Relaxed V2 languages and their Left Periphery. Two cases from Northern Italy

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Introduction: The aim of this talk is to contribute to our understanding of the V2 phenomenon by comparing two varieties spoken in Northern Italy (Trentino-South Tyrol): the Rhaeto-Romance variety of Badia (henceforth: R) and Mòcheno (M), a German dialect. Both have been independently claimed to be relaxed V2 languages, in which i) the finite verb and one XP have to move to CP for EPP reasons (Roberts 2004, Holmberg 2015), and ii) this movement coexists with V3/V4 word orders (cf. Rowley 2003 for M; Poletto 2002 for R, a.o.). By discussing a series of novel data on the structure of the left periphery in R&M, we show that they pattern alike in most contexts, and exhibit two properties which are incompatible with previous accounts of R (cf. Poletto 2002) and of relaxed V2 languages in general (Benincà 2006).

Properties of R&M: In previous accounts, the possibility of V3/V4 word orders in relaxed V2 languages was ascribed to the presence of an articulated left periphery in these varieties, like in modern Italian (cf. Rizzi 1997, Benincà 2001). However, R&M exhibit properties which are absent from modern Romance and have mostly remained unnoticed so far. These are:

1. Relativized Minimality effects (RM, cf. Rizzi 2004) in fronted topics: Two fronted topics can precede the verb; however, a given subject and a given object cannot contemporarily appear in the left periphery:

   (1) a. Luca ala mamak tik à=lj cumprè n liber (R)
   Luca to-the mum her has=he.cl bought a book
   a’. Der Luca en de mama hòt a puach kaft (M)
      the Luca to the mum has a book bought

   (2) a. *La mamaj l liberk, (lk) a(=laj) cumprà inier (R)
      the mum the book (it) has=she.cl bought yesterday
   a’. *De mama s puach hòt gester kaft (M)
      the mum the book has yesterday bought

We propose that the V3 order in (1) is due to the fact that the EPP feature is not satisfied by one of the fronted arguments, but by a pro in Fin⁰. Topics move directly to TopicP and are not base-generated there. Subject and object cannot co-occur because they share the same featural marking (+topic, -focus, -case, where case is to be understood as morphological case. This means that the presence/absence of a case assigning P is distinctive for +/- case in both R&M).
2. **Restrictions on V3 with a fronted focalised argument:** When a focalised element is fronted, strict V2 order is mandatory in R. Following Poleto (2002), we propose that the focalised element moves to ForceP, the highest projection of the clause in R. The EPP feature is on Force\(^0\), and the verb also moves to Force\(^0\) to satisfy it (see 3).

In M, just one topic can precede a fronted focus. In our proposal, this is due to the fact that in M focalisation is an instance of (focalised) topicalisation: since M has only two TopicPs (3), the lower one is occupied by the focus and one TopicP is available for topics. Moreover, in these sentences there are superiority effects: the [+contrastive] topic moves first to FinP to satisfy the EPP feature, creating the typical “bottle-neck” effect, which can be circumvented only by a topic whose base-position is higher than the base-position of the [+contrastive] XP.

3. **Asymmetries between main declarative and interrogative clauses:** In wh-interrogatives, V3/V4 word orders are possible in both R&M, but with one difference: in M we observe the same RM-effects observed in declarative clauses (2), while in R there are no restrictions on the simultaneous fronting of subject and object. We claim that in this case the EPP-feature in Fin\(^0\) is satisfied by the wh-element, and that in M the fronted topics are moved from a lower position; in R, instead, topics are base-generated when there is a wh-element.

**To conclude:** The base structure of the left periphery in both R&M is the following:

(3) \[ CP \{ \text{Force}^{+\text{EPP}} \} \{ \text{Topic} \{ \text{wh} \{ \text{Fin}^{+\text{EPP}} \} \{ V \} \} \} \]

NB: recall that the EPP-feature is usually in Fin\(^0\), but in R it is in Force\(^0\) when a focus is fronted.

**References:**