

Yehuda Falk

in memoriam

Nurit Melnik

Research Interests (Passions)

- Languages
- Typology
- Syntax
- LFG

Languages!

“Languages! Languages! Languages!
 English, Hebrew, Greek, Hungarian,
 Spanish, Norwegian, French, German,
 Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Yiddish,
 Ladino, Tagalog, Warlpiri, Acehnese,
 Dyrbal, Hindi-Urdu, Japanese, Yidiny,
 Quechua, Icelandic, Chicheŵa, Samoan,
 Kinyarwanda, Choctaw-Chickasaw,
 Welsh, Mandarin, Marathi, Malayalam,
 Farsi, Inuit, Turkish, Kannada, Wambaya,
 Tongan, ... Over 6000 of them! And I
 have never met a language I didn't like.”
 (From Yehuda's website)


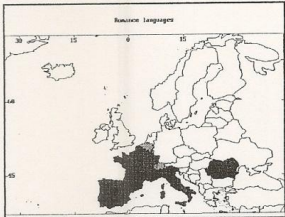
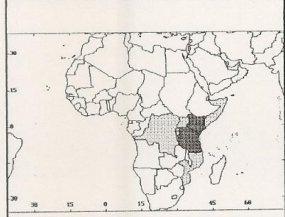
Dr. Y. N. Falk

CASE AND AGREEMENT
Nominative-Accusative Case and Agreement

(1) **Quechua**
 Juan aicha- ta micu- rca.
 Juan meat- ACC eat- PST.3
 'Juan ate meat.'

(2) **Latin**
 a. Domin- us veni- t
 master- NOM come- 3SG
 'The master comes.'
 b. Serv- us domin- um audi- t
 slave- NOM master- ACC hear- s
 'The slave hears the master'

(3) **Swahili**
 a. U- li- taka.
 2sgSUBJ- PST- want
 'You wanted.'
 b. U- li- mw- ona?
 2sgSUBJ- PST- 3sgOBJ- see
 'Did you see him?'
 c. A- li- ku- ona?
 3sgSUBJ- PST- 2sgOBJ- see
 'Did he see you?'

Quechua was the language of the Inca Empire. Today, it consists of disparate dialects spoken by 8,000,000 people in eastern South America. It is a co-official language of Peru (where it is spoken by 27% of the population) and Bolivia (where it is spoken by 37%, more than speak Spanish), and also a significant language in Ecuador (7%). It is spoken by small numbers of speakers in Colombia, Argentina, and Chile. It is a member of the Amerind family Andean (or Andean-Equatorial), and is most closely related to Aymará.

Latin is a member of the Italic branch of the Indo-European family. It was originally spoken in and around Rome, and spread through western and southern Europe, England, and northern Africa as the Roman Empire conquered these areas. The shaded countries are the European countries with Romance languages as their official language: the heavier shading marks countries where it is the sole official language (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Romania, Moldova), and the lighter shading where it is co-official (Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland). Romance languages are also spoken in former colonies of these countries in Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific Ocean area.

Swahili (or Kiswahili) is a member of the Bantu family, which in turn is part of the Benue-Congo (or South Central) branch of the Niger-Congo family. The Niger-Congo family is the major part of the larger Niger-Kordofanian family. The Bantu languages are spoken in most of central and southern Africa, and the other Niger-Congo languages are spoken in much of West Africa. Swahili itself is a lingua franca in East Africa: it is the official language of Kenya, an official language of Tanzania, and also spoken in Uganda, Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, and Mozambique. All told, it is spoken by 47,000,000 speakers, mostly as a second language.

Typology!

- Syntactic Typology Course

- A couple of quotes to consider:

- Joos 1957: “[L]anguages [can] differ from each other without limit and in unpredictable ways.”

- [*Readings in Linguistics 1* p. 96]

- Koopman & Sportiche 1991: “[W]e suppose that the null assumption concerning language variation is that it does not exist.”

- [*Lingua* 85 p. 218]

Falk on Typology

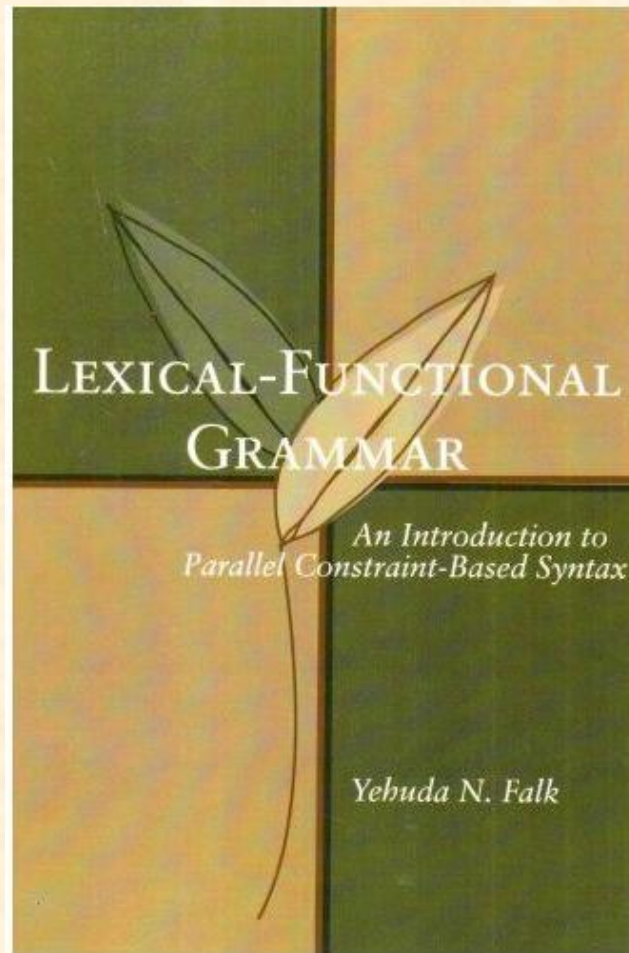
- “We take it to be self-evident that a study of this kind could not be undertaken without a sufficiently broad sample of languages.
- ...We do not believe that *any meaningful typological work can be* accomplished by comparing, say, French and English.
- ...We believe that the correct approach to typology has to rely on **relatively detailed analysis** of a **wide range of languages...**”

(from: Subjects and Universal Grammar: An Explanatory Theory, 2006:220-221)

Syntax!

- Long-distance dependency constructions in a non-transformational constraint-based theoretical framework (ISF 2007-2011)
 - Multiple-gap constructions (parasitic gaps)
 - Relative clauses
 - Resumptive pronouns
 - Islands
- Auxiliaries
- Mixed categories
 - Hebrew present tense copula
 - Hebrew action nominal
- Subjecthood
 - Subjects and Universal Grammar
 - Case
 - Agreement
 - Ergativity

Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG)!

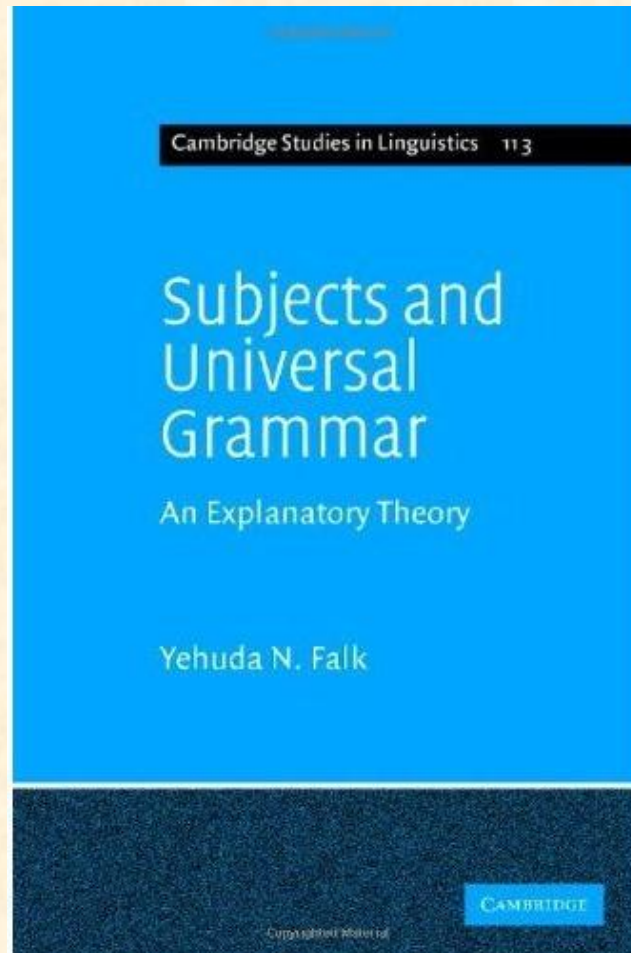


LFG

- Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG) is a non-transformational generative theory of syntax.
- A multidimensional architecture in which constituent structure, grammatical functions, and argument structure are distinct parallel levels of representation.

“I believe that LFG is a typologically more realistic model of language than Government/Binding theory or Minimalism, and thus more likely to represent the nature of the human language faculty.” (From Yehuda’s website)

Subjects and Universal Grammar



Subjects and Universal Grammar

- “Formal accounts tend to be characterized by a disregard for functional factors and often by inadequate cross-linguistic coverage.
- Functionalist and typological accounts are typically based on superficial surveys of languages and disregard the nature of the formal devices involved in syntax.
- A theory of subjects must be formally grounded, functionally aware, and achieve sufficiently broad typological coverage, including all of the types of languages which are potentially problematic.”

West Greenlandic Inuit: A mixed subject language

- S and P are marked with ERG, A marked with ABS
- The **antecedent of a possessive reflexive** can be S or A but not P.
- In control constructions, the **controllee** is S or A, not P.
- In relative clauses S and P are **accessible to extraction**, A is not.
- S and P obligatorily take **wide scope** over sentential operators such as negation, while the A need not.



Tagalog: A Philippine-type Language

Tagalog (Shachter 1987)

- a. Mag- aalis ang tindero ng bigas
ACT- CNTMP.take.out NOM storekeeper ACC rice
sa sako para sa babae.
DAT sack for DAT woman
'The storekeeper will take some rice out of a/the sack for a/the woman.'
- b. Aalis- in ng tindero ang bigas
CNTMP.take.out- DO ERG storekeeper NOM rice
sa sako para sa babae.
DAT sack for DAT woman
'A/The storekeeper will take the rice out of a/the sack for a/the woman.'
- c. Aalis- an ng tindero ng bigas
CNTMP.take.out- IO ERG storekeeper ACC rice
ang sako para sa babae.
NOM sack for DAT woman
'A/The storekeeper will take some rice out of the sack for a/the woman.'
- d. Ipag- aalis ng tindero ng bigas
BEN- CNTMP.take.out ERG storekeeper ACC rice
sa sako ang babae.
DAT sack NOM woman
'A/The storekeeper will take some rice out of a/the sack for the woman.'

Two Types of Subject Properties

- **Type 1 subject properties** (S/A)
 - Agent argument in the active voice
 - Most likely covert/empty argument
 - The addressee of an imperative
 - Anaphoric prominence
 - Switch-reference systems
 - Controlled argument (PRO) (in some languages)
 - Discourse topic
- **Type 2 subject properties** (S/P in syntactically ergative languages; nominative in Philippine-type languages)
 - Shared argument in coordinated clauses
 - Controlled argument (PRO) (in some languages)
 - Raising
 - Extraction properties
 - Obligatory element
 - “External” structural position
 - Definiteness or wide scope

Subjects and Universal Grammar

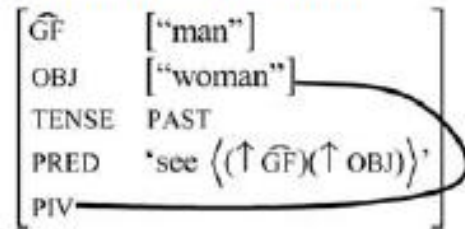
- Two distinct functions:
 - The most prominent argument of the verb (GF); associated with Type 1 properties
 - The element with the function of connecting its clause to other clauses in the sentence (PIV, or PIVOT); associated with Type 2 properties
- In familiar uniform-subject languages the two functions are associated with the same element – the subject.
- In mixed-subject languages these functions are dissociated, resulting in the predictable split of properties that these languages display.

Mixed Subject vs. Uniform-Subject

(10)

Inuit

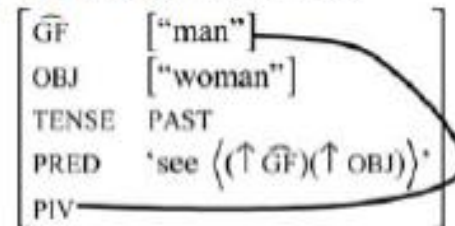
a. Anut- ip arnaq taku- vaa.
man- ERG woman see- IND.3SG.3SG
'The man saw the woman.'



(11)

English

a. The man saw the woman.



Philippine-type Languages

Tagalog (Shachter 1987)

- a. **Mag-** aalis ang tindero ng bigas
ACT- CNTMP.take.out NOM storekeeper ACC rice
 sa sako para sa babae.
 DAT sack for DAT woman
 'The storekeeper will take some rice out of a/the sack for a/the woman.'
- b. **Aalis-** in ng tindero ang bigas
CNTMP.take.out- DO ERG storekeeper **NOM** rice
 sa sako para sa babae.
 DAT sack for DAT woman
 'A/The storekeeper will take the rice out of a/the sack for a/the woman.'
- c. **Aalis-** an ng tindero ng bigas
CNTMP.take.out- IO ERG storekeeper ACC rice
ang sako para sa babae.
NOM sack for DAT woman
 'A/The storekeeper will take some rice out of the sack for a/the woman.'
- d. **Ipag-** aalis ng tindero ng bigas
BEN- CNTMP.take.out ERG storekeeper ACC rice
 sa sako **ang** babae.
 DAT sack **NOM** woman
 'A/The storekeeper will take some rice out of a/the sack for the woman.'

a. *magaalis*: (\uparrow PRED) = 'take-out ((\uparrow GF)(\uparrow OBJ)(\uparrow OBJ_{Source})(\uparrow OBL_{Ben}))'
 (\uparrow TENSE) = CONTEMP
 (\uparrow PIV) = (\uparrow GF)

PRED	'take-out ((\uparrow GF)(\uparrow OBJ)(\uparrow OBJ _{Source})(\uparrow OBL _{Ben}))'
TENSE	CONTEMP
PIV	["storekeeper"]
GF	["rice"]
OBJ	["sack"]
OBJ _{Source}	["woman"]
OBL _{Ben}	

b. *aalisin*: (\uparrow PRED) = 'take-out ((\uparrow GF)(\uparrow OBJ)(\uparrow OBJ_{Source})(\uparrow OBL_{Ben}))'
 (\uparrow TENSE) = CONTEMP
 (\uparrow PIV) = (\uparrow OBJ)

PRED	'take-out ((\uparrow GF)(\uparrow OBJ)(\uparrow OBJ _{Source})(\uparrow OBL _{Ben}))'
TENSE	CONTEMP
PIV	["rice"]
GF	["storekeeper"]
OBJ	["sack"]
OBJ _{Source}	["woman"]
OBL _{Ben}	

c. *aalisan*: (\uparrow PRED) = 'take-out ((\uparrow GF)(\uparrow OBJ)(\uparrow OBJ_{Source})(\uparrow OBL_{Ben}))'
 (\uparrow TENSE) = CONTEMP
 (\uparrow PIV) = (\uparrow OBJ_o)

PRED	'take-out ((\uparrow GF)(\uparrow OBJ)(\uparrow OBJ _{Source})(\uparrow OBL _{Ben}))'
TENSE	CONTEMP
PIV	["sack"]
GF	["storekeeper"]
OBJ	["rice"]
OBJ _{Source}	["woman"]
OBL _{Ben}	

d. *ipagaalis*: (\uparrow PRED) = 'take-out ((\uparrow GF)(\uparrow OBJ)(\uparrow OBJ_{Source})(\uparrow OBL_{Ben}))'
 (\uparrow TENSE) = CONTEMP
 (\uparrow PIV) = (\uparrow OBL_{Ben})

PRED	'take-out ((\uparrow GF)(\uparrow OBJ)(\uparrow OBJ _{Source})(\uparrow OBL _{Ben}))'
TENSE	CONTEMP
PIV	["woman"]
GF	["storekeeper"]
OBJ	["rice"]
OBJ _{Source}	["sack"]
OBL _{Ben}	

Philippine-type Languages (detail)

c. Aalis- an ng tindero ng bigas
 CNTMP.take.out- IO ERG storekeeper ACC rice
 ang sako para sa babae.
 NOM sack for DAT woman
 'A/The storekeeper will take some rice out of the sack for a/the woman.'

c. *aalisan*: (\uparrow PRED) = 'take-out $\langle\langle\uparrow \widehat{GF}\rangle\rangle(\uparrow$ OBJ) $\langle\langle\uparrow$ OBJ_{Source} $\rangle\rangle(\uparrow$ OBL_{Ben}) $\rangle\rangle'$
 (\uparrow TENSE) CONTEMP
 (\uparrow PIV) = (\uparrow OBJ _{θ})

PRED	'take-out $\langle\langle\uparrow \widehat{GF}\rangle\rangle(\uparrow$ OBJ) $\langle\langle\uparrow$ OBJ _{Source} $\rangle\rangle(\uparrow$ OBL _{Ben}) $\rangle\rangle'$
TENSE	CONTEMP
PIV	["sack"]
\widehat{GF}	["storekeeper"]
OBJ	["rice"]
OBJ _{Source}	
OBL _{Ben}	["woman"]

(Subjects and Universal Grammar: An Explanatory Theory, 2006:81-82)

Subjects and Universal Grammar: Conclusion

- “The theory proposed here is based on a formal theory embodying a multidimensional architecture in which constituent structure, grammatical functions, and argument structure are **distinct parallel levels of representation**.
- This kind of theoretical architecture has allowed us to **seriously consider questions of function within a formal syntactic system**, rather than dealing only with formal structure or only with function.
- We have taken the functionality of elements within the formal syntactic system to be the crucial element in understanding the behavior of gf and piv.”

Yehuda N. Falk bibliography

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