

## V2 and (micro)-variation in two Rhaeto-Romance varieties of Northern Italy

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### Abstract

Rhaeto-Romance varieties are the only present-day Romance varieties which exhibit the Verb Second constraint (Benincà 1994, Poletto 2002, Salvi 2010). In this chapter we examine two properties typically ascribed to the Verb Second phenomenon, subject-finite verb inversion and restrictions on the co-occurrence of multiple constituents in the sentence-initial position, in two Rhaeto-Romance varieties spoken in South Tyrol (Province of Bolzano, Northern Italy). We demonstrate that both varieties behave like Verb-Second languages as far as both phenomena are concerned, but exhibit a specific Verb-Second system governed by the interplay between syntactic and discourse constraints which differs from that of Germanic and Old Romance languages. We also show that these two varieties are subject to diatopic and micro-diatopic variation and therefore provide an excellent showcase for the role of sociolinguistic factors in determining variation in syntax.

**Keywords:** relaxed V2, Old Romance, Ladin, Badiotto, Gardenese, subject-finite verb inversion, multiple access to the left periphery, sociolinguistic variation, diatopic variation

### 1. Introduction \*

One of the main syntactic differences between Germanic and Romance languages regards the position of the finite verb in main clauses. In all Germanic languages, except for English, the finite verb must follow the first sentence constituent in declarative and interrogative main clauses as a consequence of a syntactic constraint known as Verb Second (henceforth: V2, see den Besten 1983, Tomaselli 1990, Branigan 1996, Holmberg 2015, Holmberg&Platzack 1995 among others). As is well-known, this constraint is not found in present-day Romance varieties, with the exception of some Rhaeto-Romance varieties (see Anderson 2005, Benincà 1994, 2006, 2013, Kaiser 2002, Poletto 2000, 2002, Salvi 2010 for the claim that Rhaeto-Romance varieties are V2 languages, and Adams 1987, Benincà 1984, 1994, 2006, 2013, Benincà & Poletto 2004, Cognola 2013, 2015, Fontana 1993, Ledgeway 2005, 2007, 2008, Poletto 2002, 2014, Salvesen 2013, Salvi 2000, 2004, Vance 1987, Vanelli 1987, Wolfe 2015 for the idea that Old Romance languages were also V2 languages).

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The first aim of this chapter is to provide a novel description of the syntactic properties ascribed to V2 in two Rhaeto-Romance varieties spoken in two valleys in South Tyrol (Northern Italy), Badiotto and Gardenese, and to establish whether they can both be considered V2 languages. This involves a review of the existing literature on the two varieties, followed by a discussion of sets of newly collected data. We focus particularly on the presence of so-called Germanic inversion, i.e. the need for the subject to follow the finite verb in sentences in which it is not the sentence-initial constituent, and the syntax of the sentence-initial position, which is typically restricted in V2 languages. The second aim of the chapter is to compare Badiotto and Gardenese, and to establish whether they differ from each other with respect to the syntactic phenomena under consideration. This comparison allows us to identify important aspects of variation between the varieties which we account for by establishing the role of diatopic variation, and that of variables connected to informants' backgrounds in producing (micro-)variation. This is particularly important for these Rhaeto-Romance varieties, which are characterised by a tension between low normativity (typical of non-standardised varieties, see Dorian 2010) and recent attempts at standardisation.

The chapter is organised in the following way. Section 2 describes our data collection methods and provides a sociolinguistic overview of the two varieties; Sections 3 and 4 describe their Germanic inversion and use of the sentence-initial position. In section 5, we discuss the results reached in sections 3 and 4 and their relevance to the classification of the two varieties as V2 languages. Section 6 contains the conclusions.

## 2. Sociolinguistic overview and data collection

Rhaeto-Romance is a cover term traditionally used to refer to three Romance groups (and their languages) who live in Switzerland (*Romansh*), the Italian Dolomites (*Ladin*) and Friuli (*Friulian*).<sup>1</sup> Ladin is spoken in five valleys: three in the south of the area (Fassa, Trentino; Livinallongo and Ampezzo, Veneto) and two in the north (Gardena and Badia, South Tyrol), see Pellegrini (1977), Salvi (2010).

This chapter focuses on the latter varieties, Gardenese and Badiotto, each spoken by about 10.000 people according to the Province of Bolzano's 2011 census. Gardenese is homogeneous phonologically, morphologically and syntactically (although it exhibits signs of inter-generational and diatopic variation, see Casalicchio 2011), whereas Badiotto exhibits internal diatopic (micro)-variation (Salvi 2010). Three subgroups of Badiotto have therefore been individuated to date, on mainly phonological and morphological bases: High Badiotto, Central Badiotto and Mareo (spoken in the homonymous lateral valley).<sup>2</sup>

The above classification of Ladin varieties does not fully consider syntax, partly because this level of linguistic analysis is little studied, and the research that has been done focuses on single phenomena and single varieties (see Benincà 1994, Poletto 2000, 2002, Rasom 2008, Casalicchio 2013, Hack 2013). Our work is a first attempt to fill this gap, since it compares one particular syntactic phenomenon in two Ladin varieties – thus contributing to our understanding of their

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<sup>1</sup> We do not take a position about the relationship between these three groups. For a range of opinions, see Pellegrini (1991), Haiman & Benincà (1992), Goebel (2000), Vanelli (2004), Benincà & Vanelli (2005).

<sup>2</sup> Note that there is no such variety as Low Badiot, because German varieties are spoken in the lowest part of the Badia valley.

syntax and of the (micro-)variation between them.

The chapter relies on the results of fieldwork which involved eight native speakers (aged between 25-40, average age: 30): six Badiotto speakers (representing all three groups discussed above) and two Gardenese. There are more Badiotto informants because of that language's diatopic (micro)-variation, not present in Gardense. The data collection was carried out in two phases. In the first phase we worked with two speakers, one for each variety (MI, Badiotto; MD, Gardenese), and carried out single interviews of about one hour each in which both production and judgments were tested. The results from this first phase allowed us to outline the main properties of V2 in these varieties. In the second phase, we prepared a written questionnaire containing a range of key sentences to test the properties relevant to V2 on the basis of the results reached in the first phase. The questionnaire was constructed around production tasks (8), judgment tasks (38 questions: sentences to be judged on a 1(fully ungrammatical)-5(fully grammatical) point scale) and some questions to establish the informants' sociolinguistic profiles. The questionnaire was e-mailed to informants, who completed it alone. We asked the informants to answer as spontaneous as they could, using everyday language and without considering normative grammar. In recent decades, in fact, most Ladin varieties have been subject to determined efforts to standardise them (see, for example, the normative grammars of Anderlan-Obletter 1991, Gasser 2000, Gallmann *et al.* 2008/2013), and we wanted to try to avoid in as far as possible informants' use of an artificial language.

Our work provides a fully new picture of the V2 phenomenon in contrast to that presented by normative grammars, and also provides an innovative contribution to the typological classification and understanding of micro-variation in the Ladin varieties of South Tyrol. We thus believe that the results clearly indicate that the informants did not follow the rules of normative grammar.

In Table 1 we summarise the information used to define the informants' sociolinguistic profiles which is relevant to account for the observed micro-variation (see section 5 below). We show that diatopic variation is one of the two crucial factors that give rise to micro-variation. Our data indicate that the standard classification of Badiotto varieties, which distinguishes between High and Low Badiotto, is not sufficient to account for syntactic micro-variation. We thus introduce a further distinction between Lower High Badiotto, spoken by three informants from San Leonardo, and Upper High Badiotto, spoken by one informant from Colfosco. The informants' personal histories (principally their movements from one area of the valley to another) represent the second factor in micro-variation, as we will demonstrate.

	Variety spoken	Village	Gender	Age	Notes on the personal history (if relevant)
LH	<i>Mareo</i>	San Vigilio	F	25	--
JC	Central Badiotto	Rina	F	23	Her parents are both from San Martino, which is close to Rina
SI	Lower High Badiotto	San Leonardo	F	38	DI's and MI's sister. She now lives in San Vigilio, the same village as LH (where <i>Mareo</i> is spoken)
DI	Lower High Badiotto	San Leonardo	F	33	SI's and MI's sister. She now lives in La Valle, which is close to her home village
MI	Lower High Badiotto	San Leonardo	F	40	SI's and DI's sister.
MR	Upper High Badiotto	Calfosch (Colfosco)	F	23	---
IK	Gardenese	Urtijëi (Ortisei)	M	28	---
MD	Gardenese	Selva	F	30	Her mother tongue is German, she learned Gardenese in the kindergarten.

Table 1. *Informants' sociolinguistic profile.*

### 3. On Subject-finite verb inversion

### 3.1 Current scholarship

The presence of subject-verb inversion in all main clauses in which the sentence-initial constituent is not the syntactic subject is possibly the most noteworthy property (clearly linked to their V2 character) distinguishing Badiotto and Gardenese from present-day Romance varieties.

According to the prescriptive literature (see Gallmann et al. 2013), subject-finite verb inversion is obligatory with both DPs and pronouns in Badiotto and Gardenese. Benincà (1994:94, 2013) and Poletto (2002) show that inversion is obligatory with pronouns and possible with DP subjects in Badiotto. Poletto (2002) identifies three patterns of agreement that can appear with finite verb – DP subject inversion in the language (see also Gallmann et al 2013, all examples from Poletto 2002:223). Subject – finite verb inversion can take place in the absence of clitic agreement on the finite verb (1a), or with a clitic pronoun fully (number, gender, person, 1b) or partially (person, number, 1c) agreeing with the DP subject.

- (1)      a. Duman        mangia la muta pom                                  Badiotto  
             tomorrow eats     the girl apples

b. Duman	mang-la	la muta pom	Badiotto
tomorrow	eats=subj.cl.she	the girl apples	
c.% Duman	mang-l	la muta pom (older generations only)	Badiotto
tomorrow	eats=subj.cl.it	the girl apples	
“The girl eats apples.” (Poletto 2002)			

In this chapter we focus on the type of inversion exemplified by (1a) establishing whether the type of inversion in (1) is possible or obligatory.<sup>3</sup> This issue has only been explicitly addressed in the literature by Gallmann et al (2013), who claim that subject-finite verb inversion is obligatory, without, however, providing starred examples of sentences with no DP inversion.

### 3.2 Subject-finite verb inversion in main declarative clauses

This section provides evidence that DP subject-finite verb inversion is not obligatory in either variety, and shows that the distribution of the subject in both pre- and post-verbal positions is ruled by syntactic and discourse factors, which differ slightly in the two varieties, both between the two varieties and within the same variety. This phenomenon thus provides a neat illustration of both micro-variation and inter-speaker variation.

We will now consider three possible positions of DP subjects in relation to the finite verb, which we exemplify in (2). The term G-inversion is used to refer to the so-called Germanic inversion (see Adams 1987, Salvesen 2013) found in V2 languages and in interrogative clauses in present-day English. In this construction, the DP subject follows the finite verb and precedes the past participle when a constituent different from the subject appears in the sentence-initial position (2a). We label the second possible position of the DP subject *no-inversion*, referring to the typical order found in non-V2 languages in which both a fronted constituent and the subject precede the finite verb, as in (2b), giving rise to linear V3. The third order we examine is Romance-inversion (henceforth: R-inversion, also known as “free inversion”, see Belletti 2004). In this construction, typical of non-V2 languages, the DP subject appears in inversion, always, however, positioned after the non-finite verb (unlike in G-inversion, 2c).

(2)	a. Gestern	hat Mario das Buch gekauft	G-inversion, German
	yesterday	has Mario the book bought	
	b. Ieri	Mario ha comprato il libro	no-inversion, Italian
	yesterday	Mario has bought the book	
	c. Ieri	ha comprato il libro Mario	R-inversion, Italian
	yesterday	has bought the book Mario	
	“Mario bought the book yesterday.”		

3 Subject-finite verb inversion is obligatory with subject clitic pronouns. Due to space constraints we focus on DP subjects, which have consistently received less attention in the literature than subject pronouns (see Benincà 1994, Poletto 2000, 2002, Salvi 2000).

### 3.2.1 The syntax of DP subjects in main declarative clauses

In order to investigate the syntax of DP subjects, and to test whether there is a relationship between the position of the subject and syntactic/discourse factors, we considered the following syntactic and discourse contexts: sentences with a focused DP subject in which the fronted constituent is a scene-setter adverbial (Context 1); sentences with a given DP subject in which the fronted constituent is a scene-setter adverbial (Context 2); sentences with a focused DP subject in which the fronted constituent is a given direct object (Context 3); sentences with a given DP subject in which the fronted constituent is a given direct object (Context 4); main wh-interrogative clauses, in which the DP subject (like all constituents other than the wh-interrogative element, see Benincà 1988) are given (Context 5). We tested the distribution of new-information focused and given DP subjects in both production and judgment tasks. In production tasks, informants had to answer a subject interrogative wh-question, starting the answer with a given constituent (present in the interrogative) other than the subject. This allowed us to test the positions of both new-information focus and given subjects in relation to the finite and non-finite verb forms (see Cruschina 2006, Belletti 2004 on wh-interrogatives to elicit information focus).

The production data clearly indicate the presence of different strategies for the realisation of focused DP subjects according to the type of fronted constituent. Let us first consider the syntax of focused subjects in sentences with a fronted scene-setter adverbial (Context 1). In (3) we reproduce the sentences given by informants in the production task. Three possible positions for the subject appear in the data: G-inversion (3a), no-inversion (3b) and R-inversion (3c).

- (3) *Who has always bought the flour in the shop?* [answer: the mum; begin with: in the shop]
- |    |             |             |                |                |                  |                       |                         |
|----|-------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | Te botëga   | à           | tres           | <u>la mama</u> | cumprè la farina | Badiotto, G-inversion |                         |
|    | in shop     | has         | always         | the mum        | bought the flour |                       |                         |
| b. | Te butëiga  | <u>mami</u> | à              | for            | cumpà            | la farina             | Gardenese, no-inversion |
|    | in shop     | mum         | has            | always         | bought           | the flour             |                         |
| c. | Te butëiga, | la farina   | l à            |                | for              | cumpreda              | <u>la l'oma</u>         |
|    | in shop     | the flour   | obj.cl.him=has |                | always           | bought                | the mum                 |
|    |             |             |                |                |                  |                       | Gardenese, R-inversion  |

“It was always mum who bought the flour in the shop.”

The sentences in (3) are not equally distributed across informants and varieties: (3a) is the preferred option, used by the majority of informants (5/8), mostly from Badia (MI, DI, SI, JC and LH, 5/6). (3b) is used by MR (Badia) and by MD (Gardenese); (3c) is used by the Gardenese IK. Sentences (3a-b) were also tested in a judgment task. The five informants who use (3a) give this alternative the highest score (5) and give (3b) a score of 1.<sup>4</sup> MR, from Badia, who uses (3b), gives (3a) 1. MD, the Gardenese informant who uses (3b) gives (3a) 5, whereas the other Gardenese informant, IK, rejects both orders – which means that only free inversion (3c) is grammatical for him in this context.

The results of the production and judgment tasks indicate that the distribution of the DP subject, in particular the grammaticality of G-inversion, is subject to variation. G-inversion is the *only* possible

4 Sentences are considered possible/grammatical when judged either 5 or 4, impossible/ungrammatical when they are given 1 or 2 and marginal when they are judged 3.



alternative for 5/6 speakers from Badia. For one speaker from Badia (RM), however, G-inversion is ruled out and the only possibility is the absence of inversion (V3). For IK, from Gardena, G-inversion is ruled out and R-inversion is the only possibility.<sup>5</sup> For MD, from Gardena, both orders are possible.

In order to establish whether the distribution of the DP subject in (3) is parasitic on information structure, and, more specifically, on the status of the DP subject as a new-information focus, let us consider sentences in which the sentence-initial constituent is a given scene-setter adverbial and the subject is given (Context 2). If the discourse status of the DP subject plays a role in its syntactic position, it is expected that the sentences in Context 2 will exhibit a different syntax from those in Context 1 (3). When the subject is given, two word orders appear in production (4): no inversion (4a) and G-inversion (4b).

- (4) *What did Maria buy yesterday?* [answer: the potatoes; please begin with: yesterday]  
 a. Inier            Maria à            cumprè i    soni                            *no-inversion* - Badiotto  
      yesterday    Maria has            bought the potatoes  
 b. Inier            à            Maria cumprè i    soni                            *G-inversion* - Badiotto  
      yesterday    has            Maria bought the potatoes  
      “Maria bought potatoes yesterday.”

As in the case of (3), the two word orders are not equally distributed across the varieties. (4a), i.e. the order in which inversion has *not* taken place, is the preferred order, used by 5/8 informants. This indicates that from a purely quantitative point of view, the absence of inversion is preferred when the DP subject is given, while G-inversion is preferred when the DP subject is focused. A qualitative analysis of the data confirms and refines this result. 3/6 informants from Badia (JC-MI-DI) only allow for G-inversion with focused subjects (see above), and do not produce G-inversion when the subject is given (4a). (4a) is also produced by RM and MD with focused subjects. G-inversion (4b) is produced by three informants: two from Badia (LH and SI who also have inversion with focused subjects) and one, IK, from Gardena. In the judgment task, (4b) is judged 5 by 6/8 informants (all those who used it in production, and DI, MD), and 3 or 1 by MR and MI.<sup>6</sup>

Summing up the data on Contexts 1 and 2, DP subject-finite verb inversion is preferred in Context 1 (sentences in which a given scene-setter adverbial appears in the sentence-initial position and the DP subject is focused); when the DP is given and a scene setter is in the sentence-initial position (Context 2) no inversion is the preferred options.

Three groups of informants exhibiting three different patterns of micro-variation can be identified. Informants belonging to Group 1 instantiate a syntactic system which is insensitive to information structure (G-inversion as either obligatory for LH, SI, Badia or ungrammatical for RM, Gardena) irrespective of the discourse status of the DP subject. For the informants of Group 2, G-inversion is obligatory (MI, DI, JC, Badia) when the subject is focused and impossible (MI), or, when given, possible but not produced (DI, JC). The last pattern of variation is exhibited by IK (Gardena), for whom inversion is obligatory with given, and ruled out with focused, DP subjects (Group 3). One informant, MD (Gardena), falls out of this picture, since she does not produce G-inversion, although

5 Our data indicate that in main declarative clauses with a focused subject R-inversion is marginal for speakers from Badia, while IK consistently uses this word order, or judges it to be 4-5.

6 We cannot exclude possible normative pressure here.

Interestingly, these patterns of micro-variation only partially correspond to diatopic variation, since Group 2 is composed of speakers from Lower High (DI, MI) and Central Badiotto (JC), which are neighboring varieties, and in Group 1 we find a speaker of Lower High Badiotto (SI) (see section 5 below for an explanation).

(5) *Who wrote the letter to the newspaper?* [answer: the mum; please begin with: the letter]

a. La lëtra al foliet la uma ti à scrit  
the letter to-the newspaper the mum ind.obj.cl.to-them has written  
*no-inversion*, Badiotto

b. La lëtra al foliet éi sté la mama che ti à scrit  
the letter to-the newspaper obj.cl.it was the mum that ind.obj.cl.to-them has written  
*cleft* Badiotto

c. La lëtra tla zaita l'à scritta la l'oma  
the letter to-the newspaper obj.cl.=has written the mum  
R-inversion Gardenese

“It is the mum who wrote the letter to the newspaper.”

It is striking that in (5) no informant produced G-inversion. The cleft construction (5b) was produced by 4/6 informants from Badia (SI, DI, MI, JC); (5a) was produced by MR (Badia) and MD (Gardena) and (5c) by IK (Gardena).<sup>7</sup> If we compare the sentences produced in (3) and (5), we see that the informants who produced G-inversion in (3), who are mostly from Badia, produced a cleft structure in (5). The other informants, on the other hand, stick to the syntax they used in (3) to realise a focused DP subject, i.e. either lack of inversion (RM, MD), or R-inversion (IK). We tested the grammaticality of inversion in Context 3 in a judgment task, and found that G-inversion is marginal for most informants, except for SI and LH (Group1) and MD. No inversion is judged possible by RM and MD (the informants who produce it) and by LH. All other informants judge it ungrammatical or marginal (IK).

The data on Context 3 indicate that all the informants belonging to Group 2 and the informant in Group 1 for whom G-inversion is obligatory with focused subjects (SI), change their strategy (Group 2) or prefer another strategy (SI of Group 1: cleft is used, G-inversion is accepted) for the realisation of focused subjects (from G-inversion to cleft) according to the type of fronted constituent.

Let us examine sentences in which the sentence-initial XP is a given direct object and the DP subject is also given (Context 4), to discover whether the pattern discussed for (5, Context 3) is fed by information structure, syntactic configuration (given object in the sentence-initial position), or a combination of the two. In sentences in which the sentence-initial constituent is a given object, and

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the subject is given (Context 4), informants produce the orders in (6): no inversion (6a), G-inversion (6b) and right dislocation (6c).

- (6) *When did mum buy the book?* [answer: yesterday; please begin with *the book*]
- |             |               |               |                       |                                      |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. Le liber | la uma        | l'à           | cumprè inier          | <i>no-inversion</i> , Badiotto       |
| the book    | the mum       | obj.cl.he=has | bought yesterday      |                                      |
| b. Le liber | à la mama     |               | cumprè inier          | <i>G-inversion</i> , Badiotto        |
| the book    | has the mum   | bought        | yesterday             |                                      |
| c. L liber  | l'à           |               | cumprà la l'oma inier | <i>right-dislocation</i> , Gardenese |
| the book    | obj.cl.he=has | bought        | the mum yesterday     |                                      |
- “It was yesterday that mum bought the book.”

(6a) is produced by the two informants who consistently produce sentences without inversion (RM, MD) and by RH (Badia); (6b) is produced by a single informant from Badia (SI); (6c) is produced by three informants (IK – Gardena, DI, MI, Badia).<sup>8</sup> The lack of any kind of inversion coupled with right dislocation are the preferred options for the realisation of the given subject in this context. From a qualitative point of view, the division in three groups persists. Informants belonging to Group 1 either never produce inversion (RM, Badia) like in Contexts 1 and 2, or allow for G-inversion in both Contexts 3 and 4 (SI).<sup>9</sup> For informants in Group 2 (MI, DI, JC, Badia), G-inversion is ruled out and a cleft is used instead to realise focused DP subjects, whereas given subjects are either pre-verbal or post-verbal (right-dislocated). For the Group 3 informant (IK, Gardena), G-inversion is ruled out in all contexts, except for Context 2, in which the DP subject is given and the fronted constituent is a scene setter. Informant MD again falls outside this picture, since she does not produce G-inversion, although she accepts it irrespective of the discourse context.

### 3.2.2 Subject-finite verb inversion in main wh-interrogative clauses

In the previous section we saw that the distribution of subject-finite verb inversion in main declarative clauses is ruled by an interaction between subtle syntactic and discourse constraints, which are subject to diatopic (see the asymmetries between Group 2, Badia, and Group 3, Gardena,) and inter-speaker (see the asymmetries between Badiotto speakers from Group 1 and 2) variation. Let us investigate whether the type of variation documented for main declarative clauses is also found in wh-interrogatives (Context 5). We tested interrogatives in three production tasks (translation) and in a judgment task. The production task focused on three types of interrogative clause: adverbial clauses (*when*), object interrogatives (*what*) and a why-interrogative. Two orders appear in all three interrogative types: G-inversion (7a) and right dislocation (7b).

<sup>8</sup> Informant LH did not translate this sentence correctly.

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, we have no data on informant LH's intuitions – which makes it impossible to know if she would pattern with SI, as she did in Contexts 1 and 2.

- [illegible]

G-inversion (7a) is the preferred option, used in at least two interrogative clauses by all but two of the informants. The informants who produce G-inversion also produce (7b). JC and MI only produced (7b) in all the tested sentences. The informants who produce G-inversion also require it in Context 3 (given subjects in sentences with a fronted scene setter, i.e. IK: Group 3, G-inversion in all 3 sentences, SI: Group 1), as do the speakers in Group 1 who systematically reject subject-finite inversion in main declarative clauses in all contexts. Among the speakers in group 2, DI allows for both G-inversion and right dislocation, whereas JC and MI only produce right dislocations. In the judgment tasks, both alternatives are grammatical for all the speakers except MI.

### 3.2.3 Summary of the results

Table 2 summarises the data on the syntax of DP subjects. Note that no-inversion is ruled out in just one context (Context 5, see empty box) in which G-inversion is felicitous for all informants. The second thing that should be noted is that Contexts 3 and 4 are quantitatively the least felicitous for G-inversion (see section 5 below for a complete list of generalisations).

From a qualitative point of view, Table 2 allows us to divide speakers into three groups according to their intuitions. Speakers of Group 1 are characterised by their insensitivity to information structure: they either use/accept G-inversion in all contexts (SI, Lower High Badiotto, LH, Mareo), or do not use/reject it in most contexts MR (Upper High Badiotto). Speakers in Group 2 require G-inversion with focused subjects in sentences with a fronted scene setter (Context 1, DI, JC, MI, Lower High Badiotto), the speaker in Group 3 requires G-inversion with given subjects and a fronted given object (Context 2, IK, Gardenese). Informant MD (Gardenese) does not belong to any group.

Context 1	G-inversion	<i>No-inversion</i>	R-inversion/right dislocation
Main declarative clauses with fronted scene setter & focussed subject	OBLIGATORY for SI & LH (Group 1) OBLIGATORY for MI OBLIGATORY for DI, JC (Group 1) POSSIBLE for MD	OBLIGATORY for MR (Group 1); POSSIBLE for MD	OBLIGATORY for IK (Group 3)
Context 2			
Main declarative clauses with fronted scene setter & given subject	POSSIBLE for SI & LH (Group 2) & IK (Group 3), MD, MARGINALLY POSSIBLE for DI, JC (Group 2)	OBLIGATORY for MR (Group 1), MI (Group 2) POSSIBLE for MD	POSSIBLE for DI, JC (Group 2).
Context 3			
Main declarative clauses with fronted given object & focussed subject	POSSIBLE for SI, LH (Group 1), MD; IMPOSSIBLE / MARGINAL for IK (Group 3), MI, DI, JC (Group 2)	OBLIGATORY for MR (Group 1); POSSIBLE for MI, DI, JC (Group 2)	POSSIBLE for MI, DI, JC (Group 2); IK (Group 3)
Context 4			
Main declarative clauses with fronted given object & given subject	POSSIBLE for SI (Group 1), MD	POSSIBLE for MR (Group 1), MD	POSSIBLE for MI, DI, JC (Group 2), IK (Group 3).
Context 5			
Main Wh-interrogative clauses	POSSIBLE for IK(Group 3), SI, MR (Group 1), DI, JC (Group 2), MD.		POSSIBLE for IK(Group 3), SI, MR, (Group 1), DI, JC, MI (Group 2), MD.

Table 2. *Summary of the distribution of DP subject-finite verb inversion*

## 4. Restrictions on constituents preceding the finite verb

### 4.1 Current scholarship

A second remarkable property of Badiotto and Gardenese that can be linked to their V2 nature concerns the syntax of the sentence-initial position.<sup>10</sup> The possibility of moving constituents to the sentence-initial position in V2 languages is generally recognised to be highly restricted – the “bottleneck-effects” (Poletto 2002, Wolfe 2015).

Poletto (2002) proposed that Badiotto exhibits quite a robust bottleneck-effect in main declarative clauses (but not in *wh*-interrogative clauses, where V3 and V4 are possible, see below), since usually only one constituent can precede the verb. Poletto claims there to be one exception to this restriction: a focused constituent can be preceded by either a scene-setter adverbial or by a hanging topic.<sup>11</sup> While her informants marginally accepted the combination “Adverbial – Focalised XP – V”, they judged the order “Hanging Topic – Focalised XP – V” to be fully grammatical.<sup>12</sup>

- (8) a. ?Duman,      GIANI vaighest      Badiotto (Poletto 2002:231)<sup>13</sup>  
tomorrow Gianni see=subj.cl.you  
“It is Gianni who you see tomorrow.”  
b. L liber,      A GIANI ti      l'ai  
the book to Gianni ind.obj.cl.to-him obj.cl.him=have=subj.cl.I  
bel      dè      Badiotto (Poletto 2002:231)<sup>14</sup>  
already given  
“It is to Gianni that I gave the book.”

However, the data reported in section 3 (for instance the grammaticality for many Badiotto speakers of V3 word orders with two fronted given constituents, adverbial or object and given subject, see Table 2) already point to the fact that Poletto's generalisation needs some refinement.

This is further confirmed by the specific data collected for the syntax of the sentence-initial position. V3 word orders involving a scene-setter, for example, are ruled out in Badiotto if both the scene-setter and the preverbal argument are given, as predicted by Poletto's analysis (9a); however, in Gardenese this is not the case (9b).

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10 This section draws mainly upon grammaticality judgements, due to the marked character of the phenomenon under investigation. When producing sentences, informants either avoid or systematically change (by eliminating one of the fronted constituents) sentences with two fronted constituents. It was therefore necessary to ask for grammaticality judgements to test this property of their grammars.

11 Another exception to the V2 word order, found mainly in Gardenese but also in some Badiotto varieties, concerns V1 orders, which are possible when the subject is null (both Gardenese and some Badiotto varieties are partial pro-drop languages). Further research is needed on this order.

12 Note that Poletto argues that the example in (8b) involves a Hanging Topic and not a Left Dislocation. However, as we discuss later in this section according to our informants Hanging Topics are ruled out in Badiot, while Left Dislocations are grammatical in some contexts.

13 Both Badiotto and Gardenese have subject clitics, which can replace the subject, or double it when the lexical subject is dislocated. We do not consider these in depth in this article: noting only that they are usually used in the sentences described in this section.

14 Note that in both varieties indirect objects always have to be doubled by a clitic, irrespective of the position of the argument. Direct objects, on the other hand, do not have to be doubled by a clitic.

- (9) *Who did you bring the book yesterday?*  
 a. \*Inier le liber l ài purtà al Luis (Bad.: all speakers)  
 yesterday the book obj.cl.him have=subj.cl.I brought to-the Luis  
*Who has always bought the flour in the shop?*  
 b. Te butëiga, la farina l à for cumprèda la l'oma (Gardenese)  
 in shop the flour obj.cl.him has always bought the mum  
 “It was always mum who bought the flour in the shop.”

V3 word orders in sentences with a given element and a focus are also rejected by speakers of lower High Badiotto (MI, SI, DI), contrary to Poletto's (2002) predictions, although the other Badiotto speakers (LH, JC, MR) accept them (10a,c). In Gardenese, V3 word orders are grammatical if the focused element is not an argument, see the contrast between (10b) and (10d).

- (10) *Who did you call yesterday?*  
 a. %Inier LA MARIA ài cherdè sö (Badiotto: ok for LH, JC, MR)  
 yesterday the Maria have=subj.cl.I called up  
 b. \*Inier MARIA éi cherdà su (Gardenese)  
 yesterday Maria have=subj.cl.I called up  
*When did you buy the book?*  
 c. %Le liber, INIER l'ài cumprè (Badiotto: ok for LH, JC, MR)  
 the book yesterday obj.cl.him=have=subj.cl.I bought  
 d. L liber, INIER l'èi cumprà (Gardenese)  
 the book yesterday obj.cl.him=have=subj.cl.I bought  
 “It was yesterday when I bought the book.”

The second context for V3 orders described by Poletto (2002) is that in which a Hanging Topic and a focus co-occur before the finite verb. In this case, our Badiotto informants do not confirm Poletto's claim: they all reject Hanging Topics, regardless of the informational role of the second constituent (11a). On the other hand, Gardenese speakers are divided here: MD accepts sentences with V3 when there is a Hanging Topic, while IK considers them marginal (11b).

- (11) a. \*L Giani, CUN L PIERE / cun l Piero ài baià de chël cretino (Badiotto)  
 the Gianni with the Pietro have=subj.cl.I spoken of that stupid  
 b. %Giواني, CUN PIERE / cun Piero éi rujenà de chël cretino (Gardenese)  
 Gianni with Piero have=subj.cl.I spoken of that stupid  
 “As for Gianni, it is with Pietro that I spoke of that stupid.”

## 4.2 Main declarative clauses

In order to fully account for these results, which are partly unexpected within Poletto's (2002) account, we decided to test all possible combinations of preverbal constituents (arguments and scene setters, topics and foci). As we demonstrate, both varieties are sensitive to information structure in this respect, since the co-occurrence of a given and a focalised argument is highly restricted. When two topics appear in the sentence-initial position, some combinations are favoured (subject and indirect object in preverbal position), while others are ruled out or judged marginal. Let us first consider the co-occurrence of a topicalised and a focalised argument in the preverbal position (Context 1) in Gardenese. A focus (argument or scene-setter) can only be preceded by a given direct object, doubled by an object clitic.<sup>15</sup> (12). These cases are fully accepted by MD, while they are considered marginal by IK. It is unclear at the moment if the given element is left-dislocated or a Hanging Topic (recall that Gardenese allows Hanging Topics with a focalised argument 12b) (see examples in 5 above):

- (12) *Who has written the letter?*  
 %La lëtra mami l'à scritta (Gardenese)  
 the letter the mum obj.cl.she=has written  
 "It is mum who wrote the letter."

In Badiotto, more options are open. Speakers of Lower High Badiotto (DI, SI, MI) do not admit any constituent preceding the finite verb. The other speakers accept V3 word orders in some contexts. Although there is a great deal of variation, we believe that a general pattern can be discerned: in general, these speakers restrict possible orders, based on the following underlying hierarchy:<sup>16</sup>

- (13) Indirect Object > Direct Object > Subject

Thus, a given indirect object can precede both focused direct objects and subjects, while a given direct object can only precede a focused subject (14 a,b).<sup>17</sup> Moreover, speakers in this second group accept cases in which a scene-setter is involved (14c). See also discussion in (5) above.

- (14) *Who wrote the letter?*  
 a. La lëtra la mama l'à scritta (Badiotto: ok for RM and LH)  
 the letter the mum obj.cl.she=has written  
 "It is mum that wrote the letter."  
*Whom has your brother given the bracelet?*  
 b. \*Le bracialet, a Monika ti l à scinchè ti fra  
 the bracelet to Monica ind.obj.cl.to-her obj.cl.she has given your brother  
 (Badiotto: all speakers)

<sup>15</sup> This is worth noting because sentence-initial topics are generally not doubled by a clitic in Gardenese.

<sup>16</sup> Note that the order in (13) is *never* attested but can be inferred, since speakers were asked for judgments on sentences involving two, not three, fronted constituents.

<sup>17</sup> There are some neutralisations to this order: MR exhibits the order OI>OD/Subj (OD and Subject can co-occur in any order), JC has OI/OD>Subj (both OIs and ODs can precede the Subject, but they cannot co-occur).



*Who did you call yesterday?*

- c. %Inier Maria ài cherdè sö (Badiotto: ok for LH, JC, MR)  
 yesterday Maria have=subj.cl.I called up  
 “It is Maria that I called yesterday.”

The co-occurrence of two topics in the preverbal position (Context 2; for the co-occurrence of a given argument and a scene-setter, see 9) is possible for most Badiotto speakers, except for those of Upper High Badiotto, and MD (Gardenese). For these speakers, the co-occurrence of two given arguments is only possible when their syntactic role are those of subject and indirect object (16a) with no ordering restrictions (16b). However, MR (Upper High Badiotto) does not require any restrictions: two arguments can co-occur freely in any order, provided that they are doubled by a clitic (16c-f). The last pattern is that of IK (Gardena). He shows clear-cut ordering restrictions, which are based on the following (not attested, see footnote 16) underlying order (16b,c,e).

(15) Direct Object > Subject > Indirect Object

- (16) a. Tati, a Maria ti à-l dé n liber  
 daddy to Maria ind.obj.cl.to-her has=subj.cl.he given a book  
 (SUB-IO: ok for everyone)
- b.%A Maria, tati ti à dé n liber (IO-SUB: ok for anyone except IK)  
 to Maria daddy ind.obj.cl.to-her has given a book  
 “Dad gave Maria a book.”
- c.%L pan, mami l'à cumprà inier (DO-SUB: ok for IK and MR)  
 the bread mum obj.cl.it=has bought yesterday
- d.%Mami, l pan l'à-la cumprà inier (SUB-DO: ok for MR)  
 mum the bread obj.cl.he=has=subj.cl.she bought yesterday  
 “Mum bought the bread yesterday.”
- e.%L mëil, a Marco ti l à dat Paul (DO-IO: ok for MR and IK)  
 the apple to Marco ind.obj.cl.to-him obj.cl.him given Paul
- f. %A Marco, l mëil ti l à dat Paul (IO-DO: ok for MR)  
 to Marco the apple ind.obj.cl.to-him obj.cl.him has given Paul  
 “Paul gave Marco the apple.”

The above demonstrates that Ladin speakers also divide into three groups in the syntax of V3 orders of main declarative clauses: one such grouping is represented by IK, the Gardenese native speaker. This result is expected because of diatopic variation. Within Badiotto speakers we again find inter-speaker variation. One group is formed by the speakers of Lower High Badiotto (MI, DI, SI), while the other is represented by MR alone. The informants from the lower part of the valley (LH, JC), in contrast, do not belong to one, stable, group: their behaviour depends on the syntactic context. When a given constituent and a focus co-occur, these speakers pattern with MR; when two given arguments are in the preverbal position, they fall into the Lower High Badiotto group. The Gardenese informant MD also oscillates between two different groups: when there are two fronted topics she behaves like the major Badiotto group, while when a focus and a topic are fronted she gives the same judgements as IK.



- e.% L mëil, a Marco chi ti l à pa dat?  
the apple to Marco who ind.obj.cl.to him.obj.cl.him has PART given  
(OD>OI: ungrammatical for IK and MR, marginal for SI, DI, LH, JC)
- f.% A Marco, l mëil chi ti l à pa dat?  
to Marco the apple who ind.obj.cl.to him.obj.cl.him has PART given  
(OI>OD: ungrammatical for IK, LH, MR, marginal for JC, DI, SI)
- “Who gave Marco the apple?”

A recurrent pattern is thus revealed in all the contexts described in this section and our Ladin informants can be divided into three groups. The first consists of one Gardenese speaker, IK. The core variety in the second group is Upper High Badiotto (MR), and in the last group, Lower High Badiotto (MI, DI, SI).

The other varieties, represented by LH, JC (Badia) and MD (Gardenese), oscillate between groups 2 and 3. In the cases of LH and JC, this is due to geographical factors: their varieties are geographically close to Gardenese, and it is thus unsurprising that they converge with the varieties of this group on some points. When they agree with group 2 (MR) they are displaying a pattern in which the geographically peripheral areas differ from the more central ones (here, Lower High Badiotto).

Note that the speakers belonging to the groups identified in this section only partially correspond with the speakers included in the groups identified for G-inversion: speakers do not behave coherently in both phenomena (see section 5 below for an explanation).

### 4.3 Summary

Table 2 summaries the patterns identified for the three groups of speakers.

Context 1: Top + Foc	Group1 (RM)	Group2 (SI, DI, MI)	Group 3 (IK)
	Grammatical with ordering restrictions, or if a scene-setter is involved (LH, JC, MR)	always ungrammatical (SI, MI, DI)	marginal (IK) or fully grammatical (MD) with the object in first position
Context 2: Top+Top			
	everything goes, no ordering restrictions (MR)	IO+S ok in any order. Nothing else (SI, MI, DI, LH, JC, MD).	ok with ordering restrictions (IK)
Context 3: Top+Top in wh-interrogatives			
	IO+S in any order, others marginally and with some idiosyncrasy (LH, JC, MR)	everything goes (MD, MI, DI, marginally SI)	ok with ordering restriction (IK)

Table 3.

## 5. On V2 and micro-variation

The data discussed in the two previous sections allow us to draw some important conclusions about Badiotto and Gardenese, and, we believe, confirm and refine the claim made in the literature that both languages should be analysed as V2.

With regard to the first phenomenon - the possibility of G-inversion in sentences in which the syntactic subject does not appear in the sentence-initial position - we can generalise as follows, for all varieties, and all groups:

- (19) a. it is one of two possible options (along with right dislocation) in wh-interrogative clauses (Context 5);  
b. it is virtually impossible in main declarative clauses with a fronted given direct object and a focused subject (Context 3);  
c. it is marginal in main declarative clause with a fronted given direct object and a given subject (Context 4).

The generalisations in (19) indicate that G-inversion is grammatical for all varieties, but is constrained by syntactic factors, since it is possible in wh-interrogative clauses, but not in main declarative clauses in which a direct object is fronted. This pattern is fully absent in present-day non-V2 Romance varieties – a fact which supports a V2 analysis of Badiotto and Gardenese and indicates, moreover, that wh-interrogative clauses lie at the heart of the V2 phenomenon, since they favour the presence of G-inversion (see Rizzi 1996 and the presence of G-inversion in interrogative clauses in English as an example of residual V2).

However, syntax does not govern the distribution of G-inversion in Badiotto and Gardenese alone: discourse is also a key factor. Gardenese and Badiotto differ in the ways in which discourse interplays with the distribution of G-inversion, note the diatopic differences summarised in the following generalisations:

- (20) a. *Generalisation on the distribution of G-inversion valid for Gardense (Group 3):*  
G-inversion is possible when the DP subject is given and the fronted XP is a wh-element (Context 5) or a scene-setter (Context 2).  
b. *Generalisation on the distribution of G-inversion valid for Badiotto (Groups 1&2):*  
G-inversion is possible when the DP subject is a focus and the fronted XP is a scene-setter adverbial (Context 1: exception: MR), and when the DP is given and the fronted XP is a wh-element (Context 5).

The generalisations in (19) and (20) indicate that G-inversion is possible in both varieties, and is ruled by both syntactic and discourse factors, with the former, however, appearing to play the greater role – consider, for instance, the ungrammaticality of G-inversion in sentences with a fronted object irrespective of the discourse status of the DP subject. The generalisations on G-inversion indicate that Badiotto and Gardenese exhibit a trait typical of V2 languages (although they differ from Germanic V2 languages in partially allowing for no inversion in some specific contexts).

In both varieties, the presence of G-inversion correlates with the reduced possibility of having

multiple constituents before the finite verb, as expected within the V2 analysis. As summarised in the following generalisations, this ban is subject to the following syntactic (type of main clause) and discourse factors:

- (21) *Generalisations on multiple elements preceding the finite verb valid for all varieties (based on all groups):*
- a. The co-occurrence of multiple constituents before the finite verb is possible in *wh*-interrogative clauses, and highly restricted in main declarative clauses;
  - b. in main declarative clauses, the order topic-focus is highly restricted (possible only with a subset of constituents and constructions).

We also find clear diatopic differences between the two varieties with regard to the multiple co-occurrence of constituents before the finite verb:

- (22) a. *Generalisation on the distribution of multiple constituents preceding the finite verb valid for Gardenese (based on Group 3):*
- two topics can precede the finite verb in both interrogative and main clauses;
  - in all cases in which two topics can precede the finite verb, ordering restrictions among them are found, irrespective of the syntactic context.
- b. *Generalisation on the distribution of multiple constituents valid for Badiotto (all groups):*
- two topics can precede the finite verb only in interrogative clauses with no ordering restrictions;
  - the possibility of having two topics in main declarative clauses is highly restricted.

All the generalisations indicate that Badiotto and Gardenese differ greatly from present-day non-V2 Romance languages with regard to the phenomena under consideration, and should, in our view, be considered V2 languages (even though the syntax of the sentence-initial position has a specific characteristic not shared with Germanic V2 languages).

We will now address the presence of micro-variation among speakers of the same variety, which, in our view, does not constitute a problem for the above generalisations, since these are based on the quantitatively most consistent (or representative, in the case of Gardenese) patterns.

- (23) a. Micro-variation in Badiotto:
- Speakers of Group 1 identified for G-inversion are insensitive to information structure, and either reject (MR: exception: *wh*-interrogative clauses) or generalise (SI, LH) G-inversion to all contexts;
  - Speakers of Group 1 identified for the syntax of the sentence-initial position (LH, JC, MR) are much more liberal than other Badiotto speakers in allowing for multiple constituents before the finite verb.
- b. Micro-variation in Gardenese:
- Speaker MD is much more liberal than the other Gardenese speaker (IK).

We account for the micro-variation within varieties as follows: informants LH, JC and MR live in

different villages and therefore speak slightly different varieties. We propose that the inter-speaker observed in their language is due to micro-diatopic differences, resulting from the fact that they come from Mareo, Central Badiotto and Upper High Badiotto, respectively. On the basis of our data we suggest that a distinction be made between Upper High and Lower High Badiotto, since the speaker from Colfosco (MR) patterns differently from the speakers from S. Leonardo di Badia, a fact which calls for a further specification of “High Badiotto”, based on syntax.

Given these micro-diatopic differences, it is expected that these three speakers will not pattern like other Badiotto speakers. Note that these differences do not manifest themselves in both phenomena. On the possibility of having multiple constituents before the finite verb, all three speakers differ from Lower High Badiotto speakers; however, with regard to G-inversion, only LH (Mareo) and MR (Upper High Badiotto) make judgements that differ from the other Badiotto speakers.

Two particular individual cases need to be discussed. The first is that of SI, a speaker of Lower High Badiotto, who consistently patterns with the Mareo speaker, and not with her fellow speakers from S. Leonardo (where she was born) for G-inversion. We suggest that this is not due to her age or gender (she is almost in the same age as her sisters, also speakers of Lower High Badiotto, see Table 1) but rather to the fact that she now lives in S. Vigilio, where Mareo is spoken, and has changed some micro-aspects of her original grammar. It is important to note that the micro-changes introduced by SI only affect G-inversion, for the other phenomenon considered she belongs to Group 2, like her sisters. This indicates that not all grammatical environments are equally vulnerable in contact situations.

The case of MD, the Gardenese speaker who falls outside all generalisations and only partially patterns with the other Gardenese speaker, is different. We suggest that the specificities of her grammar are due to the fact that she acquired Gardenese as an early L2, at kindergarten. Our hypothesis is, therefore, that her idiosyncrasies in both of the phenomena considered may result from her exposure to Ladin from the age of 3. The acquisition of Gardenese as an early L2 did not prevent this speaker from apparently reaching full proficiency in the language (she uses Ladin in her everyday life), but when it comes to the very subtle judgements required in our study, it seems that her competence differs from that of the other speakers.

## 6. Conclusions

In this chapter we have examined two properties typically ascribed to V2 languages, the presence of G-inversion and of bottleneck-effects, in two Rhaeto-Romance varieties of South Tyrol, Badiotto and Gardenese. We have demonstrated that these two properties are present in the languages, and their co-occurrence confirms the claim made in the literature that both languages should be considered V2.

Our novel description of the two varieties has not only allowed us to confirm the claim that Badiotto and Gardenese are V2 languages, but also to broaden the scope of the hypothesis, in three directions. First, we have increased our understanding of the typology of V2 languages and of the limits of variation among them, by providing a new perspective on two understudied V2 varieties. These languages have much in common with other (Germanic and Old Romance) V2 languages, but do not fully pattern with any of them. G-inversion, for example, is present in both Badiotto and Gardenese, but is constrained by syntactic and discourse factors – unlike in present-day Germanic



V2 languages. Moreover, the syntax of the sentence-initial position is also specific to these varieties, since the constraints we find are less strict than those of Germanic V2 varieties (or of Old French, see Salvesen 2013), and less liberal than those of Old Italian (see Benincà 2006, Poletto 2014).

The chapter also contributes to our understanding of variation between close varieties. We have demonstrated that, despite sharing some core properties, Badiotto and Gardenese differ slightly from each other in the way these properties are instantiated. Consider G-inversion: in both varieties its distribution is ruled by syntactic and discourse factors, but in Badiotto G-inversion is favoured when subjects are new information, whereas in Gardenese it is restricted to given subjects. These differences, which we have been the first to identify, provide a small but very elegant showcase for diatopic variation.

And finally, this work contributes to our understanding of micro-variation within the Badiotto variety. Using the novel data collected for this study, we have proposed that the traditional distinction between High and Central Badiotto cannot alone account for syntactic micro-variation and so we have introduced a further distinction, between Lower High Badiotto, spoken by three informants from San Leonardo, and Upper High Badiotto, spoken by one informant from Colfosco. This finding confirms and refines the hypothesis that micro-diatopic differences play a crucial role in determining variation in Badiotto. The role of micro-diatopic variation is also confirmed by our detailed analysis of the syntax of some individual informants, who moved from one village to another in the valley and subsequently made a number of small changes to the grammar of their native variety, by adapting it to the variety spoken in the villages to which they moved.

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