7   The Minor Parts of Speech

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the major parts of speech—nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs—there are many minor classes of words. Their number varies according to the level of detail in a particular analysis; more important is the clarity with which classes are distinguished. Our approach in the previous chapter used formal criteria to try to arrive at consistent assignments of words to parts of speech. Our approach in this chapter will be similar.

The minor word classes are often referred to as **closed classes**. This is because they have relatively few members, which are added to only occasionally. As a result, some of the minor form classes can be defined simply by listing their members. We will distinguish about a dozen of these classes, but the largest of them, the prepositions, has only about 50 members. Native English-speaking students do not need to memorize the members of these classes; they can become as consciously familiar as they need to be with them through presentation and practice. Some memorization may help some non-native English speaking students, but, again, proper presentation and lots of practice should enable them to develop control over these words.

Minor word classes have several properties in common. First, they tend not to alter the basic content of a sentence. For this reason, they have sometimes been called **function** or **grammatical words**, in contrast to the major parts of speech, called **content words**. Content words bear the main semantic burden in communication. They are the words that you would use to send a text message: *Broke. Send money*. Minor words, in contrast, signal modificational, relational, and interactional aspects of meaning; contextual information; or redundant grammatical information. Compare *I am broke; will you please send some money* with *Broke. Send money*. The words omitted from the second version are all minor class words.

Members of the minor word classes occur more frequently than mem-

bers of major classes. All of the 50 most common words in English are function words; they account for about 60% of words used in speech and 45% of those used in writing. (You can check this for yourself by counting the words in this paragraph, then counting the words belonging to the major parts of speech, and subtracting that number from the whole. The remainder is the number of words belonging to the minor parts of speech.) Though sometimes used to dramatize the sorry state of English, this statistic is as true of Henry James' prose as of the most pedestrian discourse. This is because the minor words are essential for indicating important modifications to, and relations among, the content words, regardless of whether the content words were chosen by the brilliant or the dull. Because they are important for integrating content words into the structural organization of sentences, minor class words are sometimes referred to as **structure words**.

In presenting the minor word classes, we will proceed mainly by listing some or all of their members. We will also note semantic, functional, and formal characteristics. Except for pronouns, the formal properties of these items do not (in English) include inflectional or derivational marking. Rather, they emerge from the item's ability to combine with other words, phrases, or sentences. For instance, *after* is a preposition because it can combine with a noun phrase (bolded), as in *after **the announcement***. The combination of a preposition and its following noun phrase is called a **prepositional phrase**. We will examine this and other phrases in our chapter on Phrases. Since minor class members may enter into several different types of combination, they will sometimes (like content words) be members of more than one class. For example, when *after* is followed by a clause, as in *After **the announcement appeared**, we received many phone calls*, it is traditionally thought of as a **subordinating adverbial conjunction**.

PRONOUNS

The traditional definition of "pronoun" is "a word used in place of one or more nouns." Let's test the adequacy of this definition by examining some examples:

(1)   a. Jonathan felt sorry for Jeremy, so *he* repaired *his* bike for *him*.
      b. Because *he* wanted to sell it, Jonathan repaired *his* bike.
      c. Jonathan repaired *his* bike.

The traditional definition is a formal one; you can easily test it by replacing each one of the pronouns with either of the nouns *Jonathan* or *Jeremy* in (1a-c).

While the replacement definition of pronouns seems to work well enough

for (1a-c), ask yourself what *their* replaces in sentence (2):

(2)   All of the members of the class elected Juan as *their* representative.

Clearly, if it replaces anything, it replaces a version of *All of the members of the class*, which is very definitely not a noun or mere list of nouns. In fact, *all of the members of the class* is a **noun phrase**, a group of words that has a noun (in this case, *members*) as its head word. Sentences like (2) (and there is an infinite number of them) show that the standard definition of a pronoun must be amended at least to read "a noun or noun phrase." But even this reformulation is not accurate. If we replace the noun *members* in sentence (2) with a pronoun, it becomes ungrammatical:

(3)   *All of the them of the class elected Juan as their representative.

A pronoun replaces a noun only when that noun is the only word, and therefore the head, in its phrase. We must conclude that pronouns always replace entire noun phrases. For the moment, let's define a pronoun as "a word that replaces a noun phrase."

Any discussion of pronouns must address the issue of how we decide what a particular pronoun refers to in a specific sentence. For example, one very likely interpretation of (1c) is *Jonathan repaired Jonathan's bike*. On this interpretation, *his* is assumed to refer to whoever *Jonathan* refers to, presumably Jonathan. (Because a pronoun and its antecedent refer to the same entity in the discourse world, they are said to **co-refer**.) So the noun phrase, *Jonathan*, is used to determine the referent of *his*. A noun phrase that determines the referent of a pronoun is said to be that pronoun's **antecedent.** This term used to mean "going before," and in most cases, a pronoun's antecedent does precede the pronoun, though sentence (1b) shows that an antecedent can sometimes follow its pronoun.

However, sentences (1a-c) are systematically ambiguous. They can mean either (1d-f) or (1g-i), respectively:

(1)   d. Jonathan felt sorry for Jeremy, so Jonathan repaired Jeremy's bike for Jeremy.
    e. Because Jonathan wanted to sell it, Jonathan repaired Jonathan's bike.
    f. Jonathan repaired Jonathan's bike.
    g. Jonathan felt sorry for some person, so Jonathan repaired that person's bike for that person.

      h. Because some person wanted to sell it, Jonathan repaired that person's bike

      i. Jonathan repaired some person's bike.

That is, what a pronoun refers to is not always determined by another noun phrase in its sentence. Rather, what a pronoun refers to may be determined by the situational context in which the language is used, as is typically the case in spoken interaction.

We'd like you to notice now that pronouns are typically shorter and communicate far less information than their antecedents. For example, *their* in (2) provides only the information that more than one entity is being referred to (along with the grammatical information that *their* is in the genitive case), clearly far less information than its antecedent, *All of the members of the class*, provides. Using pronouns instead of full noun phrases avoids repetition and reduces the production demands on the speaker or writer and processing demands on hearers or readers.

However, because pronouns provide so little information, hearers/readers expect that speakers/writers will use them only when it is easy to determine what they refer to. If a pronoun's referent is not easily or unambiguously determined, hearers/readers may quickly give up trying to interpret the piece of discourse in which it occurs. In face-to-face communication, the hearer can simply ask the speaker to clarify an unclear reference. But in written communication, this is typically not possible. Because confusion in spoken language can be fairly readily clarified, it tends to have more pronouns than written language. Beginning writers (and sometimes even more advanced ones) often use pronoun patterns typical of spoken language and so must be taught to ensure that the antecedents/referents of their pronouns will be clear to a reader who cannot ask for clarification.

In English, pronouns and their antecedents must have the same person, number, and gender; that is, pronouns must **agree** with their antecedents on these grammatical categories. All of the sentences in (1) illustrate agreement. *Jonathan* and *Jeremy* are each third person, singular, and masculine, and thus require the pronouns *he*, *his*, or *him*.

Exercise
Evaluate the traditional definition of "pronoun."

The traditional definition of "pronoun" applies most readily to some occurrences of the third person pronouns *he*, *she*, *it*, and *they*. While *I* and *you* might be taken as substitutes for noun phrases like *the speaker* and *the addressee*, respectively, this seems unnatural. Would a person who says (4a) of himself say (4b) of himself under the same circumstances? How about (4c) and (4d)?

(4)　a.　I feel so broke up, I wanna go home. (The Beach Boys)
　　　b.　The speaker feels so broke up, he wants to go home. (Not The Beach Boys)
　　　c.　I love you.
　　　d.　The speaker loves the hearer.

We think not. We think that definitions of pronouns that regard them as replacements for other expressions are fundamentally flawed. We prefer a more general definition:

> *A pronoun is a minimal linguistic form which refers to speaker(s), addressee(s), and other(s), and provides such grammatical information as person, number, gender, case, and humanness.*

These minimal forms reduce the effort required in speaking and writing by eliminating the need to repeat longer expressions when we wish to refer to someone or something more than once. For second and subsequent references we select just enough information to allow our audience to keep track of what we're speaking or writing about. If we choose to use pronouns, because the information they communicate is so minimal, we must use them only when the information they communicate is sufficient to allow an audience to easily figure out what they refer to, either from the co-text or from the situational context. The grammatical agreement expected between a pronoun and its antecedent is crucial for making the pronoun's reference clear.

　　English contains several different types of pronouns. We will list each type below according to the grammatical categories they represent.

Personal pronouns
Table 1 identifies the categories of personal pronouns:

PERSON	CASE	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	Nominative	I	we
	Objective	me	us
	Genitive	my	our
		mine	ours
Second	Nominative	you	you
	Objective	you	you
	Genitive	your	your
		yours	yours

		GENDER			
		SINGULAR			PLURAL
		Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	
Third	Nominative	he	she	it	they
	Objective	him	her	it	them
	Genitive	his	her	its	their
		his	hers	its	theirs

TABLE 1: PERSON, NUMBER, GENDER, AND CASE OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS

As Table 1 indicates, the personal pronouns represent the grammatical categories of person, number, case, and gender. **Number** (in modern English) simply distinguishes singular (one) from plural (more than one). The pronoun forms *I, you, he/she/it* represent distinctions within the person category. **Person** differentiates speakers and those associated with them (first person: *I, we*) from addressees (second person: *you*), and from entities that are neither speaker nor addressee (third person: *she, he, it, they*).

The many different forms of the modern English personal pronoun system hint at the morphological complexity of the language a millennium ago. For instance, Old English had pronouns that referred specifically to two people (called "dual" pronouns), thereby creating a three-way number distinction. (We still have the word *both* to refer to two entities and *either/neither* to refer to a choice between two entities.)

Standard English is unusual among languages in that it makes no distinction in the personal pronouns between second person singular and plural—*you* does for both. Many non-standard dialects of English do differentiate singular and plural, e.g., by adding either the ordinary nominal plural ending {-s} (*youse*) or by adding {all} (*you-all* or *y'all*).

Languages with different forms for second person singular and plural include German *du* (informal sg.) and *ihr* (informal pl.); Spanish *tu* (informal sg.) and *vosotros* (informal pl.); French *tu* (sg.) and *vous* (pl.). In French, this distinction does double duty. It can indicate not only the person and number distinction, but also certain aspects of the relationship between a speaker and addressee(s), most notably their relative social statuses and the degree of intimacy between them. Thus, while the French singular pronoun *tu* may be used by an adult to a child, the child would normally use *vous* to the adult. *Tu* can be used between people who are relatively friendly or familiar with each other; *vous* would be used among people who are not on friendly or familiar terms, or in formal situations. The other languages have other pronouns which indicate analogous social distinctions. German uses *Sie* as a polite or formal second person pronoun, pronounced the same as *sie*, the third person plural pronoun. Some varieties of Spanish use *usted* as a polite second person singular form, and *ustedes* as a polite second person plural form. In earlier periods of English, *thou* and its forms *thee*, *thy*, and *thine* were used informally while *you* and its forms were for formal use. The dimensions of status and familiarity have been extensively discussed by linguists and anthropologists under the terms **power** and **solidarity**, respectively, which we return to in our chapter on Language Variation in Book II.

The person distinction is required also to account for certain verb forms, which are most obvious in the present tense singular forms of the verb *be*: first person *am*; second person *are*; third person *is*. Regular verbs in the present tense distinguish third person singular from all other persons by marking it with the ending {-s}: *He/she/it give**s***; *I/you/we/they* **give**. Modal verbs do not indicate person at all.

Case of personal pronouns

English masculine and feminine pronouns come in three different forms: *he, him, his*; *she, her, hers*. These different forms are said to represent different **cases** of the pronouns. Which case of a pronoun to use depends upon the relation of that word to other parts of the sentence: we use *he* and *she* when the pronoun is the subject of a sentence; *him* and *her* if it is the object of a verb or a preposition; and *his* and *her* if the pronoun modifies a noun. We will use the traditional names to refer to these cases: *he/she* are in the **nominative** case; *him/her* are in the **objective** (a.k.a. **accusative**) case; and *his/her* are in the **genitive**.

English also differentiates other pronouns according to case. Thus *I, you, we, they* are all nominative; *me, you, us, them* are all objective; and *my, mine, your, yours, our, ours, their, theirs* are all genitive.

You will no doubt have noticed that there are two genitive forms of certain pronouns, such as *my* and *mine*. The forms corresponding to *my* (*your*, *our*, *their*) are used when they directly modify a noun. Otherwise we use the other genitive forms: *That is **my** horse* as opposed to *That horse is **mine***. The former are sometimes misleadingly referred to as **possessive adjectives**, as they occur before the nouns they modify in the positions believed (wrongly) to be typical of attributive adjectives. The latter are often distinguished as **possessive pronouns** because they appear to replace possessive nouns or noun phrases, e.g., compare *That bike is hers* with *That bike is Kelly's*.

English nouns functioning as heads of subjects do not differ in form from nouns functioning as heads of objects, so we do not distinguish between nominative and objective cases in those instances. Grammarians occasionally refer to the nominative/objective form of nouns as the **common case**.

Earlier forms of English, the classical languages (Latin and Greek), and modern languages such as Finnish have much more elaborate case distinctions than modern English. Table 2 provides a list of some traditional case names and their functions.

NAME	GRAMMATICAL FUNCTION
Nominative	subject
Objective	object
Genitive	modifier, complement
Dative	recipient, beneficiary
Ablative	place from where
Vocative	addressee

TABLE 2: TRADITIONAL CASE NAMES AND FUNCTIONS

Many languages require case markings on parts of speech besides nouns and pronouns. Modern German, for instance, makes case differentiations on both articles and adjectives.

Gender of personal pronouns
The pronoun system of English distinguishes three **genders: masculine** (forms of *he*), **feminine** (forms of *she*), and **neuter** (not neutral!) (forms of *it*), distinguished primarily according to the nature of the objects they refer to. Masculine pronouns refer to males, primarily human males; feminine pronouns refer to females, primarily human females; and neuter pronouns refer either to non-human animals or to entities that are non-animate and consequently are not differentiated according to sex. Infants whose sex is

unknown are also occasionally referred to by neuter pronouns. A system in which the gender of a word depends upon characteristics of its referent is called a **natural gender** system.

Other languages, such as French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Gaelic, have **grammatical gender** systems. The choice of gender is not dependent upon characteristics of a word's referent; rather, words may be assigned to gender classes, often according to formal linguistic criteria. In Italian and Spanish, for example, words ending in {-a} are typically feminine; in German, words ending in {-chen} are typically neuter. However, many nouns in these languages are assigned to gender classes somewhat arbitrarily and so when learning a noun one must also learn its gender. Also in these languages, the gender system is reflected not only in the pronouns and nouns, but in adjectives and articles, too. In Spanish, a noun and any article or adjective modifying it must agree in gender; if the noun is masculine, then any associated article or adjective must be masculine (e.g., *el libro blanco*, lit. the book white, "the white book"). If the noun is feminine, its modifiers must also be feminine (e.g., *la casa blanca*, lit. the house white, "the white house").

In recent years the English gender system has given rise to much discussion of the issue of sexism in language and the need to develop forms that are sex-neutral. Standard written English makes it difficult not to refer to the sex of a human referent when choosing a personal pronoun, regardless of whether the person's sex is relevant or even known or knowable. For example, compare the sentences *Every doctor works hard for her patients* and *Every doctor works hard for his patients*. The first suggests that all doctors are women; the second that they are all men. Clearly neither need be true. Traditional prescriptive grammars have required that the pronoun after quantifiers such as *every* and *some* be masculine—and in general that the generic pronoun be the masculine one. Many people find this norm to be objectionable and would like to find expressions that would not give any indication of the referent's sex for use in situations where sex is irrelevant. Many writers now use forms of *they* when a generic pronoun is required. The following is from a Cambridge University Press publication: . . . *while* **someone** *is taking* **their** *turn in a conversation, . . .* (Meyer 2002: 76). And growing numbers of organizations require that their publications be sex-neutral. We return to this topic in our chapter on Language Variation in Book II.

Exercise

1. In the passage below (a) identify all the personal pronouns; (b) specify the antecedent of each pronoun; and (c) indicate the case, number, and gender of each pronoun.

> Hercules was the strongest man on earth and he had the supreme self-confidence magnificent physical strength gives. He considered himself on an equality with the gods—and with some reason. They needed his help to conquer the Giants. In the final victory of the Olympians over the brutish sons of Earth, Hercules' arrows played an important part. He treated the gods accordingly. Once when the priestess at Delphi gave no response to the question he asked, he seized the tripod she sat on and declared that he would carry it off and have an oracle of his own. Apollo, of course, would not put up with this, but Hercules was perfectly willing to fight him and Zeus had to intervene. The quarrel was easily settled, however. Hercules was quite good-natured about it. He did not want to quarrel with Apollo, he only wanted an answer from his oracle. If Apollo would give it the matter was settled as far as he was concerned. Apollo on his side, facing this undaunted person, felt an admiration for his boldness and made his priestess deliver the response. (From Edith Hamilton, Mythology)

2. We hope that you noticed in the passage just above that (a) all of the pronouns in the passage are in the third person and (b) they all have an easily determined antecedent in the passage. Consider now first and second person pronouns. Is it possible for them to have a verbal antecedent, or do they always refer to some entity outside the text in which they occur? (A word with this latter property is said to be "deictic," which we discuss further below.) Try to think of examples to support your position. Does your analysis affect our definition of pronouns?

3. Briefly discuss the use of pronouns in the Hercules text in light of our revised definition of pronoun and our discussion of pronoun use.

4. For each of the following pronouns give all the grammatical categories needed to fully characterize it: *they, me, your, him, our, mine*. For example: *hers*—3rd person, singular, feminine, genitive case.

Demonstrative pronouns

English contains only four **demonstrative** pronouns; they appear in Table 3.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
NEARER	this	these
FARTHER	that	those

TABLE 3: DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

Demonstrative pronouns have the effect of "pointing out" entities, often for the purpose of contrast or selection.

(5) a. Press *this* button, not *that* one.
   b. I'll take one of *these* and one of *those*.

As the examples suggest, speakers may accompany demonstratives with pointing gestures. These forms are sometimes called **deictics**, after a Greek word meaning "to point." In written prose, of course, gestures are not available, so writers must take care to make the referents of the pronouns clear:

(6) Harry told Mabel that Maude had written the letter. This is typical.

What is typical? Harry's telling Mabel? Harry's telling anyone? Maude's writing letters?

   Like the genitive personal pronouns, demonstratives may function as heads or as modifiers, but with no change in form.

(7) a. *That* is a serious mistake. (Head)
   b. *That* mistake is serious. (Modifier)

Reflexive and intensive pronouns

Reflexive and **intensive** pronouns have the same forms; they begin with a personal pronoun, generally in the genitive case, and end in the morphemes {-*self*} or {-*selves*}, for singular and plural, respectively. The forms are listed in Table 4.

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First	myself	ourselves
Second	yourself	yourselves
Third	himself	themselves
	herself	
	itself	

TABLE 4: REFLEXIVE/INTENSIVE PRONOUNS

Exercise

1. Identify the forms in Table 4 that include a genitive personal pronoun.

2. Identify the case of the non-genitive personal pronouns in the forms in Table 4.

3. Many non-standard English dialects use the forms *hisself* and *theirselves*. Why do you think they do that?

We say that these forms are both reflexive and intensive because they are used in two quite distinct ways. We say they are **reflexive** when they are used as the object of a verb or preposition (8a-c); we say they are **intensive** when they are used as modifiers (9, 10).

(8) a. Adelaide hurt *herself*.
     b. Adelaide bought *herself* a new Lamborghini.
     c. Rudy talks to *himself* a lot.

The pronouns in (8a-c) are reflexive: in (8a) *herself* is the direct object of *hurt*; in (8b) it is the indirect object of *buy*; in (8c) *himself* is the object of the preposition *to*. The pronouns and their antecedents are in different noun phrases.

An intensive pronoun may occur *within* the noun phrase of its antecedent, typically following and modifying its antecedent directly:

(9) Adelaide *herself* completed the audit.

However, an intensive pronoun may also be moved away from the phrase it modifies:

(10) Adelaide completed the audit *herself*.

Sentences with reflexives cannot be related in the way that (9) and (10) are. In other words, sentence (8a) cannot be rearranged as (11) without significantly changing its meaning:

(11) ?Adelaide herself hurt.

Indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns constitute a loose category of words brought together traditionally by the semantic fact that they do not refer to a specific person, place, thing, or idea. The common indefinites are listed in Table 5.

all (1)	another (1)	any (1)
anybody (2)	anyone (2)	both (1)
each (1)	either (1)	everybody (2)
everyone (2)	few (1)	many (1)
most (1)	neither (1)	nobody (2)
no one (2)	none (2)	nothing (2)
one (1)	other (1)	others (2)
several (1)	some (1)	somebody (2)
someone (2)	such (1)	

TABLE 5: INDEFINITE PRONOUNS (1 = MAY BE HEAD OR MODI-FIER; 2 = MAY BE HEAD ONLY)

Occasionally, students will misapply the semantic definition and label as indefinites generic nouns such as *people*, collective nouns such as *group* or *crowd*, and abstract nouns such as *concern* or *beauty*. Formally, indefinite pronouns have little if anything in common. They are a "leftover" class to which pronouns that fit in no other category are relegated. The general semantic notion that unifies a majority of indefinites is that of "quantity," e.g., *all*, *many*, *no*, etc. For this reason, members of Table 5 are sometimes assigned to a separate class called **quantifiers**.

Indefinites have a limited range of functions, acting only as heads or modifiers. The functions of individual words are indicated in Table 5.

Exercise

Select any five indefinites labeled as (1) in Table 5. For each, give an example sentence in which the pronoun is used (a) as a head and (b) as a modifier.

Wh-words

Wh-words, such as *who* and *what*, occur in a wide range of constructions. In traditional grammars, they are called **interrogative** or **relative** pronouns. These forms are usually distinguished by the constructions in

which they function, but there is little formal reason to separate them. We thus list them as a single group in Table 6. We will briefly explain their range of functions here and go into more detail in other chapters.

Some of the words in Table 6 are traditionally called pronouns. Because of our emphasis on form, we will not use this label. Some of the members of the group function as pronouns in certain constructions but not in others. To call them pronouns on this limited basis confuses form with function.

who	whom	which
what	whose	when
where	why	whether
how		

TABLE 6: WH-WORDS

The label *wh-word* is a mnemonic that clearly applies to all members of the class except *how*. Nevertheless, this form deserves inclusion on the basis of its grammatical behavior.

Wh-pronouns perform three distinct functions:

a. Introducing information questions
b. Introducing relative clauses
c. Introducing noun clauses

We will illustrate these functions with *who*, *which*, and *where*. We will also indicate cases in which these words can occur as headwords and as modifiers.

An **information question** requests that the hearer respond with some information beyond a mere "yes" or "no." These questions appear with all wh-words (except *whether*). It is in this role that wh-words are traditionally called **interrogative pronouns**.

(12) a. *Who* invented the telescope? (Head)
      b. *Which* do you want? (Head)
      c. *Which* donut do you want? (Modifier)
      d. *Where* did she find that hat? (Head)

Exercise

For each of the wh-words in Table 6 (except *whether*), create three wh-questions.

Wh-words also introduce **relative clauses** (in square brackets in (13)). These clauses modify nouns. In our chapter on Phrases we will see how they follow a head noun as part of a noun phrase. Most wh-words can introduce relatives.

(13) a. Anyone [*who* wants a ticket] should call Herman.
     b. The book [*which* you requested] is out of print.
     c. The locale [*where* the movie is set] is fictional.
     d. The person [*who* called you] left no message.

Exercise

1. For each of the wh-words in Table 6 (except *what* and *whether*), create three sentences with relative clauses.

2. Create a sentence with a relative clause beginning with *what*. Have you ever come across such a relative clause before? How would you change it to make it acceptable in formal English?

Finally, wh-words serve to introduce **noun clauses** (in square brackets in (14)), which are entire clauses that function as if they were noun phrases. (For this reason, the entire clause can often be replaced by a simpler noun phrase or by a pronoun.)

(14) a. I don't know [*who* can get you a leash that big].
     b. Tell me [*which* tranquilizer is the strongest].
     c. Kong didn't say [*where* he dropped those banana peels].

Exercise

For each of the wh-words in Table 6 (except *whether*), create three sentences containing noun clauses.

Among the wh-words we can detect a second gender system at work in English: *who* refers to humans; *what* to non-humans; and *which* to both humans and non-humans.

Exercise

1. Which wh-word cannot introduce relative clauses in standard English?

2. Create three sentences with *whether*. What grammatical function(s) does it play in your sentences?

ARTICLES

Articles are the last minor class associated with nouns. They always function as modifiers of the head noun in a noun phrase, and traditionally are assumed to contain only two words: the indefinite article *a(n)* and the definite article *the*.

   (15) a. a visitor
           b. the United Nations

The indefinite article has two written forms, *a* before a spoken consonant and *an* before a spoken vowel; the corresponding spoken forms are /ey/, /æ/, and /æn/, at least when spoken in isolation. The definite article may be pronounced /ðə/ before a spoken consonant and /ði/ before a spoken vowel, though there is no indication of this in the standard spelling. *A* may occur only with a singular noun, whereas *the* may occur with a singular or a plural one.

Generally, *a(n)* and *the* are the only articles recognized for English. However, some linguists would claim that there is a plural of *a*, namely, *some* (pronounced with a very reduced vowel): *You have a visitor* vs. *You have some visitors*. And a case can be made for a zero article: ***The visitors** must sign* in vs. ***Visitors** must sign in* and ***A/the moose** blocked the path* vs. ***Moose** is good to eat*.

While the two traditional articles are easily recognized, their meaning is quite complex. They are part of a system of devices that enable communicators to introduce people and things into a discourse and then keep track of them as the discourse continues. Other devices in this system are pronouns and demonstratives, and the distinction between common and proper nouns.

Somewhat simplistically, the system works as follows: indefinite articles signal the entry of a new entity into the discourse, e.g., *Once upon a time there was **a** big bad wolf*. Once an entity has been introduced, it can be referred to by an appropriate personal pronoun, e.g., ***He** lived all alone*. Or it can be assigned a proper name, e.g., *He was called **Edgar***, which can

then be used to refer to it, e.g., *One day, **Edgar** was out looking for his next meal*. Later references may be marked by a definite article, e.g., *When **the** wolf came to the edge of the forest, he spotted some children*. When we want to distinguish one entity from another of the same kind, we can use the demonstratives, e.g., *Edgar said to himself, "**This** child looks far tastier than **that** one."* (Using the plural forms of the demonstratives, we can, of course, distinguish multiple entities, e.g., *"But **those** children look tastiest of all!"*)

The definite article, the demonstratives, the personal pronouns, and proper nouns all signal **definiteness**. One major purpose of marking a noun phrase as definite is to indicate the speaker's/writer's assumption that the intended hearer/reader can readily identify what it refers to. The general pattern is that we provide our audiences with only as much information as we think they will need to identify what an NP refers to. (We thereby minimize repetition and the amount of effort we must expend in producing our utterances and the amount of effort we require the audience to expend in interpreting them.) And we can rank the definite expressions according to the amount of information they provide: NPs with demonstratives provide more information than NPs with definite articles, which provide more information than proper names, which provide more information than pronouns.

Another reason for making a noun phrase definite is to indicate that all the entities relevant in a situation are being referred to. Imagine a situation in which there are books strewn on a desk. If we say, *The books should be put back on the shelves*, we will be understood to mean all the books, not just some of them. If we want just some of the books reshelved, then we have to find a characteristic common to the ones we want reshelved and mention that in our sentence, e.g., *The linguistics books should be reshelved*. In this case, we will be understood to mean all the linguistics books.

The indefinite article, *a(n)*, indicates that the speaker/writer assumes that the hearer/reader can not readily identify the referent of the NP. Contrast (16a) and (16b):

(16) a. I saw the wolf. (Speaker presents information as readily accessible to the hearer; e.g., speaker and hearer have already identified a wolf and are now referring to it again)

   b. I saw a wolf. (Speaker presents information as not readily accessible to the hearer; e.g., speaker is introducing reference to a wolf into the conversation)

It is for this reason that the indefinite article is normally used to introduce a

new entity or topic into a discourse.

Another important meaning associated with the indefinite article is **categorization** or **classification**: an indefinite NP denotes a member of the category named by the head noun of the NP. Dictionary definitions make use of such categorization. For example:

> (17) **catbird** *n. A* North American songbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) having predominantly slate plumage (American Heritage Dictionary 4th ed. p. 292)

Here the AHD defines *catbird* by categorizing it as *a* (kind of) North American songbird. Check several other dictionary entries to see if they also use the indefinite article in this way.

Whether a noun is count or non-count affects which articles may modify it. Count nouns may be modified by both articles—by *a* if the noun is singular (*a calculator*), and by *the* if the noun is either singular or plural (*the calculator/s*). Non-count nouns may occur only with *the* (*the information*); indefinite non-count nouns occur with no overt article (*information*) or with *some* (*some information*).

Definite and indefinite NPs may refer either to one or more members of a class of entities or to the entire class. For example, *The pig* in *The pig is a filthy animal* may be interpreted as referring to a single, specific pig or to the entire pig species. When we refer to an entire class, we are said to be making **generic** reference. When we refer to one or more specific entities, we are making **specific** reference. We can also make generic reference using indefinite NPs: *A pig is a filthy animal*; *Pigs are filthy animals*.

Exercise

1. Here are some rules that are typically given for when to use the definite article. For each rule, create three short examples to illustrate it.

   a. Use *the* to mark a noun phrase whose referent is identifiable in the situational context, e.g., *Where's the dean's office?*

   b. Use *the* to mark a noun phrase whose referent has already been introduced, e.g., *A rabbi and a priest went into a bar. The rabbi said to the priest . . .*

   c. Use *the* to mark a noun phrase whose referent is unique, e.g., *the earth, the tallest mountain, the fifth man.*

   d. Use *the* with adjectives and nouns that name groups of people, especially when we are referring to the entire group, e.g., *the*

poor, the Russians.
   e. Use *the* with some geographical proper nouns, e.g., *the Pacific, the Philippines,* but cf. *Spain* not **the Spain.*
   f. Use *the* in certain date formats, e.g., *the 4th of July.*

2. For each of the following categories of words, determine whether they do or do not typically occur with *the*:
   a. Names of years, e.g., *1984.*
   b. Names of professions, e.g., *accounting; the law.*
   c. Names of languages, e.g., *English.*
   d. Names of meals, e.g., *brunch.*
   e. Names of individuals, e.g., *Albert.*
   f. Titles and names together, e.g., *President Kennedy.*

3. Here are some rules that are typically given for when to use an indefinite article. (Remember to use *a* as the singular indefinite and either *some* or no article at all for the plural, e.g., *a book, some books, books.*) For each rule, create a short example to illustrate it.
   a. Use an indefinite article for the first mention of an entity or entities in a discourse, e.g., *For **a** soccer fan, few things are as exciting as the World Cup. The surgeon introduced **some** radioactive dye into the patient's arteries. Brain injuries are frequent in combat* [NB no article modifies *Brain injuries*].
   b. Use an indefinite article or no article to classify/categorize, e.g., *She is **a** doctor. They are doctors.*
   c. Use an indefinite article or no article with certain numbers, e.g., *a hundred, thousands.*

4. English articles pose considerable difficulties from ESL and EFL learners, at least partly because of the complexity of the English system, but also because languages differ in whether they have articles at all (Latin had none), how many articles they have (Irish has only a definite article), and what information the articles communicate (Spanish and French articles include information about the number and gender of the nouns they modify; German articles are marked for gender, case, and number). The following are texts by learners of English. Examine each noun phrase in them and discuss any that seem not to be idiomatic English because of the writer's choice of definite or indefinite expression.
   a. With the high technology people have taken more information

about world.
b. The average citizen in my country had access to a fast communi-
    cation.
c. Many people didn't have computer and television and didn't use
    internet.
d. Starcraft is very famous game.
e. My professor teach us throughout the computer.
f. People listen the music everywhere.
g. Because of improvement in technology people come to know how
    then can compete.
h. . . . industry that have possibility of pollution . . .
i. In past years, we had to use public phone to call in the street.
j. We had to wait for long time to call.
k. Using mobile phone is become very important to our lives.
l. People can use internet to shop.
m. Government give the money to old people.
n. Technology has unbelievably improved the lifestyle of average
    citizen.

5. The following excerpt is from Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*
(1811/1961: 1-2). We have highlighted several NPs. Read through the
passage and then for each highlighted NP, determine whether it is defi-
nite or indefinite. If it is definite, specify the grammatical device that
makes it so (e.g., definite article, pronoun, proper name, etc.). Then,
using the discussion of articles above, say why each NP is definite or
indefinite, and if definite, say why it has the form it has.

The family of Dashwood had been long settled in Sussex. Their es-
tate was large, and their residence was at Norland Park, in the centre
of their property, where for many generations they had lived in so
respectable a manner as to engage the general good opinion of their
surrounding acquaintances. The late owner of this estate was a single
man, who lived to a very advanced age, and who for many years of
his life had a constant companion and housekeeper in his sister. But
her death, which happened ten years before his own, produced a great
alteration in his home; for to supply her loss, he invited and received
into his house the family of his nephew, Mr. Henry Dashwood, the
legal inheritor of the Norland estate, and the person to whom he
intended to bequeath it. In the society of his nephew and neice, and
their children, the old gentleman's days were comfortably spent. His

<u>attachment</u> to them all increased. The constant attention of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dashwood to his wishes, which proceeded not merely from <u>interest</u>, but from goodness of heart, gave him every degree of solid comfort which his age could receive; and <u>the cheerfulness</u> of the children added <u>a relish</u> to his existence.

By <u>a former marriage</u>, Mr. Henry Dashwood had <u>one son</u>; by his present lady, <u>three daughters</u>. <u>The son</u>, <u>a steady, respectable young man</u>, was amply provided for by the fortune of <u>his mother</u>, which had been large, and half of which devolved on him on his coming of age. By his own marriage, likewise, which happened soon afterwards, he added to <u>his wealth</u>. To him, therefore, the succession to the Norland estate was not so really important as to <u>his sisters</u>; for their fortune, independent on what might arise to <u>them</u> from their father's inheriting that property, could be but small.

AUXILIARY VERBS

In this section we discuss **auxiliary verbs**, which we mentioned in passing in our chapter on Major Parts of Speech. Auxiliary verbs always occur with a main verb, though the main verb may be "understood," that is, omitted and implied, e.g., *Did John leave? He did* [*leave*]. There are only a few auxiliaries in the language, but each plays several important grammatical and semantic roles. The English auxiliaries are: *be*, *have*, and the **modal** verbs, *can*, *could*; *may*, *might*; *shall*, *should*; *will*, *would*; *must*; and *do*, which has no meaning but patterns grammatically like a modal. *Be* is used with a verb in its Ving form to indicate the progressive aspect, e.g., *The students **are working** on their term papers*. *Be* is also used with a past participle verb form, Ven, to create the passive voice, e.g., *This book **was written** by two loony linguists*. *Have* is used with a Ven form to create the perfect aspect, e.g., *The semester **has come** to an end*. *Do* and the modals are followed by a verb in its uninflected form, the form used to cite it in a dictionary, e.g., *We **shall overcome***. We discuss the progressive and perfect aspects in our chapter on Basic Clause Patterns.

Auxiliary verbs are optional elements in a clause, but up to four may occur together. Regardless of how many occur, they always follow this order: modal, *have*, progressive *be*, and passive *be*, as you can demonstrate for yourself by rearranging them in, *She may have been being spied on by Homeland Security agents*. You should find that all other orders are ungrammatical.

The first auxiliary in a sentence is extremely important. First, it is the one

that is marked for tense, if the clause is finite. In *She should have been working on her term paper*, *should* is the first auxiliary and its {-d} indicates that it is in the past tense. You can convince yourself of the accuracy of this rule by removing the past tense marker from *should* and placing it on any of the other auxiliaries and main verb, e.g., **She shall **had** been working on her term paper*. You should find that all other orders are ungrammatical. We discuss tense in our chapter on Basic Clause Patterns.

Second, in interrogative clauses, it is always the first auxiliary that is moved to the left of the subject. If we turn *She could have been seriously injured!* into a question, it is the *could* (as the first auxiliary) that moves: *Could she have been seriously injured?* Again, you can test the accuracy of our rule by moving other auxiliaries to the left of the subject, e.g., ***Have** *she could been seriously injured?*

Third, in negated sentences, the negative particle *not* is typically placed after the first auxiliary, e.g., *He has **not** been studying very hard lately*. Try placing it elsewhere in the sequence to see what happens.

Modal verbs

If a modal verb occurs in a clause, it will, as we noted, be the first of any auxiliaries that clause contains. Besides occupying the same sentential position, modals express related concepts. These concepts include notions such as (a) **necessity**, either logical or social (obligation): *You must read the book*; (b) **possibility**, logical or social (permission): *He may leave the room*; (c) **ability**: *He can do long division in his head*; or (d) **intention**, either definite or conditional: *I will/would/shall/should write another 10 pages today*. What these modal concepts all have in common is that they indicate the basis for the speaker's judgment or belief about the truth of the sentence.

We can view the {-d/t} at the end of the second member of each pair of modals as a variant of the past tense inflection {-ed}. This allows us to regard each pair (excluding *must*) as comprising a present and a past tense form. To see why this is so, consider the phenomenon called **backshifting**. Backshifting involves the change from present tense to past tense forms when direct speech, e.g., *John **is** flying to Toronto tomorrow*, is converted into indirect speech when the verb of the main clause is in the past tense: *John **said** that he **was** flying to Toronto tomorrow*. Sentences involving modals require a shift from the basic form to the past tense, {-d/t}, form: *John **will** fly out tomorrow* becomes *John said that he **would** fly out tomorrow*.

Exercise

The following text is from the mystery novel *Farriers' Lane,* by Anne Perry (1993: 285). It occurs after the discovery of a policeman's (Paterson) body hanging in his bedroom. (a) Identify all the modal verbs in the passage. (b) Discuss each one using the framework for understanding modals presented just above. Remember that each modal may serve more than one purpose. (c) You should also note that the modals occur in the later part of each paragraph. Why do you think the author shifted to the use of modals as she did? (d) The novel contains many passages with lots of modal verbs in them. Why do you think that modals might suit a mystery writer's purposes?

He touched Paterson's hand. The body swung very slightly. The flesh was cold, the arm rigid. He had been dead several hours. He was dressed in plain dark uniform trousers and tunic, which was torn, his sergeant's insignia ripped off. He still wore his boots. It was nearly midday now. Presumably it was what he had worn when he came home from the last duty of the day before. If he had slept here, risen in the morning and dressed ready to go out, the body would still have some warmth left, and be limp. He must have died sometime late yesterday evening, or during the night. It would almost certainly be the evening. Why should he be wearing his street clothes all night?

The hook was in the middle of the ceiling, about ten or eleven feet high, where one would expect to find a chandelier. There was no furniture near enough to it for him to have climbed on. It had taken a strong man to lift Paterson up and then let him fall from that height. He must have used the rope as a pulley over the hook. There was no conceivable way Paterson could have done it himself, even supposing he had some cause to, or believed he had.

Negation

Negating a clause is primarily done by inserting the negative particle *not*. If the clause has one or more auxiliary verbs, *not* is typically placed after the first auxiliary, though it can occur elsewhere: *He must **not** have arrived yet.* If the clause does not have an auxiliary, then the "dummy" auxiliary *do* is inserted into the first auxiliary position and *not* is placed after it: *He did not arrive on time.* Cf. **He not arrived on time.*

Not may be contracted (i.e., reduced) and attached to the auxiliary immediately before it: *He **didn't** arrive on time; He **mustn't** have arrived yet.*

Mood, modality, aspect, tense, voice, and negation may be combined: *Couldn't she have been being followed by the FBI?*

PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions (P) combine with noun phrases to form prepositional phrases (PPs). They are important to English because PPs play a wide range of grammatical roles. In other languages—and in earlier stages of English—prepositions play a less significant role because some of their jobs are carried out by inflectional affixes. Prepositions also express many of the major semantic relations that integrate parts of a sentence into a grammatical and meaningful whole. It is thus important for teachers and students to become familiar with, not learn by heart, the approximately 50 members of this class.

about	above	across	after	against
along	amid(st)	among	around	astride
at	before	behind	below	beneath
beside(s)	between	beyond	but (= except)	by
concerning	down	during	except	from
in	inside	into	like	of
on	onto	out	outside	over
since	through	throughout	till	to
toward	under	underneath	until	unto
up	upon	with	within	without

TABLE 7: SINGLE-WORD PREPOSITIONS

In spite of the significance of prepositions, standard grammars often assign them rather vague definitions, such as "a word that shows the relation of a noun or pronoun to some other word in a sentence" or, misleading ones, such as "a word followed by a noun or a pronoun." English **prepositions** are uninflected words that take NP objects to form prepositional phrases. In functional terms, a preposition in a PP functions as the **head** of that prepositional phrase. The preposition signals the grammatical and/or semantic role played by the PP in its clause.

PPs play a broad range of roles in English phrases and sentences, including modification of nouns, e.g., in *The trunk of the car*, the PP *of the car* consists of the preposition *of* and its object *the Shrew* and modifies the noun *trunk*. PPs complement verbs and adjectives, e.g., in *give it to her*, the PP *to her* is a

complement of the verb *give*, and in *conscious of her surroundings*, the PP *of her surroundings* complements the adjective *conscious*.

The following are some examples of PPs; the preposition is italicized:

(18) a. *of* my toe
    b. *to* Tangiers
    c. *beneath* contempt

Exercise

1. Select five prepositions from Table 7 and create a prepositional phrase around each using the phrases in (18) as models.
2. In the paragraph just beneath Table 7, (a) identify all of the prepositions, referring to Table 7 as necessary, and (b) paraphrase the meaning of each preposition.

Though prepositions are generally followed immediately by noun phrases, in wh-clauses a NP may be moved away from its preposition:

(19) a. What did you call *about*? (cf. You called *about what*?)
    b. She asked what you called *about*.
    c. The lamp which you called *about* has been sold.

In these cases, the NP objects of the prepositions (*what* and *which*) have moved elsewhere in the sentence, and in fact precede their prepositions. In a sense the preposition has been abandoned by its object NP; for this reason, we call such cases **preposition stranding**. The stranding of prepositions is sometimes criticized in prescriptive circles, but in many cases unstranded prepositions sound either stilted or downright ungrammatical:

(20) a. ?About what did you call?
    b. *She asked about what you called.
    c. The lamp about which you called has been sold.

Aside from their behavior in such cases, though, prepositions are formally very simple.

Before examining the semantics of prepositions, we should mention one further formal complexity—the tendency of prepositions to enter into complex frozen expressions that resemble idioms; Table 8 lists some examples.

according to	along with	with respect to
apart from	as for	round about
by means of	with regard to	with reference to
by reason of	by virtue of	on account of
by way of	except for	out of
in accord(ance) with	in addition to	in spite of
in case of	in compliance with	instead of
in opposition to	in place of	in regard to

TABLE 8: MULTI-WORD PREPOSITIONS

The structure of these multi-word prepositions falls into two patterns: (a) preposition + noun + preposition (P + N + P; e.g., *by means of*, *in case of*) and (b) miscellaneous word + preposition (X + P; e.g., *according to*, *because of*). It would, of course, be possible to view such expressions—particularly the P + N + P type—as simply combinations of two prepositional phrases; however, most speakers perceive them as grammatical units. We will not take a hard-and-fast position on this issue, but simply note, as do most grammars, the presence of such constructions.

Exercise
Select five of the multi-word prepositions from Table 8 and create a PP around each one, e.g., *in spite of his insistence*.

Prepositions cover a wide range of meanings. Traditional categories, along with some typical examples, are given in Table 9.

Place (Locative):	above, around, at, behind, beneath, between
Direction:	up, down
Time (Temporal):	about, after, at, during, for, since
Manner:	with (*exit **with a flourish***)
Accompaniment:	with (*went **with Flora***)
Instrument (Means):	by, with (*open it **with a knife***)
Recipient:	to (*gave it **to Lucy***)
Beneficiary:	for (*did it **for Lucy***)
Miscellaneous:	of, about, like, without

TABLE 9: SEMANTIC TYPES OF PREPOSITIONS

Exercise
Create three PPs to represent each of the semantic categories in Table 9.

Many individual prepositions have several meanings. For example, what meanings of *around* and *beneath* occur in sentences (21) and (22)?

(21) a. They walked *around* the statue.
     b. I'll return *around* 5:00.
(22) a. Horace stood *beneath* the Balancing Rock.
     b. Horace is *beneath* contempt.

This variety of meanings sometimes creates confusion for students, particularly those who simplistically associate certain structures with prepositions. For instance, the indirect object construction (e.g., *He gave Hilda the bike*; *He bought Hilda a bike*) is sometimes associated with paraphrases using the prepositions *to* (*He gave the bike to Hilda*) and *for* (*He bought a bike for Hilda*). However, this semantic relation emerges only when *to* has a Recipient meaning and *for* has a Beneficiary meaning. For example, the indirect object sentences in (23a, b) can be rephrased as the sentences with *to* and *for* in (23c, d). In contrast, when we try to rephrase the *to* and *for* in sentences (24a, b) as indirect object sentences, the results, (24c, d), are ungrammatical. This is because *to* and *for* in (24) do not have Recipient and Beneficiary interpretations, respectively.

(23) a. I offered Hickle a dozen widgets.
     b. I made Hickle an artificial earlobe.
     c. I offered a dozen widgets to Hickle.
     d. I made an artificial earlobe for Hickle.
(24) a. I sent Hickle to the lake.
     b. I made an artificial earlobe for $3,000.
     c. *I sent the lake Hickle.
     d. *I made $3,000 an artificial earlobe.

Exercise
What, if any, difference in meaning do you perceive between *He bought Hilda a bike* and *He bought a bike for Hilda?* (Hint: which sentence more strongly suggests that Hilda actually got the bike?)

Two other potential problems for students derive from the ability of many of these words to occur as **particles** (25a), and as **adverbs**, modifiers of verbs (25b).

(25) a. I called my sister up.
     b. I looked up.

Let's consider the complexities of the word *down* using the following sentences as our data:

(26) a. I cut down the tree.
     b. I fell down the hill.
     c. I cut the tree down.
     d.*I fell the hill down.
     e.*Down the tree I cut.
     f. Down the hill I fell.
     g. I cut it down
     h.*I fell it down.
     i. *I cut down it.
     j. I fell down it.

Sentences (26a, b) appear to be parallel because in both, *down* appears before the NPs *the tree* and *the hill*. However, this parallelism is broken in (26c, d). In (26c) *down* is grammatical after the NP, but in (26d) it is not. This difference in behavior suggests that *down* may represent two different parts of speech in these sentences. Semantically, we sense an idiomatic unity in *cut down* that we do not sense in *fell down*. In fact, *cut down* could be replaced by one word: *toppled* or *felled*. On formal and semantic grounds, then, *down* seems to represent different parts of speech in (26a) and (26b). The fact that *down the hill* seems to have moved as a single unit in (26f) suggests that in that and related sentences, *down* is a preposition heading a prepositional phrase. For *down* in (26a), we have no ready-made traditional label. In such sentences we will call it a **particle**, using a term coined recently by linguists, and verb + particle combinations like *cut down*, *look up* we will call **phrasal verbs**.

Next, consider the word *down* in the sentences below:

(27) a. I fell down the hill.
     b. I fell down.

Assuming that *down* is a true preposition in (27a), we note in (27b) that

down is not followed by a noun phrase, nor has it been stranded, since no noun phrase that could be construed as its object occurs elsewhere in the sentence. Moreover, we do not infer from (27b) that I fell down some inclined place—any more than we understand that some object did or did not cause me to fall. Since we cannot apply any test of moveability to the right that helped us to identify particles, we have no justification for calling *down* in (27b) a particle. Must we then invent a new part of speech? The answer is YES—unless we can fit the word into some other existing part of speech. Can you think of a candidate for the word *down*? Consider sentences (28a-d):

(28) a. Harriet visited often.
      b. Often, Harriet visited.
      c. I fell down.
      d. Down I fell.

These sentences provide evidence that *down* in (27b/28c) may be an adverb, since it fits criteria for adverbs (namely, that of relative moveability), that it modifies a verb, and that it represents direction. In practice, we would like to have more support for our analysis than this, but sometimes we do not have that luxury.

We should note, however, the semantic motivation for the tendency of prepositions to blend with adverbs. If you turn back to our discussion of adverbs, you will notice that the meanings expressed by adverbs (e.g., Time, Place, and Manner) partially coincide with those of prepositions. This tendency for parts of speech to overlap in meaning is just one more reason to prefer an analysis that separates them on the basis of form.

INTENSIFIERS

Our earlier discussion of adjectives and adverbs made reference to a class of words specifically associated with them. This class includes words like *more*, *most*, *very*, *quite*, *rather*, *somewhat*, and a few others. Traditional grammars often call such words *degree adverbs*, as if they were ordinary adverbs—like *extremely* and *thoroughly*—that happen to indicate the extent to which the meaning of the adjective or adverb holds. If you consider the criteria for adverbs that we suggested earlier, you will quickly realize that the words we have listed as intensifiers—even though they do indicate degree—do not share the formal or functional characteristics of adverbs. For instance, intensifiers do not have the moveability of true adverbs, nor can they occur in the comparative or superlative constructions, nor can

one intensifier be modified by another.

(29) a. *morer
b. *mostest
c. *more quite
d. *most rather
e. *very quite
f. *rather very

In contrast, real degree adverbs (e.g., *extremely* and *thoroughly*) do allow these possibilities.

(30) a. more extremely
b. quite extremely
c. very thoroughly
d. rather thoroughly
e. extremely thoroughly

We will thus refer to the members of this small class of words as **intensifiers** rather than as adverbs.

CONJUNCTIONS

The word **conjunction** indicates the major role of these words, namely, to join (*junction*) together (*con-*) two or more grammatical elements called **conjuncts**. The difference between **coordinating** and **subordinating** conjunctions reflects the differing grammatical statuses of the conjuncts that are united.

Coordinating conjunctions

The major one- and two-word **coordinating conjunctions** appear in Table 10.

Single Word Coordinating Conjunctions: and, but, or
Minor or Marginal Coordinating Conjunctions: for, so, nor
Multi-word Coordinating Conjunctions (Correlative Conjunctions):
both…and; not only…but (also); either…or; whether…or; neither…nor

TABLE 10: COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Since multi-word coordinators require their members to correlate (relate together) with their conjuncts, they are often called **correlative conjunctions**.

(31) a. Jack *and* Jill ran up the hill. (Single word)
     b. *Both* Jack *and* Jill ran up the hill. (Correlative)

The units connected by coordinators may be of any size—word, phrase, clause, or sentence. We show some typical instances below.

Two words
(32) a. Tarzan and Jane [got married] (nouns)
     b. wrote and sang [the song] (verbs)
     c. can and will (modals)
     d. eager and willing (adjectives)
     e. wildly and frantically (adverbs)
     f. he and she (personal pronouns)
     g. this and that (demonstrative pronouns)
     h. any and all (indefinities)
     i. who and why (wh-words)
     j. in and about (prepositions)

Two phrases
(33) a. many readers and some literary critics (noun phrases)
     b. may disagree and often have disagreed (verb phrases)
     c. extremely old and completely dilapidated (adjective phrases)
     d. very boldly and amazingly often (adverbial phrases)
     e. of the people and for the people (prepositional phrases)

Two clauses
(34) a. who comes early and who brings a camera (relative clauses)
     b. that I am right and that you are wrong (noun clauses)
     c. after the game ended and before the cleanup crew arrived (adverbial clauses)

Two sentences
(35) Lou admitted his mistake and Bud forgave him.

Generally, the two conjuncts will be of the same type (i.e., noun and noun, verb phrase and verb phrase, relative clause and relative clause). How-

ever, in some instances formally dissimilar structures may be conjoined, as in (36).

(36) quietly and without leaving a trace (adverb and prepositional phrase)

The two unlike conjuncts must be functionally and semantically similar. Sentence (36) conjoins two modifiers that indicate Manner.

Other cases in which coordinators appear to connect unlike units arise when ellipsis occurs, as in (37):

(37) Lou admitted his mistake, but Bud didn't.

In such examples, however, the difference in conjuncts is illusory, for the second conjunct can be reconstructed as a structure formally comparable to the first, as the paraphrase (38) indicates.

(38) Lou admitted his mistake, but Bud did not admit his mistake.

The literal meaning of *and* is equivalent to mathematical +, or logical &. So *Jack and Jill* means *Jack +/& Jill*. So if *Jack and Jill went up the hill* is true, then *Jack went up the hill* is true and *Jill went up the hill* is true. However, in certain contexts, *and* communicates more than just +/&. For example, we would normally interpret *Jack fell down and broke his crown* to mean *Jack fell down and then because he fell down he broke his crown*. So, amongst other meanings, *and* can communicate the order in which events took place and that an earlier event caused a later one.

The literal meaning *but* is pretty much equivalent to that of *and*, namely that both conjuncts are true. However, *but* adds the complication that an expectation set up by the first conjunct is to be rejected. For example, if you go to the dean's office and ask her assistant whether she is in, you might get the response, *She's in, but you can't see her now.* In this case, *She's in* is true and *You can't see her now* is true. *But* acknowledges that if *She's in* is true, then you might reasonably expect that you would be able to see her; however, it rejects this expectation.

Like *and*, *or* can conjoin an indefinite number of expressions. Generally when *or* conjoins expressions it indicates that only one of the expressions is true. For example, if I say *George, Dick, or Albert should go to jail* then I am saying that only one of the three should go to jail. However, I can override this exclusivity by adding something like, *or all three.*

Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions, as the name suggests, differ from coordinators by connecting structures of unequal grammatical status. In subordination, one of the structures is grammatically superior or **dominant** and the other is grammatically inferior or **subordinate**. The subordinate structure is a sub-part of the larger, dominant structure. As you'd expect, the subordinate structure is the one introduced by the subordinating conjunction.

A second difference between coordinating and subordinating conjunctions is that the latter have a restricted range; they can connect *clauses only*. Thus a structure introduced by a subordinating conjunction will be a subordinate clause. (It is, of course, possible for one clause to be subordinate (bolded) to a clause that is itself subordinate (underlined), for example, *The TV news reported <u>that the nominee claimed</u> **that he was not a crook**.*)

We will investigate subordinate clauses more fully in our chapter on Multi-clause Sentences. For the moment, we will simply mention three important types of subordinate clause and identify the conjunctions that may introduce them.

The subordinating conjunctions are classified according to the type of clause they introduce. The three types of subordinate clauses are **adverbial**, **nominal**, and **relative**.

Subordinating adverbial conjunctions

Adverbial clauses, like adverbs, function as modifiers of verbs or sentences. They are introduced by a group of words that we will call **subordinating adverbial conjunctions** (**SAC**). Table 11 lists the main SACs.

Time:	after, as, as long as, as soon as, before, just as, now that, since, until, till, when, whenever, while
Place:	where, wherever
Manner:	as, as if, as though
Reason or Cause:	as, because, inasmuch as, since
Result:	so...that, so that, such...that
Comparison:	as, as...as, just as, so...as, than
Purpose:	in order that, lest, so, so that, that
Condition:	as long as, if, on (the) condition that, provided, provided that, unless
Concession:	although, even if, even though, though, while, whereas

TABLE 11: SUBORDINATING ADVERBIAL CONJUNCTIONS

Table 11 groups SACs semantically, in a way that makes clear their overlap with adverbs. As we have just seen, prepositions also overlap with adverbs, so it should come as no surprise that prepositions have affinities with SACs. These affinities are more than semantic. Several items of Table 11 also appear on the lists of prepositions (Table 7 and 8). Because of this overlap, students may experience difficulties in telling a preposition from a SAC—and a prepositional phrase from an adverbial clause. A simple way to keep the two clear is to remember that a preposition only occurs in construction with a following noun phrase and a SAC is followed by a clause. Let's consider an example.

(39) a. I left after the party.
 b. I left after the party ended.

In (39a), *after* is followed only by a noun phrase (*the party*) and so must be a preposition. In (39b), *after* is followed by both a noun phrase (*the party*) and a verb phrase (*ended*) that together constitute a clause; thus *after* is a SAC in (39b). We can confirm our formal analysis further by moving the group of words *after the party*.

(40) a. After the party, I left.
 b.*After the party, I left ended.

Since phrases often move as a unit, the prepositional phrase in (39a) can be relocated at the front of the sentence, as it has been in (40a). But in (39b), *after the party* cannot be moved, as the ungrammaticality of (40b) shows. Thus it must not be a complete expression. In fact, the structure governed by *after* in (40b) is the clause *the party ended*, as (41) shows.

(41) After the party ended, I left.

Clauses like *after the party ended* are adverbial because they function much as adverbs do, they have meanings similar to those of adverbs, and they are relatively moveable.

Exercise
Create at least one sentence containing an adverbial clause for each of the semantic categories represented in Table 11.

Nominal conjunctions

Nominal clauses function just like noun phrases typically function—i.e., as subjects, objects, and complements. When they do, they are introduced by a set of subordinating conjunctions that includes most of the wh-words listed in Table 6 along with the word *that*. Thus, once you know the wh-words, you do not need to learn a separate list of nominal subordinating conjunctions. To illustrate, note the sentences in (42).

(42) a. I didn't know [*who(m)* I should call.]
     b. [*What* you don't know] might hurt you.
     c. [*Why* Zangooli fled] is not clear.
     d. I suspected [*that* he was wanted by the police.]

To assure yourself that the clauses truly have a nominal function, replace them with the pronouns *it* or *that*.

Exercise

Create at least six more examples of sentences containing nominal clauses modeled on (42a-d). Test that you really have created nominal clauses by replacing them with *it* or *that*.

Relative conjunctions

Relative clauses function as modifiers of the nouns they follow. Typically, they are introduced by a wh-word, (in this function, traditionally called **relative pronouns**), or by *that*. For example:

(43) a. Anyone [*who* knows the answer] will receive a prize.
     b. The cat [*that* caught the mouse] was jubilant.
     c. The reason [*why* she left] wasn't clear.
     d. I anticipate the day [*when* the world will be at peace.]

Exercise

Create at least six more examples of relative clauses modeled on (43a-d). Identify their conjunctions.

Some complexities of subordinating conjunctions
Subordinating conjunctions have several properties that make them more complicated than this basic presentation suggests. One that deserves mention is the tendency of subordinating conjunctions to be omitted from sentences in which their presence is easily inferred. Examples from each type occur in (44).

(44) a. I am so tired [_____ I could sleep on a bed of nails.]
        (SAC: *so . . . that*)
     b. Everyone said [_____ they had a good time.]
        (Nominal: *that*)
     c. The reason [_____ she left] wasn't clear.
        (Relative: *why* or *that*)

A note on *that*
Grammatically, *that* is particularly interesting, largely because it belongs to at least four different parts of speech. First, it can be a demonstrative pronoun that functions either as a modifier (e.g., ***That*** *answer is correct*) or as the head of a noun phrase (e.g., ***That*** *is correct*). Second, it can introduce a relative clause (e.g., *The answer* ***that*** *she gave was correct*). Third, *that* can act as a noun clause connector (e.g., *I said* ***that*** *the answer was correct*). Fourth, it can appear as part of a subordinating adverbial conjunction indicating either result or purpose (e.g., *The answer was* **so** *persuasive* **that** *it astounded us all. The answer was phrased* **so that** *it would confuse everyone*).

So how can you determine which class *that* belongs to in a particular sentence? One useful test is that of substitution. If you can substitute *it* for *that* you have a headword demonstrative; if you can substitute *the*, you have a modifying demonstrative; if you can substitute *who* or *which* for *that*, it introduces a relative clause. If you cannot make any of these replacements, you have either a noun clause connector or a SAC. Distinguishing the SAC is very simple, since it occurs normally with the word *so* either next to it or nearby.

Other minor parts of speech
While our catalogue of parts of speech includes nearly all the words of English, we should ask whether other categories might be identified. There is no reason in principle to believe that we have discovered all the parts of speech, any more than to believe that we have discovered all the inhabitable planets in our galaxy. Certainly, we would expect to find other parts of speech if we dealt with languages other than English. Japanese, for instance, has words similar to

our prepositions, except that they follow rather than precede their associated noun phrases. Thus English *of a book* would be rendered in Japanese as *hon ni* (literally, *book of*). Because they follow their nouns, these Japanese words are often called **postpositions**.

Those familiar with traditional grammar will also recall one part of speech that we have not mentioned, the **interjection**. This class includes words such as *shucks*, *darn*, *gee*, *wow*, and a host of saltier expressions. Usually a grammar will list the tamer interjections and let the matter drop.

Interjections have some interesting properties. First, they are not grammatically connected to other parts of the sentences in which they occur, and consequently are typically separated from the remainder of their sentence by commas. They typically indicate the speaker's attitude or feelings about what he is expressing (e.g., ***Well***, *our budget deficit is not as large as that of the Axis of Evil*).

Individual expressions also have certain unusual properties. *Darn*, for example, enters into a variety of constructions:

(45) a. Darn it!
     b. That darn cat!
     c. I don't give a darn.

In (45a), *darn*, seems to act like a verb expressing a wish for damnation (*darn*, of course, is a euphemism for *damn*), though its literal meaning is rarely intended, since even atheists can use it. In (45b), *darn* seems to modify *cat* though it is not an adjective by formal criteria: *that darner cat, *that darnest cat, **that very darn cat*, though we can say, *The darndest thing happened*. (45c) suggests that *darn* could be a noun, though we don't seem to be able to give more than one darn at a time: ?*I don't give two darns*.

Aside from interjections, we have already seen one important way in which new parts of speech may emerge. They may be distinguished from other classes of which they were thought to be normal members. For instance, we separated intensifiers from the category of adverbs and particles from prepositions. In distinguishing a group of words as a separate part of speech, linguists attempt to direct our attention to a set of formal, functional, or semantic similarities and differences. As a result, some categories will be particular to a specific book rather than to English grammar in general. The practice of reclassifying words is, in fact, relatively common, especially as we discover more about language. Studying parts of speech mirrors the study of ecological characteristics of plants and animals in nature, so it should not be surprising that, as we learn more about a particular

species, we discover unexpected similarities between it and other apparently unrelated species. Thus if prepositions and adverbs are not as distinct as we once thought, our discovery of this fact derives from our closer observation of their verbal ecology.

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GLOSSARY

ACTIVE: a grammatical voice, expressed without *be* + Ven. See PASSIVE.

ACCUSATIVE (also called OBJECTIVE): case of pronouns associated with direct objects and objects of prepositions.

ADVERBIAL CLAUSE: subordinate clause that functions as an adverbial. See NOMINAL CLAUSE and RELATIVE CLAUSE.

ASPECT: a category of a verb phrase signaled by inflection, auxiliary verbs, and other constructions, e.g., progressive, perfect, habitual.

ATTRIBUTIVE NOUN PHRASE: a NP that provides a description but does not refer to any particular individual. See REFERRING NOUN PHRASE.

AUXILIARY VERB: a verb used with a main verb to indicate aspect, voice, and

modality.

CASE FORM: one of the inflectional variants of a noun, pronoun, adjective, or (in some languages) article.

COMMON CASE: the uninflected form of English nouns found in subject and object functions.

CONJUNCT: a grammatical element connected by a coordinating or subordinating conjunction to another grammatical element.

CONJUNCTION: a function word that joins grammatical elements either as coordinate to each other or as one subordinate to the other.

CONTENT WORD: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. See chapter on Major Parts of Speech.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTION: a function word such as *and*, *but*, *or*, etc. that connects grammatically equal elements. See **SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION**.

CO-REFERENCE: property of noun phrases denoting the same entity; applies to a pronoun and its antecedent or to two noun phrases.

CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTION: a multiple-word coordinating conjunction, e.g., *both...and*, *either...or*.

DECLARATIVE (also called **INDICATIVE**): in traditional grammar, the mood of a sentence used to make an assertion.

DEFINITENESS: property of some NPs (and the (pro)nouns and articles they contain), which denote a speaker's assumption that their referent can be readily identified. See **INDEFINITENESS**.

DEICTIC: words like the **DEMONSTRATIVES**, whose referents depend upon the situations they occur in, and which change from use to use.

DEMONSTRATIVE: the deictic words *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*. See **DEICTIC**.

FUNCTION WORDS (also called **STRUCTURE WORDS**): words such as prepositions, auxiliaries, and articles that are used frequently in a language to signal recurrent semantic and grammatical information.

GENDER: linguistic category distinguishing words or the entities they denote as masculine, feminine, or neuter; signaled by pronouns and suffixes. Languages other than English may signal gender by adjective inflection, articles, verb agreement, etc.

GENERIC: property of an article whereby it designates an entire class. See **SPECIFIC**.

GENERIC PRONOUN: pronoun that makes no gender distinction, e.g., *one*.

GENITIVE: case signaled by *'s* and *s'*, indicating a variety of semantic relations, including possession, authorship, involvement with, and many less specific relations. Also called the possessive case.

IMPERATIVE: in traditional grammar, the mood of a sentence used to give a command.

INDEFINITENESS: property of some NPs (and the (pro)nouns and articles they contain), which denote a speaker's assumption that their referent cannot be specifically identified. See **DEFINITENESS**.

INDICATIVE: See **DECLARATIVE**.

INFORMATION QUESTION: a question, introduced by a wh-word, requesting information rather than a yes-no response. See **YES-NO QUESTION**.

INTENSIFIER: a function word (typically *more, most, very, quite, rather,* and *somewhat*) used to modify an adjective or an adverb.

INTENSIVE PRONOUN: a pronoun ending in *-self* or *-selves* that ordinarily occurs within the noun phrase of its antecedent, following and modifying the antecedent directly, e.g., *I **myself** did it.* See **REFLEXIVE PRONOUN**.

INTERACTIONAL FORCE: the function of a sentence in a discourse to make assertions, ask questions, issue orders, etc.

INTERJECTION: a word, often not grammatically integrated with a sentence, that expresses the emotions, etc., of the speaker, e.g., *Ouch!, Wow!*

INTERROGATIVE: in traditional grammar, the mood of a sentence used to ask a question.

MOOD: in traditional grammar, the category indicating whether a sentence makes an assertion, asks a question, issues an order, etc.

NOMINAL CLAUSE (also called **NOUN CLAUSE**): a subordinate clause that functions as subject, object, or complement. See **ADVERBIAL CLAUSE** and **RELATIVE CLAUSE**.

NOMINATIVE: the case associated with the subject function.

NOUN PHRASE: a phrase with a noun as its head word.

NOUN CLAUSE: See **NOMINAL CLAUSE**.

OBJECTIVE CASE: See **ACCUSATIVE CASE**.

PARTICLE: a function word, which, with a verb, constitutes a **PHRASAL VERB**, e.g., *call **up** my sister/call my sister **up**.*

PASSIVE: a voice expressed by the form *be* + Ven.

PERFECT: an aspect of a verb phrase, expressed by *have* + Ven.

PERSON: grammatical category distinguishing the speaker (first person), addressee (second person), and entity spoken about (third person).

PHRASAL VERB: an idiomatic unit consisting of a verb and **PARTICLE**

POSSESSIVE CASE: See **GENITIVE CASE**.

POSTPOSITION: a word analogous to a preposition, but appearing after its object NP; appears in Japanese and Old English, but not in modern English.

PREPOSITION STRANDING: ending a clause or sentence with a preposition whose object has been moved.

PREPOSITION: a function word that serves as the head of a prepositional phrase, e.g., *in, on, with, of.*

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE: phrase consisting of a prepostion and NP.

PROGRESSIVE: an aspect of a verb phrase signaled by *be* + Ving.

QUANTIFIER: words such as *someone*, *something* whose referents are often vague. See **INDEFINITNESS**.

REFERRING NOUN PHRASE: a NP that denotes a particular entity or set of enti- ties. See **ATTRIBUTIVE NOUN PHRASE**.

REFERENCE: the entities, qualities, situations, or events identified by (the use of) linguistic expressions.

REFLEXIVE PRONOUN: a pronoun ending in *-self* or *-selves* that functions as the head of a NP, e.g., *I hurt* **myself**. See **INTENSIVE PRONOUN**.

RELATIVE CLAUSE: a subordinate clause that modifies a head noun; often in- troduced by a wh-word or *that*.

RELATIVE PRONOUN: in traditional grammar, a wh-word or *that* introducing a relative clause.

SPECIFIC: property of articles whereby they designate particular members of a class. See **GENERIC**.

STRUCTURE WORD: See **FUNCTION WORDS**.

SUBJUNCTIVE: in traditional grammar, the mood of a sentence used to indi- cate wishes, contrary-to-fact conditions, probability, possibility, etc.

SUBORDINATING ADVERBIAL CONJUNCTION (**SAC**): conjunction such as *when*, *if*, *because*, etc. that introduces a subordinate adverbial clause.

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION: a function word such as *if*, *when*, *because*, *that*, *who*, etc., that connects two clauses, making one of secondary gram- matical status, specifically a modifier or a complement.

TRUNCATED PASSIVE: a passive sentence without a *by*-phrase.

WH-QUESTION: a question beginning with a **WH-WORD** that asks for more in- formation than just yes or no. See **INFORMATION QUESTION**, **YES-NO QUESTION**.

WH-WORD: a function word such as *who*, *why*, *which* that introduces ques- tions, relative clauses, and nominal clauses.

YES-NO QUESTION: a question that can be appropriately answered with yes or no. See **INFORMATION QUESTION**, **WH-QUESTION**.