

Language Universals and Typology

ENG 414 – Fall 2017

Office Hours: T 1-4 and W 10-11 and by appointment/e-mail.

Office: LL 226 C (August) RBH 237 (after August); E-mail: ellyvangelderren@asu.edu; Home page for the class: <http://www.public.asu.edu/~gelderren/Typology2017.htm>; Blackboard will only be used for grades.

Required text:

Whaley, Lindsay 1997. *Introduction to Typology*. Sage Publications.

Aims

- (a) to clarify the difference between genetic, areal, and typological classifications,
- (b) to examine language universals, e.g. regarding vowel systems, morphological systems (e.g. Case versus agreement), word order, tense and aspect, modality, transitivity, pronouns, auxiliaries, relative clauses, subject/topic, and numeral systems,
- (c) to get insight into the language faculty: why are the universals the way they are!
- (d) to look at typological issues in different language families, for instance, polysynthesis and ergativity,
- (e) to try to put the topics in a framework, e.g. of the Linguistic Cycle.

Organization:

There will be required reading each week (mainly the textbook; optional reading will be posted on the website) and I would like you to ask a question about it every week. Four homework assignments will consolidate some of the otherwise diverse material. You will be asked to pick one language (**that is a lesser known language**) for these assignments and stick with it for the assignments. If you have access to a native speaker of a lesser known language, you could also use him/her as a resource. You will be THE expert in that language for our class. The final paper could come out of the assignments, in which case it should be 12-15 pages in length. If it covers another topic, a length of 8 pages is good. In week 11, a first draft of the paper is due and the final paper is due in week 13.

Evaluation (This may be slightly modified (with the approval of the students):

Ten questions (these won't be graded) at 1.5 points each	15
One assignments at 15, and then three at 30 points each	105
One exam	30
One final paper/project	50
Total	200

Points will be converted as follows: 200 - 195: A+, 194 - 187: A, 186 - 180: A-, and 179 - 175: B+, 174 - 167: B, 166 - 160: B-, and 159 - 155: C+, 154 - 140: C, 139 - 120: D, 119 - 0: E.

Electronic Resources that might be helpful

-WALS: <http://wals.info/>

- www.sil.org/ethnologue: has data on 6703 languages (paper version is good too)

- There is a good 'dictionary' of linguistic terms at:

http://www.glottopedia.de/index.php/Main_Page

Alternative paper topics, in case you don't want to expand on your homeworks. These are left very open, but need to be narrowed, in case you would prefer to do that over the language one:

1. Tense and aspect cross-linguistically (Comrie 1976; 1984)
2. Ergativity (Dixon 1994)
3. Do Creoles have a special typology (McWhorter 2016)?
4. Are typological/structural similarities connected to geographic areas? (e.g. the distribution of 1/2 ps pronouns, Nichols 1992)
5. Possessives, existentials, locatives: *have* vs *be* (Freeze 1992; Kayne 1993; Clark 1978).
6. Negation and the negative cycle (Croft 1991; Veselinova 2015; van Gelderen 2011)
7. Demonstratives and the article cycle.
8. Subject-Verb agreement (or object-verb agreement).

Fall 2017 – Typology Preliminary Schedule

Week 1

17 August **Introduction:** What is 'typology', definitions of 'typology', the difference between genetic, areal, and typological classifications, and typology in the different linguistic frameworks.
Resources, and Organization: maps from Lyovin 1997; Ethnologue;
Universals of sounds. O'Grady et al.

Week 2

22-24 August **More introduction, history and methods:** Whaley chap 1-2-3.
Parts of Speech: Lexical and Grammatical (Functional) Categories. Whaley chap 4; van Gelderen (2017, chapter 2)

Week 3

29-31 August **Word order Typology.** Whaley chap 5-6; Greenberg (1963: 73-113): "Some Universals of Grammar with Particular Reference to the Order of Meaningful Elements".
HW #1 is due Thursday. The assignment is: Select a language that you will be working on. Explain why you picked it, define it genetically and areally. List some of the grammars/texts that are available.

Week 4

5-7 Sept **Morphological classification.** Whaley chap 7; Sapir (1921: chap 6); Szmrecsanyi (2012).

Week 5

12-14 Sept **Morphological classification continued and review (so far).** Whaley chap 8
HW #2 (analytic/synthetic) is due 14 September.

Week 6

19-21 Sept

Case and Agreement. Whaley chap 9

Ergativity. Dixon (1994: 1-22).

Pronominal Argument Languages and Non-Configurationality. Baker (2001); van Gelderen (2004).

Week 7

26-28 Sept

Animacy, definiteness, gender. Whaley chap 10.Possibly: Pronouns, demonstratives, and reflexives, and The DP-Cycle. Ingram (1978); van Gelderen (2011). **HW #3 is due.****Week 8**

3-5 Oct

Valency and Subject vs Topic. Whaley chap 11, Lambrecht (2010), Keenan (1985), Nichols et al (2004); Li & Thompson (1976).**Week 9**

10-12 Oct

Break and review so far.

Week 10

17-19 Oct

Tense, Mood, and Aspect. Whaley chap 12-13; Vendler (1957); Hopper (1979); Comrie (1985: chap 1); Comrie (1976: 16-51); Malotki (1983); Reichenbach (1947). **HW #4 is due.****Week 11**

24-26 Oct

Speech acts: interrogatives etc. Whaley chap 14; **Negation.** Payne (1985); van Gelderen (2011); Croft (1991). **Draft of research paper is due; short intro of your topic to the class.****Week 12**

31 Oct 2 Nov

Review and **EXAM.****Week 13**

7-9 Nov

Clauses. Subordinate and coordinate clauses. Whaley chap 15-16. **Research paper is due.** Review of all topics/articles.**Week 14**

14 Nov

Papers will be returned. Start of **The 2011 ASU Typology Workshop.** Presentation of your work (5-6 minutes presentation each and discussion). There is no class on the 16th.**Week 15**

21 Nov

Continuation of **The 2011 ASU Typology Workshop.****Week 16**

28-30 Nov

Continuation of **The 2011 ASU Typology Workshop.**