[#]*Je suis Charlie*
Semantic and prosodic anatomy of an empathic copular sentence[*]

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"Je suis Charlie" was used over 619.000 times in the two days that have followed the attack of the editorial team of *Charlie Hebdo* (*Le Progrès*, *The Huffington Post*) and has regularly been taken up in both written and spoken form since. In this paper, we argue that the structure of this sentence actually clashes with its meaning. More specifically, whereas its word order and default rightmost sentence stress are compatible either with an all-focus reading or a narrow focusing of *Charlie*, the context of use of this sentence as well as the solidarity/empathy message it intends to communicate suggest that its subject is narrowly focused. We will propose that two strategies have emerged to solve this conflict: (i) various alternative forms have appeared that allow proper subject focusing and (ii) speakers have reinterpreted the structure so as to pragmatically retrieve the (additive) focused nature of the subject.

1   Introduction

The sentence "Je suis Charlie", which has become tragically popular since January 2015, was first published as a logo by Joaquim Roncin, an art director and music journalist, less than an hour after the attack of *Charlie Hebdo*'s editorial team. J. Roncin declared to the press that he created this image because, in these terrible circumstances, he was lacking the words to fully express his feelings:

> "Ce que je voulais dire, c'est que c'est comme si on m'avait touché moi, je me sens personnellement visé, ça me tue, quoi"[1] (*Le Progrès*)

Writing or pronouncing this type of copular structure to express empathy and/or solidarity with a person or a group of people is not unprecedented, as illustrated by the sentences in (1) and (2).

(1)   Ich bin ein Berliner.
        'I am a Berliner.' (JFK, 06.26.1963)

(2)   Nous sommes tous américains.
        'We are all Americans.' (Serge Halimi, *Le Monde diplomatique*, 10.2001)

Recent events also show that this structure is quite productive as, since January 2015, *Charlie* has regularly been substituted with other first names (in the memory of other victims) and with various nouns and adjectives (in solidarity with other targeted communities). This is illustrated in (3).

(3)   " Je suis flic, je suis juif, je suis musulman, je suis baptisé, je suis Charlie".
        'I am a cop, I am Jewish, I am Muslim, I'm baptised, I'm Charlie.' (*Nouvel Obs*)

In popular culture, a famous instance of this type of copular structure goes back to the movie *Spartacus* (S. Kubrick, 1960). Comparisons were indeed drawn by the media between J. Roncin's sentence and the one produced by the slaves in the famous exchange in (4) (e.g. www.managementtoday.co.uk).

(4)   **Herald**: I bring a message from your master Marcus Licinius Crassus commander of Italy. By command of His Most Merciful Excellency your lives are to be spared. Slaves you were and slaves your remain. But the terrible penalty of crucifixion has been set aside on the single condition that you identify the body or the living person of the slave called Spartacus.
        Antonius: I'm Spartacus!
        Slaves *one at a time, then overlapping*: I'm Spartacus! I'm Spartacus! I'm Spartacus!

Crucially, in this exchange, the slaves provide an answer to the implicit question "Who is Spartacus?" and the prosody of their answers (with sentence main prominence located on the subject pronoun) indicates that the grammatical subject of this sentence is narrowly focused.

In our view, "Je suis Charlie" and its translation in various languages answer a similar implicit question, which puts the subject of the sentence under narrow focus. Null-subject Romance languages such as Italian and Spanish, in which

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[1]   *What I wanted to say is that it is as if it was me that they had hit, I feel personally targeted, what was done/these events just kill me.*

the translation of "Je suis Charlie" in (5) and (6) features an overt subject also suggest that this structure involves subject-focusing.

(5)   Io sono Charlie.
        'I am Charlie.' (www.huffingtonpost.it)

(6)   Yo soy Charlie.
        'I am Charlie.'(www.cronicadelquindio.com)

The grammar of French (both Standard and Colloquial) disfavours prominence shift to the subject "je". As argued by Hamlaoui (2007, 2009), the association between a focused subject and sentence stress, which is required by the stress-focus correspondence principle (Reinhart 1995, 2006; Szendrői 2001, 2003), is preferably achieved through the use of structures that allow to preserve default rightmost sentence stress. Additionally, the pronoun "je", which is analysed as a clitic in Standard French and more recently as an affix in Colloquial French (Zribi-Hertz 1994; Côté 2001; Culbertson 2010) does not constitute a prosodic word of its own and is thus not eligible to carry sentence stress. "Je suis Charlie" thus simply displays a (default) rightmost sentence stress. In our view, this French sentence presents a case of form/meaning clash. Whereas its prosody is compatible with the information-structural organisations in (7) or (8), the context of its use favours the interpretations in (9) or (10).

(7)   Je suis [Charlie]$_F$

(8)   [Je suis Charlie]$_F$

(9)   [Je]$_F$ suis Charlie

(10)   [[Je]$_F$ suis Charlie]$_F$

Two strategies have emerged to reconcile the form and meaning of "Je suis Charlie". First, alternative structures were spontaneously created that fare better in satisfying the stress-focus correspondence principle. Second, "Je suis Charlie" has been re-interpreted by French speakers so as to obtain a reading quasi-equivalent to subject focus (without actually having to prosodically focus the subject). Before we turn to the above mentioned information-structural considerations, let us first discuss the interpretation of solidarity-expressing copular sentences of the type "I am X".

2   Semantic structure

2.1   The presumptive message

From a truth-conditional perspective, there seems to be two ways of interpreting a sentence like "Je suis Charlie". In the straightforward equative-referential reading, the speaker identifies himself with the entity known by the audience as

Charlie. The proper name is simply treated as a referential expression of type e, denoting a unique and identified entity in the context. The truth-conditional content of this sentence can then be summed up by the formula in (11).

(11) $i = \mathsf{c}$

where c is a constant denoting the individual Charlie and i is an indexical variable referring directly to the speaker in the current context of utterance

In the context relevant in the present paper, this formula is however plainly false, as the speaker is *not* Charlie. Also, in contrast to Antonius in *Spartacus*, J. Roncin is not trying to pass himself off as (someone called) *Charlie*. By virtue of the Gricean maxim of quality, hearers infer that the speaker most probably means something else.

We propose that this "something else" is the second possible interpretation of the sentence: a predicative reading, in which the speaker assigns himself a certain property. This reading corresponds to the formula in (12).

(12)   Charlie-p(i)

where Charlie-p is a one-place predicate (type $\langle e,t \rangle$).

First, the predicative reading seems more on a par with J. Roncin's acknowledged intention—namely to express his solidarity—as a predicate denotes a set of (possibly many) individuals. The utterance of "Je suis Charlie" can thus be understood as a way for the speaker to volunteer the information that he belongs to a group, viz. the extension of Charlie-p. In this context, this group could be *Charlie Hebdo*'s editorial team, all the victims of this attack, or even all the other people who feel hurt by these events.

Second, the predicative reading appears to be corroborated by attested French variants of "Je suis Charlie" in (13), using an indefinite NP. The structure "I am an X", illustrated in (14), is indeed a typical predicative construction in French.

(13)   a.   Je suis un Charlie.
              I am a Charlie.
        b.   Nous sommes (tous) des Charlie.
              We are (all) Charlies.

(14)   Je suis un hipster/un imbécile/un génie.
        I'm a hipster/an idiot/a genius.

The predicative reading in (12) and (13) may be an instance of the *appellative use* of proper names (also known as *antonomasia* in the French tradition, i.e. the figurative conversion of a proper name into a common noun). The precise specification of the content of the Charlie-p property (i.e. what it means politically/morally/socially to "be Charlie") does not have to be dealt with by

compositional semantics, as antonomasia is a figure of speech involving some *a posteriori* pragmatic reasoning. Our analysis however can (and should) prepare the ground for the eventual interpretation by making the semantic structure consistent with the information packaging (cf. examples (7) to (10)), that is by assigning the sentence a semantic structure of a predicate–argument form.

2.2 The predicative Charlie

So, how can a proper name give rise to a predicate?[2] Generally speaking, the mechanism of antonomasia that is at work in "Je suis Charlie" can be viewed as yielding the predicate in (15) for the name *Charlie* (instead of the constant c).

(15) $\lambda x.R(x, c)$
        where R is a relational free variable whose value is to be supplied by the context

In standard cases of antonomasia, R will be resolved as a relation expressing resemblance, imitation, analogy, etc. In our example however, the relation may be less conventional, merely intending at expressing some form of solidarity with c, i.e. *Charlie* (whoever he or it is). For what matters here, let us however assume that the introduction of R in (15) is a stylistic type-shifting operation that turns a term of type e into a predicate of type $\langle e,t \rangle$.

Note that the predicative reading comes for free if one adopts the position, argued for by e.g. Matushansky (2015), that proper names are inherently naming predicates. Along these lines, a name like *Charlie* is analysed as (16).

(16) $\lambda x \lambda N.N(x, \text{ʃaʁli})$
        where N ranges over a set of naming conventions (e.g. *is-called*, *is-nicknamed*, *is-known-as*)

N is thus a relation between an individual (x) and a name (i.e. a phonological string, here /ʃaʁli/). The usual referential use of a proper name (i.e. as an argument NP) is treated as a definite description, with an implicit definite article, as shown in (17) for the analysis of the name *Charlie*.

(17)   [~~the~~ *Charlie*] ⤳ $\iota x\, N(x, \text{ʃaʁli})$
        i.e. the unique individual called or known as Charlie in the context

N (a free variable) is supplied by the context as the unambiguous naming convention in force between a speaker using a proper name and her addressee(s).

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2   Naturally one can directly get a predicate from a term by applying the type-shifter ident $(\lambda y \lambda x.[x = y])$, which turns an individual into the singleton set containing this individual (Partee 1987). Here it will yield the property of being identical to Charlie $(\lambda x.[x = c])$, which in the end is equivalent to the referential reading of the proper name.

The predicative use of *Charlie* ($\lambda x.N(x, \text{ʃaʁli})$) is exemplified in (18) for "Je suis Charlie", to be compared with the referential reading in (19) for "I'm Spartacus".

(18) $N(i, \text{ʃaʁli})$

(19) $i = \imath x N(x, \text{spɑːtəkəs})$

(18) literally means "my name is (one way or another) Charlie", but again, it is not to be interpreted literally. Rather, it means that the speaker belongs to the group of people who are *symbolically* named Charlie. (18) allows this interpretation, as *N* is a free variable and can be contextually resolved as a less conventional naming relation.

In sum, we have argued that in the context relevant to the present paper, the sentence "Je suis Charlie" is associated with a predicative reading of the proper name *Charlie*. We have also seen that there are several (potentially complementary) means of giving this sentence a predicate–argument structure. Importantly, the structure conveys that the speaker belongs to a set which, as we will discuss in Section 4, will be crucial for French speakers to pragmatically retrieve the (additive) focus reading of the subject pronoun "je". Let us now turn to the information-structural organisation of "Je suis Charlie".

3   Information structure

3.1   Focus/Background

The information structure of an assertion is traditionally defined as a focus-(back)ground partition (Vallduví & Engdahl 1996; Engdahl 2006), where the focus is the informative or new part, and the ground the known, given or contextually bound one. In particular, for an assertion that is a full answer to a question in a dialogue, the ground corresponds to the question asked, and the focus is the locus of the answer. The information structure of an assertion can thus be identified by determining which question (even implicit) it provides an answer to, which issue it resolves.

Accordingly, "Je suis Charlie" can answer different questions, and then (theoretically) be assigned at least 3 different information structural organisations given in S1 to S3 below. We adopt the Structured Meaning approaches (a.o. von Stechow 1982; Krifka 2001, 2006) which implements the information structure directly in the semantic representation by splitting the truth-conditional content into a pair ⟨Focus, Background⟩.[3] In these structures, Charlie-p represents the general contribution of *Charlie* in the form of a predicate. It can stand for

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[3]   The Background (i.e. the ground) is a function, and the functional application Background(Focus) yields the traditional truth-conditional content of the sentence.

the predicates $\lambda x.R(x, \mathsf{c})$ or $\lambda x.N(x, \text{ʃaʁli})$ discussed in Section 2, or even for $\lambda x.[x = \mathsf{c}]$ if we hadn't discarded the referential reading of *Charlie*.

S1 $\langle \mathsf{Charlie\text{-}p}, \lambda P.P(i) \rangle$ Je suis [Charlie]$_F$
the speaker introduces himself answering "Qui es-tu ?" [Who are you?] or simply gives some information about himself answering "Tu es quoi ?"[What are you?/What about you?]

S2 $\langle i, \lambda x.\mathsf{Charlie\text{-}p}(x) \rangle$ [Je]$_F$ suis Charlie
the speaker identifies Charlie (as being himself) answering "Qui est Charlie?" [Who is Charlie?]

S3 $\langle \mathsf{Charlie\text{-}p}(i), \lambda Y.\mathcal{R}(Y, X) \rangle$ [Je suis Charlie]$_F$
the speaker provides full-fledged all focus information, for instance answering "Pourquoi X ?" ("Pourquoi vous manifestez ?") [Why X?, Why do you demonstrate?]

If J. Roncin's "Je suis Charlie" is to be related to the famous scene of *Spartacus*, its information structure corresponds to S2. This would be consistent with the idea that someone is looking for Charlie (in order to harm him/it) and by identifying himself as Charlie, the speaker participates in protecting him/it. In contrast with the exchange between the slaves and the Roman soldiers, no virtual, explicit request is made to J. Roncin to identify Charlie, which, if we are on the right track, makes his utterance an out-of-the blue sentence (S3) with an instance of nested focus on the subject. This structure is illustrated in S4 (corresponding to (10)).

S4 $\langle \langle i, \lambda x.\mathsf{Charlie\text{-}p}(x) \rangle, \lambda Y.R(Y, X) \rangle$

Furthermore, in the context under consideration in the present paper (*Charlie Hebdo*'s attack), "Je suis Charlie" is not likely to fit with S1, as the speaker who produces this sentence as a means to express his solidarity does not constitute the topic of the sentence (i.e. he is not (primarily) providing a piece of information about himself that the hearer/addressee should store (Reinhart 1982)). The most discourse-salient, topical item of the sentence is Charlie (and not the person who produces the sentence), and what matters in this context is rather how many members the Charlie-set contains (how big the set is), rather than whether an individual ("a man in the street") can list Charlie-p as one of his/her properties.

3.2 Focus and prosodic prominence

In the European languages discussed in the present paper, prosody participates in encoding information structure (Ladd 2007; Zubizarreta 1998; Samek-Lodovici 2005), and the principle in (20) (Reinhart 1995, 2006; Szendrői 2001, 2003) or

its Optimality-Theoretic counterpart in (21) (Truckenbrodt 1995) are expected to apply .

(20)   *Focus Rule* or *Stress-Focus Correspondence Principle*
         The focus of a clause is a(ny) constituent containing the main stress of the intonational phrase, as determined by the stress-rule.

(21)   Stress-focus
         For any XP_f and YP in the focus domain of XP_f, XP_f is prosodically more prominent than YP.

Within an out-of-the-blue simple sentence, in French (as well as in English, German, Spanish or Italian), the stress rule in (22) ensures that sentence stress is rightmost (Truckenbrodt 1995).

(22)   ALIGNIP, RIGHT, HEAD(IP), R
         Align the right boundary of every intonational phrase with its head.

Assuming Selkirk's (1984, 2011) prosodic hierarchy (Intonational phrase (ι) > Phonological phrase (ϕ) > Prosodic word (ω)), the head of the rightmost phonological phrase is promoted to the status of head of the intonational phrase (noted in bold).

(23)   a. $((\text{I'm})_\phi(\textbf{Charlie})_\phi)_\iota$
         b. $((\text{Je suis } \textbf{Charlie})_\phi)_\iota$
         c. $((\text{Yo})_\phi \text{ soy } \textbf{Charlie})_\phi)_\iota$
         d. $((\text{Io})_\phi \text{ sono } \textbf{Charlie})_\phi)_\iota$

According to the principle in (20), the focus of (23) can either be the noun *Charlie*, the VP or the entire clause (cf. this is the phenomenon known as focus projection).

To encode that the subject is in narrow focus, Germanic languages shift sentence main prominence to the left, onto the subject. This is what happens in the exchange between the slaves and the herald in *Spartacus*, repeated below, where "I" is prosodically prominent and the discourse-given material following it is reduced. In this respect, functional words like subject pronouns behave just like lexical, full subject noun phrases.

(4)   **Herald**: I bring a message from your master Marcus Licinius Crassus commander of Italy. By command of His Most Merciful Excellency your lives are to be spared. Slaves you were and slaves your remain. But the terrible penalty of crucifixion has been set aside on the single condition that you identify the body or the living person of the slave called Spartacus.
         Antonius: I'm Spartacus!

> **Slaves** *one at a time, then overlapping*: **I**'m Spartacus! **I**'m Spartacus!
> **I**'m Spartacus!

To express focus on a subject, null-subject Romance language like Italian and Spanish have the possibility of using a full subject pronoun in preverbal position and, just like in English (or German), this functional word is eligible to carry prosodic prominence (Pešková to appear: and references therein).

French, and in particular Colloquial French, has been argued to generally disfavour this type of prosodic prominence shifting and, rather, resort to changes in word order or syntactic structure that allow to retain rightmost sentence stress (Hamlaoui 2007, 2009). Note that, as shown in (24), in the French (dubbed) version of the exchange in (4), the slaves use both the canonical word order and its cleft-like alternative.

(24)   **Herald**: Je suis chargé de vous lire ce message de votre maître, Marcus Licinius Crassus, commandant les légions d'Italie. Obéissant à un sentiment de pitié, nous décidons que vos vies seront épargnées. Esclaves vous étiez, esclaves vous demeurerez. Mais nous avons écarté le châtiment terrible de la crucifixion à la seule condition que vous nous aidiez à identifier le corps ou la personne vivante de l'esclave Spartacus.
Antonius: Je suis **Spartacus** !
Slaves *one at a time, then overlapping*: C'est **moi**, Spartacus ! Je **suis** Spartacus ! Je suis **Spartacus** ! C'est **moi**, Spartacus ! C'est **moi**, Spartacus ! ...

In both Standard and Colloquial French, the subject pronoun "je" is unable to carry sentence main prominence as, be it analysed as a clitic or as an agreement marker, it does not constitute a prosodic word of its own and thus, *a fortiori*, a phonological phrase. The strong form "moi" ('I') is the form that constitutes a prosodic word of its own (e.g. it can be pronounced in isolation). This form can be focused and in "C'est moi" in (24), this is done by having it follow the verb. In this postverbal position, the pronoun is aligned with the right edge of the clause/intonation phrase and thus satisfies (20). Note that the forms in (25) and (26), taken from (24), are inappropriate in this context, as they fail to answer the (implicit) subject *wh*-question.

(25)   "Je suis **Spartacus** !"

(26)   "Je **suis** Spartacus !"

If we are on the right track concerning the fact that "Je suis Charlie" provides an answer to the implicit question "Qui est Charlie?" (Who is Charlie?), the French version of this assertion violates the principle in (20), as rightmost sen-

tence stress does not encode the focused nature of the subject. The form of this French sentence then clashes with its meaning. As shown in (27), it is inappropriate/incongruent in this context.

(27)   A: Qui est Charlie?
         B: #Je suis **Charlie**.

4   Form/meaning-clash resolution

4.1   "Je suis Charlie"–variants

In our view, two strategies have appeared in French to solve this conflict between subject focus and the requirement for main prominence to be rightmost. First, a number of alternatives to "Je suis Charlie" have spontaneously emerged, that better satisfy the stress-focus correspondence in (20). The most common alternative is probably the one in (28).

(28)   Nous sommes **tous** (des) Charlie.

The postverbal location of the floated quantifier places it closer to the right edge of the clause and allows this subpart of the focused subject left in Spec,vP/VP (Sportiche 1988) to carry sentence stress. At the present stage, it is unclear to us whether "tous" is aligned with an (extra) intonational phrase boundary, as in (29), in violation of phonology-syntax mapping principles that associate intonational phrase edges with clausal edges (Selkirk 2011), or whether the head of the intonation phrase is simply shifted to the left, as in (30), in violation of (21). Nothing however hinges on this here.

(29)   [[Nous sommes **tous**]$_\iota$ (des) Charlie]$_\iota$

(30)   [Nous sommes **tous** (des) Charlie]$_\iota$

Prominence shifting is not absolutely banned in French (Féry 2001; vander Klok et al 2014), it is dispreferred whenever another – equivalent – structure is available that satisfies rightmost main prominence. Note that in the configurations in (29) and (30), *Charlie* is also prosodically reduced. This is consistent with the fact that in the context at issue, it is (somehow) discourse-given.

    Another alternative structure was contributed for instance by the cartoonist Uderzo (one of the fathers of *Asterix and Obelix*) that fares better that "Je suis Charlie" on the association between stress and focus. It is given in (31).

(31)   Moi **aussi**, je suis un Charlie !

The additive adverb *aussi* explicitly evokes alternative individuals to the speaker. As is common with adnominal focus-sensitive operators, it is the adverb that carries prominence, rather than its focused associate. This is however not a ma-

jor issue as, if the adverb and its associate form a single syntactic phrase (as argued e.g. in Siemund (2000)), it is expected under common stressing rules that the prosodic head of the phonological phrase they form be rightmost. As in (28), the prominence on *aussi* is consistent with several prosodic structures. The structure in (32) would involve a prominence shift to the left, in violation of (21).

(32)   [Moi **aussi**, je suis (un) Charlie]$_\iota$

(33)   [[Moi **aussi**]$_\iota$, je suis (un) Charlie]$_\iota$

Unless the material following "moi aussi" is somehow syntactically right dislocated, the prosodic structure in (33) violates phonology-syntax mapping constraints by inserting an intonation phrase break that does not correspond to the right edge of the clause. Again we leave this issue open for future research.

4.2   Towards an additive reading

So far, we have seen that to solve the conflict posed by the French version of "Je suis Charlie", French speakers naturally came up with alternative structures that fare better on associating prosodic prominence with the subject of this sentence. Another way of solving the form/meaning clash presented by the French sentence "Je suis Charlie" is for French speakers to pragmatically retrieve the focused nature of the subject. As was already brought up in Section 2, the predicative reading of "Je suis Charlie" means that the speaker assigns himself a certain property, the Charlie-p property. This amounts to say that he belongs to a certain set which, we have proposed, could be the set of all individuals who stand in an empathic antonomasia-relation with the iconic individual Charlie ($\lambda x.R(x, \mathsf{c})$, in (15)) or the set of all individuals who are symbolically named Charlie ($\lambda x.N(x, \mathrm{\int}a\textrm{ʁ}li)$, from (16)). The sentence "Je suis Charlie" by itself does not presuppose anything about this set, but we assume that the original context of utterance (J. Roncin's spontaneous tweet) contains the pragmatic presupposition, that is, a publicly shared knowledge being part of the Common Ground (Stalnaker 1974), that the set denoted by Charlie-p already contains several individuals. In a way, the first "Charlies" are the members of the editorial team, many of whom were victims of the attack. By taking this presupposition into account, the full message of the original utterance of the slogan amounts to (34).

(34)   It is known that there are several persons who are Charlie and I *too*, am Charlie.

(34) corresponds to an *additive* reading—that is, what is usually expressed by *also* or *too* and *aussi* in French: a predication uttered *in addition* to some similar and alternative propositions presupposed in the context (König 1991). In this

reading (34) the "first Charlies" appears as a set of alternatives (in the sense of Rooth (1992)) with respect to the subject *I*, which in turn is focused and added to the set.

This additive flavour becomes more obvious when the slogan is later publicly taken up by thousands of followers adding themselves to the growing set of Charlies in order to show and build a massive solidarity. This is still strengthened in the variant involving an indefinite (35):

(35)   Je suis un Charlie.

In French, singular indefinite NPs in a copular sentence are often understood as denoting a non singleton set. In this example, this can be explained on a pragmatic basis. (35) can be glossed as in (36).

(36)   There is an individual who is Charlie and who is me.

This is weaker than "all Charlies are me" (i.e. "I'm the unique Charlie"), which allows to infer the scalar implicature in (37).

(37)   Not all Charlies are me (= there are other Charlies).

This implicature together with the truth conditions of (37) bring about the additive reading again. This is made very explicit in Uderzo's cartoon, with the sentence in (31), repeated below.

(31)   Moi aussi je suis un Charlie !

In sum, we have argued that whereas languages like English (or also German), Italian and Spanish have at their disposal prosodic means of encoding the focused nature of a subject pronoun, in the context of the sentence "Je suis Charlie", French speakers retrieve it by means of pragmatic inferences.

5   Conclusion

Used over 619.000 times in two days, the sentence "Je suis Charlie", both in its written and its spoken form, has been a means for people all over the world to express their solidarity with the editorial team of the satirical magazine. In this paper, we have tried to show that this type of – productive – empathic copular structure raises a number of interesting linguistic issues. We have first argued that in this context, where it is meant to express solidarity and/or empathy, the proper name is associated with a predicative reading. In other words, by uttering "Je suis Charlie", the speaker conveys that she belongs to a set, that she assigns herself a Charlie-p property.

Second, we have argued that, from a communicative perspective, the sentence "Je suis Charlie" contributes an answer to the implicit question "Who is Charlie?" and thus involves narrow focus on its subject. In contrast with Germanic

languages and other Romance languages like Spanish and Italian, French subject pronouns are however not eligible to carry sentence main prominence. "Je suis Charlie" simply displays a default rightmost sentence stress on "Charlie". This prosodic configuration violates the required association between stress and focus, and creates a clash between the form of this sentence and its meaning.

We have proposed that two strategies have naturally appeared to solve this conflict: (i) several variants to "Je suis Charlie" have emerged that allow proper prosodic highlighting of the subject and (ii) speakers have reinterpreted the structure so as to pragmatically retrieve the (additive) focus nature of the subject.

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