Narrow Syntax and Phonological Form
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Narrow Syntax and Phonological Form. Scrambling in the Germanic languages

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Narrow Syntax
and Phonological Form
Scrambling in the Germanic languages

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CONTENTS

Preface ix

CHAPTER 1
Scrambling: a crosslinguistic perspective 1
  1. Scrambling languages 4
  2. Types of scrambling 7
  3. Scrambling in the Germanic languages 13

CHAPTER 2
A survey of some basic properties of German 23
  1. The structure of the German clause 24
  2. Coherent infinitival constructions 32
  3. Remnant movement 40
  4. The German pronominal system 42
  5. Focus scrambling 50

CHAPTER 3
Scrambling in German 55
  1. German scrambling in rough syntax 57
     1.1 The iterability of German scrambling 58
     1.2 Scrambling within VP 58
     1.3 Scrambling within other projections 67
     1.4 Some preliminary conclusions about scramnable constituents 69
     1.5 The clause-boundedness of scrambling and the syntactic position of scramnable constituents 74
     1.6 ‘Island effects’ 79
  2. German scrambling at the interfaces 95
     2.1 Phonological properties of scrambled elements 95
     2.2 Semantic/pragmatic properties of scrambled elements 103
     2.3 Tying the phonological and semantic / pragmatic constraints on scrambling 107
## CHAPTER 4
### Previous accounts of German scrambling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Movement approaches</th>
<th>121</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Scrambling as ‘Move $\alpha$’ (‘Government and Binding’)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Scrambling as ‘Move’ (the ‘Minimalist Program’)</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Base-generation approaches</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Base-generation, theta-role assignment, and Case-checking at PF</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Base-generation, theta-role assignment, and Case-checking at LF</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conclusions</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 5
### The phonological side of reordering processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. The phonological side of Scandinavian ‘Object Shift’</th>
<th>191</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Scandinavian ‘Object Shift’ from a descriptive perspective</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Scandinavian ‘Object Shift’ in ‘Stylistic Syntax’</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Scandinavian ‘Object Shift’ in ‘Narrow Syntax’</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The phonological side of German scrambling</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Evidence for DISL</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Is German scrambling sensitive to phonological borders?</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 6
### Conclusions, problems, and pending issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>281</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Index</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This volume presents a detailed analysis of West Germanic scrambling from the perspective of recent versions of the ‘Minimalist Program’, especially the one advanced in Chomsky’s (2001). It refutes the commonly held view that scrambled structures in West Germanic languages are the result of a phenomenon completely unrelated to North Germanic ‘Object Shift’. The claim is not completely new, since there are a small number of studies which, on the basis of the semantic/pragmatic interpretation shifted/scrambled constituents receive, have already defended the idea that there exist similarities between the two constructions. What is new in this study is that the evidence for the unified analysis is strictly syntactic and phonological, which has, in my opinion, interesting consequences, beyond the desirability of the unified analysis itself. First, it provides empirical support for Chomsky’s (2001) analysis of Scandinavian ‘Object Shift’, which, as it stands, is motivated mostly by theoretical considerations. Second, given that my data come primarily from German, it sheds light on several problematic aspects of German grammar, which have traditionally resisted a principled account. Prominent among these are: (a) the inconsistent behaviour of German coherent infinitives with respect to extraction of their internal arguments; (b) the existence of a less ‘liberal’ type of scrambling within topicalised VPs; (c) the link between reordering possibilities and headfinalness; (d) the asymmetry exhibited by monotransitive and ditransitive structures with respect to the interaction between scrambling and the unmarked word order, and, finally, (e) certain anomalies in the reordering of the lower arguments of ditransitive predicates that assign inherent case. I must add here that German has been chosen as the main focus of research in order to test the validity of the unified approach to Germanic word order variation in one of the West Germanic languages whose type of scrambling, less constrained than the one found in Dutch, appears to be most clearly at odds with the severe restrictions obeyed by North Germanic ‘Object Shift’.

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CHAPTER 1
SCRAMBLING: A CROSSLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

The term ‘scrambling’ was introduced into the technical vocabulary of generative grammar by Ross in 1967. In its non-technical use, scrambling refers to apparently optional alterations in word order. It is especially common in languages with extensive case-marking. From this very broad perspective, scrambling may be seen to apply to any example of word order variation that is not triggered by an overt morphological marker, as opposed to cases, such as interrogatives and passives, in which the linguistic constituents are rearranged for a functional purpose. The technical meaning of scrambling is, however, far more specific, excluding as it does permutations that put medial elements in the final-clause position, as in the English example in (1) below—a ‘Heavy NP-shift’— or Icelandic examples like (2)—taken from Vikner (1994)—an ‘Object Shift’, in which the relative positions of nominal objects and adverbials are exchanged:

(1)  a. I will communicate the bad news to John
 b. I will communicate to John the bad news that I heard from Bill today.

(2)  a. Í gær las Pétur eflaust ekki bókina
    yesterday read Pétur doubtlessly not book-the
    “Doubtlessly Peter didn’t read the book yesterday”
 b. Í gær las Pétur bókina eflaust ekki
    yesterday read Pétur book-the doubtlessly not
    “Doubtlessly Peter didn’t read the book yesterday”

There have been a number of attempts to deal in formal terms with the freedom of word order that this more restrictive notion of scrambling entails. Both Ross himself and Chomsky and Lasnik (1977) have taken scrambling to be a stylistic rule that applies optionally. Yet Hale (1980, 1983), on the contrary, takes it to be purely syntactic. The logic behind Hale's analysis involves a division of languages into two groups, which he calls configurational and non-configurational. In his terms, a configurational language pos-
serves a hierarchical clausal structure, with the object contained in the VP and the subject outside the VP, as in (3):

(3) Configurational language

```
S
/   \
\   /   \\
SUBJ VP
\   /   \\
  V   OBJ
```

By contrast, in a non-configurational language the VP node is absent, so that the entire phrase structure is flat, with the subject, object, and other constituents at the same level, as in (4):

(4) Non-configurational language

```
S
/   \
\   /   \\
SUBJ OBJ V
\   /   \\
  OBJ SUBJ V
```

The point of Hale’s analysis is that the syntactic structure in (4) puts subject and object into a symmetrical relation with the verb. No such possibility exists in (3), where the existence of the VP node creates a subject/object asymmetry, with the object being closer to the verb than to the subject. Hale’s conclusion is that it is the symmetry of non-configurational languages that permits the freedom for which Chomsky and Lasnik want to account in purely stylistic terms, for in the non-configurational structure the subject may be inserted either as the left-most (SOV) or second (OVS) phrase.

A major point of difference between Hale and Ross is that Hale wants not simply to dismiss stylistic choice as the main factor in scrambling, but to deny that it is optional in all cases. As we have seen, scrambling orders for Ross obeyed a rule that need not be obligatory. On the level of formal analysis, scrambling operations thus involve one more operation than those generating a non-scrambled phrasal order. But for Hale, exactly the same number of obligatory operations are involved in both scrambled and non-scrambled sequences. They are three: lexical insertion of the verb, lexical insertion of the object, and lexical insertion of the subject. On this account, optionality is due
simply to the possibility of a free order of insertion, which is possible in a non-configurational language but not in a configurational language.

The non-configurational approach has gotten good results when applied to some languages, such as Warlpiri (Hale, 1983), Navajo (Hale, Jelinek and Willie, 2003), and Hungarian (É. Kiss, 1994, 2003). The great problem has been that it is unable to account for the data in other languages—Japanese, for instance, as in Saito and Hoji (1983), and German, despite the efforts of Haider (1988)—where subjects and objects are in an asymmetrical relation to the verb. Since the existence of a VP node seems to be fully compatible with scrambling in many such cases, they seem to raise the possibility of optionality once again, although now understood as a purely syntactic rather than a stylistic choice.

The validity of this view has now come into question, however, with the emergence of the ‘Minimalist Program’ (Chomsky, 1993, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2004). The driving force behind that program is to provide as economical an account of syntactic operations as possible. In rough terms, this involves the principle that there must be a one-to-one relation between the initial set of elements entering the syntactic computation and its output at the other end. As will be seen, this leaves no room whatever for optional operations.

In the literature of the ‘Minimalist Program’, there has been an attempt to get around the problem of apparent optionality presented by scrambling in several ways. Some researchers, including Chomsky himself (1995), have tried to settle the issue by going back to Ross's original analysis and treating scrambling as a purely stylistic, and therefore non-syntactic, phenomenon. Others have taken their lead from Hale's method of analysis, attempting to make configurationality compatible with a free order of insertion. This group includes Neeleman (1994), Bayer and Kornfilt (1994), and Fanselow (2001, 2003). Finally, there is a third group of researchers that has attempted to solve the problem by showing that the difference between scrambling and ‘non-scrambling’ strings may be traced to a difference in the members of the initial set. So, for instance, Müller (1998) proposes a [+scrambling] feature and Meinunger (1995) a [+topic] feature to account for the difference between scrambling and ‘non-scrambling’ types.

As we shall see in Chapter 4, all three types of analysis face serious difficulties. They emerge with particular clarity when each is brought into confrontation with the operations in German syntax.
1. Scrambling languages

One of the obvious advantages of Hale's approach was that it made scrambling a direct result of non-configurationality, thus providing a neat solution in terms of the parametric differences of scrambling and ‘non-scrambling’ languages. It is the fact that such configurational languages as Japanese and German permit scrambling that undermined the neatness of Hale's categories, demanding that some other factor be looked for to account for the process. This factor has been sought in various alternative formulations. For example, Müller and Sternefeld (1993), who treat scrambling as an adjunction to CP, IP, or VP, propose what they call the ‘Adjunction Site Parameter’:

(5) Adjunction Site Parameter for scrambling positions (Müller and Sternefeld, 1993: 470):

English: —; German: VP, IP; Russian: VP, IP, CP.

According to (5), therefore, the only difference between a ‘non-scrambling’ language like English and a scrambling one like German or Russian would be that English and similar languages forbid adjunction to any of the projections that host scrambled phrases, while languages like German and Russian permit it.¹

Bošković and Takahashi (1998) and Neeleman (1994) have presented alternative views. They are different in detail, but share the notion that scrambling is linked to base-generation and the various mechanisms that individual languages use for theta-role assignment. Bošković and Takahashi contend that in Japanese, a scrambling language, reordered phrases are directly inserted in their surface position, then undergoing subsequent covert or invisible lowering to the sites where they receive theta-role, as in (6) (from Bošković and Takahashi, 1998):

(6) a. Base-generation in the strictly syntactic component:

\[
\text{Sono hon-o John-ga Mary-ga katta to omotteiru}
\]

that book-ACC John-NOM Mary-NOM bought that thinks

“John thinks that Mary bought that book”

b. Covert movement (at ‘Logical Form’):²

\[
t_i \text{John-ga Mary-ga sono hon-o_i katta to omotteiru}
\]

John-NOM Mary-NOM that book-ACC bought that thinks

On this account, the asymmetry between scrambling and non-scrambling languages would be due either to the availability or unavailability of base
generation of the object in the pre-subject position, or to the possibility or impossibility of its covert movement. Bošković and Takahashi are content to leave the question open, although they suggest that the second option might be preferable on theoretical grounds — that is, for basic assumptions concerning crosslinguistic variation — for those who, like themselves, are working within the framework of Chomsky's 'Minimalist Program' (Chomsky, 1995).

Like Bošković and Takahashi, Neeleman (1994) assigns a prominent role to theta-roles in his analysis of scrambling, but unlike them, does so in relation to the 'Head Parameter' of Chomsky (1981) and Stowell (1981). The notion of a 'Head Parameter' divides languages into two types, those capable of generating verbal arguments on the right of V (VO) and those that generate them to its left (OV). Since Neeleman, like Weerman (1989), assumes that adverbs and adjuncts are crosslinguistically inserted on the left, the result is that they share domain with objects in OV, but not in VO, languages. An example adapted from Neeleman (1994):

(7) Du a. *dat Jan snel het paper schreef
    that Jan-NOM quickly the paper-ACC wrote
    “that Jan wrote the paper quickly”
    En b. John quickly wrote the paper

To sustain this position, Neeleman is compelled to argue that theta-roles are not assigned to specific positions, which puts him in opposition to Chomsky's 'Sisterhood Condition' (Chomsky, 1986), according to which argumental objects may receive a thematic role only when sisters to the lexical verb. Neeleman proposes, alternatively, that the theta-domain of the verb is the entire VP, with adjuncts freely attached. This has the consequence that structures such as (8a) below are as well-formed as those like (7a), since the intervention of the adverb does not block theta-role assignment to the object. But the counterpart of this structure in a VO language like English is impossible, since the only way quickly and the paper could appear close to each other would be to undergo rightward movement to a position putting them outside VP, where the object cannot be theta-marked:

(8) Du a. *dat Jan het paper snel schreef
    that Jan-NOM the paper-ACC quickly wrote
    “that Jan wrote the paper quickly”
    En b. *John wrote quickly the paper
The ‘Head Parameter’ is the major factor distinguishing scrambling from non-scrambling languages in the work of a number of other linguists: Fukui (1993), Saito and Fukui (1998), and Haider and Rosengren (1998, 2003). Fukui (1993) argues for its importance on the considerations of economy urged by Chomsky (1991), his point being that there is no loss of theoretical economy so long as syntactic operations yield a structure that is consistent with the parameter values of any given language. On this account, there would be no theoretical cost in accounting for the preverbal domain as permitting movement in OV languages, or for the postverbal domain as doing so in VO languages. Saito and Fukui account for adjunction sites in relation to the ‘Head Parameter’, proposing that adjunction on the left —i.e. scrambling— is permitted only in OV languages, while adjunction on the right —‘Heavy NP-shift’— is permitted in VO grammars. I shall discuss the proposal of Haider and Rosengren in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Even so sketchy a summary of the various factors proposed in the theoretical literature as being responsible for the division between scrambling and non-scrambling languages will have made it clear that none is wholly satisfactory. Some are not in accord with accepted models of linguistic explanation, while some fail when made to confront relevant empirical data. In the first category we may place Müller and Sternefeld (1993), Fukui (1993), and Saito and Fukui (1998), for all are committed to giving an account of scrambling as a more or less optional operation, which clearly conflicts with Chomsky’s now widely-accepted ‘Minimalist Program’ (Chomsky, 1993, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2004). In addition, a number of studies have called into question the optionality of scrambling even in these cases —e.g. Diesing (1992), de Hoop (1992), Neeleman and Reinhart (1998), Ishihara (2000), Karimi (2003), Kornfilt (2003), etc.— where there can be shown to be clear semantic differences between scrambled and unscrambled constituents. In the second category, we find ‘Head Parameter’ interpretations such as those of Neeleman (1994), Fukui (1993), and Saito and Fukui (1998), which have no way of account for the existence of VO languages that appear to permit scrambling, such as Russian (Müller and Sternefeld, 1993) and Polish (Haegeman, 1995).

Finally, analyses like those of Neeleman (1994) or Bošković and Takahashi (1998) also appear to raise serious problems. In Chapters 4 and 5, I will show in detail how accounts of scrambling as base-generation fail on several grounds, such as their conflict with the ‘Minimal Link Condition’ so central to Chomsky’s ‘Minimalist Program’, and their failure to yield a suitable analysis of German data. There remains the question of whether the lowering operation posited by Bošković and Takahashi (1998) represents a theoretical gain in this situation. Johnston and Park (2001) have shown that Korean, a scrambling lan-
language, does not support conclusions drawn from Japanese. In Korean, scrambling can create possibilities of interpretation that do not exist in the unscrambled variant. These options are just the same ones that would exist if the scrambled element remained in its surface position at LF.

2. Types of scrambling

Extensive research on free word order in the last two decades has shown that a simple differentiation between scrambling, in its technical usage, and other reordering processes is not sufficient, and that scrambling itself is not a uniform crosslinguistic phenomenon. Evidence for this lack of uniformity arises from the different structural positions the scrambled constituent may occupy, leading linguists to distinguish at least three types of scrambling: VP-internal, clause-internal, and long-distance scrambling. The following paragraphs give a general characterisation of each of these classes.

The term VP-internal scrambling refers to those cases in which co-arguments are reordered within the limits of the maximal projection of the head selecting for them, a process clearly evident in such languages as Japanese (Hoji, 1985; Saito, 1992; Tada, 1993; Takano, 1998, and Yatsushiro, 1998, 2003, among others), and Persian (Karimi, 2003) (Japanese examples in (9) based on Miyagawa and Tsujioka, 2004; Persian examples in (10) from Karimi, 2003):

(9) a. Taroo-ga kinoo Hakano-ni nimotu-o okutta
   Taro-NOM yesterday Hakano-DAT package-ACC sent
   “Taro sent Hakano a package yesterday”

   b. Taroo-ga kinoo nimotu-o Hakano-ni okutta
   Taro-NOM yesterday package-ACC Hakano-DAT sent
   “Taro sent a package to Hakano yesterday”

(10) a. Kimea aghlab barā mâ she’r mi-xun-e
    Kimea-NOM often for us poem-ACC reads
    “It is often the case that Kimea reads poetry for us”

   b. Kimea aghlab hame-ye she’r-â-ye tâza-sh-ro
    Kimea-NOM often all-PART poems-PART fresh-her-PART
    barâ mâ mi-xun-e
    for us reads
    “It is often the case that Kimea reads all her new poems for us”

Given the assumption that adverbs like kinoo in (9) and aghlab in (10) mark the VP-boundary in many languages (Jackendoff, 1972; Holmberg, 1986;
Webelhuth, 1992; Karimi, 2003), and that both Japanese and Persian generate DAT above ACC, the examples in (9b) and (10b) are regarded as a product of a scrambling operation applying to the accusative within the boundaries of the ditransitive VP.

The second type, clause-internal scrambling, described in recent research, derives its name from the position in which the scrambled constituent appears. Like VP-scrambling, clause-internal scrambling appears within the clause to which the selecting predicate belongs, but differs crucially by remaining VP-external, as may be seen by the fact that it precedes a VP-joined adverb, or even the nominative subject. The Japanese examples in (11) (from Ishihara, 2000) and the Persian sentences in (12) (from Karimi, 2003) illustrate these two possibilities:

(11) a. *TARO-ga hon-o kyoo katta*
    Taro-NOM book-ACC today bought
    “Taro has bought a book today”

   b. *Hon-o TARO-ga kyoo katta*
    book-ACC Taro-NOM today bought
    “Taro has bought a book today”

(12) a. *KIMEA in ketâb-e dâstân-ro aghlab barâ*
    Kimea-NOM this book-PART story-PART often for
    *bachche-hâ mi-xun-e*
    children reads
    “As for this story book, Kimea often reads (it) for the children”

   b. *In ketâb-e dâstân-ro KIMEA aghlab barâ*
    this book-PART story-PART Kimea-NOM often for
    *bachche-hâ mi-xun-e*
    children reads
    “As for this story book, Kimea reads (it) often for children”

A third type, long-distance scrambling, is characterised by the presence of the reordered constituent in a hierarchically higher clause. This type appears in unrelated languages like Japanese or Russian ((13a) from Saito, 1985; (13b) from Bailyn, 2003):
As the examples in (9)-(13) will suggest, it is thus impossible to reduce scrambling to a unique structural position. One possible approach to reconciling the empirical evidence with the view that, despite differences in the places they occupy, scrambled constituents undergo the same process, might be to adopt an analysis along the lines of Müller and Sternefeld's (1993) ‘Adjunction Site Parameter’. As we saw in the preceding section, the existence of such a parameter allowed Müller and Sternefeld to account for the possibility of scrambling in both OV and VO languages. In addition, this approach would have the advantage of depicting (9)-(13) as the product of a single operation, adjunction, and tying the different scrambling types to an independent factor (i.e. the number of available adjunction positions in a given language). Some studies seem to indicate, however, that proposals of the kind found in Müller and Sternefeld (1993) are inadequate to the problem, and that the data appearing in (9)-(13) constitute similar surface manifestations of completely unrelated phenomena. For the sake of illustration, we will briefly discuss the facts in Japanese and Russian. Recent work on Russian and Japanese will provide useful illustrations for our purpose.

The latest research on Japanese free word order suggests that VP-internal, clause-internal, and long-distance scrambling must be understood as the product of distinct syntactic operations. Miyagawa and Tsujioka (2004) demonstrate that VP-internal scrambling can be reduced to the simple fact that Japanese goals may occur in two alternative positions, thus explaining why the accusative may precede or follow the dative. While the high position hosts goals that are interpreted as possessors, the low one is reserved for those interpreted as locatives, as in (14):

(14) high goal (possessive) ....... theme ....... low goal (locative)³

Thus, according to Miyagawa and Tsujioka, the structure in (9b), conventionally attributed to scrambling, parallels (9a) in that both are base-generated. However, they crucially differ in the site where the goal is inserted, that preceding the theme in (9a), and that following it in (9b).
Mahajan (1990) argues that long-distance scrambling is crosslinguistically the result of a movement operation that displaces an object from an embedded clause to a higher clause. He provides evidence that such an operation is ‘A-bar-movement’, the kind of process responsible for fronting topics and wh-elements to clause-initial position. Mahajan’s conclusions are largely uncontroversial, and accepted for Japanese by most authors (Saito, 1992; Tada, 1993; Yoshimura, 1992; Müller, 1995; Grewendorf and Sabel, 1999; Miyagawa, 2003; among others). However, clause-internal scrambling seems to behave differently, insofar as it parallels ‘A-movement’, the operation responsible for subject displacement in passives and raising structures (Grewendorf and Sabel, 1999; Miyagawa, 2003, etc). The contrast between the Japanese examples in (15), discussed in Miyagawa (2001, 2003), provides evidence for this distinction:

(15) a. *Syukudai-o zen’in-ga [sensei-ga dasu to]*
   homework-ACC all-NOM teacher-NOM assign that
   omowa-nakat-ta
   think-not-PAST
   “Homework, all did not think that the teacher will assign”
   b. *Sono tesuto-o zen’in-ga isoide uke-nakat-ta*
   that test-ACC all-NOM quickly take-not-PAST
   “That test, all didn’t take quickly”

Technical details aside, Miyagawa's argument is based on the standard view, going back to Klima (1964), that for negation to take scope over α, negation must c-command α. For the examples here, in which the relevant relation is between negation and the quantifier zen’in ‘all’, this entails a ‘partial negation’ interpretation: “Not all thought that the teacher will assign homework” in (15a), and “Not all took the test quickly” in (15b). The ‘partial negation’ interpretation is completely inadmissible in (15a), whose reading is exclusively “All did not think that the teacher will assign homework”, but it is possible in (15b), along with “All did not take the test quickly”. In other words, (15b) is ambiguous. Thus two different questions arise: (i) what is the factor allowing for ‘partial negation’ in (15b), and disallowing it in (15a)?; and (ii) what is the source for the ambiguity in (15b)? Miyagawa's answer to the first problem capitalises on the position the quantified subject and the scrambled object occupy in each of the structures. He contends that, while (15a) re-presents an ordinary case with the subject in the specifier of the T(ense) projection, hence c-commanding negation, in the ‘partial negation’ reading of (15b) this position is occupied by the scrambled *sono tesuto-o*. In consequence, the subject must
appear in a lower site, from which it cannot c-command negation. The relevance of Miyagawa's hypothesis for scrambling is that it amounts to equating it with the movement operation that displaces the subjects of passives and raising constructions to Spec, T. Simply put, it amounts to equating clause-internal scrambling with 'A-movement'.

The problem raised by the double interpretation in (15b) is solved by Miyagawa by resorting to the Japanese structure in (16) below, where, unlike the case in (15b), clause-internal scrambling targeting the pre-subject position results in only one reading:

(16) **Sono tesuto-o zen’in-ga saiwaini uke-nakat-ta**

that test-ACC all-NOM fortunately take-not-PAST

“All did not take that test”

*“Not all took the test”*

Miyagawa attributes the opposition between (15b) and (16) to the type of adverb that follows the quantified subject. In the first case, it is a manner adverb that, by assumption, occurs within the VP; in the second case, it is a sentence adverb that typically occurs high in the structure (Cinque, 1999). The result is that subjects may precede manner adverbs even if they are not hosted by Spec, T and, instead, occupy a lower position. But there is only one place for subjects that appear before a sentence adverbial, namely TP, from which they necessarily have scope over negation (the only reading in (16)).

For Miyagawa, the presence of the subject in Spec, T requires the scrambled object to occur in an A-bar-position, i.e. a position reached by ‘A-bar-movement’. This entails a double characterisation of clause-internal scrambling as targeting either an A-bar or A-position. Whether or not this is a tenable interpretation, long-distance scrambling is consistently A-bar, which prevents a uniform treatment of the two.

The facts in Russian are also more complex than they may appear at first sight. Recall that Müller and Sternefeld claim that scrambling in Russian is ‘A-bar-movement’, and that the different positions the scrambled item occurs in are the result of the alternative adjunction sites Russian grammar allows for. However, Bailyn (2002, 2003) convincingly shows, as Miyagawa (2001, 2003) does for Japanese, that some instances of clause-internal scrambling exhibit properties typical of structures derived by ‘A-movement’. Such instances, which Bailyn labels ‘General Inversion’ constructions, are characterised by the obligatory presence of the verb after the ‘scrambled’ constituent, which, although sometimes marginally, may bind a c-commanded anaphor (indicated by co-indexing) (examples from Bailyn, 2003):
Since, on standard assumptions, binding is possible only from A-positions, Bailyn’s conclusion is that ‘General Inversion’ must target a position of this kind, namely Spec, T. Nevertheless, in the scrambling strings where there is no adjacency between the scrambled constituent and the verb, the former exhibits properties traditionally assigned to elements on A-bar positions. One of these properties is that binding is impossible:

(18) a. *Ètu firmu, svoi, direktora rekomendujut
    this firm-ACC self’s directors-NOM recommend
  b. *Maše, svoja, rabota nravitsja
    Masha-DAT self’s work-NOM pleasures

On the other hand, Bailyn (1995, 2001) demonstrates that long-distance scrambling in Russian is subject to the same constraints as wh-movement, which, following Mahajan (1990), makes him characterise it as an instance of ‘A-bar-movement’. If the distinction he draws between ‘General Inversion’ in (17) and the process in (18) is correct, the situation in Russian would parallel that in Japanese, and at least two different classes of scrambling should be posited: ‘General Inversion’, if the scrambled constituent appears in an A-position (17), and ‘Dislocation’, if the position is A-bar, independently of the clause that contains it ((13b) and (18)).

Miyagawa’s (2001, 2003) and Bailyn’s (2002, 2003) analyses are simply examples of how recent studies of certain scrambling languages question the claim that all instances of reordering attested in the so-called scrambling language are the product of a single process. From this perspective, the different ordering options Japanese or Russian exhibit are linked not only to the structural positions the scrambled constituent occupies, but also to well-defined syntactic operations that cannot be subsumed under a general label. In the next section we will consider whether the same assumption may be true of Germanic scrambling.
3. Scrambling in the Germanic languages

The most common assumption about Germanic scrambling in the literature
is that it is amenable to accounts invoking a single syntactic operation. This
assumption, in turn, rests on two fundamental claims: (i) the systematic
absence of long-distance scrambling in Germanic allows for a unified treatment
of reordering sequences; and (ii) there is a strict differentiation between West
Germanic scrambling and North Germanic ‘Object Shift’. The present work
contends that, while (i) is basically correct, (ii) is not completely accurate. The
fact is that both processes share important properties usually disregarded, and
even unnoticed.

There are two reasons for considering (i) as essentially right. The first is, as
in the standard view, the general absence of long-distance scrambling. This is
illustrated below for German (19a), Dutch (19b), and Yiddish (19c) (Dutch
examples from Neeleman, 1994; Yiddish examples from Diesing, 1997):

(19) a. *dass Hans das Buch sagt dass er gelesen hat
   that Hans-NOM the book-ACC says that he read has
   “that Hans says that he has read the book”

b. *dat Kees dat artikel dacht dat hij gelezen had
   that Kees-NOM that article-ACC thought that he read had
   “that Kees thought that he had read that article”

c. *az Maks hot Avromen gezagt az Rifke
   that Max-NOM has Abraham-ACC said that Rebecca-NOM
   hot gezoen has seen
   “that Max has said that Rebecca has seen Abraham”

Thus, clause-internal scrambling seems to be the only option in Germanic
languages.

The second reason relates to the structural position in which scrambled
constituents may appear. In this respect, Germanic languages are divided into
two main types, those in which there is only a scrambling site (intervening
between VP-adjoined material and subjects), and those in which there are two
(the one intervening between the VP-adjoined material and subjects, plus
another located above the subject position). Dutch seems to belong to the first
type (20), while German and Yiddish are clear instances of the second —(21),
(22)— (Dutch examples based on Neeleman, 1994; Yiddish examples from
Diesing, 1997):

(20) a. *dat Kees dat artikel dacht dat hij gelezen had
   that Kees-NOM that article-ACC thought that he read had
   “that Kees thought that he had read that article”

b. *az Maks hot Avromen gezagt az Rifke
   that Max-NOM has Abraham-ACC said that Rebecca-NOM
   hot gezoen has seen
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type (20), while German and Yiddish are clear instances of the second —(21),
(22)— (Dutch examples based on Neeleman, 1994; Yiddish examples from
Diesing, 1997):
(20) a. \( \text{dat Jan het boek op zontag leest} \)
    \( \text{that Jan-NOM the book-ACC on Sunday reads} \)
    “that Jan reads the book on Sunday”

b. \( \text{*dat het boek Jan op zontag leest} \)
    \( \text{that the book-ACC Jan-NOM on Sunday reads} \)
    “that Jan reads the book on Sunday”

(21) a. \( \text{dass Hans das Buch gestern gelesen hat} \)
    \( \text{that Hans-NOM the book-ACC yesterday read has} \)
    “that Hans read the book yesterday”

b. \( \text{dass das Buch Hans gestern gelesen hat} \)
    \( \text{that the book-ACC Hans-NOM yesterday read has} \)
    “that Hans read the book yesterday”

(22) a. \( \text{Nekhtn hot Maks dos bukh nit geleyent} \)
    \( \text{yesterday has Max-NOM the book-ACC not read} \)
    “Max did not read the book yesterday”

b. \( \text{Nekhtn hot dos bukh Maks nit geleyent} \)
    \( \text{yesterday has the book-ACC Max-NOM not read} \)
    “Max did not read the book yesterday”

On the uncontroversial assumption that a unified syntactic treatment of
reordering options in a given language necessarily requires the existence of a
unique position for reordered elements, the facts in Dutch seem to support the
frequent claim that Germanic scrambling may be considered as a single
process. On the other hand, the data from German or Yiddish might seemingly
be interpreted to mean that pre-subject and post-subject scrambling were two
distinct phenomena. This possibility is, however, clearly disallowed by the fact
that scrambled constituents seem to exhibit an identical syntactic behaviour,
irrespective of their appearance before or after subjects. Using German as my
example, I shall argue in Chapter 3 that it is impossible to establish for that
language any syntactic distinction between pre-subject and post-subject
scrambling, if the latter takes place past VP-adjoined adverbials.

Things may be different with respect to (ii) above—that is, the strict separa-
tion between scrambling and ‘Object Shift’. At first glance, both might seem to
be generally characterised as reordering processes that allow VP-internal
material to occupy a higher, VP-external position, insofar as the string created
by ‘Object Shift’ (23) is identical to that produced by clause-internal
scrambling (24) (Icelandic example from Thráinsson, 2001):
(23) a. *Nemandinn las ekki bókina
   student-the-NOM read not book-the-ACC
   “The student did not read the book”
b. Nemandinn las bókina ekki
   student-the-NOM read book-the-ACC not
   “The student did not read the book”

(24) a. *Der Student hat gestern das Buch gelesen
   the student-NOM has yesterday the book-ACC read
   “The student read the book yesterday”
b. Der Student hat das Buch gestern gelesen
   the student-NOM has the book-ACC yesterday read
   “The student read the book yesterday”

However, extensive research has revealed that the syntactic properties they exhibit differ in several respects. Among them are:
(a) ‘Holmberg’s Generalisation’ (Holmberg, 1986) (see Chapter 5). ‘Object Shift’ is dependent on verb movement, while scrambling is not. In other words, while the presence of a shifted object is barred in Icelandic if the lexical verb remains in the VP (25), scrambled constituents are freely allowed in German (26) (Icelandic examples from Thráinsson, 2001):

(25) a. Af hverfu lásu nemendurnir bækurnar ekki?
   why read students-the-NOM books-the-ACC not
   “Why didn’t the students read the books?”
b. *Af hverfu hafa nemendurnir bækurnar ekki lesið?
   why have students-the-NOM books-the-ACC not read
   “Why haven’t the students read the books?”

(26) a. Warum las der Student gestern das Buch?
   why read the student-NOM yesterday the book-ACC
   “Why did the student read the book yesterday?”
b. Warum hat der Student das Buch gestern gelesen?
   why has the student-NOM the book-ACC yesterday read
   “Why did the student read the book yesterday?”

(b) ‘Object Shift’ is possible only with DPs, while there are no categorial restrictions on scrambling (Chapters 3 and 5). Thus, shifting of a PP in Icelandic results in an ungrammatical structure (27), but scrambling of a complement
non-finite clause in German is well-formed (28) (Icelandic examples from Thráinsson, 2001):

(27) a. Jón taladi ekki vid Mariu
   John-NOM spoke not with Mariu
   “John didn’t speak with Mary”

   b. *Jón taladi vid Mariu ekki
      John-NOM spoke with Mariu not
      “John didn’t speak with Mary”

(28) a. dass er gestern das Buch zu lesen versucht hat
    that he yesterday the book-ACC to read tried has
    “that he tried to read the book yesterday”

   b. dass er das Buch zu lesen gestern versucht hat
      that he the book-ACC to read yesterday tried has
      “that he tried to read the book yesterday”

(c) In contrast to scrambled constituents, which may precede subjects in languages like German or Yiddish (see above, and also Chapter 3), shifted objects must obligatorily follow them, as shown in the Icelandic examples in (29) (from Thráinsson, 2001) and the German examples in (30):

(29) a. þá máluðu allir stráskarnir stundum bílana rauða
    then painted all boys-the-NOM sometimes cars-the-ACC red
    “Then all the boys sometimes painted the cars red”

   b. þá máluðu allir stráskarnir bílana stundum rauða
      then painted all boys-the-NOM cars-the-ACC sometimes red
      “Then all the boys sometimes painted the cars red”

   c. *þá máluðu bílana allir stráskarnir stundum
      then painted cars-the-ACC all boys-the-NOM sometimes
      rauða
      red
      “Then all the boys sometimes painted the cars red”

(30) a. dass Peter gestern das Buch gelesen hat
    that Peter-NOM yesterday the book-ACC read has
    “that Peter read the book yesterday”

   b. dass Peter das Buch gestern gelesen hat
      that Peter-NOM the book-ACC yesterday read has
      “that Peter read the book yesterday”
c. *dass das Buch Peter gestern gelesen hat
   that the book-ACC Peter-NOM yesterday read has
   “that Peter read the book yesterday”

(d) In the case of ditransitive predicates, in which the dative is base-generated higher than the accusative (DAT > ACC), the accusative shifts only if the dative shifts as well ((31c) vs (31d)), with DAT > ACC as the only possible order ((31d) vs (31e)). However, there is no ban on scrambling an accusative across a dative (32c), and, if both are scrambled, DAT > ACC as well as ACC > DAT are permitted ((32d), (32e)) (Icelandic examples from Thráinsson, 2001):

(31) a. *Ég skilði ekki mannínun bókinni
    I did not return book-the-ACC not man-the-DAT
    “I didn’t return the book to the man”

b. Eg skilði mannínun ekki bókinni
   I returned man-the-DAT not book-the-ACC
   “I didn’t return the book to the man”

c. *Ég skilði bókinni ekki mannínun
   I returned book-the-ACC not man-the-DAT
   “I didn’t return the book to the man”

d. Eg skilði mannínun bókinni ekki
   I returned man-the-DAT book-the-ACC not
   “I didn’t return the book to the man”

e. *Ég skilði bókinni mannínun ekki
   I returned book-the-ACC man-the-DAT not
   “I didn’t return the book to the man”

(32) a. dass die Firma gestern meinem Önkel
    that the company-NOM yesterday my uncle-DAT
    die Möbel zugestellt hat
    the furniture-ACC delivered has
    “that the company delivered the furniture to my uncle
    yesterday”

b. dass die Firma meinem Önkel gestern
    that the company-NOM my uncle-DAT yesterday
    die Möbel zugestellt hat
    the furniture-ACC delivered has
    “that the company delivered the furniture to my uncle
    yesterday”
The conclusions suggested by these examples obviously argue against a unified account of Germanic reordering, supporting the common claim that scrambling and ‘Object Shift’ are unrelated phenomena. Furthermore, they tie in nicely with the view that scrambling is dependent on the ‘Head Parameter’, insofar as West Germanic languages are, probably with no exception,\textsuperscript{7} OV. They also make it possible to avoid the empirical and theoretical complications that would result from trying to explain both processes as deriving from a single source. In conclusion, preserving a strict differentiation between scrambling and ‘Object Shift’ solves a number of problems posed by such structures. At the same time, however, it raises other difficulties.

The first difficulty concerns the fact that none of the properties above, except for ‘Holmberg’s Generalisation’ in (a), can be said to be privative of either scrambling or ‘Object Shift’. For instance, it is not completely true, as the reader will see in Chapters 3 and 5, that ‘Object Shift’ is general with DPs, or that scrambling is absolutely unrestricted. In fact, as Diesing (1997) convincingly argues, the two processes seem to obey constraints related to the semantic reading of the shifted/scrambled constituent, which, in general terms, must be interpreted as discourse-linked. From this perspective, the asymmetry found between West Germanic scrambling and North Germanic ‘Object Shift’ parallels, in some sense, that manifested in North Germanic itself, where the vast majority of languages (Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Faroese) allow
reordering to apply only to pronominal DPs, which makes the Icelandic shift of nominal DPs an exception. It is true that there does not exist any account in the literature that derives the categorial differences between scrambled and shifted constituents in a satisfactory way. But it is not less true that the factor responsible for the asymmetry between Mainland Scandinavian and Icelandic has not been properly identified yet, mainly due to the facts in Faroese, a language with morphological case of the kind manifested in Icelandic, where, nevertheless, ‘Object Shift’ is restricted to pronominal DPs, as in Mainland Scandinavian.

Similar complexities arise with respect to (c) above, that is, the claim that scrambling permits two alternative clause-internal positions for reordered constituents, while ‘Object Shift’ is tied to only one. Such a statement is partially right, insofar as shifted objects never precede subjects in any of the North Germanic languages. But this is also the behaviour of scrambled constituents in Dutch (see (20) above), which has forced linguists to attribute the possibility of pre-subject scrambling in German to properties independent of the reordering process itself (see Chapter 3). The argument may be extended to the issue of the ordering restrictions with ditransitive predicates, usually considered as a hallmark of ‘Object Shift’ (31). Again, although it is true that neither German (32) nor Yiddish (Diesing, 1997:402) observe such restrictions, they are strictly obeyed in Dutch, as shown in (33) (from Thráinsson, 2001).\(^8\)

(33) a. *dat de vrouw de film waarschijnlijk
dat the woman-NOM the picture-ACC probably
de mannen toont
the men-DAT shows
“that the woman probably shows the picture to the men”

b. *dat de vrouw de film de mannen
that the woman-NOM the picture-ACC the men-DAT
waarschijnlijk toont
probably shows
“that the woman probably shows the picture to the men”

c. dat de vrouw de mannen de film
that the woman-NOM the men-DAT the picture-ACC
waarschijnlijk toont
probably shows
“that the woman probably shows the picture to the men”

If the objections to (b), (c), and (d) above are tenable, we are left with only two reliable criteria for deciding about the issue of how many reordering
processes are manifested in Germanic languages: the semantic constraints that, according to Diesing (1997), reordered constituents seem to exhibit, and ‘Holmberg’s Generalisation’ in (a). Diesing’s semantic constraints support the view that, despite remarkable differences, both scrambling and ‘Object Shift’ may constitute basically the same phenomenon. ‘Holmberg’s Generalisation’ argues for the common opinion that they must be strictly kept apart.

The present work aligns itself with the few studies that have emphasized the similarities between scrambling and ‘Object Shift’, considering them as apparently different manifestations of a single syntactic phenomenon, i.e. Germanic reordering. My analysis will focus on German scrambling, which, as shown in the previous discussion, seems to be more problematic for the unified account, because it allows for alternative clause-internal positions for scrambled constituents (c), and it does not impose ordering restrictions on ditransitive predicates (d). I shall argue that:

(i) German(ic) scrambling is restricted with respect to the semantic/pragmatic nature of the scrambled constituent, as has been frequently noted in the literature (de Hoop, 1992, Neeleman and Reinhart, 1998, for Dutch; Diesing, 1992, Meinunger, 1995, for German; Diesing, 1997, for Yiddish; among others). Scandinavian ‘Object Shift’ is restricted in the same way (Diesing, 1997; Holmberg, 1999; Chomsky, 2001; among others).

(ii) The link between Scandinavian ‘Object Shift’ and verb movement in ‘Holmberg’s Generalisation’ must be replaced by a link between the shiftable object and any phonologically realised constituent c-commanding it within the VP-projection (Holmberg, 1986; Holmberg, 1999; Chomsky, 2001). This would explain (a) why verb movement is irrelevant for reordering in West Germanic languages, where head-finalness would systematically prevent the clause-final verb from c-commanding the ‘scrambleable’ constituent; and (b) why scrambled co-arguments of ditransitive structures must appear in a fixed order in Dutch. It will be argued in these pages that ‘Holmberg’s Generalisation’ also holds true for German, as may be seen by the availability of discourse-linked readings for unscrambled accusatives following VP-internal datives, by some anomalies in the reordering of arguments bearing inherent case in ditransitive constructions, and by the asymmetry between head-initial and head-final projections as far as scrambling of their internal constituents is concerned. The claim that ‘Holmberg’s Generalisation’ applies in German, however, leaves us with the problem of accounting for those cases in which a VP-internal element may be reordered across phonologically realised material. This study will suggest a solution along the lines proposed for VP-internal scrambling in such languages as Japanese (Miyagawa and Tsujioka, 2004) and Persian (Karimi, 2003). It will defend a relatively flexible view of base
generation in German on the basis of VP-topicalisation constructions, while admitting the need for more research on this point.

(iii) German(ic) scrambling entails the same kind of special ‘Spell-Out’ procedure Chomsky (2001) proposes for Scandinavian ‘Object Shift’. This is empirically corroborated by some systematic contrasts between fronting and scrambling of constituents base-generated in reordered non-finite clauses (Grewendorf and Sabel, 1994; Müller, 1998). If the account of such asymmetries proposed in this study is tenable, it would constitute an additional proof for the unified approach to reordering in Germanic languages, and lend support to Chomsky’s insight, which, as it stands, is exclusively based on requirements derived from the theoretical model it adopts (the ‘Minimalist Program’).

To summarise, the present work will contend that German(ic) scrambling strings are the product of a single syntactic process and, moreover, that Germanic reordering (i.e. scrambling and ‘Object Shift’) are essentially the same.

The overall development of the argument proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 presents some general properties of the syntax of German, focusing on those structures that are relevant to the subsequent discussion of the scrambling data. Chapter 3 surveys the properties that characterise German scrambling, according to the vast and frequently contentious literature on the topic. Chapter 4 critically reviews the different analyses that have tried to account for such properties within a generative framework, showing their main advantages and deficiencies. Chapter 5 devotes itself to discussing in detail the claims in (i)-(iii) above, which, if tenable, would demonstrate the adequacy of a unified treatment of both North Germanic ‘Object Shift’ and West Germanic scrambling. Finally, Chapter 6 summarises the main conclusions of the study as a whole.
CHAPTER 2
A SURVEY OF SOME BASIC PROPERTIES OF GERMAN

This chapter presents an overview of some phenomena in German that will be relevant to our discussion of scrambling: clausal structure, coherent infinitival constructions, remnant movement, weak pronominals, and focus scrambling. Although the specific reasons for their importance to the larger argument about reordering processes presented here will soon become apparent in the chapters that follow, it will be useful to give a brief preliminary outline.

With respect to clausal structure, I shall argue that scrambling is invariably restricted to the German *Mittelfeld*, a fairly uncontroversial assumption. A descriptive characterisation of the *Mittelfeld*, as well as the *Vorfeld* and *Nachfeld*, will be given in Section 2.1, where we will also treat one of the most pervasive Germanic properties, the ‘verb second constraint’.

Coherent infinitival constructions have been traditionally distinguished from incoherent ones with regard to several properties (Haider, 1986a, 1987, 1990, 1991, 1993). One of those properties relates to scrambling facts: reordering of elements thematically linked to the embedded infinitive may appear in the matrix clause only in the case that the infinitive at stake is coherent. Such structures will be the topic of Section 2.2. Regarding remnant movement, its inclusion obeys to two observations on which the present work capitalises: (i) languages such as German allow for a kind of remnant movement which is the direct result of scrambling (Thiersch, 1985; Den Besten and Webelhuth, 1987; 1990); and (ii) remnant constituents cannot be reordered (Müller, 1998). Section 2.3 will focus on such incomplete categories.

In their seminal work on crosslinguistic deficiency, Cardinaletti and Starke (1996, 1999) argue that the German pronominal system cannot be reduced to the bipartite division that is traditionally assumed for Romance languages (full vs clitic forms), and that the existence of a third type of pronoun must be posited, namely weak pronouns. For Cardinaletti and Starke, these elements are endowed with special phonological, semantic, and syntactic properties, as will be shown in Section 2.4. Their connection to scrambling is due to the claim that (i) the syntactic position they occupy (the so-called ‘Wackernagel position’) is, in fact, a scrambling site (Gärtnér and Steinbach, 2003) and (ii) their phonological behaviour is the source for the well-formedness of some instances of reordering with remnant constituents (Chapter 5). Finally, Section 2.5 will
be devoted to ‘focus scrambling’ (Neeleman, 1994), in order to clarify the
ways in which the conclusions of the present study do not apply to it. Although
both processes are, in fact, very similar as far as their locus is concerned (the
*Mittelfeld*), they differ greatly with respect to syntactic behaviour, as Neeleman
(1994) convincingly demonstrates.

The approach in the following sections is mainly descriptive, and the only
theoretical assumptions are those derived from a very general generative
framework: clauses are the product of the combination of lexical and functional
heads, which project into lexical and functional phrases. With respect to
functional phrases, I shall follow a simplified design, in which the only
functional projections are TP (tense phrase) and CP (complementiser phrase).
Both heads and phrases may be displaced to higher (head and phrasal)
positions by movement operations, whose trigger and requirements will be
completely disregarded here.¹

### 1. The structure of the German clause

One of the most relevant syntactic characteristic of German is the so-called
‘verb second constraint’, which also holds in the rest Germanic languages
(except English).² The term refers to the position occupied by the finite verb,
main or auxiliary, in root declarative clauses, which is, almost without
exception,³ the second position. In other words, whatever category appears as
the initial constituent of a main clause, the finite verb will immediately follow
it. This is illustrated in (1), where a DP subject (1a), an adverbial phrase (1b),
and a secondary adjectival predicate are the first elements in the string:

(1) a. *Peter* sah *einen Vogel*
    Peter-NOM saw a bird-ACC
    “Peter saw a bird”

b. *Gestern* hat *Peter* *einen Vogel* *gesehen*
    yesterday has Peter-NOM a bird-ACC seen
    “Yesterday Peter saw a bird”

c. *Grün* hat *er* gestern *den Zaun* *gestrichen*
    green has er yesterday the fence-ACC painted
    “He painted the fence green yesterday”

Describing ‘verb-second’ as the obligatory second position of a finite verbal
form in declarative main clauses entails that, in the relevant languages, there
must exist an asymmetry with respect to verb placement between root and non-
root structures. This asymmetry is straightforward in the case of those
Germanic languages characterised as OV languages (among them, German),
where the position of the finite embedded verb is undoubtedly demonstrated to be clause-final (Koster, 1975):

(2) a. weil  Peter   einen Vogel  sah
   because Peter-NOM a bird-ACC saw
   “because Peter saw a bird”

a'. [Einen Vogel zu sehen] wäre angenehm
   a bird-ACC to see would-be fun
   “It would be fun to see a bird”

b. Mein Bruder  steht immer sehr früh auf
   my brother-NOM gets always very early up
   “My brother always gets up very early”

b'. weil  mein Bruder  immer sehr früh aufsteht
   because my brother-NOM always very early up-gets
   “Because my brother always gets up very early”

In (2a), the finite verb sah is the last element of the embedded clause, paralleling the non-finite zu sehen in the topicalised VP of (2a'). On the other hand, the final particle of root (2b) forms a unit with the finite verb in (2b'), which argues not only for the OV nature of German, but also for an account of the ‘verb second constraint’ in terms of a derived structure. And, in fact, this is the common treatment it has received in the literature.

Thiersch (1978) proposed that ‘verb-second’ is the result of two different operations, one displacing the finite verb, and the other fronting the preceding XP. It was Den Besten’s (1983) hypothesis that the verb position should be related to the C(omplementiser) position, on the basis of the absence of verb second in embedded clauses,4 and the apparent complementary distribution of finite verbs and complementisers. According to him, what both types of elements have in common is that they are phonological realisations of tense (T), hosted by C in Germanic, as such phenomena as complementiser agreement and cliticisation onto C demonstrate.5 Thus, verb movement is rendered as V-to-T. The trigger for XP-fronting is more controversial. Nevertheless, it is generally assumed that its syntactic behaviour argues for a characterisation of the position it occupies as a derived position too. Grohmann’s (2000b) study on the Germanic left periphery summarises the main arguments:

(i) The displaced element is theta-selected by the verb.