Syntax, Semantics, Prosody: On the Shifting Allegiances in Scrambling Architectures

There is a fundamental divide between types of linguistic theories: Some (e.g. "functionalist") theories maintain that language forms and structures are (by and large) reflexes of the semantic and pragmatic properties "expressed" in them. Other theories (of the "formalist" conviction) maintain that structure-building formal operations operate (partially or completely) independent of their semantic and pragmatic correlates, and, a forteriori, any notion of "communicative use". In my talk, I will demonstrate that word order variants in the middle field of the German clause, and their prosodic, semantic, and information structural properties, do not warrant a "seamless" single model of "a grammar" to begin with: Not only are semantics, information structure, syntax and prosody different modules of the cognitive system that underlies language structure – but furthermore, these systems in many cases seem to be ignorant of each other's requirements to some degree:

• Contrary to a long-standing research agenda, *no* syntactic operation involved in deriving the German middle field can be triggered (or prevented) by information structural properties (but cf., Lenerz 1977, Meinunger 2000, Frey 2004, amongst many others, for opposing views).

• Syntax operates, in part, to satisfy its own requirements. Only outputs that are legible by the semantics, however, will be considered fully adequate. Therefore, each system restricts the set of possible syntacto-semantic structures.

• The mapping of structural representations to linear word orders is influenced in some cases by semantic factors (e.g. "scope transparency", cf. Frey 1993, Hinterhölzl 2004, Bobaljik & Wurmbrand 2012, but also for binding properties). In these cases, we often find quite transparent form-function mappings (supporting the functionalist point of view).

• However, in many cases no semantic requirements accrue in a syntactic derivation at all, and the phonological mapping proceeds by its own (e.g. prosodic) requirements. In these cases, form-function mappings can even be rendered completely opaque (supporting the formalist stance).

• Insofar as discourse properties can have (limited) influence on prosody, precisely those information structural categories that have prosodic impact (namely focus and contrast) can influence word order (albeit indirectly), explaining Lenerz' 1977 findings. Information structural properties that fail to influence prosody (topic, antifocus, etc.) have even less influence on word order – they only influence word order to the degree that their position helps or hinders the independent assignment of prosodic contours in a sentence.

I will present some cases from the literature and from pilot studies carried out in Cologne that illustrate the problems and propose a complex architecture of "freewheeling" components that can make sense of the facts. The resulting picture of the overall system blatantly contradicts assumptions about "seamless" grammatical architectures: Most components of the overall grammatical architecture can be completely oblivious to anything but their own rules and restrictions.