

## Double Agreement in the Alpine Languages

A number of alpine Germanic and Romance varieties is characterized by a syntactically conditioned agreement allomorphy in verbal inflection. In all concerned varieties, this so-called double agreement phenomenon indicates an intermediate stage in the grammaticalization of atonic subject pronouns to functional subject agreement markers. But why does this intermediate stage in the functional development of pronominal elements exist at all? Why didn't the weak subject pronouns of these varieties immediately attain the status of regular verbal agreement morphemes by reanalysis? And how can we explain the fact that double agreement is sometimes quite stable?

In my talk, I will describe and analyze various double agreement effects on the basis of Bavarian, Alemannic and Ladin data. Based on these insights, I will show that double agreement is an outcome of cognitive selection mechanisms that operate during language acquisition ensuring the choice of the most specific forms and the most economical structures that are compatible with the Primary Linguistic Data. In this way, it will turn out that the emergence of double agreement has brought about an important specialization of pronominal and verbal paradigms and at the same time a considerable economization of syntactic representations in the three dialect areas mentioned above.

In Bavarian, double agreement is attested for Carinthian and for Central Bavarian, amongst others. The 1PL verb forms of these varieties carry a 1PL subject enclitic in all V1 and V2 structures ((1a)). In verb final subordinate clauses, however, the 1PL verb forms lack the enclitic. In those structures, it attaches to the subordinating complementizer, instead ((1b)). In the presence of any stressed 1PL subject the clitic always co-occurs with a strong 1PL subject pronoun (Lessiak 1963; Wiesinger 1989) ((1a)). As pointed out by Fuß (2005), such instances of clitic doubling clearly reveal that the clitic concerned has been reanalyzed as C-oriented 1PL subject agreement marker ((1b)).

(1) Carinthian

- (a) *Lafmr*      *wir dō ume!*      (b) ...*womr*      *pro sean singen.*  
run-1PL(CL) we there over      if-1PL(CL) nicely sing-1PL  
“Let us run in that direction.”      “... if we sing nicely.”

Via analogical creation the recently established marker even spread to some frequently used short verbs in sentence final position. But, as can be observed on the basis of modern data, the inflectional symmetry did not prevail. All sentence-final verb forms with 1PL clitics were eventually lost (Wiesinger 1989) and in some regions even additional C-oriented 1PL agreement markers emerged. As I will show, this restoration of double agreement is attributed to the selectional choice made by language learners who were confronted with Primary Linguistic Data that displayed double agreement phenomena as well as uniform agreement. I will argue that the language learners chose those forms that guarantee the most economical and least redundant syntactic derivations and, according to Halle's (1997) *Subset Principle*, realize the greatest subset of the morphosyntactic features encoded in the relevant terminal nodes.

In the Alemannic variety Southern Walser German, which is spoken in the Aosta Valley, all finite verbs, with the only exception of the 2SG verb forms, combine with specific subject agreement markers that developed from the traditional Walser German weak subject pronouns they still formally coincide with (Zürer 1999) ((2a)). This grammaticalization to verbal agreement marking was initiated by the formerly regular inversion of atonic subject pronouns in V2 declarative sentences and was carried on by the borrowing of the corresponding superficially verb initial declarative clauses from Italian. However, as illustrated by Zürer (1999), beside the verb forms that are accompanied by a specialized agreement marker, the traditional verb forms also exist. I will show that the latter forms are preferably used if syntactic subjects either behave “traditionally” – in other words, if they are inverted in V2 contexts or phonologically realized as weak pronouns – or if they are represented as null subjects whose *phi*-feature content is fully recoverable in the actual speech event ((2b)).

(2) Southern Walser German (Issime)

- (a) *pro / iich goan<sub>i</sub> mi meini chin im doarf.*      (b) *pro höischen der schköisi.*  
I go-1SG with my children in village      ask(1SG) you sorry  
“I walk with my children to the village.”      “I beg your pardon.”

Thus, verbal inflection varies depending on the morphosyntactic representation of the subject and the topic-worthiness of its referent. With that, double agreement in Southern Walser German has to be seen, like double agreement in Bavarian, as an outcome of an economy driven language acquisition. Due to the fact that, according to Fuß' (2005) *Blocking Principle*, more specific forms are preferred to less specific forms in language acquisition, it nowadays allows a fully distinctive person and number (and partly even gender) specification within the conjugational system. Furthermore, because of the language learner's preference for more compact representations (cf. Clark & Roberts 1993), it blocks any superfluous representation and identification of the syntactic subject.

The diachronic development of atonic subject pronouns has also given rise to double agreement effects in the Ladin variety Badiot. In Badiot subject clitics encliticize onto the finite verb located in the C-domain of a root clause if there is any overt non-subject constituent or any non-overt operator that maintains the syntactic pattern of V2. The post-verbal strong subject pronouns of such inverted structures are always preceded by a corresponding enclitic ((3a)). Post-verbal non-pronominal and non-right-dislocated subjects, however, block the insertion of enclitics (Gallmann et al. 2007) ((3b)).

### (3) Badiot

- (a) *La mēsa portera* pro / *ëra*. (b) *Šëgn vëgn* / \**vëgnera* Ana.  
 DET table carry-3SG.FEM(CL) she now come(3SG) come-3SG.FEM(CL) Ana  
 "She carries the table." "Ana is coming right now."

As I will elucidate, the syntactic behavior of the Badiot subject clitics indicates that in some sense a development of new verbal agreement markers is in progress. More precisely, the Badiot subject enclitics have gained some properties of verbal markers on their grammaticalization path to functional agreement morphemes. With that they cause double agreement effects conditioned by the distribution and structure of syntactic subjects. Nevertheless, they have retained pronominal features. I will argue that they have to be defined as the extracted clitic heads of complex pronominal DPs (cf. Poletto 2008) and that they represent specific agreement features in the functional head  $Fin^{\circ}$ , thereby leaving behind their complement, a stressed pronominal item or *pro*, in the canonical subject position. A short comparative survey will moreover illustrate that the implementation of agreement markers that are still host to pronominal features is a typical strategy of homonymy flight in the diachronic development of languages whose paradigm of strong subject pronouns is completely or at least in large part formally identical to their paradigm of strong object pronouns. Hence, in Badiot, the emergence of double agreement has been concomitant with a considerable morphological specialization of the pronoun system. In addition, due to the fact that it contributes to the identification of grammatical relations in V2 contexts it is immediately linked with an improved parsability of utterances.

Thus, in the alpine language area double agreement has come into being in V2 inversion structures. As intermediate stage in the development of verbal markers, it allows the most specialized morphological differentiation within paradigms and the most elegant representation of syntactic structures that are possible in the individual diachronic phase the language affected goes through.

### Literature

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