Variability of Languages in Time and Space

Lecture VIII
Syntax, Universals and a case of one Sprachbund

• Syntactic Typology: Ergativity
• Syntactic Typology: Word order
• Universals
• Standard Average European

Anja Nedoluzhko
Syntactic Typology

• Morphology vs. Syntax
  – Paradigmatic vs. syntagmatic relations
  – Relations within a word vs. within a sentence
  – Assembling words vs. dissembling words

• Syntactic typology
  – Differences in the choice of words and word forms
    • Word categories are variably distributed across languages (e.g. definite articles, evidentiality)
    • Available word categories are variably realized (e.g. expression of copula verbs in past and present)
    • Different choice of word forms (e.g. agreement, ezafe, government)
  – Differences in the order of words
Case and Syntactic Government

• Case keeps subject and direct object apart and thus helps the listener interpret the sentence.
  – Matka miluje dceru. (The mother loves the daughter.)
  – I resigned. (*Me resigned.)
  – He kissed me vs. I kissed him
Given Georgian phrases in Latin transcription and their translation into English:

Translate into Georgian:

The brother had a son.  
The father carries a book.  
A book lies.  
The brother carries a horse.
Roles and Cases

The boy is running.
The boy is sleeping.
The boy hit a dog.
Nominative-Accusative Syntax

The boy is running.
The boy is sleeping.
The boy hit a dog.
Ergative-Absolutive Syntax

The boy is running.

The boy is sleeping.

The boy hit a dog.
Active Syntax

The boy is running.
The boy is sleeping.
The boy hit a dog.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominative-Accusative syntax</th>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Patient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intransitive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transitive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He came.
He saw me.
He died.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ergative-Absolutive syntax</th>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Patient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intransitive</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transitive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Petr jde do lesa.
Petr upadne.
Petr pozoruje vzácného ptáka.

**Gizon-ak**
man-ERGATIVE
boy-ABSOLUTIVE
‘The man saw the boy.’

**Gizon-a**
man-ABSOLUTIVE
has arrived.
‘The man has arrived.’

**Basque**

gizon-ak
mutil-a
ikusi du.
‘The man saw the boy.’

**Sioux**

wa-ti - ‘I live.’

wa-kaška – ‘I tie him up.’

ma-kaška – ‘They tie me up.’

ma-ta – ‘I’m dying.’

**English**

He came.
He saw me.
He died.

**Czech**

Petr jde do lesa.
Petr upadne.
Petr pozoruje vzácného ptáka.
Split Ergativity

- In Hindi-Urdu, Ergative is used with the Agent of transitive verbs in preterit and perfect. In other cases, Nominative is used.

"The boy buys a book."

"The boy bought a book."
The Distribution of Languages with Ergativity
The Distribution of Languages with Ergativity
Universal Generalizations

• In most languages, case marking follows either the accusative or the ergative alignment, with accusative alignment being more frequent.

Why?
• If the primary role of case marking is to differentiate subjects and objects of transitive sentences, the accusative and the ergative systems are equally useful.
• When subject and object are marked the same way (Active Syntax), case marking fails
• Active syntax: from a semantic point of view, it is the most telling one
References - Ergativity

• Frazier, Lyn. 1985. ‘Syntactic complexity.' In D.Dowty et al (eds), Natural Language Parsing: Psychological, Computational and Theoretical Perspectives. Cambridge University Press.
• Maria Polinsky (2016). Deconstructing Ergativity. Two Types of Ergative Languages and Their Features.
Word Order Typology

- *in, one, over, below... the table* → Rule: adpositions are preposed
- *Jack picked three juicy plums off the tree* → Rule: numerals precede adjectives and adjectives precede nouns
- *Three juicy plums were picked off the tree by Jack.* → Subject NP precedes VP and VP precedes the object NP
- *Jack climbed the plum tree that was closest to the garage.* → relative clauses follow the noun that they modify
- Linearization by numerical position (Czech, German)
  - *Julia sah einen Hund im Garten.*
  - *Ráda bych se setkala s panem Novákem.*
Word Order Typology

• Joseph Greenberg (1963, 1966) gave a set of statistical universals of word order
  – He used a relatively small sample of geographically and genetically diverse languages
• Subject (S), Verb (V) and Object (O)
• Correlations, Predictable features → attractive for typologists
• Problems with this approach:
  – it is sometimes hard to define “basic word order” (e.g. in German, there is different word order in different clause types)
  – there are languages without fixed word order (Slavic languages, Latin), for which we can only talk about preferred word order
Word Order Typology

subject (S), verb (V) and object (O)
within clause: 6 logically possible types SOV, SVO, VSO, VOS, OVS, OSV

Turkish (SOV)

Hasan öküz - ü aldı.

Hasan ox ACCUSATIVE bought

‘Hasan bought the ox.’

English (SVO)

The farmer killed the duckling.

Welsh (VSO)

Lladdodd y ddraig y dyn.

killed the dragon the man

‘The dragon killed the man.’
Word Order Typology

Malagasy (VOS)  
austronesian, Madagascar  
Nahita ny mpianatra ny vehivavy.  
saw the student the woman  
‘The woman saw the student.’

Hixkaryana (OVS)  
Toto yahosiye kamara  
man it-grabbed-him jaguar  
‘The jaguar grabbed the man.’

is one of the Carib languages, spoken by 500 people  
maybe the only language with OVS
Two Dominant Orders

- German, Dutch, Frisian, Hungarian, some African languages – SVO + SOV (ca. 30 according to WALS)

\[
\begin{align*}
S & \quad V & \quad O \\
Hans \text{ wusste die Antwort, weil er das im Wörterbuch gesehen hat.}
\end{align*}
\]

- Other possibilities: VSO or VOS (Alyaska, Oceania), SVO or VSO (Welsch, Greek, Arabic), SVO///VOS or SOV///OVS
## Word Order Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Word Order</th>
<th>N in WALS</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject-[Verb-Object]</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>English, Czech, Indonesian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-[Object-Verb]</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Japanese, Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb-Subject-Object</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Celtic, Semitic languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Verb-Object]-Subject</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Malagasy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Object-Verb]-Subject</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&lt; 1%</td>
<td>Asuriní</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object-Subject-Verb</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt; 1%</td>
<td>Nadëb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dominant word order</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1228</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word Order Distribution
### The following are sentences in Inuktitut and their English translations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inuktitut</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Qingmivit takujaatit.</td>
<td>Your dog saw you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inuuhuktuup iluaqhaiji qukiqtanga.</td>
<td>The boy shot the doctor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Iluaqhaijiup aarqijaatit.</td>
<td>The doctor cured you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Qingmiq iputujait.</td>
<td>You speared the dog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Angatkuq iluaqhaijimik aarqisijuq.</td>
<td>The shaman cured a doctor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nanuq qaijuq.</td>
<td>The polar bear came.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Iluaqhaijivit inuuhuktuit aarqijanga.</td>
<td>Your doctor cured your boy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Angunahukiup amaruq iputujanga.</td>
<td>The hunter speared the wolf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Qingmiup ilinniaqtitsijiit aanniqtanga.</td>
<td>The dog hurt your teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Angunahukti nanurmik qukiqsijuq.</td>
<td>The hunter shot a polar bear.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Translate into English:

15. Angunahuktiit aarqijuq. 
16. Ilinniaqtitsiji qukiqtait. 
17. Qaijutit. 
18. Angunahuktimik aarqisijutit. 

### Translate into Inuktitut:

19. The shaman hurt you. 
20. The teacher saw the boy. 
21. Your wolf fell. 
22. You shot a dog. 
23. Your dog hurt a teacher.
Splitting the Triple

• It is more common that at least one of the two arguments of a transitive clause will be pronominal, and in many languages pronominal subjects are expressed by verbal affixes → other word order.
• More useful typology is OV vs. VO (and SV vs. VS);
• A large number of other features are predictable from it, at least in a statistical sense (Greenberg, Comrie, etc.)
• The order in transitive clauses is not always the same as the order in intransitive clauses
Order of Subject and Verb
Order of Object and Verb
Word Order within a Noun Phrase

• Relative order of A(djective) and N(oun)
  – AN or NA green table vs. the person concerned

• Relative order of head-N and relative clause
  – N Rel (in English) or Rel N (in Turkish)
    – the person (who is) concerned in this investigation

• Relative order of possessive/genitive and head-N
  – NG or GN
    – The hat of the man vs. the man's hat

• Relative order of N and adposition (Prep/Postpositions)
  – Prep N (English) or N Postp. (Japanese)
    – in London or Tokyo ni
Word Order within NP - Adjective and Noun

**AdjN**: rest European, Turkish, Semitic, Iranian, Japanese, Korean, Hindi

**NAdj**: French, Italian, Romanian, keltic (Irish, Welsh, Breton, Gaelic), Adyghe, modern Greek, Armenian, most of African
Relative Order of Adj and N
Word Order within NP:
Head-N and Relative Clause

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>NRel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the book</td>
<td>[that I am reading]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Rel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Internally-headed relative clauses:

[‘ehatt  gaat  akewii]=ve=ch  chepam
 [dog  cat  chase]=def=subj  get.away

‘The cat that the dog chased got away.’

Alamblak (Papua New Guinea)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RelN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ni  hik-r-fê] yima-r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2sg  follow-irreal-immed.pst] person-3sg.m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘a man who would have followed you’

NRel: all spoken in Europe except Basque and Hungarian, Adyghe, most in Africa

RelN: Japanese, Korean, Hindi, Basque, Chinese, Caucasian, Turkic
Relative Order of Head-N and Rel
Word Order within NP
Possessive/Genitive and Head-N

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tytö-n</th>
<th>kissa</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>‘the girl’s cat’</th>
<th>Finnish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rùzi</td>
<td>de</td>
<td>ěrduō</td>
<td>‘the rabbit’s ear’</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wō</td>
<td>de</td>
<td>chènshān</td>
<td>‘my shirt’</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čepice</td>
<td>mého otce</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Gen</td>
<td>Czech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čepice</td>
<td>mého otce</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Gen</td>
<td>Czech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čepice</td>
<td>mého otce</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Gen</td>
<td>Czech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alienable vs. Inalienable possession

- Sely m-me
- Sely 3sg.f.poss-mother
- ‘Sely’s mother’
- amah ro-Petrus
- house gen-Petrus
- ‘Petrus’ house’

**NGen** predominates in Europe; in much of Africa; in Southeast Asia and among the Austronesian languages of Indonesia, the Philippines, and the Pacific; in the Pacific Northwest in North America...

**GenN** predominates in West Africa to the west of Nigeria, in much of Asia other than the southeast; in an area around New Guinea; in the Americas...
Given are phrases in the Vai language as well as their English translations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vai</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kàiè a lèndéè</td>
<td>the man’s vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kòánjà-lèně fà</td>
<td>the baby-eagle’s father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gbòmùè á nyìmìè</td>
<td>the fish’s snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàiè kàfà</td>
<td>the man’s shoulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyìmìè jàŋè á gbòmù-lènđèè</td>
<td>the long snake’s boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mòsú jàŋè lò-đà</td>
<td>the tall woman’s brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyìmìè kùndúè ja</td>
<td>the short snake’s eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kòánjà lò-đè kènjì</td>
<td>the small eagle’s claw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàndò jàŋè</td>
<td>the high sky</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Translate into English:

můsů́ é gbɔ́mù́è; lèŋ kùndúè á nyìmìíè; gbɔ́mù́-lènđè kúndúè.

(b) There is an error in the Vai phrase kàndò-lènđè lò-đè
Correct it and translate the phrase into English.

(c) Translate into Vai:
the eagle’s snake; the small child’s eye;
the tall man’s sister; the small baby-snake.

Vai belongs to the Central group of the Mande language family. It is spoken by approx. 105 000 people in Liberia and Sierra Leone. ny and ñ are consonants; é and ò are vowels. The marks “’”, “’”, and “’” denote tones.
Relative Order of Poss and Head-N
Word Order within NP N and Adposition

Prep N (English) or N Postp. (Japanese)

in London or Tokyo ni

- **Prepositions**: Europe, North Africa and the Middle East; central and southern Africa; a large area extending from Southeast Asia, through Indonesia, the Philippines and the Pacific; the Pacific Northwest in Canada and the United States; and Mesoamerica.

- **Postpositions**: in most of Asia, except in Southeast Asia; in New Guinea, except in the northwest; in North Americ; and in most of South America.
Relative order of N and Adposition

- Postpositions: 575
- Prepositions: 511
- Impositions: 8
- No dominant order: 68
- No adpositions: 30
Correlations in Word Order Typology

VO / Prep N / NG / NA, tends to have NRel, strong prefixing, Aux V
OV / N Postp / GN / NA tends to have RelN, strong suffixing, V Aux

Greenberg’s universal:
If SOV and NG, then NAdj

vs.

Dryer (1988a, 1992):
VO/OV is not related to AdjN/NAdj

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OV and AdjN</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OV and NAdj</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VO and AdjN</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VO and NAdj</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VO and Prepositions
OV and Postpositions

exceptions: Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian, (having VO+postposition)
OV and ReIN, OV and NRel, VO and NRel, *VO and ReIN

Exception (VO&ReIN) found only in Chinese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OV and ReIN</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OV and NRel</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VO and ReIN</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VO and NRel</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a language is VO, then it is usually NRel

Example in Chinese:

- tāmen tōu zìxíngchē
  - 3pl steal bicycle
  - ‘They steal bicycles.’
- [wǒ gěi nǐ de] shū
  - [1sg give 2sg link] book
  - ‘the book [that I gave you]’
Object-Verb and Adjective-Noun

Dryer (1988a, 1992) vs. Greenberg, Comrie
References to Syntactic Typology

• Song J.J. The Oxford Handbook of linguistic typology. (2012)
• Dryer , Matthew S. 2005d. Relationship between the order of object and verb and the order of adposition and noun phrase. In Haspelmath et al. (eds.) 386 –389.
• Dryer , Matthew S. 2005e. Relationship between the order of object and verb and the order of relative clause and noun. In Haspelmath et al. (eds.) 390 –393.
Language Universals and Typology

• Modern linguistic typology is a method in language universals research
• Implicational statements in the form of ‘if X, then Y’ are drawn based on cross-linguistic distributional patterns of existing and non-existing types
• Universal types:
  – Implicational vs. non-implicational
  – Absolute vs. tendencies, statistical
• Explanations for universals
  – Common genetic origin (speculative and untestable),
  – Cognitive reasons,
  – Through the structure of discourse, etc.
Implicational and Non-Implicational Universals

• Non-implicational
  – State the existence (or non-existence) of one particular feature
  – e.g. *All languages have oral vowels*

• Implicational:
  – Apply to languages with a particular feature that is always accompanied by another feature
  – e.g. *If a language has trial grammatical number, it also has dual grammatical number*
Implicational Universals

• Always involve at least two linguistic properties,
  ‘if \( p \) then \( q \)’

*If a language has distinct reflexive pronouns in the first or second person, then it has distinct reflexive pronouns in the third person.*

\( p \) – ‘having distinct reflexive pronouns in the first or second person’

\( q \) – ‘having distinct reflexive pronouns in the third person’

– \( p \) and \( q \) (English: *I hit myself*. \( \rightarrow \) *He hit himself.*)
– \( p \) and not-\( q \) **excluded by the implicational universal**
– not-\( p \) and \( q \) (French)
– not-\( p \) and not-\( q \) (Anglo-Saxon)
Absolute Universals: Examples

• All languages have oral vowels.
• All languages have pronouns.
• The number of inflectional classes of adjectives is never larger than the number of inflectional classes of nouns.
• In all languages, inversion of the word order can be used as a logical or emotional emphasis.
• In all languages it is possible to form general questions without inversion.
• Every language has “double-subject” constructions (My work, I'm going crazy.)
• In a language, all (or almost all) verbs with the general meaning ‘to create’ or ‘to destroy’ are transitive verbs according to their formal-grammatical features.
• Every human language has deictic elements.
• In conditional statements, the conditional clause precedes the conclusion as the normal order in all languages.
Statistical Universals (Tendencies)

• Statistically significant deviations of random patterning.
  – Absolute universals are the extreme case of deviation from random distribution

• Non-implicational tendencies, e.g.
  – Nearly all languages have nasal consonants (except for some Salishan languages)

• Implicational tendencies, e.g.
  – If a language has SOV basic word order, it will probably have postpositions (but for e.g. Persian – SOV+prepositions)
  – “Languages in which the relative clause precedes the head noun are verb-final” (RelN → SOV) (but for e.g. Chinese (RelN+SVO)
  – In basic word order, the subject precedes the object.
    • but: Malagasy VOS, Hixkaryana OVS (less than 3% of languages)
Tendencies: Examples

- Consistent OV languages tend to be agglutinative
- Consistent VO languages tend to be inflectional
- If a language is agglutinative, then accent is primarily pitch
  If a language is flective, then the accent is primarily stress
- Other things being equal, the more analytic a language is, the more regular is its phraseological system
- Words tend to be longer if constituent order is free than if it is rigid
- In flective and introflective languages, word forms tend to be between two and three syllables long, agglutinative and incorporating languages tend to have longer word forms, and isolating languages shorter ones
Against Universals


- Languages are much more diverse in structure than cognitive scientists generally appreciate. Cognitive scientists are not aware of the real range of linguistic diversity
  - Supposedly common to all languages e.g. Verb affixes signaling aspect and tense BUT Many languages (e.g., Chinese, Malay) do not mark tense
  - Verbs for give always have three arguments BUT Saliba is a counterexample

- Authors suggest that
  - Differences between languages are not merely superficial
  - Linguistic diversity patterns just like biological diversity and should be understood in the same sorts of ways
  - Refocusing on a unique property of our communication system, namely its diversity, is essential to understanding its role in human cognition
References - Universals

• Croft, William (1990): Typology and Universals. Cambridge
Standard Average European (SAE)

• Terminology – B. Whorf
• Idea – there are some features that European languages tend to have in common
• Sprachbund includes:
  – Germanic languages
  – Romance languages
  – Baltic languages
  – Slavic languages
  – Albanian
  – Greek
  – Hungarian
SAE Common Features (Euroversals) (Haspelmath 2001)

1. **Definite and indefinite articles** (e.g. English *the* vs. *a*);
2. **Postnominal relative clauses** with inflected, resumptive relative pronouns (e.g. English *who* vs. *whose*);
3. **A periphrastic perfect** formed with 'have' plus a passive participle (e.g. English *I have said*);
4. **A preponderance of generalizing predicates** to encode experiencers, i.e. experiencers appear as surface subjects in nominative case, e.g. English *I like music*);
5. **A passive construction** formed with a passive participle plus an intransitive copula-like verb (e.g. English *I am known*);
6. **A prominence of anticausative verbs** in inchoative-causative pairs (e.g. in the pair *The snow melts* vs. *The flame melts the ice*, the intransitive verb is derived from the transitive);
7. **Dative external possessors** (e.g. German *Die Mutter wusch dem Kind die Haare* = *The mother washed the child's hair*, Portuguese *Ela lavou-lhe o cabelo* = *She washed his hair*);
8. **Verbal negation with a negative indefinite** (e.g. English *Nobody listened*);
9. **Particle comparatives in comparisons of inequality** (e.g. English *bigger than an elephant*);
10. **Equate constructions** based on adverbial-relative clause structures (e.g. French *grand comme un éléphant*);
11. **Subject person affixes** as strict agreement markers, i.e. the verb is inflected for person and number of the subject, but subject pronouns may not be dropped even when this would be unambiguous (only in some languages, such as German and French);
12. **Differentiation between intensifiers and reflexive pronouns** (e.g. German intensifier *selbst* vs. reflexive *sich*).
SAE – (1) Articles

• (in)definite word distinct from demonstrative/numeral for 'one'
• numeral for 'one' / demonstrative word used as marker of (in)definiteness
• (in)definite affix on noun
• Neither definite nor indefinite article
Definite Article

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definite word distinct from demonstrative</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrative word used as definite article</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite affix</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No definite, but indefinite article</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No definite or indefinite article</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indefinite Article
Articles: Examples

**German/English**

Ich habe einen Hund gekauft.
I have one dog bought
‘I bought a/one dog.’

**Bulgarian**

път-ят влиза в град-а
road-the.sg.ms enters to town-the.ms
‘The road enters the town’

**Danish**

mand-en
man-the.sg
‘the man’

den gamle mand
the old man

‘the old man’

**Slavonic languages**

Upper Sorbian:  
*Daj sej słodżeć, přesylene te jeja njejsu. To móžeš jësć.*

Czech:  
*Nech si chutnat, (ta) vajička nejsou příliš slaná. Dají se jíst.*

Russian:  
*Приятного аппетита, Ø яйца не пересоленые. Вполне съедобно.*

‘Bon appetit! The eggs are not too salty. You can eat them.’
SAE Common Features (Hasepelmth 2001)

1. definite and indefinite articles (e.g. English the vs. a);
2. postnominal relative clauses with inflected, resumptive relative pronouns (e.g. English who vs. whose);
3. a periphrastic perfect formed with 'have' plus a passive participle (e.g. English I have said);
4. a preponderance of generalizing predicates to encode experiencers, i.e. experiencers appear as surface subjects in nominative case, e.g. English I like music);
5. a passive construction formed with a passive participle plus an intransitive copula-like verb (e.g. English I am known);
6. a prominence of anticausative verbs in inchoative-causative pairs (e.g. in the pair The snow melts vs. The flame melts the ice, the intransitive verb is derived from the transitive);
7. dative external possessors (e.g. German Die Mutter wusch dem Kind die Haare = The mother washed the child's hair, Portuguese Ela lavou-lhe o cabelo = She washed his hair);
8. verbal negation with a negative indefinite (e.g. English Nobody listened);
9. particle comparatives in comparisons of inequality (e.g. English bigger than an elephant);
10. equative constructions based on adverbial-relative clause structures (e.g. French grand comme un éléphant);
11. subject person affixes as strict agreement markers, i.e. the verb is inflected for person and number of the subject, but subject pronouns may not be dropped even when this would be unambiguous (only in some languages, such as German and French);
12. differentiation between intensifiers and reflexive pronouns (e.g. German intensifier selbst vs. reflexive sich).
SAE: Postnominal Relative Clauses

- English: a man who loves flowers
- Spanish: un hombre que ama las flores
- Czech: muž, který miluje květiny
- Hungarian: egy ember, aki szereti a virágot

vs.

- Tamil: மலர்கள் நேசிக்கும் ஒரு மனிதன் „flowers loving man“
1. definite and indefinite articles (e.g. English *the* vs. *a*);
2. postnominal relative clauses with inflected, resumptive relative pronouns (e.g. English *who* vs. *whose*);
3. **a periphrastic perfect formed with 'have' plus a passive participle (e.g. English *I have said*);**
4. a preponderance of generalizing predicates to encode experiencers, i.e. experiencers appear as surface subjects in nominative case, e.g. English *I like music*);
5. a passive construction formed with a passive participle plus an intransitive copula-like verb (e.g. English *I am known*);
6. a prominence of anticausative verbs in inchoative-causative pairs (e.g. in the pair *The snow melts* vs. *The flame melts the ice*, the intransitive verb is derived from the transitive);
7. dative external possessors (e.g. German *Die Mutter wusch dem Kind die Haare* = *The mother washed the child's hair*, Portuguese *Ela lavou-lhe o cabelo* = *She washed his hair*);
8. verbal negation with a negative indefinite (e.g. English *Nobody listened*);
9. particle comparatives in comparisons of inequality (e.g. English *bigger than an elephant*);
10. equative constructions based on adverbial-relative clause structures (e.g. French *grand comme un éléphant*);
11. subject person affixes as strict agreement markers, i.e. the verb is inflected for person and number of the subject, but subject pronouns may not be dropped even when this would be unambiguous (only in some languages, such as German and French);
12. differentiation between intensifiers and reflexive pronouns (e.g. German intensifier *selbst* vs. reflexive *sich*).
SAE: Periphrastic Perfect Formed with 'have' + pass_part

- **English:** A man has jumped over the hill.
- **French:** Un homme a sauté par-dessus la colline.
- **Greek:** Ένας άντρας έχει πήδηξε πάνω στο λόφο.
- **German:** Ein Mann hat über die Hügel gesprungen. But Ich bin gekommen.
- **Finnish:** Mies on ['is'] hypännyt yli kukkula.
- **Latvian:** Vīrietis ir ['is'] pieaudzis virs kalna.
- **Czech:** Člověk přeskočil přes kopec.
- **Hungarian:** Egy ember ugrott át a dombon.
- **Hindi:** reduplication of stem and flexion ba-bhū-va ('I was')
- **Yoruba** (Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo family)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ó</th>
<th>ti</th>
<th>ka</th>
<th>iwe</th>
<th>na.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>PFV /already read</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SAE: Periphrastic Perfect Formed with 'have' + pass_part
SAE Common Features
(Haspelmath 2001)

1. definite and indefinite articles (e.g. English the vs. a);
2. postnominal relative clauses with inflected, resumptive relative pronouns (e.g. English who vs. whose);
3. a periphrastic perfect formed with 'have' plus a passive participle (e.g. English I have said);
4. a preponderance of generalizing predicates to encode experiencers, i.e. experiencers appear as surface subjects in nominative case, e.g. English I like music);
5. a passive construction formed with a passive participle plus an intransitive copula-like verb (e.g. English I am known);
6. a prominence of anticausative verbs in inchoative-causative pairs (e.g. in the pair The snow melts vs. The flame melts the ice, the intransitive verb is derived from the transitive);
7. dative external possessors (e.g. German Die Mutter wusch dem Kind die Haare = The mother washed the child's hair, Portuguese Ela lavou-lhe o cabelo = She washed his hair);
8. verbal negation with a negative indefinite (e.g. English Nobody listened);
9. particle comparatives in comparisons of inequality (e.g. English bigger than an elephant);
10. equative constructions based on adverbial-relative clause structures (e.g. French grand comme un éléphant);
11. subject person affixes as strict agreement markers, i.e. the verb is inflected for person and number of the subject, but subject pronouns may not be dropped even when this would be unambiguous (only in some languages, such as German and French);
12. differentiation between intensifiers and reflexive pronouns (e.g. German intensifier selbst vs. reflexive sich).
Voice, Diathesis, Genera Verbi

• voice - relationship between the action that the verb expresses and the participants identified by its arguments (S,O, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>active</th>
<th>passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The cat ate the mouse.</td>
<td>The mouse was eaten by the cat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• suffixation, e.g. Latin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>active</th>
<th>passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>librum legit</td>
<td>liber legitur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘He reads the book’.</td>
<td>‘The book is read.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language</td>
<td>passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td><em>He was baptized.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td><em>Stener blir krossad.</em> ‘The stone is being broken’.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td><em>Er wurde getauft.</em> ‘He was baptized’.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>być, zostać: <em>On został pochrzczony.</em> ‘He was baptized’.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td><em>Byl pokřtěn.</em> ‘He was baptized’.* But also <em>Dům se staví.</em> ‘The house is being built, refl.’(!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>(coming from spoken language): <em>le lett írva</em> (‘It was written.’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. definite and indefinite articles (e.g. English *the* vs. *a*);
2. postnominal relative clauses with inflected, resumptive relative pronouns (e.g. English *who* vs. *whose*);
3. a periphrastic perfect formed with 'have' plus a passive participle (e.g. English *I have said*);
4. a preponderance of generalizing predicates to encode experiencers, i.e. experiencers appear as surface subjects in nominative case, e.g. English *I like music*);
5. a passive construction formed with a passive participle plus an intransitive copula-like verb (e.g. English *I am known*);
6. a prominence of anticausative verbs in inchoative-causative pairs (e.g. in the pair *The snow melts* vs. *The flame melts the ice*, the intransitive verb is derived from the transitive);
7. dative external possessors (e.g. German *Die Mutter wusch dem Kind die Haare* = *The mother washed the child's hair*, Portuguese *Ela lavou-lhe o cabelo* = *She washed his hair*);
8. **verbal negation with a negative indefinite (e.g. English *Nobody listened*);**
9. particle comparatives in comparisons of inequality (e.g. English *bigger than an elephant*);
10. equative constructions based on adverbial-relative clause structures (e.g. French *grand comme un éléphant*);
11. subject person affixes as strict agreement markers, i.e. the verb is inflected for person and number of the subject, but subject pronouns may not be dropped even when this would be unambiguous (only in some languages, such as German and French);
12. differentiation between intensifiers and reflexive pronouns (e.g. German intensifier *selbst* vs. reflexive *sich*).
### SAE: Negation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>language</th>
<th>negation /example/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td><em>Nobody listened.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td><em>Ingen lyssnade.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td><em>Nadie escuchó.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**combination of negative pronoun and negation on verb:**

| Czech (all slavonic) | *Nikdo neposlouchal.*     |
| Hungarian (=slavonic)| *Senki sem figyelt.*      |

**negation on verbs**

| Estonian (+ Finnish)| *Keegi ei kuulanud* (lit. ‘Somebody not listen’) |
SAE Common Features
(Haspelmath 2001)

1. definite and indefinite articles (e.g. English *the* vs. *a*);
2. postnominal relative clauses with inflected, resumptive relative pronouns (e.g. English *who* vs. *whose*);
3. a periphrastic perfect formed with 'have' plus a passive participle (e.g. English *I have said*);
4. a preponderance of generalizing predicates to encode experiencers, i.e. experiencers appear as surface subjects in nominative case, e.g. English *I like music*);
5. a passive construction formed with a passive participle plus an intransitive copula-like verb (e.g. English *I am known*);
6. a prominence of anticausative verbs in inchoative-causative pairs (e.g. in the pair *The snow melts* vs. *The flame melts the ice*, the intransitive verb is derived from the transitive);
7. dative external possessors (e.g. German *Die Mutter wusch dem Kind die Haare* = *The mother washed the child's hair*, Portuguese *Ela lavou-lhe o cabelo* = *She washed his hair*);
8. verbal negation with a negative indefinite (e.g. English *Nobody listened*);
9. **particle comparatives in comparisons of inequality (e.g. English *bigger than an elephant*)**;
10. equative constructions based on adverbial-relative clause structures (e.g. French *grand comme un éléphant*);
11. subject person affixes as strict agreement markers, i.e. the verb is inflected for person and number of the subject, but subject pronouns may not be dropped even when this would be unambiguous (only in some languages, such as German and French);
12. differentiation between intensifiers and reflexive pronouns (e.g. German intensifier *selbst* vs. reflexive *sich*).
SAE: Comparative Constructions

**Locational comparatives**

čtam u čdam-dan yoš  
father.my that man-from young

‘My father is younger than that man.’

**Exceed comparatives**

kăw sũuŋ kwă kon tūk kon  
he tall exceed man each man

‘He is taller than anyone.’

**Conjoined comparatives**

kayu batu běrat batu  
wood stone heavy stone

‘Stone is heavier than wood.’

**Particle comparatives**

tu es plus jolie que ta sœur  
you are more pretty than your sister

‘You are prettier than your sister.’

**French**

István magasa-bb mint  
István.nom tall-more than

‘István is taller than Peter.’

**Hungarian**

István magasa-bb mint  
István.nom tall-more than

‘István is taller than Peter.’

**Malay**

kayı batu běrat batu  
wood stone heavy stone

‘Stone is heavier than wood.’

**Thai**

kăw sũuŋ kwă kon tūk kon  
he tall exceed man each man

‘He is taller than anyone.’

**Estonian**

čtam u čdam-dan yoš  
father.my that man-from young

‘My father is younger than that man.’

**Malay**

kayı batu běrat batu  
wood stone heavy stone

‘Stone is heavier than wood.’

**Hungarian**

István magasa-bb mint  
István.nom tall-more than

‘István is taller than Peter.’

**French**

tu es plus jolie que ta sœur  
you are more pretty than your sister

‘You are prettier than your sister.’
SAE: Comparative Constructions
References:

Standard Average European


References – Other

- Masayoshi Shibatani. Linguistic Typology, 2015, Rice University, Houston, TX, USA.
- Stolz, Thomas, Nataliya Levkovych & Aina Urdze. 2017. When zero is just enough ... In support of a Special Toponymic Grammar in Maltese. Folia Linguistica 51(2). 453–482.
Online resources


- The resources page of the *Association for Linguistic Typology*: Retrieved on 09/-3/2014 from [http://www.linguistic-typology.org/resources.html](http://www.linguistic-typology.org/resources.html)

- The *Universals Archive*: Retrieved on 09/03/2014 from [http://typo.uni-konstanz.de/archive/](http://typo.uni-konstanz.de/archive/)