

Optionality of Verb Placement in Subordinate Clauses in Heritage Russian in Germany

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Previous research points at some transfer effects on non-canonical V-final placement in subordinate clauses in Heritage Russian in Germany (Brehmer & Usanova 2015). In German, V-final is grammaticalized in subordinate clauses introduced by complementizers and relativizers / wh-elements (with the exception of what has been called non-integrated subordinate clauses introduced mainly by *weil* ‘because’, *obwohl* ‘although’ etc. and — very restricted — other types of subordinate clauses, cf. Wegener 1993, Gärtner 1998). In contrast, monolingual Russian is claimed to have SVO in neutral contexts in subordinate clauses, which is additionally governed by information structure (Brehmer & Usanova 2015; Švedova 2005).

In this talk, we discuss increasing exploitation of verb order options, rather than resolution of optionality in heritage languages (as indicated in the CfP). We will show that certain word order patterns are resilient with respect to transfer. We suggest that the occurrence of non-canonical patterns in this domain, might be induced by system-internal changes (cf. Poplack & Levey 2010). On the other hand certain word order patterns like V-final seem to be more prone to transfer. Those might involve external interfaces, supporting the *Interface Hypothesis* (Sorace 2011, 2012, cf. Hulk & Müller 2000 for similar assumptions). Therefore we conducted two corpus studies on word order, including

- (i) OV vs. VO placement in main and subordinate clauses
- (ii) V-final placement in relative clauses with *kotoryj* ‘which’ and temporal and locative adverbial clauses introduced by *kogda* ‘when’ and *gde* ‘where’.

We currently work on an open source corpus, RUEG (Wiese et al. 2019), which will include the data of three populations of 32 adolescent and 32 adult speakers each, collected in three countries (Germany, Russia and the U.S.), in a single experiment design. This multilevel annotated corpus already allows comparing heritage speakers’ data to those of monolingual Russian speakers and taking informal vs. formal settings and spoken vs. written modes into account on a currently available small amount of data. Preliminary results of our corpus study on OV vs. VO patterns preference (with no differentiation in types of clauses) showed non-canonical OV with VP focus in Heritage Russian in both Germany and the U.S. Surprisingly, we also found multiple occurrences of OV patterns in monolingual Russian. Since OV seems not to be more frequent in Heritage Russian in Germany than in Heritage Russian in the U.S. and in monolingual Russian, these findings speak against transfer from majority languages in the domain of directionality within the VP, and might indicate an ongoing internal change in monolingual Russian with optionality of OV / VO patterns (cf. also Pereltsvaig 2004).

On the other hand, preliminary results of our corpus study on relative clauses with *kotoryj* ‘which’ and temporal and locative adverbial clauses introduced by *kogda* ‘when’ and *gde* ‘where’ do not show instances of V-final in monolingual Russian, which might be due to a possibly general avoidance strategy of V-final by monolingual Russian speakers. In subordinate clauses which contain only the subject and the verb beside a relative pronoun or a wh-element introducing the clause, even the subject tends to appear postverbally, cf. (1):

- (1) *sobačka (-) sreagirovala na mjač (-) kotoryj pnul molodoj čelovek*
‘the dog (-) reacted to the ball (-) which the young man **kicked**’ (RUmo06MR_fsR, RUEG Corpus)

In contrast, we found several instances of V-final in relative clauses and in adverbial clauses in heritage speakers of Russian in Germany:

- (2) *mužčina brosiljsja za mjačikom na dorogu gde on è: ne posmotrel čto mašina edet*
‘the man rushed for the ball on the road *where* he did not look that the car **was driving**’ (DEbi52FR_fsR, RUEG Corpus)
- (3) *a na doroge stojala na parkovke ženščina s mašiny kotoraja è: (-) zakupki iz mašiny dostavala*

‘and there was a woman in the parking lot *who* was, uh, **pulling out** the purchases from the car’
(DEbi51FR_fsR, RUEG Corpus)

Again, in contrast, we only found two occurrences of V-final in relative clauses so far (produced by the same subject) in Heritage Russian in the U.S., cf. (4):

- (4) мушина пščteral маč. за *kotori* sabaka **pobížala**.
‘the man lost the ball *which* the dog **ran** after’ (USbi03MR_fwR, RUEG Corpus)

To sum up, our data show more frequent V-final verb placement in above mentioned subordinate clauses in Heritage Russian in Germany as compared to monolingual Russian and Heritage Russian in the U.S. Given the fact that OV word order is not necessarily equivalent to V-final word order, even if the probability of occurrence of V-final instances increases in OV patterns compared to VO patterns, it is not a contradiction that monolingual Russian allows for OV, but avoids V-final (in contrast to Heritage Russian in Germany). Even in main clauses OV patterns in our monolingual Russian data often come with further constituents in the postverbal position, cf. (5):

- (5) è: ženščina priparkovalas’ (-) rjadom s dorogoj (-) i raspakovyvala багаžnik (-) tam [_{NP}sobačku] **deržala** (-) [_{PP}na povodke]
‘a woman parked next to the road and unpacked the luggage compartment, she **kept** [_{NP}the dog] [_{PP}on a leash]’ (RUmo06MR_isR, RUEG Corpus)

In German, OV and V-final, especially in subordinate clauses, often coincide. This is not the case in monolingual Russian, which allows for OV, but rarely exhibits V-final, especially in subordinate clauses. Our preliminary findings show no transfer effects of OV in Heritage Russian in Germany, since OV does not appear more frequently than in monolingual Russian and in Heritage Russian in the U.S. However, V-final in subordinate clauses seems to be exploited more frequently in Heritage Russian in Germany than in monolingual Russian and in Heritage Russian in the U.S., leading to increased optionality of verb placement in subordinate clauses introduced by *kotorij* ‘which’, *kogda* ‘when’ and *gde* ‘where’. This increased optionality in Heritage Russian in Germany can be interpreted as a transfer effect from majority German. The corresponding domain — (non)avoidance of V-final — may be considered as involving external interfaces, and thus, be more prone to transfer. This, however, does not carry over to a far-reaching reorganisation of the grammar of Heritage Russian in Germany.

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