

From locative to presentational marker via mirative? Further observations on the development of broad-focus VS constructions in Piedmontese

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This article examines data from a Piedmontese translation of the Gospels that throw new light on the development of presentational constructions involving an etymologically locative clitic. It builds on the evolution proposed in Parry (2013), namely that presentational or broad-focus VS constructions in Piedmontese, and some other northern Italo-Romance varieties, with the clitic *i/-je* ‘(to) there’ developed from locative sentences by means of a gradual reanalysis of the anaphoric referential locative clitic as a non-argumental verbal marker of agreement with an implicit locative Subject of Predication. Alongside its original locative meaning, *i/-je* in sentences with verb-subject inversion came to acquire a pragmatic-discourse function, namely the presentation of a new entity or event. Data from the 19th-century *Testament Neuv dë Nossëgnour Gesu-Crist tradout in lingua piemontesa* (‘The New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ translated into the Piedmontese language’) suggest a significant intermediary stage in the grammaticalization process from locative argument to presentational marker that may also apply to other Romance varieties with similar presentational constructions. It is proposed that the originally deictic clitic *i/-je* was used to attract the attention of the hearer/reader to a new appearance, hence new information, first in an objective, visual sense and then metaphorically. This is the essential function of the mirative.

KEYWORDS: presentational construction, broad-focus VS construction, subject of predication, grammaticalization, Piedmontese, Romance.

1. Introduction

Italo-Romance existential and presentational constructions involving an etymologically locative clitic have received much recent attention, from both a synchronic and diachronic perspective (e.g. Bentley, Ciconte, Cruschina 2015; Bentley 2013, 2018, Bentley & Cruschina 2018; Ciconte 2009, 2011; Bentley & Cruschina 2018; Bentley & Ciconte 2024, Cruschina 2018). For the north-western dialect area, Parry (2000, 2013) traced the emergence of broad-focus presentational constructions with *i/je*¹ from sentences involving goal-oriented verbs, in which the anaphoric referential locative clitic was gradually reanalysed as a non-argumental marker of verbal agreement with an implicit locative Subject

of Predication.² The clitic *i/-je* eventually acquired a pragmatic-discourse function, namely the presentation of a new event, while still maintaining its original locative meaning in the well-known historical process of ‘layering’ (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 124-126). New data from a little-known Piedmontese translation of the Gospels, however, suggest an interesting intermediary stage that may also apply in general to the evolution of Romance presentational constructions with an etymologically locative clitic. This article thus presents data from *’L Testament Neuv dë Nossëgnour Gesu-Crist tradout in lingua piemonteisa* (‘The New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ translated into the Piedmontese language’) which suggest that the originally deictic clitic *i/-je* was used to attract the attention of the hearer/reader to new information, first presumably in a literal, visual sense, and then metaphorically. This is the essential function of the mirative, as defined by Scott DeLancey, “The term ‘mirativity’ refers to the linguistic marking of an utterance as conveying information which is new or unexpected to the speaker” (2001: 369-370).

The structure of the article is as follows: §2 describes the 19th century *’L Testament Neuv* (henceforth NT) and its importance for the study of presentational constructions in Piedmontese; §3 illustrates these constructions in modern Piedmontese and outlines their historical development, as presented in Parry (2013); §4 describes new data from the NT text that confirm this trajectory; §5 considers the argument structure of the expressions and the textual context in more detail, highlighting the mirative sense of many examples. Comparison with corresponding passages of what has been independently advanced as the French source text not only underlines the linguistic independence of the Piedmontese text as far as the presentational construction is concerned, but also strengthens the mirative interpretation; §6 reviews the changes observed in the use of *i/-je* in discourse, postulating that a mirative intermediary stage is a logical development in the semantic and pragmatic trajectory from locative to presentational marker; the clitic thus not only links to a thematic locative argument of a motion verb but comes to be interpreted also as a non-argumental eventive marker with other intransitive verbs which lack a goal argument; §7 concludes.

2. *’L Testament Neuv dë Nossëgnour Gesu-Crist tradout in lingua piemonteisa*

This translation of the Gospels into the local language was printed in London in 1834.³ The hope was that it would help to withstand the oppression of the Roman Catholic Church on the minority group of Protestant Waldensians in north-west Italy and promote education

among the poor. Sadly, strong opposition from the government in Turin and from the Catholic Church resulted in meagre distribution of the translation.

The New Testament was translated by Jean Henri (Enrico) Geymet, a Piedmontese factory owner with paper and silk mills in the Pinerolo area, not as recorded by the British Library by his father Pierre, who was Sub-Prefect of Pinerolo and a Waldensian Moderator. The translation, inspired presumably by his English friend and champion of the Waldensians, Charles Beckwith, is probably based on the 18th century French Protestant bible of David Martin, given the strong cultural links between the Waldensians of the Piedmontese valleys with neighbouring French culture, as well as many textual parallelisms (Genre & Ronco 1984: xii, xxii, xxxii; Rivoira 2023: 735).⁴

2.1 The language of the text

This is undoubtedly Piedmontese, despite many French, Franco-Provençal, Provençal and Italian lexical and graphical loans. It is basically, as Genre & Ronco (1984) point out, *piemontese illustre*, a koine and refined version of the dialect of Turin, seat of the court of the Kingdom of Sardinia, but it also reflects in the diatopic lexical variation the multi-dialectal Piedmontese background of the translator.⁵ The morphology and syntax are convincingly Piedmontese, however, offering rare and plentiful documentation of its syntax at a crucial stage of development.⁶ It is a rich source of data for all sentence types, with the Book of Revelation (often known as the Book of the Apocalypse) especially providing frequent examples of presentational or broad-focus VS sentences, which differ significantly from the presumed French original and from Italian. This article concentrates on an analysis of thesethetic Verb-Subject constructions that ‘introduce a new entity or situation into the world of discourse’ (Lambrecht 1994: 177-81). Within the context of the historical evolution of Piedmontese presentational constructions described in Parry (2013), it will present first a grammatical analysis based on verb tense, whether V(erb)-S(ubject) agreement obtains or not, the nature of the S (\pm definite), the occurrence or not of (a) the etymologically locative clitic *i/-je* (from Lat. ILLIC/IBI ‘(to) there’) and (b) a locative Prepositional Phrase, the verb’s argument structure and the nature of the reported event (\pm bounded). There follows a discussion of the semantic and pragmatic development of the *i/-je* construction, which has implications for that of presentational constructions involving etymological locatives in general.

3. The development of the broad-focus VS construction with *i/-je*

Presentational or broad-focus constructions with an etymologically locative clitic in Piedmontese (and some other northern Italo-Romance varieties) arethetic, presenting a new event or situation as a whole, rather than predicating new information about a topical nominal Subject, as categorical sentences. Instead, the main nominal argument (S or rather the Pivot) is part of the new information conveyed, follows the verb and does not trigger number or gender agreement with it. It is part of the Focus (hence the label Sentence Focus used by Lambrecht 1994, 2000), while a location (\pm overt) is deemed to be the Subject (of Predication) or **SoP**, what the sentence is about. Since Benincà (1988) the notion of a silent SoP in Italo-Romance structures with VS order is widely accepted (see Bentley & Cruschina 2018 for a detailed discussion and bibliography). Parry (2013) builds on this notion, interpreting the locative clitic in modern Piedmontese broad-focus structures as a non-argumental marker of verbal agreement with this implicit Subject of Predication.

Since in Piedmontese *i/-je* appears with compulsory expletive subject clitic(s), a brief explanation of some aspects of its clitic syntax may facilitate the interpretation of the examples. Subject clitics are obligatory with 2SG, 3SG and 3PL verb forms (occurring optionally before other persons of the verb). It is important to note that the clitic *a* represents all 3rd person subject clitics, including the expletive; it thus differs from the presentational clitic *a* described by Benincà (1983, 1994) for Paduan. In addition, Piedmontese exhibits additional prevocalic clitics (AUXSCL) before the auxiliary verb in the absence of complement or negative clitics, e.g. Turinese 3p. [l], Aglianese [ɹ]. A distinctive feature of modern Piedmontese is that unstressed pronominal complements appear enclitically on the past participle of compound tenses (except in the Canavesano group); thus, Turinese *rivaje* ‘arrived there’, PTCP.LCL, as in (1) below. (Note that we use deitalicized script for emphasis.) This change from the medieval pan-Romance pre-auxiliary clitic position passed through a stage of clitic-copying (i.e. showing pre-auxiliary and post-participial complement clitics), as may be seen below in examples from our NT text, e.g. (17a), (21), and (22).⁷ In (3), *rivà* is the invariable modern past participle of Turinese, whereas in the rural dialect of Agliano (province of Asti), *rivàja* in (4) keeps feminine singular agreement on the past participle.⁸

Broad / Sentence Focus in modern Piedmontese:

- (1) Turinese
 A *l'* *é rivaje* *Maria*
 EXPL.SCL AUXSCL is arrived.LCL Maria
 'Maria has arrived (here)'
- (2) Aglianese
 A *r'* *é rivaje* *Maria*
 EXPL.SCL AUXSCL is arrived.LCL Maria
 'Maria has arrived (here)'
 Subject-Predicate Focus:
- (3) Turinese
Maria *a* *l'* *è rivà*
 Maria SCL AUXSCL is arrived
 'Maria has arrived'
- (4) Aglianese
Maria *a* *r'* *é rivàja*
 Maria SCL AUXSCL is arrived.SG.F
 'Maria has arrived'

In (1) and (2) the whole sentence conveys new information relating to an implicit location linked to the speaker, while the categorical sentences (3) and (4) predicate new information about the topical Subject, *Maria*.

3.1 Evolution of the Piedmontese *i/-je* presentational structure (pre-19th century)

The development of a non-argumental clitic marker to refer to an implicit location first affected existential sentences, which in the medieval period, as in the original Latin, show no locative clitic with the verb 'be', although with the copula 'have' an overt locative was necessary:

- (5) Piedmontese (12-13th c. *Sermoni subalpini*, 251: 29-30)⁹
El *fo* *un reis* *qui* *avea* *un anel d'or*
 EXPL.SCL was.PST.DEF a king who had a ring of gold
o' *avea* *una* *pera preziosa*
 where had a stone precious
 'There was a king who had a gold ring in which there was a precious stone.'

In the first clause in (5) no locative occurs with 'be', but in the third clause the locative relative *o'* 'where' introduces 'have'.

Medieval locative pronouns were referential, and could also be used anaphorically or cataphorically to link dislocated locative phrases to the main body of a sentence:

- (6) Ligurian (14th c. *Dialogo de Sam Gregorio*, 225: 10-11)
In quela, çòè in la casa de lo pianto, *l'omo* *g'*
 in that.F.SG that.is in the house of the weeping the man there
è amonio de lo so fin
 is warned of the his end
 'In that one, i.e. in the house of grief, man is (there) warned of his end.'

In (6) the locative clitic *g'* links back to the left-dislocated *In quella, çòè in la casa de lo pianto*.

Furthermore, the reference of a locative clitic could be clarified by locative phrases inserted parenthetically in the immediate postverbal position within the same clause:

- (7) Veronese (13th c. Giacomino da Verona, *Babilonia*, 641: 96)
Asai g'è là çò bisse, liguri, roschi e serpenti
many there is there down grass.snakes lizards toads and serpents
'There are many grass-snakes, lizards, toads and serpents down there.'

[L]à çò specifies further the location to which the preverbal locative clitic *g'* has just referred.

Both these structures, anaphora and parenthesis, could have encouraged a reanalysis that interpreted both clitic and locative phrase to be part of the same clause. A similar process involving clause-internal resumptive subject pronouns linked to dislocated pronominal subjects led to the development of subject clitics in northern dialects (Poletto 1993, and Parry 1993 for Piedmontese). This is not meant to imply that the locative clitic is eventually reanalysed as a syntactic subject clitic, occurring in a subject clitic position in the syntax, although some linguists may have interpreted *i/-je* as such (for more detail see Parry 2013). It is at the discourse level that *i/-je* comes to represent the Subject of Predication, but in syntax it remains a complement clitic, whose syntactic behaviour does not differ from that of the homophonous clitic that persists in its original locative function.

Eventually existential sentences acquire an obligatory locative clitic, which provides the point of departure for the proposition (the SoP linked to spatio-temporal discourse co-ordinates) and can co-occur in the same clause as a pre- or postverbal locative phrase (Ciconte 2009, 2011, 2015, Parry 2013):

- (8) 16th c. Astigiano: G. G. Alione, *Farsa de Pèron et Cheyrina* (Ferrarotti 2024: 208)
par c'o gli an sia qui del besiace
seems that.EXPL.SCL LCL of.them is here of.the saddle.bags.PL.F
'It seems that there are bagfuls here (of stuff to sort out).'

In (8) the Astigiano expletive subject *o* [u] and the locative clitic *gli* [ʎi] are followed by *qui* 'here' within the same clause.

Interestingly, in a use that seems to prefigure future developments, the locative clitic is also used with the verb *arrivé* 'to arrive' by the same author to refer to an implicit geographical location (Liguria):

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- (9) 16th c. Astigiano: G. G. Alione, *Farsa de Nicolao Spranga* (Ferrarotti 2024: 180)
e s' o gli arriva forester / de Pemont o de Lengadoch
 and if EXPL.SCL LCL arrives.3SG foreigners / from Piedmont or from Languedoc
 'And if there arrive foreigners from Piedmont or Languedoc'

By the 17th century the locative clitic is found in totally out-of-the-blue contexts with the prototypical goal-oriented verb *arivé* 'arrive'.¹⁰ The clitic bears no anaphoric textual reference, but it is semantically motivated in the sense that it implies the location of the speaker:

- (10) 17th c. Turinese, *Canzoni* (Clivio 1976: 28)
gl' ariva Biatsinha
 LCL arrives Beatrice.DIM
 'Beatie arrives (here)'

In the next century the locative clitic is found with other unaccusative verbs in sentences that present a new referent or unexpected event:

18th c. Turinese: Ignazio Isler, *Canzoni piemontesi*

- (11) *Quand a-i ven peui la tempesta* (Pasero 2013: 80, l. 37)
 when EXPL.SCL-LCL comes then the hail
 'Then when it hails'
- (12) *D' ogni part a-i cor 'd fontan-e* (p. 82, l. 81)
 from eachpart EXPL.SCL-LCL runs PART fountains
 'From all directions there flow springs'
- (13) *L' é bin dal liam ch' a-i nass ij fior* (p. 376, l. 266)
 SCL is well from.the manure that EXPL.SCL-LCL is.born the flowers
 'Indeed, it's from manure that flowers grow.'

Thus, by the end of the 18th century the use of a locative clitic with the function of presenting a new entity into the world of Piedmontese discourse seems well established.

4. 19th century Piedmontese: 'L Testament Neuv'¹¹

That *i/-je*, alongside its original locative value, has grammaticalized as a marker of presentational broad-focus sentences is confirmed by data from the early 19th-century Piedmontese translation of the New Testament, e.g. (14a) and (17a).

- (14a) a l è toubà-ie dal ciel una gran steila (Rev. 8: 10; G475)
 EXPL.SCL AUXSCL is fallen-LCL from.the sky a big star
- (14b) il tomba du ciel une grande étoile (Martin 1829: 232; G475)
 EXPL.SCL fell.PRET from.the sky a big star
 'there fell a large star from the sky'

The presumed French original in (14b) on which our text is based has an impersonal construction with postposed pivot but no locative clitic.

In the Predicate Focus structure that follows on, no *-ie* appears:

- (15) *e a l è toubà ënt la tersa part d'i fium* (Rev. 8: 10; G475)
 andEXPL.SCL AUXSCL is fallen in the third part of the rivers
 'and it fell in the third part of the rivers'

nor in the resultative periphrasis, indicating a state:

- (16) *A l' è toubà, a l' è toubà coula Babilonia* (Rev. 14: 8; G82)
 SCLAUXSCL is fallen SCL AUXSCL is fallen that Babylon
 'It has fallen, Babylon has fallen!'

Nowhere in Martin's presumed French original or in Italian does this construction with the locative clitic feature:

- (17a) *a i è vènù-ie¹² una nuvola* (Mark 9: 7; G92)
 EXPL.SCL LOC.SCL is come.PTCP-LCL a cloud
 'there came a cloud'

- (17b) *Il vint une nuée* (Martin 1829: 41).
 EXPL.SCL came.PRET a cloud

- (17c) 'Venne una nube ...' (*Vangelo secondo Luca* – Testo CEI 2008)

The presentational sentence in (17a) may be contrasted with a categorical sentence, which has a preverbal subject and no locative clitic, but instead shows past participle feminine agreement with the subject:

- (18) *E una vouss a l è vènù da la nuvola* (Luke 9: 35; G138)
 and a voice SCL AUXSCL is come.PTCP.F.SG from the cloud
 'And a voice came out of the cloud'.

4.1 Grammatical features of the construction in the New Testament text

Broad-focus VS order with etymologically locative clitic *i/-je* is here, as in earlier Piedmontese texts, restricted to unaccusative verbs.¹³ These are verbs whose main argument is not agentive and within a semantic approach such as Role and Reference Grammar is considered an undergoer as opposed to an actor macrorole argument (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 141). Undergoer arguments are less likely to be topical and, depending on the language type, may not show typical subject characteristics, such as preverbal position or verb agreement; hence the use of the more neutral term 'pivot' for the privileged syntactic argument of a construction (cf. also Bentley 2010, 2018).

4.1.1 Verb agreement and tense

In the NT presentational data there is no verb agreement in number or participial gender with the following pivot of unaccusative verbs. The subject clitic is always the expletive *a*, followed in compound tenses by an auxiliary 3p. consonantal clitic before a vowel-initial auxiliary, unless this is replaced by a complement clitic (or if copying occurs, by the etymologically locative clitic, as in (21-22)). All sentence types, moods and tenses are found (simple and compound), although the Imperfect is less common:

Present tense

- (19) *a i n'a¹⁴ ven un pi poutent chë mi*
 EXPL.SCL LOC.C PART.CL comes.PRES one more powerful than me
 'there will come someone more powerful than me' (Luke 3: 16; G121)

Future tense

- (20) *a i venërà fora tra dë voui aiti istess d'omini*
 EXPL.SCL LCL come.FUT.SG out among PART you others same PART men
 'There will emerge from amongst you yourselves men ...' (Acts 20: 30; G272)

Present Perfect (often showing copying of *i/-je*)

- (21) *E mentre ch'a disia ste cose,*
a i è vënù-ie una nuvoula (Luke 9: 34; G138)
 EXPL.SCL LCL is come.PTCP-LCL a cloud
 'And while he said these things, there came a cloud'.
- (22) *a i è stà-ie una vouss da 'l ciel* (Luke 3: 22; G121)
 EXPL.SCL LCL is been-LCL a voice from the sky
 'There came (was) a voice from heaven'.

Imperfect tense

- (23) *dal trono a i partia dë lozne,*
 from.the throne EXPL.SCL LCL left.IMPF.SG PART lightning
e dë troun, e dë vouss (Rev 4: 5; G471)
 andPART thunder and PART voices
 'from the throne (there) came lightning, and thunder, and voices.'

Interrogative sentence, Present tense

- (24a) *E përché a i mountë-lou¹⁵ dë*
 and why EXPL.SCL LCL rises-INTERR.SCL.3SG PART
pensé ënt vosti coeur? (Luke 24: 38; G177)
 thoughts into your hearts
- (24b) *Et pourquoi monte-t-il des pensées dans vos*
 and why rises-t-INTERR.SCL.3SG PART thoughts into your
cœurs? (Martin 1829: 83)
 hearts
 'And why are your hearts filling with worry?'

The corresponding French in (24b) shows an impersonal construction, but no locative clitic.

Subordinate clause, Present subjunctive

- (25) È-lou *poussibil ch' a i seurta queicosa dë*
 is-EXPL.SCL possible that EXPL.SCL LCL emerges something PART
boun da Nazaret? (1: 46; G181)
 good from Nazareth
- (25b) *Peut-il venir quelque chose de bon de Nazareth?*
 can-SCL.3SG.M come some thing PART good from Nazareth
 'Is it possible for anything good to come out of Nazareth?' (Martin 1829: 85)
 A different verb occurs in the French (25b), but again no locative appears.

4.1.2 The nature of the postverbal Subject / Pivot

The postverbal pivot is usually indefinite, with the plural introduced by *dë* (see (23), and (24a)), which is simply the partitive ('of') and lacks a plural component (see the detailed evolution in Cerruti & Regis 2020). As is possible in Italo-Romance existentials, definite pivots can also occur (Leonetti 2008), but much less often (Bentley 2013), again with a lack of verb and past participle agreement:

- (26) a l¹⁶ è nassù-ie una questioun tra i dissepoul dë
 EXPL.SCL AUXSCL is born-LCL an argument between the disciples of
Giouan e i Ebreou (John 3: 25; G184)
 John and the Jews
 'there arose an argument between John's disciples and the Jews'
- (27a) *Ënt coul temp li a i è nassù-ie Mose*
 in that time there EXPL.SCL LCL is born-LCL Moses
 (Acts 7: 20; G241)
- (27b) *En ce temps-là naquit Moise* (Martin 1829: 115)
 in that time-there was.born.PRET Moses
 'During that time Moses was born'
- (28a) *Dop dë chiel a i è coumpars Giuda 'l Galilean*
 after PART him EXPL.SCL LCL is appeared Judas the Galilean
 (Acts 5: 37; G238)
- (28b) *Après lui parât Judas le Galiléen* (Martin 1829: 113)
 after him appeared.PRET Judas the Galilean
 'After him appeared Judas of Galilee'
- (29a) *E a i è surti-ie dal tempio i sett*
 andEXPL.SCL LCL is emerged-LCL from.the temple the seven
 angel (Rev 15: 6; G483)
 angels

- (29b) *Et les sept anges* [...] *sortirent* *du temple*
and the seven angels [...] came.out.PRET of the temple
(Martin 1829: 236)
'And out of the temple came the seven angels'

The preterite appears in the corresponding French (27b), (28b) and (29b) and no locative clitic occurs.

5. Semantic structure

As already noted,thetic VS constructions, in which the main argument is part of the predicate, can be considered to have a Subject of Predication in their underlying semantic structure even when not overt, this being a spatio-temporal location (Benincà 1988, Bentley & Cruschina 2018 and many publications cited therein). This comes to be represented in the surface structure by the etymologically locative clitic *i/-je*: in (27a) and (28a) it points to the moment of reference of the narrative, specified further by adverbial phrases of time, whereas in (29a) from the Book of Revelation we are dealing with a purportedly eye-witness account of spectacular events from personal memory.

It seems that the first verb affected in the development of the Piedmontese broad-focus construction with *i/-je* is *ar(r)ivé* 'arrive' (Parry 2013), which has a Goal argument, whereby the overt locative *i/gl-* is semantically justified (as in (10)). By the 18th century the construction is found for example in the poems of Ignazio Isler, with *veni* 'come', and *tombé* 'fall', and has been extended to unaccusative verbs lacking a Goal argument, such as *nasse* 'be born', *surti* 'emerge'. All are verbs whose main argument is an undergoer and frequently part of the sentence Focus. Indeed, Calabrese (1992: 107) proposes that one class of verbs, namely unaccusative verbs, is always characterized by having an extra-argument position for events or spatio-temporal location, while other verbs may have this extra-argument position only when they have a telic interpretation. For a detailed analysis of the argument structure of broad-focus subject inversion in Italian and the verb types that are compatible with this construction, see Bentley & Cruschina (2018).

Admittedly, some instances of *i/-je* in the New Testament text may be ambiguous, since the vicinity of a locative Prepositional Phrase is not unusual. A referential reading involving anaphora, and left or right-dislocation, may be possible (intonation is obviously not available as a diagnostic tool for historical texts). However, ambiguity is to be expected, given the clitic's etymology and the grammatical process of layering (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 124-126), for *i/-je* did not lose its original

locative adverbial function in other constructions. Let us consider a few cases of possible ambiguity:

- (30a) *una part dē la sēmens a l è toubà al loung*
 a part of the seed EXPL.SCL AUXSCL is fallen at.the long
dē la stra
 of the road
e a i è vènù -ie i ousei dēl ciel
 and EXPL.SCL LCL is come.PTCP LCL the birds of.the sky
e a l'han mangiàla tutta (Mark 4: 4; G80)
 and 3PL.SCL AUXSCL-have eaten.it all.SG.F

- (30b) *une partie de la semence tomba le long du chemin,*
et les oiseaux du ciel vinrent, ... (Martin 1829: 35)
 and the birds of.the sky came.PRET.3PL
 'part of the seed fell along the road and the birds came (there?) and ate it all.'

In (30a) the *i/-je* could be a referential locative, referring back to *al loung dē la stra* in the previous clause, but it seems rather to function as a presentational marker for a fateful occurrence and there is no locative clitic in the corresponding French SV structure (30b).

- (31a) *a i è arrivà-ie¹⁷ una gran carèstia ènt coul pais*
 EXPL.SCL LCL is arrived-LCL a great famine in that country
 (Luke 15: 14; G153)

- (31b) *une grande famine survint en ce pays-là* (Martin 1829: 72)
 a great famine occurred.PRET in that country-there
 'There arrived a great famine in that country'.

In (31a), since the textual punctuation is not a reliable guide, it could be that clause-final *ènt coul pais* is a right-dislocated phrase. However, again the sentence refers to a new unexpected occurrence, a dramatic turn of events, which would warrant the particular focus of the presentational construction. The corresponding French has an SV structure and no locative clitic and, since dislocated structures contributed to the construction's development in the first place, the occasional ambiguity is to be expected.

A further source of ambiguity is the dative 3p. clitic, *i* [i/j] 'to him/her/them', which also frequently expresses 'dative of interest' in the NT and occasionally doubles an indirect object.¹⁸ Although in (32a) the second *i* could be a dative 3p. clitic, it probably functions here as a presentational marker, reinforcing or 'agreeing' with the preceding *eccou*:

- (32a) *Mentre a i disia ste cose*
 while 3SCL 3DATCL said.IMPF these things
eccou ch' a i arriva un sègnour (Matt. 9:18; G28)
 behold that EXPL.SCL LCL/DATCL? arrives a gentleman

- (32b) *Comme il leur disait ces choses, voici venir un seigneur* (Martin 1829: 8)
 as he them told.IMPF these things behold come.INF a gentleman
 ‘While he told them these things, up came a gentleman’.

There is also no dative in the corresponding French, except in the first clause to refer to the indirect object.

The deictic particle *eccou* ‘behold’ is frequently used in the text to attract attention and dramatize the events, corresponding to Fr. *voici* in Martin (1829). The *i/-je* construction may follow it, introducing a new and often unexpected element into the narrative:

- (33a) *e eccou, ch’ a i è vènù-ie un gran terremot*
 and behold that EXPL.SCL LCL is come-LCL a great earthquake
 (Rev. 6: 12; G473)

- (33b) *Et voici, il se fit un grand tremblement*
 and behold EXPL.SCL REFL.CL made a great shaking
de terre (Martin 1829: 231)
 of earth
 ‘and lo, there occurred a huge earthquake!’

The above data highlight the essentially mirative character of the *i/-je* expressions. The ongoing grammaticalization of *i/-je* as a marker linked to the discourse situation is also indicated by the fact that it frequently occurs in the text without an overt pre- or postverbal locative phrase, thus unambiguously relating by default to the spatio-temporal coordinates of the discourse and conveying the sense of a new appearance on the scene or unexpected happening. Its frequency in the Book of Revelation attesting to the dramatic visual experience of the writer underlines this mirative function.

In the following examples (34-35), *i/-je* cooccurs with the argumental locative (source) clitic *ne*, proving that it cannot itself be an argumental locative clitic. *i/-je* has clearly grammaticalized as the non-argumental marker of a presentational construction.

- (34) *a l è vènù-i-ne una fería crudel e pessima*
 EXPL.SCL AUXSCL is come.LCL-SOURCE.CL a sore cruel and dreadful
ai omini (Rev 16: 2; G484)
 to.the men
 ‘from it (there) came a cruel and dreadful sore to mankind’

- (35) *a l è vènù-i-ne dë lozne, e dë vouss,*
 EXPL.SCL AUXSCL is come.LCL-SOURCE.CL PART lightning and PART voices
e dë trou, e un gran terremot (Rev 16: 18; G485)
 and PART thunder and a great earthquake
 ‘out of it (there) came lightning, voices, thunder, and a great earthquake’

There are no complement clitics of any sort in the corresponding French versions, which use different verbs (transitive *attaqua* ‘attacked’ (34) and for (35) impersonal passive *il se fit* ‘came’, lit. EXPL.SCL REFL ‘made’). Thus, *i/-je* can occur either without any further locative specification or cooccur in the same clause with all types of pre- or postverbal locative phrases, including an argumental source locative clitic.

Confirmation of the significance of *arivé* ‘arrive’ and other goal-oriented unaccusative verbs of inherently directed motion in the expansion of *i/-je* as a non-argumental clitic beyond existentials may be found in Tortora (1997: 58). In Borgomanerese, only these verbs, which have a clear goal argument, show the locative *ngh...gghi* clitic sequence in sentence-focus structures. *Parti* ‘leave’ does not, for it has a Source argument:

- (36) Borgomanero, Piedmont (Tortora 1997: 25, 56-57)

Ngh *è rivà-gghi* *na fjola.*
 LOC is arrived-LOC a girl
 ‘There arrived a girl (here).’

- (37) Borgomanero, Piedmont (Tortora 1997: 56-57)

a. *L’* *è partè* *na fjola.*
 SCL is left a girl
 ‘A girl has left.’
 b. **Ngh* *è partè-gghi* *na fjola*
 LOC is left-LOC a girl

In the NT text *arivé* is relatively uncommon in its literal sense, but it is frequent in presentational sentences with the locative clitic in the sense of ‘occur’. The parallel French construction has no locative clitic, however:

- (38a) *ch’* *a* *i* *arriva* *dë scandoul* (Matt. 17: 7; G47)
 that EXPL.SCL LCL arrives PART scandals

- (38b) *qu’* *il* *arrive* *des* *scandales* (Martin 1829 : 18)
 that EXPL.SCL arrives PART scandals
 ‘that scandals occur’

- (39) *i* *savi* *nen* *lon* *ch’* *a* *i* *arrivèrà* *douman*
 SCL.2PL know NEG what that EXPL.SCL LCL will.arrive tomorrow
 ‘you do not know what will happen tomorrow.’

When *arivé* introduces another proposition in the sense of ‘it came to pass that, it happened that’, no locative clitic occurs:

- (40) *E* *a* *l* *è arrivà* *chë* *sëmëmand...* (Mark 4: 4; G80)
 andEXPL.SCL AUXSCL is arrived that sowing.GER
 ‘It happened that during the sowing ...’

It does, however, appear with the far less common use of *vèni* ‘come’ in this sense:

- (41) A i ven ch’ èn mentre chë Gesù a l’ era
 EXPL.SCL LCL comes that in while that Jesus SCL AUXSCL was
 a taula ènt la ca dë Levi (Mark 2: 15; G77)
 at table in the house of Levi
 ‘(It happened that) while Jesus was at table in the house of Levi’
moutoubin dë coui dël peage e dë gent dë cattiva vita së buttou a taula con Gesu e i so dissepoul
 ‘many publicans/tax-collectors and sinners sat down at table with Jesus and his disciples.’

Is it possible that the outrageous event of Jesus sharing his table with such outcasts warrants the more dynamic use of Historic Present *a i ven ch’* with an overt locative?

5.1 The nature of the reported event (\pm bounded)

Broad-focus constructions introduce into the world of discourse an event that is construed as a whole, i.e. spatio-temporally bounded, and they come to be marked in Piedmontese by a locative clitic. The examples above show a pivot NP as the non-agentive undergoer of a bounded event (in the sense of Bianchi 1993, i.e. an event that is true of a single situation, involving a stage-level predicate; for detailed discussion, see Bentley & Cruschina 2018). In the NT text such an event usually involves a new appearance on the scene, as in (42) and (43). Indeed, there are many examples of the *i/-je* construction with *surtì* ‘emerge’, referring to sudden apparitions:

- (42) *Ma quand* a i è surti-ie *’l soul* (Mark 6: 6; G80)
 but when EXPL.SCL LCL is emerged-LCL the sun
 ‘But when the sun came out, ...’

This is particularly true of the Book of Revelation with its dramatic scenography:

- (43) a l è surti-ie *da la nuvoula* *una vouss*
 EXPL.SCL AUXSCL is emerged-LCL from the cloud a voice
 ‘there came a voice out of the cloud’ (Mark 9: 7; G92).

Given that the *i/je* construction refers to a bounded event, it occurs mainly in relation to past time, which explains its frequency with the Present Perfect tense. The Imperfect tense is much less common in the NT, for this tense refers to an action or state that is not marked as punctual or completed.¹⁹ As observed by Breivik (1997) in his discussion of the development of presentational *there* sentences in English, appearance and apparition are key elements of such sentences in the early stages.

The imperfect tense, however, may feature if the focus is on the emergence, with the tense being used stylistically to create immediacy (for the *imperfetto narrativo*, see Bertinetto (1991: 85-88)). In (23), repeated below as (44), however, the reference is to a sequence of momentary manifestations of light and sound, which may be construed as individual events:

- (44) *dal trono a i partia dë lozne*, (Rev 4: 5; G471)
 from.the throne EXPL.SCL LCL left.IMPF.3SG PART lightning
e dë trou e dë vouss
 and PART thunder and PART voices
 ‘from the throne (there) came lightning, and thunder, and voices.’

With present and future tenses the construction with *i/-je* also conjures up a bounded event with a punctual interpretation, implying a sudden appearance on the scene, an unexpected development, as in the following reference to the end of the world:

- (45) *E dop a i venërà la fin* (1 Cor. 15: 24; G338)
 and after EXPL.SCL LCL come.FUT the end
 ‘And afterwards the end will come, ...’

A context one might expect would exclude thethetic *i/-je* construction is relative clauses, since restrictive relatives convey presupposed information by which the head may be identified (they imply the existence of the referent), and non-restrictive relatives usually convey parenthetical or backgrounded information, although this can be hearer-new. They are not normally presentational or eventive and indeed the *i/-je* construction is rare in relative clauses in the New Testament. The restrictive relative in (46) and non-restrictive (47) both lack *i/-je* and, in contrast to the above examples, they show SV order and verb agreement with the subject:

- (46) *l'om dal qual i demoni a l erou surti*
 the man from.the whom the devils 3SCL AUXSCL were come.out
 ‘the man out of whom the devils had emerged’ (Luke 8: 35; G135)
- (47) *dë Magi, ch' a vëniou dal Levant* (Matt. 2:1; G15)
 PART Magi who 3SCL came.IMPF from.the East
 ‘Magi, who came from the East.’

However, a non-restrictive relative clause sometimes conveys new information that serves to develop the narration, the so-called ‘continuative function’ (Giacalone Ramat 2005), in which case the following example may represent the presentational *i/-je* structure:²⁰

- (48) *l'omou dè Maria, da chi a i è nassù-ie Gesu*
 the man of Mary from whom EXPL.SCL LCL is born-LCL Jesus
 'the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus' (Matt. 1: 15; G16).

The above relative clause occurs at the end of a long genealogical account culminating in the portentous birth of the Saviour, a singular event. In contrast, the non-restrictive relative clause in (49) is parenthetical, given information and not eventive:

- (49) *Doua l è-lou 'l Re d'i Ebreou ch' a l è nassù?*
 where AUXSCL is-SCL the King of the Jews who 3SCL AUXSCL is born?
 'Where is the King of the Jews, who has (just) been born?' (Matt. 2: 2; G15)

6. Pragmatic development

It is clear from the NT examples that the *i/-je* construction is used to introduce a new entity into the world of discourse and to focus on a significant, often exceptional, new event, anchoring it in the spatio-temporal context of the narrative by means of a locative clitic originally used to indicate an actual location linked to the speaker/narrator. This deictic underpinning could have served initially to capture the attention of the interlocutor by creating an aura of participation in the unfolding of a new event, as with Fr. *voici* < *voi(s)-ci!* 'see.IMP here' (Buridant 2000: 311). It may be compared with the frequent use of *da* 'there' in spoken German "in clauses with main verbs that introduce entities and events or occurrences", which can be "related to the wider usage of *da* as an attention-drawing deictic..." (Weinert 2013: 75).

In fact, a closer look at the Isler data from the previous century also suggests an early mirative inference. Many of the examples highlight the amazing and impossible delights of the Land of Cockaigne:

- (50) *Quand a-i ven peui la tempesta* (Pasero 2013: 80, 1.37)
 when EXPL.SCL-LCL comes then the hail
 'Then when it hails'

Example (50) – i.e. (11) above – refers to hail which turns out to be composed *mach 'd bombon, / D'ale, e 'd cheusse de capon* (p.80, 1.39) 'only of sweets, wings and thighs of capons', whilst the snow is made of lasagne:

- (51) *An fiocand, a-i ven 'd lasagne* (p. 80, l. 33)²¹
 in snowing EXPL.SCL-LCL comes PART lasagne
 'When it snows, there come lasagne.'

The verbs found with *i/-je* in the NT translation are *arrivé* ‘arrive’, *vëni* ‘come’, *toubé* ‘fall’, *surti* ‘emerge’, *nassi* ‘be born’, *mounté* ‘rise’, *coumpari* ‘appear’, *intré* ‘enter’, *parti* ‘leave’, and an eventive use of *sté* ‘be, come into existence’. These are all unaccusative verbs, some with goal arguments in their semantic structure, but all used in clauses that draw attention to the often-unexpected appearance of a new referent on the scene. In sum, a mirative function seems to have acted as a catalyst for the grammaticalization of *i/-je* as a presentational marker.

An alternative Piedmontese presentational structure corresponding to the use of Fr. *voici* in the Martin version is in fact formed with the reflexive passive of the verb ‘see’:

(52a) a s' è vëdù-sse arrivé a *Gerusalem* dë *Magi*
 EXPL.SCL REFL.CL is seen-REFL.CL arrive to Jerusalem PART wise.men
 (Matt. 2: 1; G15)

(52b) *voici* arriver des *Sages* d'*Orient* à *Jérusalem* (Martin 1927: 1)
 behold arrive.INF PART wise.men from East to Jerusalem
 ‘There arrived wise men in Jerusalem’

Recent research by Bentley & Cruschina (2018) examines in detail the semantic features of verbs that allow the broad-focus structure and concludes that there are two types of silent SoP, the goal argument of goal-oriented verbs and a situational or event argument (a source argument cannot be a silent SoP). The Piedmontese data suggest that the extension of the *i/-je* marker beyond goal-oriented verbs was mediated by the inference of a new arrival into the speaker/narrator’s field of vision, the idea of an unexpected emergence/appearance on the scene. Through increasing occurrence in such mirative contexts *i/-je* became associated with the introduction of new information. Eventually, frequent use led to the construction losing its dramatic value and gradually grammaticalizing as a presentational marker (following the ‘bleaching’ process of grammaticalization, Hopper & Traugott 1993: 87-89). As already noted, many languages show deictic adverbs acquiring a presentational function, e.g. Eng. *there*, Germ. *da* ‘there’, Welsh *dyma* ‘behold’ (<?-'here’) + infinitive, and Fr. *voici* ‘behold’ (< see.IMP.‘here’) + infinitive.

The occurrence with deictic motion verbs initially created greater immediacy and dynamism for the presentation of new information than had the existential construction been used. Then the original goal clitic *i/-je*, used metaphorically in conjunction with verbs of appearance or emergence e.g. *surti* (see (42-43)), came to denote a Subject of Predication that referred more generally to the spatio-temporal context

of the situation. This provided the deictic perspective from which the interlocutor/reader in turn was to construe the event. Indeed, the verb ‘happen’ in Piedmontese and French is *ar(r)ivé* ‘arrive’, which implies a bounded event, and a goal that is linked to the speaker/narrator. The evolutionary trajectory of *i/-je* could be schematized as follows:

DEICTIC I (ACTUAL) > DEICTIC II (TEXTUAL) > MIRATIVE (APPEARANCE/SURPRISE) > PRESENTATIONAL

7. Conclusion

This article has concentrated on new data that support the diachronic evolution of the Piedmontese presentational *i/-je* construction proposed in Parry (2013). There, it was also shown in greater detail how the explanation of linguistic change can benefit from a combined theoretical approach, drawing on syntactic, semantic and discourse-pragmatic theory. Its advantages may be seen in an increasingly productive and promising area of research into broad-focus constructions, as mentioned in the Introduction. Recently, for example, Bentley & Ciconte (2024: 14) argue that within a theoretical approach such as Role and Reference Grammar, which considers discourse to be an integral part of grammar, the once locative clitic, in its function as a marker of the deixis of the discourse situation, may be linked directly from syntax to the discourse component.

What the analysis of new data from the NT underlines in particular is the gradual and subtle process of grammaticalization: how a small morpho-syntactic expression *i/-je*, originally conveying a referential locative meaning, alongside its original semantic value slowly developed via discourse strategies, such as anaphora and interpolation, subjectivity and mirativity, a new pragmatic function: namely that of presenting a new entity or event into the world of discourse.

Abbreviations

The Leipzig abbreviations are used, with the following additions: EXPL.SCL = expletive subject clitic; AUXSCL = auxiliary subject clitic; DATCL = dative clitic; LCL = locative clitic; OCL = object clitic; REFL.CL = reflexive clitic; PART = partitive; PRET = preterite, INTERR.CL = interrogative clitic.

Further abbreviations: NT = ‘*L Testament Neuv*’; SoP = Subject of Predication.

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Notes

¹ The symbol *i* stands for the locative proclitic, which is realized as [j] after the vocalic expletive subject clitic, while *-je* represents the enclitic [je]. Early texts often use the graphy *gl* or *gli* for the palatal prevocalic sound, while *L Testament Neuv* always has proclitic *i*, enclitic *-ie*.

² The evolution from locative adverb to presentational marker is a not uncommon linguistic development, cf. Eng. *there*; Danish, Norwegian and Swedish (Breivik 1997); Germ. *da* ‘there’ (Weinert 2013), and in combination with a verbal element, French *voici* (Buridant 2000), Welsh *dyma* (Shisha-Halevy 2016).

³ The fascinating history of Britain’s attempts to evangelize Italy in the early 19th century may be found in Villani (2022), a key activist being one Thomas Sims, born in Wales, but based for much of his life in Bristol. See Rivoira (2020) for an overview of language use in religious contexts on the north-western border of Italy.

⁴ Genre & Ronco (1984) compare passages from the 1827 edition of Martin’s translation (the first of many editions had appeared in 1707). Comparisons in this article are made with the 1829 edition.

⁵ The complex socio-linguistic situation in this Piedmontese alpine border area of the time is succinctly described by Genre & Ronco (1984: xxxv), who also mention that in addition to possible biographical influences of the dialects of Alessandria, Pinerolo, Turin, as well as various Provençal patois, on the translator himself, he may have consciously drawn from different linguistic varieties in the hope of reaching wider sections of the population and been obliged at times to find regional translations for referents for which the urban koine had no correspondent, e.g. agricultural terms.

⁶ Unlike some Italian regions, e.g. Tuscany or the Veneto, Piedmont offers relatively few historical texts for linguistic analysis. The 18th century saw the consolidation of the Turinese koine in the kingdom ruled by the House of Savoy and the development of the Piedmontese literary tradition, which encouraged standardization. In 1783 the Court doctor, Maurizio Pipino, published his famous *Gramàtica piemontese*, while the 19th century was ‘the age of the Piedmontese Dictionaries’ (Tosco, Miola & Duberti 2023: 26-29).

⁷ Examples of all three stages may coexist in some peripheral modern dialects, e.g. Cairese (Parry 2005).

⁸ For a comprehensive Piedmontese grammar, see Tosco, Miola & Duberti (2023); see also Parry (1997) and Parry (1993, 1995) for the evolution of clitic pronouns and regional morpho-phonological variation (e.g. in the south the expletive subject clitic is [u] not [a]).

⁹ Bibliographical references for the examples from the early vernaculars relate to editions found in the invaluable online database, *Opera del Vocabolario italiano* (OVI), Chicago – Florence, Accademia della Crusca, <www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/OVI>.

¹⁰ Cf. Lambrecht (1994: 180): “The most common and grammatically most clearly marked presentational clause type is characterized across languages by the presence

of a limited set of predicates whose arguments have a highly non-agentive and often locative case, such as “BE”, [...] “ARRIVE”... etc.”

¹¹ The references give the abbreviated English name of the NT book followed by chapter and verse. In addition, to facilitate online consultation, the numbers prefixed by G refer to the page numbers of the online Google document, not to the actual numbers of the digitized book.

¹² Early Piedmontese shows the usual Romance pattern of preverbal complement clitics in all tenses, but after a stage when in compound tenses complement clitics were copied enclitically on a following non-finite verb form, as often occurs in the NT text, encliticization on the past participle became the norm (Parry 1995, 1997).

¹³ In modern Piedmontese it may be found with some unergative verbs (Parry 2013, Bentley & Ciconte 2024).

¹⁴ Although often written with an apostrophe in earlier texts, this is one word corresponding to the partitive clitic, which in modern Piedmontese is written *na* (< Lat. INDE).

¹⁵ The enclitic subject pronoun *lou* [lu] (the French graphy may be ascribed to the significant French influence on Waldensian orthography) has by this stage in the evolution of the Piedmontese interrogative construction acquired a preverbal copy, which bears the usual proclitic form *a*. For the persistence of optional double marking of the subject in interrogatives in Mod. Pied., see Tosco, Miola & Duberti (2023: 186-187).

¹⁶ When the complement (here locative) clitic is not copied in the Perfect tense, as in the last stage of the Piedmontese evolution from pre-auxiliary to post-participial positioning, the auxiliary will always be preceded by the usual pre-auxiliary clitic found in the Present tense of the auxiliary verb, *l* (Parry 1993).

¹⁷ The [r] of Pied. *arivé* is short and usually transcribed as a single consonant, but our text follows French and Italian graphical norms, hence *arivé*.

¹⁸ A l ha di-ie a Pietrou (Mark 14, v. 37, G 107)
EXPL.SCL AUX.CL has said-DATCL to Peter
'He said to Peter...'

Dative clitic doubling is, however, not obligatory in the text.

¹⁹ This fact does not preclude the later development in some modern Piedmontese dialects, whereby the *i/-je*thetic construction may be found with some unergative verbs mainly with the Imperfect, rather than the Perfect tense. As noted there, '[i]t seems that unergatives may be most acceptable in the Piedmontese presentational construction when they have a habitual aspectual value that refers to an indefinite series of events, each construed as global, non-durative' (Parry 2013: 541).

²⁰ Unless this is a case of dative of interest 'to whom was born Jesus', despite the presence of the source relative PP, *da chi*.

²¹ The 'rain' brings other types of pasta:

Ògni sman-a a-i pieuv na vòta
every week EXPL.SCL-LOC.CL rains one time
Dij fidej e 'd macaron (Pasero 2013: 80, 25-26)
PART-the vermicelli and PART macaroni
'Every week there comes a shower of vermicelli and maccheroni.'

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