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Adjective orders in Cimbrian DPs

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Abstract: In this work we aim to give a first description of the morphosyntactic behavior of some adjectives in the Cimbrian of Luserna. This Germanic variety allows a subclass of adjectives to appear in post-nominal position. This aspect seems to be relevant, since neither colloquial Standard German nor any other German substandard variety spoken in German-speaking areas display a similar pattern. Along the lines of Cinque (2010, 2014), we argue that Cimbrian, with respect to the adnominal adjectival order, has maintained the Germanic pattern of Merge, but permits in some cases NP-Movement above the (“bare” AP reduced) relative clause projection. The fact that adjectives following the head noun are predicative rather than attributive is supported by the fact that post-nominal modifiers never show up with inflection.

Keywords: Cimbrian, German-based minority languages, syntax, adjectives, NP-movement

1 Introduction

Cimbrian is a German(ic) minority language which typologically belongs to the Southern Bavarian dialects and is nowadays spoken only in the small mountain village of Luserna (Lusérn), close to Trento, in the south-eastern Italian Alps (see Bidese 2004); its lexicon shows a number of borrowings from the surrounding romance dialects, which is a well-known process since the middle ages (see Gamillscheg 1912). Until few decades ago this language was much more widespread and was actively spoken in a wider area in the Veneto and Trentino regions, between the cities of Trento, Verona and Bassano del Grappa (see again Bidese 2004). The varieties of Roana and Giazza, which were slightly different from each other and from the one in Luserna, can be currently considered only as “*Erinnerungssprachen*” (Bidese 2011: 11), since they are not used anymore in everyday communication, yet for recalling traditions and old customs. In fact, they are no longer transmitted to new generations but are taught in language courses instead.

Cimbrian has remained essentially isolated from the other Southern Bavarian dialects since the 11th century, when this Italian alpine area was first colonized (see Bidese 2004). This fact has allowed both the preservation of morphophonological features, which trace back to older stages of German (see Kranzmeyer 1981–1985 [1923] and Tyroller 1994 as well as Alber 2015 and Alber and Meneguzzo 2016), and the evolution of – especially syntactical – peculiarities undetectable in any dialect now spoken in German-speaking areas, but rather comparable to

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those found in other Germanic minority languages in Italy such as Walser (see Dal Negro 2004 and 2014) and Mòcheno (see Bidese et al. 2012 and especially Cognola 2013).

In recent years the generative-inspired research has focused on Cimbrian grammar paying a great deal of attention to (micro)variation and (contact-induced) language change in particular with regard to following topics: a) Verb-Second. Cimbrian does not display either the Germanic typology of Verb Second nor a residual one à la English; rather, it does invert only the pronominal subject, whereas full DP-subjects usually show up pre-verbally, also together with other constituents (see Bidese and Tomaselli 2007; Bidese 2008; Bidese et al. 2012); b) The pronominal system. Cimbrian shows a tripartite structure of personal pronouns, in which a specific form is linked to a specific position: 1) stressed forms are free and behave as full DPs; 2) Preverbal unstressed forms appear alone, i.e., without any other constituent, before the finite verb in main declarative sentences; 3) Post-verbal unstressed forms are encliticized onto the finite verb in main declarative sentences and onto the complementizer in subordinate sentences (Poletto and Tomaselli 2002; Bidese 2008; Kolmer 2005 and 2012; Bidese 2011; Abraham 2011); c) the subordination system. Cimbrian displays a sophisticated correlation of word order patterns and types of complementizers; some complementizers (prototypically *az* ‘that’) require a word order pattern, that is asymmetric to respect to that of the main sentence, others (prototypically *ke* ‘that’, but also *ombromm* ‘because’) a word order pattern that is perfectly symmetric to that of the main sentence (Grewendorf and Poletto 2009 and 2011, Padovan 2011, Bidese et al. 2012, 2013, 2014, Bidese and Tomaselli 2016).

In this paper we aim for the first time to explore the structure of DP of Lusern Cimbrian focusing on some morphological aspects and on the syntactic behavior of some adjectives that can appear post-nominally. In fact, Poletto (2013: 90) touches upon this issue depicting Cimbrian adjectives as typical Germanic structures ([A [N]]) totally disregarding the possibility for the adjective to occur post-nominally (see (1a)–(2a) versus (1b)–(2b)):

- (1) a. *a naüga arbat*
 a new-F.SG.NOM/ACC job
 ‘a new job’
 (Poletto 2013: 90)¹
- b. *??an arbat naüga*
 a job new-F.SG.NOM/ACC
- (2) a. *a gelz haus*
 a yellow-N.SG.NOM/ACC house
 ‘a yellow job’

¹ We inserted the glosses and adapted the Examples to the official orthography adopted with Panieri et al. (2006).

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4 b. ??a haus gelz
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6 a job yellow-N.SG.NOM/ACC
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9 However, it must be observed the these Examples, reproduced by Poletto, are not relevant for the
10 discussion here, since the adjectives *naüge* ‘new’ and *gel* ‘yellow’ show the inflections of the
11 strong declension (which is obligatory with the indefinite article or no article all): in (1) the
12 suffix *-a* for feminine singular, nominative or accusative, and in (2) the suffix *-z* for neuter
13 singular, nominative or accusative. Inflected adjectives are, indeed, totally excluded in the post-
14 nominal position, not only in Cimbrian but also in German. Instead, the significant pattern which
15 we want to discuss in this article crucially deals with uninflected post-nominal adjectives. In this
16 case Cimbrian allows for some adjectival classes to be realized also after the noun. The
17 availability of this position is possible, but very restricted in Standard German and in any other
18 non-standard variety in use in the German-speaking areas, which makes the Cimbrian pattern
19 unique among the German varieties and interesting from both a theoretical and a comparative
20 perspective.²

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24 As for the structure of the contribution, we present the inflectional system of the adjectives in
25 the contemporary Lusern Cimbrian – which has undergone a process of morphological leveling –
26 showing that the actual paradigm is rather due to a loss of inflectional morphology than to the
27 preservation of an archaic pattern (see Section 2). In Section 3 we discuss the possibility that
28 adjectives occur post-nominally with the restrictions connected to this novel scenario: we will
29 show that not all orders are attested. Section 4 is devoted to the analysis that we put forward
30 along the lines of Cinque (2010, 2014): crucially, we argue that Cimbrian maintains the
31 Germanic pattern of adjective ordering, allowing nevertheless for a wider range of structural
32 variation. In Section 5 we briefly compare the situation of Cimbrian adjectives with some erratic
33 data found in Mòcheno, a neighboring Germanic language and we provide a general conclusion.
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39 2. Adjectival morphology in Cimbrian

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41 Both traditional descriptions and recent grammars have distinguished between – the typically
42 Germanic – strong and weak declensions in the Cimbrian adjectival morphology: we begin with
43 traditional descriptions of which we give a quick historical overview.
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50 ² For a comparative perspective see the contributions of Giusti and Iovino for the prenominal versus post-nominal
51 orderings in Latin adjectives in this volume, as well as the article of Stavrou with regard to the same topic in Greek
52 compared with Romance languages. Moreover, Kotowski and Härtl (this volume) offer an overview about the
53 restrictions prenominal adjective are subjected to in German(ic). For a general overview of Germanic adjectives see
54 also Roehrs (2014).
55

Johann Andreas Schmeller (1838: 678–680) briefly referred³ to a first and a second declension of adjectives although he noticed that the two declensions are not in all cases kept separate: “This second type has been vividly kept different from the first declension; however, examples of the confusion of the two classes are not missing”.⁴

More than a century later, Bruno Schweizer pointed out in his grammar (2008 [1951/1953]: 389) that in the Cimbrian dialects of Giazza, Roana and Lusérn the following forms exist: “(1) The strong declension with the endings pronominal inflection, which is basically used with or without the definite article, 2) the weak declension with the endings of the N-stems and 3) an uninflected form which sometimes occurs instead of both the weak and the strong declensions.”⁵ With regard to these last forms, the author adds that “the usage of these uninflected forms is still poorly understood”.⁶ Thus, in Schweizer’s time, uninflected forms begin to show up in contexts where inflection is expected.

Concerning contemporary descriptions of Luserna Cimbrian, the grammar by Tyroller (2003) also distinguishes between a weak declension, preceded by the definite article, and a strong declension, which follows the indefinite article. For the former, it is emphasized that the nominative singular turns up with zero morphology, as in (3), (4) and (5) (see Tyroller 2003: 141–148):⁷

(3) *dar groaz mânn*
the tall-Ø man
‘the tall man’

(4) *di voll boza*
the full-Ø bottle
‘the full bottle’

(5) *daz grümma gras*
the green-Ø grass
‘the green grass’

³ Schmeller is mainly concerned with the Cimbrian varieties of the Seven and the Thirteen Municipalities, but the internal differences can be abstracted away from, since there is consistency among all the Cimbrian varieties.

⁴ Our translation: “Das Gefühl für den Unterschied dieser zweiten von der ersten Declinationsweise der Adjektive hat sich sehr lebhaft erhalten. Doch fehlt es nicht an Beispielen der Verwechslung beider”.

⁵ Our translation: “[...] 1.) die starke Flexion mit den Endungen der pronominalen Flexion, die im Wesentlichen ohne oder mit unbestimmtem Artikel gebraucht wird, 2.) die schwache Flexion mit Endungen der N-Stämme, 3.) eine unflektierte Form, die gelegentlich an Stelle der schwachen Flexion aber auch der starken eintreten kann.”

⁶ Our translation: „man durchblickt noch nicht ganz deutlich die Verwendung der endungslosen („unflektierten“) Form”.

⁷ The orthographic rules followed here are the ones adopted in Panieri et al. (2006).

Uninflected forms also appear in accusative singular feminine and neuter, while the morpheme *-an* and its allomorphs show up in dative for all genders, as in (6) and (7), in accusative masculine, as in (8), and in plural for all cases and genders:

- (6) *in groazan månn*
 the-M.SG.DAT big-M.SG.DAT man
 ‘to the big man’
- (7) *dar müadn khua*
 the-F.SG.DAT tired-F.SG.DAT cow
 ‘to the tired cow’
- (8) *di grüanen grésar*
 the-N.PL.NOM/ACC green-N.PL.NOM/ACC grazing lands
 ‘the green grazing lands’

On the other hand, the strong declension displays an inflectional suffix for each case and gender, both in singular and in plural: the morpheme *-ar* for the nominative masculine singular, as in (9), *-a* for the nominative and accusative feminine singular, as in (10), *-(e)z* and its allomorphs for the nominative and accusative neuter, as in (11), *-e* for the nominative and accusative plural of the three genders, as in (12), *-an* and its allomorphs in the other cases, as in (13):

- (9) *a schüanar tage*
 a beautiful-M.SG.NOM day
 ‘a beautiful day’
- (10) *a guata muatar*
 a good-F.SG.NOM mother
 ‘a good mother’
- (11) *a tiavez tal*
 a deep-N.SG.NOM valley
 ‘a deep valley’
- (12) *bravate khindar*
 well-behaved-N.PL children
 ‘well-behaved children’

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4 (13) *an* *hoatarn* *hüimbl*
5 a-M.SG.ACC bright-M.SG.ACC sky
6 ‘a bright sky’
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10 The grammar of Panieri et al. (2006: 124–142) also identifies a weak declension, which shows
11 up if the adjective follows either the definite article or the demonstrative pronouns in attributive
12 function, and a strong one, which is found if the adjective follows the indefinite article, the
13 possessive pronouns in their adjectival function, and in general the indefinite pronoun in
14 attributive function, or if no determiners precede the adjective.
15

16 For the weak declension the authors emphasize that the singular forms exhibit strong
17 morphological differences due to the syllabic structure or the phonetic characteristics of the
18 adjective (see Panieri et al. 2006: 124–142); for instance, monosyllabic adjectives like *groaz*
19 ‘tall’, *voll* ‘full’, *barm* ‘warm’ or *guat* ‘good’ show “a really simple inflectional pattern [...], in
20 which only the dative feminine singular and all plural forms carry the suffix *-n* while the other
21 forms are not inflected”⁸ (see Table 1):
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25 **Table 1:** Weak declension of monosyllabic adjective in Cimbrian according to Panieri et al.
26 (2006: 127).
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CASE	MASC. SING.	FEM. SING.	NEUT. SING.	PLURAL
NOM.	<i>dar alt männ</i> ‘the old man’	<i>da guat diarn</i> ‘the good girl’	<i>daz groaz khinn</i> ‘the tall boy’	<i>di guat-n männen</i> ‘the good men’
DAT.	<i>in alt männ</i> ‘(to) the old man’	<i>dar guat-n diarn</i> ‘(to) the good girl’	<i>in groaz khinn</i> ‘(to) the tall boy’	<i>in guat-n männen</i> ‘the good men’
ACC.	<i>in alt männ</i> ‘the old man’	<i>da guat diarn</i> ‘the good girl’	<i>daz groaz khinn</i> ‘the tall boy’	<i>di guat-n männen</i> ‘the good men’

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41 Belonging to this category are also: a) disyllabic adjectives ending up in liquid consonants (*r*, *l*)
42 like *saubar* ‘clean’ or *tunkhl* ‘dark’; b) disyllabic adjectives that denote a material, such as
43 *boatza* ‘wheaten’,⁹ *hültzra* ‘wooden’ or *aisra* ‘of iron’ and c) disyllabic adjectives ending up in –
44 *mma* like *khlumma* ‘small’, *schümma* ‘beautiful’ or *grümma* ‘green’ which derive from the older
45 monosyllabic forms *khluan*, *schüan* and *grüan*.¹⁰
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49 ⁸ Our translation: “ein sehr einfaches Flexionsmuster [...], bei dem lediglich der Dativ Singular der Feminina und
50 alle Pluralformen die Endung *-n* tragen, während die anderen Formen nicht flektiert werden”.

51 ⁹ As Panieri et al. (2006: 130, fn. 41) notices, these forms derive from the original derivational suffix *-in* (see
52 Middle High German *weitzin* ‘wheaten’).

53 ¹⁰ Even for all these types Tyroller (2003: 144-145) reports the suffix *-n* also for M.SG.DAT. and ACC (see above
54 Note 8).
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The fact that the weak declension has several uninflected forms can be explained adopting two different approaches, both of them representing an interesting point of discussion for the morphological diachronic development of a minority language which has evolved without further contact with its formerly cognate varieties and has only recently known a standardization process. As a matter of fact, the lack of inflectional morphology can be seen as a sign of a more archaic stage, since in the Middle High German (see Paul 2007: 200–201) there was a weak declension corresponding to the third class of the nouns and a strong declension which resembled the one of pronouns but uninflected adjectives in pre-nominal position were also possible: “an uninflected, nominally-strong form exists, occurring when the attributive adjective precedes the noun it modifies, namely in the nominative singular of all genders and in the accusative neuter singular”.¹¹

Moreover, if one considers the first Cimbrian Catechism of 1602 (see Meid 1985), which documents a stage of language earlier than the one described by Schweizer, Tyroller, and Panieri, one finds that adjectives of the weak declension – i.e., the ones preceded by a definite article – display inflection in nominative and accusative of all genders, as in (14) and (15):

(14) *da rekte hant*
 the-F.SG.NOM right-F.SG.NOM hand
 ‘the right hand’

(15) *der ebeghe toat*
 the-M.SG.NOM eternal-M.SG.NOM death
 ‘the eternal death’

Since the first catechism was written in the Cimbrian of the VII. municipalities and not in the variety of Luserna, one might assume that the two varieties differ in terms of inflectional suffixes and that the Luserna dialect has always had uninflected forms with regard to the weak declension. However, referring to the Cimbrian tales collected by Bacher (1976 [1905]: 171), Schweizer (2008 [1951/1953]) mentions the possibility of some morphological remnants of weak declension also for this variety attesting, for instance, both uninflected (see (16)) and inflected forms (see 17):

(16) *da rôat earde*
 the red-Ø earth

¹¹ “die endungslose, nominal-starke Form schließlich kann [...] stehen, wenn das attributive Adj. seinem Bezugswort vorangeht, und zwar in NOM.SG. aller Geschlechter und im AKK.SG.NEUT.: *der bluotec sweiz; ein gout man*”.

‘the red earth’
(Schweizer 2008 [1951/1953]: 390)

(17) *de kxalte tzait*
the cold-F.SG.NOM period’

By summarizing the data presented in this Section, it can be said that Cimbrian system of adjectives displays a clear distinction between a weak and a strong declension. While the former one does not show any inflectional suffix except for a *-n* in the form of the dative feminine singular (see, however, also the Notes 8 and 10) and in the plural forms, the later one conserves the endings in all genders and cases as well as both in singular and in plural. As for as the lack of inflection in the weak declension is concerned, we have provide evidence that it is to interpret as the result of an erosion process that has led to the loss of the suffices with the above-mentioned exception.

3. Novel patterns in adjective orderings

In the preceding Section we have proposed a possible pattern of evolution of the two inflectional classes of adjectives (strong vs. weak) reconstructing a gradual erosion of forms with respect to the weak declension. Independently of these leveling phenomena the position of the adjective was consistently pre-nominal. In this Section we deal with post-nominal occurrences that correlate structurally – i.e., independently of any erosion process – with an uninflected form.¹² This distribution had already been observed in the past and does not seem to be connected with code-switching, as proposed for Mòcheno (see Alber, *forthcoming* and the Section 5, above).

As for the diachronic evolution of the word order pattern within the adjectival system there is no consistent set of data: it is hard both to trace back its emergence and to ascertain whether this phenomenon is connected to previous stages of the language or it is to be ascribed to recent evolution. The oldest data available stem from 1602 when Cardinal Bellarmine’s Catechism, “Dottrina Cristiana Breve (Short Christian Doctrine)”, was translated into Cimbrian, (see Meid 1985).

In this work, post-nominal adjectives are relatively rare and in general occur with direct borrowings (see Padovan and Turolla 2016) as can be observed in the following Examples, where the Italian lexeme is directly inserted into the Cimbrian DP without any adaptation.

(18) *mitt unzerme contenten spirituale* (Italian: “*con nostro contento spirituale*”)
with our-M.SG.DAT joy-M.SG.DAT spiritual-Ø

¹² As already said in the introductory Section, we do not deal with uninflected adjectives occurring post-nominally since these forms are totally excluded.

‘with our spiritual joy’

- (19) *Vatter* *naturale* (Italian: *Padre naturale*)
 father-M.SG.NOM natural-Ø
 ‘natural father’

Notice that the canonical position for native adjectives is the pre-nominal one, see Examples (14–15) repeated here as (20–21).

- (20) *da* *rekte* *hant*
 the-F.SG.NOM right-F.SG.NOM hand
 ‘the right hand’
- (21) *der* *ebeghe* *toat*
 the-M.SG.NOM eternal-M.SG.NOM death
 ‘the eternal death’

As diachronic investigations have not provided us with consistent results, we have assumed that synchronic data collection might cast light on the systematic distribution of adjectives. Let’s now go back to the methodology. As regards the fieldwork, it can be divided in two different stages: in the first pilot testing we administered a translation task (from Italian into Cimbrian) to five informants: in many cases the word order proposed was noun-adjectives – which often is the unmarked option in Italian. The initial data were often inconsistent as it was not possible to determine which adjectival classes allow for the post-nominal position. This is why we carried out new fieldwork, refining the methods of investigation: first of all, we administered the tasks to a larger group of informants (15 Cimbrian speakers aged between 18 and 68 years); then we added grammaticality judgment tasks containing DPs with both pre- and post-nominal orders of the adjectives. We also increased the number of sentences dividing the adjectives systematically into semantic classes.

The informants were asked to rank the sentences in Cimbrian containing DPs modified by one or two adjectives according to the following judgment scale:

- (1) ungrammatical sentence
 (2) odd but still grammatical¹³

¹³ Passive competence of the construction was also ranked 2. As is often the case, minority languages display what is dubbed “low normativity effect” (Dorian 2010 based on Lindgren 1999), i.e. different speakers tend to accept constructions they would not produce themselves but other speakers of the community utter: such structures are not judged ungrammatical but are perceived as odd basically for belonging to a specific register (specifically the often frowned-upon juvenile jargon).

(3) grammatical sentence.

3.1 One modifier

If just one single adjective modifies the noun the frequency of the [A N] order – i.e., the one expected in a Germanic language – is the highest one with both intersective (I) (see (22)–(24)) and subsecutive adjectives (S) (see (25)–(27)).

This does not come as a surprise if one relies on what is claimed in recent traditional grammars of this heritage language (see the above-mentioned descriptions of the grammar of Cimbrian: Tyroller 2003; Panieri et al. 2006): Cimbrian adjectives are taken to be usual Germanic adjectives strictly occurring in pre-nominal position; our data confirms this basic tendency (we deal with deviance later on).

Intersective Adjectives: Color

- (22) a. *Dar roat libar iz attn skafàl*
 the red-M.SG.NOM¹⁴ book is on-the shelf
 ‘The red book is on the shelf’
- b. **Dar libar roat iz attn skafàl*
 the book red-Ø is on-the shelf
- (23) a. *Dar Håns hatt inngemekkèt in scharnagl pinn*
 the Håns has hammered the nail with-the-M.SG.DAT
sbartz hãmmar
 black-M.SG.DAT hammer
 ‘Hans hammered the nail with the black hammer’
- b. %*Dar Håns hatt inngemekkèt in scharnagl pinn*
 the Håns has hammered the nail with-the-M.SG.DAT
hãmmar sbartz
 hammer black-Ø
- (24) a. *Pitt moin geln auto von 1990 geade ka*
 with my-M.SG.DAT yellow-M.SG.DAT car of 1990 go-I to
Tria alle di mòrgas
 Trento all the mornings

¹⁴ As we have already shown in Chapter 2, the pre-nominal form preserves its ϕ -features although it does not manifest them overtly, whereas the post-nominal occurrence is taken to be a bare form devoid of any ϕ -features.

‘With my 1990 yellow car I go to Trento every morning’

- b. % *Pitt moin auto von 1990 gel geade ka*
 with my-M.SG.DAT car of 1990 yellow-Ø go-I to
Tria alle di mòrgas
 Trento all the mornings

Intersective Adjectives: Material

- (25) a. *Daz khelbra vlaisch iz daz peste*
 the of.calf-N.SG.NOM meat is the best
 ‘(The) veal is the best’
- b. **’Z vlaisch khelbra iz daz peste*
 the meat of.calf-Ø is the best
- (26) a. *Di Maria hatt gevuntet a goltnaz gevringat*
 the Maria has found a golden-N.SG.ACC ring
 ‘Maria found a golden ring’
- b. **Di Maria hatt gevuntet a gevringat goltna*
 the Maria has found a ring golden-Ø
- (27) a. *Pan bintar geabar hèrta auz pitt bollan hângas un halstuach*
 in-the winter go-we always out with woolen-PL.DAT mittensand scarf
 ‘In winter we always go out with woolen mittens and scarf on’
- b. **Pan bintar geabar hèrta auz pitt hângas un halstuach bolla*
 in-the winter go-we always out with mittens and scarf-Ø wollen

Subsecutive: Value

- (28) a. *A guatar vatar straitet nèt pitt soìn khindar*
 a good-M.SG.NOM father argues not with his children
 ‘A good father never argues with his children’
- b. **A vatar guat straitet nèt pitt soìn khindar*
 a father good-Ø argues not with his children
- (29) a. *I halte nemear auz in zèngrat gesmàkh*

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3 I stand no-longer out the bitter-M.SG.ACC taste
4 *vo kafè*
5 of coffee
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7 ‘I can’t stand the bitter taste of coffee any longer’
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10 b. %I *halte nemear auz in gesmàkh zéngnat*
11 I stand no-longer out the taste bitter-Ø
12 *vo kafè*
13 of coffee
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18 *Subsecutive: Size*

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20 (30) a. I *hân gelek di slüzzldar in an khlumman*
21 I have put the keys in a-M.SG.DAT small-M.SG.DAT
22 *kaseti*
23 drawer
24
25 ‘I put the keys in a small drawer’
26
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28 b. *I *hân gelek di slüzzldar in an kaseti*
29 I have put the keys in a-M.SG.DAT drawer
30 *khlumma*
31 small-Ø
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36 *Subsecutive: Dimension*

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38 (31) a. *Vonan hoachan pèrge hânne nidargeschauget in tal*
39 from-the high-PL.DAT mountains have-I overlooked the valley
40
41 ‘From the top of the high mountains I overlooked the valley’
42
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44 b. **Vonan pèrge hoach hânne nidargeschauget in tal*
45 from-the mountains high-Ø have-I overlooked the valley
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49 To sum up, along with normal Germanic adjectives there is a small class of intersective (see 23
50 and 24) and subsecutive (29) adjectives that are also allowed post-nominally. Why is it the case?
51 Is Cimbrian in a somehow special position between Italian and German?
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First of all, Italian allows for both categories, S and I, to appear in a post-nominal position, whereas German in general tolerates no adjectives occurring post-nominally.¹⁵

3.2 Two modifiers

Another interesting aspect in our survey turns up when it comes to two modifiers. On the one hand both orders S>I and I>S are possible when the adjectives are pre-nominal; on the other hand, either adjective can appear in a post-nominal position: however, data are not consistent with respect to the class of adjectives that can show up in the post-nominal position (32–34):

- (32) a. *Da roat boróaslte konzòtt iz dar*
 the red-M.SG.NOM flowered-M.SG.NOM dress is the
schümmanarste (I>S)
 most-beautiful
 ‘The red-flowered dress is the prettiest one’
- b. *Dar boróaslt roat konzòtt iz dar schümmanarste* (S>I)
- c. %*Dar roat konzòtt boróaslt iz dar schümmanarste*
- d. **Dar boróaslte konzòtt roat iz dar schümmanarste*
- (33) a. %’*Z khinn spilt pitnan valsan sklopp*
 the kid plays with-the-M.SG.DAT false-M.SG.DAT rifle
hülzra
 wooden-Ø
 ‘The kid is playing with a wooden toy rifle’
- b. *’*Z khinn spilt pitnan hülzran sklop vals*
 the kid plays with-the-M.SG.DAT wooden-M.SG.DAT rifle false-Ø
- (34) a. %*Dar Mario hatt gelegg di silbran kornis naüige atn*
 the Mario has put the silver-F.SG.ACC frame new-Ø on-the

¹⁵ Both in German dialects and in the standard language post-nominal adjectives are either excluded or extremely restricted. However, Dürscheid (2002) and Trost (2006) describe several examples in which post-nominal adjectives in Standard German are productive like in *Forelle blau* (blue trout), *Fußball brutal* (brutal soccer), *Schrauber verzinkt* (zinc coated screw). Nevertheless, these NPs only occur isolated and in marked registers such as newspaper titles, advertisement and commercials (see Dürscheid 2002: *Wohnwagen gross, sofort einsatzbereit* ‘big caravan, ready for use’), menus and in rhyme (see Trost 2006: *Das Mägdlein gut, bringt dir den Muth* ‘The good maid gives you the nerve’, Achim v. Arnim u. Clemens Brentano: *Schwere Wacht. Jungfrau und Wächter*).

1
2
3 *tisch*

4 table

5
6 ‘Mario put the new silver frame on the table’

- 7
8 b. **Dar Mario hatt gelekk di naüige kornis silbran attn*
9 the Mario has put the new-F.SG.ACC frame silver-Ø on-the
10
11 *tisch*
12 table
13
14

15 In general, the free order of intersective adjective pairs does not come as a surprise (see Truswell
16 2009, among others) as it is possible, to different extents, in several languages. However,
17 subjective adjectives are known to precede intersective adjectives in Germanic and to follow
18 them in Romance languages (cf. *new red dress*/?*red new dress* and *vestito rosso nuovo*/?*vestito*
19 *nuovo rosso*) (*new woolen short*/**woolen new short*) but this does not seem to be the case in
20 Cimbrian where the order of preverbal adjectives turns out to be apparently free (S>I / I>S)
21 (*vals hülzra sklopp/hülzra vals sklopp*).

22 3.3 Specificity-inducing adjectives

23
24
25 As for specificity-inducing adjectives such as *old*, *big*, *poor*, etc. our data provides evidence for a
26 possible non-specific interpretation of post-nominal adjectives in indefinite DPs reminiscent of
27 Cinque’s (2014) view on Romance:
28
29
30
31

- 32
33 (35) a. *An altär pürgarmaistar vo Lusérn hat gemacht*
34 an old-M.SG.NOM mayor of Luserna has done
35
36 *vil vor di djungen*
37 a lot for the young
38
39 ‘An old mayor/A former mayor of Luserna did a lot for the young’

- 40
41 b. %*An pürgarmaistar alt mage nèt redjarn*
42 an mayor old-Ø can not administer
43
44 ‘An old mayor cannot administer the town (properly)’

- 45
46 (36) a. *Sa hãm vortgeschickt in arm maistro*
47 they have fired the poor-M.SG.ACC teacher
48
49 ‘They fired the poor teacher/the pitiable teacher’

- 50
51 b. %*Darsell maestro arm hât nèt gelt genumma*
52 that teacher poor has not money enough
53
54 ‘That poor teacher hasn’t got money enough’
55

- 1
2
3
4 (37) a. *Dar institut hat gemacht a groazaz börtarpuach*
5 the institute has done a great-N.SG.ACC dictionary
6 ‘The institute published a good quality dictionary/an unwieldy dictionary’
7
8
9 b. *’Z börtarpuach groaz trage nèt nã umbromm ’z sbert vil
10 the dictionary great-Øcarry-I not along since it weighs a lot
11 ‘I’m not bringing the unwieldy dictionary as it weighs too much’
12
13
14

15 Looking at the data, the following questions arise: first of all, to make sense of the order [A₁ N
16 A₂] like in *da silbran kornis naüge* ‘the silver frame new’ (see 29b), should we hypothesize an
17 influence from the neighboring Romance varieties (see Alber et al. 2012)? If it is indeed the case
18 that Romance word order in APs affects Cimbrian, can the contact situation be described in
19 terms of microvariation (along the lines of Guardiano 2014, according to which parameters in the
20 bilingual mind are more likely to be reset)?
21
22

23 As we will show in the next paragraphs, our stance is that the role of language contact may
24 amount to widening the range of possibilities available (see Panagiotidis 2008).
25
26

27 4. Analysis

28
29 At the beginning of the paper we pointed out that the behavior of adjectives follows a quite clear-
30 cut directions: the typology of the orderings [Adjective N] or [N Adjective] is something quite
31 inescapable. However – as we have seen – there seems to be a new pattern emerging in an
32 otherwise clearly regular Germanic language. How is this new strand of Cimbrian data to be
33 dealt with? Should we attribute this innovation either to the resetting of microparameters in the
34 sense of Guardiano (2014) or to the introduction of uninterpretable features in functional
35 categories as hinted at by Panagiotidis (2008)?
36
37

38 Along the lines of Cinque (2010, 2014), Giusti (2002) and Laenzlinger (2005), we assume
39 that Cimbrian adjectives maintain the Germanic pattern of Merge, according to which the noun
40 plus the direct modification adjective is merged with a reduced relative clause:
41
42

- 43 (38) [RRC AP [DM (AP) N]] (cf. Cinque 2014: 19)
44
45

46 In Cimbrian this is instantiated in, e.g., [RRC *a naüge* [DM *silbran [cornis]*]] (‘a new silver
47 frame’). For the Romance languages, Cinque argues that the noun can optionally raise across one
48 or more direct modification adjectives: this optional movement must be followed by obligatory
49 raising of the noun plus direct modification adjective(s).
50
51

- 52 (39) [← AP in a reduced relative cl. [← direct modification AP N]]
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

In Italian this movement is exemplified by phrases such as:

- (40) a. [RRC *un corrotto* [DM *giovane* [*avvocato*]]]
- b. [RRC *un corrotto* [DM ~~*avvocato*~~ *giovane* ~~*avvocato*~~]]]
- c. [*un avvocato giovane* [RRC *corrotto* [DM ~~*avvocato*~~ *giovane* ~~*avvocato*~~]]]
- ‘a corrupt young lawyer’

What we argue for Cimbrian regards on the one hand the inapplicability of the optional raising of the noun across the direct modification adjectives, as can be observed in (41):

- (41) **Da näüge kornis silbran*

[RRC AP [DM (AP) N]]



On the other hand, the cluster formed by direct modification adjectives plus noun can, but need not, move as NP in front of the reduced relative cl. adjectives (see 42a–b):

- (42) a. *da näüge silbran kornis*
- b. %*da silbran kornis näüge atn tisch*

Notice that the pattern in (42b) is attested neither in Italian (Romance) nor in German; however, a very interesting parallel with some English RRC adjective classes can be drawn, even though the classes are not entirely overlapping (see Cinque 2014):

- (43) the [RCC available [DM former students]] → the former students available ~~former students~~

Structures like the ones under (42b) showcase a definitely new feature in the Cimbrian DP: should one take them by and large for contact-induced phenomena? It would be prima facie hard to do so as these constructions are not attested in the model language(s) (Italian and, to a certain extent, German). However – as is the case of the borrowing of functional words in Cimbrian such as the complementizer *ke* (see Grewendorf and Poletto 2009; Padovan 2011 and Bidese et al. 2012) – we argue that language contact is not instantiated by the mere transfer of structures (which is never the case) but, quite differently, contact manifests itself in favoring the emergence

of new alternatives, whose coming into being is allowed by the system and only upheld by the contact situation.

Having this in mind, we can finally go back to the cases under (23b)–(24b) and (29b) and (35b), (36b), where the post-nominal occurrence of both intersective/subsective and specificity-inducing adjectives might be considered to mirror the Romance pattern [N AP]: on the contrary, we take that resemblance to be only superficial as it merely represents a further possibility acquired into the Cimbrian DP. First of all, they are always pragmatically marked structures and hence their distribution is not reminiscent of Italian; secondly, post-nominal adjectives are always uninflected and this definitely points to their reduced relative clause origin.

5. Concluding remarks

Patterns similar to the ones attested in Cimbrian can be found in Mòcheno, a neighboring Germanic variety also spoken in the Province of Trentino. Mòcheno noun phrases closely resemble those of Standard German(ic), as determiners and adjectives typically precede the noun. Rowley (2001: 117) mentions erratic examples, of very recent attestation, where an adjective can actually follow the noun provided that it occurs in its uninflected form. The Examples originally appeared in Mattiola (1985: 89) and Zampedri (1995: 87–88) are the following:

- (44) *pet en trit gabis*
 with a step determined-Ø
 ‘with a determined step’
- (45) *van binter vergongen*
 from winter passed-Ø
 ‘of the past winter’
- (46) *pet de masciindl elektrisc*
 with the machine electric-Ø
 ‘with the electric machine’

It is not easy to determine whether these structures have arisen under Romance influence since they look more like products of code-switching rather than true (structural) borrowings, given their rareness (see Alber et al. 2012 for similar structures in the Cimbrian of Giazza, where they seem to be more widespread). Moreover, these phrases have the feel of something idiomatic and basically fixed in its form. In fact, as for (45) the form *vergonen* (‘passed’) is a past participle

and its post-nominal occurrence does not come as a surprise. *Elektrisc* was – at the time when Rowley published his monograph – perceived as a neologism.¹⁶

Concluding, in this paper we have shown that contact may have played a role in the reordering possibilities of the Cimbrian DP which allows for more orders than German. As is the case with other grammatical features (complementizers, embedded V2, etc.), contact does not manifest itself in structure borrowing, but in maintaining change that is already hard-wired in the language. In particular, the post-nominal position of adjectives is not excluded in Germanic but is very restricted: Cimbrian has simply moved to a status in which the classes of adjectives that occur post-nominally are gradually increasing, at least in the grammars of a group of speakers.

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¹⁶ Curiously, both ‘past’ and ‘electric’ can occur post-nominally in English in certain contexts: recall ‘The Ghost of Christmas **Past**’ in Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* and the famous line by Walt Whitman ‘I sing the body **electric**’, where the adjective *electric* – which was not commonly used at the time – shows up in a post-nominal, possibly emphatic, position.

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