

True versus accidental V2 in Old Spanish

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The V2 debate

Quite a widespread assumption that Old Spanish was a V2 language: Fontana (1993), Wolfe (2015), Poole (2013, 2017) etc.

Various scholars explicitly oppose this view, notably Rivero (1993) and Sitaridou (2011, 2019, Batllori and Sitaridou 2020).

My analysis is a *via media*.

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Basic assumptions

V2 = \bar{A} -movement to spec-CP + head movement of finite V to C. (Holmberg 2015 etc.)

Additional \bar{A} -movement across the filled spec-CP blocked, so higher constituents must be externally merged (V3 etc.). (Relativized minimality)

V-movement to C: implies subject–verb inversion, e.g. English *wh*-movement. But VS not necessarily inversion.

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Two types of “V2” order in Old Sp.

One type involves \bar{A} -movement, so ****is**** V2.

The other type involves external merge, and V2 order fortuitous or accidental.

Cliticization decisive. But note: enclisis independently excluded from embedded clauses.

Shlonsky (2004): cliticization blocks feature checking on V. Proclisis = delayed cliticization, to enable late feature checking. Otherwise, enclisis.

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Note on the data

All examples except one from 13th C. manuscripts (1250–1300). Narrative, legal, scientific & technical (all prose).

The other example is from 14th C. copy of 1255 ms (Fuero Real).

So the talk refers to usage in 13th C. But generalizations likely to be applicable also to 14th C.

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True V2

(Almost) any category can front. Main & embedded.

There is always an interpretative correlate.

- (1) Resumptive preposing (Cinque 1990).
- (2) Affective focus (emphasis, mirative focus [Jiménez Fernández 2015], verum focus [Leonetti and Escandell Vidal 2009], focus-affected [Quer 2002] etc.).

Almost all such frontings also occur in mod. Spanish.

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True V2: examples

Resumptive preposing:

Et esta semeiança posieron al can destos menores.
and this similarity they-put to the dog of-those small-ones (LSA, 9v)

Modern Spanish:

Estas cosas decían los analistas financieros en Twitter.
these things said the analysts financial on Twitter

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True V2: examples cont'd

Affective focus:

¶ de muchas maneras deuen seer penados. (FJ, 55v)
in many ways they-must be punished

Modern Spanish:

Muchas vitaminas debe de tomar. (Quer 2002:258)
many vitamins he/she-must to take

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True V2: examples cont'd

Affective focus (predicate fronting):

ca **buena es la tardança que faz la carrera segura.**
for good is the tardiness that makes the route safe (EE I, 28r)

Modern Spanish:

agradable era el descenso por la cuesta de Atocha
pleasant was the descent along the slope of Atocha
(*Tiempo de Silencio*)

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Inversion: mandatory

Grand uerguenna **ouieron los romanos del pleyto que**
great shame had the Romans of the treaty that

mancino fiziera con los de Çamora

Mancinus had-made with those of Zamora (EE I, 21r)

& si eneste medio algun iudizio diere el alcalde uala.

& if in-this period any judgment gives the magistrate,
it-stands (FR, 11v)

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Long movement: fine

& esta penna mandamos que ayan los obispos. & los
& this sanction we-order that have the bishops & the
sacerdotes. & los diaconos.

priests & the deacons (FJ, 82v)

& a este monte dizen que fuxieron muchos sobre
& to this mountain they-say that fled many above
Numiada.

Numiada (GE1, 13v)

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Obligatory proclisis

Et **estos nombres les dizen por que suben**

& these names to-them they-call because they-rise
antes que çuhayl.

before çuhayl (LSA, 22v)

¶ **Otra pena les puso aun.**

another sanction to-them it-put still (LL, 72v)

& assi los faras por orden fatal seseno. (CA, 24r)

& thus them you-will-do in order until-the sixth-one

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Compare *wh*-movement: proclisis

& si muriere que pro me tienen esas mayorias?
 & if I die what benefit to-me have those birthrights
 (GE1, 77r)

Pues como me oyra el Rey ffaraon que es sennor;
 then how to-me will-listen the king pharaoh who is lord
 (GE1, 151r)

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Long movement: only proclisis

que toda quanta bien andança auien. por su sentido
 that all what good fortune they-had by their wisdom
les dizie que uinien a ella.
 to-them he-said that they-came to it (GE I, 18r)

Rey sanos me semeian que estan.
 king unbroken to-me they-seem that they are
 (GE IV, 70v)

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Why this correlation?

V-movement to C implies feature checking by C.

Once cliticization occurs, no further feature checking on V possible (V too 'deeply embedded').

Proclisis = delayed cliticization, so compatible with feature checking by C.

Enclisis = default / early cliticization, so incompatible with feature checking by C.

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Accidental V2: P1 item peripheral adverbial

e por esto dizien los sabios que el uso e la costumbre
 & for this say the wise that the use & the custom
es la natura segunda.
 is the nature second (LA, 47r)

& desi tomo ell Arçobispo iulian el libro & las
 & then took the archbishop Julian the book & the
razones con quel amparaua;
 reasons with which-it he-defended (EE I, 187r)

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Accidental V2 has systematic enclisis

& estonce deue lo el obispo recibir. (LL, 90v)
& then must it the bishop receive

Et por esto metieron le muchos sabios en cuenta
& for this put him many wise-men in ledger
delas prophetas que prophetizaron sin libro.
of-the prophets who prophesized without book (PP, 1r)

Et quando llegaron ael. omillos le Jacob.
& when they-arrived to-him humbled-himself to-him Jacob
(GE I, 110r)

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Significance of enclisis

Implies feature checking on V by C not possible, hence V does not move to C in this structure.

Also, long movement requires proclisis, so impossible in accidental V2. Therefore preverbal constituent not \bar{A} -moved.

General typological difference vis-à-vis true V2: unlikely to be generated by same syntax.

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Optionality of “inversion” confirms

e por esto dizen los sabios que el uso e la costumbre
& for this say the wise that the use & the custom
es la natura segunda.
is the nature second (LA, 47r)

& por esto el Rey deue entender que uence
& for this the king must understand that he-outranks
todas las cosas por que es rey.
all the things because is king (FJ, 3v)

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Conclusion re accidental V2

These are VS(O) structures, but with an initial, externally merged adverbial.

VS(O) and SV(O) free to alternate after the P1 element.

Default assumption: V no higher than T (Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 1998, Bib. & Roberts 2004 etc.).

Enclisis predominates in Old Sp. (in 13th C., ratio in main clauses 3:1 [Bouzouita 2008]). So VS(O)/accidental V2 = backbone of Old Spanish.

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Overall conclusion

Old Spanish has some V2 syntax but (true) V2 was a minority pattern.

Old Spanish could have become a V2 language, had accidental V2 been reanalyzed as true V2.

Instead VS(O) has declined, to the benefit of SV(O).

Relatedly, enclisis has died out in tensed finite clauses.

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