# SUBJECT OMISSION IN PRESENT-DAY
# WRITTEN ENGLISH

## ON THE THEORETICAL RELEVANCE OF PERIPHERAL DATA[1]

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## 1. Introduction: the subject of finite clauses

In the core grammar of English, finite sentences such as (1a) below must have an overt subject. Alternative (1b), in which the subject is implicit, is not grammatical. This property is shared by French, as shown in (2), though not by Italian, as shown in (3):

| (1) | a. | | I have bought a book. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | b. | | *Have bought a book. |
| (2) | French | a | J'ai acheté un livre. |
| | | | I have bought a book |
| | | b | *Ai acheté un livre. |
| (3) | Italian | a. | Io ho comprato un libro. |
| | | | I have bought a book |
| | | b. | Ho comprato un libro. |

The variation shown in the above examples is usually discussed in terms of the pro-drop parameter: the idea is that in Italian the subject may remain implicit because its content can be identified through the rich inflection on the verb. For instance, as

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shown in (4), each person and number combination of the verb *parlare* ('speak') corresponds to a different ending, allowing the person and number (i.e. f) features of the subject to be recovered via the inflection. I will not dwell here on the formal analysis of the pro-drop phenomenon; let us assume that the non-overt subject corresponds to a null category 'pro' (Rizzi 1982, and for recent discussion see Holmberg 2004).

(4)  1sg:  *parlo,*              1pl:  *parliamo,*
     2sg:  *parli,*              2pl:  *parlate,*
     3sg:  *parla,*              3pl:  *parlano.*

This paper concentrates on certain registers in English in which the obligation for there to be a subject associated with a finite clause seems to be relaxed. This is notably the case in some variants of spoken English, here illustrated through dialogues taken from novels in (5)[2], and in some written registers which tend to use abbreviated writing such as diary writing or note taking, which are illustrated in (6). In the examples, I signal implicit subjects by the abbreviation *ec* for 'empty category'. The subscripted index does not have any theoretical status; it merely serves to indicate the grammatical person of the implied subject.

(5)  a.  'Does the name Farriner mean anything to you?' '[$ec_1$] <u>Can't</u> say it does.' … Her habit of omitting pronouns from her otherwise not particularly economical speech irritated him. [$ec_3$] <u>Couldn't</u> get herself a man, so she was always showing what she could get. [$ec_1$] <u>Wonder</u> who'll get her money? [$ec_3$] <u>Won't</u> be me, though, not so likely.' (Rendell, Ruth (1994). *A Sleeping Life. An Inspector Wexford Mystery*. London: Arrow books, 87-8) (cf. Schmerling, 1973; Thrasher, 1977)

     b  [$ec_1$] <u>Came</u> to England a couple of days ago, [$ec_1$] <u>thought</u> I've only got one brother, blood's thicker than water, I'll pay a visit. [$ec_1$] <u>Called</u> at Malbite Street, [$ec_1$] <u>got</u> the address from Mrs Whatever-her-name-is, [$ec_3$] <u>said</u> it was care of Rider. Rider, I thought, I know that name, it's Geoff's friend and employer Billy. [$ec_3$] <u>Doesn't</u> call himself Billy any more, though. (Symons, Julian, *The Plot against Roger Rider*, Penguin 1973: 67)

     c  'he lives up the road a couple of miles, Pebwater Farm, [$ec_2$] <u>can't</u> mistake it…' (Symons, J. (1967). *The Progress of a Crime*. London:

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[2] See Lawrence (1996) for a corpus based analysis.

The Crime Club. 130)
'No, it wouldn't do for me. Sharing everything with your neighbours, [ec$_2$] <u>haven't</u> even got a bit of garden to call your own except for that pocket handkerchief out there. …' (Symons, J. (1967). *The End of Solomon Grundy*. London: The Crime Club, 30)
'[ec$_1$] <u>Can't</u> understand you newspaper chaps…' [ec$_2$] Fill up the papers with all kinds of stuff nobody wants to read.' (Symons, J. (1967). *The Progress of a Crime*. London: The Crime Club, 12)

(6)    [ec$_1$] <u>Finished</u>, almost, story of Shadow. (Plath 287)
        [ec$_1$] <u>Have</u> done 110 pages. (*Diary of Virginia Woolf*, p. 33; 11 November)
        [ec$_1$] <u>May</u> drive to Paris with him. (Plath 127)
        [ec$_1$] <u>Felt</u> I'd been watching or participating in a Greek play. (Plath 284)
        [ec$_1$] <u>Hope</u> I can work for some weekly in London. (Plath 295)
        [ec$_1$] <u>Dreamt</u> that I picked up a New Yorker. (Plath 304)
        [ec$_1$] <u>Hope</u> this goes through. (Plath 302)
        [ec$_1$] <u>Feel</u> my first book of poems should be published, however limited. (Plath 327)
        Origo rather contorted: [ec$_3$] <u>says</u> Italy is blind red hot devoted patriotic; [ec$_3$] <u>has</u> thrown her wedding ring into the cauldron too. [ec$_3$] <u>Anticipates</u> a long war… (*Diary of Virginia Woolf*, p. 6, 10 January 1936)
        [ec$_1$] <u>Wish</u> you were here (postcard) (cf. Haegeman, 1990a, 1990b, 1997, 1999).

Subject omission in informal spoken English is also signalled by Quirk et al (1985: 896-7), who, among other things, provide examples of third person non-referential subject omission (7).

(7)    [ec$_3$] <u>Looks</u> like rain.
        [ec$_3$] <u>Must</u> be hot in Panama.
        [ec$_3$] <u>Must</u> be somebody waiting for you.
        [ec$_3$] <u>May</u> be some children outside.
        [ec$_3$] <u>Appears</u> to be a big crowd in the hall.
        [ec$_3$] <u>Ought</u> to be some coffee in the pot.

Though I will mainly concentrate on English I wish to point out that subject omission is also found in French diary styles and in note style writing, as shown in (8). To the best of my knowledge, the constraints on English null subjects observed

in this paper also apply to subject omission in the relevant written registers in French. I will occasionally point out relevant facts from French.

(8)   a   [ec$_3$] M'accompagne au Mercure, puis à la gare.
            me accompanies to the Mercure, then to the station.
          [ec$_3$] Revient à l'affaire Alb… [ec$_3$] Me demande si…
            returns to the business Alb. Me asks if…
          (Léautaud, P. *Le Fléau, Journal particulier.* 1917-1930, pp. 69-70, 20.3)

      b   [ec$_1$] Préparons les photocopies.
            Prepare-1PL the photocopies        (attested example)

Subject omission in spoken English was discussed in Schmerling (1973) and Thrasher (1977), who both pointed to the relevance of peripheral data for linguistic theorizing. For more discussion of the relevance of register-related phenomena see also Zwicky and Zwicky (1982), Biber (1995), Ferguson (1982), Stowell (1991), Barton (1998), Paesani (2006), and for a critical view see Newmeyer (2003).

The data of subject omission in adult English are of interest because the patterns are strikingly similar to those of subject omission attested in the early production as illustrated by English (9a,b) and French (9c) from Rizzi (2006), to whose paper I refer for more discussion.

(9)   a   ___ was a green one                        (Eve, 1;10)
      b   ___ falled in the briefcase                (Eve 1;10)
          (Brown 1973; from CHILDES, Mac Whinney & Snow 1985)
      c   ___ a tout tout tout mangé                 (Augustin 2,0)
          '___ has all all all eaten'     (Hamann, Rizzi, Frauenfelder 1996)

In this paper I discuss register-related subject omission. Ideally, if this type of omission is a grammatical phenomenon one would hope that it could be made to follow from theoretical proposals which are already available and have been independently deployed to account for linguistic phenomena in English or in other languages. It would not be desirable for an account of the phenomenon to have to invoke a ream of new and otherwise unknown principles. Since the data pattern very much like the null subject phenomena in child language, for which a number of accounts have been proposed in the literature, the register-related data also provide an new empirical domain to test these accounts.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 provides a description of register-related subject omission (RRSO) in English. Sections 3 and 4 explore different analyses which have been put forward in the literature for English subject omission in the early production and in the adult special registers. Section 3 argues against a

non-sentential analysis of the phenomenon, while section 4 argues against a pro-drop analysis and against a topic drop analysis. Section 5 focuses on the fact that RRSO is restricted to the edge of the root and implements Rizzi's (2006) analysis of subject ellipsis in language acquisition (as illustrated in (9)). Section 6 applies this analysis to RRSO and shows how the analysis has certain repercussions for the analysis of the subject domain. Section 7 explores the implications of the proposal for other areas of the grammar. Section 8 briefly discusses a variant of the diary style in which subject omission has quite different properties. Section 9 is a summary of the paper.

## 2. Adult null subjects in English: interpretation

In this section I briefly go over some of the main interpretive properties of the null subjects in spoken English and in the diary style. Intuitively it seems plausible to say that such null subjects are interpreted as pronouns: in diary writing we find examples with first and third person interpretations, both for singular and for plural. In the examples provided above the null subject can always be spelt out by an overt pronoun. That second person subjects are not attested in diary writing follows from the particularities of the register, in which the author is not addressing an interlocutor. However, as shown by the examples in (5c) second person null subjects are possible in the relevant register of spoken English.

As we will see presently (section 4.1) RRSO is restricted to main clauses. As would be the case for regular pronominal subjects, the null subject in the main clause may (10a-c) but need not (10d, 10e) be coreferential with an embedded subject: in (10) I illustrate this point with examples from diary writing but it also holds for spoken English (cf. (5))

(10) a      $[ec_1]$ Felt <u>I</u>'d been watching or participating in a Greek play. (Plath 284)

     b      $[ec_1]$ Hope <u>I</u> can work for some weekly in London. (Plath 295)

     c      $[ec_1]$ Dreamt that <u>I</u> picked up a New Yorker. (Plath 304)

     d      $[ec_1]$ Hope <u>this</u> goes through. (Plath 302)

     e      $[ec_1]$ Feel <u>my first book</u> of poems should be published, however limited. (Plath 327)

However, there seems to be one difference between null subjects and the overt pronominal counterpart as shown by the contrast in (11)[3]: in (11a) the overt pronoun *she* can be coreferential with the DP *Mary* in the sentence initial adjunct, in (11b) the null subject is grammatical as such but it cannot be interpreted as coreferential with the DP *Mary*.

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[3] Thanks to Kathleen O'Connor for judgments.

(11)    a        In John's picture of Mary$_3$ she$_3$ smiles.[4]

        b        In John's picture of Mary$_3$ [ec $_{n/*3}$] smiles.

Similarly, in the following context *he* can be coreferential with *Mourinho* in (11c), but the null subject of *became* in (11d) cannot be coreferential with *Mourinho*:

(11)    c        During Mourinho's$_3$ first year in London, he$_3$ became famous for
                 his grey Armani coat.

        d        During Mourinho's$_3$ first year in London, [ec $_{n/*3}$] became famous
                 for his grey Armani coat.

It is not the case, though, that a null subject can never co-refer with a nominal constituent contained in a initial adjunct, as shown in the note style extracts in (11e, f) in which both the overt or the null subject of *became* may refer to the referent of the possessive pronoun *his.*

(11)    e        Became Chelsea coach in 2005 and lived in Kensington. During
                 his$_3$ first year in London, he$_3$ became famous for his grey Armani
                 coat.

        f        Became Chelsea coach in 2005 and lived in Kensington. During
                 his$_3$ first year in London, [ec $_{n/*3}$] became famous for his grey
                 Armani coat.

## 3. A non-sentential analysis?

The question arises as to how to analyse subjectless sentences in the diary style and in spoken English. For a number of examples, one might propose that the subjectless structures are actually not full sentences but that they are perhaps sentence fragments, which could be analysed as independently generated small clauses. One might propose that RRSO occurs, for instance, in vP fragments. However, this is not plausible. In their work on sentence fragments, Progovac et al (2006) relate the availability of non-sentential fragments to tenselessness. The data discussed here strongly suggest that both in spoken English (12) and in the diary style (13) RRSO occurs in clausal structures. See also Barton (1998). Given the availability of tensed auxiliaries in these sentences, I will assume that the strings are projected at least to the level of TP.

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[4] The same observations hold for French:

(i)    a    Sur cette photo de Marie$_3$ elle$_3$ sourit
            On this picture of Marie she smiles
       b    Sur cette photo de Marie$_3$ [ec$_{n/*3}$]sourit.

(12)   a.      [$ec_1$] <u>Can't</u> say it does. … [$ec_3$] <u>Couldn't</u> get herself a man, so she was always showing what she could get. … [$ec_3$] <u>Won't</u> be me, though, not so likely. (=5a)

         b      [$ec_2$] <u>Can't</u> mistake it… (=5c)

         c      [$ec_1$] <u>Can't</u> understand you newspaper chaps.. (=5c)

(13)   a      [$ec_1$] <u>Have</u> done 110 pages. (*Virginia Woolf*, p. 33)

         b      [ec] <u>Am</u> reading the book of Job. (Plath, 1959: 290)

         c      [ec] <u>May</u> drive to Paris with him. (Plath 127)

         d      [ec] <u>Couldn't</u> even read. (Plath, 1956, 108)

## *4. The sentential analysis*

In this section I will discard two possible derivations for the register-related null subjects in English. In 4.1. I examine the hypothesis that in specific registers the pro-drop parameter is set positively, thus allowing pronominal null subjects in finite clauses. In section 4.2. I explore the hypothesis that the null subject is a null topic. Both analyses are based on the assumption that the relevant registers explore a particular parametric setting not available in the core grammar of English.[5]

## *4.1. Positive setting of the pro-drop parameter?*

The pro-drop analysis of the register-related null subject[6] would obviously allow us to account for the availability of null pronouns but it raises a host of questions, which I list below.

(i) A first problem is that whereas in pro-drop languages such as Italian the person and number features of the verb allow identification of the null subject (4), English verb inflection does not always suffice to identify the f features of the subject: as can be seen in (14) there are instances in which the inflection allows for full feature recovery (14a,b), but in most instances the only restriction imposed by the inflection of the verb is that the subject is not a third person singular (14c,d) and in many instances there is no indication at all as to the nature of the subject (14e,f).

(14)   a.      [ec] Am reading the book of Job. (Plath, 1959: 290)       =1SG

         b      [ec] has thrown her wedding ring into the cauldron too.     =3SG

         c.      [ec] Have been awake since black 3.30. (Plath, 1956, 154). =not 3SG

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[5] See also Sigurðsson and Maling (2007) for an account of null arguments.

[6] See Hyams (1986) for a pro-drop analysis of early null subjects such as those in (9).

|     |     |     |
| --- | --- | --- |
| d.  | [ec] Write down the passing thought. (Plath, 1956, 165) | =not 3SG |
| e.  | [ec] Couldn't even read. (Plath, 1956, 108) | |
| f   | [ec] Got up as brash, nerve-raking alarm ground off at 6. (Plath, 1956, 54) | |

Moreover, while the null subject in pro-drop languages also occurs in subordinate clauses (15), the RRSO, as already mentioned, is restricted to main clauses (16).[7] For spoken English this was observed by Schmerling (1973: 583) and by Thrasher (1977: 29), for the diary style see my earlier work (Haegeman 1990, 1997).

(15)It a. I ragazzi cantano [quando lavorano.]
    The boys sing-3PL when work -3PL
  b I ragazzi cantano [quando [pro] lavorano.]
    'The boys sing when they work.'

(16) a \*I think [(that) [ec] will leave.]
  b. \*Think [(that) [ec] will leave.]
  c \*(I) Don't really like the book [which [ec] bought.]
  d \*John called me [when [ec] returned.]

(iii) While the null subject in pro-drop languages is allowed in contexts of I to C movement, as shown for Italian in (17), the register-related null subject in English cannot occur in a context of inversion, as shown by (18). This observation was made for spoken English by Schmerling (1973) and by Thrasher (1977), and for the diary style in Haegeman (1990, 1997):

(17) (Quando) tornerà?
  (when) will-come-back?
  '(When) will he/she return?'

(18) a. \*(When) will [ec] come back?
  b \*Are [ec] coming to dinner tonight?

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[7] Telegraphic style allows subject omission in embedded clauses:
(i) Regret cannot attend. (Barton 1998: 54)
  What did was take 'sha' and… (Janda 1985: 445)
For diary styles with embedded null subjects see Haegeman and Ihsane (1999, 2002) and section 8.

(iv) The pro-drop languages allow for a null subject to occur in the context of argument topicalisation (19), an option that is not available for the register-related null subject in English (20) (Thrasher 1977: 83; Haegeman 1990, 1997):

(19)    <u>Questo libro</u>, non lo voglio.
        this book *non* it want-1SG

(20)    a.          *<u>More problems</u>, [ec] don't need (Thrasher 1977: 83)
        b           *<u>This book</u>, [ec] didn't like. (Wilder 1995: 36-7)[8]

However, observe that it is not the case that sentences with null subjects must not contain any fronted material. While argument fronting is incompatible with the adult null subject, initial circumstantial adjuncts are allowed (cf. Haegeman 1997, 1999).

(21)    a           <u>Next time you get to Kobe</u>, [ec] want you to buy me an umbrella
                    (Thrasher 1977: 80)
        b.          <u>After Dr. Krook</u>, [ec] had good lunch at Eagle with Gary [Hamp].
                    (Plath 126)
        c.          <u>With a sigh of relief</u> [ec] saw a heap of ruins. (Woolf 1940, 330;
                    Ihsane 1998, (40j))
        d           <u>Here</u>, [ec] studies under [David] Daiches… (Plath 126)
        d.          <u>This morning</u> [ec] woke to get a letter in the mail from the
                    estimable Dudley Fitts. (Plath 304)

The adjunct/argument asymmetry observed for English subject omission diaries carries over to RRSO in French diaries.[9]

(22)    a           Ce soir, [ec] m'accompagne au bistro.
                    tonight, me accompanies to the pub
        b           *Son frère, [ec] l'accompagne au bistro.
                    her brother, him accompanies to the pub

Based on the distributional differences noted above a pro-drop analysis of RRSO is not tenable. Furthermore the core pro-drop languages such as Italian are known to differ from the non pro-drop languages such as English by virtue of a number of

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[8] cf. (i) This book: didn't like it
In this example the fronted argument and the clause each have their own intonation contour, and there is a clear pause between the two, suggesting the two entities are syntactically separate. Thanks to the members of the Cambridge Linguistic Society and esp. to Prof. Peter Matthews for helpful discussion of such examples.

[9] Thanks to Danièle Vandevelde and Damien Laflaquière for judgements.

specific syntactic properties (see Rizzi 1982) such as postverbal subjects, extraction of the subject across the overt complementizer and absence of expletive pronouns. In the registers which allow RRSO the latter properties remain absent.

## 4.2. Subject omission as topic drop

### 4.2.1. Topic drop: the phenomenon

In a number of languages it is possible for the topic of a sentence to be non-overt. European Portuguese (Raposo 1986) is a case in point. As shown in (23) it is possible for the object of *guardou* ('keeps') to be null provided its referent is a contextually salient entity. Observe that the null topic may originate in the main clause (23a) or in the embedded clause (23b):

(23)   a        O Manel guardou ___ no cofre da sala de jantar. (Raposo 1986: 381, his (16a))
                Manuel kept __ in the safe of the dining room
                'Manuel kept it in the safe of the dining room.'
        b       Eu disse ao António [que pedise ao Manel [que gardase ___no cofre de sala de jantar]]. (R 1986: 381: (16b))
                I told Antonio that he asked Manuel to keep ___ in the safe of the dining room

In order to account for the interpretation and distribution of the Portuguese null topic, Raposo (1986) proposes a movement analysis. Simplifying somewhat for the sake of the presentation, the idea is that the null topic is merged in an argument position and is moved to SpecTopP in the left periphery of the matrix clause. This movement analysis accounts for the island effects observed in (24): in (24a) the object would have to be extracted from a clause embedded in a DP giving rise to a violation of the Complex NP Constraint, in (24b) the object would be extracted from an adjunct island, in (24c) the object would be extracted from a *wh*-island.

(24)   a        *Eu informei a polícia da [possibilidade [de o Manel ter guardado ___ no cofre de sale de jantar]]. (Raposo 1986: 381: (16c))
                I informed the police of the possibility that Manuel had kept ___ in the safe of the dining room
        b       *O pirata partíu para as Caraíbas [depoís de ter guardado ___cuidadosamente no cofre]. (Raposo 1986: 382: (19))
                The pirate left for the Caribbian after he had kept ___ carefully in the safe

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     c              *Eu sei [[em que cofre] o Manel guardou ___] (WH island)
                          (Raposo 1986: 383: (20))
                          I know in which safe Manuel kept ___

For discussion of topic drop in Chinese, see Huang (1984), for Japanese see Hasegawa (1984/5, 2007).

German and standard Dutch also allow topic drop and the movement analysis allows us to account for the constraints on topic drop observed in these languages. Given the V2 nature of the languages, the fronted topic will move to the initial position, that is, to the immediate left of the finite verb. Thus sentences displaying topic drop will be superficially verb-initial.[10] German (25a), for instance, the topic *das* ('that') is fronted. In (25b) the fronted topic is non-overt, hence the sentence is superficially V-initial. Topics can only be deleted when fronted, as shown in (25c). The same patterns are found in standard Dutch. The German and Dutch data thus corroborate the movement analysis proposed by Raposo.

(25)Ge.a        Das habe ich schon gesehen.
                that have I already seen
                'I have already seen that/it.'
      b        ∅ Habe ich schon gesehen.
      c        * Ich habe ∅ schon gesehen.

So far I have only illustrated object drop, but as shown by the German examples in (26) subjects may also be null, as long as they also occupy the initial position:

(26)Ge.a        Ich habe das schon gesehen.
                I have that already seen.
                'I have already seen that.'
      b        ∅ Habe das schon gesehen.
      c        *Das habe ∅ schon gesehen.

The topic drop analysis allows us to predict that since expletive subjects, being non-referential, cannot be informational 'topics', they should not be able to topicalise; hence they should not be affected by topic drop. Portuguese being a pro-drop language this cannot be tested, since expletive subjects will be null pronominals, but the prediction is correct for German and Dutch: expletive subjects in initial position cannot be null.

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[10] Observe: null topics are not available in all V2 languages. West Flemish does not have null topics.

(27)    a        *(Es) wurde viel getanzt.

                    (It) was a lot danced

       b        *(Es) hat viel geregnet.

                    (It) has a lot rained

### 4.2.2. *English RRSO as topic drop?*

It is tempting to analyse the RRSO as an instantiation of topic drop. For one thing the implicit subject is always salient in the discourse: it is either the speaker themselves or a salient third person referent. A topic drop analysis has been proposed for subject omission in diaries by, among others, Haegeman (1990), Hyams and Wexler (1993) and Matushansky (1995). A topic drop analysis of subject omission in early grammars (cf. (9) above) has been proposed by Hyams and Wexler (1993), Bromberg and Wexler, (1995: 243-4) among others. The topic drop analysis of the null subjects can account for many of the restrictions on the null subject discussed above.

(i)       RRSO is not allowed in adjunct clauses (16d) or in relative clauses (16c) These domains being islands, the ungrammaticality of subject omission is predicted by the movement account of topic drop since the fronted topic would have to be extracted from an island.

(ii)     RRSO is not allowed in complement clauses introduced by an overt C-element (16a/b). This follows straightforwardly from the topic movement analysis of null subjects in that the extraction of the subject from its canonical position in SpecTP to the peripheral SpecTopP would lead to a *that*-trace violation.

(iii)    RRSO is incompatible with topic fronting (20a,b). Multiple topics lead to degradation in English (28a):

(28)    a        *John, this book, I will give.

The topic movement analysis of null subjects accounts for the incompatibility with the topicalisation of arguments (20a,b), since these would also involve multiple topics. In addition to the overt fronted topic one would have to assume the fronting of a non-overt topic.
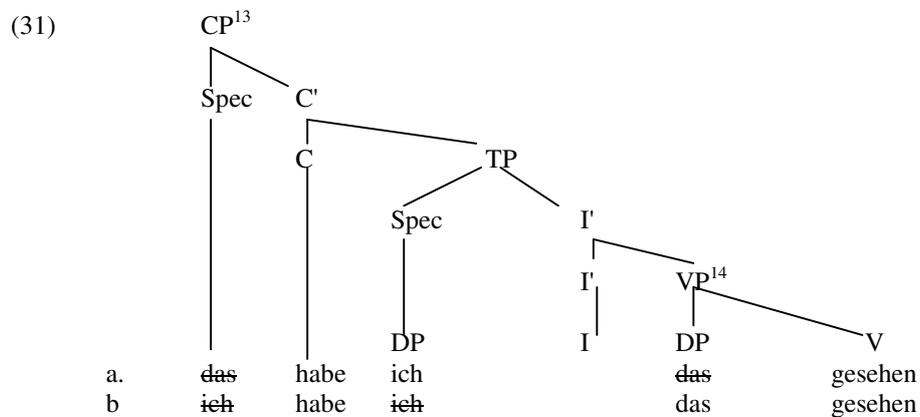
(28)    b        *[TopP ec [TopP More problems, [IP [I] don't need.]]] (Thrasher 1977: 83)

(iv)    RRSO is incompatible with *wh*-questions (18a) and with *yes-no* questions (18b). In English fronted topics are not easily compatible with fronted *wh*-items (28c) and with *yes/no* questions (28d):

(28)    c        *?? That book about shrimp, <u>when</u> did you read?

      d            \*<u>That book about shrimp,</u> did you actually read? (cf. Sobin 2003: 194)

Under a topic drop analysis the incompatibility of null subjects with *wh*-questions (18a) and with *yes-no* questions (18b) follows, since these too would be derived by topicalisation in the relevant environments.

However, in spite of the advantages of the proposal, there remain a number of problems:

(i)        Since subject extraction is possible with a zero complementizer in English we incorrectly predict embedded null subjects to be allowed just in case there is no overt complementizer.

(29)   a.        I don't think he will leave.
       b.        \*I don't think $\varnothing$ will leave.

(ii)       While by their nature expletive subjects cannot be topics, the spoken and written subject drop in English affects expletive subjects (cf. also (7c)). These data contrast with those observed for German in (27).

(30)   a.        Won't be too difficult to reconstruct his argument. (Thrasher 1977: 44)
       b         Seems like the class always wakes up five minutes before the bell rings. (Schmerling 1973: 597)

(iii)      As seen in the examples above, topic drop affects both subjects and objects. There is no evidence for systematic object drop in colloquial/ written registers which allow subject drop.[11]

Summarising the problems we observed for the pro-drop analysis and for the topic drop analysis we can say that RRSO is more restrictive than either in that the target for ellipsis must always be a subject on the left edge of the clause. We pursue this point in the next section.[12]

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[11] Instructional writing (recipes) allows object drop but this is subject to specific conditions.
(i)  a    Leave to cool for an hour.        b       \*You leave to cool for an hour.
Cf. Haegeman (1987), Massam (1989), Massam and Roberge (1989).

[12] For an earlier analysis that was very much focussed on the left edge nature of ellipsis see Rizzi (1994, 1995, 1999) for the early production data and Haegeman (1997, 1999) for the RRSO. See Horsey (1998) for a minimalist reinterpretation of Haegeman's account of RRSO, see also Sigurdsson and Maling (2007).

## 5. Subject ellipsis as a property of the Root Phase (Rizzi 2006)

### 5.1. Ellipsis of the specifier of the root

Under a movement analysis of topic drop, such as that argued for above, we observe that it is the specifier of the highest projection that is not spelt out. (31) is a first representation: assuming that the topic moves to SpecCP this means it occupies the specifier of the root projection, CP.

(31)

CP[13]

```
            CP[13]
           /    \
        Spec     C'
                /   \
               C     TP
                    /   \
                 Spec    I'
                        /  \
                      I'    VP[14]
                      |    /   \
      DP            I   DP      V
```

|   |     |      |     |   |     |         |
|---|-----|------|-----|---|-----|---------|
| a. | ~~das~~ | habe | ich |   | ~~das~~ | gesehen |
| b | ~~ich~~ | habe | ~~ich~~ |   | das | gesehen |

In his work on early null subjects Rizzi (2002, 2006) raises the question of why the specifier of the root is privileged for ellipsis. I discuss his account in the next section.

### 5.2. *Phases and spell-out* (based on Rizzi 2006)

In order to account for early subject omission Rizzi adopts a phase-based approach to spell-out (Chomsky 2001, Nissenbaum 2000) according to which, as soon as a Phase category is formed, the complement of the Phase head is sent to spell-out. The present section is based on his paper and I refer the reader to Rizzi's own paper for more detailed discussion.

The Phase-based approach to spell-out allows for a successive cyclic derivation of clauses in which moved constituents always transit via an intermediate landing

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[13] This diagram assumes that V2 is derived by head movement and it does not take into account the problem of deriving OV orders.

[14] I do not want to take a position as to the derivation of OV orders here. It may well be that the order is derived by movement from an underlying VO order. This is tangential to the point under discussion.

site on the Phase edge, in order to escape being spelt out and frozen in situ. Consider the derivation of (32) in which the DP *which book* originates in the complement clause and ends up in the specifier of the main clause. As a first step *which book* moves to the specifier of the embedded CP (32b), a Phase category. Spell-out will apply to the IP complement of C (the italics in (32c), and *which book* in the specifier domain will escape being spelt out and will thus be able to move up to the next specifier of the root CP (32e).

(32)   Which book do you think we should read?

    a        [$_{IP}$ we should read which book]

    b        [$_{CP}$ which book [$_{IP}$ we should read ~~which book~~]]

    c        [$_{CP}$ which book [$_{IP}$ *we should read* ~~which book~~]]]

    d        [$_{IP}$ you think [$_{CP}$ which book [$_{IP}$ *we should read* ~~which book~~]

    e        [$_{CP}$ which book do [$_{IP}$ you think [$_{CP}$ ~~which book~~ [$_{IP}$*we should read* ~~which book~~]]]

However, as pointed out by Rizzi (2006) the Phase-based approach to spell-out has further implications:

> But the Spell-out principle also has the consequence that the edge of the Root Phase is not sent to Spell-out at all: once the root CP is formed, its complement, the IP, is sent to spell-out … not its edge. This has the immediate positive consequence that main clause complementizers [=C] (at least declarative complementizers) are normally not pronounced, while embedded complementizers may be obligatory or optional, depending on language-specific rules. (Rizzi 2006)

Observe now that if in (32e) the Root Phase is CP and if the edge of the Root Phase is not spelt out then in fact the moved constituent *which book* in SpecCP and the auxiliary *do* in C will not be spelt out. In order to allow for their spell-out neither of them must be in the edge (specifier or head) of the Root Phase. This means that there must be a higher projection that is the Root Phase. Assume then that there is indeed a higher functional projection, the head of which takes as its complement the constituent whose specifier hosts *which book*. In (33a) I label the Root Phase as CP, but I return to this point below. Assuming (33a), *which book* and *do* are in the complement of the head of the Root Phase and are spelt out (33b).

(33)   a        [$_{CP}$ [$_{C}$ ∅] [which book do [$_{TP}$ you think [$_{CP}$ ~~which book~~ [$_{TP}$ *we should read* ~~which book~~]]]]

      b        [$_{CP}$ [$_{C}$ ∅] [*which book do [$_{TP}$ you think* [$_{CP}$ ~~which book~~ [$_{TP}$ *we should read* ~~which book~~]]]]]

The discussion above reveals the need for a more fine grained articulation of the CP layer. This is discussed in the next section.

## 5.3. Cartography and Root Phases

### 5.3.1. Cartography and the Split CP (Rizzi 1997)

Rizzi (1997) proposes that the projection CP is decomposed into a hierarchical sequence of specialised projections, the highest of which is ForceP, the root. Fronted interrogative constituents move to the specifier of FocP. Assuming then that (33b) is recast as (34b) in which the projection CP is equated to ForceP and in which the interrogative constituent is moved to FocP then spell-out will proceed.

(34)   a      ForceP > TopP > FocP > FinP > TP

      b      $[_{\text{ForceP}} [_{\text{Force}} \varnothing]$ $[_{\text{FocP}}$ *which book do $[_{IP}$ you think*

                 $[_{\text{CP}}$ ~~which book~~ $[_{IP}$ *we should read* ~~which book~~$]]]]]$

### 5.3.2. The definition of the Root Phase (=where does the projection stop?)

Assuming a richly articulated CP, the question arises as to which of the projections in the CP domain can or must be a Root Phase, or, put differently, at which point the derivation can stop. We can assume that ForceP is the natural Root Phase in that utterances normally encode illocutionary force. But Rizzi proposes that in specific instances the root may also be a lower projection:[15]

> A natural approach seems to be to assume that languages may vary in a limited fashion in the inventory of the categories which count as Root Phases, i.e., the categories at which the syntactic computation can stop. …Force presumably has the status of possible Root Phase universally, i.e. all languages have at least the option (and many have the obligation) of computing root clauses up to the Force Phrase; …one may think of topic drop languages as languages which have the additional option of stopping the computation at the TopP, hence in which Top may count as Root Phase head, and so on. (Rizzi 2006)

Under the assumption that topic drop languages allow TopP to be a Root Phase[16], the derivation of Portuguese (35a) will involve topic movement to SpecTopP. If the derivation terminates at TopP then the complement of Top spells out and the topic itself is non-overt:

---

[15] Cf. Craenenbroeck and Van Koppen (2007).

[16] At this stage it is not clear what determines the possibility for TopP to be a Root phase. Observe that the V2 property cannot be the decisive factor since West Flemish is a V2 language and does not have 'German style' topic drop.

(35)   a   A Joana viu      na TV ontem.
           The Juan saw     on TV last night
       b   TopP

```
                    TopP
             Spec        Top'
                     Top      FinP                    spell-out
                          Spec        Fin'
                               Fin         TP
                                       Spec         T'
                                              T          VP
       DP                               A Joana viu    viu  DP_ na TV ontem
```
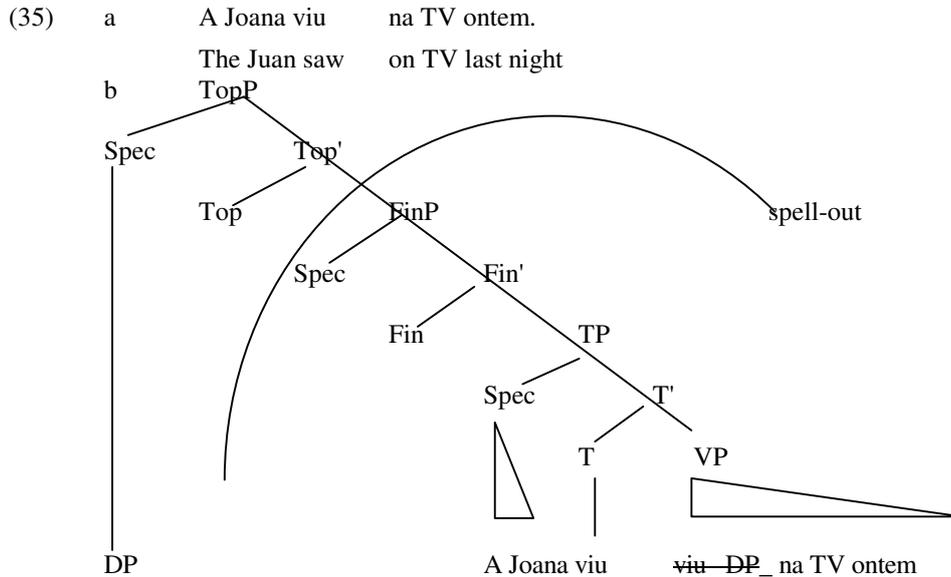
Equipped with Rizzi's implementation of phase-based spell-out (and of ellipsis) let us now turn to the analysis of null subjects.

## 6. Subject drop in adult registers in English and French

### 6.1. First hypothesis: Root Phase= TP?

Let us assume that in the core grammar of English, ForceP is the Root Phase and hence spell-out affects the complement of the head Force. This means that the subject, which is the specifier of TP, will necessarily spell out.

Rizzi implements the phase-based approach to spell-out to account for the early null subjects illustrated in (9). Basically he assumes that in the early production lower projections may also constitute the Root Phase. I will adopt this analysis here and show how it accounts for the distribution of RRSO in English and French.

As a first proposal assume that in the relevant registers TP may be the Root Phase. This means that the complement of T will be spelt out and that the specifier of root, that is the subject, and the head, T, will not be spelt out. This hypothesis gives the right results for examples such as those in (36) on the assumption that in English the finite V does not move to T.

(36)  a      [$_{TP}$ ~~I~~ [$_{vP}$ <u>Came</u> to England a couple of days ago]]

       b      [$_{TP}$ ~~it~~ [$_{vP}$ <u>Looks</u> like rain]]

The analysis predicts that in the context of fronted arguments the subject will have to spell out and that (37a) is ungrammatical. This is so because fronted arguments move to TopP.[17] In (37b) the subject *I* is located in the specifier of TP, i.e. it is not the specifier of the root and it is correctly predicted that it must be spelt out.

(37)  a.      *<u>More problems</u> don't need. (Thrasher 1977: 83)

       b      [$_{ForceP}$ [$_{TopP}$ More problems [$_{TP}$ I don't need]]]

Though promising, the analysis still raises some questions which will necessitate a reconsideration of the question of what constitutes a Root Phase in the relevant registers in English. I turn to this issue in the next section.

## 6.2. Problems for this proposal

### 6.2.1. Finite verbs in French

Recall some of the French examples given in (8) above, repeated in (38) for convenience:

(38)  a      [ec$_3$] M'accompagne au Mercure, puis à la gare.

         me accompanies to the Mercure, then to the station.

         (Léautaud, P. *Le Fléau, Journal Particulier.* 1917-1930, pp. 69-70, 20.3)

       b      [ec$_1$] Préparons les photocopies.

         Prepare-1PL the photocopies       (attested example)

Ever since Pollock (1989), it has been assumed that whereas the finite verb in English does not move to T, its French counterpart does move to T. If this were correct and if we were to assume that TP is the Root Phase then we incorrectly predict that in the above examples the lexical verb, which occupies T, cannot spell out. For (38b) the relevant part of the derivation is illustrated in (38c).

(38)  c      [$_{TP}$ nous [$_T$ préparons] [$_{vP}$ ~~préparons~~      *[$_{VP}$ les photocopies*.]]][18]

---

[17] Recall that we assume that TopP cannot be a root in English.

[18] For clarity of presentation, I omit irrelevant parts of the structure such as the VP internal copy of the subject.

*6.2.2. Tensed auxiliaries*

A problem similar to that discussed in the previous section for French arises for English sentences containing tensed auxiliaries. Such examples, as we have seen (12,13), are compatible with RRSO. Finite auxiliaries are taken to occupy T. If TP is the Root Phase and if only the complement of the Root T is spelt out, then we do not expect auxiliaries to be spelt out either, contrary to fact. (39) provides an example:

(39)  a        Have done 110 pages.
      b        [$_{TP}$ I [$_T$ Have] [$_{vP}$ *done 110 pages*]]. (*Diary of Virginia Woolf*, p. 33; 11 11)

The problem raised here is the same as that raised for French in the preceding section and comes down to the fact that neither the head nor the specifier of the root is sent to spell-out. In order to solve these problems we need to find a way to ensure that while the subject is the specifier of the Root Phase, T is not the head of the Root Phase. This suggests that in fact the subject and the inflected auxiliary in English, discussed in this section, or the subject and the inflected verb in French, discussed the preceding section, must not be in a spec head configuration. What we have to do is to create distance between the subject and the occupant of T.

*6.2.3. The adjunct/argument asymmetry*

A further problem arises with respect to the argument –adjunct asymmetry discussed in section 4.1. Recall that while fronted arguments are incompatible with null subjects, fronted circumstantial adjuncts can occur. (40a) is an example. If we assume that the initial PP *with a sigh of relief* moves to the left periphery then the projection that hosts it, FP in (40b,c), will be the Root Phase and its complement will spell out. The subject of *saw* in the specifier of TP will not be part of the edge of the Root Phase, the domain which is not sent to spell-out:

(40)  a.       With a sigh of relief saw a heap of ruins. (Woolf 1940, 330; Ihsane 1998, (40j))
      b        [$_{FP}$ With a sigh of relief [$_{IP}$ I saw a heap of ruins]]
      c        [$_{FP}$ With a sigh of relief [$_{IP}$ *I saw a heap of ruins*]]

The problem raised here is similar to that discussed above in that once again we need to find a way of removing the subject from the constituent that will be sent to spell-out.[19]

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[19] As pointed out to me by Guglielmo Cinque, adjuncts are different from arguments in other respect. For instance, as shown by Benincà (2004: 74-76), circumstantial adjuncts and clauses display a different pattern from preposed arguments with respect to the Tobler Mussafia law in Medieval Romance.

## 6.3. The subject field (Cardinaletti 1997)

In recent work in the cartography framework it has been proposed that the unitary subject position on the edge of IP/TP must be reinterpreted in terms of an articulated subject field containing more than one functional projection and more than one subject position. Various proposals to that effect have been made (Kiss 1996, Cardinaletti 1997, Haegeman 2002a, Haegeman and Vandevelde 2006, Rizzi 2004, 2006, Rizzi and Shlonsky 2005), I will stick to one implementation here.

### 6.3.1. Evidence from English for an articulated subject field

Consider example (41a) from British English. In this example the subject DP *the Prime Minister* is separated from the tensed auxiliary *had* by an adjunct of time, *yesterday*. Examples such as these are easy to come by in journalistic writing (Haegeman 2002a):

(41)  a    Asked if the Prime Minister yesterday had made his position more "explicit" regarding the rebate and its negotiability, the PMOS replied: no. (www. number10. gov. uk/ output/ Page7713)

Examples such as this should not be analysed as subject topicalisation, by which the subject moves to the specifier of TopP. As shown by the examples in (41), the type of DP adjunct found in (41a) is also available in non finite contexts (41b) and in adverbial clauses (41c), which resist argument fronting (41b',c') in English (cf. Haegeman 2002a, 2006):

(41)  b.    Her tale of Ian the groom last year asking the bride's father for Chloe's hand, but swearing him to secrecy until the young lovers had left for their summer holiday was very funny. (*Times*, Weekend, August 19, 2000, p. 3, col. 3)

   b'.    *Her tale of the bride's father Ian the groom asking for Chloe's hand,

   c    If the government last year had said, "We will reallocate that $33 million into critical areas", I know for sure that a range of programs could be funded …
www.leg.bc.ca/hansard/37th5th/h40311p.htm -

   c'    *If this news the government had announced…

In order to account for the pattern in (41), in which the subject is to the left of a circumstantial adjunct, Haegeman (2002a), following Cardinaletti (1997), proposes that the subject field contains two subject positions, and that the adjunct may intervene between these:

(42)  Subj1            *yesterday*        Subj2

*6.3.2. Supporting evidence from French (Rizzi and Shlonsky 2005)*

Recently Rizzi and Shlonsky have discussed the French example in (43) in support of their own proposal that the unitary subject position must be rethought in terms of two distinct positions, SpecSubjP and Spec TP

(43)    a          La semaine prochaine, Jean partira en Italie.
                   the week next, Jean leave-FUT-3SG to Italy
        b          Jean, la semaine prochaine, partira en Italie. (R&S 2005: 23: (56))

They say:

> The functional head Subj, distinct from and higher than [T] and other heads in the functional structure of the clause (Cinque 1999), attracts a nominal to its Spec and determines the subject-predicate articulation. (Rizzi and Shlonsky 2005: 4)

They propose the hierarchy in (44):

(44)    CP > SubjP > TP

Rizzi and Shlonsky (2005) consider SubjP as a hybrid structural zone on the IP edge, and characterize it as follows:

> The Subj layer defines a structural zone connecting the CP and the IP systems. As such, it may be assumed to share properties with both systems. The CP zone is specialised in creating dedicated positions to express scope-discourse properties, topicality, focus, scope of different kinds of sentential operators; such positions are formally optional, in the sense that they are activated in a structure when the discourse conditions and communicative intentions require them. Otherwise, they remain inert. On the other hand, a notable characteristic of the IP zone is <u>obligatoriness</u>, at least the obligatoriness of the heads forming the backbone of the 'functional' IP hierarchy, tense in the first place (Cinque 1999). So, we may think of the Subj layer as sharing properties of the two systems it connects: on a par with the CP system, it is dedicated to a scope –discourse property and on a par with the IP system, it is <u>obligatorily</u> expressed. (Rizzi and Shlonsky 2005: 12-13).[20]

We can equate my Subj1 in (42) with their SubjP in (44) and assume that adjuncts in English and in French precede or follow Subj:

(45)    a          SubjP    >Adjunct>         TP         (R&S 2005)[21]

---

[20] See also Rizzi (2004).

[21] Rizzi (2001) assumes adjuncts land in a dedicated projection 'ModP'. I do not represent this projection in the representations above and assume adjuncts are adjoined to maximal projections (i.c., TP).
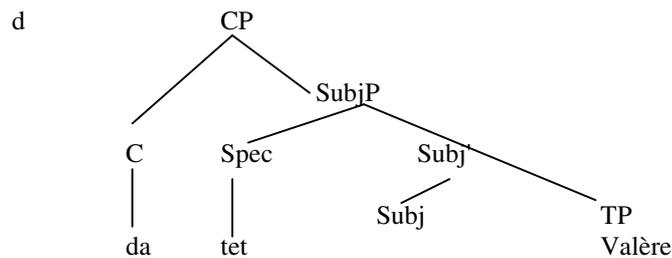
b  [_SubjP_ The Prime minister [<u>yesterday</u> [_TP_ ~~the prime minister~~ had made]]

c  [_SubjP_ Jean, [<u>la semaine prochaine</u>, [_TP_ ~~Jean~~ partira en Italie]]].

### 6.3.3. Evidence for multiple subject positions from West Flemish

Further support for postulating multiple subject positions in the IP area comes from West Flemish. In this language there is an adjacency requirement for the inflected C: it must be left adjacent to the definite subject, which occupies the canonical subject position (46a,b).[22]

There is one element, *'tet'*, which, if used, must intervene between C and the canonical subject (46c). This is an invariable pronominal element which seems to have subject properties in that it occurs only in environments in which nominative case is licensed (finite clauses, imperatives and infinitival complements of *mee* ('with'), which allow nominative subjects) and in some varieties of the language, *tet* alternates with the masculine pronoun *hij*, also a nominative form. (For more details on the distribution and interpretation of *tet* see Haegeman and Vandevelde 2006, Craenenbroeck and Haegeman 2007). Haegeman and Vandevelde (2006) propose that *tet* spells out the specifier of SubjP (46d).

(46)  a    da Valère dienen boek morgen goa weregeven
           that Valère that book tomorrow goes back give

      b    *da morgen Valère dienen boek goa weregeven
           that tomorrow Valère that book goes back give

      c    da tet Valère dienen boek morgen goa weregeven
           that *tet* Valère that book tomorrow goes back give
           'that Valère will return that book tomorrow.'

      d

```
                    CP
                   /  \
                  /    SubjP
                 /    /     \
                C   Spec    Subj'
                |    |      /    \
                da  tet   Subj    TP
                                  Valère
```

For additional discussion of the decomposition of the subject field I refer the reader to Cardinaletti (2004), Cardinaletti and Repetti (2005), and Chinellato (2005).

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[22] There is one exception: the object clitics *ze* and *t* may intervene.

## 6.4. Subject deletion in abbreviated registers: solutions to the problems

If we adopt the split subject proposal sketched in the preceding section then we effectively achieve a way of separating the subject from the remainder of the clause by assuming that the subject occupies SpecSubjP and that Subj remains empty. If SubjP can then be the root in the relevant registers, spell-out of the complement of Subj will mean that elements such as the inflected verb in T will spell out while the subject does not. Thus in (47a) the auxiliary *have* in T is sent to spell-out while the subject in SpecSubjP is not.

(47)  a  $[_{SubjP}$ <I> $[_{TP}$ ~~I~~ have received a letter in the mail]]
      b  $[_{SubjP}$ <I> $[_{TP}$ ~~I~~ *have received a letter in the mail*]]

Similarly, assuming that fronted adjuncts may be sandwiched between the higher subject position and the lower one, and that SubjP is a Root Phase, then the adjunct can be sent to spell-out along with the remainder of the complement of Subj, while the subject itself is contained in the phase edge and is not submitted to spell-out.

(48)  a  $[_{SubjP}$ <I>$[_{TP}$ this morning $[_{TP}$ ~~I~~ woke to get a letter in the mail]]]
      b  $[_{SubjP}$ <I>$[_{TP}$ *this morning $[_{TP}$ ~~I~~ woke to get a letter in the mail*]]]

The proposal still allows us to predict that fronted arguments will not be compatible with null subjects since argument fronting activates the higher projection TopP.[23] If TopP were the root, then spell-out of its complement would mean that the subject must spell out (49a). Similarly, with fronted interrogative constituents, one might assume that FocP is the root but inevitably this will mean that the lower domain containing the subject is sent to spell-out (49b). Finally embedded subjects will always be trapped in a domain that is the complement of a phase head and hence will be submitted to spell-out:

(49)  a  $[_{TopP}$ this book $[_{SubjP}$ I don't like]]
      b  $[_{FocP}$ (when) will $[_{SubjP}$ I ~~will~~ see her]]
      c  $[_{ForceP1}$I think $[_{ForceP2}$ that [I will not see her again]]]

## 6.5. Binding effects

Recall that we observed that there are certain constraints on coreference with respect to the interpretation of the non-overt subject. I repeat the relevant examples from (11) in (50):

(50)  a  In John's picture of Mary$_3$ she$_3$ smiles.
      b  In John's picture of Mary$_3$ [ec $_{n/*3}$] smiles.

---

[23] However, it is likely that TopP cannot be the root in English. Cf. Note 16.

c     During Mourinho's$_3$ first year in London he became famous for his grey Armani coat.

d     During Mourinho's$_3$ first year in London [ec $_{n/*3}$] became famous for his grey Armani coat.

e     Became Chelsea coach in 2005 and lived in Kensington. During his$_3$ first year in London he$_3$ became famous for his grey Armani coat.

f     Became Chelsea coach in 2005 and lived in Kensington. During his$_3$ first year in London, [ec $_{n/*3}$] became famous for his grey Armani coat.

These results are not unexpected. When the null subject occurs in a clause with an initial adjunct I have assumed that the subject moves to SpecSubjP, a position higher than that of the adjunct. Following Rizzi and Shlonsky (2005) I assume that this position has the properties of an IP related position, i.e. that it is an A-position. If this is correct then the moved subject is a potential binder for lower DPs. In (50b) the subject in SpecSubjP c-commands and hence binds the referential DP *Mary*.

(51)     a          *[$_{SubjP}$ <she$_3$> [$_{TP}$ In John's picture of Mary$_3$ [$_{TP}$ ~~she$_3$~~ smiles]]].

The pronominal subject to the right of the fronted adjunct (50a, 50c) obviously does not give rise to such binding effects and can be coreferential with the DP *Mary*. I assume that in such cases the adjunct is higher than SubjP.

(51)     b          [$_{SubjP}$ In John's picture of Mary$_3$ [$_{SubjP}$ she$_3$ [$_{TP}$ ~~she$_3$~~ smiles]]].

Finally the null subject is compatible with the fronted adjuncts containing a possessive pronoun in (50e,f) since it is generally the case that possessive pronouns allow binding even by a local antecedent.[24]

---

[24] A complication for this issue is that in Italian too a DP contained in a preposed adjunct cannot be coreferential with a null subject, though it can corefer with an overt pronoun. In (ia) the understood subject of *sorride* ('is smiling') cannot be coreferential with *Maria*, in (ib) *lei* can be coreferential with *Maria*. Thanks to Luigi Rizzi for these data.

(i) a     In questa foto di Maria, sorride.
        In this photograph of Maria, smiles
    b     In questa foto di Maria, lei sorride.

For reasons of space I do not go into this here. One option is that the null subject in (ia) must also move to SpecSubjP. This would not be directly compatible with Cardinaletti 's own proposals (1997, 2004) with respect to the articulation of the subject field.

## 7. Implications of the proposal

### 7.1. The analysis of V2 and topicalisation

In the above section I have shown that a phase-based account for subject omission such as that proposed by Rizzi (2006) to account for subject omission in early production can also account for RRSO. Coupled with the split subject proposals elaborated independently, this account allows us to predict the relevant distributional and interpretive properties of the null subject. In this section I briefly return to the data of topic drop in German in light of the proposal elaborated above. We will see that Rizzi's phase-based approach to null topics has some implications for the analysis of verb second in the Germanic languages.

Consider the German example of topic drop in (52b), based on the V2 sentence in (52a):

(52)   a       Das habe ich schon gesehen

        that have I already seen

       b       Habe ich schon gesehen.

        have I already seen

If V2 is derived by head movement (Van Craenenbroeck and Haegeman 2007), at least two different analyses can be advanced for the derivation of topic-initial V2 sentences: in both the assumption is that the topicalised constituent moves to SpecTopP. The inflected verb either moves to Top (53a) or remains in a lower head, say Fin (Haegeman 1996[25]) as shown in (53b):

(53)   a       $[_{TopP}$ Das $[_{Top}$ habe $[_{FinP}$ ich $[_{TP}$ schon gesehen]]]

       b       $[_{TopP}$ Das $[_{Top}]$ $[_{FinP}$ $[_{Fin}$ habe] $[_{TP}$ ich schon gesehen]]]

Observe that only the second proposal is compatible with a phase-based account of null topics: if the Root Phase is TopP then in (53a) only the complement of Top, *ich schon gesehen*, is spelt out and the auxiliary *habe* ('have') in the phasal head Top would not be spelt out. According to (53b) the topicalised constituent is in the phase edge and does not spell out, the auxiliary in Fin is spelt out with FinP:[26]

---

[25] Following Rizzi (1997) Haegeman (1996) assumes there is a null operator in SpecFin.

[26] The question arises as to why WF does not allow topic drop. One suggestion might be that the underlying structure of V2 is not identical for all the languages concerned and that in WF the topic and the fronted verb are part of the same domain.

(53)   c        TopP[27]



&lt;Das&gt;                              *habe*      *ich gesehen* ~~das~~
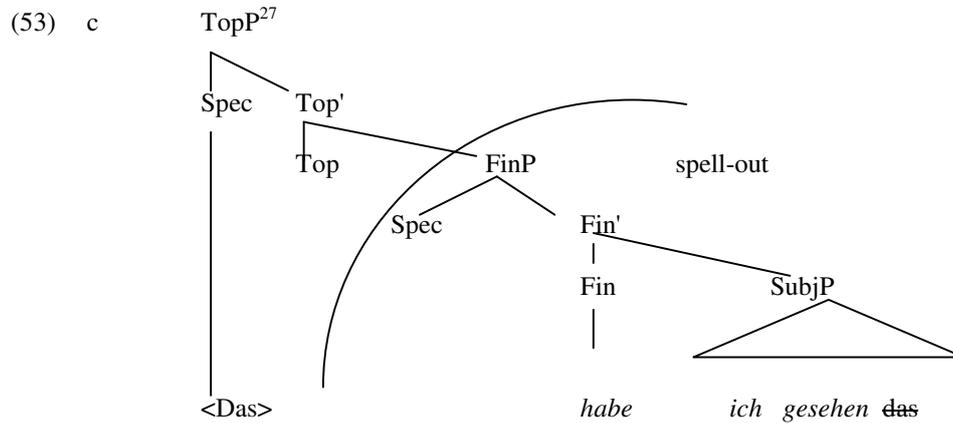
The phase-based account elaborated here also predicts that expletive subjects must be overt in German (see (27)).[28]

(54)   a        *(Es) wurde viel getanzt.
                (It) was a lot danced
       b        *(Es) hat viel geregnet.
                (It) has a lot rained

Let us assume that the verb in a V2 pattern moves to Fin (Van Craenenbroeck and Haegeman 2007) and that the subject occupies SpecFinP. Let us assume that in the absence of topicalised material TopP is not projected and that ForceP is the Root Phase. An expletive subject will not be able to be non-overt: it is contained in the complement of Force and hence will spell out obligatorily:[29]

---

[27] This diagram assumes that V2 is derived by head movement of finite V to Fin (Haegeman 1996, Haegeman and Vandevelde 2006, Van Craenenbroeck and Haegeman 2007 etc) and it does not take into account the problem of deriving OV orders. See also Roberts (2004).

[28] Observe though that Swedish allows both topic drop (ia) and expletive subject drop (ib) (Rizzi 1999: 284), which is unexpected under the present account:
(i)   a        (Det) visste jag [--- skulle haenda] (Rizzi 1999: 284, his (38c))
                (this) knew I [--- would happen]
      b        (Det) verkar som om… (Rizzi 1999: 284, his (38a))
                (it) seems as if

[29] Obviously one would like to derive the possibility of a projection being a root phase or not from independent principles. I hope that further research will shed light on this issue.

(54)   c

```
                    ForceP³⁰
                  /        \
               Spec        Force
                          /
                     Force        FinP           spell-out
                                 /    \
                              Spec     Fin'
                                        |
                                       Fin        SubjP
                                        |        /      \
                              es      wurde      viel getanzt
                              es       hat       viel geregnet
```

## 7.2. Ellipsis and coordination

In his account of ellipsis in coordination, Wilder (1994) exploits the similarity of the distribution of null subjects in adult English with that of subject deletion in coordination. (55) shows that just as the subject of a second conjunct can delete under identity with an antecedent in the preceding conjunct, a subject in the relevant registers can delete, provided there is a discourse antecedent.

(55)   a      I went home and ∅ wrote a few letters.
       a'     ∅ Wrote a few letters
       b      It was half past seven and ∅ felt like midnight.
       b'     ∅ Felt like midnight.

In the same way that the null subject in the relevant register has to be on a left edge, the subject of a coordinated clause cannot delete when it is preceded by an auxiliary (56a) or by a topicalised constituent (56b). Observe also that a fronted adjunct remains compatible with subject ellipsis (56c):

(56)   a      *Did you go home and did ∅ find anything?
       b      *That book, I like and this book, ∅ do not approve of.
       c      They are dedicated golf followers and for years ∅ have travelled
              to the Open.

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[30] Observe that in (28) *habe* ('have') does not move to Top. The representation is in fact also compatible with Platzack's Visibility condition on the C domain (Platzack 1998: 54 (1)).

Similarly, in the righthand conjunct of a coordinated structure in Dutch the initial constituent in the V2 pattern, be it subject (57) or non-subject (58), can be deleted while an expletive subject cannot (59). For similar data in German cf. te Velde 2005: 185-6)

(57) a   ∅ Komt morgen terug.
    comes tomorrow back

   b   Marie is gisteren vertrokken en ∅ komt morgen terug.
     Marie has yesterday left and ∅ comes tomorrow back

(58) a   ∅ heb ik nu niet meer nodig.
    ∅ have I now no more need
    'Now I don't need this any more.'

   b   Dit boek heb ik al gelezen en ∅ heb ik nu niet meer nodig.
     this book have I already read and ∅ have I now no more need

(59) a   *∅ zal veel gelachen worden.
    will a lot laughed be

   b   *Er zal gepraat worden en ∅ zal veel gelachen worden
     there will talked be and ∅ will much laughed be

There are further similarities between register-specific ellipsis patterns and ellipsis in coordination in that in the same way that more material can be deleted in the diary style (60a) – an issue which I have not dealt with here – similarly more material on the left edge can delete in coordination (60b):

(60) a   ~~I am~~ Waiting for L. to come back from chess with Roger. (Woolf 1926 20.5)

   b   I am working on my book and ~~I am~~ waiting for L. to come back from Roger.

The question arises as to what extent and how the phase-based approach to ellipsis can be invoked to account for ellipsis in coordination. See Te Velde (2005).

## 8. A note on telegraphic style and (British) diary style

In the above discussion I have concentrated on the data from spoken English (Thrasher 1977) and of the majority dialect for diary writing. There are speakers, however, who seem to allow subject ellipsis much more liberally in writing. Some illustrations are given in (61), with subject ellipsis in complement clauses (61a-d), in relative clauses (61e,g) and in adjunct clauses (61f-i). *Prima facie* the phase-based account would not account for these data. For discussion see Ihsane (1998), Haegeman and Ihsane (1999) and (2002b).

(61)  a        cannot believe [ec] <u>have</u> not realized this before. (Fielding 156)

      b        cannot believe [ec] <u>have</u> waited so long to get one and don't know
               how I managed to walk the dog etc without one. (review of Ipod
               Nano: (http://66.102.9.104/ search?q=cache: V37994aoZIAJ:
               www.amazon.co/uk/GP/CDP/Member-reviews/A2:)<sup>31</sup>

      c.       Start to wonder <u>whether</u> [ec] <u>am</u> really good friend. (Fielding 261)

      d        Understand <u>where</u> [ec] <u>have</u> been going wrong. (Fielding 97)

      e        but only string [ec] <u>have</u> got is blue. (Fielding 266)

      f        suddenly start thinking of former boyfriend Peter <u>with whom</u> [ec]
               <u>had</u> functional relationship for seven years, <u>until</u> [ec] <u>finished</u> for
               heart-felt agonizing reason [ec] <u>can</u> no longer remember. (Fielding
               190)

      g        stopped <u>when</u> [ec] <u>got</u> to it. (Fielding 130)

      h        But even that is inadvisable <u>since</u> [ec] <u>am</u> fat. (Fielding 17)

      i        Think [ec] <u>will</u> cross that last bit out <u>as</u> [ec] <u>contains</u> mild
               accusation. (Fielding. 25)

The examples in (61) are all recent. One might think that the phenomenon illustrated in (61) has developed due to the influence of text-messaging. However, the examples in (62) show that the phenomenon is not new: these examples are taken from E.M. Delafield's *The Diary of a Provincial Lady*.<sup>32</sup> In (62a) and (62b) the subject is omitted from a relative clause, in (60c) subject omission co-occurs with argument fronting. In (62d-f) the subject is omitted from an adverbial *as*-clause and in (62g-h) it is omitted from a *though*-clause.

(62)  a        Have a depressed feeling that this is going to be another case of
               *Orlando* about which [ec] was perfectly able to talk most
               intelligently until I read it. (Delafield, Diary of a Provincial Lady, 5)

      b        Atmosphere becomes very, very strained indeed, only Vicky
               embarking on sprightly reminiscences of recent picnic which [ec]
               meet with no response. (Delafield DPL: 107)

      c        Why or how this topic presents itself [ec] cannot say at all
               (Delafield DPL: 10)

      d        Cannot understand this, as [ec] was convinced that I still had credit
               balance of Two pounds (Delafield DPL, 5)

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<sup>31</sup> Thanks to Bert Vaux for this example.

<sup>32</sup> First published: 1930, Macmillan 1947, Virago offset from Macmillan.

 e   This very kind, and only wish I had been expecting it, as [ec] cold
     then have responded better and with less appearance of
     astonishment. (Delafield? DPL, 181)

 f    Do not feel competent to defend Mr. Hoover, otherwise should
     certainly do so, as by this time [ec] am filled with desire to
     contradict everything elderly neighbour may ever say (Delafield,
     DPL, 246)

 g    Mademoiselle… only says *Ah, je m'en doutais bien!* which makes
     me uneasy, although [ec] cannot exactly say why. (Delafield DPL:
     125)

 h    and realise that beef and Yorkshire pudding are either in the past
     or the future, although [ec] cannot be quite sure which. (Delafield
     DPL: 291)

For reasons of space I do not discuss this phenomenon here. I would just like to point out that omission of the subject from *though*-clauses is a phenomenon that is also attested in journalistic prose. Below I provide some examples from British newspapers. See also Haegeman (2002b).

(63) a.   I certainly agree with you, though [ec] find it difficult to sculpt an
     irrefutable argument. (*Observer*, 6.8.2000, Review section: 4, col 3)

   b.   He has also studied, although [ec] did not take exams in, divinity,
     chemistry, physics, art, music, design and PE. (*Times*, 17.6.2000,
     News section: 3, col 2)

   c.   He told them he didn't want re-negotiation of past treaties either,
     which is a big change from what was being spun around earlier in
     the year, though even now [ec] is supported by ominously little
     detail. (*Guardian*, 21.12.1999: 8, col 2)

   d.   She takes her daughter to school every morning (although [ec]
     drops her off in time to get across to the Brooklyn Diner for a
     quick power breakfast), she leaves the office at six every evening
     (although she starts working again between nine and midnight
     after the kids have gone to bed), and she refuses to go out more
     than one evening a week. (*Sunday Times*, 1.8.1999: 7, col 7)

   e.   Falconer flatly denied pressuring the board for political reasons,
     although [ec] conceded that he "did not dissent" from the idea of
     waiting until January for bail-out. (*Observer*, 10.9.2000: 2, col 1)

Perhaps in such examples the (*al*) *though* sentences are being reanalysed as co-ordinated sentences. In all five examples, (*al*)*though* can be replaced by *but*.[33]

## 9. Summary

This paper focuses on register-related subject omission (RRSO) in English. After having formulated arguments against a non-sentential analysis, a pro-drop analysis and a topic drop analysis, Rizzi's (2006) phase-based analysis of null subjects in early production is explored and applied to RRSO. The analysis leads to promising results and has certain repercussions for the analysis of the subject domain. The paper also briefly explores the implications of the proposal for the analysis of V2 and the analysis of ellipsis in coordination. The final section briefly discusses a variant of the diary style in which subject omission has quite different properties and at first sight would not be captured by the phase-based account.

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[33] Adverbial clauses introduced by *although* belong to those that I label 'peripheral' adverbial clauses, which are typically compatible with main clause phenomena (see Haegeman 2002, 2004).

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