

Tallerman: Chapter 2.1-2.2

Lexical Categories

How can we tell what class a word belongs to?

- Three types of criteria:
 - Distributional: Where does it occur?
 - I was happy to ____.
 - The _____ became extinct in the eighteenth century.
 - He seems very ____.
 - Morphological: What forms can it have?
 - Some *officials* *Our *officials* policies
 - I *escaped*. *The *escaped* went badly.
 - Functional: What work does it perform?
 - He *always* comes late.

- Jabberwocky (Lewis Caroll)

Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

brillig
toves
gimble
mimsy
mome
outgrabe

slithy
gyre
wabe
borogoves
raths

Some ways to identify word classes

- Notional definitions (insufficient)
 - A noun is the name of a person, place or thing.
 - A verb expresses an action, process or state.
 - An adjective is a describing word which modifies a noun.
- Compare:
 - They are fools.
 - They are foolish.

– Modification by degree adverb vs. adjective

They are utter fools.

*They are very fools.

*They are utter foolish.

They are very foolish.

– Inflection for number

fool

fools

foolish

*foolishes

– Comparative form

fool

*fooler/*more fool

foolish

more foolish

– Occurrence as subject of a clause

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

*Foolish rush in where angels fear to tread.

Paul Kroeber, 2005, Analyzing Grammar: An Introduction

Syntax of the major word classes

- Transitive verbs (two arguments)
 - Carl rejected my generous assistance.
 - Kim avoided the man who'd shouted at her.
 - Bhris sí # an chathaoir. (Irish)
Break:PAST she the chair
‘She broke the chair.’
- Ditransitive verbs (three arguments)
 - Lee handed the letter # to Kim.
 - Lee handed Kim # the letter.
 - Jack bought some flowers # for Lee
 - Ta gei wo #zhe-ben-shu (Mandarin Chinese)
S/he give I this-CLASS-book
‘S/he gave me this book.’

- **The noun phrase**
 - Nouns and the closed class of determiners
 - **The** paper, **a** problem, **those** feelings, **which** car, **my** fault, **both** children, **all** examples
 - Determiners only occur with nouns:
 - Her singing bothers me.
 - Determiners have a different distribution from adjectives:

– soft furry cats	furry soft cats
– the soft cats	*soft the cats
– soft furry clean cats	*which this the cat
– BUT: all my many friends	

- The DP hypothesis (noun phrases are really ‘determiner phrases’)
 - Some ‘pronouns’ can occur ‘transitively’
 - **We** linguists aren’t stupid.
 - I’ll give **you** **boys** three hours to finish the job.
 - Some ‘determiners’ can occur ‘intransitively’
 - **These/those** ____ are good.
 - I’ll give **some** ____ to Lee.
 - I’ll give **that/this** ____ away.
 - Some ‘determiners’ can only occur ‘transitively’
 - ***The/a** ____ could be problematic.

- Crosslinguistically, determiners are typically either initial or final in the noun phrase
 - Nmea nkeiewa no (Akan)
women PLURAL:small the
'the small women'
- Many languages have no DEFINITE or INDEFINITE ARTICLE (e.g. Russian), but sometimes word order can distinguish definiteness:
 - Ta mai pingguo le (Mandarin Chinese)
he buy apple ASPECT
'He bought an apple'
 - Ta pingguo mai le
he apple buy ASPECT
'He bought the apple.'

- Determiners often AGREE with various properties of the noun they co-occur with:
 - French
 - Le livre, le garçon, le chat, le lit
‘the book’, ‘the boy’, ‘the cat’, ‘the bed’
 - La table, la fille, la fleur, la langue
‘the table’, ‘the girl’, ‘the flower’, ‘the language’
 - Les livres, les garçons, les tables, les filles
‘the books’, ‘the boys’, ‘the tables’, ‘the girls’
 - German
 - der Mann, die Frau, das Mädchen
‘the man’, ‘the woman’, ‘the girl’

- Syntactic functions (grammatical relations)
 - Kim kissed Lee.
 SUBJECT DIRECT OBJECT
 - Lee was kissed by Kim.
 SUBJECT OBJECT OF PREPOSITION
 - Pears, she doesn't like
 DIRECT OBJECT SUBJECT
 - Kim handed the letter to Lee
 SUBJECT DIRECT OBJECT INDIRECT OBJECT
 - Kim handed Lee the letter.
 SUBJECT INDIRECT OBJECT DIRECT OBJECT
 SUBJECT DIRECT OBJECT OBJECT2
 - Lee was handed the letter by Kim.

- Subjects control subject/verb agreement in English
 - The woman is happy;
 - *The woman are happy.
 - The women are happy.
 - *The women is happy
- Subject pronouns occur in nominative case in English; whereas objects occur in accusative case:
 - She gave her a letter.
 - *Her gave she a letter.
- Nominative pronouns: *I, you, he, she, it, we, they*
- Accusative pronouns: *me, you, him, her, it, us, them*
- Genitive determiners: *my, your, his, her, its, our, their*
- Genitive pronouns: *mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs*

- Distributional test:
 - Typically only NPs can be subjects or objects:
 - _____ became extinct in the eighteenth century.
 - I like _____.
 - However, some verbs allow clausal subjects or objects:
 - That Kim was late surprised me.
 - I saw that Kim was late.
- Noun phrases can be predicates instead of arguments:
 - Malay Russian
 - Zainal guru saya Marija rebëk
 - Zainal teacher my Mary child
 - ‘Zainai is my teacher.’ “Mary is a child.”
 - English has linking verb ‘to be’ (‘copula’) connecting subject with predicate NP.

- **The adjective phrase**
 - Adjectives and the closed class of degree modifiers

- French

– tres belle	trop lourd	presque gentil
very beautiful	too heavy	almost nice

- Breton

– klañv kaer
sick very ‘very sick’

- Positions and functions of APs

- Attributive AP's modify a noun:

<u>Hungarian</u>	<u>Greek</u>	<u>Breton</u>
A piros autó	i omorfi jineka	an ti kozh tre
the red car	the beautiful woman	the house old very

- Predicative adjectives function as predicates:
 - He felt _____. She is/seemed _____.
I find it _____ to think she's forty.
 - Some languages don't have a copula:
 - » Ali marah (Malay)
Ali angry
'Ali is angry'
- The man was awake/*the awake man
*the failure seems utter/an utter failure

- **The prepositional phrase**
 - Prepositions can occur transitively:
 - under the table, beside the road, for Judy
 - They can also occur intransitively:
 - The student was here before.
 - Put your clothes underneath.
 - Prepositions pair up with their own modifiers
 - She put the book right on the table.
 - The weight is well inside the limit.
 - Put your clothes right underneath.

- Some traditional ‘adverbs’ occur with ‘right’ and are thus prepositions:
 - She lives right upstairs/downstairs
 - The plane flew right overhead.
- Traditional verbal ‘particles’ are also prepositions:
 - She called me right up.
 - Put those chocolates right back.
- Malay has prepositional modifier *terus* ‘right’:
 - Dia berarii terus ke ayahaya
he ran right to father:his
‘He ran right to his father.’
 - Tolong masuk terus ke dalam
please come right to in
‘Please come right in.’

- **Adverbs**

- Form

- Adjective + *ly* ending: slowly, suddenly
French ‘-*ment*’ (*sagement* ‘wisely’)
 - She works fast(*-ly)/hard(*ly).
 - An ungodly hour/*He speaks ungodly.

- Adjectives and adverbs are in **complementary distribution**:

- An unusual [_N song].
An unusually [_A happy] song
She speaks unusually [_{Adv} quickly]
She [_V spoke] unusually.

- Linguists thus consider adverbs and adjectives as subclasses of the same word class: ‘adjectives’ (since these are more basic in form)
- Evidence:
 - Share modifiers:
 - He is very happy He worked very happily
 - Can occur in the *as* _____ *as* comparative construction:
 - He is miserable as Kim.
He draws as miserably as Kim.
 - Comparative suffix (-er) and superlative suffix (-est) can occur on both:
 - Nice, nicer, nicest Soon, sooner, soonest
 - There are some differences:
 - He seems uncertain whether she left or not.
 - *He spoke uncertainly whether she left or not.

- In many languages there is no formal distinction
 - Er ist schön (German)
he is nice
'He is nice'.
 - Er singt schön
he sings nice
'He sings nicely'
- 'today', 'tomorrow', 'yesterday' and 'tonight' can function adverbially but are nouns since they have the distribution of NPs:
 - Tonight/tomorrow/today seems fine.
 - I planned tomorrow/tonight very carefully
 - I'll finish it by tonight.
- Words like 'still', 'already', 'sometimes' don't take degree modifiers, but do modify verbs and adjectives, so linguists count them as adverbs.