

Ling 322
Fall 2009, Hedberg

Complements vs. Adjuncts Review

I. Notes taken partly from Hedberg's 222 class on Tallerman chapter 4:

- Adjuncts are always syntactically optional; complements are fairly often syntactically obligatory (but note the point below that perhaps more often than not complements are syntactically optional).
- Intuitively, complements 'complete' the meaning of the head, filling semantic slots that are associated with the head. Complements can thus be argued to be semantically obligatory even when they are syntactically optional: when a complement is not expressed it is still understood.
- Adjuncts just add 'extra information' and can often be argued to be semantically optional. Sometimes verbal adjuncts fill semantic slots coming from sentence level considerations such as distinctions associated with the T node head of the sentence (TP) like time and place, or involving considerations pertaining to the subject like manner of carrying out the VP activity.

• Examples:

<u>Adjuncts:</u>	<u>Complements:</u>
<i>very bright</i> [_N sunflowers]	[_V admires] <i>famous linguists</i>
[_V overflowed] <i>quite quickly</i>	[_V wondered] <i>whether to leave</i>
[_V talks] <i>loudly</i>	[_A fond] <i>of chips</i>
[_V sings] <i>in the bath</i>	[_P inside] <i>the house</i>
<i>right</i> [_P outside]	[_V resorted] <i>to the instructions</i>

- Heads 'govern' their complements, i.e. have the power to select the exact form of their complements:
 - Heads determine whether a given complement will be an NP, PP, or CP, etc.
 - Heads determine whether a given complement is obligatory or not.
 - In case-marking languages, heads dictate what case (e.g. accusative, dative, genitive) a given complement will take.
 - In English, heads often select the exact preposition heading a PP complement (thus when a head selects the exact preposition of a PP dependent, the dependent is a complement).
- Complements are often syntactically optional (and are always syntactically optional in NPs):

John laughed <u>at the clown</u> .	A book <u>of poems</u> .
*John laughed <i>by/for/to</i> the clown.	*A book <i>by/for/to</i> poems.
John laughed.	A book.

- Syntactic subcategories of heads are defined on the basis of the kinds of complements that particular types of heads take. So we have intransitive, transitive, ditransitive, prepositional, and CP taking verbs, for example. We can formalize this information by associating a "subcategorization restriction" with the head in the lexicon:

<i>jump</i> , V, [__]	<i>devour</i> , V, [__NP]	<i>eat</i> , V, [__(NP)]
<i>dine</i> , V, [__(PP[on])]]	<i>convey</i> , V, [__ NP (PP[to])]	<i>think</i> , V, [__(CP)]

II. Notes taken partly from Hedberg's 222 class on Tallerman chapter 5:

A. Pro-N' *one* test

I like the student with short hair. Adjunct
I like the student of chemistry. Complement

The student with long hair is smarter than the one with short hair.

*The student of physics is smarter than the one of chemistry.

- The pro-N' *one* must replace a whole N', not just a head noun.
- The *one*-replacement test is problematical because many dialects allow *one* to replace just the head N.

B. Pro-V' *do so* test

Sue worked at her house. Adjunct
Sue laughed at the giraffe. Complement

John worked at the office, and Sue did so at her house.

*John laughed at the clown, and Sue did so at the giraffe.

- *Do so* must replace a whole V', not just a part of one.

C. V' Pseudocleft test

What Sue did at her house was work.
*What Sue did at the giraffe was laugh.

- Only a whole V', not just part of one, can move to the focus position of a V' pseudocleft and be replaced by *do*.
- Only an adjunct can be "left behind" in a V' pseudocleft.
- The pseudocleft test sometimes results in sharper intuitions than the *do-so* test.

III. What you need to know in LING 322:

- You DO need to understand the ordering test: If you have both a complement and an adjunct of a given head, the complement appears closer to the head. Hence if you can insert a clear adjunct before a dependent, the dependent must be an adjunct. This test is problematical too because sometimes complements are moved to the end of the sentence and hence can appear after adjuncts.
- You DO need to understand the *one*-replacement test for N' and the *do-so* replacement test for V', and be able to use these tests to argue that a given phrase is a complement versus an adjunct.
- You DON'T have to decide in any given case whether a dependent is a complement or an adjunct, since that requires subtle native speaker intuitions and consideration of dialects.
- You DO need to know how to place complements versus adjuncts in the syntactic tree. (Complements are sister of X, daughter of X'; adjuncts are sister of X', daughter of X'.)