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Feature-Checking and Germanic Verb-Second: comparing Yiddish, German and English

0. Background

In Travis 1984 it was argued that not all main clauses in Germanic have the same basic underlying structure. Since then there have been various interesting attempts to eliminate this possibility. Most notable of these are Schwarz and Vikner 1989 and Vikner and Schwarz 1992. Yet, the issue continues to be raised, recently in Travis 1991 and Zwart 1991a & b and 1993, in particular that both the IP and the CP can have clausal status in Germanic. Analyses of Yiddish (e.g. Travis 1984, Diesing 1990, Heycock & Santorini 1992) show that this language uses both IP- and CP-based main clauses. Since Yiddish is a descendant of Germanic, its set of parameters cannot be purely a result of its "individual" choice out of UG rather than to parameter choices it inherited. Abraham 1993 presents convincing evidence and arguments that support the significance of the IP as a clausal category in the history of Germanic, and that this status of the IP more than likely exists yet today. Modern Yiddish supports this hypothesis.

With the introduction of an expanded theory of the IP (beginning with Pollock 1989) and most recently a revised generative theory based on principles of economy, certain syntactic properties of clauses can be captured more straightforwardly. In what follows I will use Chomsky 1992, called a Minimalist Program for Linguistic Theory (MPLT), and subsequent studies which adopt this program, for drawing special attention to certain properties of main clauses in Germanic that do not seem to have CP-characteristics. My purpose will be to consider what insights the MPLT can provide with respect to the IP as a clausal category in Germanic. A comparative approach will be used in which properties of V2 in English, German and Yiddish (with special attention to the latter) will be unified in the attempt to support the assumption that the IP has clausal status in all three languages.

In §1 I state the assumptions that my analyses will be based on. In §2 we briefly review some properties of Yiddish syntax and how I think it fits into the broad picture of Germanic V2, in particular the hypothesis that subject-initial main clauses are IPs in all three languages. In §3 the focus will be on syntactic relations in the CP system relevant to V2. A specific central question will be: Can Spec,CP become an A-position by virtue of being narrowly L(exically)-related to the feature cluster [V Agr] in C? My position, based on the role of Agr in all three languages will be that Spec,CP is never an A- but always an A'-position. In §4 will follow some concluding remarks.

1. Assumptions

In the remainder of this paper I will attempt to support the following assumptions about verb movement in each language, drawing support in particular from some features of Yiddish syntax related to the way V2 is manifested in it. Some of them are already well supported in the literature:

- (1) a In Yiddish and German, V-to-Agr occurs overtly to mark a strong Agr¹; English has a weak Agr and therefore does not require overt verb raising.
- b Subsequent movement of the V to C occurs when features of the element in Spec,CP must be checked by [V Agr] in C.
- c English differs from Yiddish and German in respect to V-to-C movement, the difference expressed in the features in Comp; German and Yiddish Comp has: [+wh], [+op(erator)], [+S/C (subjunctive/conditional)], [+imp(erative)] (all but [+op] are features representing moods assumed in traditional grammar which describe clausal properties) while English has only a [+wh] feature in Comp, and possibly a latent [+op].
- d Yiddish alone among these languages targets Spec,Agr_sP in topicalization when it is an A' position (in embedded clauses); consequently V-to-C is not tied in any way to topicalization.
- e Because of the syntactic relations required for checking Spec,CP and for chain formation in topicalization, German and Yiddish do not allow adjunction to either CP or Agr_sP in main clauses, only in embedded clauses. English permits adjunction to Agr_sP in both since it lacks overt Agr raising.
- f German and Yiddish allow topicalization to Spec,CP freely in main clauses because of the availability of C as an appropriate locus for [V Agr], appropriateness based on the properties of Comp (reflected in its features).²
- g English uses overt verb raising (V-to-Agr) primarily with *do, be, have* and the modals, possibly also with full verbs in certain cases of topicalization, but the result is not the same V2 effect observed in Yiddish and German because of the weak Agr property.
- h The V2 constraint is determined in Germanic by the strength of Agr which is carried over to Comp when V-to-C occurs; Comp in turn determines a number of feature-checking relations; V2 is not a constraint based on the number of syntactic positions physically present but on syntactic relations determining which are available.

Stated in brief using terminology common in the literature, German and Yiddish both produce the V2 effect with V-to-C in main clauses whenever topicalization occurs, but in subject-initial clauses V2 does not require V-to-C. This assumption is made in Travis 1984 and will be expressed here in terms of the MPLT. Further issues will also be considered, important to the on-going refinement of this program in linguistics. My objective here and throughout is to establish the broad outlines of Germanic V2 and to account for V2 in all three of the languages through the requirement of feature-checking.

2. Yiddish Verb-Second

2.1 Yiddish as a symmetrical V2 language

One of the most salient qualities of Yiddish syntax is the presence of V2 in both main and

¹ A "strong" Agr is one which has morphological features that are visible to Phonological Form (PF), characteristic of languages having a more or less complete set of morphological agreement markers, for instance German and Yiddish, in contrast to English. More on "strong" and "weak" features will follow.

² Yiddish, like German and Dutch dialects, has subject clitics, evidence that its Comp possesses features that support Agr (from Diesing 1990, note 7):

(i) *Hostu im gegeben dos bukh?*
have-you him given the book

subordinate clauses; hence, Yiddish is often referred to as a "symmetrical" V2 language:³

- | | |
|---|--|
| subject-initial main clause: | main clause with topicalization: |
| (2) a $[_{AgrSP} \text{ikh shik avek dos bukh}]$ I send away the book | $[_{CP} \text{Dos bukh shik } [_{AgrSP} \text{ikh avek}]]$ |
| (main clause) ... embedded clause with V2 and topicalization: | |
| b $(\text{ikh veys nit}) [_{CP} \text{tsi } [_{AgrSP} \text{ot dos bukh hot er geleyent}]]$ I know not whether Q- <i>prt.</i> the book has he read | |

The property of Yiddish illustrated in (2b) distinguishes it most clearly from German which requires verb-end in subordinate clauses (see (b) for gloss):

- (2) c $(\text{Ich weiß nicht,}) [_{CP} \text{ob } [_{AgrSP} \text{er das Buch gelesen hat}]]$

Yiddish differs from English in respect to verb positions visible in the syntax because it requires overt V-to-Agr, necessary for lexical marking of a "strong Agr" as discussed in Pollock 1989, Chomsky 1992, et al.⁴ Two consequences of its strong Agr are the V2 effect in embedded clauses and overt object raising,⁵ neither of which exist in English. While German has V2 in main clauses, its dependent clauses show no overt verb raising. Yiddish requires overt verb raising in both clause types, hence "symmetrical" V2. Both German and Yiddish, I hope to show, create the V2 effect with both V-to-Agr and V-to-C. Only with this assumption can we account for V2 in Yiddish embedded clauses.⁶

2.2 Feature-checking of [+nom] with V-to-C

In Yiddish embedded clauses with V-to-C an interesting syntactic requirement comes into play, observed generally in main clauses of many languages (cf. Kosmeijer 1991): the subject must be in the specifier position immediately below C whenever V-to-C occurs (cf. Heycock & Santorini (1992) for another account). We compare (3a) and (3b):

- (3) a $\text{Ven}_i \text{ hot er nit gevolt } [_{CP} \text{t}_i \text{ az } [_{AgrSP} \text{mir zoln leyenen di bikher } \text{t}_i]]$
when has he not wanted that we are supposed to read the books

³ On the basis of (2b) we can determine that V2 can coexist with a complementizer in Yiddish (in contrast to German). The cases in which the complementary distribution of V2 and complementizer becomes an issue in Yiddish are therefore much more limited, as §2.2 will show.

My phrase marker and (1) indicate, however, that my assumptions about main clauses and--as my subsequent analyses will show--about subordinate clauses differ from Diesing who assumes that topicalization targets Spec,IP in main clauses. I see no evidence for this assumption. Support for my position will follow.

⁴ In Chomsky's (1992) terminology, Agr in English is theta-opaque because it disallows verb raising to it; without the feature [V], Agr cannot assign theta roles, without which a derivation would crash.

⁵ Object raising is a form of A-movement by which object arguments which are lexical NPs (as opposed to clitics, cf. Cardinaletti 1992) move to Agr_{OP}. Only languages which license Spec,TP at s-structure (accomplished by V-raising to T) allow object raising. See Jonas & Bobaljik 1993 for further discussion.

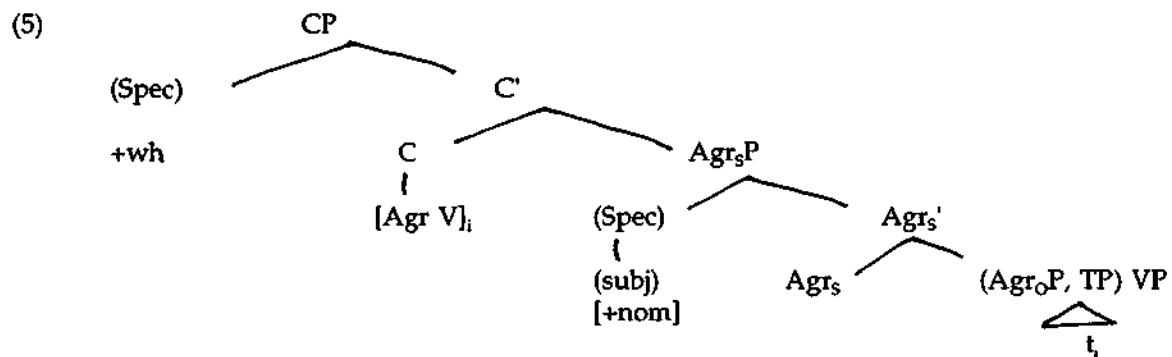
⁶ See also discussion in Santorini 1992. In contrast to Diesing 1990:43, my theory of V2 does not assume that V-to-C is independent of the V2 phenomenon. Rather, V2 will be defined in terms of feature checking rather than the number of positions that theoretically exist.

- b *Ven, hot er nit gevolt [_{CP} t_i zoln [_{Agr_SP} ot di bikher, mir leyenen t_i t_i]]

This requirement I will assume applies also to German, as the following data indicate (the exact duplicates of (3) cannot be produced in German):

- (4)a Wann hat er gemeint, sollen die Kinder die Bücher lesen?
when has he meant are supposed to the children the books read
- b *Wann hat er gemeint, sollen die Bücher die Kinder lesen?

This restriction on the displacement of Spec,Agr_SP can be accounted for in terms of Spec-head feature checking: only if the subject occupies Spec,Agr_SP can [V Agr] in C check its [+nom] feature by way of the chain headed by [V Agr] (omitting irrelevant details):⁷



This restriction occurs in Yiddish not only in cases of wh-fronting, but also in subjunctive/conditional, imperative and interrogative clauses:

- (6) vet er kumen morgen, vel ikh oykh kumen
will he come tomorrow, will I also come
- (7) gey morgen tsum dokter!
go tomorrow to the doctor
- (8) a Hot Avrom gezen Maksn?⁸

⁷ In German, one could possibly argue, no transitive subject may occur anywhere but in Spec,Agr_SP, regardless of construction type (whether declarative or interrogative). This restriction does not appear to apply in embedded clauses:

- (i) ...daß heute die Kinder die Bücher lesen sollen
...that today the children the books read are supposed to

In §3.4 I will support an adjunction analysis of *heute* rather than fronting to Spec,Agr_SP.

What appears to be a violation of this constraint in main clauses may actually be an effect of Heavy NP Shift:

- (ii) Die Bücher sollen heute die Kinder lesen, die viel Lust auf Lernen haben
??Die Bücher sollen heute die Kinder lesen

As (2b) indicates, a subject in Yiddish may occur elsewhere without the support of HNPS, one reason we assume that Spec,Agr_SP in Yiddish is not an A position in embedded clauses. (cf. §2.3).

⁸ I am excluding direct yes/no questions of the type in (i) which are actually statements (declaratives) with question intonation:

- (i) Er hot gezen Maksn? (He has seen Max acc)

This type does allow topicalization:

- (ii) Maksn hot er gezen? (cf. Diesing 1990:55)

Note also that the question operator *tsi* may occur in such questions:

(continued...)

- b **Hot Maksn Avrom gezen?*
has ... (acc) ... (nom) seen
- c *Far vos hot Maks gegesn dos broyt* (**Far vos Maks hot ...*)
For what has ... eaten the bread
(Diesing 1990:50)

We can assume that this restriction occurs in (6) and (7) on the basis of two facts: (i) a finite verb never occurs in initial position in any Yiddish declarative main clause, unless preceded by a narrative sentence (cf. Diesing 1990, note 14), and (ii) V-to-C must occur in (8) to explain the fact that the subject must follow the verb; since this restriction always occurs with V-to-C, then it also occurs in (6) and (7) which cannot derive without V-to-C. As suggested by (2), topicalization to Spec,CP may take place freely in German and Yiddish declaratives, whereas in interrogatives, subjunctives/conditionals and imperatives it may not. Since this restriction occurs only in these clause types (non-declaratives) in Yiddish, the V2 constraint evident in declaratives which don't require V-to-C must be due to Agr_S as clausal head. This assumption will play a central role in the unification of Yiddish, German and English syntax.

2.3 Spec,Agr_SP and V2

The assumption that Spec,Agr_SP is the landing site for topicalization in Yiddish embedded clauses (in contrast to the landing site for wh-fronting, Spec,CP) can be empirically supported by the fact pointed out by Diesing 1990 that topicalization does not create an island. Wh-fronting may proceed out of a clause with a topicalized element (cf. (3b)). Moreover, topicalization can occur in both embedded and matrix clauses (compare (2a) and (2b)), pointing to a different manner of feature-checking of [+nom] in Yiddish declaratives, a fact that will be explored in §2.4. In this section we consider the syntax of a main clause with a topicalized element, requiring fronting to Spec,CP and V-to-C movement. In both Yiddish and German a strong V2 effect is produced:

- Yiddish:**
- (9a) [_{CP} *dos bukh shik ikh avek*] (**Dos bukh ikh shik avek*)
the book send I away
- b **German:** (see gloss in (a))
[_{CP} *das Buch schicke* [_{Agr_{SP}} *ich weg*]] (**Das Buch ich schicke weg*)

The nature of this constraint becomes clearer in a comparison to a rather weak V2 constraint in English. I will assume that V-to-C occurs in matrix wh-questions in English because of a wh-operator in the English Comp, a general assumption in the literature⁸:

- (10a) ?*Who soon will be sending a book out?*
(cf. *Soon X is sending a book out*)

⁸ (...continued)

(iii) *Tsi hot er gezen Maksn?*

In the MPLT such operators would be analyzed like wh-operators, occupying Spec,CP. I will assume that analysis, contrary to Diesing 1990:56.

⁹ See especially Rizzi 1990b and 1991 in this regard. We should note that finding highly unacceptable V2 violations in matrix wh-questions in English is difficult, simply because not very many elements can be fronted in declarative clauses (as in the parentheses), and those that can are often either parenthetical, thereby escaping the constraint, or are modifiers of the wh-element, falling within its immediate domain.

- b ?*Who hopefully is the committee recognizing?*
(cf. *Hopefully the committee is recognizing X*)

Interestingly, V2 in another construction type in English seems stronger, as the violation of which the data below seem to indicate:

- (11)a *There goes our favorite do-nothing*
b ??*There our favorite do-nothing goes*
- c *Out of nowhere came a famous author*
d ??*Out of nowhere a famous author came*¹⁰

We note that neither of these construction types is permitted in either German or Yiddish (in that order in each pair below, glosses in (10a) and (11a)):

- (12)a **Wer bald wird ein Buch wegschicken?*
b **Ver bald vet avekshikn a bukh?*
- c **Da unser Taugenichts geht*
d **Dortn úndser schódvinkl geyt*

Several predictions can be made about these structures: (i) the weak V2 violations in (10) might be due to a weak *wh*-operator feature in the English Comp. If this feature is weak, there is no need for overt checking of the *wh*-element, with the result that minimality does not need to be met. Feature checking is accomplished later in LF. The strength of the *wh*-operator feature of Comp could be determined by Agr: if Agr does not move to C, then a weak *wh*-feature results.¹¹

In the (rather) ungrammatical cases of V2 violation in (12), a verb lacking qualities of an auxiliary (in comparison to the auxiliary forms in (10)) occupies C.¹² If we assume that English Comp has only a weak [+op] because it lacks Agr, which does not have to raise until LF, then we can explain the nonexistence of V2, the normal case in English declaratives. But for (11) I am assuming that the fronted element occupies C, as the equivalents in (12) indicate. The element in Spec,CP does not have to overtly feature-check the English Comp because it lacks strong [+N] features due to the non-raising of Agr. Therefore, the fronted element may marginally intervene between C and Spec,CP, only marginally, however, because V alone (without Agr) makes the [+op] feature of Comp strong, which in turn requires feature checking between the element in Spec,CP and Comp. The level of grammaticality stems therefore from the intervening element forcing a violation of the required local relation between C and Spec,CP. Other cases of topicalization will be analyzed in §3.2. At this point we only note the possibility that the strength of Comp depends on Agr.

2.4 Yiddish [+nom] feature checking

Further support for the assumption that subject-initial main clauses in Germanic have their head in Agr_SP can be gained from an analysis of constructions with the expletive *es*. An interesting

¹⁰ This and similar V2 violations can be made a bit more acceptable by adding a heavy modifier at the right:
(i) ?*Out of nowhere the tax collector came carrying a fat briefcase*

¹¹ See Chomsky 1992:45 where it is suggested that the V2 phenomenon is produced when I (Agr) raises to C and makes the relevant feature strong.

¹² In Chomsky 1992:43 the explanation for overt raising of English auxiliaries is that they are not visible to LF rules because they lack semantically-relevant features.

difference not immediately evident in (1) between Yiddish and German can be seen in (13):¹³

Yiddish:

- (13)a *Ikhn freg zikh* [_{CP} *vos*_i [_{AGR_{SP}} *es hot emitser gekoyft t_i*]]
 I ask refl. what it (expl) has someone bought
 (cf. **Vos es hot emitser gekoyft?*)

German: (see gloss in (a))

- b **Ich frage mich, was es jemand gekauft hat*

The presence of expletive *es* in Spec, Agr_{SP} of (13a) means that nominative case can be checked in another Spec position. In the MPLT all arguments must have their case feature checked in the functional domain, ruling out the possibility that the nominative *emitser* does not leave the VP, as assumed in Heycock & Santorini 1992. This movement may target Spec, TP however in languages like Yiddish which utilizes Spec, Agr_{SP} as an A' position in embedded clauses.¹⁴ That is the option I will assume is taken when the subject does not move to Spec, Agr_{SP}. This question will be left to further research, since it doesn't directly concern the matter of V2. The distribution of expletive *es* in Yiddish supports the assumptions made here that (i) V-to-C occurs in Yiddish main clauses with topicalization, and (ii) Spec, Agr_{SP} is the "subject position" in main clauses. If it were not, we would expect to find expletive *es* in main clauses. As (13a) shows, this is impossible.

It is clearly evident from (2) that V-to-Agr movement is overt in Yiddish. With the verb in Agr, the object must raise for [+acc] assignment. In (13) a trace as the foot of a chain headed by *vos* in Spec, CP occupies Spec, Agr_{SP} where I will assume [+acc] is assigned, following general assumptions in the literature. V-to-Agr itself occurs not only to satisfy the lexical requirement of the strong Agr but also to supply the head in Agr needed for checking the features of the element in Spec, Agr_{SP} (an expletive in this case, but nevertheless possessing features that require checking). I will assume that the expletive *es* occurs in constructions like (13) to satisfy the requirement that Spec, Agr_{SP} be lexically marked, Yiddish being a non-pro-drop language because it lacks the proper verb type.¹⁵

The crucial syntactic relation in Yiddish that does not exist in German is the assignment of [+nom] on *emitser* in Spec, TP. The expletive *es* in Spec, Agr_{SP} of the embedded clause in (13a) stands in direct contrast to German (cf. (13b)) which appears to parameterize Spec, Agr_{SP} like English as a landing site for subject raising in both main and embedded clauses. If that is the case, then Agr_{SP} serves as the locus for the clausal head which contains the features [V Agr]. If all main clauses in German were CPs, as defended in Vikner and Schwarz 1992, then we would have to assume that the subject first lands in Spec, Agr_{SP} and then moves on to Spec, CP, an unlikely derivation in a minimalist theory which puts economy at the forefront (cf. §3.4).

This conclusion is also supported empirically by the distribution facts of expletive *es*. In German expletive *es* occurs only in Spec, CP, an A' position, and only in Spec, Agr_{SP} in Yiddish, also A' (in embedded clauses). If Spec, CP were an A-position whenever [V Agr] occupied C, as would be required if it were the locus of [+nom] assignment, then an expletive *es* should not be allowed in that position whenever [V Agr] occupies C. This is not the case, however, as (14) indicates:

¹³ See the discussion in Bures 1992 on the properties of the Transitive Expletive Construction. He mentions Dutch, German and Icelandic as languages possessing the appropriate syntactic properties for this construction. Yiddish also does.

¹⁴ Just how this proceeds is not entirely clear if we assume as does Chomsky that the paths of subject and object raising must cross rather than nest. For further discussion see Jonas & Bobaljik 1993 where some comparisons of Yiddish to Icelandic are drawn.

¹⁵ For more on this verb type, see Chomsky 1992:14 and Chomsky & Lasnik 1991.

- (14) *Es kamen drei Kinder von der Schule zu uns*
It came three children from the school to us

If Spec,CP is never an A-position, then the problem of subject raising to this position via Spec,Agr_sP remains. The status of Spec,CP in German main clauses and of Spec,Agr_sP in Yiddish main clauses will be investigated further in §3.2 where we will look at the CP system from the perspective of topicalization. For the moment we note that a transitive subject must raise overtly to Spec,Agr_sP in all German clauses, giving this position the appearance of a consistent A-position, the case in English as well. The overt raising in both languages satisfies the [+nom] case assignment/checking requirement which must proceed in a Spec-head relation, Agr_s to Spec,Agr_sP. How Yiddish escapes this requirement will be investigated further in §3.4, as that entails questions of Shortest Movement and whether Spec,Agr_sP is narrowly L-related to Agr_sP.

The status of Spec,Agr_sP in Yiddish does not play a large role in the discussion of V2; it is interesting, however, because this Spec-position defines the so-called "first position" in Yiddish embedded clauses, and also in subject-initial main clauses as in German in the view supported here. My argument relevant to V2 will be that when Spec,Agr_sP is lexically filled in Yiddish and German, and feature checking has proceeded properly, then the head of the clause, [V Agr], will remain in the Agr position so long as the clause remains declarative and the option is not taken to move [V Agr] to C for topicalization. This option is available to Yiddish and German because of its Comp features as outlined earlier, an idea which had its inception in den Besten 1983 and Platzack 1983 & 1986. I will assume that the cluster of features that raise to Comp, when combined with those inherent in it, produce a very strong clausal head, strong in the sense that many syntactic relations proceed out of it.¹⁶

2.5 Section Summary

The following recaps §2 briefly: English does not utilize Spec,Agr_sP as a landing site for fronting or topicalization. Without a strong Agr, Agr_sP does not play a role in creating any V2 effects (whether the language be English, Yiddish or another). In addition, V2 effects are not as strong in English clauses with V-to-C as they are in Yiddish, whether they result from V-to-C or V-to-Agr, because English has both a weak Agr (which affects not only Agr_s but also C) and consequently weak [+wh] and [+op] features in Comp, as discussed. Further support for these assumptions will follow in §3.2 from the analysis of constructions involving the CP system and V2. There we will see that the Yiddish Comp produces a stronger V2 effect than English Comp because of its strong Agr which adjoins to C in V-to-C derivations.

The data presented in §2.1 - 2.4 support a unified analysis of V2 in Yiddish and German, one based on the role of [V Agr] as a clausal head in both languages when this feature cluster occupies Agr_sP. Support for this analysis was drawn from the central role that Agr_sP plays in Yiddish clauses, both main and embedded, and from empirical and theoretical considerations which do not favor Spec,CP as an A-position.

3. The CP System and V2 in Germanic

3.1 Spec,CP cannot become an A-position

If the assumption made in Vikner and Schwarz 1992 is correct that all main clauses in German are CPs, then Spec,CP must be an A-position when a subject occupies it. Otherwise we cannot explain the obvious subject-object asymmetries that occur in, for instance, coordinate constructions

¹⁶ A interesting analysis of what actually triggers V-to-C in terms of the MPLT is given in Zwart 1993.

like:¹⁷

- (15)a *Hans kauft seiner Freundin gern Bücher, liest sie aber selber nicht*
 b **Bücher kauft Hans seiner Freundin gern, liest er aber selber nicht*
 books buys Hans his girl friend gladly, reads he but himself not

If this asymmetry has any syntactic basis whatsoever, then the most likely source is the location of the initial element in each construction, and the relation this initial element has to the rest of the construction.¹⁸ In the MPLT it is tacitly assumed, following Rizzi 1990b, that Spec,CP can become an A'-position. Chomsky (1992:40 and note 33) explains this change in status in terms of Spec,CP's relation to an element in C. If this element has V-features, then Spec,CP can be narrowly L-related to C, making it an A position. I will suggest in what follows that this assumption is problematic and unnecessary.

If we assume that initial subjects occupy Spec,Agr_SP whereas initial objects occupy Spec,CP, the former an A-position, the latter an A'-position, then we have a basis for this asymmetry. We would need to assume that the relation between a head in an A'-position and its foot is in some way different than the same relation when the head is in an A-position. If we follow the MPLT, this difference cannot be traced to the nature of the features required in each case; Chomsky (1992:11) assumes that there is a symmetry between the subject and object inflectional systems, that in both positions, Agr_S and Agr_O, the relation of the verb to NP is mediated by Agr, a collection of features marking gender, number and case. For this reason both subject raising and topicalization in Yiddish can target Spec,Agr_SP.

Nevertheless, some mechanism is needed for distinguishing Agr_S features that assign [+nom] from Agr_O features that assign [+acc], for even in Yiddish it appears that Spec,Agr_SP is not strictly an A'-position. Diesing assumes it is an A-position when occupied by a subject which I will follow.¹⁹ In the literature there is an implicit assumption that Spec,Agr_SP is the first appropriate landing site for subject raising in English and other Germanic languages (cf. the interpretation in Jonas & Bobaljik 1993:64). This appropriateness is expressed in the assumption that Spec-positions are created freely as needed in a derivation. If no Spec-positions in the functional domain exist at the point in the derivation when the subject raises, then one will be created for it, namely Spec,Agr_SP. The only basis for this choice of landing site must lie in its relation to the highest functional head position, Agr_SP.²⁰

Even in a language like Yiddish which allows an expletive *es* in Spec,Agr_SP in embedded clauses, the assumption that this position is the first appropriate one in the event of overt subject raising does not have to be abandoned. Spec,Agr_SP can still be considered the canonical subject position, for it is Agr_S which checks [+nom] in LF, if not overtly. Evidence for a similarity between German, English and Yiddish in respect to the subject position can easily be found in the requirement discussed in §2.2 for embedded clauses that the subject must occupy Spec,Agr_SP in the event of V-to-C, a requirement that applies in all three languages. When a Yiddish subject does not raise overtly, we simply have evidence that in the inflectional systems subjects and objects are

¹⁷ For a summary of other subject-object asymmetries in German, see Webelhuth 1990.

¹⁸ Certainly there are pragmatic differences between subjects and objects in initial position as well as syntactic ones. But if there were no syntactic differences, then we should be able to produce the pragmatic context in which constructions like (15) are acceptable. This is impossible.

¹⁹ Diesing points out that when non-subjects occur in what is the equivalent of Spec,Agr_SP, extra emphasis is required, including the use of *ot*, a particle for marking a displaced non-subject NP as in:

(i) *lkh veys nit tsi ot dos bukh hot er geleyent* (Diesing's (40b))

²⁰ As has been expressed in the Extended Projection Principle (Chomsky 1982), a subject stands in a different relation to the sentence than other arguments. The appropriateness of Spec,Agr_SP as a landing site for a subject reflects this relation.

symmetrical.

What forces subject raising in the event of V-to-C in Yiddish embedded clauses (why LF checking of [+nom] is not adequate) is a question relevant to V2. Following the MPLT we must look for the answer in the morphological features of the heads involved. Since this requirement applies when V moves to C (V in Agr_S does not produce this need), then it derives from two sets of features: those inherent in Comp and those which V and Agr bring to it. When Comp becomes the locus of [V Agr], it becomes strong in the sense that it has a strong N-feature that must check out with a lexical element in Spec,CP. But we can't explain the requirement on the displacement of Spec,Agr_SP until we outline the chain that is created with the movement of [V Agr] to C:

(16) [CP wh [C [V Agr]_i] [Agr_SP (subject) t_i ...]]

When this chain is created, the domain of Agr_S shifts to the left, thereby eliminating the possibility that the subject NP can have its features checked anywhere below this chain. It must be within the local domain of [Agr...t], since the trace of Agr no longer determines a checking domain.²¹ For this reason we will never see an expletive *es* in Spec,Agr_SP of any *wh*-construction in Yiddish, German or English, for all three involve V-to-C in *wh*-fronting (cf. (13)).

In summary, there is no need for the assumption that subjects in Yiddish and German always front to Spec,CP in V2 derivations. Given the assumptions made here about Agr, based on empirical support from Yiddish, Agr_S remains in Agr_SP whenever V-to-C is not required and functions there as a clausal head when joined with a verb.

3.2 Spec,CP and operators in topicalization

A central parametric difference between Yiddish and German suggested in §2.1 was that Spec,CP is not the landing site for topicalization in Yiddish embedded clauses. We can account for this parameter in the MPLT in terms of the [+N] feature in TP which assigns [+nom] in Yiddish, thereby leaving Spec, Agr_SP available for topicalization. Nevertheless, Yiddish Comp is able to check the features [+wh] for interrogatives, [+op] for operators and [+S/C] for subjunctive/conditional constructions when the cluster [V Agr] moves to C. In all three languages we find V-to-C in interrogatives, a result of what could be a universal *wh*-operator feature (see discussion in Chomsky 1992:45).

In English Spec,CP can still in exceptional cases be the landing site for topicalization if the topicalized element has certain properties, what could be called strong operator properties, versus the properties of elements like temporal and locative adverbs. Compare the initial elements in the a-examples with those in the b-examples of (17):

- (17)a *Today Joe bought lots of books again*
Certainly Joe must like to buy books
- b *Only once did Joe leave the bookstore without any books*
Not only does Joe buy lots of books, ...

Interestingly, NPs in English never seem to possess the right qualities to elicit V-to-C:

- (18) *Books Joe buys a lot of, but not flowers* (*Books buys Joe ...)
Time he has a lot of, whenever it comes to books (*Time has he ...)

According to the theory suggested in the first paragraph of this section, the properties of the element in Spec,CP should not play a role in V-to-C, if indeed V-to-C makes the relevant feature of Comp strong. What we could speculate operates in English, however, based on the data in (17) is

²¹ See Chomsky 1992: 17-18 for further discussion.

an elicitation of a latent strong operator feature when fronting of an element with certain properties is chosen.²² These properties would be [+S- adverbial, +exclusionary] (or something similar) shared by *only once, so, there, here, not only*, etc, allowing them to extend their scope much as an NP operator does in an A-chain.²³ These elements productively and consistently elicit subject-verb inversion. Making the assumption that V-to-C occurs when they are fronted would simplify the account of constructions like those in (17). An alternate account involves the assumption that expletive *there* (as in *There were throngs of people at the party*) occupies the same position, namely Spec,Agr_SP, as the *there* in

(19) *There goes our boy with his books again*

I find this assumption problematic. In te Velde 1993 it is argued that if we assume that expletive *es* consistently occurs in an A' position, then a better account of all pronouns in German and Yiddish can be given. I believe expletive *there* and the *there* in (19) should better be argued to occupy Spec,CP, though under certain circumstances expletive *there*, just as German *da*, can occur in Spec,Agr_SP. We will need to return to this point after we consider some properties of topicalization in German.

In German Spec,CP can be the landing-site for any XP because of the features its Comp inherits and possesses. When V-to-C occurs, the feature-checking performed by Agr passes on to C. But V-to-C does not always occur when Spec,CP is occupied. In certain instances of topicalization V-to-C does not occur:

- (20)a [_{CP}Als der Tag anbrach [_{Agr_{SP}}da schickte der König Kundschafter aus]]
As the day broke, there sent the king scouts out
- b * [_{CP}Beim Grauen des Tages [_{Agr_{SP}}da schickte der König Kundschafter aus]]
By the graying of the day there sent ...

An alternate analysis would be that the fronted clause does not occupy Spec,CP. Yet, it is unclear how it can be a fronted subordinate clause without landing in Spec,CP since adjunction to CP is ruled out in German:

- (21) * [_{CP} Heute Kundschafter schickte der König aus]
Today scouts (acc) sent the king (nom) out

I see no reason to assume that subordinate clauses do not land in Spec,CP just like the similar elements *heute* and *beim grauen des Tages*. The difference between (20a) and (20b) must be sought in the features of the fronted element in each case. If subordinate clauses (CPs) of narration like *Als der Tag anbrach* do not require feature checking unlike non-S-categories, then we have an account available: [V Agr] remains in Agr_S, and *da* occupies Spec,Agr_SP.²⁴ The crucial point here is that

²² I assume the possibility of a latent [+op] feature because of evidence for a strong one in earlier stages of English, as in Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales:

(i) *Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten*

This is not to say that V-to-C consistently occurred with topicalization, for it doesn't in Chaucer's work.

²³ For an alternate analysis of expletive 'there' and similar elements listed here see Jonas & Bobaljik 1993:71 and references cited there.

²⁴ Stowell 1981 proposes the Case Resistance Principle which states that Case may not be assigned to a category bearing a Case-assigning feature. This principle could capture the assumption made here for this narrative subordinate clause.

Another clause type which appears to have a similar status is the conditional *wenn*-clause:

(ii) *Wenn der König Kundschafter hinaussschickt, dann geht X nicht*
If the king scouts out-sends, then goes X not

this option is not available to us if we do not assume that Agr_s is a clausal head when occupied by a finite verb.

A similar case of an apparent V2 violation exists in cases of topicalization in English. If we assume that *out of the store* in (22) lands in Spec,CP, following my argument that certain topicalized elements elicit V-to-C, then the expletive *there* technically violates V2 as defined here in terms of feature-checking:²⁵

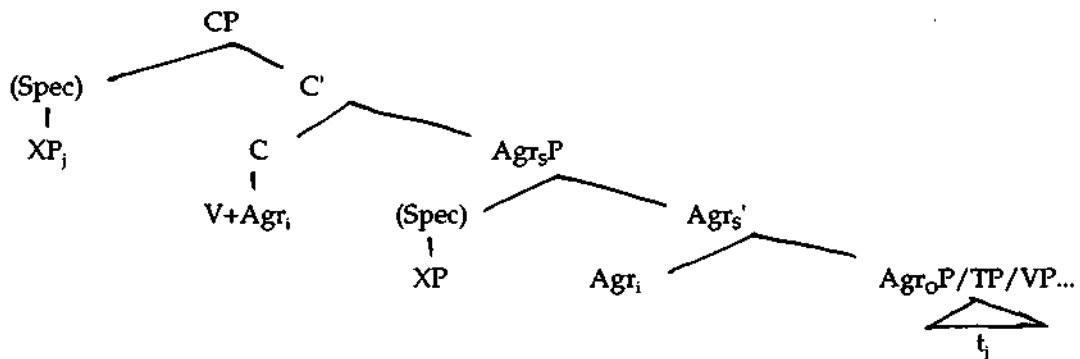
- (22)a (?) *Out of the store there came three book lovers*
 b **Aus dem Laden da kamen drei Bücherfreunde*
 (*da* not modifying the PP *aus dem Laden*)

We can account for this weak violation in English which is not permitted in German on the basis of the features that the English Comp has and inherits: In contrast to the German Comp, its [+op] feature is only latent, and the Agr which moves to it weak. Hence, the feature checking does not need to be overt, but can take the path of least effort—checking in LF—when the Spec-head relation does not obtain. Some degree of grammaticality is nevertheless lost due to the presence of a verb in C, eliciting overt feature checking which is blocked by the intervening adverb.

The exact properties of this construction are not an issue here, merely the existence of an apparent V2 violation. Not only does the construction indicate that the V2 rule is not merely a linear phenomenon (cf. discussion in Zwart 1993), but also that its properties are defined by relations between heads and specifiers involving both the CP and the IP systems.

We return as a conclusion to this section to the question raised in §3.1 regarding the status of Spec,CP in German. In the normal case of topicalization, the feature cluster [V Agr] occupies C and checks the features of the element in Spec,CP. The element in Spec,CP then stands in a position that in the MPLT is narrowly L-related to the element in C, as this element has a V-feature (Chomsky 1992:40):

- (23) the i-chain is within the domain of the j-chain; Spec,CP is narrowly L-related to C containing [V Agr]



24 (...continued)

- (iii) *Wenn es darauf ankommen sollte, so werde ich nicht mitmachen*
 If it it-on at-arrive should, so will I not with-do
 'If it should depend on that, then I will not participate'

²⁵ As pointed out in Jonas and Bobaljik 1993:note 16, the insertion of expletive *there* in this construction must be tied with a nondefinite subject. See the discussion of expletive *there* in Chomsky 1991 where the NP associated with the expletive moves to the expletive in LF.

If narrow L-relatedness actually resulted whenever a verb occupied C, including cases of topicalization, then we would have to assume that the initial elements in coordinate structures like (15) are both in Spec,CP. This eliminates a straightforward syntactic account of the subject-object asymmetries in this construction and the others alluded to at the outset of this section. If we assume that Spec,CP is an A-position only when a subject occupies it and thereby retain part of the syntactic basis for subject-object asymmetries, we create an ad hoc solution and one which runs counter to the minimalist theory for reasons stated earlier.

3.3 Adjunction and the CP and IP systems

It is commonly assumed that adjunction to Agr_SP is possible in English, but not in German. This assumption obviously relates to V2 for it concerns the nature of the CP and IP systems as defended here. That is, some syntactic feature-checking relation, lacking in English, presumably rules out the German version:²⁶

- (24)a **Heute Karl kauft wieder mehr Bücher*
 b *Today Carl bought more books again*

We assumed earlier that adjunction to the CP is ruled out in all three languages when V-to-C occurs. In the approach assumed here, *Karl* does not occupy Spec,CP but Spec,Agr_SP. It is not immediately evident why adjunction to Spec,Agr_SP should be ruled out in German, since the same chain relations present in cases of topicalization, for instance, are not present, and both the German and the English constructions are IP-based. The answer to this puzzle is found in the analysis of the underlying structures in each case. Because German requires overt verb raising to Agr_S, overt object raising must follow for which a specifier position in the functional domain must be created, namely, Spec,Agr_OP. It serves as a landing site for the head of a chain whose foot is in the VP (omitting irrelevant details):

- (25) [_{AgrSP} *Karl*_i *kauft*_i [_{AgrOP} *mehr Bücher* [_{VP} *heute* *t*_j *t*_i]]]

Object raising I will presume follows subject raising which targets Agr_SP, resulting in a syntactic chain and a feature-checking relation between Spec,Agr_SP and Agr_S.²⁷ These two raisings, of first the subject then the object, *inter alia* rule out adjunction to Spec,Agr_SP in essentially the same way that it is ruled out in (21) where C contained the head of the clause. Adjunction to Agr_SP or any other category would require movement across two filled Spec-positions. The principles of economy of derivation, specifically Shortest Movement, rule out adjunction to Agr_SP in this case. Shortest Movement requires that a moved element land in a position no farther than the first appropriate landing site. The "first appropriate landing site" in (24) would be the first available one above the first filled Spec-position; *heute* can go no farther than the first Spec position above Spec,Agr_OP, i.e. Spec,Agr_SP. Since the subject is there already, this is ruled out. In English adjunction can proceed because the first appropriate landing site would be precisely the adjunction position of Agr_SP, there being no Spec,Agr_OP to count as the first filled specifier position.

If V-to-C occurs in this derivation, then *heute* could theoretically be fronted before object

²⁶ What may also play a role in the difference between these two constructions is the fact that the relation of *kauft* to *Karl* differs from the relation of *bought* to *Carl* in respect to its overtness as well as the relation of *kauft* to its trace: both occur in the overt syntax, but in English there is no overt V-to-Agr. Spec,Agr_SP is narrowly L-related to Agr_S in German because of the V feature in Agr_S. In English the relations are not as "strong" in the overt syntax because English Agr is weak. Spec,Agr_SP is not overtly narrowly L-related to Agr_S, since Agr checks the feature of the subject in Spec,Agr_SP in LF. I assume what is true for German here is also true for Yiddish.

²⁷ For further discussion of whether subject raising precedes object raising or vice versa, see Bures 1992 (specific discussion of the cycle) and Jonas & Bobaljik 1993.

raising, avoiding a violation of Shortest Movement, since then it would land precisely in the first available Spec-position above Spec,Agr_SP, namely Spec,CP. The result would be:

(26) [_{CP} *heute_k kauft_i* [_{Agr_{SP}} *Karl_j* [_{Agr_{OP}} *mehr Bücher_l* [_{VP} *t_k t_j t_i*]]]]

A derivation not possible in German is the fronting of *heute* to Spec,Agr_SP, possible in Yiddish according to the assumptions made in Diesing 1990:

(27)a [_{Agr_{SP}} *haynt shik ikh avek dos bukh*] (*Haynt ikh shik avek ...)
today send I away the book

b **Es shik ikh avek dos bukh haynt*

One can defend the analysis in (27a) for fronting of *haynt* only if one assumes that Spec,Agr_SP is an A' position in Yiddish main clauses. It was argued earlier that expletive *es* occurs only in A' positions in both Yiddish and German.²⁸ If this assumption is correct, then we can assume that expletive *es* may occur where *haynt* does. (27b) indicates that this is not possible.

There are theoretical considerations which support the assumption that *haynt*, like all topicalized elements, targets Spec,CP rather than Spec,Agr_SP in main clauses. If *haynt* occupied Spec,Agr_SP, then *ikh* would need to occupy Spec,Agr_{OP}, and *dos bukh* Spec,TP. This derivation is ruled out in the MPLT for two obvious reasons: (i) Spec,Agr_{OP} is not an appropriate landing site for a subject, and (ii) Spec,TP is not an appropriate landing for an object. If *haynt* lands in Spec,CP, however, the subject and object will also land in the appropriate sites. Presumably, the subject and object would raise before topicalization in any case, thereby eliminating the possibility for topicalization to target Spec,Agr_SP, possible only in embedded clauses when the subject may raise to TP, as no feature-checking requirements force it to overtly raise to Spec,Agr_SP.

3.4 Subject-raising to Spec,CP violates Shortest Movement

We can assume that the English subject must occur in Spec,Agr_SP in overt syntax in order for its feature [+N] to check the strong [+N] feature of T, which has raised to Agr_S, since the latter has no strong [+N] feature (for further discussion see Jonas & Bobaljik 1993:70). The German subject raises to the same position, but no raising of [+N] is necessary, German Agr possessing a strong [+N] feature. As argued earlier, subject raising to Spec,CP would be hard to motivate in the MPLT. Specifically, we would have to assume that Spec,Agr_SP does not contain the [+N] feature. To make this assumption, we would have to provide another explanation for the subject needing to occupy Spec,Agr_SP in cases of V-to-C, for the one presented here is based on the assumption that the strong features of Agr have moved to C from Agr_S. If they had been there all along, then we would not have the restriction on the displacement of Spec,Agr_SP; rather, we would expect to find main and embedded clauses with V-to-C in which an element intervenes between C and the subject; as (28) shows, this option is out:

(28)a **Warum meint der Lehrer, kauft so viele Bücher der Junge heute?*
why thinks the teacher buys so many books the boy today

b **Warum kauft so viele Bücher der Junge heute?*

c ... [_{CP} *daß* [_{Agr_{SP}} *heute der Junge wieder so viele Bücher kauft*]]

²⁸ In te Velde 1993 I argue that the analysis of weak and strong pronouns, including expletives in German and Yiddish can be simplified if we assume that only elements which can carry stress can bind a trace (in the MPLT, head a chain). Given this principle, expletive *es* may appear in an A' position because it does not bind a trace but rather merely satisfies a phonological requirement on the position at Spell Out. It may not appear elsewhere because it has no lexical (thematic) content.

... that today the boy again so many books buys

The fronting of *heute* in (28c) is permissible because Agr has not moved to C; consequently, there is no chain between C and Agr_S to which the subject must stand in a local relation. Rather, the subject receives case in a Spec-head relation with Agr_SP and *heute* stands to the left of this relation in an adjoined position. Why adjunction is permitted here but not in (24a) is explained by the lack of overt V-to-Agr and object raising. The requirements of Shortest Movement can be met as in English main clauses.²⁹

Given the role of Agr_S in German as the head for assigning nominative, we need to assume that subject fronting to Spec,CP would have to proceed through Agr_S. How this is possible without violation of Shortest Movement, however, is not evident.

4. Conclusion

We have seen that all three languages, Yiddish, German and English, utilize both C and Agr_S as positions for the clausal head, though in varying degrees because in each these heads possess a different set of features. A change in the definition of V2 from a constraint based on positions that exist to positions available allows us to account for certain properties of English which point to a latent V2 rule. With V2 defined in terms of feature checking, the CP becomes available to topicalization in English as in German, even if the end result is not identical. Many syntactic facts can be accounted for if we assume two clausal head positions rather than one, and that the features of Agr are central to a clausal head: (i) subject-object asymmetries, illustrated here in terms of coordinate asymmetries; (ii) main-clause/subordinate-clause asymmetries, defined in terms of the location of Agr; (iii) the restriction on the displacement of Spec,Agr_SP in cases of V-to-C whose occurrence results from Agr-to-C; (iv) the behavior of expletive *es* in German and Yiddish, attributed to the A' status of Spec,Agr_SP in Yiddish when no subject raising occurs, a result of its strong [+N] on T; and (v) the occurrence of adjunction when Agr is weak or does not move to C.

Further research will show what other properties (beyond the syntactic features possessed) exist in the relation between Spec,Agr_SP as a favored "subject position" and Agr_SP as a finite verb position. The attempt made here to unify three Germanic languages in terms of how feature checking is accomplished supports the essence of the MPLT.

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²⁹ In structures like (i), I assume excorporation as described in Roberts 1991. In this case weak pronouns (cf. Cardinaletti 1992) adjoin to C which in German has non-verbal agreement features, as discussed for Dutch in Zwart 1991a:

(i) ...daß er sie heute wieder kauft

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