

Jae Jung Song, Linguistic typology: morphology and syntax (Longman Linguistics Library). Harlow: Longman, 2001. Pp. xix+406.

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The back cover of this book characterizes it as ‘an up-to-date critical introduction to linguistic typology’. The title might suggest that it gives equal coverage to morphology and syntax, but it is mainly about syntax. Chapter 1, ‘Introducing linguistic typology’, is a useful introduction to typology. For someone new to the area, it lays out the object of linguistic typology and discusses some of the important underlying assumptions (e.g. the Principle of Uniformitarianism). As an introduction, the book is up-to-date in that

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it discusses language sampling, an issue which has certainly increased in importance.

Since Greenberg's work in the early 1960s, word order has been a major topic of research in linguistic typology. Chapter 2, 'Basic word order', takes the reader from these beginnings to the work of Hawkins, Siewierska and Dryer. There is also a concentration on the explanations put forward for the statistical relationships found between word order types. The author discusses theories based on operator-operand, head-dependency, and Dryer's Branching Direction Theory, which treats word order relationships in terms of whether a language is left- or right-branching. For a student new to this topic, the chapter provides a sound overview. It has been demonstrated by Mithun that there are languages where word order is pragmatically based, with no basic order, and this poses a particular problem for claims about basic word order. There is a brief discussion of this work at the beginning of the chapter.

Chapter 3, 'Case marking', covers work on the marking of verbal arguments. The explanation of ergative-absolutive and nominative-accusative alignment is clear. However, as the absolutive arguments in the Avar examples ((27) and (28) on page 145), taken from other sources, are glossed as NOM, following the Russian tradition, the lack of explanation for this means that there is potential to confuse a reader who is just coming to grips with the concept of ergative-absolutive alignment. Such quibbles aside, the overview and clarity of writing indeed make for a good introduction to the topic of the marking of verbal arguments, and the final part of the chapter looks at work on the relationship between case marking types and word order types.

Relative clauses are the subject of chapter 4. As one would expect, Keenan & Comrie's Accessibility Hierarchy, and responses to it, form the core of this chapter, which also discusses work on processing and structural complexity, such as that of Hawkins, as explanations for the rankings of grammatical relations which can be relativized.

Chapter 5, 'Causatives', contrasts the author's own typology with what is termed 'morphologically based typology'. The author's typology identifies causative constructions in terms of a COMPACT type, an AND type and a PURP type. The first of these typically includes causatives which are lexical or morphological. The AND and PURP types are syntactic. The AND type involves conjunction or juxtaposition of the cause and the effect clauses, whereas the PURP type 'consists of two clauses, one denoting eventx carried out for the purpose of realizing eventy denoted by the other' (294).

Chapter 7 discusses the application of linguistic typology to historical linguistics, as well as to first and second language acquisition. Consideration of historical linguistics is clearly useful in a critical introduction to typology, as typological knowledge is a useful tool for evaluating historical

reconstruction. The discussion of accessibility to relativization in first and second language acquisition concludes that ‘ [t]he data from L1 acquisition have turned out to be disappointingly inconsistent when compared with those from L2 acquisition ’ (334).

The final chapter, ‘European approaches to linguistic typology’, claims to provide an overview of European schools of linguistic typology which are not considered Greenbergian. It is always brave to undertake surveys of this type, as important groups can easily be left out. The author concentrates on three particular schools, the Leningrad Typology Group, the Cologne UNITYP Group and the Prague School. These are chosen because the author sees them as standing out from the other non-Greenbergian approaches ‘ in terms of depth or breadth of their typological investigations and, more importantly, in terms of theoretical coherence of their respective approaches to linguistic typology’ (339). But theoretical coherence can be a difficult notion to pin down. As noted, surveys of this kind can attract criticism, because of who they leave out, and this one is no exception. Why, for instance, is the group of Aleksandr Kibrik in Moscow not mentioned? This book is a sound critical introduction to linguistic typology. However, it concentrates only on a particular set of the issues which typologists have addressed, and in the preface the author explicitly opts for theoretical depth rather than broad coverage. Typological work which concentrates on individual grammatical categories is not covered, for example. However, as an introduction to some of the major topics within linguistic typology, this book will prove to be valuable reading.

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