

Verb-first under Evaluatives and Psych Verbs in Swiss German

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Examples

(1) Verb-first in Swiss German

- a. (*as isch*) *guet* *sinder do*
 (it is) good are+you

“(It is) nice that you are here.”

- b. *mer freued* *üs* *sinder do*
 we are-glad us are+you

“We’re glad you’re here.”

- understudied (Lötscher 1997): The only publications are Lötscher (1997) and Hodler (1969).

Distribution

- Swiss German, acceptable to some other Alemannic speakers in Austria; Germany (Lötscher 1997)
- some* declarative embedded clauses
- *only [CP Evaluative [CP factual]]

(2) **i erwart vo der kunnsch au*
I expect from you come.2sg too
“I expect you to be there, too.”

[CP [CP ...]]

Embedded CP of [CP1 [CP2 ...]] can be verb first iff

- ① CP1 is headed by a psych verb or a V+A evaluative predicate
- ② CP2 is that verb's/predicate's theme (see Belletti and Rizzi (1988)).

(3) [CP As freut mi [CP sinder do.]]
It.EXPL pleases.PSYCH me.EXP [are+you here].THEME

“I am glad you are here.”

Why is this odd?

- Alemannic (West-Germanic) is usually not V1, but V2 in root declaratives. SVO/SOV in embedded declaratives, when there is an overt complementizer.
- Rather, V1 is usually seen in interrogatives (exception: conditionals).

What do these mean?

Any construction involving V1 (in Alemannic) can be rephrased where dass-Vfin replaces V1.

- (4) a. *Mi freuts siender do.*
Me pleases are+you here.
“I am happy that you are here.”
- b. *Mi freuts dassder do siend.*
Me pleases that+you here are.
“I am happy you are here.”

CP1

Two/Three kinds of licensors:

- ① Psych verbs: **freue**
- ② Evaluatives:
 - A) Psych verb + A **schö/schad/guet finde**
 - B) (Expl + Copula) + A **schö/schad/guet sii**

CP1 (continued)

- (5) a. *Mi freuts* [siender do]
Me pleases are+you here
“I am happy that you are here.”
- b. *I fiends schad* [sinder bald nüm do]
I find+it pity are+you soon no-longer here
“It is a shame you’ll be gone soon.”
- c. (*Es isch*) *schö* [siender do]
It is beautiful are+you here
“It’s nice that you are here.”

CP1

- Side fact regarding (c) (the adjective): Ambiguity with scrambled-up ADJ.
- ADJ and ADV are morphologically indistinguishable
- Linear order is ambiguous
- Intonation disambiguates, though!

(6) Ruling out a topicalized modifier

- a. *guet sinder GGANGE*
good are+you gone

“It’s good **that** you went.”

- b. *GUET_i sinder t_i ggange*
good are+you gone

“It’s good **how** you went.”

*CP2 CP1

CP2 (the V1, or Theme) cannot be fronted, like *dass* counterparts can. Why?
I don't know yet.

- (7) a. *Ich find schön, [dassder cho sind] / [sinder cho.]*
I find beautiful, [that+you come have] / [have+you come]
“I find it nice that you have come.”
- b. *[Dassder cho sind] / *[Sinder cho] find ich schön.*
[That+you come have] / *[have+you come] find I beautiful
“I find it nice that you have come.”

CP1 is indeed a CP

The higher (the evaluative/psych) clause is really a CP, for it follows the Verb-second/complementizer schema (see Holmberg (2015)).

- (8) a. [CP1 I bi mega froh [bisch Du bi üs]]
 I am mega happy are you at us

“I am super happy that you’re here with us.” [LC 48083]

- b. [CP1 Mir sinn au sehr froh gsi, isch nit mehr passiert]
 We aux also very glad been, is not more happened

“Also we were very glad that not more has happened.” [LC 65102]

LC = Leipzig Corpora Collection gsw-web-2016/7 (Goldhahn, Eckart, and Quasthoff 2012), a collection from scraped websites }

Also CP2 is indeed a CP

The lower CP (the V1 one) is also a CP, since it is complementary to dass+Vfin variants of the same meaning (see above).

Very related: Conditional Inversion V1 vs. C + V_{fin}

- Non-interrogative V1 does exist in Germanic.
- Here, *wenn* “if” and Verb-first can alternate, which reminds of our current *dass* “that” and Verb-first alternation puzzle.

(9) V2 irrealis in StG and English

- a. *Ginge* er heim, könnten wir aufräumen.
Goes.subj2 he home, could we clean.

“If he’d go home, we could clean.”

- b. *Wenn er heim ginge, könnten wir aufräumen.*
If he home+goes.sub2, could we clean.

“If he’d go home, we could clean.”

- c. *Had it not been for that, I would’ve stopped.*

- d. *If it had not been for that, I would’ve stopped.*

Conditional Inversion (continued I)

Irrealis (conjunctive mood) is not even required for this. German, Yiddish, Icelandic, Swedish, Old and Middle English allow this inversion also with the indicative mood (Iatridou and Embick 1994).

(10) V1 conditionals in German

Geht er wieder arbeiten, geht es ihnen besser.

Goes he again work, goes it them better.

“If he returns to work, they’ll be doing better.”

Conditional Inversion (continued II)

Reis and Wöllstein (2010): V1 conditionals can't be a fragment answer:

- (11) a. *[Wenn ich reich wäre]/[Wäre ich reich], würde ich ein*
If I rich were/Were I rich, would I a
Schloss kaufen.
castle buy.

“If I were rich, I would by a castle.”

- b. *Wann würdest du ein Schloss kaufen? Wenn ich reich*
When would you a castle buy? If I rich
*wäre./ *Wäre ich reich.*
*were./ *Were I rich*

“When would you buy a castle? If I were rich.”

The same is true for Alemannic embedded V1, when asking (what?) for the Theme.

Comparison

Conditional Inversion V1 is different from Alemannic Evaluative V1 in its information structure.

Both phenomena involve two predicates. In CI, the conditional V1 predicate restricts the other predicate. **In ALS Evaluative V1, the declarative V1 predicate is an argument of the other predicate (the theme).**

Verb-first is incomplete verb-second

- We (here today) can derive Verb-first via Verb-second
- Actually, Roberts (2005) derives Verb-second “via” Verb-first
- Verb-second consists of two operations: V-to-C and XP-to Spec-CP (“EPP”)
- EPP is a “slightly mysterious” (Roberts 2005:4) principle that has been revised multiple times, but informally: $[_X \text{ [EPP]}]$ means Spec,XP must be filled.
- Roberts (2005) argues for VSO (= Verb-first) to have V-to-C but only sometimes a first-constituent XP (namely in embedded clauses).

Verb-first is incomplete verb-second (continued)

- Roberts assumes a Split CP of the kind [ForceP [FinP ...]
- Fin = Finiteness; Force $\sim$ Clause-type (declarative, interrogative, ...)
- “Verb-second” as a phenomeon, in these terms, consists of
 - V-movement to Fin
 - XP-movement to SpecFinP (Roberts 2005:138)
- Roberts's analysis of Celtic (Welsh, Breton, Old Irish) VSO is detailed, but beyond today's scope. It involves particles in Fin and Force that affect EPP requirements.

Verb-first is incomplete verb-second (continued)

- Roberts formalizes an asymmetry of root versus embedded C heads.
“Non-selected declarative Fin is in principle distinct from selected, declarative Fin; the former is a kind of default, while the latter is a selected C-head, entering into selection relations like other heads.” (p. 29)

Verb-first is incomplete verb-second (continued)

“... we adopt a variant of Chomsky’s (2000, 2001) EPP-features that are ”interpretable“ at the PF interface (this conclusion converges with Roberts’s 2001 idea that heads may have a diacritic that indicates they require PF-realization). ”EPP-effects“ arise when such features are associated with otherwise unselected heads.” (p. 154)

- Only “unselected C” (= the C of a root CP) needs to satisfy EPP.
- It is “so impoverished in feature content [that it] requires an EPP-feature, triggering XP-movement (...)”. (Roberts 2005:141).

How this could work for Alemannic V1

- Alemannic V1 are always embedded, so I postulate (following Roberts's (2005) account of Celtic), that embedded C (Roberts's Fin) has no EPP feature since it is selected. This licenses Verb-first.
- At this point, I have to postulate that Fin* (C*) (heads that must be realized) *can only be realized by external Merge of a complementizer* in varieties that do not exhibit this Swiss German V1 pattern, while Swiss German can do so *by internal Merge (= Move) of V~T*.
- Work in progress ...

Thank you for your attention! (~ Fin ~)

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Evaluative adjectives

froh “glad”

- Är isch gloub froh gsi, [si mer wieder däne gsi] [8224]
- i bi froh [gseht min ma das genau glich] [2177]
- Auso ig bi emu froh gsi [hani eis gha] [9917]
- Doris Rätz tuet jetz i das Amt ispringe, u mir si froh [hei mir sie chönne gwinne] [28189]
- doch ich bi froh gsi, [hani e paar gfunde] [38457]

truurig “sad”

- Liebi Joya, truurig [hei mer am 9.Juni nach nume 4 Tag schlimmer Chrankheit vo dir müesse Abschied näh] [69504]

schad “unfortunate”

- Echt schaad hännd mir nid chönne/dörfe cho! [33431]
- Isch huere schad verpassi dä Event. [55651]

Nouns

Freud “joy”

- Mir hei aui freud [bisch ändlech da] [32305]

Psych verbs

fröie “be-glad”

- Es het üs uf jedefau aui gfröit, [si wedr so vöu cho, trotz em schlächt gmäudete Wätter] ! [37518]
- Mi hets gspunne gfreut, [sönd so vill glatti Sántisler a die DV choo] ! [62908]
- Mie freue üs sehr [bisch du scho uf dr Wäut] [62745]

Hodler's data

(12) From Lötscher's (3), collected from Hodler 1960

- a. *Es isch ke länge Verwich gsi, het Fritz de Läche nüt meh drnah gfragt.*

Es dauerte nicht lange, bis Fritz den Lehen nicht mehr nachfragte.

- b. *Es isch nüt drnebe gsi, het d'Wirti chly verständiger gredt.*

Es war nicht unangebracht, dass die Wirtin etwas verständiger sprach.

- c. *Cha sy, chunnt si im Fuehrwärch.*

Es kann sein, dass sie mit dem Fuhrwerk kommt.

- d. *Nid lang gäit's, stirbt äina.*

Es geht nicht lange, und es stirbt einer.

- e. *Es isch rächt chunnsch del*