Focus in Existential Sentences[*]

Silvio Cruschina
University of Manchester
silvio.cruschina@manchester.ac.uk

Starting from the question of the extension of the focus in existential constructions, this paper primarily aims to draw up a classification of both genuine and spurious types of existential sentences in Italian. Four major types will be identified: (I) existential sentences, (II) inverse locatives, (III) deictic locatives, and (IV) presentational sentences. It will be shown that this classification may shed new light on the apparent differences between Italian and other languages, such as English, with regard to well-known phenomena and restrictions such as the definiteness effects. The pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic properties of the elements occurring in this construction will be examined with respect to each type of sentence identified. Following the cartographic approach, the existence of particular structures in Italian (types II and III) will be analysed in terms of discourse-related syntactic operations associated with designated functional projections within the clause, such as the focalization of postverbal subjects and the dislocation of old-information constituents. Type IV, instead, will be argued to be the result of a process of grammaticalization peculiar to Italian and, at least synchronically, unrelated to genuine existential sentences.

A Luigi, a cui sono sinceramente grato
e riconoscente per tutto ciò che mi ha trasmesso e insegnato

1. Introduction

Languages display a rich array of strategies for the expression of information structure, with elements from different areas of the grammar – syntax, phonology, morphology – exploited for this purpose. The precise mechanisms behind these strategies and the interaction of the different components of the grammar in the realization of information structure have been the subject of much recent research. A broad traditional division is between languages that mark discourse-related notions such as topic and focus through intonation, and languages that achieve the same effects by modifying the word order of the sentence. English, for example, marks

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narrow focus by manipulating the placement of the nuclear accent within the sentence (Ladd 1996: 191). In a variety of other languages, by contrast, topics and foci have dedicated structural positions. In these languages, sometimes known as discourse configurational languages (cf. É. Kiss 1995), assigning a specific syntactic position to topic and/or focus is more relevant than assigning a specific position to the syntactic subject, as manifestly reflected in the superficial word order.

For some languages, however, the distinction is not clear-cut, in the sense that they are not 'intonational languages', but at the same time cannot be defined as discourse configurational languages proper. Additional factors and fine interpretive distinctions are to be taken into account in the determination of the position in which a topic or a focus constituent appears. This is the case in most Romance languages. In Italian, for instance, the focus constituent typically occurs in a postverbal position, but it can be fronted to a preverbal position in some specific contexts, mainly when it bears a contrastive interpretation (cf. Rizzi 1997, Cruschina 2012). Within the cartographic approach, these distinctions have led to the postulation of the existence of two left peripheries, at the edge of the phase heads C and v, each comprising an array of functional projections dedicated to the encoding of discourse-related categories (cf. Rizzi 1997, Belletti 2004). Dedicated focus projections are therefore available in the syntactic structure both in the CP-domain and in the left periphery of vP. Languages differ with respect to the activation, and possibly to the interpretive specialization, of these focus positions.

In particular, Rizzi's (1997) seminal work laid the foundations for an approach, developed within the cartographic project, which is based on the principle of the existence of a close correlation between information structure and syntactic properties. This is achieved through a 'syntacticization' of pragmatic features, which are therefore assumed to play an active role in the syntactic computation. Hence, different information structures may reflect syntactic differences which are not immediately evident and, vice-versa, particular syntactic features may be the manifestation or the correlates of distinctive information-structure notions.

In addition to providing us with the appropriate theoretical tools to reach both descriptive and explanatory adequacy, the studies conducted within the cartographic approach have also aimed to re-evaluate specific structures and constructions, and to reformulate the traditional analyses in light of the new assumptions. Fronting in Sardinian and in Sicilian has been analysed as targeting the relevant focus projection (FocP) in the left-periphery of the sentence (cf. Cruschina 2012). Subject-verb inversion in Italian and other Romance languages has been interpreted as a focalization strategy that exploits the clause-internal FocP (Belletti 1999, 2004). The same projection is also involved in constructions whose relation to focusing effects is well established, such as cleft sentences (cf. Belletti 2005a, 2008, on clefts in French and in Italian). Similarly, the cross-linguistically different position of wh-phrases can be captured in terms of the activation of either the clause-external or the clause-internal FocP, according to which languages are characterized by wh-movement (cf. Rizzi 1996, 1997) or wh in situ (cf. Jayaseelan 2001, Belletti 2005a), respectively.

Following this line of investigation, the goal of this paper is to examine the connections between the existential construction and focalization, and to explore the possibility of adopting a cartographic analysis of this construction in Italian to shed

new light on cross-linguistic differences, in particular with respect to languages that do not mark focus syntactically. The starting aims of the paper can thus be summarized by the following questions:

(a) What is the focus of existential sentences?
(b) Is a FocP involved in (any type of) existential sentences in Italian?

These questions will lead us to a more general discussion, and classification, of existential sentence types. The data discussed will mainly be from Italian, but English will serve as a constant point of comparison. As already mentioned, English expresses information structure through intonation. Nevertheless, special syntactic constructions with a specific focusing function exist in this language, existential sentences instantiating one such construction. Despite the common focusing function, significant differences are expected to be found between English, a language with an inactive clause-internal FocP, and Italian, in which narrow focus is marked through the movement of the focus constituent to a designated FocP. It will be shown that these differences have repercussions for the understanding of both the underlying structure and the semantics of existential sentences in the two languages.

Although I am now using the term existential sentences in a broad sense, it will soon become clear during the discussion that, at least for Italian, this is simply a cover term for different structures, and that no less than four types of existential sentences, or more appropriately of *ci*-sentences, must be identified. After a general discussion of the pragmatic and discourse properties of existential sentences, a distinction will first be made between existential sentences proper (type I) and locative sentences that I will call 'inverse locatives' (type II) (cf. §3 and §4). This distinction will provide an initial explanation for the apparent violation of the definiteness effects in Italian existential sentences. Section 5 will deal with some problems related to the suggested analysis of inverse locatives, in particular to the information and syntactic status of the locative phrase, and to the nature of the pronominal element *ci* in this sentence type. A third *ci*-sentence type will be identified in section 6, with reference to those locative sentences with a particular deictic interpretation (type III). In this section, the exact role of the clitic *ci* in existential sentences will be compared to locative and deictic *ci*. Finally, section 7 will discuss a further type of Italian *ci*-sentences, namely, presentational sentences, whose complexity and little-studied properties can create problems of ambiguity with other sentence types.

Due to their distinctive structural and interpretive characteristics, existential sentences represent a rich ground (and indeed a minefield) on which numerous linguistic studies have offered diverse, and often conflicting, theories concerning the semantics, the syntax, and the pragmatics of this construction. Although different aspects will be touched on in the course of the discussion, this paper by no means aims to solve all or most of the puzzling and open issues in the literature on existentials. It relies instead on results or assumptions from previous work, and contains some preliminary observations and a tenable analysis of these that could form the basis for further investigation on this topic.

2. Pragmatic function and information structure of the existential construction
Semantically, an existential sentence asserts the existence or the presence of some entity (cf. McNally 2011).[1] However, the pragmatic function of existential sentences is not normally to assert the existence of some entity but "to introduce the NP referent into the discourse world of the interlocutors by asserting its PRESENCE in a given location" (Lambrecht 1994: 179). As pointed out by Lambrecht, a statement like that in (1) would hardly be uttered in a situation in which the only purpose of the speaker is to assert that cockroaches exist:

1)   There are cockroaches.

From a discourse-pragmatic point of view, the existence of such insects will more naturally be taken for granted, and the function of the statement in (1) will be that of presenting and introducing this referent into the discourse, thereby bringing it to the addressee's attention or awareness, as in (2):[2]

2)   Don't go into the kitchen. There are cockroaches.

This function therefore has an evident connection to focalization and to the speaker's intention to direct the hearer's attention to a specific constituent within the utterance. The focal nature of the DP included in the existential sentence is widely acknowledged in the literature, and is generally considered to be a necessary feature for the well-formedness of the existential sentence. The DP must be hearer-new, and this requirement has been expressed by an explicit 'Novelty Condition' on the entity introduced by the existential construction (cf. McNally 1992, Ward and Birner 1995; cf. also Abbott 1993, 1997). This condition is based on a *referential* definition of focus, whereby a constituent is treated as focal if its referent is new in the discourse and/or to the interlocutor. The focal nature of the DP is less obvious if the *relation* between the constituents of a sentence in a given context is considered, namely, if we try to identify a specific Topic-Comment or Focus-Background structure at the level of the sentence.[3] Do existential sentences have a distinctive topic-focus articulation?

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[1] I am providing here a much simplified semantic definition of existential sentences. See Francez (2007) and McNally (2011) for an overview of the semantic accounts found in the literature.
[2] In general, in order to meet adequate conditions of pragmatic felicity, existential sentences require some sort of contextualization evoking an either explicit or implicit scene or location in the speakers' mind:

(i)   a.   #There is a boy.
       b.   #There are children.

However, existential sentences may indeed be used to express the mere existence or non-existence of an entity.

(ii)   a.   There is a God.
       b.   There are no ghosts.

This presumably happens when "the existential sentence is presupposed to be true in the context in which it is uttered, its (re-) introduction into the context is not accompanied by the instantiation of any discourse referent" (McNally 1992: 164). In the examples in (ii), therefore, the focus is on the truth value of the existential assertion.
[3] On the distinction between *referential* and *relational* topic and focus, see Gundel and Fretheim (2004), and Cruschina (2012: 10).

Even if we also acknowledge the focal status of the DP from a relational viewpoint, what is the information-structure status of the other constituents within the sentence, and in particular of the (optional) locative coda?

Lambrecht (1994, 2000) considers existential sentences to be a type of presentational sentence characterized by a sentence-focus structure in which the whole sentence is 'presented' as new information. This implies that an additional constituent such as a locative coda belongs to the focus of the sentence:

3) a.   There's a white cat in the garden.
    b.   There were lots of people at the party.
    c.   There were few apples on the tree.

However, it is not difficult to imagine contexts in which the locative phrase constitutes what the sentence is about (i.e. *aboutness topic*), or contexts in which it is reintroduced into the discourse as presupposed, after having already been mentioned in the previous discourse (i.e. *referential topic*). In these cases, the locative PP will appear at the beginning of the sentence as the topic of the clause:

4) a.   In the hallway, there was a beautiful mirror.
    b.   In the brain, there are billions of neurons.
    c.   On this tree, there were no apples.

Sentences like these have more resemblance to Topic-Comment structures in which an assertion adds a new predicate to the argument, a comment to the topic. Clearly, in these examples the locative coda is not part of the focus, and the existential sentence could be defined as an instance of predicate-focus.[4] The topicalization of the locative coda does not affect the fundamental meaning or the pragmatic function of the existential sentence. In Italian, sentence-focus and predicate-focus structures, also known as wide- or broad-focus structures, may be characterized by specific word orders, but they do not seem to involve the attraction of the focus constituent to a dedicated focus projection. This type of movement seems to be a prerogative of argument-focus or narrow-focus constituents, establishing a specific Focus-Background partition in the sentence. Given that the postverbal position of the DP is a common and general feature of the existential construction, no significant differences appear to emerge between English and Italian with respect to the relationship between word order and information structure.

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[4] Interestingly, this is a very common feature of the existential construction across languages, and complies with the claim that existential sentences always presuppose a location and that, in contrast to Lambrecht's view, they are predicate-focus structures predicating a property of a locative argument. Under this analysis, the Topic$_{LOC}$-Comment structure may be taken as representative of the prototypical existential construction. In Italian and in English, this locative topic may be somehow replaced or instantiated by a locative proform (i.e. English *there*, Italian *ci*), and a locative phrase may occur at the end of the clause as part of the focus. We will return to this point in section 6.

5)   a.   C'è   un   gatto bianco   in giardino.
            ci-is   a   cat   white   in garden
      b.   C'erano   un   sacco di   persone   alla   festa.
            ci-were   a   lot   of   people   at-the   party
      c.   C'erano   poche   mele   sull'   albero.
            ci-were   few   apple   on-the   tree

6)   a.   Nell'   entrata,   c'era   uno   specchio   bellissimo.
            in-the   hallway   *ci*-was   a   mirror   very-beautiful
      b.   Nel   cervello,   ci sono   miliardi di neuroni.
            in-the   brain   *ci* are   billions of neurons
      c.   Su   quest'   albero,   non   c'era   nessuna   mela.
            on   this   three   not   *ci*-was not-any   apple

Different conditions on topicalization in Italian will require a more frequent dislocation of the locative phrase than in English, whenever the locative expression is presupposed or somehow related to the previous discourse, but the general properties of the above sentence sets are the same in the two languages.[5] It must be noted, however, that all these examples contain an indefinite DP, which is indeed the only type of DP allowed in English existential sentences. In fact, as is well-known, the two languages differ greatly with respect to the presence of a definite DP, which is acceptable in Italian but not in English due to a definiteness effect.[6] The morphosyntactic similarity between existentials with an indefinite DP and existentials with a definite DPs in Italian has led to the assumption that definiteness effects are absent in this language. In the next section, I will address the question of whether the same similarity holds at the level of information structure and extension of the focus.

3. Definiteness effects and types of *ci*-sentences in Italian

If no significant differences are detected between English and Italian in regard to existentials with indefinite DPs, no direct comparison is possible when definite DPs are considered, simply because they are not acceptable in English:

7)   a.   C'è   Gianni   in giardino.
            ci-is John   in garden
      b.   C'era   tua   sorella in cucina.
            ci-is   your sister in kitchen

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[5] In Italian, all presupposed and old-information constituents must be dislocated (cf. Cruschina 2011). Aboutness topics may only appear at the beginning of the sentence, while familiarity or referential topics can be either left- or right-dislocated. In addition, unlike aboutness topics which are an essential part of the sentence, referential topics are optional, since the corresponding resumptive clitic pronoun would be sufficient to restore the anaphoric argument within the sentence (cf. Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007, Cruschina 2012). English left-dislocated topics are generally aboutness topics.
[6] An important aspect of the study of the definiteness restriction has been the attempt to arrive at an empirically adequate analysis of the the types of quantifier that are permissible in the post-copular position of existential sentences. Milsark (1974) referred to the determiners banned from the post-copular position as *strong*, and to those licensed in that position as *weak*. In this paper, I leave the weak/strong distinction aside; I refer to Francez (2007) and McNally (2011) for more details.

8)   a.   *There's John in the garden
       b.   *There was your sister in the kitchen.

The explanation for this different behaviour could lie in a distinct specification of the Novelty Condition holding in the two languages: while the DP has to be hearer-new, and hence indefinite, in English, it has to be discourse-new in Italian (cf. McNally 1992). The addressee of the sentences above surely knows who *Gianni* is in (7a) or that that he has a sister in (7b). The DP referent is not hearer-new. Nevertheless, the referents of the constituents at issue are discourse-new in the sense that they are newly introduced into the discourse, possibly as a consequence of the fact that they are mentioned in the conversation for the first time.

Before reaching any final conclusion with regard to the differences between (7) and (8), let us take a close look at Italian existential sentences with a definite DP, starting from some observations on their meaning and information structure. First of all, it has been pointed out that Italian existential sentences with a definite DP have a strong locative flavour (cf. Moro 1997, Zucchi 1995, Zamparelli 2000). Consequently, definite descriptions of entities that can hardly have physical realization are marginal:

9)   a. ?? Ci sono le   due   soluzioni   di   questa equazione.
             ci are   the   two   solutions   of   this   equation
       b. ?? Ci sono i   problemi complessi che conosci   nella   mia   teoria.
             ci are   the   problems complex that know.2sg in-the my   theory
                                                         (Zamparelli 2000: 69)

10)   a.   Non ci sono molti   numeri   primi   in questo insieme.
              not *ci* are   many   numbers prime   in this   set
              'There are not prime numbers in this set.'
       b.   Non c'è   Gianni in giardino.
              not *ci*-is John   in garden   (Moro 1997: 138)

Moro (1997) argues that while (10a) is a genuine existential sentence, (10b) is "truly locative". This distinction is confirmed by the comparison with the corresponding locative predications:[7]

11)   a.   *Molti   numeri   primi non sono in questo insieme
              many   numbers prime not are   in this   set
       b.   Gianni non è in giardino.
              John   not is in garden
              'John is not in the garden.'

The existential sentence (10a) does not have a locative predication counterpart (11a), while the propositions expressed by (10b) and (11b) are semantically equal. This

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[7] It has independently been shown that not all existential sentences have a locative predication counterpart (cf. Francez 2007). This fact goes against those theories that try to reduce existential sentences to locative structures (cf. Freeze 1992, 2001).

distinction becomes sharper when sentences involving abstract entities are contrasted, but it also emerges in other contexts:

12) a.   C'è   un   gatto   in giardino.
          ci-is a   cat   in garden
          'There's a cat in the garden.'
    b.   ?Un   gatto   è   in   giardino
           a   cat   is in   garden
         ?'A cat is in the garden.'

13) a.   C'è   Gianni   in   giardino
          ci-is John   in   garden
    b.   Gianni   è   in   giardino
          John   is   in   garden
          'John is in the garden.'

The (b) sentences are ordinary Subject-Predicate sentences, with a subject DP in a canonical subject position. An anti-definiteness, or indefiniteness, effect makes indefinite DPs bad topics (cf. Beaver et al. 2006, Bentley 2010), and explains why sentences like (12b) are somewhat marginal. The indefinite DP in (12a), instead, is a non-canonical subject in a non-standard structure. For these reasons, it would be difficult to consider (12b) as fully equivalent to (12a). On the contrary, the two sentences in (13) have indeed different pragmatic contexts of use but an equivalent meaning and underlying structure. A context requiring a structure like that in (13a) would be the question *Who is in the garden?*, to which (13a) would be a perfectly felicitous reply. As will be discussed below, the different position of the subject reflects specific information-structure conditions. These considerations lead us to hypothesize that of the sentences in (12) and in (13), only (12a) is an existential proper, whereas the others are locative.

   Let us now move on to the information structure of the sentences under examination. Locative copular predications are standard predicate-focus structures in which the grammatical subject is also the topic or subject of the predication. The subject is the topic of the locative predication (13b), but is part of the focus in the existential sentence (12a), as well as in the pseudo-existential locative sentence (13a). What about the locative phrase? Does it have the same status in (12a) and (13a)? I will argue that it does not. As discussed in section 2, the locative coda of an existential sentence is part of the focus (cf. 12a). However, it has been observed that in languages that are apparently insensitive to the definiteness restriction, the definite DP of the (pseudo-) existential sentence attracts narrow focus, so that if a locative coda is present, this is either right- or left-dislocated, as indicated by a comma in the following examples:

14) a. ??Hi havia el   president   a la   reunió.   *Catalan*
    b.   Hi havia el   president, a la   reunió.
          cl had   the president   at the meeting

  c.   A   la   reunió   hi   havia   el   president.
       at the meeting   *cl*   had   the president
       'The president was at the meeting.'   (Rigau 1997: 396)

15)   a. ?? C'è   la   statua   di Michelangelo   in Piazza della Signoria.   *Italian*
      b.   C'è   la   statua   di Michelangelo,   in Piazza della Signoria.
            ci-is the statue by Michelangelo   in Piazza della Signoria
            'Michelangelo's statue is in Piazza della Signoria.'   (Leonetti 2008: 140)

As shown by Rigau (1994, 1997) for Catalan (14c) and by Leonetti (2008) for Italian (15b), an existential sentence with a definite DP cannot be uttered with the neutral intonation typical of sentence-focus structures.[8] The intonation contour of this kind of sentence is in fact characterized by a primary pitch accent on the postverbal subject, signalling its status as the sole focus of the clause, namely, as an argument-focus bearing a [focus] feature. The locative coda is instead dislocated, as expressed by the following constraint:

16)   *Coda Constraint* (Leonetti 2008: 142)
      The presence of the locative coda inside the VP blocks the insertion of definite DPs: these are excluded unless the locative coda is itself (right- / left-) dislocated (or removed).

Summing up, both semantic and information structure considerations lead us to the conclusion that Italian existential sentences with a definite DP are not existentials proper, but rather locative sentences. To distinguish them from genuine existential sentences, I call this type of sentence 'inverse locatives'. Two major types of *ci*-sentences have therefore been identified in Italian: (i) existential sentences, with a indefinite DP, and (ii) inverse locatives, with a definite DP. Inverse locatives are semantically equivalent to the corresponding canonical locative predications, but display the reverse information structure: the DP is a topic in the canonical locative predication but a focus in the inverse locative. On the contrary, the locative PP is part

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[8] A notable exception to this restriction exists. A definite DP in an all-focus sentence uttered as a single prosodic unit is possible if we have a surprise or unexpectedness interpretation:

i)   C'è Gianni in giardino!

However, this sentence must probably be analyzed as a type of presentational sentence (i.e. eventive), which will be discussed in section 7 (cf. (64) below). Postverbal subjects of unaccusative verbs are subject to an analogous definiteness restriction when they are followed by another constituent, typically a locative phrase (iia) (see Benincà 1988, Belletti 1988):

ii)   a. ?? È   arrivato   Gianni   in   città.
      b.   È   arrivato   Gianni,   in   città.
      c.   È   arrivato   Gianni   in   città!
            is   arrived   John   in   town
            'John arrived in town.'

On a par with inverse locatives, this constraint may be due the focal status of the postverbal subject, which requires the other sentential constituents to be dislocated, as proved by the grammaticality of sentence (iib) (cf. Leonetti 2008: 148-152). Interestingly, as illustrated in (iic), an exception with an interpretation and a prosodic pattern similar to those in (i) has been observed in this context (cf. Calabrese 1992).

of the focus in the canonical locative predication but a topical, dislocated constituent in the inverse locative.

4. Existential sentences and inverse locatives

The term 'inverse locative' is certainly reminiscent of Moro's (1997) analysis of existentials as inverse copular sentences. The current analysis is undoubtedly inspired by Moro's work, but it differs from it in a crucial way: Moro applies his theory to both types of *ci*-sentences, regardless of the definiteness of the DP. In contrast, I follow his theory only for the second type of *ci*-sentences, namely, for inverse locatives. Building on the assumption that information-structure differences reflect differences in the underlying syntactic properties, I would like to claim that the following structures correspond to the two types of *ci*-sentence identified:[9]

17)   TYPE I: Existential Sentences (e.g. *C'è un gatto in giardino*)

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              SC
             /  \
           DP    DP
           ci    un gatto
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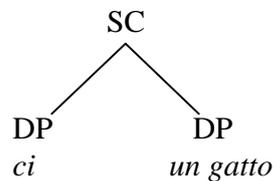
18)   TYPE II: Inverse Locatives (e.g. *C'è Gianni in giardino*)

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              SC
             /  \
           DP    DP
         Gianni   ci
```
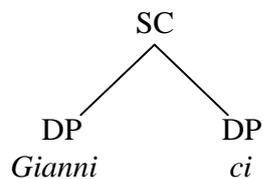
We will discuss the status of the locative coda at the end of this section and, in greater depth, in the next section. For the moment, let us concentrate on the implications of the different configurations in (17) and (18). In line with several studies, the structure in (17) analyses the DP of the existential sentence as a predicate nominal (cf. Williams 1984, 1994, Hazout 2004, Francez 2007). According to this analysis, English *there* is an expletive syntactic subject that originates in the subject position of the existential small clause. Italian *ci* is first merged in the same position within the small clause and then attaches to Infl due to its clitic status. In (18), it is the definite DP that is the subject of the small clause, while the locative pronoun (English *there*, Italian *ci*) is the predicate (cf. Moro 1997). This distinction accounts for the criticism that English *there* can never occupy a true predicate position, but can only occur as

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[9] In line with many analyses of existential and copular sentences, I am adopting a small clause structure to characterize the relation between the elements of the predication (cf. e.g. Stowell 1978, Moro 1997), but the same concepts could as well be described with a Predicative Phrase structure (Bowers 1993; cf. Hazout 2004, Remberger 2009). As for the correlation between definiteness and sentence type, it must be noted that definite DPs are found not only in inverse locatives but also, and probably more commonly, in another type of *ci*-sentence, that is, in presentational sentences (cf. §7).

what seems to be a syntactic subject (cf. Williams 1994: 135, Hazout 2004: 397). It also explains the different relationships between *ci*-sentences and canonical locative predications.

In the previous section we saw that existential sentences do not have a direct locative predication counterpart. This follows from the fact that in existential sentences only the subject (i.e. the locative pronoun) can raise out of the small clause,[10] and complies with the observation that the structure in (17) does not have an 'inverse' equivalent that could feature the raising the predicate DP.[11] The raising of the subject DP in (18) would give rise to a canonical locative predication with a locative PP in predicate position:

19)   a.   Gianni è in giardino
      b.   John is in the garden

20)   [... IP Infl ... [vP *è* [SC [DP *Gianni*] [PP *in giardino*]]]]

Italian inverse locatives, instead, are derived by the raising of the pro-predicate *ci* to Infl. In addition, the subject DP moves to the clause-internal FocP (cf. Moro 2009), in order to have its [focus] feature valued and checked, while the locative coda moves to a topic projection in the left periphery of vP:

21)   a.   C'è Gianni in giardino
      b.   *There's John in the garden

22)   [IP Infl ... [FocP [TopP [vP *è* [SC [DP *Gianni*] [DP *ci*]]   [PP *in giardino*]]]]]

In other words, as illustrated in (23), type II *ci*-sentences involve a focalization strategy that turns a locative predication into an argument-focus structure:

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[10] The function of *ci* in this sentence type will be further discussed in section 6.

[11] To a certain extent, it is possible to have a topicalized DP in English existential sentences, as in the following example (from McNally 2011: 1834):

(i)   They told us there was a solution, and indeed a solution, there was.

In Italian and in other Romance varieties, under the appropriate conditions, a presupposed and partitive DP can be easily dislocated and resumed via INDE-cliticization. I will not discuss this particular structure, but see Bentley, Ciconte and Cruschina (2012) for more details on Italo-Romance varieties.

23) a.   LOCATIVE PREDICATION   [Gianni]$_{\text{TOPIC}}$ [è in giardino]$_{\text{PREDICATE-FOCUS}}$

      b.   INVERSE LOCATIVE   C'è [Gianni]$_{\text{FOCUS}}$ [in giardino]$_{\text{TOPIC}}$

focalization

The main property of inverse locatives is not the raising of the pro-predicate out of the small clause, which is independently motivated by its morphological status, but rather the movement of the subject to FocP. This movement targets a functional projection that is active in Italian, but not in English; this would offer a syntactic explanation for the unavailability of inverse locatives in the latter language, as well as for the apparent violation of the definiteness effect in Italian.

In section 2, cases of left-dislocation of the locative phrase in genuine existential sentences were presented (cf. 4, 6). In those contexts, it was claimed that these constituents represented the aboutness topic of the clause in which they occur. What type of topic are the dislocated constituents appearing in inverse locatives? Consider the following two sentences containing a left-dislocated locative phrase and differing with respect to the definiteness of the DP:

24) a.   Nel   sistema solare, ci sono otto pianeti.
             in-the system solar   *ci* are   eight planets
             'In the solar system, there are eight planets.'
      b.   Nel   sistema solare, c'è Venere.
             in-the system solar   *ci* Venus
         * 'In the solar system, there's Venus.' / 'Venus is in the solar system.'

Unlike the existential sentence (24a), example (24b) would prove pragmatically infelicitous in a context requiring a new topic or in which that given topic is not already active in the discourse. For instance, only (24a), but not (24b), can be conceived of as an appropriate start of a science book chapter. This is due to the fact that (24b) is an inverse locative that involves a focalization strategy that is not compatible with an aboutness topic or, more precisely, with those contexts that license an aboutness topic. From a referential viewpoint, an aboutness topic can introduce a new topic, whereas referential topics simply restore into the discourse a referentially given or old-information constituent. The dislocated locative phrase of inverse locatives can therefore only be a referential topic. Sentence (24b) would in fact prove perfectly felicitous if the additive particle *anche* 'also' was inserted before the subject DP (*Nel sistema solare, c'è anche Venere*), given that it would presuppose that the locative phrase has already been introduced in the discourse. More specifically, it would presuppose that the predication holds for at least one other individual alternative to the constituent in focus. Similarly, (24b) would be a pragmatically good in reply to the question in (25a):

25) a.   Quali sono i pianeti del sistema solare oltre alla Terra?
             'Which are the planets in the solar system other than the Earth?'
      b.   Non li ricordo tutti. Sicuramente, nel sistema solare, c'è Venere.
             'I don't remember them all. Surely, Venus is in the solar system.'

26) a.   (Nel sistema solare,) c'è anche Venere (, nel sistema solare).
     b.   Sicuramente, (nel sistema solare,) c'è Venere (, nel sistema solare).

In these contexts, as is typical of referential topics, the locative phrase could be dislocated either to the left or to the right of the core sentence; alternatively, it could be omitted altogether, as illustrated in (26). These pragmatic observations support the proposed analysis of these sentences as inverse locatives.

5. The locative phrase and the nature of the proform *ci*

The need for the two separate structures (17) and (18) is motivated by the conceptually distinct roles that the DP plays in existentials and in locatives: the DP is a predicate in existential sentences, but it is a subject in locative predications, including inverse locatives. The structures under discussion have important implications for the status of the locative phrase and the proform *ci* present in both sentence types. The question of whether the coda should be treated as a post-nominal predicative modifier (cf. Williams 1984) or as a separate constituent, both syntactically and semantically (cf. Keenan 1987, 2003), has long been controversial. In most recent analyses, the locative expression included in the existential construction is considered to be a VP-external adjunct (cf. McNally 1992, Zucchi 1995, Moro 1997, Leonetti 2008). The status of the locative phrase as a predicate in locative predications is instead undisputed. The crucial question that inverse locatives raise is the following: in what sense does the proform *ci* represent the predicate of the clause? The answer I propose to this question relies on the hypothesis that *ci* and the locative coda are part of a clitic-dislocation structure. In other words, *ci* is a resumptive clitic.[12]

One important fact that supports this analysis is that, as we have already observed (cf. 16), in inverse locatives the coda is prosodically and syntactically dislocated. The recognized locative nature of our type II *ci*-sentence in Italian is thus accounted for by assuming that *ci* plays the role of a locative clitic that is co-indexed with the dislocated locative PP. This hypothesis relies on several pieces of empirical evidence. Firstly, *ci* can in fact replace the locative PP of a previous locative predication sentence, thus acting as a pro-predicate. In the following paradigm, the locative expression introduced in the question (27a) must be represented in the possible answers next to the copula – being semantically empty, the copula alone is not a complete predicate. It could simply be repeated (27b) or, alternatively, it can be substituted with either the clitic *ci* or a locative adverb (27c), but not with both (27d).

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[12] Under the big-DP analysis of clitic-dislocation, the locative PP should be analyzed as base-generated in the complement position of a complex DP with a clitic head (cf. Cecchetto 2000, Belletti 2005b), rather than as a VP-external adjunct as suggested in (22), and as defended in several studies (cf. Moro 1997, Leonetti 2008, among others). This is certainly an important issue; however, I prefer to leave this question open for the moment. More crucial for the present analysis is the claim that the locative phrase targets a topic position within the left periphery of the vP.

27)   a.   Gli asciugamani sono nel   cassetto?
           the towels   are   in-the drawer
           'Are the towels in the drawer?'
      b.   Sì, sono *(nel   cassetto).
           yes are   in-the   drawer
           'Yes, they are in the drawer.'
      c.   Sì, ci sono / sono là.
           yes *ci* are / are   there
           'Yes, they are there.'
      d.   *Sì, ci sono là   / ci sono nel   cassetto.
           yes *ci* are   there   / *ci* are in-the drawer

Secondly, this analysis of the relationship between *ci* and the dislocated locative coda makes a strong prediction. When the coda is not dislocated but is part of the focus, the sentence should become awkward or entirely ungrammatical since it would constitute a case of clitic doubling that is independently ruled out in Italian. It is well-known that in Italian resumptive clitics resume topics, but they are incompatible with foci (cf. Rizzi 1997). This constraint can be illustrated as following:

28)   Constraint on the information structure of *ci*-sentence TYPE II:

      a.   [*ci* + copula] [definite DP]$_{FOCUS}$ [coda]$_{TOPIC}$

      b.   *([coda]$_{FOCUS}$) [*ci* + copula] [definite DP] *([coda]$_{FOCUS}$)

An information-structure articulation different from (28a) is expected to give rise to a noticeable degradation of the *ci*-sentences in question. This prediction is indeed born-out: a focal coda, either preverbal or postverbal, is incompatible with a definite DP in an inverse locative structure like (28b).[13] The locative coda is the focus of the clause

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[13] Given the general restriction that imposes one focus per sentence in Italian, the definite DP cannot be a focus in this context, thus failing to satisfy another condition for the pragmatic felicity of inverse locatives. However, this condition appears to be secondary with respect to the coda constraint, in the sense that it can be violated when the definite DP is topical and the focus is on the predicate made up of the clitic *ci* and the copula:

(i)   a.   [Gianni]$_{TOP}$ [c'è]$_{FOC}$, [in giardino]$_{TOP}$
      b.   *[Gianni]$_{TOP}$ [c'è in giardino]$_{FOC}$

As shown in (ia), irrespective of the informational status of the subject, the locative PP must still be dislocated and cannot be part of the focus of the sentence together with the predicate (cf. also (27) above). Given the locative value of the clitic *ci*, sentences like (iib) must be ruled out because they would create a clitic doubling structure (cf. Moro 1997: 154). By contrast, no clitic doubling is expected to arise in existential sentences with a topicalized DP:

(ii) [Pane]$_{TOP}$ [ce   n'è   sul   tavolo]$_{FOC}$
      bread   *ci* of-it.CL on-the   table
      'There's bread on the table.'

Certainly, the INDE-cliticization and other aspects connected to the partitivity of the topicalized DP may well play a role in the contrast between (ib) and (ii). These factors cannot be disregarded because only this type of constituents is admitted as a topic in existential sentences, the other types of indefinites being excluded since they would make bad topics (cf. Beaver et al. 2006, Bentley 2010). Nevertheless, it is undeniable that in (ii), as opposed to (ib), the clitic *ci* (in fact *ce* for independent

in the following cases: (i) when it corresponds to a wh-phrase, (ii) when it bears contrastive focus, and (iii) when it is the focus of an answer to a wh-question. Let us consider the first case:

29) a. Dove (*ci) sei tu?
         where *ci* are you
         'Where are you?'
     b. Dove hai   detto che (*c') è lui?
         where have.2SG said   that *ci* is he
         'Where did you say he is?'

30) a. Dove pensi   che (*ci) sia   Gianni?
         where think.2SG that *ci* be.SUBJ.3SG John
         'Where do you think John is?'
     b. Dove (*ci) sono i   fiori   bianchi?
         where *ci* are the flowers white
         'Where are the white flowers?'

31) a. In quale stanza (??c') è tua   sorella?
         in which room   *ci* is your sister
         'Which room is your sister in?'
     b. In quale cassetto (??ci) sono i   piatti d' argento?
         in which drawer   *ci* are the plates of silver
         'Which drawer are the silver plates in?'

Care is needed with the judgments on these wh-questions, especially those in (31). An echo-question reading, as well as a D-linked interpretation of the locative wh-phrase should be disregarded.[14] The grammaticality of the sentences above can be rescued by omitting the clitic *ci*, which would basically yield a canonical locative

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morphological reasons) cannot be analyzed as a locative pronoun co-referential with the locative phrase.

[14] For many speakers, the clitic *ci* becomes more, or even totally, acceptable with a D-linked reading of the wh-phrase. The D-linked and non-D-linked interpretations can be kept distinct by means of prosody. In non-D-linked wh-questions, the main prosodic prominence is on the verb, while under a D-linked interpretation, the main pitch accent falls on the D-linked wh-phrase itself (cf. Marotta 2000, 2002, Bocci 2009). Moreover, the D-linking reading can be ruled out by using an aggressively non-D-linked wh-phrase (cf. Pesetsky 1987) (e.g. *In quale diavolo di stanza (*c') è tua sorella?* 'Which bloody room is your sister in?'). Although I am not able to provide a full explanation for this contrast, it is worth noting that D-linked wh-phrases have been described as bearing a [topic] feature: they are similar to topics not only with respect to their interpretation but also with respect to extraction phenomena (cf. Rizzi 2001). A noticeable improvement in grammaticality can also be detected when the question continues with a pseudo-relative clause:

(i)   In quale stanza c'è tua   sorella che dorme?
       in which room *ci*-is your sister   who sleeps
       'Which room is your sister sleeping in?'

It will be argued however that these are not cases of inverse locatives but rather of presentational sentences characterized by distinctive properties (cf. §7).

predication. Crucially, the same sentences are not as degraded with an indefinite DP, namely, as existential sentences (type I):[15]

32) a.   Dove pensi   che ci siano   più problemi?
            where think.2SG   that *ci* be.SUBJ.3PL more problems
            'Where do you think there are more problems?'
     b. ?Dove ci sono tanti   fiori?
            where *ci* are   many flowers
            'Where are there (so) many flowers?'
     c.   In quale giardino ci sono alberi di limone?
            in which garden   *ci* are   trees   of lemon
            'In which garden are there lemon trees?'

This contrast is even more evident in Sardinian, where the type of structure is signalled by a change in the copula and in the agreement pattern. Copula alternation in Sardinian existential sentences has long attracted the attention of linguists. It is generally related to the definiteness of the DP, so that copula HAVE appears with indefinite DPs, while BE is used with definite DPs (cf. Jones 1993: 113, La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997, Bentley 2004, 2011, and Remberger 2009):

33) a.   B'at   metas frores in sa   tanca.
            cl-has many flowers in the meadow
     b. ?Bi sun metas frores   in sa   tanca.
            cl are many flowers in the meadow
            'There are many flowers in the meadow.'

34) a.   *B'at   sos prattos in mesa.
            cl-has the plates   in table
     b.   Bi sun sos prattos in mesa.
            cl are the plates   in table
            'The plates are on the table.'

This correlation aside, it was observed by Jones (1993: 114) that the clitic *bi* has a tangible locative value when it occurs with the BE copula. This idea is further developed in Remberger (2009), in which a claim similar to the present proposal for Italian is put forward: Sardinian sentences with copula BE are locative structures. The ungrammaticality of (35b) can therefore be attributed to the creation of a clitic doubling configuration between the locative clitic and the interrogative locative phrase.

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[15] Since they are morphologically, but not semantically definite, the pronoun *ci* is also fine with some non-referential and/or non-specific DPs:
(i)   In quale aula   c'è   il   videoproiettore?
         in which classroom *ci*-is   the   video-projector
         'In which classroom is there a video-projector?'
I thank Valentina Bianchi for bringing this point to my attention.

35) a.   In ube   b'at   metas frores?
           where   *cl*-has many   flowers
           'Where are there many flowers?'
    b.   *In ube   bi sun sos prattos?
           where   *cl* are the plates
           'Where are the plates?'   (Jones 1993: 114)

Further data from the Sardinian variety spoken in Buddusò illustrate this point: an interrogative focal locative constituent and the clitic *bi* are only compatible in existential sentences, which in Sardinian are characterized by the use of the copula HAVE, the presence of an indefinite DP, and the lack of agreement between them (36a). The same pronominal form is instead ruled out in those sentences that we have identified as inverse locatives, comprising a definite DP that agrees with the copula BE (36b, 37):

36) a.   Inue   b'at   duos sindigos?
           where *cl*-has two   mayors
           'Where are there two mayors?'
    b.   Inue   (*bi) son sos duos sindigos?
           where   *cl* are the two   mayors
           'Where are the two mayors?'

37) a.   Inue (*bi) ses   tue?
           where *cl* are   you
           'Where are you?'
    b.   Inue (*bi) son sos politicos   onestos?
           where *cl* are the politicians honest
           'Where are the honest politicians?'
    c.   In cale   calasciu (*bi) son   sos piattos de pratta.
           in which drawer   *cl* are   the plates of silver
           'In which drawer are the silver plates?'

Moreover, the speakers consulted confirm the (prosodic) dislocation of the locative coda as a necessary condition for the naturalness of inverse locatives:

38) B'est sorre tua,   in uffisciu.
     cl-is your sister in office
     'Your sister is in the office.'

In Italian, a similar behaviour is observed for the pronominal clitic in sentences with a contrastively focalized fronted coda (39) and in replies to wh-questions that require a focal locative phrase in the answer (40, 41):

39) a.   IN GIARDINO (*c') è il   gatto bianco, non al   balcone!
           in   garden   *ci* is the cat   white   not   at-the balcony
           'There is a white cat in the garden, not on the balcony.'

  b. IN GIARDINO c'è un gatto bianco, non al balcone!
    in garden   *ci*-is a cat white not at-the balcony
    'The white cat is in the garden, not on the balcony.'

40) A: Dov'è mia sorella?
     where-is my sister
     'Where is my sister?'
   B: Tua sorella è in cucina.
     your sister is in kitchen
     'Your sister is in the kitchen.'
   B': *C'è tua sorella in cucina
     cl-is your sister in kitchen
     * 'There's your sister in the kitchen. / Your sister is in the kitchen.'

41) A: In quale foto ci sono tanti fiori?
     in which photo *ci* are many flowers
     'In which picture are there many flowers?
   A': In quale foto sono i fiori?
     in which photo are the flowers
     'In which picture are the flowers?'
   B: Ci sono tanti fiori nella prima foto a destra.
     ci are many flowers in-the first photo on right
     'There are many flowers in the first picture on the right.'

Once again, this contrast is supported by Sardinian data. The locative expression *in coghina* in (42B') is the focus of the clause, as required by the context. The co-occurrence of this phrase with the resumptive clitic *bi* gives rise to pragmatic infelicity:

42) A: In ube est sorre mea?   *Bono*, *Sardinian*
     where is sister my
     'Where is my sister?'
   B: (Sorre tua est) in coghina
      sister your is in kitchen
     'Your sister is the kitchen.'
   B': #B'est sorre tua in coghina.
     cl-is sister your in kitchen
     * 'There's your sister in the kitchen. / Your sister is in the kitchen.'
                        (Bentley 2012: 15)

The distinctive behaviour of existential sentences and inverse locatives with respect to the locative coda, and the nature of the clitic proform, raise two issues. First, one may wonder what happens in the absence of a locative coda, which is in fact optional both in existential sentences and in inverse locatives. Second, a strongly locative characterization of the clitic *ci* when it co-occurs with a definite DP (i.e. in inverse locatives) raises questions concerning the status of *ci* in existential sentences, where

the same locative function surely cannot be attributed. These questions will be addressed in the next section.

6. Locative and deictic *ci* vs. pro-argument *ci*

We have so far seen that when it occurs in an inverse locative structure, the pronoun *ci* functions as a locative pro-predicate referring to a locative phrase. The locative constituent can be explicitly present within the same sentence, in the form of a dislocated locative PP, or can be implicit in the context. If no locative is implicit or salient in the discourse, the clitic *ci* assumes a strong deictic value, that is, a default interpretation of 'here and now':[16]

43) a. C'è   Gianni.
        ci-is   John
        'John is here.'
    b. Guarda: c'è   tua   sorella!
        look   *ci*-is   your   sister
        'Look: your sister is here!'
    c. C'è   l'aereo,   finalmente.
        ci-is   the-airplane   eventually
        'The airplane is here, eventually.'

Let us call these deictic clauses type III *ci*-sentences, to be distinguished from the other two types that we have previously identified: type I (i.e. existential sentences) and type II (i.e. inverse locatives). Locative-deictic *ci* designates the perceptual identification of a referent in the speaker's proximal physical space. This interpretation requires that the DP be specific and referential. It is not implausible to assume that when it conveys this deictic meaning, the clitic *ci* still serves the function of a locative predicate, as in type II *ci*-sentences. The focus is obviously on the DP, which therefore has to move out of the small clause and target the clause-internal FocP. As we can see in the translations of the examples in (43), type III *ci*-sentences are rendered into English with the deictic locative adverb *here*, and a focal pitch accent on the DP subject is necessary to convey the equivalent meaning.[17]

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[16] An alternative interpretation of (43a) is possible when this sentence is used to express availability, with a meaning roughly equivalent to 'John is here (available to help)!'. This reading constitutes an exception to the definiteness effect in English (cf. Abbott 1993). Certainly, here *ci* is not locative.

[17] A further piece of evidence that in this type of sentences the pronoun *ci* replaces a locative predicate comes from some Northeastern Italian dialects that do not have a locative clitic and, consequently, lack a proform in existential sentences. To render the type of sentence under discussion (type III), these dialects adopt one of the following two strategies: either they overtly realize a locative adverb, in a construction which is otherwise identical to existentials and inverse locatives, or they borrow the locative clitic in use in the surrounding dialects. Bellunese resorts to the first strategy:

(i) a. Varda: l'é   Maria   qua.
        look   *scl*.M.3SG-is   Maria   here
        'Look: Mary is here!'
    b. ?? Varda: l'è   Maria   là.
        look   *scl*.M.3SG-is   Maria   there

Let us turn to the question of the role of *ci* in existential sentences (type I). Following Williams (1984, 1994), Hazout (2004), and Francez (2007), I have assumed that the nominal DP is in fact the main predicate of the existential sentence. What then constitutes the subject of the existential predication? Several scholars have hypothesized that the topic or subject of the predication is a location, which can be either explicit or implicit (cf. Babby 1980, Partee and Borschev 2002, 2007, Leonetti 2008, Parry 2010). In many languages, the distinction between locative predications and existential sentences is only marked by a different word order, which may be interpreted as a signal of the distinctive Topic-Comment articulation: the topic is the DP is in a locative predication but the locative phrase in the existential construction (cf. e.g. Freeze 1992, 2001; see also Partee and Borschev 2002, 2007). Francez (2007) argues that, independently of the presence of a locative phrase within the sentence, the argument of the property denoted by the existential DP is always an implicit contextual domain (something intuitively similar to a location). An overt locative coda contributes to the restriction of its identity.

Irrespective of the precise semantic analysis, all the studies mentioned above endorse the view that a location, and not the referent denoted by the DP, is the subject of the predication in the existential construction. This hypothesis thus offers an explanation of the locative nature of the proform in Italian and in other Romance languages; as a matter of fact, the proform has often been attributed a subject function (cf. Burzio 1986, Tortora 1997). Accordingly, as illustrated in structure (17) above, in Italian existential sentences the clitic *ci* is to be interpreted as a pro-argument, namely, a pronominal form that is linked to or stands for an abstract locative subject of predication. It is reasonable to argue that although it is morphologically locative both in existential sentences and in inverse locatives, the clitic *ci* is more grammaticalized in the former construction, having lost its anaphoric and referential connotation; this explains why an etymologically identical element has now two completely different functions in the two constructions under discussion.[18] Even though in existential sentences *ci* does not replace a locative complement and, consequently, no longer functions as a real locative pronoun, it has not been completely stripped of its spatial reference, in that it expresses a contextual location or, perhaps more appropriately, it is bound to an abstract or null locative topic which

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c.　　　La Maria　　　la　　　è　　là.
　　　　　the　Maria　　*scl*.F.3SG　is　there
　　　　　'Mary is there.'

Crucially, only the proximal adverb *qua* 'here' is possible in this context (ia), whereas the distal adverb *là* 'there' would give rise to a marginal, if not totally ungrammatical, result (ib). A locative predication would instead be employed in the latter case (ic).

[18] Recent diachronic findings on the emergence of the proform in Italo-Romance existential sentences may provide an account of its development (cf. Ciconte 2009, 2010, Parry 2010). In early Italo-Romance varieties, a strong tendency for a preverbal placement of the locative PP in existential sentences has been observed. After a first stage of complementary distribution with the locative phrase, the proform occurs predominantly, and systematically, in sentences with a definite DP (inverse locatives in our typology), in which the resumptive locative clitic functions as an anaphoric link between the core clause and the left-dislocated locative. Presumably as a result of reanalysis and grammaticalization, the clitic *ci* (or its equivalent) emerges and gradually becomes obligatory in true existential sentences with an indefinite DP.

provides the spatial parameters of the predication that asserts the presence and/or existence of a given entity.

7. Presentational *ci*-sentences

According to the analysis carried out so far, the definiteness of the DP directly correlates with the type of *ci*-sentences identified: indefinite DPs typically occur in existential sentences (type I), while definite DPs are generally involved in inverse locatives (type II). This correlation, however, is not rigid and fully systematic, in that it is possible for a definite DP to appear in an existential sentence under special interpretations such as a list or reminder reading. These exceptions have been widely described for English (cf. e.g. Milsark 1974, Rando and Napoli 1978, Abbott 1993, 1997, Ward and Birner 1995) and presumably hold across languages, also including Italian. Another problem that may contribute to the lack of clear-cut boundaries between *ci*-sentence types is the existence of a further construction, typical of spoken Italian, which exhibits similar morphosyntactic properties: presentational *ci*-sentences, which we will call type IV *ci*-sentences.

The DP occurring in this sentence type is not subject to a definiteness restriction, although definites and specific indefinites, as opposed to non-specific indefinites, are more commonly found:

44)   a.   C'è   un   signore   che   vuole   parlare   con   te.
           ci-is a   gentleman who wants talk.INF with you
           'A gentleman (here) wants to talk to you.'
      b.   C'erano   dei   miei amici   che   studiavano   fisica   a   Lipsia.
           ci-were some   my   friends who studied   physics in Leipzig
           'Some friends of mine were studying physics in Leipzig.'

45)   a.   C'è   mio   fratello malato   /   che   sta male.
           ci-is my   brother ill   who stays badly
           'My brother is ill. / My brother feels sick.'
      b.   C'è   Maria che   canta   in   un   teatro   di   Berlino.
           ci-is Mary who sings   in   a   theatre of   Berlin
           'Mary sings in a theatre in Berlin.'
      c.   C'è   Gianni infuriato   /   nei   guai.
           ci-is John   furious   in-the trouble
           'John is furious / in trouble.'

From a pragmatic perspective, the main property of presentational sentences is that they introduce a new proposition into the discourse. The whole clause is thus presented as sentence-focus.[19] The DP referent is first introduced in a manner similar,

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[19] The use of the category 'presentational' in this study diverges from Lambrecht (1988, 1994, 2000) in that, unlike Lambrecht, I do not include existential sentences in this class. Although it is mainly based on descriptive aspects, this choice also relies on specific empirical and theoretical considerations. An important difference between existential and presentational sentences is that while the former introduces a new referent into the discourse, to which further material, such as an additional predicate, may or may not be added, the latter serves the purpose of introducing a whole predication or a new event. Further differences will be discussed below. In his work, Lambrecht (1988, 1994, 2000, 2002)

if not entirely identical, to *ci*-sentence types I and II. This postverbal DP then functions as the topic of the predication expressed either by an adjectival predicate (45a, 45c) or, more frequently, by a pseudo-relative clause (44, 45a,b). Semantically, the sentences in (44) and in (45) can be paraphrased with the corresponding canonical Topic-Comment predications (e.g. *Un signore vuole parlare con te*, *Dei miei amici studiavano fisica a Lipsia*, etc.) without determining any alteration of their truth conditions (cf. the English translations). Presentational sentences have some features in common with both existential sentences and inverse locatives, giving rise to a certain degree of ambiguity.

The basic function shared by presentational and existential sentences is that of introducing a new referent into the discourse. However, it has been argued that existential sentences proper presuppose a location (cf. Partee and Borschev 2002, 2007, Koontz-Garboden 2009) which, as discussed in the previous section, functions as the subject of predication. On the contrary, presentational sentences may lack any locative anchoring (cf. e.g. 45a, 45c), and the DP referent is generally introduced not to predicate a property of an argument but with the purpose of making it available as the subject of subsequent predication. One further difference is that the DP must be indefinite in existential sentences – presumably because only this type of DPs can function as a predicate (cf. Higginbotham 1987) – but need not be in presentational sentences.

The fact that the DP of a presentational sentence can be definite may create a certain ambiguity between type IV, on the one hand, and types II or III, on the other, whenever a locative phrase is implicit or salient in the context, or when *ci* has a spatial deictic function. The following example may better be analysed as an occurrence of type IV *ci*-sentence (from Berruto 1986: 71, n.2):

46) C'è il Signor Ponza che chiede di essere ricevuto.
     ci-is the Mr Ponza who asks of be.INF received
     'Mr Ponza here asks to be received.'

However, in this sentence the clitic *ci* seems to have the default interpretation of 'here and now' typical of type III, as argued in Berruto (1986) and as evident from its most appropriate English translation. It could also be the case that a locative constituent is already present and active in the discourse, and that *ci* serves as a clause-internal link to that constituent, which is represented as right-dislocated in (45). In such a context the subject DP would be argument-focus, as is peculiar to sentences of type II:[20]

47) C'è il Signor Ponza, in salotto, che chiede di essere ricevuto.
     ci-is the Mr Ponza in living-room who asks of be.INF received
     'Mr Ponza is in the living room, asking to be received.'

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provides a detailed analysis of spoken French presentational sentences. From a comparison with Italian, it emerges that significant differences between the two languages exist, and that French admits a wider range of uses of this construction than Italian.

[20] Another possibility is that this sentence receives an *eventive* interpretation (cf. below).

In this example, the relative clause behaves as an ordinary appositive relative clause, rather than a pseudo-relative. A similar ambiguity obtains in the following sentence pair:

48) a.   C'è il   cane che abbaia in   giardino.
          ci-is the dog that barks   in   garden
     b.   C'è il   cane in   giardino che   abbaia.
          ci-is the dog in   garden   that barks
          'The dog is barking in the garden.'

49) a.   C'è Maria che   canta a teatro.
          ci-is Mary   who sings   in theatre
     b.   C'è Maria a teatro che   canta.
          ci-is Mary   in theatre who sings
          'Mary sings in the theatre.'

Judgements on the possible semantic differences between these sentences are difficult. At first sight, the two pairs sound fully equivalent to most native speakers. However, a careful examination reveals that while (48a) and (49a) may be taken as instances of presentational sentence, sentences (48b) and (49b) might be better interpreted as inverse locatives. From an information viewpoint, the (a) sentences are in fact most naturally uttered as single units, whereas in the (b) counterparts a pause between the constituents is normally produced, which may well signal that the locative phrase is right-dislocated and that the relative is an appositive relative clause:

50) a.   C'è il cane, in giardino, che abbaia.
          'The dog is in the garden, barking.'
     b.   C'è Maria, a teatro, che canta.
          'Mary is in the theatre, singing.'

Even more complex are the cases in which the predicate is an adjective or a non-locative PP. It is well known that existentials admit an adjectival coda, which is required to convey a stage-level predicate (see e.g. Milsark 1974, McNally 1992). In the following two examples, an ambiguity emerges between an existential and a presentational reading:

51) a.   Ci sono   molti ragazzi malati.
          ci are   many guys   will
          'There are a lot of guys ill. / A lot of guys are ill.'
     b.   Ci sono   molti ragazzi in difficoltà
          ci are   many guys   in difficulty
          'There are a lot of guys in trouble. / A lot of guys are in trouble.'

Although it is not always easy to differentiate between the two structures, it must be noted that the most natural interpretation with specific DPs is the presentational one:

52) a.   Ci sono molti dei   ragazzi di questa classe (che sono) malati.
         ci are   many of-the guys   of this   class   who are   ill
         'Lots of the guys in this classroom are ill.'
     b.   Ci sono molti dei   ragazzi di questa classe (che   sono) in difficoltà.
         ci are   many of-the guys   of this   class   who are   in difficulty
         'Lots of the guys in this classroom are in trouble.'

That these types of sentences are not existential sentences is further confirmed by the fact that they are not subject to the restriction that limits the kinds of predicates that can appear in the coda of existential sentences to stage-level predicates (cf. Milsark 1974, McNally 1992). Individual-level predicates are perfectly acceptable in Italian presentational sentences, as witnessed by the grammaticality of the following examples:

53) a. Ci sono molti ragazzi della   nostra classe che   sono davvero intelligenti.
       ci are   many guys   of-the our   class   who are   really   clever
       'Many guys in our class are really clever.'
    b. Ci sono alcuni ragazzi di   questa classe che   sono molto alti.
       ci are   a-few guys   of this   class   who are   very   tall
       'A few guys in this class are very tall.'

Less problematic are similar cases involving a definite DP. Given that the predicate is non-locative, the pronoun *ci* cannot be analysed as a locative resumptive clitic, and the locative inverse interpretation is thus ruled out:

54) a.   C'è   Gianni   infuriato / malato.
         ci-is John   furious   ill
         'John is furious / ill.'
     b.   C'è   Gianni   nei   guai   / in pericolo.
         ci-is John   in-the trouble   in danger
         'John is in trouble / in danger.'

Note that if the information-structure unity typical of presentational sentences is disrupted, for instance by forcing an argument-focus interpretation of the DP through focus-fronting, the clitic *ci* must be left out:

55) a.   **Anche   Gianni** (*c') è   infuriato / malato.
         also   John   *ci* is furious   ill
         'John too is furious / ill .'
     b.   **Anche   Gianni** (*c') è   nei   guai   / in pericolo.
         also   John   *ci* is in-the   trouble   in danger
         'John too is in trouble / in danger.'

In these examples, the presence of the focalizing adverb *anche* requires narrow-focus on the associated DP, and allows for focus fronting under a contrastive or surprise interpretation (cf. Cruschina 2012). In such a structure, the predicate must be

dislocated and connected to the core clause by a resumptive clitic other than *ci*, that is, by the pro-predicate *lo*:

56) a. **Anche Gianni** lo è (, infuriato / malato).
     b. **Anche Gianni** lo è (, nei guai / in pericolo).

The following data confirm that fronting has to take place from a canonical predication (e.g. *Anche Gianni è infuriato* 'John too is furious.'), thus providing a further syntactic explanation for the impossibility of *ci* in the (b) sentences:

57) a. C'è   tua   sorella   in pericolo.
         ci-is your sister   in danger
     b. **Soltanto tua sorella** (*c') è in pericolo.
         only   your sister   *ci* is in danger
         'Only your sister is in danger.'

58) a. Ci sono i   politici   italiani in cattive acque.
         ci are the politicians Italian   in bad   waters
     b. **Anche i   politici   italiani** (*ci) sono in cattive acque.
         also   the politicians Italian   *ci* are in bad   waters
         'Italian politicians too are in deep water.'

Recall that this is the information structure that characterizes inverse locatives. In fact, if the predicate is a locative PP, the clitic *ci* is perfectly acceptable in the fronting structure:

59) a. C'è   Gianni in giardino.
         ci-is Gianni in garden
     b. **Anche Gianni** c'è   in giardino.
         also   Gianni *ci*-is in garden
         'John too is in the garden.'

Although I will not attempt to provide a detailed analysis of the structural properties of presentational sentences, it is worth noting that these sentences share significant similarities with other constructions. In particular, the pseudo-relative in the sentence type under discussion resembles the pseudo-relative that occurs with perception verbs. For this construction, it has been independently argued that the pseudo-relative corresponds to a tensed CP that functions as the predicate of a small clause (cf. Guasti 1993, Cinque 1995; cf. also Belletti 2008 on cleft-sentences):

60) a. Ho   visto   [$_{SC}$ Gianni arrabbiato / in difficolta]
         have.1SG seen   John   angry   in difficulty
         'I saw John angry / in trouble.'
     b. Ho   visto   [$_{SC}$ Gianni   [$_{CP}$ che correva verso   casa]]
         have.1SG seen   John   who ran.3SG towards home
         I saw John running home.'   (Cinque 1995: 250, 251)

It is reasonable to think that the pseudo-relative of presentational sentences has the same function as with perception verbs, acting as the predicate of the small clause in which the predication obtains:[21]

61)   a.   C'è   [$_{SC}$ Gianni infuriato / nei guai]
            ci-is   John   furious   in-the trouble
            'John too is furious / in trouble.'
      b.   C'è   [$_{SC}$ Gianni   [$_{CP}$ che studia   medicina]]
            ci-is   John   who studies Medicine
            'John is studying to become a doctor.'

It must be observed that this analysis has an important implication for the status of the clitic *ci*: if the DP and the adjectival phrase are the argument and the predicate of the small clause, respectively, the proform *ci* cannot be regarded as an element generated within the same small clause. Hence, it cannot be attributed a role in the predication. If the syntactic analysis suggested here is on the right track, the only possibility left is that in this structure the pronoun *ci* does not undergo any syntactic derivation, but is lexicalized together with the copula BE as a marker of the presentational construction (see Russi 2008; cf. also Bentley 2006).[22]

From these considerations, it follows that the main pragmatic difference between presentational sentences and the other *ci*-sentence types is that in this construction *ci* does not point to a referent in the external world and is not connected to the contextual spatio-temporal parameters or settings of the predication. It rather expresses a discourse-internal function, marking a new proposition as relevant and pertinent to the discourse: a function that is indeed characteristic of the narrative and spoken language (cf. Berruto 1986). In this respect, a major property distinguishes type IV from the other types, which may be viewed as reflecting the special grammaticalized status of the expression *ci*+copula: presentational sentences cannot be negated:[23]

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[21] The question of whether the predicate belongs to the same small clause as the subject, as in (60), or to an independent adjunct small clause with a PRO subject (cf. Moro 1997) remains open. Not all the constituency and Wh-extraction tests used in Cinque (1995) for perception verbs can be applied to presentational sentences. Unlike with perception verbs, the subject of the small clause of presentational sentences cannot be pronominalized with the accusative clitic *lo*, preventing the applicability of the other tests. This fact may reflect a structural difference between the two constructions with respect to the complement vs. adjunct issue concerning the small clause, or it could be attributed to independent reasons connected to the special properties of *esserci* 'be there'.

[22] Russi (2008) does not distinguish between *ci*-sentence types, and suggests that when it joins with the copula BE, the element *ci* is always a grammaticalized morpheme specialized in the marking of the existential/presentational construction. In my account, the locative function of *ci* is still retained in sentence type II (i.e. in inverse locatives), but is lost in the other types, although to a different extent. Spatial deixis characterizes type III, while a link between the existential proform and a null locative argument has been envisaged for type I. No locative value of any sort is preserved in type IV, unless independently conveyed by an adjunct locative phrase.

[23] Type II can only be negated if the sole predicate, but not the subject DP, is the focus of the sentence, falling within the scope of negation:

(i)   a.   [Non c'è]$_{FOCUS}$ [Gianni], [in giardino]
       b. *[Non c'è Gianni]$_{FOCUS}$ [in giardino]

62) a. Non ci sono orsi bianchi al   Polo Sud.   (type I)
         not *ci* are   bears white   at-the Pole South
         'There are no polar bears in the South Pole.'
    b. Non c'è   Gianni   in giardino.   (type II)
         not *ci*-is John   in garden
         'John is not in the garden.'

63) a. *Non c'è Gianni infuriato.   (type IV)
    b. *Non c'è Gianni nei guai.   (type IV)
    c. *Non c'è Gianni che studia medicina.   (type IV)

This difference can be ascribed to the fully grammaticalized status of *esserci* 'be there' in presentational sentences. It is obviously possible to negate the predication that it introduces (e.g. *Gianni non è infuriato* 'John is not furious'), but not the semantically empty locution made up of *ci* and the copula (cf. 63).

A sub-type of presentational sentences is represented by the so-called eventives. This term has been used to refer to a variety of structures that should not all be grouped together with presentational sentences. In the literature on existential sentences, eventives or eventive existentials are existential sentences featuring a past participle coda that licenses an eventive interpretation (cf. Milsark 1974, McNally 1992):

64) There has been a live pig roasted.

Sentences like (64) are therefore a subtype of true existential sentences. In other areas of research, focusing particularly on Romance languages, eventives are defined as those presentational sentences that describe the occurrence of an event or something that happens at a given time and place (cf. Leonetti 2008: 141):[24]

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        c.   ??/* Non c'è [Gianni]_{FOCUS} [in giardino]

This is consistent with the proposed analysis of this sentence as an inverse locative predication. While negative existential sentences must presuppose a location (62a), negative locative predications must presuppose the existence of the entity denoted by the DP (cf. Partee and Borschev 2007, and references therein), which is therefore dislocated as a referential topic in (62b) (cf. (i) above). Unless they are interpreted as mere instances of type II, with *ci* referring to a contextually implicit location, type III *ci*-sentences (e.g. *C'è Gianni!* 'John is here') cannot be negated. This sentential category shares many properties with inverse locatives, to the extent that it is reasonable to consider it as a subcategory of type II. Nevertheless, the interpretation of deictic *ci*-sentences is closer to that of *eventive* presentational sentences, which will be discussed below. In fact, they describe something unexpected, and possibly surprising, which happens at a particular time and place.

[24] Some scholars restrict the category of eventives to those sentences in which the occurrence of an event is expressed by the single DP, such as with nominal constituents referring to natural events or accidents:

(i) a. C'è il   terremoto.
        ci-is the earthquake
        'An earthquake is happening.'
   b. Ci fu   una disgrazia.
        ci was a   misfortune
        'There was an (unfortunate) accident. / An (unfortunate) accident occurred.'

65) C'è   Gianni   {in giardino /   al   telefono / che   aspetta}   *Italian*
    ci-is John   {in garden /   at-the phone   / that   waits}
    'John is {in the garden / on the phone / waiting}'

66) Hi ha   la   Maria   {molt enfadada / al   telefon / que espera}   *Catalan*
    cl has the   Mary   {very angry   / at-the   phone   / that waits}
    'Mary is {very angry / on the phone / waiting}'

As presentationals, these event-reporting sentences are independent from the discourse context and carry no presupposition on the topic or the predicate of the proposition expressed, as reflected in the fact that they can be uttered in out-of-the blue contexts, and that they can be preceded by conventional questions or utterances, such as *What's new? What happened?* or *Guess what!*, which require sentence-focus replies (cf. Lambrecht 1988: 164).

8. Conclusions
Starting from specific observations on information structure, in this paper I have identified different types of Italian existential sentences. To avoid terminological confusion, I have assigned a distinctive label to each type, referring to all of them as *ci*-sentences because they all share the property of being introduced by the element *ci* attached to the copula. Although this study is meant to be a preliminary investigation into these sentential types, several pieces of evidence in favour of the distinctions proposed have been reviewed. The properties of the four types of Italian *ci*-sentences are summed up in the following table:

Table 1: Italian *ci*-sentences

TYPE	STRUCTURE	FOCUS	*ci*	DP
I	existential	sentence/predicate	pro-argument	predicate (indefinite)
II	inverse locative	argument	pro-predicate	argument (definite)
III	deictic locative	argument	pro-predicate	argument (definite)
IV	presentational	sentence	lexicalized	argument (specific)

The points summarized above provide an answer to the initial questions set out in the introduction as the agenda for this paper:

    (a) What is the focus of existential sentences?
    (b) Is a FocP involved in (any type of) existential sentences in Italian?

The extension of the focus varies from type to type, and only in those types clearly characterized by an argument-focus DP (i.e. types II and III) is the clause-internal FocP involved. The lack of distinctive syntactic marking for the other types supports the idea that they involve cases of broad focus including the predicate (arguably, type I) or the whole sentence (type IV). These considerations have proved fundamental for the classification proposed, clarifying the generally acknowledged intuition that existential sentences serve primarily to introduce a new referent into the discourse,

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In this type of sentence the predicate is fully synonymic with the verb 'to happen' (Berruto 1986: 67).

and shedding some light on the controversy as to whether they correspond to sentence- or predicate-focus structures. Moreover, types II and III are derived by two syntactic information-structure related operations that are not available in English, namely, postverbal focalization of the subject and clitic-dislocation of the locative coda. Type IV, instead, is an independent structure only partially related to the other categories. This explains why these constructions are not available in English.

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