

OV/VO placement in heritage Russian in Germany and the U.S.: Internal Change vs. Transfer

Previous research indicates that heritage Russian shows non-canonical phenomena with respect to verb placement. This includes OV vs. VO word order, for HR in contact with majority German, (cf. Brehmer & Usanova 2015), but also for HR in contact with majority English, (cf. Polinsky 2006, p. 237). In our talk, we will tackle the *Internal Dynamics Hypothesis* (Poplack & Levey 2010) which posits that linguistic phenomena in heritage languages may be due to internal developments rather than transfer from majority languages.

We will present semi-spontaneous data consisting of 96 productions of three groups: heritage speakers (HSs) of Russian in the US, HSs in Germany, and monolingual speakers of Russian (N=8 in each group). The data were collected in a single experimental design (Wiese, 2020) and drawn from the RUEG corpus (Wiese et al. 2019). Each participant was examined in 4 different communicative situations: formal written, formal spoken, informal written and informal spoken. Also, for each participant an individual proficiency score was calculated. In our study we compare HSs' OV and VO word orders to those of monolingual speakers of Russian and take object role (noun vs. pronoun), clause type (main vs. embedded) as well as proficiency into account.

The languages involved in our study differ with respect to word order and effects of information structure. Monolingual Russian is considered to be an SVO language with largely free reordering options due to specific information-structure realization. However, it shows a strong tendency to a preverbal linearization of pronominal objects (cf. Bailyn 1995, Kallestinova 2007). In contrast, monolingual German is an SOV language with V2 and reordering options for non-verbal constituents, regardless of the internal argument realization (cf. Wegener 1993, Gärtner 1998). Finally, monolingual English, apart from residual V2, is a strict SVO language with little reordering options. (cf. Eppler 1999, De Vogelaer 2007, Kempen & Harbusch 2019).

If one assumes an important role of transfer from majority languages, it is to be expected that HSs in Germany will predominantly show OV constructions in embedded clauses even with nominal objects. In contrast, VO is expected to be even more widespread for HSs in the U.S. than in monolingual Russian, both in main and embedded clauses and regardless of the object role. Also, we expect that transfer effects are generally more pronounced in less proficient HSs, than in more proficient ones. In our talk we present results on the possible impact of the abovementioned factors and discuss them from the perspective of the *Internal Dynamics Hypothesis*. The study contributes to the understanding of the dynamic processes in heritage languages and broadens our knowledge on how heritage grammars emerge.

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