

## **AG 2: Quirky Vorfeld Phenomena: empirically-driven approaches to theoretical challenges**

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This theme-session will specifically address lesser-studied phenomena involving the position preceding the finite verb in German main clause declaratives (the Vorfeld) whilst aiming explicitly to draw in the formal analysis on findings made available by corpus linguistics and/or experimental methods. This is motivated by the fact that various studies have shown that a reliance on introspective data has led to generalizations being missed or to false assumptions being made.

The findings of several recent works have led to a call for revision, or even rejection, of some standard assumption(s) of theoretical significance for the analysis of the Vorfeld. For instance, it was long assumed that the Vorfeld could house precisely one constituent. Recent corpus-based work has, however, shown that multiple-occupancy of the Vorfeld is not so uncommon as previously assumed (Müller 2003). The exact conditions in which such constructions are licensed still remain to be explicitly formulated though. In a similar vein, Meinunger (2007) shows that the long-adopted assumption that the German object pronoun *es* cannot occur in the Vorfeld is not empirically tenable. Again, the precise licensing conditions are all but clear. Taking a further example; although it has long been known that a subject and non-finite verb may co-occur in the Vorfeld, a detailed account of the semantic and informational-structural properties of this construction is still required. Another area of interest is less well-documented information structural constellations involving the Vorfeld. For instance, it is often assumed that the Vorfeld corresponds to some information structural category (Topic, Focus, Contrast etc.) yet Fanselow & Lenertová (to appear) introduce novel data suggesting that the relationship between syntax and information-structure is in need of refinement.

In addition to contributions considering data from verb-second languages, we also welcome proposals addressing related phenomena in other language groups (e.g. the pre-clitic position in Slavic, V2-similar effects in Romance etc.). The theme-session aims to attract researchers working in the fields of corpus linguistics, psycholinguistics as well as researchers in theoretical linguistics with a strong empirical component.

Fanselow, G. & D. Lenertová (To appear). Left Peripheral Focus: Mismatches between Syntax and Information Structure.

Meinunger, A. (2007). About object *es* in the Vorfeld. *Linguistic Inquiry*. *L1* 38.3, 553-563.

Müller, S. (2003). Mehrfache Vorfeldbesetzung. *Deutsche Sprache* 31(1), 29–62.