

# 8

## SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

- 1 Analyse the following sentences syntactically. The clause elements that contain more than one word have been bracketed.
  - a. [Until he was four year old,] [James Henry Trotter] had [a happy life]. A- S-V-dO
  - b. He lived peacefully [with his mother and father]. S-V-A-A
  - c. There were [plenty of other children] there. aS-V-S-A
  - d. [Roald Dahl] was born [in 1916]. S-V-A
  - e. [His parents] were Norwegian. S-V-sP
  - f. [Roald Dahl's many books] [are read] [by children all over the world]. S-V-A
  - g. [Quentin Blake] is [a well-known illustrator]. S-V-sP
  - h. He illustrated [a number of Roald Dahl's books] [during the author's lifetime]. S-V-dO-A
  
- 2 Analyse the following sentences and explain the difference in form and meaning between the members of each pair.
  - a.
    - 1 The plane left early.
    - 2 The early plane left.

The clause structure of sentence (a1) is subject-verbal-adverbial, whereas the clause structure of sentence (a2) is subject-verbal. The adverb “early” functions as adverbial in (a1). In (a2) “early” is an adjective that functions as a premodifier in the noun phrase

that functions as subject. Sentence (a1) focuses on the time the plane left. Sentence (a2) focuses on the fact that the plane departed.

- b. 1 Sandra was a vegetarian.

- 2 Sandra married a vegetarian.

The difference lies in the elements that function as verbals, namely the verbs “was” (linking verb) and “married”. The clause elements in (b1) are subject-verbal-subject predicative. In (b2) the clause elements are subject-verbal-direct object. In other words, the noun phrase “a vegetarian” functions as subject predicative in (b1) and direct object in (b2). This means that “a vegetarian” is a description of Sandra in sentence (b1) and a description of the person she married in sentence (b2).

- c. 1 They found Mma Ramotswe a rather colourful woman.

- 2 They found Mma Ramotswe a rather colourful outfit.

In these sentences there is a lexical difference between the nouns “woman” and “outfit”. The most likely interpretation of sentence (c1) is that their impression of Mma Ramotswe was that she was a rather colourful woman, in which case the clause structure is subject-verbal-direct object-object predicative. Sentence (c2) means that they helped Mma Ramotswe finding something to wear. The sentence structure of (c2) is subject-verbal-indirect object-direct object. Sentence (c1) could have the same clause structure as (c2) if the meaning is that Mma Ramotswe was looking for a worker, housemaid, girlfriend or the like, and they found one for her.

- d. 1 I used to open the door with a key card.

- 2 I used a key card to open the door.

In sentence (d1) the verbal is “used to open”. This is followed by a direct object (“the door”) and a circumstantial adverbial (“with a key card”). In (d2) the verbal in the main clause is “used”. The infinitive clause “to open the door” functions as a circumstantial adverbial (purpose). Sentence (d1) means that a key card was regularly used in the past, while (d2) can be about a specific occasion.

- e. 1 These people are now running the country.

- 2 These people are now running around the country.

On the surface the difference between the sentences is the preposition “around”, which occurs only in sentence (e2). The verb “run” is a transitive verb in (e1), which gives the clause pattern S-V-dO. In sentence (e2) the verb “run” is intransitive, and the clause pattern of sentence (e2) is S-V-A. Sentence (e1) means that these people

are now governing the country, whereas sentence (e2) refers to some people that are now taking part in marathon races or the like at different places around the country.

3 Read the following text and answer the questions below:

An unfinished self-portrait by the Dutch master Rembrandt has been discovered under another painting using advanced scientific techniques. No detail is visible in the face, but experts say it matches a reproductive print from 1633 that has an inscription saying it is by Rembrandt. X-ray scanning was used to detect the pigments in hidden layers of paint. A leading expert on Rembrandt said he was convinced of its authenticity based on similarities in painting style. The unfinished self-portrait was discovered under another panel said to be by the master – “Old Man with a Beard”.

- a. Identify the phrase that functions as verbal in the first sentence (line 1–2).  
has been discovered
  - b. Analyse the underlined part of the second sentence.  
subject (No detail) – verbal (is) – subject predicative (visible) – adverbial (in the face).
  - c. What is the syntactic function of the underlined clause *to detect ... paint*?  
adverbial (circumstantial)
  - d. Analyse the underlined part of the last sentence.  
subject (The unfinished self-portrait) – verbal (was discovered) – adverbial (under another panel).
- 4 Notes based on searches in the Corpus of Contemporary American English at <http://corpus.byu.edu/> as per June 2018, after clicking on “sample” to get examples from a broader variety of text types than we would get simply by looking at those hits that occurred first.
- a. Look up the word *told*. Among the first 25–30 hits, find two sentences where *told* is followed by an indirect object, and two where *been told* has a subject that refers to the recipient of the message.

For instance:

Bandar told him (iO) his partner was still up on the Monument.

I'd told myself (iO) something that sounded good at the time.

...**they** were told which condition would be operative.

I mean **he** hasn't been talked to by everyone and told what to say...

- b. Search for *told a \**. Among the phrases listed for this pattern, are there any where *a\** does not seem to represent an indirect object? If so, which ones?

For instance *told a story, told a lie, told a joke*. Also phrases such as *told a little..., told a long..., told a good..., told a sad..., etc.*

- c. Search for *keeping*. Study the first 20 hits closely. What are the grammatical patterns *keeping* occurs in? (Compare your findings to the examples in section 8.5.)

For instance:

S-V-dO (*keeping those mittens*)

S-V-dO-A (*keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius*)

S-V-sP (*keeping trim*)

S-V-do-oP (*keeping his mouth shut*)

- d. Look at the two expressions *subject to* and *object of*. Which one is more common in COCA? How would you translate the two expressions into Norwegian based on the first 10 examples of each in the corpus?

The expression *subject to* is more common.

Examples of translations of *subject to*:

utsatt for, rammet av, gjenstand for, under forutsetning av, ...

Examples of translations of *object of*:

Hensikt med, gjenstand for, mål for, årsak til ...