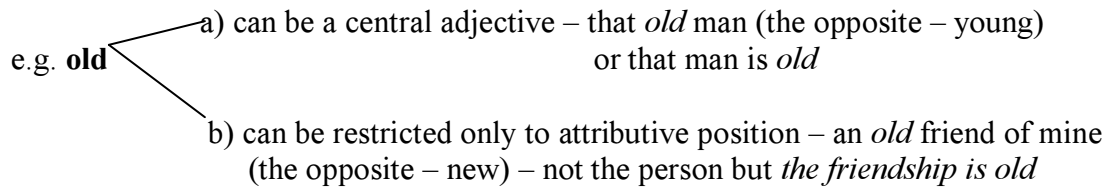


## SEMINAR 11B – ADJECTIVES and ADVERBS (2)

### SYNTACTIC SUBCLASSIFICATION OF ADJECTIVES

#### I. ATTRIBUTIVE ONLY

- in general, adjectives that are restricted to attributive position (or that occur predominantly in attributive position) do not characterize the referent of the noun directly



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- a) adjectives that characterize the referent of the noun directly are termed **INHERENT**
- b) adjectives that do not characterize it directly are termed **NONINHERENT**

#### Intensifying adjectives

- some adjectives have a **heightening effect** on the noun they modify, or the reverse – a **lowering effect**
- we can distinguish three main semantic subclasses:
  - a) emphasers
  - b) amplifiers
  - c) downtoners

↓

- a) emphasers – have a general heightening effect and are generally attributive only:

e.g. a *true* scholar                      a *sure* sign  
a *clear* failure                          the *simple* truth  
a *certain* (= *sure*) winner            *pure* fabrication  
*plain* nonsense                          *sheer* madness  
*sheer* arrogance

- b) amplifiers – scale upwards from an assumed norm, and are **central** adjectives if they are inherent and denote a high or extreme degree

e.g. a *complete* victory    v.    The victory was *complete*.  
    *great* destruction      v.    The destruction was *great*.

- when they are noninherent, amplifiers are attributive only

e.g. a *complete* fool            but not! The fool was ~~complete~~.  
    a *firm* friend                but not! The friend is ~~firm~~.  
    a *close* friend  
    an *extreme* enemy  
    a *great* supporter

Compare:

*total nonsense* – not! The nonsense was ~~total~~. = emphaser  
*total destruction* or The destruction was *total*. = amplifier  
(= destruction of everything)

- c) downtoners – have a lowering effect, usually scaling downwards from an assumed norm. They are relatively few (*slight, feeble*), generally they are central adjectives

e.g. a *slight* effort  
a *feeble* joke

### Restrictive adjectives

- restrict the reference of the noun exclusively, particularly or chiefly

e.g. a *certain* person (=particular) x a *certain* winner (sure) – intensifier!  
a *particular* child  
the *same* student  
the *only* occasion  
the *chief* excuse  
the *exact* answer  
the *sole* argument  
the *specific* point

### Adjectives related to adverbs

- some noninherent adjectives that are only attributive can be related to adverbs, even though they are not intensifying or restrictive

e.g. my *former* friend (= formerly my friend)  
*past* students (= students in the past)  
a *possible* friend (= possibly a friend)  
the *present* king (= the king at present)  
an *occasional* visitor (= occasionally a visitor)

Compare:

the *late* president (=a person who was formerly the president and now is dead) –  
attributive only

v. the *late* bus – a central adjective

- if the adjectives premodify agentive nouns, the noun suggests a relationship to an associated verb:

e.g. a *big eater* (=someone who eats a lot)  
a *clever liar* (= someone who lies cleverly)  
a *hard worker* (= someone who works hard)  
a *heavy smoker* (= someone who smokes heavily)  
a *sound sleeper* (=someone who sleeps soundly)  
a *fast car* (= a car that can go fast)  
a *fast road* (=a road on which one can drive fast)

### Adjectives related to nouns

- adjectives derived from nouns (=denominal adj.) by means of suffixes tend to be restricted to attributive position

e.g. an *atomic* scientist  
a *criminal* court (= a court dealing with crime)  
a *polar* bear (= a bear living near the pole)  
a *medical* school (= a school for students of medicine)

*musical* comedy (=a comedy accompanied by music)  
a *tidal* wave (=a wave produced by the tide)

## II. PREDICATIVE ONLY

- adjectives that are restricted, or virtually restricted, to predicative position are most like verbs and adverbs
- they tend to refer to a (possibly temporary) condition rather than a characteristic
- the most common are those referring to the health (or lack of health) of an animate being  
e.g. He felt *ill* / poorly.

He was *ill*. But not! ~~The ill man~~ .... (= *the sick man*)

- the adjectives restricted to predicative position also comprise those which can take complementation:

e.g. <i>able</i> (to+inf)	<i>fond</i> (of)
<i>afraid</i> (that, of, about)	<i>glad</i> (that, to)
<i>answerable</i> (to)	<i>happy</i> (that, to, with, about)
<i>aware</i> (of)	<i>subject</i> (to)
<i>conscious</i> (that, of)	

## SEMANTIC SUBCLASSIFICATION OF ADJECTIVES

### a) stative v. dynamic

- adjectives are characteristically stative
- some adjectives, however, can be seen as dynamic

e.g. stative - **tall** - it cannot be used with progressive aspect or imperative)  
dynamic – **funny** – e.g. I didn't realize he was being funny.

Adjectives that can be used dynamically: *brave, calm, careful, cheerful, conceited, cruel, foolish, friendly, funny, good, greedy, helpful, jealous, naughty, noisy, stupid, tidy, witty*

### b) gradable v. nongradable (ungradable)

- most adjectives are gradable, i.e. they can take comparisons and can be modified by intensifiers

e.g. tall taller tallest  
beautiful more beautiful most beautiful  
very tall (but not: ~~very impossible~~ - nongradable)  
so beautiful  
extremely useful

- all dynamic and most stative adjectives are gradable
- some stative adjectives + denominal adj. are nongradable – e.g. an *atomic* scientist, *hydrochloric* acid) + adjectives denoting provenance (*British*)

**Gradability** also influences what kind of **adverbs** we may use to modify adjectives:

**1) gradable adjectives** – e.g. *angry, big, busy, quiet, rich, strong, important*, etc. – can go with the following adverbs (although not all the adverbs given go with all the adjectives given):

*extremely, deeply, fairly, hugely, immensely, pretty (inf.), rather, really, reasonably, slightly, very*

**2) nongradable adjectives** – e.g. *amazed, awful, terrible, furious, huge, impossible, wonderful*, etc. – can go with these adverbs:

*absolutely, completely, entirely, pretty, really, simply, totally, utterly* but not: ~~very~~

note: *really* and *pretty* are universal – they can go with both types of adj.

### c) inherent v. noninherent

- most adjectives are inherent

e.g. a *wooden* cross (the adj. applies to the referent of the object directly - material)

but! a *wooden* actor – noninherent – the actor is not made of wood, we describe his acting

other examples:

<i>inherent</i>	<i>noninherent</i>
a <i>firm</i> handshake	a <i>firm</i> friend
a <i>perfect</i> alibi	a <i>perfect</i> stranger
a <i>certain</i> result	a <i>certain</i> winner
a <i>true</i> report	a <i>true</i> scholar

### Ordering of adjectives in premodification

- adjectives are placed between the determiners and the head of the noun phrase, we can distinguish four zones:
  - a) precentral (after determiners) – peripheral, nongradable adjectives, esp. intensifying adj., e.g. *certain, definite, sheer, complete, slight*
  - b) central – e.g. *hungry, ugly, funny, stupid, silent, rich, empty*
  - c) postcentral – participles – e.g. *retired, sleeping, + colours*
  - d) prehead – denominal adjectives denoting nationality, ethnic background (*Austrian*), and denominal adjectives with the meaning of consisting, involving, relating to, e.g. *experimental, statistical, political*

### The usual order of adjectives

quality      size      age      shape      colour      origin      participle      NOUN  
(opinion)

*beautiful*      *big*      *new*      *round*      *brown*      *Spanish*      *wooden*      table