1. Introduction

In recent years, a number of linguists have taken a renewed interest in describing and analyzing Haida. Since Swanton's investigations in the early twentieth century, little work had been done and Haida had been considered likely to be a Na-Dene language based on the limited amount of data available. In 1965, Krauss observed that not only was Haida less well-known than the other members of a Na-Dene group (Tlingit, Athapaskan, Eyak) "but also it appears that Haida has evolved in this respect to the point where it shows only vestiges of the structure still well-preserved in Athapaskan and especially in Eyak and Tlingit." (p. 19)

One structural feature shared by purported Na-Dene languages is constituent word order. Swanton's description of Haida (1911) was the basis of Sapir's (1915) attempt to classify Haida as genetically related to Tlingit and other Athapaskan languages. In typologically classifying Haida as Na-Dene, the ordering of subject and object with respect to the verb was considered significant. Levine (1976:8) cites...
a claim by Hymes that the object precedes the subject pronoun in Haida but seems to ignore the position of the subject when it is a noun. It is said that Na-Dene languages all exhibit OSV word order and it would appear, at first glance, that in terms of syntactic categories, the basic order typology in Haida is OSV, e.g.,

(1) chin hl taagang
   fish I eat + present
   0 S V

However, Swanton (1911:267) clearly indicates that constituent order is largely determined by the nominal or pronominal status of the subject:

   When the subject and object of the verb are nouns, the former precedes; when they are pronouns, the order is reversed. A third pronominal object is followed by one of the connectives, and is placed before the other personal pronouns. When nouns and pronouns are both used as subjects or objects, the pronouns usually stand nearest to the verb, and exceptions to this are usually for emphasis.

It is the purpose of this paper to examine constituent order in Haida to see what, if any, basic order typology obtains in the language.1

1. Constituent Order and Sentence Types

   Sentence (1) above serves as an example of OSV constituent order in Haida. In that sentence, it is important to note that the object is a noun (chin 'fish') and the subject a pronoun (hl 'I').

   In accord with Swanton's analysis we see here an instance of his "rule" that "when nouns and pronouns are both used as subjects and objects, the pronouns usually stand nearest to the verb...". The next three examples illustrate this same point:2

   (2) xagyaas 1 daawaang
       dog a they have + present
       0 S V

   (3) ja'aang hl ttigan
       wife my I kill + past
       0 S V

   Swanton's "rule" also accounts as well for

   (4) dii kaa 1 ttigan
       my uncle him kill + past
       S 0 V

   insofar as the pronoun stands "nearest to the verb". Leer (1977:147) observed that "...if there are both subject and object pronouns, the object pronoun precedes the subject pronoun and they both precede the verb". According to this analysis, position of pronouns in a sentence with respect to the verb determines which is the sentential subject and which the sentential object. Consider the following example which bears this out:

   "BI: Pronominal elements only"
   "I discussed Na-Dene hypotheses"
Welsch (1975) documented both an OSV and SOV word order in sentences where both subject and object are pronouns. His analysis involved distinguishing pronouns as emphatic or declarative. This calls to mind Swanton's claim that, with regard to his "rule", "exceptions to this are usually for emphasis." Similarly, Leer noted an exception, which we will see to be related, when he stated:

...the independent subject pronouns and the independent object pronouns...are used at the beginning of a sentence followed by the initial phrase marker uu. An independent pronoun is actually a form of the subject or object pronoun which is used outside the verb phrase. (1977:72)

1.1 Topicalization

Edwards (1978) provides an analysis of the function and meaning of topicalization in Haida in relation to the ordering of elements. She concludes that linear ordering in Haida with respect to grammatical categories (such as S,V,O) is less important than 1) classification of each ordered element as noun or pronoun and 2) the communicative importance of ordered elements. Welsch's emphatic pronouns and Leer's pronouns "followed by the initial phrase marker uu" are also analyzable as pronouns plus topic-marking particles in this sense.

In Haida, whatever is topicalized in a sentence is preposed to sentence initial position. For our purposes here, in analyzing linear word or constituent order in the language, it is sufficient to point out that regardless of whether an element is a subject or object, noun or pronoun, if it is marked as a topic, it is sentence initial. But, non-topicalized sentence elements often do conform to Swanton's "rule". In the analysis to be presented here, we will consider whether or not it is useful to look at constituent order in Haida in terms of such a "rule" at all.

The following sentences illustrate various sentence types in the language:

(5) laa 1 tiigan he killed her.
   her he kill + past
   O  S  V

(6) hlaau xyaligang I am dancing.
   1 + Topic dance + present
   hlaau = hlaa (I-active) + uu (Topic)
   cf. Welsch laa, Leer hlaa uu.

(7) nang fihlingaas sabllu tasaayk guulaagank
   the man bread to the like + present +
   eat + def. definite
   S  O  V

   The man likes to eat bread.

(8) sabllu uu tasaayk nang fihlingaas guulaagank
   bread Topic to the man like + present +
   eat + def. definite
   S  O  V

   The man likes to eat bread. (i.e., bread is the type of-eating the man likes//the man likes eating when the "topic" of eating is bread.)
In sentence (8), *sablii* 'bread' is marked as the topic (uu) and is therefore sentence initial. In sentence (9) the object is a nominal (i.e., NP consisting of a verbal noun + object noun) *sablii t'aagaayk* 'bread-eating' or 'to eat bread' while the subject is a pronoun 's/he' and the expectation of Swanton's "rule" is met since the pronoun occurs closest to the verb. The same situation occurs in (10). In (7) both the subject and object are NPs and there is no topic-marking with a resultant order of SOV. Eastman, et al. (1975:97) claimed that nominal subjects and objects like pronominal subjects and objects reflect both an SOV and OSV constituent order depending on "whether they are emphatic or declarative.

Thus, if nominal subjects are topicalized, they precede objects, if nominal objects are topicalized, they precede subjects.

In (11) the subject is a nominal and is topicalized and is in initial position. In (8) and (12) the object is topicalized and, as a result, the constituent order is OSV.

1.2 Non-topicalized Nominal Subjects and Objects

When neither the subject or object are marked for topic as in (7) above, how is sentence interpretation accomplished? So far, our analysis upholds Swanton's "rule" in its claim that the relative ordering of subject and object in Haida depends on their nominal (whether N or NP) or pronominal status and/or emphasis. It remains to see whether (7) above represents the "rule" when neither subjects nor objects are topicalized. That is, is the basic order when subjects and objects are both nouns (or noun phrases) or both pronouns, SOV? What is the constituent order in sentences with adjuncts which are neither nominal or pronominal (e.g., with prepositional phrases or adverbial phrases)?

Swanton predicted that where both subject and object are both nominals or both pronouns and not emphasized, the subject would always come first. As pointed out by Edwards (1978), this is not always the case.
(13) laa 1 tiigan
her/him s/he kill + past
O S V
s/he killed him/her.

It appears that with pronouns the rule is OSV. Object pronouns
precede subject pronouns when both occur in the same sentence. This
may be unambiguously illustrated by (14)

(14) laa hl tiigan
him/her I kill + past
O S V
I killed him/her.

In contrast, there appears to be no "rule" for constituent order
when both subject and object are nominals. Sentences (15)-(18) are
further examples.

(15) yaalaay skaangway itisdang
the raven the stick take + pres.
S O V
The raven is taking the stick.

(16) Joe Lil aan chii ipactkaagan
Joe Lil or fish bring + past
S O V
fish for Lil" (fish shape)
Joe brought Lil a fish.

(17) nang jaadas Fred tiigan
the woman Fred kill + past
O S V
The woman killed Fred.

(18) Fred nang jaadas tiigan.
Fred the woman kill + past
O S V
Fred killed the woman.

(19) nang iihlingas kiiksgaay ta'aasaan
the man the cake eat + fut.
S O V
The man will eat the cake.

(20) kiiksgaay nang iihlingas ta'aasaan
the cake the man eat + fut.
S O V
The man will eat the cake.

(19) and (20) illustrate that where interpretation will produce
semantic anomaly, there is no ambiguity occasioned by free ordering
of subject and object nominals before a verb. That is, both sentences
"mean" that 'The man will eat the cake' since neither can "mean" 'The
cake will eat the man'. (17) and (18), on the other hand, indicate that
free constituent order in non-semantically anomalous sentences yields
both syntactic and semantic ambiguity.

In the absence of topic-marking particles, then, and where context
cannot differentiate subject from object, ambiguity such as in (17) and
(18) can only be dissolved by means of prior knowledge of the hearer
(hearer presupposition, i.e., the hearer knows or can presuppose who
is dead - Fred or the woman). When non-semantically anomalous yet
syntactically ambiguous sentences such as (17) and (18) contain ele­
ments which are topicalized, the fact of topic-marking triggers an
additional rule which eliminates the syntactic ambiguity:

(21) Fred uu nang jaadas tiigan
Fred Topic the woman kill + past
O S V
The woman killed Fred.

(22) nang jaadas uu Fred tiigan
the woman Topic Fred kill + past
O S V
Fred killed the woman.

Although Edwards (1978) observes that, in general, there is a
"tendency to keep the subject near the verb", what happens if the
subject is topicalized for emphasis?
(23) nang jaadas uu Fred 1 tiigan The woman killed Fred.
the woman Topic Fred she kill + past

Literally (23) translates into English as 'The woman (is who) it is, she killed Fred.' Here we see that when the subject is topicalized, it moves out of the sentence and is coreferential with an anaphoric pronominal subject. The anaphoric pronominal subject, then, conforms to the "rule" yielding OSV order (since the sentential subject is now a pronoun) and preserves the tendency to keep the subject near the verb.

Likewise, when neither subjects nor objects per se are topicalized, the elements that are topicalized are sentence initial yet outside the range of any constituent order "rule" affecting subjects and objects. Sentence (24) illustrates this.

(24) kalk'aau tablegaay unk flowersgaay lijang the vase + ia + Topic the table on+ the flowers be + present def.
The flowers are in the vase on the table.
(lit. In the vase (is where) the flowers are on the table)
In the vase (topic) on the table (sentential object)
the flowers (subject) are (verb)
So, this utterance in Haida might be looked at as consisting of a Topic (In the vase) + an OSV element (the flowers are on the table).

2. Constituent Order and Topic Prominence

In the preceding section, we saw that whenever a constituent of a sentence is topicalized in Haida - regardless of the syntactic function of that constituent as subject or object, that constituent occurs in sentence initial position. When topicalization does not occur, the object generally precedes the subject and both precede the verb, i.e., OSV order is the "rule". But, despite a clear tendency in the language for subjects to be near the verb, it may be the case that the distinction of subject and object is not useful in considering constituent typology in the language. Since not only grammatical objects are topicalized in Haida and since other constituents can appear in initial position, it is not sufficient to conclude that OSV is the basic order typology. So doing implies a predominance of object-initial utterances in the language and this is plainly not the case. Likewise SOV cannot be considered basic since, though subjects can occur initially when topicalized or when nominal and accompanied by pronominal objects, one cannot say that an SOV constituent order prevails.

In contrast, it is suggested here that an alternative approach to the question of word order in Haida based on the function of meaningful elements in sentences will solve a number of descriptive problems and also characterize the language in such a way that
productive comparisons may be made between it and other Northwest Coast languages. The typology of Haida as OSV is functionally analyzable to encompass apparent counter examples if we consider that a sentence's topic, whatever its morphological or syntactic composition may be, is the sentence initial element obligatorily. Where topic marking does not occur overtly, there is a tendency when both grammatical subjects and objects are nouns for an OSV order to occur more frequently. Still speaker intent may alter the order such that context and/or hearer's logical presuppositions may account for interpretability.

In an analysis of Haida word order, the sentence, considered linearly, consists of:

\[
\text{[Topic (a discourse category)] + NP (a syntactic category)} + \text{Verb (VP, a syntactic category)}
\]

NP here includes nominals, pronominals, noun phrases, whether subject or object, in relation to the verb. Adverbial and locative phrases that occur as grammatical objects or subjects also fit in here. Every sentence employs an optional Topic and an obligatory NP and Verb. In sentences where no element is emphasized or where there is nothing contrastive or of striking communicative importance (Edwards, 1978: Introduction), no element will be topicalized and either an OSV or SOV order will occur in general concurrence with Swanton's "rule". Still, the syntactically ambiguous unmarked order

In sentences with nominal subjects and objects will rely on context and/or presupposition for interpretation.

In Edwards' analysis of topic and topic marking particles topicalization is considered to be a process which "...preposes a sentence element for the purpose of focus or contrast" (p. 4-5). When a language uses topicalization more frequently than any other process it is said to be topic prominent (Li & Thompson, 1976). The evidence presented here seems to indicate that Haida is best analyzed as Topic Prominent rather than as having a particular dominant constituent order. 5

3. Conclusion

In the Introduction to this paper, we observed that Haida is usually considered to have a basic order typology of OSV and that this is one of the few features that involve its continued yet increasingly unlikely inclusion in the Na-Dene hypothesis. Levine (1976) in reviewing the evidence for Haida as Na-Dene states that it is his current view, and that also held by Krauss, that "Haida cannot be shown to be a Na-Dene language". At most, Levine contends, common points of Na-Dene affiliation are 1) they all contain post positions which enter into construction with each other, 2) they all have a neuter/active distinction in the verb which is reflected pronominally" and 3) they all have OSV constituent order.
Among the world's languages an OSV order of meaningful elements constitutes a rare type. Greenberg (1966) cites no cases of languages with such a basic order typology. His proposed language universal #1 states:

In declarative sentences with nominal subject and object, the dominant order is almost always one in which the subject precedes the object. (p.77)

So, if analyzed as an OSV language, Haida would deviate from the proposed universal dominant order of subjects and objects (in its tendency for subjects to precede the verb) and also be unusual as a verb-final language. Since it is not possible to demonstrate that an OSV order predominates in Haida given the preponderance of utterances containing initial elements with topic-markers and given the tolerance of syntactic and semantic ambiguity with respect to subject/object order, little utility will be gained by considering the language as having a basic order typology as OSV.

We have shown here that Swanton's "rule" for ordering constituents in Haida with respect to the verb does not apply when both subjects and objects are nominals. Though syntactic ambiguity occurs, there is a preference for subjects to follow objects rather than precede them. Thus, nominal order does not reverse pronominal order but parallels it. It is the case that "when nouns and pronouns are both used as subjects or objects the pronouns usually stand nearest to the verb except when topicalization occurs."

Swanton's proposed "rule" also addresses the effect on constituent order when there is an added pronominal object. Consider sentence (25):

(25) laa dii aan l tiigan her me for he kill+past

He killed her for me.

Here the added pronominal object behaves in accord with Swanton's prediction in that it "is followed by one of the connectives" (aan 'for') but it is not "placed before the other personal pronouns" unless, of course, it is topicalized;

(26) dii aan uu laa l tiigan me for Topic her he kill+past

He killed her for me. (lit., for me is 'why' he killed her)

Sentence (27), a variant of (25), however, indicates that untopicalized added pronominal objects actually may be placed before the other personal pronouns as Swanton expected.

(27) dii aan laa l tiigan me for her he kill+past

He killed her for me. (i.e., added pronominal objects may precede or follow other pronominal objects. Ambiguity does not occur since the extra (indirect object) pronoun is the one with a connective after it regardless of where it occurs in the utterance.)

Thus, from this analysis, it is claimed that Haida is a topic-prominent language in which a Sentence is analyzed as (Topic) + Comment. The concept of Comment entails constituent order in accord
with an elaborated and modified version of Swanton's "rule". That is, in the syntactically independent unit analyzed as Comment; when the subject and object of the verb are nouns, objects may precede subjects and subjects may precede objects; when they are pronouns, objects precede subjects. A third pronominal object is followed by one of the connectives, and is placed either before the other personal pronouns or after the object pronoun (necessarily before the subject pronoun to preserve the tendency for subject pronouns to stand nearest to the verb). When nouns and pronouns are both used as subjects or objects, the pronouns usually stand nearest to the verb.

Exceptions to this "rule" are usually occasioned by the process of topicalization or, as Swanton stated it, "exceptions to this are usually for emphasis" (1911:267).

To illustrate, Sentence (26) may be analyzed as:

a) Topic
dii aan uu 'for me'

b) Comment
laa l tigsn
her he kill + past
0 5 V

Any constituent may be topicalized and a sentence comment may stand alone and involve either OSV or SOV constituent order. Haida as a topic-prominent language may best be analyzed as having no one basic order typeology in terms of the order of meaningful elements in sentences - even though both an SOV and OSV order are common.

Notes

1 I wish to thank Ms. Lillian Pettville for serving as the Haida language consultant for this paper. Partial support for this research was provided by a grant for consultant fees from the Melville and Elizabeth Jacobs Foundation (Summer, 1977), Whatcom County Museum.

2 The orthography used for the Haida examples in this paper is that used by Edwards (1977) and (1978), a modified form of the Practical Orthography used in the Haida Language Workshop, Ketchikan, Alaska.

3 It may be that the element placed first by the speaker is considered more important for communicational ends than that which comes next even though the hearer is faced with grammatical and semantic problems of interpretation when there is no overt marking. Edwards (1978) explores this idea using the concept of foregrounding.

4 Edwards (1978) considers what happens when more than one constituent is topicalized in a sentence and points to further possibilities for research on this question.

5 In examining topic-marking in Haida, Edwards (1978) considers the implication such an analysis has for the notions of subject and object in a "functional" framework. Since the concern in this paper is with constituent order in general, we need only note that, in considering Haida as topic-prominent, the notion of grammatical subject "is not crucial to
the order of elements in the sentence and the logical subject and object figure in selectional restrictions on the verb. In this framework, a sentence is considered as consisting of (Topic) + Comment where the Comment may be syntactically independent (i.e. consist of NP + VP). (cf. Sgall et al., 1973).

Sources


Topic Marking in Haida

Elizabeth A. Edwards

University of Washington

0. Introduction

On-going analysis of the role of some post-positional particles in Haida indicates that topic marking and topic-prominence are important in the organization of this language.

Topicalization refers to a process whereby sentence elements are placed at the front of the sentence for the purpose of focus or contrast. Some languages employ topicalization more than others and are said to be topic-prominent languages (Li & Thompson 1976). Chinese is the time-honored example of a topic-prominent language.

The topic in Haida will be assumed to be any sentence-initial element (a word or phrase) marked with a topic marking particle. Initial elements without such particles will be said to be