Interface conditions on the realisation of subjects and objects in heritage Italo-Romance
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In this paper we investigate the realisation of subject and object in heritage Italo-Romance varieties. According to the Interface Hypothesis ('IH' [1]), syntactic structures involving an interface with discourse conditions are likely to be simplified by bilingual speakers; extending this hypothesis to heritage speakers ('HSs') it is plausible to expect a simplification of the discourse conditions involved in subject and object realisation. Our data, however, show that HSs maintain interface conditions and add new discourse-related constraints to the existing ones.

Northern Italo-Romance varieties spoken in Italy have two series of subject pronouns as illustrated by Friulian in (1). The subject clitic ('SCl') *al* is analysed as an inflection head obligatorily realised as part of verbal agreement; the SCl co-occurs with the tonic subject pronoun *lui*, which is normally realised only when it serves some discourse functions, e.g.to indicate a shift in topic, as in canonical null subject languages [2].

Southern varieties show Differential Object Marking (DOM), i.e. the prepositional marking (in Romance languages) of some direct objects that feature the following semantic properties: animacy, definiteness and specificity. This phenomenon is not attested in most northern Italo-Romance varieties, while it is widespread in southern ones which do not display SCls, as shown by the Eastern Abruzzese variety from Fossacesia in (2):

(1) (Lui) al è mê nevôt.	*(Friulian)*
he he.SCL is my nephew	
'I have kissed her.'	

(2) A vasciatə a tte.	*(Eastern Abruzzese)*
have kissed DOM you	
'(S)he kissed you!'	

In our study, we investigate the changes in subject and object realisation in heritage languages, focussing on the interface conditions involved in the distribution of SCls and DOM in heritage Friulian and Eastern Abruzzese in contact with Argentinian Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese and Quebec French. Building on the IH, we expect that such conditions do not determine the subject and object distribution in heritage languages.

Our data, however, show that HSs are extremely sensitive to information structure. This represents a challenge for the IH: the change does not go in the direction of a simplification. If anything, new factors involving syntax and discourse are introduced alongside the existing ones.

We propose that these facts can be related to discourse factors, more specifically to topicality. Null subjects are available only in case of topic continuity; when there is a topic shift, an overt subject pronoun is required. Topicality is also involved in the emergence and extension of the DOM pattern we examined in our data.

Our study involves 10 HSs of Eastern Abruzzese and 14 HSs of Friulian in Argentina, Brazil and Canada which carried out a grammaticality judgment task (24 forced-choice items including fillers) and a spontaneous production task. In this paper we focus mainly on HSs in Argentina; data from Brazil and Canada are used here to highlight different behaviours depending on parametric variation in the contact language.

The questionnaire indicates that SCls in heritage Friulian are in a process of degrammaticalisation: SCls behave as pronouns rather than agreement markers, as already shown for heritage Venetan [3]. For instance, the doubling of DP subjects is generally disfavoured: the majority of HSs of Friulian chose the item without an SCl over the one with an SCl.

	Yes:	No:
(3) Maria (*e) à comprât il pan.	13 out of 14	1 out of 14
Mary she.SCL has bought the bread		
'Mary bought bread.'		

Considering the IH and the pronominal nature of SCls in heritage Friulian, we expect an overextension of SCls in contexts where these would be pragmatically unexpected. The spontaneous speech data, however, show that this expectation is not borne out; HSs are introducing

new discourse conditions on the realisation of SCls: they tend to omit the SCl in cases of topic continuity. HSs seem to have a perfectly good understanding of the information structure (and therefore interface conditions) of their language. The realisation of the subject is here determined by interface conditions: these are however different from those of the baseline grammar.

(4) I	ai	tacât	fevelà	furlan. Dop __	ai	sposât	une furlane. *(Heritage Friulian)*
I.SCL	have	started	speak.INF	Friulian then *pro*	have	married a	Friulian
'I started to speak Friulian. Then I married a Friulian.'							

The SCl is used when the subject is introduced for the first time but is omitted in subsequent sentences if the topic does not change. Such behaviour shows that HSs of Friulian are not less sensitive to discourse constraints on subject expression; if anything, the opposite occurs. Interestingly, SCls are omitted more often in contact with Argentinian Spanish, a pro-drop language, than Brazilian Portuguese, a partial pro-drop language.

Turning to DOM, our data show that HSs of Friulian, a non-DOM variety, often accept DOM-marked objects in contact with Argentinian Spanish, as shown in (5). Similarly to what we see for SCls, topicality plays an important role in DOM in heritage Friulian: 28 out of the 41 DOM sentences accepted in heritage Friulian spoken in Argentina feature a topicalised object whereas 13 out of 41 sentences display an object *in situ*.

Furthermore, DOM does not only arise in non-DOM varieties, but it also extends in DOM varieties (Eastern Abruzzese), particularly when the DP is realised in topic position. In (6) we report an example by HSs of Eastern Abruzzese in Argentina: the marking of indefinite DPs as in (6) signals an extension of DOM in heritage Eastern Abruzzese: the baseline variety spoken in Italy only allows DOM with 1st and 2nd person pronouns, [4].

(5) A	une	cjantant,	îr,	la	ai	bussade.	Yes: 5 out of 7	No: 2 out of 7
(6) A	na	candandə,	jirə,	li	so	vasciatə.	Yes: 7 out of 7	No: 0 out of 7
DOM	a	singer	yesterday	her.CL	AUX	kissed		
'A singer, I have kissed one yesterday.'								

The facts just described regarding SCls and DOM contradict the literature about HSs. In the case of subject realisation, studies on HSs (e.g. [5] for Spanish HSs in the US) attested an overextension of overt subjects to pragmatically infelicitous contexts, which is generally attributed to the increased vulnerability of the syntax-discourse interface [1]. In the case of DOM, the literature generally reports its weakening in HSs [5,6,7,8,9], mostly on Spanish in contact with English.

Our data reveal a counter-tendency with respect to these findings: on the one hand, HSs of DOM Italo-Romance varieties do not omit DOM when in contact with Quebec French, a non-DOM language; on the other hand, speakers of these varieties in contact with Argentinian Spanish, a language that allows DOM even with non-animate objects [10], show a tendency to retain DOM, and even extend it to contexts in which the baseline does not allow it. Retention of DOM has been attributed to the idea that "structures requiring the satisfaction of syntactic and semantic conditions" [11] are stable, as in the IH [12]. In our case, however, the results are not in line with the IH, as shown by the fact that HSs introduce new discourse constraints on DOM with respect to the system adopted in Italy.

For both SCls and DOM, the changes in the realisation do not go in the direction of simplification: if anything, more constraints are added. The degrammaticalisation of SCls highlights the emergence of new syntax-discourse interface conditions that are absent in Friulian as spoken in Italy. The extension of DOM points out that the simplification of structures involving syntax-discourse interface is not as obvious as previously shown.

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