Word classes

• Semantic criteria
  – Nouns denote entities.
    Givón (1984): Words that express time-stable concepts
  – Verbs denote actions.
    Givón (1984): Words that express the least time-stable concepts, e.g. events
  – Adjectives denote states.
  – Adverbs denote the manner in which something is done.
  – Prepositions denote location.
  – Determiners serve to specify.

Semantic criteria

• Not a reliable test for word classes
  – assassination, freedom, ความสุข, กรุงเทพฯ

Morphological and syntactic criteria

• Morphological and syntactic criteria for identifying word classes
  – What are the different forms that the word can have? (Morphology)
  – Whereabouts in a phrase or sentence does the word occur? (Distribution)
  – What work does the word perform in a phrase or sentence? (Function)

Word classes

• Verbs
• Nouns
• Adjectives
• Adverbs
• Prepositions
Verbs

• Morphological criteria
  – Base form
  – Present tense –s
  – Past tense –ed
  – Participle
  – Gerund –ing
• Distinguish verbs from modals (modal auxiliaries)

Verbs

• Syntactic criteria
  – Distribution
    Pat _____ her cat.
    Sam can _____ a monkey.
    Mary wanted to _____.
  – Function
    Predicates (denote situations, events, actions, processes, etc.)

Arguments

• Participants in an event
  – John ran.
    Intransitive
  – John hit Bill.
    Transitive
  – John gave a present to Bill.
    Ditransitive

Semantic roles

• Agent, Patient, Experiencer, Recipient, Goal, Force, Instrument

• Arguments and semantic roles
  – John and Bill laughed.
  – John and Bill killed two rats.
  – Tea, I like.
Nouns

- Morphological criteria
- Syntactic criteria
  - Distribution
  - Function
    Arguments of predicates
    Grammatical relations: Subject, Object (Direct object, Indirect object, Prepositional object)

Criteria for subjecthood

1. In the garden was a rabbit.
2. John is a teacher.
3. Mary doesn’t like apples.
4. These pictures were painted by John.

Criteria for subjecthood

- Control subject-verb agreement (in terms of person and number)
- Nominative case marking (seen in pronouns)
- Canonical position: right before the verb

Nouns and predicative function

- Noun phrases can be predicates, and in some languages a copula verb is not present.
Adjectives

- Morphological criteria
- Syntactic criteria
  - Distribution
    - He is very/too/quite ______.
  - Degree modifiers
- Function
  - Attributive and predicative functions

Functions of APs

- Attributive APs modify a noun and normally have a fixed position.
  - a round table, a black book
  - une table ronde, un livre noir
- Predicative APs
  - He felt tired/happy/bad.
  - She is nice/smart/jealous.

Functions of APs

- Predicative APs occur with a copula verb in English, but not in many other languages.

- Some adjectives in English can only be used as predicative adjectives or attributive adjectives, e.g., awake, utter.

Are adjectives essential?

- A closed class in Igbo
- Languages express concepts differently.
  - He is happy.
  - เขาไม่สบาย
Prasithrathsint (2000)
- There are languages which have no category of adjectives.
- Adjectives in Thai are in fact verbs.

Prasithrathsint (2000)
- Functional criterion: verb and adjective
- Semantic criterion: adjective
- Syntactic criterion: verb

Prasithrathsint (2000)
- Proposed that NP+“Adjective” is a relative clause in which thîi can be absent.
- Verb-like behaviors
  - Occurrence in predicative position
  - Negation
  - Imperative
  - Co-occurrence with words signifying aspects

Prasithrathsint (2000)
- Verbs behave like “adjectives”.
  - Nominal modification
  - Nominalization
  - Intensification
  - Comparison
  - Co-occurrence with classifiers
Prasithrathsint (2000)
- Thai expresses adjectival concepts through verbs.
  - Can be separated from action verbs
  - “adjectival verbs” (Matisoff 1973)

Post (2008)
- Questioned the claim that Thai does not have adjectives
- Examined the internal structure of the Thai adjective class and compared behaviors of adjectives with those of members of other word classes

Post (2008)
- Adjectives are terms that denote property concepts.
- Terms denoting property concepts in Thai classified into verblike and nounlike forms.

Post (2008)
- Adjectives in Thai exhibit behaviors and distributional patterns that are similar and different from stative and active verbs.
- Nominalization
  Only adjectives and non-core verbs can take \textit{khwaam}. 
Adnominal modification
- Attributive clause
  
Adjectival modification with attributive clauses, and verbal modification with relative clauses.

Adjectives in Thai can be distinguished from verbs on distributional grounds.
- There is a class of terms in Thai that is similar to the adjectives classes in many languages.
- Thai cannot be used as evidence for the existence of a language that does not treat property concept words differently from other types of words.

Prepositions
- Distributional properties
  It was right ______ the bed.
- Functions
  - Mark location and time
  - Express manner in which an event is carried out, modify verbs
    (A PP can be an adverbial.)

Adverbs
- Morphological criteria
- Syntactic criteria
  - Distribution
    - He treats her ______.
    - His ______ red shirt was stolen.
    - He sings very ______.
  - Function
    - Modify verbs, adjectives, and adverbs
- Adjectives and adverbs are similar.
Grammatical categories

• Different types of grammatical categories
  – Inherent
  – Agreement
  – Relational

• Can be represented in 2 ways
  – Change in form (e.g., affix)
  – Use a closed class word

Grammatical categories for nouns

• Number
• Gender or noun class
  – Generally marked on nouns
  – Bantu languages: extensive noun class systems
• Definiteness
• Case

Grammatical categories for verbs

• Tense: systematic coding of the relation between two points of time (reference time and event time)
  • The default temporal reference point which event/state clauses are anchored is the time of speech.
  • Absolute tense, relative tense
  • Past, Future, Present (Habitual)

Grammatical categories for verbs

• Languages may have sub-divisions of tense (remote and recent past, immediate and distance future.
  – English: past, present (non-past)
  – Cross-linguistic differences: Past and non-past, Future and non-future
Grammatical categories for verbs

- Aspect
  - Inherent (lexical) aspect vs. grammatical aspect
- Perfective: perspective focus on termination and boundedness
  Imperfective: perspective focus away from termination and boundedness
  - Progressive: ongoing process
  - Habitual: repeated events

- Interaction between inherent aspect and grammatical aspect
  - He shot the gun.
  - He was shooting the gun.
  - She left the house.
  - She was leaving the house.

- Perfect

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Grammatical categories for verbs

- Modality
  - Deontic modality: the speaker's intention to influence others' action (obligation and permission)
  - Epistemic modality: addition of information regarding the nature of proposition (conjectural, evidentiality)
- Mood
  Actual and hypothetical events
  Indicative, subjunctive

- Voice
  Active and passive
- Agreement
  Person and number
  Gender or noun class
Grammatical categories for adjectives

• Comparison
• Agreement

Grammatical categories

• How grammatical information is expressed depends on morphology in the language.