The distribution of declarative verb second in Germanic

1. Recent developments fail to shed new light on verb movement parameters. In checking theory (Chomsky 1995, Zwart 1996) differences in verb placement are at best described with the use of strong/weak features. In Chomsky (1998) the idea that feature checking accounts for this parametrization is abandoned altogether so that, irrespective of whether feature checking is real, theoretical proposals are needed. I will propose a theory of overt verb movement which, together with a simple output condition, accounts for the distribution of declarative V2 in Germanic, i.e. it answers the following questions:

   (i)Why do some V2 languages have V2 in main clauses only and some also in embedded contexts (cf.1)?
   (ii)Why is English the only Germanic language without declarative verb second (cf.2)?

2. In standard practice features are represented twice, once on an empty functional head F and once on the verb. The question is then what property of F triggers overt verb movement ('What is strong?'). The feature redundancy can be overcome by assuming that the verb does not move to "check" some feature F but rather to project it in order to satisfy some constraint. The lexicon makes available complex heads, e.g. [V[F]], leaving unspecified which of the two projects: Output conditions determine that. After insertion V *must* project in order to discharge its θ-grid. Next, [V[F]] moves and merges with VP. No ambiguity results as a consequence of this self-attachment (cf. Chomsky 1995,Ch.4) once F is the projecting feature: $[_{FP} F[_{VP} V]]$. In this alternative conception of functional structure the question is not so much what triggers movement (given that some output condition is universal) but rather what blocks it in certain contexts. I believe that this question is easier to answer than the original one, as I will show in 4 and 5.

3. I propose that the distribution of declarative V2 follows from the constraint in (3). It is the syntactic encoding of the uncontroversial claim that Tense is not part of the denotation of the predicate and does not form a semantic unit with it. Rather, it is a property of a proposition or event. Since T (attached to V) does not satisfy (3) when [V[T]] is inserted and projects into VP, V moves in order to project T (cf. 4) and to meet (3). T puts no restrictions on what XPs might occur in its specifier: Any XP can move there (cf. 5).

4. In embedded contexts (3) can be met through the presence of a complementizer. COMP is specified for T but not for [±Past] but can enter into a dependency relation with [V[T]]through head-head agreement (the definition in (6) suffices). Recall that [V[T]] is an ambiguous head in its base position, only its projection is unambiguously V' and VP. As a consequence, COMP becomes specified for [±Past], and (3) is met without the (uneconomic) use of V-movement (cf. 7). Now, V2 is only obligatory in embedded contexts in languages with 'independent V to I' movement, such as Icelandic and Yiddish (in contrast to Mainland Scandinavian, cf. Vikner 1994, Rohrbacher 1994). Under the assumption that rich agreement requires projection of AgrP to establish a spec-head relation with the subject (I will offer detailed suggestions during the talk), Agr becomes the unambiguous head after the first verb movement. It then becomes clear why V2 is triggered in these contexts. In (8), COMP cannot enter into a head-head agreement relation with any T lower in the structure since Agr, the closest head, intervenes. Hence $T_{[±Past]}$ does not c/m-command the subject or predicate in (8). V is therefore forced to move again in order to project T. SpecTP is again available for any XP. The result is an embedded V2 effect, as shown in (9).

5. Since verb movement takes place without there being an empty head, the question is when we would be led to postulate such elements if it is not verb movement. The answer is, I believe, in the face of unambiguous evidence. English lacks V2 and has another property that makes it unique among Germanic: *do*-support. The blocking effect of negation, which forces realization of a modal auxiliary in a higher position, provides clear evidence for the presence of an underlying empty head in non-negative contexts, distinct from V. Crucially, this evidence is unique to English. On the basis of the elements that can reside in it, this category must be minimally specified as [±T]. If so, (3) can be met without V-movement. VP-external T enters into a head-head relation with [V[T]], becomes specified for [±Past] and m-commands the subject and predicate (cf. 10). When negation is present this head-head dependency is blocked (cf. 11)and some tensed head must be inserted in order to specify T (cf.12). The theoretical connection between these two striking properties of English finds strong support from diachronic observations. Van Gelderen (1993) shows that the loss of V2 in the history of English and the introduction of *do*-support in negative contexts

both took place around 1400 and argues that they are both related to the introduction of T, which is close to what I propose.

6. Given that (3) is universal, we initially expect 'V to C' all over the place. However, language-specific properties, such as the presence of an empty head in English and the usability of COMP (depending on presence of indepently motivated V to I) in the other languages, lead to the actual distribution we observe. Nothing has been said about the nature of XP-fronting in Germanic yet. If time permits, I will show how a proposal by Roberts & Roussou (1997) (i.e. XP-fronting and the subject requirement (EPP) are both means of identifying speech time) can be incorporated in my analysis in such a way that the consequence will again be that a language-specific property, namely the presence of pronominal agreement in Romance, is responsible for the lack of verb second in these languages.

Examples:

(1) a. Jón harmar að þessa bók skuli ég hafa lesið   (Icelandic)
         Jon regrets that this book should I have read
     b. *Jag beklager att boken läste studenterna inte   (Swedish)
         I regret that the book read the students not
(2) a. This book John will never read   (English)
     a'. *This book will John never read
     b. Bókina keypti Jón ekki   (Icelandic)
         books bought John not
     b'. *Bókina Jón keypti ekki
         books John bought not
(3) The Tense feature of the finite verb, say [±Past], must m- or c-command the subject and the predicate.
(4) $[_{TP}$ ... $[V[T]]_i$ [subject + predicate t_i]]   (V2 main clause)
(5) $[_{TP}$ XP $T_{[+Past]}$ [subject + predicate]]
(6) Two heads α and β can enter into a dependency relation iff α c-commands β and there is no head γ such that all segments of γ c-command β but not α.
(7) $[_{CP}$ COMP$_{[+Past]}$ $[_{VP}$ subject $[V[T_{[+Past]}]]$ ...]]   (Swedish embedded clause)
(8) *$[_{CP}$ COMP $[_{AgrP}$ subject $[V[T[Agr]$ $[_{VP}$ ... $t_{[+Past]}$ ...]]   (Icelandic emb. clause)
(9) $[_{CP}$ COMP$_{[+Past]}$ $[_{TP}$ XP $T_{[+Past]}[_{AgrP}$ subject Agr $[_{VP}$ ... $[V[T_{[+Past]}]]$ ...]]   (Icelandic emb. clause)
(10) $[_{TP}$ subject $T_{[+Past]}$ [... $[V[T_{[+Past]}]]$ ...]]   (English)
(11) *$[_{TP}$ subject T $[_{negP}$ neg ... $[V[T_{[+Past]}]]$ ...]]   (English)
(12) $[_{TP}$ subject T+$do_{[+Past]}$ $[_{negP}$ neg ... $[_{VP}$ V] ...]]   (English)

References:
Chomsky, N. (1995) *The minimalist program*, MIT Press, Cambridge.
Chomsky, N. (1998) 'Minimalist inquiries', ms., MIT.
Gelderen, E. Van (1993) *The rise of functional categories*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam.
Roberts, I. & A. Roussou (1997) 'The extended projection principle as a condition on the tense dependency' paper presented at the workshop on subjects, expletives and the EPP, Tromsø.
Rohrbacher, B. (1994) *The Germanic languages and the full paradigm: A theory of V to I raising*, PhD dissertation, University of Massachusetts.
Vikner, S. (1995) *Verb movement and expletive subjects in the Germanic languages*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
Zwart, C.J.W. (1996) *Morphosyntax of verb movement*, Kluwer, Dordrecht.