Nonnative acquisition of Verb Second:
On the empirical underpinnings of universal L2 claims

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Abstract

Acquiring Germanic verb second is typically described as difficult for second-language learners. Even speakers of a V2-language (Swedish) learning another V2-language (German) are said not to transfer V2 but to start with a non-V2 grammar, following a universal developmental path of verb placement. The present study contests this claim, documenting early targetlike V2 production for 6 Swedish ab-initio (and 23 intermediate) learners of German, at a time when their interlanguage syntax elsewhere is nontargetlike (head-initial VPs). Learners whose only nonnative language is German never violate V2, indicating transfer of V2-L1 syntax. Informants with previous knowledge of English are less targetlike in their L3-German productions, indicating interference from non-V2 English. V2 per se is thus not universally difficult for nonnative learners.

in press in:
The function of function words and functional categories.
[Series: Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today]
Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins (pp. 41-77).
Nonnative acquisition of Verb Second: On the empirical underpinnings of universal L2 claims

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1. Introduction

This paper investigates the acquisition of verb placement, especially verb second (V2), by native Swedish adults and teenagers learning German. Several recent publications (e.g. Platzack 1996, 2001; Pienemann 1998; Pienemann & Håkansson 1999; Håkansson, Pienemann & Sayehli 2002) have claimed that learners, irrespective of their first language (L1), take the same developmental route in the acquisition of syntax of a foreign or second language (L2). Target-like finite verb placement in a V2 language like German, Dutch or Swedish is seen as an exceptionally difficult phenomenon, a difficult syntactic constraint or parameter, to acquire. Even if both the L1 and L2 are Germanic V2 languages, learners are said to acquire V2 late, only partially, or never. Data from Swedes learning German, violating V2 in their L2 German, have been cited as empirical support for these claims and for the resurrection of a hypothesised universal developmental path in L2 German verb placement – essentially the developmental stages proposed in the 1980s on the basis of Romance learners of German (e.g. Clahsen, Meisel & Pienemann 1983; Clahsen & Muysken 1986).

Explanations propounded in the literature are (i) the so-called “vulnerability” of the C-domain (Platzack 2001), (ii) SVO being a more basic word order (e.g. Clahsen & Muysken 1986; Platzack 1996), and (iii) “processability”, according to which the “canonical” word order of SVX and XSV (i.e. V3, with a fronted element before the subject) is easier to process – and to produce – than XVS (i.e. V2) (e.g. Pienemann 1998; Håkansson, Pienemann & Sayehli 2002). The vulnerable C-domain, processability, and the idea of a universal developmental path have also found their way into language teacher training and linguistics courses and are sometimes uncritically presented as axioms and as the basis for classroom teaching methods.

The present paper aims to show (a) that the above studies suffer from some methodological flaws, (b) that new studies of learners of a V2 language (German) with a V2 L1 (Swedish) yield strikingly different results, and thus (c) that the previous empirical underpinnings for proposed universals in the development of L2 verb placement are weak.

I proceed as follows. Comparing finite verb placement in German and Swedish, I firstly draw attention to the existence of well-formed V3 main clauses in native Swedish which tend to be overlooked in generative syntax and are ignored in L2 research. If Swedish allows certain violations of the V2 requirement (but German does not), Swedish learners of German may produce certain V3 orders in their interlanguage German not because V2 is universally hard to acquire, but because these particular V3 orders, grammatical in their L1 Swedish, have transferred.

I then discuss earlier research on the acquisition of L2 German verb placement by Swedes (Håkansson 2001; Sayehli 2001; Håkansson, Pienemann & Sayehli 2002). A confounding variable in these studies is that their informants all knew English before learning German, making it impossible to rule out transfer from L2 English to L3 German. I therefore present quantitative and qualitative data from new research: (a) oral and written cross-sectional data from 23 Swedish teenage school pupils at intermediate proficiency level, and (b) micro-comparative quasi-longitudinal oral data from 6 Swedish adults learning ab initio German (3 with no English, 3 with L2 English).
The results indicate that learners in both groups productively use V2 early on, pointing to transfer of the V2 property from their L1 Swedish to German. This happens at a time when other aspects of their interlanguage syntax are clearly nontargetlike, e.g. early VPs are head-initial (VO), giving way to German-style head-final VPs (OV) over time. My data also show a categorical difference between those ab initio learners who do not know English (0% V3 in their interlanguage German) and those who do know English (45% V3). Knowledge of a non-V2 language (English) can thus make it initially “harder” to acquire another V2 language, which points to partial transfer of the non-V2 L2-English syntax to L3 German. My findings cast doubt on current claims concerning the role of a canonical (X)SVO word order and concerning the idea of Germanic V2 being difficult to acquire per se. I therefore argue that theories of acquisition based on these notions are misguided and should be abandoned in favour of transfer approaches (e.g. Schwartz & Sprouse 1994, 1996), and I advise caution when propounding absolute “universals” for the L2 acquisition of syntax.

2. The V2 requirement in German and Swedish

As is well known, German non-finite utterances require the verb or verbal element(s) to be in final position. 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 (cf. e.g. Koster 1975; den Besten 1977/1983; Thiersch 1978; Haider 1986, 1993; Grewendorf 1988; Stechow & Sternefeld 1988; Schwartz & Vikner 1989, 1996; pace Kayne 1994). German finite clauses too have a requirement on verbs to be in final position, but in main clauses this only holds for the non-finite verbal elements of complex verbs, such as infinitives, participles and particles of separable prefix verbs (e.g. Drach 1937; Reis 1980; Grewendorf 1988: 19-25; Zifonun et al. 1997: 1498-1504). Generative grammar typically regards the positioning of these verbal elements as further evidence of German VP being head-final. In Swedish, the nonfinite verbal element(s) do not appear in final position, but to the left of the complement(s). Swedish is therefore regarded as a VO language with a head-initial VP.

German main 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 only is a simplex verb (lese in (1)), but when the clause contains a complex verb, both V2 and head-final VP are visible (habe ... ausgemacht in (2)).

(1) a. \textit{Ich lese nicht} so einen Schrott. (SVO)  
\begin{minipage}{0.6}\textit{I read not} so a scrap\end{minipage}  
\begin{minipage}{0.6}`I don’t/won’t read such rubbish.'\end{minipage}

b. *\textit{So einen Schrott ich lese nicht.} (OSV)
c. \textit{So einen Schrott lese ich nicht.} (OVS)

(2) a. \textit{Ich habe gerade das Licht ausgemacht.} (SVO)  
\begin{minipage}{0.6}\textit{I have just} the light out-switched\end{minipage}  
\begin{minipage}{0.6}`I’ve just switched off the light.'\end{minipage}

b. *\textit{Gerade ich habe das Licht ausgemacht.} (*AdvSVO)
c. \textit{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 nonargumental, phonologically light or heavy, and with any semantic function (some modal particles excluded). The same holds for Swedish. However, as corpus studies show, in natural discourse the two languages vary slightly in the frequencies of the types of items that occupy the Vorfeld. Hoberg (1981) finds, in a corpus study of written German, slightly more than 50% of the main clauses to be subject-initial, second come those starting with an adverbial adjunct. Similarly, Fabricius-Hansen & Solfjeld (1994) find 54% subject-initial clauses in written German, and 37% adverbial-initial ones. Westman (1974), on the other hand, in a corpus study of written Swedish, finds 64% of the main clauses to be subject-initial in regular prose texts, vs. 72% in formal legal texts. And in a large corpus study of spoken Swedish, Jörgensen (1976: 101-105) finds 60% of the main clauses to be subject-initial in informal discussions, 62% in interviews, vs. 80% in read-aloud formal radio news. Rosén (2005) also finds 65% subject-initial clauses in native adult Swedish, vs. only 49% in native adult German, in elicitations of the same informal written genre. A comparison of these corpora suggests, then, that subject-initial clauses are more frequent in Swedish than in German. The second largest group of main clauses in both languages are those with an adverbial in first position (Westman 1974; Jörgensen 1976), but the range of these adverbials is more restricted in Swedish than in German (Rosén 2005). In the spoken Swedish corpora, temporal adjuncts predominate in the Vorfeld (Jörgensen 1976, for adult-to-adult speech; Josefsson 2004a: 110-111, for adult-to-child speech), whereas in German, the Vorfeld frequently hosts locational, temporal and other adjuncts (e.g. Zifonun et al. 1997: 1607; Carroll & Lambert 2003: 282; Rosén 2005) and also arguments such as objects, which are rare in the Swedish Vorfeld.

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 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-subcategorised-for elements especially may be seen as base-generated. 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 & Vikner 1989, 1996), though 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; Barbier 1995; Branigan 1996). 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.

In (syntactic) acquisition research it is generally advisable to keep the – often ephemeral – formal syntactic apparatus to a minimum. I will therefore concentrate on the linear order of constituents (SVX, V1, V2, V3 etc.), 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 will 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.

3. Exceptions to V2

Swedish is a robust V2 language, but it does allow certain exceptions to V2 which are not that widely known and typically ignored in the acquisition literature. If pockets of V3 are
grammatical in Swedish, these might play a role in the acquisition of L2 German. I will discuss four such types: (i) clause-initial connective så ‘so’, (ii) clause-initial sen ‘then’, (iii) left-dislocated adverbials with resumptive så ‘so’, and (iv) V3 with certain adverbs.

3.1. Clause-initial connective elements

When a main 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 cj + [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 regarded as constituents of the clause. Hence, for the classification of L2 data a non-trivial problem arises. When learners produce a main clause introduced by a connective, is this a coordinative constituent which does not ‘count’ for V2 word order (cj + [XVS]; cj + [SVX]) – or is it an adverb that is a constituent in 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 (3). V2-så is always unstressed, there is no prosodic boundary after så, and this så can be preceded by a coordinating conjunction (och ‘and’), suggesting that it is a proper constituent of the clause.

(3)  Swe. V2  (och) så köpte dom upp EM Airways.
     (and) so bought they up EM Airways
     ‘(And) then they took over EM Airways.’

However, there is also another type of connective så (‘so/so that/hence/and as a result’) which is not temporal, but conclusive/consequential. As illustrated in (4), conclusive så does not induce inversion in native Swedish, and V3 utterances are the result.6

(4)  a. Swe. V3  så dom köpte upp EM Airways.
     so they bought up EM Airways
     ‘So they took over EM Airways.’

     b. Swe. V3  så redan i januari köpte dem upp EM Airways.
     so already in January bought they up EM Airways
     ‘So in January already they took over EM Airways./So already by January they had taken over EM Airways.’

Conclusive/consequential så is always unstressed, and there is never a prosodic boundary after så, suggesting that it is a constituent of the main clause; but on the other hand, this så cannot be preceded by a coordinative conjunction, suggesting that it might be a coordinative conjunction itself (cj + [XVX]). V3-så is a common feature of informal spoken Swedish and is found in written genres too, though there seem to be individual differences amongst speakers with regard to its frequency. Reference grammars (Holmes & Hinchliffe 1994: 465-469, 476, 529; Teleman et al. 1999a: 730) are unsure about the status of V3-så (adverbial or conjunction). I am not aware of any generative analyses, but I assume that the V3-så construction would be formalised as adjunction to CP: [CP[så] CP], i.e. as a potential exception to the V2 requirement. There is no V3 equivalent in German, compare:
3.2. Clause-initial *sen* (‘then’) with optional V3

Swedish linguists have noted the occurrence of V3 with clause-initial (temporal/sequential) *sen* ‘then’ as a nontarget feature of aphasic, SLI (i.e. specific language impairment) and L2 Swedish speech (e.g. Häkansson & Nettelbladt 1993; Platzack 1996: 382-382). However, such *sen* with optional V3 (*sen*-SVX, *sen*-XVS) – notably without a prosodic boundary after *sen* – is also attested for informal native Swedish (cf. Jörgensen 1976); compare the authentic examples in (6a), (7a), and (8), the latter from an adult addressing a child (CHILDES database, cf. Strömqvist, Richthoff & Andersson 1993)). Thus there may be a mismatch regarding the actual and perceived use of *sen*, and acceptability seems to vary amongst speakers. V3-*sen* can be formalised as adjunction to CP, constituting a true exception to the V2 requirement, and has no V3 correspondence in German (cf. (6)).

(6)  
   a. Swe.  *sen han* gick.  
       then he went  
   b.  *sen gick han.*  
       then went he  
   c. Ger.  *dann er ging.*  
       then he went  
   d.  *dann ging er.*  
       then went he  
   ‘Then he left.’

(7)  
   a.  *man gör ju allt för dom, och sen man undrar om allt det där*  
       one does well all for them and then one wonders if all this there  
       *var så smart egentligen.*  
       was so good really  
   b.  *(och)* sen undrar man om allt det där ...  
       ‘You do everything for them, don’t you, and then you start wondering  
       whether that really is such a good thing.’

(8)  
   ja, ja(g) ska *mata dej. sen ja(g) ska äta lite också.*  
   yeah I shall feed you. then I shall eat little too  
   ‘Yeah, I’ll feed you, and then I’ll have something to eat as well.’  
   (Markus’ mother, Mar26_10.cha)
3.3. Pauseless left dislocations

In both German and Swedish, an argument or an adjunct followed by a resumptive may occur to the left of the finite verb in a main clause, making the verb appear in third position. Syntactic analyses of left dislocations often assume a boundary: The initial element is extraposed and not part of the clause proper (e.g. Altmann 1981; Jörgensen & Svensson 1986/1987: 139; Ekerot 1988, 1995: 85; Heringer 1989: 247), while the resumptive element is inside the V2 clause. There are no reliable prosodic boundary diagnostics such as a pause or lengthening; the dislocated constituent in German and Swedish is linked to the remainder of the sentence by progredient intonation, though it can also constitute a domain of its own with a separate accent (Zifonun et al. 1997: 518 for German). For this reason, then, left dislocations are plausibly treated not as violations of V2, but as adjunctions to a V2 clause, formalised as (base-generated) adjunctions to CP.8

Left dislocations are more frequent in informal speech than in writing, and unless the initial element is particularly complex/heavy, e.g. a clause, left-dislocations with a resumptive in written registers are frowned upon (Jörgensen & Svensson 1986/1987: 136; Ekerot 1988: 72-74, 1995: 86; Zifonun et al. 1997: 519; Teleman et al. 1999b: 99, 695). However, in spoken Swedish, one type of left dislocation with resumptive is extremely common: left-dislocated adverbials with a resumptive, XX\text{resumptive VS}, henceforth XX,rVS (e.g. Ekerot 1988, 1995: 85-86; Teleman et al. 1999a: 670, 1999b: 10-11, 99, 694-695). The dislocated adverbial can have almost any function, but is often a frame-setting adverb, a PP, or a (temporal/conditional) clause. Resumptive så is always unstressed. German equivalents of this Swedish construction are rare, only occurring when the left-dislocated adverbial is a clause (cf. Ekerot 1988: 241-242), whilst for many other adverbials, e.g. temporal adverbs, left dislocation with a resumptive (so/da ‘so/then’) is ungrammatical in German, as shown below.

(9) a. Ger. \([als ich bei meiner Oma war] ([da],) hab ich die Katze gefüttert.\) when I at my granma was there have I the cat fed
b. Swe. \([när jag var hos mormor] [så,] matade jag katten.\) when I was at granma so fed I cat-the
‘When I was at granma’s I fed the cat.’

(10) a. Ger. \([dann [*so/*da], fütterte ich die Katze.\) then so/then fed I the cat
b. Swe. \([sen] [så,] matade jag katten.\) then so fed I cat-the
‘Then I fed the cat.’

(11) a. Ger. \([Jetzt [*so/*da], habe ich die Katze gefüttert.\) now so/then have I the cat fed
b. Swe. \([Nu] [så,] har jag matat katten.\) now so have I fed cat-the
‘Now I’ve fed the cat.’

(12) a. Ger. \([Endlich [*so/*da], hab ich die Katze gefüttert.\) at-last so/then have I the cat fed
b. Swe. \([Äntligen] [så,] har jag matat katten.\) at-last so have I fed cat-the
‘At last I’ve fed the cat.’
This fact should be borne in mind with regard to L2 acquisition. Swedes might – and in section 6 we will see that they do – produce certain nontargetlike V3 clauses (XXVS) in their interlanguage German not because they have a problem with V2, but because V3 orders with subject-verb inversion and a resumptive are permitted in their L1 syntax, a possibility that has not been investigated so far.

3.4. V3 with certain adverbs

Swedish allows V3 word order in main clauses for a group of adverbs of modality and degree, also known as focalising adverbs (e.g. Egerland 1998; cf. Nilsen 2002 for Norwegian), e.g. bara ‘only/just’, liksom ‘like’, nästan ‘nearly’, rentav ‘fairly/it is no exaggeration to say’, kanske ‘maybe’ (cf. Telemann 1967: 164; Jörgensen 1976: 105-110; Jörgensen & Svensson 1986/1987: 138; Platzack 1986a, 1998: 89; Ekerot 1988: 69-70; Wijk-Andersson 1991; Telemann et al. 1999b: 14, 100). These Swedish adverbs commonly occur between the subject and the finite verb (SAdvV), as illustrated in (13a)-(14a), but are ungrammatical in that position in German, cf. (13b)-(14b).9

(13) a. hon {bara/faktiskt/egentligen} sover.
   b. *sie {nur/eigentlich} schläft.
   c. hon sover {bara/faktiskt/egentligen}.
   d. sie schläft {nur/eigentlich}.

(14) a. hon kanske sover.
   b. *sie vielleicht schläft.
   c. hon sover kanske.
   d. sie schläft vielleicht.

(15) a. kanske hon sover.
   b. *vielleicht sie schläft.
   c. kanske sover hon.
   d. vielleicht schläft sie.

Some of these V3-adverbs, especially kanske, can also occur in first position without inversion (AdvSV), cf. (15a) kanske hon sover ‘maybe she sleeps’ alongside (15c) kanske sover hon (maybe sleeps she). Of these adverbs, kanske, which historically is a modal verb taking a clusal complement (‘may be (that) she sleeps’) is the most well known, yet the other V3-adverbs, which cannot be traced back to modal-plus-clause origin, are equally common in spoken Swedish. V3 orders with these adverbs are not obligatory but relatively frequent in spoken Swedish (cf. e.g. Jörgensen 1976: 105-110; Wijk-Andersson 1991: 130-150; Josefsson 2004b: 165-167). Note that the corresponding German V3 clauses are always ill-formed (see the b.- and d.-examples in (13)-(15)).

4. L2 acquisition of German(ic) verb placement: Common notions

The following notions about the (adult) L2 acquisition of German(ic) verb placement have long been widespread in certain linguistic circles, and still are today:
a. Irrespective of L1, it is hard or impossible to fully acquire V2.
b. Learners start out with (and stick to) the canonical word order SVO.
c. There is a universal developmental path in L2 German verb placement.

Commonly suggested explanations of these notions today are:

i. Vulnerability of the C-domain (Platzack 2001)
   Alternative, Platzack (1996) claims that V2 is hard to acquire because SVO is the underlying basic and more economical word order (at least in his 1996 Minimalist framework, building on Kayne (1994)). And according to Pienemann’s (1998) Processability Theory, V2 is hard to acquire because the “canonical” SVO word order and XSV (i.e. V3, with a fronted element before the subject) are “easier to process” than inverted VXS (i.e. V2). In essence, these ideas are intended to reflect the notion that certain word orders map function more straightforwardly than others, and that certain word orders (N-V-N, NP-V-NP) therefore are easier to process, recall the alleged semantic universal of “agent–action–patient” and the alleged pragmatic universal of “topic first–focus last” (e.g. Bever 1970; Slobin 1973; Givón 1979; Klein & Perdue 1997). And what is easier to process must also be easier to produce. Pienemann explicitly claims that L2ers employ a non-language-specific procedure to map semantic roles and surface forms both for reception and production. Additionally, they may utilise general cognitive principles (or strategies) of initialisation and finalisation (Pienemann 1998: 47, 83-85). For a lucid critique of this notion of processing, see e.g. White (1991) and Eubank (1993).

V2, then, is seen as hard or impossible to acquire (fully), irrespective of L1. The hypothesised universal L2 developmental path towards V2 is essentially the same as proposed in the 1980s on the basis of cross-sectional data from Romance L1 learners of German, guest workers in Germany who were studied in the Heidelberger Projekt Pidgindeutsch and ZISA (Zweitspracherwerb italienischer, spanischer und portugiesischer Arbeiter, L2 acquisition of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese workers), by e.g. Meisel, Clahsen & Pienemann (1981), Clahsen, Meisel & Pienemann (1983) and Clahsen & Muysken (1986). An implicational hierarchy of originally 6 developmental stages was established (16), later reduced to 4 (with stages 1 and 2 collapsed and stage 5 scrapped). Starting with SVO, learners did not acquire surface OV order until stage 3 and surface subject-verb inversion (V2) not until stage 4, if ever.

   Stage 1: S (AUX/Modal) V O
   Stage 2: (ADV/PP) S (AUX/Modal) V O
   Stage 3: (ADV/PP) S V_{finite} O V_{nonfinite}
Stage 4: \( \text{XP} \ V_{\text{finite}} \ S \ O \ (V_{\text{nonfinite}}) \)
Stage 5: \( S \ V_{\text{finite}} \ (\text{ADV}) \ O \ (V_{\text{nonfinite}}) \)
Stage 6: main clauses as at stage 5
embedded clauses: \( \text{daß} \ SOV_{\text{finite}} \)

At first, the stages in (16) were interpreted as learners starting out with canonical (X)SVO, lacking a UG-constrained grammar, gradually adding “unnatural” phrase-structure rules to this underlying SVO order via a cognitive problem-solving approach to mimic German (Clahsen & Muysken 1986, 1989).

But reanalyses of the ZISA data (e.g. duPlessis, Solin, Travis & White 1987; Tomaselli & Schwartz 1990) showed that the implicational stages could also be captured by assuming initial L1 transfer and subsequent resetting of parameters, i.e. as a succession of interlanguage grammars constrained by UG, such as in (17).

(17) Stage 1&2: Romance L1 grammar (SIVO) transfers: head-initial VP, head-initial IP. XP adjunction possible (resulting in V3).
Stage 3: Parameter for VP headedness switches from VO to OV. IP remains head-initial (SIOV); V-to-I raising derives post-subject V.
Stage 4: V2 becomes operative. IP remains head-initial.
Stage 6: Parameter for IP headedness switches to head-final (SOVI).

The litmus test came with Vainikka & Young-Scholten’s (1994) study of elementary learners of German with L1 Korean and Turkish, i.e. SOV languages. They did not follow the implicational hierarchy in (16), but initially produced OV. Apparently they had transferred OV from their L1 to their interlanguage German. It followed that the hypothesis of a universal developmental L2 path could not be upheld in its entirety (see Hoekstra & Schwartz 1994). This finding is acknowledged – though sometimes grudgingly and in footnotes – even by staunch supporters of a universal SVO base order (e.g. Clahsen & Muysken 1986: 104, fn. 5; Håkansson 2001: 69, fn.1; Platzack 2001: 371, fn. 17). Nevertheless, a number of researchers did and do continue to argue for a universal developmental L2 path as far as the acquisition of V2 is concerned, on the basis of the pairing of Swedish and German, as the next section will show.

5. Existing studies of V2 in L1 Swedish learners of L2 German

There are few studies of L1 Swedish and nonnative German. Håkansson (2001) reports on a written cross-sectional elicitation test, where 143 Swedish teenagers filled in forms with 6 simplex verb translation sentences and 4 sentences with gaps in their foreign language German. Håkansson tested 48 pupils after 2 months of classroom German 2 hours per week (7th grade), 58 after 1 year of German (8th grade), and 37 after 2 years of German (9th grade). Prior to testing, the pupils had had 4, 5 or 6 years of training in English. Overall, 18% (186/1037) of the students’ sentences are V3 (XSV) (Table 1, Håkansson 2001: 75). 53 of the 143 pupils produce V3 or nontargetlike subject omissions, though unfortunately Håkansson does not separate the two. Håkansson claims that her informants do not transfer V2 to their interlanguage German but start with XSV. However, as she does not provide numbers for SVX or for targetlike V2, nor exact figures for the different age groups, the empirical basis for her claim is perhaps not particularly strong.
Sayehli (2001) carried out a cross-sectional study where she elicited oral productions via a cut-and-reassemble cartoon strip description task from 20 Swedish pupils, 10 in 6th grade (after 8 months of classroom German) and 10 in 7th grade (after 17 months of German). All had 4-5 years of prior exposure to English. Sayehli’s results were published in Håkansson, Pienemann & Sayehli (2002), and are summarised in Table 2.

### Table 1. Word order in declarative main clauses: Written L2 German (Håkansson 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 mts to 2 yrs German</th>
<th>SVX</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>143 informants, 7th, 8th &amp; 9th grade</td>
<td>no information</td>
<td>no information</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>given</td>
<td>given</td>
<td>(186/1037)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sayehli’s results are interesting and important, and they do seem to suggest a lack of L1 transfer of V2, but then her database is perhaps not particularly large. For, out of the 155 main clauses that the 10 6th graders produce, nearly all are SVX, and only 12 are non-subject-initial, i.e. there are only 12 contexts overall where V2 could occur. In fact, 4 of the 6th graders (and 2 of the 7th graders) do not produce any adverbial-initial clauses, i.e. there are no contexts in their data where V2 could occur (Sayehli 2001: 27-29). Out of the 312 main clauses that the 10 7th graders produce, only 47 are non-subject initial, and in 22% (10/47) of them, targetlike V2 does occur. It is therefore imperative to verify Sayehli’s results for a larger database from Swedish elementary learners of German, i.e. with more than 12 potential contexts for (non-subject-initial) V2. The high number of SVX clauses is not particularly informative, as this word order occurs in all the three languages involved (Swedish, English, German). It might also be worth checking whether there are lexical or pragmatic reasons for the high percentage of SVX: Some learners might still have to acquire the relevant lexical items (adverbs, etc.) for producing adverbial-initial clauses. Secondly, the predominance of SVX over XVS in Swedish in general, as found in the corpus studies discussed in section 2, may favour SVX in the learners’ interlanguage productions. And thirdly, SVX could also simply be an artifact of Sayehli’s elicitation method, as non-subject-initial clauses are dependent on discourse/pragmatics/information structure. Her informants were asked to describe the events depicted in a cartoon in front of them, and the experimenter prodded and scaffolded if they were taciturn, as becomes evident from Sayehli (2001: 23-25, 37-38, 54).

### Table 2. Word order in declarative main clauses: Oral cross-sectional L2 German, 20 L1 Swedish teenagers (Sayehli 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8 mts German</th>
<th>SVX</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 informants, 6th grade</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(143/155)</td>
<td>(0/155)</td>
<td>(12/155)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17 mts German</th>
<th>SVX</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 informants, 7th grade</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(265/312)</td>
<td>(10/312)</td>
<td>(37/312)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most importantly however, all of Sayehli’s subjects had 4 to 5 years of exposure to English. Therefore we still need to find out whether the interlanguage of these informants may not have been influenced by English.

Before further investigating these issues empirically, it is worth pointing out that advanced L2ers have been shown to behave in stark contrast to Sayehli’s subjects. As part of a larger study, Bohnacker (2003) collected oral and written data from 3 very advanced Swedish post-puberty learners of German who as teenagers had been exposed to 3-4 years of classroom German at secondary school in Sweden and had spent 3 years of their adult lives in Germany. These advanced L2ers did not at all rely on SVX nor violate V2, but frequently use non-subject-initial V2 in their oral and written productions, as illustrated in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3. Word order in declarative main clauses: 3 advanced L2ers (Bohnacker 2003).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-7 yrs German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(850/1686)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

which break down into

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6-7 yrs German</th>
<th>SVX</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henrik</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst these data already call into question strong claims about V2 being hard or impossible to acquire fully, we also need to look at what less advanced learners do.

6. New empirical studies

6.1. The intermediate learners

Cross-sectional oral and written data were collected from 23 16-year-olds at secondary school in Sweden. Like Sayehli’s (2001) subjects, their first foreign language at school had been English, their second German. Only pupils with native Swedish were included. At the end of their third year of classroom German, they 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. It was made clear to them that this was not a test influencing their school grades and they were encouraged to speak as much as possible on the tape. Recording took place in individual language laboratory booths under the supervision of their German teacher; communication between the pupils and the use of written materials were discouraged. This recording method was chosen to forestall short/elliptic utterances typically produced by elementary learners in interaction with an experimenter, to limit non-linguistic deixis, and to favour the production of longer utterances anchored in discourse by explicit linguistic means. This I hoped would encourage learners to produce a high ratio of complete sentences with verb and subject, and non-subject-initial declaratives. The resulting 23 recordings were each 20-to-30 minutes in length, and were subsequently transcribed and analysed. On a separate occasion, these 16-year-olds were asked to write a text in German on the same topic under the supervision of their teacher, not using written materials. This voluntary exercise yielded 10 written texts, which I then also analysed with regard to verb placement. When determining finite verb placement in main
clauses, I only considered the first verb (i.e. the simplex verb, or the first verb of a periphrastic construction) and classified this verb as finite, even though morphological tense and agreement marking was often not targetlike, an approach also taken and argued for in other acquisition work (e.g. Lardiere 1998, Bohnacker 1999).

I will now present my results in brief; a more detailed discussion can be found in Bohnacker (in progress). Immediately striking is the fact that the 16-year-olds hardly ever produce V3 word orders (4% in the written corpus, 4.5% in the oral corpus), but do produce sizeable percentages of targetlike non-subject-initial V2 (52% in the written data, 32% in the oral data), see Tables 4 and 5. There is no extreme preponderance of SVX: 43% subject-initial clauses in the written data, and 62% in the oral data.

**TABLE 4.** Word order in main clauses: Written intermediate L2 German, 10 16-year-olds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 yrs German</th>
<th>SVX</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 informants</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(59/138)</td>
<td>(72/138)</td>
<td>(5/138)</td>
<td>(2/138)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which break down into

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 yrs German</th>
<th>SVX</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 informants</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 informants</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 5.** Word order in main clauses: Oral intermediate L2 German, 23 16-year-olds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 yrs German</th>
<th>SVX</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 informants</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(754/1220)</td>
<td>(18/1220)</td>
<td>(386/1220)</td>
<td>(55/1220)</td>
<td>(2/1220)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(plus 0.4% (5/1220) wh-questions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Violations of V2 are even rarer than the V3 percentage of 4.5% may suggest, as it includes some instances of XXVS with subject-verb inversion, listed in Tables 6 and 7. These are instances of a left-dislocated adverbial and a resumptive (XX,VS, probably modelled on Swedish, recall section 3.3.), exemplified in (18), and so-XVS (probably modelled on the homophonous Swedish conclusive/consequential V3-så, recall section 3.1.), and exemplified in (19).

**TABLE 6.** Types of V3 (and V4) clauses: Written intermediate L2 German.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 yrs German</th>
<th>XSV</th>
<th>SXV</th>
<th>XXVS</th>
<th>V4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 informants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 informants</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 7.** Types of V3 (and V4) clauses: Oral intermediate L2 German.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 yrs German</th>
<th>XSV</th>
<th>SXV</th>
<th>XXVS</th>
<th>V4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 informants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 informants</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(18) [wenn man mehr Freizeit haben] [da], wusste ich richtig was ich tun wollten.
   'If one had more spare time, then I’d know what I’d want to do.' (Dagny, oral, 3 yrs)

(19) so nun haben ich nicht mehr zu erzählen.
   so now have I not more to tell
   ‘So now I haven’t got anything else to tell you.’ (Dagny, oral, 3 yrs)

Subtracting such XXVS cases, the 16-year-olds produce only 2% nontarget (uninverted) V3 (and V4) in their main clauses. In fact, 8 out of 10 informants (written data, Table 6), and 11 out of 23 informants (oral data, Table 7) never violate the V2 requirement. The remaining 12 informants do so very rarely. For these 16-year-olds with 3 years of classroom German then, V2 does not seem to be much of a problem at all.

Bohnacker (in progress) investigates the 2% nontargetlike V3 and V4 cases in more detail. 25% of these are [so + SVX] with the clause-initial element so/så, which again can be argued to have transferred from Swedish (section 3.1.). Most of the other V2 violations are of the type [adverbial + SVX], a V3 construction not found in Swedish, cf. (20).

(20) [wenn ich nach Schule kam] ich mache meine Schulaufgabe.
   when I after school came I make my homework
   ‘When I get back from school, I do my homework.’ (Äsa, oral, 3 yrs)

As these pupils have had substantial training in English, one may conjecture that their V2 violations are due to syntactic transfer from English, where they would be grammatical, though I will postpone such discussion until section 6.2.

Readers might wonder whether these pupils simply are too advanced and have already mastered all the stages of the implicational developmental hierarchy up to V2 (recall (16)). If this were the case they should not only have mastered V2, but also VP-headedness (a “lower” stage) and therefore consistently use a head-final VP in their interlanguage German.

Generally, learners with a head-initial L1 VP (e.g. Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, English, Swedish) have been found to produce nontarget head-initial VPs in their L2 German (e.g. duPlessis et al. 1987: 67-70; Vainikka & Young-Scholten 1996b: 157; Pienemann 1998: 118-121; 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 & Sprouse 1994: 335; Vainikka & Young-Scholten 1994: 276-277, 293, 1996a). However, both groups of learners have been reported to produce German-style OV long before V2. In some models of acquisition (e.g. minimal trees (Vainikka & Young-Scholten 1994, 1996a: 13-15, 24-25); vulnerable C-domain (Platzack 2001: 371-372); processability (Pienemann 1998: 99-111, 116); teachability (Pienemann 1984)), such findings have been taken to mean that L2ers must first have target headedness of the VP before they can go on to acquire V2. As I will show now, however, this is not the case; the 16-year-olds’ nonfinite verb placement (VP-headedness), especially in oral production, is a lot less targetlike than their finite verb placement (i.e. V2).

Nonfinite verbal elements in native German occur in final position in finite main clauses with a complex verb (infinitive, participle, particle, etc.), and in nonfinite constructions (infinitival clauses, root infinitives/participles, sentence fragments), and in penultimate position in finite subordinate clauses with a complex verb (i.e. here the finite verb occurs in final position). I culled such nonfinite verbs from the learner data and determined their
placement in relation to other constituents ($V_{\text{nonfin}X}$ versus $XV_{\text{nonfin}}$). Many nonfinite verbs had to be excluded (e.g. utterances with a nonfinite verb but too few telltale constituents to determine headedness),\textsuperscript{12} but the remaining ones are informative enough; see Tables 8 and 9.

**TABLE 8.** Nonfinite verb placement in infinitival clauses, sentence fragments, and main clauses with a complex verb: Written intermediate L2 German.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 yrs German</th>
<th>$V_{\text{nonfin}X}$</th>
<th>$XV_{\text{nonfin}}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 informants</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6/49)</td>
<td>(43/49)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 9.** Nonfinite verb placement in infinitival clauses, sentence fragments, and main clauses with a complex verb: Oral intermediate L2 German.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 yrs German</th>
<th>$V_{\text{nonfin}X}$</th>
<th>$XV_{\text{nonfin}}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 informants</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100/389)</td>
<td>(289/389)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

which break down into

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 yrs German</th>
<th>$V_{\text{nonfin}X}$</th>
<th>$XV_{\text{nonfin}}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 informants</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(46/46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 informants</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(31/198)</td>
<td>(167/198)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 informants</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(69/145)</td>
<td>(76/145)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of nonfinite verbs in the learner data occur in final position and suggest an interlanguage grammar with a head-final VP. But 12% of the nonfinite verbs in the written data and 26% in the oral data show nontargetlike $V_{\text{nonfin}X}$ placement. The breakdown of the informants into subgroups reveals that 7 of the 23 learners in fact place 48% of their nonfinite verbs in the $V_{\text{nonfin}X}$ pattern instead of the $XV_{\text{nonfin}}$ pattern; examples are given in (21)-(22). Compare these percentages to the near-perfect production of V2 (Tables 4 and 5 above). No implicational relation such as “if target V2, then target OV” could be detected – many informants who produce nontarget $V_{\text{nonfin}X}$ nevertheless have perfect V2 (for discussion, see Bohnacker (in progress)).

(21) *ich wollte auch... schreiben Poesie und Gedichte.*

I wanted also write-INF poetry and poems

‘I’d also like to write poetry and poems.’ (Dagny, oral, 3 yrs)

(22) *ich habe nicht viel Zeit zu tun das.*

I have not much time to do-INF that

‘I don’t have much time to do that.’ (Yrsa, oral, 3 yrs)

For these learners of German then, the acquisition of V2 is *not developmentally dependent on target headedness of the VP* (here, OV) having been acquired first: acquiring V2 is much “easier” than acquiring VP headedness. This is an odd and problematic finding for acquisition models that assume a universal path of L2 development (e.g. Håkansson, Pienemann & Sayehli 2002) or a C-domain that is vulnerable (and an invulnerable V-domain (e.g. Platzack
and also for models that invoke L1 transfer at lower, lexical projections only (e.g. VP) but not at higher, functional ones (e.g. CP) (e.g. Eubank 1993/94; Vainikka & Young-Scholten 1994, 1996a, 1996b). Yet the same finding is unsurprising on an approach to second language acquisition that invokes the transfer of L1 syntax (e.g. Schwartz & Sprouse 1994, 1996): Swedish is V2 and its VP head-initial, whilst German is V2 but its VP is head-final. Transferring the Swedish L1 grammar to German will make finite verb placement in main clauses (V2) easy for the learner, but at the same time cause nontargetlike placement of nonfinite verbs – until the parameter setting for VP is changed to head-final.

In order to add more empirical force to this reasoning, let’s look at the data from a different study, Swedish L1 ab initio learners of German.

6.2. The ab initio learners and the English puzzle

In order to capture the initial stages of acquisition, I carried out another investigation, this time of adult ab initio learners of German. A micro-comparative setup was chosen to test the potential influence of knowledge of English, a factor that had not been controlled for in previous studies. I therefore had to locate native Swedes who did not know English (or any other foreign language), a difficult task as English has been a compulsory subject in Swedish schools for decades. Eventually I did find them: 6 old age pensioners who were taking an ab initio German class and were willing to be recorded. All were native Swedes in their late sixties and had lived in Sweden all their lives. For 3 of the subjects (Märta, Signe, Algot), German was their first ever foreign language, their knowledge of English being limited to a few words and phrases (greetings, foodstuffs, swearwords). Their acquisition was to be compared with that of the other 3 informants (Rune, Gun, Ulf), who had learnt English in their youth and had been using it during their careers. Oral production data were collected twice, after 4 months of exposure (German classes, 3 hours per week) and after 9 months of exposure. The elicitation method was the same as with the 16-year-old pupils: The ab initio learners were asked to record an oral monologue in German in the language lab on the topic “Was ich in meiner Freizeit tue oder tun möchte” (what I do or would like to do in my spare time) and to be as talkative as possible. This yielded four recordings at data point 1 (4 months of exposure) and six recordings at data point 3 (9 months of exposure). In addition, naturalistic oral production in dialogue form was elicited: At data point 2 (4 months of exposure), two of the learners were recorded in their home for 120 minutes each in one-to-one interaction with a monolingual speaker of German. More details on the methodology can be found in Bohnacker (2005). I then transcribed the recordings orthographically and analysed them. One-word utterances and verb-less utterances were excluded. For investigating V2, sentence fragments and subordinate clauses, (subjectless) imperatives and subjectless main clauses were excluded. Main clauses with verb and subject were classified with respect to placement of the simplex verb, or of the first verb in a periphrastic construction. Just as for the intermediate learners, I treated these verbs as finite, even though morphological tense and agreement marking is often nontargetlike. Compared to earlier studies (e.g. Häkansson 2001, Sayehli 2001), my corpora contain a large number of utterances relevant to the acquisition of finite and nonfinite verb placement.

The results are as follows. The 6 ab initio learners produce many subject-initial main clauses, with an overall average of 67% (1055/1574), but they also produce 31% non-subject-initial clauses (Table 10), and 2% V1. SVX never is the exclusive word order, at neither 4 nor 9 months. This finding indicates that not all learners of German start out with “canonical” word order; it also suggests that empirical studies which only find SVX (e.g.
Sayehli (2001) may have arrived at that result because of a small database or a method that mainly elicits SVX utterances.

The ab initio informants productively use non-subject-initial V2 already after only 4 months of exposure to German (14%-31%; see Table 10). Such early acquisition 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).

Crucially however, there is a categorical difference between learners for whom German is their first nonnative language and those who have prior knowledge of English: The informants who do not know English (Märta, Algot, Signe, white rows in Table 10) do not produce V3 main clauses in their interlanguage German, but those informants who do know English (Rune, Gun, Ulf, rows shaded in grey in Table 10) do produce V3.

### Table 10. Word order in main clauses, percentages. Ab initio L2 German.

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

Just as for the 16-year-old intermediate learners, V3 does not always indicate a violation of V2: 8% of the ab initio learners’ V3 clauses are instances of subject-verb inversion (XXVS), where the first element is an adverbial and the second a resumptive, as listed in Table 11 and exemplified in (23). If we exclude such instances of XXVS from the V3 counts, the figures change very slightly, but the difference between the two groups of learners is even clearer: Those who do not have knowledge of English never violate V2 (0%).
TABLE 11. Types of V3 clauses, raw figures: Ab initio L2 German.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data point</th>
<th>XSV</th>
<th>SXV</th>
<th>XX,VS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rune1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rune2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algot3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rune3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulf3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>91% (96/106)</td>
<td>1% (1/106)</td>
<td>8% (9/106)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(23)  
[Im Weihnacht] [dann] bjude ich ein Freund auch.  
in-the Christmas then inviteSWE I a friend also  
‘At Christmas I also invite a friend.’  (Gun3, 9 months)

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 12). Learners who know English produce on average 41% (97/235) nontarget V3 in their non-subject-initial main clauses, whereas those who do not know English never do (0%, 0/275). Examples of nontarget V3 are given in (24)-(28) below. Nearly all (96/106, cf. Table 11) are of the type XSV. 13

TABLE 12. Word order in non-subject-initial main clauses: Ab initio L2 German.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 mts German</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>nontarget V3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Märta1, Märta2</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22/96</td>
<td>74/96</td>
<td>0/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algot1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/19</td>
<td>19/19</td>
<td>0/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rune1, Rune2</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/87</td>
<td>43/87</td>
<td>36/87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/20</td>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>9/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9 mts German</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>nontarget V3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Märta3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/59</td>
<td>59/59</td>
<td>0/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algot3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/23</td>
<td>23/23</td>
<td>0/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signe3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/78</td>
<td>76/78</td>
<td>0/78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rune3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/43</td>
<td>26/43</td>
<td>17/43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/60</td>
<td>37/60</td>
<td>23/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulf3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/25</td>
<td>13/25</td>
<td>12/25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(24) **und dann ich lege detta kort und dann du nächst.** (Rune2, 4 mts)
and then I put [this card]_{SWE} and then you next
‘And then, I’ll play this card and then you’ll play the next.’

(25) **wenn wir ist in Sommerhaus wir gehe promenad in Wald.** (Rune2, 4 mts)
when we are in cottage we go walk_{SWE} in wood
‘When we’re at the cottage we go for a walk in the woods.’

(26) **in Montags ich seh ein Programm um Essen # teve.** (Gun1, 4 mts)
in mondays I see a programme about food # telly_{SWE}
‘On Mondays, I watch a programme on television about food.’

(27) **aber manchmal sie helfe nicht, sie muß arbeiten, ja.** (Gun3, 9 mts)
but sometimes she help not she must work yes
‘But sometimes she doesn’t help, she’s got to work.’

(28) **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 see it.’ (Gun3, 9 mts)

As Table 13 shows, the first constituent in the XSV V3 clauses always is an adjunct, not an argument.

**TABLE 13.** Types of first constituent in XSV V3 clauses: Bulked data from Rune, Gun, Ulf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Adjunct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>temporal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incl. 40 dann/denn/sen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26% of the XSV V3 main clauses are introduced by the connective element so (‘so’). This use of so is strongly reminiscent of Swedish, where conclusive/consequential så does not require inversion (så + SVX), resulting in a V3 order, compare **so ich will gerne sehen das** ((28), interlanguage German) with Swedish **så jag vill gärna se det** (so I want gladly see it). så – and interlanguage so – allows adjunction to CP (or to IP, for readers who prefer to treat subject-initial main clauses as IPs). We might therefore explain these so-V3 utterances as L1-induced from Swedish. The same V3 order occurs in English with conclusive so (**so I would like to see it**), so that the utterances could also be interpreted as L2-induced. Indeed, two reviewers suggest that interference from L2 English is more likely than from L1 Swedish here, because informants with no knowledge of English do not produce so-V3 orders. The point is well taken, though on the basis of my naturalistic production data we do not know whether so-V3 really is ruled out in the interlanguage of the informants without English; grammaticality judgment or elicited-production experiments would be necessary to decide this point. Two of the learners do start an utterance with så jag (so I) or so ich (so I ...) but then break off, leaving us uninformed about verb placement.

The bulk of the ab initio learners’ V3 main clauses are introduced by other elements than so, often temporal adverbials (63%), and exhibit an AdvSVX word order not generally
permitted in Swedish. Though many such V3 clauses involve initial dann ‘then’ (e.g. (24)), which might be construed as L1-induced, as V3 is marginally possible with the Swedish equivalent of dann, sen ‘then’ (section 3.2.), the learners also produce V3 with other clause-initial adverbials. I suggest that these are adjunctions to IP/CP in the learners’ interlanguage, transferred from English, where such adjunction is freely allowed, compare (24)-(28): und dann ich lege ... ‘and then I put...’; wenn wir ist in Sommerhaus wir gehe ... ‘when we’re at the cottage we go...’; in Montags ich seh ... ‘on Mondays I watch ...’; aber manchmal sie helfe ... ‘but sometimes she helps ...’; so ich will ... ‘so I’d like ...’ I therefore 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’).

One might argue (with e.g. Håkansson, Pienemann & Sayehli (2002)) that the existence of nontarget V3 utterances in itself does not constitute evidence for transfer from English. This is true. However, we must not forget that there is a categorical difference between the two ab initio learner groups. It is the absence of nontarget V3 utterances in the learners who do not know English that remains a complete mystery under their approach – a mystery that is easily solved if we allow for L2-transfer from L2 English in the other group. Thus, L2 knowledge of a non-V2 language can make it more difficult to comply with the V2 requirement of the L3, even though the learner’s L1 is a V2 language. In this regard, Swedes who do not know English are at an advantage when learning German, but of course they need not be at an advantage as far as syntactic phenomena other than V2 are concerned – and as for other language constellations, knowledge of English may help or impede acquisition in quite different ways.

It should be stressed that the interference of non-V2 English syntax on the learners’ interlanguage German is not total, but only intermittent. Recall that the ab initio learners who know English do produce ca. 50% targetlike V2 out of their non-subject-initial clauses after 4 months (Table 12), and ca. 60% after 9 months. And as readers will recall from section 6.1, after 3 years of exposure, the 16-year-old Swedes are virtually perfect in observing the V2 requirement in their interlanguage German, which is earlier than what the literature generally reports of learners of German with an L1 that is not V2: Tutored learners of German with L1 English and untutored learners (with e.g. Romance, Turkish and Korean L1s) do not or do not fully adhere to the V2 constraint, despite years of exposure (cf. e.g. Clahsen & Muysken 1986; duPlessis et al. 1987; Ellis 1989; Schwartz & Sprouse 1994, 1996; Vainikka & Young-Scholten 1994, 1996; Pienemann 1998: 118-130).

The high frequencies of targetlike V2 at 4 and 9 months might make some readers wonder whether the ab initio learners are precocious and too advanced already. Yet this is unlikely to be the case considering their low MLUs, their small vocabulary and their nontarget morphology (Bohnacker 2005). And while they may be mastering V2, other aspects of their interlanguage syntax are strikingly nontargetlike, as will now be shown for VP headedness (VO/OV); in my corpora, head-final VP and V2 in interlanguage German are unrelated. Just as for the 16-year-olds (section 6.1.), I culled nonfinite verbs from the ab initio learner data and determined their placement; the results are given in Table 14.
TABLE 14. Nonfinite verb placement in infinitival clauses, sentence fragments, and main clauses with a complex verb: Ab initio L2 German.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4 mts German nontarget V\textsubscript{nonfin}X</th>
<th>XV\textsubscript{nonfin}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Märt\textsubscript{1}&amp;2, Algot1</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(105/124)</td>
<td>(19/124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rune \textsubscript{1}&amp;2, Gun1</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(94/104)</td>
<td>(10/104)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9 mts German nontarget V\textsubscript{nonfin}X</th>
<th>XV\textsubscript{nonfin}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Märt\textsubscript{3}, Alg\textsubscript{3}, Signe3</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(30/103)</td>
<td>(73/103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rune\textsubscript{3}, Gun\textsubscript{3}, Ulf\textsubscript{3}</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(26/88)</td>
<td>(62/88)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 nonfinite verbs after 4 months of exposure to German, when 87% (199/228) precede other material (nontargetlike V\textsubscript{nonfin}X), and after 9 months of exposure, when only 29% (56/191) of their nonfinite verbs appear in V\textsubscript{nonfin}X order. A plausible interpretation for this difference is that at 4 months, the learners have a head-initial VP in their interlanguage grammars (which they could have transferred from L1 Swedish), but in the 9-months recordings, they are changing to a head-final VP. Examples are given in (29) and (30).

(29) \textit{nun haben ich} spielt \textit{Boule} vier Jahr. \hspace{1cm} (VO, Märt\textsubscript{a}2, 4 mths)

‘I’ve now been playing boules for four years.’

(Target: \textit{nun habe ich vier Jahre Boule gespielt}.)

(30) \textit{und dann solln ich} Boule spielen. \hspace{1cm} (OV, Märt\textsubscript{a}3, 9 mths)

‘And then I’ll play boules.’

This change from a VO to an OV interlanguage grammar is by no means complete at 9 months (recall also that many of the 16-year-old intermediate learners still have problems with nonfinite verb placement after 3 years of German), but it is a clear tendency. Moreover, it is entirely unrelated to the acquisition of V2: At 4 months, Märt\textsubscript{a} and Algot produce 85% nontargetlike V\textsubscript{nonfin}X (Table 14), at a time when their non-subject initial main clauses show perfect V2 (100%, 93/93, Table 12); and likewise at 4 months, Rune and Gun (who know English) produce 90% nontargetlike V\textsubscript{nonfin}X (Table 14), at a time when, by contrast, ca. 50% of their non-subject initial main clauses are targetlike V2 (Table 12). 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. 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 & Young-Scholten 1994, 1996a, b), 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)).
7. Conclusion

In this paper I have explored the acquisition of verb placement by Swedish learners of German at elementary (ab initio) and intermediate levels, focusing on finite verb placement in main clauses (V2) and nonfinite verb placement (VP headedness).

The empirical data suggest that contrary to claims in the literature, learners do not necessarily start out with “canonical” SVX. If there 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 indicate – contrary to what is often claimed – that Germanic V2 is not hard 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 4 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 4 months of exposure, but only in 50% of obligatory contexts: additionally, they produce nontargetlike V3, which indicates that knowledge of a non-V2 language (English) can make it harder to acquire V2. I have interpreted these results as clear 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. Hardly any traces of this hindering influence of English remain after 3 years of German exposure in the cross-sectional data of intermediate-level learners.

In contrast to these findings regarding V2, my informants do have problems acquiring the nonfinite verb placement of German. At first, after 4 months of exposure, the ab initio learners produce 87% nontargetlike VO orders. After 9 months, the percentage of such VO has dropped to 29%, presumably because VP headedness in the interlanguage grammars is being changed from head-initial to head-final. However, nonfinite verb placement is not completely targetlike yet, nor is it so for most of the intermediate-level learners after 3 years of exposure (26% VO). The acquisition of targetlike nonfinite verb placement (a syntactic phenomenon involving the VP domain) thus lags behind the acquisition of V2 (involving the C-domain) in Swedish learners of German.

None of this is particularly surprising if we assume L1 syntax transfer in second language acquisition. On a transfer approach such as Schwartz & Sprouse’s (1994, 1996) Full Transfer/Full Access model, according to which learners initially produce and process L2 utterances entirely through the L1 grammar, and only later change their interlanguage syntax by acquiring new rules/constraints/parameter settings, 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 (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 our 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 nontargetlike head-initial VP utterances, and this is documented for the Swedish learners of German in my studies 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 any attention to the possibility of English influence. To capture the developmental path of these learners, existing models of
syntactic transfer (such as Schwartz & 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 is not particularly widespread today. However, much (non-generative) research on trilingualism has already documented L2 transfer alongside L1 transfer in L3 production: In the domain of the lexicon, L1 and L2 transfer to the L3 seems to be the rule rather than the exception (cf. e.g. Williams & Hammarberg 1998; Hammarberg 2001; Heine 2001; Ringbom 2001), and also Sayehli (2001) notes lexical transfers from L1 Swedish and L2 English in the productions of her L3 German learners. The same holds for my subjects here (for details, see Bohnacker 2005). 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 their L2 syntax, I think we should look to the factors that have been shown to condition L2 influence on the L3 in nonsyntactic domains, namely (i) L2 proficiency in the learner, (ii) perceived typological closeness of the languages involved, and (iii) recency of L2 use (cf. e.g. Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner 2001).

I have tried to show that the following notions about nonnative acquisition of syntax cannot be upheld empirically:

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

As a consequence, I suggest that theories of nonnative 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. I believe it is time we took serious the complexity of different language constellations and the existence of transfer in nonnative acquisition. What needs to be done is to carry out methodologically sound comparative empirical studies of interlanguage for a larger variety of L1/L2 and L1/L2/L3 language combinations. Before results from these are in, it is advisable to tread cautiously when propounding “universal” developmental sequences for the acquisition of nonnative syntax.

References


Bohnacker, U. in progress. (detailed analysis of V2 in 23 Swedish learners of German).


Notes

* I would like to thank the editors of this volume and two anonymous reviewers for their extremely helpful comments and suggestions, and the audiences at CUNY, Lund, Växjö, UMass Amherst and Boston University for valuable discussions. This work was supported by grant 142-2001-6286 from the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskaprådet). An earlier version of this paper has appeared in Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax 74, December 2004.

1 Occasionally the Vorfeld does not contain one syntactic constituent, but only part of a constituent (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: 1626-1638) or as remnant movement (e.g. G. Müller 1998; S. Müller 2004). I will not discuss such cases here.

2 The Vorfeld can also be empty (yes/no questions, declaratives). V1 declaratives appear to be used more frequently and with a wider range of functions in spoken Swedish discourse than in German, cf. Önnerfors (1997) for German, Mörnström (2002) for Swedish. I will not discuss such cases here.

3 Certain analyses move the verb from the VP directly into C (e.g. Holmberg & 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 1991/1995). The existence and headedness of IP (TP, AgrP, etc.) in German is a matter of debate (cf. Haider 1993).

4 I am aware of other approaches that model V2 as single leftward movement of a larger constituent which includes the verb (e.g. G. Müller 2004).

5 A plethora of ideas 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 on the position it moves to (e.g. Platzack 1986a, b; Platzack & 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 Vorfeld – including nonreferential arguments (like the subjects of weather verbs), adverbials and V-projections – makes it difficult, I believe, to argue that they have an abstract grammatical feature in common (cf. also Haider 1993: 69-70).
There 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 clause, as shown in (i).

(i) a. så köpte dom upp EM Airways.
   this-way bought they up EM Airways
   ‘This is how they took over EM Airways.’

b. *så dom köpte upp EM Airways.

Incidentally – and in contrast to German – the Dutch equivalent of Swedish så, dus (‘so/thus/therefore/hence’), can also function as a clause-initial connective, adjoining to CP and giving a V3 order. Thus, in the Germanic V2 languages, the general ban on adjunction to CP seems to be stricter in certain languages than in others, and there seems to be cross-linguistic variation regarding the (small) set of elements that may adjoin to CP.

I will not discuss “V3” root clauses that involve a pause or intonation break between the initial constituent (left dislocated or otherwise) and the preverbal constituent.

Incidentally, Zwart (this volume) notes that in Dutch, a small set of “connecting adverbs” can intervene between the clause-initial constituent and the finite verb, e.g. echter ‘however’, nu ‘now’, dan ‘then’, daarentegen ‘in contrast’. Their semantics is somewhat different from the focalising adverbs of Swedish and Norwegian. For a discussion of related connectives in German, see Zifonun et al. (1997: 1637-1638).

For counterevidence, see Bohnacker (2003) for L2 acquisition, and de Roo (2003) for aphasia.

Sayehli (2001: 30-33) claims that Adv-SVX precedes OV in accordance with the implicational hierarchy, as she finds zero instances of OV in her 6th grade data, and only 7 in her 7th grade material. This may however be an artifact of data selection: Sayehli only counts uninterrupted declarative clauses with subject and verb, disregarding all sentence fragments, infinitival clauses, root infinitives, root participials, sentences with subject omissions, subordinate clauses and interrogatives. In order to investigate VO vs. OV, one would certainly want to look at the nonfinite verbal elements in all utterances, and not only at complex verbs in declaratives.

Other such uninformative cases are nonfinite verbs with a sentential complement, which must occur postverbally in German. Moreover, as the following authentic native German examples show, nonfinite verbs bearing focal stress can be optionally followed by a defocused adverb (i), and especially in informal speech, certain types of adjuncts may also occur postverbally, cf. (ii).

(i) ich hab sie gerade noch erWISCHT gestern.
   I have her just still caught yesterday
   ‘I reached her just in time yesterday.’

(ii) das Geld wurde alles aufgeteilt zwischen ihnen.
   the money was all divided between them
   ‘All the money was shared between them.’

There is also 1 instance of SAdvV, with the Swedish focalising adverb bara ‘only’ (i). bara allows V3 word order in Swedish (cf. section 3.4.), and the learner may have transferred this to German, the same V3 order also being allowed in English, his L2.

(i) Märta bara sage so, aber es stimme nicht, nein. (Rune2, 4 mths)
   Märta onlySWE say so but it is-true not no
   ‘Märta only says that, but it isn’t true, no.’