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Rebecca Woods and Sam Wolfe (eds.) *Rethinking verb second*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. xxii + 956.

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The verb second property has played a pivotal role in syntactic theory for nearly a half century, and not without good reason. Verb second structures exhibit both head movement and phrasal movement (in common generative terms), with many dimensions of within-language and cross-linguistic variation, often conditioned by information-structural and/or pragmatic factors. The phenomenon thus forms a rich testing ground for broader theories of syntactic displacement, clause structure, and the syntax-pragmatics interface.

Rethinking Verb Second, edited by Rebecca Woods and Sam Wolfe, is an ambitious undertaking. Its 36 chapters are intended as a compendium of current theoretical debates around verb second, and the wide range of empirical methods that can be applied to its study. In addition, the editors have aimed to emphasize contributions that reevaluate current debates, or open new lines of inquiry on the interfaces between verb second patterns and semantic, pragmatic, and prosodic factors. Overall, the volume admirably meets the editors' goals; it is impressive to find such breadth of research in a single book. While generative syntactic theory (in particular the Minimalist and Cartographic traditions) is best represented, the book is enriched by contributions from a range of theories and research methods.

I can highly recommend the book to any linguist with research interests in any aspect of verb second and its variation, who will surely find unfamiliar data and new theories to be challenged and surprised by. Given its extensive coverage of current and prior approaches to verb second, the volume can also serve as a useful reference manual. The editors' introductory chapter offers a concise but highly informative summary of the main theoretical issues at stake. Because the book

is not intended as a handbook, however, readers who are less familiar with its topics should keep in mind that many chapters read as continuations or further explorations of prior works where key proposals or assumptions are argued for in fuller detail. While the chapters vary in their aims and methods, the discussion and argumentation is generally of high quality. Aside from some inconsistencies in the layout of tree diagrams, and an inconvenient absence of glosses for a few non-English examples in some chapters, the book is well edited, well formatted, and highly readable.

The work is organized in three sections. Part 1 focuses on verb second and its pragmatic import in Germanic languages. Part 2 discusses other branches of the Indo-European family, and the diachronic development of verb second. The chapters in Part 3 are a heterogeneous group that discuss verb second in contact varieties, non-Indo-European languages, and language acquisition patterns. The editors acknowledge in their introduction that these categorizations are not mutually exclusive, and subject to many cross-currents and alternative groupings. Nonetheless, aspects of this division are puzzling given that the work is not physically split into separate volumes. Here, I will attempt to group the chapters (excluding the introduction) into four broad categories, which may assist the reader in approaching the work.

First, there are a number of empirical overviews of verb second or an aspect thereof in a particular language, typically accompanied by some formal analysis. This characterizes the chapters by Holmberg (Swedish); Greco & Haegeman (West Flemish and Standard Dutch); Bidese, Padovan, & Tomaselli (Cimbrian); Casalicchio & Cognola (Ladin); van Urk (Dinka); Giorgi & Haroutyunian (Modern Eastern Armenian); Diesing & Santorini (Yiddish); Andrason (Wymysorys); and Fitzgerald (Tohono O'odham). While these chapters collectively discuss a broad range of phenomena, there is a recurrent focus on understanding the structural properties or

featural licensing conditions of various exceptions to verb-second order (e.x. verb first, verb third). Here, there is a wide range of approaches, but little current consensus. As a brief example, the availability of particular verb third structures is argued to depend on the height of the landing site of verb movement by Greco & Haegeman, the featural makeup of left-peripheral heads by van Urk, and the availability of base-generation in the left periphery by Giorgi & Haroutyunian. Overall, it is clear that verb second systems can permit a rich variety of deviations, which may ultimately require different explanations. However, the success of these particular explanations will have to be determined by broader cross-linguistic studies.

In a second, but related vein, some chapters focus on an aspect of verb second, based on contemporary or historic corpus data. This includes the contributions by Poletto (Old Italian, with a focus on null subjects); Wolfe (verb second properties of Old Sicilian and Old French); Agantýsson (variation in verb second contexts in contemporary Icelandic); Galves (verb-second and verb-first orders in Classical Portuguese); Haeberli, Pintzuk, & Taylor (information-structural factors on object pronoun placement in Old English); Meelen (verb second in Middle Welsh and its precursors); Walkden & Booth (arguments against the broad availability of embedded verb second across clause types, particularly in historical Icelandic and Yiddish); Petrova (the distribution of verb second in complementizerless embedded clauses in Old High German). These chapters offer substantial new data, and often improve upon prior works with more fine-grained classifications of clause-type and phrase-type effects on word order. Their results often call into question widely accepted claims, as is especially notable in the chapters by Walkden & Booth and Petrova, which present serious empirical challenges to previous arguments for the availability of embedded verb second in some languages under non-asserted predicates (based on classifications of Hooper and Thompson 1973).

The third group consists of chapters with a heavier focus on the grounding factors that underlie (or do not underlie) verb second phenomena. Roughly half of these are based on experimental work, child language data, or a combination thereof. This includes the chapters by Bader (discourse constraints on the first position in German); Sanfelici, Trabant, & Schulz (verb second vs. verb-final orders in child German relative clauses); Gould (the acquisition path of embedded clause order in Swiss German, and implications for learning models); Woods & Roeper (pragmatic bases of auxiliary doubling in child English, German); Wiese, Öncü, Müller, & Wittenberg (an information-structural grounding factor favoring verb-third orders); Lohndal, Westergaard, & Vangsnes (variation in verb-second contexts in Norwegian dialects). The other papers in this group base their claims primarily on formal data. This includes chapters by Lohnstein (semantic and structural relations between discourse contexts and agreement, tense, and mood features); Gärtner & Eyþórsson (effects of mood on the availability of embedded verb second in Icelandic); Julien (a defense of assertion-based accounts of verb second); Gärtner & Michaelis (verb second in clausal disjunctions as a counterexample to assertion-based or at-issue-based explanations); Jouitteau (verb second as a postsyntactic exponence requirement); Bošković (syntactic differences between clitic second and verb second, and a shared prosodic grounding factor). Taken together, these chapters show that investigation of verb second patterns reveals a myriad of information-structural, morphological, and phonological grounding factors that can influence word order. The fact that no one factor can explain the attested variation, and that few are exceptionless in a given language, further suggests that verb second structures result from particular confluences of grounding factors. These preferences may conflict with other influences on grammar, a point notably made in the unexpected but thought-provoking chapter by Wiese et al., which presents experimental evidence for a language-independent communicative preference for frame-setters and topics to be expressed

before predicates, favoring certain verb third patterns that frequently emerge from ‘strict’ verb second systems. In a similar vein, Bader discusses a range of corpus and experimental evidence that the type of phrase that fills the first position in German verb second clauses is determined by a transitive hierarchy of competing discourse-based restrictions. To my knowledge, generative approaches to verb second have not yet considered in depth this aspect of speaker choice in the discourse property that ‘wins’ to fill the first position, nor its probabilistic nature, so it presents a worthy challenge for future work.

The fourth group of chapters offers analyses of phenomena with close structural ties to verb second. This includes the contributions by Branigan (a unified approach to verb second and other phrasal movement patterns in terms of feature inheritance; Chomsky 2008); Meklenborg (the inventory and availability of first-position resumptive pronouns); Sailor (British English *fuck*-inversion); Woods (embedded inverted questions in some English varieties); Manetta (verb phrase ellipsis in Kashmiri); Migdalski (the relation between tense morphology and second position clisis in Slavic). These chapters are an excellent illustration of the theoretical cross-fertilization that can result from the investigation of verb second alongside other domains of syntax. Sailor and Manetta, for example, quite convincingly situate their patterns of interest in the predicted typologies of theories of operator-triggered movement and verb-stranding ellipsis, respectively.

While most languages discussed in the book are in the Germanic, Celtic, and Romance families, a handful of chapters focus on less-discussed Indo-European branches (Manetta’s chapter on Kashmiri, Giorgi & Haroutyunian’s chapter on Modern Eastern Armenian), and non-Indo-European languages (van Urk’s chapter on Dinka, Fitzgerald’s chapter on Tohono O’odham). There is, however, little mention of well-known instances of verb second in Ingush (Nichols 2011) and Karitiana (Storto 1999), or of other non-Indo-European languages. The Indo-European focus

is in some ways reasonable, given the family's typological properties and its being the locus of prior work on verb second. However, discussion of a broader range of languages is certainly warranted, given the growing consensus in many chapters that the 'verb second' label masks several continua of variation, and that superficial verb-first orders often share defining structural properties with verb-second patterns (as proposed in some way in the chapters by Sailor, Poletto, Wolfe, and Jouitteau). Naturally, the editors are not responsible for the state of the field, but the observation highlights that much progress is yet to be made from engagement with a wider range of languages and phenomena.

The works in the volume point to numerous avenues for future work, reflecting diverse interests and approaches of its authors. As one noteworthy example, the successive chapters by Casalicchio & Cognola, van Urk, and Giorgi & Haroutyunian discuss apparent parallelisms between verb-second structures at the clause edge and the structure of the ν P projection. Giorgi & Haroutyunian show that in Modern Eastern Armenian, non-focused indefinite nouns immediately precede auxiliaries in clauses without auxiliary movement to the clausal domain. Van Urk shows that direct object nouns in Dinka immediately precede the second highest auxiliary or verb in the clause. Both patterns reveal a 'verb second' structure at the ν P edge, triggered by features that are tellingly related but not identical to those active at the clause edge. These proposals suggest that there may be much to learn about canonical verb second structures by examining patterns outside of the clausal left periphery.

Looking farther afield, I suggest that there are fruitful lines of work yet to be pursued in examining verb second in relation to the structure of nominal expressions. To briefly consider one example, despite significant interest in parallels between nominal and clausal structure, and in the availability of head and phrasal movement within nominal expressions (see Alexiadou et al. 2007;

Giusti 2015 for overviews), little attention has been paid to the apparent absence of ‘noun second’ patterns that display systematic head movement of a noun to a DP projection that must also have a filled specifier (for example, a phrasal determiner, thematic argument, or expletive). The asymmetry is striking, given that some grounding factors proposed for verb second are also present in nominal structures. For example, the existence of languages with nominal-internal second position clitics suggests that the prosodic grounding factor in verb second and clitic second (like the ones discussed in chapters by Bošković, Fitzgerald, and Jouitteau) is also active in nominal structures. The absence of grammaticalized, syntactic noun second patterns has many potential implications. It may indicate that in verb second structures the ability of the relevant C head to license a specifier is inherited from the moved verbal head, whereas this EPP property is absent on noun heads (Hsu 2020). Alternatively, the asymmetry may suggest that nominal expressions fundamentally differ from clauses in terms of how they project, and the selectional relations they are subject to (Bruening 2020). There are certainly other avenues to pursue, with potential to deepen our understanding of both verb second and nominal structures.

In summary, *Rethinking Verb Second* is a comprehensive and thoughtful compendium of the state-of-the-art in research on verb second. I suspect that the volume and its chapters will play a key role in many theoretical advances to come.

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