

Squib 1: Verb Movement

Ling 610: Syntax II (Bruening)

Draft due Weds. March 26, 2003; final due April 9

1 Instructions

The following data illustrate word order possibilities in two Germanic languages, German and Danish. Focusing on the position of the finite verb, your task in this squib is to provide as well-motivated an analysis of the facts as you can, making use of assumptions discussed in class. In addition, you should use these data and the analysis that you motivate to evaluate the theory of Pollock (1989). You should start with the same assumptions he does (make them as explicit as possible), and show how the data below are or are not compatible with his theory. If they are not compatible, suggest some amendments to his theory or an alternative theory that will account for the data.

The main assumption that Pollock makes, and which you should also make, is that sentential adverbs and negation appear in fixed positions. However, you will note in the data below that certain adverbs can appear in sentence-initial (or clause-initial) position, apparently the same position that an NP can appear in. *These are not the adverbs that Pollock assumes to be fixed in position.* These are adjuncts that can be rather freely ordered: *Yesterday, I saw a snake; I saw a snake yesterday.* The adverbs that Pollock assumes to be fixed are the ones that appear sentence-internally: *I often see snakes.* (Compare *I yesterday saw a snake.*) These can appear in other positions, but not other internal positions; they must be peripheral, and even there they're kind of marked: *?Often, I see snakes; ?I see snakes often; *I see often snakes.* So, you need to make a clear distinction between the adverbs that appear in initial position and the ones that appear sentence-internally. It is only the latter that you should assume are fixed.

The first two sections give the basic data concerning word order in German and Danish matrix and embedded clauses. The third section contains the crucial data in Danish regarding negation and adverbs. Your squib should discuss all of the data here and answer the questions below, but it does not need to follow the order of presentation here. You should write the squib as a free-standing paper, not as answers to homework questions.

2 German

The following data illustrate word order possibilities in German matrix and embedded clauses. Concentrating on the position of verbs (the tensed verb or auxiliary in comparison with participles), your task is to describe the word order possibilities and provide an analysis of them. Please provide explicit trees for 1c, 2b, and 3b (at least; you can show others if you feel it is necessary to explicate them fully). Your analysis should explain why 1g-1h and 3c-3d are ungrammatical.

2.1 Main Clauses

- (1) a. Die Kinder sahen diesen Film gestern.
The children saw this film yesterday.

- b. Gestern sahen die Kinder diesen Film.
Yesterday saw the children this film.
- c. Die Kinder haben diesen Film gesehen.
The children have seen this film.
- d. Diesen Film haben die Kinder gesehen.
This film have the children seen.
- e. Die Kinder haben diesen Film gesehen haben.
The children have seen this film seen have.
- f. Was haben die Kinder gesehen?
What have the children seen?
- g. * Diesen Film die Kinder haben gesehen.
This Film the children have seen.
- h. * Haben die Kinder diesen Film gesehen.
Have the children this film seen.

2.2 Embedded Clauses

- (2) a. Er sagt, daß die Kinder diesen Film sahen.
He says, that the children this film saw.
- b. Er sagt, daß die Kinder diesen Film gesehen haben.
He says, that the children this film seen have.
- c. Er sagt, daß die Kinder diesen Film gesehen haben müssen.
He says, that the children this film seen have must.
- (3) a. Er sagt, die Kinder haben diesen Film gesehen.
He says, the children have this film seen.
- b. Er sagt, diesen Film haben die Kinder gesehen.
He says, this film have the children seen.
- c. * Er sagt, daß die Kinder haben diesen Film gesehen.
He says, that the children have this film seen.
- d. * Er sagt, daß diesen Film haben die Kinder gesehen.
He says, that this film have the children seen.

3 Danish

The analysis you provide for German should account for the same types of data in Danish, given below. Describe how Danish differs from German, and explain whether any of the differences require a different analysis. Discuss different alternative explanations for the differences and say which you think is preferable and why. Again, please provide explicit trees for as many types of clauses as you feel are necessary to explicate the analysis.

3.1 Main Clauses

- (4) a. Børnene har set denne film.
Children-the have seen this film.
- b. Denne film har børnene set.
This film have children-the seen.

- c. I går så børnene denne film.
yesterday saw children-the this film.
- d. Måske har Peter læst denne bog.
Maybe has Peter read this book.
- e. * Denne film børnene har set.
This film children-the have seen.
- f. * Har børnene set denne film.
Have children-the seen this film.

3.2 Embedded Clauses

Clause-embedding verbs in Danish divide into two types as far as the data we are concerned. You do not need to explain why there are two types or why the verbs divide up in the way they do. But you do need to give an analysis of the embedded clauses under each type of verb. The first type looks like this:

- (5) a. Han siger at børnene har set denne film.
he says that children-the have seen this film.
- b. Han siger denne film har børnene set.
he says this film have children-the seen.
- (6) a. Vi ved at Peter ofte har drukket kaffe.
We know that Peter often has drunk coffee.
- b. Vi ved at Peter har ofte drukket kaffe.
We know that Peter has often drunk coffee.
- c. Vi ved at om morgenen har Peter ofte drukket kaffe.
We know that in morning-the has Peter often drunk coffee.
- d. Vi ved at om morgenen drikker Peter ofte kaffe.
We know that in morning-the drinks Peter often coffee.

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The second type is exemplified by the embedded clauses in the next section. You can discuss the two types independently of the negation/adverb question.

4 Negation in Danish

Assume with Pollock (1989) that the position of negation and adverbs does not vary between languages and clause types (they are supposed to be the same in French and English, for example). If that is true, what do the following embedded clauses show about Danish tensed verbs? Give answers in Pollock's terms; state where the tensed verb must be in each case, according to him.

- (7) a. Det var godt at han ikke købte bogen.
It was good that he not bought book-the.
- b. * Det var godt at han købte ikke bogen.
It was good that he bought not book-the.
- (8) a. Jeg tror ikke at Peter ofte spiser tomater.
I think not that Peter often eats tomatoes.
- b. * Jeg tror ikke at Peter spiser ofte tomater.
I think not that Peter eats often tomatoes.

Now look at the position of the tensed verb with respect to negation in matrix clauses, below (also seen with the verb *think* in 8). Does this fit the analysis you gave in the first two sections? Does it fit Pollock's analysis, namely, his theory of *way* verb movement may or may not take place and why it's sometimes restricted to auxiliaries? Are the two analyses in conflict, or can you reconcile them? If you think it's impossible to reconcile them, explain in which you feel should be abandoned and why. (You should explain Pollock's analysis of French and English clearly in order to show whether Danish is compatible with it.) If you decide to abandon the analysis you gave above, give an alternative. If you decide that Pollock's analysis is incorrect, suggest an alternative.

- (9) a. Kaffe drikker Peter ikke.
Coffee drinks Peter not.
b. * Kaffe ikke drikker Peter.
Coffee not drinks Peter.
- (10) a. Kaffe drikker Peter ofte om morgenen.
Coffee drinks Peter often in morning-the.
b. Om morgenen drikker Peter ofte kaffe.
In morning-the drinks Peter often coffee.

A further set of data that you may want to incorporate into your discussion: tensed auxiliaries show the same positioning as main verbs in both embedded and matrix clauses:

- (11) a. Jeg ved at børnene ikke har set denne film.
I know that children-the not have seen this film.
b. * Jeg ved at børnene har ikke set denne film.
I know that children-the have not seen this film.
- (12) a. Børnene har ikke set denne film.
Children-the have not seen this film.
b. * Børnene ikke har set denne film.
Children-the not have seen this film.

References

Pollock, Jean-Yves (1989). "Verb Movement, Universal Grammar, and the Structure of IP." *Linguistic Inquiry* 20: 365–424.