

Developing pro-drop: the case of Cimbrian

Cimbrian is a German(ic) VO variety (Grewendorf&Poletto 2005) that has lost the core property of the V2 phenomenon – the well-known Germanic linear restriction – expanding the CP-domain (Split-CP) (Bidese 2008; Bidese&Cognola&Padovan 2012) (cf. 1):

- (1) [Gestarn] [dar pua] hatt gisekk in has [Panieri et al. 2006:
310]
Yesterday the boy has seen the hare
'Yesterday, the boy saw the hare'

Despite the development of a split CP, Cimbrian has maintained the mandatory V to Fin movement in root clauses and has generalized it in some types of subordinate clauses (e.g. those introduced by complementizers like *ke* 'that' or by WH-elements like *benn* 'when' or *bem* 'whom').

As regards the pronominal realization of the referential subject it can be observed that it is attested since the first documentation of a Cimbrian variety in 1602 (cf. 2) – the Cimbrian translation of Roberto Bellarmin's Italian catechism – until nowadays (cf. 3):

- (2) **Ik** glaube in den Hailighen Gaist [Cat. 1602:
240]
'I believe in the Holy Ghost'
Italian original: Credo nello Spirito Santo
∅ believe.1ST.PERS.SING in the Holy Ghost

- (3) **I** gloabe in Hailege Gaist¹

As already noted in the literature (cf., among others, Poletto&Tomaselli 2002), subject inversion occurs:

- i) with pronominal subjects: on the right of the finite verb like in German (VFIN+PRON) (cf. 4):
- (4) Gestarn hatt-**ar** gisekk in has [Panieri et al. 2006: 309]
Yesterday has-he.CL seen the hare
'Yesterday, he saw the hare'
- ii) with nominal subjects: on the right of the VP like in Italian (VP DP) (cf. 5):
- (5) Haüt iz-ta khent **dar nono**
Today is-DA arrived the grandpa
'Today, the grandpa arrived'

Not surprisingly there are two expletives in Cimbrian:

- i) 'z which always precedes the finite verb in FIN (root declarative clauses) (cf. 6):
- (6) 'Z gem-en di milch di baké [Panieri et al. 2006: 316]
It give-him.CL.DAT the milk the farmers
'The farmers are giving him the milk'

1 Where no bibliographical references are given, the sentences come from a Cimbrian-speaking informant (many thanks to ANG).

ii) *-da/-ta* which always occurs in enclisis either to the finite verb (root clauses) (cf. 7) or to the subordinating conjunction (*az+da*, *bo+da*, ..., cf. Kolmer 2005; Bidese&Padovan&Tomaselli 2012) (cf. 8 and 9), whenever the subject is ‘delayed’ in a way to be defined:

- (7) *Haüt iz-ta khent dar nono*
 Today is-DA.CL arrived the grandpa
 ‘Today, the grandpa arrived’
- (8) *I bill az-ta dar maurar richt di schual*
 I want that-DA the bricklayer repairs.SUBJ the school
 (I want the bricklayer to repair the school building)
- (9) *’Z proat, bo-da hatt gekhoaft dar nono, ...* [Bidese&Padovan&Tomaselli 2012: 4]
 The bread that-DA has bought the grandpa ...
 (The bread that the grandpa bought ...)
- (10) *’Z proat, bo-da DAR NONO hatt gekhoaft (nètt di nona) ...* [ibidem]
 The bread that-DA has bought the grandpa (not the grandma) ...
 (The bread that the grandpa bought ...)

The first expletive (*’z*) is a CP expletive whose function is to maintain the declarative modality (*Satzart*) as German *Vorfeld-es*. The second expletive (*-da*) is a subject expletive which occurs immediately on the right of the finite verb whenever the nominal subject is not raised in the CP domain, i.e. it remains in its thematic position (cf. 7 and 8) or it has undergone either free inversion (cf. 9) or focalization (cf. 10). The different status of the two types of expletive (CP expletive vs subject expletive) is confirmed by the possibility of co-occurrence (cf. 11):

- (11) *’Z iz-ta khent dar nono* (cf. 4, 5 and 6)
 It is-DA arrived the grandpa
 ‘The grandpa just arrived’

The analysis we propose for discussion is based on the following assumptions:

- The feature characterization of FIN triggers mandatory V movement in the root (declarative) clause but is not compatible with pro-drop.
- Unlike German (a strict V2 language) non referential *pro* is not allowed: *-da* roughly corresponds to English *there*.
- Free subject inversion (like Italian), which implies the VO typology, precedes the core phenomenon (the correlates emerge earlier and disappear later with respect to the core phenomenon)
- The core phenomenon (referential *pro*) will not develop until mandatory V movement to FIN is maintained (i.e.: Cimbrian remains a CP dominant language in the sense of Hulk&Kemenade 1995):

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