

Scope Freezing in Russian and Ukrainian and its implications for the argument structure of ditransitives.

In this talk I will present data to motivate the Scope Freezing Generalization (SFG) in (1), formulated on the basis of quantifier scope ambiguity and scope freezing distribution patterns in Russian and Ukrainian.

(1) Scope Freezing Generalization (SFG), revised (Antonyuk 2015):

Scope freezing results when one QP raises over another to a c-commanding position as a result of a single instance of movement.

I will then argue that we can use SFG as a diagnostic tool to gain insights into the structure of ditransitives and will present the finding thus obtained that ditransitives in East Slavic are not a homogeneous group, as argued by virtually all other accounts (Harbert & Toribio 1991; Greenberg & Franks 1991; Franks 1995 Richardson 2007, Bailyn 1995, 2010, 2012; Titov 2017, Dyakonova 2005, 2007; cf. Bonet and Nash 2017); instead ditransitive predicates subdivide into three distinct Groups, each with its own distinct set of properties, with further syntactic evidence supporting the claim that these Groups have distinct underlying structures. One of the main findings, suggested by SFG and supported by syntactic unaccusativity tests is that a large group of Russian and Ukrainian “direct objects” are not in fact what they seem, but are low Oblique arguments receiving lexical Accusative case from a silent P head. These findings add to the body of literature arguing that the notion of ‘object’ is not uniform (see, for instance, Postal 2005). Furthermore, if scope freezing is indeed to be viewed as a defining property of ditransitives (Bruening 2001, 2010 i.a.), then scope freezing, which is found in more contexts in Russian and Ukrainian than are known from English, suggests that the notion of ditransitivity we should be considering is one that includes all predicates that assign two internal thematic roles and not just those that assign structural case to its internal arguments. Finally, the findings we’ll discuss have implications for the argument structure of ditransitives cross-linguistically, providing support for derivational accounts (see Larson 1988, 1990, 2014; Hallman 2015).