

Handout 6: Syntax – Part Two

November 1-8

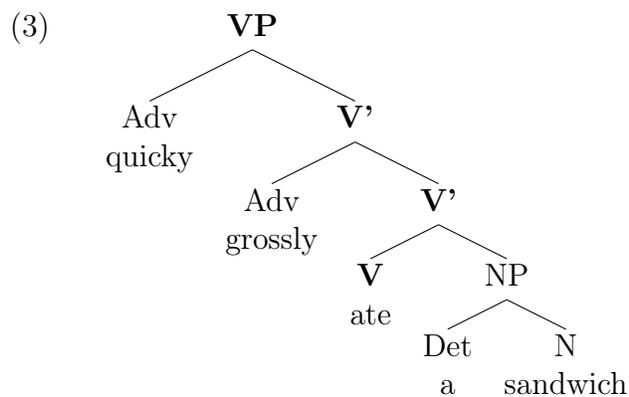
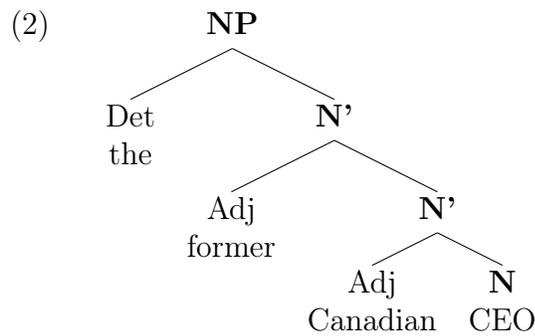
1 What’s the head of a sentence?

Headedness:

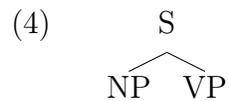
Morphology: Head contributes category and core meaning

- (1) a. **green**house
- b. green **house**
- c. **black**board
- d. black **board**
- e. **wet** suit
- f. wet **suit**

Syntax: Every constituent has a head, which determines the syntactic category



Are sentences constituents? If so, how do we know? We've been drawing sentences like (4).



Does anything seem funny to you about giving sentences the label S?

Let's see if we can figure out what the head of a sentence is. Consider the following data:

- (5)
- a. Kaeli laughed.
 - b. Kaeli laughs.
 - c. *Kaeli laugh.

Why are (5a-b) grammatical, but not (5c)?

- (6)
- a. Kaeli will laugh.
 - b. Kaeli can laugh.
 - c. Kaeli could laugh.
 - d. *Kaeli will/can/could laughs.
 - e. *Kaeli will/can/could laughed.

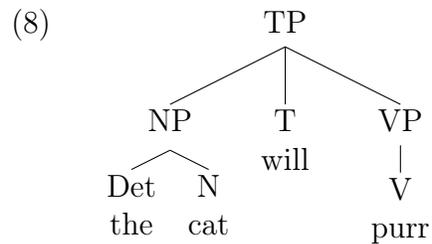
Why are (6a-c) grammatical, but not (6d-e)?

- (7)
- a. Kaeli will eat a cookie.
 - b. *Kaeli will a cookie.
 - c. Kaeli can eat a cookie.
 - d. *Kaeli can a cookie.
 - e. Kaeli could eat a cookie.
 - f. *Kaeli could a cookie.

Why are (7a,c,e) grammatical, but not (7b,d,f)?

What is common to all sentences is that they have a tense. So, the head of a sentence is T(ense), which means that sentences have what phrase type?

A first attempt at including T/TP in our trees, (8). Does anything look funny here?



A better structure:

What should we do about tense affixes like *-ed* and *-s*?

Some practice:

- (9)
- a. The puppy will eat a treat.
 - b. The students danced on the desks.
 - c. Lauren laughs for hours on Wednesdays.
 - d. The girls laugh for hours on Wednesdays.
 - e. The puppy took a bath.

2 Complement vs. adjunct

One thing that we noticed above was that there was a difference in VP between the attachment of phrases like *at night* and *the book*, (11).

- (10) a. I read the book at night.
 b. I [[did so] at night]. *at night* can be stranded by *do so* replacement
 c. *I [[did so] the book at night]. ...while *the book* cannot

We posited a structural difference to account for these diagnostic differences:

The technical names for these different positions (and their relation to the phrase) are:

- **complement** (sister to a head)
- **adjunct** (sister to a bar level)

On an intuitive level, complements are things that are required to be there, i.e., are **selected**, while adjuncts are things that further describe the phrase (e.g., time, place, manner...).

There are a number of tests we can run to see if something is a complement or adjunct, which most clearly work with V/VP, so we'll stick to V/VP.

(Note that I've mostly chosen verbs with complements, but there does NOT need to be a complement; note also that the judgments will be stronger for NP complements than PP complements.)

A. Strandability under *do so* replacement

- Complements: cannot be stranded
- Adjuncts: can be stranded

(11) Stefan devoured [the sandwich] [in three minutes].

(12) I talked [to Mary] [at noon].

B. Optionality of the phrase

- Complements: not optional (unless the verb is optionally intransitive)
- Adjuncts: always optional

(13) Stefan devoured [the sandwich] [in three minutes].

(14) I talked [to Mary] [at noon].

C. Iterability

- Complements: not iterable
- Adjuncts: iterable (so long as not conflicting)

(15) Stefan devoured [the sandwich] [in three minutes].

(16) I talked [to Mary] [at noon].

D. Proximity to head verb

- Complements: must stack up adjacent to the verb
- Adjuncts: don't have to be adjacent to the verb; can't come before a complement

(17) Stefan devoured [the sandwich] [in three minutes].

(18) I talked [to Mary] [at noon].

E. Reorderability

- Complements: when there are multiple complements, they appear in a fixed order
- Adjuncts: when there are multiple adjuncts, they can be swapped around

(19) Stefan put [the baseball] [in his glove].

(20) I sing [in a high pitched voice] [in the shower] [at ten o'clock].

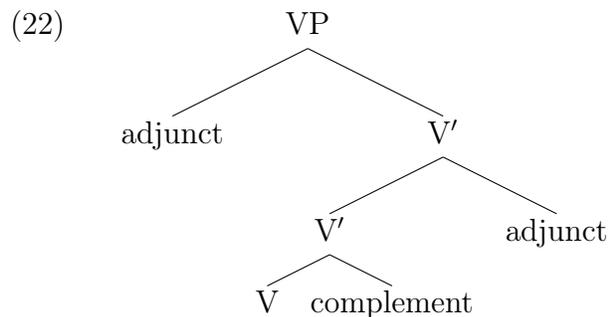
F. Pickiness

- Complements: the verb is picky about them
- Adjuncts: the verb is not picky about them

- (21)
- a. *devour* selects NP
 - b. *eat* optionally selects NP
 - c. *talk* optionally selects PP

Summary:

- We have seen a fundamental difference between complements to V and adjuncts to V, which can be seen as having a structural correlate:



- Complements are... selected, not strandable, not optional, not iterable, close to the head, not reorderable.
- Adjuncts are... not selected, strandable, optional, iterable, need not be close to the head, reorderable.