Exploiting syntax to circumvent morphology: word order as a means for marking grammatical categories

Word order typology has traditionally focused on identifying basic word orders and characterizing *correlations* associated with those word orders. This work has largely followed the precedent set by Greenberg (1966) and elaborated on by Dryer (1991; 1992) in that it determines the ways in which argument-verb order is correlated with other orders, such as adjective-noun order, genitive-noun order, or the relative ordering of adpositions.

I would like to expand the notion of word order typology to encompass *alternations*, cases where word order is exploited to convey semantic information. I discuss a word order alternation in Iquito, a highly endangered Zaparoan language of the Peruvian Amazon, that uses word order to mark the reality status of a clause. Irrealis clauses are characterized by an 'SXV' order, where the subject and verb are separated from each other by an intervening element, whereas realis clauses exhibit 'SVX' order, where the subject and verb must be contiguous. (The intervening element can be an object, determiner, adverb, postpositional phrase, or negation particle, which is why I have used 'X' rather than 'O'.) Word order is the sole indicator of a clause's reality status; there is no additional morphological marking associated with this grammatical category, as demonstrated in (1).

(1) a. Ima <u>asúraaja</u> capi-qui-Ø.   (SXV order; irrealis)
        Ema manioc cook-PERF-E.C.TENSE
        'Ema will cook manioc.'
    b. Ima capi-qui-Ø   <u>asúraaja</u>.   (SVX order; realis)
        Ema cook-PERF-E.C.TENSE   manioc
        'Ema cooked manioc.'

Using data that I have collected through my fieldwork on Iquito and research I have conducted using published grammars, I discuss how the Iquito alternation fits within a larger typology of word order alternations. Marking the irrealis through word order is typologically very rare; when reality status is marked, it is typically done so through morphology (cf. Palmer 2001, Elliott 2000). In fact, cases where word order directly correlates with semantic distinctions are rare in South America and in the world's languages more generally (Payne 1993: 281). Word order alternations associated with other grammatical categories, such as negation in several West African languages (Good 2003, Güldemann 2007, Welmers 1973), the progressive in Cocama-Cocamilla (Vallejos Yopán 2004) and Tikar (Stanley 1986), and definiteness in K'iche' (England 1991) and Puare (Donohue 2008) exhibit similar characteristics to the Iquito alternation, but are usually accompanied by other markers of the grammatical category in addition to a change in word order. Thus, the Iquito alternation is unique in that it functions as the sole marker of a grammatical category. Furthermore, an alternation between SVO and SOV order is found in other languages (e.g. Papago, where VO order is associated with definite objects and OV is associated with indefinite ones (Dryer 2007: 76)), but the SXV order exhibited by Iquito is quite rare. I will explore the word alternations found in other

languages, and discuss how these alternations are similar to and different from the Iquito case. Such a survey does not currently exist anywhere in the typological literature.

References

Donohue, M. (2008). Semantic alignment systems: what's what, and what's not. In M. Donohue & S. Wichmann (Eds.), *The typology of semantic alignment* (pp. 24-75). New York: Oxford University Press.

Dryer, M. S. (1991). SVO Languages and the OV:VO Typology. *Journal of Linguistics, 27*(2), 443-482.

---. (1992). The Greenbergian Word Order Correlations. *Language, 68*(1), 81-138.

---. (2007). Word order. In *Clause Structure, Language Typology and Syntactic Description,* Vol I, edited by Timothy Shopen. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Elliott, J. R. (2000). Realis and irrealis: Forms and concepts of the grammaticalisation of reality. *Linguistic Typology, 4*, 55-90.

England, N. C. (1991). Changes in Basic Word Order in Mayan Languages. *International Journal of American Linguistics, 57*(4), 446-486.

Good, J. (2003). When arguments become adjuncts: Split configurationality in Leggbo. *Proceedings from the Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, 39*(1), 110-129.

Greenberg, J. H. (ed). (1966). *Universals of language.* 2nd edition. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Güldemann, T. (2007). Preverbal objects and information structure in Benue-Congo. In E. O. Aboh, K. Hartmann & M. Zimmermann (Eds.), *Focus strategies in African languages: the interaction of focus and grammar in Niger-Congo and Afro-Asiatic* (pp. 83-111). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Palmer, F. R. (2001). *Mood and Modality*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Payne, D. L. (1993). Meaning and pragmatics of order in selected South American Indian Languages. In W. A. Foley (Ed.), *The Role of Theory in Language Description* (pp. 281-314). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Stanley, C. (1986). *Description Morpho-syntaxique de la langue Tikar (parlée au Cameroun)*: Societe Internationale de Linguistique.

Vallejos Yopán, R. (2004). *Basic clauses in Kokama-Kokamilla.* University of Oregon Master's Thesis.

Welmers, W. E. (1973). *African language structures*. Berkeley: University of California Press.