Fitting a monolingual solution to bilingual data: verb second

Code-switching (CS) could be said to be "a hallmark of bilingual communities world-wide" (Poplack 2001, 2062). Studying the interaction of the two grammars involved in code-switching (CS) can be a valuable tool for investigating linguistic structure, as it can make information accessible which is not always available when only looking at monolingual data.

Accounting for CS phenomena within the Generativist framework has been made easier since the advent of the Minimimalist Program (MP). In a framework such as X'-theory, in which the structure is built before lexical insertion, it is difficult to explain how exactly individual lexical items can influence the structure. The MP is a more "lexical entry driven" approach, and it is precisely the features on the items in the lexicon that drive the derivation (MacSwan 2009).

Adapting Generative accounts developed for monolingual systems to explain bilingual data can be quite straightforward (see Cantone and MacSwan (2009) for DP word order). For other phenomena it is more complicated. Take the V2 phenomenon: In Dutch (1), the finite verb moves to the second position of the clause. In English (2), the finite verb remains in post-subject position.

Traditional Generative accounts (such as the one in Holmberg (2015)) assume the following for V2 languages. A functional head in the left periphery (usually called C^0) attracts the finite verb. This functional head then attracts something (which may be the subject (1-a), or an adjunct (1-b)) to its specifier position.

Non-V2 languages are thought *not* to have this functional head in the left periphery (at least not in declarative main clauses). A Dutch-English bilingual, will acquire two systems: one with a C^0 to trigger V2 word order (Dutch), and one without a C^0 (English).

The main issue with such accounts is that they make no predictions when it comes to mixed structures. As it is an *unlexicalised* structural position that determines V2 effects, it is unclear which structure a code-switching bilingual would choose: the English structure (3-a), or the Dutch structure (3-b). However, both native and non-native bilinguals show a strong preference for (3-a).

Rambow and Santorini (1995) provides an account that avoids this problem. In this proposal it is the finite verb itself which is responsible introducing the features which trigger the V2 effects. Which features a verb introduces is language specific. Consequently, the account makes the correct predictions for the preferences described above. An English verb would not trigger the possibility for V2 word order and hence (3-b) is excluded.

The proposed solution will build on the approach taken by Rambow and Santorini (1995). The proposal will then be tested using data from a grammaticality judgment task, which is currently in progress.

(1)   Dutch: V2; SOV word-order

     a.   Ik **zag** Adele.

     b.   Gisteren **zag** ik Adele.

     c.   Ik **heb** Adele gezien.

(2)   English: no V2; SVO word-order

     a.   I **saw** Adele.

     b.   Yesterday I **saw** Adele.

     c.   I **have** seen Adele.

(3)   a.   GISTEREN *I saw Adele*.

     b.   GISTEREN *saw I Adele*.

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