

V1 sentences in New Testament Greek: subject positions, givenness, rhetorical relations

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In New Testament Greek, definite and indefinite subject Nps may both be preverbal or postverbal. In my paper, I try to identify some of the factors which condition the distribution of subjects. These include the form and complexity of the NP itself, the status of the referents of subject phrases wrt. givenness in the discourse, the rhetorical relation of the sentence containing the subject to the preceding context, and also the referential status of the subject (specific vs. non-specific).

The Greek data are discussed within the context of recent hypotheses about the syntactic structure of Ancient Greek, in particular attempts to explain the high frequency of VS order in the Greek of this period.

Finally, I will take a brief look at the degree to which subject verb order is replicated in the old Indo-European translations of the New Testament covered by the PROIEL corpus.