Variation in the syntax-semantics linking: The case of Turinese *je*
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In this talk I discuss a pattern of variation observed in dialects of Northern Italy. I argue that the RRG theory of the syntax-semantics linking readily captures this variation in synchrony and its possible repercussions in diachrony. The pattern under analysis is observed in broad focus constructions with VS order, which, in many dialects of Northern Italy, exhibit an etymologically locative clitic (Parry 1997, 2013; Tortora 1997, 2014; Manzini/Savoia 2005/2; Ciconte 2008; Pescarini 2016:749; Bentley 2018; Bentley/Cennamo 2022). This clitic is exemplified by Milanese *ghe* and Turinese *je* below.[1]

(1) **Gh'** è   rivà   i   to   surèi. (Milanese, Lombardy, Italy)
    LCL be.3SG arrive.PSTP the your sister.PL
    'Your sisters have arrived.'

(2) A   l'   è   riva**je**   toe   sorele. (Turinese, Piedmont, Italy)
    EXPL AUXCL be.3SG arrive.PSTP.LCL your sister.PL
    'Your sisters have arrived (here, where I am).'

Given that the clitic under discussion occurs with verbs of inherently directed motion (cf. 1-2), it could be the realization of a locative argument of the verb. Indeed, native speaker judgements indicate that Turinese *je* can be deictic or suggestive of first-hand experience on the part of the speaker, although it need not have such denotations or connotations. On the other hand, the etymologically locative clitic also recurs with verbs which lack a locative argument.

(3) **Gh'** è   mort   tanti suldà   (Milanese)
    LCL be.3SG die.PSTP many soldier.PL
    'Many soldiers died.'

(4) A   l'   è   mort**je**   tanti inocent (Turinese)
    EXPL AUXCL be.3SG die.PSTP.LCL many innocent.PL
    'Many innocent people died.'

The fact that, in most relevant dialects, the etymologically locative clitic occurs in the position of a subject clitic (cf. 1, 3), in concomitance with VS order and the absence of number agreement of V with S (cf. 1-4), has led scholars to claim that the clitic is associated with a syntactic subject position (see, e.g., Tortora 1997, 2014; Parry 2013), thus satisfying the subjecthood well-formedness requirements which are assumed in frameworks other than RRG. In these analyses, the clitic is both the here-and-now topic of an all-new predication (see Erteschik-Shir's 1997 notion of stage topic) and a syntactic subject.

The case of Turinese *je*, however, challenges the analysis of the etymologically locative clitic as a subject. First, *je* does not figure in a preverbal position (cf. 2, 4). In fact, it occurs in complementary distribution with clitics that realize non-PSA arguments (cf. 2, 4 vs. 5). Second, *je* is not incompatible with V-S agreement (cf. 6-7).

(5) A   l'   è   riva**mne(*je)**   due (Turinese)
    EXPL AUXCL be.3SG arrive.PSTP.to.me.of.them(LCL) two
    'There arrived two of them to me.'

(6) Peui **i** **seve** vnù**je** voi autri (Turinese)
after SCL be.2PL come.PSTP.LCL you.PL others 'Then you came (here, where I am/was).'
(7) **A** **son** rivà**je** di pachet (Turinese)
SCL be.3PL arrive.PSTP.LCL of parcel.PL
'There arrived some parcels (here, where I am).'

In this talk I capture the observation that Turinese *je* can express a locative argument (cf. 6-7) or, alternatively, a non-referential here-and-now stage topic (cf. 4) in terms of the RRG notion of linking (Van Valin 2023:123-125). Taking the perspective of the hearer, I claim that with verbs of inherently directed motion, or if there is a locative antecedent, *je* is analysed as a locative pronoun, in which case it links from syntax to a semantic position of in the Logical Structure of a predicator, thus fulfilling the Completeness Constraint. However, the clitic can also be analysed as the here-and-now topic of an all-new predication, regardless of the semantics of the predicators in the clause (cf. 4). In the latter case, *je* links directly from syntax to a position in discourse representation, thus fulfilling the well-formedness requirement of a stage topic (Erteschik-Shir 1997). The fact that *je* is not in a subject position is immaterial in the RRG analysis, which does not assume the requirement of a subject.

From the RRG perspective the variation observed in Turinese and across dialects thus resides in the linking. The reanalysis by which an etymologically locative clitic ceases to be referential in the VS construction (as is the case with Milanese *ghe*, cf. 1, 3) can also be explained as a change from a syntax-semantics to a syntax-discourse pattern of linking.

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