

On the interaction between Verb-Projection Raising (VPR) and the occurrence of very late verb-placement errors

Klausurtagung 2002 Manuela Schönenberger (manuela@ims.uni-stuttgart.de)

I. Verb placement in embedded clauses

- (1) a. I ka kei Ahnig [worum (dass) de Beowulf de Grendel nöd mag].
I have no idea why that the Beowulf the Grendel not likes
- b. De Grendel [wo im Sumpf lebt] schlooft vil.
the Grendel who in-the bog lives sleeps a lot
- c. I ha nöd gwüsst [dass de Beowulf gern de Grendel chützelet].
I have not known that the Beowulf gladly the Grendel tickles
- (2) a. I weiss nöd [öb de Grendel öppedie kämpft mit'm Beowulf]. E
I know not if the Grendel sometimes fights with-the Beowulf
- b. I weiss [dass de Grendel de Beowulf gern tut trätzle]. V(P)R
I know that the Grendel the Beowulf gladly does irritate
- c. I weiss [dass de Beowulf wött de Grendel gingge]. VPR
I know that the Beowulf wants the Grendel kick

II. What is Verb-Projection Raising?

- (3) a. dass er hat *unbedingt nach Hause gehen müssen* G
that he has absolutely (to) home go must
- b. dass de Chli 'Chatz wött *am Schwanz packe* CH
that the little one the-cat wants at-the tail grab
- c. da Jan Valère deeg *een boek vu zen wuf kuopen* WF
that Jan Valère lets a book for his wife buy

- VPR exists in German and Dutch (and their respective dialects) and Old English.

• Only a (language-specific) subgroup of verbs triggers VPR:

- (4) a. Doubling Verbs, e.g. *lo* 'let', *cho* 'come', *aafo* 'begin'
- b. Modal verbs, e.g. *chöne* 'can', *wöle* 'want'
- c. Dummy Verbs, e.g. *tue* 'do'
- d. Verbs triggering IPP (infinitivus pro participio), e.g. *gseh* 'see'
- e. Auxiliary verbs, *ha* 'have' and *sii* 'be' (!)

- Main verbs are incompatible with VPR:

- (5) a. * dass er goot *hei*
that he goes home
b. * dass mer fräset *en Chnoche*
that we eat a bone

• The *raised cluster* always contains a non-finite verb:

- (6) a. dass er wött *am Grendel 'Pfoote zruggeh* VPR
that he wants to-the Grendel the-paw back-give
b. dass er am Grendel wött 'Pfoote *zruggeh* VPR
that he to-the Grendel wants the-paw back-give
c. dass er am Grendel 'Pfoote wött *zruggeh* V(P)R
that he to-the Grendel the-paw wants back-give

• Non-pronominal complements and adjuncts of the non-finite verb can optionally occur in the raised cluster:

- (7) a. dass er wött *s chlii Chätzli schtrichele*
that he wants the little cat stroke
b. dass'n wött *fescht is Ohreläppli biise*
that it him wants badly in the ear-lobe bite

• Other elements (e.g. subjects (8a), unstressed pronouns (8b), sentential negation (8c), discourse particles (8d)) cannot occur in the raised cluster:

- (8) a. * dass wött *s'Müüsli 'Chatz gingge*
that wants the little mouse the-cat kick
b. * dass t'Muus wött's *gingge*
that the mouse wants-it kick
c. * dass t'Muus wött *nöd/nie 'Chatz gingge*
that the mouse wants not/never the-cat kick
d. * dass t'Muus wött *ebe/doch 'Chatz gingge*
that the mouse wants EBE/DOCH the-cat kick

III. Acquisition data on verb placement in embedded clauses

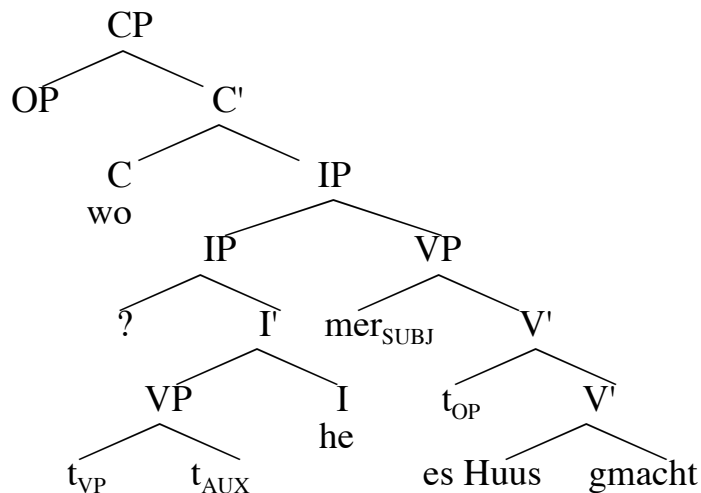
It is not entirely clear whether German-speaking children have no difficulties with verb placement in embedded clauses. Swiss-German-speaking children do have difficulties.

A. Bernese

Penner (1990) shows that Bernese-speaking children (around age 3;0) sometimes produce verb-placement errors. He suggests that these errors can be accounted for in terms of an overgeneralization of VPR.

- (9) % dr Buur ... wo he mer es Huus gmacht da
the farmer... who have we a house made here

(10) Derivation of (9)



Penner's hypothesis: The subject optionally moves to [Spec,IP] in child grammar.

- (a) What happens to the EPP if the subject remains in [Spec,VP]?
 (b) Is there any repercussion of optional subject movement elsewhere in the child data?

Penner does not address either of these questions. One would expect, however, that the children's matrix clauses would sometimes also show optional subject movement, resulting in ungrammatical strings of the type in (11):

- (11) a. * Uf s Jungfrauoch hät wöle de Jakob fahre.
to the Jungfrauoch has wanted the Jakob drive
 b. * Hüt singt nöd de Jakob. * sentential negation
today sings not the Jakob

- (12) % nei, vilech das Rädli, weisch, wo isch gäbig
no perhaps the little wheel which is suitable

- The raised cluster in (12) does not contain a non-finite verb!
- All of the non-target-consistent examples listed in Penner (1990) involve relative clauses. It is unclear why other types of embedded clauses do not show verb-placement errors.

B. Lucernese

- **Verb placement before age 4;11**

The two Lucernese-speaking children of my study (2001, 2002) generally place the finite verb in any type of embedded clause incorrectly. They hardly ever use the verb-final pattern before age 4;11.

- The misplaced verb can be a main verb (13a), a modal (13b), or an auxiliary (13c):

- (13) a. % wemmər macht *das* (M:4;05)
when-we make this
- b. % dass chasch *du die andere Chleider weglegge* (M:4;03)
that can you the other clothes away-put
- c. % dass isch's *kaput gange* (M:4;03)
that is-it destroyed gone (that it got destroyed)

- The raised cluster always contains the subject in non-subject relative clauses:

- (14) a. % und de [wo sind 'Puebe det gsi] ... (M:4;00)
and then when are the-boys there been
- b. % du häsch en Bese [wo chasch *du drufhocke*] (M:3;11)
you have a broom which can you on-sit
- c. % das [wo macht *de Aladin*] (M:3;11)
that which makes the Aladdin

Relative clauses introduced by *wo*: % **wo V_{fin} SU ...**

- The raised cluster in clauses introduced by a complementizer sometimes contains the subject (15) and sometimes does not (16):

- (15) a. % wenn verwachtet-*mər* (M:3;11)
when wakes-up-one
- b. % Wenn isch *ebe die Tör offe bi de Eliza* (M:4;02)
when is EBE the door open at the Eliza's place
- (16) a. % Wenn ich säg'm 'gang use'... (M:4;07)
when I tell-him 'go away'
- b. % Wenn's goot *loos* (M:4;11)
when-it goes on (when it starts)

Clauses introduced by a complementizer: % **Comp V_{fin} SU ...**
or % **Comp SU V_{fin} ...**

- Overgeneralization of VPR cannot explain why raising of the subject to [Spec,IP] does not occur in the children's relative clauses. After all, it should be optional according to Penner.

- The children do not seem to produce matrix clauses with non-raised subjects (cf. example (11)).

- The children's VPR would differ substantially from adult VPR. The two features which characterize adult VPR would be lost: (a) any type of verb can trigger VPR, and (b) anything can be contained in the raised cluster.

- Overgeneralization of VPR cannot explain why verb-placement errors seem to be restricted to relative clauses in Bernese. Moreover, it cannot account for the Lucernese acquisition data. I therefore do not adopt this approach for Lucernese.

Instead I propose that verb-placement errors in Lucernese are the result of *verb movement to the left* (to either Fin° or $Force^{\circ}$). The finite verb moves to Fin° in clauses introduced by a complementizer (17a/b), it moves to $Force^{\circ}$ in relative clauses (17c/d). The subject generally moves to [Spec,IP], but *unstressed subject pronouns can optionally move to [Spec,FinP] in the child grammar*.

- (17)
- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| a. % | Wemmər <u>wüset</u> nüme t | V in Fin° + pron. SU in [Spec,FinP] |
| b. % | wenn <u>verwächet</u> -mər t | V in Fin° + pron. SU in [Spec,IP] |
| c. % | de wo <u>sind</u> 'Puebe det gsi t ... | V in $Force^{\circ}$ + non-pron. SU in [Spec,IP] |
| d. % | de wo <u>sind</u> 's det gsi t ... | V in $Force^{\circ}$ + pron. SU in [Spec,FinP] |

- **Verb placement after age 4;11**

Around age 5;0 the verb-final pattern starts to appear. The verb-final pattern gradually replaces verb movement in embedded clauses. Verb-placement errors after age 5;0 in essence resemble those produced before age 5;0. However, there are certain differences.

- Non-target-consistent verb placement in clauses introduced by a complementizer still results in either (A) 'complementizer V_{fin} SU ...' or (B) 'complementizer SU V_{fin} ...'. In contrast to verb-placement errors produced before age 4;11, those produced after age 4;11 more often involve Pattern B than A. Moreover, the subject in Pattern B, which is always pronominal before age 4;11, can now also be non-pronominal. Since a non-pronominal subject is assumed to occupy [Spec,IP], the fact that the finite verb can now follow it suggests that the finite verb no longer moves to Fin° but to a lower head.

- Around age 5;0 there is a sudden increase in examples in which the finite verb is doubled:

- (18)
- | | | |
|------|--|----------|
| a. % | [wil si <u>hät</u> ebe de Fuess proche <u>hät</u>] | (M:5;00) |
| | <i>because she has EBE the foot broken has</i> | |
| b. % | Weisch du [wo-mer <u>mues</u> döt döre <u>mues</u>] | (M:5;01) |
| | <i>know you where-one must there through must</i> | |
| c. % | [Wenn ich <u>schtöo</u> ufschtöo] denn lärm ich | (E:4;11) |
| | <i>when I get up-get then scream I</i> | |

- Very late verb-placement errors generally involve auxiliaries:

- (19)
- | | | |
|------|--|----------|
| a. % | [Wil ich nonig uf de Welt <u>bi</u> gsi] bisch du ano äleige gsi | (M:7;08) |
| | <i>because I not yet on the world am been are you still alone been</i> | |
| b. % | ... s Chind [wo Geburtstag <u>hät</u> gha] | (M:7;06) |
| | <i>the child who birthday has had</i> | |

- (20) a. % S erschte mol [wo-n-ich no bin mit em Mami gange] (M:7;09)
the first time when I still am with the mother gone
 b. % [Wo's mit sine Auge hät die schöne Fraue gseh] ... (M:7;11)
when-it with its eyes has the beautiful women seen

Auxiliaries which embed a participial complement cannot trigger VPR in Lucernese (21a). They can optionally do so in Bernese (22a/a'). However, auxiliaries which embed an infinitival complement can trigger VPR in both Lucernese (21b) and Bernese (22b).

(21) Lucernese:

- a. * ... Aux_{fin} (...) Participle '... ist ... gegangen'
 a'. ... (...) Participle Aux_{fin} '... gegangen ist'
 b. ... Aux_{fin} (...) Infinitive (...) Infinitive IPP 'hat ... wollen ... essen'

(22) Bernese:

- a. ... Aux_{fin} (...) Participle '... ist ... gegangen'
 a'. ... (...) Participle Aux_{fin} '... gegangen ist'
 b. ... Aux_{fin} (...) Infinitive (...) Infinitive IPP 'hat ... wollen ... essen'

VPR is optional with modal verbs in Lucernese (23a/b), while it is obligatory in Bernese (24a).

(23) Lucernese:

- a. Mod_{fin} (...) Infinitive (preferred) '... will ... essen'
 b. (...) Infinitive Mod_{fin} '... essen will'

(24) Bernese:

- a. Mod_{fin} (...) Infinitive '... will ... essen'
 b. * (...) Infinitive Mod_{fin} '... essen will'

The Lucernese children use optional VPR with auxiliaries which embed participial complements, and they use obligatory VPR with modals. They behave as if they were acquiring Bernese! One of the children produces these Bernese patterns even at age 8;01. Although this child has acquired the verb-final pattern she has not yet identified the correct VPR-triggers of the target grammar.

Similar verb-placement errors have been noted for German-speaking children:

- (25) a. % [weil ich dir den Apfel hab gegeben] (2;05)
because I to-you the apple have given
 a'.% [dass man nicht runter darf fallen] (4;06)
that one not down may fall
 b. (%) [wenn du mich hättest einen Pfennig in den Automaten stecken lassen] (4;06)
if you me had a penny in the machine put let

targets Fin^o before age 4;11 and a lower head after age 4;11, while verb movement in relative clauses always targets Force^o.

- Very late verb-placement errors produced after the appearance of the verb-final pattern can be explained in terms of a misidentification of VPR-triggers. There does not seem to be any evidence that the raised cluster shows anomalies.
- The Lucernese children produce many ambiguous constructions, which sound target-consistent, but it is unclear how they are derived. A statistical analysis needs to be carried out (work in progress with Stefan Evert).
- The reason why Swiss-German-speaking children have difficulties with verb placement in contrast to German-speaking children remains a puzzle.

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Verb-placement patterns used by the two Lucernese children

Clauses introduced by a complementizer:

- I. a. complementizer pronominal SU Vfin ...
- b. complementizer Vfin SU ...

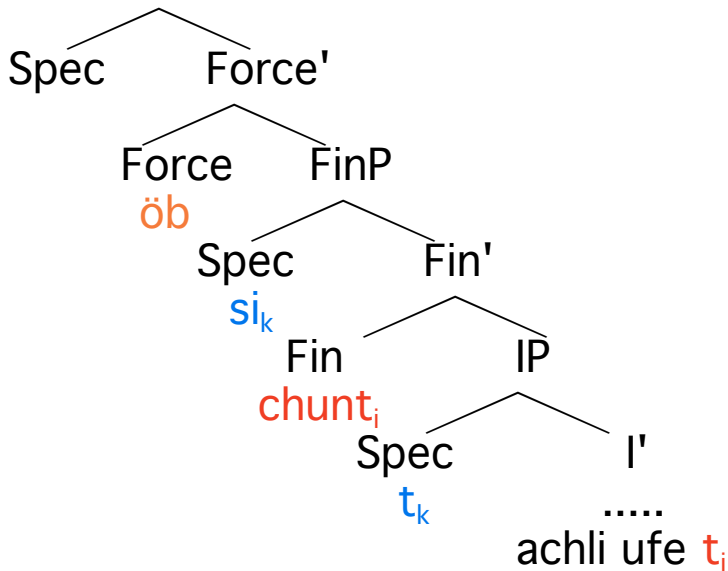
Relative clauses:

- II. a. wo Vfin ...
- b. wo pronominal SU Vfin ...
 (very rare)

Wh-complements:

- III. a. Wh-constituent Vfin ...
- b. Wh-constituent pronominal SU Vfin... (very rare)

(1) ForceP

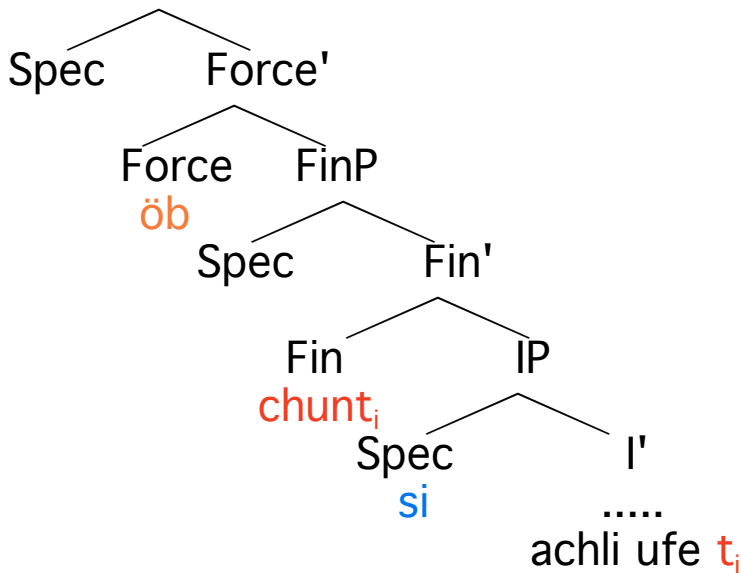


- [Spec,FinP]= Wackernagel-position

- [Spec,IP]= subject position

*Before age 4;11 the subject between the complementizer and the finite verb is always an **unstressed subject pronoun**.*

(2) ForceP

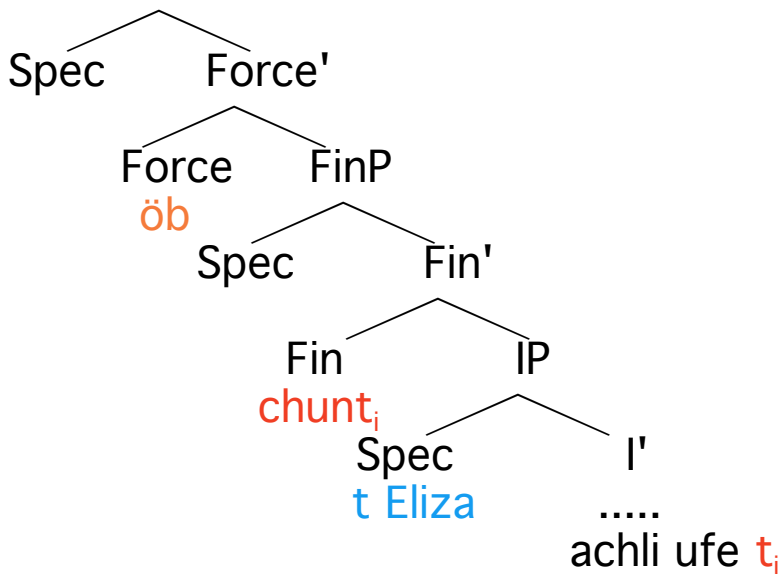


- [Spec,FinP]= Wackernagel-position

- [Spec,IP]= subject position

*There are two contexts in the child grammar in which unstressed subject pronouns can occur, either in [Spec,IP]—resulting in **Complementizer Vfin pron. SU ...**—or in [Spec,FinP]—resulting in **Complementizer pron. SU Vfin***

(3) ForceP

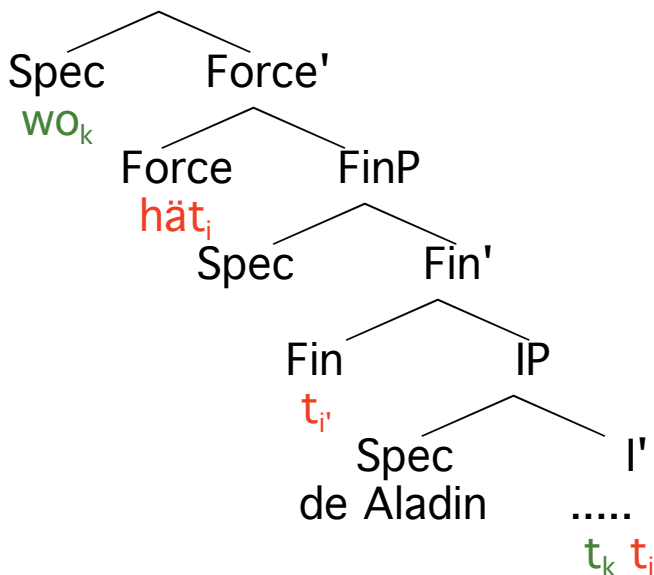


• [Spec,FinP]=
Wackernagel-position

• [Spec,IP]=
subject position

Non-pronominal SU move into [Spec,IP]. They cannot move into [Spec,FinP].

(4) ForceP

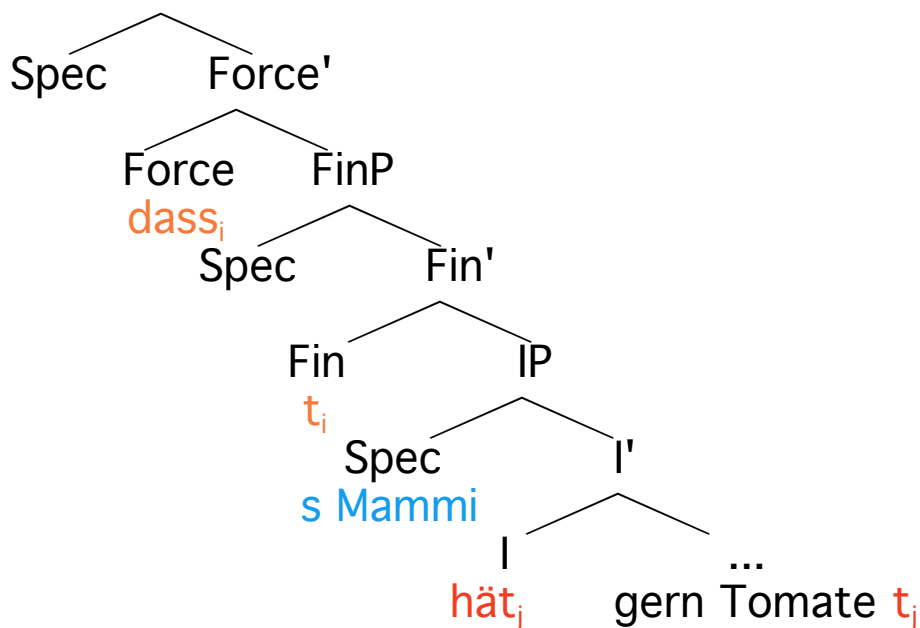


• [Spec,FinP]=
Wackernagel-position

• [Spec,IP]=
subject position

The relative complementizer is misanalysed by the children as the relative operator itself. It moves into [Spec,ForceP].

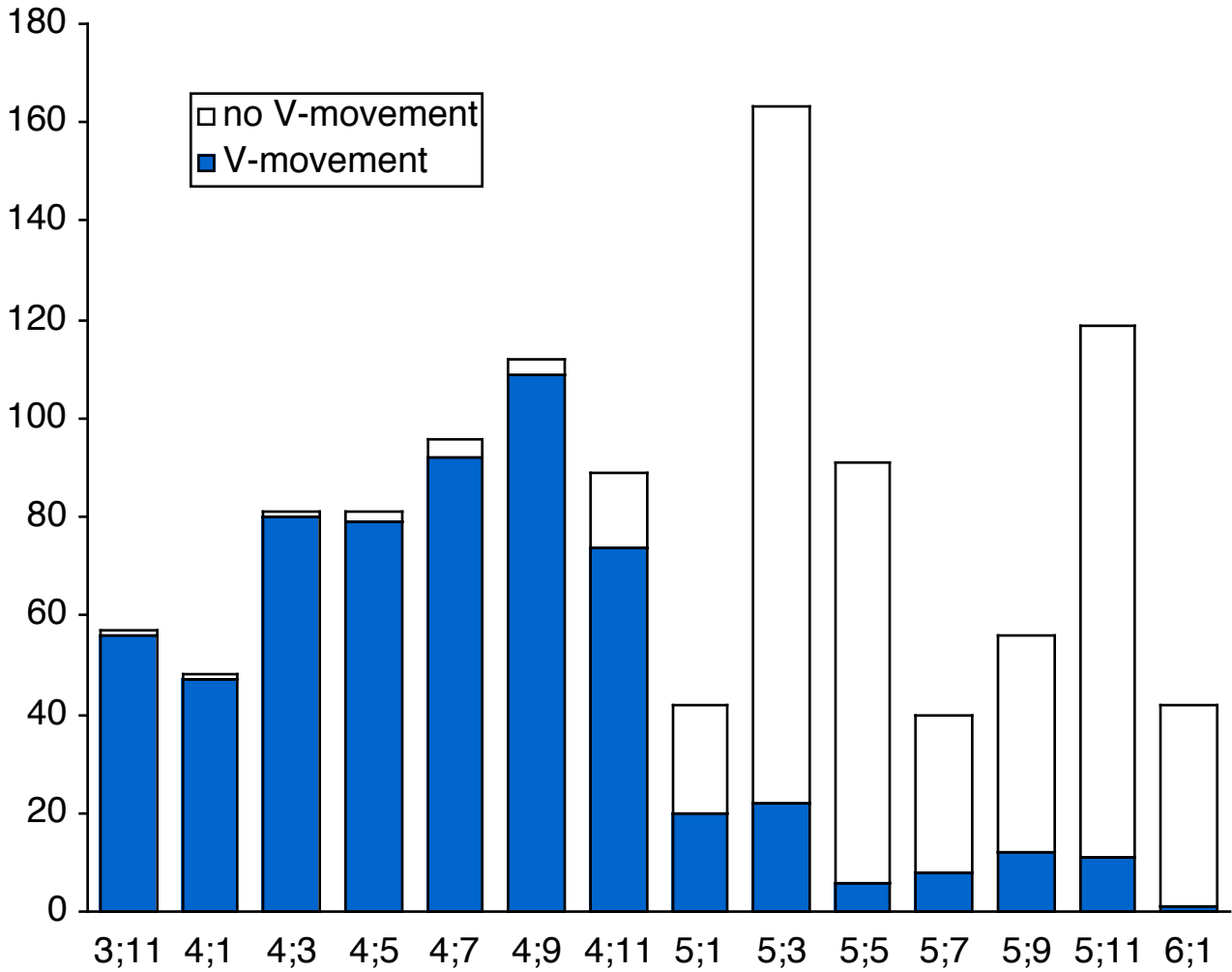
(5) ForceP



*After age 4;11 even **non-pronominal subjects** (or more than one constituent) can intervene between the complementizer and the moved finite verb. At the same time the verb-final pattern appears and gradually becomes the predominant pattern in embedded clauses.*

1A: Clauses introduced by a complementizer* (Moira):

V-movement vs. no *V*-movement (all)

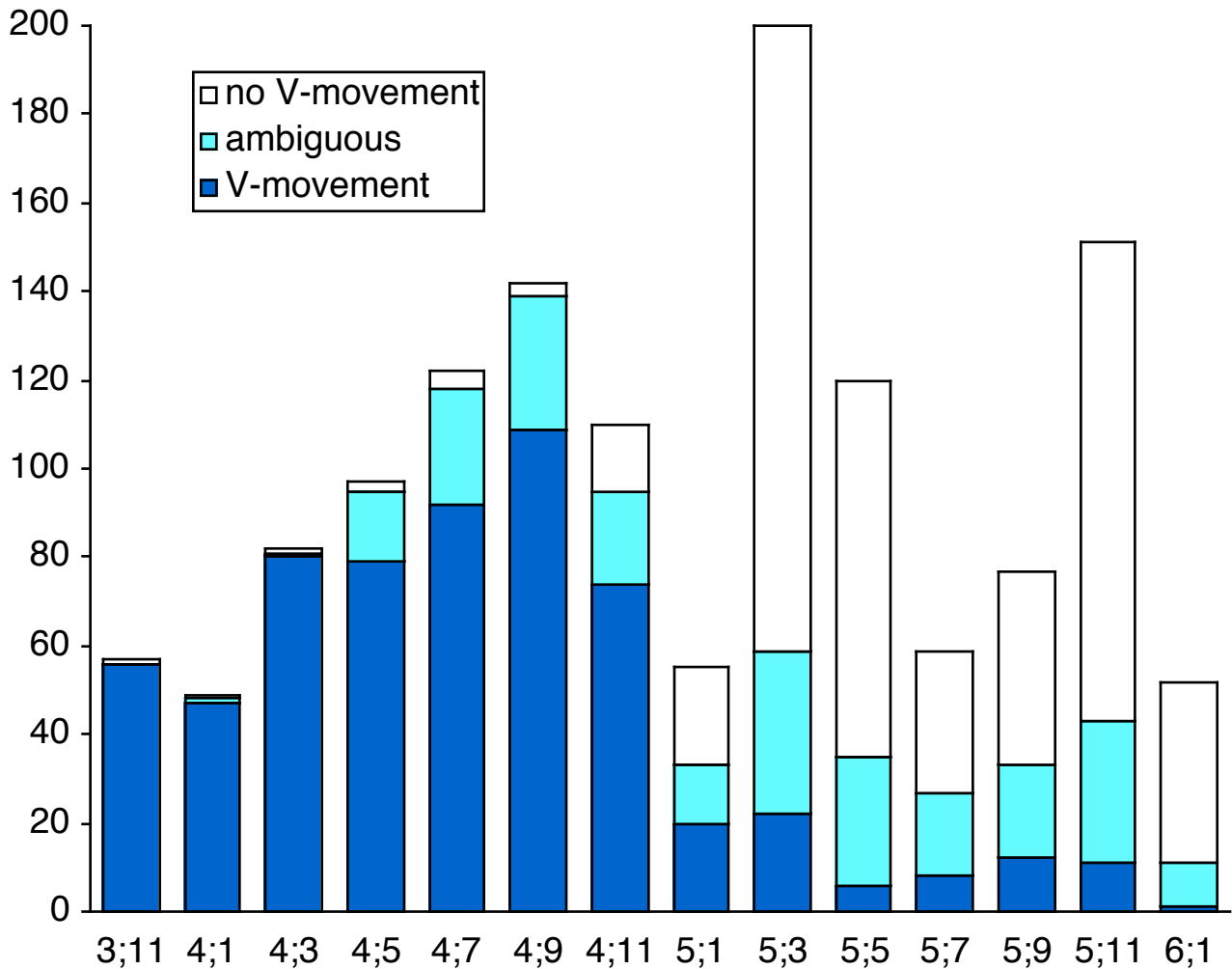


No V-movement	500
V-movement	617
TOTAL	1117

* dass "that", ob "whether, if", wenn "when, if"

1B: Clauses introduced by a complementizer (Moira):*

V-movement, ambiguous, no V-movement (all)

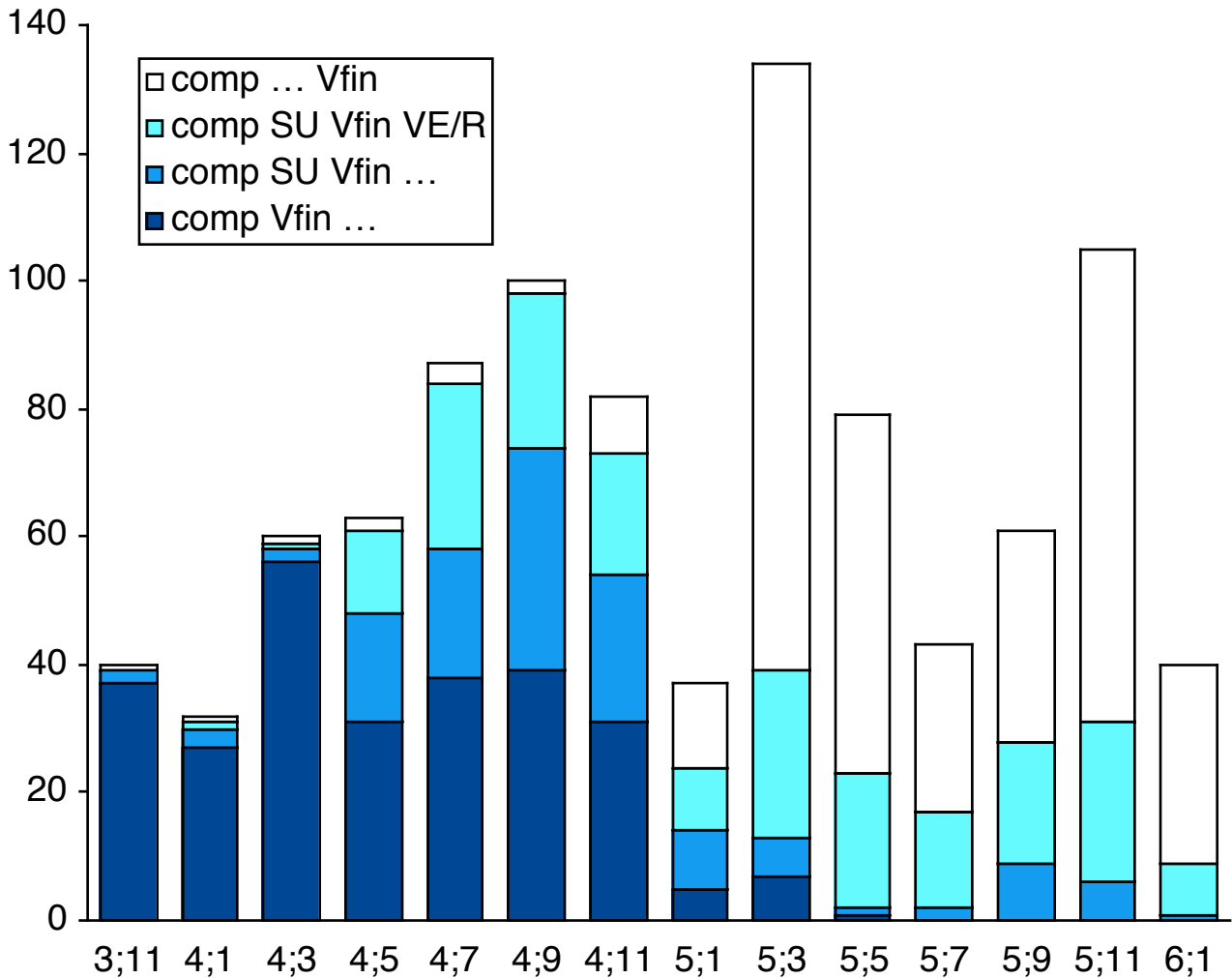


No V-movement	500
Ambiguous	256
V-movement	617
TOTAL	1373

* dass "that", ob "whether, if", wenn "when, if"

2A: Clauses introduced by a complementizer* (Moira)

with SU = unstressed pronoun

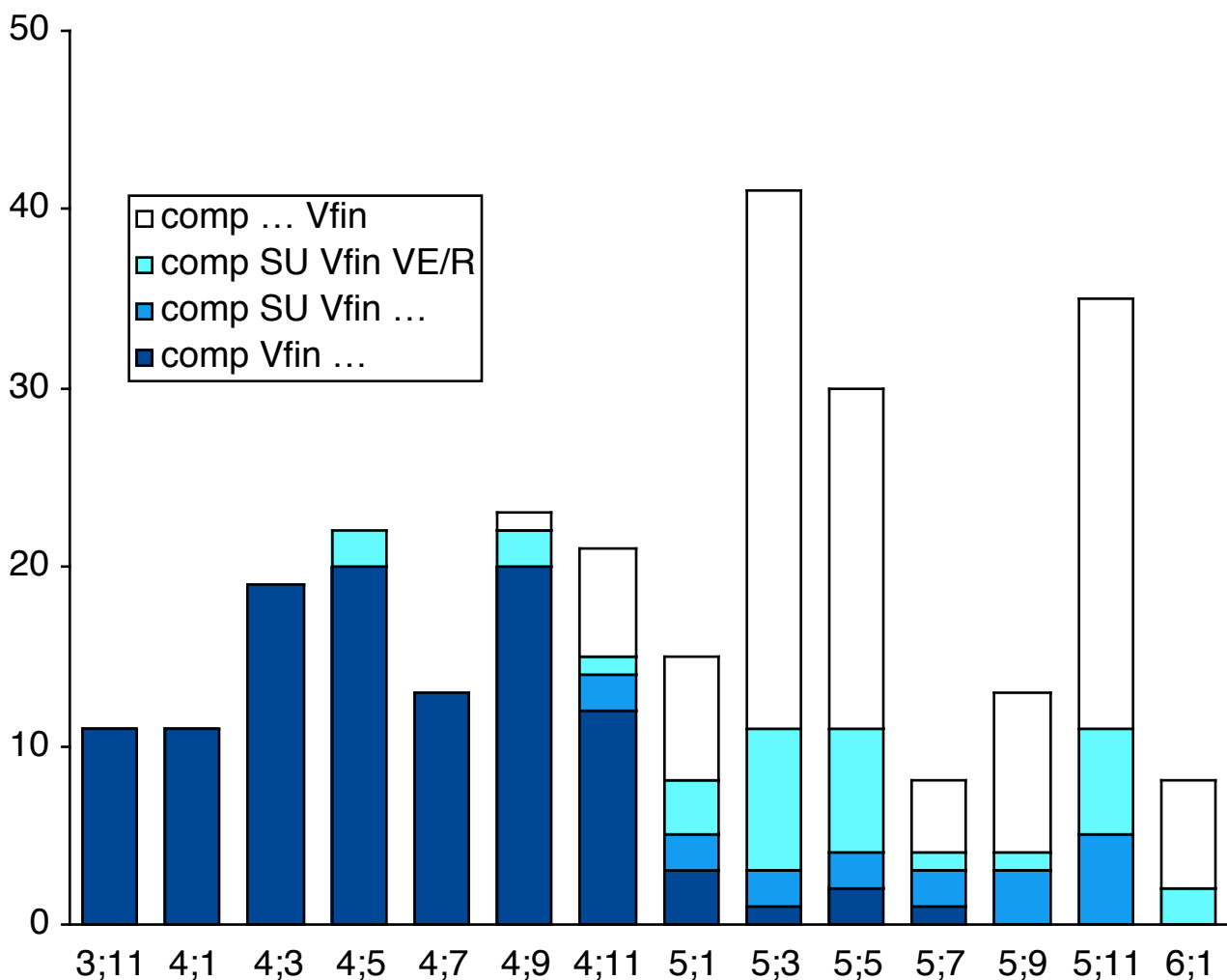


No V-movement:	comp ... Vfin	347
Ambiguous:	comp SU Vfin VE/R	208
V-movement:	comp SU Vfin ...	136
	comp Vfin ...	272
TOTAL		963

* dass "that", öb "whether, if", wenn "when, if"

2B: Clauses introduced by a complementizer* (Moira)

with $SU = DP$

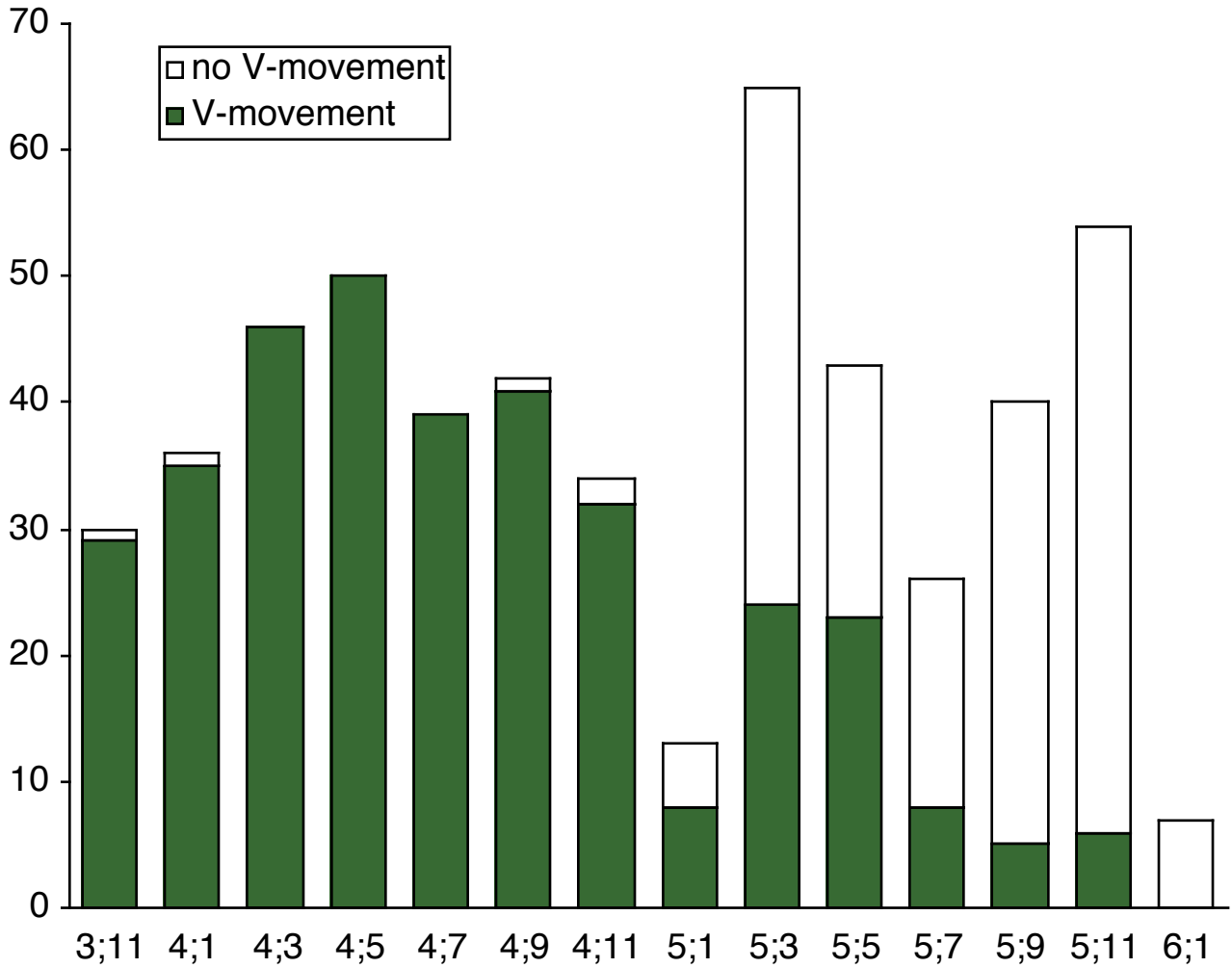


No V-movement:	comp ... Vfin	106
Ambiguous:	comp SU Vfin VE/R	33
V-movement:	comp SU Vfin ...	18
	comp Vfin ...	113
TOTAL		270

* dass "that", öb "whether, if", wenn "when, if"

3A: Relative clauses (Maira):

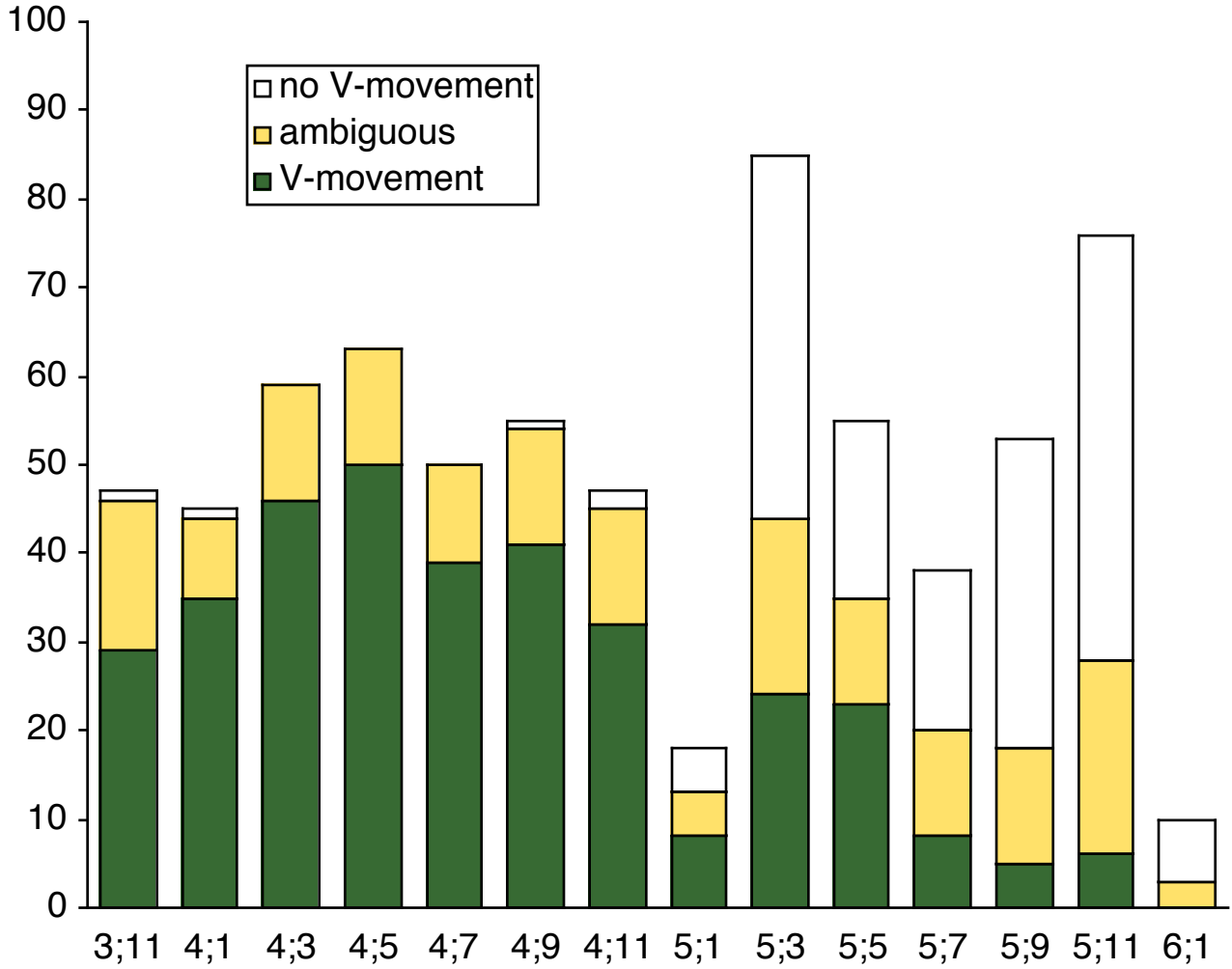
V-movement vs. no V-movement (all)



No V-movement	179
V-movement	346
TOTAL	525

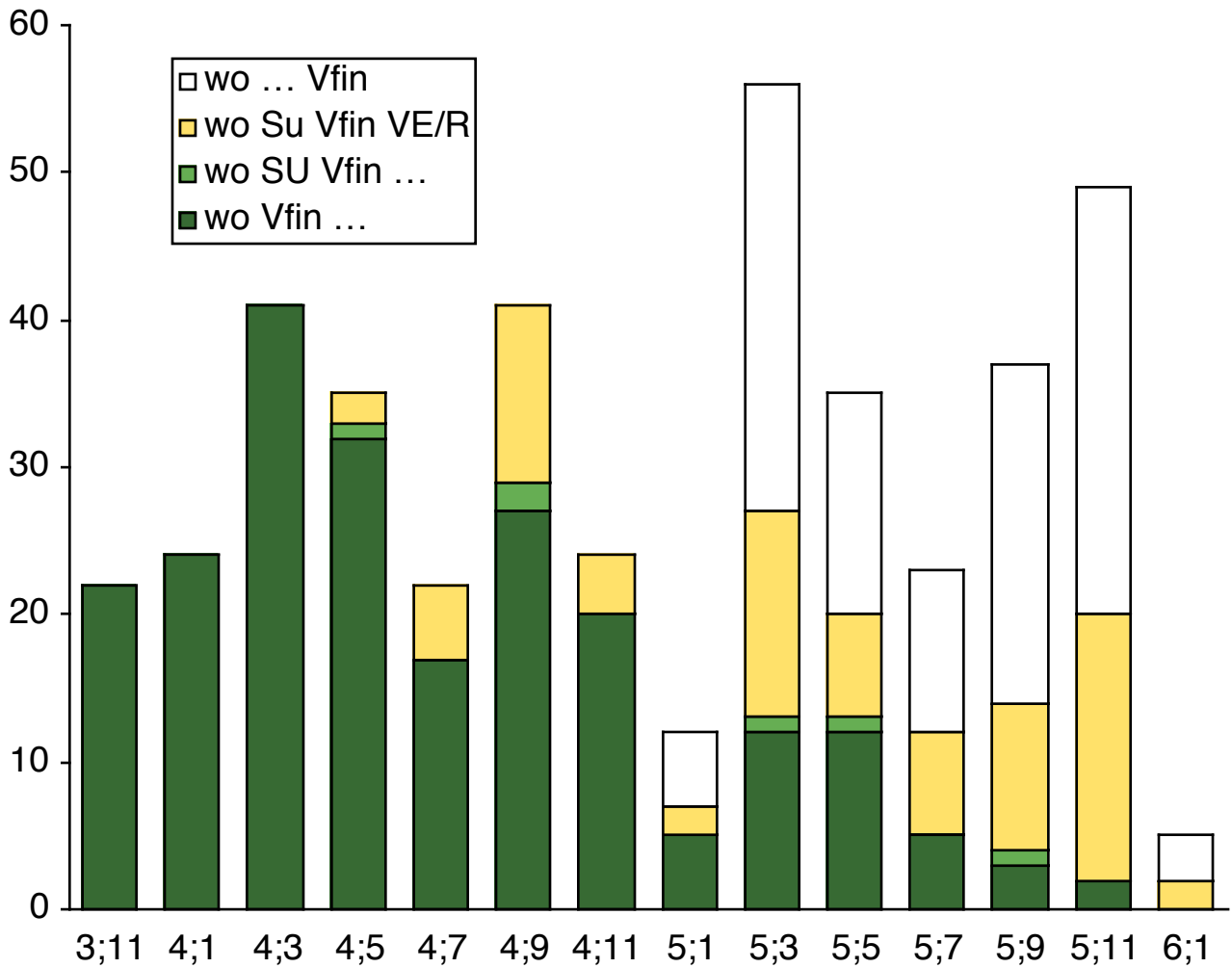
3B: Relative clauses (Maira):

V-movement, ambiguous, no V-movement (all)



No V-movement	179
Ambiguous	176
V-movement	346
TOTAL	701

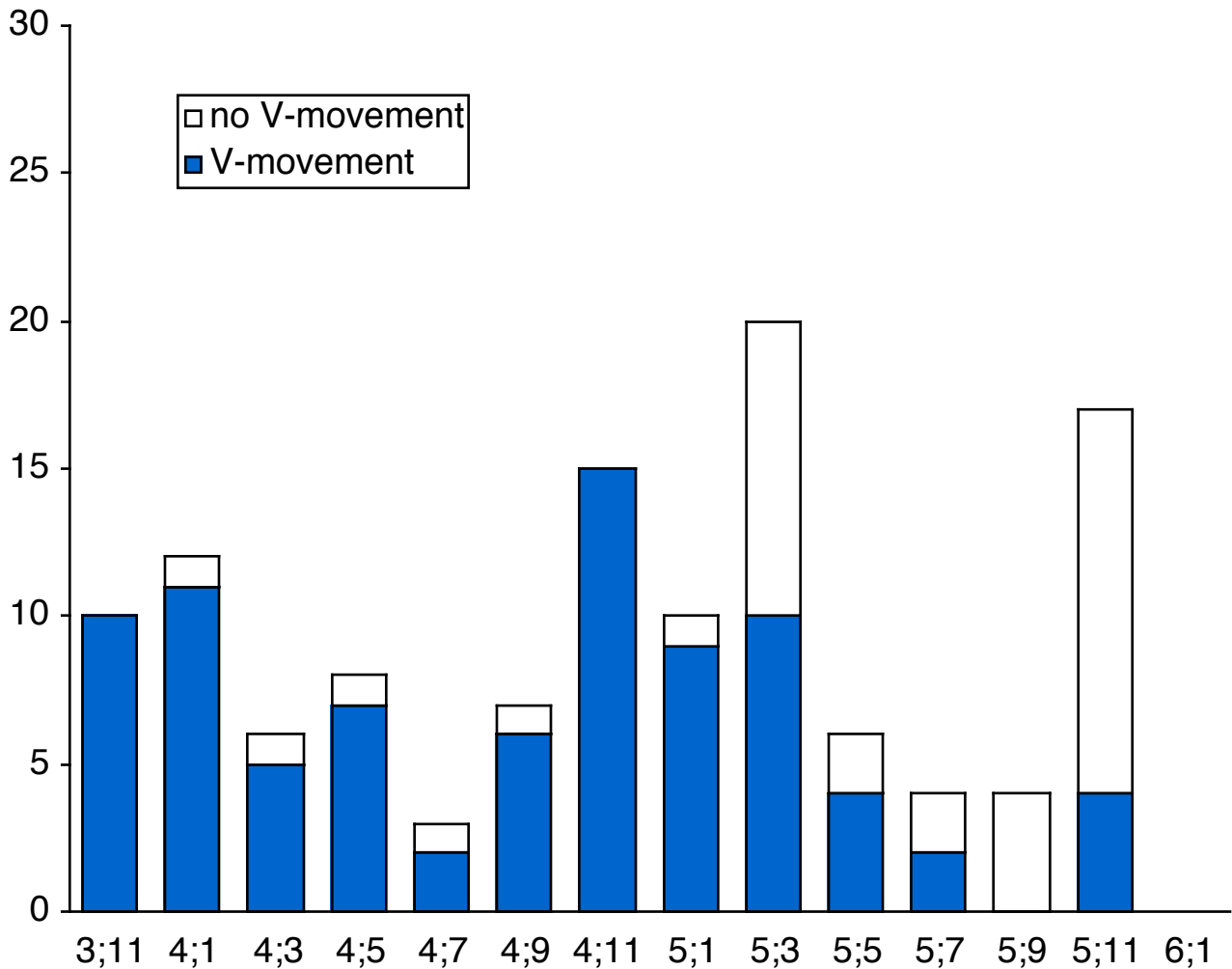
4A: Non-subject relative clauses (Moira)



No V-movement:	wo ... Vfin	115
ambiguous:	wo SU Vfin VE/R	83
V-movement:	wo SU Vfin ...	6
	wo Vfin ...	222
TOTAL		426

1A': Clauses introduced by a complementizer (Eliza)*

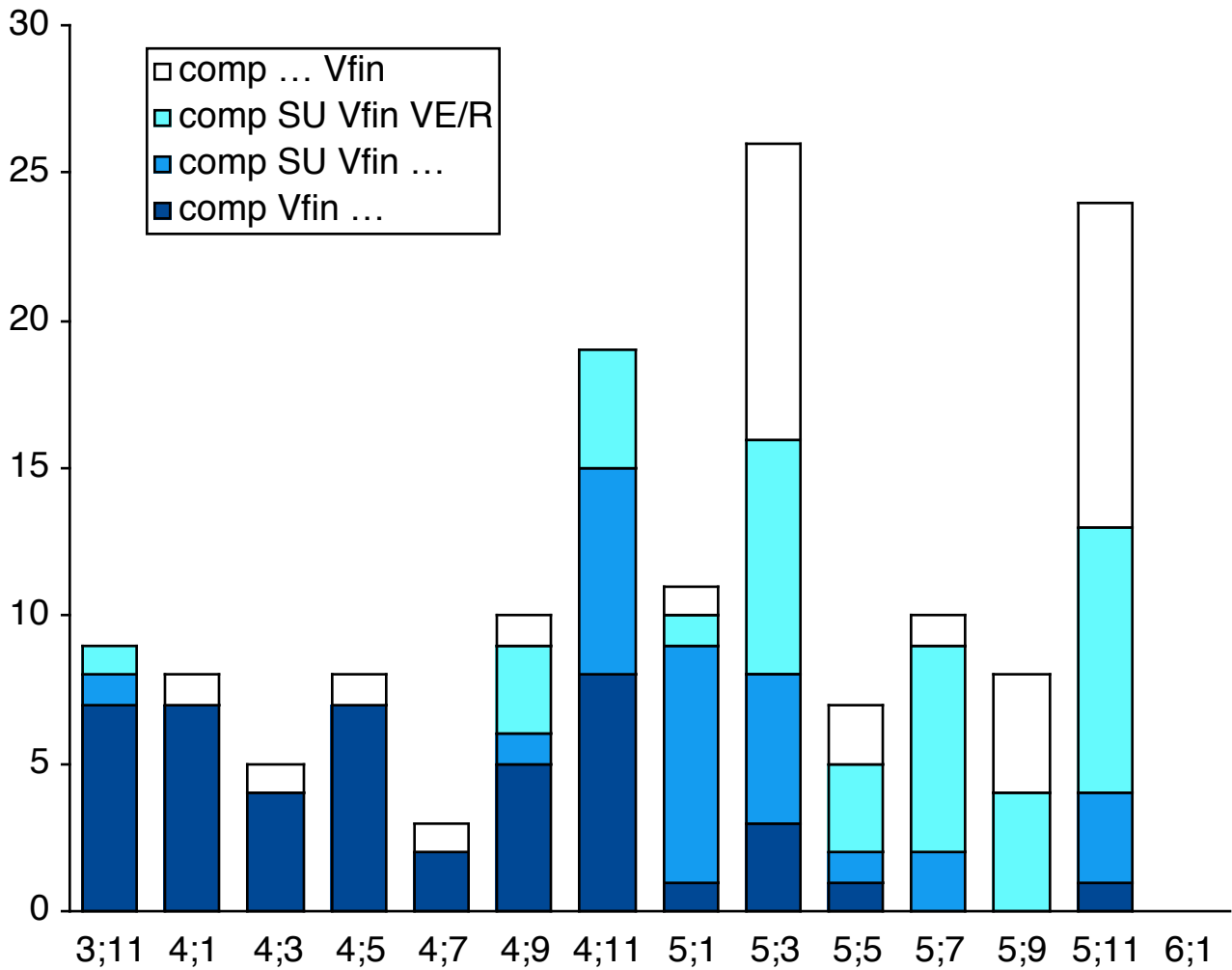
V-movement vs. no V-movement (all)



No V-movement	37
V-movement	85
TOTAL	122

* dass "that", öb "whether, if", wenn "when, if"

1B': Clauses introduced by a complementizer (Eliza)*



No V-movement:	comp ... Vfin	34
Ambiguous:	comp SU Vfin VE/R	40
V-movement:	comp SU Vfin ...	28
	comp Vfin ...	46
TOTAL		148

* dass "that", ob "whether, if", wenn "when, if"