Rethinking Romance Microvariation through SI

Sam Wolfe, University of Oxford

- General acknowledgement that contemporary Romance varieties show extensive morphosyntactic microvariation (Kayne 2000, 2005; Poletto 2000, 2002; Manzini & Savoia 2005; D'Alessandro, Ledgeway & Roberts 2010; Benincà & Munaro 2010; Dindelegan 2013; Ledgeway 2015; Jiménez-Fernández 2015; Schifano 2018)

- Much of this variation can be attributed to variation within the left periphery of standard and non-standard Romance varieties (cf. Manzini & Savoia 2003, 2010; Damonte 2005; Ledgeway 2010; Benincà & Munaro 2010; Haegeman 2012; Cruschina 2012; Corr 2016; Cruschina & Ledgeway 2016;§31.3).

General Romance Background

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How does this synchronic claim relate to both historical and diachronic studies of Romance morphosyntax? There are broadly three schools of thought at present.

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(Semi)-Homogenous V2 Accounts

Emphasis on homogeneity of the early textual records which are characterised by a V2 syntax (cf. Salvi 2000, 2004, 2011, 2012; Benincà 2004, 2006, 2013; Benincà & Poletto 2004).

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The microvariation found in the medieval period may correlate with a purported **North/South split** (Zamboni 1998, 2000) in Romance syntactic typology (Ledgeway 2012:312-319; Wolfe 2018, in press)

Microvariation and Sᴜ
Continuity and Microvariation
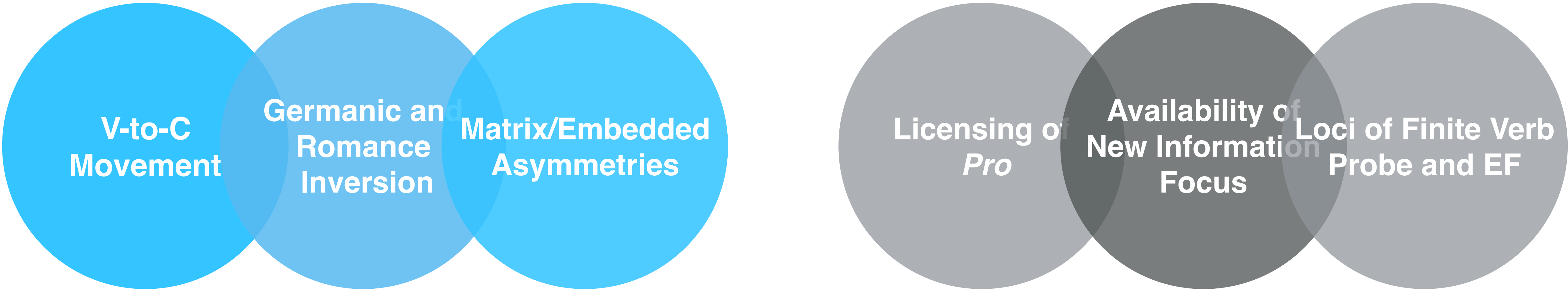
Continuity and Microvariation

Continuity and Microvariation

V-to-C Movement

Germanic and Romance Inversion

Matrix/Embedded Asymmetries

Increasing consensus that this is a pan-Medieval Romance phenomenon (Benincà 2013; Ledgeway 2012; Poletto 2014; Wolfe 2018)

Continuity and Microvariation

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Matrix/Embedded Asymmetries

Both reported for French and Italian (Adams 1987b:4; Roberts 1993:§2.2; Vance 1997:78-79; Salvesen & Bech 2014:223; Poletto 2014) **but found across Medieval Sicilian, Sardinian, Occitan, Spanish and Piedmontese** (Wolfe 2016, 2018)

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Matrix/Embedded Asymmetries

G-Inversion consistently correlates with discourse-linking and OLD information subjects, whereas R-inversion typically occurs with quantified, heavy and NEW information subject expressions (Wolfe 2018:Ch 3-7)

et   en faciendo   estos seguramientos, ha   <u>él</u> ya   pensado
and in make.PROG these assurances   have.3SG he already think.ptcp

'And in making these assurances, he has already thought . . . '(OSp.,*Lucanor*)

VS.

e   ancora eranu   vivi <u>alcuni pirsuni</u>
and still   be.3PL.PST alive some   people

'And some people were still alive . . . '(OSic., *Gregoriu*)

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Continuity and Microvariation

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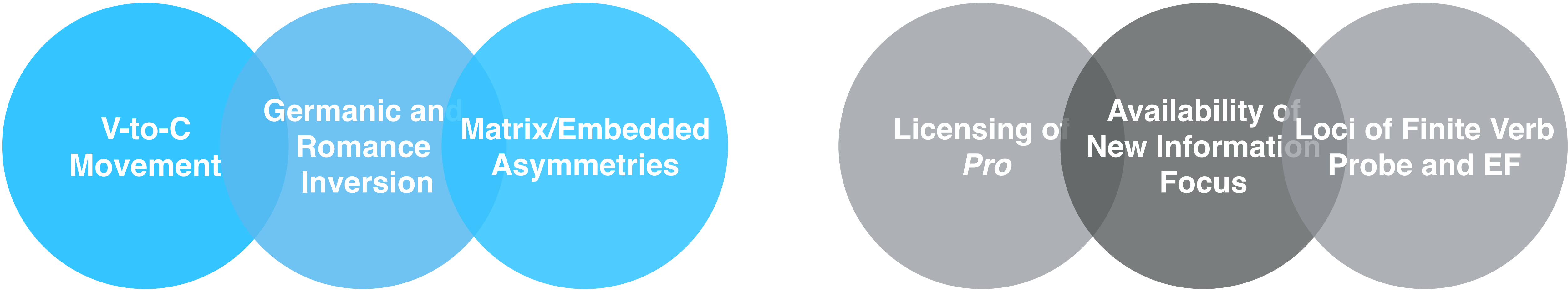
Germanic and Romance Inversion

Matrix/Embedded Asymmetries

Licensing of *Pro*

Availability of New Information Focus

Loci of Finite Verb Probe and EF

Continuity and Microvariation

Licensing of
Pro

Availability of New Information Focus

Loci of Finite Verb Probe and EF

V1 clauses heavily restricted in French after 1200 and certain later Old Spanish varieties, but widespread in Occitan, SIDs and Early Old French

Continuity and Microvariation

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Loci of Finite Verb Probe and EF

New Information Focus licensed across the earliest texts but seemingly lost by the 13th century in most Northern Romance varieties
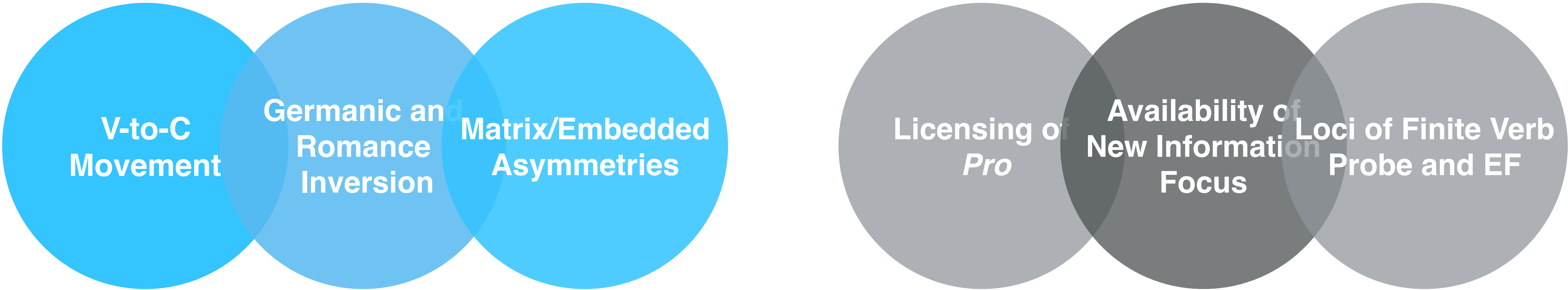
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**Availability of
New Information
Focus**

**Loci of Finite Verb
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Poletto (2002) and Wolfe (2015, 2016, 2018) - **The locus of V2 effects can vary within the left periphery. Minimally this concerns Fin or Force**

Continuity and Microvariation

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SI
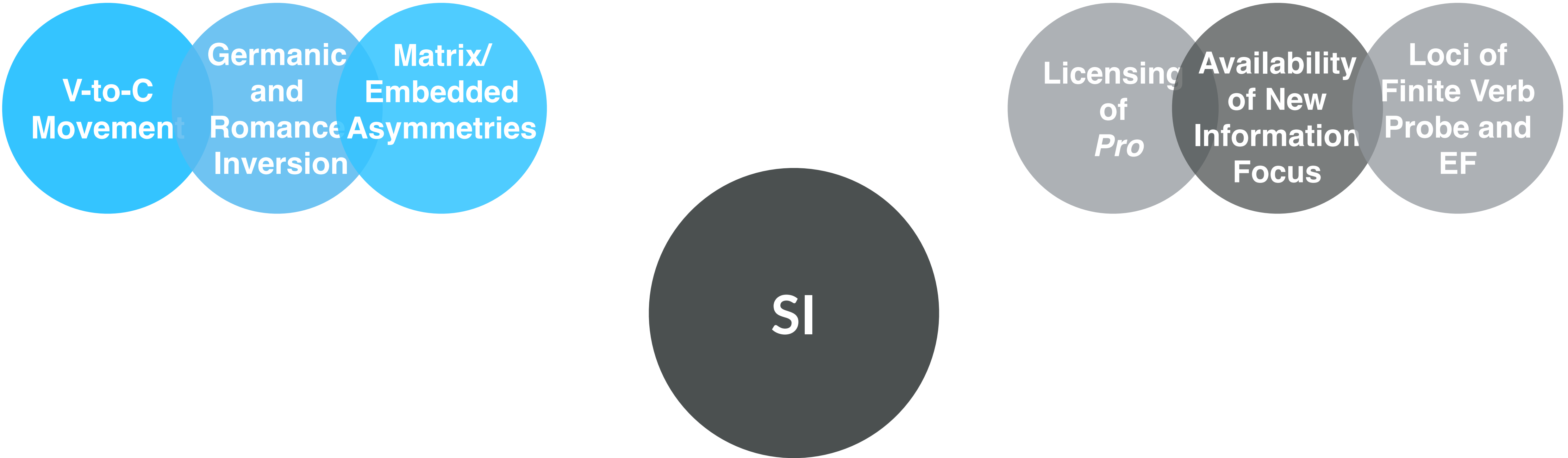
Adont s̲i̲ atirent   leurs messages
Then   SI take.3PL.PST their messages
'Then they take their messages' (Fleischman 1991:260)

Old French

Adont si atirent   leurs messages
Then   SI take.3PL.PST their messages
'Then they take their messages' (Fleischman 1991:260)   **Old French**

Spissi   cuolpi mortali sì le dava
frequent blows mortal SI CL gave
'He struck him with many deadly blows' (Ledgeway 2008:438)   **Old Neapolitan**

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Guillems de la Tor <u>si</u> fon   joglars
Guillem   de la Tor SI be.3SG.PST jongleur
'Guillem de la Tor was a jongleur' (Wolfe 2018:§2.2.4)   **Old Occitan**

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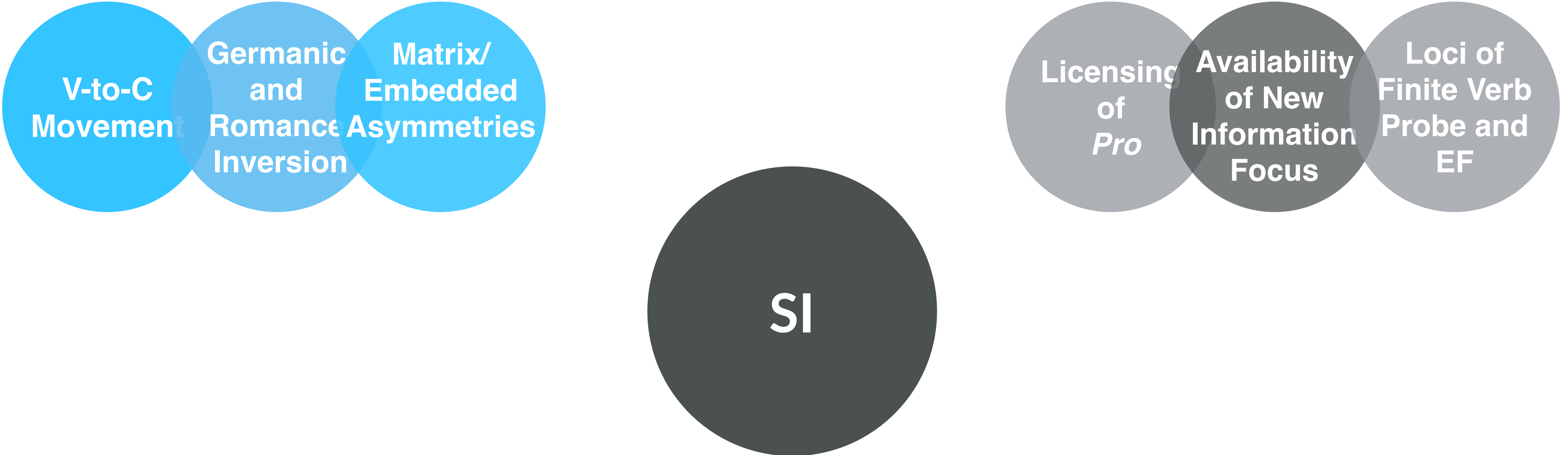'Guillem de la Tor was a jongleur' (Wolfe 2018:§2.2.4)   **Old Occitan**

Après   si li dist
After   SI CL say.3SG.PST
'Afterwards, he said to him' (*Sermoni Subalpini*, 1, 140, 36)   **Old Piedmontese**

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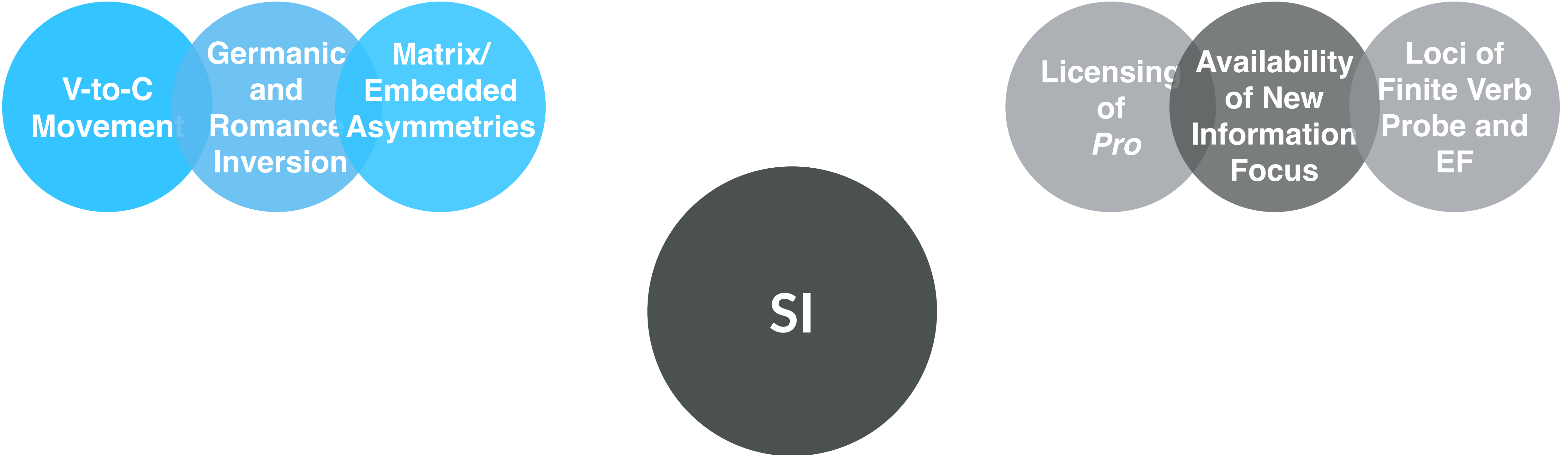
Continuity or microvariation?

Previous Research on SI

The literature on the particle SI across Medieval Romance is truly vast is full of claims which are often in direct conflict with one another.

Previous Research on Sɪ

The literature on the particle sɪ across Medieval Romance is truly vast is full of claims which are often in direct conflict with one another.

Points of Agreement:

Derived from a temporal deictic adverbial sɪc, itself < VP adverb 'like this' (Salvi 2004:15 n. 66; Rosén 2005:228-230; Pinsker 2006:65, 107-108; Ledgeway in press a)

Abundance across the textual record (Foulet 1928:300; Marchello-Nizia 1985:2; Benincà 1995:333; Salvi 2002)

Sɪ is located in the C-layer (Benincà 1995, 2004, 2006; Poletto 2006, 2013; Ledgeway 2008; Salvesen 2013)

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Different Analyses:

Sɪ is a marker of same-subject reference/topic continuity (Fleischman 1991, 1992; Van Reenen & Schøsler 1992, 1993, 2000; Benincà 1995:184; Vance 1995)

Sɪ is a Head which is an alternative (Ledgeway 2008:452-465) or complementary strategy (Ferraresi & Goldbach 2002:18-23) to V-to-C movement

Sɪ is a Fin (2013:143), Focus (Poletto 2005:218, Benincà 2006:64 or Force (Wolfe 2018) expletive

Previous Research on Sɪ

The Topic Continuity Account

Sɪ does not occur at the beginning of a portion of text in either French or Sicilian (in line with Marchello-Nizia 1985:25; Ménard 1988:328; Lemieux & Dupuis 1995:96; Vance 1997:54; Van Reenen & Schøsler 2000:86; Buridant 2000:508; Bonnard & Régnier 2008:209)

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Sɪ often occurs with pre- or post-verbal discourse ACTIVE subjects (Foulet 1928:301; Marchello-Nizia 1985:7; Fleischman 1991:265-266,271; Ferraresi & Goldbach 2002:12; Salvesen 2013:156; Buridant 2000:509)

ceste ville si est   mult riche
this   town SI be.3SG very rich
'and this town is very rich …'
(Old French, *Villehardouin1* 86, 4)

chisto monaco sì ricuntava   multe cose…
this   monk   si tell.3sg.pst many things
'this monk told him many things'
(Old Sicilian, *Gregoriu* 11, 18)

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If SI is indeed a marker of Topic continuity it is not clear why it should co-occur with readily accessible DPs

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Even more problematically Sɪ also occurs with brand NEW information subjects (This has generally gone undiscussed)

E   si i   furent   e   Gerin e   Gerers
 and SI LOC.CL=be.3PL.PST and Gerin and Gerers
'And Gerin and Gerer were there'
(Old French Roland 107)

in chilla vallij sì era   unu homu de am*ir*abilj   v*ir*tuti
in that valley si be.3SG.PST a   man   of admirable virtues
(Old Sicilian *Gregoru*, 34, 18)

The Head Account

Sɪ occurs with both G- and R-Inversion in Old French and R-Inversion in Old Sicilian. This is the exact effect fronted XPs have but unexpected if sɪ is a Head (pace Ledgeway 2008:444-445)

Quant eles furent   faites,   si fu   <u>la   chose</u> teüe   que …
when   they be.3PL.PST do.PTCP SI be.3SG.PST the thing   keep-quiet.PTCP that

'When they [the covenants] were completed, it was kept secret that we would go to Babylon' (Old French, Villehardouin1, 30, 3)

et   in là …   sì nchi fiche   <u>sanctu Benedictu</u> unu oratoriu
and in there   si CL   make.3SG.PST Saint   Benedict   an   oration

'And there (where the altar of Apollo was), Saint Benedict gave an oration (Old Sicilian, Gregoriu 51, 1)

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If Head Sɪ co-occurs with verb movement through Head adjunction the wrong order of V + sɪ is predicted (Ledgeway 2008:439, n.3)

We are also left with a conceptual problem of formulating a potentially ad-hoc account of why in a V2 language V-to-C movement obtains in *all* contexts except where sɪ is present

The Phrasal Expletive Account

Fits with the observation that SI is difficult to define in semantic terms. Foulet 1928:§300; Skårup 1975:238-239; Jensen 1990:472-473; Roberts 1993:330; Vance 1995:185; 1997:53; Benincà 2006; Poletto 2005)

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Parallel distribution to V2-satisfying XPs: Near-total absence in the embedded domain in asymmetric later Old French Lemieux & Dupuis 1995:96; Ferraresi & Goldbach 2002:11, 2003:113) and more frequent in more symmetrical Old Sicilian (Wolfe 2018:Ch3)

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But is there more we can say?

Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Sɪᴄɪʟɪᴀɴ

1

1

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1

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Chisto Pietro, vedendo sancto Gregorio afflicto,   sì llo ademandao
This   Pietro   see.PROG Saint   Gregory suffering sɪ ᴄʟ   ASK.3SG.PST
'This Pietro, seeing Saint Gregory suffering, asked him...' (*Gregoriu* 5, 8)

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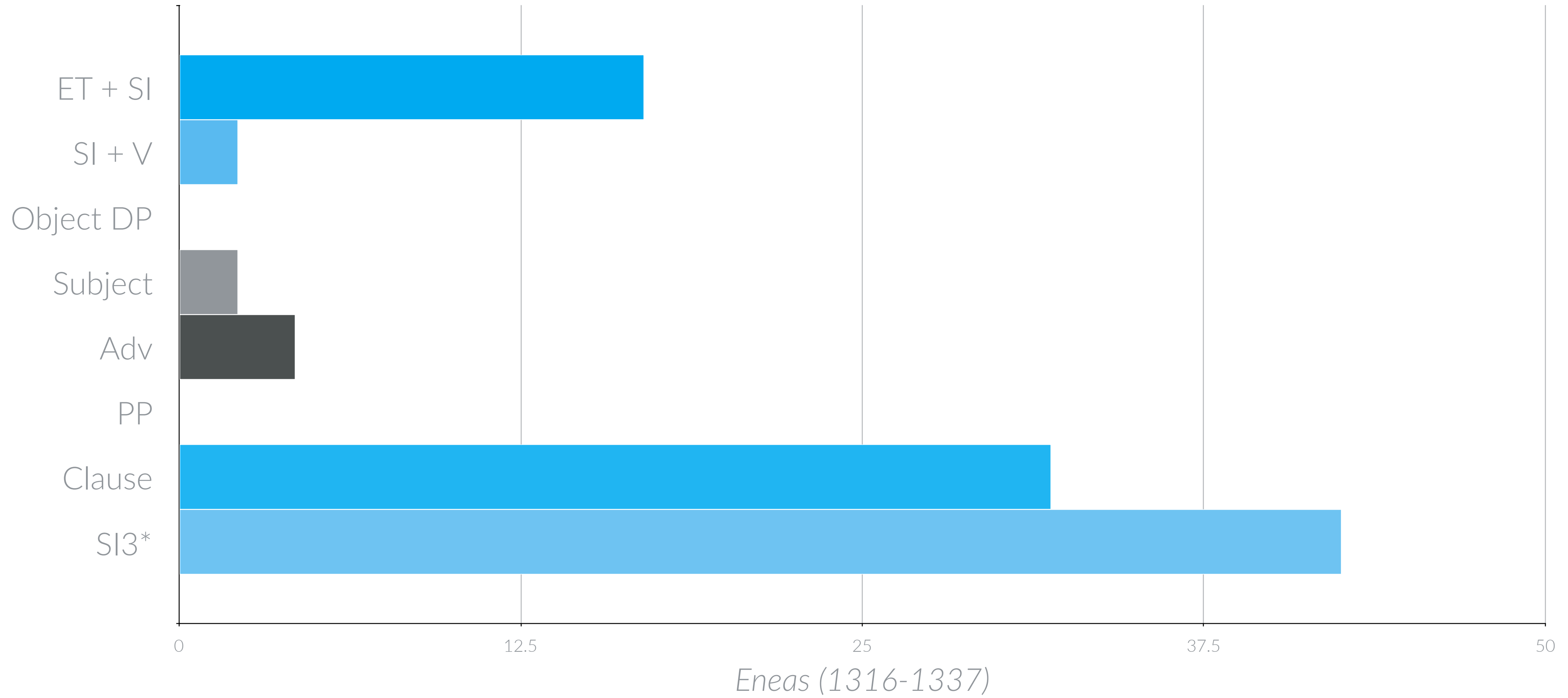**lu cumpagnuni di Eneas, audendu   lu bonu parlari di la   regina**
the companions of Eneas hear.PROG the good words of the queen
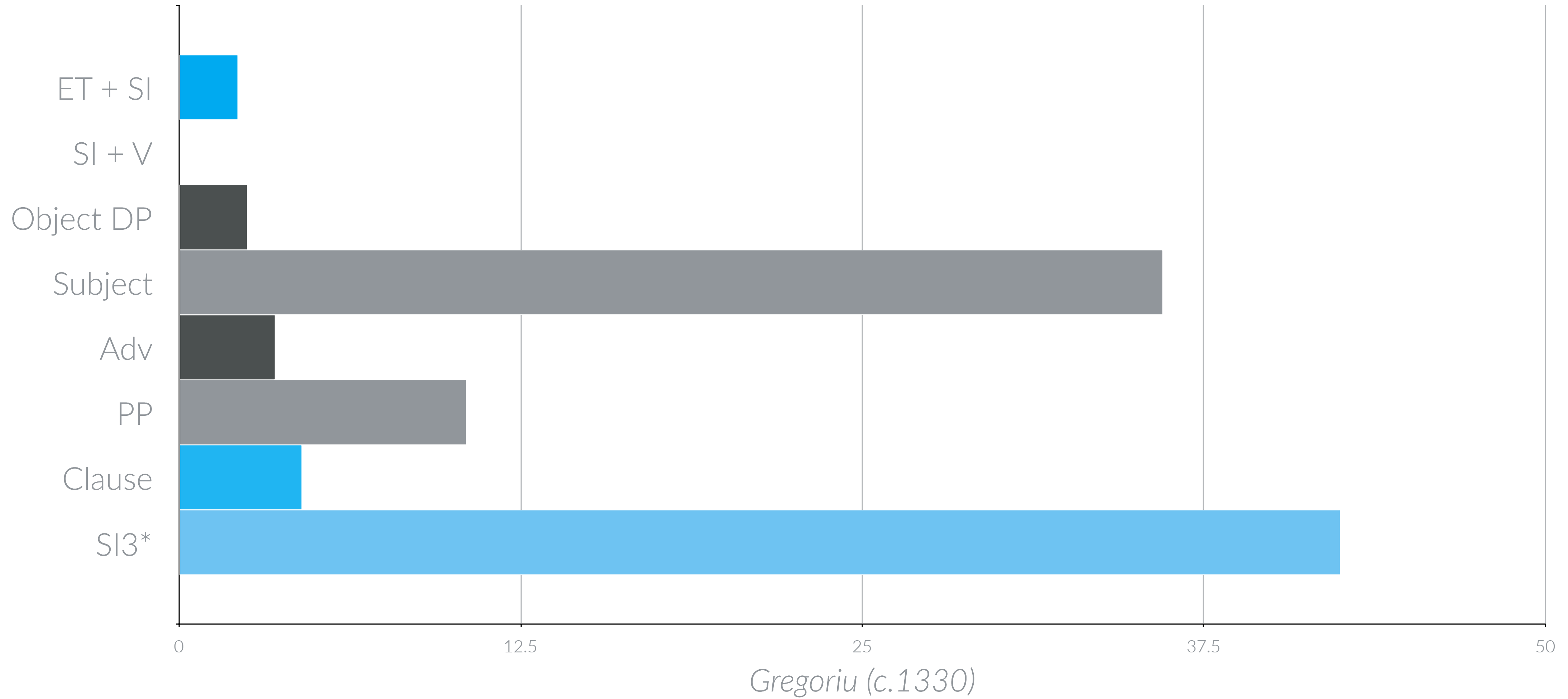**et   girandusi   ad Eneas sì li dissi**
and turn.PROG.CL to Eneas SI CL say.3PL.PST
'Eneas's companions, hearing the positive words of the queen and turning to him said…' (*Eneas* 20, 9)

Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Sɪᴄɪʟɪᴀɴ

Eneas (1316-1337)

Microvariation and Sɪ
Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Sɪᴄɪʟɪᴀɴ

Gregoriu (c.1330)

Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Sɪᴄɪʟɪᴀɴ

2

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This applies to both those in XP + sɪ configurations and sɪ-third configurations.

2

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Pietro sì adimanda ad sancto Gregorio
Pietro si ask.3SG.PST to Saint   Gregory
'Pietro asked Saint Gregory…' (*Gregoriu*, 8, 19)

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Pietro sì adimanda ad sancto Gregorio
Pietro si ask.3SG.PST to Saint   Gregory
'Pietro asked Saint Gregory…' (*Gregoriu*, 8, 19)

chisto monaco sì trovao   uno grande serpente… Lo serpente sì llo secutao
this   monk   SI find.3SG.PST a   great   serpent   the serpent SI CL follow.3SG.PST
'This monk found a great snake, the snake followed him….' (*Gregoriu* 11, 27)

3

3

This observation also extends to the small number (n=5) of fronted direct objects found in *Gregoriu*, which are all discourse-active (cf. Prince 1981:243; Chafe 1987; Lambrecht 1994:165). The same applies to prepositional objects:

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et chesta tentacione sì lo fice
and this temptation S*I* C*L* do.3*SG.PST*
'And this (type of) temptation happened…' (*Gregoriu*, 12, 22)

e kista parte sì tene tuctu
and this part S*I* keep.3*SG.PST* all
'and all (…) keep this part…' (*Gregoriu* 77, 17)

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e   kista parte sì tene   tuctu
and this   part   Sɪ keep.3SG.PST all
'and all (…) keep this part…' (*Gregoriu* 77, 17)

et de le   cose   che erano all'orto   sì nde li donao…
and of the things that were at=the=vegetable garden Sɪ CL   CL give.3SG.PST
'And he gave… from all the things that were in the vegetable garden' (Gregoriu 12, 6)

Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Sɪᴄɪʟɪᴀɴ

Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Sɪᴄɪʟɪᴀɴ

4

4

Orders where Sɪ is the third, fourth or even fifth constituent are extensively attested (c.43% of attestations) in both texts. V3* orders are typical of Early Italo-Romance varieties (Benincà 2004, 2006; Ledgeway 2009; Poletto 2006, 2014; Wolfe 2015, 2016, 2018).

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Lo abbate, audendo   ço, sì llo salutao
the abbot   hear.ᴘʀᴏɢ this sɪ ᴄʟ greet.3ꜱɢ.ᴘꜱᴛ
'Hearing this, the abbot greeted him…' (*Gregoriu* 15, 9)

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Lo abbate, audendo   ço, sì llo salutao
the abbot   hear.PROG this S<small>I</small> CL greet.3SG.PST
'Hearing this, the abbot greeted him…' (*Gregoriu* 15, 9)

Allura, Eneas, videndu fugiri   li   Latini, sì ordina   di andari
then   Eneas see.PROG leave.INF the Latini si order.3SG to go.INF
'Then, Eneas seeing the Latini leave gave the order to go….' (*Eneas* 214, 17)

Sı in Old Sicilian

Frame > Force > Topic > Focus > Fin

The articulated Medieval Italo-Romance left periphery assumed by Benincà (2004,2006), Ledgeway (2005, 2008), Poletto (2006, 2014) and Wolfe (2015, 2016, 2018)

Sɪ ɪɴ Old Sɪᴄɪʟɪᴀɴ

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Poi   adunca   ki Iuppiter appi audutu a Venus, sì li   rispusi
Then therefore that Jupiter   had heard   to Venus sɪ ᴄʟ respond.3sɢ.ᴘsᴛ
'Then, once Jupiter had spoken to Venus, he responded...' (*Eneas*, 12, 10

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De chistu Bonifaciu sì recunta multi miraculi <u>unu previte</u>
of   this   Bonifaciu Sɪ tell.3ꜱɢ many miracles a   priest
'A priest told of many miracles performed by this Bonifaciu' (Gregoriu 22, 22)

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This strongly supports the alternative V2 expletive account of SI.

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But		after		the death of Eneas	Ascaniu	si baptise.3sɢ.ᴘsᴛ

'But after Eneas's death Ascaniu baptised him…' (*Eneas* 225, 7)

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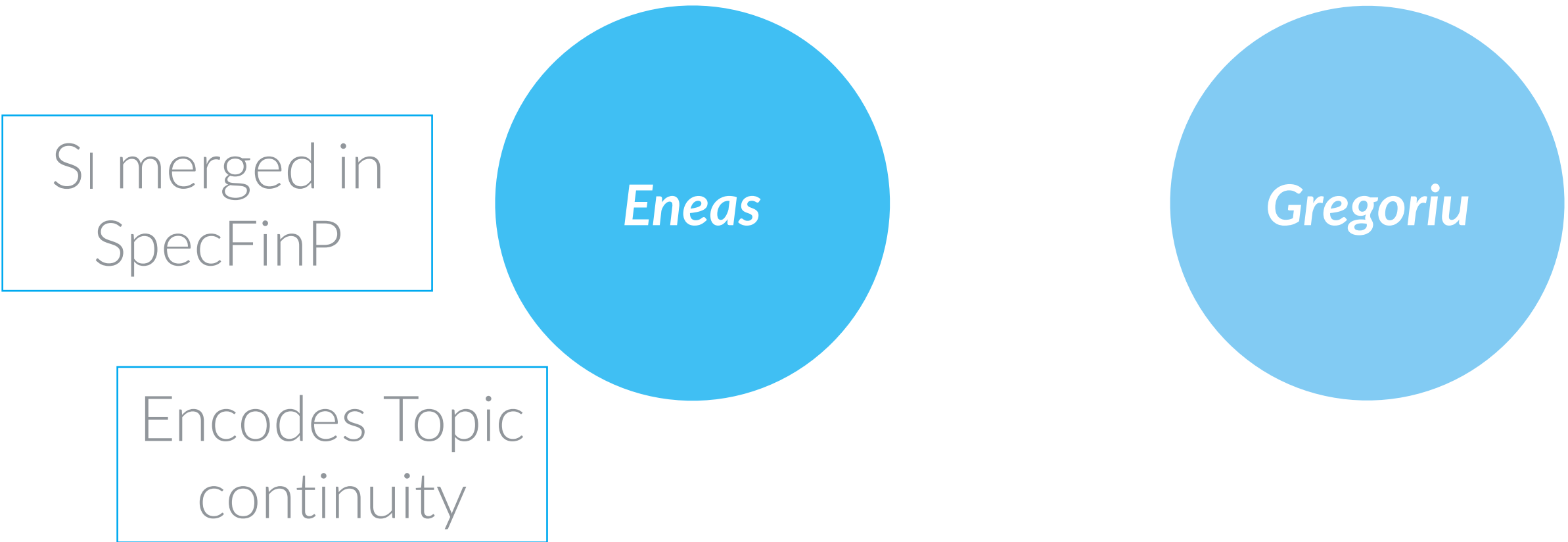
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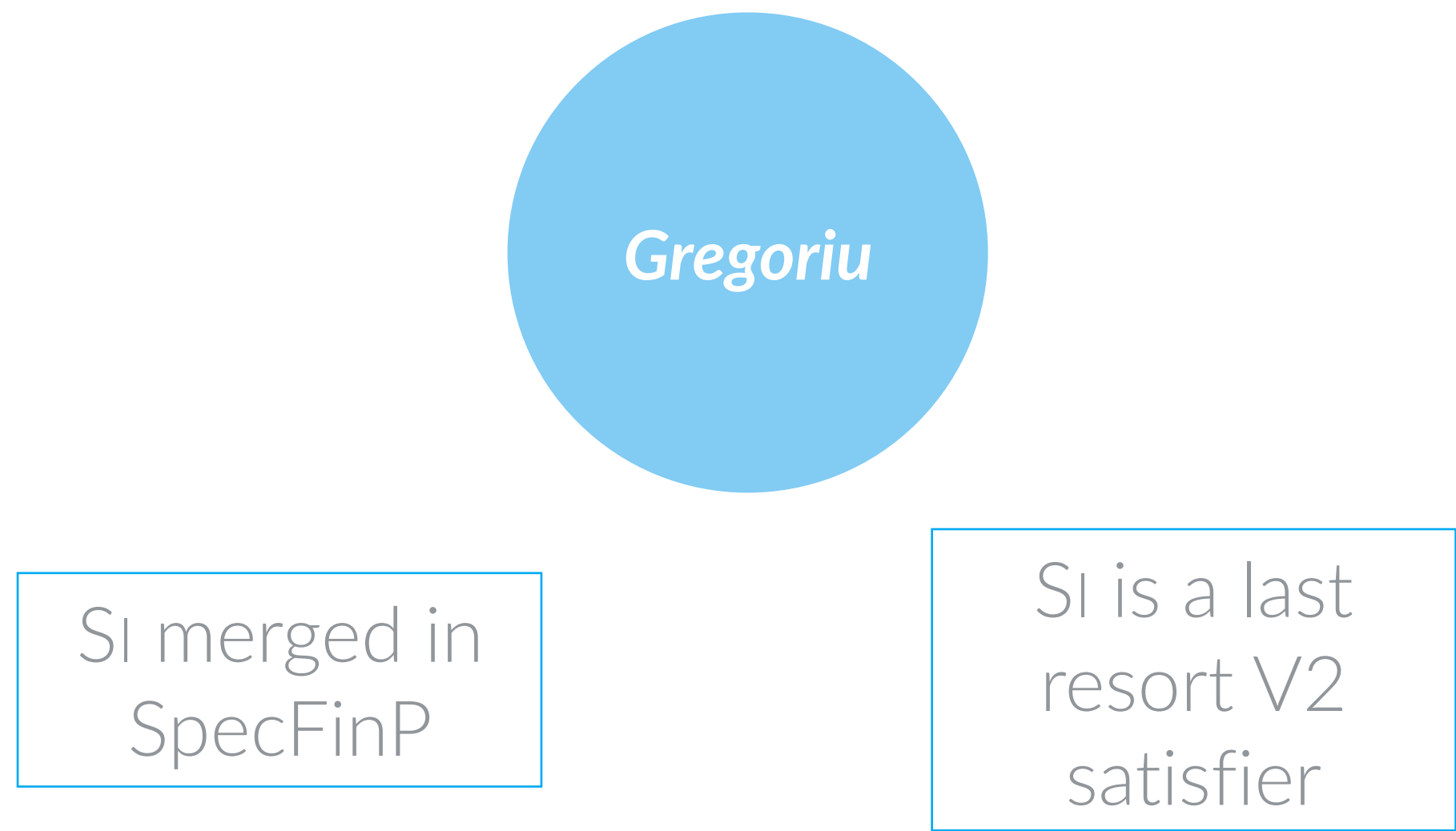**Proposal: SI occupies Spec-FinP in both Old Sicilian texts, but for distinct formal syntactic and pragmatic reasons.**

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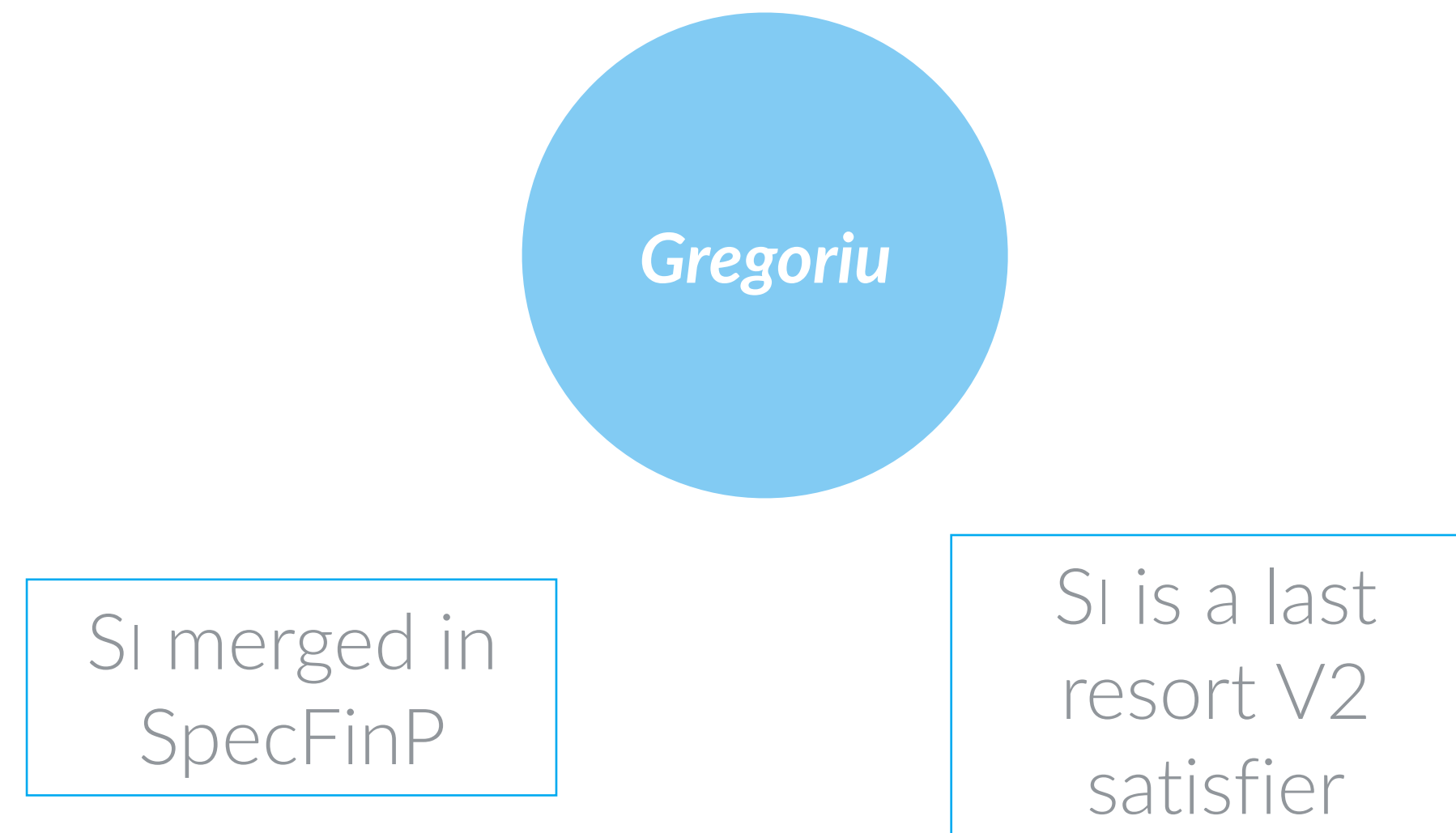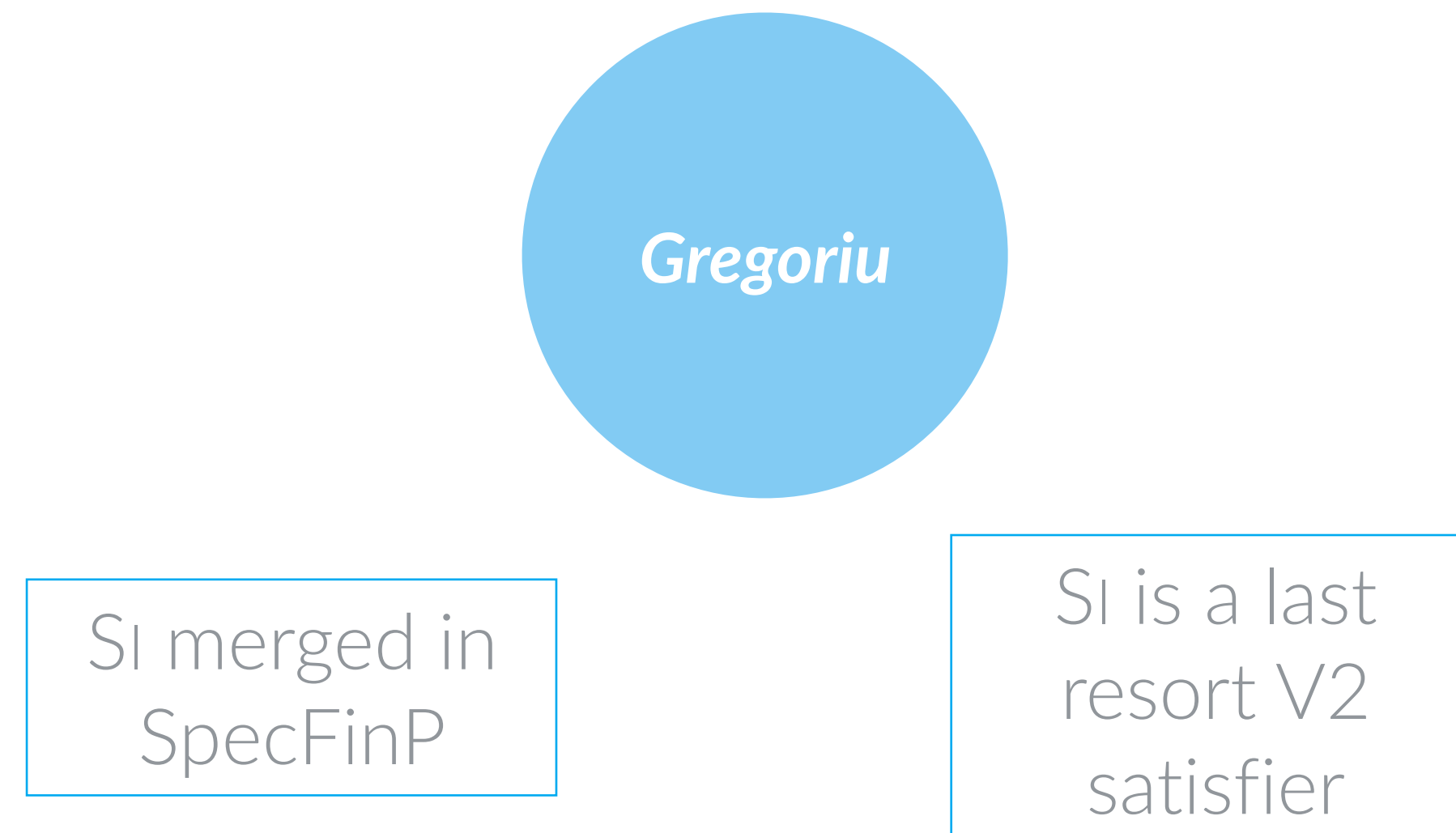
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All constituents co-occurring with SI are Topics or Frame-setters. These are base-generated (Cinque 1990; Benincà & Poletto 2004; Frascarelli 2008) so cannot satisfy V2.
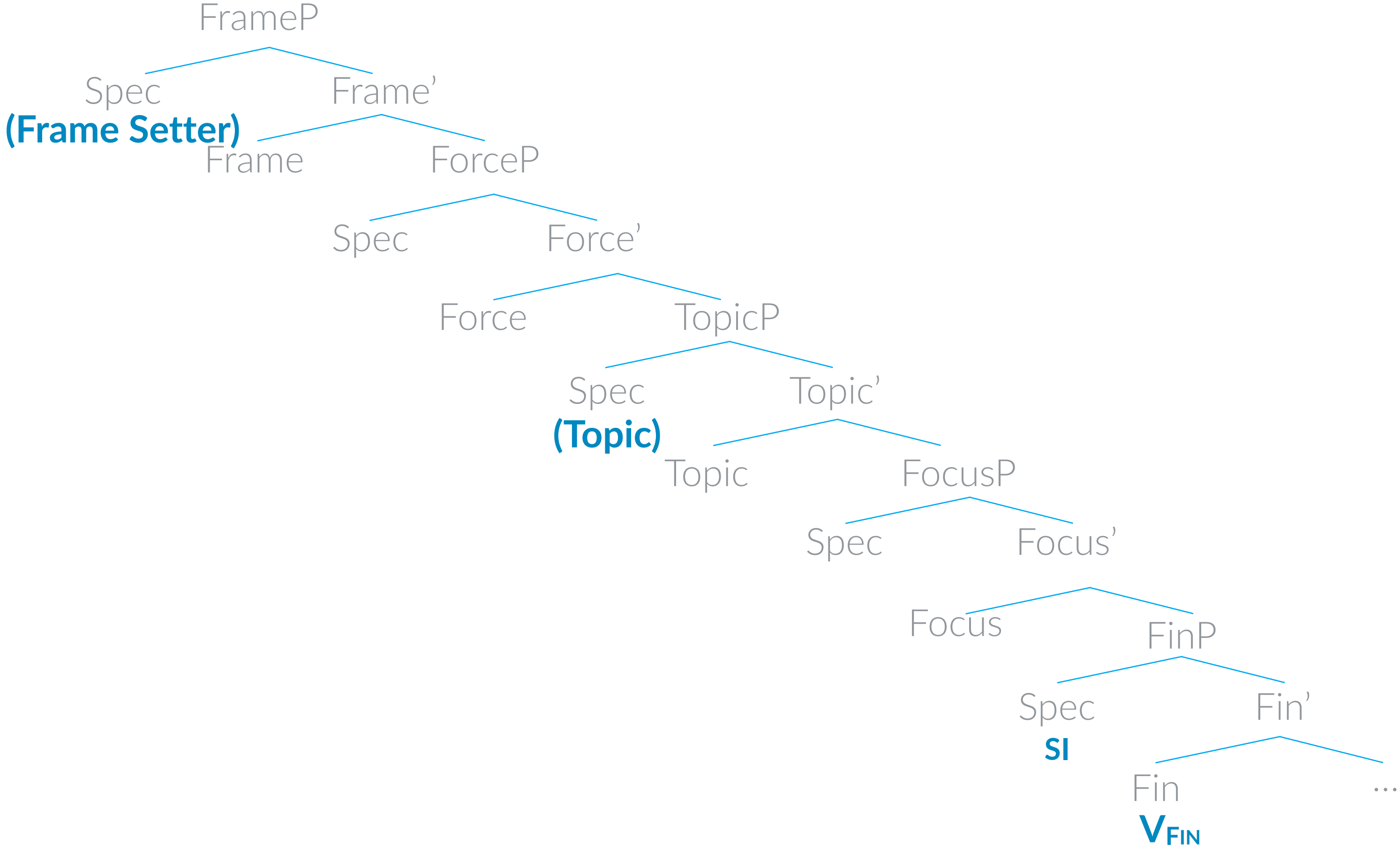
FrameP

Spec
(Frame Setter) Frame'

Frame ForceP

Spec Force'

Force TopicP

Spec Topic'
(Topic)

Topic FocusP

Spec Focus'

Focus FinP

Spec Fin'
SI

Fin ...
VFIN

Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Fʀᴇɴᴄʜ

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1

1

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	Sɪ Third	
	N	**% of Corpus**
Roland **1100**	6	2.99
Charrette **1177-1181**	3	2.40
Villehardouin **1199–1213**	17	4.24
Clari **1205**	2	0.70
Queste **1225–1230**	1	0.33

Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Fʀᴇɴᴄʜ

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2

2 In terms of pragmatics, preverbal constituents are discourse old as in Sicilian after the 12th century. Prior to this, there are a small number of focal constituents occurring before Sɪ (New Information Focus being widely licensed preverbally in Early Medieval Romance, cf. Poletto 2014:Ch1 and Wolfe 2016:§3).

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Reis Vivien si succuras   en Imphe
King Vivien SI help.2SG.FUT in Imphe
'help King Vivien there in Imphe' (*Roland* 3995-3996)

Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Fʀᴇɴᴄʜ

Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Fʀᴇɴᴄʜ

3

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	N	% of Corpus
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Queste 1225–1230	38	12.67

Sɪ ɪɴ Old French

Sɪ ɪɴ Oʟᴅ Fʀᴇɴᴄʜ

4

4

Unlike Sicilian, sɪ-initial clauses make up a much larger proportion of the corpus (c. 70% > 45% > 38% > 39% > 32%) although decline diachronically:

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Si tenoit   chascuns une hache
si have.3SG.PST each   an   axe
'Each had an axe' (Charrette 31b, 1091

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In the late 12th century texts, *Charrette* and *Villehardouin*, the distribution is broadly similar to *Gregoriu*, with initial Frame-Setters and Topics permitted. V3 is qualitatively similar but never as widespread.

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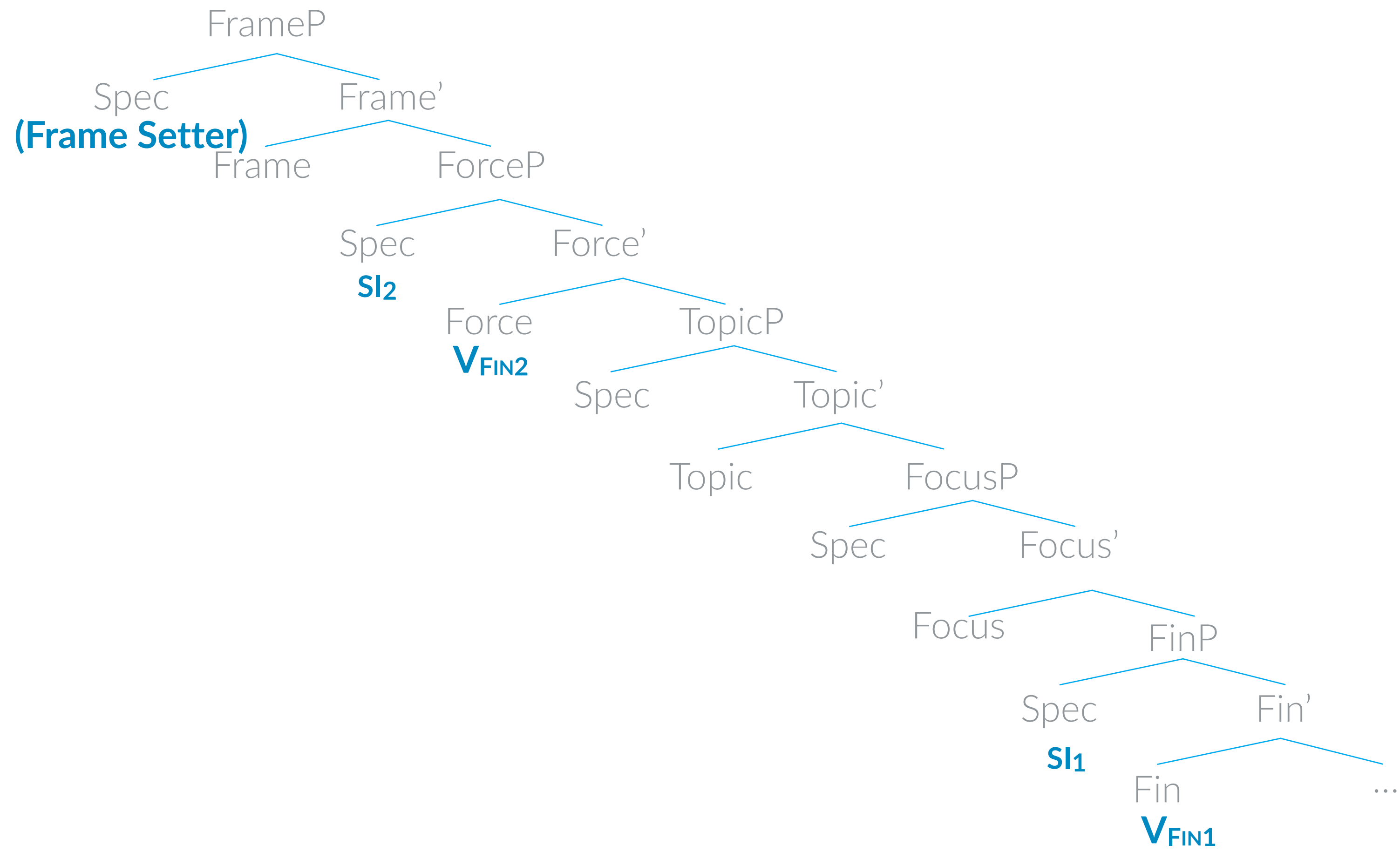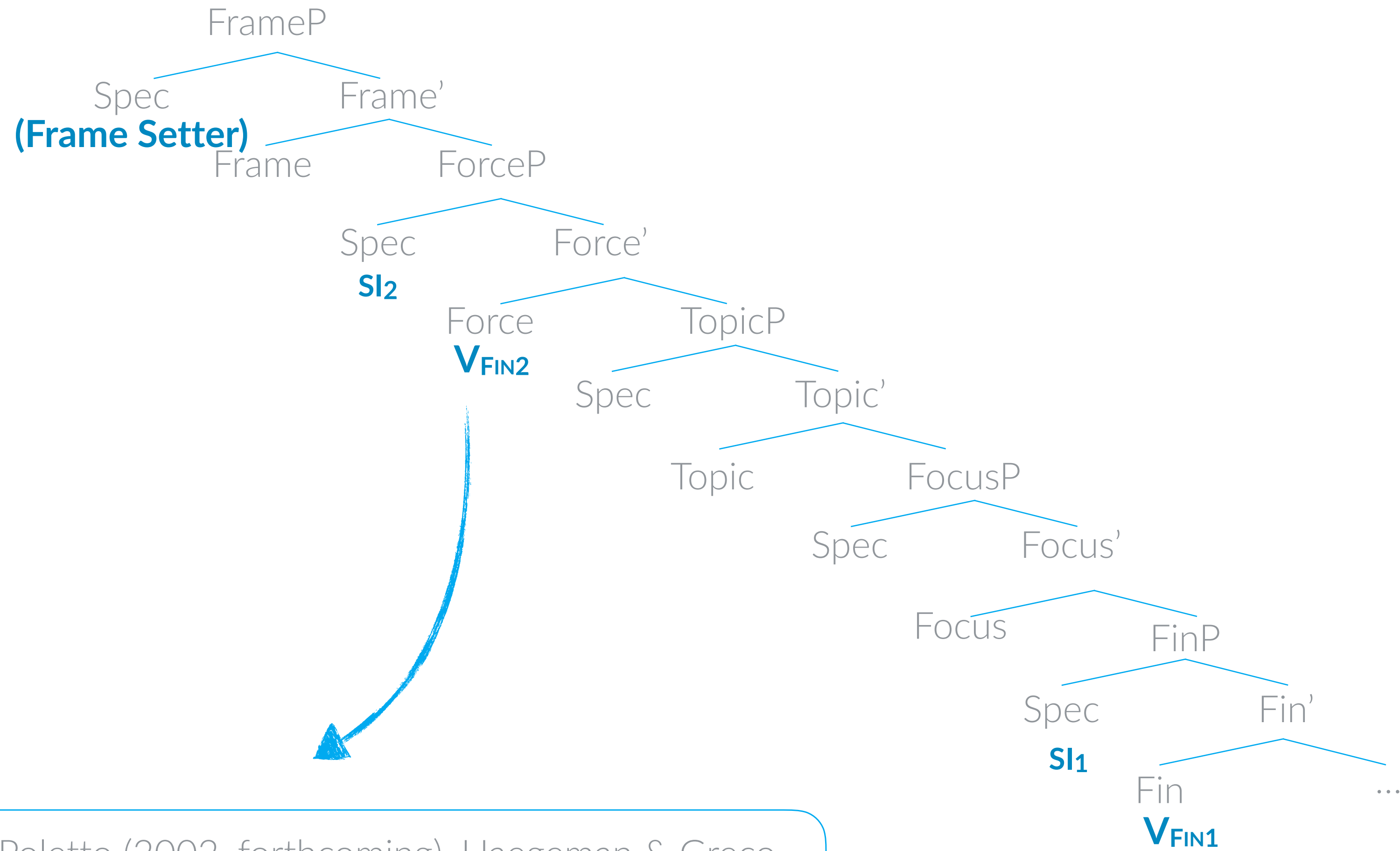
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Adverbials are all Speaker Oriented or Frame-Setting adverbials (Poletto 2000: 100; Beninca & Poletto 2004: 66; Öhl 2010: 62)

FrameP

Spec   Frame'
(Frame Setter)

    Frame   ForceP

Spec   Force'
SI₂

Force   TopicP
V$_{FIN2}$

Spec   Topic'

Topic   FocusP

Spec   Focus'

Focus   FinP

Spec   Fin'
SI₁

Fin   …
V$_{FIN1}$

See Poletto (2002, forthcoming), Haegeman & Greco (2018, forthcoming) and Wolfe (2016, 2018) for the assumption that some V2 languages including Later Old French feature V-to-Force movement

Conclusions

CONCLUSIONS

The data on SI are more heterogeneous than typical accounts suggest

Cᴏɴᴄʟᴜsɪᴏɴs

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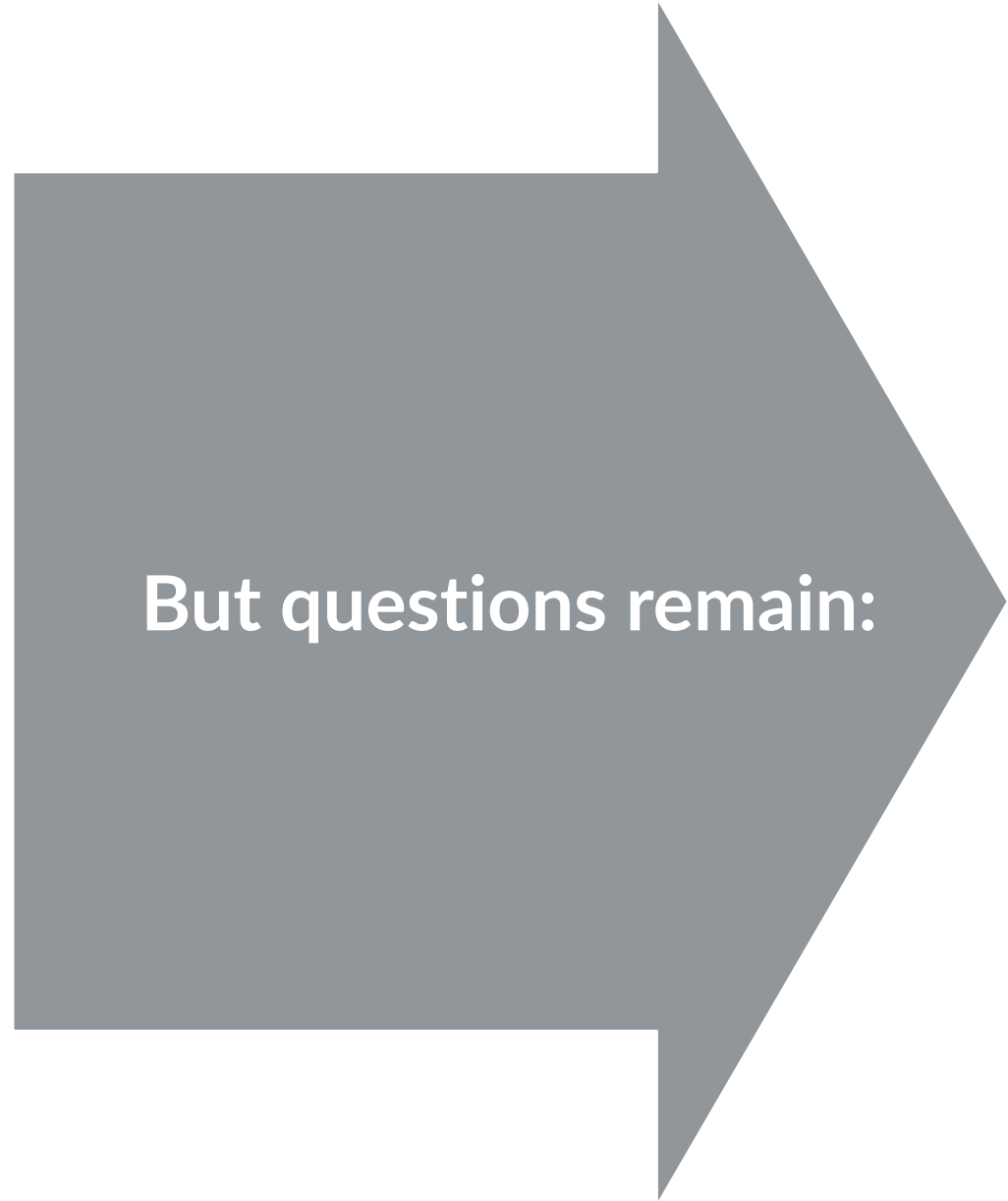
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We still do not understand the changes that Sɪ *causes* on the syntax of the languages in question.

Thank You