

A microparametric approach to word order typology

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The fact that even the most rigid head-final and head-initial languages show inconsistencies and, more crucially, that the very languages which come closest to the ideal types (the “rigid” SOV and the VOS languages) are apparently a minority among the languages of the world, makes it plausible to explore the possibility of a microparametric approach for what is often taken to be one of the prototypical examples of macroparameter, the ‘head-initial/head-final parameter’. From this perspective, the features responsible for the different types of movement (attraction) of the constituents of the unique structure of Merge from which all canonical orders derive are determined by lexical specifications of different generality (cf. Baker 2008,fn2 and Biberauer,Holmberg and Roberts 2014): from those present on a single lexical item, to those present on lexical items belonging to a specific subclass of a certain category, or to every subclass of a certain category, or to every subclass of two or more, or all, categories, (always) with certain exceptions.