

Critical remarks on the Force-Fin V2 model

Over the past years, a new analysis for V2 has developed, claiming that there are (at least) two different loci for the V2 structure: a low and a high position. If the finite verb targets a low position – Fin⁰ – V>2 orders are possible. If the finite verb moves to a high position – Force⁰ – the language is a strict V2 language, admitting no violations to the V2 rule. The idea is that in a Fin-V2 language, there are several positions to the left of the landing site of the finite verb, opening up to the base generation of topics and other elements. If a language has high V2, there are hardly any positions to the left of the finite verb. This approach was initially proposed for Rhaeto-Romance by Poletto (2002), and has been developed by Wolfe (2015 and subsequent work). Walkden (2015) applies it to the West-Germanic languages past and present, where some of the crucial points for the analysis for Romance do not figure. Another component of this analysis is the bottleneck effect (Haegeman, 1996; Roberts 2004), which claims that only one element may *move* (rather than be base-generated) past the finite verb in a V2 structure. As such one element may have been moved to the left of the finite verb, any further elements preceding the finite verb in a V>2 clause must have been base-generated there.

Wolfe (2015) claims that while early Old French was a Fin-V2 language, late Old French was Force-V2. Old English, on the other hand, had a mixed syntax (Walkden 2015). In this paper, we will show how both analyses fail to account for the data with respect to topics.

We will adopt a CP model which combines Benincà and Poletto (2002) and Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) where there are two distinct fields in the CP: a lower field for foci and a higher field for topics. We further assume that the topic field is divided by ForceP so that Hanging topics are positioned to the left of Force and Left Dislocated topics occur to its right. In the case of OE we will assume a Familiarity Topic lower than Focus. For the economy of the presentation we do not identify different foci in (1).

(1) Hanging topics > Force > Left dislocation > Foci > FamTop > Finiteness

Given this model we see that in a Fin-V2 language, there is the possibility of having left dislocated elements, thus generating V>2 structures. Further, there should be no left dislocated structures in Force-V2 languages, only hanging topics. Given the basic distinction between hanging topics and left dislocated elements, the former should not bear case distinctions (Benincà & Poletto 2002, de Vries 2007) and be resumed by a clause-internal pronoun. Left dislocated topics may either be co-referential with a pronoun in a clause-internal position or immediately followed by a co-referential pronoun or a resumptive. The former is the Romance clitic left dislocation, assumed to be derived by base generation (Benincà and Poletto 2004; Benincà 2006; de Cat 2007, Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Fernández-Rubiera 2009, 2013); the latter is the strategy of the Germanic Force V2 languages as in (Grohmann 2000, Axel 2007, de Vries 2007, Salvesen 2013), which are generally accepted to involve movement on the basis of observed reconstruction effects.

We now consider data from Old French (OF) and Old English (OE), basing our analysis on extensive searches in the YCOE corpus as well as in the *Base du français médiéval*.

In OE (2), an initial topicalised element may be resumed by demonstrative *þone*, and in OF by *si* (3).

(2) [_{LD} *ðone ðe Drihten lufað*]. *þone he ðread*. (ÆCHom_II, 21:188.247.4154)
Him that God loves, him he chastises
'God chastises those he loves.'

(3) *A chest conseil si s' acorderent tout*
to this advice SI REFL agreed.PS.3PL all
'Everybody agreed to this advice.'

(OF 13th. c., Clari, p 38)

In (2), we see that *þone* is co-referential with the fronted LD, and that there is Case matching. It is followed by the light pronoun *he* in what is assumed to be SpecFamP, and the finite verb in Fin. As such, the OE left dislocation is structurally identical to left dislocation in the Germanic Force-V2 languages, in that it involves movement, and that the LD is immediately followed by its anaphor. Following the analysis proposed by Grohmann (2000), we will assume that the LD element in OE is moved through SpecFinP to LDP, while *þone* is the spell-out of its copy.

In (3) the fronted topic is a PP, which is excluded from a HT position. As such, we are forced to conclude that it is a LD. We take this element to be an indirect object, attached to the verb *acorder*. Unlike the OE example, it is followed by the resumptive particle *si*. Crucially, LDs in OF are followed by *si* rather than by a D-linked pronoun as in Germanic. In later texts, this structure is reserved for subjects. We will argue that this is the precursor of the French extraction strategy "*partir, c'est mourir un peu*" (*leaving, it's like dying*), where *si est* has been reanalysed as *c'est* 'it is'. In Old French, the cleft construction emerges during the period, but we have not found traces of the modern Romance clitic left dislocation structure. Based on this, we will claim that left dislocation in Old French was derived by movement and that the resumptive *si* is the lexicalisation of LD⁰. LD structures involving base generation is a newer option in the French language.

We thus find that left dislocation in OE and OF has very different structural properties, but that they both crucially occur to the left of FinP, and that they do not have the formal characteristics of hanging topics, which would be expected if the locus for V2 were Force⁰. Based on this, we consider the Force-V2 analysis to be ruled out for both languages.

Selected references

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