

## Between V2 and V3: Processing non-canonical sentence structures in L2 German

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Although the finite verb in German can be implemented at different positions in the sentence, German is often classified as a V2-language. V2 placement is found both in canonical SVAdv-sentences as well as with sentence-initial adverbs (AdvVS) or objects (OVS). Given this V2-rule, non-canonical verb-third-sentences (V3) of the type AdvSVfin (see 1) are usually classified as ungrammatical and attributed to learning errors in L2 acquisition.

(1) und dann die Studierenden bilden sechs Gruppen  
'and then the students form six groups' (Wiese & Müller 2018)

However, V3-sentences are not only typical for L2-learners' grammars, but also fulfill specific information-structural functions in (oral) mono- and multilingual language settings (Freywald et al. 2015, Wiese & Müller 2018). Also, self-paced-reading experiments show that monolingual German speakers do not show any processing differences between (contextually embedded) V2- and V3-sentences (Bunk 2016). Given this functional perspective, the question arises whether V3-sentences also have an information-structural component in L2 grammar.

Advanced L2-learners of German (50 at B1- and 44 at B2-level) were subjected to an elicitation test and a self-paced-reading experiment based on Bunk (2016). To determine whether participants produce V3-sentences under specific conditions, elicitation included the task of completing sentences varying according to sentence initial constituents. The self-paced reading experiment examined processing differences between different V2- and V3-sentences. The test sentences were presented embedded in contexts. In both tests, the semantic class of the adverbs was controlled (temporal vs. local).

Initial analyses show that V3-sentences hardly occur in production in B1-participants and almost disappear with increasing proficiency level. At the same time, only B1-participants show marginally higher reading time differences in V3-conditions. Thus, V3 structures barely occur in (written) production and do hardly deviate from canonical V2-sentences in processing.

These preliminary results pose challenges on both theoretical approaches and acquisition-related models. If V3-sentences were merely ungrammatical structures in learners' grammars, this should be reflected in longer reading times. Since this is not the case, it could be argued that V3-sentences fulfill information-structural purposes. However, their occurrence in use is so low that it is unclear whether L2-learners can actually derive the discourse functions of V3-sentences from the input.

**References:** Bunk, O. (2016). Adv-S-Vfin-Sätze als Form der mehrfachen Vorfeldbesetzung im Deutschen. Syntaktische Struktur und Verarbeitung. Universität Potsdam: Master Thesis. Freywald, U., L. Cornips, N. Ganuza, I. Nistov & T. Opsahl (2015). Beyond verb second – a matter of novel information-structural effects? Evidence from Norwegian, Swedish, German and Dutch. In Nortier, J. & B. A. Svendsen (eds.): Language, Youth and Identity in the 21st Century. Linguistic Practices across Urban Spaces. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 73–92. Wiese, H. & H. G. Müller (2018). The hidden life of V3: An overlooked word order variant on verb-second. In Antomo, M. & S. Müller (eds.), Non-Canonical Verb Positioning in Main Clauses. Hamburg: Buske, 201–224.

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