

### Diagnosing embedded V2 in Old French and Old English

Over the years there has been an extensive debate as to the target of verb-movement in asymmetric V2 languages. For modern V2 languages such as German and Dutch, the main point of contention has been whether subject-initial V2 main clauses project a CP, with den Besten (1977), Evers (1981) and Schwartz & Vikner (1996) arguing that they do and Travis (1984) and Zwart (1993) arguing that they do not. For older V2 languages such as Old English (OE) and Old French (OFr), whereas early generative analyses proposed that the verb always moves to a head in the left periphery (e.g. van Kemenade 1987 for OE; Adams 1987 for OFr), in recent years strong voices have made the claim that many or all cases of apparent V2 in these languages take place within IP (e.g. Pintzuk 1993 for OE; Rinke & Meisel 2009 for OFr). This claim gains *prima facie* support from the fact that more than one constituent can occur preverbally in matrix clauses in both OE and OFr (see Salvesen 2013 for OFr and Walkden 2012: 77–104 for OE). We will refer to the V-to-C analysis as the C-V2 hypothesis and the V-to-I analysis as the I-V2 hypothesis.

In this paper we evaluate the two hypotheses according to their predictions for embedded clauses. If the I-V2 hypothesis is correct in its strongest form, SpecIP has to be analysed as an A'-position not restricted to subjects (Pintzuk 1993: 25; Rinke & Meisel 2009: 111). All else being equal, then, we would not expect there to be any asymmetries between main and subordinate clauses, given that nothing should prevent material from moving into SpecIP in embedded clauses just as it does in main clauses. However, both Old English and Old French are usually regarded as asymmetric V2 languages.

In order to examine verb movement in Old English and Old French, we have gathered a pilot corpus of embedded clauses from both languages. If the I-V2 is correct, we will expect to find instances of V2 embedded under all kinds of verbs. If the C-V2 hypothesis is correct, we will only expect to find V2 under so-called bridge verbs.

For our pilot study, in Old English we have so far examined a total of 442 V2 complement clauses (an exhaustive sample from the YCOE corpus; Taylor *et al.* 2003), whereas the corresponding number in Old French is 114 (taken from *La quête du Graal*, in the BFM corpus; Heiden *et al.* 2010). In order to apply the bridge vs. non-bridge distinction in an objective manner, we have used Hooper & Thompson's (1973) distinction between verb classes in analysing these clauses. This approach distinguishes between five different classes of verbs (A–E), and it is expected that types C and D do not admit embedded main clause phenomena.

What we find is that OFr and OE behave in a remarkably similar manner when it comes to embedded V2. In both languages, non-SV V2 complement clauses are comparatively rare: 20.2% of V2 complement clauses in OFr (114/563), and 7.0% (422/6327) in OE. 62.3% of all embedded V2 complement clauses in Old French (71/114) are embedded under a type A verb (essentially verbs of saying). In Old English the corresponding figure is 44.6% (197/442). The second most common verb type is type E, with 20.1% (23/114) of the embedded V2 clauses in Old French and 26.0% (115/442) in Old English.

For OFr we have not found any non-SV V2 complement clauses under type C verbs, and only four under type D verbs. For OE we have found four examples under type C and twelve under type D. Crucially, though exhibiting surface V2, all these examples are structurally ambiguous: most feature heavy subjects that can be assumed to have undergone a process of rightward extraposition, as in (1) from OE, therefore yielding no evidence that the verb has moved to the left periphery.

- (1) Nis nan twyn þæt eow ne beo forgolden **ælc ðæra stapa ðe ge to Godes huse stæppað**  
NEG-is no doubt that you.DAT NEG be requited all those steps that you to God's house step  
'There is no doubt that you will be repaid for all those steps you climb to God's house'  
(cocathom2,+ACHom\_II,\_34:259.113.5787)

The conclusion we draw from the data is that there are indeed root-embedded asymmetries with respect to V2 in Old English and Old French (van Kemenade 1997 comes to the same conclusion for OE, though without having conducted an exhaustive search). We propose that the difference between the classes of verbs in Hooper & Thompson (1973) is essentially a difference in the complements they may select. Building on insight from Rizzi (1997) and Haegeman (2003), we propose that verbs of type A, B and E may select a ForceP complement containing a high complementizer, situated under Force<sup>0</sup>. Type C and D verbs, however, necessarily select a FinP complement containing a lower complementizer, under Fin<sup>0</sup>. Certain examples from OFr and OE strongly suggest that this is indeed the case. With type A verbs, there are several instances of doubly spelled out complementizers, as in (2) from OFr and (3) from OE.

- (2) Or dit li contes **que** quant Melianz se fu partiz de Galaad **que** il chevaucha tant  
 now says the story that when Meliant REFL was left from Galaad that he rode so-much  
 que il vint a la forest gaste  
 that he came to the forest wast  
 ‘The story then tells that after Meliant had left Galaad, he rode so far that he reached the Forest Gaste’
- (3) Hu ne wost ðu nu **þæt** ælc þara manna þe oðerne swiðe lufað **þæt**  
 how NEG know you now that each the.GEN men.GEN that other-ACC dearly loves that  
 hine lyst bet þaccian and cyssan ðonne oðerne on bær lic ... ?  
 him.ACC.SUBJ better touch.INF and kiss.INF the.ACC other-ACC on bare body  
 ‘Don’t you know that every man who loves another would prefer to touch and kiss the other’s naked body?’ (cosolilo,Solil\_1:42.14.539)

The data therefore support the C-V2 hypothesis for both OFr and OE.

**References:** Adams, Marianne. 1987. From Old French to the theory of pro-drop. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 5, 1–32. **Besten**, Hans den. 1977. *On the Interaction of Root Transformations and Lexical Deletive Verbs*. Ms. University of Amsterdam. **Evers**, Arnold. 1981. Verb-second movement rules. *Wiener Linguistische Gazette* 26, 15–34. **Haegeman**, Liliane. 2003. Conditional clauses: external and internal syntax. *Mind and Language* 18, 317–339. **Heiden**, Serge, Céline Guillot, Alexei Lavrentiev, & Lauranne Bertrand. 2010. *Base de Français Médiéval*. Lyon: ENS. **Hooper**, Joan, & Sandra Thompson. 1973. On the applicability of root transformations. *Linguistic Inquiry* 4, 465–497. **Kemenade**, Ans van. 1987. *Syntactic case and morphological case in the history of English*. Dordrecht: Foris. **Kemenade**, Ans van. 1997. V2 and embedded topicalization in Old and Middle English. In Ans van Kemenade & Nigel Vincent (eds.), *Parameters of morphosyntactic change*, 326–352. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Pintzuk**, Susan. 1993. Verb seconding in Old English: verb movement to Infl. *The Linguistic Review* 10, 5–35. **Rinke**, Esther, & Jürgen M. Meisel. 2009. Subject inversion in Old French: Syntax and information structure. In Georg Kaiser & Eva-Maria Remberger (eds.), *Proceedings of the Workshop “Null-subjects, expletives, and locatives in Romance”*, 93–130. Konstanz: Fachbereich Sprachwissenschaft. **Salvesen**, Christine M. 2013. Topics and the left periphery: a comparison of Old French and Modern Germanic. In Terje Lohndal (ed.), *In search of Universal Grammar: from Old Norse to Zoque*, 131–171. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. **Schwartz**, Bonnie D., & Sten Vikner. 1996. The verb always leaves IP in V2 clauses. In Adriana Belletti & Luigi Rizzi (eds.), *Parameters and Functional Heads*, 11–63. Oxford: Oxford University Press. **Taylor**, Ann, Anthony Warner, Susan Pintzuk, & Frank Beths. 2003. York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose. **Travis**, Lisa de Mena. 1984. *Parameters and effects of word order variation*. PhD dissertation. MIT. **Walkden**, George. 2012. *Syntactic reconstruction and Proto-Germanic*. PhD dissertation. University of Cambridge. **Zwart**, C. Jan-Wouter. 1993. *Dutch syntax: a Minimalist approach*. PhD dissertation. University of Groningen.