Language Universals and Language Typology

Veranstaltungsart: MA + Lehramt
Zeit: Fr 10:15 – 11:45
Raum: SR 601

Human languages, especially those spoken by members of unfamiliar and distant cultures, appear on the surface to be very different from one another. But closer examination reveals that languages differ in systematic ways and that they can often be divided into a relatively small number of basic types. In this course we will identify and study some of these basic patterns and consider the English language from a cross-linguistic point of view. Further, we will explore possible reasons for the existence of language types and linguistic universals, seeking explanations where possible in the communicative function of language as well as in the historical evolution of languages.

Prerequisite

Basic knowledge of grammatical categories

Requirements

Term paper
Assignments
Short report

Readings

**Course Schedule: Linguistic Typology**

20.4. Introduction  
What is typology?  
Reference grammars and questionnaires

27.4. Basic notions of typological research  
Short survey of the languages of the world  
Types of universals  
Whaley 1997: 1-3

4.5. Nominal categories  
Case, number, gender  
Whaley 1997: 4

11.5. Verbal categories  
Tense, aspect, mood  
Whaley 1997: 12-13

**18.5. Fällt aus**

25.5. Morphological typology  
Morphological language types  
Head-marking and dependent marking  
-> Presentation of Assignment 1: nominal/verbal categories  
Whaley 1997: 8

1.6. Grammatical relations 1  
The notion of subject, the case hierarchy  
Whaley 1997: 9

8.6. Grammatical relations 2  
Ergativity, split ergativity, syntactic ergativity  
Dixon 1994: 1-22

15.6. Valency  
Passives, middles, causatives  
-> Presentation of Assignment 2: grammatical relations  
Whaley 1997: 11

22.6. Word order 1  
Basic word orders  
Whaley 1997: 5

29.6. Word order correlations  
Word order correlations  
Whaley 1997: 6

6.7. Complex sentences  
Finiteness, clause order  
-> Presentation of Assignment 3: valency/word order  
Whaley 1997: 15

13.7. Relative clauses  
Types of relative clauses  
The noun phrase accessibility hierarchy  
Comrie 1989: 7

20.7. Markedness  
Markedness patterns and explanations  
Croft 1990: 4