

Understanding English Grammar: A Linguistic Introduction

Additional Exercises for Chapter 9: Complementation

1. Complements or adjuncts?

Underline any Complements of the italicized words, and circle all Oblique adjuncts in the following sentences (Note: Complements occurring within complements should be underlined twice). Remember that the difference between Complement and Oblique adjunct is a continuum, rather than an absolute distinction. If you find any of these troublesome, feel free to express your difficulties:

- a. Wallace was *snoring* in the sitting room.
- b. All of the students at Hogwarts *love* magic.
- c. The Slitherins *don't* like the boy *with* red hair.
- d. *This* professor of alchemy *is* famous.
- e. He was *waiting* for her *in* the kitchen.
- f. She *hugged* him warmly.
- g. They quickly *moved* the body.
- h. He slowly *sharpened* the knife in the kitchen.
- i. Phil, we're not *gonna* leave *a* *baby* in the room.

2. Types of Predicate Complements

The following examples illustrate several types of Predicate Complements. For each example, underline the Predicate Complement, and indicate whether it is a Subject Complement or an Object Complement, and whether it is stative or inchoative.

- a. Proverbs form a very important part of Maasai oral literature,
- b. since they summarize the wisdom of the sages.
- c. You are literally too stupid to insult.
- d. Don't let the beard fool you.
- e. You're a disgrace to depression.
- f. You seem a decent fellow.
- g. We are but poor, lost circus performers.
- h. My grandmother has more attitude than you!
- i. Let me put it this way.
- j. I look like a nerdy hillbilly!
- k. I consider myself a bit of a loner.
- l. You are deemed unfit.
- m. I hereby relieve you of your command.
- n. You can't ascribe great cosmic significance to a simple earthly event.
- o. Peanut butter on bananas I find delicious.

3. Determining syntactic functions

Determine the syntactic function (Head, Modifier, Complement) of each of the underlined constituents and indicate which other constituent it functions in relation to (adapted from Brinton (2000:140)).

Example: .You don't by any chance happen to have six fingers on your right hand?

Answer: by any chance = Modifier of the IP "don't __ happen to have six fingers . . . "

your = Head of the DP "your right hand".

- a. There are things in this world which are out of our control.
- b. You make me want to be a better man.
- c. You shine up like a new penny.
- d. Life is full of interruptions and complications.
- e. Sauron's forces are already moving.
- f. The Ring is trying to get back to its master.
- g. I should have danced with you.
- h. That does put a damper on our relationship.

4. Subjects and Predicates

Underline the (main clause) Subject and circle the *highest level* Predicate in each of the following sentences (Hint: Sometimes predicates can be divided into two parts, in which case you will need two circles):

- a. How much do you pay people to do this?
- b. Just because I'm a man doesn't mean I can't do ballet.
- c. Every evening about this time, there's a big ruckus over at the Villa Rosa.
- d. It really bothers me when students eat popcorn in class.
- e. Where in the world would you have hidden my shoes?
- f. Beans for breakfast is one of my favorites.
- g. Even selling off the farm won't get you out of debt.
- h. It's amazing what a little paint can do.
- i. Let them eat cake.
- j. Whoever goes to the store should buy bread.
- k. That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

(William Shakespear, from Sonnet 73)

5. Categories and functions

Give the syntactic category and syntactic function for each underlined constituent in the following sentences. Write the category label below the constituent and the function label above it. The first example is done for you:

a. There are things in this world which are out of our control.
 Predicate Complement Head or Determiner (of DP)
 prep. phrase pronoun

b. It's been 84 years, and I can still smell the fresh paint.

c. The concept of the suction pump is centuries old.

d. Wait! Take a couple practice swings over there.

e. When you first entered the restaurant, I thought you were handsome.

f. When I was your age, television was called books!

g. If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere!

h. What we have here is a failure to communicate.