

LINGUIST 168 Introduction to Linguistic Typology

LECTURE 18: WORD ORDER AND BEYOND

Ksenia Ershova

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For Wednesday, 6/2

- no class on Monday (Memorial Day)
- Reading: Velupillai (2012), Ch.13
- Discussion post
- Revisions due on homeworks #1-5
- Any missed discussion posts due

Important deadlines

- **6/7** final assignment due for graduating students
revisions due on homeworks #6-7
- **6/11** final assignment due for non-graduating students
- **final assignment is only for 4 units
- **For assignments that involved unnamed languages, I will post the language info after all assignment deadlines have passed.

Plan for today

- larger word order generalizations
- correlations between word order and affix placement

Word order correlations

Verb ~ object

Object ~ verb

Noun ~ possessor

Possessor ~ noun

Preposition ~ noun phrase

Noun phrase ~ postposition

Noun ~ relative clause

Relative clause ~ noun

Adjective ~ standard of
comparison

Standard of comparison ~
adjective

Verb ~ object correlations

Rapa Nui (Austronesian)

verb

object

He	to'o	te	tenitō	i	te	moni
PAST	take	the	Chinese	ACC	the	money
'The Chinese took the money.'						

noun

possessor

te	hoi	o	te	tagata
the	horse	GEN	the	man
'the horse of the man'				

preposition **noun**

ki	Boston
to	Boston
'to Boston'	

Verb ~ object correlations

Rapa Nui (Austronesian)

noun

relative clause

te	tani	rapanui	[noho	oruga	o	te	miro]
the	other	Rapa Nui	stay	upon	GEN	the	boat
'the other Rapa Nui people who stayed on the boat'							

Object ~ verb correlations

Ainu (isolate)

	object	verb
Totto	amam	esose.
mother	rice	borrowed
‘The mother borrowed rice.’		

noun	postposition
pis	ta
shore	at
‘at the shore’	

possessor	noun
sapo	ninkarihi
sister	earrings
‘sister’s earrings’	

relative clause	noun
[Tokaci wa ek]	perekur
Tokachi from come	young.person
‘the young man who came from Tokachi’	

The position of the head

Verb ~ object

Noun ~ possessor

Preposition ~ noun phrase

Noun ~ relative clause

Adjective ~ standard of
comparison

HEAD ~ DEPENDENT

head-initial languages

E.g. Rapa Nui

Object ~ verb

Possessor ~ noun

Noun phrase ~ postposition

Relative clause ~ noun

Standard of comparison ~
adjective

DEPENDENT ~ HEAD

head-final languages

E.g. Ainu

Head position as a useful characteristic

West Circassian:

- no basic word order at clause-level
- BUT: **clauses tend to be verb-final** (especially embedded clauses)
- **noun** before **postposition**
- **relative clause** before **noun**
- **possessor** before **noun**
- **standard of comparison** before **adjective**

West Circassian is head-final

[zet̪ç'emjə	qaʔ ^w ere]	weredxer
all	they sing	songs
'the songs that everyone sings'		

relative clause > noun

pʃaʃem	paje
girl	for
'for the girl'	

pʃaʃem	jəha
girl	her dog
'the girl's dog'	

noun > postposition

possessor > noun

wex	naħ	pay-jə
you	more	proud-and
'even more proud than you'		

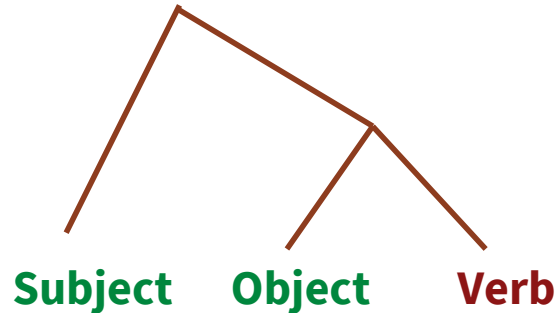
standard of comparison > adjective

Why is head directionality so uniform?

Dryer 1992: Branching Direction Theory

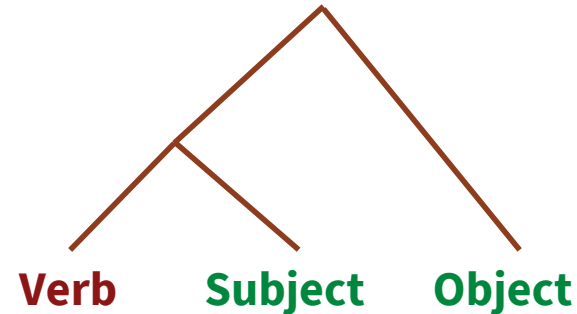
If syntactic structures are represented as trees, there is uniformity in the direction of branching.

Verb Phrase



branching **away** from the head phrase expands/branches to the **left**

Verb Phrase

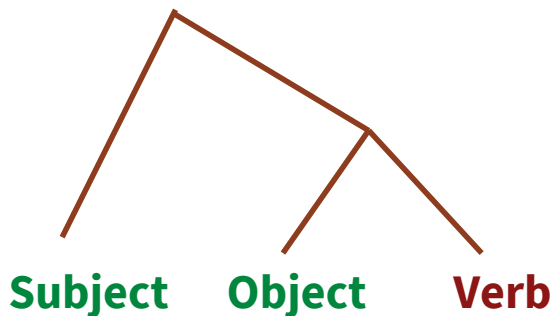


branching **away** from the head phrase expands/branches to the **right**

Head position and branching

HEAD-FINAL

Verb Phrase

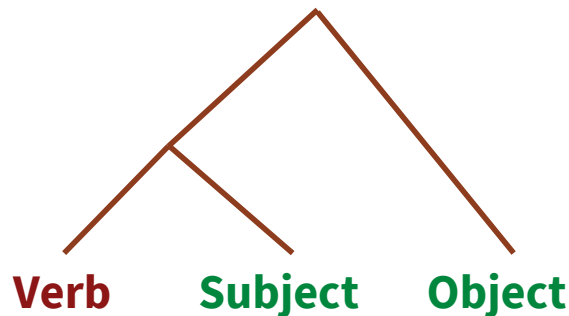


branching **away** from the head phrase expands/branches to the **left**

LEFT-BRANCHING
RIGHT-HEADED

HEAD-INITIAL

Verb Phrase

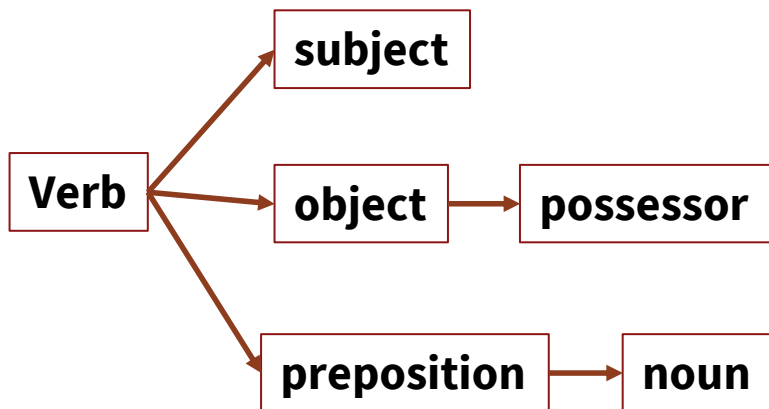


branching **away** from the head phrase expands/branches to the **right**

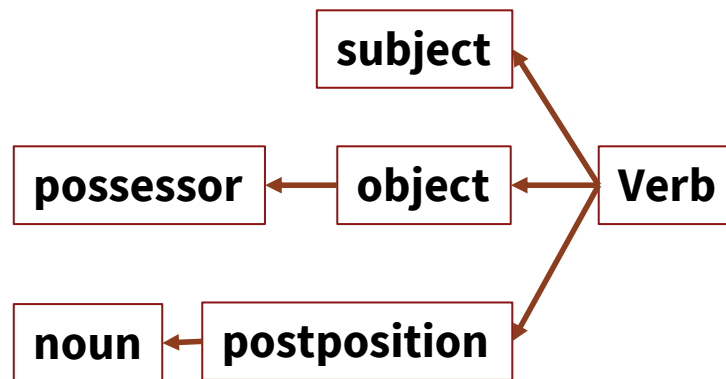
RIGHT-BRANCHING
LEFT-HEADED

Branching visualized in a dependency tree

HEAD-INITIAL



HEAD-FINAL

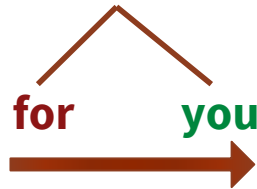


Is English left-branching or right-branching?

Is English left-branching or right-branching?

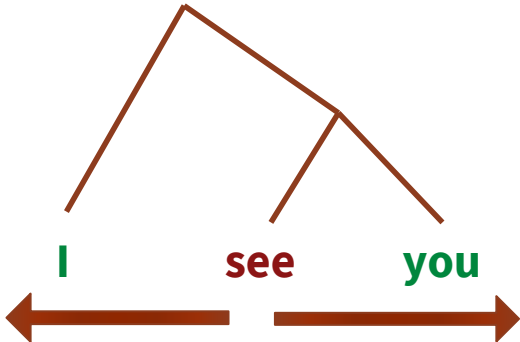
- mostly right-branching

Prepositional Phrase



- verb phrases are **mixed**

Verb Phrase

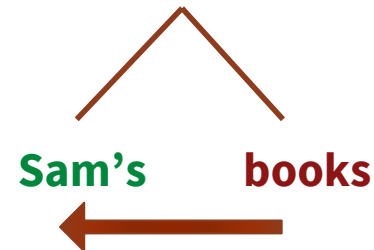


Noun Phrase



- noun+possessor is left-branching

Noun Phrase



Activity

Data: <https://bit.ly/3yGmyv4>

1. Characterize this language in terms of **head position** and **branching directionality**. Constructions to consider:
 - a. verb and subject
 - b. verb and object
 - c. adposition and noun
 - d. noun and possessor
 - e. noun and relative clause
2. Characterize this language in terms of affix placement (prefixing versus suffixing).
3. BONUS: Notice anything interesting about the affixes?

(slide intentionally left blank)

Jahai (Mon-Khmer)

- mostly head-initial / right-branching

verb

object

noun

relative clause

ʔoʔ	gej-gej	nasiʔ	ton
he	CONT-eat	rice	that
'He kept on eating that rice.'			

mnraʔ	k=cip	ba=hip
people	REL=go	to=forest
'the people who went to the forest'		

preposition noun

noun

possessor

ba=wɔŋ	jɛʔ
to=child	I
'to my child'	

Jahai (Mon-Khmer)

- subject is left-branching

subject **verb**

ʔoʔ	gej-gej	nasiʔ	ton
he	CONT-eat	rice	that
‘He kept on eating that rice.’			

subject **verb**

wɔŋ	wa=gej
child	FUT.3SG=eat
‘The child will eat.’	

*nominative-accusative,
ergative-absolutive,
or neither?*

Correlation between word order and morphology

- Jahai is (mostly) **head-initial**
- Jahai is also **exclusively prefixing**

ʔoʔ	gej-gej	nasiʔ	ton
he	CONT-eat	rice	that
‘He kept on eating that rice.’			

ʔoʔ	b-dʔ-deʔ	ka=ʔũn
he	PROG-IMPF-make	at=there
‘He was setting a trap over there.’		

Word order and morphology

- Head-initial languages tend to be predominantly prefixing.
- Head-final languages tend to be predominantly suffixing.

head-final languages

**DEPENDENT
STEM**

**HEAD
SUFFIXES**

head-initial languages

**HEAD
PREFIXES**

**DEPENDENT
STEM**

Correlation between VO and affix placement

- https://wals.info/combinations/83A_26A#1/22/153
- combined parameters:
 1. order of object and verb <https://wals.info/chapter/83>
 2. prefixing versus suffixing in inflectional morphology <https://wals.info/chapter/26>

	Strongly suffixing / VO	93
	Strongly suffixing / OV	269
	Strong prefixing / VO	51
	Strong prefixing / OV	6

The connection is complicated

- There are exceptions to **head position ~ affix placement** correlation.
- E.g. **Navajo (Athabaskan)**: head-final, but exclusively prefixing!

Nihi-jish	b-	iih-	da-	hw-	oh-	ł-	nííl
2PL-suitcase	3-	into-	distr-	indefinite. object-	2PL.subj-	tr-	put

‘Pack your suitcases.’

- **object** > **verb**
- **prefixes** > **stem**

Affix placement depends on historical development

- correlation between word order and affix placement implies connection:

Syntax: **head** > **dependent**

Morphology: **affix** > **stem**

Mithun 2003:

- some affixes are not analogous to syntactic heads
- depends on how those affixes developed

Agreement / “pronominal” affixes

- agreement affixes on the verb frequently develop out of regular pronouns
- E.g. in **West Circassian**:

se	we	wə-	s-	teβ ^{wə}	-jə	-β
I	you	2SG-	1SG-	see	-again	-PAST
‘I saw you again.’						

te	∫ ^w e	∫ ^w ə-	t-	teβ ^{wə}	-jə	-β
we	you(pl)	2PL-	1PL-	see	-again	-PAST
‘I saw you again.’						

1SG	se	~	s-
2SG	we	~	wə-
1PL	te	~	t-
2PL	∫ ^w e	~	∫ ^w ə-

West Circassian is head-final. Why are these prefixes?

Agreement prefixes in a head-final language

- **grammaticalization**: historical change from independent word to affix
- independent pronouns are **dependents** of the **verb**
- if language is **head-final**, they appear **before** the verb
- resulting prefixes appear in same position

dependents



prefixes-

head

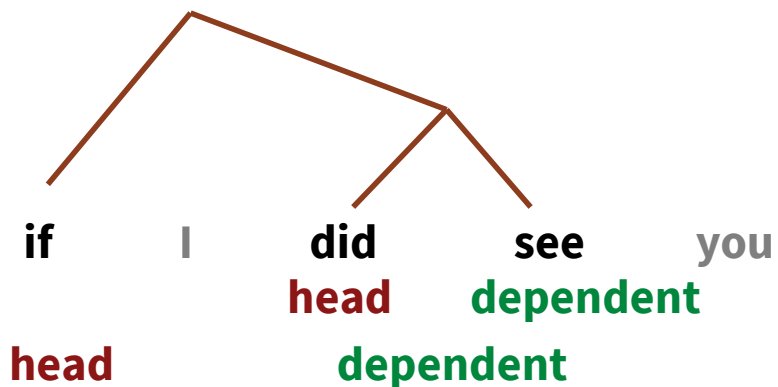
stem

se	we	wə-	s-	ʔeB ^{wə}	-jə	-B
I	you	2SG-	1SG-	see	-again	-PAST
'I saw you again.'						

Suffixes are more head-like

se	we	wə-	s-	ʔeɣ ^{wə}	-jə	-ɸe	-mjə
I	you	2SG-	1SG-	see	-again	-PAST	-CONCESSIVE
'even if I saw you again'							

Compare with English:



Syntactic typology: big takeaways

- **argument alignment:**
 - › domains of expression: case, agreement, word order
 - › nominative-accusative versus ergative-absolutive
- **word order:**
 - › major typologies:
 - subject, object, verb
 - subject and verb
 - object and verb
 - › correlations with other domains (phrasal word order and morphology)
 - › terminology: head-final, head-initial, right-branching, left-branching