

Features and Patterns in Foreign Language Learning

Robert Bley-Vroman University of Hawai'i
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A version of this talk will be available at <http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/bley-vroman/>

NP

VP

V NP NP V V NP

Lack of inversion with preposed adverbials in German is consistent with the input.
The learner may note "Gestern sah ich den Mann" as either:

[Adverbial [S_{+inv}]], or as

[Adverbial [S]]

- (1)
- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| S | S_{-inv} (prototype) | [Adverbial []] |
| | S _{+inv} | |
- (2)
- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| S | S_{-inv} (prototype) | [Adverbial []] |
| | S _{+inv} | |
- (3)
- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| S | S_{-inv} (prototype) | [Adverbial []] |
| | S _{+inv} | |

Inversion of embedded wh-questions:

Kinds (instances) of S:

(for example)

S _{+inv}	did John eat __
S _{-inv}	John ate __
S/XP	did John eat the cake
S _{no hole}	John ate the cake

Kinds (instances) of Questions:

IQ	what John ate __	[XP _Q S/XP _{-inv}]
DQ	what did John eat __	[XP _Q S/XP _{+inv}]
+wh	whether John ate the cake	[whether S/XP _{-inv}]
-wh	did John eat the cake	[S _{+inv}]

The learner encounters the +wh IQ: "I know what John ate __"

The learner could notice that this is of the form

[XP_Q [S/XP_{-inv}]], or merely

[XP_Q [S/XP]]

(or, sometimes notice the inversion and sometimes not)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--|-----------------------|
| | | | IQ +wh |
| (1) S _{nohole} | S _{+inv} | | |
| | | | [XP _Q []] |
| S/XP | S _{-inv} | | |
| | | | |
| (2) S _{nohole} | S _{+inv} | | |
| | | | [XP _Q []] |
| S/XP | S _{-inv} | | |
| | | | |
| (3) S _{nohole} | S _{+inv} | | |
| | | | [XP _Q []] |
| S/XP | S _{-inv} | | |

Higher-level links may also enter in. If the learner makes a link to inversion at the wh-question level, based on direct wh-questions, then both direct and indirect questions will "inherit" inversion. A link to inversion may also be made at the level of question itself (based on inversion in both +wh and -wh DQs). Then all questions will inherit inversion.

S _{nohole}	S _{+inv}	DQ+wh	
			[XP _Q []] (Q+wh)
S/XP	S _{-inv}	IQ+wh	
S _{nohole}	S _{+inv}	DQ+wh	
			[XP _Q []] [] (Q)
S/XP	S _{-inv}	IQ+wh	
			(Q-wh)