

## Head-Complement Order and ‘Super-Local Movement’

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At the outset of the Minimalist period (Chomsky 1993, 1995), several influential articles directly associated the freedom of word order in languages such as German and Dutch (Neeleman 1994, Neeleman & Reinhart 1998) and Japanese and Korean (Fukui 1993, Fukui & Saito 1998) to the *head-final* status of those languages. Fukui (1993), for example, argues for the “PVP”, a principle that allows optional phrasal movement (“scrambling”) only if it conforms to basic head-complement directionality. Thus, in head-final languages, (leftward) Scrambling is costless to the computational system, and is therefore always available as an option: “to the best of my knowledge, most ... ‘Scrambling’ languages [Korean, Japanese, German, Dutch, etc.] ... conform to the pattern predicted by the PVP measure ..., [no instance of ‘Scrambling’ in those languages involves movement of a complement over a head]” (Fukui 1993: 417). Similarly, Neeleman and Reinhart (1998: 311) observe “there is a strong typological correlation between OV order and Scrambling on the one hand, and VO order and verb-object adjacency on the other.”

Since that time, the Slavic languages have been the elephant in room with regard to the derivation of free word order patterns, apparently not conforming to the expectation that head-initial languages should allow freedom of word order. Various non-derivational approaches have been proposed to account for such behavior (Van Gelderen 2003, Titov 2003) as well as Haider & Szucsich’s 2021 claim that Slavic are not in fact head-initial but rather what they call “T3”, in which both head initial and head final orders are equally available.

In this talk, I present an alternative to non-derivational approaches that maintains a strictly head-initial analysis of Slavic, while still accounting for its unusual word order behavior. First, I quickly review arguments why a head-initial approach to Slavic should not be abandoned: importantly (i) fixed directionality of both lexical and functional categories; (ii) significant evidence of movement constraints. The crucial case, then, is that of SOV orders which are not only available, but highly common. I show evidence pointing to a non Object-Shift analysis: IS neutrality, scope behavior, adverb placement and lack of Holmberg effects. To account for this behavior, I argue that heads and complements can undergo “super local movement”, that is, movement from complement position to Specifier position which accounts for the properties found in Slavic SOV as well as in certain stylistic PP interruption constructions where an adnominal genitive intervenes between a preposition and its complement – the result of Super Local movement. Next, I show that the possibility of SLM also explains the existence of OVS and other Inversion constructions that are equally unavailable in English as SOV. This leads us to a possible understanding of why head-finality and free word order appear to be connected.

I end with discussion of the theoretical issues with such a proposal. First, what does it mean for movement theory in general for such an operation to be available? It is certainly in apparent defiance of Grohmann’s (2011) anti-locality principle, However, even Grohmann allows for Super Local Movement from the complement of non-phase heads. Second, what does it mean for theories of spell-out and linearization (Kayne 1994, Fox & Pesetsky 2006)? I argue that the SLM approach pushes us towards a certain PF-oriented component within syntax, whereby head directionality is not purely a function of linearization, but “written in” to the syntax itself. If the approach stands, both the essentially head-initial nature of the Slavic languages and the unusual word order patterns often cited, as well as the mixed status of German/Dutch type languages, and most important, the connection between head-finality and word order freedom, can be accounted for without abandoning basic notions of derivational syntax.

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