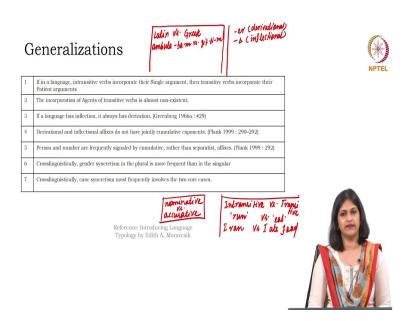**Appreciating Linguistics: A typological approach**
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Lecture - 23
Morphological Typology: Generalization

Now, it is the time to find out what are the generalizations that we can draw in morphological typology.

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This is the most important section of this discussion. I am not really going to give you data for each of them. I will see how much of time I have, but then we will surely discuss and then I want you to read Moravcsik's book once and go and check what sort of data that has been discussed over here.

So, what is the first generalization? Every time when you see generalizations in linguistics you would see the symbol GEN would be used followed by a numeral. The numerical here is 1, 2, 3, 4. We have listed how many generalizations. Let me check it. There are 14 generalizations which have been listed here. I will go through them one by one and I will give you substantive data. Briefly I will just discuss and do let me know if there is any confusion that you have.

So, what is the first one? The first morphological typological generalization GEN1 if I can say is if in a language, intransitive verbs incorporate their single argument, then transitive verbs incorporate their patient argument. I will go slow considering I have not given you the data on the slides. I want you to listen to me carefully so that you can understand how this intransitivity, transitivity, agent, patient, relation works.

As I told you, those who have had some courses of introduction to linguistics, it is going to be easier for them and if you are new to linguistics, my suggestion would be to listen to me a little more carefully. So, what I will do? I will just write here a few things that I want you to understand: one is intransitive versus transitive. These are the predicates or the verbs. I want you to compare a verb like run with a verb like let us say eat.

In this case, run is an intransitive verb and eat is a transitive verb. Why are we going to call run an intransitive verb? Because it has only one argument. You can say John ran away or John ran or you can say I was running, that is fine. There is only one argument present that is I, I was running. It does not need a patient, it does not need an object. But in case of eat, you cannot say I ate; implicitly there is a meaning you must have eaten something. There would be a patient or a theme or primarily grammatically it is going to be an object.

So, this run versus eat; run is intransitive and eat is transitive, what does the generalization say about it in the first one? GEN 1, I am going to read it again; if in a language intransitive verbs incorporate their single argument. So, let us consider a verb like run and the single argument that it has is I ran versus I ate food. So, in this case, when it is I ran, the single argument here is I, then the transitive verb. So, what does the generalization say? Then the transitive verbs incorporate their patient argument.

When I say I ate food, I is the agent and food can be considered as the patient. So, that is the first generalization and what is the second generalization? Related to the first, the second one is the incorporation of agents of transitive verbs is almost nonexistent. When you think about the incorporation, what is it? If it is a transitive verb, it is assumed that there must be an agent.

For example, let us say the examples like for the wind to blow or for the letter to write, to write a letter. Writing a letter means there must be an agent; for something to be blown means

there must be wind; for punishing children, the word punish, there must be a punisher if I can use the term. There must be an agent. Any language with any kind of patient incorporation, it must have a subject incorporation too. Let me put it in a simpler form; if it is a transitive verb, an agent seems to be the most.

Tthe agent incorporation is not much. You cannot do away with the agent incorporation in case of transitive verbs, it must be there. If the verb is transitive, generally it carries some kind of agenthood. So, that is what the second generalization says. When it is related to the generalizations we cannot do away with the derivations and the inflections.

If you remember when I was talking about the types of affixes, whether it is a prefix or a suffix I did talk about inflectional morphemes and derivational morphemes. Go back to the previous slides and go back to the previous lectures if you have forgotten. When it is inflection; that means, the grammatical category of the word generally does not change. When I say child – children or tree – trees.

In case of trees, the -s marker or the -s morpheme is an inflectional morpheme because it does not change the grammatical category. Tree is also a noun, trees is also noun. But, in case of the other morphemes like destroy and destruction, destroy is a verb and destruction would be a noun. The grammatical category has changed, and this change in the grammatical category is related to the morpheme that it is associated with, the the verb destroy. So, the -ion morpheme is a derivational morpheme.

So, now, since the third generalization talks about the inflection-derivation, it is primarily Greenberg (1966). So, the generalization here is if a language has inflection, it always has derivation. If in your language you are able to find or you know the affixes related to like if there are inflectional affixes, you must find the derivational affixes too. My suggestion for you would be why don't you check the validity of this generalization in your own language. Find out if it holds true for your language or not. Considering it has been a generalization which has been drawn from the analysis of a big sample size, very likely it is going to be true for your language too, but that does not mean that it must be true. You should always think about and find out all the generalizations whether they work for your language or not. But, I hope I can make it clear how the generalization 3 works.

The fourth one is also related to derivational and inflectional things. Let us read what does the fourth generalization say. It says derivational and inflectional affixes do not have jointly cumulative exponents. That means, when you are talking about let us say I am giving you a word, there are two morphemes here, one is -er and the other one is -s. This needs a bit of discussion. One is -er and the other one is -s. So, this one is generally derivational morpheme and this one is generally an inflectional morpheme.

So, what does it say? It says the difference between the derivational and inflectional affixes has to be understood clearly to find out if this generalization works. So, what does it mean? It means that there are no languages where the word for speaker would look like it does in English. There is a stem and a derivational affix, but where the plural form would be speaks a lot in that sense. So, where the affix lot combines both the deverbal nominaliser -er and s so, it is a little tricky for you to understand, but then.

We were talking about the fourth generalization. So, in case of the fourth generalization the concern here is that let us read it first and then we can discuss. The fourth generalization says derivational and inflectional affixes do not have jointly cumulative exponents. That means, you cannot put both like one particular morpheme which will also have a derivational feature and the inflectional feature.

Let us look at the example in English; -er is a derivational morpheme in English because it generally changes the parts of speech. When you say teacher, -er is the derivational morpheme which changes the form of the verb teach and makes it a noun teacher. So, it becomes verb to noun. Change happens because of the derivational affix -er. On the other hand we have -s which is the plural marker; it remains noun in case of the plural morphemes.

So, when it is a book and books; book is also a noun, books is also a noun. There is no change in the grammatical category. However, in a language like Latin for that matter, lut is a morpheme. It also has the deverbal nominaliser function as well as the plural nominalization function. So, the concern here is that both the things they generally do not occur simultaneously in any of the languages in the world. That means, if a particular morpheme has both the derivational and inflectional feature, it is very difficult almost impossible to find out such combinations.

Either it is going to change the category, so it becomes derivational, or the grammatical category retains its form and it just becomes an inflectional. But you would never find any language where let us say the -er morpheme in teacher which is derivational, the plural form would also have a marker like -s that is not going to work.

If there is a derivational marker, it will remain derivational, if it is an inflectional marker, it is going to remain inflectional. But, in a construction like teachers there are two markers; one is -er, the other one is -s. -Er is independently derivational, -s is independently inflectional. But, if a particular language has one morpheme which has both the features, it is very unlikely to occur with a predicate like speak. That is what the forth generalization says.

How about the fifth one? The fifth one is about the person-number difference. The person-number differences are frequently signaled by cumulative rather than separative affixes. If you remember when we were talking about the cumulative and separative affixes, Latin is a language which has cumulative affixes; that means, one particular morpheme will have many features. Separatist means there would be many morphemes and each of them will have a different function.

So, in case of let us say Turkish; if I remember I gave you the example of Turkish. Go back to the previous sessions, previous recordings and you can easily find it out. In Turkish, we have separate plural affixes. In case of Latin, we have a cumulative number and case which is assigned on only one morpheme. So, one morpheme has accumulated many features.

So, on the basis of this cumulative versus separatist definition, the fifth generalization says the person and number they are frequently signaled by cumulative rather than separatist affixes. You will generally find the number feature and the person feature get accumulated on one morpheme. It is very unlikely you will find it in the separative cases, but that does not mean that you will not see any such instances. But most of the time it happens like this. I will give you a small example here since we do not have the data.

Let us write the cumulative one, Latin versus Greek. Remember Latin is cumulative and Greek is a separatist. I will just take into account only one example. Let us say this is ambula-bam that is Latin, and Greek would be I am writing versus here git-ti and m git-ti and m. So, in this case what happens, this is the past tense. The past tense is generally signaled by

a separatists affix in both languages. If it is tense, then the affix is separatist, but if it is number or gender or person, generally everything is clubbed together.

That means, the concern here is that tense does not get manifested by the cumulative affixes, rather the person, number and gender does. So, in the fifth generalization, the person and number are generally signaled by cumulative affixes where as tense it generally signaled by the separatist affixes. That is what you need to remember. Tense has a separate category; person, number, sometimes gender has a separate category.

Then the sixth one is about syncretism, and when we say syncretism, the simple thing that I can say syncretism means distinction. When there is a lack of distinction within a category, in that case we will find out that there is no syncretism. There is no gender syncretism here for that matter. We will say there is a particular language which has differences in singular. The gender differences in singular, but the gender differences are not found in plural; that means, there is a gender syncretism happening over there.

If you look at a closer view of the data in German, go back to the to the book like to the examples I think I discussed in the previous sessions, but then again I am going to repeat it. So, when it is related to syncretism; that means, there is a difference in singular; the gender is marked clearly and in plural it does not. So, what does it say? It says gender syncretism in the plural is more frequent than in the singular. That means, when the noun is singular, the gender is marked overtly.

There would be a difference between the masculine and feminine. But, in case of plural, you do not generally see the overt marking of gender. That is why there is a syncretism available there. So, the gender distinction in a language like Finnish; Finnish is a language which does not have gender distinction. It would not meet the definition of syncretism because it does not have the gender distinction. But, let us say Hindi is a language which is extremely gender sensitive and you can easily find gender syncretism in South Asian language like Hindi.

For that matter I can also talk about Odia which does not have much gender difference. So, in case of Hindi, in most of the cases you see that the singular nouns are extremely gender sensitive; the plural ones are not as gender sensitive as the singular ones. There you clearly

see gender syncretism. But in a language like Finnish, where there is no gender difference or there is no gender distinction in grammar, hardly you would see the syncretism.

To put it in simpler words, syncretism is the asymmetry in the expression of certain meanings. Remember that it is just an asymmetry. In some instances it behaves in a different way, some instances it behaves in another way. This asymmetry or this difference in various categories brings us to a generalization related to gender. Remember, when the noun is singular, gender is manifested more overtly; when it is plural, in most of the cases, the gender is not manifested as rigidly or as strictly as in plural. That is why the sixth generalization reads crosslinguistically gender syncretism in the plural is more frequent. We do not say it is not found, rather it is more frequent than in singular. So, that is about the sixth generalization or you can say generalization 6.

The seventh one is also related to syncretism. This syncretism is related to the case syncretism. The sixth one is gender syncretism and the seventh one is case syncretism. There is a bit of difference in the case syncretism. Crosslinguistically case syncretism most frequently involves two core cases. What are these two core cases? These are nominative and accusative. These are the two core cases that involve case syncretism.

So, the seventh generalization reads crosslinguistically case syncretism most frequently involves the two core cases. So, what are the two core cases here? One is nominative, the other one is accusative. These are the two which are primarily related to the first 7 crosslinguistic generalizations that we have encountered so far. Let me recall what we have discussed and what you should take home. There would be more. There are 7 more generalizations which I will discuss in the next session, but let us now try to find out what we have learnt so far.

First thing we started the discussion with the typology of affixes, and in the typology of affixes three different patterns are emerging. The first pattern where the affix precedes the root word, that would be a prefix; second category, the affix that follows the root word, that will be a suffix; the third category, you will see a lot of interlocking. In the category of interlocking you will have three different types. The first type would be infixing and what

happens in the infixing? You break open or you break the root word into two parts and you are inserting the infix into it.

The second one is circumfixing. In circumfixing the morpheme itself or the affix itself has been broken into two parts: one part is used before the root word the other part is used after the root word. That would be circum fixing. Then the third one we have is introfixing. What function all of them are doing? Interlocking function. When we are talking about the interim introfixing, here not only the affix has been broken into two parts but also the root word has been broken.In such cases Hebrew is an example of this.

So, in such a case what happens, after you break the root word, you are also dropping the vowels. When we are talking about morphological typology, these are the things you need to remember to understand the world's languages better. And, in such cases my suggestion for you would be to think about the languages that you know, the languages that you are familiar with, or that you can speak, which type does it belong to.

The other side of the story is when you are talking about preceding and following, there is further typological division. There are languages which allow only prefixes, there are languages which allow only suffixes, there could be languages which allow both. In such cases there are three different typological differences emerging. Within the category of affixation, you also have overt versus zero morphemes. When the affixes are overtly manifested we are call them overt affixes, when they do not get manifested overtly yet they change or they play a crucial role in changing the meaning of the verb or meaning of the word we call them zero affixes.

So, the first example that we have had Mandarin, the plurals are zero affixed once Latin-English these are generally and these are generally the overt affixes ones. But you can also find out the zero affixed morphemes in English too. This is all about the affixes or the typology of affixes that we have discussed so far. Besides that, we also talked about 7 different generalizations that we have identified so far.

The first generalization is about transitivity and intransitivity. If in a language the intransitive verb incorporates a single argument, then the transitive verb would incorporate the patient argument or the theme or you can say primarily the object. And in case of the transitive

verbs, you generally cannot incorporate agents. Why you cannot because the transitive verb already has an agent. So, it is not possible to incorporate another one, very unlikely. So, that is why the second generalization will say that this is almost nonexistent.

Then, the third one is a simpler one. If it has an inflectional morpheme that it will also have a derivational morpheme. The fourth one you generally will not find any language where the derivational and inflectional affixes jointly are treated as cumulative exponents, not really; that does not work, either it will be only derivative or it will be only inflectional. And, if there is one morpheme which has both the features it generally does not occur with the verb like speak. Then, person and number, these are frequently signaled by cumulative ones, not the separatist. On the other hand tense is generally signaled by the separatist morpheme, but not the cumulative ones, remember this.

And, then we also talked about two different kinds of syncretism. The first syncretism is related to gender, the second syncretism is related to case. When it is the gender-related syncretism, the generalization is that the gender syncretism in the plural is more frequent than the singular. You do not really see much of the plural gender marking in the plurals. In case of case syncretism, it involves generally two core cases, mostly nominative and accusative ones.

So, these are a few morphological, typological generalizations that we have identified so far from our reference book. There are more into it. I am going to talk about 7 more generalizations in the next session.

Until then my suggestion would be to think about the languages that you speak and find out typologically what sort of affixation works in your language.

Thank you.

Keywords: generalizations, transitivity, intransitivity, agent, patient, argument, inflection and derivation, gender syncretism, case syncretism