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From my view, one of the great strengths of early 21st century generative syntax is, in a sense, its diversity. More work—and more prominent work—than ever before is being done on an “interesting” range of languages beyond the usual suspects (Western Indo-European languages, plus Chinese-Japanese-Korean and Hebrew/Arabic). Much as earlier generative work discovered (and continues to discover) tons of interesting and significant generalizations about language that were previously unknown, even unsuspected—extraction patterns, binding patterns, interactions of GF-changing phenomena, restrictions on scopal interpretation—so current work is making similar discoveries about a much wider range of languages, both in these familiar empirical domains and in others. I believe that this stems from generative grammar’s ethos toward being specific and detailed, toward looking at more complex structures, and to studying the way phenomena interact with one another, together with an openness to warranted use of a degree of abstraction in the analysis. These commitments simply do not exist in other approaches to grammar (traditional-descriptive, functionalist). At the same time, our semantics friends have been stepping up to the crosslinguistic plate in increasing numbers, with semantic fieldwork becoming more popular. Combined with some useful newish morphological tools from Distributed Morphology, this means that it is also becoming possible to look at issues involving syntax’s two most obvious interfaces (semantics and morphology) with increasing sophistication in an interesting and appropriately diverse range of languages. It is therefore a good time to be a linguist, and good that we can play our distinctive role in studying endangered languages while they are still with us.

However, despite this increasing knowledge of the syntax of diverse languages from a generative perspective, the paradigm has not made such good progress in cohering a distinctive approach to typology, i.e. larger scale comparison of languages and constructions in terms of their syntactic structure. A survey of papers published in leading journals (*LJ*, *NLLT*, *Syntax*) shows a marked increase in the range of languages discussed, and in the number of languages exemplified per article. Nevertheless, it is still rare for articles to compare in any depth languages from multiple language families and linguistic areas. Rather, it is much more typical either to consider a range of languages from a single family (e.g. Indo-European), or to make a pairwise comparison of a language from one family with a language from another family (e.g., Japanese compared with English). Thus, an article might refer to 6-8 languages, but not typically to 6-8 *unrelated* languages. There is thus something attractive and valuable about the (neo-)Greenbergian vision of typology which we have failed to incorporate into effective generative culture and practice, despite its intellectual attractions and congeniality to generative syntax, at least in its Principles and Parameters guise. It is this quasi-methodological lacuna, rather than any lack of coherence regarding theoretical posits, that concerns me most going forward.

Arguably, the de facto lack of much serious generative syntactic typology weakens the program in several ways. It has made us more vulnerable to attack and controversy (borderline slander) about whether the notion of universal grammar is empirically supported or not. It has detracted from our ability to make serious and credible claims about parameterization and other forms of systematic (as opposed to random) crosslinguistic variation. And it has weakened our claim that the generative paradigm can make valuable contributions to the urgent tasks of language documentation. And so on.

We can debate why a robust generative syntactic typology has been slow to emerge; no doubt the reasons are many. But two of our erstwhile successes may work against us in this respect. One is the minimalist impulse that not only do new syntactic notions need to meet a burden of proof, but they must be held up to a high standard of “virtual conceptual necessity”. The other is the success and attraction of microcomparative syntax, where it is thought that comparing unrelated languages is too hard, and too uncontrolled. In fact, if we hold to a strong and substantive universal grammar, the need to use shared history as a controlling factor is less severe, and indeed comparison does seem possible.