

The goal of the project is to explore patterns of extraction out of noun phrases from a cross-linguistic perspective in hope of shedding some light on the functional architecture of NPs on the one hand, and the theory of locality and the nature of displacement on the other. Languages exhibit great variability with respect to what can be moved out of noun phrases, and the complexity of data poses a serious challenge for parametric accounts of extraction possibilities. Focusing on postnominal constituents, the acceptability of extraction is sensitive to a number of factors including the definiteness of the noun phrase, the thematic hierarchy, and the nature of case assigned to the NP. On the other hand, when the possibility of extracting prenominal constituents is taken into account, the patterns of extraction become even more complex. In many languages, movement of prenominal elements out of the noun phrase is disallowed (e.g. English, Dutch), other languages seem to freely allow this type of displacement (e.g. most Slavic languages), while still some other languages allow extraction of only certain prenominal constituents (e.g. possessors in Hungarian, Tzotzil). A number of proposals have been put forward in an attempt to identify the locus of parametrization in extraction patterns. One line of thought has focused on the nature of determiners, arguing that the determiner layer is systematically missing in languages which allow movement of prenominal constituents. One of the initial goals of the proposed project is to pursue the idea that not all cases of apparent extraction of prenominal elements should receive a uniform treatment, such as the one in terms of the lack of determiners. Plausibly, the Slavic cases are better analyzed as involving two instances of movement rather than direct extraction, whereby the NP moves out of the dominating phrase, and subsequently the remnant phrase hosting the prenominal modifiers fronts to clause-initial position. This leaves open the possibility that some languages allow direct removal of some NP constituents, which in turn calls for a more detailed investigation of exact restrictions and conditions on this type of displacement. A particularly challenging task in this respect is to capture the asymmetry in extraction of prenominal and postnominal constituents in a principled way. Hopefully, a better understanding of extraction patterns will also further our knowledge regarding the internal structure of noun phrases and contribute to identifying the number and nature of functional layers present in the extended projection of nouns.