University of Bamberg

Word order & post-predicate elements in Romeyka

Laurentia Schreiber (University of Bamberg/Ghent University) &
Mark Janse (Ghent University)

Workshop on ‘Post-predicate elements across the languages of Western Asia: Theoretical and empirical approaches’, University of Bamberg, 22-23 September, 2022

Romeyka

- Romeyka is an endangered variety of Pontic Greek (Indo-European) still spoken by Muslims in its historical setting in North-eastern Turkey (Sitaridou 2013)
- Language contact with Turkish for several hundred years (presumably since Islamization in the 17th c.)
- Ongoing language shift towards Turkish in the last decades
- Language vitality/competence varies per speech community (Schreiber & Sitaridou 2017)

Word order in Romeyka

- Romeyka is a mixed-directionality language: SVO, SOV
- Word order is strictly sensitive to discourse; focus in immediate pre-verbal position, topic in both pre- and post-verbal position (Neocleous 2020)
- Inherited VO order in main clauses and OV order in subordinate clauses reinforced by contact with Turkish SOV order (Neocleous 2020)

Word order in Romeyka (cont.)

- Bilingual data in the WOWA corpus reveal 55% post-predicate elements (Schreiber 2021)
- Influence of semantic roles on word order is still unclear (due to small token numbers)
- Romeyka is a prepositional language (61% prepositional arguments), whereby the majority of goals is post-verbal (78%) but locations appear predominantly pre-verbal (42% post-verbal)

Word order in Romeyka (cont.)

Declarative clauses (Scheiber, in preparation)

(1) *etšine=bal ðotš emena milo*
she=FOC gave.3SG me apple
'She gave me an apple.' (T1)

(2) *esi do kitabi don aðelfo=s eðotšes*
you the book the man=POSS.2SG gave.2SG
'You gave the book to your brother.' (T1)

Word order in Romeyka (cont.)

Focus (Scheiber, in preparation)

(3) *ekatsame me ti mana=s*
sat.1PL with the mother=POSS.2SG
'We sat together with your mother.' (03_07072019F_1; 10)

(4) *me di mana=m erθafame*
with the mother=POSS.1SG grew_up.1PL
'We grew up with my mother.' (02_02022015F_1; 004)

Word order in Romeyka (cont.)

Copula clauses (Scheiber, in preparation)

(5) *havudies dženneti en*
this paradise be.3SG
'This is paradise.' (08_04072019M_1; 249)

(6) *avudjega en rahati*
here be.3SG comfortable
'It is comfortable here.' (08_04072019M_3; 133)

(7) *etšinos xaremenos Ø*
he happy COP
'He is happy.' (02_9062019F_1; 24)

Romeyka in WOWA: the sample

- Relatively small sample: 500 tokens
- Relatively high number of unclassified tokens (98 tokens); difficulties due to Tr. mixing, ellipsis, etc.
- Part of the texts are elicited by means of a storytelling task prompted by picture cards
- Texts from 3 different speakers (wrt age, gender, speech community)

No	Speaker	Text(s)	Total tokens
1	M60, ROf, upper village	A	198
2	F50, ROf, lower village	B, D, E	251
3	M40, RSür	C	52

The Romeyka WOWA dataset: analysis

1. Direct objects (DOs)

DOs	p
Post-pred. nominal DOs	66%
Post-pred. pronominal DOs	58%

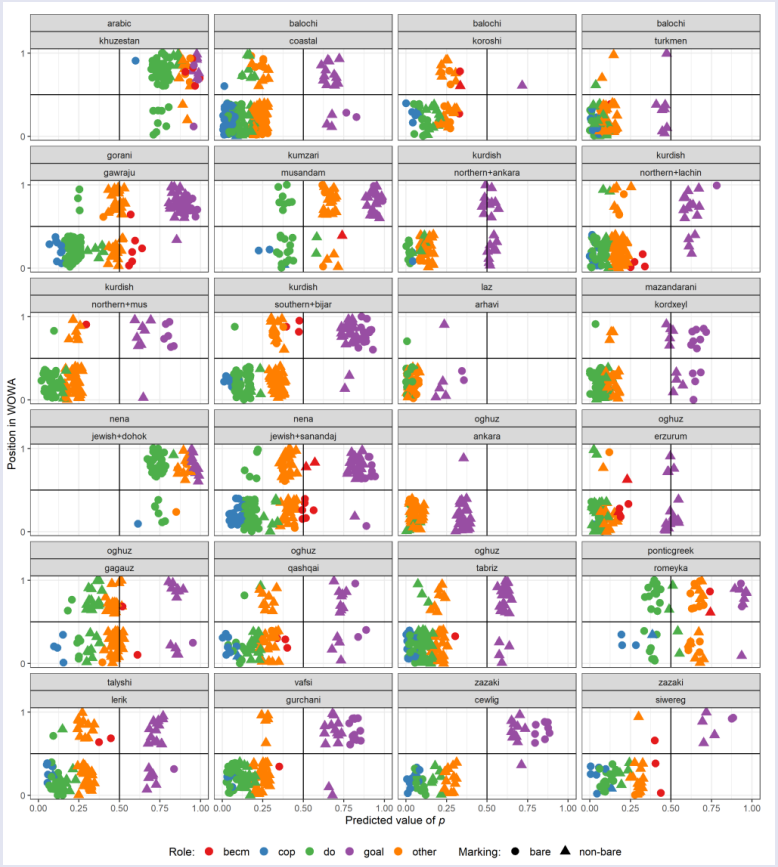
- Definiteness seems not to play a role (both 66% post-verbal; ≠ Capp. with indef. NPs in post-verbal position)
- Flagging seems not to play a role
- Weight possibly relevant: >10 tend to be pre-verbal (43% post-verbal); <10 tend to be post-verbal (approx. 70%)
- Animacy/humanness is indifferent: [-hum] tend to be pre-verbal (37% post-verbal)

The Romeyka WOWA dataset: analysis (cont.)

2. Semantic roles & copulas

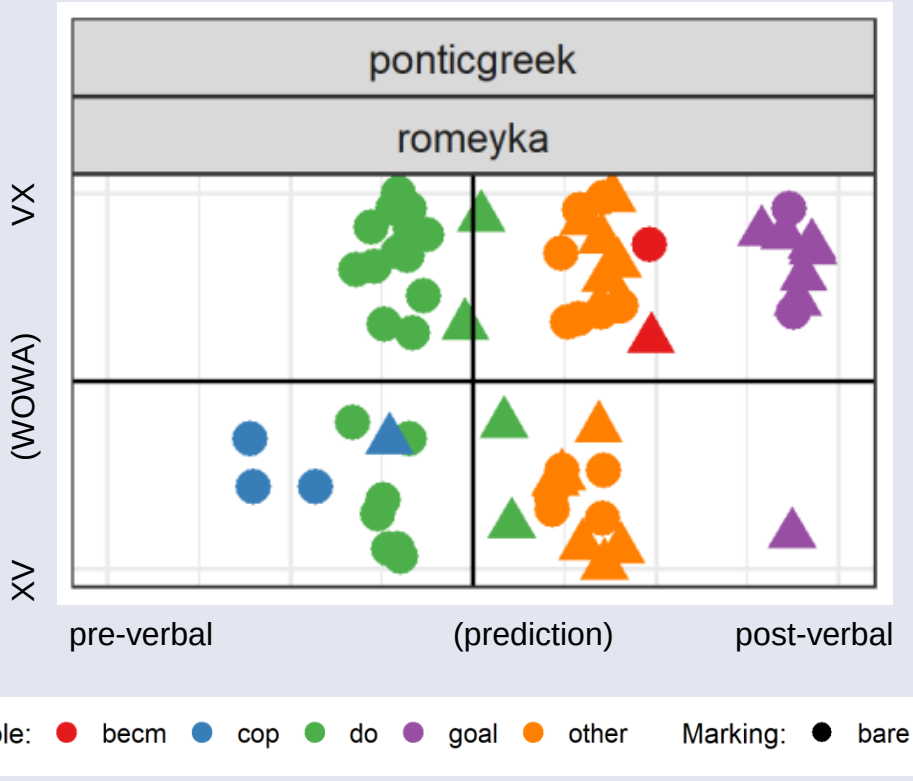
	p (= VX)	
Post-pred. goals	78%	
Post-pred. locations	42%	
Copula complements	8%	
Become complements	69%	
Post-pred. recipients	0%	! Very small token no. (2)
Post-pred. addressees	1%	! Very small token no. (3)
Post.-pred other obliques (com/instr/ben/other)	47%	

Post-predicate elements: the WOWA data



Source: Craevschi (2022: 58, Fig. 14)

The Romeyka WOWA dataset: patterning



Source: Craevschi (2022: 58, Fig. 14)

The Romeyka WOWA dataset: patterning (cont.)

-> How to explain these striking differences?

- Variable ‘text type’, thus in fact, the ‘speaker’ variable is significant (Craevschi 2022):

  (i) 4/5 Romeyka texts show strong inter-textual (~inter-speaker) variation; no other doculect showing such strong variation

  (ii) variable ‘text’ is in the whole WOWA corpus strongest for a Romeyka text; 4/5 Romeyka texts have strong effects of ‘text’ in comparison to other variables (role, flagging, family, weight, etc.)

Inter-speaker differences in rates of post-predicate elements

Direct objects (DOs)

	Total nominal DOs (do+do-def)	Total VO	% VO nominal DOs	% VO pronominal DOs
Speaker 1 (=text A)	51	18	35%	8%
Speaker 2 (= text B, D, E)	103	86	83%	50%
Speaker 3 (=text C)	21	12	57%	nc

Inter-speaker differences in rates of post-predicate elements

Goals

	Total goals (no pronouns)	Total VG	% VG
Speaker 1 (=text A)	32	17	53%
Speaker 2 (= text B, D, E)	44	43	98%
Speaker 3 (=text C)	1	1	nc

Inter-speaker differences in rates of post-predicate elements

Locations

	Total locations	Total VL	% VL
Speaker 1 (=text A)	32	11	34%
Speaker 2 (= text B, D, E)	35	23	66%
Speaker 3 (=text C)	16	1	6%

Interim summary

- Cf. colloquial spoken Turkish, Ankara (Iefremenko 2021): the corresponding values for post-verbal nominal direct objects are ca. 4%; for goals ca. 7%

- Speaker 1 has clearly turkified word order (only 35% of post-verbal DOs, and 53% of goals)
- Speaker 2 displays most “Greek” word order (83% post-verbal DOs, 98% post-verbal goals)
- Speaker 3 is less reliable due to small text size, patterns more like Speaker 1

Inter-speaker differences in rates of post-predicate elements

Copula complements

	Total copulas (cop)	Total VX	% VX	Omitted copulas
Speaker 1 (=text A)	19	2	10%	2
Speaker 2 (= text B, D, E)	4	0	0%	6
Speaker 3 (=text C)	3	1	33%	4

= In general Turkish syntax (+ copula often left out alltogether)

Attempts at an explanation

- Apparently, the differences in word order correspond to individual differences in the speaker‘s bilingual repertoire, i.e., the amount of contact with Turkish, probably also indicating attrition.
- For determining the exact social variable accounting for this (e.g., gender, speech community, mobility, bilingual acquisition), detailed monitoring of the speaker‘s individual language biography is in order.

Conclusion & outlook

- Word order in Romeyka is currently undergoing a change (see also Neocleous & Sitaridou 2022)
- Detailed patterning yet to be investigated with a larger dataset
- Possible influence of syntactic/discourse parameters, information structure, type of NP; but also intra-speaker variation of unclear motivation
- Strong inter-speaker variation is singular in the WOWA corpus; indicating that individual forms of bilingualism influence word order

References

- Craevschi, Alexandru. 2022. Historical contingency and typological tendencies in languages of Western Asia: A quantitative study of word order of non-subject constituents. Unpublished MA thesis. Bamberg: University of Bamberg.
- Iefremenko, Kateryna. 2021. Oghuz (Ankara). In Haig, Geoffrey & Stilo, Donald & Doğan, Mahîr C. & Schiborr, Nils N. (eds.), *WOWA — Word Order in Western Asia: A spoken-language-based corpus for investigating areal effects in word order variation*. Bamberg: University of Bamberg. (multicast.aspra.uni-bamberg.de/resources/wowa/) (accessed 10/01/2022).
- Neocleous, Nicolaos. 2020. *Word order and information structure in Romeyka: A syntax and semantics interface account of order in a minimalist system*. University of Cambridge dissertation.
- Neocleous, Nicolaos & Ioanna Sitaridou. 2022. Never just contact: The rise of final auxiliaries in Asia Minor Greek. *Diachronica* 39(3), 369–408.

References (cont.)

- Schreiber, Laurentia. In preparation. A (contact-)grammar of Romeyka. University of Bamberg/Ghent University dissertation.
- Schreiber, Laurentia. 2021. Pontic Greek (Romeyka). In Haig, Geoffrey, Donald Stilo, Mahîr C. Doğan & Nils N. Schiborr (eds.), *WOWA — Word Order in Western Asia: A spoken-language-based corpus for investigating areal effects in word order variation*. Bamberg: University of Bamberg. Https://multicast.aspra.uni-bamberg.de/resources/wowa/ (accessed 10/01/2022).
- Schreiber, Laurentia & Sitaridou, Ioanna. 2017. Assessing the sociolinguistic vitality of Istanbulite Romeyka: An attitudinal study. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development 39(1), 1–16*. DOI: 10.1080/01434632.2017.1301944
- Sitaridou, Ioanna. 2013. Greek-speaking enclaves in Pontus today: The documentation and revitalization of Romeyka. In Jones, Mari & Sarah Ogilvie (eds.), *Keeping languages alive: Documentation, pedagogy, and revitalization*, 98–112. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

WOWA statistics

label	role
total length	
number of analyzed tokens	
number of non-classified tokens	

WOWA statistics

selection criteria				hell_ponticgreek_romeyka
pro	weight2	anim	flag	n(tokens)
				598
				500
				98

label	role	pro	weight2	anim	flag	n(all)	n(PP)	p(PP)
rate of post-predicate direct objects, all forms	do|do-def					207	127	0.61
rate of post-predicate direct objects, nominal	do|do-def	(empty)				175	116	0.66
rate of post-predicate direct objects, pronominal	do|do-def	1|2|3|4				12	7	0.58
rate of post-predicate direct objects, nominal, definite	do-def	(empty)				41	27	0.66
rate of post-predicate direct objects, nominal, indefinite	do	(empty)				134	89	0.66
rate of post-predicate direct objects, nominal, weight2 ≤ 5	do|do-def	(empty)	1–5			39	27	0.69
rate of post-predicate direct objects, nominal, weight2 > 5 and ≤ 10	do|do-def	(empty)	6–10			108	77	0.71
rate of post-predicate direct objects, nominal, weight2 > 10	do|do-def	(empty)	>10			28	12	0.43
rate of post-predicate direct objects, nominal, human	do|do-def	(empty)		hum		2	2	1.00
rate of post-predicate direct objects, nominal, non-human	do|do-def	(empty)		inam|anim		41	15	0.37
rate of post-predicate direct objects, nominal, no flagging	do|do-def	(empty)			bare	153	103	0.67
rate of post-predicate goals	goal					74	58	0.78
rate of post-predicate caused goals	goal-c					4	4	1.00
rate of post-predicate copula complements	cop					25	2	0.08
rate of post-predicate become complements	becm					13	9	0.69
rate of post-predicate recipients	rec					2	0	0.00
rate of post-predicate addressees	addr					3	3	1.00
rate of post-predicate locations	loc					83	35	0.42
rate of post-predicate other obliques	com|instr|ben|other					59	28	0.47

label	role	pro	weight2	anim	flag	n(all)	n(bare)	p(bare)
rate of bare direct objects, nominal (= rate of DOM)	do|do-def	(empty)			bare / (rest)	175	153	0.87

label	role	pro	weight2	anim	flag	n(all)	n(prep)	p(prep)
rate of prepositional marking ("prepositionality")	*not* (do|do-def|cop|becm)				prep / (rest)	255	155	0.61