

Word order

Here's an English sentence...

Marie has discovered radium.

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Marie has discovered radium.

some reorderings of this sentence would make it ungrammatical:

***Marie discovered radium has.**

***Marie has radium discovered.**

***has discovered Marie radium.**

...

Here's an English sentence...

Marie has discovered radium.

some reorderings of this sentence would make it ungrammatical:

***Marie discovered radium has.**

***Marie has radium discovered.**

***has discovered Marie radium.**

Others are grammatical, but mean different things, or just emphasize different parts of the sentence:

#radium has discovered Marie.

radium, Marie has discovered.

Languages vary in their word order...

Marie **has** **discovered** **radium.**

1 2 3

...da **Jan** **wilt** **een huis** **kopen.** [West Flemish]

1 3 2

...dass **Johann** **das** **Buch** **gelesen** **hat.** [German]

3 2 1

...dat **Jan** **het boek** **wil** **lezen.** [Dutch]

3 1 2

...þæt **æ****nig** **mon** **atellan** **mæge** **þ****one demm.**

2 1 3 [Old English]

Languages vary in their word order...

...but not without limit!

Marie has discovered radium.

1 2 3

...da Jan wilt een huis kopen. [*West Flemish*]

1 3 2

...dass Johann das Buch gelesen hat. [*German*]

3 2 1

...dat Jan het boek wil lezen. [*Dutch*]

3 1 2

...þæt ænig mon atellan mæge þone demm.

2 1 3 [*Old English*]

...that Marie discovered radium has.

2 3 1

[*NO LANGUAGE ANYWHERE ON EARTH!!!!*]

Languages vary in their word order...

We've been ignoring **subjects** (*Marie*).

Where can subjects go?

Languages vary in their word order...

We've been ignoring **subjects (*Marie*)**.

Where can subjects go? WALS data:

SOV	48%	
SVO	41%	
VSO	8%	
VOS	2%	
OVS	1%	
OSV	<1%	(4/1188 in the sample)

Languages vary in their word order...

We've been ignoring **subjects** (*Marie*).

Where can subjects go? WALS data:

SOV	48%	John-ga tegami-o yonda.	[<i>Japanese</i>]
SVO	41%	John read the letter	[<i>English</i>]
VSO	8%	Léann na sagairt na leabhair	[<i>Irish</i>]
VOS	2%	Irino vakhe ina-gu	[<i>Nias</i>]
OVS	1%	Toto yahosiye kamara	[<i>Hixkaryana</i>]
OSV	<1%	Awad kalapée hapúh	[<i>Nadëb</i>]

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(translations:)

‘John read the letter’	(<i>Japanese</i>)
‘John read the letter’	(<i>English</i>)
‘The priests are reading the books’	(<i>Irish</i>)
‘My mother cooked rice’	(<i>Nias</i>)
‘The jaguar grabbed the man’	(<i>Hixkaryana</i>)
‘The child sees the jaguar’	(<i>Nadëb</i>)

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(recall that Klingon is like Hixkaryana ...)

tera'ngan legh **tlhIngan** 'The **Klingon** sees **the human**'

Side note about Hixkaryana...

Toto yahosiye **kamara**

man grabbed **jaguar**

‘The jaguar grabbed the man’

Side note about Hixkaryana...

Toto yahosiye **kamara**

man grabbed **jaguar**

‘The jaguar grabbed the man’

biryekomo komo yonyetxkoni **kamara** [**txetxa wawo**] [**amnyehra**]

child ate **jaguar** **in.the.forest** **long.ago**

‘The jaguar used to eat children **in the forest long ago**’

Side note about Hixkaryana...

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man grabbed **jaguar**

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child ate **jaguar in.the.forest long.ago**

‘The jaguar used to eat children **in the forest long ago**’

(Klingon is not like this...)

Sometimes languages have options.

Japanese (**SOV**)

Taroo-kun-wa natto-o tabeta.

‘Taro ate natto’

Tagalog (**VSO**)

Kumain **si Juan ng balut**.

‘Juan ate balut’

Sometimes languages have options.

Japanese (SOV)

Taroo-kun-wa **natto-o** tabeta.
natto-o **Taroo-kun-wa** tabeta.
‘Taro ate natto’

Tagalog (VSO)

Kumain **si Juan** **ng balut**.
Kumain **ng balut** **si Juan**.
‘Juan ate balut’

Sometimes languages have options....

...but often there are limits.

Japanese (**SOV**)

Taroo-kun-wa **nattoo-o** tabeta.

?* tabeta **T-kun-wa** **nattoo-o**

nattoo-o **Taroo-kun-wa** tabeta.

‘Taro ate natto’

Tagalog (**VSO**)

Kumain **si Juan** **ng balut**.

* **Si Juan** **ng balut** kumain

Kumain **ng balut** **si Juan**.

‘Juan ate balut’

Prepositions...

Taro ate the natto **with** a knife.

Prepositions...

...and Postpositions.

Taro ate the natto **with** a knife.

Taroo-kun-wa nattoo-o naifu-**de** tabeta. (*Japanese*)

(WALS: about 53% postpositions, 47% prepositions)

Adjectives

big house

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dēk mənū? (*Temiar*)

Adjectives

big house

dēk mənū? (*Temiar*)

malaking bahay (*Tagalog*)
bahay **na malaki**

Adjectives

(*WALS*)

27% **big** house

65% **dēk mənū?** (*Temiar*)

8% **malaking** bahay (*Tagalog*)
bahay **na malaki**

Embedded clauses

Taro thinks [**that** natto is tasty] (*complementizer*)

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Taroo-kun-wa [nattoo-ga oisii **to**] omou. (*Japanese*)

CheleTa Suneche [**je** or baba aSbe] (*Bangla*)
the.boy heard that his father will.come

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Bangla is mostly SOV...

KriSno hEmleT poRlo.
Krishna Hamlet read
'Krishna read Hamlet'

Embedded clauses

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the.boy heard that his father will.come

CheleTa [or baba aSbe **bole**] Suneche.

Bangla is mostly SOV...

very common for embedded clauses

KriSno hEmleT poRlo. **to be ‘on the edge’**
Krishna Hamlet read **of the main clause.**
‘Krishna read Hamlet’

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