

Introduction

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1. Introduction

This special issue offers a selection of the papers presented at the workshop *Residual Verb Second in Romance* (ReVerSe) that took place online on 10–11 June 2021 and that was (digitally) hosted by the University of Helsinki. The main goal of the workshop was to investigate the morpho-syntactic phenomena in the modern Romance languages that can be considered residues of the verb-second (V2) syntax of medieval Romance. There is considerable – albeit not absolute – consensus that the syntax of

medieval Romance was characterized by a V2 constraint as a transitional phase between the predominant SOV order of Classical Latin and the SVO order of modern Romance (see Benincà 2006, Ledgeway 2012, Poletto 2014, 2019, Wolfe 2018). Within this broader area of investigation, the contributions collected here share the following general goals and objectives:

(i) to identify and establish definitional criteria for residual V2 in the modern Romance languages, addressing the question of whether the V2 constructions of modern Romance can be regarded as vestigial phenomena that have persisted into the present-day language from some earlier stage;

(ii) to contrast and compare the synchronic data and findings with the existing diachronic and comparative literature on medieval Romance in order to recognize and distinguish between genuine residues and innovative developments in the history of the Romance languages;

(iii) to explore, on the basis of crosslinguistic evidence, the possible factors that are involved in the emergence and loss of V2 or in the apparent cases of residual V2.

In addition to the controversial aspects surrounding the notion of residual V2, this special issue will also contribute to the debate on syntactic reconstruction and syntactic change more generally. We also hope that these papers will ultimately make a contribution to the development of a new research methodology that could complement the existing corpus-based accounts, based on the idea that the analyses of the residual V2 phenomena can be used as ‘windows’ to the past to reconstruct syntactic change.

2. Residual verb second

The term ‘residual verb second’ was first used by Rizzi (1990, 1996) to refer to apparently V2 structures in otherwise non-V2-languages and, in particular, to describe phenomena featuring subject inversion in English and in French, as well as in Italian. One such structure is *wh*-questions, as shown in (1)–(3) (from Rizzi 1990: 376 and Rizzi 1996: 63), where the finite verb occurs in the second position of the sentence, immediately after the *wh*-phrase, triggering the subject inversion typical of full V2 languages – a preverbal subject would indeed yield an ungrammatical result:

- (1) a. What has Mary said? (*English*)
 b. *What Mary has said?
- (2) a. Que manges-tu? (*French*)
 what eat.2SG-you
 ‘What do you eat?’
 b. *Que tu manges?
 what you eat.2SG
- (3) a. Che cosa ha detto Maria? (*Italian*)
 what has said Maria
 ‘What did Maria say?’

- b. *Che cosa Maria ha detto?
 what Maria has said

Rizzi's analysis is mainly concerned with subject inversion in wh-questions (cf. (1)–(3)), but also in negative and hypothetical clauses. The term residual V2 was later extended to a variety of further structures featuring the placement of a constituent other than the subject in the initial preverbal position with the consequent inversion of the subject, including locative inversion, quotative inversion, and anaphoric preposing. The clear implication of the term is that these V2 phenomena are residues of an older, more general V2 system. However, a thorough diachronic analysis of these residues and their historical contexts has never been undertaken. As in Rizzi's work, the term 'residual verb second' has mostly been used to refer to contemporary constructions that manifest a marked word order with the verb preceding the subject – as a consequence of the same type of verb-movement operation as in V2 languages. Moreover, some types of inversion, such as subject inversion in French (Lahousse 2011) and anaphoric preposing in Italian (Cardinaletti 2009), are mainly limited to the written and literary language. In this sense, these structures "may be regarded as learnt vestiges of an older language stage" (Kaiser & Zimmermann 2011: 377).

Residual-V2 constructions and configurations therefore constitute a little-studied empirical domain that could shed light on syntactic changes in the history of the Romance languages. Many questions have yet to be answered, especially with reference to the aims mentioned above, both in synchrony (the examination of possible V2 residues in modern Romance and the identification of the definitional properties of the residual V2) and in diachrony (the exploration of their diachronic development in order to distinguish between persistent properties and innovations). These questions are directly addressed in the papers collected in this special issue.

3. The contributions in this special issue

Taking the notion of residual V2 as the starting point, the first two articles in this collection propose more precise definitions of this term and analyse V2 as a gradable property. **Silvio Cruschina and Craig Sailor's** paper *What is "residual verb second"? And what does Romance have to do with it?* deals with the notion of V2 with respect to both the terminological problems and the typological perspective. Two different senses in which residual V2 has been used in the literature are identified (one formal and one historical). A further distinction is proposed between residual and partial V2: residual V2 should be used for *de facto* fossilized V2 patterns that no longer show genuine syntactic properties of V2, while partial V2 describes systems involving genuine instances of V2 that are limited to nondeclarative environments in a given language (e.g. English). With these distinctions in the background, the authors propose an updated typology of V2 systems, built on a spectrum of degrees of V2ness. Along similar lines, in his *Residual Verb Second in French and Romance*, **Sam Wolfe** revisits the classic definition of residual V2 based on data from the history of French, and supplemented with evidence from the modern Romance languages. The main idea is that French has gradually lost the correlates of the V2 property over time, so that at different stages it can be characterized as 'more' or 'less' V2, depending on the extension and availability of left-peripheral phrasal or head movement. Novel data

from Renaissance and Classical French show that the triggers for such movement operations become increasingly limited. In this approach, instances of residual V2 in the modern Romance languages are viewed as the leftovers of the left-peripheral phrasal movement or head movement that are still (almost exceptionally) licensed and permitted.

Espen Klævik-Pettersen's article *Full V2, no V2, residual V2: Exploring variation through phases* draws on evidence for the different V2 systems to propose a new phase-based theory of V2 and a new model of the left periphery. Moving away from the mainstream cartographic approach to the left periphery, the author claims that the movement of the verb to the phase head Fin^0 in V2 languages interferes with the properties of phase heads and that this movement has important repercussions on the syntax of the clause; this provides an explanation for several apparently unrelated phenomena such as pronominal resumption in topicalization, Weak Cross-Over effects in Romance and Germanic, and linear restrictions with respect to preverbal constituents. Within this model, the author explores why a certain subset of V2 environments remains active even when generalized V-to- Fin^0 has been lost as in modern Romance. The answer to this question comes from the observation that these residual-V2 contexts are focal domains, involving an initial focus that must be followed by the verb, and that verb movement seems to have been restricted to these focal, as opposed to topical, contexts.

In her article *Parametric variation in Romance synchronic V2 through the lens of French* **Karen Lahousse** proposes a new approach to residual V2 in modern French. This paper is specifically concerned with the subject inversion structure with an XVS order in (modern) standard French, where the first constituent is an adverbial or an adjectival phrase. Lahousse shows that this residual V2 structure is still active in French and should not be analysed as a case of nano-parametric variation that is limited to specific lexical items. More specifically, she claims that the initial elements in this configuration share specific features and therefore constitute a lexically-defined class of adverbial and adjectival phrases. The initial constituent can either be [+scalar], falling within the phenomena of Romance mirative focus fronting, or [+anaphoric], thus belonging to the more general domain of Romance resumptive preposing. This analysis allows Lahousse to bridge the gap between the existing analyses of XVS in French, which are mainly based on the synchrony of this language, and other comparative perspectives: the diachronic analyses of XVS in French and the synchronic comparative analyses from other Romance languages or from the Romance family in general.

Verner Egerland's paper *On word order and case in Old Italian past participle constructions* deals with a possible residual-V2 construction in Italian. In Modern Italian nonfinite adverbial clauses (or absolute clauses) the verb is assumed to raise to Comp: V1 is thus mandatory in absolute constructions, raising the question of whether this could be seen as the residue of a V2 configuration. The author, however, shows that this word-order restriction is absent in Old Italian: the verb raises to a position lower than Comp, allowing a constituent to occur before the verb (e.g. the SVO word order). This difference shows that the V1 pattern of Modern Italian should be understood as an innovation rather than a residue of an earlier stage. With regard to the syntactic structure, Egerland claims that the past participle in Old Italian, unlike in the modern language, is able to project a Tense Phrase, with clear consequences for case assignment. Thanks to this Tense Phrase, two arguments can be case licensed in

a participial clause in Old Italian. Moreover, an information-structure related change has reduced the availability of focus constituents in preverbal positions: in Modern Italian a focal argument must be realized postverbally, explaining the V1 pattern.

Finally, the article *Word order variation with decir ‘say’ in spoken Peninsular Spanish: A case of residual V2?* by **Peter Herbeck and Pekka Posio** tackles the question of quotative inversion in spoken peninsular Spanish. On the basis of corpus data, the high frequency of postverbal subjects with the verb *decir* ‘say’ is analysed with respect to several factors, including the type of subject, the type of complement, and the type of sentence in which *decir* appears. This study shows that some factors that are not related to a structural residual V2 have a strong effect on subject-verb inversion patterns. Postverbal lexical DPs, for example, are more frequent than pronominal subjects, while indefinite subjects occur postverbally less frequently than expected. In addition, postverbal subjects are favoured in the absence of a verbal complement (e.g. with the intransitive uses of the verb *decir*). The existence of semi-fixed parentheticals or ‘constructionalized’ word order patterns calls for a functionalist analysis in terms of discourse functions. In this sense, subject inversion with the verb *decir* cannot be seen as the simple consequence of a residual V2 requirement, but results from several structural and functional factors that operate simultaneously.

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