

Impact Length on Word Order Preferences in Spanish and Basque Native and Near-native Speakers

ABSTRACT:

We found that native speakers of Basque (OV) prefer to place longer elements before shorter ones, while native speakers of Spanish (VO) favor the opposite short-before-long orderings. However, both languages differ in the frequency and the type of sentences where length dependent word order rearrangements take place. Also, Basque and Spanish non-native speakers behave differently than native speakers: they show a milder effect of length and a preference for canonical word orders. Basque non-native speakers prefer to deploy verb-final long-before-short sequences, while Basque native speakers make a heavier use of verb-medial structures.

Interesting readings related to this talk are listed below:

- Yamashita, H., & Chang, F. (2001). *"Long before short" preference in the production of a head-final language*, *Cognition*, 81, B45–B55. [[PDF](#)]
- Dennison, H. Y. (2008). *Universal versus language-specific conceptual effects on shifted word-order production in Korean: Evidence from bilinguals*. *Working papers in Linguistics: University of Hawaii at Manoa* 39(2), 1– 16. [[PDF](#)]