**Verb-Initial Word Order and Typology**

1. **Typology**

   (1) (Oda 2005:118-9; cited in Potsdam 2009:751)
   
   a. rich and uniform subject-verb agreement  
   required  disallowed  
   
   b. nominal predicate fronting  
   disallowed  required  
   
   c. SV/VS alternation  
   possible  disallowed  
   
   d. wh-in-situ  
   possible  required  
   
   e. wh-movement  
   possible  disallowed  
   
   f. questioning of VP-internal elements  
   possible  disallowed  

   This typology includes a number of assumptions (1b, 1e, 1f) which are not substantiated by the data.

   VSO order in Celtic languages is generally claimed to be derived through V-raising, but these languages also have nominal predicate fronting, as in Irish, suggesting that (1b) does not distinguish different types of verb-initial language.

   \[ \text{Irish (Doherty 1997)} \]

   (2) Sin thall Dónall,  
   that over.there Dónall  
   Is [cara leis\textsubscript{j}] mo dheartháir.  
   Cop friend with.him my brother  
   ‘That’s Dónall over there. My brother is a friend of his.’

   Verb-initial languages also allow SV order when the subject is topicalized, raising suspicion about (1c).

   \[ \text{Tagalog (song “Ako ay Isang Pinoy”)} \]

   (3) Ako ay isa-ng Pinoy sa puso at diwa.  
   1SG.NOM TOP 1-LK Philippino in heart and mind  
   ‘I am a Philippine in heart and mind.’

   What Austronesian languages disallow is DP wh-movement, but fronting of non-DPs is free in many languages.
(4) a. Saan b<in>ili ni Maria ang libro? (Tagalog)  
where <TR.PRV>buy GEN Maria NOM book  
“Where did Maria buy the book?”
b. Di dia mangisap sandu nasida? (Toba Batak; Silitonga 1973:117)  
in where AT.smoke opium they  
‘Where did they smoke opium?’

In languages that do not allow fronting to clause-initial position, wh-movement does take place within TP, so wh-words do not appear in-situ. (4) and (5) call (1d) and (1e) into question.

(5) a. M<n>ari patis Taihoku ka Ape?  
INTR<PRV>buy book Taipei NOM Ape  
‘Ape bought books in Taipei.’
b. M<n>ari inu patis Ape?  
INTR<PRV>buy where book Ape  
‘Where did Ape buy books?’

Likewise, wh-questions in Celtic languages look suspiciously like clefts, calling into question the suggestion that they allow wh-movement.

(6) a. an leabhar a cheannaich thu an diugh  
the book C-REL bought you today  
‘the book that you bought today’
b. Co a bha sgith?  
who C-REL be-PAST tired  
‘Who was tired?’
c. ‘S e lain a bha sgith.  
it’s lain C-REL be-PAST tired  
‘It is lain that was tired.’

And SVO languages like Indonesian also have clefts and do not allow DP wh-fronting.

Ali Act-buy buku  
‘Ali bought a book.’
b. Siapa [yang mem-beli buku-nya]?  
who C Act-give book-Def  
‘Who bought the book?’

Regarding (1f), predicate-fronting has nothing to do with DP extraction. First and foremost, the DP extraction restriction is not limited to verb-initial languages. This restriction is found generally in syntactically ergative languages, including verb-final Inuit languages and Dyirbal,
which has extremely free word order but is certainly not verb-initial. In both languages, only absolutes can extract. Movement of an external argument requires the verb to be intransitive or antipassive.

**W. Greenlandic** (Manning 1996:84)

(8) a. nanuq Piita-p tuqu-ta-a
    polar.bear.Abs Piita-Erg kill-Tr.Part-3sg
    ‘a polar bear killed by Piita’

b. *angut aallaat tigu-sima-sa-a
    man.Abs gun.Abs take-Perf-Rel.Tr-3sg
    ‘the man who took the gun’

**Dyirbal** (Dixon 1994:169-70)

(9) a. nguma[ e; banaga-ngu] yabu-nggu bura-n
    father.Abs return-Rel.Abs mother-Erg see-Nonfut
    ‘Mother saw father, who was returning.’

b. yabu[ e; bural-nga-ngu nguma-gu] banaga-nyu
    mother.Abs see-AP-Rel.Abs father-Dat return-Nonfut
    ‘Mother, who saw father, was returning.’

But even this restriction is not limited to languages with ergative alignment, since it is found in Indonesian languages as well. Note further that basic word order in Standard Indonesian is SVO.

**Indonesian**

    Ali ACT-buy buku
    ‘Ali bought a book.’

b. Siapa yang mem-beli buku-nya?
    who C ACT-buy book-DEF
    ‘Who bought the book?’

c. *Apa yang Ali mem-beli?
    what C Ali ACT-buy
    ‘What did Ali buy?’

d. Apa yang di-beli (oleh) Ali?
    what C PASS-buy by Ali
    ‘What was bought by Ali?’

Predicate-fronting constrains *wh*-movement only when the fronted constituent is very large. This is generally true of TP-fronting languages like Malagasy and Seediq.

**Seediq**

(11) a. Wada burig-un na Ape ka patis.
    PAST buy-TR ERG Ape ABS book
    ‘Ape bought the book.’
b. Wada=na s-tabu huling **ka buuts rodux.**

PAST=3SG.ERG APP-feed dog ABS bone chicken

‘She fed the chicken bones to a/the dog.’

c. Wada m-ari hulama **ka Ape.**

PAST INTR-buy treat ABS Ape

‘Ape bought a treat.’

d. FocP=CP

\[
\text{TP} \quad \text{Foc'}
\]

Foc \quad TopP

\[
\text{DP} \quad \text{Top'}
\]

\[
\text{Top[D^*]} \quad <\text{TP}>
\]

…tP…

In these languages, XPs are trapped inside the fronted remnant clause.

Seedig

(12) a. M<n>ari **inu** patis Ape?

INTR<PRV>buy where book Ape

“Where did Ape buy books?”

b. *Inui m<n>ari **ti** patis Ape?

where INTR<PRV>buy book Ape

c.

\[
\text{CP}
\]

\[
\text{TP}
\]

\[
mnari inu patis
\]

Ape \quad C'

\[
C[EPP]\quad t_{TP}
\]

But VP-fronting languages do allow movement of non-DPs. Toba Batak does require the minimal VP to front to the edge of vP. But this does not prevent fronting of non-DPs. Note further that it is not merely the possibility of stranding non-DPs before VP-fronting which allows them to undergo fronting. This does happen, of course, as in (13). And these constituents can be fronted, as in (14).

Toba Batak (Silitonga 1973:7)

(13) a. [vP Mangisap sandu] nasida **di djabu.**

AT.smoke opium they in house

“ They are smoking opium in the house.”
b. [VP Mangisap sandu] nasida nantoari.  
   AT.smoke opium they yesterday  
   “They smoked opium yesterday.”

Toba Batak
(14) a. Andigan ho mulak?  
   (Silitonga 1973:99)  
   when you return  
   “When will you return?”

b. Di dia mangisap sandu nasida?  
   (Silitonga 1973:117)  
   in where AT.smoke opium they  
   “Where did they smoke opium?”

But if stranding were what permitted constituents to be fronted, then Toba Batak would allow fronting of non-subject DPs. These can be stranded, as in (15). However, they cannot be wh-moved to clause-initial position, as shown in (16).

Toba Batak (Schachter 1984:137)
(15) a. [VP Mangalean biang] si Torus tu si Ria.  
   AT.give dog PM Torus to PM Ria  
   “Torus is giving a dog to Ria.”

b. [VP Mangalean si Ria] si Torus biang.  
   AT.give PM Ria PM Torus dog  
   “Torus is giving Ria a dog.”

Toba Batak (Schachter 1984:126)
(16) a. Aha diida si John?  
   What TT.see PM John  
   “What did John see?”

b. *Aha mangida si John?  
   what AT.see PM John  
   “What did John see?”

2. Analysis

So what are the correct correlations? First, it should be clear that restrictions on DP-fronting and predicate-initial word order are NOT directly linked. The DP extraction restriction is accounted for in terms of \( \phi \)-feature competition in languages that have the parameter setting (17).

DP-extraction restriction parameter
(17) All DP movement is driven by \([\mu\phi]\).

This parameter has the following consequences for DP movement.

(18) a. Subject movement is free, checking \([\mu\phi]\) on C.

b. Object movement requires independent licensing of the subject (e.g. inherent case).
What about predicate-fronting?

**Predicate-fronting**

(19)  
   a. V-movement is basic.  
   b. VP-movement pied-pipes local material to create a complex predicate. (e.g. Niuean)  
   c. TP-movement takes place in languages with category sensitive restrictions on focus movement. (Austronesian languages generally)

**References**


