

Is all Alemannic VO?

Indications from Verb Doubling

What is sometimes called verb doubling is the construction where an infinitive-like particle is obligatorily interposed between a full verb of a certain class (see (1)) and that verb's infinitive complement (Hodler, 1969; Lötscher, 1993), as in (2). Although the morphology of such particles corresponds to that of the full verb it occurs with (e.g. *ga* : *gaa*, *la* : *laa*), their categorial status is under debate (Salzmann & Brandner, 2011; Schallert, 2014). This talk defends the analysis as a verbal head, since that predicts the word order in doubling, tripling, and particle-only data, including when objects are involved. If true, the analysis of doublers as verbal heads has an important implication: Since doublers without exception precede their complement across subdialects, the doubler's phrase (be it a VP or not) is head-initial. Since Alemannic non-nominal complements occur both before and after the a verb, an analysis as either VO or OV is in principle possible, although nominal objects only occur preverbally. Either way, an analysis as either VO or OV requires the explanation of the respective other order by some mechanism. Following the evidence of verb doubling being strictly VO, I argue that all OV orders in Alemannic involve object raising. Assuming general head-initialness for the Alemannic verbal domain has the theoretical benefit of salvaging the Final-over-Final violation (head-initial doubler phrase under a head-final VP, Salzmann (2010), see Sheehan et al. (2017)), while still being capable of predicting both VO and OV word orders correctly.

In a head movement analysis of verb doubling, the syntax does justice to the phenomenon's name: Doubling particles are actual doubles (copies) in a movement chain of the verbal head V. This means V-to-v or V-to-T in embedded clauses (as in (2)) and V-to-v-to-C or V-to-T-to-C in main clauses (based on the standard verb-second analysis of movement to C). Assuming that this movement happens in all cases, the phenomenon really is the non-deletion of the trace, or even of several traces in the case of tripling (as in (3)). The difference between a language with doubling (Alemannic) and one without (e.g. Standard German) is, under this view, a matter of lexical variation.

Configurations without a finite verb (as in (4)), are a challenge to the present analysis, since there are not enough positions in the structure for the head movement which this doubling account is based on (see also Salzmann (2013, fn. 6)). One solution to this is to assume that verbs (here: *go*) start as a root head and raise to V, creating an intermediate space for object raising in the specifier of rootP. This intuitively fits the assumption that doubler particles are not full verbs (shown by their vowel length compared to infinitives and their lack of inflectional morphology).

In sum, whatever the exact positions of the heads (and complements) in question is, it is argued that a VO analysis of Alemannic together with the head-movement account of verb doubling defended here is the most coherent way to predict the observed word orders with existing mechanisms, and salvaging Salzmann's FOFC problem. In the talk I will address previous objections to a head-movement analysis and show that none of them are problematic for my account.

- (1) a. goo (“go”)
 b. choo (“come”)
 c. afoo (“begin”)
 d. loo (“let”)
- (2) “that I go buy shoes”
- a. *dass i [ga schuah_i koufa t_i]_k gang t_k* OV
 that I go.ptcl shoes buy go.lsg
- b. *dass i [schuah_i ga t_i koufa t_i]_k gang t_k* raised, OV
 that I shoes go.ptcl buy go.lsg
- c. *dass i gang ga schuah_i koufa t_i* VO
 that I go.lsg go.ptcl shoes buy
- d. *dass i gang schuah_i ga t_i koufa t_i* raised, VO
 that I go.lsg shoes go.ptcl buy
- (3) *i gang ga d schuah ga koufa* tripling
 I go.lsg go.ptcl the shoes go.ptcl buy
 I go buy the shoes
- (4) *ga bada goo* doubler under a nonfinite doubling verb
 go.ptcl swim go
 go swimming

References

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