1. The data: In Italian and Spanish, overt subjects are legitimate in OC infinitives:
(1) Il Rettore, ha deciso [di aprire (lui)] il convegno (*lui). (Italian; Cardinaletti 1999: 79)
the Dean has decided to open he the conference he
(2) pro, Le prometti a Juan [escribir (yo) un libro (*yo)]. (Spanish)
CL promised-I to John to-write (I) a book (I)
While Italian only allows the VSO order in control infinitives, Spanish allows both VSO and VOS. Catalan patterns with Italian in preferring the VSO order:
(3) pro, Li vaig prometre [de fer (jo)] els deures (*jo)]. (Catalan)
CL I-promised C to-do I the homework I
Apparent VOS orders in Catalan and Italian control infinitives are in fact not instances of overt subjects of the embedded infinitive:
(4) Va probar [d’escriure només ell un llibre]. (‘només ell’ scopes over embedded event)
(5) Va probar [d’escriure un llibre] només ell. (‘només ell’ scopes over matrix event)
‘Tried-3.sg to-write (only he) a book (only he)’
Surprisingly, OC infinitives with overt subjects display VSO in Catalan and Italian although VSO is generally unavailable in finite clauses (Piccallo 1998, Cardinaletti 1999).
Furthermore, the fact that full copies are illegitimate in Italian/Catalan control infinitives makes a Backward Control analysis implausible for these configurations.
(6) * Vol anar en Joan a l’escola. (Catalan)
Wants to-go the John to school
(7) * Non vuole andare solo Gianni a Milano. (Italian; Szabolcsi 2009: 27)
(8) Quiere ir Juan a la escuela. (Spanish)
Spanish, on the other hand, allows full R-expressions more freely in restructuring contexts (see (8); Ordóñez 2007). A last correlation between overt subjects in Catalan and Italian infinitives can be found in non-control infinitives. While Spanish allows full R-expressions in postverbal position, Italian and Catalan only allow pronouns:
(9) [Andarci (noi/ *Giovanni)] sarebbe un errore. (Italian; Burzio 1986: 104f)
‘To go there [we / *Giovanni] would be a mistake’
(10) [Irse (él/Juan) a casa] seria un error. (Spanish)
Go-cl (he/John) to home would-be an error
(11) Anar-me’n (*jo) seria un error. / Anar-se’n (*la Maria) seria un error. (Catalan)
To-go-cl (I) would-be an error / To-go-cl (the Mary) would-be an error
2. The analysis: There is one major correlation between Spanish, Catalan, and Italian: overt subjects exist in infinitives but they cannot be full copies in non-restructuring contexts. We hypothesize that the mechanism employed in the licensing of the overt/covert distinction of subjects in control infinitives in this group of languages is more similar to pro-drop than to raising (in contrast to languages allowing Backward Control):
(12) a. interpretable/complete phi-features $\rightarrow$ C-T in pro-drop; pronominals
b. interpretable/defective phi-features $\rightarrow$ C-T in Forward Control (FC); anaphors
c. uninterpretable/complete phi-features $\rightarrow$ C-T in non-pro-drop
d. uninterpretable/defective phi-features $\rightarrow$ C-T in Backward Control (BC); raising
Following Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (1998), T (AGR) can be equipped with interpretable phi-features in Romance pro-drop. We argue that this strategy can also be observed in Italian/Catalan/Spanish control infinitives, the difference to finite structures lying in the (in)-completeness of the features of T:
(13) Juan dice [CP que [TP T[φ: comp] durmieron [vP e[φ: _] v-durmieron [vP durmieron... (pro-drop)]

(14) Juan intentó [CP def [TP T[φ: def] dormir [vP e[φ: _] v-dormir [vP dormir... (control]

Following Sigurðsson (2008), we claim that base-generated ecs are reference variables, characterized by unvalued phi-features. Hence, null subjects in control as well as pro-drop are the result of Merger of an unvalued phi-feature bundle in Spec,v which is valued by T. Overt subjects, in this approach, are phi-feature bundles which are equipped with a phonetic matrix after transfer of syntactic chunks (adopting Halle & Marantz 1993 and subsequent work). Szabolcsi (2009) has shown that overt subjects in control infinitives are necessarily focussed. Following López (2009), we assume that syntactic chunks are sent to the pragmatic interface before transfer to S-M. Hence, a focus feature at the phase edge in Spec,v serves as an instruction to the morpho-phonological component to equip e[φ: _] with a phonetic matrix. Since infinitives have a reduced left-peripheral activity (Gallego 2010), preverbal subjects are generally ruled out. We claim that the difference between Spanish vs. Catalan/Italian lies in the Case-properties of T: structural nominative can be checked in-situ in the former but must be checked in Spec,T in the latter languages. The fact that Spanish allows full R-expressions in NOC (see (10)) will be taken as evidence that subjects can check regular structural Case in a low focus position even in infinitives. Italian and Catalan non-finite T, on the other hand, cannot value structural nominative Case. Hence, Move of the subject to Spec,T is blocked and subjects receive default Case in a low focus position, explaining why they can only be pronouns: only strong pronouns are inherently Case-marked and can thus escape the Case Filter (Cardinaletti & Starke 1999). Thus, only VSO is possible in control infinitives. In finite clauses, the subject obligatorily raises to Spec,T in Italian/Catalan checking structural Case (cf. Cardinaletti 1999, López 2009) and, hence, VSO is impossible. VOS is derived by means of topicalization of VO in finite clauses (Zubizarreta 1998). This operation is unavailable in Italian/Catalan infinitives because of reduced left-peripheral activity, blocking VOS in control. Spanish VOS is available in infinitives because of the availability of object shift over the subject located in Spec,v (Ordóñez 1998). Finally, the proposed analysis can explain the difference in (6) – (8): Since the postverbal subject may remain in a low focus position in Spanish, the non-finite verb can be moved over it in restructuring contexts (Ordóñez 2007). However, in Italian/Catalan, full R-expressions have to move to the finite matrix Spec,T position to be licensed, checking structural nominative Case. Hence, they must move to a higher position than the restructured verbal complex, explaining why (6) and (7), in contrast to (8), are ungrammatical.

References:
castellà”. 