

Fiorentino antiagreement does not support a skipping derivation for subject extraction: Suñer 1992 revisited

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Abstract

We provide novel empirical evidence that supports the view advocated in Suñer (1992) according to which antiagreement in Fiorentino (also attested in Trentino) cannot be taken as evidence for the hypothesis that long subject extraction in these languages proceeds from a low postverbal position (the so-called skipping derivation). As Suñer argues, default agreement rather reflects interpretative properties of the subject. This goes against the initial view proposed in Rizzi (1982), Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989), which is still the dominant view in the literature. The basic observation is that antiagreement is not tied to a postverbal pre-extraction site and that it has a much wider distribution than previously thought. The generalization that emerges covers all instances of antiagreement, including the classic subject extraction cases, while the traditional view would need a different explanation for the non- \bar{A} -extraction-related contexts.

1. Introduction

It is well-known that subject extraction, in particular (but not only) across clause-boundaries, requires morphosyntactic repair strategies in many languages in the sense that the usual derivation that is available for object extraction leads to ungrammaticality for subject movement. The *that*-trace effect is a famous example (Perlmutter 1968, 1971, Bresnan 1977). (1) illustrates the effect for English *wh*-movement: While a long object question can be formed across the overt embedding complementizer *that*, long subject extraction is unacceptable if *that* is pronounced.

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- (1) The *that*-trace effect in English (Perlmutter 1968: 214):¹
- a. What did he say that Laura hid ___? *long DO question*
- b. *Who did he say that ___ hid the rutabaga? *long SU question*

Documented repairs applied in subject extraction contexts include (i) the use of an alternative morphophonological form (e.g., the zero form) of the embedding complementizer, (ii) the use of a resumptive pronoun in the embedded subject position, (iii) pied-piping of the embedded clause, (iv) default subject-verb-agreement in the embedded clause (also called antiagreement, see Ouhalla 1993), and (v) extraction of the embedded subject from a postverbal position rather than from SpecTP (see Rizzi & Shlonsky 2004). Various hypotheses about the reason behind the restriction on subject extraction have been proposed, see Pesetsky (2017) for an overview. We will not engage in the discussion of the cause of the effect. We will rather concentrate on repair strategy (v), related to strategy (iv) as we will see, whereby long subject movement skips the derived subject position SpecTP in the embedded clause and moves directly from its low vP-internal base-position to SpecCP. The idea is developed in Rizzi (1982) (see also Chomsky 1981, Jaeggli 1982), who investigates the reasons behind cross-linguistic variation in subject extraction restrictions: (Standard) Italian lacks the equivalent of the English *that*-trace effect (an observation going back to Perlmutter 1971), see the well-formed long subject question in (2a). Rizzi proposes that this is because subject extraction in Italian proceeds as schematically represented in (2b) (Rizzi 1982: 145,147):

- (2) a. Chi credi che verrà?
 who think.2SG C come.FUT.3SG
 Lit.: ‘Who do you believe that will come?’
- b. Chi_i credi [CP che [TP *pro* verrà _i]]?

Italian, being a “null subject language”, allows for (certain) subjects to appear in their vP-internal, post-verbal position; SpecTP is occupied by a silent *pro*

¹Note that Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989) provide only superficial glosses while they are entirely absent in Suñer (1992). Thus, the glosses in this paper are our own, based on those in B&C’s work and the translations and surrounding descriptions of the examples. List of glosses: 1/2/3 = 1st/2nd/3rd person; C = complementizer; CL= clitic; DAT = dative; DEF = definite article; F = feminine; FUT = future; M = masculine; NEG = negation; PL = plural; PRTC = participle; SG = singular; SUBJ = subjunctive.

in this construction. Long subject extraction can thus take place from this postverbal position, skipping SpecTP (with *pro* in it) entirely. This avoids the problematic *that*-trace configuration where an embedding complementizer is adjacent to a trace in SpecTP. English is not a null subject language and hence, subjects always have to move to SpecTP to satisfy T's EPP-property (unless an expletive is available). An Italian-style skipping derivation along the lines of (2b) is thus not possible in English, and the *that*-trace effect emerges.

Two major empirical Italian-internal arguments for the derivation in (2b) have been provided in the literature: Rizzi (1982) discusses *ne*-cliticization (see also Burzio 1986); later Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989) added antiagreement (abbreviated as AAE in what follows) in the two Northern Italian dialects Trentino and Fiorentino. The present paper is concerned with the status of the AAE as empirical support for Rizzi's (1982) derivation. AAE traditionally refers to a reduction of subject-doubling morphology (such as verb agreement) under \bar{A} -extraction of the subject (see Ouhalla 1993, and Baier 2018 for qualifications). The effect is illustrated for Fiorentino in (3). While preverbal subject DPs in a declarative sentence trigger phi-agreement on the finite verb and the subject clitic, short and long *wh*-extraction of the subject result in a default 3sg masculine form of the (embedded) finite verb and the subject clitic (see (3) from Brandi & Cordin 1989: 124–125).

- (3) a. Quante ragazze gli è venuto
 how.many girls CL.3SG.M be.SUBJ.3SG come.PRTC.SG.M
 con te?
 with you
 'How many girls have come with you?'
 b. Quante ragazze tu chredi che e' sia
 how.many girls you think.2SG C CL.3SG.M be.SUBJ.3SG
 venuto con te?
 come.PRTC.SG.M with you
 'How many girls do you think have come with you?'

The crucial argument for extraction of the *wh*-subject in (3) from a low postverbal position comes from the observation that the same 3sg default morphology appears on the verb and the subject clitic in Fiorentino (and Trentino) when the subject is in postverbal position in a declarative sentence, see (4) (Brandi & Cordin 1989: 121):

- (4) Gli è venuto delle ragazze
 CL.3SG.M be.3SG come.PRTC.SG.M of.the.3PL.F girls
 ‘Some girls have come.’

This morphological parallel between postverbal, non- \bar{A} -extracted subjects and \bar{A} -extracted subjects in Fiorentino and Trentino is still widely considered to be crucial empirical evidence for the claim that \bar{A} -movement – at least in (varieties of) Italian – must take place from a vP-internal position and does not go through SpecTP (see Rizzi 1990).

Suñer (1992) critically reviews Rizzi’s (1982) and Brandi & Cordin’s (1989) claim that the AAE data from the Northern Italian varieties provide evidence for the hypothesis that subject extraction proceeds from a vP-internal, postverbal position. She argues that once a wider range of data is considered, the analysis is not tenable because the AAE is not tied to a postverbal pre-extraction position and is rather related to the interpretation of the subject: A subject that is presupposed or fully referential triggers full agreement, while a subject that is non-specific or not presupposed is only compatible with the reduced 3sg-morphology. This characterization also covers the classic AAE-instances under subject extraction (see (3)): *wh*-subjects like ‘how many X’ are less referential, and post-verbal subjects are focused and thus not presupposed. Suñer’s (1992) empirical arguments against a connection between AAE morphology and the extraction site of an \bar{A} -moved subject have largely been ignored in the subsequent literature on the topic, and Rizzi’s original account is still the standard one, with the Fiorentino and Trentino data frequently cited as primary evidence for the skipping derivation in (2b).

In this paper, we will provide further data from Fiorenino that strengthen Suñer’s interpretation-based approach and that argue against the classic view that AAE in this Northern Italian variety is crucially related to the syntactic position of the subject (pre- vs. postverbal). This in turn implies, as Suñer had already pointed out, that the AAE data from Fiorentino do not provide an argument for Rizzi’s (1982) skipping derivation. We want to emphasize right from the beginning that the new data do not falsify the skipping analysis for Italian. They simply show that the AAE does not constitute empirical evidence *for* a skipping derivation. We thus need to look for other evidence to verify or falsify Rizzi’s analysis.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides basic facts about agreement in Fiorentino, and introduces the common assumptions about the

syntax of agreement and the lack thereof with postverbal and \bar{A} -extracted subjects. We summarize Suñer's (1992) arguments against the conclusions previously drawn from these basic facts and provide an overview of the reception of Suñer's contribution in Section 3. Section 4 contains the novel empirical evidence we collected that supports Suñer's major point. In Section 5 we discuss the Fiorentino pattern from a wider cross-linguistic perspective and show that it instantiates a common pattern, which is likely to hold in other languages with the AAE as well.

2. Fiorentino (anti)agreement and postverbal subjects

In this section we summarize some basic facts about the morphosyntax of agreement and the structure of sentences with a postverbal subject in the Northern Italian variety Fiorentino, as described and analyzed in Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989), Rizzi (1986), Safir (1986), Suñer (1992).² Fiorentino has basic SVO order in neutral declarative sentences and exhibits subject pro-drop. The subject of a sentence is indexed by agreement on the finite verb as well as by a clitic that immediately precedes this verb and follows the subject (if the latter is overt). Both doubling devices reflect person, number, and – for the 3rd person – also gender of the subject. (5) provides a few simple example sentences; (5a–c) each contain a pro-dropped subject, while (5d) has an overt subject (here a proper name, but it could also be a tonic pronoun or any DP, see Brandi & Cordin 1989: 112f.).

- (5) a. Tu parl-i
CL.2SG speak-2SG
'You speak.'
- b. Gl' è partito
CL.3SG.M be.3SG left
'He has left.'
- c. E parl-a
CL.3SG.M speak-3SG
'He speaks.'
- d. La Maria la parl-a
DEF.F.SG Maria CL.3SG.F speak-3SG
'Maria speaks.'

²The facts reported here by and large also hold for Trentino, the other Northern Italian variety discussed in Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989). We will not address Trentino in this paper, however.

The full paradigm of the clitics and the agreement suffixes is given in (6). The clitics are obligatory in a finite clause, except for the 1sg clitic, which is optional (represented by the brackets in (6)). The 3sg masculine clitic exhibits allomorphy (Suñer 1992: 644, fn.5): it surfaces as *gli* when it precedes an /s/-initial consonant cluster, as the reduced form *gl* when it precedes a vowel, and as *e* elsewhere. The 3sg masculine form of the pronoun is also used in sentences with an impersonal verb (see (7)) and in impersonal passives (Brandi & Cordin 1989: 137, fn.7, Suñer 1992: 644).

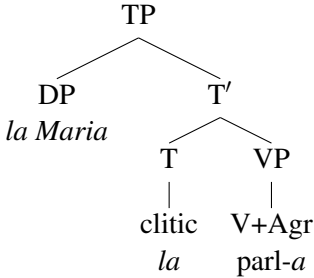
- (6) Fiorentino subject clitics and phi-agreement morphology
(Brandi & Cordin 1989: 113, Suñer 1992: 643, fn.4):

subject phi-features	clitic	agreement suffix
1sg	(e)	-o
2sg	tu	-i
3sg masc	e/gli/gl'	-a
3sg fem	la	-a
1pl	si	-a
2pl	vu	-ate
3pl masc	e	-ano
3pl fem	le	-ano

- (7) E' bisogna che Mario e' parta oggi
be.3SG necessary that Mario CL.3SG.M leaves today
'It is necessary that Mario leaves today.'

Rizzi (1986) and Brandi & Cordin (1989) analyze both the verbal suffixes and the clitics as morphological doubling devices that originate in INFL (now T) under agreement with the DP in SpecINFL (now SpecTP) (see Safir 1986 for a different view). The features on INFL are realized by the clitic; a copy of the phi-features on INFL attaches to the finite verb (by some kind of affix hopping) and is realized by agreement suffixes there. The (updated) version of this analysis is represented in (8) for example (5d) (based on Rizzi 1986: ex. (5), p. 393).

(8) Structure with subject DP + clitic + V-agreement:



Rizzi (1986) and Brandi & Cordin (1989) argue against an alternative view according to which the clitic is a pronoun in SpecINFL and thus the proper argument of the verb; an overt subject DP as in (5d) would then just be a left-dislocated topic. What argues against lexical subject DPs being topics in sentences such as (5d) are the following observations: The subject DP can be quantified (but topics cannot, see Rizzi 1986), we do not get the typical intonational contour of dislocation in these cases, and in Fiorentino left-dislocated topics are followed by a topic marker, but the subject in, e.g., (5d), is not. The arguments against treating the clitic as a pronominal argument in SpecTP include the following facts: The clitic is not accentuated (unlike tonic pronouns), no lexical material can intervene between the clitic and the finite verb (only other clitics can), the clitic has to be repeated in verbal coordination, and only subject clitics (but not object clitics) show word order flexibility with respect to the negation clitic (which is assumed to originate in the T-domain as well).

With the basic analysis of the subject doubling devices (clitic and agreement) in place for preverbal subjects (see (8)), let us now turn to sentences with postverbal subjects and the question why they cannot feature full agreement morphology. Fiorentino, like Standard Italian, allows not only unaccusative subjects but also unergative and transitive subjects to appear postverbally (Suñer 1992: 643). Postverbal subjects tend to be focused; sentences containing them can be answers to subject questions (new information focus) or express contrast (see, e.g., Brandi & Cordin 1989: p. 137, fn.6). Crucially, Fiorentino (unlike Standard Italian) requires the default form, viz., 3sg masculine, of the clitic and the agreement suffix in clauses with postverbal subjects, full

phi-agreement is ungrammatical, see (9a, b) with an unergative verb, and (9c, d) with an unaccusative verb (Brandi & Cordin 1989: 121f.).³

- (9) Postverbal subjects require default agreement:
- a. **Gli ha** telefonato delle ragazze
CL.3SG.M have.3SG called of.the girls
 - b. ***Le hanno** telefonato delle ragazze
CL.3PL.F have.3PL called of.the girls
'Some girls have telephoned.'
 - c. **Gli è** venuto delle ragazze
CL.3SG.M be.3SG come.SG.M of.the girls
 - d. ***Le son** venute delle ragazze
CL.3PL.F be.3SG come.PL.F of.the girls
'Some girls have come.'

The question is why full agreement is blocked when subjects appear postverbally. Rizzi (1982, 1986) and Brandi & Cordin (1989) propose the following: A postverbal subject DP as in (9a, c) does not move to SpecTP but remains inside the VP; its exact position is debated, but it is often assumed to be right-adjoined to VP (following Kayne 1981, Belletti & Rizzi 1981, Rizzi 1986, Belletti 1988).⁴ SpecT is occupied by an empty *pro* in this case; this element is inherently 3sg masc, see (10). *Pro* and the subject DP are co-indexed, which leads to the transmission of the theta-role from *pro* to the postverbal subject DP. Since the clitic and the agreement suffix result from agreement between T and the element in SpecTP (see (8)), the VP-internal lexical subject DP cannot be the goal of phi-agreement. Instead, we find that the clitic and the agreement morphology reflect the features of *pro* in SpecTP, viz., 3sg masculine.

- (10) [TP *pro*_i [T' T ... [VP [VP V ...] DP_i]]]

Brandi & Cordin (1989: 137f., fn.8) provide evidence for the assumption that postverbal subjects are in a low clause-internal position and not right-dislocated

³In the case of unaccusative verbs that take the *be*-auxiliary in the perfect we also observe default agreement on the past participle. With preverbal subjects, the participle agrees in gender and number with the subject, but with postverbal ones, it always takes the 3sg masculine form, see (9c) vs. (9d).

⁴Belletti (2001, 2004) argues that subject focalization involves movement of the thematic subject to a low, predicate-internal focal position.

based on their interaction with negation. Whereas focused postverbal subjects of the kind in (4) are interpreted in the scope of the clause-mate negation (see (11a)) in Fiorentino, right-dislocated subjects are not (see (11b), where correcting only the verbal complex without the subject is not possible).⁵

- (11) a. E unn' ha telefonato le' tu sorelle, ma le' mi cugine
 not have telephoned the your sisters, but the my cousins
 'Your sisters have not telephoned, but my cousins have.'
- b. *E unn' ha telefonato le' tu sorelle, ma l' enno
 not have telephoned the your sisters, but CL.3PL.F be.3PL
 venute di persona
 come.PL.F in person
 'Your sisters have not telephoned, but they have come personally.'

With this analysis of the lack of agreement with postverbal subjects in mind, the crucial observation that Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989) brought into the discussion is that Fiorentino exhibits the same default 3sg masculine agreement morphology (= antiagreement) when the subject undergoes \bar{A} -movement. In fact, this does not only hold for subject questions, as shown in (3), but also for (restrictive) subject relatives (see (12)) and subject topicalization (see (13)). Moreover, antiagreement is not restricted to local extraction, but also surfaces in embedded clauses under long subject extraction in all three constructions (not illustrated here).

- (12) Subject relative clause, restrictive:
- a. le ragazze che gl' ha parlato ieri alia
 the girls that CL.3SG.M have.3SG spoken yesterday at.the
 riunione
 gathering
- b. *le ragazze che l' hanno parlato ieri alia
 the girls that CL.3PL.F have.3PL spoken yesterday at.the
 riunione
 gathering
 'the girls that spoke yesterday at the gathering'

⁵Rizzi (1982: 121, ex. (14)) shows that a postverbal NPI subject like *nessuno* 'nobody' is licensed by preverbal sentential negation in Standard Italian.

(13) Subject topicalization, contrastive:

- a. La Maria, gl' ha parlato alia riunione, no
 the Mary, CL.3SG.M have.3SG spoken at.the gathering, not
 la Carla
 the Carla
- b. *La Maria, l' ha parlato alia riunione, no
 the Mary, CL.3SG.F have.3SG spoken at.the gathering, not
 la Carla
 the Carla
 'Mary, she spoke at the gathering, not Carla.'

It is this morphological parallel between subject extraction and postverbal subjects, i.e., the obligatory AAE, that Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989), and following them Rizzi (1990), took to be empirical support for the skipping derivation where the \bar{A} -subject is extracted from the postverbal position.

3. Suñer's (1992) reanalysis

3.1. An interpretation-based account

Suñer (1992) argues against the view that the use of full vs. default 3sg agreement on finite verbs in the Northern Italian vernaculars is related to the position of the subject DP (postverbal/VP-internal position vs. preverbal/SpecTP position). Her claim is based on the empirical observation that there are contexts in which full agreement is found with postverbal subjects, and that the AAE is more wide-spread and not just found with \bar{A} -extracted subjects. Instead, Suñer proposes that the contexts in which the AAE arises – including the famous subject \bar{A} -extraction cases – form a natural class that is related to the interpretation of the subject: specific or presupposed subjects trigger full agreement while subjects that are non-specific and “unknown or newly introduced in the discourse” (p. 641) require default agreement. In what follows, we summarize her empirical findings and arguments.⁶

⁶Suñer (1992), following Jaeggli (1984) and May (1985), also provides a conceptual argument against the skipping derivation: the at the time standard ECP-based account of the ban on subject extraction could account for the need of a repair (here, antiagreement) for long subject extraction, but it could not explain why short subject extraction requires a repair, too. The

First, Suñer (1992) points out that a subject in postverbal position does not always result in the default form of the agreement suffix and the clitic. For example, local person subjects trigger full agreement, whether in preverbal or in postverbal position. The (main text) examples in Rizzi's and Brandi and Cordin's work all involve 3rd person subjects, however.

- (14) No AAE with local person postverbal subjects (Suñer 1992: 652):⁷
- a. e parl-o io
CL.1SG speak-1SG I
'I speak.'
 - b. tu parli te
CL.2SG speak-2SG you.SG
'You(sg) speak.'
 - c. vu parl-ate voin
CL.2PL speak-2PL you.PL
'You(pl) speak.'

Moreover, even 3rd person postverbal subjects trigger full agreement in case a different XP undergoes \bar{A} -extraction (Suñer 1992: 655)

- (15) No AAE with postverbal subjects + non-subject extraction:
- a. *Ichhè ha-ella/*-egli mangiato la Maria?*
what has-she/-it eaten DEF Maria
'What has Maria eaten?'
 - b. *Quando è-ella/*-egli arrivata/*arrivato la Maria?*
when is-she/-it arrived.F.SG/arrived.M.SG DEF Maria
'When has Maria arrived?'

This clearly shows that there is no 1:1 link between the position of the subject (pre- vs. postverbal) and its (dis)ability to trigger full agreement. Suñer's (1992) explanation for the facts relates to the interpretation of the subjects: Local person functions deictically, so "their referent is well-established" and they are

proposals from the literature all lead to a non-uniform analysis as they treat short subject extraction differently from long subject extraction.

⁷With 1pl subjects generally, the clitic takes the form of the impersonal/reflexive *si* and the verb appears in 3sg. Suñer relates this to the impersonal *si* construction in Standard Italian, which can be understood as referring to 1pl on pragmatic grounds. The difference is that Fiorentino uses the regular 1pl tonic pronoun *noi* showing that this underlying 'we' reading is grammatically encoded in some sense.

presupposed in the context. As for the cases of *wh*-non-subject extraction with postverbal (3rd person) subjects, it is the *wh*-non-subject that is focused and the postverbal subject is thus (better) known in the discourse. Being known and presupposed leads to full agreement in her interpretation-based analysis.

The second argument Suñer discusses relates to the type of \bar{A} -extraction. While subject questions, restricted relative clauses and topicalization trigger antiagreement in Fiorentino (see (3), (12), and (13) above), subject clefts and subject relativization in appositive relative clauses do not, see (16) (Suñer 1992: 653, 670); the same holds for the corresponding long subject dependencies.

(16) No AAE in subject *it*-clefts and in appositive subject relatives:

- a. *gl' è la Maria che la / *gl m' ha*
it is DEF Maria that CL.3SG.F CL.3SG.M CL.1SG.DAT has
sciupato tutti i libri
damaged all the books
 'It is Maria who has damaged all my books.'
- b. *La Matia, che l' / *gl ha preso quattro in*
DEF Maria that CL.3SG.F CL.3SG.M has received four in
matematica ...
math
 'Maria, who received a 4 in math, ...'

This is surprising if all of these constructions involve \bar{A} -movement of the subject. Why should its movement from the preverbal position be blocked only in certain \bar{A} -dependencies but not in others? According to Suñer (1992), the split between the \bar{A} -constructions can be explained by taking into account interpretative aspects: The *wh*-clause in *it*-clefts has been argued to be presupposed (see Prince 1978), "the hearer knows or is able to deduce the information that they encode" (Suñer 1992: 654). Appositive relative clauses also do not add new information but "rather make explicit shared information" (*ibid.*).

Interestingly, the facts that Suñer puts forward against Brandi & Cordin's / Rizzi's original analysis were already mentioned in Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989) and also cited in Jaeggli (1984). Brandi & Cordin (1989) only present them in footnotes and give them little attention regarding the overall analysis of the AAE. For example, Brandi & Cordin (1989: 138, fn. 9) provide data with fully-agreeing postverbal local person subjects. They speculate that this agreement is caused by a person feature transmission from postverbal subjects

to *pro*, which can then trigger person agreement on the clitic and the verb. It remains unexplained, however, (a) why we still see number agreement with local person postverbal subjects but not with 3rd person ones, and (b) why antiagreement is excluded (at least as an option) with local person subjects. Brandi & Cordin (1989: p.139f., fn. 12) also note the absence of default agreement in *it*-clefts and in appositive relative clauses. They hypothesize that these dependencies do not involve \bar{A} -movement but base-generation (and resumption), hence the absence of the AAE. They do not provide independent evidence for their claim, however. Regarding full agreement with postverbal subjects under \bar{A} -extraction of a non-subject, Brandi & Cordin (1981: 64f.) suggest that the post-verbal subjects in these constructions are right-dislocated, unlike the non-agreeing postverbal subjects in sentences such as (5d), which are VP-internal. Suñer (1992: 656) shows that this reanalysis is not tenable because the postverbal subjects in these constructions also fall in the scope of clause-mate negation, just like VP-internal postverbal subjects, and unlike properly right-dislocated phrases (recall the contrast in (11)).

- (17) a. *Ichhè unn' ha-ella mangiato la Maria?*
 what NEG has-she eaten DEF Maria
 'What hasn't Maria eaten?'
 b. can be continued with:
ma la Carla si
 but DEF Carla yes
 '... but Carla has'

Moreover, Suñer shows that her interpretation-based account makes predictions about other contexts in which the AAE should (not) arise. These are borne out, and the contexts are hard to explain in an approach in which the only relevant factor for the (non-)occurrence of full agreement is the position of the extractee. First, since lexical partitives and D-linked *wh*-phrases involve selection from a contextually salient set of elements, they are expected to trigger full agreement on the clitic and the agreement suffix in Fiorentino, which is indeed the case, see (18) and (19). While Suñer (1992) does not make it clear whether full agreement in (18) is just an option (alongside antiagreement) or obligatory, the fact that it is possible is surprising under Brandi & Cordin's (1989) account.

- (18) No AAE with lexical partitive subjects (Suñer 1992: 660):
 Quante de quelle ragazze l' hanno parlato con te?
 how.many of these girls CL.3PL.F have.3PL spoken with you
 'How many (of the girls) have spoken with you'
- (19) No AAE with D-linked wh-phrases (Suñer 1992: 661):
- a. Quale de quelle ragazze l'/*gl' ha cantato
 which of these girls CL.3PL.F/CL.3SG.M have.3SG sung
 ni' coro?
 in choir
 - b. Quale ragazza l'/*gl' ha cantato ni' coro?
 which girl CL.3SG.F/CL.3SG.M have.3SG sung in choir
 'Which of the girls sang in the choir? / Which girl sang in the choir?'

The equivalents of question words like 'who', 'what' and 'how many'-phrases, as used in the original Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989) examples, are, however, not D-linked (non-specific in Suñer's terms) and thus trigger the use of AAE-default forms of the clitic and the agreement suffix. For the account that relates the AAE to the pre-extraction position of the subject relative to the verb, it is not expected that D-linking should play a role as it would suggest that D-linked and non-D-linked subjects occupy different pre-extraction sites.

Second, impersonal *se/si*-sentences in Italian are "used to predicate something about an unspecified group of human beings" (Suñer 1992: 663). As such, they should be compatible with default agreement morphology, which is borne out (Suñer 1992: 664, *e* is an epenthetic vowel in (20)):

- (20) *Icché si fa-e-gli?*
 what SI do.3SG-V-CL.3SG.M
 'What is one doing?'

Finally, Suñer (1992: 667f.) notes that quantified subjects ('everybody', 'nobody'), which are non-referential, sometimes co-occur with the non-agreeing default 3sg morphology (as expected under her interpretation-based account), but sometimes also exhibit full agreement. To explain the occurrences with full agreement, she hypothesizes that these expressions can be interpreted as partitives by the speakers ('each of them /none of them').

3.2. Reception of Suñer (1992)

Suñer (1992) discusses a broad array of data from Fiorentino and Trentino that undermines the 1-to-1 link between default agreement and the extraction position of the subject, and proposes an independent, interpretation-based generalization. Even if her analysis turned out to be incorrect, the status of Northern Italian AAE as an argument in favour of Rizzi's skipping derivation is untenable in light of the data. Curiously enough though, Rizzi's/Brandi & Cordin's approach in terms of extraction from a low subject position has become the widely accepted standard among linguists working on the topic. Subsequent work largely took skipping as a given and attempted to explain why movement from SpecTP is blocked. Various proposals have been put forward, including ones based on Aoun & Li's (1990, 1993) \bar{A} -disjointness requirement (Ouhalla 1993), antilocality (Cheng 2006, Erlewine 2020, Schneider-Zioga 2007), or Criterial Freezing (Rizzi 2006, Shlonsky 2014, Diercks 2009, 2010). What the subsequent literature on the AAE and related phenomena has in common is that Suñer's work and also the data in Brandi & Cordin's footnotes is only marginally acknowledged, if at all (see, e.g. Ouhalla 1993, Erlewine 2020, Pesetsky 2021). In the few cases where they are mentioned more prominently, only a subset of Suñer's challenging facts is discussed (see, e.g., Campos 1997, Mereu 1999), but not necessarily explained; other facts are still ignored. Baier (2018), for example, mentions the local person data and the fact that postverbal subjects fully agree with the verb when a different XP undergoes \bar{A} -movement. In his analysis, antiagreement is the result of postsyntactic impoverishment of a probe that has undergone phi-agree with an \bar{A} -goal (viz., a goal that bears an \bar{A} -feature such as [focus]). The absence of antiagreement with postverbal subjects in the presence of a different \bar{A} -moved XP follows nicely because it is the XP that bears the \bar{A} -feature in this context, not the postverbal subject. The local person exception, however, receives a different account; it is basically due to a stipulation: impoverishment only applies in the presence of [-participant] (= 3rd) person features copied from the goal. This approach also leaves unexplained other observations that Suñer's explanation was able to capture uniformly in addition to the local person data.

To sum up, while Suñer (1992) points out that the skipping analysis has a number of problems when faced with the full range of data from Fiorentino/Trentino and proposes an explanation for the observed lack of full agreement that covers all data points, her work has not been widely received. If

acknowledged, it is usually for specific data points while her main insight and critique of the skipping derivation is left unmentioned. In the following section we provide additional evidence for Suñer's account in the hope of contributing to a broader recognition of her work showing that these Northern Italian dialect data do not provide an argument in favour of the skipping derivation.

4. Additional evidence for Suñer's (1992) account of the AAE

We presented 7 native speakers of the Fiorentino dialect with sentences with varying agreement (full vs. reduced) and varying subject position (pre- vs. postverbal) in contexts that were designed to facilitate either a specific/presupposed reading or a non-specific/non-presupposed reading. They were asked to pick the sentence that in their view best continued the context. We expected the speakers to choose a sentence with full agreement in the former contexts and a sentence with default agreement in the latter. In what follows, we present the results of this very basic study arguing that they support Suñer's approach. We will adopt the following notational conventions: Sentences that were chosen by at most 1 speaker will be marked by an asterisk '*'. Sentences selected by the largest subset of speakers will remain unmarked. A '%' sign signals that a sentence was selected by more than 1 speaker but not by the largest subset of speakers. A general thing to note is that our speakers consistently rejected sentences in which the verb itself shows default agreement, independent of the position of the subject. Only the preverbal subject clitic varies between the form that fully agrees with the subject's phi-features and the default 3rd singular masculine *gli*.⁸ We will address this in section 5. Overall, we further found no indication that postverbal (3rd person) subjects trigger reduced agreement. To the extent that speakers chose sentences with postverbal (3rd person) subjects, they more often picked one that had full phi-agreement.

4.1. D-linked wh-phrases

First, we were able to generally replicate the AAE with wh-phrases as documented in the literature (modulo the default 3rd singular inflection on the

⁸This mismatch between verbal agreement markers and subject clitics already challenges the original analysis of Rizzi (1982), where both originate in T (cf. section 2) and should therefore not be able to mismatch.

verb). In a question with a *wh*-subject such as *quante ragazze* ‘how many girls’ in (21), 4 speakers preferred the unagreeing sentence in (21b). Only 2 speakers opted for the agreeing version in (21a). One speaker allowed all three options, that is, even the sentence in (21c) with an unagreeing verb form.

- (21) Context: Marco owns several bars in the city centre. One Friday morning, he visits one of his bars and finds it in a very chaotic and deranged state, apparently a private party has taken place. He asks one of the few guests who are still there what happened. The guy tells him that some girls threw a party last night. Marco asks:
- a. %*Quante ragazze le han festeggiato?*
 how.many girls CL.3PL.F have.3PL party.PRTC
 ‘How many girls have had a party?’
 - b. *Quante ragazze gli han festeggiato?*
 how.many girls CL.3SG.M have.3PL party.PRTC
 - c. #*Quante ragazze gli ha festeggiato?*
 how.many girls CL.3SG.M have.3SG party.PRTC

With D-linked *wh*-subjects, however, a similarly clear preference for AAE versions of the *wh*-questions emerged in the context in (22), which figures the *wh*-subject *quali ragazze* ‘which girls’. The same 4 speakers that chose the unagreeing question in (21) also opted for an unagreeing version in (22), two preferring (22b) and two even (22c). The same two speakers who went with the fully agreeing form in (21) also chose the fully agreeing sentence (22a). The remaining speaker allowed more than one option, namely (22a) and (22b).

- (22) Context: Marco owns several bars in the city centre. One Friday morning, he visits one of his bars and finds it in a very chaotic and deranged state, apparently a private party has taken place. He asks one of the few guests who are still there what happened. The guy tells him that some girls threw a party last night. Marco asks:
- a. *Quali ragazze le han festeggiato?*
 which girls CL.3PL.F have.3PL party.PRTC
 ‘Which girls have had a party?’
 - b. *Quali ragazze gli han festeggiato?*
 which girls CL.3SG.M have.3PL party.PRTC

- c. %Quali ragazze gli ha festeggiato?
 which girls CL.3SG.M have.3SG party.PRTC

It is possible, however, that in this specific context, speakers interpreted ‘which girls’ as non-D-linked, not as referring to a subset of a presupposed set of girls. Instead, they might have interpreted the subject as ‘what girls’, i.e. as the bar owner wondering that there was a group of girls in the first place.

Only in the respective singular version of this context, which is given in (23), did the number of fully agreeing responses increase a bit. Three speakers preferred the fully agreeing (23a) while three other speakers opted for the unagreeing (23b). One speaker allowed both.

(23) Context: Marco owns several bars in the city centre. One Friday morning, he visits one of his bars and finds it in a very chaotic and deranged state, apparently a private party has taken place. He asks one of the few guests who are still there what happened. The guy tells him a girl threw a party last night. Marco asks:

- a. Quale ragazza la ha festeggiato?
 which girl CL.3SG.F have.3SG party.PRTC
 ‘Which girl has had a party?’
- b. Quale ragazza gli ha festeggiato?
 which girl CL.3SG.M have.3SG party.PRTC

Again, the provisions pertaining to the previous context also hold here. Generally, the responses show that our speakers exhibit the AAE in (at least local) subject extractions.

4.2. Idioms

A clear piece of support for Suñer’s approach comes from the behaviour of idiomatic subjects, which are inherently non-referential/non-specific. Independent of the position of the subject, these therefore are expected to exhibit reduced agreement under Suñer’s approach. Under the standard account, however, we would expect them to show position-dependent behaviour, i.e., full agreement in preverbal and reduced agreement in postverbal position. We presented our speakers with two idiomatic subject constructions. The first is provided in (24). Our speakers overwhelmingly preferred the unagreeing version

(24b), which was chosen by 5 of them. Only one speaker opted for the fully agreeing (24a), while another speaker allowed both the a. and the b. option.

(24) Context: Rodolfo has a difficult decision to make. Should he take an offer for a well-paid job in Singapore or should he stay at his old job in Florence? He cannot bring himself to make a decision. The next day, he tells his friend Carlo that he has made a decision. Another friend, Luca, hears about this and asks Carlo: “How come he’s able to choose now?” Carlo replies:

- a. %La notte la ha portato consiglio a
DEF.F.SG night CL.3SG.F have.SG bring.PRTC advice to
Rodolfo.
R.
‘Rodolfo has slept over it.’
- b. La notte gli ha portato consiglio a
DEF.F.SG night CL.3SG.M have.SG bring.PRTC advice to
Rodolfo.
R.
- c. #La ha portato la notte consiglio a Rodolfo.
- d. #Gli ha portato la notte consiglio a Rodolfo.

With a different subject idiom, a similar picture emerges. In (25), 3 speakers preferred unagreeing (25d) and 2 speakers opted for unagreeing (25b). One speaker allowed both unagreeing options. Only one speaker chose the fully agreeing (25a) option.

(25) Context: Luca and his friend Cosimo went to a bar yesterday night. They ended up in a fight which resulted in a few lacerations, bruises and a black eye for Cosimo. When some of their friends come to pick them up from the hospital, they ask how it all happened. Luca replies: “Well, at first some of the other guests started to insult us. Then they came over and spilled our beer. Afterwards they even started jostling us. And then ...”

- a. #La mosca la è saltata al naso
DEF.F.SG fly CL.3SG.F be.3SG jump.PRTC at.DEF.M.SG nose
di/a Cosimo.
of C.
‘Cosimo lost his temper.’

- b. La mosca gli è saltato al naso
 DEF.F.SG fly CL.3SG.M be.3SG jump.PRTC at.DEF.M.SG nose
 di/a Cosimo.
 of C.
- c. #La è saltata la mosca al naso di/a Cosimo.
- d. Gli è saltata la mosca al naso di/a Cosimo.

This response pattern is puzzling under the standard approach but entirely expected under Suñer's interpretative account of the AAE.

4.3. Quantified nominals

Another type of subject we tested are quantified nominals. We included four different quantifiers: *ogni* 'every', *tutte* 'all', *poche* 'few', and *nessuna* 'no(body)'. We found that the distributive universal *ogni* and the negative existential *nessuna* both gave rise to a majority of unagreeing responses. Thus, in the context (26), 4 speakers preferred the unagreeing (26b) while 3 speakers opted for fully agreeing (26a). One speaker chose both.

(26) Context: For market research purposes, Enzo recently conducted a survey on women's eating preferences. Each woman was asked to choose a dish from a list. He was expecting that at least some of the participants' responses would converge on one dish. However, when a colleague asks him how it went he just shrugs his shoulders and replies:

- a. %Ogni donna la ha scelto un piatto diverso.
 every woman CL.3SG.F have.3SG select.PRTC a dish different
 'Every woman selected a different dish.'
- b. Ogni donna gli ha scelto un piatto diverso.
 every woman CL.3SG.M have.3SG select.PRTC a dish different
- c. #La ha scelto ogni donna un piatto diverso.
- d. #Gli ha scelto ogni donna un piatto diverso.

For the context with the negative indefinite *nessuna ragazza* in (27), only 5 speakers provided judgements. 3 of them opted for the unagreeing (27b) and one for the fully agreeing (27a). One speaker equally allowed both options.

(27) Context: Usually, the dancefloor at the hottest night club in town is full of dancing people. However, last night was different.

- a. %Nessuna ragazza la ha ballato.
 no girl CL.3SG.F have.3SG dance.PRTC
 ‘No girl has danced.’
- b. Nessuna ragazza gli ha ballato.
 no girl CL.3SG.M have.3SG dance.PRTC
- c. #La ha ballato nessuna ragazza.
- d. #Gli ha ballato nessuna ragazza.

In contrast, with the quantifiers *poche* ‘few’ and *tutte* ‘all’, which incidentally also take plural restrictors (as opposed to the singular ones of *ogni* and *nessuna*), more speakers chose an agreeing version of the sentence. Thus, for the *tutte* context in (28), 4 speakers preferred fully agreeing (28a) and 2 speakers opted for unagreeing (28b). One speaker allowed both.

(28) Context: Gabriella recently went to the annual performance of the local music school. When she tells her friend Luna about this she asks whether the girls who’ve just started music school and only had a few singing lessons had to perform individually. Gabriella replies:

- a. No. Tutte le ragazze le han cantato
 no all DEF.F.PL girls CL.3PL.F have.3PL sing.PRTC
 insieme come un coro.
 together like a choir
 ‘No. All the girls sang together like a choir.’
- b. %No. Tutte le ragazze gli han cantato
 no all DEF.F.PL girls CL.3SG.M have.3PL sing.PRTC
 insieme come un coro.
 together like a choir
- c. #No. Le han cantato tutte le ragazze insieme come un coro.
- d. #No. Gli han cantato tutte le ragazze insieme come un coro.

In the *poche* context in (29), 2 speakers preferred the fully agreeing (29a) and 2 further speakers the fully agreeing (29c). Another 2 speakers chose unagreeing (29d) while one speaker allowed all four options.

(29) Context: Usually, the dancefloor at the hottest night club in town is full of dancing people. However, last night was different.

- a. Poche ragazze le han ballato.
few girls CL.3PL.F have.3PL dance.PRTC
'Few girls danced.'
- b. #Poche ragazze gli han ballato.
few girls CL.3SG.M have.3PL dance.PRTC
- c. Le han ballato poche ragazze.
- d. Gli han ballato poche ragazze.

The observed preference for unagreement with *ogni* and *nessuna* again supports Suñer's account of the AAE in terms of referentiality. In addition, the fact that the non-distributive universal quantifier *tutte* predominantly triggers full agreement lends even further, though indirect, support. As has been reported by Baker (1996), Baker & Kramer (2018), Cinque (1990), Safir (2017) in languages with a referentiality-based split in argument marking morphology, this morphology may double non-distributive but not distributive universal quantifiers. The different behaviour of argument marking subject-clitics in Fiorentino for the two types of universal quantifiers therefore can be taken to indicate that it is a language that shows a referentiality-based split as well.

4.4. Definites

We also tested definite subjects in different contexts of definiteness. As definite noun phrases are typically referential, we would expect them to trigger full agreement. This is indeed what we found. In the familiarity context (30), 4 speakers preferred fully agreeing (30a), one speaker fully agreeing (30c). Only two speakers chose unagreeing (30b).

(30) Context: At the club, Giovanni has met two girls and three guys. The guys just drank wine. But...

- a. Le ragazze le han ballato.
DEF.F.PL girls CL.3PL.F have.3PL dance.PRTC
'The girls danced.'
- b. #Le ragazze gli han ballato.
DEF.F.PL girls CL.3SG.M have.3PL dance.PRTC
- c. #Le han ballato le ragazze.
- d. #Gli han ballato le ragazze.

In a context where the subject refers to an entity that is unique in the larger sit-

uation, 4 speakers preferred the fully agreeing preverbal subject sentence (31a) while 3 speakers opted for the fully agreeing postverbal subject sentence (31c).

(31) Context: A priest arrives at the convent of nuns in order to celebrate the holy mass and take confessions. A nun informs him:

- a. La badessa la confesserà per prima.
DEF.F.SG abbess CL.3SG.F confess.FUT.3SG for first
'The abbess will confess first.'
- b. #La badessa gli confesserà per prima.
DEF.F.SG abbess CL.3SG.M confess.FUT.3SG for first
- c. %La confesserà la badessa per prima.
- d. #Gli confesserà la badessa per prima.

In a global uniqueness context such as (32), only one speaker chose the sentence in (32b) with reduced agreement whereas the 6 other speakers preferred the fully agreeing version in (32a).

(32) Context: A grandmother is telling her grandchildren a story. She begins: "It was a bright night..."

- a. La luna la splendeva in cielo.
DEF.F.SG moon CL.3SG.F shine.PST.3SG in sky
'The moon was shining in the sky.'
- b. #La luna gli splendeva in cielo.
DEF.F.SG moon CL.3SG.M shine.PST.3SG in sky
- c. #La splendeva la luna in cielo.
- d. #Gli splendeva la luna in cielo.

As definite subjects generally are specific/presupposed, under Suñer's approach it is not surprising that they occur with fully agreeing subject clitics, even in cases where the subject is in postverbal position, such as (31c), which was selected by 3 of 7 speakers. Under the skipping derivation, the last point in particular poses a challenge because while there is potentially an analysis for the fact that local person subjects trigger full agreement even in postverbal position (e.g., Baier 2018), the very observation of 3rd person postverbal subjects with full agreement is incompatible with it.

4.5. Interim summary and conclusions

To summarize, we were generally able to verify Suñer's empirical claims with respect to reduced agreement with *wh*-subjects as well as full agreement with postverbal 3rd person DP-subjects with 7 native speakers. Moreover, additional data from typically non-referential idiomatic subjects as well as quantified subjects further support her account as these were judged to trigger reduced agreement by a majority of our speakers. In particular the split between reduced agreement with the distributive universal *ogni* and full agreement with its non-distributive counterpart *tutte*, which is typical of languages with referentiality-based argument marking, is indicative of the fact that an interpretative account of Fiorentino such as Suñer's is on the right track. In the following section, we will show that such a referentiality-oriented system of argument marking is far from uncommon in the world's languages and that it is therefore not extraordinary for Fiorentino to exhibit such a system.

5. Fiorentino in a cross-linguistic perspective

We conclude from the above observations that the antiagreement effect in Fiorentino, contrary to widely held beliefs, does not provide support for a skipping analysis of subject extraction along the lines of Rizzi (1982), Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989). This does not necessarily mean that the skipping derivation is wrong, it simply does not receive support from antiagreement. The facts rather support Suñer's (1992) interpretation-based account of the AAE according to which the referentiality of the subject is the decisive factor.

Considering the cross-linguistic picture, Suñer's (1992) perspective on the Fiorentino subject clitic pattern is not extraordinary at all. It is well-known that fully matching argument doubling morphology in the form of pronominal or clitic elements often requires the argument to be referential or specific. If the argument is non-referential/non-specific, doubling morphology is either absent or appears in a reduced/default form. For instance, clitic doubling is often not possible for non-referential and non-specific DPs (Suñer 1988, Dobrovie-Sorin 1990, Franks & Rudin 2005, Kramer 2014, Yuan 2021). Likewise, resumptive pronouns in several languages induce a referential or specific interpretation of their antecedent (Doron 1982, Sharvit 1999, Bianchi 2004, 2011, Sichel 2014). It is therefore not unfounded to claim for Fiorentino that the choice between fully agreeing and reduced subject clitics is conditioned by

interpretational properties of the subject. Moreover, similar patterns where the form (agreeing/non-agreeing) or the presence/absence of subject clitics depends on information-structural and referential properties of the subject have been described for several other Northern Italian varieties (see, e.g., Poletto & Tortora 2016, Poletto 2000, D’Alessandro & Frasson 2023 and references cited there). It has also been observed that referentiality/specificity can have a crucial role in the syntax of extraction, too. For example, D-linked wh-phrases in English can violate Superiority (Pesetsky 1987) and ameliorate certain island violations (Maling & Zaenen 1982, Cinque 1990, Rizzi 1990, Kiss 1993). It also affects reconstruction (Heycock 1995) and French participial agreement (Obenauer 1994). With this background in mind, the Fiorentino pattern exhibiting a dependence of subject doubling morphology on interpretational properties of the subject as argued by Suñer would be far from a unusual.

The fact that our speakers quite consistently rejected reduced agreement on the auxiliary/verb also receives a straightforward explanation under Suñer’s approach. While pronominal elements such as clitics may be sensitive to the referential properties of corresponding arguments (Baker & Kramer 2018, Fominyam & Georgi 2021) bona fide agreement is not (see among others Corbett 2006, Kramer 2014). If the occurrence of reduced clitic forms in Fiorentino is conditioned by referentiality instead of by \bar{A} -extraction, then it is entirely expected that proper verbal agreement affixes remain unaffected. What is more, some inter-speaker variation between reduced and fully agreeing clitics may then be attributed to different degrees of grammaticalization of the subject clitics as proper agreement markers.

Given that antiagreement in Fiorentino does not simply reflect the position of the subject (pre- vs. postverbal) and has a much wider distribution than just subject extraction contexts, it is worth reconsidering other languages that have been claimed to exhibit a classic antiagreement effect (in the sense that \bar{A} -arguments trigger reduced agreement or agreement drop, see Ouhalla 1993 on Turkish, Berber, and Celtic). In fact, in at least some of these languages antiagreement also surfaces in other, non-subject- \bar{A} -extraction contexts, and often, semantic/pragmatic factors play a crucial role for the occurrence of the effect there as well. For example, Cagri (2005), Göksel & Kerslake (2005), Szarvas (2021) show that antiagreement in Turkish relative clauses is not just attested in subject relative clauses, but also, e.g., in locative relatives, and that the specificity of the subject inside the relative clause is also crucial for the choice between full and reduced agreement. Subject “agreement” in varieties

of Berber has been argued to be a pronominal clitic (e.g., Guerssel 1995), and that the AAE arises because this type of pronoun cannot function as a bound variable (Elouazizi & Wiltschko 2006). That antiagreement in Celtic languages is of a different kind has long been noted (e.g., in Borsley 2009, Baier 2018) – and the reason is actually the same that Suñer brought forward for Fiorentino and Trentino: the AAE in these languages has a much wider distribution than just subject \bar{A} -extraction contexts. In Celtic languages, agreement morphology is in complementary distribution with overt DP arguments in general.

Beyond the classic antiagreement languages, we find similar patterns. For example, while \bar{A} -extraction of subjects in Awing leads to an obligatory absence of the subject marker, it also has to be dropped if the subject is idiomatic, non-D-linked, generic, non-specific, non-ostensively used, or a non-referential quantifier (Fominyam & Georgi 2021). Similarly, object agreement in Tundra Nenets has to be dropped with *wh*-objects and focussed objects, which is analyzed by Baier (2018) as an antiagreement effect and exploited as an argument for his theory of the AAE as \bar{A} -triggered impoverishment. Crucially, this agreement is also obligatorily absent with non-specific indefinite (so-called predestinative) objects, indefinite or negative object pronouns, vague quantities and cardinal numerals larger than two (Nikolaeva 2014: 201–213; not discussed in Baier 2018). All of these examples show us that it is important to consider whether antiagreement as found under (subject) \bar{A} -extraction also arises in other contexts in a given language, and to investigate whether there is a broader generalization that can capture *all* occurrences rather than just the \bar{A} -extraction related ones. In the end, antiagreement may turn out not be a uniform phenomenon; only detailed studies of individual languages with the effect will allow us to provide an answer.

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