Discourse Structure and Information Packaging in Cross-Linguistic Perspective

Verb Placement in Early Germanic (B4)

Motivation
Results of earlier studies (Hinrichs et al. 2005) point that the inflected verb in Early Germanic enters the borderline between old and new information in an utterance and thus marks the beginning of the domain of new-information focus. This phenomenon is best shown on the complementary distribution of V1 vs. V2 in sentences of the presentational vs. categorical kind. A problem apparently arises with V111-sentences containing discourse-given referents:

Distribution of V1-patterns in Early Germanic

- text-initial sentences and episode onsets = new text sequence

1. (Lat.) Factum est autem in debus illid

2. (Lat.) 3. (Lat.)

Verb groups:
- motion verbs = change in the local orientation of the narrative setting
- perception verbs in inchoative meaning = change in the temporal orientation
- verbs of saying = change of personnel

Proposition
verb placement indicates rhetorical relations in Early Germanic
- V1 indicates coordination at the end of a chain of continuation;
- V2 indicates subordination and continuation; here V2111 separates a topic from the comment/new-information focus
- V1 indicates coordinational or thematic utterance without topic

Dative of V1-patterns in Early Germanic

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