

## **Hiding in plain sight: when two syntactic constructions share a linearization**

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In the face of richness of word order variation attested in Discourse Configurational languages, wherein various discourse functions are achieved via the permutation of the (basic) word order (Bailyn 2012, Dyakonova 2009 i.a.), much less is known about cases where different constructions map to the same linearization. The present contribution focuses on the latter situation, examining a case where a label such as SOV (in an SVO language) is shown to be a cover term for more than one syntactic construction with the same linearization. The present contribution combines theoretical syntactic work with empirical insights gained through original corpus work. We report on the results of a corpus investigation into the SOV word order in Ukrainian, with relevant comparisons to recent corpus work in Russian (Slioussar & Makarchuk 2022) revealing microvariation between the languages. Based on theoretical work in East Slavic we hypothesized that the SOV linearization will map to several constructions. Specifically, we hypothesized that SOV in Ukrainian will correspond to the construction existing research refers to as Object Shift (Antonyuk & Mykhaylyk 2022), in which preverbal object movement results in the specificity interpretation, as well as to what is known from theoretical research on Russian as “salient objects” (Slioussar 2007 i.a.), an SOV linearization where a new/non-given object becomes salient (information structurally and prosodically) relative to the verb. The latter construction has so far not been posited for Ukrainian.

**Procedure.** Our corpus search was carried out using the ukTenTen2022 web corpus. We searched for the target sentences of the following 4 types: (i.) **Nom (Neg) V Acc**, (ii.) **Nom Acc (Neg) V**, (iii.) **Nom Acc (Neg) Adv V**, (iv) **Nom (Neg) Adv Acc V**. We performed random balanced sampling of 900 sentences per type. Each sample was manually cleaned for errors, leaving (i) n=902, (ii) n=474; (iii) n=442; (iv) n=485. An automatic syntactic parser, Stanza (Qi et al., 2020), has been applied to these sentences, providing part-of-speech, animacy and dependency annotations. Our small sample size allowed us in addition to manually code for object properties, such as givenness, definiteness, partitivity, salience/contrastiveness, etc. **Results.** The most salient predictor for Ukrainian SOV order is found to be object pronominality – 92% of pronominal objects occur in SOV clauses (Fig. 1). This finding is in line with S&M’s (2022) result for Russian. Pronominal subjects are also predominantly in SOV (71% of SOV), converging with Russian, where both arguments are pronominal in most SOV sentences. A notable point of difference is the proportion of non-pronominal objects in SOV. In Russian, S&M report that only 2.1% of clauses with nominal objects are SOV. By contrast, our far smaller sample shows 17% of non-pronominal objects occurring in SOV orders. This difference in effect size suggests that the conditions licensing SOV word order differ between the two languages. In particular, it provides support for A&M’s claim that OS in Ukrainian involves both pronominal and nominal shift, and support for S&M’s claim that among given objects, only pronominal ones move in Russian. We built a logistic regression model to predict word order given the properties of subject and object. The model shows the significance of four effects (cf. Fig.2). Animacy emerged as a potentially strong predictor, with animate objects strongly favoring the SOV order, but the effect was not significant. Pronominality largely outweighs the animacy effects and there is also no interaction between the two factors (Fig.3). However, pronominality and animacy are correlated: 90% of nouns are inanimate, but 73% of pronouns are animate. Overall, the properties of the object have a stronger effect than the properties of the subject. Importantly, our coding for object semantics revealed that Ukrainian does allow contrastive/salient preverbal objects of the kind posited for Russian. Furthermore, the distribution of adverbs in our sample is consistent with the existence of two preverbal positions (SOAdvV and SAdvOV).

Our corpus investigation thus provides evidence of two distinct constructions under the same SOV label and linearization: a high preverbal object construction (as determined by the position of the adverb, SOAdvV) and a construction with a low preverbal object (SAdvOV), taking into account adverb semantics and syntactic placement (Cinque 1999, Ernst 2002/2020, Biskup 2011), and with independent syntactic evidence of the verb raised to Voice (cf. Antonyuk 2021). Crucially, this situation holds only for Ukrainian: as is clear from the comparison of our results to those of Slioussar & Makarchuk (2022), Russian does not allow bare NP preverbal objects, thus there is indeed no evidence of Object Shift in Russian. Our findings underscore an important point regarding microvariation in word order and linearization. Specifically, the results suggest that one possible locus of microvariation between languages is not in terms of word order differences, but rather in terms of which constructions are found under the same label and linearization. In Ukrainian, the two constructions can look identical (sans

adverbs), but are characterized by different landing sites, semantic interpretation and prosodic realizations. Furthermore, Object Shift can be signaled either with overt syntactic movement or in situ, via prosodic recontouring (Antonyuk & Mykhaylyk 2013), with the optionality of the syntactic operation being one of its noted properties. On the other hand, we note that salient objects do not exist in situ: their interpretation arises only as a function of movement to the phase edge, Spec, VoiceP (see also esp. S&M 2022), while Object Shift is movement to a higher, phase-internal position, Spec, AspP (i.e., internal to a higher phase). We argue that the different interpretations and properties afforded by the two movement operations can be traced back to the type of operation involved, i.e., phase-internal movement vs movement to the phase edge (cf. López 2009).

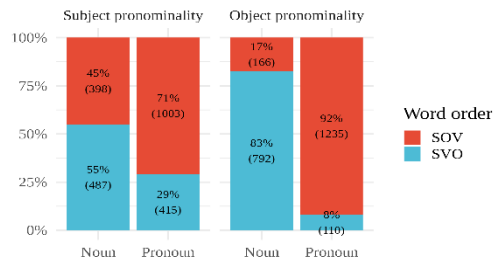


Fig 1. SVO vs SOV: Pronominality

Parameter	Estimate	95% Crl	PD	Significance
Intercept	1.37	[1.05, 1.74]	1.00	*
Pronominal subject	0.45	[0.03, 0.88]	0.98	*
Animate subject	0.00	[-0.48, 0.49]	0.51	
Pronominal object	3.36	[2.83, 3.97]	1.00	*
Animate object	0.12	[-0.39, 0.62]	0.67	
Definite subject	0.26	[-0.43, 0.93]	0.77	
Definite object	0.03	[-0.7, 0.72]	0.53	
Longer subject	-0.94	[-1.41, -0.5]	1.00	*
Longer object	-1.65	[-2.07, -1.29]	1.00	*
Pronominal object:Animate object	0.19	[-0.7, 1.09]	0.66	

Fig 2. Logistic regression model main effects

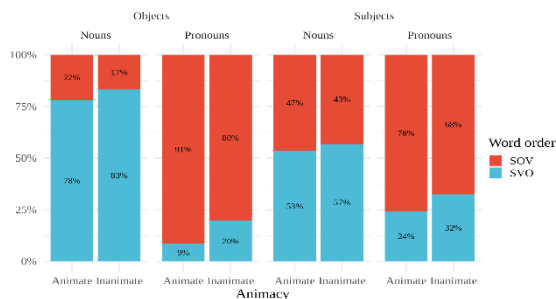


Fig 3. Animacy across conditions

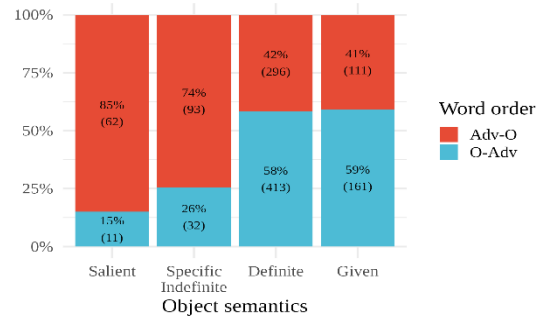


Fig 4: AdvO vs OAdv: Object discourse status

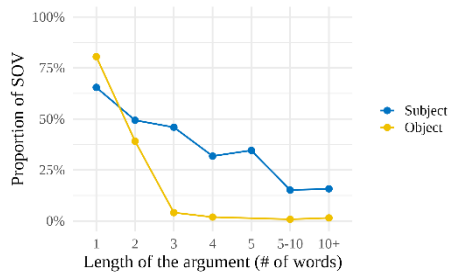


Fig 5. SVO vs SOV: Length

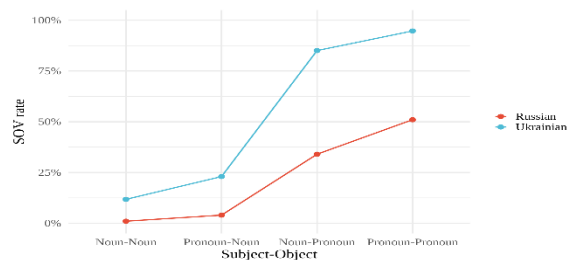


Fig 6. Comparison between UKR & RU

**Selected references:** Antonyuk, S. 2021. Object-shifting and head-raising one's way to discourse configurationality. In: Language use and linguistic structure: Proceedings of the Olomouc Linguistics Conference 2021. Olomouc, Czech Republic: Palacký University. Antonyuk, S., & R. Mykhaylyk. 2022. Scope freezing and object shift in Ukrainian: does Superiority matter? *Syntax* 25, 122–146. <https://doi.org/10.1111/synt.12229> Dyakonova, M. 2009. A phase-based approach to Russian free word order. Doctoral thesis. Utrecht, the Netherlands: Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics. López, L. 2009. A derivational Syntax for Information Structure. Oxford Studies in Theoretical Linguistics. Oxford University Press. Slioussar, N. 2007. Grammar and information structure: A study with reference to Russian. Doctoral thesis. Utrecht, the Netherlands: Utrecht University. Slioussar, N., & I. Makarchuk. 2022. SOV in Russian: A Corpus Study. *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 30, FASL 29 extra issue, pp. 1-14. <https://ojs.ung.si/index.php/JSL/article/view/98>.