

Foundations of Linguistics WiSe 23/24

Morphology & Syntax block --- Assignment II: Syntax

Question 1 (from H&P2005):

Divide the **main clauses** of the following examples into subject and predicate. Underline the subject and make bold the predicate. (For example: This **is the house that Jack built.**)

- i *I think it's a disgrace.*
- ii *The guy in that house over there works for the city.*
- iii *Most of the mistakes he made were very minor.*
- iv *The thing that puzzles me is why no one called the police.*
- v *One of her daughters is training to be a pilot.*

Question 2 Have a look at the text excerpt below (from Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone by J. K. Rowling). Can you assign each word to one of the following classes: **nouns**, **pronouns**, **verbs**, **adjectives**, **adverbs**, **determinatives**, **prepositions**, **coordinators**, **subordinators**, **interjections**. Use the colours given to each class. Which words, if any, are tricky? Make a list and write down **why** you find certain words difficult to classify.

For nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions, use the definitions/discussion provided by Tallerman (2014) and discussed in class. Definitions of the others follow:

pronouns: in some accounts, pronouns are a subclass of nouns, often defined as those elements that substitute a noun. Pronouns are like nouns in their syntactic function: they occur as heads of NPs. Examples are *I, you, he, she, we, who*, etc.

determinatives: a word class of function words in English that function as determiner in NP structure and mark definiteness, quantity or number. Examples are *the, a, this, that, some, any, many, few, one, two, three*, etc.

coordinators: *and, or, but*, their function is to mark the coordination (relation between elements of equal syntactic status) of two or more expressions

subordinators: *that, whether, if*, etc., their function is to mark a clause as subordinate

interjections: "Interjections are relatively conventionalised vocal gestures (or more generally, linguistic gestures) which express a speaker's mental state, action or attitude or reaction to a situation" (Ameka 1992) *ouch, oh, look!, wow, sshht, hmm-hmm*, etc.

There was a horrible smell in the kitchen next morning when Harry went in for breakfast. It seemed to be coming from a large metal tub in the sink. He went to have a look. The tub was full of what looked like dirty rags swimming in grey water.

'What's this?' he asked Aunt Petunia. Her lips tightened as they always did if he dared to ask a question.

'Your new school uniform,' she said.

Harry looked in the bowl again.

'Oh,' he said. 'I didn't realise it had to be so wet.'

'Don't be stupid,' snapped Aunt Petunia. 'I'm dyeing some of Dudley's old things grey for you. It'll look just like everyone else's when I've finished.'

Harry seriously doubted this, but thought it best not to argue. He sat down at the table and tried not to think about how he was going to look on his first day at Stonewall High – like he was wearing bits of old elephant skin, probably.

Question 3. In the following phrases, identify the heads and dependents, and mark whether the dependents are complements and/or modifiers. Mark the head in bold, put the complements/modifiers between brackets [], and put 'modifier' and/or 'complement' behind each sentence.

Clause (remember that modifiers on the clausal level are (traditionally) called adjuncts; and that the head of a simple clause is the verb phrase)

- a. I worked last week.
- b. She seemed very annoyed.
- c. The longhorned beetle seemed to hug its rival.
- d. The pirates laughed heartily.

Nominal phrase

- e. the furnace black with soot
- f. an understanding of C++, Java, and other programming languages
- g. the very young child
- h. my German class
- i. her criticism of my decision
- j. the treasure chest in my room
- k. the work I did yesterday

Prepositional phrase (ignore the parts within brackets)

- l. (That was) nearly two weeks ago.
- m. (I stayed) until after dinner.
- n. (The student body elected her) as student prefect.
- o. (We went) directly to my room.

Question 4. Provide a tree structure of the sentence "*The father happily fed the baby mashed carrots for lunch*" in the way we have done in class, so marking nodes in the tree both with labels for function and category. Give short definitions of the following terms, using the tree structure you made:

- a. clause
- b. subject
- c. predicate
- d. predicator
- e. object
- f. complement
- g. adjunct
- h. NP
- i. VP
- j. PP
- k. adverb

Question 5. Word order in Ju|'hoan (Kx'a, Namibia & Botswana). Examine the Ju|'hoan sentences in (1) and their English glosses (from Snyman 1970) and then answer these questions: (question taken from Lyovin et al. 2017)

- a. What signals grammatical relations in this language? In your answer be sure to indicate how you reached your conclusions.
- b. What is the basic word order? Again, state how you come to your conclusions.

- a. [mi meni i!a] 'I answer you.'
- b. [i!a !aro mi] 'You teach me.'
- c. [!eŋ ho mi] 'The eland sees me.'
- d. [!h^hwã ho !eŋ] 'The man sees the eland.'
- e. [daʔama ho !eŋ] 'The child sees the eland.'
- f. [!h^hei ho !eŋ] 'The lion/lions see(s) the eland.'
- g. [deʔebi ho !eŋ] 'The children see the eland.'
- h. [||a^he ho !eŋ] 'The men see the eland.'
- i. [!e^hu ho mi] 'The elder sees me.'
- j. [!e^husi ho mi] 'The elders see me.'

Question 6. The two sentences in (1) and (2) below contain words from the same word classes, and in the same order, but they each have different syntactic structures.

1. Kim glanced at the actor with a wig.
2. Kim glanced at the actor through her binoculars.

Using standard tests for constituency, work out what the constituents of each sentence must be. You should use at least two tests for each putative constituent. Your answers should include contrasting grammatical and ungrammatical examples which reveal the syntactic differences between (1) and (2). Use square brackets to indicate the constituents you find in each example, and remember to bracket constituents only, and not random strings of words. (ii) Next, draw labelled tree diagrams for (1) and (2), taking care that the trees correctly represent the constituent structures you discovered above. (taken from Tallerman 2014: 182)