

## Language contact and the loss of strict V2

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*The issue:* Certain recently-attested varieties of V2 languages are known to deviate from the strict V2 requirement characteristic of the standard. This is the case, for example, for Kiezdeutsch, a new German dialect (Wiese 2009, 2013), Rinkebysvenska, a new dialect of Swedish (Kotsinas 1998), and københavnsk multietnolekt, a Danish multiethnolect (Quist 2008). In these varieties, subject-verb inversion is not required in all contexts.

- (1) morgen        **ich**    **geh**    arbeitsamt  
tomorrow    I        go       job.centre  
'Tomorrow I will go to the job centre' (Kiezdeutsch; Wiese 2009: 787)
- (2) igår            **jag**    **var**    sjuk  
yesterday    I        was     sick  
'Yesterday I was sick' (Rinkebysvenska, Kotsinas 1998: 137)
- (3) normalt        **man**    **går**    på       ungdomsskolen  
usually        one     goes    to       youth.club  
'Normally you attend the youth club' (københavnsk multietnolekt, Quist 2008: 47)

In terms of the actuation problem of Weinreich, Labov & Herzog (1968: 102), we are led to ask: why is strict V2 lost in these varieties at these particular times, and not in other varieties at other times? Since all these varieties have existed in situations of language contact, an obvious response is to invoke transfer from the other contact languages involved. However, it is not clear that transfer is a possible explanation here, since, in at least the first three varieties discussed above, there is no clear pattern that the new varieties could be replicating.

*Analysis:* Focusing on verb movement, I follow Roberts (2010) in treating head-movement as a special case of Agree in which the features on the goal are a subset of those on the probe. In canonical "strict" V2 languages like German and Swedish, then, a [*u*V] feature is present on C<sup>0</sup>, causing the features on C<sup>0</sup> to be a superset of those on the verb; as a result, once agreement between C<sup>0</sup> and the verb has been established, the verb is spelt out in the higher position. In non-V2 languages, no such feature is present. I claim that, rather than illustrating transfer, the developments in multiethnic urban vernaculars such as Kiezdeutsch, Rinkebysvenska and københavnsk multietnolekt support Trudgill's (2011) account of the outcomes of short-term contact involving extensive adult L2 use. In such situations the predicted outcome is that aspects of a language that are L2-difficult will, at the population level, be lost. This fits well with a Minimalist interpretation of Trudgill's insight in which the locus of cross-linguistic variation is the featural content of lexical items, and in which uninterpretable features pose a particular challenge to the L2 acquirer (the Interpretability Hypothesis of Hawkins & Hattori 2006 and Tsimplici & Dimitrakopoulou 2007). In the case of the loss of strict V2, it is the uninterpretable feature [*u*V] on C<sup>0</sup> that is lost. The hypothesis that V2 is unstable in such situations receives support from the L2 acquisition literature, since it has been shown repeatedly that L2 learners of V2 languages have difficulty with the V2 property regardless of the structure of their L1 (Clahsen & Muysken 1986); Håkansson, Pienemann and Sayehli (2002) show that even speakers of Swedish learning German as an L2 regularly produce non-V2 structures in their German output.

*Diachronic developments:* The new non-strict-V2 varieties are not spoken only by adolescent L2 acquirers, but also by monolinguals; hence, what may have started out life as 'imperfect' L2 learning has now become a native feature of a new variety (Freywald et al. 2013: 1). The

constituent order that results in Kiezdeutsch is not consistently V2 or SVO but follows a ‘systematic pattern that evolves from a specific interplay of grammar and pragmatics’ (Wiese 2009: 787). Wiese shows using corpus data that topical subjects (in particular, pronominal subjects) precede the finite verb, giving rise to a V3 pattern; V1 structures are also found (Wiese 2013: 15–19). Multiethnic varieties of Norwegian and Swedish show the same behaviour (Freywald et al. 2013: 7–10).

Interestingly, this is exactly the structure described for West Saxon Old English by Bech (2001), van Kemenade & Los (2006), Walkden (2012) and others. If the development of information-structurally-conditioned V3 from V2 is a common diachronic pathway in situations of short-term contact, then we can hypothesize that, *pace* Walkden (2012: 101–104), strict V2 may have been a property of Proto-Northwest Germanic, and the development of V3 in West Saxon alone may have been a consequence of dialect admixture among Anglo-Saxon immigrants and L2 acquisition by a Celtic-speaking native population.

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