0. Introduction

French is generally considered to be an SVO language, although subjects may appear in postverbal position if the appropriate requirements are met. This is illustrated in (1)-(3). The standard SVO order is exemplified in (1), while in (2) and (3) (taken from Kayne, 1972, and Jonare, 1976, respectively), several examples of Stylistic Inversion (SI) are given, a construction in which the subject follows the verb and some other constituent precedes it. Whenever there is no constituent preceding the verb, as in (4), unacceptability is the result, which suggest that something like the generalization in (5) holds for French.

(1) Mon ami est allé à New York pour trouver la paix.  
my friend is gone to New York to find the peace

(2) Où est allé votre ami pour trouver la paix?  
where is gone your friend to find the peace

(3) a Dans les deux années qui suivent, se développent les tendances in the two years that follow develop the tendencies 
sexual normal

b Tout récemment sont apparues les éditions comportant (...).
all recently are appeared the editions including

c A la diversité géographique correspond la diversité des crus.
to the diversity geographic corresponds the diversity of-the wines

d Tout autre fut la réaction de Laurence.
all different was the reaction of Laurence

(4) *Est venu Jean.
is come Jean

(5) Generalization: the verbal cluster must be preceded by some XP.

We will focus on several problems that relate to SI in declaratives and interrogatives, which should lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon of postverbal subjects in French in general. In section 1, we will see that French

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1 I would like to thank Cecile de Bakker, Hans Broekhuis, João Costa, Anders Holmberg, Aafke Hulk, Ad Neeleman, Daniel Valois, Maarten de Wind, and in particular the anonymous reviewer, Brigitte Kampers-Manhe and Christine Tellier for their suggestions and comments.
interrogatives can be formed in several ways, and that this optionality partially disappears when the wh-element is a sentential adverbial. Remarkably, the three types of interrogative clauses we will be examining (Stylistic Inversion, Complex Inversion, and a construction involving est-ce que) each seem to have a declarative counterpart. However, these three constructions do not share all their properties in the two sentence types under investigation. This will lead us in the sections 2 and 3 to an analysis of French interrogatives, and to the hypothesis that definite postverbal subjects in declaratives (contrary to their counterparts in interrogatives) are foci. Finally, in section 4, we will look at the behaviour of indefinite postverbal subjects, which differs in some important respects from that of their definite counterparts.

1. Sentence-initial adverbials and optionality

A striking property of the French interrogative clause is the high degree of optionality involved. Within the conservative variety of French alone, there are two alternative ways of expressing the question in (2). This is shown in (6): the subject may appear in preverbal position, provided that either a subject clitic or the interrogative complementizer est-ce que is inserted.

(6) a Où est allé votre ami pour trouver la paix? (Stylistic Inversion)
   b Où est-ce que votre ami est allé pour trouver la paix?
   c Où votre ami est-il allé pour trouver la paix? (Complex Inversion)

Now, the first problem we run into is the fact that the optionality in (6) partially disappears when the sentential adverbial pourquoi introduces the clause, as in (7). Pourquoi does not license SI, which goes against the generalization in (5). The same pattern is found in declaratives: just like pourquoi, an adverbial like peut-être is successfully used in Complex Inversion and the construction containing an overt complementizer (which is que in declaratives), but not in Stylistic Inversion, which is shown in (8). However, when we substitute a lower adverbial (e.g. an adverbial of time or place) for peut-être, as we did in (9), declaratives turn out to behave in a peculiar fashion. Preposed non-interrogative lower adverbials license only Stylistic Inversion.

(7) a *Pourquoi est venu Jean? ‘Why did Jean come’
   b Pourquoi Jean est-il venu?
   c Pourquoi est-ce que Jean est venu?

(8) a *Peut-être (sans doute) sont comme cela toutes les femmes. maybe (probably) are like that all the women
   b Peut-être (sans doute) que toutes les femmes sont comme cela.
   c Peut-être (sans doute) toutes les femmes sont-elles comme cela.
In sum, sentence-initial adverbials in declaratives seem to induce either Complex Inversion and *que*-insertion (sentential adverbials) or Stylistic Inversion (all other adverbials). The question is of course: why do declaratives differ from interrogatives in this respect?

Before proceeding to answer this question, we should first consider the behaviour of the adverb *ainsi*, which licenses both Stylistic Inversion and Complex Inversion. As Blinkenberg (1958) remarks, *ainsi* followed by Complex Inversion tends to be interpreted as a sentential adverbial, while SI licensing *ainsi* generally gets a manner interpretation, which he illustrates with the examples in (10). In short, the interpretation *ainsi* gets in the two constructions is in accordance with what we have observed so far. Notice in passing that we wrongly predict that sentential *ainsi* is also able to appear in the *que*-construction. *Ainsi* as such may be followed by *que*, but whenever it is, the complex *ainsi que* functions as a conjunction. The fact that *ainsi* differs from an adverb like *peut-être* in this respect might be attributed to a blocking effect, that results in an avoidance strategy whenever the sequence adverb-*que* is independently listed as a complex conjunction in the lexicon. This hypothesis is corroborated by the behaviour of the sentential adverb *encore*, which is also interpreted as a complex conjunction when combined with *que*, with the result that only the option of Complex Inversion is available:

(10) a  Ainsi, le malentendu s’explique-t-il. (sentential)
     ‘Consequently, the misunderstanding can be explained’
 b  Ainsi s’explique le malentendu. (manner)
     ‘The misunderstanding can be explained this way’

(11) Ainsi qu’on vient de le dire,... ‘As we have just said,...’ (Petit Robert)
(12) Et encore les plus avertis doivent-ils penser que (...). (Jonare, 1976)
     ‘And still, the most knowledgeable people must think that (...)’
(13) Encore que la révolution puisse fausser le caractère. (Petit Robert)
     ‘Although the revolution may deform one’s character’

2. French interrogatives: an analysis

Since preverbal subjects and preposed elements like *wh*-phrases are in complementary distribution in (1)-(3), the most natural hypothesis would be that these elements occupy one and the same position: SpecIP, the canonical subject position. This yields the structures in (14). Following De Wind (1995) and many others, I take the postverbal subject in SI to be stranded in its base position inside
the VP. This entails that the participle in (14b) is moved out of its VP. We leave this matter aside, since it is not crucial to the point to be made here.

(14)  
\[ \text{a IP [votre ami] [\text{\_ est allé à New York pour trouver la paix}]} \]
\[ \text{b IP [où] [\text{\_ est allé votre ami pour trouver la paix}]} \]

However, we are now led to the non-trivial conclusion that \textit{wh}-elements may appear in SpecIP, which goes against the assumption that SpecIP is a case position exclusively available for subjects, but which is fully compatible with the framework we are adopting here.

We are assuming the model of syntax developed in Broekhuis and Dekkers (to appear). They argue in favor of a syntactic system that consists of two components: (i) a generator, which functions in essence like Chomsky's (1995) computational system, and (ii) an Optimality Theoretic evaluator that acts as a filtering device. Within the computational system, feature driven movement must apply to satisfy bare output conditions. If, for example, the \textit{wh}-feature of a given constituent is not associated with a \textit{wh}-marked head, either visibly or invisibly, the sentence is not interpretable at LF, and the derivation crashes. All other movement operations are free, although movement in general obeys the Minimal Link Condition.

The computational system selects, merges and moves (bundles of) features, and ultimately produces candidate sets that contain syntactic structures that are semantically non-distinct. Subsequently, the evaluator selects the optimal member(s) of each candidate set. The basic task of the evaluator is to decide about the optimal parsing of features. I refer the reader to Broekhuis and Dekkers (to appear) for the general framework, and to Dekkers (in prep.) for arguments in favor of a syntactic system that makes use of both soft constraints and features, the main advantages being that the existence of features puts severe restrictions on the constraint inventory (an important advantage over standard OT syntax) and that feature strength can be dispensed with.

Now, Rizzi (1991) takes the \textit{wh}-feature to be potentially associated with the inflectional head, an assumption that is taken up by Broekhuis and Dekkers. If we push this position to the extreme, then interrogative constituents may move to SpecIP in order to establish a Spec-Head relation with a \textit{wh}-marked head. As a result, the subject is forced to stay in its base position (although a subset of its features moves and adjoins to Infl, if necessary).

The structures in (14) bring us to the formulation of the first of five constraints, EPP, given in (15a). Following Holmberg (1997) among others, I take EPP to be of a very general nature, in order to account for the fact that the occurrence of preverbal material obliterates the need to raise the subject to
SpecIP: the subject is just one of the many potential fillers of this position, be it a privileged one, for reasons we will give below.²

(15) a  EPP (Extended Projection Principle): SpecIP must be filled.
   b  CASE: Parse constituents in their case position.
   c  PARSE-scope: Parse constituents in their scope position.
   d  STAY: Traces are not allowed.

Let us return now to the three-way optionality in (6). These examples show that by means of inserting a clitic or an interrogative complementizer, French restores the SVO order in questions. This can be explained by the introduction of the constraints in (15b-d). CASE is a constraint taken from Costa (1996). Unlike Costa, we will assume that NPs that do not appear in their case position are nevertheless marked for case. More specifically, in a case like (6a), a subset of the features of the subject moves to the checking domain of Infl: its case feature, and its phi-features (otherwise the visible agreement of the postverbal subject and the verb would be left unexplained). Movement of a subset of the features of a constituent is disfavored by parse constraints like CASE: CASE wants all features, and not just case features in isolation, to be parsed in the appropriate position.

Similarly, PARSE-scope (see Legendre et al., 1995) requires that the entire feature bundle of an operator be parsed in its scope position, and not only the isolated operator feature. Remember that we assumed that the inflectional head may be endowed with a wh-feature. If this is on the right track, then the wh-feature moves to the checking domain of Infl, while PARSE-scope requires that the rest of the feature bundle associated with the wh-phrase be pied-piped. So, if a wh-element is not pronounced in its scope position, PARSE-scope is violated.

Finally, STAY is a constraint found throughout the syntactic OT literature. Crucially, STAY is only violated if the entire feature bundle moves. Each instance of a trace, as we will see in the tableaux below, will count as a violation of this constraint.

It seems that the optionality in (6) is caused by the tension between EPP, CASE, and PARSE-scope. On the one hand, STAY prefers Stylistic Inversion, since EPP is satisfied by the wh-element, which moves to sentence-initial position for independent reasons, namely in order to satisfy PARSE-scope. On the other hand,

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² The anonymous reviewer notes that EPP as it is formulated in (15) only comes into play if SpecIP is indeed generated, which is not evident in a system that disposes of a principle of economy of projection. Irrespective of the question whether we would like to build economy of projection into our system (which is not trivial, since the independently needed STAY seems to be able to the job, see Broekhuis and Dekkers, to appear, and Dekkers, 1995), IP is needed for reasons of case and agreement: the case features of the subject as well as its phi-features must move to the checking domain of Infl, whether they pied-pipe the remaining feature bundle or not. Notice furthermore that EPP might be replaced by an even more general constraint that simply requires specifiers to be filled.
CASE prefers Complex Inversion and the est-ce que construction, which both lead to an SVO order.

Since constraints are violable and ranked in Optimality Theory, we are able to express the relative weight of the four constraints in question. The French ranking seems to be the one given in (16), which leads to the evaluation given in Tableau 1.\(^3\) In this tableau, Stylistic Inversion (candidate (a)), the structures involving est-ce que insertion and raising of a constituent to SpecIP (candidates (c) and (e)), and Complex Inversion (candidate (d)) all satisfy the highly ranked constraints PARSE-scope and EPP. The fact that the candidates (a), (c) and (d) survive follows from the assumption that STAY and CASE are in a tie. In spite of this tie, CASE is more than relevant, since it ensures that candidate (e) is blocked by candidate (c).

More concretely, the unacceptable *Pourquoi est-ce que hier est venu Jean* is blocked by the acceptable *Pourquoi est-ce que Jean est venu hier*, because the former involves an additional violation of CASE.

\[\text{(16) \ Ranking (French): PARSE-scope} \gg \text{EPP} \gg \text{STAY} \gg \text{CASE}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tableau 1</th>
<th>P-scope</th>
<th>EPP</th>
<th>STAY</th>
<th>CASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [wh [I] ..su...t..XP..]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. [su [I] ..t...wh...XP..]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. [wh [est-ce que] [su [I] ..t...t..XP..]]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. [wh [su [I-cl] ..t...t..XP..]]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. [wh [est-ce que] [XP [I] ..su...t...]]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. [wh [est-ce que] [ [I] ..su...t..XP..]]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question remains of course why the repair strategy that restores the SVO order involves either est-ce que or a clitic. We will not go into this question in great detail here. I would like to propose that est-ce que is inserted, because C° must be lexicalized whenever its specifier is filled, either to satisfy Grimshaw’s (1995) Obligatory Heads, or Ackema and Neeleman’s (1995) Q-marking.

\(^3\) The tableaux only contain the most relevant candidates. However, candidates involving expletives in SpecIP are structurally ignored. I assume that candidates that involve both the expletive *il* and a postverbal definite subject clash within the computational system, because both elements compete for the same case. In section 4.2, it is implied that indefinite postverbal subjects are assigned an independent case in their base position, so that the regular nominative case is still available for the expletive.

\(^4\) The constraints STAY and CASE are in a tie. We will assume here that if constraints are in a tie in a language, all rankings of these tied constraints are available. For instance, the set of optimal candidates obtained under a ranking \(\text{A} \gg \text{B} \gg \text{C} \gg \text{D}\) equals the union of the two sets of optimal candidates that result from the rankings \(\text{A} \gg \text{B} \gg \text{C} \gg \text{D}\) and \(\text{A} \gg \text{C} \gg \text{B} \gg \text{D}\). See Broekhuis and Dekkers (to appear) for discussion.
Alternatively, a clitic is introduced. In the literature on Complex Inversion (see De Wind, 1995, for a particularly extensive overview), there exists little consensus about the position of the nominal subject and the postverbal clitic. The mere fact that in the variety of French where Complex Inversion is found, clitic doubling is a specific property of this construction, and not a general phenomenon, has led to various construction-specific proposals concerning the position of the clitic and the nominal subject. Faute de mieux, we will assume that the clitic in Complex Inversion forms a complex with the inflectional head, thus licensing a second specifier, as in structure (d) in Tableau 1. Notice that the exact structure of Complex Inversion is not crucial here, the important point being that the wh-phrase does not occupy the canonical nominative case position, just like in the construction containing est-ce que.

3. *Sentence-initial adverbials and optionality: an explanation*

3.1. *The peculiar behaviour of sentential adverbials.* We observed in section 1 that the generalization in (5) is not correctly stated, since it incorrectly rules in sentences like (7a): preverbal sentential adverbials do not license SI. This suggests, given our analysis of SI, that sentential adverbials are not allowed to appear in SpecIP. I would like to propose that this is so, because sentential adverbials like pourquoi are base-generated in a position higher than SpecIP whenever they appear clause-initially.

There are two properties of pourquoi that suggest that it is in fact base-generated in clause-initial position. Firstly, pourquoi is allowed to appear in island contexts, contrary to an wh-adverbial like comment (see also Rizzi, 1990). This is illustrated by the examples in (17). It is in general very difficult to have wh-adverbials in negative contexts. Pourquoi, however, is not sensitive at all to the negation in (17), contrary to the aforementioned comment.

\[
\begin{align*}
(17)\ a \ & \text{Pourquoi n’a-t-il pas ouvert la porte?} \\
& \text{why NE-has-T-he not opened the door} \\
& \text{NE-has-T-he not opened the door} \\
\ & \text{b *Comment n’a-t-il pas ouvert la porte?} \\
& \text{how NE-has-T-he not opened the door} \\
(18) & \text{Comment sont partis les étudiants? ‘How did the students leave?’}
\end{align*}
\]

If pourquoi (contrary to comment) is base-generated in sentence-initial position, we can explain the pattern in (17), since pourquoi does not have to be moved across the negative island. Notice that comment licenses Stylistic Inversion, as is shown in (18). This follows immediately from the (negative) correlation we have established between the behaviour of wh-elements in Stylistic Inversion on the one hand, and in island contexts on the other.
Secondly, it is observed by Rizzi (1990) that *pourquoi* is not allowed to follow the verbal cluster in colloquial French. This is telling, since in this variety of French, *wh*-elements are generally allowed to be stranded in their base-position, which is exemplified in (19a). If we assume that *pourquoi* is base-generated in sentence-initial position, it simply cannot be stranded in postverbal position.\(^5\)

(19) a  Tu es allé où? 'Where did you go?'
b  *Tu es venu pourquoi? 'Why did you come?'
c  Marie l'a tué comment? 'How did Marie kill him?'

In short, there are good reasons to assume that sentential adverbials are base-generated very high up in the clause. If we take them to be inserted in a position higher than SpecIP, they would only be able to satisfy EPP through the illegitimate operation of lowering. Notice that if Complex Inversion indeed involves a second SpecIP, *pourquoi* may appear in this position. At present, we do not have an explanation why *pourquoi* is only able to occupy this outer specifier position.

3.2. Reduced optionality in declaratives. We observed in section 1 that preverbal adverbials in declaratives license either Complex Inversion and the *que*-construction or SI, while in interrogatives, a *wh*-adverb like *où* may appear in all three constructions. Of course, the question remains: why do there not exist adverbials that are allowed to appear in these three constructions in declaratives? In order to answer this question, we should ask ourselves why constituents like *tout récemment* in (9) occupy their preverbal position in the first place.

We argued that in interrogatives, the *wh*-element moves to sentence-initial position for scopal reasons, i.e. to respect PARSE-scope. In the case of declaratives, a similar approach is feasible. It could be that *tout récemment* in (9a) is moved because it has the pragmatic function of topic, i.e. to satisfy a constraint we could call PARSE-topic. However, such an approach would leave the asymmetry between declaratives and interrogatives unexplained. This suggests that in declaratives, the nature of the postverbal subject, rather than that of the preposed element, is responsible for the inversion. I would like to propose that the postverbal subject is (narrowly) focused in the declaratives we are examining.

Indeed, postverbal subject are informationally prominent when occurring in postverbal position in declaratives: they are preferably (very) heavy (see Jonare, 1976, among others), and when they are not, as Le Bidois (1952) remarks, 'inversion is even more expressive', the postverbal subject being 'the important

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\(^5\) The judgements in (19) are based on reason *pourquoi* and instrumental *comment*. There is no consensus among my informants with respect to the examples involving purposive *pourquoi* and manner *comment*.
word', 'the psychological predicate' of the utterance (see also Blinkenberg, 1958).\(^6\)

The relevance of focus suggests that a constraint like Grimshaw and Samek-Lodovici's (1995) ALIGN-focus is in play here (see also Costa, 1996, and Samek-Lodovici, 1996). Whenever a focused subject does not appear at the very right edge of the clause, ALIGN-focus is violated:

(20) ALIGN-focus: Align focused constituents with the right edge of a CP.

So, in sentences like (9a), XP preposing takes place in order to satisfy EPP, so that the focused subject may remain in situ and satisfy the highly ranked ALIGN-focus. This entails that preposing never occurs in Complex Inversion (candidate (d)) or in the que-construction (candidate (c)), since in these constructions the subject has moved to SpecIP. Also the candidates (b) and (d), as well as many others that are left without mention, are blocked by either EPP or ALIGN-focus, or by both. Finally, the ranking EPP >> ALIGN-focus ensures that the subject moves to SpecIP if there is no constituent present that may fill SpecIP, which explains the ungrammaticality of examples like (4).\(^7\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tableau 2</th>
<th></th>
<th>EPP</th>
<th>ALIGN-F</th>
<th>STAY</th>
<th>CASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [XP [I] ...su(_{FOC}...I..]]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. [su(_{FOC} [I] ...I...XP..]]</td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. [XP [que] [su(_{FOC} [I] ...I...]]</td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. [XP [su(_{FOC} [I-cl] ...I...]]</td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. [XP [que] [ [I] ...su(_{FOC}...I..]]</td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that we take ALIGN-focus to be responsible for Stylistic Inversion in declaratives, we expect that in this sentence type, the postverbal subject may not be followed by any syntactic material. In fact, we expect declaratives to differ from interrogatives in this respect, given that ALIGN-focus does not play a role in interrogative SI. The examples in (21) show that this prediction is borne out ((21a) is taken from Valois and Dupuis, 1992, cf. also (2)).

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\(^6\) See also Zubizarreta (1994), who associates Heavy NP Shift with narrow focus. It remains to be seen what the exact correlation is between focus and heaviness in this French construction, and how the general phenomenon of Heavy NP Shift fits into the picture. I leave this for further research, and assume that the narrowly focused constituents must be informationally prominent. Also the effect of ALIGN-focus on other constituents than the subject will be disregarded.

\(^7\) Note that EPP may be violated in the case of stage directions and similar pragmatically extremely marked sentences. We will leave these cases aside.
4. Postverbal indefinites

4.1 Subjunctive clauses. As is well-known, postverbal subjects are allowed to appear in subjunctive clauses in French without the requirement that there be an XP that precedes the verbal cluster. Kampers-Manhe (1996) argues that these postverbal subjects are focused. Above, we established a link between the relevance of focus and the impossibility of having material following the postverbal subject. Now, if Kampers-Manhe is right in assuming that postverbal subjects in subjunctive clauses are focused, we predict that they can never be followed by any syntactic material. This is exactly what she observes:

(22) Je veux que parte Paul (*aux Etats-Unis).
I want that leave Paul to-the United States

However, she also notes that this restriction only holds for definite subjects. The counterpart of (22) involving an indefinite postverbal subject is acceptable, as is shown in (23). Remarkably, these observations also hold for non-subjunctive clauses involving a postverbal subject and XP preposing (Christine Tellier, p.c.), as is shown in (24).

(23) J'exige que soient distribués des/ces prospectus par les enfants.
'I demand that (those) prospectuses be distributed by the children'

(24) a Dans ce musée figuraient de/les précieux manuscrits avant la guerre.
'(The) precious manuscripts figured in this museum before the war'
b Durant l'hiver se sont présentés des/les enfants affamés à nos portes.
'(The) starving children presented themselves at our doors during the winter'

4.2. More postverbal subjects: the il-construction. In several respects, the construction involving an indefinite subject in (23) and (24) resembles the French impersonal construction, exemplified in (25). In both constructions, the postverbal NP is indefinite and may be followed by syntactic material, but not by dependant

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8 Apparently, EPP need not be satisfied by moving an overt constituent into SpecIP. This suggests that subjunctive inflection may license an empty (expletive) element that is visible to EPP, or that subjunctive inflection itself satisfies this constraint.
clauses containing an obligatorily controlled PRO subject. However, the impersonal construction is still unique in at least two respects. Firstly, the postverbal NP does not agree with the verb in this construction (compare (25) with (23)-(24)). Secondly, en-extraction is possible in the impersonal construction only, which is shown in (26a), taken from Pollock (1986).

(25) Il figurait de/*les précieux manuscrits dans ce musée.
Il figured indef./les precious manuscripts in this museum

(26) a *Dans cette prison en ont été exécuté deux.
in this prison of-them have been executed two
b Il en a été exécuté deux.
IL of-them has been executed two

In short, there seems to be a link between the possibility of en-extraction and agreement. This points in the direction of an analysis in which the postverbal NPs in question are always associated with Infl through feature movement, except when expletive il is inserted. The impossibility of en-extraction in (26a) would then involve illicit countercyclic movement: en would be extracted from an element that undergoes movement to the checking domain of Infl.

This does not necessarily mean that the postverbal NP that agrees with the verb is assigned nominative case. Remember that if both the phi-features and the case features of the postverbal NP are moved to Infl, CASE is violated. By the same token, CASE is satisfied if the case features are not moved to Infl. If this is what may happen to postverbal indefinite subjects, that is, if they can be assigned case in their base position, the definite-indefinite asymmetry is explained. I refer the reader to Dekkers (in prep.) for a proposal along these lines.

5. Conclusion

We have argued that Stylistic Inversion in French interrogatives applies because the wh-element is able to satisfy EPP while it moves to sentence-initial position for independent reasons, namely in order to avoid a violation of PARSE-scope. In

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9 I am referring to sentences like the ones given in (i), taken from Pollock (1986), who argues that (ia) and (ib) are ungrammatical, because the postverbal subject/associate is not able to control the PRO subject of the infinitival clause.

(i) a *IL trônaient des bibelots de prix sur cette cheminée avant de tomber par terre.
   IL were-displayed precious trinkets on this mantlepiece before of fall on ground
b *Sur cette bibliothèque trônaient des bibelots de prix avant de tomber par terre.
on this bookcase were-displayed precious trinkets before of fall on ground
c Où trônaient ces bibelots avant de tomber par terre?
where were-displayed these trinkets before of fall on ground
declaratives, however, non-nominative XPs move to this position only to satisfy EPP. Because, in principle, it is cheaper to move the subject to satisfy this constraint, since this would lead to the satisfaction of CASE, it is imperative that the subject stay in situ for independent reasons. Definite postverbal subjects, we have suggested, stay in situ to satisfy ALIGN-focus, a constraint that requires that focused elements appear in sentence-final position, while their indefinite counterparts do so because they can (arguably) be assigned case in their base position.

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