**Optional V2 in Estonian**

Anders Holmberg Newcastle University
Heete Sahkai Institute of Estonian Language
Anne Tamm Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary

Estonian is a V2 language, seen in data like (1): the finite verb is the second constituent in main clauses (Tael 1988, Lindström 2017).

(1) Pühapäeviti (*Mari) küpseta-b Mari tavaliselt kooki.
on.Sundays Mari.NOM bake-3SG Mari.NOM usually cake.PAR
'On Sundays Mary usually bakes a cake.'

The V2 condition can be flouted, though, in several ways. First, an unstressed pronominal subject may intervene between a fronted constituent and the verb.

(2) Pühapäeviti ma küpseta-n tavaliselt kooki.
on.Sundays 1SG.NOM bake-1SG usually cake.PAR
'On Sundays I usually bake a cake.'

Second, the finite verb may appear in a clause-medial position, which has been associated with the accentuation of the verb (Remmel 1963, Sahkai and Tamm submitted).[1]

(3) Pühapäeviti ma tavaliselt küpseta-n midagi.
on.Sundays 1SG.NOM usually bake-1SG something.PAR
'On Sundays I usually bake something.'

Third, in wh-questions the verb need not be in second position. The default order tends to be sentence-final position.

(4) Miks raamat laual on?
why book.NOM on.table is
'Why is the book on the table?'

We propose that

- Estonian has a poorly articulated left periphery: There is a Subj/Top position hosting the subject or a fronted topic, and above it a position hosting a contrastive topic, or a wh-phrase, or an adjunct or frame-element, moved or externally merged. Following Vilkuna's (1995) theory of Finnish, we call the relevant head 'K' (for 'kontrast').
- The head K in Estonian (unlike Finnish) has a feature attracting the finite verb and a 'general EPP' feature which attracts a phrasal constituent to spec-K, by movement or external merge (the V2 signature; Holmberg 2015).
- V moves to K only when it is not a focus exponent, i.e. does not receive a nuclear accent (Sahkai & Tamm submitted).
- A weak subject pronoun moves (preferably, sometimes obligatorily) to spec-K, but does not check the EPP, possibly best modelled as the pronoun adjoining to K, thus allowing another constituent, moved or externally merged, to check the EPP of K.

This accounts for (1a,b), (2) and (3) (the clause-medial accented verb position), as well as for (5a,b) and (6). In (5a), the Contrastive Topic object moves to spec-K. In (5b), the subject pronoun adjoins to K, Contrastive Topic moves to spec-K. In (6a) a sentence adverb fills spec-K, in (6b) the pronoun adjoins to K.

(5)a. **Selle** **kleidi** tahaks mu tütar osta.
that.ACC dress.ACC would.like 1SG.GEN daughter.NOM to.buy
'That dress, my daughter would like to buy.'

[1] Pragmatic factors may lead to placement of the verb in the first or final position.

b. **Selle** **kleidi** **ta** tahaks osta.
that.ACC dress.ACC 3SG.NOM would.like to.buy

(6)a. **Ehk** oska-b Mari eesti keelt.
perhaps can.speak-3SG Mari.NOM Estonian language

b. **Ehk** **ta** oska-b eesti keelt.
perhaps she can.speak-3SG Estonian language

The effect of the subject pronoun is reminiscent of Old English (Haeberli 2002). The principal difference between Estonian and its close relative Finnish is that K does not attract the verb or have a general EPP feature in Finnish.

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