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.
    • \([\text{NP very bright}\ [\text{N sunflowers}]]\)
    • \([\text{VP }\text{v overflowed}\ [\text{Q quite quickly}]]\)
    • \([\text{AP very}\ [\text{A bright}]]\)
    • \([\text{AdvP quite}\ [\text{Adv quickly}]]\)
    • \([\text{PP p inside}\ [\text{the house}]]\)
– 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
• **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 \[CP \textbf{that} \text{she was leaving}\]
  – \[CP \textbf{For} \text{Kim to go too}\] would be surprising.
  – I don’t know \[CP \textbf{whether} \text{you should go}\]
  – I don’t know \[CP \textbf{whether to go}\]

– **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’:
      » \textbf{this} man
      very happy
      very happily
      \textbf{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:
    – \[DP \text{this} [NP \text{box of dates}]\]
• 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] [PP into the water]
      – [AP fond of chips] [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 matja wake] I know that you much work
        ‘I know that you work hard.’
      – [NP kô rugi bee börrò urá mwiê news about drowning POSSESSIVE woman
        ‘the news about the woman’s drowning’
– Head-final languages

• **Japanese**
  – [VP Hanako-ni hana-o ageta]  
    Taro-NOM Hanako-DATIVE flower-ACC gave  
    ‘Taro gave Hanako flowers.’
  – [VP tomodati-to]  
    friend-with  
    ‘with a friend’
  – [SNP sono tesuto e no zisin]  
    that test to POSSESSIVE confidence  
    ‘confidence in that test’

• **Lezgian**
  – Adaz [SP mektebdaxel-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.’

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**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] (P + NP)
  – Kim loves Lee (Su + V + Obj)
  – Kim’s house (possessor NP + N)
  – red book (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 Ama₁, na₂-kei-ya₃ na ri muru₃
      the father 3SG:SU-buy-3SG:OBJ
      ‘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 boland
    
    mountain high
    
    ‘high mountain’

• Some typological distinctions between languages

  • **Head-marking languages**
    
    – Abkhaz, Mayan (Jicaltec, Tzotzil, Cakchiquel), Athabaskan (Navajo), Iroquoian (Mohawk, Cherokee), Algonquian (Cree, Blackfoot), Siouan (Crow, Lakota), Salish (Squamish)

  • **Dependent-marking languages**
    
    – Indo-European (German, Greek, Armenian, Slavic [Russian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian]), Pama-Nyungan (Dyirbal, Yidiny), Northeast Caucasian (Chechen), Dravidian (Malayalam).

  • **Neither head-marking nor dependent-marking**
    
    – Chinese
      
      Wo changchang jian ta ta changchang jian wo
      
      I often see he he often see I
      
      ‘I often saw him’ ‘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.’