

Linguistics  
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Ralf Vogel (ed.)

Three papers on German verb movement



## Introduction

In recent generative syntactic debate, the view of verb movement as head movement “has gained a bad reputation ” (Fanselow, this volume) on conceptual grounds. But it is still an open question to what extent the alternatives that have been proposed fare better. Those alternatives are first of all remnant XP movement and postponing head movement to the level of Phonological form (PF).

This volume offers new arguments and perspectives in the ongoing debate about the optimal analysis of verb movement, mainly, but not exclusively, in German. Fanselow and Meinunger deal with verb second (V2) movement in German main clauses. Fanselow argues that head movement of the substitution type follows the standard minimalist conceptions of MERGE and MOVE and is therefore not subject to the same objections as head movement as head adjunction which violates Chomsky’s minimalist extension condition, operates countercyclically, and fails to let the moved head c-command its trace. Fanselow argues for V2 movement as head movement of the substitution type. Meinunger discusses a restriction on V2 movement imposed by phrases like “*mehr als*” (‘more than’), as in “*Der Wert hat sich weit mehr als verdreifacht*” (‘the value has far more than tripled’) where V2 movement is ruled out (cf. \*‘*Der Wert verdreifachte sich mehr als*’). Meinunger claims that this restriction is best analysed in phonological terms: the preposition/complementiser “*als*” acts as a prefixal clitic to its host, the finite verb, which therefore may not move without it. With

respect to the V2 debate, Meinunger argues for an interface perspective. He shows that V2 is restricted from both the conceptual and the phonological interface. Vogel, finally, discusses the syntax of clause-final verbal complexes and their dialectal variation in German. He compares three different syntactic analyses, a minimalist head movement analysis, a minimalist XP movement analysis, and an Optimality theoretic PF movement analysis. The three accounts are evaluated relative to the additional assumptions they have to make, the complications they face and how they fit the observations. Vogel argues in favour of the phonologically oriented OT analysis because of its ability to create a direct link between the coming about of a particular word order pattern and its basically phonological trigger. Each of the three papers recognises the relevance of surface forms in the analysis of German verb movement. They differ, however in the extent to which phonological aspects take part in the explanations they offer. The papers by Fanselow and Vogel are slightly modified versions of two papers by the same authors which are included under the same titles in: Anoop Mahajan (ed.), *Syntax at Sunset 3. Head Movement and Syntactic Theory*, UCLA/Potsdam Working Papers in Linguistics 10, Los Angeles: UCLA, 2003.

I hope you enjoy reading the papers in this volume,

Potsdam, February 11, 2004,

Ralf Vogel

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