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Head Movement and Second Position Effects

In standard models of verb second language like German, the first position is filled by an operator movement fronting an XP, and the second position by a head movement operation preposing the finite verb. The talk will discuss a number of problems that arise with these assumptions.

Operator movement is inadequate for those constructions in which a phrase precedes the finite verb which bears no special semantic or pragmatic function. We will defend the view that examples such as (1) involve an EPP-driven movement of the highest element in IP, as suggested by Bhatt (1999) for Kashmiri and Fanselow & Mahajan (1996) and Fanselow (2002) for German. The strict locality of the movement is forced by the EPP.

- (1) *heute hat niemand angerufen*
today has nobody called
wahrscheinlich hat niemand angerufen
probably has nobody called

In this respect, the analysis of German can be linked directly to so-called long head movement constructions in Breton or Serbo-Croatian. Furthermore, the analysis we propose allows for a non-subject analysis of so-called quirky subjects in Icelandic.

Simple operator movement analyses also face a problem when it comes to account for structures in which only part of an operator phrase has been fronted, as in (2). The problem is most obvious for structures like (3), in which the preposed element has no semantic content of its own.

- (2) was hast du für Bücher gesehen
what have you for books seen
"what kind of books have you seen"
(3) vor hab ich das schon gehabt
in- have I that well tended
"lit: I have intended that"

We will discuss an analysis for these data in terms of the copy-and-deletion model proposed by Fanselow & Ćavar (2002) in the context of split noun phrases.

Finally, head movement has come under attack recently. We will show that head movement is a necessary part of grammatical theory, and we will develop a restricted model of head movement that is able to overcome the shortcomings identified for standard head movement theory.