

Traces of discourse-configurationality in older Indo-European languages

Though it is widely assumed that Indo-European was of the SOV type, especially in Greek SVO prevails and also in Vedic this word order is to be found. The presumption is that traces of discourse-configurationality are present here (Keydana 2008). Firstly, two parameters are relevant, the kind of topic and the kind of focus, associated with the positions of these pragmatic categories. As for the topic the theoretical framework is Centering Theory. For on the one hand this theory is consistent with the generative sentence analysis within the scope of the government-and-binding-theory, supplemented by functional projections. On the other hand the Centering Theory can be applied to the information structure of sentences. It deals with givenness and salience and as an epiphenomenon with the aboutness-quality of topics. Thus, both a connection with the topic-term of the topic-comment-structure and above all with the subject is possible. Subsequently the contextual references with the relations *continue*, *retain*, *smooth shift* and *rough shift* can be identified. This raises the question whether if the first sentence slot is identical with the topic is it an instance of *aboutness*, *contrastive* or *familiar topic*? And furthermore, is it a “non-new-aboutness-topic” or a “new-aboutness-topic” in the case of an *aboutness topic*? As for the focus we distinguish new information focus and contrastive focus together with their positions. In this regard it has to be examined whether and how many data are available from the older Indo-European languages to show up Dik’s preverbal focus slot position which she demonstrated with the specific example of Old Greek Herodotus. On the contrary, Matić (2003), who has analyzed Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, found a lot of sentences with a complex left periphery, focus intruders and postverbal positions with pragmatically marked material. Thus, Dik’s (1995) distinction of four informational relevant Old Greek sentence positions, topic slot, focus slot, predicate slot and the pragmatically unmarked rest and her comparison with the discourse-configurational Hungarian word order probably to have to be abandoned. It is rather a question whether Old Indo-European languages use parameters like enclitics and low-stressed words to highlight the focus, *hyperbata*, a special position for negation or a fix position for sub-clauses. The data for the analysis come from annotated corpora on information structure in Hittite, Vedic, Greek and Latin. By using the mentioned parameters the goal of the lecture is to compare the degree of discourse-configurationality of these four languages and to answer the question if there is a change from discourse-configurationality to syntax-configurationality and vice versa.

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