

## Chapter 5

### NPs and their Functions

#### Review of NPs

Definition of a noun phrase: *A noun or pronoun head and all of its modifiers.*

Let's go over all the NPs in the sentence below:

*Gaggles of goblins attacked some cute witches with black, well-worn broomsticks.*

What is the first NP in this sentence? Not *gaggles*--it is a noun, but it has a modifier, *of goblins*. What is the evidence for this identification? Try replacing the NP which has *gaggles* as its head with *they*. Is *They of goblins attacked some cute witches with black, well-worn broomsticks* okay? No. Try *They attacked some cute witches with black, well-worn broomsticks*. That is grammatical, suggesting that the entire NP is *gaggles of goblins*, not just *gaggles*.

What evidence is there that *gaggles* is not a modifier of *goblins*? It could be a new predeterminer (notice that it can't be an adjective phrase). It marks number (*a gaggle* vs. *gaggles*) which suggests that it's a noun. But, notice something else, *goblins* can be replaced with a personal pronoun: *Gaggles of them*. This suggests that *goblins* is a separate NP that does not include *gaggles* (or *of*). Notice also that the pronoun that replaces *goblins* is *them*, while the pronoun which replaces *gaggles of goblins* is *they*, suggesting that these two NPs fill different functions in the sentence.

So there are two NPs: *Gaggles of goblins* (which has a head noun *gaggles* and a prepositional modifier *of goblins*) and *goblins* (which has only a head noun *goblins* and no modifiers).

*[Gaggles of {goblins}] attacked some cute witches with black, well-worn broomsticks.*

What other nouns appear in the sentence? *Witches* and *broomsticks*. So there are probably two more NPs. If we try the pronoun substitution test, we discover something curious: Both *Gaggles of goblins attacked them with black, well-worn broomsticks* and *Gaggles of goblins attacked them* are okay. And the second paraphrase actually works if *they* refers to the *some cute witches with black, well-worn broomsticks*. What's going on here? The first paraphrase suggest that we have a NP *some cute witches*, while the second suggests a NP *some cute witches with black, well-worn broomsticks*. Stop and think. There are two different analyses of this sentence! This is an ambiguous sentence: it has two readings. In one reading, the goblins use broomsticks to attack witches; in the other, goblins attack witches who are equipped with broomsticks. In both these analyses *black, well-work broomsticks* is an NP (replaceable with *them*). The NPs in the two readings differ only in what the NP which has *witches* as its head is.

**Reading 1:** *[Gaggles of {goblins}] attacked [some cute witches] with [black, well-worn broomsticks].* (meaning "Gaggles of goblins used black, well-worn broomsticks to attack some cute witches")

**Reading 2:** *[Gaggles of {goblins}] attacked [some cute witches with {black, well-worn broomsticks}].* (meaning "Gaggles of goblins attacked some cute witches who had black, well-worn broomsticks")

Now practice picking out the NPs in the following paragraph.

*In some houses, the front door is in an entryway; in other houses, the front door opens directly to the living room. In newer houses, storage in the form of attics has been replaced by closets. The modern American house has changed most obviously in the amount of floorspace and number of bathrooms. By the 1970s, the size of a new house in the U.S. would average around 1500 square feet, while in 2003 the average square footage has increased to 2300. Similarly the number of bathrooms has been going up for the last thirty years.*

## Subjects

Subject is a grammatical function typically filled by a noun phrase. In a simple sentence, the subject is always a noun phrase; in a complex sentence the subjects may be noun phrases or clauses. We're going to work on the properties of subject noun phrases of finite clauses (some of which are shared by different kinds of subordinate clauses and some of which are not -- we'll talk more about this later in our discussion of subordination).

Some of the properties we already know about: we've been talking about subject-verb agreement since chapter two.

**Agreement:** In standard English, a past tense form of *be* or a present tense form of a non-modal verb agrees in person and number with the subject. So *They are helping me* is grammatical, but *\*They is/am helping me* is not. The verb does not agree with any object or possessor or adverbial, etc.

We've also noted in chapter 3 that some pronouns mark case.

**Case of Pronoun:** In standard English, if the subject of a finite verb is a personal pronoun, then it must be a subject case pronoun. So *They are helping me* is grammatical, but *\*Their/them are helping me* is not. The subject case pronoun can also be used for subject complements, as in *This is she*. Subject complements, however, except in the highest register, can also be in the object case (and, in fact, more typically are), as in *This is her*, while subjects cannot be.

**Active/Passive:** The subject of an active corresponds to the object of *by* in the passive. So the subject of the active *A car hit Mary* corresponds to the object of *by* in the passive *Mary was hit by a car*. The subject of the passive corresponds to the first object of the active paraphrase. So the subject of the passive *Mary was hit by a car* corresponds to the object in the active *A car hit Mary*.

**Form of Question:** In many types of questions, the subject is found in a specific place

**Tag Question:** One kind of tag question has a tag which consists of a copy of the first verb of the verb phrase of the clause to which it is tagged

(if it is an auxiliary or a form of *be*) or if there is no eligible verb, the verb *do*, plus a pronoun which refers to the subject of that clause. If the clause to which the tag is attached is positive, the tag must be negative; if the clause is negative, the tag must be positive. So, *You can help me, can't you?* and *The children don't like candy, do they?* are fine; but *\*You can help me, can't I* and *\*The children don't like candy, does it?* are not. So the pronoun in the tag must share the referent of the subject of the clause to which it is attached.

**Yes-No Question:** The NP immediately following the operator in a yes-no question must be the subject. So in *Can you help me?*, *you* is the subject and in *Don't the children like candy?*, *the children* is the subject.

**Wh- Questions:** If the subject contains or is what is being questioned (contains or is the *wh-* word), it will be first in the sentence and no NP will immediately follow the first verb in the VP if the VP is more than one word long. So in *Whose book is lying on the table?*, *whose book* is the subject, since no other potential subject follows the first verb in a multiword VP, and in *Who can help me?*, *who* is the subject, since no other potential subject follows the first verb in the VP.

Any NP which immediately follows the first verb in a multiword VP in a *wh-* is the subject, so in *Who can you help?*, *you* is the subject.

If the VP is only one word-long and not a form of *be*, then the phrase containing the *wh-* word at the beginning of the sentence must be the subject, so in *Who helped you?*, *who* is the subject and in *Whose dog barked?*, *whose dog* is the subject. If the VP is a form of *be* and an NP follows it and that NP is not part of another clause or an adverbial, that NP will be the subject, so in *Who is that guy in the funny hat?* *that guy in the funny hat* is the subject. Notice that if it is replaced by a personal pronoun, that pronoun must be in the subject case, so *Who is he?* not *\*Who is him?* which you would expect would be possible if *that guy in the funny hat* was the subject complement and not the subject. On the other hand, in *Who is home?* *home* is not the subject, but an adverbial. Can you find a test that demonstrates this?

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### A Digression: Definitions of the Subject

These properties alone work to distinguish subjects of finite clauses. Many textbooks however like to give another kind of definition for subjects. They provide either semantic definitions, usually something like "The subject 'does the action' expressed by the verb" or discourse definitions, usually something like "The subject is what the sentence is about." The semantic definition therefore defines the subject as the agent, while the discourse definition defines the subject as the topic.

**Subject as Agent:** It is relatively easy to find sentences in which the subject is not the agent. Consider *Olive is brilliant*, *I was seriously injured in a car accident*, *It is raining*, or *The resistance worker suffered torture at the hands of the Gestapo*. In these sentences, either there is no action or what action there is may not have an agent or the agent is something else in the sentences, not the subject. Consider the actions in these two sentences: *He is giving me money* and *I am getting money from him*. Do they describe different events? Different people doing different things? No. However, in the first sentence *he* is the subject and in the second *I* is. (Check both agreement and case-marking to confirm this claim.) This definition doesn't seem to work.

It is clear that different verbs restrict the range of semantics roles their subjects can fill: A verb like *melt* in an active clause may have a subject which is an agent, as in *Mary melted the ice (with a blowtorch)*; an instrument, as in *The blowtorch melted the ice*; or the patient, as in *The ice melted*. A verb like *see* in an active clause may only have a subject which is a perceiver, as in *Mary saw me*; but not an instrument, *\*The binoculars saw me*; or a patient, *\*I saw* (in which *I* is who is seen). Part of the definition of a verb in a competent dictionary will include the range of semantic roles the subject may fill. We can also note something else: though *melt* allows three different kinds of subject, if the agent is present in an active clause, it must be the subject. We can say *Mary melted the ice with a blowtorch*, but not *\*The blowtorch melted the ice with Mary*.

**Subject as Topic:** It is also relatively easy to find sentences in which this definition will not work. In many sentences, the subject is what is sometimes called a dummy as in *It's raining outside*. Is this sentence about *it*? What is *it*? How about cases where there is a overt topic which is not the subject, like *As for education, they have hardly any* or *Speaking of music, do you want to go to the concert tonight?* In these two sentences, the overt topics (*education* and *music*) are not the subjects; *they* and *you* are. Moreover, for stylistic reasons, English teachers often encourage students to recast sentences to make the topic the subject -- however, the original sentences would not be possible if the subject **had** to be the topic.

In the end we have to fall back on grammatical properties to determine the subject.

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## Practice with Subjects

Now let's try picking out the subjects of each of the finite clauses in the sentences we worked through in the NP section above. Look at the first sentence:

- **Sentence 1:** *In some houses, the front door is in an entryway; in other houses, the front door opens directly to the living room.*
  - **Clause 1:** *In some houses, the front door is in an entryway*

What is the subject of the first clause, *In some houses, the front door is in an entryway*? We've found three NPs in the first clause: *some houses*, *the front door*, and *an entryway*. Any of them might be the subject of some clause, but in this clause only one of them actually is. How can we tell which one?

Some tests are difficult to use with this sentence. Replacing the subject with a pronoun and checking the case won't help, because the pronoun would be *it* and *it* is used for both subjects and objects. Testing using *wh*- questions is difficult to use when the operator is the lexical verb *be* because both subjects and subject complements can immediately follow the lexical verb *be*. The passive/active test won't help, because *be* doesn't have a passive version. However, several tests remain:

**Verb Agreement** Let's start by picking out the verb phrase of this clause. The verb phrase of this clause is *is* -- which indicates that the subject of the clause is singular (and third person, but since all of the NPs in this clause are third person, that is not relevant to any argument about what is the subject of this clause). Since the subject is singular, that eliminates *some houses*, which is plural. But *the front door* and *an entryway* are singular. Let's change the number of each of these NPs and see which forces the verb to change, so *In some houses the front doors is in an entryway* is ungrammatical, the clause must be *In some houses, the front doors are in an entryway*. *In some houses the front door is in an entryways* is semantically weird, but not ungrammatical. Therefore, *the front door* must be the subject.

**Forms of Questions** Is this clause a question? No. We can't just read off the information as we could if this sentence was a question. We can, however, turn it into a question.

**Tag Question:** Let's consider how we might turn *In some houses, the front door is in an entryway* into tag question. We copy the operator (in this case *is*) and make it negative (since the clause is positive) and then put in a pronoun that refers to the subject, in this case *it*: *In some houses, the front door is in an entryway, isn't it?* Our problem here is that *it* might refer either to *the front door* or to *an entryway* (since they are both third person singular neuter noun phrases). (*it* cannot refer to *some houses* since that NP is plural.) We can distinguish by changing one of them to plural and seeing if it forces the pronoun in the tag to change as well. So if we change *the front door* to *the front doors*, *In some houses the front doors are in an entryway, aren't they?* is okay, but *\*In some houses the front doors are in an entryway, aren't/isn't it?* is not. This suggests that *it* in the singular version must refer not to *an entryway*, but to *the front door*. Therefore, *the front door* must be the subject.

**Yes-No Question:** Let's turn *In some houses, the front door is in an entryway* into a yes-no question: *In some houses, is the front door in an entryway?* In the yes-no question, the NP immediately following the operator is *the front door*. The NP immediately following the operator in a yes-no question is the subject. Therefore, *the front door* must be the subject.

Note that all the three tests indicated the same NP, *the front door*, as the subject. Any one of these tests, by itself, would be sufficient, but it's comforting to see that all the tests indicate the same thing.

- **Sentence 1:** *In some houses, the front door is in an entryway; in other houses, the front door opens directly to the living room.*
  - **Clause 2:** *in other houses, the front door opens directly to the living room.*

What tests are difficult to use with this sentence? Replacing the subject with a pronoun and checking the case won't help, because the pronoun would be *it* and *it* is used for both subjects and objects. The passive/active test won't help, because *open* in this intransitive sense doesn't have a passive version.

**Verb Agreement** Let's start by picking out the verb phrase of this clause. The verb phrase of this clause is *opens* -- which indicates that the subject of the clause is singular (and third person, but since all the NPs in this clause are third person, that is not relevant to any argument about what is the subject of this clause). Since the subject is singular, that eliminates *other houses*, which is plural. But both *the front door* and *the living room* are singular. If we change the number of those two NPs independently, we get *\*in other houses, the front doors opens directly to the living room* and *in other houses and the front door opens directly to the living rooms*. If we change *the front door* to *the front doors*, the sentence is ungrammatical, unless we also change the verb from *opens* to *open*; if we change *the living room* to *the living rooms*, no such issue arises. Therefore, we can see that the verb *opens* is agreeing with *the front door*, so *the front door* must be the subject.

**Forms of Questions** Is this clause a question? No. We can't just read off the information as we could if this sentence was a question. We can, however, turn it into a question.

**Tag Question:** Let's consider how we might turn *in most cases in other houses, the front door opens directly to the living room* into tag question. We copy the operator if there is one, if not we must insert the appropriate form of *do* (in this case, *does*) and make it negative (since the clause is positive) and then put in a pronoun that refers to the subject, in this case *it*: *in other houses, the front door opens directly to the living room, doesn't it?* *it* might refer either to *the front door* or to *the living room* (since they are both third person singular neuter noun phrases). (*it* cannot refer to *other houses* since those NPs are plural.) We can distinguish by changing one of them to plural and seeing if it forces the pronoun in the tag to change as well. So if we change *the living room* to *the living rooms*, *in other houses, the front door opens directly to the living rooms, doesn't it?* is okay, suggesting that *it* must refer not to *the living room(s)*, but to *the front door*. Therefore, *the front door* must be the subject.

**Yes-No Question:** Let's turn *in other houses, the front door opens directly to the living room* into a yes-no question: *in other houses, does the front door open directly to the living room?* In the yes-no question, the NP immediately following the operator is *the living room*. The NP immediately following the operator in a yes-no question is the subject. Therefore, *the cooking* must be the subject.

**Wh- Questions:** Let's try replacing each of the in the sentence with interrogative pronouns:

1. *In what does the front door open directly to the living room? [other houses]*

2. *In other houses, what opens directly to the living room? [The front door]*
3. *In other houses, what does the front door open directly to? (or In other houses, to what does the front door open directly?) [the living room]*

In (1) and (3) the NP immediately following the operator is *the front door*. The NP in a question which immediately follows the operator (unless the operator is the lexical verb *be*) must be the subject. Therefore, *the front door* must be the subject.

In (2), no NP follows the operator--there is no operator. In a *wh-* question, the only time an NP does not follow the operator (and the only time there doesn't have to be an operator) is when the *wh-* pronoun is the subject. In this case the *wh-* pronoun replaced *the front door*. Therefore, *the cooking* must be the subject.

- **Sentence 2:** *In newer houses, storage in the form of attics has been replaced by closets.*

In this sentence there is only one finite clause, so we'll work directly on that. In this case the case of the pronoun won't work since the subject here is a third person singular neuter NP, which would be *it*, which does not distinguish between subject and object case.

**Verb agreement:** The first verb in the VP is *has*—a present tense non-modal auxiliary, which is marked to indicate that it has a third person singular subject. Of the five NPs in this sentence, three are plural, *newer houses*, *attics*, and *closets*, while two are singular, *storage in the form of attics* and *the form of attics*. *the form of attics* is the object of the preposition *in*, and part of a larger NP *storage in the form of attics*, so *the form of attics* cannot be a subject, therefore the verb must be agreeing with *storage in the form of attics*.

**Active/Passive:** This is a passive clause. (Notice the passive auxiliary *be* followed by the past participle of *replace* and the *by*-phrase.) The subject of the passive corresponds to the first object of the active paraphrase. The active paraphrase of this sentence is *In newer houses, closets have replaced storage in the form of attics*. The first object of the verb *replace* is *storage in the form of attics* which should correspond to the subject in the passive. Therefore, *storage in the form of attics* must be the subject.

**Forms of Questions** Again this sentence is not a question, but it can be converted to a question.

**Tag Question:** Turning this sentence into a tag question would give us *In newer houses, storage in the form of attics has been replaced by closets, hasn't it?* The *it* in the tag must refer back to the *storage in the form of attics* in the main clause. The only other singular NP in the sentence, *the form of attics*, is inside another NP, and as noted above, the subject of a clause must be directly in that clause -- it cannot be in another NP or another clause. Therefore, *storage in the form of attics* must be the subject.

**Yes-No Question:** *In newer houses, has storage in the form of attics been replaced by closets?* The NP immediately after the operator *has* is *storage in the form of attics*. Therefore, *storage in the form of attics* must be the subject.

**Wh- Questions:**

1. *In what, has storage in the form of attics been replaced by closets?*

2. *In newer houses what has been replaced by closets?*
3. *In newer houses, what has storage in the form of attics been replaced by? (or In new houses, by what has storage in the form of attics been replaced?)*

In (1) and (3) the NP immediately following the operator is *storage in the form of attics*. The NP in a question which immediately follows the operator (unless the operator is the lexical verb *be*) must be the subject. Therefore, *storage in the form of attics* must be the subject.

In (2), no NP follows the operator. In a *wh-* question, the only time an NP does not follow the operator is when the *wh-* pronoun is the subject. In this case the *wh-* pronoun replaced *storage in the form of attics*. Therefore, *storage in the form of attics* must be the subject.

- **Sentence 3:** . *The modern American house has changed most obviously in the amount of floorspace and number of bathrooms.*

This is a sentence with one finite clause. Its subject is *The modern American house*. How can you tell?

- **Sentence 4** *In the 1970s, the size of a new house in the U.S. would average around 1500 square feet, while in 2003 the average square footage has increased to 2300.*
  - **Clause 1** *By the 1970s, the size of a new house in the U.S. would average around 1500 square feet, while in 2003 the average square footage has increased to 2300.*

This sentence has two finite clauses, one of which contains the other. The main clause (clause 1) contains the finite subordinate clause (clause 2 below). The question tests can be used on the main clause, but not on the subordinate clause since they affect only main clauses. The subject of this clause is *the size of a new house in the U.S.,.* How can you tell?

- **Clause 2:** *while in 2003 the average square footage has increased to 2300.*

This is a finite subordinate clause, that is, it is a finite clause which serves a grammatical role in another clause. You cannot turn a subordinate clause into a question, so the forms of the questions would not make relevant arguments here. Instead, you should try the other tests. The subject of this clause is *the average square footage*. Giving evidence to support the identification of *the average square footage* as the subject of this clause requires a bit of ingenuity.

- **Sentence 5:** *Similarly the number of bathrooms has been going up for the last thirty years.*

This is a sentence with one finite clause whose subject is *the number of bathrooms*. How can you tell that *the number of bathrooms* is the subject?

### Special Subjects

There are a couple of constructions in which more than one structure seems to act like the subject or in which no structure appears to have all the properties of a subject. These cases often seem to involve proforms which don't have antecedents: *it* and *there*. These are often called *dummies*, because they seem to fill a grammatical function without having any semantic content at all.

We've already met *it* above in sentences like *It's raining* and *It's sunny*, in which *it* does not

appear to have any referent. However, *it* is clearly the subject. The verb form must be a third singular form (*is* or *was*); *it* will follow the operator in a *yes-no* question -- *Is it raining? Is it sunny?* The pronoun in a tag question is always *it*, *It's sunny, isn't it?* For all available tests, *it* is clearly the subject.

We also have sentences like *It is obvious that Charley should be awarded the prize*, *It was clear to everyone that Marianne had come in first*, and *It was hard to understand what the children were saying*. In these sentences it is traditional to say that the *it* refers to the clause that comes later in the sentence: in these cases *that Charley should be awarded the prize*, *that Marianne had come in first*, and *to understand what the children were saying*. This analysis is based on the fact that these sentences have paraphrases like *That Charley should be awarded the prize is obvious*, *That Marianne had come in first was clear to everyone*, and *To understand what the children were saying was hard*. But these structures are clearly special, since in all these cases the pronoun *it* must precede the antecedent clause. Typically, as we know, personal pronouns like *it* follow the NPs which serve as their antecedents. However, for all testable properties, in sentences like these, *it*, no matter what it may mean, serves as the subject of the main clause.

There are sentences like *There are sixteen gray sloths in my kitchen* and *There was a strange man standing right here*. What are the subjects in these sentences? The structure of these sentences are fairly restricted: they all contain a *there* which is not an adverbial meaning a distant place, as in *A strange man was standing there*, since the *there* in these sentences can cooccur with *here*, as in the example above (and as it cannot in something like *\*A strange man was standing there here*, which is obviously no good). They all contain a form of *be* (as in the examples above, and *There had been a witch writing spells at this desk earlier today*) or other existential verb (as in *Suddenly there appeared a ghostly figure in the fog* or *There exists only one kind of ghouel at this party*). The noun phrase which follows the existential verb is always indefinite. The verb phrase appears to agree with the noun phrase following the existential verb. If we were going to rely on overt agreement alone, we'd probably go along with the analysis which treats the NP which follows the existential verb as the subject of the clause. It is clear however that the subject of the main clause must be *there*. If we use this construction in a *yes-no* or other question, *there* always follows the operator, as in

1. Where are there sixteen gray sloths?
2. Was there a strange man standing right here?
3. Had there been a witch writing spells at this desk earlier today?

and in tag questions, the pronoun in the tag must be *there*, as in

4. There exists only one kind of ghouel at this party, doesn't there? \*doesn't he?
5. There was a strange man standing right here, wasn't there? \*wasn't he?

A simple way to account for these data is to assume that there are two pronouns *there*, one singular and one plural, which must agree with the number of the NP which immediately follows the existential verb. It may seem odd to have a form which covers both these meanings -- but remember the English pronominal system has a lot of homophony; *it*, for example, is both subject case and object case. *You* is both subject case and object case, singular and plural.

This use of *there* contrasts with the adverbial use in several ways. We've already noted that it can cooccur with *here*, unlike the adverbial *there*. Locative adverbials can precede the verb as in *There stood the ghost of the minstrel's tale* and *Here comes the bride*. Notice that these cannot cooccur with semantically contrastive adverbials, so *\*There stood the ghost of the minstrel's tale here* and *\*Here comes the bride there* are both ungrammatical.

If we try to make these sentences into questions *there* and *here* do not act like subjects. In *yes-no* questions, notice *\*Did there stand the ghost of the minstrel's tale* and *Does here come the bride*, which put *there* or *here* after the operator, are ungrammatical. Instead to convert these sentences into *yes-no* questions, you must put the NP which follows the verb: *Did the ghost of the minstrel's tale stand there?* and *Does the bride come here?*

Similarly consider the *taq* questions: *There stood the ghost of the minstrel's tale, didn't he?* and *Here comes the bride, doesn't she?* are grammatical, while *\*There stood the ghost of the minstrel's tale, didn't there* and *\*Here comes the bride, doesn't here?* are ungrammatical. Why?

## Objects

There are three different kinds of objects: direct objects, indirect objects and objects of prepositions. All objects share one property: If the object is a pronoun, it **must** be in the object case.

6. John saw me/\*I. (The pronoun is a direct object.)
7. John gave me/\*I a gift. (The pronoun is an indirect object.)
8. John talked to me/\*I. (The pronoun is a prepositional object.)

**Direct Objects** If a verb has only one object, then it will be a direct object (DO).

9. That cat ate the mouse.
10. He considers them fools.
11. She finished her homework last week.

If there is an indirect object, the order is typically V IO DO (and NEVER V DO IO), as in

12. They built her a house.  
V IO DO
13. The teacher gave the students a serious talking-to.  
V IO DO

If the direct object is the only object, then it will be the same as the subject of the passive paraphrase:

14. The mouse was eaten by the cat.  
(The subject of (14) is the same as the direct object of (9).)

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### A Digression: Definitions of the Direct Object

Many textbooks however like to give another kind of definition for direct object. They provide

a semantic definition, usually something like "The direct object 'receives the action' expressed by the verb". The semantic definition therefore defines the direct object as the patient.

As you might expect from all prior experience in this book, this definition doesn't work.

Notice that in a sentence like *Mary saw the Eiffel Tower*, *the Eiffel Tower* is the direct object, but it's hard to see exactly what it receives. How about *Marvin knows French*? Here *French* is the direct object, what does it receive?

In the sentence *The resistance worker suffered torture at the hands of the gestapo*, the only one receiving anything is *the resistance worker*--which is, of course the subject. In a passive like *The mouse was eaten by the cat*, there is no direct object, but *the mouse* is the patient -- it undergoes the action.

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### Indirect Objects

Indirect objects (IOs) typically cooccur with and precede direct objects.

15. They built her a house.  
V IO DO

16. I gave them the notes.  
V IO DO

17. John found those children a useful book.  
V IO DO

18. Will you play me a game of chess?  
V IO DO

Sentences with VP IO DO predicates have a paraphrase in which the NP which serves as the IO is instead an the object of a preposition, as in

19. They build a house for her

20. I gave the notes to them.

21. John found a useful book for those children.

22. Will you play a game of chess with me?

Usually, the preposition is *to* or *for*, as in (19)-(21), though occasionally it is another preposition as in (22).

Direct objects in constructions with indirect objects cannot be unstressed pronouns, so

23. \*John found those children it.

is ungrammatical. To convey the same information, you must either use a stressed NP as the direct object as in (17) or you must use the prepositional phrase construction as in (24)

24. John found it for those children.

The passive paraphrase of a sentence with an indirect object will have the indirect object of the active, not the direct object of the active, as its subject, so the passives of (15) - (17) are

25. She was built a house by them.
26. They were given the notes by me.
27. Those children were found a useful book by John.

To make the direct object into the subject of the passive, you must start with one of the versions without an indirect object (as in (19) - (21)), which gives

28. A house was built for her by them.
29. The notes were given to her by me.
30. A useful book was found for those children by John.

Indirect objects don't have to be people, so in

31. I gave the problem a lot of thought.
32. Can you give this task your full attention?

the indirect objects are *the problem* and *this task*, respectively.

### **Objects of Prepositions**

Objects of prepositions (OPs) typically immediately follow the prepositions they are objects of.

33. Mary talked to me.
34. During the winter I get sick of snow.
35. We should go to the movies after the meeting.
36. A little old man lives in the house on the corner.

The only times they don't were discussed when we talked about PPs in Chapter 4.

Typically if the preposition can be moved, the OP moves with it. So we can say

37. a. I get sick of snow during the winter.  
b. During the winter I get sick of snow.

but not

38. \*During I get sick of snow the winter.

and

39. In the house on the corner lives a little old man.

but not

40. \*In lives a little old man the house on the corner.
41. \*In the house on lives a little old man the corner.

## Complements

We've already talked about subject complements and object complements in Chapter 4. Just as these complements can be adjective phrases (as in (42) and (43)), they can be noun phrases (as in (44) and (45)).

42. Those children are quite brilliant. (Adjective Phrase *quite brilliant* = Subject Complement)
43. I consider Evelyn idiotic. (Adjective Phrase *idiotic* = Object Complement)
44. Those children are real geniuses. (Noun Phrase *real geniuses* = Subject Complement)
45. I consider Evelyn an idiot. (Noun Phrase *an idiot* = Object Complement)

### Subject Complements

Subject complement (SC) NPs, just like direct or indirect objects, typically immediately follow the VP.

46. I am the person in charge.
47. These students will become doctors.

SC NPs, if they are personal or *wh*- pronouns, can be either in subject or object case:

48. I am she/her. (There is a difference in formality.)

Notice that if the subject is at all long, then subject case pronominal SCs sound very odd,

49. The little girl in the front row in the blue dress is her/?she.

SCs must, by definition, refer to the subject. A direct or indirect object can refer to the same referent as the subject, but when they do, they must be reflexive pronouns,

50. I saw myself. (DO is coreferential with the subject.)
51. I told myself a story. (IO is coreferential with the subject.)

However, any NP as a subject complement must be coreferential with the subject. Compare

52. I am a doctor.
- with

53. I need a doctor.

In (52) *a doctor* and *I* must refer to the same individual; in (53), *a doctor* and *I* cannot refer to the same individual.

Only a limited set of verbs can take a subject complement NP -- most typically *be* and *become*.

### Object Complements

Object complements (OCs) (whether adjective phrases or noun phrases) typically immediately follow the DO.

54. I consider Mary a godsend.

(Compare (54) to *I consider Mary wonderful* in which the object complement is an adjective

phrase.)

55. John found those books a useful supplement to the textbook.

(Compare (55) to *John found those books useful* in which the object complement is an adjective phrase.)

OCs typically are not personal pronouns at all. Since an object complement predicates something about the direct object, it is difficult to think of a semantically appropriate sentence with a personal pronoun as an object complement -- *I called Mary her? I found the children them?*

OCs, like SCs, have a forced reference. OCs must refer to the direct object, so in (54) the *godsend* must be *Mary* and in (55) the *a useful supplement to the text* must be *those books*.

### **Determiners**

NPs as determiners are always in the possessive (genitive) case. They are therefore distinct in form.

56. Ben's dog ran away.

57. That man's dog bit my cat.

Like all determiners, there can only be one possessive NP modifying a head noun; they immediately follow any predeterminers and precede the noun and any attributive adjective phrases.

58. All the teacher's rowdy children came over at once.

59. That strange man's fury scared me.

Notice that the attributive adjective phrase in (59) does not modify *fury*, but *man* (the head of the determiner NP.)

### **Appositives**

Appositive NPs must be coreferential (that is, they must refer to the same individual or group).

Typically, there are two units in apposition and they are right next to each other. Occasionally you find the second unit of the apposition postposed, as in *A threatening figure stood at the door, an armed policeman* (= *A threatening figure, an armed policeman, stood at the door.*). There are overt markers of apposition: *namely, in other words, such as* among others.

60. The current governor of Washington, Christine Gregoire, spoke at WSU last year.

In (60), the second appositive is not needed to pick out a possible referent for the first -- instead it is non-restrictive. Since there is only one current governor of Washington, we don't need the name *Gary Locke* to know who the speaker/writer is talking about. Notice that the subject of (60) is *The current governor of Washington, Christine Gregoire*; *The current governor of Washington* is an appositive, as is *Christine Gregoire*. Any time you identify one NP as an appositive, you need to be able find at least one other NP which it is in apposition to (also an appositive). Sometimes, the second or later appositive is needed to pick out the appropriate referent for the first -- it may be restrictive, as in (61). Since it is possible for the speaker to have

more than one sister, *my sister* does not necessarily identify a single unique individual or group -- the addition of *Kate*, however, makes the NP uniquely identifying. Notice that in (55), a comma separates the two appositives, but in (20) no comma separates the two appositives, *my sister* and *Kate*.

61. My sister Kate lives in California.

It is possible to have more than two appositives within a single NP, as in (56).

62. My friend Charley, a teacher, a writer, the former president of Bluefish Lovers of America, lives in a little town in Vermont.

The appositives in (62) are (1) *My friend*, (2) *Charley*, (3) *a teacher*, (4) *a writer*, and (5) *the former president of Bluefish Lovers of America*. The subject of (62) is *My friend Charley, a teacher, a writer, the former president of Bluefish Lovers of America*.

### Adverbials

Adverbial NPs cover a much more restricted semantic range than other adverbials. They can express time and space measures and can be manner adverbials (but only when the head of the NP is *way*).

63. Last week I worked every morning.

64. I walk six miles every day.

65. Those guys finished that job the hard way.

Adverbial NPs differ from other NPs in that they can never be pronouns. The proform must be a proadverbial:

66. Then I worked every morning/\*It I worked every morning.

Adverbials can often be moved around in the clause without changing the meaning of the sentence; adverbial NPs can be moved around similarly as in

67. I worked every morning last week.

68. Last week I worked every morning.

69. Every morning last week I worked.

### V NP Structures

Three different grammatical structures can consist of the surface order V NP:

70. **V DO:** His friends replaced the audience.

71. **V SC:** His friends were the audience.

72. **V Advbl:** His friends departed the following week.

How the different structures be distinguished? (1) Only a transitive clause (a clause with a direct object) can have a passive paraphrase, so we can see that (70) has a passive paraphrase *The audience was replaced by his friends*, but (71) and (72) do not have passive paraphrases since *\*The audience was been by his friends* and *\*The following week was departed by his friends* are ungrammatical. So in (70), the NP following the verb must be a direct object.

(2) Any kind of an object will be in the object case if it is replaced by a personal pronoun. Subject complements can be either subject or object case if a personal pronoun. Adverbial NPs cannot be replaced by personal pronouns at all, but they can be replaced by adverbial proforms (*then, there, thus(ly)*). So if you replace the NP after the verb in (70) it would be *His friends replaced them*, but not *\*His friends replaced they*; in (71) it would be *His friends were them* or *His friends were they*; in (72) it would be *His friends left then*, but not *\*His friends departed it*.

Can you see other ways to distinguish the roles of these NPs?

### V NP NP Structures

Four different grammatical structures can consist of the surface order V NP NP:

73. **V IO DO:** Annie found the boss a replacement for his secretary.

74. **V DO OC:** Annie considered the boss a moron.

75. **V DO Advbl:** Annie found a replacement for the boss's secretary the very next day.

76. **V SC Advbl:** Annie became the boss the very next day.

Can you see parallel ways to distinguish the roles of these NPs?

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### NP Practice

Identify each of the NPs and their functions in the the sentences below.

When I was young, our family had a series of neurotic pets. A memorable example was our grey, formerly feral cat, Simba. Simba had an overwhelming sense of entitlement. Most particularly, he considered the entire block his territory. When I say the entire block, I don't mean just the yards.

An older couple lived next door to us. They had a miniature poodle, Frenchie. Frenchie would leave their house through the small dog door every day and sit on the grass of their front lawn. He would yip at every passing pedestrian.

One day Simba noticed something: he was larger than Frenchie! While this was an unfortunate discovery from Frenchie's point of view, it apparently inspired Simba. Taking off at top speed, Simba aimed right at Frenchie. Frenchie began to yip, but rapidly realized that his high-pitched barking was not going to save him. He skittered to the dog door as fast as his short

legs could carry him. He made it into his house just ahead of Simba. He should have been safe in his own territory, but he wasn't. Simba ran right through the dog door into the house without a second's hesitation. Frenchie ran behind his mistress in hopes that she would intimidate the cat, but Simba continued to chase him, complete unfazed by the presence of the woman.

Frenchie had one advantage: he knew the layout of the house. This knowledge gave him a split second lead as he headed toward the stairs. As Frenchie ran up the stairs, he took a left into the first bedroom and slid under the bed. Simba followed closely, but Frenchie hooked around and ran out the door. His mistress followed them both up the stairs and scooped French in her arms. She slammed the door to the bedroom. She carried Frenchie into the bathroom and closed him in it. Then she returned to her bedroom and looked briefly at Simba. Simba was a big cat, a very big cat. She backed out of the bedroom and shut the door.

She walked over to our house and knocked on the door. I answered and she described what had happened to my mounting horror. I accompanied her to her house and she sent me up to the bedroom. I can only suppose that Simba had realized that he was in trouble, because he was hiding under the bed, just out of my reach. I lay down and crept under the bed and tried to grab him, but he kept edging away from me.

I ran back to my house. I called my younger brother, Joey, and grabbed a broom. We went back next door where I swept the broom under the bed and my brother seized Simba as he ran from his hiding place just ahead of the broom. Joey carried the cat home, while I went to apologize to Frenchie's owner. Frenchie was shaking in her arms. After a series of abject apologies, I backed out of the house in embarrassment.

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