

The typology of V2: Evidence from heritage languages and urban vernaculars

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Introduction: It is well known that there is variation among what is classified as V2 languages (e.g., Holmberg 2015): Not all varieties display a strict system whereby the finite verb is in the second position in main clauses. Dialects in e.g., Norway display a rich pattern of variation (Westergaard & Vangsnes 2005, Westergaard 2009), and modern urban vernaculars often do not have V2 (see Wiese et al. to appear, Walkden 2017 for overviews). In this paper, we consider Germanic urban vernaculars in comparison with Germanic heritage languages, demonstrating that similar processes and structures are in place in both varieties. This, we claim, provides important information about the typology of verb placement. We argue that the typology in Wolfe (2015) needs to be revised in light of the data and generalizations concerning urban vernaculars, suggesting that the variation within V2 languages is even more fine-grained than previously argued. We will further argue that we find in these grammars corresponds to the notion of a ‘default system’ (Benmamoun et al. 2013, Scontras et al. 2015).

Background: Walkden (2017) provides a detailed overview of verb placement in learner varieties of various Germanic languages. He focuses among others on Kiezdeutsch and the Mainland Scandinavian urban vernaculars. (1) and (2) provide examples of V3 structures in Kiezdeutsch and Norwegian, respectively.

- (1) morgen **ich geh** arbeitsamt (Kiezdeutsch)
tomorrow I go job.center
‘Tomorrow I will go to the job center.’ (Wiese 2009: 787)
- (2) med limewire **det tar** én to dager (Norwegian multiethnolect)
with Limewire it takes one two days
‘Using Limewire it takes one or two days’ (Freywald et al. 2015: 84)

Walkden argues that the similarity across geographically isolated areas should be analyzed in terms of what he labels sequential simplification and complexification. Walkden shows that the initial element is almost always an adjunct (cf. Freywald et al. 2015), most typically a temporal adverb. The subject has a strong tendency of being pronominal, and in Kiezdeutsch, there are no OSV structures (cf. Haegeman & Greco 2016 for West Flemish V3).

Goal: Building on Walkden (2017), we argue that similar patterns can be seen in other varieties of Germanic languages, most notably heritage languages. This comparison suggests that the factors favoring V3 in Germanic are uniform, involving clauses which have an initial adjunct constituent. To this end, we will present data from American Norwegian showing surprising similarities, which in turn suggests a revised typology of V2 languages.

Case Study: American Norwegian is a heritage language of Norwegian spoken in the US. Data have been collected by Haugen (1953), Hjelde (1992), and more recently through the spoken corpus CANS (Johannessen 2015; 50 speakers transcribed and tagged, age 70-100, 3rd-5th generation). Research has already shown that V2 in American Norwegian is variable (Eide & Hjelde 2005, among others), although most of the work so far has focused on a few informants. We have studied 16 speakers in detail, examining all their V2 and non-V2 structures in the CANS corpus. It should be noted that in spoken Norwegian, about one third of main clause declaratives are topicalization structures (Eide & Hjelde 2015: 88), thus this is perceived to be a ‘Norwegian’ trait for speakers of American Norwegian. Our work suggests a lot of variability: 9 of the 16 speakers produce V3 structures, ranging from 1 to 9 occurrences. Almost all instances involve clause-initial adjuncts (adverbs, PPs, temporal clauses). The subject is always pronominal except for one name. Examples of V3 are in (3) and (4)

- (3) nå **jeg får** (westby_WI_01gm) (4) I Norge **de ville** ... (chicago_IL_01gk)
now I get in Norway they would ...
‘Now I get.’ ‘In Norway, they would ...’

In the corpus, there are only two instances of OSV structures, both involving quotatives. This may seem surprising, but it is important to compare this to the use of OVS. Out of 601 V2 structures, only 35 are OVS (5.8%). In European Norwegian, OVS is also infrequent: Westergaard (2009: 92) reports a figure of 9.8% (26/265).

Generalizations: The above data from both urban vernacular and American Norwegian heritage language provides the following generalization: V3 predominantly appears with clause-initial adjuncts and pronominal subjects. Walkden (2017) observes that of 2067 examples of a *wh*-constituent followed directly by a finite verb, only 2 are V3, and those two involve *wieso* ‘why’ (cf. Rizzi 2001 and others on the special properties of *why* cross-linguistically). In CANS, there are few questions to begin with, but no questions with V3.

Analysis: Essentially three different analyses of V3 have been explored. Opsahl & Nistov (2015) and te Velde (2016) argue that there is verb movement only to T. Walkden (2017) argues for a split-CP approach (cf. Rizzi 1997), whereas Haegeman & Greco (2017, 2017) argue that V3 involves a constituent in FrameP and V movement to Force°. None of these analyses really capture the fact that these clauses are ‘subject-initial’ with a pronominal subject and that the initial adjunct seem to be ‘outside’ of the clause proper (although for Haegeman & Greco, FrameP is ‘outside’ the clause). We argue for the analysis in (5).

(5) [CP/FrameP adjunct [C'/Frame' C/Frame [TP subject [T' verb [VP ...]]]]]

This structure assumes the asymmetric analysis of V2: subject-initial V2 structures have the subject in SpecTP (Travis 1984, Zwart 1997), which recently has been defended based on a range of learner grammars (Westergaard, Lohndal & Alexiadou 2016). Essentially, (5) is an ‘English’ structure that has been created due to contact with English grammar, suggesting that speakers of American Norwegian (and originally urban vernaculars when they were created) have multiple grammatical representations available for verb movement (cf. Roeper 1999).

Different V2 languages allow different sub-systems when it comes to V2 and non-V2, which has been taken to suggest that V2 is an umbrella term for a range of ‘smaller rules’ (Westergaard et al. 2016). Based on an extensive review and new data, Wolfe (2015) proposes a typology where he distinguishes between three types of languages: two types of strict V2 languages and one type of flexible V2 languages. We will discuss this typology from the point of view of urban vernaculars and heritage languages, demonstrating that the typology needs to be expanded for these languages (Sluckin 2017) and be more fine-grained: It needs to be able to account for subject-preferences (given the abundant systematicity in urban vernaculars and heritage languages), and it needs to be able to account for more variation than hitherto discovered for the clause-initial constituent.

Implications: We adopt the view that heritage grammars are native grammars (Rothman & Treffers-Daller 2014) in the sense that they are fully-fledged grammatical systems internalized by their speakers. Despite their age, the speakers in CANS, show systematic influences by the contact language (i.e., English), yet they are also creating a novel grammatical system for verb placement which does not exist in either Norwegian or English. In view of the abundant similarity across populations, urban vernaculars and heritage grammars, we will explore the question whether or not the system discussed here qualifies as an instance of what Scontras, Fuchs and Polinsky (2015) identify as a ‘default system’. This, they argue, often obtains in the case of heritage grammars (cf. Benmamoun, Montrul and Polinsky 2013). From this perspective, V3 structures emerge due to the employment of a restricted set of operations and avoidance of marked word order such as V2.

Selected references: Walkden, George. 2017. Language contact and V3 in Germanic varieties new and old. *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 20. Wiese, Heike. 2009. Grammatical innovation in multiethnic urban Europe: new linguistic practices among adolescents. *Lingua* 119: 782-806.