

# Glossary

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*A Student's Introduction to English Grammar*  
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**Absolute negator.** Word such as *not*, *nobody*, or *never* appearing in a **negative clause** and entirely ruling something out semantically. See also **approximate negator**.

**Act-related.** Of an **adjunct**, characterizing the whole act described by a clause, not the action or state identified by the verb (e.g. *Foolishly, he resigned*).

**Active.** The opposite of **passive** in the so-called ‘**voice**’ system.

**Adjective (Adj).** See Chapter 6.

**Adjectival passive.** A **clause** with an intransitive verb and an AdjP complement, describing a **state** resulting from an earlier event (*Her phone was still broken*).

‘**Adjective clause**’. Traditional term for a relative clause (a poor choice of name, because relative clauses don’t behave anything like adjectives). See **relative clause**.

**Adjective phrase (AdjP).** **Phrase** with an **adjective** as head: *big, very happy with it*.

**Adverb (Adv).** See Chapter 6.

‘**Adverb clause**’. A traditional term for a clause-containing constituent that functions as a modifier, usually in a VP. We reject the term because such clauses are often in complement function inside a PP, and it’s the PP that is really the adjunct. See **adjunct** or **preposition phrase**, and also Chapters 7 and 8.

**Adverb phrase (AdvP).** **Phrase** with an **adverb** as head: *so quickly, very happily, almost never*.

‘**Adverbial**’. Traditional term for an adjunct construction. We avoid this term completely, because it misleadingly suggests a connection to

adverbs. Adjuncts can be AdvP, AdjP, PP, NP, or Clause. See **adjunct** or **modifier**, and Chapter 8.

**AdvP.** See **adverb phrase**.

**Affix.** **Prefix** or **suffix** added to a **base** to make up a word (or larger base): *unfriendly*, *befriended*.

**Affixation.** The **morphological operation** of adding an **affix**: *intone* → *intonation*.

**Alternant.** One of two or more semantically identical and phonologically similar inflectional **shapes**, like the plural suffixes on *boxes* and *dogs*.

**Alternation.** The property of having **alternants**, or a set of alternants (the singular/plural alternation).

**Alternative interrogative.** Closed interrogative with a list of alternative answers supplied (*Do you want sparkling water or plain?*) so it does not have ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ as an appropriate answer.

**Alternative question.** The **speech act** normally realized by a **closed interrogative** main clause: *should I stay or should I go?*

**Ambiguous.** Allowing more than one semantic interpretation, either because two structures are possible or because of containing ambiguous words.

**AmE.** The American dialect of Standard English (or the family of such dialects, which comes close to including the Canadian dialects of Standard English).

**Anchor.** Constituent with which a **supplement** is loosely associated, often located just before the supplement.

**Answer.** **Response** to a **question** that is of the right sort to the requested information. A response is a **speech act**.

**Antecedent.** Constituent whose meaning dictates the meaning of a pronoun or other such expression in cases of **anaphora**.

**Appositive NP.** Post-head modifier in an NP that may stand alone in place of the whole NP: *my wife Lucy*.

**Approximate negator.** Word such as *few* or *rarely*, appearing in a **negative clause** but not strictly ruling something out semantically. See also **absolute negator**.

**Ascribed.** See **ascriptive**.

**Asymmetric. Coordination** in which “A and B” cannot be paraphrased as “B and A”. Contrasts with **symmetric**.

**Attributive.** Applies to an adjective or other **pre-head internal modifier** in NP structure: *a hot day* illustrates attributive use of *hot*.

**Attributive genitive. Genitive** NP in pre-head **modifier** function in a **nominal**.

**Attributive modifier.** Pre-head **modifier** in a **nominal**.

**Attributive-only.** Able to function only as pre-head **modifier** in a **nominal**, not as a **predicative complement**: an adjective like *utter* or *principal*.

**Back-formation.** Lexical word-formation operation through which a new base is created by removing an affix of an existing word: *editor* → *edit*

**Backgrounded.** Of information: treated as relevant but not the main focus, having implications for **information packaging**. Contrasts with **foregrounded**, see also **emphasized**.

**Bare coordinate. Coordinate** not marked with a **coordinator**.

**Bare existential. Existential clause** lacking the extension that an **extended existential** has: *There was an update*.

**Bare genitive.** Genitive form of a plural NP ending in *s* and marked with an apostrophe not followed by a second *s*: *the dogs' eyes*.

**Bare infinitival clause. Infinitival clause** lacking the marker *to*: *You must do your best*.

**Bare passive. Past-participial** clause with **passive** interpretation but not headed by *be* or *get*: *I had the work done by experts*.

**Bare relative. Relative clause** without *that* as a **marker** or a **relative word**: *the file you sent me*.

**Base.** One of the two main kinds of unit found in the structure of words; contrasts with **affix**. In *friendly* the *·ly* is an affix attached to the noun base *friend*, making a new adjective base, which can then have a suffix of its own, as in *friendlier*.

**Base plural.** Plural noun identical with the **lexical base** for the **lexeme**: *sheep, cod, barracks*.

**Basic coordination.** **Coordination** with a continuous sequence of **coordinates** that are bare or marked and which are valid constituents outside of a coordination: *both Mia and Erika*.

**Blending.** **Morphological operation** in which part of one (or both) of the source **bases** is dropped at the boundary between them: *chocoholic*.

**Bound base.** **Base** that cannot stand alone: *scissor-like*.

**BrE.** British English, or the set of all British dialects of Standard English (which comes close to including the Australian and New Zealand dialects).

**Cardinal numeral.** Numeral such as *one, two, three*, etc. Contrasts with ordinal numerals.

**Category-changing.** Derivational **affix** that changes the **category** of a **lexeme**. Contrasts with category-preserving.

**Category-preserving.** Derivational **affix** that changes the meaning of a **lexeme**, but not its **category**. Contrasts with category-changing.

**Clause type.** Classification of clauses into syntactic types, roughly correlated in main clauses with characteristically associated **speech act**. See: **declarative, exclamative, imperative, interrogative**.

**Clipping.** The morphological operation of forming a new word by removing part of a base: *influenza* → *flu*

**Closed question.** Question with a closed set of answers: *Is it raining?* (answers: *Yes, No*); *Is he alive or dead?* (answers: *He's alive, He's dead*).

**Collective noun.** Noun denoting a collection of individuals. In BrE especially, can function as head of a singular NP taking plural verb agreement: *%The committee have not yet decided*.

**Command.** Direct instruction to another person; one variety of **directives** – the kind of **speech act** usually realized by an **imperative** main clause: *Hold still*.

**Comparative (grade, form).** The term in the system of grade indicating **superiority** or **inferiority**, marked either inflectionally (as in *neater*) or by the adverbs *more* or *less* (*more useful*).

**Complex.** Of a **lexeme**, having internal syntactic structure consisting of different words, like the items *a few, in front*, and *each other*.

**Compounding.** The **morphological operation** of putting **bases** together:  
*bird + cage → birdcage.*

**Conditional.** Construction containing an **adjunct** introduced by the preposition *if*: *I'll do it if you pay me.*

**‘Conjunction’.** Traditional term (not used in this book) that unwisely attempts to unite words like *and* (see **coordinator**, and Chapter 15) with words like *that* (see **subordinator**, and Chapter 11), together with numerous prepositions such as *after* and *because* that take clause complements (see **preposition**, and Chapter 7).

**Connective adjunct.** **Adjunct** that connects clauses together in a way that relates to their semantic and information-packaging properties: *by contrast, consequently, conversely, however, rather, too*, etc.

**Constant polarity.** Of a **tag**, having the same **polarity** (almost always positive) as the main clause: *Oh, it's you again, is it?*

**Construction.** Syntactic pattern with characteristic semantic or information-packaging property as well as syntactic properties (often, but not necessarily, a **constituent**).

**Conventional implicature.** Sentence meaning contributed by the relevance of an utterance to its context, without being part of the semantics (as when a person says *Don't you think it's getting a bit cold in here?* hoping to convey “I think we should close that window now”).

**Conversion.** **Affixation** to a base of one category resulting in a word of another category, as when the suffix *-ize* is attached to the adjective *industrial* to make the verb *industrialize*.

**Coordinate.** Element linked to others by a **coordinator** in a **coordination** construction. *Sue or her son* has two coordinates: *Sue* (a **bare coordinate**) and *or her son* (an **expanded coordinate**).

**Coordinator (Cdr).** Word of the category to which *and*, *or*, and *but* belong (see Chapter 15).

**‘Coordinating conjunction’.** Traditional term for a **coordinator**.

**Core meaning.** Central part of the meaning that determines the **truth conditions** of a clause or sentence.

**Correlative coordination.** Coordination with the first **coordinate** marked by a **determinative** (*both*, *either*, or *neither*), as in *Both Sue and her husband went* or *It's neither illegal nor unethical.*

**Dangling modifier. Adjunct** (often having the form of a subjectless non-finite clause, especially a participial one) with the predicand not denoted by the subject of the main clause and thus being a potential source of puzzlement, as in *Breathing heavily, the piano was finally lifted off the rug*.

**Dangling participle.** See **dangling modifier**.

**Dative.** Morphological case assigned to a noun heading an NP functioning as **indirect object** in some languages, e.g. Latin. A term of no use in describing English, which uses **accusative** case to mark indirect object pronouns.

**Declarative.** The **default clause type** – the one that in **main clauses** is characteristically used to make a statement: *She can swim*.

**Default.** What holds if nothing special is stipulated to override it. The default position of the subject of a clause is before the verb, though under certain conditions it can follow the verb (e.g. if it is an auxiliary verb in a closed interrogative as in *Can she swim?* or if it is in the construction exemplified by *Off went the train*).

**Definite article.** The determinative *the*. Prototypically this functions as determiner in NP structure, where it indicates that the head noun should be sufficient in the context to identify the referent. When I ask *Where's the car?*, I presuppose that you know which car I'm asking about. But *the* has one or two other uses, e.g. in the construction *the more you try*.

**Definite NP.** NP marked by the **definite article** *the* or by certain other **determiners** (e.g., *this, that, my*), or having a **proper noun** as head. Characteristically used when the content of the NP is sufficient in the context to identify the referent.

**Deictic.** Used in a way that allows the interpretation to be determined by features of the act of utterance like when and where it takes place, who the speaker and addressee are, or what the speaker is pointing to. The pronoun *I* is deictic (it always refers to the speaker); *now* is deictic (it refers to a time interval that includes the time of utterance); in *Look at him!* the pronoun *him* is deictic if the speaker is pointing at someone.

**Delayed right constituent coordination.** **Coordination** in which at least one **coordinate** does not form a **constituent** in a corresponding construction that is not a coordination, and for which the element following the coordination is understood as related to each of the coordinates: *Two perfectly fine and four slightly damaged copies were found*.

**Denotation.** The semantic relationship between a **constituent** and its **core meaning**.

**Denote.** See **denotation**.

**Dependent vs independent genitive.** A few personal pronouns have two **genitive** forms, a dependent one used with a following head (*your house*) and an independent when it is **fused** with the head (*Her house is bigger than yours*) or is head by itself (*All this is yours*).

**Derivation.** Any **morphological operation** that results in a new **base**.

**Determinative (D).** Word of the category whose members include *a* (or *an*), *any*, *some*, *the*, *this*, etc. See Chapter 5.

**Determinative phrase (DP).** Phrase with a **determinative** as **head**: *not many*; *almost every*; *just about all*; etc. See Chapter 5.

**Dialect.** Any distinct variety of English shared by a group of speakers.

**Direct object.** The default kind of object of a verb (not an **indirect object**). In a **canonical clause** with two objects, the first is indirect and the second direct: *He gave me the key* (*me* is the indirect object, *the key* is the direct object).

**Direction question.** **Question** whose **answer** is a **directive**. Contrasts with **information question**. *Shall I open the window? Please do.*

**Dislocation.** **Construction** with an extra NP located to the left or right of the main part of the **clause** (the **nucleus**) and a **personal pronoun** in the nucleus, taking the extra NP as its **antecedent**: *My dad, he likes puns.*

**Displaced.** Of a marker, not occurring in its basic position: *both for you and me* (as opposed to *for both you and me*).

**Displaced subject.** Internal **complement** in an **existential clause** that corresponds semantically to the **subject** of the syntactically more basic construction: *There was a nurse present.* (The term ‘displaced subject’ does not imply that *a nurse* here is a kind of subject.)

**Distributive coordination.** The basic interpretation of a coordination in which a property is predicated of each coordinate individually, as in *Don and Phil played the guitar* (each had their own guitar). Contrasts with **joint coordination**, as in *Don and Phil broke up* (a singing duo can break up, but an individual can’t).

**Ditransitive.** Of a clause, having two **objects**, as in *I lent her my bike*; of a verb, licensing two objects, as *lend* does.

**Domain adjunct.** Adjunct applying only to a particular domain or area of endeavour (statistics, history, music, politics, or whatever). Examples: *In aeronautical terms the Spruce Goose was a disaster; I'd say that musically she was absolutely brilliant; It's just an acyclic graph mathematically.*

**Dummy.** Meaningless word required in some construction to satisfy a syntactic requirement; e.g. *do* in *Does she know him?* (where the construction requires an **auxiliary verb** so **do** is used), or *it* in the **extraposition** construction *It bugs me that he never told us.*

**Echo question.** Variety of **information question** uttered in response to a **stimulus** to clarify or express surprise; has a sharply rising final **intonation** and no **subject-auxiliary inversion** (e.g. *So then you did WHAT with your underwear?*).

**'Embedded question'.** Traditional term for an **interrogative content clause**.

**Emphatic.** Special use of a **reflexive pronoun** where it functions as **modifier** in a **clause** or **NP**: *We actually met the minister herself.*

**End-attachment coordinate.** Clause-final **supplement** marked with a **coordinator** and semantically similar to a **coordinate**: *Any sensible person would have remained polite, but not Max.*

**Equality, comparison of.** Comparison in which the terms are asserted to be more or less equal: *as good as we had hoped; the same job as mine.* Contrasts with comparison of **inequality**: *a better job than mine.*

**Exclamation.** Speech act that is something of an emotional outburst, sometimes realized by an exclamative main clause (*What an absolutely beautiful day that was!*) or an interrogative (*Is that clever or what!*) or just an NP (*Such luck!*).

**Exclamative.** The **clause type** characteristically used, in **main clauses**, to make an exclamatory statement: *What a mess they made of it!; How stupid I've been!*

**Exclamatory meaning.** The emotional component of the meaning conveyed by an **exclamative statement**, over and above its truth conditions.

**Exclamatory statement.** **Speech act** of a type used to convey surprise, shock, anger, or other strong emotions stimulated by some proposition; the characteristic use of an **exclamative clause**.

**Exhaustive conditional.** Construction in which a **subordinate interrogative clause** appears in **adjunct** function to express a set of



conditions that exhaustively cover the possibilities: *He'll agree, whatever you ask him to do.*

**Existential clause.** Clause with the **dummy** pronoun *there* as subject and an internal complement corresponding to the subject of a more basic construction: *There was a key on the table.* Here *a key* corresponds to the subject of the more basic *A key was on the table.*

**Expanded coordinate.** **Coordinate** beginning with a **coordinator**.

**Explicit partitive.** **Partitive** of the type where the **fused head** is followed by a partitive PP complement: *some of that cake.* Contrasts with **implicit**.

**Extended existential.** **Existential clause** in which the VP contains not only the **displaced subject** but also an additional element, the **extension**: *There's a class at 8:00; There are discounts available.* Contrasts with **bare existential**.

**Extension.** Element in an **existential clause** realized by a locative complement, a temporal complement, predicative complement, or some other such phrase in an **extended existential**.

**External.** Located outside the VP (in a clause) or the nominal (in an NP): (*She* [<sub>VP</sub> *lost her key*]); (*this big* [<sub>NP</sub> *a hole*]).

**External modifier.** **Modifier** in NP structure located outside of the **nominal**.

**Extraposed object.** Postverbal subordinate clause in a clause with dummy *it* as object: *I consider it a scandal that we weren't paid.*

**Extraposed subject.** Postverbal subordinate clause in a clause with dummy *it* as subject: *It is fortunate that you could come.*

**Familiarity.** The property that differentiates **new information** (unfamiliar) from **old information** (familiar).

**Feminine.** The **gender** of the pronoun *she*, applying to those persons who identify as female.

**First person.** See **Person**.

**Foregrounded.** Of information: treated as the main focus, having implications for information packaging: *It's you I love.* Contrasts with **backgrounded**.

**Foreign.** Of plural morphology, not native to English or Anglo-Saxon: *formulae, phenomena, cherubim.*

- Form.** **Base** or **affix** with a combination of a shape and a meaning: The **plain form** *write*, the **plain present-tense form** *write*, the **past-participle form** *written*, the **preterite form** *wrote*, etc.
- Fossilized.** Of a fixed word combination, lacking the syntactic flexibility that would be expected. *Come across* (meaning “find by chance”) is fossilized in that the preposition must immediately follow the verb: *the letters which I came across*, not *\*the letters across which I came*.
- Free.** Of a morphological element, able to form a word on its own without another base or affix. Contrasts with **bound**. See the online Morphology appendix.
- Fronted preposition.** Preposition positioned along with its complement at the front of the clause, in **prenucleus** function: [*To whom*] *are you referring?*. See Chapter 7.
- Fused.** Performing two **functions** at once. See Chapter 5.
- Fused modifier-head.** **Modifier** in NP structure that also functions as the head of the NP: *The poor are always with us* illustrates the adjective *poor* in fused modifier-head function.
- Fused relative construction.** NP construction in which a relative word (like *what* or *whoever*) functions simultaneously as **head** of the whole NP and as a *wh*-marked relative phrase within a modifying relative clause: *What you say is true* or *Whoever told you that is mistaken*.
- Fused-head construction.** NP where the **head** is fused with a dependent element, usually a **determiner** or **internal modifier**. In *We have three eggs but [two] are cracked*, *two* is both **determiner** and **head**. In *the poor* the adjective *poor* is simultaneously **modifier** and **head**.
- Gapped coordination.** **Coordination** in which the middle part of a non-initial coordinate can be omitted if it is recoverable from the corresponding part of the initial coordinate: *I fell in love with Paris, and you \_\_\_\_ New York*.
- Gender.** Grammatical classification (primarily of nouns) which, in English, distinguishes between **persons** of pronouns and other NPs (*I, you, who, someone* etc.) and **non-persons** (*what, it, something* etc.). In the case of persons, gender distinguishes between neutral (*they*), masculine (*he*), feminine (*she*), and neuter (*it*).
- General level.** The level at which a definition is claimed, within a given linguistic theory, to apply universally, across all human languages. Contrasts with **language-particular**.
- ‘Gerund’.** In Latin, a form of a verb having mainly noun-like syntactic uses, as opposed to a present participle, which has verb-like uses (or a

gerundive, which is a future passive participle with a particular kind of adjective-like use). Not at all a useful term in English (though unfortunately ubiquitous in traditional grammars), since English has no verb showing a morphological distinction between gerund and present participle. See **gerund-participle**.

**Gerund-participle.** The form of an English verb ending in *-ing* and having uses covering both what traditional grammars (following Latin grammars) called the ‘gerund’ and what they called (again as in Latin) the ‘present participle’.

**Gerund-participial.** Clause with a **gerund-participle** as head verb: *I recall her being there*.

**Goal.** Clause constituent prototypically indicating a location towards which something moves: *I went home*.

**Gradable.** Denoting a property that can apply in varying degrees. Gradable adjectives take degree modifiers: *very hot, rather good, slightly dubious*, etc., and some inflect (*hotter, hottest*).

**Grammar.** Either the structure of sentences, clauses, phrases, and words in a language, or the linguist’s theoretical account of the principles determining that structure, or a book presenting such an account.

**Grammatical.** Not violating any of the structural constraints of a language.

**Grammaticized.** Of a word, used merely as a meaningless marker of some grammatical relationship rather than making an independent meaning contribution: *written by a student; partaking of a light meal*.

**Heavier.** Of the **weight** of a **constituent**, being relatively longer and structurally more complex.

**Hollow clause.** Non-finite clause with missing non-subject element, such as an object, deriving its interpretation from an **antecedent**: *He’s easy to get on with; It’s a difficult thing to do*.

**Idiom.** Combination of words with a meaning not systematically derivable from the meanings of those words and the structure in which they appear: *kick the bucket* (= “die”); *tie the knot* (= “get married”).

**Idiomatic meaning.** Meaning not systematically derivable from the meanings of the words involved and the structure in which they appear.

**Imperative clause.** **Clause type** characteristically used to express a **directive**: *Don’t move; Please sit down*. Verb in **plain form**; **subject** usually omitted but understood as “you”.

**Implicit partitive.** **Partitive** where the **fused head** isn't followed by a partitive PP complement: *I'll have some*. Contrasts with **explicit**.

**Indefinite article.** The **determinative** *a* (or *an*), prototypically used as **determiner** in **count singular** NPs indicating that the content is not sufficient to identify a specific referent: *a bus*.

**Indefinite NP.** NP that is not semantically **definite**: *a book, some dogs, several students*.

**Independent genitive.** See **dependent vs independent genitive**.

**'Indicative'.** Term used in traditional grammars for clauses of a default type that refer to the actual world (not to imagined or unreal ones); not used at all in our book. See **irrealis**.

**Indirect complement.** Complement **licensed** not by the **head** but by a **dependent**. In *a longer delay than we expected*, the *than*-PP is in the NP but licensed by a modifier (*longer*).

**Indirect object.** Object of a verb prototypically (but not invariably) having the semantic role of recipient. Precedes the **direct object** in **canonical clauses**: *I gave Max the key*.

**Inequality, comparison of.** Comparisons of **superiority** and **inferiority**. Contrasts with **equality**: *noisier, noisiest, less noisy, least noisy*.

**Inferiority.** The semantics of being "less than", typically realized morphologically or syntactically by the adverb *less*.

**'Infinitive'.** Term used in grammars of other languages (Latin, French, Spanish) for a particular non-tensed form of the verb. English has no analogous form, so we never use this term. See **infinitival clause**, and Chapter 14.

**Inflection, inflectional form.** Variation in the form of a lexeme determined by syntactic properties like singular or plural **number** in nouns, **preterite** or **present tense** in verbs. *Cat* (singular) and *cats* (plural) are the two non-genitive inflectional forms of the lexeme *cat*.

**Information question.** **Question** whose appropriate **answers** are **statements**. Contrasts with **direction questions**. *Did you open the window? Yes, I did*.

**Information-packaging construction.** Construction presenting information differently from the way a **canonical clause** would, thus having a different relationship to the discourse context, prototypically having the same **truth conditions** as a syntactically more basic counterpart. Examples: **passive**, **existential**, **extraposition**, ***it*-cleft**, etc. Compare *It was Kim who broke the vase* (***it*-cleft** information-

packaging construction) with *Kim broke the vase* (**canonical** counterpart).

**Integrated vs supplementary.** Relative clauses are **integrated** if they form an integral part of the containing construction and are normally not marked off by commas; their meaning is presented as an integral part of the message. A relative clause is **supplementary** if it has a much looser connection to the main message, forms a separate intonation unit phonologically, and is generally marked off by commas, dashes, or parentheses in writing. *Politicians who make extravagant promises aren't trusted* has an integrated relative clause (underlined); *Politicians, who make extravagant promises, aren't trusted* has a supplementary one. The latter sentence claims that politicians aren't trusted (and throws in another fact about extravagant promise-making); the former doesn't say they are all mistrusted, but only says that the extravagant promise-makers among them are.

**Interrogative clause.** **Clause type** characteristically used, in **main clauses**, to ask a question: *Are you ready?* (**closed interrogative**); *What have you done?* (**open interrogative**). In subordinate clauses, expresses the content of a question (*Tell me whether you're ready or It depends what you have done*).

**Interrogative phrase.** Phrase founded on an **interrogative word** which can function as **prenucleus**. The interrogative word may be either alone (*What did you buy?*) or in combination with other words (such as the head noun, underlined, in *What books did you buy?* or *Which version is it?*).

**Interrogative pronoun.** **Interrogative word** of pronoun category like *what* or *who*.

**Interrogative subordinator.** **Interrogative word** for introducing a closed interrogative content clause: *whether* or *if*.

**Interrogative tag.** Truncated interrogative clause consisting of an auxiliary verb and a pronoun, added to the end of another clause to request some kind of confirmation: *He hasn't seen her, has he?*

**Interrogative word.** Word such as *what*, *which*, *when*, *whether*, *who*, *whom*, etc., introducing an **interrogative clause**: *What do you want?*; *I don't know whether I should*.

**Intransitive.** Having no object, as with a verb like *faint* or a clause like *I fainted*.

**Inversion.** Type of **construction** in which the canonical linear positions of the subject and another element are switched, like the auxiliary *had* and the nominative pronoun *she* in *Never had she seen such a thing*, or the lexical verb *said* and the subject *Fred* in *"Right," said Fred*.

**Irrealis (form).** The **form** *were* where it is used to express remoteness from factuality with a first- or third-person **subject**: *if I were you...*

**Irrealis (mood).** The special **mood** form instanced solely by *were* with 1st or 3rd person singular subject: *I wish she were here*. Often replaced by the less formal preterite form *was*.

**Irregular lexeme.** Lexeme whose **inflectional forms** are not all predictable by general rule: *build* is irregular because the preterite and past participle form is *built* (not *\*builded*).

**It-cleft.** Clause like *It was Sue who had the key*, which has a more basic counterpart *Sue had the key* but divides it in two: *Sue* is foregrounded as complement of *be* in a main clause with dummy *it* subject; *had the key* is backgrounded and expressed in a **relative clause**.

**Joint coordination.** **Coordination** in which a property doesn't apply to the individual **coordinates**: *Nita is only 50 kg, but together, Nita and I are 110 kg*.

**Language-particular level.** Level at which a definition of a syntactic term applies solely within a specific language, not universally across the whole range of human languages. Contrasts with **general level**.

**Layered coordination.** **Coordination** in which at least one **coordinate** is a coordination: *You can have [pancakes] or [egg and bacon]*.

**Left dislocation.** **Dislocation** in which the extra NP is located to the left of the main clause: *My friend, she works for Amazon*.

**Lexicalized.** In a fixed form that might once have been formed with a productive lexical work-formation process but today as to be treated as having a form simply stipulated in the lexicon. The word *friable* might once have been reasonably seen as built from the root of the Latin verb *friare* ("to crumble") plus the possibilitative combining form *-able*, but today it is simply lexicalized.

**Lexicon.** The collection of all **lexemes** in current use (in typical speakers' vocabularies, that is: there are far more items in the *Oxford English Dictionary* than any speaker uses or even knows by sight).

**Locative.** Type of **complement** expressing where a **situation** takes place, usually in the form of a PP: *We stayed inside*. See also **goal** and **source**.

**Long passive.** Passive clause with a *by*-phrase expressing the agent: *It was eaten by the cat*. Contrasts with **short passive**.

**Lower-level coordination.** **Coordination** in which the **coordinates** are not **main clauses**.

**Main clause coordination.** Coordinations in which **coordinates** are **main clauses**.

**Mandative.** **Construction** with a **declarative content clause** with verb in the **plain form** as **complement**, having a **deontic modality** rather similar to *must*: *I demand that he be here by Monday*. Also used of the complement itself.

**Mark.** Informal: expressing a grammatical meaning morphologically or syntactically: In *jumped*, *·ed* is said to mark the past tense.

**Masculine.** The **gender** of the pronoun *he*, applying to those persons who identify as male.

**Matrix clause.** Clause within which a **subordinate clause** is embedded. In *I think [she said he was ill]*, the brackets enclose the matrix clause within which the underlined one is embedded.

**Meaning.** What an utterance expresses. For linguists, usually limited to what is literally and directly expressed by an utterance – the content that is determined by the meanings of its words and the structure of the sentence. Thus a linguist might say that *You're a bastard* only means that you are either of illegitimate birth or are a disagreeable person, but not that it means the utterer is angry with you – that would be a **pragmatic** inference.

**Modification.** Of a **phrase**: including a **modifier** as a **dependent**: *a lovely day*. Also, a **morphological operation** involving a change of the **base**: *take* → *took*.

**Mood.** Traditional name for a verbal category expressing various kinds of **modality**. Such meaning is primarily marked in English by **modal auxiliaries**, and also by adjectives like *necessarily* when used as modal adjuncts. In languages with richer inflection on verbs, mood is a more significant notion.

**Morphological operation.** Morphological operations include **compounding**, **affixation**, **conversion**, **modification**, **back-formation**, **clipping**, **blending**, and **initialism**.

**Negative clause.** The simplest negative clauses are marked by *not* modifying the verb (*She is not here*) or by an auxiliary verb bearing the suffix *·n't* (*She isn't here*). A negative **declarative** clause prototypically has the opposite **truth conditions** to its positive counterpart: in any situation or state of the world where *Grass is green* is true, *Grass is not green* will be false, and vice versa.

**Negative concord.** Multiply **marked negation**: *That ain't no good; I never meant no harm to nobody*; French *On ne peut pas le faire*; Italian *Non ha telefonato nessuno*.

**Negative inflection.** The *·n't* ending that can be attached to most auxiliary verbs. (For many speakers, *may* and *am* are exceptions.)

**Negative orientation.** Of a **polarity-sensitive** item, occurring freely in negatives but excluded from positive declarative **constructions**: compare *I don't have any ideas to share* with *\*I have any ideas to share*, or *I haven't seen you in ages* with *\*I have seen you in ages*. Contrasts with **positive orientation**.

**Negative polarity.** Expressing **negation**. Contrasts with **positive polarity**.

**Negative word.** Word such as *not*, *isn't*, *can't*, *nothing*, or *never* that can mark a clause as a **negative clause**, or a word containing an affix like *un-* or *dis-* with a meaning similar to *not*.

**Neutral.** In the system of personal gender, neither selecting persons nor non-persons, as with determiner *what*. In the system of **polarity**, occurring in both **positive** and **negative clauses**: contrasts with **negative**.

**Never-attributive.** Of **adjectives**, capable of occurring **predicatively**, but not **attributively**: compare *The baby is asleep* with *\*They were carrying an asleep baby*.

**New.** Of information, not having previously been introduced into the discourse and not otherwise available to the addressee.

**Nominal.** Category of the constituent typically intermediate between the NP and its noun head. The nominal in *the big guy who fainted* is underlined. It has the noun *guy* as its own head.

**Non-affirmative contexts.** **Negative**, **interrogative**, and related constructions where we find expressions like *at all* which do not occur in positive assertions. Compare *He didn't complain at all* and *Did he complain at all?* with *\*He complained at all*.

**Non-affirmative item.** Word or expression such as *at all*, *ever*, or modal *need*, normally found only in **non-affirmative contexts**: *You needn't go*, but not *\*You need go*.

**Non-count noun.** **Noun** denoting an entity that is uncountable; hence a noun unable to combine with **cardinal numerals**: *\*one furniture*, *\*two remains*.

**Non-personal.** The gender of the pronoun *what* as contrasted with *who*. See **personal vs non-personal**.

**Noun (N).** See chapter 5.



**‘Noun clause’.** Traditional term for a content clause – not a sensible term, since such clauses do not behave the slightest bit like nouns syntactically. See **content clause**.

**Noun phrase (NP).** Phrase headed by a nominal and ultimately a noun or a **fused head**, mainly functioning as subject or as object in a VP or PP (*The dog barked, I found a stray dog, Save it for somebody’s dog*).

**Nucleus.** Head clause in a clause with a **prenucleus**: *This, I think we can agree to*.

**Object-oriented predicative complement.** **Predicative complement** with the **object** of a **matrix clause** as its **predicand**: *It made her truly happy*. Contrasts with **subject-oriented predicative complement**.

**Old information.** Information assumed to be familiar to the addressee(s) via earlier mention in discourse, features of the utterance situation, or (in some cases) background knowledge.

**Open interrogative clause.** Interrogative clause containing at least one interrogative word, characteristically used, in **main clauses**, to ask an **open question**: *Who said that?*; in subordinate clauses, states the content of a question: *I found out who said that*.

**Open question.** Question with an open-ended set of answers: *Who broke it?* has an open set of answers, of indefinitely huge size, all of the form *X broke it*, where *X* stands for some person or persons.

**Ordinal numeral.** Numeral such as *first, second, third*, etc. Contrasts with **cardinal**.

**Ordinary intransitive.** **Verb** having a direct semantic relationship with the **subject** of its **clause**.

**Ordinary object.** **Object** related semantically to the **matrix clause** verb. Contrasts with **raised object**.

**Ordinary subject.** **Subject** semantically related to the verb of its clause. Contrasts with **dummy subject** and **raised subject**.

**Particle.** Type of **complement** in the VP, usually in the form of an intransitive **preposition phrase**, that can freely come either after the direct object (*Start the engine up*) or before it (*Start up the engine*). Also, derivatively, those words that can function as particles (though this is not a subcategory of any one lexical category). Such words include *along, clear, back, down, in, off, up, short*, and many others.

**Partitive.** Having reference to some part of the whole.

**Partitive fused-head construction.** NP construction with an explicit or understood *of* phrase, denoting part of larger set or quantity: [*Some of the photos*] *are great*; [*some*] *are not*.

**Past participial.** Clause with a **past participle** as head verb: *a letter written by my aunt*; *Elvis has left the building*.

**Passive.** Clause contrasting with an **active** clause in the so-called ‘voice’ system, in which a relation expressed by the verb is inverted so that the **subject** corresponds to what would be a non-subject in the **active** counterpart: *Ukraine was invaded by Russia* has the same truth conditions as *Russia invaded Ukraine*. In English, the verb of a passive clause is always a **participle**, usually a **past participle**.

**Patient.** The semantic role of someone or something undergoing a process or action, as is typical of the **subject** of a **passive clause**.

**PC.** Occasionally used abbreviation for **predicative complement**.

**Perfect (tense).** Past tense formed by means of the **auxiliary have**, normally followed by a **past participle**: *She has gone home*; *They may have seen you*.

**Performative.** As used to actually constitute the **speech act** denoted by a verb: the verb **declare** as used by a sincere utterance of *I hereby declare that I have no conflict of interest*, or **name** as used in *I name this ship the Titanic* when uttered by a designated authority on the occasion of a launching.

**Peripheral modifier.** **External modifier** at the periphery of an NP, usually an AdvP: *only half the time*; *the others too*.

**Person.** The feature of NPs differentiating **I** and **we** (first person) from **you** (second person) and **he**, **she**, **it**, or **they** (third person).

**Personal vs non-personal.** **Gender** system applying primarily to **interrogative** and **relative** pronouns, contrasting e.g. personal *who* (for persons and sometimes certain animals) vs non-personal *what*. The sentence *Who is that?* asks about a person; *What is that?* asks about something other than a person.

**‘Phrasal verb’.** Traditional term for a **prepositional verb** like *partake* (+ *of* NP), **verb-particle** combination like **look into**, or **idiom** like **keep tabs on**. (‘Phrasal verb’ would have been a fine name for the sequence *kept tabs on*, except that it isn’t a phrase and isn’t a verb.)

**Plain case.** Non-genitive case that is neither **accusative** nor **nominative**: the case found on words like *you*, *cat*, *children*, etc.

**Plain present tense.** **Present-tense form** identical to the lexical **base** of the verb, as in *I know*. Contrasts with **3rd person singular present tense**.

**Plain singular.** **Singular** noun form identical to the lexical **base** of the noun. *An apple* as opposed to *an apple's*.

**Plural inflected form.** The form that most plural nouns have, often ending in *-s*, used when making reference to a number of entities other than one: *apples, geese, boxes', children's*.

**Plural-only.** Noun which, in one or more of its senses, cannot be singular: *binoculars*.

**Polar interrogative.** **Interrogative clause** where the possible answers to the (implied) question are the polar opposite answers *Yes* and *No*.

**Polar question.** The **speech act** usually realized by means of a **polar interrogative main clause**: *Are you all right?*

**Polarity-sensitive.** Occurring readily in clauses of one **polarity** but not of the other. Having a **positive** or **negative orientation**.

**Positive clause.** Non-**negative** clause: *She is here* (contrasts with negative *She isn't here*).

**Positive orientation.** Of a **polarity-sensitive** item, occurring freely in positive but excluded from certain negative **constructions**: *There are some changes*. *\*There aren't some changes*. Contrasts with **negative orientation**.

**Positive polarity.** Expressing the truth of a basic assertion. Contrasts with **negative polarity**.

**'Possessive'.** Traditional (and misleading) term for the case we call genitive, which in some cases marks possessors. See **genitive**.

**Postposing.** Putting an element at or near the end of the clause rather than in the earlier position that would be the default place for a **constituent** with the same **function**.

**Postpositive.** Function of an **AdjP** that appears after the head noun in a nominal, or any **adjective** heading such an AdjP.

**Pragmatics.** The study of how the full intended import of an utterance in context is inferred from a combination of what it means and what the broader context suggests might be relevant about it.

**Predeterminer modifier. External modifier** in an NP occurring before the **determiner**: *half the time*.

**Predicative genitive. Genitive NP** in **predicative complement** function: *That's mine*.

**Predicative use.** Use of an adjective or other expression as **predicative complement** or **adjunct** (as opposed to **modifier**): *I'm hot* illustrates the predicative use of *hot*.

**Prefix.** **Affix** that attaches to the beginning of a **base**.

**Prenucleus. Dependent** in a clause that also has a clause in **nucleus** function.

**Preposition (P).** See Chapter 7.

**Preposition phrase (PP).** Phrase headed by a preposition: *in the end*.

**Preposition stranding. Construction** involving a PP that includes the **head** preposition but not the **constituent** understood as its **complement**, because that constituent is positioned outside of the PP. *What did you do that for?*

**Prepositional passive. Passive clause** where the **subject** corresponds to an **object** of a PP rather than of the VP: *It's being looked into*.

**Prepositional verb.** Verb taking a complement consisting of a PP with a particular preposition as head: *ask* in *I asked for help*; *come* in *I came across some old letters*.

**'Present participle'.** Traditional term covering some but not all of the English verb forms ending in *-ing*. Rejected in this book (and in *CGEL*) because in English no verb has a present participle distinct in form from its so-called 'gerund'. See **gerund-participle**.

**Presentational.** Clause very similar to an **existential** clause, with **dummy there** as **subject** not of *be* but of an intransitive verb of emergence such as *appear*: *There remain three problems*.

**Presupposition.** Information that is taken for granted, its truth not being at issue.

**Primary verb-form.** For verbs other than *be* the primary forms are those marked for **tense** (**present** or **preterite**). For *be* they also include irrealis mood *were* (as in *if I were you*).

**Pro-form.** Form represent a reference to **old information** retrievable in full from the context. *You take this seat, and I'll take the other one*.

**Productive.** Of **morphological operations**, available for the creation of new words on the fly by speakers.

**Progressive (aspect).** Construction marked by auxiliary *be* taking a **gerund-participle** complement: *She was writing a novel*; usually represents a situation as being in progress.

**Prototypical.** Central or core to a category, having the full set of distinctive properties.

**Pseudo-cleft.** Construction like *What we need is a knife*, splitting the basic counterpart *We need a knife* into two parts: *a knife* is foregrounded in an extra clause as complement of *be*, and the residue is backgrounded in a **fused relative construction** (*what we need*).

**Quantification.** The property of quantity, expressing “how much”.

**Raised object.** **Direct object** in a **matrix clause** that belongs semantically as if it were in the **subordinate clause**: *We hold these things to be self-evident*. Contrasts with **ordinary object**.

**Raised subject.** **Subject** in a **matrix clause** that belongs semantically as if it were in the **subordinate clause**: *Forrest Gump always seemed to be happy*. Contrasts with ordinary **subject**.

**Reciprocal pronoun.** One of the complex **pronouns** *each other* and *one another*.

**Reduction.** Cover term for a group of **information packaging constructions** where a constituent representing old information is reduced to a pro-form (*I believe so*), or else omitted altogether (*Actually I haven't*).

**Referent.** The unique set or individual that some **constituent** picks out semantically.

**Reflexive pronoun.** One of the **personal pronoun forms** ending in *-self* (or, in the plural, *-selves*).

**Regular lexeme.** **Lexeme** with **inflectional forms** all predictable by general rule.

**Relative adverb.** The adverb *why* as used in a **relative construction**: *The reason [why they left]*.

**Relative construction.** A **relative clause** or a **fused-relative NP**.

**Relative determinative.** Any of the determinatives *which(ever)* and *what(ever)* as used in a **relative construction**: *Arrive at noon, [at*

*which time we'll begin*]. [*Whatever food you can donate*] will be appreciated.

**Relative phrase.** **Relative word**, alone or in combination with other words: *Arrive at noon*, [*at which time we'll begin*]. *The reason* [*why they left*].

**Relative preposition.** Either of the prepositions *when* or *where* as used in a **relative construction**: *The place* [*where I work*].

**Relative word.** A **relative pronoun**, **determiner**, **preposition**, or **adverb**.

**Relativised element.** The word or phrase that is **anaphorically** linked to an **antecedent** in a **relative clause**; e.g., *which* in *the book* [*which she reviewed*], where the relativised element is object.

**Remote.** Counterfactual: not realized in the actual world (at least in the worldview of the speaker's best judgment). *If I had been at Woodstock* talks about the unrealized possibility of my having been there if things had worked out differently (though of course a speaker suffering from amnesia might use that expression despite actually having been at Woodstock).

**Replacement phrase.** An **answer** that corresponds to just the **interrogative phrase** on its own, as when *What is the capital city of Albania?* is answered with: *Tirana*.

**Response.** Anything someone says as a result of being asked some **question**. It may or may not constitute an **answer** (a question like *Don't you have time to come and have a drink?* might elicit the response *You have no idea how many papers I have to grade*, but that's not an answer to the question).

**Restrictive.** Of an **adjunct** or **relative clause**, limiting the possible **reference** or **denotation**.

**Reversed polarity.** Of a **tag**, having the opposite **polarity** of the **main clause**: *It's good, isn't it?*. Contrasts with **constant polarity**.

**Right dislocation.** A **dislocation** in which the extra NP is located to the right of the **main clause**: *She's a good professor, Dr. Goldman*.

**Scalar.** Of properties, capable of holding to a greater or lesser extent: e.g. size, brightness, importance, etc.

**Scope of negation.** The part of the sentence that the negative applies to semantically. In *I didn't log out purposely* (with no pause), *purposely* is in the scope of the negative: it means "I logged out, but not purposely". But *I purposely didn't log out* has *purposely* outside the scope of negation: it means "I chose not to log out".

- Secondary form.** Non-**primary** inflectional form of the verb: either the **plain form**, the **gerund-participle**, or the **past participle**.
- Secondary tense.** The **tense** system contrasting **perfect tense** (*I have lived in Paris*) with the absence of perfect tense (*I live in Paris*).
- Semantic.** Related to the strict and literal meaning of an utterance, not to any overtones or contextual implications or suggestions.
- ‘Sentence adverb’.** Traditional term for the kind of adjunct that modifies the content of a whole clause (the term is a misnomer, because they’re not always adverbs and they don’t apply to whole sentences). See **adjunct**, and Chapter 8.
- Set comparison.** Comparison between the members of some set with respect to their position on the scale denoted by the relevant lexeme: *I’m the tallest in my class* compares my height to the set of heights of all my classmates.
- Short passive.** **Passive clause** without a *by* phrase expressing the **agent**: *It was eaten*. Contrasts with **long passive**.
- Simple.** Of a **base**, having no **affixes** and not decomposable into more than one base.
- Simple fused head.** Construction where fused head can be replaced by dependent plus an understood head: in *Should I wear the red shirt or [the blue]?* (*blue* means “blue shirt”).
- Simple tense.** The non-**perfect present** or **preterite tenses**: *He went to Mississauga*. Contrasts with **compound tense**.
- Source.** Clause constituent prototypically indicating where something moves from: *I came from work*.
- Special fused head.** Fused head construction where the interpretation is not derivable from anything in the context: *Many would disagree* (*many* has the special interpretation “many people”).
- Specified preposition.** Preposition whose presence in a PP is determined by the head verb, noun or adjective of which the PP is complement: *rely on it; gifts to charity; afraid of her*.
- Speech act.** Act accomplished through producing an utterance, like making a statement, asking a question, or issuing a directive.
- Statement.** **Speech act** intended to express a proposition – something that can be either true or false – and usually realized by a **declarative main clause**: *My birthday is in January*.

**Stimulus.** The kind of utterance that an **echo question** repeats with the force of a question.

**Stranded preposition.** Preposition which is understood with a complement but does not immediately precede that complement: *Who did you give it to?*; *This is the book [I was talking about yesterday].*

**Stressed/unstressed.** **Stressed** word or syllable is one that is said relatively more loudly and is longer than others nearby.

**Structure.** The specific ways in which **constituents** go together to form **phrases** and the way **bases** and **affixes** go together to form words.

**Style level.** How formal or informal an utterance is.

**Subclausal negation.** Any negation that is not **clausal negation**: *unhappy*.

**Subject-oriented predicative complement.** A **predicative complement** with the **subject** of a **matrix clause** as its **predicand**: *They're happy*. Contrasts with object-oriented predicative complement.

**Subjective predicative complement.** See **subject-oriented**.

**Subjunctive clause.** One of the three major constructions headed by a **plain form** verb (the others are **imperatives** and **infinitivals**): *It is vital that I be kept informed*, or (in somewhat archaic English) *God be thanked*.

**Subordinator (Sbr).** Word belonging to the small category containing meaningless markers of subordination such as *that* or *whether*. See chapters 7 & 11.

**‘Subordinating conjunction’.** Ill-advised traditional term (which we do not use) for a miscellaneous collection of words including all of what we call subordinators and a variety of words we treat as prepositions taking clause complements. See **subordinator**, and Chapter 7.

**Substitution.** A test technique where a **constituent** is replaced with another constituent with slightly different properties to see whether the sentence remains grammatical or not.

**Suffix.** **Affix** that attaches to the end of a **base**.

**Superiority.** The semantics of being “more than”, typically realized morphologically or syntactically by comparative or superlative forms or constructions.

**Superlative (grade, form).** The term in the **grade** system indicating the highest or lowest point on a scale; marked either inflectionally (as in



*hottest*, the maximum on a scale of heat) or by the adverb *most* or *least* (*most useful*, the maximum on a scale of usefulness).

**Symmetric.** Of a **coordination**, having the same meaning when the order of the coordinates is reversed: *Roses are red and violets are blue* is equivalent to *Violets are blue and roses are red*.

**Syntactic determination.** The associating of a **predicand** with a **predicate** through the requirements imposed by the syntactic properties of particular lexical items.

**Syntactic integration.** How closely and strongly a **dependent** is integrated into a **phrase**.

**System.** Group of interrelated grammatical facts or properties: **number**, **tense**, **gender**, etc.

**Tag.** Truncated **interrogative clause** added to the end of another clause, requesting some kind of confirmation: *He hasn't seen her*, *has he?*

**Temporal.** Of adjuncts or in general, related to time: *I'll finish later*.

**Term comparison.** **Comparison** between a primary term and a secondary term, where a 'term' is generally something like an implied arithmetical value. *She's faster than me*.

**To-infinitival clause.** **Infinitival clause** containing the marker *to*: *I want to see them*; *We arranged for them to meet*.

**Transitive.** Of a verb, requiring at least one object (*I broke the vase*); also applied to a clause with such a verb.

**Transparent verb.** Verb that acts as if it were transparent to subjecthood, so its subject is understood as if it were the subject in the following complement clause; in other words, it takes a **raised subject**, one that has no semantic relationship with the verb of the clause it's in.

**Tree.** Diagram showing the successively smaller branching **constituents** in a **phrase** and containing **function** and **category** labels.

**Truth conditions.** The conditions that must be satisfied for the statement made by uttering a **declarative** main clause in a given context to be true: *Whales eat krill* and *Krill is eaten by whales* have the same truth conditions, because if one is true the other is, and if one is false the other is.

**Ultimate head.** The verb heading the VP that is the head of a clause, or the noun heading the nominal that is the head of an NP.

**‘Understood subject’.** An informal traditional term for what we call the **predicand** of a constituent such as a VP, AdjP, or predicative NP.

**Ungrammatical.** Not conforming to the grammatical rules of **Standard English** (insofar as we can determine them – the claim that some expression is ungrammatical is at root a theoretical claim).

**Universal.** See **general-level**.

**Variable lexeme.** Lexeme with **inflectional forms**.

**Variant.** One of two or more alternant **structures**.

**Verb (V).** See Chapter 3.

**Verb phrase (VP).** Phrase headed by a verb and typically heading a clause.

**Verbal idiom.** Idiom with a verb as the main element: ***kick** the bucket* (“die”), ***fall** out* (“quarrel”).

**Verbal negation.** Negation of the verb, marked either by *not* (*You need not answer*) or by a verb-form containing the suffix *-n’t* (*You needn’t answer*).

**Verbless clause.** A **clause** lacking a verb but expressing a semantic relationship between a predicand and a predicate (*without any sunscreen on*).

**‘Voice’.** The traditional name for the grammatical system in which **active** and **passive** clauses contrast. *Many people dislike it* is in the active voice; *It is disliked by many people* is in the passive voice. The term is unfortunate, because the active/passive choice has nothing to do with authorial voice (the recognizable and characteristic style of a given writer), or vocal capability, or vibration of the vocal folds. A better term might be ‘argument alignment’. We avoid the term ‘voice’, but you will see it in most books about grammar.

**Weight.** The length and complexity of a **constituent**.

**Word.** An instance of the smallest unit dealt with in studying clause structure; used ambiguously to mean either **lexeme** or word **form**.