

# What is Verb Second?

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Although the Verb Second (V2) property which is found in most of the Germanic languages belongs to the most stable and well described grammatical phenomena, the nature of V2 and its explanation continues to be a matter of debate among linguists. In this presentation it will be argued on the basis of German data that V2 is essentially an epiphenomenon which emerges from the the requirement of morphological integrity. The expression “V2” is partially misleading because the verb in the sense of the verb stem is only affected due to the fact that the associated inflectional features must move to C. In other words, the verb stem is affected by *generalized pied-piping*. The talk will concentrate on the following phenomena:

1. periphrastic *tun* („do“ )
2. verb doubling
3. negative polarity
4. association with focus
5. verb and separable particle

It will be shown that in all these cases the verb itself is interpreted in its underlying clause-final position and not in the second position in which it is phonetically perceived, i.e. the verb is obligatorily reconstructed. The analysis does not only offer a consistent explanation of the data but also makes a strong point in favor of a syntactic theory in which movement leaves an inaudible copy, the so-called “copy-theory of movement”. The result of V2 is V2 only at the PF-side of the grammar; it is I2 (or T2) at the LF-side of the grammar because the lexical part of the inflected verb remains at LF in the base position.

If time permits, the result will be placed in a larger typological context. Different, also weakly related or even unrelated languages of the world show V2-effects or related X2 phenomena. Comparisons offer room for speculations about the functionality of V2/X2.