Some Silent First Person Plurals* [revised]

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1. Introduction.
    The first person plural object clitic in French is *nous*:
   (1) Elle nous voit. ('she us sees')
   (2) Elle nous a donné un livre. ('she us has given a book')
Nous is also the form of the first person plural pronoun in non-clitic contexts such as object of preposition:
   (3) Elle a parlé de nous. ('she has spoken of us')
and right- and left-dislocation:
   (4) Elle nous aime bien, nous. ('she us likes well us')
   (5) Nous, elle nous aime bien.
In literary French, *nous* is also the form found as subject clitic:
   (6) Nous avons ri. ('we have laughed')
    In spoken French *nous* as subject clitic is often 'replaced', for some speakers obligatorily, by another subject clitic *on*:
   (7) On a ri. ('*on* has laughed')
Although one might be tempted to gloss French *on* as 'one', (7) can be interpreted exactly as English *We have laughed* (English *one* does not admit this possibility).
    English *one* and French *on* do, on the other hand, share the ability to appear in generic sentences:
   (8) When one is happy, one sleeps well.
   (9) Quand on est heureux, on dort bien.
French also allows *on* to appear in cases where English would normally have *they*:
   (10) Jean est allé à la poste. On lui a dit de revenir plus tard. ('J is gone to the post. One him has told to return more late')
   (11) John went to the post office. They told him to come back later.
    I take the three instances of the morpheme *on* illustrated in (7), (9) and (10) to be syntactically distinct from one another, in contextual ways to be determined (I will in this paper primarily be interested in the properties of (7)). One notable difference is that (7) allows the addition of the floating universal quantifier *tous* (with a plural *-s*):
   (12) On a tous ri. ('*on* has all laughed' = 'we have all laughed')
Generic *on* does not:
   (13) En France on boit beaucoup de vin. ('in F *on* drinks a-great-deal of wine')
Tous could be added here:
   (14) En France on boit tous beaucoup de vin.
but then speakers feel that the interpretation necessarily becomes first person plural.[1] Similarly the *on* of (10), which I will call 'indefinite', does not cooccur with *tous*. If one adds *tous* to the

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[1] This incompatibility of generic *on* with *tous* may or may not have the same source as in English:
   i) In France one (*all) drinks a great deal of wine.
     English generic *one* might be analyzed as accompanied by a silent PERSON, perhaps as in 'PERSON one'.

second half of (10), the result is acceptable, but again only with the first person plural interpretation.

2. Silent *nous*.

The acceptability of plural *tous* in (12) and (14) with subject clitic *on* (associated with a first person plural interpretation) is striking in that *on* in such examples (and everywhere else) requires 3rd person singular agreement on the finite verb. Despite the plural interpretation, neither a 3rd person plural verb:

(15) *On ont tous ri/*En France on boivent tous...

nor a 1st person plural verb:

(16) *On avons tous ri/*En France on buvons tous...

is at all possible.

The acceptability of plural *tous* in (12) and (14) becomes less surprising when we consider (and similarly for (14)):

(17) Nous, on a tous ri. ('us, *on* has all laughed' = 'us, we've all laughed')

Here, we have *on* and *nous* simultaneously. The obvious proposal is that the presence of *tous* in (17) is licensed as a function of the presence of plural *nous*, essentially as in:

(18) Nous avons tous ri. ('we have all laughed')

in which *on* is absent. The exact character of the position of *nous* in (17) is not entirely clear; since *on* is a subject clitic,[2] it may be that *nous* is actually in spec of IP. Alternatively, it may be higher up, in which case its link with *tous* would (also) recall the following English sentence (acceptable to some speakers, including myself):

(19) These books I've all read twice.

in which the well-formedness of post-auxiliary *all* depends on the object *these books* having been moved up, given the impossibility of:

(20) *I've all read these books twice.

The central point now is that the presence of *tous* in (12) can be understood in exactly the same way, if we grant that (12) contains a silent counterpart (to be represented as NOUS) of the *nous* seen in (17):

(21) NOUS on a tous ri.

Tous in (12)/(21), then, is licensed by the presence of NOUS.[3]

This NOUS is also involved in disjoint reference effects (of the sort that show that Condition B cannot be reduced to a 'side effect' of Condition A[4]), as seen in:

(22) On te voit tous. ('*on* you sees all' = 'we all see you')

(23) *On me voit tous. ('*on* me sees all')

(23) is really:

(24) *NOUS on me voit tous

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2   On French subject clitics, see Kayne (1972; 1975, sect. 2.4), Cardinaletti and Starke (1999) and Kayne and Pollock (2001, sect. 5). The earliest of these shows in most detail how French subject clitics can cooccur with true subjects, at least in the 'complex inversion' construction.

3   On how the derivation might proceed, see Sportiche (1988) and Shlonsky (1991).

The postulation of NOUS here is an updating of Kayne (1972, 95; 1975, chap. 1, note 79).

A (partially) similar analysis, but with a silent 3rd plural, will be needed for:

i) C'est tous des linguistes. ('it is all of-the linguists' = 'they're all linguists')

Cf. Kayne (1975, chap. 1, note 79).

4   For discussion, see Kayne (2002, sect.9).

in which *me* does not tolerate the local c-commanding NOUS. (This point about disjoint reference goes back to Cinque's (1988, sect. 3.4) discussion of the close Italian counterpart of French *on* that I return to below.)

There is a contrast in French between (12)/(21) and similar sentences with a collective subject of the sort seen in:

(25) Le groupe a (*tous) protesté. ('the group has (all) protested')

Despite the plural reference (indirectly) associated with nouns like *group*, plural *tous* is not possible in (25), since there is no proper grammatically plural antecedent for it present, unlike the NOUS of (12)/(21).[5] Similarly, the impossibility of *tous* with generic *on* indicates that (14) with generic *on* contains no silent plural subject (and the same for the indefinite *on* of (10)[6]).

3. NOUS/*nous* and agreement.

The fact that (6) is absent from (some) colloquial French, i.e. that *nous* has been lost there as a subject clitic (while being retained as object clitic and as non-clitic) lends itself to being interpreted in terms of the loss, in the relevant French, of the first person plural agreement morpheme *-ons*. This will be so, if subject clitic *nous* needs to be licensed by *-ons*, as part of a more general fact about French, to the effect that subject clitics depend on the presence of a finite verb. That they do is shown clearly by their incompatibility with the present participle/gerund form (despite the fact that present participle/gerunds pattern with finite verbs as far as adverb positioning is concerned):

(26) Les témoins ayant menti,... ('the witnesses having lied...')

(27) *Ils ayant menti,... ('they having lied...')

The impossibility of (27) is plausibly due to the (systematic) lack of agreement suffixes on present participles/gerunds. To exclude (6), though, we need to say more specifically that a subject clitic requires the presence of a matching agreement suffix, given:

(28) Nous partons. ('we leave')

(29) *Nous partent'. ('we leave$_{3pl}$')

Not surprisingly, subject clitic *nous* requires the presence of *-ons*; a non 1pl. agreement suffix would not suffice.

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[5] In agreement with den Dikken (2001), I take British English (i) (with a plural verb) to contain a silent plural pronoun, as for example in (ii):

(i) The committee have all voted yes.

(ii) THEY the committee have all voted yes

with THEY the true antecedent of *all* in (i). This is supported by:

(iii) *It have all voted yes.

the unacceptability of which can be traced back to that of:

(iv) *They it have all voted yes.

With a singular verb (as in French), my English has:

(v) The jury has (??all) voted for acquittal.

The lack of a sharp '*' here may be due to the marginal availability of an adverbial reading for *all* (and/or to the lack of plural morphology on *all* (contrary to French *tous*)), as suggested by the sharper:

(vi) The jury has (*both) voted in favor of a fellowship.

[6] The incompatiblity of indefinite *they* with *all* in (11) indicates that plurality of form is not sufficient, even though it is necessary. Relevant is the fact that *all of them* does not seem to work in (11), either, in the relevant reading. Cf. perhaps:

(i) Someone$_i$ just said they$_i$ (*all) lost their wallet.

as well as the generic:

(ii) When people (*all) get lonely, they get unhappy.

The suffix *-ons* also seems to play a licensing role in imperatives:

(30) Partons! ('(let's) leave!')

The French that has (28) has (30) as a corresponding first person plural imperative. But the French that has (31) instead of (or in addition to) (28):

(31) On part. ('*on* leaves' = 'we leave')

never allows an imperative with the 3sg. verb form of (31):

(32) *Part!

This suggests that the licensing of silent NOUS in subjectless imperatives has the presence of *-ons* as a necessary condition.[7]

Although subject clitic *nous* requires *-ons*, the subject clitic *on* that can 'replace' *nous* requires the 3sg. form of the verb, as seen in (31). Having *-ons* with *on* is not possible:

(33) *On partons.

This is so even in sentences with overt *nous* in addition to *on*:

(34) Nous, on part.

(35) *Nous, on partons.

The sharp deviance of (35) will follow as a consequence of *on* not being properly licensed, in that 1pl. *-ons* does not match 3sg. *on*.

This kind of mismatch is not limited to subject clitic and agreement suffix. It also extends to reflexive clitics, with an interesting twist. In the presence of subject clitic *nous*, the reflexive object clitic is also *nous*:

(36) Nous nous lavons. ('we us wash')

If the subject clitic is *on*, the reflexive is *se* (the usual reflexive for third person):

(37) On se lave. ('*on* refl. washes')

In neither of these two cases is there another option in standard French:[8]

(38) *Nous se lavons.

(39) *On nous lave.

(More exactly, (39) is impossible with a first person plural interpretation for the subject; it is possible (irrelevantly here) with the indefinite *on* of (10) and a non-reflexive interpretation akin to *They're washing us*.)

This is particularly striking if we add overt *nous* to (37) and (39), yielding:

(40) Nous, on se lave.

(41) *Nous, on nous lave.

(Again, (41) is irrelevantly possible with indefinite *on* as subject and a non-reflexive interpretation akin to *Us, they're washing us*.) As a reflexive sentence, (41) is sharply out; the presence of initial non-clitic *nous* cannot overcome the requirement that subject clitic *on* calls for reflexive *se*. The interesting twist is that the sharp deviance of (39) and (41) as reflexive sentences diminishes if the reflexive clitic *nous* is more deeply embedded relative to *on*:

(42) ?On a essayé de faire semblant de nous laver. ('*on* has tried to make semblance of us to-wash' = 'we have tried to pretend to wash ourselves')

Although the exact conditions that make (42) better than (39) remain to be worked out, what is clear is that having reflexive clitic *nous* with *on* as antecedent, as in (42), is not possible with

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[7]   But not as a sufficient condition, since (30) is not possible as a declarative. For relevant discussion, see Zanuttini (2007).

[8]   At least some sentences like (38) are possible in the non-standard French described by Bauche (1928, 111). See also below.

indefinite *on*, which suggests that a necessary component of the (relative) acceptability of (42) is the presence of silent NOUS, i.e. (42) must be:

(43) NOUS on ... nous ...

in which NOUS is licensing *nous* as the form of the reflexive clitic. This is, then, another reason to take silent NOUS to be available in French in the context of subject clitic *on*.[9]

4. Italian *si*.

Cinque (1988, sects. 2.4.3, 3.4) shows very clearly that the Italian impersonal (as it is often called) *si* is actually compatible with a first person plural interpretation in sentences like:

(44) Si è stati invitati tutti. ('*si* is been invited all' = 'we have all been invited')

This interpretation, combined with the presence here of *tutti* ('all'), leads Cinque to propose that such sentences contain a first person plural subject pro, which I will represent as silent NOI, emphasizing the parallel with French. (Overt non-clitic *noi* is the Italian counterpart of overt (non-clitic) French *nous*.)

In other words, we should think of (44) as:

(45) NOI si è stati invitati tutti

in a way that is strongly parallel to the cooccurrence of *tous* ('all') and NOUS in French in (21). Similarly, the French sentence:

(46) Nous, on a ri. ('us, *on* has laughed' = 'us, we've laughed')

with overt *nous* and *on* cooccurring, has a fairly close counterpart in Italian in Cinque's:

(47) Si è stati invitati anche noi. ('*si* is been invited also us' = 'we have been invited, too')

in which *si* cooccurs with overt *noi*.

Cinque gives further evidence for the availability of silent NOI in the presence of impersonal *si*, for example from disjoint reference effects, as in the discussion of (23) earlier, and also from reflexives and control. There seems to be no doubt, then, that Italian impersonal *si* shares with French *on* the property of being compatible with a first person plural subject pronoun (*noi* in Italian, *nous* in French) that can be silent (NOI in Italian, NOUS in French).

5. The privileged status of first person plural.

Morin (1978, 363-4) has pointed out that the local cooccurrence between *on* and *nous* seen in (46) is limited to first person plural. Alongside (46) one does not have in French any of the following:

(48) *Vous, on a ri. ('you$_{pl}$ *on* has laughed')
(49) *Toi, on a ri. ('you$_{sg}$...')
(50) *Moi, on a ri. ('me...')

Subject clitic *on* can be locally linked to non-clitic 1pl. *nous*, but not to 2pl. *vous* or 2sg. *toi* or 1sg. *moi*. Nor is a third person pronoun linkable to *on*:

(51) *Lui, on a ri. ('him...')
(52) *Eux, on a ri. ('them...')

The same holds for Italian, in that alongside (47), with first plural *noi*, there is no:

(53) *Si è stati invitati anche voi. ('...you$_{pl.}$')

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[9] Chris Collins points out (p.c.) that the licensing of NOUS by *on* (and similarly by *si/sa* and *ci* as discussed later) argued for here contrasts with the restrictions on other than third person silent pronouns discussed in Kayne (2001, sects. 10-12). I think this contrast is probably related to the deictic character of *on, s-* and *ci*. (The deictic character of *on* and *s-* is to be understood in terms of their relation to first and second person singular as discussed in Kayne (2003)).

    (54) *Si è stati/stato invitati/o anche tu/te. ('...you$_{sg.}$')
    (55) *Si è stati/stato invitati/o anch'io. ('...I')
Nor is there a third person counterpart to (47), in the sense that the following are not possible, either:
    (56) *Si è stati/stata invitati/a anche lei. ('...she')
    (57) *Si è stati invitati anche loro. ('...they')

6. Reflexive *si/se* and first person plural.

    Of interest is the fact that the privileged status of first person plural relative to Italian impersonal *si* (and to French *on*) has a parallel with reflexive object clitics, if we move on to Paduan. In Italian, reflexive *si* is strictly limited to taking a third person antecedent, as in:[10]
    (58) Gianni si lava le mani. ('John refl. washes the hands' = 'J is washing his hands')
    (59) I bambini si lavano le mani. ('the children...')
With a first or second person antecedent *si* is not possible; rather, the corresponding non-reflexive object clitic appears:
    (60) Io mi/*si lavo le mani. ('I me wash the hands' = 'I am washing my hands')
    (61) Tu ti/*si lavi le mani. ('you$_{sg.}$...')
    (62) Noi ci/*si laviamo le mani. ('we...')
    (63) Voi vi/*si lavate le mani. ('you$_{pl.}$...')
    Paduan reflexive clitic *se*, like Italian *si*, also appears with third person antecedents, and like Italian *si*, does not appear with a first person singular or with a second person antecedent. In other words, Paduan is just like Italian in the relevant respects as far as all of (58)-(63) are concerned, with the single exception of (62). In Paduan, when the antecedent is first person plural, reflexive *se* does appear:
    (64) Noaltri se lavémo le man. ('we-others *se* wash the hands' = 'we are washing our hands')
Conversely, the normal first person plural object clitic, which in Paduan is *ne*, cannot appear (contrary to Italian *ci* in (62)):
    (65) *Noaltri ne lavémo le man.
In opposition to (65), Paduan does have ordinary object clitics in reflexive sentences when the subject is first person singular or second person singular or plural:
    (66) Mi me lavo le man. ('I me wash the hands')
    (67) Ti te te lavi le man. ('you you you wash...')
    (68) Voaltri ve lavè le man. ('you-others you wash...')
(The first *te* in (67) is the second singular subject clitic, which is not relevant to the present discussion.)
    The way in which first person plural stands out (against first person singular and second person) in Paduan (64) strongly recalls the French and Italian facts of (46)-(57). In all three languages, first person plural has a closer relation to elements of the *on* and *si/se* type than either first person singular or second person singular or plural.
    Given that French *on* and Italian (impersonal) *si* have the ability to license a silent first person plural NOUS or NOI (as illustrated in (21), (43), and (45)), it seems natural to integrate Paduan (64) with them by having (reflexive) *se* in (64) license a silent NE. The proposal, then, is that (64) is properly thought of as:
    (69) noaltri NE se lavémo le man

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[10] For an insightful discussion of the case in which the antecedent is itself impersonal *si*, see Cinque (1995).

with silent first person plural object clitic NE in addition to *se*.

The claim that Paduan reflexive *se* can license silent 1pl. NE here in a way similar to the way in which Italian impersonal *si* licenses silent 1pl. NOI in (45) will, if it is correct, reinforce the idea that impersonal *si/se* (the impersonal is *se* in Paduan) and reflexive *si/se* are the same element, an idea emphasized by Cinque (1988, sect. 6 and introduction).

7. The extra object clitic in reflexive sentences.

The proposal in (69) implies that at least some reflexive clitic sentences in Romance have two object clitics corresponding in some sense to the same (here, dative) argument, where a single object clitic might have seemed sufficient. This implication is strongly supported by certain dialects from the Ticino area of Italian-speaking Switzerland and by certain Lombardy dialects, e.g. (from Spiess (1976, 207)):

(70) Mi a ma sa lavi i man. ('me I me refl. wash the hands')

Mi, a non-clitic, and *a*, a subject clitic of the sort discussed by Benincà (1983) and Poletto (2000), are not directly relevant. Important, rather, are *ma* and *sa*, both of which seem to overtly correspond to the same dative/possessive argument.

The existence of (70) in some dialects obviously increases the plausibility of (69), but in at least some of those dialects there is an even tighter connection to (69). For example, Andrea Cattaneo tells me that in his Bellinzona (Ticino) dialect, (70) is possible (as are parallel sentences with *va sa* in the second plural),[11] yet in the first person plural having two such clitics is still impossible. (In the first person plural, Bellinzonese has *sa* alone, much as Paduan has *se* in (64).) Within Bellinzonese, then, the existence of *ma sa* in (70) contrasting with the first plural lends additional indirect support to the silent first plural NE of (69).[12]

8. Silent *se/si*.

The French and Italian counterparts of (70) have one object clitic, rather than two:

(71) Moi, je me lave les mains.
(72) Io mi lavo le mani.

In these, *moi* and *io* are non-clitics that correspond to *mi* in (70). *Je* in (71) is a subject clitic corresponding only very approximately to the *a* of (70). *Me* and *mi* here are object clitics, but in contrast to (70) there is no additional *se/si* visible in (71) or (72):

(73) *Moi, je me se lave les mains.

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[11] He has noted that neither *ma sa* nor *va sa* here are possible post-infinitivally. This may be related to the restrictions on post-infinitival clitic combinations and ordering discussed by Ordoñez (2002).

Restrictions in imperatives appear to be less strong - v. Nicoli (1983, 152) and Lurà (1990, 161). Cf. also Benincà and Poletto (200%).

For a different approach to comparable phenomena in Barcelona Catalan, cf. Bonet (1991) and Harris (1997, 43). Harris takes the presence of a clitic *te* intervening in Catalan between *me* and *se* to preclude a more syntactic approach than his. Note, though, that the text approach to Ticino *ma sa* does not imply that the two clitics form a constituent at every stage of the derivation - in fact the absence of post-infinitival *ma sa* suggests that preverbally *ma* and *sa* do not form a constituent - cf. also Kayne (1994, 21).

[12] Compexities that go beyond the scope of this paper involve the fact that Bellinzonese appears to be like Italian in having *ga* rather than *na* as a first person plural object clitic, much as in the discussion of Italian *ci* below, and similarly, at least in part, for the Mendrisiotto dialect of Lurà (1990, 160). The text point is sharpest, then, in the Milanese of Nicoli (1983, 146, 151), which allows 1pl. object clitic *ne* and allows *me se* and *ve se*, yet still disallows **ne se*.

(74) *Io mi si lavo le mani.

A plausible proposal at this point is that (71) and (72) differ from (70) not in lacking a reflexive clitic entirely, but in failing to pronounce it, i.e. (71) and (72) are really:

(75) moi je me SE lave les mains

(76) io mi SI lavo le mani

with a silent reflexive clitic in addition to the visible pronominal object clitic. (The parametric variation here remains to be elucidated.)

9. The role of *se/si/sa*.

A natural question is why Romance languages would ever need two object clitics here. A natural answer is that otherwise there would be a Condition B violation. After all, apart from the special position and clitic character of *me/mi* in (71)-(72), those French and Italian sentences closely resemble the following (switching to non-possessive cases):

(77) *I never criticize me if I don't have to.

English gets around this Condition B violation with *self* (and possessive structure):

(78) I never criticize myself if I don't have to.

The proposal in (75) and (76) amounts to saying that *ma/me/mi* are ordinary first person pronouns (and are not reflexive in any sense), even in reflexive sentences. *Sa/se/si* or a silent counterpart SA/SE/SI are necessarily present in addition to *ma/me/mi* in such sentences in order to avoid a Condition B violation, just as *self* is in English.[13] In some first or second person cases, such as (69) (and more generally in Slavic), the reflexive element *sa/se/si* is pronounced and it is the ordinary pronoun NE that is not pronounced.

It is worth noting that from this perspective),[14] neither *self* nor *se/si/sa* is to be thought of as intrinsically 'reflexive'. *S-* in Romance (and Slavic and some Germanic) is a morpheme related to first person *m-* and second person *t-*.[15] *Self* is arguably an abstract body part noun that in English (and other languages, often with other body part nouns)[16] enters into a possessive structure with the ordinary pronoun.[17] English *self* and Romance *s-* play a role in licensing 'reflexive' sentences by protecting the ordinary pronoun from incurring a Condition B violation (although the exact mechanism may not be identical in the two cases). But they are not themselves 'reflexive', as shown also by their other clearly non-reflexive uses, e.g. in the impersonal *si* constructions touched on earlier.

10. Third person reflexive sentences.

As far as I know, no North Italian dialect (or any other Romance language) has a counterpart of (70) with a third person subject and a visible third person object pronoun in addition to the

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[13]   The fact that SA/SE/SI or *sa/se/si* is not sufficient by itself now resembles:
  i) *John thinks highly of self.
[14]   See Kayne (2002, sect. 10), which converges with Jayaseelan (1997) and in part with Pica and Snyder (1997).
[15]   As in Kayne (2003), which has *m-/t-/s-* as a natural class that does not include first plural *n-* or second plural *v-*, and in that respect differs from Bonet (1995, 614). That first and second plural *n-* and *v-* are more different from (primarily singular) *m-/t-/s-* than one might think is supported by Vassilieva and Larson (2001) and den Dikken et al. (2001).
[16]   For interesting discussion, see Pica and Snyder (1997).
[17]   Though the standard English third-person forms *himself, themselves* and arguably *herself*, with the objective form of the pronoun, need to be accounted for (see Ghomeshi and Ritter (1996)), alongside the regular:
  i) He lost his/*him cool.
The possessive idea goes back to Helke (1971; 1973).

reflexive *sa/se/si*. (This would seem to be related to the fact that cross-linguistically third person pronouns (e.g. in Somalian[18]) and third person agreement are more readily left unpronounced than first or second.) A reasonable proposal, given the preceding, would be that French and Italian:

(79) Jean se lave les mains. ('J *se* washes the hands' = 'J is washing his hands')

(80) Gianni si lava le mani.

are actually (cf. in part Jakubowicz (1992)):

(81) Jean LUI se lave les mains

(82) Gianni GLI si lava le mani

with an unpronounced third person (dative) clitic, in addition to the visible *se/si*; and similarly for accusatives:[19]

(83) Jean LE se photographie souvent. ('J him *se* photographs often')

(84) Gianni LO si fotografa spesso.

11. Italian *ci* and the question of syncretism.

   Parallel to first singular *m-*, second singular *t-*, and second plural *v-*, Romance languages typically have *n-* for first plural pronouns, e.g. with non-clitics:

(85) nous (French); noi (Italian); nosotros (Spanish)

with clitics:

(86) nous (French); nos (Spanish); ne (Paduan)

and with possessives:

(87) notre (French); nostro (Italian); nuestro (Spanish)

There is a gap, however, in Italian, which despite having with *n-* non-clitic *noi* and possessive *nostro* seems to have as its first plural object clitic *ci* (whether accusative or dative):

(88) Ci amano. ('us they-love')

(89) Ci parlano. ('us they-speak' = 'they speak to us')

   This *ci* is identical in form to the clitic found in locative sentences:

(90) Ci vanno. ('there they-are-going')

and to that found in:

(91) Ci pensano. ('there they-think' = 'they are thinking about that')

As argued in Kayne (2004; to appear), I take the *ci* of (90) to be the same element as the *ci* of (91), and similarly for *there* in the following two English sentences (the second archaic):

(92) They are going there.

(93) We spoke thereof.

The difference in interpretation in these two pairs is not due to a difference in *ci*/*there*, but rather in their syntactic context. In (90) and (92), *ci* and *there* are modifiers of a silent PLACE, much as in Katz and Postal (1964), whereas in (91) and (93) they modify a silent THING. (In (91) there is additionally a silent preposition.)

   The question now is how to integrate the *ci* of (88)/(89). One might think in terms of syncretism, saying that in Italian the first person plural object clitic has 'fallen together' with the Italian counterpart of *there*. Consider, however, the fact that *ci* has not fallen together with 1sg.

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[18] See Saeed (1993, 174).

[19] Colloquial French also allows silent third person accusative clitics in sentences like:

  i) Jean lui a donné. ('J [it/them] to-him has given')

in the context of a third person dative clitic, as discussed by Morin (1978, 371) - cf. Grevisse (1993, sect. 635e).
Something similar appears to hold for Catalan - Bonet (1995, 639).

or 2sg. or 2pl., a fact that recalls others discussed earlier, in particular the fact that French *on* is compatible with a first person plural non-clitic subject, but not with 1sg. or 2sg. or 2pl., as illustrated in (48)-(50), plus the fact that Italian *si* has essentially the same property as *on*, as shown in (53)-(55).

We can unify these three instances of 1pl. vs. 1sg./2sg./2pl. involving *ci*, *on* and *si* if we treat *ci* in (88)/(89) as sharing with *on* and *si* the property of cooccurring with a first person plural pronoun, especially keeping in mind the fact that *on* and *si* can cooccur with a silent 1pl. pronoun, as in (21), (43), and (45). These considerations lead to the following proposal, which simultaneously establishes a link to the cooccurrence of Paduan reflexive *se* with a(n obligatorily, as here) silent 1pl. object clitic (as in (69)):

(94) Italian *ci* can cooccur with a silent 1pl.

In other words, (88)/(89) are to be analyzed as:[20]

(95) NI ci amano

(96) NI ci parlano

where NI is the silent first person (object clitic) pronoun in question.

Another way to put this is to say that syncretism of the sort under consideration is nothing other than a particular kind of syntactic ambiguity. It is not that *ci* has multiple possible values. Rather, *ci*, the same *ci*, is compatible in Italian with a certain range of syntactic contexts, as illustrated by (at least) (90), (91), and (88)/(89). (90) contains a silent PLACE, (91) a silent THING, and (88)/(89) a silent 1pl. NI.

This approach to the *ci* of (88)/(89), which takes *ci* not to be a first person plural clitic,[21] is supported by the account it allows of certain clitic ordering facts noted by Bianchi (2005). To the extent that object clitic *mi* and object clitic *ti* can cooccur, the order in Italian is necessarily *mi ti* (% here indicates 'accepted by some'):

(97) %Mi ti affideranno. ('me you(sg.) they-will-entrust')

(98) *Ti mi affideranno.

Holding first person constant, while replacing singular *mi* by plural *ci*, yields, somewhat surprisingly, a reversal in clitic order:

(99) %Ti ci affideranno. ('you(sg.) *ci* they-will-entrust')

(100) *Ci ti affideranno.

As Bianchi notes, the *ti ci* order here is identical to that required with ordinary 'locative' *ci*:

(101) Ti ci spediranno. ('you(sg.) there they-will-send')

(102) *Ci ti spediranno.

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[20]   The cooccurrence of NI and *ci* may be related to the reasonably acceptable (in the non-standard English that has *these here cars* - Bernstein (1997)):

  i) Us here guys ain't never gonna play like that.

which seems better than:

  ii) *?You there guys ain't never gonna play like that.

The fact that an overt 1pl. *ni* is impossible in the text examples , just as in (69), but differently from (17), may be related to its object clitic position, i.e. there are more positions available in the left periphery for the overt *nous* of (17) to take advantage of than there are in the object clitic area.

[21] Since Italian object clitic *vi* has the same initial consonant as non-clitic 2pl. *voi* and as 2pl. possessive *vostro*, it is plausible to take *vi* in contemporary Italian to be able to be a true second person plural object clitic, in which case *vi* differs sharply from *ci*, which is only apparently first person plural. This may be supported by the (apparent) fact (further work is called for) that deletion of the vowel of *vi* and deletion of the vowel of *ci* are not parallel (the latter seems more readily deletable, like that of *ci* in locative sentences (with PLACE)). How to integrate the locative *vi* of a more literary Italian remains open. For relevant diachronic discussion, see Reisig Ferrazzano (2003).

This is not unexpected from the perspective developed here. The *ci* of (99)/(100) is not a first person plural clitic,[22] despite appearances, but is rather the same (deictic) clitic found in (101)/(102), and, as we see, has the same position relative to *ti*.[23]

12. Conclusion

Silent first person plural pronouns are present in various Romance languages in certain special contexts. An approach based on silent elements provides an alternative (one that is more tightly tied to other aspects of syntax) to an approach based on syncretism (which might have seemed plausible at least for Italian *ci*).

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[22] (99) (but not (101)) must in addition contain a silent 1pl. NI, as in:
  i) NI ti ci affideranno
[23] Beyond the scope of this paper is the fact that impersonal *si* follows accusative third person object clitics:
    i) Li si legge facilmente. ('them *si* reads easily')
while reflexive *si/se* precedes them:
    ii) Gianni se li compra. ('G *se* them buys')

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