Article

Fortune and Decay of Lexical Expletives in Germanic and Romance along the Adige River

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Abstract: Lexical expletives can be divided into two main classes: (i) CP expletives required by the V2 constraint and, hence, by the necessity to lexicalize the position on the left of the inflected verb and (ii) TP expletives connected with the negative value of the pro-drop parameter and, therefore, with the necessity to lexicalize the 'structural' subject position, specifically, [Spec, TP]. The latter can, in turn, be divided into two subclasses: impersonal subjects and positional expletives, which occur with postverbal/low subjects and extraposed subject clauses. While CP expletives only appear in Germanic varieties that maintain V2, the subclassification of TP expletives yields interesting results when comparing Cimbrian and the Venetan varieties in Nord-East Italy, where the gradual disappearance of the positional expletive in free inversion structures and the residual maintenance of impersonal subjects from North to South along the Adige River confirms the distinction between two classes of subject expletives; furthermore, the resilience of impersonal subjects and their distribution in the northwestern part of the area under consideration sheds light on the role of language contact which is confirmed along the same axis—but crucially in the opposite direction—by the increasing employment of cleft constructions in WH-clauses replacing enclisis (i.e.,: pronominal subject inversion with the finite verb).

1. Introduction

Since the principles-and-parameters approach was introduced in the generative grammar framework (see Chomsky 1981, 1982, 1986), two descriptive correlations have never been challenged[1]: (a) the negative value of the null subject parameter (henceforth NSP) correlates with the occurrence of lexical expletives; (b) finite verb movement in the C-domain correlates with subject inversion (Vfin-Subj). A third correlation, originally introduced by Hulk and van Kemenade (1995) and recently revisited by Bidese and Tomaselli (2018), Tomaselli and Bidese (2019), and Bidese et al. (2020), maintains that V2 is incompatible with a positive value of the NSP, that is, a specific type of V2 (mandatory Vfin-to-C movement in the root context) is incompatible with a specific type of pro-drop (referential null subject of the third person singular).[2] In this paper, we will provide further arguments to confirm the robustness of these assumptions based on the syntax of lexical expletives in two groups of languages in the northeastern part of Italy: a (still) V2 Germanic variety such as Cimbrian[3] and the Italian dialectal varieties spoken in Trentino and in the western part of Veneto (the provinces of Verona and Vicenza), on the one hand, in comparison with the eastern Venetian varieties spoken in the provinces of Treviso, Padova, and Venice, on the other hand.

This paper is organized into four sections. The first part (Section 2) offers a description and analysis of the syntax of expletives in Cimbrian. In the second section (Section 3), we revise the data from Trentino (from the seminal work by Brandi and Cordin (1981,

1989) to incorporate recent refinements proposed by Cordin (2021), based on the data collected by VinKo[4]). Next, the third section (Section 4) explores the data on Venetan dialects that are not on the linguistic Germanic–Romance border. The last section (Section 5) compares the data discussed in the previous sections which show a decreasing rate of expletive realization along the Adige River (from NW to SE) with the different rates of verb–subject inversion in interrogatives (i.e., the maintenance of enclisis to the finite verb). The comparison of these two aspects of pronominal syntax leads us to propose a double conclusion. First, the phenomenon of pronominal subject inversion (enclisis to the finite verb in C) in the root interrogative context is fully maintained in the Trentino dialects, possibly due to the pressure of the Germanic varieties on the border which robustly show both expletive realization and generalized verb–subject inversion in the root clause (not only in WH contexts). Second, the maintenance of V2 in Cimbrian preserves this variety from a resetting of the NSP, as it reinforces the occurrence of lexical expletives instead. These two distinct developmental lines strongly support the idea that the role of language contact is limited to the speed of a given language change determined by the possible choices of the inherent system of the language (see Padovan et al. 2016).

2. The Typology of Lexical Expletives in Cimbrian

Cimbrian is characterized by two classes of lexical expletives that correlate with both the negative value of the NSP and the V2 phenomenon (see Bidese and Tomaselli 2018 for details):

(i) *'z/-z*, which corresponds to German *es* (English *it*);
(ii) *-da*, which approximately corresponds to English *there*.

Even if the lexical forms etymologically coincide (es = it; da = tho/there), their syntax is clearly divergent if required by either one (pro-drop) or the other (V2) syntactic phenomenon.

2.1. Expletives Required by the Negative Value of the NSP

2.1.1. The Expletive *'z/-z*

In connection to subject syntax, the lexical expletive *'z* obligatorily occurs on either the left (1a) or the right of the finite verbal element (1b) in the root declarative sentence. Thus, it behaves quite similar to its German counterpart *es* (cf. 2):

(1)	a.	'Z	**snaibet**	haüt	atz	Lusérn.
		it	snows	today	at	Luserna
	b.	Haüt	**snaibet**=z	atz	Lusérn.	
		today	snows=it.$_{CL}$	at	Luserna	
		'It is snowing today in Luserna.'				

(2)	a.	*Es*	**schneit**	heute	in	Lusérn.
		it	snows	today	at	Luserna
	b.	Heute	**schneit**	*es*	in	Lusérn.
		today	snows	it	at	Luserna
		'It is snowing today in Luserna.'				

Furthermore, this expletive occurs to the right of the lexical complementizer in the embedded clause, for instance, *bal* 'when' (cf. 3), *az* 'that', or *be* 'if' (cf. 4):[5]

(3) a. Bal=z **snaibet** starch atz Lusérn, stea=bar dahuam.
　　 when=it.CL snows hard at Luserna, stay=we.CL at=home
　　 'When it snows heavily in Luserna, we stay home.'

　 b. I sperar, az=(z)[6] **snaibe** starch haüt atz Lusérn.
　　 I hope that=it.CL snow.CONJ hard today at Luserna
　　 'I hope that it will snow heavily today in Luserna.'

　 c. I vors=mar, be=z **snaibet** starch haüt atz Lusérn.
　　 I ask=me.DAT.CL if=it.CL snows hard today at Luserna
　　 'I'm wondering if it is snowing heavily today in Luserna.'

These examples reveal the same structural position as in German. Compare (3a–b) with (4a–b) modulo OV and the position of the adverb 'heavily':

(4) a. Wenn *es* in Lusérn stark **schneit**, bleiben wir zu Hause.
　　 when=it.CL in Luserna hard snows, remain we at home
　　 'When it snows heavily in Luserna, we remain home.'

　 b. Ich hoffe, dass *es* heute in Lusern stark **schneit**.
　　 I hope that it today in Lusern hard snows
　　 'I hope that it will snow heavily today in Luserna.'

　 c. Ich frage mich, ob *es* heute in Lusern stark **schneit**.
　　 I ask me if it today in Lusern hard snows
　　 'I'm wondering if it is snowing heavily today in Luserna.'

Lastly, the lexical expletive *-z* obligatorily occurs to the right of the finite verb in the direct interrogative context (cf. 5), as in the German equivalent sentence examples (cf. 6):

(5) a. **Snaibet**=z haüt atz Lusérn?
　　 Snows=it.CL today at Luserna
　　 'Is it snowing at Lusern today?'

　 b. Bo **snaibet**=z haüt?
　　 where snows=it.CL today
　　 'Where is it snowing today?'

(6) a. **Schneit** *es* heute in Lusérn?
　　 Snows it today in Luserna
　　 'Is it snowing in Lusern today?'

　 b. Wo **schneit** *es* heute?
　　 where snows it today
　　 'Where is it snowing today?'

The same lexical item occurs with the same distributional pattern in co-occurrence with subject clauses (cf. 7) as happens in German (cf. 8):

(7)　a.　'Z　　　　**hatt**=en　　　gevallt,　　[az=ta　　dar Luca　sai(be)　khent　afn　　　vairta]
　　　　　it　　　　has=him.CL　　pleased　　that=da　　the Luca　is.CONJ　come　to=the　party
　　　　　'He was pleased that Luca came to the party.'

　　b.　Gestarn　**hatt**=z=en　　gevallt,　　[az=ta　　dar Luca　sai(be)　khent　afn　　　vairta]
　　　　　Yesterday　has=it=him.CL　pleased　　that=da　　the Luca　is.CONJ　come　to=the　party
　　　　　'Yesterday, he was pleased that Luca came to the party.'

　　c.　**Hatt**=z=en　　gevallt　　gestarn,　　[az=ta　　dar Luca　sai(be)　khent　afn　　　vairta]?
　　　　　has=it=him.CL　pleased　　yesterday　that=da　　the Luca　is.CONJ　come　to=the　party
　　　　　'Yesterday, did he like yesterday that Luca came to the party?'

(8)　a.　*Es*　　　**hat**　　　　Hans　gefallen,　[*dass*　*Lukas*　*zum*　*Fest*　*gekommen*　*ist*]
　　　　　it　　　　has　　　　　Hans　pleased　　that　Lukas　to=the　party　come　is
　　　　　'Hans was pleased that Lukas came to the party.'

　　b.　Gestern　**hat**　　(es)　　Hans　gefallen,　[*dass*　*Lukas*　*zum*　*Fest*　*gekommen*　*ist*]
　　　　　yesterday　has　　it　　　Hans　pleased　　that　Lukas　to=the　party　come　is
　　　　　'Yesterday, Hans was pleased that Lukas came to the party.'

　　c.　**Hat**　　(es)　　　　Hans　gestern　gefallen,　[*dass*　*Lukas*　*zum*　*Fest*　*gekommen*　*ist*]?
　　　　　Has　　it　　　　　Hans　yesterday　pleased　that　Lukas　to=the　party　come　is
　　　　　'Was Hans pleased yesterday that Lukas came to the party?'

When the subject clause is topicalized before the finite verb, there is, of course, no possibility for the lexical expletives *'z/-z* and *es* to show up in either Cimbrian (cf. 9) or German (cf. 10):

(9)　[Az=ta　　dar Luca　sai(be)　khent　afn　　　vairta],　**hatt**=(*z)=en[i]　gevallt　　in　　　Håns[i].
　　　that=da　the Luca　is　　　come　　to=the　party　　has=(it)=him.CL　pleased　the.DAT　John
　　　'That Luke came to the party pleased Hans.'

(10)　[*Dass*　*Lukas*　*zum*　*Fest*　*gekommen*　*ist*],　**hat**　　　(*es)　　Hans　gefallen.
　　　that　Lukas　to=the　party　come　is　　　has　　　(it)　　Hans　pleased
　　　'That Luke came to the party pleased Hans.'

2.1.2. The Expletive *-da*

The expletive particle *-da* is excluded in all the preceding contexts, and it will never play the role of an impersonal subject. It is always realized as an enclitic form to either the finite verb in C/Fin or the lexical complementizer *bal*, *be*, or *az*. The occurrence of the enclitic particle *-da* is required whenever the nominal subject is not fronted to the left of the finite verb (compare 11a with 11b–d):

(11)　a.　*Moi nono*　**iz**　　　　　　khent　　atz Lusérn　　haüt.
　　　　　my grandpa　is　　　　　　come　　to Luserna　　today
　　　　　'My grandpa came to Luserna today.'

　　b.　Haüt　　**iz**=ta　　　　khent　　atz Lusérn　　*moi nono.*
　　　　　today　is=da　　　　come　　to Luserna　　my grandpa
　　　　　'Today, my grandpa came to Luserna.'

　　c.　I sperar,　**az**=ta　　sai(be)　khent　　atz Lusérn　　*moi nono*　haüt.
　　　　　I hope,　　that=da　is　　　come　　in Luserna　　my grandpa　today
　　　　　'I hope that my grandpa came to Luserna today.'

　　d.　**Iz**=ta　　khent　　　atz Lusérn　　*moi nono*　　haüt?
　　　　　Is=da　　come　　　in Luserna　　my grandpa　　today
　　　　　'Did my grandpa come to Luserna today?'

The German translation of the preceding examples reveals that Cimbrian -*da* does not find a lexical counterpart in Standard German (cf. 12):

(12) a. 　*Mein Großvater*　　**ist**　　(*es)　　heute　　　　　　nach Lusérn　　gekommen.
　　　　　my grandpa　　　　is　　　(it)　　　today　　　　　　to Luserna　　　come
　　　　　'My grandpa came to Luserna today.'

　　　b. 　Heute　　　　　**ist**　　(*es)　　nach　　　　Lusérn　　*mein Großvater*　gekommen.
　　　　　today　　　　　is　　　(it)　　　to　　　　　Luserna　　my grandpa　　　come
　　　　　'Today, my grandpa came to Luserna.'

　　　c. 　Ich hoffe,　　　**dass**　(*es)　　heute　　nach　　Lusérn　　*mein Großvater*　gekommen ist.
　　　　　I hope,　　　　that　　(it)　　　today　　to　　　Luserna　　my grandpa　　　come　　is
　　　　　'I hope that my grandpa came to Luserna today.'

　　　d. 　**Ist**　　　　　　　(*es)　　heute　　nach　　Lusérn　　*mein Großvater*　gekommen?
　　　　　is　　　　　　　　(it)　　　today　　to　　　Luserna　　my grandpa　　　come
　　　　　'Did my grandpa come to Luserna today?'

The expletive particle -*da* partially corresponds to English *there* in subject inversion constructions, as in the following:

(13)　　　　　a.　　　　　　　*There* **arrives** *a man.*
　　　　　　　b.　　　　　　　I know that *there* **lived** *a lonely old man* in the forest.

Two main differences can be seen between Cimbrian -*da* and English *there*: (i) -*da* is not sensible to the definiteness effect as in English (cf. 14a with 14b), and (ii) it is not limited to a specific verbal class (i.e., unaccusative verbs) (cf. 15a with 15b). The following comparison of the same sentences in English and in Cimbrian demonstrates the two main differences:

(14)　　　　　a.　　　　　　　*There arrives *Mary* today　　　　　　(definiteness effect)

　　　　　　　b.　　　　　　　[ok]Haüt　　　　**khint=(t)a**　　*di Maria.*
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　today　　　　comes=da　　　the Mary
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　'Mary is arriving today.'

(15)　　　a.　　　　　*There has **read** a book my mother/my mother a book　　(transitive verbs)

　　　　　b.　　　　　[ok]Haüt　　　　**hatt=(t)a**　　　gelest　　　　an libar　　*moi mamma*
　　　　　　　　　　today　　　　has=da　　　　read　　　　a book　　my mother
　　　　　　　　　　'Today, my mother has read a book.'

The occurrence of -*da* represents one of the most peculiar aspects of Cimbrian subject syntax; it is used for nominative case assignment (NOM) whenever the nominal subject is not raised to the structural subject position (i.e., the subject does not occur on the left of the finite verb), which is assumed to be the specifier of the lowest CP projection (i.e., [Spec, Fin]):

(16)　　　a. Cimbrian　　　　　　　　b. German　　　　　　　　c. Italian
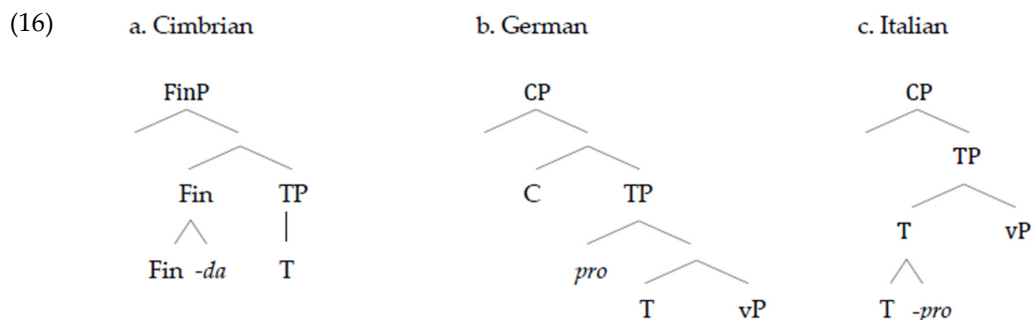
The basic idea proposed by Bidese et al. (2020) and represented in (16) above is that C/Fin is responsible for case assignment in both German and Cimbrian (which are both V2 languages) but that only in Cimbrian Fin provides NOM on the left (i.e., to its specifier position [Spec, Fin], much like Italian T).

2.2. V2 Expletives

Cimbrian is considered a structural V2 language that has lost the well-known linear restriction characterizing all other Germanic languages with the exception of Modern English. This means that Cimbrian is characterized by mandatory finite V-to-C movement in a Split-CP configuration. Therefore, the following word order pattern (cf. 17a) should be analyzed as proposed in (17b) (see Bidese and Tomaselli 2016, pp. 69–71):

(17)   a.

Haüt	in	balt	**hatt**=*ar*	gesek	in	has.
today	in=the	wood	has=he.CL	seen	the.ACC	rabbit

'Today, he saw the rabbit in the wood.'

     b.   [CP [Haüt] [in balt] [FinP hatt=ar . . . . [VP gesek [DP in has]]]]

If the position on the left of the finite verb is not lexicalized by at least one constituent, either the subject or a complement, the sentence becomes grammatical only as a Yes/No question (cf. 18a for Cimbrian and 18b for German):

(18)   a.

Hatt=*ar*	gesek	in	has	haüt	in	balt?
has=he.CL	seen	the.ACC	rabbit	today	in=the	wood

'Did he see the rabbit in the wood today?'

     b.

Hat	*er*	heute	im Wald	den Hasen	gesehen?
has=he.CL		today	in=the wood	the.ACC rabbit	seen

'Did he see the rabbit in the wood today?'

In order to maintain the declarative/assertive modality, a V2 positional expletive can occur in the first position on the left of the finite verb in the CP domain (cf. 19a for Cimbrian and 19b for German):

(19) a.

'Z	**hatt**=*(t)a*	gesek	in	has	*dar djunge*	in	balt	haüt.
it	has=da	seen	the.ACC	rabbit	the boy	in=the	wood	heute

'Today, the boy saw the rabbit in the wood.'

  a.

Es	**hat**	*der Junge*	heute	im Wald	den Hasen	gesehen.
it	has	the boy	today	in=the	the.ACC rabbit	seen

'Today, the boy saw the rabbit in the wood.'

V2 positional expletive *'z* (German *es*) lexically corresponds to the subject expletive *'z*, with two main differences:

(i)   The morphological realization: it only occurs on the left of the finite verb (i.e., it refuses enclisis);

(ii)   The co-occurrence with enclitic *-da*: since *'z* implies a postverbal (i.e., not raised subject), the enclitic particle *-da* is always required (cf. 20):

(20)

'Z	**laütan**=*da*	di klokkn.
it	ring.PL=da	the bells

'The bells are ringing.'

V2 expletive *'z* should not be confused with locative *da* (cf. also Grewendorf and Poletto 2011), which satisfies the V2 constraint as well as other unaccented, monosyllabic adverbials (for instance, *est* 'now') in a presentative construction (cf. 21).

(21)　a.　**Da**　laütan=*da*　di klokkn.
　　　　　there　ring._{PL}=da　the bells
　　　　　'There the bells are ringing.'

　　　b.　**Da**　hatt=*(d)a*　gesek　　　　in　　has　　dar　　　djunge.
　　　　　there　has=da　　seen　　　　the._{ACC}　hare　the._{NOM}　boy
　　　　　'There the boy saw the hare.'

This kind of adverb represents the only choice whenever the subject is realized by an enclitic pronoun (cf. 22 for Cimbrian):

(22)　a.　**Da**　　laütan=*sa.*
　　　　　there　　ring._{PL}=they._{CL}
　　　　　'There they are ringing.'

　　　b.　**Da**　hatt=ar　gesek　in has　　　haüt　　in　　　balt.
　　　　　there　has=he._{CL}　seen　the._{ACC} hare　today　in-the　wood
　　　　　'There he saw the hare in the wood today.'

This is also true for Standard German (cf. 23a) unless the postverbal pronominal subject is accented (cf. 23b):

(23)　a.　*Es　　　ist　　　er　　　　　angekommen.
　　　　　it　　　is　　　he　　　　　arrived

　　　b.　Es　　　ist　　　(auch) ER/DER　gekommen.
　　　　　it　　　is　　　also　he　　　arrived
　　　　　'He also arrived.'

The syntax of lexical expletives represents a strong argument for the assumption that Cimbrian is characterized by both structural V2 (mandatory finite verb movement to C) and the negative value of the NSP. Hence, Cimbrian syntax reinforces the divide between COMP-dominant languages and INFL-dominant languages introduced by Hulk and van Kemenade (1995): V2 languages are COMP-dominant languages that do not allow referential null subjects; in contrast, null-subject languages are INFL-dominant languages, which do not allow V2.[7]

2.3. First Summary

The data discussed in the previous paragraphs are summarized in the following Table 1 (see Bidese and Tomaselli 2018):

Table 1. Typology of lexical expletives[8].

	ENGLISH	**CIMBRIAN**	**GERMAN**	**ITALIAN**	
(24)	it	'z/-z	es	*pro*	(impersonal subjects)
TP expletives					
	there	-da	*pro*	*pro*	(with postverbal subjects)
CP expletives	/	'z	es	/	(V2 expletive)

The comparison between Cimbrian and German underlines the maintenance and even the reinforcement of lexical expletives in both impersonal constructions and non-subject initial V2 clauses. Moreover, the comparison with the Italian dialects of the northeastern region should provide us with new insight concerning the syntax of subject clitics. Although we would expect the absence of V2 expletives, we would not exclude a potential distinction

between positional expletives that co-occur with postverbal subjects and subject clitics linked to impersonal verbs.

3. The Typology of Lexical Expletives in the Trentino Dialects

It is well known in the literature that expletive clitic subjects with weather verbs like *nevegar/fiocar* ('to snow') are still well attested in the Trentino dialects (see Casalicchio and Cordin 2020, p. 109: "Meteorological verbs [in Central Trentino] require a 3rd singular person subject clitic, which has no argumental value" and 264: "Semiargumental verbs, such as meteorological verbs, take an obligatory expletive subject that morphologically corresponds to a 3rd person masculine singular subject clitic"):

(25)	a.	*El*	*piòve.*			(Casalicchio and Cordin 2020, p. 109)
		it	rains			
		'It's raining.'				
	b.	*L'a*	*nevegà*	*tuta*	*la*	*nòt.*
		it.CL-has	snowed	all	the	night
		'It snowed all night.'				

A glance at the data recently collected by VinKo, a platform based on crowdsourcing (cf. footnote 4), strongly confirms this observation. The translation of the Italian sentence n. 136 in the VinKo platform (cf. here 26), as follows,

(26)		*È*	*nevicato.*
		is	snowed
		'It snowed.'	

has been recorded by 14 informants from 11 different locations in Trentino, with the following results:

Twelve maintained the subject clitic *'l* 'it' (third person singular masculine) independently of both lexical choice (*nevegar* versus *fiocar*, both 'to snow') and auxiliary selection:[9]

(27)	a.	*L'a*	*fiocà.*	(Lavis, S0136_tre_U0409)[10]
		it.CL-has	snowed	
		'It snowed.'		
	b.	*L'è*	*nevegà.*	(Cinte Tesino, S0136_tre_U0411)
		it.CL-is	snowed	
		'It snowed.'		
	c.	*L'a*	*nevegà.*	(Trento, S0136_tre_U0451)
		it.CL-has	snowed	
		'It snowed.'		

Only two young informants translated the sentence without the subject clitic:[11]

(28)	a.	*È*	*nevegà.*	(Levico, S0136_tre_U0565)
		is	snowed	
		'It snowed.'		
	b.	A	*fiocà.*	(Mori, S0136_tre_U0469)
		has	snowed	
		'It snowed.'		

Following the seminal work by Brandi and Cordin (1981, 1989), we will consider subject clitics of the Trentino dialects (and, more generally, of the area we are focusing on) as the manifestation of subject agreement (see also Casalicchio and Cordin 2020, p. 258).

From this perspective, the maintenance of expletive subject clitics with weather verbs corresponds to the lexical manifestation of expletive subject agreement of the third person singular.[12]

According to this point of view, it is interesting to underline two relevant points already discussed in the literature:

(i) Inflected verbs in the third person singular always involve a clitic that doubles the argumental preverbal subject even when the last one was not left-dislocated (cf. 29) (see Brandi and Cordin 1989 and Casalicchio and Cordin 2020, p. 110: "Subject clitics must also be expressed when the preverbal subject is a noun phrase, or a pronoun"):[13]

(29) a.
La	*maestra de matematica*	***la***		va	via.
the	teacher of math	she		goes	away

'The math teacher is going away.'

b.
**La*	*maestra de matematica*			va	via.
the	teacher of math			goes	away

c.
La	*maestra de matematica*	*l'*	è	nada	via.
the	teacher of math	she	is	gone	away

'The math teacher went away.'

d.
**La*	*maestra de matematica*		è	nada via.	
the	teacher of math		is	gone	away

(ii) As already noted by Brandi and Cordin (1989) and confirmed by Casalicchio and Cordin (2020, pp. 111, 261), clitic reduplication is excluded in three contexts: (a) when the subject occurs in the postverbal position without being right-dislocated (cf. 30) (see also Poletto 1993); (b) in both restrictive relative clauses (cf. 31) and *wh*-interrogatives on the subject (cf. 32); and (c) with the negative quantifier *nissun/nessun/nissuni/nessuni* 'nobody' (cf. 33).[14]

(30) a.
Va	via	*la maestra*	*de matematica.*
goes	away	the teacher	of math

'The math teacher is going away.'

b.
È	nà	via	*la*	*maestra*	*de matematica.*
is	gone	away	the	teacher	of math

'The math teacher went away.'

(31)
Le putele	che	(**le*)$_{CL}$	ha	parlà	con ti …	(Brandi and Cordin 1989, p. 126)
the girls	that	they.$_{CL}$	have	talked	with you	

'The girls who talked to you … '

(32)
Quante	*putèle*	(**le*)	ha	parlà	con ti?	(Brandi and Cordin 1989, p. 125)
how-many	girls	they.$_{CL}$	have	talked	with you	

'How many girls talked to you?'

(33)
Nesun	(**l'*)	è	vegnù	en	tèmp.	(adapted from Casalicchio and Cordin 2020, p. 111)
nobody	he.$_{CL}$	is	come	in	time	

'Nobody was on time.'

However, systematic results do not always confirm the generalization presented in (ii), as noted by Casalicchio and Cordin (2020, p. 111, footnote 22) and Kruijt et al. (n.d.), among others. Nevertheless, several sentences in ASIt, the online *Atlante Sintattico d'Italia*, which collects written dialectal data, exhibit the co-occurrence 'clitic – postverbal subject', especially in the Trentino area.[15] This phenomenon has been recently confirmed by data collected within projects conceived with a different methodology, including AThEME and VinKo, which are based on oral recordings.

Following the analysis proposed by Kruijt et al. (n.d., Section 4.2, *Trentino dialects: agreement with a postverbal subject*), whose main aim was to compare the data collected by

AThEME (based on fieldwork) with the data collected by VinKo (based on crowdsourcing), two tendencies clearly emerge:

(a) Postverbal [-hum] subjects in declarative sentences do not to realize the clitic (36 cases versus 8 in VinKo) (cf. 34) (data taken from Kruijt et al. n.d.):

(34) | È | scominzià | la | | scola. | (Brentonico, S0134_tre_U0049) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| is | started | the | | school | |

'School has started.'

(b) Postverbal [+hum] subjects in indirect interrogative sentences almost always require a clitic (18 cases vs. 1):

(35) | Non | so | miga | ndo | che='l | sia | nà | *el* | *Marco*. (Brentonico, S0115_tre_U0088) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not | know | not | where | that=he.$_{CL}$ | is.$_{CONJ}$ | gone | the | Mark |

'I don't know where Mark has gone.'s

The occurrence of a clitic with a postverbal [+hum] non-right-dislocated subject in presentative sentences, as shown in (36), is not so clear-cut (see also Casalicchio and Cordin 2020, p. 112); nevertheless, it is far from being abandoned by the Trentino speakers:

(36) a. | *L'è* | bela | *to sorela.* |
|---|---|---|
| she.$_{CL}$-is | nice | your sister |

'Your sister is nice.'

b. | *I* | è | za | grandi | *i pòpi.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| they.$_{CL}$ | are | already | grown-up | the children |

'The children are already grown up.'

Without going into the details of Kruijt et al.'s (n.d.) analysis[16], what matters to us is the different situation represented by data collected in Veneto. As the next paragraph will demonstrate, the dialects spoken in Veneto are coherently characterized by the absence of subject agreement (no clitic) with postverbal subjects (strong confirmation of Brandi and Cordin 1981, 1989 generalization, cf. (ii) above) and by the gradual disappearance of the clitic expletive. This graduated loss seems to follow the flow of the river Adige, starting from the southwest (Verona), where it is still attested, eastward (Vicenza, Padova, Treviso, Venezia), where it is marginally residual or even completely absent, which is perfectly in line with the situation already presented and discussed with regard to the Venetian dialects by Benincà (1994).

4. The Typology of Lexical Expletives in the Dialects Spoken in Veneto

The translation of sentence n. 136 (*è nevicato* 'it snowed') in the VinKo database clearly shows a gradual disappearance of the clitic expletive with meteorological verbs in the dialects spoken in Veneto compared with the situation attested in Trentino, as discussed in the previous paragraph.

The data collected in the province of **Verona**, the southwestern province on the border with Trentino, show that at least a fourth of the speakers maintain the clitic.[17] More precisely, the 41 records collected in the province of Verona display a lexical expletive in 12 cases— usually the third singular masculine *l'* (cf. 37a–b), and *a*[18] in two cases (cf. 38)[19]—and with no clitic in 29 records (39)[20]:

(a) Examples with the clitic and both auxiliary verbs *a* 'has' and *è* 'is':

(37) a. *L'*a nevegà. (Verona, S0136_vec_U0420)
　　　 it.CL-has snowed
　　　 'It snowed.'

　 b. *L'*è nevegà. (Verona, S0136_vec_U0439)
　　　 it.CL-is snowed

(38) *A* ga nevegà. (Bonavigo, S0136_vec_U0450)
　 PRT has snowed

(b)　Examples without the clitic:

(39) a. A nevegà. (Verona, S0136_vec_U0403)
　　　 has snowed
　　　 'It snowed.'

　 b. È nevegà. (Sona, S0136_vec_U0402)
　　　 is snowed

　 c. Ghe nevegà. (Bonavigo, S0136_vec_U0408)
　　　 has snowed

　 d. Ga nevegà. (Legnago, S0136_vec_U0300)
　　　 has snowed

In the province of **Vicenza,** only two out of ten informants (Schio, Sarego) have the clitic expletive, as exemplified in (40), while the vast majority of speakers (four-fifths of the total) do not express it (cf. 41, resembling 39 in the province of Verona):[21]

(40)　 *(E)l* ga nevegà. (Schio, S0136_vec_U0320)
　　　 it.CL-has snowed
　　　 'It snowed.'

(41)　 Ga nevegà. (Recoaro, S0136_vec_U0306)
　　　 has snowed
　　　 'It snowed.'

In the province of **Padua**, none of the recordings feature the clitic. All speakers use the auxiliary *ga*:

(42)　 Ga nevegà. (Cittadella, S0136_vec_U0326)
　　　 has snowed
　　　 'It snowed.'

The same holds for the province of **Treviso** (cf. 43), with one exception (cf. 44):

(43)　 Ga nevegà. (Castelfranco, S0136_vec_U0302)
　　　 has snowed
　　　 'It snowed.'

(44)　 *L'*è nevegà (ma no tant). (Codognè, S0136_vec_U0647)
　　　 it.CL-is snowed (but not too much)
　　　 'It snowed (but not too much).'

Finally, the same holds for the province of **Venice** (cf. 45), with the exception of San Donà del Piave (cf. 46):

(45)　 Ga nevegà (Venezia, S0136_vec_U0454)
　　　 has snowed
　　　 'It snowed.'

(46)　 *L'*è nevegà (San Donà, S0136_vec_U0651)
　　　 it.CL-is snowed
　　　 'It snowed.'

The presentation and discussion of the data in this section do not pretend to exploit the complexity of the situation in terms of the occurrence of the subject clitics in the dialects spoken in Veneto (as, for instance, the role of auxiliary selection or extra-linguistic factors, such as either the age of the informant or the difference between data collected in city areas versus rural ones). Nevertheless, two generalizations can be drawn:

(a) The maintenance of lexical expletives in the dialects spoken in Trentino is definitely more robust in comparison with the Venetian region with respect to both impersonal subject clitics and the possible co-occurrence with a postverbal subject;

(b) The maintenance of lexical expletives in Veneto exhibits a clear decrease from the southwestern area (the province of Verona) toward the southeastern provinces of Vicenza, Padova, and Venice.[22]

Second Summary

The comparison between the data collected in Trentino and discussed in Section 3 and the Venetan data just discussed in the preceding section (cf. Section 4) is synthesized in the following Table 2 (exceptional cases excluded):[23]

Table 2. Rate of expletive realization.

		TRENTO	**VERONA**	**VICENZA**	**PADOVA**	**VENEZIA**
(47)	Impersonal subject clitics	**85.7%** (12 su 14)	**29.9%** (12 su 41)	**20%** (2 su 10)	none	none
	Expletives with a postverbal subject [+/-hum]	(a) **18.1%** (b) **94.7%** (a. 8 su 44 [-hum]; b. 18 su 19 [+hum])	none	none	none	none

As already noted in the preceding sections (3) and (4), the percentages clearly show that the overt realization of expletives decreases "along the Adige River". In this perspective, the province of Verona emblematically represents the turning point coherently with the course of the river. As we will see in the next concluding section, along the same axis, verb–subject inversion (i.e., enclisis to the finite verb) in the interrogative context is gradually replaced by other structures (clefts, mainly).

5. Linguistic Borders and the Potential Role of Language Contact

The special position of the dialects spoken in Trentino with respect to the maintenance of subject clitics is well documented in terms of both impersonal constructions with weather-related verbs and the co-occurrence with postverbal subjects (of a certain kind, that is, [+human]), as already shown by the data presented and discussed in Section 3. Further expected confirmation comes from the position of the clitic in direct questions (cf. 48 and 49) in these same contexts (i.e., with weather verbs and unaccusative verbs):[24]

(48) a. A=*lo*   nevegà?
          has=it.CL   snowed
          'Did it snow?'

     b. È=*lo*   nevegà?
          is=it.CL   snowed

(49) È=*lo*[i]   rivà   *to*   *nono*[i]?
       is=he.CL   arrived   your   grandpa
       'Did your grandpa arrive?'

The different position of the subject clitic in [+WH] versus [-WH] root clauses (i.e., enclisis versus proclisis) is an uncontroversial argument for the assumption of finite verb

movement to C in the interrogative context[25] and can be extended to the full paradigm of subject clitics with highly complex and intriguing results concerning the possible gaps attested by the different dialectal paradigms.

In terms of the dialects spoken in Trentino, the following patterns can be considered canonical patterns:[26]

(50) a. Cosa fa=*lo*?
       what does=he.CL
       'What is he doing?'

    b. Cosa a=*lo* combinà?
       what has=he.CL done
       'What did he do?'

    c. 'Ndo va=*lo*?
       where goes=he.CL
       'Where is he going?'

The maintenance of subject enclisis in direct interrogative clauses (cf. 50) co-exists with alternative constructions that rely on different strategies:

(i) Polarity questions may eventually rely on a different stress pattern without word order variations, meaning no subject clitic inversion (raising intonation, similar to standard Italian, cf. 51a–c, in specific pragmatic contexts as with an expression of surprise):

(51) a. *L'*a magnà su tut?
       he.CL-has eaten PRT all
       'He ate it all, didn't he?'

    b. *L'*a nevegà anc'ancò?
       it.CL-has snowed also-today
       'It snowed today too, didn't it?'

    c. *L'ⁱ* è rivà anca *to* *nono*[i]?
       he.CL-is arrived also your grandpa
       'Your grandfather arrived too, didn't he?'

(ii) WH-questions can be realized with a cleft construction, where the subject clitic of the 'that' clause regularly occurs on the left of the finite verbal form (cf. 52 in comparison with 50a):[27]

(52) a. Cos'è=(l/lo) che'l fa?[28]   (Casalicchio and Cordin 2020, p. 120)
       what-is=it.CL that-he.CL does
       'What is he doing?'

    b. End'è=l che *l'*a metü la bórsa?
       Where-is=it.CL that have.2PS put the bag
       'Where did you put the bag?'   (adapted from Casalicchio and Cordin 2020, p. 320)

We do not want to enter the complexity of facts, either extra-linguistic (i.e., the age of the speaker)[29] or purely morphological (i.e., person and number variations), which favors one construction over the other(s). Most relevant to our line of argumentation is that the maintenance of subject enclisis to the finite verb in root WH-clauses seems to follow the same path already noted for the occurrence of lexical expletives with meteorological verbs.

Comparing the data discussed for Trentino with those of Veneto, the following three generalizations can be proposed:

I.   Whenever the expletive subject does not occur in the declarative sentence, it does not appear in the interrogative context either in enclisis (cf. 53a-b) or in the much more common cleft construction (cf. 54):

(53)   a.   Ga   nevegà?   (Cittadella, Padova)
               has   snowed
               'Did it snow?'

        b.   Dove   ga   nevegà   uncò?
               where   has   snowed   today
               'Where did it snow today?'

(54)   Dove   xe   che   ga   nevegà   uncò?   (Cittadella, Padova)
       where   is   that   has   snowed   today
       'Where did it snow today?'

II.   Enclisis appears regularly in polarity questions (cf. 55):

(55)   a.   Va=*lo*   via?   (Verona)
               goes-he.CL   away
               'Is he leaving?'

        a.'   Va=*eo*   via?   (Cittadella, Padova)
               goes-he.CL   away

        b.   È=*lo*   na   via?   (Verona)
                is-he.CL   gone   away
               'Did he leave?'

        b.'   Z=*eo*   onda(to)   via?   (Cittadella, Padova)
               is-he.CL   gone   away

        c.   A=*lo*   magnà   tuto?   (Verona)
               has=he.CL   eaten   all
               'Did he eat it all?'

        c.'   Ga=*eo*   magnà   tutto?   (Cittadella, Padova)
               has=he.CL   eaten   all

    The rising intonation without word order variation (cf. 56) is possible in specific pragmatic contexts (e.g., an expression of surprise):[30]

(56) a.   *El*   va via?   Sul serio?   (Cittadella)
         he.CL   goes away.   Seriously
         'He is leaving. Seriously?'

     b.   *L'è*   ndà   via?   Sul serio?   (Cittadella)
         he.CL-is   gone   away.   Seriously
         'He left. Seriously?'

     c.   *L'à*   magnà   tuto   anca   uncò?   (Cittadella)
         he.CL-has eaten   all   also   today
         'Did he eat it all today as well?'

III.   In WH-questions, enclisis is maintained (cf. 57), but there is a strong preference for the cleft construction whose attestation definitely increases from southwest (Verona) moving eastward (Padua) and represents the only option in Venice:

(57) a. Ndo   va=*lo*?   (Verona)
         where   goes=he.CL
         'Where is he going?'

   a.' Dove   xè che   *el*   va?   /   Dove   va=*eo*?   (Cittadella, Padova)

         where   is   that   he.CL   goes   /   Where   goes=he.CL

   b.   Cos'a=*lo*   magnà?   (Verona)
         what-has he.CL eaten
         'What did he eat?'

   b.´ Cosa   zè   che   *el*   ga   magnà? /   Cosa   ga=*eo*   magnà?   (Cittadella, Padova)

         what   is   that   he   has   eaten   /   what   has=he.CL eaten

The geographical distribution of the data discussed to this point can be visualized in the following simplified but essential map, where the arrows correspond to the river Adige:

(58) Geographical distribution:
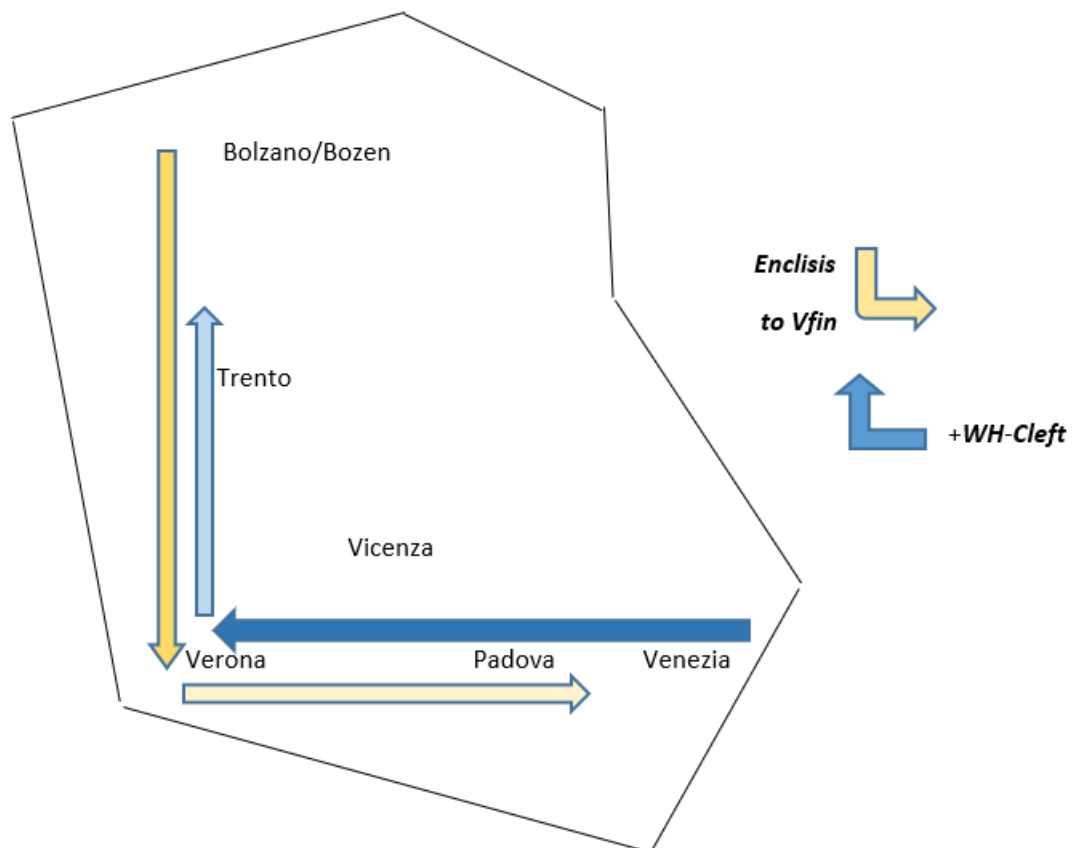
NB: the yellow arrow represents the gradual reduction in pronominal subject inversion (= enclisis to the finite verb) in the interrogative context, the blue one –in the opposite direction—the gradual reduction of the cleft construction in WH-clauses.

Why do the dialects spoken in Trentino maintain both lexical expletives and enclisis to the finite verb (see the yellow arrow in 58) moderating the success of the cleft construction in Romance dialectal syntax (see the blue arrow in 58)?

Our answer relies on a theory of language contact that attributes a fundamental role to the linear convergences deriving from different structural systems in terms of (a) regulating the speed of the syntactic change and (b) determining the direction of the diachronic development among the array of possible paths that are compatible (i.e., coherent) with a specific language system.[31]

As a matter of fact, the political border between Trentino (once called *Welschtirol*, referring to Italian Tyrol) and South Tyrol coincides with the German–Italian linguistic border with a well-studied situation of plurilingualism (at both the dialectal and the standard linguistic level).[32]

As for Trentino (the southern province of the autonomous region Trentino–Alto Adige/South Tyrol), the relevance of German (as a second language in school education) and the protection of linguistic minorities (both Ladin and Germanic varieties) is well known from both political and legal perspectives.

What we want to suggest is that the influence of German could have played a role with respect to both the relatively stronger preservation of expletive subjects and the maintenance of German-like patterns, such as pronominal subject inversion (enclisis of the pronominal subject to the finite verb) in the WH root clause damming the preference for the Romance cleft construction. This convergence applies at the superficial (i.e., linear) level, coherently with the Romance structure of the dialects spoken in Trentino, which remain:

(i)   Null-subject languages (following Brandi and Cordin 1981, 1989, we analyze the clitic as the manifestation of subject agreement);

(ii)   'residual' V2 languages (i.e., V2 languages), such as Italian and English, where finite verb movement to C is limited to well-defined contexts.

The notion of "residual V2," as introduced by Rizzi (1990, 1996), suggests the idea that both Old English and Old Romance were characterized by a more 'consistent' V2. As Poletto (2019) already pointed out, V2 is not a unique phenomenon but implies a complex, fine-grained typology: different types of V2 allow (and, in fact, did allow) different ways of losing processes. The role of contact with varieties of the German type, where V2 does not depend on the informational structure (i.e., it is not compatible with a 'criterial' approach, and it is not compatible with proclisis and, ultimately, with a positive value of the NSP) is limited to both the speed of the change and the maintenance of residual aspects of the phenomenon.[33]

Conversely, the conservative aspects of Cimbrian syntax (cf. Section 2), which behaves like German regarding both the negative value of the NSP and the maintenance of structural V2 (i.e., generalized finite verb movement to the lower projection of the C-domain in both declarative and interrogative clauses), could have found in the morphosyntax of the surrounding Italian dialects—subject clitics and residual V2 in the interrogative context—a robust dam that has slowed the speed of the potential loss of Germanic V2 and the resetting of the NSP.

Notes

1. We are very grateful to the VinKo research group in Verona, in particular, Anne Kruijt, Andrea Padovan, and Stefan Rabanus, and to the two anonymous reviewers for their suggestions and comments that really helped us to improve the clarity of the argumentation. Remaining mistakes are our own.

2. For a typology of V2, see Holmberg (2015) and Poletto (2019). Furthermore, Woods and Wolfe (2020) provide a comprehensive updated view on many aspects of the V2 phenomenon.

3. For a general introduction to Cimbrian from a historical, geographical, and linguistic point of view, see Bidese (2004, 2021).

4. VinKo is a spoken corpus based on crowdsourcing; it is designed for linguistic research on audio recordings of minority languages and dialects spoken in the area between Innsbruck and the Po Valley (see Rabanus et al. 2021, http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.121 24/46, accessed on 1 March 2022). For a description of the platform and its methodology, see Cordin et al. (2018).

5. Cimbrian exhibits two classes of complementizers that clearly differ with respect to their syntax (see Panieri et al. 2006; Grewendorf and Poletto 2009, 2011; Padovan 2011; Bidese et al. 2012; Bidese et al. 2014; Bidese and Tomaselli 2016). The first of these consists of Germanic autochthonous complementizers, which realize an asymmetric word order regarding the position of the finite verb on the right of the negation, the enclitization of the personal pronoun, and the expletive particle *-da* onto the complementizer. Meanwhile, the second class belongs to the borrowed complementizer *ke* 'that' and the 'new' complementizer *umbromm* 'because'. In this class, the negation appears on the left of the finite verb, thus very similar to the usage in the main clauses, whereas the complementizer cannot host the pronoun and the particle *-da*:

(i)	a.	Comp=clitics/-da *Neg* **Vfnt**	(asymmetric word order)
	b.	Comp pronoun **Vfnt** *Neg*	(symmetric word order)

6. When the sentence is introduced by the complementizer *az*, the expletive tends to be absorbed due to the postalveolar fricative [z].

7. Bavarian is often taken as an exception to this correlation since it is a V2 language which allows a gap in the paradigm of personal pronouns for the second person (singular and plural) and the first person plural (exactly where COMP-agreement morphology is attested), cf. among others, Biberauer (2010). The counterhypothesis that Bavarian cannot be analyzed as a semi-pro-drop language was already discussed in Rabanus and Tomaselli (2017), Tomaselli and Bidese (2019), Poletto and Tomaselli (2021), and Bidese and Tomaselli (2021).

8. See Bidese and Tomaselli (2018, p. 63), first presented in June 2014 at the International Conference *Understanding pro-drop. A synchronic and diachronic perspective* (University of Trento).

9. About the auxiliary selection in this area, see, among others, Loporcaro and Vigolo (1995) and Cordin (2009).

10. Lavis (U0409), Cinte Tesino (U04011), Trento (UO412/451/592/646), Tuenno (U0448), Castello-Molina (U0561), Folgaria (U0571), Pinzolo (U0578), Imer (U0607), Carano (U0624).

11. Levico (U0565, Male, 19 years old), Mori (U0569, Female, 21 years old).

12. For a further discussion of subject agreement morphology in both Romance and Germanic varieties, we refer to Bidese and Tomaselli (2018) and Tomaselli and Bidese (2019).

13. According to the extensive literature on the topic (see, among many others, Renzi and Vanelli 1983; Rizzi 1986; Poletto 2000; Roberts 2010a, 2010b), subject clitic doubling in a no-topicalization context is reported in all northern Italian dialects and in some Tuscan varieties. Interestingly this is in contrast with the realization of subject pronouns in [+V2, -NS] Germanic varieties where a preverbal subject always excludes doubling with a pronominal form (enclisis on the right of the finite verb).

14. According to Casalicchio and Cordin (2020, p. 262), the absence of subject clitic doubling belongs to a more general phenomenon in these contexts, i.e., the ban of agreement (see also Bidese and Tomaselli 2021 and Padovan et al. 2021), which can be seen not only from the absence of the subject clitic but also from the absence of agreement in number and gender in the participle (cf. ii):

(ii)	a.	Sète putèle	le	è	vegnude	con ti.	(Casalicchio and Cordin 2020, pp. 262)
		seven girls	they.CL	are	come.F.PL	with you	
		"Seven girls came with you."					
	b.	Quante putèle	è	vegnù /	*vegnude	con ti?	
		how many girls	is	come.M.SG /	come.F.PL	with you	
		"How many girls came with you?"					

15. Cf. ASIt search engine: <http://svrims2.dei.unipd.it:8080/asit-maldura/pages/search.jsp> (accessed on 17 December 2021); see: "Sceglie la regione" *Trentino Alto Adige;* "Sceglie la provincia" *Trento;* "Seleziona una o più marche..." *soggetto > soggetto postv;* sentences 4, 21, 22, 27, 28, 61, 62, 63, 67, 68.

16. The role of intonation could prove fundamental in the possible distinction between postverbal right-dislocated structures (which require the clitic) versus postverbal VP internal subjects. Nevertheless, the judgment obtained for sentence (34) as opposed to (36) represents the relevant point, even if it requires further documentation.

[17] The percentage increases if we exclude the data collected in the city (cf. footnotes 16 and 17 below): excluding the 19 informants from Verona (4 with the clitic, 15 without it), 8 of the remaining 22 records collected display an expletive clitic.

[18] For an analysis of the clitic *a* as a modal particle rather than a pronominal subject, see Benincà (1994, pp. 15–27).

[19] Verona (4), Colognola ai Colli, Tregnago, Vigasio, Montecchio di Crosara, Bonavigo, Monteforte d'Alpone, Roveredo di Guà, Selva di Progno. If we exclude the two attestations with *a* collected in Montecchio di Crosara and Bonavigo, we are left with ten attestations with the clitic "*l*" coherently with our observation.

[20] Verona (15), Zevio (2), Sona, Bonavigo, Montecchio di Crosara, Isola, Negrar, Bovolone, Pescantina, Veronella, Grezzana, Bevilacqua, Legnago, Illasi.

[21] The two examples with the clitic come from Schio and Sarego; the eight examples without the clitic come from Recoaro, Arsiero, Sarcedo, Pozzoleone, Valdagno, Bassano, Breganze, Thiene.

[22] We do not consider Rovigo, which seems to behave like Venice (just two records, both without the clitic); nor do we include Belluno, whose area has not yet been covered by data collected in VinKo at this stage of the project.

[23] A further refinement of the data with the representation of the single investigated localities in a geographical map is beyond the purpose of this paper. We want to thank one of the anonymous reviewers who encouraged us to propose a first row synthesis which could certainly be implemented in the future relying on the revised version of the VinKo corpus.

[24] The data presented in § 5 have been collected by interviewing dialect speakers of the relevant area (many thanks to SB, AP, EB, CP). It should be noted that they confirm the situation already presented and discussed in Benincà (1994, in particular, chapter 2, *Appunti di sintassi veneta*) when the ASIT project was just starting (as well as other relevant subsequent digital corpora devoted to dialectal syntax).

[25] The analysis of WH-clauses as instances of 'residual' verb second (i.e., finite verb movement to C and, hence, subject inversion) in both English and Romance goes back to Rizzi (1996).

[26] See Casalicchio and Cordin (2020, p. 115): "In C[entral] T[rentino] direct interrogative sentences, a subject clitic must follow the inflected verb when no lexical subject is expressed."

[27] Note that, contrary to what we will see for the Veneto dialects (cf. 54), the cleft itself represents a further context which displays enclisis in Trentino.

[28] In Trentino, in copular sentences (and, hence, in cleft constructions), an expletive subject pronoun always appears as correlate of the extraposed subject clause. For a more detailed analysis, see Casalicchio and Cordin (2020, p. 317).

[29] Casalicchio and Cordin (2020, p. 116, footnote 30) noted that young speakers, especially in cities, seem to lose the subject clitic inversion, in particular, in connection with very frequent verbs (see also Poletto 1993 for the same phenomenon in other northern Italian dialectal varieties).

[30] The only exception is Venice, where the word order pattern that maintains proclisis is well attested and does not imply surprise, as already noted by Benincà (1994):

(iii)	a.	Gas=*tu*	visto	to	zio?		Benincà (1994, p. 57)
		have.$_{2PS}$-you.$_{CL}$	seen	your	uncle		
		"Did you see your uncle?"					
	b.	Ti	ga	visto	to zio?		
		You	have.$_{2PS}$	seen	your	uncle	

Nowadays, the variant exemplified in (b) is certainly preferred if not the only one. The exception of Venice confirms, in any case, the gradual loss of enclitic subjects in the interrogative context, starting from the East.

[31] See, among others, Bidese et al. (2014), Padovan et al. (2016), Bidese (2017a, 2017b), Bidese and Tomaselli (2021), in line with the tradition of studies on syntactic contact within the generative framework that goes back at least to Benincà (1994).

[32] See Rabanus and Tomaselli (2017), Ciccolone and Negro (2021), and literature cited there.

[33] For a detailed typology of V2, see Holmberg (2015) and Giorgi et al. (2021), among others.

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