LINGUIST 168 Introduction to Linguistic Typology

LECTURE 19: LANGUAGE CHANGE

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Plan for today

- argument alignment activity (for homework #7)
- typology and historical linguistics
- wrapping up / discussion questions

Activity

Handout: https://bit.ly/3fCNzbw

1. Characterize the case marking, word order and agreement as exhaustively as possible.
2. Identify the alignment of the language within each of these domains.

Group 1   Language 1

Group 2   Language 2

Group 3   Language 3
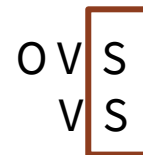
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Hixharyana (Carib)

Word order

O	V	S

O	V	S
kuraha	yonyhoryeno	bɨryekomo
bow	he-made-it	boy
'The boy made a bow.'		

V	S

V	S
newehyatxhe	worɨskomo komo
they-bathe	women COLLECTIVE
'The women are taking a bath.'	

O V S
V S

nominative-accusative

Derbyshire, Desmond C. 1985. Hixkaryana and Linguistic Typology. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

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Hixharyana (Carib)

Agreement

Intransitive verb

Transitive verb

mɨ-onkuhtotxowɨ
2-deceived
'you deceived them'

o-momokyaha
2-waits
'he is waiting for you'

mɨ-omokno
2-came
'you have come'

Position: prefix

Agreement with:

    one argument

    in combination of 2 and 3 person, with 2 person

    subject or object

Form: **nominative-accusative**

    same for S and A

    different for O

Hixharyana (Carib)

Word order: OVS

VS

nominative-accusative

Agreement: prefixal

with one argument: subject or object

S and A = same; P = different

nominative-accusative

Case: no overt case

neutral alignment

Kewa (Trans-New Guinea)

Intransitive

áá	píra-a
man	sit-PAST.**3SG**
'The man sat down.'	

ní	píra-wa
I	sit-PAST.**1SG**
'I sat down.'	

Word order: SV
Case: no case
Agreement: suffix with S

Dryer, Matthew S. (2007) Clause types. In Language typology and syntactic description. Vol.1. CUP.

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Kewa (Trans-New Guinea)

<u>Transitive</u>

S	O	V
áá-**mé**	étaa	ná-a
man	food	eat-PAST.**3SG**
'The man ate the food.'		

né-**mé**	irikai	tá-wa
I	dog	hit-PAST.**1SG**
'I hit the dog.'		

Word order: SOV
Case: suffix on A
no case on P
Agreement: suffix
with A

Kewa (Trans-New Guinea)

Word order: SV

SOV

neutral alignment

Agreement: suffix

one argument: S or A

nominative-accusative

Case: suffix on A

no overt case on S or P

ergative-absolutive

Jacaltec (Mayan)

Intransitive

V	S
x'apni	naj
arrived	he
'He arrived'	

ch-in	axni
ASP-1	bathe
'I bathe.'	

Transitive

V	S	O
xil	naj	ix
saw	he	she
'He saw her'		

ch-in	haw-ila
ASP-1	2-see
'You see me.'	

Word order: VSO

VS

Agreement:

suffix on ASP for S or [

prefix on V for A

Case: no case

Agreement: ergative-absolutive
Case and word order: neutral

Craig, Colette Grinevald. 1977. The Structure of Jacaltec. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Jacaltec (Mayan)

Word order: VSO
VS
neutral alignment

Agreement: with two arguments
suffix on ASP for S or P
prefix on verb for A
ergative-absolutive

Case: no case
neutral alignment

Questions?

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Plan for today

- argument alignment activity (for homework #7)
- typology and historical linguistics
- discussion questions
- wrapping up

Typology and historical linguistics

- historical linguistics studies **how languages change over time**
- two-way relationship with typology:
  - › typology can be used to evaluate the plausibility of historical reconstruction

  It is plausible for proto-language to have typologically common features.

  - › generalizations in language change can explain typological distributions

  A common type of change can explain why a particular linguistic feature is typologically common.

  - › together: bring us closer to understanding motivations for common features

  *If something is typologically common **and** a frequent end product of language change, the interesting question is **why**.*

Typology informs historical linguistics

Example: 'Glottalic Theory of Indo-European stop consonants'

- The languages Indo-European language family are hypothesized to have **a common ancestor – Proto-Indo-European**

- Original Neo-Grammarian reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European **stop consonants**:

	Labial	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Labiovelar
Voiceless	*p	*t	*k^j	*k	*k^w
Voiced	*b	*d	*g^j	*g	*g^w
Voiced aspirated	*b^h	*d^h	*g^{jh}	*g^h	*g^{wh}

What is typologically unusual about this inventory?

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Proto-Indo-European stop consonants

	Labial	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Labiovelar
Voiceless	*p	*t	*k^j	*k	*k^w
Voiced	*b	*d	*g^j	*g	*g^w
Voiced aspirated	*b^h	*d^h	*g^{jh}	*g^h	*g^{wh}
Voiceless glottalized	*p'	*t'	*k^j'	*k'	*k^w'

Jakobson 1971:

There is no known language that has voiced aspirated stop /d^h/, but not voiceless /t^h/.

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Historical linguistics informs typology

Example: definite and indefinite articles

▪ indefinite articles often have a form similar to the word meaning 'one'

E.g. French:

une pomme = 'an apple'

= 'one apple'

▪ definite articles often have a form similar to demonstrative pronouns

E.g. Bizkayan Basque (Isolate)

*gizon **a** = 'that man'*

*man **that***

*gizon-**a** = 'the man'*

*man-**the***

Moravcsik, Edith (2013) Introducing language typology. CUP.

The origins of articles

Heine & Kuteva 2002:

- All definite articles are grammaticalized from demonstrative pronouns.

- All indefinite articles are grammaticalized from the numeral 'one'.

- **Grammaticalization**:

  › gradual shift in use from independent content word to grammatical element (clitic or affix)

  › accompanied with phonological reduction, loss of morphological and syntactic function and semantic bleaching (loss of original meaning)

Heine, Bernd and Kuteva, Tania (2002) World lexicon of grammaticalization. CUP.

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Example of grammaticalization

Latin **ille / ille**   >   French   **le / la**

demonstrative   definite article

- phonological erosion
- gradual semantic bleaching:

Old French: article used only for 'uniquely identifiable referents'

*I bought a house. **The** house is spacious.*

Modern French: extended generic nouns

***The** polar bear is an endangered animal.*

Heine, Bernd and Kuteva, Tania (2002) World lexicon of grammaticalization. CUP.

Explaining the typology of articles

- Historical linguistics can explain why these correspondences are typologically common:
  - › definite article = demonstrative pronoun
  - › indefinite article = numeral 'one'
- Articles are historically derived from these two sources.

➡ synchronic generalization explained diachronically

Historical linguistics can explain typological discrepancies

- There are many cross-linguistically common trajectories in language change.

- But each language changes individually and at its own pace, often resulting in idiosyncrasies that don't fit typological generalizations well.

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**
HEAD ~ DEPENDENT	**DEPENDENT ~ HEAD**
head-initial languages	**head-final languages**
VSO	**SOV**

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Word order correlations

- https://wals.info/combinations/86A_81A#2/26.2/153.0

- Combined features on WALS:

  › order of subject, object, and verb https://wals.info/chapter/81

  › order of genitive and noun https://wals.info/chapter/86

Word order correlations: VSO and SOV

strong correlation

○	VSO / Noun-Genitive	77
○	VSO / No dominant order	4
○	VSO / Genitive-Noun	3

VSO ~ noun-genitive

●	SOV / Noun-Genitive	26
●	SOV / No dominant order	17
●	SOV / Genitive-Noun	398

SOV ~ genitive-noun

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SVO doesn't fit the typology

🟡	SVO / Noun-Genitive	249
⚪	SVO / No dominant order	40
🔴	SVO / Genitive-Noun	106

- Somewhat more common: **SVO ~ noun-genitive**

- SVO languages otherwise <u>mostly</u> behave like head-initial languages

- Why this discrepancy?

Possible explanation: SVO is a transitional stage. At this stage, the language is neither head-final, nor head-initial.

Previously discussed example: 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**

- Exceptions to this generalization have historical underpinnings!

Mithun, Marianne. 2003. Why prefixes? *Acta Linguistica Hungarica*.

Agreement / "pronominal" affixes

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

se	we	**wə-**	**s-**	ɬeʁʷə	-ɟə	-ʁ
I	you	**2SG-**	**1SG-**	see	-again	-PAST
'I saw you again.'						

1SG se	~	s-
2SG we	~	wə-
1PL te	~	t-
2PL ʃʷe	~	ʃʷə-

te	ʃʷe	**ʃʷə-**	**t-**	ɬeʁʷə	-ɟə	-ʁ
we	you(pl)	**2PL-**	**1PL-**	see	-again	-PAST
'I saw you again.'						

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

Agreement prefixes in a head-final language

- **<u>grammaticalization</u>**: 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   **head**

              ⟶   **prefixes-**   **stem**

se	we	**wə-**	**s-**	ɬeʁʷə	-ʝə	-ʁ
I	you	**2SG-**	**1SG-**	see	-again	-PAST
'I saw you again.'						

Typology and historical linguistics work together

- Typology is a useful tool for historical linguists:

  Typology can be used to evaluate the plausibility of historical reconstruction.

- Historical linguistics is a useful tool for typologists:

  › Typological distributions can be explained with historical development.

  › Exceptions to typological generalizations are often connected to language change.

Wrapping up

- Autumn 2021 classes, if you want to learn more typology:

  › LINGUIST 121B: Crosslinguistic Syntax (Boris Harizanov)

  › LINGUIST 132: Lexical Semantic Typology (Beth Levin)

- What is your biggest takeaway from this course?

Discussion questions

- Most grammatical material developed out of nouns or verbs. Does this mean that there was a language that had _only_ nouns and verbs?
- Are there processes comparable to grammaticalization, but for the development of new content words?
- Degrammaticalization, example of English 's.
- Why is degrammaticalization rare?
- Diessel's argument that demonstratives aren't derived from other sources:
  - › no consistent evidence for lexical sources
  - › sound symbolism (higher = closer)
- What is the controversy around the notion of unidirectionality? If there are exceptions, should it be considered a statistical universal?
- Language contact (Sprachbund effects) versus genetic similarities