Some notes on
Subjects and the Left Periphery of Swiss Romansh varieties

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Etruscan origins?

“In 1805, there appeared a remarkable monograph by P. Placi a Spescha on *Die Rhaeto-Hetruskische Sprache*, which identified Surselvan as the purest or most archaic dialect of ‘RH’—and thus the one most closely related to *Etruscan*”

(Haiman & Benincà 1992: 15)

![Livy](image1.png) ![Pliny the Elder](image2.png) ![Inscriptions](image3.png) ![Father = il bab](image4.png)

No! Just a Romance language!
Swiss Romansh varieties

1. Surselvan Sursilvano
2. Sutselvan Sottosilvano
3. Surmiran Surmirirano
4. Putér Alto Engadino
5. Vallader Basso Engadino
Some issues

😊  ≈ 40,000 speakers (mostly bilingual)

💻 Media (TV, Radio): *Rumantsch Grischun*

📖 Lack of corpora

- Corpus of SMS4Science, Whatsapp Switzerland!
- Zürich Universität
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>SMSs</th>
<th>CPs</th>
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<td>Surlselvan</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>1144</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sutselvan</td>
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<td>Surmiran</td>
<td>110</td>
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<td>Putèr</td>
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<td>515</td>
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<td>Vallader</td>
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<td>966</td>
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SR varieties are V2 languages

Rumantsch **discorra** Ursus stupent
Rumantsch speaks.3sg Ursus excellently
‘Ursus speaks Rumantsch very well’

*(Surmiran, Anderson 2005: 206; 7.45a)*

**On V2:** Holmberg (2015), Wolfe (2015), Samo (in prep.)
**On Romance V2:** Poletto (2002)
V2 language in embedded contexts

a. El a detg **che** a **CUIRA** lavura Renzo
   He said that IN CHUR works Renzo (not in Zurich)
   *(Surselvan, Renzo Caduff p.c.)*

b. Ia pains **tgi** dultchems **vegia** Corinna gugent
   I think that sweets have.subj.3sg Corinna gladly
   ‘I think Corinna likes sweets’
   *(Surmiran, Anderson 2005: 212, 7.57b)*
V2 language in embedded contexts

**Standard German**

No Embedded V2

**SR varieties**

Embedded V2

On Subjects
Subject Clitics

a. Ursus **discorra** stupent Rumantsch
   Ursus speaks.3sg excellently Rumantsch
   ‘Ursus speaks Rumantsch very well’
   *(Surmiran, Anderson 2005: 206; 7.43, 7.44a)*

b. Rumantsch **discorra** Ursus stupent
   Rumantsch speaks.3sg Ursus excellently
   ‘Ursus speaks Rumantsch very well’
   *(Surmiran, Anderson 2005: 206; 7.45a)*
Subject Clitics

c. *Ursus **discorra-’1** stupent Rumantsch
   Ursus speaks.3sg excellently Rumantsch
   ‘Ursus speaks Rumantsch very well’
   *(Surmiran, Anderson 2005: 206; 7.43, 7.44a)*

d. Rumantsch **discorra-’1** Ursus stupent
   Rumantsch speaks.3sg.3sgm Ursus excellently
   ‘Ursus speaks Rumantsch very well’
   *(Surmiran, Anderson 2005: 206; 7.45a)*
Subject Clitics

Among the varieties, doubling is possible in "all person/number combinations where a subject enclitic is available, that is, 1sg, 1pl and 3sg, 3pl." (Fuß 2005: 190).

Within a non-generative literature, clitic doubling was considered to be stylistic because it serves “to reinforce the subject”.

In particular, Sutselvan shows a different, and more cartographic, form of clitic doubling: the clitic doubling which "appears to be more common" (Fuß 2005: 192) and is "almost an obligatory phenomenon that has lost its function as a stylistically marked structural option". As a matter of fact, the DP does not receive stress (Linder 1987: 150).
Subject Clitics

a. Egn da quels lev-i ear jou
   One of those wanted-cl1s also I
   ‘I also wanted one of those’

b. Ascheia vain-sa nus arviart igl mulegn…
   so have-cl1p we unlocked the mill
   ‘So we have unlocked the mill’

c. Igl fetschi preaschas, â-l el getg.
   It is urgent, has-cl3sm he said.
   ‘He said it’s urgent’

(Sutselvan, Linder 1987: 148, 149 and 153)
Subject Clitics

d. Cunquegl c’igl eara november, vev-\textit{la la scola} antschiat since it was November, had-cl3sf the school begun
‘Since it was November, the school had begun’

e. Natiral vev-\textit{in las matànse} radetg sei mailenders.
Of course had-cl3p the girls brought up Milans
‘Of course, the girl had brought up some Milans [pastries]’

(Linder 1987: 153, 193)
Subject enclitics doubling

SR varieties (Fuß 2005, Anderson 2005) may be considered VITP (Travis 1984, Zwart 1997) languages.

The verb and the fronted XP do not move to the Left Periphery in Subject-Initial sentences.
Back in the ‘90s
VITP vs. VOTP analysis

Uniform V2, Verb Outside TP (VOTP)

a. [SpecFinP/SpecTopP/SpecFocP John [FinP reads [IP the book in the library]]]
b. [SpecTopP/SpecFocP The book [SpecFinP - [FinP reads [IP John in the library]]]]
c. [SpecFinP/SpecTopP/SpecFocP In the library [FinP reads [IP John the book]]]

Non-uniform V2, Verb Inside TP (VITP)

d. [SpecIP John [IP reads the book in the library]]
e. [SpecTopP/SpecFocP The book [SpecFinP - [FinP reads [IP John in the library]]]]
f. [SpecFinP/SpecTopP/SpecFocP In the library [FinP reads [IP John the book]]]
Subject enclitics doubling

The clitic possibly lies in the head of SubjP and the clitic becomes part of the verbal inflection in the targeted head in the CP.

Subject-initial sentences  Non-subject initial sentences
Towards a Criterial V2

😊 Mainstream Analyses of V2: Wolfe (2015); Poletto (2017)

\[\text{Frame} [\text{Force} [\text{Top} [\text{Foc} [\text{Fin}])))]]\]

(\text{Benincà & Poletto 2004})

😊 Criterial V2 (Samo, in prep.)

\[\text{Force} [\text{Top}^* [\text{Int} [\text{Top}^* [\text{Foc} [\text{Top}^* [\text{Mod} [\text{Top}^* [\text{Qemb} [\text{Fin} [\text{IP}]]]]]]]]]]]]\]

(Rizzi & Cinque 2016:146)
A different syntactic structure is involved in SR varieties, in which it has been proposed that the subject can target, as in Italian, a Topic position in the low IP area (Belletti 2004).

Evidence for subjects in a Belletti’s (2004) lower Topic position are from SR varieties in (27), where also the past participle precedes the subject as in Italian.

SubjP is however activated, since the verb shows the subject clitic.
Putér
Che effet ha=la gnü aint il pövel la nouva predgia?
Which effect has.cl.3sf had the new sermon on the people?
‘Which effect had the new sermon on the people?’

(Linder 1987: 154)

Surmiran
An quell mumaint è-la riveda er la mama
in this moment is-cl3sf arrived also the mother
‘In this moment, the mother arrived too’

(Linder 1987: 154)
On the Left Periphery


Strict V2 language (Benincà 1995)?
Subj – FocusAdverb– V3
Jeu bunamein sedurmentel

(Corpus SMS4science, Sms n. 24022)

Similar pattern in:
Mainland Scandinavian (Nilsen 2003)
Icelandic (Samo, forthcoming)
Vallader

LocItem – Subj – V3
Pro üna chasa da vaschins üna merla ha fat seis gnieu
On a house of neighbours a blackbird has made his nest
‘On a neighbours house, a blackbird made ist nest’ (Oetzel 1994: 157)

TempItem – FocusSubj – V3
Fin a quel di INGÜN nu'm vaiva mai dit il cuntrari
Until to that day NOBODY neg.cl.had never said the opposite
‘Until that day, nobody told me the opposite’ (Oetzel 1994: 159)
SpeechActAdv – Subj – V3
uschè niaunch' orma nu savaiva nouvas da la gramma
so no soul neg-know news on the cream
‘Nobody knew anything on the cream’ (Oetzel 1994: 161)

LocItem – Subj – V3
Nodvart l'alp Giuvannes evra a la fin la buocha
This-side of alps Giuvannes opened finally the mouth
‘Once in this side of Alps, Giuvannes finally started talking’ (Oetzel 1994: 161)

TempItem – Subj – V3
Uossa Ciglia la clama
Now Ciglia her calls
‘now Cilia calls her’
Da quella Maria nu pudaiva sfügir
From that Maria neg.can escape
From her, Mary could not escape (Oetzel 1994: 163)

per bgers ün purtret es ün bun amih
For many a portrait is a good friend  (Oetzel 1994: 163)

nus üngün nu'ns güda
Us nobody neg.helps
‘Nobody helps us’ (Oeztzel 1994: 163)
Topic - Subj/Focus– V3
ma da que üngün nu s'ho inachüert ünguotta
But of that nobody neg.refl.have noticed nothing (Oetzel 1994: 163)

Topic / Focus – Subj – V3
a Ludwig ils öglis haun cumanzo a glüschir
to-Ludwig the eyes have started to glow (Oetzel 1994: 164)
Conclusion (work in progress)

SpecSubjP is involved in V2 contexts
→ towards a VITP analysis, Criterial-V2

- SR may not be considered strict V2 languages
Merci, Danke, Grazie

ENGRAZIEL!

References: unige.ch/syncart/about-cartography

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