THE TYPOLOGY OF WORD ORDER IN THE LANGUAGES OF ASIA

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When we shall speak about word order we shall mean, firstly, the order of autosemantic words, constituents of sentences, secondly, the word order with a syntactic significance; in particular we shall regard the variations of sentences with the same syntactic structure but different communicative structures or stylistic characteristics as synonyms.

The classifications of word order in that sense are usually divided into two groups. The authors of the classifications of the first group fix first of all the basic, widespread word order; they divide the languages into classes depending on the mutual order of predicate, subject and direct object. The authors of the classification of the second group describe the degree of the strictness of the word order, the possibilities of its changes without changes of the syntactic structure: the languages are divided first of all into the languages with free and fixed word order, or into the languages with different degrees of strictness of word order. The first group of classifications is peculiar to American (Greenberg (1966); Lehmann (1975)), the second — to Soviet (Kholodovich (1966); Rozhdestvenskiy (1969)) linguists: it is not accidental, since these differences are connected with the interference of the structure of the native language of the linguists. Some linguists tried to combine both the approaches: Steele (1978); Vardul (1989).

The languages with basic word orders SOV, SVO, VSO, VOS, OSV, OVS (V — predicate, S — subject, O — direct object) can be singled out; the two last basic orders are very rare. From the point of view of the degree of strictness of word order we can single out two parameters: possibility or impossibility of the change of the order of the dependent constituent, possibility or impossibility of the change of the order of constituents dependent on the main one. There are four combinations of these two features but the languages with fixation of only the second order are not exist. There are three other possibili-
ties: both orders are free, only the position of the dependent constituent is fixed, both orders are fixed. These types are found in the languages.

There are different types in the languages of Asia. However one of them is widespread and is concentrated in the certain area. L. Tesnière called that type "centripète", J. Greenberg - "rigid subtype of the SOV type". From the point of view of the degree of strictness of the word order they are characterized by the fixed position of depending constituents with respect to the main one and the free mutual position of several constituents dependent on the main one. From the point of view of the basic order they characterized by the SOV order: besides only the order OSV is possible if this type is consistent.

This type covers all Asia with the exception of two peripheral areas: the south-east (China, the main part of Indo-China and adjoining islands) and the south-west (Arabia and territories to north and north-west of it); we do not take into account the recent spreading to Asia some languages of other areas and other types of word order, first of all Russian and English. This type of word order is widespread in general; according to Hawkins J. (1983) it includes more than 50% of the languages of the world. However we do not know other vast areas with only the languages of this type (with the exception of Russian and other languages of the recent colonization). As early as in the fifties L. Tesnière wrote that this type is widespread in Asia first of all.

The main rule of word order in these languages is: the dependent constituent is found before the governing one (we consider that predicate governs subject). The languages of this type are characterized by many common features besides word order. However they belong to different language families: on the contrary cognate languages of other areas can have other types of word order, the Indo-European languages are especially significant.

The languages of the consistent SOV type have the following features. The predicate of every clause takes the last place. Attributes of all the types are found before their main words (in particular numerals before counted nouns, family names before first names). Dependent clauses are found main clauses or within them directly before the main word. Many rules at other levels are revealed now: there are postpositions (not prepositions), only suffixes (not prefixes) in these languages, the order of components in compo-
sita corresponds to the order in word-combinations. J. Greenberg (1966) and W. P. Lehmann (1975) discovered many such correspondences, but they (especially W. P. Lehmann who proceeds from the Japanese Standard too straightforwardly) connect this type with many features which are peculiar to them, for instance the honorific system in Japanese.

These features exist in all the languages of that area but with different strictness; in particular the final position of predicate is the most usual and frequent. But the degree of the consistence of that features is not the same. Many differences are connected with some contacts with the languages of other types.

The most consistent languages of this type are for instance Japanese, Corean, Ainu, many languages of Siberia; for instance the Ob-Ugrian and Samojed (except Nganasan) languages preserve this type better than other Uralic languages.

Many of these languages did not contact with the languages of other types or have contacted with them since recent years. But the situation of Japanese is the different: that language is Altaic (Starostin S. A. (1991)) but it was influenced by the Austronesian substrate; afterwards it was in long contacts with Chinese. Nevertheless the order connected with the preposition of depending constituents is kept very strictly at the level of word order in the foregoing sense. The such examples as: Shim bun o katta ka? Ken- kichi wa 'Bought a newspaper? Kenkichi...' or Ken- kichi wa katta ka? Shim bun o 'Kenkichi bought? A newspaper?' are not the exceptions. Wardul (1989) wrote correctly: "There is a double construction of the same sentence in our examples but that sentence is constructed in two different elliptic variations; if that variations are put together they supply the ellipsis of each other" (p.27). Violations of that rule exist in Japanese only at other levels: there are not numerous prefixes which have correspondences in Austronesian (Polivanov (1918)); words composed from roots of Chinese origin retain the Chinese order of their components.

The above-mentioned rules are not so rigid in many other languages of Asia. The basic order does not change usually but the word order becomes more free. Some languages especially near the borders of the area (Armenian, many Caucasian, Colloquial Turkish, some Iranian languages) can be considered as the languages with free word-order although their basic order is S0V
in contrast to Slavic and other languages with free word order. The more considerable change with the change of the basic order occurs usually when a language finds itself inside another area; it is the case of Finnish, Estonian (but not Hungarian) and two Turkic languages: Qagauz and Karaim.

Different constituents of the sentence obey that rule with different rigidity. On the whole the order of predicates, subjects and objects is less rigid than the order of attributes; it is fixed by linguists for many languages of different parts of Asia (Turkmen, Buryat, Tamil and other Dravidians, Bengali and so on). The order of dependent clauses (especially the clauses of time, cause, goal etc.) is the least stable in many languages (Azerbaijan, Buryat and others). We must take into account that this language type is characterized by the presence of constructions with non-finite verbal forms and not dependent clauses; these clauses if they exist can be results of the influence of the languages of other structure (Persian, Arabic, Russian); therefore their order must not obey the common rule.

The Burmese and Tibetan languages which are settled near the border of the area too (but near the south-east border) have some peculiarities. The order SOV is rather strict but some classes of attributes are postpositive. It is difficult to say if that specific order is connected with an influence of the neighbour languages of Indo-China which have postpositive attributes too; but the order of objects is different.

The degree of rigidity of the rule is different in the different styles of some languages. For instance the word order in the literary Turkish language (newspapers, fiction excepting direct speech etc.) is rather rigid but the word order in the colloquial Turkish language is quite free. The similar case is mentioned in the descriptions of Bengali.

It should be distinguished deviations from the common rules under the influence of languages of other structure and relics of the old type. The Indo-Aryan languages changed their structure under the influence of Dravidian and other neighbour languages. However they preserve some prepositions, possibility of the postposition of some clauses and other features.

Why this type of word order is widespread and stable? We can say a priori about the opposite type
of word order with the rigid preposition of the main constituent. Although as early as in Greenberg (1966) it is explained that the languages of VSO type exist but unlike the rigid SOV subtype the rigid VSO subtype does not exist. The following researches discovered the existence not only VSO languages (Arabic, Tagalog and others) but VOS languages (Malagasy). Although the initial position of predicates is not strictly fixed in that languages. On the whole the VSO and VOS languages are not widespread as the SOV languages; their number is three times as small as the number of SOV languages: Hawkins (1983). The area of that languages in Asia is in the south-west and in the extreme south-east (Philippines, Polynesia). There are some hypotheses about that asymmetry. J. Greenberg supposes that it is more important to mark the end of an utterance than its beginning which usually is clearer. Kozinský (1980) suggested another interesting hypothesis. He considers that there are three rules in the languages, each of them is true for not less than 70% of all the languages. These rules are: the position of subject before predicate, the contact position of predicate and direct object, the contact position of subject and object. The SOV order is the only word order obeyed all that rules. However the OSV order is possible in the languages with the basic SOV order; if the order of several constituents dependent from the main one is mutually fixed too the SVO order is more typical: compare English, French on the one hand and Chinese, Thai etc. on the other hand.

The Asian languages of this type usually have explicit markers of the subject-object relations besides word order (affixes or particles). Hence the word order in that languages can become free without the total change of the linguistic type. It is especially typical for the languages of Western Asia where they are in contact with languages with free word order. However contacts with the languages with the fixed word order of other types (Chinese, languages of Indo-China) does not change the rigidity of the rules.

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