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**The expression of  
indefiniteness and  
optionality in the dialect  
of Piacenza**

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## Introduction

The issue of optionality and diatopic variation in the choice of indefinite determiners in standard Italian and in Italo-Romance varieties has been discussed in recent literature (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018, in press; Giusti, to appear for a general overview). This work will analyze this phenomenon in a specific variety, namely in Piacentino (the dialect spoken in the province of Piacenza, in western Emilia).

Among all the possibilities available in modern Italian to express indefiniteness with singular mass and plural count nouns, five are relevant for the present work:

- ZERO (bare nouns), as in (1a);
- The definite article with non-referential reading (ART), as in (1b);
- The partitive determiner (*di+art*), whose morphology can be analyzed as the bare indefinite determiner *di* merged with Gender and Number concord features (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016, 2018), as in (1c);
- The indefinite operator (bare *di*), which is available only in some north-western Italo-Romance varieties (though not in the standard language, cf. (1d));
- The form *certo* ‘certain’, which conveys a specialized reading (‘of a special type’ or ‘with specific reference’) in standard Italian, as in (1e). It is available as a way of expressing indefiniteness only in some southern varieties (cf. Rholfs, 1968; Ledgeway 2009).

- (1) a. *Ho visto ragazzi.*  
b. *Ho visto i ragazzi.*  
c. *Ho visto dei ragazzi.*  
d. *\*Ho visto di ragazzi.*  
e. *#Ho visto certi ragazzi.*

[I] have seen Ø / ART / *di+art* / *di* / certain boys

Through the analysis of three different AIS maps (Linguistic and Ethnographic Atlas of Italy and Southern Switzerland), Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018) showed the peculiar distribution of the first four indefinite determiners in the dialects spoken throughout the peninsula. They show that their diatopic distribution reflects the consequences of Bartoli’s *Law of Lateral Areas*, according to which an innovation spreads from the center to peripheral areas ultimately losing

its effectiveness while reaching the borders. In this case, ART represents the innovation (originating from Latin, a language which lacked articles), spreading from central Italy northwards (up to southern Tuscany) and southwards (to northern Calabria and northern Apulia). The areas at the borders (extreme south and north) display ZERO, maintaining bare nominals, like Latin. Bare *di* is instead an innovation spreading from the bordering with France (approximately corresponding to western Piedmont) towards east. The region Emilia-Romagna (together with part of Liguria and southern Tuscany) is particularly interesting, since is located at the crossroads of these two isoglosses (bare *di* and ART): as a consequence, this area displays a consistent use of *di*+art.

The authors suggest a simple unified structure for all these indefinite determiners, which are taken to be simple DPs. The DP hosts in the specifier the indefinite operator *di*, while the head D realizes Gender and Number concord features (in this way the article-like morphology can be accounted for without the need to assume its kind-referring reading). Their different realization can be captured by assuming the interaction between a micro-parameter (whether the head D should remain silent when combined with an indefinite determiner in the specifier) and a nano-parameter (regarding the realization of the indefinite determiner as *di* or ZERO).<sup>1</sup>

A pilot study carried out by Cardinaletti and Giusti (in press) about the possible available indefinite determiners in informal Italian further shows that there is a certain degree of optionality in the choice of competing forms (given by the fact that more than a half of the participants chose a two-choice answer). ZERO and ART appear to be widespread throughout the country in indefinite contexts. A high rate of optionality is present between these two forms, constituting more than the half of two-choice answers provided by the participants of the research. In some areas and contexts one form is more prominent than the others. The choice is influenced both by the semantics conveyed by the context and by the geographical area of the speaker, due to the contact with the dialectal substratum. The different diatopic tendencies found in the choice of indefinite determiners in contemporary Italian are linked to the contact of the standard language with the local dialect.

Since the semantics of the context influences the choice of the indefinite determiner (or, at least, it privileges one form against the other ones), Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018, in press) propose that in some cases true optionality can be excluded, since those forms which do not represent the unmarked option specialize for different meanings. By analyzing AIS maps, the authors suggest that ZERO marks core existential indefiniteness: this interpretation is facilitated

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<sup>1</sup> See Biberauer et al. (2014) for the classification of parameters. See also Chapter 5, §5.1 for the theoretical framework based on the theory of parameters.



by the context in AIS map 1037 ('if there was water'). ART is taken to convey saliency, as in AIS map 1343 'go to the cellar to take wine'. In fact, in this context, 'wine' has a major saliency, since it is generally stored in cellars. *di+art* instead carries small quantity interpretation (cf. AIS map 637 '[to go and look for] violets'). In this case, a small quantity reading is more accessible, since violets are collected in small bunches.

Given the optionality attested in standard Italian (excluding the instances of semantic specialization), a first research was conducted to verify the availability of indefinite determiners in the dialect of Piacenza. More precisely, the study aimed to answer the following **research questions** that arise from the general background presented above:

- How many indefinite determiners are available in Piacentino?
- What is the rate of optionality? Could different competing indefinite determiners co-vary in the same syntactic context?
- How do indefinite determiners behave with respect to some relevant traits individuated by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018)?
- Is there true optionality? Do the competing forms specialize for meaning?

The traits are listed below (each of them is tested with both a singular mass and a plural count noun)<sup>2</sup>:

Generic negative sentences, exemplified in (2a) for singular mass and in (2b) for plural count nouns:

(2) a. *In t'al to dialët, un vegetarian dirisal:*

'In your dialect, a vegetarian would say'

*A mangi mia chèran / la chèran / ad chèran / dla chèran / sèrta chèran*

[I] don't eat ZERO meat /ART meat / *di* meat / *di+art* meat /certain meat

b. *Adès, al post ad "chèran" matag "patèti", e dam tüüt al ragon c'at pö in t'al to dialët.*

'Now replace *meat* with *potatoes* and give me all the sentences you can [say] in your dialect'

*A mangi mia patèti / al patèti / ad patèti / dal patèti / sèrti patèti*

[I] don't eat ZERO potatoes/ART potatoes/*di* potatoes/*di+art* potatoes/certain potatoes

Episodic positive sentences, cf. (3a) for mass and (3b) for plural nouns:

<sup>2</sup> The complete list of items of the questionnaire are given in Appendix A.

- (3) a. *In t'al to dialët, s'at cuntès la seina fata dai to amis iarsira, dirisat:*  
 'In your dialect, if you would talk about the dinner you had at your friends' last night, you would say:'  
*Um mangè chèran / la chèran / ad chèran / dla chèran / sèrta chèran*  
 [We] ate ZERO meat / ART meat / *di* meat / *di*+art meat / certain meat'
- b. *In t'al to dialët, s'at cuntès 'd un brindisi fat cui to amis ier, dirisat:*  
 'In your dialect, if you would talk about a toast you made with your friends yesterday, you would say:'  
*Um buì vein / al vein / ad vein / dal vein / sèrt vein*  
 [We] drank ZERO wine / ART wine / *di* wine / *di*+art wine / certain wine

Modal sentences, as in (4) (this item lacks the counterpart with the mass noun):

- (4) *In t'al to dialët, sa 't cunsipliès cus as pö fè quand as va in muntagna, dirisat:*  
 'In your dialect, if you would suggest what one can do on the mountain, you would say:'  
*At pö catè viulëti / al viulëti / ad viulëti / dal viulëti / sèrti viulëti*  
 [You] can collect ZERO violets / ART violets / *di* violets / *di*+art violets / certain violets

Atelic sentences with mass (5a) and plural count nouns (5b)):

- (5) *Sum a dré cuntè cu c'ho fat dumènica pr'astè dal temp föra d'in ca:*  
 'I am telling what I did on Sunday to spend some time outdoors:'
- a. *Ho tajè erba / l'erba / d'erba / dl'erba pr' un'ura*  
 [I] mowed ZERO grass / ART grass / *di* grass / *di*+art grass for an hour
- b. *Ho catè muri / al muri / ad muri / dal muri pr' un'ura*  
 [I] collected ZERO blackberries / ART blackb. / *di* blackb. / *di*+art blackb. for an hour

Telic sentences (cf. (6a-b)<sup>3</sup>):

- (6) a. *Ho tajè erba / l'erba / d'erba / dl'erba in t' un'ura*  
 [I] mowed ZERO grass / ART grass / *di* grass / *di*+art grass in an hour
- b. *Ho catè muri / al muri / ad muri / dal muri pr' un'ura*

<sup>3</sup> The assignment is not repeated since it is identical to that of the example (5a-b).

[I] collected ZERO blackberries / ART blackb. / *di* blackb. / *di+art* blackb. in an hour

Saliency contexts, as (7a-b):

(7) a. *Intant ca Giani al preparèva la tèvla in giardein...*

‘While John was laying the table in the garden...’

*Maria l’è andè zu in canteina a tö vein / al vein / ad vein / dal vein*

Mary went down to the cellar to take ZERO wine / ART wine / *di* wine / *di+art* wine

b. *E intant...*

‘In the meantime...’

*Teresa l’è andè dal maslein a cumprè bistechi / al bistechi / ad bistechi / dal bistechi*

Teresa went to the butcher to buy ZERO steaks/ART steaks/DI steaks/DI-art steaks

Wide scope (cf. (8a)) vs narrow scope (cf. (8b)) reading of the indefinite:

(8) *Lesà ogni ragion fein in fonda e signa cu ch’è scrit ma ‘t diris:*

‘Read each sentence entirely and check those which are correct’

a. *Ala festa, ho mia invidè ragas / i ragas / ad ragas / di ragas / sèrt ragas,*

At the party [I] didn’t invite ZERO boys / ART boys / *di* boys / *di+art* boys / certain boys,

*ma admé ragasi*

but just girls

b. *Ala festa, ho mia invidè ragas / i ragas / ad ragas / di ragas / sèrt ragas*

At the party [I] didn’t invite ZERO boys / ART boys / *di* boys / *di+art* boys / certain boys

*parché i eran antipatic*

because they were unpleasant

The results of the first research (that will be discussed in Ch. 3 and 5) show that in Piacentino a broader set of options is available in the same context if compared with Italian. In negative sentences with an indefinite object taking narrow scope has bare *di* is the unmarked determiner. The remaining forms (ZERO, ART and *di+art*) are generally possible in all the investigated sentences, with low occurrence of ZERO, while ART and *di+art* are often in competition with one another.

These results led to the second research aimed at studying the form of the clitic that resumes these indefinite determiners in left dislocated structures. In fact, Italo-Romance varieties

display a quantitative clitic *ne* that is associated with indefinite objects and unaccusative subject. *Ne* is in competition with the accusative clitics in object position and nominative *pro* in standard Italian and in central and southern varieties and nominative clitics in norther Italian varieties, to which Piacentino belongs.

This research has focussed on: ZERO, bare *di* and *di+art*, assuming that ART is naturally resumed by accusative / nominative clitics.

In Italian, objects introduced by *di+art* can only take wide scope when left dislocated and can only be resumed by the accusative clitic. In this case, only universal quantifiers are allowed to cooccur in basic position. Bare *di* is instead associated with narrow scope indefiniteness. It is always resumed by the quantitative clitic *ne* and can only co-occur with existential quantifiers. The same holds for ZERO. As regards subject position, left dislocation is visible only with the clitic *ne*, since this language, differently from Piacentino, lacks Nominative clitics.

Given this brief introduction, the second research was designed to answer the following questions:

- How do indefinite determiners behave in Clitic Left Dislocation in different contexts?

The relevant investigated traits are listed below with related examples<sup>4</sup>:

Dislocated object (9a) and subject (9b) with accusative and nominative clitics

(9) a. *Di panein, i ho mia mangè.*

*Ad panein, i ho mia mangè.*

*Panein, i ho mia mangè.*

*di+art / di / ZERO sandwiches, CL.ACC have.1P.SG not eat.PST.PRT*

‘Sandwiches, I didn’t eat.’

b. *Dal machini, i s’en mia farmè.*

*Ad machini, i s’en mia farmè.*

*Machini, i s’en mia farmè.*

*di+art / di / ZERO cars, CL.NOM CL.REFL be.AUX.3P.PL not stop.PST.PRT*

‘Cars, they didn’t stop.’

Dislocated objects (10a) and subjects (10b) with quantitative *ne*

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<sup>4</sup> The examples are taken from the items of the questionnaire used for the research. All the items will be listed in Appendix B.

- (10) a. *Di ragas, n'ho invidè.*  
*Ad ragas, n'ho invidè.*  
*Ragas, n'ho invidè.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO boys, ne have.1P.SG invite.PST.PRT*  
 'Boys, I invited.'
- b. *Ad i usei, n'é mia vulè via.*  
*D'usei, n'é mia vulè via.*  
*Usei, n'é mia vulè via.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO birds, ne be.AUX.3P.SG not fly.PST.PRT away*  
 'Birds, they didn't fly away.'

Transitive (cf. (9)), unaccusative (11a) or unergative (11b) verb:

- (11) a. *Di prufasur, n'é mia partì 'nson.*  
*Ad prufasur, n'é mia partì 'nson.*  
*Prufasur, n'é mia partì 'nson.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO professors, ne be.AUX.3P.SG not leave.PST.PRT no.one*  
 'Professors, no one of them left.'
- b. *Di ragasein, abota n'ha züghè.*  
*Ad ragasein, abota n'ha züghè.*  
*Ragasein, abota n'ha züghè.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO children, a.lot ne have.AUX.3P.SG play.PST.PRT*  
 'Children, a lot of them played.'

Quantifiers:

- With no quantifiers (cf. (10a)):
- With an existential (12a) or a universal (12b) quantifier:

- (12) a. *Di nud, n'é rivè poc.*  
*Ad nud, n'é rivè poc.*  
*Nud, n'é rivè poc.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO nephews, ne be.AUX.3P.PL arrive.PST.PRT few*  
 'Nephews, few of them arrived.'
- b. *Di non, i han telefunè tüüt.*

*Ad non, i han telefonè tiit.*

*Non, i han telefonè tiit.*

*di+art / di / ZERO* grandparents, CL.NOM have.AUX.3P.PL phone.PST.PRT all  
'Grandparents, all of them phoned.'

What emerged from the results is that *di+art* can be resumed by the quantitative clitic *ne* both in subject and object position, and that this resumption is preferred over the accusative or nominative clitic, which is possible in any case. A detailed report of the results of the second research (also regarding bare *di* and ZERO) will be presented in Chapter 4.

This work is divided in 5 chapters, each of which goes through a specific thematic area.

Chapter 1, "The expression of indefiniteness in Romance", goes through the notion of indefiniteness, presenting the issue of optionality and diatopic distribution in landscape of the Italo-Romance varieties spoken throughout the peninsula. Moreover, in this chapter the different determiners used in the expression of indefiniteness are analyzed, not only in the dialects of Italy but also in Italian and in French, a Romance language which is particularly close to the variety analyzed here, the dialect spoken in the province of Piacenza.

Chapter 2, "The Piacentino dialect", is committed to a (geographical and social) overview of just mentioned Gallo-Romance variety. Some salient phonological phenomena occurring in this dialect are considered to account for the superficial form of some determiners and clitics that will be analyzed in the following chapters. Moreover, some preliminary information about Clitic Left Dislocation and accusative/nominative clitics is given as an introduction to the second research.

Chapter 3, "The first research", is devoted to the description of the first research, outlining the methods (participants, stimuli, procedure and data analysis) and showing the results of the submission of the questionnaires, obtained by means of the application of statistical tests in order to be able to produce inferences on the data. The chapter is concluded by a section answering the research questions addressed at the beginning.

Chapter 4, "The second research", follows the same structure of the previous chapter in presenting the second research. The same tests were applied to the results. This chapter too is concluded by a section summarizing the results and answering the research questions that arose from the results of the first survey.

Chapter 5, "Towards a syntactic analysis", presents the theoretical framework on which this work is grounded, and recalls the results of the researches to provide a syntactic analysis and a tentative proposal to account for the behavior of the indefinite determiners. The diachronic

development of the determiner *di* is also considered, which allows to single out the semantic (and syntactic) link among the contexts considered in the researches. The chapter is concluded by a section which summarizes the proposal and addresses new research questions for future research.

## Chapter 1.

### The expression of indefiniteness in Romance

Indefiniteness is a wide and many-sided issue, involving syntax, semantics and pragmatics. In the last decades, a subfield of nominal semantics focused on semantic and pragmatic aspects of indefiniteness, trying to best characterize the phenomenon (cf. Brasoveanu and Farkas 2016) since Russel (1905). There have been many attempts to depict the positive counterpart of indefiniteness, i.e. definiteness. A lot has been written about the topic: various attempts have been made to characterize this broad field referring to different formal distinctions: uniqueness and non-uniqueness (e.g. Russel 1905, 1919), familiarity and novelty (e.g. Bolinger 1977, Heim 1982), specificity and non-specificity (e.g. Partee 1972, Fodor and Sag 1982) among others. As observed by Abbott (2004), however, “grammar is willfully resistant to attempts at tidy categorization” (p. 147), as each of these approaches display some theoretical inadequacies (cf. Abbott 2004 for a synthetic but complete discussion).

It is evident that it is not possible to give a clear definition of indefiniteness totally embracing all its features. Brasoveanu and Farkas (2016) individuate indefinites in those DPs headed by an indefinite determiner, (e.g. the italicized phrases in (1), reported here from Brasoveanu and Farkas 2016: 238). Definite NPs refer to an entity that was already mentioned in the discourse, while indefinite NPs can either introduce new referents (2) or do not have reference at all.

(1) Mary visited *a garden, some garden(s), some of the gardens, a certain garden.*

(2) A woman sat with a cat on her lap. She stroked the cat and it purred.

(Abbott 2014: 133)

Since this work is inspired by the framework set by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018, in press) and Giusti (to appear) (see Ch. 5, §5.1), it will focus on the same class of indefinites, namely those defined “uncontroversial indefinites” by Brasoveanu and Farkas (2016). They are also called “u(nmarked)-indefinites” since their interpretation is not subject to any constraint (cf. (3)). They are distinguished from their marked counterparts, namely “partitive indefinites”, whose interpretation undergoes domain-constraints (cf. (4a)), and “*a certain* indefinites”, which are introduced by the determiner *a certain* and are constrained in the choice of the values they can pick (cf. (4b)) (ibid.).

(3) *Madrigals* are polyphonic. / These are *madrigals*.

(ibid.: 239)



- (4) a. Some children ran into the room. *A child / Some of the children* was/were dressed up. (ibid.: 258)
- b. Every Englishman adores *a certain woman* – the Queen / his mother. (ibid.: 262)

The researches carried out and presented in this work are dedicated to the investigation of the first type, “unmarked indefinites” in the Italo-Romance variety spoken in the province of Piacenza. This field of research is particularly interesting because, unlike English, which only displays the indefinite determiner *a* and bare nominals, Italian and Italo-Romance varieties display a wide range of options to express “u-indefiniteness” (henceforth simply referred to as indefiniteness).

### 1.1 Indefinites in Italian and Italo-Romance dialects

Italian, French and Italo-Romance varieties spoken throughout the Italian peninsula have several ways of expressing indefiniteness that have been presented in previous literature (Chierchia, 1998; Stark, 2008; Le Bruyn, 2010; Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2018, in press; Giusti, to appear, to cite just some of them).

It is well known that in the expression of indefiniteness many languages treat singular count nouns separately from plural count and singular mass nouns (cf. Alexiadou, 2011).

This is the case of the languages mentioned above: on the one hand, only one available option for singular count nouns is attested; on the other hand, for the other noun classes there are five co-occurring variants which *prima facie* seem to be optional. Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018, in press) provided evidence against the mere optionality of these five different indefinite determiners, showing that each one of them is found to be the default form for expressing indefiniteness in different areas of the peninsula, while other variants specialize in their semantics and convey a particular shade of meaning.

The next subsections give an overview of all the ways of expressing indefiniteness which are available for French, Italian and Italo-Romance varieties, also providing examples directly from the dialect of Piacenza, to show how all the alternatives presented seem to be available also in this dialect. French is also taken into account, since it has some features in common with the dialect of Piacenza (being a Gallo-Italic dialect), especially concerning the indefinite determiner *di* which is indeed a Gallic innovation (cf. Rohlfs, 1968).

The discussion follows Cardinaletti and Giusti’s (2018) terminology: the lack of a realized determiner is referred to as “ZERO”, the definite article with indefinite interpretation is labeled

“ART”, the indefinite determiner homophonous to the possessive/partitive preposition “bare *di*” and the partitive article *di+art*.

### 1.1.1 *un(o)/una, un/une*

With singular count nouns, both in Italian and in French the only available option is *un(o)/una* and *un/une* respectively, as in (5a)-(6a). This determiner is not found with singular mass nouns, as (5b)-(6b) show.

- (5) a. *Ho raccolto una violetta.* (Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2018:136-137)  
 [I] have picked a violet  
 b. *Ho raccolto (\*un) fieno.*  
 [I] have harvested (\*a) hay
- (6) a. *Je vois un chat.* (adapted from Carlier, 2007:2)  
 ‘I see a cat.’  
 b. *Je mange \*un / du riz.*  
 I eat \*a / *di+art* rice  
 ‘I eat rice.’

*Un(o)/una* is taken to be the reanalysis of an indefinite quantifier into an indefinite determiner. Its quantificational nature is shown by the fact that this form is homophonous to the numeral/quantifier *uno* ‘one’ (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2018). The same holds for French, since the two forms are syncretic.

The singular indefinite determiner is widespread also in the dialects spoken in the Italian peninsula, and it can have different forms according to the geographical area, as reported by Rohlfs (1968): *un/ən dènt* ‘a tooth’, *na veŋa* ‘a blood vessel’ (Piedmontese); *nnu fruttu* ‘a fruit’, *nnna scala* ‘a stair’ (Salentino) (ibid.:113-114).

As regards Piacentino, the situation is the same. The translation of the sentences in the previous examples is given in (7a,b).

- (7) a. *Ho catè ‘na viulèta, ho vist un gat.*  
 [I] have picked a violet, [I] have seen a cat  
 b. *\*Ho catè ‘na paja, ho mangè un ris.*  
 [I] have harvested a hay, [I] have eaten a rice

Neither French nor Italian and Italo-Romance dialects have a plural counterpart of this indefinite determiner, which instead is found e.g. in Spanish (8), Catalan (9) and Romanian<sup>5</sup> (10).

- (8) *Juan leyó unos libros.* (Gutiérrez-Rexach, 2001:117)  
 Juan read a-pl. books  
 ‘Juan read some books.’
- (9) *Porto unas llibres.* (Tolchinski et al., 2007:326)  
 carry-1SG a-PL book-PL  
 ‘I bring some books.’
- (10) *unor fete frumose* (Tomić, 2006:130)  
 a.F.PL.DAT girl.F.PL beautiful.F.PL  
 ‘to/of some beautiful girls’

In Italian and French, the lacking morphological plural form of the singular indefinite article is replaced by the partitive determiner, as in (11)-(12) (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2016; Zamparelli 2008a for Italian and Stark, 2008; Le Bruyn, 2010 for French).

- (11) *Ho incontrato [degli studenti].* Italian  
 I.have met [of.the students]
- (12) *J’ ai rencontré [des étudiants].* French  
 I have met [of.the students]  
 ‘I have met some students.’
- (Zamparelli, 2008a:301)

In this respect, Piacentino behaves in the same fashion, lacking a pluralized form of the singular indefinite article *un/(u)na*<sup>6</sup>, replacing it with the partitive determiner (13).

- (13) *Ho incontrè di stüdeint.*  
 [I] have met *di*+art students  
 ‘I have met some students.’

<sup>5</sup> The plural form of the indefinite article is marked only for Dative case. There is no such nominative plural form (cf. Tomić, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, in Piacentino the singular indefinite determiner and the numeral ‘one’ are not syncretic form, since the latter surfaces as *voŋ* (masculine) / *viina* (feminine).

### 1.1.2 Bare nouns

Looking at plural count and mass singular nouns, there is a greater variety of indefinites which can combine with them in the Romance landscape. In Italian, one way of expressing indefiniteness is the zero determiner, as shown in (14a,b). As already said, this determiner can't be combined with a singular count noun, as (14c) shows.

- (14) a. *Ho raccolto violette.* (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018:137)  
[I] have picked violets  
b. *Ho raccolto fieno.*  
[I] have harvested hay  
c. \**Ho raccolto violetta.*  
[I] have picked violet

In the latter case, the indefinite determiner *una* needs to be necessarily inserted to make the sentence grammatical.

In Italo-Romance dialects, ZERO is the default form to express indefiniteness in those areas located in the borders of Italy: it is widely spread in the extreme south (in southern Calabria, Apulia and in Sicily) and in the extreme north (especially the Grigioni area in Switzerland) (Cardinaletti and Giusti, in press). In fact, looking at AIS map 1037 '[if there was] water', it is possible to notice that in these areas the NP displays a null DP (cf. (15)).

- (15) a. àkwa (AIS 1037, 216 Lazanda (Sondrio))  
b. ega (AIS 1037, 305 San Virgilio di Marebbe (Bolzano))  
c. akwa (AIS 1037, 369 Trieste)  
d. akwa (AIS 1037, 749 Salve (Lecce))  
e. éwgwa (AIS 1037, 836 Sperlinga (Enna))  
f. àbba (AIS 1037, 938 Bitti (Nuoro))

French behaves differently from Italian and most Italo-Romance varieties, in that it is the only Romance language which does not allow for bare nominals<sup>7</sup> (cf. Ihsane, 2008). In the

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<sup>7</sup> Roodenburg (2004), capitalizing on Heycock and Zamparelli (2003), shows that in French bare nominals are not ruled out at all; they are allowed e.g. in coordination:

- (i) \**Le chat est mammifère.* (ibid. :307)  
'The cat is mammal.'  
(ii) *Le chat est (à la fois) mammifère et animal domestique.*  
'The cat is (both) mammal and pet.'

examples in (16)-(17), only the presence of the “partitive determiner” saves the sentence from ungrammaticality.

(16) *J'achète \*(du) poisson.* (Stark, 2014:134)

1SG buy.1SG PART fish

‘I buy fish.’

(17) *Jean a recommandé* (Ihsane, 2008:194)

‘Jean has recommended’

a. *des livres et Marie en a recommandé d'autres.*

of.the books and Marie EN has recommended others

b. *\*livres et Marie en a recommandé d'autres.*

books and Marie EN has recommended others

ZERO is available in the dialect of Piacenza for plural and mass nouns (though not being the preferred form), as the examples in (18a,b) show, but not with singular count nouns (18c):

(18) a. *Ho catè viulëti.*

[I] have picked violets

b. *Ho catè paja.*

[I] have harvested hay

c. *\*Ho catè viulëta.*

[I] have picked violet

### 1.1.3 The definite article

The definite article (henceforth ART) with indefinite interpretation is widespread all over Italy, both in the standard language and in the great majority of the dialects. Its indefinite reading can be obtained only when combined with plural count and singular mass nouns (see (19a) and (19b) respectively), not with singular count nouns (19c); in the latter case it has a definite reading, picking out a specific referent which is known by the speaker or which has already been introduced in the discourse.

(19) a. *Ho raccolto le violette.* (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018:138)

[I] have picked the violets

b. *Ho raccolto il fieno.*

[I] have harvested the hay  
 c. *Ho raccolto la violetta.*  
 [I] have picked the violet

Of course, the definite meaning is also possible with plural count and singular mass nouns. In generic sentences the definite article may also be interpreted with reference to kind (cf. Chierchia, 1998), as in (20a-b):

- (20) a. *I cani abbaiano.* (Chierchia, 1998:392)  
 the dogs bark  
 ‘Dogs bark.’  
 b. *L’elio è abbondante nell’universo.* (adapted from Zamparelli, 2001:306)  
 the helium is abundant in.the universe  
 ‘Helium is abundant is the universe.’

In French, the picture is analogous to that of Italian, since both languages allows for definite articles with all kinds of NP (cf. 21).

- (21) a. *Il préfère la viande.*  
 he prefers the meat  
 ‘He prefers the meat.’  
 b. *J’ai lu le livre.*  
 I have read the book  
 ‘I read the book.’  
 c. *Je reproche les enfants.*  
 I scold the children  
 ‘I scold the children.’

The same holds for the dialect of Piacenza. Some examples are given in (22a-c), which are the translations of (19a-c). These sentences are semantically parallel to those of the previous example.

- (22) a. *Ho catè al viulëti.*  
 [I] have picked the violets

b. *Ho catè la paja.*

[I] have harvested the hay

c. *Ho catè la viulëta.*

[I] have harvested the hay

While (22a) and (22b) can have both a generic indefinite and a definite reading, (22c) can only refer to a specific violet that is known by the speaker and by the hearer or that has already been mentioned.

In subject position, the definite article in Piacentino can denote reference to kind with singular mass (23a), singular count (23b) and plural count (23c) nouns.

(23) a. *La chëran la custa abota.*

the meat CL.NOM cost a.lot

‘Meat is very expensive.’

b. *La viulëta l' è tipica ad l'Italia.*

the violet CL.NOM is typical of the Italy

‘The violet is typical of Italy.’

c. *I gat i g'han quatar sanfi.*

the cats CL.NOM have four paws

‘Cats have four paws.’

Even though this option is largely found all over the peninsula, AIS maps (1037, 1343, 637) reveal that ART is predominant in the central-southern part of Italy, namely in the area going from southern Tuscany-Umbria-Marche down to northern Calabria and Apulia (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti, in press). (24) provides some examples taken from the AIS map 1307, in which the noun ‘water’ is preceded by the definite article:

(24) a. *Il akwa* (AIS 1037, 630 Tarquinia (Viterbo))

b. *l akwa* (AIS 1037, 534 Incisa (Florence))

c. *l akwa* (AIS 1037, 539 Ancona)

d. *l ekwa* (AIS 1037, 608 Bellante (Teramo))

e. *l àkw<sup>a</sup>* (AIS 1037, 729 Carovigno (Bari))

f. *l akw<sup>a</sup>* (AIS 1037, 724 Acerno (Salerno))

### 1.1.4 Bare *di*

Bare *di* is homophonous to the genitive preposition *di* (“of”) in Italian. In the standard language bare *di* is not found as a mean of expressing indefiniteness, nor with singular count, nor with plural count and singular mass nouns. The determiner *di* is found in north-western varieties of dialect spoken especially in the region of Piedmont and Aosta Valley. This is because *di* is a Gallic innovation (cf. Rohlfs 1968) which spread from France.

(25) shows some examples of some varieties of Piedmontese.

- (25) a. *sei fyse d’ aqua* (Piedmontese; Berruto1974:57)  
 if there was *di* water  
 b. *anda sarkà d viulatte* (AIS 637, 153 Giaveno (Turin))  
 to-go to-pick *di* violets

Moreover, the analysis of the AIS map 1037 confirms the widespread use of the indefinite determiner in the area bordering with France, namely in Piedmont and Aosta Valley (cf. (26)).

- (26) a. *d eve* (AIS 1037, 123 Brusson (Aosta))  
 b. *d aygå* (AIS 1037, 160 Pontechianale (Cuneo))  
 c. *d eva* (AIS 1037, 156 Castelnuovo d’Asti (Asti))

Bare *di* with singular count nouns is reported by Rohlfs to be found in Tuscany and only if the noun is modified by an adjective, as in “*di bon vino*” ‘*di* good wine’, and even in ancient Lombard, e.g. “*de bela aqua*” ‘lit. of beautiful water’ (Barsegapé, 1519) (Rohlfs 1968:117).

Being a Gallic innovation, French is characterized by a consistent presence of bare *di* (in French *de*), but only in negative contexts (cf. (27)-(28)). Needless to say, French displays the same syncretism between the preposition and the determiner *de*.

- (27) a. *Il a du papier.* a’. *Il n’a pas de papier.*  
 he has of.the.masc. paper he NE has not of paper  
 b. *Il a un papier.* b’. *Il n’a pas de papier.*  
 he has a/one paper he NE has not of paper  
 c. *Il a des papiers.* c’. *Il n’a pas de papiers.*  
 he has of.the.pl. papers he NE has not of papers

(Ihsane 2005: 205)



(28) a. *Marie n'a pas vu de fantôme.*

Marie ne has not seen DE ghost

'Marie hasn't seen a ghost.'

b. \**Marie a vu de fantôme.*

Marie has seen DE ghost

(Ihsane 2008:79)

As pointed out by Ihsane (2005), the definite article can appear in negative sentences, those whose positive counterpart displays the definite article too. In this case, however, the DP has a definite reading, parallel to what happens in Italian with singular count nouns (cf. (29)).

(29) a. *Il a le papier.*

he has the paper

b. *Il a les papiers.*

he has the.pl. papers

a'. *Il n' a pas le papier.*

he *ne* has not the paper

b'. *Il n' a pas les papiers.*

he *ne* has not the papers

(ibid.: 205)

This distribution shows that bare *di* in French is the unmarked form for the expression of indefiniteness in negative contexts.

In this respect, Piacentino and French behave in the same fashion, and (partially) differently from Italian: bare *di* is never found in positive sentences, disregarding noun class (cf. (30a-c) for Italian and (31a-c) for Piacentino). The indefinite operator is found instead only when it is under the scope of the negation, but just with plural count and singular mass nouns, as in (32a-c). In the cases in which bare *di* is allowed, it could be taken as the unmarked form for indefiniteness.

(30) a. \**(Non) Ho raccolto di violette.*

(NEG) [I] have picked *di* violets

b. \**(Non) Ho raccolto di fieno.*

(NEG) [I] have harvested *di* hay

c. \**(Non) Ho raccolto di violetta.*

(NEG) [I] have picked *di* violet

(31) a. \**Ho catè ad viulèti.*

[I] have picked *di* violets

b. \**Ho catè ad paja.*

[I] have harvested *di* hay

- c. \**Ho catè ad viulèta.*  
 [I] have picked *di* violet
- (32) a. *Ho mia catè ad viulèti.*  
 [I] have not picked *di* violets
- b. *Ho mia catè ad paja.*  
 [I] have not harvested *di* hay
- c. \**Ho mia catè ad viulèta.*  
 [I] have not picked *di* violet

In negative contexts, bare *di* in Piacentino looks to be able to appear in both episodic and generic sentences, and it always conveys narrow scope interpretation.

The modification of the *di*NP by means of an adjective, as in the cases previously mentioned by Rohlf's for Tuscan and ancient Lombard, does not improve the grammaticality of a positive polarity sentence (33).

- (33) a. \**Ho buì ad vein bon.*<sup>8</sup>  
 [I] have drunk *di* wine good
- b. *Ho mia buì ad vein bon.*  
 [I] have not drunk *di* wine good  
 ‘I didn’t drink good wine.’

Moreover, bare *di* in a negative context in Piacentino conveys core indefinite meaning (34a), while the definite article seems to identify a referent (34b), paralleling the pattern found in French. A translation of the French examples in (28)-(29) is given in (34)-(35).

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(34) a. <i>Al g’ha dla chèrta.</i><br/>         [he] has <i>di</i>+art paper<br/>         ‘He has some paper.’</p> <p>b. <i>Al g’ha ‘na chèrta.</i><br/>         [he] has a paper<br/>         ‘He has a (piece of) paper.’</p> | <p>a’. <i>Al g’ha mia ad chèrta</i><br/>         [he] has not <i>di</i> paper<br/>         ‘He hasn’t got any paper.’</p> <p>b’. <i>Al g’ha mia ad chèrta.</i><br/>         [he] has not <i>di</i> paper<br/>         ‘He hasn’t got any paper.’</p> |
|--|--|

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<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that the order Adjective > NP leads to ungrammaticality. Unfortunately, adjectival modification was not taken into account in the researches presented here. This task could be fulfilled by future work.

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
|      | c. <i>Al g'ha dal chèrti.</i><br>[he] has <i>di</i> +art papers<br>'He has some papers.' | c'. <i>Al g'ha mia ad chèrti.</i><br>[he] has not <i>di</i> papers<br>'He hasn't got papers.' |
| (35) | a. <i>Al g'ha la chèrta.</i><br>[he] has the paper<br>'He has the paper.'                | a'. <i>Al g'ha mia la chèrta.</i><br>[he] has not the paper<br>'He hasn't got the paper.'     |
|      | b. <i>Al g'ha al chèrti.</i><br>[he] has the papers<br>'He has the papers.'              | b'. <i>Al g'ha mia al chèrti.</i><br>[he] has not the papers<br>'He hasn't got the papers.'   |

In (34), the indefinite reading of the partitive determiner in the positive sentences is obtained by means of bare *di* in the negative counterparts. In (35), instead, the definite article guarantees that the definite reading is preserved also in the negative sentences.

### 1.1.5 The partitive determiner

Another way of expressing indefiniteness is with the so-called “partitive determiner”, labeled *di*+art. This label is due to its morphological form: it is constituted by the indefinite determiner *di* which is “merged” with the overt realization of Number and Gender features, namely the grammaticalized definite article (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018, in press; Giusti 2015).

In Italian, this option is available only with plural count and singular mass nouns (36a,b), not with singular count nouns (36c).

- |      |  |                                    |
|------|--|------------------------------------|
| (36) | a. <i>Ho raccolto delle violette.</i><br>[I] have picked <i>di</i> +art violets  | (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018:139) |
|      | b. <i>Ho raccolto del fieno.</i><br>[I] have picked <i>di</i> +art hay           |                                    |
|      | c. * <i>Ho raccolto della violetta.</i><br>[I] have picked <i>di</i> +art violet |                                    |

The same picture is found in French, a language making a great use of the partitive determiner, often referred to also as “bare partitive” (cf. Chierchia, 1998; Le Bruyn, 2010) or “partitive article” (cf. Stark, 2008).

- (37) a. *Elle a mangé<sup>9</sup> du gâteau / de la tarte / des biscuits*  
 she has eaten of.the.masc cake / of the.fem tart / of.the.pl biscuits  
 ‘She ate (some) cake/tart/biscuits.’ (Ihsane 2008:126)
- b. *Jean a acheté des pommes et du pain.*  
 Jean has bought of.the.pl apples and of.the.masc.sg bread  
 ‘John bought apples and bread.’ (ibid.:129)

As mentioned before, the partitive determiner has been analyzed as the plural counterpart of the singular indefinite article not only in French, but even and Italian (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2006; Stark, 2008; Zamparelli, 2008a). It marks mass nouns in preverbal and postverbal subjects (38a) and objects (38b), as well as plural count nouns (38c).

- (38) a. *Il me faut \*(de /)eau.* (Stark, 2008:58)  
 ‘I need (some) water.’
- b. *J’achète \*(du) pain.*  
 ‘I buy (some) bread.’
- c. *Je vois \*(des) étudiants dans le bâtiment.*  
 ‘I see (some) students in the building.’

The partitive determiner is typical of Gallo-Romance dialects. Its use is restricted to the area corresponding roughly to Emilia-Romagna. The analysis of the AIS map 1037 reveals its occurrence also in Liguria and in some areas across the borders of Emilia-Romagna (cf. (39)).

- (39) a. de l àyga (AIS 1037, 190 Aiole (Imperia))  
 b. dell akwa (AIS 1037, 520 Camaiore (Lucca))  
 c. de l akwa (AIS 1037, 285 Pescarolo (Cremona))  
 d. ad l akwa (AIS 1037, 412 Carpaneto (Piacenza))  
 e. d l akwa (AIS 1037, 459 Ravenna)

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<sup>9</sup> Note however that consumption verbs like *to eat* or *to drink* allow for bare partitives even in those languages that in general disallow them (e.g. English (i) and Spanish (ii)) The following examples are taken from Le Bruyn, 2010:117. Underlined phrases are mine.

- (i) Again Tarzan came down into the village and renewed his supply of arrows and ate of the offering of food which the blacks had made to appease his wrath. (E. Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan of the Apes*)
- (ii) ... Eva, representada en las Sagradas Escrituras como mujer-culpable por haber comido de la manzana prohibida.  
 ... Eva, represented in the Sacred Writings as woman-guilty of having eaten of the apple forbidden  
 (data drawn from the CREA corpus)

It is found also in some north-western varieties spoken in Piedmont (*del vin* ‘of the wine’), in some parts of Lombardy (e.g. *di donn* ‘of the women’, *dil paroli* ‘of the words’) and in some north-western Tuscan dialects (*diǵ ói* ‘of the eggs’, Garfagnana; *dla bèla fava* ‘of the good fava bean’, Lunigiana), while it is completely absent in southern dialects (Rohlf, 1968:116).

In (40a-c) the translation in Piacentino of the sentences in (36a-c) is provided. As was already pointed out, the presence of this determiner is much more widespread than in Italian: its distribution seems to be at the halfway between Italian and French.

- (40) a. *Ho catè dal viulèti.*  
 [I] have picked *di+art* violets  
 b. *Ho catè dla paja.*  
 [I] have harvested *di+art* hay  
 c. \**Ho catè dla viulèta.*  
 [I] have picked *di+art* violet

### 1.1.6 *certo*

Another form for expressing indefiniteness is the determiner-like *certo/a/i/e* ‘certain’, reported by Rohlf (1968) to be widespread in the varieties spoken in southern Italy.

In standard Italian, *certo* conveys the meaning of “specific indefiniteness” and is compatible with all kinds of nouns, but with singular count nouns it requires the mandatory presence of the indefinite determiner *un(o)/una* (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2018, in press), as shown in (41b). As far as plural count and singular mass nouns are concerned, *certo* is in complementary distribution with all determiners (41a).

- (41) a. (\**la/\*di/\*della*) *certa roba*, (\**i/\*di/\*dei*) *certi ragazzi*  
 The/*di/di+art* certain stuff, the/*di/di+art* certain boys  
 b. \*(*un*) *certo ragazzo*

a certain boy

(Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2018:139)

Only in some southern dialects (such as Neapolitan and Abruzzese, cf. Rohlf 1968) *certo* has the function of a genuine indefinite, adding no shades of meaning to the expression (cf. (42a-b)).

- (42) a. *s'era corcato mmiezo a ccerto fieno* (Neapolitan; Rohlfs 1968:119)  
 'He was lying on some hay'  
 b. *cə šta cirta pərzonə* (Abruzzese, ibid.:119)  
 'There are some people'  
 b. *certi kundi* (Avezzano; Giammarco1979:141)  
 'Some stories'

In these southern varieties *certo* can be treated on a par with *un(o)/una* as a case of reanalysis of an indefinite quantifier into an indefinite determiner (as suggested by the authors).

French, just like Italian and northern dialects, displays the form *certain/e/s/es* 'certain' which is not used for core indefiniteness but "impose an extra qualitative distinction on the individuals making up the referent of the DP they head." (Le Bruyn, 2010:83). In fact, it is disallowed with nouns denoting objects whose parts are undistinguishable one from the other (43).

- (43) ?? *J'ai parcouru certains kilomètres.* (Le Bruyn, 2010:83)  
 'I have travelled certain kilometers.'

Differently from Italian, *certain* in French can co-occur with the partitive determiner (44).

- (44) a. *certaines des femmes* (ibid.:113)  
 certain DES women  
 b. *certes (\*delle) donne*  
 certain *di*+art women

Piacentino is like Italian, in using *certo* with mass / count plural nouns to convey "specific indefiniteness", not to express core existential indefiniteness without any other semantic shade. An example is given in (45a,b):

- (45) a. *(\*la/\*ad/\*dla) serto roba, (\*i/\*ad/\*di) sert ragas*  
 ART/*di/di*+art certain stuff, ART/*di/di*+art certain boys  
 b. *\*(un) sert ragas*  
 a certain boy

No AIS map reports examples with *certo*. This may indicate that, even in southern dialects where *certo* is available as a mean of expressing “genuine” indefiniteness, it is not the only available form and that it does not represent the unmarked option.

## 1.2 Overview of the relevant traits in Italian and French

This section is committed to a brief overview of the behavior of two relevant languages, Italian and French, with respect to the traits investigated in the questionnaires that will be presented, in order to facilitate the cross-linguistic perspective. The former language is relevant in that it is in contact with Piacentino and its pressure is becoming more and more powerful. The latter one is taken into account in that it displays strong similarities with the dialect under investigation.

### 1.2.1 Argument position

It is well known that the kind of predicate poses restrictions on the choice of indefinite determiner introducing the DP in an argument position (cf. Krifka, 2003; Cohen, 2007; Zamparelli, 2008b among others).

Italian is a language displaying the “subject-object asymmetry” (Castella, 2014:23): bare nominals are more easily allowed in object than in subject position. Plural count and singular mass objects can occur with a ZERO determiner when embedded under a verb which does not select kind-referring nouns (cf. Giusti, to appear). Typical examples of verbs which do not select a kind-referring nominal are consumption verbs: they allow for a bare nominal as their complement, contrary to attitude verbs, which always select kind-referring NPs (cf. the contrast between (46) and (47)).

- (46) a. *Bevo (il) café.* (Giusti, to appear:10)  
‘I drink coffee.’  
b. *Mangio (le) ciliegie.*  
‘I eat cherries.’
- (47) a. *Detesto \*(il) café.*  
‘I hate coffee.’  
b. *Detesto \*(le) ciliegie.*  
‘I hate cherries.’

The definite article in object position can be kind-referring (as in (48a-b)), indefinite (cf. (49a-b)) or definite (50a-b).

- (48) a. *L'acqua abbonda in questa regione.* (ibid.:8-9)  
the water abounds in this region  
‘Water abounds in this region.’  
b. *Le zanzare sono molto diffuse in questa regione.*  
the mosquitos are very wide-spread in this region.  
‘Mosquitos are wide-spread in this region.’
- (49) a. *Mi sono versata l'acqua nel bicchiere.*  
CL.1P.DAT be.1P.SG poured the water in the glass  
‘I poured water in my glass.’  
b. *In questa stanza (non) ci sono le zanzare.*  
in this room, (NEG) there are the mosquitos  
‘In this room, there are (no) mosquitoes.’
- (50) a. *L'acqua che ho preso dal frigorifero era troppo fredda.*  
‘The water that I took from the fridge was too cold.’  
b. *Le zanzare che mi hanno punto erano molto fastidiose.*  
the mosquitoes that CL.1P.ACC bit me were very annoying  
‘The mosquitoes that bit me were very annoying.’

Given the above consideration, object position is the one which better allows to understand the difference in the distribution of bare nominals and overt indefinite determiner. This is the reason why the first research only took in consideration this syntactic position.

As pointed out above, there are restrictions for a subject to appear with a ZERO determiner: it is ruled out with kind-referring predicates (51a), unless it is coordinated (51b) (cf. Longobardi, 2001). It is also possible with some individual-level predicates (those that are more “eventive” in Longobardi’s term, while it sounds weird with the “stative” ones), provided that the DP is modified, e.g. by a PP as in (52a).

- (51) a. *\*Elefanti di colore bianco sono estinti.* (Longobardi, 2001:343)  
‘White-colored elephants have become extinct.’  
b. *Elefanti e tigri di colore bianco sono estinti.* (Cohen, 2007:513)  
‘White-colored elephants and tigers have become extinct’



- (52) a. *Cani da guardia di grosse dimensioni sono più efficient/ aggressivi.*  
 ‘Watchdogs of large size are more efficient/aggressive.’  
 b. *??Cani da guardia di grosse dimensioni sono più pelosi/neri.*  
 ‘Watchdogs of large size are more hairy/black.’ (Longobardi, 2001:341)

French is a language which does not allow for bare nominals at all (Ihsane 2008). They are ungrammatical in both subject (53a) and object (53b) position.

- (53) a. *\*Etudiants ont occupé l’édifice.* (Ihsane 2008:194)  
 ‘Students have occupied the building.’  
 b. *\*J’ai vu étudiants dans l’édifice.*  
 ‘I have seen students in the building.’  
 (Delfitto & Schroten 1991:156(4))

The sentences can be saved by inserting the partitive determiner, which maintains the indefinite reading of the nouns (cf. (54), taken from Ihsane 2008:194).

- (54) *Tout le monde a lu des livres sur les chenilles / \*livres sur les chenilles.*  
 everyone has read of.the books on the caterpillars / books on the caterpillars

Bare nominals, however, are not completely disallowed in French: as noted by Heycock and Zamparelli (2003), these nominals can appear if coordinated (55a). Moreover, bare predicate nominals are disallowed, both with singular (55a) and plural (55c) nouns.

- (55) a. *Un chien noir et un chat gras se battaient fougueusement dans notre jardin.*  
 a dog black and a cat fat were fighting furiously in our garden  
*Chien et chat avaient tous les deux l’air très sale.*  
 dog and cat had both the appearance very dirty  
 (Heycock and Zamparelli, 2003:445)  
 b. *\*La baleine est mammifère.*  
 ‘The whale is mammal.’  
 c. *\*Les baleines sont mammifères.*  
 ‘The whales are mammals.’ (Roodenburg, 2004:305)

This, however, does not hold for nouns expressing functions (cf. Roodenburg, 2004), as in (56).

- (56) a. *Jean et Marie sont professeurs.* (ibid.:304-305)  
‘John and Mary are professors.’  
b. *Jean est professeur.*  
‘John is [a] professor.’

Interestingly, the contrast between kind-referring and non-kind-referring predicates is visible also in French, with a difference: kind-referring objects selected by attitude verbs are introduced by the definite article (cf. (57a)), while complements of consumption verbs display the partitive determiner (cf. (57b)).

- (57) a. *C’est un singe, mais il n’aime pas les bananes.* (Anscombe, 2001:73)  
‘It’s a monkey, but it doesn’t love bananas.’  
b. *Arrête de manger des gâteaux, tu vas avoir mal au ventre.* (ibid.:69)  
‘Stop eating cakes, you’re going to have stomachache.’

Piacentino, partially allowing for bare nominals in argument position (although only as direct objects), is expected to pattern more like Italian in this respect. Coordinated bare DPs and nouns expressing functions were not tested in the questionnaires, but they seem to be possible (58)<sup>10</sup>.

- (58) a. *Un caṇ e un gat as dèvan in t’al giardèṇ. Can e gat i parivan sporc abota.*  
a dog and a cat were fighting in the garden. Dog and cat CL.NOM looked dirty very  
‘A dog and a cat were fighting in the garden. The dog and the cat looked very dirty.’  
b. *Giani al é prufasur.*  
Gianni CL.NOM is professor  
‘Gianni is a professor.’

---

<sup>10</sup> These sentences are the product of my own judgment of native speaker. Further research on this topic is needed.

### 1.2.2 Aspect

Indefinite determiners correlate with the aspect of the sentence. Telicity is linked to the fact that the denotation of an event includes a “terminal point” (Krifka 1989), i.e. the result / aim of the action expressed by the verb. A typical diagnostics for this aspect is its compatibility with adverbials, such as “in an hour”. On the contrary, atelicity does not presuppose a result, and consequently it is able to co-occur with different adverbials, like “for an hour” (cf. Dowty 1979).

With respect to the aspect of the sentences, Italian *di+art* is almost unacceptable with atelic aspect (cf. 59a), while it is acceptable with telic aspect, as in (59b)<sup>11</sup> (Giusti, to appear).

- (59) a. *Maria ha raccolto (??delle) fragole per un'ora.* (Giusti, to appear:14)  
Maria has picked *di+art* strawberries for an hour  
'Mary picked strawberries for an hour.'
- b. *Maria ha raccolto delle fragole in un'ora.*  
Maria has picked *di+art* strawberries in an hour  
'Maria picked strawberries in an hour.'

As is clear, the omission of the partitive determiner in (59a) prevents the sentence from being ungrammatical. In fact, ZERO objects in Italian are compatible only with the atelic reading.

French allows the partitive determiner to occur with an atelic predicate (60). In fact, “noun phrases introduced by *des/du* do not delimit individual referents, as can be shown by the impossibility of their furnishing [...] the delimitation required for telic interpretations” (Corblin et al.,2004:19).

- (60) a. *Il a mangé des gâteaux pendant / \*en une heure.*  
he has eaten *des* cakes for / in one hour  
'He ate cakes for /\*in an hour.'
- b. *Il a mangé plusieurs gâteaux en / \*pendant une heure.*  
'He ate several cakes in / \*for an hour.' (Corblin et al.,2004:19)

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<sup>11</sup> Notice that these judgments are subject to diatopic variation. To provide a clear example, in my own Italian (which is influenced by the dialectal substratum), the sentence in (59a) is perfectly fine with the partitive determiner, while (59b) sounds weird. This reveals that the influence of the local dialect is pervasive in the use of the so called “standard Italian”.

Since the partitive determiner in Piacentino shares most of the features of the French one, one could expect *di*+art to occur mostly in atelic predicates.

### 1.2.3 Clause types

Clause type is one of the parameters taken into account in the first research. The two types are (i) episodic sentences in the past, thus using verbs in *passato prossimo*, corresponding to simple past in English (at least in the northern varieties of Italo-Romance languages), and (ii) generic sentences in the present.

Generic (kind-referring) nominals need to be distinguished by generic sentences, in that the former don't need to occur in the latter, and the latter don't need to contain the former (cf. Krifka et al. 1995). Romance languages sometimes express reference to kind by means of the definite article, even though there are restrictions in its use regarding e.g. the kind of predicate (cf. Giusti, to appear).

A first general picture of the situation in Italian is given by Cardinaletti and Giusti (in press) in the questionnaire on indefiniteness they designed and that was taken by 92 Italian informants (from different parts of the peninsula). Examples of items testing a generic and an episodic sentence from their questionnaire are given in (61a) and (61b) respectively.

(61) a. *Nella tua varietà di italiano parlato, un vegetariano direbbe:*

‘In your variety of spoken Italian, a vegetarian would say:’

*Non mangio carne / la carne / di carne / della carne / certa carne.*

not I.eat ZERO meat / ART meat / *di* meat / *di*+art meat / certain meat

‘I don't eat meat’

b. *Nella tua varietà di italiano parlato, raccontando la cena a casa di amici fatta ieri si direbbe:*

‘In your spoken Italian variety, while telling about the dinner party at friends’ yesterday, one would say:’

*Abbiamo mangiato carne / la carne / di carne / della carne / certa carne.*

we.have eaten ZERO meat / ART meat / *di* meat / *di*+art meat / certain meat

‘We ate meat’

They report that in Italian in generic sentences (as that in (61a)) ART is much more used and the partitive determiner never appears. In episodic sentences, instead, *di*+art is very frequent: it is in competition with ART and ZERO.

French seems to display a pattern which is similar to that of Italian, in that reference to kind is generally marked by the definite article (Behrens 2005), even though this is ambiguous between reference-to-kind and definite reading (cf. (62), adapted from Ihsane 2008: 219).

- (62) *Le chien aboie.* (epis./generic)  
 ‘The dog is barking/barks.’ (Guéron 2006:220(3))  
 a. *Ecoute, le chien aboie.* (episodic)  
 ‘Listen, the dog is barking.’  
 b. *Le chien aboie.* (generic)  
 ‘(\*Listen) the dog barks.’ (ibid., (4))

The same holds for the partitive determiner: as stated by Behrens (2005), French uses definite articles for pointing to kinds, while the partitive determiner for encoding non-specific readings. This means that in generic sentences the partitive determiner (parallel to the definite article) can surface with kind-referring meaning. This determiner can also appear in episodic sentences with an indefinite, non-kind-referring meaning (cf. (63)).

- (63) a. *Jeanne mange les pommes.* (Behrens 2005:285)  
 ‘Jeanne eats apples.’ (habitual), ‘Jeanne is eating the apples.’ (nonhabitual)  
 b. *Jeanne mange des pommes.*  
 ‘Jeanne eats apples.’ (habitual), ‘Jeanne is eating apples.’ (nonhabitual)

The difference between episodic sentences displaying ART or *di+art* is shown by the English translation of the nonhabitual reading of (63a) vs (63b). While the former refers to some specific apples (as shown by the definite article ‘Jeanne is eating *the* apples’), the latter has a non-specific reading (it is in fact translated by means of a bare nominal).

Le Bruyn (2010) adds that the pair *les/des* (ART/*di+art*) in French is the result of a process of semantic optimization, in which the former has specified for a specific interpretation, while the latter for a generic one (cf. (64a) vs (64b)).

- (64) a. *J’ai vu les lions.* (adapted from Le Bruyn, 2010:116)  
 ‘I have seen the lions.’ (specific)  
 b. *J’ai vu des lions.*  
 I have seen of\_the lions

‘I have seen some lions.’ (generic)

This correspondence, however, is not straightforward, since the same author points out that the definite article is preferred in generic sentences as the one in (65a), when there is no referent to be picked out.

- (65) a. *Les lions sont des chats.* (ibid.:116)  
the lions are of\_the cats  
b. \**Des lions sont des chats.*  
of\_the lions are of\_the cats

Given the language contact between Piacentino and Italian, and the similarity in the behavior of its partitive determiner and that of French, it would not be weird to find a “mixed” behavior in this dialect, i.e. *di*+art equally distributed in both episodic and generic sentences, being in competition with ART in the latter case.

#### 1.2.4 Noun classes

As previously shown, plural count and singular mass nouns are treated separately from singular count nouns, in that they are not compatible with the same indefinite determiners. The latter kind of NP displays only one option. In the following researches, abstract nouns were not considered, since they behave like singular count (cf. Tovenà 2001). Argument structure nominals were left out too, as they pattern along with mass nouns, though being countable (Alexiadou, 2011).

As pointed out by Cardinaletti and Giusti (in press), in Italian count/mass distinction is not due to scope properties but to other syntactic traits, e.g. polarity, specialization of meaning and type of context. Overall, ZERO and ART can both occur with plural count and singular mass nouns in negative contexts (as the one in (61a) for mass nouns vs (66a) for plural count). In episodic sentences (e.g. (61b)), the competition between the two forms remains, but *di*+art is possible as well, with the same rate of occurrence with both noun classes (66b).

- (66) a. *(Non) mangio patate / le patate.*  
not I.eat ZERO potatoes / ART potatoes  
‘I don’t eat potatoes.’  
b. *Ieri (non) ho mangiato patate / le patate / delle patate.*

yesterday not [I] have eaten ZERO potatoes / ART potatoes / *di*+art potatoes  
'Yesterday I ate / didn't eat potatoes.'

As for French, there is not a research aimed at verifying the rate of occurrence of indefinite determiners with mass and plural count nouns. It could be supposed, however, that French displays the same possibilities Italian has, with the exception of ZERO.

(67) a. *Jean a mangé des biscuits.* (Ihsane 2008: 142)

Jean has eaten of.the biscuits

'Jean ate (some of the) biscuits.'

b. *Jean a bu du café.*

Jean has drunk of.the coffee

'Jean drank (some of the) coffee.'

(68) a. *Les étudiants ont lu un livre.* (adapted from *ibid.*, 2008: 49)

the students have read a book

'The students have read a book.'

b. *J'évite l'eau en bouteille.*

(Giusti, to appear:4)

I avoid the water in bottle

'I avoid bottled water.'

The sentences above show how both ART and *di*+art<sup>12</sup> can co-occur with a plural count ((67a)-(68a)) and a singular mass ((67b)-(68b)) noun. As said before, noun class does not *per se* influence the choice of the determiner, since it is subordinated to other traits, such as polarity (cf. (27) above).

### 1.2.5 Scope properties

Unlike ZERO, which only takes narrow scope in Italian, plural count nouns introduced by *di*+art in Italian can take both narrow and wide scope (cf. Chierchia, 1997; Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2016, Zamparelli, 2008a). The sentences in (69a-c) exemplify what has just been claimed.

(69) a. *Non ho visto ragazzi* [only  $\neg\exists$ ]

'I didn't see boys'

---

<sup>12</sup> The partitive determiner in French is often indicated with the two masculine forms: *du* for mass nouns and *des* for plural count nouns (cf. Ihsane, 2008).

b. *Non ho visto un ragazzo* [both  $\neg\exists$  and  $\exists\neg$ ]

‘I didn’t see a boy’

c. *Non ho visto dei ragazzi* [both  $\neg\exists$  and  $\exists\neg$ ]

‘I didn’t see of-the boys’

(Chierchia,1997:91)

Mass nouns introduced by the partitive determiner can instead only take narrow scope, as (70) shows. The only pragmatically suitable continuation is (70b), entailing a narrow scope reading.

(70) *Non ho bevuto del vino.*

[I] did not drink *di+art* wine

a. #*Ho bevuto (del) Prosecco e (del) Cabernet, ma non ho bevuto (del) Ribolla*

[I] drank (*di+art*) Prosecco and (*di+art*) Cabernet, but [I] did not drink (*di+art*) Ribolla  
*o (del) Sauvignon.*

or (*di+art*) Sauvignon

b. *Ho bevuto solo (dei) liquori e (dell’)acqua minerale.*

[I] only drank (*di+art*) liqueurs and (*di+art*) mineral water

Corblin et al. (2004) point out that in French, NPs introduced by *du/des* take the narrowest scope, being generally dependent on other scoped elements, such as quantifiers (71).

(71) *Tous les professeurs nous ont conseillé trois / des livres.* (Corblin et al., 2004:19)

all the teachers to-us have recommended three / *des* books

‘All the teachers have recommended us three / some books.’

While the numeral in this example can take both narrow (meaning that for each teacher it holds that the teacher recommended three books, which are not necessarily the same the others suggested) and wide scope (i.e. there are three books such that all the teachers recommended them) with respect to the quantifier, for the *des*NP only the latter reading is possible.

Ihsane (2008), however, pointed out that, while the singular partitive article can only take narrow scope, the plural one can have ambiguous scope properties: when used referentially, it is able to take the widest scope. She explains this fact by recalling Bunt’s (1985) homogeneity hypothesis: since the referential use entails that the speaker pick up a specific entity, this is not possible for mass nouns, as their denotation does not contain minimal entities.



As regards the determiner *de*, Ihsane (2008) describes *de*NPs as “property-denoting arguments which occur in the scope of a negation and which lack existence entailment.” (ibid.:82). Thus, *de* always takes narrow scope with respect to the negation.

Bare *di* in Piacentino is expected to pattern like French *de*, while *di*+art could display some properties of both the Italian and French partitive determiner, being able to take both narrow and wide scope with both noun classes.

### 1.2.6 Clitic Left Dislocation

Since the second research focused indefinites in left dislocated sentences, this paragraph is dedicated to a brief overview of the properties of Clitic Left Dislocated (henceforth CLLD) structures.

CLLD is characterized by a constituent which is dislocated<sup>13</sup> at the left edge of the sentence (in the CP domain). The dislocated material is reintroduced in the clause by a resumptive clitic, whose case is the same of the element found at the beginning of the sentence. As discussed in Cinque (1982), the left-hand constituent behaves following the same syntactic properties as if it occupied the same position in which the resumptive clitic is found. CLLD in Italian displays some features, listed by Cinque (1982, 1990)<sup>14</sup>:

- i. Any maximal phrase can be found in “left-dislocated” position (cf. (72)).

- (72) [PP *Al mare*],      *ci siamo già stati.*      (p. 57-58)  
           to the seaside there-(we)-have already been  
       [AP *Bella*],      *non lo è mai stata.*  
           beautiful non-it-(she) ever was  
       [VP *Messo da parte*],      *non lo è mai stato.*  
           got out of the way not-it-(he) ever was  
       [QP *Tutti*], *non li ho visti ancora.*  
           all    not-them-(I) have seen yet  
       [CP *Che bevi*],      *lo dicono tutti.*  
           that (you) drink it says everybody

- ii. The “dislocated” phrase can be found at the left of any subordinate clause type (cf. (73)):

<sup>13</sup> The word “dislocated” here does not entail that the constituent has been moved. CLLD in fact has been analyzed as a structure which is not derived by Wh-movement (for the complete diagnostic for lack of Wh-movement, see Cinque 1990).

<sup>14</sup> All the following examples regarding Italian are taken from Cinque (1990).

(73) *L'unica persona che a Gianni, non gli ha mai fatto un favore, ...* (p. 58)

the only person which to Gianni not-to-him-has ever done a favor

*Da quando, al mercato, ci va lui, non mangiano più bene.*

since when to the market he goes there they don't eat well anymore

iii. There is theoretically no limit for the number of fronted phrases, as shown in (74):

(74) *Di vestiti, a me, Gianni, in quel negozio, non mi ce ne ha mai comprati.*

clothes to me Gianni in that shop (he) not-to-me-there-of them ever bought

(p. 58)

iv. When present, the resumptive element can be a clitic pronoun only (hence the contrast between (75a) and (75b)):

(75) a. *In quella città, non ci sono mai stato.* (p. 59)

in that town not-there-(I)-have ever been

b. *\*In quella città, non sono mai stato là.*

in that town not (I) have ever been there

v. There is obligatory Connectivity between the “left-dislocated” phrase and the TP-internal position (e.g. sensitivity to binding theory) (cf. (76)):

(76) *A lei/\*se stessa, Maria dice che non ci pensiamo mai.* (p. 59)

of her/herself Maria says that (we) not-there-think ever

*A \*?lei/se stessa, Maria non ci pensa.*

of her/herself Maria not-there-thinks

vi. The relation between the fronted element and the TP-internal position undergoes islands constraints, as in (77):

(77) *\*[PP A Carlo], ti parlerò solo del[<sub>NP</sub> le persone [<sub>CP</sub> che gli piacciono]].*

to Carlo I will talk to you only about the people that to him appeal

*\*[PP A casa], lo abbiamo incontrato [PP prima che ci andasse].*

home we met him before that he there went

- vii. Only in the case of a “left-dislocated” object, the resumptive clitic is obligatory (cf. (78a)). In all the other instances, it is optional (cf. (78b-e)). Only when the clitic counterpart of the fronted element does not exist, it is not required (cf. (78f-g)).

- (78) a. *Gianni, \*(lo) vedrò domani.* (p. 71)

Gianni (him) (I) will see tomorrow

- b. *A casa, non (ci) sono stato ancora.*

home not (there) have (I) been yet

- c. *Di questa faccenda, non (ne) voglio più parlare.*

hf this matter not (of-it) (I) want to speak anymore

- d. *Bella, pare che non (lo) sia mai stata.*

beautiful it seems that not (it) (she) ever was

- e. *Influenzato dalla pittura fiamminga, non (lo) è stato.*

influenced by Flemish painting not (it) ha was

- f. *Da Gianni, non è stato salutato.* (p. 68)

by Gianni, he was not greeted

- g. *Per Mario, non ho mai lavorato.*

For Mario, I never worked

- In French, the phenomenon of CLLD shares most of the properties listed above, i.e. ii. (79), iii. (80), vi. (81) and i. (82).

- (79) *Je pense pas que la bière<sub>i</sub>, ça<sub>i</sub> soit très bon pour le foie.* (De Cat, 2007:490)

I think not that the beer it be very goodfor the liver

‘I don’t think beer is very good for the liver.’

- (80) *Celui-là<sub>i</sub>, des vers<sub>j</sub>, il<sub>i</sub> en<sub>j</sub> produisait cinq tous les matins* (ibid.:489)

that-one-there INDEF verses he of-them produced five all the mornings

‘That guy produced five verses a day.’

- (81) *\*A Marie, je connais le flic qui lui a retiré son permis.*

to Marie, I know the cop who has taken her her license

(Delais-Roussaire et al., 2004:504)

- (82) *Cette femme, je n’ai pas confiance en elle.*

this woman, I do not have confidence in her

*A la campagne, Paul n'y reste jamais longtemps.*

in the country, Paul never stays there a long time

*Heureuse, elle ne l'a jamais été.*

happy, she has never been it

*Partir, c'est mourir un peu.*

to leave, that is to die a bit

*Qu'il se soit trompé, c'est évident.*

that he has made a mistake, that is clear

*Moi, personne ne veut m'aider.*

me, nobody wants to help me

*Pierre, je n'aime pas cet idiot.*

Pierre, I do not like that idiot

(ibid.:502)

### 1.2.6.1 Direct case clitics

Given the property in (vii), focusing on argument positions allows to have the clitic obligatorily realized. In the case of Italian, the only direct case clitic that could be realized is the accusative one, resuming a direct object. French has instead both accusative and nominative clitics.

As already mentioned, the clitic should display the same case of the dislocated element and, consequently, it displays the same Gender and Number features. In Italian, there are four forms for the Accusative clitic: *lo* (M.SG), *la* (F.SG), *li* (M.PL) and *le* (F.PL). In periphrastic tense constructions (e.g. *passato prossimo*) which display past participle, also this latter elements agrees with the moved clitic for Gender and Number (cf. 82). The same holds for French too (cf. (83)).

(82) a. *Gianni ha visto dei ragazzi.*

John have.3P.SG see.PST.PRT.SG.M of.the boys

b. *Maria ha visto dei ragazzi.*

Mary have.3P.SG see.PST.PRT.SG.M of.the boys

'John/Mary saw some boys'

c. *Dei ragazzi, Gianni/Maria li ha visti.*

Of.the boys, John/Mary CL.ACC have.3P.SG see.PST.PRT.PL.M

'Some boys, John/Mary saw them'

(83) a. *Le garçon, je l' ai vu.*

the boy, [I] him have see.PST.PRT.3SG.M

b. *Les garçons, je les ai vus.*  
 the boys, [I] them have see.PST.PRT.3PL.M

c. *Les filles, je les ai vues.*  
 the girls, [I] them have see.PST.PRT.3PL.F  
 ‘The boy(s) / girls, I’ve seen him / them.’

This provides evidence for clitic movement: it is assumed that clitic pronouns, during their derivation, undergo movement passing through the specifier position of the past participle (AgrPstPrt) triggering agreement for Number and Gender features (cf. Belletti 1999).

Accusative clitics are compatible only with universal quantifiers. According to Cardinaletti and Giusti (1992, 2006), quantifiers are (semi-)lexical heads with selectional properties projecting a full structure and embedding a DP (and optionally a PP). They are divided in partitive case assigners (existential and distributive) and case transparent (universal). The latter ones let accusative percolate through them to the DP they embed.

This theory predicts that Accusative clitics can be extracted out of universal Qs (through Spec,QP position), but not out of existential Qs. This is indeed borne out (cf. (84) for Italian and (85) for French).

(84) *I panini, li / \*ne ho mangiati tutti.*  
 the sandwiches, CL.ACC / \*CL.QNT [I] have eaten all

(85) *Les sandwiches, je les / \*j’en ai tout mangés*  
 the sandwiches, I CL.ACC / \*I CL.QNT have all eaten  
 ‘Sandwiches, I’ve eaten all of them.’

Italian can have left-dislocated subjects, but, as stated in (vii), clitic resumption is not required if no clitic counterpart of the dislocated element exists. In fact, Italian lacks subject clitics.

French, instead, being a non pro-drop language, displays a paradigm of Nominative clitics which introduce the left dislocated subject (cf. (86)).

(86) *Les clitiq<sub>u</sub>i, ils<sub>i</sub> comptent pas pour du beurre.* (De Cat, 2007:487)  
 the clitics they count not for some butter  
 ‘Clitics do count.’

Piacentino, as French, has a complete array of Nominative clitics that need to be obligatorily realized for some persons of the paradigm (see Ch. 2, §2.5.2 for a discussion of the issue). Thus, this dialect is expected to pattern like French in this respect.

### 1.2.6.2 Oblique case clitics

The oblique case clitic considered in this study is the quantitative clitic surfacing as *ne* in Italian and *en* in French. Cardinaletti and Giusti (1992, 2006) argue in favor of the DP status of the quantitative clitics, showing how in Italian CLLD constructions it is obligatorily realized (cf. (87a) with (78c)), just like accusative one.

- (87) a. *Di ragazzi francesi, \*(ne) ho conosciuti molti.* (ibid.:42)  
of boys French, [I] NE have met many  
b. *I ragazzi francesi, \*(li) ho conosciuti.*  
the boys French, [I] them have met

One of the general properties of quantitative clitics is the fact that they are compatible only with existential quantifiers. This is explained by the bipartition of quantifiers mentioned above made by the authors.

Quantitative *ne* signals the presence of partitive case, so its co-occurrence with universal QPs is ruled out (since the latter ones do not assign case, but they let it percolate through them). This also accounts for the presence of the preposition *di* in Italian and *de* in French with *ne/en* cliticization (cf. (88)-(89)). The incompatibility of *ne* with distributive QPs is explained by the proposal put forward by Cardinaletti and Giusti (1992; 2006) that distributive quantifiers have the specifier position (that through which clitic extraction occurs) filled by a distributive operator triggering the universal reading.

- (88) *Di ragazzi, ne ho visti molti / \*tutti.*  
of boys, [I] *ne* have seen many / \*all  
‘I’ve seen many boys.’ (adapted from Cardinaletti and Giusti 20017: 36)
- (89) *De filles, j’en ai vu plusieurs / \*toutes.*  
of girls, [I] *ne* have seen many / \*all  
‘I’ve seen many girls.’

The clitic *ne*, just like the accusative one, triggers agreement on the past participle in Italian (as in (90)), contrary to what happens with French *en* (cf. (91)).

(90) *Ne ho conosciut\*o / i / e molti / e.* (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2017: 43)

[I] *ne* have met.M.SG/M/F.PL manyM/F.PL

(91) *On en a mis / \*mises sur la table (des fourchettes).*

one *en* has put.M.SG / \*put.F.PL on the table (some forks)

(adapted from *ibid.*:41)

### 1.2.6.3 CLLD and scope

CLLD interacts with indefinite determiners occurring in the sentence. Among them, the partitive determiner in Italian is able to take narrow scope in specific contexts (episodic sentences in the past), but in CLLD constructions it can only have wide scope (cf. (92) and (93)).

(92) a. *Non ho invitato dei ragazzi alla festa, ma solo (delle) ragazze.*  $\neg\exists$

[I] did not invite *di+art* boys at the party, but only (*di+art*) girls

b. *Non ho invitato dei ragazzi alla festa perché erano antipatici.*  $\exists\neg$

[I] did not invite *di+art* boys at the party, because they were obnoxious

(Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018:145)

(93) a. *\*Dei ragazzi, non li ho invitati alla festa, ma solo (delle) ragazze.*  $*\neg\exists$

*di+art* boys, [I] did not invite them at the party, but only (*di+art*) girls

b. *Dei ragazzi, non li ho invitati alla festa perché erano antipatici.*  $\exists\neg$

*di+art* boys, [I] did not invite them at the party because they were obnoxious

As shown in the examples in (93), DPs introduced by *di+art* can be resumed in the sentence only by means of the accusative clitic (in this case *li*). To have a narrow scope reading, the quantitative clitic *ne* is necessary: in this case, bare *di* or ZERO need to appear (cf. (94)).

(94) a. *(Di) Ragazzi, non ne ho invitati alla festa, ma solo (delle) ragazze.*  $\neg\exists$

(Of) boys, [I] did not *ne* invite at the party, but only (*di+art*) girls

b. *\*?(Di) Ragazzi, non ne ho invitati alla festa perché erano antipatici.*  $*\exists\neg$

(Of) boys, [I] did not *ne* invite at the party because they were obnoxious

As noted above, universal quantifiers are compatible with the extraction of the accusative clitic. This means that *di*+art co-occurring with the quantitative clitic is ruled out in Italian, as in (95).

- (95) a. \**Dei ragazzi, ne ho invitati molti.*  
      *di*+art boys, [I] *ne* invited many  
      b. *Dei ragazzi, li ho invitati tutti.*  
      *di*+art boys, [I] them invited all

This is consistent with the scope properties of *di*+art in dislocated position: since it can only take wide scope, it cannot be resumed by *ne*, taking only narrow scope.

As regards French, De Cat (2007) states that dislocated elements in French are not interpreted in their reconstructed position. Thus, they take wide scope with respect to the sentential negation (cf. (96)).

- (96) *Toutes ces toiles<sub>i</sub>-là, elle ne les<sub>i</sub> a pas vendues.*  
      all those canvases-there she NEG them has not sold  
      ‘She didn’t sell any of (all) those pictures.’  
      #‘She didn’t sell some of those pictures.’

NPs introduced by *de* and resumed by clitic *en* have instead narrow scope, parallel to Italian (cf. (97)).

- (97) *De garçons, j’en ai pas vu.*  
      of boys, [I] *en* have not seen  
      ‘I didn’t see any boy.’

Piacentino is expected to pattern like Italian and French when bare *di* is present. *di*+art is instead predicted to be able to take wide scope and, possibly, narrow scope as well, given its different status from the Italian and French partitive determiner.



## Chapter 2

### The Piacentino dialect

This chapter introduces Piacentino<sup>15</sup>, which is the Gallo-Italic dialect<sup>16</sup> spoken in the province of Piacenza, contextualizing this Italo-Romance variety in its geographical context and presenting some relevant phonological and syntactic features that are important for the better understanding of the conducted researches.

#### 2.1 Geographical background: Emilia-Romagna

This section is dedicated to a brief overview of the geographical area in which Piacentino is spoken, namely the province of Piacenza. It constitutes the westmost part of the region Emilia-Romagna, whose geographical position is peculiar, since its territory is crossed by the main isogloss in the peninsula, namely that line going from La Spezia (in Liguria) to Rimini (in Romagna) that divides northern (Gallic) dialects from central and southern ones. The province under analysis borders with three different regions: to the south-west with Liguria, to the west with Lombardy and Piedmont, and to the north again with Lombardy. The eastern and southern parts border with the adjacent province of Parma (also belonging to Emilia-Romagna). Its geographical position already suggests that this area (not limited just to the province of Piacenza but extending to all Emilia-Romagna) is a sort of crossroads of different tendencies as regards local dialects.

The region itself can be divided, from north to south, in three geolinguistic strata (cf. Hajek 1997). The distinction made by the author is based mainly on phonologic phenomena that characterize local varieties.

The upper stratum is located to the north of the region, encompassing the northmost areas of the provinces of Modena, Reggio Emilia, Parma and Piacenza. This is the region of the lowland river Po plain, which is more opened to influences from bordering areas (Veneto to the west and Lombardy to the east).

The central stratum corresponds to the stripe surrounding the Via Emilia, the main road crossing Emilia-Romagna, linking Piacenza in the very east and Rimini in the extreme west of

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<sup>15</sup> The focus of this study is the dialect spoken in Lugagnano Val d'Arda, a variety of Piacentino spoken in the central-meridional area of the territory constituting the province of Piacenza.

<sup>16</sup> The term “dialect” here is used as a synonym of “variety”, abstracting away from any consideration about social prestige, use, or geographical extension (cf. Loporcaro 2013).

the region. This area is characterized by the fronting and rising of the vowel [a] in open syllables (e.g. [ˈtʃɛ:r] < CLARU(M) ‘clear’ or [ˈkɛ:rãŋ] < CARNIS ‘meat’).

The southern stratum is found in the area of the middle and upper Apennines of Emilia. The most consistent characteristic of the southern part is the consistent preservation of rounded front vowels such as [y] and [ø]. Moreover, some dialects spoken here show influences from Tuscan varieties, especially in the areas bordering with Tuscany.

Syntactic patterns are the same as those reported in other Northern Italian dialects (Hajek 1997). Moreover, Manzini and Savoia (2005) take Emilian varieties to pattern in the same way from a syntactic point of view. This confirms the fact that there is no substantial difference at syntactic level among the varieties spoken in the same area (at least in the same province). For this reason, it is possible to safely talk about Piacentino in a unified way as far as syntax is concerned.

### **2.1.1 The present-day dialect**

The term “Piacentino” refers to the sum of all the varieties spoken in the different towns present on the territory of the province. In some cases, they vary in the realization of peculiar phonological traits, while, as stated above, there are no differences among them on a syntactic level. This variety is spread, as the name indicates, in the territory belonging to the province of Piacenza, a city located in the north-west of Italy, about 70 kilometers south from Milan. Being in a central position with respect to different dialectal areas, its varieties are influenced by surrounding areas: precisely, the northern varieties show influences from Lombard, while in the southern Apennine area local dialects display Ligurian features.

Piacentino, as all the dialects spoken in the peninsula, developed directly from Latin. According to the classification of Italian dialects by Pellegrini (1977), Piacentino belongs to the Gallo-Italic group, which is part of the Northern-Italian dialects. As suggested by the classification, Piacentino originated from the Celtic substratum on which Latin superimposed (cf. Loporcaro 2013).

Following a distinction made by Pellegrini (1977), the province of Piacenza (together with Parma, Modena and Reggio Emilia) share the so called “Western Emilian” variety, distinguished from “Eastern Emilian” including the area of Bologna and Ferrara. Emilian is also mentioned in the UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger as being “definitely endangered”<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php>, accessed 21 December 2019.

As a matter of fact, Italian is gradually becoming more and more popular as the language of everyday communication. This phenomenon is more accentuated in the North-West: in Emilia-Romagna, for instance, 55,6% of people talk almost exclusively in Italian within the family context, and the percentage raises to 63,2% with friends and 89,1% with strangers. Moreover, the use of the dialect decreases among the younger generations and with the increase of the education level<sup>18</sup>. The use of Piacentino is following the same path (even though exact statistical data for this specific variety are not available).

## 2.2 The expression of indefiniteness in Piacentino

As was shown in the previous Chapter 1, Piacentino displays a wide range of means for the expression of indefiniteness, even broader than the array present in Italian.

In the following examples, all the options found in Piacentino are summarized (1a-d), including other three possibilities that are found in Italian too, namely (i) the quantifier *alcune* ‘some’ (2a), (ii) the cardinal *due* ‘two’, which in this case does not convey the cardinal reading but it is used as a synonym of the former quantifier (2b), and (iii) the periphrastic construction *un po’ di* ‘a bit of’ (2c) (see Cardinaletti and Giusti, in press).

- (1) a. *A mangi turtlen.*<sup>19</sup>  
 [I] eat tortellini  
 b. *A mangi i turtlen.*  
 [I] eat ART tortellini  
 c. *A mangi di turtlen.*  
 [I] eat di+art tortellini  
 ‘I eat tortellini.’  
 d. *A mangi mia ad turtlen.*  
 [I] eat not di tortellini  
 ‘I don’t eat tortellini.’
- (2) a. *A mangiaris un quèl turtlen.*  
 [I] would.eat a some friends  
 b. *A mangiaris un po’ ad turtlen.*

<sup>18</sup> Indagine ISTAT (2015) – *L’uso della lingua italiana, dei dialetti e delle lingue straniere* (2017), In <[https://www.istat.it/it/files//2017/12/Report\\_Uso-italiano-dialetti-altrelingue\\_2015.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files//2017/12/Report_Uso-italiano-dialetti-altrelingue_2015.pdf)>, accessed 6 February 2020

<sup>19</sup> The option displaying ZERO is available, but it is less acceptable than other preferred variants (see Chapter 3 for an analysis of the results of the first research).

[I] would.eat a bit of tortellini  
 c. *A mangiaris dū turtlen*.<sup>20</sup>  
 [I] would.eat two tortellini  
 ‘I would eat tortellini.’

The analysis of the relevant AIS maps reveals some interesting facts. The map 1037 ‘if there was water’ shows some occurrences of *di*+art also in Liguria and in some areas across the borders of Emilia-Romagna, as was claimed in Chapter 1. This context strongly supports a core existential indefinite meaning. For simplicity, (39) from previous chapter is reported here as (3).

- |     |              |                                      |
|-----|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| (3) | a. de l àyga | (AIS 1037, 190 Aiole (Imperia))      |
|     | b. dell akwa | (AIS 1037, 520 Camaiore (Lucca))     |
|     | c. de l akwa | (AIS 1037, 285 Pescarolo (Cremona))  |
|     | d. ad l akwa | (AIS 1037, 412 Carpaneto (Piacenza)) |
|     | e. d l akwa  | (AIS 1037, 459 Ravenna)              |

The map 1343 ‘to take wine’, which entails a saliency reading, shows different indefinite determiners surfacing in the area of the Province of Piacenza, namely ART (cf. (4a-b)), bare *di* (cf. (4c)). It seems that in this case the partitive determiner is spread in the surrounding province of Parma (cf. (4d-e)).

- |     |                    |                                      |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (4) | a. a kavè l vøy    | (AIS 1343, 412 Carpaneto (Piacenza)) |
|     | b. par pyà ar vén  | (AIS 1343, 420 Coli (Piacenza))      |
|     | c. (va) pjà du vén | (AIS 1343, 432 Bardi (Piacenza))     |
|     | d. a tœr dal vén   | (AIS 1343, 413 San Secondo (Parma))  |
|     | e. par tœr dal véy | (AIS 1343, 443 Tizzano (Parma))      |

The analysis of the map 637 ‘[some] violets’ gives a more homogeneous result, showing a spread tendency through the use of the partitive determiner in this area (cf. (5)).

- |     |              |                                     |
|-----|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| (5) | a. da viceli | (AIS 637, 412 Carpaneto (Piacenza)) |
|-----|--------------|-------------------------------------|

<sup>20</sup> The non-cardinal reading of *dū* ‘two’ is better captured in some fixed expressions, as in *Andum a fè dū pas* (lit. ‘Let’s go to do two steps’) ‘Let’s have a walk’.

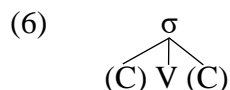
### 2.3 Phonological aspects of Piacentino

This short section presents concisely some phonological features of the dialect spoken in Piacenza that may account for the allomorphs of both the preposition *di* (surfacing as *d* in Piacentino), which is homophonous to the indefinite determiner referred to as ‘bare *di*’, and of the partitive determiner, whose forms differ from those found in Italian. The same rule can explain also the different outcomes of the 3sg clitics.

#### 2.3.1 The syllabic structure

Repetti (1997) described some sandhi phenomena occurring in a variety of Piacentino, namely the one spoken in Donceto<sup>21</sup>. The most relevant phonological aspect of this variety is the reduction of atonic vowels. The result of syncope and apocope sometimes gives rise to unpronounceable consonant sequences, and thus epenthetic vowels should be inserted to facilitate the pronunciation, as the case of *SILVATICU(M)* > \*/slvadg/ > [salˈvæædag].

Epenthesis can occur not only inside word boundaries, but also outside them, to facilitate the pronunciation of sequences of words in the same sentence. This process can be explained by looking at the syllabic structure of Piacentino exemplified in (6), following Repetti (1997: 648).



The onset can be constituted by a single consonant (C), or by the cluster C+r/l or other clusters with increasing (or the same) sonority. The coda can consist in a single C or a consonant cluster with decreasing sonority.

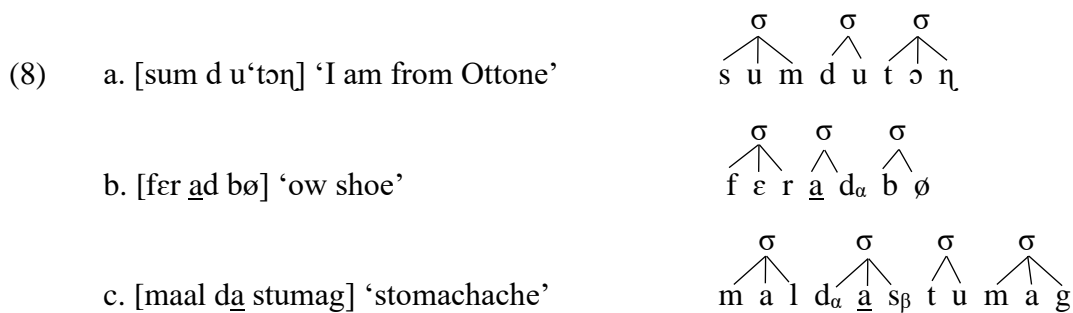
The epenthesis occurs if, after the syllabification of the phonemes of a word or a sentence, there remain either one or two non-syllabified Cs. In the former case, the epenthetic vowel occurs before the C (cf. (7a)), while in the latter it is inserted between the two Cs (cf. (7b)).  $C_\alpha$  /  $C_\beta$  indicate the non-syllabified consonants, while  $\underline{a}$  stands for the epenthetic vowel.

<sup>21</sup> Even though the authoress analyzes the data from the variety of Donceto, I take them to be applicable also to the dialect spoken in Lugagnano Val d’Arda, since the two varieties follow the same morpho-phonological rules. The examples provided by Repetti indeed correspond to the way inhabitants of Lugagnano (and surrounding towns) speak.



### 2.3.2 Allomorphs of the indefinite determiner/preposition “d”

Recurring to the syllabic structure and sandhi phenomena in Piacentino, it is possible to explain the peculiar form of the preposition and of the indefinite determiner *di*, surfacing in three allomorphs: *d*, *ad* or *da*. The underlying form is taken to be *d*, following the same line of Vanelli’s (1992) proposal extended by Repetti (1997) on the analysis of the singular masculine form of the definite article. Reporting some examples by Repetti (1997:651), it is possible to account for the three available , as in (8):



These examples show the surface allomorphs of the preposition *di*, but the same results hold also for the indefinite determiner.

Taking the sequence *d ragas* (of boys), the indefinite determiner can be realized in its underlying form, since Piacentino allows for syllabic onsets composed by C+r. In this case, the sequence would be syllabified as [dra.gas]<sup>22</sup>.

Analyzing a phrase like *ad pan* (‘of bread’), we know that the underlying form would be /d pãŋ/, but the determiner cannot be syllabified, since syllabic structure of Piacentino doesn’t allow for an onset formed by two Cs with decreasing sonority, as /dp/ in this case. So, the epenthetic vowel ‘a’ is inserted before the determiner, resulting in *ad*. Note that, if inserted in a sentence like *Ho mia catè d pan* (lit. ‘I didn’t find of bread’), *d* can be syllabified as the coda of the last syllable of *catè* (*ca.ted.pan*), so epenthesis is not required.

As for the realization of *d* as *da*, take a sentence as *Ho mia vèrt da scatuli* (lit. ‘I didn’t open of boxes’). Here the indefinite operator cannot be syllabified neither together with the past participle (creating the impossible cluster \*/rtd/), nor as the onset of the following syllable (leading to the impossible onset \*/dsc/). The epenthesis is not available before *d* since it would

<sup>22</sup> Please note that in the experimental items of both questionnaires, the form *ad ragas* was used. That is because an epenthetic ‘a’ (pronounced as [ə]) is often inserted even when not required. The sequence *d ragas* is perfectly fine and pronounceable by speakers of Piacentino.

create a syllable with a coda made of two Cs with increasing sonority (*\*/tads/*), so the only possible solution is the insertion of the vowel after the determiner. In this way, syllabification respects the phonological constraints of Piacentino, since the final *t* of the past participle is assimilated and not pronounced (*/ver.das.ca.tu.li/*).

### 2.3.3 Allomorphs of the partitive determiner

The partitive determiner, just like the indefinite one, can surface in three different allomorphs: *di*, *dla* and *dal*.

The underlying form of the indefinite determiner *d* is enough to account for the plural masculine form *di*, which is parallel to Italian *dei*. Since the definite article for plural masculine nouns in Piacentino is *i*, the surfacing form follows directly from the union of the determiner and the article ( $d+i > di$ ), as in the case of *di ragas* ('of the boys') found in some items of the questionnaires.

The same holds also for the singular feminine *dla* (Italian *della*), which is used with feminine mass nouns (e.g. *dla chèran* 'of the meat'). Given that the singular feminine form of the definite article is *la*, the merging of this latter form with *d* already gives the welcomed result. Note that the syllabic structure of this determiner does not violate phonological constraints in Piacentino, since a cluster *C+l* with increasing sonority is allowed.

The last allomorph of the partitive determiner can be easily accounted for by recurring to vocalic epenthesis, as shown above. *Dal* is used with masculine singular mass nouns (e.g. *dal lat* 'of the milk', parallel to Italian *del*) and with feminine plural nouns (e.g. *dal ragasi* 'of the girls', corresponding to Italian *delle*). For both these nominal classes the definite article surfaces as *l* (cf. Vanelli 1992 and Repetti 1997 for the masculine singular definite article). Taking the example *dal lat*, the underlying form would be */d l lat/*, which violates the syllabic structure of this language (creating the impossible onset *\*/dll/*). Thus, the two non-syllabified Cs, *d* and *l*, are unified by inserting the epenthetic 'a' between them.

### 2.3.4 Allomorphs of the 3sg clitics

The same line of reasoning can be adopted for the analysis of the 3sg nominative and accusative clitic (see (22) and (19) below respectively). These clitics, as is the case of Italian accusative one, have the same superficial form of the definite article, *l*. As was just shown for the article, these clitics too can have different allomorphs.

When no epenthesis is needed, they can surface in their primitive form, as in the case of *l'ho mangè* 'I ate it' or *lù/le l'é partì* 'he/she left'.

It seems that 3sg clitics are marked for Gender in those cases in which no epenthesis is needed and the following word is introduced by a consonant (cf. (9a-d)). However, when a clitic cluster intervenes or there is a non-syllabified C, the epenthesis rule is applied over the Gender distinction (cf. (10a-b)).

- (9) a. *Al pan, al tög.*  
 the bread, CL.ACC.3SG.M take.PRES.1SG  
 ‘I take the bread.’
- b. *La madzeina, la tög.*  
 ‘the medicine, CL.ACC.3SG.F take.PRES.1SG  
 ‘I take the medicine.’
- c. *Giani al va via.*  
 Gianni CL.NOM.3SG.M go.PRES.3SG away  
 ‘Gianni goes away.’
- d. *Maria la va via.*  
 Maria CL.NOM.3SG.F go.PRES.3SG away  
 ‘Maria goes away.’
- (10) a. *Maria, al pan, al la töza.*  
 Maria the bread CL.NOM(.M) CL.ACC(.F) take.PRES.3SG  
 ‘Maria takes the bread.’
- b. *Giani la töza al pan.*  
 Gianni CL.NOM(.F) take.PRES.3SG the bread

In (10a) the Nominative clitic has the masculine form, even though the subject is a woman, while the Accusative one displays feminine morphology even if the direct object (*al pan*) is masculine. Since it is not possible to have a sequence like */la al/*, the epenthetic vowels are inserted before and after the two consonants.

(10b) shows that the subject clitic apparently displays feminine agreement, while the subject is masculine. Since the subject in this sentence is syllabified independently, the clitic *l* would remain non-syllabified, as it cannot create an onset with the C following it (*\*/lt/*). The epenthetic vowel is then inserted between the two Cs.

It is then reasonable to think that there is not a real Gender marking on 3sg clitics, but that their form is influenced by the phonological surrounding environment.



## 2.4 Clitic Left Dislocation in Piacentino

Clitic Left Dislocation in Piacentino shares the general features that this kind of structures has in Italian (see Chapter 1). In this kind of structures, this dialect pattern more like the national language it is in contact with than French. Here are listed some relevant features of the CLLD in Piacentino:

- i. Any maximal category can be fronted to the left (cf. (11) which is the translation of the examples taken from Cinque 1990:57-58):

(11) [<sub>CP</sub> *C'at bev*], *il disan tüüt*.  
 that [you] drink, it says everybody  
 [<sub>PP</sub> *Al mèr*], *ag sum bele stè*.  
 to the seaside, there [we] have already been  
 [<sub>VP</sub> *Mis da pèrt*], *l'è mia mèi stè*.  
 got out of the way, it [he] has not ever been  
 [<sub>AP</sub> *Bela*], *l'è mia mèi stè*.  
 beautiful, it [she] has not ever been  
 [<sub>QP</sub> *Tüt*], *i ho mia uncura vist*.  
 all, them [I] have not yet seen

- ii. The dislocated element should be obligatorily resumed by a clitic in the main clause. Differently from Italian, in Piacentino the clitic should be obligatorily realized even when the “moved” constituent is an indirect object or an adjunct (cf. (12)). The clitic is not required when there is no clitic counterpart of the dislocated material (cf. (13)):

(12) *Giani, \*(l') ho vist*.  
 John, him [I] have seen  
*A Maria, \*(g') ho dat un libar*.  
 to Mary, to.her [I] have given a book  
*A ca', \*(ag) sum bele andà*.  
 to.home, there [I] have already been  
*Da cla roba ché, \*(ni) vöi mia parlè*.  
 of this thing here, of.this [I] want not talk  
*I ragas, \*(i) en mia rivè*.  
 the boys, they are not arrived

- (13) *Par lü, ho mia mèi laurè.*  
 for him, [I] have not never worked  
*Da le, a sum mia astè bazè.*  
 by her, [I] am not been kissed
- iii. The position of the fronted element and that of the clitic inside the TP field undergoes island constraints (cf. (14)):
- (14) \*<sub>[PP A ca '], l'um incuntrè</sub> <sub>[PP prüma ca g'andès]</sub>.  
 to.home, [we] him have met before that [he] there went  
 \*<sub>[PP A Giani], at vöi cuntè</sub> <sub>[PP dal libar ch'i g'han dat]</sub>.  
 to John, [I] to.you want to.tell about the book that to.him [they] have given
- iv. The resumptive element can be a clitic pronoun only. Tonic pronouns are disallowed (cf. (15)):
- (15) *A Piasëisa, ag sum bele stà.*  
 to Piacenza, there [I] am already been  
 \* *A Piasëisa, a sum bele stà là.*  
 to Piacenza, [I] am already been there
- v. There is theoretically no limit for the fronted phrases, as in (16) (translation of an example from Cinque 1990:58). Differently from Italian, not all of them need to be resumed:
- (16) *Ad vistì, a me, Giani, in c'al negosi lé, am n'ha mia mèi cumprè.*  
 clothes, to me, Gianni, in that shop there, [he] to.me of.them has not ever bought
- vi. The “dislocated” constituent can be found at the left of any subordinate clause (cf. (17) translated from Cinque 1990:58):
- (17) *Da quand, al marchè, ag va lü, i mangian mia pö bein.*  
 since when, to the market, he goes there, [they] don't eat well anymore

- vii. There is Connectivity between the dislocated constituent and the TP-internal position. The relation between these two positions is sensible to binding theory (cf. (18)), even though Piacentino lacks anaphors. Binding restrictions are nevertheless visible with pronouns:

- (18) *A lei<sub>i</sub>, Maria<sub>i</sub> la disa c'ag pensum mia mèi.*  
of her, Mary says that of.her [we] think not ever  
\**A lei<sub>i</sub>, Maria<sub>i</sub> ag pensa mia.*  
of her, Mary of.her [she] thinks not

It is possible to conclude that the features regulating CLLD in Piacentino are the same Italian displays. Thus, a comparison between the two languages can be safely made.

## 2.5 Clitic pronouns

This section briefly deals with three kinds of clitic pronouns in Piacentino, those that are relevant for the present study: accusative and nominative clitics, and the quantitative clitic.

### 2.5.1 Accusative clitics

Parallel to Italian, Piacentino displays a complete paradigm of Accusative clitics, reported in (19). This paradigm is poorer than that of Italian, since Piacentino has just one form for 3<sup>rd</sup> person clitics.

(19)

Person	Accusative clitic	Person	Accusative clitic
1sg.	<b>m</b>	1pl.	<b>g</b>
2sg.	<b>t</b>	2pl.	<b>v</b>
3sg.	<b>l</b>	3pl.	<b>i</b>

Their position and derivation are taken to be the same as the ones found in Italian (cf. Chapter 1). Clitic movement, though, is not always visible in Piacentino. As already mentioned in Chapter 1, in Italian periphrastic tense constructions (e.g. *passato prossimo*) displaying past participle, this latter element agrees with the moved clitic for Gender and Number.

In Piacentino the form of the past participle loses to a certain extent their inflection. Thus, agreement is visible only on those verbs whose unmarked participial form (masculine singular) ends with a consonant (cf. (20a-b)). The plural form is not specified for Gender: it displays

masculine agreement in all cases (cf. (20c)). Past participles ending with a vowel cannot be inflected (cf. (20d-f)).

- (20) a. *Giani l' ha vist di ragas / 'na ragasa / dal ragasi.*  
 John CL.NOM have.3P.SG see.PST.PRT.SG.M *di+art* boys / a girl / *di+art* girls  
 'John saw some boys / a girl / some girls'
- b. *'Na ragasa, Giani al l' ha vista.*  
 a girl, John CL.NOM CL.ACC have.3P.SG see.PST.PRT.SG.F  
 'A girl, John saw her'
- c. *Di ragas / Dal ragasi, Giani al i ha visti.*  
 of.the boys / of.the girls, John CL.NOM CL.ACC have.3P.SG see.PST.PRT.PL  
 'Some boys / girls, John saw them'
- d. *Giani l' ha incuntrè di ragas / 'na ragasa / dal ragasi.*  
 John CL.NOM have.3P.SG meet.PST.PRT *di+art* boys / a girl / *di+art* girls  
 'John met some boys / a girl / some girls'
- e. *'Na ragasa, Giani al l' ha incuntrè.*  
 a girl, John CL.NOM CL.ACC have.3P.SG meet.PST.PRT  
 'A girl, John met her'
- f. *Di ragas / Dal ragasi, Giani al i ha incuntrè.*  
 of.the boys / of.the girls, John CL.NOM CL.ACC have.3P.SG meet.PST.PRT  
 'Some boys / girls, John met them'

### 2.5.2 Nominative clitics

Piacentino, as other Northern Italian dialects, also displays a paradigm of Nominative clitics that are obligatorily realized in some persons (2sg., 3sg. and 3pl.) in declarative sentences (cf. Cardinaletti and Repetti 2010). The paradigm is given in (21) for the verb "to drink"<sup>23</sup>, reported from Cardinaletti and Repetti (2010:120).

- |         |             |    |            |
|---------|-------------|----|------------|
| (21) a. | (ə)- 'be:v  | b. | 'be:v -jə  |
|         | ət- 'be:v   |    | 'be:v -ət  |
|         | əl- 'be:va  |    | 'be:və -l  |
|         | (ə)- bu'vum |    | bu'vum -jə |

<sup>23</sup> This example is taken from the dialect spoken in Donceto (prov. of Piacenza), which is still almost identical to the variety spoken in Lugagnano Val d'Arda.

(ə)- bu'vi

bu'vi -v

i- 'be:v

'be:vən -jə

(21a) shows the availability of Nominative clitics in declarative sentences, while (21b) shows the inversion between the verb and subject clitic in interrogatives. The optional schwa found in (21a) in the 1sg., 1pl. and 2pl. forms is taken by the authoresses not to be a clitic pronoun but the phonological realization of a lower functional head in the so-called “subject field” (cf. Cardinaletti and Repetti 2004, 2009, 2010). The optionality of this “subject field vowel” (Cardinaletti and Repetti 2009) is accounted for by assuming that 1sg, 1pl. and 2pl T has a D feature checked by *pro* sitting in the SpecTP. For the remaining persons of the paradigm, instead, a movement of the verb to a functional head higher than T (namely XP, following Cardinaletti and Repetti 2010) is supposed. The obligatory presence of the subject clitic in these cases is explained by extending Roberts’s proposal (put forth for object clitics) to subject clitics, namely that cliticization is triggered by Agree, and that clitics cannot incorporate into heads endowed with an EPP feature. Supposing that X contains an unvalued version of the  $\phi$ -features that make up subject clitics, and that T contains the EPP feature (Chomsky 1995), subject clitics shall incorporate into X to check its  $\phi$ -features. The obligatory presence of the subject clitic in interrogative sentences is instead explained by the movement of the verb to a higher head to value interrogative features (Cardinaletti and Repetti 2009, 2010).

As is clear from the discussion above, Piacentino displays only three Nominative clitics (22):

(22)

Person	Clitic	Person	Clitic
1sg.	-	1pl.	-
2sg.	<b>t</b>	2pl.	-
3sg.	<b>l</b>	3pl.	<b>i</b>

As a consequence, in CLLD constructions, the subject clitic resumption is available only with those persons displaying a Nominative clitic. For the remaining persons of the paradigm, the “subject field” schwa is inserted, as in (21a) above (cf. (23)).

(23) *Me, (ə) sum rivè.*

*Te, t'è rivè.*

*Lü/Le, l'è rivè.*

*Nüètar, (ə) sum rivè.*

*Viètar, (ə) siv rivè.*

*Lilur, i en rivè.*

I/you/he/she/we/you/they, (ə)/CL.NOM have arrived

The fact that this language displays Nominative clitics allows to have a fine-grained analysis of subject position. Benincà and Poletto (2001) suppose that the appearance of the Nominative clitic in the sentence indicates that the subject has been dislocated in the Topic field. It is thus reasonable to think that dislocated subjects in languages displaying Nominative clitics can be resumed by these latter ones. Unifying the two perspectives presented so far, full subjects are left dislocated when the Nominative clitic appears (Benincà and Poletto 2001). The realization of clitic is itself a diagnostic of verb movement to a higher functional head in the subject field (Cardinaletti and Repetti 2010). The exemplification of the assumed structure is shown in (24).

(24) [Top Te [XP t é [TP  $\bar{t}$  é [VP [DP  $\bar{t}$ ] rivè]]]]]

### 2.5.3 Quantitative clitic

The quantitative clitic in Piacentino takes the underlying form *n*, according to the phenomenon of the reduction of atonic vowels.

As regards its properties, it behaves in the same way it does in Italian (see Chapter 1 for the features displayed by *ne* in Italian), in that it is incompatible with universal quantifiers (cf. (25)) and triggers agreement on the past participle, when the latter is inflectable, as discussed above (cf. (26)):

(25) a. \**Ad ragas, n' ho vist tüt.*

of boys, [I] NE have seen all

b. *Ad ragas, n' ho vist abota.*

of boys, [I] NE have seen many

(26) a. *Ad ragas / ragasi, n' ho incuntrè bota.*

of boys / girls, [I] NE have met.PST.PRT.M many

b. *Ad ragas, n' ho vist poc.*

of boys, [I] NE have seen.PST.PRT.M few

c. *Ad ragasi, n' ho visti bota.*

Of girls, [I] NE have seen.PST.PRT.PL.F many

The extraction out of quantifiers, too, follows the same general properties presented in Chapter 1 (§1.2.6.1-1.2.6.2), as (27)-(28) show.

(27) a. *Ho vist abota / tri [∅ ragas]*

[I] have seen many / three boys

b. *N'ho vist abota / tri [ne]*

[I] NE have seen many / three

(28) a. *Ho vist tüt [i ragas]*<sup>24</sup>

[I] have seen all the boys

b. *\*N'ho vist tüt [ne]*

[I] NE have seen all

## 2.6 Summary

This chapter gave some general information about different aspects characterizing the dialect spoken in Piacenza:

- A wider availability of indefinite determiners with respect to Italian. It is expected that the researches that will be presented in the next chapters will confirm this broad set of different options;
- Some phonological aspects peculiar to Piacentino that help understanding the superficial realization of two indefinite determiners considered here, bare *di* and *di+art*;
- The behavior of this dialect in CLLD constructions to better understand the items of the second research;
- The kinds of clitics present in Piacentino (accusative, nominative and quantitative), to show their similarity with respect to Italian ones. Moreover, subject clitics were introduced, since Italian lacks such class.

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<sup>24</sup> I didn't translate the distributive "both" for two reasons: first, distributive QPs were not considered here; second, in Piacentino the equivalent of "both" is a periphrastic construction involving a universal quantifier (i.e. *tüt dü* 'all two').

## Chapter 3

### The first research

This chapter presents the first research about indefinites in Piacentino. It was carried out in February 2018 with the purpose of having an overview of the available indefinite determiners in this dialect and shedding light on the optionality in the choice of competing forms.

The collection of data of this first research aims at casting some light about the phenomenon of optionality in the use of indefinite determiners in the variety of Piacentino spoken in Lugagnano Val d'Arda, a little town of 3927 inhabitants<sup>25</sup> located on the northern slope of the Ligurian Apennine in the southern part of the province of Piacenza, about 35 kilometers from this city. The research questions that this survey aims at answering (listed in detail in the Introduction) are briefly reported here:

- How many indefinite determiners are available in Piacentino?
- What is the rate of optionality? Could different competing indefinite determiners co-vary in the same syntactic context?
- How do indefinite determiners behave with respect to some relevant traits individuated by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018), i.e. noun class, clause type, aspect, specialization of meaning and scope of the indefinite determiner?
- Is there true optionality? Do the competing forms specialize for meaning?

### 3.1 Methods

#### 3.1.1 Participants

A total number of 16 interviewees took part in this research. They are equally distributed in the mean three age classes:

- 5 informants in the range up to 30, referred to as 'A';
- 6 informants in the range 31-60, referred to as 'B';
- 5 informants in the range above 61, referred to as 'C'.

Their cultural background is quite homogeneous: they are from the same area (Lugagnano and other small towns in its surroundings), except for two informants who have been living in Piacenza for many years (though one of them was born and grown near Lugagnano) and another one who recently moved to Parma. They all grew in contact with the dialect and learned it as a

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<sup>25</sup> According to ISTAT statistics updated on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018.



mother tongue from their parents or grandparents. The education level was taken into account too. In this respect, the participants are distributed in the following way:

- 3 informants attended only elementary school. They are indicated with the label ‘E’;
- 1 has middle school education (label ‘M’);
- 9 informants have high school formation (referred to with ‘S’);
- 3 attended university (categorized with ‘U’).

The informants switch easily from Piacentino to colloquial Italian, with a more consistent use of the dialect as L1 in everyday communication for the members of the older group. They usually use dialect, switching to Italian in formal situations (when necessary). The members of the middle range use the dialect on a daily base, though there is a sort of diglossia: at work the main language is Italian, while at home and with friends dialect is more frequently used. The speakers of the younger group, instead, use dialect but not as a proper L1 because it has a narrower field of use (for example with friends, relatives or acquaintances in order to suggest a particular interpretation or to give more emphasis to what they are saying).

Table 1 below reports the essential information about each speaker who took part in the research.

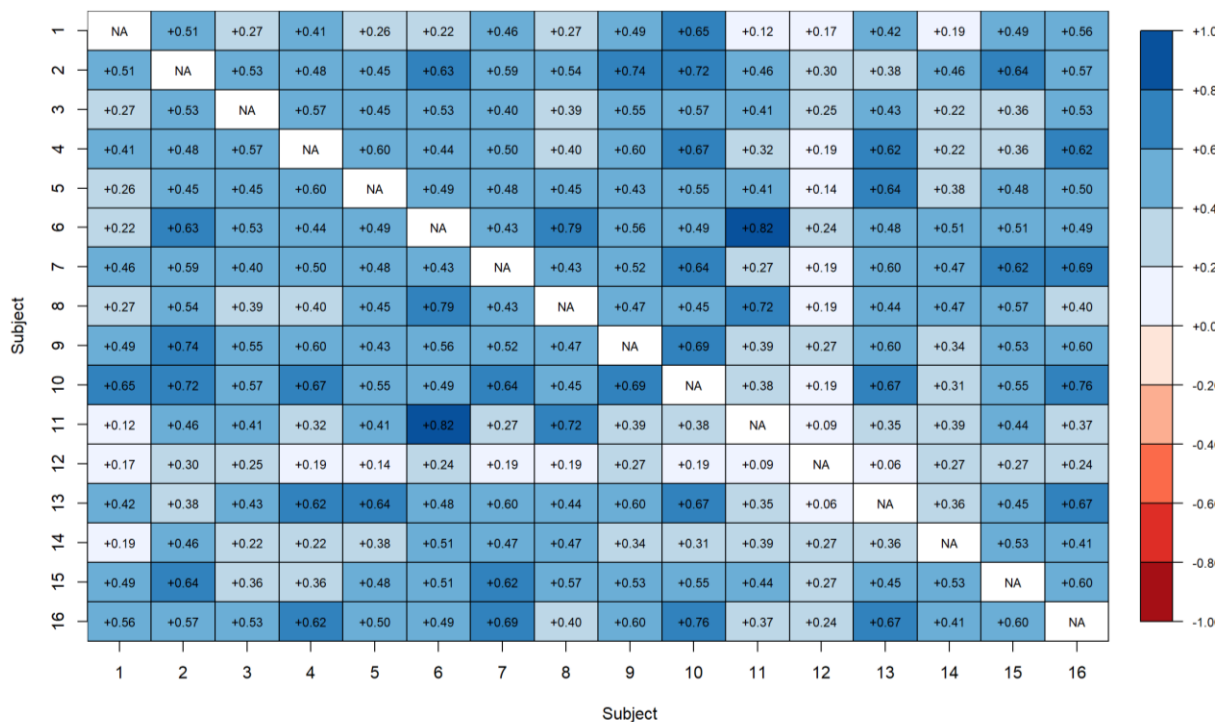
<b>Table 1</b>	<b>Age (class)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education (class)</b>	<b>Years he/she lived in Lugagnano</b>
<b>Informant 1</b>	70 (C)	M	Middle school (M)	70
<b>Informant 2</b>	53 (B)	F	High school (S)	53
<b>Informant 3</b>	67 (C)	M	High school (S)	62
<b>Informant 4</b>	24 (A)	F	High school (S)	24
<b>Informant 5</b>	27 (A)	M	High school (S)	27
<b>Informant 6</b>	87 (C)	F	Elementary school (E)	60
<b>Informant 7</b>	65 (C)	F	Elementary school (E)	60
<b>Informant 8</b>	24 (A)	F	University (U)	0
<b>Informant 9</b>	47 (B)	F	High school (S)	45
<b>Informant 10</b>	55 (B)	M	High school (S)	40
<b>Informant 11</b>	38 (B)	F	High school (S)	33
<b>Informant 12</b>	43 (B)	F	High school (S)	43
<b>Informant 13</b>	53 (B)	M	High school (S)	53
<b>Informant 14</b>	25 (A)	F	University (U)	25

<b>Informant 15</b>	29 (A)	M	University (U)	26
<b>Informant 16</b>	83 (C)	F	Elementary school (E)	20

It is necessary to check which subjects need to be fended off by the pool in that they are outliers. Among possible strategies to detect them, the one adopted here consists in eliminating those informants who display a low agreement with the other subjects. Krippendorff's alpha (Krippendorff 1980) was applied for this purpose.

Krippendorff's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is "a reliability coefficient developed to measure the agreement among observers, coders, judges, raters, or measuring instruments drawing distinctions among typically unstructured phenomena or assign computable values to them." (Krippendorff 2011).

In order to verify the Inter-Coder Agreement, each participant's answers pattern was compared with the others (cf. Figure 1). The threshold that was fixed to establish low agreement is  $\alpha < 0.30$ . Subjects displaying a lower rate of agreement need to be fended off.



**Figure 1:** Inter-Coder Agreement between subjects ( $\alpha = 0.462$ ). The boxes marked "N/A" indicate unavailable values, as there is no reason to compare a subject with himself/herself. The more the  $\alpha$  value approaches 1, the higher the agreement is. On the contrary, the more the  $\alpha$  value approaches 0, the lower the agreement is.

Figure 1 shows that, among all the participants, Subject 12 displays a very low agreement with all the other participants, as the value of  $\alpha$  is always lower than 0.30. For this reason, Subject 12 was excluded from the pool and her answers were not considered in the analysis of the data.

Subject 1 too shows low agreement ( $\alpha < .30$ ) with seven of the other participants (or six, considering the anomalous pattern displayed by Subject 12). Since he agrees with more than the half of the participants, and in order to eliminate the minimum number of informants, only Subject 12 was fended off from data analysis. In §2, then, only the remaining 15 subjects were considered.

### 3.1.2 Stimuli

The questionnaire was patterned after the one structured and submitted by Cardinaletti and Giusti (in press), with some small changings. For reasons of space, only one example is provided here for each typology of item<sup>26</sup>. The reader will find the complete set of items in Appendix A. The structure of the questionnaire is the one that follows:

- 13 multiple choice items with indefinite direct objects (singular mass vs. plural count noun distinction (1) that was replicated for each category of item) with different polarity (2), tense (cf. (2a) vs. (3)), aspect (4) and different pragmatic contexts (5).

(1) *In t'al to dialët, un astemi dirisal:*

‘In your dialect, a teetotaler would say:’

a. *A bev mia                      vein / al vein / ad vein / dal vein / sèrt vein*<sup>27</sup>

[I] don't drink ZERO wine / ART wine / di wine / di+art wine / certain wine

b. *A bev mia                      liquor fort / i liquor fort / ad liquor fort / di liquor fort / sèrt liquor fort*

[I] don't drink ZERO spirits / ART spirits / di spirits / di+art spirits / certain spirits

(2) a. *In t'al to dialët, un vegetarian dirisal:*

‘In your dialect, a vegetarian would say’

*A mangi mia                      chèran / la chèran / ad chèran / dla chèran / sèrta chèran*

[I] don't eat ZERO meat /ART meat / di meat / di+art meat /certain meat

b. *Adès, al post ad “chèran” matag “patèti”, e dam tüit al ragion c'at pö in t'al to dialët.*

‘Now replace *meat* with *potatoes* and give me all the sentences you can [say] in your dialect’

*A mangi mia                      patèti / al patèti / ad patèti / dal patèti / sèrti patèti*

[I] don't eat ZERO potatoes/ART potatoes/di potatoes/di+art potatoes/certain potatoes

<sup>26</sup> In the following examples, the possible choices are given in *italics* to distinguish them from the assignment.

<sup>27</sup> For reasons of space, here I give all the options in a row, separating them with a slash. In the questionnaire, each possible answer occupied a line and had a little empty square to be checked in case the informant gave that option as a possible answer.

- (3) *In t'al to dialët, s'at cuntès la seina fata dai to amis iarsira, dirisat:*  
 'In your dialect, if you would talk about the dinner you had at your friends' last night, you would say:'  
*Um mangè chèran / la chèran / ad chèran / dla chèran / sèrta chèran*  
 [We] ate ZERO meat / ART meat / di meat / di+art meat / certain meat'
- (4) *Sum a dré cuntè cu c'ho fat dumènica pr'astè dal temp fōra d'in ca:*  
 'I am telling what I did on Sunday to spend some time outdoors:'  
 a. *Ho tajè erba / l'erba / d'erba / dl'erba pr' un'ura*  
 [I] mowed ZERO grass / ART grass / di grass / di+art grass for an hour  
 b. *Ho tajè erba / l'erba / d'erba / dl'erba in t' un'ura*  
 [I] mowed ZERO grass / ART grass / di grass / di+art grass in an hour
- (5) a. *Intant ca Giani al preparèva la tèvla in giardein...*  
 'While John was laying the table in the garden...'  
*Maria l'é andè zu in canteina a tö vein / al vein / ad vein / dal vein*  
 Mary went down to the cellar to take ZERO wine / ART wine / di wine / di+art wine  
 b. *In t'al to dialët, sa 't cunsigniès cus as pō fè quand as va in muntagna, dirisat:*  
 'In your dialect, if you would suggest what one can do on the mountain, you would say:'  
*At pō catè viulèti / al viulèti / ad viulèti / dal viulèti / sèrti viulèti*  
 [You] can collect ZERO violets / ART violets / di violets / di+art violets / certain violets
- 6 open comments on possible differences in meaning and interpretation of the choices, if the informant chose more than one. One of these items is reported in (6).
- (6) *Sa t'è sarnì püsè 'd 'na risposta in (5)<sup>28</sup>, at sa 'd vis c'ag sia 'na difareinsa ad cu ch'i vön di tra vüna e l'ètra? Pöt aspighè quèl ela?*  
 'If you chose more than one answer in (5), do you think there is a difference in meaning among them? Could you explain it?'

<sup>28</sup> This number is referred to the correspondent item in the questionnaire, according to the numeration of the assignments.

- 2 multiple choice items in which the informant was asked to give the possible variants in pragmatically coherent sentences, structured with a causative subordinate clause or with a coordination (7).

(7) *Lesà ogni ragion fein in fonda e signa cu ch'è scrit ma 't diris.*

'Read each sentence entirely and check those that are written as you would say them:'

*A disnè incö ho mia buì                                      acqua / l'acqua / d'acqua / dl'acqua*

Today, at lunch, [I] didn't drink ZERO water / ART water / di water / di+art water

*parché la sèva ad candegina*

because it tasted like chlorine

- 3 questions on the linguistic attitude of the participants (confidence in their judgments, their linguistic attitude and the personal appreciation of the task they had to fulfill). An example is reported in (8).

(8) *A pinsè a la manera ca t'è cumpilè 'l dumandi, cus dirisat?*

'Thinking about the way you answered the questions, what would you say?'

a. *Ho sempar sarnè sicür/sicüra, sensa aveg di dübi*

'I have always been sure, without having doubts'

b. *G'ho avè di dübi, ma ad solit s'era sicür/sicüra ca 'l me risposti i fisan giüsti*

'I had some doubts, but generally I was sure that my answers were correct'

c. *Specialment par sèrti dmandi sum mia sicür/sicüra d'avé dat la risposta giüsta*

'Especially for some questions I am not sure I gave the right answer'

### 3.1.3 Procedure

Data collection was carried out personally through the oral submission of the previously mentioned questionnaire directly to the interviewees. The questionnaires were printed on paper sheets in order to facilitate the procedure of registration of the answers. The interviews were done in a quiet setting (frequently in the house of the informants) in a relaxed context (we both sat at the table with a glass of water to make the research appear as a normal conversation). The questions and all the possible alternatives were furnished orally, and the interviewee had to spell out all the answers he/she considered correct. If needed, the informant had direct access to the questionnaire in order to make it possible for him/her to read directly from the sheet. All the possible variants were checked directly on the sheet immediately after their spell-out. The

submission of the assignments was concluded by the request of the consensus to use the data by checking the option “I agree” and signing. The procedure took about half an hour to be concluded.

The submission of the questionnaire was preceded by a brief explanation of the purpose of the study, explicating that the informants could choose more than one option (if necessary, all of them) and stressing the fact that it was not an evaluation of the linguistic skills of the speakers (and so that there were no wrong answers) but, on the contrary, that their contributions were very important for the understanding of the phenomenon. This was done to enhance the awareness of the participants of their linguistic tools and to stimulate a deeper reflection about the language. The hope was to avoid superficial answers and to push the interviewees to think deeply about all the nuances of the proposed sentences and about the differences between possible options. All the interviews and the brief presentations were carried out in dialect, in order not to have a direct influence of colloquial Italian in the answers and trying to make them as accurate as possible.

#### **3.1.4 Data analysis**

The data collected by means of the questionnaire will be analyzed in order to verify whether the investigated variables are dependent between them. In order to do so, we ran *Pearson's chi-squared test* ( $\chi^2$ ).  $\chi^2$  is used to verify the probability that the difference found between two variables arose by chance, by comparing the “expected” value a variable should assume with the “observed” value (cf. Johnson, 2013; Gries, 2013). To find out the kind of relation two variables instantiate, *Parson residuals* will be analyzed. They correspond to “the difference between each cell's observed minus its expected frequency, divided by the square root of the expected frequency. If a Pearson residual is positive/negative, then the corresponding observed frequency is greater/less than its expected frequency. Second, the more the Pearson residual deviates from 0, the stronger that effect.” (Gries, 2013:326).

In the following analysis, the acceptability of the indefinite determiners is taken as the dependent variable, while the independent variables are the contexts that were tested in the questionnaire (noun class, polarity, clause type, aspect, scope and context).

When a variable presented more than two levels, the *Pairwise comparison of proportion* test was used. It allows to compare all the pairs of level of a given variable in order to highlight possible statistically significant difference between them.

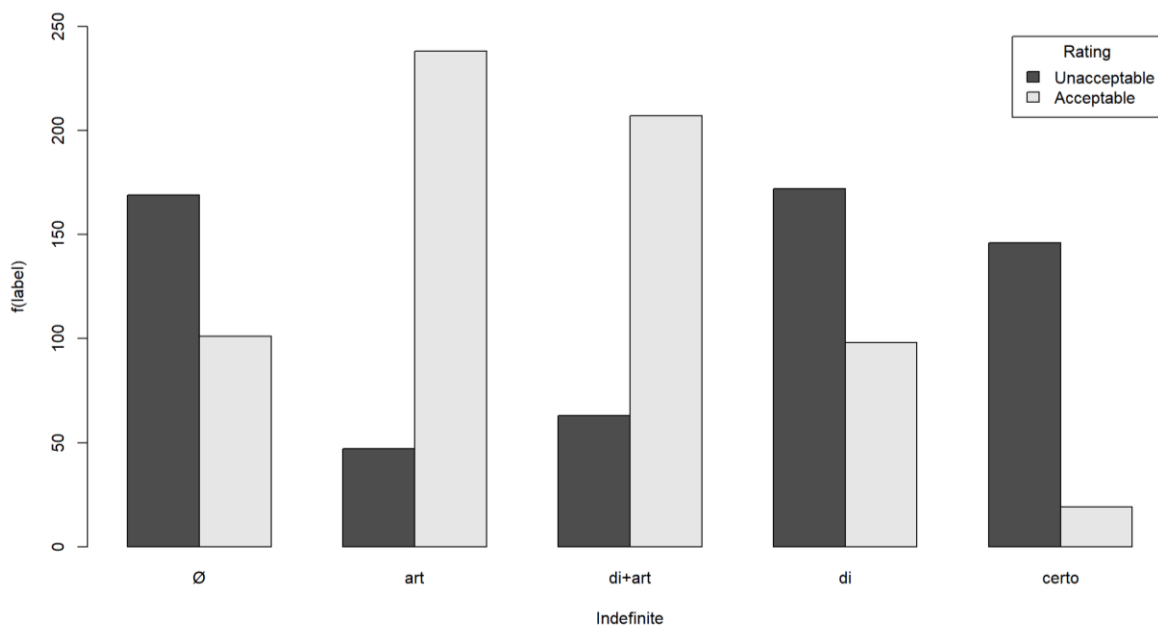
It is important to underline that this analysis, as every statistical analysis, exhibits some limits that are linked to the problem of multiple comparisons; thus, the data need to be taken with caution.

### 3.2 Results

In what follows, the (un)acceptability of the different DPs under investigation will be analyzed in relation to the different relevant parameters, namely age, noun class, polarity, clause type, aspect, scope and saliency.

#### 3.2.1 Indefinite DP and acceptability

A first analysis was conducted to verify the existence of significant differences among the considered indefinite determiners with respect to their overall acceptability. The  $\chi^2$  test showed indeed that the differences among these DPs reach statistical significance ( $\chi^2 = 337.43$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The bar plot in Figure 2 shows their rate of (un)acceptability.



**Figure 2:** Bar plot of the (un)acceptability rate of the indefinite determiners under investigation.

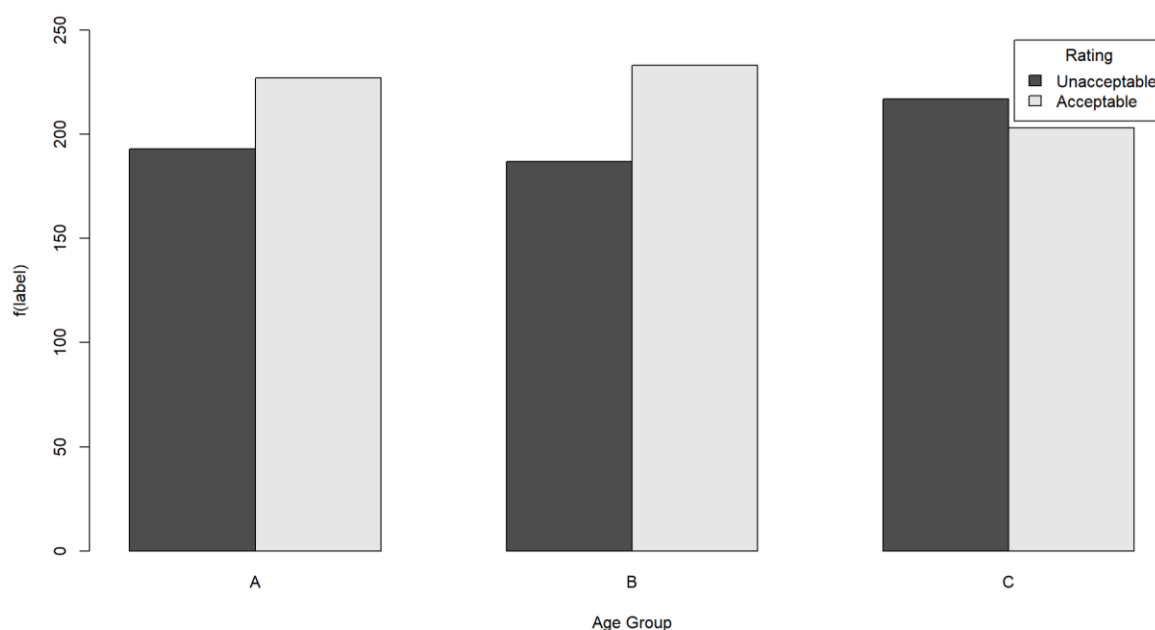
Since there is a significantly difference among these determiners, the *Pairwise comparison of proportion* was applied to reveal which are the pairs whose difference reaches statistical significance. The test gave the following results: *certo* is significantly different from ZERO ( $p < .001$ ), ART ( $p < .001$ ), bare *di* ( $p < .001$ ) and *di+art* ( $p < .001$ ). Moreover, ZERO significantly differs from ART ( $p < .001$ ) and *di+art* ( $p < .001$ ), but no relevant difference was found between

ZERO and bare *di* ( $p = .86$ ). Bare *di*, in turn, significantly differs from ART ( $p < .001$ ) and *di+art* ( $p < .001$ ). ART and *di+art*, instead, do not display any significant difference ( $p = .11$ ).

The results confirm the expected distribution of *certo*, which looks to be unavailable in most contexts in Piacentino. The difference displayed by ZERO consists in its higher unavailability with respect to the others. Its distribution resembles that of bare *di* (in fact the difference between them is not statistically relevant): this could suggest a parallel between them or be due to other factors. ART and *di+art* are instead very similar in their distribution. They display a higher rate of acceptability with respect to the other ones. *Di+art* subtly differs from ART in that it has a slightly lower number of acceptance judgments, while ART is the DP which registered the highest number of occurrences among these.

### 3.2.2 Acceptability of indefinite DP in age groups

The subjects participating in the submission of the questionnaire are evenly distributed for age groups: after the elimination of Subject 12 (cf. §3.1.1), in fact, each group counts exactly five informants. The age of the participants is taken as a variable to reveal possible differences in the rate of acceptance of different indefinite DPs the groups show. The  $\chi^2$  test reveals that the dependence between age group and acceptability of different indefinite DPs is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 4.8132$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .090$ ), even though it suggests an interesting tendency<sup>29</sup> (see Figure 3). Younger speakers (groups A and B) seem to have a slightly higher acceptance rate than the older ones (group C).



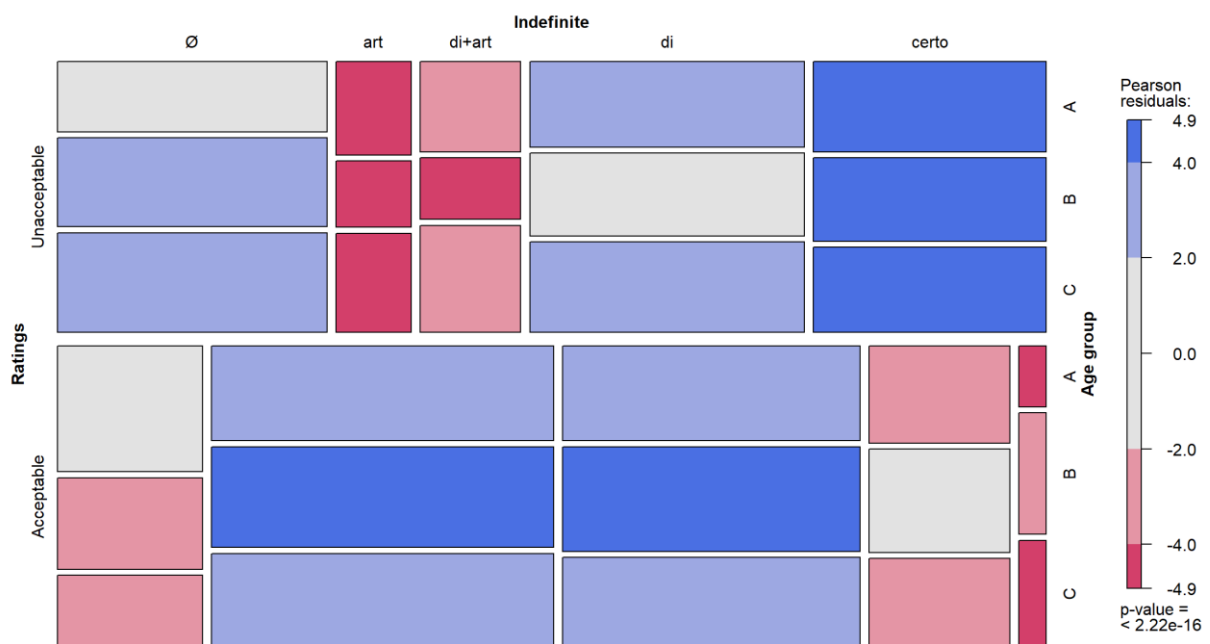
**Figure 3:** Bar plot of the acceptance rate of the age groups.

<sup>29</sup> If  $0.05 < p < 0.1$ , then the difference is “marginally significant”, i.e. there is a tendency.



It may be the case that younger generations are more influenced by the contact with Italian, so they more easily accept structures borrowed from Italian. Older speakers are instead more conservative, preserving the structures of the dialect when Italian had not influenced it to a great extent. The *Pairwise comparison of proportion*, however, revealed that the difference between the pairs of age groups does not reach statistical significance: A vs B ( $p = .73$ ), A vs C ( $p = .22$ ) and B vs C ( $p = .14$ ).

Comparing the acceptability of each indefinite determiner for each age group, significant differences are found ( $\chi^2 = 350.5$ ,  $df = 22$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The mosaic plot in Figure 4 shows how DPs are accepted among the three groups.



**Figure 4:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and age groups (A/B/C).

In the mosaic plot, the color of shading resembles the sign of the residual (blue for positive values, red for negative ones), while the intensity relates to the importance of the deviation (the darker the shade, the greater the deviation). The plot also reflects the distribution of the data with respect to the parameters taken in consideration: the bigger is one area, the more are the data falling into it (cf. Levshina 2015)

As inferable from Figure 4, *certo* is strongly rejected by all the groups almost at the same rate, reaching statistical significance. Bare *di* is significantly less accepted by groups A and C, even though the dimension of the three areas is roughly equal. ART and *di+art* show instead an

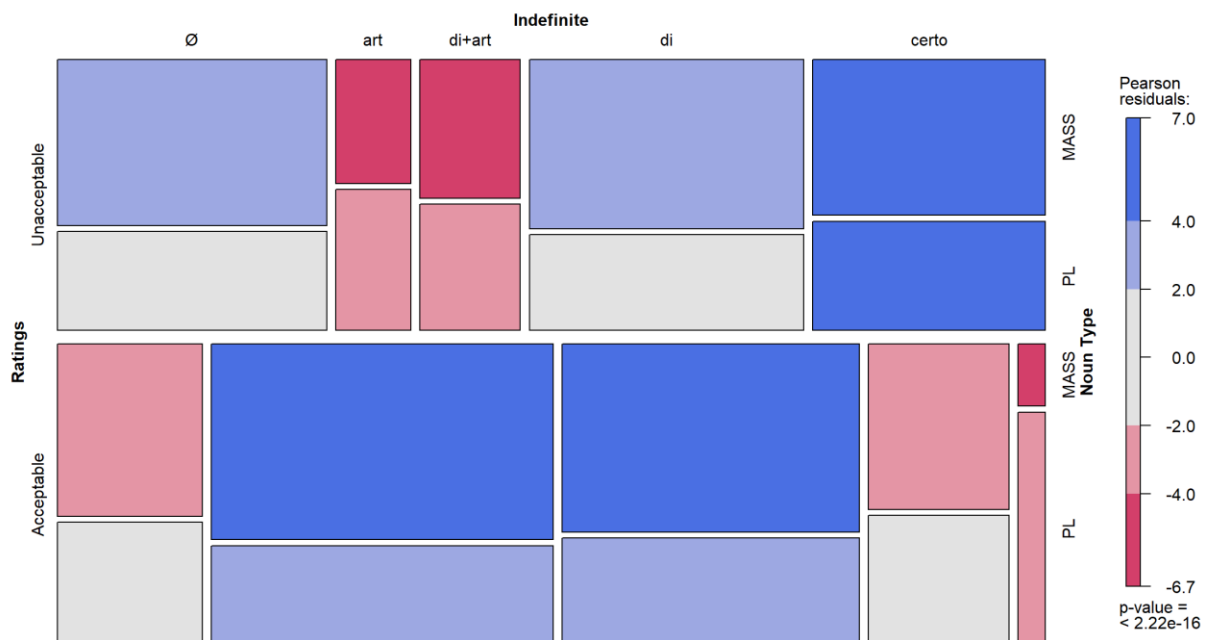
identical pattern: they are significantly more accepted by all the groups, with a greater deviation (more acceptability) shown by group B.

Interestingly, ZERO is significantly less accepted by groups B and C: this points to the fact that ZERO may be borrowed from Italian with the more consistent contact between the national language and the dialect, and that it is more tolerated by the younger generations, those who are more in contact with the standard language.

The “standardization” of ZERO in Piacentino confirms the observation made by Loporcaro (2013), referring to Chambers e Trudgill (1980) about the autonomy of the national language versus the heteronomy of the dialects. The former is seen by the speakers as the standard to which the dialects need to conform. One of the possible ways is indeed the borrowing, in this case, of a functional element such as the ZERO determiner.

### 3.2.3 Indefinite DP and noun class

Noun class identifies the kind of NP which is embedded under the indefinite DP under investigation. Only plural count and singular mass nouns were taken into account. The comparison between the two noun classes did not find any significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 0.32891$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .566$ ).



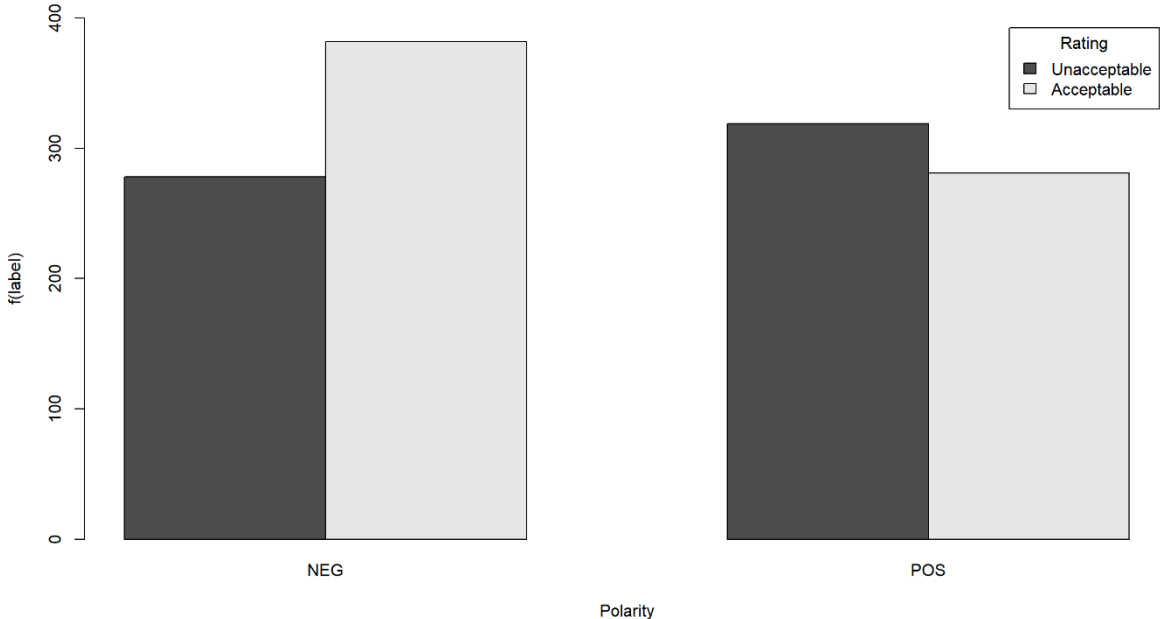
**Figure 5:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and noun class (MASS/PLURAL).

Figure 5 represents the range of acceptability of the indefinite DPs with respect to the noun class ( $\chi^2 = 351.2$ ,  $df = 13$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Interestingly, ART and *di+art* are significantly more

acceptable with mass nouns than with plural count ones, even though there also in the latter case the higher acceptability reaches statistical significance. Their occurrence, on the basis of the extension of their dedicated area, is very similar: they tend to occur more with mass than plural NPs. On the contrary, bare *di* and ZERO are significantly less accepted than expected when co-occurring with mass nouns. *Certo*, instead, proves to be ungrammatical with both noun classes, even though, when accepted, is strongly preferred with plural count nouns.

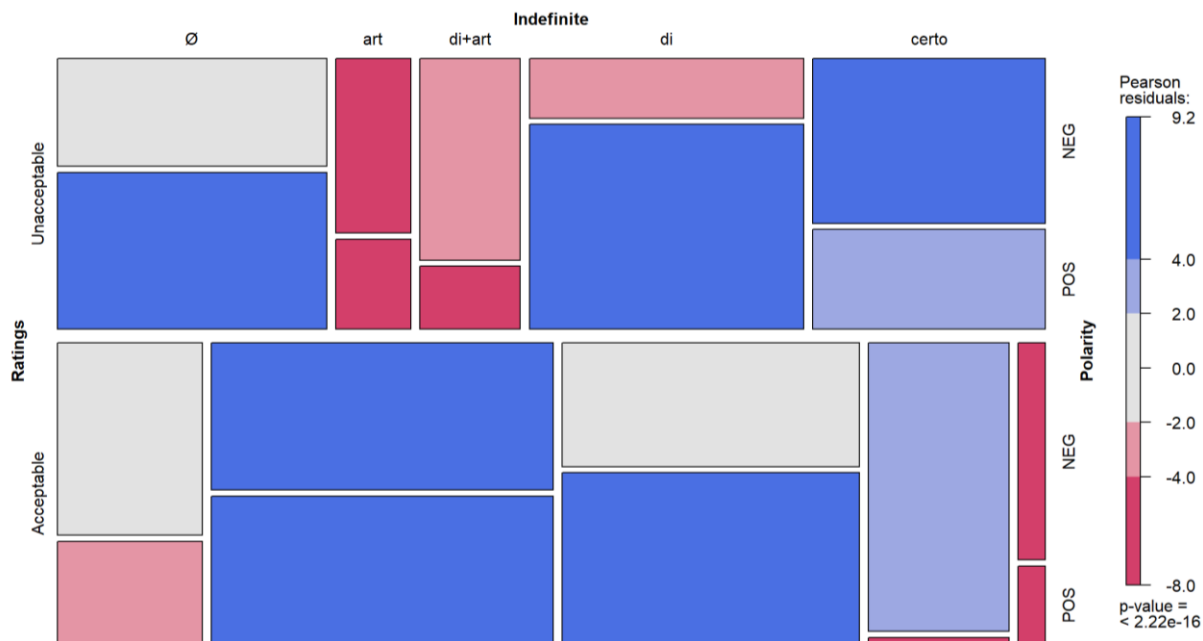
**3.2.4 Indefinite DP and polarity**

The presence or absence of the negation interacts with the kind of indefinite determiner that could be used. The comparison between positive and negative polarity sentences showed a significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 14.94$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The tendency of this difference is represented in the bar plot in Figure 6, showing that positive polarity sentences are significantly more unacceptable than expected. Indeed, negative polarity sentences score a high rate of acceptancy, while the rate of unacceptability is similar between positive and negative contexts.



**Figure 6:** Bar plot of acceptability of positive and negative polarity sentences.

The mosaic plot in Figure 7 shows how the distribution of DPs changes significantly depending on the polarity of the sentence ( $\chi^2 = 526$ ,  $df = 13$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As expected, bare *di* has a significant acceptability in negative sentences, correlated to a strong unacceptability in positive ones (in which it is always absent). As noticed in Chapter 1, the behavior of this indefinite determiner resembles that of French *de*. Both seem to fulfill the same functions.



**Figure 7:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and polarity (POSITIVE/NEGATIVE).

While ART is almost equally accepted both in positive and negative polarity (scoring a high number of occurrences), *di+art* is interestingly significantly more accepted in positive sentences (as regards negative ones, no correlation was found). ZERO shows a greater rate of unacceptability in positive contexts, but its acceptable occurrences are quite limited.

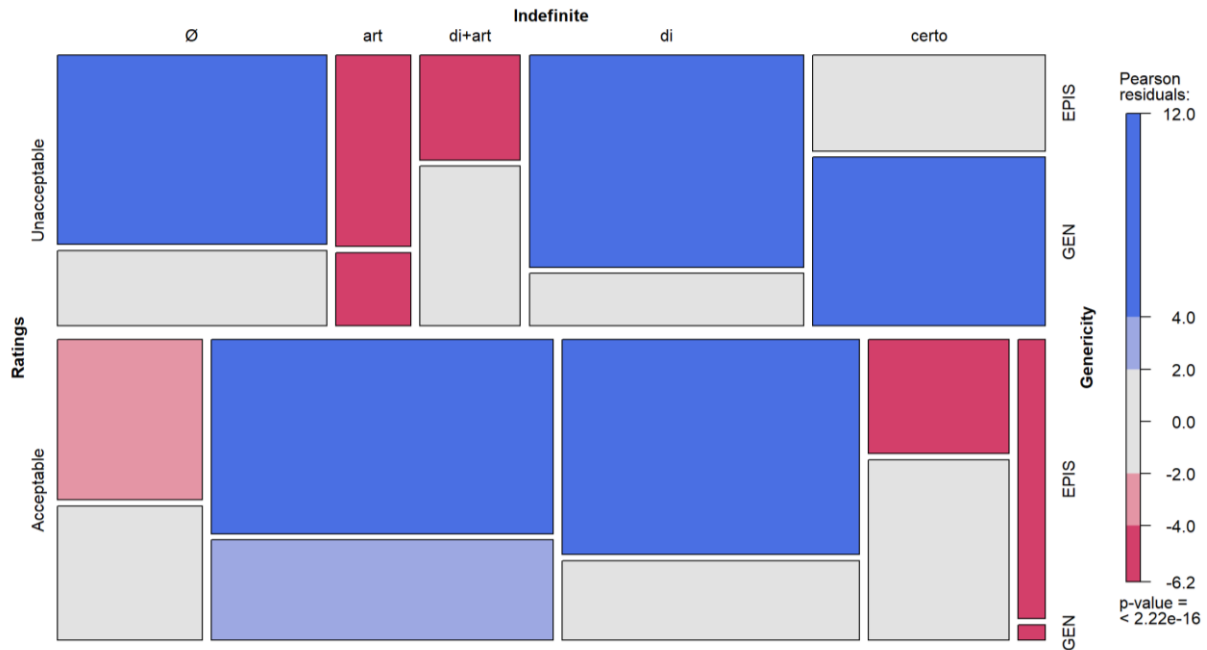
*Certo* was very rarely chosen; in the sentences it appears, it displays a strong preference for negative contexts (though being significantly less accepted).

### 3.2.5 Indefinite DP and clause type

Clause type defines whether the event is generic (in this questionnaire, generic sentences were marked by a present tense verb) or episodic (displaying a simple past verb, indicating an event that happened once). The  $\chi^2$  test run to compare clause types did not reveal any significant difference between them in terms of acceptability ( $\chi^2 = 0.10744$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .743$ ).

The mosaic plot in Figure 8 gives a picture of the acceptability of the different DPs with respect to the kind of event described in the sentence ( $\chi^2 = 500$ ,  $df = 13$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The plot reveals a statistically significant greater acceptability of both ART and *di+art* in episodic contexts, though ART is also significantly more accepted in generic sentences (for *di+art* in this respect no correlation is found). Moreover, *di+art* scores a subtly greater number of occurrences than ART in episodic sentences. This behavior is consistent to the pattern found in Italian,

though in Piacentino the partitive determiner can appear in generic contexts too, more often than in Italian. This picture resembles the one found in French.



**Figure 8:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and clause type (GENERIC/EPISODIC).

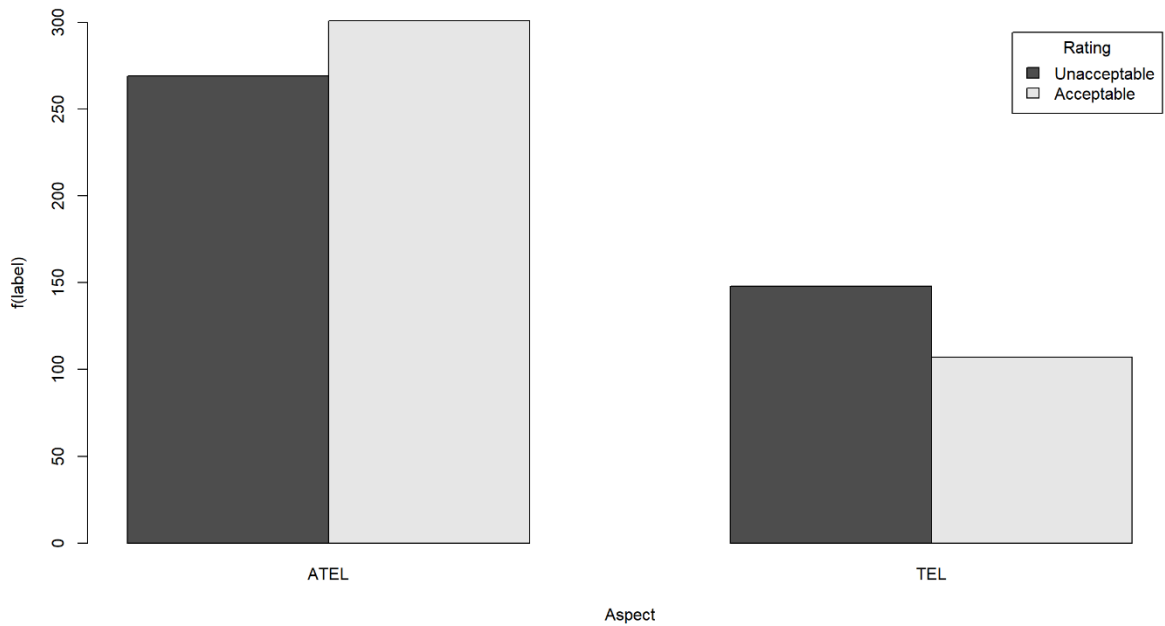
Bare *di* shows an interesting pattern: it is significantly less acceptable in episodic sentences, and it was judged unacceptable with a greater extent overall. This is not in contrast with its narrow scope taking nature. ZERO follows the same pattern, suggesting, as said before, a possible correlation with bare *di*. *Certo*, despite being mostly ungrammatical, shows a strong preference for episodic contexts (more easily facilitating wide scope reading), even though its occurrence is quite limited.

### 3.2.6 Indefinite DP and aspect

Aspect refers to whether the event expressed by the sentence is telic or atelic. To carry out this analysis, only non-ambiguous contexts were considered, i.e. those containing those adverbials constituting a diagnostics for (a)telicity (“in an hour” for telic contexts and “for an hour” for atelic ones, cf. Dowty (1979)).

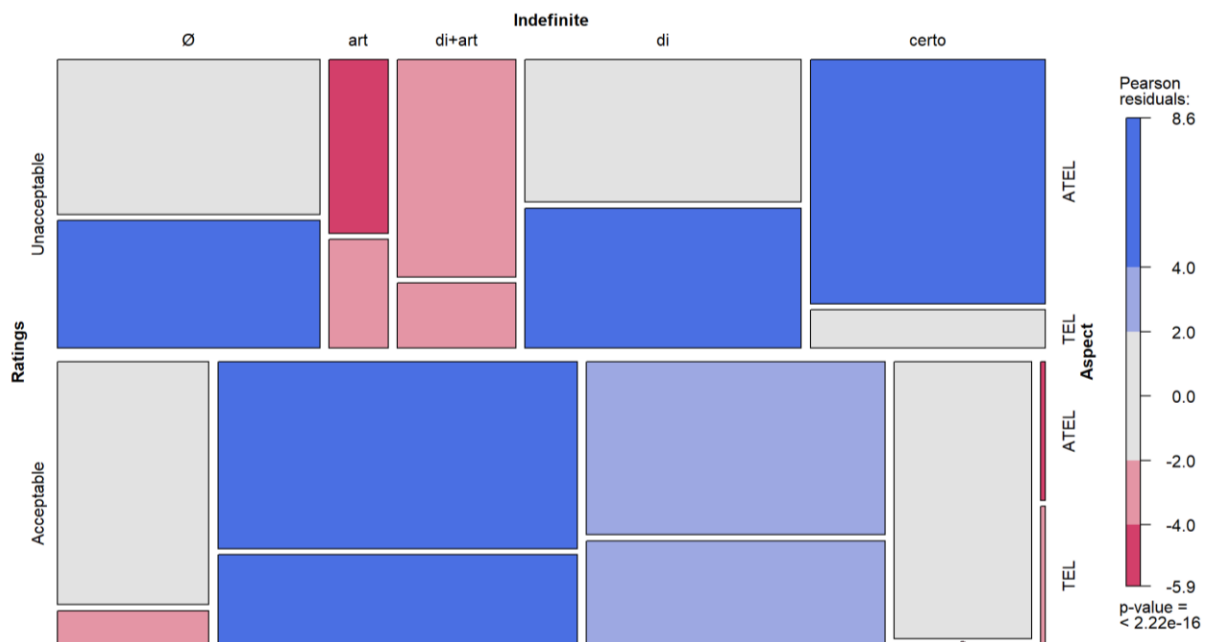
Applying  $\chi^2$  test to the data from telic and atelic sentences, a significant difference between the two aspects emerges ( $\chi^2 = 7.8632$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .005$ ).

Figure 9 shows that atelic sentences are more acceptable overall, while as regards telic ones, on the contrary, unacceptable sentences outnumber acceptable ones.



**Figure 9:** Bar plot of acceptability of telic and atelic sentences.

The distribution of the indefinite DPs with respect to the aspect of the sentence is represented in the mosaic plot in Figure 10. A significant difference was found in this context ( $\chi^2 = 354$ ,  $df = 13$ ,  $p < .001$ ).



**Figure 10:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and aspect (TELIC/ATELIC).

The most consistent deviation here is shown by ART, significantly more accepted in both telic and atelic sentences, though registering a preference for the latter kind of predicate. *di+art* follows the same pattern, though with a weaker deviation. As expected, the partitive determiner

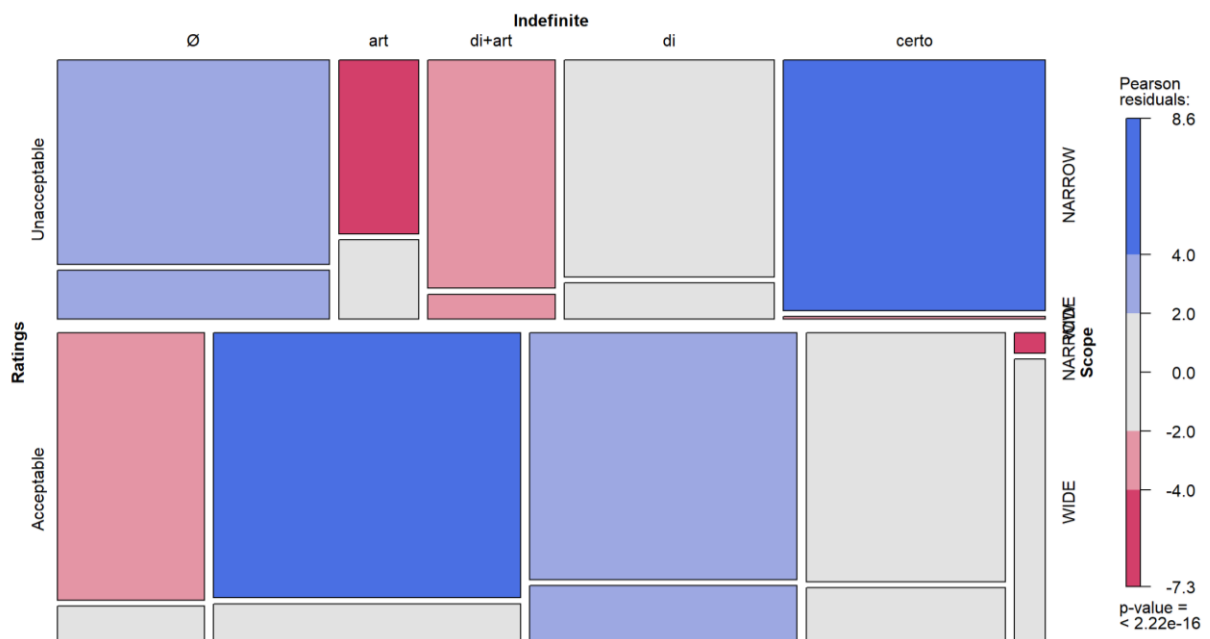
in Piacentino patterns like the one in French, being perfectly grammatical in atelic sentences. Differently from *des*NPs, and more likely *dei*NPs, it is allowed also in telic predicates.

Once again, ZERO and bare *di* display a very similar tendency, being significantly less acceptable in telic contexts (which is expected, given their narrow scope reading). It looks like bare *di* (almost) never occurs in telic sentences. *Certo*, on the contrary, is ungrammatical in both atelic sentences (due to its wide scope interpretation) and in telic ones, even though its appearance is almost not registered overall.

### 3.2.7 Indefinite DP and scope

Indefinite DPs have different scope properties. In particular, some of them can take only wide or narrow scope, while others can have both readings. The difference between narrow and wide scope readings in terms of acceptability is not significant ( $\chi^2 = 4.9015$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .027$ ). We need to check the cross-category distribution of acceptability of scope readings with the different indefinite DPs.

The mosaic plot in Figure 11 reveals which of the DPs are compatible with narrow and wide scope ( $\chi^2 = 236.46$ ,  $df = 13$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The mosaic plot confirms the expectations as regards bare *di* (high number of occurrences in when narrow scope interpretation is forced, though no statistical significance was found here) and ZERO, which exhibits a similar tendency, despite the latter is slightly (but still significantly) less acceptable with narrow scope interpretation. In this respect too, bare *di* is perfectly in line with the pattern shown by French *de*.

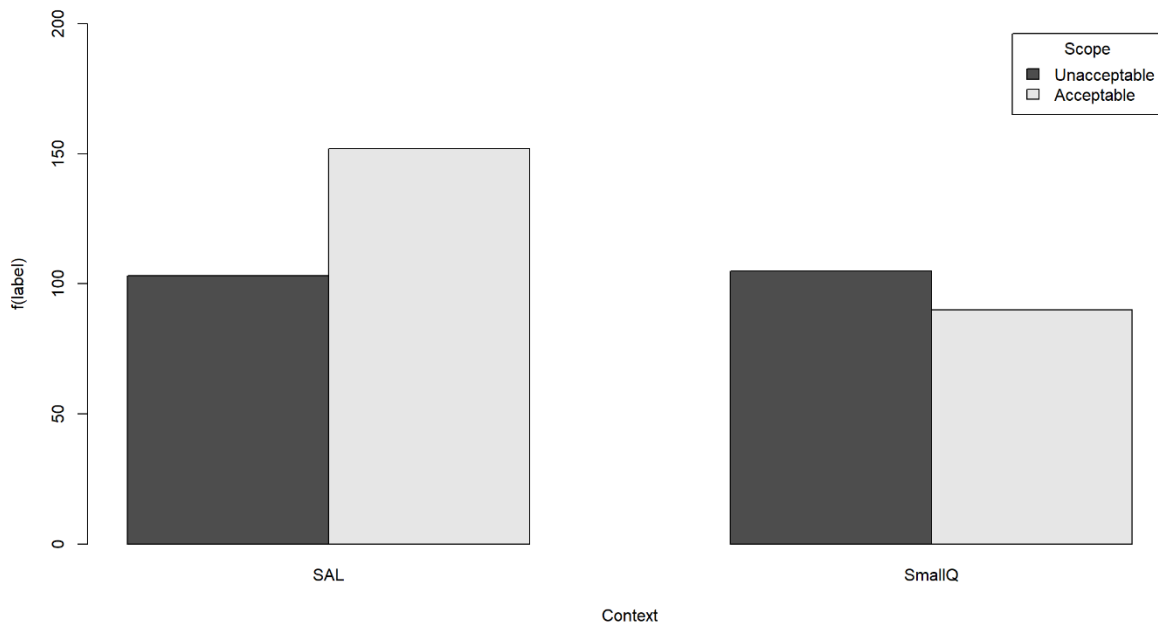


**Figure 11:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and scope (NARROW/WIDE).

Moreover, ART shows a significant greater preference for narrow scope reading, and the same holds for *di+art*, whose deviation is not that consistent as the one displayed by ART. *di+art* is also significantly more acceptable with wide scope reading: this points to the fact that, as predicted, it can take both scopes, depending on the interpretation of the sentence, and contrary to Anconetano (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2018; Giusti, to appear), in which the partitive determiner can only take wide scope. *di+art*, though, manifests a strong preference for wide scope reading. The behavior of the partitive determiner, in this case, seems to be closer to that displayed by Italian *di+art*. As expected, *certo* is significantly ungrammatical with narrow scope interpretation, (almost) never surfacing with narrow scope reading.

### 3.2.8 Indefinite DP and context

The label “context” here includes two different semantic values associated to different indefinite DPs: saliency and small quantity interpretation. In Italian, the former is taken to be associated to the semantics of ART, while the latter is conveyed by *di+art* (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2018, in press). The  $\chi^2$  test showed a significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 7.5144$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .006$ ) between saliency and small quantity interpretation. The relevant difference is inferable from the bar plot in Figure 12.



**Figure 12:** Bar plot of acceptability of saliency and small quantity interpretation.

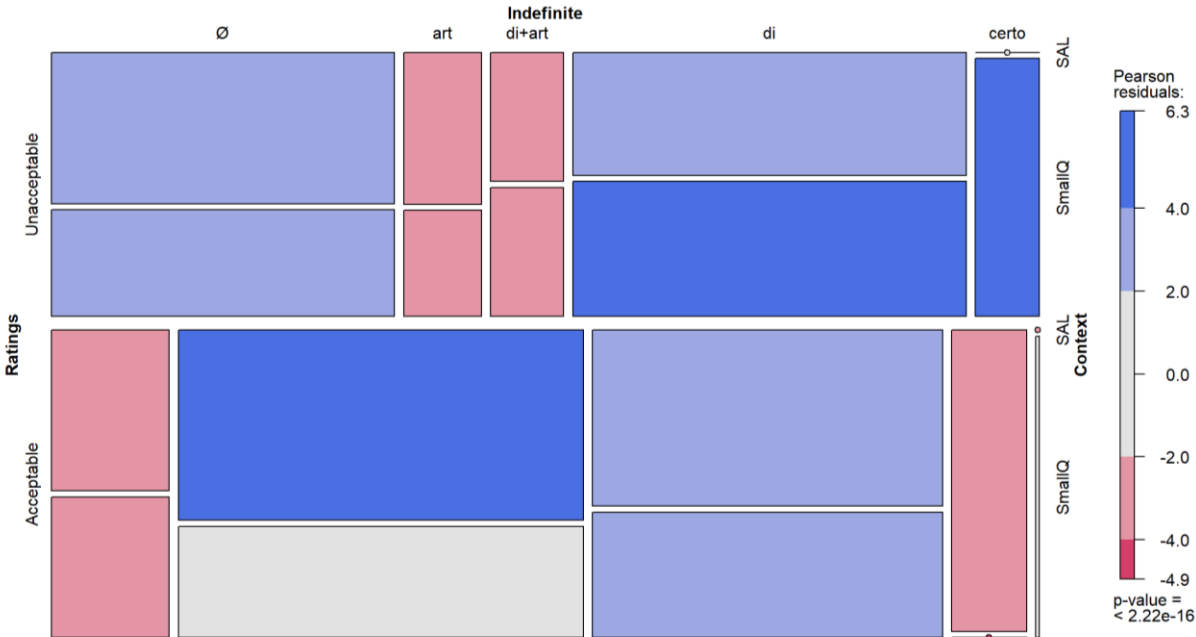
It can be noticed that saliency contexts are more acceptable, while those triggering small quantity interpretation display a higher rate of ungrammaticality.



The significant differences found in the acceptability of the different DPs with respect to context ( $\chi^2 = 234.53$ ,  $df = 13$ ,  $p < .001$ ) are shown in the mosaic plot in Figure 13. They partially reflect the proposal put forth by the authors.

As shown by the big blue area, ART has a significantly high rate of acceptability in saliency contexts, as does *di+art*, which is marked, as expected, for a significantly high rate of grammaticality even with small quantity interpretation. The relative proportions of ART and *di+art* are very similar, with a subtle preference of *di+art* for small quantity interpretation if compared to ART, but displaying a higher number of occurrences within salient contexts overall.

Once again, bare *di* and ZERO exhibit a similar behavior: for both a significant rate of unacceptability is highlighted in the two investigated contexts. While *di* (almost) never appears with small quantity interpretation, ZERO has been chosen with a higher frequency (though it is significantly less acceptable in this context). *Certo* is almost never available, but seems to surface only when conveying saliency.



**Figure 13:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and context (SALIENCY/SMALL QUANTITY).

### 3.3 Summary

This section resumes the important information which emerged from the statistical analyses in order to facilitate the interpretation and discussion of the results. In what follows, the relevant facts about each indefinite determiner which arose from the survey.

- ZERO: significantly different from ART, *di+art* and *certo*, but not from bare *di*. Its acceptability rate is lower than that of the other indefinites (except *certo*, which is ungrammatical in most contexts).
  - Age: significantly less accepted by groups B and C. It is probably a recently borrowed form from Italian, and, as such, it is more tolerated by the younger generation. It is the result of the process of the “adaptation” of the dialect to the standard of the national language due to the heteronomy of the former (cf. §3.2.2).
  - Noun class: significantly less accepted than expected with mass nouns. The overall occurrences with mass nouns, however, outnumber those with plural ones.
  - Polarity: significantly less accepted in positive polarity sentences, with a greater occurrence in negative ones.
  - Clause type: significantly more unaccepted in episodic sentences, even though its occurrences is higher here than in generic ones. This is consistent with its narrow scope taking nature.
  - Aspect: significantly less acceptable in telic contexts. The occurrences of ZERO are almost exclusively limited to atelic sentences. This is expected considering its narrow scope interpretation.
  - Scope: slight but significant lower acceptability with narrow scope reading which, however, is the dominant interpretation it displays.
  - Context: significantly less accepted in both contexts, with an almost equal rate of occurrence in both saliency and small quantity interpretation contexts.
  
- ART: significantly different from ZERO, bare *di* and *certo*, but not from *di+art*. It has the highest acceptability rate, indicating its broad use in all the contexts that were investigated.
  - Age: significantly more accepted by all groups equally (with group B showing a greater positive deviation).
  - Noun class: significantly more accepted both with mass and with plural count nouns (though the positive deviation is slightly lower for the latter type). ART appears more frequently with mass nouns.
  - Polarity: significantly more acceptable in both positive and negative sentences, occurring in an equal rate with both polarities.

- Clause type: significantly more accepted in both episodic and generic sentences (with a minor positive deviation for the latter ones). As regards the number of occurrences, ART appears to a greater extent in episodic sentences.
  - Aspect: significantly more accepted in both telic and atelic sentences, though displaying a preference for the latter kind.
  - Scope: significantly more accepted with narrow scope reading, registering in this context the almost total number of occurrences.
  - Context: significantly more acceptable in saliency contexts, displaying also the majority of occurrences of ART.
- Bare *di*: significantly different from ART, *di+art* and *certo*, but not from ZERO. Its acceptability rate is lower than that of unacceptability. It patterns like the French determiner *de*.
    - Age: significantly less accepted by groups A and C. This doesn't reveal much on its nature.
    - Noun class: significantly less accepted than expected with mass nouns. The overall occurrences with mass nouns, however, subtly outnumber those with plural ones.
    - Polarity: significantly more accepted in negative polarity sentences, which constitute the exclusive syntactic environment in which bare *di* could appear.
    - Clause type: significantly less acceptable in episodic sentences, and it was judged unacceptable with a greater extent overall. Its occurrences in generic sentences outnumber those found in episodic ones. This fact is not in contrast with its narrow scope reading.
    - Aspect: it occurs exclusively in atelic sentences.
    - Scope: as already repeated, bare *di* can only take narrow scope.
    - Context: significantly less accepted in saliency contexts, with, however, constitute the totality of its (low) occurrences.
- *di+ART*: significantly different from ZERO, bare *di* and *certo*, but not from ART. It is the second DP with the highest acceptability rate (after ART), indicating its wide availability in all the contexts.
    - Age: significantly more accepted by all groups equally (with group B showing a greater positive deviation).

- Noun class: significantly more accepted both with mass and with plural count nouns (though the positive deviation is slightly lower for the latter type). *di+art* appears with a greater frequency with mass nouns.
  - Polarity: significantly more acceptable in positive sentences, occurring slightly more frequently with them, though it can easily appear in negative polarity too.
  - Clause type: significantly more accepted in episodic sentences, in which *di+art* appears to a greater extent.
  - Aspect: significantly more accepted in both telic and atelic sentences, though displaying a preference for the latter kind.
  - Scope: significantly more accepted with both narrow and wide scope reading, registering in the former context the great majority of occurrences.
  - Context: significantly more acceptable in saliency and small quantity interpretation. It displays a higher rate of occurrence within salient contexts overall, though the difference with small quantity is very subtle.
- *certo*: significantly different from all the other indefinite determiners. It is mainly ungrammatical, the cases in which it is accepted are very limited.
    - Age: significantly less accepted by all groups equally (with groups A and C showing a greater negative deviation).
    - Noun class: significantly less accepted both with mass and with plural count nouns (though the negative deviation is stronger for the former type). *certo* appears with a greater frequency with plural count nouns.
    - Polarity: significantly less acceptable with both polarities, occurring more frequently with negative sentences.
    - Clause type: significantly less accepted in both clause types. *certo*, however, appears to a greater extent with episodic sentences, probably facilitating its wide scope interpretation.
    - Aspect: significantly less accepted in both telic and atelic sentences (the latter showing a greater negative deviation), with an equal occurrence with both aspects. Its appearance in these sentences is very low.
    - Scope: significantly less accepted with narrow scope reading, occurring almost always with wide scope interpretation. Its presence is quite limited.
    - Context: *certo* here registers almost no occurrences. When it does, its presence is limited to small quantity interpretation.

### 3.4 Answers to research questions

Here the research questions listed in the introduction are recalled, trying to answer them on the basis of the data collected and analyzed so far.

#### **How many indefinite determiners are available in Piacentino?**

- ✓ Looking at the overall acceptability of the considered indefinite DPs and their distribution, four variants are available in Piacentino, namely (listing them in decreasing order for acceptability) ART, *di+art*, bare *di* and ZERO.

#### **What is the rate of optionality? Could different competing indefinite determiners co-vary in the same syntactic context?**

- ✓ Considering the distribution of the available forms, ART and *di+art* occur in all the contexts that were investigated in this research, revealing their lack of specialization for a particular syntactic environment. These two determiners are always in competition. They display a slight preference for positive sentences and occur more often in generic sentences, atelic predicates and saliency contexts, preferring narrow scope reading. The remaining two DPs, ZERO and bare *di*, are instead in competition between one another, occurring mainly in negative sentences (ZERO can be found in positive polarity too but to a lesser extent, while bare *di* is completely disallowed in the absence of the negation).

To sum up, a tentative answer to this question is that in Piacentino there is optionality, and it emerges in positive sentences between ART and *di+art*, while with negation optionality marginally arises in the choice of bare *di* or ZERO, as the latter form is a relatively new one, borrowed from Italian, and as such still not completely accepted by all the speakers (especially the older ones). In negative sentences, however, ART and *di+art* are available too, possibly co-varying with bare *di*.

#### **How do indefinite determiners behave with respect to some relevant traits individuated by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018)?**

- i. **Generic negative sentences:** prominent use of bare *di*, co-varying with ART and with *di+art* and ZERO but to a lesser extent.
- ii. **Episodic positive sentences:** competition between ART and *di+art*.
- iii. **Modal sentences:** competition between ART and *di+art*, with a marginal appearance of ZERO.

- iv. **Atelic sentences:** occurrence of all the available DPs, with ART and *di+art* being chosen more often (and bare *di* in negative contexts).
- v. **Telic sentences:** only ART and *di+art* are accepted.
- vi. **Wide scope reading:** available only for ART and *di+art*.
- vii. **Narrow scope reading:** proper of bare *di* and ZERO (mainly), but available also for ART and *di+art*.

**Is there true optionality? Do the competing forms specialize for meaning?**

- ✓ As said before, in Piacentino there seems to be true optionality between ART and *di+art*. Contrary to what supposed by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018) for the small quantity interpretation of the partitive determiner, in this dialect the latter form is unmarked just like the definite article.

Considering negative sentences, instead, true optionality arises only between bare *di* and ART (also *di+art*, with a subtly smaller frequency). Their specialization, in this case, consists in the scope properties: only narrow scope is available for bare *di*, while ART (and *di+art*) can take also wide scope. At the current stage of language development, ZERO seems not to freely co-vary with bare *di*, as it is not yet fully accepted by all speakers. There is no need to say that further research will be needed to verify these observations, desirably with a larger corpus to be analyzed.

## Chapter 4

### The second research

This chapter is dedicated to the research carried out in November 2018. The focus of this second questionnaire is on the behavior of three particular indefinite determiners (namely, ZERO, bare *di* and *di+art*) with regards to the cliticization in left dislocated position. The interest for these specific DPs raised as a consequence of the results of the previous survey (see Chapter 3, §3.3).

The purpose of this research is studying the clitic resumption of some of the indefinite determiners (in left dislocated constructions) that are available in Piacentino. The focus is on three of them: ZERO, bare *di* and *di+art*. The latter one was shown to be particularly interesting from the results of the first questionnaire, since its availability is wider with respect to Italian. Bare *di* has a different status too, being the unmarked indefinite determiner conveying narrow scope in negative contexts (it has the same status of French *de*), while ZERO is just occasionally used, less than in Italian.

Given the fact that

- i. in Italian, objects introduced by *di+art* can only take wide scope when left dislocated, can be resumed only by the accusative clitic and can co-occur only with universal quantifiers;
- ii. bare *di* is associated with narrow scope indefiniteness; it is always resumed by the quantitative clitic *ne* and can co-occur only with existential quantifiers, both in Italian and in French, and
- iii. in Piacentino, ZERO behaves in the same way bare *di* does,

the second research was designed to answer the following questions: how do indefinite determiners behave in Clitic Left Dislocation in different contexts? The relevant investigated traits are:

- grammatical function (subject vs object);
- clitic resumption (accusative, nominative or quantitative clitic);
- polarity (positive vs negative);
- verbal class (transitive, unergative or unaccusative);
- noun class (plural count vs singular mass);
- presence vs absence of a quantifier (universal vs existential).

## 4.1 Methods

### 4.1.1 Participants

This study involved 12 informants (in part a subgroup of those who participated in the former research, with two new informants), distributed as follows in the mean three age classes:

- 3 informants in the range up to 30 (A);
- 3 informants in the range 31-60 (B);
- 6 informants in the range above 61 (C).

Speaking about education level, the distribution is the following:

- 3 informants with elementary school education (E);
- 2 informants with middle school education (M);
- 5 informants with high school education (S);
- 2 informants with university education (U).

Unfortunately, participants are not equally distributed with respect to age class and education level. Table (1) below provides a complete overview of the speakers.

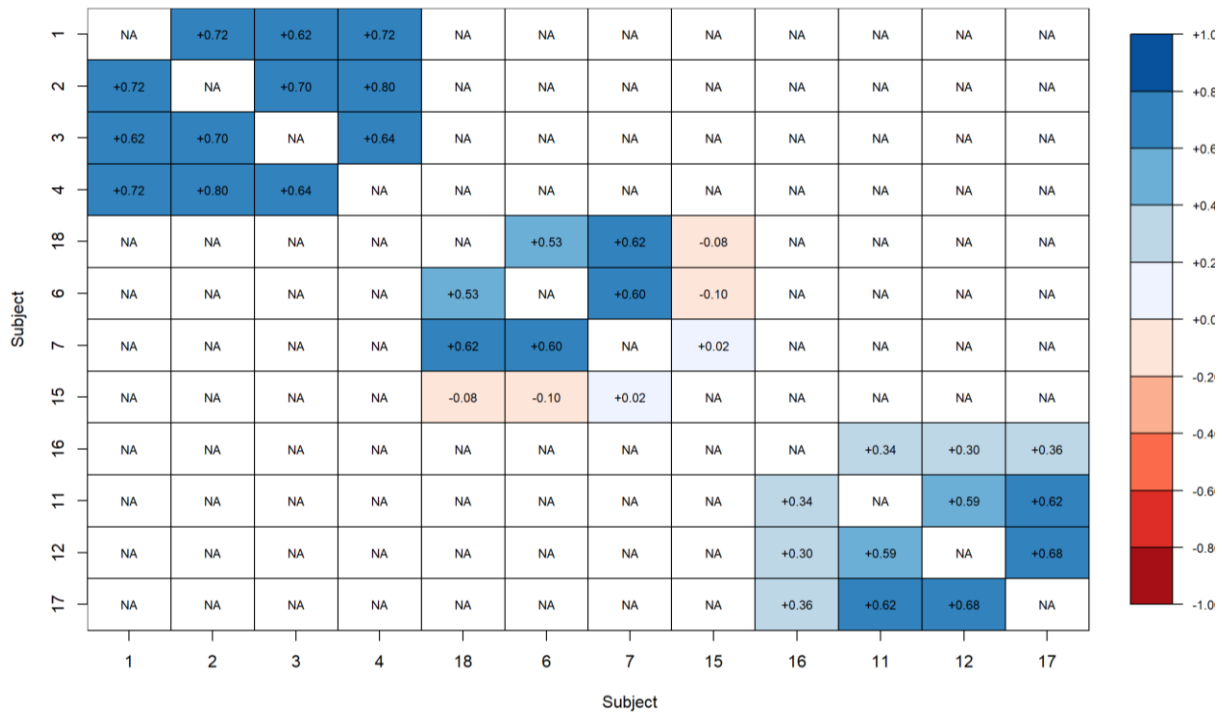
<b>Table (1)</b>	<b>Age (class)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education (class)</b>	<b>Years he/she lived in Lugagnano</b>
<b>Informant 1</b>	70 (C)	M	Middle school (M)	70
<b>Informant 2</b>	53 (B)	F	High school (S)	53
<b>Informant 3</b>	67 (C)	M	High school (S)	62
<b>Informant 4</b>	24 (A)	F	High school (S)	24
<b>Informant 5</b>	24 (A)	M	University (U)	24
<b>Informant 6</b>	87 (C)	F	Elementary school (E)	60
<b>Informant 7</b>	65 (C)	F	Elementary school (E)	60
<b>Informant 8</b>	29 (A)	M	University (U)	26
<b>Informant 9</b>	83 (C)	F	Elementary school (E)	20
<b>Informant 10</b>	55 (B)	M	High school (S)	40
<b>Informant 11</b>	38 (B)	F	High school (S)	33
<b>Informant 12</b>	67 (C)	F	Middle school (M)	50

It is necessary to check which subjects need to be fended off by the pool in that they are outliers. Among possible strategies to detect them, the one adopted here consists in eliminating those informants who display a low agreement with the other subjects. The participants in this



research were submitted a Likert scale task with judgments ranging from 1 to 5. Being these ordinal data, the most appropriate measure to calculate the subjects' reliability is Krippendorff's alpha (Krippendorff 1980). The Inter-Coder Agreement of all the subjects is represented in Figure 1.

Krippendorff's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is "a reliability coefficient developed to measure the agreement among observers, coders, judges, raters, or measuring instruments drawing distinctions among typically unstructured phenomena or assign computable values to them." (Krippendorff 2011).

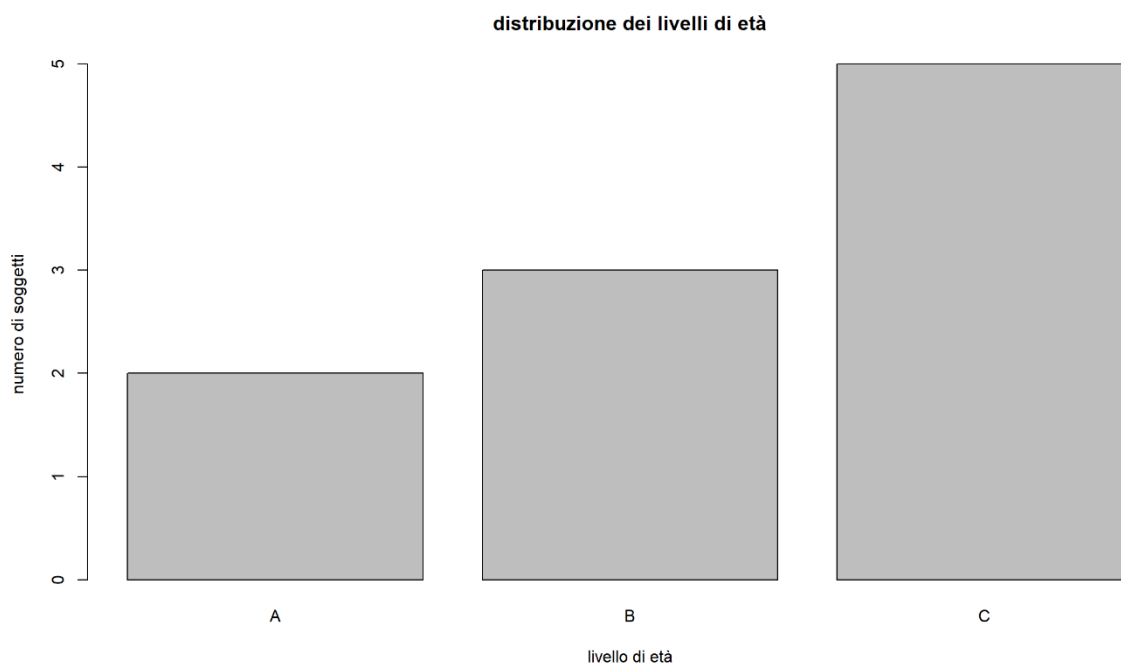


**Figure 1:** Inter-Coder Agreement between subjects ( $\alpha = 0.476$ ) belonging to the same group. Only participants who were submitted the same test were compared to each other.

The participants were divided in three groups, each of which contained four subjects. Each group was submitted one of the three tests. Figure 1 shows the comparisons made between subjects belonging to the same group. This is the reason for the high number of the boxes marked "N/A", as subjects belonging to different groups judged different items, so they could not be compared with each other. The threshold that was fixed to establish low agreement is  $\alpha < 0.50$ . subjects displaying a lower rate of agreement need to be fended off.

Subjects 15 and 16 disagree with all the other members of their group: their judgments were not taken into account in the following analyses. After their elimination from the pool,  $\alpha$  was recalculated for the remaining three members in the second and third groups, obtaining a higher level of agreement: for Subjects 18, 6 and 7,  $\alpha = 0.583$ ; for Subjects 11, 12 and 17,  $\alpha = 0.627$ .

The distribution of the subjects inside the three age groups is not equal after the elimination of Subjects 15 and 16 from the pool (cf. Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Bar plot of the distribution of the subjects per age group.

#### 4.1.2 Stimuli

The first step to conduct this research consisted in the construction of a test containing dialectal sentences. The list of total items was divided in four groups: target sentences, containing the structure which was relevant for the aim of the research, and three groups of fillers, each one designed with a double aim: (i) to prevent the informants who took part in the research to get used to experimental items (in order not to create automatic answering patterns), and (ii) to collect useful information about other phenomena<sup>30</sup>. In total, the full matrix contained:

- 120 target sentences, labeled EXPERIMENTAL;
- 270 FILLER sentences.

The construction of the test was supervised, guided and improved with patience and rigor by Professor Giuliana Giusti. All items were created in advance and grouped together in a unique matrix Excel sheet, without any distinction between EXPERIMENTAL or FILLER. Each sentence was inserted into a cell and assigned an arbitrary number. Each sentence

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<sup>30</sup> One group of fillers, FILLER 1, was designed to investigate the behavior of negation and negative adverbs. FILLER 2 was about the co-occurrence of the partitive determiner with the determiner-like *certo*. FILLER 3 was constituted by a group of sentences taken from the first questionnaire. The phenomena investigated by FILLER 1 and FILLER 2 are not relevant for the present work, but they are left for future analysis.

occupied a line. On the same line, but in different cells, its features were specified. The features appearing in the Excel sheet and the relative values they could assume are listed here:

- Subject (the number identifying the informant - from 1 to 16)
- Age (A / B / C)
- Education (E / M / S / U)
- Unknown (the random number assigned to each sentence to randomize them – from 1 to 390)
- EXPERIMENTAL (for EXPERIMENTAL items)
- Item (the number assigned to each block of items)
- Indefinite\_DP (ZERO / DI / DEI)
- Clitic (LI / I / NE)
- Verb (the infinitive of the verb used in the sentence, written in Italian)
- Number (PLURAL / SINGULAR)
- Noun\_type (COUNT / MASS)
- Argument (SUBJECT / OBJECT)
- Polarity (POSITIVE / NEGATIVE)
- QP (EXISTENTIAL / UNIVERSAL / NONE)
- Verb\_class (TRANSITIVE / UNACCUSATIVE / UNERGATIVE)
- Italian\_version (the target sentence translated in Italian)
- Dialect\_version (the target sentence in Piacentino)
- Judgment (from 1 to 5)

All the items were then mixed and randomized using specific functions on Excel and then divided into three tests, containing the same number of EXPERIMENTAL items and FILLERS, for a total of 130 sentences per test. In each test, target and filler sentences were again mixed up, in order not to have all EXPERIMENTAL sentences joined in one block.

For the design of the EXPERIMENTAL items, the starting point was the construction of simple sentences, modifying the parameters listed above in order to investigate the relevant phenomena.

Each item contains three sentences: one for each determiner under investigation. Moreover, the same item is repeated twice: the first time with the accusative or nominative clitic, the second with the quantitative clitic.

The following sections specify the kind of EXPERIMENTAL items, divided for the syntactic traits that were modified in the first phase of creation of the questionnaire.

#### 4.1.2.1 Indefinite determiner

As already said before, the study focuses on three indefinite determiners: ZERO, bare *di* and *di+art*. Thus, the items were formed by taking a simple sentence with a dislocated constituent. Out of the same sentence, three variants were created, each one introduced by a different DP. The 120 EXPERIMENTAL sentences are distributed in the following way:

- 40 containing *di+ art*;
- 40 with bare *di*;
- 40 displaying ZERO.

The sentences containing the three competing determiners but with the same remaining features were grouped together and labelled with the same item number. An example taken from the matrix is provided in (1).

- (1) a. *Di panein, i ho mia mangè.*  
*di+art sandwiches CL.ACC have.1P.SG not eat.PST.PRT*
- b. *Ad panein, i ho mia mangè.*  
*di sandwiches, CL.ACC have.1P.SG not eat.PST.PRT*
- c. *Panein, i ho mia mangè.*  
*ZERO sandwiches, CL.ACC have.1P.SG not eat.PST.PRT*  
'Sandwiches, I didn't eat.'

#### 4.1.2.2 Resumptive clitic

Since the items display Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD), an important parameter to be modified was the resumptive clitic. There are three options in this respect.

In sentences with dislocated object, one possibility was to reintroduce this constituent with the accusative clitic (*li*), as in item (1) above.

The other clitic that was tested in EXPERIMENTAL items was the clitic *ne*, which could be applied both to *subject* and *object* sentences (cf. (2a) and (2b) respectively).

The third possibility could be tested only in those sentences with dislocated subject. This constituent in fact could be introduced by the nominative clitic (indicated as *i* for simplicity). An example is provided in (2c).

- (2) a. *Di panein, n' ho mia mangè.*  
*di+art sandwiches, ne have.1P.SG not eat.PST.PRT*
- b. *Di nud, n' è rivè poc.*

*di+art nephews, ne be.AUX.3P.PL arrive.PST.PRT few*  
 c. *Di nud, i' en rivè poc.*  
*di+art nephews, CL.NOM be.AUX.3P.PL arriv.PST.PRT few*  
 ‘Nephews, they arrived.’

With respect to the clitic, the full matrix contained

- 20 items (60 sentences) with a Direct Case clitic, of which
  - 10 items (30 sentences) with *li* (Accusative clitic);
  - 10 items (30 sentences) with *i* (Nominative clitic);
- 20 items (60 sentences) with the Oblique Case clitic *ne*, equally distributed for
  - *subject* (10 items), and
  - *object* (10 items) sentences.

#### 4.1.2.3 Grammatical function

Out of all 120 EXPERIMENTAL sentences

- 20 items (60 sentences) are labeled *subject*, in which the subject of the sentence is dislocated to the left (cf. (3a));
- 20 items (60 sentences) are labeled *object* because here the dislocated constituent is the object of the transitive verb as in (3b).

This distinction was made mainly to allow the individuation of the differences between the two kinds of constituent, already presented in Chapter 1 (§1.2.1).

(3) a. *Dal vein, n' ho mia buì.*

*di+art wine, ne have.1P.SG not drink.PST.PRT*

‘Wine, I didn’t drink.’

b. *Di prufasur, l' è mia partì 'nson.*

*di+art professors, CL.NOM be.AUX.3P.SG not leave.PST.PRT no.one*

‘Professors, no one has left.’

#### 4.1.2.4 Verb class

As a natural consequence of considering both subjects and objects, the kind of verb appearing in the sentences was modified. *Object* items obviously only display transitive verbs. No ditransitive verbs were chosen in order not to add complexity to the structure.

As regards *subject* sentences, half of them were designed by choosing unaccusative verbs, while the other half contains unergative verbs. In doing this, it would be possible to account for some differences that could possibly show up in the analysis of the data. The most evident difference concerns *ne* extraction: this kind of cliticization is possible in Italian only with transitive and unaccusative verbs (thus verbs having an argument in internal complement position), but not with unergative ones (their argument is the external complement).

The distribution of these sentences is given here:

- 20 items (60 sentences) with a transitive verb (see (4a));
- 20 items (60 sentences) with an intransitive verb, of which
  - 10 items (30 sentences) with an unaccusative verb (as in (4b));
  - 10 items (30 sentences) with an unergative verb (cf. (4c)).

- (4) a. *Di fiur, n' ho töt.*  
*di+art flowers, ne have.1P.SG buy.PST.PRT*  
 'Flowers, I bought them.'
- b. *Dal machini, i s' en mia farmè.*  
*di+art cars, CL.NOM CL.REFL be.AUX.3P.PL not stop.PST.PRT*  
 'Cars, they didn't stop.'
- c. *Di non, i han telefonè tüüt.*  
*di+art grandparents, CL.NOM have.AUX.3P.PL phone.PST.PRT all*  
 'Grandparents, they all phoned.'

#### 4.1.2.5 Noun class

In EXPERIMENTAL items two kinds of NP taken as the complement of the indefinite DP were used: singular mass and plural count NPs, which display some differences (cf. Chapter 1, §1.2.4).

Noun classes are not equally distributed inside the questionnaire:

- 10 items (30 sentences) contain a singular mass noun (cf. (5a));
- 30 items (90 sentences) display a plural count noun (cf. (5b)).

- (5) a. *Dal lat, al s' è infurtì.*  
*di+art milk, CL.NOM CL.REFL be.AUX.3P.SG acidify.PST.PRT*  
 'Milk, it acidified.'
- b. *Di ragasein, abota i han züghè.*

*di+art children, a.lot CL.NOM have.AUX.3P.PL play.PST.PRT*  
'Children, lot of them played.'

#### 4.1.2.6 Clause type

This research is focused on episodic sentences in the past, thus using verbs in *passato prossimo*, corresponding to simple past in English (at least in the northern Italo-Romance varieties). *Passato prossimo*, contrary to English simple past, is a periphrastic verbal tense, formed by the auxiliary (*essere* 'to be' for unaccusative verbs and *avere* 'to have' for transitive and unergative verbs) and the past participle of the lexical verbs. It is used to indicate actions that happened in the past and are concluded at the moment of the speech act. All the examples given so far are episodic sentences.

Since the focus is on episodic contexts, 38 items (114 sentences) display *passato prossimo*, while only 2 items (6 sentences) are generic with present tense (cf. (6)-(7)).

- (6) a. *Di frances, ia cugnus.*  
*di+art French people, CL.ACC know.1P.SG*
- b. *Ad frances, ia cugnus.*  
*di French people, CL.ACC know.1P.SG*
- c. *Frances, ia cugnus.*  
*ZERO French people, CL.ACC know.1P.SG*  
'French people, I know.'
- (7) a. *Di frances, ni cugnus.*  
*di+art French people, ne know.1P.SG*
- b. *Ad frances, ni cugnus.*  
*di French people, ne know.1P.SG*
- c. *Frances, ni cugnus.*  
*ZERO French people, ne know.1P.SG*  
'French people, I know.'

#### 4.1.2.7 Polarity

Another parameter that was modified is the polarity of the sentences. The test displays

- 20 items (60 sentences) has positive polarity (cf. (8a));
- 20 items (60 sentences) has negative polarity (cf. (8b)).

This aims at looking for possible differences due to the fact that the indefinite is or is not under the scope of the negation.

- (8) a. *Di libar in s'la mensula, i ho lesì tüü.*  
*di+art books on.the shelf, CL.ACC have.1P.SG read.PST.PRT all*  
 'Books on the shelf, I read all of them.'
- b. *Ad i amis, n' ho mia vist.*  
*di+art friends, ne have.1P.SG not see.PST.PRT*  
 'Friends, I didn't see them.'

As a matter of fact, the negative operator interacts with indefiniteness: bare *di* is a clear example. Since in Piacentino *di+art* in negative sentences is ambiguous between narrow and wide scope, and the ambiguity holds both in episodic and in generic sentences, it is possible that the partitive determiner is compatible also with the clitic *ne* (which is ungrammatical in Italian).

#### 4.1.2.8 Quantifiers

The presence or the absence of a realized quantifier was also considered. In this respect, the questionnaire is composed in the following way:

- 24 items (72 sentences) contained no QP (9a);
- 16 items (48 sentences) contained a QP. Of them,
  - 12 items (36 sentences) display a universal QP (9b);
  - 4 items (12 sentences) have an existential QP (9c).

- (9) a. *Dal veint, l' ha tirè fort.*  
*di+art wind, CL.NOM have.AUX.3P.SG blow.PST.PRT heavily*  
 'Wind, it blew heavily.'
- b. *Di non, i han telefonè tüü.*  
*di+art grandparents, CL.NOM have.AUX.3P.PL phone.PST.PRT all*  
 'Grandparents, they all phoned.'
- c. *Dla chèran, n' ho mia cot abota.*  
*di+art meat, ne have.1P.SG not cook.PST.PRT much*  
 'Meat, I didn't cook much.'



### 4.1.3 Procedure

Every informant was submitted one of the three tests containing 130 sentences. Since the number of informants was 12, they were divided in three groups of four people. This time, the questionnaire was not printed (because it would be too long) but was read directly from the Excel sheet on the computer.

The submission of the questionnaire was preceded by a brief introduction with the aim of improving speaker's self-awareness and the awareness of his/her linguistic competency. It was also remarked the importance of giving sincere judgments, since there could be the tendency to indulge the interviewer and judge a sentence as grammatical even if it didn't sound good. This introduction, as well as all the conversation during the implementation of the questionnaire, was made in Piacentino, in order not to have interferences with Italian.

The submission was carried out orally: each sentence was read from the Excel sheet and the informant was given the time to think about the judgment. If necessary, the sentence was repeated more than once and if something was unclear an explanation was furnished. If needed, the written version was shown to the speaker directly from the computer. The setting was quiet and not stressful, since every informant was interviewed in his/her own house, so that they could feel comfortable with the task. The submission took about 45 minutes.

Informants had to undergo Likert scale (LS) task (Schütze and Sprouse, 2013): for each one of the sentences, they had to give a judgment about its grammaticality or ungrammaticality. They were given a numerical scale, from 1 to 5, and asked to rate each sentence<sup>31</sup>. Here are listed the meanings associated to each value of the scale, as they were explained to the participants:

- 1 = “the sentence is completely ungrammatical; I would never use it”
- 2 = “the sentence does not sound completely ungrammatical, but it is bad anyway”
- 3 = “I don't know” (when the informant was hesitant and didn't know whether the target item was grammatical or not)
- 4 = “the sentence sounds good, it is acceptable, but I wouldn't personally use it”
- 5 = “the sentence is perfectly grammatical; I would use it”

The judgments were registered immediately in the appropriate cell attached to the corresponding sentence in order to avoid mistakes in the transcription of all the values. If the interviewed person made observations about the meaning of the sentences, or if he/she was asked to give an interpretation of a specific sentence, the verbal feedback was written down in

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<sup>31</sup> Values in the LS could be 1-7, but a reduced scale was adopted not to create too confusion and/or indecision in the judgments since this task is sometimes not intuitive and straightforward at all.

a dedicated notebook and the corresponding judgment marked with an asterisk directly in the Excel sheet.

The procedure was concluded by the informant signing the consensus to use the data for research purposes. This was followed by an informal discussion about the difficulty of judging sentences in the mother tongue and about potential uncertainties that emerged during the implementation of the task.

#### **4.1.4 Data analysis**

The data collected by means of the questionnaire will be analyzed in order to verify whether the investigated variables are dependent between them. For this purpose, the Pearson's chi-squared test ( $\chi^2$ ) was run.  $\chi^2$  is used to verify the probability that the difference found between two variables arose by chance, by comparing the "expected" value a variable should assume with the "observed" value (cf. Johnson, 2013; Gries, 2013). To find out the kind of relation two variables instantiate, Pearson residuals will be analyzed. They correspond to "the difference between each cell's observed minus its expected frequency, divided by the square root of the expected frequency. If a Pearson residual is positive/negative, then the corresponding observed frequency is greater/less than its expected frequency. Second, the more the Pearson residual deviates from 0, the stronger that effect." (Gries, 2013:326). In order to have a binary value for judgments, we re-codified the values of the Likert scale following this pattern: (1,2) = 0 (corresponding to "ungrammatical"), 3 = N/A ('3' was not considered, as it doesn't provide any information about the grammaticality of the sentence), (4,5) = 1 (corresponding to "grammatical").

In the following analysis, the acceptability of the indefinite determiners is taken as the dependent variable, while the independent variables are the contexts that were tested in the questionnaire (age group, clitic, argument, quantifiers, verbal class). When a variable presented more than two levels, the Pairwise comparison of proportion test was used. It allows to compare all the pairs of level of a given variable in order to highlight possible statistically significant difference between them.

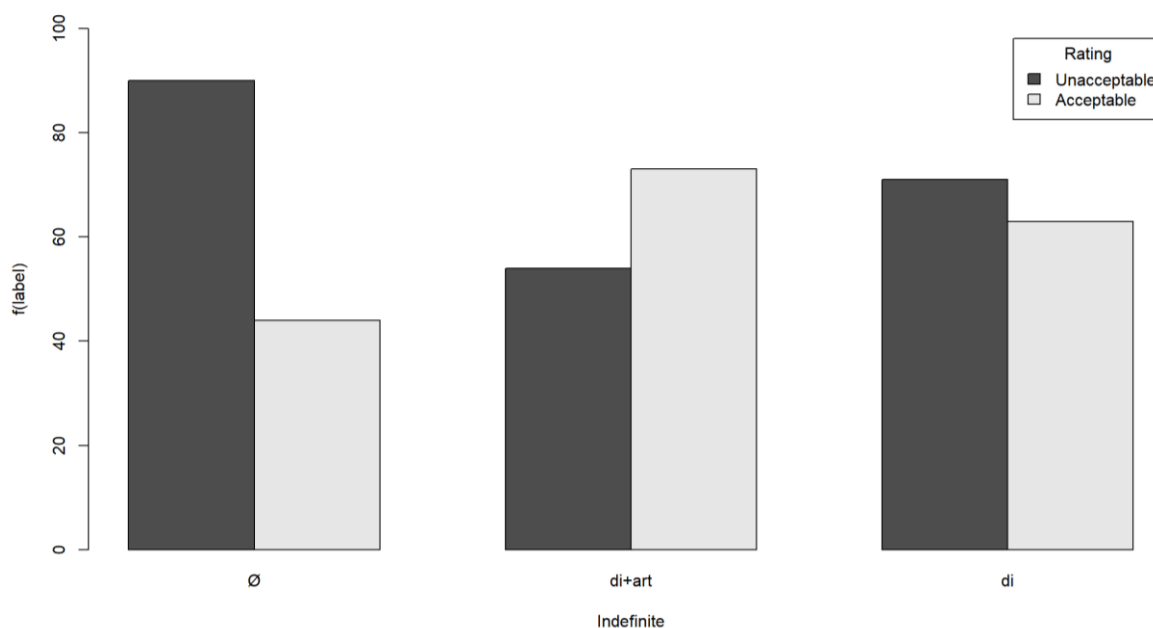
It is important to underline that this analysis, as every statistical analysis, exhibits some limits that are linked to the problem of multiple comparisons; thus, the data need to be taken with caution.

## 4.2 Results

The analysis will go through the significant differences that were found in the interaction of the investigated parameters. In what follows, the overall (un)acceptability of the different DPs and of the clitics under investigation will be analyzed. Then the section turns to cross-category comparisons between the acceptability of the different DPs with respect to age, clitic, argument, quantifiers and verbal class.

### 4.2.1 Overall acceptability of indefinite DPs

This section analyzes the occurrences of the indefinite DPs taken into account in this study (ZERO, bare *di* and *di+art*). The  $\chi^2$  test showed a significant difference between them ( $\chi^2 = 16.137$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Since here the variables are three, we applied the *Pairwise comparison of proportions* test. It revealed that ZERO significantly differs from both bare *di* ( $p = .049$ ) and *di+art* ( $p < .001$ ). The partitive determiner and bare *di*, instead, do not differ significantly ( $p = .117$ ).



**Figure 3:** Bar plot of acceptability of indefinite determiners.

As shown in Figure 3, ZERO is much more unacceptable than the remaining two DPs. Note that this does not necessarily go against what has been claimed in the first research about the similar behavior shown by ZERO and bare *di*: here the comparison is on the acceptability rate. Since ZERO, as claimed in Chapter 3 (§3.2.2), is a quite recent borrowing from Italian, it is more easily rejected by the older group (which here is bigger than the other two), while bare *di* is perfectly grammatical and extensively used in Piacentino. The prediction that can be made

here is that, when grammatical, ZERO tends to compete with bare *di*. As regards *di* and *di+art*, the former looks more unacceptable than the latter, even though the difference is not significant.

#### 4.2.2 Overall acceptability of clitics

Here are reported the results of the comparison between the clitics which were tested in the sentences. A statistically relevant difference emerged:  $\chi^2 = 40.105$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ . The *Pairwise comparison of proportions* test revealed a significant difference between *ne* and *li* ( $p < .001$ ), and between *ne* and *i* ( $p < .001$ ). *Li* and *i*, instead, don't differ significantly ( $p = .112$ ).

The bar plot in Figure 4 shows their tendencies: the accusative and nominative clitics appear to be significantly more unacceptable, while *ne*, on the contrary, is significantly more accepted overall. This difference is somehow expected: *li* and *i* are taken to be similar, since they resume constituents endowed with a direct case (accusative and nominative respectively).

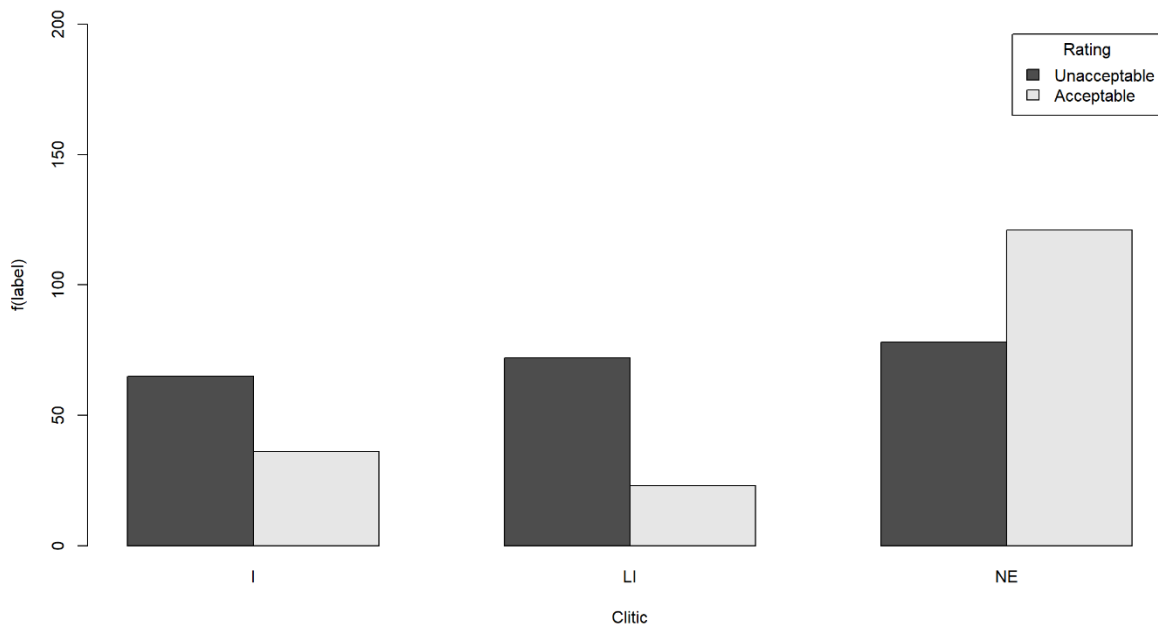


Figure 4: Bar plot of acceptability of the clitics.

#### 4.2.3 Acceptability of indefinite DPs in age groups

The acceptance rate does not differ significantly comparing the three groups ( $\chi^2 = 0.32503$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .085$ ). There is, however, a significant difference when compared with the three indefinite DPs used in this research ( $\chi^2 = 25.03$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p = .015$ ). The mosaic plot in Figure 5 highlights this tendency.

The only significantly deviant value is the acceptance rate by subjects belonging to the group C. It seems that older speakers accept less sentences containing ZERO. This is correlated with the observation made in Chapter 3 (§3.2.2) about the tendency of the older group to be more conservative than younger ones. Moreover, it is also consistent with the statement that

ZERO could be a borrowing from Italian. The total lower tolerance of the older speakers through ZERO confirms that this indefinite DP is a more recent acquisition in the dialect, which is used more frequently by younger generations (teenagers and middle-aged people).



**Figure 5:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and age group (A/B/C).

#### 4.2.4 Indefinite DP and clitic

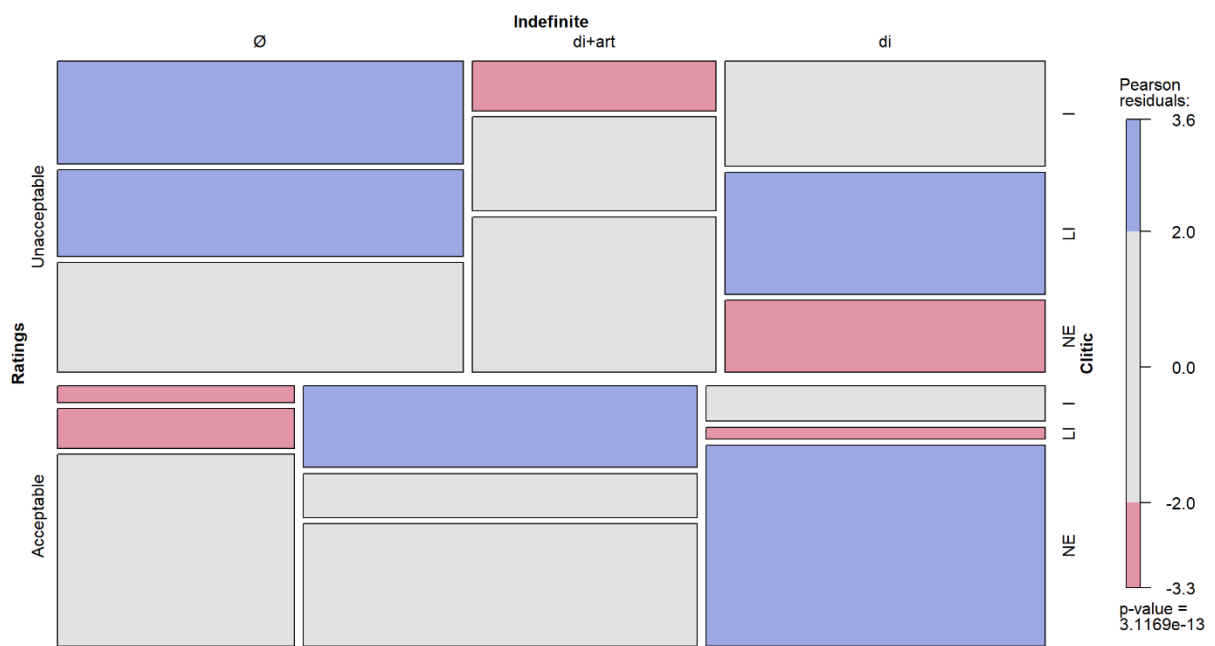
Let's turn to the most interesting comparison, that between the kind of indefinite determiner and the clitic used in the sentence. Significant differences have been found ( $\chi^2 = 85.85$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Figure 6 represents the acceptability of ZERO, bare *di* and *di+art* with respect to the clitic used (accusative *li*, quantitative *ne* and nominative *i*).

As expected, bare *di* is significantly more accepted when co-occurs with *ne*, and significantly more unacceptable when it is resumed by *li*. This reflects also the behavior of Italian and French, which allow bare *di* (and, in Italian, ZERO too) to co-occur only with the quantitative clitic *ne*.

*di+art* displays a significant greater acceptability in co-occurrence with nominative *i*. Assuming that *i* is the nominative counterpart of *li*, the fact that *di+art* easily co-occurs with it points to the fact that the partitive determiner in Piacentino is indeed able to take wide scope (as well as narrow, as shown by the previous work). Moreover, *di+art* shows the greatest occurrence with *ne* (looking at the extension of the corresponding intersecting area), even though in this case it does not reach statistical significance. The resumption of a dislocated DP introduced by *di+art* by means of the clitic *ne* is available in French, but not in Italian. The

reason for this restriction lies in the semantics of *di+art*, which in CLLD in Italian always has wide scope and introduces a specific referent. *Ne*, on the other hand, resumes only DPs with no specific referent, as those introduced by bare *di* or ZERO (which in Italian always takes narrow scope).

ZERO is significantly more unacceptable when co-occurring with both *li* and *i*. Looking at the dimension of the corresponding blocks, it is possible to notice how the distribution of both ZERO and bare *di* is similar. This, once again, strengthens the hypothesis that ZERO and bare *di* are competing forms.



**Figure 6:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and clitic (NE/LI/I).

#### 4.2.5 Indefinite DP and argument

The label “argument” identifies the distinction between the kind of constituent which has been dislocated in the sentences, i.e. subject or direct object. The  $\chi^2$  test did not reveal any significant difference between these two arguments ( $\chi^2 = 0.098218$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .754$ ).

Figure 7 enlightens the distribution of *di*, *di+art* and ZERO with respect to the kind of dislocated argument.

The result of this cross categorial comparison is not surprising, since ZERO displays a significant higher unacceptability (and a corresponding lower acceptability) in sentences with dislocated subject. This is expected, as it was already showed that Piacentino doesn’t allow for bare nominals in subject position. Moreover, as already repeated above, ZERO seems to be a borrowing from Italian, this factor further influencing on its lower grammaticality.

Though the distribution of bare *di* doesn't display any statistically relevant deviation, it resembles that of ZERO, which is not surprising. In combination with the kind of argument, *di+art* too follows the same line of bare *di*, but with a subtly greater occurrence in subject sentences.



**Figure 7:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and argument (SUBJECT/OBJECT).

#### 4.2.6 Indefinite DP and quantifiers

The label “quantifier” includes three subclasses: sentences with a universal quantifier, those with an existential quantifier, and those with no quantifiers at all. A significant difference has been found between them ( $\chi^2 = 21.215$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The *Pairwise comparison of proportions* test revealed that the relevant differences are those between universal and existential QPs ( $p = .001$ ), and between universal QPs and sentences with no QP ( $p < .001$ ).

In particular, as Figure 8 shows, universal QPs, in proportion, seem to be significantly more unacceptable overall. Instances of unacceptable sentences with existential QPs too outnumber those of grammatical items containing them. Sentences with no QP, instead, are almost equally distributed between grammatical and ungrammatical (though the former are slightly more than the latter).

The cross-categoriy comparison between the acceptability of the different kinds of QPs co-occurring with the different indefinite DPs is represented in the mosaic plot in Figure 9. Statistically significant differences have been found ( $\chi^2 = 44.91$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The distribution of ZERO shows that it is significantly more unacceptable when co-occurring with a universal quantifier. In fact, its occurrences in items containing a universal quantifier are almost null.

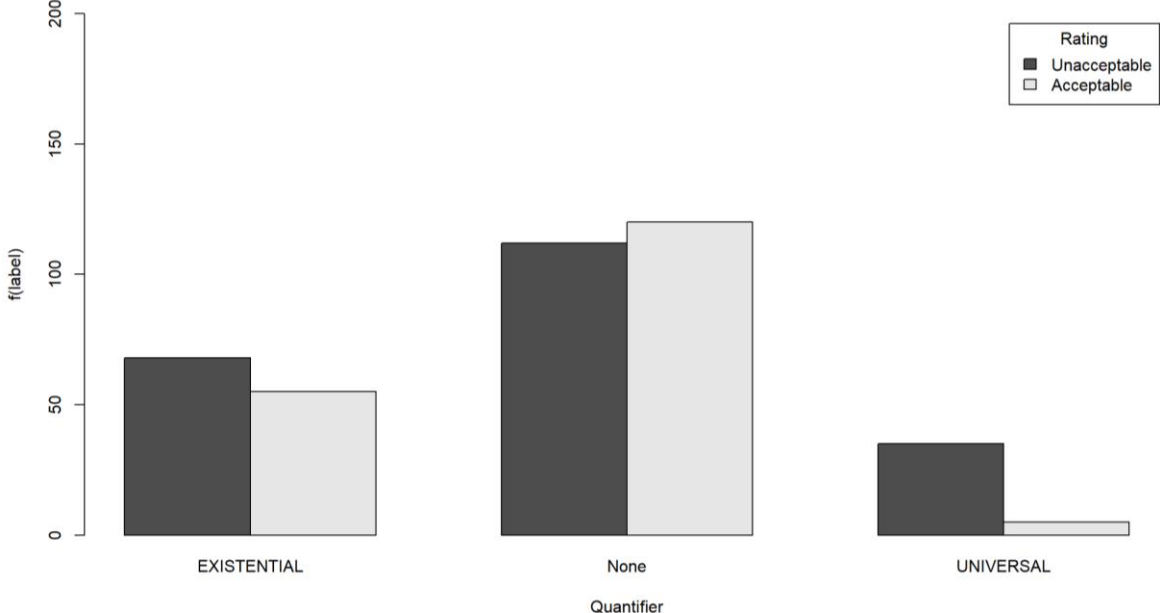


Figure 8: Bar plot of acceptability of the sentences containing existential QPs, universal QPs and no QP.

*di+art* displays a significant neat preference for those sentences lacking the quantifier. It is found also in co-occurrence with existential and universal quantifiers. Recall that the restricted

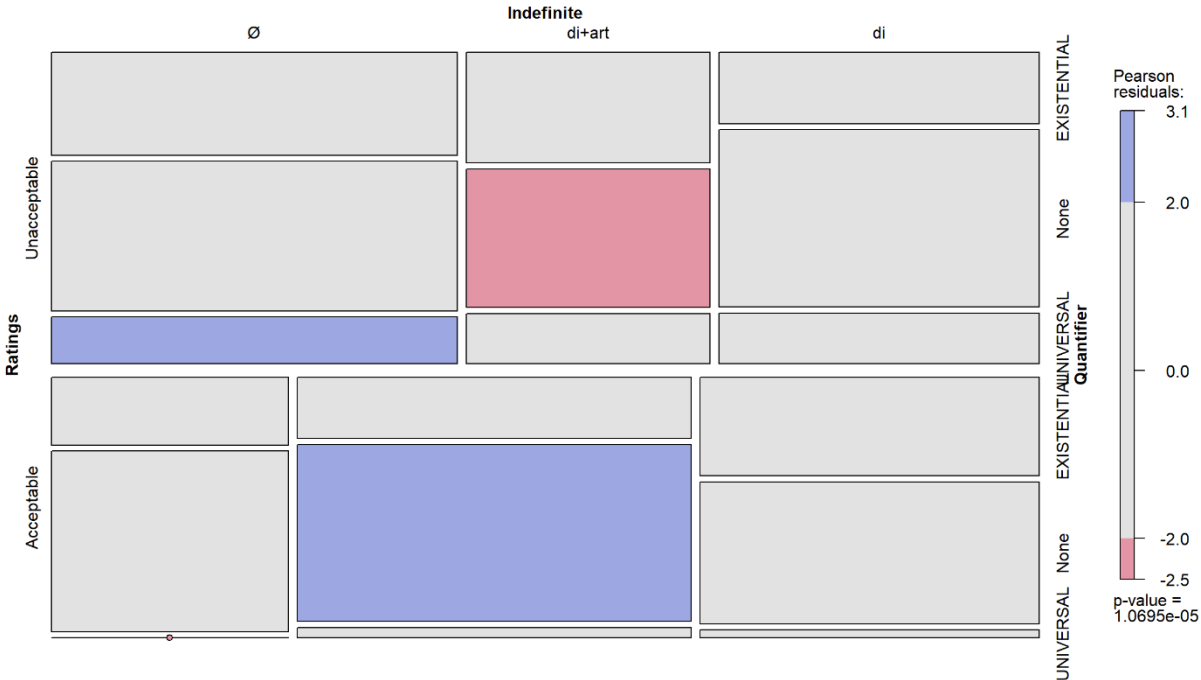


Figure 9: Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and quantifiers (UNIVERSAL/EXISTENTIAL/NONE).



area dedicated to these kinds of QPs is due to its unbalanced presence in the questionnaire, since they are in neat minority.

Bare *di*, instead, resembles the distribution of ZERO, with a strong tendency to be considered acceptable in sentences with no QP, followed by those with an existential one. It is slightly more acceptable than ZERO even in co-occurrence with universal quantifiers.

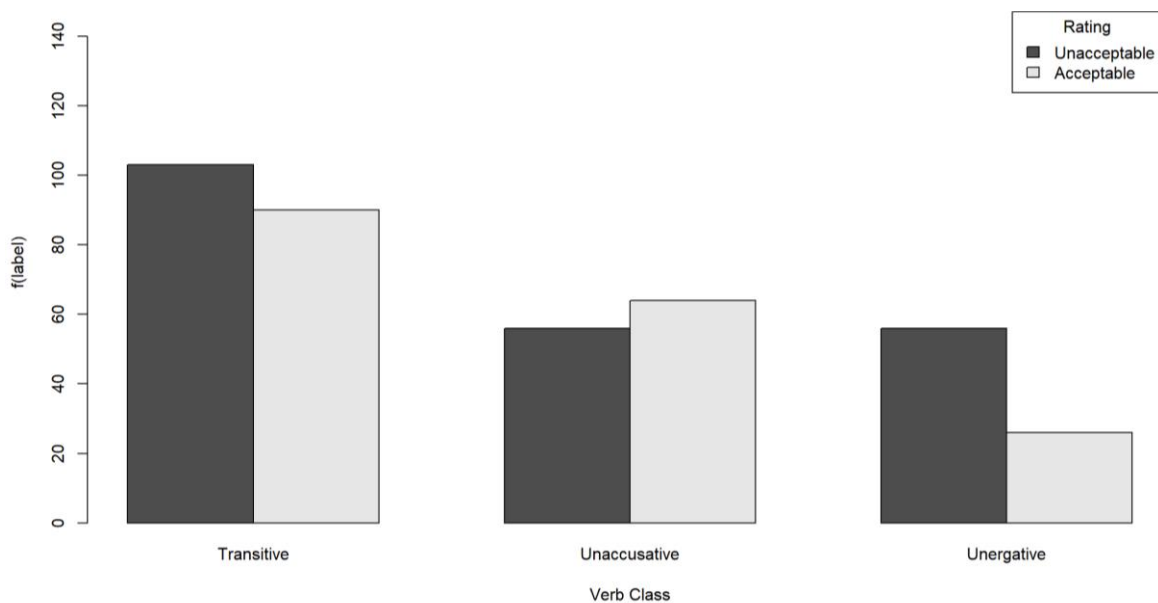
The occurrence of all these DPs in those sentences containing a universal QP may be not too reliable, as the questionnaire was not well balanced with respect to the number of sentences falling in these three categories.

#### 4.2.7 Indefinite DP and verbal class

The verbal class identifies which kind of verb has been used in a given experimental sentence: it may be transitive, unaccusative and unergative. A statistically significant difference has been found between these classes ( $\chi^2 = 9.3568$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .009$ ).

The *Pairwise comparison of proportions* test revealed a unique significant difference between unaccusative and unergative verbs ( $p = .011$ ). Interestingly, the difference between transitive and unaccusative ( $p = .300$ ) and transitive and unergative ( $p = .062$ ) is not statistically significant. There is a tendency between the latter pair: they *tend* to behave differently.

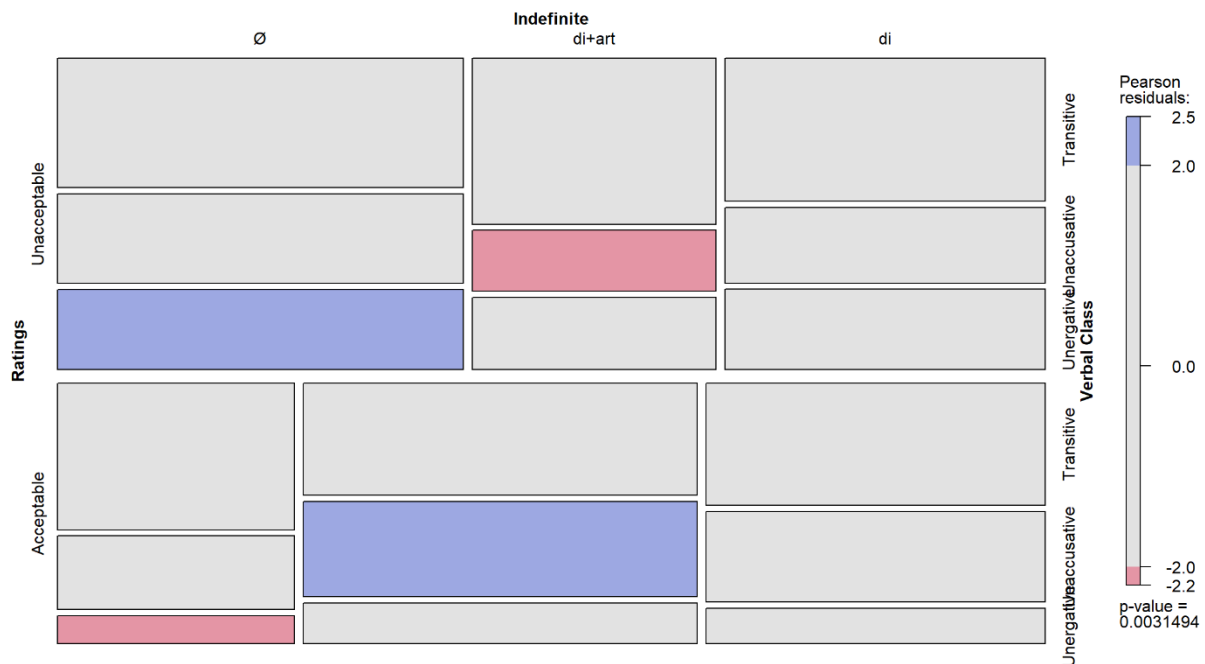
The bar plot in Figure 10 shows their distribution: sentences with unergative verbs are much less accepted than those displaying an unaccusative, while their rate of unacceptability seems to be almost equivalent.



**Figure 10:** Bar plot of acceptability of verbal classes.

The mosaic plot in Figure 11 highlights the deviations found considering the acceptability of the DPs in interaction with the verbal classes. Differences reaching statistical significance have been found ( $\chi^2 = 29.652$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p = .003$ ).

ZERO shows a significant higher unacceptability with unergative verbs, but its overall acceptability with intransitive verbs is lower, considering that Piacentino disallows bare nominals in subject position.



**Figure 11:** Cross-category distribution of indefinite determiners with respect to judgments (ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE) and verbal class (TRANSITIVE/UNACCUSATIVE/UNERGATIVE).

*di+art* is significantly more accepted with unaccusative verbs, probably to the fact that it is allowed in co-occurrence with the clitic *ne*, the only clitic allowed with this kind of verb. The occurrence of the partitive determiner is instead much lower with unergative verbs.

As regards bare *di*, it is able to appear both with unaccusative and transitive verb with a similar rate, while with unergatives its presence is limited, but still allowed in some cases.

### 4.3 Summary

The relevant data collected for each indefinite determiner are summarized here, in order to have a clear and synthetic picture of the features of each DP considered in this second survey, to facilitate discussion and interpretation of the data.

- ZERO: in CLLD structures it displays a significant difference with both bare *di* and *di+art*. It is significantly more unacceptable than the other indefinite DPs considered here.

- Age: significantly less accepted by group C, which confirms what was found in the former research (it is a relatively recent acquisition in the dialect, probably borrowed by Italian with the increasing contact between the two languages; consequently, the younger generations tend to be more tolerant to this form).
  - Clitic: significantly more unacceptable when co-occurring with both *li* and *i*. The great majority of cases in which ZERO is present is in co-occurrence with *ne*, patterning as Italian in this case. This distribution is similar to that of bare *di*, suggesting that they might be competing forms.
  - Argument: significantly less accepted in subject sentences, which is expected, given the tendency to disallow bare nominals in subject position found both in Piacentino and Italian (and in French, disallowing ZERO at all).
  - Quantifier: significantly more unacceptable when co-occurring with a universal quantifier, with which it registers no occurrences. The greater number of occurrences is found in sentences with no quantifier, while those with an existential one are limited.
  - Verbal class: significantly higher unacceptability with unergative verbs, but its overall acceptability with intransitive verbs is much lower than that with transitive ones, for the reason repeated above.
- *di+art*: in CLLD structures it displays a significant difference only with ZERO, but not with bare *di*. It has the highest rate of acceptability if compared to the other indefinite DPs considered here.
    - Age: equally accepted by all the age groups without any significant deviation from the expectation.
    - Clitic: significantly more acceptable when co-occurring with *i*. It is found more often with *i* than with *li*. Grouping together the accusative and nominative clitic under the same label “direct case”, however, the occurrences of the partitive determiner with direct case and oblique case (the quantitative clitic *ne*) would be equal.
    - Argument: it occurs almost equally in both subject and object sentences, with a subtle preference for the former ones.
    - Quantifier: significantly more acceptable in sentences with no quantifier, even though it can co-occur also with universal and existential quantifiers.

- Verbal class: significantly higher acceptability with unaccusative verbs, which is expected, since the partitive determiner perfectly co-occurs with clitic *ne*. On the contrary, *di+art* exhibits a lower occurrence with unergative verbs, while it is acceptable with transitive ones. If we grouped together unaccusative and unergative verbs under the label “intransitive”, then the acceptability of *di+art* would be almost equal in both transitive and intransitive predicates.
- Bare *di*: in CLLD structures it displays a significant difference only with ZERO, but not with *di+art*. It displays a high rate of acceptability, even though that of unacceptability is slightly higher.
  - Age: equally accepted by all the age groups without any significant deviation from the expectation.
  - Clitic: significantly more acceptable when co-occurring with *ne*, while it shows a significantly lower acceptance when resumed by clitic *li*. Its occurrences with the nominative clitic are quite limited. This is expected, given the property of bare *di*, which is resumed by *ne/en* also in Italian and French.
  - Argument: it occurs almost equally in both subject and object sentences, with a subtle preference for the former ones.
  - Quantifier: it is acceptable in sentences with no quantifier and in those with existential quantifiers. It is not allowed in co-occurrence with universal QPs. This is not weird, since existential (but not universal) quantifiers are suitable for *ne* extraction.
  - Verbal class: significant higher acceptability with unaccusative verbs, which is expected, since only they allow for *ne* extraction. It exhibits a lower occurrence with unergative verbs, while it is acceptable with transitive ones. As before, grouping together unaccusative and unergative verbs under the label “intransitive”, the acceptability of bare *di* would be almost equal in both transitive and intransitive verbs.

As regards the clitics, their relevant features are reported below:

- Accusative clitic *li*: significantly different from *ne*, but not from *i*. It displays a high rate of unacceptability. Moreover, it is significantly less acceptable when resuming dislocated objects introduced by ZERO and bare *di*. Its occurrence with *di+art* is instead allowed, but not to a great extent.

- Nominative clitic *i*: significantly different from *ne*, but not from *li*. It displays a quite high rate of unacceptability, but it is more acceptable than *li* overall. It is significantly less accepted with ZERO, showing also a very low occurrence with bare *di*. It is instead significantly more accepted with *di+art*, with which it registers the highest number of occurrences.
- Quantitative clitic *ne*: significantly different from both *li* and *i*. It is significantly more acceptable when resuming dislocated DPs introduced by bare *di*. It registers a high number of occurrences also with ZERO and *di+art*.

#### 4.4 Answers to research questions

This final section reports the research questions listed in the introduction, trying to answer them on the basis of the data collected and analyzed in the second research.

##### How do indefinite determiners behave in Clitic Left Dislocation in different contexts?

- Dislocated subject:** the most frequent DP occurring in these sentences is *di+art*, followed by bare *di*. Intuitively, ZERO is disallowed with subjects, in accordance with the ban of bare nominal in subject position, holding for both Italian and Piacentino.
- Dislocated object:** in most cases *di+art* and bare *di* are found with dislocated object, but ZERO registers a quite high number of occurrences too.
- Accusative clitic resumption:** disallowed, as expected, with bare *di* and ZERO (which presumably mark an oblique case), but allowed with *di+art*.
- Nominative clitic resumption:** as with *li* resumption, only *di+art* can be resumed by the nominative clitic.
- Quantitative clitic resumption:** perfectly acceptable with bare *di* and ZERO. What is interesting here is that the partitive determiner is perfectly allowed too in co-occurrence with *ne* (in Italian they are in complementary distribution, while in French this option is admitted).
- Verbal class:** with transitive verbs, all these indefinite determiners can occur in left dislocated structures. The same holds for unaccusative ones, since all these DPs allow for *ne* extraction. The class of unergative verbs, banning *ne* extraction, is grammatical only when the partitive determiner occurs, while ZERO is ruled out. The presence of bare *di* is quite limited, but still allowed in some contexts.

- vii. **Quantifiers:** in absence of any quantifier, all the three forms are available in dislocated sentences. The presence of a quantifier poses restrictions on the kind of indefinite DP that can occur in the sentence: universal QPs, as expected, rule out the presence of both bare *di* and ZERO, still allowing for the occurrence of *di*+art. The latter is admitted also with an existential quantifier, with which bare *di* and ZERO are grammatical too.

## Chapter 5

### Towards a syntactic analysis

This chapter is committed to the theoretical discussion of the results presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, following the framework proposed by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018, in press).

First, the framework is presented, and the results of the researches are summarized. Building on the data, a theoretical proposal to account for the distribution of the indefinite determiners in Piacentino is put forth. The various contexts that were taken into account are then analyzed, following the account proposed here. The diachronic development of bare *di* is also briefly exposed, to show how all the semantic features conveyed by the contexts analyzed here are interconnected. The chapter is concluded by some final remarks, addressing new research questions to future research.

#### 5.1 The theoretical background

This work is based on the unified analysis of the four indefinite determiners in Italian and Italo-Romance varieties (ZERO, art, bare *di* and *di+art*) provided by Cardinaletti and Giusti in several papers (2015b, 2016, 2018, in press) I will base my discussion on the two most recent papers and on further research by Giusti (to appear).

They are concerned with the wide choice of different determiners which can be used to express indefiniteness in Italian and Italo-Romance varieties. Recalling what was shown in Chapter 1 (§1.1), this issue of optionality among competing forms arises only when we take into account plural nouns, as with singular count nouns only one option conveying core existential indefiniteness is available, i.e. the numeral *uno/a* ‘one’ which grammaticalized into an indefinite determiner (cf. (1)).

In this case, the other options offered by the array of indefinite determiners would either result in ungrammaticality (cf. (2a-c)) or be semantically infelicitous (as in (2d) in which the article identifies a definite referent).

- (1) *Ho raccolto una violetta.* (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018:136-139)  
[I] have picked a violet
- (2) a. \**Ho raccolto violetta.*  
b. \**Ho raccolto della violetta.*  
c. \**Ho raccolto certa violetta.*

[I] have picked ZERO / *di*+art / certain violet

d. #*Ho raccolto la violetta.*

[I] have picked the violet

(Understood: a specific violet which is part of the shared knowledge)

Turning to plural count and singular mass nouns, there are various forms for expressing indefiniteness (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti, in press). Excluding the quantifier *alcuni* ‘some’, the cardinal *due* ‘two’ in its non-cardinal reading, and the pseudo-partitive construction *un po’ di* ‘a bit of’, the three commonly used determiners to express an indefinite quantity in Italian are exemplified in (3):

(3) a. *Ho raccolto fieno, ho raccolto violette.* (ibid.:137-139)

b. *Ho raccolto il fieno, ho raccolto le violette.*

c. *Ho raccolto del fieno, ho raccolto delle violette.*

[I] have harvested ZERO / ART / *di*+art hay, [I] have picked ZERO / ART / *di*+art violets

Besides these determiners, there are other two forms available in Italo-Romance varieties (but not to the same extent in Italian), namely the adjective *certo* (cf. (4a)), used in Italian for expressing “specific indefiniteness”, and the indefinite operator defined “bare *di*” (cf. (4b)), which is ungrammatical in the national language.

(4) a. #*Ho raccolto certe violette.*

b. \**Ho raccolto di violette.*

[I] have picked certain / *di* violets

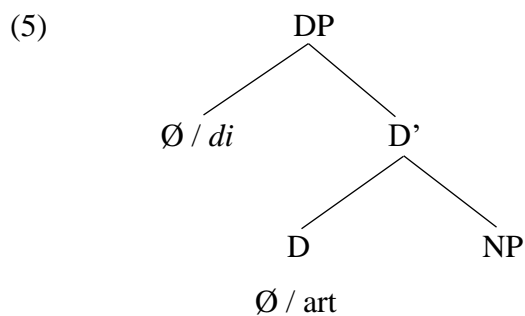
These two forms with a genuine indefinite meaning are indeed found in Italo-Romance varieties: the former in southern varieties (cf. Rholfs, 1968; Ledgeway 2009), while the latter in the north-western Italy, e.g. in Piedmontese (cf. Berruto, 1974) and Piacentino.

Analyzing three AIS maps (map 1037, 1343, 637), the authors single out an interesting diatopic distribution of indefinite determiners in Italo-Romance varieties throughout the peninsula. The definite article, representing the innovation with respect to Latin, spread from the center in northward – southward direction, while ZERO coexist with in the north and in the south, and still is the most used at the borders of Italy, in the extreme north (in the Grigioni area in Switzerland, it is the only possible form) and in the south, including the islands. The north-



western part presents bare *di*, a Gallic innovation due to contact with Occitan and Franco-Provençal (cf. Rohlfs, 1968:118), which spread from France across the border with Italy in an eastward direction. The area roughly coinciding with the Emilia-Romagna region is a sort of crossroads between the *di*-area and the ART-area. It is therefore expected that this area displays a consistent use of *di*+art as its most used indefinite determiner.

Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018) account for the morphology of these four different indefinite determiners resorting to a unified syntactic structure, represented in (5).



In (5), the Specifier and the head of the DP can be overt or covert. The Specifier of the DP hosts the indefinite determiner *di*, superficially identical to the preposition *di* (they both developed from Late Latin *de*, the preposition used to indicate source with the ablative case, later becoming the marker of genitive case as well (cf. Luraghi and Kittilä 2014)). The whole DP is headed by the definite article in the sense of Giusti (2015), who analyzes it as a dummy realizing the nominal features (case bundled with Number and Gender) associated with the N, and as such lacking semantic features, but only realizing the direct vs partitive case distinction. This analysis accounts for the fact that the so-called “definite article” is actually found in indefinite NPs.

The co-existence of these four variants is accounted for by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018) by referring to Biberauer and Roberts (2012a) about the interaction of a nano-parameter and a micro-parameter applied to the structure of the DP. Parameters are taken not to be pre-specified options that are genetically encoded, but they are argued to arise from underspecification of formal features in Universal Grammar. Biberauer et al. (2014:9) state that the “the theory of parameters” consists in “some subset of the universally available set of features [which] is optional. In other words, to paraphrase a very apt formulation put forward by Biberauer & Richards (2006), parametric variation emerges where UG «doesn’t mind».” The authors, quoting Biberauer (2011), Biberauer and Roberts (2012a,b, 2013), individuate a taxonomy of parameters, reported here in (6) from Biberauer et al. (2014:11):

- (6) “For a given value  $v_i$  of a parametrically variant feature F:
- a. Macroparameters: all functional heads of the relevant type share  $v_i$ ;
  - b. Mesoparameters: all functional heads of a given naturally definable class, e.g. [+V], share  $v_i$ ;
  - c. Microparameters: a small subclass of functional heads (e.g. modal auxiliaries, pronouns) shows  $v_i$ ;
  - d. Nanoparameters: one or more individual lexical items is/are specified for  $v_i$ .”

Applied to the framework presented here, “the micro-parameter regards whether the head D must be realized or remain silent when combined with an indefinite determiner sitting in its specifier. The nano-parameter, instead, regards the lexical realization of the indefinite determiner as *di* or zero.” (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018:142). This means that, when the Specifier is realized as *di*, the head could be non-realized, resulting in bare *di*, or overtly realize nominal features, surfacing as *di*+art. When the Spec,DP is realized as zero, if the head remains silent, we obtain ZERO; if D realizes its nominal features, it will surface as the definite article. Not to create confusion in the discussion that will follow, the non-realization of the head will be referred to as “null-D”, while the zero specifier as “null determiner”.

Biberauer et al. (2014) state that, in the hierarchy presented above, the lower parameters are diachronically less stable, such that microparameters are “somewhat unstable”, while nanoparameters are “highly unstable”. This statement predicts the great variability in the forms of the indefinite determiners found throughout the peninsula.

## 5.2 A summary of the results

In this section the results of the preceding analyses will be briefly recalled; on the basis of the behavior of each determiner, the theoretical research questions will be addressed.

### 5.2.1 ZERO

ZERO exhibits a rate of acceptability which is lower than that of the other DPs here considered (except for *certo*, which was already expected). In particular, the older groups B and C are less tolerant of it: this suggests that ZERO is a relatively recent acquisition in Piacentino, as the younger group displays a higher rate of acceptance. The more consistent language contact between the dialect and contemporary Italian should have facilitated the borrowing from the latter of the indefinite determiner realized as ZERO.

The DP with null determiner and null-D occurs with both mass and plural nouns, with a subtle preference for the former kind. Moreover, it is found more often in negative polarity sentences, revealing a significant lower acceptance in positive ones. Null determiner co-occurring with null-D is preferred in generic and atelic sentences. This reading could be facilitated, as ZERO takes (almost) only narrow scope. As for the context, in both saliency and small quantity interpretation it occurs rarely but with the same frequency.

The null realization of both positions in the DP can hardly be resumed by the accusative clitic *li* and is ruled out in co-occurrence with the nominative clitic *i*, facilitated by the ban on bare nominals in subject position. It can be resumed by *ne* only in dislocated object sentences. As expected, null determiner in co-occurrence with null-D is permitted only with existential quantifiers, or in absence of any QP.

What emerged from the results is that null determiner is in competition with *di* when the head D is not realized.

### 5.2.2 ART

The definite article exhibits the highest rate of acceptability: it is found in all contexts that were investigated, and is equally accepted by all the age groups, revealing that it is deeply rooted in the syntax of Piacentino. Interestingly, no significant difference was found between ART and *di+art*.

The overt realization of the nominal features in D with null determiner in the specifier can co-occur with both mass and plural count nouns (though registering a higher acceptance with the former noun class) and in positive and negative polarity sentences. This realization is preferred in episodic contexts and in atelic sentences. The appearance of overt nominal morphology in D provides the determiner with ambiguous scope properties. Moreover, as predicted by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018), overt D is preferred in predicates facilitating saliency (though in Piacentino it appears frequently also with small quantity interpretation).

### 5.2.3 Bare *di*

The indefinite determiner *di* displays an overall low acceptability, but this is due to its peculiar properties restricting its distribution. It is a typical determiner of Piacentino: it is accepted with the same rate by all the age groups.

Its distribution is not influenced by the nominal class: bare *di* is found both with plural count and mass nouns, though being subtly preferred with the latter kind.

The appearance of *di* in the specifier of the DP with null-D is dependent on the presence of the negation: it is found only in negative sentences. Moreover, it always takes narrow scope. This is consistent also with its distribution with respect to aspect: it is found only in atelic sentences<sup>32</sup>. Its preference for generic sentences could follow naturally from the features just mentioned. As for the context, bare *di* occurs only in those sentences which facilitate saliency.

Regarding clitic resumption, as in Italian it is perfectly grammatical in co-occurrence with *ne*, while with *li* it is disallowed. With *i*, the number of occurrences is quite limited. Consequently, bare *di* is more acceptable with unaccusative verbs (allowing *ne* extraction) than with unergative ones; with transitive verbs it is perfectly grammatical. Bare *di* can freely occur in sentences without a quantifier or with an existential QP (those which allow *ne* extraction), but not in those with a universal QP.

#### 5.2.4 *di+art*

The partitive determiner displays a very high acceptability, the highest after ART. Moreover, it is accepted by all the age groups at the same rate and is found in almost all contexts, meaning, once again, that *di+art* is a commonly used determiner, deeply rooted in Piacentino.

The overt realization of both the specifier and the head of the DP is allowed both with mass and plural count nouns (displaying a preference for the former class) and occurs more frequently in positive polarity sentences, though it can also co-occur with the negation. The partitive determiner is much more accepted in episodic and atelic sentences (though being possible in generic and telic predicates). It preferably takes narrow scope, though being able to take also wide scope. Its distribution is not affected by saliency or small quantity interpretation: *di+art* is almost equally accepted in both contexts, with a slightly higher rate of occurrence in the former. This, from one side, confirms the predictions made by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018) about the small quantity interpretation of the partitive determiner but, from the other side, shows that this hypothesis cannot be applied to Piacentino: *di+art* seems not to be specialized for any particular semantic shade, but it functions as the unmarked form for expressing core existential indefiniteness (together with ART).

The realization of both positions allows the DP to be resumed by direct (*li* and *i*) and oblique case (*ne*) clitics. The interesting thing is that the number of co-occurrences with the nominative

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<sup>32</sup> *Conditio sine qua non* for the appearance of bare *di* in non-left dislocated sentences is the presence of negation. This means that atelic aspect *per se* is not able to license the occurrence of this determiner. The results of the first research, however, point to the presence of bare *di* only in atelic predicates because, in the categorization of items, not only those sentences containing “for an hour”, but also sentences like “I don’t eat meat” or “I don’t eat potatoes” were classified among atelic ones. The following discussion, however, will focus only on those items containing the mentioned adverbial, which guarantees the atelicity of the predicate.

clitic outnumbered those with the accusative one. It can occur in subject and object sentences: as regards the former class, it is more tolerated with unaccusative verbs. As for quantifiers, it shows no restriction: when both the specifier and the head are overtly realized, the DP can co-occur with both universal and existential QPs and in sentences lacking these operators.

Interestingly, the partitive determiner displays a different behavior in Piacentino with respect to Italian: in the latter, in fact, it cannot be resumed by *ne* and, consequently, it is incompatible with existential quantifiers. Moreover, in dislocated position, Italian *di+art* displays only a wide scope reading.

### 5.2.5 *Certo*

This determiner has the lowest acceptability rate: it was equally not accepted by all the age groups, which is expected, since it is typical of southern Italo-Romance varieties (cf. Rohlfs, 1968). The significant difference between *certo* and all the other indefinite DPs further supports this claim.

Keeping in mind that *certo* was chosen quite rarely overall, it co-occurs more frequently with plural count nouns and in negative contexts. As expected, it takes wide scope, being more acceptable in episodic sentences and conveying small quantity interpretation. As regards the aspect, it registers almost no occurrences, neither in telic nor in atelic predicates.

### 5.2.6 Interim summary

There seems however to be a divide correlating two pairs of competing forms, namely:

- i. ZERO and bare *di* for negative polarity, generic sentences and narrow scope interpretation;
- ii. ART and *di+art* in positive polarity, episodic sentences, telic (as well as atelic) aspect, with wide scope interpretation and in co-occurrence with mass nouns.

As specified above, this does not amount to saying that ART and *di+art* cannot be used in the contexts listed for ZERO and bare *di* or the other way around. Looking at the distribution, however, it seems that both pairs occur more often in the contexts enumerated for each of them.

*Certo*, being not proper of the determiner system of Piacentino (as the data clearly confirmed), won't be considered in the following discussion.

Summarizing what said above, the relevant observations that emerged are (excluding *certo*):

- ZERO is less available than the other indefinite DPs since it is probably a borrowing from Italian due to contact language;
- Null determiner and *di* are in competition in the Spec,DP;

- If the head D is not overtly realized, there is no possibility for direct case clitic resumption and co-occurrence with universal quantifiers;
- When D is overt, the realization of the specifier as *nell-det* or *di* is optional for the expression of core existential indefiniteness;
- Null-D seems to license only narrow scope interpretation; when D is morphologically realized, the DP has ambiguous scope properties;
- When both the specifier and the head are realized, the DP can be resumed by both direct and oblique case clitics, and can co-occur with both universal and existential quantifiers;
- There seems to be a correlation between narrow scope and the higher acceptability with atelic aspect, generic sentences and saliency contexts.

### 5.2.7 Theoretical research questions

Given the above observations, some theoretical questions should be addressed at this point:

- What is the semantic value associated to the realization of Spec,DP as null determiner?
- What is the semantic value associated to the realization of Spec,DP as *di*?
- Does null determiner /*di* in the specifier correlate with different syntactic conditions?
- Is overt morphology in D linked to a specific semantics?
- Is covert morphology in D linked to a specific semantics?
- Is there any syntactic feature triggering the (non-)realization of the overt nominal morphology on the head D?

### 5.3 Diachronic evolution of bare *di*

What distinguishes Piacentino from Italian is the availability of bare *di* and the wider use of the partitive determiner, which displays different features from that found in the national language. The behavior of bare *di* is instead very similar to French *de*; as for *di+art*, instead, its availability in Piacentino showed up to be even broader than *du/des*NPs.

The partitive determiner is formed by *di* in Spec,DP and the head overtly realizing nominal features (ART). Since the behavior of ART coincides in Italian and Piacentino, the reason for the different behavior of bare *di* and *di+art* must be looked for in the different semantic and syntactic features associated with *di*. The difference with French, on the contrary, should be due to the different role of the definite article in these two languages. As is well known, the definite article in Romance languages developed from the weakening of the Latin demonstratives (*hic*, *iste* and *ille*) and the identative *ipse* (cf. Bauer, 2007).

The heteronomy of the dialect, however, pushes it towards its adaptation to the standard, recognized language, which is Italian in this case. This is the reason why the comparison is primarily made between Piacentino and Italian. What is relevant here is indeed the status of the indefinite determiner referred to as bare *di*.

To explain the properties of bare *di*, it would be useful to take a step back and understand its diachronic development. As said before, this indefinite determiner originated from the preposition *de* that originally was used in Late Latin to mark the source of an event (with the meaning “away from” (cf. Carlier and Lamiroy, 2014)) and was used with ablative case (cf. Luraghi and Kittilä, 2014). An example is provided in (7).

- (7) *Decido de lecto.* (Carlier and Lamiroy, 2014:483)  
 fall.from:PRS.1SG from bed:ABL.SG(M)  
 ‘I fall from my bed.’ (Latin: Plautus, Casina 931)

Later, *de* started introducing oblique complements of some verbs (8), gradually loosing its status of preposition and ending up combining even with the definite article (9) its final stage.

- (8) *Il approucha de la dicte fontaine.*  
 PRO.3SG approach:PST.3SG from DEF.ART.F.SG say:PTCP.PST.F.SG fountain  
 ‘He approached the fountain.’ (Old French: Jean d’Arras, Mélusine, end 14th C.)
- (9) *Pren des grains de poyvre.*  
 take:IMP.2SG of.DEF.ART.PL grain:PL(M) of pepper:SG(M)  
 ‘Take some peppercorns.’ (Old French translation of Albertus Magnus, *De falconibus*, BNF fr. 2003, 15th C). (ibid.:484-486)

In the later period, when cases were lost, this preposition became the marker of genitive as well (without losing its status of ablative marker). Indeed, Proto-Romance used the preposition *de* to mark both genitive and ablative, while occurring also in partitive constructions (cf. (10)). Later, Italian developed the preposition *di* having genitive (cf. (11a)) and partitive (cf. (11b)) functions, separate from the preposition *da* (from Latin *de ab*) indicating source (ablative case) (idib.).

- (10) *dicit eis Iesus adferte de piscibus quos*  
 say:PRS.3SG 3PL.DAT Jesus:NOM bring:IMP.PRS.3PL from fish:ABL.PL REL.ACC.PL

*prendidistis nunc*

catch:PRF.2PL now

‘Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught!” ’ (John 21,10)

(Luraghi and Kittilä, 2014:53)

(11) a. *La casa di Maria*

the house of Mary

‘Mary’s house’

b. *Alcuni film di quelli che ho visto.*

some films of those that [I] have seen

‘Some of the films I have seen’

Carlier and Lamiroy (2014) argue that “*de* turned into a full-fledged indefinite article, thus changing its morpho-syntactic status as well as its meaning. [In] Italian [...] the partitive article remains optional (next to zero marking) in all cases, and it is more widely spread in the North than in the South.” (ibid.:477).

Being an Italo-Romance variety, Piacentino followed the same path, developing a preposition (*a*)*d* marking genitive case and appearing in partitive constructions (see (12a) and (12b) which are the translation of (11a) and (11b) respectively), separate from the preposition *da* which is used to indicate the source.

(12) a. *La ca' ad Maria.*

the house of Mary

b. *Quèl film ad cü c'ho vist.*

some films of those that [I] have seen

The passage from genitive to partitive is derived from an inference, which is productive and consistent cross-linguistically (cf. Nikiforidou, 1991) resorting to an association between the possessor meaning and the part-whole relation. In this case, “Whole are possessors, Parts are entities possessed” (Luraghi and Kittilä 2014:52). The authors point out that from the partitive construction other inferences may arise; among them, that leading to indefiniteness is singled out. This accounts for the partitive and indefinite nature associated with bare *di*.

The partitive construction implies that “a part of the referent undergoes the effect of an action/process” (ibid.:55). Thus, only a part of the referent is involved in the discourse, but this part is not specified. This leads to the semantics of indefiniteness, explaining the link between



the syncretic realization of the genitive/partitive preposition and that of the indefinite determiner *di*.

The inference may go even further, accounting for the behavior of bare *di* in the scope of negation. As explained by Luraghi and Kittilä (2014), “indefiniteness becomes one of the natural readings for a group of entities taken from a (specified) whole. [...] The indefiniteness is especially evident when the whole is a universal set of all possible referents of the noun in question.” (ibid.:56).

The negation interacts with indefiniteness in that the affected parts of the whole are completely missing. It is not surprising that the indefinite determiner *di* (whose morphological realization is syncretic to that of the partitive case marker) appears exactly under the scope of the negation. In fact, “The function of negation is, naturally, to state that the event/state referred to did not occur. This makes the patient of negated clauses indefinite, because the reference is not to a specific entity, but rather to any entity that corresponds semantically to the direct object referent.” (ibid.:27). The non-specific reading of DPs under the scope of the negation is also explained by the fact that “negatives [...] are not used to introduce new referents to the discourse.” (Miestamo, 2014:81).

As singled out by Miestamo (2014), the partitive marking of a NP in the scope of the negation is found in other European languages lacking articles, like Finnic, Basque, Slavic and Baltic. A clear example from the Slavic group is Russian, commonly marking negated objects with partitive genitive, and obligatorily realizing it with the entity involved is absent (cf. (13)).

- (13) a. *Maria ne pila vina.* (Luraghi and Kittilä 2014:26)  
 Maria:NOM NEG drink:PST wine:GEN  
 ‘Maria didn’t drink (any) wine.’  
 b. *Ljudej zdes’ ne bylo.*  
 people:GEN here NEG be.PST.3SG.NEUT  
 ‘There weren’t people here.’

As for languages with articles, “negation is found to affect the use of articles and other determiners” (Miestamo 2014:63). French, as already observed, is consistent with this observation (cf. (14)).

- (14) a. *je vois un chien* (ibid.: 72)  
 1SG.NOM see.1SG INDF.M dog

- ‘I see a dog.’
- b. *je ne vois pas de chien*  
 1SG.NOM NEG see.1SG NEG DET dog  
 ‘I do not see a dog.’
- c. *il y a un livre sur la table*  
 EX INDF.M book on DEF.F table  
 ‘There is a book on the table.’
- d. *il n’y a pas de livre sur la table*  
 EX.NEG DET book on DEF.F table  
 ‘There is no book on the table.’

The appearance of *de* with negation is expected, since Piacentino shows the same pattern, in that it marks negative contexts with the partitive marker (15a). Note also that another peculiarity of partitive subjects is that they do not trigger verb agreement (Luraghi and Kittilä 2014), as in Russian (13b) and French (14d). This generalization holds for partitive subjects in Piacentino too, revealing that they are indeed marked for partitive case (15b).

- (15) a. *Maria l’ ha mia buì ad vein.*  
 Maria CL.NOM have.AUX.3SG NEG drink.PST.PRT *di* wine  
 ‘Maria didn’t drink wine.’
- b. *A gh’è mia ad geint chimò.*  
 there be.3SG NEG *di* people here  
 ‘There aren’t people here.’

In (15b) the subject *geint* ‘people’ is a 3.pl, but it does not agree with the verb ‘to be’, which surfaces as a 3.sg (the default form). Since the subject is not marked for nominative case, it is unable to trigger subject-verb agreement. In this case, the 3.sg morphology on the verb could be due to the presence of an expletive *pro* triggering the “default” agreement.

Partitives, however, started developing in direct object position (Luraghi and Kittilä, 2014). By analogy, they spread to subject position, though primarily to subjects of unaccusative verbs. This is not fortuitous, since unaccusative subjects have the same properties of direct objects. In Piacentino, it seems that the generalization has gone even further, as nominals marked with partitive case started extending also to subjects of some unergative verbs (as shown by the low – but still existing – acceptability of bare *di* with this verbal class (cf. Chapter 4, §4.2.7)). (16)

presents two items taken from the second questionnaire: (16a) it received a 5-judgment by all the informants to whom this sentence was submitted. (16b), instead, was only assigned 1- or 2-value of the scale.

- (16) a. *Ad ragasein, n'ha züghè abota.*  
*di little.boys, ne have.AUX.3SG play.PST.PRT a.lot*  
 'A lot of little boys have played.'
- b. *\*Ad can, n' ha mia curì.*  
*di dogs, ne have.AUX.3SG not run.PST.PRT*  
 'Dogs, they didn't run.'

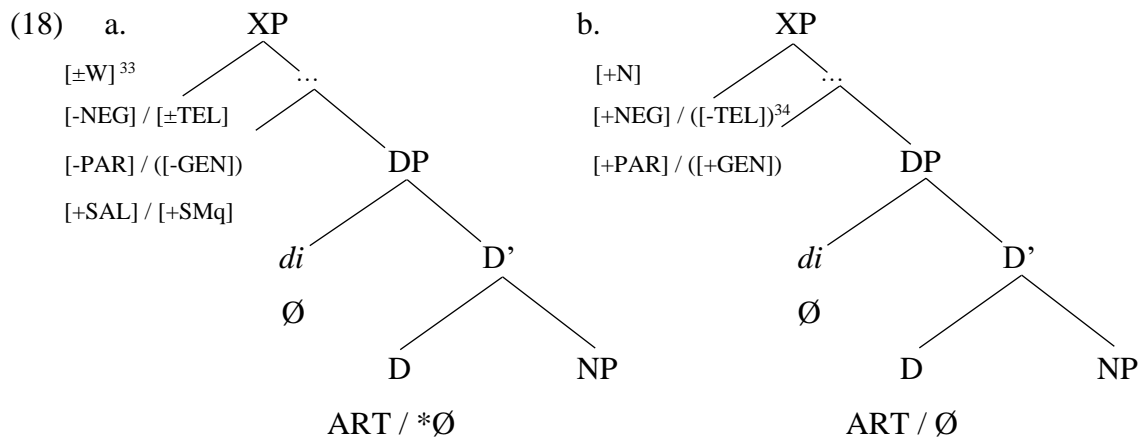
The partitive subject doesn't trigger verb agreement. It is not clear why only some unergative verbs allow for *ne* extraction out of a partitive subject. Above all, the issue of which feature is able to distinguish them is still unsolved. However, observing the sentences in (17), an intuitive difference can be noticed: the verbs which seem to admit a partitive subject (17a-b) pertain to the first conjugation (past participle ending in -è), while those whose subject hardly surfaces partitive case (17c-d) belong to the second conjugation (past participle ending in -ì).

- (17) a. *Ad ragas, n'ha mia telefonè.*  
*di boys, ne have.AUX.3SG not phone.PST.PRT*  
 'No boy phoned.'
- b. *Ad can, n'ha mia baiè.*  
*di dogs, ne have.AUX.3SG not bark.PST.PRT*  
 'No dog barked.'
- c. *??Ad ragas, n'ha mia drumì.*  
*di boys, ne have.AUX.3SG not sleep.PST.PRT*  
 'No boy slept.'
- d. *?Ad gat, n'ha mia buì.*  
*di cats, ne have.AUX.3SG not drunk.PST.PRT*

Whether the different conjugation plays or not a crucial role is still to be understood. As this issue falls outside the scope of the present work, it won't be discussed here. The observation just made, however, could provide a good starting point and might prove insightful for a deepened investigation of this topic.

## 5.4 Towards a syntactic analysis

The attempt here is to account for the distribution of the indefinite determiner in a unified perspective. The representation in (18) summarizes the structures showing the possible realizations of the four options in the contexts considered here. (18a) schematically presents the options available in Piacentino in the specified contexts (wide or narrow scope, positive polarity, (a)telicity, non-partitive case, non-genericity, saliency and small quantity interpretation). What is observed is that in these cases the null determiner is in competition with *di* in the specifier, requiring the head D be obligatorily overtly realized. (18b) shows that with the other traits (only narrow scope, negative polarity, only atelicity, partitive case and genericity) all the options are available, i.e. the specifier does not impose any restriction on the (non-)realization of the head D.



The structures just presented show how the context influences the realizations of the head and the specifier of the DP. In syntactic terms, the distribution of the indefinite determiners in Piacentino can be explained by a different instantiation of Compensatory Concord (in the sense of Cardinaletti and Giusti (2015a)) with respect to Italian.

The authors analyze the Italian partitive determiner as an application of this principle: since the indefinite determiner *de* (the Italian form is *dei*) does not concord overtly or covertly (cf. Giusti 2008, 2009), the head D must be realized to compensate for the lack of features in the specifier. The difference between these two languages in this: while in Italian the determiner *de* in the specifier obligatorily requires this principle to be applied, in Piacentino the determiner *di* may dispense with Compensatory Concord in the context of negation. Instead, null

<sup>33</sup> W = wide scope; N = narrow scope; NEG = negative; TEL = telic; PAR = partitive; GEN = generic; SAL = saliency; SMq = small quantity.

<sup>34</sup> A more precise analysis of atelic predicates will be given in §5.4.3.

determiner generally requires Compensatory Concord, contrary to what happens in Italian, in which this concord may not be instantiated, allowing for the ZERO determiner (in proper contexts). Needless to say, the ZERO option is still not well assimilated in the determiner system of this dialect, as its low overall acceptability shows.

In this respect, a suitable observation is that Piacentino is undergoing a cyclic development. This dialect developed from Latin, a language recurring to synthetic structures (cf. Ledgeway 2012) and consequently lacking articles, thus displaying only bare nominals. This means that, in its first stage, Piacentino gradually lost bare nominals, developing determiners (ART). Now it is gradually acquiring a ZERO determiner, a process triggered by the more and more pervasive contact with Italian.

Whether or not Compensatory Concord should be instantiated depends on the syntactic and semantic traits characterizing the sentence the indefinite determiner appears in. From a semantic point of view, the feature that could be tentatively taken to be crucial is (non-)specificity<sup>35</sup> (and existentiality<sup>36</sup> to a minor extent) which depend on the context and on the kind of predicate. How is it possible to characterize a “non-specific indefinite”? The easiest way to do so is to look at the “specific” counterpart. Von Heusinger (2002) lists the features that are generally assumed to be proper of specific indefinite NPs.

- “(i) certainty of the speaker about the identity of the referent
- (ii) the referent is fixed/determined/not depending on the interpretation of the matrix predicate
- (iii) specific indefinite NPs are ‘scopeless’ or ‘referential terms’, i.e. they behave as if they always have the widest scope
- (iv) specific indefinite NPs are referential terms, i.e. they are existentially presupposed
- (v) specific indefinite NPs can be paraphrased by a certain”

(ibid.: 246)

Non-specificity could be easily conceived as lack of these properties (unknown identity of the referent, narrow scope, lack of presupposition of existence).

Syntax and semantics are strictly connected, as syntactic and semantic features interact with one another. Once the non-specificity of the indefinites has been defined, the syntactic traits

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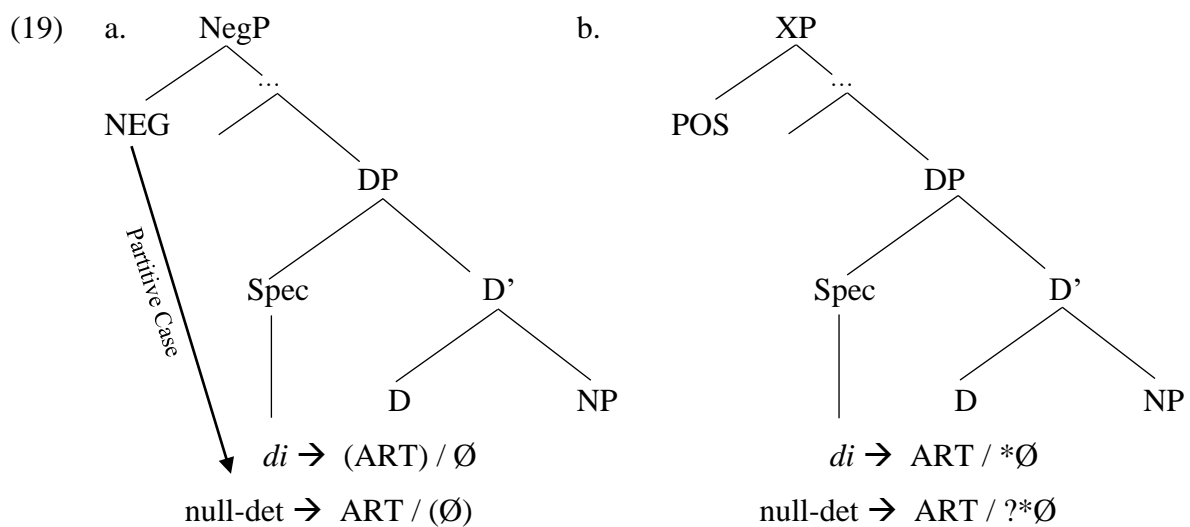
<sup>35</sup> The contrast between specific and non-specific indefinites has been argued to lie in that the speaker has or has not a particular referent in mind (cf. Fodor and Sag, 1982). The difference between specific indefiniteness and definiteness can be characterized by the fact that in the former case the information is given both to the speaker and the hearer, while in the latter it is accessible only to the speaker (cf. Geurts, 2010).

<sup>36</sup> The existential meaning is attributed to the presence of a ‘default’ existential quantifier (named “Existential Closure”) binding the free variable provided by the indefinite noun (cf. Diesing, 1992, and Kratzer, 1995). An appealing view on existentiality is given by Dobrovie-Sorin (1997), linking the existentiality of a predicate to the possibility of (one of) its arguments to be space-localized.

can be analyzed, one by one, trying to characterize the way they interact with the realization of the positions inside the DP, resulting in the four indefinite determiners available in Piacentino.

### 5.4.1 Polarity

Polarity sharply affects the realization of the specifier and the head of the DP. What distinguishes positive from negative polarity sentences is the presence of the negation. In fact, the negation, given its nature of operator, interacts with indefinite determiners that have been argued to be variables (cf. Heim 1982). A simplified structure illustrating the interaction of the polarity with the possible choices of indefinite determiners is given in (19).



Let's start with (19a). The results of the researches have already shown that bare *di* occurs only under the scope of negation. *di* is a free variable and, as such, it needs to be bound by an operator, i.e. the negation. In this case, the DP lacks the presupposition of existence (since the existence of a possible referent is negated) and, consequently, has non-specific reading. In this case, *di* can dispense with Compensatory Concord, co-occurring with null-D (which is the most frequent option, even though the overt realization of D is perfectly possible). Moreover, negation turns accusative objects or nominative subjects into partitive case. Piacentino marks partitive with *di* in Spec,DP. The idea that partitive is marked in the DP is in line with Giusti (2015), who takes Case features to be realized in the higher re-projection of the N, namely the DP (also labeled KP). The fact that *di* and null determiner are in competition in negative contexts suggests that partitive case can also be realized by null determiner in the specifier. In this latter case, Compensatory Concord is triggered. Under the pressure of Italian, Piacentino is

starting to (marginally) admit the co-occurrence of null determiner with null-D. (20) gives an example of a negative sentence from the first questionnaire.

(20) *In t'al to dialèt, un astemi dirisal:*

'In your dialect, a teetotaler would say:'

*A bev mia                    liquor fort / i / ad / di / sèrt liquor fort*

'[I] don't drink ZERO spirits /ART / di / di+art / certain spirits'

For this item bare *di* was selected by 14 participants, and ZERO by 10. *di+art* here occurs with a low frequency (chosen by 4 informants), while ART, as underlined, has a high occurrence even with negation (11 replies). The DP is assigned partitive case. Moreover, it does not presuppose the existence of any spirits, guaranteeing non-specific reading of the indefinite.

This seems to be consistent in French too, displaying bare *de* under the scope of the negation to express the complete lack of an entity (cf. the contrast between (27c-c') and (29b-b') from Chapter 1, repeated here in (21)).

- |      |                             |                                     |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (21) | a. <i>Il a des papiers.</i> | a'. <i>Il n'a pas de papiers.</i>   |
|      | he has of.the.pl. papers    | he <i>ne</i> has not of papers      |
|      | b. <i>Il a les papiers.</i> | b'. <i>Il n' a pas les papiers.</i> |
|      | he has the.pl. papers       | he <i>ne</i> has not the papers     |

(Ihsane 2005: 205)

In (21b'), the only way of maintaining the specific reading of the positive counterpart in (21b) is keeping the definite article; otherwise, the non-specific reading applies, as in (21a'). The same was shown to hold in Piacentino too (see Chapter 1, §1.1.4).

An interesting observation by Bosveld-de Smet (2004) points out that, in case of contrastive focus, it is possible to have the partitive determiner instead of *de*, even under the scope of the negation (22). Once again, Piacentino patterns in the same way (23), disallowing bare *di* in these syntactic constructions.

(22) a. *Marie n'écrit pas des romans, mais des poèmes.* (Bosveld-de Smet, 2004:47)

Mary doesn't write of-the novels, but of-the poems

b. *On ne nous sert pas du champagne, mais du vin pétillant.*

One doesn't serve us of-the champagne, but of-the sparkling wine

(23) a. *Maria la scriva mia di libar, ma dal cansoni.*

Maria doesn't write *di*+art books, but *di*+art songs.

b. *Um mia buì dla bira, ma dal vein.*

[We] didn't drink *di*+art beer, but *di*+art wine

Turning to the structure in (19b), no partitive case is assigned, and the specifier exhibits obligatory Compensatory Concord. Head D should always be overtly realized, while the specifier can be occupied by either *di* or null determiner<sup>37</sup>. (24) reports an item consisting in a positive polarity sentence from the first questionnaire.

(24) *In t'al to dialët, s'at cuntès d'un brindisi fat cui to amis ier, dirisat:*

'In your dialect, if you would talk about a toast you made with your friends yesterday, you would say:'

*Um buì vein / al vein / ad vein / dal vein / sèrt vein*

[We] drank Ø wine / ART wine / *di* wine / *di*+art wine / certain wine

In (24), all 15 informants gave *di*+art as a possible option, and 14 of them indicated ART as well. Only 5 occurrences of ZERO are found, while bare *di* was never chosen. As expected, the indefinite DP here entails the existence of some wine that was drunk, in the sense that, if no wine existed, the sentence would turn up false. It could also be supposed that the kind of wine can be specified (let's say, if one asked the utterer which wine was drunk during the dinner). No occurrences of bare *di* are found, and ZERO is a very marginal option.

To sum up, bare *di* in Piacentino is the unmarked non-specific indefinite DP expressing core non-existential indefiniteness. It is found only under the scope of negation. The negation, as has been shown to be the case in other languages, selects partitive case on the DP in its scope. This case surfaces through the realization of *di* in the specifier (in competition with null determiner, but to a lesser extent), optionally requiring Compensatory Concord. Negation is responsible for lack of presupposition of existence and the non-specificity of the referent. The partitive case also explains its possibility to co-occur with existential quantifiers and to be resumed by the quantitative clitic *ne* in clitic left dislocated sentences and, on the contrary, its impossibility of co-occurrence with universal QPs and accusative *li* resumption.

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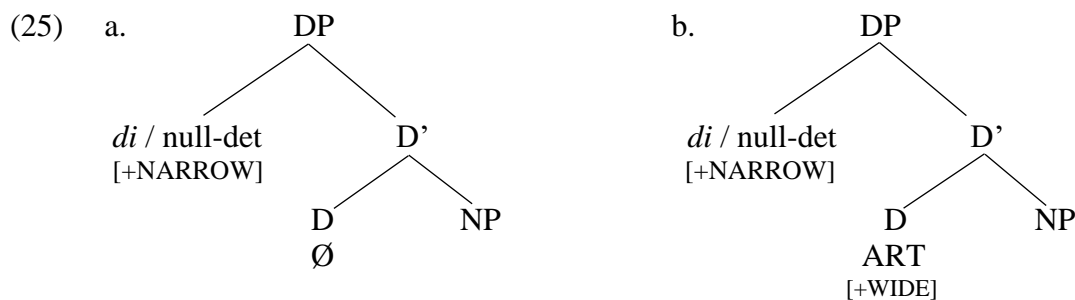
<sup>37</sup> One could even suppose the existence of two syncretic forms of *di* in the specifier: one realizing partitive case, while the other realizing direct case (accusative or nominative, according to the structural position occupied by the DP). This claim, however, seems not to be the most economical strategy to account for the state of affairs in Piacentino. For this reason, it won't be pursued in the following discussion.



In the absence of negation, bare *di* is ruled out, and the competing forms are ART and *di*+art. In this case, if the indefinite DP gets an existential and/or a specific reading, the *di*/ZERO specifier requires overt nominal morphology on D. Covert morphology on D is linked to the lack of presupposition of existence, while the overt realization of the head is ambiguous, as it can (but doesn't need to) entail existence. Notice, however, that this presupposition is not linked to the realization of the head, as, if it were the case, it would be expected not to find ART in negative sentences, contrary to the fact.

#### 5.4.2 Scope

Scope properties of the determiners affect their semantic properties, and, at the same time, they correlate with the realization of the head position inside the DP. It could be possible to associate the head position with wide scope, and the specifier with narrow scope. This generalization could hold supposing that the specifier is always realized (either as *di* or as null determiner, the latter being just a realization with null morphology), while the head could be realized or not (the zero head corresponds to a non-realization of its features). This would predict that narrow scope reading would always be available, while wide scope would only be possible when nominal features are realized in D. This prediction about the scope of the indefinite in Piacentino correlating with its structure is represented in (25).



Comparing the two structures, it is possible to notice that the (non-)realization of the overt morphology in D strongly correlates with the scope the indefinite DP can take. When D is non-overt (25a), the DP can only have narrow scope interpretation. The example in (26a), is only compatible with the continuation in (i) which introduces a new indefinite. It is incompatible with (ii), which refers back to the indefinite and presupposes its existence. When D is overt, disregarding the presence of null determiner or *di* in the specifier (25b), the determiner has ambiguous scope properties (cf. (26b)).

(26) a. *Ala festa, ho mia invidè ragas / ad ragas,*

- at the party I didn't invite ZERO boys / *di* boys,  
 (i) *ma admé ragasi*  
 but just girls  
 (ii) *\*parché i eran antipatic*  
 because they were unpleasant
- b. *Ala festa, ho mia invidè i ragas / di ragas*  
 at the party I didn't invite ART boys / *di+art* boys  
 (i) *ma admé al / dal ragasi*  
 but just ART / *di+art* girls  
 (ii) *parché i eran antipatic*  
 because they were unpleasant

The results suggest that *di* combining with null-D can only take narrow scope. When it combines with a realized D, it is ambiguous. This confirms Giusti's hypothesis that the article in D does not have semantic features of (in)definiteness or specificity. Note that a null determiner can also co-occur with a null or an overt D with acceptable results in narrow scope contexts. In fact, all the four variants are possible in negative sentences.

Scope properties are strictly related to the semantics of indefinites. Enç (1991) states that the possibility to take only narrow scope is proper to non-specific indefinite NPs, while specific indefinite NPs can have both narrow and wide scope reading. Another semantic account of indefinites takes them to be specific when they have wide scope over an operator (cf. Fodor and Sag, 1982). The authors show as an example a sentence like (27), taken from Fodor and Sag (1982:355), whose possible continuation is compatible with the specific (27a) or non-specific (27b) interpretation of the NP (from von Heusinger, 2002:245).

- (27) A student in the syntax class cheated on the final exam.  
 a. His name is John.  
 b. We all try to figure out who it was.

Opposite to the properties of specific NPs listed in §5.4, non-specific NPs should be characterized by the lack of identification of the referent, narrow scope and lack of presupposition of existence. This is consistent with the collected data (especially in the first questionnaire). (28) is an item taken from the first questionnaire to test the narrow (28a) vs wide (28b) scope reading of the indefinites.

- (28) *Ala festa, ho mia invidè ragas / i ragas / ad ragas / di ragas / sèrt ragas,*  
 at the party I didn't invite ZERO boys / ART boys / *di* boys / *di+art* boys / certain boys,  
 a. *ma admé ragasi*  
 but just girls  
 b. *parché i eran antipatic*  
 because they were unpleasant

In this item, in the narrow scope reading, bare *di* and ART were equally chosen 15 times, while *di+art* registers 13 occurrences, followed by ZERO, that was chosen 9 times. The wide scope reading, instead, counts 14 occurrences of the partitive determiner, 5 of ART and 3 of bare *di* and ZERO (apart from the 15 occurrences of *certo*, which was expected). These results confirm that bare *di* displays only narrow scope and ZERO too seems to be more easily pushed through a narrow scope reading. As expected, these determiners, having only non-specific reading, match these properties: the non-identifiability of their referent is borne out given their incompatibility with restrictive relative clauses (cf. (29a) vs (29b)). ART and *di+art*, on the other hand, can take both interpretations, according to the context they occur in.

- (29) a. *\*Ho mia incuntrè ragas / ad ragas chi gnivan chimò a züghè.*  
 [I] have not met ZERO boys / *di* boys who came here for play  
 b. *Ho mia incuntrè i / di ragas chi gnivan chimò a züghè.*  
 [I] have not met ART / *di+art* boys who came here for play  
 'I didn't meet the boys who used to come here playing.'

The lack of the presupposition of existence is intuitively true for bare *di* (and ZERO, in most cases), since they occur in the scope of the negation. ART and *di+art*, instead, can entail existence in sentences like (28b) or (29b), where the existence of unpleasant boys or boys that used to go playing in a specified place is presupposed, otherwise the sentence would not make sense.

While this presupposition cannot be linked to the overt realization of the head D (otherwise we would expect not to find ART in negative contexts), the generalization stated above concerning scope properties seems to hold: in Piacentino, whenever the head D is not realized, the indefinite determiner can have only narrow scope (and, thus, non-specific) reading. If there

is overt morphology on D, instead, the DP has ambiguous scope properties, to be further specified in interaction with other clausal traits, e.g. polarity, aspect etc.

In this respect, French *du/des*NPs are interesting to be compared to the partitive determiner in Piacentino: as Ihsane (2008) pointed out, the singular partitive article can only take narrow scope, while the plural one can have ambiguous scope properties. By default, it takes the narrowest scope (as in (71) from Chapter 1, repeated here as (30)), while, if used referentially, it is able to take the widest scope.

- (30) *Tous les professeurs nous ont conseillé trois / des livres.* (Corblin et al., 2004:19)  
all the teachers to-us have recommended three / *des* books  
'All the teachers have recommended us three / some books.'

The sentence in (30) can only mean that all professors recommended some books, but they are not the same for each professor. The partitive determiner in Piacentino was already shown to have ambiguous scope properties. Moreover, as it displays the properties of both bare *di* and ART (cf. also §5.4.6), this restriction with respect to mass nouns should not hold. Even though the scope properties were not tested with this noun class, the prediction seems to be borne out<sup>38</sup>  
(31).

- (31) *Tüt i ragasein i han bui dal lat.*  
all the children CL.NOM have drunk *di+art* milk  
'All the children drank milk.'

The interpretation of *dal lat* 'of.the milk' in (31) is ambiguous: when the DP takes narrow scope, the sentence means that all the children drank some milk, which is not necessarily the same for each child. With wide scope interpretation, there is a particular kind of milk, such that all the children drank it. The ambiguity, as predicted, is given by the overt realization of the head D.

### 5.4.3 Aspect

Aspect is also linked to (non-)specificity: atelic sentences facilitate the non-specific interpretation, allowing for the non-realization of the head D, and for the appearance of bare *di*

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<sup>38</sup> This judgment is based on personal intuitions. Needless to say, further research aimed to investigate this aspect of indefiniteness in Piacentino is required.

or ZERO. In fact, Borer (2005) treats telicity as a syntactic feature, pointing out an interesting link between atelicity and partitive case assignment in Finnish quoting some examples from Vainikka and Maling (1993) and de Hoop (1992), reported here in (32).

(32) a. *Kirjoitin juuri naita kutsukortteja perjantaina, kun soitit.*

I.wrote just these.PRT invitations.PRT on.Friday when you.called

'I was just writing these invitations on Friday when you called.'

b. *Kirjoitin nama kutsukortit perjantaina.*

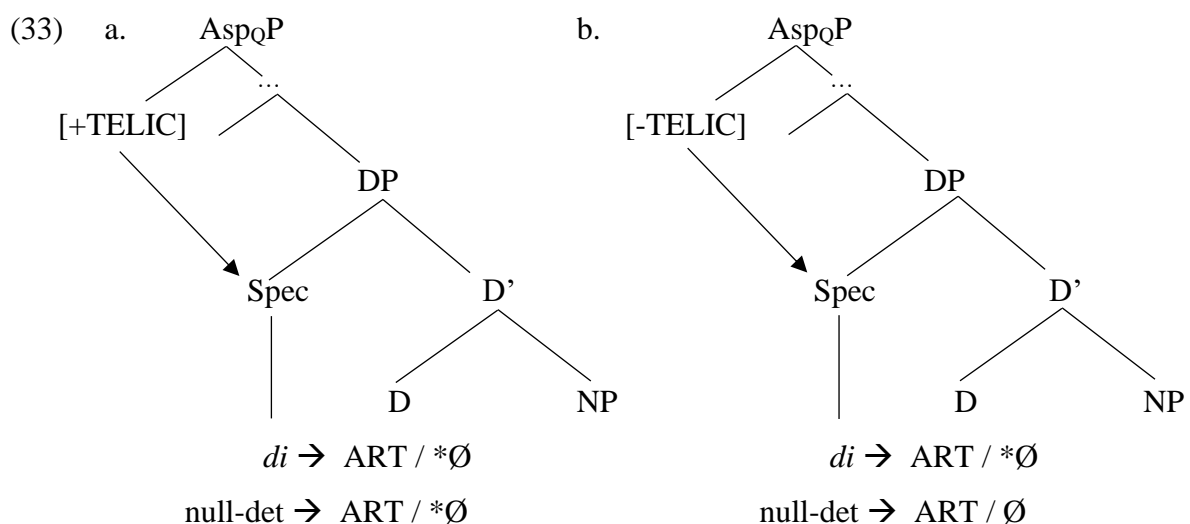
I.wrote these.ACC invitations.ACC on.Friday

'I wrote (and finished) these invitations on Friday when you called.'

(Borer 2005:100)

The author observes that in Finnish direct objects receive partitive case when embedded under atelic predicates, as in (32a), and receive accusative case with telic predicates (32b).

A syntactic account of telicity is given in Borer (2005): she assumes that the event is generated in VP, and then it is modified by a structure dominating it (she calls it AspQP) and containing a syntactic feature [+telic]. Assuming the proposal sketched above for Piacentino, a simplified structure of DPs in telic and atelic predicates is represented in (33).



(33a) shows that telic sentences behave in the same way positive polarity sentences do, in allowing the specifier to surface either as *di* or as null determiner but mandatorily requiring Compensatory Concord. In (33b) the options are less restricted, as null determiner can combine with null-D, resulting in ZERO. What is interesting to note is that [-TELIC] and negation similarly influence the realization of the DP, but with a crucial difference: while the latter allows

for bare *di*, the former trait *per se* cannot license the co-occurrence of *di* with null-D (cf. fn. 32 which amends that the presence of bare *di* in atelic sentences is due to the categorization of the items). If [-TELIC] assigns partitive case (as is the case for Finnish) in Piacentino too, then one is led to suppose that partitive case makes the instantiation of Compensatory Concord non-compulsory for null determiner.

The different distribution with respect to aspect was taken to derive directly from scope properties and (non-)specificity of the determiner. Atelic sentences facilitate non-specific semantics, resulting in narrow scope of the indefinite, indeed not requiring overt morphology in D. Moreover, the presupposition of existence carried by these predicated seems to be weaker than that of telic sentences. The latter, on the contrary, require a specific reading of the DP, requiring that *di* or null determiner in the specifier obligatorily co-occur with overt morphology on D.

This distribution, once again, confirms the asymmetry in the realization of the nominal inflection in the DP in Piacentino: the non-realization of the head guarantees a non-specific reading of the determiner, but not the other way around. The overtly realized D does not *per se* assure that the DP has indefinite interpretation, as ART and *di*+art are ambiguous in this respect.

Telicity has received various accounts. Krifka (1989) states that “A verbal expression is atelic if its denotation has no set terminal point (e.g. walk); it is telic if it includes a terminal point (e.g. solve the puzzle).” (p. 75). He refers to Dowty’s (1979) syntactic tests that distinguish between these two aspects: “atelic predicates allow for durative adverbials (e.g. for ten minutes), but do not allow for timespan adverbials (e.g. in ten minutes), whereas with telic expressions the situation is reversed.” (Krifka 1989:75). These are the adverbials that were exploited in the items to force the telic or atelic reading of the predicate (cf. (34a) and (34b) respectively, taken from the first questionnaire). This semantic definition is assumed also by Marín and McNally (2011), arguing that telicity is applied to events that involve a sort of “natural” endpoint. In contrast, “atelic events do not contain such a culminating point and have the potential to continue indefinitely, without any change in their internal structure.” (Grose et al., 2007:1263).

(34) *Sum a dré cuntè cu c’ho fat dumènica pr’astè dal temp föra d’in ca:*

‘I am telling what I did on Sunday to spend some time outdoors:’

a. *Ho catè                    muri                    / al muri                    / ad muri                    / dal muri                    in t’ un’ura*

‘[I] picked ZERO blackberries / ART blackb. / *di* blackb. / *di*+art blackb. in an hour’

- b. *Ho catè muri / al muri / ad muri / dal muri pr' un'ura*  
 ‘[I] picked ZERO blackberries / ART blackb. / *di* blackb. / *di+art* blackb. for an hour’

(34a) scored 11 occurrences of ART, followed by 9 of *di+art* and 3 of ZERO, while no one chose bare *di* (as negation is absent). On the contrary, in (34b), *di+art* was chosen 14 times, while ART 13 times. ZERO counted 7 positive answers and, of course, no bare *di*.

The distribution of *des/du*NPs in atelic contexts reveals that French patterns like Piacentino, as these kinds of NPs do not delimit individual referents (Corblin et al., 2004) and are incompatible with *en*-adverbials, as the latter require bounded nominals (specific or bound by spatio-temporal boundaries, cf. Bosveld-de Smet, 2004), as (35) shows.

- (35) a. *L'enfant a fait des dessins \*en une heure / pendant des heures.*

The child has made of-the drawings in an hour / for hours

- b. *Du gaz s'est échappé du tuyau \*en une heure / pendant des heures.*

Of-the gas has escaped from the pipe in an hour / for hours

(Bosveld-de Smet, 2004:51)

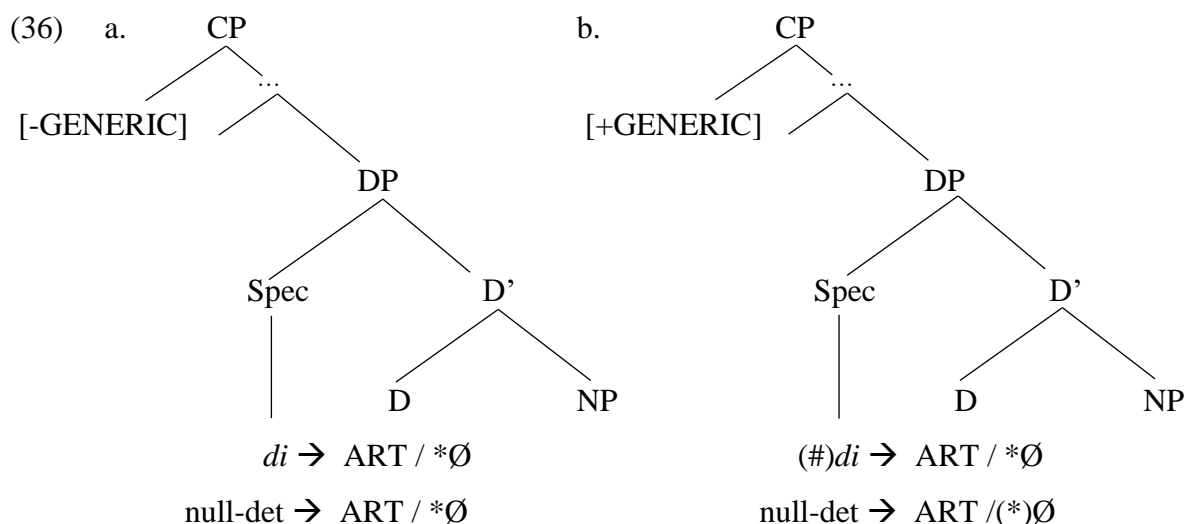
#### 5.4.4 Clause type

Genericity is not considered a syntactic feature, but a “semantically and discourse-pragmatically complex phenomenon which involves oppositions on different dimensions.” (Behrens 2005:295). Sentences are taken to be generic when their predicate express a characterization concerning “a kind rather than a particular individual.” (ibid.:288). “Generic NPs” need to be distinguished by “generic sentences”, in that the former don’t need to occur in the latter, and the latter don’t need to contain the former (cf. Krifka et al. 1995).

Episodic sentences more easily require specific reading of the indefinite NPs, while generic ones allow for non-specific indefinites. The results of the first questionnaire show that generic contexts privilege the presence of bare *di* and ZERO, those determiners taking only narrow scope. In episodic sentences, instead, the competing forms are ART and *di+art*, ambiguous both between a non-specific and a specific interpretation and between narrow and wide scope.

(Non-)genericity is however subordinated to the polarity of the sentence. The results in this case could be influenced by the latter parameter, as in the first questionnaire, in fact, all generic sentences had negative polarity, while episodic sentences had mostly positive polarity (see the complete list of the items in Appendix A). the picture, in this case, seems to be more similar to

that of (a)telicity: generic sentences pattern as atelic sentences, while episodic predicates are more similar to telic ones. (36) shows the proposed structure.



(36a) shows the possibilities found in episodic sentences. Since the specific reading is facilitated in this context, disregarding the realization of the specifier as *di* or as the null determiner, Compensatory Concord is triggered, and D is realized. (36b) shows how the DP is realized in generic contexts, keeping in mind that, as for atelicity, genericity *per se* cannot license the presence of bare *di*. Since only negative generic sentences were tested, (36b) represents just a tentative structure for indefinites occurring in generic predicates. The question mark and the asterisk in brackets signal personal judgments<sup>39</sup>. This issue needs to be investigated in more detail, submitting a questionnaire containing positive generic sentences.

(37a) gives an example of generic sentence used in the questionnaire, while (37b) exemplifies an episodic context.

<sup>39</sup> According to my intuitions of native speakers, positive generic sentences only allow for ART, and just marginally for *di*+art.

- (i) *A mangi la / #dla chèran.* (ii) *A mangi al / #dal patèti.*  
 I eat the / #of.the meat I eat the / #of.the potatoes

The oddity of the partitive determiner here is due to its “specific” interpretation, as it refers to some specific kind of meat or potatoes. This is just a personal intuition that must be checked with a questionnaire created *ad hoc*.



(37) a. *In t'al to dialèt, un vegetarian dirisal:*

‘In your dialect, a vegetarian would say’

*A mangi mia chèran / la chèran / ad chèran / dla chèran / sèrta chèran*

[I] don't eat ZERO meat / ART meat / *di* meat / *di*+art meat / certain meat

b. *In t'al to dialèt, s'at cuntès la seina fata dai to amis iarsira, dirisat:*

‘In your dialect, if you would talk about the dinner you had at your friends’ last night, you would say:’

*Um mangè chèran / la chèran / ad chèran / dla chèran / sèrta chèran*

[We] ate ZERO meat / ART meat / *di* meat / *di*+art meat / certain meat’

(37a) received the following number of judgments: 13 for bare *di*, 11 for ART, 9 for *di*+art, and 8 for ZERO. As visible, bare *di* is strongly preferred, even over ART. As for (37b), instead, 15 occurrences of *di*+art are registered, followed by 14 of ART, 5 for ZERO and one for bare *di*. The polarity (and possibly the specificity requirement) strongly affects the choice of the indefinite determiner.

In French, the state of affairs is similar. Recall (63) from Chapter 1, repeated here as (38).

(38) a. *Jeanne mange les pommes.*

(Behrens 2005:285)

(i) ‘Jeanne eats apples.’ (habitual)

(ii) ‘Jeanne is eating the apples.’ (nonhabitual)

b. *Jeanne mange des pommes.*

(i) ‘Jeanne eats apples.’ (habitual)

(ii) ‘Jeanne is eating apples.’ (nonhabitual)

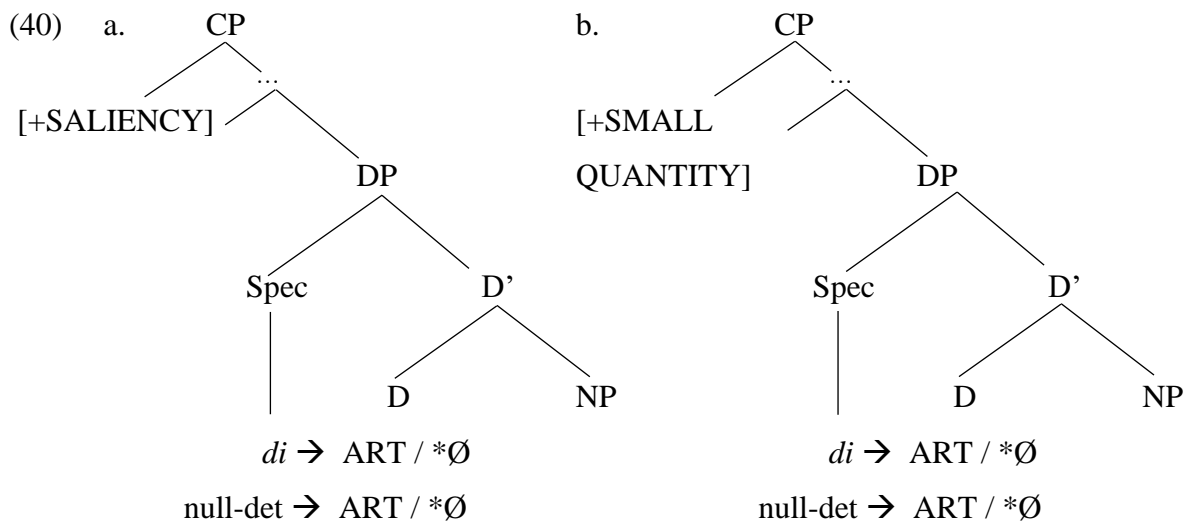
French uses definite articles with kind-referring interpretation (38a(i)), while the partitive determiner for encodes non-specific readings (cf. Behrens, 2005). This means that in generic sentences the partitive determiner (parallel to the definite article) can surface with kind-referring meaning (38b(i)). This determiner can also appear in episodic sentences with an indefinite, non-kind-referring meaning (38b(ii)).

#### 5.4.5 Specialized meaning

The results of the first questionnaire revealed that both ART and *di*+art have been chosen with a high frequency in sentences conveying saliency (39a) and small quantity interpretation (39b).

- (39) a. *Intant ca Giani al preparèva la tèvla in giardein...*  
 ‘While John was laying the table in the garden...’  
*Maria l’è andè zu in canteina a tö vein / al vein / ad vein / dal vein*  
 Mary went down to the cellar to take ZERO wine / ART wine / *di* wine / *di*+art wine
- b. *In t’al to dialèt, sa ‘t cunsigniès cus as pö fè quand as va in muntagna, dirisat:*  
 ‘In your dialect, if you would suggest what one can do on the mountain, you would say:’  
*At pö catè viulëti / al viulëti / ad viulëti / dal viulëti / sèrti viulëti*  
 [You] can collect ZERO violets / ART violets / *di* violets / *di*+art violets / certain violets

(39a) registered 15 occurrences of ART and 14 of *di*+art, while in (39b) ART and *di*+art were both chosen 13 times, with 5 occurrences of ZERO. This picture shows that both forms are equivalent in their interpretation, which, however, seems to facilitate a specific reading (at least in (39a)). It could be the case, as is for clause type, that the salient/small quantity interpretation is secondary with respect to other clausal traits, such as those listed before. The picture sketched so far suggests the same structure for both specialized meanings (40).



Both contexts require Compensatory Concord, disregarding the realization of the specifier as *di* or null determiner. The current state of affairs does not point to any semantic specification of the definite article or of the partitive determiner towards one of these two interpretations.

### 5.4.6 Clitic Left Dislocation

In the second research, there is a neat opposition that parallels the one singled out analyzing the data of the first research (with the exception that ART was not tested in the second questionnaire, but which is expected to patter as in Italian, i.e. taking wide scope and being resumed only by the accusative clitic):

- i. Bare *di* and ZERO behave in a similar way, in that they can only occur with existential quantifiers and are resumable only by the clitic *ne*;
- ii. *di+art* can behave as bare *di* and ZERO, but it can also display the opposite pattern, co-occurring with universal quantifiers and being resumed by *li* and *i*.

The account proposed above takes *di* to be a visible marker of partitive case. This predicts their co-occurrence with existential but not universal QPs, and consequently the possibility to be resumed only by the clitic *ne*. The partitive nature of bare *di* (and some instance of *di+art*, as well as some of ZERO) is accounted for by observing the results of the second research and resorting to the QP-hypothesis.

Since Sportiche (1988), QPs have been considered external to the nominal projection. This idea has been enhanced in the QP-hypothesis (cf. Giusti, 1991; Cardinaletti and Giusti 1992, 2006), according to which quantifiers are (semi-)lexical categories endowed with selectional properties, projecting a full structure and always embedding a DP (and optionally a PP in the case of partitive constructions). This hypothesis assumes an escape hatch (i.e. Spec,QP) through which DP and clitic extraction could take place. Moreover, quantifiers are further distinguished in case transparent (e.g. universal QPs) and partitive case assigners (e.g. existential QPs).

The former kind of Qs does not assign case. This is confirmed by the phenomenon of Quantifier-Float (Sportiche, 1988), consisting in the movement of a DP subject leftwards, from a VP-internal position, leaving the quantifier *in situ*. This is possible only with universal quantifiers, as the DP embedded under the QP does not receive case, and is free to be assigned nominative in Spec,TP (cf. (41) for Italian, (42) for French and (43) for Piacentino).

(41) [TP [NP *I ragazzi*] hanno [VP [QP *tutti* [NP ~~*i ragazzi*~~] visto questo film]].

(42) [TP [NP *Les enfants*] ont [VP [QP *tous* [NP ~~*les enfants*~~] vu ce film]]<sup>40</sup>.

(43) [TP [NP *I ragas*] *i han* [VP [QP *tüt* [NP ~~*i ragas*~~] vist cul film ché]].

‘The children have all seen this film.’

---

<sup>40</sup> This example is taken and adapted from Cardinaletti and Giusti (2017:13).

Universal quantifiers provide an escape hatch for accusative and nominative (in Piacentino) clitic extraction, since they let case percolate through them to the embedded DP. (44) shows an example from Italian, while (45) from Piacentino.

(45) *I ragazzi, li ho visti* [QP *tutti* [ $\#$ ]].

(45) a. *I ragas, i ho vist* [QP *tüt* [ $\#$ ]].

‘The boys, I have seen them all.’

b. *I ragas, i en rivè* [QP *tüt* [ $\#$ ]].

‘The boys, they all arrived.’

Existential Qs, on the contrary, assign partitive case to the DP they embed (cf. (46) from Russian, showing that this prediction holds cross linguistically), providing a position for *ne* the extraction and licensing the appearance of bare *di* in left dislocated position (cf. (47) for Italian and (48) for Piacentino). *Ne*, in fact, is taken to resume a quantitative DP, appearing when partitive case is assigned (see Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2017, and references cited there for a complete discussion).

(46) *Ja rabotaju* [QP *mnogo* [DP *časov*]].

I work many hours-GEN

‘I work for many hours.’

(47) a. *Di ragazzi, ne ho invitati* [QP *molti* [ $\#e$ ]].

‘Boys, I invited lots of them.’

b. *Di ragazzi, ne sono arrivati* [QP *molti* [ $\#e$ ]].

‘Of boys, there arrived lots of them.’

(48) a. *Ad ragas, n’ho invide* [QP *bota* [ $\#$ ]].

‘Boys, I invited lots of them.’

b. *Ad ragas, n’è rivè* [QP *bota* [ $\#$ ]].

‘Of boys, there arrived lots of them.’

As anticipated, Piacentino patterns like Italian, in that it allows accusative (and nominative) clitic extraction with universal quantifiers (when present). In this case, the direct case clitic can resume only dislocated constituents introduced by the partitive determiner (and the definite article, though it was not tested). (49)-(52) exemplify some items that were used in the

questionnaires, containing dislocated objects with (49) and without (49) a universal quantifier, and dislocated subjects with (51) and without (52) a universal quantifier.

- (49) a. *Di libar in s'la mensula, i ho lesì tüt.*  
 b. \**Ad libar in s'la mensula, i ho lesì tüt.*  
 c. \**Libar in s'la mensula, i ho lesì tüt.*  
*di+art / di / Ø books on.the shelf, CL.ACC have.1P.SG read.PST.PRT all*  
 'Books on the shelf, I read them all.'
- (50) a. *Di fiur, i ho töt.*  
 b. \**Ad fiur, i ho töt.*  
 c. \**Fiur, i ho töt.*  
*di+art / di / Ø flowers, CL.ACC have.1P.SG buy.PST.PRT*  
 'Flowers, I bought.'
- (51) a. *Di non, i han telefunè tüt.*  
 b. \**Ad non, i han telefunè tüt.*  
 c. \**Non, i han telefunè tüt.*  
*di+art / di / Ø grandparents, CL.NOM have.AUX.3P.PL phone.PST.PRT all*  
 'Grandparents, all of them phoned.'
- (52) a. *Dal veint, l'ha tirè fort.*  
 b. \**Ad veint, l'ha tirè fort.*  
 c. \**Veint, l'ha tirè fort.*  
*di+art / di / Ø wind, CL.NOM have.AUX.3P.SG blown.PST.PRT heavily*  
 'Wind, it blew heavily.'

When the dislocated DP is resumed by *ne* (and in co-occurrence with existential quantifiers), all the tested options are available. Notice that negation is not the only trigger for non-specific interpretation of the indefinite determiners, as in CLLD bare *di* is found also in positive polarity sentences. This means that the partitive case assigned by existential quantifiers is able to license the occurrence of bare *di* (which is what happens with negation). The co-occurrence of *di* with null-D even in absence of a quantifier may signal the presence of a silent QP embedding the DP and assigning it partitive case. The existential reading that is obtained in this case is in line with the idea of the Existential Closure (cf. Diesing, 1992, and Kratzer, 1995). (53)-(56), as before, report some items with dislocated objects with (53) and without (54) an

existential quantifier, and dislocated subjects with (55) and without (56) an existential quantifier.

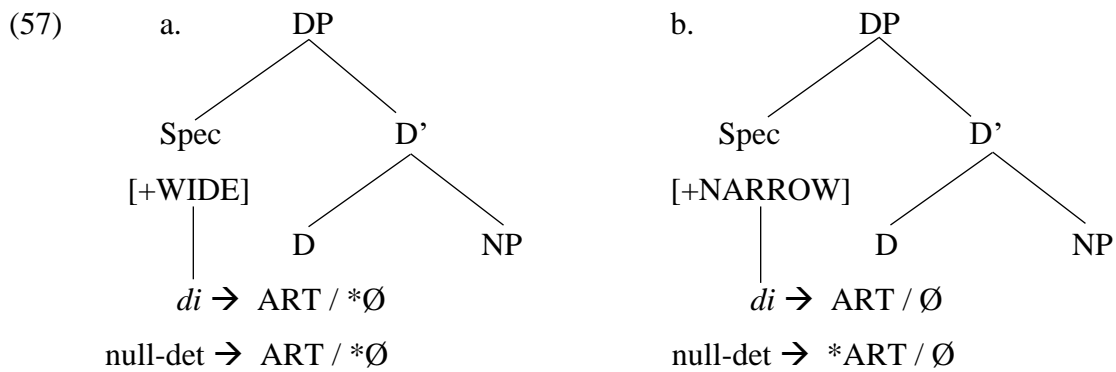
- (53) a. *Dal*            *pan, n'ho*            *tajè*            *poc.*  
 b.            *Ad* *pan, n'ho*            *tajè*            *poc.*  
 c.            *Pan, n'ho*            *tajè*            *poc.*  
*di+art / di / Ø* bread, *ne* have.1P.SG cut.PST.PRT little  
 ‘Bread, I cut little.’

- (54) a. *Di*            *fiur, n'ho*            *töt.*  
 b.            *Ad* *fiur, n'ho*            *töt.*  
 c.            *Fiur, n'ho*            *töt.*  
*di+art / di / Ø* flowers, *ne* have.1P.SG buy.PST.PRT  
 ‘Flowers, I bought.’

- (55) a. *Di*            *nud, n'è*            *rivè*            *poc.*  
 b.            *Ad* *nud, n'è*            *rivè*            *poc.*  
 c.            *Nud, n'è*            *rivè*            *poc.*  
*di+art / di / Ø* nephews, *ne* be.AUX.3P.SG arrive.PST.PRT few  
 ‘Nephews, few of them arrived.’

- (56) a. *Dal*            *veint, n'ha*            *tirè*            *fort.*  
 b.            *Ad* *veint, n'ha*            *tirè*            *fort.*  
 c.            *Veint, n'ha*            *tirè*            *fort.*  
*di+art / di / Ø* wind, *ne* have.AUX.3P.SG blown.PST.PRT heavily  
 ‘Wind, it blew heavily.’

These examples show the ambiguity of the partitive determiner, which shows the same properties of (non-specific) bare *di* and ZERO on the one hand, but it can follow the pattern of ART from the other hand. This explains its possibility to co-occur even with universal quantifiers and to be resumed by the direct case clitics, *li* and *i*. The broad set of contexts *di+art* is able to appear in is explainable by recalling to the scope ambiguity of the DPs, emerging when the head D is realized. The structure in (57), however, is slightly different than that in (25) above.



Differently from what happens in sentences with no dislocation, the realized D co-occurring with the null determiner can take only wide scope when left-dislocated (57a). When combined with *di* in the specifier, instead, it has ambiguous scope properties. Null D, instead, only correlates with narrow scope interpretation (57b).

The peculiar behavior of *di+art* in Piacentino contrasts with the pattern found in Italian, in that the partitive determiner in the latter maintains the scope ambiguity in negative sentences<sup>41</sup> with no dislocation (58), while with left dislocation only the wide scope reading is available (58a). In Piacentino, instead, the ambiguity is maintained even when the DP appears in the left periphery, but this surfaces by means of the different clitic resumption: direct case clitic for wide scope (59a) or quantitative clitic for narrow scope (59b) reading.

- (58) *Non ho mangiato dei biscotti.* ¬E / E¬  
 not [I] have eaten *di+art* biscuits  
 ‘I didn’t eat (some) biscuits.’
- a. *Dei biscotti, non li ho mangiati.* E¬  
*di+art* biscuits, not [I] CL.ACC have eaten  
 ‘Some biscuits, I didn’t eat them.’
- b. *\*Dei biscotti, non ne ho mangiati.* \*E¬  
*di+art* biscuits, not [I] *ne* have eaten
- (59) *Ho mia mangè di biscot.* ¬E / E¬  
 ‘I didn’t eat (some) biscuits.’
- a. *Di biscot, i ho mia mangè.* E¬  
 ‘I didn’t eat some biscuits.’
- b. *Di biscot, n’ho mia mangè.* E¬

<sup>41</sup> In order to obtain scope ambiguity, the indefinite needs to interact with another operator. In this case negation was used.

‘I didn’t eat biscuits.’

The dislocated partitive determiner in Italian can have only specific meaning ((58a) can only be paraphrased as ‘there are some biscuits that I didn’t eat’), while in Piacentino both the specific ((59a) parallel to the Italian counterpart) and the non-specific readings ((59b) means ‘I didn’t eat biscuits at all’) are available.

As regards the subject position, the partitive nature of bare *di* (and *di*+art in some cases) is once again confirmed by their greater occurrence with unaccusative verbs (allowing for *ne* extraction). The scarce availability of ZERO in dislocated subject position can instead be attributed to a special requirement disallowing bare nominals in ungoverned position, parallel to what is observed with subjects (Delfitto and Schroten, 1991):

- (60) a. *Politici \*(corrotti) hanno occupato il palazzo.* (ibid.:172)  
‘Corrupt politicians have occupied the building.’  
b. *Acqua \*(fresca e limpida) scende dalle colline.* (ibid.:181)  
‘Fresh and limpid water comes down from the hills’

Bare nouns in subject position in Italian are allowed only if modified by postnominal adjectives. The authors explain this fact by assuming that these adjectives act as restrictors on the domain of the N (together with Number inflection), which is treated as a pseudo-quantifier undergoing head movement from N to D at LF. Piacentino, however, does not have this possibility, as even modified bare NPs are not allowed in subject position (61).

- (61) a. *\*Can asporc i curan in t la strè.*  
‘Dirty dogs run on the street.’  
b. *\*Acqua frasca e neta la cura in ta cul fiüm lé.*  
‘Fresh and clean water flows in that river.’

The situation in Piacentino is closer to that of French, which (almost completely) disallows bare nominals (cf. Chapter 1, §1.2.1). This observation strengthens the supposition that ZERO is not proper to the dialect of Piacenza, but rather a borrowing from Italian. This dialect did not allow for bare NPs; the more and more urging pressure of Italian, however, is making this variety acquiring back the ZERO determiner, starting from those positions in which it is allowed also in Italian.



To conclude, a last observation needs to be pointed out: comparing the distribution of the partitive determiner and its rate of acceptability in the first and second research, it seems that in canonical word order sentences it behaves more like ART (in that it occurs more often in positive sentences, with atelic aspect and episodic contexts), while in left dislocated sentences it is more similar to bare *di*, given its relatively low number of occurrences with the clitics *li* and *i*. This, *prima facie*, seems to depend on the different structural position of the DP, as if its appearance in the left periphery interacted with its syntactic properties.

There is still a lot of work to be done in this field of research. For this reason, the unsolved issues will be addressed in the next section.

## 5.5 Conclusion

After having presented the framework this piece of work is based on, and having put forth a proposal to account for the distribution of the indefinite determiners in Piacentino, these concluding sections answer the theoretical research questions and address new questions to be left for future research.

### 5.5.1 Answers to theoretical research questions

Basing on the previous analysis, it is now possible to provide an answer to the theoretical questions listed above:

#### **What is the semantic value associated to the realization of Spec,DP as *di* or ZERO?**

- ✓ Null determiner and *di* in the specifier were found to be always in competition with one another. There seems to be a preference for *di* in narrow scope (non-specific) interpretation and lacking presupposition of existence. In this case (especially under the scope of negation), it preferably co-occurs with null D, and the null specifier occurs to a smaller extent. The null determiner in the specifier co-occurring with overt morphology in D is instead (generally) linked to specificity and presupposition of existence.

#### **Does *di* / ZERO in the specifier correlate with different syntactic conditions?**

- ✓ Since these two forms are in competition, the appearance of one rather than the other seems not to be dependent on particular syntactic conditions. However, excluding for a moment the ZERO determiner (a recent borrowing from Italian), it appears that the default form of the indefinite determiner in the specifier is *di*, whose appearance is strictly dependent on the presence of negation. When negation is absent, the

specifier can be optionally realized as null determiner, requiring Compensatory Concord with (a)telic aspect, within episodic predicates, in wide scope reading and in saliency and small quantity specialized meanings.

### **Is overt/covert morphology in D linked to a specific semantics?**

- ✓ There seems to be a strong correlation between the (non-)realization of nominal morphology in D and the scope properties of the indefinite determiner (which, in turn, affect the (non-)specific interpretation of the indefinite NP). If D is null, the DP can only take narrow scope and be non-specific. If D is realized, the DP is ambiguous between narrow and wide scope and can be either specific or non-specific. It is not the head itself which encodes these features, but overt morphology in D is a requirement due to these traits.

### **Is there any syntactic feature triggering the (non-)realization of the overt nominal morphology on the head D?**

- ✓ What influence the (non-)realization of overt nominal features on the head D are the semantic values or the syntactic features that are present in the sentence. The negation requires the DP to be interpreted non-specifically and without presupposition of existence. In this case, *di* (or null determiner) in the specifier does not pose any constraint for the (non-)realization of overt morphology in D, even though it seems that the head is preferably silent when *di* appears. If specific reading or existential presupposition are triggered, then the specifier (either *di* or null determiner) require the head D to be obligatorily realized. This amounts to saying that D is always realized with positive polarity, in telic predicates, with wide scope reading, in episodic sentences and with saliency and small quantity interpretation.

### **5.5.2 Concluding remarks**

The results of the two researches and the account provided here raise new questions and inevitably leave open issues that will be addressed here and left for future research.

- i. It is not clear how CLLD triggers non-specific reading and how exactly bare *di* is licensed in these structures, even when the negation is absent. Unfortunately, the tentative account sketched above is not able to make any prediction regarding the issue of dislocated indefinite constituents.

- ii. The results showed that, when appearing in the left periphery, *di+art* displays a behavior which is much more similar to bare *di* than that of ART in sentences with canonical word order. A detailed analysis of the features triggering non-specific reading of indefinites and the licensing of bare *di* would undoubtedly prove insightful.
- iii. There seems to be no difference between ART and *di+art* with respect to saliency and small quantity interpretation, as they both score a very high number of appearances in both contexts, but both preferring the former one. It was possible to individuate bare *di* as the unmarked determiner for the expression of (non-)existential indefiniteness under the scope of the negation, while both ART and *di+art* seem to be equally unmarked for expressing core existential indefiniteness in positive contexts. A possible solution to this issue could be assuming that, in the present phase of language development, they happen to have the same semantics and the choice between them is completely optional, but in the future one of them will specialize for some particular semantic nuances. Another way to face the problem is admitting that the collected data could not reveal any significant difference between them, so more deepened research is needed to investigate other contexts that could possibly reveal a semantic specialization already characterizing these two forms in the present stadium of development of this language.
- iv. It would be very interesting to submit the same questionnaires used in the presented researches to native speakers of French and compare the results with those obtained for Piacentino. The comparative analysis could highlight the weaknesses of the account presented here and let emerge new interesting data.
- v. A more balanced questionnaire about generic vs episodic sentences is required, in order to verify if genericity by itself really has an impact on the choice of indefinite determiners. Moreover, the scope properties of *di+art* in combination with both singular mass and plural count nouns need to be further investigated, to find out more about their behavior, also in scope islands. A comparative approach with French would be welcomed.

The desire that led this piece of work is to hopefully cast some light on the syntactic nature of indefiniteness in this little studied Italo-Romance variety and to provide a starting point on which further studies could be grounded.

Future research will optimistically find answers to these intriguing open questions. Further investigation is needed to have a clearer and more complete picture of the syntax of indefinite determiners in Piacentino. Here just the tip of the iceberg was scratched.

## Appendix A

In what follows the items of the first questionnaire are listed.

1. *In t'al to dialët, un vegetarian dirisal:*  
'In your dialect, a vegetarian would say'  
*A mangi mia chèran*  
*A mangi mia la chèran*  
*A mangi mia ad chèran*  
*A mangi mia dla chèran*  
*A mangi mia sèrta chèran*  
'I don't eat meat'
2. *Adès, al post ad "chèran" in (1) matag "patèti", e dam tüit al ragon c'at pö in t'al to dialët.*  
*Tegnat in ment ca sum a dré parlè ad cu ca l'é invié a mangiè 'na parsona:*  
'Now replace "meat" in (1) with "potatoes" and give me all the sentences you can say in your dialect. Keep in mind that we are talking about what a person is used to eat.'  
*A mangi mia patèti*  
*A mangi mia al patèti*  
*A mangi mia ad patèti*  
*A mangi mia dal patèti*  
*A mangi mia sèrti patèti*  
'I don't eat potatoes'
3. *In t'al to dialët, un astemi dirisal:*  
'In your dialect, a teetotaler would say:'  
*A bev mia vein*  
*A bev mia al vein*  
*A bev mia ad vein*  
*A bev mia ad vein*  
*A bev mia sèrt vein*  
'I don't drink wine'
4. *Adès, al post ad "vein" in (3) matag "liqur fort", e dam admé al ragon ch'i van bein in t'al to dialët s'at parlès ad cu ca 'na parsona l'é invié a bev:*  
'Now replace "wine" in (3) with "spirits" and give me all the sentences you can [say] in your dialect. Keep in mind that we are talking about what a person is used to drink.'

*A bev mia liquir fort*  
*A bev mia i liquir fort*  
*A bev mia ad liquir fort*  
*A bev mia di liquir fort*  
*A bev mia sèrt liquir fort*  
'I don't drink spirits'

5. *In t'al to dialèt, s'at cuntès la seina fata dai to amis iarsira, dirisat:*  
'In your dialect, if you would talk about the dinner you had at your friends' last night, you would say:'

*Um mangè chèran*  
*Um mangè la chèran*  
*Um mangè ad chèran*  
*Um mangè dla chèran*  
*Um mangè sèrta chèran*  
'We ate meat'

*In t'al to dialèt, s'at cuntès 'd un brindisi fat cui to amis ier, dirisat:*

6. *Sa t'è sarni püsè 'd 'na risposta in (5), at sa 'd vis c'ag sia 'na difareinsa ad cu ch'i vön dì tra vüna e l'ètra? Pöt aspiegghè quèl ela?*  
'If you chose more than one answer in (5), do you think there is a difference in meaning among them? Can you explain it?'

7. 'In your dialect, if you would talk about a toast you made with your friends yesterday, you would say:'

*Um bui vein*  
*Um bui al vein*  
*Um bui ad vein*  
*Um bui dal vein*  
*Um bui sèrt vein*  
'We drank wine'

8. *Sa t'è sarni püsè 'd 'na risposta in (7), at sa 'd vis c'ag sia 'na difareinsa ad cu ch'i vön dì tra vüna e l'ètra? Pöt aspiegghè quèl ela?*  
'If you chose more than one answer in (7), do you think there is a difference in meaning among them? Can you explain it?'

9. *Sempar in t'al to dialèt, sa 't cunsigliès cus as pö fè quand as va in muntagna, dirisat:*  
'In your dialect, if you would suggest what one can do on the mountain, you would say:'

*At pö catè viulëti*

*At pö catè al viulëti*

*At pö catè ad viulëti*

*At pö catè dal viulëti*

*At pö catè sèrti viulëti*

‘You can collect violets’

10. *Sa t’è sarni püsè ‘d ‘na risposta in (9), at sa ‘d vis c’ag sia ‘na difareinsa ad cu ch’i vön di tra vüna e l’ètra? Pöt aspiegghè quèl ela?*

‘If you chose more than one answer in (9), do you think there is a difference in meaning among them? Can you explain it?’

11. *Lesà ogni ragion fein in fonda e signa cu ch’è scrit ma ‘t diris:*

‘Read each sentence entirely and check those which are correct’

*Ala festa, ho mia invidè ragas, ma admé ragasi*

*Ala festa, ho mia invidè i ragas, ma admé ragasi*

*Ala festa, ho mia invidè ad ragas, ma admé ragasi*

*Ala festa, ho mia invidè di ragas, ma admé ragasi*

*Ala festa, ho mia invidè sèrt ragas, ma admé ragasi*

‘At the party I didn’t invite boys, but just girls’

*Ala festa, ho mia invidè ragas parché i eran antipatic*

*Ala festa, ho mia invidè i ragas parché i eran antipatic*

*Ala festa, ho mia invidè ad ragas parché i eran antipatic*

*Ala festa, ho mia invidè di ragas parché i eran antipatic*

*Ala festa, ho mia invidè sèrt ragas parché i eran antipatic*

‘At the party I didn’t invite some boys because they were unpleasant’

12. *Sum a dré cuntè cu c’ho fat dumènica pr’astè dal temp fōra d’in ca:*

‘I am telling what I did on Sunday to spend some time outdoors:’

*Ho tajè erba pr’ un’ura*

*Ho tajè l’erba pr’ un’ura*

*Ho tajè d’erba pr’ un’ura*

*Ho tajè dl’erba pr’ un’ura*

‘I have mowed grass for an hour’

*Ho tajè erba in t’ un’ura*

*Ho tajè l’erba in t’ un’ura*

*Ho tajè d’erba in t’ un’ura*

- Ho tajè dl'erba in t' un'ura*  
 'I mowed the grass in an hour'
13. *Sa t'è sarnì püsè 'd 'na risposta in (12), at sa 'd vis c'ag sia 'na difareinsa ad cu ch'i vön dì tra vüna e l'ètra? Pöt aspiegghè quèl ela?*  
 'If you chose more than one answer in (12), do you think there is a difference in meaning among them? Can you explain it?'
14. *Sum sempr'adré cuntè cu c'ho fat dumènica par pasè dal teimp föra d'in ca:*  
 'I am still telling what I did on Sunday to spend some time outdoors:'
- Ho catè muri pr' un'ura*  
*Ho catè al muri pr' un'ura*  
*Ho catè ad muri pr' un'ura*  
*Ho catè dal muri pr' un'ura*
- 'I have collected blackberries for an hour'
- Ho catè muri in t' un'ura*  
*Ho catè al muri in t' un'ura*  
*Ho catè ad muri in t' un'ura*  
*Ho catè dal muri in t' un'ura*
- 'I collected the blackberries in an hour'
15. *Sa t'è sarnì püsè 'd 'na risposta in (14), at sa 'd vis c'ag sia 'na difareinsa ad cu ch'i vön dì tra vüna e l'ètra? Pöt aspiegghè quèl ela?*  
 'If you chose more than one answer in (14), do you think there is a difference in meaning among them? Can you explain it?'
16. *Lesà ogni ragion fein in fonda e signa cu ch'è scrit ma 't diris.*  
 'Read each sentence entirely and check those that are written as you would say them:'
- A disnè incö ho mia buì acqua parché la sèva ad candegina*  
*A disnè incö ho mia buì l'acqua parché la sèva ad candegina*  
*A disnè incö ho mia buì d'acqua parché la sèva ad candegina*  
*A disnè incö ho mia buì dl'acqua parché la sèva ad candegina*
- 'For lunch today I didn't drink water because it tasted like chlorine'
17. *Lesà ogni ragion fein in fonda e signa cu ch'è scrit ma 't diris.*  
 'Read each sentence entirely and check those that are written as you would say them:'
- A disnè incö ho mia buì acqua ma admé vein*  
*A disnè incö ho mia buì l'acqua ma admé vein*  
*A disnè incö ho mia buì l'acqua ma admé al vein*

- A disnè incö ho mia buì d'acqua ma admé ad vein*  
*A disnè incö ho mia buì dl'acqua ma admé dal vein*
18. *Sa t'è sarnì püsè 'd 'na risposta in (17), at sa 'd vis c'ag sia 'na difareinsa ad cu ch'i vön di tra vüna e l'ètra? Pöt aspiegghè quèl ela?*  
 'If you chose more than one answer in (17), do you think there is a difference in meaning among them? Can you explain it?'
19. *Intant ca Giani al preparèva la tèvla in giardein...*  
 'While John was laying the table in the garden...'  
*Maria l'é andè zu in canteina a tö vein*  
*Maria l'é andè zu in canteina a tö al vein*  
*Maria l'é andè zu in canteina a tö ad vein*  
*Maria l'é andè zu in canteina a tö dal vein*  
 'Mary went down to the cellar to take wine'
20. *E intant...*  
 'In the meantime...'  
*Teresa l'é andè dal maslein a cumprè bistechi*  
*Teresa l'é andè dal maslein a cumprè al bistechi*  
*Teresa l'é andè dal maslein a cumprè ad bistechi*  
*Teresa l'é andè dal maslein a cumprè dal bistechi*  
 'Teresa went to the butcher to buy steaks'
21. *In t'al to dialèt, un imbariagon dirisal:*  
 'In your dialect, a drunkard would say:'  
*A bev mia acqua*  
*A bev mia l'acqua*  
*A bev mia d'acqua*  
*A bev mia dl'acqua*  
*A bev mia sèrta acqua*  
 'I don't drink water'
22. *A pinsè a la manera ca t'è cumpilè 'l dumandi, cus dirisat?*  
 'Thinking about the way you answered the questions, what would you say?'  
*Ho sempar sarnì sicür/sicüra, senza aveg di dübi*  
 'I've always been sure, choosing without doubts'  
*G'ho avì di dübi, ma ad solit s'era sicür/sicüra ca 'l me risposti i fisan giüsti*  
 'I've had some doubts, but generally I was sure that my answers were right'



*Specialment par sèrti dmandi sum mia sicür/sicüra d'avé dat la risposta giüsta*

'Especially for some questions I'm not sure I gave the right answer'

23. *Sura cusa t'et basè par rispond a chi dmandi che?*

'On what did you rely to answer the questions?'

*Ho tignè cont ad cu ca so 'd la gramatica*

'I relied on the grammar'

*Ho tignè cont ad cu ca so par ves von/vüna ca pèrla l'italian nurmèl*

'I relied on what I know being a speaker of Italian'

*Ho tignè cont ad cu ca so par ves von/vüna ca pèrla l'italian 'd la me region*

'I relied on what I know being a speaker of the Italian of my region'

24. *Dim quant a t'é piasì cu laur che:*

'Tell me how much you enjoyed this task'

*Rispond a dmandi al 'm ha fat ragioniè sura sert laur dal me parlè ca gh'èva mia mèi fat a meint*

'Answering the questions made me think about certain aspect of my language that I had never noticed'

*Rispond a dmandi l'é stè nuius e capis mia cusa sarvisa fè cul laur che*

'Answering the questions was boring and I don't understand the reason of this task'

## Appendix B

Here are listed all the EXPERIMENTAL items contained in the second questionnaire.

1. a. *Di*                      *panein, i ho mia mangè.*  
b.        *Ad*                *panein, i ho mia mangè.*  
c.                        *Panein, i ho mia mangè.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO sandwiches, CL.ACC have.1P.SG not eat.PST.PRT*  
'Sandwiches, I didn't eat.'
2. a. *Dal*                      *vein, l' ho mia bui.*  
b.        *Ad*                *vein, l' ho mia bui.*  
c.                        *Vein, l' ho mia bui.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO wine, CL.ACC have.1P.SG not drink.PST.PRT*  
'Wine, I didn't drink.'
3. a. *Di*                      *fiur, i ho töt.*  
b.        *Ad*                *fiur, i ho töt.*  
c.                        *Fiur, i ho töt.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO flowers, CL.ACC have.1P.SG buy.PST.PRT*  
'Flowers, I bought.'
4. a. *Di*                      *ragas, i ho invidè.*  
b.        *Ad*                *ragas, i ho invidè.*  
c.                        *Ragas, i ho invidè.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO boys, CL.ACC have.1P.SG invite.PST.PRT*  
'Boys, I invited.'
5. a. *Ad i*                      *amis, i ho mia vist.*  
b.        *D'*                      *amis, i ho mia vist.*  
c.                        *Amis, i ho mia vist.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO friends, CL.ACC have.1P.SG not see.PST.PRT*  
'Friends, I didn't see.'
6. a. *Di*                      *frances, ia cugnus.*  
b.        *Ad*                *frances, ia cugnus.*  
c.                        *Frances, ia cugnus.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO French people, CL.ACC know.1P.SG*  
'French people, I know.'
7. a. *Di*                      *libar in s'la mensula, i ho lesi tüt.*

- b. *Ad libar in s'la mensula, i ho lesì tiüt.*  
 c. *Libar in s'la mensula, i ho lesì tiüt.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO books on.the shelf, CL.ACC have.1P.SG read.PST.PRT all*  
 'Books on the shelf, I read them all.'
8. a. *Di visein, i ho mia incuntrè 'nson.*  
 b. *Ad visein, i ho mia incuntrè 'nson.*  
 c. *Visein, i ho mia incuntrè 'nson.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO neighbors, CL.ACC have.1P.SG not meet.PST.PRT. no.one*  
 'Neighbors, I didn't meet anyone of them.'
9. a. *Dal pan, l' ho tajè poc.*  
 b. *Ad pan, l' ho tajè poc.*  
 c. *Pan, l' ho tajè poc.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO bread, CL.ACC have.1P.SG cut.PST.PRT. little*  
 'Bread, I cut little.'
10. a. *Dla chèran, l' ho mia cot abota.*  
 b. *Ad chèran, l' ho mia cot abota.*  
 c. *Chèran, l' ho mia cot abota.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO meat, CL.ACC have.1P.SG not cook.PST.PRT much*  
 'Meat, I didn't cook much.'
11. a. *Di panein, n' ho mia mangè.*  
 b. *Ad panein, n' ho mia mangè.*  
 c. *Panein, n' ho mia mangè.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO sandwiches, ne have.1P.SG not eat.PST.PRT*  
 'Sandwiches, I didn't eat.'
12. a. *Dal vein, n' ho mia buì.*  
 b. *Ad vein, n' ho mia buì.*  
 c. *Vein, n' ho mia buì.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO wine, ne have.1P.SG not drink.PST.PRT*  
 'Wine, I didn't drink.'
13. a. *Di fiur, n' ho töt.*  
 b. *Ad fiur, n' ho töt.*  
 c. *Fiur, n' ho töt.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO flowers, ne have.1P.SG buy.PST.PRT*  
 'Flowers, I bought.'

14. a. *Di ragas, n' ho invidè.*  
 b. *Ad ragas, n' ho invidè.*  
 c. *Ragas, n' ho invidè.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO boys, ne have.1P.SG invite.PST.PRT*  
 'Boys, I invited.'
15. a. *Ad i amis, n' ho mia vist.*  
 b. *D' amis, n' ho mia vist.*  
 c. *Amis, n' ho mia vist.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO friends, ne have.1P.SG not see.PST.PRT*  
 'Friends, I didn't see.'
16. a. *Di frances, ni cugnus.*  
 b. *Ad frances, ni cugnus.*  
 c. *Frances, ni cugnus.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO French people, ne know.1P.SG*  
 'French people, I know.'
17. a. *Di libar in s'la mensula, n' ho lesi tüüt.*  
 b. *Ad libar in s'la mensula, n' ho lesi tüüt.*  
 c. *Libar in s'la mensula, n' ho lesi tüüt.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO books on.the shelf, ne have.1P.SG read.PST.PRT all*  
 'Books on the shelf, I read them all.'
18. a. *Di visein, n' ho mia incuntrè 'nson.*  
 b. *Ad visein, n' ho mia incuntrè 'nson.*  
 c. *Visein, n' ho mia incuntrè 'nson.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO neighbors, ne have.1P.SG not meet.PST.PRT no.one*  
 'Neighbors, I didn't meet anyone of them.'
19. a. *Dal pan, n' ho tajè poc.*  
 b. *Ad pan, n' ho tajè poc.*  
 c. *Pan, n' ho tajè poc.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO bread, ne have.1P.SG cut.PST.PRT little*  
 'Bread, I cut little.'
20. a. *Dla chèran, n' ho mia cot abota.*  
 b. *Ad chèran, n' ho mia cot abota.*  
 c. *Chèran, n' ho mia cot abota.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO meat, ne have.1P.SG not cook.PST.PRT much*

- ‘Meat, I didn’t cook much.’
21. a. *Di nud, i en rivè poc.*  
 b. *Ad nud, i en rivè poc.*  
 c. *Nud, i en rivè poc.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO nephews, CL.NOM be.AUX.3P.PL arrive.PST.PRT few*  
 ‘Nephews, few of them arrived.’
22. a. *Di non, i han telefonè tüüt.*  
 b. *Ad non, i han telefonè tüüt.*  
 c. *Non, i han telefonè tüüt.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO grandparents, CL.NOM have.AUX.3P.PL phone.PST.PRT all*  
 ‘Grandparents, all of them phoned.’
23. a. *Di prufasur, l’ è mia partì ‘nson.*  
 b. *Ad prufasur, l’ è mia partì ‘nson.*  
 c. *Prufasur, l’ è mia partì ‘nson.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO professors, CL.NOM be.AUX.3P.SG not leave.PST.PRT no.one*  
 ‘Professors, no one of them left.’
24. a. *Di ragasein, abota i han züghè.*  
 b. *Ad ragasein, abota i han züghè.*  
 c. *Ragasein, abota i han züghè.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO children, a.lot CL.NOM have.AUX.3P.PL play.PST.PRT*  
 ‘Children, a lot of them played.’
25. a. *Dal lat, al s’ è infurtì.*  
 b. *Ad lat, al s’ è infurtì.*  
 c. *Lat, al s’ è infurtì.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO milk, CL.NOM CL.REFL be.AUX.3P.SG acidify.PST.PRT*  
 ‘Milk, it acidified.’
26. a. *Dal veint, l’ ha tirè fort.*  
 b. *Ad veint, l’ ha tire fort.*  
 c. *Veint, l’ ha tirè fort.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO wind, CL.NOM have.AUX.3P.SG blown.PST.PRT heavily*  
 ‘Wind, it blew heavily.’
27. a. *Dal machini, i s’ en mia farmè.*  
 b. *Ad machini, i s’ en mia farmè.*  
 c. *Machini, i s’ en mia farmè.*

cars, CL.NOM CL.REFL be.AUX.3P.PL not stop.PST.PRT

‘Cars, they didn’t stop.’

28. a. *Di*                    *gatein, i s’ en mia indrumintè.*  
b.     *Ad*                *gatein, i s’ en mia indrumintè.*  
c.                        *Gatein, i s’ en mia indrumintè.*

*di+art / di / ZERO* kittens, CL.NOM CL.REFL be.AUX.3P.PL not fall.asleep.PST.PRT

‘Kittens, they didn’t fall asleep.’

29. a. *Di*                    *can, i han mia curì.*  
b.     *Ad*                *can, i han mia curì.*  
c.                        *Can, i han mia curì.*

*di+art / di / ZERO* dogs, CL.NOM have.3P.PL not run.PST.PRT

‘Dogs, they didn’t run.’

30. a. *Ad i*                    *usei, i en mia vulè via.*  
b.     *D’*                *usei, i en mia vulè via.*  
c.                        *Usei, i en mia vulè via.*

*di+art / di / ZERO* birds, CL.NOM be.AUX.3P.PL not fly.PST.PRT away

‘Birds, they didn’t fly away.’

31. a. *Di*                    *nud, n’ è rivè poc.*  
b.     *Ad*                *nud, n’ è rivè poc.*  
c.                        *Nud, n’ è rivè poc.*

*di+art / di / ZERO* nephews, *ne* be.AUX.3P.SG arrive.PST.PRT few

‘Nephews, few of them arrived.’

32. a. *Di*                    *non, n’ ha telefonè tüüt.*  
b.     *Ad*                *non, n’ ha telefonè tüüt.*  
c.                        *Non, n’ ha telefonè tüüt.*

*di+art / di / ZERO* grandparents, *ne* have.AUX.3P.SG phone.PST.PRT all

‘Grandparents, all of them phoned.’

33. a. *Di*                    *prufasur, n’ è mia partì ‘nson.*  
b.     *Ad*                *prufasur, n’ è mia partì ‘nson.*  
c.                        *Prufasur, n’ è mia partì ‘nson.*

*di+art / di / ZERO* professors, *ne* be.AUX.3P.SG not leave.PST.PRT no.one

‘Professors, no one of them left.’

34. a. *Di*                    *ragasein, abota n’ ha züghè.*  
b.     *Ad*                *ragasein, abota n’ ha züghè.*

- c. *Ragasein, abota n' ha* *züghè.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO children, a.lot ne have.AUX.3P.SG play.PST.PRT*  
 ‘Children, a lot of them played.’
35. a. *Dal lat, as n' é infurtì.*  
 b. *Ad lat, as n' é infurtì.*  
 c. *Lat, as n' é infurtì.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO milk, CL.REFL ne be.AUX.3P.SG acidify.PST.PRT*  
 ‘Milk, it acidified.’
36. a. *Dal veint, n' ha tirè fort.*  
 b. *Ad veint, n' ha tirè fort.*  
 c. *Veint, n' ha tirè fort.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO wind, ne have.AUX.3P.SG blow.PST.PRT heavily*  
 ‘Wind, it blew heavily.’
37. a. *Dal machini, as n' è mia farmè.*  
 b. *Ad machini, as n' è mia farmè.*  
 c. *Machini, as n' è mia farmè.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO cars, CL.REFL ne be.AUX.3P.SG not stop.PST.PRT*  
 ‘Cars, they didn’t stop.’
38. a. *Di gatein, as n' è mia indrumintè.*  
 b. *Ad gatein, as n' è mia indrumintè.*  
 c. *Gatein, as n' è mia indrumintè.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO kittens, CL.REFL ne be.AUX.3P.SG not fall.asleep.PST.PRT*  
 ‘Kittens, they didn’t fall asleep.’
39. a. *Di can, n' han mia curì.*  
 b. *Ad can, n' han mia curì.*  
 c. *Can, n' han mia curì.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO dogs, ne have.3P.PL not run.PST.PRT*  
 ‘Dogs, they didn’t run.’
40. a. *Ad i usei, n' è mia vulè via.*  
 b. *D' usei, n' è mia vulè via.*  
 c. *Usei, n' è mia vulè via.*  
*di+art / di / ZERO birds, ne be.AUX.3P.SG not fly.PST.PRT away*  
 ‘Birds, they didn’t fly away.’

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