

Johan Brandtler
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On subjects and negation in Swedish subordinate clauses – a new approach to embedded V2

It is a well-known fact that Swedish subordinate clauses display variation with regards to the position of clause adverbials. While a clause adverbial prototypically precedes the finite verb in subordinate clauses, see (1a), it may also follow the verb in so called embedded V2-clauses, see (1b). As is illustrated in (1c), clause adverbials may also follow the complementizer, preceding the subject:

- (1) a. ...att Maria *inte vill* läsa boken
 that M. not want read book-the
 “...that Mary doesn’t want to read the book”
 b. ...att Maria *vill inte* läsa boken
 c. ...att *inte* Maria *vill* läsa boken

Since the occurrence of embedded V2 is related to the applicability of root transformations, the variation found in (1b) has been the focus of much research (see eg. Andersson 1975, Vikner 1995 and Julien 2007). The variation displayed in (1c), on the other hand, has gained little attention in the literature.

In this talk, I will show that the variations in (1b) and (1c) are intricately linked to each other: they are in complementary distribution. Environments that allow embedded V2, disallow the construction in (1c) and vice versa. This observation is confirmed by the results from a corpus survey.

The results shed light on a previously unobserved aspect of Swedish subordinate clauses. Furthermore, it offers strong arguments in favour of the assumption that the verb has raised from V^o-C^o in embedded V2-clauses. The position preceding the finite verb in embedded V2-clauses shows the exact same limitations as the prefield does in Swedish main clauses. Thus, this observation provides an improved tool for delimiting the environments that allow V^o-C^o movement in Swedish, which in turn may lead to a better understanding of the underlying factors that make embedded V2 possible.