

Particle verbs are a ‘first phase’ phenomenon: Evidence from Heritage German

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Introduction. West Germanic languages (as well as most North Germanic languages except Icelandic) have a class of predicates in which a modifying particle can appear in a non-local position from said predicate. The examples from standard German (cf. (1) & (2)) illustrate this contrast.

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| (1) | Die Party fängt an!
the party begins PRT
‘The party is starting!’ | (2) | Die Party hat angefangen.
the party has PRT-ASP.PERF.begun
‘The party has begun.’ |
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Theoretical analyses of these separable elements in these complex predicates have predominantly fallen into two camps: (i) a morphological and (ii) a syntactic treatment. Here we adopt a late-insertion model of morphology (Borer, 2013; Embick, 2015; Embick & Noyer, 2007; Salzmänn, 2019; Putnam & Hoffman, to appear) in which the operations responsible for generating morphology and syntax are one and the same (i.e., the *one engine-approach*). Equipped with data from two Bavarian-based varieties of Heritage German spoken in the United States (in Cleveland, OH and Queens, NY) and present-day Slovenia, e.g. **Gottscheerisch** and **Zarzerdeutsch**, we demonstrate that the formation of these separable particle elements are a ‘first phase’ (*vP*) phenomenon (Chomsky, 2000, 2001).

Gottscheerisch. Gottscheerisch is a Southern Bavarian dialect of Kočevje (Gottschee) in southern Slovenia. It is currently spoken primarily in diaspora in Austria, the United States, and Canada. In matrix clauses, Gottscheerisch exhibits the verbal bracket where the finite verb raises to C while the separable element remains *in situ*; (3).

- (3) Dər vēgl **khlüštərt** ži **aüf.**
the bird ruffle.3SG ANPH PRT
‘The bird ruffles its feathers.’
German: Der Vogel **plustert** sich **auf.**

Subordinate clauses modified by separable particles display a peculiar structure referred to as a *cluster creeper*, where the separable particle structurally dominates both the auxiliary and the non-finite verb (such as a past participle in (4)). Assuming that light verbs are Merged into *v*, we propose that the separable particle appears at the edge of *vP*.

- (4) ... heantar dər khriəkh [*vP* **aüs-išt-gəpröxxn.**
... before the war PRT-be.3SG-break.out.PTCP
‘...before the war broke out.’
German: ...bevor der Krieg **ausgebrochen** ist.

Imperatives in Gottscheerisch provide additional evidence for the appearance of separable particles at the edge of *vP*. Separable prefixes (in the absence of proclitic negation) always accompany the finite verb to C ((5) & (6)). Extended imperatives, such as (6), clearly illustrate that the formation of imperatives is not lexical, as the separable particle raises to the edge of *vP* to form a complex head with the light verb in *v*.

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| (5) | Aüf-šraib mər’s af a tsēdl.
PRT-write.IMP me=it on a piece.of.paper
‘Write it down on a piece of paper for me.’ | (6) | Aüs-luəs es khüäl.
PRT-let.IMP it cool.INF
‘Let it cool down.’ |
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Zarzerdeutsch. The Zarzer German dialect (Zarzerdeutsch) was formerly spoken in and around the town of Sorica (Zarz) in northern Slovenia. Today, a distinctly creole-like language called *Hubner Mischsprache* (known locally as Drfaška Špraha) is the most prevalent existing form of the language.

Unlike Gottscheerisch, separable particles in matrix clauses do not remain *in situ*, and raise to the edge of *vP*. In (7) the separable prefix and its predicate appear at edge of *vP*, moving over the direct object. When we compare (7) and (8) we see that in the latter, the main predicate raises to C (see Vikner, 2020 for a summary of V2-properties in Germanic languages), while the particle remains at the edge of the first phase.

- (7) de henne tōət [vP **āuf**-pīkkʏn de veigilar (8) i tōən et [vP **vqr** hūmmr(ĵ)
the hen do.3sg PRT-pick.INF the chicks I perceive.1sg NEG PRT hunger
‘The hen pecks the chicks.’ ‘I feel no hunger.’
cf. Ger. *Ich nehme keinen Hunger wahr.*

The data in (7) and (8) should not be misinterpreted as an indication that Zarzerdeutsch has adopted an underlying VO-ordering. In matrix clauses with a single predicate, the separable particle remains *in situ* (e.g., (9)).

- (9) de žunne gēət **āuf**
the sun rise.3sg PRT
‘The sun rises.’

Unlike Gottscheerisch, Zarzerdeutsch does not license cluster creepers; see (10) and (11). In (11) we observe the *aux-V* ordering common to Gottscheerish but no cluster creepers.

- (10) wen īr vōr **auf**-štēənt (11) nou dam žābm wäige, lež ar ijt
if 2pl earlier PRT-get.up.2pl.SBJV on the same way REL he be.3sg
‘If you (all) had gotten up earlier’ **hērg**gegēən
PRT.come.down.PTCP
‘by the same route (that) he came down’

Finally, imperatives in Zarzerdeutsch display a mixed preferences with respect to the placement of separable particles. Gottscheerisch-style imperatives are not found with most particles (see (12)); however, directional particles do exhibit this behavior (see (13)).

- (12) grāiff et **qun** (13) **innar** kxīm
touch.IMP NEG PRT PRT come.in.IMP
‘Don’t touch!’ ‘Come in!’

Analysis. The aforementioned examples from Gottscheerisch and Zarzerdeutsch reveal that separable particles cyclically span over the *vP*-phase. These phenomena are summarized in Table 1:

	Gottscheerisch	Zarzerdeutsch
Matrix clauses	particle remains <i>in situ</i>	particle appears at the edge of <i>vP</i>
Subordinate clauses	cluster creepers; particle at edge of <i>vP</i>	standard German-like
Imperatives	at the edge of <i>vP</i>	mixed structure

Table 1: Distribution of separable particles

The importance of these patterns of microvariation in these two Bavarian-based heritage dialects is threefold: First, as argued by Bousquette & Putnam (2020) and others, in spite of the moribund status of both of these grammars, heritage grammars maintain (an often high) degree of complexity. Second, this variation is constrained by theoretical constructs applied to other languages. Third, data from heritage grammars such as these enrich our understanding of the nature of syntactic constraints and their continued development across the lifespan.