Information-structural domains and the emergence of head-initial VPs in Caucasian Urum

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Caucasian Urum is a Turkic language spoken in Georgia by a population originating in Anatolia. The present-day spoken Urum shows a change from OV to VO (between generations). After establishing the structural properties of the verb projections, this talk will focus on the mapping of different linearizations to information structural domains.

SYNTACTIC PROJECTIONS. Postverbal constituents in Urum do not display the set of properties that appear with right-dislocated constituents in Turkish (cf. Kural 2002; Öztürk 2005). Postverbal arguments can be stressed. The variation between clause-final and non-clause-final Vs is accounted for through a semantically vacuous operation, i.e., by raising the (finite/non-finite) V-head to the head position of a functional projection above the V-layer.

BETWEEN GENERATIONS. Observational data reveal that the OV/VO ratio changes over time (generalization from spoken data). While Old Urum is a variety with flexible V placement (resulting from V-movement), Young Urum is a grammar that allows both descending and ascending structures in the postverbal domain (data from adjunct order).

INFORMATION STRUCTURE. Both varieties share in common that the focus can be postverbal (which applies to VO languages and to OV languages with V-fronting, e.g., in Georgian) and may appear immediately left adjacent to the verb (which applies to OV languages such as Basque and Turkish as well as to VO languages with a left peripheral focus position). The crucial developments are: (a) preverbal material can be focused in the canonical order, i.e., focused subjects may appear in $S_F OV$ (while $O_F SV$ is excluded) only in Old Urum, but not so in Young Urum; (b) prefocal topics are interpreted as contrastive topics in Young Urum, but not so in Old Urum. While the old variety is a type of V-final language (especially, a V-final languages that allow for wh- in situ and V-fronting; similar facts are reported for Eastern Armenian), Young Urum changes to a VO language, with a left peripheral position for topics preceding foci.

References: • Kural, M. 2002. *Properties of scrambling in Turkish*. Unpublished Ms, UCLA. • Öztürk, B. 2005. *Case, referentiality and phrase structure*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.