Tallerman: Chapter 2.3

Grammatical Categories: Syntax
Grammatical Categories

• Form:
  – **Inflection**
    • Affix indicates grammatical category
  – **Closed class words**

• Types
  – **Inherent categories**
    • Properties a word has or doesn’t have
  – **Agreement categories**
    • Show syntactic links between words
  – **Relational categories**
    • Mark the relationship a word or phrase has to the whole sentence
– Nouns
  • **Inherent**: number, gender or noun class, definiteness
  • **Relational**: case

– Verbs
  • **Inherent**: tense, aspect, mood, transitivity
  • **Relational**: voice
  • **Agreement**: agreement with arguments

– Adjectives
  • **Inherent**: degree of comparison (equative, comparative, superlative)
  • **Agreement**: 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

• **Spanish:** two genders: masculine & feminine
  – el libro ‘the book’
  – el chico ‘the boy’
  – el vestido ‘the dress’
  – el jardin ‘the garden’
  – la revista ‘the magazine’
  – la chica ‘the girl’
  – la corbata ‘the necktie’
  – la libertad ‘the liberty’

• **Swahili:** 15 noun classes.
  – **m**-toto ‘child’
    PERSON-child
  – **wa**-toto ‘children’
    PEOPLE-child
  – **ki**-kapu ‘basket’
    SMALL.THING-basket
  – **vi**-ti ‘stools’
    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:
  – German 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’
  - Committative     talomeni ‘with my house(s)
  - Instructive      talon   ‘with (a) house’

• 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)
• English:
  – She is/was studying  Progressive
    She has/had studied.  Perfect
• Russian
  – 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.’
• **French**
  – Jean étudiait quand Pierre est entré
    studied: IMPV when is entered
    ‘Jean was studying when Pierre entered.’
  – Imparfait Imperfective
  – Passé Composé: Perfective

• **Welsh**
  – 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:SJT: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:
  - **English**: person and number of subject (very little)
    
    » I play  
    He play-s (3SG in Present tense)
  
  - **Kaqchikel**: person and number of subject and object
    
    » rijo y-e-qa-tsu? rie?
      we ASPECT-OBJ-SUBJ-see they
      ‘We see them.’
    
    » rie? y-oj-ki-tsu? rijo
      they ASPECT-OBJ-SUBJ-see we
      ‘They see us.’
  
  - **Swahili**: 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.
      ‘The cup is as full as the bottle.’
  – Agreement
    • Swahili
      – ma-pande ma-kubwa
      ‘big blocks’
    • German
      – Ein klein-es Kind sah einen reich-en Mann.
      ‘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