

Andreas Pregla (University of Potsdam): Scrambling and lack thereof in Uralic OV

A number of scholars have put forward the claim that every OV language allows for scrambling (Reuland & Kosemeijer 1993, Fukui 1993, Neeleman 1994, Corver & van Riemsdijk 1997, Saito & Fukui 1998, Koster 1999, Haider & Rosengren 2003, Haider 2010, 2013, Hawkins 2008). After deciding on what scrambling is in terms of A-scrambling, this talk shows that, (a) scrambling is a pervasive phenomenon in Uralic OV, but (b) that the Uralic OV language South Sámi lacks scrambling.

Original data from the OV languages Estonian, Udmurt, and Meadow Mari are in line with what can be identified as A-scrambling. In contrast to other reordering operations such as topic fronting or contrastive fronting, I argue that the surface detectable, typologically comparable hallmark of A-scrambling is *altruism*. Altruistic displacement means that the displaced element does not receive a special, information-structural role. In OV languages, altruistic displacement goes hand in hand with directly preverbal focus. Estonian, Udmurt and Meadow Mari feature A-scrambling and directly preverbal focus. In contrast, South Sámi features neither A-scrambling nor directly preverbal focus. I will also briefly present that South Sámi is not the only rigid OV language, but that Nepali (Indo-European), Quechua (Quechuan) and Jejueo (Koreanic) also lack A-scrambling.

I argue that the relative rigidity of languages without A-scrambling is the result of an obligatory high structural subject position, also called EPP in the generative literature. Therefore, I will show that a high subject position is a meaningful assumption for South Sámi syntax in general.

In sum, this talk shows that languages differ in the kind of word-order variability available to them. A close examination of the Uralic family can already suffice to falsify implicational universals regarding word order.