

Word Order Variation and Change in Transylvanian Saxon

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1 Introduction

When closely related languages are in contact, structural transfer from one language to another is possible (Thomason 2001:71). However, prolonged contact between two languages (of at least a few centuries), or intense contact characterized by high degree of bilingualism in the community can lead to similar results (Clyne 2003; Backus et. al 2011). Furthermore, when contact-induced changes occur in a language, variation between the new and native forms is not uncommon (Poplack et. al 2012:204).

The present study focuses on syntactic transfer in a situation where three languages are in contact, and assesses the role each of the supplying languages play in the integration of transferred structures from a source language into a target language. The data come from six Transylvanian Saxon participants who belong to a trilingual community located in Viscri, Romania, a multi-ethnic village of 400 inhabitants, out of which 15 are Transylvanian Saxons, and the rest are Romanians and Roma. The first language of the group is Transylvanian Saxon (hereafter TrSax) used only in oral communication, the second language is German, traditionally used in education and church, and the third Romanian, used for communication with the wider community. Thus two languages are closely related Germanic languages (TrSax and German), and the third language is a Romance language (Romanian), displaying typological differences to the other two languages. I argue that new structures transferred from German into TrSax, but Romanian may aid in maintaining the TrSax patterns and thus slowing down the change towards German, due to similarities between the TrSax and Romanian structures.

There are two types of verbal structures that display variation in the TrSax dialect spoken in Viscri (hereafter Viscri Saxon): two-verb clusters (i.e. auxiliary/modal + verb) in subordinate clauses and particle verbs that are part of such two-verb clusters¹. The variation in each case occurs between native TrSax structures and German-type structures. For example, two-verb clusters in subordinate clauses follow both auxiliary/modal-verb and verb-auxiliary/modal orders, the former being the native TrSax structure (as in 1) and the latter the typical Standard German structure (as in 2):

- (1) wa der Kenenk dot **hat**_{Aux} **ge-hirt**_v (Aux-V)
when the king that have.3SG.PRS PCPT-hear.PCPT
'When the king has heard that...'
Viscri Saxon (ASD|Deutsch-Weisskirch|23f|1709b-15|41)²
- (2) dod et sich ja niet aen en Spal **stoiche**_v **keun**_{Aux} (V-Aux)
that she REFL.3SG yes no in a thorn sting.INF can.3SG.PRS
'...and [he] thought that this way she could not prick herself in a thorn.'
Viscri Saxon (ASD|Deutsch-Weisskirch|23f|1709b-15|1)

Variation between the structures exemplified in (1) and (2) is present in other West-Germanic varieties (e.g. Middle High German, Luxembourgish) related to TrSax, though the distribution between the two orders shows a predominant preference towards V-Aux/M order (Wurmbrand 2006; Dubenion-Sminth 2008; Sapp 2011). Because Viscri Saxon allows flexible distribution be-

*I would like to thank the Linguistics Department at the University of Michigan, and the Weiser Center for Eastern European Studies for the financial support in conducting fieldwork for this study.

¹A syntactic characteristic that many West-Germanic languages share is the clustering of multiple verbs in what is called a 'verb cluster' (Wurmbrand 2006; Zwart 2007). I will use the term 'verb cluster' to refer to a grouping of verbal elements that are part of the same verbal complex and have the property of a tensed auxiliary or modal selecting a participle or an infinitive (Zwart 2007:78).

²These examples are taken from the ASD corpus, an online database with recordings of TrSax dialects collected between 1960-1975. I am following the citation format recommended on the ASD website: *ASD* |town name| age [m/f]|file number |interval number| ([m/f] stands for gender).

tween the two orders and it patterns differently among the recorded participants depending on language background, I claim that variation in this dialect is the result of language contact: both German and Romanian influence the distribution between possible word orders. Furthermore, I will show that the increased use of German transferred structures lead to subsequent changes in the area of particle verbs. The individual variation displayed among the speakers support these claims, as variation is present only in speakers who use all three languages regularly. One speaker, who does not use Romanian, uses only German-type structures, and another speaker, who does not use German, uses only TrSax structures, which also overlap with the structures found in Romanian.

The following section highlights syntactic transfer phenomena in language contact situations that are relevant to the current study, such as prolonged contact among languages (such as in the case of TrSax, German, and Romanian), high degree of multilingualism in the community, and contact between typologically similar (i.e. German and TrSax) and distinct languages (i.e. TrSax and Romanian). Furthermore, I will show how two-verb clusters pattern in TrSax, and discuss some of the studies that have analyzed the phenomena in more depth.

2 Syntactic Transfer

2.1 Factors Facilitating Syntactic Transfer

The focus of the present study is syntactic transfer due to language contact in a trilingual situation. More specifically, the language under investigation, TrSax, is an endangered language and members of the TrSax community are shifting from TrSax to German or Romanian, due to a drastic decrease in number of TrSax speakers. In analyzing how this shift is affecting specific syntactic areas in TrSax, a series of factors needs to be considered, that shape the possible outcomes of language contact, such as intensity of contact (i.e. the duration of contact, the relative population sizes, and the degree of bilingualism in the community), and typological similarity among the languages. While TrSax has been in prolonged contact with both German and Romanian, previous studies indicate that contact with Romanian was sporadic and limited over time, but TrSax and German have been historically in close contact (McClure 1973; Ney 1984). However, since the mass emigration of Transylvanian Saxons after the revolution in Romania in 1989, contact between TrSax and Romanian has intensified and many TrSax families started using Romanian in various aspects of their lives, including the home.

Intimate contact between languages, such as in the case of mixed households leads to more structural transfer from a source language to a target language (Thomason and Kaufman 1988:72). As a convention, I will use the term ‘transfer’ (cf. Heine and Kuteva 2005; Meakins and O’Shannessy 2012) to refer to linguistic features (e.g. lexical, phonological, morphologic, syntactic, semantic), which are incorporated from a source language into a receiving language. I will refer to contact-induced changes, which affect the syntactic structure more specifically, as syntactic transfer. Syntactic transfer can come in the form of a single morpheme, a grammatical relation or pattern (i.e. word order), the function or meaning of a grammatical form, or a combination of these forms (Heine and Kuteva 2005:2).

There is a tendency for non-basic vocabulary to be transferred first from one language to another and in situations of less intense contact, and for basic vocabulary items and structural features to be transferred later as the intensity of contact increases (Thomason 2010:36). Exceptions to such tendencies, while rare, do occur, especially in situations of prolonged contact and intense bilingualism. Syntactic transfer has been attested in situations where community norms prohibit the use of foreign lexical and grammatical forms (Aikhenwald 2003:3) and in cases where a rigorous separation of languages and the avoidance of language mixing are imposed in the community (Gumperz and Wilson 1971). The more intense the contact situation, the more likely it is that syntactic transfer will occur. Intensity of contact can be identified by the duration of contact, the relative population sizes (e.g. source language speakers versus receiving language speakers), and the degree of bilingualism that is present in the community (Thomason and Kaufman 1988:65-66). The longer the contact between two languages, the higher the chances for bilingualism to develop, which in turn sets the stage for increased structural transfer.

Typological similarity among languages in contact can also facilitate syntactic transfer in the same way prolonged contact can contribute to such outcomes. Haig (2006:217) notes that the

alignment of smaller syntactic units, such as relative clauses or noun phrases, is more likely when typologically similar languages are involved, but similar results can be found in cases of prolonged contact between typologically distinct languages. Variation in outcomes can also be explained through the differential adaptation of transferred forms into the receiving language by members of the community, depending on degree of bilingualism (Heath 1984:371). When investigating German-English and Dutch-English bilingualism in Australia, Clyne (1992, 2003) found that both German and Dutch were moving towards a more rigid XVO word order under the influence of English, which is dependent on word order due to lack of case marking. German and Dutch are verb-last languages, thus being partly SOV and partly XVO. The tendency was for both languages to overgeneralize SVO word order, but it happened to different degrees in each language. XVO generalization was not found in the German of first generation German immigrants in Australia, but second or later generations of Germans were starting to use it. In contrast, the tendency towards XVO generalization was already present in the speech of first generation Dutch immigrants (Clyne 2003:132). The fact that both languages were changing towards XVO order shows that certain forms in the heritage language of a group will advance under the influence of the dominant language in the wider community, but differences in outcomes can be the result of more or less exposure to the heritage language.

Interestingly, when looking at German-Dutch-English trilinguals, Clyne (2003:135) found that SVO overgeneralization in Dutch under the influence of English occurred less frequently for Dutch speakers who also used German, i.e. in Dutch-German-English trilinguals, than for Dutch-English bilinguals, indicating that in the case of the former, German had a conservative effect on the typological drift of Dutch towards English. Overall Clyne's (2003:134) findings show that trilingual transfer phenomena are similar to bilingual ones, but in the case of trilingualism, a morphologically more complex language (e.g. German) can slow down the changes in a morphologically less complex language (e.g. Dutch) under the influence of a third, typologically more progressive language (e.g. English).

In the case of TrSax, German, and Romanian, the latter language could have the same effect in slowing down the changes of TrSax towards German, or could act as a source for syntactic transfer in the form of an overgeneralization of shared structures. While TrSax has been in contact prolonged contact with both German and Romanian (over 800 years), it seems to have been influenced more by German than Romanian, as the following section will show. Studies looking into Romanian influences on TrSax (Ney 1984; Krefeld 2015) report that such influences are seen mostly in the vocabulary area. However, dialects of TrSax are exhibiting German patterns even in the syntactic areas where TrSax used to be distinct from German.

2.2 Syntactic Transfer in TrSax

A syntactic characteristic that many West-Germanic languages share is the clustering of multiple verbs in what is called a 'verb cluster' (Wurmbrand, 2006; Zwart, 2007). When a clause contains verb clusters that are formed out of two verbs, i.e. two-verb clusters, such constructions typically involve an auxiliary and a participle (e.g., *Mary has eaten*) or an auxiliary/modal and an infinitive (e.g., *Mary will/must eat*) (Wurmbrand 2006:44). For ease of exposure I will adopt a standard numbering system found in the literature on verbal clusters: the finite verb (i.e. the auxiliary or the modal) is indexed with 1, and the non-finite lexical verb is indexed with 2 (see example 3 below).

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------|
| (3) | er hat ₁ heute ein Buch ge-lesen ₂ | 1-2 |
| | he have.3SG.PRS today a book PCPT-read.PCPT | |
| | 'He has read a book today.' | Standard German |
| | | |
| (4) | sie sagt [dass er heute ein Buch gelesen ₂ hat ₁] | 2-1 |
| | she says that he today a book PCPT-read.PCPT have.3SG.PRS | |
| | 'She says, that he has read a book today.' | Standard German |

Standard German contains a well-known asymmetry in word order between main and subordinate clauses that contain a two-verb cluster (Sapp 2011:1): in main clauses, the finite verb occupies the second position in the clause, while the non-finite verb comes clause finally as in (3). In

subordinate clauses the non-finite and the finite verb occur together at the end of the clause, with the finite verb following the non-finite verb as in (4).

Overall TrSax and German are remarkably similar in structure (McClure 1973), but differ in a few syntactic areas. One difference is that TrSax maintains 1-2 order in both main and subordinate clauses, another one being that particle verbs that are part of a two-verb cluster in subordinate clauses pattern differently in TrSax than in German. Thus the discussion from here on will focus on subordinate clauses. The example below shows a relative clause construction (delimited with square brackets) where the auxiliary *hu* ‘have’ precedes the participle verb *gesan* ‘seen’, thus exemplifying 1-2 order in TrSax:

- (5) det Mechen [dot yach hu₁ ge-san₂] 1-2
 the girl that I have.1SG.PRS PCPT-see.PCPT
 ‘The girl [that I have seen].’ Vingard Saxon (McClure, 1973:332)

Two-verb clusters in Romanian are similar to TrSax, in that the finite Aux/M comes before the lexical verb in both main and subordinate clauses. Example (6) shows a subordinate clause in Romanian, where the auxiliary *a* ‘have’ precedes the verb *citit* ‘read’:

- (6) ea zice [că el a₁ citit₂ o carte azi] 1-2
 she says that he have.3SG.PRS read.PCPT a book today
 ‘She says that he has read a book today.’ Romanian

It has been argued that verbal cluster constructions typical for German have entered TrSax through speakers who were in close contact with German (Holzträger, 1912; Isbănescu and Mantsch, 1975). The evidence comes from comparing documents written in TrSax from different time periods and from comparing dialects spoken in the cities to dialects spoken in the countryside (Holzträger, 1912; Isbănescu and Mantsch, 1975). Holzträger (1912), a speaker of TrSax himself, undertook a syntactic comparison of several TrSax dialects to Standard German, Luxembourgish, and Moselle Franconian. When it comes to subordinate clauses, Holzträger (1912:27-28) notes that constructions with the finite Aux/M preceding the non-finite verb (i.e. 1-2 order) are the most commonly encountered constructions in the dialects spoken in the countryside, such as in (7):

- (7) [dad er mich nāt huat₁ farschmä.t₂] mich māt meiner Hauswitten 1-2
 that you me not have.2PL.PRS despise.PCPT me with my landlady
 ‘That you have not despised me, me and my landlady.’
 TrSax (Holzträger, 1912:28)

Holzträger (1912:28) points out that 2-1 order is also possible in subordinate clauses and present to a large extent in the city varieties where contact with German is more intense, but he does not provide examples of a subordinate clause with such a construction. However, he established that 1-2 order was the original order in TrSax, by analyzing written documents from the 15th and 16th century, which only contained 1-2 order in subordinate clauses. While it is hard to determine when exactly 2-1 order became possible in Viscari Saxon, the dialect under investigation in this study, there is evidence from recordings in the ASD corpus that both 1-2 and 2-1 orders were present in the 1960s. The examples shown in (1) and (2) above come from a 1965 recording from the ASD corpus and were produced by the same participant.

Language	Possible word orders	
Standard German	x	2-1
Viscari Saxon	1-2	2-1
Romanian	1-2	x

Table 1: Two-verb clusters in subordinate clauses.

The evidence discussed so far shows that there are two possible word orders in two-verb clusters in TrSax subordinate clauses, and that 2-1 order occurs in TrSax as the result of contact be-

tween TrSax and German. Furthermore, both 1-2 and 2-1 order are attested in Visceri Saxon as early as 1965. Table 1 delivers an overview of the possible word orders encountered in subordinate clauses in the languages discussed so far³.

Thus, the situation I am investigating involves three languages in contact, where one language, Visceri Saxon, allows two possible word orders for two-verb clusters in subordinate clauses, one that is the original order (1-2) and overlaps with the structure found in Romanian, and one that is a German-type structure, hence overlapping with the order found in German.

Another area where TrSax and German differ is in the patterning of particle verbs in subordinate clauses. While TrSax particle verb structures have been reported to follow a strict rule in subordinate clauses (Holzträger 1912; McClure 1973; Sift 2015), more current data from Visceri Saxon show that German-type constructions transferred in that area as well.

Upon investigating TrSax documents from the 15th and 16th century, Holzträger (1912:32) found that separable particle verbs had a special rule in subordinate clauses containing auxiliaries, namely that the tensed auxiliary had to occur between the particle and the verb, as in (8) below. The auxiliary *vorn* ‘were’ is placed between the particle *fort* ‘away’ and the participle *gəlufm* ‘gone’:

- | | | |
|---|-----|-----------------------------|
| (8) wai se fort-vorn₁-ge-lufm₂ | 1-2 | |
| as they away-be.3PL.PST-PCPT-go.PCPT | | |
| ‘...as they went away.’ | | TrSax (Holzträger, 1912:32) |

This structure is unlike the one encountered in Standard German, which requires the particle verb to remain as one unit and be placed before the auxiliary, such as in (9):

- | | | |
|--|-----|-----------------|
| (9) wie sie fort-gelaufen₂ waren | 2-1 | |
| as they away-go.PCPT be.3PL.PST-PCPT | | |
| ‘...as they went away.’ | | Standard German |

Similarly, Sift (2015:196-199) analyzed particle verbs in the recordings from the ASD corpus, and noted that the most commonly encountered rule in subordinate clauses containing an auxiliary or modal verb and a particle verb, is for the auxiliary or modal to be placed between the particle and the verb. Furthermore, there were no examples exhibiting the Standard German word order. Since Visceri Saxon is one of the dialects also present in the ASD corpus, it is safe to assume that the particle verb rule was invariable in the 1960s when recordings were collected.

This section provided an overview of syntactic transfer more broadly and exemplified the verbal structures under investigation in this study. The variable verb cluster constructions that are currently encountered in TrSax can also be seen in other West Germanic varieties that are related to TrSax, such as Moselle Franconian, Luxembourgish, and West Flemish. However, there is evidence that TrSax used to have a rigid word order in subordinate clauses containing a two-verb cluster, including the area of particle verbs, and variation in the ordering of verbal elements has been influenced by German. The broader patterns found in Visceri Saxon, combined with the individual pattern displayed by the participants provide further proof for a language contact explanation in the case of word order variation in Visceri Saxon.

3 Data and Methodology

There were only 15 TrSax speakers left in Visceri at the time of my investigation. Most of the Transylvanian Saxons left the village after the revolution in Romania in 1989 and settled in Germany⁴. The TrSax data analyzed in this study come from one-hour long sociolinguistic interviews (cf. Tagliamonte 2006) conducted by a TrSax research assistant (RA) with six native speakers of Visceri Saxon ages 30 – 78. A questionnaire (Birdsong et. al 2012) was used to collect data on each participant’s linguistic background. Responses from the questionnaire show that four of the six

³‘x’ indicates that the order is not possible in the respective language

⁴More detailed information about the demographics in Visceri are available in Corsale and Iorio (2014).

participants (P2, P3, P5 and P6) learned German as a second language and Romanian third. They all followed the educational path traditional in TrSax communities in Romania, where children start learning German in kindergarten or first grade, and learning Romanian as a foreign language starting with second grade. I will refer to these four participants as (sequential) trilinguals (DeGroot 2011:12). One participant, P1 had very sporadic contact with Romanian throughout her life and does not speak the language, due to her family emigrating to Germany when she was 6 years old. She is a TrSax-German bilingual. One participant, P4 grew up TrSax–Romanian bilingual and never learned German in a formal setting, unlike the rest of the participants. None of the participants had formal instruction in TrSax; they acquired it solely aurally. The language used for writing (e.g. letters, grocery lists) is German for all participants, except P4, who uses Romanian.

The interviews were transcribed and all subordinate clauses that contained two-verb clusters were selected and coded for various linguistic factors (i.e. type of verb, type of Aux/M, type of subordinating conjunction) that might explain the variation between 1-2 and 2-1 word order. Based on patterns found in related Germanic languages such as Luxembourgish (Dubenion-Smith 2008:35), and West Flemish (Wurmbrand 2006:45), where subordinate clauses that contain modals paired with an infinitive verb require 1-2 order, verbs were coded according to finite and non-finite form, in order to test if the same rule holds in Viscri Saxon. Particle verbs in two-verb clusters were coded according to the same principles.

4 Results

There are many different dialects of TrSax and they display variation at the phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic levels. Therefore, the results presented in this chapter cannot be generalized for dialects other than Viscri Saxon.

A total of 162 tokens of two-verb clusters in subordinate clauses were analyzed in this study and both 1-2 (Aux/M-V) and 2-1 (V-Aux/M) orders were present to a similar degree. Example (10) illustrates a subordinate clause with 1-2 order, while example (11) shows 2-1 order, both utterances coming from the same participant, P5, indicated in parenthesis after the language index:

- (10) (...) *wuat mar hun₁ ge-breich-t₂* 1-2
 that we have.1PL.PRS PTCP-need-PTCP
 ‘(We brought everything) that we needed.’ Viscri Saxon (P5)
- (11) (...) *dat ech sa verkeuf-t₂ hun₁* 2-1
 that I them sell-PCPT have.1SG.PRS
 ‘(I went to the market) so that I sell them.’ Viscri Saxon (P5)

Furthermore no significant differences for the two word orders were found based on type of construction, i.e. when an auxiliary-verb construction is used in contrast to a modal-verb construction, as shown in Table 2:

Construction type	%
Aux-V	48
V-Aux	52
Modal-V	38
V-Modal	62
Number of tokens: 162	

Table 2: Two-verb clusters in subordinate clauses by type of construction.

Additionally, there is a relatively even distribution among word orders for each type of auxiliary: *sein* ‘to be’ occurs in 54% of the clauses displaying 1-2 order and in 44% of the clauses with 2-1 order, while *hun* ‘to have’ occurs in 46% of the clauses displaying 1-2 order and in 54% of the clauses with 2-1 order. No significant differences were found for any of the other analyzed linguistic factors, indicating that there is flexible distribution between 1-2 and 2-1 order in subordinate

clauses. However, not all participants use both orders. The participants categorized as trilinguals (P2, P3, P5, P6) use both orders, while P1 uses only 2-1 order and P4 uses only 1-2 order. These results are illustrated in Figure 1:

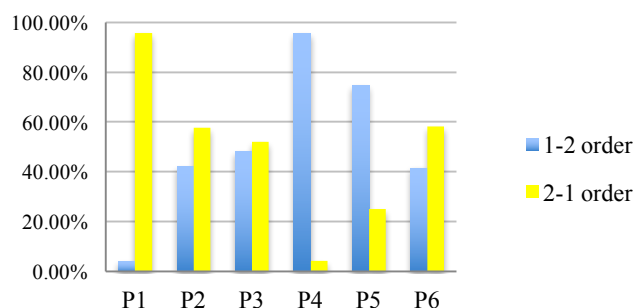


Figure 1: Verb clusters in subordinate clauses.

A binomial test indicates that the differences in the distribution between the two word orders displayed by P1, P4 and P5 are significant ($p \leq 0.001$), while the ones displayed by P2, P3, and P6 are not significant ($p > 0.05$).

Similar tendencies can be seen when analyzing particle verbs in subordinate clauses containing two-verb clusters. First, a new structure could be identified in Viscri Saxon, which has not been reported in previous studies. This structure is similar to the one found in Standard German, where the particle verb remains as a unit and precedes the auxiliary verb (as in 12):

- (12) ech dinkan niet [dat am daut **af-ge-schriw-an**₂ hat₁] 2-1
 I think.1SG.PRS not [that one that on-PCPT-write-PCPT have.3SG]
 ‘I don’t think, that they used to write that down.’
 Viscri Saxon (P3)

The structure shown in (12) coexists with the native TrSax structure, described in section 2 and exemplified for convenience in (13):

- (13) (...) dat am Wasser **eau** seull₁ **fuhren**₂ en da Gemujn 1-2
 that one water in should.3SG.PRS bring.INF in the community
 ‘(...) that they should bring in water in the community.’
 Viscri Saxon (P3)

Participant	Languages used ⁵	Subordinate clause structures used	
		Two-verb clusters	Particle verbs
P1	TrSax/ DE	2-1	P-V-Aux/M
P2	TrSax/ DE/ Ro	1-2 / 2-1	P-V-Aux/M / P-Aux/M-V
P3	TrSax/ DE/ Ro	1-2 / 2-1	P-V-Aux/M / P-Aux/M-V
P4	TrSax/ Ro	1-2	P-Aux/M-V
P5	TrSax/ DE/ Ro	1-2 / 2-1	P-V-Aux/M / P-Aux/M-V
P6	TrSax/ DE/ Ro	1-2 / 2-1	P-V-Aux/M / P-Aux/M-V

Table 3: Differential structures used by individual speakers.

⁵The second column indicates the languages speakers use regularly (TrSax - Viscri Saxon, DE - German, and Ro - Romanian).

Again, not all participants use both structures: trilinguals use both, while bilinguals use only one of the available structures. P1, the TrSax-German bilingual uses only the German-type structure (particle-verb-Aux/M or P-V-Aux/M), while P4, the TrSax-Romanian bilingual uses only the TrSax pattern (particle-Aux/M-verb or P-Aux/M-V). Overall results of the study are best summed up in Table 3 above.

5 Discussion

A driving concern of this study is to illustrate word order variation in Viscer Saxon two-verb clusters, and to show that this variation is the result of contact-induced syntactic transfer from German into Viscer Saxon. None of the previous studies arguing that German-type two-verb clusters are present in TrSax (i.e. Holzträger 1912; Isbănescu and Mantsch; 1975) show any examples of such constructions in TrSax. One interesting result that comes out of this study is that both 1-2 and 2-1 orders occur to a comparable extent in two-verb clusters in subordinate clauses. This distribution contrasts to other West Germanic languages/dialects related to TrSax and to Middle High German (an earlier stage of German and predecessor of TrSax), where 2-1 order is the preferred order in subordinate clauses (Dubenion-Smith 2008; Sapp 2011). Furthermore, none of the linguistic factors, such as type of auxiliary, type of subordinating conjunction, or form of verb (i.e. participle vs. infinitive) showed a preference towards one of the orders in Viscer Saxon.

While it is not clear when the 2-1 rule was introduced in Viscer Saxon, recordings from the ASD corpus show that it was present in the 1960s, and my data reveal that it is still present today in adult speakers of various ages, ranging from 30 to 78. Thus, the integration of this change is not generation specific, but rather connected to the degree of German-Viscer Saxon bilingualism among the interviewed speakers: the only speaker who does not use 2-1 order is P4, who is also the only speaker who does not use German regularly. Furthermore, P1, who spends most of her time in Germany and uses German more than the other speakers, has adopted this change to the extent where 1-2 order does not occur in her utterances. These differential outcomes may be attributed the fact that 2-1 order is the result of syntactic transfer from German to Viscer Saxon, introduced and predominantly used by Viscer Saxon-German bilinguals.

Furthermore, the more common use of the German-type 2-1 constructions in Viscer Saxon subordinate clauses may have been extended analogically to particle verbs, which can now precede the Aux/M and thus remain unsplit. All subordinate clause examples involving a particle verb preceding the Aux/M show an unsplit verb, while all examples where the Aux/M precedes the particle verb, show the Aux/M placed between particle and verb. Thus, the variation in this case is between the TrSax pattern and the German pattern.

Turning to individual speakers, P1 is the only speaker who does not use 1-2 order or P-Aux/M-V structures in subordinate clauses. P1 is also the only participant who spends most of her time in Germany, and is not a fluent speaker of Romanian. Her Viscer Saxon constructions are heavily influenced by her German. In contrast, P4, the TrSax-Romanian bilingual, does not use any of the German-type constructions (e.g. 2-1 and P-V-Aux/M). P2 and P3 use German frequently and even spent several years of their lives in Germany, however they use both TrSax and German-type constructions throughout. What sets them apart from P1 is that they are fluent speakers of Romanian and use it regularly. P5 and P6, who also use both TrSax and German-type constructions in subordinate clauses, never lived in Germany, but they are both fluent speakers of German and Romanian and use them regularly. P5, who uses Romanian at home, even displays a preference for 1-2 order (as shown in Figure 1), using it in 70% of her utterances. Overall, these results show that speakers who use all three languages regularly, use both TrSax and German-type constructions in two-verb clusters in subordinate clauses, while speakers who use only two languages use only one of the two possible patterns.

These results can be interpreted in light of Clyne's (2003:105) findings from his investigations of trilingual communities, according to which speakers tended to extend a linguistic pattern that is shared between two of their languages to the third language, which did not have that pattern initially. Interestingly, in the case of Viscer Saxon-German-Romanian trilingualism there are shared constructions between Viscer Saxon and Romanian (e.g. 1-2 order) and shared constructions between Viscer Saxon and German (e.g. 2-1 order), which in turn are not shared among the three languages. Considering that the distribution between the two orders is relatively even in tri-

lingual speakers, as opposed to bilingual speakers, it seems that Romanian may play an important role in maintaining 1-2 order in Viscri Saxon.

The intense contact between Viscri Saxon and German and the typological similarity between the two languages set the stage for intense syntactic transfer (cf. Thomason 2001:71). As the variation between 1-2 and 2-1 orders in subordinate clauses was already present in Viscri Saxon in the 1960s, a change towards 2-1 order is not excluded if speakers maintained a more casual contact with Romanian. The patterns displayed by P1 can be used to support such a prediction. Participants who grew up in Viscri before the revolution in 1989 report that they used Romanian only on rare occasions, which involved interaction with Romanians, such as going to the store or traveling outside the village. However, Romanians have been the numerically dominant group in the village for the past 25 years, and the more intense contact between Viscri Saxon and Romanian has led to more trilingualism in the Transylvanian Saxon community.

In his investigation on trilingualism Clyne (2003:135) also found that when three languages (A, B, and C) interact, language C can slow down the changes in language A under the influence of language B, especially when language A and B are structurally more similar and language C displays differences to both A and B. If the same principles apply in the case of Viscri Saxon-German-Romanian trilingualism, Romanian is the language that slows down the change of Viscri Saxon towards German.

6 Conclusions

This study documents, classifies, and analyzes word order variation in two-verb clusters in a variety of Transylvanian Saxon spoken in the village of Viscri in Romania. I showed that new constructions entered Viscri Saxon through German, and argued that Romanian plays a role in maintaining native TrSax constructions that pattern similarly in Romanian. Overall, findings suggest that speakers' regular use of German, played an important role in introducing new structures in Viscri Saxon, but more intense contact between Viscri Saxon and Romanian in recent years has helped to maintain the TrSax 1-2 order in subordinate clauses, due to a shared pattern in this area. In addition, speakers showed clear individual variation, with one speaker always using only one structure, and another speaker always using another. This is accounted for by the speakers' differing use of German and Romanian, thus strengthening the contact-driven explanation of word order variation. The individual differences that the two bilingual speakers display help in making predictions for future research, that can further assess the role each language plays in conditioning variation between available patterns.

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