

SOUTHERN TUTCHONE GRAMMAR NOTES ON SYNTAX

In the Southern Tutchone Easy Alphabet

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Part Three

1.0 Word Order

Syntax is word order. It is the way a language organizes its subject (phrase) and predicate (phrase). In Southern Tutchone sentences the verbs always contain a subject pronoun, so the predicate or verb phrase (VP) seems to be the most important constituent. This is especially noticeable with verbs that take a direct object (i.e., transitive verbs). The direct object is a constituent of the verb phrase.

Southern Tutchone is an object-oriented language. This means that the language places less emphasis on the subject noun phrase that in fact can be placed after the verb phrase.

The general word order is Subject - Object - Verb.

1.1 Basic Word Order

Southern Tutchone is verb-final language, that is, the verb is generally at the end of the sentence, though the subject is free to appear at the end of a sentence. The basic word order is Object - Verb.

1.1 Object - Verb

nààlààt yètsì	s/he made a boat
boat s/he-made-it	
[object - verb]	

a tthàn áttuh she, he, it is eating meat
meat s/he, it-is-eating-it
[object - verb]

da tà là átàn s/he is holding its (own) dad's hand
its (own) dad's hand s/he-is-holding-it

1.3 Subject - Object - Verb

dan nààlààt yètsì the person made a boat
person boat s/he-made-it

tli a tthàn áttuh the dog is eating meat
dog meat it-is-eating-it

dunèn da tà là átàn the child is holding its (own) dad's hand
child its (own) father's hand s/he-is-holding-it

1.4 Subject Phrase

The subject phrase can be put after the verb phrase.

Object - Verb - Subject.

nààlààt yètsì dan the person made a boat
boat s/he-made-it person

a tthàn áttuh tli the dog is eating meat
meat it-is-eating-it dog

da tà là átàn dunèn the child is holding its (own) dad's hand
its (own) father's hand s/he-is-holding-it child

Oblique objects precede the direct object.

dak'àana da ma gha nàlààt yètsi
boy his (own) mom for boat he-made-it
the boy made a boat for his mom

There can be more than one oblique object.