

Verb second in adverbial causal clauses in German: Embedded V2 and the syntax-semantics-pragmatics interface

The Data

The canonical distribution of verb second and verb final in German is as follows: The finite verb appears in the second position in main clauses (1a) and in clause final position in subordinate clauses (1b). Yet, in spoken variants of German, causal adverbial clauses introduced by *weil* are frequently used with V2 order (1c).

- (1) a. Er **hat** nur wenige Artikel gelesen.
he has only few articles read
'He has read only a few articles.'
- b. Sie kommt zu spät, weil sie den Bus verpasst **hat**.
she comes too late because she the bus missed has
'She comes too late because she has missed the bus.'
- c. Sie kommt zu spät, weil sie **hat** den Bus verpasst.
she comes too late because she has the bus missed
'She comes too late because she has missed the bus.'

Weil-V2 clauses are not simply a colloquial synonymous variant of standard verb-final clauses, but they have specific syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties.

Syntactic restrictions

The V2 realizations of *weil*-clauses are subject to numerous syntactic restrictions: verb-raising is blocked if the *weil*-clause is clause initial, furthermore, V2 is impossible if the *weil*-clause is in the scope of negation or in case of variable-binding by a quantifier. Following Uhmann (1998), I interpret these observations as providing sufficient evidence to treat *weil*-V2 clauses paratactically. The conjunction *weil* is head of a paratactic phrase π P and both arguments of the conjunction *weil* are full CPs (cf. Gärtner 2001). In contrast, the canonical V-final clauses are adjuncts to the matrix IP. Hence, *weil*-clauses with V-final order show a higher degree of syntactic integration than *weil*-V2 clauses.

Coordination and implicature

These syntactic differences go hand in hand with systematic interpretational differences between *weil*-V2 clauses and *weil*-V-final clauses. Blakemore & Carston (2004) and Carston (2002) show that syntactic disintegration leads to semantic and pragmatic disintegration and triggers henceforth implicatures and pragmatic strengthening. Since *weil*-V2 clauses are not part of the matrix assertion, both CPs are interpreted in isolation. In a second step, the meaning of the clause final *weil*-clause must be applied to the antecedent CP. As a consequence, *weil*-V2 clauses can express a wider range of semantic relations than *weil*-V-final clauses. *Weil*-V2 clauses can be interpreted on the illocutionary level instead of the propositional one. In this case, the causal V2 clause gives a reason for the speaker's attitude and not for the propositional content of the matrix clause. In example (2a), the causal clause justifies the speaker's attitude (epistemic reading). This reading is not available for the integrated structure (2b).

- (2) a. Es hat geschneit, weil die Straße **ist** ganz weiß.
it has snowed because the road is totally white.
'It snowed, because the road is totally white.'
(≈ It must have snowed, and I think so because the road is totally white.)

- b. #Es hat geschneit, weil die Straße ganz weiß ist.
 it has snowed because the road totally white is
 'It snowed because the road is totally white.'

The semantics of [V-to-C]

Furthermore, *weil*-V2 clauses share crucial formal and functional properties with other kinds of embedded V2 clauses such as V2 complement clauses (3a) and V2 relative clauses (3b).

- (3) a. Seine Freunde glauben, er **hat** nur wenige Artikel gelesen.
 his friends believe he has only few articles read.
 'His friends believe that he has read only a few articles.'
- b. Ich kenne einen Linguisten, der **kann** nicht lesen.
 I know a linguist who can not read.
 'I know a linguist who cannot read.'

As in *weil*-V2 clauses, verb raising is blocked if the embedded clause is in the scope of negation or if it is part of the background. These restrictions are related to the specific semantics of the movement of the finite verb to C [V-to-C]. In declarative clauses, the movement of the finite verb to C triggers an assertive force potential (cf. Truckenbrodt 2006, Vikner 1995, Wechsler 1991). As a consequence, V2 clauses are always assertive and verb raising is blocked if the sentence has a presuppositional reading. *Weil*-V2 clauses can therefore be subsumed under the notion of "embedded root phenomena" (cf. Hooper&Thompson 1973).

My analysis of *weil*-V2 clauses is able to derive all syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties of the clauses from two factors: the paratactic structure of *weil*-V2 clauses and the semantics of V-to-C movement.

References:

- Antomo, Mailin/Steinbach, Markus (2008): Desintegration und Interpretation. *Weil*-V2-Sätze an der Schnittstelle zwischen Syntax, Semantik und Pragmatik. Unpublished manuscript submitted for publication.
- Blakemore, Diane/Carston, Robyn (2004): The pragmatics of sentential coordination with "and". *Lingua* 115, 569-589.
- Carston, Robyn (2002): Thoughts and Utterances. *The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gärtner, Hans-Martin (2001): Are there V2 relative clauses in German? *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 3, 97-141.
- Hooper, Joan & Sandra Thompson (1973). On the applicability of root transformations. *Linguistic Inquiry* 4, 465-497.
- Truckenbrodt, Hubert (2006): On the semantic motivation of syntactic verb movement to C in German. *Theoretical Linguistics* 22, 257-306.
- Uhmann, Susanne (1998): Verbstellungsvariation in *weil*-Sätzen: Lexikalische Differenzierung mit grammatischen Folgen. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 17.1, 92-139
- Vikner, Sten (1995): *Verb Movement and Expletive Subjects in the Germanic Languages*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 65-130.
- Wechsler, Stephen (1991): Verb Second and Illocutionary Force. Bouchard, D./Leffel, K. (eds.): *Views on Phrase Structure*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 177-191.