

LILEC 2021

Workshop: Doing syntactic typology ...

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Task 3:

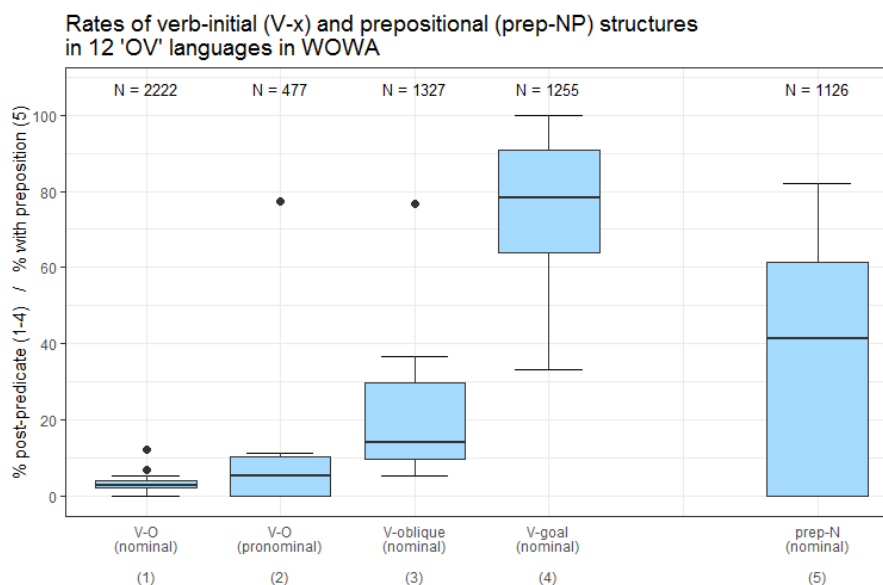
Consider the data summed up in the figure below. They are based on 12 languages that are historically OV (Turkic and Iranian languages).

The dark horizontal bars indicate the median value for each feature; so for V-0 (nominal) the median frequency for **post-verbal objects** in spontaneous spoken discourse for these languages is around 5%. In other words, about 95% of the direct objects (nominal) in these languages are pre-verbal.

The light blue boxes show the dispersion of half the data points around the median (6 languages), and extended whiskers the range of the rest of the data points. One language is an outlier for the first three features (it is the same language in each case); its value lies outside the range of variation that these graphs conventionally capture.

Think about the following questions (you might want to consider the notes on the next page that describes the procedure behind this analysis)

1. What do these data tell us about variability of different verbal arguments in discourse?
2. Why do you think the outlier language might pattern so differently from its relative (Iranian) languages?
3. If we assume that those constituents that are least 'argument-like', and most 'adjunct like' should have the greatest degree of word-order freedom, how can you explain the difference between goals (of verbs of motion and caused motion), and obliques (instruments, place, locations)?
4. Why might the frequency distribution of prepositions in these languages rather different to the measures of objects/verb?



Notes:

Informal formulation of the queries that yielded Figure 1 (refers to the column labels in the coding scheme):

(1) Rates of pre-verbal nominal object:

- role = <do> or <do-def>
- pro = empty cell
- pos = percentage of <1>

(2) Rates of pre-verbal nominal object, pronouns:

- role = <do> or <do-def>
- pro = <1, 2, 3, 4, refl> and only these
- pos = percentage of <1>

(3) Rates of pre-verbal oblique constituents, except goals (see (4))

- role = <abl, addr, ben, instr, loc, rec, rec-ben>
- pro = empty cell
- pos = percentage of <1>

(4) Rates of pre-verbal nominal goals

- role = <goal, goal-c >
- pro = empty cell
- pos = percentage of <1>

(5) Rates of preposition used in contexts where some form of adposition is expected:

- role = <abl, addr, ben, goal, instr, loc, rec, rec-ben>
- anim = excludes <adv>
- pro = empty cell
- pos = percentage of <1>