

Unit 1

Theoretical Introduction and Overview of English grammar within the SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL model of language

Slides for the session of

Exploring English Grammar – the world of clauses
held on

15.xi.2021 / 25 brumaire CCXXX

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Saarland University

① About grammar

Prescriptive vs descriptive grammar

Lexicogrammar

Functional vs formal grammar

Systemic vs structural grammar

② Some choices involved in producing a clause

Strata: semantics vs grammar vs phonology/orthography

'Functional components' a.k.a. 'metafunctions'

Clause as interaction: MOOD

Clause as representation: TRANSITIVITY

Clause as message: THEME

The learning goals for today's session are:

- 1 To understand four choices we'll make about how to 'do' grammar:
 - 1 Descriptive vs prescriptive grammar
 - 2 Lexis + Grammar = Lexicogrammar
 - 3 Functional vs formal grammar
 - 4 Systemic vs structural grammar
- 2 To introduce some concepts useful in studying grammar

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Descriptive vs prescriptive (and/or proscriptive) grammar

- 1 Lay people often say grammar is about prescribing what is good, or proscribing what is bad.
- 2 A modern grammarian just describes how people actually use language (rather than how they think they do, or claim to do)
- 3 Grammatical “rules” therefore need to be reinterpreted as something like “laws of nature” (like gravity, or conservation of energy, or evolution by means of natural selection): generalized statements of observed fact.
- 4 We'll try to work with real examples taken from linguistic corpora; but sometimes, when trying to illustrate a particular grammatical point, it can be convenient to use (carefully) constructed examples.

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- 2 We will treat both together, as “lexicogrammar”
- 3 Lexicogrammar covers all the knowledge in the dictionary plus all the knowledge in the grammar book
- 4 With this knowledge, you can produce and understand very many sentences
- 5 But you still need to know about the context before you can really use or understand lexis and grammar appropriately.

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Functional vs formal grammar

- 1 Consider the simple sentence: “Socrates runs”.
- 2 A formal grammar might analyze this by saying that it consists of a noun followed by a verb.
- 3 A functional grammar might analyze it by saying that it consists of:
 - a subject, of which something is predicated
 - an actor, who is involved in a process of doing something
 - a theme (specifying the topic), followed by a rheme (conveying a message about the topic)

Socrates	runs
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S

P

- 4

Actor	Process
Theme	Rheme

- 5 From now on, we'll use initial capitals for function labels.
- 6 We'll also include information from formal grammar as well:

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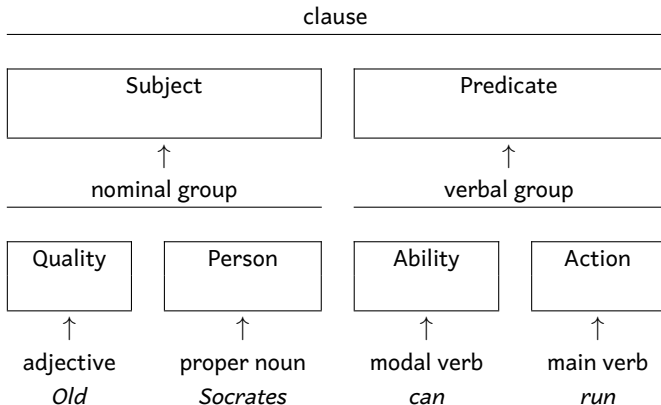
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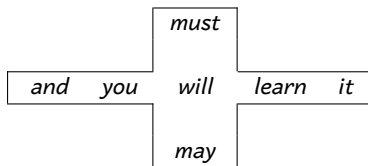
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Functional and formal grammar combined



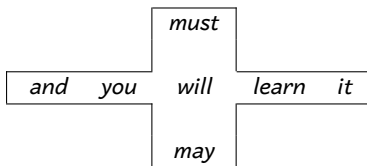
Systemic vs structural grammar



- 1 A structural approach is interested in the horizontal (syntagmatic) relations: what is connected to what, and how?
- 2 A systemic approach gives priority to the vertical (paradigmatic) dimension: what choices are available, and how do they differ from each other?
- 3 Once the focus has been shifted from structure to system, the choices available can be stated in a more abstract way:



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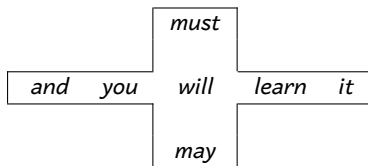


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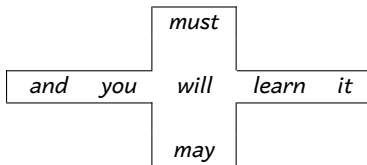
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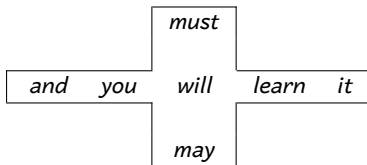


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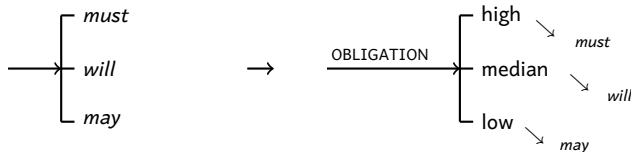


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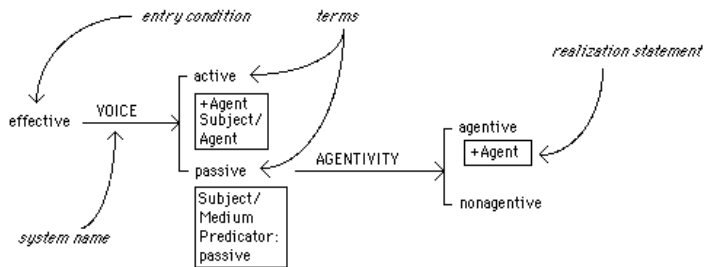




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Some notational conventions



Oswald	shot	Kennedy
Subject/ Agent	Predicator	Medium

Kennedy	was shot	by Oswald
Subject/ Medium	Predicator: passive	Agent

Kennedy	was shot
Subject/ Medium	Predicator: passive

Some choices involved in producing a clause

- 1 In winter semester you tried to guess a clause that I was thinking of; you asked 'closed' questions (e.g. 'yes/no' for binary choices, or 'wh-' questions for sets of choices with three or more terms).
- 2 Some of the results from that experiment can be generalized.

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Clause as message: THEME

- “Is it a question?”
- →
- “Does it function as a question?”
- OR:
- “Does it have the grammatical structure of a question?”
- OR:
- “Does it sound like (/ Is it written like) a question?”

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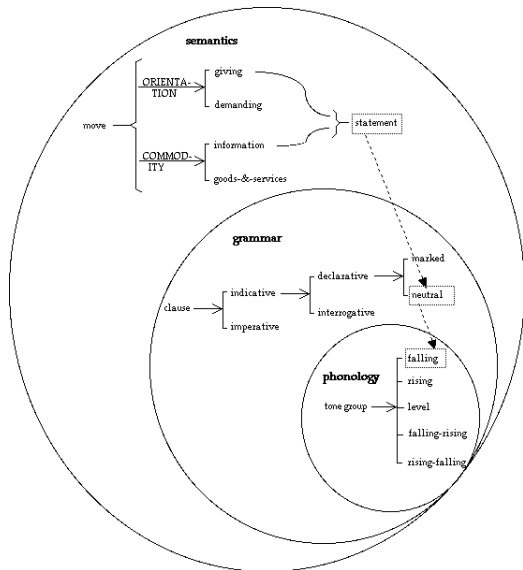
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‘Functional components’ a.k.a. ‘metafunctions’

- 1 Clause as interaction:
grammatical systems of MOOD
— enacting social relationships
- 2 Clause as representation:
grammatical systems of TRANSITIVITY
— construing a model of reality
- 3 Clause as message:
grammatical systems of THEME
— creating relevance to context
- 4 These three sets of choices are simultaneous to and independent of each other (i.e. they are ‘in parallel’)

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Metafunctions in the grammar of English (1): syntagmatic view

Do	cats	eat	bats?
----	------	-----	-------

Mood	Residue		
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MOOD

Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
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Pro- Agent	Actor/ Agent	-cess: material	Goal/ Medium 'affected'
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TRANSITIVITY

Theme	Rheme
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THEME

Who	shot		the sheriff?
Mood		Residue	
Subject/Wh-	(did) Finite	Predicator (shoot)	Complement
Actor/ Agent	Process: material		Goal/ Medium
Theme	Rheme		

I	have		a dream.
Mood		Residue	
Subject	(do) Finite	Predicator (have)	Complement
Carrier/ Medium	Process: relational: ascriptive/possessive		Attribute/ Range
Theme	Rheme		

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Mood	Residue		
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Actor/ Agent	Process: material	Goal/ Medium
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Mood	Residue
------	---------

Subject/Wh-	(did) Finite	Predicator (shoot)	Complement
-------------	--------------	--------------------	------------

Actor/ Agent	Process: material	Goal/ Medium
-----------------	----------------------	-----------------

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

I	have	a dream.
---	------	----------

Mood	Residue
------	---------

Subject	(do) Finite	Predicator (have)	Complement
---------	-------------	-------------------	------------

Carrier/ Medium	Process: relational: ascriptive/possessive	Attribute/ Range
--------------------	---	---------------------

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

Metafunctions in the grammar of English (1): syntagmatic view

Do	cats	eat	bats?
----	------	-----	-------

Mood	Residue
------	---------

MOOD

Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
--------	---------	------------	------------

Pro-	Actor/ Agent	-cess: material	Goal/ Medium 'affected'
------	-----------------	--------------------	----------------------------

TRANSITIVITY

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

THEME

Who	shot	the sheriff?	
Mood	Residue		
Subject/Wh-	(did) Finite	Predicator (shoot)	Complement
Actor/ Agent	Process: material	Goal/ Medium	
Theme	Rheme		

I	have	a dream.	
Mood	Residue		
Subject	(do) Finite	Predicator (have)	Complement
Carrier/ Medium	Process: relational: ascriptive/possessive	Attribute/ Range	
Theme	Rheme		

Metafunctions in the grammar of English (1): syntagmatic view

Do	cats	eat	bats?
----	------	-----	-------

Mood	Residue		
------	---------	--	--

MOOD

Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
--------	---------	------------	------------

Pro- Agent	Actor/ Agent	-cess: material	Goal/ Medium 'affected'
---------------	-----------------	--------------------	----------------------------

TRANSITIVITY

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

THEME

Who	shot	the sheriff?
-----	------	--------------

Mood	Residue	
------	---------	--

Subject/Wh-	(did) Finite	Predicator (shoot)	Complement
-------------	--------------	--------------------	------------

Actor/ Agent	Process: material	Goal/ Medium
-----------------	----------------------	-----------------

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

I	have	a dream.
---	------	----------

Mood	Residue	
------	---------	--

Subject	(do) Finite	Predicator (have)	Complement
---------	-------------	-------------------	------------

Carrier/ Medium	Process: relational: ascriptive/possessive	Attribute/ Range
--------------------	---	---------------------

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

Metafunctions in the grammar of English (1): syntagmatic view

Do	cats	eat	bats?
----	------	-----	-------

Mood	Residue		
------	---------	--	--

MOOD

Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
--------	---------	------------	------------

Pro- Agent	Actor/ Agent	-cess: material	Goal/ Medium 'affected'
---------------	-----------------	--------------------	----------------------------

TRANSITIVITY

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

THEME

Who	shot		the sheriff?
Mood		Residue	
Subject/Wh-	(did) Finite	Predicator (shoot)	Complement
Actor/ Agent	Process: material		Goal/ Medium
Theme	Rheme		

I	have		a dream.
Mood		Residue	
Subject	(do) Finite	Predicator (have)	Complement
Carrier/ Medium	Process: relational: ascriptive/possessive		Attribute/ Range
Theme	Rheme		

Metafunctions in the grammar of English (1): syntagmatic view

Do	cats	eat	bats?
----	------	-----	-------

Mood	Residue		
------	---------	--	--

MOOD

Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
--------	---------	------------	------------

Pro- Agent	Actor/ Agent	-cess: material	Goal/ Medium 'affected'
---------------	-----------------	--------------------	----------------------------

TRANSITIVITY

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

THEME

Who	shot	the sheriff?
-----	------	--------------

Mood	Residue	
------	---------	--

Subject/Wh-	(did) Finite	Predicator (shoot)	Complement
-------------	--------------	--------------------	------------

Actor/ Agent	Process: material	Goal/ Medium
-----------------	----------------------	-----------------

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

I	have	a dream.
---	------	----------

Mood	Residue	
------	---------	--

Subject	(do) Finite	Predicator (have)	Complement
---------	-------------	-------------------	------------

Carrier/ Medium	Process: relational: ascriptive/possessive	Attribute/ Range
--------------------	---	---------------------

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

Metafunctions in the grammar of English (1): syntagmatic view

Do	cats	eat	bats?
----	------	-----	-------

Mood	Residue		
------	---------	--	--

MOOD

Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
--------	---------	------------	------------

Pro- Agent	Actor/ Agent	-cess: material	Goal/ Medium 'affected'
---------------	-----------------	--------------------	----------------------------

TRANSITIVITY

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

THEME

Who	shot	the sheriff?
-----	------	--------------

Mood	Residue		
------	---------	--	--

Subject/Wh-	(did) Finite	Predicator (shoot)	Complement
-------------	--------------	--------------------	------------

Actor/ Agent	Process: material	Goal/ Medium
-----------------	----------------------	-----------------

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

I	have	a dream.
---	------	----------

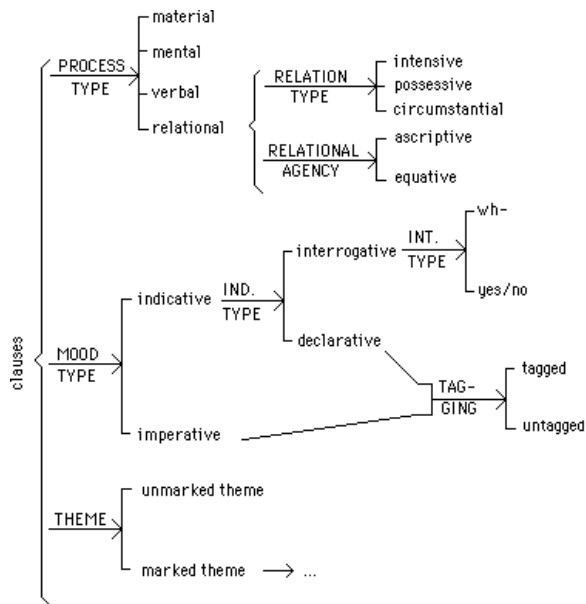
Mood	Residue		
------	---------	--	--

Subject	(do) Finite	Predicator (have)	Complement
---------	-------------	-------------------	------------

Carrier/ Medium	Process: relational: ascriptive/possessive	Attribute/ Range
--------------------	---	---------------------

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

Metafunctions in the grammar of English (2): paradigmatic view



ideational: TRANSITIVITY
interpersonal: MOOD
textual: THEME

ΥΡΑ

Theoretical
Introduction and
Overview of English
grammar

Goals

About grammar

- Prescriptive vs descriptive grammar
- Lexicogrammar
- Functional vs formal grammar
- Systemic vs structural grammar

Some choices involved in
producing a clause

Strata: semantics vs grammar
vs phonology/orthography

'Functional components' a.k.a.
'metafunctions'

Clause as interaction: MOOD

Clause as representation:
TRANSITIVITY

Clause as message: THEME

Clause as interaction: MOOD (1)

MOOD TYPE:

- either 'imperative' or 'indicative',
 - if 'indicative', then either 'declarative' or 'interrogative'

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Clause as interaction: MOOD

Clause as representation:
TRANSITIVITY

Clause as message: THEME

Clause as interaction: MOOD (1)

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Clause as interaction: MOOD

Clause as representation:
TRANSITIVITY

Clause as message: THEME

MOOD TYPE:

- either 'imperative' or 'indicative',
 - if 'indicative', then either 'declarative' or 'interrogative',
 - if 'interrogative', then 'yes/no' or 'wh'

MOOD TYPE:

- either 'imperative' or 'indicative',
 - if 'indicative', then either 'declarative' or 'interrogative',
 - if 'interrogative', then 'yes/no' or 'WH-',

if 'WH-', then 'WH-question' or 'WH-structure'

MOOD TYPE:

- either 'imperative' or 'indicative',
 - if 'indicative', then either 'declarative' or 'interrogative',
 - if 'interrogative', then 'yes/no' or 'WH-',
 - if 'WH-', then 'WH-subject' or 'WH-other'.

MOOD TYPE:

- either 'imperative' or 'indicative',
 - if 'indicative', then either 'declarative' or 'interrogative',
 - if 'interrogative', then 'yes/no' or 'WH-',
if 'WH-', then 'WH-subject' or 'WH-other'.

MOOD TYPE:

- either 'imperative' or 'indicative',
 - if 'indicative', then either 'declarative' or 'interrogative',
 - if 'interrogative', then 'yes/no' or 'WH-',
if 'WH-', then 'WH-subject' or 'WH-other'.

MOOD TYPE:

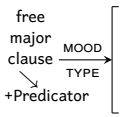
- either 'imperative' or 'indicative',
 - if 'indicative', then either 'declarative' or 'interrogative',
 - if 'interrogative', then 'yes/no' or 'WH-',
if 'WH-', then 'WH-subject' or 'WH-other'.

clause

major
clause
↙
+Predicator

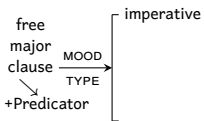
Close

↑
Pred



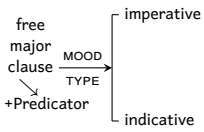
Close

↑
Pred



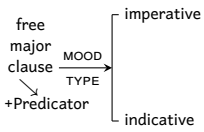
Close

↑
Pred



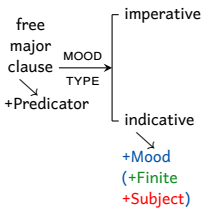
Close

↑
Pred

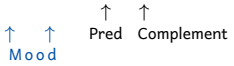


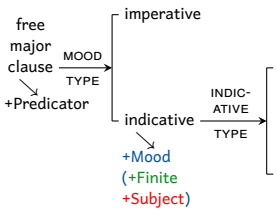
Close the window!

↑ ↑
Pred Complement

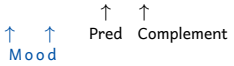


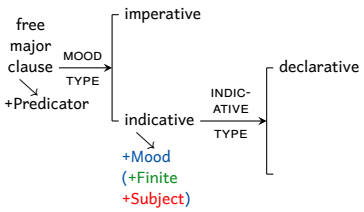
Close the window!



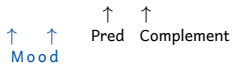


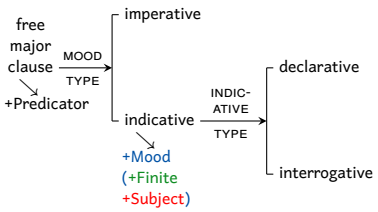
Close the window!



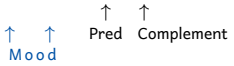


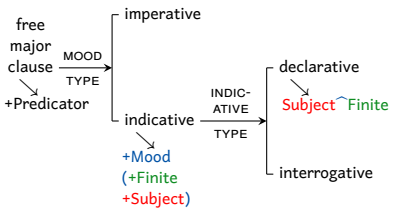
Close the window!





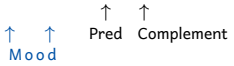
Close the window!

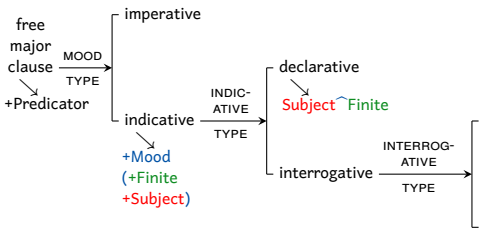




Close the window!

He is closing the window.

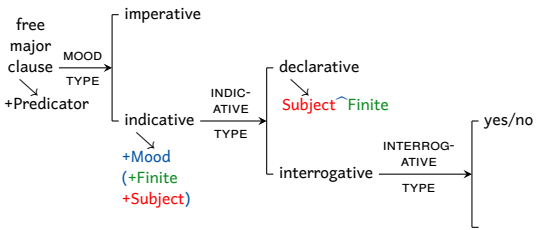




Close the window!

He is closing the window.

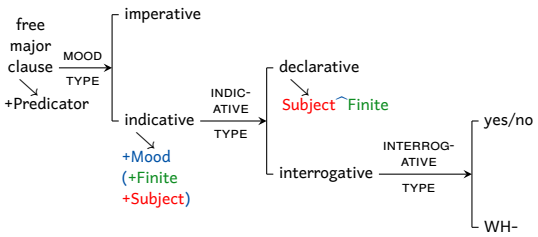
↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
Mood Pred Complement



Close the window!

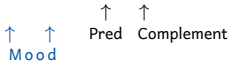
He is closing the window.

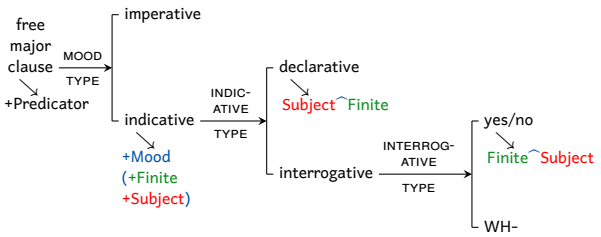
↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
Mood Pred Complement



Close the window!

He is closing the window.



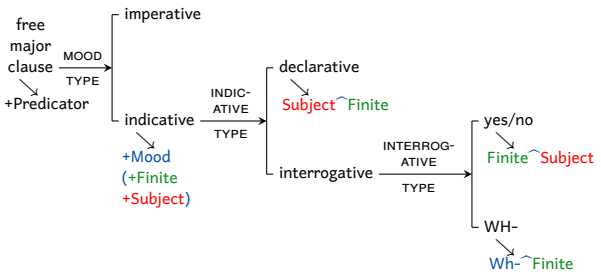


Close the window!

He is closing the window.

Is he closing the window?

↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
 Mood Pred Complement



Close the window!

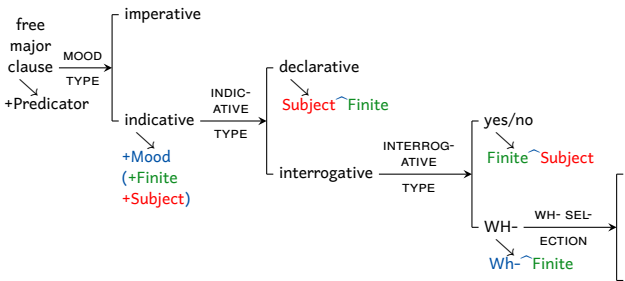
He is closing the window.

Is he closing the window?

Wh is

Wh Wh is is

↑ ↑
Mood Pred Complement



Close the window!

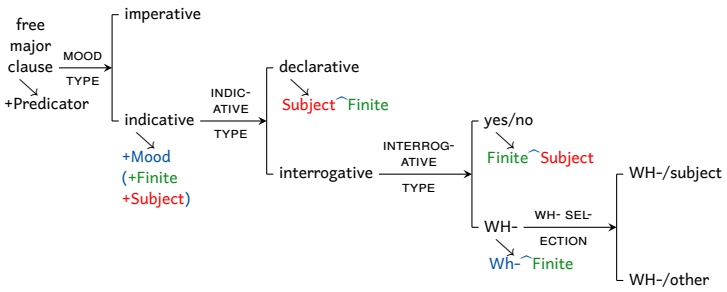
He is closing the window.

Is he closing the window?

Wh is

Wh is
Wh is

↑ ↑
Mood Pred Complement



Close the window!

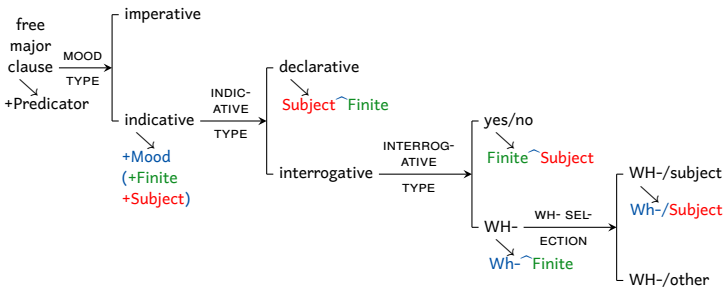
He is closing the window.

Is he closing the window?

Wh is

Wh is
Wh is

↑ ↑
Mood Pred Complement



Close the window!

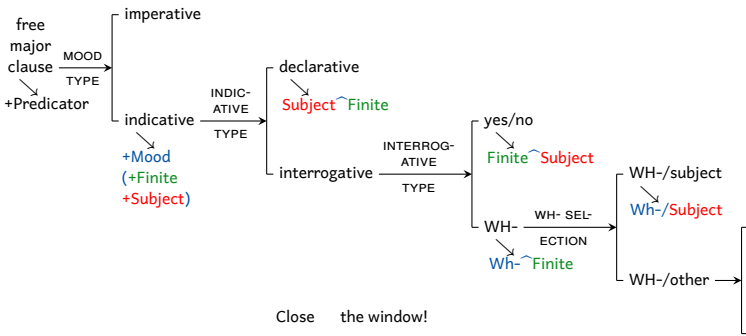
He is closing the window.

Is he closing the window?

Who is closing the window?

Wh is
is

↑ ↑
Mood Pred Complement



Close the window!

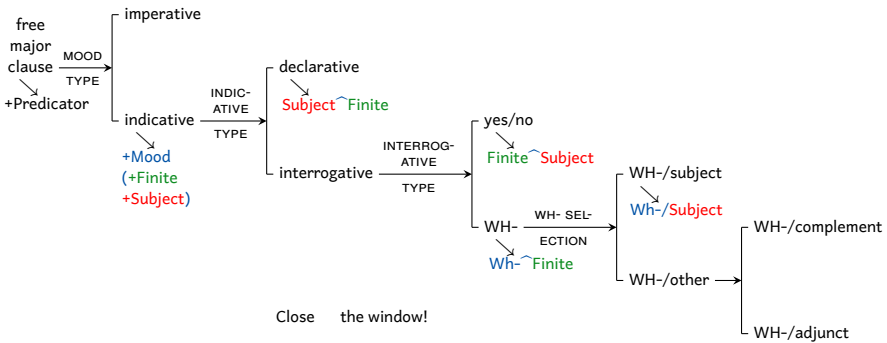
He is closing the window.

Is he closing the window?

Who is closing the window?

Wh is
Wh is

↑ ↑
Mood Pred Complement



Close the window!

He is closing the window.

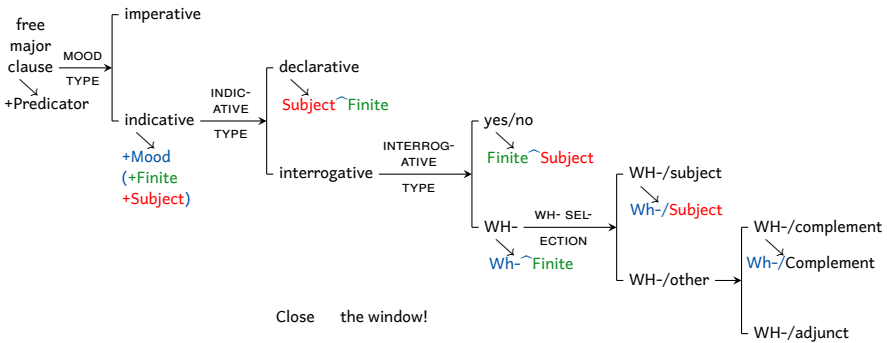
Is he closing the window?

Who is closing the window?

Wh Wh is is

↑ ↑ Pred Complement

Mood



Close the window!

He is closing the window.

Is he closing the window?

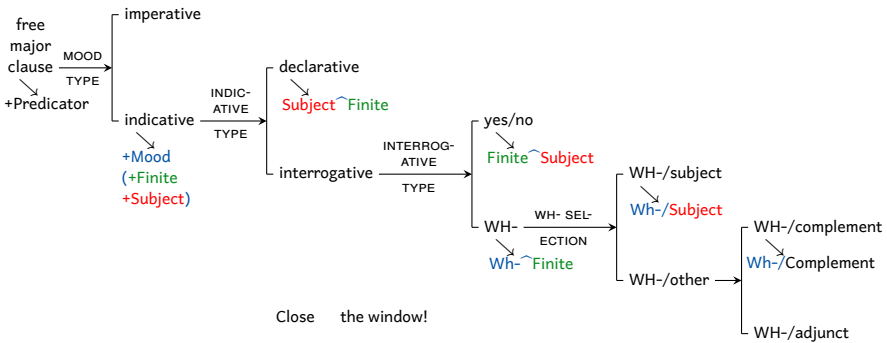
Who is closing the window?

Wh

What is is

↑ ↑

Complement Mood Pred Complement



Close the window!

He is closing the window.

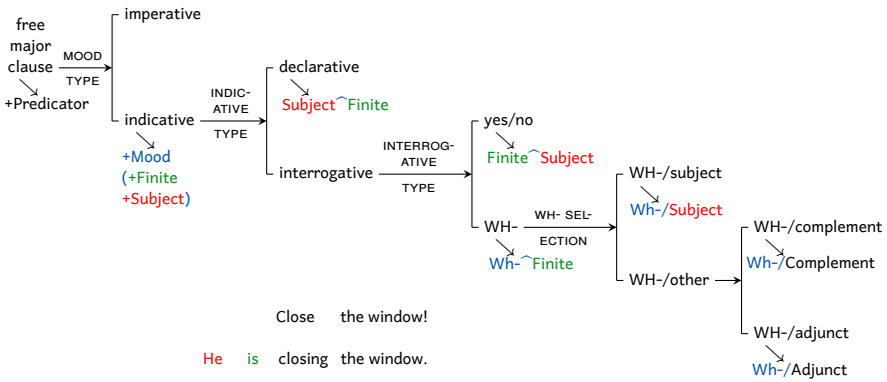
Is he closing the window?

Who is closing the window?

What is he closing?

Wh





Close the window!

He is closing the window.

Is he closing the window?

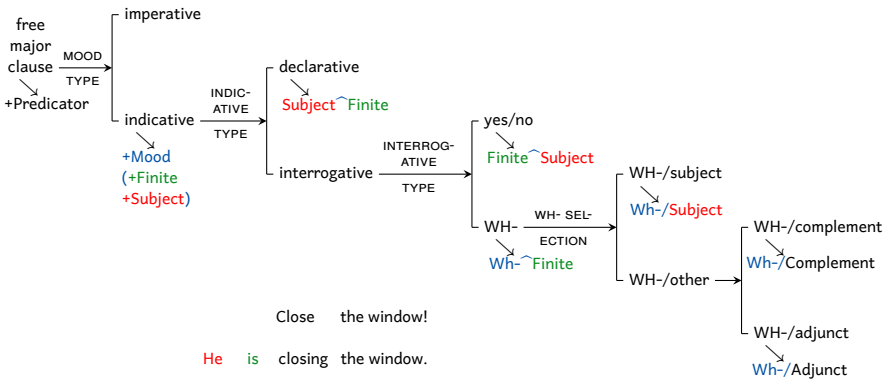
Who is closing the window?

What is he closing?

Why

Adjunct Complement Mood Pred Complement

↑ ↑ ↑ ↑



Close the window!

He is closing the window.

Is he closing the window?

Who is closing the window?

What is he closing?

Why is he closing the window?

Adjunct Complement Mood Pred Complement

↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

- non-finite or finite
- bound (e.g. reported speech)
- major
- **clause**
-
-

[free]	[[free]]	[bound]	
Close the window!	(She told me)	to close the window.	[non-finite]
He is closing the window	(She told me)	whether he was closing the window.	[finite]
Is he closing the window?	(She asked me)	who was closing the window.	[finite]
Who is closing the window?	(She asked me)	what he was closing.	[finite]
What is he closing?	(She asked me)	why he was closing the window.	[finite]
Why is he closing the window?	(She asked me)		

- non-finite or finite
- bound (e.g. reported speech)
- major
- clause
-
-

[free]	[[free]]		[bound]	
Close the window!	(She told me)		to close the window.	[non-finite]
He is closing the window	(She told me)	he was	closing the window.	[finite]
Is he closing the window?	(She asked me)	whether he was	closing the window.	[finite]
Who is closing the window?	(She asked me)	who was	closing the window.	[finite]
What is he closing?	(She asked me)	what he was	closing.	[finite]
Why is he closing the window?	(She asked me)	why he was	closing the window.	[finite]

- non-finite or finite
- bound (e.g. reported speech)
- major
- clause
-
-

[free]	[[free]]		[bound]	
Close the window!	(She told me)		to close the window.	[non-finite]
He is closing the window	(She told me)	he was	closing the window.	[finite]
Is he closing the window?	(She asked me)	whether he was	closing the window.	[finite]
Who is closing the window?	(She asked me)	who was	closing the window.	[finite]
What is he closing?	(She asked me)	what he was	closing.	[finite]
Why is he closing the window?	(She asked me)	why he was	closing the window.	[finite]

- non-finite or finite
- bound (e.g. reported speech)
- major
- clause

-
-

[free]	[[free]]	[bound]	
Close the window!	(She told me)	to close the window.	[non-finite]
He is closing the window	(She told me)	whether he was closing the window.	[finite]
Is he closing the window?	(She asked me)	who was closing the window.	[finite]
Who is closing the window?	(She asked me)	what he was closing.	[finite]
What is he closing?	(She asked me)	why he was closing the window.	[finite]
Why is he closing the window?	(She asked me)		

- non-finite or finite
- bound (e.g. reported speech)
- major
- clause
-
-

[free]		[[free]]		[bound]	
Close the window!		(She told me)		to close the window.	[non-finite]
He is closing the window		(She told me)	he was	closing the window.	[finite]
Is he closing the window?		(She asked me)	whether he was	closing the window.	[finite]
Who is closing the window?		(She asked me)	who was	closing the window.	[finite]
What is he closing?		(She asked me)	what he was	closing.	[finite]
Why is he closing the window?		(She asked me)	why he was	closing the window.	[finite]

- non-finite or finite
- bound (e.g. reported speech)
- major
- clause
-
-

[free]		[[free]]		[bound]		[non-finite]
Close the window!		(She told me)			to close the window.	
He is closing the window		(She told me)		he was	closing the window.	[finite]
Is he closing the window?		(She asked me)	whether	he was	closing the window.	[finite]
Who is closing the window?		(She asked me)		who was	closing the window.	[finite]
What is he closing?		(She asked me)	what	he was	closing.	[finite]
Why is he closing the window?		(She asked me)	why	he was	closing the window.	[finite]

Clause as interaction: MOOD (2)

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Clause as interaction: MOOD

Clause as representation:

TRANSITIVITY

Clause as message: THEME

SUBJECT PERSON:

- either 'non-interactant' or 'interactant',

• 'non-interactant' = 'non-person' (e.g. 'It is raining')

• 'interactant' = 'person'

Clause as interaction: MOOD (2)



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'Functional components' a.k.a.
'metafunctions'

Clause as interaction: MOOD

Clause as representation:
TRANSITIVITY

Clause as message: THEME

SUBJECT PERSON:

- either 'non-interactant' or 'interactant',
 - if 'interactant', then 'speaker' ("I") or 'speaker-plus' ("we") or 'addressee' ("you");

• if 'non-interactant', then no further differentiation (either singular

or plural)

SUBJECT PERSON:

- either 'non-interactant' or 'interactant',
 - if 'interactant', then 'speaker' ("I") or 'speaker-plus' ("we") or 'addressee' ("you");
 - if 'addressee', then: no further differentiation (unlike German)
 - *You kenn say You to me. :-D*

SUBJECT PERSON:

- either 'non-interactant' or 'interactant',
 - if 'interactant', then 'speaker' ("I") or 'speaker-plus' ("we") or 'addressee' ("you");
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 - *You kenn say You to me. :-D*

SUBJECT PERSON:

- either 'non-interactant' or 'interactant',
 - if 'interactant', then 'speaker' ("I") or 'speaker-plus' ("we") or 'addressee' ("you");
 - if 'addressee', then: no further differentiation (unlike German)
 - *You kenn say You to me. :-D*



Clause as interaction: MOOD (3)

FINITE TYPE:

- either 'temporal' (primary tense) or 'modal';

• PRIMARY TENSE: [past], [present], [future]

• MODALITY: [high], [median], [low]

	[past]	<i>she knew</i> ('yesterday')
PRIMARY TENSE	[present]	<i>she knows</i> ('now')
	[future]	<i>she will know</i> ('tomorrow')
	[high]	<i>she must know</i> ('surely')
MODALITY	[median]	<i>she will know</i> ('probably')
	[low]	<i>she may know</i> ('perhaps')

Clause as interaction: MOOD (3)

FINITE TYPE:

- either 'temporal' (primary tense) or 'modal';
 - if 'temporal', then PRIMARY TENSE: 'past' or 'present' or 'future';
 - if 'modal', then MODALITY: 'high' or 'median' or 'low'.

	[past]	<i>she knew</i> ('yesterday')
PRIMARY TENSE	[present]	<i>she knows</i> ('now')
	[future]	<i>she will know</i> ('tomorrow')
	[high]	<i>she must know</i> ('surely')
MODALITY	[median]	<i>she will know</i> ('probably')
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Clause as interaction: MOOD (4)

POLARITY:

- either 'positive' or 'negative';

POLARITY MARKING:

- if 'positive' or if 'negative', then either 'marked' (emphatic) or 'unmarked'.

	[unmarked]	[marked]
[positive]	<i>he closed it</i>	<i>he did close it</i>
[negative]	<i>he didn't close it</i>	<i>he did not close it</i>

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Clause as representation: TRANSITIVITY

1 A “GOING ON” consists of

- PROCESS +
- PARTICIPANTS +
- CIRCUMSTANCES

2 PROCESS TYPE:

- material ('doing')
 - *Lola runs.* [intransitive]
 - *Tom films Lola.* [transitive]
- mental ('sensing')
 - *Mary liked the gift.* ['like' type]
 - *The gift pleased Mary.* ['please' type]
- relational ('being')
 - *Mary is a teacher.* [ascriptive]
 - *Mary is the teacher.* [equative]
- (plus other minor types)

3 TWO WAYS OF MODELLING REALITY:

- *Pat cooked.* [intransitive]
- *Pat cooked the rice.* [transitive]
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MODEL 1 IS THE
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Prescriptive vs descriptive
grammar

Lexicogrammar

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Systemic vs structural grammar

Some choices involved in producing a clause

Strata: semantics vs grammar
vs phonology/orthography

'Functional components' a.k.a.
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Clause as message: THEME

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- Theme = Predicator (*Close the **window!***)
- Theme = Adjunct (*In summer the students drink lots of **beer.***)
- Theme = Subject (*Maria likes **Mozart.***)
- Theme = ...

2 THEME FOCUSING

• THEME PREDICATION

- *It was Oswald who shot Kennedy*

• THEME IDENTIFICATION

- *the one who shot Kennedy was Oswald*
- *Oswald was the one who shot Kennedy*
- ... probably VOICE belongs here, too:
 - *Oswald shot Kennedy*
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3 INTERPERSONAL THEME

- *surely Anne*

4 TEXTUAL THEME

- *oh but in that case*

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