
Prosody determines word order: the case of Mainland Scandinavian object shift

Nomi Erteschik-Shir
Ben-Gurion Univ.

shir@bgu.ac.il

Gunlög Josefsson
Lund University

gunlog.josefsson@Nordlund.lu.se

Björn Köhnlein
Ohio State University

koehnlein.3@osu.edu

In this paper we argue for an analysis of Object Shift (OS) in Mainland Scandinavian (MSc) in which the a weak object pronoun is placed to the left of an adverb instead of in the canonical position for objects to the right of the sentence adverb. We argue following Bennet et al.'s proposal that elements may move in the phonology in cases of prosodic repair that OS applies as a prosodic repair when the weak pronoun is left unincorporated when preceded by an adverb.

Whether or not OS is obligatory varies among the MSc languages and varieties. For instance, OS is obligatory in Standard Danish but optional in a number of southern Danish dialects, for example the dialect spoken on the island of Ærø. In Swedish OS is optional in most dialects. We observe that varieties with optional OS also have a tone accent contrast. We argue that the in-situ word order is licensed in these dialects because tonal accent creates a higher prosodic domain licensing the incorporation of the weak pronoun in situ.

Syntactic accounts of OS are problematic: There is no obvious way of linking the occurrence OS to Verb-movement upon which it is dependent. OS has no semantic or even information structural motivation nor is there any obvious syntactic motivation and there is no way to *syntactically* constrain optionality of OS by making reference to language/dialect specific *prosodic* properties.

Our analysis opens up an exciting area of research examining which cases of movement belong in Syntax and which do not.

References: • Bennett, R., Elfner, E., and McCloskey, J. (2016): Lightest to the Right: An Apparently Anomalous Displacement in Irish. *Linguistic Inquiry* 47:169-234. • Myrberg, S., and Riad, T. (2015): The prosodic hierarchy of Swedish. *Nordic Journal of Linguistics* 38:115-147. • Selkirk, E. (2011): The syntax-phonology interface. In *The Handbook of Phonological Theory*. Blackwell.