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Contact-induced changes in cliticization and word order: the Cimbrian dialect of Luserna as a case study

Abstract

Which properties of a cliticization system can be borrowed relatively easily and which ones are harder to adapt due to external influence? This article examines the contact situation of the Cimbrian dialect spoken in Luserna as a starting point for a discussion of this question. It presents new data on a German variety which has been exposed to intensive contact with Italian and its local varieties over several generations. The article shows that certain peculiarities of the Cimbrian cliticization system result on the one hand from word order changes and on the other hand from the imitation and integration of the model language's strategies for mapping information structure onto sentence form.

Keywords: grammatical borrowing, clitics, Cimbrian, Italian

1. Introduction

Which types of contact-induced syntactic changes are possible? Given the fact that the article focuses on one concrete contact situation, only a limited range of syntactic changes will be discussed. The contact situation in Luserna has been characterized by stable bilingualism for generations. The Cimbrian dialect is used side by side with Italian, the official language, which prevails in administration, education and the media. Cimbro dominates language use not only in the domestic context but in all orally performed interactions. Throughout this paper, I will refer to Italian as the model or source language and Cimbro as the recipient language (cf. Van Coetsem 2000). The idealized general aim of developments in a recipient language can be conceptualized as attaining the highest degree of similarity to the structures of the model language. I will call this approach the isomorphism concept. Matras (2007: 67) assumes on the basis of results concerning the borrowability of structural categories that the "trigger for borrowing […] is the need to reduce the cognitive load when handling a complex linguistic repertoire". In relatively small communities characterized by long-term collective bilingualism, we are confronted with the problem that changes can be triggered by different mechanisms such as code-switching and code alternation or by mechanisms linked to second language acquisition strategies. For example, this applies to women who become part of the community via marriage, assimilate linguistically and consequently influence the bilingual first language acquisition of the next generation. Moreover, a minority language like Cimbro is not exposed to social control so that elements and structures of the model language are tolerated virtually without any limit (cf. Weinreich 1963: 83–87). If we agree with Sasse (1992: 61) that in cases of long-term collective bilingualism "[t]he ideal goal over the long term […] is a total isomorphism

of the two languages", it also seems to be interesting to consider the fictional outcome of this development and discuss changes which have not (yet) taken place.

In search for answers to the question of how easily the grammar of the recipient language can be altered by the influence of a model language in contact situations, one is confronted with rather different and partially controversial statements, cf. e.g. HEINE & KUTEVA (2001: 395, 2005: 264) and WINFORD (2003: 61). Views also differ on what kind of underlying processes should be regarded as the most important ones, e.g. grammaticalization and/or lexical borrowing (cf. HEINE & KUTEVA 2005 and KING 2000). This article reports on the most important properties of pronominal cliticization in Cimbro. It mainly focuses on the question of which properties can be considered to result from contact-induced change. It thus provides an impression of what components of a cliticization system are harder to adapt due to external influence in this specific contact situation. Moreover, it is shown that the observed changes can be best accounted for by considering them as a part of superordinate modifications concerning word order.

After surveying the history and sociolinguistic setting of the contact situation (section 2), I will concentrate on the following linguistic aspects: (1) the investigation of the cliticization of pronominals in Cimbro, where evidently only certain parts of the cliticization system have altered while others remain stable (section 3); (2) contact-induced changes regarding pronominal clitics and information structure (section 4) and (3) the phenomenon called "clitic doubling", which probably indicates a change of the agreement system of Cimbro (section 5).

2. Cimbrians and Cimbro

The name Cimbrian is applied to a group of South Bavarian dialects spoken in the Italian Alpine region east of the river Adige and south of the river Brenta. It is a remnant of the legends linked to the origin of this German-speaking minority propagated by Italian scholars in the 14th century. In describing the Cimbrian variety of the so-called *Sieben Gemeinden* (seven communities) in 1838, JOHANN ANDREAS SCHMELLER linguistically proved that the Cimbrians are not offspring of the Germanic tribe of the same name, but came into being south of the German-Italian language border and were separated from the German-speaking area sometime after the 11th century. Most of the settlements in the provinces of Veneto and Trentino were founded during the late middle ages in the 12th and 13th century.[1] The Cimbrian language, which was the first language of more than 30,000 people in the so-called *Sette comuni*, *Tredici comuni* and the elevated plains of Folgaria and Lavarone in the 17th and 18th century, is almost extinct nowadays (cf. ROWLEY 1996). Today, after centuries of language maintenance in a Romance-speaking environment, one can find speakers still fluent in both Cimbrian and Italian (and the local Italian dialect) only in Luserna,

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[1] In the north-eastern part of Italy, several groups of German-speaking minorities can be distinguished which date back to settlements in the late middle ages. According to the traditional practice of German dialectology, only the German dialects in the communities of the so-called *Sette comuni*, *Tredici comuni* and the elevated plain of Folgaria and Lavarone are called Cimbrian, whereas the German dialect spoken in the valley of the river Fersina (called Mòcheno) and the dialects spoken in the far east near the border to Austria (in Sappada, Sauris, Timau) are not included in the group of Cimbrian dialects.

a small village in the mountains of the south-eastern part of the Italian province of Trentino, 50 km south east of Trient.

The Cimbrian dialect of Luserna, which is called *Cimbro* or *Azbebiar* (literally 'as how we (talk/are)') by most of the villagers, was first described by JOSEPH BACHER (1905); recent grammatical descriptions have been provided by TYROLLER (2003) and PANIERI et al. (2006).[2]

The community of Luserna, situated at the extreme edge of an elevated plain, was founded as permanent secondary settlement of Lavarone in the 16th century. In the first two decades of the 20th century, more than 900 people lived in Luserna, in 1920 even more than 1000. Today no more than 300 people are officially registered in Luserna. Reasons for the decline are diseases in the 1920s and the so-called *Option* in the early 1940s, i.e. the possibility to settle in Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia as a consequence of the agreement between Hitler and Mussolini in October 1939. After World War II, a strong tendency to permanently move to the surrounding valleys emerged. Nowadays the most important factor for a decrease in number of inhabitants is the effect of negative population growth. Thus, the current socio-economic situation is mainly due to the increasing percentage of elderly people. At the beginning of the 21st century, about 90 % of the estimated 200 permanent residents of Luserna regard themselves as bilingual in Cimbro and Italian, while the rest are monolingual in Italian. Although the German-speaking population has always been dominant since the beginning of the settlement in the 16th century, there are reasons to suppose that reasonable comprehension and communication in Italian (and the local dialect) has been widespread for generations. Both ecclesiastical membership and jurisdiction joined the villagers to the Italian-speaking southern and northern valleys (Brancafora in Val d'Astico and Caldonazzo in Val Sugana) at least for the first two hundred years. For a very long time, language contact in Luserna was characterized by a situation which can be described as stable bilingualism. Thanks to their legal status as language minority, the financial support from the government and the creative work of the local documentation centre, there is still hope that the tendency to shift to Italian as the single language, which has been intensifying since the 1970s, can be stopped. Most Cimbro data presented in this paper date from the beginning of the 21st century and were collected by the author by interviewing speakers, who acquired Cimbro as first language, speak it fluently and use it in every-day life with other native speakers.

3. Cliticization of pronominals in Cimbro

The Cimbrian dialect of Luserna possesses formally distinct series of subject and object pronouns (cf. Table 1 in the appendix). Stressed forms containing a long vowel, i.e. a long monophthong or a diphthong, can be distinguished from weak forms containing a short vowel.[3] These forms are called pronominal clitics because they cannot be used in isolation, i.e. they cannot constitute an utterance on their own, cf. the contrasts in (1). Instead, they are phonologically deficient and pronounced as a unit with the following or preceding

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[2]　In the *Zimbrische Gesamtgrammatik* written by BRUNO SCHWEIZER in the middle of the 20th century and edited by JAMES R. DOW in 2008, the dialect of Luserna is considered as it was already described by BACHER (1905) and GAMILLSCHEG (1912).

[3]　The only exception to this generalization is the pair of (homophonous) NOM and ACC forms 3.SG.N.

word which constitutes their host (cf. HALPERN 1998). Throughout this article only enclitic pronominals are indicated as such with the symbol '=' preceding them:

(1a) *Ber*   *is*   *khent?*   *Ēr*   //   **Dar*   */*Ar*
       [WH   is   come:PS.P]   [3.SG.M.NOM]
       'Who came?'   'He'

(1b) *Bem*   *hast=(d)o*   *gesēk?*   *Īmen*   //   **En*
       [WH   have=2.SG.NOM   see:PS.P]   [3.SG.M.ACC]
       'Who did you see?'   'Him'

Some of the clitic forms cannot be derived from the corresponding stressed ones on the basis of phonological rules. This applies to the enclitic forms of the second person plural accusative and dative, which are not distinguished from the ones encoding the first person plural accusative and dative. Because Cimbro does not share this feature either with other Upper German dialects or with Italian varieties, it is likely that this peculiarity is an outcome of an independent development which leads to this syncretism.

In the domain of morphological forms, external influence barely seems to exist. What can be ascribed to the influence of northern Italian dialects is the fact that the stressed plural forms showing the extension with *-andre* 'others' are based upon a loan translation from the immediate contact varieties, the dialects spoken in the provinces Trentino and Veneto. Interestingly, northern Italian varieties exhibit the extension with *altri* in the stressed plural forms only in the first and second person (cf. VANELLI & RENZI 1997: 107). Thus, we are confronted not only with a case of transfer but also with a case of generalization. Similarly, the Alemannic dialect of Issime, spoken in the westernmost part of northern Italy, shows this peculiarity (cf. ZÜRRER 1999, chapter 5.2).

In answering the question of how the system of clitic subject and object pronouns in Cimbro arose, the following facts are significant.

We are in the fortunate position that one of the Cimbrian varieties, namely that which was spoken in the Seven Communities around Asiago, was used as a written language already at the beginning of the 17th century and also in the 19th century. Religious texts and poems exist that have been handed down from one generation to the next for teaching (e.g. catechisms, cf. MEID 1985a and MEID 1985b). BIDESE (2008: 99, 125) shows that in the first Cimbrian catechism published in 1602 reduced personal pronoun forms can be distinguished from full forms on a morpho-phonological level for many persons (cf. also FERRERO 1981). In the second catechism published in 1813, even more correspondences between full and reduced forms can be detected. On the other hand, we know that German dialects spoken in the cohesive territory of the German-speaking area today possess pronominal clitics. The German dialect groups of Alemannic and Bavarian, of which the latter can be considered the closest relative to the Cimbrian dialect group, are also characterized by weak pronominals (cf. ALTMANN 1984 and WEISS 1998 for Bavarian and PENNER 1991, NÜBLING 1992, COOPER 1999 for Alemannic). Because of the lack of detailed diachronic studies concerning the development of pronominal clitics in German varieties we are forced to rely predominantly on synchronic typological comparisons. Thus, it can be concluded that Cimbro is predisposed to the development of clitic subject and object pronouns. The fact that it possesses a distinct series of subject and object pronouns is not the outcome of contact-induced change.

3.1. Proclitics and enclitics

In Cimbro only weak subject pronouns can be further subdivided into proclitics and enclitics. A proclitic subject pronoun is always adjacent to a finite verb form. The stressed subject pronoun *biar* 'we' in (2b) cannot be replaced by the unstressed form *bar*.[4] An enclitic subject pronoun is attached either to a finite verb form, like =*bar* in (2b), or to an appropriate conjunction (see section 3.2).

(2a) *Bar*　　　　*gē-n=s=en*　　　　　　　　　　　*morng*
　　　 [1.PL.NOM　　give-1.PL=3.SG.N.ACC=3.PL.DAT　tomorrow]
　　　 'We'll give it to them tomorrow'

(2b) *Biar*　　　 *in*　　 *zimbar*　　 *kö=bar*　　　 *z'stiana*
　　　 [1.PL.NOM　in　　 cimbro　　 say=1.PL.NOM　to stand]
　　　 'We, in cimbro, call it *z'stiana*' (*z'stiana* means 'to work as a servant')

Weak object pronouns are always enclitically attached to a preceding host. As a comparison of the examples in (3a) and (3b) shows, the weak object pronouns =*s* 'it' and =*en* 'them' cannot occupy a position in front of the finite verb in main clauses.

(3a) *Morng*　　　　 *gē=bar=s=en*
　　　 [tomorrow　　　give=1.PL.NOM=3.SG.N.ACC=3.PL.DAT]
　　　 'Tomorrow we'll give it to them'

(3b) *Morng*　　　 *s=en=gē=bar*　　 //　　 **Morng en=gē=bar=s*　　 //
　　　 **Morng*　　　*s=gē=bar=en* (intended meaning as in example (3a))

Regarding the exclusively enclitic attachment of weak object pronominals to finite verb forms, the German dialect of Luserna is conservative, because it shares this particularity with other German varieties spoken today. Concerning the relative position of object clitics and finite verb form, it can be stated that Cimbro has not broadened the phonological orientation or "phonological liaison" of object clitics (parameter 3 within the typology of Klavans 1985) under the influence of Italian or northern Italian dialects which attach weak object pronouns proclitically to the finite verb in most contexts.

3.2. Hosts

3.2.1. Subordinating conjunctions

Another fundamental difference between the Cimbrian and the Romance cliticization system concerns the fact, that in Cimbrian pronominal object clitics can not only take verb forms but also subordinating conjunctions as their host.[5] In Cimbro, there exists a small number of conjunctions which can serve as a host for phonologically deficient pro-

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4　Note that in the Cimbrian dialect of Luserna, subject doubling of the sort **Biar kö=bar* …'We say …' is not possible. The case attested in (2b), i.e. the possibility of repeating a sentence-initial subject expression, depends on the fact that the intervening phrase represents a non-attributive sentence constituent.

5　At least the current Romance languages differ in this respect. The Old Romance languages seem to show some similarities with Cimbro and German varieties regarding the clitizication of pronominals to subordinating conjunctions (Esther Rinke, p.c., cf. also Hinzelin 2007).

nominals: *as* 'that, if' (related to German *dass*), *bo* 'where' (a WH-word also used as relative particle, related to German *wo*), *bi/be* 'whether, if' (related to German *wenn*), *vor* 'before' and *bal* 'when' (related to German *(so)bald*). In subordinate clauses introduced by one of these conjunctions (or a combination such as *intanto as* 'while'), pronominal clitics are normally attached to them and positioned preverbally, cf. *=ar=en* in (4a) and *=sa=en* in (4b). Object noun phrases have to be positioned postverbally, cf. *di freikarte* in example (4a):

(4a)　[…] ***as=ar=en***　　　　　　　　　*gēbe*　　*di*　　*freikarte*
　　　　[CONJ=3.SG.M.NOM=3.PL.DAT　give:SUBJ　ART　free ticket]
　　　　'[…] that he would give them the free ticket'

(4b)　[…] *pit*　*nan*　*gēsle*　***bo=s(a)ᵢ=enᵢ***　　　*han*　*gekócht*　*z' essa*
　　　　[PREP　ART　gas:DIM　WH=3.PL.NOM=3.PL.DAT　have　cook:PS.P　to eat:INF]
　　　　'[…] with a small gas (cooker) where they cooked meals for themselves'

The negation particle *net* 'not' intervenes between pronominal clitics and the finite verb form in this context, cf. (5) taken from PANIERI et al. (2006: 343). In subordinate clauses the negative particle *net* 'not' has to be positioned preverbally only if the verb form is simple as in (5). With complex verb forms the word order known from matrix sentences is also possible, cf. PANIERI et al. (2006: 341).

(5)　*As=ar=s=en*　　　　　　　　　　　　　　***net***　*gitt […]*
　　　[CONJ=3.SG.M.NOM=3.SG.N.ACC=3.PL.DAT　NEG　gives]
　　　'If he doesn't give it to them, […]'

The subordinating conjunctions enumerated above can serve as a host for object clitics if the subject of the embedded clause is realized as a pronominal. When the subject is realized as a lexical noun phrase, the object clitic can attach to the conjunction only if the subject noun phrase is in a postverbal position, cf. (6a) vs. (6b). Otherwise, the weak object pronoun has to be positioned enclitically to the finite verb, cf. (6c).

(6a)　*I*　*boas*　*net*　*be=da=**me***　　　*han*　*gesēk*　*moine*　*prüadar*
　　　[I　know　NEG　CONJ=there=1.SG.ACC　have　see:PS.P　my　brothers]
　　　'I don't know if my brothers have seen me'

(6b)　**I boas net be=da=me moine prüadar han gesēk*

(6c)　*I boas net be=da moine prüadar han=**me** gesēk*

The element *da* 'there' is the weak form of a deictic particle with local meaning and serves as a kind of expletive in this context (cf. KOLMER 2005a). It is compatible with all subordinating conjunctions belonging to the class mentioned above and has to be present in contexts illustrated by the examples in (6a) and (6c).

Additionally, in the Cimbrian dialect of Luserna there is a class of conjunctions characterized by not being able to function as a host for cliticization of weak object pronouns. This class consists of the borrowed conjunction *ke* 'that' (cf. Italian *che*) and also of conjunctions with German origin such as *umbrom* 'because, why', *benn* 'when' and *bia* 'how' (cf. PANIERI et al. 2006: 339).

With regard to the distribution of pronominal clitics in subordinate clauses and especially of enclitic object (and reflexive) pronouns, it can be stated that in Cimbro basically all sentences introduced by a conjunction are compatible with the word order valid in (un-

marked) matrix sentences. There, object pronominals can never be positioned in front of the finite verb, cf. the sentences in example (3) above.

To sum up, in embedded clauses the positioning of object (and reflexive) pronouns to the left of the finite verb form (enclitically to the subordinating conjunction) occurs quite frequently. But in clauses introduced by conjunctions such as *ke* 'that' or *benn* 'when', cf. (7a) and (7b) respectively, pronominal object clitics always attach to the finite verb and not to the subordinating conjunction.

(7a) […] *ke*   *dar*   *lat=**me***   *nemear*   *gian* […]
      […] [that   3.SG.M.NOM   let=1.SG.ACC   not anymore   go]
      '[…] that he does not let me go anymore […]'

(7b) […] *benn*   *da*   *hon=**se***   *boraatet*
      […] [when   3.PL.NOM   have=REFL   marry:PS.P]
      (then we also asked them) '[…] when they got married'

Compared with German varieties like the Bavarian and Alemannic dialects spoken in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, the Cimbrian dialect of Luserna has minimized the "field" in subordinate clauses, which is confined by the subordinating conjunction and the finite verb, so that the word order OSV (with O realized as pronominal clitic and S realized as lexical noun phrase) is excluded here.

With respect to subordinating conjunctions as hosts for pronominal clitics, one can conclude for the Cimbrian dialect of Luserna that their clitic-attracting force is limited compared to their equivalents in the German varieties of the cohesive German-speaking territory. This limitation is a symptom of the levelling process leading to the neutralization of the word order asymmetry between main and subordinate clauses typical of German and some other West Germanic languages such as Dutch or Frisian. Consequently, the verb orientation of pronominal object clitics in Cimbrian is increasing, even though always in postverbal, enclitic position.

Cimbro still differs from Italian (and its dialectal varieties) not only in relation to the "phonological liaison" of object clitics but also with regard to their location. I will use the terms domain and anchoring in accordance with the typology of clitic positions proposed by ANDERSON (2005: 82), who modified the typology of KLAVANS (1985). In Cimbro, the domain for the placement of clitic pronouns in subordinate clauses with conjunctions such as *as* 'that' or *bi* 'whether' can be considered to be the clause. This becomes particularly evident in those instances where the anchoring element for clitic placement within the domain is the subordinating conjunction, i.e. the first element within the "subordinate clause" domain. Accordingly, some subordinating conjunctions are still possible hosts for pronominal clitics. Despite major word order changes leading to a radical limitation of the "middle field" and partly to a possible basis for reanalysing the object clitics as elements with "dual citizenship" (cf. KLAVANS 1985), two facts seem to have impeded the imaginable development of "(pre)verbal clitics" (which took place, for example, in the language history of Bulgarian, cf. PANCHEVA 2005): firstly, the negation particle has to be positioned between object clitics and finite verb form in at least some contexts, cf. example (5); and secondly, a strategy is available to avoid cliticization to the subordinating conjunction, cf. example (6a) vs. (6c).

3.2.2. *Verb forms*

As already mentioned and illustrated above, pronominal clitics in Cimbro can take verb forms as their host, cf. (8), (2a/b) and (3a) as examples with a simple finite verb form and the highlighted construction in (9) as an example with an embedded infinitive as clitic host.

(8) *Morng*   **gīb=e=dar=se**
     [tomorrow   give=1.SG.NOM=2.SG.DAT=3.PL.ACC]
     'Tomorrow I'll give them to you'

(9) *dopo*   *is=ta*   *khent*   *dar*   *Gianfranco*   *zo*   **nemma=se**
     [afterwards   is=there   come:PS.P   ART   Gianfranco   to   take:INF=3.PL.ACC]
     'Afterwards Gianfranco came to take them'

For affirmative verb forms in imperative mood there is no difference between Cimbro and Italian with regard to the relative position of verb form and object clitic, cf. (10) with enclitic pronominals both in Cimbro and Italian.

(10a) *Get=**san=as**!*   [Cimbro]   (10b) *Segui=**mi**!*   [Italian]
      [give:2.PL=PART.SG.N=1.PL.DAT]   [follow:2.SG=1.SG.DAT]
      'Give us some!'   'Follow me!'

With negative imperative forms, object clitics in Italian can be attached enclitically to the infinitive form and can also be inserted between the negative particle and the verb, cf. *Non far**lo**!/Non **lo** fare!* In Cimbro, no comparable alternation exists; both object clitic and negation particle are placed postverbally in this context, cf. *Tüa=s net!* 'Don't do it!' (cf. PANIERI et al. 2006: 275, footnote 82).

In interrogative sentences, weak subject and object pronouns are always enclitically attached to the finite verb:

(11a) *Koavst=**(d)o=se**?*
      [give:2.SG=2.SG.NOM=3.PL.ACC]
      'Do you buy them?'

(11b) *Bas*   *hat=**ar=en***   *köt?*
      [WH   has=3.SG.M.NOM=3.SG.M.DAT   say:PS.P]
      'What did he say to him?'

Concerning interrogative sentences that are distinguished from declaratives not solely by intonation, it is worth comparing the German dialect of Luserna with the surrounding local Italian varieties. It is a well known fact that northern Italian dialects possess subject clitics occurring beside coreferential noun phrases (or stressed pronouns), cf. the declarative sentence in example (12) taken from the database ASIS[6,7]. With finite verb forms in questions, these subject clitics appear as morphologized special endings that "historically arose from enclitic personal pronouns, which were originally postposed to the verb via

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[6]   The database of the Atlante Sintattico d'Italia Settentrionale (ASIS) is available online: http://asis-cnr.unipd.it/

[7]   According to VANELLI (1998: 29–30), six different systems exist in assertive clauses with regard to the paradigm of subject clitics. Many varieties possess obligatory subject clitics for the second singular and third person (singular and plural, masculine and feminine).

syntactic inversion" (Loporcaro 2001: 273). Despite the superficial similarity between (11a) and (13) (regarding the postverbal attachment of a morpheme denoting second person singular), these forms have a different morphological status:

(12) El   Mario$_i$ **el**$_i$ m'ha   vista   en   piazza
                                                                               [Arsiero, Veneto]
      [ART   Mario   he   1.SG.ACC has   see:PS.P   PREP   square]
      'Mario has seen me at the square'

(13) **La**   compri-**to**?   [ASIS: Arsiero, Veneto]
      [3.SG.F.ACC   buy:2.SG-2.SG.NOM]
      'Do you buy it?'

In northern Italian dialects (and some Rhaeto-Romance varieties, such as in Friuli), the morphologization of proclitic and enclitic subject clitics has progressed quite far. Multiple indexication in a context like the one exemplified in (12) is obligatory in many dialects (cf. Vanelli 1998: 37–38). In the Cimbrian dialect of Luserna, the degree of morphologization of pronominal clitics is very low, since multiple indexication is as yet limited to certain construction types. The most important ones concerning objects will be discussed in sections 4 and 5.

Regarding the feature of weak object pronouns enclitically attached to infinite verb forms, cf. example (9) above, Cimbro differs from almost all current German varieties, except for those exposed to intensive Romance contact such as the dialect called Mòcheno (cf. Rowley 2003: 277).

In a periphrastic verbal construction weak object pronouns do not always attach to the finite verb, i. e. the verb form positioned leftmost in the verbal complex. In constructions with a modal as a finite verb, the object clitic can also be attached to the infinitive, cf. (14a). With modal constructions in the perfect tense, attachments of object clitics to the modal (realized as past participle) can be observed, cf. (14b).

(14a) Umbrom   i   māge   net   herta   fermar=**me**, […]
       [because   I   may   NEG   always   stop:INF=1.SG.ACC]
       'Because I can't keep stopping, …'

(14b) Sem   hon=e   net   nō   gemát=**mar**   nemmen   in   pua
       [there   have=I   NEG   after   can:PS.P=1.SG.DAT take:INF   ART   boy]
       'There I couldn't take my boy with me'

The dialects of northern Italy are known to avoid the positioning of weak object pronouns as proclitics to the finite verb in the context of modal constructions in the perfect tense (cf. Benincà & Vanelli 1984: 189). The dialects of the Veneto region, for instance, prefer the order *Non abbiamo potuto veder**li*** 'We couldn't see them' with the enclitic attachment of the object pronoun to the infinitive form of the main verb to Standard Italian *Non **li** abbiamo potuti vedere*.[8] Interestingly, a Romance variety exists, which has been in constant contact with German for centuries: the Ladin dialect of the Val Gardena. Here, the same word order as in the Cimbrian dialect of Luserna can be observed for construc-

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8   Described according to the parameters proposed by Anderson (2005), the difference between the two variants lies in the choice of the "first" vs. the "last" element as the anchor for pronominal cliticization within the "verb phrase" domain.

tions exemplified in (14b); cf. the object clitic *me* in (15) from SALVI (1997: 293). But the direction of the attachment seems to exhibit an important difference. In Cimbrian, the phonological orientation of the weak pronoun clearly is enclitic (cf. =*mar* in (14b)) while in the Ladin dialect it is proclitic, cf. (15).

(15) *kæla*   *'e*   *i*   *pu'du*   ***me***   *kumpre*   *dan*   *træj'*   *ani*
     [that   have   I   can:PS.P   1.SG.DAT   buy:INF   before   three   years]
    'I could buy that for myself three years ago'

The Ladin dialect of the Val Gardena is not a direct contact variety of Cimbro but a Rhaeto-Romance variety deviating from other northern Italian varieties in word order characteristics similar to Cimbrian, e.g. subject-verb inversion with subject pronominals in main declarative clauses, cf. Cimbrian *hon=e* 'have I' in (14b) and Ladin *'e i* 'have I' in (15). This clearly shows that the German variety of Cimbro – being in constant contact with Italian varieties – and the Rhaeto-Romance variety of the Val Gardena – being in constant contact with German varieties – independently acquired a similar linear order regarding a particular infinitive construction containing a weak object pronominal. Further studies must confirm whether this is a special kind of convergence at the level of word order and whether parallel cases can be found in other language contact areas of the world.

3.3. Clitic clusters

As can be seen in example (14b) above, enclitic subject and object pronouns do not cluster in all contexts in Cimbro. Concerning the separability of two objects expressed as pronominal clitics, I have so far not come across any instances with the two object clitics separated from each other. Wherever a verb takes more than one object and these are all expressed as weak pronominals, they must be serialized in the following way (an optional enclitic subject pronoun included) (cf. BACHER 1905: 199):

    (NOM)=DAT=ACC   if DAT is 1.SG or 2.SG
    (NOM)=ACC=DAT   otherwise

The serialization ACC DAT is also valid for objects realized as lexical noun phrases in pragmatically unmarked contexts, cf. (16) taken from PANIERI et al. (2006: 303).

(16) *Dar*   *tatta*   *hatt*   *gett*   *'z*   *proat*   *in*   *khindarn*
    [ART   father   has   give:PS.P   ART   bread   ART   children]
    'The father gave the bread to the children'

The order ACC DAT is reversed when one of the deictic pronouns =*mar* and =*dar* is involved, cf. (17).

(17) *I*   *bill=**mar=en***   *net*   *leng*
    [I   want=1.SG.DAT=3.SG.M.ACC   NEG   put:INF]
    'I don't want to put it (on)'

The 1./2.DAT plural form =*as* is not affected by this rule, cf. (18a) with =*as* in the function of 1.PL.DAT and (18b) with =*as* in the function of 2.PL.DAT.

(18a) *hat=se=**s=as***   *gelát*   *leng*
    [has=3.SG.F.NOM=3.SG.N.ACC=1.PL.DAT   let:PS.P   lay:INF]
    'She let us put it down'

(18b) *Ēst   kūd=e=**s=as***
        [now   tell=1.SG.NOM=3.SG.N.ACC=2.PL.DAT]
        'Now I tell it to you'

The partitive clitics =*san* (SG.M and SG.N) and =*ar* (SG.F and PL for all genders), derived from Middle High German genitive pronouns, are treated like accusative clitics in the cluster; for an example with =*san* cf. (19).

(19) *minan   tratōr   vüarn=sa=**dar=san**   auvar*
       [PREP+ART   tractor   bring=3.PL.NOM=2.SG.DAT=PART.SG.N   up]
       'With a tractor they bring (it) up for you.' (some hay)

3.4. Changes in pronominal cliticization and word order

Examining the peculiarities of pronominal cliticization in Cimbro, one can see that Romance influence is limited. The enclitic nature characteristic of weak Bavarian object pronouns has basically not been altered. The internal serialization of object clitics has not been generalized to the order DAT ACC typical of both standard Italian and the Italian dialects of north-eastern Italy. There are still some subordinating conjunctions serving as hosts for object clitics. The most striking change concerns the fact that infinitival verb forms can host enclitic object pronouns, cf. example (9). This is a fundamental difference compared to other German dialects.

Whereas the direct object of an embedded infinitive expressed as a lexical noun phrase has to be placed postverbally, cf. (20), preverbal location of pronominal object clitics is possible under certain conditions.

(20) *Un   sain=da   auvar   kent   kámion   **zo   nemma   s   gehülz***
       [and   are=there   up   come:PS.P   trucks   to   take:INF ART   wood]
       'And there came up trucks to take the wood'

Preverbal positioning of the weak object pronoun in a subordinated infinitive construction is possible in two contexts. The first one is exemplified in (21a), where the direct object of *koava* 'buy' attaches to a preceding infinitive form (which is subordinated itself). The second context concerns the attachment of the object pronominal to the finite verb of the matrix sentence, cf. example (21b); the pronoun =*se* represents the direct object of the verb *nemma* 'take'. Thus "clitic climbing" to the next highest embedded infinitive or to the finite verb of the matrix clause is possible.

(21a) *Umbróm   di   solde   zo   giana=**s**   **zo   koava***
        [because   ART   money   to   go:INF=3.SG.N.ACC   to   buy:INF
        is=ta=da   net   gēst
        is=there=there   NEG   is:PS.P]
        'Because there was no money in order to go to buy it'

(21b) *han=sa=**se**   gemócht   gian   **zo   nemma   sem***
        [have=3.PL.NOM=3.SG.F.ACC   must:PS.P   go:INF   to   take:INF there]
        'They had to go to take it there' (the mail)

It has been questioned whether the peculiarities of Cimbrian word order concerning the relative order of verb and object are exclusively due to contact-induced change (cf. BACHER 1905: 198, TYROLLER 2003: 21). Adopting this view, one could state that the predominance

of the verb-object order in Cimbrian infinitive constructions is the result of extending a formerly marked variant attested in earlier periods of German (cf. for example the following Old High German sentence: *fár ér zi giwuonenne thih mít thinemo bruoder* 'go first to reconcile yourself with your brother', Tatian 27, 1, cited from SIEVERS 1966: 50). So far it cannot be ascertained to what extent this variation was a proper feature of the German varieties spoken in the territories near and in the Alps up to the 12th century, because appropriate studies are still lacking and difficult to undertake. The fact, that the Cimbrian dialects diverged in their development from those German varieties that were not exposed to language contact with Italian, can be used to argue that this at least represents a case of contact-induced word order change to some extent. In any case it cannot be proved that contact with Italian had no influence on the development in the Cimbrian dialects in this respect.

Despite the developments concerning cliticization to infinite verb forms, Cimbro does not exhibit "verbal clitics". In most of the Romance languages this type of pronominal clitic has at least some contexts where proclitic attachment to the verbal host is regular.

So far, I have treated pronominal clitics in Cimbro as representations of syntactic functions. Since there are contexts with a pronominal clitic that occur beside a coreferential noun phrase or strong pronoun, it is necessary to discuss the morphosyntactic status of pronominal clitics in Cimbro. Therefore, I will first investigate the role pronominal clitics play in marking information structure. The next sections will focus on object noun phrases in main clauses.[9]

4. Pronominal clitics and information structure in Cimbro

Deviation from the regular SVO order is marked. The syntactic properties of a nominal object, which is placed in sentence-initial position as a topic expression and which is not contrastively focused, are regularly repeated sentence-internally. This kind of construction is called "left detachment" or "left dislocation" (cf. LAMBRECHT 1994). Whereas in German *Linksversetzung* is accompanied by a preverbal coreferential demonstrative pronoun, cf. *Die Brigitte, **die** kann ich schon gar nicht leiden* (ALTMANN 1981: 48), *dislocazione a sinistra* is marked sentence-internally by a coreferential object clitic in Italian, cf. *Mario, **lo** vedo sempre* (BENINCÀ et al. 1988: 153). Cimbro has adopted the latter strategy with an intra-clausal object clitic repeating anaphorically the sentence-initial object, as can be seen in the following examples (22a) and (22b):

(22a) *De   fötsch$_i$ han=sa=**se**$_i$ gemacht   pit   alte   dekhan*
      [ART felt shoes have=3.PL.NOM=3.PL.ACC   make:PS.P PREP old   blankets]
      'The felt shoes they have made out of old blankets'

(22b) *Ma   in   püable$_i$ tüat=s=**en**$_i$ ont   […]*
      [but   the   boy:DIM   does=3.SG.N.NOM=3.SG.M.DAT   sorry]
      'But the little boy is sorry […]'

(22c) *[…] in   a   zikl.   A   zikl$_i$ nützt=ma=**se**$_i$ herta* […]
      [PREP ART bucket ART bucket   uses=INDEF=3.SG.F.ACC   always]
      '[…] in a bucket. A bucket one uses always […]'

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9   See KOLMER (2005b) for strategies for focusing the subject.

The object in sentence-initial position does not have to be marked as definite in order for the pronominal clitic to emerge. It suffices for the noun phrase to represent a discourse referent that has been introduced previously, cf. (22c). When the nominal object placed in sentence-initial position is contrastively focused, anaphoric resumption does not take place. In this respect, the German dialect of Luserna also corresponds to the model language Italian, cf. Benincà et al. (1988: 154).

Strong pronouns are not in complementary distribution with weak pronouns, cf. the examples in (23) with an object clitic occurring beside a focused strong pronoun. Similar patterns are attested in dialects of northern Italy, such as in Friuli (cf. Benincà 1989: 582).

(23a) *Du*   *hast=**me**$_i$*   *geböllt*   *vressan mī̄$_i$*   *un*   *est*   *dū*   *inveze …*
       [2.SG.NOM have=1.SG.ACC want:PS.P eat:INF   me   and   now   you   instead]
       'You wanted to eat ME and now YOU instead …'

(23b) […] *un*   *est*   *moch=bar=s=**en**$_I$*   *gēm*   *imenandern*$_i$
            [and   now   must=1.PL.NOM=3.SG.N.ACC=3.PL.DAT   give:INF   3.PL.DAT]
            '[…] and now we have to give it to THEM'

In summary it can be stated that the speakers of Cimbro have copied the patterns of mapping information structure onto sentence form of the model language Italian and its dialectal varieties. The most salient patterns dealing with extraposition and focusing have been integrated. The last section investigates the extent to which this integration has already influenced the grammar and in particular the agreement system. In the following, I will concentrate on object clitics.[10]

5. Pronominal clitics in Cimbro as agreement markers

Categorization problems with a weak pronominal arise mainly in two occasions: when we are confronted with distributional properties which distinguish it from a corresponding noun phrase; and/or, on the other hand, when its occurrence beside a coreferential noun phrase or a strong pronoun within a clause can be documented.

The former can be demonstrated by the following examples. In the Cimbrian dialect of Luserna, lexically realized objects do not occupy the position left of the main verb in main clauses with complex verb forms:

(24) *Di*   *baibar*   *hon*   **gesétzt**   **patātn**
      [ART   women   have   plant:PS.P   potatoes]
      'The women planted potatoes'

Weak object pronouns behave differently. In main clauses, they attach as enclitics to the finite verb, cf. (25):

(25) *Un*   *bia*   *da*   *han=**s**=**en***   *gett!*
      [and   WH   they   have=3.SG.N.ACC=3.PL.DAT   give:PS.P]
      'And how they have given (it to) them!' (physical punishment)

---

[10] In the case of subject clitics, more details must be considered, which shall not be treated in this paper. For further reading cf. Kolmer (2005b).

The occurrence beside a coreferential noun phrase or a strong pronoun within a clause can be observed in Cimbro too – so far only with partitive object clitics in connection with quantified noun phrases, cf. the examples in (26). There, the noun phrase is not dislocated or appositional, but represents the argument subcategorized by the verb.

(26a) *Alora pitn vīsan dā [...] han=e=**san** gemacht*
     [so PREP+ART meadows there have=1.SG.NOM=PART.SG.N make:PS.P
     ***genumma höbe** vor zwoa küa*
     enough hay PREP two cows]
     'So with the meadows there [...] I made enough hay for two cows'

(26b) *Ja, da han=**ar** kontart **vil** stördjela*
     [yes 1.PL.NOM have=PART.PL tell:PS.P many stories:DIM
     dīse djār in kindar
     [these years ART children]
     'Yes, they told the children many stories in these years'

The main debate on clitics concerns their status as head-like or phrase-like elements in a particular language (or language family) (cf. CARDINALETTI 1999). Head is a notion referring to one part of a complex constituent. In unification-based syntactic theory, the head can be a lexical or a functional category and is the element which determines the properties of the whole phrase. In a head-marking language, which uses inflectional devices to mark syntactic relations, the head is a vital element. It bears the "morphosyntactic marks linking that constituent with higher-level constituents" (CROFT 2001: 245). Analysing a pronominal clitic as a head (such as of an agreement projection) implies that it has lost its status as a dependent element of the verb. "This type of representation treats the clitics more as inflectional/agreement markers than as arguments per se" (FRANKS & KING 2000: 313). In order to detect the degree of similarity of a pronominal clitic with bound agreement markers one has to analyse the degree to which the clitic behaves like a prototypical agreement marker. If it occurs – according to certain properties of its domain – obligatorily in a certain position, which is fixed in relation to the verb, the marker resembles inflectional morphology. There are different properties which may be relevant, such as verbal finiteness (like subject agreement marking in many inflectional languages). Moreover, subcategorization of the verb as transitive or di-transitive is important (such as direct object agreement in Albanian, cf. SASSE 2001, or dative clitic doubling in the Italian dialects of Trentino, cf. CORDIN 1993). However, we are confronted with instances of non-canonical agreement marking when the placement of the clitic varies or, on the other hand, when the occurrence of clitic and corresponding noun phrase or strong pronoun alongside each other can be best described in discourse-pragmatic terms (cf. the canonical approach to agreement proposed by CORBETT 2003).

Dislocation constructions are wide-spread however "doubling constructions" such as those in (26) raise serious categorization problems concerning the syntactic status of the pronominal clitic. There are principally two ways to construct a syntactic analysis, as reasoned by CORBETT (2006: 102) in the context of pronominal affixes. Firstly, one can insist on the ideal of the functional uniqueness of morphological markers. This approach leads to two possibilities: the pronominal expressions can still be treated as pronouns or they can be regarded as pronominal affixes. Both are problematic in certain respects, which cannot be discussed in the present paper. On the other hand, one can dismiss the idea of functional

uniqueness and therefore assume a dual function for a single marker depending on the context: as a pronoun (when there is no full noun phrase) or as an agreement marker (when there is a full noun phrase in the canonical position for that syntactic function) (cf. BRESNAN 2001: 146). CROFT (2001: 228) suggests abandoning the assumption "that there is exactly one syntactic argument per semantic referent" altogether and advocates treating agreement as a symbolic and not syntactic relation. There is a wide difference between detachment and antitopic (or afterthought) constructions on the one hand and inflectional agreement on the other. GIVÓN (1976, 2001: 425) regards the former as the grounds on which the development of pronominal agreement can flourish. The Cimbro data above suggest that the implicational hierarchies proposed by GIVÓN (2001: 416) can be further subdivided. Within the domain of "direct object", quantified objects seem to be the first to trigger object agreement. This could be typical of languages which display weak pronominal pronouns denoting partitivity.

6. Summary

In this case study I have shown on the basis of data from Cimbrian that morphology, phonological orientation and internal serialization are the most stable components of a cliticization system. It has been asserted that the position of object pronouns as enclitics to an infinitival verb form can be regarded as the most striking difference between Cimbro and (most) other German varieties and that this difference is due to external influence to some extent. Moreover, it has been advocated that the modification of the inherited agreement system should be regarded as a change based upon the imitation and integration of detachment and focus constructions. It is assumed that in Cimbro the domain of partitivity and quantification gives way to the development of object agreement.

Abbreviations

1	first person	NOM	nominative
2	second person	PART	partitive
3	third person	PL	plural
ACC	accusative	PREP	preposition
ART	article	PRT	particle
CONJ	conjunction	PS.P	past participle
DAT	dative	SG	singular
DIM	diminutive	SUBJ	subjunctive
F	feminine	REFL	reflexive
INF	infinitive	REL	relative particle
INDEF	indefinite, generic pronoun	WH	wh-word
M	masculine	+N	intrusive [n] to avoid hiatus
N	neuter	+D	intrusive [d] to avoid hiatus
NEG	negator		

Appendix

	NOM			DAT		ACC	
	stressed	*weak/clitic*		*stressed*	*enclitic*	*stressed*	*enclitic*
		proclitic	*enclitic*				
1.SG	**ī**	**i**	**=e**	**miar**	**=mar**	**mī**	**=me**
2.SG	**dū**	**du**	**=do** (=Ø)	**diar**	**=dar**	**dī**	**=de**
3.SG.F	**sī**	**si**	**=se**	**iar**	**=ar**	**sī**	**=se**
3.SG.M	**ēr**	**dar**	**=ar**	**īmen**	**=en**	**īmen**	**=en**
3.SG.N	**is**	**s** (es)	**=s** (=es)			**is**	**=s** (=es)
INDEFINITE/GENERIC		**ma**	**=ma**				
1.PL	**biar** biar'andre ber'andre	**bar**	**=bar**	**ǖs** üs'andern	**=as**	**ǖs** üs'andre	**=as**
2.PL	**iar** iar'andre er'andre	**dar**	**=ar**	**aüch** aüch'andern		**aüch** aüch'andre	
3.PL	**sē** se'andre	**sa** **da**	**=sa**	**īmen** imen'andern	**=en**	**sē** se'andre	**=se**
				REFL (3.SG/PL)	**=se**		
				PART (SG.M/N)	**=san**		
				PART (SG.F and PL.F/M/N)	**=ar**		

Table 1: Pronominal forms in the Cimbrian dialect of Luserna. To obtain a phonetic representation of the forms, replace < e > with [ə], < a > with [ɒ] and < o > with [ɔ] in the columns for clitics. ē, ī and ǖ are long vowels.

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