Categories & Features
Categories/features matter to syntax

*Me fail English?

*John and at lunch seem to go together nicely.

Hershey bars protest.
Words come in categories

**Open class categories:**
Noun (N), Verb (V), Adjective (Adj), Adverb (Adv).

**Closed class categories:**
Preposition (P), Determiner (D), Complementizers (C), Auxiliaries and Modals ($V_{aux}$), Coordinators (Coord), Negation (Neg)
Lexical vs. functional categories

**Lexical categories:** "content" words

Noun (N), Verb (V), Adjective (Adj), Adverb (Adv).

**Functional categories:** grammatical info

Preposition (P), Determiner (D), Complementizers (C), Auxiliaries and Modals ($V_{aux}$), Coordinators (Coord), Negation (Neg)
Functional categories

Generally speaking, functional categories are not inflected and do not have prefixes or suffixes.

Prepositions tell you about time, location, source, goal, etc.

Determiners
articles, demonstratives, quantifiers, numerals, possessive pronouns

Grammatical categories
Functional categories

**Complementizer:** introduce a clause

*that, for, whether, if*

How do you tell the determiner *that* from the C *that*?

**Tense**

*will, to, do, does, did*

\[ V_{aux} \]

*has, have, had, am, is, are, was, were, be, would, should, shall, could, can, could*

Grammatical categories
Words come in categories

How do we know that a particular word belongs to a particular category?

1. Semantics
2. Morphological distribution
   - derivational morphemes
   - inflectional morphemes
3. Syntactic distribution
   - I will ____ after you leave.
   - They have no ____.

- Grammatical categories
Consider the following data from Nootka (data from Sapir and Swadesh 1939), a language spoken in British Columbia, Canada, and answer the following questions.

Note: DEF means definite determiner, which means that instead of having a separate word meaning ‘the’, Nootka adds an affix to the noun. PRESENT is a present tense marker.

i. Mamu:k-ma qu:?as-ʔi.
   working-PRESENT man-DEF
   'The man is working.'

ii. Qu:?as-ma mamu:k-ʔi.
    man-PRESENT working-DEF
    'The working one is a man.'

a. In sentences i, is qu:?as functioning as a verb or a noun?
b. In sentences i, is mamu:k functioning as a verb or a noun?
c. In sentences ii, is qu:?as a verb or a noun?
d. In sentences ii, is mamu:k a verb or a noun?
e. What criteria did you use to tell what is a noun in Nootka and what is a verb?
f. How does this data support the idea that semantic criteria alone cannot be used to determine the part of speech of a word?
Morphosyntactic features

D: A **morphosyntactic** feature is a property of a word that the syntax is sensitive to

- features:
  1. encode grammatical information
  2. encode semantic information
  3. distinguish grammatical categories
Features and grammaticality

1. *The rat my hotdog ate.

2. *Lost and The Office are two of my TV shows favorite.

3. *Me fail English?

4. *They’s throwing robots.
Number

D: **Number** is a feature of nouns, pronouns, and verb agreement that expresses count distinctions (such as "one" or "more than one").

[+singular]
[+plural]

Marshallese

*kwe* ‘you’ singular
*komi* ‘you’ plural
*komi-ro* ‘you two’
*komi-jeal* ‘you three’
*komi-ean* ‘you four’
*komi-uij* ‘you’ group

Morphosyntactic features
Grammatical gender

D: **Grammatical gender** is a noun class system, composed of two or three classes, whose nouns that have human male and female referents tend to be in separate classes. [+masc], [+fem], [+neut]

- Dutch: masculine, feminine, neuter (from Adger 2003)

5. de man die het boek leest.
   the.MASC man that. MASC the.NEUT book read.PRES
   ‘the man that reads the book’

6. het meisje dat/*die het boek leest.
   the.NEUT girl that.NEUT/that.MASC the.NEUT book read.PRES
   ‘the girl that reads the book’

- Morphosyntactic features
Grammatical gender

- Typical of Afro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Indo-European, Northeast Caucasian, and several Australian aboriginal languages such as Dyirbal.
- Usually absent in the Altaic, Austronesian, Sino-Tibetan, Uralic and most Native American language families.
- Some languages have dozens!
- Add morphology based on some (arbitrary) class that the word itself belongs to.
D: **Transitivity** refers to the number of participants a verb requires.

- **Intransitive**: 1 participant = a subject
     I-PST hit~INTR
     ‘I did some hitting.’

- **Transitive**: 2 participants = a subject and a direct object
  8. I-ar den-ete leddik eo.
     I-PST hit-TR girl the.SG
     ‘I hit the girl.’

- **Ditransitive**: 3 participants = a subject, a direct object and an indirect object
  9a. She brought me an ice cream cone.
  9b. She brought an ice cream cone to me.

**Morphosyntactic features**
Transitivity

Ditransitive verbs: *bring, send, give, take, put, etc.*

- Ditransitive or not? Indirect objects are not optional.
  9a. She gave a book to me.
  9b. *She gave a book.

*To me* is an indirect object.

What about…
9c. She is riding a tricycle to grandma’s house.
9d. She is riding a tricycle.

*To grandma’s house* is not an indirect object.

Morphosyntactic features
**Case**

D: **Case** is a feature determined by the syntactic or semantic function of a noun or pronoun. [+nom], [+acc], etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| subject | nominative | NOM  
| direct object | accusative | ACC  
| indirect object | dative | DAT  

Japanese

10. Asako-ga ronbun-o kai-ta.
   Asako-NOM article-ACC wrote-PST
   ‘Asako wrote the article.’

    Tanaka-Mr-DAT give please
    ‘Please give it to Mr. Tanaka.’

▶ Morphosyntactic features
Case continued

- Genitive = possession

**Finnish**

maa ‘country’; maa-n ‘of the country’

- Locative = location

**Montagnais (an Algonquian language spoken in Quebec)**

- shipu
  - ‘river’
- ship-it
  - ‘at the river’
- katshishkutamatsheutshuap
  - ‘school’
- katshishkutamatsheutshuap-it
  - ‘at school’
- nipi
  - ‘water’
- nip-it
  - ‘in the water’

- Morphosyntactic features
Case – continued

- **Instrumental** = means, method

**Classical Sanskrit**

12. रामो लेखन्या लिखति।
Rāma lekha-nyā likhati.
Rāma pen-INS writes
‘Rāma writes with a pen.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>subject</th>
<th>direct object</th>
<th>indirect object</th>
<th>possessive</th>
<th>location</th>
<th>instrument</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>nominative</td>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>dative</td>
<td>genitive</td>
<td>locative</td>
<td>instrumental</td>
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</table>

**Morphosyntactic features**
**Case – con’t**

Old English – determiners, adjectives and nouns show case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>wlonc baecere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>wlonce baecere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>wloncum baecere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INS</td>
<td>wlonce baecere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>wlonces baecerse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘proud baker’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘the proud baker’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>se wlonca baecere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>þone wloncan baecere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>þae wloncan baecere</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>þy wloncan baecere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>þaes wloncan baecere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Morphosyntactic features
## Person

- Chinook (from Adger 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>plural</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} exclusive</td>
<td>naika</td>
<td>ntaikia</td>
<td>ntshaika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} inclusive</td>
<td>tchaika</td>
<td>lchaika</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>maika</td>
<td>mtaika</td>
<td>mshaika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd}</td>
<td>áchka</td>
<td>shtáchka</td>
<td>táska</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Tense**

D: **Tense** is typically marked on the verb and refers to the time of the event or state denoted by the verb in relation to some other temporal reference point.

- **Irish (from Adger 2003)**

13. Dh’fhàg mi e.
   - PAST. leave I him.
   - ‘I left him.’

14. Fàgaidh mi e.
   - FUT. leave I him.
   - ‘I will leave him.’

▶ Morphosyntactic features
Tense

- English
  15. I will dance.
  16a. I dance.
  16b. I danced.
  17. I have a cold.
  18. I had a cold.
  19. I have often thought about moving to London.
  20. I had often thought about moving to London.

Morphosyntactic features
Agreement

D: *Agreement* refers to a relationship between elements whereby a form of one word requires a corresponding form of another.

Aleut (data from Merchant and Sadock 2009)
21. Tayağu-m hesanga-ku-u.
   man-SG.REL ascend-PRES-3SG
   ‘The man is ascending it.’

Arabic (Agder 2003)
22. Al-bint-aani qadim-atta.
   the-girl-FEM.DUAL came-FEM.DUAL
   ‘The two girls came.’

Morphosyntactic features
Voice

D: **Voice** indicates whether the subject is an agent, a theme or a recipient (etc.)

**English**
23. John **saw** the man in the yellow hat.
24. The man in the yellow hat **was seen** by John.

25. Mama a-likentenez-a shati langu.
   mother my IAGR-PAST-made-FV shirt my
   ‘My mother made my shirt.’

   shirt my 5AGR-PAST-made-PASS-FV by mother my
   ‘My shirt was made by my mother.’

Morphosyntactic features
References


Merchant, J. and J. Sadock 2009. Case, agreement, and null arguments in Aleut. Handout from the Linguistics Society of America annual meeting