

THEORETICAL ENGLISH GRAMMAR

## LECTURE 8

# THE PHRASE

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# MAIN POINTS TO DISCUSS

1. Definition.
2. Types of phrases. Classifications
3. Syntactic relations.

<https://www.englishgrammar101.com/phrases-and-clauses>

<https://doulkifl.com/introduction-to-phrases/>

# Definition

a phrase is a group of two or more words functioning as a *meaningful* unit within a sentence or clause

a word-combination as any syntactically organized group of syntagmatically connected words

# PHRASE IN ENGLISH

## DEFINITION



- A phrase is a group of words in a sentence that does not have a subject nor a verb. A phrase cannot express a complete thought on its own because it lacks a subject and a verb.
- A phrase is composed of a head, also known as a headword, which defines the grammatical nature the unit will assume and a single or multiple optional modifiers.

# Why predicative phrases cannot be sentences?

**they considered the problem**  
**their consideration of the problem**  
**for them to consider the problem**  
**their considering of the problem**

# TYPES

## Functional classification

Phrases may be built by:

- - **notional phr**

(combining **notional** words) *come home*

- - **formative phr**

(combining **notional and functional** words) *in the corner*

- - **functional phr**

(combining **functional** words) *out of*

# TYPES

## Morphological approach

### 10 Types of Phrases



A phrase can be defined as a set of words, consisting of any number of elements. These elements may include subject-verb combinations, objects, conjunctions, prepositions and more. Some phrases are simple while others are complex. Using the right type of phrase in your writing can bring depth to your work and engage readers on a deeper level.

**Here are 10 basic types of phrases:**

1. Absolute Phrase
2. Appositive Phrase
3. Gerund Phrase
4. Infinitive Phrase
5. Noun Phrase
6. Participial Phrase
7. Prepositional Phrase
8. Adverbial Phrase
9. Verb Phrase
10. Adjective Phrase



## NOMINAL PHR

Noun phr  
*Nick's car*

Adjective phr  
*Nice and quiet*

Adverbial phr  
*Quite well*

## VERBAL PHR

Verb phr  
*Did well*

Infinitive phr  
*To do well*

Gerund phr  
*After doing well*

Participial phr  
*Having done well*

## PREPOSITIONAL PHR

*After lunch*





# Prepositional Phrase List

## BY

by degrees  
by design  
by dint of  
by far  
by force  
by hand  
by heart  
by law  
by marriage  
by means of  
by mistake  
by my watch  
by nature  
by no means

## AT

at a low ebb  
at a moment's  
notice  
at a price  
at a rate of  
at a speed of  
at a standstill  
at all costs  
at all events  
at an advantage  
at any cost  
at any rate  
at night  
at noon

## FOR

for a good cause  
for the benefit (of)  
for a reason  
for a change  
for certain  
for fear of  
for good  
for granted  
for hire  
for lack of  
for life  
for love  
for my  
for real

## IN

in anticipation of  
in arrears  
in essence  
in excess of  
in exchange for  
in existence  
in fact  
in fairness to  
in favor of  
in fear of  
in flames  
in flower  
in confinement  
in operation

## ON

on watch  
on schedule  
on the record  
on the road  
on oath  
on pain of  
on the air  
on balance  
on a diet  
on a journey  
on a trip  
on approval  
on average  
on condition that

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# Absolute phrase

**Definition:** An absolute phrase (nominative absolute) is generally made up of a noun or pronoun with a participial phrase. It modifies the whole sentence, not a single noun, which makes it different from a participial phrase.

Absolute phrases:

***Its branches covered in icicles**, the tall oak stood in our yard.*

*The tall oak, **its branches covered in icicles**, stood in our yard.*

*The tall oak stood in our yard, **its branches covered in icicles**.*

# ABSOLUTE PHRASES

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A phrase that modifies an independent clause (a complete sentence) is called an absolute phrase. It does not modify a particular word or a phrase; it modifies a complete sentence (independent clause) and adds beautiful visuals to it.

## TYPES OF ABSOLUTE PHRASES

**TYPE 1:** These are absolute phrases that give beautiful visuals of the event, making it imagery, adding more details to a sentence. These are very common in fiction writing.

**TYPE 2:** These are absolute phrases that show a cause or a condition.

### Examples:

It was pouring down rain heavily; a random girl stopped at my place asking to stay for a night, **her clothes completely wet, her body hot.**

'adding visuals'

She organized a welcome party and invited all the close friends, **her brother coming from China.**



**Appositive Phrase** – a group of words that renames the noun next to it

A winning prize-fighter, Charles put on his gloves.

Charles, a winning prize-fighter, put on his gloves.

The person competing was Charles, a winning prize-fighter.



# APPOSITIVE PHRASE

## WHAT IS AN APPOSITIVE PHRASE?



- An appositive can be a noun or a pronoun that comes before or follows a noun and describes it further. It's composed of an appositive and the modifiers contained in it.
- Appositive phrases can be categorized into two; essential and non-essential.

## 02 TYPES OF APPOSITIVE PHRASES

# APPOSITIVE PHRASE

An appositive phrase is a group of words that functions as a noun and renames another noun or pronoun in a sentence. It consists of an appositive (a noun) and some modifiers. Appositive phrases can be essential or non-essential to the sentence they are a part of.

## 1. ESSENTIAL APPOSITIVE PHRASE

Essential appositive phrases give essential information and are not separated from the rest of the sentence using commas, and without them, the sentence gives a different meaning.

My favorite book **The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck** got lost last night.

(The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck is the appositive phrase that's identifying the noun phrase My favorite book with a proper name.)

## 1. NON-ESSENTIAL APPOSITIVE PHRASE

Nonessential or nonrestrictive appositive or appositive phrases give extra information (that is not necessary to identify the noun or the pronoun they modify). They are separated from the rest of the sentence using commas

Alex, **his headteacher of the school,** is very strict.

(His headteacher of the school is the nonessential appositive phrase that's renaming the noun 'Alex' with extra information. 'Alex' is a proper noun and does not need any information to be identified. The core sentence is Alex is very strict.)

# Types of phr on the base of place

**regressive**

*a beautiful girl*

**progressive**

*came home*



# The structural theory of word-groups (L.Bloomfield)

distribution and substitution

**endocentric  
(headed)**

**An old man** came in.  
**A man** came in.

**exocentric  
(non-headed)**

**The boy stood** on the  
burning deck.

# The syntactic theory of O.Jespersen

It can be applied to phrases and sentences. The theory of three ranks is based on the principle of determination.

*a furiously<sup>3</sup> barking<sup>2</sup> dog<sup>1</sup>*

1 is independent and is called a primary,

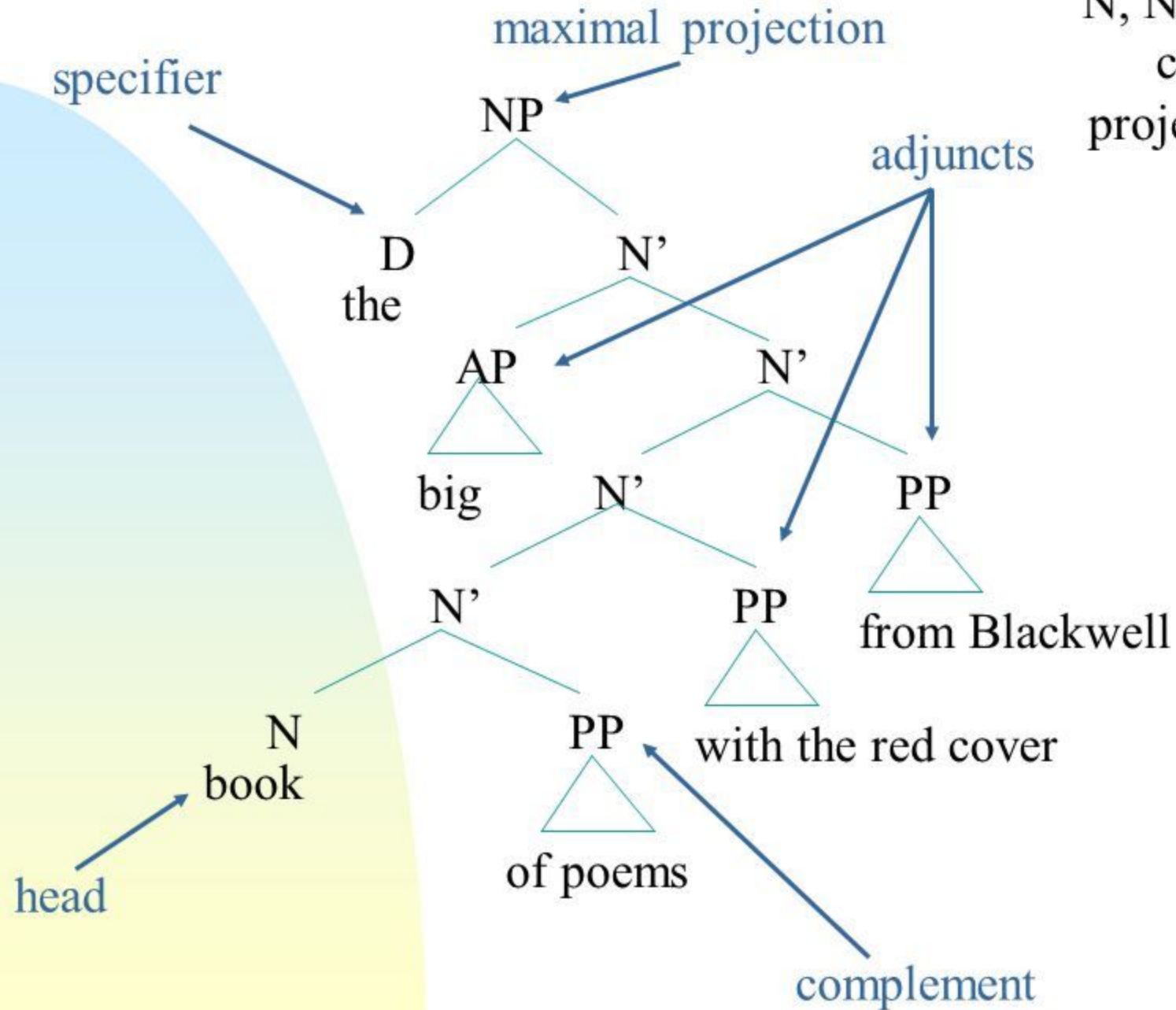
2 modifies 1 and is called a secondary,

3 modifies 2 and is called a tertiary.

A secondary may be joined to a primary in two ways: junction and nexus. These terms are used to differentiate between attributive and predicative relations (relations between the subject and the predicate), or the relations of subordination and interdependence.

# Predictions?

- Propose three different kinds of modifiers:
  - ✚ specifiers
  - ✚ complements
  - ✚ adjuncts
- Is this valid? Are there really three different kinds? Do they have different properties



N, N', ... NP are called the projections of N

Type of Determiner	Example Determiner	Modifier	Noun
Articles	The	old	house
Demonstratives	These	rich	people
Possessive Adjectives	Our	uncle's	car
Quantifiers	A lot of	excited	children
Numbers	Twenty	brick	buildings
Distributives	Both	black	kettles
Interrogative	Which	new	restaurant?

# Syntactic relations

Syntactic relations are syntagmatic relations observed between syntactic units. They can be of three types –

- **coordination,**
- **subordination,**
- **predication.**

# Syntactic relations

## Coordination (SR1)

- syntagmatic relations of **independence**. SR1 can be observed on the phrase, sentence and text levels.

### Symmetric

Symmetric coordination is characterized by complete interchangeability of its elements.

**pens and pencils**

### Asymmetric

Asymmetric coordination occurs when the position of elements is fixed.

**ladies and gentlemen**



# Coordination (SR1)



Forms of connection within SR1 may be:

copulative

you **and** me

disjunctive

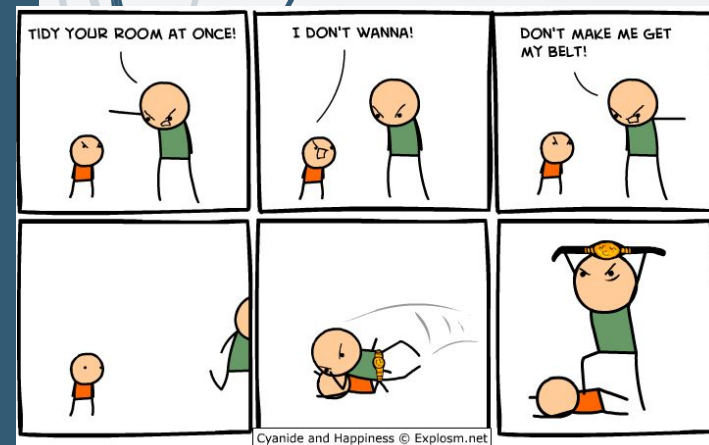
you **or** me

adversative

strict **but** just

causative-consecutive

so



# Coordination (SR1)

**Syndetic**

conjunction

*Yes and no*

**Asyndetic**

No conjunction

*Blue, yellow, red*

# Subordination (SR2)

Subordination (SR2) – syntagmatic relations of dependence.

SR2 are established between the constituents of different linguistic rank. They are observed on the phrase and sentence level. Subordination may be of three different kinds:

- ★ **adverbial** (*to speak slowly*),
  - ★ **objective** (*to see a house*)
  - ★ **attributive** (*a beautiful flower*).

Forms of subordination may also be different:

- ❑ **agreement** (*this book – these books*),
- ❑ **government** (*help us*),
- ❑ **adjournment** (*the use of modifying particles just, only, even, etc.*)
- ❑ **enclosure** (*the use of modal words and their equivalents really, after all, etc.*)

# Predication (SR3)


**Predication (SR3) – syntagmatic relations of interdependence.**

**Predication may be of two kinds:**

**primary (sentence level)**

**secondary (phrase level)**

**I saw you dancing.**



# Valency

Obligatory

***Depend on***

and

optional

***stay in bed, here...***