

# Transferring Strategies and the Nature of Transfer<sup>\*</sup>

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*Jantar Mantar, Jaipur impressive observatory, is now a wonderful open-air museum: though built in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it is based on the Ptolemaic system. To Adriana, who constantly shows through her work how fundamental is grounding data, and their collection, on a good theory.*

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\* The related article will be part of Di Domenico, E., C. Hamann and S. Matteini (eds.) (to appear) *Structures, Strategies and Beyond. Studies in Honour of Adriana Belletti*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, Benjamins Publishing Company.

## Abstract

Through a number of papers written by Adriana Belletti during the first decade of the third millennium, an interesting picture gradually emerges.<sup>1</sup>

She notes that different languages adopt different ways to answer the same question requiring the identification of the subject, and that these different ways are amenable to basically three patterns (VS, clefts, SV with DP internal focalization) which are followed by different, apparently unrelated, languages. She gives an analysis of these patterns, which she calls (answering) strategies, i.e. ‘formal options that are both grammatically and pragmatically constrained’ (Belletti 2009: 264). Furthermore, she observes that in the L2 acquisition of Italian, the L1 (French, German, English) strategy is characteristically transferred, even in speakers at a very advanced level, i.e. in near natives.

How are strategies transferred? Is the transfer of strategies based on the same mechanism as the transfer of parameters values? Why is their transfer protracted?

In order to answer these questions, in this work I will outline a model of transfer which accounts in a unitary fashion for the transfer of strategies and of parameters values, where the latter are assumed to be properties of the elements of the functional lexicon (along the lines developed in Rizzi (2011)), and transfer may occur, derivationally, when a property is not acquired. This, in turn, might be due to the fact that the property is complex, as implicitly assumed by the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace and Filiaci 2006), but not by other models of transfer proposed in the literature, such as the Full Transfer/ Full Access model (Schwartz and Sprouse 1996). Crucially, however, in line with Belletti and Leonini (2004), I will argue that the problematic property underlying the transfer of answering strategies is not an interface property *per se*. What I assume for the cases at stake is that, although the Null Subject Parameter ( i.e. a feature of the T/AgrS head, which governs the Spell-out properties of its Spec) is correctly set, properties of *pro*, a new element in the subjects’ L2 functional lexicon, are not (yet) set, nor can they be transferred since there is no equivalent of *pro* in the subjects’ L1. So *pro* is left syntactically inert: it does not trigger the doubling derivation necessary to allow the lexical subject occupy the clause internal focus position, and the L1 strategy is, derivationally, adopted. This analysis is finally extended to account for the protracted overuse of overt pronouns in L2 Italian, another finding of ( a. o.) Belletti, Bennati and Sorace (2007).

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<sup>1</sup> We refer in particular to Belletti (2005), (2007) and (2009). Belletti and Leonini (2004) and Belletti, Bennati and Sorace (2007) give the necessary experimental evidence, while Belletti (2001) and (2004) give the pre- requisites for the development of the picture, in that in these works VS structures in Italian are first analyzed as instances of low, vP internal, focalization of the subject.

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