

Steffani Scheer. McGill University.
Saturday, March 7th: 2:30-3:00

A Revised Analysis of German V2 as T-to-C Movement

German, amongst other languages, exhibits a phenomenon known as the verb-second (V2) effect: finite verbs must occupy the second position in matrix clauses. In embedded clauses, finite verbs are clause-final. German V2 has been traditionally analyzed as V-to-T-to-C movement, followed by the movement of some constituent into SpecCP (den Besten 1983). Thus the presence of a complementizer in embedded clauses blocks T-to-C movement.

I propose an analysis of German V2 that accounts for the asymmetry of V2 in matrix and embedded clauses, but that also explains why T-to-C movement occurs (unlike den Besten's analysis). My proposal is based on Pesetsky and Torrego's (2001) account of T-to-C movement.

I assume Chomsky's (2001) theory of derivation. Chomsky argues that certain constituents bear uninterpretable features (*uF*). *uF*s make no semantic contribution to the constituent. They must therefore be deleted by LF, or the derivation will crash. A constituent's *uF*s are deleted by being "matched" to similar features on another constituent, for whom the features are interpretable. For instance, T has the uninterpretable Φ -features [number] and [person]. D also has Φ -features, but they are interpretable on D because they make a semantic contribution to D. The *uF*s on T are deleted by matching the Φ -features of D to those of T.

Chomsky argues that the Φ -features of T have an EPP feature, which causes the DP to move into SpecTP as part of the matching process. I assume Travis' (personal communication) theory of EPP as an uninterpretable argumentative feature (*uA*), which must be deleted by moving an argumentative constituent (e.g. DP) into the phrase marker with the *uA*.

Pesetsky and Torrego (2001) use Chomsky's theory of derivation to provide a theory of T-to-C movement. One aspect of their theory bears on German V2: they argue that finite C bears an uninterpretable tense feature *uT* with an EPP feature. When a DP is moved into SpecTP, its *uT* is matched and the DP may therefore move into CP to delete *uT* on C. Furthermore, Pesetsky and Torrego argue that "that" bears *iT* features, because it is actually a pronoun moved from T to C rather than a complementizer.

Using Travis' analysis of EPP features as *uA*, I reformulate Pesetsky and Torrego's theory as stating that finite C bears both *uT* and *uA*. The German V2 phenomenon and its asymmetries may now be explained as follows. In embedded clauses, "that" deletes both *uT* and *uA* on C. Being moved from T, "that" bears *iT*, and being a pronoun, it bears *iA*. Therefore "that" matches all the uninterpretable features on embedded C.

In matrix clauses, the uninterpretable features on C are matched by a different process. The *uT* on C are first matched by moving the finite verb into C. Its *uA* are then matched by moving an argumentative constituent into SpecCP. One may ask why nominative DPs, which bear both *iT* and *iA*, do not always move into SpecCP to match the features of C, eliminating the need for verb movement. The solution involves Matushansky's (2006) proposal that head-movement takes place before phrasal movement. Therefore, in

matrix clauses of German, the verb moves into C to match uT before any other constituent can move into CP to match uT .

The main strength of the above V2 analysis is that it preserves the traditional view of V2 as T-to-C movement while providing an explanation for why such movement occurs. The above analysis may also serve as evidence for Pesetsky and Torrego's account of T-to-C movement, and for Matushansky's ordered movement hypothesis. One problem is the question of why the uFs of finite C do not get matched in all languages in the manner that they do in German. Moreover, parts of Pesetsky and Torrego's theory are incompatible with Matushansky's ordering hypothesis, which might result in inconsistencies in the above analysis of V2.

Works Cited

- Den Besten, Hans. 1983. "On the interaction of root transformations and lexical deletive rules." On the Formal Syntax of the Westgermania. Ed. Werner Abraham. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2001. "Derivation by Phase." Ken Hale: A Life in Language. Ed. Michael Kenstowicz. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Matushansky, Ora. 2006. "Head Movement in Linguistic Theory." Linguistic Inquiry 37(1): 69-109.
- Pesetsky, David and Esther Torrego. 2001. "T-to-C Movement." Ken Hale: A Life in Language. Ed. Michael Kenstowicz. Cambridge: MIT Press.