Finishing Up Syntax
grab-bag of some remaining syntactic topics:

- ‘have’
- coordination
- anaphora
- comparatives, superlatives
but first!

Ŝâluvyqrst (ked) vályqrst speak I Vâlqrst.ACC
‘I speak Vâlqrst’
and also!

lo-jov’-av-en-eX-l’hej
CONTINUALLY-exhale-1SG-connecting-3PL-l’hej
‘I speak L’hej’

l’ h (e) j
continual useful exhaling
moreover!

kɪogul-ag wʊʃgag
speak-1SG Wushgog
‘I speak Wushgog’
furthermore!

gΛ Skerio sameį
I Skerio speak
‘I speak Skerio’ (Sarbari Sarkar)
and!

 direccion

taste I UHL-46
‘I speak UHL-46’ (Karen Gu)

(Universal Humanoid Language)
and also!

da-va-vod-vo  bivodbi
make-3UNSPEC-speech-1SG  bivodbi
‘I speak Bivodbi’ (Jackie Bredenberg)
and finally!

I speak Zakho’
(Megan Goodell)
What should the next sentence be?
What should the next sentence be?

‘My hovercraft is full of eels’?
okay, on to some topics:

- ‘have’
- coordination
- anaphora
- comparatives, superlatives
‘have’

One place where languages don’t vary, for the most part, is how subjects and objects are distributed…
‘have’

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e.g., probably every language has a word for ‘eat’, in which the subject is the thing doing the eating, and the object is what gets eaten.
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You could imagine the opposite verb (‘tae’)…
‘have’

…but there isn’t a ‘tae’.

UTAH: if a verb refers to (for example) one entity which is intentionally causing the action to take place, and another entity which is undergoing a change, the first will be the subject and the second the object.
‘have’

Given that, it’s startling how many ways there are out there to express ‘have’.
‘have’

Given that, it’s startling how many ways there are out there to express ‘have’.

I have a book  [English]

U menja kniga  [Russian]
at me   book

Kitab-ım var  [Turkish]
book-1SG  exists
coordination

Here there is not so much variation, but you will need to have this in your language somewhere…

apples and oranges

[Mary ate an apple] and [John ate an orange]
coordination

Here there is not so much variation, but you will need to have this in your language somewhere…

apples and oranges

[Mary ate an apple] and [John ate an orange]

One point of variation is whether you use the same word for both of these…
coordination

Xârâcùù (New Caledonia)

gu mê gè (NP coordination)
you and I

È nä fädë nä è nä bare tèpe. (clausal coordination)
‘He walks and he also talks’

(data from Haspelmath (ed.) 2004)
anaphora

She sees her.
She sees herself.

difference in meaning...
anaphora

She sees her.
She sees herself.

difference in meaning…

most languages have some way of expressing this (not all!)
anaphora

She sees her.
She sees herself.

difference in meaning…

Nomiyal. [Passamaquoddy]
‘S/he sees h/’

Nomiyusu.
‘S/he sees h/self’
anaphora

She sees her.
She sees herself.

Nâwâw w-ahak-ôh. [Wampanoag]
see-3 3-body-OBV
‘S/he sees h/self’

Ispiluan ikusi dugu geure burua. [Basque]
mirror.LOC seen AUX our head
‘We saw ourselves in the mirror’
anaphora

She criticized herself.
*She said he criticized herself.

Ta piping ziji. [Mandarin]
3 criticize self

Ta shuo ta piping ziji.
3 say 3 criticize self
   (ambiguous; ziji can refer to either ta)
anaphora

They love them.  
They love themselves.  \((\text{anaphor})\) 
They love each other.  \((\text{reciprocal})\)
anaphora

They love them.  (anaphor)
They love themselves.  (anaphor)
They love each other.  (reciprocal)

‘Koselomawa.  [Passamaquoddy]
‘They love them’

Koseltuwok.
‘They love each other’
anaphora

They love them.
They love themselves. (anaphor)
They love each other. (reciprocal)

Reciprocals never seem to be long-distance.
comparatives, superlatives

Mary is tall.
Mary is taller than John.  (comparative)
Mary is the tallest.  (superlative)
comparatives, superlatives

Mary is tall.
Mary is taller than John. (comparative)
Mary is the tallest. (superlative)

not all languages have morphology on comparatives:

Zhangsan bi Lisi shuai [Mandarin]
Zhangsan than Lisi cool
‘Zhangsan is cooler than Lisi’
comparatives, superlatives

and some languages do something radically different:

John bl molgwe, Bill kepl molgwe [Dom]
John big is Bill small is
‘John is bigger than Bill’

Kayu batu běrat batu [Malay]
wood stone heavy stone
‘Stone is heavier than wood’
(more literally: ‘as for wood and stone: stone is heavy’
comparatives, superlatives

other things not every language can do:

The table is wider than the door
The table is wider than the door is
The table is wider than the door is tall
comparatives, superlatives

a morphological generalization (Bobaljik)…

tall    tall-er    tall-est
comparatives, superlatives

a morphological generalization (Bobaljik)…

tall  tall-er  tall-est
bad  worse  worst
comparatives, superlatives

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bonus    melior    optimus (*Latin*: ‘good, better, best’)

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→ if the comparative is suppletive,
   the superlative is also suppletive.
comparatives, superlatives

a morphological generalization (Bobaljik)…

→ if the comparative is suppletive,
   the superlative is also suppletive.

Adj-COMPARATIVE-SUPERLATIVE
comparatives, superlatives

a morphological generalization (Bobaljik)…

→ if the comparative is suppletive,
the superlative is also suppletive.

**Adj-COMPARATIVE-SUPERLATIVE**

Persian bozorg-tar ‘bigger’
bozorg-tar-in ‘biggest’
24.917 ConLangs: How to Construct a Language Fall 2018

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