Missing subjects, expletives, particles - cues for structural differences

Dutch, English and Scandinavian evidence for obligatorily lexicalized positions and its contrasts with German. Insufficiency of pro-drop accounts. Implications for more far-reaching structural differences.

Expletives as evidence for (overt) clause medial functional head positions
- If no spec position, no EPP-effects (no structural expletives)
- If there is a structural expletive, there is a functional spec position.

Claim: German is not semi-pro-drop (nor is Dutch or English)

1. a. Hefur (*Það) rígnt í nótt? (Isl.) *Icelandic quasi argument drop
   b. Hat *(es) geregnet in der Nacht? (quasi argument)
   c. Hier lebt *(es) sich gut (intransitive middle construction)
   d. War *(es) sehr unangenehm, daß kein Taxi kam? (extraposition)
   e. Wurde getanzt? - Wurde *(es) getanzt - Es wurde getanzt (Ge.) (intransitive passive)
   f. daß *(es) getanzt wurde (Ge.) vs. dat *(er) gedanst wordt (Du.) (intransitive passive)

Comment: In an impersonal passive (1e), an expletive is ungrammatical, not because it is obligatorily dropped (- it would not drop -), but simply because there is no obligatory functional subject position to be filled. In the Spec-C position it is obligatory, however.

2. a. In deze hoek werd (er) volgens mij gefluisterd (Paardekoper 1963, Beknopte ABN Syntax)
   b. Werd *(er) gefluisterd (in deze hoek)
   c. On this spot (there) will stand a huge tower
   d. Will *(there) stand a huge tower on this spot?
   e. I grüset *gras can *finnas be-found ormar snakes (Sw.) H&P p. 100.

Comment: Dutch or English, but not German, requires an expletive element if there is neither a subject nor a (locative) adverbial. Why? Expletive for a functional subject position (EPP).

3. a. Out of the lecture hall limped a covert pro-drop-troll
   b. Out of which lecture hall limped a covert pro-drop-troll?
   c. *Out of which lecture hall did limp a covert pro-drop-troll?

Comment: The locative PP relates to the subject position (Spec-T), because it does not trigger do-support in interrogative clauses. It does, however, with ‘there’ in the subject position.

Side remark: What is ‘pro-drop’? What is ‘semi-pro-drop’?
- ‘Pro-drop’ is clitic-drop (do not spell out the same features twice on the same position)
- ‘Semi-pro-drop’ do not spell out an argument without referential content.

Consequences:
- a. Icelandic is not ‘pro-drop’ because it does not cliticize a subject pronoun
- b. Italian cannot drop in contexts where cliticization does not apply: (Aux-to-Comp, 12a)
- c. Italian and Icelandic are ‘semi-pro-drop’ languages, Italian is ‘pro-drop’ too, German is neither (for relevant data contrasts see: Rizzi 1986 L1):

4. a. *Ritengo [esseare Ω/Mario/lei simpatico] b. Ritengo [esseare Ωetroppo tardi per L.]
   ich-think [be Ω/Maria/he likeable] I-think [be (it) too late for L. (L.Rizzi)
Unit 9: On the relation between OV and VO: OV is more basic than VO

What is an OV property of German, what is the corresponding VO property, and how are these differences accounted for in grammar theory?

→ On the relation between ‘OV’ and ‘VO’

How to not turn VO (=Icelandic) into OV (=German) (by applying LCA: Kayne 1994)

(1) a. Ég hef ekki Þekkt Pessa konu = ‘front the postverbal phrase’
    b. Ég hef Pessa konu, ekki Þekkt e

How to turn OV (= German) into VO (= Icelandic) (by applying BC: Haider 1992):

(2) a. Ich habe diese Frau gekannt
    b. Ich habe gekannt, diese Frau e

Ég hef þekkt Pessa konu

1. Headedness in a universal theory of phrase structure: asymmetric structures

   ▪ phrases are endocentric (= head at the bottom of the phrase)
   ▪ heads are directional licensors: progressively or regressively
   ▪ complex projections (and their extension) are right-branching (BC = branching constraint; details in Haider 1992; 1997)

2. Why?

   ▪ The grammar is the algorithm for unfolding more-dimensional qualities (= syntactic structures) on a one-dimensional representation (= PF-strings as linear arrays) and for compressing more-dimensional qualities into a one-dimensional linear array. (Note: reception and production aspect)
   ▪ The data structures provided by the grammar (= compiled knowledge system) do not impede parsing (= effective, incremental processing activity)
   ▪ Incremental parsing: ‘integrate the incoming terminals into the structure already projected’ (= provide data structures that do not require look-ahead)
   ▪ Grammar support: Make sure that you can apply top-down (grammar driven) and bottom-up (= data driven) information at each step of construction.
   ▪ Consequence: *left-branching projections and their extensions

(3) a. right branching + ➡️ (= OV)  b. *left-branching + ➡️  c. right-branching + ➡️

d. right-branching + ➡️ + head-chaining (= VO; with VP-shells)
For the sake of illustration: **Particles** as indicators of V-Positions (Haider 97, JCGL):

(4) a. send out, send up, hand in, ...
   b. I sent the clients *out* their mail - *I sent out* the clients their mail
   c. *I sent the clients their mail out*
      **But:**
   d. I sent the clients their mail *out* to their respective holiday resorts
   e. I [sent, [the clients [V° [their mail [v°, out [to their respective holiday resorts]]]]]

Comment: In English (and to a certain degree also in Icelandic and Norwegian, but not in Danish and Swedish) you may strand or pied-pipe the particle: The potential stranding positions are the V-positions on the head chain. A particle in absolute clause final position cannot be stranded but must be independent (evidence: intensifiers).

(5) a. Mike tossed me the wrench (right) up
   b. Mike tossed me (*right) up the wrench
   c. He threw the ball right/straight up/back/down
   d. *He threw right/straight up/back/down the ball Dikken (1991:38) Dikken:

In sum: XV and VX are alternative instantiations of directionality in a BC-constrained structure, with its own costs, though:
- simple projection with head in lowest position: = OV. Cost: late head
- early head: = VO. Costs: head chain in a simple phrasal projection

**Some consequences** of the BC

*for any language*
- no head-final functional projections: \( \Rightarrow \) no head movement to the right
- no specs following the head: \( \Rightarrow \) no phrasal movement to specs on the right
- no adjunction to the right: \( \Rightarrow \) no scrambling to the right, no adjuncts
- complex head-initial projections have a shell structure: \( \Rightarrow \) more particle positions in head-initial VPs

*for German:*
- no clause final functional head position (no V-to-I)
- extraposition must be embedding and not movement to the right or right adjunction
- obligatory V-clustering (with subsentential V-projections)