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## Creating sentences (without tears!)

Line Mikkelsen

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## Making sentences is a bit like cooking

- ▶ You need ingredients
- ▶ You need to put them together in a certain way
- ▶ It's nice to have someone to talk to and eat with!

## How do we learn to cook?

- ▶ We grow up with seeing and helping others cook
- ▶ We taste something and somehow know how to make it — rare!
- ▶ We follow a recipe until we have it figured out

## How do we learn to make sentences?

- ▶ We grow up with the language
- ▶ We hear a recording or see a written-down sentence in an archive and somehow know how to make other sentences — rare!
- ▶ We follow a recipe until we have it figured out

## Four “dishes”

1. basic sentences The man sang.
2. negative sentences The woman didn't sing.
3. commands Sing!
4. confirmation questions: Are you going to sing?

“I walked.”

**subject pronoun = I**

**verb root = walk**

**tense suffix = -ed**

**Pattern: subject verb.root-tense**

If you know a sentence pattern and some nouns and verbs, you can create lots of new sentences.

You talk-ed.

My sister work-ed.

The man sneez-ed.

...

...

**Caution:** Sometimes the pattern doesn't work!

I sing-ed. → I sang.

**Caution:** Sometimes there is more than one pattern!

“I will walk”

subject    tense    verb.root



## What goes into a basic sentence?

- ▶ **verb root**: expresses the action or state
- ▶ **subject**: expresses the one doing the action or in the state

and one or more ...

- ▶ tense: expresses when the action happens
- ▶ aspect: expresses whether the action is complete, on-going, about to happen, or repeating
- ▶ other important bits (“spices”)

## Three patterns for creating basic sentences

### 1. affix pattern:

the subject is part of the verb

### 2. clitic pattern:

the subject “leans” onto another word

### 3. pronoun pattern:

the subject is a separate word from the verb

# Affix pattern

## Barbareño

swe' = He is asleep.

kwe' = I am asleep.

pwe' = You are asleep.

Pattern: subject-verb.root

## Kawaiisu

mahanaan = She is washing.

**Pattern:** verb.root-verb.suffix-subject.

# Clitic pattern

## Tongva

Chechuuchke-nax=ne. means “I am playing peon.”

**Pattern:** verb.root(-...)=subject



# Mutsun

hinne=ka. means “I walk.”

**Pattern:** verb.root(-...)=subject

# Pronoun pattern

## Eastern Pomo

wa xajáma = We are swimming

Pattern: subject verb.root-tense

## Nisenan

**solim ni** = I am singing.

**Pattern:** **verb.root**-verbal.suffix **subject**

## affix clitic pronoun — Why bother?

- ▶ Gives you clues about other sentences
  - ▶ An affix always stays with the verb!
  - ▶ A clitic always leans on another word!
  - ▶ A pronoun can be used on its own!

# Negative sentences

**General recipe:** add negation to a basic sentence!

## Hupa

ch'e:ne:sit. = I woke up.

do: ch'e:ne:sit = I didn't wake up.

**Recipe:** Add do: at the beginning.

## Barbareño

swe' = He is asleep.

sewe' = He is not asleep.

**Recipe:** Add **negation prefix e-** between **subject prefix** and **verb root**.



But you might have to do some other adjustments as well ...

**English:** Basic sentence: I walk-ed.

Negative sentence: I not walk-ed → I did not walk.

**Recipe:** Add not, add special dummy verb “do”, move tense from verb root to dummy verb.

## Coeur d'Alene

'iɬn = She ate.

lut he'yɬn. = She didn't eat.

**Recipe:** add lut at the beginning of the sentence and change the form of the verb! The verb change depends on aspect and transitivity.

# Command sentences

**Ventureño:** **yət!** = Come here! (talking to one person)

**Barbareño:** **we'!** = Sleep!

**Pattern:** **verb.root!**

## Nisenan

**solip** = Sing! (talking to one person)

**solikwa** = Sing! (talking to two or more people)

### Recipe:

- ▶ talking to 1 person: add **-p** to **verb root**
- ▶ talking to 2+ people: add **-kwa** to **verb root**

# Confirmation questions

## Otoe

manyi ki. = He walks.  
(spoken by a woman)

manyi ja? = Is he walking?  
(spoken by a woman)

**Pattern:** For a woman speaking, change ki to ja.

## Ventureño

tšnowo = He/she/it stops.

tšno↑wo↓nu = Did he/she/it stop?

**Recipe:** add **-nu** (or **-u**) to **verb root** and let the sentence melody rise (↑) on the syllable before **-nu** and then fall (↓).



Enjoy cooking up new sentences!