

More on word order

Verb second (V2)

In a German main clause, some phrase is at the front, and the verb is second:

Die Frau **sah** gestern den Mann
the woman saw yesterday the man
'The woman saw the man yesterday'

Den Mann **sah** die Frau gestern
the man saw the woman yesterday
'The man, the woman saw yesterday'

Gestern **sah** die Frau den Mann
yesterday saw the woman the man
'Yesterday, the woman saw the man'

Verb second (V2)

Sometimes 'the verb' is an auxiliary:

Die Frau **hat** gestern den Mann gesehen
the woman has yesterday the man seen
'The woman saw the man yesterday'

Den Mann **hat** die Frau gestern gesehen
the man has the woman yesterday seen
'The man, the woman saw yesterday'

Gestern **hat** die Frau den Mann gesehen
yesterday has the woman the man seen
'Yesterday, the woman saw the man'

Verb second (V2)

Cận à-cẹ̀ Bòl γᵛᵛᵛc álèth róok. (*Dinka*)

Can 3SG-PRF Bol buy clothes town.LOC

‘Can bought Bol clothes at the town’

Álèth áa-cᵛᵛ Cậ́n ké γᵛᵛᵛc Bòl róok.

clothes 3PL-PRF.NS Can.GEN PL buy Bol town.LOC

‘Can bought Bol clothes at the town’

Rók à-cᵛᵛ Cậ́n álèth γᵛᵛᵛc Bòl.

town 3SG-PRF.NS Can.GEN clothes buy Bol

‘Can bought Bol clothes at the town’

The Noun Phrase

Elephants are big

Those elephants are big

Those grey elephants are big

Those grey elephants in the corner are big

Those grey elephants in the corner that the little boy is pointing at are big

Demonstratives, Numbers, Adjectives

those three red books

Demonstratives, Numbers, Adjectives

those three red books
three those red books
three red those books
those red three books
red those three books
red three those books

books *those three red*
books *three those red*
books *three red those*
books *those red three*
books *red those three*
books *red three those*

Demonstratives, Numbers, Adjectives

those three red books

~~*three those red books*~~

~~*three red those books*~~

~~*those red three books*~~

~~*red those three books*~~

~~*red three those books*~~

books those three red

~~*books three those red*~~

books three red those

books those red three

books red those three

books red three those

Demonstratives, Numbers, Adjectives

those three red books

~~*three those red books*~~

~~*three red those books*~~

~~*those red three books*~~

~~*red those three books*~~

~~*red three those books*~~

those three books red

~~*three those books red*~~

three red books those

those red books three

~~*red those books three*~~

~~*red three books those*~~

books those three red

~~*books three those red*~~

books three red those

books those red three

books red those three

books red three those

those books three red

~~*three books those red*~~

three books red those

those books red three

red books those three

red books three those

→ 14 of the logically possible 24 orders attested

Demonstratives, Numbers, Adjectives

most common orders:

those three red books

~~three those red books~~

~~three red those books~~

~~those red three books~~

~~red those three books~~

~~red three those books~~

those three books red

~~three those books red~~

~~three red books those~~

~~those red books three~~

~~red those books three~~

~~red three books those~~

~~books those three red~~

~~books three those red~~

~~books three red those~~

~~books those red three~~

~~books red those three~~

books red three those

those books three red

~~three books those red~~

~~three books red those~~

~~those books red three~~

~~red books those three~~

~~red books three those~~

Demonstratives

English *this, that, these, those*

Demonstratives

English *this, that, these, those*

<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Tagalog</i>	<i>Lardil</i>
kono	ito	diin 'this'
sono	iyan	kiin 'that, near you'
ano	iyon	ngani 'that, far from both of us'

Demonstratives

English *this, that, these, those*

<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Tagalog</i>	<i>Lardil</i>	
kono	ito	diin	‘this’
sono	iyan	kiin	‘that, near you’
ano	iyon	ngani	‘that, far from both of us’

Tibetan

di	‘this’
phagi	‘that’
yagi	‘that, uphill from here’
magi	‘that, downhill from here’

Determiners (Articles)

English *a, the*

Determiners (Articles)

English *a, the*

A man walked in. The room was dark.
(**A/the**) man sat down.

Determiners (Articles)

English *a, the*

A man walked in. The room was dark.
(**A/the**) man sat down.

Samoan *le* ‘specific’, *se* ‘non-specific’

(compare “Yesterday, this guy walks into the department...”)

Adjectives (ordering)

a beautiful little purple Japanese car

Concord

Ngada kubari diin-**i** kiyan-**i** mutha-**n** wangalk-**i**
I made this-ACC two-ACC big-ACC boomerang-ACC
'I made these two big boomerangs' (*Lardil*)

nov- yj žurnal	nov- aja kniga	nov- oe pis'mo
new-MASC magazine	new-FEM book	new-NEUT letter
'a new magazine'	'a new book'	'a new letter'

(*Russian*)

Possessors

My book

Mary's book

Possessors

n-ikuwoss ‘my mother’
k-ikuwoss ‘your mother’

n-pihtenskos ‘I am tall’
k-pihtenskos ‘you are tall’ (*Passamaquoddy*)

Péter-nek a kalap-ja
Peter-DAT DET hat-3SG
‘Peter’s hat’

a Péter kalap-ja
DET Peter hat-3SG
‘Peter’s hat’ (*Hungarian*)

Relative clauses

*The little boy is pointing at.

[The elephant *that the little boy is pointing at*] is huge.

This is a *head-external* relative clause: the modified noun is outside the clause that modifies it.

Relative clauses

*The little boy is pointing at.

[The elephant *that the little boy is pointing at*] is huge.

This is a *head-external* relative clause: the modified noun is outside the clause that modifies it.

Here's a *head-internal* relative clause:

Junya-wa [*Ayaka-ga ringo-o muita no-o*] taberu

Junya-TOP Ayaka-NOM apple-ACC peeled one-ACC eat

'Junya will eat the **apples** that Ayaka peeled' (*Japanese*)

Relative clauses

Here's a *head-internal* relative clause:

Junya-wa [*Ayaka-ga ringo-o muita no-o*] taberu
Junya-TOP Ayaka-NOM apple-ACC peeled one-ACC eat
'Junya will eat the **apples** that Ayaka peeled' (*Japanese*)

Japanese relative clauses can also be *head-external*:

Junya-wa [*Ayaka-ga muita ringo-o*] taberu
Junya-TOP Ayaka-NOM peeled apple-ACC eat

leaving out N

the big *(ones)

ang mga malalaki

the PL PL.big

‘the big ones’ (*Tagalog*)

MIT OpenCourseWare
<https://ocw.mit.edu/>

24.917 ConLangs: How to Construct a Language Fall 2018

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <https://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.