

The role of phonological factors in word order phenomena

Current debate, open questions and the implications for the architecture of the grammar

Anna Preßler

The question about the structure of the language faculty is a long-debated issue. Over the past decades, theoretical linguists especially Noam Chomsky have worked out “maximally general and consistent theory-internal derivations of morphosyntactic structures” (Schlüter 2003:69). In the mid-sixties, Chomsky elaborates a tripartite model that claims a strict differentiation of the components of grammar and assigns the core role to the syntactic component that is supported by “two interpretive components, a phonological component and a semantic component” (Chomsky 1964:9). After that, the influence of either the phonological or the semantic component on the syntactic core component are ruled out for a very long time (Schlüter 2003:70).

Schlüter (2003), however, argues that “an empirically founded model of grammar needs to assign an appropriate place to phonology” (Schlüter 2003:69). Her core aim being to demonstrate that a satisfactory approach of syntax should have access to semantics and phonology and requires material of all three sub-components to co-occur.

In the light of the ongoing debate, the current project aims at working out cross-linguistic phenomena, that are able to question Chomsky’s syntacto-centric view on the architecture of grammar and strengthen the influence of phonological/ prosodic factors on the order of constituents. The presentation will establish the starting point of such analyses and present first considerations.