

Head Words and Phrases

Tallerman: Chapter 4

Heads and their Dependents

- **Properties of heads**
 - Head bears most important semantic information of the phrase.
 - Word class of head determines word class of entire phrase.
 - [_{NP} very bright [_N sunflowers]]
[_{VP} [_V overflowed] quite quickly]
[_{AP} very [_A bright]]
[_{AdvP} quite [_{Adv} quickly]]
[_{PP} [_P inside] the house]

- Head has same distribution as the entire phrase.
 - Go inside the house.
Go inside.
 - Kim likes very bright sunflowers.
Kim likes sunflowers.
- Heads normally can't be omitted
 - *Go the house.
 - *Kim likes very bright.

- Heads select dependent phrases of a particular word class.
 - The soldiers released the hostages.
 - *The soldiers released.
 - He went into the house.
 - *He went into.
 - bright sunflowers
 - *brightly sunflowers
 - Kambera
 - **Lalu** mbana-na na lodu
too hot-3SG the sun
'The sun is hot.'
 - ***Lalu** uma
too house

- Heads often require dependents to agree with grammatical features of head.

- French

- un livre vert
a:MASC book green:MASC
'a green book.'
 - une pomme verte
a:FEM apple green:FEM
'a green apple'

- Heads may require dependent NPs to occur in a particular grammatical case.

- Japanese

- Kodomo-**ga** hon-**o** yon-da
child-NOM book-ACC read-PAST
'The child read the book.'

- **More about dependents**

- Adjuncts and complements

- Adjuncts are always optional; complements are frequently obligatory
 - Complements are selected by the head and therefore bear a close relationship with it; adjuncts add extra information.

- Adjuncts:

very bright [_N sunflowers]
[_V overflowed] **quite quickly**
[_V talks] **loudly**
[_V sings] **in the bath**
right [_P outside]

- Complements:

[_V admires] **famous linguists**
[_V wondered] **whether to leave**
[_A fond] **of chips**
[_P inside] **the house**
[_V resorted] **to the instructions**

- When a head selects the exact preposition within a dependent PP, the PP is a complement of the head.

- In English, a complement typically occurs closer to the head than any adjuncts:
 - We met the new students yesterday.
*We met yesterday the new students.
 - that picture of John on the table.
*that picture on the table of John
- Passivization test:
 - Direct object complements of verb can be passivized
 - » All our friends admired Mel.
Mel was admired by all our friends.
 - » The magician disappeared the next day.
*the next day was disappeared by the magician.
 - NPs can be passivized out of complement PPs:
 - » Jack laughed at the clown.
The clown was laughed at by Jack.
 - » Jack worked at the office
*The office was worked at by Jack.
 - » Jack decided on the boat. (ambiguous)
The boat was decided on by John. (unambiguous)

- Adverbs are usually adjuncts but can be complements:

- I wrote the report (carefully)

Kim practices (carefully)

- You should treat sensitive people *(carefully).

You have to tread *(carefully).

- Verbs and their complements

- Intransitive verbs take no complements
 - *fall, elapse, capitulate, expire, disappear*
- Transitive verbs take an NP complement (the direct object)
 - *assassinate, rewrite, imitate, cultivate*
- Often a verb can be transitive or intransitive
 - Lee left Kim. Lee left

– *fall, elapse, capitulate, expire, disappear*

- Transitive verbs take an NP complement (the direct object)

– *assassinate, rewrite, imitate, cultivate*

- Often a verb can be transitive or intransitive

– Lee left Kim.

Lee left

- Ditransitive verbs take two complements, either an NP and a PP, or two NPs
 - *send, show, write, buy, give*
 - Kim gave the chips to Lee.
Kim gave Lee the chips.
 - Direct object (*the chips*), indirect object (*(to) Lee*)
- Some verbs take an NP and a PP complement, but don't have the NP NP alternation:
 - Kim put the potatoes into the pan.
*Kim put the pan the potatoes.
- Prepositional verbs take a PP complement headed by a specific preposition.
 - This cake consists of fruit and nuts.
I applied for a new job.
Bill laughed at the clown
Sue relied on Mary.

- Some verbs select both an NP and a clausal complement (finite, non-finite, or either)
 - Kim persuaded Bill that he should leave.
Kim persuaded Bill to leave.
 - *convince, allow, encourage, force, permit*
- Often a verb can appear in more than one subclass
 - Chris couldn't remember that long shopping list.
 - » NP complement
 - Chris remembered that they'd left it on the shelf.
 - » Finite clause complement
 - Chris usually remembers to pick up the list.
 - » Non-finite infinitival clause complement
 - Chris remembered leaving it on the shelf.
 - » Non-finite participial clause complement

- Other heads and their complements
 - Prepositions have variety in their complement structure but less than verbs
 - Intransitive:
She lives nearby (*the bank).
 - Transitive
She went into *(the house).
 - Either transitive or intransitive:
He went inside (the house).
 - Clausal complement
We left before Mary arrived.
 - PP complement
The spider emerged from under the bed.

- Adjectives have less variation
 - Obligatory complement
 - » John is fond *(of Mary).
 - This speech is totally devoid *(of sense).
 - Optional PP complement with a specific preposition:
 - » good at spelling
 - free from any doubts
 - sorry for your friend
 - Optional clausal complement
 - » Kim felt sorry that she had been late.
 - » *sorry, happy, angry, glad, delighted*

- Nouns never take obligatory complements
 - Optional PP complements with a specific preposition
 - » a manufacturer of tires
 - » Lee's belief in extraterrestrials
 - Optional clausal complements
 - » the fact that Bill was late
 - » their demand for the library to stay open later
- Complementizers (C) can be viewed as heads selecting the clause they introduce to form a Complementizer Phrase (CP).
 - Mel said [_{CP} **that** she was leaving]
 - [_{CP} **For** Kim to go too] would be surprising.
 - I don't know [_{CP} **whether** you should go]
 - I don't know [_{CP} **whether** to go]

– Determiners and nouns

- Traditionally determiners are considered dependents of the head noun in a noun phrase.
 - They are sometimes called ‘specifiers’, a sort of adjunct occurring in a fixed position in the phrase, and other closed class words that occur with heads of different types are also termed ‘specifiers’:
 - » **this** man
 - very** happy
 - very** happily
 - right** inside
- Recently, linguists have proposed that the determiner is the head of the “noun phrase”, and that this should be considered a Determiner Phrase (DP) which has an NP complement to the head D:
 - [_{DP} this [_{NP} box of dates]]

- Determiners fulfil a number of criteria for head status.
 - Many determiners can have the same distribution as the entire phrase.
 - » I'll have *this/that/these/those/either/some*.
 - Determiners are frequently obligatory.
 - » *I'll have *box of dates*.
 - The head D requires its NP complement to agree with certain properties of the head:
 - » this box of dates
 - » these boxes of dates
- The “DP hypothesis” is a controversial one still, and we will continue viewing the noun as head of the phrase in question.

- **Where does the head occur in a phrase?**

- Head-initial languages

- English

- [_{VP} **likes** chips]
 - [_{AP} **fond** of chips]

- [_{PP} **into** the water]
 - [_{NP} **admiration** for Mary]

- Welsh

- [_{PP} **dros** y ffordd]
 - over the road

- Ddaru Ceri [_{VP} **yfed** paned o de]
 - did Ceri drink cupful of tea
 - ‘Ceri drank a cup of tea’

- Tinrin

- u [_{VP} **tramwâ** mwâ ke maija wake]
 - I know that you much work
 - ‘I know that you work hard.’

- [_{NP} **kò** rugi beebòrrò urá mwîê]
 - news about drowning POSSESSIVE woman
 - ‘the news about the woman’s drowning’

– Head-final languages

- Japanese

- Taroo-ga [_{VP} Hanako-ni hana-o **ageta**]
Taro-NOM Hanako-DATIVE flower-ACC gave
‘Taro gave Hanako flowers.’
- [_{PP} tomodati-**to**]
friend-with
‘with a friend’
- [_{NP} sono tesuto e no **zisin**]
that test to POSSESSIVE confidence
‘confidence in that test’

- Lezgian

- Adaz [_{NP} mektebda k’el-da-j **mumkinwal**] xa-na-c
he in.school study-FUT-PARTICIPLE possibility be-PAST-NEG
‘He did not have the possibility to learn in school.’
- Adaz [_{VP} zun cpi-z klig-zawa-jdi **aku-na**].
He I selves-DATIVE look-IMPf-PARTICIPLE see-PAST
‘He saw that I was looking at them.’

Head-Marking and Dependent-Marking Languages

- **Definitions and illustrations**

- Syntactic relationships between heads and dependents

- **Head**

- postposition/preposition
 - verb
 - (possessed) noun
 - noun

- **Dependent**

- object NP
 - arguments (subject, object)
 - possessor NP
 - adjective

- English

- **in** [_{NP} the shower]

- Kim **loves** Lee

- Kim's **house**

- red **book**

- (**P** + NP)

- (Su + **V** + Obj)

- (possessor NP + **N**)

- (modifying A + **N**)

– Head preposition/postposition and its NP object

• **Dependent-marking**

– German: prepositions ‘govern’ the case of their object

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| » Für meinen Freund | mit meinem Freund |
| for my:ACC friend | with my:DATIVE friend |
| ‘for my friend’ | ‘with my friend’ |

– Chechen

» Beera-na t’e
child-DATIVE on
‘on the child’

• **Head-marking**

– Kaqchikel

ru-ma ri-achin
3SG-by the-man
‘by the man’

– Welsh

| | | |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| » arna i | arno fo | arni hi |
| on:1SG me | on:3M:SG him | on:3F:SG her |
| ‘on me’ | ‘on him’ | ‘on her’ |

– The clause: a head verb and the arguments of the verb

- **Dependent-marking**

- Japanese

- » Taroo-**ga** tegami-**o** kaita
Tarro-NOM letter-ACC wrote
‘Taroo wrote a letter.’

- German

- » Der Hund sah den Vogel
the:NOM dog saw the:ACC bird
‘The dog saw the bird.’
 - » Den Vogel sah der Hund.
The:ACC bird saw the:NOM dog
‘The dog saw **the bird**.’

- **Head-marking**

- Kambera

- » Hi **ku**-palu-ya

- so 1SG:SU-hit-3SG:OBJ

- ‘So I hit him.’

- » I Ama_S, **na**_S-kei-**ya**_O na ri muru_O

- the father 3SG:SU-buy-3SG:OBJ the vegetable green

- ‘Father buys the green vegetables.’

- Lit., ‘Father he-buys-it the green vegetable’

- Kaqchikel

- » Per ma x-**e-r**-komsaj-ta

- but NEG CMPL-3PL:OBJ-3SG:SU-kill-IRREALIS

- ‘but he didn’t kill them’

– Head noun and dependent possessor NP

- **Dependent marking**

- English

- » Kim's house

- Finnish

- » tytö-**n** kissa
girl-GEN cat
'girl's cat'

- **Head-marking**

- Saliba

- » Sine natu-**na**
woman child-3SG
'the woman's child'

- Kaqchikel

- » ri-ya-Ros i ru-k'in ri-Enrik **ki-te** **ki-tata**
the-FEM-Rosa and 3SG-with the-Enrique 3PL-mother 3PL-father
'Rosa and Enrique's mother and father'

– Head noun and dependent AP

- **Dependent-marking**

- Spanish: adjective agrees with noun in gender

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| » el | niño pequeño | la | niña pequeña |
| the:MASC | boy small:MASC | the:FEM | girl small:FEM |
| ‘the small boy’ | | ‘the small girl’ | |

- **Head-marking**

- Persian: noun is marked as having a dependent

- » kûh-e bolând
 - mountain high
 - ‘high mountain’

- **Some typological distinctions between languages**
 - **Head-marking languages**
 - Abkhaz, Mayan (Jacaltec, Tzotzil, Cakchiquel), Athabaskan (Navajo), Iroquoian (Mohawk, Cherokee), Algonquian (Cree, Blackfoot), Siouan (Crow, Lakhota), Salish (Squamish)
 - **Dependent-marking languages**
 - Indo-European (German, Greek, Armenian, Slavic [Russian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian]), Pama-Nyunngan (Dyirbal, Yidiny), Northeast Caucasian (Chechen), Dravidian (Malayalam).
 - **Neither head-marking nor dependent-marking**
 - Chinese

| | |
|---|---|
| Wo changchang jian ta I often see he ‘I often saw him’ | Ta changchang jian wo he often see I ‘He often saw me’ |
|---|---|

- English

- A little dependent-marking

- » Kim's house Possessor marker 's

- » **He** met **him** Case-marking in pronouns

- » **these** books Determiner-noun number agreement

- A little head-marking

- » Bill smokes Subject-verb agreement

- I **am**, she **is**, we **are**

- Mixtures are not unusual

- German: dependent-marking plus subject-verb agreement

- » Ich **sehe** den Vogel

- I:NOM see:PRES:1SG the:ACC bird

- 'I see the bird.'

- » Wir **sehen** den Vogel

- we:NOM see:PRES:1PL the:ACC bird

- 'We see the bird.'