Diskussion

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THE LOGIC OF NONSTANDARD SYNTAX

Introduction

In a recent article in this journal (LÖTSCHER 2004), Andreas LÖTSCHER poses a fundamental question regarding the syntax of German dialects, namely: Are German dialectal (and non-standard) syntactic structures the result of the spoken character (*Mündlichkeit*) of dialects, or are they describable in terms of dialect-specific rules? In other words, do dialects have their own grammars, autonomous from that of the written standard language, or are their syntactic features a function of certain structural properties shared by all spoken varieties of German? LÖTSCHER's investigation raises a number of more general questions of relevance to readers of this journal, including how we distinguish dialects from languages, and speech from writing. In what follows I explore some of these questions, drawing on evidence from both German and English. Before doing so, let us summarize briefly the main lines of LÖTSCHER's analysis.

LÖTSCHER (2004, 157) views certain syntactic structures, which are presumed to be more common in speech than in writing, as possessing a "character of irregularity" (*Irregularitäts-charakter*). Examples of such structures in spoken German would include, among others, the preference for parataxis over hypotaxis, ellipsis, anacoluthon, and so-called Drehsätze. Such phenomena LÖTSCHER describes as yielded less by actual rules than by "epi-rules" (*Epi-Regeln*) operating on or modifying structures that have already been derived by "basic rules" (*Grund-regeln*). "Epi-rules" are assumed to result from the psycholinguistic, and perhaps also sociolinguistic, exigencies of oral linguistic performance (speech). These "performance-conditioned" factors include: economy of effort, limitations of short-term memory, and the circumstances of communicative context (what LÖTSCHER [2004, 158] calls "semiotic economy"). The question, whether dialects have their own "basic rules" or merely "epi-rules", LÖTSCHER tests on three areas of Swiss German syntactic structure that he identifies as nonstandard, namely, verb-second in subordinate clauses, subjunctive in indirect speech, and the use of the complementizer *wo* to introduce relatives.

On the basis of a careful analysis of the data, LÖTSCHER arrives at what I find to be a sensible conclusion: that the (Swiss German) dialectal structures are the result of both dialect-specific basic rules and the epi-rules presumed to operate in speech generally. I argue, however, that this conclusion is an unremarkable one in light of the psycho- and sociolinguistic factors that determine how linguistic systems generally – including and especially dialects – are acquired, structured, and put to use.

1. Dialects and languages

Let us begin by considering what a "dialect" is, which is often defined in opposition to a "language" An oft-quoted maxim, usually attributed to the great Yiddish linguist, Max WEIN-REICH, holds that "a language is a dialect with an army and a navy".[1] Implied here is that the

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[1] The precise origins of this maxim are unclear, however the consensus is that if it did not originate with M. WEINREICH, he nonetheless promoted it (BRIGHT 1997).

difference between "languages" and "dialects" is an accident of the external situation of their users. That is, under particular social, and often political, circumstances, a community of speakers may choose to identify the *linguistic system* (to employ a neutral term) that unites them as a "language", distinct from what different, often geographically proximate, groups of people speak. "Dialects," in contrast, lack the image of autonomy enjoyed by "languages", hence we typically speak of "dialects *of* a particular language". That strictly linguistic (that is, structural or internal) criteria need not determine whether a given linguistic system is labeled a "language" or a "dialect" is shown on a number of famous examples: the terms *Chinese* and *German*, for example, are applied to varieties so distinct as to be mutually unintelligible (cf. Mandarin vs. Cantonese, standard German vs. Swiss German), while structurally similar systems may be viewed as separate languages, rather than dialects of a single, common language (cf. Norwegian vs. Swedish, Serbian vs. Croatian vs. Bosnian, Hindi vs. Urdu).[2]

It is uncontroversial, then, that the distinction between what are called "languages" and "dialects" is an arbitrary one. Both, then, must be viewed as of equal structural complexity. A dialect does not all of a sudden acquire "basic rules" once it is declared to be a language (cf. the "promotion" of Cape Dutch to Afrikaans in the early twentieth century; note also the declaration of Luxembourgish as an official language in 1984). But we must also recognize that the linguistic systems to which we attach labels like "Swiss German" and "Urdu" are in fact abstractions from cognitive reality. For example, in the same way that no two humans called "Swiss Germans" – even genetically identical twins – are truly identical, no two humans have exactly the same inventory of linguistic knowledge (especially at the lexical level). Yet owing to the general similarity among several individual linguistic systems (idiolects), such abstractions (called "social grammars" by DAVID LIGHTFOOT [1999, 79–82]), imperfect though they may be, are useful in the same ways that the terms *Chilean* and *Inuit* are to, say, sociologists, anthropologists, and historians, or even *female* and *male* to biologists.

All this cautions us to avoid making the assumption, implicitly or explicitly, that dialects and languages – and the idiolects that ultimately underlie them – are qualitatively different from one another in the ways that they combine symbolic elements to communicate meaning. But what of the difference between speech and writing? Do utterances and texts differ qualitatively from one another in the syntactic structures they employ? LÖTSCHER, and many others, would appear to assume so. "Basic rules" are presumed to be found in written language, while speech is viewed as fundamentally "irregular". Whether dialects behave more like written language or speech guides LÖTSCHER's investigation. At this point, a closer look at the putative structural differences between spoken and written language is warranted.

2. Speech and writing

In his excellent (2003) monograph, JOHANNES SCHWITALLA sets out to describe the major features – phonetic/phonological, syntactic, and lexical – of spoken German. At the outset, SCHWITALLA (2003, 18–25) surveys the range of views presented by researchers on the question, to what extent spoken and written language are similar to or differ from one another. Although he himself remains cautiously agnostic on this question,[3] it is clear that there is broad consensus on two fundamental points. First, speech is logically prior to writing. It is uncontroversial that written texts are imperfect, secondary attempts at the representation of human language that are produced under particular communicative circumstances. There is no such thing as a language that is solely written and not spoken,[4] yet there are countless examples of

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[2] Cf. CHESHIRE and STEIN's (1997, 1–12) apt observations on the lack of conceptual precision underlying the "fuzzy" use of terms such as *colloquial, dialect*, and *nonstandard* in the description and analysis of spoken language.

[3] "Diese Frage ist weiterhin umstritten und schwer zu beantworten" (SCHWITALLA 2003, 23).

[4] "Eine Sprache, die nur gedacht werden kann, ist keine Sprache" (SCHWITALLA 2003, 20).

languages lacking a literary tradition. It would seem a priori counterintuitive that a language only gains structure (is "regular" or rule-governed) once it is committed to paper (or a tablet or a computer screen), which makes us skeptical of the view that spoken language is fundamentally "irregular".

A second crucial point made by SCHWITALLA (2003, 20–23) is that there is little evidence of a qualitative difference between the structures produced orally and in writing. It is certainly true that some linguistic elements, such as individual lexical items, idioms, and even certain syntactic constructions, may be more or less typical of speech or writing (e.g., certain interjections, *jawohl*, for example, probably occur more frequently in oral discourse), but this is more a question of style than actual grammatical substance. Linguistic utterances – both oral and written – may be arrayed along pragmatic continua between poles of "proximity" (*Nähe*) versus "distance" (*Distanz*), as laid out very effectively by KOCH and OESTERREICHER (1985, 1994). In other words, in distinguishing speech from writing we must look to contextual differences that make certain strategies of usage more or less appropriate. While many oral utterances do indeed tend to be more spontaneous than written texts, a speaker may also "choose her words carefully". And by the same token, that speaker may then turn around and hastily write a note to a friend. In these cases, is the language user drawing on two different grammatical systems or is she simply selecting certain forms from a single store of linguistic knowledge, her choice of forms being dependent on the communicative context in which she finds herself? I argue that the latter is true.

These two points taken together, the priority of speech over writing and the apparent absence of qualitative structural differences between oral and written utterances, render questionable the utility of presuming that spoken language, including dialects or not, is inherently irregular.[5] To underscore the second point, it is instructive to consider briefly some of the characteristics that have been ascribed to the syntax of speech. Following SCHWITALLA (ch. 7), these can be grouped into four major categories: 1. short(ened) forms; 2. discontinuities; 3. anacoluthon and apocoinu sentences; and 4. parataxis. Let us examine examples of each.

2.1. Short(ened) forms

One of the most frequently cited examples of the "economy" of speech is ellipsis, the deletion or omission of certain syntactic elements. Indeed, such *Ersparungen* are obviously quite frequent in oral discourse; cf. examples in (1).[6]

(1)   A: *was hast du dir gekauft?*
       B: *[ich habe mir] ein buch über die deutsche syntax [gekauft]*
       A: *warum [hast du dir ein Buch über die deutsche syntax gekauft]?*
       B: *[ich habe mir ein buch über die deutsche syntax gekauft] weil ich mich dafür
           interessiere*

The "economic" function of ellipsis is clearly evident here. But are these omissions/deletions constrained structurally, that is, are they rule-governed, or is ellipsis irregular? The ungrammaticality of the forms in (1') points to the former conclusion.

(1')   A: *was hast du dir gekauft?*
       B: **[ich habe] mir ein buch über die deutsche syntax gekauft*
       A: **warum hast du [dir ein Buch über die deutsche syntax gekauft]?*
       B: **ich habe mir [ein buch über die deutsche syntax] gekauft weil ich mich dafür
           interessiere*

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   [5] Cf. also STEGER (1987).
   [6] Following SCHWITALLA (2003), I omit capital letters for those examples intended to reflect oral discourse. Regular capitalization is used for examples that may reflect either spoken or written norms.

Indeed, one would be very hard pressed to explain why these logically possible, but ungrammatical, partial ellipses should be ruled out on semantic or pragmatic grounds. From a syntactic perspective, however, omitting each group of words in (1') yields strings that do not form syntactic constituents (*mir ein buch über die deutsche syntax gekauft; *warum hast du; *ich habe mir gekauft ...). Ellipsis is, therefore, constrained by rules, hence it is regular. And to claim ellipsis is a process (epi-rule) that operates on the output of basic rules exclusively or even primarily in speech, as opposed to formal writing, is questionable. Cf. the example in (2) from Ernst Bloch's "Spuren", cited by MACHEINER (1991, 314).

(2)   Nichts merkwürdiger als der Blick von außen ins eigene Zimmer.

Presumably what is "missing" here are the words es ist. Their absence is allowable for precisely the same reason that such omissions/deletions occur in speech: the resulting string of words forms a syntactic constituent (the complement of ist). Ellipsis, then, is a rule-governed syntactic process that operates in both speech and writing. [7]

2.2. Discontinuities

A good example of a syntactic operation often cited as prevalent in spoken German, and nearly as often proscribed by stylists, is extraposition (Ausklammerung), the rightward movement of strings of words out of the inner field (Mittelfeld), beyond the right periphery of a clause, into the post field (Nachfeld). A quick review of the productivity of this process points to the same basic conclusions drawn in the preceding section: extraposition is structurally constrained (regular) and is not limited to speech. Cf. the example in (3) from speech cited by SCHWITALLA (2003, 117); the clausal boundary is marked by "|" and the extraposed string is underscored.

(3)   man müsste jetzt wirklich untersuchungen anstellen | über die verschiedenen rassen in
       verschiedenen erdteilen ob ...

The discontinuity here is that the extraposed prepositional phrase (itself containing a second PP) is no longer immediately adjacent to the noun it complements (untersuchungen). As we observed with ellipsis above, structural limits on extraposition may be identified by constructing other, logically possible scenarios:

(3')   *man müsste jetzt wirklich untersuchungen über anstellen | die verschiedenen rassen in
        verschiedenen erdteilen ob ...
(3")   ??man müsste jetzt wirklich untersuchungen über die verschiedenen rassen anstellen | in
        verschiedenen erdteilen ob ...
(3"')   ??man müsste jetzt wirklich anstellen | untersuchungen über die verschiedenen rassen in
        verschiedenen erdteilen ob ...

In all three cases, extraposition would be extremely unlikely, if not impossible. Again, the reason for this is that structural principles appear to be violated: in (3') untersuchungen über ist not a constituents while in (3") and (3"') the extraposition of a prepositional or nominal complement (of rassen and anstellen, respectively) is strongly disfavored.
    So what is the status of extraposition in standard written German? It is clearly observable there; cf. the example from Kafka's "Hungerkünstler" (MACHEINER 1991, 93) in (4a), and its possible unextraposed variant in (4b).

[7] Cf. also DUDEN (1998, 709–713). Note that other rule-governed deletion processes are the hallmark of certain "reduced" registers of language, namely caregivers' speech (motherese, Mutterisch, Ammensprache) and Foreigner Talk (HINNENKAMP 1982).

(4)   a. *Auch in der Nacht fanden Besichtigungen statt, <u>zur Erhöhung der Wirkung bei Fackelschein</u>.*
       b. *Auch in der Nacht fanden Besichtigungen <u>zur Erhöhung der Wirkung bei Fackelschein</u> statt.*

Some observers (e.g., DUDEN 1998, 820–821) view extraposition in both speech and writing as only optional, subject to pragmatic and processing constraints. In fact, a closer look at where extraposition occurs – in both speech and writing – suggests that it may be mandatory in certain cases. Compare (5).

(5)   a. *Ich habe (es) bemerkt, <u>dass das Wetter plötzlich kalt geworden ist</u>.*
       b. **Ich habe <u>dass das Wetter plötzlich kalt geworden ist</u> bemerkt.*

While (5b) is impossible, sentences like (5c) are perfectly normal.

(5)   c. *<u>Dass das Wetter plötzlich kalt geworden ist</u>, habe ich (*es) bemerkt.*

The examples in (5) point to the following rule that clearly applies to both spoken and written German: a finite clause may not occur within the inner field. It must be moved either to the right, out of the main clause (extraposed), or to the left (topicalized) into the prefield (*Vorfeld*). That the subordinate clause has been moved out of the clause entirely in (5a), but not in (5c), is reflected by the possibility of inserting the resumptive pronoun *es* in (5a). Note that this prohibition on entire clauses within the inner field is not limited to complements; subject clauses are subject to this constraint as well; cf. (6).

(6)   a. *Es hat mich überrascht, <u>dass das Wetter plötzlich kalt geworden ist</u>.*
       b. **Es hat <u>dass das Wetter plötzlich kalt geworden ist</u> mich überrascht.*
       c. *<u>Dass das Wetter plötzlich kalt geworden ist</u>, hat (*es) mich überrascht.*

In sum, structural discontinuities such as those yielded by extraposition in German, in both written and spoken forms, are describable in terms of simple syntactic constraints. The optionality of extraposition in some cases does not contradict its overall regularity.

2.3. Anacoluthon and apocoinu sentences

Anacoluthon is a broad term refering to some kind of interruption within an utterance. Examples of anacoluthon include "speech errors" and their repair (cf. also section 4 below) and other apparently anomalous breaks of structure. SCHWITALLA (2003, 122), in analyzing several instances of error and repair, points out that the break between the two partial utterances involved in anacoluthon is subject to structural constraints, phonological, morphological, and syntactic: speakers do not immediately repair the error at the precise spot where it occurs, but go further back to the beginning of the larger constituent in which the error occurs; cf. (7)–(10).

(7)   *dann hat der polizier*
                   zist mir gesagt   (phonological: repair at syllable onset)
(8)   *die textilfa äh*
              industrie   (morphological: repair at morpheme boundary)
(9)   *der arbeitet jeden morgen bis-* (.)
              jeden tach bis um elf   (syntactic: repair at phrase boundary)
(10)   *uns hats geSCHUddelt wo wer aus der wOhnung wieder kAmen*
       uns hats geSCHÜddelt   (syntactic: repair at clause boundary)

Such error + repair examples of anacoluthon are inevitably going to occur more frequently in spoken language because of the inherent spontaneity of speech. When speakers express themselves in writing, they have the luxury of planning their words more carefully. At the same time, though, structural interruptions are not entirely absent from written language. Consider the example in (11) of a parenthetical phrase that itself includes an anacoluthon-style repetition (from Ernst Bloch, "Prinzip Hoffnung"; MACHEINER 1991, 112).

(11) *An sich ist es merkwürdig, dass das Altwerden, sofern es sich auf den Verlust eines früheren, eines mit Recht oder Unrecht als schöner empfundenen Zustands bezieht, erst um die Fünfzig herum so recht empfunden wird.*

Parentheticals, then, may also be regarded as examples of anacoluthon. Their productivity in formal writing could be easily demonstrated empirically.

Undoubtedly rare in written language, however, is a kind of construction frequently viewed as a form of anacoluthon, namely apocoinu sentences (*Drehsätze*), in which two clauses appear linked by a common constituent. Cf. example (12) from SCHEUTZ (1992, 250).

(12) *da is | die fensterkurbel | hab-i abgedreht gehabt*

SCHEUTZ (1992) distinguishes real from apparent apocoinu sentences on the basis of prosodic cues. If the linking constituent (here, *die fensterkurbel*) is immediately preceded or followed by a pause, then SCHEUTZ analyzes the sentence as an anacoluthon utterance in which the speaker "changes course" in the stream of speech. If no pause occurs, then the sentence is true apocoinu.

Importantly, structures such as (12), which are effectively limited to spoken language, are subject to a structural constraint, as SCHEUTZ (1992, 250–251) points out, that is, the shared constituent must yield two grammatical sentences, as in (12') and (12").

(12') *da is die fensterkurbel*

(12") *die fensterkurbel hab-i abgedreht gehabt*

A sentence like (13), therefore, would not be produced.

(13) **da is | der fensterhebel | hab-i abgedreht gehabt*

Furthermore, apocoinu sentences must also obey a semantic constraint (SCHEUTZ 1992, 251). Specifically, the shared constitutent must be interpreted identically in the two linked clauses. The semantic structure of (12) is indicated in (12''').

(12''') *da is die fensterkurbel (abgebrochen/abgedreht worden) hab-i abgedreht gehabt*

Sentences, like (14), in which semantic harmony is violated, are therefore ungrammatical.

(14) **ich geb dir | die fensterkurbel | hab-i abgebrochen*

Thus the pattern we saw with shortened forms and discontinuities in sections 2.1 and 2.2 is repeated here. Both anacoluthon and apocoinu phenomena obey linguistic constraints, regardless of whether they are common (parentheticals) or nonexistent (apocoinu sentences) in the formal written language. These constraints can be described in the form of "basic rules" found in individual grammars and not the putative "epi-rules" ascribed to speech.

2.4. Parataxis

One frequently mentioned example of the relative "simplicity" of spoken language is the tendency to prefer combining clauses paratactically rather than hypotactically. Because para-

taxis is viewed as a form of coordination, successive main clauses are treated as an example of parataxis, whereas subordinate clauses are associated with hypotaxis. As we have seen in (5) and (6), however, not every subordinate clause in German is necessarily embedded within a main clause. Let us look again at examples (5a) and (6a).

(5)   a. *Ich habe (es) bemerkt, dass das Wetter plötzlich kalt geworden ist.*
(6)   a. *Es hat mich überrascht, dass das Wetter plötzlich kalt geworden ist.*

Although both these sentences consist of a main clause followed by a subordinate clause, the latter is not embedded within the former; in both cases, the *dass*-clause has been extraposed out of the main clause. The structure of (5) and (6) is therefore not

(15) $[_{MAIN}[_{SUBORD.}]]$

but

(16) $[_{MAIN}] - [_{SUBORD.}]$.

Garden-variety main clause + subordinate clause sentences, in all forms of German, are therefore paratactic due to the rule specifying that no clause may be embedded within the inner field. Subordinate clauses may, of course, still remain within the clause (with the structure in [15]), if moved to the prefield (topicalized); cf. (5c) and (6c).

(5)   c. *Dass das Wetter plötzlich kalt geworden ist, habe ich bemerkt.*
(6)   c. *Dass das Wetter plötzlich kalt geworden ist, hat mich überrascht.*

Note that the general prohibition against subordinate clauses within the inner field would also apply to doubly embedded relative clauses as well, as in (17), if native speakers judge (17') to be ungrammatical.

(17)   *Ich habe das Buch gelesen, das du auch gelesen hast.*
(17')   ??*Ich habe das Buch, das du auch gelesen hast, gelesen.*

In any case, the questionable grammaticality of (17') contrasts with the naturalness of (18), where the relative clause remains adjacent to the head it modifies (*Buch*) when the entire constituent is topicalized.

(18)   *Das Buch, das du gelesen hast, habe ich auch gelesen.*

In order to continue to make the case that hypotaxis is much more frequent in written German, one would have to argue that sentences like (5c), (6c), and (18) are less common in the spoken language. Quantitative work might support such a hypothesis, but there is no evidence whatsoever that real hypotaxis is truly any more infrequent in speech than in writing.

  Summing up this section regarding the four major characteristics associated with spoken German, we see no evidence of a qualitative difference between speech and writing. Spoken language, even stylistically stigmatized and apparently anomalous language, is clearly just as rule-governed as its written counterpart. Furthermore, we do not find that the rules guiding the combination of words into larger units themselves differ between the two domains of use. It is evident that both written and spoken German draw on essentially the same grammar, leading us to answer SCHWITALLA's (2003, 23) question, "Beruhen gesprochene und geschriebene Sprache auf demselben Sprachsystem?", with a "Ja", at least as far as syntax is concerned.

  Let us revisit LÖTSCHER's research question, whether dialect syntax is regular (rule-governed) or not, tested on the extent to which dialect syntax resembles non-dialectal spoken German. Even if the apparently nonstandard structures he observes in Swiss German were paralleled in other oral varieties, they should be no less regular than what we find in the standard written language. And in light of the priority of spoken language over written language, as well as the arbitrariness of the definitions of "languages" and "dialects" (not to

mention the fluid continuum of colloquial speech found across German-speaking Europe, which makes it difficult to determine where dialects end and colloquial standards begin), LÖTSCHER's conclusion that Swiss German syntax includes both "basic rules" and "epi-rules" is inevitable. But let us recall the rules LÖTSCHER identifies as operating in Swiss German syntax that he believes are dialect-specific. The presumed distance between Swiss and standard German syntactic structures is worth exploring in more detail.

3. Verb-second in German

I have selected one of the three areas of structure that LÖTSCHER investigates – the occurrence of verb-second in "subordinate" clauses – for the fact that this touches on some of the issues explored in the previous section. After a look at clausal structure in German generally, we review some of the relevant Swiss German data.

All varieties of German, written and spoken (including dialectal), show a basic structural asymmetry between main and subordinate clauses involving the location of the finite verb. In main clauses, the finite verb is located in the second structural position (left bracket, *linke Klammer*), while in subordinate clauses, it is clause-final (right bracket, *rechte Klammer*). Main clauses, then, are verb-second (V2), and subordinate clauses verb-final (Vfinal). This structural asymmetry correlates with a pragmatic difference; that is, the content of V2 structures is associated with a degree of emphasis or prominence greater than that of subordinate clauses.[8] Interestingly, for every major construction type in German, speakers may choose between either a V2 or Vfinal structure, depending on the communicative context. Cf. examples in (19). The pragmatically more "forceful" variant is indicated by a "[+]".[9]

(19) a.   *Sie meint, dass du bald ins Bett gehen sollst.*   (simple declarative)
      a'. *Sie meint, du sollst bald ins Bett gehen.* [+]

      b.   *Das ist schade, weil es noch ziemlich früh ist.*   (causal)
      b'. *Das ist schade, weil (denn) es ist noch ziemlich früh.* [+]

      c.   *Sie sehen (so) aus, als ob sie sich gut erholt hätten.*   (*as if*)
      c'. *Sie sehen (so) aus, als hätten sie sich gut erholt.* [+]

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[8] The pragmatic difference between main and subordinate clauses in German has been examined most thoroughly in studies of the construction *weil* + V2 (e.g., SANDIG [1973], GAUMANN [1983], KÜPER [1991], GÜNTHNER [1993], WEGENER [1993], UHMANN [1996], SELTING [1999], SCHEUTZ [2001]; cf. also SCHWITALLA [2003, 144–146]). Contrary to the views of many, the use of *weil* as a coordinating conjunction is not a recent phenomenon, nor does it signify any "weakening" of Vfinal in modern German (see especially SELTING [1999] for the diachronic perspective). While there is no consensus on a precise description of the pragmatic difference between V2 and Vfinal orders in German, the basic fact that V2 corresponds more with heightened prominence than Vfinal is widely recognized. It is interesting to note that the pragmatic asymmetry between main and subordinate clauses observed for German is in fact universal across modern Germanic languages, including those, like German, in which V2 is still robust (e.g., Dutch [OVERDIEP 1949, 533–555] and West Frisian [VAN DER MEER 1988]); those in which V2 is more limited (e.g., Swedish [WECHSLER 1991]); and in English, which has lost V2 (DUNBAR 1982). In English, the pragmatic asymmetry is now between "verb-early" and "verb-late" structures; cf. note 10 below.

[9] Notice, of course, that the relative independence of two coordinated main clauses from one another is accompanied by prosodic marking (e.g., an audible pause between them) that is better represented orthographically by something other than a simple comma, e.g., a colon or an em-dash. It must be borne in mind that both sentence types are of the structure [ ]-[ ] (16 above), and not [[ ]] (15). Syntactically, however, one could distinguish the V2 + Vfinal sentences from the V2 + V2 sentences as follows: in the former, the extraposed subordinate clause is *ad*joined to the matrix (main) clause; in the latter, the two clauses are *con*joined.

d. *Es war einmal ein König, der drei Töchter hatte.*	(relative)
d'. *Es war einmal ein König, der hatte drei Töchter.* [+]	

e. *Ich frage mich, ob das wirklich so ist.*	(indirect *yes/no-*?)
e'. *Ich frage mich, ist das wirklich so.* [+]	

f. *Ist das wirklich so?* [+]	(direct *yes/no-*?)
f'. *Ob das wirklich so ist?*	(echo *yes/no-*?)

g. *Sie möchte wissen, wann der Zug ankommt.*	(indirect *wh-*?)
g'. *Sie möchte wissen, wann kommt der Zug an.* [+][10]	

h. *Wann kommt der Zug an?* [+]	(direct *wh-*?)
h'. *Wann der Zug ankommt?*	(echo *wh-*?)

i. *Wenn ich mehr Zeit hätte, würde ich mitkommen.*	(conditional)
i'. *Hätte ich mehr Zeit, (so) würde ich mitkommen.* [+]	

This correlation of (finite-)verb-early with heightened pragmatic force is taken one step further with the possibility of using verb-first (V1) structures in simple declaratives. Cf. (20) attested in spoken German by ÖNNERFORS (1997, 1).

(20) *vor wem läufste denn eigentlich weg?* <u>*bin*</u> *ich dann hingegangen, ich sag: guten tag, frau*
   b., guten tag helga. und dann dachte ich: sollste ihr auch noch en kuss geben, ganz
   frech? ja, dachte ich, das machste. <u>*hab*</u> *ich ihr ganz frech noch en kuss gegeben, nicht.*

Some grammarians and syntacticians, including LÖTSCHER, are inclined to believe that whether or not a clausal argument (*Ergänzung*) is either V2 or Vfinal is determined by the particular predicate that appears in the uppermost (main, *matrix*) clause of a given sentence. While it is certainly true that one or the other clause type may sound odd in a particular context, that is more a pragmatic matter than a strictly syntactic one, otherwise we would be very hard pressed to account for the variation between V2 and Vfinal that demonstrably exists with one and the same predicate (as in the examples in [19] above).

Let us turn now to some of the Swiss German data LÖTSCHER analyzes. In a number of cases, the distribution of V2 or Vfinal clausal arguments parallels what we find for standard German. (Bracketed numbers correspond to the examples in LÖTSCHER 2004).

(21) *Wenn Diìr säget, das isch ehh komunistisch oder es isch kapitalistisch, das ische jetz e*
   politische Uuffassig. [2]
   'Wenn Sie sagen, das ist eh kommunistisch oder es ist kapitalistisch, das ist jetzt eine
   politische Auffassung.'
(22) *Ich glaube es gòòt umene kritischi Uufkläärig y de Gägewaart.* [3b]
   'Ich glaube, es geht um eine kritische Aufklärung in der Gegenwart.'
(23) *Herr Tanner, Si händ seer verträtte dass me jetz mues aafange würklich eh gnauer*
   erfòrsche was da äigetlich glòffen isch. [4b]
   'Herr Tanner, Sie haben sehr vertreten, dass man jetzt anfangen muss, wirklich eh
   genauer zu erforschen, was da eigentlich gelaufen ist.'
(24) *Ich ha i allne Sitzige, won ich draa teilgnoo ha, nie erläbt dass es dr Presidänt zueglaa*
   hetti, dass Richter äifach drinine gredt händ. [5b]
   'Ich habe in allen Sitzungen, in denen ich teilgenommen habe, nie erlebt, dass es der
   Präsident zugelassen hätte, dass Richter einfach hinein geredet haben.'

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[10] The English parallels for (19e, e'; g, g') are as follows:
   (i) *I wonder, whether that's really so.*
   (i') *I wonder, is that really so.* [+]
   (ii) *She wants to know, when the train is coming.*
   (ii') *She wants to know, when is the train coming.* [+]

Beyond these examples, LÖTSCHER also cites a number of instances from Swiss German of V2 structures that would apparently violate standard German rules.

(25) *Was mich stöört, isch, es schtìmmt für si nìd ganz.*   [6d]
      'Was mich stört, ist, es stimmt für Sie nicht ganz.'
(26) *Dr Grund isch dää, es söll e reprèsentativi Daarschtellig vo dr Truppe sii.*   [6f]
      'Der Grund ist der, es soll eine repräsentative Darstellung von der Truppe sein.'
(27) *Jetz gòòts drum, jo wäär schriibt von wèllere Siite her.*   [7b]
      'Jetzt geht es ja darum, ja wer schreibt von welcher Seite her.'
(28) *Für mich isch es ganz zentraal z wüsse, wie stoot das bi iine.*   [7f]
      'Für mich ist es ganz zentral zu wissen, wie steht das bei Ihnen.'

Sentences (25) and (26) LÖTSCHER deems impossible in standard German for the fact that the predicates in the first main clause of each are "without a context of indirectness" (2004, 163). (27) and (28) are viewed as anomalous because, a priori, indirect questions should never take V2.[11] LÖTSCHER rules out the possibility that the second clause in these latter two sentences is simply a direct question, in part because they are not reiterations of actually uttered questions. In light of sentences like (25) and (26), and especially (27) and (28), LÖTSCHER concludes that the grammar of Swiss German is qualitatively different from that of the standard by allowing a "universal principle" of speech, the preference for main clauses, to override the "application of grammatical rules".[12]

    The following questions may be raised at this point. First, it is an empirical question whether in fact sentences with structures like (25)–(28) are truly not found in other varieties of German. Furthermore, one need not assume that indirect questions may not take the form of direct questions, even when one is not repeating a quote. I leave it to native speakers to judge whether sentences like (27) and (28), with a few cosmetic changes of punctuation, might not in fact be possible.

(27')   *Jetzt geht es ja darum: ja wer schreibt von welcher Seite her?*
(28')   *Für mich ist es ganz zentral zu wissen: wie steht das bei Ihnen?*

Furthermore, LÖTSCHER also points out that the putatively nonstandard structures in (25)–(28) are subject to variation; sometimes Swiss German speakers produce V2 with such predicates, sometimes Vfinal. This variability is strong evidence of the overall fact that in many, if not most or all cases, speakers may choose between a V2 or a Vfinal clausal complement – depending on the communicative context. Again, consider the examples in (19) above. A second question we may raise regards the assumption that V2 clauses in German are any simpler to produce or process than Vfinal ones. Given the fact that all varieties of German are underlying verb-final with respect to their complements (e.g., *Kaffee trinken* vs. *trinken Kaffee*), one could just as easily argue that subordinate word order – which is closer to underlying structure, does not involve discontinuous constituents (the verbal elements of the *Satzklammer*), and is the pragmatically neutral of the two orders – should be no more burdensome psycholinguistically than main clause word order. Most importantly, though, we must reiterate the basic point made in section 2.4: subordinate clauses, unless they appear (topicalized) in sentence-initial position, are just as structurally unembedded as their conjoined main clause counterparts.[13]

    In the case of V2/Vfinal, then, it appears that the grammar of Swiss German is not qualitatively different from that of other varieties, standard or nonstandard. In all varieties of German, two clausal types occur, defined according to the position of the finite verb. One type,

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[11] If this is true, then sentences such as (19e', g') should be impossible.
[12] "In den relevanten Fällen werden Performanzanforderungen höher gewichtet als die Erfüllung grammatischer Regeln" (LÖTSCHER 2004, 168).
[13] Cf. also note 9 above.

Vfinal (subordinate), is pragmatically neutral, while V2 correlates with greater communicative prominence; whether speakers produce one or the other structure is determined by contextual factors. Recalling KOCH and OESTERREICHER's (1985, 1994) *Nähe/Mündlichkeit–Distanz/Schrift-lichkeit* continuum, we should not be surprised that language users select the pragmatically more prominent clause-type – V2 – more frequently, the closer their communicative situation approaches the "proximate" pole. In doing this, they are not violating a structural rule in order to ease their psycholinguistic load; they are obeying a pragmatic rule and selecting between variants of equal structural complexity.

4. Further thoughts

The belief that written, standard varieties of languages are more "structured" or "regular" than language in its spoken form is certainly a widespread one. A generation ago, when the generative approach to language was being pioneered by Noam CHOMSKY, the sociolinguist William LABOV tested this belief by looking closely at naturally produced language in both its internal and external aspects. What he found was that, far from being hopelessly inconsistent, the structures of oral language were profoundly rule-governed, and that variation, both within and across speakers, is describable in terms of both structural and social/pragmatic factors. LABOV's notion of a *variable rule*, which incorporates both kinds of factor, is an excellent example of how speakers, often unconsciously, select structures that are appropriate for specific communicative contexts. It is quite plausible that the variation between V2 and Vfinal structures discussed in the previous section could be expressible in the form of a variable rule.[14]

    To underscore the inherent structuredness of naturally occurring language, LABOV has also devoted much attention to the analysis of the most stigmatized nonstandard dialect of English, African-American Vernacular English (Black English, Ebonics). In a seminal article titled "The Logic of Nonstandard English",[15] LABOV analyzed the following excerpt of an interview conducted with a young African-American male, Larry H. (LABOV 1972b, 214–215).

(29)   Interviewer: What happens to you after you die? Do you know?
        Larry: Yeah, I know.
        Interviewer: What?
        Larry: After they put you in the ground, your body turns into – ah – bones, an' shit.
        Interviewer: And what happens to your spirit?
        Larry: Your spirit – soon as you die, your spirit leaves you.
        Interviewer: And where does the spirit go?
        Larry: Well, it all depends.
        Interviewer: On what?
        Larry: You know, like some people say, if you're good an' shit, your spirit goin' t'heaven ... 'n' if you bad, your spirit goin' to hell. Well, bullshit! Your spirit goin' to hell anyway, good or bad.
        Interviewer: Why?
        Larry: Why? I'll tell you why. 'Cause, you see, doesn' nobody really know that it's a God, y'know, 'cause I mean I have seen black gods, pink gods, white gods, all color gods, and don't nobody know if it's really a God. An' when they be sayin' if you good, you goin' to heaven, tha's bullshit, 'cause it ain't no heaven for you to go to.

Many readers of this transcript would dismiss this as "bad English" and not presume that the content had any substance. LABOV, in order to counter this presumption, distilled the logical

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[14] A classic article outlining the early Labovian program is LABOV (1972a, ch. 8); see especially pp. 216ff. for discussion of the variable rule.
  [15] The title of the present paper was consciously intended to parallel that of LABOV (1972b, ch. 5).

structure of Larry's argument and re-presented it in standard English, thereby revealing the content to be quite substantive (Labov 1972b, 215–216).

(30)   (A) If you are good, (B) then your spirit will go to heaven.
        (A) If you are bad, (C) then your spirit will go to hell.
        "Larry denies B and asserts that if A or A , then C."

        1. Everyone has a different idea of what God is like.
        2. Therefore nobody really knows that God exists.
        3. If there is a heaven, it was made by God.
        4. If God doesn't exist, he couldn't have made heaven.
        5. Therefore heaven does not exist.
        6. You can't go somewhere that doesn't exist.
        (B) Therefore you can't go to heaven.
        (C) Therefore you are going to hell.

A close analysis of the syntax of (29) similarly dispels any doubt that it is lacking in structure. Clauses are all formed according clearly identifiable rules, some of which are shared with standard English (e.g., left-dislocation for topic foregrounding: *Your spirit – ...*), some of which are AAVE-specific. Examples of the latter include the following:

(31)   multiple negation: *doesn'/don't nobody really know that it's a God*
        zero copula: *your spirit goin' to heaven/hell*
        invariant *be: when they be sayin'*

Clauses are linked to one another by means of subordinators (e.g., *after, soon as, if, 'cause*), and ellipsis, as discussed in section 2.1, is sensitive to syntactic constituency (e.g., *Yeah, I know [what happens to you after you die].*)

    Labov's fundamental point is the same as in this paper: nonstandard speech is just as regular as its standard written counterpart. Nonstandard German is no exception in this regard. A quick analysis of some of the "Fehler" targeted in "Fehlerfreies Deutsch" (Berger 1982) reveal, ironically, how truly "fehlerfrei" naturally spoken German is (page numbers from Berger 1982 are given after each example).

(32)   a. *Sie sprach mit Margot und derem Mann.*   [p. 77]
        b. *... weil die können nicht ordentlich Deutsch sprechen.*   [p. 103]
        c. *Er braucht heute nicht arbeiten.*   [p. 115]
        d. *Rufst du mir heute abend an?*   [p. 117]
        e. *Er ist älter wie du.*   [p. 161]
        f. *Die, wo er totgeschossen hat, leben alle noch.*   [p. 184]

The examples in (32) are not nonce "slips of the tongue", but constructions that obey identifiable rules, given in (32').

(32')   a. inflection of definite article
        b. use of V2 for pragmatic emphasis
        c. modal verb + infinitive
        d. use of dative to express indirect involvement in/affectedness by content of verb
        e. use of a single lexical item to express comparison
        f. use of a complementizer to introduce relatives

Of these, only rule f is at odds with standard German, in which relatives are formed with bona fide relative pronouns. In every other case, the difference between the standard and nonstandard forms is not in rules, but in their application, which could well describe the Swiss German V2 data discussed above.

    But what about "slips of the tongue"? Do "speech errors" represent violations of rules? Arguably, they do not. This basic point was made by the late Victoria Fromkin, in her classic

article, "The non-anomalous nature of anomalous utterances" (FROMKIN 1971). Rather than breaching principles of linguistic architecture, anomalous utterances obey them. Most of FROMKIN's examples are drawn from phonology and demonstrate the reality of such fundamental units of sound structure as the segment and the syllable. Consider a simple "spoonerism", like the one in (33) from LEUNINGER (1993, 18).

(33)   *Schmeinfecker*

Here, the segments in the onsets of the first two syllables have been transposed, supporting the fact that "segments", "onsets", and "syllables" are real units of linguistic structure. Indeed, one of the most common causes of anomalous utterances is the substitution of like elements for one another. At the syntactic level, that would mean that only words (or morphemes) belonging to the same morphosyntactic class should be transposable, and this is just what we find. Consider the examples in (34) from LEUNINGER (1993,14, 24, 26).

(34)   a. *Sie hat ihren Mann zum Brötchen schicken geholt.*   (verb)
       b. *Ich hätte gerne einen herrenlosen Ärmelpullover.*   (pl. noun)
       c. *die einzige, die mal Bildungsanspruch in Urlaubgenommen hat*   (sg. noun)

These examples demonstrate the psychological reality of the word classes "verb" and "noun", as well as the inflectional category "number". Such anomalous utterances are therefore regular, in that their occurrence can be described in terms of units of structure, if not necessarily in terms of the repeated application of a particular rule.

   A somewhat different, but no less structurally describable, type of anomalous utterance is hypercorrection. In this case, speakers attempt to apply a rule that they have not fully mastered, arguably because it was not acquired during the psycholinguistic window of opportunity known as the "critical (or sensitive) period for language acquisition", which apparently correlates with childhood. Two examples from English are worth looking at here, both dealing with morphological case. (35) is a(n) (in)famous quote from Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice"; (36) is a quote from one Baroness Barker during a debate in the British House of Lords. The "errors" are underlined.

(35)   *All debts are cleared between <u>you and I</u>.*
(36)   *I cannot remember the case – and the noble Baroness, Lady Howarth, might be able to help me out – but I believe it was in Norfolk where two people went on the run with a couple of children a couple of years ago. I remember vividly that the matter came up on "Question Time" and the panel was asked to talk about it. One person, <u>whom</u> I believe was one of my colleagues, was absolutely right in saying, "All these social services questions are governed by confidentiality and I cannot talk about this."* [16]

As is well-known, English has undergone extensive case syncretism and loss, yielding a modern two-case system (Subjective vs. Objective) in which only (some) pronouns visibly show inflection. Subjective case is assigned through agreement with a finite verb, while (pro)nouns receive Objective case from transitive verbs and prepositions. If a pronoun appears in a position in which it cannot be assigned case (e.g., to the right of an intransitive verb [37] or in isolation [38]), it is marked by default as Objective.

(37)   *It's me/*I.*
(38)   *Who wants ice cream? – I do!* but *Me/*I!*

Another structural position in English where case assignment is blocked is within conjoined constituents (e.g., *N and/or N*, etc.). The natural inclination for many native speakers of English is to produce sentences like (39).

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   [16] Source: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200102/ldhansrd/vo020702/text/20702-20.htm>.

(39)   *You and me don't owe each other anything.*

Such constructions are explicitly proscribed by teachers and language critics, leading speakers to not only avoid the Objective in the places where they "should" do so, but across the board, as in (35), where prescriptivists acknowledge the Objective is necessary, on the grounds that the conjoined constituent is the object of *between*.

   Regarding example (36), it has been documented that children growing up in English-speaking environments have not acquired a rule that distinguishes between *who* and *whom*: *who* has been generalized for all (that is, both) cases.

(40)   *Who is that? / Who do you believe? / Who were you talking to?*

As with the overuse of Subjective case in conjoined constituents, style-conscious speakers overcompensate with *whom* as well, employing it in contexts, such as (36), where it "does not logically belong". The insertion of the parenthetical *I believe*, which includes a transitive verb that would appear to assign case to *who(m)*, almost certainly reinforces many speakers' hypercorrect behavior in sentences such as (36).

   Hypercorrection is thus another source of errors, that is, anomalous utterances, especially in speech, but also in writing. While hypercorrection might be viewed as the consequence of not knowing a rule, and therefore a potential example of "irregularity", just the opposite is true. In many cases, hypercorrection involves the intuition of an innovative, and relatively simple rule of the form "Substitute X for Y" where X is a prestige form, and Y is proscribed in some – but not all – contexts; hence the "over-correct" result. At the very least, hypercorrection reflects speakers' attempts to apply a rule they have not fully mastered: they are displaying rule-governed behavior.

5. Conclusion

What I hope is clear from the discussion above is that the structures speakers produce, both spontaneously and with some degree of planning, are the result of the application of internal-ized rules; linguistic productions of all kinds are thus regular. Returning briefly to the question of a possible difference between the "basic rules" of a grammar, and the "epi-rules" that emerge from the real-world conditions of speech, because the distinction between spoken and written language is not an absolute one (just as the difference between "languages" and "dialects" is arbitrary), we can state that rules are rules, and all belong to an individual's system of linguistic knowledge. Some rules may be universal, and others language/dialect/idiolect-specific; some may be absolute, and others variable. While human behavior, including verbal behavior, is on a micro-level unpredictable, we do not do something for no reason at all. Our systems of knowledge, assembled through the interaction of our genetic endowment with real-world experience, lead us to act in infinitely creative, sometimes anomalous, and not infre-quently stigmatized, but ultimately always regular, ways.

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