
Universals of argument marking in scenario splits and universals of reflexive marking in a functional-adaptive theory of syntax

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In functional-adaptive syntactic theory, an additional type of constraint on possible linguistic systems is posited: Not only representational constraints (of the UG type) can account for limits on attested systems, but functional-adaptive constraints can do so as well. These derive from adaptive processes in the cultural evolution of languages. Scenario splits (situations where the referential prominence values of two arguments need to be taken into account) obey a very general principle, given in (1).

- (1) In a scenario split, downstream scenarios show the shortest marking, upstream scenarios show the longest coding, and balanced scenarios are intermediate.

Rules of reflexive marking also involve relational conditions. One general principle that languages seem to follow is given in (2) (cf. Haspelmath 2008, where a number of further principles are discussed).

- (2) If a language uses a special reflexive pronoun in long-distance contexts, it also uses a special reflexive pronoun in local contexts, but not vice versa.

These universals can be seen as falling under the general principle of form-frequency correspondence, and can thus be explained by coding efficiency (Hawkins's 2014 "Minimize Form").

Literatur: • Haspelmath, Martin. 2008: A frequentist explanation of some universals of reflexive marking. *Linguistic Discovery* 6(1). 40–63. • Hawkins, John A. 2014: *Cross-linguistic variation and efficiency*. New York: Oxford University Press.