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When Swedes begin to learn German: from V2 to V2

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This article investigates verb placement, especially verb second (V2), in post-puberty second language (L2) learners of two closely related Germanic V2 languages: Swedish and German. Håkansson, *et al.* (2002) have adduced data from first language (L1) Swedish-speaking learners of German in support of the claim that the syntactic property of V2 never transfers from the L1 to L2 interlanguage grammars. Regardless of L1, learners are said to follow a hypothesized universal developmental path of L2 German verb placement, where V2 is mastered very late (only after Object–Verb, OV, has been acquired), if ever. Explanations include the notion of Subject–Verb–Object (SVO) being a more basic, ‘canonical’ word order (e.g. Clahsen and Muysken, 1986), so-called ‘vulnerability’ of the C-domain (Platzack, 2001), and ‘processability’, according to which SVX and Adv–SVX (i.e. V3) are easier to process (i.e. produce) than XVS (i.e. V2) (e.g. Pienemann, 1998). However, the empirical data comes exclusively from Swedes learning German as a third language, after substantial exposure to English. When these learners violate V2, syntactic transfer from English, a non-V2 language, cannot be ruled out. In order to control for this potential confound, I compare new oral production data from six adult Swedish *ab initio* learners of German, three with prior knowledge of English and three without. With an appropriate elicitation method, the informants can be shown to productively use non-subject-initial V2 in their German after four months of exposure, at a point when their interlanguage syntax elsewhere is non-targetlike (VO instead of OV). Informants who do not know English never violate V2 (0%), indicating transfer of V2-L1 syntax. Those with prior knowledge of

English are less targetlike in their L3-German productions (45% V2 violations), indicating interference from non-V2 English. These results suggest that, contra Håkansson *et al.* (2002), learners do transfer the property of V2 from their L1, and that L2 knowledge of a non-V2 language (English) may obscure this V2 transfer. The findings also suggest that V2 is not difficult to acquire *per se*, and that V2 is not developmentally dependent on target headedness of the VP (German OV) having been acquired first.

I Introduction

Few acquisition theorists would dispute that the first language (L1) plays a role in second language acquisition, but many disagree about its extent and whether it equally affects all second language (L2) modules.¹ As regards syntax, one of the most widely discussed topics has been L1 influence on the L2 acquisition of German verb placement, German being SOV and V2. Here it has proven fruitful to investigate and compare developmental routes of L2ers with typologically different L1s, and the present article continues in this vein by presenting new data from Swedish learners of German.

In the 1980s, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese post-puberty learners of German were shown to exhibit the same implicational hierarchy of developmental stages in their L2 verb placement. Irrespective of their L1s, they first produced SVO utterances and soon after V3 utterances (XSVO). Only at later stages – and in that order – did the following occur (Clahsen and Muysken, 1986):

- separation of verbal elements;
- surface OV order (clause-final placement of non-finite verbal elements);
- surface ‘subject–verb inversion’ (placement of the finite verb in second position in root clauses, i.e. V2) and, finally,
- clause-final placement of the verb in subordinate clauses.

Many researchers took these findings as evidence for a universal base SVO order, where the verb precedes its complement(s), and as evidence

¹As is common, second language (L2) is understood in a wide sense here where ‘second’ refers to any language added after infancy; a learner may thus acquire one or more L2s.

for a universal path of acquisition that always starts with SVO, regardless of the L1 (e.g. Meisel *et al.*, 1981; Clahsen *et al.*, 1983; Clahsen and Muysken, 1986; 1989). Others argued that there was nothing universal about the developmental route taken by these Romance learners: Italian, Spanish and Portuguese have the same syntactic properties with regard to verb placement, being SVO languages typologically, with the possibility of XSVO, and the learners had simply transferred these properties to their interlanguage German (e.g. du Plessis *et al.*, 1987; Tomaselli and Schwartz, 1990; the differences in the formalism of their models need not concern us here). The litmus test came in the early 1990s, with an investigation of non-Romance speakers: Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994) studied Koreans and Turks, i.e. speakers of SOV languages. They exhibited a different implicational order of developmental verb placement stages, starting not with SVO in their German, but with OV. This dealt a severe blow to theories of acquisition that assume all L2ers to start with SVO. To my knowledge, these early OV findings have not been disputed; they are acknowledged – though at times grudgingly and in footnotes – even by staunch supporters of universal SVO (Clahsen and Muysken, 1986: 104, fn. 5; Håkansson, 2001: 69, fn. 1; Platzack, 2001: 371, fn. 17).²

Based on these findings from learners with typologically different L1s, Schwartz and Sprouse (1994; 1996) developed a transfer model of L2 acquisition, Full Transfer/Full Access, according to which learners initially transfer their entire L1 syntax, producing and processing L2 utterances through the L1 grammar. Only after this initial state may learners change their interlanguage syntax by abandoning L1 rules/constraints/parameter settings, acquiring new rules/constraints/parameter settings (that may or may not be those of the target language), and eventually converge or not converge onto a targetlike L2 grammar. Schwartz and Sprouse's model is well known, and its explicitness (Full Transfer) makes it easy to test against empirical data from beginning learners.

²Schwartz and Sprouse's (1994: 335, 340–41) longitudinal study of a Turkish adult learner of German confirms Vainikka and Young-Scholten's (1994) finding: He too started with OV, not with SVO. Similar observations exist for Turks learning Dutch (also SOV): Coenen (1987, cited in Clahsen and Muysken, 1989), in a longitudinal study of two Turkish adults, and Jansen *et al.* (1981), in a cross-sectional study of eight Turks, found that Turkish learners of Dutch initially do not start with SVO, but consistently produce OV patterns.

Nevertheless, a number of second language acquisition (SLA) researchers today continue to argue against L1 transfer, and one notion of no transfer in particular has become widespread, namely that a V2 grammar (the V2 parameter setting, rule, or constraint) never transfers. They adhere to the (old) idea that uninverted SVX and uninverted XSV (i.e. V3, with a fronted element before the subject) will exact less cost in terms of ‘processing’ than inverted XVS (i.e. V2), even if inverted sentences in the native language and in the target language are grammatical, and uninverted sentences are not. In essence, these ideas reflect the notion that certain word orders (N–V–N, NP–V–NP) map function more straightforwardly than others, are easier to process, and therefore must also be easier to produce. (For a critique of this notion of processing, see e.g. White, 1991; Eubank, 1993.) Pienemann (1998: 47, 83–85) explicitly claims that L2ers in comprehension and production employ a non-language-specific procedure to map semantic roles and surface forms (agent–action–patient, N–V–N). Additionally, they may utilize general cognitive principles (or strategies) of initialization and finalization.

In a similar vein, Håkansson (2001), Sayehli (2001) and Håkansson *et al.* (2002) have recently presented verb placement data from Swedish learners of German that, as they say, falsify Schwartz and Sprouse (1994) and any model of non-native language acquisition that assumes transfer of L1 syntax. The Swedish learners apparently do not transfer the V2 rule from their L1 to their interlanguage German, but undergo universal developmental stages, starting with SVO and XSV utterances, just like learners with Romance L1s.³ Håkansson *et al.* thus return to the 1980s’ assumption of a universal base word order and a universal path of acquisition (in L2 German), essentially resurrecting Clahsen and Muysken’s (1986) stages.

However, a potential confound in Håkansson *et al.*’s (2002) study is prior knowledge of English. Their subjects were Swedish school children

³Similarly, Platzack (1996: 380–81, 2001) claims that learners of Swedish with L1 German (or another V2 language) do not transfer V2 from their L1, but start with SVO and, if they ever acquire V2, it will be late and even then never 100%. Platzack (1996) claims this because he regards SVO as a more basic word order, building on Kayne (1994). Platzack (2001) propounds the idea of a ‘vulnerable’ C-domain, where syntactic rules/constraints that involve the left periphery of the clause (e.g. V2) are said to be acquired last and only imperfectly by L2ers and SLI children, and to be the first to be adversely affected in aphasia and attrition. For counterevidence, see Bohnacker (2003; 2007) for L2 acquisition, and de Roo (2003) for aphasia.

who had had at least three years of English before their first exposure to German, and 4–6 years of English by the time their German was tested. Thus, German was their third language, and syntactic properties of English (a non-V2 SVO language) may have transferred to their L3 German. To control for this possibility, we need to study a control group of Swedish learners of German who have never been exposed to English and for whom German truly is their first L2. If they acquire German verb placement (and V2 in particular) just like Håkansson *et al.*'s (2002) participants, or any Swedes with L2 English and L3 German, then transfer-from-L2 would be falsified. On the other hand, if the acquisitional paths of the two groups differ, something is wrong with Håkansson *et al.*'s claim of a universal path of acquisition. And if the interlanguage of Swedes for whom German is their first L2 can be captured with the rules/constraints of Swedish syntax, we could make a case for L1 transfer. This is precisely what I aim to do in this article (see also Bohnacker, 2005).

The article proceeds as follows. Section II outlines the syntactic properties of German and Swedish with regard to VP headedness (OV/VO) and the V2 requirement in root clauses. Also discussed are potential exceptions to V2 that are less well known (Swedish connectives, adverbs), but may affect L2 acquisition. Section III provides background information on a new study (materials and method, informants, data collection, preliminary data analysis). In Section IV, the learner data are investigated quantitatively with regard to verb placement in root clauses (SVX, V1, V2, V3), followed in section V by a qualitative investigation, where the clause-initial/preverbal constituents of V2 and V3 utterances are discussed in detail. Section VI looks at the acquisition of VP headedness (VO/OV) and relates (or rather un-relates) it to V2 acquisition. Section VII contains concluding remarks.

II Outline of German syntax pertaining to V2

1 *Verb-final*

Descriptively, German non-finite utterances require the verb or verbal element(s) to be in final position, as illustrated in (1a–c). Because of this fact, German is regarded as an OV language (at the relevant level of abstraction), and generative grammar standardly holds German to

have a head-final VP (compare e.g. Koster, 1975; den Besten, 1977/83; Thiersch, 1978; Haider, 1986; 1993; Grewendorf, 1988; von Stechow and Sternefeld, 1988; Schwartz and Vikner, 1989; 1996; *pace* Kayne, 1994). In contrast, the non-finite verbal element(s) in Swedish do not appear in final position, but to the left of the complement(s); see (2a–c). Swedish is therefore regarded as a VO language with a head-initial VP.

- 1) a. German: das Licht ausmachen
 the light out-make-INF
 ‘(to) switch off the light’, ‘Switch off the light!’
 a.’ * ausmachen das Licht
 b. das Licht ausmachen können
 the light out-switch-INF can-INF
 c. das Licht ausgemacht haben
 the light out-switched have-INF
- 2) a. Swedish: släcka ljuset
 switch.off-INF light-DEF
 ‘(to) switch off the light’
 a.’ * ljuset släcka
 b. kunna släcka ljuset
 can-INF switch.off-INF light-DEF
 c. ha släckt ljuset
 have-INF switch.off-ed light-DEF

German finite clauses too have a requirement on verbs to be in final position, but in root clauses this only holds for the non-finite verbal elements of complex verbs, such as infinitives, participles, and particles of separable prefix verbs, as illustrated in bold in (3). In topological work, these are said to form the *rechte Satzklammer* (right-hand clause bracket; Drach, 1937; Reis 1980; Grewendorf, 1988: 19–25; Zifonun *et al.*, 1997: 1498–1504; Eisenberg, *et al.*, 1998: 817–19). Generative grammar typically regards the positioning of these verbal elements as further evidence for German being VP-final. Swedish is again different here, the non-finite verbal element(s) occurring further to the left.

- 3) a. ich kann ja dann auch das Licht **ausmachen**.
 I can yes then also the light out-switch
 ‘Well, and then I can also switch off the light.’
 b. ich habe gerade das Licht **ausgemacht**.
 I have just the light out-switched
 ‘I’ve just switched off the light.’

- c. ich mache gerade das Licht aus.
 I switch just the light out
 'I'm just switching off the light.'

2 Verb-second

German root clauses require the second constituent to be the finite verb (V2), an observation going back to Erdmann (1886) and Paul (1919). For non-subject-initial clauses, so-called 'inversion' of the subject and the verb (XVS) is required (e.g. Zifonun *et al.*, 1997: 1500). The same holds for Swedish (e.g. Teleman *et al.*, 1999b: 10–13). The V2 phenomenon may obscure the basic verb-final pattern of German if there is only a simplex verb (*mache* in (4)), but when the clause contains a complex verb, both V2 and head-final VP are visible (*habe . . . ausgemacht* in (5)).

- 4) a. ich mache oft so was. (SVO)
 I do often so what
 'I often do things like that.'
- b. * so was ich mache oft. (*OSV)
- c. so was mache ich oft. (OVS)
- 5) a. ich habe gerade das Licht ausgemacht. (SVO)
 I have just the light out-switched
 'I've just switched off the light.'
- b. * gerade ich habe das Licht ausgemacht. (*AdvSVO)
- c. gerade habe ich das Licht ausgemacht. (AdvVSO)

SVX is often said to be the most frequent word order in German, but inversion is very common too. The first position, the *Vorfeld* (Drach, 1937; Reis, 1980), can be occupied by virtually any constituent, phrasal or clausal, argumental or non-argumental, phonologically light or heavy, and with any semantic function (some modal particles excluded).⁴ The same holds for Swedish. However, corpus studies suggest that the two

⁴Occasionally the *Vorfeld* does not contain simply one syntactic constituent, but only part of a constituent (i.e. discontinuous elements), or what seem to be two constituents. The latter are often analysed as two syntactic components merged into one information unit (e.g. Zifonun *et al.*, 1997: 1626–38) or as remnant movement (e.g. G. Müller, 1998; S. Müller, 2004). The *Vorfeld* can also be empty (V1 yes/no questions, imperatives, declaratives). V1 declaratives appear to be used more frequently and with a wider range of functions in spoken Swedish than in German; for German, see Öttenfors, 1997; for Swedish, Mörnstj, 2002. I do not discuss such cases here.

languages vary in the frequencies of the types of items that occupy the *Vorfeld* in natural discourse. Whilst the majority of root clauses in both languages are subject-initial, the frequency of subject initial clauses appears to be higher in Swedish than in German, for all registers.⁵ The second-largest group of root clauses in both languages are those with an adverbial in first position (compare Westman, 1974; Jörgensen, 1976; Hoberg, 1981; Fabricius-Hansen and Solfeld, 1994), but the range of these adverbials appears to be more restricted in Swedish than in German: In spoken Swedish corpora, temporal adjuncts predominate in the *Vorfeld* (for adult-to-adult speech, see Jörgensen 1976; for adult-to-child speech, see Josefsson 2003a: 110–11), whereas in German, the *Vorfeld* frequently hosts locational, temporal and other adjuncts (e.g. Zifonun *et al.*, 1997: 1607; Carroll and Lambert, 2003: 282; Rosén, 2006). Corpus studies also indicate that in Swedish, objects and other complements in the *Vorfeld* are rarer than in German, and the range of objects in the *Vorfeld* is more restricted.⁶

Generative grammars typically describe V2 as a two-step process, a syntactic double-movement transformation: leftward movement of the finite verb to a functional head position on the left sentence periphery, creating a V1 clause, plus movement of a constituent into the specifier position of that functional projection. In Government Binding (GB) models, this functional projection is commonly identified as CP (e.g. Grewendorf, 1988: 64–67). The element in SpecC is not always considered to have moved; expletives and non-subcategorized-for elements especially may be seen as base-generated.⁷ Some analyses move the

⁵Jörgensen (1976: 101–05), in a large corpus study of spoken Swedish, finds 60% of the root clauses to be subject-initial in informal discussions, 62% in interviews, and 80% in read-aloud (formal) radio news. Westman (1974), in a corpus study of written Swedish, finds 64% of the root clauses to be subject-initial in regular prose texts, and 72% in formal legal texts. By contrast, in a corpus study of written German, Hoberg (1981) finds about 50% of the root clauses to be subject-initial. Rosén (2006), who elicited the same informal written genre from Swedes and Germans, finds 66% subject-initial clauses in adult native Swedish, vs. only 48% in native adult German. This suggests that subject-initial clauses are more frequent in Swedish than in German.

⁶Pronominal *det* 'that' is the only object to occur in the *Vorfeld* with any frequency in natural spoken Swedish discourse (see, e.g. Josefsson, 2003a: 110; Rosén, 2006), whereas in German lexical and pronominal objects of all varieties regularly occur in that position.

⁷I refrain from using the term 'topicalization' to refer to non-subject-initial V2 clauses, as sentence-initial elements need not have been syntactically topicalized (i.e. moved), and (syntactic) topicalization does not need to apply to the information-structural topic (a topic in the sense of what the sentence is about; see e.g. Chafe, 1976; Reinhart, 1981; Jacobs, 2001).

verb from the VP directly into C (e.g. Holmberg and Platzack, 1988: 31; Haider, 1993); others do so via one or more head positions in the IP domain (e.g. Grewendorf *et al.*, 1987: 221; Grewendorf, 1988: 219; Vikner, 1991/95). The existence and headedness of IP (TP, AgrP, etc.) in German is a matter of debate (see Haider, 1993). In symmetric V2 analyses, clause-initial subjects and non-subjects – which occupy the same linear position – occupy the same hierarchical position (e.g. Grewendorf *et al.* 1987; Schwartz and Vikner, 1989; 1996), although they do not on an asymmetric V2 analysis, where subject-initial clauses are smaller than non-subject-initial ones (e.g. Travis, 1984; 1991; Zwart, 1993). With the breaking-up of the CP domain into several functional projections in GB and Minimalist models, suggestions of where to locate the preverbal constituent and the verb have multiplied. A plethora of ideas and formal mechanisms exist about what might motivate and drive V2, e.g. a spec–head relationship (e.g. Zwart, 1993; Grimshaw, 1994), some (e.g. tense/finiteness) feature of the verb or the position it moves to (e.g. Platzack and Holmberg, 1989), and/or some (e.g. topic/focus/contrast) feature of the XP constituent or the left-peripheral position it moves to (e.g. Grewendorf, 2002; Frey, 2004). The wide variety of elements that can occur in the German *Vorfeld* – including non-referential arguments (like the subject of weather verbs), adverbials and V-projections – makes it difficult, I believe, to argue that they have an abstract grammatical feature in common.

In syntactic acquisition research it is generally advisable to keep the – often ephemeral – formal syntactic apparatus to a minimum. I therefore concentrate on the linear order of constituents (SVX, V1, V2, V3, etc.),⁸ and abstract away from analytical questions concerning the structural account of this linear order, as none of the basic and robust findings to be reported on hinges on specific syntactic analyses. I occasionally refer to the (old) Principles and Parameters model of CP, IP and head-final VP for German, head-initial VP for Swedish, which readers can easily translate into the syntactic models of their choice.

⁸Although SVX utterances are technically ‘V2’, in this article V2 is used to exclusively refer to non-subject-initial V2 utterances, i.e. XVS.

3 *Exceptions to V2*

Before setting out to study how Swedish learners of German acquire V2, it is worth noting that there are slight differences in the V2 requirement between these two Germanic languages. Swedish does allow certain exceptions to V2 that are not widely known and typically ignored in the acquisition literature. Yet the existence of pockets of grammatical V3 in Swedish may induce learners to produce certain V3 constructions in German due to L1 transfer.

a Clause-initial connective elements: When a root clause is introduced by a coordinating conjunction (e.g. German *und* ‘and’, *aber* ‘but’, *denn/weil* ‘for’; Swedish *och* ‘and’, *men* ‘but’, *för* ‘for’), this conjunction is typically not regarded as a constituent of the clause, but as a linking word with no influence on word order, as conjunction + [XVX] (e.g. Zifonun *et al.*, 1997: 1578; Eisenberg *et al.*, 1998: 400, 819). Thus, there is no exception to the V2 requirement.

However, there is a gradient that relates coordinating conjunctions to conjunct/connective adverbials: Such adverbials also have a linking function, but are also regarded as constituents of the clause. Hence, for the classification of L2 data a non-trivial problem arises. When learners produce a root clause introduced by a connective, is this a coordinating conjunction that does not ‘count’ for V2 word order (conjunction + [XVS]; conjunction + [SVX]); or is it an adverb that is a constituent that occupies the *Vorfeld* of the clause ([AdvVS])? In Swedish, connective *så* ‘so’ is particularly problematic in this regard. One type of *så* – commonly used in colloquial spoken Swedish to indicate temporal succession or consequence (‘so/so then’) – induces inversion, as illustrated in (6). V2-*så* is always unstressed, there is no prosodic boundary between *så* and the rest of the clause, and this *så* can be preceded by a coordinating conjunction (*och* ‘and’), suggesting that it is a proper constituent of the clause.⁹

⁹There is also an adverb-of-manner type *så* ‘so/like this/this way’, which is not connective. It can occur inside the VP, it can be stressed, it can be preceded by a coordinating conjunction and, if used clause-initially, it induces inversion, resulting in a V2 utterance, as shown in (i).

- (i) a. *så* rostar jag alltid bröd.
 this-way toast I always bread
 ‘I always toast bread this way.’
 b. * *så* jag rostar alltid bröd.

- 6) V2 (och) **så** kommer han tillbaks igen med rostat bröd.
 (and) so comes he back again with toasted bread
 '(And) *then* he came back again with some toast.'

However, there is also another type of connective *så* ('so/so that/hence/and as a result/so therefore') which is not temporal, but conclusive/consequential. As illustrated in (7), conclusive *så* does not induce inversion in native Swedish, and V3 utterances are the result.

- 7) V3 a. **så jag fick** alltid rostat bröd i England.
 so I got always toasted bread in England
 'So (*therefore*) I always got toast in England.'
- V3 b. **så i England fick** jag alltid rostat bröd.
 so in England got I always toasted bread
 'So (*therefore*) in England I always got toast.'

Conclusive/consequential *så* is always unstressed, and there is never a prosodic boundary after *så*, suggesting that it is a clausal constituent; but, on the other hand, this *så* cannot be preceded by a coordinating conjunction, suggesting that it might be a coordinating conjunction itself (conjunction+[XVX]). V3-*så* is a common feature of informal spoken Swedish and is found in written genres too, although there seem to be individual differences amongst speakers with regard to its frequency. Reference grammars (Holmes and Hinchliffe, 1994: 465–69, 476, 529; Teleman *et al.*, 1999a: 730) are unsure about the status of V3-*så* (adverbial or conjunction). The V3-*så* construction can be formalized as adjunction to CP: [_{CP} [*så*] CP], i.e. as a potential exception to the V2 requirement. There is no V3 equivalent in German; see (8):

- 8) a. German * V3 * so ich bekam in England immer Toastbrot.
 so I got in England always toast
- b. German V2 {so/daher/deshalb} bekam ich in England immer Toastbrot.
 so/therefore/hence got I in England always toast
 'So I always got toast in England.'

The general ban on adjunction to CP in the Germanic V2 languages thus seems to be stricter in certain languages (German) than in others (Swedish), and there is cross-linguistic variation regarding the (small) set of elements that may adjoin to CP. When L2 learners produce a V3 root clause introduced by what looks like a connective adverbial and thus apparently violate V2 (AdvSVX or AdvXVS), the 'adverbial' might in fact be a coordinating conjunction in their interlanguage grammar, plus a V2 clause, or

Jörgensen, 1976: 105–10; Jörgensen and Svensson, 1986/87: 138; Ekerot, 1988: 69–70; Wijk-Andersson, 1991; Platzack, 1998: 89; Teleman *et al.*, 1999b: 14, 100). These Swedish adverbs commonly occur between the subject and the finite verb (SAdvV), as illustrated in (12a)–(13a), but are ungrammatical in that position in German; compare (12c)–(13c).

- 12) a. **hon** {bara/faktiskt/egentligen/liksom} ville låna min cykel.
 she only/actually/actually/like wanted borrow my bike
 b. hon ville {bara/faktiskt/egentligen/liksom} låna min cykel.
 c. * sie {nur/eigentlich} wollte mein Fahrrad ausleihen.
 she only/actually wanted my bike borrow
 d. sie wollte {nur/eigentlich} mein Fahrrad ausleihen.
- 13) a. **hon kanske** ville låna min cykel.
 she maybe wanted borrow my bike
 b. hon ville kanske låna min cykel.
 c. * sie vielleicht wollte mein Fahrrad ausleihen
 d. sie wollte vielleicht mein Fahrrad ausleihen.
- 14) a. **kanske hon** ville låna min cykel.
 b. kanske ville hon låna min cykel.
 c. * vielleicht sie wollte mein Fahrrad ausleihen
 d. vielleicht wollte sie mein Fahrrad ausleihen.

There is no agreement as how to formalize V3 with these focalizing adverbs in Swedish. Some of these V3-adverbs, especially *kanske*, can also occur in first position without inversion (AdvSV); see (14a) *kanske hon ville* ‘maybe she wanted’ alongside (14b) *kanske ville hon* (maybe wanted she). Of these adverbs, *kanske*, which historically is a modal verb taking a clausal complement (‘may be (that) she wanted to borrow my bike’) is the most well known, yet the other V3-adverbs, which cannot be traced back to modal-plus-clause origin, are equally common in written and spoken Swedish. V3 orders with these adverbs are not obligatory but relatively frequent in spoken Swedish (see, e.g., Jörgensen, 1976: 105–10; Wijk-Andersson, 1991: 130–50; Josefsson 2003b: 165–67). Note that the corresponding German V3 clauses are always ill-formed; see the (c) and (d) examples in (12)–(14).¹⁰

¹⁰Again there are microcomparative differences between the Germanic V2 languages here. It appears that in Dutch, a small set of adverbs can ‘intervene’ between the clause-initial constituent and the finite verb, e.g. *echter* ‘however’, *nu* ‘now’, *dan* ‘then’, *daarentegen* ‘in contrast’. Whether these should count as constituents of their own or form a larger (information-structural) constituent with the adjacent phrase is a matter of debate; for related discussion of connectives in German, see e.g. Zifonun *et al.* (1997: 1637–38).

III A new study: informants, method and materials

I Informants

One of the reasons why Håkansson (2001), Sayehli (2001) and Håkansson *et al.* (2002) did not control for prior knowledge of English in their informants may have been that this is not easy to do: Most native speakers of Swedish speak English, as English has been a compulsory subject in the Swedish schooling system for decades. Swedish test participants who have not learnt English first will therefore not be found in the school-age, young and middle-age populations, but only amongst the elderly. Eventually I located six old-age pensioners who were elementary learners of German and willing to be recorded. They had had a monolingual childhood, lived in Sweden all their lives, came from non-academic homes, worked outside the home for 35–45 years in non-academic professions, were now in their late sixties and recently retired. Three were women and three were men. They were all literate, not suffering from any known language, speech or serious hearing impairments (self-assessment), they were reasonably fit and healthy, living at home on their own or with a partner, and leading varied, active lives (self-assessment). One of the activities they engaged in was attending an *ab initio* German language class at the local community adult education centre. None of the participants had learnt German before embarking on this course, although all could cite a handful of German tourist phrases. Their main reason for learning German was being able to communicate orally with the monolingual German-speaking parent(s) of their children-in-law (recent additions to the family) and when travelling to Germany and Austria.

The six learners differed from each other in one respect: prior knowledge of English. For three of the learners (code-named Märta, Signe, Algot), German was their very first L2. Their English was limited to about a dozen words and phrases (greetings, foodstuffs, swearwords). The other three (code-named Rune, Ulf, Gun) had learnt English post puberty as their first L2, mainly through foreign languages at work and evening college courses. They had been using English during their careers (as an engineer, secretary, technician).

The six learners attended an *ab initio* German class of 3 hours per week, taught by a native speaker of German with some knowledge of

Swedish and a background in language teaching. Group size was 8–15 students,¹¹ and the course emphasized speaking, listening and reading comprehension, but little writing. The classroom language was primarily German, with occasional explanations in Swedish and word translations into Swedish. Classroom German constituted the primary source of L2 exposure, supplemented by texts and exercises at home, by short state television programmes in ‘slow and simple German’, and some limited contact with native speakers (family friends, tourists).

Naturalistic oral production data were collected twice from the learners, at the end of their first term of German, i.e. after four months of exposure, using two different techniques (data points 1 and 2), and again at the end of their second term (1 month vacation and another four months of classes), i.e. nine months after first exposure (data point 3).

2 Data collection

a Data point 1: After four months of German classes, oral L2 production data were collected from four of the learners, Märta, Algot, Gun and Rune, ca. 15 minutes each. Recording the other two learners Signe and Ulf had to be aborted, as they kept speaking Swedish, insisting that ‘they just could not speak German’. Testing took place at the adult education centre in individual language laboratory booths. The learners were asked to record their thoughts in German on the topic ‘Was ich in meiner Freizeit tue oder tun möchte’ (‘What I do or would like to do in my spare time’) in the form of an oral monologue, and to be as talkative as possible. They were allowed to stop the tape to pause if necessary, but not to rewind and re-record. Communication between the students and the use of written materials were discouraged. Each student could record for 30 minutes, but in practice none of them filled the audio-tape, but stopped after ca. 15 minutes, increasingly frustrated with the task and their lack of German. The recordings were subsequently transcribed orthographically and analysed.

¹¹Not included in the present study are students whose L1 was not Swedish, who had a hearing impairment, who spoke languages other than Swedish, English and German, who were false beginners of German, or who were unwilling to be recorded.

The somewhat unusual form of a monologue recording was chosen in order to forestall short, elliptic utterances typically produced by elementary learners in interaction with an experimenter, to limit the use of non-verbal deixis, and to favour the production of longer utterances anchored in place, time and person by explicit linguistic means.¹² The technique of having the informants tell a lab monologue induced them, despite their low proficiency, to produce a high ratio of complete sentences with verb and subject, and structure discourse in such a way that many clauses are non-subject-initial (in contrast to the technique employed by Sayehli (2001), who elicited many fragmentary utterances, and root clauses that were overwhelmingly subject-initial). Thus, the corpora contain a large number of utterances relevant to the acquisition of finite and non-finite verb placement.

All four learners frequently use Swedish as a supplier language for vocabulary items, and they produce both Swedish and German editing elements in self-repairs, introspective and metalinguistic comments (e.g. *nej* ‘no’, *va hette de* ‘what’s it called?’, *å de går ju ba inte* ‘oh I just can’t do it’, *nu funkar de* ‘now it’s working’), and sometimes switch entirely to Swedish.

To get a flavour of the data, consider the longish utterance by Märta in (15), where underscoring and subscripts indicate Swedish items in the otherwise German utterance (hatches indicating hesitations). The two participants who know English (Rune, Gun) moreover frequently use English as a supplier language, as illustrated in (16) and (17).

- 15) und Freitag schau ich Så-ska-det-låta Musikprogramm in # *nej* # *äh*
 and Friday watch I [Så-ska-det-låta]_{SWE} music-show in # no_{SWE} # oh_{SWE}
va heter de # auf *teve*.
 [what call it]_{SWE} # on telly_{SWE}
 ‘And on Fridays I watch (the) Så-ska-det-låta music show on # no # oh what’s it
 called # on telly.’ (Märta1, 4 months)
- 16) *and then I* # denn ich geh ein studiecirkel und wi mache sidenmåleri.
 [and then I]_{ENG} then I go a study-circle_{SWE} and we make silk-painting_{SWE}
 ‘And then I, and then I do a course where we do silk painting.’ (Gun1, 4 months)

¹²Moreover, this allows for straightforward comparison with monologues collected in the same fashion from younger Swedish learners of German (Bohnacker, 2005).

- 17) ich gehe auf *six o'clock* # *six nej* sechs Uhr und holen das Zeitung.
 I go up [six o'clock]_{ENG} # *six*_{ENG} *no*_{SWE} six clock und fetch the newspaper
 'I get up at six o'clock # six no, six o'clock and get the newspaper.'
 (Rune1, 4 months)

Such activation and frequent use of L1 Swedish and L2 English lexical elements and constructions by the learners are worth bearing in mind when investigating the possibility of syntactic transfer.

b Data point 2: In order to complement the monologues from data point 1, I also collected another type of naturalistic L2 production data just a few days later: conversations between Märta and Rune and a visiting monolingual German speaker. Recordings of 120 minutes of each were made in their home in one-on-one interaction with this visitor while they were engaged in a range of activities (cooking, washing up, repotting plants, discussing family photographs, playing cards and so on).

c Data point 3: After nine months of L2 exposure, 30 minutes of oral production data were collected from each of the six learners. Testing at data point 3 was similar to data point 1 (language laboratory monologues on the topic 'What I do or would like to do in my spare time').

3 Data classification

Recordings at data point 1 consist of ca. 100–150 utterances each from Märta, Algot, Gun and Rune. At data point 2, roughly 1000 utterances each were collected from Rune and Märta, and at data point 3, ca. 100–350 utterances were collected from each of the six informants. Table 1 gives the raw figures for word tokens, number of utterances and, in the middle column, MLU (mean length of utterance, total of words divided by total of utterances) for each informant. Not surprisingly for elementary learners, MLU is low but increases over time, especially when the monologues at data points 1 and 3 are compared.

For investigating verb placement and related phenomena, only a subset of these utterances is relevant. Imitations (attested at data point 2 due to the presence of a native speaker), one-word utterances and

Table 1 Word tokens, utterances, MLU, multi-word utterances containing a verb, root clauses with verb and overt subject (raw figures)

Data points	Word tokens	All utterances	MLU	Multi-word utterances with verb	Root clauses (with verb and subject)
<i>Data point 1:</i>					
Märta1	396	122	3.25	100	82
Algot1	440	137	3.21	91	62
Rune1	319	98	3.26	67	64
Gun1	277	117	2.47	99	78
<i>Data point 2:</i>					
Märta2	5155	1019	5.06	350	171
Rune2	4579	997	4.59	311	160
<i>Data point 3:</i>					
Märta3	962	220	4.37	192	184
Algot3	1128	197	5.73	160	128
Signe3	1375	260	5.29	251	206
Rune3	1087	227	4.79	204	171
Gun3	1277	345	3.70	211	185
Ulf3	588	117	5.03	90	83

utterances without a verb were excluded. Also excluded were utterances that were purely in Swedish or English. Utterances that contained Swedish or English items alongside German were interpreted as inter-language German and are therefore included in the counts. This leaves 2126 multi-word utterances containing a verb. They comprise simple sentences, complex sentences containing coordinated and/or subordinated clauses (which count more than once when considering verb placement), and sentence fragments. For investigating V2, only root clauses with a subject are relevant. Therefore, sentence fragments (common in the Märta2 and Rune2 dialogue corpora) were excluded, as they typically lack a subject, being elliptic, root infinitival or root participial (e.g. *so # und aufmachen* ‘like this . . . and open’; *und gewohnen in Göteborg mange Jahr* ‘and lived in Gothenburg (for) many_{SWE} years’), as were subjectless imperatives (e.g. *nehmen eins bitte!* ‘take one please!’) and a few instances of non-targetlike subject omission (e.g. *und am montags gehe und spielen Boule* ‘and on Mondays (I) go and play boules’). Also excluded were stand-alone subordinate clauses introduced by a complementizer (e.g. *(ja,) wenn ich faul bin*. Yes when I lazy am ‘(Yes,) when I’m lazy’; *und wenn sie nicht*

kommt? and if she not comes ‘And if she doesn’t come?’), and stand-alone indirect questions (e.g. *was ich am Wochenende mache* what I at-the weekend do ‘What I do at the weekend’), where the verb is never in second position. This leaves 1574 root clauses containing a verb and a subject, shown in the rightmost column in Table 1.

When determining finite verb placement in root clauses, I only considered the first verb, i.e. the simplex verb or the first verb of a periphrastic verb construction. This first verb was classified as finite, even though the morphological tense and agreement marking was often not targetlike (compare Lardiere, 1998).

IV Quantitative analysis of the data pertaining to V2

Table 2 breaks down the 1574 root clauses (with verb and subject) in the corpora according to the position of the finite verb vis-à-vis the subject constituent (S) and another constituent (X). Non-referential *es* subjects (expletives) are counted as S, just like referential ones. A distributional analysis shows whether the learners generally stick to subject-initial SVX, or whether they produce non-subject-initial clauses and, if so, whether they produce subject-verb ‘inversions’. The columns in Table 2

Table 2 L2 German: word order in root clauses (raw figures)

Data points	SVX	V1	V2	V3	Total
<i>Data point 1:</i>					
Märta1	58	0	24	0	82
Algot1	43	0	19	0	62
Rune1	35	0	16	13	64
Gun1	58	0	11	9	78
<i>Data point 2:</i>					
Märta2	99	22	50	0	171
Rune2	101	8	27	24	160
<i>Data point 3:</i>					
Märta3	125	0	59	0	184
Algot3	104	0	23	1	128
Signe3	128	2	76	0	206
Rune3	126	0	26	19	171
Gun3	120	0	37	28	185
Ulf3	58	0	13	12	83
Total	1055	32	381	106	1574

show instances of SVX,¹³ V1 (i.e. VSX), V2 (i.e. XVS), and V3 (i.e. typically XSV).¹⁴ (In theory, the learners could also produce V4 or V5 root clauses but, as they never did, no such column is included.)

- 18) SVX und ich habe ein Sommerhaus. (Rune1, 4 months)
and I have a summer-house
'And I have a cottage.'
- 19) SVX wir spielen Boule, ja. (Rune2, 4 months)
we play boules yes
'We play boules, yeah.'
- 20) V1 will-, wollen du Kaffee eller # Tee oder was? (Rune2, 4 months)
want want you coffee or_{SWE} tea or what
'Do you want coffee or tea or something?'
- 21) V2 auf Pro-fest habe ich auch tanzen mit # sie. (Rune2, 4 months)
at OAP-party have I also dance with # she
'At the OAP party I also danced with her.'
- 22) V2 dann gehe ich und kaufen Essen. (Rune3, 9 months)
then go I and buy food
'Then I go food shopping.'
- 23) V3 und dann ich lege detta kort und dann du nächst. (Rune2, 4 months)
and then I put [this card]_{SWE} and then you next
'And then, then I('ll) play this card and then you('ll play) the next.'
- 24) V3 Märta bara sage so, aber es stimme nicht, nein. (Rune2, 4 months)
Märta only_{SWE} say so but it is-true not no
'Märta only says that, but it isn't true, no.'

In order to see the distribution of the different verb placement types more clearly, percentages of SVX, V1, V2 and V3 out of all root clauses are given in Table 3. (Märta1 and Märta2 and Rune1 and Rune2 have been combined in this table, since these recordings were made only a few days after one another, both after four months of exposure.)

¹³The figures for SVX also include 18 instances of SV out of a total of 1055 SVX.

¹⁴Not only XSV, but also SXV and XXVS are 'V3'. The literature on L2 German typically only mentions XSV, presumably because that is the only V3 word order learners produce. In the present study, XXVS and SXV do occur, but rarely; see below. See also Bohnacker, 2005.

Table 3 Word order in root clauses (percentages)

Informants and data point	SVX	V1	V2	V3
<i>4 months German:</i>				
Märta1, Märta2	62%	9%	29%	0%
	157/253	22/253	74/253	0/253
Algot1	69%	0%	31%	0%
	43/62	0/62	19/62	0/62
Rune1, Rune2	61%	4%	19%	17%
	136/224	8/224	43/224	37/224
Gun1	74%	0%	14%	12%
	58/78	0/78	11/78	9/78
<i>9 months German:</i>				
Märta3	68%	0%	32%	0%
	125/184	0/184	59/184	0/184
Algot3	81%	0%	18%	1%
	104/128	0/128	23/128	1/128
Signe3	62%	1%	37%	0%
	128/206	2/206	76/206	0/206
Rune3	74%	0%	15%	11%
	126/171	0/171	26/171	19/171
Gun3	65%	0%	20%	15%
	120/185	0/185	37/185	28/185
Ulf3	70%	0%	16%	14%
	58/83	0/83	13/83	12/83

SVX is the word order most frequently employed, making up on average 67% (1055/1574) of the learners' root clauses, with similar ranges of 61–74% at four months and 62–81% at nine months. SVX is correct in German but not informative as regards the question of L1 transfer, L2 transfer or universal base order.

V1 is very rare in the corpora, occurring in only 2% (32/1574) of all root clauses. It is not found in the monologues (except for two instances in Signe3). Presumably, this distribution is genre induced: V1, often used for direct questions (queries, requests and suggestions) is more likely to occur in face-to-face dialogue (13% (22/171) for Märta2, 5% (8/160) for Rune2) than in language lab monologues (0–1%). V1 clauses do constitute instances of subject–verb inversion, but because of their rarity they will be disregarded here.

The second most frequent clause type in the corpora is non-subject-initial V2 (XVS), produced by all learners, and constituting on average 24% (381/1574) of all root clauses. Such early production of V2 has not been documented for learners with a non-V2 L1, which suggests that L1 knowledge of a V2 language (Swedish) does make it easier to

acquire V2 in a second or third language (German). All the learners in the present study produce (non-subject-initial) V2 root clauses at every data point, with similar ranges of 14–31% (4 months), and 15–37% (9 months). This indicates that Sayehli's (2001) and Håkansson *et al.*'s (2002) results from L1 Swedish learners of German, who (in a cartoon description task) did not produce V2, cannot be generalized to mean that Swedish elementary learners of German are unable to produce (non-subject-initial) V2.

In the present study, there is a slight difference between those learners for whom German is the first L2 (Märta, Algot, Signe), and those for whom German is the L3 (Rune, Gun, Ulf). The former produce more V2 root clauses (30% (251/833)) than the latter (18% (130/741)). This tendency is related to a categorical difference between these two groups once we look at V3 clauses, with two constituents to the left of the finite verb. Across all learners, V3 occurs in 7% (106/1574) of all root clauses, with a range of 0–17%. But crucially, Märta, Algot and Signe, for whom German is the first L2, hardly ever produce V3, i.e. in only 0.1% (1/833) of their root clauses (white rows in Table 3), whereas Rune, Gun and Ulf produce V3 in 14% (105/741) of their root clauses (rows shaded in grey, Table 3). This difference is unlikely to simply be a sampling error, considering the size of the corpora, and I suggest that it is to do with Rune's, Gun's and Ulf's prior knowledge of English (see below).

A closer look reveals that not all V3 root clauses are violations of V2: Whilst most are XSV (91%, 96/106), as shown in Table 4, 8% (9/106) are instances of subject–verb inversion (XXVS), where the first element is a left-dislocated adverbial and the second a resumptive, exemplified in (25)–(29).

Table 4 Types of V3 clauses (raw figures)

Data point	XSV	SXV	XXVS
Rune1	13	0	0
Gun1	9	0	0
Rune2	22	1	1
Algot3	0	0	1
Rune3	17	0	2
Gun3	23	0	5
Ulf3	12	0	0
Total	91% (96/106)	1% (1/106)	8% (9/106)

- 25) [**dann**] [**so**] haben ich gewart in Hamburg.
 then so have I been in Hamburg
 'Then I've been to Hamburg.' (Algot3, 9 months)
- 26) [**ins studiecirkel**] [**so**] gebe ein Mädchen sie ist viel ünge.
 in study-circle_{SWE} so give/exist a girl she is much younger
 'In that course there's a girl that's much younger.' (Gun3, 9 months)
- 27) [**im Weihnacht**] [**dann**] bjude ich ein Freund auch.
 in-the Christmas then invite_{SWE} I a friend also
 'At Christmas I also invite a friend.' (Gun3, 9 months)
- 28) [**freitagmorgen**] [**dann**] gehen wir Boulebahn, das ist in ein Haus.
 Friday-morning then go we boules-court that is in a house
 'On Friday mornings we go to the boules court, which is indoors.' (Gun3, 9 months)
- 29) [**wenn ich bin klar**] [**dann**] mache ich vielleicht korsord_{SWE}.
 when I am ready then make I perhaps cross-word
 'When I'm done I perhaps do the cross-word puzzle.' (Rune3, 9 months)

XXVS mainly occur in the later samples (data point 3); see Table 4. The first constituent is a (mostly temporal) adjunct, and the second constituent is always *so* or *dann*, which is plausibly interpreted as the resumptive of a left-dislocated topic: The first constituent sets the frame in which the predication is assumed to hold true (e.g. Chafe, 1976: 50). The construction is probably modelled on Swedish: compare (25)–(26) to (25')–(26'). In Swedish, XXVS with an adverbial and a resumptive is frequent, especially in informal spoken registers (see Bohnacker 2005).

- 25') [sen] [så] har jag varit i Hamburg. (Swedish)
 then so have I been in Hamburg
- 26') [i studiecirkeln] [så] finns det en flicka ... (Swedish)
 in study-circle so exist there a girl

Whilst not quite targetlike in German (no resumptive would be used here unless the left-dislocated adverbial is a clause), the learners' XXVS root clauses do not violate V2; the verb has raised past the subject as in XVS V2 clauses ('subject–verb inversion'). If we exclude these instances of XXVS from the V3 counts, the figures change very slightly, but the difference between the two groups of learners becomes even clearer: Those who do not have knowledge of English never violate V2 (0%).

Table 5 Word order in non-subject-initial root clauses

Informants and data point	V1	V2	Non-target V3
<i>4 months German:</i>			
Märta1, Märta2	23% 22/96	77% 74/96	0% 0/96
Algot1	0% 0/19	100% 19/19	0% 0/19
Rune1, Rune2	9% 8/87	49% 43/87	41% 36/87
Gun1	0% 0/20	55% 11/20	45% 9/20
<i>9 months German:</i>			
Märta3	0% 0/59	100% 59/59	0% 0/59
Algot3	0% 0/23	100% 23/23	0% 0/23
Signe3	3% 2/78	97% 76/78	0% 0/78
Rune3	0% 0/43	60% 26/43	40% 17/43
Gun3	0% 0/60	62% 37/60	38% 23/60
Ulf3	0% 0/25	52% 13/25	48% 12/25

The difference between the two learner groups is even more prominent if we only consider non-subject-initial clauses and disregard the SVX clauses, which are uninformative with regard to subject–verb inversion (Table 5). Learners who know English produce on average 41% (97/235) non-target V3 in their non-subject-initial root clauses (grey rows), whereas those who do not know English never do (0%, 0/275, white rows).

V Qualitative data analysis of the V2 and V3 utterances

Could there be differences in the type of subject, type of verb, or the types of first constituent that correlate with the word orders in the learners' root clauses (SVX, V2, V3)? This might be worth exploring as some interlanguage grammars are attested where only pronominal subjects invert (e.g. Cevdet, L1 Turkish, Schwartz and Sprouse, 1994; Niklas, L1 Swedish, Håkansson, 2001: 78). For other interlanguage grammars it has been claimed – though based on somewhat scanty data – that learners at first invert only with certain types of verbs, e.g. non-thematic verbs or

unaccusatives, or only with a handful of short adverbs, e.g. Bolander (1988) for L2 Swedish; Håkansson (2001) for L1 Swedish, L2 German.¹⁵

1 Subjects

The learners' root clauses contain a variety of pronominal and lexical subjects, but the overwhelming majority are pronominal first person singular *ich* 'I', averaging 80% (1250/1574) of all subjects in the corpora, with a range of 69–92% per corpus. It is hardly surprising that *ich* subjects are the most frequent at data points 1 and 3, i.e. in the first person monologues. Indeed, there are often long stretches of repetitive utterance openings, with first person *ich ... (und) ich ... (und) ich ... (und) ich ... (I ... (and) I ... (and) I ... (and) I ...*). *ich* is frequent both preverbally (SVX, XSV) and postverbally (XVS). I have not been able to detect a difference in the positioning of other subject types (personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, indefinite pronouns, proper nouns, multi-word DPs): all are attested for SVX, XSV and XVS.

2 Verbs

About two thirds of the finite verbs in the learners' root clauses are thematic; the others are modal, auxiliary and copular. Thematic verbs include intransitives, unaccusatives, transitives, and ditransitives. No correlation could be detected between thematic/non-thematic types and verb placement, nor between valency and verb placement. Nor could I discern any tendency for V2 utterances to mainly contain unaccusatives. In fact, there are often (near)-minimal pairs in the recordings, where a learner produces both a SVX and a XVS utterance (and in Rune's and Gun's case, also a V3 utterance) with the same verb; compare:

- 30) a. **ich lege** das und das.
 I put this and this
 'I play this and this.'

¹⁵Håkansson's (2001: 77, 82) figures are very low (Ludvig: two instances of XVS (both ergative) and four instances of XSV (ergatives and transitives); Martin: four instances of XVS (all ergative) and four instances of XSV). Bolander (1988) provides unspecified data from L2ers with various L1s.

b. **dann lege ich** eins.

then put I one
 'Then I play one.'

c. und **dann ich lege** detta kort und dann du nächst.
 and then I put [this card]_{SWE} and then you next

'And then, then I('ll) play this card and then you('ll play) the next.'
 (all from Rune2, 4 months)

31) a. [. . .] und **ich helfe sie**.

and I help she
 '... and I help her.'

b. **manchmal helfe mein dotter** mit das.

sometimes help my daughter_{SWE} with it
 'Sometimes my daughter helps me with it.'

c. aber **manchmal sie helfe** nicht, sie muß arbeiten, ja.

but sometimes she help not she must work yes
 'But sometimes she doesn't help, she's got to work.' (all from Gun3, 9 months)

3 *First constituents*

a First constituents in V2 clauses: In the learners' V2 clauses, 59% (226/381) of the first constituents are monosyllabic, phonologically light words like adverbial *dann* 'then', *da* 'then/there', *so* 'so', or pronominal *das* 'that/this/it'. *Dann* (146 instances) is by far the most common. This holds true for all learners at all data points. In the remaining 155 cases, distributed quite evenly across the corpora, the first constituent is phonologically heavier, typically a NP/DP or PP, or, in a few cases, a one-word AdvP or an adverbial clause. Interestingly, in 90% (344/381), the first constituent is not an argument/complement of the verb, but an adjunct, as shown in Table 6.

In the few cases where a complement is clause-initial (10%, 37/381, with a range of 0–15% per corpus), it is mostly the direct object pronoun *das* (33/37). In these cases, *das* always (33/33) acts as the information-structural theme, linking up with the previous discourse, as example (32) illustrates.

32) *ich spiele Boule.* ←[**das**] hab ich macht in fünf Jahr.

I play boules that have I done in five year
 'I play boules. I've done that for five years (now).'

(Rune3, 9 months)

Table 6 L2 German: types of first constituent in V2 clauses: aggregated data from all six learners at data points 1, 2 and 3

Argument		Adjunct		
Direct object	Other	Temporal	Locational	Other adverbial
100% 37/37	0 0/37	72% 248/344	20% 69/344	8% 27/344
10% (37/381)		90% (344/381)		

However, it is much more common for the first constituent to be an adjunct (90%). And here there is a strong tendency for this adjunct to be a temporal adverbial (72%, 248/344). A further 20% (69/344) are adverbials of place, and the remaining 8% (27/344) a motley collection of other functions. Temporal adverbials as the first constituent of V2 clauses predominate for all learners at every data point. These temporal adverbials are mostly the abovementioned *dann* (59%, 146/248), NPs/DPs (18%, 45/248, e.g. *dies(e/er/en/es) Jahr* ‘this year’, *Freitag* ‘(on) Fridays’, *Sommer* ‘(in) summer’), and PPs (16%, 39/248, e.g. *in/im/auf (die/der) Abend* ‘in the evening(s)’, *auffin Weihnacht(en)* ‘at Christmas’, *in/am/im Montag* ‘on Monday(s)’, *um sechs Uhr* ‘at 6 o’clock’). 7% (18/248) are adverbs like *nun* ‘now’, *jetzt* ‘now’, *da* ‘then’ (compare Swedish *då* ‘then’), *manchmal* ‘sometimes’, etc., and a few temporal adverbial clauses with complementizer *wenn* (e.g. *wenn ich bin klar* ‘when I am ready’). Locative adverbials in first position are mostly *da* ‘there’ (58%, 40/69), a few instances of *hier* ‘here’, some novel *er* ‘there’ (modelled on Swedish *där* ‘there’), and PPs denoting mainly concrete geographical locations (e.g. *in/im Schweden* ‘in Sweden’, *in/im (der/die) Haus* ‘in the house/at home’, *auf das/der Balkon* ‘on the balcony’).¹⁶ The few other, non-temporal and non-locative, adverbials (8%) are mostly *so* ‘so’ and modal or speaker-attitude sentence adverbs (e.g. *vielleicht* ‘maybe’, *natürlich* ‘of course’, *hoffentlich* ‘hopefully’), plus a few conditional clauses introduced by *wenn* ‘if’ or novel *um* and *ob* (both modelled on Swedish *om* ‘if’).

¹⁶Discerning readers will have noticed that the learners’ choice of lexical items such as prepositions and articles and their use of inflectional morphology often differ from native German.

This suggests that the learners' use of non-subject-initial V2 root clauses is not restricted to a handful of adverb(ial)s. Rather, they produce a variety of lexical elements in preverbal position. At the same time, there are strong tendencies for this preverbal element to be phonologically light, to be an adjunct, and to be a temporal adverbial. Judged by the existing corpus studies of natural discourse, the informants appear to reproduce native Swedish frequency patterns in their interlanguage German.

b First constituents in V3 clauses: Turning now to the learners' non-target V3 root clauses, we find that their first constituents are similar to those in V2 clauses in many ways. All but one V3 clause¹⁷ are of the XSV type, the first constituent being an adverbial, the second one always being a subject (i.e. no resumptive), and the two preverbal constituents have different semantic roles. Examples are given in (33)–(38).

33) and then I # **denn ich geh** ein studiecirkel und wi mache sidenmåleri.
and then I_{ENG} then I go a study-circle_{SWE} and we make silk-painting_{SWE}
'And then I, and then I do a course where we do silk painting.' (Gun1, 4 months)

34) **in Montags ich seh** ein Programm um Essen # teve.
in Mondays I see a programm about food # telly_{SWE}
'On Mondays, I watch a programme on television about food.' (Gun1, 4 months)

35) und **dann ich lege** detta kort und dann du nächst.
and then I put [this card]_{SWE} and then you next
'And then, then I('ll) play this card and then you('ll play) the next.'
(Rune2, 4 months)

36) **wenn wir ist in Sommerhaus wir gehe** promenad in Wald.
when we is in cottage we go walk_{SWE} in wood
'When we're at the cottage we go for a walk in the woods.' (Rune2, 4 months)

¹⁷One learner (Rune) also produces one instance of SAdvV, with the Swedish adverb *bara* 'only' (i). Focalizing *bara* allows V3, and thus the use of the Swedish lexical element and the SAdvV word order suggests that V3 is due to transfer from Rune's L1 Swedish. (The same V3 order is also allowed in English, his L2, with 'only'.)

(i) Märta **bara** sage so, aber es stimme nicht, nein.
Märta only_{SWE} say so but it is-true not no
'Märta only says that, but it isn't true, no.'
(Rune2, 4 months)

Readers may wonder why the learners do not produce more V3 clauses of the SAdvV type. Most likely this is to do with the fact that there are very few focalizing adverbs (also in other positions) in their German in general.

- 37) aber **manchmal sie helfe** nicht, sie muß arbeiten, ja.
 but sometimes she help not she must work yes
 'But sometimes she doesn't help, she's got to work.' (Gun3, 9 months)
- 38) ich habe viel hören um Bodensee, **so ich will** gerne sehen das.
 I have much hear about Lake-Constance,so I want gladly see it
 'I've heard a lot about Lake Constance, so I'd like to (go and) see it.'
 (Gun3, 9 months)

In 55% (53/96) of the V3 utterances, the first constituent is a phonologically light, monosyllabic one-word adverbial, mostly *dann* 'then' or *so* 'so'. This, readers will recall, is similar to the first constituent in V2 clauses. In the remaining 43 XSV clauses, the first constituent is phonologically heavier (mostly PPs, AdvPs, *wenn*-clauses). The V3 utterances all begin with an adjunct (100%, 96/96), and never with an argument/complement (Table 7).

There is a strong tendency for the clause-initial adjunct in XSV clauses to be a temporal adverbial (63%, 60/96), just as it was for the V2 clauses. Again, this temporal adverbial is often *dann* 'then', or *denn*, which is a novel use by the learner, probably modelled on phonetically close English *then* and/or Swedish *sen* 'then'. Other temporal adverbs, NPs/DPs, PPs, and *wenn*-adverbial clauses also occur (e.g. *morgen* 'tomorrow', *manchmal* 'sometimes', *in mein Freizeit* 'in my spare time').¹⁸ Unlike for V2 clauses, the first position of a XSV clause is never filled by an adverbial of place (0%), but often by the connective element *so* (26%, 27/96), a novel use not found in native German.

The learners' *so* is cognate and homophonous with the German adverb *so* (which requires inversion, i.e. *so-VSX*) and with the Swedish

Table 7 Types of first constituent in XSV V3 clauses: aggregated data from Rune, Gun, Ulf

Argument	Adjunct			
	Temporal	Locational	Connective <i>so</i>	Other adverbial
0	63% 60/96 (incl. 40 <i>dann/denn/sen</i>)	0% 0/96	26% 27/96	9% 9/96
0% (0/96)	100% (96/96)			

¹⁸The nine other adverbials in AdvSV are single-instance items (e.g. *in Schwedisch* 'in Swedish', *erstens* 'firstly').

adverb *så* (requiring inversion, *så*-VSX), but also with the Swedish conclusive/consequential connective *så*, which does *not* allow inversion (*så* + [XVX]), resulting in a V3 order. The informants' interlanguage *so* functions just like this Swedish V3-*så*, it introduces a clause that is a conclusion or consequence, as illustrated by the following examples and their Swedish equivalents:

39) boule ist kul.
 boules is fun_{SWE}
 ←**so ich machen** das Montag, Tienstag und Freitag.
 so I make that Monday Tuesday and Friday
 'Boules is fun, so I do that on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays.' (Rune3, 9 months)

40) ich habe viel hören um Bodensee, **so ich will** gerne sehen das.
 I have much hear about Lake-Constance, so I want gladly see it
 'I've heard a lot about Lake Constance, so I'd like to (go and) see it.'
 (Gun3, 9 months)

39') boule är kul, **så** jag gör det på måndagar, tisdagar och fredagar. (Swedish)
 boules is fun so I do that on Mondays Tuesdays and Fridays

40') jag har hört mycket om Bodensjön, **så** jag vill gärna se det.
 I have heard much about Lake-Constance so I want gladly see that
 (Swedish)

We might therefore explain the non-target V3-*so* utterances as L1-induced from Swedish.¹⁹ Swedish V3-*så* – and interlanguage *so* – allows adjunction to CP (or to IP, for readers who prefer to treat subject-initial root clauses as IPs). What the informants then need to learn is that German *so*, unlike its Swedish homophone *så*, does not allow adjunction to CP.

The *so* utterances could also be interpreted as L2-induced. This is because a similar V3 order also occurs in English with (conclusive) *so* (i.e. **so I do that on Mondays**; **so I would like to see that**), and because only the informants with prior knowledge of English produce *so*-V3 orders. On the basis of naturalistic production data we do not know for sure whether *so*-V3 is ruled out in the interlanguage of the informants without English; grammaticality judgment or elicited-production experiments would be necessary to decide this point. There are several

¹⁹In the naturalistic oral production data collected from 23 L1 Swedish teenagers learning German, Bohnacker (2005) also found that 25% of the (few) non-target V3 root clauses started with *so*.

instances where a learner starts an utterance with *så* followed by an NP/DP (e.g. *så jag* (so I) or *so ich* (so I ...)) but then breaks off, leaving us uninformed about verb placement. Lacking a verb, such break-offs of utterance-initial *so* are obviously not part of the counts. Interestingly, two of the learners who do not know English (Märta, Signe) also produce a few such utterances (*so ich*), which could suggest that *so*-V3 is an option allowed by their interlanguage grammars. For the informants who do know English, then, *so*-V3 root clauses are probably due to combined influence from L1 Swedish and L2 English.

The bulk of the *ab initio* learners' V3 root clauses are introduced by other elements than *so* and exhibit an AdvSVX word order not generally permitted in Swedish. I suggest that these are adjunctions to IP/CP in the learners' interlanguage, transferred from English, where such adjunction is freely allowed, compare (33)-(38) with the identical linear AdvSVX order of the English equivalents: *denn ich geh ein studiecirkel ...* 'then I go to a course ...'; *in Montags ich seh ...* 'on Mondays I watch ...'; *und dann ich lege ...* 'and then I put ...'; *wenn wir ist in Sommerhaus wir gehe ...* 'when we're at the cottage we go ...'; *aber manchmal sie helfe ...* 'but sometimes she helps ...'; *so ich will ...* 'so I'd like ...' Sometimes, there is also visible lexical evidence that the learner's English is activated, as their German utterance contains chunks of English. Consider for instance the following example, where Gun starts off with English *and then I* ([AdvS]), and then employs the same word order when continuing in German, *denn ich geh ...* [AdvSVX].

- 41) **and then I # denn ich geh** ein studiecirkel und wi mache sidenmåleri.
 and then I_{ENG} then I go a study-circle_{SWE} and we make silk-painting_{SWE}
 'And then I, and then I do a course where we do silk painting.' (Gun1, 4 months)

As noted before, many V3 clauses involve initial *dann* 'then' or novel *denn* (see Table 7). In addition to syntactic transfer from English, these might also be construed as L1-induced, as V3 is marginally possible with the Swedish equivalent of *dann, sen* 'then'.

Summarizing, the distributional patterns of V2 and V3 root clauses across the *ab initio* learners suggest that there is partial transfer of non-V2 English syntax to the learners' German interlanguage grammar, and, in the particular case of *so*-adjunction (and potentially *dann*-adjunction), transfer from L1 Swedish and L2 English may work together.

Only informants with previous knowledge of English produce XSV, but interestingly, transfer from L2 English seems to be most prevalent in connection with those phonologically light sentence-initial lexical elements that in Swedish also allow XSV, i.e. the V3-inducing connective adverbials *så* (conclusive ‘so’) and *sen* (‘then’).

VI VP headedness

The high frequencies of targetlike V2 at four and nine months might make some readers wonder whether the learners in the present study simply are too advanced and have already mastered all the stages of the implicational developmental hierarchy up to V2 (Clahsen *et al.*, 1983; Pienemann, 1998). In this case they should not only have mastered V2, but also the placement of non-finite verbs and therefore consistently use a head-final VP (OV) in their interlanguage German. However, their syntax as regards VP is far from targetlike.

VP headedness has been much looked at in acquisition work, and generally learners with a head-initial L1 VP (e.g. Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, English, Swedish) have been found to produce non-target head-initial VPs in their L2 German (e.g. du Plessis *et al.*, 1987: 67–70; Vainikka and Young-Scholten, 1996b: 157; Pienemann, 1998: 118–21; Håkansson, 2001: 79; Sayehli, 2001: 27–29, 36–37), whilst learners with a head-final L1 VP (Turkish, Korean) initially produce head-final VPs in their L2 German (e.g. Schwartz and Sprouse 1994: 335; Vainikka and Young-Scholten 1994: 276–77, 293; 1996a). However, both groups of learners have been reported to have a head-final VP long before they acquire V2. In some models of acquisition – e.g. minimal trees Vainikka and Young-Scholten, 1994; 1996a: 13–15, 24–25); vulnerable C-domain (Platzack, 2001: 371–72), processability theory (Pienemann, 1998: 99–111, 116), teachability (Pienemann, 1984; Ellis, 1989) – such findings have been taken to mean that L2ers must first have successfully acquired target VP headedness before they can go on to acquire V2. As I show now, this is not the case: In the present study, the learners’ non-finite verb placement (VP headedness) is a lot less targetlike than their finite verb placement, i.e. V2. For them, head-final VP and V2 are unrelated. (For similar results from Swedish teenage learners of German, see Bohnacker, 2005.)

Non-finite verbal elements in native German occur in final position in finite root clauses with a complex verb (infinitive, participle, particle, etc.), and in non-finite constructions (infinitival clauses, root infinitives/participles, sentence fragments), but in penultimate position in finite subordinate clauses with a complex verb (i.e. here the finite verb occurs in final position). I culled such non-finite verbs from the 2126 utterances with verbs (see Table 1) and determined their placement in relation to other constituents ($V_{\text{non-fin}}X$ vs. $XV_{\text{non-fin}}$). There were many uninformative cases that had to be excluded, e.g. utterances with a non-finite verb but too few telltale constituents to determine headedness,²⁰ but the remaining 419 cases should be telling enough. The individual results are given in Table 8, combined results in Table 9.

There is no substantial difference between the learners who know English (grey rows) and those who do not (white rows). However, there is an important difference between the learners' placement of non-finite verbs after four months of exposure to German, and after nine months of German. At four months, the four learners predominantly produce utterances where the non-finite verb precedes other material, 87% $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$ (199/228), with a range of 70–92%. These are non-targetlike in German. A plausible interpretation is that at this point the learners have a head-initial VP in their interlanguage grammars (which they could have transferred from L1 Swedish). At nine months however, $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$ is down to 29% (56/191), with a range of 15–39%. The six learners now mostly produce

²⁰An example of too few constituents would be *man muß auch essen* (one must also eat). Also uninformative are verbs with sentential complements, as these occur postverbally in German. Moreover, some utterances with adjuncts have been discounted: As the following authentic native German examples show, defocused adverbs can occur to the right of a non-finite verb bearing focal stress (i), and especially in informal speech, certain types of adjuncts optionally occur postverbally; see (ii)–(iii):

- i) die will mich dann noch **ANrufen** *nachher*.
she wants me then still ring later
'She's gonna give me a ring later.'
- ii) das Geld wurde alles **aufgeteilt** *zwischen ihnen*.
the money was all divided between them
'All the money was shared between them.'
- iii) da is'n Telegramm **gekommen** *von deiner Oma*.
there is-a telegram come from your granma
'There's been a telegram from your granma.'

Table 8 Non-finite verb placement in infinitival clauses, sentence fragments, and root clauses with a complex verb

Informants and data point	Non-target $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$	Target $XV_{\text{non-fin}}$
<i>4 months German:</i>		
Märta1 and 2	88% 89/101	12% 12/101
Algot1	70% 16/23	30% 7/23
Rune1 and 2	92% 78/85	8% 7/85
Gun1	84% 16/19	16% 3/19
Total	199	29
<i>9 months German:</i>		
Märta3	30% 11/37	70% 26/37
Algot3	15% 4/26	85% 22/26
Signe3	38% 15/40	62% 25/40
Rune3	24% 9/37	76% 28/37
Gun3	30% 10/33	70% 23/33
Ulf3	39% 7/18	61% 11/18
Total	56	135

utterances where the non-finite verb is in final position. I suggest that the learners are changing from a head-initial VP to a head-final VP in their interlanguage grammars. Examples are given in (42) and (43).

- 42) nun haben ich **spielt Boule** vier Jahr. (VO, Märta2, 4 months)
 now have I played boules four year
 'I've now been playing boules for four years.'
 (Target: nun habe ich vier Jahre Boule gespielt.)

Table 9 Non-finite verb placement in infinitival clauses, sentence fragments, and main clauses with a complex verb

Informants and data point	Non-target $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$	Target $XV_{\text{non-fin}}$
<i>4 months German:</i>		
Märta1 and 2, Algot1	85% 105/124	15% 19/124
Rune1 and 2, Gun1	90% 94/104	10% 10/104
<i>9 months German:</i>		
Märta3, Algot3, Signe3	29% 30/103	71% 73/103
Rune3, Gun3, Ulf3	30% 26/88	70% 62/88

- 43) und dann solln ich **Boule spielen**. (OV, Märta3, 9 months)
 and then shall I boules play
 'And then I'll play boules.'

This change from a VO to an OV grammar is by no means complete at nine months, but it is a clear tendency. Moreover, it is entirely unrelated to the acquisition of V2: At four months, Märta and Algot produce 85% (105/124) non-targetlike $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$ (Table 9), at a time when their non-subject-initial root clauses show perfect V2 (100%, 93/93, Table 5); and likewise at four months, Rune and Gun (who know English) produce 90% (94/104) non-targetlike $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$ (Table 9), at a time when, by contrast, 54% (54/100) of their non-subject-initial root clauses are targetlike V2 (Table 5). For learners both with and without knowledge of English, then, acquiring V2 in German seems to be much easier and happens earlier than acquiring a head-final VP.²¹ Again, this empirical finding is sharply at odds with the claims and predictions of acquisition models that assume universal L2 developmental stages, e.g. processability theory (Pienemann, 1998), that assume that target lexical projections (VP) are developmentally prior to target functional ones, e.g. minimal trees (Vainikka and Young-Scholten, 1994; 1996a; 1996b), modulated structure building (Hawkins, 2001: 73–75, 146), or that assume that learners only have to grapple with the acquisition of the topmost levels of syntactic structure, e.g. vulnerable C-domain (Platzack, 2001). The same findings are straightforwardly accounted for on an approach to second language acquisition that invokes the transfer of L1 syntax.

VIII Conclusions

In this article I have explored the acquisition of finite verb placement in root clauses (V2) and non-finite verb placement (VP headedness) by Swedish L1 elementary learners of German. The results suggest that learners do not necessarily start out with 'canonical' SVX. If there

²¹At nine months, the informants with prior knowledge of English produce roughly the same percentage of non-target V3 as of non-target $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$. Which will take longer to get rid of? Bohnacker (2005; 2006) argues, on the basis of empirical data from more advanced informants, that for Swedish learners of German it is more difficult to completely get rid of non-target $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$ than of non-target V3. After three years of German (L1 Swedish, L2 English, L3 German) V3 has virtually disappeared (2%), whereas there are still 26% non-target $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$.

exists a canonical word order at all, all it means is a word order of high frequency, but it is certainly not exclusive. The findings also clearly show – contrary to claims in the literature – that Germanic V2 is not difficult to acquire *per se*: With an appropriate elicitation method, it was shown that non-subject-initial V2 is productive and targetlike (100% contexts) already after just four months in Swedish *ab initio* learners of German as their first L2. I do not know of any similar results from learners with non-V2 L1s. *Ab initio* learners who know English and for whom German is the L3 also productively use non-subject-initial V2 after four months of exposure, but only in 50% of obligatory contexts; additionally, they produce non-targetlike V3, which indicates that L2 knowledge of a non-V2 language (English) can make it more difficult to comply with the V2 requirement of the L3, even though the learner's L1 is a V2 language.

I have interpreted these results as robust evidence for L1-syntax transfer of the V2 property from Swedish to German, including modest evidence for L1-transfer of a small group of constructions that are exceptions to the V2 requirement, and as evidence for partial L2-syntax transfer from English to L3 interlanguage German.

In contrast to these findings regarding V2, my informants do have initial problems with the non-finite verb placement of German. At first, after four months of exposure, the learners produce 87% non-targetlike $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$ orders. After nine months, the percentage of such $V_{\text{non-fin}}X$ has dropped to 29%, presumably because VP headedness in the interlanguage grammars is being changed from head-initial to head-final. Thus, for Swedish learners of German, the acquisition of targetlike non-finite verb placement (a phenomenon involving the VP domain) lags behind the acquisition of V2 (a phenomenon involving the CP domain).

None of this is particularly surprising if we assume L1 syntax transfer in second language acquisition. On a transfer approach such as Schwartz and Sprouse's (1994; 1996) Full Transfer/Full Access model, according to which learners initially produce and process L2 utterances entirely through the L1 grammar, we expect to find divergent L2 developmental routes with respect to the same target language for groups of learners with typologically distinct L1s. Thus, we also expect to find groups of speakers of V2 languages who transfer the V2 property from their L1 to their interlanguage grammar (for L1 Dutch and L2 French,

see e.g. Hulk 1991), and who therefore acquire V2 in a V2-L2 early and easily, even though this has not been documented empirically until now. The individuals acquiring V2 early and easily are the Swedish *ab initio* learners of German who do not know English, exhibiting L1 transfer of V2 in its purest form.

On the other hand, L1 transfer of a head-initial VP is predicted to result in the production of non-targetlike head-initial VP utterances, and this is documented for the Swedish learners of German irrespective of whether they know English or not. Finally, there are the Swedish learners of German as an L3 who do know English, a group of learners that earlier research has focused on, unfortunately without paying attention to the possibility of English influence. To capture the developmental path of these learners, existing models of syntactic transfer (such as Schwartz and Sprouse, 1994) would need to be enriched to also allow for L2 syntactic transfer, yielding potentially divergent L3 developmental routes with respect to the same target language for groups of learners with the same L1 but with different, typologically distinct L2s.

The assumption that there may be both L1-syntax and L2-syntax transfer in L3 acquisition appears to be somewhat contentious today. Håkansson *et al.* (2002: 269) for instance claim that if we allowed for L2-syntax transfer to the L3, the extent of transfer would be unpredictable, unless L2 transfer were to be total, leaving no room for L1 transfer. I do not see why this should be so. For domains other than syntax, there is ample documentation of L2 transfer alongside L1 transfer: In the domain of the lexicon, L1 and L2 transfer to the L3 seems to be the rule rather than the exception in both production and comprehension (e.g. Ringbom, 1987; 2001; Dentler, 2000: 84–93; Hammarberg, 2001) and, similarly, in L3 discourse, entire non-adapted language switches to the L1 and the L2 are widely attested (see, e.g. Williams and Hammarberg, 1998; Hammarberg, 2001). Both are also found for the *ab initio* learners in the present study (recall (15)-(17)), and Sayehli (2001) too notes frequent lexical transfers from Swedish and English in the productions of her L3 German learners (although they go unmentioned in Håkansson *et al.*, 2002). Similarly, for the domains of phonology and morphology, L1 and L2 transfer to the L3 has been documented for some learners (e.g. Hammarberg, 2001: 32–35). There is no reason why syntax should be exempt from such transfer.

As for predicting whether learners will transfer aspects of L2 syntax, I think we should look to the factors that condition L2 influence on the L3 in non-syntactic domains (see, e.g. the articles in Cenoz *et al.*, 2001). Three – interacting – factors have been shown to be of prime importance here: L2 proficiency in the learner, perceived typological closeness, and recency of L2 use. L2 influence on the L3 is favoured if the learner has a high level of competence in the L2. Second, the more typologically close a learner perceives the languages to be (note that this concerns the learner's perception, not linguistic typology), the more likely there will be transfer to the L3. And, third, if the learner has recently used the L2, the L2 is activated more easily and can influence the speaker's L3 productions.

With the present study I have tried to show that the following notions about L2 (and L3) acquisition of syntax cannot be upheld empirically:

- Irrespective of L1, it is hard or impossible to fully acquire V2.
- Learners start out with (and stick to) the canonical word order SVO.
- There is a universal developmental path in L2 German verb placement.

As a consequence, I suggest that theories of non-native acquisition that are based on these notions also lack an empirical underpinning and should therefore be abandoned, and this includes current generative models that postulate the existence of universally vulnerable (or universally invulnerable) syntactic domains.

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