

Displaced morphology in German and its implications for the theory of verb clusters

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In my talk I will address the syntax of displaced morphology in German as in the following example:

- (1) ?ohne es mich [haben₁ prüfen₃ zu lassen₂]
without it me have.INF verify.INF to let.INF
'without having let me verify it'

Standard German

The preposition *ohne* 'without' selects a *zu*-infinitive. Contrary to Dutch, *zu* does not surface on the hierarchically highest verb of the verb cluster, viz. V1 *haben* 'have', but on V3 *prüfen* 'verify'. The infinitive particle *zu* in fact always appears before the last verb of the cluster, irrespective of its position in the clausal hierarchy, viz. 32zu1, 12zu3, 31zu2 etc.

I will analyze *zu* as a separate syntactic element, a clause-final head F above VP, that is associated with a V post-syntactically by Local Dislocation (linear reordering + affixation under adjacency, Embick and Noyer (2001), after all reordering in the V-cluster. Displacement obtains with ascending orders in the verb-cluster. These, I argue, are the result of VP-inversion (Haegeman and van Riemsdijk 1986). Evidence for a separate functional head will come from varieties (Thuringian, Frisian) where *zu/te* determines the form of the infinitive it attaches to (it appears as a gerund). Evidence for the affix nature of *zu* will come from Bernese data showing that displacement of *zu* is blocked in Aux-Part clusters with 12 order (*zu* and the *ge*-prefix compete for the same slot).

In the second part of my talk, I will show that displacement can be used as a diagnostic for structure: while displacement is possible in Verb Raising and Verb Projection Raising, it is disallowed in the 3rd construction (and with CP-complements). I will propose that displacement presupposes complementation because this is the only way a different verb can come to stand next to *zu* (after VP-inversion). The placement facts in the 3rd Construction can be accounted for if it involves (remnant) extraposition (e.g. Broekhuis et al. 1995), but in principle, the facts are also compatible with a leftward (remnant) movement analysis of extraposition (as e.g. in Hinterhölzl 2006). The asymmetry complementation (VPR) vs. adjunction (3rd Construction) will be corroborated by two additional diagnostics, viz. short relative clause extraposition and VP3-stranding.

In the final part of my talk, I will discuss verb cluster-like constructions with 213 order like the following:

- (2) dass i en ghöört₂ ha₁ en Arie singe₃
that I him heard have.1SG an aria sing.INF
'that I heard him sing an aria'

Swiss German, see also Lötscher (1978: 2)

This construction raises important question for the theory of verb clusters as it is often claimed that of the 6 logically possible orders in 3-verb clusters, 213 does not exist, Wurmbrand (2004), Barbiers (2005), Abels (2011). One may be tempted to analyze this construction as an instance of the 3rd construction which can also occur in 213 order:

- (3) dass er dem Hans versucht₂ hat₁ t_{dem Hans} die Uhr zu stehlen₃
that he the.DAT John tried has the watch to steal.INF
'that he tried to steal John's watch'

3rdC Standard German

Additionally, both constructions have a lexical participial V2 and allow non-verbal material between V1 and V3. However, based on the diagnostics developed to distinguish V(P)R and the 3rd

Construction, I will show that the Swiss German 213 construction does not behave like the 3rd Construction but rather like a verb cluster construction involving complementation, i.e. like VR and VPR. This implies that cluster-forming mechanisms must be more powerful than frequently claimed, i.e. must be able to generate all six orders.

References

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