The Syntax of Greek and Latin

Classics Faculty, University of Cambridge

Jo Willmott, Lent 2013

The Syntax of Greek and Latin 2: Predication and syntactic structure

1 Predication

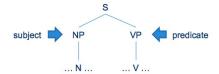
- Origins in Aristotelian logic (κατηγορεῖν)
- · Most basic syntactic relation within each clause
 - i.e. between **subject** and **predicate** (κατηγόρημα)
- · Predicate expresses that which is 'said of' (predicated of) the subject

The girls play football

- NB two uses of predicate:
 - in **syntax**: predicate = the clause apart from its subject
 - in semantics (predicate-argument structure):
 predicate = (usually) a verb which requires a set of arguments

2 Basic structure of a clause

- Minimally subject consists of a noun or pronoun (N) ...
- ... but may also contain other items relating to it (e.g. demonstratives, adjectives, etc)
- ... altogether making a noun phrase (NP)
- Minimally a predicate consists of a verb (V) ...
- ... but may also contain other items relating to it (e.g. adverbs, direct object, indirect object, etc)
- ... altogether making a verb phrase (VP)
- So the basic structure of a sentence (S) is:



- Subject = the NP that stands outside the predicate
- Syntactic predicate = everything else
- Usually predicate = VP (except in verbless copula sentences)

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3 Immediate Constituent Analysis

- Functional labels:
 - Subject (S)

- Direct Object (DO)

Verb (V)

- Adverb (Adv)

- · Units may be built up:
 - S+V: The dog + is running
 - S+V+DO: The man + saw + a cow
 - S+V+DO+IDO: The man + gave + a book + to John
 - S+V+A: The rose + smells + sweet
- · Languages vary in how they mark the different functions: word order, morphology
- · Japanese marked by special particles

Kodomo ga tomodachi no inu ni mizu o yaru child SUBJ friend GEN dog IDO water DO gives 'The child gives water to the friend's dog'

4 Constituency analysis

- Group together units within sentence:
 - Hilary couldn't open the window

Hilary = noun phrase (NP), couldn't open = verb phrase (VP),

the window = noun phrase (NP)

• Phrases can be seen of as extensions of a central element (head)

- cars

the big cars

big cars

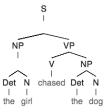
- all the big cars in the garage
- Phrases combine into clauses, which may combine into sentences:
 - 'Hilary opened the window, and David opened the doors'
- Identify the major components:
 - (The girl)(chased the dog)
 - (The girl)(chased (the dog))
 - ((The) (girl))(chased ((the)(dog)))

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• Can be represented by tree diagram (online syntax tree generator: http://mshang.ca/syntree/)



· Leads to a grammar of possible combinations of phrases:

$$S \rightarrow V + NP$$
: Leave the meat $NP \rightarrow Art + N$: the meat

$$S \rightarrow V + NP + PP$$
: Leave the meat in the kitchen $NP \rightarrow Det + N + PP$: the meat in the kitchen

$$PP \rightarrow P + NP$$
: in the kitchen

• **NB** S → S: complex constructions (usually involving complementiser (C))

5 Phrase structure: further details

- Phrases (NP, VP etc.) have heads:
 - the element without which the phrase would not exist (N in NP, V in VP, P in PP etc.)
 - determines the type of phrase (head is $N \Rightarrow NP$, head is $V \Rightarrow VP$)

- · Specific heads take complements
- Complements correspond syntactically to the *obligatory* participants in the scenes denoted (semantic arguments):

N:	$[Heluetiorum]_{agent}iniuria[Romanorum]_{patient}$	WRONG (h) (r)
V:	pro cecidit	FALL (x)
	pro [mundum] gubernat	CONTROL (x) (m)
	pro [Aeduos] [frumentum] flagitabat	DEMAND (x) (f) (a)
	pro [consilia] [aegrotis] damus	GIVE (x) (c) (a)
	pro dixit [aquam esse initium rerum]	SAY (x) (S)
P:	in [hortum]	INTO (h)
	in [horto]	IN (h)

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- Heads **govern** their complements and assign a 'mark' to them to indicate this
- Nouns assign genitive case to their subjective/objective complements
- Verbs assign a variety of cases, typically accusative to direct object, dative to indirect object
- Prepositions assign cases to their complements
- Verbs assign properties to complement clauses (e.g. non-finiteness after dico)
- Conjunctions may assign properties to complement clauses (e.g. subjunctive after ut)
- · Heads may be modified by adjuncts
 - Correspond syntactically to any *optional* elements in the real-world scenes [NP] ille magnanimus \underline{uir} quem nouisti] [VP] heri in foro $\underline{cecidit}$
 - Where possible, adjuncts agree (are in concord) with all possible grammatical categories on the heads which they modify; agreement/concord signals modification
- **Specifiers** are pronominal items like articles, demonstratives, possessives
 - · Like adjuncts they modify the head
 - Unlike adjuncts there can be at most one in each phrase

The tall, interesting woman on the train

- * The this tall interesting woman on the train
- * The his woman on the train

The inherent vice of capitalism

