Syntactic and information structural restrictions on the realization of subjects in Cimbrian
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1. Introduction.
In this talk we present novel data on the realization of subjects in Cimbrian (Germanic, spoken in Luserna, Northern Italy). More specifically, we discuss the complex relationship between the position of NP subjects, coupled with the presence of an enclitic subject pronoun or the expletive element *da*, and information structure.

We show that none of the previous analyses can account for the novel data. Bidese et al (2012) and Bidese & Tomaselli (2014) propose that subject clitics and *da* are hosted in FinP° and their function is that of controlling an EPP feature on T° since post-verbal subjects fail to raise to this position. Subject clitics realise Fin° with given/topicalised subjects, whereas *da* shows up when the subject is new information. Grewendorf & Poletto (2015) propose that *da* is not hosted in the same FP hosting clitics, but realises the Specifier of GroundP, whose function is to signal the Ground against which the new information in the clause is set. The two analyses are challenged by the fact that *da* is ruled out in i) some syntactic configurations involving a focused subject, ii) possible in interrogatives with given subjects and iii) optional in some contexts.

2. The data.
2.1 Post-verbal subjects
In Cimbrian, post-verbal NP subjects always co-occur with a clitic pronoun or the expletive *da*. According to the literature, *da* is obligatory when the NP subject is new-information / focussed, whereas the subject clitic is obligatory if the subject is given information. Our novel data, which consider several fine-grained information-structure contexts, indicate that this generalization is partially correct. NP subject-finite verb inversion is possible in Cimbrian – as long as i) the subject is contrastively focussed, and ii) the expletive *da* follows the finite verb (1).

(1)   In de botege hatta /*hat   herta **dar Mario**   gekoaft s mel,   net de mama
        in the shop   has-da / has   always the Mario   bought the flour not the mum
        "It is Mario who has always bought the flour in the shop, not the mum."

When the NP subject is discourse given, post-verbal subjects cannot co-occur with the expletive *da* but must be doubled by the clitic, see (2).

(2)   *Luca and Maria are talking about Giada*
        a. Luca asks: Pit bem   ist=se$_j$ ausgònt   di Giada$_j$?
                     with whom   is=she gone out   the Giada?
        b. Luca asks: # Pit bem   ist=da ausgònt   di Giada
                     with whom   is=*da* gone out   the Giada

The fact that *da* is restricted to focused subjects seems to be further confirmed by the examples in (3) indicating that the NP subject can be dropped when it is doubled by a clitic (3b) but not when it is doubled by a *da* (3c). This follows from the fact that topics can be dropped / remain silent, and foci cannot (Frascarelli 2007).

(3)   *Luca and Maria are talking about Giada*
        a. Luca asks: Pit bem   ist=se ausgònt?
                     with whom   is=she gone out
        b. Luca asks: *Pit bem   ist=da ausgònt?
                     with whom   is=*da* gone out

However, the connection between *da* and focused post-verbal subject turns out to be less clear than expected when more data are considered. In (4) we show that in all sentences in which a discourse-

given object appears in CP and the subject is new-information, *da* is ruled out.

(4)   a. Someone asks: "Who watched the match on TV?"

b. Answer: In television	di partia$_j$	hat-se$_j$	geschauget di momma
on TV	the match	has=she	watched the mum
c. Answer: *In television	di partia	hatta	geschauget di momma
on TV	the match	has=*da*	watched the mum

Moreover, interrogative clauses with *da* are possible even when the subject represents given information, as can be deduced from the presupposition information seeking question in (5), namely that *Giada went out with someone*.

(5)
Pit bem	ist=da ausgònt	de Giada?
with whom	is=*da* gone out	the Giada

2.2. Preverbal subjects
The second set of arguments that will be discussed in the talk regards the generalization that *da* is restricted to post-verbal NP subjects. Our data confirm this view for discourse-given subjects (6a), but not for focused subjects or operators (like QPs and QP-phrases), which can optionally co-occur with *da* (6bc).

(6)   a.   A: *What did Mario buy?*
            B. Dar Mario hat / *hatta gekhoaft in liber
            the Mario has / has=da bought the-acc book
        b.   Ber hat / hatta geprinkt in turt?
            who has / has-da brought the-acc cake
        c.   Niamat hat / hatta gekoaft in liber
            noone has / has=da bougth the-acc book

3. Our proposal.
We distinguish three types of subject positions according to their information structural role: post-verbal subjects represent new information; subjects that precede the non-finite verb are interpreted as contrastive focus and subjects that precede the finite verb are interpreted as given information. The crucial point of data in (4) and (5) is that topicalization or wh-movement of an object block a pre-finite subject. We argue that Spec,FinP constitutes a criterial position for the subject and blocks movement into another criterial position across it (cf. Rizzi 1990, 2004).

The data in (6), however, have another explanation. We show that the presence of *da* in sentences with a preverbal NP subject in (6) has the function of turning an unmarked interrogative clause into a special interrogative (6b), and of turning a main declarative clause into an exclamative sentence (6c), by making the fronted operator / quantifier specific / referential. In this optional use *da* functions like Dutch *er* (Biberauer&van der Wal 2014). As for the position of *da*, we follow Bidese & Tomaselli (2014) and suggest that it is hosted in Fin° where also subject clitics are hosted, explaining why *da* is obligatory in (4c) but excluded in (4b).

References
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