

Languages of the World

Head marking and dependent marking

Types of Morphological Linkage between Constituents

Government

morphological features are only relevant to the dependent construction and not to the head

Data from ancient Greek:

- a. **ana** *skē:p̄rt-ō:* (DAT) „upon a staff“
- b. **apo** *tou hipp-ou* (GEN) „from a horse“
- c. **en** *Spart-ē* (DAT) „in Sparta“
- d. **eis** *basil-ea* (ACC) „to the King“

prepositions carry no special morphology

obligatory marking on the dependent (here: noun)

prepositions are said to **govern** a particular case

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Agreement

morphological features occur on head and dependent alike

Data from Spanish:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. <i>la elefanta negr-a</i> | „the black elephant“ |
| b. <i>las elefantas negr-as</i> | „the black elephants“ |
| c. <i>el gato negr-o</i> | „the black cat“ |
| d. <i>los gatos negr-os</i> | „the black cats“ |

here:

article and adjective occur in a form that corresponds to the head noun (number: singular vs. plural)

they all **agree** in number

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Consider the following possessive constructions:

- a. *a man's house*
- b. *az ember h'az-a*
the man house-3S

note:

syntactic relations are identical; a head noun is modified by a possessor

in the English a. the possessor (ie. the modifier) is marked;

this is an instance of **dependent marking**

in the Hungarian b., the possessee is (ie. the head noun) is marked;

this is an instance of **head marking**

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Syntactic relations between head and nonhead are not always indicated morphologically

E.g. in Kobon juxtaposition of possessor and possessee is enough

Dumnab ram

Dumnab house „*Dumnab's house*“

More exceptionally, **double-marking** occurs, e.g. in Turkish:

ev-in kapi-si

house-GEN door-3S „*the door of the house*“

Sometimes marking cannot be uniquely assigned, e.g. Persian:

asb-e-mard

horse-LINKER-man „*the man's horse*“

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Four classes:

- Head marking (e.g. Blackfoot, Lakhota)
- Dependent marking (e.g. Greek)
- Double marking (e.g. Aleut, Arabic)
- **Split marking**: roughly equivalent numbers of head-marking
and dependent-marking patterns (e.g. Bantu languages)

As with other classifications, no language is entirely consistent in its marking strategy

Areal distribution

- Locus of Marking in Clause
- Locus of Marking in Possessive Noun Phrases
- Locus of Marking: Whole-Language Typology