
The post-predicate position in Turkish in language contact situations: Resistant to change?

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In our talk, we discuss to what extent Turkish, a canonically (S)OV language, resists or allows shifting to (S)VO in language contact situations. The research literature on this matter is inconsistent (Doğruöz and Backus 2007, Onar Valk 2015 versus Bayram 2013, Keskin in review versus Schroeder et al. in press) and it is not clear whether this is because different explanatory approaches were used or whether the investigated dynamics are related to different factors in the respective contact situations. We rely on corpus data and consider a diverse set of contact situations, namely (i) heritage language contact in (a) Germany and (b) the U.S., (ii) contact with Kurmanji in Turkey, and (iii) contact with South Slavic languages in the Balkans. We entertain several explanatory variables and their interplay. First, we investigate whether duration of contact influences speakers' tendency to place constituents post-verbally. Second, we examine the effect of sociolinguistic parameters such as speech community size (Keskin in review). Third, we explore the effect of dependent type, based on the suggestion that word order change begins with the position of subordinate clauses (Keskin in review, Bayram 2013, Onar Valk 2015) and is subsequently followed by obliques, followed by accusative-marked objects (Keskin in review). Fourth, we consider the role of information structure in the resistance to change to (S)VO (Schroeder et al. in press). And finally, we explore the possible impact of the contact languages, i.e. South Slavic (flexible VO), Kurmanji (OVX), English (VO), and German (OV with V2 effects).

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