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THE CLAUSE-INITIAL POSITION IN L2 GERMAN DECLARATIVES

Transfer of Information Structure

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This article investigates the information structure of verb-second (V2) declaratives in Swedish, German, and nonnative German. Even though almost any type of element can occur in the so-called prefield, the clause-initial preverbal position of V2 declaratives, we have found language-specific patterns in native-speaker corpora: The frequencies of prefield constituent types differ substantially between German and Swedish, and Swedish postpones new (rhematic) information and instead fills the prefield with given (thematic) elements and elements of no or low informational value (e.g., expletives) to a far greater extent than German. We compare Swedish learners of German to native controls matched for age and genre (Bohnacker, 2005, 2006; Rosén, 2006). These learners master the syntactic properties of V2 but start their sentences in nonnative ways. They overapply the Swedish principle of rheme later in their second language German, indicating first language (L1) transfer at the interface of syntax and information structure, especially for structures that are frequent in the L1.

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Much of the debate in SLA theory concerns the extent to which the native language (L1) plays a role in the acquisition of a second (L2) or foreign language. The present article aims to contribute to this debate by presenting new empirical data from a closely related language pair, Swedish and German, for the domain of information structure in verb second (V2) declaratives.

Certain approaches assume that the L1 grammar initially plays no role in SLA but that learners make use of a universal base or so-called canonical word order (subject [S]-verb [V]-object [O], with the possibility of another element [X] in the third position; e.g., Clahsen & Muysken, 1986; Klein & Perdue, 1992; Pienemann, 1998). Such approaches predict that L2 learners with different L1s acquiring the same L2 show the same developmental sequence. For L2 German, the following universal path of grammatical development has been proposed (e.g., Pienemann):

(1) Stage 1 words
Stage 2 SVX
Stage 3 Adv-SVX
Stage 4 verb separation ($SV_{finite}OV_{nonfinite}$)
Stage 5 inversion (XVS)
Stage 6 V-end in subordinate clauses

However, this allegedly universal developmental sequence has also been criticized: Although L1 Romance and L1 English speakers may exhibit the developmental sequence illustrated in (1) in their L2 German, L1 Turkish and L1 Korean learners of German do not; they start to produce $OV_{nonfinite}$ right away (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994; Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1994). Because Turkish and Korean are OV languages, but Romance and English are VO languages, the L1 grammar appears to exert a crucial influence on the L2, such that L2 learners with typologically different L1s who are acquiring the same L2 show different developmental sequences. Based on these findings, Schwartz and Sprouse (1994, 1996, 2000) developed a transfer model of SLA, according to which learners initially transfer their entire L1 syntax—lexical as well as functional categories—and produce and process L2 utterances through the L1 grammar. Only after this initial state may learners change their interlanguage syntax by abandoning L1 rules (constraints, parameter settings), acquiring new rules, constraints, and parameter settings—which may or may not be those of the target language—and eventually converging or not converging on a targetlike L2 grammar. Schwartz and Sprouse's (1994, 1996) model is well known, and its explicitness (full transfer) makes it easy to test against empirical data from beginning learners.

What about Swedish learners of German? Swedish is typologically, grammatically, and lexically very close to German (with an estimated 80% of Swedish words cognate with German words). Syntactically, both Swedish and German adhere to the V2 constraint that requires the finite verb in declaratives to be the second constituent. In non-subject-initial main clauses, so-called

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inversion of the subject and the verb (XVS) is required, and verb third (V3) is generally ungrammatical (for exceptions, see Bohnacker, 2005).[1] The position to the left of the finite verb is called the prefield (German *Vorfeld*, Swedish *fundament*; see, e.g., Drach, 1937; Reis, 1980); this is also almost always the clause-initial position.[2] In principle, the prefield in Swedish and German may be occupied by almost any type of constituent, irrespective of syntactic category, complexity, and semantic function; what is fixed is the verb in second position.

A full transfer approach would predict that Swedish learners of German should master V2 word order right away. However, Håkansson, Pienemann, and Sayehli (2002) claimed that Swedish natives violate V2 in their L2 German, following the sequence illustrated in (1). Our experience as German teachers at schools and universities in Sweden prompted the empirical investigation of this issue. In Bohnacker (2005, 2006), Swedes learning German were shown to productively use V2 in oral narratives after only 4 months of exposure; these findings are summarized in the next section. Here, we also present new written data from Swedish beginning learners of German who have little difficulty with V2. We interpret these results as indicative of transfer of the V2 property from L1 Swedish to L2 German. However, whereas learner productions may have targetlike word order (syntax), these productions are not necessarily adequate in the context in which they occur. This brings us to the major aim of this article, which is to investigate syntactically targetlike V2 clauses with regard to information-structural (i.e., discourse-pragmatic) adequacy. We will argue that nonnative learners of German transfer not only L1 syntactic properties but also L1 information-organizational principles to the L2.

Rosén (2006) found that the very same Swedish learners of German who produce targetlike V2 clauses appear to be organizing and structuring information in a way that disturbs German readers and listeners. In a pilot study, she asked native speakers of German to assess advanced L2 productions, which they described as choppy, textually incoherent, and simply as "it does not sound German." When asked to make the L2 texts sound more German, native speakers unpromptedly homed in on the beginning of sentences and consistently changed them in certain ways.

Why would changing the beginnings of sentences make texts less choppy and more German? The prefield is especially important for communication, as it anchors the clause in discourse. At the intersentential level, the prefield contributes to textual coherence by linking up with preceding discourse; at the intrasentential level, it often establishes the topic (i.e., what is being talked about), followed by the comment. Moreover, the prefield typically contains given information: the theme (i.e., an element of low informational value). New information, known as the rheme, is usually provided later, after the finite verb in V2 clauses.[3] Alternatively, the prefield can also be used to focus or contrast constituents.

By comparing native German and native Swedish corpora, we point to quantitative and qualitative differences in the way these two V2 languages make

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use of the prefield. For instance, Swedish appears to have a much stronger preference for rheme later, in which the prefield contains an element of no or low informational value (e.g., an expletive or a thematic element) and in which rhematic information is realized further to the right in the clause. These language-specific differences in information structure, we believe, lie at the heart of why native Germans change the beginnings of sentences in L2 texts to make them sound more German. Consider (2)–(4), which illustrate that German speakers prefer to start the sentence with a rhematic constituent (underlined), whereas Swedish speakers prefer to do so with a thematic subject or an expletive (in boldface).

(2) Context: And have you managed to get around much yet?

a. German *Ja, ich bin schon in München gewesen und in den Alpen.*
yes I am already in Munich been and in the Alps
An den Bodensee und auf die Insel Mainau bin ich
to the Lake-Constance and on the island Mainau am I
auch gefahren.
also gone

b. Swedish *Ja, jag har varit i München och i Alperna.*
yes I have been in Munich and in Alps-the
***Jag** har även varit vid Bodensjön och på Mainau.*
I have also been at Lake-Constance-the and on Mainau

"Yes, I've been to Munich and the Alps, and I've also visited Lake Constance and the Isle of Mainau."

(3) a. German *Mit den Übersetzungsklausuren lief es nicht so gut.*
with the translation-exams went it not so well

b. Swedish ***Det** gick inte så bra med översättningstentorna.*
it went not so well with translation-exams-the

"Things didn't go so well with the translation exams."

(4) a. German *Fast hätte sie ein Tor geschossen.*
nearly had she a goal shot

b. Swedish ***Det** var nästan att hon gjorde mål.*
it was nearly that she made goal

"She nearly scored a goal."

Having contrasted prefields in native German and native Swedish corpora, we will compare these with oral and written L2 German productions. We will show that the learners largely apply the information-structural and word-order frequency patterns of their L1 Swedish to German, which results in an unidiomatic, nonnative discourse structure. We will suggest that L1 transfer is found not only in the domain of syntax but also in the domain of information structure and information organization and that such L1 influence persists at high L2 proficiency levels.

We first present a quantitative analysis of prefield constituents in native Swedish and native German by surveying existing corpus studies and analyzing new L1 corpora (Rosén, 2006). Second, we undertake a detailed, qualita-

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tive investigation of how the prefield is used for organizing and structuring information in the two languages (concerning subjects and expletives, adverbial *så* "so," objects, pronominal adverbs, and other adverbials). After providing background information on informants and data collection, Bohnacker's (2005, 2006) findings on verb placement (V2) in oral L2 German and new findings from written L2 data (Rosén) are summarized. The frequencies of prefield constituents in the learner data are then compared to those of native controls. Finally, results from Rosén's study in which native Germans rated, commented on, and rewrote L2 texts are included in the discussion of the qualitative analysis of the learner's prefields.

COMPARISON OF SWEDISH AND GERMAN PREFIELDS: QUANTITATIVE DIFFERENCES

Earlier Corpus Studies of Swedish and German

Swedish and German prefield constituents can vary in syntactic category and complexity: They can be phrasal or clausal, argumental or nonargumental, phonologically heavy or light (including unstressed object pronouns) and can have almost any semantic function, although subjects predominate in both languages. Because, in principle, virtually any constituent (some modal particles excluded) can be placed in the prefield of German and Swedish V2 declaratives (e.g., Erdmann, 1886; Herling, 1821; Teleman, Hellberg, & Andersson, 1999; Zifonun, Hoffmann, & Strecker, 1997), the two languages are often—tacitly or explicitly—assumed to behave alike concerning the frequency and function of prefield constituents. For instance, according to Håkansson (1997), 60% of all declaratives in Swedish, German, Dutch, and Icelandic begin with a subject, whereas 40% are non-subject-initial. However, Håkansson provided no empirical evidence for this claim, and contrastive corpus studies of V2 languages are few and far between. Even single-language corpora are difficult to compare because they are often of different genres, and genre has been shown to influence the frequencies of the types of items in the prefield. For instance, in a 25,000-word corpus of colloquial spoken German collected between 1955 and 1963, Engel (1974) found 51% subject-initial and 35% adverbial-initial main clauses, but these averages varied significantly for near-monological narratives (24–36% SVX, 49–60% Adv-VS) versus more interactive dialogue data (54–68% SVX, 17–32% Adv-VS).

As far as we know, there are no contrastive corpus studies of German and Swedish that focus on the prefield. However, a survey of existing single-language corpora suggests that subject-initial clauses are considerably more frequent in Swedish than in German, especially if genre is kept constant, and that object-initial clauses are less frequent than in German. For instance, for an 18,000-word corpus of German newspapers, Fabricius-Hansen and Solfjeld (1994) reported 54% subject-initial and nearly 7% object-initial main clauses. For Swedish, by contrast, Westman (1974) found 64% subject-initial and only

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Table 1. Constituents in the prefield in written German (newspaper articles), based on Fabricius-Hansen and Solfjeld (1994, pp. 101–102), and in written Swedish (newspapers, textbooks, brochures), based on Westman (1974, p. 155)

Constituent in prefield	*N*	%
German (n = 984)		
Subjects and expletives	532	54.0
Objects	65	6.6
Adverbials	362	36.8
Other	25	2.5
Swedish (n = 5,588)		
Subjects and expletives	3,575	64.0
Objects	128	2.3
Adverbials	1,720	30.8
Other	165	3.0

2% object-initial main clauses in an 87,000-word corpus of newspaper articles and other nonfiction texts from high school textbooks, magazines, and brochures issued by the authorities between 1962 and 1971 (Table 1). A very similar distribution is found in Hultman and Westman's (1977) study of essays written by Swedish students as part of their 1970 *studentexamen* (Swedish A-levels, written exams in the final year of grammar school). In this 88,000-word corpus, main clauses are 66% subject-initial and 3% object-initial. Westman's (1974) figures also match those of a more recent study by Nordman (1992). In 45,000 words of Swedish technical, scientific, and scholarly prose, she found 61% subject-initial and 2% object-initial clauses. Swedish fiction and Swedish law texts have an even higher proportion of subject-initial clauses: Benson (1974) reported 68% in drafts for new legislation, Teleman and Wieselgren (1970) reported 70% in fictional prose, and Jörgensen (1976) also reported 73% subject-initial and 1.6% object-initial main clauses for written Swedish read aloud on the 1974 radio news. Comparing such formal radio news with more informal spoken genres, Jörgensen found a decrease in subjects and an increase in objects in the prefield in the more colloquial genres: He reported 60% subject-initial and 9% object-initial clauses for a corpus of informal conversations and debates between native Swedish academics (8 informants, 3 hr of recording, collected in 1968) and 62% subject-initial and 14% object-initial clauses for a large corpus of informal interviews of thirty-two 30–45-year-olds (collected in 1968, 8–9 hr of recording). However, even in such colloquial speech, Swedish appears to have more subject-initial declaratives than German does, as illustrated by a comparison with two separate 25,500-word corpora of colloquial spoken German. In Engel's (1974) recordings of the 1960s, declaratives are 51% subject-

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initial, 9% object-initial, 35% adverbial-initial, and 4% other. Bohnacker (2007) reported similar figures for a colloquial German 25,300-word corpus recorded in the late 1990s: 52% subject-initial, 10% object-initial, 37% adverbial-initial, and 1% other.

Second most frequent in both languages are adverbial-initial declaratives (see Table 1). The types of adverbials may vary depending on genre, but temporal adjuncts often appear to predominate (e.g., Westman, 1974). In German, the prefield is said to mostly host locational or temporal adverbials as well as a range of other adjuncts (e.g., Carroll & von Stutterheim, 2003; Zifonun et al., 1997). Least frequent in the two languages are object-initial declaratives. The corpus studies reviewed thus far suggest, however, that objects in the prefield are much rarer in Swedish than in German, especially in the written modality.

Results From the Native Corpora

To verify and further investigate these language-specific tendencies, we collected new informal written L1 corpora from native speakers matched for age and text type. These written control corpora of 17,500 words (Swedish) and 28,500 words (German) comprise 150 compositions (informal letters, summaries, short stories) by 80 native Swedes and 70 native Germans, who were 15-year-old pupils and 20–25-year-old university students—the same ages as the L2 learners in this study.

Table 2 shows the results for the informal letters written by the 20–25-year-old L1 informants; the data collected from the 15–16-year-olds in the form of informal letters and stories look very similar (see Rosén, 2006). Clear differences emerge in the frequencies of constituent types in the prefield: Swedish has a stronger subject-initial preference (73%) than German (50%), objects are fronted more often in German (7%) than in Swedish (3%), and adverbials other than temporal and locational are fronted more frequently in German (25%) than in Swedish (9%).[4]

Table 2. Constituents in the prefield, written L1 adult data (informal letters)

	L1 Swedish		L1 German	
Type of constituent	*N*	%	*N*	%
Subjects and expletives	388/535	73	587/1,173	50
Objects	24/535	3	87/1,173	7
Temporal and locational adverbials	77/535	14	199/1,173	17
Other adverbials	46/535	9	287/1,173	25
Other	10/535	2	13/1,173	1

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LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC WAYS OF STRUCTURING INFORMATION: QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCES

Subjects in the Prefield

Both Swedish and German have a tendency to start declaratives with a subject. Both languages also tend to let the subject, a grammatical category, coincide with the information-structural categories of theme and topic (e.g., Lambrecht, 1994; Reinhart, 1982; but see Chafe, 1976, and Jacobs, 2001, for wider definitions). Both languages also have a tendency to place theme before rheme and therefore a tendency to place the thematic information in the clause-initial position (e.g., Beneš, 1971; Daneš, 1970; Ekerot, 1979; Hoberg, 1981; Teleman et al., 1999). Theme here stands for what the speaker or writer may assume the listener or reader to know (i.e., given information), because it has previously been explicitly mentioned or is inferable with recourse to the linguistic discourse or the discourse situation. Rheme stands for what the speaker or writer assumes to be new information for the hearer or reader, thus it is of higher informational value.

Furthermore, corpus data suggest that Swedish has a stronger tendency than German to keep informationally new (i.e., rhematic or focal) material out of the clause-initial position and instead place it further to the right (i.e., in postverbal position). This structural organization can be achieved by filling the prefield with the theme or with an element of no informational value, such as an expletive subject, or by leaving the prefield empty, as in verb initial (V1) declaratives (which will not be discussed here). One might thus say that Swedish linear syntax more faithfully follows the information-structural principle of rheme later. Moreover, Swedish seems to have a stronger tendency than German to start the sentence with a phonologically light element; we observed this tendency in our written control corpora, and results from written Norwegian versus German corpora point in the same direction (e.g., Benthien, 1990; Fabricius-Hansen & Solfjeld, 1994). One would need to investigate this more in depth for spoken corpora of the same genre in the two languages. It is unclear whether it is the light phonological weight that promotes thematicity or vice versa (i.e., whether it is the phonology that influences information structure or the other way around), but the two tendencies seem connected.

The principle of rheme later is first presented for rhematic subjects. Swedish declaratives that contain a rhematic subject typically have an expletive subject, *det* "it," in the prefield, as shown in (5a) and (6a). The proper subject (*många studenter* "many students," *mycket* "much") occurs postverbally. Alternatively, an element encoding new information, like the rhematic subject *många studenter* "many students" or the locational adverbial *i Växjö* "in Växjö," could be placed in the prefield, as shown in (5b) and (6b). Although such sentences are grammatical in Swedish, they are dispreferred by native speakers and rarely occur in the control corpus.

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(5) a. preferred ***Det*** *bor många studenter här.*
it live many students here
b. dispreferred ***Många studenter*** *bor här.*
many students live here
"Lots of students live here./There're lots of students living here."

(6) a. preferred ***Det*** *händer mycket i Växjö.*
it happens much in Växjö
b. dispreferred ***I Växjö*** *händer (det) mycket.*
in Växjö happens EXPL much
"Lots of things are going on in Växjö./There's a lot going on in Växjö."

By contrast, German tends not to use an expletive subject in sentence-initial position but starts the clause with a phonologically heavier, rhematic element, as illustrated in (7a) and (8a). We could paraphrase the sentence in (7a) and (8a) by using an expletive as exemplified in (7b) and (8b), but such constructions are dispreferred in German and rare in the control corpus. (However, such constructions will be shown to be common in the L2 data.)

(7) a. preferred ***Viele StudentInnen*** *wohnen hier.*
many students live here
b. dispreferred ***Es*** *wohnen viele StudentInnen hier.*
it live many students here
"Lots of students live here."

(8) a. preferred ***In Växjö*** *ist viel los.*
in Växjö is much on
b. dispreferred ***Es*** *ist viel los in Växjö.*
it is much on in Växjö
"Lots of things are going on in Växjö./There's a lot going on in Växjö."

Thus, subtle differences exist between Swedish and German in the linguistic means used for introducing referents and other new information. These cross-linguistic differences are not categorical (grammatical vs. ungrammatical) but rather tendencies, and their mastery is an integral part of language competence (cf. Carroll, Murcia-Serra, Watorek, & Bendiscioli, 2000; Carroll & von Stutterheim, 2003).

The informational value of individual constituents is not affected by where they are placed in the clause. However, fronting or not fronting an element and using or not using a clause-initial expletive can induce a change in thematic progression as a whole. Swedish has a range of constructions with an element of low informational value in the prefield. Consider, for instance, the presentational sentences (i.e., existential constructions and clefts) in (9) and (10), which begin with the expletive *det* "it" and a copula verb. Rhematic information, such as the proper subject and temporal, locational, or other adverbials, is introduced postverbally (cf. Ekberg, 1997; Teleman et al., 1999).

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(9) ***Det*** *{är/sitter} en lapp på dörren.*
it is/sits a paper on door-the
"There's a note on the door."

(10) ***Det*** *var i förra veckan som en domare i Malmö fälldes*
it was in last week-the that a judge in Malmö was-condemned
för samma brott.
for same crime
"Last week, a judge in Malmö was condemned for the same crime."

German has corresponding constructions, but these are less common in naturalistic discourse; the preferred way of expressing the equivalent of (9) and (10) in German is not to start with an expletive, as shown in (11) and (12).

(11) a. preferred *Ein Zettel {ist/hängt} an der Tür.*
a paper is/hangs on the door
b. preferred *Da {ist/hängt} ein Zettel an der Tür.*
there.LOC is/hangs a paper on the door
c. dispreferred ***Es*** *{ist/hängt} ein Zettel an der Tür.*
it is/hangs a paper on the door
"There's a note on the door."

(12) a. preferred *Letzte Woche wurde ein Richter in Malmö für dieselbe*
last week was a judge in Malmö for same
Straftat verurteilt.
crime condemned
b. dispreferred ??***Es*** *war letzte Woche daß ein Richter in Malmö*
it was last week that a judge in Malmö
für dieselbe Straftat verurteilt wurde.
for same crime condemned was
"Last week, a judge in Malmö was condemned for the same crime."

Table 3 provides quantified data to show that the expletive *det* "it" in the prefield is indeed much more frequent in Swedish than the expletive *es* "it" in German. In Rosén's (2006) corpora of informal letters, 22% of all subject-initial sentences begin with an expletive in native Swedish, but only 11% do so in native German.[5]

Table 3. Expletive subjects in the prefield, informal written data, letters

	L1 Swedish		L1 German	
Expletives	*N*	%	*N*	%
Out of all subjects	85/388	22	85/535	16
Out of all overt prefield constituents	66/587	11	66/1,173	6

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Adverbial *så* "so" in the Prefield

Another typically Swedish construction is the unstressed connective *så* "so" in clause-initial position. *Så* "so" in the prefield, like the expletive *det* "it," is of low informational value and allows rhematic information to be placed after the verb. Connective *så* "so" conjoins clauses and can indicate temporal succession, simultaneity, or consequence ("and," "and then," "so [then]") but is often simply a coordinator with no particular temporal interpretation. *Så* "so" is very frequent in colloquial spoken Swedish (e.g., Ekberg, 1997; Eriksson, 1997), and when declaratives are coordinated, *så* "so" is one of the most common ways to introduce the second conjunct in combination with the conjunction *och* "and," as illustrated in (13a) and (14a).[6] German has an adverb, *so*, cognate with Swedish *så* "so," but it cannot be used as a connective in the same way. As a result, literal translations of the *så* construction into German are marginal at best, as shown in (13b) and (14b), and unattested in the native controls (but found in the L2 data).

(13) a. Swedish *Jag tycker om att spela säckpipa och* ***så*** *sjunger jag i kör.*
I like PREP to play bagpipe and so sing I in choir
b. German **Ich spiele gern Dudelsack und so singe ich im Chor.*
I play like bagpipe and so sing I in-the choir
"I like to play the bagpipes and I sing in a choir."

(14) a. Swedish *Vi badade och* ***så*** *kom det häftiga regnet.*
we bathed and so came the intense rain-the
b. German **Wir haben gebadet und* ***so*** *kam voll der Regen.*
we have bathed and so came full the rain
"We went swimming and (then) there was heavy rain."

Objects in the Prefield

The tendency to start Swedish sentences with an element of low informational value—which also often happens to be phonologically light—manifests itself in the case of fronted objects as well. Recall that object-initial declaratives, although generally uncommon, are more frequent in German than in Swedish (see Table 2). Swedish speakers typically front objects that are themes. They do so mostly in the form of the anaphoric definite inanimate pronoun *det* "it" or "that." Because of its thematic anaphoric function, object *det* "it" in the Swedish prefield enhances textual cohesion.[7] Object *det* "it" is much more frequent in the native control corpora than its German equivalent (*das/es* "it" or "that"): Swedish *det* "it" makes up 82% of all fronted object pronouns, but German *das* "it" makes up only 24% (Rosén, 2006). This distribution, where most objects in the prefield are *det* "it," need not hold across all genres of Swedish, but we believe that it is typical of the informal written texts produced by young people in the 21st century and that it is also a feature of informal spoken Swedish. In recordings from 1968, Jörgensen (1976) found 14%

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fronted objects in informal interviews and 9% in conversations and debates between academics but only 1.6% in radio news that consisted of read-aloud formal writing.[8] It is interesting to note that Jörgensen's examples indicate that fronted objects in colloquial Swedish nearly always take the form *det* "it." Teleman (personal communication, November 24, 2006), who is very familiar with the corpora used by Jörgensen, confirmed this and pointed out frequently occurring semiformulaic utterances of the type in (15).

(15) a. *det {tror /tycker /vet} jag.*
that {believe /think /know} I
"I think so."/"I know (that)."
b. *det {tror /tycker/ vet} jag inte.*
that {believe /think / know} I not
"I don't think so."/"I don't know."

The German equivalent of Swedish *det* "it," *das* "it/that," is less frequent in the prefield. German speakers regularly front a much wider range of objects, both pronominal and lexical (e.g., *mir* "me," *ihr* "[to] her," *der* "[to] her, to this").[9] They also place rhematic objects in clause-initial position, as illustrated in (16).

(16) a. thematic or rhematic object in clause-initial position
Der *hab ich das schon gesagt.*
her.FEM.DATIVE have I it already said
"I've already told her (that)."
b. rhematic object in clause-initial position
*{**Der Alex** **/Meiner Freundin**} hab ich das schon gesagt.*
the-FEM.DATIVE Alex /my-FEM.DATIVE girlfriend have I it already said
"I've already told {Alex/my girlfriend} (that)."

Pronominal Adverbs in the Prefield

German native speakers make use of so-called pronominal adverbs (*Pronominaladverbien*, proadverbials) for reference maintenance. These are thematic elements composed of a locational adverb (typically, *da* "there") and a preposition. Whereas *da* "there" on its own functions as a deictic or anaphoric adverb that is primarily locational, *da* as part of a pronominal adverb can be quite vague in the space it denotes; its primary function is anaphoric. The morphological complexity of pronominal adverbs makes them informationally more specific than simple thematic *das* "it" or *da* "there." Pronominal adverbs maintain a referent in spatial, temporal, and other terms and are thus a means to establish textual coherence. In (17), for example, the rhematic information of the first clause, *Autofahren lernen* "learning how to drive," is turned via *damit* "with that" into the theme of the second clause. Further examples of pronominal adverbs in German include *dazu* "there-to/with that," *damit* "there-with/with that," and *davon* "there-of/about that," among others.[10]

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(17) *Außerdem möchte ich Autofahren lernen, aber* ***damit*** *warte ich erst*
moreover would-like I car-drive learn but there-with wait I first
mal noch.
once still
"I'd also like to learn how to drive, but I'll still wait a little with that."

Other Adverbials in the Prefield

Apart from pronominal adverbs, there are many other adverbials that can be used in the prefield to improve textual cohesion—in particular, sentence adverbials such as logical connectives and speaker-attitude adverbials.[11] These other adverbials are much more frequent in the prefield in native German than in native Swedish (see Table 2). It would be interesting to see whether this surprising difference could be verified for larger corpora and corpora of other text types, because the Swedish language has no shortage of sentence adverbs or logical connectives in general. According to Jörgensen and Svensson (1986) however, such adverbials tend to be placed in the medial or final position in Swedish declaratives (i.e., to the right of the finite verb), and Altenberg (1998) provided empirical evidence for this tendency by comparing the placement of connective adverbials in Swedish and English original texts and in translations thereof (he does not discuss German). In Altenberg's corpus of English original texts, 74% (624/845) of the adverbial connectors occur sentence-initially as opposed to 37% (441/1,191) in the Swedish original texts. Connectives in other positions are rare in English but common in Swedish, where 27% occur in the medial position (between the subject and the main verb) and 29% occur postverbally. Altenberg also showed that in professional English translations of Swedish texts, originally noninitial connectives are fronted, whereas in Swedish translations of English texts, clause-initial connectives are postponed. This is illustrated in (18a) and (18b).

(18) a. English *<u>However</u>, Copernicus's theory was much simpler.*
b. Swedish *Kopernikus teori var <u>emellertid</u> mycket enklare.*
Copernicus's theory was however much simpler
(Altenberg, p. 126)

In Swedish texts and Swedish translations, then, the expression of logical relations is generally signaled not in the prefield but much later in the sentence (Altenberg). As far as we know, no such tendency has ever been reported for German. It is thus possible that German tends to place speaker-attitude adverbs and logical connectives in the prefield, whereas Swedish places them more often postverbally and largely reserves the prefield for other, thematic, elements; compare (19) and (20).

(19) a. preferred *Kopernikus teori var <u>emellertid</u> mycket enklare.*
Copernicus theory was however much simpler

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b. dispreferred ?*Emellertid var Kopernikus teori mycket enklare.*
however was Copernicus theory much simpler
"However, Copernicus's theory was much simpler."

(20) a. acceptable *Kopernikus' Theorie war allerdings viel einfacher.*
Copernicus theory was however much simpler
b. preferred *Allerdings war Kopernikus' Theorie viel einfacher.*
however was Copernicus theory much simpler
"However, Copernicus's theory was much simpler."

THE LEARNER DATA

Oral Data

Our oral L2 production data come from Swedish L1 teenagers learning German as a foreign language at a secondary school in Sweden and from Swedish L1 adults taking evening classes in German as a foreign language for beginners (Bohnacker, 2005, 2006). Data were elicited from all learners with the same narrative task: the telling of a monologue on a given topic (as described in Bohnacker, 2005, 2006).

The twenty-three 16-year-old teenagers were tested once, at the end of their third year of German (i.e., after approximately 800 hr of classroom German). They will be referred to as intermediate. Their recordings comprise approximately 12,500 words. The adults, six 60–70-year-old pensioners, were tested twice, after 4 months (i.e., 45 hr of classroom German) and after 9 months (after 90 hr of classroom German). They will be referred to as beginners. Their recordings comprise approximately 17,500 words. Three adults did not know any language other than Swedish before taking up German, whereas the other three, and the teenagers, had learned English at school.

Written Data

Our written L2 data consist of texts produced by teenage and young adult Swedish learners of German at secondary schools and universities in Sweden. The informants had all learned English at school before studying German.

We collected 245 L2 German compositions, including informal letters, essays, and summaries, for a total of about 100,000 words, between 1999 and 2005 (for details, see Rosén, 2006). There were 55 L2 beginners (14-year-olds), who had had approximately 200 hr of classroom German, and 55 L2 intermediates (17-year-olds), with approximately 830 hr of classroom German. Moreover, we collected 135 advanced L2 productions from 20–25-year-old university students, who had had about 6 years of classroom German.

Here, the terms *beginner*, *intermediate*, and *advanced* are simply used as shorthand for the varying lengths of exposure the learners had to the foreign language. No independent measure of proficiency was used. The learner data were compared to the written L1 control corpora of 80 native Swedish and 70 native German speakers (Rosén, 2006).

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L2 RESULTS

V2 Word Order

Before we can investigate how the learners use the prefield to structure information, we need to establish that they indeed have a prefield, insofar as they adhere to the V2 constraint and are able to produce non-subject-initial V2 declaratives. In the same oral corpora used here, Bohnacker (2005, 2006) showed that Swedish learners of German produce subject-initial and non-subject-initial V2 declaratives at the beginner level. For the pensioners (after 4 months of training), she found that those informants who did not speak English fully adhere to the V2 constraint in their L2 German, producing 68% SVX, 32% XVS, and 0% nontargetlike V3.[12] Bohnacker (2005, 2006) interpreted this as indicative of L1 transfer. The pensioners who spoke English were found to adhere to the V2 constraint only partially in their third language (L3) German, producing SVX, targetlike XVS, and nontargetlike V3. This suggests that they, too, transfer V2 from their L1, but that prior knowledge of a non-V2 language, such as English, can have a detrimental effect, slowing down full mastery of V2 in the L3 (however, this is incidental to the present study).[13] For individual results, raw figures, and detailed discussion, see Bohnacker (2005, 2006).

In the written L2 data, word-order distribution is very similar. For reasons of space, we only present the results from the least advanced group—the 14-year-olds who have had 200 hr of German training. They produce 81% (796/984) subject-initial and 19% (188/984) non-subject-initial declaratives (see Bohnacker & Rosén, 2007a, 2007b). Crucially, 153 of the 188 non-subject-initial clauses are XVS, including 16% targetlike V2 and only 3% V3. The group is homogeneous in that every learner produces both targetlike XVS clauses and between zero and three instances of nontargetlike XSVO.[14]

In earlier studies, L2 learners whose L1 is non-V2 were reported to acquire V2 late (e.g., Clahsen & Muysken, 1986; du Plessis, Solin, Travis, & White, 1987; Pienemann, 1998; Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994; Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1994, 1996). Additionally, Håkansson et al. (2002), in a study of Swedish teenagers learning German as a L3 (after English), reported that their learners were not able to produce any XVS at first. However, their elicitation method and the small-sized database do not enable us to draw strong conclusions about V2 (as discussed in Bohnacker, 2005). By contrast, Bohnacker's and our Swedish learners of German produce XVS declaratives early on, and we are thus in a position to compare their use of the prefield in V2 clauses to that of native speakers.

Quantification of Constituents in the Prefield

The frequencies of constituents in the prefield in the L2 German data differ substantially from those of L1 German but resemble those of L1 Swedish. Fig-

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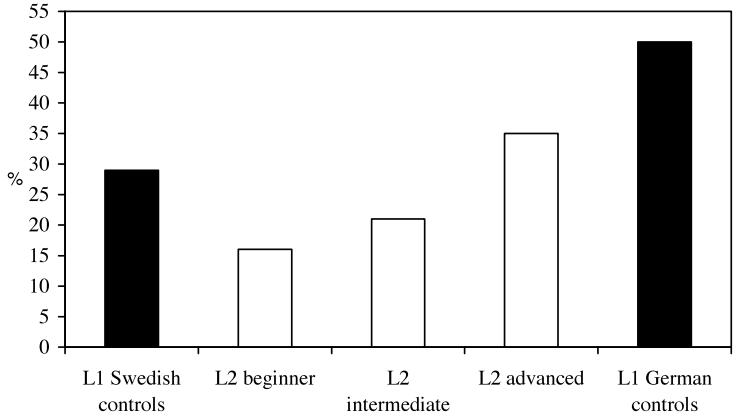


Figure 1. Percentage of non-subject-initial V2 declaratives in L2 learners and L1 controls (letters).

ure 1 illustrates this for the written text type of informal letters. Solid black bars show the percentage of non-subject-initial clauses out of all V2 declaratives for L1 Swedish (29%, 157/535) and for L1 German (50%, 586/1,173). Compare this with the written L2 productions (the white bars): For the fifty-five 14-year-old L2 beginners, the prefield contains a constituent other than the subject only 16% of the time (88/544); for the intermediate learners (17-year-olds) 21% (291/1,371); and for the advanced learners 35% (403/1,122). Thus, for the learners, non-subject-initial clauses become more common with increasing proficiency, but even the most advanced group has not reached nativelike levels after 6 years of German.

The non-subject-initial clauses of the learners can be broken down further by constituent type. This is done in Tables 4 and 5 for the L2 beginners (oral), the intermediate learners (oral), and the age-matched intermediate learners (written). Their figures are strikingly similar.[15] Fronted arguments (objects) are rare (10–12%) and largely take the form of object pronominal *das* "it/that." Adjuncts in the prefield are frequent (88–90%), but mostly temporal, especially in the oral narrative data (72–75%, with a preponderance of *dann* "then"). Locational adverbials also occur (16–20%), whereas other adverbials (e.g., modal, speaker attitude, and connective adverbs) are less frequent, especially in the oral data.

Qualitative Analysis of Learner Prefields and Discussion

A Rating and Rewriting Experiment. Results from a rating and rewriting experiment (Rosén, 2006) bolster the quantitative differences we found concerning constituents in the prefield. Three groups of adult native speakers of

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Table 4. Constituents in the prefield of non-subject-initial declaratives: Arguments and adjuncts by participant group and task

L2 data	Argument	Adjunct
Beginner: Oral		
N	37/381	344/381
Percent	10%	90%
Intermediate: Oral		
N	39/386	347/386
Percent	10%	90%
Intermediate: Written		
N	35/295	260/295
Percent	12%	88%

Note. The beginner data are combined from six adults performing a narrative task after 4 and 9 months; the oral intermediate data are from twenty-three 16-year-olds performing a narrative task after 3 years; the written data are letters from fifty-five 17-year-olds after 3 years.

German (58 university students, language teachers, and others, including mainly dentists and other professionals) rated the written L2 data (see Rosén for details). Moreover, 20 of them, the 20–25-year-old university students, were asked to rewrite 20 advanced L2 texts produced by learners their own age, to

Table 5. Constituents in the prefield of non-subject-initial declaratives: Detailed analysis of arguments and adjuncts by group and task

	Argument		Adjunct		
L2 data	Direct object	Other	Temporal	Locational	Other adverbial
Beginner: Oral					
N	37/37[a]	0/37	248/344[b]	69/344	27/344
Percent	100%	0%	72%	20%	8%
Intermediate: Oral					
N	37/39[c]	2/39	259/347	55/347	33/347
Percent	95%	5%	75%	16%	10%
Intermediate: Written					
N	33/35[d]	2/35	207/260		53/260
Percent	94%	6%	80%		20%

Note. The beginner data are combined from six adults performing a narrative task after 4 and 9 months; the oral intermediate data are from twenty-three 16-year-olds performing a narrative task after 3 years; the written data are letters from fifty-five 17-year-olds after 3 years.
[a]All are instances of *das*.
[b]Includes 146 instances of *dann*.
[c]Includes 22 instances of *das*.
[d]Includes 16 instances of *das*.

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Table 6. Constituents in the prefield, L2 German versus L1 German rewritings

Type of constituent	L2 German writing (n = 538)	L1 German rewriting (n = 658)
Subjects and expletives	366 (68%)	363 (55%)
Objects	17 (3%)	43 (7%)
Temporal and locational adverbials	88 (16%)	120 (18%)
Other adverbials	42 (8%)	95 (14%)

make them sound more German. They unpromptedly made changes in the prefield (Table 6).[16] Rewritings resulted in a reduction of clause-initial subjects and expletives from 68% to 55%, a doubling of the figures for objects (from 3% to 7%), and a strong increase in adverbials other than temporal and locational (from 8% to 14%). Thus, the distribution of constituent types in the rewritten texts became very similar to the distribution independently found in the L1 German control corpus (Table 2). This strongly suggests that the differences between the groups cannot be dismissed as stylistic variation in the sense of idiosyncratic preferences of individuals but that they are in fact consistent, language-specific differences.

Subjects. In contrast to the native Germans, the L2 learners rarely start their V2 clauses with a rhematic element; rather they begin with an element of no or low informational value. Particularly striking is their propensity to produce expletive-subject-initial clauses as illustrated in (21)–(23). These are dispreferred in native German but correspond to the expletive-initial constructions typical of Swedish.[17]

(21) *Autobahn!* ***Es*** *ist nicht mehr eine gleich aggressive Stimmung auf Autobahn*
motorway it is not more a same aggressive mood on motorway
in Deutschland, aber gewiss ist es harter als in z.B. Schweden.
in Germany but certainly is it harder than in e.g. Sweden
"Motorways! There isn't this aggressive mood on the motorways in Germany any more, but it's certainly tougher than in Sweden for example."
(advanced L2 summary)

(22) *Zwei Tage danach fährt eine meiner Freundinnen nach England um als Au*
two days later goes one my friends to England for as au
pair zu arbeiten, so ***es*** *wird zugleich ein Abschiedsfest sein.*
pair to work so it will same-time a farewell-party be
"Two days later one of my friends will be going to England to work as an au pair, so there'll also be a farewell party."
(advanced L2 essay)

(23) *Wenn es ein Verkehrsstockung wird soll man wie weit nach rechts wie*
when it a traffic-jam is shall one as far to right as

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möglich oder bei der Planke in der Mitte bleiben um Raum zu den
possible or at the fence in the middle stay for room to the
Krankenwagen zu geben. ***Es*** *ist gut die Bremsen zu probieren wenn man*
ambulance to give it is good the brakes to try when one
einen schwer gelasteten Auto fährt.
a heavy loaded car drives
"When there is a traffic jam, you should keep as much to the right as possible or close to the fence in the middle, to make room for the ambulance. When driving a vehicle with a heavy load, it is a good idea to test the brakes."
(advanced L2 summary)

This pattern of overusing clause-initial subjects and expletives was also confirmed when native speakers rewrote or commented on the L2 texts, pointing out *zu viel* ***es*** *am Satzanfang* "too many *es* in clause-initial position," ***es*** *wirkt sehr undeutsch* "very un-German *es* constructions," *zu viel* ***es gibt*** "too many *it is/it exists*," and *zu oft Subjekte am Satzanfang* "too many clause-initial subjects."

Native speakers prefer to use alternative ways of connecting sentences, for instance by fronting an adverbial, as shown in (24b)–(26b), which are the rewritten versions of the L2 sentences in (24a)–(26a), or by adding a connective adverbial. Apart from providing paraphrases that sound more German, the native raters suggested *es könnte gut mal auch ein Verb oder ein Objekt nach vorn gestellt werden* "why not front a verb or an object for a change" and advised using connectives *eines Gebrauchs von z.B. außerdem*, *jedenfalls* "why not use e.g. *außerdem* 'moreover,' *jedenfalls* 'anyway/in any case.'"

(24) a. ***Der Kleiderstil der Leute*** *ist im Vergleich zu dem in anderen*
the clothes-style of-the people is in-the comparison to that in other
Grossstädten ziemlich freizeitsbetont, aber wenn man geschäftlich in der
big-cities fairly leisure-oriented but when one on-business in the
Stadt ist, gilt etwas anders.
town is counts something else (advanced L2 summary)

b. ***Im Vergleich zu anderen Großstädten*** *ist der Kleiderstil der*
in-the comparison to other big-cities is the clothes-style of-the
Leute ziemlich freizeitbetont . . .
people fairly leisure-oriented (rewritten by native speaker)
"Compared to other big cities, people dress quite leisurely, but this doesn't apply when you're in town on business."

(25) a. [About Neuschwanstein castle in Bavaria]
Es *ist in dem königlichen Zimmern, wo den Besuchern die Motive*
it is in the royal rooms where the visitors the scenes
aus Mittelalterem Märchen begegnen, dass viele von den Wände deckt.
from mediaeval sagas meet that many of the walls covers
(advanced L2 summary)

b. ***In den königlichen Zimmern*** *begegnen den Besuchern Motive*
in the royal rooms meet the visitors scenes
aus mittelalterlichen Märchen . . .
from mediaeval sagas (rewritten by native speaker)
"In the royal rooms, visitors will see scenes from medieval sagas, which cover many of the walls."

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(26) a. *Man muss hart drucken um die ganze Bremswirkung zu bekommen.*
one must hard push for the whole break-effect to get
***Man** fährt nicht so aggressiv, wie man früher machte, auf Autobahn heute.*
one drives not so aggressively as one earlier did on motorway today
"You need to break hard for maximal effect. People don't drive as aggressively on the motorways today as they once did." (advanced L2 summary)
b. ***Heute** fährt man auf der Autobahn nicht so aggressiv wie früher.*
Today drives one on the motorway not so aggressively as earlier
(rewritten by native speaker)

So *and* Så. The Swedish tendency of starting sentences with an element of low informational value not only appears via the many subject-initial and expletive-initial declaratives in the L2 data but also in unidiomatic *so*-initial V2 clauses, like (27) and (28). These are presumably due to transfer from L1 Swedish: Recall that the cognate of German *so*, Swedish unstressed *så* "and (so)," allows rhematic information to be placed after the verb. German native raters commented on this point, for instance *Ungewöhnliche Satzbindungen mit **so** kommen vor* "unusual ways of linking sentences with *so* are found," *merkwürdige[r] Gebrauch von **so***, "strange use of *so*," *sehr undeutsch* "very un-German."

(27) *Ich war fast immer allein auf die Wochenende und machte nicht.*
I was almost always alone at the weekend and did not(hing)
*Aber **so** denkte ich daß ich alle in die Klasse, zu mein Haus, sollte*
but so thought I that I all in the class to my house should
bringen und wir hatten sehr Spaß.
bring and we had very fun
"I was nearly always alone during weekends and didn't do anything. But then I thought of inviting everyone in class to my house and we had a lot of fun."
(intermediate L2 essay)

(28) *Und dann fliegt der Plan und **so** landet der Plan und vielleicht auch*
and then flies the plane and so lands the plane and perhaps also
krachen.
crash
"And then the plane flies and then it lands or perhaps crashes."
(intermediate L2 oral narrative)

Objects. The L2 learners rarely produce an object in the prefield, but when they do, they predominantly front pronominal *das* "it/that" (80%), and this *das* "it/that" is always thematic, as illustrated in (29)–(31). Recall that the Swedish equivalent of *das* (*det* "it/that"), is the most common object to be fronted in native Swedish, where its anaphoric nature may serve to enhance textual cohesion.

(29) *Nach Weihnachten sind wir vielleicht wieder nach Schweiz fahren.*
after Christmas are we perhaps again to Switzerland go
***Das** finde ich Spaß.*
that find I fun
"After Christmas we might go to Switzerland again. That'd be fun I think."
(beginner L2 letter)

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(30) *Vielleicht kommen wir eines Tages nach Haus aber* ***das*** *glaube ich nicht.*
maybe come we one day to home but that think I not
"Maybe we'll come back home one day, but I don't think so."
(intermediate L2 essay)

(31) *Ab und zu machen wir auch Sachen zusammen,* ***das*** *muss man.*
now and then make we too things together that must you
"Now and then we do things together, you have to."
(advanced L2 essay)

The native German raters of the L2 texts reacted to the learners' disproportionate fronting of *das* "it/that" and stated, for instance, *zu viele Sätze fangen mit* ***das*** *an* "too many sentences start with *das*," *übertriebener Gebrauch von* ***Das/Es****-Sätzen* "exaggerated use of *Das-/Es*-clauses." Fronted object *das* "it/that" as produced by the L2 learners is not ungrammatical in native German, but it is less common in the control corpora. It is noteworthy that the learners rarely front other objects, be it pronouns or lexical noun phrases. Moreover, they do not use pronominal adverbs in the prefield.

Pronominal Adverbs. Pronominal adverbs serve to maintain a referent in spatial, temporal, and other terms. The native German controls front pronominal adverbs in their writing; consider the example in (32), in which preverbal *dazu* links up with *schöne Ecken* "nice spots" in the preceding clause.

(32) *Man muß sich hier schöne Ecken suchen.* ***Dazu*** *gehört ganz sicher das Hindenburgufer . . .*
one must self here nice corners seek there-to belongs quite certain the Hindenburg-bank
"You have to go and find yourself some nice spots. One of those would most certainly be the Hindenburgufer . . ."
(native German)

Pronominal adverbs in the prefield are not very frequent in the German control data (20 instances; i.e., 4% [20/514] of all non-subject-initial clauses) but are certainly much more common than in the learner data. None of the L2 learners use pronominal adverbs in their writing at the beginner level, and only a few L2 learners do so at the intermediate level, and then rarely (1%, 4/291). Even at the advanced level, pronominal adverbs in the prefield remain rare (1%, 3/403). Pronominal adverbs in the prefield are also exceedingly rare in the oral L2 data. The six beginners do not use them at all, and the 23 intermediate learners only produce one clause-initial pronominal adverb (0.3%) and a total of four pronominal adverbs in the entire corpus of 12,500 words. Therefore, the differences between the native controls and the L2 learners are presumably due not only to L1 influence on information structure but also to a vocabulary deficit: Learners can only place a pronominal adverb in the prefield if they have in fact learned the relevant lexical item. Because the beginning learners and most of the intermediate learners are not using pronominal adverbs in other, postverbal, positions, it may be surmised that they have not

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yet added these items to their lexicons, although a larger database would be needed for each individual learner to verify this claim.[18] For those advanced L2 learners who use pronominal adverbs but rarely do so in the clause-initial position, we believe that the overall principle of information organization that warrants their use is not yet fully established.[19]

Other Adverbials. The L2 learners in this study also underuse other adverbials, such as speaker-attitude adverbials and connectives, in the prefield, as demonstrated by the fact that when advanced L2 texts were rewritten by native Germans, the number of other adverbials increased from 8% to 14% (Table 6). The German native speakers sometimes moved a connective adverbial from the postverbal position to the prefield as in (33b), the rewritten version of (33a), or, more commonly, added a logical connective, as in (34b).[20]

(33) a. *Man weiß jetzt, mehr als früher, daß es nicht selbstklar eine*
one knows now more than before that it not self-evident a
Familie zu haben ist. Ich finde ***deswegen****, daß zum Beispiel die*
family to have is I think therefore that to-the example the
Traditionen sehr wichtig sind.
traditions very important are
"Nowadays people know better than before that you don't just have a family as a matter of course. Therefore I think that it's very important to keep traditions."
(advanced L2 essay)

b. [. . .] ***Deswegen*** *finde ich, daß …*
therefore think I that (rewritten by native speaker)

(34) a. *Das Lieblingstier von Ludwig II war der Schwan, weil der*
the favourite-animal of Ludwig II was the swan because the
Schwan so viel symbolisiert. Man kann Schwäne überall in dem
swan so much symbolises One can swans everywhere in the
Schloß finden, z.B. an Wasserhähne und Türgriffe.
castle find e.g. on water-taps and door-knobs
(advanced L2 summary)

b. *Das Lieblingstier von Ludwig II war der Schwan, weil dieses*
the favourite-animal of Ludwig II was the swan because this
Tier so viel symbolisiert. ***Deshalb*** *sind überall in dem Schloß,*
animal so much symbolises therefore are everywhere in the castle
z.B. an den Wasserhähnen und Türgriffen, Schwäne zu finden.
e.g. on the taps and doorknobs swans to find
(rewritten by native speaker)
"Ludwig the Second's favorite animal was the swan, because it symbolizes so much. One can find swans everywhere in the castle, e.g. on taps and doorknobs."

Native raters also repeatedly characterized the L2 texts as un-German, criticizing a lack of adverbials in the clause-initial position: *Adverbiale am Satzanfang fehlen* "clauses should more often begin with an adverbial," *es gibt zu wenig kommentierende Wörter wie* ***leider***, ***zum Glück*** *etc. am Satzanfang* "there are not enough commentary words like *leider* 'unfortunately,' *zum Glück* 'fortunately,' etc. in clause-initial position," *Es gibt keine Verbindungen zwischen den Sätzen oder den Absätzen* "there are no links between sentences or para-

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graphs," *Der Gebrauch von **Dadurch**, **Deshalb** etc. würde den Text flüssiger machen* "using *dadurch*, *deshalb* etc. would improve textual coherence." Our impression of the L2 texts is that cohesion-building adverbials are not only rare in the prefield but also relatively rare in other clausal positions (although we have not quantified them there). Therefore, a lack of coherence is presumably attributable not only to L1 influence in the domain of information structure but also to lexical deficits for both connective adverbials and pronominal adverbs.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we have pointed to some diverging tendencies in the way the prefield in V2 declaratives is employed for structuring information and organizing text in Swedish and German, and we have investigated how Swedish-speaking learners of German make use of the prefield. On the basis of corpus data, we have suggested that Swedish has a stronger tendency than German to fill the prefield with a (thematic) subject or a phonologically light all-purpose element of low informational value (the expletive subject *det* "it," the thematic pronominal object *det* "it/that," the adverbial *så* "and [then/so]," etc.) to establish texual coherence. German also allows these options but often places rhematic subjects—as well as phonologically heavier object and adverbial constituents, including morphologically complex thematic pronominal adverbs and a range of connective and sentence adverbials—in the prefield. We have tried to link these prefield constituent patterns to a principle of information structure that we called rheme later, where informationally new material is kept out of the clause-initial position and is placed further to the right (i.e., postverbally) instead. We have claimed that this principle is stronger in Swedish than it is in German. Crosslinguistic research has shown that languages may choose to implement quite different information-structural principles. Swedish and German, which are typologically close, implement information-structural principles that are not diametrically opposed but only slightly different from each other: Rheme later, as we have argued, is stronger in Swedish than in German, and L2 learners must learn to relax this information-structural principle.

In the L2 German data, V2 syntax is largely targetlike, but the word-order frequency and information-structural patterns in learners' V2 clauses resemble those of Swedish and not those of native German. L2 learners may master pure syntax long before they are able to put that syntax to appropriate use. The learners tend to fill the prefield with elements that are different in form and function than those used by the native controls: The L2 learners overuse subject-initial and expletive-*es*-initial clauses and the fronted thematic object *das* "it/that" as well as constructions with *så/so* "so"—structures typical of and frequent in their L1 Swedish. They underuse constructions typically used to introduce sentences in German: objects other than pronominal *das* "it/that," specific pronominal adverbs, and a range of connective adverbials.

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The results indicate that the learners, both at lower and higher proficiency levels, have problems with the acquisition of the German-specific linguistic means that have an impact on information structuring. Some of these problems may be due to vocabulary deficits, but most of them can be traced back to the language-specific tendencies of structuring information in Swedish: the learners' L1. We thus propose that L1 transfer is found not only in the domain of syntax but also in the domain of information structure and information organization and that such L1 influence persists even at high L2 proficiency levels. L1 constraints on information structure are not relaxed, even though they are too restrictive for the L2, resulting in texts that are unidiomatic and not fully cohesive from the perspective of a native speaker.

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NOTES

1. Generative grammars typically model V2 as a syntactic double-movement transformation: leftward movement of the finite verb to a functional head position on the left sentence periphery, creating a V1 clause, plus movement of a constituent into the specifier position of that functional projection, often identified as complementizer phrase (CP; e.g., Dürscheid, 1989; Grewendorf, 1988). Alternatively, it is postulated that the prefield constituent is not moved but generated in that position. With the breaking up of the CP domain into several functional projections in government and binding theory and minimalism, models of where to locate that first constituent and the verb have multiplied. Here we concentrate on the linear order of constituents (SVX, V1 [= VSX], V2 [= XVS], V3 [= XSV, SXV]), because the findings reported do not hinge on any specific structural account.

2. Coordinating conjunctions are disregarded here: They are treated not as clausal constituents but as linking words with no influence on word order. Utterance-initial elements separated by a pause or an intonation break, such as left-dislocated constituents, vocatives, and interjections, are not considered to be part of the prefield.

3. Even though generations of linguists of various schools have worked on topic and theme, these terms lack generally agreed-on definitions. Theme here stands for what the speaker or writer assumes the listener or reader to know (i.e., given information); rheme stands for what the speaker or writer assumes to be new information for the listener or reader, thus being of higher informational value. Such a strict partitioning of the clause into theme and rheme is not without problems; often there is a cline from one to the other. Moreover, some clauses may contain several thematic elements, and some contain none but are informationally all-new. (See, e.g., Beneš, 1971; Daneš, 1970; Lötscher, 1984; note that for Daneš and Beneš, the notion thema comprises not only given information or low informational value but also aboutness and point of departure, thus encompassing both theme and sentence topic.)

4. The differences between Swedish and German are statistically significant for subjects and expletives, $\chi^2 = 75.797$, $p < .001$, objects, $\chi^2 = 15.216$, $p < .001$, and other adverbials, $\chi^2 = 58.951$, $p < .001$. The difference for temporal and locational adverbials is not statistically significant, $\chi^2 = 1.795$, $p = .180$. The figures for other constituents (e.g., verbs, verb phrases, and predicatives) in the prefield are low in both languages. The figures in Table 2 are adapted from Rosén (2006), who also included V1 clauses with elided prefield in her counts. Here we only consider overt constituents.

5. Corpus studies of other genres may yield other percentages, but the point here is that for informal letters of the same age group, there is a clear asymmetry concerning clause-initial expletives between native German and native Swedish. Findings from informal speech point in the same direction: Bohnacker (2007) found that 16% (99/623) and 19% (578/3,068) of all subject-initial declaratives start with an expletive in corpora of spoken Swedish, but only 3% (39/1,190) do so in a comparable corpus of spoken German.

6. See Bohnacker (2005, 2006) for related *så* "so" constructions and their influence on L2 learners.

7. As an anonymous *SSLA* reviewer pointed out, *det* "it" may also serve to build topic continuity (cf. Lambrecht, 1994).

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8. The fronted object *det* "it" (or any fronted object for that matter) is also rare in the more formal written texts studied by Westman (1974).

9. German has a rich system of morphological case marking.

10. Some pronominal adverbs also exist in Swedish, but these are restricted to formal registers and archaic expressions, as in (i). No pronominal adverbs were found in the native Swedish corpus, neither in the prefield nor in any other position in the clause.

(i) *Därom tvista de lärde.*
there-about disagree the learned
"On that point the learned disagree."

11. Some examples are German *leider* and Swedish *tyvärr* "unfortunately," German *wahrscheinlich* and Swedish *antagligen/troligen* "probably," and logical connectives such as German *zudem/außerdem* and Swedish *dessutom* "moreover," and German *deshalb/deswegen/daher* and Swedish *därför* "therefore."

12. This happens at a point where the learners have not yet mastered OV placement of nonfinite verbs in German (see Bohnacker, 2005, 2006).

13. Bohnacker (2005) also found that the V3 influence of English on the learners' German syntax diminishes over time, as the 23 intermediate learners produced 62% SVX and 33% targetlike XVS but only 2% nontargetlike V3 after 3 years of German.

14. A 55th informant was excluded from these aggregated counts in order to avoid skewed statistics. He produced seven instances of XSVO that, if included, would have marginally altered the counts: 80% SVX (811/1,008) and 19% non-subject-initial (197/1,008), whereas 153/197 are XVS.

15. The results from oral L2 German are included here precisely because the distribution in the prefield is so similar to that of the written L2 data. Note that despite the difference in modality, the oral and written data are of related genres. Both are informal and monological: monologue narratives on a given topic versus monological letters and essays on a given topic. Ideally, however, the oral L2 data should also be compared with oral L1 control corpora elicited in the same fashion—an investigation that we plan to undertake in the future.

16. The figures in Table 6 do not add up to 100%, as 25 subordinate clauses have been left out from the advanced L2 German and 37 have been left out from the native German rewritings (see Rosén, 2006).

17. The learners' choice of lexical items and inflectional morphology sometimes differs from native German. Such nontarget features will not be commented on here.

18. An overview of the raw figures for the use of pronominal adverbs in the data is presented here.

	Prefield	Other positions in the clause
L1 Swedish written, letters	0	0
L1 German written, letters	20	66
L2 beginner oral narrative	0	0
L2 beginner written, letters	0	0
L2 intermediate oral narrative	1	4
L2 intermediate written, letters	4	1
L2 advanced written, letters	3	12

19. For a related proposal, see Carroll et al. (2000), who compared the productions of very advanced learners of German (L1 English, L1 Spanish) in a picture description task with those of German natives. Although the learners seemed to have acquired the German-specific lexical and grammatical means for organizing information, they tended to start their sentences differently than native controls. German native speakers preferred to introduce a new referent (e.g., *ein Baum* "a tree") by anchoring it in the discourse spatially via a clause-initial locational prepositional phrase or pronominal adverb, such as *daneben* "beside that," as in (ii). The L2 learners typically used less specific locational *da* "there" (iii) or nonlocational, existential constructions, as in (iv), but hardly any (cohesion-building) pronominal adverbials.

(ii) *{daneben /neben dem Haus} steht ein Baum.*
there-beside /beside the house stands a tree
"Next to it/the house is a tree."

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(iii) *Da* *steht* *ein* *Baum.*
there.LOC stands a tree
"There's a tree."
(iv) *Es* *gibt* *einen* *Baum.*
it exists a tree
"There's a tree."

20. In other studies, advanced nonnative writers have also been found to use connectives less frequently than native speakers and to employ a relatively limited set of connectives (e.g., Ventola, 1992).

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