Subject Doubling in Spoken French

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the syntax and pragmatics of subject doubling in spoken French. Many prescriptivists have considered it a redundant and ungrammatical form, but over the years, it has gained more interest from syntacticians.

It is widely acknowledged that dislocations involve topics, but the position of these structures is very disputed. Some linguists believe in base generation while others state there is movement. The status of subject clitics also comes into play and their role as arguments or agreement markers is crucial to understanding the issues at stake with a topic analysis. It is often argued that the clitics are undergoing a linguistic cycle whereby they lose their function of argument, and need to be reinforced by disjunct pronouns.

In this study, I examined which analyses support my data and I attempted to determine what structures tend to be most dislocated by looking at the environment of the discourse in a corpus of spoken French.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The focus of my thesis is the status of subject doubling in spoken French. I will attempt to assess whether this phenomenon is very widespread or if it only concerns certain aspects of colloquial French. Subject doubling is not a French specificity; it is also common in some dialects of Northern Italy and many other languages such as Greek, Lebanese Arabic, etc. French is a Romance language that has lost pro-drop and some verbal agreement and has developed clitic subjects (van Gelderen, 2011), which has led some linguists to argue that French is a synthetic language with an analytic orthography. Most prescriptivist grammarians used to consider double subjects ungrammatical and redundant, but over the past couple of decades, notably throughout the works of Lambrecht, the status of this structure in the literature has started to change. Lambrecht (1981) and Calvé (1985) mention that dislocation used to be regarded as a superficial or surface feature. However, the fact that it can influence the way a sentence is interpreted made syntacticians re-evaluate the place of this phenomenon in terms of syntactic theory. The pragmatics associated to it, for instance the speaker's presuppositions, also come into play in the way a sentence is interpreted. Topic and comment have thus gained the status of universal concepts, present in the underlying structure of all statements in a similar way as noun phrase and verb phrase.

In this thesis, I will be looking at theoretical perspectives on subject doubling and left dislocation through the works of Lambrecht (1981), Roberge(1990), Auger (2003) and Van Gelderen (2011) for the so-called 'morphological analysis' as well as those of De Cat (2007) and Frascarelli (2000)

among others who refute that analysis. One of my goals is to investigate whether or not this phenomenon is due to the evolution of clitics that tend to attach to the verb and thus become agreement markers encoding uninterpretable features. This loss of phonetic and semantic content of the subject pronoun requires the insertion of a new pronoun to reinforce it. Culbertson (2010) points out that the status of subject clitics in French has been heavily debated by numerous researchers. Subject clitics have distributional properties that have been analyzed by linguists as argument-bearing elements occupying a canonical subject position, cliticizing to the verb only at the level of phonology. French subject clitics are categorized as true syntactic subjects generated in canonical subject position. However, this hypothesis has been debated since it "fails to capture patterns of subject-clitic use in colloquial French dialects/registers (Culbertson, p 85)." Other evidence provided by analyses on prosody and corpora as well as speaker judgments and crosslinguistic typology established that there are "differences from Standard French that impact how subject clitics are best analyzed, and more specifically subject clitics in European Colloquial French appear to be affixal agreement markers, and not phonological clitic arguments"(Culbertson, 2010).

On the other hand, Cécile De Cat (2007) clearly states that French subject clitics are not agreement morphemes and that they are available for syntactic movement. She also argues that Spoken French does not allow subject doubling[1], which seems surprising considering that I have observed it many times in spoken language. I will thus attempt to see if that argument is confirmed by my analysis.

[1] She does not believe that clitics are becoming grammatical agreement markers (morphemes) but rather anaphoric agreement markers (incorporated pronouns)

The main issues at stake when looking at subject doubling are whether the clitic is an agreement marker or still an actual argument and whether the NP is the actual subject or if it becomes a topic. Auger (2003) points out that it is difficult to differentiate actual grammatical subjects from dislocated phrases since both favor definite and specific noun phrases, and identifiable referents. Another important point is whether the subject is undergoing a linguistic cycle, whereby the clitic becomes an agreement marker, thus requiring a new argument in subject position, which could be null. Semantics via theta-roles therefore come into play as well. Most researchers still disagree on that subject, thus I am going to give an overview and synthesis of their points of view in the next two chapters. Although my focus in this thesis is syntax, pragmatics, semantics and phonology are also important aspects that I am going to be looking at.

Dislocation is a phenomenon that has always been difficult to analyze in terms of syntax since it very often implies a different word order and a move away from the sentence level. The very name dislocation brings to mind a certain disruption of the sentence structure, a "syntactic anomaly" associated to spoken language. Calvé (1985) defines dislocation as "a construction in which one element, usually a noun (or noun phrase), is isolated at the beginning or at the end of a sentence, while being represented in the body of the sentence by a pronoun (or clitic)"(p. 230). Bally (1951) argues that dislocation "creates the fundamental pattern of the spoken sentence [and that] this use of pronouns [in an anaphoric position] is a sign of spoken grammar in modern French."(p. 231 in Calvé). In a way, this could mean that spoken French provides more grammatical clues than written French. Calvé (1985) points out that "this 'grammaticalization'

of word order explains in part why French makes so much use of dislocation."(p. 232).

In the second chapter, I will be looking at the syntactic structure of the sentence and how the extended CP layer is relevant to the issues of topic. I will go over the different syntactic analyses of topic and will try to synthesize the conflicting interpretations of topics in French in order to figure out which types are actually present. In chapter three, I will provide a review of what linguists say about the status of subject clitics and how the latter influence the way French tends to topicalize subjects. The issue of clitics being analyzed as agreement markers or arguments will be brought up and discussed. Chapter four will be concerned with my corpus analysis of Kate Beeching's corpus of spoken French. I will consider the distribution of pronoun doubling in French by examining the frequency of 1st, 2nd and 3rd subject pronouns in the singular and the plural. I will attempt to determine what elements can or cannot be left dislocated in French and will analyze the different patterns I can find. Does subject doubling only concern pronouns or does it also involve nouns? In subject doublings such as "moi, je", is "moi" the topic or the real subject of the verb? In this case, could we still call these instances subject doubling? I will look at standard spoken French but also at other non-standard dialect alternatives as an attempt to determine whether it is a phenomenon common to all varieties of French or more relevant to only some.

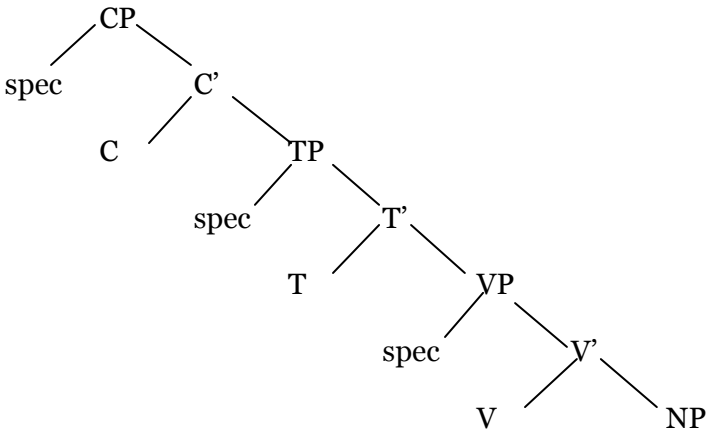
Chapter 2

THE SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE OF THE SENTENCE: THE THREE LAYERS, THE CP LAYER AND THE POSITIONS FOR THE TOPIC AND FOCUS PHRASES

In order to better understand the concepts at stake in this thesis, it is important to go back to the basic syntactic structure of the sentence and to define the main layers that compose it. I will then elaborate on the CP layer by discussing the concepts of Topic and Focus, which are crucial to the idea of subject doubling.

2.1 The Syntactic Structure of the Sentence: the Three Layers

A sentence, or a clause, consists of mood, tense, a grammatical subject and a lexical verb. Some elements in the clause have different roles and functions, which contribute to the three-layered syntactic structure of the sentence. The main layers are the CP or Complementizer Phrase, the TP or Tense Phrase and the VP or Verb Phrase. The higher nodes of the tree (CP, TP) contain more abstract categories, whereas the VP hosts lexical verbs and all lexical categories: Noun Phrase, Adjective Phrase, Prepositional Phrase, etc. Below is a syntactic tree representing the structure of the sentence:



The VP is the layer that contains the argument structure or the thematic structure, which is the reason why it is called the lexical layer. The VP layer houses the lexical verbs and its arguments as well as light verbs. This is where the theta-roles are assigned (agent, theme, patient, etc): 'who did what to whom'.

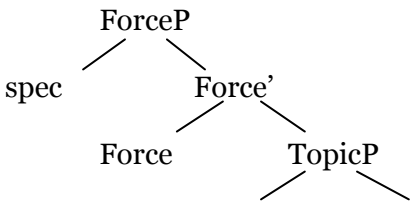
The TP is called the grammatical or functional layer. It houses information about tense, (epistemic) mood, aspect, verbal agreement, and grammatical case. Cross linguistically, it might be the layer that presents the most variety since some languages do not have agreement or case. French presents grammatical agreement, but no longer has case, which is now replaced by prepositions.

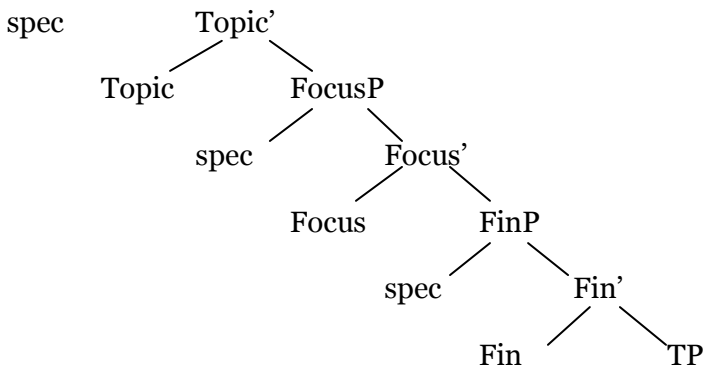
The CP is the pragmatic or discourse layer. It houses the (pragmatic) mood of the sentence, its finiteness and the topicalized and focalized elements. The mood in the CP is located in the Force Phrase. The complementizer is usually 'that' or 'if' in English ('que' or 'si' or interrogative pronouns in French) and gives information about mood (Force) and tense. It also communicates with Tense in the TP layer. In the conflict between minimalism and cartography, Rizzi (1997) came up with an extended CP layer also called split CP layer to give more depth to the structure of the CP. He created a Force phrase, which indicates the mood of a sentence and enables to distinguish various types of clauses: declarative, interrogative, exclamative, relative, comparative, and several types of adverbial clauses. The Force looks to the outside and connects the proposition to another clause in the case of embedded clauses or to the discourse event in the case of a main clause. In order to differentiate finite clauses from non-finite, Rizzi introduced another main phrase in this system: the Finiteness phrase (FinP). The Fin phrase is the closest to the TP layer and looks inside the clause. Both phrases

close the CP upward and downward respectively. They can also merge if the clause is simple. However, there are sometimes topics and/or foci in a clause, and those can also be represented in the extended CP layer.

2.2 The Topic and the Focus

A topic is a lexical element which is already known or familiar in the discourse event. It is usually placed at the beginning of a clause. The Topic Phrase is located below the Force Phrase. In most languages, the head of the topic is not overt and the topicalized NP is usually located in the specifier of the Topic Phrase, which is the case of the French 'moi' or 'toi'. A focus, on the other hand, is a lexical element which is new or unfamiliar in the discourse event. Focusing involves the operation of moving the lexical element at the beginning of the clause in order to emphasize it or make it stand out. The Focus Phrase is located below the Topic Phrase, and just like the latter, its head is usually not overt. In most cases of subject doubling, the dislocated element is almost never a focus. In more recent research, there has been debate over where exactly in the CP the topic would be located. Some researchers argue that there might be as many as three different possible positions for the topic. This makes the issue quite controversial since no consensus is yet achieved. It is sometimes difficult to keep the three layers separate. Here is a tree to illustrate the split CP layer advanced by Rizzi:





Some researchers argue that the topic is not necessarily in the CP but originates elsewhere, maybe in the TP. There are also factors in the sentence that push certain arguments into topics. De Cat (2007) shows that Individual Level predicates or ILPs (permanent states and properties) force the subject into a topic position and cause clitic doubling, as in (1) a. whereas Stage Level predicates(momentary statement, fact) do not, as in (1) b.:

(1) a. Le malais, **c**'est difficile.
Malay is difficult
b. Le directeur est là.
The director is there.

Thus, there might be a link between the verb type in the VP and the presence of an Aspect Phrase, which would determine the availability of a topic position in the CP. This also means that some subjects are more likely to be doubled than others. In (1)b., the topic of the sentence is a stage topic referring to the "here-and-now of the discourse" (Erteschik-Shir, 1997) and therefore the subject "le directeur" cannot be interpreted as the topic. In (1)a., on the other hand, the predication cannot be restricted in time or space; it expresses a defining property of what is being talked about. The subject in (1)a. must be interpreted as the topic and the sentence receives a generic reading. Therefore ILPs can be a test for topichood according to De Cat.

2.3 The Topic: Syntactic Theory

As I have discussed earlier, there is no general agreement on the position of the Topic constituent. Frascarelli (2000) points out that there are two main theories of Topic within the generative framework: the movement analysis and the base-generated analysis.

According to the movement analysis, the Topic enters the computation in argument position and is then moved to a higher extrasentential node. However, the type of movement is subject to a lot of debate regarding adjunction, which is the "operation whereby one constituent is attached to another to form a larger constituent of the same type" (Radford, 2004 p. 321). Some linguists argue in favor of the adjunction process, where the target nodes for Topic are IP or CP. Rochemont (1989) believes in an adjunction to IP for Topic whereas Culicover (1991) proposes two available landing sites, which depend on the presence of a Focus constituent. If there is no Focus, the landing site for Topic adjunction, similar to Rochemont's model, is IP. If there is a Focus constituent, however, the Topic must move from IP to specCP.

Other linguists who refute the idea of adjunction posit a specific maximal projection for Topic movement: the Topic Phrase. Its position, however, is also disputed. Kiss (1996) locates TopP immediately above FocP while Cecchetto (1999) proposes two different Topic nodes: one dominating FocP and the other lower in the structure, dominating VP. Authors supporting movement analysis of Topic base their arguments on the analysis of syntactic islands, subjacency and LF (Logical Form) reconstruction effects (Kiss, Cecchetto). De Cat (2007) argues that French LD is not sensitive to islands as far as topics are concerned, basing

her claim on native speakers' judgments. The following examples are considered grammatical and likely to be heard in everyday speech by her participants:

(2) a. **Les autres**, je vais attendre [avant de **les** relire].
I will wait before reading the other ones again.
b. **Aux petits**, je sais pas [ce [qu'elle **leur** lit]].
I don't know what she reads to the little ones.

I will not go into details about the analysis of subjacency and LF reconstruction effects.

Cecchetto[2] (1999, 2000) also brings up another analysis for movement of the DP in which the topic moves. He argues that the dislocated element moves from the specifier of a big DP headed by the resumptive clitic and generated in an argument position of the verb. The big DP then raises to [spec,AgroP] and then to the specifier of a Topic projection in the extended VP field. The topic is argued to remain in this position while the clitic climbs further up the structure. However, Cecchetto points out that this is only viable for dislocated DPs.

Base-generation analysis, on the other hand, features a Topic inserted in an extrasentential maximal projection which receives Case and phi-features via coindexing with a resumptive pronoun or an empty category in argument position. This analysis is based on binding relations and effects and is supported by Cinque (1990) who proposes a recursive CP node for Topic generation. I will not go into detail about this analysis. De Cat believes that French dislocation is not generated by movement since it is not sensitive to islands.

2.4 Types of Topics in French

2.4.1 Hanging topics?

[2] In De Cat, C. (2007)

As far as phonological properties are concerned, Frascarelli argues that a Topic element is typically deaccented and separated from the sentence by an intonational break. Galambos (1980), on the other hand, distinguishes two types of topics. She claims that hanging topics are "stressed," and "also accompanied by a rise in pitch and followed by a pause" (as in 10 b) whereas what she calls "topic-comment constructions par excellence" show none of these special prosodic features, as in 10 a:

(4) a. Les gens izz applaudissaient maman.
People clapped for mom.
b. Ca, je m'en fous. (hanging topic)
This I don't care about.

French also has another type of topic introduced by the preposition « quant à » ("as for"). Lagae (2007) looked at left dislocation and topic-marking in French, more specifically at the "quant à" construction. She observed that "quant à" is always followed by definite NPs and often involves an anaphoric relation with a coreferential pronoun where the anaphoric word functions as subject.

(5)[3] *Au niveau de l'infirmerie dijonnaise, c'est toujours la morosité. Micoud, 7e côte fracturée, est toujours convalescent, Perrier-David, point de contracture aux adducteurs, joue sur une jambe,* ***quant à*** *Pawel Storozynski, son retour n'est pas prévu pour demain. Si pour le dernier nommé, tout le monde est fixé depuis longtemps, les blessures des deux autres sont beaucoup plus problématiques.* (*Le Bien Public*, 2005/02/09)
'At the level of the Dijon infirmary, gloominess is still prevailing. Micoud (fracture of the 7th rib) is still recovering, Perrier-David (adductor contraction) is playing on one leg, as for Pawel Storozynski, he will not come back soon. Although everyone has been in the picture for a long time about the latter, the injuries of the two others are much more problematical.

In the same frame of mind as Lambrecht (1994), she states it is a "prototypical topic-marking construction" where the constituent is positioned at the head of

[3] Lagae's example

the sentence. Nølke (1994) argues that "quant à" indicates "focalization spécialisée de nature thématisante », which means that the topic is focalized because it is a result of a choice between different topics. This is very reminiscent of hanging topics, especially when considering Choi-Jonin's (2003) and Fløttum's (2003) observations that "quant à" always implies a contrast between different parts of a given set.

According to Galambos (1980), French has only hanging topics. In the light of pragmatics, she follows Cinque (1977)'s argument whereby he describes a hanging topic as a topic which also functions as a "focus or center of attention." The latter should not be confused with the focus or focus phrase. Hanging topics usually present a contrastive function or an emphatic element such as an 'apposition' or an interjection:

(6)[4] a. Moi, je connais une brasserie… Toi, tu vas voir le patron.
I know a brewery… *You* go see the boss.
b. Mais moi, *personnellement*, j'en suis pas.
But I, personally, am not part of it.
c. *Eh bien* moi, j'attends, tout simplement.
Well, I'm waiting, quite simply.

However, Galambos does not address the syntactic analysis of left detachment constructions. In Cinque's opinion, there would therefore be at least two different types of topics depending on certain pragmatic and/or phonological contexts. These properties can be separated into two categories according to Galambos:

BASE-GENERATED (Hanging Topic)	**TRANSFORMATIONAL (Ordinary Topic)**
1. Emphatic/contrastive function	**1.** Not emphatic or contrastive

[4] Galambos' examples

2. Phonologically marked (pitch rise, pause) **3.** Referent becomes a topic, may be new to the discourse **4.** May be accompanied by interjection or 'emphatic' adverbial expression	**2.** Phonologically unmarked **3.** Referent is already a topic **4.** No accompanying interjection or 'emphatic' adverbial expression

De Cat (2007) raises an important question: is French Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD) actually Hanging Topic Left Dislocation (HTLD)? According to her, there is no clear-cut difference between these two types of structures. She shows that there is in fact no empirical base for a distinction between HTLD and CLLD. She states that in both cases, the dislocated element is interpreted as the topic. Dependency markers would be the only signs to identify hanging topics. […]
De Cat's examples of hanging topics, however, are not cases of subject doubling but rather of object doubling. The question thus remains: does French have hanging topics or not?

2.5 Pragmatic Properties of Topics

Lambrecht (1981) argues that the concepts of newness or givenness do not adequately capture NSF (Non Standard French, i.e. colloquial standard French) topics. He believes that, by elevating a referent to the topic status, the speech participants establish a kind of communicative agreement. This strategy of topicalization marks the referent as important for the communication, and this topic can govern more than one sentence or turn in a conversation. Some topics thus become what some linguists call discourse topics. In some instances, topics might have another communicative function, that of marking shift or creating a

new topic. Lambrecht states that NSF topic seems to mark a transition from an evoked to a given entity.

> (7) Speaker A: *J'ai essayé d'aller à la plage hier, mais i faisait trop froid.*
> I tried to go to the beach yesterday, but it was too cold outside.
> Speaker B : *La plage i faut y aller quand i fait chaud.*
> *The beach* you need to go there when it's hot.

Lambrecht argues that « la plage » in speaker B's reply is given and not simply evoked, which means that dropping the topic would probably not alter comprehensibility. Hence the referent is most likely in the addressee's consciousness.

The issue of topic cannot be dissociated from the issue of the status of French clitics since the latter might determine whether an XP can be raised to the status of topic. When it comes to double subjects, many linguists have discussed the nature of the subject pronoun: is it a clitic or an agreement marker? Do NPs function differently from disjunct pronouns such as "moi", "lui" or "nous"? Does the DP get a theta-role and is it moved from its original position? In the next section, I will provide the different perspectives on these issues and later determine which accounts seem the most valid.

Chapter 3

THE STATUS OF DOUBLED SUBJECTS IN FRENCH: IS THE PRONOUN A CLITIC OR AN AGREEMENT MARKER? DOES THE DP GET A THETA-ROLE AND IS IT MOVED FROM ITS ORIGINAL POSITION?

Doubled subjects are quite common in French, especially in spoken discourse but also more surprisingly in written discourse. French doubled subjects do not tend to have the non-standard connotation that they would have in English, even though some grammarians still believe that it is not proper language. However, over the last decades, grammarians and syntacticians have noticed that this construction is not an error of language but can be explained syntactically.

3.1 Attitudes Toward Subject Doubling

Coveney (2005) describes attitudes toward subject doubling over the centuries. In France, linguistic diversity and variation is not very popular and this intolerance for non-standard speech can be observed throughout the history of the French language. French grammarians expressed strong criticisms against subject doubling from the Revolution up to this day. Chifflet in 1659 argued that the subject pronoun in "*Mon père il est malade*" (My father he is sick) was superfluous, which means that that form was present as early as the 17th century. Even in the 20th century, Moufflet states: « Rien de tel que les mots superflus pour faire perdre le fil du discours et le sens du raisonnement. » Grammarians proved to be inconsistent though since an initial emphatic pronoun such as "moi" in "moi, je" was considered legitimate and appropriate when used to highlight a contrast. The same applies for the subject pronoun in complex inversion such as

"*Mon père est-il malade?*" (Is my father sick?)", which is still considered grammatical and mandatory today. It could thus be argued that there is a kind of inconsistency on the part of the grammarians.

3.2 Frequency of subject doubling

According to Coveney (2005), 90% or more of the subjects in speech tend to be pronouns rather than NPs, which is at least in part due to the high frequency of first- and second-person pronouns in conversation. Subject doubling is used by everyone nowadays, but at different frequencies. The main issue though is what to consider subject doubling: indeed, the author argues that it is important not to confuse subject doubling with left dislocation, which is also one of De Cat's concerns. Previous research studies have found different results depending on whether or not left dislocation counts as an instance of subject doubling for researchers. Ball (2000)'s guide to colloquial French claims that "the frequency of dislocated sentences in familiar and popular French can be as high as 50%" and that SD is very common among young people, regardless of their social class. This estimate, however, includes other structures in addition to SD. There are of course differences of register when looking at subject doubling: the more doubled the subjects, the more colloquial the speech. Since written/academic language is more formal, doubled subjects appear very rarely. On the other hand, Gadet (1997), describing spoken language, said: "On ne rencontre pas plus de 10% de sujets disloqués (certains corpus peuvent aller jusqu'à 15 ou 16%, jamais au-delà) but his data include all subjects, including those consisting of a bare pronoun where SD could not have been used without

changing the meaning. Therefore, the central problem is deciding what to count and what to discard in this kind of linguistic analysis.

3.3 The Syntax behind Double Subjects: the Role of Clitics

From a syntactic point of view, this phenomenon could be analyzed as an example of grammaticalization whereby the clitic undergoes a linguistic cycle, bleaches and becomes an agreement marker. As a result there is a need to reinforce the subject, hence the doubled subject. Lambrecht (1981) for instance, observes a change from suffixation to prefixation of the grammatical morphemes, which he calls "desyntacticization" of free NP forms (nouns and independent pronouns). Written French is thus becoming a "dead language" that does not have much to do with spoken French any more. Lambrecht raises an interesting question: are the topic oriented patterns of Non Standard French the result of or evidence for an ongoing change in Modern French from 'subject prominence' to 'topic prominence' or is the Standard French/Non Standard French contrast instead one of synchronic coexistence over an indefinite stretch of time? Nevertheless, he advises to use caution since this question might not encompass the whole complexity of the phenomenon. As far as the SF/NSF distinction is concerned, the contrast between written language and spoken language would seem to be more revealing than the synchronic/diachronic distinction.

3.4 Properties of Clitic Pronouns in Standard and in Non-Standard French: Clitic Pronouns as Agreement Markers

French clitic pronouns form a phonological unit with the verb, that is, a clitic cannot be present by itself, and it needs to be attached to the verb. Van

Gelderen (2011) points that out in several examples: in (8), *écris* must be preceded by a subject pronoun, which means that subject clitics in spoken French cannot take wide scope (De Cat). The same is true of the verb in Van Gelderen's examples (9) and (10).

(8) a. ***Je** lis et **j'**écris*
I read and I write
b.**Je lis et écris*
I read and write
(9) J'ai vu ça.
I saw that.
(10) *Je probablement ai vu ça.
I probably saw that.

As De Cat points out, clitics are "hybrid elements with a status somewhere between pronouns and affixes, so they can be expected to share properties of both."(p. 32) This phenomenon also includes liaison and elision, which are phonotactic traits specific to French. Liaison is obligatory between clitics and verbs as well as between two clitics. Examples (11) and (12) are clear instances of this:

(11) a. SF ils ont /il**z**o/ NSF is-ont /**iz**o/ ; b. elles en ont /el**z**a**n**o/
They have they have they have some
(12) il-fait : /**if**e/ vs il-a : /**il**a/
He does he has

Modification and coordination of clitics are also rare if not absent in Modern French:

(13)[5] *Je et tu…
I and you

The exception in modification lies in the third person:

(14) et c'est **elle qui** a eu la place
'And she got the spot'

Subject doubling is very widespread in many dialects such as Pied Noir, Quebecois or Picard French but there is still debate over its actual existence in

[5] Examples (13) and (14) are Van Gelderen's

Standard Spoken French. Researchers do not agree on the frequency of use of double expression of subjects in French, on its pragmatic value and on the type of subjects it allows. The main issue at stake is whether these constructions are dislocated, which would place the subject at the beginning of the sentence and repeat it with a pronominal copy in subject position; or doubled, involving a lexical subject and a subject pronoun in the role of agreement marker. Some linguists argue that subject doubling does not exist in Standard Spoken French and is only used to highlight a contrast, which are all instances of left dislocation:

(15) **Moi**, j'ai souvent mal à la tête.
Me, I often have headaches.

The dislocated NP 'moi' is echoed by the clitic 'j". Usually, 'heavy' NPs or NPs including a relative clause undergo subject doubling. Here is an example by Ossipov (2003) in which repeating the clitic pronoun helps to recall the subject NP:

(16) L'autre qui est moins belle, **elle** va se contenter de peu.
The other who is less pretty, she will be happy with little.

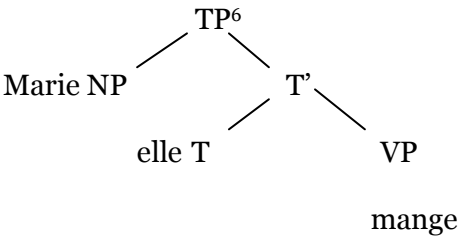
Some linguists argue that the structure in (15) is rather an instance of left dislocation because the disjoint pronoun 'moi' could be omitted without changing the meaning of the sentence. Subject doubling would, on the other hand, present a conjunct clitic that could be deleted and the sentence would retain the same meaning, as in (17):

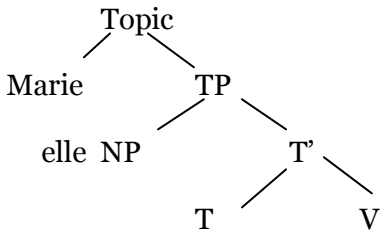
(17) Cette femme, **elle** va au marché tous les lundis.
This woman, she goes to the market every Monday.

The main issue here is to distinguish left dislocation from subject doubling, and many linguists do not agree on the subject, which makes the analysis of subject doubling problematic. Roberge (1990) gives two different tree structures

for the same sentence, the first one being subject doubling, the second left dislocation involving a topic:

(18)Marie, elle mange.





mange

According to research on subject doubling conducted by Culbertson & Legendre (2008), the status of subject clitics (SCLs) is evolving. Their data confirms that subject clitics are being reanalyzed as agreement markers and thus no longer have the status of argument. The doubled subject (the disjoint pronoun or the full DP) becomes the argument, or subject and thus acquires a theta role, usually agent. Research by Auger (2003) on Picard French also goes in the same direction and can help explain the phenomenon that goes on in Standard Spoken French. She observes that subject clitics are the syntactic realization of the agreement of the verb with its subject. She argues that since clitics are already agreement markers in Picard and that the doubled subject is the true subject, subject doubling is almost automatic.

3.5 Van Gelderen's and Auger's Points of View: the Case of Spoken Swiss French and Picard French

[6] I am using here the terminology used by Roberge, but I "updated" the IP into a TP)

Van Gelderen looked at Fonseca-Greber's (2000) study of spoken Swiss French, in which subject clitics such as *je* 'I', *tu* 'you,' etc. always precede the finite verb, which means that they cannot be anything else than agreement markers. Object clitics are also used a little less frequently between the subject and the verb in spoken language.

(19) Je l'ai vu/ J'ai vu **ça**.

Nowadays, inverted questions are very unlikely in colloquial language and these also involve complex clitic usage. Fonseca-Greber also shows that all emphatic pronouns (except for *eux* 'them') are accompanied by the subject marker. With proper nouns, the percentage is lower, around 75 percent for person names and 35 percent for place names. Definite NPs have additional pronouns around 60 percent of the time, with human singulars being the highest. In Swiss, doubled "pronouns" occur frequently even with indefinite subjects, on average 77 percent as in the examples provided by Fonseca-Greber (2000) in (20) and (21):

(20) **une omelette elle** est comme ça. Sp Fr
An omelet she is like that
(21) si un : **un Russe i** va en France. Sp Swiss Fr
If one one Russian he goes in France
If a Russian man goes to France

Quantifiers are the least likely to be doubled, about 20 percent of the time.

(22) c'est que **chacun il** a sa manière de…
This is that each he has his manner of…
That's because everyone has their own way of…

Van Gelderen argues that this is the last stage before the pronoun is reanalyzed as an agreement marker. Once that happens, quantifiers generally occur with the clitic/agreement marker, which is the case of Picard French. Sentence (22) "chacun il" is rare in spoken French because the pronominal *il*

would be bound. For the same reason, colloquial French does not allow (23) (yet):

(23) * **Qui il** est allé? Co and St Fr

Third person pronouns are more complex in French (and English) since gender is also involved. Van Gelderen raises an interesting question: if *je* and *tu* are agreement markers, is French pro-drop or is a new subject already present? Sentences such as the following are very frequent but not yet obligatory:

(24) **Moi** je suis un blogueur.

She thus believes that colloquial French is pro-drop. In the *Corpus d'Entretiens Spontanés*, there are 2,097 instances of *je* and 150 of these are preceded by *moi*.

Van Gelderen concludes that French is in transition between having subject arguments expressed analytically and having them expressed synthetically. As can be expected, different varieties of French are in different stages, and this has been discussed above and will be explored in my own corpus analysis. In comparison to English pronouns, French pronouns show more evidence of agreement status. In comparison, other languages such as Egyptian and Celtic have pronouns that incorporate into the verb without the emergence of a new emphatic element.

In Picard, subject doubling is almost automatic and obligatory, in spoken as well as in written language. Auger (2003) also argues that subject clitics have become agreement markers in that dialect and that double subjects (NPs or disjoint/strong pronouns such as "moi", "toi") are the actual subjects. However, in a different study on Picard (2003), she argues that the agreement markers on the verb are not verbal affixes generated in morphology but instead are still syntactic elements attaching to the verb, which become inseparable in the

Phonological Form (PF). Auger points out that the position of quantifiers in Picard is fixed: they cannot be separated from the verb, which entails that they need to occupy the argument position of subject.

(25) a. **Tout l'monne i** s'a rbéyè.
'tout le monde s'est regardé'
'everyone looked at each other'
b. **Parsonne i** n'poroait mie vnir ll'értcheure
'personne ne pourrait venir le chercher'
'no one could come get him'
c. **n'importé tchèche i** s'doute bién qu'oz a un lit quique pèrt
'n'importe qui se doute bien qu'on a un lit quelque part'
'anyone figure that one has a bed somewhere'

Indeed, one can only find specific or generic subjects in postverbal position:

(26) a. **Il** est fin contint, **Piot Toéne**
'Il est très content, Ti-Antoine'
'He is very glad, Lil-Antoine'
b. Est rudmint bieu, **l'progrès**
'C'est bien beau, le progrès'
'It's very beautiful, progress'

Grammaticality judgments proved ungrammaticality of sentences containing a quantified subject in postverbal position:

(27) a. *__I__ s'a rbéyè **tout l'monne**
b. *__I__ n'poroait mie vnir **parsonne**
c. *__I__ s'in doute bien **n'importé tchèche**

Auger argues that the high frequency of subject doubling in Picard is due to the fact that Picard was not hindered by prescriptivists and thus is most likely what French would have become.

3.6 De Cat's arguments

Some linguists such as De Cat (2007) and Rizzi (1997) disagree with the claim that clitics are becoming agreement markers and argue that left dislocation, i.e. topicalization is the most common. De Cat states that French subject clitics are not agreement morphemes and that they are available for syntactic movement.

She argues that spoken French does not allow subject doubling. According to her, the high frequency of dislocated XPs does not indicate an "evolution towards allowing argument doubling (accompanied by loss of the argumenthood of resumptive clitics) nor that dislocation is becoming 'grammaticalized' (implying a loss of interpretive effects), but rather is a manifestation of discourse configurationality." She states that this property manifests itself in the language's overt topic-comment articulation.

Rizzi also maintains that clitics are still arguments located in the specifier of TP, and that the topic (disjoint pronoun or DP) originates in the CP since the presence of a subject clitic forces the topic interpretation of a coindexed XP. The clitic is thus a resumptive element in their view, and not an agreement marker, and the morpheme-like properties associated to subject clitics are accidental. In that case, since the DP would originate in the CP, it would not get a theta-role since those are assigned in the VP. Rizzi argues that the structure of the CP is fixed so the topics are base generated there, which means there is no movement. In the same line of thought, other linguists have argued that clitics remain actual clitics: they are generated in syntax and they combine to the verb and become inseparable at the level of Phonological Form.

In this chapter, I have shown that the status of subject clitics is highly debated. No consensus is actually achieved because the syntax of clitics tends to be very controversial. In addition to that, some linguists use both structures in different contexts. As I am moving on to the next chapter, I will try to keep in mind the different approaches concerning the issues of topic and clitics, and I will attempt to use them as a framework to support my analysis of the different instances of double subjects I find in Kate Beeching's corpus.

Chapter 4

CORPUS ANALYSIS

In this section, I will look at the different types of doubled subjects that can be found in Kate Beeching's corpus. This corpus consists of transcriptions of 95 interviews of different lengths, recorded in Lot, in Minervois, in Paris and in Brittany. The topics of discussion encompass various linguistic functions: exchange of information about a region, instructions, narrations, argumentations on family relationships, racism, politics, etc. The conversation themes emerged from the interests of speakers. The speakers consist of 45 men and 50 women from the age of 7 to 88, with very different education levels.

I will describe the cases of doubled pronouns and their location in the sentence, what surrounds them, as well as what types of mood/Force are involved in them (declarative, exclamative, interrogative, etc). I will not only look at instances of left dislocation but also right dislocation, since they both topicalize the subject. I will focus my analysis on doubled pronouns such as "moi, je", "lui, il" etc. but also "ça c'est", and "ça, ça". I will briefly go over dislocated NPs but these are not easily researchable in the corpus due to the wide variety of NPs and the very high frequency of the 3rd person pronouns "il", "elle", "ils", "elles." For the sake of thoroughness, I will thus discuss them but I will not look at their overall frequency.

4.1 De Cat's corpus - findings

De Cat found that not all dislocated elements are topics, but most of them are. The most common case she observed was a sentence containing a single dislocated element, which is usually coreferential with the subject. She claims

that approximately a quarter of clauses in spoken French contain a dislocation. Most dislocated elements are DPs, and most dislocated DPs are definite. Almost all of them express the subject of the clause containing their resumptive element. In other words, the function of their resumptive element is that of subject (only 11% are objects).

The second most common type of dislocated elements are strong pronouns. Most instances are singular (*moi, je*; etc) but some rare cases involving a first person plural pronoun are attested in her corpus: *nous, on*. Dislocated first and second person pronouns are almost exclusively associated with the subject of the clause. Third person pronouns are more similar to dislocated DPs as far as the function they are associated with is concerned.

She also found that dislocated clauses can express subjects, and these can sometimes be interpreted as topic. Whenever a dislocated clause expresses the subject, it appears with a copular main clause in which the impersonal subject clitic ce 'it' is its resumptive:

> (28) Parce que [**se donner en spectacle comme ça**], hein, **ce** n'est vraiment pas beau, sais-tu.
> 'Because it really doesn't look good to show off like that, you know.'

I will not consider these in my analysis, but it still is a fact worth mentioning in my opinion.

4.2 Preliminary Observations

The following table describes the overall frequencies of doubled pronouns (as opposed to "regular" simple pronouns) in the corpus and I will focus on those in my analysis.

Table 1: Occurrence of doubled pronouns in the corpus

	Moi, je	Toi, tu	Lui, il/ Elle, elle	Nous, on	Vous, vous	Eux, ils Elles,elles
Tokens 228	153	6	15+6	32	12	4
%	67.1	2.6	9.2	14	5.3	1.7

"Je" is reinforced by "moi" only 7% of the time.

NPs + clitics are also very common, as well as NPs + c'est/ça, "ça, c'est" and "ça, ça", and I will also spend some time on them.

"Quant à" + strong pronouns are absent from the corpus, which is probably due to the fact that this phrase tends to be used in formal contexts or in written language.

4.3 First-person pronouns : Moi, je and "nous, on"

In this section I will look at the most frequent occurrences of first-person pronoun doubling. As could be predicted, most of them involve topic shift.

4.3.1 "Moi, je"

"Moi, je" is one of the most common instances of subject doubling in the corpus. In this corpus, there are 153 occurrences of "moi, je". Most cases of "moi, je" are located at the very beginning of a speaker's utterance.

(1) A: *Est-ce que les membres de la famille s'entendent plus ou moins dans votre famille?*
B: ***Moi, j'****ai un frère qui a cinq ans de plus [pause] que moi. On s'entend très très bien. J'ai une soeur qui a cinq ans de moins, on s'entend beaucoup moins bien.*

A : Do members of your family get along more or less well?

B: Me I have a brother who is five years older than me. We get along very very well. I have a sister who is five years younger, we get along way less well.

Some linguists argue that the "moi" in "moi, je" marks emphasis. It can sometimes seem to be the case in contrastive statements:

(2) C**:** *Oui [rires] Oui mais fff…*
B: *Je préfère euh…*
C**:** *Oui c'est mieux euh The Cure, Dépêche-Modes.*
B: ***Moi, je*** *préfère.* (contrastive)
A: *Et cela vous plaît euh aller en boîte?*
C**:** *Bon,* ***nous, on*** *ne peut pas encore y aller puisque…* (contrastive)

B: Me, I prefer.
A: And you like that, going to clubs?
C: Well, *we* cannot go yet since…

Barnes argues that the following example is not a case of topic shift nor of comparison. He argues that it adds a slight emphasis to the speaker or the speaker's opinion, therefore involving an implicit and subtle comparison:

(3) A: *Alors si vous voyez un jeune qui pique par exemple un livre dans une euh très grande librairie, qu'est-ce que vous en pensez?*
C**:** *Ah ffbon,* ***moi, je*** *trouve que c'est bête pour lui.*
C**:** *Donc il a aussi des chances de se faire prendre.*
B: ***Moi, je*** *trouve que c'est son affaire, il fait ce qu'il veut.*

A: So if you see a teenager stealing for instance a book in a erm very big bookstore, what do you think about it?
C: Oh well, me I think it's stupid for him. So he can also get caught.
B: Me, I think it's his business, he does what he wants.

Lambrecht (1980) disagrees with these claims and believes a topic shift is more relevant and convincing in most contexts. Others such as De Cat reject the notion of subject doubling altogether since the "je" is already an anaphoric agreement marker (not generated in morphology). Keenan and Schieffelin (1976) describe it as a foregrounding function in the discourse, related to the notion of turn-taking. Due to the format of the corpus, this phenomenon can be expected since most interactions take place between the interviewer and one participant.

The comparative “moi, je” is very common in this corpus. Another important point to consider is that the “moi” does not so much focus the discourse event on the actual speaker but rather on the contribution the speaker makes in the discourse. “Moi, je” also occurs in what Barnes (1985) calls “turn-medial position”, and these instances are different from the turn-taking device.

4.3.2 “Nous, on”

The first-person plural pronoun “nous” accompanied by “on” occurs 32 times. It usually involves a similar pragmatic meaning as “moi, je” except for the fact that it generally includes a group of people. It has the same comparative meaning and also describes the ways people do things:

(4) ***Nous on*** *appelle ça un k-way.*
We call this a k-way.

(5) *Comme* ***nous on*** *fait.*
Like we do.

4.4. Second-person Pronouns: “toi, tu” and “vous, vous”

4.4.1 “Toi, tu”

Not that many interviews involve participants interacting with one another and this is testified by the rare occurence of “toi, tu”, only 6 times.

(6) *Alors, est-ce que tu as regardé ce qu'ils ont fait. Non, hein. Non mais* ***toi, tu*** *fais pas grand chose sur ton poney. Tiens-toi, tiens les rênes prends-les tes rênes dans les mains. [?] dessus.*

So, did you look at what they did. No you didn’t. No but you, you don’t do much on your poney. Hang on, hold the reins, take the reins in your hands.

In example (6), “toi, tu” is preceded by “mais”, a discourse marker which indicates a comparison and a topic shift.

However, “toi, tu” has an entirely different function in the discourse: it usually implies that a speaker is asking another speaker’s opinion or way of doing things, which tends to appear in correlation with the contrastive and highly topicalized “moi, je”:

> (7) *J'y étais trop fort tu vas rester auprès de ce puits, premiers plus parce que **moi j'**aimais le puits elle me dit euh tu vas rester ici mais maman on dirait que **toi tu** me l'as pas, tu me l'as pas lavé?*
>
> Because me I liked the pit, she tells me erm you’re gonna stay here but mom, it looks like you, you didn’t, you didn’t wash it for me.

We can also see that “toi, tu” in this example occurs in an embedded clause.

To left-dislocated “toi”, one can add right-dislocated “toi” which is always located at the end of a sentence. This right dislocation where “toi” is the strong pronoun puts emphasis on addressing directly the interlocutor. Right-dislocated “toi” occurs 3 times in the corpus. It can also be interpreted as a vocative, and in that sense it can be perceived as quite impolite, but not in the example below:

> (8) A: *Qu'est-ce que tu as, **toi**?*
> C: *Moi j’ai des cassettes.*
>
> A: What do *you* have?
> C: I have tapes.

The next example requires the interlocutor to give his/her opinion:

> (9) *Et qu’est-ce que tu en penses, **toi**?*
> What do you think about it, you?

The last example, though, sounds more impolite, but the context gives us hints that it is an adult talking to a child.

> (10) *Alors comment tu ferais pour arrêter ton poney, **toi**. Hein ?*
> So how would you stop your poney, you. Huh?

4.4.2“Vous, vous”

One needs to be cautious when looking at “vous, vous” in the corpus since they often involve pronominal verbs (“se marier” or “s’entendre”) or can be cases

of false starts. However, quite a few examples are clear instances of subject doubling/left dislocation. I counted about 12 instances of obvious left dislocations, and about a couple that are debatable and might be false starts. The reason why "vous, vous" is more frequent than 'toi, tu' is politeness since in most cases, the interviewer is only addressing one person whom she does not know.

(11) B. *Tandis que maintenant, on se sépare bon. Alors y en a un qui, alors le garçon il prend une autre fille, la fille prend un autre gars, quelquefois c'est pire, quelquefois c'est un peu mieux, mais on recommence, ça, les gosses sont pas heureux du tout, du tout. Non.*
A: *Oui. Et et* ***vous, vous*** *avez eu beaucoup d'enfants?*
B: *Deux enfants.*

A : Yes. And you, did you have a lot of children?
B: Two children.

(12) A:***Vous****, personnellement,* ***vous*** *aimez la voile ?*
A: Personally, do you like sailing?

The adverb "personnellement" clearly indicates a focus on the interlocutor, thus making him/her the topic.

(13) B: *Oui, vous êtes où en Angleterre.*
A: *Euh Bath. Et* ***vous, vous*** *n'êtes pas d'ici?*
B: *Oh si, je suis de St. [?], une trentaine de kilomètres d'ici, oui, oui.*

B: Yes, where are you in England?
A: Hm Bath. And you, you're not from here?
B: Oh yes, I am from St., about thirty kilometers from here, yes, yes.

The reason why the second-person plural pronoun is more frequent than the second-person singular is most likely due to that fact that the interviewer tends to express politeness and respect towards her interviewees, thus using the polite "vous" alternative to "tu". Interestingly enough, no instance of right-dislocated "vous" is present in the corpus. This can be explained by the implicit vocative it entails, which is in line with a sort of familiarity that does not correspond to the polite "vous".

4.5 Third-person Pronouns: “lui, il/c’”, “elle, elle”, “eux, ils”, ‘elles, elles’

While first- and second-person pronouns clearly refer to people, third person pronouns can behave differently since “il”, “elle” encode gender features and can represent non-humans.

In the following example, speaker C identifies two politicians with their political parties:

(14)B: *son premier ministre. Il y a Valéry Giscard d'Estaing qui est l'ancien président de la République [pause] euh il y a…*
C: *Et **lui il** est du centre.*
B: *Oui.*
C: ***Lui, il** est de gauche.*

B: his prime minister. There is VGdE who is the previous president of the Republic, hm there is…
C: And him, he is from the center.
B: Yes.
C: Him, he is from the left.

“Lui, il” can also appear in an embedded clause:

(15)B: et on voit que **lui il** n'apprécie pas tellement la politique puisque s'il s'il s'en va comme ça.

B: and you can tell that him he doesn’t really appreciate politics since if he leaves like that.

Similarly, in the following example, “lui, il” refers to a dog and is used to distinguish a type of dog from another one:

(16)B: *Alors il y a d ça c'est un type de chien il y a un autre type de chien d'arrêt bon ben **lui,il** sent le gibier qui pff ça peut être à cinquante centimètres ou à 2 mètres il s'arrête et il ne bouge plus. Et le chasseur sait que le gibier est là.*

B: So there is that it’s a type of dog there is another type of pointer so well him it smells game who it can be about fifty centimeters or two meters away it stops and it doesn’t move. And the hunter knows that the game is there.

Interestingly enough, “lui” is the only pronoun that takes “c’” as an alternative for “il” as a clitic. I would argue that there is a slight difference between “lui, il” and

"lui, c'est" in the sense that "c'" tends to involve some sort of identity and inherent characteristics: (17) and (18) appear to entail Individual Level Predicates:

(17) ***Lui c'****était un Lorrain…*
Him he was from Lorraine.

(18) ***Mais lui, c'****était un homme.*
But him, he was a man.

"c'/ce" is never associated with "elle", "eux" or "elles" in the corpus. I do believe, however, that "elle, c'est une chanteuse" would be acceptable. The plural alternatives would also be likely, especially in dialectal speech. I have heard in the Ch'ti dialect something along the lines of "**eux**, **c'**est des ploucs" (they are rednecks).

« Eux, ils » is also common, and in the next few examples is introduced by conjunctions such as « donc », and « mais » involving contrast and transition to a new idea:

(19) *donc le gouvernement pour lequel ils ont voté pourquoi se mettent-ils en grève? Pourquoi? Alors tout simplement parce qu'ils n'ont pas du tout ce qu'ils espéraient. Ils voient que la vie augmente, ils voient que les salaires n'augmentent pas, donc* ***eux, ils*** *vivent plus mal qu'ils vivaient il y a quelques années.*

So them, they live worse than they did a few years ago.

(20)B: *Qu'ils ont moins de télévision, ils sont moins passionnés par des choses comme nous 100 qui restent si vous voulez à la maison. Le fauteuil devant la télé, on bouge pas, on fait pas d'effort, hein? Mais* ***eux, ils*** *se déplacent, je l'ai vu aux vacances je dis, …*

B: That they have less TV, they're less passionate with stuff like us who stay at home, if you will. The armchair in front of the TV, you don't move, you don't make any effort, right? But them, they move, I saw it during vacations…

"Eux" is right dislocated twice in the entire corpus, which marks a strong contrast:

(21) *C'est pour arriver à les faire réagir un petit peu parce qu'**ils** sont très jeunes, hein, **les enfants** qu'on a là. Donc il faut absolument arriver à mobiliser leur attention et puis euh arriver à un résultat avec leur poney. Qu'**ils** arrivent, **eux**, à un résultat.*

It's to get them to react a little because they are really young, hm, the kids we have here. So you absolutely need to get them to focus their attention and then hm get to a result with their poney. That they get, them, to a result.

« elles, elles » can be difficult to analyze since it might be a false start, just like "elle, elle" or "vous, vous". However, I found a good example of left dislocation describing what doctors' wives are like in example (22):

(22)B: *Et **ça, ça** encombre un peu les choses. J'estime que si ces femmes, **moi, je** connais des femmes de médecin qui travaillent, je connais des femmes d'avocat qui travaillent qui ont absolument pas besoin de ça qui ont des fortunes personnelles mais **elles, elles** sont là dans une activité qui… et tout ça pour se distraire alors je trouve qu'il y a beaucoup de choses pour se distraire*

B: And that, that burdens things a little. I believe that if these women, me I know doctors' wives who work, I know lawyers' wives who work who absolutely do not need that who have personal fortunes but them, they are there in an activity which… and all that to distract themselves […]

4.6 The case of "ça, c'est"

"ça, c'est" occurs 133 times in the corpus, which is almost as frequent as "moi, je." In example (17), the context tells us that the speaker is pointing at someone at a picture. This very deictic use of "ça" oddly enough refers to a woman, but this can be explained by the fact that he/she points at someone in a picture, not to an actual person in flesh and blood. This could happen but would be very rude.

(23)*Alors ensuite euh c'est une publicité pour Rodier, un grand couturier et euh c'est une femme euh qui euh qui aime la musique visiblement et qui a un j un jeune enfant en train de crier mais euh alors euh [exhalation/ rire] ensuite euh **ça c'est** pas c'est pas vraiment une Française là.*

Then hm there it's not it's not really a French woman there.

In example (24), “ça” refers to an entire statement (underlined in the example). Once again, the environment of speech, here the previous utterance, plays a central role in the understanding of this deictic.

> (24) ***Les gens ils*** *vont faire le nord peut-être passer le tunnel et non plus prendre les bateaux mais* ***ça, c'est*** *une autre histoire.*
> People they’re going to make the north maybe pass the tunnel and not take boats, but that, that’s another story.

Lambrecht (1981) claims that “ça” replaces both “cela” and “ce” in spoken language. “ça c-” represents a deictic subject pronoun, while “c-” represents a merely anaphoric subject (before est/était). This functional difference is usually described as emphasis, but is unlike the difference between “je” and “moi, je” in the sense that deixis is more obvious in “ça” and the alternation between “c’est” and “ça c’est” is not as systematic. Also the “c’” in “c’est” is more of an empty place-holder than an agreement marker.

4.7 Nonpersonal Anaphor: NP + c’est

According to Barnes, “c’est” has a reduced semantic content. Since it is not limited to distinct individual entities as referents, “ce/c’” is open to any sort of subject. Its referential properties are to some extent the opposite of those of “il(s)/elle(s).” “C’est” is not restricted to generics, it also applies to other types of subjects because it has become grammatically as well as semantically neutral. This means it can allow something other than singular number agreement. For example, a singular subject can occur with a plural predicate complement:

> (25) B: *J'aimerais bien [pause] des vacances mais* ***ça les vacances, c'est*** *pas souvent.*
> B: I would like vacations but *that*, vacations, it’s not often.

Example (25) makes use of the NP “les vacances” as a way to disambiguate the topic of the conversation. What is very interesting in this type of construction is

that I transfer it very often to English to disambiguate what I am talking about, especially at the very end of a sentence. Native speakers of English would not do that as often, which means I sometimes rely on L1 strategies to make myself understood. This instance "les vacances" refers to one entity, which might be a semantic factor that facilitates the neutralization of the number feature, just like plural generics or a plural NP representing a collective entity would. Moreover, "c'est" may link NPs in every possible combination of grammatical numbers. A plural subject can be associated with a singular complement; a singular subject with a plural complement; and a plural subject with a plural complement.

What is interesting in the example below and in some others found in the corpus is the feature mismatch and all the more surprising lack thereof in the first sentence:

> (26)A: *Je crois que les vacances bon pour les Français, je ne sais pas pour les Belges, c'est c'est très important**es**, les vacances. C'est la même chose bon je peux vous demander, madame? Pour vous **les vacances, c'est** important?*
> A: For you, vacations, is it important?

First, "c'est très important**es**, <u>les vacances</u>" is very unusual and unlikely in speech because "c'est" is always followed by a singular masculine adjective but can be followed by plural nouns. We are thus in presence of a plural right dislocated subject preceded by a plural complement introduced by "c'est," thus there is no feature mismatch in that sentence, which is surprisingly ungrammatical. However, in "les vacances, c'est important" the DP is plural but the verb agreement morphology is singular. This is actually quite common in spoken French. A possible reason for this phenomenon is that the pronoun "ce" is non-deictic: it corresponds to the English "it". It is more here about the person's opinion of vacations, not so much the vacations themselves. This is thus a

different use of “c’est” in the spoken language, since the relation between the two related expressions is not one of strict identity (some call it “sloppy identity”). “Les vacances, elles sont importantes” would sound off unless you expect an evaluation/judgment of the actual vacations. On the other hand, “ce sont” is actually only used to identify something. For instance, « ce sont des pommes/des enfants » is very deictic.

Some instances of nonpersonal anaphors have indefinite subjects as their dislocated element, which corresponds to generalizations (generic meaning):

> (27)B: *C'est pas sérieux. Euh c'est c'est des mensonges euh…., c'est pas sérieux.* ***Des amis, c'****est sérieux.*
> B : It’s not serious. Hm it’s it’s lies hm…, it’s not serious. Friends, it’s serious.

Barnes (1985) distinguishes two types of motivation for the structure NP “c’est” LDs, which may apply simultaneously. The first type involves the predicate complement bearing a relation of identity with the LD-expression, and it sees the LD structure as an iconic representation of the identity relation. In other cases, the relation of the predicate complement is rather one of predication (i.e. the complement is adjectival), in which a more semantic motivation comes into play. The latter involves the exploitation of certain referential properties of “c-“ as opposed to “il(s)”/”elle(s)”. These two types of motivation are in fact related, and this is attested by the semantic ‘neutrality’ or unmarkedness of “ce” which makes possible the conversational use of “c’est” as an ‘all-purpose’ pragmatic connector.

4.8 ‘Nonpersonal’ Pronouns: ça

“Ça” represents a deictic subject pronoun, while “ce” represents a merely anaphoric subject (before est/était). In contrast to the personal pronouns, we

would not expect "ça" to have topic shift as a major function, especially with a comparative connotation.

"Ça, ça" followed by a verb clearly presents a comparative or emphatic function. These are highly topicalized because they refer to entire statements from the discourse event.

(28)B: *Et je me dis, euh, je regrette un petit peu, enfin* ***moi je*** *suis pour* <u>*la peine de mort*</u>*.*
A: *Oui. oui.*
B: *Parce que …*
A: *Oui, vous pensez que* ***ça, ça*** *peut empêcher?*

B: And I tell myself, hm, I regret a little bit, I mean me I'm for death penalty.
A: Yes. Yes.
B: Because…
A: Yes, you think that that, that can prevent?

(29)<u>*Il sait pas dire*</u> <u>*merci*</u> *par exemple si euh… il va casser la croute là, il dira pas oh ben merci – maintenant ça vient là - mais il sait pas dire, alors* ***ça, ça*** *contrarie ma ma grande fille, […]*

<u>He cannot say thank you</u> for instance if hm… he's gonna have lunch there, he won't say oh thank you – now it's better – but he cannot say, so that, that upsets my my daughter, […]

(30)A: *Oui. Je ne sais pas s'il y a une raison. Ou* <u>*mettre les chaussures sur la table.*</u>
B: *Ça, j'ai jamais entendu.*
A: *Mais* ***ça, ça*** *se comprend parce que c'est sale.*

A : Yes. I don't know if he has a reason. Or put his shoes on the table.
B: That, I've never heard.
A: But that, that is understandable because it's dirty.

"ça" usually refers to a previous idea or concept, not to humans, except in rare cases where "ça" is used as a generic pronoun. The example below is very interesting since it presents two different types of doubled subject: NP + c'est and NP + ça:

(31)B: *Ensuite, [?] une publicité où on voit un homme dans un canoë donc ça doit être un aventurier donc il ne doit pas être souvent chez lui donc à mon*

avis c'est pas le c'est pas le meilleur père. Ensuite, on voit un peintre ***un peintre*** *et* ***c'est*** *toujours chez lui,* ***un peintre ça*** *peut être un bon père.*

Then, one can see a painter a painter and he's always home, a painter that can be a good father.

The first one is a case of person (or here a profession), and the "c'est" represents what is typical of a painter. This is thus a generic use of an indefinite subject. The second is actually very similar in its use of generic. The only difference lies in the verb used: instead of "être" in the first instance, the verb in the second instance is "pouvoir", hence the use of "ça". De Cat found a similar instance in her corpus and she argues that "ça" can refer to a [+human] nominal, something it cannot do under a specific reading.

As we have seen throughout this corpus, subject doubling appears in numerous forms in spoken French. Pronoun doubling is incontestably the most common, with first-person pronouns at the highest frequency. XPs + subject clitics also occur very regularly (quite logically in the third person: masculine or feminine), and are clear instances of dislocated topics. XPs +"c'est"/"ça" are also very interesting in my opinion and the semantic and grammatical neutrality of the "c-" constituents make them all the more complex and diverse in their usage since gender and number seem to be, if not annihilated, at least not fully respected. The notions of definiteness, generics, etc. are also crucial to the use of left dislocation.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, after analyzing data from a corpus of spoken French, I observed that French topicalizes a lot of subjects. Contrary to prescriptivist opinions, I found out left dislocation usually does not imply redundancy or heaviness. It is a linguistic and syntactic tool used by speakers in discourse to express different pragmatics notions such as opinions, contrast, turn-taking, etc. Pronoun doubling is not only very common, but quasi obligatory when used in a speech event (especially first-person pronouns) and comparisons. Dislocations can sometimes be used in questions or embedded clauses, and are very sensitive to discourse markers such as “mais”, or “donc.” NP doubling is also very frequent and occurs with the clitics “il(s)”, “elle(s)”, and to some extent “c’est.” Subject doubling is also a very complex syntactic phenomenon involving either movement or base analysis of Topic depending on the theoretical background one believes in. The role of subject clitics as argument or agreement marker is major in the understanding of subject doubling. The potential linguistic cycle they are going through might be one of the reasons why French has a strong tendency to double subjects.

I have also shown that different dialects use subject doubling at different frequencies: Picard uses it almost automatically, even with non-definite or non-specific noun phrases, and it is very frequent in Swiss French as well; whereas standard spoken French uses it in more specific contexts (never with quantifiers, for instance). Picard is the more advanced in the grammaticalization cycle since it frequently doubles quantifiers, Swiss French does too but more rarely whereas informal French does not. I also found that disjunct pronouns such as “moi”,

“toi”, “lui” function mainly as topics since the clitics still have the (theta-) role of subject. However, these pronouns are most likely undergoing a cycle and maybe someday they will become the actual subjects.

There are many other syntactic analyses of left- and right- dislocations as well as various additional theories on subject clitics that I did not address in this thesis for the sake of conciseness. I only focused my study on pronoun doubling even though I attempted to cover some instances of interesting NP doubling. These could be explored in a future quantitative work or a potential dissertation that would cover more varieties of French.

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