

## More than one way out: on the factors influencing the loss of V to C movement

### 1. Setting the problem

In this work I will consider the process of loss of the verb second property in Old Italian<sup>1</sup> (OI) and more generally try to identify possible factors which might have enhanced or slowed down this process. I will start by pointing out an observation made by Wolfe (2015) concerning the amount of inversion found in different V2 languages. He notes that according to Lightfoot (1999: 153) the amount of subject inversion structures which should be the main clue for children to acquire the V2 property should be around 30%. However, Wolfe notices that the distribution of subject inversion is not uniform even across languages that are unequivocally considered as V2 languages. According to Westergaard (2009:67), the percentage is much lower in Norwegian and amounts to 13,6%, while Yang (2000:114) states that the percentage for modern Dutch is 23%. I propose here that this variability shows that inversion cannot be the only factor triggering V2. In the literature the other major property related to V2 is the asymmetry between main and embedded clauses. However, since in OI the verb obligatorily moves at least to T, this difference is not as clear as it can be in OV languages like German and Dutch or even in VO languages like the mainland Scandinavian languages, where the inflected verb does not raise to T in embedded clauses. OI would thus be a language similar to Icelandic, which is VO and has V (at least) to T in embedded clauses. Nevertheless, Icelandic does not show any signs of losing V2, while OI did. Furthermore, Wolfe (2015) notes that in several Old Italian dialects like Old Sicilian and Old Venetian there is clear asymmetry between main and embedded clauses in terms of percentages of inversion: for instance Wolfe shows that in Old Sicilian main clauses there is over 56% of inversion structures, while embedded clauses have a much more reduced set of non subject initial clauses (about 20%). Both factors are thus rather robust. Nevertheless, Old Sicilian lost V2. In Poletto (2015) I proposed that a further factor stabilizing or destabilizing V2 is the fact that in OI the V2-like property is not only found in the CP, but also in the vP and in the DP/PP phases. Examples like those in (1) are cases of scrambling, since OI was clearly already a VO language with postnominal adjectives and arguments of the N:

- (1) a. ed ha'mi la cosa molte volte ridetta  
and has-to-me the thing many times retold (BG, Tratt., p.131)  
'and he told me this several times'
- b. Di dolor madre antica  
of sorrow mother ancient  
'The ancient mother of sorrow' (VN 30)
- c. Ballata, i' voi che tu ritrovi Amore, / e con lui vade a madonna davante...  
Ballad I want.1sg that you find.2sg love and with him go.2sg to my-lady before  
'Ballad, I want that you find Love and with him go before my lady...' (VN 46)

On the account that phases are built in a parallel fashion when there is no evidence of the opposite, we expect scrambling in the vP and DP/PP to have rendered to V2-like property of the CP more stable. It is actually a fact that when the V2 system collapses around 1350, the same is true of vP and DP/PP scrambling, which speaks for a connection between these phenomena (see Poletto 2006 on this). On the other hand, it is also true that other V2 languages like German or Dutch do not display any DP scrambling in the way OI did (cf. 1b), which means that their V2 system remains stable on the basis of different evidence. The claim I make here is therefore that there is no single factor triggering V2, but each linguistic system can contain different hints that the left periphery of the clause attracts the inflected verb. Clues for V2 coming from other phases are most probably weaker with respect to clues coming from the CP, and as such, should only count in addition to other factors. In section 2 I will show that the OI system has changed due to a

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<sup>1</sup> In this article I will adopt Renzi and Salvi's (2010) terminology and refer to Old Italian meaning the Old Florentine variety written from the 1209 to 1315, the point in time where we start seeing considerable changes in the sentence structure. Since Wolfe (2015) has shown that not all Romance languages and not all the stages had the same system, I will restrict my claims to the OI system and do not extend it to any other Romance language or variety.

constellation of factors, so that it is impossible to pin down exactly which of these changes is to origin of the loss of V2. In section 3 I will discuss the role of other left peripheral phenomena: it will become clear that the process of change might be triggered by different factors in different languages but one single factor does not seem to be sufficient to destabilize the system, there must be more than one. In other words, there must a given critical mass to tip over the balance of the system, although the critical mass can be provided by different factors. I will also consider an additional factor which has not been discussed so far for Romance, but which has been clearly identified for the weakening of the V2 system in Cimbrian, a German dialect spoken in the Eastern Alps at the borders between the two regions of Veneto and Trentino and clearly in a language contact situation with the neighboring Northern Italian varieties. Section 4 applies the observations found with other languages to Old Italian and shows that the type of complementizers is also to be taken into account as one of the possible factors in the constellation of properties which lead to the loss of V2 in this language.

## 2. V2 types

As Rizzi's seminal work on the split left periphery of Romance came out in (1997), several scholars immediately saw the problem such a theory poses for the standard explanation of the V2 property traditionally associated to the Germanic languages. Several authors proposed that Germanic does not have a split left periphery, so the distinction between the two language groups would be a parametric one. Such a line of thought could be integrated into the "scattering" approach proposed by Giorgi and Pianesi (1997) according to which a head can contain one or more ordered features, which can be scattered across different heads or compressed into a single one. V2 languages would thus be languages with a compressed CP and non V2 languages would have a "scattered" CP in the terms of Rizzi (1997). However, this type of approach is still problematic for a language like OI, where the left periphery looks like the one of modern Italian in the sense that clitic left dislocation is recursive, but immediately below the TopicPs, one observes the features typical of a V2 language, like a) subject inversion b) main versus embedded asymmetry with respect to the position of object clitics (known in traditional philology as the Tobler Mussafia law and to the licensing of null subjects, which are only possible in main clauses but not in embedded ones, c) presence of CP expletives similar to German *es* (in OI the form is *sì* 'so').

In order to explain this type of "mixed" languages I proposed in (2002) that there are at least two types of V2 languages, one typically found in continental Germanic (and Rhaetoromance declarative clauses), where the target of the V2 property is ForceP and one represented by OI (and Rhaetoromance interrogatives) where the target of the V2 property is FocusP, which leaves the possibility open to have recursive Topics on top of a "normal" V2 structure. The two possibilities are represented in (2):

(2) [HT [Scene setting [ **Force** V<sub>infl</sub> [LD ... [LD [**Focus** V<sub>infl</sub> [WH [FinP [TP]]]]]]]]]]

Recently, Wolfe (2015) has taken up the idea of "low" and "high" V2 languages developing a typology of Old Romance, where later stages of Old French and Old Spanish are of the high type, i.e. V2 targets ForceP and earlier stages are of the low type and target FinP (and not Focus as in my original proposal). In this work I will not discuss whether the low type targets Focus or FinP (see Ledgeway (2008) for a discussion concerning FinP), since there are good arguments for both possibilities, which I only briefly list here below. In favor on the FinP idea I see two arguments: a) the fact that V2 is independent from Focus requirements, which are clear in some examples, but not in others, so that it is virtually impossible to prove that each case of V2 in OI is triggered by some sort of Focus; b) the fact that the two systems Force-V2 and Fin-V2 are perfectly symmetric, since they target the two "sides" of the CP layer. This would also render the system symmetric with respect to the position of complementizers, which are generally considered to be located in Fin or in Force (see Belletti 2008, Poletto 2001 and Ledgeway 2008 and his subsequent work on this.)

In favor of FocusP as the locus of low V2, there are following arguments a) the fact that this analysis explains the Tobler Mussafia law and Null Topics by assuming that you either have verb movement to Focus, yielding proclisis, or to Topic, yielding enclisis and licensing by Spec-head agreement different types of Null topics like continuation topic and shift topic that are not possible any longer in modern Italian (as originally proposed by Benincà (2006). b) The fact that you can both have moved and basis generated

topics, since they do not interfere with Focus, while FinP constitutes a bottle neck for all moved elements, which would block moved topics. (see Wolfe 2015 for a discussion on this problem) c) The fact that the expletive element on OI is clearly a Focus marker like *sì* 'so' (but see (2008) for an alternative analysis of OI *sì*).

Since both analyses present some advantages and disadvantages, I will not decide between the two, but for the sake of the argumentation I will go on assuming that FocusP is the target of verb movement as I did in Poletto (2014), although it might well be the case that the FinP hypothesis will turn out to be the correct one.

In order to distinguish between the two systems, I will briefly compare their properties:

a) high V2 can only have a V3 structure, not a V\*, since the only elements which can be located in front of Force are Hanging Topics (HT) and scene setting adverbs. This is not the case for low V2, which can have several Topics of all types located in front of the V2 structure.

b) high V2 is probably more prone to have an asymmetric system, since a high as well as a low complementizer can block V2, while a low V2 system can survive if there is a high complementizer in Force° and is only blocked if the complementizer is merged in Fin°.

c) The type of expletive also appears to be different, since low V2 systems have adverbial elements like (*si*, or etc.) while high V2 systems have pronominal expletives.

d) Only low V2 has Tobler Mussafia effects, since in high systems the verb always raises higher than Focus and Topic, so we expect to have only proclisis on the assumption that the verb moves directly to Force.

d) As shown by Wolfe (2015), low V2 languages have more contexts in which V1 is possible, since there are more types of null topics that can be found in front of the inflected verb, while this is not the case for high V2 languages, where the only V1 cases are those where null HT or scene setting elements can be licensed.

## 2.1 The loss of V2: from Old to Renaissance Italian

In order to establish how the loss of the V2-system of OI develops, I have taken a text from the beginning of the XVI century, and systematically investigated the first ten chapters of Machiavelli's "Il principe". The text was written in 1513, as the author himself states in the preface, with no literary intentions, but to convey notions of governance and politics to the dominant class. This is particularly important in this period, where authors are prone to mimic the language written in the medieval period, which still had a V2 system.

The first property always involved in the loss of V2 is the one already proposed by Roberts (1993) in his work on Old French: he notices that there is an increase in subject initial clauses, and a parallel decrease of inverted subjects. This would thus be the first property to check in the text under consideration.

As for Renaissance Italian (RI), it is hard to tell whether the number of subject initial clauses increases, as OI preverbal subjects were already rather restricted, since OI was pro drop in main clauses and allowed for a consistent number of V1 constructions, both at the beginning of a narration (the type of narrative operator also found in high V2 languages), in cases of coordination with *e* 'and' and in cases of null shift topics, as illustrated in (3):<sup>2</sup>

- (3) E [la gente d'oltremare] i vuol gran male [a' Romani] j perché Øi fur già segnoreggiati  
and the people of overseas wants great evil to.the Romans since were already dominated  
da loro, e Øj fecero loro dura e aspra signoria  
by them and did.3pl them hard and harsh rule  
'The people from overseas hates the Romans because they have been ruled by those, and the  
Romans ruled in a hard and harsh way' (VeV 100)

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<sup>2</sup> In (3) the first subject is expressed but has the flavor of a topic-like subject, while the second and the third are null subjects, the second is coindexed with the subject of the main clause and the third with the PP of the main clause, which would be impossible in modern Italian.

In the case of RI, since the language is pro drop in main clauses, but also in the majority of embedded clauses (see below for a brief discussion of subject clitics), it is difficult to make a count of pre or postverbal subjects, as the subject is often not visible:

- (4) non \_\_ho trovato intra la mia suppellettile cosa, quale *io* abbia più cara o \_\_tanto esístimi quanto la  
 not have found among the my various thing, which I have more dear or much estimate as the  
 cognizione delle azioni delli uomini grandi  
 knowledge of-the action of.the men great  
 'I have not found among my property anything that I have more dear or that I estimate so much as  
 the knowledge of great men"

In the example above we find that the main clause has no overt subject and that in the two following relative clauses, the first has an overt subject pronoun, while the second does not. This means that the system of OI, where pro drop depends on verb raising to the C domain is not in place anymore, which is in turn a first indication that the V2 system is no longer active in RI. However, since we do not know whether pro is pre or postverbal, and given the pervasive distribution of pro with respect to overt subjects, a count the number of subject initial clauses might prove unreliable, since the frequency rates might have changed due to the change in the pro drop system.

As it is not possible to provide a reliable count of the rising of subject initial clauses, I have tried to look at the converse property noted by Roberts, i.e. the decrease of subject inversion structure. Looking at inversion, it is still possible to show that the same observation made by Roberts (1993) for the loss of V2 in Old French is valid for OI. An investigation of the first ten chapters of Machiavelli's *Il principe* in Poletto (2006) shows that the cases of subject inversion of the German type (i.e. cases where the subject occurs after the auxiliary but before the past participle) are very rare: in the whole sample of ten chapters I only found 3 cases of inversion with an inflected auxiliary and eight with a modal verb (six with *potere* 'can' and two with *dovere* 'must'). Here are four of the 11 examples I found:<sup>3</sup>

- (5) a. Spenti adunque questi capi, e ridotti i partigiani loro  
 blown off then these bosses and reduced the partisan their  
 amici suoi, aveva **il duca** gittato assai buoni fondamenti  
 friends his had the duke thrown very good foundations  
 alla potenza sua (p. 221)  
 to-the power his
- b. Né le può **il re** torre loro senza suo pericolo (p. 201)  
 neither them can the king take without his danger  
 'Neither can the king take it without being in danger'
- c. Consideri ora uno con quanta poca difficoltà poteva il re tenere in Italia (p. 195)  
 Consider now one with how little difficulty could the kind hold in Italy..  
 'Let us now consider with how little difficulty the king could keep Italy'.
- d. Non poteva Teseo dimostrare la sua virtù se non trovava gli Ateniesi dispersi (p. 209)  
 'Not could Teseo show the his virtue if not found the Athenians missing '  
 'Teseo could not show his skills if he did not find the missing Athenians'

Furthermore, subject inversion is often found after the verb in first position, after elements which do not count as first position (like negation), after elements which might be located in a C° head, like the negative conjunction 'né' in (4b) or the embedded clause selected by the verb consider in (4c), i.e. in contexts which are not typically V2-contexts. This might indicate that even the test of Germanic inversion is not as reliable as it is generally considered to be in order to assess V2 (but see the debate on inversion between Kaiser 2002, Rinke 2007, Sitaridou 2005 and Wolfe 2015).

<sup>3</sup> The text displays a fairly high number of inversion with infinitival or gerund auxiliaries, a structure known as Aux to C and still possible in modern Italian and not possible in typical V2 languages like German. Therefore, I did not count this as evidence in favor of the V2 property.

In this respect, there is one further observations that can help us to determine whether RI was still a V2 language or not: the fact that the type of elements found in the left periphery of the clause change in the sense that some types of elements are not found in first position any longer. While OI admits all sorts of elements as the XP creating V2, this is not the case for RI. In addition to topics and scene setting adverbs, which do not count for V2 even in OI, the set of adverbs found in first position in Renaissance Italian and which are not possible in modern Italian are mostly low adverbs like *sempre* 'always' and *mai* 'never', but very rarely non-wh direct or indirect objects, adverbs like *anche* 'also', quantifiers, and vP preposing.<sup>4</sup> I list here some of the examples I found with *sempre*, *mai* and other lower adverbs:

- (6) a. Come di sopra si disse  
 as above one said.3sg (p.213)  
 'As mentioned above'
- b. Sempre si trova dei malcontenti  
 always one finds some grudging (p.202)  
 'You can always find someone who is dissatisfied'
- c. Mai si troverà ingannato da lui  
 never himself will-find.3sg cheated by him (p.243)  
 'He will never be cheated by him'

RI still displays some cases of preposed objects without a clitic copy, which are however rather rare in the sample:

- (7) i gentiluomini romani si aveva guadagnati, e nel collegio aveva grandissima parte (p.224)  
 the noble men roman to-him had gained, and in.the group had greatest part  
 'He was trusted by the noble Romans and was influential in the group'

One wonders what the observation that cases of preposed object without a clitic copy, typical of the old V2 system is rare, though possible in RI it might mean from the theoretical point of view. Since RI often copies the style of the "classic" authors, the so-called fathers of the language, I do not think that the existence of these rare cases can be viewed as robust evidence in one sense or in the other.

Much clearer evidence that the OI V2-system is at best destabilized in RI is the fact that in the sample there is not a single case of *si* expletive, which is extremely frequent in OI, as the example in (8) shows, but totally absent in Machiavelli's text:

- (8) E quando fur le genti ammonite di ben fare dall'una parte  
 and when were.3pl the people warned of well do.inf from.the one side  
 e dall'altra, che dovesser esser prodi e valentri,  
 and from.the other that should.3pl be.inf brave and strong  
 sì cominciò una battaglia sì pericolosa e grande...  
 refl began.3sg a battle so perilous and great  
 'And when the people of both sides had been warned to be brave and strong, a  
 perilous and great battle began' (VeV 86)

A change is clearly evident also in the pro drop system, which should coherently require subject pronouns in embedded clauses but not in main clauses, since pro drop is licensed by V to C movement. On the contrary, there are clear cases of reduced overt pronominal forms occurring both in embedded but more

<sup>4</sup> As I noted in Poletto (2006), relative clauses deserve particular notice since they display movement to the left periphery lower than the relativizer in the vast majority of the cases:

Quelli che di sua qualità gli avevano invidia  
 the ones that of his qualities to-him had.3pl envy (p.211)

Cases where there is no preposing in front of the inflected verb in relative clauses are rather rare, though they exist. I will leave this problem aside, since I do not think these are regular cases of V2 and deserve

crucially in main clauses, where they are unexpected, given the OI V2 system. The following examples illustrate the case in point:

- (9) a. I principati sono o ereditari ... o e' sono nuovi. (p. 176/7)  
The kingdoms are either hereditary, or they are new
- b. E fatto un primo errore e' fu costretto a seguirne (p. 196)  
And done a first mistake, he was forced to go on
- c. A sì alto esempio io voglio aggiungere un esempio minore (p. 211)  
To such high example I want to add an example minor

The fact that the third person plural and singular have the same form, as shown by (9a) and (9b) could be seen as evidence that the system has already developed subject clitics which are the forerunners of modern Florentine subject clitics. In any case, (9c) clearly shows that it is possible to have subject pronouns in main clauses without focalization of the subject. Notice furthermore that (9c) is a case of verb third in which the first element, the PP introduced by *a*, is focussed, a case which is not expected given a V2 system.

We can conclude that RI was not a stable V2 system on the basis of a) the fact that Germanic subject inversion is very rare b) the type of XPs found in first position is more restricted than in OI c) the fact that the CP expletive *sì* has completely disappeared, d) the pro drop system does not display any asymmetry related to V2 e) the fact that V3 with Focus in the first position followed by a non focussed subject is allowed.

Even if Machiavelli's text shows that RI was not a coherent V2 language any longer, it still does not provide any hint of what the triggering factor might have been. In order to solve this problem, I will now turn to other languages which are losing or have lost V2.

## 2. 2 What subject inversion tells us

In the previous section I have shown that RI has strongly reduced subject inversion, has a more restricted set of first position elements with respect to OI and has no asymmetric pro drop any longer. At this point one might think that any of these three properties is the decisive factor triggering the loss of V2. A first indication that subject inversion might be the relevant factor is provided by comparing two Rhaetoromance varieties, Badiotto and Marebbano.

These two dialects are spoken at the different extremes of the Badia Valley in the province of Bozen and are both in contact with the German dialects of the neighboring valley Pustertal and with standard German, at least at the level of secondary school education. The variety of S. Leonardo di Badia is losing V2 and presents the following situation: the older generation (over 60 years of age) requires subject inversion of both nominal and pronominal clitic subjects in main clauses. For these speakers, cases like (10a) are possible along with (10b), an SVO structure and (10c), where the subject is right dislocated.

- (10) a. \*Gonoot mangia Giani n pom S. Leonardo  
Often eats John an apple
- b. Gonoot mang-el n pom  
Often eats-he an apple
- c. Gonoot mang-el n pom, Giani  
Often eats-he an apple, John

The younger generation (under forty) has obligatory inversion with subject clitics but avoids subject inversion when the subject is a nominal expression, i.e. they judge a sentence like (10a) as ungrammatical.

It is reported (Daria Valentin, p.c.) that teenagers are losing inversion altogether and do not have inverted subject clitics at all, so for them also (10c) is not possible.<sup>5</sup>

The same pattern is found in interrogatives, where only subject clitics can invert:

- (11) a. \*Ci a pa Giani fat? S. Leonardo  
What has John done?  
b. Ci al pa fat?  
What has- he done?

In S. Leonardo, there is evidence of a parallel advancement of V3 constructions, which are the proof that the system is changing at least towards a low type of V2. As I reported in Poletto (2000), there is a distinction between declarative and interrogative clauses: in declaratives the type of V3 found is the one with hanging topics as it is the case of German, while in interrogative, the type of V3 is similar to the general modern Romance recursive left dislocation and should be properly called V\* and not only V3.<sup>6</sup>

- (12) a. Duman che mangia pa chilò?  
Tomorrow who eats interrogative marker here?  
b. \*Duman, Giani mangia chilò  
Tomorrow John eats. here

If we compare the variety of S. Leonardo di Badia with the one of San Vigilio di Marebbe, another dialect with approximately the same contact situation with Italian on one side and German (dialects) on the other, we see that in San Vigilio inversion remains stable and there is no indication of loss or of advancement of V3 constructions. In a parallel way, the dialect of San Vigilio di Marebbe still has a full pattern on subject inversion:

- (13) a. Sagn maia Giani n meil S. Vigilio di Marebbe  
Now eats John an apple  
b. Sagn maie-l n meil  
Now eats-he an apple  
c. Ci a-l pa Giani fat S. Vigilio  
What has-he pa John done

This seems to indicate that, as originally proposed by Roberts (1993), the loss of V2 goes hand in hand with the loss of subject inversion, and that inversion of nominal subjects is different from subject clitic inversion, a well known fact since French and Northern Italian dialects allow for subject clitic inversion but not for German inversion of a nominal expression. and also found in more recent work (see Wolfe 2015 and work quoted therein).

### 3.3 Cimbrian

However, if we consider Cimbrian, a German variety spoken in the Italian Alps, we find precisely the opposite, i.e. the test of subject inversion is not the decisive factor. As originally noted by Bosco (1999), Poletto-Tomaselli (2002), and Bidese (2008) Cimbrian has never had nominal inversion throughout its history. The first attestation are those of the Catechism at the beginning of the XVII century, where only pronouns are inverted:

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<sup>5</sup> I abstract here from different agreement patterns and from vP internal subjects. The positioning of subjects in S. Leonardo is much more complex than what is presented here.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion of V3 patterns in S. Leonardo with scene setting adverbs, clitic left dislocation and focussed elements, see Poletto (2000) and Poletto (2002).

- (14) a. und darome saint za zbelf articheln. (Kat. 1602: 247, Bidese (2008): 34)  
and therefore are they twelve articles

Bidese further notes that in the first Catechism, the only violation of the V2 linear restriction, consists in the addition of a subject pronoun to sentences where the original Latin text had none (Latin being a null subject language, lexical subject pronouns are restricted to cases of Focus or Topic). In these cases the position of the subject pronoun inserted in the Cimbrian translation is located to the left of the inflected verb and not to the right, as exemplified in the following example:

- (15) Im funften iz schaffet. (Kat 1602: 529, in Bidese (2008): 42e)  
in the fifth it orders...

The same type of violation is found in Old High German and Old English texts and has been studied by van Kemenade (1987), Tomaselli (1995), Fuss (2003), (2008) among others.

- (16) a. Dhaz ir chichundida. (Isidors contra Iudaeos)  
this he announces  
b. erino portun ih firchnussu. (Isidors contra Iudaeos)  
iron portals I destroy

I conclude following Bidese (2008) that the system of V2 in the XVII century is rather stable although Cimbrian never had nominal inversion. In present day Luserna Cimbrian, the only type of subject inversion is with pronominal clitics, i.e. the inversion pattern has not changed, and nominal subjects yield V3 cases:

- (17) a. \*Gestarn hatt dar Giani gisekk in has.  
yesterday has the G. seen a hare  
b. Gestarn dar Giani hat gisekk in has.  
yesterday the G. has seen a hare  
(18) a. Gestarn hatt-ar gisekk in has.  
yesterday has-he seen a hare  
b. \*Gestarn ar hatt gisekk in has.  
yesterday he has seen a hare

This shows that in modern Cimbrian, the V2 constraint is more relaxed, and depending on the dialect, it has virtually disappeared (as it is the case in the residual variety of Giazza) or not (as it is the case in Luserna). In Grewendorf and Poletto (2011) it has been shown that Luserna Cimbrian is still a fully fledged V2 language, since there is still pronominal inversion, and a clear asymmetry with a class of embedded clauses with respect to a) the position of clitic pronouns b) the position of the sentential negative marker c) the position of separable prefixes d) the presence of the CP expletive 's similar to standard German *es*. This means that nominal inversion is clearly not a necessary factor to maintain the V2 system in a stable phase, since Cimbrian has never had nominal inversion, but still had a stable V2 system and is losing the V2 property only now.

If nominal inversion is not the crucial factor destabilizing V2, then the most straightforward hypothesis is that it is the possibility of V3. Actually, Padovan and Tomaselli (2013) propose exactly that that path towards the loss of V2 in Cimbrian goes through the reanalysis of V3 constructions which start out as Hanging Topics followed by a V2 structure and end up being reanalyzed as TPs with a left dislocation in front of them. If we apply this idea to OI, this would mean that the first factor destabilizing V2 would have been the fact that OI allowed for a complex left periphery in front of the V2 structure. In other words, the reason why OI lost V2 would be the fact that it was a low V2 language. However, this is not what one expects given Wolfe's (2015) observation that Old French and Old Spanish moved from a low V2 system to a high V2 system. If the reason why V2 was lost is the massive presence of V3 we would rather expect that a high V2 system turns first into a low V2 system as a first step towards the loss of V2 and not the opposite.



### 3.1 Plodarisch

If we consider another German dialect spoken in the linguistic island of Sappada, Plodn at the border between Veneto and Friul, namely Sappadino/Plodarisch, we see that the hypothesis that the loss of V3 goes through the reanalysis of V3 constructions cannot be the whole story. Plodarisch has recursive left dislocation and allows freely as many elements in front of the inflected verb:

- (19) a. Geischer der Hons hot me Bolde s Holz gehokt  
Yesterday the John has in.the wood the wood hacked  
Yesterday John hacked wood in the wood
- b. Geischer me Bolde der Tate hot-ar si werlezt  
Yesterday in-the wood the father has-he himself injured  
Yesterday father injured himself in the wood

On the other hand, Germanic subject inversion is well attested with both pronouns and nominal expressions:

- (20) V2: Hainte tuit de Mame de kinder ins Pette  
Today does the mother the children to bed  
Today mother takes the children to bed

Furthermore, subject inversion is obligatory with subject pronouns, either tonic (as in 21a,b) or clitic (as in 21c,d):

- (21) a. Hainte tuit er Aalan werkaafn  
Today does he eggs sell  
Today he sells eggs
- b. \*Hainte er werkaaf d Aalan  
Today he does eggs sell  
Today he sells eggs
- c. Geischer hot-ar d Aalan werkaaft  
Yesterday has-he the eggs sold  
Yesterday he sold eggs
- d. \*Geischer er hot d Aalan werkaaft  
Yesterday he has the eggs sold  
Yesterday he sold eggs

Furthermore, Plodarisch has the typical features of a V2 language like German, since it has the CP expletive *es*:

- (22) S is Zait beder Haam ze keren  
It is time back home to come  
It is time to come back home

We can conclude that the possibility of recursive Topics is not always the decisive factor in the process of loss of V2 since Plodarisch has a recursive TopicP but still presents the typical features of a V2 language.

### 3.4 The complex picture

At the end of our tour among Rhaetoromance and German dialects, we are left with the following conclusion: apparently there is not a single factor which always gets first destabilized and causes the crash

of the V2 system in all V2 varieties. In Rhaetoromance it seems to be nominal subject inversion, in Cimbrian the presence of V3 structure, which however has no influence on the V2 system in Plodarisch. Actually, such a complex situation is precisely what is expected if V2 is made up by a constellation of different factors: the architecture of the V2 systems can start to weaken in different places and each language will thus have its own path towards a stable non V2 systems according to the other features it has (for instance VO versus OV, V to T, type of pro drop system, type of pronominal system., etc). In what follows I would like to add another factor which might play a role in the loss of V2, namely the complementizer system. As shown in Grewendorf and Poletto (2011), Cimbrian has two types of complementizers, the first type, the so called *az*-type, is typical of Germanic: it is a low complementizer and blocks embedded V2, with the consequence that the verb remains lower than the negative marker, than separable prefixes and clitics occur on the complementizer. The second type, the *ke*-type, is a very high subordinator that does not block embedded V2, with the consequence that in embedded clauses introduced by this type of complementizer the verb occurs higher than the negative marker and separable prefixes, clitics are located on the verb, and the CP expletive 's is possible in embedded clauses. Bidese Padovan & Tomaselli (2013) consider the usage of *ke* as a language contact phenomenon. They note that syntactic borrowing is rare, though possible and that: "Even functional words like *ke* are inserted in their "bare" form into the replica language, discarding their original feature array; differently from lexical words they do not assume – at least initially – the morphosyntactic feature characterization of the target language". Interestingly, the complementizer *ke* assumes in Cimbrian the typical features of a high subordinator which allows for embedded V2, but there are other complementizers that are of Germanic origin and display the same high subordinator status. Grewendorf & Poletto (2011:310) provide a list of high subordinator which includes not only *ke* but also *benn*, 'when'; *bia*, 'as'; *umbròmm* 'because'; *bia nã*, 'why'. This means that the complementizer borrowed from the neighboring Italian varieties has been inserted in the class of complementizers that select a V2 structure in the embedded clause. As Bidese, Padova & Tomaselli notice, *ke* selects for indicative complement clauses, i.e. it is one of the most frequent types of complementizers. Furthermore, complex forms created by a Romance preposition and a Germanic low complementizer like *prima az*, *dopo az*, *fin az* are being substituted by *prima ke*, *dopo ke* and *fin ke*, i.e. with the high subordinator. The same type of phenomenon is found in relative clauses as Bidese Padovan and Tomaselli (2012) discuss: relative clauses can have two complementizers, one is the low-type autoctonous *bo*, found only in restrictive relatives, the other the Romance *ke*, found in both restrictive and appositive relatives. The general picture we derive from the complex system of Cimbrian is that the high subordinator type is intruding more and more into embedded clauses which had a low complementizer, thus giving rise to a loss of the evidence of the asymmetry between main and embedded clauses. In other words, one of the factors conditioning the progressive loss of V2 can be hypothesized to be the loss of the asymmetry between main and embedded clauses, signaled in Cimbrian by the split complementizer system in all types of embedded clauses. We can conclude that the fact that the borrowing of *ke* has been reanalyzed as a high subordinator and not as a low complementizer is further weakening the architecture of the V2 system which is already weakened by a) the fact that Germanic nominal inversion was never possible in Cimbrian b) the fact that V3 constructions are possible.

#### 4. Old Italian

The fact that Cimbrian is losing the V2 property also by virtue of a class of high subordinators can shed new light on a series of phenomena already known in OI but which have never been tied to V2 directly. In OI two complementizers are also clearly visible in structures like the following investigated by Paoli (2007) Ledgeway (2008) and Wanner (1995):

- (23) Poi a lui promectere se fe' **che**,                    poi ch' elli averia  
       'then to him promise.inf rfl make.pt.3s that after that he have.cond.3s  
       Isocta al re Marco menata,                    **ch'** esso tornaria a lui in  
       Isocta to-the king Marco take.ppl that he return.cond.3s to him in  
       sorlois, perche' esso volea lui e Lancelocto insieme avere  
       Sorlois because he want.imp he and Lancelocto together have.inf'

And then he got promised that after having escorted Isocta to king Marco, he would return to him in Sorlois because he wanted to have together him and Lancelocto  
(Con, 21:155, 13th-c. Tuscan, OVI)

Double complementizers distribute according to the studies mentioned above in the following way: a) they never occur adjacent to one another, but only when there is an XP in between b) this XP is generally a topic-like element, often it is a temporal or hypothetical clause or another adverbial embedded clause, or a DP/PP topic, generally the subject.

According to Paoli (2007), the analysis of medieval Romance double complementizers is the following: the first complementizer is the standard complementizer of all embedded finite clauses sitting in Force°, the second is the realization of the Focus or Topic head whose specifier is lexically filled.

(24) [ForceP [Force° *che* [TopP. . . [Top° *che* [FinP [Fin° . . .

Ledgeway (2008:50) analyses the double complementizer system of old High Southern Italian (HSID) dialects in comparison with Low Southern Italian dialects and assumes that in HSID both complementizers *ca* and *che* are merged in the Fin° position, *ca* selecting an indicative and *che* selecting a subjunctive. In these cases Force is either empty or filled by a null element:

(25) a. [Force (∅) [Finiteness CA [IP Vindic.]]]  
b. [Force (∅) [Finiteness CHE [IP Vcong.]]]

He further assumes that when the TopicP or FocusP are activated by the presence of an XP in their specifier, the complementizer must raise to Force and on its way it legitimates the Topic and Focus heads and assumes invariably the form *che*.

(26) a. [Force *che* [Finiteness ~~ca~~ [IP Vindic.]]]  
b. [Force *che* [Finiteness ~~che~~ [IP Vcong.]]]

According to Ledgeway, the cases of double complementizers found in all Old Italian dialects noted by Wanner (1995) are thus be cases of spell out of traces: the lower complementizer is the realization of the lower copy of the complementizer that raises from Fin° to the Topic field to Force: if the trace is realized in Fin°, the form is *ca*, if the trace is the one in Focus or Topic, its form is *che*. This trace is realized in Foc° or Top° because it taken on the role of a topic particle.

Legdeway's work on Southern Italian convincingly shows that the complementizer moves and changes its form when it raises higher than Fin. Notice that Southern Italian dialects are rather similar to Cimbrian, which has exactly the same distinction between a modal complementizer and an indicative complementizer. However, in Cimbrian, the low one is the modal one, while in Southern Italian the low one is the indicative one. One might also hypothesize that the features in Fin can be realized through verb movement, as I did in Poletto (2001), which would give rise to embedded low V2. This could be the case of the OI system, which has no morphological distinction between the lower and the higher complementizer as there is in the Southern Italian dialects, but which has cases of realization of the trace in Topic°, as Paoli has shown. Interestingly, OI has cases of embedded subject inversion of Germanic type, this is found also in contexts which are not complement clauses under bridge verbs, as the following examples show:

(27) a. E quando fur **le genti** ammonite di ben fare dall'una parte  
and when were.3pl the people warned of well do.inf from.the one side  
e dall'altra, che dovesser esser prodi e valentri,  
and from.the other that should.3pl be.inf brave and strong  
sì cominciò una battaglia sì pericolosa e grande...  
refl began.3sg a battle so perilous and great  
'And when the people of both sides had been warned to be brave and strong, a  
perilous and great battle began' (VeV 86)

- b. Et qui cade una quistione, ché potrebbe **alcuno** dicere...  
 and here falls a question since could.3sg one say.inf  
 'And here a question arises, since one could say...' (Rettorica 22)

Further evidence that embedded V2 is possible in OI is the fact that the CP expletive *sì* is also found in embedded clauses:

- (28) a. che 'l ferro, se l'aopere, *sì* si logora, se no l'aopere la ruginè il consuma  
 as the iron if it use.2sg so refl wears.out. if not it use.2sg the rust it destroys  
 'as the iron wears out if you use it, if you do not, it gets rusty' (FSI 146)
- b. Leggesi del re Currado, del padre di Curradino, che, quando era garzone,  
 reads-one of.the king C. of.the father of C., that, when was boy  
*sì* avea in compagnia dodici garzoni di sua etade  
 so had.3sg in company twelve boys of his age  
 'One reads that the King Currado, the father of Curradino, had twelve boys with him,  
 when he was a boy' (Nov. XLVIII, 232)

This suggests that OI had a system with two classes of complementizers, one embedding a V2 structure, the other which does not. This is similar to the situation we have found in Cimbrian, where the complementizer system is split into two classes, one which maintains the typical asymmetry between main and embedded clauses, the other which does not. Interestingly, the phenomenon of double complementizers is not found in Machiavelli's text, where on the contrary we find numerous examples of complementizer deletion in relative and complement clauses, a phenomenon which has already been noted in the literature, which further confirms that the loss of V2 also passes through a change in the properties of the complementizer system.

## 5. Concluding remarks

In this first part of this work I have considered various V2 languages which have different properties and shown that we cannot identify a single diachronic path towards the loss of the V2 property, but that the architecture of V2 can be weakened starting from various correlates: in some languages the loss of subject inversion seems to be a crucial factor undermining the V2 system, in others cases of V3 seem to be the relevant trigger. In the second part I have considered a factor which has been given less relevance in studies on the loss of V2, namely the type of complementizer system. I have proposed that both in Cimbrian and in OI the loss of V2 is, among other factors, also favored by the presence of a double complementizer system which allows the presence of extended embedded V2 structure.

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