Today's topic:

- ## Syntactic change: Typology

Studying syntactic change

From *IHL*, sec 12.1 [emphasis added]

- "When we study syntax, we are studying the **rules that we infer from sentence data**. If we treat these as correspondence sets, they are sets of very abstract items."

- "…there has been quite a bit of focus on…the changes that are attested in the history of **individual languages**. There has also recently been much work on the **historical relationship between syntax and morphology**. This is part of grammaticalization theory…"

Studying syntactic change

In this course, we will focus on:

- **Typology** (today)
  - Classifying languages by **characteristics** (rather than by genetic affiliation)
  - Seeing how languages might **change** from one type to another
  - Understanding how changes between types relate to the syntactic grammar — the "rules that we infer from sentence data"

- **Grammaticalization** (Mon)

- **How to study** syntactic change (Wed)

Typology

- "Typological classifications of languages can be based on whatever features we might find it useful to base them on" (*IHL*, p 219)
  - What are some examples?

- One reason for looking at typological classification is in order to study which types tend to change into which other types

Basic constituent order

- "Basic constituents" here are **subject**, **object**, **verb**

- All six possible orders are found

  SVO   VSO   OSV
  SOV   VOS   OVS

- Which are the most common?
  - See WALS map

Changes in basic constituent order

- Sometimes caused by language contact

- Sometimes by generalization of a minor pattern found in a language to become the major pattern

Basic constituent order and mental grammar

See discussion exercises

- What makes a language SOV?
  What makes a language SVO?

- If a language changes from SOV to SVO, how does the mental grammar change?

- How do we predict thhat adposition type (preposition vs. postposition) should differ between SVO and SOV languages?

  - Does WALS data support this prediction?

Morphological type

What are the characteristics that distinguish these types of languages?

- Examples discussed in class: Spanish, Japanese
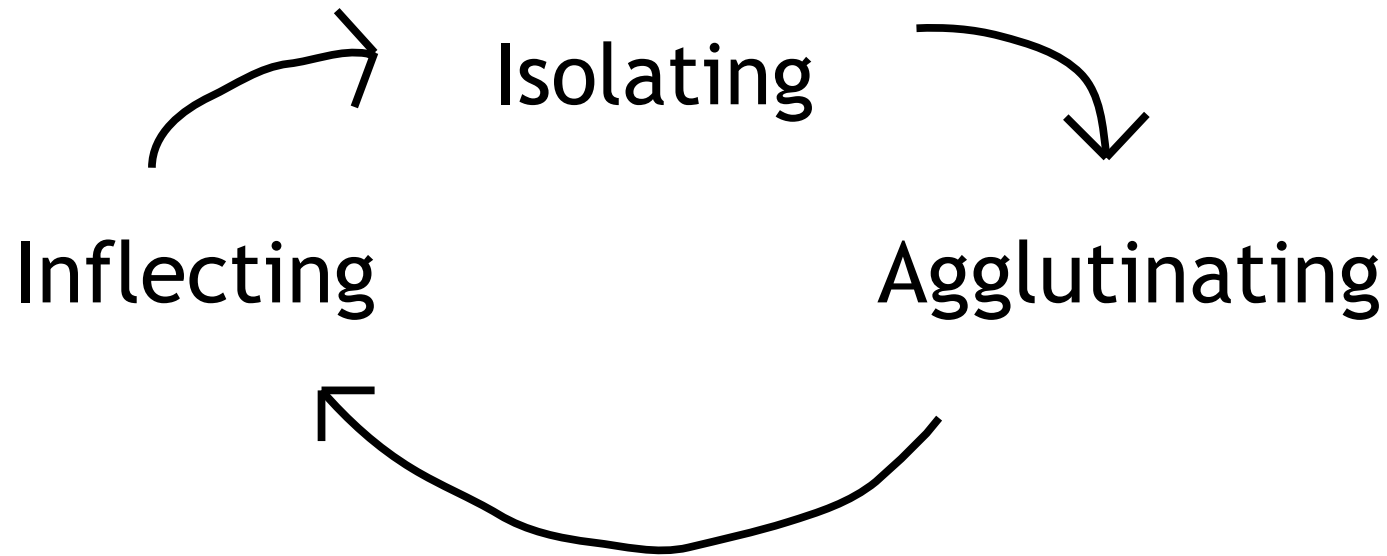
- isolating

- agglutinating

- inflecting

→ Why is this topic discussed in the 'syntactic change' chapter?

Morphological type

	Many morphemes are	*Relationship between morph. features and sound shape is largely*
isolating	free	
agglutinating	bound	one-to-one
inflecting	bound	many-to-one

- also **polysynthetic** (~extreme agglutination, often with 'words' equivalent to 'clauses')

Morphological type — Cycle of change

- **Isolating** language
  - + phonological reduction (words > affixes)
  - > **agglutinating** language

- **Agglutinating** language
  - + morphological fusion (often via sound change)
  - > **inflecting** language

- **Inflecting** language
  - + morphological reduction (often via sound change)
  - > **isolating** language

Morphological type

- A caution
  "Inflectional languages are those in which there are many morphemes included within a single word, but the boundaries between one morpheme and another are not clear."
  (*IHL*, p 220)

  - What is actually meant by "morpheme" here? (This wording assumes a diachronic perspective, with a change *agglutinating > inflectional*.)

Morphological type

- Why is this topic discussed in the 'syntactic change' chapter?

    - Do any of the morphological types bear directly on syntax?

    - Can an adposition develop into a *suffix* through phonological reduction?

    - What is the difference between morphology and syntax?