

Atelier international / International Workshop

OV-IS 2018

Corrélats de l'ordre OV et structure de
l'information

OV basic word order correlates and
information structure

Jeudi 6 et vendredi 7 décembre 2018

Salles : RJ24 (Bulac) et 4.23

Organisation

SeDyL (Structure et Dynamique des Langues, UMR 8202 Inalco-CNRS-IRD)

MII (Monde Indien et Iranien, UMR FRE 2018-EPHE-Inalco-CNRS)

Labex EFL (Empirical Foundations of Linguistics, USPC)

Contact

Anaïd Donabedian (Inalco-SeDyL) adonabedian@inalco.fr

Pollet Samvelian (P3-MII) pollet.samvelian@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr

Claudine Chamoreau (CNRS-CEMCA/SeDyL) claudine.chamoreau@cnrs.fr

Inalco

65 rue des
Grands Moulins
75013 Paris

Argumentaire/pitch

Studies on (S)OV basic word order (head final VP) have pointed out several correlations concerning other word order properties in SOV languages (Greenberg 1963, Dryer 1992 and sqq) but also apparently non-related morphological (agglutination) or various syntactic (Haider 2014) properties. It has been suggested that SOV basic orders display a clear inclination toward discourse configurationality (Kiss 1995), which could be related to a universal trend for a preverbal focus position. Major languages illustrating this situation were Hungarian, Japanese and Korean. Since the 2000s, extensive work by Stavros Skopeteas on Information structure has led to the extension of these questions to new areas, like Caucasus and Meso-America.

The Workshop brings together linguists interested in these issues in different areas, and having first-hand access to languages under study, as well as specialists of non OV languages as a control sample. It aims to be a first step toward a further in-depth comparative study of the phenomena under discussion, in various perspectives (especially testing and explaining more general typological correlations, accounting for word order and syntactic variation from a diachronic and areal point of view), and in all relevant languages (with some emphasis on Western Asia and Mesoamerica). We would also like to discuss the extent to which a given language can be labelled as SOV, when it also displays alternative orders are identified in a language (MC vs SC in German ; OV and pre-verbal focus vs VO and post-verbal focus in Georgian and in Eastern Armenian), and how Information structure correlations are involved in the debate.

Thursday, December 6 / Jeudi 6 décembre 2018 - BULAC salle RJ24

9h15-10h00

Welcome coffee / Accueil (second floor mezzanine deuxième étage)

10h00-11h00 Keynote lecture

Stavros Skopeteas (University of Gottingen)

Narrow Focus in V-final languages

11h00-11h35

Hossep Dolatian (Stony Brook University),

Nikita Bezrukov, (University of Pennsylvania)

Affix order & information structure: Mobile affixes across Western Armenian

11h35-12h10

Victoria Khurshudyan (Inalco, SeDyL)

Cleft constructions in Modern Eastern Armenian

14h00-14h35

Agnès Korn (CNRS, MII)

Goals and other post-verbal arguments in Balochi and Bashkardi

14h35-15h10

Annie Montaut (Inalco, SeDyL)

Shahid Kapur-ERG a.acheté 5 millions-de un duplex: que sont ces objets 'post-rhème' des langues dites SOV?

15h10-15h45

Katherine Hodgson (Inalco, SeDyL)

Preverbal and postverbal focus in the matrix clause of Eastern Armenian relative constructions

Thursday, December 6 / Jeudi 6 décembre 2018 - BULAC salle RJ24

15h45-16h10

Coffee break / Pause café (second floor mezzanine deuxième étage)

16h10-16h45

Pegah Faghiri (Universität zu Köln),

Pollet Samvelian (Sorbonne-Nouvelle - MII)

Focal objects in the postverbal domain: SOV and SVO orders in Eastern Armenian and Persian

16h45-17h20

Tabita Toparlak (Sorbonne-Nouvelle)

Are they focusless sentences in Western Armenian? Evidence from prosody

17h20-17h55

Anaïd Donabedian (Inalco, SeDyL)

OV/V0 variation in Western Armenian and IS correlates

18h00-18h30 : Discussion

Friday, December 7 / Vendredi 7 décembre 2018 - Inalco Salle 4.23

09h30-10h30 Keynote lecture

Ioanna Sitaridou (University of Cambridge)

Never just contact: The rise of final auxiliaries in Asia Minor Greek

10h30-11h05

Martine Vanhove (CNRS, LLACAN)

OV vs VO in Beja

11h05-11h20

Coffee break / Pause café

11h20-11h55

Marie Benzerrak (Inalco, SeDyL)

La structure de l'information en rama

11h55-12h30

Claudine Chamoreau (CNRS-CEMCA/SeDyL)

Constituent order flexibility, differential case marking, and focus in Pesh

12h30 - 14h00

Lunch / Déjeuner

14h00-14h35

Odile Roth (Inalco, CRLAO)

A preliminary investigation on preverbal polar question marker i in spoken Jinghpo

14h35-15h10

Marie-Anne Moreaux (Inalco, Ertim)

L'allemand, langue V2, OV, ou ni l'un ni l'autre ?

15h10 - 15h30

Coffee break / Pause café

15h30 - 16h05

San-San Hnin Tun (Inalco, Lacito)

Information Structuring Discourse Particles in Spoken Burmese

16h05-16h40

Amina Mettouchi (EPHE, CNRS-LLACAN)

Of chickens and eggs: Objects as constructs in Kabyle (Berber)

16h40 - 17h30 : Final discussion - Conclusion

Résumés des présentations/ Abstracts

Marie Benzerrak (SeDyL-INALCO)

La structure de l'information en rama

Le rama est une langue de la famille chibcha parlée par une trentaine de locuteurs sur la côte atlantique du Nicaragua. L'objectif de cette présentation est de montrer comment le rama, ne possédant pas de marques morphologiques spécifiques pour exprimer les topics et les focus, se sert de l'ordre des constituants comme stratégie pour coder la structure de l'information grâce à plusieurs manipulations.

Le rama est une langue SOV comme le montrent les critères tant fréquentiel (98% des propositions transitives sont à verbe final) que syntaxique (le rama se comporte comme les langues OV selon certaines corrélations syntaxiques). Cependant, une certaine flexibilité existe. La configuration à verbe final autorise une flexibilité de l'ordre entre le sujet et l'objet. L'objet peut se déplacer devant le sujet pour marquer une proéminence à travers un focus ou certains types de topics (réactivation d'un topic ou introduction affirmée d'un nouveau topic). Le rama permet donc la séparation du verbe et de son objet.

Les quelques instances de phrases à verbe initial et à verbe en position intermédiaire codent elles aussi la structure de l'information mais sont réservées à des topics utilisés dans le but de désambiguïser une situation (antitopic) ou de contraster des topics (topic contrastif). Cette position est le plus souvent accompagnée d'indicateurs prosodiques.

Le rama reflète donc certaines caractéristiques particulières des langues à verbe final concernant les corrélations entre l'ordre des constituants et la structure de l'information. Dans cette langue on peut vérifier les tendances des langues OV sur le positionnement des focus à la périphérie gauche. Le rama permet également de discuter des tendances dans le comportement des langues OV sur les questions du domaine post verbal et de la proximité entre le focus et le verbe.

Nikita Bezrukov (University of Pennsylvania),

Hossep Dolatian (Stony Brook University)

Affix order & information structure: Mobile affixes across Western Armenian

Affix order and information structure are largely independent linguistic processes. Affix order is often determined by factors such as templates, semantic scope, frequency, and so forth; while information structure is marked syntactically by different word order configurations or prosodically through intonational contours. We study a mobile affix in Western Armenian dialects which blurs this distinction. Depending on the dialect, this affix is positioned based on templates, phonology, or syntax-semantics (information structure). Based on recent field work, we analyze what factors control the positioning of this affix and how it provides robust evidence for phonologically-conditioned and syntactically-conditioned affix mobility.

Résumés des présentations/ Abstracts

Claudine Chamoreau, (CNRS - CEMCA, SEDYL)

Constituent order flexibility, differential case marking, and focus in Pesh

The aim of this talk is to offer a first analysis of the correlation between the flexibility of constituent order, the differential (ergative and absolutive) case marking, and the expression of focus in Pesh, a Chibchan language spoken in Honduras. Pesh is a SOV language that also allows some change in constituent order. When the order is SOV, following a principle of economy the ergative and absolutive case markers are not normally used. However, a change in the order triggers the use of these markers. The change in the order and the morphological codification of the absolutive and ergative cases are caused less by the need to indicate the syntactic functions or semantic roles (that is, the distinction between agent and patient) than by the wish to structure the information. Each type of focus (for prominence, new information, selective or corrective focus) takes a specific position, preverbal or postverbal and adjacent or not to the verb.

Anaïd Donabedian-Demopoulos (Inalco - SeDyL)

OV/VO variation in Western Armenian and IS correlates

Western Armenian and Eastern Armenian are both considered to be head final OV languages, what is confirmed by several congruent features of the language (i.-e. preverbal relative clauses).

One of the correlates of Verb final order is the preverbal focus position already mentioned for Turkish, Basque, Japanese, Korean and other OV languages, including languages of the Caucasus, as reminded in Comrie 1984, and the afterthought status of postverbal components, confirmed by the prosody and the fact that sentences with postverbal component remain grammatical if this component is removed.

However, this issue is often discussed in the literature and several authors assume that the neutral order in Modern Armenian could be VO, arguing that at the level of clause syntax head-final order is challenged by available alternative strategies (i.-e. inherited postverbal finite relative clause strategy along with contact-induced non-finite preverbal relative clauses). As well, similarly to what is described in Skopeteas & Fancelow 2010, postverbal position may also be a focused one, although with different properties.

For those issues, Western Armenian and Eastern Armenian present both similarities and differences, Eastern Armenian being more discussed than Western Armenian.

This paper will be a first attempt to make an overview of the parameters correlated to OV-VO selection strategy based on a spoken corpus collected among 6 native speakers using the stimuli 1-147 of the questionnaire on Information Structure (Skopeteas et al. 2006).

References mentioned in the abstract

Comrie B. *Some Formal Properties of Focus in Modern Eastern Armenian*. *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, 1984, 5: 1-21.

Skopeteas S, Fanselow G. *Focus in Georgian and the expression of contrast*. *Lingua*. 2010;120(6):1370-1391.

Skopeteas S, Fiedler I, Hellmuth S, et al. *Questionnaire on Information Structure: Reference Manual*. *Interdisciplinary Studies on Information Structure*. Vol 4. Potsdam: University of Potsdam; 2006.

Résumés des présentations/ Abstracts

Pegah Faghiri (Universität zu Köln),
Pollet Samvelian (Sorbonne-Nouvelle-MII)

Focal objects in the postverbal domain : SOV and SVO orders in Eastern Armenian and Persian

East Armenian and Persian are both considered to be SOV languages with relatively free word order. In Persian, except for a limited class of objects (ex. sentential and 'goal' oblique arguments; to simplify) focal objects cannot appear in the SVO order. Only back-grounded objects are allowed in the postverbal domain. Furthermore, previous corpus and experimental studies have shown that non canonical SOV orders, including SVO, are marginal in written Persian. In contrast, pilot corpus explorations in East Armenian show that non SOV orders are relatively frequent, in particular, the SVO order, which interestingly does not seem to be limited to non focal or back-grounded objects. In this paper, we present primary experimental data to explore the distribution of SOV (vs. SVO) order in East Armenian in a comparative perspective.

San San HNIN TUN (INALCO - LACITO)

Information Structuring Discourse Particles in Spoken Burmes

There is a general consensus that in "free" word-order languages such as Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Turkish, the word order structures the information being conveyed as a topic or focus of the sentence. Burmese can be said to belong to the same category, given that except for the verbal complex that always occupies the final position in a sentence, the rest of the elements can appear in any order. That said, it has been found that it is not always straightforward to differentiate a topic from a focus in a normal connected speech. In fact, it has been observed that Information-Structure sensitive particles are a prominent feature of SOV languages.

Given the obvious premise that when something is said, it is always said by someone to someone, it is clear that for any given language, information structure can better be understood by examining not only syntactic functions but also discourse functions such as attitudinal aspects involving the speaker towards his/her message or towards his/her interlocutor(s). In Burmese, such information is expressed through the use of lexical items called "particles" - bound morphemes that are always attached (post-positionally) to another lexical item. Some particles serve grammatical functions but not all, nor always. Most particles do not have a one-to-one equivalent in English since their semantic value is highly contextual. This study aims at identifying a number of discourse particles in Burmese that serve as key elements in a construction of information structure, in the frameworks of discourse analysis and corpus linguistics based on a corpus of 250 000 words in contemporary spoken Burmese comprised of recordings of spontaneous as well as non-spontaneous speech (e.g. radio plays, film scripts). Our findings suggest that it is not the word order but rather the discourse particles, which play a more prominent role in Burmese IS. As such, this study highlights the importance of socio-cultural aspects that seem to have strong impact on the construction of IS.

Résumés des présentations/ Abstracts

Katherine Hodgson (Inalco-SeDyL)

Preverbal and postverbal focus in the matrix clause of Eastern Armenian relative constructions

Overall, there is a 67% - 33% preference for preverbal over postverbal focus, but actually, in most dialects (Ararat, Mush, Gyumri, Paraka) the preference is much stronger (about 80% pre- 20% post). The exceptions are Khoy and Bayazet, where it is approximately 50-50. Main factors are :

Having finite vs non-finite RC : MC subjects and objects are somewhat more likely to have postverbal focus when they have a finite RC than a non-finite RC (subjects: 37% post with NF, 54% post with F, DO 50% post with NF, 56% with F). MC predicates (i.e. forms where the verb is just the auxiliary) overwhelmingly have preverbal focus, whether the RC is finite or non-finite (88% for NF, 89% for F). For the other MC GRs, numbers are too small to be sure.

Grammatical relations: With NF RC, subjects have a somewhat lower proportion of postverbal focus than objects (37% vs. 50%), but when there is a finite RC, there is no significant difference. Locative, time and instrumental all have 50-50%, but the numbers are small. Ablative, postpositional object and destination have a strong preference for postverbal position (87-100%) but again, the overall numbers are small. Thus we have approximately 50-50% for subjects, objects, location, time and instrumental, while predicates are 90% preverbal and ablative, postpositional object and destination are about 90% postverbal.

Type of verb form : Forms where the only verb is the auxiliary overwhelmingly favour preverbal focus (97%). This is the same even in Khoy and Gavar dialects, where there is a much larger amount of postverbal focus. For complex verb forms with an auxiliary, overall we have about 70% preverbal, 60% for Khoy and Bayazet (73% for other dialects). The big difference is in forms without an auxiliary, which in dialects other than Khoy and Bayazet are about 60% preverbal, but in Khoy and Bayazet are 93% postverbal, and also much more numerous than in other dialects, partly because this dialect omits 3sg aux in complex verb forms, but not only (overall 47% of forms from Bayazet and Khoy are without aux, compared to 18% in other dialects; even if we discount forms with omitted aux, we still have 31% verb forms without aux, nearly twice as high as in the other dialects).

Victoria Khurshudyan (Inalco-SeDyL)

Cleft Constructions in Modern Eastern Armenian

Parallel to prosody and preverbal focalization with its possibility of auxiliary verb movement Modern Eastern Armenian (MEA) uses cleft constructions to mark contrastive/exhaustive focus. Cleft constructions can be applied to most of the syntactic roles, and based on the syntactic element cleft in such constructions, certain types can be outlined (e.g. adverbial, nominal etc.) with their proper semantics. Typologically cleft constructions are considered to be typical of languages with rigid word-order, and yet the Armenian case proves the contrary. It is argued that cleft constructions in MEA mark certain degree of focalization parallel to other focus marking means with focus marking presented as a continuum rather than clear-cut degrees. The scale of the focalization depends on the kind of focus/topic marking in MEA with the simple prosody marking being the weakest and with the preverbal position and cleft constructions being the medium and the strongest ones respectively.

Résumés des présentations/ Abstracts

Agnes Korn (CNRS-MII)

Goals and other post-verbal arguments in Balochi and Bashkardi

This paper builds on HAIG 2014, who shows that the post-verbal position of “goal” arguments is very common in Kurdish varieties, and regular in Kurmanji. I will contrast his findings with those from two other Western Ir. languages, confirming the main point of HAIG’s argument and contributing precisions on some part of it. As noted by (Haig 2015:408), languages that share the combination of (1) OV word order, prepositions and noun-genitive order are very rare cross-linguistically. Only eight among the 1142 languages in the sample of (Dryer 2013) show this configuration, of which three belong to the Western Iranian group (viz. Persian, Tajik and Central Kurdish), and one is an Aramaic variety under strong Iranian influence. HAIG concludes that western Iranian is an “outlier” of an (otherwise) “OV/postposition/GN block” and the configuration in (1) is likely to be due to language contact (Haig 2015:410), Kurdish and NENA (Northeastern Neo-Aramaic) being the cases in point that he studies. Haig proceeds to argue that Kurdish (and some more closely related Ir. varieties) and NENA developed the combination of OV and post-verbal goals under strong mutual influence, yielding a pattern that is unusual for both (otherwise head-initial) Semitic and (head-final) Iranian. This can also be seen in the fact that postverbal goals are regular in Kurdish varieties in the area of Semitic influence and less generalised in other Kurdish (and related) varieties. In Haig’s article, these include the goal of verbs of motion as well as recipients of “give”-verbs and addressees of speech verbs (Haig 2015:413). In some of the varieties, the position of the goal argument (and/or its being human or non-human) can determine whether a preposition is used; for instance, the postverbal position being typical for goals, prepositions are not used in some varieties while they would be on preverbal goals (Haig 2015:416–421). I argue that Bashkardi (a group of dialects spoken in the province of Hormozgan) and Balochi (spoken in the far south-east of the Ir. sphere) represent cases of contrast that might shed some light on Haig’s results. Differently from Kurmanji or NENA, both are not in an area of strong contact with Semitic and Turkic languages. Crucially, Bashkardi shares the features in (1). Balochi, on the other hand, shares the features only partly: traditionally it largely is a member of the “OV/postposition/GN block”, although the dialects of Sistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan have moved towards the Persian model. Differently from what Haig observes for Kurmanji, the postverbal position is not grammaticalised for goals in these two languages, but it is the most frequent position for goals of verbs of motion and occurs with and without adpositions. Lower on the frequency scale are other postverbal goals, viz. indirect objects. These overlap with direct objects that, contrary to Haig’s findings, are likewise not infrequently found in this position. Another type of arguments that is frequently postposed are other types of movements (e.g. coming from somewhere) and other types of location (non-directional) and related metaphorical expressions, suggesting that goal-related patterns might not be the only types of argument for which there is maybe a cognitive reason to be placed postverbally.

DRYER, MATTHEW S. 2013. Relationship between the Order of Object and Verb and the Order of Adposition and Noun Phrase. *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. by Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath. Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. <https://wals.info/chapter/95>.

HAIG, GEOFFREY. 2015. Verb-Goal (VG) Word Order in Kurdish and Neo-Aramaic: Typological and Areal Considerations. *Neo-Aramaic and its linguistic context*, ed. by Geoffrey Khan and Lidia Napiorkowska, 407–425. *Neo-Aramaic Studies* 14. Gorgias.

Résumés des présentations/ Abstracts

Amina Mettouchi (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, CNRS - LLACAN)
Of chickens and eggs : Objects as constructs in Kabyle (Berber)

What if objects were not given categories, but constructs ? What if word order was not a scrambling device, but a formal coding means ?

Instead of taking the grammatical category 'object' for granted, my purpose in this talk will be to define it language-internally for Kabyle, and suggest that a systematic empirical treatment of relationships between noun phrases and predicates can unveil rich interactions between linguistic properties of languages.

More specifically, I will show that a separate characterization of noun phrases and pronouns referring to undergoers, together with the analysis of the formal means involved in their coding (morphology, prosody, linear ordering) and of associated cognitive processing traces (disfluencies), allows a more precise analysis of the interaction between grammatical categories and information structure in Kabyle.

Ultimately, the function of construction under investigation for the workshop, « OV » (for me [NABS-NGi V-Pro:RU-NGi], where N = noun, ABS = absolute state, NG = number-gender marking, Pro = bound pronoun, RU = referential undergoer, and square brackets indicating a single intonation contour) will be discussed in terms of information structure in Kabyle.

Marie-Anne Moreaux (ERTIM - INALCO)

L'allemand, langue V2, OV, ou ni l'un ni l'autre ?

L'allemand est actuellement réputé pour être une langue SOV. La littérature traitant de l'ordre des mots et des groupes dans la phrase ainsi que de la position du verbe dans cette langue est abondante. Les perspectives théoriques sont diverses. D'un point de vue strictement descriptif, indépendamment de toutes considérations théoriques, de manière générale on observe que la partie conjuguée du groupe verbal se trouve (1) en deuxième position dans les phrases déclaratives. N'importe quel groupe syntaxique peut occuper la première position (groupe nominal, adverbial, conjonctionnel, infinitif ... exerçant la fonction sujet, objet, ou une fonction circonstancielle), (2) en première position dans les phrases injonctives, interrogatives et exclamatives, (3) en dernière position dans les groupes conjonctionnels. On admet assez généralement que la disposition linéaire des groupes est contrainte par un ordre de référence, caractérisé par la position finale de la partie conjuguée du verbe et marque d'un énoncé dit « neutre », non marqué. Un grand nombre de conceptions théoriques s'appuient de plus sur le fait que la phrase allemande serait organisée topologiquement en différents champs prédéterminés : un champ initial (Vorfeld), un champ central (Mittelfeld) et un champ final (Nachfeld). La partie conjuguée du verbe est vue comme une borne entre le Vorfeld et le Mittelfeld lorsque la partie conjuguée du verbe est en position seconde, entre le Mittelfeld et le Nachfeld lorsqu'elle est en position finale. Il n'est cependant pas toujours aisé de comprendre en croisant ces deux critères, ordre de base et organisation topologique, si le positionnement des groupes sur l'ordre linéaire est du ressort de la structure syntagmatique ou d'une structure provoquée par la distribution de l'information. Nous souhaitons montrer que l'ordonnement des groupes n'est pas déterminé a priori, mais est fondamentalement dépendant du contexte d'énonciation. C'est à partir de la structure des groupes conjonctionnels considérés comme représentant un ordre de base (Grundordnung) que cela est le plus évident, en remontant l'enchaînement des déterminations depuis la partie conjuguée du verbe en position finale. En cela l'allemand serait bien une langue à verbe final.

Résumés des présentations/ Abstracts

Annie Montaut (Inalco-SeDyL)

Shahid Kapur-ERG a.acheté 5 millions-de un duplex: que sont ces objets 'post-rhème' des langues dites SOV ?

Post verbal elements in Hindi, a language usually considered SOV with some consistent arguments (prenominal relative, preverbal preferred focus position, postpositional) are usually analyzed, like in Tamil, as afterthoughts, antitopic or emphatic (for Tamil, cf. Herring). Given the fact that the focus is normally preverbal, and that the non-focalized object normally occurs in the preverbal position, one can expect that the object moves somewhere else when focalized – if not in situ focalized, which is always a possibility in Hindi, mainly with corrective interpretation. Similarly, postverbal subjects of intransitive sentences can be considered a device for focalizing intransitive subjects – again, if not in situ focalized. However, one can also find transitive subjects in the right periphery, and the fact that postverbal subjects and postverbal objects occur with very similar semantic effects and in very similar contexts in titles calls for a specific explanation.

In the written press, the order VO (and VS) indeed occurs only in the titles of articles and are always reformulated within a « canonical » order in the body of the article which gives the information required to document the title. That suggests that the « non-canonical » order of the title, whether the object, or the subject, or an attributive constituent, are in the right periphery, have a specific function, distinct both from the “afterthought” and “backgrounding” functions. I will attempt to clarify the notion of « emphasis » (Herring 1994) which operates here in such clause internal postverbal constituents, arguing that not only the postverbal constituent is emphasized, but also the verb itself, and both constituents are both given a special status, which is particularly clear when O and V form a more or less idiomatic verbal locution (complex predicate with light verb) usually considered as a single unit (girafar dena “court arrest”, istifa dena “give demission”, adesh dena “give order”, mazbut karna “reinforce”). The reordering of such OV sequences into VO makes both constituents available for stress enhancing the fact that they are autonomous constituents even in so-called verbo-nominal locutions. The meaning attached to the VO order in titles amounts to call to the reader’s attention the process presented as a breaking news/shocking fact (surprise effect?), further elaborated in the body of the paper as explainable/descriptible.

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Skopeteas, Stavros and Gisbert Fanselow. 2009. Effects of givenness and constraints on free word order. In Information Structure from Different Perspectives, Malte Zimmerman and Caroline Féry (eds.), 307–331. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Herring, Susan C. 1994. Afterthoughts, antitopics, and emphasis: The syntacticization of postverbal position in Tamil. In Theoretical Perspectives on Word Order in Asian Languages, Miriam Butt, Tracy Holloway King and Gillian Ramchand (eds.), 119–152. Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information Publications.

Herring, Susan C. and John C. Paolillo. 1995. Focus position in SOV languages. In Word Order in Discourse, Pamela Downing and Michael Noonan (eds.), 163–198. Amsterdam: Benjamins

Résumés des présentations/ Abstracts

Odile Roth (Inalco-CRLAO)

A preliminary investigation on preverbal polar question marker i in spoken Jinghpo

Polar question markers in Jinghpo have been paid little attention so far, as they are generally treated alongside with interrogative mood within the complex system of sentence final particles (SFP) that provide slots for person, number, direction, aspect and mood (Dai and Xu 1992; Dai and Diehl 2003; Dai 2012). However, following the simplification of the system of SFP already noticed by Dai (2012), some interrogative markers, among which the polar question marker *i*, have split from the SFP and can now occur outside the verb complex in modern Jinghpo (Kurabe 2016). As expected for an OV Tibeto-Burman language (Dryer 2003), these markers are found at the end of interrogative sentences. In this paper, we present new fieldwork data exhibiting an unexpected preverbal use of the polar question marker *i* in Tongbiguan (China) spoken Jinghpo. Although both orders are widely attested among speakers, restrictions on the use of preverbal *i* allow us to think that it is only licensed under specific context configurations.

Dai, Qingxia. 2012. *Jingpoyu cankao yufa* (A Reference Grammar of Jingpo). Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.

Dai, Qingxia and Diehl, Lon. 2003. "Jinghpo" in Graham Thurgood and Randy LaPolla (eds), *The Sino-Tibetan languages*, London: Routledge, 401-408.

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Dryer, Matthew. 2003. "Word order in Sino-tibetan languages from a typological and geographical perspective", in Graham Thurgood and Randy LaPolla (eds), *The Sino-Tibetan languages*, London: Routledge, 43-55.

Kurabe, Keita. 2016. *A grammar of Jinghpaw from Northern Burma*. Unpublished dissertation. Kyoto University.

Ioanna Sitaridou (University of Cambridge)

Never just contact: The rise of final auxiliaries in Asia Minor Greek

In this talk (which is joint work with Nicolaos Neocleous), we investigate the diachronic developments that gave rise to final auxiliaries in Asia Minor Greek, a cluster of Greek varieties originally spoken in the area historically known as Asia Minor (present-day Anatolia, Turkey). We propose that the original source for the final auxiliaries is to be found in Hellenistic Greek for conditionals, whereas it can be traced back to Medieval Greek for pluperfects. Despite the Greek source of this change, the development from pragmatically marked *V-AUX* to pragmatically unmarked *V-AUX* in Asia Minor Greek seems to be contact-induced. There is strong indication that an Asia Minor Greek variety, namely (some variety of) Cappadocian, changed from harmonic head-initial to harmonic head-final. In minimalist terms, we propose that attrition, one of the ways that language contact manifests itself, targets LF-interpretable features; from this point onwards contact may or may not ensue depending on the feature (mis)match between the two languages.

Résumés des présentations/ Abstracts

Stavros Skopeteas (University of Göttingen)

Narrow focus in V-final languages

The aim of this talk is to offer an overview of the cross-linguistic variation in expressing focus in OV languages. The main idea is that syntactic variation between several subtypes of OV determines the available linearization options. The sources of this variation are syntactic in nature, i.e., they do not depend on information structure but they finally determine the possibilities of expressing information structure. Speakers exploit the syntactic possibilities for discourse purposes, i.e., apply discourse templates (such as topic-comment and focus-background) to linearization options that are made available by the syntax.

FOCUS-VERB ADJACENCY. Probably the most robust generalization across V-final languages: the focused constituent preferably appears left adjacent to the V (if this is allowed by the syntax). This phenomenon is reported for very different languages, e.g., Turkish, Japanese, Basque, Georgian, Classical Latin, etc.

POSTVERBAL DOMAIN. A first source of variation between OV languages relates to the rigidity of the clause-final placement of the verb. Postverbal material can be limited to afterthoughts, as in East Asian OV languages such as Korean and Japanese. Other OV languages, such as Turkish, allow for postverbal constituents with a crucial restriction: postverbal material cannot be stressed, which straightforwardly restricts the available focus options. A further class of OV languages, such as Georgian and Eastern Armenian allows for postverbal foci: these languages have substantial word order flexibility and cannot be easily distinguished from VO languages (since both OV and VO appear without contextual restrictions). The argumentation that these languages are OV in nature does not relate to word order frequencies but rather to general preferences in the directionality of several classes of syntactic projections (adverbs, complex verb constructions, etc.).

OV FLEXIBILITY. A further dimension of variation is the flexibility of the OV sequence (which is not necessarily a syntactic constituent in all OV languages). Some OV languages (e.g., Basque) allow for adverbs to intervene between the O and the V, while other languages (e.g., the Chibchan languages of the Isthmian branch: Cabécar, Teribe, etc.) prevent such interventions. This distinction has implications for the focus options: focus on the subject of a transitive verb is expressed through OSFOCV or SFOCVO in languages like Basque and Georgian, satisfying the preference for foci to be left adjacent to the verb. In the Isthmian languages, O and V cannot be separated to the effect that the only possibilities for subject focus are SFOCOV and OVSFOC.

IN SITU FOCUS. Some OV languages (e.g., Turkish and Eastern Armenian) allow for an additional option: in the canonical order, every constituent can be focused in situ (without word order deviations). This possibility creates additional focus options that may have particular interpretative properties (very likely in corrective focus).

LEFT-PERIPHERAL FOCUS. A frequent phenomenon in VO languages is the presence of an articulated left periphery, providing positions for foci and topics (see Italian, Hungarian, Greek). The corresponding pattern in an OV language would be a focus position preceding the subject (FocSOV). OV languages with this property are almost inexistent (examples of this possibility in West African languages will be presented/discussed in the talk).

Résumés des présentations/ Abstracts

Tabita Toparlak (Université Sorbonne-Nouvelle)

Are there focusless sentences in Western Armenian?

Based on our spontaneous corpus, the intonational properties (the f₀ movement) of default and marked foci are studied. The location of “focus” in the utterance, and its characteristics compared to non-focal elements. We also studied whether the word order is susceptible to the realization of focus or not.

Martine Vanhove, Llacan (CNRS-LLACAN)

Are there focusless sentences in Western Armenian?

Beja (North-Cushitic, Afro-Asiatic) has an (S)OV basic word order, and has hardly any focusing or topicalizing segmental devices. Consequently, prosody plays a major role in information structuring, in particular to distinguish topicality vs syntactic functions of nominals.

This presentation will be based on a 3-hour corpus fully annotated and segmented into intonation units, and will be two-fold.

(i) It will first deal with VO and VS word orders where S and O may function as antitopic or as focus, depending on prosodic cues, namely melodic contours and presence or absence of a unit boundary and/or a pause.

(ii) In the second part I will look at the prosodic cues in SOV linear order that help distinguish between syntax and pragmatics, in particular topicalization of S and O vs syntactic subject and object.

יִשְׂרָאֵל национален שפה 文化 شرقية
i n a l c o

Institut national
des langues
et civilisations orientales

Inalco
65 rue des
Grands Moulins
75013 Paris

