

V2 in Early New High German Argument and Relative Clauses: a Discourse-Pragmatic Account

This talk deals with Early New High German (ENHG) V2-argument clauses (ARG.V2) (1) and relative clauses (R.V2) (2), which are considered to be non-canonical in Present Day German (PDG) compared to their VE counterparts (cf. Freywald 2013). It will be argued that V2 is rather systematically used in ENHG, and that it is elicited by two discourse-pragmatical features independently.

- 1) sy sagten all [sy **wißten** es nit] (Fortunatus)
they said all they knew it NEG
'They all said they didn't know it'
- 2) do was ain edelman an des künigs hoff [der **het** ain weib] die ain außbund was von
there was a nobleman at the king's court that had a wife that a paragon was of
schoene (Fortunatus)
beauty
'There was a nobleman at the king's court that had a wife who was extraordinarily beautiful'

V2 in dependent clauses follows discourse-pragmatical licensing conditions that have to do with assertion in PDG (Gärtner 2002, Freywald 2013, Hinterhölzl 2020). However, the precise nature of these conditions is still under debate (cf. Jacobs 2020). On the one hand, it has been assumed that V2 in argument clauses is licensed by *mediated assertivity* (Reis 1997), that is, the proposition in the dependent clause is epistemically anchored at a matrix subject, not the speaker/narrator. On the other hand, more discourse-pragmatical approaches emphasize that it is factors like *discourse-newness* (Meinunger 2006), *at-issueness* (Simons et al 2010, Antomo 2015) and *discourse move* (Djävrv 2022) that affect the form of the dependent clause.

The corpus study reveals that both *at-issueness* and *mediated assertivity* can, independently, motivate V2. The data comes from narrative texts from the 15th and 16th century, with a focus on the *Fortunatus* (1509).

The *Fortunatus*, which is an original ENHG narrative, reveals a rather systematic picture: Dependent V2 may mark propositions that are on the same discourse level like the preceding and/or following independent clauses, as they add illocutionary content to the story line, thus having *at-issue* content (3) & 4)). In such cases, the proposition might even be discourse-old.

- 3) da was ainer [der **het** ain grosse prinnende koertzen] (Fortunatus)
there was one that had a big burning candle
'There was someone that had a big burning candle'
- 4) ich kenn wol [sy **haben** land und leüt] was sy gebieten das muessen ir underthon
I know well they have land and people what they command this must their subjects
volbringen (Fortunatus)
fulfill
'I know well that they possess territory and people, what they command, their subjects must fulfill'

Besides this function, V2 can also mark "bare" *mediated assertions* under verbs that denote an act of assertion. In these contexts, the narrator is not necessarily committed towards the truth value of the proposition. The proposition lies on a lower discourse level.

- 5) unnd sprach [er waere ym lieber dann kainer seiner brueder] (...) unnd sollicher güter wort
and spoke he was him dearer than none his brothers (...) and such good words
gab er im vil (Fortunatus)
gave he him many
'He said he liked him more than any of his brothers (...) and of such kind words he gave him a lot'

In sum, this corpus study will show that there are two distinct discourse-functions of V2 in ENHG dependent clauses, pushing two different developmental paths of V2-embedding.

References

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