

# Linguistics 550 Final Squib

November 26, 2018

Your final assignment us to write a short squib on one of the twi topics listed below. Please do this squib on a computer, as with the other assignments, and submit the answer via email in a file whose name has the following form:

*yourname-550-Final.doc or .pdf*

Your squib should be submitted by the end of the day on Thursday, December 20. It should be no more than ten pages long, excluding the bibliography. I'd like you to think of the squib as a potential contribution to our online syntax text, perhaps as an added chapter. This means that it is ok to present a somewhat simplified account with the goal of handling the core properties of the phenomenon. Where your treatment fails to cover an aspect of the topic, however, you should point that out and briefly indicate what's at stake. You should make reference to existing literature on the topic and make substantive use of more than one reference in your discussion. At the same time, you should not worry about being exhaustive. A total bibliography of five to ten or sources is sufficient. Be sure to use tree diagrams where appropriate to represent sentence structure.

Because your work is being graded, you should not discuss the topics or your approach with other students or with anyone else. If you have questions, send them to me by email. I'll be happy to answer them.

Please choose one of the following topics:

**Squib topic 1.** A syntactic construction called the “applicative” has been the subject of considerable discussion in the syntactic literature. It is best known for its widespread occurrence in the Bantu languages of Africa but is found in many other languages as well. The construction involves the addition to the verb of a “applicative” suffix, which licenses an additional verbal argument. Compare (1) to (2) from the Bantu language Chingoni:

- (1) Kuku i-geg-a li-gela.  
grandpa SM-carry-FV hoe  
“Grandpa carries the hoe.”
  
- (2) Kuku a-ku-va-geg-el-a va-jukulu li-gela.  
grandpa SM-PR-OM-carry-APPL-FV grandchild hoe  
“Grandpa carries a hoe for the grandchildren.”

(Note: SM is a subject agreement marker for “grandpa,” OM is an object-agreement marker for “grandchild,” FV is a thematic vowel, PR is a present tense marker, and APPL is the applicative suffix.) The applicative construction interacts in interesting ways with syntactic movement, including the passive. Starting from the syntactic system of the textbook, provide an analysis of the applicative construction in two languages where the syntax of the construction is at least minimally different. What difficulties, if any, arise in using the textbook system for this purpose? What are the minimal changes you would have to make in the system to handle the data you are describing?

**Squib topic 2.** Syntactically, one of the major “types” of language is the verb-initial type. In the modern era both the Celtic and the Semitic families have been dominated by languages of this type and other languages are also verb-initial. Two examples of Celtic verb-initial languages are Irish Gaelic and Welsh. Describe the clausal syntax of these two languages in structural terms, using the syntactic system we have developed over the semester as a starting point. Focus on comparing them from a structural point of view, being sure to explain how the verb-initial order is generated each case. What modifications of our system seem to be necessary to capture the facts correctly? If you wanted to include a discussion of these languages’ clause structure in a later edition of the text, where would you put it and what modifications would you make to the rest of the textbook in order to accommodate the new material?