7

Summary of conclusions

The aim of this research was to prove within the limits of MP as expounded by Chomsky (1992), that V movement, in combination with the strength of the features of lexical heads, accounts adequately for the various word orders found in BA.

BA has at its disposal all six of the possible word orders, and consequently word order was traditionally considered to be free in BA. Such a view is highly problematic because it implies that word order can provide no contribution to the semantic interpretation of any sentence. This study has shown that the contention that word order is free in BA is questionable in view of:

- the way in which a system of abstract principles and fixed parameters developed in the human mind in the process of language acquisition;
- the time-honoured distinction existing between marked and unmarked word order, and
- mandatory word orders in BA.

In order to oppose the view of word order as free in BA, the principal hypothesis, *viz* that V movement is adequate to account for the various word orders in BA, was advanced. This hypothesis has been justified by proving that:

- word order in BA is unfree, and that
- the distinction between marked and unmarked word order in BA should be maintained.

According to MP the perceptible differences between the word orders of various languages, as well as the differences in sentence construction within a single language, may be reduced to parametric differences in the morphological features of which functional categories are made up, with specific reference to the distinction strong/weak between N- and V-features in the categories T and Agr.

(1) Perfect/Imperfect

AgrS - N-features = weak

    V-Features = strong

AgrO - N-features = weak

    V-features = weak

T   - N-features = weak

    V-features = strong

(2) Participle

AgrS - N-features = weak

    V-features = weak

AgrO - N-features = weak

    V-features = weak

T   - N-features = weak

    V -features = strong

Chomsky (1992) proposes that there is no difference between the types of features to be found in the AgrO and AgrS positions. By implication, if the V-features of AgrS are strong, those of AgrO must also be so. Chomsky's (1992) suggestion is completely untenable as far as BA is concerned, because it can be proved morphologically that the V-features of AgrO are weak, while the V-features of AgrS are strong.

In order to deal with topics in BA, projections have been suggested to which a noun or verb may move for feature control. Two topic positions, *viz* TopP*I* and TopP*II* serve as "landing sites" for topics.

A distinction may be drawn between N topics and V topic in terms of the strong/weak distinction of N- and V-features.

(3)　N topics

strong　N-features on Top

weak　V-features on Top

(4)　V topic

weak　N-features on Top

strong V-features on Top

By means of the strong/weak distinction between features on Top, an explanation of marked word orders in BA was discovered.

The unusual V-O-S word order in BA can be explained by understanding V as a verb topic.

The focus on the strength of the features of lexical units opened the way for the explanation of the various word orders in BA by way of V movement. The derivation of sentences in BA as taxonomically researched in the various types of sentences and classes of conjugation in verbal sentences can be justified mainly by V movement. In the course of the study the selection features of the verb were determined. The following conclusions were reached concerning word orders in BA:

Unmarked word orders	Marked word orders		Processing
	single topics	multiple topics	
V-S			
	S-V		subject topicalisation
V-O			
	O-V		object topicalisation
V-S-O			
	S-V-O		subject topicalisation
		O-S-V	object topicalisation/ subject topicalisation
	O-V-S		object topicalisation
		S-O-V	subject topicalisation/ object topicalisation
		V-O-S	object topicalisation/ verb topicalisation
V-O$_1$-O$_2$			
V-O$_2$(cl)-O$_1$			
	O$_1$-V-O$_2$		direct object topicalisation

Unmarked word orders	Marked word orders		Processing
	single topics	multiple topics	
	O2-V-O1		indirect object topicalisation
	O1-V-S-O2		direct object topicalisation
		S-O1-V-O2	subject topicalisation/ direct object topicalisation

The following observations indicate that there is no connection between morphological distinctions relating to verbs and a syntactic phenomenon like word order:

- No specific word order can be related to any particular class of conjugation (Perfect/Imperfect/Participle).
- Sentences with verbs revealing a specific stem formation also have a specific word order pattern.

On the strength of a taxonomic investigation of all verbal sentences in BA, MP fails to explain the following observations:

- The participle whose nature is verbal takes no pronominal enclitic.
- The participle with an independent pronoun as its object is not found.

These unexplained observations offer potential for further research.

The following observations concerning BA are explicable within the parameters of word order analysis:

- No distinction could be found between the derivation of word orders in the Aramaic of Daniel and Ezra. Had there been a difference between the Aramaic of Daniel and that of Ezra, it would have been parametrically explicable in terms of the strength of features.
- The Perfect/Imperfect with an independent pronoun as its subject features only in S-V word order. Pronouns in the Perfect/Imperfect can only be topics.
- The Perfect/Imperfect with an independent pronoun as its object occurs only in V-O word order. This can be explained by the V-O word order cliticisation of the independent pronoun to the verb.

Word orders, therefore, are not free, but justifiable and explicable within the parameters of the proposed analysis.

The following problems were not dealt with in this study, but may offer future research projects:

• The distribution of adjuncts (eg adverbs), operators (eg words of denial), wh-questions (eg מָה what?) and words signifying existence (eg אִיתַי (*jtaj*)) and the explanation thereof in MP. If these lexical units are not freely generated in these positions, they will have to be moved in order to license their inflectional features. At this stage it is still unclear what features have to be associated with them and in what way they should be represented.

• The derivation of adjectives (הוה (*hwh*) + participle and participle + הוה (*hwh*)) and verbal passives.

A language can never be described by simply drawing up a catalogue of constructions. An analysis and explanation of the language is required for a better understanding of its structure and the functioning of its forms. The research into BA word order in this study comprises an explanation of the coherence between its constituents. A future research project could involve investigating the semantic and pragmatic function of the coherence of the marked word order in BA as revealed by this research.