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# Variation and change in the use of gerund: the case of Ladin

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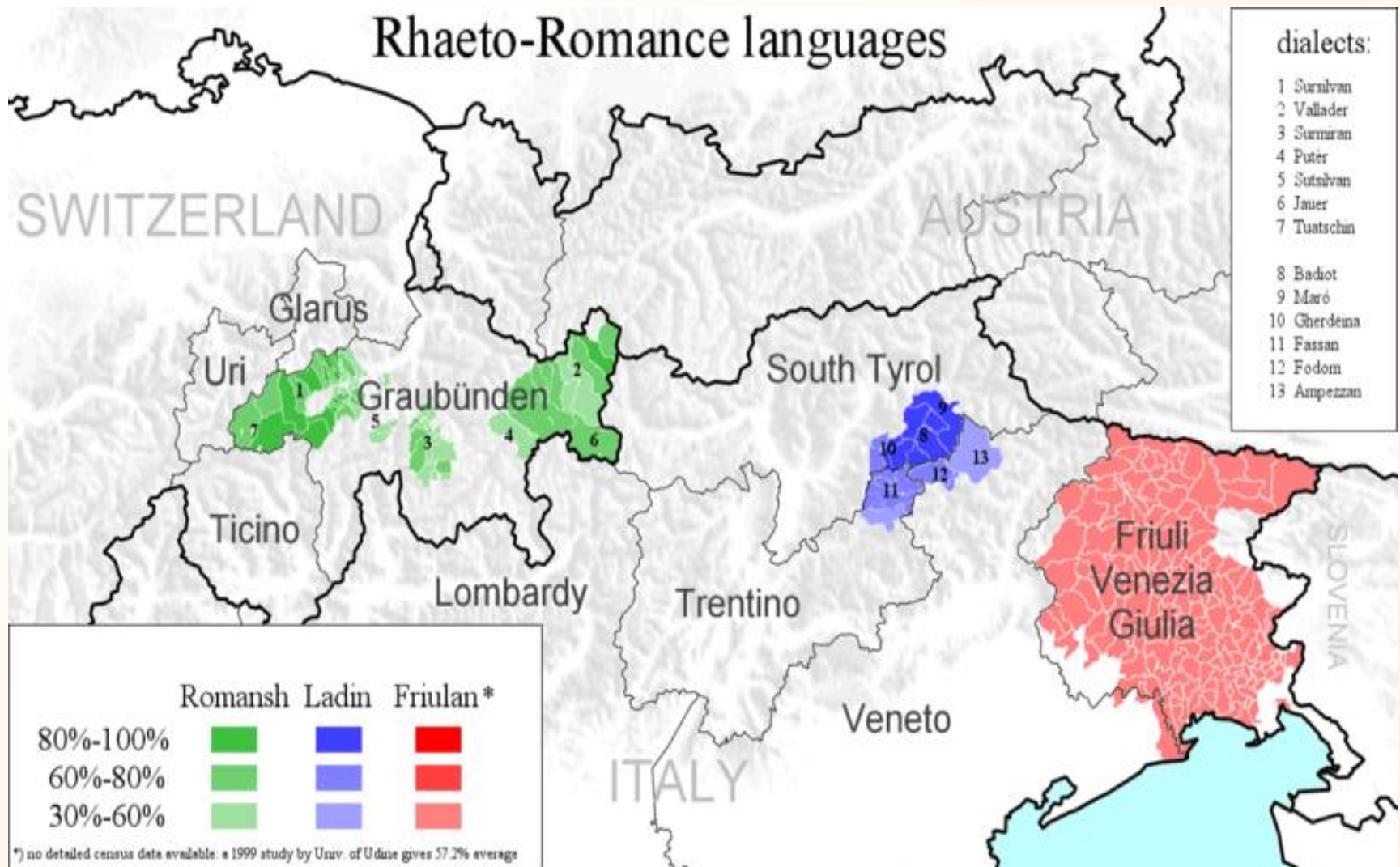
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Rencontres lyonnaises des jeunes chercheurs  
en linguistique historique  
Lyon, 6 June 2019





This map is based on a narrow understanding of that language, following [Guntram A. Plangg](#): *Ladinisch: Interne Sprachgeschichte I. Grammatik*. In: *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik, III*. Tübingen, Niemeyer 1989, [ISBN 3-484-50250-9](#), p. 646–667



Map of the distribution of the Ladin language

[https://it.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ladinia\\_towns.gif](https://it.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ladinia_towns.gif)

## Basic facts on Ladin

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- Romance language spoken in Ladin Valleys (Northern Italy - Bolzano, Trento)
- Surrounded by Italo-Romance and Germanic varieties
- Speakers are usually trilingual
- Displays traditional gerund in grammars

# Roadmap

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- ❖ Basic facts on gerund in Ladin
- ❖ Current literature
- ❖ Data collection – methodology
- ❖ Evidence from fieldwork
- ❖ Final thoughts with respect to language change and contact

## Aim of the presentation

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- Description of the use of gerund in Ladin
- Detection of possible language contact
- Detection of possible language change due to contact

## Basic facts on Ladin (gerund)

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1) L 'è vegnù co la mans scorlan.

He AUX came with DET hand GER

'He came empty handed'

(Fassano)

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1) L 'è vegnù co la mans scorl-an.

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'He came empty handed'

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According to Chiocchetti & Iori (2002), gerund is rarely used on the daily basis.

It is maintained in idiomatic expressions.



## Casalicchio (2011, 2013)

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- Traditional gerund is limited to perceptive constructions
- Exclusive to the following verbs: *udëi* ('to see'), *audì* ('to hear'), *sentì* ('to smell' or 'to touch')

2) Canche l        dessënia uciei i        aud i        sculeies **sciblan**  
when he.CL draws birds them.CL hear DET students whistle.GER  
'When he draws the birds, students can hear them whistling'

(Bels. 1)

(Gardenese)

## Casalicchio (2011, 2013)

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However...

Traditional gerund in perceptive constructions is restricted to Gardenese.

Badioto: percep. verb + GER

Fassano: percep. verb + INF

Fodom: percep. verb + INF + prepos.

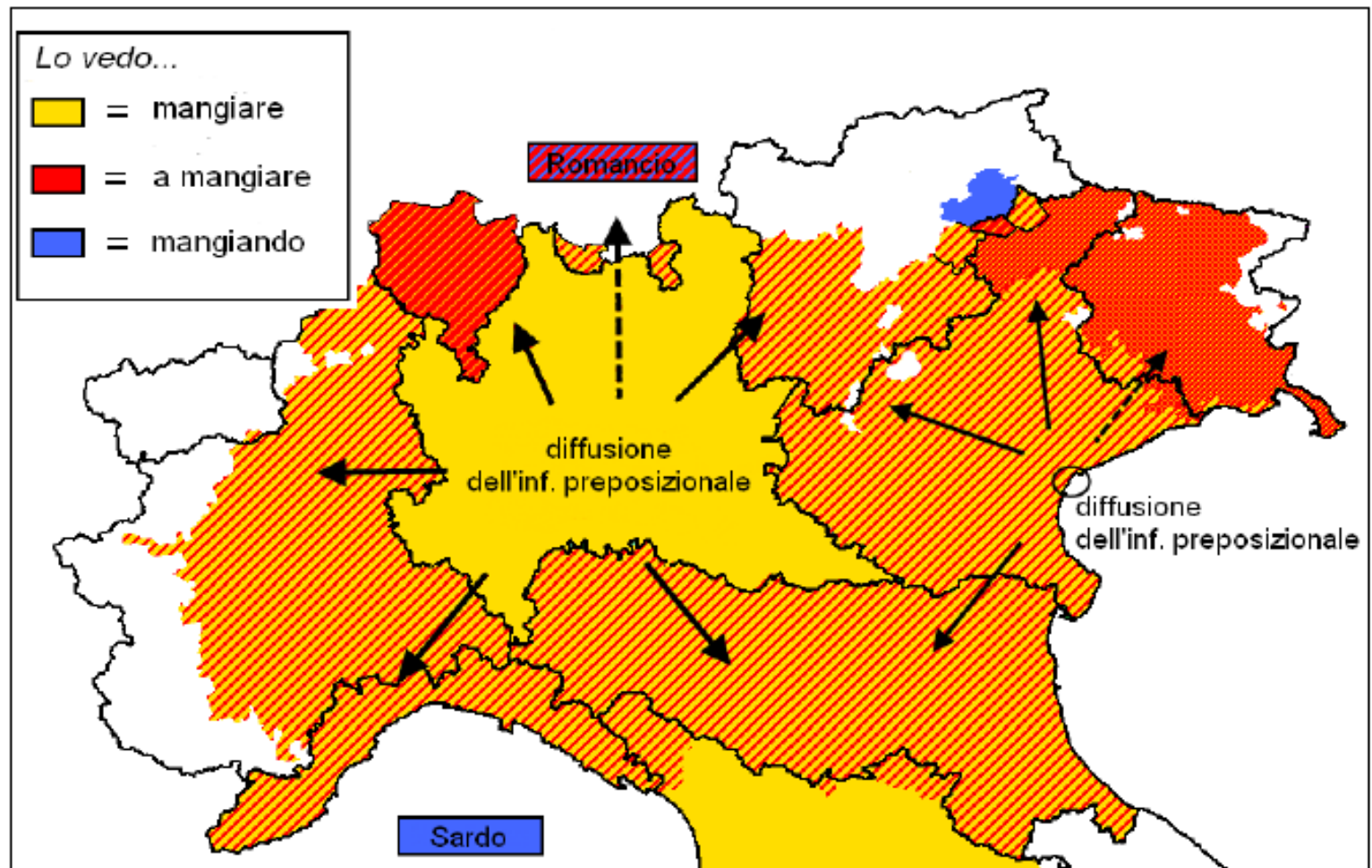
## Casalicchio (2011, 2013)

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### Conclusion:

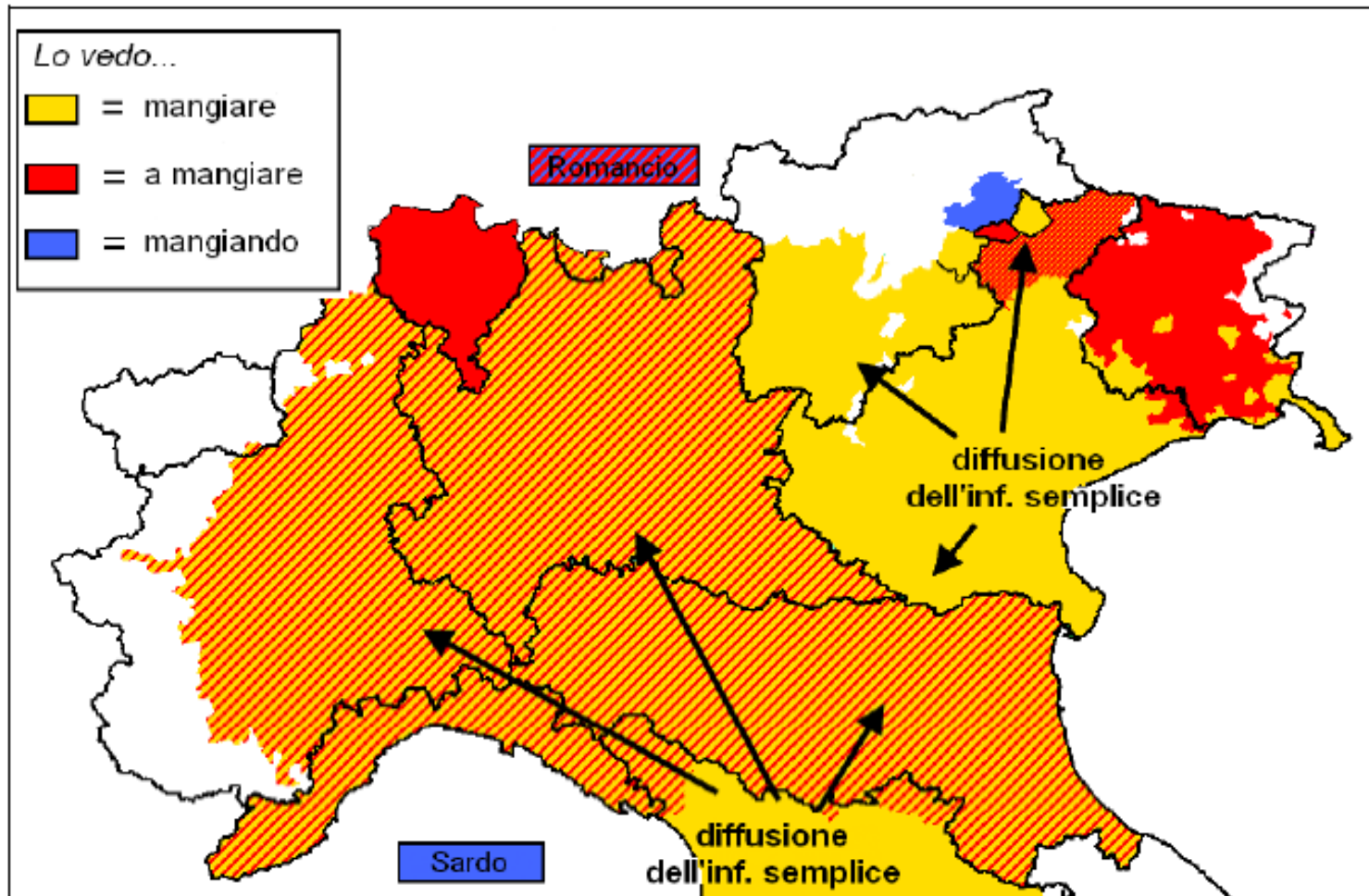
- gerundive construction lost a large part of its semantic and aspectual features
- it lacks the characteristic of durativity and the need for an explicit semantic subject
- it resembles the Italian infinitival construction

# Casalicchio (2011, 2013)



Diachronic change from the Middle Ages to the modern period according to Casalicchio (2013)

# Casalicchio (2011, 2013)



Current distribution according to Casalicchio (2013)

# Methodology

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- Data gathering in high schools
- written translation task from Italian into Ladin
- 2 varieties: Badioto and Fassano
- 56 participants: 33 from Val Badia, 23 from Val di Fassa

# Test

GENERE M  F

DATA DI NASCITA 29.03.01

Quali LINGUE conosci? e a quale livello da 1 a 5? Con 1 si indica competenza elementare, con 5 livello superiore/madrelingua per parlato, lettura, scrittura e comprensione su ascolto.

LINGUA 1 indian

Parlato	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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LINGUA 2 francese

Parlato	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
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Comprensione	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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LINGUA 3 tedesco

Parlato	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
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Ascolto	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

# Test

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LINGUA 4 franceze

Parlato	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Scrittura	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Comprensione	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Ascolto	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

LINGUA 5 latin

Parlato	1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Scrittura	1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Comprensione	1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Ascolto	1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Quale/i lingua/e utilizzi in casa? latin

Quale/i lingua/e utilizzi per comunicare con gli amici? latin, talian, todësch y dotrai  
inca l'ingleze



# Test

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- 12 complex sentences, involving subordination
- Main clause: progressive periphrasis  
e.g. Sto mangiando un pezzo di torta.  
‘I am eating a piece of cake’

# Test

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- 12 complex sentences, involving subordination
- Main clause: progressive periphrasis  
e.g. Sto mangiando un pezzo di torta.  
‘I am eating a piece of cake’
- Subordinate clause: adverbial function  
e.g. Leggendo il giornale, sono venuto a conoscenza della grande vittoria di Valentino Rossi.  
‘I came across Valentino Rossi’s victory by reading the newspapers’

## Preliminary results: progressive periphrasis

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3) Ita. Sto mangiando un pezzo di torta.

Lad. I mangi en toch de turta.

I eat.PRES.1SG a piece of cake

‘I am eating a piece of cake’

(Badioto)

## Preliminary results: progressive periphrasis

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3) Ita. Sto mangiando un pezzo di torta.

Lad. I mangi en toch de turta.

I eat.PRES.1SG a piece of cake

‘I am eating a piece of cake’ (Badioto)

4) Stavo andando in bici quando ha cominciato a piovere.

I je cun la roda canche al à metü man da

I go.PRES.1SG with the bike when it AUX put hand to  
pluvëi.

rain.INF

‘I was riding my bike when it started raining’ (Badioto)

## Preliminary results: progressive periphrasis

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- Gerund is not used in progressive periphrasis.
- There is no specific morphological or syntactic marking for progressive.
- Present indicative is used in both examples, from Badioto and Fassano.

## Preliminary results: subordination

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5) Ita. Ho sporcato i pantaloni sedendomi sul pavimento.

Lad. I m 'à ijiè la braie canche i mo son

I REFL AUX dirty DET pants when I REFL AUX

sontada jò por funz.

sat down for floor

‘I dirtied my pants by sitting on the floor’ (Badioto)

## Preliminary results: subordination

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sontada jò por funz.  
sat down for floor

‘I dirtied my pants by sitting on the floor’ (Badioto)

6) Ita. Lavando i piatti ho rotto la mia tazza preferita.

Lad. **Intratan** che i lavâ i tais ai rot mia  
while that I wash.IMP DET cup AUX broken my  
copa preferida.  
cup favorite

‘I broke my favorite cup while washing the dishes’ (Badioto)

## **Preliminary results: subordination**

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Participants had a strong preference towards paraphrasing the entire structure and switching to finite forms.



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WHY?

To what extent do we have variation?

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WHY?

To what extent do we have variation?

Is language contact a plausible cause of variation?

## Types of sentences

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1. *Mangiando in un ristorante stellato ho scoperto combinazioni del tutto nuove.*

‘By eating in a starred restaurant, I discovered brand new combinations.’

2. *Essendo a dieta, non posso mangiare la ciocciolata.*

‘Being on a diet, I cannot eat chocolate.’

3. *Ogni mattina vado al lavoro cantando a squarciagola in macchina.*

‘Every morning I go to work by singing out loud in my car.’

4. *Lavando i piatti ho rotto la mia tazza preferita.*

‘By washing the dishes I broke my favorite cup.’

5. *Sono caduto guidando la bici e ho rotto il polso.*

‘I fell (while) riding my bike and I broke my wrist.’

## Types of sentences

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6. *Ho sporcato i pantaloni sedendomi sul pavimento.*

'I dirtied my pants by sitting on the floor.'

7. *Ridendo e scherzando, sono già le 3 di notte!*

«Laughing and joking» it is already 3am!

8. *Finendo di lavorare tardi ogni giorno, non ho mai tempo per andare in banca.*

'By finishing work late every day, I never have time to go to the bank.'

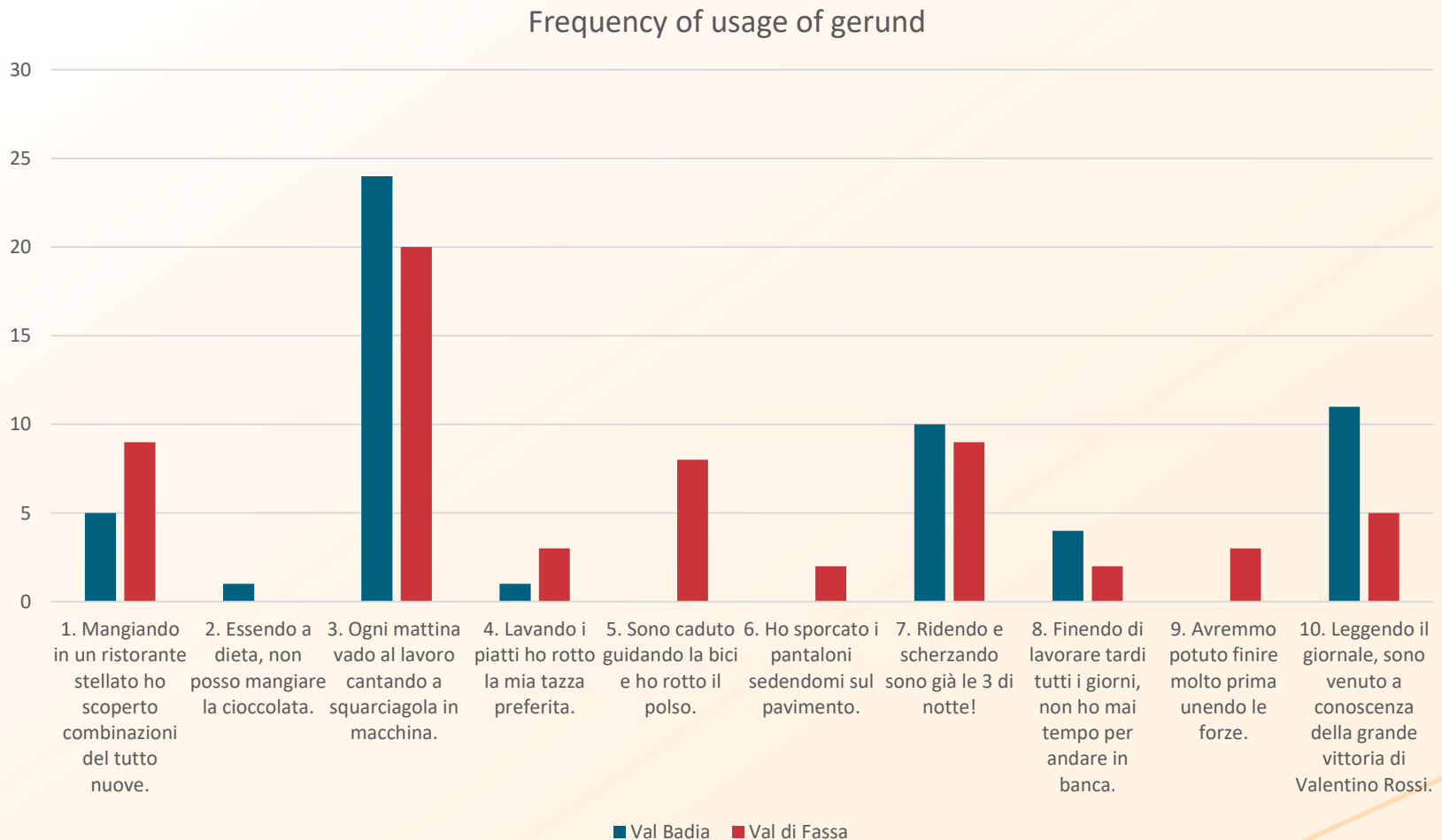
9. *Avremmo potuto finire prima unendo le forze.*

'We could've finished earlier, by joining our forces.'

10. *Leggendo il giornale sono venuto a conoscenza della grande vittoria di Valentino Rossi.*

'By reading the journal, I learned about the big victory of Valentino Rossi.'

# Subordination: some statistics



# Types of sentences

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Ita. Ogni mattina vado al lavoro **cantando** a squarciagola in macchina.

Ger. Jeden Morgen fahre ich lauthals **singend** im Auto zur Arbeit.

Lad. Vigni dè do duman vai al laur **ciantan** dar da dalt t'auto.

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Seems to be the only sentence with the following characteristics of actionality:

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Seems to be the only sentence with the following aspectual characteristics:

both verbs are atelic, expressing a non-definite process

Duration	Dynamicity	Telicity
+	+	-



# Language contact?

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Is it due to language contact?


## Language contact?

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Is it due to language contact?

Not necessarily. However, contact might play a role in preserving certain structures (Benincà 1988).

The pattern seems to be similar to German.

The bottom right corner of the slide features several decorative lines: a thin white line, a thin orange line, and a thicker orange line, all extending diagonally upwards from the bottom right towards the center of the slide.

## Conclusion

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- Surely, Ladin displays a wide range of variation when it comes to gerund.
- Ladin does not have a progressive periphrasis.
- It is not possible to assume that contact plays a major role – further examples are necessary.
- Diachronic data are necessary in order to postulate any kind of language change (there are very limited resources).

## Possible constraints

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- Written input
- Translation task
- Schooling setting

## Future work

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- Preparation of a corpus of written texts (school journals, daily/weekly press and scientific articles) which should tell us more on variation in the use of gerund on a synchronic level.
- Preparation of a small diachronic corpus which should provide a glance at a possible language change.

## Selected references

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**Thank you!**

