

## OV and VO in Early New High German: Discourse and other factors

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Although Modern Standard German consistently exhibits OV order in subordinate clauses, Early New High German (ENHG) shows much more variation. In ENHG, one finds subordinate clauses with OV order (a) as well as VO order (b). Moreover, independent of the placement of the object, within the verb cluster one finds the 2-1 order (i.e.  $V^{\text{non-finite}}$  followed by  $V^{\text{finite}}$ ) as in (a), considered typical of SOV languages, alongside the SVO-type 1-2 order (b-c).

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|----|--|---------|
| a. | <i>das er in kainer sund verczweiffeln sol</i>                                     | OV, 2-1 |
|    | that he in no sin despair <sub>2</sub> shall <sub>1</sub>                          |         |
| b. | <i>daz ich damit sol pussen mein sund</i>  | VO, 1-2 |
|    | that I therewith shall <sub>1</sub> atone <sub>2</sub> my sin                      |         |
| c. | <i>das der mensch alle sein lebttag nicht anders scholt thun</i>                   | OV, 1-2 |
|    | that the person all his life-days nothing else should <sub>1</sub> do <sub>2</sub> |         |

This paper reports on a study of nearly 3,000 subordinate clauses from the *Bonner Frühneuhochdeutsch-Korpus* conducted with the statistics package *GoldVarb 2001*. First, using Kroch & Taylor's (2000) criteria, the paper demonstrates that despite the variation discussed above, ENHG has SOV as its basic order, unlike Middle English. I argue that the VO-type orders occur under the influence of a number of factors, including discourse.

As in previous studies (Ebert 1981 among others), several factors that favor the 1-2 order in ENHG are identified, including syntagm type, the presence of a stressed separable prefix, and sociolinguistic factors. In addition, this paper finds that focus affects word order within the verb cluster: the 1-2 order appears not only when the V itself is focused, but also when the NP preceding the verb cluster is focused, as in *nicht anders* in (c). In addition to the directly detectable cases of focus, indirect evidence of focus is found by examining the correlation between scrambling and verb order in ENHG and by examining word order in some contemporary German dialects. Since Bies (1996) found that object extraposition in ENHG is focus-driven, it appears that both of the SOV-type orders (OV *per se* and 1-2) have discourse functions.

The paper concludes with a hypothesis on the relation between focus and the 1-2 order and with a discussion of the diachrony of these constructions.

### References

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