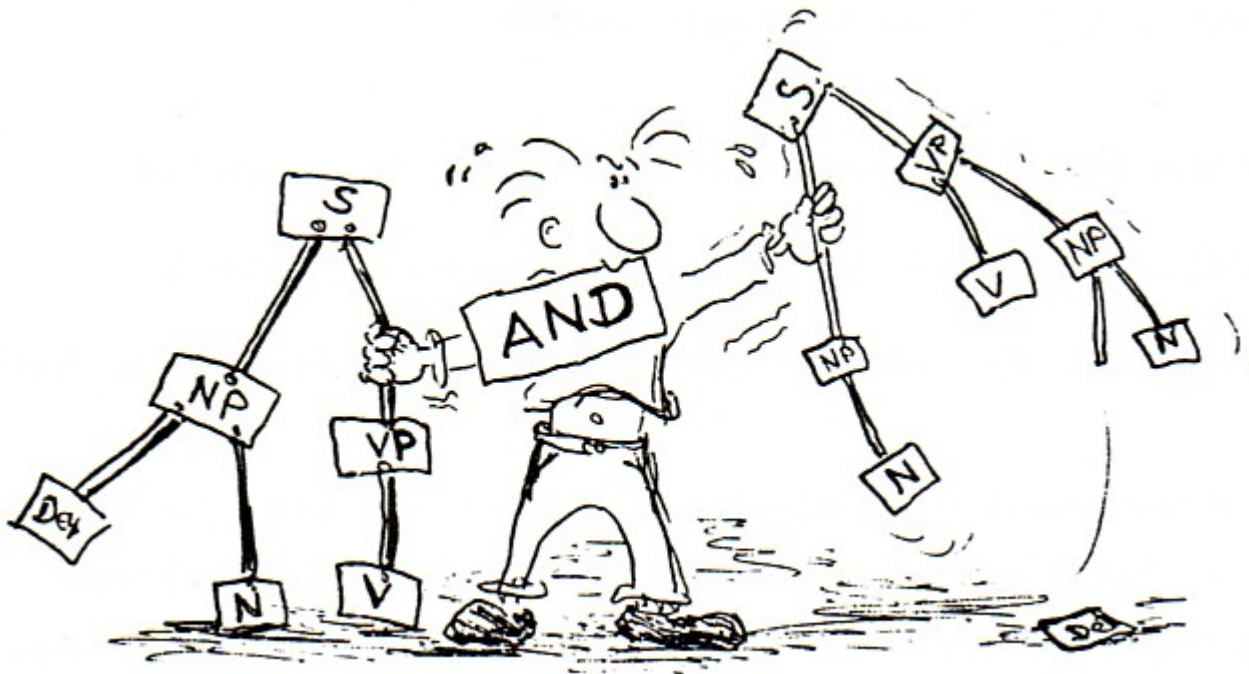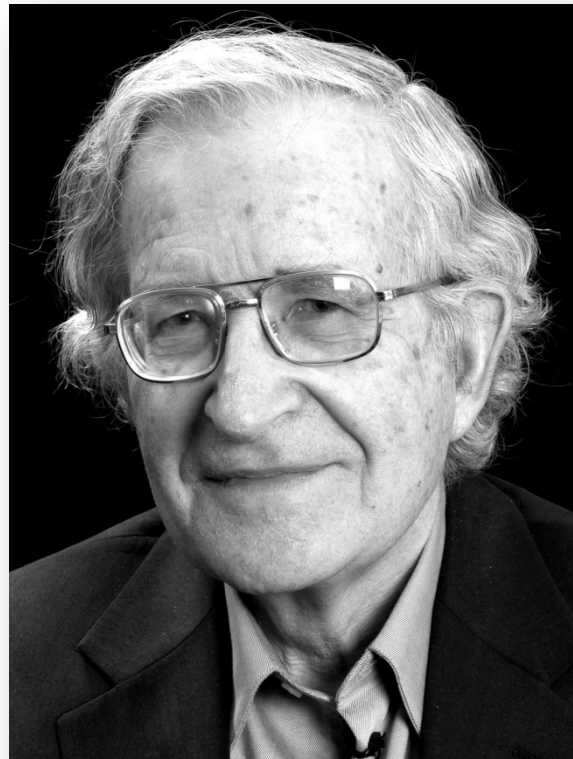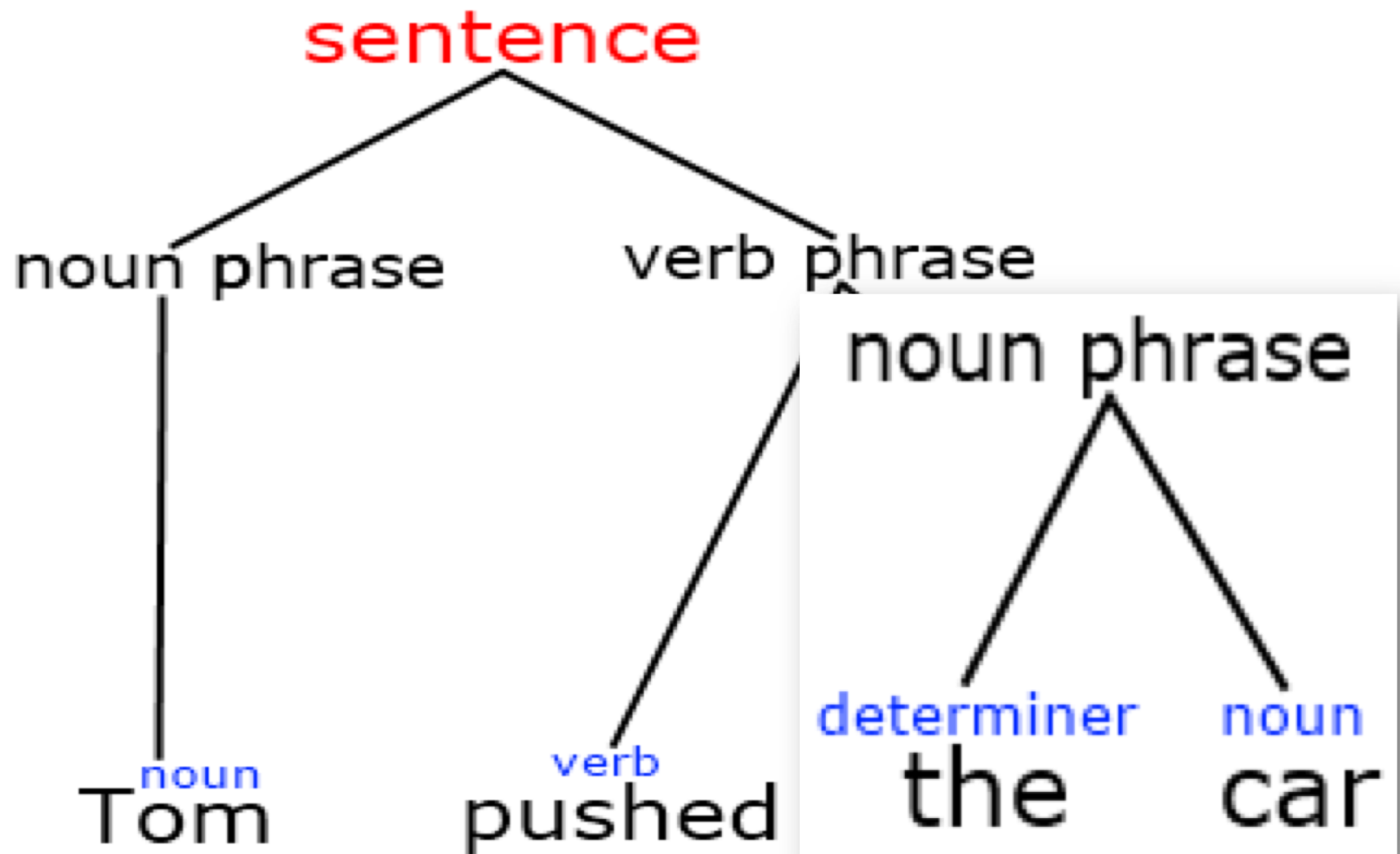# SYNTAX

Peter Bojo

□ Syntax is a subdiscipline of linguistics dealing with higher units of grammar, namely phrases, clauses, and sentences

- Noam Chomsky

- Phrase structure grammar – grammar defined by phrase structure rules
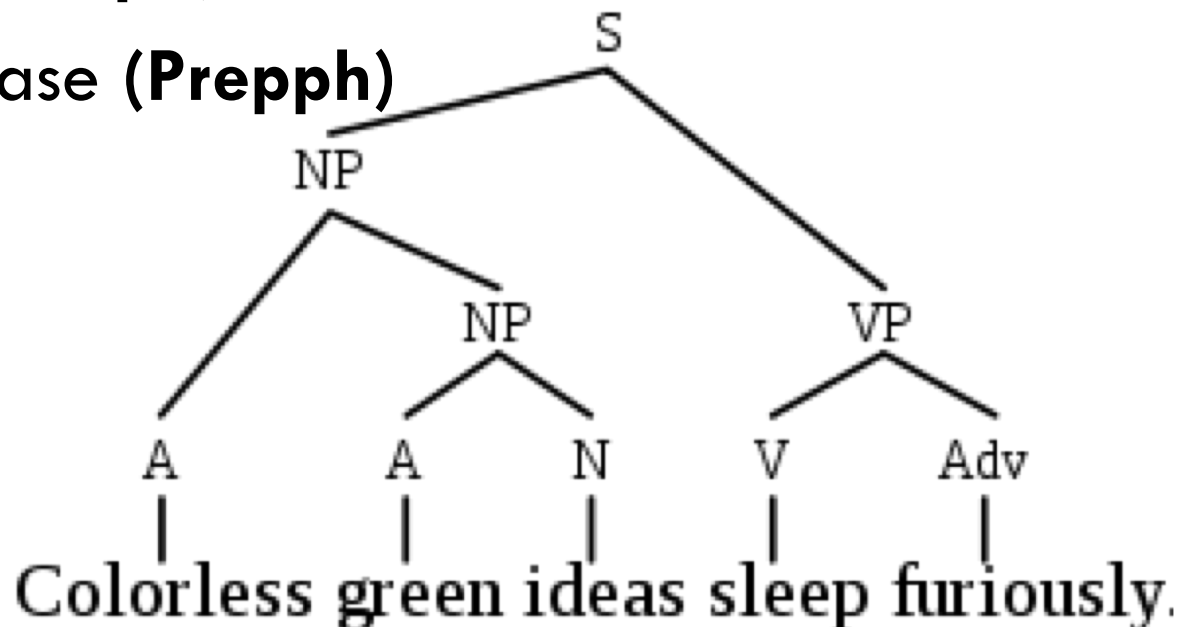
Phrases

Types of phrases

- Noun phrase **(Nph)**
- Verb phrase **(Vph)**
- Adjective phrase **(Adjph)**
- Adverb phrase **(Advph)**
- Prepositional phrase **(Prepph)**

S
NP
NP   VP
A   A   N   V   Adv
Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.

Noun Phrases

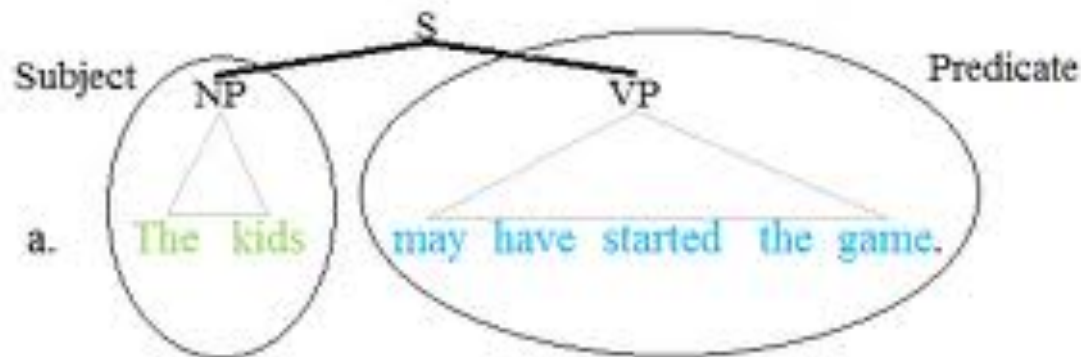- Noun as its head

- The head can be replaced by a determiner (*the, my..etc*)

- Accompanied by a modifier – describing what a phrase refer to *(the young boy in the shop)*

- Head noun can be followed by a postmodifier (called qualifier or complement), mostly by that clause, or infinitive to clause: *e.g. The fact that he cannot speak English*, *He didn´t show his ability to speak a foreign language*
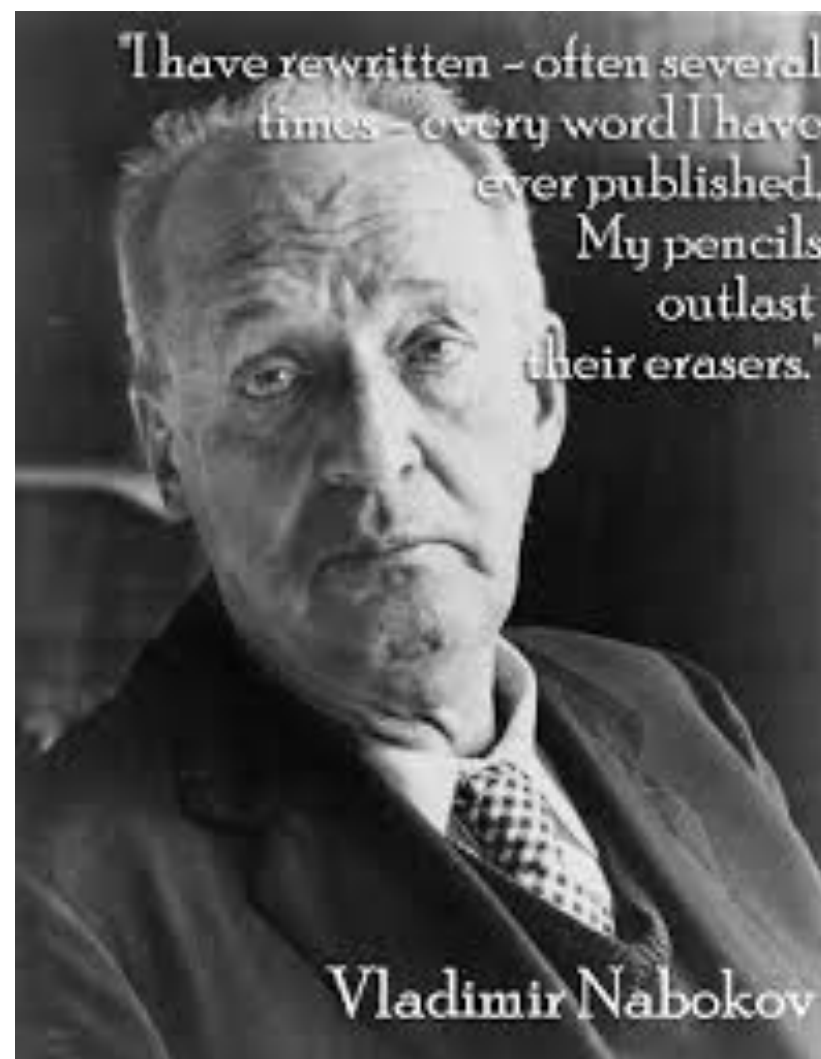
Verb Phrase

□ Full (main) verb as its head

□ Used independently or preceded by auxiliary verbs

□ The main forms of the verb phrases are simple, perfect, progressive, perfect + progressive, perfect + passive, progressive + passive

- Simple verb phrase
- Perfect verb phrase
- Progressive verb phrase
- Passive verb phrase
- Perfect + progressive
- Perfect + passive
- Progressive + passive

- Define verb phrases in the quotations

"I have rewritten – often several times – every word I have ever published. My pencils outlast their erasers."

Vladimir Nabokov

Adjective phrase

- Consist of an adjective as a head
- A modifier referring to the degree of the quality expressed by the adjective can precede or follow it. *(e.g. incredibly beautiful, good enough)*
- Adjective phrases can be followed by a complement: *(e.g. difficult to explain)*

1. A reporter from the New York Times questioned the president.

noun   adjective phrase

2. The painter is a person of immense talent.

noun   adjective phrase

Adverb phrases

- The _____ adverb
- Ma_____ precede or
  fol_____
- _E.g._____
- Ca_____ _e.g. so rapidly_
  _(th_____

1. Baseball has become very popular <u>in our town</u>.

               Adverb phrase (where?)

2. The flowers will bloom <u>in spring</u>.

               Adverb phrase (when?)

3. Helen did not go to school <u>on account of the bad weather</u>.

               Adverb phrase (why?)

4. My brother spoke <u>in a condescending manner</u>.

               Adverb phrase (how?)

5. <u>For many years</u>, she has been waiting for this opportunity.
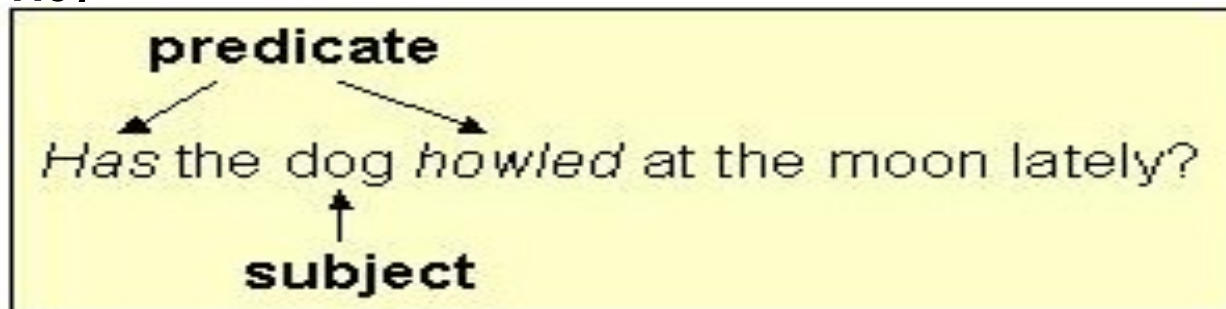
Adverb phrase (to what extent)

Prepositional phrase

- Usually consists of a preposition which is followed by a noun phrase: e.g. to me, in the afternoon

- They have two main syntactic roles:

     1. adverbials e.g. *in the garden* in *We are working in the garden.*

     2. modifiers e.g. *of Britain* in *I´ve bought a tourist guide of Britain*

Clauses

- Difference between a phrase and a clause

- Any group of words which is grammatically equivalent to a single word and which does not have its own subject and predicate is called a phrase

- A group of words with its own *subject and predicate*, if it is included in a larger sentence, is a clause (Lyons)

predicate

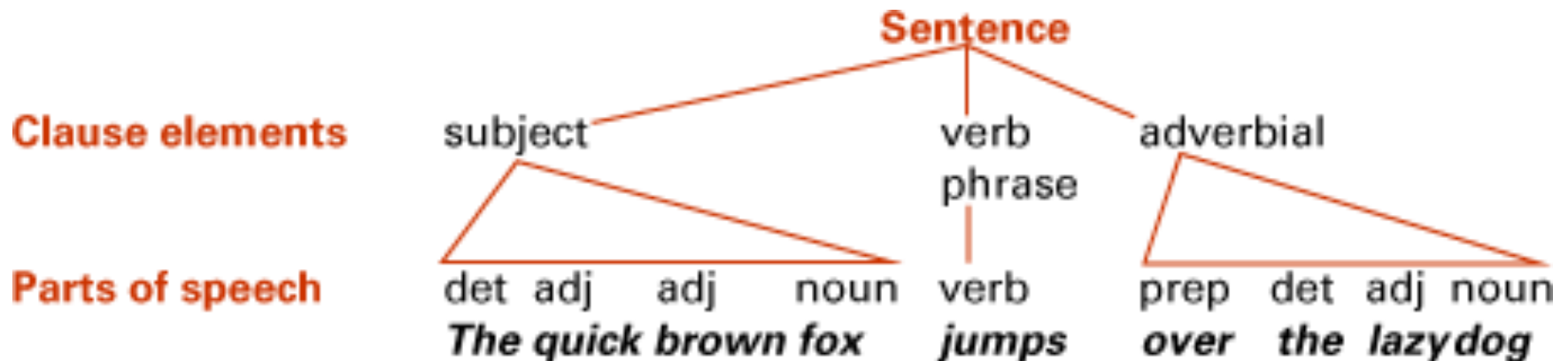*Has* the dog *howled* at the moon lately?

subject

Clause elements

- Subject
- Predicate
- Object
- Complement
- adverbial

Subject

□ Represents the main participant in the action or state expressed by the verb

Predicate

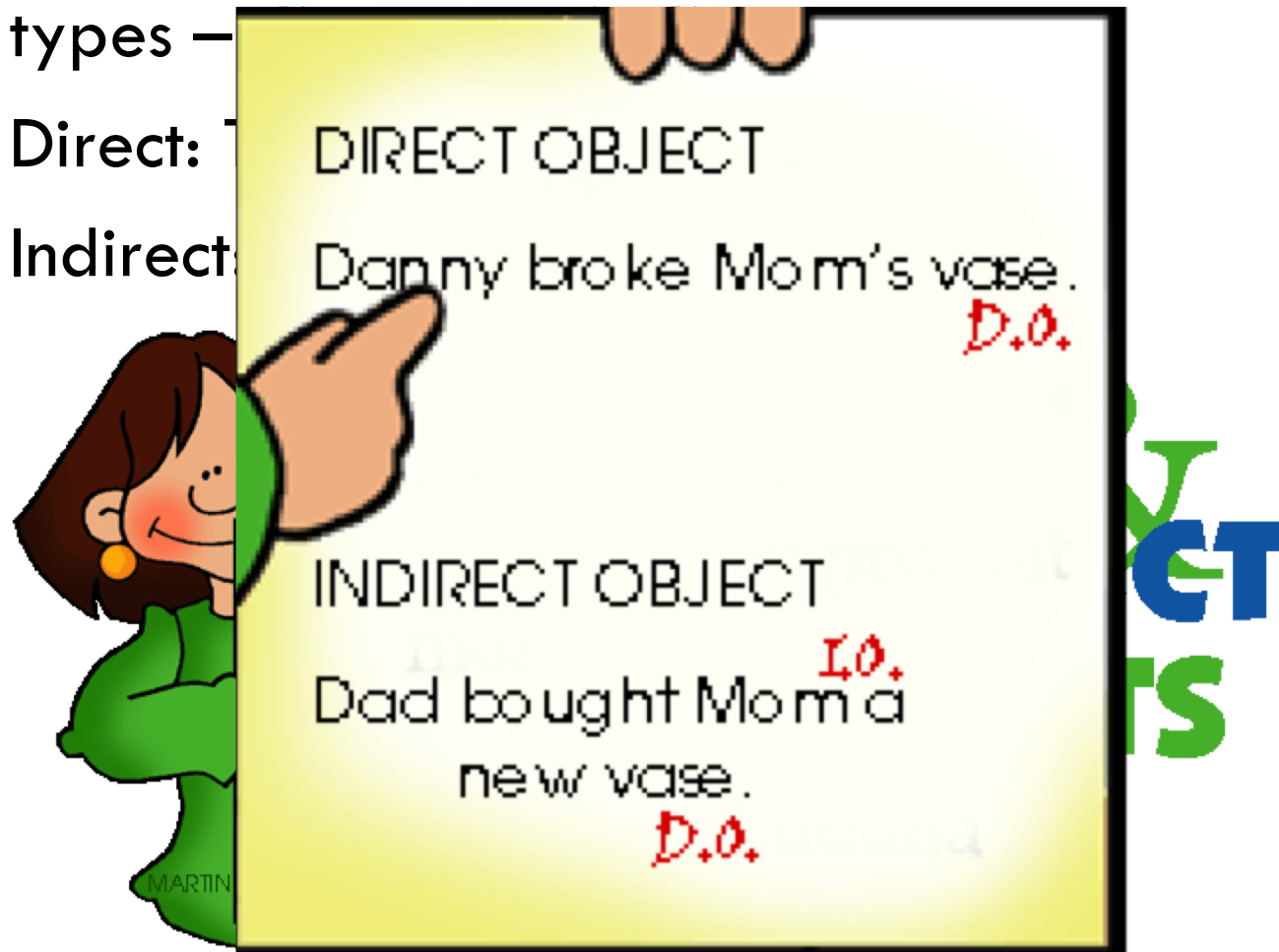□ Expresses the action or state to which other elements relate

Object

- A noun phrase occurring only with transitive verbs. 2 types –
- Direct:
- Indirect

DIRECT OBJECT

Danny broke Mom's vase.
D.O.

INDIRECT OBJECT
I.O.
Dad bought Mom a
new vase.
D.O.

MARTIN

Complement

- An adjective phrase, or a noun phrase

- 2 types – **Subject complement**, **Object complement**

- Subject Complement – Your friend *is very nice*

- They elected him *the president*

My favorite food is **yogurt**.
↑
single-word noun

My favorite exercise is **jogging**.
↑
gerund

My favorite exercise is **jogging around the block**.
↑
gerund phrase

Adverbial

- Usually completes the meaning of the verb

- Place, time manner.. etc

- Obligatory or optional

- Obligatory – cannot be omitted: e.g. *to Russia* in The president went *to Russia*

- Optional: can be omitted: e.g. *last year* in We were here, with her mother, *last year*.

Clause Patterns

- S + V   *His friend works*
- S + V + Od   *The director meets the rules*
- S + V + Cs   *My father is very old*
- S + V + Adv   *The book is on the table*
- S + V + Oi + Od   *The bank lends him much money*
- S + V + Od + Co   *They made him the king*
- S + V + Od + Adv   *He put the book on the table*

- She hid the letter hastily   SVOA
- Tom hired a car   SVO
- The concert was marvelous   SVsC
- They appointed her First Secretary   SVOoC
- I saw her in the street   SVOA
- I have sent them an invitation   SViOdO
- I will do it tomorrow   SVOA
- She made him furious   SVOoC

Sentence

- *„An independent linguistic form that is not included in any larger form".* (Bloomfield)

- *„An elementary speech utterance, through which teh speaker (writer) reacts to some reality, concrete or abstract, and which in its formal character appears to realize grammatical possibilities of the respective language and to be subjectively, that is, from the point of view of the speaker (writer), complete."* (Mathesius)

Functional categorization of sentences

- Declarative – used to make statements: *I´m reading the book*

- Interogative – used to ask questions: *Are you ready?*

- Imperative – used to issue commands: *Go to school!*

- Exclamative – used to express emotions: *What a beautiful car.*

Formal categorization of sentences

- Simple sentences: typically contain one subject and one predicate: *The students can hear the teacher.*

- Multiple sentences: consists of two or more clauses: 2 types: **compound and complex**

- **1. Compound**: constituent clauses are grammatically coordinate (coordinating conjunction – but, and..etc) – *The teacher is speaking and the students are listening.*

- **2. Complex:** The main clause is modified by one or more subordinate clauses, are grammatically dependent, (subordinate conjunctions: if, when, etc.): *The fact **that he is illiterate** makes him unsuitable for this job.*

Thank You!
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