

AG 9: Linearisierung

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In current syntactic thinking, syntactic representations are strictly hierarchical and do not contain any information on the linear order of terminal elements. Such an assumption obviously raises a number of questions, which this workshop aims to address.

The first question that is raised concerns the motivation of this hypothesis. The original motivation was mainly theoretical, but empirical support may be found if the hypothesis allows us to account for certain facts more easily, e.g., certain typological universals of word order or the fact that phonological ‘weight’ appears to play a role in establishing linear order. On the other hand, syntactic theory must be able to explain the fact that some languages have strict ordering requirements, something that seems unexpected in a purely hierarchical syntax model.

These questions are closely tied to another important issue: if the idea is in fact correct, how can a linear order be derived from the hierarchical structure? Several answers have been given in the (generative) literature, which are often based – directly or indirectly – on Kayne’s (1994) LCA. Some of these proposals focus on explaining syntactic phenomena such as Object Shift or successive-cyclic movement, thus expanding the empirical basis for the hypothesis.

Sign languages may throw a completely different light on linearisation. Most approaches to linearisation assume that linear order is established in the derivation from syntax to phonology and that it is completed before purely phonological operations take place. Sign languages, however, show a large degree of *simultaneity*, i.e., they have the ability to realise multiple meaningful elements *simultaneously*. Such facts violate common assumptions regarding linearisation and suggest that linear order is established not before but rather as a part of purely phonological operations. This raises the question of whether sign languages must be treated differently from spoken languages or whether linearisation must be approached in a different way altogether.

The workshop focusses on syntax and the syntax-phonology interface from a theoretical perspective and should interest linguists working in those fields.