

Investigating word order variation in Uralic languages

Part I: Information structure and sentence construction

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The problem: “free word order”

English as a free-word-order language

- (1) a. Gojira will destroy that mountain.
- b. That mountain Gojira will destroy.
- c. Destroy that mountain Gojira will.

The problem: “free word order”

A common approach:

- show six orders of S, O, V
- say that all of them are grammatical
- say that word order is determined by pragmatic factors
- say that word order is free
- say that it's because of case marking

Word order is done, let's move on!

Isn't it all said and done?

Why not just use Grambank, CLLD, ...?

Grambank: Hill Mari is verb-medial

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| GB131 | Is a pragmatically unmarked constituent order verb-initial for transitive clauses? | 0 | Alhoniemi 1993 |
| GB132 | Is a pragmatically unmarked constituent order verb-medial for transitive clauses? | 1 | Alhoniemi 1993: 128-129 |
| GB133 | Is a pragmatically unmarked constituent order verb-final for transitive clauses? | 0 | Alhoniemi 1993 |

⇒ no information about word order at given source

Uralic CLLD: Hill Mari is verb-final (= true)

| | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------------|
| 0 | Is a pragmatically unmarked constituent order verb-initial for transitive clauses? | | GB131 |
| 0 | Is a pragmatically unmarked constituent order verb-medial for transitive clauses? | | GB132 |
| 1 | Is a pragmatically unmarked constituent order verb-final for transitive clauses? | | GB133 |

Isn't it all said and done?

Feature GB133: Good definition!

This feature focuses on the relative order of the verb and its core arguments in a transitive clause. Any constituents other than the core arguments (A, P) and the verb of a transitive clause should be ignored. All questions concerning order of constituents aim to capture the pragmatically unmarked order between full NP constituents (not pronouns). Do not consider 'left or right-dislocation', accompanied by intonational signals or pragmatically marked constructions such as focus. If the verb phrase consists of several elements it is the lexical verb that counts. The position of auxiliaries/TAME marking elements can be ignored.

Isn't it all said and done?

Feature GB133: Not so good application ...

Nez Perce (ISO 639-3: nez, Glottolog: nezp1238)

Word order in Nez Perce is very free. According to Crook (1999: 231–232) any of the logically possible orders of a transitive verb and its A and P arguments is permissible, as shown in the following example:

```
?áayátom páaqn?isaqa qèiqiine
?áayat-um pee-qn?ii-see-qa eqi.it-ne
Woman-ERG 3ON3-dig-INCMP-L-PST qeqiit-OBJ
'The woman was digging the qeqiit (an edible root).' (Crook 1999: 231)
```

Other available word orders:

```
?áayátom qèiqiine páaqn?isaqa
S O V
```

```
páaqn?isaqa ?áayátom qèiqiine
V S O
```

```
páaqn?isaqa qèiqiine ?áayátom
V O S
```

```
qèiqiine páaqn?isaqa ?áayátom
O V S
```

```
qèiqiine ?áayátom páaqn?isaqa
O S V
```

Because the available word orders in pragmatically unmarked transitive clauses with full NP arguments include V-final orders, Nez Perce is coded 1.

- ⇒ every source mentions that reordering is pragmatically marked
- ⇒ if even the illustration doesn't follow its rules, why trust any of the values

Isn't it all said and done?

Oxford Guide to Uralic languages (2022)

Mari (Saarinen 2022)

“Mari word order is controlled by **information structure**, with the exception of the verb. In a **neutral** sentence, the position of the finite verb is at the end, and the object–or any other **focal** sentence constituent–precedes it. [...] Deviating from SOV order is possible and obviously conditions by information structure, **but these phenomena have not been researched in detail.**”

Mordvin (Hamarai & Ajanki 2022)

“It is typical of transitive, intransitive, and non-verbal predicate clauses that the subject precedes the predicate, but the word order depends on **information structuring** and the clause type [...]. In transitive clauses the basic word order is SVO; nevertheless, SOV is also common. **Variation of word order should be the target of further research; [...]**”

Study aims for lesson 1

You will be able to ...

- handle information-structural terminology.
- control for information-structural status in fieldwork.
- control for various further factors relevant for word-order research.

Information Structure: “Emphasis”

Fieldwork situation: presenting the sentence pair in (2)

- (2) a. Gaahtoe bearjadahken maanam gåaskoeji.
cat.NOM friday.GEN child.ACC wake.PST.3SG
'A cat woke a child up on friday.'
comment: “That’s okay and normal.”
- b. Gaahtoe MAANAM bearjadahken gåaskoeji.
cat.NOM child.ACC friday.GEN wake.PST.3SG
comment: “Here, the child is **emphasised**.”
comment: “Now the child is **more important**.”

⇒ emphasis, важны, trykk, rõhk, ... = vague terms, used by

- (a) laypersons
- (b) linguists who are intentionally vague (not at-issue)
- (c) **linguists who don’t know better** ≠ you

Information Structure: “Emphasis”

Exemplification of your skills afterwards

(3) a. Starting point

Gaahtoe MAANAM bearjadahken gâaskoeji.
cat.NOM child.ACC friday.GEN wake.PST.3SG
‘A cat woke A CHILD up on friday.’
comment: “Here, the child is **emphasised**.”

b. C: Mij deahpadi? / What happened? – verification

#Gaahtoe MAANAM bearjadahken gâaskoeji.
cat.NOM child.ACC friday.GEN wake.PST.3SG
‘A cat woke A CHILD up on friday.’
comment: “No, that’s a not a good way of answering the question.”

Exemplification of your skills afterwards

(4) Testing for **contrastive focus**

A:. Gaahtoe bearjadahken tjidtjiem gåaskoeji.
cat.NOM friday.GEN mother.ACC wake.up.PST.3SG
‘The cat woke the mother on friday.’

B:. Ijje! Gaahtoe MAANAM bearjadahken gåaskoeji.
no cat.NOM child.ACC friday.GEN wake.up.PST.3SG
‘No, the cat woke THE CHILD on friday.’

⇒ emphasis in this case = at least contrastive focus

Rule

Always make sure what people denote with their terminology. People use the same terminology for different concepts, and different terminology for the same concepts.

(5) Behaghel's second law (1909):

Less important things (**known to the interlocutor**) precede **important** things.

(6) Titova (2007, 428):

... [T]here is a requirement for **interpretatively prominent** material to precede **interpretatively nonprominent** material. ...

According to this principle, material that is **contextually prominent** (e.g., in virtue of **being present in the context**) precedes material that conveys information **not (yet) prominent in the discourse**.

⇒ the same law, but Behaghel's *importance* ≠ Titova's *prominence*

Information structure: Topic–Focus

Rule

Topic and focus are not a complementary pair.

Context: Do you have any news about Hello Kitty? Do you know where she is coping with syntactic analysis?

| Topic | Comment |
|--|---------|
| Hello Kitty is coping with syntactic analysis in a closet. | |
| Background | Focus |



Information structure: Topic–Focus

| Topic | Comment |
|--|---------|
| Hello Kitty is coping with syntactic analysis in a closet. | |
| Background | Focus |

- conflation of Topic and Background
- ⇒ any non-focus is called Topic
- ⇒ Topic becomes another term for *given*
- ⇒ Focus becomes another term for *new*
- ⇒ conflation of information structure and activation status
- ⇒ setback to *rheme-theme*

Topic and comment

Article [Talk](#)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is about the topic of a sentence. For the topic of a discourse, see [Discourse topic](#) in generative grammar, see [Theta role](#). For theme in semantics, see [Thematic relation](#).



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In [linguistics](#), the **topic**, or **theme**, of a [sentence](#) is what is being talked about, and the **comment** (**rheme** or **focus**) is what is being said about the topic. This division into old vs. new content is called [information structure](#). It is generally agreed that [clauses](#) are divided

Rule

Topic and focus are not a complementary pair.

(7) Pair 1: at-issueness

Focus (at issue) – Background (presupposition)

(8) Pair 2: ???

Topic (logical subject) – Comment (logical predicate)

⇒ we'll go through these next

- (9) Pair 1: Focus (at issue) – Background (presupposition)
 - a. information focus
 - b. contrastive/exhaustive focus
 - c. presentational focus
 - d. further types not discussed here

- (10) Pair 2: Topic (logical subject) – Comment (logical predicate)
 - a. aboutness topic
 - b. contrastive topic
 - c. topics in name only

- uniting property: **alternatives** and **at-issueness**
- archetype: **interrogative elements** in single content questions

(11) Someone asks you: *Who destroyed the Naroda recently?*

- a. presupposition = **background**: *some x-person recently destroyed the Naroda*
- b. at issue: *who is x-person*
- c. alternatives: $X = \{\text{hellokitty}, \text{gojira}, \text{niki}, \text{balázs}, \dots\}$

⇒ interrogatives often assume a special position, indicating a focus position (BUT further reasons for special position: clause-typing, quantification, weight, ...)

Information structure: Focus: Interrogatives

- in many OV languages: (preverbal) *wh*-V adjacency requirement
- renowned examples: languages of the Caucasus (esp. Georgian), Basque, Hittite
- ... and **Hungarian** (data by Horváth 1986: 52ff.)

- (12) a. Mari az asztalra **tett az edényeket**.
Mari the table.onto put the dish.PL.ACC
“Mary put the dishes on the table.”
- b. Mari **mit** **tett** az asztalra?
Mari what.ACC put the table.onto
“What did Mary put on the table?”
- c. *Mari **mit** az asztalra **tett**?
Mari what.ACC the table.onto put

- only preferential effects in Nenets, varieties of Khanty, and Udmurt
- ⇒ more generally: **focus position** (all OV except South Sámi)

Information focus: the part that corresponds to the interrogative element in the corresponding content question (= most common definition of focus)

(13) The in-situ snorefest that is English

C: Who destroyed the Naroda recently?

A: GOJIRA destroyed the Naroda recently.

Russian is said to have clause-final focus. Let's put our native speakers to the test!

Information structure: Focus types

- (14) a. baseline sentence

В понедельник **Hello Kitty** интенсивно анализировала это предложение без посторонней
in Monday Hello Kitty intensely analysed this sentence without external
помощи в библиотеке.
help in library

‘On monday Hello Kitty intensely analysed this sentences without any help in the library.’

- b. C: subject question

Кто в понедельник интенсивно анализировала это предложение без посторонней помощи в
who in Monday intensely analysed this sentence without external help in
библиотеке?
library

‘Who intensely analysed this sentence without any help in the library on monday?’

- c. target sentence: clause-final focus

□ В понедельник интенсивно анализировала это предложение без посторонней помощи в
in Monday intensely analysed this sentence without external help in
библиотеке **Hello Kitty**.
library Hello Kitty

int. ‘HELLO KITTY intensely analysed this sentences without any help in the library on monday.’

Information structure: Focus types

Task: Construct yourself!

- 3 minutes, small groups
- window-side: focus temporal adverbial *on monday*, *в понедельник* – когда
- wall-side: focus manner adverbial *intensively*, *интенсивно* – как
- people that find it too easy: focus verb *analysed*, *анализировала* – что сделать

Information structure: Focus types

Contrastive/exhaustive focus: excludes alternatives, focussed phrase is usually given

(15) Most common translation via *cleft*, also cross-linguistically common

a. via alternative question

C: Did Hello Kitty or Gojira destroy the Naroda recently?

– It was GOJIRA that destroyed the Naroda recently (not Hello Kitty).

b. via correction

C: Hello Kitty destroyed the Naroda recently.

– No, it was GOJIRA that destroyed the Naroda recently (not Hello Kitty).

c. via accomodation

C: Who destroyed the Naroda recently?

– It was GOJIRA that destroyed the Naroda recently (not anyone else).

Information structure: Focus types

Contrastive/Exhaustive focus: excludes alternatives

(16) Comments that hint towards exhaustive focus

- a. exhaustive focus used in metalanguage
- b. *only x, just x*
- c. *not something/someone else*

(17) Litmus-test for exhaustivity: adding an alternative (however, it's fallible)

- a. ??It was Gojira that destroyed the Naroda recently, **and Balázs did as well!**
- b. Gojira destroyed the Naroda recently, **and Balázs did as well!**

See the handout for postverbal contrastive focus in Meadow Mari and long-moved contrastive focus in Udmurt.

Presentational focus: essentially a kind of information focus, occurs with unaccusative intransitive verbs (no agent)

(18) Cross-linguistically: triggers VS order in SVO languages without subject EPP (SVO+VS languages)

- a. Here comes **the sun**.
- b. There appeared to Joseph **an angel**.
- c. Появился **Годзира**.
appeared Gojira
'There appeared Gojira.'

(19) Vilkuna (1989: 165ff.): “Manifestation sentences” in Finnish

- a. Oli ukko ja akka.
was man and woman
- b. Tuli vaikeat ajat.
came hard times
- c. Syttyi tulipalo.
lighted fire
- d. Sattui onnettomuus.
occurred accident
- e. Tapahtui outo asia.
happened odd thing
- f. Ilmeni toinen romaani.
appeared another novel

Information structure: Focus types

Polarity/verum focus: essentially verb focus, associated with verb fronting in Uralic

⇒ Anders Holmberg's course

(20) **Nepali** verb focus (don't have a nicely controlled Uralic minimal pair, South Sámi on handout)

a. [C: no context]

Mero bhaile nəjã ghər **kinjo.**
my brother.ERG new house buy.PST.3SG.M.NH
'My brother bought a new house.' (neutral)

b. [C: *Timro bhaile nəjã ghər kinenə!* 'Your brother didn't buy a new house!']

Hoinə, mero bhaile KINJO nəjã ghər.
no my brother.ERG buy.PST.3SG.M.NH new house
'No, my brother DID buy a new house!'

Background: everything's that not focus, presupposed

(21) Who destroyed the Naroda recently?

- a. presupposition = **background:** *some x recently destroyed the Naroda*
- b. at-issue: *who is x*

(22) GOJIRA recently destroyed the Naroda.

- a. presupposition = **background:** *some x recently destroyed the Naroda*
- b. at-issue: *who is x*

Background: everything's that not focus, presupposed

(23) You can't straightforwardly negate presuppositions, non-at-issue content

- a. When did you stop conflating Topic and Background?
#No, I never conflated them!
- b. Who destroyed the Naroda recently?
Nobody, and the Naroda isn't even destroyed.
#No, the Naroda isn't destroyed.
- c. GOJIRA recently destroyed the Naroda.
No, **Hello Kitty** recently destroyed the Naroda.
#No, the Naroda isn't destroyed.

Information structure: Topic

Aboutness topic: logical subject; what the discourse is about; file to save information in

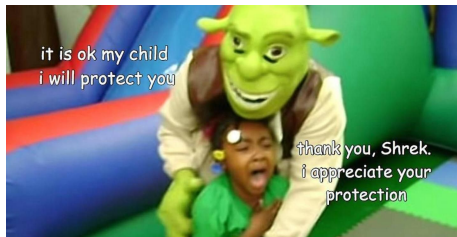
Shrek protects the scared child at the fair.

(24) Where to store the information?

/.../shrek.txt: protector of the scared children at fairs

/.../scaredChild.txt: is being protected by Shrek at the fair

/.../fair.txt: where Shrek is protecting scared children



(25) Topic context: Let's talk about X!

- a. C: Any news about the fair in town? What's going on there?
- b. At the fair, Shrek is protecting a scared child.
- c. C: Tell me about the scared child from last time. What've they been up to?
- d. That child, Shrek protected it a the fair.
⇒ Left-dislocation: pay close attention, possible biclausal structure

(26) Comments that hint towards topicality

- a. explicit aboutness in metalanguage: *this sentence is about x*
- b. *regarding x, as for x, when it comes to x*

- Litmus test for aboutness topics: non-referential elements
 - things that a discourse cannot be about
 - non-specific indefinites, parts of idioms

- (27) a. #Let's talk about nothing! Any new about nothing?
b. #What about nobody? Have you heard of nobody lately?
c. #Regarding whatever.

- Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007): introduction of *familiar topics*
 - to uphold cartographic projections for information structure
 - mere givenness
 - no topic-comment structure

⇒ conflation of topic, given, and background

⇒ don't call given elements topic
- Fanselow (2001): German scrambling \neq topicalisation

(28) dass *niemanden* der Bürgermeister abholt.
that nobody.ACC the mayor fetches
“that the mayor fetches nobody.”

Why ride on about this?

- “topicalisation” is a very common name for any kind of fronting
- commonly: no checking of actual topic status
- good example of how to do it: Nikolaeva (1999) on topic status of subjects (discussed by Kati Gugán)

One unusual topic construction from Udmurt on the handout.

Information structure: Topic

Contrastive topic: indicates the presence of other topics

(29) Topic shift, switch topic \Rightarrow contrastive topic

C.: Any news about **the basar**? Is something special going on there?

A.: I dunno, but **at the fair**, Shrek protected some scared children.

C.: What happened to **the Kékes**?

A.: I dunno, but **the Naroda**, Gojira recently destroyed.

(30) Answers to multiple content questions: contrastive topics paired with contrastive foci

C.: When did you work on which language?

A.: **Last year** I worked on SINDARIN, **this year** I work on KLINGON.

C.: Which mountain was destroyed by which monster?

A.: **The Naroda** GOJIRA destroyed, but the **Kékes** BALÁZS destroyed.

(31) South Sámi OS order

- a. MAANAM gaahtoe BEARJADAHKEN gáaskoeji.
child.ACC cat.NOM friday.GEN wake.PST.3SG
'(On monday, the cat woke the mother, on wednesday the father,
and) on friday, the cat woke the child.'
- b. *Maanam gaahtoe varki/soejmetje gáaskoeji.
child.ACC cat.NOM fast/carefully wake.PST.3SG
int. 'The cat woke the child carefully/fast.'
"completely meaningless sentence"

Back to the vague terminology

- importance
 - Focus is “important” because it is at-issue
 - Topic is “important” because it is the centre of discourse
 - Background is mostly “not important” since it is presupposed
- emphasis
 - information focus, contrastive focus, and contrastive topic
 - aboutness topic less likely, but possible
 - Laypersons conflate special prosodic patterns and semantic emphasis
- contrast
 - contrastive focus vs. topic

Practice in groups: determining the function of a construction

- ① Settle on a language (Uralic has higher priority, higher endangerment has higher priority)
- ② Pick a marked worder with **emphasis**, or a special construction.
- ③ **What kind of emphasis is it?**
- ④ Is it a “topic construction”? Check a topic context, but then make the “topicalised” element a focus, make it non-referential etc.
- ⑤ Is it a “focus construction”? Check a focus context, but then make the “focalised” element a topic, make it presupposed etc.

- (32) Word order investigation principles
- a. construct sentences beforehand
 - b. determine information-structural functions
 - c. verify and falsify using contexts
 - d. include many constituents
 - e. control for verb semantics
 - f. control for NP-types (differential marking)
 - g. test non-finite verb forms

Recommendation

Construct sentences beforehand!

- prerequisite: enough material to construct sentences
- prior construction = no translation
- you'll lose questioning time by constructing during the lesson
- you won't be able to control in the heat of the moment

Rule

Determine information structural functions!

- prerequisite: you know the core IS contexts by heart
- prior construction of contexts for different functions
- clarify intuitions of “emphasis/importance”: offer possible contexts when the informant is unsure

Investigating word order

Rule

Include many constituents!

- few constituents \Rightarrow not much reordering
- with few constituents: most generalisations merely preliminary
- good-practice example: Asztalos (2020)
- generally: V-initial declaratives reserved for special function; in Uralic: beginnings of narratives

- (33) a. SVO
- b. $OV[S]_{\text{foc}} \Rightarrow$ clause-final? postverbal? O-fronting?
- c. XSYVOZ
- d. $XYVOZ[S]_{\text{foc}} \Rightarrow$ clause final!
- e. $XYV[S]_{\text{foc}}OZ \Rightarrow$ postverbal!

Rule

Include many constituents!

- Mari preverbal focus: no real examples in literature
- preverbal focus testing in SOV:
 - many constituents
 - testing things that would change position: S focus!
 - testing other positions

(34) Ашныше эрдене йочалан пörтыштö пырысым пуыш.
custodian in.morning child.DAT house.IN cat.ACC gave
'The custodian gave a cat to our child in the house in the morning.'
(neutral)

Rule

Test non-finite verbs!

- verb-raising is common across languages
- ⇒ for appropriate generalisations, base position must be determined (says the German person)
- ⇒ possible non-raising context: non-finite verbs
- more fine-grained diagnostic of V-raising: next lesson

Preverbal focus in Estonian

- generalisation: clause-final focus (e.g. Erelt et al. 1993, Salveste 2015, Lindström 2017, Sahkai & Tamm 2019)

(35) a. Sinu kasvatasin ju MINA üles.
2SG.ACC raise.PST.1SG DISC.PRT 1SG.NOM PRT

‘I was me who raised you, wasn’t it?’

(Erelt et al. 1993: 14 and 195, gloss and translation AP)

b. Harilikult alustas kõnelust ISA.
usually start.PST.3SG conversation.PART father

‘FATHER usually started the conversation.’

(Lindström 2017: 550; gloss and translation by AP)

c. Triinu sööb kooki AIAS.
Triinu eat.PRS.3SG cake.PART garden.INESS

‘Triinu is eating some cake IN THE GARDEN.’

(Sahkai & Veismann 2015: 136)

Preverbal focus in Estonian

- better generalisation: preverbal focus + V-raising
- indicators of original V-position:
 - verb particle
 - non-finite verb
- more examples on handout
- e.g., Inari Sámi had the same pattern

(36) a. Sinu kasvatasin ju MINA üles.
2SG.ACC raise.PST.1SG DISC.PRT 1SG.NOM PRT

‘I was me who raised you, wasn’t it?’

(Erelt et al. 1993: 14 and 195, gloss and translation AP)

b. [Sinu [kasvatasin [ju [<sinu> [MINA
2SG.ACC raise.PST.1SG DISC.PRT 2SG.ACC 1SG.NOM
üles-<kasvatasin>]]]]].
PRT

Rule

Be aware of the verbs you're using!

- every verb should be investigated at some point
- start with clearly transitive verbs, with an agent and a patient
- psych- and perception-verbs: often used, but should be left for specific investigations
 - *love, fear, enjoy, ...*
 - *see, hear, smell, ...*
- same for copula, possessive verbs, ...

- (37) a. [C: What did Mary tell you?]

Mynyy aav-ig ühel aylga-dag. (Mongolian)
my father-ACC death scare-HAB
'The death scares my father.'

- b. [C: What did Mary tell you?]

Men-inj äke-m-di mašyne quant-a-dı. (Kazakh)
my.GEN father.POSS1SG.ACC car make.happy-CONV-PAST.3
'The car pleases my father.'

Beware of morphological causatives

Rule

Be aware of the verbs you're using!

- morphological causatives can cause strict word order
- even non-derived causatives! (not two direct objects)

(38) **Udmurt** [C: The school made an excursion to the opera.]

- a. Толон дышетйсь кы́че ке крезьгурчиез котькуд нылпиен
yesterday teacher.NOM some.kind musician.ACC every child.INSTR

тодма -т -йз.

acquaint -CAUS -PST.3SG

‘Yesterday the teacher introduced some kind of musician to every child.’

- b. *Толон дышетйсь котькуд нылпиен кы́че ке крезьгурчиез
yesterday teacher.NOM every child.INSTR some.kind musician.ACC

тодматйз.

acquaint.CAUS.PST.3SG

int. ‘Yesterday the teacher introduced some kind of musician to every

Rule

Control for NP-types.

- most languages: some sort of differential object marking (DOM)
- Uralic: asymmetric DOM in all languages, sometimes even symmetric DOM
 - Nenets, Khanty, Hungarian: differential head-marking
 - Udmurt, Mari, Komi: differential dependent-marking (case and Px)
 - Mordvin: differential head- and dependent-marking
- DOM potentially influences word order!
- generally, expect unmarked objects to be more rigid than marked objects

DOM and pseudo-incorporation

- Komi-Zyrian: DOM via Px and via case
- marked O = postverbal
- unmarked O = preverbal

⇒ pseudoincorporation

(39) [C: Мыйла тани куйлö идзас и морков? – ‘Why are there carrots lying around?’]

a. Аски ме кöсья **вöв** гусявны нылыслысь.
tomorrow 1SG.NOM want.PRS.1SG horse steal.INF girl.ABL.Px
‘I want to steal a horse from some girl tomorrow.’

b. *Аски ме кöсья **вöвсö** гусявны
tomorrow 1SG.NOM want.PRS.1SG horse.ACC.Px steal.INF
нылыслысь.
girl.ABL.Px

int. ‘I want to steal a horse from the girl tomorrow.’ possible with contrastive focus ABL: ‘Yesterday, I stole a horse from a boy, and

(39)

- a. Аски ме кӧсья гусявны нылыслысь
tomorrow 1SG.NOM want.PRS.1SG steal.INF girl.ABL.Px

вӧвсӧ.

horse.ACC.Px

‘I want to steal a horse from some girl tomorrow.’

- b. *Аски ме кӧсья гусявны нылыслысь **вӧв.**
tomorrow 1SG.NOM want.PRS.1SG steal.INF girl.ABL.Px horse

int. ‘I want to steal a horse from some girl tomorrow.’ possible
with O focus: ‘I want to steal A HORSE from some girl tomorrow.’

Incorporation: Komi vs. Hungarian

- Hungarian object incorporation:
 - bare noun vs. article
 - no *rightwards* detachment
 - judgements by Timea Sarvas, examples based on Ferenc Kiefer

(40) leftward seperability in Hungarian

- a. ☒ Аски ме көсья **БÖВ** нылыслысь гусявны.
tomorrow 1SG.NOM want.PRS.1SG horse girl.ABL.Px steal.INF
int. 'I want to steal A HORSE from some girl tomorrow.'
- b. VERSET Mari holnap fog olvasni.
poem.ACC Mari tomorrow want read.INF
'Mari wants to do POEM-reading tomorrow.'

Incorporation: Komi vs. Hungarian

(41) no rightward separability in Hungarian

- a. Аски ме көсья гусявны нылыслысь вöв.
tomorrow 1SG.NOM want.PRS.1SG steal.INF girl.ABL.Px horse
'I want to steal A HORSE from the girl tomorrow.'
- b. *Mari holnap fog olvasni **verset**.
Mari tomorrow want read.INF poem.ACC
int. 'Mari wants to do poem-reading tomorrow.'
- c. *Mari fog olvasni holnap **verset**.
Mari want read.INF tomorrow poem.ACC
int. 'Mari wants to do poem-reading tomorrow.'
- d. *Mari fog olvasni **verset** holnap.
Mari want read.INF poem.ACC tomorrow
int. 'Mari wants to do poem-reading tomorrow.'

Conclusion

- per se, word order is easy to research:
 - switch words around
 - ask whether its still okay
- do that easy thing as well as possible!
- caveat: how well people respond to judgement tasks

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