

Directional Asymmetry in Agreement and Case-Marking: Deriving Greenberg's Universals 33 and 41

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Summary:

- ◆ OV order tends to have agreement (Univ #33) and case-marking (Univ #41), but VO order does not.
- ◆ These asymmetries show that the relation between V and O is more local in OV order than in VO order.
- ◆ The asymmetry in locality between OV and VO is due to the different strengths of juncture between left-branching structure and right-branching structure.

Background:

- It has been assumed that complement is the most typical governed position by head.
- [Specifier [Head Complement]]
V O
- In the antisymmetric syntax of Kayne (1994), object in OV languages moves from the post-verbal position to the specifier position.
- [Specifier [Head Complement]]
O V O

1

O is more local to V in OV order than in VO order

✓ Why? Because ..

- Juncture in left-branching structure is strong.
- Juncture in right-branching structure is weak.

(Tokizaki 2008)



➤ Supported by evidence from

- phonology: Japanese voicing, Korean n-insertion,
- morphology: Interfixation in Dutch three-word compounds
- syntax: Quasi-incorporation in Dutch NV

- ◇ OV is like a compound word while VO is a phrase.
- ◇ Closely connected words realize agreement and case-marking.

Deriving Greenberg's Universal #41: SOV → a case system

- ◇ O in OV order realizes case-marking because it is closely connected to V.
- ◇ O in VO order realizes case-marking because it is separated from V.

Deriving Greenberg's Universal #33: No agreement → VO

Li ho visti. [V agrees with Pronoun]
them I-have seen(m.pl.)

*Ho visti loro. [V cannot agree with Pronoun]
I-have seen(m.pl.) them

A problem: Pronouns and clitics are non-branching.

3

OV vs. VO asymmetry: Greenberg's universals #33 and #41

#33 agreement is suspended based on order → V NP

When number agreement between the noun and verb is suspended and the rule is based on order, the case is always one in which the verb precedes and the verb is in the singular. (Greenberg 1963: 94) (cf. Kayne 2011: 6)

Li ho visti. [V agrees with Pronoun]

them I-have seen(m.pl.)

*Ho visti loro. [V does not agree with Pronoun]

I-have seen(m.pl.) them

#41 SOV → a case system

If in a language the verb follows the nominal subject and the nominal object as the dominant order, the language almost always has a case system. (Greenberg 1963: 96) [counterexamples ○]

- Juncture in (potentially) left-branching structure is strong. (Complements are potentially branching.)

Ho visto [la gente]. -- Ho visto [loro].
have seen the people have seen THEM

[Ho [visti [li]]] → [Ho [[li] visti]] → [[li] [ho visti]]

Agreement
left-branching

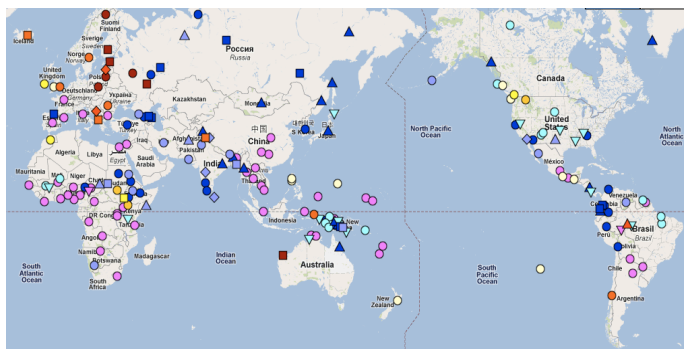
Ho [visto [loro]] (*Ho [visti [loro]])
No agreement *Agreement
right-branching

- ◇ Thus, when number agreement between the noun and verb is suspended and the rule is based on order, the case is always one in which the verb precedes (#33).

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4



2