

# Chapter 7

## Morphology and Syntax



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## Contents of this chapter

- Morphology and syntax
- Universal grammar
- Valency (=valence)
- Valency changes in verbs by morphology:
  - Passive
  - Antipassive
  - Causative
  - Applicative
  - Noun incorporation

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## Syntactic inflection

- “Does English have modality / evidentiality?”
  - semantically, yes, of course
    - apparently, reportedly, must have, ...
  - all languages same/similar in the sense that all can express anything
  - morphologically, no
    - modality / evidentiality in English is expressed by modal auxiliaries, not by bound forms (unlike other languages)

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## Structural constraints on inflection

- Verb inflection is often obligatory in some contexts, but not in others
  - e.g. in English only present (3<sup>rd</sup> sg) is marked for tense (-s)
  - Arabic: subject-verb agreement on the verb when the word order is Subject-Verb, but not when it is Verb-Subject

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## Universal grammar

- The same kinds of **morphological categories** come up in language after language (e.g. number, gender, aspect, tense, etc.)
  - a result of “universal grammar”?
  - or a result of general human experience?
- The **realization** of these categories differs considerably, however
  - e.g. inflection vs. auxiliaries, affixes vs. particles

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## E.g. gender

- German: masculine, feminine, neuter
- Ojibwa: animate, inanimate
- Kujamaat Jóola: 19 noun classes
  - Dyirbal II: women, fire and dangerous things
- **Sameness**: all languages divide nouns into certain kinds (need (?) for categorization)
  - how are the categories expressed in language?
- **Difference**: they all do it in a different way

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## Valency

- Valency (or: valence) refers to the number of "roles" (or: arguments) a verb assigns in a sentence
  - rain, snow: **0** roles      "It" rains
  - cry, think: **1** role      Jesus wept
  - beat: **2** roles      I didn't beat him
  - give: **3** roles      I gave him a new bike
  - or more complex roles or constructions (e.g. with phrases 'I want to go'
- Morphology can change the number of roles a verb assigns

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## Passive

- Passive = taking a role away from verbs that normally have two roles
  - The governor broke the law
  - The law was broken
    - (who did it is "downgraded": this mechanism is very useful in languages, so that's why many languages have it)
- English: passive construction
  - auxiliary plus past participle
- Chinese: 我打 vs. 我被打: passive particle, or coverb
- Japanese: passive affixation (inflection)
  - yaku 'to grill' vs. yakareru 'to be grilled'
  - yomu 'to read' vs. yomareru 'to be read'

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## Passive affixation

- Bajau (Austronesian, Borneo):
  - kita-ku uggo'      'I saw the pig'
  - di-kita-ku uggo'      'The pig was seen by me'
- Usually (always?) passive is marked with an affix, in comparison to the active
  - markedness theory (present vs. past, singular vs. plural, etc.)

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## Antipassive

- = when the object is downgraded
  - Mary is eating a pie      (trans.)
  - Mary is eating      (intrans.)
- Common in "ergative" languages:
  - Mary-ERG is eating-ACTIVE a pie-ABS
  - Mary-ABS is eating-ANTIPASS
    - or 'from the pie'

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## Causative

- Adding a role:
  - I washed the dishes
  - I made him wash the dishes (English)
- Many languages have a morphological affix for causatives
  - Kujamaat Jóola: tey-en 'run-CAUS'
- Isolated English examples (Ablaut):
 

|                |                         |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| drink - drench | sit - set               |
| lie - lay      | fall - fell (from PGmc) |

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## Applicative

- English:
  - I bought a bottle of wine
  - I bought him a bottle of wine / for him
- beneficiary, maleficiary, goal, instrument, location, motive
- Kichaga (Bantu):
  - ly-a eat (a=final vowel)
  - lyi-i eat-for (applicative)

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## Verb compounding

- Absent in English
  - a few exceptions: e.g. stir-fry, kick-start, force-feed
  - the first verb expresses a manner with which the action expressed by the second verb is carried out

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## Chinese: Three types (Packard)

- V1 and V2 are (nearly) synonymous

|           |    |                       |                 |
|-----------|----|-----------------------|-----------------|
| dàoqiè    | 盗窃 | steal-steal           | 'steal'         |
| dìjiāo    | 递交 | pass:over-transfer    | 'submit'        |
| diūshī    | 丢失 | lose-lose             | 'lose'          |
| dǔsè      | 堵塞 | stop:up-plug          | 'stop up'       |
| duōbì     | 躲避 | hide/avoid-hide/avoid | 'hide, avoid'   |
| guànchuān | 贯穿 | pierce-penetrate      | 'penetrate'     |
| guàngài   | 灌溉 | irrigate-irrigate     | 'irrigate'      |
| tǎolùn    | 讨论 | discuss-discuss       | 'discuss'       |
| yuèdú     | 阅读 | read-read             | 'read'          |
| zhǐdǎo    | 指导 | point:out-guide       | 'direct, guide' |

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- V1 and V2 different meanings

|          |    |                     |                        |
|----------|----|---------------------|------------------------|
| fángchú  | 防除 | defend-eliminate    | 'prevent and kill off' |
| gēchú    | 割除 | cut-eliminate       | 'cut out'              |
| guānchá  | 观察 | observe-investigate | 'investigate'          |
| jiàoxǐng | 叫醒 | call-wake:up        | 'awaken by calling'    |
| qiǎnggòu | 抢购 | seize-buy           | 'rush to buy'          |
| shuōfú   | 说服 | speak-convince      | 'convince'             |
| zhuīqiú  | 追求 | pursue-seek         | 'seek and pursue'      |

- Others

|        |    |                 |                |
|--------|----|-----------------|----------------|
| fēiwǔ  | 飞舞 | fly-dance       | 'flutter'      |
| tàntǎo | 探讨 | explore-discuss | 'inquire into' |

- Resultatives

■ chī-bǎo pǎo-shang kàn-dào ting-dong

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## Noun incorporation

- Not in English: I buy shopping  
\*I shop-do

- shop: uninflected form
- cf. Japanese (*suru*)

- Nahuatl: I eat the flesh  
I flesh-eat

Verb's roles are **incorporated** into the verbal expression itself

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## Cf. compound formation

- Noun incorporation:  
e.g. I eat flesh → I flesh-eat  
'flesh' is unmarked for case, plural etc.
- Compare: compounding:  
He deals in cars  
He is a car-dealer (\*cars-dealer)  
'car' is similarly unmarked

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## Summary

- Morphology can affect the syntactic status of verbs, such as by taking away or adding theta-roles
  - alternatively: focus/unfocus some information
- Common patterns found include passive and causative. Other terms include antipassive, applicative and middle
- Noun incorporation takes away all roles, resulting in a compound-like formation

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## Homework

- Read chapter 7 very very carefully; note down any questions
- Please prepare exercises **1-4** for class
- Don't forget to hunt for new words!
- Thank You~~

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