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The evolution of the subject pronoun system in Milanese dialect.

According to Renzi - Vanelli (1983), romance linguistic varieties are divided in six classes based on the presence or absence of subject clitics (henceforth *scl*) in assertive sentences of SV(O) type. According to this classification, Milanese dialect is included in the 5th system: in fact it has *scl* in 2nd and 3rd sg person of inflected verbs, absence of *scl* with postponed subject and with impersonal, meteorological and existential verbs; absence of inversion in interrogative sentences. This characterization applies to contemporary Milanese. However, over the centuries, Milanese has gone through different systems of organization of subject pronouns: between the first phase of medieval attestations and the contemporary phase, it has undergone a phase characterized by a richer subject pronoun system than the actual one. Among the many processes occurring in the course of this evolution, I will consider here in particular the following :

i) during the medieval stage (Old Milanese) this variety, like other Romance languages of the same period distributed in a continuous area from France to Northern Italy, presents an *asymmetric pro-drop*, which can be seen as a function of V movement to a C°: main clauses are *pro-drop*; in dependent clauses, in which the verb is assumed not to have moved to C°, the subject has to be expressed (Vanelli, Renzi, Benincà 1985), e.g.:

Bonvesin Q 65-66

Quand tu veniss al mondo, se tu voliss pensar, negota ge
portassi _ , negota n poi _ portar

When you came to.the world, if you wanted to-think-about-it,
nothing there (you) brought2sg / nothing from-there (you) can2sg bring

ii) in the same period, ancient tonic complement pronouns (intended to become modern subject pronouns) are possibly used as subjects in the left periphery of the sentence.

iii) for the same stage, I will assume the existence of a double series of subject pronouns, strong and weak, which may not be indicated by spelling; this system should apply at least to the transition between the medieval period and the system attested since the end of the fourteenth century ;

iv) in the documents dating Fourteenth/Fifteenth Century, a change of reciprocal order between subject pronouns and preverbal negation starts; the first evidence of *scl* “a” also appears; in the same period, the drastic reduction of Tobler-Mussafia (TM) enclisis detracts the speaker evidence of V2 order (this evidence being substituted by “*si*-complement *cl-V*” order and by the reduction of evident XVS orders, which were in turn substituted by “ \emptyset – V-*pro* – (S)” order). The only evidence of V2 occurs in presence of some initial particles (*mò*, *donca*, etc...). V to C movement is also preserved in (main) interrogative clauses.

v) the system of *scl* of the seventeenth century Milanese corresponds to the 3rd system of Renzi Vanelli: the presence of *scl* in the 1st, 2nd , 3rd, 6th person (for the 4th the 1st is used, if present); from the end of the eighteenth century the system of clitics assumes a type similar to that of the contemporary Milanese, except for the still preserved inversion in interrogative clauses.

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