

## Competing motivations for the linear structuring of complex sentences

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At least since Greenberg's seminal work in the 1960s, the linear order of syntactic constituents has been considered an important dimension of linguistic structure. Moreover, the systematic typological variation of word order has been shown to be influenced by various competing forces, ranging from on-line processing pressures (e.g. Hawkins 2004) to long-term effects of grammaticalization (e.g. Aristar 1991). Crucially, the generalized linearization patterns typically invoked, such as uniform head-dependent ordering or branching directions (e.g. Dryer 1992), also make predictions for the ordering of main and dependent *clauses*. Those have hitherto received comparatively little attention, even though the respective phenomena are structurally more complex and hence, arguably, sensitive to even more (and maybe differently ranked) functional motivations.

In this paper, we present key results and insights of the first large-scale project that has investigated the linear structure of complex sentences from a typological perspective. The project has resulted in a substantial database that takes stock of entire systems of complex sentences from more than 100 independent languages. The database is coded for some 50 pertinent construction-specific variables of relative, complement and the main semantic types of adverbial clauses. We will illustrate how these multivariate data can be exploited to further strengthen and differentiate the competing-motivations approach to constituent order at the inter-clausal level.

To begin with, the database allows for a precise quantification of the degrees to which different types of subordinate clauses pattern with other constituent-order choices of VO/OV language types, and with each other. The expected analogical or systemic pressures are, for instance, typically overridden by adverbial clauses in VO languages, and by complement and relative clauses in OV languages. Crucially, however, several independent motivations need to be invoked here, ranging from the structural complexity of the subordinate clause over the position of subordinating elements, to semantic and discourse-pragmatic factors. Recurrent phenomena such as differential topic marking on clauses or their obligatory extraposition thus reflect grammaticalized solutions, as it were, to the pressure of responding to these motivations simultaneously.

More generally, then, the position of subordinate clauses provides a challenging test case for theories of competing motivations: It can shed light on the question of which alleged motivations or 'principles' (Hawkins 2004) are actually significantly materialized in grammars across the world's languages, which ones may be needed in addition, and how they are ranked when it comes to potential conflicts.

### References

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- Hawkins, J.A. 2004. *Efficiency and Complexity in Grammars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.