

## High Valyrian - Greenberg's (1966) Universals and Chomsky's (1981) Binding

### Theory

Greenberg (1966: 110-113) names 45 language universals of natural languages which - as language universals in general (Comrie 1989: 19) - can be categorized into absolute universals (1b) and tendencies (1a). Following Comrie (1989: 17), a second distinction must be made: Implicational universals imply that 'a given property must, or can only, be present if some other property is also present' (1a) whereas non-implicational universals apply independently to any other property (1b).

- (1) a. Universal 1: 'In declarative sentences with nominal subject and object, the order is almost always one in which the subject precedes the object.'

(Greenberg 1966: 110)

- b. Universal 36: 'A language never has more gender categories in nonsingular [sic!] than in singular.'

(Greenberg 1966: 112)

Chomsky (1981) proposes the Binding Theory (2).

(2) **Binding Theory**

**Principle A**

An anaphor must be bound in its governing category.  
The term anaphor covers reflexives and reciprocals.

**Principle B**

A pronoun must be free in its governing category.

**Principle C**

An R-expression must be free everywhere.

(Haegeman 1994: 240)

Analysing High Valyrian, I hypothesize that

- a. as an artificial language, High Valyrian violates at least some of the universals 1, 3, 4, and 5 – relating to the Basic Order Typology –, and the morphological universals 29, 31, 32, 34, 36, and 38 proposed by Greenberg (1966) for natural languages.
- b. as a human language, High Valyrian is in conformity with the principles of Chomsky's (1981) Binding Theory.

### References:

Chomsky, Noam. 1981. *Lectures on Government and Binding*. Dordrecht: Foris.

Comrie, Bernard. <sup>2</sup>1989. *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology – Morphology and Syntax*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Greenberg, Joseph. <sup>2</sup>1966. 'Some Universals of Grammar with Particular Reference to the Order of Meaningful Elements'. In: Greenberg, Joseph (ed.), *Universals of Language*, 110-113. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.

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