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Chapter 1 : Markedness - Wikipedia

Typological Markedness and Second Language Phonology Fred R. Eckman University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Ms. Under consideration for Zampini and Hansen (Eds.).

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Chapter 2 : Philosophical Issues in Eckman () " Let Me Say This About That

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Eckman University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Ms. Under consideration for Zampini and Hansen Eds. Cambridge University Press Direct correspondence to: The primary aim is to give an overview of the role of typological markedness in the explanation of facts about second language L2 phonology. A secondary goal is to explore some of the implications of using such markedness principles to explain facts about L2 phonology. This discussion leads naturally to a consideration of some of the major issues and counter claims surrounding the use of markedness as an explanatory principle in second language acquisition SLA in general, and L2 phonology in particular. The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows. The background section sketches out a brief history of typological markedness, with the following sections discussing the two major hypotheses in SLA that have been formulated around this concept. The treatment of each hypothesis includes a presentation of the kind of evidence that has been adduced in favor of each hypothesis, as well as an evaluation of what the field has gained from the hypothesis and a critical look at what remains to be learned. The discussion then turns to what appears to be a viable future direction for a research program in L2 phonology that incorporates markedness. The final section concludes the chapter. We begin with a brief discussion of the origin of markedness in linguistic theory and its use in SLA. The idea behind this 2 concept was that binary oppositions between certain linguistic representations e. Rather, one member of the opposition was assumed to be privileged in that it had a wider distribution, both within a given language and across languages. Imposing a markedness value on this opposition was one way of characterizing this special status: In the examples cited above, voiceless obstruents, oral vowels and open syllables are all unmarked relative to, respectively, voiced obstruents, nasalized vowels and closed syllables. The last notion, distribution among the languages of the world, where there is an implicational relationship between the occurrence of the members of the opposition, is known as typological markedness, and was developed extensively in the work of Greenberg and can be defined as in 1. Greenberg noted that, in attempting to formulate universal generalizations about human languages, linguists have often found the most insightful statements to be implicational; that is, the most enlightening universals are formulated in terms of typological markedness. To take a concrete example, not all languages have a contrast in voice, and furthermore, if a language exhibits a voice contrast in some environments, it may not exhibit this contrast in all environments. Nevertheless, it is possible to state a universal generalization about the occurrence of a voice contrast in a language if one states this generalization implicationally, as in 2 below. Thus, a language may not evince a voice contrast in any of its utterances; but if a language does have a voice contrast anywhere, it will have it in syllable onset position. In addition to onset position, a language may also have a voice contrast in coda position; but if a language has a voice contrast in codas, it will necessarily have the contrast in onsets. It is this type of thinking that is embodied in the idea of typological markedness. Finally, an important aspect of typological markedness that has made it a particularly useful theoretical tool is that linguists have been able to apply this construct to virtually all kinds of linguistic expressions, including, besides the above phonological examples, lexical, morphological, and syntactic structures, in a number of sub-domains of linguistics. In the next section we focus our attention on the role of markedness in second language phonology, more specifically, we discuss the claim that marked structures are more difficult than the corresponding unmarked structures. We consider each in turn. Whereas the CAH attempted to explain L2 learning difficulty only on the basis of differences between the NL and TL, the MDH claimed that NL-TL differences were necessary for such an explanation, but they were not sufficient; rather, one needed to incorporate typological markedness into the explanation. The hypothesis asserts that, within the areas of difference between the NL and TL, marked structures are more difficult than the corresponding unmarked structures. What follows immediately from this hypothesis is that not all NL-TL differences will

cause equal difficulty. TL structures that are different from the NL but are not related by markedness principles to any other structures are predicted to cause no difficulty, while TL constructions which are related to other representations by markedness principles are predicted to cause learning problems. The degree of difficulty involved is predicted to correspond directly to the relative degree of markedness. Another type of evidence involves markedness being invoked to explain the different degrees of difficulty associated with learners from different NL backgrounds all acquiring the same TL. The third type of evidence in support of the MDH indicates that markedness can predict the relative degree of difficulty associated with the learning of various TL structures. We will discuss examples of each in turn. An example of the first type of evidence, directionality of difficulty, was reported in Moulton , in which the author stated that the difference between German and English involving voice contrasts in syllable codas caused more difficulty for German speakers learning English than it did for English speakers learning German. In word-final position in German, this contrast is neutralized in favor of voiceless obstruents. Moulton stated that, for Germans learning English, acquiring a voice contrast in word-final position was very difficult, whereas for English speakers learning German, the lack of a voice contrast word-finally was not difficult to learn. An example of the second kind of evidence, that deriving from different amounts of difficulty associated with learners from diverse NL backgrounds learning a given TL, comes from, among others, Anderson . Specifically, the existence of an onset cluster of length N in a language implies the occurrence of onset clusters of length $N-1$ in that language, where N is an integer. For example, a language that allows three consonants to cluster in onsets will necessarily allow two-consonant cluster, but not vice versa, and a language that allows biconsonantal onsets will also permit singleton consonants in onsets, but not vice versa. The same principle holds for codas: In sum, longer clusters in onsets and codas are more marked relative to, respectively, shorter clusters in onsets and codas. Additional examples of this kind of support for the MDH were reported in Eckman a; b , in which it was argued that speakers from different NL backgrounds performed differently on voiced obstruents in codas. In this study the author analyzed the production of complex onsets in English by native speakers of Spanish, using a reading task. The findings showed that the subjects modified the complex onsets by inserting an epenthetic vowel, and that the likelihood of a given onset type being modified was a function of the relative degree of markedness of two factors: Another example of this kind of evidence for the MDH comes from a study by Benson , in which she tested the performance of Vietnamese speakers on a number of onset and coda clusters in English. The data were elicited using a reading task in which the subjects produced single words, and the results were in conformity with the predictions of the MDH. First, both the MDH and the CAH make claims about L2 learning difficulty, and second, both hypotheses base their claims about such difficulty, at least in part, on the areas of difference between the NL and TL. We consider each of these issues in turn. The fundamental prediction of the MDH is that linguistic representations in the TL that are both different and more marked than corresponding structures in the NL will cause learning difficulty. The obvious question then becomes how one measures learning difficulty. Although the vast majority of work in L2 phonology has calibrated difficulty in terms of learner errors: However, it has been recognized since the early days of Error Analysis Schachter that learner errors are not the only measure of difficulty, and at times may not even be the most reliable measure. One hypothesis that has attempted to address this question is the Similarity Differential Rate Hypothesis Major and Kim . The central claim of this hypothesis is that rate of acquisition, rather than difficulty, is a more insightful measure of learning than difficulty. As the Similarity Differential Rate Hypothesis is covered extensively by Major this volume , the reader is referred to the chapter by Major, and nothing more will be said about the SDRH here. In this situation, the spirit of the MDH seemed to be invoked, in that more marked structures caused more errors than the corresponding less marked structures, however, the letter of the MDH prevented the hypothesis from making any predictions. That is to say, as stated, the MDH made predictions only when the marked and unmarked structures in question occurred in an area of difference between the NL and TL. If the structures in questions were found in both the NL and TL, then, as stated, the hypothesis made no prediction at all. In both studies it was shown that these L2 learners of English regularly

devoiced word-final obstruents, an error pattern which involved a marked position of contrast, but which occurred in an area in which the NL and TL do not differ. English contains many words which exhibit a 11 voice contrast in word-final obstruents, and both Hungarian and Farsi also have a wordfinal voice contrast in obstruents. In such cases, the MDH would predict that the L2 learners in question would be able to produce TL voice contrasts successfully by virtue of the similarity of such contrasts in the NL; however, this was not the case. Such data are, therefore, exceptional to the MDH in that it is reasonable for the hypothesis to account for these L2 utterances, but instead the errors lie outside the domain of the hypothesis. The second type of fact that the MDH could not address was that it gave no prediction as to the kind of strategy the learner would employ when encountering a particular TL difficulty. The hypothesis could not explain why, in other words, L2 learners altered or simplified the marked structures in the way that they did, rather than in some other way. This point will be addressed below in the section on Future Directions. The reason for this focus may well lie in the fact that the typological generalizations that have been formulated about onsets and codas are relatively robust. As far as the results from these studies are concerned, none of them has uncovered evidence directly falsifying the claim that learners experience more difficulty with more marked structures than they do with corresponding less marked structures, though it is clear that evidence exists that runs counter to the spirit of the MDH, if not the letter. It is this type of evidence that constituted at least part of the motivation for the formulation of an alternative hypothesis, to which we now turn. The Structural Conformity Hypothesis 12 The other hypothesis which invoked typological markedness, or at least the generalizations underlying markedness principles, is the Structural Conformity Hypothesis SCH Eckman , stated as in 4. The primary motivation for the SCH, as argued in Eckman , is an L2 pattern, perhaps, but not necessarily, an error pattern, in which the L2 structures adhere to markedness principles, but the constructions in question are not an area of difference between the NL and TL. One way to address this shortcoming was to eliminate NL-TL differences as a criterion for invoking markedness to explain the L2 learning facts. If we can assume that a learner will perform better on less marked structures relative to more marked structures, then the MDH can be seen as a special case of the SCH, namely, the case in which universal generalizations hold for the IL in question, and the structures for which the generalizations hold are ones in which the NL and TL differ, As stated in 4 , the SCH is not formulated within a particular school of thought on language universals, and therefore would be programmatic with any research program invoking linguistic universals. The hypothesis simply asserts that interlanguages and primary languages are similar in at least one important respect: Each of these studies considered the case of consonant clusters in onsets or codas, where the TL allowed both a greater number of clusters, as well as more marked clusters, than did the NL. In Eckman the data were obtained using several elicitation tasks, including a free-conversation interview, from eleven ESL learners, four speakers each of Japanese and Korean and three speakers of Cantonese. This determination was then used to test the SCH using several universal generalizations about the co-occurrence of consonant cluster types in a language. Out of over five hundred individual tests, the hypothesis was shown to hold in all but five cases. The studies by Carlisle , also tested the occurrence of consonant clusters, but in the interlanguage grammars of Spanish-speaking learners of English. The specific hypotheses tested by Carlisle predicted that more marked clusters that more marked clusters would be modified by the learners more frequently than related clusters that were less marked. The results supported the hypotheses in each case. The findings showed that the learners made more errors on the more marked codas than they did on the less marked ones. As a consequence, the respective IL grammars had the more marked cluster type only if it also exhibited the less marked type. What is common among studies reporting this kind of evidence in support of the SCH is that in each instance the IL grammars contained cluster types that were more complex than those allowed by the NL, but not as complex as those required by the TL. In this respect, the IL grammars fell between the NL and TL, but always did so in a way that was in conformity with the applicable universal generalizations³. Having presented the kind of evidence adduced in support of the SCH, we now turn to the major methodological issue that has been raised with respect to this hypothesis, namely, whether it constitutes an explanation for the facts in question. Issues

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surrounding the Structural Conformity Hypothesis Despite the accounts given in the previous section claiming that the SCH has given an explanation for a number of different facts about L2 phonology, it seems that some researchers in SLA have taken the position that markedness, in general, and the SCH, in particular, are not viable explanatory principles. There appear to be at least two arguments given for this position. The first is that markedness itself is simply a fact to be explained, and as such does not offer an explanation. This position is taken by Archibald. All in all, I prefer to assume some sort of structural explanation. First, one must understand why a universal is a universal. It is not sufficient to state that second languages obey natural language constraints because that is the way languages are. This only pushes the problem of explanation back one step. The important point that both of these criticisms miss is this: To debate whether a generalization is a description or an explanation is to debate the level of explanation, not whether an explanation has been given. Our goal will be to show that the accounts offered by markedness principles and the SCH for facts about L2 phonology do in fact constitute explanations⁴. Scientists explain facts about the world by subsuming them under general laws. To take a concrete example, how do scientists explain that a rod or stick looks bent when it is partially submerged in a container of water?

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Typological markedness and second language phonology. Fred Eckman Phonetic and Phonological Factors in the Second Language Production of Phonemes and Phonotactics.

Thus, a morphologically negative word form is marked as opposed to a positive one: Similarly, unaffixed masculine or singular forms are taken to be unmarked in contrast to affixed feminine or plural forms: An unmarked form is also a default form. For example, the unmarked lion can refer to a male or female, while lioness is marked because it can refer only to females. The default nature allows unmarked lexical forms to be identified even when the opposites are not morphologically related. For example, English speakers typically ask how old, big, happy, or clean something or someone is; use of the marked term how young are you?

Background in the Prague School[edit] While the idea of linguistic asymmetry predated the actual coining of the terms marked and unmarked, the modern concept of markedness originated in the Prague School structuralism of Roman Jakobson and Nikolai Trubetzkoy as a means of characterizing binary oppositions. Edwin Battistella said "Binarism suggests symmetry and equivalence in linguistic analysis ; markedness adds the idea of hierarchy. For Jakobson and Trubetzkoy, binary phonological features formed part of a universal feature alphabet applicable to all languages. In his article "Structure of the Russian Verb", Jakobson extended the concept to grammatical meanings in which the marked element "announces the existence of [some meaning] A" while the unmarked element "does not announce the existence of A, i. Drawing on existing studies of acquisition and aphasia , Jakobson suggested a mirror-image relationship determined by a universal feature hierarchy of marked and unmarked oppositions. Other semiotically-oriented work has investigated the isomorphism of form and meaning with less emphasis on invariance, including the efforts of Henning Andersen, Michael Shapiro, and Edwin Battistella. Shapiro and Andrews have especially made connections between the semiotic of C. Willi Mayerthaler, another linguist, for example, defines unmarked categories as those "in agreement with the typical attributes of the speaker". What is more marked in some general contexts may be less marked in other local contexts. Thus, "ant" is less marked than "ants" on the morphological level, but on the semantic and frequency levels it may be more marked since ants are more often encountered many at once than one at a time. Often a more general markedness relation may be reversed in a particular context. Thus, voicelessness of consonants is typically unmarked. But between vowels or in the neighborhood of voiced consonants, voicing may be the expected or unmarked value. However, a number of words instead reform the singular by extending the form of the plural: Greenberg took frequency to be the primary determining factor of markedness in grammar and suggested that unmarked categories could be determined by "the frequency of association of things in the real world". Greenberg also applied frequency cross-linguistically, suggesting that unmarked categories would be those that are unmarked in a wide number of languages. However, critics have argued that frequency is problematic because categories that are cross-linguistically infrequent may have a high distribution in a particular language. This entails that a category is taken as marked if every language that has the marked category also has the unmarked one but not vice versa. Diagnostics[edit] Markedness has been extended and reshaped over the past century and reflects a range of loosely connected theoretical approaches. From emerging in the analysis of binary oppositions, it has become a global semiotic principle, a means of encoding naturalness and language universals, and a terminology for studying defaults and preferences in language acquisition. What connects various approaches is a concern for the evaluation of linguistic structure, though the details of how markedness is determined and what its implications and diagnostics are varies widely. Other approaches to universal markedness relations focus on functional economic and iconic motivations, tying recurring symmetries to properties of communication channels and communication events. Croft , for example, notes that asymmetries among linguistic elements may be explainable in terms economy of form, in terms of iconism between the structure of language and conceptualization of the world. In *The Sound Pattern of English*, the value of a grammar was the

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inverse of the number of features required in that grammar. However, Chomsky and Halle realized that their initial approach to phonological features made implausible rules and segment inventories as highly valued as natural ones. The unmarked value of a feature was cost-free with respect to the evaluation metric, while the marked feature values were counted by the metric. Segment inventories could also be evaluated according to the number of marked features. However, the use of phonological markedness as part of the evaluation metric was never able to fully account for the fact that some features are more likely than others or for the fact that phonological systems must have a certain minimal complexity and symmetry [19] In generative syntax, markedness as feature-evaluation did not receive the same attention that it did in phonology. Chomsky came to view unmarked properties as an innate preference structure based first in constraints and later in parameters of universal grammar. An actual language is determined by fixing the parameters of core grammar and then adding rules or conditions, using much richer resources. These added properties of grammars we may think of as the syntactic analogue of irregular verbs. The distinction between core and periphery leaves us with three notions of markedness: The second has to do with the way parameters are set in the absence of evidence. As for the third, there are, no doubt, significant regularities even in departures from the core principles for example, in irregular verb morphology in English, and it may be that peripheral constructions are related to the core in systematic ways, say by relaxing certain conditions of core grammar.

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The use of typological markedness conditions as predictors in second language acquisition: The case of pronominal copies in relative clauses. In Andersen, R. (Ed.), Second languages: A cross-linguistic perspective (pp. 39 - 58).