Typology, type-ology, and extreme languages
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an era of universalizing models
    formal/rationalist/generativist (Chomsky)
        neutral as to speaker vs. hearer but biased toward parsing
    cognitivist/naturalist (Langacker)
        speaker-oriented (speech reflects real-time cognitive processes)

"typology" has been a useful corrective and refuge against this tide
    a welcome institutional cover for fieldwork
        keeping that flame alive in a hostile academic environment (thanks, MPI-EVA!)

but: polarization into "theory" and "description/typology" is ultimately untenable
    to the general public: typology is a starting point for research (e.g. WALS), not a destination
    institutionalized castes of formal/generative, typological, and historical linguists
        boundaries maintained by captive journals, conferences, departments
        socialization: accept "standard assumptions" of a model or face expulsion
    many typologists steer away from contentious "big" issues about the nature of language

previous efforts by typologists to dramatize crosslinguistic variation
    1. OV versus VO
        once claimed to be a major binary split, reverberating across the grammar
    2. ergativity
        claim of "ergative syntax" (Dixon) as a structural mirror image of English
    these turned out not to be master principles, reverberating across grammars
        original binary classifications are now split into multiple subtypes
        many languages cannot be coded on these variables

most typologists have therefore lost interest in integrated grammatical systems
    languages are now broken up into small, quasi-functional domains
        —case-marking, linear order, coordination, reflexives, numerals, etc. etc.
    focus on easily coded variables nested within a specific domain
        almost all typology conferences, books, articles are organized around such domains

parallels with social anthropology of the mid-20th C.
    patri-/matrilineal descent proposed as a ramifying "master principle," but has disappointed
    breakup into discrete domains ("institutions"): kinship, ritual, economics
        structural-functionalism (Radcliffe-Brown)
    Human Relations Area Files = HRAF (the "WALS" of social anthropology)

the role of extreme cases in other fields
    botany: parasitic, subterranean, aquatic, and carnivorous plants
        same dynamics as "normal" plants: nutrients, water, photosynthesis, defences, symbioses
    anthropology: field reports of "promiscuous" and "violent" cultures
        critical assessment, field revisits, second opinions, debunking
    textbooks in such fields are full of extended sections about (real or apparent) outliers
    functional trade-offs

grammatical systems versus low-level typology
 grammar is about interactions, not juxtapositions
 example 1: reflexives and imperatives
  typologists: analyse these separately (domain-specific coding)
  grammarians: how do imperatives interact with reflexivization?
   do covert imperative "subjects" always bind reflexive objects?
 example 2: prosody and NP structure
  typologists: analyse prosodic systems and NP syntax separately
  grammarians: how do prosodic systems interact with NP syntax?
   do adjectives & numerals have identical prosodic interactions with nouns?

the real deal: (non)configurationality
 this is the <u>mother lode</u> of crosslinguistic variation
  it ramifies across the entire grammar and lexicon, unlike ergativity and OV/VO
 it is barely mentioned in typology textbooks and is widely disregarded by typologists
  there are few radically nonconfigurational languages, making statistics and mapping difficult
  many conventional typological features are <u>uncodable</u> in such languages
 if typologists aren't interested in them, why should generativists/cognitivists be?

typology of configurationality
 a) tightly-phrasal languages (most, including English)
 b) chunkily-phrasal languages, e.g. Cambodian/Khmer (Haiman)
  "NP" expressed in separable two-word chunks (mini-phrases)
 c) nonphrasal languages (little or no syntax above word-level)
  i) analytic subtype: (idealized) colloquial Indonesian (Gil)
   speaker utters a string of monomorphemic words
   the listener guesses the clause-level sense from among multiple possibilities
    (rather like reading unpointed Arabic script!)
   a colloquial register, coexisting with phrasal formal/written registers
  ii) polysynthetic subtype: Nunggubuyu (Australia)
   morphologically elaborate words (esp. verbs) but no higher syntax
   no higher register, no escape from nonconfigurationality

ripple effects of nonphrasal grammar
 no clauses
  hence no systematic subject/predicate distinction
  no clausal "tense" requirement
 no multi-word NPs (DPs)
  hence no syntax of (nonaffixal) modifiers/determiners
   adjectives, demonstratives, quantifiers, and numerals have no distinct status
   juxtaposition (apposition) rather than phrasal integration
 recursion as such is not possible
  not merely avoided for cultural reasons (Piraha)
 verb-NP government is not possible (except for pronominal agreement in verbs)
  so no structural case-marking of "subject" and "object" NPs
 no edge-marking for the scope of modal operators (negation, conditional 'if')
  resort to word-level morphological gimmicks to indicate continuing modal scope
 no anaphora
  no reflexives, reciprocals, logophorics outside of verb morphology (intransitivization)
 no imperatives? (should be possible via verb morphology, but absent in Nunggubuyu)

phrasality should be the number-one highlight of crosslinguistic research
    a direct challenge to core assumptions of generative grammar
        but "emergent" two-word proto-phrases occur in discourse
    forces rethinking of the relationship between grammar and "conceptual structure"
        speech draws on, but is not a crystallate of, conceptual structures

sociohistorical typology
    Trudgill on sociolinguistic typology of tightly-knit small-scale societies
        these languages can put heavy <u>processing</u> burdens on listeners in either of two ways:
            a) speech is skeletal, listener must piece together semantic relationships
            b) speech is elaborate, listener must parse complex morphological structures
        cf. colloquial Indonesian (a) and Nunggubuyu (b)
    typology can be integrated into mainstream linguistics by highlighting extreme cases
        but it risks being trampled underfoot in quantitative macro-geographical studies
        "big" is small

which dead ancestor to worship?
    Greenberg?
        open-minded, inductive scientific method
        code traits in a neutral sample of languages, discover statistical correlations
        interpret the results later (with emphasis on "master principle" of markedness)
        in tune methodologically with most recent typology
    Whorf?
        the first cross-linguistically aware cognitive linguist (Gestalt psychology)
        understood functional trade-offs (tense-aspect-mood) and the role of inference
        interested in subtle but widely ramifying language-specific "patterns" (cf. Sapir)
        focus on a few languages that push the envelope
    you pick your hero, I'll pick mine