



UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE

FACULTÉ DES LETTRES  
Département de linguistique

# Some notes on Subjects and the Left Periphery of Swiss Romansh varieties

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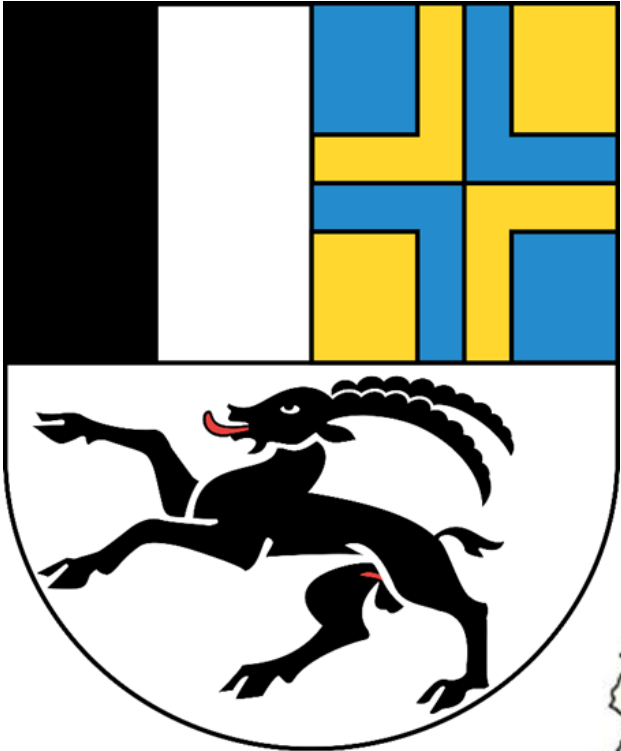
Microworkshop in Romance,

Université de Genève, 1.11.2017



# Grisons / Graubunden / Grigioni

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# Etruscan origins?

“In 1805, there appeared a remarkable monograph by P.Placi a Spescha on *Die Rhaeto-Hetruskische Sprache*, which identified Surselvan as the purest or most archaic dialect of ‘RH’ – and thus the one most closely related to **Etruscan**”

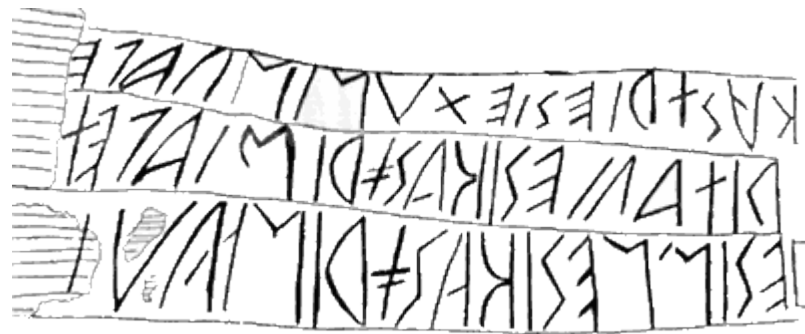
(Haiman & Benincà 1992: 15)



Livy



Pliny the Elder



Inscriptions

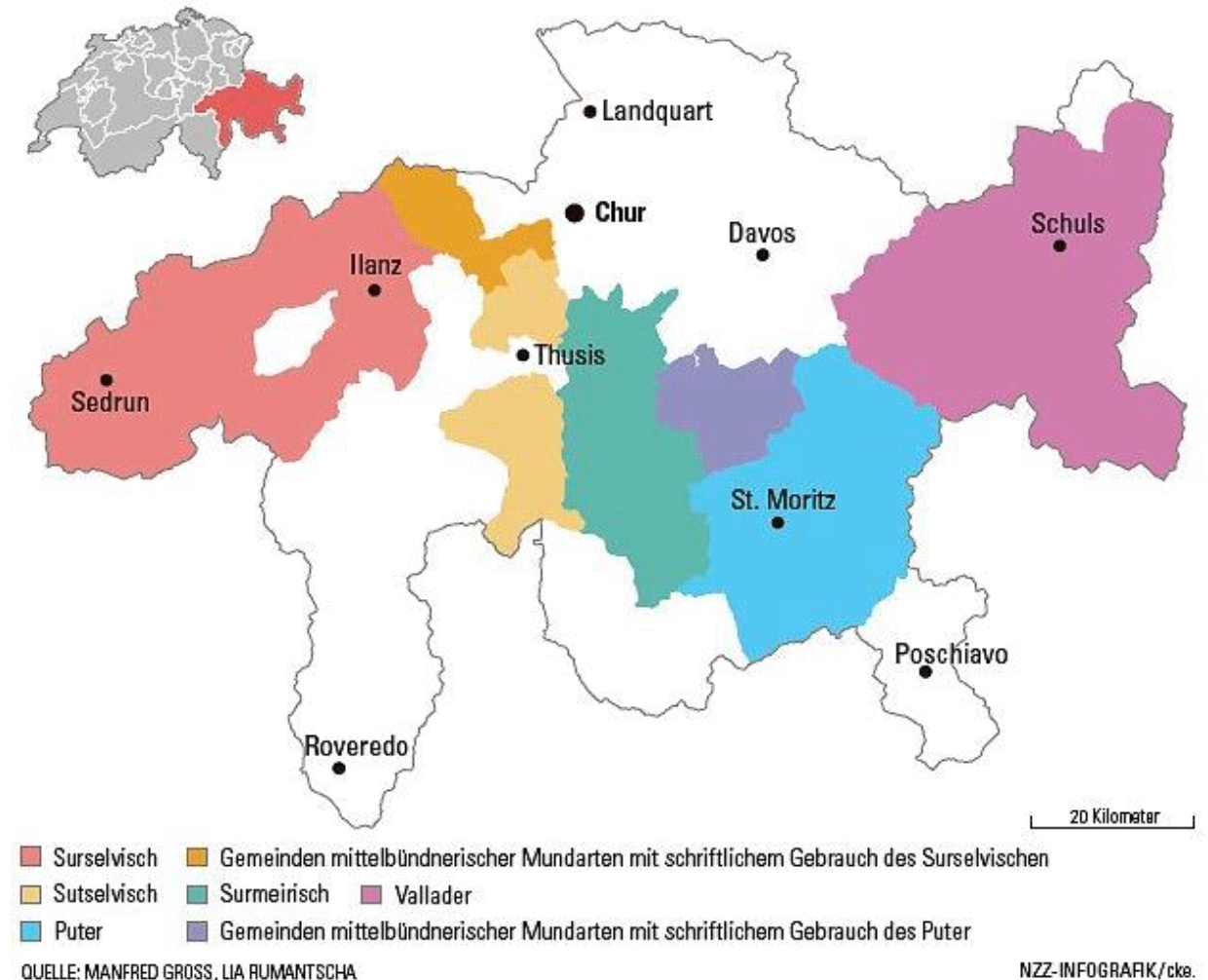


Father = il bab

*No! Just a Romance language!*

# Swiss Romansh varieties

1. **Surselvan** Sursilvano
2. **Sutselvan** Sottosilvano
3. **Surmiran** Surmirano
4. **Putér** Alto Engadino
5. **Vallader** Basso Engadino



# Some issues

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😊 ≈ 40.000 speakers (mostly bilingual)



Media (TV, Radio): *Rumantsch Grischun*



Lack of corpora

Corpus of SMS4Science, Whatsapp Switzerland!

Zürich Universität

Variety	SMSs	CPs
<i>Surlselvan</i>	425	1144
<i>Sutselvan</i>	9	29
<i>Surmiran</i>	110	304
<i>Putèr</i>	181	515
<i>Vallader</i>	337	966

# SR varieties are V2 languages

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Rumantsch **discorra** Ursus stupent

Rumantsch speaks.3sg Ursus excellently

‘Ursus speaks Rumantsch very well’

(*Surmiran*, Anderson 2005: 206; 7.45a)

 **On V2:** Holmberg (2015), Wolfe (2015), Samo (in prep.)

 **On Romance V2:** Poletto (2002)

# V2 language in embedded contexts

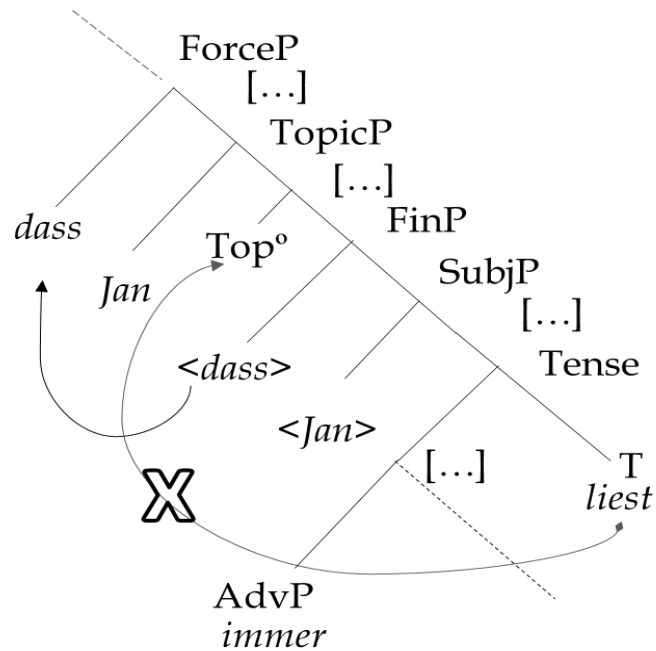
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- a. El a detg **che** A CUIRA **lavura** Renzo  
He said that IN CHUR works Renzo (not in Zurich)  
(*Surselvan*, Renzo Caduff p.c.)
- b. Ia pains **tgi** dultchems **vegia** Corinna gugent  
I think that sweets have.subj.3sg Corinna gladly  
'I think Corinna likes sweets'  
(*Surmiran*, Anderson 2005: 212, 7.57b)



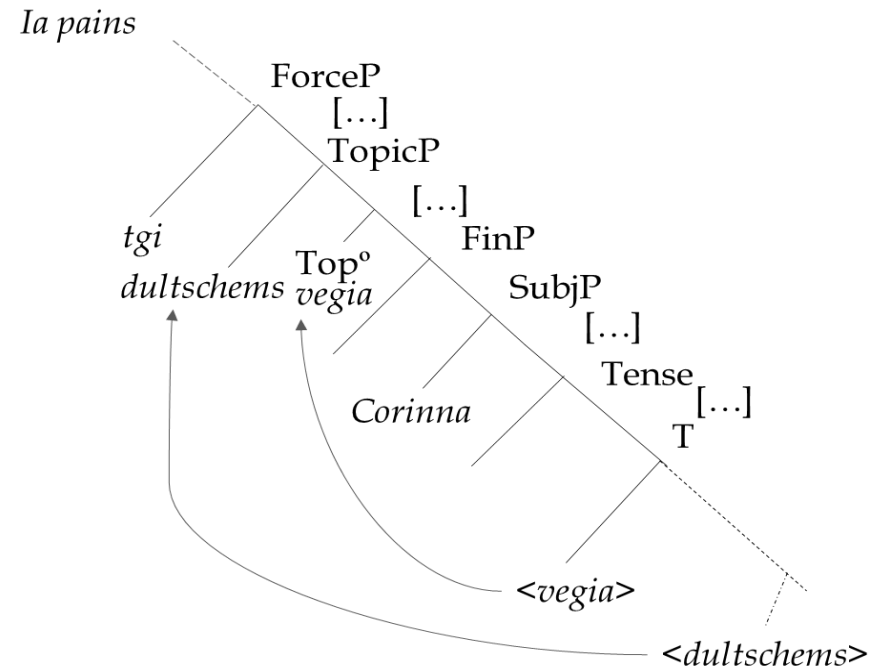
# V2 language in embedded contexts

## Standard German



No Embedded V2

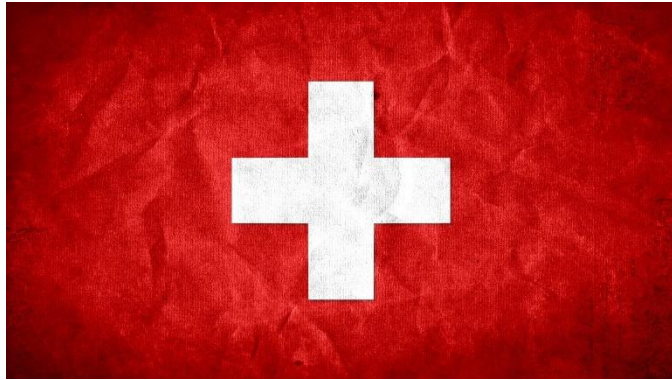
## SR varieties



Embedded V2

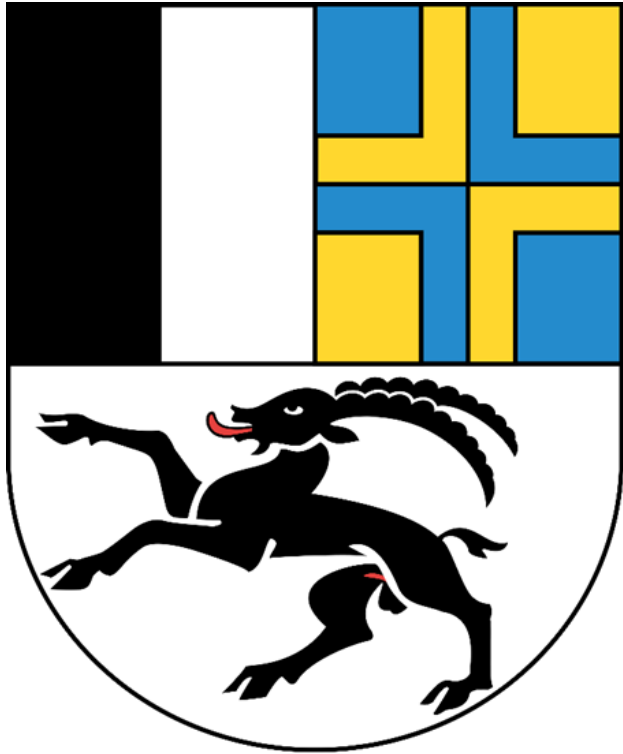


Cf. Grewendorf & Poletto (2011), Leu (2015), Samo (in prep.)



# On Subjects

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# Subject Clitics

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- a. Ursus **discorra** stupent Rumantsch  
Ursus speaks.3sg excellently Rumantsch  
'Ursus speaks Rumantsch very well'

(*Surmiran*, Anderson 2005: 206; 7.43, 7.44a)

- b. Rumantsch **discorra** Ursus stupent  
Rumantsch speaks.3sg Ursus excellently  
'Ursus speaks Rumantsch very well'

(*Surmiran*, Anderson 2005: 206; 7.45a)

# Subject Clitics

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- c. \*Ursus **discorra-’1** stupent Rumantsch  
Ursus speaks.3sg excellently Rumantsch  
‘Ursus speaks Rumantsch very well’  
(*Surmiran*, Anderson 2005: 206; 7.43, 7.44a)
- d. Rumantsch **discorra-’1** Ursus stupent  
Rumantsch speaks.3sg.3sgm Ursus excellently  
‘Ursus speaks Rumantsch very well’  
(*Surmiran*, Anderson 2005: 206; 7.45a)

# Subject Clitics

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Among the varieties, doubling is possible in "all person/number combinations where a subject enclitic is available, that is, 1sg, 1pl and 3sg, 3pl." (Fuß 2005: 190).

Within a non-generative literature, clitic doubling was considered to be stylistic because it serves "to reinforce the subject".

In particular, Sutselvan shows a different, and *more cartographic*, form of clitic doubling: the clitic doubling which "appears to be more common" (Fuß 2005: 192) and is "almost an obligatory phenomenon that has lost its function as a stylistically marked structural option". As a matter of fact, the DP does not receive stress (Linder 1987: 150).

# Subject Clitics

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- a. Egn da quels lev-**i** ear **jou**  
One of those wanted-cl1s also I  
'I also wanted one of those'
- b. Ascheia vain-**sa nus** arviart igl mulegn...  
so have-cl1p we unlocked the mill  
'So we have unlocked the mill'
- c. Igl fetschi preaschas, â-**l el** getg.  
It is urgent, has-cl3sm he said.  
'He said it's urgent'

# Subject Clitics

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d. Cunquegl c'igl eara november, vev-**la la scola** antschiat  
since it was November, had-cl3sf the school begun  
'Since it was November, the school had begun'

e. Natiral vev-**in las matàns** radetg sei mailenders.  
Of course had-cl3p the girls brought up Milans  
'Of course, the girl had brought up some Milans [pastries]'

(Linder 1987: 153, 193)

# Subject enclitics doubling

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SR varieties (Fuß 2005, Anderson 2005) may be considered VITP (Travis 1984, Zwart 1997) languages.

The verb and the fronted XP do not move to the Left Periphery in Subject-Initial sentences.



# Back in the '90s

## VITP vs. VOTP analysis



### Uniform V2, Verb Outside TP (VOTP)

*Vikner & Schwartz (1996), van Craenenbroeck & Haegeman (2006)*

- a. [<sub>SpecFinP/SpecTopP/SpecFocP</sub> John [<sub>FinP</sub> reads [<sub>IP</sub> the book in the library]]]
- b. [<sub>SpecTopP/SpecFocP</sub> The book [<sub>SpecFinP</sub> - [<sub>FinP</sub> reads [<sub>IP</sub> John in the library]]]
- c. [<sub>SpecFinP/SpecTopP/SpecFocP</sub> In the library [<sub>FinP</sub> reads [<sub>IP</sub> John the book]]]

### Non-uniform V2, Verb Inside TP (VITP)

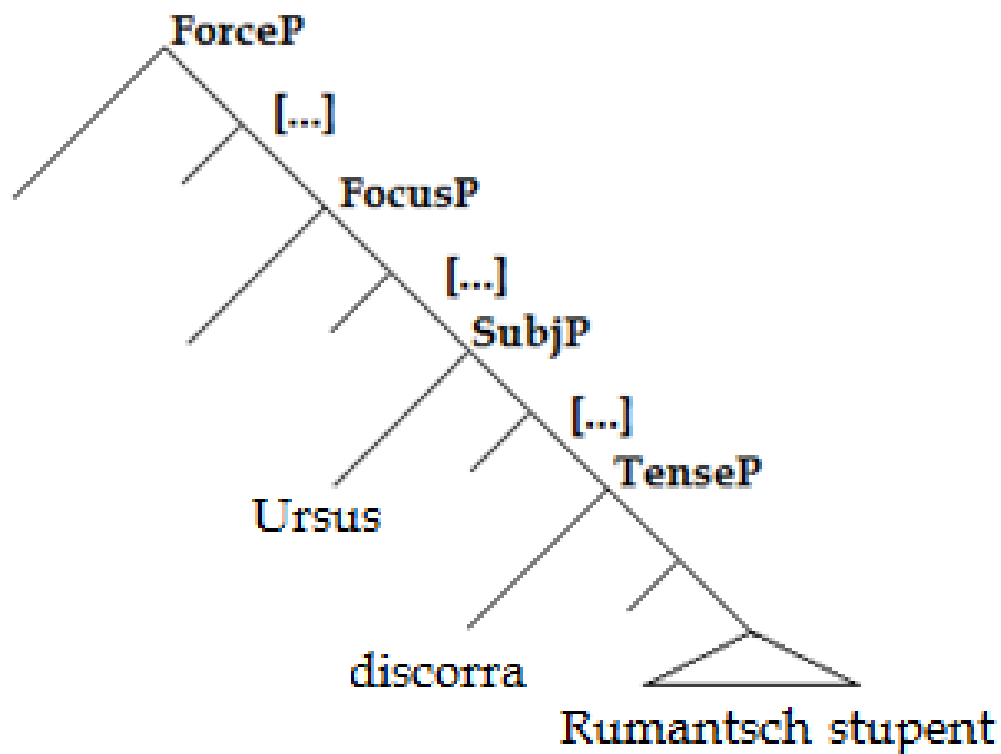
*Travis (1984) Zwart (1997)*

- d. [<sub>SpecIP</sub> John [<sub>IP</sub> reads the book in the library]]]
- e. [<sub>SpecTopP/SpecFocP</sub> The book [<sub>SpecFinP</sub> - [<sub>FinP</sub> reads [<sub>IP</sub> John in the library]]]
- f. [<sub>SpecFinP/SpecTopP/SpecFocP</sub> In the library [<sub>FinP</sub> reads [<sub>IP</sub> John the book]]]

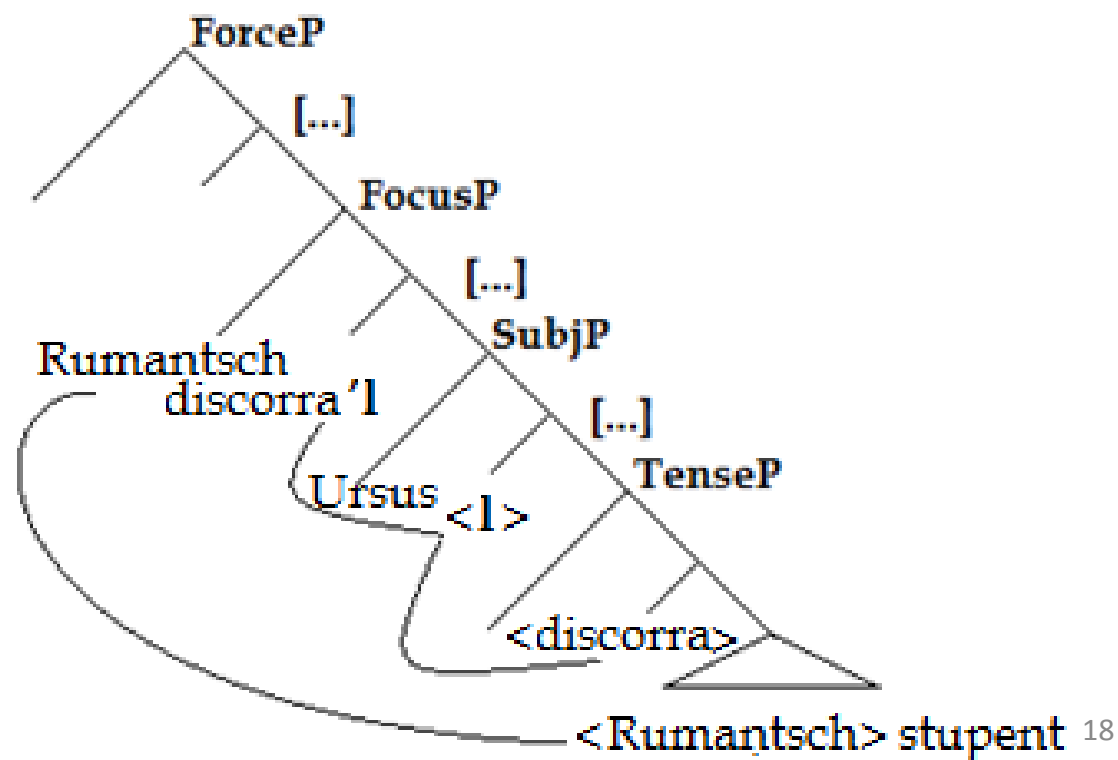
# Subject enclitics doubling

The clitic possibly lies in the head of SubjP and the clitic becomes part of the verbal inflection in the targeted head in the CP.

Subject-initial sentences



Non-subject initial sentences



# Towards a Criterial V2

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☹ **Mainstream Analyses of V2:** Wolfe (2015); Poletto (2017)

[Frame [**Force** [Top [Foc [**Fin**]]]]]

(Benincà & Poletto 2004)

😊 **Criterial V2** (Samo, in prep.)

[Force [Top\* [Int [Top\* [Foc [Top\* [Mod [Top\* [Qemb [Fin [IP]]]]]]]]]]]]]

(Rizzi & Cinque 2016:146)

# Lower Subject Position

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A different syntactic structure is involved in SR varieties, in which it has been proposed that the subject can target, as in Italian, a Topic position in the low IP area (Belletti 2004).

Evidence for subjects in a Belletti's (2004) lower Topic position are from SR varieties in (27), where also the past participle precedes the subject as in Italian.

SubjP is however activated, since the verb shows the subject clitic.

# Lower Subject Position

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## Putér

Che effet **ha=la gnü** aint il pövel **la nouva predgia?**

Which effect has.cl.3sf had the new sermon on the people?

‘Which effect had the new sermon on the people?’

(Linder 1987: 154)

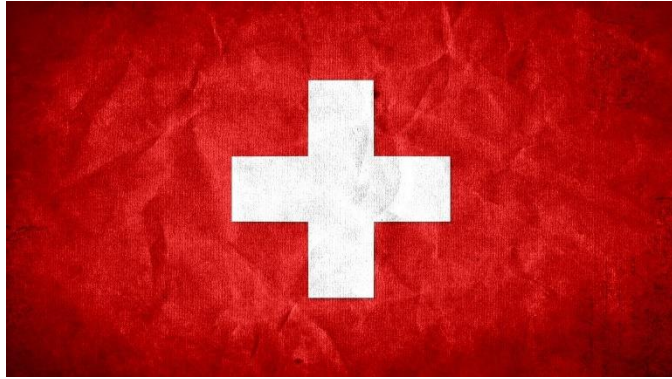
## Surmiran

An quell mumaint **è-la riveda** er **la mama**

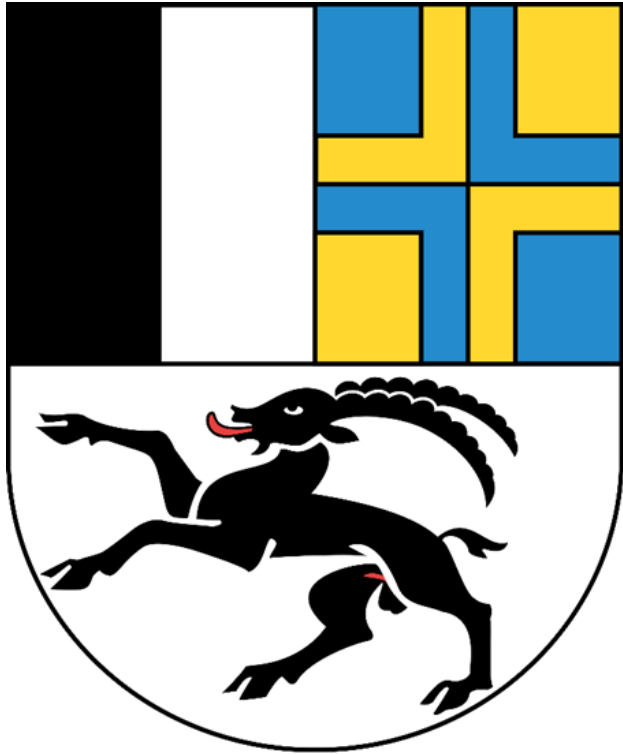
in this moment is-cl3sf arrived also the mother

‘In this moment, the mother arrived too’

(Linder 1987: 154)



# On the CP



# On the Left Periphery

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Romansh varieties avoid V3 (Haiman & Benincà 1992: 150).

Strict V2 language (Benincà 1995)?

# Surselvan

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**Subj - FocusAdverb- V3**

Jeu bunamein sedurmentel

(Corpus SMS4science, Sms n. 24022)

➔ **Similar pattern in:**

Mainland Scandinavian (Nilsen 2003)

Icelandic (Samo, forthcoming)



# Vallader

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## LocItem - Subj - V3

Pro üna chasa da vaschins üna merla **ha** fat seis gnieu

On a house of neighbours a blackbird has made his nest

'On a neighbours house, a blackbird made ist nest' (Oetzel 1994: 157)

## TempItem - FocusSubj - V3

Fin a quel di INGÜN **nu'm vaiva** mai dit il cuntrari

Until to that day NOBODY neg.cl.had never said the opposite

'Until that day, nobody told me the opposite' (Oetzel 1994: 159)

# Putèr

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## SpeechActAdv - Subj - V3

uschè niaunch' orma **nu savaiva** novas da la gramma

so no soul neg-know news on the cream

'Nobody knew anything on the cream' (Oetzel 1994: 161)

## LocItem - Subj - V3

Nodvart l'alp Giuvannes **evra** a la fin la buocha

This-side of alps Giuvannes opened finally the mouth

'Once in this side of Alps, Giuvannes finally started talking' (Oetzel 1994: 161)

## TempItem - Subj - V3

Uossa Ciglia **la clama**

Now Ciglia her calls

'now Cilia calls her'

# Putèr

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## Topic / Focus - Subj - V3

Da quella Maria nu pudaiva sfügir

From that Maria neg.can escape

From her, Mary could not escape (Oetzl 1994: 163)

## Topic / Focus - Subj - V3

per bgers ün purtret es ün bun amih

For many a portrait is a good friend (Oetzl 1994: 163)

## Topic / Focus - Subj - V3

nus üngün nu'ns güda

Us nobody neg.helps

'Nobody helps us' (Oetzl 1994: 163)

# Putèr

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## Topic - Subj/Focus- V3

ma da que üngün nu s'ho inachüert ünguotta

But of that nobody neg.refl.have noticed nothing (Oetzel 1994: 163)

## Topic / Focus - Subj - V3

a Ludwig ils ögls haun cumanzo a glüschir

to-Ludwig the eyes have started to glow (Oetzel 1994: 164)

# Conclusion (work in progress)

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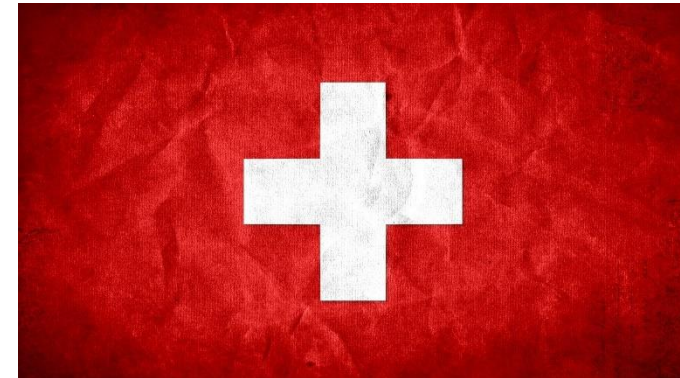
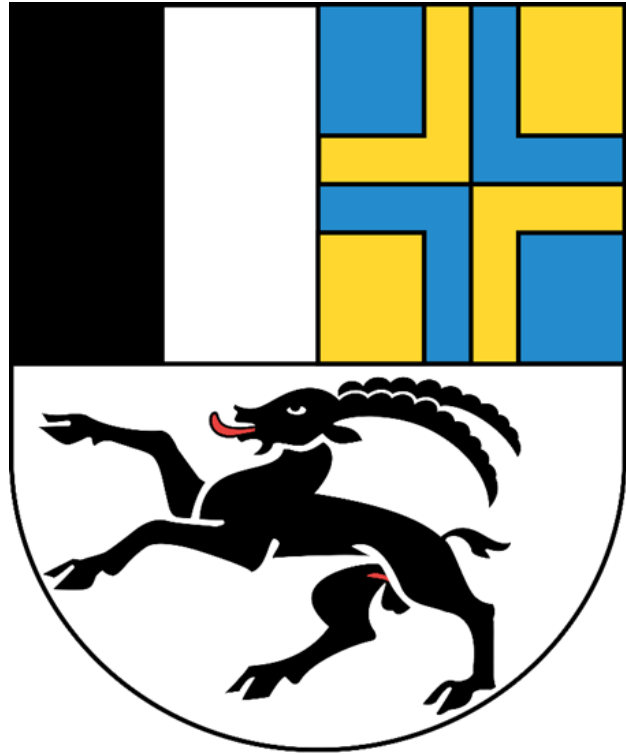
**SpecSubjP is involved in V2 contexts**

**→ towards a VITP analysis, Criterial-V2**

**➤ SR may not be considered *strict* V2 languages**

# Merci, Danke, Grazie

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# ENGRAZIEL!