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## **Object shift in the Scandinavian languages : syntax, information structure, and intonation**

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### **Citation**

Hosono, M. (2013, June 19). *Object shift in the Scandinavian languages : syntax, information structure, and intonation*. LOT dissertation series. LOT, Utrecht. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/20984>

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**Issue Date:** 2013-06-19

## Chapter 1. Introduction

The Scandinavian languages are classified into two main branches: Mainland Scandinavian and Insular Scandinavian. The former includes Swedish, Norwegian and Danish, and the latter Icelandic and Faroese (Holmberg and Platzack 1995). In almost all of these Scandinavian varieties, a weak, unstressed object pronoun moves across a sentential adverb. This movement phenomenon is called *Object Shift* OS (see below).<sup>1, 2</sup> A full NP object normally does not move (1). However, the weak pronominal object, *henne* ‘her’ in Swedish (2a), *den* ‘it’ in Norwegian (2b), *ham* ‘him’ in Danish (2c), *hann* ‘it’ in Icelandic (2d) and *hann* ‘it’ in Faroese (2e) moves across the negation. OS is obligatory in some of the Scandinavian varieties, but optional in others. Despite the presence of (either obligatory or optional) OS in most of the Scandinavian varieties, OS never occurs in Övdalian, the Älvdalen dialect of Swedish. The weak pronominal object *ána* ‘it’ follows the negation (2f).

- (1) Jag kysste (\*Marit) inte (OKMarit). [Swe.]  
I kissed Marit not Marit  
‘I didn’t kiss Marit.’
- (2) a. Jag kysste (OKhenne) inte (OKhenne). [Swe.]  
I kissed her not her  
‘I didn’t kiss her.’
- b. Jon sparket (OKden) ikke (OK/\*den). [Nor.]  
Jon kicked it not it  
‘Jon didn’t kick it.’
- c. Peter mødte (OKham) ikke (OK/\*ham). [Dan.]  
Peter met him not him  
‘Peter didn’t meet him.’
- d. Jón keypti (OKhann) ekki (\*hann). [Ice.]  
Jón bought it not it  
‘Jón didn’t buy it.’

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<sup>1</sup> In this work, the terminology *Object Shift* is used to refer to pronominal shift only. I refer to movement of noun phrases as *full NP shift*.

<sup>2</sup> ‘OK’ indicates that the relevant sentential element can be located in that position. ‘\*’ indicates that the relevant one cannot be located there.

- e. Eg málaði (<sup>OK</sup>hann) ekki (<sup>OK</sup>/<sup>\*</sup>hann). [Far.]  
 I painted it not it  
 ‘I didn’t paint it.’
- f. Ig tjöpt (<sup>\*</sup>ána) it (<sup>OK</sup>ána). [Övd.]  
 I bought it not it  
 ‘I didn’t buy it.’

There is a condition under which an object pronoun can move. In simple tense forms (3a-b), a main verb moves to the second position.<sup>3</sup> An object pronoun can move too. In complex tense forms (4a-b), a past participle main verb does not move due to the presence of the Aux(iliary verb). An object pronoun cannot move either. In embedded clauses (5a-b), verb movement does not take place. An object pronoun cannot move either. This observation is called *Holmberg’s Generalization* (Holmberg 1986): an object pronoun can move only when verb movement takes place.<sup>4</sup>

- (3) a. Jag kysste henne inte [<sub>VP</sub> kysste ~~henne~~]. [Swe.]  
 I kissed her not  
 ‘I didn’t kiss her.’
- b. Jag kysste inte [<sub>VP</sub> kysste henne].  
 I kissed not her  
 ‘I didn’t kiss her.’
- (4) a. Jag har inte [<sub>VP</sub> kysst henne]. [Swe.]  
 I have not kissed her  
 ‘I haven’t kissed her.’
- b. \*Jag har henne inte [<sub>VP</sub> kysst ~~henne~~].  
 I have her not kissed
- (5) a. ... att jag inte [<sub>VP</sub> kysste henne] [Swe.]  
 that I not kissed her  
 ‘... that I didn’t kiss her’
- b. \*... att jag henne inte [<sub>VP</sub> kysste ~~henne~~]  
 that I her not kissed

<sup>3</sup> The deletion line illustrates that a relevant sentential element has vacated the position and moved to a higher position. A deleted element is assumed to be a copy of the raised element and have the same properties that the raised one has (Chomsky 1995).

<sup>4</sup> There are many other issues regarding OS, which I introduce in the next chapter.

Holmberg's Generalization indicates that the presence of pronominal movement is dependent on that of verb movement. However, no movement phenomenon other than OS has been found in which the presence of movement of a sentential element is dependent on that of another sentential element. Due to this particular property, OS has long been one of the most controversial issues in generative syntax. Despite much literature on OS (Diesing 1992, 1997; Holmberg and Platzack 1995; Bobaljik and Jonas 1996; Collins and Thráinsson 1996; Holmberg 1999; Chomsky 2001; Sells 2001; Vikner 2001; Josefsson 2003; Fox and Pesetsky 2005; Erteschik-Shir 2005a,b; Broekhuis 2008; among others), no comprehensive and decisive account for all aspects of OS has been provided yet.

Hence, the research questions are as follows:

- i) What principled account can be provided for Holmberg's Generalization?; and
- ii) What principled accounts can be provided for the obligatoriness, optionality and absence of OS, and how are they related to i)?

It is well known that the Scandinavian languages have specific intonational systems, as represented by Bruce (1977) for Swedish, Kristoffersen (2000) for Norwegian, Grønnum (1998) for Danish, and Árnason (2011) for Icelandic and Faroese. Though these works convincingly show that the intonational properties are involved in characterizing the overall aspect of the Scandinavian languages to a significant extent, a thorough study of OS from the viewpoint of the intonational properties has not been carried out so far.<sup>5</sup> In this thesis, I present experimental data of the constructions relevant to OS of all the Scandinavian varieties concerned. I discuss their intonational properties in turn. I present a new hypothesis and generalization on OS from the perspective of the intonational properties of the Scandinavian languages, and provide an account of Holmberg's Generalization on the basis of it.

The overall property regarding the constructions relevant to OS revealed in this work is as follows: downstep typically occurs in the OS construction of simple tense forms and Verb Topicalization, but it does not occur in complex tense forms and embedded clauses, which mostly do not have OS, in almost all the Scandinavian varieties investigated. That is, the fundamental frequency F0 on the negation becomes lower than the F0 on the main verb in the OS construction. However, in complex tense forms and embedded clauses, the pitch peak occurs on a sentential/clausal element located 'after' the element that cannot be followed by an object pronoun directly, i.e. the Aux and the embedded subject. Thus, the relation between the presence of OS and that of downstep is described as follows: movement of the object

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<sup>5</sup> But see Hellan (1981, 1994) for a discussion of OS from the perspective of word tone and intonation.

pronoun entails downstep. The relation of ‘entailment’ expresses that whenever OS takes place, downstep occurs (but not vice versa). This descriptive generalisation is supported by experimental data collected for 13 Scandinavian varieties (presented in chapters 3 and 4). In chapter 5, the entailment relationship will be theoretically interpreted as that of ‘causation’. I propose the following new hypothesis on OS:

- (6) Scandinavian Object Shift:  
The object pronoun moves to cause downstep.

In simple tense forms, the focus and focal accent typically occurs on a raised main verb. A possible focal effect on the sentential element(s) located after it must be eliminated. In complex tense forms and embedded clauses, the focus typically occurs on the in-situ past participle in the former and on the (in-situ) embedded verb in the latter. The final pitch peak occurs on those main verbs. Then, the theoretical account of Holmberg’s Generalization will be provided as follows. When main verb movement takes place, an object pronoun moves and causes downstep to eliminate a focal effect on the sentential element(s) after the main verb. In the environments in which downstep must not occur, i.e. in the constructions where the final pitch peak occurs on the (in-situ) main verb, OS does not occur either.

Whether OS is obligatory, optional or absent depends on whether a Scandinavian variety at issue has an early or delayed pitch gesture: the Scandinavian varieties in which OS tends to be absent, e.g. Övdalian, typically have a delayed pitch gesture, whereas those which have more or less obligatory OS, e.g. East Swedish, have an early pitch gesture. I present the following new generalization on OS:

- (7) Scandinavian Object Shift:  
The earlier the pitch gesture occurs, the more likely is Object Shift to occur; the more delayed the pitch gesture is, the more likely is Object Shift to be absent.

I argue that OS is not a binary/dichotomous property, i.e. either its presence or absence, but a gradient phenomenon in the Scandinavian languages. We will also see that the property of the early/delayed pitch gesture is closely related to the one-/two-peaked pitch property in the Scandinavian languages.

I propose a system that accounts for the facts on OS as well as the interaction between syntax, information structure and intonation in general. The basic idea is that in theorizing the interaction between syntax, information structure and intonation, only the focal point and the highest pitch peak need to be taken into account: the locus of the highest pitch peak always indicates that the focal point is also there (or quite near it). The cross-linguistic

prediction from the proposed model is that the farther the focal point moves from an unmarked position, the more an unmarked intonation pattern is likely to change, and the more an unmarked syntactic word order is likely to be affected, which is confirmed in various languages.

Finally, I discuss in which grammatical component OS occurs. First, in the current Chomskyan framework, the interpretation that a category receives in the semantic component is derived from the fact that it has already moved to and been located in the corresponding structural position in syntax. Thus, no movement including OS can occur in the semantic component. Secondly, optional movement such as OS in which the interpretation a category receives in a moved position does not differ from the one it receives *in situ* cannot occur in syntax, and is assumed to occur in the phonological component. I show, however, that movement in phonology cannot be carried out in a theoretically principled way in the currently assumed framework. Thirdly, in the thorough discussion of OS from the intonational perspective, we will see that the obligatoriness, optionality and absence of OS, i.e. all the syntactic behaviors of object pronouns, can be accounted for in a principled way in terms of the intonational properties. Thus, I suggest the possibility that OS occurs in syntax, driven by the intonational properties. I suggest that ‘intonation-driven syntactic movement’ is feasible in the system as proposed here in which the grammatical components directly interact with each other.

This thesis is organized as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the semantico-syntactic, syntactic and phonological approaches to OS. I argue that none of those studies can provide a decisive account for all aspects of OS. Chapter 3 introduces an experiment that I conducted to observe the intonational properties of the constructions relevant to OS. I present data from Swedish (East, West, South, North, Finland Swedish, Dalecarlian and Övdalian), Norwegian (East and West), Danish (East and South), Icelandic and Faroese. I discuss remarkable findings in each of the Scandinavian varieties in turn. Chapter 4 presents statistical data of the downstep/non-downstep size of the constructions relevant to OS of all the Scandinavian varieties investigated. Chapter 5 presents a new hypothesis and generalization on OS. I also present a new system that accounts for the alignment between syntax, information structure and intonation. Finally, I discuss in which grammatical component OS occurs. Chapter 6 concludes this thesis, presenting several indications from the discussion in the thesis. Especially, I suggest the possibility that phonology affects syntax.

