Today

Clauses vs. sentences

• The structure of the clause
  – Subjects
  – Predicates

• (Types of clauses)

Reading: pp. 215-228
Clauses

Sentence: a **clause** consisting of one or more clauses (i.e., “everything between the capital letter and the period”)

Clause: a syntactic unit consisting of a **subject** and a **predicate**, generated by rule: $S \Rightarrow NP \ (AUX) \ VP$ (may or may not be a sentence)
Structure of the Clause

What is a subject?

(Traditional grammar):
“A noun or pronoun that the sentence is about (i.e., it does the action of, and usually comes before, the verb)”
Structure of the Clause

What is a subject?

Joe walked the dog.
A student walked the dog.
The student from Thailand that I think is nice walked the dog.

A subject is a phrase, not just a word.
Structure of the Clause

What is a subject?

_Leo_ broke the vase. (= AGENT or ‘doer’ of the action)

_The vase_ was broken by Leo. (= THEME or undergoer of the action)

A subject cannot be defined in terms of semantic roles.
Structure of the Clause

What is a subject?

It is hot outside.  
There is someone at the door.  

A subject cannot be defined in terms of semantic meaning.

= pleonastic pronouns
Structure of the Clause

What is a subject?

The tiger was chased by the lion.
In the jungle, the lion chased the tiger.
What did the lion chase?
Where did the lion chase the tiger?

A subject cannot be defined as the first phrase in the sentence.
Structure of the Clause

What is a subject?

– A subject is a phrase, not just a word
– A subject is a position, not a type of meaning
– A subject is an NP that branches from $S^*$

(* = can be other things besides NP, but we won’t get into these)
Structure of the Clause

S
   ^
  /\  
NP the lion  AUX will VP chase NP the tiger
Diagnostics for finding the Subject

1. Auxiliaries move to left of subject in questions (Subject-Aux Inversion)

   All of the animals will eat tomorrow.
   \textbf{Will all of the animals} eat tomorrow?  
   = \texttt{[NP all of the animals]} is the subject

   There was someone at the door.
   \textbf{Was there} someone at the door?  
   = \texttt{[NP there]} is the subject
Diagnostics for finding the Subject

1. Auxiliaries move to left of subject in questions (Subject-Aux Inversion)

At the pound, the mangy dog ate roast beef.
At the pound, did the mangy dog eat roast beef?
*At did the pound the mangy dog east roast beef?
= \[ \text{NP the mangy dog} \] is the subject
Diagnostics for finding the Subject

2. **Tag-questions**: The tag has a subject that agrees in person, number with subject of main clause

- Jo and Jan won’t leave, will they? (*she, *he)
- The window with the curtains is open, isn’t it? (*they)
- Bernice’s radio doesn’t work, does it? (*she)
Structure of the Clause

What is a predicate?

We just saw that subject is a structural concept, not a semantic one.

Is a predicate structural or semantic?
Answer = BOTH
Structure of the Clause

What is a **predicate**?

**Semantic** generalization:

A predicate is an *event* or “*property* or *state*” of a subject.

Fred **has green eyes.**  Property
Fred **is sick.**  State
Fred **went to the party.**  Event
Structure of the Clause

What is a *predicate*?

**Structural generalization:**

A predicate is the **VP that branches from** *S*.  
( = VP dominated by *S*)
Structure of the Clause

Fred has green eyes.

S
  NP
    N
      Fred

VP
  V
    has

NP
  green eyes
Fred is very sick.
Structure of the Clause

Fred will go to the party.

\[
S \\
NP \quad AUX \\
N \quad will \\
Fred \quad V \quad PP \quad to \quad the \quad party \\
go
\]
Structure of the Clause

Clause:  \[ S \Rightarrow NP \ (AUX) \ VP \]
Types of Clauses

- Independent (Main) clause
- Subordinate clause
- (Coordinated clauses)
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

A student from Laos walked the dog.
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

A student from Laos walked the dog.

SUBJ
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

A student from Laos walked the dog.

SUBJ  PREDICATE
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

A student from Laos walked the dog.

```
S
 /\ 
NP      VP
 / \    / \ 
DET  N   V   NP
 | A | student from Laos walked
    | PP |
     |    
     | dog
```
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

I think that a student from Laos walked the dog.
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

I think that a student from Laos walked the dog.

Subj
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

I think that a student from Laos walked the dog.

Subj Predicate
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

I think that a student from Laos walked the dog.

I think that a student from…

\[ \text{Independent clause} \]

\[ \text{Subordinate clause} \]
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

I think that a student from Laos walked the dog.

```
NP          VP
  S          S
    I       think
      N        V
        that
```

This introducer of the subordinate clause is called a complementizer.
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

This works well at first glance…

Jory says his knee hurts.  = stands alone = **Main clause**
His knee hurts.  = **Main clause**

…but what do we mean structurally by ‘stand alone’?
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

Jory says his knee hurts.

```
S
 NP
  N  VP
    V   S
     N    NP
          V    VP
            his knee  hurts
```

← Independent clause

← Subordinate clause
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

Revised definition #1:*

Independent clause:
A clause not dominated by another node.

Subordinate clause:
A clause dominated by another node.

* = We’re not done revising yet.
Main vs. Subordinate clauses

Diagnostic for Main vs. Subordinate clauses: Main clauses can undergo Subject-Aux Inversion but Subordinate clauses cannot.

Compare…

Rory will leave.

Will Rory leave? (OK = Main clause)