

## Verb-third word order in Turkish-German language contact: Information-structural linearisations of mono- and bilingual speakers

In present day Germanic languages, we find new word-order options that allow violations of canonical verb-second in root declarative clauses. In these cases, two positions are occupied in the “forefield”, the left-peripheral domain preceding the finite verb. Such patterns have been reported across Germanic languages, in particular from informal language use among adolescents in urban speech communities with a large proportion of bilingual, heritage language speakers (Wiese 2009). (1) through (5) give examples from German, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Dutch, respectively:

- (1a) dann die sind zur Ubahn gerannt (KiDKo, MuH19WT)  
then they have to.the subway ran -  
‘Then, they ran to the subway.’
- (1b) jestern wir gucken Fußball (KiDKo, MuH11MD)  
yesterday we watch football  
‘Yesterday, we watched football.’
- (1c) jetzt ich bin 18 (Auer 2003, S. 259)  
now I am 18  
‘Now, I am 18’
- (2) å sen dom får de(t) brevet (Ganuza 2008, S.111)  
and then they get the letter  
‘And then they get the letter’
- (3) normalt man går på ungdomsskolen (Quist 2008, S.47)  
normally one goes to youth.club  
Normally, one goes to the youth club’
- (4) nå de får betale (Opsahl 2009, S. 133)  
now they get pay  
‘Now, they have to pay.’
- (5) toen we hadden eerst twee autos (Freywald et al. 2015)  
then we had only two cars  
‘Then, we had only two cars’.

In Germany, such examples are particularly well known from Turkish-German bilingual speakers in the contexts of new urban dialects (cf. examples (1a) and (1c)), but such usages can also be found in monolingual German speakers, not only in the context of multilingual urban youth language (cf. (1b)), but also in informal language in more monolingual contexts, cf. (6):

- (6a) EY vorhin ick bin so na= HAUse jelaufen (KiDKo, MoH05WD)  
ey earlier I have PTL HOME GONE
- (6b) ja, dann ich sehe jetzt Don-Giovanni von Mozart. (TüBa-D/S, s27885)  
yes then I watch noovannyGiovanni by Mozart  
‘Okay, then I will watch Mozart’s Don Giovanni now.’

- (6c) im Gehirn das Sprachverstehen ist wechselseitig organisiert (BSa-Sch )  
in.the brain the language.comprehension is bilaterally organised  
'In the brain, language comprehension is organised bilaterally.'

The different examples point to a converging pattern realising a verb-third (V3) word order option where the forefield is occupied by two constituents, rather than one. Judging from the data available so far, these constituents are often an adverbial followed by a subject, which identify, at the level of information structure, a framesetter and a topic respectively. This suggests a possible information-structural motivation for this pattern: an underlying preference to express framesetters and topics before the action. If the roots of *indeed* indeed lie in information structure proper, then we would expect the preference itself to hold independently of speakers' linguistic backgrounds, while its linguistic realisation will be subject to language-specific word-order constraints. Such constraints differ, for instance, in German and Turkish. While both languages can be captured typologically as basic SOV, root declaratives realise different word-order patterns at the surface.

In Turkish, the finite verb remains in its basic position and can be preceded by expressions for framesetters and topics together, in either order, with preferences depending on semantic class; e.g. (7). In contrast to this, German root declaratives place the finite verb in a position further to the left (the so-called "left sentence bracket"), and open an additional domain in front of it, the forefield. In standard German, this domain is subject to the verb-second rule; that is, it can only be occupied by one constituent, and hence speakers are forced to choose either the framesetter expression or the one for the topic for the left sentence periphery, and place the remaining one in the sentence's middle field, after the finite verb; cf. (8).

- (7a) Derya dün arabayı sattı.  
Derya yesterday car-ACC SOLD  
'Yesterday, Derya sold the car.'
- (7b) Maalesef Derya arabayı sattı.  
unfortunately Derya car-ACC SOLD  
'Unfortunately, Derya sold the car.'
- (8a) Gestern hat Derya das Auto verkauft.  
yesterday has Derya the car sold  
'Yesterday, Derya sold the car.'
- (8b) Derya hat gestern das Auto verkauft  
Derya has yesterday the car sold  
'Yesterday, Derya sold the car.'

In contrast to (8), the data in (1) through (6) above illustrates violations of the standard V2 constraint that would serve the realisation of information-structural preferences, and such violations might occur more easily in the more dynamic linguistic context of multilingual speech communities. In our study, we targeted the interaction of general information-structural and language-specific syntactic aspects in such serialisations, focussing on the particularly interesting case of multilingual speakers: we investigated the influence of syntactic and language-independent information-structural preferences for Turkish-German bilingual speakers compared to monolingual German and monolingual Turkish speakers. Bilingual speakers were heritage speakers of Turkish who had grown up in Germany;

monolingual speakers were majority language speakers in Germany and Turkey, respectively. Our goal was to pin down language-independent preferences in these different speaker groups, to uncover how far they interact with language-specific patterns, and to see how this might be realised in the heritage speakers' two languages.

In order to do investigate this, we further developed a set up introduced by Goldin-Meadow et al. (2008) to investigate language-independent serialisation preferences. In the original study, Goldin-Meadow and colleagues investigated language-independent preferences for the serialisation of thematic roles. Speakers of typologically different language saw a non-verbally, visually presented event and had to describe it (a) verbally, and (b) nonverbally. While verbal descriptions followed the different serialisation patterns for the different languages; , nonverbal representations pointed to a general, language-independent preference to place Actors before Patients, followed by the Act.

Given our interest in information-structural aspects, we used as stimuli short sequences rather than individual events, presented through comic strips that consisted of three pictures with a story of an animate (human or animal) or inanimate object (e.g., a ball, or a ring), with different times indicated for each picture by little clocks, cf. Figure 1. "Topics" were operationalised as the animate or inanimate object that appeared on all pictures, that is, the one that the story was "about", while temporal "Framesetters" were operationalised as the clocks indicating different times.



Figure 1: Nonverbal stimuli (= comic strip)

Participants were asked to describe (a) verbally, and (b) nonverbally the third picture of each comic, which always represented an intransitive event. For nonverbal conditions, participants were presented with a range of little plastic "Playmobile®" figurines similar to the players in the comic strip, wooden clock faces showing different times, similar to the clocks in the comics, and print-outs of different verbs, representing the actions performed in the pictures. Figure 2 gives illustrations for stimuli in the German conditions (on the left) and the Turkish conditions (on the right).



Figure 2: Objects for representing events

In order to describe a picture nonverbally, participants had to choose from this range and put elements on a “scene”, provided by a sheet of white paper. Although this task was mostly nonverbal, since participants were not allowed to speak, it involved a linguistic element in the form of those verbs. However verbs were given in infinitive forms, and since there were no further linguistic elements, they did not use grammatical constructions in their answers. Hence, these conditions can be described as “extra-grammatical”: grammatical restrictions were largely minimised, leaving participants a much greater freedom from language-specific constraints on linearisation than in the verbal conditions.

The study involved three experiments. Experiment 1 was conducted in German with monolingual German students in Potsdam, Germany, and Experiment 2 in Turkish with monolingual Turkish students in Izmir, Turkey. Experiment 3 was conducted with bilingual Turkish-German adolescents in Berlin. In this experiment, testing was done twice, once in German (Experiment 3a) and once in Turkish (Experiment 3b), with the same participants.

In verbal conditions, speakers realised topics as subjects, framesetters as adverbials, and expressed actions with verbs, as expected. Also as expected, they followed the standard linearisation patterns of the different languages, realising SOV in Turkish and V2 in German. Under these conditions, bilingual speakers behaved similarly to monolingual ones. In extra-grammatical conditions, however, we found a more homogeneous picture, indicating converging patterns. For these conditions, we recorded the order in which laminated verbs were placed on the “scene” to represent the event, in relation to the wooden clock and the plastic figurine. Since this was not a verbal representation, we called the orders “verb-front”, “verb-mid”, and “verb-end”, meant to imply no linguistic word-order commitment (as opposed to, say, such terminology as “verb-first”, “verb-second”, “verb-final” or “verb-third”). Results indicate a general tendency to place verbs in a position after framesetter and topic; in addition, we found language-specific influences that distinguish Turkish-German and monolingually German speakers from monolingually Turkish ones. 3 gives an overview of the relative distribution of serialisations in the different extra-grammatical conditions:

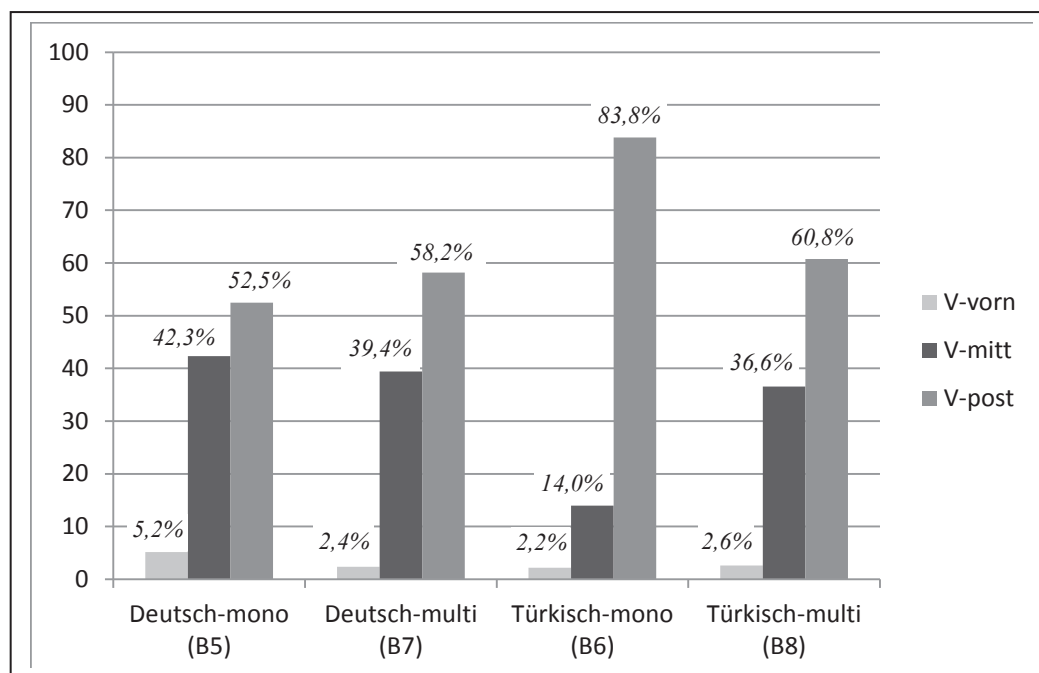


Figure 3: Distribution of serialisations in extra-grammatical conditions

As the figure shows, the V-end is the most frequent choice across all conditions. This finding, then, supports our hypothesis on language-independent preferences to structure information: when grammatical restrictions are largely minimised, we find a preference to place the verb after both framesetter *and* topic across mono- and bilingual speakers and different languages. This preference is most pronounced for the monolingual Turkish speakers (Exp.2), while in the other conditions, *V-mid* comes second, with approximately 40%. The difference between the monolingual Turkish speakers and the others is significant for this distribution of *V-mid* versus the other two linearisations ( $\chi^2=129.73$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). In contrast to this, there are no significant differences within the other speakers' data, for this distribution (i.e. *V-mid* versus the others): the comparison between monolingual German speakers (Exp.1) on the one hand, and bilingual speakers in the German (Exp.3a) and Turkish conditions (Exp.3b) on the other, does not yield significant differences ( $\chi^2=3.33$ ;  $p = 0.19$ ). This points to an influence of German V2 that is interesting for two reasons: (1) it suggests language-specific effects even in these extra-grammatical, mostly nonverbal conditions, and (2) bilingual speakers show the same behaviour as monolingual German speakers, not only in the German condition (Exp.3a), but also in the Turkish (Exp.3b), where Turkish was the language of communication in the experiment as well as the language used for the laminated verbs. A comparison of the overall distribution of V-front, V-mid, and V-end in Experiments 2, 3a, and 3b sheds further light on the second point: the data for bilingual speakers in the Turkish condition (Exp. 3b) does not differ significantly from their data in the German condition (Exp.3a) ( $\chi^2=0.67$ ;  $p = 0.72$ ), but it differs significantly from that of monolingual Turkish speakers (Exp.2) ( $\chi^2=68.83$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This, then, indicates that for extra-grammatical tasks, the bilingual group behaves like the monolingual German group in *both* linguistic contexts.

Taken together, we interpret our results as evidence for an information-structural motivation for verb-third, and for a dominance of German for Turkish-German speakers in Germany that is strong enough to have effects in tasks where grammatical restrictions are largely minimised, not only if the linguistic setting is German, but also if it is Turkish.

## References

- Auer, Peter (2003): 'Türkenslang': Ein jugendsprachlicher Ethnolekt des Deutschen und seine Transformationen. Häcki Buhofer, Annelies (Eds.): *Spracherwerb und Lebensalter*. Tübingen, Basel: A. Francke. 255-264.
- Freywald, Ulrike/ Cornips, Leonie/ Ganuza, Natalia/ Nistov, Ingvild/ Opsahl, Toril (2015): Beyond verb second – a matter of novel information structural effects? Evidence from Norwegian, Swedish, German, and Dutch. Nortier, Jacomine/ Svendsen, Bente Ailin (Eds.): *Language, Youth, and Identity in the 21st Century*. Oxford University Press. Ch.4.
- Ganuza, Natalia (2008): Syntactic variation in the Swedish of adolescents in multilingual urban settings. Subject-verb order in declaratives, questions and subordinate clauses. Dissertation. Stockholm University.
- Goldin-Meadow, Susan/ So, Wing Chee/ Özyürek, Asli/ Mylander, Carolyn (2008): The natural order of events: How speakers of different languages represent events nonverbally. *PNAS* 105 (27). 9163-9168.
- Opsahl, Toril (2009): "Egentlig alle kan bidra!" En samling sosiolingvistiske studier av strukturelle trekk ved norsk i multietniske ungdomsmiljøer i Oslo. Dissertation. University of Oslo.
- Quist, Pia (2008): Sociolinguistic approaches to multiethnolect: Language variety and stylistic practice. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 12 (1;2). 43-61.
- Rehbein, Ines/ Schalowski, Sören/ Wiese, Heike (2014): The KiezDeutsch Korpus (KiDKo) Release 1.0. In: Calzolari, Nicoletta/ Choukri, Khalid/ Declerck, Thierry/ Loftsson, Hrafn/ Maegaard, Bente/ Mariani, Joseph/ Moreno, Asuncion/ Odijk, Jan/ Piperidis, Stelios (Eds.): *Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation*. Reykjavik, Iceland. 3927-3934.
- Wiese, Heike (2009): Grammatical innovation in multiethnic urban Europe: new linguistic practices among adolescents. *Lingua* 119. 782-806.
- Wiese, Heike/ Freywald, Ulrike/ Schalowski, Sören/ Mayr, Katharina (2012): Das KiezDeutsch-Korpus. Spontansprachliche Daten Jugendlicher aus urbanen Wohngebieten. In: *Deutsche Sprache* 40. 97-123.