

Morphological Typology

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Morphological parameters



Friedrich von Schlegel



Edward Sapir

Morphological parameters

- Index of synthesis
- Index of fusion

Index of synthesis



isolating

synthetic

Vietnamese

English

Russian

Oneida

Isolating language

(1) Vietnamese (Comrie 1981: 43)

Khi tôi đến nhà bạn tôi,
When I come house friend I
'When I came to my friend's house,

chúng tôi bắt đầu làm bài.
PL I begin do lesson
'we began to do lessons.'

Synthetic language

(2) Kirundi (Whaley 1997:20)

Y-a-bi-**gur**-i-ye

CL1-PST-CL8.them-**buy**-APPL-ASP

'He bought them for the children.'

abâna

CL2.children

Polysynthetic language

Noun-incorporation (cf. fox-hunting, bird-watching)

(3) Mohawk (Mithun 1984: 868)

- a. r-**ukwe't-í:yo**
he-person-nice
'He is a nice person.'
- b. wa-hi-**'sereth-óhare-**'se
PST-he/me-car-wash-for
'He car-wash for me.' (= 'He washed my car')
- c. kvtsyu v-kuwa-**nya't-ó:'ase**
fish FUT-they/her-throat-slit
'They will throat-slit a fish.'

Index of fusion



agglutinative

fusional

Swahili

Russian

Oneida

Agglutinative language

(1) Turkish (Comrie 1981: 44)

	SG	PL
Nominative	adam	adam-lar
Accusative	adam-I	adam-lar-I
Genitive	adam-IN	adam-lar-IN
Dative	adam-a	adam-lar-a
Locative	adam-da	adam-lar-da
Ablative	adam-dan	adam-lar-dan

Fusional language

(2) Russian

	SG	PL	SG	PL
Nominative	stol	stol-y	lip-a	lip-y
Accusative	stol	stol-y	lip-u	lip-y
Genitive	stol-a	stol-ov	lip-y	lip
Dative	stol-u	stol-am	lip-e	lip-am
Instrumental	stol-om	stol-ami	lip-oj	lip-ami
Prepositional	stol-e	stol-ax	lip-e	lip-ax

Fusional language

Synthetic languages tend to be agglutinative.

Hypothetical language

TENSE		VOICE		PERS		NUM	
<i>PST</i>	pa	<i>ACT</i>	no	1 st	ku	<i>SG</i>	sa
<i>PRS</i>	pi	<i>PAS</i>	mo	2 nd	ko	<i>DU</i>	si
<i>FUT</i>	po	<i>MID</i>	ŋo	3 rd	ka	<i>PL</i>	so

(1) sleep-pa-no-ku-sa

V-PST-ACT-1-PL

'We slept'

(2) hit-pi-mo-ka-so

V-PRS-PAS-3-PL

'They get/are hit'

Polysynthetic language

Prepronominal	Pronominal	Stem	Suffixes
Negation Direction Iterative Partative	I I:you.SG I:you.DU I:you.PL I:he ... you.SG:me you.DU:me you.PL:me ...	Verb	Aspect

Language change

August Schleicher: Language change reflects cultural change
(→ teleological view of language change)

From isolating to agglutinative

(1) Melanesian Pidgin (Whaley 1997: 136)

aus	blon	mi	>	aus	blo-mi
house	belong	me		house	of-me / my

(2) English (hypothetical)

walk + do/did	>	walked
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From isolating to agglutinative

(2)	how ever	>	however
	by cause	>	because
	going to	>	gonna
	there fore	>	therefore
	in deed	>	indeed
	N meaning 'body-like'	>	-ly
	any body	>	anybody
	in front of	>	in.front.of
	in deed	>	indeed

From agglutinating to fusional

(1) Paamese (Whaley 1997: 137)

a. **ni**-lesi- Ø
I.FUT-see-it

From:

*na-i-lesi-Ø
I-FUT-see-it

b. **ki**-lesi-nau
you.FUT-see-me

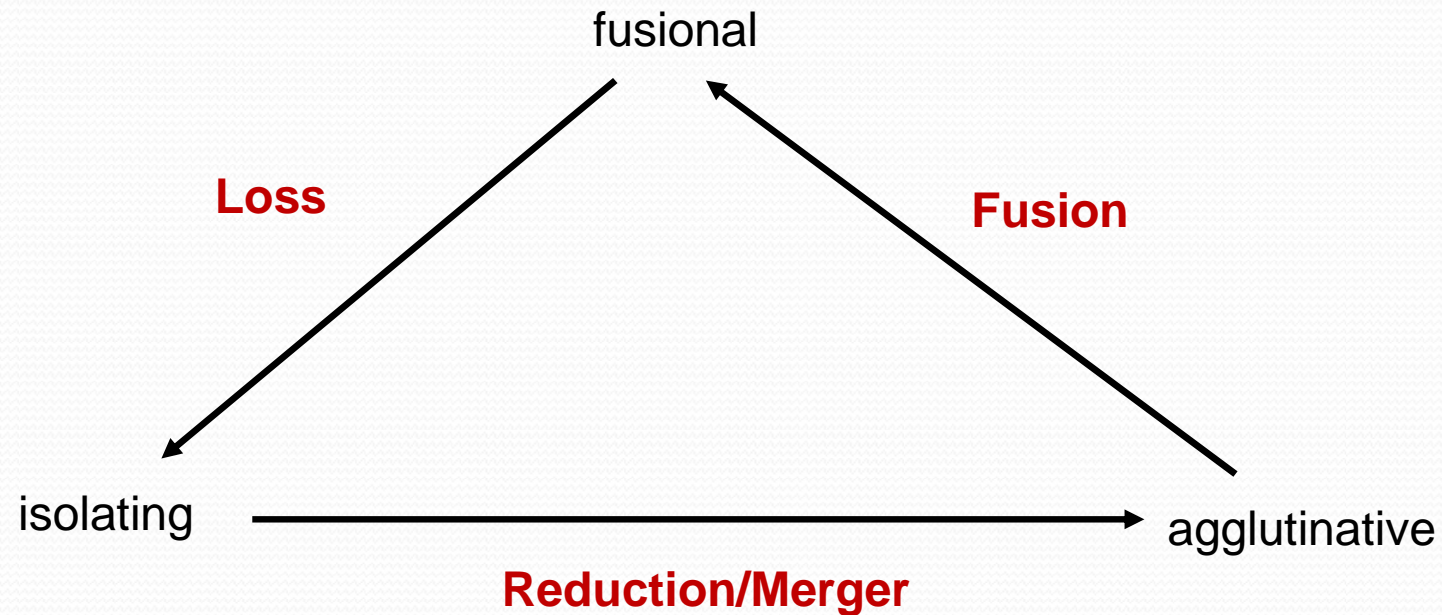
*ko-i-lesi-nau
you-FUT-see-me

From fusional to isolating

	SG	PL
NOM	stan	stan-as
GEN	stan-es	stan-a
DAT	stan-e	stan-um
ACC	stan	stan-as

	SG	PL
SUBJ	stone	stones
GEN	stone's	stones
DAT	stone	stones
ACC	stone	stones

Developmental cycle



- No evidence for the entire cycle from one language
- Morphological features can differ in one language



Head marking vs. dependent marking

Head marking vs. dependent marking

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|-------------------|
| (1) | English | dependent-marking |
| | The man's house | |
| (2) | Hungarian | head-marking |
| | az ember ház-a | |
| | the man house-his | |
| | 'The man's house' | |
| (3) | Turkish | double-marking |
| | Adam-in ev-i | |
| | Man-POSS house-his | |
| | 'the man's house' | |
| (4) | Haruai | no marking |
| | nöbö ram | |
| | man house | |
| | 'the man's house' | |

Head marking vs. dependent marking

Level	Head	Dependent
Phrase	Possessed noun Noun Adposition	Possessor Adjective NP
Clause	Predicate Auxiliary	Arguments + Adjuncts Verb

Nicholas 1986

Clause

(1) Chechen

da:-**s** wo'a-**na** urs-**∅** tü:xira
father-ERG son-DAT knife-NOM struck
'The father stabbed the son.'

(2) Japanese

boku **ga** tomudati **ni** hana **o** tü:xira
I SUBJ friend to flowers OBJ gave
'The man gave the woman the book.'

Clause

(3) Abkhaz

a-xàcʔa a-pħəs a-ʃqʔə Ø-lə-y-te-ytʔ
the-man the man the-book it-her-he-gave-FIN
'The man gave the woman the book.'

(4) Tzutujil

x-Ø-kee-tij tzyaq ch'ooyaaʔ
ASP-3SG-3PL-ate clothes rats
'Rats ate the clothes.'

Clause

(5) Dani

ap palu-**nen** Ø-nasikh-**e**

Man python-OBJ 3SG.OBJ-eat.PST-3SG.SUBJ

'The python ate the man.'

(6) English

The man gave Peter the book.

Cross-linguistic generalizations

- If a language has head-marking morphology anywhere, it will have it at the clause level.
- If a language has head-marking at the clause level, arguments can usually be omitted.
- Head-marking morphology favors verb-initial order, while dependent-marking morphology disfavors it.