

# Declining V2 is sensitive to register

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# Medieval French V2

Medieval French has remnant unambiguous V2 constructions (Le Coultre 1875, Thurneysen 1892, Foulet 1928, Adams 1987, Roberts 2012, Vance 1997, Labelle 2007, Mathieu 2012, Wolfe 2018a, Larrivée 2019)

Unambiguous V2 constructions (XP V S) are instantiated by initial arguments & adjuncts (i), particles (ii) and coordinators (iii)

i. En cest cas ni **doit** li évesques nului **recevoir**,

ii. sin **ert faite** la iustise de larrun

iii. et **ot** Aales la sèsine

On the whole, they are asymmetric (Main Clause Phenomena) and non strict (unlike contemporary standard German, more than one XP is possible)

# Medieval French V2

Current research displays two important points of divergence however

- The rate of unambiguous V2 constructions in 13th c prose
- The role of the initial XP

# Medieval French V2

Current research displays two important points of divergence –

- The rate of unambiguous V2 constructions in 13th c prose

° Some studies find about 20% of post-verbal subjects

(18.6% of clauses with a post-verbal subjects in two literary 1230-40 texts, Bech and Salvesen 2014, Salvesen and Bech 2014; 20,1% of post-verbal subjects in 1230 *Tristan*, Radwan 2011; 20% and 17% in two literary texts of the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> c, Marchello-Nizia 2017; 30.3% of strict V2 in a 1220 literary text, Kaiser and Zimmermann 2011)

° Other sources point to less than 5% (unambiguous V2)

(Prévost 2015, Larrivée 2019)

# Medieval French V2

Current research displays two important points of divergence

- The role of the initial XP

There is an assumption that the XP has an informational role which justifies its initial position

° primarily a Focus: preverbal object with expressed post-verbal subject in verse texts between 1090 and 1200 (Labelle and Hirschbühler 2018) (see also also Steiner 2012)

° no categorial role (Bardagil-Mas 2012, Bech and Salvesen 2014, Salvesen and Bech 2014)

° (nearly) categorially a Topic (Ingham 2018, Larrivée 2019)

Note that Focus are exceedingly rare in Larrivée (2019)'s data

# Context

Differences in

- The rate of unambiguous V2 constructions
- The IS value of the initial XP

These tend to correspond to the types of texts (literary vs. non-literary)

# Context

## **Hypotheses:**

The observed disparities for Medieval French V2

- The rate of unambiguous V2 constructions
- The IS value of the initial XP

relate to the register of the investigated text( type)s

- Galves (2019) : higher rate of post-verbal subject in the higher register in the history of Portuguese
- Differential behaviour of clausal properties in direct speech and narrative sequences (e.g. Mazziotta and Glikman 2019, Pujol i Campeny 2018)

# Method

If higher register determines more frequent V2 and more frequently focus XPs,  
it should be detectable by comparing register-differentiated  
13th c prose texts from the same domain of activity and region

The following Anglo-norman 13th c prose legal texts have  
already been shown to be register-differentiated by Ingham  
(2016)

- The Anglo-Norman Year Books

- The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England

# Method

Anglo-norman 13<sup>th</sup> c prose legal texts

1. *Anglo-Norman Year Books* (1270-1279)
2. *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England* (1290-1300)
3. *Fet asaver* (1263)

Literary comparative

4. *Queste* (1225-1230)

# Method

From the 4 texts

Annotate a continuous textual stretch containing 50 V2 clauses

Clause type, subject expression and position, XP type (argument or adjunct, particle, connector, coordinator) and IS value

# Method

## IS value decision tree for annotation of XP

i. Has the phrase been explicitly mentioned in the previous discourse?

Yes -> It is discourse-old      No -> Go to ii.

ii. Is the phrase referring by anaphor or deixis to a previously-mentioned phrase?

Yes -> It is discourse-old      No -> Go to iii.

iii. Is the phrase used in a construction that accommodates it as discourse-old information?

Yes -> It is discourse-old      No -> Go to iv.

iv. Is the phrase used in a context that leads us to infer it as discourse-old information based on *a.* previous discourse or *b.* world-knowledge?

Yes -> It is discourse-old      No -> It is discourse-new.

# Method

IS value decision tree for annotation of XP

(1) e            coe        ne        put            ele            dire  
and        this        NEG        can-PST.3S    3SG.NOM    say-INF  
‘[and] This she cannot do’

(2) Pag'. Sire, par iij resons nous        vous        moustrum        ke  
Pag'. Sir, by 3 reasons 1P-NOM 2P-ACC show-PR-1P that  
‘Pakenham. Sir, we will give you three good reasons ... that’

# Results

On the rate of unambiguous V2 constructions

Prediction : the proportion of unambiguous V2 should be greater in texts of higher register

This would lead to expect that texts 1 and 2 will have a lower rate of V2 than texts 3 and 4

1. *Anglo-Norman Year Books* (1270-1279)
2. *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England* (1290-1300)
3. *Fet asaver* (1263)
4. *Queste* (1225-1230)

# Results

On the rate of unambiguous V2 constructions  
(in main clauses)

Table 5. Rate of unambiguous V2 against all assertive main clauses, in numbers and percentages

	ANYBC (1270-1279)		PROME (1290-1300)		Fet asaver (1263)		Queste (1225-1330)	
	To all clauses	To all main clauses	To all clauses	To all main clauses	To all clauses	To all main clauses	To all clauses	To all main clauses
	5.1%	14%	8.1%	23.3%	16.7%	43.1%	9.2%	20.7%
	(50/982)	(50/358)	50/619	50/235	50/300	50/116	(50/545)	(50/242)

Highly significant differences

# Results

On the IS value of the initial XP

Prediction : the proportion of Focus XP in unambiguous V2 should be greater in texts of higher register

This would lead to expect that texts 1 and 2 will have a lower rate of V2 than texts 3 and 4

1. Anglo-Norman Year Books (1270-1279)
2. *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England* (1290-1300)
3. *Fet asaver* (1263)
4. *Queste* (1225-1230)

# Results

On the rate of Focus XP  
(in main clauses)

Table 6. Rate of Focus XPs in unambiguous V2, in numbers and percentages

	ANYBC (1270-1279)		PROME (1290-1300)		Fet asaver (1263)		Queste (1225-1330)	
	To all arguments and adjuncts	To all V2	To all arguments and adjuncts	To all V2	To all arguments and adjuncts	To all V2	To all arguments and adjuncts	To all V2
	6,3%	4%	10,9%	10%	14.3%	10%	16.1%	10%
	(2/32)	(2/50)	(5/46)	5/50	(5/35)	5/50	(5/31)	(5/50)

The tendency is there, but the numbers are too small to be statistically significant

# V2 is an informational construction driven by the XP

- The rate of unambiguous V2 constructions
- The IS value of the initial XP

is correlated to text register in Medieval French

But what type of register?

The proximity/distance

or The conceptual orality (dialogue/narration)

*à la* Koch & Österreicher

# V2 is an informational construction driven by the XP

Does conceptual orality impact the IS value of the initial XP ?

It might be that there are more opportunities to be « emphatic » and have a Focus/Discourse-New XP in direct speech sequences

To test this, we can check the IS value of the argument and adjunct XPs in 50 unambiguous V2 constructions (main and subordinate)

- in direct speech

- vs. indirect speech and narration)

in the *ANYBC* and in the *Queste* that present both

# Results

## On the rate of Focus XP

		Old	New+focus	Focus	compl	part+coord	tots
	Dial ANYBC	38 / 76%	7 / 14%	2 / 4%	45 / 90%	34 / 68%	50
	Dial Queste	23 / 46%	11 / 22%	7 / 14%	34 / 68%	38 / 76%	50
	Narr ANYBC	30 / 60%	3 / 6%	1 / 2%	33 / 67%	40 / 80%	50
	Narr Queste	26 / 52%	9 / 18%	9 / 18%	35 / 72%	45 / 90%	50

The rate of Focus is actually not determined by orality as much as it is by text register understood as formality

- More Discourse-Old XPs in *ANYBC* irrespective of modality
- More Focus XPs in *Queste* irrespective of modality

# Future verification

Is orality really making no impact on rate of Focus/?

Reexamining the issue

trying to assemble 50 occurrences

in prototypical V2 constructions (main clause, strict)

with argument/adjunct

in dialogue and narration of *ANYBC*

## V2 and register – summary

V2 is a declining construction

That is influenced by register conceived of in terms of formality

- rate of unambiguous V2
- rate of Focus XP

As can be detected by comparing annotation of register-differentiated prose texts calibrated by region and domain

## V2 and register – summary

V2 is a register-differentiated construction throughout

- In 1460-1480 letters of the d'Estouteville family, V2 is used ONLY in letters to readers of higher social status, never in letters to middle-class readers (artisans, land managers)

- In contemporary French, remnants of V2 (less than 0.1%)

*Encore faudrait-il*

are a normative register constructions

# Medieval French: A diglossic language variety?

Contemporary French has been said to be diglossic (e.g. Massot)

Du coup, on va pas faire ça / Nous ne le ferons donc pas

‘We won’t do it then’

Is Medieval French diglossic?

There’s certainly differential rates for some constructions.

What remains to be found are constructions absent in one of the registers. Capin (2019) proposes that extraposed relatives to a demonstrative is only found in literary texts

*Ço dist li reis que sa guerre out finee (Roland)*

