

Parameters of variation in the clausal domain: a pan-Romance view

Adam Ledgeway (anl21@cam.ac.uk), University of Cambridge

The goal of this talk is to review some of the principal patterns of morphosyntactic variation within the Romance in support of a north-south Romance continuum from an approach which locates the relevant dimensions of (micro)variation between northern and southern varieties in the properties of individual functional heads (Ledgeway 2016; 2020; in press). This approach which builds on the insights of the Borer-Chomsky Conjecture (cf. Baker 2008: 353) assumes that the locus of parametric variation lies in the lexicon and, in particular, in the (PF-)lexicalization of specific formal feature values of individual functional heads (Borer 1984; Chomsky 1995). As will be shown, these feature values are not set in isolation, inasmuch as parameters ostensibly form an interrelated network of implicational relationships whereby the given value of a particular parameter may, in turn, entail the concomitant activation of associated lower-order parametric choices, whose potential surface effects may consequently become entirely predictable, or indeed rule out and render entirely irrelevant other parameters (cf. Roberts 2019). Such is the case, for instance, with T which, we will see, probes the verb in northern Romance, a parametric setting which, in turn, accounts for the availability of verb-subject inversion, Stage II and III negation, subject clitics and active-stative perfective auxiliary selection. In southern Romance varieties, by contrast, all these same options are absent since T fails to attract the verb which is probed instead by *v*, a parametric choice which explains the restriction of V-to-C movement to positive imperatives, the use of generalized or person-driven perfective auxiliaries, and active participle agreement with *in situ* objects.

Considerable progress in this direction has already been made in establishing, and modelling the relationships between, some of the most important parameters of microvariation within the nominal domain, not just across Romance but also more broadly within Indo-European and beyond, in recent parametric work, especially that couched within the Parametric Comparison Method (see, among others, Guardiano and Longobardi (2005; 2017a,b), Longobardi, Guardiano (2009), Longobardi, Guardiano, Silvestri, Boattini and Ceolin (2013), Guardiano (2014), Guardiano and Stavrou (2014), Ledgeway (2015), Guardiano, Michelioudakis, Ceolin, Irimia, Longobardi, Radkevich, Silvestri and Sitaridou (2016), Longobardi, Ghirotto, Guardiano, Tassi, Benazzo, Ceolin and Barbujani (2015), Longobardi, Ceolin, Ecay, Ghirotto, Guardiano, Irimia, Michelioudakis, Radkevich, Luiselli, Pettener and Barbujani (2016), Guardiano and Michelioudakis (2019)). In this talk, by contrast, I shall consider a selection of key examples from the clausal domain of representative morphosyntactic divergence between the varieties of northern and southern Romance which highlight a number of significant differences in the featural make-up of the functional heads C-T-*v* and their associated domains – the left periphery, the inflexional core of the sentence, and the verb phrase – and the parametric options they instantiate. For example, the contrast between northern Romance varieties which show differential marking of the subject through a system of subject clitics and southern varieties characterized by differential marking of the object highlights a major difference that can ultimately be related to the differential, and often complementary, featural composition and role of the functional heads T and *v*. Whereas in the north the T head proves particularly active in probing, for example, the verb and spelling out the D-features of the subject through a system of subject clitics, in the south the role of T is less significant in that it is *v* that attracts the verb and spells out the various D-related features of the object through a licensing operation of DOM.

References

- Baker, M., 2008: "The macroparameter in a microparametric world", in T. Biberauer (ed.), *The Limits of Syntactic Variation*, Amsterdam, Benjamins, pp. 351-74.
- Borer, H., 1984: *Parametric Syntax*, Dordrecht, Foris.
- Chomsky, N., 1995: *The Minimalist Program*, Cambridge MA, MIT Press.
- Guardiano, C., 2014: "Fenomeni di contatto sintattico in Italia meridionale? Alcune note comparative", *Quaderni di lavoro ASIt* 18, pp. 73-102.
- Guardiano, C., Michelioudakis, D., Ceolin, A., Irimia, M.A., Longobardi, G., Radkevich, N., Silvestri, G., and Sitaridou, I., 2016: "South by southeast: a syntactic approach to Greek and Romance microvariation", *L'Italia Dialettale* 77, pp. 95-166.
- Guardiano, C., and Michelioudakis, D., 2019: "Syntactic variation across Greek dialects: the case of demonstratives", in S. Cruschina, A. Ledgeway and E.-M. Remberger (eds.), *Italian Dialectology at the Interfaces*, Amsterdam, Benjamins, pp. 319-55.
- Guardiano, C., and Stavrou, M., 2014: "Greek and Romance in southern Italy: history and contact in nominal Structures", *L'Italia dialettale* 75, pp. 121-47.
- Guardiano, C., and Longobardi, G., 2005: "Parametric comparison and language taxonomy", in M. Batllori, M.-Ll. Hernanz, C. Picallo and F. Roca (eds.), *Grammaticalization and Parametric Variation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 149-74.
- Guardiano, C., and Longobardi, G., 2017a: "Phylogenetic reconstruction in syntax: the Parametric Comparison Method", in A. Ledgeway and I. Roberts (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Historical Syntax*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 241-71.
- Guardiano, C., and Longobardi, G., 2017b: "Parameter theory and parametric comparison", in I. Roberts (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Universal Grammar*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 377-98.
- Longobardi, G., and Guardiano, C., 2009: "Evidence for syntax as a signal of historical relatedness", *Lingua* 119/11, pp. 1679-1706.
- Longobardi G., Guardiano, C., Silvestri, G., Boattini, A. and Ceolin, A., 2013: "Toward a syntactic phylogeny of modern Indo-European languages", *Journal of Historical Linguistics* 3, pp. 122-52.
- Longobardi G., Ghirotto, S., Guardiano, C., Tassi, F., Benazzo, A., Ceolin, A., and Barbujani, G., 2015: "Across language families: Genome diversity mirrors linguistic variation within Europe", *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 157, pp. 630-40.
- Longobardi, G., Ceolin, A., Ecay, A., Ghirotto, S., Guardiano, C., Irimia, M.A., Michelioudakis, D., Radkevich, N., Luiselli, D., Pettener, D., and Barbujani, G., 2016: "Formal linguistics as a cue to demographic history", *Journal of Anthropological Sciences* 94, pp. 147-55.
- Ledgeway, A. 2016. "Functional Categories", in A. Ledgeway and M. Maiden (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 761-71.
- Ledgeway, A. 2020. 'The North-South Divide: Parameters of Variation in the Clausal Domain', *L'Italia Dialettale* 81:29-77.
- Ledgeway, A. In press. 'Disentangling parameters: Romance differential object marking and the distribution of head and edge features', in Gabriela Alboiu, Daniela Isac, Alexandru Nicolae, Mihaela Tănase-Dogaru, Alina Tigău (eds), *Studies in Honor of X.* Bucharest: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti.
- Roberts, I. 2019. *Parameter Hierarchies and Universal Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.