

WS 2004/05

Contrastive Linguistics

Josef Schmied

more in:

- Hellinger, M. (1977). *Kontrastive Linguistik Deutsch/Englisch: Theorie und Anwendung*. Hueber Hochschulreihe 23. München: Hueber.
- James, C. (1980). *Contrastive analysis*. London: Longman.
- Hawkins, John (1986). *A Comparative Typology of English and German. Unifying the Contrasts*. London & Sydney: Croom Helm.

more on:

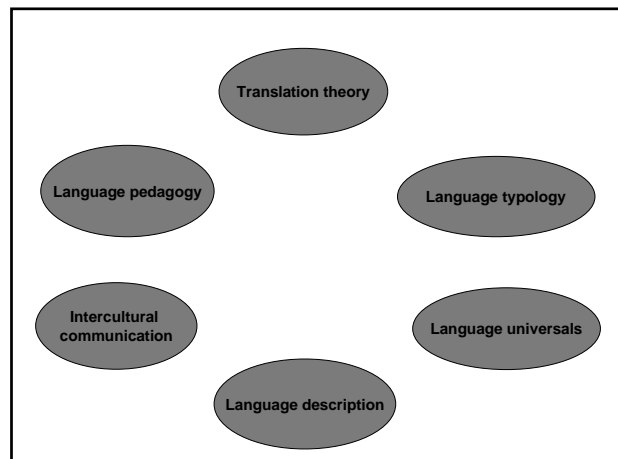
<http://www.tu-chemnitz.de/phil/english/chairs/linguist/independent/kursmaterialien/contrli/index.html>

Introduction to contrastive linguistics

0.1. Historical development

- 1950's: based on structuralism
- to make foreign language teaching more effective
- on the assumptions that:
 - Foreign language learning is based on the mother tongue
 - Positive transfer: similarities facilitate learning
 - Negative transfer/Interference: differences cause problems
 - Via contrastive analysis: problems can be predicted and considered in the curriculum

- CL seen as an applied branch of linguistics
- Serving practical purposes in foreign and second language teaching
- Expectations were not met
- Interest in CL declined especially in the US
- In Europe, interest continued; large contrastive projects in the 1970s
- since 1990s corpus-based
- Expanding field; theoretical and methodological interest
- Internationalisation increasingly demands cross-cultural competence, translation, foreign language teaching etc.



0.2. Methodological steps in CL

1. Description:
 - Selection of items to be compared
 - Characterisation of items in terms of some language independent theoretical model
2. Juxtaposition
 - Search for and identification of cross-linguistic equivalents
3. Comparison:
 - Specification of degree and type of correspondence between compared items

0.3. Problems

- *Tertium Comparationis*:
 - Lg a and Lg b differ in structure
 - translation equivalence:
 - meaning^c of structure a > structure b
 - meaning structure a = meaning structure b?
 - *Das gefällt mir*
 - *I like this*
 - *Cela me plaît / J'aime cela*
- > *gefallen = to like = plaire = aimer...?*
- > *Similar: Present Perfect vs. Perfekt vs. passé composé*
- norm, standard ?
- language independent model?

- *Predictability*
 - L1-based errors vs. non-L1-based errors
- *Complexity of language systems*
 - Analysis of subsystems
- *Differences vs. similarities*
 - Importance of crosslinguistics similarities
- *Langue vs. parole*
 - Static view on language
 - Context
 - Levels of linguistic description in theory and practice

0.4. Levels of description

- Phonology
- Morpho-Syntax / Grammar
- Lexis
- Pragmatics
- Text/Discourse
- ‚Culture‘

0.5. Terminology

- Contrastive Analysis
- Transfer: positive and negative
- Interference
- Hypercorrection
- Error Analysis <> predicting errors

1. Contrastive typology: English and German

Overview

- Grammatical morphology
- Word order
- Grammatical relations and their semantic diversity
- The position of the verb

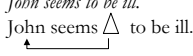
1.1. Contrastive typology E – G: morph-syn

- | German | English |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • more grammatical morphology | less grammatical morphology |
| • more word order freedom | less word order freedom |
| • less semantic diversity of GRs | more semantic diversity of GRs |
- one unifying generalization; surface forms of German are in a closer correspondence with their associated meanings:
- greater ambiguity/vagueness in English
 - destruction of semantic clause structure in English

Contrastive typology E - G

- | German | English |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| ■ less raising | more raising |
| ■ less extraction | more extraction |
- what is raising?
 - what is extraction?
 - How are raising and extraction evidence for the destruction of semantic clause structure?

Raising in English and German

- **Subject-to-subject raising**, e.g.
John seems to be ill.


John scheint Δ to be ill.
- *happen, continue, cease, ...*
- German: more restricted, e.g.,
John scheint krank zu sein.
- *geschehen, fortfahren, aufhören*: no raising

Raising in English and German

- **semantic interpretation**: interpret the derived subjects and objects as arguments of the lower embedded clause and not as arguments of the immediate clause
- example: *The noise ceased to get on his nerves (when he bought ear plugs).*
- a. The noise ceased
 b. (The noise got on his nerves) ceased.
 interpretation b.
- arguments of raised grammatical relations are interpreted as belonging in an altogether different clause from the one in which they are physically located in surface structure

Causes and consequences of the contrasts in raising

- two causes of the greater productivity of raising and tough movement (Hawkins 1986: 82-84) in English
- 1) semantic diversity of English grammatical relations is taken one step further; also: Old English already included the possibilities Modern German has (*Er glaubte sich betrogen, Er scheint krank zu sein, Das Buch ist leicht zu lesen*), so the pattern existed already
- 2) all clause-external movements are more productive in English than in German (cf. extractions)

Extraction in English and German

- extraction out of an infinitival object complement of a two-place predicate: in both E and G
- example:
The man who I have tried to kill was your friend.
The man (I have tried (to kill who))
Der Mann, den zu töten ich versucht habe, war dein Freund.
Der Mann (ich (den zu töten) versucht habe)
- with three-place predicates?
- example:
Who has he requested you to marry? *Wen hat er dich gebeten zu heiraten?*
- BUT: less "good" in German when sentence more complex, e.g.,
?Die Unterlagen verdächtigt man ihn unterschlagen zu haben.

Causes and consequences of extraction

- Generalization: in all cases German permits less trespassing of an argument into a clause in which it contracts no semantic relation with its immediate predicate
- raising: part of the semantic diversity of grammatical relations in English, which is attributable to the loss of case
- same with extraction
- German NPs: much more reluctant to leave their dominant phrasal categories (when governed, i.e., case-marked)
- other languages with case, e.g., Russian: similar behavior to that of German
- other languages with lost case, e.g., Danish: similar behavior to that of English

Causes and consequences of extraction

Consequences

- semantic consequences: related to what we've seen before (E: greater ambiguity by collapsing semantically diverse things into less forms)
- conservation of **logical** structure at the surface (predicate, arguments): yes in German, no in English

A general correlation

- complexity of form \Leftrightarrow simplicity with which meanings can be derived from that form
- few, simple forms \Rightarrow ambiguity, more work in decoding
- many, complex forms \Rightarrow semantic transparency, less work in decoding
- a continuum
- languages strike a balance at different points

2. Tense

2.0. Issues

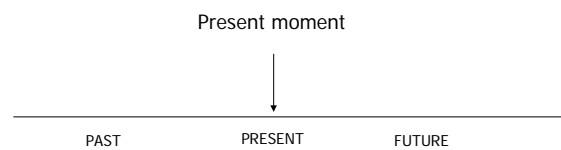
conglomerate tense & aspect & aktionsart:

- Difficult categories
- Terminological and conceptual confusion
- *Joan was singing vs. John is singing: TENSE*
 - *Joan was singing vs. John sang: ASPECT*

2.0.1. Time concepts and language

- Conceptualisation of time
 - Culture-specific
 - Time arrow / straight time line vs. cycle
 - Impact on or relevance for grammatical categories?
- All human languages have ways of locating in time

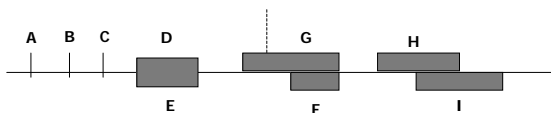
Representation of time: arrow



Representations of situations

Situations: Processes
Events
States

- Location of situations in relation to some other point or segment of line
- Internal temporal contour of a situation: point on the line vs. stretch of the time line



Cf. Comrie 1985: 6

2.0.2. Expressions of time

- Expressions can be divided into three classes:
 - Lexically composite expressions
 - Largest set, potentially infinite
 - *Last year, five minutes after J. left...*
 - Lexical items
 - Finite set
 - *Now, today, yesterday, ...*
 - Grammatical categories: TENSES
 - Finite set
 - *Present, past, ...*

2.0.3. Grammaticalisation vs. lexicalisation

- Grammaticalisation:
 - Integration into the grammatical system of a language
 - Obligatory expression
 - Morphological boundness
 - *Joan runs vs. Joan ran*
- Lexicalisation:
 - Integration into the lexicon of a language without effect on the grammatical structure
 - Non-obligatory
 - Free lexical items
 - *Now, yesterday...*
- Borderline cases, „continuum“:
 - Auxiliaries, preverbal markers...
 - Diachronic developments

2.1. Approaches to tense

2.1.1. Definitions

- „Tense relates the time of the situation referred to to some other time, usually the moment of speaking.“ (Comrie)
- Grammaticalised location in time
- Commonest tenses cross-linguistically:
 - Present: situation described is located temporally as simultaneous with the moment of speaking
 - Past: situation described is located prior to the moment of speaking
 - Future: situation described is located subsequent to the moment of speaking

- Tense is almost always indicated on the verb
 - Verb morphology
 - Grammatical words (e.g. auxiliaries) adjacent to the verb
- Tense is a deictic system
 - Deictic centre (usually present moment of speaking but cf. below for relative tenses)

2.1.2. Absolute tenses vs. relative tenses

- Absolute tenses relate the time of the situation described to the present moment, i.e. present moment = deictic centre
 - E.g.: Finite verb forms in English
- Relative tenses relate the time of a situation to the time of some other situation
 - E.g.: Non-finite verb forms in English
 - *When walking down the road, ...*
 - *... I often meet Harry*
 - *... I often met Harry*

2.2. Present tense

- Absolute tense
- Basic meaning: location of a situation at the present moment (cf. diagram)
- 100% simultaneity rare
 - Performative sentences:
 - *I promise you...*
 - *I name this ship*
 - Simultaneous reports
- Usually: Present tense used to refer to situations which occupy a much longer period of time than the present moment, but which include the present moment
 - *The Eiffel Tower stands in Paris*
 - *The author is working on chapter two*
- Implicature: whether a situation is part of a larger situation extending to the past or future is an implicature that is worked out on the basis of the context, structure of the sentence and/or one's knowledge of the world

- Many languages use the present tense to refer to habitual situations
 - *Joan goes to work at eight o'clock (every day)*
 - *Jobanna steht (jeden Tag) um sieben Uhr auf.*
- Contradiction to definition of basic meaning?
 - Reference to a habit and not to a sequence of situations
 - The habit does hold at the present moment
 - Habituality also aspectual (see below)
- Present tense = universal tense?
 - *Cows eat grass*
 - Interpretation of universal truth on the basis of factors beyond the basic meaning of present tense => implicature

2.3. Past tense

- Absolute tense
- Basic meaning: location of a situation in time prior to the present moment
 - Situation may occupy
 - a single point
 - *At seven o'clock, yesterday J. promised to give me ten pounds*
 - an extended time period prior to the present moment
 - *J. lived in Manchester from 1962 to 1982*
 - or the whole period up to the present moment
 - *Up to this moment this disease was incurable*
- Basic meaning does not include any reference to whether the situation continues to the present or even into the future!
- Conversational implicature that past tense does not continue to or beyond the present

2.4. Future tense

- Absolute tense
- Basic meaning: location of a situation at a time subsequent to the present moment
- Tense or mood?
 - Mood: a grammatical category which expresses the degree or kind of reality as perceived by the speaker
 - Speculative
 - Prediction
 - Realis vs. irrealis
- Many languages have a clear grammatical distinction between past and non-past (i.e. present and future time reference)
- Distinction between future and non-future is less distinct; in particular between future and present

- In many languages, present tense the normal verb form used to indicate future (German, Finnish):

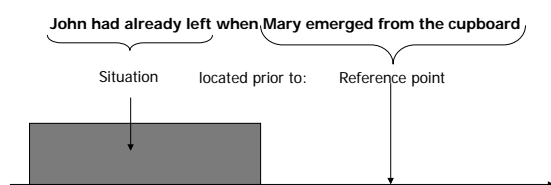
- German:
 - *ich gehe morgen ... vs. ich werde morgen gehen*
- Also possible in English for scheduled situations:
 - *The train leaves tomorrow*
 - **It rains tomorrow*

- Binary tense systems

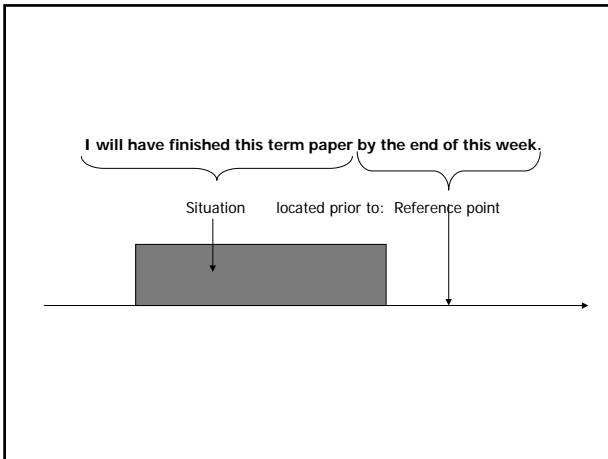
- Future vs. non-future
- Past vs. non-past
 - Present tense can always be used with future time reference (Finnish, German)
 - Severe constraints on the use of present tense to refer to time (English)

2.5. Absolute-relative tense

- Some verb forms can combine absolute time location of a reference point with relative time location of a situation
- As with pure relative tense, the reference point is given by the context
- Example: **English Pluperfect**
- Meaning: there is a reference point in the past (before the present moment) and the situation referred to is located prior to that reference point; establishment of the reference point is done by the context



- Interpretation as 'remote past' is an implicature
 - Temporal location does not have to be remote
 - *This particle had been created 2 seconds before this other particle was created 1 second ago.*
 - Intervening reference point is always necessary
 - **They had built the Great Wall of China.*
- Similar: **Future perfect**
 - Reference point is in the future (anterior to present moment)



2.6. Perfect

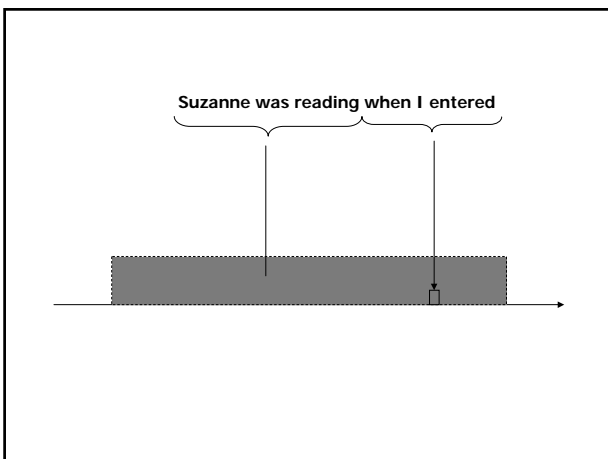
- Formal similarities between perfect and absolute-relative tenses
- Location in time prior to a reference point which in this case is simultaneous with the present moment
- Thus: locates a situation prior to the present moment = past tense
- Perfect differs from past but not with regard to time location
- Perfect in English cannot collocate with time adverbials which refer to a specific point or period in the past (≠past and ≠pluperfect and future perfect)

- Particularity of the English language indicates that perfect constitutes a category apart from past and from absolute-relative tenses
- Also: cross-linguistically some languages may have a distinct perfect category while lacking a pluperfect or future perfect
- Diachronic changes affecting the perfect may have no repercussions on the pluperfect and future perfect
 - German and French: perfect takes over functions originally covered by past tense but pluperfect and future perfect remain
- Frequent implicature: more recent time reference

3. Aspect

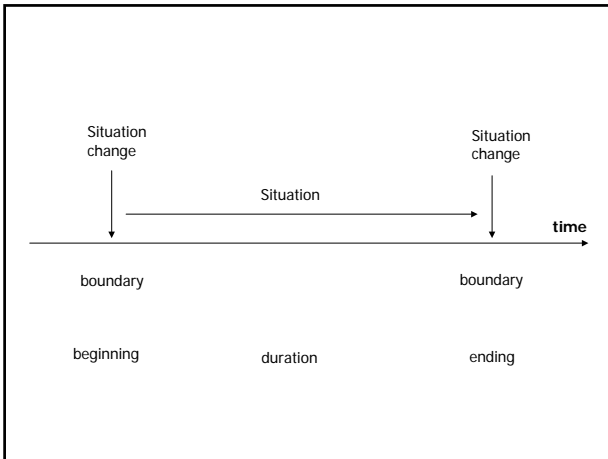
3.1. Approaches

- „Aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation.“ (Comrie 1976:3)
- Characterisation of the internal structure of an event
 - *Sue was reading when I entered.*
 - *Suzanne lisait quant j'entrai.*
- Background vs. event
- No reference to the beginning or the end vs. presentation of totality of the situation

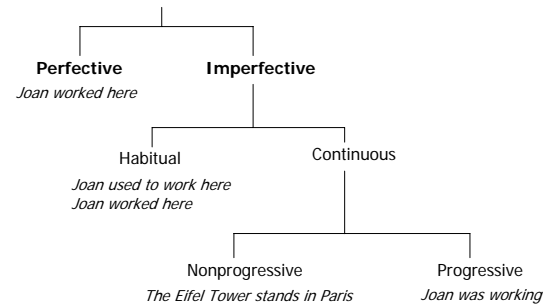


3.2. Perfective vs. imperfective

- Aspect insists on oppositions; for example:
 - Perfective aspect: looks at the situation from the outside, without distinguishing any of the internal structure of the situation
 - External focus
 - Imperfective aspect: looks at the situation from the inside, is crucially concerned with the internal structure of the situation; can look backwards towards the start, or look forward to the end of the situation
 - Internal focus



3.3. Classification of aspectual oppositions



Cf. Comrie (1976: 25)

3.4. Meaning and form

- ‚Aspect‘ is often used to refer lexical realisations of this semantic category as well as to grammatical categories corresponding to this semantic distinction
- Not all aspectual distinctions are expressed or grammaticalised in all languages
 - Example: English is said to lack the opposition perfective vs. imperfective
 - Distinction progressive vs. non-progressive realised within a limited set of verbs (i.e. non-stative), and only if habitual meaning is excluded
 - Example: German basically lacks a grammatical realisation of aspect
 - *She read the book > Sie las das Buch*
 - *She was reading the book > Sie las im Buch*

■ Lexicalisation

■ German

- *gerade, im Buch*

■ Inflection

■ Spanish

- *leyó vs. leía*

■ Periphrasis

■ English

- *she was reading*

■ Very often combination of aspect and tense:

- Spanish *leía* combines imperfective meaning with past time reference

3.5. Perfect

- Different type of aspect
- No information about the internal temporal constitution of a situation
- Reference to a past situation which has present relevance
- Indication of continuing present relevance of a past situation

4. Aktionsart

4.1. Approaches

1. A distinction of **aspect** which is expressed lexically, rather than grammatically: *eat, nibble, devour*.
2. A distinction of aspect which is expressed by derivational morphology (e.g. Russian).

(Trask, *Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics*)

a situation may be either static or dynamic, punctual or durative

normally expressed in the lexical meaning of the verb and its arguments

Examples



6.2. Aktionsart categories

- Best known verb categorisation by Zeno Vendler (1967)
- States: *love, hate*
- Activities: *run, walk*
- Accomplishments: *run a mile, read a book*
- Achievements: *win a race, recognize*

■ Telic vs. atelic

- *Joan is singing vs. Joan is singing a song*
- *Joan sang vs. Joan sung a song.*
- *When I crossed the bridge, a man drowned.*
- *When I crossed the bridge, a man was drowning.*
- *essen vs. aufessen*
- *kämpfen vs. erkämpfen*

■ Punctual

- *He was coughing*
- *also: flash*
- *reach: *Joan is reaching the summit*

7. Word order

- Constituent order?
- Free vs. strict word order
- Diachronic development
 - Case vs. word order
- Word order freedom?
 - Clause external: crossing clause boundaries
 - Clause internal: within clause boundaries

6.1. Basic principles of word order

- German has clause-internal word order movement rules which do not exist in English
- German and English have a number of similar clause-internal movement rules but these are more productive in German

6.1.1. Examples

- {Peter} {gab} {zu Weihnachten} {dem Bruder} {das Buch}.
- {Peter} {gave} {the book} {to his brother} {for Christmas}.
- 24 possible relative orderings of the four constituents?
- Degrees of grammaticality?
- Effects of stress?

German

- i. *Dem Bruder gab zu Weihnachten das Buch Peter.
- ii. *Dem Bruder gab das Buch zu Weihnachten Peter.
- iii. *Zu Weihnachten gab dem Bruder das Buch Peter.
- iv. *Zu Weihnachten gab das Buch dem Bruder Peter.
- v. *Zu Weihnachten gab das Buch Peter dem Bruder.
- vi. *Das Buch gab dem Bruder Peter zu Weihnachten.
- vii. *Das Buch gab dem Bruder zu Weihnachten Peter.
- viii. *Das Buch gab zu Weihnachten dem Bruder Peter.

- i. Peter gab zu Weihnachten dem Bruder das Buch.
- ii. Peter gab dem Bruder zu Weihnachten das Buch.
- iii. Peter gab dem Bruder das Buch zu Weihnachten.
- iv. Peter gab zu Weihnachten das Buch dem Bruder.
- v. Peter gab das Buch zu Weihnachten dem Bruder.
- vi. Peter gab das Buch dem Bruder zu Weihnachten.
- vii. Dem Bruder gab Peter zu Weihnachten das Buch.
- viii. Dem Bruder gab zu Weihnachten Peter das Buch.
- ix. Dem Bruder gab Peter das Buch zu Weihnachten.
- x. Dem Bruder gab das Buch Peter zu Weihnachten.
- xi. Zu Weihnachten gab Peter dem Bruder das Buch.
- xii. Zu Weihnachten gab dem Bruder Peter das Buch.
- xiii. Zu Weihnachten gab Peter das Buch dem Bruder.
- xiv. Das Buch gab Peter dem Bruder zu Weihnachten.
- xv. Das Buch gab Peter zu Weihnachten dem Bruder.
- xvi. Das Buch gab zu Weihnachten Peter dem Bruder.

English

- * Peter gave for Christmas (to) his brother the book.
- * To his brother Peter gave for Christmas the book.
- * To his brother gave the book Peter for Christmas.

English

- i. Peter gave his brother the book for Christmas.
- ii. Peter gave for Christmas his brother the book.
- iii. Peter gave the book to his brother for Christmas.
- iv. Peter gave the book for Christmas to his brother.

- v. Peter gave for Christmas the book to his brother.
- vi. To his brother Peter gave the book for Christmas.
- vii. For Christmas Peter gave his brother the book.
- viii. For Christmas Peter gave the book to his brother.
- ix. The book Peter gave for Christmas to his brother.
- x. The book Peter gave to his brother for Christmas.

6.1.2. Results

- Effect of stress?
- German examples:
 - Without stress: 8 ungrammatical sentences and 16 grammatical
 - With appropriate stress, all 24 were judged grammatical in an experiment carried out by Bierwisch (1963)
 - Varying degrees of grammaticality
- English examples:
 - Only 10 sentences judged as grammatical
 - Fixed word order replaces morphologically encoded grammatical relation
- Pragmatic consequences ?

6.1.3. Pragmatic consequences

- Ambiguity of English constructions with respect to pragmatic functions
- Pragmatic differences are syntactically encoded in German
- Theme („old information“) and Rheme („new information“)
- Examples:
 - *Ich habe ein Kleid an den Kleiderhaken gehängt.*
 - *Ich habe an den Kleiderhaken ein Kleid gehängt.*
 - *I hang a dress on the clothes-book.*

6.2. Basic verb position

- The order of subject, verb and object plays a major role in the typological classification of languages
- Major contrast in basic sentence structure between English and German
- English basic word order: SVO
- German: complex situation with SVO in main clauses and SOV in subordinate clauses

English: examples

- *John saw the boy (S V O)*
- *John has seen the boy (S Aux V O)*
- *I know that John saw the boy (S V O)*
- *I know that John has seen the boy (S Aux V O)*

German: examples

- *Johann sah den Jungen. (S V O)*
- *Johann hat den Jungen gesehen. (S Aux O V)*
- *Ich weiß, dass Johann den Jungen sah. (S O V)*
- *Ich weiß, dass Johann den Jungen gesehen hat. (S O V Aux)*

- Difference between finite verb position and non-finite verb position in German
- In declarative main sentences: finite verb occupies second position, other verb forms occupy the final position („verbale Klammer“)
- In subordinate clauses, the finite verb form occupies final position, following all other verb forms

Examples

- *Johanna hatte gestern in Leipzig ihrem Freund das Buch gegeben.*
- *..., (weil) Johanna gestern in Leipzig ihrem Freund das Buch gegeben hatte.*

6.3. Verb-final

6.3.1. Verb-final in German

- German assumed to be a verb-final (SOV) language
- Examples with finite and non-finite verb forms
 - ..., dass Johann den Jungen sah.
 - Der Mann, der die Frau vor einigen Tagen besuchte. ...
 - Ich freue mich darauf, heute nach Hause zu fahren.
 - Der Versuch, im Haus einen passenden Schlüssel zu finden...

- Fronting rule for the finite verb into second or first position in main clauses
 - Johann sah den Jungen.
 - Sah Johann den Jungen?
 - Mein Vater ist vor einigen Tagen nach London gefahren.
 - Vor einigen Tagen ist mein Vater nach L. gefahren.
 - Abends kann ich in der Wirtschaft ein Bier trinken.
- Non-finite verb forms in main clauses remain in final position
 - Mein Vater ist vor einigen Tagen nach London gefahren.
 - Ist mein Vater vor einigen Tagen nach L. gefahren?

6.3.2. Verb-final in English

- In PDE, we do not find verb-final sentence structures
- Diachronic development
- In PDE, verb-final patterns in compounds:
 - lion-hunter, quick-drying,

6.4. Differences in information structure

- German:
 - Ich weiß, du bist ein intelligentes Mädchen.
 - Ich weiß, dass du ein intelligentes Mädchen bist.
 - *Ich bin keineswegs überzeugt, du bist ein intelligentes Mädchen.
 - Ich bin keineswegs überzeugt, dass du ein intelligentes Mädchen bist.
- Main vs. subordinate clause

- English:
 - I know, you are an intelligent girl.
 - *I am by no means convinced, you are an intelligent girl.
 - I know (that) you are an intelligent girl.
 - I am by no means convinced (that) you are an intelligent girl.
- Comma intonation
- Greater ambiguity in English

German alternations

- The following alternations are unacceptable in English:
 - Schließe mir ja heute abend die Haustür.
 - Dass du mir ja heute abend die Haustür schließt.
 - Close the front door for me this evening.
 - *That you close the front door for me this evening.
- In German, verb position is sufficient to indicate the subordinate status of a clause and thus to carry the associated pragmatic meaning.

7. Relative clauses

- Problem variables?
animacy, juncture (restrictive/necessary), case
 - who – which
 - whose – of which
 - which – that /0
 - who – whom?

English vs. German

German

- All relative clauses are embraced by commas
- Relative pronouns: *die, der, das*
- Formal: *welche, welcher, welches*

English

- **Non-defining relative clauses:**
- Use of commas
- Relative pronouns: *who/whom/which*

- **Defining relative clauses:**
- No commas
- *'That'* as relative pronoun
- Omission of relative pronoun
- Non-finite construction

Ungerer et al. 1999: 252

English vs. German

German

- Er kauft jede Antiquität, die ihm in den Weg kommt.
- Das Lokal, das ich meine, liegt direkt auf der anderen Seite der Brücke.
- Die Leute, die auf den Bus warten, werden allmählich ungeduldig.

English

- He buys every piece of antique furniture that comes his way.
- The restaurant I mean is just across the bridge.
- The people waiting for the bus are getting impatient.

Ungerer et al. 1999: 253

8. Non-finite clauses

■ infinitives

for N postmodification: *a man to watch*

D: relative

■ participles

for N postmodification: *the man watching us*

D: relative

■ gerunds

clause initiating: *By doing so, she achieved wonderful results.*

D: subordination + conjunct *indem*