

# Who Embeds Verb Complement Clauses in Germanic?

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## 1 V2 Complement Clauses

### Data

- Attitude verbs in Germanic languages usually embed declarative complements in the form of ‘that’-clauses. However, a subset of the declarative-embedding verbs can also license complements with matrix-like properties (in the languages where this applies, this is expressed as verb-second word order). Both options are illustrated for German below.

(1) **Regular ‘that’-complements:**

a. Ich glaube, dass Peter nach Hause gegangen ist.  
I believe that Peter to home gone is.

‘I believe that Peter has gone home.’

b. Ich möchte, dass Peter nach Hause geht.  
I want that Peter to home goes.

‘I want that Peter goes home.’

(2) **Verb-Second Complement Clauses (V2CC):**

a. Ich glaube, Peter ist nach Hause gegangen.  
I believe, Peter is to home gone.

‘I believe that Peter has gone home.’

b. \* Ich möchte, Peter geht nach Hause.  
I want Peter goes to home.

‘I want that Peter goes home.’

### Questions

- Given the similar superficial behavior (complements of attitude verbs with matrix-like structure), are V2CCs characterizable as a cross-linguistically stable construction?
- Which verbs, cross-linguistically, allow V2CCs?
- Are V2CCs syntactically and semantically embedded in each language?
- What is the semantic contribution of the construction?

### Plan

1. Verb classes that allow V2CCs have large overlap cross-linguistically.
2. I argue that V2CCs are properly embedded in German, but don’t seem to be in Frisian and Scandinavian. A common analysis is therefore not likely.
3. The Scandinavian type of V2CCs is more similar to *slifting*, which points to a potential account of V2CCs for these Germanic languages.
4. I show an analysis for German V2CCs based on their embedding properties: slifting in “reverse”. The same semantic contributions are distributed differently over semantic dimensions.

## 2 Verb Classes

**verbs of saying:** say, claim

**verbs of belief:** believe, think

**verbs of imagination:** imagine, dream

**factive verbs:** regret, forget

**semifactive verbs:** know, discover

**hope:** hope, fear

**pure preference verbs:** want, wish

**negative verbs:** doubt, deny

**double negations:** don't deny, don't doubt

**modalized:** must think, can think

**questioned:** do you think

### 2.1 German<sup>1</sup>

+ V2CC	– V2CC
verbs of saying	factive verbs
verbs of belief	semifactive verbs
verbs of imagination	negative verbs
'hope'/'fear'	pure preference verbs

Table 1: Attitude verbs that allow V2 complements in German.

#### Generalization of V2-embedding verbs in German:

Verbs that provide an upward-directed epistemic component, without factivity, can license V2CCs.

### 2.2 Other Germanic languages

- The core class of V2 embedding verbs (verbs of saying and belief) is the same in Frisian (de Haan, 2001) and the Scandinavian languages Faroese, Swedish, Norwegian, and Icelandic (Wechsler, 1990; Bentzen et al., 2007; Julien, 2007).

#### (3) Frisian

Hy leaude dat it skip ⟨wie⟩ juster fergien ⟨wie⟩  
 He believed that the ship ⟨was⟩ yesterday wrecked ⟨was⟩  
 'He believed that the ship was wrecked yesterday.'

(de Haan, 2001, (5))

#### (4) Swedish

Han sa att Lisa hade inte läst boken.  
 He said that Lisa had not read book-the.  
 'He said that Lisa had not read the book.'

(Bentzen et al., 2007, (5a))

#### (5) Norwegian

Han sa at han kunne ikke synge i bryllupet.  
 He said that he could not sing in wedding-the.  
 'He said that he could not sing in the wedding.'

(Bentzen et al., 2007, (15a))

- However, for the other classes the Germanic languages do not match up exactly.

<sup>1</sup>Data mostly from (Reis, 1996, 1997; Wagner, 2004; Truckenbrodt, 2006)

### Factive

- In Norwegian (as well as in Swedish), factive verbs can sometimes have complement clauses with V2 word order (marked by the verb preceding the negation *ikke* ('not')).

- (6) Alltid glemte de at den gutt-en var ikke som andre. (N)  
 Always forgot they that that boy-def was not like others.  
 'They always forgot that that boy was not like the others.' (Julien, 2007, (23b))
- (7) \*Sie haben immer vergessen, dieser Junge war nicht wie die anderen. (German)  
 They have always forgot, that boy was not like the others.  
 'They always forgot that that boy was not like the others.'

### Semifactive

- Semifactive/cognitive factive verbs (*discover*, *know*) are possible with V2 complements in several languages:

- (8) Jeg oppdaget at jeg hadde ikke lest den. (N)  
 I discovered that I had not read it.  
 'I discovered that I hadn't read it.' (Bentzen et al., 2007, (31a))
- (9) \*Ich habe entdeckt, ich hatte es nicht gelesen. (G)  
 I have discovered, I had it not read.  
 'I discovered that I hadn't read it.'

### Double Negations

- Further, in Norwegian, double negations have been claimed to be able to embed V2 clauses, which they cannot in German:

- (10) Jeg tviler ikke på at slike konserter hjelper faktisk mot vold-en. (N)  
 I doubt not on that such concerts help actually against violence-DEF.  
 'But I do not doubt it that concerts like that actually have an effect on the violence.'  
 (Julien, 2007, (19))
- (11) \*Ich bezweifle nicht, solche Konzerte haben einen Einfluß auf die Gewalt. (G)  
 I doubt not, such concerts have an effect on the violence.  
 'I don't doubt that such concerts have an effect on the violence.'

### Questions

- All the quoted literature points out that when the matrix clause is changed into a question, V2-embedding becomes impossible in Frisian, Swedish and Norwegian.
- Questioning the matrix verb is perfectly fine for German V2CCs.
- I will come back to discuss the meaning of this data point below.

- (12) Trur du at vi (\*kan) ikke (<sup>ok</sup>kan) forby alt som er usunt? (N)  
 Think you that we can not can forbid all that is unhealthy?  
 'Do you think that we cannot ban everything that is unhealthy?' (Julien, 2007, (11a))
- (13) Denkst du, man kann nicht alles, was ungesund ist, verbieten? (G)  
 Think you, one can not all, that unhealthy is, forbid?  
 'Do you think that one cannot ban everything that is unhealthy?'

## 3 Semantic Embedding

- The split between German and Frisian/Swedish/Norwegian wrt. whether questions with V2CCs are possible points to a larger difference.

verb class	German	Frisian	Swedish	Norwegian
saying verbs ( <i>say</i> )	✓	✓	✓	✓
believing verbs ( <i>believe</i> )	✓	✓	✓	✓
factive verbs ( <i>regret</i> )	*	*	?	?
semifactive verbs ( <i>know</i> )	*	*	✓	✓
<i>hope, fear</i>	✓	*	*	(*)
pure preference verbs ( <i>wish, want</i> )	*	(*)	(*)	(*)
negative verbs ( <i>doubt, deny</i> )	*	*	*	*
double negations ( <i>don't deny</i> )	*		✓	✓
modalized verbs	(✓)	*		
questioned verbs	✓	*	*	*

Table 2: Verbs allowing embedded V2 clauses in some Germanic languages.

### 3.1 German

- In German, V2CCs are properly semantically and syntactically embedded in the matrix clause (Scheffler, 2009).

#### Embedding in a Question

- German question particle *denn* must be licensed locally by a question operator

- (14) Glaubst du denn, daß er (\* denn) gefahren ist?  
 Believe you PART, that he (\* PART) driven is?  
 ‘Do you think that he has left?’
- (15) Glaubst du denn, er ist (\* denn) gefahren?  
 Believe you PART, he is (\* PART) driven?  
 ‘Do you think that he has left?’
- (16) Ist er denn, glaubst du (\* denn), gefahren?  
 Is he PART, believe you (\* PART), driven?  
 ‘Do you think that he has left?’

#### Embedding under ‘because’

- (17) Maria kommt nicht, weil ich denke, daß es regnen wird.  
 Maria comes not, because I think, that it rain will.  
 ‘Maria won’t come. The reason is that I think that it will rain.’
- (18) Maria kommt nicht, weil ich denke, es wird regnen.  
 Maria comes not, because I think, it will rain.  
 ‘Maria won’t come. The reason is that I think that it will rain.’
- (19) Maria kommt nicht, weil es, denke ich, regnen wird.  
 Maria comes not, because it, think I, will rain.  
 ‘Maria won’t come. I think the reason is that it will rain.’

### 3.2 Frisian, Swedish, Norwegian

- In Frisian, Swedish and Norwegian, these facts don’t hold.
- Thus, e.g. de Haan (2001) concludes that Frisian V2CCs are not embedded under the matrix verb.

#### Embedding in Questions

- Questioning a V2 embedding is impossible in Frisian, Swedish, and Norwegian.

- (20) \*Leaude er dat it skip wie juster fergien? (F)  
 Believed he that the ship was yesterday wrecked?  
 ‘Did he believe that the ship was wrecked yesterday?’ (de Haan, 2001, (7c))
- (21) \*Trur du att man vet inte vad en sån där kille kan göra? (S)  
 Think you that one know not what a such there guy can do?  
 ‘Do you think that one doesn’t know what a guy like that can do?’ (Julien, 2007, (11b))
- (22) \*Trur du at vi kan ikke forby alt som er usunt? (N)  
 Think you that we can not forbid all that is unhealthy?  
 ‘Do you think that we cannot ban everything that is unhealthy?’ (Julien, 2007, (11a))

#### Embedding under Other Operators

## 4 Analysis of “Unembedded” Complement Clauses

## 5 German V2CCs

## 6 Conclusion

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