

## Topics in Grammar

### Class activities

#### Week 1: Review

You already know a lot about English grammatical structure – but how much do you remember? In groups of up to 4, try the following activities. The activities are mainly concerned with refreshing your memory of basic grammatical terminology. In this course we will survey different ways of modelling the grammar of English, but many procedures and concepts are common to different models. Remember that on this course, we are not only concerned with *what* label we give to a part of speech, but *why* we give it that label. Some of the examples below are problematical, and we will revisit them as the course progresses.

### 1. Identifying words

a) Which of the following are prepositions and which are adverbs, and which can be both? How can your knowledge of *paradigmatic relations* help you decide this?

out    outwards    quickly    in    over    fast    now    at

b) Using similar ‘grammatical tests’, decide which of the following are prepositions and which are conjunctions

if    up    although    over    because    in that    in

c) Can you think of a *syntagmatic* test which can help you to distinguish the following adverbs and conjunctions? Which can be either?

however    but    furthermore    unless    besides

### Note

Grammatical tests can help us identify parts of speech, but few are reliable in isolation. Usually to determine how a word functions, different tests have to be devised.

### 2. Identifying phrases

Identify the phrase structure of the following by marking the phrases with round brackets. Label the phrases only. For example:

          M    M    H  
          (that beautiful woman)  
      NP   d    Aj    N

- a man
- a loud-voiced man
- a very loud-voiced man
- A very loud-voiced man is calling for you because he wants to take you away in his big, flashy automobile.
- Don't let him!

### 3. Recalling clause structure

Identify the clause structure (SPOCA) of the sentences given below. First, identify the phrases and then figure out how they relate to each other. Then try to devise some sentences of your own to illustrate the SPOCA labels.

- a) They seemed friendly.
- b) They rode over the hill.
- c) Then they disappeared.
- d) Some gave presents.
- e) Others gave us gifts.

#### Note: Labels

One real problem with different grammatical theories is that different books use different labels for parts of speech and grammatical structures. *Sigh*. This is life. *Heavy sigh*. Here are some common labels that you might want to use for these activities.

#### Word labels:

Functional:	M = Modifier	H=Headword	x = neither M nor H
Formal:	d=determiner c= conjunction pr=preposition neg=negative	Aj=Adjective Av=Adverb pn=pronoun	N=Noun V=Verb a= auxiliary verb

#### Phrase labels:

Functional	S=Subject	P=Predicator	O=Object	C=Complement	A=Adverbial
Formal	NP	VP	NP	AjP/NP	PP/AvP

Combinations of phrases around a Predicator/VP are known as *clauses*. A simple sentence is made up of a single clause, e.g. SP, or SPO. Complex sentences are made up either of two or more coordinate clauses, or a main clause with one or more subordinate/dependent clauses. Depending on their function, subclauses can be Noun Clauses, Adverbial Clauses or Relative Clauses. Do you know the difference?

#### Homework task: Learning Log

This course sets off from the assumption that you are already familiar with the content of this worksheet. However, just to make sure, we will continue to review some of these basic assumptions in the coming week. Come ready with questions if you have doubts! In your first learning log on moodle, analyse the structure of one or two complex sentences like the following – or identify an area of analysis that you find difficult. How easy/difficult do you find this kind of analysis?

*She ran to the bedroom and forced the window open.  
She pulled the children close to protect them from the flames.*