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Progressive and Prospective in German dialects of Italy

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1 Introduction

In the last decades, the interest in investigating periphrastic constructions that convey a progressive meaning in German has grown considerably. Many large research studies have been dedicated to the so-called *rheinische Verlaufsform* or *am*-Progressive, to its areal extension and to the phases of the grammaticalization process (cf. representatively Flick 2011, Gárgyán 2014, Ramelli 2015, Kuhmichel 2016 and 2017), and further research has focused on the periphrastic form with the light verb *tun* ‘do’ (Schwarz 2009, Weber 2017 among many others).

On the contrary, similar constructions in German-based isolated varieties have been taken into consideration only rarely (cf. as exceptions Angster 2005 for the *tun*-periphrasis in Titsch of Gressoney and Tomas 2018 for the *am*-Progressive in Pennsylvania Dutch). As it has been generally observed for such varieties (cf. Padovan et al. 2016), the contact environment has often an impact on the speed of the grammaticalization process accelerating it compared with non-isolated varieties. This is, for instance, the case of the progressive periphrasis in Pennsylvania Dutch. As Tomas (2018) shows, the periphrasis also extends to passive progressive forms (1); furthermore, it can include the objects between the particle *am* and the verb (2).

- (1) Ich kann dich unsr neie Pony weisa, derweel ass di Kieh
I can you our new pony show as-long as the cows
am gmolka werra sin
PRT milked been are
‘I can show you the new pony, while the cows are being milked’

- (2) Ich bin *am* die Kinna dihre Hoar *schneida*
I am PRT the children their hair cut
‘I’m cutting the children’s hair’

In addition, Michelotti (2020) also brings evidence in favor of a possible expansion of the progressive construction in Pennsylvania Dutch to cover habitual-ity, in particular with accomplishment verbs (3).

- (3) Alli Daag is sie n neier Rock n naehe
 every day is she a new dress PRT sew_{INF}
 ‘She sews a new dress every day’

As far as the German-based minority varieties in Italy are concerned, little is yet known about progressive forms. In some cases, they seem to have borrowed constructions that can also be found in the surrounding Italo-romance varieties, as Ferraresi (2016: 109-110) suggests for the Cimbrian construction *soin + nã + zu-infinitive* (‘to be after + zu-infinitive’). She considers this to be a grammar replication pattern of the Northern-Italian progressive construction *esser + drio + (a)-inf* (‘to be after + to-inf’). As a matter of fact, such an aspectual use of the preposition *nã* ‘after’ is not attested in any inner-German dialect, while it is very common in the Romance Veneto and Trentino varieties Cimbrian is in contact with, according to Ferraresi (2016).

In this article, we will, first of all, challenge Ferraresi’s description of the aspectual periphrases in Cimbrian and her conclusion about the origin of the particle *nã* (§ 2). As a second step we present new data collected in a large study about progressive in Cimbrian (34 speakers aged 17 to 100) (§ 3). Next, we discuss a theoretical analysis of the progressive periphrasis in line with the bisentential approach outlined by Manzini, Lorusso & Savoia (2017) (§ 4). Finally, we consider the semantic aspects of the interpretation of the progressive, including its futurate uses (§ 5). § 6 will conclude the contribution.

2 Ferraresi’s (2016) results about progressive in Cimbrian

2.1 Previous literature

As already mentioned, Ferraresi (2016) provided the first investigation of the Cimbrian progressive system. Previous mentions of the phenomenon are sparse. Schweizer ([1952-53] 2008: 831) mentioned the constructions ‘*to be + na + to-inf*’ (cf. 4) and ‘*to be + darnach + to-inf*’ (cf. 5) for the Cimbrian historical varieties of Giazza and Roana, respectively, and qualified the temporal value of such construction as ‘restricted present’ (in original: “eingeschränkte Gegenwart”).

Cimbrian of Giazza (Schweizer [1952-53] 2008: 831)

- (4) De rouš sain **na** tze pazarn in pach
 the horses are PRT to pass_{INF} the_{ACC} stream
 ‘The horses are crossing the stream’

Cimbrian of Roana (Schweizer [1952-53] 2008: 831)

- (5) Ba sait=ar **darnach** tzo *genan*?
 where are=you_{CL.SUBJ} PRT to go._{INF}
 ‘Where are you going?’

The grammar of the Cimbrian of Lusérn, which is the last variety still actively spoken, mentions only the periphrasis “to be + *nâ* + to and the fleeted infinitive” expressing “progressive or durative action”, according to Panieri et al. (2006: 220, fn. 71).

Cimbrian of Lusérn (Panieri et al. 2006: 220, fn. 71)

- (6) I pin *nâ* zo *lesa*
 I am PRT to read._{FL.INF}
 ‘I’m reading’

2.2 Ferraresi (2016)

To begin with, and differently from the ‘official’ grammar (Panieri et al. 2006), Ferraresi (2016) distinguishes between two different periphrastic constructions encoding aspectual meaning in Cimbrian. The first one, namely ‘to be + *nâ* + zu and fleeted infinitive’ for progressive, is illustrated in (7). The second relevant construction is ‘to be + *drâ* + zu-fl.inf’ for inchoative or prospective meaning, as in (8).

Cimbrian of Lusérn (Ferraresi 2016: 106)

- (7) Dar iz *nâ* z’slava
 he is PRT to sleep._{FL.INF}
 ‘He is sleeping.’
- (8) Dar iz *drâ* z’sterba
 he is PRT to sleep._{FL.INF}
 ‘He is about to die.’

In Ferraresi’s analysis, *nâ* is related with the German preposition *nach* ‘after [local and temporal]’, while *drâ* derives from the agglutination of OHG *dâr* ~ *dara* and *ana* (cf. MHG *dar an(e)*, *deran(e)*, *dran(e)* ,thereby’). Since neither *d(a)ran* nor *nach* are involved in some aspectual periphrasis in German, the source of the Cimbrian construction ought to be sought in the contact languages. In particular, the periphrastic construction ‘to be + *drîo* + to-inf’, gives rise to a progressive meaning in the local variety of Italo-Romance, where *drîo* is the preposition ‘after’.

- (9) L'è *drio* (*a*) *stirare*
 he=is PRT to iron_{INF}
 'He is after ironing/he is ironing.'

Therefore, this is an instance of contact-induced transfer resulting in a grammar replication pattern, according to Ferraresi (2016). In addition, she points out that speakers who are older than 30 know both constructions and are able to give a grammaticality judgment for both structures, although they generally prefer '*soin nâ* + *zu-fl.inf*' for the progressive meaning. On the other hand, speakers who are younger than 30 do not use '*soin drâ* + *zu-fl.inf*' at all. For instance, in the passive context, the older group prefers *drâ* (cfr. 10a), whereas the younger one only knows *nâ*.

Cimbrian of Lusérn (Ferraresi 2016: 108)

- (10) a. 'Z sboi iz *drâ* zu *khemma abegestocht*
 the pig is PRT to come_{INF} slaughtered
 b. 'Z sboi iz *nâ* zu *khemma abegestocht*
 the pig is PRT to come_{fl.inf} slaughtered
 'The pig is going to be slaughtered'

3 Our empirical study

The evaluation of the data is still going on (34 speakers aged 17 to 100). What follows are our provisional results.¹ First, our survey confirms that *soin nâ* + *zu* and *flected infinitive* is the most common periphrasis to convey a progressive meaning in Cimbrian; it is largely accepted and produced by all speakers.

Second, a subgroup of speakers (about half of the whole group) uses *soin drâ* + *zu* and *flected infinitive*. This construction, though, differs from the first one, on the basis of syntactic tests like that in (11)–(12), where *drâ* can be used in an answer with an anaphoric function, which *nâ* cannot.

- (11) Hast=(t)o nonet gemacht di kòmpite? I pin *drâ* est
 have=you not-yet done the homework. I am PRT now
 'Haven't you done yet your homework? I'm doing it now'
 (12) *Hast=(t)o nonet gemacht di kòmpite? I pin *nâ* est
 have=you not-yet done the homework. I am PRT now

¹ The field work has been conducted by Chiara Ferrari (see Ferrari 2021).

Third, semantically, *soin drâ + zu and flected infinitive* does not seem to convey a prospective meaning in comparison to *soin nâ + zu and flected infinitive*, contrary to what Ferraresi's (2016) pilot study concludes. For instance, even an atterminative action like *gian in pa balt* 'to be walking in the forest' can be used by a subgroup of speakers with *drâ* without any prospective interpretation.

- (13) I pin *drâ* gest zo giana in pa balt, bal ...
 I am PRT been to go.INF in through forest, when
 'I was walking through the woods, when ...'

Fourth, our data show that Cimbrian has a third periphrastic construction which is specialized only for prospective meaning, i.e. *soin + drumauz + zu and flected infinitive* (14). In fact, *soin + drumauz + zu and flected infinitive* can be used exclusively with terminative verbs (15).

- (14) Dar iz *drumauz* zo *giana* atz Lusérn
 he is prt to go.fl.inf to Lusérn
 'He is going to go to Lusern'
- (15) a. Di nona iz sber krânk, si iz *drumauz* zo *sterba*
 the grandma is seriously ill she is PRT to die.fl.inf
 'Grandma is seriously ill, she is going to die'
- b. *Dar iz *drumauz* zo *paita*
 He is PRT to wait.fl.inf

Finally, however, it is not clear whether this last construction is on its way out from the aspectual system of Cimbrian, since several speakers don't use it actively and tend to generalize *soin + nâ + zu and inflected infinitive* to every context.

4 Theoretical approaches: syntax

4.1 Progressive Periphrases and the hypothesis of a PROG category

The focus of our theoretical discussion is the syntax of progressives including the interfacing of syntax with interpretation. In other words, we aim at accounting for the internal structure of the progressive periphrases involving the copula, a prepositional expression and an infinitival verb – and at the same time at showing that the structure can be mapped to adequate semantics for the progressive. We consider two main types of account. Because our arguments are syntactic, we chose to characterize them first of all in terms of monoclausality vs. biclausality of the progressive periphrases. We support a biclausal conception in which progressive

periphrases involve a copula sentence and an embedded infinitival sentence (the two being connected by a PP). In monoclausal proposals, on the contrary, the PP periphrasis is simply an exponent of an Asp/Progr projection of the main verb (see Cinque 2017).

Different conceptions of the syntax/semantics interface are involved by the two analyses. The monoclausal analysis, in which the wide crosslinguistic variety of PP periphrases (and others) found in the progressive are but realizations of the same abstract node, is compatible with a Uniformity postulate to the effect that “the same meaning always maps onto the same syntactic structure” (Culicover & Jackendoff 2005: 6). This postulate is deeply ingrained in generative grammar, from the Universal Base Hypothesis (Ross 1970) to the UTAH (Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis) of Baker (1988). Lately it has strongly characterized cartographic approaches, based on the “syntacticization of semantics” (Cinque & Rizzi 2009).

We endorse not only a biclausal syntax for progressive periphrases, but also a non-Uniformity approach to the syntax/semantics interface. While Uniformity is strongly represented within generative grammar, so are its opponents, coming from very different points of view of the generative spectrum. They include scholars working outside the minimalist paradigm (Culicover & Jackendoff 2005, quoted above) as well as within different streams of the minimalist paradigm, e.g. Wood & Marantz (2017) holding a Distributed Morphology (DM) view of the syntax/externalization interface, Manzini & Savoia (2011, 2018) holding lexicalist views. In present terms, the semantics of the progressive has nothing to do with some Asp(ect) or Progr(essive) abstract category but is constructed (compositionally) from the prepositional periphrasis (a locative periphrasis in the cases under consideration).

The monoclausal, Uniformity-based view is developed specifically for the progressive by Cinque (2017), whose empirical basis is typological variation in the progressive forms, rather than any given language. As is well known while in many languages, including English, the progressive has a dedicated periphrasis, in other equally familiar languages the simple present is systematically ambiguous with the progressive. This is the case in both German and Italian (16), or in Bulgarian, mentioned by Cinque.

- | | | | |
|------|----|--------------------------------------|---------|
| (16) | a. | Ich lese
I read
'I am reading' | German |
| | b. | Leggo
read.1SG
'I am reading' | Italian |

Cinque's idea for languages like Bulgarian, German, Italian is that "in contexts compatible with a progressive interpretation actually co-occurs with a silent Progressive aspect head" (2017: 545). Therefore, for Cinque all progressives are characterized by an invariant syntactico-semantic structure including the Progressive head. In externalization, this underlyingly universal structure yields several possible morphophonological outputs, which include lack of any realization. Needless to say, it is not a matter of contention, then, that Italian may externalize just Tense (present) and not Aspect (here progressive). The question is whether the disambiguation which this necessitates is performed by the syntax, cartography-style, by means of a Progressive head – or whether Aspect can simply be enriched at the semantic interface. Neither option is intrinsically simpler or more complex in itself – hopefully empirical evidence can be brought to bear on this choice.

Note that while Uniformity is taken to be paramount by theorists like Cinque, no matter what the cost may be in terms of opacity at the EXT interface, the readability of the latter is linked to learnability, given that this is the only interface through which evidence is accessible to the child. Cinque (2017: 562) explicitly mentions that "if Progressive aspect is a universal category (possibly reflecting the way our cognition analyses the world), a child only needs to recognize which piece of morphology, if any, represents it, even if this has no obvious correspondence to (parts of) its meaning". This statement hides a difficulty, namely that his cartographic model does not simply require a universal concept of progressive, on which we may all agree. It requires much stronger assumptions about the existence of a Progressive syntactic head and of a template ordering it with respect to other functional heads. This is far from a generally accepted postulate – and in fact characterized as "unevolvable" by Chomsky et al. (2019).

The issue is ultimately empirical, and it revolves around the assumptions that one needs to make at the Externalization interface to adjust to Uniformity at the semantic interface. In addition to syncretism with the present (16), the progressive often involves a locative embedding. In the easiest case, a simple preposition is involved. A Germanic language which makes use of an overt preposition is Dutch, as in (17a). The *rheinische Verlaufsform of German in (17b) is a further example of this*. Progressives consisting of a copula and an embedded gerund, like English or Italian, the latter exemplified in (18), are not dissimilar adopting Gallego's (2010) view of the gerund as a sort of verbal PP; even etymologically, it corresponds to the oblique case (dative/instrumental) of the Latin verbal noun.

- (17) a. Ik ben aan het/'t werken. Dutch (van Gelderen 1993: 180-182)
 I am on the working
 'I am working'.

- b. Ich bin am Lesen German
 I am at reading

(18) Sto leggendo Italian
stay.1SG reading
'I am reading'

(19) L'è *drio* (*a*) *stirare* Italo-Romance (Veneto)
s/he=is after to iron_{INF}
'S/he is ironing.'

(20) emakume-a ogi-a ja-te-n ari da Basque
 woman-DET bread-DET eat-NOM-LOC engaged is (Laka 2006)
 ‘The woman is eating the bread’

Cinque (2017: 554) is prepared to entertain the possibility that “the entire *ari* + PP could perhaps be in the specifier of a silent [Progressive] head”. Even granting the technical feasibility of this approach, the question we want to raise here is whether an abstract Progressive head does in fact make any contribution independent of that already made by the various components of syntax individuated by Laka in her analysis. In what follows we take the view that it does not.

³ For readers who are not familiar with the phenomenon it is worth stating explicitly that the relevant languages are not Balkan type language 'without infinitives'; they do have a morphological infinitive, fully productive and in fact alternating with the doubly inflected construction, see (23) below.

solution, while made possible by the cartographic notation with its unlimited repertory of positions, encodes the facts, rather than explaining them. It is not clear why other functional verbs are normally inflected, i.e., lower than AGR, as Ledge-way (2016) also notices; and the notion of ‘parasitic inflection’ is stated, not defined.

All in all, exactly like the Basque facts reported in (20), the South Italian facts in (21) can at best be accommodated in a monoclausal structure; they are certainly not predicted by it. Vice versa, like the Basque facts, they find their most natural explanation in a biclausal structure. Specifically, Manzini et al. (2017) propose that *stay* is an ordinary lexical verb, conventionally modelled in (22) by first merge in VP and movement to IP. This lexical verb selects a PP complement whose head is the *a* ‘at/to’ preposition – and which is of course directly reminiscent of the Basque biclausal structure posited by Laka (2006). The preposition in turn selects for a sentence, which in these varieties happens to be finite. The latter has the ordinary internal structure of a finite sentence. Because of its properties, this complement sentence must be an IP (not a CP), hence a deficient/weak phase (Chomsky 2001), see (22). Indeed, it displays obligatory control of the embedded subject and lack of tense independence (see especially Landau 2015) as well as clitic climbing.⁴

(22) [IP stənn [v [VP stənn [PP a [IP bbəvənə [v [VP bbəvənə

Now, the doubly inflected construction alternates with an otherwise identical construction where the embedded verb is an infinitival one. In fact, the alternation between finite and infinitival embedding is often found in the same varieties, as for instance in (23a). The structure in (23b) is once again based on the assumption that *stay* is a main verb, taking a PP complement, which in turn embeds an IP, but an infinitival one. The continuity between the two phenomena strongly argues in favour of parallel structures in (22)-(23).

(23) a. u st-εmə a fε Conversano (Apulia)
it stay-1PL at/to do.INF
‘We are doing it’

b. [IP stεmə [v [VP stεmə [PP a [CP/IP fε [v [VP fε

Not the least advantage claimed by Manzini et al (2017) for the structures just proposed involves the PP structure headed by *a* ‘at/to’. Monoclausal approaches to doubly inflected constructions lack a cogent proposal in this respect. Cardinaletti and Giusti (2001) simply refer to *a* as a ‘connector’. Cruschina (2013),

⁴ Lack of a C phase is also necessary to allow clitic climbing from the embedded to the matrix sentence, see example (23) below. The fact that clitic climbing is not merely possible but necessary is one of the key points of contention in the literature.

By contrast, adopting the biclausal structure in (22)–(23) allows a relatively straightforward account of the *a* introducer. Quite simply, we can account for it as the preposition *a*, with which it is homophonous, and associated the aspectual *stay* verb with a sentential PP complement. If so, the real question becomes whether a compositional interpretation can be assigned to the structure and whether the P can be shown to make a contribution towards the progressive meaning. As we will see in section 5, the answer is positive. In the meantime, let us conclude that there are distinct advantages to biclausality when both verbs are fully inflected and that biclausality easily allows for the presence of an intermediate PP structure (see also Basque in section 4.1). With this much background we turn to the syntax of North Italian and Cimbrian varieties.

As mentioned at the beginning, one of the leading ideas about the Cimbrian progressive periphrasis is that it has arisen under contact with North Italian varieties where similar paraphrases are widespread, as illustrated in (9) and again in (24a) for ease of reference.

(24) a. L'è *drio* (a) *stirare* Veneto, North Italy
s/he=is after to iron_{INF}
'S/he is ironing.'

⁵ Linker is used by much generative literature as a cover term for elements introducing adnominal modifiers (e.g. the Persian *ezafe*, cf. den Dikken 2006) or oblique complements of the verb (Collins 2019). I take it that reference is not made to this specific notion, since no relevant literature is cross-referenced.

⁶ The structure of complex PPs is detailed in a rich literature including Svenonius (2006) and much cartographic work (Cinque 2010).

Turning back to Cimbrian, Ferraresi (2016: 109) claims that the progressive periphrasis ‘*soin nâ + zu-fl.inf*’ is the result of the grammatical borrowing from the Romance construction in (24). Nevertheless, note that the particle *nâ*’s nasalized vowel -â- in the Lusern variety suggests that the original preposition was not *na* – which also exists in Cimbrian and together with the verb *gian* ‘to go’ displays the very specific meaning of ‘for’ or ‘after’, cf. (25).

- (25) a. I *gea* *na* *mel*
 I go for flour
 ‘I’m going to buy flour’
- b. I *gea* *na* *holtz*
 I go for wood
 ‘I’m going to get wood’
- c. Dise *djar* *sòinsa* *gânt* *na* *aisan*
 these years [= once] are=they gone after iron
 ‘Once, they went to gather iron’

In contrast to *na*, *nâ* can be used for ‘along’ when it is used with a verb of movement and the dative of the object, as in (26), or for ‘on’ with the verb *soin* (to be), as in (27). In this latter case, it indicates an action I’m conducting on or with the object; the case is again dative.

- (26) I *gea* *nâ* *dar* *maur*
 I go along the.DAT wall
 ‘I’m going along the wall’
- (27) I *pin* *nâ* *in* *patàtn*
 I am on the.DAT.PL potatoes
 ‘I’m working on potatoes’

Both uses of (26) and (27) can also be found with *drio* in the Romance dialects of Trentino (see Ricci 1904: 147) and of Veneto (Boerio 1867: 248), with the preposition *a* introducing the object somebody is going along, as in (28), or s/he is working on, as in (29). The semantics of all these constructions somehow implicates an event in progress described in the moment in which it is going on.

- (28) *camminar drio a un fiume o un arzero* (Boerio 1867: 248)
 to-walk along PREP a river or a dyke
 ‘to walk along the river or the dike’
- (29) *eser drio a ...* (Ricci 1904: 147)
 to-be after PREP

‘to be after (something)’

As we saw in (24) (cf. below in 5.3), the complex locative PPs – *drio a* in Romance and *nâ* + dative in Cimbrian – introduce an axis of orientation relating the figure (i.e., the subject of the predication) to the ground (i.e. the complement of the complex PP). This construal is consistent with the fact, that the origin of the preposition *nâ* is probably the adverb (*hin*)*na*ⁿ with the apocope of -n-. A similar preposition can be found in Swabian, where it shows an identical semantics. According to Wax (2011: 226), Swabian *na(n)* corresponds to an adverb with the meaning “an etwas, an jemand hin” (i.e. ‘towards something or somebody’, ‘in the direction of’) or it shows up in connection with verbs of motion (2011: 468), such as *na(n)-fallen* ‘to fall down’ or *na(n)-keien* ‘to throw down’, and so on.

In short, we do not assume that Cimbrian simply took over the construction from the Romance dialects of Trentino or Veneto. Rather, it developed autonomously a progressive construction exploiting the own resources and implementing a typologically well-attested pattern.

5 Theoretical approaches: semantics

5.1 Introduction: The role of the PP

In addressing the interpretation of progressives, our goal is not to propose our own theory for the interpretation of progressives. We simply want to show that the syntactic structures in section 4 are semantically adequate.

Before we proceed to the semantic literature on progressives, let us dwell a little more on the independently known interpretive properties of the PPs involved in progressive periphrases. We may follow once again Manzini et al. (2017) in discussing the most elementary of the various PPs involved, namely the simple Romance preposition *a* ‘at, to’. According to Manzini and Franco (2016), the basic denotation of *a* is not locative, but dative. In other words, it instantiates a relation, whose content is what Belvin and den Dikken (1997: 170), speaking of the verb *have*, call “zonal inclusion”. Thus, in a sentence like (30), Italian *a*, and similarly its English counterpart *to*, introduce a relation between the prepositional object *Peter* and the object of the verb *the book* such that *Peter* (zonally) includes *the book*. In this instance, inclusion translates into material possession, but inherent possession may be involved for instance of body parts (*the surgeon gave a new nose to the patient*), of mental states (John gave a fright to Peter). In the latter examples the part-whole nature of the relation introduced by *a/to* is even more evident.⁷

⁷ Manzini and Franco (2016) notate the content of the dative elementary relator by the label $\subseteq$, implying not the formal subset relation but precisely a mnemonic for ‘zonal inclusion’. Given the

- (30) Diedi il libro a Pietro Italian
 gave-1sg the book to Peter
 ‘I gave the book to Peter’

This framework can also easily fit occurrences of both Italian *a* and English *to* as locative prepositions, though their values diverge partially in this respect, for reasons that are not relevant here. Following Franco et al. (2021), the locative reading of the *a* preposition is once again an inclusion reading, which arises when the object of the preposition denotes a location. Thus consider the simple Italian example in (31). As the object of *a* is a location, then the reading is what is classically called a locative. However, the basic relation is again inclusion; in this instance the location *Rome* includes the subject of the unaccusative verb. Whether state-in or motion-to is involved is determined by the predicate *Peter* (since typologically, the Romance languages are ‘verb-framed’).

- (31) Pietro era/andò a Roma
 Peter was/went in/to Rome
 ‘Peter was in/went to Rome’

If the PP appearing in the progressive of many Romance and Germanic varieties alike is fundamentally dative/locative, then we expect that part of the semantic construal of the progressive is also a part-whole relation, as we will see in the next section.

5.2 The Part-Whole analysis of the progressive

In the words of Portner (2011: 1248-49), one of the most important streams of research on the semantics of the progressive holds that “a progressive sentence describes part of an event, in the same way that a common noun phrase of the form *part of X* describes part of the individual referred to by *X*... This approach to the semantics of the progressive can be referred to as the partitive analysis”. We refer the reader to Portner’s work for a summary of the various accounts proposed in the literature. Despite the “quite unique” nature of some of his ideas, as highlighted by Portner, here we briefly illustrate Landman’s (1992) treatment of the progressive, labelled by its author as the Part-of Proposal.

The idea is that “Mary is crossing the street is true iff some actual event realizes sufficiently much of the type of events of Mary’s crossing the street”. For instance, the sentence in (32a) is true “iff some event is realized in *w* in the past and that event stands in the PROG relation to the type of events of Mary building a

possibility of misunderstandings, we do not employ the notation here. However, the content of the prepositional relator is as characterized in the works quoted.

house”, as indicated in (32b). In turn, PROG is a shorthand for two relations ordering events: “a relation of ‘part-of’ and a relation of ‘stage-of’ [...] a stage of an event is a special sort of part of that event” (Landman 1992: 13-22).

- (32) a. Mary was building a house
 b. $\exists e'[t(e') < \text{now and } \text{PROG}(e', \lambda e.\exists y [\text{house}(y) \text{ and } \text{Build}(e) \text{ and } \text{Agent}(e)=\text{Mary and Theme}(e)=y])]$

Two points about Landman’s treatment are salient for present purposes. First, the logical syntax of the progressive in (32b) is bi-eventive, rather than mono-eventive.⁸ The second important point concerns the part-of/stage-of relation, which seems indeed to fit in with the present construal of the *a* preposition. As discussed in the previous section, the *a* preposition in its dative or locative occurrences has a part-whole or inclusion content, as motivated by Manzini and Franco (2016), Franco et al. (2021). In turn in section 4, we concluded that the doubly inflected construction involved not some mysterious *a* connector or linker, but a bona fide *a* preposition, as in (22), schematically reproduced in (33a). In the corresponding elementary logical form in (33b) the responsibility for introducing a relation between the event introduced by the main verb *e'* and the event property introduced by the embedded sentence falls to the *a* relator.

- (33) a. $[_{IP} \text{stōnn} \dots [_{PP} a [_{IP} \text{bbēvānā} \dots$
 b. $[_{IP} \text{stōnn}(e') \dots [_P a(e', e) [_{IP} \text{bbēvānā}(e) \dots$

In progressives like (33), the part/whole relation holds of event pairs, saying that one event is part of, or a stage of, a second event – or rather a set of events/an event type. This is part of the semantics required by Landman’s PROG. Thus, the inclusion/location content is a natural candidate to instantiate the relation between events and event properties that a part of the formal semantics literature identifies with the progressive. In conclusion, semantic accounts of the progressive are in fact surprisingly easy to map to syntactic structures of the type proposed in section 4. Specifically, syntactic structures of the type proposed here, with two distinct event positions associated with the matrix and embedded verb and an inclusion content attributed to *a* are good candidates to express a partitive semantics for the progressive.⁹

⁸ An operation of lambda-abstraction, which turns the embedded event into an event type (set), appears to be necessary in order to map the syntax in section 4 to the semantics in (32b). But this is the kind of enrichment that can reasonably be expected to take place at the interface.

⁹ Conversely, one may wonder where this leaves accounts where the monoeventive interpretation of the progressive is systematically listed amongst the arguments in favor of monoclausality. Since Landman’s analysis is carried out for the English progressive construction, which is normally taken to be monoclausal, we provisionally conclude that there is no one-to-one correspondence between event interpretation and monoclausal/biclausal syntax. Even so, the Uniformity view that monoclausal theorists are trying to enforce is further undermined.

5.3 Complex PPs in North Italian and Cimbrian

With this background, we can come back to Cimbrian and North Italo-Romance varieties, which recruit complex PPs, including Axial Parts (Svenonius 2006) towards the expression of the possessive. Many Romance varieties of North Italy employ *behind/after*, as do those of the Veneto, in contact with Cimbrian, e.g. in (24), repeated below in (34) for ease of reference. What AxParts do in the economy of complex locative PPs is introduce an axis of orientation relating the figure (i.e., the subject of the predication in (34)) to the ground (i.e. the complement of the complex PP). The presence of a dative *a* preposition embedded under the AxPart in (34) implies that an inclusion relation must relate figure (the located individual) and ground (the location) prior to further specifications by the Ax Part.

(34) [IP I [I' è ... [AxPartP drio [PP a [CP/IP stirare

We therefore suggest that complex PPs simply introduce a specialization of the general relation introduced simply by *a* in (33) above. Though the periphrases of the type involved in (34) are generally described as locative, we further suggest that examples like (34) involve well-known general processes whereby many Axial Parts can be plied either to a locative or to a temporal/aspectual interpretation. For example, Franco (2015) documents how the Italian equivalent of *drio* in (34), namely *dietro* 'behind', turns up in formations with the meaning of 'after' – following a typologically well attested pattern (see Franco for references).

If locative relations are not crucial to the present account of progressives, we fully expect that languages employ periphrases, which involve complex PPs without locative meaning. According to Cinque (2017), these include for instance the French progressive formed by *en train de* + infinitive. Thus, languages like French use a dedicated aspectual periphrasis to restrict the partitive relation at the heart of the progressive.

As for Cimbrian, we already showed in 4.3 that the progressive periphrasis is probably connected with other constructions in which a verb of movement or the verb 'to be' shows up with the preposition *nå* and a dative object, cf. (26) and (27). Importantly, the verb in the Cimbrian progressive periphrasis is not the simple infinitive (*slavan* in this case), but the inflected one, cf. (7) above, reproduced here as (35).

(35) Dar iz nå z'slava
 he is PRT to sleep_{FL,INF}
 'He is sleeping'

According to Panieri et al. (2006: 41), the inflected form *-a* of the infinitive is an archaic morphological feature of the Cimbrian construction that goes back to the

OHG inflected infinitive *zi/za* + *-anne/-enne*¹⁰ which represents the dative of the infinitive, also called *gerund* (see Braune 1958, § 315).¹¹ In the light of the discussion that precedes, we interpret this form as an old reflex of biclausality implementing a part-whole semantics.

5.4 The Futurate Interpretation of the Progressive

The last issue to be considered here emerges in relation to our empirical study of the Cimbrian of Lusern, namely the fact that the same periphrases whose semantics we have so far described in terms of progressive aspect, can also introduce a future value. From the semantics literature we adopt the label *futurate* for “a sentence with no obvious means of future reference, which conveys that a future-oriented eventuality is planned” (Copley 2008: 261). Thus, in English both the simple present and the progressive get a futurate reading, for instance in (36a). In Italian, recall that the simple present can convey the progressive and there is also a specialized progressive periphrasis (cf. (16b) and (18) above, respectively). The simple present has the futurate construal, though the progressive periphrasis does not, as in (36b).

- (36) a. The Red Sox play/are playing the Yankees tomorrow
 b. L’Inter gioca/*sta giocando con il Milan domani Italian
 the Inter plays/is playing with the Milan tomorrow
 ‘Inter and Milan will play each other tomorrow’

While the subtle crosslinguistic interplay of morphosyntactic and semantic factors will ultimately need to be accounted for, the general fact is that “most if not all forms with futurate construals seem to be imperfective or progressive forms” (Copley 2008: 261). There is no lack of proposals for connecting imperfective/progressive aspect and futurate meaning in the semantics literature (see also Copley (2009) and further reference quoted there). According to Copley (2008: 262) “what these proposals have in common is the idea that a plan for an event can constitute an early stage of the event, and thus that an imperfective sentence about the event can be true before the event has begun, while the event is only a gleam in someone’s eye”. In terms of the partitive theory of progressives, the planning stage implied by the futurate semantics, becomes part-of a certain event type and can therefore be matched to a progressive morphosyntax.

As we already saw above, Cimbrian displays two additional periphrastic constructions besides the *nâ* construction studied so far, i.e. *soin* + *drâ* + *zu* and *inflected infinitive* and *soin* + *drumauz* + *zu* and *inflected infinitive*. Our data suggest that only the second one can be clearly used with a prospective meaning, cf.

¹⁰ For a different explanation of the inflected infinitive in Cimbrian see Kolmer (2012: 141–148).

¹¹ See also OE *to* + *-anne/-enne* as in *tō bindanne*, later *to bindende* (Sievers 1959: 60).

(15a) above, repeated here as (37), whereas *soin* + *drâ* can be considered as a variant of *soin* + *nâ* preferred by a subgroup of speakers.

- (37) Di nona iz sber krânk, si iz *drumauz* *zo sterba*
 the grandma is seriously ill she is PRT to die._{FL,INF}
 ‘Grandma is seriously ill, she is going to die’

As in the case of *nâ* progressives, we support a biclausal structure for the prospective construction. In fact, as pointed out in 5.2, based on Landman (1992), the progressive is the relation between the event considered as a whole and its sub-parts. Stages belong to the event as a less developed version of it (see Landman 1992). The same can be assumed for the prospective, understood as the part of the event which represents the stage immediately before the event begins. We see a confirmation of this assumption in the fact that the construction *soin* + *drumauz* + *zu* and *inflected infinitive* can only be used with terminative verbs, i.e. with events that can be divided in sub-events. In the qualitative part of our field research, we asked 6 fluent speakers of Cimbrian to translate Italian sentences in their mother tongue. In (38) we present their production in a terminative context, in (39) in an a-terminative one.

- (38) *La primavera sta arrivando, i ciliegi stanno fiorendo/ Spring is coming, the cherry trees are blooming.*

- GN: 'Z iz=ta ***drumauz*** *zo khemma dar lângez, di khêrschpüam soin ***drumauz*** zo plüana*
 AN: 'Z iz=ta ***drumauz*** *zo khemma dar lângez, di khêrschpüam soin ***drumauz*** zo plüana*¹²
 ANG: 'Z iz=ta ***drumauz*** *zo khemma dar lângez, di khêrschpüam soin ***drumauz*** zo plüana*
 FNC: *Dar lângez iz nâ zo riva, di khêrschpüam soin nâ zo plüana*
 VNC: 'Z iz=ta *nâ zo riva dar lângez, di khêrschpüam soin nâ zo plüana*
 AG: *Dar lângez iz ***drumauz*** nâ zo riva / zo khemma, di khêrschpüam soin ***drumauz*** zo plüana*

- (39) *Non ti credo, stai mentendo / I don't believe you, you are lying*

- GN: I gloa(b)=dar nêt, du pist *nâ zo lunga*
 AN: I gloa(b)=dar nêt, du pist *nâ zo lunga*
 FNC: I gloa(b)=dar=z nêt, du pist *nâ zo khöda lungen*
 VNC: I gloa=dar nêt, du pist *nâ zo lunga*.
 AG: I gloa=dar nêt, du pist *nâ zo lunga*

¹² This speaker produced a variant in which she uses the periphrasis with *soin nâ*.

It is easy to see that the prospective periphrasis with *soin* + *drumauz* + *zu* and *inflected infinitive* is only possible when the event is a sub-stage of a bigger one. In this case as well, the construction consists of a complex element (*da* + *um* + *auz*), in which two preposition and the particle *da* are combined, and again the dative form of the infinitive. However, the fact that the youngest speaker does not use this construction (cf. VNC in (38)) and other evidence by the grammaticality judgment data (not reported here) suggest that it is eventually going to be discarded from the aspectual system of Cimbrian, and that *soin* + *nå* will probably expand to every futurate context.

6 Conclusions

The first aim of our paper was to present some new data about the progressive and prospective periphrases in Cimbrian. This study fits into a renewed interest in the grammaticalization of progressive constructions in the German dialects and in Standard German and attempts to draw attention to similar constructions in German-based minority languages spoken outside of the German-speaking areas. In these languages, processes take place with accelerated dynamics due to language contact. The data we discussed show that Cimbrian have three constructions for progressive and prospective, although one of them, i.e. *soin* *nå* + *zu* and *inflected infinitive* is predictably going to be generalized for all contexts.

The second aim was offering an explanation for the syntax and the semantics of progressivity which – in accordance with Manzini & Savoia (2005) and Manzini et al. (2017) – involves a biclausal construal of these periphrases. The gist of our proposal is that the Cimbrian progressive (and prospective) should be considered as structures in which an AxPart dominates a PP, headed by a preposition introducing a (dative) infinitive. Interpretively, the relation mediated by the Ax-Part and the PP is a ‘part-of’ relation, which here turns out to be a ‘stage-of’ relation between an event as a whole one and its sub-parts. In this sense, the Cimbrian constructions perfectly fit into a typologically well-attested pattern and confirm it. In a more general perspective, we argued that an insightful account of microvariation, contact and change requires a perspective on the relation between syntax and interpretation based on the projection of syntactic structures from the lexicon (as opposed to lexical realization of abstract syntactico-semantic structures).

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