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Language change in comparison: The (special) case of Raeto-Romance

0. Introduction

Some of the Raeto-Romance varieties spoken in Switzerland and Northern Italy exhibit morphosyntactic peculiarities like the verb-second (V2) property, the obligatory use of subject pronouns and the lack of object clitics, which distinguish them from their neighbouring Gallo-Romance languages and dialects. As Raeto-Romance varieties have been and continue to be influenced by (varieties of) German which also exhibit these properties, the existence of these characteristics in Raeto-Romance has often been attributed to language contact. This paper challenges this assumption. By comparing Raeto-Romance with other Romance languages both from a synchronic and from a diachronic perspective we will show that other Romance languages seem to be undergoing or to have undergone similar developmental stages like those observed in Raeto-Romance. Given this observation, we will argue that it is more adequate to assume that the influence of German did not cause the existence of these morphosyntactic peculiarities in Raeto-Romance. Rather, we will claim that the contact with German contributed to the maintenance and the further development of these properties in Raeto-Romance. Other Romance languages, in contrast, despite showing tendencies that favoured the development of these properties, did never develop them completely due to the lack of the relevant language contact situation.

The paper is organised as follows: Section 1 gives a brief introductory overview of the Raeto-Romance varieties and illustrates some of their morphosyntactic particularities. Section 2 compares these properties to German and its dialects. In section 3, we then consider these properties from a diachronic perspective and propose that all the Romance varieties under consideration here have undergone similar diachronic developments. We conclude by showing that some varieties of Raeto-Romance extended and fully developed these properties because of their language contact with German varieties while other Romance varieties did not develop them further but often lost them later on.

1. Raeto-Romance

1.1 Language areas

Since Gartner (1883) the term ‘Raetoromanisch’ (‘Raeto-Romance’) has traditionally been used as an umbrella term for varieties spoken in three geographically independent language areas: Swiss Romansh spoken in the Swiss Canton Graubünden (cf. 1 in fig. 1 below), Dolomitic Ladin (cf. 2 in fig. 1) in the Italian Dolomites and Friulian (cf. 5) spoken in the

region of Friuli in North-Eastern Italy. However, contrary to Schneller (1870), Ascoli (1873), Gartner (1883) and many others, who take these three groups as one independent linguistic unit with a common origin, other scholars such as Battisti (1931) negate the existence of a Raeto-Romance unity and declare these varieties as Northern Italian dialects. These opposing views on the question as to whether the three language territories can in fact be conceived as one linguistic unit has led to controversy in Romance linguistics (Liver²2010: 15-28) and lies at the origin of the so-called *Questione Ladina*.

Figure 1: The language areas of Raeto-Romance varieties (Lia Rumantscha 2004: 14)

The dialectal variation among the Raeto-Romance varieties is complex and each of the three groups comprises several subvarieties. Swiss Romansh is further divided into the five written subvarieties or 'linguistic idioms': Sursilvan, Sutsilvan, Surmiran, Putér and Vallader. Jauer is the oral variety of Vallader spoken in Val Müstair. Central Dolomitic Ladin comprises the varieties found in five valleys around Mount Sella: Gherdëina (Val Gardena), Badiot (Val Badia) with Marèo spoken in the tributary valley Marebbe, Fascian (Val di Fassa), Fodom (Livinallongo del Col di Lana and Colle Santa Lucia) and Anpezo (Cortina d'Ampezzo).¹ Moreover, some scholars also classify the varieties of Val di Non and Val di Sole as well as those of Cadorino (cf. 3 in fig. 1 above) and Comelico (cf. 4) among the Dolomitic Ladin varieties. The Friulian varieties are usually divided into the three areas Central-Southern Friulian, Western Friulian and Carnic Friulian (Francescato 1966: 91-125; Frau 1984: 14-16; Vanelli 1997: 279).

Figure 2 illustrates the position of the Raeto-Romance varieties in the centre of contradictory linguistic influences. There are three main linguistic influences on Raeto-Romance. First, Alemannic/Swiss German and Southern German dialects from the North are in close contact with all subvarieties of Romansh in Switzerland. Second, Tyrolean or Bavarian dialects influence Dolomitic Ladin but do also affect the Eastern-Romansh varieties, above all Jauer spoken in Val Müstair. Third, Northern Italian dialects are in close

¹ We use the Dolomitic Ladin terms to denominate the varieties and use the Italian names of the areas in which they are spoken. As far as Dolomitic Ladin in Val Badia is concerned, 'Badiot' is in fact the denomination of the variety spoken in the higher part of Val Badia, 'Ladin' refers to the variety of the central part of the valley and 'Marèo' is the variety spoken in Marebbe, a tributary valley of Val Badia.

language contact with Dolomitic Ladin and Friulian, and, to a lesser extent, influence the Romansh varieties in Engadine. Friulian, finally, is strongly influenced by Slavic dialects and by Northern Italian dialects, especially Venetian. Due to this complex situation of language contacts and political, administrative, economical and cultural conditions, speakers of Raeto-Romance are bilingual or even trilingual. In Switzerland, all speakers of Swiss Romansh are bilingual with (Swiss) German (Alemannic) and some are even trilingual with Italian. As for Dolomitic Ladin, the speakers of the northern varieties Gherdëina, Badiot and Marèò are bilingual with German (Bavarian), whereas the speakers of the southern varieties Fodom, Fascian and Anpezo are bilingual with Italian. Trilingualism is widespread, in particular in the autonomous province of Bolzano, to which Val Gardena, Val Badia and Marebbe belong.

Figure 2: Linguistic contact and influences on Raeto-Romance varieties (adapted from Kristol 1998: 938 and Craffonara 1999: 7)²

Despite these different linguistic influences and the fact that the Raeto-Romance varieties have never formed a contiguous language area, they have several linguistic properties in common as we will discuss in the next section.

² As indicated by the slim arrow (which we add to the original map), Bavarian had also some influence on Swiss Romansh, but this was in fact restricted to the Samnaun area due to its geographical position at the far end of the Inn valley and its geographical vicinity to Bavarian-speaking areas. Nowadays, Swiss Romansh in Samnaun is lost.

1.2 Common morphophonological characteristics of the Raeto-Romance varieties

Traditionally, Swiss Romansh, Dolomitic Ladin and Friulian are treated as one linguistic unit because they share three common morphophonological characteristics that they have maintained from Latin whereas the neighbouring Northern Italian dialects have lost these properties (Haiman & Benincà 1992: 65, 75; Liver 2010: 23f.; Kaiser, Carigiet & Evans 2001: 186f.).

- 1) maintenance of Latin *-s* as a plural marker in nominal and adjectival inflection and as marker of the 2SG and PL verb endings, whereas this segment has been lost in central Romance languages and varieties (Kristol 1998: 942, Tekavčić 1981: 273):

Latin		Swiss Romansh	Dolomitic Ladin	Friulian	French	Italian	English
STELLA	SG	<i>staila</i>	<i>štéra</i>	<i>štéle</i>	<i>étoile</i> [etwal]	<i>stella</i>	‘star’
	PL	<i>stailas</i>	<i>štéras</i>	<i>štéles</i>	<i>étoiles</i> [etwal]	<i>stelle</i>	‘stars’

LAVAS	2SG	<i>lavas</i>	<i>lás</i>	<i>lávés</i>	<i>(tu) laves</i> [lav]	<i>lavi</i>	‘(you) wash’
LAVATIS	2PL	<i>lavais</i>	<i>laéis</i>	<i>laváis</i>	<i>(vous) lavez</i> [lave]	<i>lavate</i>	‘(you) wash’

- 2) maintenance of consonantal clusters of the type C+1 (/kl-/, /gl-/, /pl-/, /bl-/, /fl-/) (Kuen 1968: 50, Kristol 1998: 942):

Latin	Swiss Romansh	Dolomitic Ladin	Friulian	French	Italian	English
CLAVIS	<i>clav</i>	<i>tlé</i>	<i>clâf</i>	<i>clé</i>	<i>chiave</i>	‘key’
FLAMMA	<i>flomma</i>	<i>fláma</i>	<i>flame</i>	<i>flamme</i>	<i>fiamma</i>	‘flame’
PLENUS	<i>plain</i>	<i>plen</i>	<i>plen</i>	<i>plein</i>	<i>pieno</i>	‘full’

- 3) palatalisation of /k/ and /g/ before /a/ (Ascoli 1873, Lang 1982: 214-218, Gartner 1883, Kristol 1998: 944):

Latin	Swiss Romansh	Dolomitic Ladin	Friulian	French	Italian	English
CALIDA	<i>chauda</i>	<i>čálda</i>	<i>čálde</i>	<i>chaude</i>	<i>calda</i>	‘warm’
GATTU	<i>giat</i>	<i>iat (giat)</i>	<i>(g)jat</i>	<i>chat</i>	<i>gatto</i>	‘cat’

The existence of these three properties in Raeto-Romance also provides evidence for the close similarity of the Raeto-Romance varieties to the Gallo-Romance languages, namely to French, for instance.

1.3 Common syntactic properties of Raeto-Romance varieties

1.3.1 Verb-second (V2) property

In addition to the morphophonological properties discussed in the preceding section, Raeto-Romance varieties (in particular Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin) are characterised by syntactic properties which make them more similar to Germanic rather than to Romance, given that these are unknown to neighbouring Romance varieties. Like Romance languages in general, the Raeto-Romance varieties are characterised by SVO word order. However, contrary to all the other modern Romance languages, some varieties of Raeto-Romance, namely all varieties of Swiss Romansh and the northern varieties of Dolomitic Ladin, Gherdëina, Badiot and Marè, exhibit a regular verb-second (V2) word order. V2-languages are characterised by the fact that the finite verb always occurs in the second position in a declarative main clause. If a constituent other than the subject appears in the first position of the sentence, these languages exhibit the so-called ‘V2-effect’, an inversion, which creates an XVS word order (1b-e), with the verb appearing in second position avoiding an ungrammatical V3-order (2). A crucial piece of evidence for the existence of a strong V2-order in Swiss Romansh is shown in (1e), where a subordinate clause introducing the sentence obligatorily triggers V2-order.

- (1) The V2-property in Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan)³ (Kaiser 2002/2003: 314)

- a. La dunna ha legiu il cudisch cun plascher.
the woman has read the book with pleasure
- b. Il cudisch ha **la dunna** legiu cun plascher.
the book has the woman read with pleasure
- c. Cun plascher ha **la dunna** legiu il cudisch.
with pleasure has the woman read the book
- d. Legiu ha **la dunna** il cudisch cun plascher.
read has the woman the book with pleasure
- e. Sche ella havess giu temps, havess **la dunna** legiu il cudisch.
if she would-have had time would-have the woman read the book
‘If she had had time, the woman would have read the book.’

- (2) Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan) (Kaiser 2002/2003: 314)

- a. *Cun plascher **la dunna** ha legiu il cudisch.
with pleasure the woman has read the book
- b. *Sche ella havess giu temps, **la dunna** havess legiu il cudisch.
if she would-have had time the woman would-have read the book

As far as V2 in the Dolomitic Ladin varieties Gherdëina, Badiot and Marè is concerned, the situation is much more complex. According to Poletto (2000: 104), Badiot and Marè differ with respect to the V2-order. Whereas in Marè, the V2-rule holds almost without restriction (3), V2-order in Badiot is only obligatory when the subject is a (clitic) pronoun, but not when it is a full noun phrase (4):

³ In this and the following examples, the first constituent of the clause is underlined, the verb in second position is in roman type and the subject of the clause in **bold**.

- (3) Dolomitic Ladin (Marè, S. Vigilio di Marebbe) (Poletto 2000: 104)
- a. *Sagn* maia *Giani* *n* *meil*.
now eats John an apple
'Now John is eating an apple.'
- b. *Sagn* maia=*l* *n* *meil*.
now eats=he an apple
'Now he is eating an apple.'
- (4) Dolomitic Ladin (Badiot, S. Leonardo) (Poletto 2000: 104)
- a. **Sagn* mangia *Giani* *n* *pom*.
now eats John an apple
'Now John is eating an apple.'
- b. *Sagn* mang=*el* *n* *pom*.
now eats=he an apple
'Now he is eating an apple.'

From a pan-Raeto-Romance perspective, we observe that as we move from west to east in the Raeto-Romance-speaking territories, the V2-rule becomes weaker, in other words, the more eastern the Raeto-Romance variety, the weaker the application of the V2-rule. Hence, while the V2-rule applies almost without any restriction in Swiss Romansh (note, that the postverbal subject pronoun in (5a-c) could be replaced by a nominal subject) in many Dolomitic Ladin varieties, in contrast, the V2-rule is only possible when pronominal subjects (5d) are used and in Friulian, the V2-rule does not apply at all (5e).

- (5) The V2-rule in Raeto-Romance varieties (Gartner 1910: 16ff.; Kuen 1957: 310)
- a. Sursilvan (Swiss Romansh)
š-el-veny-ain, *š-e-maly-əl* *vus tuts kun pjal-a-palenya*.
when-he-comes-in then-eats-he you all with skin-and-hair
- b. Surmiran (Swiss Romansh)
š-i-əl-viny-aint, *š-i-ts-maly-əl* *tots kun pəl-a-pəil*.
when-he-comes-in then-eats-he all with skin-and-hair
- c. Vallader (Swiss Romansh)
š-el-vain-aint, *š-i-s-maly-əl* *tots kun pel-a-pajl*.
when-he-comes-in then-eats-he all with skin-and-hair
- d. Gherdëina (Dolomitic Ladin)
še-l-ven-itə, *və-madyə-l* *dui kuŋ-pel-i-péil*.
when-he-comes-in you-eats-he all with-skin-and-hair
- e. Carnic Friulian
š-al-ven-dentri, *a(l)-ši-mandyə duč kuŋ-pjəl-r-píol*.
when-he-comes-in he-you-eats all with-skin-and-hair
'When he comes in, he will devour you completely.'

1.3.2 The use of subject pronouns

The second syntactic property that sets Raeto-Romance and French apart from most other Romance languages concerns the use of subject pronouns: Romance languages like (Standard) Italian (6a) or (Standard) Spanish (6b) have retained from Latin the property to omit subject pronouns and to use them only to mark contrastiveness or to avoid ambiguity.

These languages are so-called *null-subject languages* or *pro-drop languages*.

- (6) Null-subject languages: Italian (a), Spanish (b)
 - a. (*Lei*) *dorme*.
 - b. (*Ella*) *duerme*.

‘She sleeps’

In *non-null-subject languages* like Modern French (7a) and Raeto-Romance (exemplified by Sursilvan, a variety of Swiss Romansh) (7b, 8a-b), subject pronouns are used obligatorily.

- (7) Non-null-subject languages: French (a), Raeto-Romance (Sursilvan) (b)
 - a. **(Elle) dort*.
 - b. **(Ella) dorma*.

In contrast to French, which exhibits two series of subject pronouns, a clitic and a non-clitic (i.e. free) series, Swiss Romansh disposes of one series only. These subject pronouns are non-clitic, or free, pronouns, as shown by the fact that they violate Kayne’s (1975) criteria of cliticness in that they can be stressed (8c) and coordinated (8d).

- (8) Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan)
 - a. *Ella ha legiu in cudisch*.
 - she has read a book
 - b. **Ha legiu in cudisch*.
 - has read a book
 - c. *ELLA ha legiu in cudisch*.
 - SHE has read a book
 - d. *Ella ed el han legiu in cudisch*.
 - She and he have read a book

Swiss Romansh is hence a non-null subject language and, like French, also disposes of expletive subject pronouns as shown in (9).

- (9) Expletive pronouns in Swiss Romansh (Kaiser 2003: 260)
 - a. *Ei dat in niev cudisch da Chomsky*.
 - it gives a new book by Chomsky
 - ‘There is a new book by Chomsky.’
 - b. **Dat in niev cudisch da Chomsky*.
 - gives a new book by Chomsky

Traditionally, the possibility in null-subject languages of leaving the subject pronouns unexpressed has been associated with the presence of a ‘strong’ or highly differentiated inflectional paradigm of the verb which exhibits distinct affixes for each grammatical person and thus, from a functional point of view, helps to identify the grammatical person implicitly supplying the missing subject. In this view, the overt realisation of a subject pronoun would be redundant as it would only express information (namely person and number) already given by the verb. In non-null-subject languages, in contrast, verbal inflection would not be sufficient to allow for the identification of the grammatical person.

However, Swiss Romansh shows that there is not necessarily a correlation between a highly differentiated verb inflection and the null-subject property: Despite its rich and well-

differentiated verb morphology (cf. table 1), Swiss Romansh does not normally allow the omission of subject pronouns.

Table 1: Verb paradigm in Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan and Vallader) ('to sing')

person	Sursilvan			Vallader		
1SG	<i>jeu</i>	<i>cont</i>	<i>el</i>	<i>eu</i>	<i>chant</i>	
2SG	<i>ti</i>	<i>cont</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>tii</i>	<i>chant</i>	<i>ast</i>
3SG	<i>el / ella</i>	<i>cont</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>el / ella</i>	<i>chant</i>	<i>a</i>
1PL	<i>nus</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>ein</i>	<i>nus (no)</i>	<i>chant</i>	<i>ain</i>
2PL	<i>vus</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>eis</i>	<i>vus (vo)</i>	<i>chant</i>	<i>aivat (ais)</i>
3PL	<i>els / ellas</i>	<i>cont</i>	<i>an</i>	<i>els / ellas</i>	<i>chant</i>	<i>an</i>

Hence, we can conclude with Benincà (1985/1986: 38f.):

La ricchezza della flessione potrà quindi essere considerata una condizione preliminare per l'assenza di soggetto nelle lingue che hanno questa caratteristica, ma non potrà essere considerata semplicemente come la causa di questa caratteristica.⁴

What is more, a detailed analysis of subject pronoun usage in Raeto-Romance (cf. Hack 2007, Hack & Gaglia 2009, Kaiser & Hack 2010) shows that subject pronouns can be omitted in Swiss Romansh in very specific contexts. According to descriptive grammars of Raeto-Romance such as Spescha (1989) for Sursilvan, Ganzoni (1983) for Vallader and Belardi (1984) and Anderlan-Obletter (1991) for Gherdëina, the second person singular and plural subject pronouns are omitted very often when they would normally appear in postverbal position.

(10) Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan)

(Spescha 1989: 563)

- a. *Oz fas (ti) quella lavur.*
today do-2SG (you) this work
'Today you do this work.'
- b. *Vegnīs (vus) lu in tec ad uras?*
come-2PL (you) then a bit in time
'Will you then arrive in time?'

(11) Dolomitic Ladin (Gherdëina)

(Anderlan-Obletter 1991: 40)

- a. *Pona vënies.*
then come-2SG
- b. *Pona uniëis Ø.*
then come-2PL
'Then you come.'

⁴ 'The richness of the (verb) inflection could thus be considered a preliminary condition for the absence of the subject (pronoun) in languages that have this characteristic, but it could not be considered simply the cause of this characteristic.' [our translation]

1.3.3 The use of object pronouns

Swiss Romansh exhibits a further peculiarity in the domain of pronouns. In contrast to all other Romance languages, Sursilvan does not dispose of preverbal object clitics, neither dative nor accusative ones. It exhibits one series of object pronouns only which do not show clitic properties and which appear in postverbal position:

(12) Non-clitic object pronouns in Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan)

- a. *Maria enconuscha el.*
Mary knows him
- b. *Maria enconuscha el e tei.*
Mary knows him and you
- c. *Maria enconuscha EL, buca tei.*
Mary knows him not you

Note that this property, i.e. the lack of object clitics, only occurs in the Swiss Romansh variety of Sursilvan. All remaining Raeto-Romance varieties exhibit preverbal object clitic pronouns.

In the following section 2, we compare Raeto-Romance to German and its dialects with respect to the above-mentioned properties.

2. Syntactic properties of German

2.1 V2-word order

As far as word order is concerned, German is well-known for its strong V2-property, generally not permitting V3-sequences (13f-g).⁵

(13) Strong V2 in German

(Kaiser 2002: 314)

- a. **Die Frau** hat *das Buch gelesen mit Vergnügen.*
the woman has the book read with pleasure
- b. **Das Buch** hat **die Frau** *mit Vergnügen gelesen.*
the book has the woman with pleasure read
- c. **Mit Vergnügen** hat **die Frau** *das Buch gelesen.*
with pleasure has the woman the book read
- d. **Gelesen** hat **die Frau** *das Buch mit Vergnügen.*
read has the woman the book with pleasure

⁵ There are some very marked and restricted contexts in German which allow V3-order. This is the case, for instance, in sentences which are introduced by an embedded clause and which furthermore contain an adverb phrase coindexed with the embedded clause:

(i) [**Wenn sie Zeit gehabt hätte**]_i, **dann**_i hätte **die Frau** *das Buch gelesen*
if she time had would-have then would-have the woman the book read

This kind of V3-clauses as well as other V3-constructions in German are generally not considered to be violations of the general V2-rule that holds for German (cf. Dürscheid 1989 or Müller 2005).

- e. Wenn sie Zeit gehabt hätte, hätte **die Frau** das Buch gelesen.
 if she time had would-have would-have the woman the book read
 'If she had had time, the woman would have read the book.'
- f. *Mit Vergnügen die Frau hat gelesen das Buch.
 with pleasure the woman has read the book
- g. *Wenn sie Zeit gehabt hätte, **die Frau** hätte das Buch gelesen.
 if she time had would-have the woman would-have the book read

As we have seen above in section 1.3, Swiss Romansh and the northern varieties of Dolomitic Ladin behave quite similarly to German in this respect. The fact that these are just the Raeto-Romance varieties which are exposed to strong influence from Germanic suggests that German influence plays a crucial role for V2 in Raeto-Romance. This language-contact hypothesis regarding the origin of V2 in Raeto-Romance which is put forward by Meyer-Lübke (1890-1906), Elwert (1943), Rohlf's (1952), Kuen (1978) and Kramer (1978) among others is well summarised by Linder (1987: 95):

Unser Phänomen tritt nur in den Gebieten auf, die stark von deutschen Mundarten geprägt wurden. Diese Südtiroler, also südbayrischen, Mundarten kennen die Inversionsformen ebenso wie die schweizerdeutschen, die auf das Bündnerromanische gewirkt haben. Aufgrund dieser Verhältnisse, insbesondere aufgrund der differenzierten Sachlage im Dolomitenladinischen, ist der Schluß zu ziehen, daß die Herausbildung dieses besonderen Systems der Inversion und der Inversionsformen im Rätoromanischen mit deutschem Einfluß in Verbindung zu bringen ist.⁶

2.2 The use of subject pronouns

As for the use of subject pronouns, German and its dialects behave quite similarly to Raeto-Romance in various respects. On the one hand, like Raeto-Romance, German is a non-null-subject language, requiring the overt realisation of (non-clitic) subject pronouns (14) and expletive pronouns in impersonal constructions or with weather verbs (15).

- (14) Subject pronoun usage in German
- Sie *hat* das Buch *gelesen*.
 she has the book read
 - Sie und er *haben* das Buch *gelesen*.
 she and he have the book read
 - SIE *hat* das Buch *gelesen*.
 SHE has the book read
 - **Hat* das Buch *gelesen*.
 has the book read

⁶ 'Our phenomenon appears only in those areas which have been strongly influenced by German dialects. These South-Tyrolian, i.e. South-Bavarian, dialects, as well as the Swiss German dialects which have influenced Swiss Romansh, are characterised by inversion forms. Because of these circumstances, in particular because of the complex situation in Dolomitic Ladin [for political reasons the northern varieties have been and still are influenced by German, while the southern varieties are mainly influenced by Northern Italian dialects] one has to conclude that the evolution of this particular system of inversion and inversion forms in Raeto-Romance should be connected to German influence.' [our translation]

- (15) Expletive pronouns in German (Kaiser 2003: 260)
- a. **(Es) gibt ein neues Buch von Chomsky.*
 it gives a new book by Chomsky
 ‘There is a new book by Chomsky.’
 - b. **(Es) regnet.*
 it rains

On the other hand, the omission of subject pronouns in southern varieties of German like Alemannic (Lötscher 1983) (16) and Bavarian (Altmann 1981, Mayerthaler & Mayerthaler 1990, Fuß 2004) (17) is allowed under similar circumstances as in Swiss Romansh, namely when the subject pronoun is in second person and in postverbal position.

- (16) Omission of second person subject pronouns in Alemannic (Lötscher 1983: 94)
- a. *Was häsch?*
 what have-2SG
 ‘What’s the matter with you?’
 - b. *Gòðsch scho?*
 go-2SG already
 ‘Are you already leaving?’
 - c. *Woane gaasch?*
 where go-2SG
 ‘Where are you going?’
- (17) Bavarian
- a. *Kumst noch Minga, dann muaßt me b’suacha.* (Fuß 2004: 61)
 come-2SG to Munich then must-2SG me visit
 ‘When you come to Munich you have to call on me.’
 - b. *Gestern håst kōā Brot zīkaft.* (Mayerthaler & Mayerthaler 1990: 413)
 yesterday have-2SG no bread buy-PST.PTCP
 ‘Yesterday you didn’t buy any bread.’

2.3 The use of object pronouns

(Standard) German has one paradigm of object pronouns, which generally behave like non-clitic elements (Duden ⁸2009: 269ff.):

- (18) Non-clitic object pronouns in German
- a. *Maria kennt ihn.*
 Maria knows him
 - b. *Maria kennt ihn und dich.*
 Maria knows him and you
 - c. *Maria kennt IHN, aber nicht dich.*
 Maria knows him but not you

However, colloquial German and its dialects also dispose of reduced forms of these non-clitic pronouns. They show typical characteristics of (special) clitics and form, at least in some dialects, an own paradigm (Prinz 1991: 88, Werner 1999, Weiß 2005).

(19) Clitic-like object pronouns in colloquial German and German dialects

- a. *Maria kennt=n.*
Maria knows him
- b. **Maria kennt=n und dich.*
Maria knows him and you
- c. **Maria kennt=n, aber nicht dich.*
Maria knows him but not you

Note that while this situation contrasts with Sursilvan which does not exhibit object clitics, all other Raeto-Romance varieties do feature object clitics which form an own paradigm.

The fact that, with respect to the above-mentioned morphosyntactic properties, (varieties of) Raeto-Romance behave like (varieties of) German, seems to suggest that the existence of these characteristics in Raeto-Romance is triggered by language contact. However, as our comparison between Raeto-Romance and other Romance languages and varieties in the following section shows, we do observe tendencies for these properties already in Old Romance as well as in other modern Romance languages.

3. Comparison with other Romance languages

In this section, we challenge the language-contact hypothesis by showing that various Romance languages have undergone developmental stages in which they exhibited the same or similar morphosyntactic properties like those observed in Raeto-Romance varieties today.

3.1 V2-order

V2-effects are already observed in declarative clauses in older stages of the Romance languages, such as Old Italian (20) or Old French (21).

(20) V2-order in Old Venetian
(dialect of Lio Mazor, 13th century)

(Levi 1904, cited in Jaberg 1934: 90)

- a. *Ancò* acusarò *e' an mi*
still will-accuse I also me
- b. *Questo* aurò *e'*
this will-have I
- c. *Mo* aués *e' le mie arme.*
but would-have I the my arms

(21) V2-order in Old French

(Kaiser 2002/2003: 318)

- a. *En tel sen* dist *la dame les paroles*
in this sense said the lady the words
- b. *É puis* úrad *Anna.*
and then prayed Hanna

(QLR 1160, 83: 2 Samuel 14,9)

(QLR 1160, 6: 1 Samuel 2,1)

- c. *Icest lieu seintefied* fud *li bers Helchana* ácustumiers á visiter
 this place holy was the lord Elcana habituated to visit
 'The man Elcana went up regularly in order to visit this holy place.'

(QLR 1160,4:1 Sam 1,3)

Given the existence and the relatively high frequency of subject-verb inversion and thus V2-word order in older stages of the Romance languages, it is generally assumed that most Old Romance languages were V2-languages.⁷ Arquint (1975), Kristol (1998), Belardi (1984), Benincà (1985/1986) and others argue that V2 in Raeto-Romance is due to the fact that this V2-grammar has been maintained from older stages in the transition from Latin to modern Romance. According to Benincà (1985/1986: 100f.), it is "piuttosto la continuazione diretta e regolare della grammatica delle varietà romanze medievali da cui queste parlate sono derivate".⁸ However, this account faces the problem that Old Romance languages never exhibited a *strong* V2-order like German or Swiss Romansh. As illustrated on the basis of data from Old French (22), all Old Romance texts contain a number of clauses with V3-order:

(22) V3 in Old French

(Kaiser 2002/2003: 321)

- a. *Le matin li reis* fist *faire un brief*.
 the morning the king made open a letter

(QLR 1160, p.78, 2 Samuel 11,14)

- b. *É Samuel á sun lit* returna
 and Samuel to his bed returned

(QLR 1160, p.78, 2 Samuel 11,14)

- c. *é ki mei despirra, iol* metrai *en despit*
 and who me despise I-him put-FUT.1SG in disdain

(QLR 1160, p.8: 1 Samuel 2,30)

- d. *E devant c'ó qu' il venissent, la nuvele* vint *al rei*
 and before this that they came the message came to-the king

(QLR 1160, p.82: 2 Samuel 13,30)

More importantly, these examples show that V3-clauses in Old French do not only appear in restricted contexts as it is the case in German or Swiss Romansh (see footnote 4). As a consequence, Old French exhibits, despite of its relatively high number of V2-clauses involving subject-verb inversion, a number of clauses which are incompatible with a grammar featuring a general V2-rule. Therefore, recent work has argued against the analysis of Old French as a V2-language (Kaiser 2002, Ferraresi & Goldbach 2002, Elsig & Rinke 2007, Rinke & Meisel 2009, Kaiser & Zimmermann 2011). The same holds for other Old Romance languages. In this view, consequently, the fact that Swiss Romansh has a V2-grammar cannot be attributed to the existence of a V2-grammar in Old Romance. It follows then that the V2-grammar of Swiss Romansh does not exist because it has been maintained

⁷ See Kaiser (2002) for an overview of this assumption.

⁸ [...] 'rather the direct and regular continuation of the grammar of those medieval Romance varieties from which these dialects derive (these dialects derive from)' [our translation]

due to the language contact with German, as argued by Benincà (1985/1986).⁹ We rather claim that the close language contact with German has caused the emergence of a strong V2-order in Swiss Romansh in a situation where a tendency to develop such a word order already existed before.

3.2 The use of subject pronouns in Romance null-subject languages

Most Romance languages like (standard) Italian and Spanish have retained from Latin the property of leaving pronominal subjects unexpressed. Most Gallo-Romance languages and varieties, such as French, in contrast, have lost the null-subject property and exhibit obligatory subject pronouns. Interestingly, the use of subject pronouns has become considerably more frequent also in Ibero-Romance languages spoken in Latin America, as noted, for instance, by Duarte (2000) with respect to Brazilian Portuguese.

Figure 3: Evolution of the use of subject pronouns in Brazilian Portuguese (percentage of occurrences) (Duarte 2000: 19)

Moreover, on the basis of a comparative analysis of Portuguese Bible translations, Kaiser (2009) observes a significant increase in subject pronoun usage in European Portuguese and even to a higher extent in Brazilian Portuguese.

⁹ Benincà (1985/1986:101) admits that “sarà allora proprio il contatto col tedesco che ha contribuito a mantenerla in vita nelle aree ladine” [‘it should really be the language contact with German that has contributed to maintain it in the Dolomitic Ladin areas’; our translation].

Figure 4: Evolution of the use of subject pronouns in Portuguese Bible translations (1 Samuel 1–3, 2 Samuel 11–14) (Kaiser 2009: 137)

This increase of subject pronoun usage in Portuguese seems to correlate with a loss of the verb endings. In comparison with the Old Portuguese inflectional system, Brazilian Portuguese has completely lost the agreement markers for the second person singular and plural, due to the fact that the second person pronouns have been given up and substituted by the pronouns *você* and *vocês* which require agreement with the third person. Moreover, in Colloquial Brazilian Portuguese, the first person plural pronoun *nós* can be replaced by *a gente*, which also takes third person agreement. As a result, Brazilian Portuguese has two or – depending on the realization of the pronoun for the first person plural – three zero endings, and it has identical agreement markers for the second and third plural in the present tense of all verb classes:

Table 2: The development of the present indicative verb inflection in European and Brazilian Portuguese (Kaiser 2009: 139)

Person	Old Portuguese				Modern European Portuguese				Modern Brazilian Portuguese			
1SG	<i>eu</i>	<i>cant</i>		<i>o</i>	<i>eu</i>	<i>cant</i>		<i>o</i>	<i>eu</i>	<i>cant</i>		<i>o</i>
2SG	<i>tu</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>você</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	-
3SG	<i>el(l)e, el(l)/el(l)a</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	-	<i>ele/ ela</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	-	<i>ele/ ela</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	-
1PL	<i>nos, nós</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>mos</i>	<i>nós</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>mos</i>	<i>nós</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>mos</i>
									<i>a gente</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	-
2PL	<i>vos, vós</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>des</i>	<i>vocês</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>vocês</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>
3PL	<i>el(l)es/ e(l)las</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>eles/ elas</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>eles/ elas</i>	<i>cant</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>

As far as Raeto-Romance is concerned, subject pronouns are obligatory from the earliest written evidence onwards, and these varieties can thus be classified from the beginning as non-null-subject languages. However, this classification is put into question by remarks in descriptive grammars of Raeto-Romance (cf. section 1.3.2 above) indicating the possible

omission of subject pronouns in specific contexts. In order to determine the conditions for subject pronoun omission in Raeto-Romance, we carried out fieldwork covering three varieties of Swiss Romansh (Sursilvan, Vallader and Jauer) and three varieties of Dolomitic Ladin (Gherdëina, Badiot and Marèò).¹⁰ We used an especially conceived questionnaire including more than thirty sentences in two versions. Whereas the first version of the sentence contained the subject pronoun, the second version lacked it. One hundred native speakers of Swiss Romansh and another 57 native speakers of Dolomitic Ladin were asked to compare these two versions and to judge which one they would use in a day-to-day situation. Figure 5 shows the overall results regarding the frequency of postverbal subject pronouns in Swiss Romansh.

Figure 5: Frequency of postverbal subject pronouns in Swiss Romansh (Hack 2007: 28, Hack & Gaglia 2009)

While third person subject pronouns are considered obligatory by our informants, our grammaticality judgement data show that the 1SG as well as the 1 and 2PL subject pronouns are used significantly less frequently and that they can be omitted to a greater or lesser extent depending on the grammatical person. The most significant result pertains to the second person singular subject pronoun, which takes an exceptional position in that only around 20 percent of speakers of Swiss Romansh affirmed that they always use it. In fact, we found that the omission of the second person singular subject pronoun in postverbal position represents the default case in Swiss Romansh and in the Dolomitic Ladin variety Gherdëina. Note that in the latter variety, the second person singular subject clitic is not only omitted, but its form is completely missing in the paradigm.

As far as Dolomitic Ladin is concerned, the varieties under consideration differ with respect to subject pronoun omission. For native speakers of Marèò, the use of postverbal subject clitics is 100% obligatory in all grammatical persons. Native speakers of Badiot, in

¹⁰ This fieldwork was carried out from March to June 2007 within the research project “Evolution and Variation of Expletive and Neuter Pronouns in Romance Languages” (directed by Georg A. Kaiser), Collaborative Research Centre 471 “Variation and Evolution in the Lexicon”, University of Konstanz, funded by the German Research Foundation.

contrast, omit postverbal subject clitics to a greater or lesser extent depending on the grammatical person. According to our informants, first and third person singular as well as third person plural postverbal subject clitics are almost obligatory, whereas second person singular as well as first and second person plural subject clitics may be omitted (cf. fig. 6).

Figure 6: Frequency of postverbal subject clitics in Badiot (cf. Hack & Gaglia 2009: 166)

In conclusion, the use of postverbal subject pronouns in Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin shows similar trends in the third persons as well as in the first and second person plural. The striking difference concerns the usage of the second person singular subject pronoun: While it is generally omitted in Swiss Romansh and in Gherdëina, 75% of the informants in Val Badia considered it obligatory.

From a broader Romance perspective, comparing our results with those of Renzi & Vanelli's (1983) investigation of the use of subject pronouns in thirty Romance varieties, we observe a fundamental difference in the usage of the second person singular postverbal subject pronoun between Swiss Romansh on the one hand and the other Romance varieties on the other.¹¹ While the second person singular subject pronoun is omitted in Swiss Romansh and completely missing in the paradigm in Gherdëina (Hack 2007, Hack & Gaglia 2009, Kaiser & Hack 2010), it is obligatory in all Romance varieties investigated by Renzi & Vanelli, even in varieties which do not dispose of subject pronouns for all grammatical persons, so-called *split-pro-drop languages*. Renzi & Vanelli (1983) put forward the following generalisation (which is confirmed by Heap's 2000 study):

Se una varietà fa un uso costante di almeno un pronome soggetto, questo è quello di 2. persona [singolare, GAK & FMH].¹² (Renzi & Vanelli 1983: 143)

Table 3 shows a comparison of the hierarchies suggested with respect to the frequency of

¹¹ The varieties investigated by Renzi & Vanelli (1983) are mainly Northern Italian dialects.

¹² 'If a variety makes constant use of at least one subject pronoun, then it is the one for second person singular.' [our translation]

subject pronouns in thirty Romance varieties (Renzi & Vanelli 1983), ‘Central Romance’ (Heap 2000) and Swiss Romansh (Hack 2007).

Table 3: Synopsis of the hierarchy of subject pronouns according to Renzi & Vanelli (1983), Heap (2000) and Hack (2007)

	Renzi & Vanelli (1983): 30 Romance varieties	Heap (2000): ‘Central Romance’	Hack (2007): Swiss Romansh
obligatoriness ↑			
1	2SG	2SG	3SG
2	3SG	3PL	3PL
3	3PL	3SG	1PL
4	1PL	2PL	2PL
5	2PL	1SG	1SG
6	1SG	1PL	2SG

Both in Renzi & Vanelli’s (1983) and in Heap’s (2000) hierarchies, the second person singular subject pronoun takes the first position, i.e. the pronoun has always to be used obligatorily and is never omitted. In the case of varieties with partial subject pronoun paradigms, the second person singular subject pronoun is the first one to be present. By contrast, as Hack’s (2007) investigation regarding Swiss Romansh shows, this pronoun is situated just at the opposite end of the hierarchy, that is to say, it is the pronoun to be most frequently omitted. Gherdëina goes even further than Swiss Romansh, in that in this Dolomitic Ladin variety, the second person singular postverbal subject pronoun is not only omitted but does not even exist in the paradigm. Hence, as for the use of the second person singular subject pronoun, we observe a significant difference between Swiss Romansh on the one hand and the remaining Romance varieties on the other.

Hack (2007), Hack & Gaglia (2009) and Kaiser & Hack (2010) attribute the omission of subject pronouns in Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin to four main factors: discourse situation, language contact, syncretism in the verbal paradigm and the genesis of verb desinences in the course of a grammaticalisation process, that is to say, the reanalysis of postverbal subject pronouns as part of verbal inflection. As for the difference regarding the usage of the second person singular postverbal subject pronoun, the decisive factor seems to be the close language contact between Swiss Romansh / Gherdëina and (varieties of) German, i.e. Alemannic and Bavarian, as also these latter Germanic varieties allow the omission of this pronoun in postverbal position (cf. section 2.2 above). Further evidence derives from the fact that Northern Italian dialects, which are not exposed to language contact with varieties of German, do not omit the second person singular postverbal subject pronoun.

3.3 The use of object pronouns in Romance

All Romance languages apart from the Raeto-Romance variety Sursilvan exhibit both clitic and non-clitic object pronouns. As illustrated on the basis of Italian in (23), clitic object pronouns in Romance generally appear in preverbal position where they cliticize onto the finite verb, together with other clitics, if present (23b):

- (23) Italian clitic object pronouns: (Schwarze 1995: 341)
- a. *Maria la=vede.*
Maria her=see-3SG
'Maria sees her.'
 - b. *Maria se=lo=spiega.* (Schwarze 1995: 344)
Maria herself=it=explain-3SG
'Maria explains it to herself.'

It is only in combination with non-finite verbs or in affirmative imperative clauses that object clitics appear or may appear – depending on the language and the context – in enclitic position:¹³

- (24) Postverbal object clitics in Italian: (Schwarze 1995: 341f.)
- a. *È possibile veder=ti?*
is possible see=you
'Is it possible to see you.'
 - b. *Vendendo=li arrivare, mi sono nascosto.*
seeing=them arrive myself be-1SG hidden
'As soon as I saw them coming, I hid.'
 - c. *Rispondi=mi!*
answer=me
'Answer me!'

Like their clitic counterparts, also non-clitic object pronouns generally appear in postverbal position in all Romance languages. Italian differs from most other Romance languages in allowing the object pronoun to appear without a coreferent proclitic pronoun (25). In Spanish, in contrast, the use of a non-clitic object pronoun is ungrammatical when the coreferent clitic pronoun is absent (26):

- (25) Non-clitic object pronouns in Italian: (Schwarze 1995: 334)
- Maria vede lei.*
Maria see-3SG her
'Maria sees her.'
- (26) Non-clitic object pronouns in Spanish: (Fernández Soriano 1999: 1229)
- a. *María lo vi a él.*
María him saw PREP him
'María saw him.'
 - b. **María vi a él.*
María saw PREP him
'María saw him.'

Interestingly, as far as Raeto-Romance is concerned, the fact that Sursilvan exhibits non-clitic object pronouns only – and thus lacks clitic object pronouns – is a quite recent phenomenon. A comparison of the oldest Sursilvan Bible ('Biblia da Cuera'), dating from

¹³ Note that the use of clitic pronouns in postverbal position in imperative clauses is a residual fact of the so-called 'Tobler-Mussafia law' which applied to Old Romance languages and which excluded the presence of clitic elements in clause-initial position. Nowadays, this property only exists in Modern European Portuguese and Galician Portuguese (Hinzelin 2007: 41).

the beginning of the 18th century, with a Modern Sursilvan Bible provides evidence for a linguistic change in this respect. Whereas the Old Bible translation in the ‘Biblia da Cuera’ presents only preverbal object clitics (27a), the very same passages in the Modern Sursilvan Bible contain non-clitic postverbal object pronouns instead (27b):

- (27) Object pronouns in Old Sursilvan (a) vs. Modern Sursilvan (b)
- a. *Ti mi=has clumau* (Biblia da Cuera 1718, 1 Samuel 3,5)
 you me=have-2SG called
 ‘You have called me.’
- b. *Ti has clamau mei.* (Vegl Testament 1967, 1 Samuel 3,5)
 you have-2SG called me

Note that as for Raeto-Romance, this loss of clitic pronouns can only be observed in the Sursilvan variety. The translation of the sentence in (27) in a modern Engadine Bible contains an object clitic appearing in the position before the finite verb:

- (28) Objects pronouns in Modern Vallader:
- Tii m’=hast clamà.* (La Soncha Scrittura, 1 Samuel 3,5)
 you me=have-2SG called
 ‘You have called me.’

This observation strongly supports the assumption according to which the influence of German, which is certainly stronger regarding Sursilvan than regarding the Engadine varieties, is responsible for this grammatical change in Sursilvan.

Interestingly, however, the loss of clitic pronouns is observed not only in Sursilvan, but also in other Romance languages, in particular in Brazilian Portuguese. This can be illustrated again on the basis of a comparison between different Bible translations. Whereas the European Portuguese Bible translation of the passage in (27) contains a proclitic pronoun (29a), the Brazilian Portuguese version uses a postverbal non-clitic object pronoun instead (29b):

- (29) Second person object pronouns in European (a) vs. Brazilian Portuguese (b)
- a. *Não te=chamei* (Biblia Sagrada 1993: 1 Samuel 3,5)
 NEG you=call-PST.1SG
- b. *Eu não chamei você.* (Nova Tradução 2000: 1 Samuel 3,5)
 I NEG call-PST.1SG you

The use of non-clitic pronouns instead of clitics in Brazilian Portuguese is possible in particular with second person pronouns, and the fact that one finds it in Bible translations clearly shows that it is already widely accepted in Brazilian Portuguese. In addition, in colloquial Brazilian Portuguese it is also very common to replace a third person clitic object pronoun by the corresponding non-clitic form. Another option, which is also very frequent, is to leave it unexpressed altogether, i.e. to omit it. Hence, in colloquial Brazilian Portuguese, instead of using the object clitic as in the Bible translation in (30a), it would be more natural to use a non-clitic postverbal object pronoun (30b) or to omit it altogether (30c) (Cyryno, Duarte & Kato 2000):

(30) Third person object pronouns in Brazilian Portuguese

- a. *Mas Eli=o chamou* (Nova Tradução 2000: 1 Samuel 3,16)
 but Eli=him called
- b. *Mas Eli chamou ele*
 but Eli called him
- c. *Mas Eli chamou*
 but Eli called
 'But Eli called him.'

These data clearly illustrate that there is an ongoing change in Brazilian Portuguese which is similar to what we have observed in the recent history of Sursilvan and which consists in the loss of clitic object pronouns. Brazilian Portuguese differs from Sursilvan in that this process is still ongoing, given that object clitics still exist in Brazilian Portuguese at least for some grammatical persons whereas Sursilvan does not exhibit any object clitics any more. Furthermore, another difference between Brazilian Portuguese and Sursilvan pertains to the fact that object pronouns can be omitted in the former which is generally not possible in the latter. In conclusion, given that we observe a similar process in a Romance language which has no contact at all with German or Germanic varieties we must challenge the assumption that the loss of object clitics in Sursilvan is triggered by language contact with German.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed the diachronic emergence of morphosyntactic peculiarities such as the strong V2-order, the special use of subject pronouns and the lack of clitic object pronouns in some Raeto-Romance varieties. We have shown that one obvious explanation for the emergence of these characteristics is the close language contact with German and German varieties, which share these properties. However, the observation that other Romance languages exhibited similar properties in their historical development or have recently begun to show tendencies to develop at least some of these properties has led us to the conclusion that the morphosyntactic properties of Raeto-Romance varieties are not as peculiar as they might seem at first glance. Hence, we claim that the close language contact with German (varieties) should not be considered as the unique cause for these characteristics in Raeto-Romance, but rather as a supporting factor for the development of properties which exist(ed) as preliminaries or tendencies in other Romance languages as well. Furthermore, this paper has shown that the existence of similar or the same properties in neighbouring languages should not be overhastily attributed to language contact. Rather, as our comparative approach has demonstrated, we can only account for the synchronic facts by taking into consideration the diachronic developments as well.

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