V3 and V2 in German varieties revisited

Introduction: As is well-known, German is considered a strict V2 language. Two issues have been controversially discussed in the literature across varieties of Germanic. First, the rigidity of V2 has been called into question and second, the derivation of V2 as such. While there is a consensus that V raises to C (or the highest head in Rizzi's 1997 model) in non-subject initial clauses, scholars disagree with respect to V placement in subject initial clauses: some argue that V always raises to C in all types of clauses, e.g., den Besten 1983, Holmberg & Platzack 1995, Vikner 1995, Van Craenenbroek & Haegeman 2007 among others, while others posit that V just moves to I/T, e.g., Travis 1984, Zwart 1993, and more recently Wastergaard & al. 2016. The present paper addresses both these issues in varieties of German and shows that they are related. We demonstrate that V3 orders are available in addition to V2, and present experimental results on the processing of V2 and V3. First, our data indicates that subject-initial and non-subject-initial clauses behave differently, in accordance with an analysis whereby non-subject- and subject-initial V2 clauses have different derivations. Second, our results show that V3 orders are not processed significantly differently from V2 non-subject-initial clauses. Based on this, we argue that V3 and non-subject-initial V2 have a similar derivation and the availability of V3 as such provides evidence for the asymmetric analysis of V2 (cf. Westergaard & al. 2016, Alexiadou & Lohndal 2017, Hinterhölzl 2017, Haegeman & Greco 2016).

V3 orders: V3 orders have been reported to be available in informal, spoken German (thus being register-dependent), in multilingual speech communities (= Kiezdeutsch), and, lately, also in various monolingual contexts. While V3 is low in frequency, it follows systematic patterns (cf. Wiese 2013; Wiese & Rehbein for an overview; Walkden 2017 for a cross-linguistic discussion). A lot of recent work has studied V3 patterns in multilingual speech communities of the type in (1) (from the multilingual part of the Kiezdeutsch Corpus, KiDKo/*Mu*). However, there are good arguments that such V3 orders do not arise due to transfer from contact languages (Wiese 2013, Wiese et al. 2017, Walkden 2017). Notably, V3 is also present in the production of monolinguals (e.g., in a comparable subcorpus from a more monolingual speech community, KiDKo/*Mo*, but also in data collected from other regions of Germany, e.g., TüBa-D/S; Wiese 2013, Schalowski 2014):

(1) danach   sie hat misch AUCH geblockt   (KiDKo, MuH9WT)
      afterwards she has me   also   blocked
      'After that, she blocked me, too [in an internet-based social network].'

(2) EY vorhin ick bin   so   na= HAUse jelaufen und …   (KiDKo, Mo05WD)
      ey earlier I   have PTCL to=home   went   and
      'Ey, earlier I was going home, and …'

(3) ja,   dann ich sehe jetzt Don-Giovanni von Mozart.   (TüBa-D/S, s27885)
       Yes, then I   see now Don-Giovanni from Mozart.
      'Then I'm going to watch Don-Giovanni by Mozart now.'

Typically, V3 orders in KiDKo/*Mu* involve a sentence-initial adverbial and a pronominal subject. Similar patterns are observed in the monolingual varieties. Assuming that the sentence-initial adverbial is base-generated in Spec,CP (or ForceP), data such as in (1-3) is compatible with the asymmetric analysis of V2, whereby V raises to I and the pronominal subject is located in Spec,IP (Alexiadou & Lohndal 2017; cf. Te Velde to appear, Hinterhölzl 2017).

Processing of V3 and V2: Against this background, we conducted a study on the processing of V3 vs. V2. We predict that speakers will treat V3 orders similar to non-subject-initial clauses, as these involve an adverbial in CP, while they will treat subject initial clauses differently. In order to test this, we ran a self-paced reading task with monolingual German speakers in Germany: we asked participants to read sentences presented on a computer screen by clicking trough word-by-word; the reading times were measured between each press of the space bar.

We examined the following conditions: V3 as in Kiezdeutsch, that is, with a left-peripheral adverbial ("V3"); canonical V2 with a left-peripheral adverbial ("Adv-V2"), and canonical V2 with a left-peripheral subject ("S-V2"):

(4) **condition**   **word order**   **stimulus** ('Afterwards, I answer the question and laugh.')

"V3" $Adv\text{-}S\text{-}V_{fin}$ Danach   ich beantworte die Frage   und lache.
                                            afterwards I   answer   the question and laugh

"Adv-V2" $Adv\text{-}V_{fin}\text{-}S$ Danach   beantworte ich die Frage   und lache.
                                            afterwards answer   I   the question and laugh

"S-V2" $S\text{-}V_{fin}\text{-}Adv$ Ich beantworte danach   die Frage   und lache.
                                            I   answer   afterwards the question and laugh

Results: Examining the overall residual reading times (collapsed over all regions), we found a significant difference between the S-V2 (M = -30.2, SD = 67) and V3 (M = -14.2, SD = 56) condition (p < .03), but not between Adv-V2 (M = -22, SD = 57) and V3 (p > .5, according to the post hoc Tukey Honest Significant Differences test). The results match our predictions and are visualized in Fig. 1:
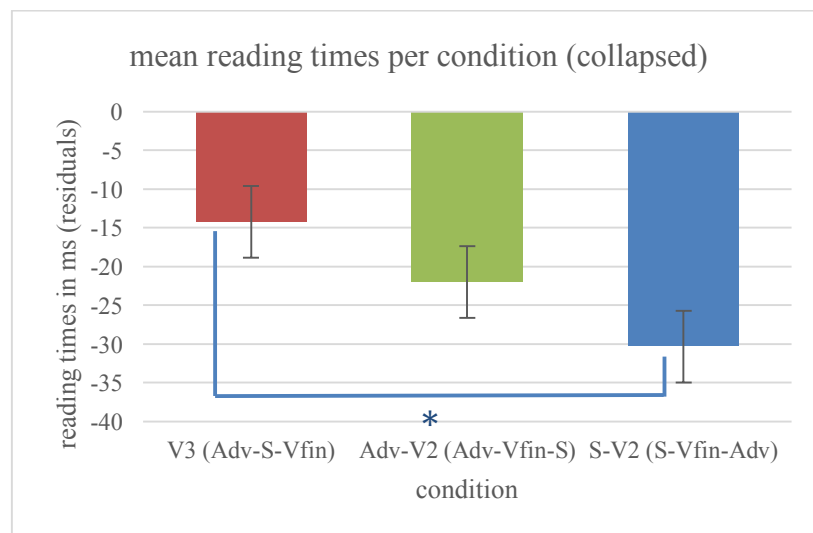

Figure 1: Residual reading times collapsed over all regions for all conditions.

Hence, while we observe significantly faster residual reading times for S-V2 in comparison to V3, we do not find this effect for V3 and Adv-V2, suggesting that they involve identical derivations.

Discussion and implications: There are at least two possible explanations for our results. On the one hand, the differences in reading times might be due to frequency effects; on the other hand, structural properties might play a role. Since corpus data do not provide evidence for the former account, we argue that different structural configurations, in accordance with the asymmetric account, might lead to processing differences. As a next step, we plan to test object-initial V2 clauses. Bader & al. (2017) report an avoidance of object fronting in spite of frequency effects. We might thus expect differences in the processing of object-V2 correlating with movement of the object vs. base-generation of the adjunct in Adv-V2.

Some references: Alexiadou, Artemis & Terje Lohndal (2017). Paper presented at AG 8, 39th, DGfS, Saarbrücken; Schalowski, Sören (2014). From adverbial to discourse connective: the function of German 'dann' and 'danach' in non-canonical prefields. Manuscript, University of Potsdam; Wiese, Heike (2013). What can new urban dialects tell us about internal language dynamics? *Linguistische Berichte* Special Issue 19: 208-245.