

Eric Fuß

Titel: On the historical origin of verb fronting in the Germanic V2 languages

Abstract:

Since the seminal work of den Besten (1977/1983), the Germanic V2 is commonly analyzed as the result of two distinct syntactic operations: (i) fronting of the finite verb to the head of CP and (ii) fronting of an arbitrary XP to the specifier of CP. However, there is less consensus regarding the triggers and historical development of these movement operations. While there is some agreement that XP-fronting arose through the syntactification of movement originally triggered by pragmatic or discourse-semantic factors (Axel 2007, Fuß 2008, Hinterhölzl & Petrova 2010), much less is known about the origins of verb fronting. Existing proposals include:

- a) prosodic origins (unstressed verbs as second-position clitics; Wackernagel 1892, Dewey 2006),
- b) stylistic origins (verb fronting as a text-structuring device; Delbrück 1900, Lenerz 1984),
- c) morphosyntactic origins (loss of clause-typing (enclitic/suffixal) particles that originally triggered verb movement; Roberts 1996, Ferraresi 1997),
- d) discourse-semantic origins (licensing of fronted operators; Kiparsky 1995, Fuß 2003).

Building on a review of these proposals, I will offer a synthesis suggesting that verb fronting evolved through a series of structural changes, whereby earlier 'substantial' (semantic/pragmatic, morphological, and prosodic) movement triggers were reanalyzed in terms of purely syntactic movement.

Jutta Hartmann

Title: Focus marking in mismatching contexts: Creative construal of focus alternatives?

Abstract:

In this talk, I discuss to what extent focus alternatives are construed on the basis of syntactic and/or prosodic focus marking by looking at focus marking in mismatching contexts. Mismatching contexts are contexts in which the licensing conditions of a given focus marking are not fulfilled, for example, givenness marking in a context where the marked constituent is not given, lack of relevant focus alternatives in a context, etc. We investigate to what extent and under what conditions listeners creatively amend the context to make sense of the focus marking. I will discuss experimental rating data as well as results from a picture selection task addressing these questions.

Katrin Axel-Tober & Sigrid Beck

**Title: Diachronic pathways in conditional and interrogative complementizers:
The case of German 'wenn'**

Abstract:

In our talk we are going to discuss two typical diachronic pathways in conditional and interrogative complementizers by using German WENN as an illustrative example. WENN developed its usage as a conditional complementizer, which is still the prevalent usage in present-day Standard German, from a wh-adverb in a free-choice relative construction. In certain dialects it was subject to a further change and came to be used as an interrogative complementizer (Axel-Tober & Weiß to appear). In those dialects where WENN has undergone further development, the conditional and interrogative complementizer have become homophonous. This so-called 'conditional-interrogative' link, which also occurs in English /if/, is widely attested in Indo-European languages and beyond. For both pathways we are going to propose that the pertinent reanalyses occurred in bridging contexts characterized by interpretive closeness in the sense of Constant Entailments (Beck & Gergel 2015, Axel-Tober & Beck 2024). As our approach does not hinge on a particular type of 'morpho-syntactic' shape of the subordinators/complementizers, our proposal has wider implications for the evolution of complementizers in further languages – Germanic and beyond."

Roland Hinterhölzl

Title: On the information structure underlying VP-ellipsis and coreference

Abstract:

Traditionally, two types of anaphoric relations, binding and coreference are distinguished in the prominent approach, initiated by Reinhart (1983) and further developed by Heim (1998), Fox (2000), Büring (2005), Reinhart (2006) and Roelofsen (2008), which assumes that only one type of anaphoric relation, namely binding, is syntactically encoded (and thus subject to rules of syntactic well-formedness), while coreference is not syntactically encoded and thus not constrained by rules of grammar. I will show that the C-domain plays a crucial role in accounting for valid and invalid cases of coreference. In particular, I will argue that discourse anaphors are bound by a context operator, implying that the mechanism that corresponds to coreference is syntactically encoded. The crucial empirical evidence comes from the licensing of strict and sloppy readings in VP-ellipsis. The talk will discuss Dahl's puzzle, vehicle change and show that semantic identity and parallelism (necessary for licensing deletion) can be defined on the propositional and on the speech act level.

Edgar Onea

Title: Exploring Semantic change in the lab

Abstract: TBA

Kalle Müller (University of Tübingen)

Title: On the history of cleft sentences in German

Abstract: TBA

Svetlana Petrova

Title: Correlates of argument clauses in Old and Middle Low German

Abstract:

This is a follow-up of my previous DG/SG-talk dealing with the role of correlates of sentential arguments in diachronic scenarios on sentence embedding. I am analysing the corpus evidence from Old (ReA 1.2) and Middle Low German (ReN 1.1) which displays two types of correlates of argument clauses, namely the personal pronoun of the neuter *_it_* and the simple demonstrative *_that_*. The main focus is on the distribution as well as the syntactic and information-structural status of these correlative pronouns in terms of anaphoric pro-forms or 'true' placeholders, respectively. The main observation is that, as also shown for Old and Middle High German by Axel-Tober (2012), the distinction of a placeholder construction and one involving a pro-form seems less tightly related to the lexical choice of the correlative pronoun, in contrast to modern German correlative constructions involving these types of correlates (Pütz 1986, Sudhoff 2003, Axel-Tober et al. 2016). In this talk, I address an additional asymmetry concerning correlative constructions involving subject and object clauses, showing that they behave differently with respect to the distribution of the correlative elements and the givenness of the associated CP.

Tara Struik & Chiara de Bastiani

Title: The background to Vaux: A multifactorial approach to verb order in Old English adverbial subclauses

Abstract: TBA

Ans van Kemenade

Title: Prosodic evidence for the syntactic status of auxiliaries in Middle English and early Modern English.

Abstract:

There is a wealth of literature on the historical development of modals and other auxiliaries in which it is argued that they underwent a development from main verb status to auxiliary status (i.e. function word status). Contra much other literature that claims that this shift took place in the early 16th century, Getty 2002 argues, based on metrical evidence, that stress on (pre-) auxiliaries was lost before the end of the Old English period.

This paper presents syntactic and prosodic evidence that auxiliaries in V2 constructions over the Middle English period (1100-1500) could carry primary stress. I will present fine-grained evidence from metrical prose texts such as the *Ormulum* (ca. 1200) and from 13th and 14th century verse texts, that fronted auxiliaries in V2 constructions occur highly frequently with stress on the stem.

The syntactic shift to auxiliary status is argued by Lightfoot (1979); Warner (1993), Haerberli & Ihsane (2022) to have taken place in the early 16th century. I argue that this led to the loss of primary stress on fronted auxiliaries, as is evident from the loss of V2 in clauses with initial unstressed adverbs such as *then*.