

|                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| QUOT           | quotative                   |
| R              | rannig-verb (Breton)        |
| REDUP          | reduplicated                |
| REFL           | reflexive                   |
| REP            | repetitive                  |
| R-expression   | referring expression        |
| RLS            | reallis                     |
| S              | Sentence                    |
| S, SU, SUBJ    | subject                     |
| SBJV           | subjunctive                 |
| SEMBL          | semblative                  |
| SG             | singular                    |
| SOV            | Subject Object Verb order   |
| SS             | Surface Structure           |
| STAT           | stative                     |
| SUBJ           | subject                     |
| SVO            | Subject Verb Object order   |
| T              | Tense                       |
| TAM            | Tense/Aspect/Mood marker    |
| TEMP           | temporal                    |
| TOP            | topic                       |
| TP             | Tense Phrase                |
| TRANS          | transitive                  |
| TRG            | trigger                     |
| TT             | theme-topic                 |
| TV             | theme voice                 |
| UG             | Universal grammar           |
| V              | Verb                        |
| V1             | Verb initial order          |
| V2             | Verb second order           |
| VB             | verbalizer                  |
| <i>vi</i>      | intransitive verb           |
| VOS            | Verb Object Subject order   |
| vP             | Little verb Phrase          |
| VP             | Verb Phrase                 |
| VSO            | Verb Subject Object order   |
| <i>vt</i>      | transitive verb             |
| X'             | X bar                       |
| X <sup>0</sup> | head or zero level category |
| XP             | Phrase level category       |
| YNQ            | Yes-no question marker      |

## Introduction

### When verbs come first

Andrew Carnie, Heidi Harley, and Sheila Dooley

University of Arizona

Carnie and Guilfoyle (2000a) pose the following conundrum: Languages that put their verbs first in the sentence – that is languages with Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) and Verb-Object-Subject (VOS) orders – seem, at least on the surface, to have a number of typological similarities in common. This is counterbalanced by the fact, however, that these languages come from widely separated geographic areas and genetic stocks.<sup>1</sup>

A common, although of course not universal, assumption in generative approaches to syntax is that VSO and VOS orders are derived from some different underlying order. In the case of VSO languages, this assumption has been driven by the apparent lack of a surface VP constituent in tensed clauses, but the appearance of such a structure in other contexts (McCloskey 1983, 1991 and many others). In the case of VOS order, the debate has been most recently driven by the controversial claims of Kayne (1994) that the universal underlying order is SVO and the literature on VP- and VP-remnant movement that has grown up around this assumption (see Koopman & Szabolci 2000 as a typical example). There is a wide range of analyses that have been proposed for the derivation of V-initial order. For VSO order, these range from head-movement of the V to some functional projection higher than the subject (i.e. T or C) (as first suggested in Emonds 1980); lowering of the subject into the VP (Chung 1990; Choe 1987); leftward movement of the object from an underlying VOS ordering (England 1991);<sup>2</sup> and most recently, the leftward movement of a VP remnant into the specifier of some position higher than the subject and object (Massam 2000a; Lee 2000a). The last of these is of particular interest because it dovetails with recent work on VOS languages, where it has been shown that there is evidence for VP movement (Rackowski & Travis 2000). The obvious question emerges then as to whether there is actually a universal means by

which languages become verb-initial, or if the surface similarities in word orders are merely a coincidence.

Carnie and Guilfoyle (2000a) challenge researchers working on these languages to determine whether, if a universal derivation of verb initial order can be justified, this order has any explanatory power in accounting for the apparent typological properties that seem pervasive in these languages. There are really two parts to this challenge: (1) Are there really any typological properties that all these languages have in common and (2) is there a universal derivation of verb initial order (or at least a universal derivation of VSO and a universal derivation of VOS)?

It was in the face of this challenge that the current editors organized a US National Science Foundation<sup>3</sup>-sponsored workshop on the syntax of V-initial languages, which was held in Tucson, Arizona, February 21–23, 2003. We invited 17 speakers who worked on a wide variety of verb-initial languages from a wide variety of theoretical perspectives. Sixteen of these papers are presented here.<sup>4</sup>

It appears that the answer to both the questions above is, at least tentatively, no. Among the similarities that Carnie and Guilfoyle (2000a) discuss are a lack of the verb *have*, *be*-less copular constructions, initial particles, and a “nominal” character to verbal constructions. The papers in this volume, however, show these are not universal properties of V-initial languages (see for example, the extensive discussion in Macaulay’s contribution about the structure of Chalcatongo Mixtec). Similarly, there is no agreement over the derivation of V-initial order. For example, a number of papers in this volume take opposing views on the relative merits of VP-remnant movement vs. head-movement analyses. Take the case of the Celtic languages: using data from clause typing and the structure of *wh*-constructions, Oda argues that VP-remnant movement is appropriate for Irish. By contrast, in looking at particles, Bury’s paper argues that head-movement is the correct approach for these languages. Joutiteau adopts a head-movement analysis on the basis of parallels between CP and NP constructions in Breton. McCloskey’s paper looks at both copular constructions and verbal constructions, and argues that the predicate-initial character of Irish isn’t uniform even within the language, with some constructions being underlyingly predicate initial, and others being derived through head-movement.

Even though the results of the two driving questions of the workshop turned out to be negatives, a number of interesting patterns, themes and results emerged from the papers and the discussion that followed the workshop.

One important topic that came out in the discussion was the role of methodology and data sets in determining how V-initial order is derived. It seems likely that the kinds of data one looks at affect which analysis is adopted. Those analyses that focus on nominal predicates, particles, and incorporated forms tend to argue for VP(-remnant) movement (although see Otsuka’s paper for an exception); those that focus on adverbial positioning, ellipsis and adverbial effects tend to argue for

V-movement (but again, see Travis’s paper for an exception to this generalization); finally those that focus on coordination tend to give a subject lowering analysis. Davis’s paper in this volume, in addition to its empirical and theoretical contributions, discusses this methodological point in some depth. Using the Salish language St’át’imcets as a testing ground, he examines VP constituency from the perspective of the different kinds of tests that have been applied in V-initial languages. Chung’s contribution also bears on this issue. She considers the question of what kinds of evidence are required to distinguish VP-raising from V-raising and notes that a VP-raising account seems to be relatively well motivated for languages such as Seediq and Malagasy, but much less so for a language like Chamorro.

Continuing the debate over the derivation of V-initial order, Otsuka uses evidence from both noun-incorporation and non-verbal predicates and their interaction with pronominal clitics and scrambling to argue that VP-raising is appropriate for Niuean, but not for the closely related language of Tongan. As mentioned above, McCloskey also argues that predicate-initial order may well have more than one source, even within one language. Travis’s paper uses evidence from ellipsis phenomena to show that VP fronting is the best analysis for VOS order in Malagasy. Also dealing with a VOS language, Holmer argues that certain sentence-final particles are evidence for VP-remnant movement. Lee’s paper also concerns final clause-typing particles; she argues that these are evidence for VP-remnant movement in the VSO language Quiavani Zapotec. Oda’s paper also focuses on clause-typing; he argues that *wh*-constructions in Irish are predicate initial pseudo-clefts<sup>5</sup> that are most consistent with a VP-remnant fronting approach. Bury’s paper takes the exact opposite position. He claims, using a set theoretic system for describing phrase structure, that any language that derives its V-initiality through head movement will necessarily have preverbal particles, needed in order to disambiguate the constituent tree. On such an account, a V-initial language with preverbal particles must use head-movement.

On a different track, a number of the papers argue that syntax-external pressures may drive V-initiality. Laughren et al. argue that focus and information structure is a driving force in word order derivation in Wanyi, a V-initial language from Australia. Macaulay’s contribution also looks extensively at the role of information structure in VSO order. She argues that V-initial order is due to head movement of the verb to the Focus head. Gil’s paper operates in a very different framework but comes to similar conclusions; predicate initiality is due to the interaction of head-initiality and information structure. Billings argues that a complex set of factors including phonological weight, a subject-final tendency, and the voice system determine the order of post-verbal constituents in Tagalog.

One recurring theme in the papers in this volume was the role of part of speech category and the apparent nominality or acategoriality of many V-initial languages. There are two major versions of this category-argument. First we have

the observation that many V-initial languages aren't just verb-initial, but are more properly predicate-initial. Copular clauses without verbal *be*-like elements often place the non-verbal predicate first in the clause. Second, we have the apparent parallels between the structure of clauses and DPs. As Ritter (1988) first noticed, predicate-initial languages also often have DP-internal orderings that appear to follow principles similar to those ordering full clauses. The former idea is explored in depth for Niuean by Massam's paper. She argues that the predicate-initial character of the language is a direct consequence of the lack of verbal categories in the language. Gil's paper takes a similar approach, but from the perspective of functional linguistics. The importance of nominal and other non-verbal predicates for determining word order is also highlighted in the papers by Oda, Otsuka, and McCloskey. The latter observation (that there are parallels between DP and clausal constructions) are highlighted in two of the papers in this volume. Koopman argues that all DPs in Maasai are really [DP CP] complexes. In both clausal and nominal constructions, she argues for massive leftwards remnant movement triggered by Force, Focus, Case and other features. Jouisseau also looks at the parallels between CPs and DPs, but argues that they are due to the fact that Breton clauses, and not those of languages like English, have a [+D] feature on the little *v* category.

While the present state of understanding seems to show that there are many derivational sources of V-initial order, contra the hypothesis that motivated this volume, we are proud to present these papers as the next step in investigating the syntaxes of these interesting and complex languages. Comparative work such as this informs us as to the kinds of questions we should ask about standard analyses of more studied languages and thus provides an important impetus to refining our understanding of our capacity for human language.

## Notes

1. For example Verb Initial languages are found in Austronesian, Polynesian, Semitic, Celtic, Romance, Mayan, Nilo-saharan, Zapotecan, Chinantecan, Mixtecan, Salish, Wakashan genetic stocks to name just a few. The papers in this book cover mainly Celtic, Polynesian, Salishan, Austronesian, Nilosaharan, Mixtecan, and a language from Australia (Wanyi). The geographical and language family omissions from this book are entirely accidental.
2. England's analysis was actually about diachronic evolution rather than synchronic derivation. However, it is included here under the assumption that diachronic and synchronic processes are presumably linked to one another.
3. National Science Foundation award number BCS-0131761.

4. The paper presented by Aoun and Li appears as part of their book *Essays on the Representational and Derivational Nature of Grammar: The Diversity of wh-Constructions* (2003), Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

5. Interestingly, Koopman's paper makes a nearly identical claim for Maasai, and similarly argues for VP-remnant fronting.