

# **Sardinian Syntax**

**Michael Allan Jones**

## Sardinian Syntax

*Sardinian Syntax* presents the first comprehensive synchronic description of Sardinian syntax available in English. Michael Jones combines a detailed coverage of the language with a theoretical approach that draws on contemporary linguistic theory. The book provides not only an extensive reference grammar but an invaluable source of information for all linguists whose interests extend beyond the world's major languages.

Distinctive properties of Sardinian, such as the use of infinitives with nominative subjects, the prepositional accusative, the syntax of impersonal constructions, and the factors determining auxiliary choice, are investigated in such a way as to allow synchronic comparison with other Romance languages. The author makes a rare attempt to apply a theoretical framework to the comprehensive description of a language, and the result is a book that goes beyond standard grammatical description to make an original contribution to syntactic theory.

Michael Allan Jones is Lecturer in Linguistics and French at the University of Essex. His work on the Sardinian language has been published in *The Romance Languages* edited by Martin Harris and Nigel Vincent.

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LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1993 by  
Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada  
by Routledge  
270 Madison Ave, New York NY 10016

Transferred to Digital Printing 2006

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Typeset by Florencetype Ltd, Kewstoke, Avon

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
a catalogue record for this title is available*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data  
applied for*

ISBN 0-415-04922-9

#### **Publisher's Note**

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original may be apparent

For Laura and Catherine

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# Romance Linguistics

## **Editorial Statement**

Routledge publish the Romance Linguistics series under the editorship of Martin Harris (University of Manchester) and Nigel Vincent (University of Manchester).

Romance Philology and General Linguistics have followed sometimes converging paths over the last century and a half. With the present series we wish to recognise and promote the mutual interaction of the two disciplines. The focus is deliberately wide, seeking to encompass not only work in the phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis of the Romance languages, but also studies in the history of Romance linguistics and linguistic thought in the Romance cultural area. Some of the volumes will be devoted to particular aspects of individual languages, some will be comparative in nature; some will adopt a synchronic and some a diachronic slant; some will concentrate on linguistic structures, and some will investigate the sociocultural dimensions of language and language use in the Romance-speaking territories. Yet all will endorse the view that a General Linguistics that ignores the always rich and often unique data of Romance is as impoverished as a Romance Philology that turns its back on the insights of linguistics theory.

# Preface

The idea of writing a book on the syntax of Sardinian evolved as I was conducting research for my contribution to Martin Harris and Nigel Vincent's collective volume on *The Romance Languages* (Jones 1988a). While much of the relevant information on the phonology, morphology and lexis of Sardinian could be gleaned from published sources, I quickly discovered that the syntax of Sardinian was relatively uncharted territory, which, moreover, concealed many treasures for the linguist. I therefore set about exploring this territory for myself. The fruits of this research soon outgrew the scope of the chapter for *The Romance Languages* and the project of a more extensive study devoted entirely to syntax was conceived. I would like to thank Martin Harris and Nigel Vincent for encouraging me to embark on this project and for their continuing support and assistance at every stage in its completion.

The bulk of the fieldwork for this study was conducted during a period of sabbatical leave from the University of Essex in the Autumn of 1986 and during subsequent Summer vacations. In the course of these visits to Sardinia I had the pleasure of meeting many scholars and lay-specialists in Sardinian language and culture, notably Eduardo Blasco-Ferrar, Diego Corraïne, Ines Loi Corvetto, Enzo Espa and Massimo Pittau. I thank them for their interest in my work, for the fruitful discussions we have shared and for their assistance in various other respects. I owe a very special debt to Serafino Spiggia and Dionigi Panedda who took me under their wing during my visits to Sardinia and who generously gave up their time to check through the thousands of examples on which this study is based. Their vigilance and their understanding of what I was trying to achieve undoubtedly saved me from a number of embarrassing errors. My other main informants, Maddalena Taras-Jones, Giuseppa Taras and Salvatore Taras, played a still more fundamental role since it is

through my personal relationship with them that I acquired my practical command of Sardinian, such as it is. I take this opportunity of thanking them for this and for their patience in answering what must have seemed endless tedious queries which I would not have dared to impose on anyone else. I would also like to thank the countless other friends and acquaintances in Sardinia who, sometimes unwittingly, acted as informants on a more casual basis.

This book has evolved in a rather eclectic fashion involving the continuous interplay between detailed analysis of particular phenomena and the building up of a coherent picture of the grammar as a whole against the background of developments in syntactic theory. Undoubtedly, the most difficult task was that of bringing all the bits and pieces together and presenting them under reasonably sensible chapter headings. The final result is something of a compromise between the goals of explanatory adequacy and scientific rigour on the one hand and comprehensiveness and user-friendliness on the other. One of the least satisfactory aspects of this compromise is that I was unable to incorporate many of the important theoretical developments which took place during the period of this research, since to have done so would have entailed continuous revision of those parts of the research which were already completed. I hope nevertheless that this account approaches the syntax of Sardinian in a manner conducive to further investigation in the light of recent theoretical developments and, conversely, that scholars whose interest in Sardinian is not based on current generative theory will be able to benefit from this description without being daunted by the conceptual framework within which it is couched. Throughout this research I have benefited greatly from comments and criticisms by many of my fellow linguists. I am grateful to all those who provided me with feedback and who encouraged me in the belief that this enterprise was worthwhile, particularly (to mention but a few) Richie Kayne, Adrian Battye, Luigi Burzio, Andrew Radford, Luigi Rizzi and Nicolas Ruwet.

While acknowledging my debt to all those who have helped me to bring this work to completion, I accept full responsibility for any errors or shortcomings which remain.

Finally, on a more personal note, I would like to thank my parents and my wife Enam for their encouragement and moral support.

# Abbreviations

acc.	accusative	Log.	Logudorese
adj.	adjective	Log.-Nuor.	Logudorese-Nuorese
AG	Agent	m.	masculine
aux.	auxiliary	NEG	negative
Camp.	Campidanese	nom.	nominative
com.	comitative	Nuor.	Nuorese
CONJ	conjunction	obl.	oblique
dat.	dative	pers.	person
DET	determiner	perf.	perfective
fam.	familiar	pol.	polite
f.	feminine	pp.	past participle
imperf.	imperfect	prog.	progressive
ind.	indicative	refl.	reflexive
inf.	infinitive	sg.	singular
It.	Italian	subj.	subjunctive
LOC	Location	TH	Theme

# Introduction

## 0.1 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The syntax of Sardinian is a rather neglected area of research. Most of the available information is to be found in general surveys of the language such as Porru (1811), Spano (1840), Wagner (1951), Pittau (1972), Atzori (1982), Blasco-Ferrer (1984, 1986) and Jones (1988a). Whereas there are a number of extensive studies of other aspects of Sardinian such as lexis (cf. Wagner 1960–4), morphology (cf. Wagner 1938–9) and phonetics and phonology (cf. Wagner 1941, 1984; Viridis 1978 and Contini 1985), there are no comparable studies devoted specifically to syntax. Moreover, while evidence from other Romance languages and dialects has had a profound influence on the development of syntactic theory, particularly within the generative paradigm, references to Sardinian data are conspicuous by their absence, presumably because the relevant facts are not widely known or have not been analysed in sufficient detail for their theoretical significance to be assessed.

The principal aim of this study is to fill the gaps identified above, by providing a description of Sardinian syntax which is comprehensive enough to qualify as a reference grammar but which is formulated within a conceptual framework which allows individual facts to be studied as part of a coherent system. To a large extent, these objectives complement each other in so far as the adoption of an explicit framework imposes an attention to empirical details (e.g. the precise range of categories affected by a given phenomenon) which might be overlooked in an informal description and also provides a means of investigating the interaction between different syntactic processes. Nevertheless, there are also cases where the degree of abstraction necessary for a theoretical explanation of a particular phenomenon is superfluous to an adequate description of the data and, for the

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'uninitiated' reader, may even obscure the generalisation which the theory is designed to capture. Moreover, in practice, theoretical research typically involves some degree of idealisation or selectivity which is incompatible with our aim of presenting a comprehensive description of Sardinian Syntax – whereas the theoretician can legitimately concentrate on a range of phenomena about which he has something interesting to say, our aim of comprehensivity requires us to deal with facts which we may not be able to explain in a theoretically insightful way. Bearing in mind these considerations, we have attempted to achieve a compromise between 'explanatory adequacy' and factual description, making use of theoretical concepts and formal representations in so far as they serve to elucidate the data under discussion while avoiding issues of a theory-internal nature.

This type of analysis requires access to negative data (i.e. evidence of sentences or constructions which do not form part of the language). Consequently, we have relied heavily on the intuitive judgements of native speakers, our general strategy being to formulate initial hypotheses (based on our own observations, attested written examples, information provided in other grammars, etc.) and to test these hypotheses by eliciting informants' judgements of appropriate constructed examples, revising and retesting our hypotheses as necessary. For this purpose, we selected a small group of five principal informants whom we were able to consult extensively on the whole range of phenomena investigated in this study. We also solicited judgements from a much wider range of speakers on a casual basis with regard to particular points of grammar of a more contentious nature (for example, cases where our principal informants diverged or hesitated in their judgements). A further resource which we have exploited is a corpus of written prose texts (see Bibliography) which we have used first, as a basis for formulating initial hypotheses, and second, as a means of checking the intuitive judgements of our informants against attested usage.

The empirical evidence presented in our account consists mainly of constructed examples with the judgements elicited from our informants. As far as possible we have attempted to extrapolate a consensus from the intuitions of individual informants, indicating divergence by prefixing the relevant examples with a question mark and/or by appropriate comments in the text. Occasionally we have used attested written examples, mainly to illustrate matters of style or usage which require an authentic context or, in some cases, to corroborate or qualify the evidence provided by our informants.

## 0.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our approach to the syntax of Sardinian is a generative one in the sense that we assume that the infinite range of utterances which are possible in a given language is the product of a finite set of interacting rules and principles which constitute the speaker's knowledge of the language. Within this perspective, the task of the linguist is to define this system of rules and principles in a manner consistent with observable data (and also with certain assumptions concerning the nature of the language faculty) rather than simply to illustrate or classify representative examples of the external manifestations of this system. Our study conforms to the spirit of this enterprise in that we have endeavoured to provide insights into the internalised grammatical system or, at least, to give sufficiently detailed empirical evidence to enable other linguists to gain such insights.

The particular model which we have adopted as a basis for our description is a broad version of the Government-Binding theory presented in Chomsky (1981). We have used this model primarily as a heuristic framework rather than an object of inquiry in its own right and, in order to make our account intelligible to readers who may not be familiar with this framework, we have cut a number of theoretical corners. Thus, for example, although we have made use of empty categories as a means of representing 'missing elements' and have given an informal characterisation of the way in which they are interpreted, we have not systematically attempted to identify the type of empty category involved or the means by which it is licensed according to the theory.

With regard to syntactic structure, our main requirement is a system of representation which allows us to indicate which elements of a sequence form constituents and to state generalisations regarding the order of elements within a given constituent. For these purposes, the framework of Chomsky (1981) is adequate. Specifically, we assume the following canonical schema for the structure of phrasal categories, where X stands for any of the major lexical categories:

- (1) a  $XP \rightarrow (\text{SPECIFIER}) X'$
- b  $X' \rightarrow (\text{MODIFIER}) X' (\text{MODIFIER})$
- c  $X' \rightarrow X (\text{COMPLEMENT})$

Starting from the bottom, the head X and its complement (if any) combine to form a category X', the complement normally following the head in Sardinian, as shown in (1c). To this category, optional modifiers (e.g. adjectives, relative clauses, adverbs, etc.) may be

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adjoined to the right or left depending on their properties, as in (1b). Finally, the symbol XP represents the complete phrase or ‘maximal projection’, the position SPECIFIER being occupied by items such as determiners, quantifiers and degree elements. We take the schema in (1) as an idealised model which is subject to language-specific or construction-specific variation (i.e. we take it as a basis for the analysis of phrase structure rather than as a model which must be strictly adhered to). We follow Chomsky (1981) in treating sentences as a separate system (see Chapter 1 for discussion), in contrast to more recent proposals whereby sentences are analysed as phrasal projections of inflectional or tense features (for example, as in Chomsky (1986)).

The amount of structural detail which we have given in our account depends largely on the extent to which it is useful for the purpose of description. Often the relevant facts can be adequately described in terms of linear order or fairly gross syntactic structure, in which case we have used representations (usually by means of labelled bracketing) which indicate only the major constituents which are relevant to the point under discussion. Where we have proposed more detailed structural analyses, our proposals should be taken as an attempt to capture certain generalisations within the framework outlined above, not as an implicit argument against alternative analyses which might be available within a more sophisticated model.

In addition to surface structure, which corresponds to the form of sentences as they are actually attested, we assume an underlying level of representation in which elements occur in canonical positions determined by their semantic function within the sentence. Thus, to take a simple example, we postulate that the interrogative sentence (2a) has essentially the same underlying structure as the corresponding declarative sentence (2b), represented approximately in (2c), in which *Juanne* ‘John’ occurs in the canonical subject position and *itte* ‘what’ in the direct object position:

- (2) a *Itte videt Juanne?*  
    ‘What does John see?’  
    b *Juanne videt su libru.*  
      ‘John sees the book.’  
    c [<sub>S</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> *Juanne*] [<sub>VP</sub> *videt* [<sub>NP</sub> *itte*] ] ]

To derive the surface form, the interrogative item *itte* must be moved to the beginning of the clause and the subject *Juanne* must be placed in a postverbal position (see 1.2.2 and 7.1.3 for detailed discussion). It is generally assumed that the processes which map underlying

structures on to surface structures are governed by various formal constraints. We shall not discuss these directly, but we have endeavoured to formulate our description in accordance with them.

The schemata in (1) define a range of potential syntactic positions within a phrase. However the instantiation of particular positions is dependent on other factors, particularly properties of the head (X); for example, the COMPLEMENT position in (1c) can only be instantiated as an NP if X is a preposition or transitive verb. Within the framework assumed here, such dependencies are expressed (partially) in terms of  $\theta$ -roles (or thematic roles) which characterise the semantic relation between a predicate and its argument(s) (e.g. 'Agent', 'Patient', etc. – see 3.2.1). Thus, the COMPLEMENT position in (1c) is available only if X is an item which assigns a  $\theta$ -role to this position. In addition, overt NPs are subject to a syntactic licensing requirement which is formulated in terms of the notion of Case. Although overt Case inflection is restricted to certain pronouns in Sardinian (as in English), it is assumed that all overt argument NPs must bear a Case feature which is assigned by certain elements under particular structural conditions, the details of which we shall leave for discussion in relation to relevant data. The fundamental point is that if an NP is assigned a  $\theta$ -role but cannot receive a Case feature by virtue of its structural position, it must remain null (in which case its referential properties must be recovered from other elements in the sentence) or the NP itself or the Case-assigning item must move so that the requisite structural conditions on Case assignment are satisfied.

### 0.3 THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC STATUS OF SARDINIAN

A question which we have avoided so far is whether our object of inquiry, the syntax of Sardinian, is sufficiently coherent as to be amenable to the type of investigation which we have outlined above. We do not wish to take a stance on the question of whether the dialects of Sardinian merit the status of an independent 'language', whatever this might mean, though we categorically reject the view that they are simply degenerate varieties of Italian. Nevertheless, there are a number of questions regarding the sociolinguistic status of Sardinian which are directly relevant to this study.

The first concerns variation between the dialects of Sardinian. For the purposes of this study we define Sardinian as the family of dialects spoken in Sardinia except for Alghero (Catalan speaking), Calasetta and Carloforte (Ligurian), the area of Gallura along the northern

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coast where a variety of Southern Corsican is spoken and the town of Sassari where a hybrid dialect evolved in the Middle Ages as a result of close contact between the local population and the maritime powers of Pisa and Genoa. The dialects of Sardinian proper have also been influenced to a greater or lesser extent by other Romance languages and dialects (principally Pisan, Genovese, Catalan and Spanish and, more recently, Standard Italian) which have given rise to considerable regional differences, particularly between the Campidanese dialects spoken in the southern half of the island and the Logudorese-Nuorese dialects spoken in the northern-central areas. These differences are particularly striking in the domains of phonology, morphology and lexis. From a syntactic point of view Sardinian appears to be much more homogeneous, though this perception may be due in part to the fact that the syntax of Sardinian has not been investigated as extensively as other aspects of the language and to the more general fact that syntactic differences are less amenable to direct observation (for example, it is rather easier to document dialectal differences with regard to lenition of obstruents, the forms of the imperfect or the word for 'butterfly' than to investigate potential differences in the structural position of auxiliary verbs).

Rather than attempting to formulate a description based on data covering the whole of the Sardinian-speaking community, we have concentrated on giving a detailed analysis of varieties which are generally recognised as conservative, principally from the central-eastern (Nuorese) area. Similarly, we have standardised the morphology, lexis and spelling of our examples in accordance with the usage and pronunciation of our principal informants, except in the case of examples taken from written sources which we have reproduced in their original form (see 0.4 for discussion of the orthographic conventions used in this study). In adopting this policy, we recognise that some of our claims may not be valid for all varieties of Sardinian. In cases where other descriptive studies reveal significant dialectal differences or present evidence which conflicts with our own observations, we have drawn attention to the relevant facts. However, the available evidence suggests that such differences are largely confined to matters of morphosyntax. Even if it should turn out that syntactic differences between dialects are more fundamental than we have supposed, we hope that this analysis will serve as a useful framework for the investigation of parameters of variation.

A further issue is the influence of Standard Italian. Nowadays almost all speakers of Sardinian (including all our informants) are also fluent speakers of Italian, which they regard as one of their

native languages. Indeed, in domains such as education, the media, administration and commerce, Italian is used exclusively, with the result that Sardinian is largely confined to informal conversation among friends and family. In view of this situation and the substantial similarities between Sardinian and Italian, some degree of interference between the two languages is to be expected. This effect can be seen in the emergence of a regional variety of Italian which incorporates many salient features of Sardinian and which is widespread even among Sardinians who do not speak Sardinian; see Loi-Corvetto (1983) for detailed description. With regard to the influence of modern Italian on Sardinian, we draw a distinction between genuine influences (features of Italian which have become part of accepted Sardinian usage) and cases where a speaker's knowledge of Italian interferes with his intuitions or performance on a particular occasion. Since we wish our description to reflect contemporary usage, influences of the former type must be recognised (in the same way as the earlier influence of Catalan or Spanish), but the possibility of interference of the latter type raises important questions concerning the admissibility of certain types of evidence. This problem arises particularly in cases which rely on negative evidence. Consider, for example, a situation where positive evidence indicates that Sardinian has a construction X which corresponds to a different construction Y in Italian. Positive evidence is sufficient to establish that the two languages differ in so far as Sardinian allows X whereas Italian does not. Moreover, if informants systematically reject constructions of the type Y in Sardinian, we can conclude that construction Y does not form part of the grammar of Sardinian, assuming that the judgements of these informants are representative. The problem arises when judgements of examples of type Y in Sardinian vacillate (for example, the construction is accepted by a minority of informants, perhaps with some hesitation) – are we to take such judgements as evidence that construction Y is marginally possible in Sardinian or can they be attributed to interference from Italian? A similar problem occasionally arises with attested written examples, particularly in cases where the subject matter or the level of discourse demand a style which goes beyond the 'normal' resources of Sardinian as a medium for casual communication between friends or relations. To take an extreme example, Pira (1983: 42) uses the phrase "*s'issoro assimizzaresi e contriaresi*", literally 'the their resembling each other and opposing each other' (i.e. 'the similarities and oppositions between them'). This phrase occurs within the context of a discussion of the nature of the linguistic sign, not the sort of

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discussion which would typically be conducted in Sardinian. The syntax of this example is quite clearly Italian; in Sardinian, possessive items (e.g. *issoro* 'their') always follow the head and clitic pronouns are never suffixed to infinitives, even in cases like this where the infinitive has a nominal function similar to that of the gerund in English (though, as a lexicographic convention, citation forms of pronominal verbs are sometimes given with the reflexive clitic suffixed to the infinitive – e.g. *pentíresi* 'repent' – as in Spano (1852)). Although this example can be dismissed as a case of interference, there are other examples, involving more subtle aspects of grammar, where the choice is less clear. Later on the same page we find the example "*limbar divessas usan paraular divessas*" 'different languages use different words', which conflicts with the generalisation that indefinite NPs without a determiner do not normally occur in the preverbal subject position (see 2.2.5 for discussion). Here it is not clear whether the use of *limbar divessas* is simply an imitation of Italian *diverse lingue* or whether it constitutes a genuine exception to the generalisation in question.

Having raised the problem of possible interference from Italian, we acknowledge that we have no principled strategy for dealing with it. As far as possible, we have attempted to ascertain the extent to which 'aberrant' data is representative by consulting a wider range of native-speakers. Sometimes, informants' comments on other informants' judgements have provided useful clues; for example, a comment like 'Some people say things like that, but it is not real Sardinian' suggests Italian influence which is resisted by more conservative speakers whereas a flat rejection of the type 'No, that is pure Italian' suggests that we are dealing with a case of interference. In presenting raw data we have endeavoured to reflect our informants' judgements faithfully, but have exercised some discretion in extrapolating generalisations from this evidence. In particular, where examples which show Italian influence conflict with otherwise valid generalisations or with the predictions of our analysis, we have noted the relevant facts but have not attempted to modify our analysis in order to accommodate them.

### 0.4 ORTHOGRAPHY

Sardinian has no generally accepted system of spelling, though numerous attempts have been made to establish one (see Spano 1840; Pittau 1978; Farina and Mingione n.d.). Since there is no variety of Sardinian which is acknowledged as a standard, individual writers

tend to base their spelling on a particular dialect (usually their own). Second, whereas some writers adopt a phonetically-based approach, attempting to represent actual pronunciation within the limits of the standard alphabet, others aim at a more abstract, phonological representation which assigns a single spelling to a given word regardless of context and, in some cases, reflects etymology rather than current pronunciation. At a more trivial level, there is considerable variation in the choice of characters which are used to represent a given segment or phoneme, particularly with respect to consonants.

The spelling conventions which we have adopted are a compromise between a phonemic representation of the dialect of our principal informants (namely the variety of Nuorese spoken in the Bitti-Lula area) and typographical convenience, with some concessions to orthographic traditions in so far as they exist. These conventions are outlined below, together with brief notes on some of the more common practices adopted by other writers, some of which will be encountered in written examples which we have cited – these are given in their original orthography and are distinguished from our own examples by the use of double quotation marks (both within the text and in numbered examples).

The transcription of vowels poses no particular problems. Sardinian has a classic five-vowel system, with three degrees of aperture and a front-back distinction for high and mid vowels, and can thus be adequately represented by the characters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o* and *u*. Diphthongs are represented by sequences of vowels. Mid vowels are subject to a process of metaphony whereby they assume a mid-high pronunciation when the vowel of the following syllable is high – this effect is not reflected in our spelling. In Campidanese, mid vowels are systematically raised to /i/ and /u/ in final syllables and before other vowels and are transcribed as *i* and *u* in examples from Campidanese. There is also a tendency, which we have indicated wherever it occurs, for mid vowels to become high in pre-tonic position (e.g. *cunténtu* ‘content, happy’), leading to a change in the stem vowel in the paradigms of some verbs (e.g. *issíre* ‘to go out’ vs. *éssu* ‘I go out’). An acute accent over a vowel is used to indicate word stress when it falls on a syllable other than the penultimate, and in other cases where the position of stress is relevant to the discussion (as in the examples just given). We have also indicated word stress to distinguish cases where the second of two adjacent vowels constitutes a separate, stressed syllable (e.g. *fáinas* ‘chores’, *paúra* ‘fear’) from those where the two vowels form a diphthong (e.g. *áinu* ‘donkey’, *fáulas* ‘lies’).

Within the consonant system an important feature of Sardinian

phonology is lenition of stops and fricatives in intervocalic position. Our general policy is to represent intervocalic consonants in their non-lenis forms. This accords with the pronunciation of the Bitti-Lula dialect, where lenition is restricted to voicing of fricatives and fricativisation of voiced stops. Thus, intervocalic *s* is pronounced [z], and *d*, *g* and *b* are pronounced respectively as [ð], [ɣ] and [v] (or [β]), but other consonants have their normal phonetic value. However, in many dialects (including all varieties of Logudorese and Campidanese) voiceless stops become voiced fricatives, and voiced stops and fricatives are elided. Moreover, these effects are typically represented in spelling. Thus, corresponding to *meta* ‘much, many’, *locu* ‘place’, *ape* ‘bee’, *pede* ‘foot’, *ovu* ‘egg’, etc., we find the spellings *meda*, *logu*, *abe*, *pe(e)* (Camp. *pei*), *ou*, etc. in Logudorese and Campidanese texts. In those cases where elision does occur in the dialect adopted here (e.g. *caddu* ‘horse’, *jeo* ‘I’, *nue* ‘cloud’), this is reflected in our spelling, even though the non-elided forms are attested in other Nuorese dialects (*cabaddu*, *dego*, *nube*). In most dialects, the etymological distinction between /v/ and /b/ has been neutralised in favour of the latter, but in the dialect adopted here it is generally maintained in initial position, though neutralised in other contexts (giving [v] intervocalically and [b] before or after a consonant other than /r/). Our spelling follows the pronunciation of this dialect, reflecting etymology in word-initial position, but not necessarily in other contexts: e.g. *vénneru* ‘come’, *bíere* ‘drink’, *cumbínkere* ‘convince’, *dévere* ‘must’.

Stops and fricatives derived historically from Latin geminates or clusters do not normally undergo lenition or elision in any dialect. Such cases are indicated in our spelling by gemination of the consonant. Voiceless stops transcribed as geminates are not phonetically geminate, and in the dialect presented here are identical to those represented by a single character (e.g. *latte* ‘milk’ and *latu* ‘flat’ are pronounced [late] and [latu]) – in these cases, orthographic gemination is simply a means of indicating that the segment does not undergo lenition in other dialects (e.g. Log. [late] vs. [laðu]). Although this practice is quite common, it is not adopted by all writers. Other consonants transcribed here as geminates do have a characteristically long pronunciation, though in the case of stops and fricatives this is difficult to establish with certainty since the effects of lenition preclude direct comparison with corresponding simple consonants in the same context. Note that *-dd-* has a retroflex pronunciation (as opposed to simple *d* which is dental) and corresponds historically to Latin *-ll-* (e.g. *nudda* ‘nothing’). Also *-bb-* typically

corresponds to Latin -QU- (e.g. *abba* ‘water’) (retained as /kw/ in Campidanese and transcribed accordingly: e.g. *ácuca*).

The transcription of velar stops before front vowels is a rather contentious issue. In the Logudorese-Nuorese dialects, /k/ and /g/ retain their velar articulation before /i/ and /e/, whereas in Campidanese they become palatal affricates, as in Italian. In principle there is no reason why these phonemes should not be represented by the same characters (e.g. *c* and *g*) regardless of context, as in Latin. In practice, the influence of Italian spelling conventions is so pervasive that written sequences of the type *-ci-*, *-gi-* are perceived as representing palatal affricates, with the result that in Logudorese-Nuorese texts the absence of palatalisation is indicated systematically by means of special characters (typically *k* or *ch* for /k/ and *gh* for /g/), whereas in Campidanese *c* and *g* are used for both velar and palatalised variants. Despite reservations, we have bowed to tradition on this matter, and use *k* and *gh* before front vowels but *c* and *g* elsewhere: e.g. *kentu* ‘hundred’, *ghirare* ‘return’, but *cantare* ‘sing’, *gattu* ‘cat’.

In accordance with widespread practice, we use *dz* and *tz* to represent the alveolar affricates /dz/ and /ts/ (though some writers neutralise the voicing distinction by using *z* for both, often geminated to *zz* intervocally). In addition, [dz] occurs as a variant of the palatal glide /j/, which we represent as *j*. Etymologically, /dz/ normally derives from Latin /lj/ (e.g. *mudzere* < MULIEREM ‘wife’) whereas /j/ corresponds to Latin /j/ or /dj/ (e.g. *janna* < JANUAM ‘door’, *oje* < HODIE ‘today’) – the Campidanese counterparts to these two phonemes are respectively /ll/ and the palatal affricate /dʒ/, usually written as *g* followed by *i* or *e*, elided intervocally (e.g. *mulleri*, *genna*, *oi*). We use the digraph *th* to represent a phoneme which is pronounced as a voiceless dental fricative [θ] by conservative Nuorese speakers but is gradually being supplanted by its Campidanese variant [ts] – Logudorese speakers have the variant [t], which does not undergo lenition and is typically written as *tt*. The palatal nasal /ɲ/, which occurs mainly in loan words from Italian, is represented as *gn* as in Italian.

Among the contextually determined phenomena which some writers have tried to encode, but which are not represented in our transcription, we draw attention to the following: elision of word-final /t/ before a consonant (usually indicated by an apostrophe); addition of an unstressed epenthetic vowel (identical to that of the preceding syllable) when a word ending in a consonant occurs in absolute final position; partial neutralisation of word-final /s/ and /r/,

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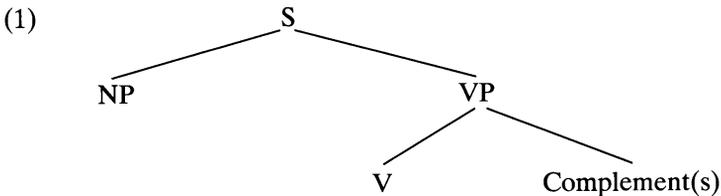
whereby /-s/ → [-r] (or [-l]) before a voiced consonant and /-r/ → [-s] before a voiceless consonant; modification of word-initial consonants according to the final segment of the preceding word (e.g. lenition or elision of initial stops or fricatives after a vowel). However, in accordance with established practice, we have indicated (by means of an apostrophe) elision of the final segment of certain function words before following vowels (for example, elision of the final vowel of determiners and clitic pronouns and of the final /n/ of the negative particle *non*: *s'ómine* 'the man', *cuss'ómine* 'this man', *l'appo fattu* 'I did it', *no'est veru* 'it is not true').

# 1 The sentence

## 1.1 CONSTITUENT ORDER

### 1.1.1 Structure of the clause

For the purposes of our discussion we assume that the underlying order of principal elements within the clause is subject–verb–complement(s), with the verb and its complements (if any) forming a verb phrase (VP), whereas the subject noun phrase is external to this constituent, as represented in (1):



The position of other elements such as adverbial expressions and auxiliary verbs will be discussed in subsequent chapters, as will the internal structure of NP, VP and other categories which occur within these phrases.

Our claim that Sardinian has an underlying subject–verb–complement order is based largely on the intuition that this is the canonical order of elements in declarative main clauses, as in (2):

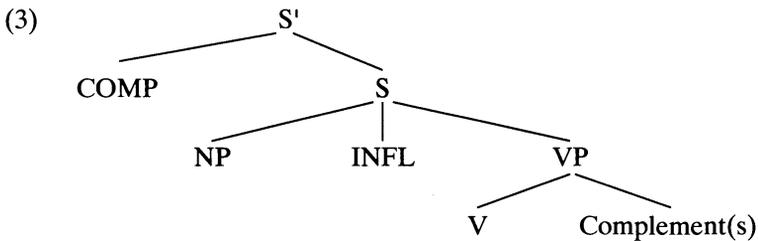
- (2) a Su pitzinnu dormit.  
'The child sleeps.'  
b Juanne leghet su libro.  
'John reads the book.'  
c Sos pastores murghen sas berbekes.  
'The shepherds milk the sheep.'

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- d Su mere at datu su dinari a su theraccu.  
 ‘The master gave the money to the servant.’

Although alternative orders are possible (see 1.1.2 for a general overview and Chapter 7 for a more detailed analysis), they tend to be exploited for particular stylistic or discursive effects (such as focusing or emphasis of a constituent) and in some cases are subject to syntactic constraints which can best be accounted for in terms of deviation from the canonical structure in (1).

Following Chomsky (1981) and our remarks in 0.2 (p. 4), we postulate two further refinements to the structure in (1), which we shall simply mention at this stage. First, we assume that specifications of tense and mood and person/number features, which are ultimately expressed by verb inflection, are encoded under a separate INFL node directly dependent on S (see Chomsky 1981), though in practice we shall only make use of the INFL node when it is directly relevant to the matter in hand – in other cases we shall use simplified representations of the type in (1) where the verb is given in its inflected form under the V node. Second, we postulate a higher projection of the S category, labelled S', which includes a COMP position whose primary function is to accommodate ‘complementisers’ (such as the particle *ki* ‘that’ which typically introduces finite complement clauses) but also provides a natural site for various types of fronted items (cf. 1.2.2). Thus the full structure of the clause can be represented as in (3):

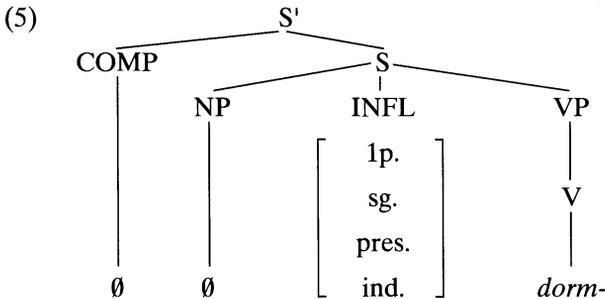


Like most of the other Romance languages, with the notable exception of French, Sardinian is a null-subject (or ‘pro-drop’) language; that is, the subject of a finite clause can be omitted in circumstances where languages like English or French would require a subject pronoun:

- (4) a Dormo.  
 ‘I sleep.’  
 b Leghet su libru.  
 ‘He/she reads the book.’

- c Murghen sas berbekes.  
 'They milk the sheep.'

We shall not take a stand here on the various theoretical approaches which have been proposed in the literature to account for the null-subject phenomenon,<sup>1</sup> but we shall retain two leading ideas which are common to these approaches. The first is the formal assumption that in sentences like those in (4) the subject NP node is present in the structure but is devoid of lexical content (i.e. it is an empty node, represented as  $\emptyset$ ); e.g. (4a) has the structure (5):



The second leading idea is that the null-subject phenomenon is related in some way to a rich system of person/number inflection on the verb (all Sardinian verbs have six distinct person/number endings in each finite tense and mood). Intuitively, either the verb inflection itself has a status akin to that of a subject pronoun, or it allows the empty subject to function as a personal pronoun by making the person/number features recoverable.

Overt subject pronouns are typically only used when there is some element of emphasis or contrast, also in the third person to make gender distinctions which cannot be conveyed by verb inflection alone. When a subject pronoun is used, it must have specific (typically human) reference. In particular, there is no overt subject pronoun corresponding to impersonal 'it' in English – i.e. the subject position is always empty in cases such as (6):

- (6) a Proet.  
 'It is raining.'  
 b Paret ki Maria est maláida.  
 'It seems that Mary is sick.'

Complements of the verb and other categories within the VP cannot be omitted freely, but must be represented by a clitic pronoun:

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- (7) a *Juanne lu videt.*  
      ‘John sees him/it.’  
      b *Maria lis at datu su dinari.*  
      ‘Mary gave them the money.’  
      c *Su pitzinnu nd’est cuntentu.*  
      ‘The child is happy with it.’

Clitics precede finite verbs and infinitives but follow imperatives and present participles (they cannot be attached to past participles or to bare infinitives governed by a modal auxiliary; see 3.3.2, 3.3.3). The circumstances under which disjunctive object pronouns are used instead of (or, in some cases, as well as) clitics are roughly the same as those which determine the use of subject pronouns, except that disjunctive pronouns can be used non-emphatically as complements of certain prepositions for which there is no corresponding clitic; see 5.1.1 for detailed discussion.

### 1.1.2 **Constituent-order variations**

Variations on the canonical SVO order can be described in terms of three basic processes: dislocation, fronting and subject inversion. These phenomena will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7. Below we give an informal outline of their essential properties so that we can refer to them in discussion of other syntactic phenomena.

Dislocated sentences are constructions in which an NP or PP is placed outside the core of the sentence with a resumptive pronominal element (usually a clitic) within the sentence. Dislocated phrases may be placed either before the sentence (left-dislocation) as in (8) or after it (right-dislocation) as in (9):

- (8) a *Cussu libru, l’appo lessu metas vias.*  
      [that book it I+have read many times]  
      ‘That book, I have read it many times.’  
      b *A Nùgoro, non bi so mai andatu.*  
      [to Nuoro NEG there I+am never gone]  
      ‘To Nuoro, I have never been there.’
- (9) a *L’appo lessu metas vias, cussu libru.*  
      ‘I have read it many times, that book.’  
      b *Non bi so mai andatu, a Nùgoro.*  
      ‘I have never been there, to Nuoro.’

Dislocated items are usually separated from the rest of the sentence by a pause (indicated here by a comma), though this is less systematic in cases of right-dislocation.

Indefinite plural or non-count nouns which function as direct objects can be dislocated with the partitive clitic *nde* as the resumptive pronoun; e.g. the sentence *Bimus meta abba* ‘We drink a lot of water’ can be rephrased as in (10):

- (10) a (De) abba, nde bimus meta.  
 ‘(Of) water, we drink a lot of it.’  
 b Nde bimus meta, de abba.  
 ‘We drink a lot of it, of water.’

Note that the quantified noun (*abba* in (10)) must be introduced by the preposition *de* ‘of’ when right-dislocated (optionally when left-dislocated). Also, the quantifier (*meta* in (10)) is not dislocated along with the rest of the NP but remains in the direct-object position. The quantifier may be absent, in which case we get a ‘some . . .’ interpretation (‘any . . .’ in negative sentences) as in the following examples which correspond to *Bimus abba* ‘We drink water’.

- (11) a (De) abba, nde bimus.  
 ‘(Of) water, we drink (some).’  
 b Nde bimus, de abba.  
 ‘We drink some, of water.’

Apart from the constructions in (10)–(11), dislocated NPs are always definite.

Subject NPs can also be dislocated, with the verb inflection (or the empty subject) functioning as the resumptive pronominal element:

- (12) a Maria, credío ki fit inoke.  
 ‘Mary, I thought that she was here.’  
 b At accabbatu su travallu, Pretu.  
 ‘He has finished the work, Peter.’

In (12a) we have chosen an example with an embedded subject to illustrate the effects of left-dislocation more clearly, but we assume that left-dislocation of the subject is also possible in simple sentences like (13) even though it does not affect word-order (for evidence in support of this assumption, see 7.1.1):

- (13) Pretu, at accabbatu su travallu.  
 ‘Peter, he has finished the work.’

Fronted constructions superficially resemble left-dislocated constructions except that there is no resumptive pronoun and no pause after the fronted expression:

- (14) a Cussu libru appo lessu.  
 [that book I+have read]

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- b A Núgoro so andatu.  
 [to Nuoro I+am gone]

However, they have a very different interpretation. Whereas the function of left-dislocation is, roughly, to establish or confirm the dislocated element as the topic of the sentence (i.e. as the entity about which a statement is being made), fronted constituents always have a focus interpretation (expressing the part of the statement which is new or particularly noteworthy) similar to that of clefted elements in English; thus, the examples in (14) would translate as 'It is that book that I have read' and 'It is to Nuoro that I went'.

Fronting can apply to a wide variety of phrases and for this reason provides a useful diagnostic for constituenthood. In particular, fronting can apply to predicative categories, such as AP (adjective phrase) and infinitival or participial VPs dependent on an auxiliary, which cannot normally be clefted in English:

- (15) a Troppu grassu est.  
 lit. 'Too fat he is.'  
 b Dormire keljo.  
 lit. 'To sleep I want.'  
 c Andatu a Núgoro est.  
 lit. 'Gone to Nuoro he has.'

For arguments that such cases involve fronting of the AP or VP rather than postposition of the copula or auxiliary, see 7.1.5. Fronting of predicative categories such as AP or VP is particularly common in yes/no questions (see 1.2.2, 7.2.2) and also in answers to questions where in English one would typically give an elliptical reply (for example, (15b) is roughly equivalent to 'Sleep!' as a short answer to a question such as 'What do you want to do tonight?').

Fronting also differs from left-dislocation in cases involving indefinite NPs. When an indefinite NP is fronted, the quantifier or determiner is moved along with the rest of the phrase (compare example (10a) above):

- (16) Meta abba amus bitu.  
 lit. 'A lot of water we have drunk.'

An important syntactic restriction on fronting (which again does not apply to left-dislocation) is that the preverbal subject position must be empty. Thus, if an expression is fronted, the subject must either remain unspecified (as in (14)–(16)) or must be placed in a postverbal position:

- (17) a \*Troppu grassu Juane est.

- b Troppu grassu est Juanne.  
'John is too fat.'

As we have seen (example (12b)), one way of achieving the latter effect is by means of right-dislocation of the subject. However, there are instances of postposed subjects which do not appear to be the result of dislocation. Typically, right-dislocated phrases are unstressed and refer to entities which are already fairly prominent in the discourse whereas corresponding phrases in final position in non-dislocated constructions typically bear main stress and contribute new information. Thus, (18a) might be appropriate in a conversation about the whereabouts of the builder, whereas (18b) would be more natural as part of a report on the people whom I met while I was out:

- (18) a L'appo vistu, su mastru de muru.  
b Appo vistu su mastru de muru.  
'I have seen the builder.'

Note now that examples like (19) have both prosodic patterns and their associated discourse interpretations:

- (19) At telefonatu su mastru de muru.  
[has telephoned the builder]

With stress on *telefonatu* and a pause (not indicated here) before *su mastru de muru*, (19) would be an appropriate answer to a question such as 'Has the builder been in touch?', whereas with no pause and with main stress on *su mastru de muru* a more suitable context would be 'Did anyone telephone while I was out?' We postulate that on the first reading, (19) is an instance of right-dislocation of the subject, but on the second interpretation it is the result of an inversion process which places the subject in a postverbal position similar to that of a direct object (recall that dislocated items are placed outside the core of the sentence).

The difference between inversion and right-dislocation of the subject is not always absolutely clear since, in many cases, they yield the same linear sequences and can only be distinguished by reference to prosody or context.<sup>2</sup> This makes it rather difficult to determine or illustrate the particular syntactic properties of each process simply by means of acceptability judgements of constructed examples. Nevertheless, there are at least two syntactic differences between these two processes which we shall simply state here pending a more detailed discussion in 7.1.3. First, inversion, but not right-dislocation, appears to be inhibited by the presence of a postverbal complement, particularly a direct object. The second difference is that inversion

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can apply to both definite and indefinite subjects, whereas dislocation is possible only with definite subjects. This restriction on dislocation is to be expected in so far as null subjects have the same status as definite pronouns. With regard to inversion, we should note that although inversion of an indefinite subject is possible, as in (20a), an impersonal construction of the type in (20b) is often preferred in such cases:

- (20) a An telefonatu metas pessones.  
[have telephoned many people]  
b B'at telefonatu metas pessones.  
[there has telephoned many people]  
'Many people have telephoned.'

Whereas in (20a) the finite verb *an* is third person plural in agreement with the inverted subject *metas pessones*, the verb in the impersonal construction (20b) is always third person singular and must be accompanied by the clitic *bi* (for detailed discussion see 3.2.2).

With regard to the subject-inversion phenomenon, there is a subclass of intransitive verbs which deserves special mention; namely, verbs whose subject is a Theme (or Patient) and which select *éssere* 'be' rather than *áere* 'have' as their perfective auxiliary. In some recent analyses of related languages such as Italian and Spanish (see for example Jaeggli 1982, Rizzi 1982, Burzio 1986), it has been argued that the subject of such verbs (which we shall refer to as 'unaccusative' verbs, though some linguists use the term 'ergative') originates in the postverbal position normally occupied by the direct object NP and is moved, optionally, into the preverbal subject position in essentially the same way as the underlying object in passive sentences, whereas with 'normal' intransitive verbs of the *telefonare* type which take an agentive subject, the subject is base-generated in the preverbal position, the inversion construction being derived by a transformation which adjoins the subject to the VP. Thus, adopting this approach for Sardinian, (19) above, repeated as (21a), would be derived from (21b) whereas (22a) would be derived from (22b):

- (21) a At telefonatu su mastru de muru.  
b Su mastru de muru at telefonatu.  
'The builder has telephoned.'  
(22) a Su mastru de muru est arrivatu.  
b Est arrivatu su mastru de muru.  
'The builder has arrived.' (lit. ' . . . is arrived.')

The facts of Sardinian seem to be generally consistent with this

approach, though our informants' judgements about some of the examples which might positively support this analysis are rather uncertain. Some of the implications of this approach are explored in 3.2.3.

## 1.2 PROPOSITIONAL ATTITUDE

### 1.2.1 Negation

Sentences are negated by placing the negative particle *non* before the verb. The distribution of *non* is very similar to that of preverbal clitic pronouns; i.e. it can occur before finite verb forms and before infinitives (except 'bare' infinitives governed by a modal auxiliary or causative verb; cf. 3.3.3, 6.1.4) but not before participles or imperatives (for negation of imperatives, see 1.2.3):

- (23) a Custu vinu non m'aggradat.  
'This wine does not please me.'
- b Provo a non rúghere.  
'I try not to fall.'
- c Non keljo issire.  
'I do not want to go out.'
- d Non so ascurtande.  
'I am not listening.'
- e No'est arrivatu.  
'He has not arrived.'
- (24) a \*Keljo no'issire. cf. (23c)  
b \*So no'ascurtande. cf. (23d)  
c \*Est no'arrivatu. cf. (23e)

Unlike clitic pronouns, however, *non* can be used without a verb in elliptical constructions such as (25):<sup>3</sup>

- (25) a Appo comporatu sa petha ma non su pane.  
'I have bought the meat but not the bread.'
- b Keljo dormire, non travallare.  
'I want to sleep, not to work.'

Particularly characteristic of Sardinian is the use of *non* with *de* + noun in constructions of the following type:

- (26) a Non de abba, abbardente est.  
[not of water brandy it+is]  
'It is not water, but brandy.'

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- b Non de frates, paren nimicos.  
 [not of brothers they+seem enemies]  
 'Far from being brothers, they are like enemies.'

When the negative item is used on its own (i.e. as the equivalent of English 'no') it is realised as *no* or, for greater emphasis, *nono* (there is also a polite form *nossi*, an abbreviation of *no signore* 'no sir'). The corresponding affirmative items are *emmo*, *eja* 'yes' (polite form *sissi*) and for emphasis *ello* 'yes indeed, of course'. The above items can be used in reported speech preceded by the complementiser *ki* or, in some dialects, *ca*:

- (27) T'appo natu  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} ca \\ ki \end{array} \right\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} emmo \\ no(no) \end{array} \right\}$ .

'I told you yes/no.'

They can also be used to affirm or negate a preceding phrase, as in (28):

- (28) Isse travallat una die emmo, s'attera nono.  
 [he works one day yes the other no]  
 'Some days he works, others he does not.'

The particle *non* is also used with negative pronouns and adverbs such as those listed in (29):

- (29) *neune* 'nobody', *nudda* 'nothing', *neddue* 'nowhere', *mai* 'never', *ne . . . ne* 'neither . . . nor', *prus* 'no longer', *mancu* 'not even', *perunu*, *-a* 'none, not any'.
- (30) a *Juanne non pessat a neune.*  
 'John does not think about anyone.'
- b *No'appo comporatu nudda.*  
 'I have not bought anything.'
- c *Non semus andatos a neddue.*  
 'We did not go anywhere.'
- d *No'appo mai vistu una cosa gai.*  
 'I have never seen a thing like that.'
- e *No'amus mandicatu ne petha ne casu.*  
 'We ate neither meat nor cheese.'
- f *Non lu faco prus.*  
 'I will not do it any more.'
- g *Non faeddan mancu su sardu.*  
 'They do not speak even Sardinian.'
- h *Non b'at periculu perunu.*  
 'There is no danger.'

However, *non* does not occur when the negative pronoun or adverb precedes the verb (i.e. as a preverbal subject or a fronted item):

- (31) a Neune est vénnitu.  
      ‘Nobody came.’  
      b Mai appo vistu una cosa gai.  
      ‘Never have I seen a thing like that.’  
      c Mancu su sardu faeddan.  
      ‘Not even Sardinian do they speak.’

On the other hand, *non* must be present when a negative pronoun occurs as an inverted subject:

- (32) No'est vénnitu neune.  
      ‘Nobody came.’

The item *prus* ‘no longer’ differs from the other items discussed above in that it cannot be used alone outside the scope of *non*, but must be preceded by *mai* ‘never’ in such cases:

- (33) Mai prus faco cussu.  
      ‘Never again will I do that.’

It is possible for a simple sentence to contain more than one negative pronoun or adverb:

- (34) No'appo mai datu nudda a neune.  
      ‘I have never given anything to anyone.’

When one negative item precedes the verb with other negative items following it, *non* may be present or absent, but with a difference in meaning:

- (35) a Neune at mai peccatu.  
      ‘Nobody has ever sinned.’  
      b Neune no'at mai peccatu.  
      ‘Nobody has never sinned.’

When *non* is omitted, subsequent negative items are interpreted as being within the scope of the first whereas when *non* is present, the first item is negated independently of the rest. In cases of the second type, a periphrastic construction such as (36), in which each negative item occurs within its own clause, is generally preferred:

- (36) Non b'at neune ki no'at mai peccatu.  
      ‘There is nobody who has never sinned.’

We may also note the following negative constructions with *kene* ‘without’:<sup>4</sup>

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- (37) a *Custa tsikkera est kene lavata.*  
[This cup is without washed]  
'This cup has not been washed.'
- b *So kene abba.*  
[I+am without water]  
'I have no water.'
- c *So issitu kene tuncare sa janna.*  
'I went out without closing the door.'

Adverbs and pronouns interpreted as variables within the scope of *kene* are realised as the negative items listed in (29): *kene faeddare a neune* 'without speaking to anyone', *kene nudda* 'without anything', *kene salutare mancu su babbu* 'without greeting even his father', *kene dormire mai* 'without ever sleeping', *kene pane ne abba* 'without bread or water' (note that *ne* 'nor' does not occur before the first conjunct governed by *kene*).

### 1.2.2 Questions

Yes/no questions can be formed simply by means of intonation; essentially by failing to produce a full pitch descent on the syllable which bears main sentence stress. As we noted in 1.1.2, fronting of a constituent (especially a predicative element such as a verb or adjective) is particularly common in yes/no questions, though it is not specifically a question-formation process. Thus, sentences like those in (38) would typically be interpreted as questions – 'Are you happy?', 'Have you eaten?', 'Has John telephoned?' (see 7.2.2):

- (38) a *Cumentu ses.*  
[happy you+are]
- b *Mandicatu as.*  
[eaten you+have]
- c *Telefonatu at Juanne.*  
[telephoned has John]

Sardinian has an interrogative particle *a* which can be prefixed to yes/no questions under certain conditions:

- (39) a *A mi vattus cudda tassa?*  
[a me you+fetch that glass]  
'Will you fetch me that glass?'
- b *A bi venit Juanne?*  
[a there comes John]  
'Is John coming?'

This particle is used predominantly, but not exclusively, in questions which are to be interpreted as requests (as in (39a)), invitations, offers, etc.:

- (40) a A keres vénnere a domo mea?  
 'Do you want to come to my house?'  
 b A ti lavo cussos prattos?  
 'Should I wash those plates for you?'

We postulate that interrogative *a* is a complementiser, in the sense that it occurs under the COMP node in (3) above, though it can only introduce main clauses. An important restriction on constructions with this particle is that the preverbal subject position must be empty; i.e. if the subject is overtly specified, it must be postposed as in (39b) above:

- (41) \*A Juanne bi venit?  
 [a John there comes] cf. (39b)

Also, when *a* is present, no item may be fronted:<sup>5</sup>

- (42) \*A telefonatu at Juanne cf. (38c)

Moreover, interrogative *a* cannot co-occur with negation:

- (43) \*A no'est arrivatu Juanne?  
 [a NEG is arrived John]  
 'Has John not arrived?'

Questions which request a specific piece of information are normally introduced by the appropriate interrogative adverb or pronoun (e.g. one of the items in (44)) or a phrase containing such an item:

- (44) *cale* 'which', *cando* 'when', *cantu* 'how much, how many',  
*comente* 'how', *itte* 'what', *kie* 'who', *proitte* 'why', *ube*  
 'where'.
- (45) a Cando sun arrivatos?  
 'When did they arrive?'  
 b Kin kie est issitu Juanne?  
 'With whom did John go out?'  
 c Itte as fattu?  
 'What did you do?'

We assume that in underlying structure the interrogative expression occupies the position which is relevant to its semantic role within the sentence (i.e. the position occupied by the phrase which supplies the requested information in an appropriate reply) and is moved to

the COMP position, as indicated in the derivation of (45c) given in (46):

- (46) [s' [COMP ] [s  $\emptyset$  as fattu itte ]]
- 

Interrogative expressions may remain in their underlying position, as in (47), but such sentences can only be interpreted as ‘echo questions’ or expressions of surprise, as in English:

- (47) a Sun arrivatos cando?  
 ‘They arrived when?’  
 b Juanne est issitu kin kie?  
 ‘John went out with whom?’  
 c As fattu itte?  
 ‘You did what?’

Movement of the interrogative expression to the COMP position, like fronting of a non-interrogative item (see example (17a) and the use of interrogative *a* (see example (41) above), precludes the presence of an overt preverbal subject – compare the following example with (45b) and (47b): \**Kin kie Juanne est issitu*.

Also, the three phenomena just mentioned are mutually incompatible; in particular, movement of an interrogative expression precludes both fronting of another constituent and the use of *a*:

- (48) a \*Cando telefonatu at Juanne? cf. (38c)  
 [when telephoned has John]  
 b \*Proitte a bi venit Juanne? cf. (39b), (41)  
 [why *a* there comes John]

### 1.2.3 Imperatives and hortatives

Positive commands are expressed by means of the imperative verb forms, which, in regular cases, are identical to the second person forms of the present indicative except that the final *-s* is omitted;<sup>6</sup> e.g. *Mandica!* (sg.), *Mandicate!* (pl.) ‘Eat!’, vs. *Mandicas* (sg.), *Mandicates* (pl.) ‘You eat’; for detailed discussion of verb inflection, see 3.1.1:

- (49) a Veni a inoke!  
 ‘Come here!’ (singular)  
 b Ascurtate su ki so nande!  
 ‘Listen to what I am saying!’ (plural)

The third person singular of the present subjunctive may be used as a