

**Inherited vs. contact-induced structures:
the progressive periphrases in Ladin and Swiss Romansh**

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This study aims to shed light on the origin of Ladin and Swiss Romansh progressive periphrastic constructions. Unlike other Romance varieties exhibiting a stative verb + gerund progressive periphrasis (e.g. Ita. *Sto mangiando una mela* ‘I am eating an apple’), Ladin and Romansh both display grammaticalized constructions using an aspectual marker, as in (1) and (2).

(1) *Son (dò) che chante.*

be.1SG behind that sing.1SG

‘I am singing’ lit. ‘I am behind that I sing’

(Ladin; Gsell 2008)

(2) *Jeu erel vid mirar televisium cu che jeu hai udiu ina ramur.*

I be.IPFV.1SG ASP watch.INF television when that I AUX hear.PP a noise

‘I was watching TV, when I heard a noise’

(Romansh)

Both examples at first sight seem to be structurally equivalent representations of the regional Italian *son qui che canto* lit. ‘I am here that I sing’ in (1) and of the German *Ich war am fernsehen, als ich ein verdächtiges Geräusch hörte* ‘I was watching TV when I heard a suspicious noise’ in (2). Maraffino (2021) claims that such constructions are contact-induced by providing evidence of the diatopic variation in the expression of progressive across the Alpine area. Indeed, we find further structural affinities in progressive constructions, such as *gist* + finite structure in Romansh, for instance *Jeu ves, ti legias gist Italo Calvino, mes autur preferí* ‘I see you’re reading Italo Calvino, my favorite author’, with *gist* being an equivalent aspectual marker to the German *gerade*. The matching distribution between the Italian/German and the Ladin/Romansh constructions makes the idea of contact-induced structures plausible.

However, the existing literature on this topic only provides a synchronic analysis of the above-mentioned structures and an overview of their distribution, whereas their origin is yet to be understood. In fact, it is debatable whether and to what extent such constructions are to be considered as purely contact-induced or whether they could be understood as Romance-inherited inasmuch non-gerundial locative periphrasis are attested in other Romance varieties as well (e.g. Fr. *être en train de*). The present study aims to bridge this gap by providing a comparative diachronic investigation of the existing Romansh and Germanic data, which compensate the lack of Ladin written records attesting older stages of this variety.

Furthermore, the understanding of progressive patterns could bring additional insight in a wider and comprehensive examination of the development of Romance morphosyntactic features and more specifically, in the discussion on the classification of Romance according to the central-centripetal status vs. the north-south continuum (cf. Zamboni 2000, Ledgeway 2012, but also Drinka 2017, 2020).

Keywords: progressive periphrasis, periphrastic constructions, Ladin, Swiss Romansh, Rhaeto-Romance

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