Tallerman: Chapter 2.3

Grammatical Categories: Syntax

Grammatical Categories

- Form:
  - <u>Inflection</u>
    - Affix indicates grammatical category
  - <u>Closed class words</u>
- Types
  - <u>Inherent categories</u>
    - Properties a word has or doesn't have
  - <u>Agreement categories</u>
    - Show syntactic links between words
  - <u>Relational categories</u>
    - Mark the relationship a word or phrase has to the whole sentence

- Nouns
  - <u>Inherent</u>: number, gender or noun class, definiteness
  - <u>Relational</u> : case
- Verbs
  - <u>Inherent</u>: tense, aspect, mood, transitivity
  - <u>Relational</u>: voice
  - <u>Agreement</u>: agreement with arguments
- Adjectives
  - <u>Inherent</u>: degree of comparison (equative, comparative, superlative)
  - <u>Agreement</u>: agreement of attributive adjectives with head noun; agreement of predicative adjectives with subject.

- **Grammatical categories for nouns**
  - **Number**
    - natu-gu   natu-gu-wao   (Saliba)
      child-my   child-my-PLURAL
      'my child'   'my children'
    - ci   cwn   pedwar ci   (Welsh)
      'dog'   'dogs'   'four dogs'
    - Some languages use dual or trial
      - dyulef 'the hands'   (Cornish)
      - dornow 'hands of more than one person'
      - dewlagas 'the eyes'
      - lagasow 'eyes of more than one person'

– Gender or noun class

- <u>Spanish</u>: two genders: masculine & feminine

  - el libro 'the book'   la revista 'the magazine'
    el chico 'the boy'   la chica 'the girl'
    el vestido 'the dress'   la corbata 'the necktie'
    el jardin 'the garden'   la libertad 'the liberty'

- <u>Swahili</u>: 15 noun classes.

  - **m**-toto   'child'   **wa**-toto   'children'
    PERSON-child   PEOPLE-child

    ki-kapu   'basket'   **vi**-ti   'stools'
    SMALL.THING-basket   SMALL.THINGS-stool

    ku-soma   'reading'
    ACTIVITY-reading

- **Mandarin Chinese**: many measure words
  - yi **tiao** lu   yi **tiao** qunzi   yi **tiao** dianxian
    one CLASS road   one CLASS skirt   one CLASS wire
  - yi **zhang** youpiao   yi **zhang** piao   yi **zhang** zhuoze
    one CLASS stamp   one CLASS ticket   one CLASS
    table

– **Definiteness**

- **Swedish** marks definiteness morphologically:
  - mus-**en**
    mouse-DEF
    'the mouse'
  - den (hungriga) mus-**en**
    the hungry mouse-DEF
    'the (hungry) mouse'

– Case

- English shows case only on pronouns
- Some languages show no case at all

  – Saya benci dia   Dia benci saya   (Malay)
      I   hate he/she   He/she hate I
      'I hate him/her'   'She/he hates me'

- Some languages have rich case systems:

  – <u>German</u> has four cases: Nominative, Accusative, Dative, Genitive:

  Der Mann   kaufte   dem Vater   des Jungen   den Computer.
     DEF:NOM man bought DEF:DAT father DEF:GEN boy DEF:ACC computer
  'The man bought the boy's father the computer.'

- Rich case systems can allow freer word order:

  – Nauta   puellam amat   (Latin)
  sailor:NOM girl:ACC loves
  'the sailor loves the girl.'

  – Puellam   nauta   amat
  girl:ACC sailor:NOM loves
  'the sailor loves the girl'

- **Finnish** has 14 cases:

    - Nominative   talo   'house'
      Genitive   talon   'of (a) house'
      Essive   talona   'as a house'
      Partitive   taloa   'house (as an object')
      Translative   taloksi   'to a house'
      Inessive   talossa   in (a) house'
      Elative   talosta   'from (a) house'
      Illative   taloon   'into (a) house'
      Adessive   talolla   'at (a) house'
      Ablative   talolta   'from (a) house'
      Allative   talolle   'to (a) house'
      Abessive   talotta   without (a) house'
      Commitative   talomeni 'with my house(s)
      Instructive   talon   'with (a) house'

    http://www.cs.tut.fi/~jkorpela/finnish-cases.html

- • Grammatical categories for verbs
  - – **Tense**
    - • Grammaticalized expression of location in time (Comrie)
    - • English
      - – John studied yesterday   past tense
        John studies every day   present (non-past) tense
        John will study tomorrow   future auxiliary verb
    - • ChiBemba
      - – ba-**a~li/-**bomb-ele   remote past (before yesterday)
        ba-**a~li/I**/-bomba   removed past (yesterday)
        ba-**a~ci**/-bomba   near past (earlier today)
        ba-**a/-**bomba   immediate past (just happened)
        'they worked'

      - – ba-**ka/-**bomba   remote future (after tomorrow)
        ba-**ka~**-bomba   removed future (tomorrow)
        ba-**lee**/-bomba   near future (later today)
        ba-**a/la/a**/-bomba   immediate future (very soon)
        'they'll work'

– **Aspect**:

- Different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation (Comrie)

- <u>English</u>:

  - She is/was studying   Progressive
    She has/had studied.   Perfect

- <u>Russian</u>

  - On napisal pis'mo   Perfective
    He wrote.PERF a.letter
    'She wrote a letter'

  - My pisali   pis'mo   Imperfective
    we wrote.IMPERF a.letter
    'We were writing a letter'

  - My pisali   pis'mo i ešče pišem ego.
    we wrote.IMPERF a.letter and still write.IMPERF it
    'We were writing the letter and are still writing it.'

  - ?On napisal pis'mo i ešče pišem   ego.
    he wrote.PERF a.letter and still write.IMPERF it
    '?He wrote a letter and is still writing it.'

- <u>French</u>
  - Jean étudiait   quand Pierre est entré
    studied:IMPV when   is entered
    'Jean was studying when Pierre entered.'
  - Imparfait   Imperfective
  - Passé Composé: Perfective
- <u>Welsh</u>
  - Mae Steffan **yn** sgwennu llyfr
    is   PROGRESSIVE write book
    'Steffan is writing a book.'
  - Mae Steffan **wedi** sgwennu llyfr
    is   PERFECT write book
    'Steffan has written a book.'

– **Mood**

- A grammatical category which marks properties such as possibility, probability, and certainty.
  - Indicative mood (for actual events)
    - » Kim goes to Greece tomorrow.
    - » Kim went to Greece yesterday
  - Hypothetical event expressed by modal auxiliary
    - » Kim **would** go to Greece tomorrow…
      (*would, could, can, may, might, should…*)
  - Subjunctive mood (verbal morphology for hypothetical events)
    - » …if she **were** wealthy enough.
    - » I demand that this man **leave/be removed** at once!
- French:
  - Je veux que tu le **fasses**
    I want that you:SG it do:SJTV:2SG
    'I want you to do it.'
  - Je crois que tu le **feras**
    I believe that you:SG it do:FUT:INDIC:2SG
    'I believe that you will do it.'

– **Voice**

- Relational category because it is associated with the position of the NP arguments of the verb.
- Active vs. Passive voice
  - Japanese (from David Oshima)
    - » Pat-ga   Max-o   nagut-ta
      Pat-NOM Max-ACC hit-PAST
      'Pat hit Max.'
    - » Max-ga   Pat-ni   nagu-**rare**-ta
      Max-NOM Pat-DAT hit-PASSIVE-PAST
      'Max was hit by Pat.'
  - Direct object of active verb is promoted, subject of active verb is demoted, and the form of the verb changes.
  - English: auxiliary *be* or *get* plus past participle.

– **Agreement**
- Inherent features of the noun phrase arguments are marked (cross-referenced) on the verb.
  - <u>English</u>: person and number of subject (very little)
    » I play   He play-**s** (3SG in Present tense)
  - <u>Kaqchikel</u>: person and number of subject and object
    » rioj y-**e-qa**-tsu? rie?
      we ASPECT-OBJ-SUBJ-see they
      'We see them.'
    » rie? y-**oj-ki**-tsu? rioj
      they ASPECT-OBJ-SUBJ-see we
      'They see us.'
  - <u>Swahili</u>: noun class of subject and object:
    » Wa-toto **wa**-li-**i**-imba   ny-imbo
      NC2-child NC2-PAST-NC9-sing NC9-song
      'The children sang songs.'
    » Mw-alimu **a**-me-**wa**-amsha   wa-toto
      NC1-teacher NC1-PERF-NC2-wake.up NC2-child
      'The teacher has woken the children up'
      (http://www~personal.umich.edu/~dbeck/lin211/Swahili.html)

- **Grammatical categories for adjectives**
  - **Comparison**
    - English
      - Big, bigger, biggest
    - Welsh
      - Mae-'r cwpan cyn llawn-**ed**   a-'r   botel.
        is-the   cup   as full-EQUATIVE with-the bottle
        'The cup is as full as the bottle.'
  - **Agreement**
    - Swahili
      - ma-pande **ma**-kubwa
        NC6-block NC6-big
        'big blocks'
    - German
      - Ein klein-**es**   Kind sah einen reich-**en** Mann.
        A small-NOM:SG:NEUTER child saw a rich-ACC:SG:MASC man
        'A small child saw a rich man.'

- **Grammatical categories for prepositions**
  - **Agreement**
    - Irish

            le Séamas   'with Séamas'
            leis   'with him'
            léithí   'with her'

    - Kaqchikel
      - **ru**-ma ri-ixoq
        3SG-by the-woman
        'by the woman'

      - **ki**-ma ri-ixoq-e
        3PL-by-the-woman-PLURAL
         'by the women'

Summary

- Languages with a lot of morphology represent grammatical information without needing a lot of closed class words
  - Bantu languages, native American languages, Greek, Slavic, Finnish, Turkish
- Languages without a lot of morphology rely on closed class words.
  - Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malay/Indonesian