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TITLE: Word order Variation and Change in Transylvanian Saxon
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This study analyzes variation and change in Transylvanian Saxon (TrSax), an endangered language spoken in Romania. The dialect under investigation, spoken in Viscri, Romania, has evolved in a multilingual community featuring two Germanic languages (TrSax and German) and a Romance language (Romanian). TrSax is the first language of the community, German the second (used in education and church), and Romanian the third (used with the wider community). In this intense contact situation, syntactic transfer occurs in two-verb clusters, resulting in word order variation between TrSax and German-influenced structures. For example, German requires lexical verbs to precede the auxiliary (V-Aux) in subordinate clauses, while TrSax requires verbs to follow the auxiliary (Aux-V) in such clauses (McClure, 1973). Both orders are present in the TrSax dialect spoken in Viscri, and the use of V-Aux constructions lead to subsequent changes in the area of particle verbs.

In TrSax, the auxiliary is placed between particle and verb in subordinate clauses (Sift, 2015) as shown in (1), where the particle verb *ukun* 'arrive' is split by the auxiliary *were* 'were':

(1) …wa   mer   *u*   were   *kun*   Aux-V
       where we   at   be.3PL.PST come.PCPT
     '…where we arrived.'

However, Viscri TrSax displays a new particle verb structure not attested in previous studies (c.f. Sift, 2015). This structure is influenced by German, which does not allow split particle verbs when auxiliaries are present. In (2), the particle verb *amzahn* 'change' remains unsplit and is placed before the auxiliary *hat* 'has', thus following V-Aux order:

(2) …wa   am   sech   *am-ge-zuach-en*   hat   V-Aux
       where one   REFL   around-PTCP-trek-PTCP   has
     '…where they changed themselves/…where they changed clothes.'

In analyzing word order variation in Viscri TrSax, I compare current data collected through sociolinguistic interviews with six participants to data from other TrSax dialects, and to ancestors of TrSax (e.g. Middle High German, Luxembourgish). Findings show

that subordinate clause verb clusters pattern differently in Viscri TrSax than in related varieties, displaying flexible distribution between available structures (based on 157 tokens). Speakers use Aux-V order in 44% of analyzed subordinate clauses, and V-Aux order in 56% of the clauses, without favoring one of the two orders with different verbal elements (e.g. modals, infinitives, participles). Related Germanic varieties display a preference towards V-Aux structures, and word order depends on the verbal elements involved (Wurmbrand, 2006).

I argue that this distribution is conditioned by the languages in contact with TrSax in Viscri. The transfer of new structures from German into TrSax is facilitated by the typological similarity between the two languages (c.f. Thomason, 2003), however a complete change towards German is prevented by Romanian. Speakers who use three languages regularly, use both TrSax and German-type constructions, while speakers who use only two languages use only one of the two possible patterns. A language C can impede changes in a language A under the influence of language B, especially when language C displays typological differences to both A and B (Clyne, 2003). In the case of TrSax-German-Romanian trilingualism in Viscri, Romanian slows down the change of TrSax towards German.

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