

# Deontic Existentials

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The aim of this paper is to investigate the components of so-called “deontic existentials”, in order to shed new light on the interplay of syntax and semantics in canonical existential constructions. I start from the claim that at least some languages display constructions that work in parallel to canonical existential constructions but which are characterized by a surplus value, namely deontic modality. In the languages under discussion, this special “deontic” type of existential is instantiated by a construction with the modal verb WANT, which would encode volitionality in its canonical use. Crosslinguistically, this deontic existential behaves syntactically like its canonical counterpart: in both types of existential construction in Italian, there is an obligatory (originally) locative element; the unmarked position of the pivot is postverbal, but it still agrees with the finite verb. Once true existential constructions are clearly distinguished from locatives, definiteness effects in both deontic and canonical existentials can be observed even in Italian. Definiteness effects are even more obvious in Sardinian, where both types of existentials also display similar syntactic behaviour. However, some differences between canonical and deontic constructions, which can be traced back both to the argument structure of WANT and to its modal semantics, can be observed as well.\*

## 1. Introduction

This paper starts from the claim that at least some languages exhibit constructions that work in parallel to canonical existential constructions but which are characterized by a surplus deontic value, cf. (1) from Italian:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. Canonical existential  
**Ci** sono tre uova nel frigo.  
LOC<sup>2</sup> be.3PL three eggs in-the fridge  
‘There are three eggs in the fridge.’

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b. Existential + deontic modality

**Ci** *vogliono* tre uova per fare questa torta  
 LOC want.3PL three eggs for make.INF this cake  
 ‘There must be three eggs / Three eggs are needed to make this cake.’

The deontic existential construction under discussion here consists of a form of the verb WANT/*volere*, which functions as a modal existential auxiliary (in italics), an apparently locative clitic (in bold) and a nominal phrase representing the element whose modalized coming-into-existence<sup>3</sup> is predicated, known as the pivot<sup>4</sup> (underlined).

Crosslinguistically, this pattern is not uncommon in other Romance varieties, cf. (2) from Venetan and especially (3) from Sardinian; however, similar deontic existentials with WANT can also be found in earlier stages of English, cf. (4):<sup>5</sup>

(2) Venetan (Benincà & Tortora 2009: 23)

**Ghe** *vole* do euro.  
 LOC want.3SG two euros  
 ‘Two Euros are necessary.’

(3) Sardinian (Jones 1993: 101)<sup>6</sup>

**Bi** *keret* tres ovos.  
 LOC want.3SG three eggs.  
 ‘Three eggs are necessary.’

(4) I grant that two bodies placed beyond the tenth sphere, or in a vacuity, according to Aristotle’s philosophy, could not behold each other, because **there** *wants* a body or medium to hand and transport the visible rays of the object unto the sense.

(Sir Th. Brown 1635)

The overall aim of this paper is to further investigate the components of the “deontic existentials” presented here, in order to shed new light on the interplay of syntax and semantics in canonical existential constructions. Thus, in what follows, I will use principally Italian and Sardinian data to 1) explain how and why the verb WANT can develop into a deontic existential auxiliary, and 2) exemplify the parallels and differences between the behaviour of the deontic and canonical existential constructions. The organization of the paper is as follows: the next section (§2) introduces some basic concepts of voli-

tionality, the modality usually attributed to the verb WANT<sup>7</sup>, within formal modal semantics. Morphosyntactic criteria will be the subject of §3, as they have been identified as relevant to the description of existentials in general and the type of constructions at issue here; §4 looks at the distinction between true existentials and locatives. An analysis of the data, covering synchronic and diachronic aspects, is presented in §5, while a summary and brief outlook conclude the paper (§6).

## 2. Modal semantics

This special type of “deontic” existential, which is instantiated in the languages under discussion by a construction with the modal verb WANT, is more specialized in interpretation than the simple combination of deontic modal plus canonical existential would be, cf. (5a) vs. (5b):

- (5) a. **Ci**    *devono*    *essere*    tre    uova.  
 LOC    must.3PL    be.INF    three    eggs  
 ‘There must be three eggs.’  
 ⇒ Interpretation: deontic / epistemic (preferred)
- b. **Ci**    *vogliono*    tre    uova.  
 LOC    be.3PL    three    eggs  
 ‘There must be three eggs/Three eggs are needed.’  
 ⇒ Interpretation: deontic / \*epistemic

Thus, ‘coming into existence’ can be semantically modalized in several ways. In (5a) the semantically compositional construction with the modal *dovere* ‘must’ and BE can have two readings, the strictly deontic reading and the usually preferred epistemic reading. In the WANT-construction (5b), the modality can only be interpreted as deontically, not epistemically necessary. This seems to be due to the impossibility, at least in Italian, to get an epistemic reading for *volere* at all.<sup>8</sup> This property of *volere* thus seems to be inherited also by the *volerci*-constructions.<sup>9</sup>

The following example furthermore shows that in the WANT-construction negation always has scope over the deontic necessity:<sup>10</sup>

(6) Non **ci** *deve* *essere* la panna nella carbonara.  
 NEG LOC must.3PL be.INF the cream in-the Carbonara

a. 'It is necessary not to have cream in Carbonara.'

b. 'It is not necessary to have cream in Carbonara.'

⇒ Interpretation:<sup>11</sup>  $\neg\Box, \Box\neg$

(7) Non **ci** *vuole* la panna nella carbonara.  
 NEG LOC want.3PL the cream in-the Carbonara

a. 'It is necessary not to have cream in Carbonara.'

b. \*'It is not necessary to have cream in Carbonara.'

⇒ Interpretation:  $\neg\Box, *\Box\neg$

Thus, modality in the deontic WANT-construction is purely deontic and lower in scope than both epistemic modality and negation.

Crosslinguistically, WANT not only develops into a future auxiliary in many languages, but it is also found in all types of constructions expressing pure deontic necessity: see the following examples from German, Calabrian (CS) and Sardinian (for an overview in Romance, see Remberger 2005; for the deontic passive, see Remberger 2006b; for the development into an evidential marker particular to German, cf. Remberger 2011):<sup>12</sup>

(8) Ger. Dieses Buch *will* *gelesen* *werden*.  
 this book want.3SG read.PST.PTCP be.PASS.3PL

'This book must be read.'

(9) Cal. 'sta pasta *vo* *cu* *ru* *sugu*. (Ledgeway 2000: 261)  
 this pasta want.3SG with the sauce

'This pasta should be eaten with tomato sauce.'

(10) Sard. Sas *criticas* *cheren* *motivadas* *e* *misuradas*,  
 the critiques want.3PL motivated and measured  
*sinono non* *servin* *a* *nudda*.  
 if-not not help.3SG to nothing

'Criticism needs to be motivated and modest, otherwise it is not helpful at all.'

(Sa-Limba 1999-2011,<sup>13</sup> cf. also Remberger 2006: 263)

In (8) we have an inanimate subject with the complement of WANT in the passive, which results in a non-volitional reading. In (9), WANT acts as a copula selecting a small clause, whose subject

is still inanimate. Finally, in (10), WANT appears as a true passive auxiliary with a main verb participle and, again, the subject is not volitional. Thus WANT can have a purely deontic reading in certain constructions, especially in passive contexts and with inanimate subjects.

Let us now look at the semantic make-up of WANT, given in (11). Following Kratzer's modal semantics with two basic types of modality, i.e. possibility and necessity, the modal meaning of WANT can clearly be related to necessity (see property i); the modal base for WANT has been claimed to be buletic, and sometimes there might be a further epistemic or doxastic modal base (cf. property ii); the goal of the modal relation is the complement in the scope of WANT, namely a set of propositions which are preferred in a world *w* (see property iii); what makes WANT unusual among the verbs expressing modality is that the modal meaning of WANT, necessity, is individually anchored (for this notion, cf. Farkas 1992) in the external argument of the clause (see property iv):

- (11) The components of volitional modality / WANT  
(cf. also Remberger 2010: 165-167):
- i. a modal relation of necessity  
(cf. Calbert 1975: 36, fn. 32)
  - ii. a modal base: a buletic or epistemic / doxastic model  
(buletic: cf. Kratzer 1981; doxastic: cf. von Stechow 1999:117; Heim 1992; epistemic: cf. Hacquard 2006)
  - iii. a goal of modality: the complement over which WANT takes scope  
(a set of propositions preferred in *w*, cf. Quer 1998: 22)
  - iv. a source of modality: the individual anchor of volitional modality is the thematic 'subject', i.e. the external argument of WANT, usually an intentional entity.

It is property iv which is particular to WANT among most of the other modal verbs. However, as we have seen before, this link of the source of modality to the external argument can be cancelled in certain contexts, namely, 1) if the external argument is not (even metonymically) intentional, e.g. an inanimate entity (as 'the book' in (8)); 2) if the goal of modality contradicts what an intentional entity could want (e.g. in passive constructions with animate subjects); and 3) if there is no external argument at all, as in impersonal constructions. These conditions, of course, play a role in the diachronic development of WANT as a pure deontic marker of modality (cf. especially §5.2).

### 3. Morphosyntactic criteria

As in canonical existential constructions, several morphosyntactic and often individually parametrized properties can also be observed in deontic existential constructions in the languages discussed here:

- (12) Morphosyntactic criteria
- (1) the presence of a coda
  - (2) +/- agreement of the DP with the verb
  - (3) +/- defective paradigm of the deontic existential verb
  - (4) +/- overt case of the DP
  - (5) *ne*-cliticization
  - (6) +/- obligatoriness of the locative/existential clitic
  - (7) +/- co-occurrence or complementary distribution with a dative clitic
  - (8) +/- formal identity of the existential clitic with other clitics  
(dative / locative / reflexive)
  - (9) +/- definiteness effect

These morphosyntactic criteria will each be illustrated in the following subsections.

#### 3.1. Presence of the coda

An overt locative phrase in canonical existential constructions is usually called a “coda”, cf. the PP *nel frigo* in (1a). The coda<sup>14</sup> usually narrows down the spatiotemporal circumstances for which the existence of an entity is predicated (cf. Leonetti 2008, Cruschina 2012). Deontic existentials can also have a coda: this is mostly not locative in nature, but – probably as a consequence of the modal meaning – encodes a purpose, consisting either of a final infinitival sentence, like *per fare questa torta* in (1b), or a final PP (e.g. *per questa torta* ‘for this cake’). However, locative codas are possible, like *nella carbonara* in (7), where a purpose is implicit. Conversely, canonical existentials can also have a non-locative coda, consisting of a purpose phrase, cf. (13):

- (13) Per ogni tipo di gioco *c’era* un edificio. (Mereu 2011: 120)  
for every type of game LOC be.PST.3SG a building  
‘For every type of game there was a building.’

However, the coda for a canonical existential is usually a locative phrase.

### 3.2. +/- Agreement of the DP with the verb

In the Italian deontic existential, the finite verb agrees with the pivot, but in Sardinian it always appears in the 3sg default form (but see the correlation with the definiteness effect below in §3.3.), cf. (14a) vs. (14b) (repeated from (1b) and (3) above):

- (14) a. Italian  
**Ci** *vogliono* tre uova per fare questa torta.  
 LOC want.3PL three eggs for make this cake  
 ‘There must be three eggs/Three eggs are needed to make this cake.’
- b. Sardinian (Jones 1993:101)  
**Bi** *cheret* tres ovos.  
 LOC want.3SG three eggs  
 ‘Three eggs are necessary.’

### 3.3. +/- Defective paradigm of the deontic existential verb

In Sardinian, the paradigm of WANT in the deontic existential is clearly defective, i.e. it can appear only in the 3sg. Unlike Italian *bisogna*, however, which is much more restricted in use (cf. Benincà & Poletto 1994, 1997), it can appear in other than simple finite tenses, e.g. the compound perfect (for *have-* vs. *be-*selection, see again §3.9):

- (15) Sardinian (Jones 1993: 101)  
**B'** at *kérfitu* tres ovos pro fákere cussas gatheddas.  
 LOC have.3SG want.PST.PTCP three eggs for make these biscuits  
 ‘Three eggs were needed to make these biscuits.’

Also in Italian, *ci vuole* is able to appear in the compound perfect as the data from Russi (2006: 253-257)<sup>15</sup> show:

- (16) **Ci** sono *voluti* quattro anni per creare “Standing Stone”.  
 LOC be.3PL want.PST.PTCP.M.PL four years for create “Standing Stone”  
 ‘It took 4 years to create “Standing Stone”.’

Russi (2006: 253-257) also has further data for Italian, like (17) with a gerundial form or even forms in the 2nd and 1st person, cf. (18):

- (17) *Volendoci del pane, Carlo è andato a comprarlo.*  
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want.GERUND=LOC of.the bread Carlo be.3SG gone to buy=it

‘Since bread was needed, Carlo went to buy it.’

- (18) a. *Ci voglio io / Ci vuoi tu /*  
LOC want.1SG I / LOC want.2SG you.SG /  
*Ci vogliamo noi / Vi volete voi per...*  
LOC want.1PL we / LOC want.2PL you.PL for...

- b. *Ci voglio io per ridargli una motivazione.*  
LOC want.1SG I for to-give-back=him a motivation  
 ‘It’ll take me to get his motivation back.’

- c. *Ci volevi tu, eh, Grassone!*  
LOC want.PST.2SG you.SG eh fatty  
 ‘It took you, eh, fatty!’

However, besides the fact that these data are not all accepted by all native speakers, I would propose that examples like (18) are not true existentials, since the DP is definite. In fact, cases with 2SG pronouns or other definite DPs are also found in Sardinian, cf. (19):

- (19) a. *Non bi keres tue inoke.*  
NEG LOC want.2SG you.SG here  
 ‘You are not needed here.’

- b. *Bi sun kèrfitos cussos òmines.*  
LOC be.3SG want.PST.PTCP.M.PL these men  
 ‘These men were needed there.’

However, also these constructions can be claimed to be locative rather than existential, since they can clearly be distinguished from one another, at least in Sardinian, by agreement phenomena and auxiliary selection (see §3.8 below, and Remberger 2009, Remberger 2012); for Italian, although these tests are not available, a similar distinction can be made between topical locative constructions and existentials proper (cf. Leonetti 2008 and Cruschina 2012, and §4).

### 3.4. +/- Overt case of the DP

Overt case marking in Italian is detectible only with a limited

number of pronouns. But since overt personal pronouns are definite by definition, they can be said to be not existential pivots proper, but nominative subjects in locative constructions (for canonical existentials, cf. Leonetti 2008 and Cruschina 2012). The following examples, again from Russi (2006: 253-257), as the ones already presented in (18),<sup>17</sup> are thus not existential deontics proper, but deontic existentials involving a pronominalized locative phrase (in what follows I will call these constructions deontic-locatives, in order to distinguish them from existential deontics proper):

- (20) a. **Ci** *voleva* lui, Silvio Berlusconi in persona.  
 LOC want.PST.3SG he.NOM S.B. in person  
 ‘It required him, Silvio Berlusconi in person.’
- b. Sono robusti, **ci** *vogliono* loro.  
 be.3PL strong LOC want.3PL they.NOM  
 ‘They are strong, they are needed there.’

As for the postverbal indefinite pivot in Sardinian, it is unclear which case it has: here too, case is overt only with personal pronouns, which are definite by definition, so there never can be a clear nominative marking for indefinite pivots. Also Jones (1993: 104) claimed that these indefinite DPs cannot be subjects and might have either no or another case than nominative. For similar pivots in other languages, especially those that use HAVE as an existential auxiliary,<sup>18</sup> the case is clearly accusative. In Sardinian (and maybe Italian too) it might be partitive (see also the following *ne*-cliticization test).

### 3.5. *Ne-cliticization*

*Ne-cliticization* shows that the indefinite pivot of an existential construction proper is its internal argument (Russi 2006: 253-257):

- (21) a. Gli **ce** *ne* sono *voluti* otto.  
 him.DAT LOC CL.PART be.3PL want.PST.PTCP.M.PL eight  
 ‘At least eight were necessary for him.’
- b. Gli **ce** *ne* / \**le* *vorranno* almeno due.  
 him.DAT LOC CL.PART / CL.ACC.F.PL want.FUT.3PL at least two  
 ‘At least two he will need.’

For these arguments in unaccusative constructions it has been claimed that they have partitive (and thus not nominative) case (cf. Belletti 1988).

### 3.6. Obligatoriness of the locative / existential clitic

In Italian, the locative clitic in the *ci vuole* construction can never be omitted (Russi 2006: 253-257):

- (22) \*(**Ci**) *vogliono* nove giorni per farsi installare  
 LOC want.3PL nine days for make= REFL install  
 in casa il telefono dalla Telecom.  
 in home the phone by-the telecom  
 ‘It takes nine days to have the phone installed by Telecom at home.’

In Sardinian, the locative can only be left out in examples such as the following (from Sa-Limba 1999-2011), where the pivot is not a DP but a CP (and in case there is a dative clitic instead, see next subsection):

- (23) a. Como *cheret* chi faedemus e scriemus.  
 now want.3SG that talk.SBJV.1PL and write.SBJV.1PL  
 ‘Now it is necessary to talk and write.’
- b. *Cheret* chi tumbulemus prus a forte pro las abberrer.  
 want.3SG that hit.1PL more strong for them.F.PL open  
 ‘It’s necessary that we hit them harder to open them.’

I assume, as I have done in Remberger (2009), that the originally locative clitic is a kind of overt existential operator in both the canonical and the deontic existential; the existential operator then needs a verbal predicator (BE for Italian, HAVE for Sardinian, or WANT, for both) in order to build an existential predicate. Furthermore, the clitic has the function of marking a stage topic (which is the ‘here and now’ of the speech situation, cf. Erteschik-Shir 1997). This is a remainder of the former locative function.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.7. +/- Co-occurrence or complementary distribution with a dative clitic

In Italian, as well as the (obligatory) locative in the deontic existential, a dative pronoun encoding a beneficiary can also appear (Russi 2006: 253-257):

- (24) Gli **ci** sono *voluti* otto mesi  
 him.DAT LOC be.3PL want.PART.M.PL eight months  
 per rimettersi dall' incidente.  
 for recover=REFL.from.the accident  
 'For him, it took eight months to recover from the accident.'

In Sardinian, instead, either the locative clitic or a dative pronoun, but not both, appears in these constructions (Jones 1997: 101):<sup>20</sup>

- (25) Nos *keret* unu milione de francos.  
 us.DAT want.3SG one million of francs  
 'We need one million francs.'

What is interesting here<sup>21</sup> is that a dative clitic is never possible in the existential constructions proper, neither in Italian (cf. (26a)) nor in Sardinian (cf. (26b)):

- (26) a. \*Mi **ci** sono *tre* uova nel frigo.  
 me.DAT LOC be.3PL three eggs in-the fridge  
 b. \*Mi **b'** *at* tres ovos.  
 me.DAT LOC have.3SG three eggs

In principle, it seems to be the argument structure of WANT that allows a beneficiary dative representing the source of modality (cf. (11iv)). In Sardinian, unlike Italian, the dative clitic is obviously able to additionally assume the role of the existential operator and stage topic marker *bi*.

### 3.8. +/- Formal identity of the existential clitic with other clitics (dative / locative / reflexive)

In Italian, the pronoun clitic *ci* has several functions: 1) 1PL accusative (also reflexive); 2) 1PL dative (also reflexive); 3) deictic locative; 4) existential operator;<sup>22</sup> 5) replacement for the reflexive in the case of double *si* (cf. Benincà & Tortora 2009:21 and the examples given there in (8)). In Sardinian, the locative *bi* and other locative forms found in the Sardinian varieties are not identical to any personal pronoun (e.g. the 1PL would be *nos*, the 2PL would be *bos*); *bi* is only used as a deictic or existential locative (also in presentational locative constructions, cf. Remberger 2009, 2012; for the variation of the locative clitic in existential constructions in other Sardinian varieties, cf. Bentley 2011).

### 3.9. Definiteness effect

In Sardinian existential constructions, as in other languages such as English or French, definiteness effects (in the sense of the weak/strong determiner distinction cf. Milsark 1974, 1977) are found, with the following side effects:

- |                                       |                                    |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (27) a. With a definite DP we have:   | b. With an indefinite DP there is: |
| auxiliary selection                   | the default auxiliary              |
| verb agreement                        | no verb agreement                  |
| participle agreement                  | no participle agreement            |
| post- or preverbal position of the DP | postverbal position of the DP      |
| a locative construction               | an existential construction proper |

Crosslinguistically, the deontic existential behaves syntactically like its canonical counterpart: in Italian both existential constructions have an obligatory locative element; the unmarked position of the pivot is postverbal, but still it agrees with the finite verb. Once a clear distinction is drawn between true existential constructions and locatives (as observed by Leonetti 2008) definiteness effects can also be observed in both deontic and canonical existentials in Italian. Definiteness effects are even more obvious in Sardinian, which also has both types of existentials. Moreover, Sardinian canonical and deontic constructions exhibit similar syntactic behaviour and show the same correlations with the definiteness effect, cf. (28) (repeated from (15) and (19b) above) (cf. Jones 1993, La Fauci & Loporcario 1997, Bentley 2004, 2011):

- (28) a. **B'**    *at*    *kérfitu*            tres    ovos    [...]. (Jones 1993: 101)  
 there have.3SG want.PST.PTCP.M.SG three eggs  
 'Three eggs were needed.'  
 ⇒ indefinite DP, postverbal position, no agreement, auxiliary: HAVE  
 ⇒ deontic existential with an existential operator in subject position<sup>23</sup>
- b. **Bi**    *sun*    *kérfitos*            cussos ómines [...]. (Jones 1993: 101)  
 there be.3PL want.PST.PTCP.M.PL these men  
 'These men were needed there.'  
 ⇒ definite DP, subject-verb and participle agreement, auxiliary: BE  
 ⇒ deontic copula with a locative clitic in subject position

The difference in meaning between these two constructions stems from the difference in the functional meaning encoded in the copula BE, normally considered to be semantically almost empty (i.e. just a verbal predicator where a verbal category is needed), and the verb WANT: in its canonical use, the latter is a modal verb encoding volitionality, but, as shown in §2, it can develop into a modal encoder of pure necessity in certain circumstances.

#### *4. Existentials proper vs. locative constructions*

Studies have adopted two main approaches to the interpretation of existential constructions. In typological discussions in particular, existentials have been put on a par with locatives (cf. Freeze 1992), interpreting the DP present in the structure as the (theme) subject of the predication, and the locative phrase the predicate, with the locative pronoun as a further spell-out of a locative feature or a pro-predicate. Moro (1998) tried to show that existentials are simply inverse locatives, with the DP a focus and the locative predicate the topic of the sentence (thus expressed by a pro-predicate, and sometimes by a locative adjunct, the coda). Some studies that claim that locatives and existentials have the same underlying structure go even further, claiming that the full verbs BE and HAVE, often used as existential verbs in the European languages, are also the same, with HAVE containing some additional incorporated feature (like a location, for example). The most recent exponent of the latter claim is Kayne (1993).<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, several other studies keep existential constructions clearly distinct from locative constructions, such as McNally (1992, 2011), Zamparelli (2000), Cornilescu (2008) for Romanian, Remberger (2009) for Sardinian, and Leonetti (2008) and Cruschina (2012) for Italian. They all have shown that the pivot in existentials is not a good subject (cf. also Bentley 2010, Beaver, Levinson & Francez 2005) and have attributed several functions to it within the structure of the proposition (for a recent semantic analysis of existentials, cf. Francez 2007), cf. Table 1:

**Table 1.** Existentials are different from locatives.

EXISTENTIALS	ROLE OF THE DP	ROLE OF THE LOCATIVE PHRASE	ROLE OF THE LOCATIVE ELEMENT
McNally (1992)	complement to BE <sub>exist</sub> (property)	semantic adjunct	expletive in [Spec, IP] (requires the definiteness restriction/ novelty)
Zamparelli (2000)	predicate	optional locative adjunct	specific indefinite locative with a novelty requirement
Cornilescu (2008)	predicate	adjunct (optional)	subject (external argument) specific indefinite locative

In line with these authors and based on Jones (1993), Remberger (2009) has also claimed that existentials are different from locatives, and that this difference is highlighted by Sardinian, where the definiteness effect is accompanied by further overt grammatical consequences as shown above and summed up in (29):

(29) Correlation in Sardinian

- (i) for existentials proper:
  - ⇒ indefinite/weak DP, postverbal position, HAVE-selection, default-agreement, obligatory clitic;
- (ii) for locative constructions:
  - ⇒ definite/strong DP, (pre- and) postverbal position, BE-selection, S-V-agreement, locative clitic (often referring to an overt locative PP).

However, the definiteness effect, and thus a distinction between locatives and true existential constructions, can also be observed in Italian, as Leonetti (2008) and Cruschina (2012) have shown. The following test is from Leonetti (2008: ex. 13):

- (30) a. **C'** è la statua di Michelangelo, in Piazza della Signoria.  
 b. ??**C'** è la statua di Michelangelo in Piazza della Signoria.  
 c. **C'** è la statua di Michelangelo.  
LOC is the statue of Michelangelo in Piazza della Signoria  
 'The statue of Michelangelo is there, in Piazza della Signoria.'

According to Leonetti, (30a), with a definite nominal, is not a true existential but a locative construction with a topicalized and thus right-dislocated locative. (30b) is therefore excluded, since it has an existential syntax with a locative coda within the focus of the sentence, which is a violation of his Coda Constraint (i.e. definite DPs in these constructions must have narrow focus, not allowing a non-topical locative coda). (30c) is again grammatical, but still a locative construction with a definite nominal. Existentials proper, with an indefinite pivot, are not subject to the Coda Constraint, making them distinct from locatives in Italian.

Cruschina (2012) proposes a further group of tests in order to distinguish a locative construction, compatible with definite DPs, from a true existential, which is incompatible with a definite pivot (cf. Cruschina 2012: 15ff). All these tests follow from the generalization that, in a locative construction, the location cannot be focal:

(31) Tests for Italian

- (i) In a locative construction, where the DP is allowed to be definite, the locative element, the Italian clitic *ci*, must be linked to a topic; thus if the location corresponds to a wh-phrase, i.e. it is focus, *ci* cannot be present. In existential constructions, with obligatorily indefinite pivots, where *ci* does not refer to a location but has the function of a kind of existential operator, a combination of a locative wh-phrase and *ci* is possible.
- (ii) If the location bears contrastive focus it is not compatible with the presence of *ci* and with a definite DP; existential *ci* and indefinite pivots can instead appear together with a contrastive locative coda.
- (iii) If the location represents the focus constituent in an answer to a wh-question definite DPs and *ci* in the same clause are out; in existentials proper, which allow only indefinite DPs, *ci* can appear together with a information focus marked locative coda.

Let us now try to apply Cruschina's tests, which have been proven to work with the Italian *esserci* construction, to deontic existentials. Let us start with (31i), cf. (32) (which is parallel to Cruschina 2012: 15, ex. (29)):

- (32) a. \*Dove **ci** vuoi **tu**?  
 where LOC want.2SG tu?  
 ⇒ locative *ci* (impossible in the same clause with *dove*)

- b. ??Dove pensi che **ci** voglia Gianni?  
 where think.2SG that LOC want.SBJV.3SG Gianni  
 ⇒ locative *ci* (impossible in the same clause with  
*dove*)

In (32a) and (32b) the DP is definite, thus not an existential pivot. The constructions are marginal or ungrammatical because of the incompatibility between a locative wh-phrase and the locative *ci*, which is linked to a topical location. If the DP is indefinite, thus a proper pivot, the co-occurrence of a locative wh-phrase and existential *ci* is possible (sometimes in particular contexts),<sup>25</sup> cf. (33a) and (33b):

- (33) a. Dove **ci** vogliono tanti fiori?  
 where LOC want.3PL many flowers  
 ‘Where is it that many flowers are needed?’  
 ⇒ existential *ci*
- b. In quale stanza **ci** vuole una finestra in più?  
 in which room LOC want.3SG a window in more  
 ‘In which room is one more window needed?’  
 ⇒ existential *ci*

However, whereas in the constructions with *essere* in (34) (cf. Cruschina 2012:15, (29a) and (30a)) a grammatical sentence is easily yielded by omitting the topical locative *ci*, for the WANT-construction this is not so easy, since a further change in meaning occurs, cf. (35):

- (34) a. Dove sei tu?  
 where be.2SG you  
 ‘Where are you?’
- b. Dove hai detto che è Gianni?  
 where have.2SG said that be.3SG Gianni  
 ‘Where did you say Gianni is?’
- (35) a. \*?Dove vuoi tu?  
 where want.2SG you
- b. \*?Dove hai pensato che voglia Gianni?  
 where have.2SG think.PST.PTCP that want.SBJV.3SG Gianni

(35a) and (35b) are both difficult to interpret, close to incomprehensible, since the omission of the existential clitic *ci* in the WANT construction automatically results in the interpretation of *volere* as a personal volitional verb, which, as such, needs two arguments: an intentional experiencer as the source of volitionality (cf. §2) and a theme argument as the goal of modality. Since this second argument is missing in (35a) and (35b), the sentence is odd and only marginally interpretable with an implicit or pragmatically omitted argument, as in (36):<sup>26</sup>

- (36) ?Dove *vuoi* tu (che mettiamo il tavolo)?  
 where want.2SG you that put.1PL the table  
 ‘Where do you want (us to put the table)?’

However, as we have seen before, Italian has examples such as those quoted above from Russi (2006: 253-257), cf. (18) and (20), in which only one definite argument for *volere* occurs – and is definite – in the presence of *ci*. These examples resemble the deontic existential construction but cannot have an existential reading, since there only indefinite pivots are allowed.<sup>27</sup> Examples such as (18) and (20) are indeed interpreted similarly to the *esserci* constructions in (37) (from Cruschina 2012: 19):

- (37) a. C’ è Gianni.  
 loc be.3SG Gianni  
 ‘Gianni is here.’
- b. Guarda: C’ è tua sorella!  
 Look LOC be.3SG your sister  
 ‘Look: Your sister is here.’

Cruschina (2012: 19) claims that *ci* in (37) is locative-deictic, i.e. it “designates the perceptual identification of a referent in the speaker’s proximal physical space”. Thus, the examples in (18) and (20) could best be translated by the sentences in (38), where *ci* is rendered as a true locative-deictic referring to a specific location or discourse situation, i.e. a normal locative stage topic, but not also an existential operator (with (38a-c) for (18); (38d-e) for (20)):

- (38) a. ‘I am needed here. / You are needed here. / We are needed here...’  
 b. ‘I am needed here to give him back a motivation.’  
 c. ‘You were needed here, eh, fatty!’ (ironic)  
 d. ‘It was him, Silvio Berlusconi in person who was needed here.’  
 e. ‘They are strong, they are needed here.’

Cruschina's second test, cf. (31ii), is illustrated by the following examples:

- (39) a. **Ci vorrebbe un cane** in giardino.  
 loc want.COND.3SG a dog in garden  
 'It would be better to have a dog in the garden.'
- b. In GIARDINO **ci vorrebbe un cane** (non nel cortile).  
 in garden LOC want.COND.3SG a dog not in-the courtyard  
 'It would be better to have a dog in the garden, not in the courtyard.'
- c. ?\* IN GIARDINO **ci vorrebbe il cane** (non nel cortile).  
 in garden LOC want.COND.3SG the dog not in-the courtyard
- d. \*IN GIARDINO **vorrebbe il cane** (non nel cortile).  
 in garden want.COND.3SG the dog not in-the courtyard

(39a) and (39b) are grammatical, with an indefinite DP and a locative coda, which is contrastively focused in (39b). (39c) with a definite DP is ungrammatical, since the locative PP is contrastively focused, and with a definite DP,<sup>28</sup> *ci* is locative and can only be coreferential with a topic. However, (39d), with *ci* omitted, is also out, since in this case the interpretation of *volere* automatically becomes a personal one and the second argument is missing.<sup>29</sup> Cruschina's third test, cf. (31iii), is not applicable to the WANT-constructions for the same reasons of argument structure that cause the wh-questions in (35a-b) to be ungrammatical.

To conclude, this section has been shown that for Italian *volerci* two WANT-constructions can be distinguished: the true deontic existential and the deontic-locative construction. The same distinction holds for Sardinian, where further criteria, such as agreement (cf. §3.2) and auxiliary selection (cf. §3.9) clearly show the grammatical and interpretational difference between deontic existentials and deontic-locatives. Without *ci*, the *volere* returns to its personal reading as a volitional verb. This is not always true for Sardinian, which exhibits impersonal deontic WANT-constructions without existential (or operator) *ci*, like (23a-b) above, but an analysis of these constructions is outside the scope of this paper.

## 5. Comparative analysis

## 5.1 Synchrony

We have already seen that *volere* as a deontic existential is characterized by an indefinite pivot and an existential operator, whereas personal *volere* has two arguments. In what follows, only DP-complements, not infinitival complements, of *volere* are considered since these are the relevant arguments also for the analysis of the construction under discussion. In synchrony, the following parallel can be drawn between these constructions, since the pivot in the existential construction directly corresponds to the theme argument of personal *volere*, cf. (40a-b):

- (40) a. Gianni *vuole* una macchina (per andare in campagna).  
 G. want.3SG a car (for go.INF in countryside)  
 ‘Gianni wants a car to go to the countryside.’
- b. Ci *vuole* una macchina (per andare in campagna).  
 loc want.3SG a car (for go.INF in countryside)  
 ‘A car is needed to go to the countryside.’

If the theme argument of *volere* is definite, it is interpreted as specific, cf. (41):

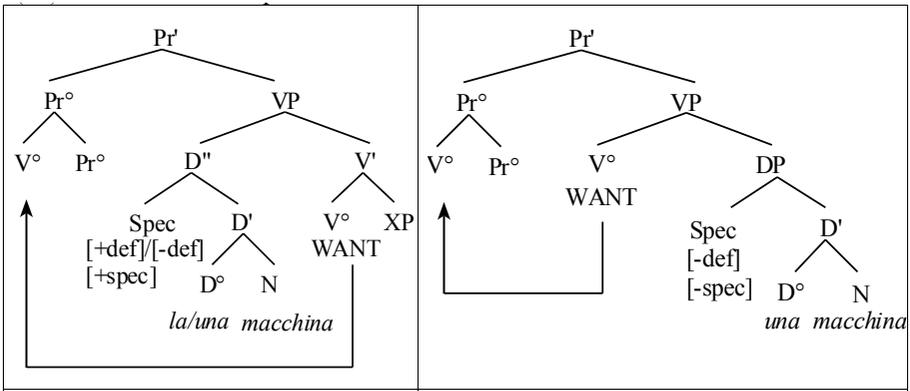
- (41) Gianni *vuole* la macchina (per andare in campagna).  
 G. want.3SG the car (for go.INF in countryside)  
 ‘Gianni wants the car to go to the countryside.’

If the theme argument is indefinite, two possible readings are available: specific (*de re*) and non-specific (*de dicto*). This distinction is illustrated in (42):

- (42) Gianni *vuole* una macchina ...  
 G. want.3SG a car  
 ‘Gianni wants a car...’
- a. ...che sia verde.  
 ‘...that is green.’  
 ⇒ [-specific]
- b. ...che ha visto dal venditore più caro della città.  
 ‘...that he has seen at the most expensive car seller of town.’  
 ⇒ [+specific]

In Remberger (2009), I argued that in Sardinian deontic WANT-constructions an indefinite pivot is in a position lower than other definite postverbal DPs. Evidence for that comes mainly from auxiliary selection and agreement criteria. Although the latter criteria are not visible in Italian personal and impersonal WANT-constructions or in Sardinian personal WANT-constructions I would now like to argue that there is a general structural difference in the generation of indefinite theme arguments of WANT, as shown in figure (43):

(43) a. Definite description/*de re* b. *de dicto*



DP[+def] < WANT => [+spec]  
 DP[-def] < WANT => [+spec]

WANT < DP[-def] => [-spec]

In both cases, the DP is inside the PrP (a generalized predication phrase, abstracting away from little v, little n, and little a, cf. Bowers 1993), where a proper internal argument (or direct object) should be. In (43a), the DP is in Spec, VP, in (43b) it is a complement of the VP. This structural difference would explain the scope factors which are at the basis of the *de dicto* vs. *de re* interpretation: in the former WANT has scope over the theme argument, which has a non-specific reading, while in the latter the theme argument is existentially closed above WANT, thus the reading is specific. It must of course be the *de dicto* interpretation which is at the origin of the WANT-constructions that are true deontic existentials, i.e. the indefinite pivot (the element just coming into existence within the set of worlds introduced by the modal) must be structurally lower than the verb.

## 5.2. Diachrony

The first attestations of the use of *ci vuole* as a deontic existential are given below. The data were retrieved from OVI and independently from Russi (2009), a paper in which many of the examples presented as (what we call here) deontic existentials are misinterpreted.

(44) Old Italian

- a. A farne cotanta **ci** ne vuole tre foglie;  
 to make that.much LOC PART want.3SG three leaves  
 ‘To make a certain amount of it three leaves are needed.’  
 (Giordano da Pisa; 1306)
- b. ... che largamente **ci** vorrebbe molto tempo...  
 that by-and-large LOC want.COND.3SG much time  
 ‘... that by and large a lot of time would be needed...’  
 (Giordano da Pisa; 1306)
- c. Ma altro rimedio **ci** voleva per appacificarci con Dio...  
 but other remedy LOC want.PST.3SG for reconcile=REFL with God  
 ‘but another remedy was needed for to reconcile ourselves with God...’  
 (Giovanni Villani; 1348)
- d. Piero, de’ tuoi pari **ci** vorrebbe assai;  
 Piero of your kind LOC want.COND.3SG a-lot  
 ‘Piero, many of your kind would be needed;’  
 (Sacchetti; XIV cent.)

All the DPs present in these structures are indeed indefinite (*tre foglie, molto tempo, altro rimedio, de’ tuoi pari*) and thus already seem to represent deontic existentials proper; (44a) and (44c) also have an appropriate coda (*a farne cotanta, per appacificarci con Dio*). Let us now look at possible pathways in the development of *volere* into an impersonal deontic existential.

## 5.2.1. Diachronic development: Hypotheses

In what follows, three hypotheses will be sketched, which might provide insight into how the volitional meaning of WANT was lost in the impersonal deontic constructions discussed. Hypothesis (A) is that the deontic existential and the deontic-locative both developed out of an impersonal construction, *si vuole* ‘one wants’, also involving a locative-deictic *ci*. In hypothesis (B) I assume that the construction originates from the personal pronoun clitic *ci*, encoding a beneficent dative 1PL, which is natural with WANT, indicating the source of modality

(cf. §3.7). Finally, hypothesis (C), which was proposed by Russi (2009), claims that it was the metonymical use of inanimate subjects which led to the impersonal use:

- (45) A.    *ci*            *si*        *vuole* > *ci vuole*  
      ⇒ merger/exchange of the impersonal reflexive and locative clitic
- B.    *gli/mi/ti...ci*    *vuole* > *ci vuole*  
      ⇒ dative clitic *ci* is the origin of *ci* in *volerci*
- C.    DP<sub>[inanimate]}</sub>*vuole* DP    *ci vuole* (Russi 2009)  
      ⇒ metonymical use of inanimate subjects leads to impersonal use

The following subsections will shortly discuss each of these hypotheses.

### 5.2.2. Hypothesis A

(46a) demonstrates again the personal use of *volere* with a direct object. The corresponding impersonal construction featuring the clitic pronoun *si* comes in two versions in Italian, namely without agreement (cf. (46b)) and as a medio-passive reflexive with agreement (cf. (46c)) (for speaker variation in these constructions, cf. D'Alessandro 2007). A locative-deictic marker *ci* might also appear in the medio-passive construction (cf. (46d)) (although it is quite marginal).<sup>30</sup> A loss of the reflexive element would then give rise to the deontic existential discussed here (cf. (46e)):

- (46) a.    *Maria vuole due ragazzi allo stesso tempo.*  
          Maria    want.3SG two    boy-friends at-the same time  
          ‘Maria wants two boyfriends at the same time.’
- b.    *Quando *si* vuole due ragazzi allo stesso tempo...*  
          when    *SI*    want.3SG two    boy-friends at-the same time  
          ‘When one wants two boyfriends at the same time...’
- c.    *Quando *si* vogliono due ragazzi allo stesso tempo...*  
          when    *SI*    want.3PL two    boy-friends at-the same time  
          ‘When one wants two boyfriends at the same time...’

- d. Quando (?**ci**) *si vogliono* due ragazzi<sub>(s)</sub> allo stesso tempo...  
 when (LOC) *si* want.3PL two boy-friends at-the same time  
 ‘When one wants two boyfriends there at the same time...’
- e. **Ci** *vogliono* due ragazzi.  
 loc want.3PL two boys  
 ‘Two boys are needed.’

Although the presence of a prepositional adjunct pronominalized by *ci* might seem odd in (46d), it is in principle possible in a transitive construction with personal *volere*, cf. (47):

- (47) Gianni **ci** *vuole* sempre due piatti, sul tavolo.  
 Gianni loc want.3SG always two plates on-the table  
 ‘Gianni always wants two plates, on the table.’

However, something seems to inhibit the presence of both, impersonal *si* and locative *ci*, in these constructions, so that we find either one or the other.<sup>31</sup> As for impersonal *si*, early attestations of an impersonal or medio-passive use of *volere* are given in the following examples from Dante:<sup>32</sup>

(48) Old Italian

- a. Questo **si** *vuole* e questo già **si** cerca...  
 this *si* want.3SG and this already *si* search-for.3SG  
 ‘One wants this and one already searches for this.’  
 (Dante, Paradiso 17, 0)
- b. E tutte le altre cose **si** *vogliono* per la perfezione  
 and all the other things *si* want.3PL for the perfection  
 di colui che vuole  
 of him that want.3SG  
 ‘And all the other things are wanted for the perfection of him who wants.’  
 (Dante, Conv. 13, 56)

The meaning of *si vuole* (impersonal construction with *si*) and *ci vuole* (deontic existential) already is very close, so that there might have been a functional exchange or merger of the clitics at one point or another.<sup>33</sup> However, hypothesis A clearly needs some further investigation.

### 5.2.3. Hypothesis B

One argument in favour of hypothesis (B) is that the deictic meaning of 1PL is very close to the locative-deictic meaning in any case (indeed, Italian *ci* is derived from the former proximal locative adverb in Latin, \*HICCE) and thus a shift from 1PL dative meaning to a purely situational and then later purely functional meaning would be natural. Furthermore, in at least some Italian varieties (cf. Benincà & Tortora 2009) constructions that might initially appear to be deontic existentials with *ci vuole* can still be also interpreted as referring to 1PL, cf. (49) from Benincà & Tortora (2009: 24):<sup>34</sup>

(49) Regional Italian from Padua

Ci	vogliono	due	euro.
cl.1pl.dat	want.3PL	two	euros

‘We need two Euros.’

We have already seen that in Sardinian the existential clitic *ci* can be substituted by a dative clitic (in contrast to Standard Italian, where this construction would be ungrammatical), cf. (25) above. However, Sardinian *bi* (and the other ‘locative’ elements found in these WANT-constructions such as Logudorese *ke*, Campidanese *ddhue*, *ci*) cannot be explained as a dative clitic (e.g. *nos* ‘to us’, *bos* ‘to you’ etc., cf. also §3.6) since in Sardinian, contrary to Italian, the distinction between 1PL dative clitic and locative-deictic clitic is maintained (cf. also §3.8). Thus also hypothesis B must be further explored in future research.

### 5.2.4. Hypothesis C

Russi’s (2009) hypothesis derived the deontic existential use of *volere* from early examples where the subject argument of the construction is inanimate. We have indeed already seen in §2 (cf. especially examples (8-10)) that non-volitional subjects in WANT-constructions easily result in pure deontic readings. Russi (2009) gives the following example from Latin:

(50) *Seri non volt hordeum nisi in sicca et soluta terra.*  
to-be-sown not want.3SG barley but in dry and loose soil  
‘Barley doesn’t want to be sown except in dry and loose soil.’

Note that this example closely resembles the German use of WANT in (8), where the infinitive is also in the passive; Russi (2009) also provides the following example for Old Italian:

- (51) Il regno di Cielo *vuole* fatica e forza grandissima...  
the reign of Heaven want.3sg trouble and effort biggest  
'The reign of heaven wants highest trouble and effort...'

Of course, examples of this kind can also be found in Modern Italian even with non-infinitival complements (from Russi 2009):

- (52) È un verbo che *vuole* l'accusativo.  
is a verb that want.3sg the accusative  
'This verb takes the accusative.'

Although the shift from a volitional to a deontic meaning can be conditioned by semantic features of the subject, I do not think that this fact can explain why the *ci vuole* construction arises in Italian and Sardinian at all, nor in Latin or German, were similar shifts with respect to inanimate subjects could be observed. Furthermore, it is the subject of volitional WANT, i.e. the experiencer, which is lost, whereas the DP-argument, which might be inanimate in both constructions, is still kept (see the parallels given in (40) above). However, a more detailed discussion of the historical factors leading to the development of WANT as a deontic existential is a topic for further research.

## 6. Conclusion and outlook

In this paper I have demonstrated that the deontic existentials in the languages discussed here show a morphosyntactic behaviour parallel to canonical existentials. The difference in meaning between deontic and canonical existentials stems from the verb WANT, which inherently encodes the modal relation of necessity and takes two arguments. The shift from volitionality to necessity can be observed in several WANT-constructions in many languages in the world.

I have also shown that, as with canonical existentials, a distinction must be drawn between deontic existentials proper and deontic-locatives with WANT. Synchronically, it can be observed that the theme argument of WANT can also be either specific (*de re* => a higher internal argument) or unspecific (*de dicto* => a lower internal argument) in personal WANT-constructions. In the true deontic existentials the indefinite pivot is a low argument, in contrast to the deontic-locatives, where the argument DP is definite (*de re*) and must be in a higher position. With regard to diachrony, several paths of

development have been proposed and some arguments in favour of each have been outlined. A detailed study of the possible origins of the construction, however, must be left to further studies. We have seen that there are differences between the WANT and the BE constructions discussed here, but these can be traced back to differences in argument structure and modal meaning. Yet, the parallel behaviour of the constructions with WANT and the constructions with BE in both Italian and Sardinian is a further argument in favour of the claim that a clear distinction between locatives with definite subjects and true existentials with indefinite pivots is necessary.

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*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> As for the Italian examples, they were checked by three native speakers of Italian, one from a Southern area, one from Tuscany, and one from a Northern region; thanks to Silvio Cruschina, Alessia Angiolini and Cecilia Poletto for their help. I think that a detailed study of WANT-constructions in regional Italian would reveal some substantial variation in grammatical judgements. However, as for the particular WANT-construction at issue here, the judgements seem quite clear, when the appropriate contexts are given.

<sup>2</sup> The element glossed with LOC is meant to be formally, but not always also semantically, locative; in fact, in existential constructions LOC is more an existential operator (or expletive) than a locative marker (cf. also the distinction between *there* and *thr* in Lyons 1999: 227-252).

<sup>3</sup> In existential constructions, the pivot is the element that “comes into existence”: it is not present in the preceding discourse and it can only be referred to after its existence was predicated. As Bentley (2004, 2007) puts it the pivot must be a “brandnew unanchored element”. As for the deontic existentials at issue here, the modal environment adds an additional factor insofar as modality introduces sets of alternative worlds. The indefinite pivot in a modal environment must necessarily have a non-referential, non-specific interpretation, i.e. a *de dicto* reading, whereas a *de re* reading of an indefinite element would suggest that the definite DP is interpreted as being existentially quantified above the modal. Such a DP thus is not “brandnew” and “unanchored”; see also the representation in (43).

<sup>4</sup> In the text, I will refer to the nominal phrases involved in the constructions under discussion as a “pivot” only in cases of true existential constructions (as for the distinction, cf. §4 below). I will also avoid the notion “subject” in the context of proper existential pivots (as for the general problem of subjecthood, cf. also Bentley 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Note that English *want* is a loan from Old Norse *vanta* ‘to lack’ (cf. Onions et al. 1966), originally meaning ‘lack’ in English as well and thus often used as an

impersonal verb. Therefore, although there often is a development from a personal verb to an impersonal construction observable in language history, the opposite development, as in English, from an impersonal to a personal use of *want* is also observable.

<sup>6</sup> The Sardinian variety in Jones (1993) is Logudorese (from the village of Lula). In what follows, as for Sardinian, I will only use examples from the Logudorese varieties, although the construction does exist also in Campidanese (where the verb for WANT is *bòlliri/bolli* and also the locative element is different). Since there is no commonly accepted standard for Sardinian, the orthography might vary following the different sources of the data. Of course, a thorough investigation of micro-variation with respect to the Sardinian constructions at issue here would be a desideratum (cf. the work of Delia Bentley as presented in Bentley 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Sometimes the term “volitionality” is used for larger concepts, like in Portner (2009: 196 ff, ch. 4.4.1), where it is assumed that “volitional modals take their subject as a semantic argument in the fashion of control predicates”, which actually holds also for ability modals (Portner 2009: 220).

<sup>8</sup> Epistemic (or sometimes rather: evidential) readings for WANT do exist in other languages, cf. Remberger (2010, 2011) and the references therein.

<sup>9</sup> Thus the impossibility of getting an epistemic reading is due to compositionality as well and completely independent from the interpretation of the clitic *ci*, which is the same in existentials proper and deontic existentials.

<sup>10</sup> Note that *la panna* is only apparently definite in these examples, as the English translation shows.

<sup>11</sup>  $\neg$  is the negative operator,  $\square$  is the modal operator of necessity. The epistemic interpretation is not taken into account here, since it seems to be difficult to get if not impossible with negation.

<sup>12</sup> Besides Remberger (2005), a very short overview on possible constructions with WANT is given in Patruno (2005); however, the latter provides only a superficial treatment of the most interesting research questions concerning the semantics and syntax of WANT; as for the classification of examples like (i) as evidential, the author obviously has not considered that the evidential meaning here stems from the verb *sembrare*, not *volere*, see also De Mauro (2000) where for exactly this example *volere* is classified as imminential:

- (i) *Sembra che voglia piovere*  
 seem.3SG that want.SBJV.3SG rain.INF  
 ‘It seems as if it is about to rain.’

<sup>13</sup> As for the examples taken from the electronic corpus of the mailing list Sa-Limba (cf. Sa-Limba 1999-2011), it has to be emphasized that the data are manually filtered in order to consider only messages from known native speakers.

<sup>14</sup> Note that in what follows the notion “coda” will only be used in case of existential constructions proper (cf. §4 below).

<sup>15</sup> The examples are from Russi; however, as far as the translations are concerned, I could not follow her proposals in all cases since there were a few inconsistencies and errors.

<sup>16</sup> This example is not accepted by everyone (S.C.). The following may be better, although not accepted by everyone iether (C.P.):

- (i) *Volendoci più soldi per comprare la macchina nuova, ho smesso di fumare*  
 want.GERUND = LOC more money for buy the car new have.1SG stop.PST.PTCP to smoke  
 ‘Since more money are needed to buy a new car, I stopped smoking’

<sup>17</sup> As noted by a reviewer, *loro* and *lui* in (20) could be in principle both, accusative or nominative. The pronouns *io* and *tu* in (18), however, can only be nominative.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. in Modern Greek or regional German, cf. (i):

- (i) Southwestern Regional German  
 Es hat keinen Fisch im See.  
 expl have.3SG NO.ACC fish.ACC in-the lake  
 ‘There is no fish in the lake.’

<sup>19</sup> There are languages, like Romanian, where this function is not expressed by a clitic, but by stress on the auxiliary BE, cf. Cornilescu (2009).

<sup>20</sup> This is also valid for Paduan where either a dative clitic or the locative element can appear, cf. (i) from Benincà & Tortora (2009: 23):

- (i) Me (\*ghe) vole do euro.  
 me.CL.DAT LOC want.3SG two Euros

<sup>21</sup> I am grateful to the reviewer for pointing this out to me.

<sup>22</sup> In Benincà & Tortora (2009:21) the existential operator is dubbed “existential locative”; in order to keep constructions involving a locative clitic clearly distinguished from existentials proper I changed this denomination.

<sup>23</sup> Of course, with “subject position” I refer to both a specifier position (for constituents such as overt DPs) as well as a head position (for the non-overt subject *pro*, which, due to its interpretative properties parallel to clitic object pronouns, should also be considered a clitic). Thus, the existential operator as well as the locative are incorporated in the head representing the preverbal subject position (be it T, I, Subj or Fin; for the proposal that clitics can check an information structural feature in this position, cf. Giurgea & Remberger 2012).

<sup>24</sup> The underlying structure of WANT was also analysed as WANT + HAVE (Fodor & Lepore 1998) or, on the basis of Kayne (1993), as WANT + BE + P (Harley 2004).

<sup>25</sup> An appropriate context to (33a), according to Silvio Cruschina (p.c.), would be the following: ‘In a church one of the frescos was damaged by an increase of humidity and thus now several flower arrangements are needed in order to cover the damage for aesthetic reasons. The question is where the damaged fresco is located.’ Remember that locative codas seem to be less natural with deontic existentials than final clauses or purpose DPs (cf. §3.1).

<sup>26</sup> (36) would be pragmatically less marked for some speakers if the subject pronoun *tu* was omitted, or if there would be a contextually given contrast, e.g. ‘I want to have the table put here; where do YOU want us to put the table?’; for other speakers, the example is ungrammatical in any case.

<sup>27</sup> A further example from Russi (2006: 254) with a definite DP is the following:

- (i) Credo che per quelli all’ ultima fila **ci** voglia addirittura  
 I-think that for those at-the last row LOC want.SBJV.3SG even  
 il binocolo per...  
 the binocular for...

Yet, in this case *il binocolo* is not referential (i.e. it does not refer to a specific pair of binoculars) but has an indefinite (or generic) reading, so that (i) can be said to be a true deontic existential.

<sup>28</sup> (39c) is marked as less ungrammatical than (39d) since the definite DP *il cane* could be interpreted as a non-referential entity, a dog in general as there could be one for every house.

<sup>29</sup> The parallel example in German would be grammatical since in German WANT can have a locative second argument which results in a directional interpretation, cf. (i); in Italian, the structure could be rescued by inserting an infinitive of a verb of motion or state, cf. (ii):

- (i) In den Garten *will* der Hund.  
 in the garden want.3SG the dog
- (ii) IN GIARDINO *vorrebbe* andare il cane.  
 in garden want.COND.3SG go.INF the dog  
 'The dog wants to go into the garden.'

<sup>30</sup> In the internet examples like the following are found:

- (i) Ci *si* vogliono più foto come questa!  
 LOC SI want.3SG more pictureslike this  
 'More pictures like this are needed here.'

However, they are judged as ungrammatical by native speakers. Combinations of locative-deictic *ci* and impersonal *si* are more easily found in infinitive constructions with WANT, since Italian has Clitic Climbing.

<sup>31</sup> The combination *ci si* is possible, of course, in cases where double *si* (impersonal + reflexive) is avoided.

<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, in (48b) in the second occurrence of WANT it is used as an intransitive (unergative) verb.

<sup>33</sup> Russi notes for one of her examples brought forward for early *volerci* that the original form for the example is *si voglia*, but then read as *ci voglia* and listed as first attestation for *volerci* by Battaglia's dictionary (cf. Russi 2009: 176, fn. 9; Battaglia 1961-2002).

<sup>34</sup> In Paduan, the parallel construction would be (from Benincà & Tortora 2009: 23):

- (i) Ghe vole do euro.  
 him want.3SG two euros

Thus a sentence like (i) is ambiguous between the interpretation of the clitic *ghe* as 3SG dative and the interpretation as a locative/existential, as given before in (2); cf. also fn. 20.

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