

FURTHER READING

- Grimshaw, Jane (1990) *Argument Structure*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
 Harley, Heidi (2006) *English Words: A Linguistic Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
 Katamba, Francis (2004) *English Words*. New York: Routledge.
 Levin, Beth (1993) *English Verb Classes and Alternations: A Preliminary Investigation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 Williams, Edwin (1983) Semantic vs. syntactic categories. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 6, 423–46.

GENERAL PROBLEM SETS

1. PART OF SPEECH 1⁹

[Application of Skills; Basic]

Identify the main parts of speech (i.e., Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives/Adverbs, and Prepositions) in the following sentences. Treat hyphenated words as single words:

- The old rusty pot-belly stove has been replaced.
- The red-haired assistant put the vital documents through the new efficient shredder.
- The large evil leathery alligator complained to his aging keeper about his extremely unattractive description.
- I've just eaten the last piece of chocolate cake.

2. NOOTKA

[Application of Skills; Intermediate]

Consider the following data from Nootka (data from Sapir and Swadesh 1939), a language spoken in British Columbia, Canada and answer the questions that follow the grey text box.

- Mamu:k-ma qu:ʔas-ʔi.
 working-PRES man-DEF
 "The man is working."

- Qu:ʔas-ma mamu:k-ʔi.
 man-PRES working-DEF
 "The working one is a man."

(The : mark indicates a long vowel. ʔ is a glottal stop. PRES in the second line means "present tense," DEF means "definite determiner" (the).)

Reading Foreign Language Examples

There are three parts to most foreign language examples used in syntax. Look at the sentences above. The first line is the sentence or phrase in the language under consideration. The second line, which is the most important for our purposes, contains a word-by-word translation of the sentence. Finally, there is a colloquial English translation. The second line, called the *gloss*, is the most useful if you don't speak the language. It shows you the order of elements in the sentence. *When reading about the syntax of foreign languages, concentrate on the order of elements in this second line.*

Questions about Nootka:

- In sentence a, is *Qu:ʔas* functioning as a verb or a noun?
- In sentence a, is *Mamu:k* functioning as a verb or a noun?
- In sentence b, is *Qu:ʔas* a verb or a noun?
- In sentence b, is *Mamu:k* a verb or a noun?
- What criteria did you use to tell what is a noun in Nootka and what is a verb?
- How does this data support the idea that there are no semantic criteria involved in determining the part of speech?

3. GENDER NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

[Creative and Critical Thinking; Basic]

Most standard varieties of English don't have a gender-neutral singular pronoun that can refer to humans (other than the very awkward "one"). There have been numerous attempts to introduce gender-neutral singular human pronouns into English. The following list is a subset of the ones found on John Chao's gender neutral pronoun FAQ¹⁰:

ae, ar, co, e, em, ens, en, es, et, ey, fn, ha, hann, he'er, heesh, heir, hem, her'n, herim, herm, hes, hesh, heshe, hey, hez, hi, himer, hir, hiren, hires, hirm, his'er, his'n, hisher, hizer, ho, hom, hse, hymer, im, ip, ir, iro, jhe, le, lem, na, ne, ner, nim,

⁹ Problem set contributed by Sheila Dooley-Collberg.

¹⁰ <http://www.aetherlumina.com/gnp/index.html>

on, per, po, rim, s/he, sap, se, sem, ser, sheehy, shem, shey, shim, sie, sim, ta, tem, term, tey, thim, thon, uh, ve, vim, vir, vis, xe, z, ze, zie, zim, zir.

None of these have caught on. Instead, the otherwise plural *they/them/their/themselves* is usually felt to be more natural by native speakers. Why have the above forms not caught on, but instead we have co-opted a plural pronoun for this usage?

4. FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES

[Application of Skills; Basic]

The following is an extract from the preface to Captain Grose's *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1811) (from the open source Gutenberg project):

The propriety of introducing the university slang will be readily admitted; it is not less curious than that of the College in the Old Bailey, and is less generally understood. When the number and accuracy of our additions are compared with the price of the volume, we have no doubt that its editors will meet with the encouragement that is due to learning, modesty, and virtue.

For every word in this paragraph identify its part of speech, and mark whether part of speech is a lexical or functional part of speech and whether the part of speech is open or closed.

5. PART OF SPEECH 2

[Application of Skills; Intermediate]

Consider the following selection from *Jabberwocky*, a poem by Lewis Carroll (From *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, 1872):

Twas brillig and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought –
So rested he by the tumtum tree
And stood a while in thought.

And as in uffish thought he stood
The Jabberwock with eyes of flame,
Came whiffing through the tulgey wood,
and burbled as it came.

For each underlined word, indicate its part of speech (word class), and for Ns, Vs, Adjs, Advs, explain the *distributional* criteria by which you came up with that classification. If the item is a closed class part of speech, indicate that. Do not try to use a dictionary. Most of these words are nonsense words. You will need to figure out what part of speech they are based upon what suffixes and prefixes they take, along with where they appear relative to other words. Capitalization and punctuation should *not* be used as a guide to part of speech.

6. SUBCATEGORIES OF NOUNS

[Application of Knowledge; Basic]

For each of the nouns below put a + sign in the box under the features that they have. Note that some nouns might have a plus value for more than one feature. The first one is done for you. Do not mark the minus (-) values, or the values for which the word is not specified; mark only the plus values!

Noun	Plural	Count	Proper	Pronoun	Anaphor
Cats	+	+			
Milk					
New York					
They					
People					
Language					
Printer					
Himself					
Wind					
Lightbulb					

7. SUBCATEGORIES OF VERBS

[Application of Knowledge; Intermediate]

For each of the verbs below, list whether they are intransitive, transitive or ditransitive and list which features they take (see the list in (32) as an example). In some cases they may allow more than one feature. E.g., the verb *eat* is both [NP __ NP] and [NP ____]. Give an example for each feature: