

## On the expletive element *da* in Cimbrian: description and analysis

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The aim of this talk is to provide a comprehensive description and analysis of the syntactic and informational structural restrictions ruling the distribution of subjects the main clauses of Cimbrian, a Germanic dialect spoken by around 300 people in the village of Luserna, Trentino (Northern Italy). The placement of subjects in this variety gives rise to the following puzzle, as is illustrated in (1): post-verbal subjects necessitate the presence of a subject clitic pronoun or of the element *da* (which is homophonous with the locative pronoun “here”) cliticized onto the finite verb (cf. 1abc), while a preverbal subject excludes these elements (cf. 1def).

- (1) a. Bas **hatt-ar<sub>i</sub>** herta gekoaft dar Luca?  
what has-he always bought the Luca  
b. Bas **hat-ta** herta gekoaft dar Luca?  
what has-DA always bought the Luca  
c.\*Bas **hat** herta gekoaft dar Luca?  
what has always bought the Luca  
“What has always Luca bought?”  
d.\*Dar Luca **hatt-ar<sub>i</sub>** herta gekhoaft in libar  
the Luca has-he always bought a book  
e.\*Dar Luca **hat-ta** herta gekhoaft in libar  
the Luca has-DA always bought a book  
f. Dar Luca **hat** herta gekhoaft in libar  
the Luca has always bought a book  
“Luca has always bought a book.”

I show that, contrary to current analysis, *da* is not a *pro*-licensing element (as proposed by Bidese & Tomaselli 2018) nor a Ground Marker (as in Grewendorf & Poletto 2015), but should be analysed as a CP expletive (see Biberauer 2010) whose function (and distribution) is fed by the V2 nature of the language. More specifically, *da* lexicalises Spec,SubjP (like *tet* in West Flemish, see Haegeman & van de Velde 2006) in all those cases in which the fronted XP is not able to count as a pragmatic subject (Cognola & Hinterhölzl 2016), i.e. when the fronted XP is not the syntactic subject or the syntactic subject is non-specific/non-D-linked.

### References

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