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Embedded verb second in north-eastern Italy

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Abstract

In this work, we put forth the observation that some V2 languages are sensitive to the category of the XP moved in first position, only in cases of embedded V2, but not in main clause V2. This shows: a) that embedded V2 can be different from main clause V2 and b) that different types of XPs do not undergo the same restrictions when moving to the left periphery. We propose an analysis of these differences in terms of relativized minimality.

Keywords: embedded verb second, Romance varieties, German dialects, minority languages.

1. The typology of V2[1]

Verb Second (V2) is a typologically rare linguistic phenomenon mostly associated with Germanic and Old Romance languages (den Besten 1983, Benincà 2006, Holmberg 2015) whereby the finite verb is required (i) to move to the left periphery, and (ii) to be preceded by (exactly) one constituent, as in (1) from German.

(1) German
- a. [Hans] hat einen Apfel gegessen.
  Hans has an apple eaten
  'Hans has eaten an apple.'
- b. [Einen Apfel] hat Hans gegessen.
  an apple has Hans eaten
  'Hans has eaten an apple.'
- c. *[Einen Apfel] [Hans] hat gegessen.
  an apple Hans has eaten
  'Hans has eaten an apple.'

Due to cross-linguistic differences in its syntax, the status of V2 as a unitary phenomenon was put in doubt, and several typologies of V2 have been argued to exist based on the functioning, locus, and availability of V2 in both main and embedded clauses (Poletto 2002, Wolfe 2018). One fundamental development of the theory has come about from the interaction between V2 and a split left periphery, as the one originally discovered in Italian (Benincá 2006, Poletto 2014). The fact that there are several projections in the CP layer (see Rizzi 1997) has offered the possibility to modulate variation with respect to the V2 phenomenon. Wolfe (2018) proposes that there are 'high' and 'low' V2 languages, i.e., those in which the verb moves to the highest projection in the CP (ForceP), and those where the target of the verbal movement is the lowest projection (FinP). This allows us to capture the distinction between languages that admit Topics on top of the V2 structure, yielding in some cases

[1] The data cited in this paper come from various sources. We indicate with 'F' the letter taken from our own fieldwork, and with 'C' the Gardenese Ladin data that we collected in a Corpus of written Gardenese (based on the novel *L fova n iede te Gherdëina*, written in Gardenese). Examples without indication are basic examples based on our own competence.

V3 and V*[2] (the low/FinP V2 languages), and those in which the linear restriction is respected (the high/ForceP V2 languages).[3] However, in the original paper by Poletto (2002), the observation is made that Focus, Topic or Force can be targeted in the same language depending on the type of element fronted: in interrogatives, Ladin varieties allow for V3 and V*, while in main declaratives this does not happen. This means that interrogatives exhibit low V2, while declaratives exhibit high V2. The same observation is made by van Kemenade and Meklenborg (2021) for Old English.

(2) $[_{\text{ForceP}}$ that $[_{\text{IntP}}$ Int $[_{\text{TopP}}$ Topic $[_{\text{FocP}}$ DPobject $[_{\text{ModP}}$ Adverbs $[_{\text{FinP}}$ V $[_{\text{TP}}$ Subj … $[_{\text{vP}}$ v]]]]]]

In a similar vein, Samo (2019) puts forth the idea that the position targeted by V2 depends on the fronted XP, so that, if a focus is fronted, the verb will move to Focus°; if a Topic is fronted, the verb will move to Top°, etc. We adopt this approach, i.e., that different XPs (and the verb) can target different projections within the CP layer and, crucially, that this is true not only for V2 in main clauses, but also in embedded clauses.

Embedded V2 is found in the same languages that have main V2.[4] A general assumption made in the literature, which we question here, is that once you allow for embedded V2 (for instance with bridge verbs in languages like German), the possibilities you have in embedded V2 are the same found in main clauses. So, the restriction in embedded clauses only concerns the possibility to activate V2, not the type of V2.

In this paper, we present an analysis of a type of embedded V2 instantiated by four regional languages spoken in North-Eastern Italy: two Rhaeto-Romance varieties spoken in the Dolomites (Badiotto and Gardenese Ladin) and two Germanic languages spoken in a linguistic island in Friuli (Saurian and Timavese). We show that one major difference between main and embedded V2 clauses in these languages concerns the XPs allowed as the first element of the clause. While in main clauses any type of constituent can be fronted and can serve as the first element of the V2 structure, embedded V2 is constrained so that only some types of XPs can be fronted.[5]

In the previous literature, embedded V2 has been split into two types: 'broad' V2 languages, where V2 is possible in all embedded clauses, including regular complement clauses of non-bridge verbs, adverbial clauses etc.; and 'narrow' V2 languages, in which embedded V2 is only possible in complement clauses selected by a bridge verb (see Vikner 1995, Walkden & Booth 2020). As a consequence, the crucial factor that governs the difference between broad and narrow V2 languages is the behavior with non-bridge verbs: they trigger V2 in broad V2 languages, but not in narrow V2 languages. In this article, we argue that Ladin, Saurian and Timavese provide evidence for the existence of a third factor constraining embedded V2 in addition to the traditional 'broad' and 'narrow' distinction, which is sensitive to the grammatical category of the XP participating in V2.

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[2] By V* we mean all the cases of apparently recursive Topics that occur in front of the V2 structure.

[3] See Greco & Haegeman (2020), Meklenborg (2020), Breitbarth (2022) and the chapters by De Clercq et al. (2023) for exceptions to linear V2 in Force-V2 languages.

[4] V2 languages can be symmetric and asymmetric. See §2 for symmetric V2 languages.

[5] Note that the complementizer does not count for linear V2 in embedded clauses.

The article is organized as follows: Section 1 introduces the phenomenon of Verb Second (V2) and outlines a structural proposal. Section 2 distinguishes between broad and narrow V2 languages. Section 3 presents the structure of main clauses in the three varieties investigated: Ladin, Saurano, and Timavese. Sections 4, 5, and 6 examine in detail the V2 behavior in Ladin, Saurano, and Timavese respectively, highlighting similarities and differences. Section 7 offers a summary of the data presented, including both the minority varieties under investigation and the broader typology introduced in Section 2. Section 8 discusses two possible analyses to account for the patterns observed. Finally, Section 9 concludes the paper.

2. Broad and Narrow V2 languages

As mentioned above, V2 languages differ as to the contexts in which embedded V2 is found and are traditionally divided into broad and narrow V2 languages (as originally pointed out by Vikner 1995, see also Vikner & Schwarz 1996, Sigurðsson 1986, Holmberg 2015, Walkden & Booth 2020, a.o.). In narrow V2 languages embedded V2 has the character of an 'embedded root phenomenon', on a par with e.g. embedded topicalization (Hooper & Thompson 1973), whose availability in embedded clauses depends on the class of the matrix predicate (e.g., bridge vs non-bridge verb, 'viaduct' predicates, cf. Walkden & Booth 2020).[6] Typical narrow V2 languages are German and Danish, both only allowing for embedded V2 under bridge verbs but not under non-bridge verbs (we present here an example with a factive main verb). The distinction between these two languages concerns the presence of the complementizer, which is banned in German (in embedded V2) and realized in Danish (see the distinction between (3b) for German, and (4b) for Danish):

(3) German
- a. Ich glaube/bereue, {dass er das Buch gelesen hat}
  I believe/regret that he the book read has
  'I believe/regret that he has read the book.'
- b. Ich glaube, {er hat das Buch gelesen}
  I believe he has the book read
  'I believe he has read the book.'
- c. *Ich bereue, {er hat das Buch gelesen}
  I regret he has the book read
  '*I regret he has read the book.'
- d. Ich glaube, {das Buch hat er gelesen}
  I believe the book has he read
  'I believe he has read the book.'

[6] It is often observed that the category of bridge-verbs does not capture the class of predicates that allow for embedded V2, or embedded root phenomena in general. A more correct generalization is that the verbs allowing for embedded V2 are those of class A, B, D according to Hooper & Thompson's (1973: 480), respectively verbs of saying, verbs expressing mental processes (e.g. *think*), and those that 'assert the manner in which the subject came to know that the complement proposition is true' (e.g., *realize*). This class, to which a Class V can be added comprising volitional verbs, is described by Walkden & Booth (2020) as 'viaduct verbs').

e. Ich glaube, {morgen wird er kommen}
I believe tomorrow will he come
'I believe he will come tomorrow.'

(4) Danish, Vikner (1995: 72, 85)
a. Hun sagde/beklager {at vi ikke skulle købe denne bog}
she said regrets that we not should buy this book
'She said that we should not buy this book.'
b. Hun sagde {at vi skulle ikke købe denne bog}
she said that we should not buy this book
'She said that we should not buy this book.'
c. *Johan beklager {at vi skulle ikke købe denne bog}
Johan regrets that we should not buy this book
'John regrets that we should buy this book.'
d. *Johan beklager {at denne bog har jeg læst}
Johan regrets that this book have I read
'John regrets that I have read this book.'
e. *Johan tvivler på {at i morgen står Maria tidligt op}
Johan doubts on that tomorrow stand Maria early up
'Johan doubts that tomorrow Maria will get up early.'

Broad V2 languages are also known as 'symmetric'; in these languages, V2 is generalized in embedded (complement and adverbial) clauses, irrespective of the bridge/non-bridge nature of the matrix verb (Yiddish, Diesing & Santorini 2020; Icelandic, Angantýsson 2011; cf. also Thráinsson 1990). There are differences concerning the availability of V2 in interrogatives and relative clauses, which we do not delve into now.

(5) Yiddish, Iatridou & Kroch (1992)
a. Jonas zogt {az ikh hob geleyent zayn bukh}
Jonas says that I have read his book
'Jonas said that I have read his book.'
b. Jonas bedoyert {az ikh hob geleyent zayn bukh}
Jonas regrets that I have read his book
'Jonas regrets that I have read his book.'
c. Jonas bedoyert {az zayn bukh hob ikh geleyent}
Jonas regrets that his book have I read
'Jonas regrets that I have read his book.'
d. Jonas tsveyfelt {az morgen vet Miriam fri oyfshteyn}
Jonas doubts that tomorrow will Miriam early get-up
'Jonas doubts that Miriam will get up early tomorrow.'

So, up to now, the main verb selecting the embedded clause has been considered to be the only factor constraining embedded V2. In the following table, we show that in all languages considered so far, there is no distinction with respect to the type of fronted XP in embedded clauses:

Table 1. Taxonomy of Broad and Narrow V2 languages with bridge and non-bridge verbs

	Bridge V Fronted Adv	Non-bridge V Fronted Adv	Bridge V Fronted Obj	Non-bridge V Fronted Obj
Yiddish	+	+	+	+
German	+	-	+	-
Danish	+	-	+	-

3. V2 in Ladin, Saurian and Timavese main clauses

3.1. Ladin

It is well known that the Rhaeto-Romance varieties spoken in the Dolomites (Central Ladin valleys) still maintain a V2 structure inherited from Old Romance main clauses: in declarative clauses,[7] Badiotto and Gardenese display the typical correlates of V2,[8] i.e., there cannot be more than one constituent to the left of the inflected verb (6a, 7a) and, in case the fronted element is different from the subject, there is 'subject-finite verb inversion' (6b, 6c, 7b, 7c).

(6) Badiotto Ladin, S. Leonardo in Badia, Poletto (2000: 89, 90)
- a. Te vas gonoot a ciasa sua.
  you go often at home his
  'You often visit him.'
- b. Gonoot vas=te a ciasa sua.
  often go=you at home his
- c. L Giat a=al odù.
  The cat has=he seen
  'He saw a cat.'
- d. *Gonoot te vas a ciasa sua.
  Often you go at home his

(7) Gardenese Ladin, Ortisei, C
- a. Maria maia la sopa ncuei.
  Maria eats the soup today
- b. Ncuei maia Maria la sopa.
  today eats Maria the soup
- c. La sopa maia Maria ncuei.
  the soup eats Maria today
- d. *Maria ncuei maia la sopa.
  Maria today eats the soup
  'Maria eats the soup today.'

[7] But see Poletto (2002) for interrogative clauses, where recursive Topics are allowed in front of the *wh*-item.

[8] Ladin is best understood in terms of *relaxed* V2 (Poletto 2002, Casalicchio & Cognola 2020).

3.2. Saurian and Timavese

The same happens in Saurian, which displays V2 only when the subject is pronominal (8a, 9a). Thus, if a constituent is fronted, subject-verb inversion is instantiated, where only one constituent can precede the inflected verb if the subject is pronominal (8a), and where fronting of elements (with the exception of subjects) triggers the inversion of the subject (8b, 8c). Timavese (9) is also V2 in main clauses and displays subject inversion when the inverted subject is a QP or a DP in addition to subject pronouns.

(8) Saurian, Sauris, F

a. Geister ot=ar gelesn a puech.
Yesterday has=he read a book
'Yesterday he read a book.'

b. De zahrar sproche on=i geleart inder schuele.
Saurian have=I learnt in.the school
'As for Saurian, I have learnt it at school.'

c. Geister der Peater ot gelesn a puech.
Yesterday the Peter has read a book
'Yesterday Peter read a book.'

(9) Timavese, F

a. Geistar hont=sa tseachn maina sghbeistar.
Yesterday have=they seen my sister
'Yesterday they have seen my sister.'

b. In merz homar viil sghneab tseachn.
In March have=we a.lot.of snow seen
'In March we have seen a lot of snow.'

c. Geistar is eipas tschleachts passiart.
Yesterday is something bad happened
'Yesterday something bad happened.'

4. Embedded V2 in Ladin

If we consider embedded V2 in Ladin, we observe a restriction that is not found in main clauses, and that adds a further item to the factors that govern the occurrence of embedded V2 in addition to (a) the type of embedding verb and (b) the presence of the complementizer: the grammatical category of the XP in first position. More precisely, the possibility of embedded V2 is constrained by the grammatical class of the fronted XP, or in cases where both restrictions, i.e., the nature of the fronted XP and the type of main predicate, are active (Badiotto and Gardenese as in (10) and (11); cf. Casalicchio & Cognola 2018, 2020). Badiotto and Gardenese both present regular embedded V2 of the Danish type, allowed under bridge verbs and lower than the complementizer (10a). In particular, (10b) features a focalized internal argument (*l giat*).

(10) Badiotto
a. Al m a dit {che magari mang=el a ciasa}
he me has told that perhaps eats=he at home
'He told me that perhaps he will eat at home'
b. Al m a dit {che l giat a=al odù}
he me has told that the cat has=he seen
'He told that he has seen the cat'

(11) Gardenese, C
a. L savova che {da anda Eva pudove=n for fumé dedite}
he knew that at aunt Eva could=imp always smoke inside
'He knew that at aunt Eva's you could always smoke inside.'
b. Leo ti ova dit che {chël ësse=l messù se davanië}
Leo him.dat had said that that.dem would=he have.to REFL earn
'Leo had told him that he had to earn that.'

However, under non-bridge verbs, V2 is only possible with fronted adverbials and subjects. Fronted non-subject DPs, on the other hand, are not allowed under any circumstances. In fact, speakers always prefer the SVO order, which is ambiguous with a non V2 structure, since these are SVO languages where the inflected verb raises at least up to T in all contexts. See Badiotto in (12) and Gardenese in (13).

(12) Badiotto
a. Al se despleej che magari mang=el a ciasa.
he REFL is.sorry that perhaps eats=he at home
'He is sorry that perhaps he will eat at home.'
b. *Al se despleej che L GIAT a=al odù.
he REFL is.sorry that the cat has=he seen
'He is sorry that he has seen the cat.'

(13) Gardenese, C
a. Fove cuntënt che {per l prim iede ne fove=l nia unì tratà
I.was happy that for the first time NEG was=he NEG been treated
sciche l prinz dla fabules}
like the prince of.the fairy.tales
'I was happy that for the first time he wasn't treated like a fairytale prince.'
b. *L fova cuntënt che na scincunda ti ove=la purtà.
he was happy that a gift him.DAT had=she brought
'I was happy that she had brought a gift.'

5. Embedded V2 in Saurian

As for Saurian, it can be seen as a symmetrical V2 language, since subject-verb inversion obtains under the same conditions as in main clauses, with respect to the kind of subject (pronominal and DP subject). In (14a), where the subject is pronominal, subject-verb inversion obtains, whereas in (14b), where the subject is a full DP, V3 is

instantiated instead. We can thus see that the syntax of the embedded clause parallels the structure of the matrix one.

(14) Saurian, F
a. S Miele ot gesot as geister ot=se gerichtet de njoks
The Maria has said that yesterday has=she prepared the njoks
'Maria has said that yesterday she prepared gnocchi'
b. Ar ot gesot as geister 's Miele ot gerichtet de njoks
He has said that yesterday the Maria has prepared the njoks
'He said that yesterday Maria prepared gnocchi'.

The similarity between the left periphery in the matrix and in the embedded clause, however, is only superficial. In main clauses, any type of XP can be in first sentence position (thus preceding the verb). This is not the case in embedded clauses, because here Saurian does not allow V2 with a fronted direct object; unlike Ladin, this ban is found both in bridge and non-bridge verbs.

(15) Saurian, F
*{S Miele ot gesot/*S is=per ana mie}
{The Maria has said/espl is=1sg.DAT a sorrow}
as de torta ot=ar varpreinet
that the cake has=he burnt
'Maria has said/I am sorry that he burned the cake'

Thus, V2 in Saurian appears not to be sensitive to the semantics of the matrix verb, but instead to the type of fronted element.[9] Fronted adverbs, in fact, are allowed in V2 embedded clauses, regardless of the matrix verb, which can be either a bridge verb (see example (14a)) or a factive verb (see (16)):

(16) Saurian, F
S is=per ana mie as geister ot=ar varpreinet de torta
The is=1sg.DAT a sorrow that yesterday has=he burnt the cake
'I am sorry that yesterday he burned the cake'

In conclusion, embedded V2 with fronting of an adverb in Saurian is not related to the semantics of the matrix verb or to the presence (and type) of a complementizer, but rather to the grammatical class of the fronted XP. Saurian, in fact, displays a restriction on V2 in relation to fronted direct objects, both with bridge verbs and non-bridge verbs, differing from Badiotto and Gardenese, which display the restriction on the type of fronted element only under non-bridge verbs, thus being sensitive also to the semantics of the matrix predicates (Casalicchio & Cognola 2018; 2020). With

[9] Moreover, V2 in embedded clauses in Saurian and Ladin is not sensitive to the presence and type of complementizer, because V2 also obtains with complementizers different from *as* ('that'), as in the following Saurian sentence (taken from Bidese 2019: 76):
(i) *Haite plaib=I dehame vaspegn geister on=I kholt pakhemen*
Today remain=I.cl at-home because yesterday have=I cold gotten
'I stay at home today, as yesterday I've gotten a cold'

respect to the traditional distinction between broad and narrow V2 languages, Saurian occupies an intermediate position. Despite the fact that V2 is allowed regardless of the matrix verb and the complementizer (as for traditional broad V2 languages), Saurian displays a restriction concerning the type of fronted element (as shown in (14), (15), (16)): a condition that has not been traditionally taken into consideration in previous accounts of V2 in embedded clauses.

6. Embedded V2 in Timavese

Timavese behaves as Saurian: bridge verbs allow for the regular type of embedded V2, while non-bridge verbs do not allow fronted objects; fronted adverbs are instead possible. This is only a general tendency, since some speakers refuse embedded V2 altogether with any type of embedding verb and any type of fronted XP.
We report the judgements of the majority of the speakers, who have a grammar similar to Saurian:

(17) Timavese, F

a. *Da Laura hott zok/ismar laat {as=ar da ckuacka hott varprent,
the Laura has said/I.am.sorry that=he the cake has burnt
not the potatoes
niit da kartufulas}
'Laura said/I am sorry that (he) burnt the cake, not the potatoes.'

b. *Da Laura hott zok/ismar laat { as da ckuacka hott=ar varprent,
the Laura has said I.am.sorry that the cake has=he burnt
not the potatoes
niit da kartufulas}
'Laura said/I am sorry that (he) burnt the cake, not the potatoes.'

c. Ismar laat {as geistar hott=ar da ckuacka varprent}
I.am.sorry that yesterday has=he the cake burnt
'I am sorry that yesterday (he) burnt the cake.'

d. Da Laura zok {as geistar hott=ar da ckuacka varprent}
the Laura says that yesterday has=he the cake burnt
'Laura said that yesterday (he) burnt the cake.'

7. Recap

While Badiotto and Gardenese distinguish between bridge and non-bridge verbs, in Saurian and Timavese they behave alike in not allowing fronted direct objects (19), while allowing fronted adverbs (18):

(18) Saurian, F

S Miele ot gesot/S is=per ana mie {as geister ot=ar
the Miele has said/ It is=1sg.DAT a sorrow that yesterday has=he
varpreinet de torta}
burnt the cake
'Miele has said/I am sorry that yesterday he burned the cake.'

(19) Saurian, F
*S Miele ot gesot/*S is=per ana mie {as de torta ot=ar
the Miele has said/ It is=1sg.DAT a sorrow that the cake has=he
varpreinet}
burnt
'Miele has said/I am sorry that he burned the cake.'

The data we have discussed are summarized in the following table, which also includes the language types that have been already discussed in the literature by means of three representatives: Danish, German and Yiddish.

Table 2. Summary of the data

	Bridge V Fronted Adv	Non-bridge V Fronted Adv	Bridge V Fronted Obj	Non-bridge V Fronted Obj
Yiddish	+	+	+	+
Badiotto	+	+	+	-
Gardenese	+	+	+	-
Saurian	+	+	-	-
Timavese	+	+	-	-
Danish	+	-	+	-
German	+	-	+	-

8. Towards an analysis

The data from Badiotto, Gardenese, Saurian and Timavese show that embedded V2 can be of a different quality with respect to the V2 pattern found in main clauses, since it allows for fronted adverbs but not for fronted focussed objects, which we dub 'XP-restriction'. In Gardenese and Badiotto the XP-restriction is found only under non-bridge verbs while bridge verbs allow for the same unrestricted type of V2 found in main clauses, which allows for both fronted adverbs and fronted objects. In Saurian and one variant of Timavese, the XP-restriction is found with both bridge and non-bridge verbs, so that embedded V2 in Saurian is always different from main V2 because it never allows for fronted objects. Another group of Timavese speakers do not allow for embedded V2 altogether.

The common point among all these languages is that fronted adverbs are more liberal than fronted objects in embedded V2 contexts. This has never been observed up to now and needs a theoretical explanation. In order to explain this fact, we can model the effects found in two ways. The first alternative that comes to mind is that of 'tree pruning' in the left periphery, an idea that has circulated since the '70s in various

forms, much earlier than the split left periphery was discovered.[10] For the sake of concreteness we discuss the pruning possibility implementing it with Haegeman's (2006) analysis, whereby some embedded clauses are truncated structures. Haegeman argues that it is possible to cut off the Topic and Focus positions, a proposal that is also in line with Rizzi's (1997) original idea that Topic and Focus can avoid being projected. We frame this within a cartographic analysis of the left periphery à la Rizzi & Bocci (2017), integrated with Benincá and Poletto's (2004) observation that there is no TopP below FocP.

If we assume that there are embedded clauses in which Topic and Focus are not projected we obtain a structure like (21) starting from the regular one illustrated in (20):

(20) [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ *that* [$_{\text{IntP}}$ Int [$_{\text{TopP}}$ Topic [$_{\text{FocP}}$ DP$_{\text{object}}$ [$_{\text{ModP}}$ Adverbs [$_{\text{FinP}}$ V [$_{\text{TP}}$ Subj … [$_{\text{vP}}$ *v*]]]]]]]

(21) [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ *that* [$_{\text{IntP}}$ Int [$_{\text{ModP}}$ Adverbs [$_{\text{FinP}}$ V [$_{\text{TP}}$ Subj … [$_{\text{vP}}$ *v*]]]]]]]

This accounts for the asymmetry between fronted adverbs and fronted arguments. Adverbs and arguments target different positions: only the one for adverbs, which we identify with Rizzi's (2004) ModP, is available when the structure lacks Topic and Focus. In Gardenese and Badiotto, the 'pruning' is found only with non-bridge verbs while bridge verbs have the structure in (20). In Saurian and Timavese the structure is truncated as in (21) under both bridge and non-bridge verbs. Note that in no case does the pruning affect the complementizer, as originally argued for complement clauses of factive predicates by Haegeman (2006: 37, (19)).

This means that pruning needs not be correlated with the semantics of the main verb, but may rather be a purely syntactic phenomenon, which is not what Haegeman originally proposed, since in her proposal, the possibility of pruning is clearly related to interpretation. Pruning cannot affect projections located in the middle of the left periphery but must start from the top, otherwise we would delete a structure that is not a proper subtree. This is however not possible, since the complementizer is sitting in ForceP. That we cannot assume that the complementizer is in the low FinP is attested by the fact that the adverb sitting in ModP follows the complementizer (as in (14)). So, pruning cannot be adopted. A second possibility to take into account is not to project Topic and Focus at all. Actually, in the original idea that Rizzi (1997) puts forth, Topic and Focus can avoid being projected because they are projections encoding specific pragmatic values at the interface, i.e., projections that can be there only when the speaker intends to express certain pragmatic values. The problem is that the same holds for Mod, which however, is not pruned. One wonders why this should be so. In principle, this analysis also opens the possibility that there exist languages where ModP is pruned, but Topic and Focus are not, so that the reversed pattern would be found. This is not the case, at least in the sample we have: there are no German or Romance minority languages that allow for fronted objects but not for fronted adverbs. Nevertheless, the sample we have is not so big, so it is in principle possible that such languages exist.

[10] The issue of structure removal is also framed as a possible solution to *free Merge* (as opposed to *feature-driven Merge*). While in feature-driven Merge the two combining elements (α,β) contain properties allowing for sisterhood, and thus for feature matching between α and β, in a free Merge approach no such requirement is enforced, leading to overgeneration. In this sense, a solution to overgeneration is structure removal, as proposed in Müller (2017).

A second alternative is provided by the following work by Haegeman (2012), who puts forth that factive verbs (the class we have also used in our tests) have a reduced left periphery because they have a factive operator in the left periphery.

(22) [$_{ForceP}$ *that* [$_{IntP}$ Int [$_{TopP}$ Topic [$_{FocP}$ Foc [$_{ModP}$ Mod [$_{FinP}$ OP$_{fact}$ [$_{TP}$ Subj T … [$_{vP}$ *v*]]]]]]]

Suppose now that this operator is of nominal origin, as suggested by several languages that introduce factive verbs with a semi-functional noun like 'fact', which can also be lexicalized both in English and in Romance. Following Zanuttini and Portner (2003), we adopt a left periphery where the factive element is located in a low position, as they show for exclamatives on the basis of examples like the following:

(23) Paduan, Zanuttini & Portner (2003: 64)
a. Che alto che l ze!
what tall that S.CL is
'How tall he is!'
b. [$_{CP}$ che alto [[$_{C}$ Ø] [$_{CP}$ FACT [$_{C}$ che] IP]]]

The presence of a null nominal element sitting in the low left periphery would block any movement, either to TopP or FocP of constituents containing a noun, because of (relativized) minimality effects. Since adverbs do not contain a nominal inside their structure, it is still possible to move them across the nominal operator (which is probably sitting in a position lower than FocP in the operator layer proposed by Poletto 2014). So, the blocking of nominal categories like objects would not be due to the non-existence of TopP or FocP with factive verbs, but to the fact that the factive null nominal intervenes in their movement path. This analysis does not predict that the reversed embedded V2 pattern (possible objects but impossible adverbs) is found, but rather the opposite: it predicts that according to the type of null operator found in the left periphery of different types of embedded clauses, the extraction possibilities vary. We know that there are languages in which a nominal element is found introducing different types of embedded clauses, so we would expect this block in the left periphery to be found with other verb classes, depending on whether the nominal operator is present or not in the language. This can also explain why the object/adverb asymmetry is found in Timavese and Saurian with both bridge and non-bridge verbs. Here there is a null nominal present in both verbal classes. The idea that embedded clauses are introduced by a nominal expression, similar to cases like 'John regrets the fact that …' has already been put forth to explain languages in which the noun is lexically realized, or where nominal morphology is present. For instance, in Japanese, embedded questions include a nominal element, which is consequently marked for the case provided by the main verb (Nasu et al. 2024: 4), as in (24). In Ndebele, the augmentative morpheme *-u* is prefixed to the complementizer *kuthi*, as in (25) (Pietraszko 2019:12a). This morpheme is usually described as a D element, and, diachronically speaking, *ukuthi* embedded nominal complements.[11]

[11] Traces of this phenomenon have been noticed by Schreiber (2011) for Gothic, where the complementizer is marked for the case assigned by the main verb.

(24) Japanese, Nasu et al. (2024: 4)
[[Dare-ga sono mondai-o kaiketusuru ka] *(-ga) motiron zyuuyoo-da-ga],
who-nom that problem-acc solve q-nom of.course important-cop-although
doo kaiketusuru ka-mo zyuuyoo da.
how solve q-also important cop
'Although who will solve the problem is of course important, how they will solve it is also important.'

(25) Ndebele, Pietraszko (2019:12a)
A-ngi-cabangi [(u)-kuthi uSipho u-za-pheka].
NEG-1SG.SBJ-think (15.AUG)-15.COMP 1.Sipho 1.SBJ-FUT-cook
'I don't think that Sipho will cook.'

So, the two analyses that have been proposed here differ with respect to the predictions they make: while the pruning analysis allows for the reverse pattern to occur, where adverbs would be banned but Topics and Foci are not, the minimality analysis only allows for differences in the class of main verbs that triggers the minimality effect in embedded V2, depending on the presence of a null nominal in the low CP area. Up to now, the data we have seem to be better explained by the second hypothesis (the one more recently proposed by Haegeman) and not by the first. However, more languages need to be investigated in this sense to see which of the two predictions is really met cross-linguistically.

9. Summing up

The data we have presented in this work show that for both Romance and Germanic V2, we need a more fine-grained typology of embedded V2 languages, in addition to narrow V2 languages like mainland Scandinavian and German, and broad V2 languages like Yiddish and Icelandic. Intermediate types are represented by Saurian, Timavese, Badiotto and Gardenese Ladin, where embedded V2 under factive verbs is possible only with adverbs but not with direct objects. In Saurian and Timavese this effect is found also with bridge verbs. We have proposed that the pruning hypothesis originally proposed by Haegeman (2006) can account for this asymmetry: in embedded clauses the left periphery is cut/not projected at different points in the tree, while this is never the case in main clauses. However, some questions remain open: first of all, why is the complementizer not pruned, although it is the highest element? Is the reverse pattern, where only objects are ok but adverbs are not, also possible? The second hypothesis we put forth is in line with Haegeman's more recent work and argues that the object/adverb asymmetry found in the four languages we have investigated is due to a minimality effect of a null nominal operator located in the low CP area, which blocks the movement of other nominal constituents but crucially not the one of adverbs, which are of a different category. At present, the data we have are more in line with the more recent hypothesis, but a bigger sample is needed.

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