Evidence that V2 involves two movements: a reply to Müller[*]

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This paper considers a recent proposal by Müller (forthcoming) that the traditional two-movement analysis of verb second (V2) constructions can usefully be replaced by a single movement analysis. Specifically, Müller proposes that V2 structures involve a fronted vP-remnant containing only the finite verb and an XP that has not undergone evacuation from the vP-domain. We argue that there are both empirical and theoretical reasons to doubt the validity of Müller's proposal and that the standard analysis fares better in accounting for a number of phenomena that do not appear to be explicable on a single movement analysis. In particular, we consider three types of problematic data: those which point to the implausibility of the assumption that initial constituents in V2 constructions necessarily originate vP-internally and also those which respectively suggest that it is necessary to identify distinct verb- and XP-raising operations.

1   INTRODUCTION

In a very interesting recent paper, Müller (forthcoming) argues that the hitherto standard analysis of verb second (V2) constructions involving two separate movements of the verb and an XP, originally proposed by den Besten (1977), should be replaced by a single operation of remnant-fronting. Specifically, Müller proposes that a vP evacuated of all overt material other than the verb and a single constituent on the left edge undergoes this fronting operation, the creation of the appropriate initial domain being achieved by the Edge Domain Pied-Piping Condition, which states just this (cf. the definition of Edge Domain given in (4) below). This analysis is claimed to have certain interesting empirical advantages, and, notably to have the theoretical advantage of allowing us to dispense with a recalcitrant case of head-movement.

The central innovation in Müller's analysis is the idea that V2 is derived by a single movement operation, remnant vP-fronting, rather than by the interaction of movement of the finite verb and movement of an XP. Thus, instead of the standard derived structure for an object-initial V2 clause as in (1) (Müller's (1)), we have (2) (Müller's (3)):

(1)   [$_{CP}$ Das Buch$_2$ [$_{C'}$ hat$_3$-C [$_{TP}$ Fritz$_1$ [$_{vP}$ t$_1$ [$_{VP}$ t$_2$ gelesen] t$_3$] t'$_3$]]]
          the book$_{acc}$ has   Fritz$_{nom}$ read

(2)   [$_{CP}$ [$_{vP5}$ Das Buch$_2$ t$_1$ t$_4$ hat$_3$] [$_{C'}$ C [$_{TP}$ Fritz$_1$ [$_{T'}$ [$_{VP4}$ t$_2$ gelesen] [$_{T'}$ t$_5$ T]]]]]
             the book$_{acc}$ has   Fritz$_{nom}$ read

As Müller points out:

(3)   "In this approach, the pre-V/2 position is occupied by whatever category
          happens to be at the left edge of vP earlier in the derivation – this will typically
          be the subject NP or an adverb, but, after scrambling, it may also be an object