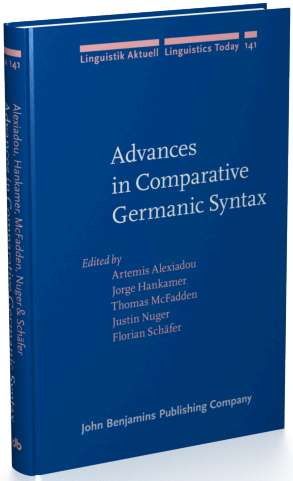
Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today

141

Advances in Comparative Germanic Syntax

Artemis Alexiadou
Jorge Hankamer
Thomas McFadden
Justin Nuger
Florian Schäfer

https://doi.org/10.1075/la.141.01adv



Pages vii–xvi of
Advances in Comparative Germanic Syntax
Edited by Artemis Alexiadou, Jorge Hankamer, Thomas McFadden, Justin Nuger and Florian Schäfer
[**Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today**, 141]
2009. xv, 395 pp.

John Benjamins Publishing Company

Advances in Comparative Germanic Syntax

Artemis Alexiadou, Jorge Hankamer, Thomas McFadden,
Justin Nuger & Florian Schäfer

This volume contains a selection of the papers that were presented at the 21st Comparative Germanic Syntax Workshop, held from March 31st to April 2nd 2006 at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and at the 22nd Comparative Germanic Syntax Workshop, held on June 8th and 9th 2007 at the Universität Stuttgart. With the range of topics covered in the fourteen chapters we have put together a mixture that we think accurately reflects the feeling of the CGSW meetings. Alongside traditional themes of Germanic comparative syntax like verb second and Holmberg's Generalization we find discussion of those driving current cutting edge work in comparative syntax and syntactic theory in general, for example the cartographic approach to clause structure and the nature of the syntax-morphology interface.

We have organized the volume into four thematically defined parts. Not surprisingly, some of the chapters could be at home in more than one of the parts as they touch on several of the recurring themes of the volume. Within each part, the chapters are thus organized in such a way as to highlight the relationships between the various topics and to create a smooth transition from one part to the next. While each chapter is intended to stand on its own, this structure will hopefully facilitate a reading of the volume in its entirety.

Part I. Cartography and the left periphery

In the first part of the volume we have collected five papers which deal with the inventory of functional projections at the left periphery of the clause, and in particular with the advantages and disadvantages of what has come to be known as the Cartographic approach (Rizzi 1997; Cinque 1999 and many others). In the first place, work in this tradition argues that the structure of the left periphery is far more articulated than had previously been assumed. Where the standard Minimalism of the mid-1990s (e.g., Chomsky 1995) had only C and T, eight or more functional heads are now commonly posited. In the second place, the functional heads in this structure are argued to play a crucial role in the the syntax and semantics related to discourse functions,

e.g., both driving the fronting of topic elements and encoding or supporting their topical semantics. A great deal of research over the past decade has focused on this cartographic approach, either supporting and developing it further (see e.g., the contributions in Cinque 2002 and Rizzi 2004) or arguing against it. In Part I of this volume we have collected papers of both types.

The contribution by Anna Cardinaletti, "On a (*wh*-)moved Topic in Italian, compared to Germanic", falls squarely into the pro-cartography camp. On the basis of data from left peripheral elements in Italian and English, Cardinaletti attempts to work out some of the details of the relationship between two of the functional heads that have been proposed in the cartographic approach to appear at the interface between the traditional I and C layers. The central proposal is that Resumptive Preposing (RP) in Italian (1a) should be treated as *wh*-movement to the highest topic position, like English Locative Inversion and Comparative Inversion but unlike Italian Clitic Left Dislocation (1b) and Focalization (1c), which target the low topic position.

(1) a. *La stessa proposta fece poi il partito di maggioranza*
b. *La stessa proposta la fece poi il partito di maggioranza*
c. *La* SMALL CAPS *stessa proposta fece poi il partito di maggioranza*
the same proposal (it) made then the party of majority
(*non una analoga*)
not one similar
'The majority party then made the same proposal (not a similar one).'

From this follow three consequences for RP. First, it is restricted to root contexts because only there is the highest TopicP projected. Second, preverbal subjects are impossible because the fronted XP moves through specFinP, satisfying the EPP and blocking subsequent subject raising. If *wh*-movement and focalization proceed via this same escape hatch, their incompatibility with RP is accounted for as well. Third, subjects must be heavy, because it is Heavy NP Shift that obviates what would otherwise be a Minimality violation – a light subject would intervene between the fronted element and the position where it originates.

A second contribution which makes crucial use of cartographic assumptions to account for specific phenomena on the left periphery is that by Michael Putnam and Marjo van Koppen. In "C-agreement or something close to it: some thoughts on the 'alls-construction'", the authors examine a little-studied construction in Midwestern American English, exemplified in (2)

(2) Alls Jim and Carol want to do is stay at home.

Their proposal is to assimilate this 'alls construction' to the phenomenon of Complementizer agreement found in certain West Germanic languages, and they offer a

minimalist-inspired analysis based on this association. Specifically, the *s* ending on *all* signals agreement between the Force head and a non-2nd person definite subject. This agreement is subject to a strict form of locality, which becomes apparent when the overt complementizer *that* is present as in (3).

(3) a. ***All-s that** I know is that Doris talks a lot.
b. All that I know is that Doris talks a lot.

When there is no *that*, the heads of the articulated C domain (Force, Top and Fin) are conflated, so that φ-features associated with Force can Agree with the subject, yielding the *s* ending. But if *that* is present, conflation is blocked, and Force is not sufficiently local to the subject for the requisite Agree relation.

The next two chapters in Part I of the volume argue explicitly against the cartographic approach and propose alternative views of the left periphery and clause structure in general. In "Uncharted territory? Towards a non-cartographic account of Germanic syntax", Jan-Wouter Zwart explores a strictly derivational approach to clausal structure, where syntactic relations are established dynamically rather than on the basis of a pre-determined hierarchy of functional elements. He argues that under a cartographic approach, where word orders are derived by a fixed hierarchy of positions, if A precedes B and B precedes C, then A should precede C even when B is not present. Cases where this prediction is not borne out, which he calls "transitivity failures", are however attested in the left periphery, adverb ordering, argument-adjunct interactions and adjective ordering. Zwart thus proposes an implementation of a non-cartographic alternative, and lays out how it can be made to work in four areas of Germanic syntax: the structure of the left periphery, topicalization/focalization, subject placement and object placement.

Gisbert Fanselow, in "Bootstrapping verb movement and the clausal architecture of German (and other languages)" similarly argues that the basic assumptions of the cartographic approach suffer from empirical and theoretical problems and proposes a decidedly non-cartographic approach to the derivation of German verb-second word orders. He makes two key claims. First, movement of the finite verb does not target COMP or any other pre-existing position in a fixed hierarchy of functional projections. Rather, it adjoins to TP via a reformulated bootstrapping version of head movement. Second, subsequent movement of an XP to the first position is triggered not by (pragmatic) features on the XP itself or by cartography-style Topic or Focus heads, but rather by an unrestricted edge feature on the finite verb.

In the final chapter of Part I, "A conjunction conspiracy at the West Germanic left periphery", John te Velde examines the role played by functional projections at the left edge of the clause in a special kind of coordinate construction. This Left-Edge Ellipsis, which is found in many of the Germanic verb second languages, involves a

gap at the left periphery of the second (and subsequent) conjuncts, as in the German example in (4):

(4) *Die Briefmarken$_i$ zeigt Hans seinem Onkel t_i und e_i verkauft*
the stamps shows Hans his uncle and sells
er seiner Tante t_i.
he his aunt
'Hans shows the stamps to his uncle and sells them to his aunt.'

te Velde notes that previous accounts of LEE have been focused on examples where the gap is the subject and are not easily extended to those like (4) where it is an object, and that they are not consistent with Phase Theory and other recent developments in Minimalism. He thus proposes an alternative which avoids both shortcomings and is also consistent with a particular understanding of the Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC, originally due to Ross, 1967). Specifically, the gap is taken to be the result of ellipsis rather than being a trace of across-the-board movement or a bound pronoun. The ellipsis itself is restricted syntactically, in that the conjunction must c-command the gap, and recovery is restricted semantically, by a requirement that the gap undergo Match at LF with its antecedent. The left edge requirement resulting from the c-command condition conspires with the V2 syntax of these languages such that any V2-fronted argument will be eligible for ellipsis if the conditions on Match at LF are also met. te Velde also presents evidence from asymmetries with subject, object and *wh*-fronting in favor of assuming three distinct landing sites in the left periphery, Spec-TP, Spec-TopP and Spec-CP respectively.

Part II. Word order and movement

Discussion of the left periphery and cartography is usually concerned at least implicitly with questions of word order, as the overt ordering of elements is one of the main pieces of evidence for underlying structure. The chapters in Part I of this volume are no exception in this respect, and thus lead in to the four contributions in Part II, which are concerned more directly with word order issues. Not surprisingly for a volume on Germanic syntax, the verb-second phenomenon plays an important role in tying the parts together, featuring prominently in the contributions by Zwart, Fanselow, and te Velde in Part I and in those by Trips & Fuß, and Noel in Part II.

The first chapter in part II picks up directly where te Velde's chapter left off, with the discussion of empirical challenges to the CSC. In "Reconsidering odd coordination in German", Hironobu Kasai proposes to handle German data which seem to violate the CSC – e.g., those in (5) and (6) – in terms of constraints on movement.

(5) *Die Suppe wird der Hans essen und sich hinlegen.*
the soup will the Hans eat and self down-lie
'Hans will eat the soup and lie down.'

(6) *Äpfel ißt der Hans drei und zwei Bananen.*
apples eats the Hans three and two bananas
'Hans eats three apples and two bananas.'

Kasai shows that a previous analysis of such examples proposed by Schwarz (1998) doesn't actually work for all types of verbal 'odd coordination'. He then argues that the CSC can be maintained in the face of these data if it is understood in terms of the Principle of Minimal Compliance (PMC, Richards 1998). Informally, this states that a well-formed dependency that satisfies a particular constraint can obviate a violation of that same constraint by some other dependency. For the CSC specifically, Kasai proposes that a functional head triggering movement out of a coordinate structure must establish an ATB dependency with that structure. Once it establishes one ATB dependency, however, the PMC implies that further movement dependencies can potentially be established with a single conjunct. This allows precisely those types of odd coordination observed in German. For example, in 'verbal odd coordination' like (5), ATB V-to-C movement satisfies the CSC, obviating a violation by subsequent movement out of one of the conjuncts to Spec-CP.

In "The syntax and semantics of the temporal anaphor 'then' in Old and Middle English", Carola Trips and Eric Fuß discuss the properties of the adverbs corresponding to *then* in the early history of English, *þa* and *þonne*. They identify two issues concerning these adverbs that have remained unexplained in the literature. First, they pattern together with *wh*-elements and negatives with respect to subject-verb inversion in OE and EME, in that they trigger inversion even with subject pronouns, whereas in other contexts such inversion generally does not occur. Yet, from a semantic point of view, they do not seem to form a natural class with such elements. Second, in the ME period, *þa* and *þonne* lose their ability to systematically trigger inversion. Trips and Fuß address these issues by proposing that, contrary to what is generally assumed in the literature, subject-verb inversion with the adverbs meaning 'then' is not derived in the same way as inversion with interrogatives and negatives. Rather, they occur in SpecTP in OE and EME, what is normally the surface position for pronominal subjects, forcing such subjects to stay in a lower, post-verbal position. Fronted *wh*-elements and negatives, on the other hand, are located in SpecCP. This explains why the former but not the latter could be preceded by fronted topics yielding V3 surface orders. The loss of inversion with *þa* and *þonne* in ME was caused by the development of an EPP feature requiring that SpecTP be filled by an actual subject, keeping the 'then' words out and also triggering the simultaneous rise of overt expletives in the period. The connection between the two changes is something that previous accounts, which treated *þa* and *þonne* the same as fronted operators, have not explained.

A second study focussing on historical forms of Germanic is Patrizia Noel's contribution "Jespersen's Cycle and the issue of prosodic 'weakness'". This chapter traces prosodic weakening of the negation particle from Proto-Indo-European through to Modern Standard German. Noel claims that prosodic weakening of the particle has actually occurred twice: first in the transition from Proto-Indo-European to Old High German, and then again in the transition from Old High German to Middle High German. Only in the latter case was Jespersen's Cycle initiated. She argues that in Old High German mononegation was stable enough to tolerate the gradual reduction of the negative particle, whereas in Middle High German several factors – segmental, syntactic and prosodic – conspired to weaken its status to such a degree that strengthening by means of an additional element was necessitated. First, OHG avoided secondary stress on open syllables ending in a high vowel, which includes the negative particle *ni*. Second, the stabilization of V2 in declarative sentences prevented the negative particle from appearing in initial position where secondary stress would be expected. Third, the particle could not form a rhythmic foot on its own, nor could it easily resolve with the right-adjacent syllable to become the head of that foot, because it typically preceded a stressed verb-initial syllable.

Word order in the lower domain of the clause is the focus of "Holmberg's Generalization: Blocking and push up". This contribution, by Hans Broekhuis, takes Holmberg's (1999) characterisation of the generalization as its point of departure, in terms of which HG is viewed as a condition on derivations, and Object Shift (OS) therefore necessarily emerges as a post-syntactic operation. Appealing to the fact that OS in Icelandic is semantically restricted, the author argues that this characterisation cannot be upheld, proposing instead that HG should be viewed as a filter on output representations. He also argues for a novel understanding of how HG actually manifests itself in specific sentences. In addition to the usual assumption that it simply blocks object movement whenever verb movement fails, he argues that it could result in object movement "pushing up" the verb to a higher position. Broekhuis concludes on the basis of data from Danish and Icelandic that in fact both strategies for satisfying HG are attested. He provides an Optimality Theoretic analysis which predicts which strategy will apply when and which can account for the observed cross-linguistic variation in the availability of OS and verb movement. To account for the full range of word-order patterns, Broekhuis proposes that there are in fact two different types of OS, one which is driven by φ-features on V, and another which is driven by Case features on v.

Part III. Thematic relations and NP realization

This dovetails with part III of the volume, where we have collected three chapters concerned with the relationships between noun phrases and the rest of the clause,

including in particular thematic roles, binding and case. In the first contribution, "The No Case Generalization", Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson argues specifically against the use of case to explain syntactic patterns such as that proposed by Broekhuis. Sigurðsson presents and defends the idea that, in fact, "Syntax has no case features". Morphological case is instead a purely morphological phenomenon, determined and realized in the PF component. While this determination is based on and thus sensitive to the output of the Narrow Syntax, it cannot affect the pre-PF derivation, thus case can play no role in NP-licensing, movement or semantic interpretation. Sigurðsson starts by reviewing several types of evidence that have been presented in the literature supporting the No Case Generalization. First, NP-movement and the distribution of PRO are independent of morphological case. Second, the distribution of specific morphological cases has a complex and indirect relationship with the syntactic and semantic status of the NPs they mark. Third, patterns of case-assignment are subject to significant cross-linguistic variation, such that it would not make sense to posit (universal) features like [+NOM], [+DAT] or even [+OBLIQUE] in the syntax. He then moves on to outline an account of case assignment for Icelandic. Along the way he highlights relevant contrasts with other languages, especially German, and develops further the notion that case assignment is part of the non-isomorphic translation of abstract syntactic structure into morphological material. Sigurðsson notes several instances where this allows a more satisfying analysis than the assumption that case features are already present in the syntax.

Also concerned with case is the contribution by Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson, "The new impersonal as a true passive". This paper explores the nature of the Icelandic new impersonal construction, where a verb with passive morphology takes an impersonal subject and a (potentially definite) DP complement that bears the same case as it would in the active form, be it accusative, dative or genitive. Jónsson argues against the view that these are actually active sentences with null subjects, claiming that they are instead true passives, with an understood agent. At stake is the question of whether structural accusative case can be assigned in the absence of the nominative, and Jónsson argues that this is indeed possible. Also at stake is the status of the unexpressed thematic agent – whether an agent theta role is actually assigned to a phonologically null but syntactically present subject, or is simply implicitly understood, as is often thought to be the case with standard passives.

The third contribution in Part III, "Anaphoric distribution in the prepositional phrase: Similarities between Norwegian and English" by Jenny Lederer, is also concerned with thematic issues, in particular with how they relate to the licensing of anaphora. This chapter studies the interaction between the distribution of "anaphoric" pronouns (i.e., reflexives and reciprocals) in PPs and the directional vs. locational sense of prepositions. As is well known, variation between anaphoric and non-anaphoric forms is found in this context, which is unexpected under the standard

Binding Theory. Lederer argues that an account of the pronominal distribution requires recognizing that the use of a reflexive pronoun encodes spatial semantics both in terms of directionality and in terms of location near the body. English and Norwegian, while using reflexives differently in terms of designating the moving thing and its destination, are united in favoring a reflexive when the moving thing and its destination end up in the same place or very close together. Lederer argues that a particular formal analysis by Tungseth (2003), which attempts to instantiate the notion "PATH" in the syntactic structure, is too simplistic. She proposes instead that the principles governing the choice between anaphoric and non-anaphoric pronouns must make reference to more detailed spatial semantics.

Part IV. Finiteness and modality

The fourth and final part of this volume contains two papers that tackle issues of the tense-aspect-mood system. The chapter by Remus Gergel and Jutta Hartmann, "Experiencers with (un)willingness: A raising analysis of German 'wollen'", serves as a fitting transition from part III, as it is concerned with thematic aspects of certain modal constructions. The authors propose a raising analysis of the German modal *wollen* 'want' on its volitional reading and thereby support Wurmbrand's (1999) Generalized Raising Hypothesis, as opposed to a treatment of modals that splits them up into Raising and Control verbs. Drawing on data from Spanish, Romanian and Dutch in addition to German, they present evidence that volitional *wollen* (and its congeners) induces coherence, and that this is necessary (though not sufficient) to allow an oblique argument to raise from the lower clause to become the subject of the modal, acquiring a second theta-role. The paper represents a contribution both to the study of the syntax of modal constructions and to the development of the theory of thematic roles.

The final chapter of the volume, "Finiteness: The *haves* and the *have-nots*" by Kristin M. Eide is also concerned with modals and more broadly with their relationship to finiteness. Eide identifies finiteness as the key player in the distribution of English phenomena that single out a particular class of verbs (the modals, the auxiliaries *have* and *be,* and the dummy *do*), and defines finiteness not in terms of tense or agreement but in its own right, as a primitive. The chapter shows how this perspective allows one to make sense of the difference between present-day English and Mainland Scandinavian. The latter is poorer than English in its agreement inflection, but richer in that it makes a four-way distinction in terms of both tense and finiteness for all verbs, whereas English makes such a distinction only for the auxiliaries *have* and *be,* not for lexical verbs. The generalization that emerges is that

only [+finite] verbs undergo the kinds of processes that set apart the lexical verbs (which are not marked for finiteness) from the modals, the auxiliaries *have* and *be,* and the dummy *do* (which are).

References

Cinque, G. 1999. *Adverbs and functional heads*. Oxford: OUP.
Cinque, G. (Ed.) 2002. *Functional structure in DP and IP: The cartography of syntactic structures,* Vol. 1.Oxford: OUP.
Chomsky, N. 1995. *The Minimalist Program*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.
Holmberg, A. 1999. Remarks on Holmberg's generalization. *Studia Linguistica* 53: 1–39.
Richards, N. 1998. The Principle of Minimal Compliance. *Linguistic Inquiry* 29: 599–629.
Rizzi, L. 1997. The fine structure of the left periphery. In *Elements of grammar*, L. Haegeman (Ed.), 281–337. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
Rizzi, L. 2004. *The Structure of CP and IP: The Cartography of Syntactic Structures*, Vol. 2. Oxford: OUP.
Ross, J.R. 1967. Constraints on Variables in Syntax. Ph.D. dissertation, MIT.
Schwarz, B. 1998. Odd coordination. *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 2: 191–219.
Tungseth, M. 2003. Two structural positions for locative and directional PPs in Norwegian motion constructions. *Nordlyd* 31(2): 473–487.
Wurmbrand, S. 1999. Modal verbs must be raising verbs. *WCCFL* 18, 599–612.