

# Classification of phrases

Степанов Никита АЗ-18-03

# What is a phrase?

Despite the fact that the phrase, along with the sentence, is a basic unit of syntax, there is no universally accepted definition of the phrase.

All definitions of phrases fall into two groups: the modern approach and the traditional approach

# Modern approach

According to the modern approach the phrase is a combination of at least two words, one of which is a notional word but which is not a form of a word.

e.g. will have been writing is not a phrase but a form of the verb to write.

Do it is a phrase.

# Traditional approach

According to the traditional approach the phrase is a combination of at least two words belonging to the notional parts of speech. According to this approach the combination of words in the park is not a phrase because "in" is not a notional word.

Types of phrases  
are distinguished a  
ccording to 2  
criteria

- The structural criterium
- The semantic criterium

## Classification of phrases according to the presence/absence of the kernel element

- **The kernel element** is that on which the other one is dependent. If there is the kernel element in a phrase, the phrase belongs to the kernel group of phrases (a nice place, well-known artists, absolutely positive, to run fast, to see a movie, to taste good).
- If there is no main constituent in a phrase, it belongs to **the non-kernel subgroup**. The procedure which helps to see whether there is a dependent constituent or not is to see on the sentence level the possibility of dropping one of the constituents without destroying the identity of the sentence.

According to the reference of the main constituent to this or that part of speech, phrases are divided into 4 groups:

- - noun-phrases:

A+N: a young man

N+N: a brick wall

N's+N: the girl's smile;

adv+N: the then government

N+prep+N: a leg of the table

- - verb-phrases:

V+N: take a shower

V+adv: to walk fast

V+adj: to look beautiful;

V+prep+N: to depend on the weather

V+V: to try to do

- - adjective-phrases:

adv+adj: very interesting

adj+prep+N: independent of the weather

- - adverb-phrases: adv+adv - very quickly

According to the semantic relations existing between the components phrases are divided into:

- a. The ones expressing attributive (qualifying) relations (characteristics)  
adj+N, N's+N, adv+V, adv+adj, adv+adv (a young man, a girl's voice, very beautiful, very fast)
- b. The ones expressing objective relations:
  - action-receiver relations e.g. to read a book, the book is written, the farther's discovery
  - doer-action relations: N+V: my friend reads, I insist on his going there,  
N's+N: his father's arrival
- c. The ones expressing adverbial relations: prep+N in the park, V+N to enter the room  
V+prep+N: to peep into the room