

Embedded verb placement in North American and Argentine heritage Scandinavian

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In present-day Mainland Scandinavian, the finite verb moves to C in main clauses. In embedded clauses (except certain asserted clauses; Julien 2015), the verb remains in situ, as diagnosed by the order of the verb relative to negation/sentence adverbs (1), which mark the border between vP and TP (e.g., Platzack 2011; see Wiklund et al. 2007 for a different view).¹

- (1) mannen [CP som [TP {*røyker} [vP ikke {røyker}]]]
 man.DEF RC smokes not smokes
 ‘the man who doesn’t smoke’ (Norwegian)

This paper discusses embedded verb placement in heritage Norwegian and Swedish in two contact situations: North America, with English as the

majority language (NAmScand), and Argentina, with Spanish as the majority language (ArgScand).² We focus on relative clauses, a clause type where verb placement can be diagnosed unambiguously in the presence of negation/adverbs.³ For NAmScand, we build on Larsson & Johannessen (2015) (L&J) with additional data from the Corpus of American Nordic Speech (CANS) (speakers mainly elderly 3–4-generation immigrants, recorded in 2010–2016). For ArgNo, the population of speakers is small and tagged corpus data are currently unavailable. As relative clauses with negation/adverbs are infrequent in free speech, we conducted an oral production task (in 2022) with 20 participants (mainly elderly 2nd-generation immigrants), eliciting subject relatives with negation/‘always/never’ (based on Novogrodsky & Friedmann (2006), adapted to elderly heritage speakers by using pictures).

L&J show that NAmScand differs from homeland Scandinavian: several speakers produce the order V-Neg/Adv, suggesting that the verb has left vP. This pattern is not restricted to certain clause types and occurs in relative clauses (2). L&J analyze V-Neg/Adv orders in NAmScand as V-to-T, as the verb stays below the subject.

- (2) en som **forstår** **ikke** så mye norsk
 one ... RC understands not so much Norwegian
 ‘one who doesn’t understand much Norwegian’ (L&J)

We ran an additional query in CANS targeting relative clauses with negation/adverbs (Table 1). Our results corroborate L&J’s findings: 46.5% of the

71 hits (produced by 39 speakers) have V-Neg/Adv (V-to-T).

<i>Table 1</i>	Neg/Adv-V	V-Neg/Adv	Total
<i>NAm-Scand</i>	38 (53.5%)	33 (46.5%)	71 (100%)

The predominant pattern in ArgScand is Neg/Adv-V (Table 2), indicating that V-in-situ is retained to a higher degree than in NAmScand, but not categorically –

there is 20.5% V-Neg/Adv). There are some systematic patterns in the variation in ArgScand;

<i>Table 2</i>	Neg/Adv-V	V-Neg/Adv	Total
<i>ArgScand</i>	89 (79.5%)	23 (20.5%)	112 (100%)

¹ *Som* is an uninflected complementizer introducing relative clauses.

² Heritage languages are acquired in the home but are not dominant languages in the larger society (Rothman 2009).

³ We only include subject relatives to avoid A’-movement-operations that are potentially difficult for heritage speakers (Polinsky 2018).

notably, there is a higher proportion of V-Adv with ‘always/never’ than with negation.⁴ Cf. (3a–b), produced by one individual:

- (3) a. han som **läser alltid** tidningen
he RC reads always newspaper.DEF
‘the one who always reads the newspaper’
- b. hon som **inte har** hatt
she RC has not hat
‘the one who doesn’t have a hat’

The innovative V-Neg/Adv orders cannot be fully explained by cross-linguistic influence (CLI) from the majority languages. The asymmetry between negation and ‘always/never’ in ArgScand is mirrored by an optional pattern for certain adverbs in Spanish (Zagona 2002). However, Spanish negation always precedes the verb (*la mujer que **no tiene** sombrero*) – still, V-Neg is found in ArgScand. English has Adv-V (V-in-situ) except with auxiliaries/copulas/do-support (V-Neg); no such correlation between verb placement and verb type is found in our sample. Spanish is commonly analyzed with general V-to-T and a higher position for negation (Zagona 2002); thus, one might consider CLI only affecting the structural position of the verb (and negation remaining “homeland-like”) in ArgScand. However, this would predict more V-to-T in ArgScand than in NAmScand (as English has V-in-situ, Roberts 2007), contrary to our findings.

We analyze the innovative verb placement in both NAmScand and ArgScand as divergent attainment (Polinsky 2018, L&J). The pattern with V-Neg/Adv is attested in monolingual children in Scandinavia, but while homeland speakers eventually abandon it, it is maintained by heritage speakers, who receive more limited input (see L&J). Our findings highlight that syntactic change in contact situations does not necessarily, or primarily, involve CLI. We propose that the differences between NAmScand and ArgScand are primarily due to differences in the communities: NAmScand speakers are 3–4-generation immigrants (i.e., their parents were heritage speakers), and generally illiterate in Scandinavian. These two factors may lower the frequency of complex structures like embedded clauses in the input (Karstadt 2003). ArgScand speakers are mostly 2nd-generation immigrants; they also read in Scandinavian. This may contribute to a higher degree of stability – but it does not completely prevent innovation.

Selected references: Julien, M. 2015. The force of V2 revisited. *Journal of Comp Germ Ling* 18. Koeneman, O. & Zeijlstra, H. 2014. The RAH rehabilitated. LI. Larsson, I. & Johannessen, J.B. 2015. Incomplete acquisition and verb placement in heritage Scand. In Page & Putnam, *Moribund Heritage Langs in North Am.* Novogrodsky, R., & Friedmann, N. 2006. The prod. of relative clauses in SLI. *Adv. in Speech-Lang. Pathology*, Polinsky, M. 2018. *HLs and their speakers*. Wiklund, A.L. et al. 2007. Rethinking Scand. verb movement. *Journal of Comp Germ Ling* 10.

⁴ This pattern interacts with other factors which we have yet to analyze in more detail. Differences between adverbs and negation have also been observed in certain varieties of homeland Scandinavian; see Bentzen (2007), Wiklund et al. (2007), Koeneman & Zeijlstra (2014).