Verb-third in early West Germanic: a comparative perspective

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I develop an analysis of the alternation between verb-third (V3) and verb-second (V2) in the older West Germanic languages in terms of information-structural considerations. I present the situation in Old English and Old High German as well as new data from Old Saxon, proposing on the basis of this data that there were (at least) two possible left-peripheral targets for verb-movement in Proto-West Germanic, $Force^0$ and Fin^0, with information-structural considerations determining the surface constituent order of neutral declarative clauses. Strict V2, under this account, is a more recent development in Old Saxon and later Old High German.

14.1. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the V2/V3 alternation that has often been

observed in Old English (OE) main clauses. Some scholars

(e.g. Westergaard 2005; Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2009b) have

speculated that the V3 pattern resulted from an innovation in

Old English. In this paper I present this alternation and my

analysis of it, then draw on comparative data from the other

early Germanic languages, Old High German (OHG) and the

little-studied Old Saxon (OS). It will be argued that the

possibility of V3 is more likely to be the result of shared

retention than of innovation among these languages. The

approach has in common with Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b)

the idea that information structure is key to understanding the

V2/V3 alternation, and that this should be captured in terms of

a split CP. However, I call into question their hypothesis

(2009b: 325–6) that V2 in OHG arose from reanalysis of V1

orders accompanied by a left-dislocated aboutness topic while

V3 in OE/OS arose from reanalysis of V2 orders with initial

familiar topic accompanied by a left-dislocated aboutness topic.

I argue that this hypothesis is not supported by the data, and

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that it is in any case not well founded from the point of view of diachronic methodological parsimony.

Sections 14.2, 14.3, and 14.4 of this paper deal with the clausal left periphery in OE, OHG, and OS respectively, and Section 14.5 sketches a diachronic scenario. Section 14.6 summarizes and concludes.

14.2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE LEFT PERIPHERY IN OLD ENGLISH

A first glance at the syntax of OE main clauses 'suggests a strong parallelism' between OE and modern Germanic V2 languages such as Dutch and German (van Kemenade 1987: 42). Examples (1)–(3) illustrate this.[1]

(1)   We habbað hwæðere   þa bysene   on halgum bocum
        we have   nevertheless the examples in holy   books
        'We have, nevertheless, the examples in holy books'
        (cocathom1,+ACHom_I,_31:450.315.6332)

(2)   On twam þingum hæfde God þæs mannes saule
        in two things had   God the   man's soul
        gegodod
        endowed
        'With two things had God endowed man's soul'

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[1] References to OE examples are given from the YCOE (Taylor et al. 2003).

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(cocathom1,+ACHom_I,_1:184.161.166)

(3)   Hwi wolde God swa lytles þinges him forwyrnan

       why would God such small thing   him deny

       'why would God deny him such a small thing'

       (cocathom1,+ACHom_I,_1:181.74.71)

In all of these examples the verb follows the first constituent; in
wh-questions such as (3), and where an adverb such as *þa* or
þonne is initial, this pattern is essentially exceptionless
(Eythórsson 1995: 293), and it is the majority pattern in main
clauses in general. Many scholars have analysed this as
uniform leftward verb-movement: to C in the case of van
Kemenade (1987) and to Fin^0 in the case of Roberts (1996).
However, three alternative patterns exist which cast doubt on
the analysis of V2 in OE as parallel to V2 in modern German
and Dutch. These are verb-late main clauses (cf. Koopman
1995; Pintzuk and Haeberli 2008), verb-initial main clauses
(van Kemenade 1987: 44–5), and verb-third main clauses.[2] The
latter pattern, in which two constituents precede the finite verb,
as in (4), (5) and (6), is the one which concerns us here.

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[2] I omit (second and subsequent) conjunct clauses from consideration, since
it has often been observed (e.g. Mitchell 1985; Kiparsky 1995) that these
appear to pattern with subordinate clauses in constituent order terms.

(4)   æfter his gebede he ahof þæt cild   up

        after his prayer he lifted the child up

        'After his prayer he lifted the child up'

        (cocathom2,+ACHom_II,_2:14.70.320)

(5)   Fela   spella him sægdon þa Beormas

        Many stories him told   the Permians

        'The Permians told him many stories'

        (coorosiu,Or_1:1.14.27.243)

(6)   Nu   se rica mann ne   mæg her   habban ...

        Now the rich man NEG can   here have   ...

        'Now the rich man cannot here have ...'

        (coaelive,+ALS[Ash_Wed]:110.2758)

Where the subject is pronominal, as in (4), it almost invariably

precedes the verb in main clauses (Haeberli 1999b: 335). Van

Kemenade (1987: 138–40) was aware of such examples, in

which the second-position constituent is a subject, and argued

that an asymmetry between pronominal and non-pronominal

subjects arose because the former were clitics. Pintzuk (1999)

took a similar line, in the process noting that examples such as

(5) existed in which the object appeared to be proclitic. The

existence of examples such as (6) was first brought to light in

generative research by Allen (1990: 150–151), and their

relative prevalence was established by Haeberli (2002), who found that subject-verb non-inversion (i.e. V3) occurred 188 times (28.7% of the time) in a small corpus of 654 clauses with full subjects in second position and a fronted constituent in initial position, taken from ten text samples. The clitic analysis is rendered extremely problematic by the existence of such examples, which indicate that another explanation must be sought for V3 in OE: as Bech (2001: 98) puts it, 'the fact that one fifth of the subjects in the [XP-V_{fin}-subject] pattern cannot be clitics, but nevertheless occur in exactly the same position as the clitic elements, can hardly be overlooked'. Koopman (1997) provides further general arguments against a clitic analysis of OE pronouns.

Bech (2001), Westergaard (2005), van Kemenade and Los (2006), Walkden (2009) and Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b) suggest that the factor unifying examples such as (4)–(6) is that the elements in second position are all discourse-given; Westergaard (2005) and Westergaard and Vangsnes (2005) present a close parallel from a recent synchronic study of Tromsø Norwegian. If this information-structural approach is correct, then analyses such as those of Pintzuk (1999) or Fuß (2003), positing V-to-T^0-movement and variation in whether the subject moves to SpecTP, are unenlightening with regard to V3 unless additions are made. Walkden (2009: 60) and Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b: 324) proceed to formalize the

information-structural patterns in terms of the cartography of the split CP in the tradition of Rizzi (1997). Here I will base my analysis on the more nuanced split-CP hierarchy presented in (7), from Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007), following Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b).

(7)   ForceP > ShiftP > ContrP > FocP > FamP* > FinP

         (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007: 22; their (37))

It is assumed that movement of constituents to these left-peripheral positions in OE is relatively unconstrained. Following Aboh (2008) and Cruschina (2009), I take information-structural features to be present in the syntax, added in the numeration; the element bearing these features must then enter into an Agree relation with a left-peripheral head. Where the probing features are associated with a movement-triggering feature, an EPP-feature in the sense of Chomsky (2000, 2001) or a generalized movement-triggering feature ^ in the sense of Biberauer, Holmberg, and Roberts (2014), the lower element must move into the relevant specifier position.

Multiple landing sites for the finite verb are needed; I hypothesize that these are (at a minimum) $Force^0$ and Fin^0 (cf. also Roberts 1996). I assume that in OE, $Force^0$ always requires a constituent to be merged in its specifier. This may be satisfied

by internal Merge of a high frontable constituent, corresponding to the Stylistic Fronting posited by Fanselow (2003) for modern German. The relevant feature can be conceptualized in the movement typology of Biberauer, Holmberg, and Roberts (2014) as ^ associated with an Edge Feature; cf. Rizzi 2005 for the suggestion that $Force^0$ is universally a phase head. Alternatively, a discourse-related adverb (*þa*, *þonne* 'then') or a null discourse-continuity operator may be first Merged in SpecForceP. In cases where the feature is satisfied by external Merge, the finite verb moves to $Force^0$ (I remain neutral concerning the exact mechanism of head-movement). This accounts for the consistently V2 nature of clauses introduced by *þa*, *þonne* 'then', and also for verb-initial main clauses. The latter have been argued to have the specific illocutionary value of expressing/recounting (M. Reis 2000a, 2000b), a property which seems to carry over to the older Germanic languages, where this pattern is referred to as 'Narrative Inversion' (cf. e.g. Sigurðsson 1993 on Old Norse).

In neutral declarative contexts, on the other hand, the verb moves as far as Fin^0 but no further, with other elements able to move past it into the left periphery of the clause. Crucially, familiar topics, which represent given information, may move to SpecFamP. An analysis of V3 in these terms immediately explains the high prevalence of subject pronouns in SpecFamP, since unstressed subject pronouns are 'the

canonical instance of a given nominal' (Westergaard and Vangsnes 2005: 137). As FamP may be recursive, as indicated by the Kleene star, sequences where multiple personal pronouns precede the verb such as those discussed by Koopman (1992) can be accounted for unproblematically. (8) and (9) illustrate OE declarative clauses with verb-movement to Fin^0 and given and new subjects respectively, abstracting away from irrelevant levels of structure.

(8)   [ForceP [*æfter his gebede*] Ø [FamP [*he*] [FinP *ahof* [...]]]]
              after his prayer   he   lifted ...

(9)   [ForceP [*On twam þingum*] Ø [FinP *hæfde* [TP [*God*] ...]]]
              in two   things   had   God ...

One problem with this approach (and that of Hinterhölzl and Petrova 2009b) is that, all other things being equal, one would predict verb-movement to Fin^0 to occur in subordinate clauses, since the classic observation that the complementizer and the finite verb are in complementary distribution (e.g. den Besten 1977; Evers 1981, 1982) can only be used to account for the absence of verb-movement to $Force^0$ in subordinate clauses under this analysis. Roberts (1996: 160) proposes that complementizers in OE are first Merged in Fin^0, thus blocking verb-movement. The complementizer then moves to $Force^0$

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because 'the selected Force of embedded contexts requires PF-realisation' (1996: 160). While this account solves the technical problem, the PF-realization requirement is no more than a stipulation, and the account also faces learnability problems: how is the acquirer to discern the first-Merge position of the complementizer? In the framework of Roberts and Roussou (2003) and van Gelderen (2004), one might expect it to "grammaticalize" upwards by eliminating the movement and treating Force^0 as its first merged position, but this would give the wrong result for OE. Nevertheless, I will adopt this proposal, since I have no better answer to this problem at present.

14.3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE LEFT PERIPHERY IN OLD HIGH GERMAN

In this section I broaden the picture by introducing data from a second early West Germanic language, Old High German. Much of the data is drawn from Tomaselli (1995) and Axel (2007), although the analysis I develop is closer to that of Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b). Since many of the relevant facts about OHG are the same as for OE, this section will be briefer than the preceding one.

It has long been observed that OHG exhibits a variant of the V2 property that is fairly well established (e.g. H. Reis 1901). Lippert (1974) counts 280 of 380 main declarative

clause examples in *Isidor* as verb-second (73.6%), with the rest classifiable 'into a relatively small number of easily distinguishable and clearly describable types' (Axel 2007: 63). Examples of subject-initial and non-subject-initial verb-second are in (10) and (11).

(10)   der antichristo stet   pi   demo altfiant

            the antichrist   stands with the   old.fiend

            'The Antichrist stands with the devil'

            (*Muspilli* 44)

(11)   pidiu scal er in deru uuicsteti   uunt   piuallan

            thus shall he in the battlefield wounded fall

            'Thus he shall fall, wounded, on the battlefield'

            (*Muspilli* 46)

However, there are also a number of cases of verb-third main clauses in OHG, first brought to light by Tomaselli (1995):

(12)   erino portun ih firchnussu

            iron   portals I destroy

            'I destroy iron portals'

            (*Isidor* 157)

(13)   Dhes martyrunga endi dodh uuir findemes   mit

his   martyrdom and death we demonstrate with

urchundin dhes   heilegin chiscribes

evidence   of.the holy   writings

'We demonstrate his martyrdom and his death with

evidence from the Holy Writings'

(*Isidor* 516)

Tomaselli argues that subject pronouns are the only elements

found in this position (1995: 348). Furthermore, she claims that

V3 clauses are only found in the *Isidor* translation and in the

Monsee Fragments; later texts largely do not contain this type

of clause. As Axel (2007: 239) points out, these are dated

earlier than most OHG prose texts.

Tomaselli's first claim appears to be falsified, at least

on the surface, by clauses such as (14) (from Axel 2007: 239):

(14)   forlazan imo uuirdit

forgiven him becomes

'he will be forgiven'

(Monsee Fragments 6,9)

On the basis of Tomaselli's second claim, Hinterhölzl and

Petrova (2009b) state that V3 in OHG constituted 'a very rare

declining pattern' (2009b: 316), later implying that such

clauses are grammatical only in OE and OS: 'depending on whether the subject is given or represents new information we find V3- or V2-clauses in the former two languages [OE and OS—GW]' (2009: 324). This has implications for their diachronic analysis, to which I shall return in Section 14.5.

Unfortunately, Axel (2007) provides little unambiguous data on non-pronominal elements that may occur in second position, other than a few examples with adverbs:

(15)   siu tho giuuanta sih

        she then turned   REFL

        'she then turned herself'

        (*Tatian* 665,19)

She argues that 'there is no compelling evidence that more than one XP can move to the left periphery in OHG' (2007: 249–50), but also that the reduction of XP-positions in the left periphery was not yet fully completed in earlier OHG (2007: 202), and that 'XP-pron-V_{fin}-sequences were a native and at least partially productive pattern in earlier OHG' (2007: 248), in contrast to Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b). Axel adduces considerable evidence for this, including the fact that pronouns are often inserted in this position counter to the source text in translations (2007: 248). She also demonstrates that such examples cannot be written off as instances of verb-late order

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(*pace* Lenerz 1984), since further pronouns may follow the verb, which they may never do in ordinary verb-late clauses:

(16)   Vnde do   iu   habeta si leid   in-fangen in

         and   then you.DAT.PL had   she sorrow received   in

         iro herzen

         her heart

         'and then her heart was filled with sorrow for you'

         (N Ps VII 23, 26)

She also demonstrates that there is no compelling evidence that these pronouns are X^0-clitics in OHG as suggested by van Kemenade (1987) for OE and Tomaselli (1995) for OHG; rather, they should be analysed as full XP elements (2007: 277), even if phonologically clitics. This does raise the question of why other XP elements did not move to this position (if indeed they did not), and what the trigger for the movement is; Axel states that it is simply optional (2007: 277).

Other than the absence of evidence for full XP movement to the left of the finite verb, the situation in early OHG, at least, seems fully compatible with the hypotheses about clause structure advanced for OE in Section 14.2, namely that second-position pronouns and adverbs are familiar topics in SpecFamP. This similarity of analysis is not unusual in the literature: Eythórsson (1995: 324–330), for example, explicitly

assumes syntactic identity between OHG, OS, and OE in verb placement in main clauses, at least to a first approximation. There is no need to assume with Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b) that OHG differed substantially from OE in this regard. However, it is true that the movement of subject pronouns to SpecFamP appears to be optional in those OHG texts in which it occurs at all, whereas it is virtually obligatory in OE (Haeberli 1999b: 335). Furthermore, as Axel (2007: 244–5) demonstrates, in early OHG texts pronouns may intervene between *wh*-elements and the finite verb. While this pattern is usually assumed to be ungrammatical in OE (e.g. van Kemenade 1987: 196), it seems that in OHG *wh*-questions do not behave differently from other main clauses. These more nuanced differences will undoubtedly reward future research.

14.4. THE STRUCTURE OF THE LEFT PERIPHERY IN OLD SAXON

Along with OE and OHG, OS is one of only three West Germanic languages to have a textual tradition dating back to the first millennium AD. Two main texts exist from this period: the *Heliand*, a gospel harmony written in alliterative verse of 5,968 lines, and fragments of a version of the Genesis story, also in verse. Both can be dated to the first half of the 9th century.

Given the antiquity of these texts, it is surprising that, in comparison to the vast amount of work dealing with the constituent order and clause structure of OE, OS has rarely been given any serious attention, a lack noted elsewhere in the literature (e.g. by Linde 2009: 366). For the most part, traditional philological works on syntax (e.g. Behaghel 1897) and grammars in the philological tradition (e.g. Gallée and Tiefenbach 1993) have had nothing to say about OS clause structure, and the extensive survey of verb position in the early Germanic languages by Eythórsson (1995) only mentions OS in passing. The only book-length study is Ries (1880), which due to its antiquity is useful only as a point of departure for the modern linguist. Rauch (1992), Erickson (1997), and Linde (2009) also discuss constituent order, but without going into particular detail.

My own data consist of an exhaustive sample of the finite clauses in the *Heliand*, using the Behaghel and Taeger (1996) edition. Clauses were manually tagged for clause-type (main, conjunct, subordinate, relative, *wh*-question, yes-no question, imperative), and for verb position (initial, second, or late), as well as for two other features: the negation morpheme *ni*/*ne* proclitic to the finite verb, and absence of overt subject.

Of the finite clauses in my corpus, 2,348 were analysed as (non-conjunct) main clauses. As with OE and OHG, a variety of surface orderings are visible: however, these fall into

a limited number of types. As observed by Erickson (1997), V2 seems to be the dominant pattern in OS as it is in OE and OHG. A total of 1,597 of the 2,348 main clauses in my corpus (68.0%) had the verb in second position, as in (17).

(17)   Mattheus uuas he hetan
        Matthew was he called
        'He was called Matthew'
        (*Heliand* 1192)

A further 481 clauses (20.5%) are verb-initial. Only 270 clauses (11.5%) have the verb in a position later than second. This is similar to OE and OHG: Koopman (1995), for example, finds for a variety of Old English texts that the frequency of verb-final main clauses is between 0.6% and 6.1%, and Cichosz (2010: 73–4) finds that between 10.7% and 16.5% of main clauses in OE, and between 1.2% and 10.7% of main clauses in OHG, have the verb in a position later than second. Some unambiguous examples of verb-late order are given in (18)–(20):

(18)   Ic eu an uuatara scal / gidopean diurlico
        I you in water   shall baptize   tenderly
        'I shall baptize you tenderly in water'
        (*Heliand* 882–3)

(19)   Krist im   forđ giuuet / an Galileo land

       Christ REFL forth went   into Galilee land

       'Christ went forth into the land of Galilee'

       (*Heliand* 1134–5)

(20)   Ic is engil bium

       I his angel am

       'I am his angel'

       (*Heliand* 99)

Crucially, verb-third as found in OE and early OHG, in which the pre-finite element is given information, does not appear to be a productive pattern in OS. I can only find four examples of this order occurring with a personal pronoun subject in my corpus; two of these are given in (21) and (22).

(21)   Thanna thu scalt lon   nemen / fora   godes ogun

       then   you shall reward take   before God's eyes

       'Then you shall be rewarded before God'

       (*Heliand* 1563–4)

(22)   Bethiu   man sculun / haldan thene holdlico

       therefore one should   hold   him   favourably

       'Therefore all should keep him in their favour'

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(*Heliand* 1869–70)

Both of these clauses begin with adverbs that may also serve as adverbial subordinators, rendering them potentially ambiguous between main and embedded clauses, although they are traditionally read as the former. More tellingly, since no adverbs are present as diagnostics for verb-movement to the left periphery rather than solely to v^0 (cf. Fuß and Trips 2002), neither is an unambiguous example of V3 with verb-movement to Fin^0 as found in OHG and OE.

Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b: 320) suggest that (23) (their (12)a) is an example of V3 with verb movement as in OE.

(23)   Thar imu tegegnes quam en idis   fan   adrom
        there him against   came a   woman from different
        thiodun
        tribe
        'There, a woman from another tribe approached him'
        (*Heliand* 2984)

However, this example is as inconclusive as (21) and (22) with regard to underlying structure. Since extraposition and heavy NP shift must be postulated for OS as for OE, it is possible to argue that the verb in (23) is unmoved and that the postverbal

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constituent *en idis fan adrom thiodun* 'a woman from another tribe' has in fact been moved rightward over it. Since this constituent represents new information—as acknowledged by Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b: 320)—this state of affairs is all the more likely, as rightward movement (at least in OE) appears to be driven by information-structural considerations (Pintzuk 2005: 124, n. 12; Taylor and Pintzuk 2009). Furthermore, as for (21) and (22), in context it is entirely possible to analyse (23) as an embedded clause with the meaning 'where a woman from another tribe approached him'.

The extreme rarity of this order in my corpus must also be taken as an argument against its productivity. For OE, the order XP-SubjPron-V_{fin} is 'used consistently' (Haeberli 1999b: 335) when an element other than *þa, þonne* 'then' or a wh-phrase is fronted. In the *Heliand*, by contrast, there are 462 examples of V2 declarative main clauses in which the subject pronoun follows the finite verb, e.g. (24) and (25), and 223 examples of V2 declarative main clauses in which the subject pronoun precedes the finite verb. All of these can be seen as 'missed opportunities' (Faarlund 1990: 17–18) for V3.

(24)   mildi uuas he im   an is   mode

mild was he them in his mood

'He was gentle in spirit to them'

(*Heliand* 1259)

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(25)   Thar fundun sea enna godan man

there found they a   good man

'There they found a good man'

(*Heliand* 463)

I therefore conclude that V3 as found in OE and early OHG,

with a familiar topic in second position preceding the finite

verb, is not a productive feature of OS, or at least of the variety

represented by the *Heliand*. Rather, V2 appears to be

generalized in main clauses in OS much as it is in later OHG,

modulo the V1 and rare verb-late patterns, which OE and OHG

also exhibit.

14.5. MAIN CLAUSES IN PROTO-WEST GERMANIC: A

DIACHRONIC SCENARIO

Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b) assume that V3 clauses were

the product of a single innovation in pre-OE/OS, and that a

different change took place in OHG. The diachronic scenario

they posit is as illustrated in (26) (their (28)) for OE and OS,

and (27) (their (27)) for OHG.

(26)   a. Stage I: (topic +non-V1)

[Aboutness] [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ (familiar topic) [$_{\text{TP}}$...V_{fin}...]]

b. Stage II:

[$_{\text{ForceP}}$ [Aboutness] (familiar topic) [$_{\text{TP}}$...V_{fin}...]]

c. Stage III:

[$_{\text{ForceP}}$ [Aboutness]$_i$ [$_{\text{TP}}$ Subject V_{fin} t_i] ...]

(27)   a. Stage I: (topic + V1)

[Aboutness] [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ V_{fin} [$_{\text{TP}}$ ...]]

b. Stage II:

[$_{\text{ForceP}}$ [Aboutness] V_{fin} [$_{\text{TP}}$ ...]]

c. Stage III:

[$_{\text{ForceP}}$ [Aboutness]$_i$ V_{fin} [t_i [$_{\text{TP}}$ ...]]

In other words, they posit that OE and OS underwent a process
of reanalysis that caused clause-external aboutness topics to be
integrated into a clause with a clause-internal, TP-external
familiar topic (26a–b). In OHG, on the other hand, this clause-
external aboutness topic is integrated instead into a clause in
which initial position is occupied by the finite verb (27a–b).
These topics are then reanalysed as originating inside the clause
(26b–c,) (27b–c). V3 as a syntactic possibility in OE and OS
thus results from the innovation in (26a–b).

      Hinterhölzl and Petrova's (2009b) general approach is
appealing in many respects, since they offer a detailed

consideration of the interaction between information structure and constituent order which makes nuanced predictions; furthermore, they attempt to account for a wide range of data. However, the specifics of their diachronic proposal are unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, both empirical and theoretical. For a start, Hinterhölzl and Petrova are incorrect in asserting (2009b: 324) that in OS 'clauses expressing subordinating discourse relations [topic-comment structures—GW] pattern with OE rather than with OHG' in exhibiting V3; as I have shown in Section 14.4, XP-V_{fin}-SubjPron rather than XP-SubjPron-V_{fin} is almost ubiquitous in the *Heliand*, and there is no clear evidence that clauses in which the verb has moved from its first-Merged position into the left periphery as in Old English, but in which a constituent still intervenes between it and an XP in initial position, are possible at all in OS. Of course, our data on the language is limited, and it could be that the non-occurrence of such clauses is coincidental: absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. However, at the very least the prevalence of XP-V_{fin}-SubjPron is an argument against treating OS and OE as identical in this regard.

Hinterhölzl and Petrova's reanalysis schema in (27) for OHG also cannot account for the fact (mentioned in passing earlier in their paper, 2009b: 316) that V3 orders do exist in this language, as clearly demonstrated by Axel (2007); see Section 14.3. Hinterhölzl and Petrova would either have to argue that

the unequivocal examples of this kind (such as (16)) are ungrammatical, which seems unlikely, or that V3 in Old High German is in fact the product of a similar innovation to that which took place in OE.

There are also a few conceptual problems with this analysis. The schemata in (26) and (27) make numerous assumptions about the syntax of earlier stages of the languages in question. For instance, in order for (26a) to be possible, Proto-West Germanic (or just Proto-Ingvaeonic) would have had to allow clause-internal preverbal familiar topics, suggesting that a V2 pattern, of a kind, was already possible. But for (27a) to be possible, Proto-West Germanic (or at least prehistoric OHG) would have had to allow verb-initial clauses with verb-movement to Force^0. Hinterhölzl and Petrova's analysis thus either requires both V1 and V2 to have been possibilities in Proto-West Germanic, a state of affairs which they do not support with diachronic argumentation, or requires extra changes, which they do not discuss, to have taken place between Proto-West Germanic and the individual prehistoric OHG/OS/OE languages. Furthermore, evidence for stages a) and b) in their schemata is lacking, as they acknowledge in a footnote (2009: n. 7). Finally, Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b) motivate neither of the changes that they propose as initiating the reanalysis chains: why would the reanalysis involve a

clause with a familiar topic for OE/OS acquirers only, and a verb-initial clause for OHG acquirers only?

The alternative I will pursue here is simpler, in that it only involves a single change: the reanalysis of ambiguous SubjPron-V_{fin}-... clauses as involving verb-movement to $Force^0$ rather than to Fin^0 in early Old Saxon. In terms of the analysis in Section 14.2, I am proposing that the system involving multiple targets of verb-movement, Fin^0 and $Force^0$, as found in OE and early OHG, was the original one, and the change that occurred in OS was the generalization of verb-movement to $Force^0$. The only plausible alternative is to assume that the change happened in reverse in OE and OHG, which is not as diachronically parsimonious: the well-established family tree structure of West Germanic, in which OE and OS (together with the later-attested Old Frisian and Dutch) are often assumed to form a North Sea Germanic or Ingvaeonic subgroup to the exclusion of OHG,[3] prevents one from positing that these two languages shared an innovation, and so one would need to posit two separate (but parallel) identical innovations. Contact

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[3] This hypothesis is not uncontroversial; however, the debate centres around the affiliation of OS, which shares certain features with OHG that the two do not share with OE (see Nielsen 2000 for discussion). For our purposes it is important simply to note that OS can be considered phylogenetically and geographically intermediate between OE and OHG. No one, to my knowledge, has proposed a subgrouping associating OE and OHG with each other to the exclusion of OS.

is also not a likely explanation, since OE and OHG occupied areas of the West Germanic dialect continuum that were not geographically contiguous, with the OS-speaking area between them. By contrast, the generalization of verb-movement to Force^0, and hence of V2, in OS and later OHG could plausibly have spread as a single wave of diffusion across the Continental West Germanic area.

I can only speculate as to why V2 became generalized in OS and later OHG but not OE. One possibility is to link this generalization to another syntactic difference between these languages, namely the possibility/prevalence of null arguments. In OE the possibility of leaving arguments unexpressed "occurs (or survives) only spasmodically" (Mitchell 1985: 633; cf. also Pogatscher 1901; van Gelderen 2000: ch. 3; Walkden 2014: ch. 5). OHG, on the other hand, seems to allow null arguments more liberally (cf. Axel 2007: ch. 6), and this possibility also exists in OS. Since the second position element in OE and OHG V3 clauses is most often a given subject, and since given subjects are the most likely elements to remain unexpressed if the grammar of the language sanctions null arguments at all, the evidence available to the acquirer for V3 in OS may simply have dropped below a critical level at some point in the language's prehistory, at which point internal pressures may have intervened to trigger verb-movement to Force^0 and thus generalized V2. Detailed comparative work on null arguments

in early Germanic is in its infancy (though see Rosenkvist 2009 for an early summary, and Walkden 2014: ch. 5); if it can be established that null arguments were significantly more common in OHG and OS than in OE, it may be plausible to posit a causal nexus, though such a change would have to have taken place before the onset of the textual record, rendering the claim difficult to assess.

Several further, language-specific changes must be posited in order to capture the intricacies of the data. For instance, V2 must have become generalized in OE *wh*-questions, since both in OHG (Axel 2007: 244–5) and Gothic (Eythórsson 1995: 25) pronouns were able to intervene between *wh*-elements and the finite verb.[4] Furthermore, if it is the case that only pronouns and not full XP topics could intervene between the initial XP and the finite verb in OHG, then an explanation for this qualitative difference as compared with OE is required. Detailed consideration of these questions is beyond the scope of this chapter.

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[4] Fuß (2003: 199) argues that all such cases in Gothic are word-for-word translations of the Greek *Vorlage* and 'do not tell us anything about the syntax of Gothic'. This is problematic in that we must assume that these examples are fully ungrammatical in Gothic if we do not wish to posit this pattern as a native one; furthermore, the existence of an identical pattern in OHG, in which the order does not follow the Latin original, suggests that we are dealing with a shared retention here.

To summarize: under the scenario sketched here, Proto-West Germanic had generalized V2/V3, i.e. verb-movement to Fin^0 and no further, in ordinary declarative clauses, with the surface occurrence of V2 or V3 depending on the information-structural status of clausal constituents.

14.6. CONCLUSION

In Sections 14.2, 14.3, and 14.4 I showed that the syntax of OE, OHG, and OS with respect to verb placement in neutral declarative main clauses was extremely similar, but that differences existed, primarily in the frequency of occurrence of V3 clauses: these are extremely common and apparently the default pattern in certain contexts in OE, rare but still abundantly attested in OHG, and, crucially, nonexistent in my corpus of OS. The alternation between V2 and V3 in OE was shown to be information-structurally conditioned. I developed a (partial) feature-based analysis of the relevant movements within a cartographic framework in which information-structural features are present in the syntax, based on Walkden (2009), Axel (2007) and Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b), and argued that OS differed from OE and early OHG in that it had generalized V-to-Force^0 movement.

Using the data and analysis from these sections I then outlined a diachronic scenario whereby OS (and later OHG) lost the possibility of V3 and generalized V-to-Force^0

movement. Such a scenario was shown to be preferable to that
of Hinterhölzl and Petrova (2009b), an account which faces
certain empirical and conceptual problems discussed in detail
in Section 14.5.

If my account is along the right lines, some light is shed
not only on the syntactic properties of the early West Germanic
languages but also on those of unattested stages of the
Germanic family tree.

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