

<b><u>Workshop ID :</u></b>	45
<b><u>Workshop Duration :</u></b>	Workshop - 1 Day
<b><u>Workshop Title :</u></b>	<b>The emergence of configurationality</b>
<b><u>Workshop Leader :</u></b>	Freek Van de Velde, KU Leuven

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A vexing question in linguistics is the extent to which languages have similar syntactic structures. Are the obvious differences in the surface forms reducible to deep similarities, or do they, conversely, reflect widely different strategies deployed in organising their grammar? Generative Universal Grammar approaches have traditionally stressed the similarities (Chomsky 1986), whereas usage-based approaches have empirically explored the differences (Croft 2001; Evans & Levinson 2009). However the exact degree to which languages differ with respect to syntactic structure is still a matter of debate, across the theoretical fault-lines. Of particular interest are the so-called non-configurational languages (Austin & Bresnan 1996), which defy description in terms of constituency. These languages display free word order, discontinuous phrases, and/or extensive use of null anaphora, both for subjects and objects. The concept of (non-)configurationality was introduced by Hale (1983) in his description of Warlpiri, and appears to be an areal feature of Australian languages, though it can be found elsewhere as well, notably in the older Indo-European languages such as Latin. The non-configurational behaviour of some languages have led scholars like Evans & Levinson (2009:440-442) to posit that syntactic constituency is just one possible way to mark relationships in language. In other words: not all languages have constituents. Indeed, as Rijkhoff (1998:322-326, 362-363) notes, tightly-structured 'integral' NPs might be particularly favoured by modern European languages, but are not as ubiquitous in other parts of the world.

If constituency is not universal, it is plausible that languages can acquire it, or lose it over time. Indeed, several scholars have documented the diachronic emergence of constituent structure in Romance, Germanic and Indo-Aryan. All these studies suggest that configurationality is a property that is often acquired, but is rarely seen to be lost. This is in accordance with Faarlund's observation that word order can become strict, but not free (Faarlund 2010: 203). It remains to be seen (and empirically underpinned) how unidirectional a change in configurationality really is (see e.g. Givón 2009: 277 on Ute, a language that did develop from strict to free word order) and which mechanisms may favour it. Thus Steels & Casademont (2015) show by computational simulation that the use of constituency dampens processing efforts, and similar arguments have been put forward by Hawkins (2004). One of the decisive factors could be the proportion of L2 speakers in a community: L1 speakers favour 'synthetic' strategies - i.e. non-configurational strategies, depending on inflectional markers - whereas L2 speakers favour 'analytic' strategies - i.e. configurational strategies, depending on word order and phrase structure (Lupyan & Dale 2010, Trudgill 2011, Carlier et al. 2012, Haspelmath & Michaelisforthc.). This can explain why big, so-called 'exoteric' languages tend to develop configurationality (see Bentz & Christiansen 2013 on Romance and Germanic).

This workshop aims at taking stock of research into the rise of configurationality. The following questions will be addressed:

- a What are reliable symptoms of configurationality?
- b Is configurationality an all-or-nothing, or rather a gradual phenomenon?
- c Does (non-)configurationality inform us on the universality of syntactic structures?
- d Is the diachronic rise of configurationality a unidirectional process?
- e How do language-external factors, like demography, play a role in the drift towards increased configurationality?
- f What kind of data (typological data, diachronic corpus data, agent-based simulation ...) can shed light on the nature of configurationality?

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