

Characteristics:

- Restricted application= only true if certain conditions are fulfilled.
- Implicational universals always take the form of “if x, then y”
- Their intention being to find the constant relationships or correlations between two or more properties of language.

Implicational universals are unidirectional, non-reversible

For e.g. if a language is VSO, then it is also prepositional.

Reverse is not true, English is prepositional, but not VSO

In 99% of the languages whose word order has been studied, grammatical subjects precede objects. (Tendency, implicational)

QUIZ: (A or T and I or NI) (99%, whose (not all), most, may, must, is likely to, every, if, all, with overwhelmingly over chance frequency (synonym))

1. Every language has vowels and consonants (Absolute, non-implicational)

2. Every language has SVO as its basic order (Absolute, non-implicational)

3. If a language has only three vowels, they may all be front vowels (Implicational tendency)

4. If a language has stop consonants, they may all be voiced (Implicational tendency)

5. All languages have a pronoun that distinguishes between singular and plural “you” (Absolute, non-implicational)

6. If a language has separate words for “arm” and “hand” it must also have separate words for “leg” and “foot.” (Implicational, Absolute)

7. If a language has the colour red in its inventory, it must also have the colours white and black. (Implicational, Absolute)

Explanations for Language Universals:

Original Language Hypothesis

- All languages of the world derive historically from the same original language. This hypothesis is difficult to support.
- No evidence for or against the hypothesis.
- If the “original” language had been a verb-final language with all the characteristics of SOV languages, for example, how would VSO languages have acquired the regularities that they exhibit today?
- If it was a verb-initial language, how did verb final language develop.
- **(Monogenesis) hard to support (Greenberg trying-Nostratic)**

Universals and Perception

A more likely explanation for language universals is the hypothesis that they are symptoms of how all humans perceive the world and conduct verbal interactions.