Diachronic Development in Isolation: The Loss of V2 Phenomena in Cimbrian[1]

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Abstract: This paper deals with the syntactic development of Cimbrian, a German dialect, which was spoken for centuries in some enclaves in northern Italy. In particular, we argue that the 'dismantlement' of the V2 phenomenon is connected with a change concerning the 'nature' of specific word order patterns: from 'allowed' V2 exceptions to 'unmarked' and frequent constructions, i.e., from hanging topic (*freies Thema*) in WH clause to 'new' left dislocation modalities, which finally bring to generalized V3 in the declarative clause.

1 Introduction

Cimbrian is a German dialect commonly spoken today in the village of Lusern/Luserna in the region of Trentino in northern Italy. It is also found, albeit in widely dispersed pockets, in the Venetian communities of Mittoballe/Mezzaselva and Ljetzan/Giazza, in the Northeast of Italy. When the Cimbrian colonies were founded and where the colonists came from are still subjects of controversy, although the accepted historical explanation is that the Cimbrian colonies originated from a migration of people from Tyrol and Bavaria (*Lechtal*) at the beginning of the second millennium.[2] In any case the following two points could be accepted as factual: a) Cimbrian developed in close proximity to

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[2] For a general introduction in the geographical and historical main questions about the formation of the Cimbrian enclaves see Bidese (2004b).

northern Italy's Romance dialects; b) the geographical isolation of these communities favoured the conservation of some peculiarities of Germanic syntax.

The first known Cimbrian document (1602) is a translation of the Italian catechism *Dottrina christiana breve*, written by Cardinal Bellarmino in 1598. The preservation of this text[3] allows us to analyse the diachronic evolution of Cimbrian syntax during the last 400 years. Some recent studies[4] have already laid stress on the followings: the Cimbrian documented in the first Catechism was still characterized by the most relevant features of the Germanic V2 phenomenon (i.e., only one constituent before the finite verb, subject-verb inversion, limited word order asymmetries between the main and the subordinate clause). During the last 400 years, the V2 restriction gradually disappeared, so it is no longer found in the Cimbrian spoken in today's Venetian communities.

The focal point of this contribution consists in providing some argumentation in favour of the following hypothesis: the decline of V2 in Cimbrian should be related to the spread of a special type of WH-question, i.e., WH-question with a 'fronted' or 'thematized' subject NP, which evolved from an original German model towards a Romance one (from German *Heraustellung* towards Romance clitic left dislocation).[5]

This paper is divided into three main sections: In section 1. we analyse the main characteristics of the first Cimbrian Catechism referring to the realization of the V2 phenomenon. In Section 2. we present and discuss data from two Cimbrian texts of the 19th century, which show an interesting evolution in regard to the 'dismantlement' of V2 and allow us to speculate about the origins and the developmental lines of this syntactic change. Section 3. aims to verify the sketched development with data from 20th century, which clearly show how some 'residual' Germanic peculiarities still survive in the syntax of pronominal elements.

2 The diachronic development of the Cimbrian Dialect

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[3] Two partially and differently preserved exemplars (printed copies) of the first Cimbrian catechism can be consulted respectively in Innsbruck (Ferdinandeum, sig. FB 906, nr. 3) and in Vienna (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, sig. 62790-A Rara). The critical edition of this text was provided thirty years ago by Wolfgang Meid (cf. Meid: 1985a).

[4] See especially Bosco (1996) and (1999), Benincà & Renzi (2000) and Poletto & Tomaselli (2000).

[5] For a general description of the V2 phenomena in standard German see Tomaselli (1990) and Bidese & Tomaselli (2005).

The diachronic development of Cimbrian with respect to the loss of the V2 restriction has been the subject of several contributions since the last decade of 20th century. In particular the following corpora have been put under investigation:

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(a) the well-known and already mentioned first Cimbrian Catechism, *Christlike unt korze Dottrina,* (1602)[6] (cf. § 2.1);

(b) the so-called second Catechism, *Dar klóane Catechismo vor dez Béloseland*, 1813[7] (cf. § 3.1);

(c) data collected by interviews with native speakers from different Cimbrian areas[8] (cf. § 4.2).

In the following paragraphs we will pursue two different aims: first of all we will try to compare and systematically organize the already acquired conclusions; as a second aim we will introduce and discuss further new data, drawn from texts which seem to represent relevant intermediate stages, i.e., the report about the building of the bridge in Robaan/Roana, which was first published by Aristide Baragiola in 1906 and the Cimbrian stories, collected by Bruno Schweizer in Ljetzan/Giazza during the third decade of the last century.

2.1 The first Cimbrian Catechism (*Kat.1602*)

The relevant syntactic features of the first Cimbrian Catechism could be summarized by the following points:

- The word order restriction is preserved (finite verb usually in second position) (cf. 1):

(1) [Dez zboa Ghepot] **vorpoetet** die sberer[9]

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[6] Cf. Bosco (1996) und (1999), Benincà & Renzi (2000) and Poletto & Tomaselli (2000).

[7] Cf. Benincà & Renzi (2000) and Pili (2001). Wolfgang Meid provided the critical edition of this work too (cf. Meid: 1985b). An online-edition of this text is available at the TITUS server of the University of Frankfurt: http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/germ/zimbr/kat1813d/kat18.htm.

[8] Cf. Vicentini (1993) and Scardoni (2000).

[9] *Kat.1602*: 508 in Meid (1985a: 75).

The second commandment forbids the oaths

(The second commandment forbids [taking of] oaths)

- Subject inversion is limited to pronominal subject in both interrogative and declarative main clause (cf. 2):

(2) [Mitt der Bizzonghe] sai**bar** ghemostert zò bizzan den billen Gottez[10]

Through knowledge are-we taught to know the will of God

(Through knowledge we are taught to know the will of God)

- V2 exception in the declarative main clause can be reduced to the following two factors: a) influence by the original Italian text (XP YP Vfin …) (cf. 3); b) insertion of the pronominal subject between the topic XP and the finite verb (XP pronoun Vfin …) (cf. 4):

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(3) unt [dernak] [unzer Herre Christo] hat si confirmart in der nèugien[11]

and thereafter our Lord Christ has them confirmed in the new

(and thereafter our Lord Christ confirmed them in the new)

e poi Christo nostro Signore gli hà confermati nella nuova[12]

(4) ma [nikt derminder] [sè] unghevallet Gott[13]

but nevertheless they displeased God

(but they nevertheless displeased God)

mà nondimeno dispiace à Dio[14]

- Embedded V2 is occasionally attested (cf. 5 and 6):

(5) in bèilme regnar**ber** mit Gott, àn koan impedimenten[15]

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[10] Ivi: 694–5 in Meid (1985a: 87).
[11] Ivi: 487–8 in Meid (1985a: 75).
[12] Bellarmino's original Italian version in Meid (1985a: 74).
[13] *Kat.1602*: 750 in Meid (1985a: 91).
[14] Bellarmino's original Italian version in Meid (1985a: 90).
[15] *Kat.1602*: 405–6 in Meid (1985a: 69).

in what (bliss) rule-we with God, without hindrance

(in what bliss do we rule with God, without hindrance)

nella quale (beatitudine) regnaremo con Dio senza nessuno impedimento[16]

(6) barome met der Vorte enthalte**ber** unz von sunten[17]

so that with the fear abstain-we from the sins

(so that in reason of the fear we abstain from the sins)[18]

As for the word order pattern exemplified in (5) and (6), it is interesting to note that the occurrence of embedded V2 is not influenced at all by the Italian model, on the contrary it should be analysed as a peculiar Cimbrian syntactic feature.

- 'Residual' word order asymmetries between main and embedded clauses are maintained. That means, negation (cf. 7), reflexive (cf. 8) and objective pronouns (cf. 9) so as verbal affixes (cf. 10) tend to precede the finite verb only in the embedded clause:[19]

(7) daz bar **net** sain gheloeket[20]

that we not are deceived

(that we are not deceived)

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(8) daz **sik** eere in Vater, un de Mùeter[21]

(that father and mother are honoured)

(9) daz Gott **unz** erlose von den tentation[22]

that God us liberates from the temptation

(that God liberates us from the temptation)

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[16] Bellarmino's original Italian version in Meid (1985a: 68).

[17] *Kat.1602*: 690–1 in Meid (1985a: 87).

[18] Bellarmino's original Italian version in Meid (1985a: 70).

[19] Cf. Bosco (1999) and Bidese (2004a). This is always true just for subordinate clause introduced by 'that' (*daz*). In fact, there are some variations in relation with the different type of subordinate clauses; for examples, causative clauses introduced by 'because' (*baròme*) behave syntactically as main clauses (like causative introduced by 'denn' in German).

[20] *Kat.1602*: 672 in Meid (1985a: 85).

[21] Ivi: 520–1 in Meid (1985a: 77).

[22] Ivi: 439–40 in Meid (1985a: 71).

(10) daz bar **bider** gheben ame ieleken, baz sain ist[23]

that we back give everyone what belongs to him

(that we give back to everyone what belongs to him)

- The most relevant 'new' tendency attested in the first Catechism consists in the relatively frequent occurrence of V3 word order patterns in WH main clauses (XP WH Vfin ... , where XP = *freies Thema*/hanging topic) (cf. 11–13):

(11) [De Fede] nun, bia stet**se** zua Gott?[24]

The belief now, how applies-it to God?

(The belief now, how does it apply to God?)

(12) [Disa] bia kimet se unz abeghereschet?[25]

This (original sin), how will it us be removed?

(This original sin, how will it be removed from us?)

(13) [Disa Kirka], barume cheu-sik Hailega, unt Catholica?[26]

(This church, why is it called holy and catholic?)

With respect to standard German, the possibility to have a 'fronted' subject in Cimbrian WH main clauses shows some minor but relevant peculiarities, which represent a first step towards a Romance 'fronting' model (or at least a first divergence from German hanging topic constructions). In particular, it should be noted that:

(a) Thematized subjects (cf. 11–13) are both unmarked and quite frequent in Italian syntax (cf. 14):[27]

(14) Giorgio che cosa ha comprato?

Giorgio, what has he bought?

(What did Giorgio buy?)

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[23] Ivi: 674–5 in Meid (1985a: 85).

[24] Ivi: 654 in Meid (1985a: 85). In Meid's edition the personal pronoun 'se' is separately written from the verb. So it suggests, the personal pronoun shouldn't be analyzed as a clitic (cf. Pili 2001: 65). Instead, the reproduction of the original texts at the end of Meid's edition shows the pronoun written together with the verb, at least as far as this particular example is concerned (cf. Meid 1985a: 261).

[25] *Kat.1602*: 733 in Meid (1985a: 89).

[26] Ivi: 317 in Meid (1985a: 65).

[27] Cf. Benincà & Salvi & Frison (1988/1991: 130).

(b) Thematized demonstrative pronouns (as exemplified by 12 and 13) are particularly difficult to find in German.[28]

(c) The grammatical status of resumptive pronouns in examples (11–13) is not uncontroversial. Pili assumes,[29] that in the first Cimbrian Catechism resumptive pronouns shouldn't be analyzed as clitics, contrary to the situation attested in the second Catechism (*Kat. 1813*) (but cf. 11, footnote nr. 23). If this assumption proves to be tenable, it could be considered as evidence in favour of a German-like hanging topic construction. However, the simple fact that Cimbrian pronouns always occur in Wackernagel's position (immediately to the right of the finite verb) leads us to consider them at least as syntactic clitics.[30]

Despite of the few peculiarities just noted, it is reasonable to consider V3 constructions due to subject fronting in Cimbrian WH main clause as exceptions, which don't compromise the validity of the V2 restriction in the syntax of the first Catechism. This assumption is confirmed by an observation concerning fronting possibilities in the declarative main clause. The following example (15), in fact, represents a clear case of German left dislocation (*Linksversetzung*):[31]

(15) **die andere sibna**$_i$ **die**$_i$ lernt unz zo tunan bol in prossimen[32]

The other seven (rules), they teach us to do good to the neighbour

(The other seven rules teach us to do good to the neighbour)

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[28] In order to find an explanation for the reason why such construction is marked in German, an investigation into speech deixis could prove to be relevant (cf. Pafel 2002: 209.212). In any case it seems important to underline that Meid's German translation of these sentences keeps the left dislocated construction only for the examples without the demonstrative pronoun, i.e., (11) (cf. Meid 1985a: 162.164.155).

[29] Cf. (2001: 65).

[30] Cf. for this Poletto & Tomaselli (1995: 217).

[31] Benincà & Renzi (2000: 150.156) and Poletto & Tomaselli (2000: 175) have yet underlined the relevance of this sentence for the realization of the dislocation structure in *Kat.1602*. Cf. Pili (2001: 65) too.

[32] *Kat.1602*: 493 in Meid (1985a: 75).

As we will see, German-like left dislocation is no more attested in later texts: clear evidence, at least from our point of view, in favour of the decline of V2 in Cimbrian diachronic evolution (cf. §§ 3.1, 3.2, 4.1 and § 4.2). A first relevant hint in this direction is represented by the 'new tendency' concerning the modalities of subject fronting in WH main clauses (cf. 11–13). On the contrary, subject left dislocation in the declarative clause still adheres to the German V2 model (cf. 15).

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3 Cimbrian Texts from the 19th century (*Kat.1813* and *Bar.1906*)

The second phase in the diachronic evolution of Cimbrian syntax is well represented by two texts from the 19th century, respectively: the second Catechism (1813) and a report about the building of the bridge in Robaan/Roana, which was written at the end of the 19th century and first published by Aristide Baragiola in 1906. As we will see, during this period, the Cimbrian dialect developed from a V2 language to a non-V2 one. More precisely, Cimbrian syntax loses the Germanic word order restriction but keeps the most important correlate of the V2 phenomenon, i.e., subject - (finite) verb inversion, which occurs, like *Kat.1602*, only with pronominal subjects.

3.1 The second Cimbrian Catechism (*Kat.1813*)

As for the **main clause** we find the same situation already discussed for the first Catechism. In particular:

- The V2 word order restriction is preserved. The V3 linear sequence, i.e.: *XP YP Vfin …, is not yet regularly attested (cf. 16)

(16) Gott dar Herre **síghet** allez in andar véarte[33]
    (God the Lord sees all at the same time)

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[33] *Kat.1813*: 115 in Meid (1985b: 41).

- Subject inversion is limited to pronominal subject both in declarative (cf. 17) and in-
  terrogative (cf. 18) main clause:

> (17) [Nia] bel**bar** rìven zo vorkünnen eür linnez herze[34]
>
>   Never want-we give up to praise your tender heart
>
>   (We never want to give up praising your tender heart)
>
> (18) [Bas] hat**ar** gatànt, darnàch ar ist gabèst in Hümmel?[35]
>
>   What has-he done, after he has been in heaven?
>
>   (What did he do, after he has been in heaven?)

Nevertheless, in this text we find the same typology of exceptions already discussed in
§ 1.1. In particular, in the declarative main clause it is possible to find a very limited
number of V3 linear sequences, due to the intervention of the first person singular
'*ich*' between the topic XP and the finite verb (XP pronoun Vfin ...) (cf. 19). It is inter-
esting to point out that in the original Italian version, which the author is translating
from, the first person singular '*io*' is regularly missing. This observation could be po-
tentially used in order to argue for two different explanations: a) this V3 word order
pattern is peculiar to Cimbrian syntax; b) it is due, at least indirectly, to the influence
of the original Italian text:

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the generally limited use of the first person singular in Italian 'prevents' the realiza-
tion of subject verb inversion in Cimbrian.

> (19) [Vor Kercha] [ich] vorstéa alle di Christan léüte[36]
>
>   (As Church I understand all the Christians)
>
>   Per Chiesa intendo la società de' Fedeli[37]

As regards the **embedded clause**, embedded V2 seems to be no longer attested (cf. 20):

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[34] Ivi: 508–9 in Meid (1985b: 65).
[35] Ivi: 196 in Meid (1985b: 47).
[36] Ivi: 200 in ibidem.
[37] Original Italian version in Meid (1985b: 46).

(20) De Fede ist an virtù ... vor bela biar cloben in Gott den Herren[38]

  The faith is a virtue ... through which we believe in God the Lord

  (The faith is a virtue ... which makes us believe in God the Lord)

- 'Residual' asymmetries between main and subordinate clause are still due to the position of negation (cf. 21):

(21) az bar **net** héüte vallen in kóana sünte[39]

  so that we not today lapse into (nobody) sin

  (so that we don't lapse into anybody sin)

Like *Kat.1602*, the V3 linear sequence in WH main clauses always results from the occurrence of a hanging Topic (*freies Thema*) to the left of the nexus WH-Vfin (cf. 22):

(22) [De Kercha] ba langhe hát**se**da zo sainan[40]

  The church, how long has-it-here to be?

  (How long has the church to exist?)

Nevertheless, as Benincà & Renzi (2000) and Pili (2001) have already pointed out, there are some relevant differences between *Kat.1602* and *Kat.1813*, which represent a remarkable change of the WH main clause with hanging topic from a German type, like (11–13 and 15), to a 'more Romance' one. Let's consider the following aspects:

- In *Kat.1813* we find the first 'still strange' sporadic examples with more then one constituent before the finite verb (cf. 23), as it is typical for the Italian left dislocation structures (cf. 24):

(23) [Dar Sun von Gotte me Herren] [máchenten-sich man] hatar galàzt zo sáinan Gott?[41]

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[38] *Kat.1813*: 316–7 in Meid (1985b: 53).
[39] Ivi: 526–7 in Meid (1985b: 67).
[40] Ivi: 206 in Meid (1985b: 47).
[41] Ivi: 157–8 in Meid (1985b: 43).

The son of God the Lord, becoming man, has-he given up to be God?

(Did the son of God the Lord, becoming man, give up being God?)

(24) [A Mario]$_i$ [quel libro]$_{ii}$ (quando) gli$_i$-e-l$_{ii}$'hanno regalato?

[Mario]$_i$ [this book]$_{ii}$, (when) to him$_i$-it$_{ii}$-have given?

(When did they give this book to Mario?)

- In *Kat.1813* there are many examples of clitic right dislocation (cf. 25). Standard German does not permit such construction and it is not attested in *Kat.1602*. On the contrary, it is typical for Italian (cf. 26):

(25) Brumme háta**r**üz gaschàft un galèt af de belt [Gott dar Herre]?[42]

Why has-he$_i$-us created and placed on the world, [God the Lord]$_i$?

(Why did God the Lord create and place us in the world?)

(26) Quando **l'**hai comprato, [il libro]?

When it$_i$-have (you) buy, [the book]$_i$?

(When did you buy the book?)

- Further evidence in favour of the 'compatibility' with a Romance model is represented by the left dislocation of both PPs and AvbP, which don't use a strategy of resumption (cf. 27 and 28):

(27) Un [nach den viarzk taghen] [baz] hat**ar** gatànt?[43]

And after forty days, what has-he made?

(What did he make after forty days?)

(28) [In minschen boart], [baz] hatsich zo tünan zo volghen allen disen Comandaménten?[44]

In a few words, what has to do to follow all these precepts?

(What is to do, in a few words, for following all these precepts?)

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[42] Ivi: 99–100 in Meid (1985b: 39).
[43] Ivi: 194 in Meid (1985b: 47).
[44] Ivi: 232 in Meid (1985b: 49).

- The fourth clear indication of a Romanization process in *Kat.1813* in comparison with *Kat.1602* is the frequent occurrence of a reduplicated subject. Some types of interrogative phrases have a clitic subject and a referential one;[45] for the WH questions see (29), for the direct questions (30) and for the interrogative sentence with hanging topic (31):

(29) Unmbrúmme saint**sa**$_i$ [dise drai persúun]$_i$ an Gott anlóan?[46]

Why are-they these three persons a one God?

(Why are these three persons one God?)

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(30) Sáit**ar iart** Christan?[47]

Are-you you Christian?

(Are you Christian?)

(31) [Gott der Herre]$_i$ hat**ar**$_i$ Korp?[48]

God the Lord, has-he (a) body?

(Has God the Lord a body?)

In *Kat.1602* there are only two examples of subject reduplication: the first one in a direct question (cf. 32), the second one in a subordinate clause (cf. 33). In both cases we find an emphatic subject pronoun in the original Italian version. In *Kat.1602* the reduplication of a 'full' NP like (25) and (27) is simply not attested. In *Kat.1813* subject reduplication emerges mostly in interrogative clauses without any direct influence from the original Italian text.[49] In fact, the Italian version doesn't show an emphatic subject.

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[45] Cf. Benincà & Renzi (2000: 153). Nevertheless the authors underline that clitic (subject) doubling is typical for the Bavarian dialect too (p. 150).

[46] *Kat.1813*: 137 in Meid (1985b: 43).

[47] Ivi: 80 in Meid (1985b: 39). In this example the original Italian text presents the emphatic pronominal subject 'voi'. But, there are many WH questions without emphatic subject in the Italian version, which have a reduplication of the pronominal subject in the Cimbrian one.

[48] Ivi: 106 in Meid (1985b: 41).

[49] Obviously many examples of reduplication are found in *Kat.1813* in a non interrogative context but we can always reconduct them to an emphatic use of the pronominal subject in the original Italian model.

(32) Recorrert**er** net **ier** vor hilfe nok kanden andern Holeghen?[50]

Appeal-you not you to the help of anybody saint?

(Don't you appeal for the help of some saint?)

Non ricorrette **voi** per aiuto ancora à gl'altri Santi?[51]

(33) daz **ber** net beln **bier** vorgheben die inzurien[52]

that-we not want we to forgive the insults

(that we don't want to forgive the insults)

se non vogliamo **noi** perdonare l'ingiurie[53]

3.2 Baragiola (*Bar.1906*)

The second text, which we are going to analyse in order to reconstruct the syntactic development of Cimbrian, is *Bar.1906.* This is a historical report from the end of the 19th century. It shows that during this period Cimbrian syntax lost the V2 restriction (OK: XP YP Vfin ...) (cf. 34), but maintained the inversion of the subject pronoun in both the declarative and the interrogative main clause ([XP] YP Vfin pronoun ...) (cf. 35):

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(34) [Af de noin Oarn] [de Klocka] hat get Avviso[54]

At 9 o' clock the bell gave alarm

(The bell gave alarm at 9 o' clock)

(35) [Benne di andarn drai Lentar habent gahört asó], haben-**se**-sich manegiart[55]

When the other three villages had heard this, had-they taken pains to ...

(When the other three villages had heard this, they took pains to ...)

In regard to subject reduplication, an interesting evolution of Cimbrian's syntax is attested. This phenomenon, which in *Kat.1813* was limited to the interrogative main

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[50] *Kat.1602*: 466–467 in Meid (1985a: 73).
[51] Bellarmino's original Italian version in Meid (1985a: 72).
[52] *Kat.1602*: 435–436 in Meid (1985a: 71).
[53] Bellarmino's original Italian version in Meid (1985a: 70).
[54] The data are taken by Lobbia & Bonato (1998: 110).
[55] Ivi: 108.

clause, expands and involves the declarative too; perhaps for the first time subject doubling now appears both in interrogative **and declarative** contexts (cf. 36 and 37):[56]

(36) [De Loite ..., ba saint da gabest,]$_i$ segenten asó, haben**se**$_i$sich ritirart alle[57]

The people ..., who were present, seeing this, has-it retired all

(All the people ..., who were present, seeing this, retired)

(37) Oh! grozar Got, haban**sa**$_i$ kött [di Loite ba haben-sich gavunt da]$_i$ [58]

Oh! Great God, has-it said the people, who were there

(The people, who were there, said: Oh! Great God!)

We can now sum up our analysis of the Cimbrian data from the 19th century and draw the evolution lines of Cimbrian's syntax in this second phase. The analysed texts show that during this century Cimbrian syntax has lost the main feature of V2 phenomenon, i.e., the word order restriction which allows just one constituent before the finite verb. According to our reconstruction, the starting-point of this development is represented by some relevant peculiarities concerning dislocation strategies in the main interrogative clause, above all the construction with a *freies Thema*. Whereas in standard German 'fronting strategies' are seldom attested in WH clauses, in Italian they are quite common, besides, the left dislocation of a subject NP in interrogative main clause isn't marked in Italian.

In *Kat.1602* the *freies Thema* in interrogative main clauses can be considered – as in standard German – a clear exception of the V2 phenomenon, which is probably 'suggested' by the Italian original text (cf. 11–13). In a later period, this word order pattern is no longer understood as an exception, but rather as a regular construction. This is the phase represented by *Kat.1813*. *Bar.1906* documents the following step, in which the 'new' thematization modality expands from the interrogative to the declarative clause. The spread of the disloca-

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[56] For further aspects of *Bar.1906*'s syntax see Bidese (2004a).

[57] Lobbia & Bonato (1998: 113).

[58] Ibidem.

tion possibilities to the declarative main clause determines the loss of Germanic V2. Notwithstanding this, the most important correlate of this phenomenon, i.e., the (pronominal) subject – finite verb – inversion persists in this phase too.

4 The Cimbrian dialect of the 20th century (*Schw.1939* and *Scar.2000*)

In the third phase we find a further development in the process, which brings the complete loss of the correlates of the V2 phenomenon. Pronominal subject inversion is still attested in Schweizer's stories collection but no more in the native speaker's competence ascertained by Scardoni's interviews in 1998/1999. In contemporary Cimbrian syntax only residual German features still 'survive' in the syntax of pronominal elements.

4.1 Bruno Schweizer's Corpus (*Schw.1939*)[59]

The data from the Schweizer's Corpus confirm the evolution trend we outlined in *Bar.1906.* In *Schw.1939* the referential subject is generally, even if not obligatorily, resumed, or rather, doubled by a subject clitic (cf. 38–41):

(38) [De ljetse] an bwoute hen**se** gaturscht gien in Bwrunge[60]

The inhabitants of Ljetzan once have-they must go to Brunge

(The inhabitants of Ljetzan once had to go to Brunge)

(39) Alora [in vischoff] kchoüt**ar**[61]

Then the bishop says-he

Then the bishop says

(40) Alóra hat**ar** galoutsat [in vischoff] un orlóje[62]

Thus has-he looked the bishop at the watch

(Thus the bishop looked at the watch)

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[59] The results presented in this section are part of the research project R291/02: "La sintassi della dislocazione in cimbro: il modello germanico ed il modello romanzo a confronto" financed by the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature of the University of Verona.

[60] Schweizer (1939: 48). For a general introduction in Bruno Schweizer's research and his Langobardian thesis about the origin of the Cimbrian enclaves see Schweizer (1948), Bidese (2004b: 23–26) and Dow (2004) and (2005).

[61] *Schw.1939*: 50.

[62] Ivi: 48.

(41) [Bwir] morgen gea**bwar** ala saágra[63]

 We tomorrow go-we to the village festival

 (Tomorrow we will go to the village festival)

<div align="right">[Linguistische Berichte 210/2007, 221]</div>

It is interesting to observe that in this Corpus there are many examples of right dislocation, which are characterized by the occurrence of an object clitic used as resumption of a referential dative NP (cf. 42 and 43). This construction isn't present in the older texts we considered in the preceding paragraphs:

(42) Un de pfaffan un Bwrunge he**me** kchout [im vischofe][64]

 And the priests of Brunge have-(to)-him said to the bishop

 (And the priests of Brunge said to the bishop)

(43) Alóra hense**me** get iss gelt [indem on ouksen][65]

 Thus have-they-(to)-him given the money to the one of the ox

 (Thus they gave the money to the one with the ox)

Nevertheless it seems that in Schweizer's Corpus there are no examples of such doubling construction with an accusative object.[66] Particularly relevant for our discussion is example (44). It shows that the left dislocated subject is resumed by a clitic element, whereas the left dislocated object isn't.

(44) un asou [de ljetze]$_i$ den pfaffe Gugule hen**si**$_i$ gamachat paroko[67]

 And so the inhabitants of Ljetzan the priest Gugule have-they made (appointed) parish priest

 (And so the inhabitants of Ljetzan made (appointed) the priest Gugule parish priest)

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[63] Ivi: 24.

[64] Ivi: 50.

[65] Ivi: 40.

[66] Right dislocation of the direct object NP is not only possible but even quite frequent in Italian and in the neighbouring Venetian varieties.

[67] Ivi: 48.

The occurrence of a resumptive clitic seem to depend on the morphological case realized by the resumpted constituent and on the open question, whether resumptive clitics are becoming congruence markers in this phase.[68] Even if there had been a possible tendency for such a development, the data from *Scar.2000* (cf. § 4.2) clearly show that this evolution didn't occur as a result of the demise of the speaker community in Ljetzan/Giazza in the last decades.

4.2 Scardoni's Interviews (*Scar.2000*)

The last phase in the Cimbrian diachronic evolution which has brought the complete loss of the V2 phenomenon is characterized by the following syntactic peculiarities:

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- Object and reflexive pronouns always occur to the right of the finite verb in the main clause (Wackernagel's position);
- Expletive subject 'es/iz' is still attested with weather verbs;
- Pronominal subject inversion in the main declarative clause undergoes a process of gradual limitation (subject to lexical restrictions, i.e., only in impersonal constructions).

This situation is well represented by the data collected by Scardoni through the interviews she conducted in Ljetzan/Giazza at the end of the last decade (1998/1999). Just one among four interviewed native speakers still allowed pronominal subject inversion (cf. 45–46), the other three never inverted the subject in personal constructions with transitive verbs (cf. 47–48):

   (45) [Haute] borkofart**ar** de oiar[69]
        Today sells-he the eggs
        (Today he sells eggs)
   (46) [Haute] han**i** gaarbatat im balje[70]

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[68] As for as this question is concerned see Grewendorf & Poletto (2005) and Fuß (2005).
[69] *Scar.2000*:155.
[70] Ibidem. This native speaker uses the dative form with the old ending '-e'. This is an indication of a

Today have-I worked in the forest

(Today I worked in the forest)

(47) [Haute] [er] borkofart de oiar[71]

(Today he sells eggs)

(48) [Haute] [i] han gaarbat im balt[72]

(Today I have worked in the forest)

With weather verbs (*Witterungsimpersonalia*) subject inversion is realized by two native speakers. More precisely the one which allowed (pronominal) subject inversion in personal constructions realized it obligatorily (cf. 49a), a second one just optionally. Interestingly, the impersonal subject *-ma/-pa* (which corresponds to German *man*) is realized only in inverted position by all four informants (cf. 50–51):

(49a) In sontaghe regat**z**[73]

On Sunday rains-it

(On Sunday it rains)

(49b) In sontaghe iz regat

(On Sunday it rains)

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(50) Haute tze machan tz'essan muß-**ma** kuntan iz faut[74]

(Today, in order to make a meal, one must light a fire)

(51) Ote bisan see**pa** in vocs[75]

(On the meadows one sees the fox)

As for the 'fronting' possibilities in WH main clause, Scardoni's data show a further extension: not only subject NP but even pronouns can occur in first position to the left

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very good (tacit) knowledge of the Cimbrian dialect, which can be compared with the state of Cimbrian, we found in *Schw.1939* (cf. Cappelletti & Schweizer 1942/1980: 23).

[71] *Scar.2000*: 155.

[72] Ibidem.

[73] Ivi: 144.

[74] Ivi: 147.

[75] Ivi: 150.

of the WH phrase (cf. 52–53). Like Romance clitic left dislocation, this structure implies that the dislocated element (the 'full' subject pronoun) is coindexed with a resumptive clitic. It is interesting to note that this specific word order pattern (subject pronoun, WH – Vfin – subject clitic ...) is common to all Northern Italian dialect (and even to French) but not to Standard Italian, which lacks a lexical subject clitic:

(52) [Si], begnje ha**ci** gessat dis manestar?[76]
    She, when has-she eaten the soup?
    (She, when did she eat the soup?)
(53) [Sandre], begnje he**sa** gaschlafat?[77]
    They, when have-they slept?
    (They, when did they sleep?)

The preceding construction acquires a particular relevance in comparison with fronting modalities in Cimbrian declarative clause. In this last context, in fact, the occurrence of a resumptive pronoun is no more required at all (cf. 54–56):

(54) Gheistar in Giani hat gahakat iz holtz in/ime balt[78]
    Yesterday the Gianni has cut the wood in the forest
    (Yesterday Gianni cut wood in the forest)
    Algéri [el Giani] **l**'à taià la legna in t'el bosco
(55) De muotar gheistar kam Abato hat kost iz mel[79]
    The mother yesterday in Badia has bought the meal
    (Yesterday mother bought meal in Badia)
    [La mama] algéri a Badia **l**'à comprà la farina
(56) Haute i han gaarbat/gaarbatat im balt[80]
    (Today I have worked in the forest)
    Ancò ò laorà in t'el bosco

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[76] Ivi: 174.
[77] Ibidem.
[78] Ivi: 152.
[79] Ivi: 157.
[80] Ivi: 155.

As Poletto & Tomaselli (cf. 2000: 240ff.) these V3 word order patterns are peculiar to Cimbrian syntax. The 'subject resumptive strategy', which is obligatory in Venetian dialects (with the exception of the first person both singular and plural), is no more realized in the Cimbrian declarative clause but it is still active just for subject pronoun in WH root clauses (cf. 52–53). It should be noted that this last context is the only one which implies a full convergence between the syntax of both Romance and Cimbrian pronominal elements: the resumptive subject clitic, in fact, occurs to the right of the finite verbs (subject verb inversion!) (cf. 57):

(57) XP WH Vfin clitic ...

Rather, in the declarative left dislocated constructions, the resumptive clitic occurs to the left of the finite verb (proclisis) in Romance dialects (cf. 58):

(58) XP (YP) clitic Vfin ...

This word order pattern never occurred in the diachronic evolution of the Cimbrian dialect, not even in those texts which have been taken as representative of the preceding phases (cf. §§ 3.2, 4.1, in particular 42–44), where the occurrence of resumptive pronouns in declarative clauses reached their peak during their 'short' development.

5 Conclusio

The reconstruction of the different steps which brought the loss of the V2 phenomena in Cimbrian diachronic evolution confirms, without any doubt, that 'syntactic interference' is very hard to obtain, as already noted in the literature at least from Karl Brugmann (1917: 54): "*Auf syntaktischem Gebiet sind Entlehnungen meistens viel weniger leicht zu erkennen als in andern Gebieten der Grammatik.*"

This last assumption doesn't allow us to deny the role played by the adjacent romance dialects. On the contrary, it forces us to better define the 'limits' within which syntactic interference can occur.

First of all it should be noted that the 'dismantlement' of V2 is connected with a change concerning the 'nature' of specific word order patterns: from 'allowed' V2 exceptions to 'unmarked' and frequent constructions, i.e., from hanging topic (*freies Thema*) in WH clause (cf. § 2.1) to 'new' left dislocation modalities, which finally bring to generalized V3 in the declarative clause (cf. §§ 3.2, 4.1). The outlines of this diachronic process (from exceptions to regular constructions) were already sketched out by Brugmann (1917: 55), who intuitively lead them to bilingualism.[81] In 'modern' terms it is easy to assume

that the starting-point of this process is represented by the accidental overlapping of two different structures. This phenomenon is known as 'structural ambiguity' within the same language, as 'reanalysis' when it involves two different language systems (from both a diachronic and a synchronic point of view).[82] The sequence YP WH Vfin pronoun ... which was initially analyzable just in terms of hangig topic construction (YP = *freies Thema = nominativus pendens*), was later reanalyzed as dislocated construction (YP = left dislocated phrase with coindexed resumptive pronoun). The extension of this 'fronting' modality to the declarative clause brought about the definite loss of V2 in Cimbrian syntax.[83]

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[81] Brugmann (1917: 55): "*Vielmehr ist in der Regel für etwas, was zunächst nur in dem einen Gebiet in weiterem Unfang üblich war, in dem Nachbargebiet zwar Analoges, aber nur in ganz geringer Anwendung, vielleicht nur bei einem ganz kleinen Teil der Sprachgenossen, in Gebrauch, und nun wird dieses erst durch die Zweisprachigen – denn im Syntaktischen werden Lehnbeziehungen folgenreicher Art erst möglich, wenn Leute da sind, die zu ihrer Muttersprache die fremde Sprache hinzugelernt haben und diese nun wenigsten bis zu einem gewissen Grad schon beherrschen – zu reicherem Leben entwickelt, wenn oft auch nur zu einem Leben in gewissen einzelnen Kreisen.*"

[82] Cf. foremost Lightfoot (1979).

[83] Well-known 'word order overlappings', which can lead to a reanalysis of the V2 constructions are the followings: a) subject-inversion with non-accusative verbs (*Heute kommt der Vater / Oggi arriva il papà /* Today father comes); b) V2 declarative main sentences with a NP subject preceding (*Der Vater liest die Zeitung / Il papà legge il giornale /* Father reads the newspaper); c) embedded verbal parenthetical formations *versus* 'verb projection raising' (*dass* Subject Vfin XP V). The role of these 'word order overlappings' has already been treated in regard to the diachronic development of the English language (cf. among others, Lightfoot 1997 and the literature in his citations). For Cimbrian we do not want to underestimate the meaning of these 'overlapping contexts'. We simply do not find them adequate.

In any case, the assumption that this diachronic 'path' was not simply influenced by the Romance model finds an important argument in the following two observations:

- The pronominal subject is obligatorily lexicalized. In particular it is relevant to note that the first person (both singular and plural) always requires lexicalization in contrast with Romance dialects which are spoken in the Venetian area. In this perspective, contemporary Cimbrian (like all Germanic languages and French) hasn't become yet a 'null-subject' language like Italian.
- The syntax of pronominal elements is still characterized by the following Germanic features: 1) impersonal subjects invert with the finite verb like German; 2) object and reflexive pronouns always occur on the right of the finite verb in the main clause. Proclisis isn't realized in any syntactic context.

As a final remark it is interesting to underline that not even the 'acquired' VO-typology (which was still attested in *Kat. 1602*) could be ascribed to the Romance influence: first of all Cimbrian is still characterized by OV residual construction, as a second point it is not surprising to note that exactly these aspects of Cimbrian syntax find a correspondence with Scandinavian Germanic language.[84]

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List of used abbreviations

AdvP	Adverbial Phrase
Bar.1906	Baragiola (1906)
CL	clitic
Kat.1602	Catechism of 1602 (Meid 1985a)
Kat.1813	Catechism of 1813 (Meid 1985b)
NP	Nominal Phrase
PP	Prepositional Phrase
Scar.2000	Scardoni (2000)
Schw.1939	Schweizer (1939)
Vfin	finite Verb
V2	Verb Second
V3	Verb Third
XP	X Phrase
YP	Y Phrase

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[84] Cf. Grewendorf & Poletto (2005).

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