

Understanding English Grammar: A Linguistic Introduction

Additional Exercises for Chapter 2: Typology

1. Typological comparison: English and Swahili Noun Phrases

Consider the following noun phrases in English and Swahili, the major Bantu language of East Africa. Based on these data:

A. Fill in the blanks with the probable Swahili translations.

B. Describe the morphological type of Swahili and compare it to that of English.

C. Describe the order of words in Swahili noun phrases, and compare this to the order of words in English noun phrases.¹

| English (singular) | Swahili (singular) | English (plural) | Swahili (Plural) |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| my book | kitabu changu | my books | vitabu vyangu |
| this book | kitabu hiki | these books | vitabu hivi |
| new book | kitabu kipya | new books | vitabu vipya |
| one book | kitabu kimoja | three books | vitabu vitatu |
| my new book | kitabu changu kipya | my new books | _____ |
| my one book | kitabu kimoja changu | my three books | vitabu vitatu vyangu |
| this new book | _____ | these new books | vitabu hivi vipya |
| this one book | kitabu hiki kimoja | these three books | vitabu hivi vitatu |
| my one new book | | my three new books | |
| <hr/> | | | |
| this one new book | | these three new books | |
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¹ If you know Swahili, you know that there is some variation possible in the word orders of these phrases. However, for the purposes of this exercise, please just consider the orders given in the examples, all of which are perfectly natural (at least to Swahili speakers in Tanzania).

2. Translating constituent order

Translate the following English sentences into your native language or some other language you speak well. If variation in word order is possible in your language, use the most "normal" or "natural" order, whether or not it is the same as the word order in the English examples:

- a. There was a tall man in the town.
- b. The man had some money.
- c. The man went to the market.
- d. The man bought two chickens and some maize.
- e. The man fed the chickens the maize.
- f. The chickens ate the maize.
- g. The man sold one chicken to his friend.
- h. His friend gave the man some money.
- i. The man killed one chicken.
- j. The chicken died.
- k. The man put the chicken in a pot.
- l. The man cooked the chicken and ate it.

Based on your translations, consider how the constituent order in your language differs from the constituent orders in the English sentences. In what ways is your language like English with respect to word order and in what ways is it different? Are there any cases where the grammar of your language and English are so different as to make it difficult to compare the languages in the ways asked for here? Feel free to include additional examples beyond the examples you are asked to translate if you think they are relevant for the comparison.

3. Translating manner, motion and path

Translate the following English sentences into your native language or some other language you speak well. If there is more than one way to translate these sentences, use the most "normal" or "natural" way, whether or not it corresponds word-for-word to the English examples:

- a. There was a mouse in my house.
- b. The mouse snuck in from outside.
- c. The mouse came in through an open window.
- d. The mouse scurried all over the floor.
- e. The mouse climbed to the rafters.
- f. The mouse ran along the rafters.
- g. The mouse dropped to the floor.
- h. I chased the mouse out of the bedroom.
- i. The mouse wiggled into a hole in the wall.
- j. The mouse went out through the hole.
- k. The mouse ran away.

Based on the translations, consider how your language packages the semantic components of MOTION, MANNER and PATH. How does this compare to the English examples? Are there any cases where the grammar of your language and English are so different as to make it difficult to compare the languages in the ways asked for here? Feel free to include additional examples beyond the phrases you are asked to translate if you think they are relevant for the comparison.

4. Translating cause and effect

Translate the following English sentences into your native language or some other language you speak well. If there is more than one way to translate these sentences, use the most "normal" or "natural" way, whether or not it corresponds word-for-word to the English examples:

- a. One of our chickens died.
- b. A dog killed our chicken.
- c. The door broke.
- d. The dog broke the door.
- e. I showed the chicken to my friend.
- f. My friend saw the chicken.
- g. My friend taught me how to build a chicken house.
- h. My friend helped me build a chicken house.
- i. My friend made me build a chicken house.
- j. I learned how to build a strong chicken house.
- k. The chickens became happy.
- l. The chickens are happy.
- m. I made the chickens happy.

Based on the translations, consider how your language packages the semantic components of CAUSE and EFFECT. How does this compare to the English examples? Are there any cases where the grammar of your language and English are so different as to make it difficult to compare the languages in the ways asked for here? Feel free to include additional examples beyond the phrases you are asked to translate if you think they are relevant for the comparison.

5. Translating perspective

Translate the following English sentences into your native language or some other language you speak well. If there is more than one way to translate these sentences, use the most "normal" or "natural" way, whether or not it corresponds word-for-word to the English examples:

- a. Yesterday I bought a radio.
- b. I bought the radio from my friend for ten dollars.
- c. My friend sold me the radio for ten dollars.
- d. I borrowed ten dollars from my brother.
- e. My brother loaned me ten dollars.
- f. I rented the radio to my sister.
- g. She rented the radio from me.
- h. She gave me one dollar.
- i. I received one dollar from my sister.
- j. A thief stole the dollar from me.
- k. The thief robbed me of one dollar.

Based on the translations, consider how your language expresses various perspectives on similar scenes. How does this compare to the English examples? In particular, how are the English verbs *buy* and *sell* translated? *Rent (to)* and *rent (from)*? *Borrow* and *lend*? *Rob* and *steal*? Are there any cases where the grammar of your language and English are so different as to make it difficult to compare the languages in the ways asked for here? Feel free to include additional examples beyond the phrases you are asked to translate if you think they are relevant for the comparison.