English notes

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 2

Grammatical overview

2.1 Parts of speech

2.2 Nouns and noun phrases

2.3 Verbal morphology and the clause

2.3.1 TAM categories

English has two tenses: the past and the present. The aspectual system is more complicated. The concept of composition – whether the inner makeup of an event is important (Dixon 2012, § 19.10) – is marked by the so-called plain-progressive distinction, though (Dixon 2012) calls it the imperfective-perfective distinction. The English plain-perfect distinction arguably marks a distorted version of the completion concept – whether the time of an event is before the time of narratives defined by tense (Dixon 2012, § 19.7), because sometimes the event time in the English PERFECT is the starting time of the event in question, not the finishing time, and this disagrees with the term *completion*. English also has several modal constructions. The above categories interact freely (TODO: really?).

The category of tense is always realized morphologically on the main verb when there is no auxiliary or on the highest auxiliary verb (§ 4.1.1). The category of the two aspect categories are marked by auxiliary verbs, as well as modality (§ 4.1.2).

There is no future tense in English: The future time is marked by the auxiliary *will* or *would* or the *be going to do* construction (§ 4.1.4.1).

Besides the regular TAM system, there are also some periphrastic constructions marking specific TAM configurations, like *used to* or *would rather* (§ 4.1.3). Adverbs are also a important part in expressing TAM information in English (TODO: ref).

2.3.2 Negation

Negation in English clauses is usually realized by the negator *not*. Negative forms of auxiliaries and pronouns can also be used to express a negative idea.

2.3.3 Verb valency and alignment

English is a typical accusative language. A subject can be identified syntactically according to constituent order,

2.3.4 Moods

English has three types of finite main clauses with regard to the related speech act: the imperative, the indicative and the interrogative. No further morphosyntactic marking of sentential speech act (such as sentence-final particles) exists in English. The three moods are not marked morphologically. The interrogative mood

Box 2.1: Mood and modality

Dixon (2009) firmly argues against using the term *mood* for the syntactic marking of modality, while Huddleston and Pullum (2002) uses the term *mood* for the syntactic marking of modality and uses *clause type* to specifically refer to Dixon's *mood*. To avoid confusion (*clause type* is too vague), this note follows the definition of Dixon.

The confusion seems to arise from traditional Latin grammar, in which there is no significant difference between a declarative sentence and an interrogative sentence, while there is significant difference between the verbal morphology in indicative and subjunctive clauses. On the other hand, in imperative clauses there is no indicative-subjunctive distinction. Therefore the imperative-non-imperative distinction is fused with the indicative-subjunctive distinction and is named *mood*. This relies on the specificities of Latin grammar and surely is not a universal category for all languages. English also has subjunctive clauses, but that's about modality, not mood.

Box 2.2: Clause and sentence

Also, note that *mood* is about *sentences*, and not necessarily anything that can be called a clause Dixon (2009, 96). (Here Dixon is trapped into another extreme by claiming the clause linking procedure is flat, and the sentence is the ultimate product of grammar. But of course clause linking can be done recursively, with a tree-like order.) In generative syntax, a TP or a low-level CP is already well qualified as a clause, but in order to construct a sentence – a verbal constituent that serves as a "full" utterance – we still need to include the full functional projections marking speech acts or speech "forces". In Mandarin Chinese, for example, a clause often needs sentence-final particles attached to it to be an acceptable independent sentence, while clauses without sentence-final particles appear regularly in clause linking, and even more impoverished "small clauses" – basically *v*Ps – also appear in clause embedding. Thus, there are several types of clauses with different sizes.

Such phenomena also appear in English, arguably in all languages. Non-embedded finite clauses are of course full CPs, but some embedded finite clauses, like the indirect quoted question in *I asked [why he was always late]*, show different behaviors with their non-embedded counterparts: In the bracketed example, the subject-auxiliary inversion is absent. Participle constructions are likely to be TPs, as well as infinitives in control constructions (Pires 2006), while infinitives are impoverished CPs.

Still, Huddleston and Pullum (2002, pp. 45) uses the term *sentence* almost as a synonym of *utterance*, and all discussions concerning the syntax in their account of English grammar are about clauses. In practice, covering all kinds of TPs and CPs with the catch-all term *clause* doesn't create much confusion, because non-embedded finite clauses, embedded finite clauses, and nonfinite clauses are usually discussed in different places and it's easy to infer whether the term *clause* means a full CP, a defective CP or a TP. So to say mood (or *clause type*, with the specific meaning of the imperative/declarative/interrogative distinction) is marked on a finite clause doesn't create much confusion, and nor do wordings like "the clause type or the mood marks the speech force", though the latter is not universally true (in Chinese there are several syntactic systems marking the speech force).

2.3.5 Valency changing

Box 2.3: Valency changing

Valency changing involves the lexicon, the *v*P layer, and the TP layer. The term *valency changing* is kind of misleading, because what actually happens is *valency corresponding*, and the transformational rules used to describe valency changing are just phenomenological.

Some kinds of valency changing is likely to be purely because of the verb in question has two subcategorization frames. The clause *John and Mary will meet tomorrow* has the same meaning of *John will meet with Mary tomorrow*, but it's unlikely the relation between the two arises from some operations in the *v*P layer: The case may just be that *meet* is compatible with two *v*P structures, which turn out to have the same semantic interpretation.

Sometimes, however, we can add a *v* head to an existing *v*P, and extract one of the arguments introduced in the latter into the specifier of the former or introduce a new argument. This is frequently seen in Old Chinese as well as its sisters, and is still the main way Modern Mandarin Chinese does valency changing.

It's also possible to have two (or more) *v*P structures that both work for a group of verbs, and for some reason (e.g. the agentive argument is assigned an inherent case, so it's no longer visible for the A-movement to SpecTP), one of them disrupts the way TP usually works. This seems to be the way the English passive works.

In more descriptive terms, the *v*P-internal strategy lies on the blur line between derivation and inflection (and if the additional *v* head is realized as a word, that it lines on the line between multi-verb predicates and auxiliary verb constructions), while the *v*P-TP strategy involves the *alignment*.[a] It's hard to draw a clear line between the first and the second strategy.

[a] This – the agentive argument in a transitive clause being assigned an inherent case – also seems to be the source of morphological ergativity (Aldridge 2008). Syntactic ergativity, on the other hand, is caused by an early EPP feature targeting the absolutive NP.

2.3.6 Nonfinite constructions

2.4 Clause combining

All English clause combining devices are on the level of complete clauses: There is no complex predicate or clause chaining. Thus, TODO: types of clause combining

2.5 Constituent order

As is said above, English has highly rigid constituent orders. Moving of syntactic objects usually indicates non-trivial information structure (TODO) or is triggered by the syntactic environment (TODO: interrogative, etc.).

Chapter 3

The structure of the noun phrase

Chapter 4

Verb inflection

4.1 The verb paradigm

4.1.1 Inflectional forms

4.1.1.1 Lexical verbs

> **Box 4.1: Distinguishing inflectional forms**
>
> Traditional grammars usually have a large paradigm with its row and column headers being grammatical categories. (When there are too many categories – and in this case the language in question is usually agglutinative – the paradigm will be unbearably large, and another way – like the School Grammar of Japanese – is needed to cover verb inflection. Still, partial paradigms are useful in this case.) This is a morphosyntactic way to represent the inflection of a word, but if we are talking purely about the *morphological* part (i.e. how grammatical relations and categories are realized), then it's sometimes not necessary to recognize so many forms: If a verb appears exactly the same in two different syntactic environments, then we say there is only one *inflectional form* of that verb. For languages like Latin, the traditional large-paradigm way is handy, while for English, we can zip the paradigm severely (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, § 3.1.2).

Modern English has already lost most of its verb inflection. Following the analysis of Huddleston and Pullum (2002, § 3.1.1), for lexical verbs, there are six remaining inflectional forms: the past form, the plain present form, the 3sg present form, the plain form, the *ing*-participle, and the *ed*-participle. The two present forms and the past form appear solely with trivial aspectual values and trivial modality. They are **primary** forms: They already have all TAM categories marked on them. The plain form and the two participles are **secondary** forms: They usually appear after auxiliaries in a periphrastic construction to have full TAM marking, though a subjunctive clause may sometimes get rid of any auxiliary verb, as in *he suggests that she [complete] this task first* (TODO: ref).

Examples of these forms are illustrated in Table 4.1. This is a copy of [1] in Huddleston and Pullum (2002, § 1.1). It can be noticed that the plain form is usually the same as the plain present form. However, since modal verbs (see below) have no plain form, and that the syntactic environments of the plain form and the present plain form are too different, if Table 4.1 is to be regarded as a paradigm – that is, to be incorporated with morphosyntactic information – then the two forms should occupy two cells.

Table 4.1: Paradigms of lexical verbs

			take	*want*	*hit*
Primary	past form		*took*	*wanted*	*hit*
	present form	3sg	*takes*	*wants*	*hits*
		plain	*take*	*want*	*hit*
Secondary	plain form		*take*	*want*	*hit*
	ing-participle		*taking*	*wanting*	*hitting*
	ed-participle		*taken*	*wanted*	*hit*

Box 4.2: The name of the forms

Here I deviate from the practice in (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, Ch 3) and pick up the more common names for some of the forms.

The *ing*-participle is frequently called the *gerund*, because it now has the function of both a gerund and an active participle. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002) calls it the *gerund-participle*. Some grammars use the term *present participle*. Since in Modern English, the *ing*-participle no longer carries any tense information, the historical term *present participle* is abandoned in this note.

The traditional name *past participle* for the *ed*-participle makes more sense, because it's morphologically related to the past form for regular verbs and it still has some sense of "past": It is strongly related to the PERFECT and therefore has some sense of the past, though it doesn't carry the past tense. A better term would be the one in Latin grammar: the *perfect passive participle*, but this is in conflict with the name of the *having been done* construction.

A usual name for the plain form is the infinitive form, which I reject here because the morphological marking of the main verb after modal auxiliary verbs (*would [like]*), the verb in a subjunctive clause (*he suggests that she [complete] this task first*), and the verb in a real infinitive clause are all the same, and therefore it makes no sense to use the term *infinitive* to cover the *morphological* form of all the three.

The *ing*-participle is regularly formed by adding *-ing* to the end of the plain form (TODO: -tt- in splitting). The *ed*-participle and the past form are usually obtained by adding *-ed* to the end of the plain form, but for irregular verbs they can't be inferred from the plain form. Thus English verbs have three principal forms: the plain form, the past form, and the *ed*-participle.

4.1.1.2 Auxiliary verbs

English also has a number of auxiliary verbs (§ 4.1.2). All auxiliary verbs have tense-dependent forms, because all of them may appear as the first word in an auxiliary chain, and the tense category is to be marked on the highest i.e. the first of them (§ 4.1.2.1). Thus, we say English auxiliaries also have primary forms. Modal auxiliaries don't have a separate 3sg present form, but *do*, *have* and *be* (when used as auxiliary verbs) do. It should be noted that the past forms of many auxiliary verbs don't just appear in past clauses: They may have distinct meanings (TODO: ref).

Modal auxiliaries don't have secondary forms, probably because they never appear after another auxiliary verb or in nonfinite clauses, but *do*, *have* and *be* do.

English auxiliary verbs also have negative forms, which are obtained by attaching *-nt* to the end of auxiliary. The *-nt* is historically a contraction form of the negator *not*, but in modern English the negative suffix moves together with the auxiliary in subject-auxiliary inversion (§ 4.1.2.2). Thus, it's recognized as a part of the auxiliary (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, pp. 91). All auxiliaries don't have secondary negative forms, though *do*, *have* and *be* have primary negative forms.

Since auxiliary verbs are a part of the grammar, here I list the paradigms TODO

4.1.2 Periphrastic constructions with auxiliary verbs

4.1.2.1 The regular auxiliary chain

In a canonical finite clause (non-canonical clauses may undergo subject-auxiliary inversion (§ 4.1.2.2) or may not), the order of auxiliaries is constantly given by Table 4.2. The auxiliaries positions can be filled by the corresponding auxiliaries or be just left blank, without creating ungrammatical constructions. The MODAL slot may be filled by a modal auxiliary. The PERFECT slot may be filled by the auxiliary version of *have* with the correct inflection, and the PROGRESSIVE and *passive* slots may be filled by the auxiliary version of *be* with the correct inflection.

The rules of inflection are the follows. The tense category is always marked on the first auxiliary, and when there is no auxiliary, it's marked on the main verb. The progressive marking *be* is always followed by an *ing*-participle, and the perfect marking *have* is always followed by an *ed*-participle, and so is the passive marking *be*.

In nonfinite forms, the MODAL slot has to go; the rest are still there. Thus we have *to have been being taken* or *having been being taken*.

Table 4.2: The order of auxiliaries and some examples

MODAL	PERFECT	PROGRESSIVE	PASSIVE	main verb
				takes
			am/are/is/was/were	*taken*
		am/are/is/was/were		*taking*
	have/has/had			*taken*
	have/has/had	*been*	*being*	*taken*
will/would	*have*	*been*	*being*	*taken*

Table 4.2 is a part of the larger picture of clause structure, because adverbs and the negator may be inserted into somewhere between two auxiliaries. The rule of negation is simple: If the negator *not* is used, it is always after the first auxiliary (2), otherwise the first auxiliary is in its negative form (3). TODO: rules for adverbs and where to place them

(1) He [is]$_{\text{PROGRESSIVE}}$ [vigorously]$_{\text{TODO:}}$ [doing]$_{\text{main verb}}$ [his job]$_{\text{object}}$.

(2) He is [not]$_{\text{negation}}$ vigorously doing his job.

(3) He isn't vigorously doing his job.

Box 4.3: The TP projections

From a generative perspective, what happens here isn't surprising: What happens here is the span spellout of grammatical categories in the TP layer. The T feature is realized via affix lowering, and it's attached locally to the nearest "word" after vocabulary insertion, which is, of course, the first auxiliary. Some adverbs are actually heads of functional projections, and they are by all means a part of the sequence in Table 4.2. TODO: cartography of TP, especially the position of not

4.1.2.2 Subject-auxiliary inversion

In interrogative sentences, TODO: what else the first auxiliary in the chain undergoes leftward movement, usually to the initial position but may be preceded by preposed constituents (TODO: ref). This is called **subject-auxiliary inversion**. If

4.1.3 Semi-auxiliaries

4.1.4 Other semantic concepts

Some concepts exist in English but are not marked in the verb paradigm.

4.1.4.1 The future time

4.1.4.2 Evidentiality

The usual idea is English doesn't have an evidentiality category. The idea of evidentiality may be expressed by TODO: allegedly and by complement clause constructions about quoted speech (TODO: ref).

4.2 The imperative mood

4.3 The verb in nonfinite constructions

4.4 The subjunctive mood

Chapter 5

Verb valency

Chapter 6

Peripheral arguments

Chapter 7

Passivization

Chapter 8

Simple clauses

This chapter is mainly about the inner makeup of "canonical" clauses, i.e. clauses without information packaging (Ch 9). The details of how a clause is embedded into another are not covered in this chapter – they are covered in Ch 10, Ch 11 and TODO: adverbial clause.

8.1 Canonical verbal clauses

8.2 Clauses containing copular complements

8.2.1 Copular clause

Chapter 9

Information packaging

Chapter 10

Complement clause constructions

10.1 Types of complement clauses

10.2 Complement-taking verbs

Chapter 11

Relative clauses

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