Subject clitic languages in comparison: Subject clitics, finite verb movement, and nomi-native case assignment in Germanic (Bavarian, Cimbrian) and Romance (French, North Italian)...

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Subject clitic languages in comparison:

Subject clitics, finite verb movement, and nominative case assignment in Germanic (Bavarian, Cimbrian) and Romance (French, North Italian) varieties

Alessandra Tomaselli and Ermenegildo Bidese

Abstract: Since the seminal work by Brandi & Cordin (1981; 1989), the syntactic differences between subject clitics in Italian dialects (Trentino and Fiorentino) and subject clitics in French have been assumed to rely on the value of the null subject parameter: subject clitics in Italian dialects behave like verbal affixes; that is, they do not realize a specific position but should be considered as verbal morphology. Subject clitics in French realize the structural position for the subject connected with nominative case assignment. The Germanic-Romance comparative perspective allows us to provide a more complex picture. On one hand, the difference between 'weak pronouns' and clitics could be better understood: 'weak' German pronouns in the so-called *Wackernagelposition* are not morphologically distinct from full pronouns and cannot double the subject, but they present some analogies with French clitics rather than with clitics in Italian dialects. On the other hand, subject clitics in Germanic varieties such as West Flemish and Bavarian, and even in isolated varieties such as Cimbrian, differ strongly from their Romance counterparts with regard to both finite verb movement and nominative case assignment, and have been analyzed as being either agreement morphology in C or nominative case markers. The consideration of all the factors involved in the definition of 'subject clitic' allow us to define the feature characterization of the hosting head, which acts as a probe for the cliticization process, and to re-evaluate the traditional distinction between COMP-dominant versus

1. Introduction*

The categorial status of subject pronouns extends from the notion of full subjects to the notion of verbal agreement through the intermediate step of reduced/weak pronominal forms, and it qualifies the different stages of what has been recapped as "the Subject Agreement Cycle" (van Gelderen 2011):

full subject pronoun → weak subject pronoun → subject clitic → null subject + rich verbal morphology

The four stages of the cycle can be exemplified easily by the following classes of languages:

1. English (full subject pronouns);
2. German (reduced subject pronouns);
3. French / German(ic) dialects / North Italian dialects (subject clitics); and
4. Standard Italian (null subject + rich verbal morphology).

It is interesting to note that the difference between pronouns and clitics is well established from a morphological point of view: A clitic class is justified only by the existence of two different morphological paradigms, which allows the well-known phenomenon of reduplication (see Kayne 1975, Renzi & Vanelli 1983). From this point of view, classes 1 and 2 go together, and are entirely fully differentiated from

class 4 as far as the value of the null subject parameter (henceforth 'NSP') is concerned.[1]

In this contribution, we concentrate on class 3. On one hand, the traditional divide between the two Romance subtypes, French and (some) Northern Italian dialects, has been debated extensively since Brandi & Cordin (1981, 1989); on the other hand, the syntax of German(ic) clitics reinforces and sheds light on the components that derive from the positive or negative value of both the NSP and

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the V2 phenomenon (that is, mandatory V-to-C movement in the root declarative clause).

The languages listed in class 3 belong to the same group from a morphological point of view (showing two distinct pronominal paradigms), but they differ crucially from a syntactic perspective as far as the following phenomena, among others, are concerned:

(i)   Position with regard to the hosting head; that is, proclisis versus enclisis;[2]

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[1]   With regard to the subtle difference between full and weak pronouns (1. vs. 2.) in German, we refer directly to the relevant literature (see Cardinaletti & Starke 1999, among others). What is important for the purpose of the present paper is the fact that weak pronouns in German are restricted to the *Wackernagelposition*.
[2]   This opposition obviously refers to cliticization to Vfnt in declarative sentences It is a well-known fact that Germanic varieties do not present proclisis at all, while French and North Italian dialects display proclisis to the finite verbal form in declarative clauses and enclisis in specific contexts, such as

(ii)   co-occurrence with full pronouns and DP subjects; and
(iii)   coordination.

From this perspective, the differences between subject clitics in a North- ern Italian dialect such as Trentino and French will gain a new relevance precisely through the comparison with their Germanic counterparts along the lines already traced by Poletto & Tomaselli (1995).

    In this paper, we will first recap the basic differences with regard to the three phenomena listed above (§§ 2, 3, 4), and will then outline the analysis (§ 5) of the data; § 6 presents some concluding remarks.

2. Proclisis versus enclisis

Clitic syntax in both Romance and Germanic varieties implies the activation of a portion of the sentence structure between C (more accurately, the lowest portion of Rizzi's (1997) split C domain, Fin) and T, which corresponds traditionally to the *Wackernagelposition* (henceforth WP, see Weiß 2018) in the analysis of Germanic varieties and to a (shell of) functional projection(s) in Romance variously called AgrSP, CliticP (Sportiche 1996, Bidese 2008, 2011), and SubjectP (Cardinaletti 2004, Haegeman 2014):

$$C/Fin \leftarrow \qquad (WP/CliticP) \rightarrow \qquad T$$

Crucially, pronominal elements occurring in WP are attracted by C (correlation with the V2 phenomenon), and pronominal elements in AgrSP; on the other hand, they cliticize on T (correlation with the NSP).

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    It is interesting to note that the activation of this portion of sentence structure is related strongly to nominative case assignment (= NOM),

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    root wh-clauses, in which subject inversion occurs, and non-finite verbal forms.

which derives from the feature characterization of C in V2 languages, and of T in Romance. This difference is mirrored by a different strategy of cliticization in the two groups of languages: enclisis on the finite verb(/complementizer) in C^0 in the V2 type, and proclisis on the finite verb in the T domain in Romance. The correlation between NOM and cliticization is illustrated by the following diagrams (see also Bidese, Padovan, Tomaselli, *in press*):

(1) Nominative Case Assignment + enclisis
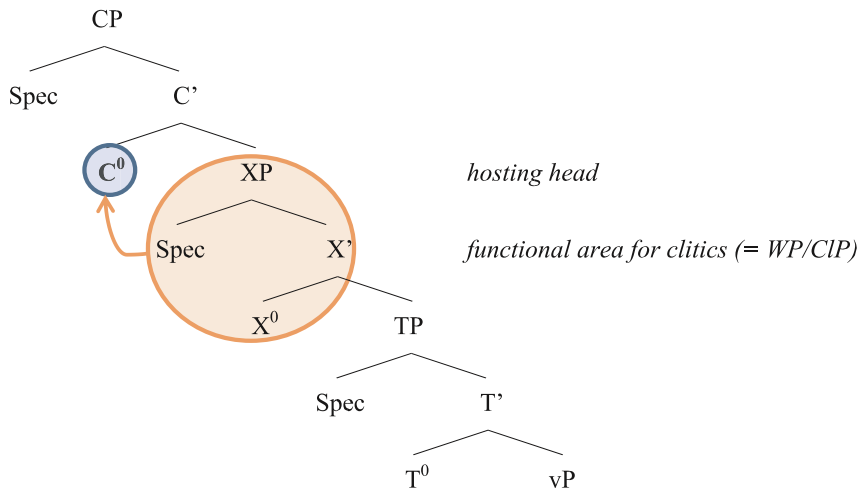
In Germanic V2 languages, C (/Fin) is endowed with the proper functional features that are responsible for both mandatory finite verb movement and NOM assignment to the specifier of the lower functional position. In this configuration, cliticization applies upwards to the right of C, independently of its lexicalization, as either a finite verb (see 2a and 3a) or a subordinating conjunction (see 2b and 3b):

(2) a Dann fahr=**ma** noch Minga   (Bavarian)
       then   go.1PL   to   Munich
       'Then we go to Munich'

b …, dass=**ma** noch Minga   fahr-n
    that.1PL to   Munich   go
  '…, that we're going to Munich'

(3) a Dena gea=**bar**   ka Tria   (Cimbrian)
    then go=we.CL   to Trento
    'Then we go to Trento'
  b …, az=**bar**   gian ka Tria
    that=we.CL   go   to Trento
    '…, that we go to Trento'

(4) Nominative Case Assignment + proclisis

functional area for clitics (=WP/ClP)

hosting head
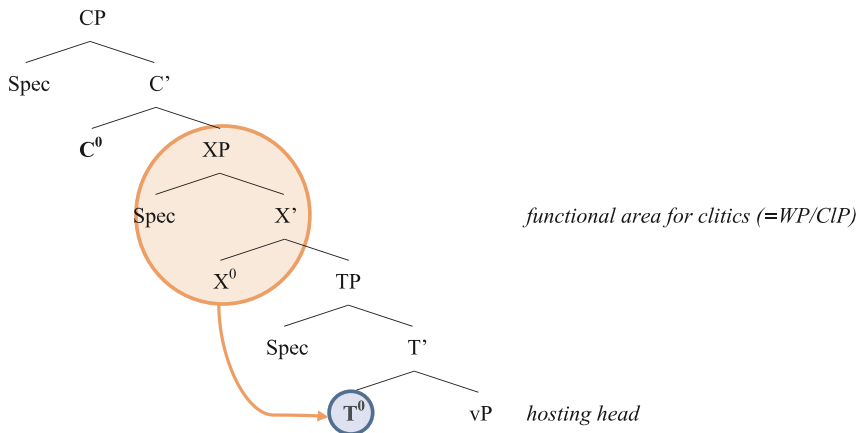
In Romance, finite verb moment ends up in the Tense domain, and NOM assignment is traditionally assumed to apply via agreement with [Spec, TP] (traditionally called the 'structural subject position'). In this configuration, cliticization applies downwards to the left of the finite verb in T^0:

(5)   (qu')   aujourd'hui **il**   chante   (French)
    that   today   he.CL   sings
    '(that) today he's singing'

(6) (che) ancoi **el** canta (Trentino)
       that today he.CL sings
       '(that) today he's singing'

It is interesting to note that proclisis never implies an orthographic coa- lescence of the clitic with the finite verb, unlike enclisis. As Renzi & Vanelli (1983) originally noted, proclisis presupposes more distance with regard to the hosting head. In fact, in contrast to enclisis, proclisis does not require strict adjacency, which is always broken by the intervention of (at least) clitic objects.

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3. Clitic doubling phenomena

The difference in NOM case assignment not only reflects the divide between enclisis and proclisis, it also provides an explanation to the different possibilities of subject reduplication. We find different scenarios in Romance languages:

(i) Italian shows no subject doubling phenomena because of the lack of a subject clitic paradigm (see 7a-b):

(7) a *pro* canta (Italian)
             sings
        'S/he is singing'
    b *Gianni /* *Lui* canta
        Gianni / he sings
        'Gianni / He is singing'

(ii) French admits the possibility of reduplicating the subject (full DP or subject pronoun) with a clitic pronoun, resulting in an emphatic meaning (see 8):

(8) *Jean / Lui* (**il**)   chante   (French)
     Jean / he (he.CL)   sings
     'Gianni / He is singing'

(ii) In Trentino, a subject clitic *must* follow the DP subject or the sub-
      ject full pronoun, and it cannot be omitted. No emphatic interpre-
      tation is conveyed by the reduplication, at least as far as the DP is
      concerned (see 9):

(9) *El Giani /*   *Lu* **el**   canta³   (Trentino)
     the Gianni / he he.CL sings
     'Gianni / He is singing'

The difference between (ii) and (iii) can also be observed when we con-
sider sentences in which the subject is realized in a very high marginal-
ized position, and may co-occur with both the full pronoun and the clitic
(see 10). Also in this context, Trentino must realize the subject clitic in
addition to the full pronoun, thus producing a triplication of the subject:

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(10) *El Gianni,*   *lu* **el**   vien   co   noialtri   ancoi   (Trentino)
      the Gianni   he he.CL comes with   us-others today
      'Gianni, he will join us today'

By contrast, such a construction is totally marginal in French (see 11a-b
with data taken from Twitter)⁴:

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³ Whereas the reduplication of the DP subject does not convey any emphatic
   reading, this is not the case for the reduplication of the pronominal subject,
   the unmarked interpretation of which is conveyed by the clitic alone. In the
   context of the present work, we cannot go into further detail about this as-
   pect.
⁴ We are grateful to Joachim Kokkelmans, who provided us with the data.

(11)   *(Rock Metal Mag: Et vous aviez les mêmes influences musicales?)*
         (Rock Metal Mag: And you, did you have the same musical influences?)

  a J.C.: Alors pas du tout. Moi, je suis un gros fan de blues, *Alex*, *lui*, **il** kiffe
      J.C.: so   not at all.   Me, I'm   a big fan of blues, Alex, he, he likes
      vraiment   le Thrash
      really   the Thrash
      'Actually, not at all. I'm big fan of blues, Alex really likes thrash (Metal)'

  b Alors qu'*Alex*, *lui*, **il** est cool, gentil, attentionné, franc, attentif …
     so while Alex he, he is cool, kind, considerate, frank, attentive …
     'So, while Alex is cool, kind, considerate, frank, attentive …'

Whereas the French structure can be interpreted as a hanging topic, that of Trentino is more similar to a left dislocation. At any rate, it is interesting to note that the full subject is always a step further outside of the sentence core in French than it is in Trentino. This proves the different nature of the subject clitics in the two Romance languages.

In Germanic varieties, subject reduplication is strongly limited. In Bavarian, it is only possible with the first person plural (see 12a-b) and the second person (both singular and plural); hence, unlike the abovementioned Romance varieties, (i) subject reduplication in Bavarian never admits a DP, and (ii) the relative order is always 'clitic-full pronoun' (see 12–14):

(12) a … dass-*ma* (**mia**) noch Minga fahr-n (Low Bavarian, Bayer 1984: 251)
          that.1PL (we) to   Munich go
          '… that we will go to Munich'

  b Fahr-*ma* (**mia**) noch   Minga?
     Go.1PL   (we)   to   Munich
     'Will we go to Munich?'

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(13)   …, ob-*st* (**du**)   des   ned   spuin kon-st (Bavarian, Bayer 2013: 30)
        if.2SG you   this   not   play   can.2SG
        '…, if you cannot play this'

(14)   …, ob-*ts* (**es**)   des   ned spuin ken-ts   (Bavarian, Bayer 2013: 30)
        If.2PL you   this   not play can.2PL
        '…, if you cannot play this'

It is interesting that the clitic reduplication is also mandatory when a full pronoun is realized to the left of the finite verb (see 15):

(15)   **Mia**   fahr-*ma* / *fahr-n noch   Minga (Lower Bavarian, Zwart 1997: 140)
        we   go.1PL   to   Munich
        'We are going to Munich'

This shows that the form -*ma* has to be reanalyzed as verbal flexion or as lexicalization of the feature AGR in C, and no longer as a cliticization phenomenon.[5] In fact, in a subset of the Lower Bavarian varieties, the form –*ma* appears with auxiliaries such as 'have' and 'do' in the final position as well (see 16) (Kollmer 1987: I, 357; Wiesinger 1989: 38; Weiß 2002: 9; Fuß & Trips 2004: 66), thus providing a robust body of evidence that it has been reanalyzed as an agreement marker:

(16) a …, dass-*ma* (**mia**) koā   geid   ned hā-*ma*   [instead of 1PL hā-n]
        that.1PL we   no   money not have.1PL
        '…, that we have no money'   (Kollmer 1987: I, 362)

    b we-*ma* (**mia**) des   ned   dou-*ma*…   [instead of 1PL dou-n]
        if.1PL we   that   not   do.1PL
        'if we don't do that…'   (Kollmer 1987: I, 358)

Cimbrian, a German(ic) variety spoken in Northern Italy, presents a very peculiar situation. Unlike Bavarian, subject reduplication is excluded for

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5   With regard to the possibility of analyzing this phenomenon as a partial pro-drop, see Biberauer (2010).

the first and second person. Nevertheless, similarly to Bavarian, reduplication of either the DP subject or a full pronoun occurring to the left of Vfnt is never allowed (see 17) (see Bidese 2008):

(17) *Dar Gianni / Er singt=**ar**
      the John / he sings=he.CL
      'John is singing'

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Reduplication possibilities are admitted only in pragmatically defined structures where the subject is fronted in a position that resembles either a clitic left- or right-dislocation (see 18a-b), or a hanging topic (see 19):[6]

(18) a *Dar Gianni*, haüt   khint=**ar**   atz Lusérn
         the Gianni, today   comes=he.CL to Luserna
         'John, he is coming to Luserna today'

    b   Haüt   khint=**ar**   atz Lusérn, *dar Gianni*
         today comes=he.CL to Luserna, the Gianni

(19) *Dar Gianni*, **er**   khint atz   Lusérn   haüt
       the Gianni, he   comes to   Luserna   today
       'Speaking of Gianni, he will come to Luserna today'

It is not surprising that, a pattern similar to the one allowed for Trentino (see 10, above), in which a fronted DP subject co-occurs with both the full pronoun and the clitic, is excluded completely in Cimbrian (see 20):

(20) *Dar Gianni, **er** khint =**ar**   atz Lusérn   haüt
       the John,   he comes=he.CL to Lusérn   today

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6   See Kolmer (2012: 186–187). The DP-subject must be 'given'; this means that it must have already been introduced in the discourse, or it must be known to the participants Kolmer interpreted sentences such as (18) or (19) as *reference tracing*, and suggested that they may be borrowed from Italian, such as a focalization construction (see p. 191). A similar structure also seems to be possible in Mòcheno (see Rowley 2003: 263–265).

Another main difference between Cimbrian and Trentino concerns V2. Although Cimbrian has lost the linear V2 restriction, it maintains V-to-C, that is V-to-Fin, movement, as do all other German(ic) varieties with the well-known exception of English (see Bidese 2008; Bidese, Cognola & Padovan 2012). Hence, in order to obtain a declarative clause, at least one position before the finite verb must be realized. When the DP subject or the subject pronoun does not appear in front of the finite verb, another XP must be in COMP in order to satisfy the EPP (see 21). In fact, the specifier of C must be filled; otherwise, the sentence will be a direct question (see 22):

(21)   Haüt khint=**ar**   atz Lusérn
        today comes=he.CL to Luserna
        'He will come to Luserna today'

(22)   Khint=**ar**   atz Lusérn   haüt?
        comes=he.CL to Luserna   today
        'Will he come to Luserna today?'

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It is interesting that Cimbrian allows only one 'real' context of clitic reduplication below C^0, namely one in which a low DP subject within the vP domain requires the subject expletive *–da* (see Bidese & Tomaselli 2018), as in presentative constructions (see 23) or, more generally, in subordinate clauses (see 24):

(23)   Haüt iz=**ta**   khent *dar nono*   atz Lusérn
        today is=EXPL.SUBJ   come the grandpa   to Luserna
        'Today the grandpa has arrived to Luserna'

(24)   I sperar,   az=**ta**   *dar maurar*   richt   di schual
        I hope   that=EXPL.SUBJ   the bricklayer repairs.SBJV   the school
        'I hope that the bricklayer is going to repair the school building'

It is important to note that:

(i)   A DP subject can never be doubled by a personal clitic (see 25):[7]

(25)   *I sperar, az=**ar**   *dar maurar*   richt   di schual
        I hope   that=er.CL   the bricklayer   repairs.SBJV   the school
        'I hope that the bricklayer is going to repair the school building'

(ii)   When the DP subject is realized to the left of the Vfnt, no reduplication with the expletive –*da* is allowed; that is, the order "-da DP" is mandatory, but the order "DP/-da" is categorically excluded (see 25):

(26)   Haüt   dar nono   iz / *iz=**ta**   khent atz Lusérn
        today the grandpa   is / is=EXPL.SUBJ   come   to Lusern
        'Today the grandpa has arrived to Luserna'

In summary, when comparing subject reduplication as found in the Romance varieties (French and Trentino) to the Cimbrian data, we can observe the following structural differences:

(i)   In the Romance varieties (French and Trentino), the reduplicated DP subject realizes a topic position within the C domain (see 8 and 10, above)[8]. In Cimbrian, it appears in a position that is less integrated into the structure of the clause (se 18a and 19, above). In fact, it should be considered to be outside of the C domain or at least in a position that does not satisfy V2, such as the EPP in C. Moreover, at least one lower Spec position within CP must

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[7]   In our analysis, the expletive –*da* is a defective goal, which builds a chain with the subject in the vP (see Bidese & Tomaselli 2018). In the event that a personal pronoun appears, this requires NOM for itself and cannot transmit it.
[8]   In Example 9 (see above), it can be assumed that the DP is realized in the C domain, or at least above TP, as in [Spec, AgrP], for example.

be realized (see *haüt* in 18 and *er* in 19, above) in order to have a declarative clause.[9] With regard to the other German variety that we considered, Bavarian, reduplication is limited to the first person plural (see 12a-b, above) and to the second person (both singular and plural). In some cases, the clitic element seems to have evolved into an agreement marker.

(ii)   The subject clitic is expressed obligatorily in Trentino: In fact, a non-reduplicated DP always results in agrammaticality, while it is optional in French, where either the clitic or the DP are sufficient to satisfy the EPP in T.

4. Coordination

The third syntactic aspect that makes a distinction between different types of subject clitic is coordination. Since Brandi & Cordin (1989), it has been noted that the mandatory realization of the subject clitic in Trentino (and Florentine) correlates with the necessary repetition of the clitic in sentence coordination (see 27):

(27)   a   Maria /   Ela   **la**   canta e   **la**   bala
              Maria /   she   she.CL sings   and   she.CL dances
              'Maria /   She is singing and dancing'
         b   *Maria /   ela   **la**   canta e   bala
              Maria /   she   she.CL sings   and   dances

In contrast to Italian dialects, sentence coordination in French does not imply the repetition of the subject clitic (see 28):

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9   Note that, if *haüt* is not realized to the left of the verb, sentence (8a) becomes a yes/ no-question (see ia), as in German (see ib):

(i) a   Dar Gianni,   khint=ar   haüt   atz Lusérn?
          the John,   comes=he.CL today   to   Lusérn
          'Is John coming to Lusérn today?'
     b   Johann,   kommt   er heute nach   Lusérn?
          John,   comes   he today to   Lusérn

(28)	Marie /	Elle	**la**	chante	et	dance
	Maria /	she	she.CL	sings	and	dances

This fact constitutes a strong argument in favor of the idea that the subject clitic in Trentino represents a verbal morpheme (that is, a verbal prefix) connected to the inflection. In fact, the hypothesis proposed by Brandi & Cordin (1989) refers directly to the pro-drop/null subject parameter, and allows us to revisit their generalizations:

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(i)   In Trentino, the subject clitic represents the lexical realization of the strong AGR-feature that characterizes T^0 in a null subject language such as Standard Italian, and absorbs NOM thus satisfying EPP (see Biberauer 2010);

(ii)   In French, the subject clitic does not realize the AGR-feature in T^0, but occupies a specifier position in order to satisfy NOM assignment in a language that is characterized by a negative value of the pro-drop parameter.

At this point of the discussion, it is interesting to verify what occurs in Cimbrian syntax. Cimbrian is not a Null Subject language and, in the context of coordination, the subject clitic (see 29 and 30) (that is, the clitic expletive, see 30) is not repeated, as in French. Let us consider the following examples:

(29)	Haüt	singt=**ze**	un	tanzt
	today	sings=she.CL	and	dances

'Today she will sing and dance'

(30)	…, az=**ze**	sing	un	tanz
		that=she.CL	sing.SUBJV	and	dance.SUBJV

'…, that she sings and dances'

(31)	…, az=**ta**	*dar nono*	khemm	atz Lusern	un
		that=EXPL.SUBJ.CL	the grandpa	comes	to Luserna	and
	di nona	stea	ka Tria

the grandma stays   in Trento
'…, that the grandpa comes to Luserna, but the grandma remains in Trento'

If we are correct in assuming that subject clitics absorb NOM from the relevant X^0 + Agr in both Trentino and Cimbrian, the fact that the subject clitic is not repeated in sentence coordination does not represent a counterargument. In fact, as we noted from the beginning, the relevant NOM assigning X^0 in a V2 language such as Cimbrian is C^0 (that is, Fin^0), and the clitic does not form a chain with the Tense domain. Hence, if we assume that sentence coordination implies TP coordination, it is fully expected that the *Wackernagelposition* / the Clitic Phrase does not undergo repetition, exactly as can be seen in Standard German:

(32)   …, dass **sich**   der eine freut   und der andere ärgert[10]
             that refl   the one rejoices   and the other get-angry
        '   …, that one is happy and the other angry'

Not surprisingly, the only possibility for repeating the clitic in Cimbrian (and in German) must rely on CP coordination:

(33)   …, az=**ze**   sing   un   az=**ze**   tanz
             that=she.CL   sing.SUBJV and   that=she.CL   dance.SUBJV
             '…, that she sings and dances'

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(34)   …, az=**ta**   *dar nono*   khemm   atz Lusern   un
             that=EXPL.SUBJ   the grandpa   comes.SUBJV   to Luserna   and
        az=**ta**   *di nona*   stea   ka Trento
        that=EXPL.SUBJ   the grandma stays.SUBJV   in Tria
        '…, that the grandpa comes to Luserna, but the grandma remains in Trento'

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10   Example adapted from Wöllstein-Leisten et al. (1997: 17).

(35)   …, dass **sich** der eine   freut   und dass **sich** der andere ärgert
        that refl the one   rejoices   and that refl the other get-angry
    '…, that one is happy and the other angry'

What should be explained at this point is the difference between Trentino and French, given our basic assumption that the functional layer related to clitics looks downwards to Tense in Romance varieties but upwards to Comp in V2 Germanic varieties. The basic idea that we are going to develop in the next paragraph is based heavily on the original hypothesis by Brandi & Cordin (1989): The proclitic is part of the finiteness morphology in Trentino (it is part of the AGR-TENSE system), while subject clitics in French enter a relationship with the 'structural subject position', which is the position where NOM is assigned.

5. Analysis

The consideration of the three ingredients involved in the definition of 'subject clitic' (proclisis versus enclisis, doubling, and coordination) allows us to define the feature characterization of the hosting head, which acts as a probe for the cliticization process, and to revalue the traditional distinction between COMP-dominant versus INFL-dominant languages through the distinction of phase versus non-phase heads (see Bidese, Padovan & Tomaselli, *in press*).

In V2 languages, such as Bavarian and Cimbrian, the head that attracts the subject clitic is the same that assigns NOM and attracts the finite verb, namely C.

The perspective opened by Ouali (2008) and elaborated by Biberauer & Roberts (2010) and Bidese & Tomaselli (2018) implies that

(i)   the phase head C is endowed with the relevant features, namely the u-phi feature involved in NOM assignment, and the EPP feature that requires the projection of the relevant specifier, and

(ii)   C either KEEPs or SHAREs them with the lower non-phase head TENSE.

In a linear V2 language such as Standard German (and Bavarian), C SHAREs the relevant feature with T:

– NOM is assigned by C (via T: SHARing of u-phi) to the lower Spec in the T domain;

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– EPP is satisfied in both TP (in connection with NOM assignment) and CP (independently from NOM assignment);
– The projection of a CLITICP allows the possibility of assigning NOM to the first Spec below C^0, or of absorbing NOM via C-agreement morphology (first and second person in Bavarian):

(36) Feature sharing system for German:[11] SHARE

C^0 [u-phi; EPP]

Wackernagelposition/ClP

T^0 [u-phi; EPP]
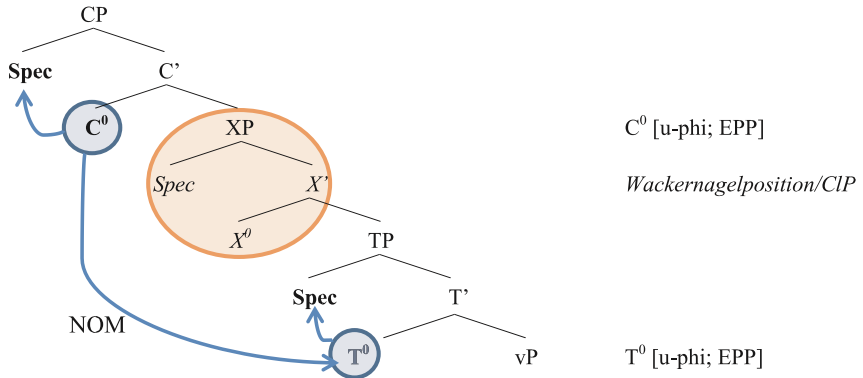
In a non-linear V2 language such as Cimbrian (which has developed a Split-CP system), C^0 KEEPs the relevant features, with the following consequences:

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[11] For the first person plural and the second person (singular and plural) in Bavarian, we assume that they realize the phi-feature in C, which corresponds to the traditional definition of agreement in COMP.

–   NOM is assigned by C (u-phi) to [Spec, FinP] in the C domain;
–   EPP is satisfied in CP (either via NOM assignment to the Subject in [Spec, FinP] or by XP movement to any Spec in the 'low' C domain);
–   Whenever the subject has not raised to [Spec, Fin], NOM is absorbed by the subject clitic (either personal or expletive, namely - da).

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(37) Feature sharing system for Cimbrian: KEEP

FinP

Fin^0 [u-phi; EPP]

Wackernagelposition/ClP
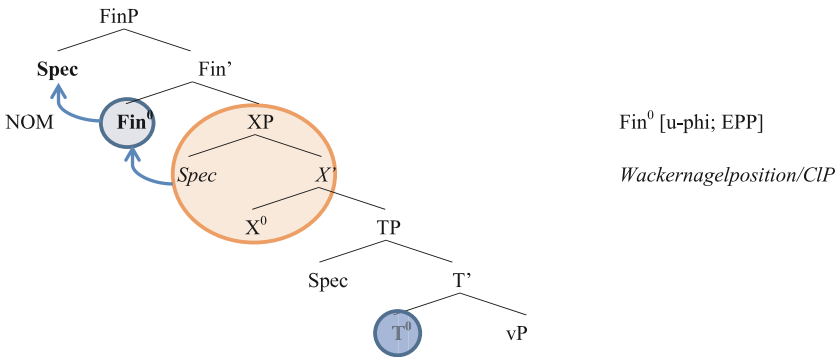
In Romance languages such as French, Italian, and Trentino, which are not characterized by V2, C DONATEs the relevant feature to T. The main difference between French on one hand and Italian and Trentino on the other is the structural complexity of the Tense domain. In both Italian and Trentino, u-phi and EPP characterize two independent heads (as assumed in the Split-Infl-hypothesis),[12] Agr^0 and T^0; in French, both u-phi and EPP characterize the same head, T^0.

With regard to Trentino, we can formalize the following configuration:

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[12]   The first hypothesis in this direction was proposed by Donati & Tomaselli (2009).

(38) Feature sharing system for Trentino: DONATE
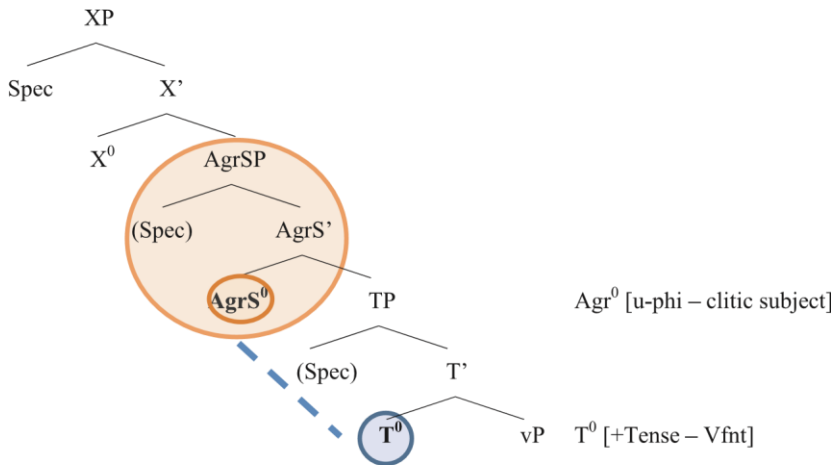
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NOM is absorbed by the clitic head in $AgrS^0$, EPP is satisfied by the chain $AgrS^0T^0$ that acts as a probe for Vfnt movement, which results in T^0; [Spec, TP] is not projected/is never lexically realized, and DP/full pronoun subjects are always realized higher (possibly [Spec, AgrSP] or [Spec, XP]).

With regard to Standard Italian, we assume the same configuration, albeit with a relevant difference: in Standard Italian, the finite verb must rise to $AgrS^0$ in order to satisfy the u(ninterpretable)-phi in this head; in fact, in the prototypical realization of the positive value of the NSP, verbal morphology is sufficient to act as a goal for both u-phi and EPP, absorbing NOM.

With regard to French, we assume that the subject clitic realizes/lexicalizes [Spec, ClP], the head of which is endowed with an i(nterpretable)-phi feature (following the suggestion by Roberts 2010: 306) T^0 is endowed with both u-phi and EPP, attracts the finite verb, and assigns NOM to [Spec, TP].

(39) Feature sharing system for French

Cl^0 [i-phi]

T^0 [u-phi; EPP]
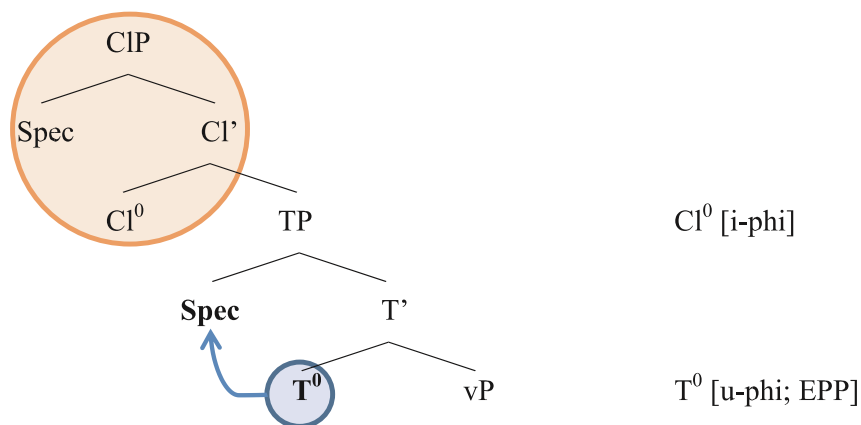
As shown above, the finite verb rises to T in both Trentino and in French, whereas it must move to AgrS⁰ coherently with the positive value of the NSP in Italian. With regard to the difference between Trentino and French, the subject clitic is a head in the former, and a specifier in the latter. Furthermore, it involves the AgrP in Trentino, but the ClP in French. From our perspective, the projection of AgrP depends directly on the fact that Trentino is a Null Subject language, unlike French, as suggested previously by Donati & Tomaselli (2009).

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6. Conclusion

The aim of our contribution was to revisit the well-known divide between subject clitics in French and in (some) North Italian varieties, particularly in Trentino (see Brandi & Cordin 1981, 1989). By comparing these two Romance subtypes of clitic pronouns with the syntax of German(ic) clitics, particularly in Bavarian and in Cimbrian, we shed light on the consequences that result from a positive value of both the NSP

and the V2. In fact, although all the occurrences of pronominal cliticization in the abovementioned subject clitic languages belong to the same group from a simple morphological point of view, our analysis has shown that they differ substantially. Crucially, pronominal elements in Germanic are attracted by C, which is the head that attracts Vfnt and assigns NOM; by contrast, pronominal elements in Romance cliticize on T, with a major difference between a non-Null Subject language like French and Null Subject languages such as Italian and the North Italian dialects. In French, the subject clitic is assumed to lexicalize in [Spec, ClP] and to form a chain with [Spec, TP]. Crucial to this explanation is the assumption that the head of ClP is endowed with an interpretable phi-feature. By contrast, Trentino's subject clitics lexicalize $AgrS^0$, projection of which correlates directly with the positive value of the NSP.

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