

Use of the Left Periphery as evidence for Verb Second grammar

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Verb Second:

- Descriptively: Finite verb (Vf) is obligatorily the second constituent in a matrix clause. The Vf is preceded by one and only one constituent.
 - Modern German = prototypical V2 language (Kaiser & Zimmermann 2010)
- (1) a. [Gerne] **isst** Bruno Äpfel.
with-pleasure eats Bruno apples
'Bruno likes eating apples'
- b. [Wenn er Hunger hat], **isst** Bruno Äpfel.
When he hunger has, eats Bruno apples
'When he is hungry, Bruno eats apples.'
- V2 in Old French
- (2) a. [Ensis] **emprist** *deables* a faire home qui eust sa mémoire
Thus **began** *demon* to.do to.man that would.have his memory
"Thus the demon began to do to the man whose memory he would have"
- b. [Un jour] li **vindrent** *nouveles* que
One day to.him **came** *news* that
en la cite de Romme ot un cheval...
in the city of Rome was a horse...
"One day, news came to him that there was a horse in Rome..."
- Structurally: Roberts (2004):
 - V-to-Fin movement
 - SpecFinP obligatorily filled by an XP
 - Only one XP preverbally (EPP)
- V>2 in Old French
- (3) a. [Quant cil ot assez son cheval prisie],
When this had enough his horse appraised,
[*li empereres*] li **dist**...
the emperor to.him **said** ...
"When he had sufficiently appraised his horse, the emperor said to him..."
- b. [Et *deables*]_T [por ce que il volt les suens honir]_{FS}
And demon for this that he wants his shame.INF
fist ceste ovre savoir
made.3.S this work know.INF
"And the demon, because he wants to shame his people, made this work known"

Modern French: SVO, not V2

Left-Periphery

- Cartography (Benincà 2004, 2006): [Force [Frame [Topic [Focus [Fin]]]]]
- LP & V2 (Roberts 2004): [Force [Frame [Topic [Focus [FinP XP [Vf]]]]]]
 - EPP blocks movement beyond FinP; merging is permitted
 - SpecFocP = move
 - SpecFrameP, SpecTopP = merge

Information Structure:

- Topic: The entity or set of entities about which the rest of the sentence (comment) provides information; DPs (e.g. Reinhart 1981; Krifka 2006)
- Focus: “indicates the presence of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expressions”; AdvPs, PPs, DPs, whole clauses (Krifka 2006)
- Frame Setter: “specify the situation under which the truth value of the proposition has to be evaluated”; AdvPs, PPs, DPs, whole clauses (Speyer 2008)

Claim:

- in a V2 grammar, V>2 is permitted, as long as initial element is a Topic or Frame Setting element (i.e. Topic X Vf or FS X Vf)
- As V2 declines, Focus X Vf orders should increase

Table (1) Frequency of V1, V2, and V>2 clauses in *Merlin en prose* (13th century), *Perceforest* (14th century) and *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* (15th century)

	Merlin	Perceforest	Les CNN
V2	80.6% (229/284)	60.3% (158/262)	58.2% (156/268)
V>2	19.4% (55/284)	39.7% (104/262)	41.8% (112/268)

- Increase in V>2 clauses from 19.4% in 13thC to 41.8% in 15thC

Table (2) Frequency of initial IS element in V>2 clauses in *Merlin en prose* (13th century), *Perceforest* (14th century) and *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* (15th century)

	Merlin	Perceforest	Les CNN
Topic	16.4% (9/55)	14.4% (15/104)	8.0% (9/112)
Focus	1.8% (1/55)	6.7% (7/104)	25.9% (29/112)
Frame Setter	83.6% (46 /55)	78.8% (82/104)	65.2% (73/112)
Non-IS	0% (0/55)	0% (0/104)	0.8% (1/112)

- Focus X Vf clauses increase from 1.8% in 13th C to 25.9% in 15th C

Conclusion:

- Increase in Focus X Vf orders as V2 declines, as predicted
- 14th century = transition period; still V2 grammar?