

## Syntax presentation

Due Thursday, November 10th

*For this presentation, please create a new document answering the questions contained here. As usual, please print 15 copies for the class. You'll have 3 minutes to present the information here in class. If you do hand-write your answers to the questions, make sure to write very clearly, so that everyone can read it even after it has been photocopied.*

**Basic word order:** In class, we've discussed the structure of English sentences in quite a lot of detail, but syntacticians also care about languages' 'basic word order', meaning the typical order of a sentence's subject, verb, and object. English is 'SVO' meaning subjects precede verbs, which precede objects. Korean, on the other hand, is 'SOV', while Irish is 'VSO'.

- (1) Labhraíonn Micheal Gaeilge le Cait go minic.  
speaks Micheal Irish with Cait often  
Verb Subject Dir.Obj Ind.Obj  
Micheal speaks Irish with Cait often.
- (2) nae-ga sangja-reul yeo-nda.  
I-NOM box-ACC open-PRES  
Subject Object Verb  
I open the box.

Give at least two example sentences from your language illustrating the basic word order of your language, with each word translated, as above. Also state the basic word order in 'SVO' style terms.

Comanche's basic word order is SOV.

- (3) suru se? hani-bi-ha tu-runi?i-nu.  
they CONTRAST corn plant-PAST  
S O V  
They planted corn.
- (4) situ: kwasinabo:ʔ-nu: ma ma-nuki-ku-nu.  
these snake-PLURAL her run-CAUSE-PAST  
S O V  
These snakes chased her.
- (5) Noha u? nu kwuhuru? i.  
nearly he me catch-UNR  
S O V  
He nearly caught me.

## Structure:

Different grammars focus on different things. Based on what's in your grammar, and what you're interested in, choose **two** of the following topics to describe.

**NOTE:** I filled in as much of these as I could given the contents of my grammar. You really only need to pick two, though.

(a) **Questions:** How does your language form questions? Consider (i) Yes/No questions (ii) wh-questions of as many types as you can find (types: 'who', 'what', 'why', 'how'). Provide examples of declarative sentences, and their corresponding questions to illustrate the difference in structure.

**Yes/No:** Yes/No questions in Comanche are indicated by the question particle *-ha*. Otherwise, nothing changes. Note that from the examples below it is impossible to tell exactly where in the sentence this particle would come if there were a full verb, and object.

(6) nu kahni tsa:  
my house good  
My house is good.

(7) nu kahni **-ha** tsa:  
my house Q good  
Is my house good?

**wh-questions:** Comanche has a long list of wh-words, designed to query specific types of constituents. All occur at the beginning of the sentence, leaving a gap where the constituent they are querying would normally occur.

wh-word	
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hini	what-subject
hina	what-object
hipekaʔi	how big
hahka	whom
hakani	how
hakaniʔyutu	why
haku	where
hakahpu	to/from where
hu:	how many?
hipe	when

Here are some examples of a few of these in action:

(8) **hakahpu** u piaʔmiʔa:-yu  
where your mother go-DUR  
Where is your mother going?

(9) **hina** ranu ta: turueʔ-ti: tuhka-ku-hu-tuʔi  
what we our children eat-CAUSE-INDEF  
What are we going to feed our children?

- (10) **hahka** unu turu?ai  
 whom you work  
 For whom do you work?

(b) **Negation:** How does your language form negative sentences? Give examples of positive and negative versions of each sentence, for example “The man ate the candy.”, “The man didn’t eat the candy.” Notice that in English there’s more going on than just the addition of ‘not’ - we also have to add ‘do’, and that gets tense instead of the verb. Watch out for such things in your language as well!

In Comanche, negation is expressed as a particle *ke*, immediately before the VP. Since my grammar didn’t have examples of negative and positive versions of the same sentence, I’ve tried to construct the positive sentence in (11). The following negative sentence is from the grammar.

- (11) sari:? -tsa? u suwai-tu.  
 dog DECL him like-PROG  
 The dog likes him.
- (12) sari:? -tsa? **ke** u suwai-tu.  
 dog DECL NEG him like-PROG  
 The dog doesn’t like him.

(c) **Adjunct ordering:** Where do adjuncts come relative to the head of a phrase? Do adjectives come before or after nouns? Do adverbs come before or after verbs? Is there optionality? Also check out the behavior of prepositional phrases, if your language has them, and relative clauses. (Recall: relative clauses are embedded sentences that describe something in the sentence, for example “The man *who Sally loved* went to sea.”)

Relative clauses precede the nouns they modify (here, ‘cedar’):

- (13) sumu? kutsa? raiboo? [pumaku buu waahima-ru?ih-a] waah-pi-hta  
 A EVID man [they celebrate Christmas] cedar  
 wuh-ka?a-mi?a-nu.  
 chop-go-PAST  
 A white man went to cut down a cedar tree with which they would celebrate christmas.

(d) **Passives:** Passives are sentences in which the recipient of an action is the subject (where usually it is the object) and the doer of the action is either not in the sentence, or included in an adjunct. For example, “The tuna was eaten by the cat.” is a passive version of “The cat ate the tuna.” How do passives work in your language?

(e) **Commands:** How does your language form commands? (Note: these are also called ‘imperatives’) Does your language allow commands to have subjects? What form does the

verb take in commands? Do any parts of the sentence appear out of order relative to your language's basic word order?

In Comanche, imperatives are formed using the simple verb stem:

(14) kima habi-ki  
come lie  
Come lie down!

(15) ihka **buni** tui-h  
this see friend  
Look at this, friend!

However, Comanche also has negative imperatives, which are formed using the progressive tense on the verb, and a negation marker *keta?* at the beginning of the sentence.

(16) keta? nu kuya?a-ku-tu  
NEG me fear-CAUSE-PROG  
Come lie down!

(f) **Topicalization, or other word order variations:** In English, we can draw attention to a constituent by moving it to the front of a sentence. For example: “*Beans*, I like.” Does your language have something like this? Can parts of a sentence occur out of the basic word order, for emphasis or for any other reason? If a constituent can occur out of order, where does it occur?