Abstract

Based on data from surveys, this paper offers a contrastive description of presentational sentences in Catalan dialects. Drawing on functional grammar and cognitive linguistics, we attempt to show the basic characteristics of presentational as opposed to locative sentences, considering that the so-called definiteness effect is not valid for Catalan. We note that there are three verbs which may appear in presentational contexts: haver-hi, ésser-hi (or ser-hi) and estar(-hi), and that their distribution is not always alike in all Catalan dialects. In fact, distribution depends to a great extent on the degree of definiteness of the NP. With the definiteness hierarchy as our basis for analysis, we have determined which verbs appear in the most prototypical presentational contexts, and which in more peripheral ones. In addition, we have found that distributional boundaries for the verbs examined are not always clear cut.

Key words: presentational sentences, existential, Catalan, dialectology.

Presentational Sentences in Catalan Dialects*

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1. Introduction
The purpose of this paper is to study presentational sentences, also known as existentials, in Catalan dialects.

1.1. Sources
In order to describe the uses of presentational sentences in various Catalan dialects, we shall draw on the general literature on the subject, on the adaptation of an episode of the comic *Tintin* in the Catalan dialect known as Algherese (spoken in Sardinia), and especially on surveys of fifteen informants representing different dialectical regions conducted during the period running from June to December, 1996.

With regard to the surveys, certain methodological limitations must be taken into account. It is a well known fact that syntactic studies on dialects tend to involve a number of basic methodological difficulties. Obtaining syntactic structures through the use of an indirect method, in which an interviewer attempts to gather spontaneous data without influencing informants’ responses, proves to be a very tricky business (cf. Viaplana (1996: § 4)). The difficulty involved is even greater if, as in the case of presentational sentences, the contextual possibilities are complex. In light of these problems, we opted to use a direct method based on a list of syntactic contexts, each of which showed a selected syntactic structure expressed with different verbs (*ésser-hi*, *haver-hi* and *estar(-hi)*). Informants were asked to classify these structures as normal, unusual but acceptable, strange, or unacceptable in their own colloquial register. The surveys were conducted by correspondence, and all but five of the participating informants were linguists.

We must admit that both the survey by correspondence method chosen here and the fact that linguists were used as informants may cast some doubt on the spontaneity and colloquial nature of the responses obtained. Nevertheless, the fact that we were careful to compare and contrast the similarities and differences revealed in the responses, coupled with our own prior knowledge of Catalan dialects, substantially reduced the risk of erroneous interpretations of the survey results. We therefore believe that the data obtained from our surveys constitute a highly useful basis for the description of the syntactic topic which concerns us here.

1.2. Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework for our study draws on aspects of both functional grammar and cognitive linguistics. The latter school defends the notion that all approaches to language should be based on our direct experience of the world, and on how we perceive and conceptualize it. Language is a dynamic entity, in which the

1. Adaptation of the episode entitled *Tintín al país de l’or negre* (Barcelona: Joventut, 1995), coordinated and revised by Andreu Bosch.
2. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who, directly or indirectly, helped with the survey responses.
pragmatic context and cultural environment in which the speaker is embedded are fundamental to an understanding of the way a particular language works (cf. Ungerer and Schmid (1996)).

In this paper we shall deal with the following three theoretical notions:

— The principle of prominence, according to which visual and auditory perception are organized in terms of prominence, a fact which then affects the configuration of our language. In this sense, we shall refer to the concepts of figure, or prominent element, and ground, or frame of reference.

— The theory of prototypes and cognitive categorization, which shows that the limits between categories are not discrete, but rather fuzzy. Furthermore, some entities are perceived as more representative or prototypical within a given group, and these are the ones which tend to be the most frequent. By the same token, others are more peripheral, or to put it another way, less representative and generally less frequent (cf. Taylor (1989), Cuenca (1996), Ungerer and Schmid (1996)).

— The definiteness hierarchy, a simple representation of which is offered in (1a). This hierarchy is related to other basic hierarchies such as those of person, NP type and the animate/inanimate distinction. Proof of this is the fact that these hierarchies may often be seen to overlap (cf. Croft (1990)). Thus, in the definiteness hierarchy (1b) that we propose as a basis for explaining the functioning of presentational structures, it may be seen that definiteness has been made to prevail over the criterion of animation.

(1) a. Definite > specific indefinite > non-specific indefinite.
   b. 1, 2 > 3 > tots (‘all’) > proper noun > common definite animate noun > common definite inanimate noun > common indefinite animate noun > common indefinite inanimate noun > common definite animate noun with no determiner > common indefinite inanimate noun with no determiner > abstract noun with no determiner.

2. Cognitive Characterization of Presentational Sentences

2.1. The Structure of Presentational Sentences

Spatial relations may be simply expressed through the use of two basic syntactic structures: locatives (2a) and presentational (2b).

(2) a. La teva germana és al restaurant.
    the your sister is at-the restaurant
    ‘Your sister is at the restaurant.’

    b. Al restaurant hi ha una germana teva.
    at-the restaurant Loc HAVER-Pres-3sg a sister your
    ‘At the restaurant there is a sister of yours.’

The fact that the order of the phrases in the above two sentences is different, though important, is not the most determining factor in distinguishing their struc-
tures. The fundamental difference to be observed here is of a pragmatic and discourse-based nature. While in example (2a) the NP is the discourse theme and the PP is the theme, in the case of (2b), exactly the opposite occurs, i.e. the PP is the theme and the NP is the rheme. In terms of cognitive prominence, then, the NP, which appears in sentence-initial position in (2a), is the prominent element or figure, and the PP is the frame of reference or ground. In contrast to this, the terms are inverted in (2b) in such a way that the ground coincides with the locative element appearing before the verb, and the figure with the NP following the verb. Thus, the prototypical scheme corresponding to locative sentences may be seen in (3), and that of presentational sentences in (4), below:

(3)
Syntactic structure: NP — PP
Semantic structure: Theme — Locative
Information structure: theme — rheme
Gestalt structure: Figure — Ground

(4)
Syntactic structure: PP — NP
Semantic structure: Locative — Theme
Information structure: theme — rheme
Gestalt structure: Ground — Figure

While some languages, in contexts in which aspect is unmarked, may express the spatial relationships outlined here without the use of a verbal element (cf. Benveniste (1966:151-152)), languages such as Catalan require a verb to join the two basic parts of the sentence. This is precisely what occurs in Catalan presentational sentences, in which the function of linking the locative element and the NP is performed by more than one verb.

2.2. The Verbs of Presentational Sentences

There are currently three verbs which may be seen to appear in presentational contexts in Catalan: haver-hi, ésser-hi and estar(-hi).

The verb haver-hi has its etymological origins in the Latin possessive verb HABERE, and the locative clitic hi appears as a lexicalized element with the verb. In fact, the grammatical relations of possession, existence and location take on very similar forms in many languages of the world (cf. Lyons (1967), Clark (1978), Kempchinsky (1995), Huumo (1996)). The verb ésser-hi (or ser-hi), derived from the existential Latin ESSE, also carries the locative clitic element hi as lexicalized

3. The second element of the syntactic structure is generally an PP, though other elements, such as deictics, may also appear in this position.
in these contexts. Finally, the verb *estar(-hi)*, from the Latin verb of position *STARE*, has also acquired a presentational function in contemporary Catalan as a result of its semantic extension to include locative meanings not carrying an aspectual sense of duration. In this latter case, the appearance of the locative clitic *hi* will generally depend on the dialect spoken.

Nevertheless, we must point out that not all Catalan dialects produce presentational sentences with all three of these verbs. What’s more, the use of one verb or another largely depends on the definite or indefinite nature of the NP in these types of sentences. Due to this fact, then, we must first refer to the so-called definiteness effect.

### 2.3. The Definiteness Effect

The traditional position regarding presentational sentences holds that, in keeping with the thematic nature of the NP, the languages of the world may only use indefinite NPs in such sentences. This is what is known as the definiteness effect (cf. Kuno (1971), Clark (1978), Torrego (1984), Freeze (1992)). Yet some authors such as Suñer (1982), with reference to Spanish; Dik (1989:178-179), with reference to Dutch; Hannay (1985), Lakoff (1987:ch.3), Abbott (1997) and Ward and Birner (1995,1997), with reference to English; or Rigau (1994) and Solà (1994:127-139), with regard to Catalan, have shown that in some pragmatic contexts the presence of a definite NP is also a possibility. According to Ward and Birner (1997), this occurs when the NP is an entity known to the receiver, but at the time of utterance, the speaker considers its contents to be new to him (receiver).

(5) En aquella festa, només hi havia la Marta.

   *At that party only the Marta*.

From this point of view, then, the so-called definiteness effect must be considered an inadequate principle for languages such as Catalan (see also Rigau (1994)), which also admit the presence of a definite NP in these pragmatic-discursive contexts. Nevertheless, it is logical to conclude that the most frequent and prototypical presentational structures will be those in which an indefinite NP appears.

### 3. Dialectical Description of Presentational Sentences

In analyzing the data collected, we have taken six basic dialects into consideration: Central Catalan (eastern region of Catalonia), Northwestern Catalan (western region of Catalonia), Balearic (spoken in the Balearic Islands), Valencian (spoken in the autonomous region of Valencia), Roussillonese (spoken in the French region of the eastern Pyrenees) and Algherese (spoken in the city of Alghero, in northwestern Sardinia).
3.1. The Central Catalan, Northwestern Catalan and Balearic Dialects

Surveys of speakers of Central Catalan, Northwestern Catalan and Balearic reveal a very similar use of verbs in presentational sentences in the three dialects. It is for this reason that we shall consider the three together.

As indicated earlier in this paper, differences in the distribution of verbs in presentational constructions may depend on the definite or indefinite nature of the NP. At the same time, however, it must be kept in mind that grammatically definite and indefinite elements may be classified according to degree, as seen in the definiteness hierarchy shown in (1b). This hierarchy, which includes elements ranging from the highly definite —sender and recipient— to the most indefinite ones—undetermined abstract nouns—, proves to be of great use in understanding and describing the verbal distribution to be observed in presentational constructions in the different Catalan dialects.

Beginning with the essential characteristics of Central Catalan, Northwestern Catalan and Balearic, we may note that the members of the hierarchy shown in bold type in (6) permit the use of the verb *esser-hi*, but not that of *haver-hi*, as shown in (7). On the other hand, with the remaining elements in the hierarchy there is a tendency for just the opposite to occur; the prototypical verb in these cases is *haver-hi* (8):

(6) 1, 2 > 3 > tots > proper noun > common definite animate noun > common definite inanimate noun > common indefinite animate noun > common indefinite inanimate noun > common indefinite animate noun with no determiner > common indefinite inanimate noun with no determiner > abstract noun with no determiner

(7) a. En aquella assemblea, hi érem ella, tu i jo. at that meeting Loc were-1pl she you and I ‘At that meeting it was she, you and I who were present.’
b. *En aquella assemblea, hi havia ella, tu i jo. at that meeting Loc HAVER-Past-3sg she you and I ‘At that meeting it was she, you and I who where present.’
c. En aquella assemblea, hi eren tots.4 at that meeting Loc were-3pl all ‘At that meeting they were all present.’
d. *En aquella assemblea, hi havia tots. at that meeting Loc HAVER-Past-3sg all ‘At that meeting they were all present.’

4. In this study we considered the viability of the use of the indefinite pronoun *tothom* (‘everyone’) in this type of context, a possibility which might have raised doubts concerning the validity of the hierarchic model proposed here. In this sense, we must clarify that the informants participating in the study were not at all sure of the use of *tothom* in these contexts, and preferred the pronoun *tots* (‘all’), which is clearly definite and specific in nature.
Although this is in fact the most prototypical distribution, Solà (1994:131-132) has observed a recent increase in the use of the verb *és·ser-*hi in contexts such as that of (9), similar to that of (8b): 5

(9) [a friend on the telephone:] ¿que hi és la Carme?
‘Is Carme there?’

(example by Solà (1994:131))

It should be noted that this usage, as also confirmed by our surveys, affects the proper noun, or the member of our hierarchy closest to those which are used in combination with the verb *és·ser-*hi.

In spite of this slight increase in the use of the verb *és·ser-*hi in contexts generally requiring *haver-*hi, among young speakers, and especially in urban environments, the presence of yet another verb, *estar(-hi)*, may also be observed in presentational contexts. The following examples taken from Solà (1994:132-133) serve to demonstrate this:

(10) a. [organizers awaiting the arrival of participants or parents before starting a race:] 
Apa, nois, ja estem tots: comencem.
INTERJ guys already ESTAR-Pr 1pl all start-1pl
‘Come on, guys, we’re all here. Let’s start.’

5. Solà (1994:§ 7.3) appears to interpret this usage as a case of ultracorrection resulting from the increasing use of *estar* in these contexts.
b. [a salesgirl checking to see if she has the shoes a customer wants:]

¿A veure? Està la Black Top 39, la 40... i la 41.

Res més. ‘Let’s see. There’s Black Top 39, 40...and 41. Nothing else.’

In the definiteness hierarchy cited in (6), and reproduced below in (11), it may be observed that the verb estar(-hi) may appear with all the members highlighted in bold type:

(11) 1, 2 > 3 > tots > proper noun > common definite animate noun > common definite inanimate noun > common indefinite animate noun > common indefinite inanimate noun with no determiner > common indefinite inanimate noun with no determiner > abstract noun with no determiner.

What this means is that the verb estar(-hi) may be associated with all the members originally assigned to the verb ésser-qi. This extension in usage is not surprising if we take into account the fact that there is currently also a tendency to introduce the verb estar into the corresponding locative structures shown above in (2a), due to the influence of Spanish (cf. Solà (1987:13-82)). But this particular extension of usage permeates even further down into the hierarchy, including members traditionally associated with haver-qi, specifically those which are characterized as grammatically definite.6 As a result, the verb estar(-hi), among the younger generations, may also appear with the grammatically defined members of the hierarchy, although it is generally not found, at least for the moment, in association with the indefinite members:

(12) A la reunió, només hi estaven un home i una dona.

‘At the meeting there was only a man and a woman.’

3.2. The Roussillonese Dialect

The Roussillonese dialect shares many of the distributional characteristics outlined in association with the dialects considered in the previous section. Nevertheless, as we have been able to deduce from our research, it does include some usage differences which merit separate discussion.

In principle, the distribution of presentational verbs in the Roussillonese dialect is the same as that of Central Catalan, Northwestern Catalan and Balearic (13):

6. Sanz and González (1995) have also noted this extension in the subdialect spoken in the southern region of Catalonia (known as tortós), as shown in the following example:

(i) A San Carlos està la zona marítima, la part vella.

‘In San Carlos there is a coastal section, the old part (of the city).’
the verb ésser-hi is associated with NPs in the first, second and third persons, as well as with tots (‘all’) (14), while the verb haver-hi is used with the remaining members of the hierarchy (15-16).

(13) 1, 2 > 3 > tots > proper noun > common definite animate noun > common definite inanimate noun > common indefinite inanimate noun > common indefinite animate noun with no determiner > common indefinite inanimate noun with no determiner > abstract noun with no determiner.

(14) a. Falta algú? No, ja hi són tots.  
   ‘Is anyone missing? No, they are all already here.’
   b. *Falta algú? No, ja hi ha tots.  
   ‘Is anyone missing? No, they are all already here.’

(15) a. Buscàvem el batlle o la Carme. Vam anar al  
   looked-for-1pl the mayor or the Carme Past-1pl go-Inf to-the  
   poble del costat.  
   village of-the side  
   I allí hi havia la Carme.  
   and there Loc HAVER-Past-3sg the Carme  
   ‘We were looking for the mayor or for Carme. We went to the next village. And there was Carme.’
   b. *Buscàvem el batlle o la Carme. Vam anar al  
   looked-for-1pl the mayor or the Carme Past-1pl go-Inf to-the  
   poble del costat.  
   village of-the side  
   I allí hi era la Carme.  
   and there Loc was the Carme  
   ‘We were looking for the mayor or for Carme. We went to the next village. And there was Carme.’

   looked-for-1pl the police Past-1pl go-Inf to-the  
   poble del costat.  
   I allí hi havia un guàrdia patrullant.  
   and there Loc HAVER-Past-3sg an officer patrolling  
   ‘We were looking for the police. We went to the next village. And there there was an officer patrolling.’
   b. *Buscàvem la policia. Vam anar al poble del costat.  
   looked-for-1pl the police Past-1pl go-Inf to-the  
   poble del costat.  
   I allí hi era un guàrdia patrullant.  
   and there Loc was an officer patrolling  
   ‘We were looking for the police. We went to the next village. And there there was an officer patrolling.’
While examples (15b) and (16b) were labeled unacceptable by our informant, the same cannot be said when this type of NP appears in a more peripheral presentational context, such as that of a relative clause introduced by a relative pronoun with a locative function. In this particular context, our informant admitted the possibility of using the verb ésser-hi, while considering the verb haver-hi more usual, as (17) shows:

(17) a. Vaig participar en un programa on hi havia/Past-1sg participate-Inf in a program where Loc HAVER-Past-3sg/hi era Robert Redford.
Loc was Robert Redford
‘I participated in a program in which Robert Redford was present.’
b. Què prefereixes, anar a la muntanya o a la mar?
What prefer-2sg go-Inf to the mountain or to the beach
Jo prefereixi anar a jugar on hi ha /hi I prefer-1sg go-Inf to play-Inf where Loc HAVER-Pres-3sg/ Loc és la nina is the doll
‘Which do you prefer, to go to the mountains or to the sea? I prefer to go to play where the doll is.’
c. Vaig anar a una casa on hi havia/hi era
Past-1sg go-Inf to a house where Loc HAVER-Past-3sg/ Loc un periodista de TV.
Loc was a reporter of TV
‘I went to a house where there was a TV reporter.’

Thus, in relative clauses introduced by a relative pronoun with a locative function, it is possible to use both the verbs ésser-hi and haver-hi together with the NPs in bold type in (18):

(18) 1, 2 > 3 > tots > proper noun > common definite animate noun > common definite inanimate noun > common indefinite animate noun > common indefinite inanimate noun > common indefinite animate noun with no determiner > common indefinite inanimate noun with no determiner > abstract noun with no determiner.

The reason why the use of the verb ésser-hi is seen as acceptable in structures such as that in (17), but not in others such as (15b) and (16b) may be explained as an instance of archaic usage (cf. Ramos (1997)). The more common or prototypical structures have become more quickly stabilized, while the more peripheral structures continue to show signs of alternation between the older verb ésser-hi and the more innovative use of haver-hi.

Furthermore, it should be noted that, as opposed to what we saw in the previous section with regard to Central Catalan, Northwestern Catalan and Balearic, the tendency to use estar(-hi) in presentational clauses may not be observed in Roussillonese.
3.3. The Algherese Dialect

The distribution of verbs in presentational sentences in Algherese differs on a number of points from that of the dialects described up to now. According to our own research and commentaries drawn from Rigau (1994) and Molina (1996), the verb ésser-hi is characterized by a more extensive usage in this dialect. Within the definiteness hierarchy, it is the verb used exclusively in association with the members marked in bold type below (19):

(19) 1, 2 > 3 > *tots > proper noun > common definite animate noun > common definite inanimate noun > common indefinite inanimate noun > common indefinite animate noun with no determiner > common indefinite inanimate noun with no determiner > abstract noun with no determiner.

   ‘We were looking for the mayor or for Carme. We went to the next village. And there was Carme.’

b. Buscàv em el repartidor de pa i l’ ajudant. Vam anar al poble del costat. I allí hi era el repartidor, però no l’ ajudant.
   ‘We were looking for the bread delivery man and his helper. We went to the next village. And there was the delivery man, but not his helper.’

   ‘We were trying to escape from the noise. We went to the next village. And there was the peace we needed.’

In addition to these uses, the verb ésser-hi is also used peripherally in association with the following members of the hierarchy: common indefinite animate noun and common indefinite inanimate noun, as shown in (21):

   ‘We were looking for the police. We went to the next village. And there was an officer.’
b. Sem salvos. En aquí hi és una cabina telefònica.  
are-1pl saved in here Loc is a booth telephone  
‘We’re saved. Here there is a telephone booth.’  
(Example taken from the adaptation of the Tintin comic, p. 2)

In fact, in this case we are dealing with recent uses due to interferences from Italian.7 This is what our two informants indicated in judging the sample sentences in (21) as acceptable, while considering the examples in (22), with *haver-hi*, as normal.

(22) a. Buscàvem la policia. Vam anar al poble del looked-for-1pl the police Past-1pl go-Inf to-the village of-the costat. I allí hi havia un guàrdia. side and there Loc HAVER-Past-3sg an officer  
‘We were looking for the police. We went to the next village. And there there was an officer.’

b. Buscàvem allotjament. Vam anar al poble del looked-for-1pl accommodation Past-1pl go-Inf to-the village of-the costat. I allí hi havia una habitació de dos llits. side and there Loc HAVER-Past-3sg a room of two beds  
‘We were looking for accommodation. We went to the next village. And there there was a room with two beds.’

In this sense, Molina (1996) also warns that speakers of Algherese are aware of this innovative use of the verb *ésser-hi* in contexts such as those shown in (21). This is confirmed by grammatical facts. While there is some degree of acceptance with regard to the sentences shown in (21), the verb *ésser-hi* is considered unacceptable in more peripheral structures such as those in (23), which contain relative clauses with pronouns performing a locative function:

(23) a. *Vaig anar a una casa on era un periodista de TV.  
Past-1sg go-Inf to a house where was a reporter of TV  
‘I went to a house where there was a TV reporter.’

7. Interference from Italian is probably also responsible for the appearance of the participle *estat* (ia) in compound tenses of the verb *haver-hi*, as opposed to *hagut*, used in other Catalan dialects (ib):

(i) a. Los primers? N’ hi ha estat altres?  
the first-ones EN Loc has ÉSSER-Participle others  
‘The first ones? Haven’t there been others?’  
(example taken from the comic Tintin, p. 62)

b. Els primers? N’ hi ha hagut altres?  
the first-ones EN Loc has HAVER-Participle others  
‘The first ones? Haven’t there been others?’

Considering the fact that the verb *ésser-hi* has the participial form *estat*, but uses the same verb *ésser* as an auxiliary (e.g. *és estat*) while the verb *haver-hi* uses the verb *haver* as an auxiliary (e.g. *ha hagut*), it is not unthinkable that the compound form *hi ha estat* in association with *haver-hi* may be derived from a hybridization of forms favored by the influence of Italian.
b. “Vaig anar a una casa on er a molta tranquil·lità.
Past-1sg go-Inf to a house where was much peace
‘I went to a house where there was a great deal of peace.’

We may therefore conclude that all cases involving indefinite NPs, including those lowest down in the hierarchy, as shown in (24), are typically expressed with the verb *haver-hi.*

(24) a. No hi ha hòmens.
no Loc HAVER-Présg men
‘There are no men.’

b. No hi ha res a fer!
no Loc HAVER-Présg nothing to do
‘There’s nothing to do.’

What all this means is that contemporary Algherese maintains a distribution associated with the most prototypical uses of medieval Catalan (cf. Ramos (1997)), uses which furthermore coincide with those of Sardinian (cf. Jones (1993:113-114).

To conclude, our surveys indicate that, just as we saw in the case of the Roussilhonese, in Algherese the verb *estar(-hi)* does not appear to have developed presentational uses.

### 3.4. The Valencian Dialect

The characteristic verbal distribution of the Valencian dialect differs in many aspects from that of the other Catalan dialects. In the case of Valencian, the verb *ésser-hi* no longer appears in presentational sentences, having been replaced by the verbs *estar* or *haver-hi.* The latter two verbs are therefore the only ones which may be used in presentational contexts in this dialect.

8. It should be noted that the verb *estar* in Valencian never carries the locative clitic element *hi*. On the other hand, in the case of the verb *haver-hi*, the locative clitic is also generally suppressed with compound forms (ia), the infinitive (ib) or the gerund (ic):

(i) a. En aquell bar, ha(n) haguèt molts incidents.
in that bar has(have) HAVER-Participle many incidents
‘In that bar there have been many incidents.’

b. L’ any passat va(n) haver tres encerntants.
the year last Past-3sg(pl) HAVER-Inf three winners
‘Last year there were three winners.’

c. Havent tres candidats, no tindrem problemes.
HAVER-Gerund three candidates no shall-have-1pl troubles
‘There being three candidates, we shall have no troubles.’

On the other hand, in the subdialect of the southernmost part of Valencia (*alacantí*), the form used to express the present indicative is *ha-hi* instead of *hi hu*. As with the case previously cited, this phenomenon appears to be due to Spanish interference. In this particular case, we are dealing with interference from the Spanish form *hay* (*ha + y*).
With the definiteness hierarchy as our starting point, we may say that the verbal distribution of Valencian is the following (25):

\[
1, 2 > 3 > \textit{tots} > \text{proper noun} > \text{common definite animate noun} > \text{common definite inanimate noun} > \text{common indefinite animate noun} > \text{common indefinite inanimate noun} > \text{common indefinite animate noun with no determiner} > \text{common indefinite inanimate noun with no determiner} > \text{abstract noun with no determiner}.
\]

All members shown in bold type in the hierarchy are associated exclusively with the verb \textit{estar}:

(26) a. En aquella reunió només estàvem ell i jo. 
\text{at that meeting only ESTAR-Past-1pl he and I} 
\text{‘At that meeting only he and I were present.’} 

b. Vam anar al ball, però no estaven tots, eh!  
\text{Past-1pl go-Inf to-the dance but no ESTAR-Past-3pl all INTERJ} 
\text{‘We went to the dance, but they weren’t all there - hey!’} 

c. A la festa vam veure que estaven Jaume i Miquel. 
\text{Past-1pl see-Inf that ESTAR-Past-3pl Jaume and Miquel} 
\text{‘At the party we saw that Jaume and Miquel were present.’} 

d. Al bar estan el ferrer i la seua dona. 
\text{at-the bar ESTAR-Pr es-3pl the blacksmith and the his wife} 
\text{‘At the bar are the blacksmith and his wife.’} 

e. Què busques? Ací només estan les meues sabatilles. 
\text{what look-for-2sg here only ESTAR-Pr es-3pl the my slippers} 
\text{‘What are you looking for? Here there’s nothing but my slippers.’} 

On the other hand, the remaining members of the hierarchy generally appear with the verb \textit{haver-hi}:

(27) a. A la plaça hi havia un home molt ben vestit. 
\text{in the square Loc HA VER-P ast-3sg a man very well dressed} 
\text{‘In the square there was a very well dressed man.’} 

b. A l’ armari hi ha un paquet de tabac. 
\text{in the cupboard Loc HA VER-Pr es-3sg a pack of cigarettes} 
\text{‘In the cupboard there is a pack of cigarettes.’} 

c. Per sort, ara ja hi ha tranquil·litat. 
\text{by fortune now already Loc HA VER-Pr es-3sg peace} 
\text{‘Fortunately there is peace now.’} 

While this is in fact the most general characterization, it should be noted that the verb \textit{estar} is currently descending on the hierarchy and is beginning to be heard together with indefinite animate NPs. This means that a presentational sentence
such as (27a), among the younger generations and in environments notably affected by the influence of Spanish, may appear with the verb *estar* (28):

(28) A la plaça estava un home molt ben vestit.

‘In the square there was a very well dressed man.’

4. Interpretation of Data

In the preceding section, we saw that the distribution of verbs in presentational sentences varies in accordance with the dialect under examination and the type of NP involved. In light of this fact, our present task is to attempt to discover the reasons which might justify such variations.

To begin with, it has been proved that, due to the rhematic nature of the NP, the most prototypical presentational sentences are those in which an indefinite NP appears. At the same time, the most peripheral examples of presentational sentences are those which include definite NPs, as these constructions are only possible when the pragmatic-discoursive conditions are such that the NP may be seen as rhematic. What this means is that the possibilities of a certain type of NP appearing in presentational sentences increase as we descend through the definiteness hierarchy.

It is to be noted that all Catalan dialects generally coincide in their use of the verb *haver-hi* in association with the indefinite members of the hierarchy. On the other hand, the distribution of verbs in connection with the definite members of the hierarchy is more varied. Speakers of Central Catalan, Northwestern Catalan, Balearic and Roussillonese generally use the verbs *ésser-hi* and *haver-hi* in these cases, while Algherese speakers use the verb *ésser-hi*, and Valencians use the verb *estar*.

A preliminary explanation for this variation in distribution is to be found in the different functional features of the NPs associated with these verbs. While *haver-hi* is generally used in connection with an NP acting as a direct object, the NPs appearing with the verbs *ésser-hi* and *estar* act as grammatical subjects. If we take into account the fact that the prototypical direct object is postverbal, rhematic, indefinite, inanimate and patient, while the prototypical subject is preverbal, rhematic, definite, animate and agent, it is much easier to come to an understanding of the presentational sentences which concern us here.

Let us consider the fact that the most typical usage to be observed in presentational clauses essentially coincides with the definition of the prototypical direct object. This being the case, it is not surprising that *haver-hi* should be the verb appearing most frequently in these constructions, especially with indefinite NPs. On the other hand, the subject of the verbs *ésser-hi* and *estar* in these constructions is not a prototypical subject, as it is generally postverbal, rhematic and patient. Nevertheless, it does in fact conserve some typical features such as definiteness and animation. All this implies a more infrequent use of the verbs *ésser-hi* and *estar* in presentational sentences, as well as a preference for definite NPs.
Yet while the verb *have-ši* is generally associated with indefinite NPs and the verbs *ésser-ši* and *estar* with definite NPs, the reality of dialectical usage shows that the distributional boundaries of these verbs are not clear cut. Speakers increasingly tend to use the NP associated with *have-ši* as a subject, a fact which has led to two basic consequences for the construction of presentational sentences. Firstly, dialects such as Central Catalan, Northwestern Catalan, Balearic and Roussillonese have experienced an increase in the possible uses of the verb *have-ši* with some of the definite members of the definiteness hierarchy: common definite inanimate nouns, common definite animate nouns and proper nouns.9 Secondly, dialects such as Central Catalan and Valencian show agreement between this verb and its theoretical direct object (29) (cf. Solà (1987:89-100), Rigau (1994)):

(29) En aquell calaix hi han dos rellotges.
    in that drawer Loc HAVER-Pres-3pl two watches
    ‘In that drawer there are two watches.’

Furthermore, there has also been a reverse movement in the distribution of the verbs *ésser-ši* and *estar(-hi)*, in the sense that they are now used in association with indefinite members of the hierarchy. In this case, as we saw earlier in this paper, we are dealing with peripheral uses in which the influence of a coterritorial language may be clearly noted. In the case of Algherese, the fact that the verb *ésser-ši* may appear with indefinite NPs is undoubtedly due to the influence of Italian, the official language of Sardinia, which is characterized by an exclusive use of the verb *essere* in presentational sentences. As for Valencian, the appearance of *estar* together with common indefinite animate nouns must be attributed to the influence of Spanish. In fact, Spanish has increasingly extended its use of the verb *estar* to the detriment of that of *ser* to express spatial relationships (cf. Suñer (1982)). The influence of Spanish also allows us to explain the fact that Valencian does not use the verb *ésser-ši* with the definite members of the hierarchy, as well as the fact that other Catalan dialects in Spain also show an increasing tendency to use *estar* with definite NPs.

5. Conclusions

The description of presentational sentences we have undertaken in this study shows that there are three verbs in Catalan which may appear in this type of structure: *have-ši*, *ésser-ši* and *estar(-hi)*.

We have seen that one of the most important factors conditioning the presence of any one of these particular verbs has to do with the characteristics of the NP as a basic element in presentational sentences. While the NP is prototypically post-verbal, rhematic and indefinite, this fact does not exclude the possibility of the presence of definite NPs under certain pragmatic and discoursive conditions. The

9. As we pointed out in Ramos (1997), the verb *have-ši* in medieval Catalan was used only sporadically with definite NPs.
admission of definite NPs necessarily implies that the so-called definiteness effect must be considered inadequate for Catalan and allows for the establishment of degrees within the definiteness hierarchy. This hierarchy, which has been shown to be inversely proportional to the prototypical characteristics of the NP in presentational sentences, has allowed us to determine which verbs appear in the most prototypical contexts and which verbs are associated with more peripheral contexts. In addition, it has helped us to show that distributional limits are not always discrete.

The following table summarizes the distribution of verbs in presentational sentences in the different Catalan dialects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>indefinite NPs</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>common noun</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(animate/inanimate)</td>
<td>(animate/inanimate)</td>
</tr>
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<td>HAVER-HI HAVER-HI HAVER-HI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roussillonese</td>
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<td>HAVER-HI HAVER-HI HAVER-HI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valencian</td>
<td>ESTAR ESTAR ESTAR</td>
<td>HAVER-HI HAVER-HI HAVER-HI</td>
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6. References