

Extra notes for Chapter 7 - adjectives

Denominal adjectives: participant roles

Semantic relations were introduced in generative grammar during the mid-1960s and early as a way of classifying the arguments of natural language predicates into a closed set of participant types which were thought to have a special status in grammar. A list of the most popular roles and the properties usually associated with them is given below.

Agent: A participant which the meaning of the verb specifies as doing or causing something, possibly intentionally. Examples: subjects of *kill, eat, hit, smash, kick, watch*.

Patient (or Recipient): a participant which the verb characterizes as having something happen to it, and as being affected by what happens to it. Examples: objects of *kill, eat, smash* but not those of *watch, hear, love*.

Experiencer: A participant who is characterized as aware of something. Examples: subject of *love*, object of *annoy*.

Theme: A participant which is characterized as changing its position or condition, or as being in a state or position. Examples: objects of *give, hand*, subjects of *walk, die*.

Location: The thematic role associated with the NP expressing the location in a sentence with a verb of location. Examples: subjects of *keep, own, retain, know*, locative PPs.

Source: Object from which motion proceeds. Examples: subjects of *buy, promise*, objects of *deprive, free, cure*.

Goal: Object to which motion proceeds. Examples: subject of *receive, buy*, dative objects of *tell, give*.

Text from <http://www.ilc.cnr.it/EAGLES96/rep2/node8.html>

A list of **determining (emphasizing)** adjectives in English (COBUILD Grammar):

(This subclass of determining adjectives *specify a thing, or ground a referent*).

absolute, complete, entire, outright, perfect, positive, pure, real, sheer, total, true, utter

*Note that *utter* usually occurs in the combination *total and utter*

A list of **determining (specifying)** adjectives in English (COBUILD Grammar):

(This subclass of determining adjectives *stress the uniqueness of a referent*. Here they are arranged in groups, by sub-function).

importance: *chief, main, principal; entire, whole*

sequence: *first, last, next, previous, past, present*

identifying: *certain, existing, only, particular, specific,*

addition: *additional, following, further, other, remaining; same, usual,*

Note on postmodifier adjectives (adapted from COBUILD Grammar)

You do not usually put adjectives after nouns. There are two main exceptions: the case of "reduced relative clauses", and the case of formal terminology.

1. Reduced relative clauses

You can put an adjective after a noun if the adjective is followed by a *prepositional phrase* or a *to-infinitive clause*.

...a warning to people eager for a quick cure.

...the sort of weapons likely to be deployed against it.

The adjectives *alive* and *awake* can be put after a noun which is preceded by a superlative, an adverb, or a determining adjective such as *first, last, only, every, or any*.

Is Phil Morgan the only man alive who knows all the words to that song?

She sat at the window, until she was the last person awake.

2. A few formal adjectives are *only* used after a noun: *designate, elect, incarnate,*

...British Rail's chairman designate, Mr Robert Reid.

She was now the president elect.

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Extra notes on *a/the NOUN of NOUN*.

This is one of the most common constructions in English, so it should come as no surprise to learn that it can express several different meanings.

It is usually referred to as a partitive structure; in this guise, we have seen it at work in Chapter 4 in expressing quantities, particularly in changing *unbounded substances* and indeterminate plurals into *bounded objects*:

- a bar of chocolate / soap
- a cup of coffee / tea
- a pint of beer / milk
- a tin of tuna / beans
- a roomful of people
- a handful of coins
- a mouthful of water

In these examples, the first noun is a shape, container, or quantity, while the second noun is the substance (or plural noun).

It is also possible to use this structure to create boundaries on the basis of abstract qualities (characteristics):

- a gust of wind
- a round of applause
- an air of mystery
- the shadow of the past

Here, clearly, we are not dealing with a part-whole relation, or with quantity. So what is going on?

Within cognitive grammar, four types of *intrinsic relation* are identified in the *a/the NOUN of NOUN* construction. They are:

- Part-whole relation
- Relational term
- Reified thing
- Identifying relation

All four exploit one of the construals we encountered in Chapter 2, namely *windowing of attention*, *figure/ground*, and *profiling*. In part-whole relations and relational terms, the first noun is *profiled* (in focus) while the second noun serves as its *base* (=reference point). In reification, the window of attention imposed by the reified term excludes some participants but we can evoke them thanks to our knowledge of the relevant frame. In identifying relations, the terms are of equal prominence and can be interpreted thanks to the figure/ground construal.

Part-whole relations apply to objects. We profile one component part of the object (the first noun) and specify the base that it belongs to (the second noun),

e.g. *the end of the tunnel*

This refers not to the whole tunnel, but to just one part of it

We need to specify the whole that “the end of” belongs to, because too many things in the world can have an end: the phrase is incomplete and meaningless without the second noun.

Relational terms apply mainly to humans as participants in things and events. The most obvious type of relation is a family relation, and this also illustrates the non-reversibility of the dependency between profiled thing and base: note in *the father of the bride*, the expression cannot be reversed (**the bride of the father*). The second noun is the *base* for understanding the whole expression.

e.g. *a photograph of Bob Dylan*

The profiled noun (here, *photograph*) has a dependency relation with its subject/base (here, *Bob Dylan*), because no photograph can exist without a subject. We focus on the profiled noun, but in

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order to understand it, we need to be told what its base is. The relationship is *non-reversible*: *Bob Dylan* has no dependency relation with *photograph* (i.e. the base is *independent*; in English we can't say *the Bob Dylan of the photograph*).

Reified things are abstract nouns which express relations as if they were things. In removing the verb and its subject, object/complement, etc, the relations' grounding elements (tense, number, definiteness) remain unspecified. However, the participants in the situation can be recovered and evoked, even if they are not actually mentioned.

e.g. *the review of a book*

The episodic event is *to review* – a transitive verb with both a subject (reviewer) and object (thing reviewed).

The reified thing *review* intrinsically requires both participants even though only the object is mentioned in the construction.

We can say that this is a type of reconstructed, or implicit relation in which the abstract noun evokes abstract (and absent) participants in order to complete the frame of reference for the event.

Identifying relations are based on the figure/ground construal rather than profile/base construal. In other words, the nouns have equal prominence, are mutually-dependent, and hence their relationship is symmetrical (we can switch our attention between the figure and ground)

e.g. *the issue of unemployment*

The head noun (here, *issue*) intrinsically requires an entity which specifies /identifies what it refers to (*what kind of issue? -> unemployment*).

But the construction "the issue of employment" can be paraphrased as a relation ("A is B") which shows the terms' mutual dependency and the symmetry of the relation: *the issue is unemployment / unemployment is the issue*.

It is very common for this construction to have as its figure an abstract or metaphorical expression, and for it to express metaphorical quantities and qualities.

e.g. *A cup of coffee*

At first glance, this looks like a part-for-whole, or perhaps a relational term, but it is in fact an identifying relation between a substance (*coffee*) and its profiled quantity (*cup*).

While it is 'obvious' that the coffee relates to and is dependent on the cup (the coffee is in the cup), it is perhaps less obvious that the cup is also dependent on the coffee: here, the meaning of *cup* is not literal (object) but metonymic: CONTAINER (*cup*) FOR CONTAINED (=the size of the cup is the quantity of coffee; the cup is seen as a unit of measure, not a physical object).

TASK: *intrinsic relations in context*

Game of Thrones, book 1. Synopsis

Game of Thrones, the first novel in George R.R. Martin's fantasy epic *A Tale of Fire and Ice*, takes place on the continent of Westeros. This land was once divided into seven kingdoms, and at the start of the tale these are united under a single king, Robert Baratheon, who had deposed Anaeris Targaryen, "the mad king" several years previously. The Seven Kingdoms are protected from the wild North by an immense wall of ice which is manned by the men of the Black Watch who garrison at Castle Black.

The action starts when the king visits his old friend, Lord Eddard Stark of Winterfell, Warden of the North. He wishes Stark to move south to the royal city of King's Landing to take up the post of "Hand of the King". However Robert Baratheon dies in a hunting accident shortly after returning to King's Landing. He is succeeded by his spiteful son Joffrey, whom Stark discovers to be a bastard, born out of incest committed by Baratheon's wife, Cersei Lannister, and her twin brother Jaime "The Kingslayer". Stark is accused of treason and executed by order of King Joffrey.

What ensues is indeed a Game of Thrones, as the seven kingdoms start to fracture once more. Robert Baratheon's two brothers, Renley and Stannis, each stake a claim; Stark's heir Robb is pronounced King of the North by his bannermen. Meanwhile, on another continent, the last surviving heir of Anaeris Targaryen is raising an army. Danaerys Targaryen not only has men: she also has dragons. . .