

OVS in Russian, Reconsidered

1. The puzzle: Russian is well-known for its “freedom” of word order, and in particular for the possibility of OVS order, as in (1), for which several analyses have been proposed in the literature ([Erechko 2003](#), [Bailyn 2004, 2018](#), [Slioussar 2011](#), [Wiland 2013](#), [Titov 2013, 2018](#), [Ionin & Luchkina 2018](#)). In this talk, we reconsider the arguments for and against the various proposals; since several data points have been contested in the literature, we base this study on extensive (albeit informal) surveys of native speakers (to which a total of 121 speakers have responded to date). Ultimately, we provide novel support for an analysis proposed in Bailyn (2018) whereby the O in OVS is in Spec-TP and the VS order is derived by rightward movement of S (contrary to [Erechko 2003](#), [Slioussar 2011](#), [Wiland 2013](#)).

2. What’s in Spec-TP? There are two answers to this question in the literature: the O ([Bailyn 2004, 2018](#), [Titov 2013, 2018](#)) or the S (in which case, the O is in an A'-position in the C-domain; [Erechko 2003](#), [Slioussar 2011](#), [Wiland 2013](#), [Ionin & Luchkina 2018](#)). We argue for the former analysis, whereby the O in OVS is in Spec-TP, and show that the arguments in favor of the S in OVS being in Spec-TP are flawed in various ways. For example, we show that only the reciprocal *drug druga* ‘each other’, but not the reflexives *sebjja* ‘self’ and *svoj* ‘self’s’, can be used as a reliable diagnostic for Spec-TP. Based on our survey of native speakers, we show that non-agentive arguments in Spec-TP, such as derived subjects of the passive, are degraded as antecedents of *sebjja* ‘self’ and *svoj* ‘self’s’: to most speakers, passives with reflexives are degraded compared to passives with a non-reflexive element or a reciprocal, as shown in (2). With that in mind, we can dismiss the data (cf. [Slioussar 2011](#), [Ionin & Luchkina 2018](#)) where the O cannot bind into the S that contains *sebjja* ‘self’. Yet, based on data where the O can bind *drug druga* ‘each other’ in the S, as in (3), we can conclude that indeed the O in OVS is in an A-position such as Spec-TP. Similarly, we show that the argument for placing the S in OVS in Spec-TP based on its ability to take wide scope with respect to sentential negation (as in (4a); cf. [Erechko 2003](#), [Wiland 2013](#)) is flawed: in SVO, where the O is uncontroversially not in Spec-TP, it can nonetheless take wide scope with respect to sentential negation, as shown in (4b). In addition to the reciprocal binding pattern, as in (3), we present two novel patterns, not mentioned in previous literature on OVS: one involving *on sam* ‘he himself’ (5) and the other involving subject-oriented adverbs (e.g. *umno* ‘cleverly’, *oxotno* ‘willingly’). For all three patterns, we show that the O in OVS behaves in the same way as the S in SVO and the derived subject in passives, and not as the O in OSV. We thus conclude that in OVS the O (and not the S) is in Spec-TP.

3. How is the VS derived? Here, we agree with much of the previous literature ([Erechko 2003](#), [Slioussar 2011](#), [Ionin & Luchkina 2018](#), [Bailyn 2018](#)) that the verb in OVS does not raise to T° by Head Movement, cf. (1). Still, there are two ways to derive the VS portion of the OVS order: by moving the S rightward ([Bailyn 2018](#)) or by movement of remnant vP (previously vacated by S) to the left of the S ([Erechko 2003](#), [Slioussar 2011](#), [Wiland 2013](#)). We propose that this issue can be decided by examining data involving the Scope Freezing effect, described for Germanic languages in [Sauerland \(1998\)](#), [Wurmbrand \(2006\)](#): the quantifier inside a fronted vP cannot QR out of the vP and hence can only take narrow scope with relation to another quantifier, as in (6). To the best of our knowledge, this Scope Freezing effect has not been discussed for Russian, so first we need to test whether this effect obtains in structures that involve overt remnant vP fronting, such as Predicate Clefts (PCs). There is some controversy in the literature as to whether PCs where the verb fronts with (some or all of) its arguments involve movement ([Abels 2001](#), [Ibnbari 2008 a, b](#), [Scott 2012](#)) or base-generation ([Antonenko 2018](#)). Our survey shows that (for the overwhelming majority of speakers) such PCs are indeed sensitive to strong islands, as in (7), contrary to [Antonenko \(2018\)](#), and hence are derived by movement. Moreover, while many speakers find PCs with a quantified argument degraded, those who do not, exhibit judgments in line with the Scope Freezing effect, as in (8). Finally, we tested whether the Scope Freezing effect obtains in OVS sentences: if the VS order is obtained by remnant vP-fronting, we expect the same Scope Freezing effect; however, our survey shows that no such effect obtains in (9), which allows the interpretation disallowed in (8).

- (1) Xorošie detektivy často pišut ženščiny. *OVS; no V-to-T Raising*
 good mystery.novels often write women
 'As for good mystery novels, it's women who often write them.'
- (2) a. Urjupov byl (ras)sprošen {o */??sebe / ob istinnom adrese ženy}.
 Urupov was asked about self /about real address wife
 'Urupov was asked about */??himself / his wife's real address.'
 b. Storony byli proinformirovany drug o druge.
 sides were informed each about other
 'The sides were informed about each other.'
- (3) Duèljantov ubili {vystrely / sekundanty} drug druga.
 duelists.ACC killed {shots / assistants} each other
 'As for duelists, they were killed by the {shots / assistants} of each other.'
- (4) a. Mannyju kašu ne poprobovali eščë desjat' detej.
 [semolina porridge].ACC not tried yet [ten children].NOM
 'As for semolina porridge, the number of children who tried it is less than 10.' →10
 'As for semolina porridge, ten of the children haven't tried it yet.' 10→
 b. Maša ne poprobovala eščë desjat' pirožnyx.
 Masha not tried yet [ten pastries].ACC
 'Masha tried less than ten pastries.' →10
 'There's ten pastries that Masha hasn't tried yet.' 10→
- (5) a. [On sam]_{i/k} priglasil Putina.
 he himself.NOM invited Putin.ACC
 'He himself (some person other than Putin, e.g. Trump) invited Putin.'
 b. Putina_i priglasil [on sam]_{i/*k}. c. Putina_i priglašën [im samim]_{i/*k}.
 Putin.ACC invited he himself.NOM Putin.NOM invited.PASS he himself.INSTR
 'Putin was invited by himself.' 'Putin is invited by himself.'
 d. Putina_i [on sam]_{i/k} priglasil.
 Putin.ACC he himself.NOM invited
 'As for Putin, he himself (some person other than Putin, e.g. Trump) invited him.'
- (6) ...and [stand in front of every bank] a policeman did that day. $\exists\forall$, $*\forall\exists$ (Wurmbrand 2006)
- (7) a. * Kupit' piva-to ja znaju čeloveka, kotoryj {kupil / smog}. *complex NP*
 to.buy beer (-TOP) I know person who {bought / could}
 intended: 'As for buying beer, I know a person who {did / could}.'
 b. * Vypit' piva-to ja ušël, potomy čto Maša {vypila / smogla}. *adjunct*
 to.drink beer (-TOP) I left because Masha {drank / could}
 intended: 'As for drinking beer, I left because Masha {did / could}.'
 (OK on the interpretation: 'I left to drink beer because Masha drank (something).')
- (8) Otvetit' na každyj vopros(-to) bol'she poloviny studentov otvetili.
 to.respond to each question(-TOP) more.than half students responded
 'To respond to each question, more than half the students did.'
 $\exists\forall$, $*\forall\exists$ (the unacceptability of the latter interpretation = Scope Freezing effect)
- (9) "Da" otvetili na každyj vopros bol'she poloviny studentov.
 yes responded to each question more.than half students
 'More than half the students responded "yes" to each question.' ${}^{ok}\forall\exists$