

Seminar 17312

Introduction to Linguistics

Institute for English Philology
Winter Semester 2020/2021

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**Syntax II: Grammatical relations and semantic
roles**

Recap: Syntax I

Parts of Speech or Word Classes

LEXICAL/CONTENT	GRAMMATICAL/FUNCTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● nouns: <i>child, apple, love</i> ● verbs: <i>eat, think, deny</i> ● adjectives: <i>little, angry, abstract</i> ● adverbs: <i>slowly, yesterday, usually</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pronouns: <i>you, his, them</i> ● determiners: <i>the, a</i> ● prepositions: <i>at, to, under</i> ● conjunctions: <i>and, while, since</i> ● auxiliaries: <i>be, do, have</i>

Grammatical categories

GENDER grammatical vs. natural gender

PRONOUNS

CASE nominative/common case, possessive/genitive, object case **NOUNS, PRONOUNS**

NUMBER singular, plural

NOUNS, PRONOUNS, VERB (BE)

PERSON 1st/2nd/3rd

VERB (BE)

TENSE past, non-past

VERB

ASPECT (non-)progressive, (non-)perfect

VERB

MOOD indicative, subjunctive

VERB

VOICE active, passive

VERB

COMPARISON absolute – comparative – superlative

ADJECTIVE, ADVERBS

- **SENTENCE:** "The largest independent (!) syntactic unit of a language which is not embedded in any larger construction" (Oxfordreference.com);
- Sentences are built from smaller building blocks: clauses;
- **CLAUSE:** "A unit of grammar which typically involves a subject–predicate relationship, and which operates at a level lower than a sentence, but higher than a phrase" (Oxfordreference.com);
- **SIMPLEX SENTENCES:** consist only of one clause
- **COMPLEX SENTENCES:**
 1. compound sentences (several main clauses)
 2. complex sentences (at least main clause and one subordinate clause) (Kortmann 2005: 124).

Phrase

- "A linguistic unit at a level between the word and the clause" (Oxfordreference.com);
- Obligatory element (the head) + usually modifying elements (modifiers);
- May consist of a single word or several words;
- The whole phrase is categorised according to the syntactic category of its head;
- The head also determines its position in a sentence (Kortmann 2005: 128);
- Noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective phrase (AP), adverb phrase (ADvP), prepositional phrase (PP) (Oxfordreference.com);

Types of phrases

Head	Term	Examples
Noun	noun phrase (NP)	Mary, she, the boy, a green apple, the man with the beard, the girl who stood at the corner
Verb	verb phrase (VP)	(has/was) asked, may ask, is asking, may have been being asked
Adjective	adjective phrase (AP)	(really) old, young and ambitious
Adverb	adverbial phrase (AdvP)	quickly, here
Preposition	prepositional phrase (PP)	at work, in the garden, on the roof

Kortmann (2005: 128)

Subject (S)	<p>A syntactic element seen as representing someone or something of which something is said. <i>e.g. John came. The car is red. The flower was given.</i></p>
Verb (in Bieswanger & Becker 2010 called predicate in a narrow sense (P))	<p>A syntactic element which represents what is said (or predicated of) the subject./ some linguistist refer only to the verb. <i>e.g. John came. The flower was given.</i></p>
Object (O)	<p>An element which represents someone or something other than the person/thing represented by the subject. Direct objects: immediately involved in a subject's activities: I met him. Indirect object: benefit from or receive the direct objects involved in these activities. <i>e.g. Tom gives her (indirect object) flowers (direct object).</i> Prepositional object: <i>He looked at him.</i></p>

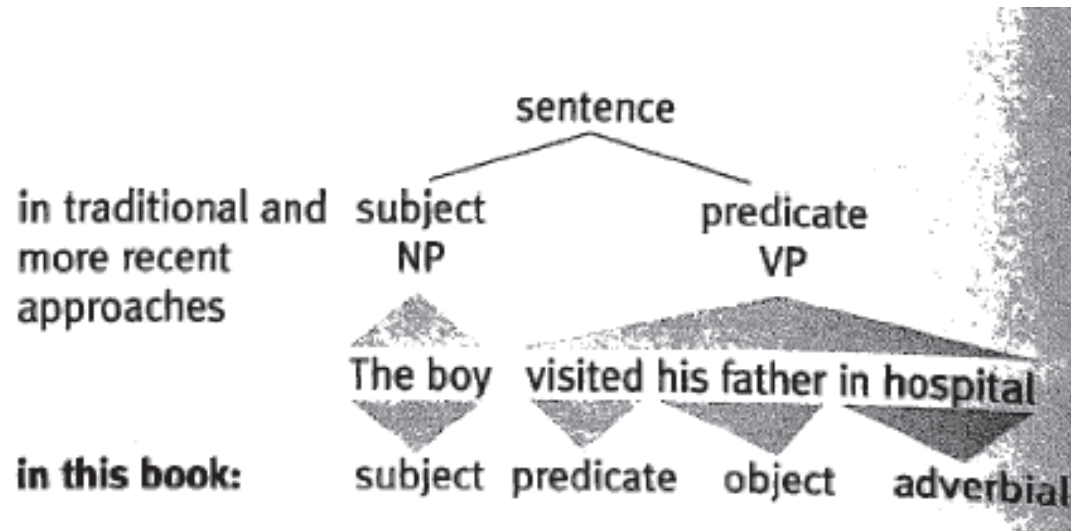
Mathews (2007), as cited in Bieswanger & Becker (2010: 107)

Syntactic elements

Complement (C) or predicative	A syntactic element seen as “complementing” the construction of another element, usually the subject (object complement/predicative) or the object. <i>e.g. Mary seems happy. That present will make her happy.</i>
Adverbial (A)	A syntactic element usually providing information about the time, place or manner of the action or state referred to in a sentence. <i>e.g. I will do it tomorrow/ on Monday/ when I am back home.</i>

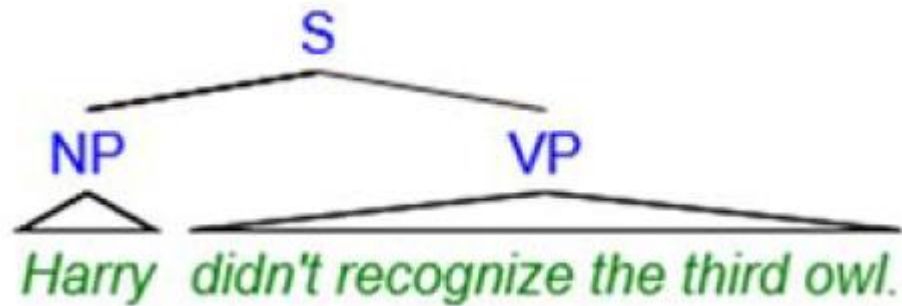
Mathews (2007), as cited in Bieswanger & Becker (2010: 107)

Syntactic functions of phrases in a sentence



(Kortmann 2005: 130)

Harry didn't recognise the third owl.



- Subject = Harry;
- Predicate = all the remaining structures (the rest of the clause);
- Subject-predicate structure is fundamental in the English language;
- **S -> NP VP**
- Triangle = we do not analyse the structure (out of choice);
(Stefanowitsch, Middeke 2020: 15).

- "Other noun phrases that complement the verb" (Stefanowitsch, Middeke 2019: 16);
- Three kinds of objects:
 - **DIRECT OBJECTS** (in case-marking languages accusative objects);
 - **INDIRECT OBJECTS** (in case-marking languages dative objects);
 - **PREPOSITIONAL OBJECTS** (remember that not all prepositional phrases are prepositional objects!)

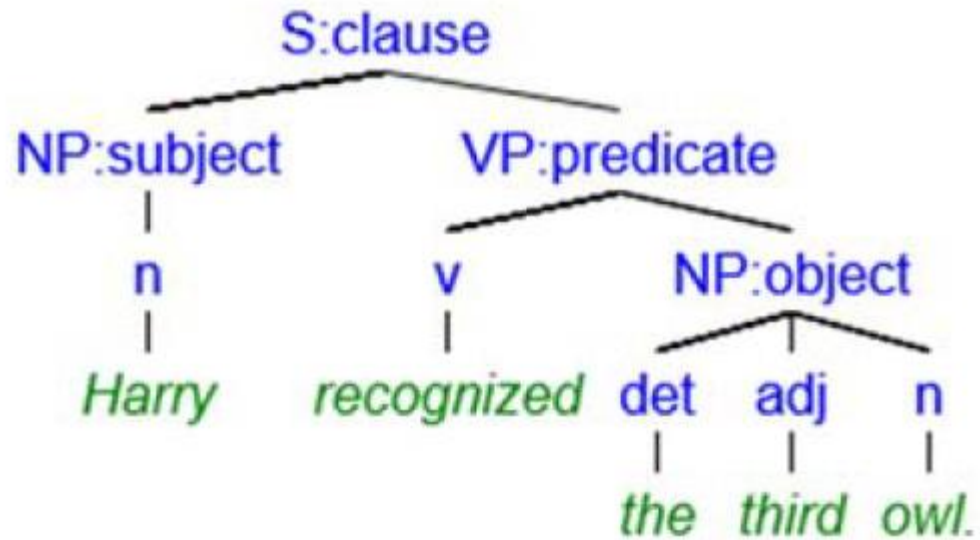
Tom gave Anna flowers.

The first object is direct (*Anna*), and the second is indirect object (*flowers*).

Tom gave flowers to the girl.

(ibid., p. 16-17).

Sentence structure



Complements and arguments of a verb

- Subjects and objects = complements/arguments of a verb;
- Argument: a term from logic and mathematics;
- Predicate requires arguments to be able to form a true or false statement;
(Stefanowitsch, Middeke 2020: 18).

Predicative complement (in short: predicative)

- **SUBJECT COMPLEMENT:** object of a copular verb (be, become, consider) that refers to the subject

He is *a teacher*.

He wants to be *a pilot*.

(Stefanowitsch, Middeke 2020: 18);

- **OBJECT COMPLEMENT:** "constituent co-referential" with the direct object (ibid.).

Anna considers the day *wasted*.

The class has elected Helen *team captain*.

- They "complete the verb by specifying participants of an event" (ibid.).

Adjuncts: adverbials

- Adjunct: can be omitted without leaving the clause incomplete;

ADVERBIAL ADJUNCTS:

- specify the circumstances;
- Often described according to their semantic function:

ADVERBIALS of **TIME, PLACE, MANNER**

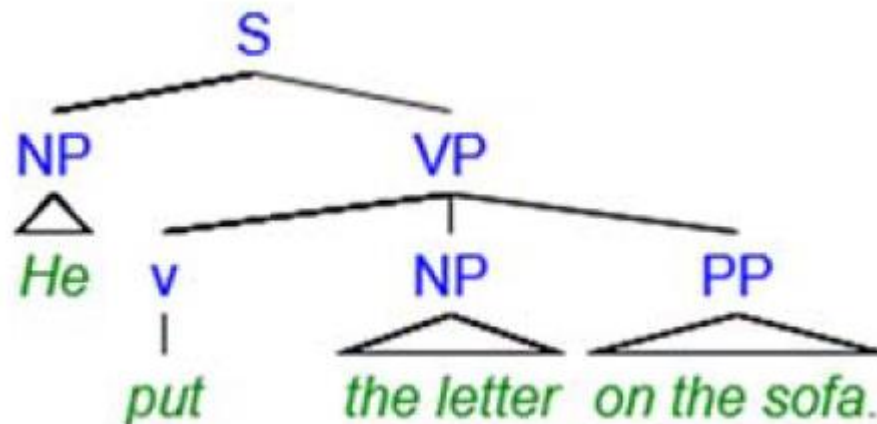
Last night, Jane slept at home.

- come in various forms: NPs (*last night, next Monday*); PPs (*on Monday, with an evil grin*) (Stefanowitsch, Middeke 2020: 19)

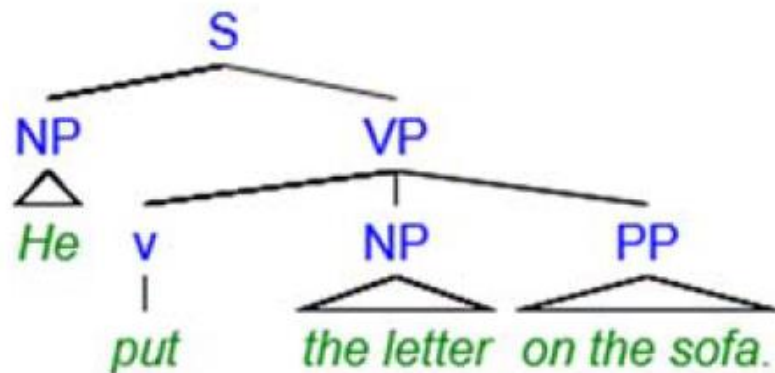
Adverbial complements or obligatory adjuncts?

- AdvP or PP that is required to complete a verb which is not considered transitive; usually the verb of motion and location (Stefanowitsch, Middeke 2020: 20).

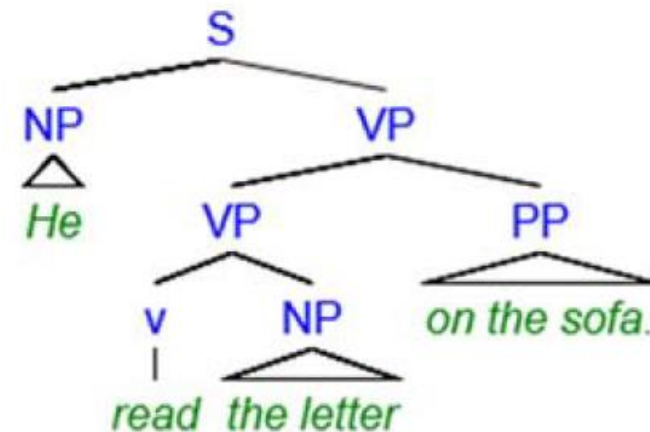
He put a letter *on the sofa*.



Adverbial complement vs adjunct adverbial



(Middeke, Stefanowitsch 2020: 20)



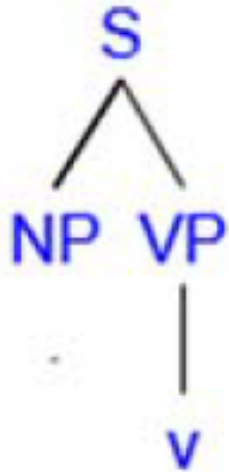
(ibid., p. 21)

Syntax II

The seven basic clause patterns in English

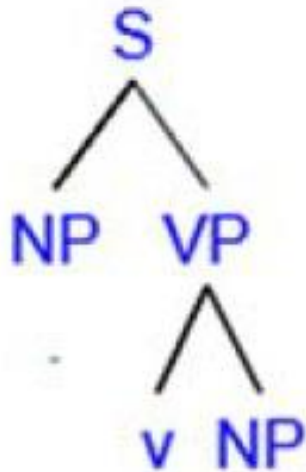
verb type	example clause	valency	clause pattern
INTRANSITIVE	<i>She was working</i>	monovalent	SP
TRANSITIVE (OR MONOTRANSITIVE)	<i>I read a book</i>	divalent	SPO
DITRANSITIVE	<i>We sent them a parcel</i>	trivalent	SPOO
COPULAR	<i>He became the President of the United States</i>	divalent	SPC
	<i>We were too early</i>	divalent	SPA
COMPLEX TRANSITIVE	<i>We find clause patterns fascinating</i>	trivalent	SPOC
	<i>I put the book on the shelf</i>	trivalent	SPOA

Intransitive clauses



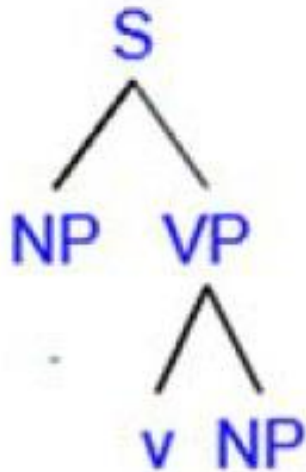
He was swimming.

Monotransitive clauses (S+O)



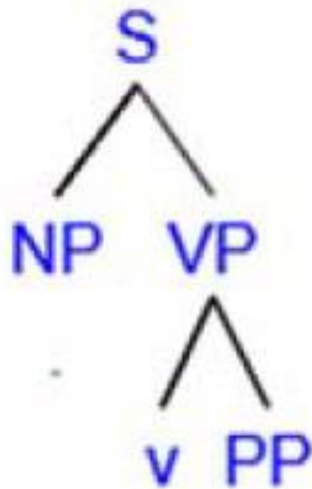
He bought a car.

Monotransitive clauses with a bare NP object



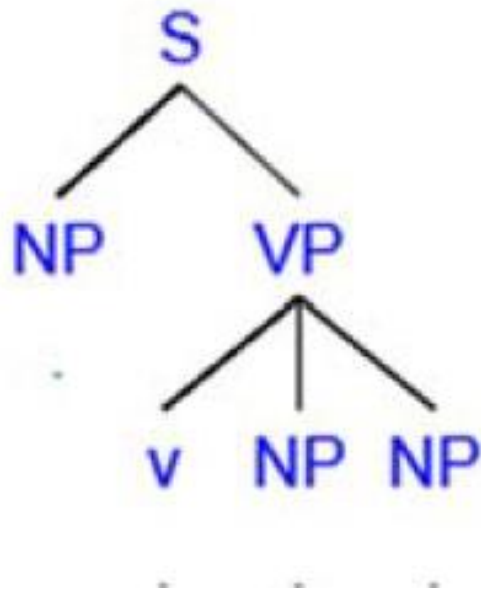
He bought a car.

Monotransitive clauses (S + AdvC)



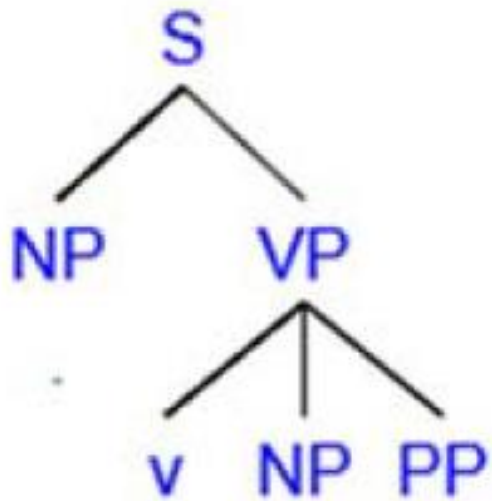
She went to the cinema.

Ditransitive clauses (S+O+O)



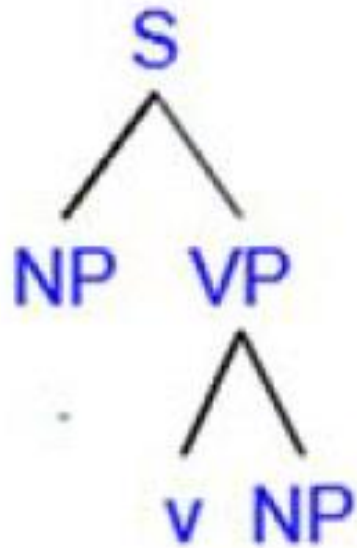
He gave her a flower.

Ditransitive clauses (S+O+AdvC)



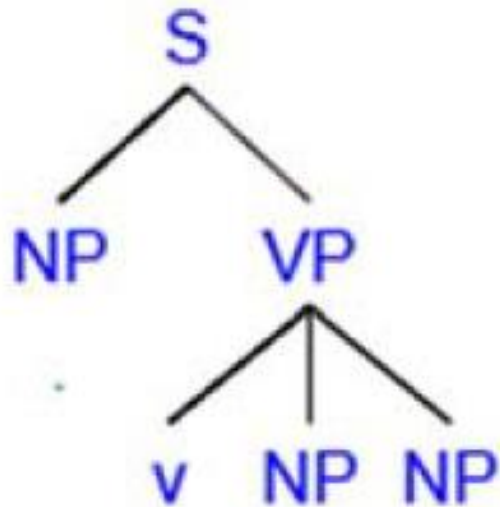
He put a drink on the table.

Clauses with subject complements (S+SCpl)



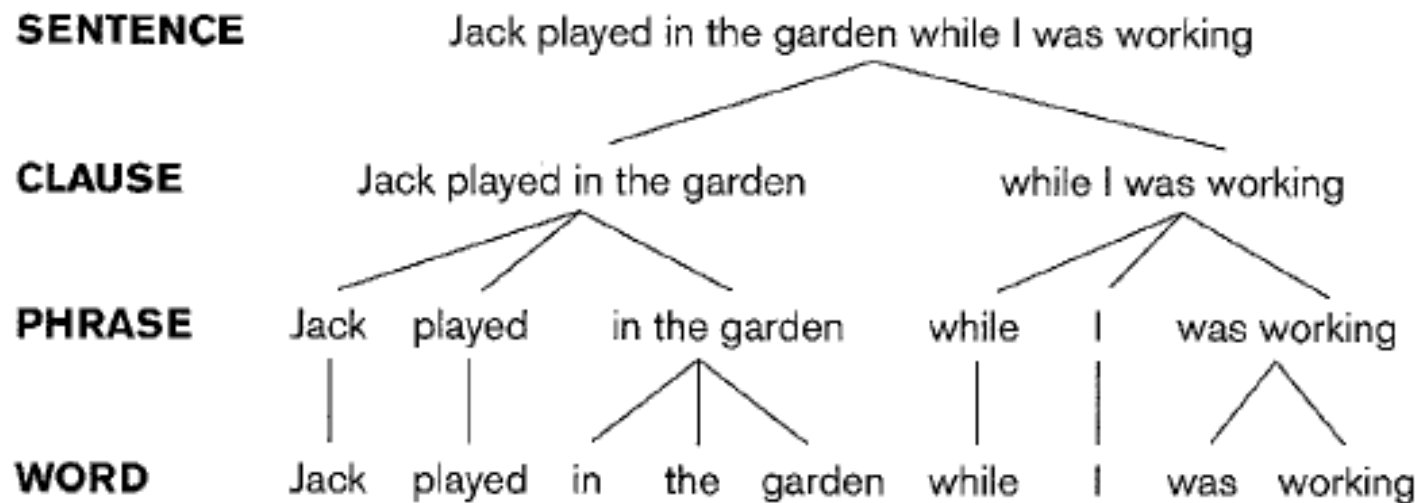
He was appointed new president.

Clauses with object complements (S+OCpl.)



He called her a liar.

Levels of Analysis



Types of clauses

FINITE clauses in which verb is inflected for tense and person :

- *John **leaves**.*
- *John **leaves** and Mary **stays**.*
- *Mary, who **was** left by John, **is** sad.*

NON-FINITE clauses contain infinitives or participles:

- *Someone wants John **to leave**.*
- ***Leaving** Mary, I waved goodbye.*
- ***Left by** John, Mary was sad.*

CLAUSES are usually built around **a verb** and a varying number of constituents.

Types of sentences

1. **Simple(x) sentences:** one main clause;
 2. **Complex sentences:**
 - Compound sentences: coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or) join two or more clauses;
 - Complex sentences: main clause + one or several subordinate clauses (subordinate conjunctions such as although, if, when, because, as + relative pronouns that, who, which)
- (Kortmann 2005: 129).

Terminology and concepts

PHRASE is a building block of a clause

CLAUSE can consist of one or more phrases

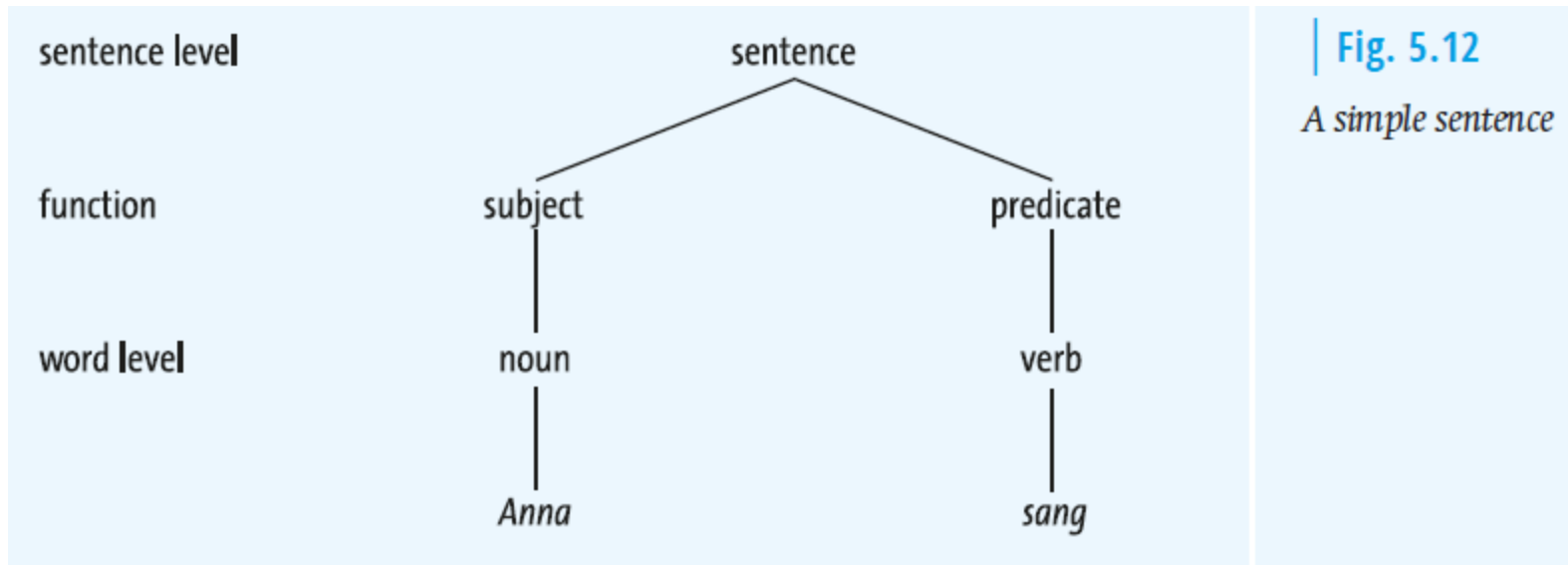
CLAUSE is a constituent with **ONE SUBJECT-PREDICATE STRUCTURE** and may either constitute a sentence by itself or be combined with other clauses to form a sentence.

UTTERANCE consists of one or more clauses: **MAIN CLAUSE** and **SUBORDINATE CLAUSE(S)**

SENTENCE is an independent syntactic unit which usually begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (question mark, exclamation mark) in writing.

(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 107)

A simple sentence

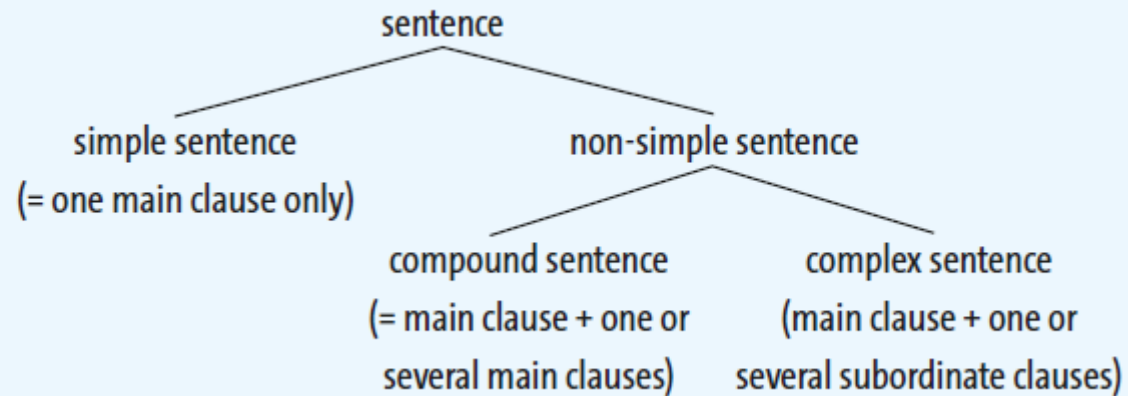


Bieswanger & Becker (2017: 109)

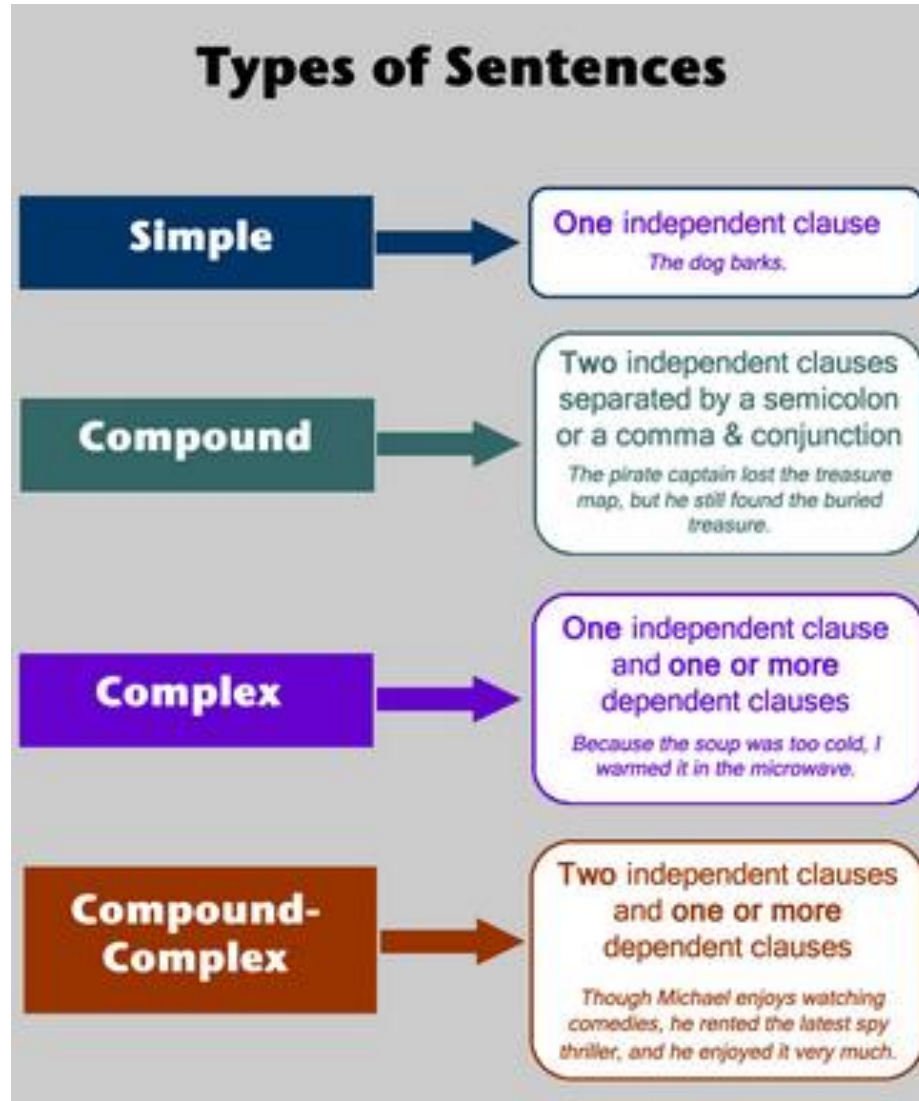
Types of sentences

Fig. 5.10 |

Simple and non-simple sentences



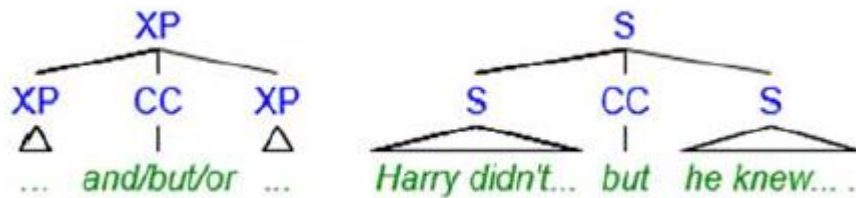
(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 108)



Source: (<http://swaney.weebly.com/simple-compound-complex-sentences.html>)

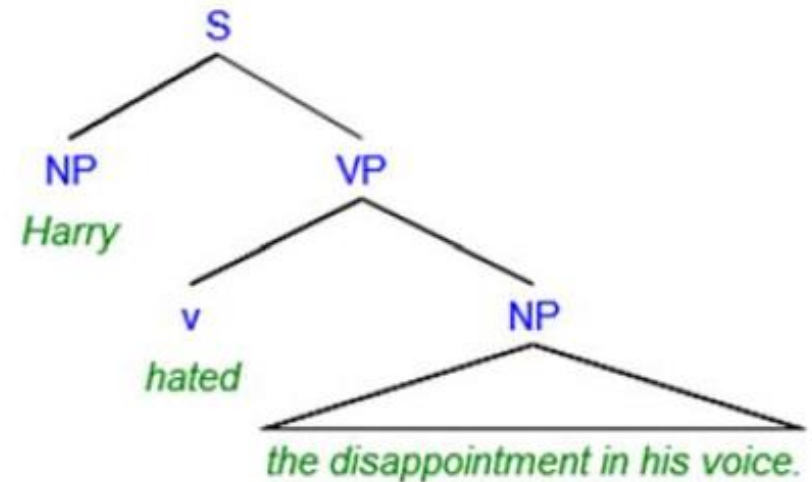
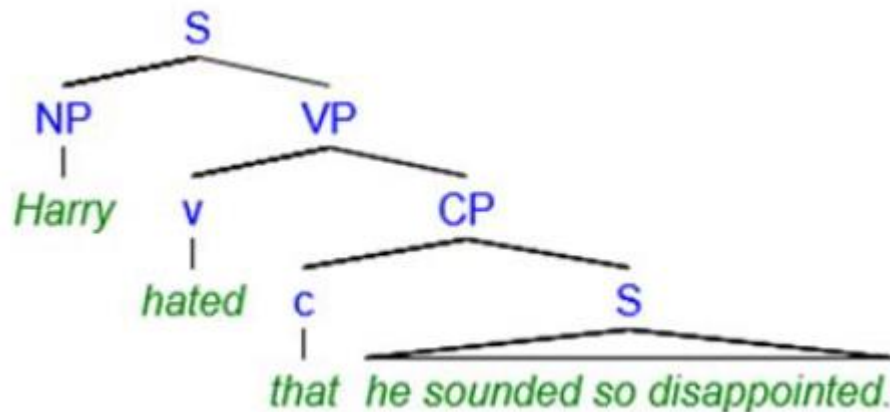
Coordination

- Compound sentences;
- Main clause + one or more main clauses;
- Coordinating conjunctions = cc *and, but, or*



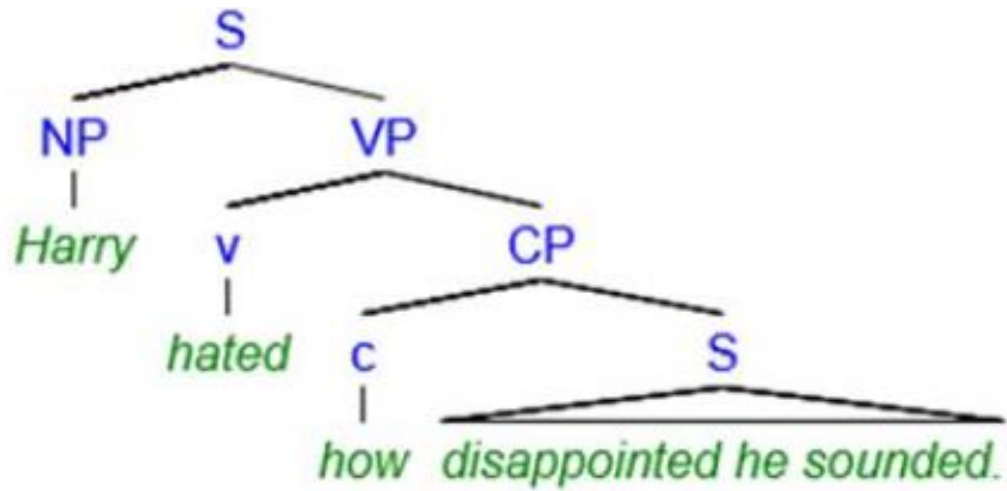
Middeke & Stefanowitsch (2020: 27)

- Main clause + one or more subordinate clauses;
- Complementizers = subordinating conjunctions;
- Complementizer phrase has the same function as a complement (PP and NP) in simple sentences.



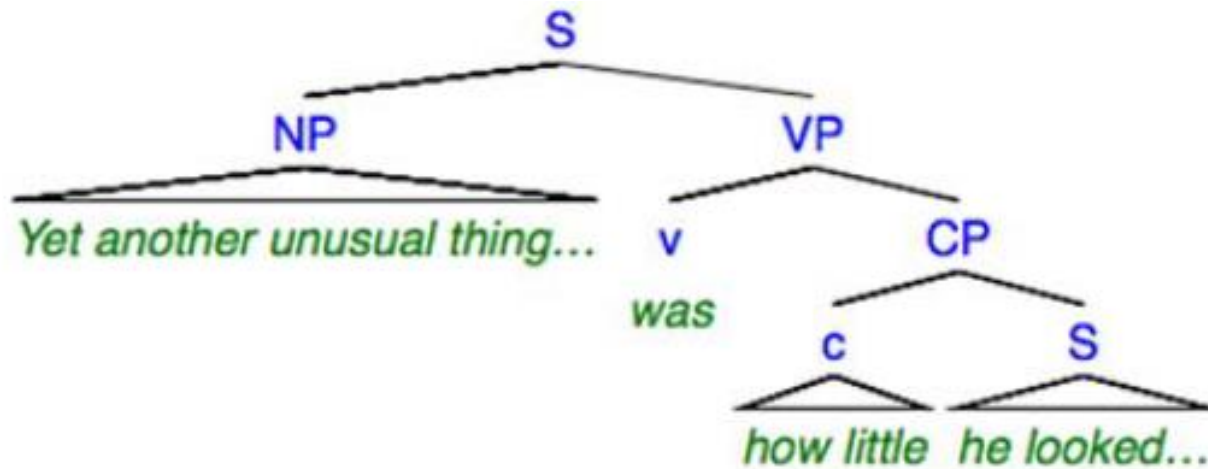
Middeke & Stefanowitsch (2020: 26)

Embedded clauses



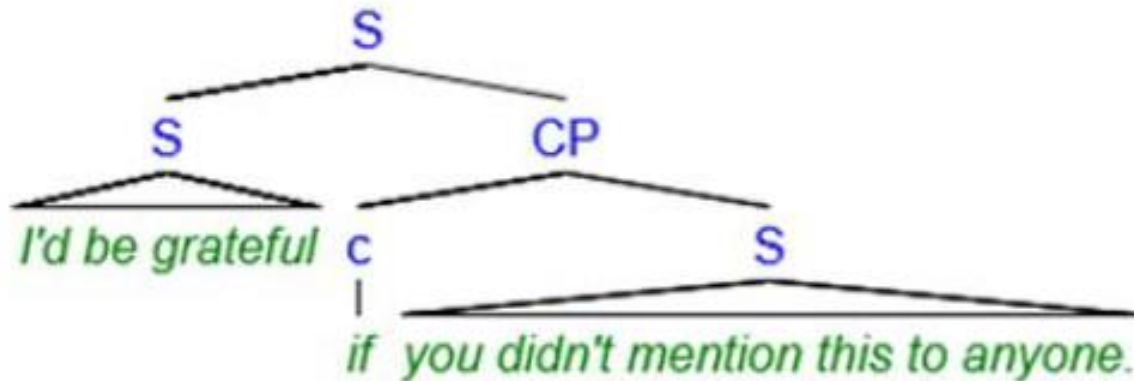
Middeke, Stefanowitsch (2020: 27)

CPs as predicative complements



Middeke & Stefanowitsch (2020: 28)

CPs as a subordinate clause that is not a complement



Middeke, Stefanowitsch (2020: 27)

Types of subordinate clauses

Nominal clauses:

Subject clause: That you are here is a miracle.

Object clause: We knew (that) he was a bad driver.

Complement clause: The problem is how to stay away from the trouble.

Adverbial clauses:

Adverbial of time: We left as soon as we had finished breakfast.

Adverbial of place: He waited where I had left him.

Adverbial of manner: She behaves as if she has problems.

Adverbial of condition: If you leave now, you will still reach the train.

Adverbial of cause: I was angry because he came late.

Adverbial of concession: Although I love good food, I eat very little.

Adverbial of purpose: He came (in order) to help me.

Adverbial of principle: Walking along the river, he watched the fishermen.

(Kortmann 2005: 133)

Basic sentence patterns in English

Pattern	Subject	Predicate/ verb	Object(s)	Complement	Adverbial
SV	The girl	was sleeping.			
SVO	Her mother	was dressing	the baby (O _d)		
SVC	Little James	seemed		very happy (C _s)	
SVA	He	was sitting			on the table
SVOO	Mrs Bates	gave	her children (O _i) all her love (O _d).		
SVOC	Most people	considered	her (O _d)	a perfect mother (C _o)	
SVOA	She	had spent	all her life (O _d)		In the village

(Kortmann 2005: 131)

How to draw a tree diagram

1. Identify the phrases by **constituency tests** (cf. to Bieswanger & Becker 2008: 104-106; Plat et al. 2009).
2. Name the phrase by identifying the word classes and look for the semantic head of the phrase. Start with the NPs and see what fits next.
3. Go **upwards** from **WORD LEVEL** to **PHRASE LEVEL**, and finally, to **CLAUSE LEVEL**.

Types of relations

- Syntactic structure of sentences (NP, VP etc);
- Syntactic functions of constituents (subject, verb, object, complement - adverbial etc.)
- Semantic relations/roles

Semantic roles

- In a prototypical active sentence the subject carries out an action (**THE AGENT**), while the direct object is typically affected by this action (**THE PATIENT**); the indirect object is the goal of this action or benefits from it (**RECIPIENT** or **BENEFACTIVE**).
- Adverbials: semantic roles of TIME, PLACE, SOURCE, GOAL, INSTRUMENT;

(Kortmann 2005: 133-134)

Semantic roles

- *Christopher called his father.*

SUBJECT-AGENT DIRECT OBJECT - PATIENT

- *Christopher was called by his father.*

SUBJECT-PATIENT PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT – AGENT

The subject has different **SEMANTIC ROLES** - the underlying relationships that a participant has with the main verb in a clause.

Semantic/thematic roles (subject/object)

AGENT carries out the action/deliberately performs the action:

*The **writer** publishes his new book.*

PATIENT undergoes the action and changes its state/is affected by the action.

*The little girl strokes **the dog**.*

THEME undergoes the action, but does not change its state.

*I put **the book** on the table.*

EXPERIENCER receives sensory or emotional input (feels or perceives events):

***Susan** heard the song.*

STIMULUS affects the experiencer

*Susan heard **the song**.*

RECIPIENT profits from the action (only with verbs that denote a change of possession):

*I sent **John** the letter.*

(Kortmann 2005: 133-134; Carnie 2006: 219-224)

Semantic/thematic roles (adverbials)

TIME

I will do that ***tomorrow***.

LOCATION The place where the action occurs

Tom is ***in his apartment***.

GOAL The entity towards which motion takes place

Doug went ***to Chicago***.

SOURCE The entity from which a motion takes place

Stacy came directly ***from sociolinguistics class***.

INSTRUMENT The object with which an action is performed

He opened the bottle ***with a corkscrew***.

References

1. Bieswanger, Markus & Annette Becker. 2017. *Introduction to English linguistics*. Tübingen: Francke.
2. Huddleston, Rodney & Geoffrey K. Pullum. 2005. *A student's introduction to English Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Kortmann, Bern. 2010. *Linguistics: Essential*. Berlin: Cornelsen.
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5. Matthews, Peter H. 2007. *Syntactic relations: a critical survey*. Cambridge: CUP.
6. Oxfordreference.com. 2020. *Agreement - Oxford Reference*. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199675128.001.0001/acref-9780199675128-e-111# 2 Jan. 2020>].