

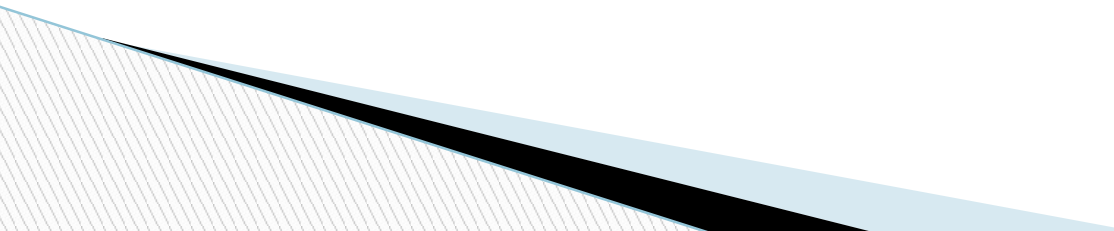
**Presentation**  
**Course: Typology**  
**Topic: Language**  
**universals**

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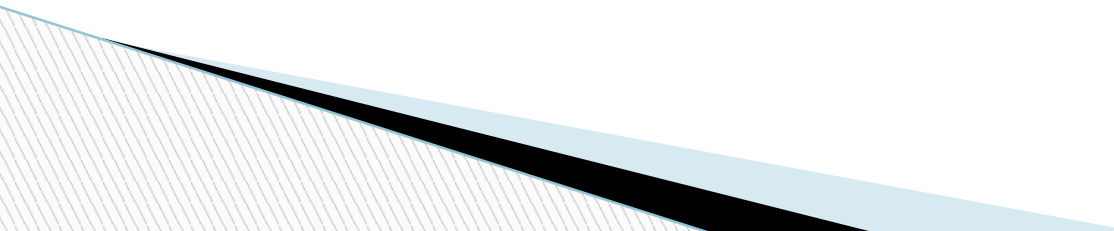
# Plan:

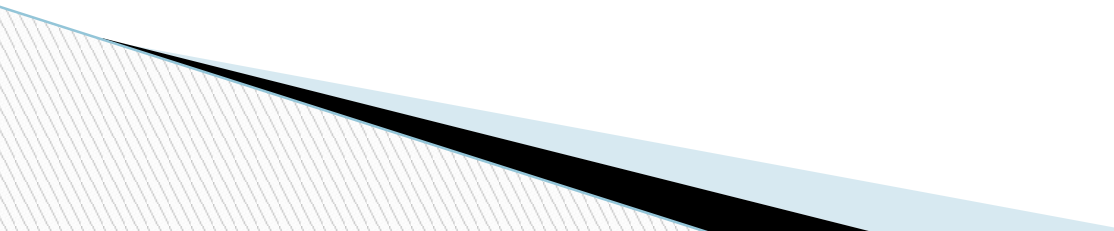
- Structural typology and its branches
  - What is a linguistic universal?
  - Classification of universals
  - Common linguistic universals of all languages
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# Structural typology and its branches.

- The Structural typology is the major branch of Linguistic typology and aims to identify structural language types. The ultimate goal of Structural typology is to identify universal features of languages.
- **The Structural typology has 4 branches:**
  - a) linguistic universals;
  - b) typological classification;
  - c) etalon language;
  - d) typological theory.

# What is a linguistic universal?

- The differences between languages are many. The pronunciation of each word differs from one language to another. The word order also differs, e.g. the verb comes last in the Japanese sentence, first in the Arabic sentence.
  - In spite of all the differences, however, languages still have a lot in common.
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- Most obviously, all languages have sentences that consist of words with a pronunciation and a meaning.
  - In all three languages, the pronunciation may be analyzed into vowels and consonants that combine into syllables
  - . Furthermore, there is agreement about what are the central components of the sentence (Subject- Verb-Object)
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- the features or patterns that are common to human languages in the world
- For example, *All languages have nouns and verbs, or If a language is spoken, it has consonants and vowels.*
- The notion of Linguistic Universals appeared in 1961 at the Congress of Linguists in New York where J. Greenberg, J. Jenkins and I. Osgood proposed a Memorandum on Language/Linguistic Universals". They defined it as follows: "A Linguistic Universal is a certain feature specific to all languages of the world or the language per se."

# Classification of universals

- The universals may be classified according to various principles.
- First, we must make a basic distinction between absolute universals and statistical universals.
- **Absolute universals** refer to properties found in all languages
  - *All languages have vowels and consonants.*
  - *All languages have pronouns.*
- **Statistical universals** reflect important trends that are found in a predominant part of the languages of the world, but not necessarily in all.
  - *Subjects tend strongly to precede objects*
- **An implicational universal** applies to languages with a particular feature that is always accompanied by another feature. If a language has property A, then it also has property B, but not necessarily the other way round.
  - *If a language has voiced fricatives like [v] and [z] (property A), it also has unvoiced fricatives like [f] and [s] (property B).*

# According to language hierarchy there are following types of universals:

- Phonetic
  - all languages have vowels and consonants
- Morphological:
  - in most languages words are structured into morphemes,
  - morphemes function as full and auxiliary elements.
- Lexical:
  - in all languages vocabulary is a system of semantic fields.
  - in all languages there is polysemy, synonymy, antonymy.
- Syntactic:
  - in all languages there is a distribution of a subject-verb- object



# Common Linguistic Universals

- 1. Wherever humans exist, language exists.
- 2. There are no "primitive" languages - all languages are equally complex and equally capable of expressing any idea in the universe. The vocabulary of any language can be expanded to include new words for new concepts.
- 3. All languages change through time.
- 4. The relationship between the sounds and meanings of spoken languages and between the gestures (signs) and meanings of sign languages are for the most part arbitrary.
- 5. All human languages utilize a finite set of discrete sounds (or gestures) **that** are combined to form meaningful elements or words, which themselves form an infinite set of possible sentences

- 6. All grammars contain rules for the formation of words and sentences of a similar kind.
- 7. Every spoken language includes discrete sound segments like p, n, or a, which can be defined by a finite set of sound properties or features. Every spoken language has a class of vowels and a class of consonants.
- 8. Similar grammatical categories (for example, noun, verb) are found in all languages.
- 9. There are semantic universals, such as "male" or "female," "animate" or "human," found in every language in the world.
- 10. Every language has a way of referring to past time, forming questions, issuing commands, and so on.
- 11. Any normal child, born anywhere in the world, of any racial, geographical, social, or economic heritage, is capable learning any language to which he or she is exposed. The differences we find among languages cannot be due to biological reasons.

**Thank you for your  
attention!**

