

# Noun Phrases

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# Next assignments

- Hundred noun phrases
- Hundred sentences
- Morphological analyzer

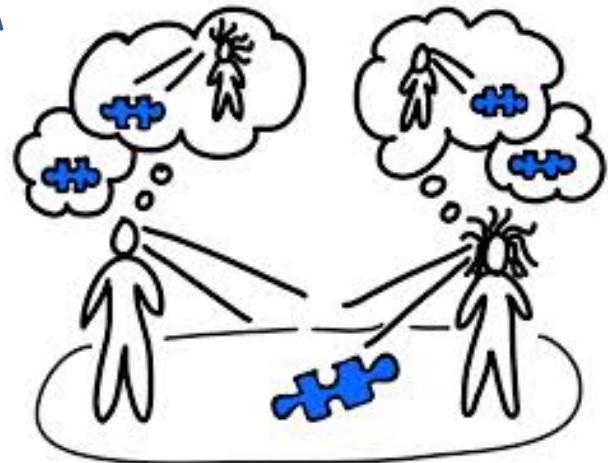
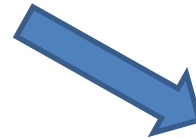
# The Universe



# Why does syntax exist?



**Around seven seconds of  
puffed air**



Communication between sentient beings puts a tiny piece of the universe in the common ground with the intent of getting the pictures in your heads to be the same.

Search google images for "common ground"

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwii78KNsaTRAhUBWSYKHeprCxAQjRwIBw&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.stefanomastrogiacomoinfo%2Fcommon-ground%2F&psig=AFQjCNGIgEKtGzB4SqzYI6iqQi7QyGEb8Q&ust=1483478189655154>

# Metalinguistic Awareness

- Being aware of what is happening in languages so that you can do it differently from English or other language you know

# Meanings that are expressed in noun phrases

- Number (singular/plural)
- Gender/noun class
- Person
- Definiteness
- Cardinality
- Ordinality
- Classifiers
- Possession
- Quantification

# Additional things that are in noun phrases

- Relative clauses
  - The book that I read
  - The book that annoyed you
- Prepositional phrases
  - The book on the table
  - The book about linguistics
- Adjectives
  - The blue book
  - The book (that is) bluer than the sky
  - The bird light enough to fly

# Note

- We are not talking about case (nominative, accusative, ergative) yet because that is about the role of the noun phrase in the sentence (subject, object).
- But we will talk about two cases that are important in noun phrases: genitive and possessive.

# Kinds of nouns

- Common nouns
- Proper nouns
- Pronouns
  - Anaphoric
  - Demonstrative



# Grammatical Number

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical\\_number](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_number)
- This article covers number in noun phrases and in agreement between nouns and verbs.
- We will look at number in noun phrases first

# To have number or not

- Some languages do not differentiate between singular and plural nouns.
  - I read **book** can mean I read a book or I read books.
  - Such languages sometimes have optional plural markers (Mandarin “men”, Japanese “tachi”).
  - Isolating languages (see morphology lecture) are more likely to not have obligatory number (Wikipedia).

# How many numbers to have?

- Some languages have singular and plural:
  - Book/books
- Some languages have dual:
  - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual \(grammatical number\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual_(grammatical_number))

# Exponence

- How a meaning gets *exponed* (expressed)

# Exponence of Number

- Suffix
  - Book-s
- Prefix
  - s-book
- Infix
  - B-es-ook
  - Boosk
- Reduplication
  - Bookbook, boobook, bookook
- Separate word
  - Es book, book es
- Change in the word
  - Mouse, mice
  - Goose, geese

# Is one kind of number unmarked?

- English
  - Singular: book-∅
  - Plural: book-s
- In English, singular is *unmarked* and plural is *marked*.

# So for each kind of meaning

- Does your language have a way of expressing it?
- How many distinctions in meaning are expressed?
- How are the meanings expressed (exponence)?
- Are any of the distinctions unmarked (zero exponence)?
- How does it interact with other words and morphemes?

# Definiteness

- Definiteness is about words like “the” and “a”
- But actually words like this express many kinds of meaning:
  - Familiarity
  - Identifiability
  - Uniqueness
  - Specificity
  - Genericness



Establish and maintain the common ground.



# Familiarity

- Talking to my husband on the phone, starting a conversation:
  - Don't forget to take *the clothes* to the dry cleaner.
    - He knows which clothes I am talking about.
- Talking to someone at the office, starting a conversation:
  - My husband took *(some) clothes* to the dry cleaner.
  - My husband took *the clothes* to the dry cleaner.

# Identifiability

- Hand me the blue block
- Hand me a blue block
- Hand me the red block
- Hand me the leftmost blue block
- Hand me the middle blue block



# Identifiability

- To someone at work, starting a conversation:
  - The man stole my newspaper.
  - The man next door stole my newspaper.

# Familiarity/Identifiability from discourse

- A student and a teacher were crossing the street. *The student* suddenly tripped.

# Familiarity/Identifiability evoked from discourse

- I went to a *wedding*. *The bride* was beautiful.
- Our house was *robbed*. *The burglar* left footprints.

# Specificity

- Specific
  - I am looking for a student. Her name is Jane.
- Non-specific
  - I am looking for a student. I need one to help me with something.
- English uses “a” for both specific and non-specific.

# Uniqueness

- The tallest student
- The sun
- The president

# Generics

- Birds fly.
- Lions are fierce beasts.
- The lion is a fierce beast.
- A lion is a fierce beast.



# Strange cases

- Abstract nouns
  - Glory, freedom, friendship, peace
    - People love (the) freedom
- Nationalities and parties
  - (the) Americans, (the) democrats, (the) republicans
- Institutions
  - (the) bank, (the) hospital, (the) bus
- Issues that people are familiar with
  - (the) global warming, (the) nuclear arms race
    - (See count vs mass nouns?)

Does your language have markings (words or morphemes) for definiteness?

- Many human languages don't have words like "the" and "a".
  - If they need to emphasize familiarity, they can use a *demonstrative* (*this, that*).
  - If they need to emphasize indefiniteness, they may use the word for "one".
  - Previously mentioned information typically goes closer to the beginning of the sentence.
    - Mother necklace me gave. (Mother gave me a necklace)
    - Necklace Mother me gave. (Mother gave me the necklace)

# How many distinctions in definiteness do you want to have?

- Hausa (Nigeria) has a word like “the” that is used only for nouns that are familiar because they have been mentioned earlier in the conversation, not for nouns that are familiar or identifiable from physical surroundings or common experience.
- Do you want to use the same word (like “a”) for specific and non-specific indefinites?
- Do you want a special marker for generics?

# Exponence of definiteness

- Separate word
  - The book, book the
  - Words like “the” and “a” are called “determiners”. They can also be called “articles”.
- Affix
  - Book-th, th-book
- You can use “this” and “that” for definite and “one” for indefinite, because that is where “the” and “a” often come from, or come up with something creative.

# Does either definiteness or indefiniteness have zero exponence (unmarked)?

- English indefiniteness is unmarked on plural nouns.
  - I read books. (indefinite)
  - I read the books. (definite)
- But English kind of has a plural indefinite determiner:
  - Unstressed “sm” vs stressed “some” in English
    - I saw sm students (indefinite plural)
    - I saw some students (quantifier)

# Definiteness and Number

- If you have markings (words or morphemes) for definiteness and number, what order are they in?
- Combinations: definite singular, indefinite singular, definite plural, indefinite plural
  - The book, a book, the(s) book(s), sm book(s)
- Is number expressed on the determiner, the noun, or both?

# Gender/Noun Class

- English has gender on third person singular pronouns: “she” vs “he”
- Genders may correspond to biological gender.
- But they extend to inanimate objects and become noun classes that aren’t completely connected to biological gender.
  - In gender languages, tables and chairs have gender.

# How many noun classes?

- Masculine, feminine, (neuter)
- Human, non-human animate, inanimate
- Human, animal, man-made thing, natural thing, long thing, etc.
- “Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things” (the title of a book by George Lakoff) is a noun class from the language Dyirbal.



# Exponence of noun classes

- Romance languages: on the determiner (le, la; el, la; un, una, etc.) and on adjectives that modify the noun (petit, petite).
  - Le petit garçon
  - La petite fille
- Bantu languages: on the noun itself and on all the words that modify it (determiner, adjective, preposition)

Are any of the classes unmarked?

# Interaction of noun class, definiteness, and number

- Order of morphemes in the word
- Order of words in the noun phrase

# Mass and Count Nouns

## Count (English)

- \*I read book.
- I read the book.
- I read a book.
- I read books.
- I read some books.
- I read that book.
- I read two books.

## Mass (English)

- I'd like information.
- I'd like the information.
- \*I'd like an information.
- \*I'd like informations.
- I got some informations.
- I got some information.
- I'd like that information.
- \*I'd like two informations.
- I'd like two pieces of information.

# How to individuate a mass noun

- A sheet/piece of paper
- A loaf/piece of bread
- A stick/piece of chalk
- A piece of information
- A cup of coffee
- A kind of coffee
- After they are individuated, they can be counted:
  - Two pieces of bread
  - Two pieces of information

# Some languages need numerical classifiers for every noun

- One person of student
- Two sheets of pizza

# Cardinality

- Adjacency
  - one book, two books
- Adposition
  - one **of** the books, two **of** the books
  - one book of, book of one
- What part of speech? Adjective? Determiner? Something else?
- Some languages use *genitive* case:
  - one book-iz, one iz-book, book-iz one, iz-book one
  - (Genitive case is also used for possession: *The student's book*)
- Since these can be thought of as partitives (part of the set of books), you could make a partitive case that is separate from genitive case.

# Cardinality with Numerical Classifier

- One person student
- One person of student
- Student('s) one person
- Student('s) person one
- Two person(s) of student (s)



# Interaction of definiteness, cardinality, number, and gender

# Ordinality

- The first student, the second student
  - Old English *fyr(e)st* ; of Germanic origin, related to Old Norse *fyrstr* and German *Fürst* ‘prince,’ from an Indo-European root shared by Sanskrit *prathama*, Latin *primus*, and Greek *prōtos* .
  - Second: *secundus*, *sequel*, ...
- (The) student’s first, (the) first of student, etc.
- Distinguish cardinals from ordinals?
  - four-th, th-four
- What part of speech?
  - Adjective, determiner, something else?

# Interaction

- Cardinality
- Ordinality
- Gender
- Number
- Definiteness

# Quantification

- All **of the** students, all the students, every student, some students, both of the students, many students
- What part of speech? Determiner? Adjective? Other?

# Types of pronouns

- Definite
- Indefinite
- Interrogative
- Deictic
- Reflexive/reciprocal
- Person
- Number
- Gender
- Case
- Formality

When two cells (or whole columns or rows) of the table are the same: *syncretism*

1sg	1pl	2sg	2sg	2pl	3sgf	3sgm	3sgn	3pl
I	we	you	thou	You/ Yinz/y'all/ You guys	she	he	it	they
me	us	you	thee	You/yinz/ Y'all/you guys	her	him	it	them
my	our	your	thy	Your/yinz' s/y'all's	her	his	its	their
mine	ours	yours	thine	Yours ?	hers	his	its	theirs

“You” used to be plural. 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural is often used as a polite form of address for 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular and the next thing you know, something disappears from your language.

# Other things that have exponence in pronouns

- Dual number
- First person plural inclusive and exclusive:
  - We-incl. = me and you (and possibly others)
  - We-excl = me and others, not you
- Fourth person or third proximate and obviate
  - In Algonquian languages and other native American languages: a third person who is more distant.
    - This guy=3<sup>rd</sup> proximate
    - That guy= 4<sup>th</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> obviate)

# Reflexive Pronouns

A pronoun that refers to an earlier pronoun in the sentence

- Myself
- Yourself
- Herself
- Himself
- Itself
- Ourselves
- Themselves
- In almost all human languages there are no nominative reflexive pronouns like *Iself*, *weself*.
- The reflexive pronoun is never the subject of a sentence.
  - I saw myself.
  - \**Iself* saw me.



# Non-English reflexive pronouns

- Instead of “self”: head, body, mouth, etc.
- Or just a single word “self”
  - I saw self.
  - You saw self.
- Possessive reflexive
  - I saw my book.
  - I saw self’s book.

# Reciprocal Pronouns

- Each other
  - We saw each other.
  - They saw each other.
  - We read each other's books.

# Deictic pronouns

## Distance from speaker/hearer

this	that
these	those

Deixis: words whose meaning depends on when they are uttered or who says them or where they are uttered: *now, today, this, etc.*

Distance can be in discourse (recently mentioned), or location (near and far).

Deictic pronouns occur without a noun: *This bothered me; I saw that.*

Deictic determiners occur with a noun: *This book bothered me; I saw that movie.*

- There can be a three way distinction in distance:
  - Japanese: *koko, soko, asoko*
- More distinctions:
  - This one near me
  - This one near you
  - This one visible to both of us
  - That one down river
  - Etc.

# Indefinite pronouns

- Some
- Someone, somebody, something

# Interrogative pronouns

- Who, whom, to-whom, what, where, when, why, how

# Possession

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Possession \(linguistics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Possession_(linguistics))
- Ownership: my book
- Part-whole: the top of the table, the horse's leg
- Kinship: the student's mother
- Masai language: land is unpossessable (Wikipedia)
- Which of these do you consider to be alienable and which inalienable?

# Exponence of possession

- Word order
  - Possessor Possessed
  - Possessed Possessor
- Genitive case: a marking on the possessor
  - the student's book
- Possessive case: a marking on the possessed
  - book-e student (the student's book)

# Possession Exercise 1

## Exponence of possession

- Hindi
- Basque
- Mandarin
- Japanese
- Spanish



# Beware if you speak another language

*In principle, yes.*

- <https://bratislavaguide.com/archive/radio-yerevan-jokes>
- Question to Radio Yerevan: "Is it correct that Grigori Grigorievich Grigoriev won a luxury car at the All-Union Championship in Moscow?"  
Radio Yerevan answered: "In principle, yes. But first of all it was not Grigori Grigorievich Grigoriev, but Vassili Vassilievich Vassiliev; second, it was not at the All-Union Championship in Moscow, but at a Collective Farm Sports Festival in Smolensk; third, it was not a car, but a bicycle; and fourth he didn't win it, but rather it was stolen from him."

There is a tendency to think that because you translate "I don't have a book" into Hebrew as "en li sefer" that they are exactly the same. They are not the same at all. "en" is a negative existential particle. "Li" is a first person dative case pronoun.

So in principle, yes. But instead of a main verb plus an auxiliary verb and a negative word (don't have) there is a negative existence particle and instead of a nominative pronoun there is a dative pronoun. And instead of an indefinite article "a" there is nothing. And "en" doesn't really *mean* "doesn't have": "have" is used for possession and part-whole relationships (e.g., the table has legs" whereas "en" is used for existence and location ("en sefer" There isn't a book), ("en sefer ba shulxan" There isn't a book on the table).

# Possession Exercise 2

What other meanings are possession markers used for?

- With voting open for this year's Oscars, we're taking a closer look at some of the craftspeople nominated for the year's best films—
- In the third act of the film, though, Louise finally cracks the alien language—
- Vermette was also responsible for designing the alien's language,
- at her house, with the big glass window overlooking the hazy lake. In her classroom, you have her whiteboard. And the chamber is divided by the big glass window. . . For Louise, the idea of the chamber was pre-conveyed in her world." Hotte, who dressed Louise's home and classroom minimally to create an openness, revealed that he made a point of keeping an oblong lamp in front of the home's great window as an early nod to the spaceship that will change Louise's life.

# Possession exercise 2

- The title **of** “The Present,” now playing on Broadway, is a clever one. The play takes place at a summer house in Russia on the occasion **of** a 40th birthday, and there are a few physical gifts in play — notably, a chess set and an antique gun. (The play is a Chekhov adaptation, so yes, both get used before the final curtain falls.) But it’s also concerned with the specters raised by “the present” as a concept, particularly in a group **of** friends with years **of** history between them: How does the past **of** each relationship impact how we might feel about it now? How much can we ever depend on the future?
- The linchpin of the proceedings is the birthday girl, Anna, played by Cate Blanchett with wit, grace and physical deftness. She spends much of the play’s first half smiling in amusement, resolutely unruffled by the impassioned meltdowns of those around her, and much **of its** second half shouting and seducing and dancing on tables. During a busy time for Blanchett — in addition to the three-hour run **of** the play each night, she’s also the face of Armani’s Sì fragrance, which launches a new iteration of **its** Rose Signature scent next month — she answered a few questions for T.

# Possession Exercise 2

- “At the beginning of the movie when we are first introduced to Louise’s house, the camera pans down from the ceiling to the windows and you see these textured lines in the ceiling. You also see those lines in the texture of the wall of the ship and those lines in the corridor of the university, when the camera pans down from the ceiling to introduce both settings.” The interconnectedness of the past, present, and future is also conveyed in the cinematic language.

# Fieldwork checklists

- For eliciting enough information about a language to write a reference grammar:
  - <https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/tools-at-lingboard/questionnaires.php>