

WSI: LINGUISTIC TYPOLOGY
AN INTRODUCTION
8TH INTERNATIONAL WINTER SCHOOL FOR FINNO-UGRIC STUDIES

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OUTLINE

- **what is linguistic typology?**
- types of linguistic comparison
- typological classification
- methodology
- sources, databases
- universals

WHAT IS LINGUISTIC TYPOLOGY?

Typology is in connection with

- variation,
- language types,
- the taxonomy or classification of languages,
- linguistic universals,
- patterns across the languages of the world, and
- the limits of variation

WHAT IS LINGUISTIC TYPOLOGY?

- "a classification of structural types across languages."
 - cross-linguistic comparison
- "the study of patterns that occur systematically across languages."
 - typological generalizations
 - patterns found in typological generalizations are universals
- "typology represents an approach or theoretical framework to the study of language..."
 - it contrasts with other approaches like GG
 - functionalism (Croft 2003: 1–2)

EXAMPLES FOR VARIATION

What differences can you observe?

(1) Hungarian

(Mi) szombat-on finn-ül tanul-unk.

(2) Finnish

(Me) opiskele-mme some-a lauantai-na.

(3) English

We learn Finnish on Saturday.

EXAMPLES FOR VARIATION

(1) Hungarian

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i. Hungarian and Finnish use affixes for expressing grammatical relations

ii. pronominal subjects can be dropped in Hungarian and Finnish

iii. the adverbial precedes the verb in Hungarian but follows it in the Finnish and English examples)

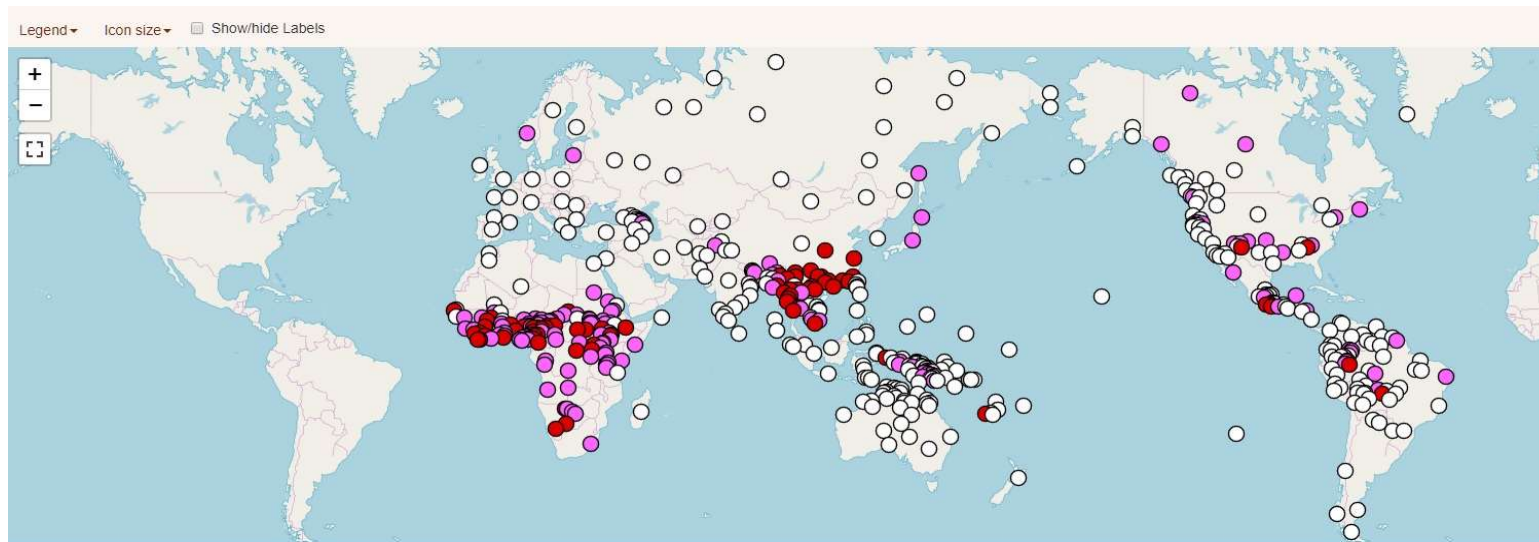
EXAMPLES FOR VARIATION

Tone (Maddieson 2013)

No tones 307

Simple tone system 132

Complex tone system 88



Maddieson 2013

EXAMPLES FOR VARIATION

Number of nominal cases	Hungarian	Surgut Khanty	German	Synja Khanty
	18–28	9	4 (3)	3

Case	Hungarian	Surgut Khanty	German	Synja Khanty
Nominative	kutya	āmp	der Hund	āmp
Accusative	kutyá-t	–	den Hund	–
Dative	kutyá-nak	–	dem Hund	–
Genitive	a kutyá(nak a)	–	des Hund-es	–
Locative	kutyá-n (Superessive)	āmp-nə	–	āmp-ən
Ablative	kutyá-tól	āmp-i	–	–
Lative	kutyá-ra (Sublative)	āmp-a	–	āmp-a
Approximative	–	āmp-nam	–	–
Translative	kutyá-vá	āmp-γə	–	–
Instructive-Final	kutyá-ért (Caus-Fin.)	āmp-at	–	–
Comit-Instrumental	kutyá-val	āmp-nat	–	–
Abessive	–	āmp-Λəγ	–	–
...	kutyá-ul, kutya-ként, kutyá-ba, kutyá-ban, etc.	–	–	–

THE GOALS OF LINGUISTIC TYPOLOGY

- to find structural similarities cross-linguistically,
- to find patterns of variation,
- **to provide an explanation for variation.**

THE TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP

- genealogical
 - language families
- areal
 - language unions
 - Sprachbund
 - pidgins and creoles
 - mixed languages?
- **typological**
 - **language types**

GENEALOGICAL RELATIONSHIP

- cognate languages track back to a common **proto language**
- the so-called proto language is a hypothesis or a generalization
- on the other hand, it was a real language with speakers, dialects, etc.
 - this diversity cannot be reached by reconstruction
- systematic, regular differences are more important than complete overlaps (cf. *kakukk* – cuckoo etc.)

SOUND CORRESPONDENCES

Hu: Hungarian, Man: Mansi, Kha: Khanty, Ud: Udmurt, Mar: Mari, Er: Erzya, Est: Estonian, Fi: Finnish

- same sound correspondences:

Hu. *lélek*, Man. *lél*, Kha. *lil*, Ud. *lul*, Fi. *löyly* 'soul'

- regular differences:

Hu. *kés*, Man. *kāsi*, Kha. *kečə*, Mar. *küzö* 'knife'

- based on the position of a given sound:

- Hu. *három*, Man. *χūrem*, Ud. *kwiń*, Er. *kolmo*, Est. *kolm*, Fi. *kolme*

MORPHOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Person, number	Hungarian	Old Hungarian	Udmurt	Finnish
1 Sg	men-t-e-m	men-é-m	myn-i-0	men-i-n
2 Sg	men-t-é-l	men-é-d	myn-i-d	men-i-t
3 Sg	men-t-0	men-e	myn-i-z	men-i-0
1 Pl	men-t-ünk	men-é-nk	myn-i-my	men-i-mme
2 Pl	men-t-e-tek	men-é-tek	myn-i-dy	men-i-tte
3 Pl	men-t-ek	men-é-k	myn-i-zy	men-i-vät

	<u>GERMANIC</u>				<u>ARMENIAN</u>	<u>ALBANIAN</u>	
Reconstructed	Indo-European	English	German	Dutch	Danish	Armenian	Albanian
*giRos	one	eins	een	en	mi	nji	
*dwo	two	zwei	twee	to	erku	dy	
*treyes	three	drei	drie	tre	erek	tre	
*kwetwor	four	vier	vier	fire	cork	katër	
*penkwe	five	ftinf	vijf	fern	hing	pese	
*s(w)eks	six	sechs	zes	seks	vec	gjashtë	
*septm	seven	sieben	zeven	syv	evtn	shtatt	
*okto	eight	acht	acht	otte	ut	tetë	
*newn	nine	neun	negen	ni	inn	nând	
*dekm	ten	zehn	tien	ti	tasn	dhiet	
*kmtom	hundred	hundert	honderd	hundrede	hariur	qind	

http://www.tutorpal.com/Our_English/indo_european/cogwords.html

Altaic languages

Turkish	Turkic Turkmen	Tatar	Mongolic Mongolian
ben	men	min	bi
sen	sen	sin	chi
o	ol	ul	ter
biz	biz	bez	bid
siz	siz	sez	ta
onlar	olar	alar	ted

AREAL RELATIONSHIP

- loanwords
 - *tej* 'milk' (Old Iranian), *disznó* 'pig' (Old Turkic), *muszáj* 'must' (German)
- loanwords are non-detectable for users (phonetic, semantics)
- Sprachbund:
 - sharing common features originated in areal connections
 - e. g. Balkans: Greek, Albanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian, (Turkish)
 - formation of future tense, infinitives
- contact languages:
 - pidgins and creoles

TYPOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION

- classifying languages based on similarities and differences
- independently of their (common) history or area.
- any grammatical property can be a parameter of classification, e.g.
 - word order: SVO, SOV, VSO, VOS, OSV, OVS
 - inflectional morphology: isolating, agglutinating, ...

TYPOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION

- these properties can be compared across languages
- partial, rather than holistic comparison
- English: SVO, isolating (and fusional)
- Hungarian: SOV (and SVO, ...), agglutinating

METHODOLOGY

- a bottom up approach
- always empirical
- based on hypotheses that are testable

e.g. No languages with object-subject ordering?
False!

METHODOLOGY

- inductive: empirical data from individual languages lead to **generalizations** about language
- SOV/SVO very frequent > subjects (S) mostly precede objects (O)

METHODOLOGY

- some implications:
- the existence of typological gaps need to be explained
- Do gaps indicate impossible languages?

METHODOLOGY

- languages are assumed to be uniform in some sense, otherwise generalizations are useless
- language universals represent some of this uniformity

BIASES TO AVOID

- biases in sampling:
 - genealogical
 - areal
 - typological
 - in data (sources)

BIASES TO AVOID

- areal biases in sampling:
 - a given linguistic area, like the Balkan Sprachbund, the SAE, or Northern Eurasia is more focused
 - cf. basic word order for European languages: mostly SVO
 - this is not the case cross-linguistically

BIASES TO AVOID

- genealogical biases in sampling:
 - a certain language family or
 - a branch of a language family is more focused
 - the lack of language isolates
 - cf. again, basic word order for European languages: mostly SVO

BIASES TO AVOID

- typological biases in sampling:
 - a certain language type is more focused or the proportion is not balanced
 - e. g. just a few agglutinating languages

BIASES TO AVOID

- biases in the data:
 - typologists use descriptive grammars
 - do those grammars contain comparative concepts?
 - e. g. ergativity in Khanty?

GLOSSING

- aim: to make linguistic examples understandable
- consists of: i) an example, ii) interlinear glossing (translations and grammatical category labels), and iii) translation of the whole example
- word-by-word
- and morpheme-by-morpheme correspondences
- what is essential to be marked
- there is no such a thing like the only correct way of glossing

GLOSSING

- a unified annotation of linguistic data
- glossing
 - the [Leipzig Glossing Rules](#)

(1) Surgut Khanty (Ugric, Uralic; F. Gulyás 2018)

Māša Mīša-γa məj-əmə ṅāń äpΛəŋ.

Masha Misha-LAT give-PTCP.PST **bread** tasty

‘(The) bread that Masha gave to Misha was tasty.’

EXERCISE

How would you gloss the following example?

Кытшӧм сылӧн айним(ыс)?

EXERCISE

How would you gloss the following example?

КЫТШӨМ	СЫЛӨН	ай-ним-(ыс)?
how	(s)he.GEN	father-name-3SG
‘What is your name?’		

DATABASES

- [Ethnologue](#)
- [Glottolog](#)
- [WALS](#)
- [APICS](#)
- [UTDB](#)

UTDB: AIMS AND MOTIVATIONS

- To create an online typological database of (some less described) Finno-Ugric languages
- using the terminology and concepts of linguistic typology (Dryer 2001, Haspelmath & Dryer 2013) in order to
- make these languages more “visible” cross-linguistically,
- broaden our perspective on some morphosyntactic properties of the target languages.

The first phase of the project (UTDB) is ready, the second phase (VLTB) is in progress.

KEY NOTIONS OF THE DATABASE

Parameters: cross-linguistically comparable grammatical properties

- e. g. Optative mood
- Is there a distinct verbal paradigm to express the optative mood?

Values: the set of logically possible variants of a certain parameter

- NoOptInfl: There is no distinct verbal paradigm to express the optative mood.
- OptInfl: There is a distinct verbal paradigm to express the optative mood.

WALS and UTDB: similarities and differences

WALS (Dryer & Haspelmath 2013)

- Languages of the world
- Phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon
- 192 parameters
- For FU languages: poor and sometimes outdated data
- Different goals!

UTDB (Havas et al. 2015)

- One language family
- Morphology, syntax
- 213 parameters
- Some new data based on fieldwork
- Glossed examples
- The database is available in Hungarian, English, and Russian

SYNTACTIC TYPOLOGY

New trends in language typology

- from the middle of the 20th century

Two main subfields:

- word order typology
- "everything else" including
 - alignment patterns
 - case marking typology (cf. Song, Jae Jung 2001)

UNIVERSALS

linguistic universals are statements about properties of

- all languages: absolute universals, or
- some languages: non-absolute, or statistical universals (or tendencies),
- with or without restrictions

UNIVERSALS

- what is possible in the languages universally
- and what is not possible
- universals are explanatory (not all types)

UNIVERSALS

- are based on a genetically and areally balanced sample, or
- independently motivated principles, or both.
- they are hypotheses
 - they can be tested

EXAMPLES

Universals can be found in any domain of grammar

- all languages have personal pronouns (Moravcsik 2013: 12)
- languages with dominant VSO order are always prepositional (Greenberg 1963)

ABSOLUTE AND NONABSOLUTE UNIVERSALS

Absolute universals are statements that are true of all languages

- *All languages ...*
 - ... *have vowels*

Nonabsolute universals (also statistical universals or tendencies) are true of a proper subset of languages

- *Most languages ...*
 - *have oral plosives*

UNRESTRICTED AND RESTRICTED UNIVERSALS

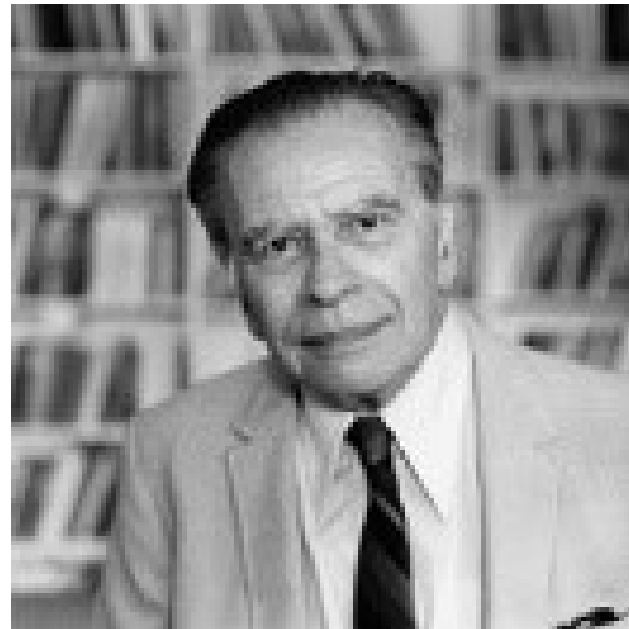
Irrespectively of being absolute or nonabsolute, universals can be:

- unrestricted
 - no restriction on the domain of the universal property
 - *All languages have X, Most languages are X*
- restricted
 - restriction on the domain of the universal property
 - *All languages that have Y have X*

EARLY WORD ORDER TYPOLOGY

Joseph H. Greenberg
(1963)

- the first work on basic word order from a typological viewpoint
- he established a new type of universal statement, the implicational universal



1915-2001

EARLY WORD ORDER TYPOLOGY

Joseph H. Greenberg (1963)

- implicational universals:
- e.g. $x \supset y$ (read: if the x exists, than this implies the existence of y)
- Greenberg's implications are unilateral
- they can not be reversed
- $x \supset y \neq y \supset x$

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Thank you!

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