

Morpho-syntax

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Core Arguments

- The core arguments of a verb are Actor, Undergoer, and Recipient:
- The student gave books to the teacher.
Actor **undergoer** **recipient**
- These are typically expressed as subject, object, and indirect object.

Transitive, Intransitive, Ditransitive

- Transitive (actor and undergoer)
 - The student saw the teacher.
- Intransitive (actor)
 - The student studied.
- Intransitive (undergoer)
 - The student disappeared.
- Ditransitive (actor, undergoer, and recipient)
 - The student gave books to the teacher.

Distinguishing Actor and Undergoer (Grammatical Encoding)

- The student bit the dog
- The dog bit the student

Grammatical Encoding

- Word order
- Case Marking
- Agreement with verb

We looked at three kinds of case
marking

Japanese (Nominative-Accusative)

nominative	accusative	
gakusei <u>gwa</u> Student	sensei <u>wo</u> mita teacher saw	P P S 15) kasleak mi Kasle - ak student - def. org. ergative Kasle Kasle - a student - def.
sensei wo	gakusei wa ga mita ga saw	
gakusei <u>gwa</u> Student	<u>uti e</u> kaerimasu house to returned	
gakusei <u>gwa</u> Student	omoshiroi desu interesting is	

We invented the case marker “gwa” as a combination of “ga” (nominative) and “wa” (topic).

Japanese Case Marking

- Student gwa teacher wo saw.
- Student gwa returned.
- Student gwa teacher ni book wo gave.

- “Gwa” is nominative
- “Wo” is accusative

Basque (Ergative-Absolutive)

	P	P	zihurtan			
	P	S	zuten			
	S	P	zihuren.			
15) ikasleak	irakaslea	ikusit	zuen	ikasleak	irakasleak	zuen
ikasle - ak	irakaste - a	see		ikasle - ak	irakaste - a	
student - def. erg.	teacher - def.			student - def. erg.	teacher - def. absolutive	
(ergative)	(absolutive)					
ikasleak	etxera	joan	zen	el estudiante	vio	al profesor (teacher)
ikasle - a	etxe - ra	go	part. sing.	el estudiante	vio	el libro (book)
student - def.	house - to the					

			irakasleei			
			irakasleak	irakasleak	liburuak	eman
			irakaste - a	irakaste - a	liburu - a	zuen
			teacher - def. absolutive	teacher - def. absolutive	book - the	give
						s-s-s-past
					liburu berria	
					book	new
				(a+el)		

Basque Case Marking

- Student-the-k teacher-the saw(sg-sg)
- Student-the returned
- Student-the-k teacher-the-ri book-the gave(sg-sg-sg)

- “-k” is ergative
- \emptyset is absolutive

- The verb agrees with the subject, object, and indirect object.

Hindi (Ergative in the past tense and differential object marking)

Handwritten notes on a whiteboard illustrating Hindi ergative constructions in the past tense and differential object marking.

Example 1: Ergative in the past tense

Student sees the teacher
 Vidyaarthi Shikshak ko Dekhte Hai

Student → Vidyaarthi
 Teacher → Shikshak
 I → Hai

Example 2: Ergative in the present tense

Teacher
 Shikshak ko Dekhta Hun

Teacher → Shikshak
 I → Hun

Example 3: Differential object marking

Student
 Vidyaarthi Ne Kitabo Dekha

Student → Vidyaarthi
 Teacher → Shikshak
 I → Dekha

Example 4: Ergative in the past tense with differential object marking

Home
 Vidyaarthi Ghar waha gaya

Home → Ghar
 I → gaya

Example 5: Ergative in the past tense with differential object marking

I read the book
 Maine Kitabo Dekha

I → Maine
 I → read → Dekha

Additional notes:

Every Day I
 Har Din Jab Main Ghar Jata Hun

Go
 Ghar Jata Hun

I
 Main

See present tense
 Dekhta Hun

(5) I read
 I Kase -
 student -
 erg

I Kase
 I Kase
 student -

Additional Properties of Basic Sentences

- Adpositions and oblique cases
- Negation
- Tense

Oblique (not core argument)

- Other arguments of a verb are oblique:
 - I thought *about linguistics*.
 - I loaded the truck *with hay*.
 - I loaded hay *onto the truck*.
 - I ate ice cream *with a spoon*.
 - I walked *with my friend*.
 - I gave the speech *without anger*.
 - I ran *to school from home along the river*.
 - I slept *in my bed during the night*.
 - I sold a book *for ten dollars*.

Exponence of oblique marking

- Adposition
 - Preposition
 - Postposition
- Lots of case markers
 - Instrumental, illative, allative, etc.
- Adposition plus case marker
 - To (preposition) him (case)
 - Of (preposition) mine (case)
- Serial verbs or co-verbs
 - Take knife cut bread = cut the bread with a knife
 - Run cross field = run across field

TAM: Tense, Aspect, Mood

Tense

- Present
 - Happening at the time of speech
- Past
 - Happened before the time of speech
- Future
 - Will happen after the time of speech

Aspect

- Perfective
 - **I ran** when I saw him.
- Imperfective
 - **I was running** when I saw him.
- Confusing terminology: “perfective” means something different from “perfect” in linguistics.

Mood

- Real
 - The student read a book
- Unreal
 - Conditional
 - If the student read a book...
 - Subjunctive
 - I recommend that he go
 - Imperative
 - Go!

TAM: languages blur the distinction between tense, aspect, and mood

- Things in the past and the present are real.
- Things in the future are unreal.
- Things in the past are more finished (perfective).
- Things in the present and future are less finished (imperfective).

Two-Tense systems

- Past-Nonpast (e.g., Japanese)
 - May actually be a perfective-nonperfective
- Future-Nonfuture
 - May actually be real-unreal

Multi-tense systems

- Mythical past
 - Used in a creation story
- Remote past
- Recent past
 - I just saw her.
- Present
- Near future
 - I'm about to see her.
- Distant future

Varieties and Exponente of TAM

- <http://wals.info/feature/21B#2/25.5/151.9>
- <http://wals.info/feature/66A#2/25.5/148.4>
- <http://wals.info/feature/67A#2/25.5/148.4>
- <http://wals.info/feature/69A#2/18.0/152.9>

Adding a reference point

Perfect (not Perfective)

- Bertrand Russell
 - S: Time of speech
 - E: Time of the event
 - R: A reference point
- Past perfect:
 - At 10am, I had (already) seen her.
 - The reference point (10am) is before the time of speech and the event (seeing her) is before the reference point.
- Future perfect:
 - At 3pm, I will have already seen her.
 - The reference point (3pm) is after the time of speech and the event (seeing her) is before the reference point.

Beware of English

- Don't copy the morphology or syntax of English.
- Think about what it means and then create your own syntax and morphology.

Beware of the English Present Perfect

- It is not present and it is not perfect
- What is it?
 - I have just eaten.
 - recent past
 - I have eaten breakfast.
 - Past with some present relevance
 - I have been to Paris.
 - Experiential past
- Look up “English present perfect usage” to see more.

Beware of English

- If *I go*, I will see him.
 - Other languages say “If I will go, I will see him”
- If *I had gone*, I would have seen him
 - This has a special meaning. It is counterfactual; I did not go.
- He was going tomorrow.
 - What does this mean?
- He said he was going tomorrow.
 - *Sequence of tenses*
- He would go tomorrow
- He said he would go tomorrow

Beware of English

- English tenses are made up of
 - Inflected verbs
 - Saw
 - sees
 - Auxiliary verbs
 - will
 - have
 - be
 - do
 - Participles
 - seen
 - seeing

What about Chinese?

- Chinese has a series of Tense-Aspect particles that do not translate directly into English.
- It is not necessary to have one in each sentence.
- This is mind boggling to Europeans who's sentences must have a “finite” verb or auxiliary verb:
 - *She seeing, *She to see,
 - She seen (Past tense in some dialects, not good in others)
 - She sees
 - She saw
 - She is seeing
 - She has seen
 - She does see

But other languages have obligatory things that we don't express

- Inclusive and exclusive first person plural
- Singular and plural second person
- Evidentiality (obligatorily marked in Quechua)
 - first hand: She read the book. I saw her read it.
 - hearsay: They say she read the book.
 - concluded from evidence: She must have read the book. She knew the story.

Negation

- I am reading
- I am not reading
- I read
- I do not read
- Some students left
- No students left

Linguistic Exponence of Negation

World Atlas of Language Structures

<http://wals.info/chapter/143>

- Separate word
- Morpheme attached to verb
- Obligatory double negative
- Optional double negative
- Multiple strategies

Example: Multiple negation strategies depending on tense

(16) Maasai (Tucker and Mpaayei 1955: 67)

a. *eItÚ* *a-rany.*

NEG 1SG-sing

‘I did not sing.’ (Tucker and Mpaayei 1955: 67)

b. *m-a-rany.*

NEG-1SG-sing

‘I do not sing.’ (Tucker and Mpaayei 1955: 67)

Also Wolof (Senegal), Armenian

Negative sentences can have different morpho-syntax

<http://wals.info/chapter/113>

(4) Finnish (personal knowledge)

a. *tule-n*

come-1SG
.....

'I am coming.'

b. *e-n tule*

NEG-1SG come.CONNEG.PRES
.....

'I am not coming.'

c. *tul-i-n*

come-PST-1SG

'I came.'

d. *e-n tul-lut*

NEG-1SG come-PST.PTCP
.....

'I did not come.'

See also

- <http://wals.info/feature>
 - Type “negation” in the search box
- My favorite negation sentence:
 - It **ain't no** chicken **can't** get into **no** coop.
 - Can mean no chicken can get into a coop

Negative Polarity Items

- ***Any** people are here.
- Some people are here.
- I don't think **any** people are here.
- Are any people here?
- I doubt that any people are here?

Scope ambiguity with quantifiers and negation

- All doors will not be open.
 - This is said regularly on Amtrak.
- It is not the case that all doors will be open.
 - Go to the door that the conductor directs you to.
- For all doors, it is the case that they will not be open.
 - How can I get off the train?

Special Sentence Types

- Copula
- PEL: Possession, Existence, Location
- Question
- Command
- Modality
- Passive voice
- Comparison

Copula

- Identity
 - Clark Kent is superman.
 - She is the teacher.
- Role
 - She is a teacher.
- Definition
 - A square is a four sided equi-angled polygon.
- Permanent property
 - She is tall
- Temporary property
 - She is in Pittsburgh

Zero copula languages

- All tenses
- Some tenses
- She teacher

PEL

PEL language

- Possession:
 - A book is to me
- Existence
 - A book is
- Location
 - The book is on the table

English

- I have a book
- There is a book
- A book exists
- The book is on the table
- There is a book on the table

Negation, Tense, and PEL

English	Hebrew	Turkish	Russian
There is a book on the table.	Yesh sefer al ha shulxan. (There is a book on the table.)	Kösede bir kahve var . (There is a book on the corner.)	Jest kniga na stolje. (There is a book on the table.)
There isn't a book on the table.	Eyn sefer al ha shulxan. (There is not a book on the table.)	Kösede bir kahve yok . (There is not a book on the corner)	Njet knigi na stolje. (There is not a book on the table.)
There was a book on the table.	Haya sefer al ha shulxan. (There was a book on the table.)		
There wasn't a book on the table.	Lo haya sefer al ha shulxan. (There was not a book on the table.)		

Questions

- Closed (yes-no)
- Open (“wh”)

Closed questions

- Don't copy English's crazy pattern
 - If there is no auxiliary verb, add “do”
 - You eat sushi → You do eat sushi
 - Move “do” or other auxiliary verb to the left of the subject.
 - Are you eating sushi?
 - Do you eat sushi?
 - If negation is contracted, move it with the auxiliary verb
 - Don't you eat sushi?
 - Aren't you eating sushi?
 - Haven't you eaten sushi?
 - Otherwise, leave negation after the subject
 - Have you not eaten sushi?

Other ways to make closed questions

- A question particle like Mandarin “ma” or Japanese “ka”.
- Intonation
- Put a focus marker on the noun that is really in question.
 - You-foc wash dishes?
 - Was it you who washed the dishes?
 - You wash-foc dishes?
 - Is what you did washing dishes?
 - You wash dishes-?
 - Was it dishes that you washed?

Closed questions: what answer do you expect?

- Have you washed the dishes?
- Haven't you washed the dishes?
- Expect the answer to be "yes" or "no"?

Open questions

- Who, what, where, when, why, how, which X, whose X
- In situ
 - You ate what?
- Displaced
 - Which sushi you ate?
- Resumptive pronoun
 - Whose sushi you ate it?

Fillers and gaps

- Who you talk to ____?
 - Who is the filler
 - ____ is the gap
- To whom you talk ____?
- What you eat ____ ?
- Who you try to talk to ____ ?
- People who have taken a syntax class know a lot about fillers and gaps.

Open Questions

Mixed strategies

- Displacement for Subject and Object, but resumptive pronoun for everything else
 - What you ate?
 - Who ate sushi?
 - Who you talked to her?
 - Who you talked to her sister?

Modality

- Epistemic (status of knowledge)
 - Certain
 - She definitely read the book.
 - Uncertain
 - She *might* have read the book.
 - Auxiliary verb
 - She *probably* read the book.
 - Adverb
 - She *is likely* to have read the book.
 - Adjective
 - She *seems* to have read the book.
 - Verb

Modality

- Deontic (Obligation)
 - I require that you go.
 - You should go.
 - Not going won't do
 - Paraphrasing Japanese
 - You are allowed to go.
 - I permit you to go.
 - I let you go.

Modality

- Ability
 - You are able to read the book.
 - You can play the piano.

Exponence of Modality

- In human languages, modality can be expressed with almost any part of speech.
- Consider also that many human languages have “potential” (ability) as an affix:
 - eat-can = able to eat

What is passive voice?

- Many students have read the book.
- The book has been read by many students.
- A change in alignment between semantic roles (actor and undergoer) and grammatical relations (subject and object).

Active Voice

- The actor is the subject.
- The actor has the linear position, case marking, and/or verb agreement of a subject.
- She has eaten them.
 - “She” has nominative case
 - “She” is to the left of the verb
 - The verb is “has”, agreeing with “she”

Passive voice

- The undergoer is the subject.
- The undergoer has the linear position, case marking, and/or verb agreement of the subject.
 - They have been eaten by her
 - “They” is to the left of the verb
 - “They” has nominative case
 - The verb is “have”, agreeing with “they”

Exponence of passive voice

- English uses a system of auxiliary verbs and past participles.
- Other languages use an affix.
 - person-nom eat cookie-acc
 - cookie-nom eat-pass person-oblique
 - The oblique case or adposition can be “by”, “with”, “to”, etc. It isn’t always “by”.

If you are interested, ask me about antipassive
in Ergative languages

Comparison

- X is more Y than Z
 - Z is the standard against which X is compared
 - Y is the scale on which X and Z are compared
 - There are markers on Y (more) and Z (than) in English. In many languages there is no marker on Y.
 - X than-Z is Y

Try some creative things for comparison

- X is Y compared to Z
- X is Y, exceeds/surpasses Z