roman dialect or Romanesco/Romanaccio) from the mid-fourteenth century, written by an anonymous author

The unfortunate tedium that accompanies any research into the classification of a language (or a dialect) often occurs, not in working with the text itself, but in the process of finding an appropriate sample, and the microscopic filtering through which one must view the work The actual statistical work done through such an investigation is really quite simple and straightforward, albeit time consuming and tedious That which provides more interest is the derivation of, and the explanations for, the surface structure from the apparent deep structure For purposes of clarity and definition, I shall try not to rely so heavily on the formality of movement rules, but, rather, emphasize the triggers of such movements

The typology of word order, especially the position of the verb, has often lent itself to many a linguistic research study analyzing linguistic universals Joseph Greenberg, for instance,

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suggests that certain phenomena are quite predictable, based on the position of the verb in basic word order   Although such a conclusion in this brief study of Romanesco is not forthwith coming, the investigation of other dialects with it may yield many answers dealing with the nature of shared tendencies of retention, not only between related languages, but in more general terms, as well

1   Methodology of Investigation

A random sample of 286 contiguous sentences was selected from the text *Cronica*   The passage is comprised of the first ten chapters of the section *La Vita di Cola di Rienzo*   That which was statistically compiled was the frequency of *pro*-drop and subject-verb inversion in main clauses   Before any discussion of the findings, it is necessary to explicitly define the terms to be used   In this way, I will seek to keep the terms as theory-neutral as possible, and use terms which are descriptively transparent

The term *pro*-drop refers to the free alternation between an unstressed subject pronoun and a silent category *pro*   Data from Modern Standard Italian (MSI) illustrates

(1)   lui dorme   *pro* dorme
                 he sleeps   *pro* sleeps
                       "He sleeps"

For explanatory adequacy, it should be noted that verbs of weather (*piovere*, 'to rain', *nevicare*, 'to snow') and verbs of appearance (*sembrare*, 'to seem', when followed by a tensed clause) can never take an overt subject pronoun   Indeed, these two classes of verbs may together form a more encompassing class   those which project neither an internal argument, nor an agentive external argument   Italian also possesses no 'dummy' subject pronoun, and does not conform to the Extended Projection Principle   These two facts suggest that, indeed, when a richly thematic, transitive verb appears without an overt subject, that silent category which sits in the subject position is of the same type that appears in subject position of weather-verbs   *Pro*-drop is thus the alternation between a silent category and an overt category of the type DP/NP

Inversion-Phenomena refers to the relatively unconstrained position of the subject with respect to the verb, preverbal or post-verbal   In MSI, the alternation in (2-3) illustrate the flexibility[1]

(2)   arriva Gianni   Gianni arriva[2]
                 arrives John   John arrives
                       "John arrives"

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[1] In the instance where there is an internal argument, the subject tends to appear after the entire V+DP constituent if it appears post-verbally

[2] With unaccusative verbs, the slightly less marked ordering is that with the grammatical subject (which is projected thematically internal to the verb) appearing post-verbally   Not all native speakers of Italian, however, agree

(3)   dorme Gianni   Gianni dorme
                 sleeps John   John   sleeps
                        "John sleeps"

       Central to this parameter is that, simply, there are only two options of subject-verb positioning either SV or VS In sentences with a silent category, the position of the silent category is not readily apparent, and may be indeterminable, independent from inference suggested by transitive verb structures

       Basic Word Order is the syntactic structure of a sentence as it is projected from the lexicon It is essentially a structure with no sentence external pragmatic emphasis, or clause internal movement operations Each element of a transitive verb's argument structure must be overt and non-pronominal, and indeed, the verb must minimally project two arguments one internal, the other external Indeed, it seems *a priori*, that such neutral constituent orderings will be fairly rare, as sentences in a given text are not linguistically isolated, and will exhibit properties of emphasis and markedness more often than not

       One assumption to make is that Romanesco, like Modern Italian, is an SVO language, that is, a language whose basic word order is Subject-Verb-Object, where the Object and Subject are not pronouns Consider the following comparison

(4)   a Modern Italian
            Gianni vide Giovanna   =/=   Giovanna vide Gianni
             John saw Joan   *Joan saw John*
            Giovanna, Gianni vide   =/=   Gianni, Giovanna *(lo) vide
             Joan, John saw   *John, Joan saw*

     b Romanesco

            Lo tribuno fece uno parlamento   (ch 16)
            the tribune made a parliament
            'the tribune held a parliament'

That such a construction is extremely rare in the pages of the *Vita di Cola di Rienzo* is very significant, but not surprising Basic word order is not a sought after commodity in the prose of Romanesco (Nor is it in Modern Italian prose, or even in English for that matter) It is therefore of interest to determine exactly what triggers the processes that transform a "basic" word ordered sentence into one which is actually committed to paper

2 Statistics

There are 286 main clauses in the sample, which include 85 embedded clauses (relative clauses, complement clauses, etc) Of the main clauses, the distribution of the various word orders break down as depicted in (5) There are 146 transitive sentences, 78 of which do not possess an overt subject Interesting to note is that all six permutations of the building blocks S, V and O are attested

(5)

SVO	25
SOV	15
VSO	5
VOS	6
OVS	14
OSV	3
VO	62
OV	16
TOTAL	146

Among copular, intransitive, unaccusative and passive sentences, where there is no structural object, the majority (71/140) possess post-verbal subjects This correlates to a structure where the subject DP's remain in-situ, in base-generated position [3] The chart in (6) summarizes the overall numbers of one-place predicate verbs

(6)

SV	22
VS	71
V	47
TOTAL	140

Total number of sentences with no overt subject 125/286 or 43 7%

It is the degree to which Romanesco is *pro*-drop, especially when compared to Florentine Italian of the same century, that is so astounding Consider the following statistic A random sample of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (written between 1348 and 1353) reveals, contrastively, that 36 out of 176 main clauses, only 24%, do not possess an explicit subject

Given this language's relatively free word order, the status of a single DP with a transitive verb becomes ambiguous as to its grammatical relation, especially if both subject and direct object are singular In this instance, Romanesco shows a tendency to retain both Noun Phrases (Subject/ Object) In Romanesco, if a verb is transitive, and possesses an object Noun Phrase, it will most likely have an accompanying subject Noun Phrase, even a pronoun More on this in section 3

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[3] The question of agreement does come into play Indeed, because there is overt agreement (singular vs plural, third person in most cases), it raises the question of whether there might be movement to [Spec,AgrS], and further movement of the verb into the Complementizer slot I leave this question open here

A further analysis of the use of explicit subjects possesses quite interesting results, especially in the areas where the explicit subjects are not full Noun Phrases, but are, rather, nominative pronouns Statistically, the sample breaks down as follows Of the 161 sentences with explicit subjects, only 20 (12 4%) are pronouns Of particular curiosity is the fact that in every one of these cases, each pronominal subject precedes the verb Such a fact from this limited sample is by no means indicative of any sweeping conclusion of the grammar of Romanesco, however, given such a minimal use of pronouns and the very limited contexts in which they appear, it seems as if pronominal subject use is parallel to that of Modern Standard Italian's optional use of the pronoun for purposes of emphasis or reinforcement Consider the following data

(7)   a Modern Italian
            Non lo so   io   Io   non lo so
            not it know-1st,sg I-nom   I-nom not it know-1st,sg
                            'I don't know'

(Such statements are context dependent, and are by no means neutral, but they are grammatical.)

       b Fourteenth Century Romanesco

            Io serraijo granne signore   (Ch 4)
            I will-be great   lord

             et tu aspetta allo tiempo   (Ch 4) Imperative
             and you wait   to-the time
            "And you await the   time"

             esso se   fu levato in pede   (Ch 4)
             he CL-refl was raised on foot
            "He had risen to his feet"

       Although in this particular sample, no nominative pronouns follow the verb, there are examples elsewhere in which the pronoun is post-posed to the verb In these instances, other conditioning factors may be at work Consider the following sentence from Book 4, ch 4

(8)   Nientemeno fate voi, et   facciate   bene
            Nevertheless do you and   do-SUBJ   well
            "Nevertheless do it, and may it go well with you"

The formula to which this sentence seems to conform mirrors rules in Modern German (a decidedly Non-Pro-Drop language), which requires the presence of a post-verbal subject in a command Although such a rule is obligatory in German, lest the sentence be ungrammatical, it does not seem to be so in Romanesco

Conclusions to be drawn from such a *pro*-drop analysis at this stage are quite premature, and without a means with which to compare this dialect, they would be quite limited, indeed Comparing the *pro*-drop phenomena to other dialects contemporary with Romanesco provides insight into the general pattern of the pro-drop phenomenon in the Eastern Branch of the Romance Languages Dialects of the North, especially those of the Piedmont, also *pro*-drop in the early stages in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as evidenced by the Sermoni Subalpini, have gradually become non-*pro*-drop languages today (Berruto and Rizzi), while central and southern dialects have retained their relatively elastic *pro*-drop status

3   Examples of each type of word order

3 1   Transitive Verbs

The occurrence of all six possible word type orders is rather astounding, especially those where the Object precedes the S-V or V-S complex   In this section, examples from each of the types of word order will be furnished   The first difficulty with a language that displays such flexibility in its surface word order is the determination of what the underlying, basic word order is   As mentioned above, *a priori*, I have assumed Romanesco to have basic SVO word order, under controlled circumstances (no clitics, pronouns, *pro*-subjects, etc)   And indeed, under such conditions, Romanesco is predominately SVO   The example in (9) illustrates (Ch 4)

(9)   Quello piccolo celletto   portava   quella corona
      That-m little   bird   was-carrying   that-f crown
      The little bird was carrying the crown

Although the determiners used in each of the DP's denote specificity in Florentine/Modern Standard Italian, in Romanesco, they apparently simply mark definiteness
The second most common order is SOV, however, such frequency is not unexpected, as Romanesco--like Italian--makes heavy use of object clitic pronouns   (10) serves as an example

(10)   quello   lo   aizao
       That-one him raised
       he raised him up (exalted)

Interesting to note are the effects of the Law of Tobler-Mussafia, a prosodic rule which disallows an unstressed head (clitic) from appearing as the first element in a sentence   A clitic object pronoun cannot appear as the first element in a sentence and will be, in turn, post-posed to the verb [4]   However the effects of the phenomenon are simply to restore V+O word order   Such a phenomenon is moderately numerous in this sampling of Romanesco, occurring in 23 instances throughout the surveyed pages, but its application appears universal   Wherever its specific requirements are met, and the law can occur, it does so with no exceptions

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[4] The convention of writing these two words as one is a phenomenon of the form of orthography and style, and has nothing to do with the act of speaking   The V+clitic form a prosodic word in similar fashion to a clitic+V

VSO word order is attested far less frequently than other word orders It represents a disruption in the integrity of the V+direct object predicate, however, it occurs under conditions which appear similar to V2 phenomena Consider the example in (11), from Chapter 1

(11)   Moito mira   Papa Chimento lo bello   stile della   lingua   de Cola
        Much admired Pope Clement   the beautiful style of-the language of Cola.
        Pope Clement admired the beautiful style of Cola's language

This example serves as a representative for all that fall under this word ordering A pre-posed XP (quantifier, or other adverbial), followed by the verb (possibly in the complementizer slot), followed by the subject DP, which is itself most probably in [Spec,AgrS] Such a configuration is highly reminiscent of main clause structure in V-2 languages

VOS word order is numerically just as rare in the sample as VSO order There are two causes of such a word order If the object is a clitic, and occurs as the first element of a sentence, the verb must precede the clitic, resulting in $[[V_1 + O\ t_1]+S]$ order In those instances where VOS occurs with full DP arguments, it forms itself under the same configuration as VSO sentences, where there is an XP at the beginning of the sentence Consider the example in (12)

(12)   Hora   prenne   audacia   Cola di Rienzo
        Now   took   courage   Cola di Rienzo
        Now Cola di Rienzo gathered courage

The movement in this example cannot easily be reduced to head movement, as both the V (a head) and its internal argument appear before the subject [5] Since overt agreement appears on the verb, I will assume it to have passed through the head position of AgrS The subject does not seem to have undergone further raising than [Spec, AgrS] If this assumption is correct, it must be the case, then, that there are two fully phrasal elements inside the complementizer position, the AdvP *hora* 'now', and the VP *prenne audacia*, 'gathered courage' [6] I leave the question open here

The surprising prevalence of sentences with the shape OVS is easily accounted for as clitic structures A full adverbial or prepositional phrase occurs as the first element of the sentence, followed by a clitic object, then the verb There are, however, instances where such an ordering appears when all DP's are full In these instances, heavy focalization (or pragmatic prominence) is the probable explanation Consider the following example, from chapter 5

(13)   Questo   portava Stefanello
        This-one   carried Stefanello
        Stefanello carried THIS ONE

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[5] Since, however, the V+Direct object appear to be an idiom chunk, and because there is no visible signs of a Determiner-system associated with the N, *audacia*, it could be argued that *prenne audacia* may be more characteristic of a complex head than of a full predicate
[6] Such a configuration does not pose a problem, within Rizzi's (1995) proposed articulated complementizer system

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The direct object is a focalized element, pragmatically strong in the preceding sentence Topicalization is most probably not the cause for this particular word order, as topicalized structures in Romance generally display resumptive object clitics Focalized elements do not elicit clitic doubling

OSV order is the rarest of all types There can be no object clitics in such a word order, as cliticization always occurs to a verbal head In these instances, the internal argument must be a full DP As mentioned above, the pronominal subject will occur before the verb (although not as a clitic) The example in (14) illustrates

(14) Tutti   esso   iudicava
     All-m, pl   he   condemned
     He condemned ALL of them

Again, as in the previous example, there appears to be a heavily focalized element in, or near, [Spec,CP] As there is no resumptive clitic, topicalization of the quantifier does not appear to be the explanation for such movement

Among transitive sentences with a *pro* as the subject, the tendency toward V2 is rather striking As the examples in (15) and (16) show, the verb follows the first constituent

(15) Uitimamente adunao questa bona iente   et matura[7] (ch 5)
     Finally   gathered this good people and mature
     Finally, he gathered this good and mature people

(16) Tutte   scritture antiche vulgarizzava (ch 1)
     All-f, pl writings ancient translated
     He translated all the ancient writings
     (=he translated into popular speech)

In (16), as in (13-14), it appears that focalization of the direct object is occurring, however, in this case there is merely a *pro* in subject position Since *pro* appears to alternate with subject pronouns, and not full DP's, the position for it in (16) is likely in preverbal position (as in 14) If this is the case, we can conclude that Romanesco is not strictly a V2 language, despite outward appearances

3 2 Intransitive, Unaccusative, and Passive Verbs

Sentences with verbs that project only one thematic argument, be it external or internal exhibit only two possible orderings Subject-Verb or Verb-Subject Such an assessment does not take into consideration the position of adverbials of location, provenance or destination By the

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[7] The conjoined adjectives in the subject DP appear to violate the coordinated structure constraint, as *bona* 'good' appears to head-adjoin to the noun, to the exclusion of *matura* At this point, I have no explanation

same token, however, a typology that takes into account only the position of subjects and direct objects with respect to the verb also does not adequately deal with such syntactic categories

S-V order occurs principally in copular constructions, where there is either a predicate nominal or a predicate modifier (adjectival or prepositional phrase) Such constructions tend toward V-2, however, exceptions are numerous, as in (17)

(17)   la cittate de Roma   fu   in grannissima   travaglia
        the city of Rome was in great-SUF   agony
        .. , *the city of Rome was in (extremely) great agony*

V-S order is quite common, generally involving locatives A locative or temporal adverbial, followed by the V (copula), then the Subject In fact, of the 71 sentences with V-S order, 60 are follow this form There are other sentences with such an ordering, as (18) demonstrates

(18)   In questo tiempo nella cittate de Roma nato fu   uno   mostro
        In this   time in-the city of Rome born was   a   monster
        At this time in the city of Rome, a monster was born

Of particular interest in (18) is the placement of the participle, relative to the auxiliary and the inverted subject The main verb, in participial form, *nato,* 'born,' is that which is projecting the subject It, however, appears to have moved out of its VP, to a position higher than its auxiliary If we assume the subject is in [Spec, AgrS] (as it must be, as agreement morphology is overt), the auxiliary that precedes it must be in a head position within the complementizer-system The participial head must also be in a position within the C-system Indeed, there are two focalized constituents in (18), the temporal PP *in questo tiempo* 'at this time,' and the locative PP, *nella cittate de Roma,* 'in the city of Rome,' which must be sitting inside specifier positions This begs the question if these constituents are adjoined to each other or are substituted into pre-existing specifier positions If left adjunction is the pertinent syntactic operation, we would not expect to find more than one head-position If it is substitution, we should expect to find as many heads in the C-system as we find XP's It is the presence of the two verbal heads which have undergone V-to-I-to-C movement that forces the conclusion that substitution has occurred, rather than adjunction At this juncture, however, I leave the mechanics of such movement an open question

The final type of structure involves a one place predicate which has *pro* as its subject It is never the case within the sample that a verb with *pro* as its subject is the only element in a sentence, as in these cases adverbial adjuncts are abundant In the case of verbs of movement, an AdvP which denotes the direction is obligatorily recoverable, either from context, or sentence internally The example in (19) from Chapter 7 demonstrates

(19)   A Roma   tornao
        To Rome returned
        He returned to Rome

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These explanations are by no means complete, nor do they seek to explain in generative terms the ways and means of derivation Rather, they merely illustrate descriptively the triggering mechanisms of subject inversion in Romanesco

4 Summary and Conclusions

In summary, the wildly divergent attestations of word order in the text at hand can reduce to only a few basic movement triggers These triggers are attested all throughout Romance The basic mechanisms are

• Clitic placement operations The placing of pronominal direct object in an immediate pre-verbal position account for the majority of O-V sequences

• The Law of Tobler-Mussafia, which involves verbs and argument clitics, restores the superficial order of a verb and a clitic This result, however, is probably not the result of non movement Indeed, the verb most probably left head-adjoins to the clitic This also suggests that clitics do not adjoin directly to verbs, but rather some functional category associated with verbs

• Locative inversion This accounts for 60 of the 71 sentences with VS order Such structures generally involve full subject DP's, and as they are associated with one-place predicate verbs which project an internal argument, the VS order may reflect that the subject is *in situ*, and has not moved

• The attestation of OSV and OVS word order, not involving clitics, is most likely explained as outputs of Topicalization and/or Focalization movement Considering the nature of text, a chronicle, designed to glorify a depressing historical period, and the nature of its target audience (the common, non-literate citizen of Rome in 1360) the ample use of topicalization/focalization becomes clear

• Verb Final Underlying order There is text-internal evidence that the verb may be the final element of the VP In some subordinated clauses, the inflected verb comes clause finally (as in German or Dutch) Consider the following example

(20) Puoi che queste cose in Roma fatte erano
   After that these things in Rome made were
   After these things had been done in Rome

Many such examples exist throughout the work, however their structure does not seem to be obligatory There are other alternative structures with the subordinator *puoi che* 'after (that)' that do not follow the pattern of the example above, indicating that there are either further semantic/grammatical constrictions operational within lower clauses, or that this construction is in random distribution and possesses stylistic, not grammatical, overtones

The investigation of ancient and medieval texts often provides deep insight into the processes of language change, even in a syntactic or typological light Although Romanesco, in its purest form, was eventually replaced by the more prominent Florentine dialect by the fifteenth century, its study may indeed provide key evidence and insights into the languages of central Italy in all linguistic areas This particular investigation is quite incomplete Indeed, a more comprehensive examination of the entire work would yield many more facets of Romanesco syntax. Many assumptions and expectations of the central Italian dialects have herewith been confirmed, yet many new questions have arisen (A basic VS word order? Lower clause verb finalization?) Looking toward future prospects, it is obvious that many questions both in dialectological and general linguistic terms have yet to be approached, and this initial attempt is a mere stepping stone to a more thoughtful and far reaching analysis

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