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## **VS SYNTACTIC CONFIGURATIONS IN ROMANCE ADVERBIAL CLAUSES**

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### **Abstract**

*Based on an original corpus, and also on the important contributions of Haegeman 2012, Pană Dindelegan & Maiden 2013, and Lahousse 2010, I intend to demonstrate in this article that there are specific factors that influence the VS syntactic configurations of Romance languages (Romanian, Italian, and French), and these factors are directly connected to the internal information structure. From a methodological point of view, this is an empirical study, combining comparative and corpus analyses, qualitative and quantitative observations, and using the instruments of Morphosyntax and Pragmatics. In the end, the results of the analysis highlight the idea that both information structure and the “pro-drop” feature have a big impact on the word order of the constituents, generating a significant discrepancy between Romanian and Italian, on the one hand, and French, on the other hand.*

### **Keywords**

Adverbial Clauses, VS Configuration, Word Order, Romance Languages

## **1. Introduction**

Although there are many studies on the topic of adverbial clauses (see Geis 1970, Kortmann 1997, Cinque 1999, Ernst 2002, Lang, Maienborn & Fabricius-Hansen 2003, Diessel 2004, Kiss 2009, Hasselgård 2010, Haegeman 2010, 2012, among others) the research of these syntactic structures is still an endless source of knowledge and an intriguing task. Every syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic aspect reveals new and interesting phenomena that encourage authors to develop various theories or to ask more and more questions about the complexity of language.

### **1.1. Object of Study – Research Questions**

The object of the study is represented by complex sentences (henceforth, CSs) with adverbial clauses as they appear in the journalists' articles from present-day Romanian, Italian, and French. More precisely, the research is focused on the temporal and causal adjuncts that usually have a Subject Verb Object (SVO) nucleus, but display other configurations as well, to illustrate the relationship between Syntax and Pragmatics, between word order and information structure. Although over the last decades, significant work has been done on this topic (Bech 2001, Faarlund 2004, van Kemenade & Los 2006, Eide 2006, Petrova & Solf 2008, Hinterhölzl & Petrova 2009), it is still a relatively new topic, especially in comparative or diachronic studies.

The following research questions are in focus:

- What is the effect of information structure on word order in Romanian, Italian, and French adjuncts?
- How do these three languages differ from each other?
- What are the factors that determine the VS word order?
- What influences language-internal variation or cross-linguistic variation inside the Romance family of languages?

### **1.2. Objectives of the paper**

This paper aims to provide a descriptive account of a certain type of scrambling, i.e., the VS configuration, as it appears in the present-day adverbial clauses. Therefore, I will concentrate on the factors that trigger VS inversion in three genetically related Romance languages: Romanian, Italian, and French. My first goal is to quantify the degree of productivity of VS configurations in these three languages through a corpus-based analysis. The second goal is to determine the factors or other formal mechanisms that languages resort to fulfill the discourse roles typically associated

with this ‘stylistic inversion’ (Haegeman 2012). So, based on the important contributions of Haegeman 2012, Pană Dindelegan 2013, and Lahousse 2010, I intend to demonstrate here that there are specific factors that influence the VS syntactic configuration of an adjunct clause, and these factors are directly connected to the internal information structure. I also highlight the idea that the „pro-drop” feature has a big impact on the word order of the constituents, generating a significant discrepancy between Romanian and Italian, on the one hand, and French, on the other hand.

### **1.3. Corpus and Methodology**

From a methodological point of view, this is an empirical study, combining comparative and corpus analyses, qualitative and quantitative observations, and using the instruments of Morphosyntax and Pragmatics. From a descriptive perspective, I intend to delineate the extension of the VS configuration analyzed based on a Contemporary Romance corpus (ROAMED corpus, comprising around 530.000 words). Based on their sentence connectors, I extracted from ROAMED corpus 464 CSs with Romanian temporal adjuncts, 329 CSs with Italian temporal adjuncts, and 305 CSs with French temporal adjuncts. For the causal adjuncts, the situation is the following: 207 CSs in Romanian, 244 CSs in Italian, and 148 CSs in French. Altogether, 1697 CSs were selected, but larger contexts of these sentences were also available for the investigation, to prevent the analysis from being misleading or biased. For a proper organization of the investigation, only two types of adjuncts were selected (causal and temporal adjuncts), but further investigation will prove if all types of adjuncts follow the same restrictions.

## **2. Canonical and Non-Canonical Word Order – Literature Review**

It is a well-known fact that the three investigated languages have a canonical SVO (Subject – S, Verb – V, Direct Object – O) word order, being *configurational languages* (Pană Dindelegan & Maiden 2013: 494, Ledgeway 2011: 408). The syntactic configuration of these Romance languages, as well as their relative freedom of the constituents, were inherited from Latin (Klein 2012: 99), although not all of them display the same flexibility. This idea is very well illustrated by the research of Lahousse & Lamiroy (2012) (see Table 1) who consider that the “different word order patterns can be accounted for in terms of grammaticalization” (2012: 387).

**Table 1: Word-order in Latin and Romance**

	Latin	Old French	Spanish	Italian	French
SVO	+	+	+	+	+
VOS	+	+	+	+	+
OSV	+	+	+	+	+
SOV	+	+	+	+	-
OVS	+	+	+	+/-	-
VSO	+	+	+	-	-

(Source: Lahousse & Lamiroy 2012: 396)

Compared to these varieties, Romanian allows all the possible combinations, under the right circumstances:

- (1) A. Băieții Citesc Romane (Svo)  
Boys-NOM Read-3 PL: PRES Novels-ACC  
'The Boys Read Novels'
- B. Citesc Romane Băieții. (Vos)
- C. Romane Băieții Citesc. (OSV)
- D. Băieții Romane Citesc. (Sov)
- E. Romane Citesc Băieții. (Ovs)
- F. Citesc Băieții Romane. (Vso)

As result of the examples above, the dominant unmarked word order of a declarative main clause is SVO (8a) (Dryer 2005: 332; Pană Dindelegan & Maiden 2013: 494), with the grammatical subject corresponding to the Topic, while the other non-canonical configurations are motivated by discursive or pragmatic factors. Many factors affect the prototypical order of the constituents, and this results in discourse-oriented flexibility of surface configurations. From this point of view, Romanian is very similar to Old French and Spanish, close to Italian, but quite different from present-day French, which is the most restrictive (see Table 1). French restrictions can be explained by the loss of the *null subject* or *pro-drop* feature (in the 14<sup>th</sup> century), which resulted in the fixation of the subject in preverbal position (SVO word order). This is, undoubtedly, a very relevant observation for the present analysis, but I still need to find good motivations for those French contexts that contradict Lahousse & Lamiroy's results and display a VS word order.

As far as Romanian is concerned, the general opinion of the Romanists is that it should be included in the *SVO structural type* of languages (along with Italian, French, etc.), but there were some generative and non-generative studies (Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, Renzi 1991[1989]) in which arguments were brought in favor of a *VS structural type* of language (setting it apart from other Romance languages). More exactly, “inside the **V-O** Romance type, Renzi (1991 [1989]) distinguishes two subtypes: the **VSO** type, to which Romanian and (archaic) Sardinian belong, and the **SVO** type, to which French, Italian, etc. belong” (Pană Dindelegan & Maiden 2013: 120).

### **3. Scrambling**

In this paper, I use the term *scrambling* with an extended meaning to refer to all the syntactic configurations in which a free word order permutation occurs. This is a rather simple interpretation, but let’s take a closer look at the VS configuration, as it raises a series of questions:

- How Does This Surface Configuration Appear in A Sentence?
- What Are the Constraints on The Adverbial Clauses That Allow This Special Arrangement?
- How Can It Be Accounted for Syntactically?
- Is It A ‘Free’ Inversion, A Stylistic Inversion, Or A Syntactic Movement?

All these questions were addressed in the Romance literature on word order, and it is worth bringing some of the studies into the discussion here. Referring to the example under (2), Rizzi (1982), Burzio (1986), among others, talk about the phenomenon of ‘free’ inversion, which occurs in Spanish (2a) and Italian (2b), but it is absent from French (2c).

- (2) a. *Llega el tren.*  
b. *Arriva il treno.*  
c. \**Arrive le train.*  
Arrive-3SG : PRES the train  
‘The train arrives’

This phenomenon has often been linked to the *pro-drop* feature that characterizes Spanish and Italian but differentiates them from French. Although we all accept this as a fact, I will follow Lahousse & Lamiroy (2012) in arguing that “the radical opposition between Spanish and Italian on the one hand, and French on the other, does not (*always*) hold, or should at least be fine-tuned” (2012: 388).

Another important contribution comes from Haegeman (2012) who uses the phrase ‘stylistic inversion’ (SI) for this type of construction in which the subject is postposed, and this is especially relevant for my research, as the author considers it to be an “additional evidence that temporal adverbial clauses have a left periphery” (Haegeman 2012: 158). In a previous article, Bailyn (2003) gives reasons for the interpretation of scrambling as a stylistically-driven process used by the speakers to derive alternative orders (2003: 157). In addition, Bailyn argues against optional scrambling in Russian and divides this operation into two syntactic processes: “*Generalized Inversion*, revealing properties of A-scrambling, and *Dislocation*, triggered by Information Focus, representing properties of A'-scrambling” (Karimi 2003: xviii).

All these theories and views are interesting and provoking, but their veracity is beyond the scope of this article. A more sophisticated methodology is needed for the understanding of each theory, and this is impossible to get for the present article due to space and time limitations. For the time being, the focus will be on describing the data as it results from the corpus investigation, and also on finding some plausible explanations for these linguistic facts.

#### 4. Corpus Analysis - Quantitative Results

The first step of the analysis was to identify all the CSS with temporal and causal adjuncts that display VS configurations and then to compare the frequency of canonical and non-canonical word order patterns. The results of the quantitative analysis are summarized in the next two Figures that illustrate a very interesting, yet intuitive distribution of the SV(O) and VS configurations in the Romance temporal and causal adjuncts.

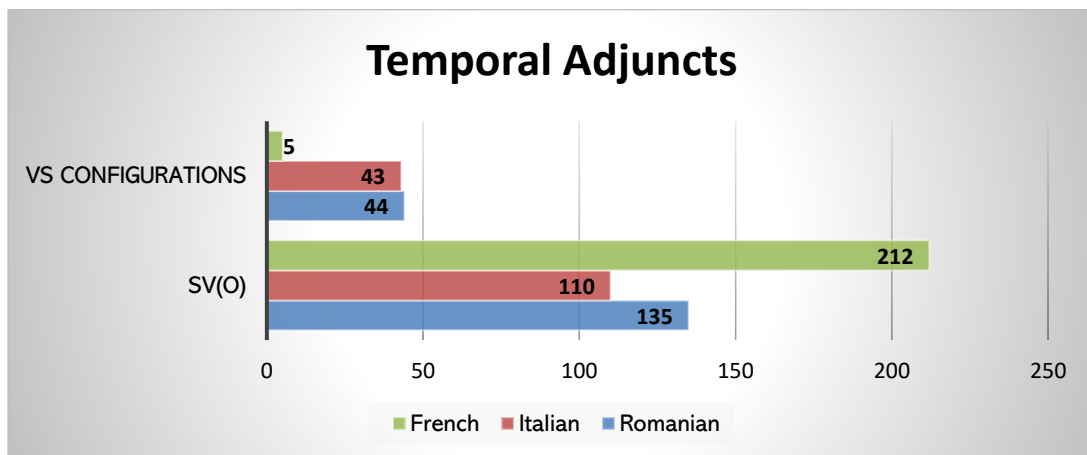
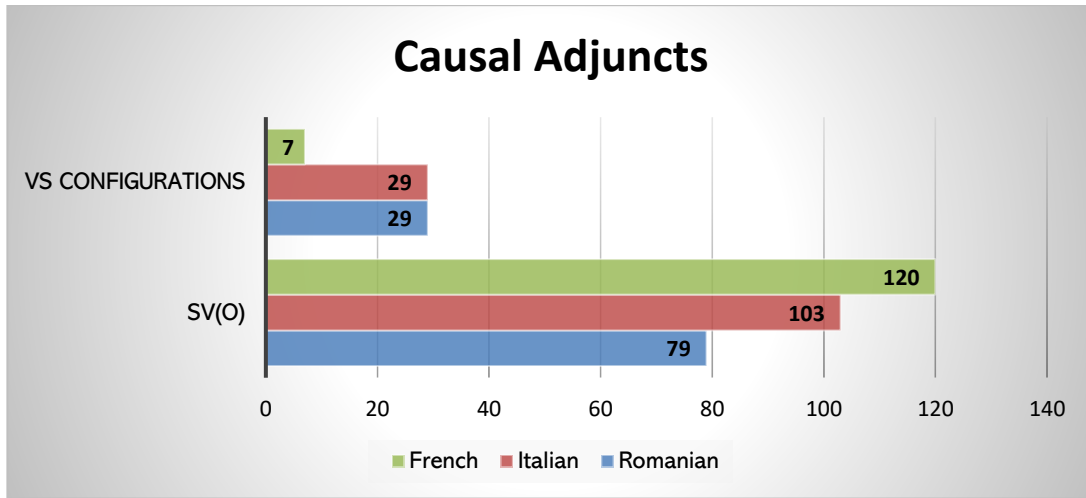


Figure 1: Distribution of the SV(O) and VS configurations in the ROAMED corpus

(Source: Self)



**Figure 2:** Distribution of the SV(O) and VS configurations in the ROAMED corpus

(Source: Self)

For the canonical patterns, I took into consideration only those sentences in which the subject was lexicalized, excluding the contexts in which the connector is followed by an infinitive and the adjuncts with the non-realized or absent subject. These excluded situations are very frequent in Romanian, and Italian, as they are ‘pro-drop languages’, and can have a ‘null pronominal subject’. Being a ‘non-pro-drop language’, French does not belong to the same group as Romanian, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, and it accepts a generic pronoun *on* in subject position (Pană Dindelegan & Maiden 2013: 108), or an expletive clitic *il* (Renzi & Andreose 2003: 217; Reinheimer & Tasmowski 2005: 105-106; Metzeltin 2011: 84). This explains the highest number of SVO patterns in French, both for temporal (212 CSs) and causal (120 CSs) adjuncts, and the most reduced number of VS configurations (5 in temporal adjuncts, and 7 in causal adjuncts). Still, Figures 1 and 2 indicate that, although the SV(O) configuration is used in most of the subordinate clauses, becoming the prototypical word order of a sentence, there are many cases in which it is replaced by the VS configuration, and this is happening not only in Romanian and Italian (as ‘pro-drop’ languages) but also in French.

## 5. “Specific Licensing Factors” Of the Romance VS Configuration

Besides the VS configuration investigated here, ROAMED corpus revealed many contexts in which the canonical SVO word order is influenced by scrambling, resulting in (O)VS (3), or SOV (4) patterns that demonstrate the morphosyntactic flexibility of Romance languages.

(3) (O)VS

a. *Nu trebuie să te sperii de fiecare dată când ți se pare că ai un simptom al cancerului ovarian.* (E, 2016)

‘You don't have to be scared every time you think you have a symptom of ovarian cancer’

b. *I perché sono molti.* (IG, 2019)

‘And because there are many’

(4) SOV

*Non è finita fino a quando M.L. lo indossa.* (E, 2017)

‘It's not over until M.L. wears it’

There were found 166 temporal and causal clauses that display the VS configuration, and most of them are licensed by specific factors, i.e., they are not just simple inversions, but the result of syntax-information structure interface. Analyzing the internal IS of French adverbial clauses, Lahousse (2010) identifies two licensing factors for the verb-subject word order that she considers to be a “clearly IS-driven syntactic configuration” (2010: 300).

In what follows, I will present Lahousse’s factors, then I will verify their influence on the CSs extracted from ROAMED corpus, and check their validity in Romanian, and Italian adverbial adjuncts. After that, I will extend the analysis, and try to find other factors that favor the VS configuration across languages.

a) The first factor that Lahousse (2010) discusses for French is the “**presence of a Spatio-temporal topic in a sentence-initial position**”, and her analysis is based on “the extensive literature on ‘locative inversion’ (Bresnan 1994, Hoekstra & Mulder 1990, Gournay 2006, Borillo 2006, among others)” (2010: 304). The example that she gives for French is resumed under (5):

(5) *Un nom prédestiné, parce que là renaîtrait le phénix.*

a name fated because there would-be-reborn the phoenix.

‘A name that was fated, because there would the phoenix be reborn.’

(*apud* Lahousse 2010: 303).

Many similar contexts were identified in ROAMED corpus, and the topicalized adjunct can be a spatial (6) or temporal (7) adverb, but also a Prepositional Phrase (8) functioning as a Spatio-temporal adjunct:



- (6) *Ma “per studiare i media bisogna usare sia il cinismo sia la tenerezza”. Perché qui comincia la parte più profonda del suo viaggio.* (IF, 2019)  
‘But “to study the media one must use both cynicism and tenderness”. Because here begins the deepest part of his journey
- (7) *Le doux sillage qui flotte dans les airs se pare de nostalgie, car déjà vient le temps du bilan.* (E, 2019)  
‘The gentle wake that floats in the air is adorned with nostalgia because the time for appraisal has already come’
- (8) *Perioada 1928-1929 este una importantă pentru că în timpul cercetării arheologice prindea contur și Hobbitul.* (A, 2015)  
‘The period 1928-1929 is an important one because during the archeological research the Hobbit also took shape’

These examples illustrate structures in which a situative adjunct (*ci* ‘there’, *qui* ‘here’, *déjà* ‘already’, *acum* ‘now’) is positioned in the left periphery of the clause, i.e., it is topicalized, and this topicalization determines the postverbal placing of the subject (in the right periphery) that functions as a Focus. Many researchers analyzed these adjuncts as left-dislocated constituents as it is well-known that adverbials are usually placed after the verb. This was a strong argument for the hypothesis that subordinate clauses allow left dislocation (Hirschbühler 1997, Shaer 2009, van Putten 2014: 71) both in English, and Romance languages. A very important contribution to the Romance languages comes from Haegeman (2012) who investigates the adverbial clauses with ‘stylistic inversion’ (SI), and she notices that fronting of an adjunct “is an additional licensing factor” that appears only in the peripheral adverbial clauses, while in central adverbial clauses, “no such licensing factors are mandatory” (2012: 162).

Interestingly, there are contexts in which the adjunct is placed even before the sentence connector, and the effect is similar (the subject moves after the verb). In these cases, the fronted constituents are frequently highlighted by a fall-rise intonation and might get a contrastive reading:

- (9) *În octombrie-noiembrie, când se împlinesc patru ani de la Colectiv, „manifestul generației Y” va merge prin țară.* (A, 2019)  
‘In October-November, when it is four years since the Collective, the “Generation Y Manifesto” will go through the country’

- (10) *Et en même temps, dès qu'apparaît une nouvelle technologie, il s'en empare.* (LF, 2019)

And at the same time, as soon as a new technology appears, it grabs it'

b) The second factor identified by Lahousse (2010) is “**the presence of one or more explicit indications of the focal interpretation of the subject**” (2010: 6), such as the fronting of negation:

- (11) *...ar fi bine să încerci să-ți ajustezi un pic meniul. Iar asta, nu pentru că-i la modă să mănânci pește, ci pentru că acest aliment e cu adevărat sănătos.* (F, 2015)

‘you should try to adjust your menu a bit. And that's not because it's fashionable to eat fish, but because this food is healthy’

To a certain extent, this factor is similar to the previous one, as it implies the fronting of a constituent, too. This time, there isn't a dislocation phenomenon, the negation is not moved or ‘detached’ from the verbal core of the sentence, but it is placed before or immediately after the sentence connector, and this forces the subject to appear postverbally, taking a rhematic value, i.e., the Focus of the sentence. Sometimes, the two factors ‘work’ together within the same clause, and the effect is that of a contrastive reading. For example, in (12), the negation *nu* ‘not’ followed by the PrepP *în aste* ‘in these’ implies the idea that the novelty of the book is different than the ‘shocking revelations’.

- (12) *Poate că unii cititori, care se așteptau să găsească în carte dezvăluiri șocante, vor fi dezamăgiți, fîndcă nu în aste constă ineditul ei.* (C, 2015)

‘Perhaps some readers, who expected to find shocking revelations in the book, will be disappointed because this is not its novelty’

Besides the two factors analyzed by Lahousse (2010) and identified in my corpus as well, I suggest that there are more syntactic and/or pragmatic processes/factors that influence this specific VS word order.

c) The third factor that I analyze in this article, and the first that I add to Lahousse’s presentation for French is a very interesting one and implies an ‘**existential structure**’. The subject of an existential structure/verb “is frequently postverbal when it is a rhematic element” (Pană Dindelegan & Maiden 2013: 494), i.e., it is the subject of an existential verb or that of the verb ‘to be taking an existential (semantic) value.

- (13) *Aportul de acizi grași esențiali din peștele gras nu este de neglijat, întrucât există studii care demonstrează că aceste grăsimi bune protejează.* (F, 2018)

‘The intake of essential fatty acids in fatty fish should not be neglected, as there are studies that show that these good fats protect us’

- (14) *În final, pentru că e o mare diferență între a ști și a înțelege.* (EZ, 2016)

‘In the end, because there is a big difference between knowing and understanding’

In French, these structures are called *il y a...* or *c’est...* constructions, in Italian, there is a *c’è...* construction, and all these correspond to the so-called ‘*they’re/it insertion* construction in English:

- (15) *«Parce qu’il y a une liberté là-dedans», répond FL.* (L, 2018)

“‘Because there is freedom in that’ answers FL’

- (16) *Quando c’è un morto, quando c’è un ammalato, quando ci sono bambini che presentano malattie con eccessi statistici, è un segnale fortissimo per la politica.* (IFQ, 2019)

‘When there is a dead person when there is a sick person when there are children who have diseases with statistical excesses, it is a very strong signal for politics’

Unlike Romanian, which lacks expletives, French and Italian have an expletive *il/c’* that is inserted into the sentence-initial position and enforces an inversion of the subject. The inversion “brings about focus on the subject” placed at the right periphery while “a similar information structural effect cannot be achieved by unmarked SVO word order” (Winkler 2012: 87).

d) Another factor that favors the VS configuration is the syntactic process of **passivization** or that **personalization**. In Romanian, the passive construction uses the auxiliary verb *a fi* ‘to be’ or the reflexive clitic ‘se’. Although less used in present-day Romanian, “these-*passive* is specialized for the configurations with the postverbal subject” (Pană Dindelegan 2003: 136). In the selected corpus, I found many contexts in which the VS word order appears in a passive or an impersonal construction, regardless of the language or the type of adjunct.

- (17) *Ministrii de Sănătate nu au stat mult. De ce ? Pentru că au fost puși oameni care nu se pricep.* (A, 2016)

‘The Ministers of Health did not stay long. Why? Because they put people who don't know-how

- (18) *Un souffle salin et libertaire glisse sur Marseille alors que s'ouvre le festival littéraire.* (LF, 2018)

‘A salty and libertarian breath glides over Marseille as the literary festival opens’

- (19) *Non mi permetto, tuttavia, di giudicare gli altri, ha raccontato a Repubblica, rimandando alla questione sollevata nelle scorse settimane sul presidente della Regione Michele Emiliano, in aspettativa da quando è stato eletto prima sindaco di Bari.* (IFQ, 2017)

‘I do not allow myself, however, to judge others, he told Repubblica, referring to the question raised in recent weeks on the president of the Region Michele Emiliano, on leave since he was first elected mayor of Bari’

A very interesting type of construction is the Italian *si/so* – an impersonal structure that allows even the combination with the verb ‘have’, a linguistic phenomenon that is absent from Romanian or French (see Cinque 1988: 522):

- (20) *Eppure abbiamo l'abitudine di buttarle appena si presentano quelle macchie nere.* (E, 2016)

‘Yet we have the habit of throwing them away as soon as those black spots appear’

- (21) *Non abusare dell'acqua micellare quando si ha la pelle matura.* (UD, 2018)

‘Do not abuse micellar water when you have mature skin’

e) The next factor that I consider to be responsible for the VS configuration of an adjunct clause is **the insertion of a modal adverbial** or that of a “speaker-oriented modal expression” (Hageman 2012: 149). Placed before or after the sentence connector, elements such as the Italian *Anche* ‘also’, *probabilmente* ‘probably’, *specie* ‘especially’, or the Romanian *mai* ‘also’, *mai ales* ‘especially’ function as focalizes or as “focus sensitive particles (fso)” and assign Focus on the postverbal subject (Winkler 2012: 73):

- (22) *Un'artista italiano che usi lo stesso materiale lo fa probabilmente perché gli piace il colore della ruggine.* (IF, 2019)

‘An Italian artist who uses the same material probably does it because he likes the color of rust’

- (23) *Puține lucruri reușesc să placă majorității oamenilor, mai ales când e vorba despre mâncăruri sau băuturi.* (F, 2015)

‘Few things most people like, especially when it comes to food or drink’

According to Haegeman (2012: 253) “speaker-oriented modal expressions do not license SI in French” and this explains why I did not find any example in my corpus either:

- (24) \**Probablement arriveront les enfants.*  
probably arrive-FUT-3PL the children

(*apud* Haegeman 2012: 253, example (144))

f) The last factor that I am going to analyze here is **the presence of a heavy subject**. This heavy subject is either a full embedded clause, a long (25), or a coordinated (26) subject, and it is placed after the verb due to certain processing reasons.

- (25) *La crise humanitaire touche plus de 7 millions de personnes et les risques de famine ne sont pas écartés, alors que commence la période d'attente de la nouvelle récolte.* (LM, 2019)

‘The humanitarian crisis affects more than 7 million people and the risks of famine have not been ruled out as the waiting period for the new harvest begins’

- (26) *Înțelegeam dacă protestele se opreau după ce au demisionat Piedone și Ponta.* (A, 2015)

‘I would have understood if the nonsense stopped after Piedone and Ponta resigned’

The embedded subject clause is imposed by an impersonal verb construction, such as *none Vero* ‘it is not true, or by an impersonal verb, such as *trebuie/faut* ‘must’.

- (27) *Facce dello stesso mondo spesso condiviso dalle stesse protagoniste. **Perché non è vero che le donne non sono capaci di creare connessioni con le altre donne!*** (E, 2016)

‘Faces of the same world are often shared by the same protagonists. Because it is not true that women are unable to make connections with other women’

- (28) *Așa cum păsările simt când trebuie să migreze.* (JN, 2019)

‘As birds feel when they have to migrate’

Besides all the contexts in which the VS configuration is the result of a certain syntactic rearrangement, or is influenced by another factor, there are also many CSs with clausal adjuncts in which no factor is involved. See, for instance, the following contexts, extracted from all three languages:

- (29) ***Când apar probleme, pune-le la treabă!*** (F, 2017)

‘When problems arise, put them to work!’

(30) *Et en même temps, dès qu'apparaît une nouvelle technologie, il s'en empare.* (LF, 2019)

‘And at the same time, as soon as a new technology appears, it grabs it’

(31) *Anniversario tragedia Marcinelle ci ricorda **quando imigranti eravamo noi*** (IG, 2017)

‘Anniversary of the Marcinelle tragedy reminds us of when we were immigrants’

Even though these contexts do not seem to have a specific factor to license the VS word order, some explanations can be alleged, and further investigation is required:

- the subject is realized as an indefinite Noun Phrase
- the subject is assigned a different role than that of the Agent (non-agentive subject)
- the subject depends on a verb that takes only one argument (a monovalent verb, as opposed to divalent or trivalent verbs), usually, a non-agentive subject (Suzuki 2010: 40).

Although I cannot turn these observations into rules, I must admit that they influence the word order of the sentences. These “**word order preferences** depend on the nature of the prediction, the number of arguments, the personal vs. non-personal character of the subject, determination vs. non-determination, and the rhematic nature of the subject” (Pană Dindelegan & Maiden 2013: 118). According to Manoliu (2011) “these preferences also occur in other Romance languages except for French, which has a fixed word order” (2011: 505-7), but I also found French examples, such as the one under (30), that prove the existence of some ‘preferences’ in French. Of course, “there are numerous counterexamples for any of these preferences”, i.e., the subject can be preverbal in any type of structure, depending on any type of verb (Pană Dindelegan & Maiden 2013: 119).

## **6. Concluding Remarks**

In this article, I brought evidence for the fact that VS configurations from Romanian and Italian adverbial clauses are, in general, licensed by specific factors, such as the topicalization of a spatial or temporal adverb, the insertion of negation in sentence-initial position, the presence of a heavy subject, the syntactic reorganization processes (passive constructions and impersonal constructions), etc. Many of these factors could not be identified in French, as it is usually considered more restrictive, due to its preverbal subject fixation (SVO word order, and the loss of pro-drop feature). Still, from this point of view, I consider that the three kindred languages display

certain similar flexibility of syntactic constituents, even though I do not deny French restrictions. It should also be mentioned that the identified factors influence the syntactic configuration of the adjunct clause, but they are not mandatory.

All in all, I consider that the results of the analysis reveal a certain ‘flexibility’ of the subject in the present-day Romance languages as concerns its position before or after the verb. If the SV(O) order is treated as canonical/prototypical, the VS configuration is motivated by different factors that illustrate the syntax-information structure interface. Furthermore, these results represent a relevant contribution to the literature on adverbial clauses in general, and also to the comparative field of Romance languages research.

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### **(ROAMED) CORPUS**

#### **Italian**

➤ **newspapers:**

1. Il Fato Quotidiano (IFQ 2015-2019) - <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/>
2. Il Giornale (IG 2015-2019) - <https://www.ilgiornale.it/>
3. Il Foglio (IF 2015-2019) - <https://www.ilfoglio.it/>

➤ **magazines:**

1. Elle (E 2015-2019) - <https://www.elle.com/it/>
2. Una Donna (UD 2015-2019) - <https://www.unadonna.it/>

#### **French**

➤ **newspapers:**

1. Le Monde (LM 2015-2019) - <https://www.lemonde.fr/>
2. Le Figaro (LF 2015-2019) - <https://www.lefigaro.fr/>
3. Liberation (L 2015-2019) - <https://www.liberation.fr/>

➤ **magazines:**

1. Elle (E 2015-2019) - <https://www.elle.fr/>
2. Femme Actuelle (FA 2015-2019) - <https://www.femmeactuelle.fr/>

#### **Romanian**

➤ **newspapers:**

1. Adevărul (A 2015-2019) - <https://adevarul.ro/>
2. Evenimentul Zilei (EZ 2015-2019) - <https://evz.ro/>
3. Jurnalul Național (JN 2015-2019) - <https://jurnalul.ro/>

➤ **magazines:**

1. Elle (E 2015-2019) - <https://www.elle.ro/>
2. Femeia (F 2015-2019) - <https://www.femeia.ro/>

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