Experimental evidence on positional and relational explanations of scrambling

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Scrambling in German has been analysed *ad nauseam*. However, we present empirical evidence that cartographic approaches fail to capture not only some nuances of the phenomenon, but even many basic facts. We argue that scrambling does not target information structural positions, but creates relational asymmetries which the interfaces assess.

In many scrambling analyses (e.g. Frey 2004, Meinunger 2000), syntax is driven by the information structural (IS) features of target positions:

(1) $[_{CP}$ XP V_{+fin} $[_{TP}$ $[_{IS}$ DP_{IS} IS^0 $[$(elements crossed) $[_{vP}$ DP_{IS}...$]]]$ $(V_{-fin})]]$

Theoretically, IS positions are circular machinery: They are posited because arguments move someplace – and arguments move someplace because of the stipulated positions! Empirically, we find that scrambling triggers are often not syntactic in nature (cf. Struckmeier 2014). We present experimental data that show that linear prosodic relations license word order changes required by PF which do not register semantically. Conversely, we show that LF relations license word order changes which ignore prosodic contraints, e.g. the ban on scrambling foci. Also, we show that the syntactic boundary elements crossed by scrambling do *not* predict the acceptability of scrambled structures, even in relatively simple cases. In sum, experimental data show that cartographic analyses fail to represent scrambling properties.   We show how the asymmetries generated by Merge (on the hierarchical as well as linear dimensions) allow for assessments by all (syntactic, phonological, semantic) systems. All of these assessments can be subsumed under a de-centralized architecture of scrambling that takes the syntactic, *as well as* semantic and prosodic effects caused by scrambling mergers seriously.

References: • Frey, W. 2004 in LB 198. • Meinunger, A. 2000: Syntactic aspects of topic and comment. • Struckmeier, V: 2014: Scrambling ohne Informationsstruktur?