

## LECTURE 2

1. Grammatical phrases
2. Functions of phrases



### Aims of today's lecture:

- To understand the concept of 'grammatical phrase' and to understand its significance
- To understand the distinction between form and function
- To be able to identify and name phrases
- To be able to identify and name functions of phrases



### Part I: Grammatical phrase

- A grammatical phrase consists of one or more words. (Exception: the prepositional phrase consists of at least two words).
- The phrase functions and behaves as a single grammatical unit in a clause.



### 'single grammatical unit' - illustrated

The boys **gathered** in the street.

The boys had gathered in the street.

The boys had been gathering in the street.

The boys would have gathered in the street.



### 'single grammatical unit' - ctd

**Boys** gathered in the street.

The boys gathered in the street.

All the boys gathered in the street.

All the boys from Brixton gathered in the street.



### 'single grammatical unit' - ctd

The car was **nice**.

The car was very nice.

The car was very nice to drive.

The car was much nicer than mine.



'single grammatical unit' - ctd

Bill drives **slowly**.  
 Bill drives too slowly.  
 Bill drives so slowly that we're sure to be late.



In this course, we recognise five grammatical phrases in English:

Verb phrase            VP  
 Noun phrase           NP  
 Adjective phrase     AdjP  
 Adverb phrase        AdvP  
 Prepositional phrase PP



Clauses ('sats'er') are made up of phrases

Often, strong coffee is great on a cold morning.

AdvP    NP            VP    AdjP            PP

On a cold morning, strong coffee is often great.

PP                            NP            VP    AdvP            AdjP



VP

• VPs contain verbs only (but can be broken up =be discontinuous) as in examples 4-5 below):

1. He has a tummy ache.
2. I have had lunch.
3. I will be having lunch at 2.
4. I have not had lunch.
5. I will always love you.



NP

• consists of one or more words, e.g.

Tim is great.

Coffee is great.

Strong coffee is great.

Very strong coffee is great.

Very strong coffee from Columbia is great.

Very strong coffee that is freshly ground is great.



An NP can consist of just a pronoun

He likes playing computer games.

They like it.

(Recall: one of the functions of pronouns is to 'replace' NPs.)



## AdjP

Always contains an adjective:

Strong coffee is great on a cold morning.  
 NP VP AdjP PP

Can also include an **adverb** and a **prepositional phrase**:

Her parents were so great  
 Her parents were very happy.  
 Her parents were really nice to me.



## AdvP

- Always includes an adverb:

He drives carefully.  
 He drives fast.  
 She said it then.

- AdvP may contain more than one adverb:

He drives very carefully.  
 He drives very, very carefully.



## PP

(cannot consist of just one word)

- Typically consists of a preposition + an NP:

Dan is in the house  
 I'm seeing him on Monday  
 I walked in after him.



- A preposition alone cannot form a prepositional phrase:

\* We talked about.  
 \* I'm seeing him on.



## All phrases have a HEAD

- The most important word in the phrase.
- The word that tells us what kind of phrase it is
- The only obligatory element in the phrase (with the exception of PPs, which need more).



## A chant to meditate over

- The head of a noun phrase is always a noun (or a pronoun).
- The head of a verb phrase is always a verb.
- The head of an adjective phrase is always an adjective.
- The head of an adverb phrase is always an adverb.
- The head of a prepositional phrase is always a preposition.



How do I know where a phrase begins and ends?

The word or group of words functions and behaves as a single grammatical unit in the sentence.

We can test this:



## Two tests:

1. Substitution
2. Movement



1. Is it possible to substitute the group of words by one other word?

*Strong coffee* is great on a cold morning.  
 NP VP AdjP PP

*It* is great then.  
 NP VP AdjP AdvP



All the **boys** from Brixton gathered in the street.  
They gathered there.

Very strong coffee that is freshly ground is great.  
It is great.

I had seen him on Monday.  
 I saw him then.



## Test 2: Movement

2. A phrase can be **MOVED** in its entirety (we cannot move groups of words that do not form a phrase).

Strong coffee is great on a cold morning.

On a cold morning strong coffee is great.

\*Morning coffee is great on a cold.



## Syntax at the **clause** level

A **clause** expresses a complete thought. It communicates a message which can be true or false.





### The importance of the predicate verb

- The predicate verb determines what the clause is like, in terms of what other clause elements must, or can, be present.
- In other words, the verb determines whether there must be objects, predicatives, or obligatory adverbials in the clause.



### An example:

- predicate verb, e.g. *like*
- The verb LIKE requires both a subject and an object.  
*We like juice.*  
\* *like juice.*  
\* *We like.*



### (PREDICATE) VERB

is always a VP, e.g.

*The children sing in the morning.*  
*The children were singing when we arrived.*  
*The children had been singing all morning.*



### An example of a discontinuous VP

[The boy] [had] [not] [eaten] [since yesterday].  
 S        V    A    V            A  
 NP        VP   AdvP VP        PP



### SUBJECT

Semantics:

- typically somebody who performs the action expressed by the verb
- typically denotes the most important participant in the action, and the subject therefore often represents the topic, i.e. what the clause (or sentence) is about.

NB! Notions like "most important", "what the sentence is about" reflect the speaker's (or writer's) perspective on the text, etc. Also, other factors may determine the choice of subject.



### Examples:

The boy threw the ball.  
 S

but does not have to be a human being or animal:

Flying frightened him.  
 S



**Syntax: 1. the subject typically precedes the predicate verb, e.g.**

The old man played the guitar.  
S            V

Yesterday the old man played the guitar.  
S                            V



**Syntax 2. The subject changes places with the first auxiliary verb in questions, e.g.**

He can speak English .  
S            V            Od

Can he speak English?  
v   S            V            Od



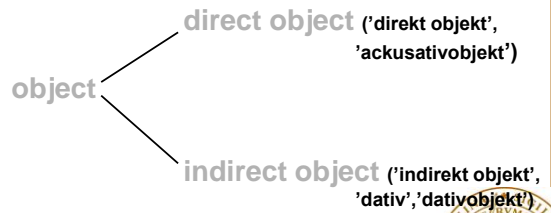
**Syntax 3. The subject agrees with the predicative verb (if the verb is in the present tense):**

He understands the problems.  
S            V            Od

We understand the problem  
S            V            Od



### OBJECT



### DIRECT OBJECT

**Semantics: somebody or something affected by the action expressed by the predicate verb.**

Dennis read a book.  
S            V            Od  
NP            VP            NP




**Syntax:**

- the direct object typically follows the verb.
- occurs after transitive verbs of different kinds.
- Objects are typically NPs, but can also be a dependent clause, e.g.



We saw him.  
 S V Od  
 NP VP NP


We saw that they really tried their best.  
 S V Od  
 NP VP clause



### INDIRECT OBJECT


**Semantics: is a recipient of something, usually people receiving something or benefiting from the action expressed by the verb:**

America has given me everything.  
 S V Oi Od  
 NP VP NP NP




**Syntax:**

- The indirect object is typically an NP.
- When a clause has an indirect object, there is also a direct object.
- The indirect object normally precedes the direct object.




### Mini exercise: which is the indirect object?

The student bought his girl-friend flowers.  
 S V NP NP  
 NP VP NP NP




### Mini exercise: which is the indirect object?

They asked their teacher a lot of questions.  
 S V NP NP  
 NP VP NP NP

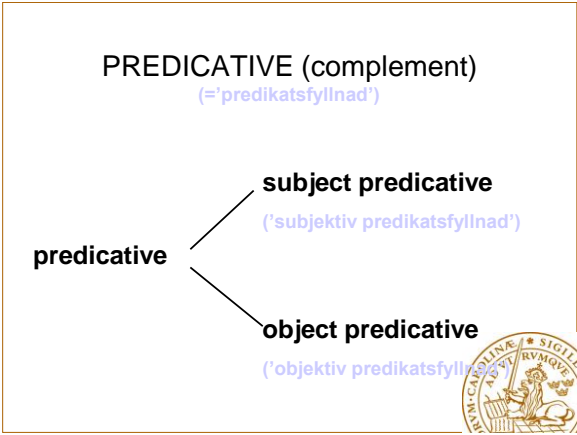


**NOTE: the indirect object can also be realised by a PP. The indirect object then comes after the direct object. UGE (p. 75) calls it a prepositional object in this case.**

They gave a bunch of flowers to Anne.  
 S V Od Oi/Op  
 NP VP NP PP








### SUBJECT PREDICATIVE


**Semantics:**  
A subject predicative ascribes a property to the subject (*Susan is nice*) or identifies the subject (*Susan is the teacher*).



**Ascribing a property:**

Dixie is a dog.

S	V	Ps
NP	VP	NP




**Comparison with direct objects:**

The object does not describe or identify the subject:

Dennis has a dog.

S	V	Od
NP	VP	NP




**Mini exercise:  
object vs predicative**

Dennis became a lawyer.

S	V	NP
NP	VP	NP

Dennis needs a lawyer.

S	V	NP
NP	VP	NP




**The subject predicative is often an  
AdjP:**

Sally is brilliant.

I got nervous.

She looked very happy.



### The syntax of subject predicatives

The subject predicative:

- typically follows the V
- is realised by an AdjP, an NP or a dependent clause
- the verb is a linking verb (copula, 'bindeverb')



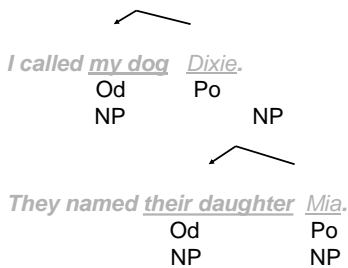
### Summing up

Subjects and objects have different referents.

When the subject predicative takes the form of a noun phrase, the subject and the subject predicative have the same referent.



### OBJECT PREDICATIVE



### PREDICATIVES: summing up

The semantics of predicatives: **If they are AdjPs, they ascribe properties to the subject or object. If they are NPs, they have the same referent as the subject or object, or identify the subject or object**

**A subject predicative typically follows the verb.**

**An object predicative typically follows the direct object.**



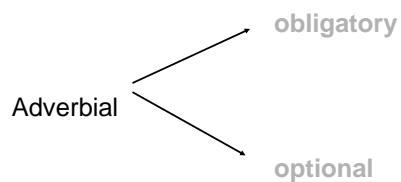
### Adverbial

Adverbials convey a range of information about the event expressed by the core of the clause, e.g.

- Time
- Place
- Reason
- Condition ('villkor')
- Speaker's attitude
- etc



### Subcategories of adverbials based on syntactic criteria



### Obligatory adverbial:

- can occur with two patterns:
  - a) after a linking verb
  - b) after some other verbs such as *put*

Example: linking verb:

*I am at home.*

S V A  
NP VP PP

\* *I am.*



With the verb *put, place* etc:

*He put the butter in the fridge.*

S V Od A  
NP VP NP PP

\**He put the butter.*



### Optional adverbials:

- can be added to clauses with any type of verb, e.g.

*I will leave now.*

S V A  
NP VP AdvP

*I will leave.*



*If you finish your dinner you can have dessert.*

A S V Od

*You can have dessert.*

*Luckily, Sweden beat Denmark.*

A S V Od

*Sweden beat Denmark.*



### Clause patterns in English (cf. UGE p. 81):

*Dennis sneezed.* SV  
*Dennis lives in Maryland.* SVA  
*Lilian likes chocolate.* SVO  
*Lilian is a lovely person.* SVP  
*He gave me this necklace.* SVOO  
*We named our daughter Sue.* SVOP  
*He put his keys on the table.* SVOA



### Optional adverbials can be added:

*Dennis sneezed all the time.* SV(A)  
*These days, Dennis lives in Maryland.* (A)SVA  
*Luckily, Lilian likes chocolate.* (A)SVO  
*Fortunately, Lilian is a lovely person.* (A)SVP  
*He gave me this necklace for my birthday.* SVOO(A)  
*We named our daughter Sue even before she was born.* SVOP(A)  
*He put his keys on the table when he got back from work.* SVOA(A)

