Relationships Within the Clause

Tallerman, Chapter 6.1-6.5.3

- All languages have intransitive sentences, with one participant:
  - John sneezed.   John is subject
- All languages have transitive sentences, with two participants
  - John saw Mary.   John is subject, Mary is object
- To distinguish subjects from objects, languages use one or more of three strategies:
  - Word Order
  - Case Marking
  - Agreement Marking

Order of Phrases Within the Clause

- **Basic and marked orders**
  - All six basic orders of Subject, Object, Verb occur

  - Mpsa   e-lomile ngwana   (Northern Sotho)
    S   **V**   **O**
    dog   SU-bit   child
    'The dog bit the child.'
  - Müdür   mektub-u   imzala-di.   (Turkish)
    S   **O**   **V**
    director:NOM letter-ACC sign-PAST
    'The director signed the letter.'

- Tuigeann Bríd Gaeilge   (Irish)
  V   **S**   **O**
  understands Bridget Irish
  'Bridget understands Irish.'

- E kamatea [te naeta] [te moa]   (Gilbertese)
    V   **O**   **S**
  3SG kill:3SG the snake the chicken
  'The chicken killed the snake.'

- Kaikuxi etapa-V toto, papa tomo   (Apalai)
    O   **V**   **S**
  jaguar kill-PAST 3PL father 3PL
  'They killed a jaguar, father's group.'

- Anana nota apa   (Apurinã)
  O   **S**   **V**
  pineapple I fetch
  'I fetch pineapple.'

- The word order in those examples is fairly uncontroversial, so we can say it is basic.

- Languages do have alternative MARKED word orders for reasons of emphasis or topic marking

  - English   I like beans   SVO

                          Beans I like   OSV

- Some languages have two UNMARKED orders (neutral and frequent)

  - Fijian, Tongan, Samoan: VSO, VOS

- Some languages have a different order in main and subordinate clauses

  - German: SVO main, SOV subordinate

- In strongly head-marking languages, sentences with both subject and object NP are rare.

- **Variations of order**
  - It is common for all six orders to be grammatical:
    - Russian, Polish: SVO is basic
    - Mohawk: no order is basic
  - Warlpiri has been called a 'free word order language', only AUX has to occur in second position.
    - Ngarrka-ngku ka   wawirri   panti-rni
      man-ERG   AUX:PRES kangaroo spear-NONPAST
      'The man is spearing the kangaroo.'
    - Wawirri   ka   panti-rni   ngarrka-ngku
      kangaroo AUX:PRES spear-NONPAST man-ERG
      'The man is spearing the kangaroo.'
    - Panti-rni   ka   ngarrka-ngku wawirri
      spear-NONPAST AUX:PRES man-ERG   kangaroo
      'The man is spearing the kangaroo.'

– Warlpiri even has DISCONTINUOUS CONSTITUENTS:

- **Wawirri yalumpa** kapi-ma   panti-rni
  kangaroo   that   AUX:FUT-1SG:SU spear-NONPAST
  'I will spear that kangaroo.'

- **Wawirri** kapi-ma   panti-rni   **yalumpa**
  kangaroo AUX:FUT-1SG:SU spear-NONPAST that
  'I will spear that kangaroo.'

– Other languages also allow some discontinuous constituents:

- Mohawk, Nahuatl, Southern Tiwa, Latin

- **Statistical patterns**
  - 90%:   SVO +SOV
    9-12%   VSO
    3%   VOS
    < 1%   OSV, OVS
  - Subjects tend to be clause initial.
  - Subjects overwhelmingly tend to precede objects (96%)
    - Subjects more salient because they initiate the action and are likely to be topics.
  - Verb and Object overwhelmingly tend to be put next to each other (> 90%)
    - Subject-Predicate division

– Word order within constituents correlates with the order of the major constituents:

- Head-final order
    - Verb follows objects and complement clauses
    - Adpositions are postpositions
    - Complementizers follow the clause they select as complement.
- Head-initial order
    - Verb precedes objects and complement clauses.
    - Adpositions are prepositions
    - Complementizers precede the clause they select as complement.
- Postpositional: Verb-final   96%
                        SVO   14%
                        Verb-initial   9%
- Complementizers: VO   virtually always precede
                        OV   70% follow

Case Systems

- **Ways of dividing core arguments**
  - Subject of an intransitive verb   **S**
    Subject of a transitive verb   **A**
    Object of a transitive verb   **O**
    - It is necessary to distinguish A from O, so that we know who performs the action on whom.
    - A language could mark A, O, and S differently, but it is more economical to only mark A and O differently.

– NOMINATIVE/ACCUSATIVE SYSTEM

- Marks S and A the same, and O differently.
  - English
    » We(S) left.
      We(A) like her(O).
      She(S) left.
      She(A) likes us(O).

– ERGATIVE/ABSOLUTIVE SYSTEM

- Marks S and O the same, and A differently.

Accusative System	
A S	O
nominative	accusative

Ergative System	
A	S O
ergative	absolutive

- **Illustration of the main case systems**
  - Nominative/accusative: AS/O
    - Latin, German, Japanese, Turkish, etc.
    - Latin
      - **Puella**   venni-t
        girl:NOM come-PRES:3SG
        "The girl(S) comes.'
      - Puer-um **puella**   audi-t
        boy-ACC girl:NOM hear-PRES:3SG
        'The girl(A) hears the boy(O).'
      - **Puella**   puer-um audi-t
        girl:NOM boy:ACC hear-PRES:3SG
        'The girl(S) hears the boy(O).'

- German
  - **Der   gross-e Hund** knurrte
    the:NOM big-NOM dog   growled
    'The big dog growled.'
  - **Der   gross-e Hund** hiss den   klein-en Mann.
    The:NOM big-NOM dog   bit the:ACC small-ACC man
    'The big dog bit the small man.'

– Ergative/absolutive: A/SO

  - Lezgian
    - **Za**   zi balk'an   c'ud xipe-qʰ ga-na
      I:ERG my horse:ABS ten sheep-for give-PAST
      'I(A) gave away my horse(O) in exchange for ten sheep.'
    - **Zun**   ata-na
      I:ABS come-PAST
      'I(S) came.'
    - Aburu   **zun** ajib-da
      they:ERG I:ABS shame-FUT
      They(A)will shame me(O).'

- **Basque**
  - **Gixona-k** liburûa   erosi dau.
    Man:ERG   book:ABS buy AUX:3SG
    'The man(A) has bought the book(O).'
  - **Gixonâ**   etorri da
    man:ABS come AUX:3SG
    'The man(S) has come.'
  - **Gixonâ**   ikusi dot
    man:ABS see   AUX:1SG
    'I(A) have seen the man(O).'

- 25% of languages are ergative.

- Common in Australian, Tibeto-Burman, Mayan, Papuan languages, etc.

– Split systems
  • Ergative languages have a combination of ergative and accusative properties.
  • Splits can occur
    – Animacy or other properties of the NPs
    – Meaning of the verb
    – Tense or aspect of the verb
    – Main versus subordinate clause
  • Dyirbal
    – Full noun phrases: ergative system
    – Pronouns: accusative system

- **Dyirbal**
  - Nguma   banagan'o
    father:ABS returned   'Father(S) returned.'
  - Yabu   banagan'u
    mother:ABS returned   'Mother(S) returned.'
  - Nguma   yabu-nggu buran
    father:ABS mother-ERG saw 'Mother(A) saw father(O)

  - Ngana banagan'u
    we:NOM returned   'We(S) returned.'
  - N'urra bunagan'u
    you:NOM returned   'You(S) returned.'
  - N'urra ngana-na buran
    you:NOM we:ACC saw   'You(A) saw us(O).'

– Languages which use a different case for S, A and O are rare.

- Pitta-Pitta, in nonfuture tenses

  - **Nga-tu** kat^{y}u-na watˠama-ka
    I-ERG clothes-ACC wash-PAST
    'I(A) washed the clothes(O)'

  - Nangka-ya **nganˠtˠa** kunti-ini
    sit-PRES I:NOM house-in
    'I(S) am sitting in the house.'

  - Tupu-u **nganˠa** pat^{y}a-pat^{y}a-ya
    caterpillar-ERG I:ACC bite-bite-PRES
    'A caterpillar(A) is biting me(O).'

– Marked and unmarked forms

- Common for absolutive or nominative to be formally unmarked and ergative or accusative to receive a special inflection.

- Nominative and Absolutive are also functionally unmarked:

  – More widespread in occurrence.

  – More basic in terms of usage

  – Typically used as citation form in dictionaries

Agreement

– Agreement or cross-referencing means that a verb is formally marked to reflect grammatical properties of its NP arguments.

- Person, number, gender (= noun class), case
- Verb agreement may reflect a case system

– Languages with no verb agreement

- Swedish, Japanese, Chinese, Maori, Malagasy
- <u>Chinese</u>
  - Wo xihuan ta   Ta xihuan wo.
    I like   him   he like I
    'I like him'   'he likes me.'

– Languages with only subject agreement

- Italian, French, Spanish, German, Dutch, English, Turkish, Tamil, Finnish

- <u>French</u>

  – Nous avons   vu ce   film.
    we   have:1PL seen this film
    'We(a) have seen this film(O)'

  – Nous avons   décidé
    we   have:1PL decided
    'We(S) have decided.'

– Languages with subject and object agreement

- <u>Kambera</u>

  – I Ama   **na**-kei-**ya**   na rí   muru
    the father 3SG:SU-buy-3SG:OBJ the vegetable green
    'Father buys the green vegetables.'

– Constituent order can affect which agreement markers occur.

- Northern Sotho

  - Mpsa **e**-lomile ngwana
    dog   SU-bit   child
    'The dog bit a/the child.'

  - Di-mpsa **di**-lomile ngwana.
    PL-dog   SU-bit   child
    'The dogs bit a/the child.'

  - Ngwana mpsa **e-mo**-lomile.
    child   dog SU-OBJ-bit
    'As for the child, the dog bit him/her.'

  - Mpsa ngwana **e-mo**-lomile.
    dog   chld   SU-OBJ-bit
    'As for the dog, it bit the child.'

– If a language has object agreement, it also has subject agreement.

– Languages can have subject, direct object and indirect object agreement:

- Kambera

  – I   Ama   **un**-kei-**ngga-nya**
    the father   3SG:NOM-boy-1SG:DATIVE-3SG:DATIVE
    'Father buys it for me.'

– Ergative agreement marking occurs in Caucasian and Mayan languages.

Kaqchikel

- x-**e**-kom

  CMPL-3PL:ABS-die

  'They(S) died'

- x-**oj**-kom

  CMPL-1PL:ABS-die

  'We(S) died'

- x-**oj-ki**-tsu

  CMPL-1PL:ABS-3PL:ERG-see

  'They(A) saw us(O).'

- x-**e-qa**-tsu

  CMPL-3PL:ABS-1PL:ERG-see

  'We(A) saw them(O).'

- A language with ergative agreement may have ergative case marking too.
  - Avar
- There are languages with ergative case marking, but an accusative system of agreement.
  - <u>Warlpiri</u>
    - Ngaju ka-**rna**   wangka-mi
      I:ABS   AUX;PRES-1SG:SU speak-NONPAST
      'I(S) am speaking.'
    - Ngajulu-rlu ka-**rna-ngku**   nyuntu   nya-nyi.
      I-ERG   AUX:PRES-1SG:SU-2:OBJ you:ABS see-NONPAST
      'I(A) see you(O).'
- There are no known languages with accusative case systems and ergative agreement systems.