The use of V2 structures
by Japanese learners of German as a foreign language
during classroom interaction

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Late acquisition of V2?

- Evidence in many SLA studies that V2 (XVS, non-subject-initial sentences with the finite verb in second position) is acquired late

stage 1	words
stage 2	SVX
stage 3	AdvSVX (ungrammatical V3)
stage 4	verb separation (SV$_{finite}$XV$_{infinite}$)
stage 5	**XVS (V2)**

- Proposed determining factors for developmental sequences: processability constraints (Pienemann 1998), L1 transfer (Diehl et al. 2000), L2 complexity (Lee 2012a,b)

- Little discussion on pragmatic functions of the prefield (but see Bohnacker & Rosén 2008, Walter & Doolittle 2012)

- **Questions:** Is XVS difficult per se? Why do elementary learners produce so many SVX structures?

- **Needed**: elaborated elicitation methods

- Counter evidence against late XVS in Bohnacker (2005, 2006): XVS in elementary learner varieties Swedish-German (suggested explanation: L1 transfer)

- Counter evidence against late XVS in Hoshii (2010): XVS in elementary learner varieties Japanese-German (suggested explanation: Chunks), see also Andreas, Fehrmann & Schumacher (forthcoming)

- Verb placement in learner varieties Japanese-German: evidence from written, non spontaneous data (Hoshii 2010, Lipsky 2010)

- **Needed**: data from spontaneous production (oral and written)

Given that both V and Adv are realised, where do Japanese elementary learners of German place the verb during spontaneous production in the classroom?
How many targetlike V2 structures do they produce, how many non-targetlike V3 structures?
Which factors determine the amount of targetlike structures?

Data collection

Project
Spontaneous language production of Japanese learners in GFL classes

Participants:
20 learners (L1 Japanese, L2 English, L3 German)
in a 4-week language course (A1) in Germany
(2 groups, 48 contact hr each)

Data
- video and audio recordings of oral production in the classroom (31 hr overall, 10 hr evaluable, 2 hr analysed for V2 so far, 98 sentences)
- spontaneous written production from the classroom, written data from homework (386 sentences)

Elicitation methods
focused tasks (Ellis 2003) to elicit non-subject-initial sentences within meaning based activities

Task	Medium	Meaning based result	Presumed fillings of prefields
Information gap (timetables)	Oral (Skype)	Date	
Putting-in-order, Information gap (map, to-do lists)	Oral	Path drawn on a map	Temporal adverbials
Discussion (cards with provocative statements)	Oral	Agreement about cultural stereotypes	Local adverbials
Story completion (first sentence)	Written	Narrative text	
Storytelling (picture)	Written	Crime thriller	Variable elements to establish text coherence
Reporting (trip to Dresden)	Written (Homework)	Report	

Oral information gap task: example

„Find a date for a new skype session, comparing your timetables"
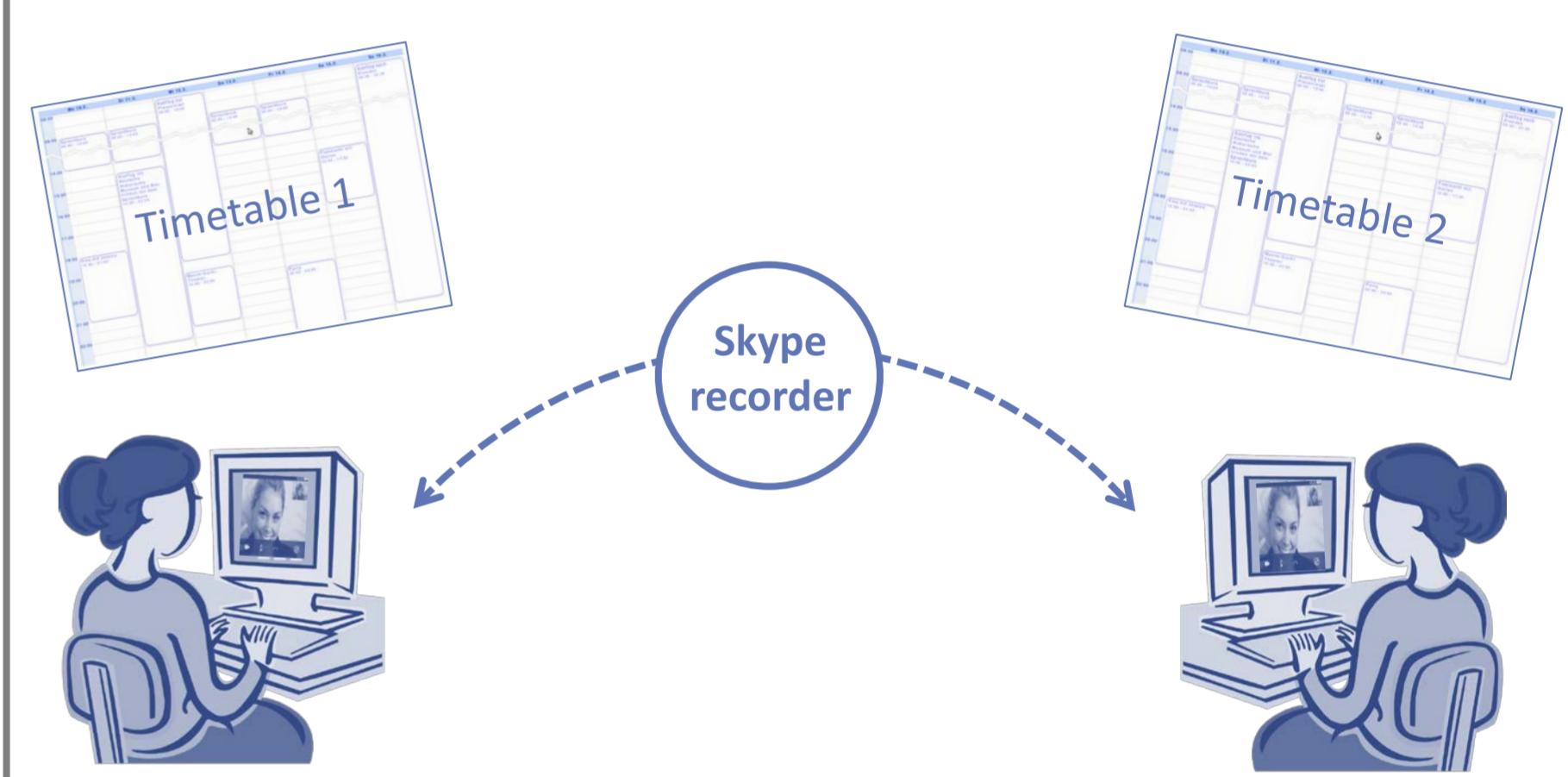
Data & Results

**Example for oral production from the information gap task (excerpt)**

17 TN05 a:h (--) am montag
a:h (--) on monday
(--) am monta:g (--) ich:: gehe,
(--) on monday (--) i go
18 TN06 hm
hm
19 TN05 ä:h (--) spreche'kurs,
a:h (--) speak'course,
20 TN05 von neun uhr,
from nine o'clock
21 TN06 neun uhr;
nine o'clock
22 TN05 bis,
to
23 TN06 bis
to
24 TN05 ä:h (-) vierzehn uhr.
*a:h (-) two o'clock.*

Complete data
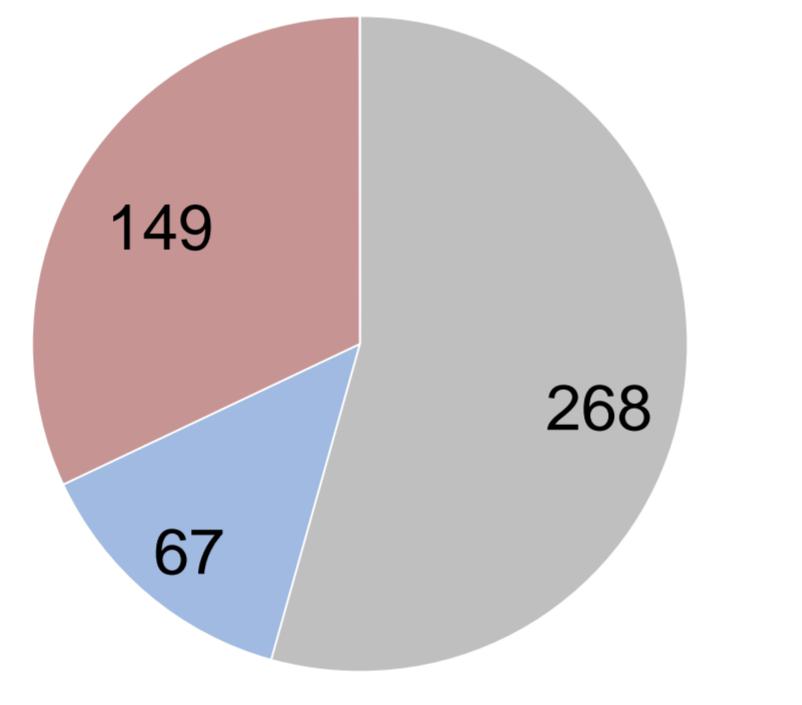
- Items without Adv (268)
- Adv (other positions) (67)
- Adv prefield (German "Vorfeld") (149)
  - of these:
  78/149 AdvVSO (targetlike)
  71/149 AdvSVO (non-targetlike)

Verb placement in sentences with adverbials in the prefield – oral and written data (total amount)

- AdvVSO (targetlike)
- AdvSVO (non-targetlike)

(categories: oral (total), written (total))
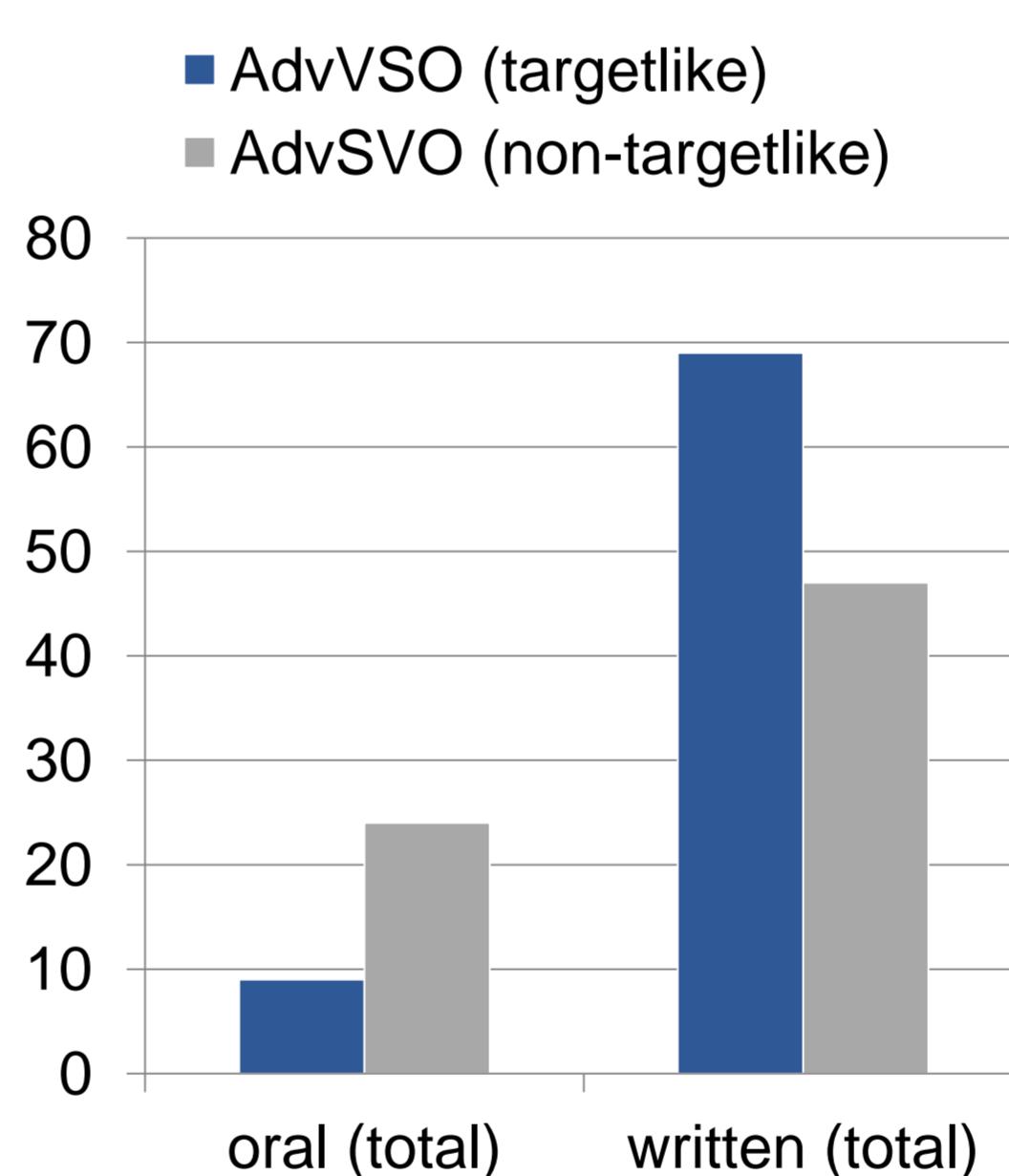
Verb placement in sentences with adverbials in the prefield – different tasks (written data, total amount)

- AdvVSO (targetlike)
- AdvSVO (non-targetlike)

(categories: classroom (total), homework (total))
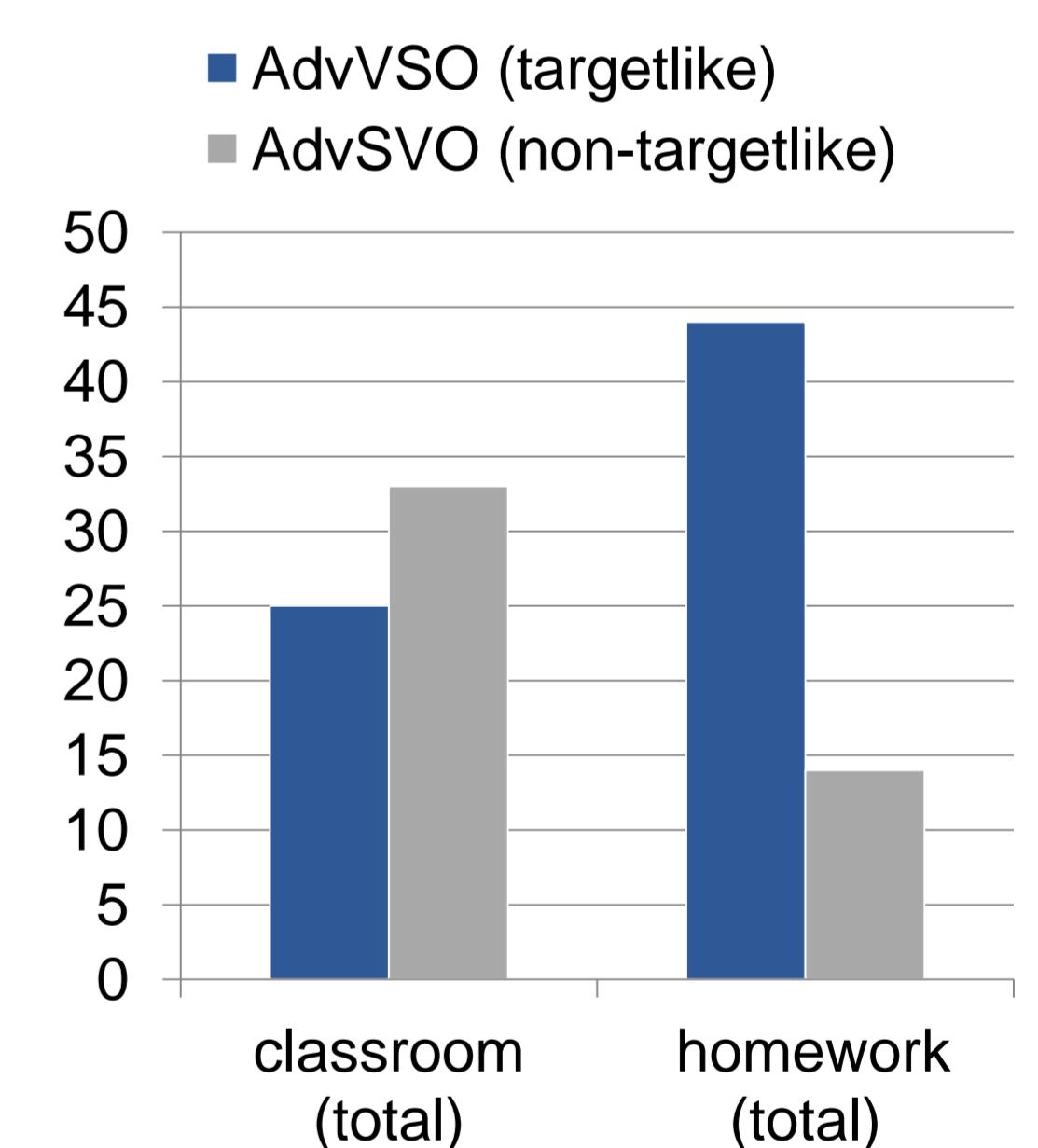
Discussion

- Elementary learners place adverbials in the prefield in appropriate contexts when stimulated by certain tasks, about half of the instances contain targetlike V2 structures.

- The high degree of targetlike structures is unexpected, given the general learners' stage of L2 development.

  → Our data do not support the established correlations between word order and other aspects of L2 development, e.g. verb morphology, lexical diversity; contra Grießhaber 2013.

- XVS is not difficult per se – but the amount of targetlike V2 structures depends on the medium (fewer targetlike structures in oral vs. written production) and the task setting (fewer targetlike structures in classroom writings vs. homework).

  → Learners seem to draw on their explicit knowledge of V2 in less spontaneous production as indicated by self-corrections in their texts.

- Evidence for chunks in spontaneous speech were found in our pilot study (Andreas, Fehrmann & Schumacher forthcoming), but not in our current data analysed so far.

  → Further analysis of oral data is necessary.

- Analysis of subject specific oral data is challenging because of collaborative sentence production.

- In which ways might our results be influenced by the learners' L1 (Japanese, cf. the pragmatic functions of sentence initial elements) or the L2 (English, cf. the high frequency of AdvSVO)?

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