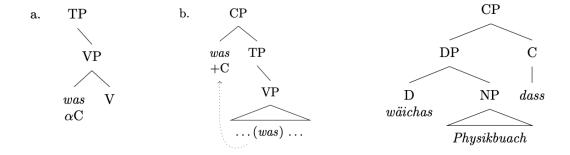**Aspects of microvariation in the German dialect of Salorno: the Doubly-filled COMP filter**

This paper deals with some syntactic aspects of the German variety spoken in Salorno in the Province of Bolzano/Bozen. This variety belongs to the German dialects spoken in the area, which in turn are part of the South Bavarian group. The special feature of this variety is that it is spoken in the borderland between the German- and the Italian-speaking areas: thus, since "balanced" German-Italian bilingualism is assumed to be stronger in this area than in other parts of South Tyrol, Salorno German is expected to exhibit interesting contact phenomena of phonological, morphosyntactic and lexical nature. In this paper we will focus on the syntactic phenomenon of the Doubly-filled Comp Filter (DFCF).

DFCF is quite widespread in Northern Italian dialects; Southern German dialects display it to a lesser extent–with the exception of some Bavarian varieties–and with restrictions depending on the wh-item at stake (see a.o. Bayer 2014/2015). In particular, Bayer assumes that wh-words contain an inherent C-feature [$\alpha$C], which is set to [+C] when the wh-word leaves its TP/VP-internal position and is remerged with T, becoming its sister and giving rise to an interrogative structure. Differently, if the element carrying the [$\alpha$C] feature is nested inside some branching structure, it cannot become sister to TP: the feature is therefore set to [–C] and deletes, leaving the C-head empty; this is why a "real", overt complementizer is needed. As a rule of thumb, monosyllabic wh-words are likely to behave as C-heads, whereas disyllabic wh-words or wh-phrases are likely to behave as Spec,C (cf. 1a-b-c, *was*=what; *wäichas Physikbuach*=which physics book):

(1)



We have carried out fieldwork in Salorno testing DFCF phenomena (among other things): in both translation and grammaticality judgment tasks it turned out that Bayer's generalizations on Bavarian carry over to Salorno German as well, cf. (2)-(7) [PRT=discourse particle; PRF=verbal prefix]:

(2) *Woasch no, **wos dass** de Frau do entn gekaft hot?
  you.know PRT **what that** the lady there bought has?
  'Do you know what that lady bought?'

(3) *Frog deinen Onkel, **wen dass** sie zum Fest inglodn hobn
  ask your uncle **whom that** they to.the party invited have
  'Ask your uncle whom they invited to the party'

(4) *I woaß net, **wo dass** dr Markus hingongn isch
  I know not **where that** the M. PRF.gone is
  'I don't know where M. has gone'

(5) I konn sie decht net frogn, **wiaviel Kilo dass** sie leschtes Johr zuagnummen hot!
  I can her PRT not ask, **how.many kilos that** she last year PRF.taken has!
  'I can by no means ask her how many kilos she put on last year!'

(6)     %I woaß net, **weliger/welcher Bus dass** als erster losfohrt
        I know not **which bus** that as first PRF.goes
        'I don't know which bus is leaving first'

(7)     %Sog mir, **brum dass** er morgn startet
        tell me **why that** he tomorrow starts
        'Tell me why she's leaving tomorrow'

Examples (6) and (7) are marked with the %-sign as (6) was accepted by 2 out of 6 informants and (7) by 3 out of 6. Notice that close varieties spoken in the area may not even display DFCF phenomena at all (or to a very little extent): e.g., a control group in Malles, which is located in western Vinschgau Valley (i.e. pretty far from the Germanic-Romance border) strongly reject the presence of *dass* in practically all contexts with the weak exception of (5), *wiaviel Kilo dass*, which is accepted by 2 out of 3 informants.

Our informants were also administered with the Italian counterpart of the German questionnaire (i.e. translation tasks from Italian into Trentino dialect): again, the DFCF data in the Romance dialect exhibit a huge deal of variation (much more than expected). In the following table we display just the [wh-form+*che*] introducing embedded interrogatives [the empty set sign indicating a form not spontaneously produced but somehow accepted; '*' indicating total rejection of the form]:

| wh-form+*che* | 23 y.o. informant | 59 y.o. informant | 63 y.o. informant |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *chi che*<br>who(m) that | ok | Ø | ok |
| *quanti ani che*<br>how many years that | ok | Ø | Ø |
| *da ndo che*<br>from where that | ok | Ø | ok |
| *cossa che*<br>what that | ok/Ø | * | ok |
| *perché che*<br>why/because that | Ø | Ø | Ø |

At first blush, the variation at stake here seems to depend on generational factors, younger generations' grammar being more inclined to bleed the DFCF; however, looking at the data provided by the 63 y.o. informant, the scenario turns out to be a little more complex than just a divide between the young and the adults/elderly. Anyway, two competing grammars seem to coexist in this context.

To sum up, we will try to disentangle the odd distribution of the DFCF phenomena displayed in the German data from two different perspectives: (i) a theoretical one dealing with the subtle difference between specific wh-phrases such as [*wiaviel Kilo dass*] and [*weliger/welcher Bus dass*] that makes the latter less acceptable (moreover, what about the status of *brum/warum dass*?). We will follow Bayer's analysis in characterizing the head status of wh-words such as *wos*, *wen*, etc. and expand on it; (ii) the perspective of language contact. More precisely: can the Italian data prove useful in disentangling the distribution of *dass* in the German counterparts of the embedded interrogatives (even if at first sight it doesn't seem to be the case)?

**References**

Bayer, J. 2014. Syntactic and phonological properties of wh-operators and wh-movement in Bavarian. In *Bavarian Syntax*, G. Grewendorf and H. Weiß, eds., Pp. 23–50. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. ● Bayer, J. 2015. Doubly-filled COMP, wh head-movement, and derivational economy. In *Representing Structure in Phonology and Syntax*, van Riemsdijk and M. van Oostendorp, eds., Pp. 7–40. Berlin: de Gruyter.