

# **Basic concepts of syntax**

Holger Diessel  
[holger.diessel@uni-jena.de](mailto:holger.diessel@uni-jena.de)

# Basic concepts

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Syntax: The study of how sentences are composed.

Syntactic analysis involves three basic concepts:

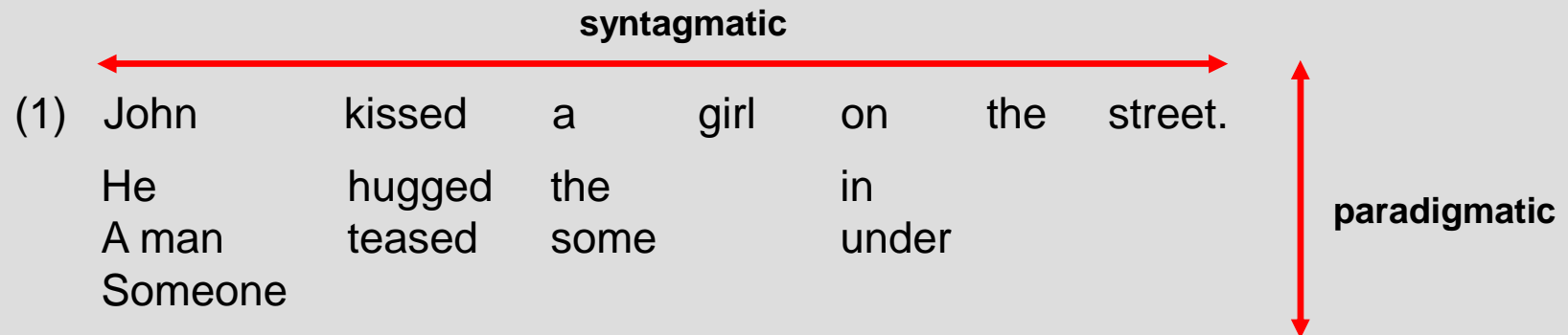
- |                               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Types of words              | Constituents/phrases |
| • Parts of sentences          | Parts-of-speech      |
| • Functions of sentence parts | Syntactic functions  |

# Basic concepts

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Linguistic structure can be analyzed along two dimensions:

- syntagmatic
- paradigmatic



# **Word classes**

**[parts-of-speech]**

**[lexical categories]**

# Word classes

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Criteria defining word classes:

- ☐ semantic
- ☐ morphological
- ☐ distributional

Word classes tend to have particular meanings, but there is no direct correspondence between meaning and grammatical category:

Class	Typical
Noun	

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Verb		

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The same 'concept' can be expressed by different categories in different languages:

- Ojibwa**
- (1) a. *N-ginooz.*  
1sg-tall  
'I am tall.'
- b. *N-nagam.*  
1sg-sing  
'I am singing.'

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Open class	Symbol	Examples
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Determiner	Det	<i>the, a, some, which, that, my, all</i>

# Word classes

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Word classes are language specific.

English (Europe)
nouns
pronouns
determiners
verbs
adjectives
adverbs
prepositions
auxiliaries
interjections

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English (Europe)	Wolof (Africa)	Chickasaw (North America)	Zapotec (Mesoamerica)	Warlpiri (Australia)
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pronouns	pronouns	pronouns	pronouns	pronouns
determiners	determiners	---	---	determiners
verbs	verbs	verbs	verbs	verbs
adjectives	---	---	adjectives	---
adverbs	adverbs	---	adverbs	---
prepositions	prepositions	---	prepositions	---
auxiliaries	---	---	---	auxiliaries
interjections	interjections	interjections	interjections	interjections

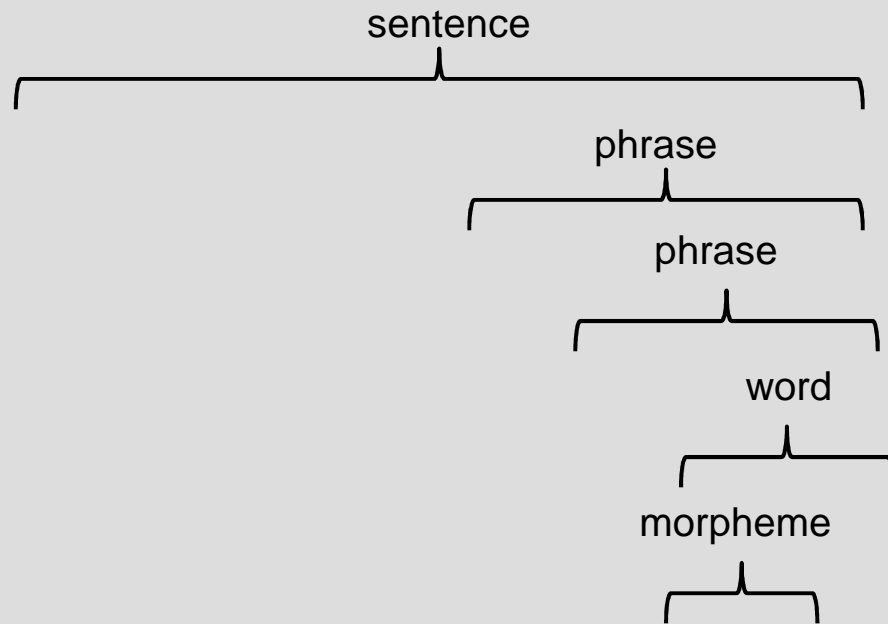
# **Constituents**

**[phrasal categories]**

# Constituents

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Sentences are build up from smaller parts (i.e. constituents):



(1) The man talk-ed to the manag-er.

# Constituents

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Category	Label	Examples
		my uncle, a busy road, dangerous things



# Constituents

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Category	Label	Examples
Noun phrase	NP	my uncle, a busy road, dangerous things

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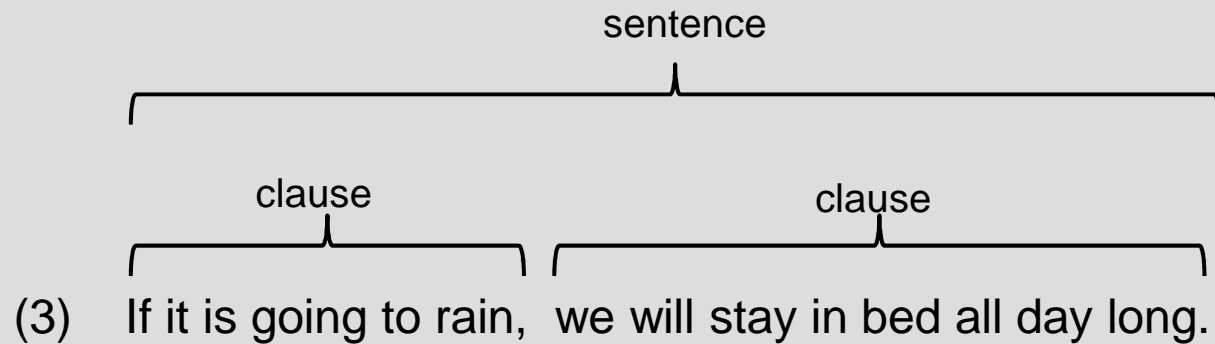
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(1) We left Jena after the game.

Simple sentence

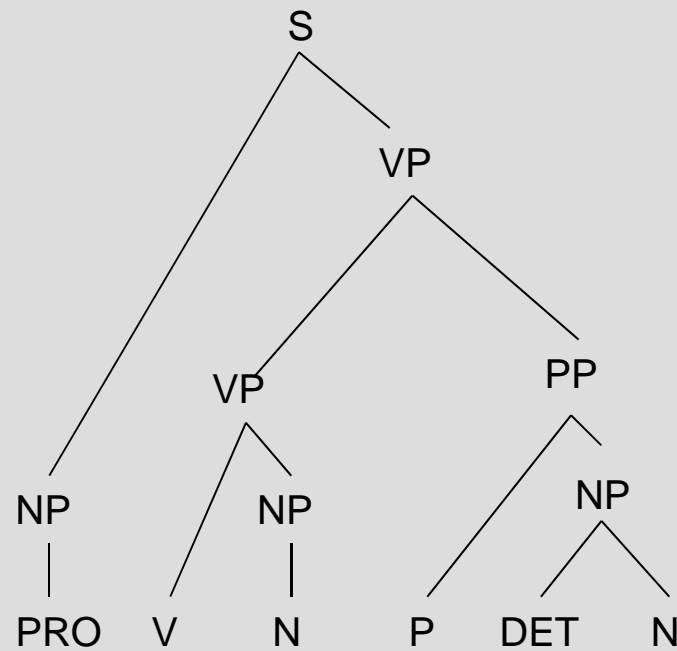
(2) We left Jena after the game ended.

Complex sentence



# Constituents

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(1) We left Jena after the game.

# **Syntactic functions**

**[grammatical relations]**

# Syntactic functions

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Category	Label	Examples
		<b>My father</b> left Jena.

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Subject	SUBJ	<b>My father</b> left Jena.

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**Example**

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