Editors' note

Null subjects present a classic example of parametric variation, dividing languages into those that allow the subject of active finite clauses to remain silent, and those that do not. This book focuses on languages that are relatively understudied in this respect. It is a selection of twelve studies featuring null subjects in Slavic, Baltic, Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic language families. In particular, it includes chapters on East Slavic (Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian), West Slavic (Polish, Czech), South Slavic (Bulgarian); on two Baltic languages, Lithuanian and Latvian; on Finnish, Hungarian, Mari and Saami from the Finno-Ugric language family; and finally, on two Samoyedic languages, Selkup and Nganasan, closely related to Ugric languages.

As the title of the book suggests, the main concern of this volume is to draw attention to null subjects in two less studied European language families, in particular, Slavic and Finno-Ugric. The two Baltic languages represented in the volume connect these two language families geographically, while the Samoyedic languages included here point towards Turkic and other Altaic languages, which also allow null subjects but are not represented in the volume.

The inventory is obviously incomplete. South Slavic languages are represented merely by Bulgarian, and Finnish and South Saami represent the Finnic branch. In this sense, the volume is not a concise handbook. Rather, it is a manifestation of the Null Subject Continuum. The collection is meant to be an appetizer, which will hopefully instigate further research.

As is usually the case with thematic volumes, the theoretical background of the chapters is not homogeneous. It ranges from minimalist, cartographic and conceptual semantic to historical, typological, corpus-based and descriptive approaches. These approaches, nonetheless, make it possible to compare the different methods used by these linguistic theories and to measure them against the data presented in the volume.

The volume starts with a Preface by **Anders Holmberg**, which, in addition to setting the scene, also serves as a recommendation of the volume to the linguistic audience.

In Chapter 1, **Jacek Witkoś** offers an overview of recent theories of null subjects within generative syntactic theorizing. Three new avenues of research have crystallized since Rizzi's (1982) seminal work on null subjects: (i) Holmberg's tripartite division of null subjects according to their projectional complexity (DP, φP, nP); (ii) Frascarelli's theory of licensing null subjects in the C-domain, as prescribed by the Topic Criterion; (iii) Barbosa's theory of the internal organization of null subjects as minimal nPs. These theories are often referred to in the chapters of the volume.

Egor Tsedryk in Chapter 2 discusses null subjects in East Slavic root clauses. He offers a comprehensive overview of the subject (null and overt) pronouns in Belarusian, Russian and Ukrainian, including (i) non-referential the third person plural generic pronoun, (ii) the second person generic pronoun and (iii) the reflexive marker used in generic statements. First of all, it is shown that referential null subjects are not linked to Topic operators in the left periphery. Pronominal elements are subsequently analyzed from the point of view of their morphosyntactic features and their categorial status. That is, null subjects are analyzed as projections of *phi*-features, in opposition to overt pronouns that have an additional D-layer in their extended nominal projection. The contribution of the D-head is twofold: (a) it signals the overt spell-out at the sensori-motoric interface, and (b) it ensures type shifting in the logical form. The chapter concludes with a list of spell-out rules operating in East Slavic languages.

In Chapter 3, **Nerea Madariaga** offers a unified account of referential null subjects in Russian both from the synchronic and the diachronic perspective. Building on previous work, she evaluates the crucial conditions for licensing null subjects in Russian according to the level of embedding (root vs embedded clauses), and verbal finiteness. Modern Russian, a partial Null Subject Language (NSL), displays a complex pattern: non-emphatic pronominal subjects in root clauses can or cannot be dropped, depending on (i) their informational interpretation (whether they are discourse Topics or successive occurrences of Topics in a topic chain), and (ii) additional syntactic restrictions involving locality requirements. In embedded clauses, null subjects are licensed under obligatory control in both finite and non-finite clauses, again, in absence of an intervener between the null subject and the left periphery. In Old Russian (a consistent NSL), on the contrary, every non-emphatic subject had to be dropped, in root and embedded, finite and non-finite clauses, regardless the distance of the antecedent in the text and despite the presence of potential interveners.

In Chapter 4, Polish null subjects are investigated by **Marta Ruda**. Polish is a consistent NSL with a basic SVO but in principle flexible word order, in which the interpretation of nominal arguments, including definite bare NPs, is, to a great extent, guided by contextual factors. It is shown that null subjects in Polish follow the same pattern, making available a much wider array of interpretations than what is observed, for example, in Italian, which is the paradigm case of consistent NSLs. With the theoretical focus on the left-peripheral approaches to the licensing and interpretation of null subjects, the author shows that the proposals based on the requirement that third person null subjects be identified with the (Aboutness-Shift) Topic heavily undergenerate when tested against the null subject facts of Polish. In general, the discussion leads to the conclusion that approaches which do not rely on information-structural notions for the licensing

of null subjects provide a more promising basis for furthering the theoretical understanding of the mechanisms underlying the phenomenon, including the patterns of cross-linguistic variation.

Chapter 5, by **Ludmila Veselovská**, investigates null subjects in Czech. The author first provides the Czech data to demonstrate the typical characteristics of a consistent NSL. Czech finite predicates, although located in a low position, carry rich agreement morphology allowing null subjects with a non-contrastive definite (specific) interpretation in all Tense-Aspect contexts for all three persons, both singular and plural. On the other hand, a generic (non-specific) subject in standard Czech requires either an overt proform *jeden* 'one' or a standard null subject. The chapter concentrates on Czech structures with (i) obligatory null subjects, and (ii) those which do not allow null subjects. The former includes agentless predicates, generic second person singular subjects, and anaphoric subjects in non-root clauses with a hierarchically symmetrical interpretation. The chapter proposes a complex agreement process including several independent checking domains for (i) the nominal *phi*-feature set, (ii) the D-feature set and (iii) a Topic/Focus feature. The theoretical framework used for the discussion and analyses is based on the diagnostics and claims made in the previous studies on null subjects.

In Chapter 6, **Dobrinka Genevska-Hanke** investigates Bulgarian, in the context of the existing classifications, as a consistent or a partial NSL. While providing ample empirical evidence for Bulgarian being a consistent NSL, the author shows that, in contrast to Italian (and thus contrary to expectation), Bulgarian allows overt subjects in Topic continuity contexts, implying that consistent NSLs are possibly subject to microvariation. Another reason for a more fine-grained classification is the availability of a generic null subject, characteristic of partial NSLs. While consistent NSLs are expected to use the reflexive *si*, Bulgarian (on a par with European Portuguese, a consistent NSL) allows for both of these options. There is evidence for a dissociation between the *si*-construction and genericity, on the one hand, and for the fact that *si*-constructions are formally similar (but not identical) to passive constructions, on the other hand.

Chapter 7, by **Axel Holvoet** and **Anna Daugavet**, deals with subjects without phonetic realization in Baltic languages, characterized in terms of agreement features on the verb, the type of syntactic environments they are compatible with, and the regular semantic interpretations associated with them. The discussion focuses on three types: (i) generic human null subjects that are masculine singular in terms of the verbal agreement, (ii) *they*-type null subjects that are masculine plural in terms of agreement (Siewierska's "episodic type"), and (iii) ambient (force) inanimate null subjects with causative verbs. Lithuanian and Latvian sen-

tences with null subjects show major differences in their use and in the different types of interaction with other (impersonal and passive) constructions. The areal connections of the constructions under discussion (Slavic and Finnic) are mentioned to clarify some points of interpretation.

In Chapter 8, **Urpo Nikanne** discusses licensing null subjects in Finnish active finite sentences. The focus is on argument structure and the analysis is based on the author's Conceptual Semantics framework. The licensing and interpretation of null subject sentences is explained as the interaction between three different levels of argument structure: (i) syntactic arguments (subject and object), (ii) lexically determined arguments ("logical" subject and object), and (iii) lexical conceptual structures. It is shown that empty syntactic subject is not needed for licensing a null subject if the system, as a whole, can link the structure to lexically determined arguments and a well-formed conceptual structure. Two kinds of NS are discussed: the referential (first or second person) null subject and the third person generic NS. In the plural, the latter is allowed only with verbs of communication. The author also provides an account of the different interpretive procedures applicable the respective null subject types.

Chapter 9 by **Gréte Dalmi** investigates the licensing conditions for the individual vs. generic reference interpretations of null arguments in Hungarian finite matrix and dependent clauses. The free occurrences of individual reference null arguments behave like R-expressions. The bound variable occurrences are subject to standard syntactic constraints such as locality, c-command and coreference. While lexical pronominal arguments with the individual interpretation require merely syntactic licensing, their null counterparts must be both syntactically and semantically licensed. Null arguments with the generic inclusive interpretation must be semantically licensed by the generic operator on the left periphery of the clause.

Generic reference null arguments also have free vs. bound occurrences in Hungarian. The free occurrences must always be lexical, just like *one* and *people* in English. The bound variable occurrences are always null and require a coreferential generic antecedent in some adjacent clause, but without the syntactic requirements applying to the bound variable occurrences of individual reference null arguments.

From the typological perspective, Hungarian resembles radical NSLs inasmuch that in finite clauses any argument of the predicate can remain silent as long as this argument can be reconstructed at some level of linguistic representation. Hungarian also differs from radical NSLs in disallowing free variation in the interpretation of the third person individual and generic reference null arguments. These facts place Hungarian somewhere between partial and radical NSLs in the typological scale of Null Subject Languages established by Holmberg & Roberts (2010).

Chapter 10, by **Jeremy Bradley** and **Johannes Hirvonen**, presents a corpus-based study of the conditions on licensing null subjects in Mari. Mari, a pluricentric language spoken in the Volga and Ural Regions of the Russian Federation, has two actively used literary norms – Meadow (Eastern) Mari and Hill (Western) Mari – and has historically been subject to Turkic and Russian language contact. First, the classic hypothesis that NSs are licensed by verbal *phi*-features is tested against an alternative hypothesis which attributes null subject licensing to a left-peripheral discourse-related head. Second, the authors perform a multi-level quantitative analysis to examine the importance of factors which do not have a categorical effect on subject expression, such as subject person (first, second, or third). As their empirical base, they use original fieldwork data, as well as the Corpus of Literary Mari recently compiled with the involvement of the authors. This corpus includes large bodies of texts from two literary standards of Mari dating back to before the Russian Revolution.

In Chapter 11, **Mikael Vinka** investigates two types of referential third person null subjects in South Saami, a Finno-Ugric language spoken in central Norway and Sweden by approximately 1,000 native speakers. The author addresses three distinct, but interrelated phenomena observed in South Saami, i.e. null subjects, logophoricity and cases of obligatory coreference in subjunctive complements. The general claim is that these phenomena have in common the fact that the occurrence of a null subject or a logophoric pronoun is contingent on the presence of a designated item in the C-domain which mediates the relation between the pronoun and its ultimate antecedent. In embedded contexts, two types of NS can be detected. One of them is *pro,* occuring in matrix clauses and indicative complement CPs. However, the null subject in subjunctive complements is incompatible with the *pro* analysis. On the basis of distributional facts, the author argues that this particular kind of null subject is a PF-deleted overt pronoun.

In Chapter 12, **Susann Fischer** and **Beáta Wagner-Nagy** investigate the distribution of referential and generic null subjects in Selkup and Nganasan, including the syntactic and pragmatic conditions determining their distribution. Nganasan got in contact with Russian relatively late, while Selkup has been under Russian influence for centuries. In Uralic languages (including Samoyedic languages), it is not obligatory to lexically express the subject and the object. Thus, these languages can be classified as *pro*-drop languages. At the same time, the circumstances that render subject omission possible have yet to be described extensively. Likewise, it is less known how the two closely related languages behave with regard to subject omission. In the course of the discussion, the authors seek to answer these questions.

Chapter 13, by **Piotr Cegłowski**, summarizes the main findings of the volume.