# VERB CATEGORIZATION DEVICES

I survey a representative sample of ca. 300 languages for their morphosyntactic implementation of "verb categorization devices". Departing from a statistical-distributional rather than a cognitive definition of classificatory phenomena (as in McGregor 2002, Gerner 2009), this study will scrutinize five major morphosyntactic types (and numerous subtypes):

A. Lexical Devices
   (1) By means of **core NP-arguments** [classification of verbs by number of possible NP arguments: intransitive, monotransitive, ditransitive] (nearly all languages)
   (2) By means of **adjunct NP-arguments** [a closed set of instrumental or temporal NPs show selectional restrictions for certain verbs in frequency constructions] (isolating languages of East Asia)
   (3) By means of **classificatory verbs** [a closed set of inflected 'dummy' verbs categorizes the open set of uninflected verbs] (in various parts of the world)

B. Grammatical Devices
   (1) By means of **verb affixes** [a closed of verbal affixes categorizes verbs in verb classes and thereby mirroring the nominal categorization technique of 'noun classes'] (in several languages of the world)
   (2) By means of **conjugation systems** [each verb is inflected in a verbal paradigm for a number of parameters such as person of core arguments, TAM etc; there is a small number of conjugation paradigms] (e.g. Romance languages)

For some of the above types, the *classification of linguistic forms* also relates to a *classification of experience* (Lucy 2000). A potential for a classification of referring events denoted by verbs is attested for types A(2), A(3) and B(1). For A(2), Gerner (2009) shows that classifiable verbs match the concept of TOUCH-events, i.e. of physical events in which two objects enter into touch contact either once (e.g. 'beat') or iteratively (e.g. 'hammer'). As for A(3) and B(1), classificatory verbs and affixes are often associated with a number of generic activity concepts (*do*, *change*, *express* etc).

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