

The Prepositional Phrase as Sentential Modifier and as Manner Adverbial in English *

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I. The aim of this paper is to examine prepositional phrases which function either as sentential modifiers or as manner adverbials. Prepositional phrases often behave like adverbs, modifying or specifying a particular word or the sentence as a whole. In fact, prepositions have played a more crucial role in sentence construction ever since the English language lost so many of its inflections, particularly during the Middle English Period. The analysis of prepositional phrases in light of actual language use should be of great help to those who are learning English as a second language.

First of all, let us review briefly some proposals concerning adverbs and prepositional phrases. Chomsky (1965), in dealing with Verb subcategorization, claims that Time and Place Adverbials can occur freely with various types of Verb Phrase, whereas many Prepositional Phrases occur in a much narrower range. He proposes the phrase structure rules given in (1):
(P.102)

- (1) i $S \rightarrow NP \widehat{\text{Predicate-Phrase}}$
 ii $\widehat{\text{Predicate-Phrase}} \rightarrow \text{Aux } VP \text{ (Place) (Time)}$
 iii $VP \rightarrow V (NP) (\text{Prep-Phrase}) (\text{Prep-Phrase}) (\text{Manner})$
 iv $\text{Prep-Phrase} \rightarrow \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Direction} \\ \text{Duration} \\ \text{Place} \\ \text{Frequency} \\ \text{etc.} \end{array} \right\}$

He argues that Verbs are subcategorized with respect to the Prepositional Phrases introduced by (liii) but not with respect to those introduced by (lii), namely, the Place and Time Adverbials, which are perhaps better thought of a Sentence Adverbial. Briefly put, Verbs are to be subcategorized by Verbal Complements, but not by Verbal Phrase Complements. To illustrate how the four types of Adverbials listed in (liv) function as Verbal Complements, he gives the following examples:
(P.102)

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- (2)
- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| dash—into the room | (V-Direction) |
| last—for three hours | (V-Duration) |
| remain—in England | (V-Place) |
| win—three times a week | (V-Frequency) |
| * dash—in England | |
| * last—three times a week | |
| * remain—into the room | |
| * win—for three hours | |

The first three examples seem to me to differ from the last one, *win three times a week*, in that Frequency seems better thought of as a sentential modifier than a verbal complement. Before examining the above examples, let us now consider the following pair of sentences:

(3) Mary sings *on the bus*.

(4) Mary gets *on the bus*.

Each prepositional phrase *on the bus* given above indicates Place, but their functions differ depending on the head verb (*sing and get*, respectively). The prepositional phrase *on the bus* in (3) is an adverbial phrase, which Chomsky designates as a Place Adverbial, whereas the prepositional phrase in (4) is an adverbial complement, which Chomsky designates as Verbal Complement. The prepositional phrase in (3) can be deleted:

(5) Mary sings.

but it can not be deleted in (4):

(6) *Mary gets.

Moreover, the prepositional phrase *on the bus* in (3) can also stand in initial position:

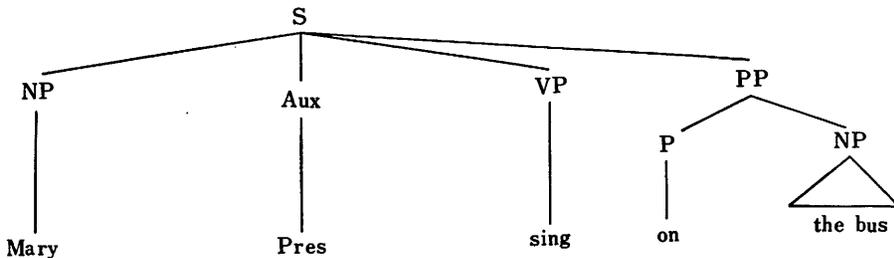
(7) On the bus, Mary sings.

but not in (4):

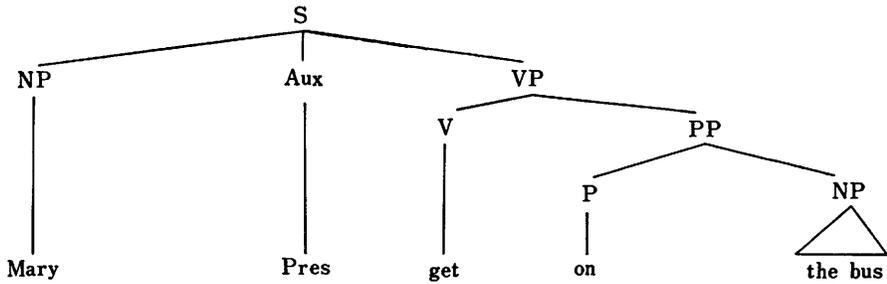
(8) *On the bus Mary gets.

The functional difference between these prepositional phrases in (3) and (4) might be related to the underlying structures represented by the tree diagrams below:

(9) (Mary sings on the bus)



(10) (Mary gets on the bus)



Notice that the prepositional phrase in (9) is immediately dominated by Sentence (S), while the prepositional phrase in (10), by Verb Phrase (VP). In other words, prepositional phrases like *on the bus* in (3) are transportable and optional, whereas prepositional phrases as in (4) are not transportable, and obligatory. The distinction between adverbial phrase and adverbial complement seems to depend upon the head verb which the prepositional phrase follows.

Returning to the examples Chomsky presents, the prepositional phrases *into the house* in *dash into the house* and *in England* in *remain in England* are adverbial complements which he calls verbal complements, since prepositional phrases and verbs in these cases function as semantic units indicating the goal of the action. The prepositional phrase *for three hours* in *last for three hours* might best be classified as an adverbial complement in the sense that the prepositional phrase is very closely related to the verb *last*, indicating how long the action continues. On the other hand, the adverbial *three times a week* in *win three times a week* looks more like a sentential adverb than an adverbial complement, because the verb *win* can often be used freely by itself.

For example,

(11) The visiting team *won*.

(12) I am sure to *win*.

(13) "Which side *won*?" "We *won*."

(14) "Where did he *win*?" "He *won* at Forest Hills."

It seems that the relationship between the verb and its adverbial in the case of *win* is not so strong as those seen in the cases of *dash into*, *remain in* and *last for*.

Furthermore, Chomsky argues that Manner Adverbial participates in Verb subcategorization, since verbs generally take Manner Adverbials freely although there are some that do not, e. g. *resemble*, *weigh* and *fit*, all classified as "middle verbs" by Lees (1960). Chomsky considers the passive transformation to be applicable to structures containing verbs which take Manner Adverbials freely. But we shall not be concerned with this issue here. Thus, his proposal that Manner Adverbials dominated by VP modify verbs directly, while the Place and Time Adverbials modify sentences, seems proper and reasonable, reflecting somehow the behavior of adverbs.

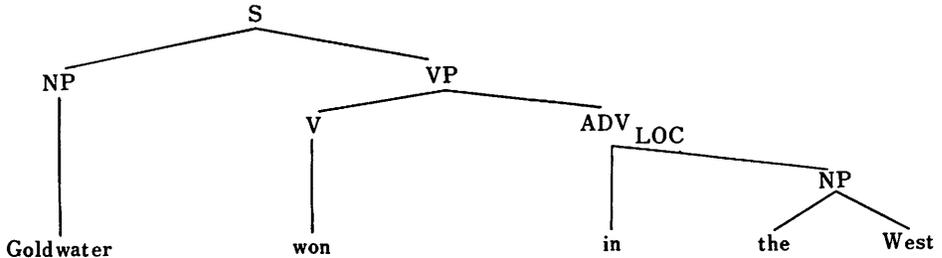
On the other hand, Lakoff (1970), basing his views on Chomsky's (1957 & 1965)

assumption that attributive adjectives are derived from full sentences in deep structure, proposes that the same is true of certain adverbial modifiers, especially, Time and Place Adverbials. Using the following example (P. 154)

(15) Goldwater won in the West.

he claims that in traditional and transformational grammar, (15) would be analyzed as in (16):

(16)



and that *in the West* is a locative adverb modifying *won* and *won in the West* forms a single deep structure constituent. He argues that locative adverbs like *in the West* do not occur in the same VP constituents and that the locative adverbials do not modify a verb but rather an "event", given by a full sentence (in this case, *Goldwater won*). I agree with his first assumption, namely, that locative adverbs do not occur in the same VP constituents or the head verbs. The Locative Adverbial, as Chomsky (1965) analyzes it, is a node governed by Sentence (S) rather than Verb Phrase (VP). In other words, it is a sentential adverb that can move freely without changing the meaning involved. For example, in (15) the prepositional phrase *in the West* may occur in both sentence-initial and sentence-final positions:

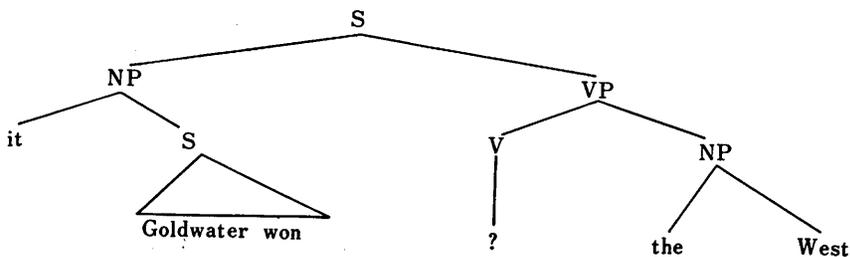
(17) In the West, Goldwater won.

As for the second assumption, that the locative adverb modifies an "event", it seems to me that sentential adverbials, including locative and time adverbs, modify an "event" in a sense since they modify an entire sentence.

Lakoff's analysis leads him to conclude that "time and locative adverbs do not occur in deep structure as parts of the sentences that they modify. Rather they appear to be derived from predicates of other, 'higher sentences'⁽¹⁾" as in (18):

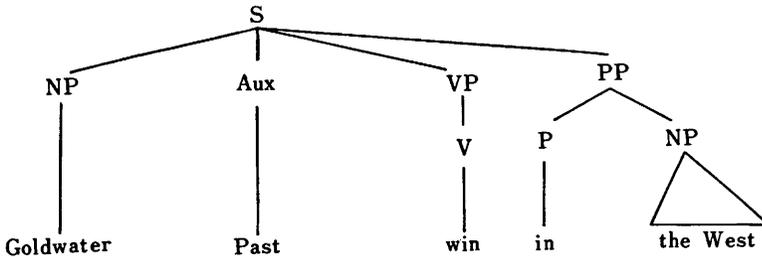
(18)

(P.156)



In my opinion, however, time and locative adverbs occur from the start in deep structures as a constituent dominated by Sentence (S). Thus, the underlying structure of (15) might look like this:

(19)



With regard to Manner Adverbials, Lakoff (1965) proposes that they are derived from adjectival complements. He gives the following example:

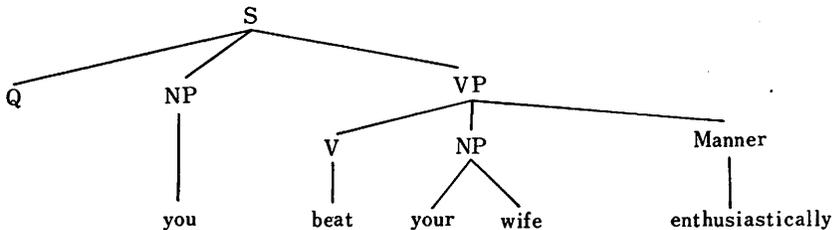
(20) Do you beat your wife *enthusiastically*? (P.165)

Here he claims that asking (20) is analogous to asking:

(21) Are you enthusiastic in beating your wife?

He, furthermore, assumes that if Sentence (20) had the underlying structure of (22),

(22)



Sentence (20) would be questioning whether the beating took place without referring to the enthusiasm with which the beating occurs. Nevertheless, the underlying structure represented in (22) looks reasonable except for the abstract symbol "Q", which has no constituent of its own. His analysis based on the assumption that manner adverbials are derived from adjectival complements seems semantically oriented, since manner adverbials are not necessarily adverbs derived from adjectives such as *careful* or *slow* but are often prepositional phrases, (which I shall discuss later in detail).

II. Let us now consider the prepositional phrase functioning as sentential modifier, as in the case of Place Adverbials and Time Adverbials. With Place Adverbials, the same prepositional phrase can occur as sentential modifier and adverbial complement, as in (3) and (4). This possibility seems to have something to do with the head verb which the prepositional phrase

follows. Here are some examples of Place Adverbials:

- (23) a) They are shopping *at the IGA*.
 b) If you are cold, come and get warm *near the stove*.
 c) Ring me up *at my office*.
 d) I will meet you *upstairs*.⁽²⁾
 e) Tom ran into her *on the train*.
 f) Katharine is relaxing *at home*.
 g) He spent two happy years *in the various capitals of Europe*.
 h) The children play dodge ball *outside*.⁽³⁾
 i) We enjoyed our vacation *in Texas*.

At this stage of the discussion, we must consider the phrase structure rule required to deal with a sentential modifier.

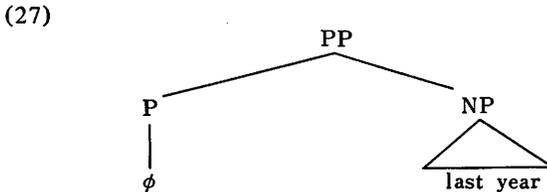
- (24) S → NP (Aux) VP (PP)*

[* indicates an unlimited number of prepositional phrases to follow, in order to treat such sentences as *My uncle passed away in Paris in 1974*.]

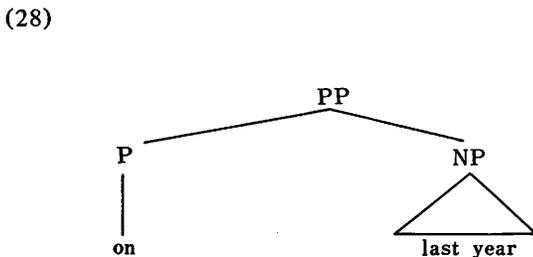
Secondary, Time Adverbials like *last week*, *on Sunday morning* can be classified as sentential modifiers. There are many cases in which prepositions do not appear on a surface level, e.g.

- (25) He went to Boston *last year*.
 (26) I have not read the newspaper *today*.

Nevertheless, we could assume that *last year*, for example, is dominated by Prepositional Phrase (PP) which has something like the following deep structure:



Otherwise, there might be some such structure underlying *last year* as in (28):



The preposition *on*, which exists in the deep structure, could be deleted by a transformation to produce *last year*. We have some examples:

- (29) a) I wrote to Mother *last month*.
b) Where are you likely to be *next week*?
c) The party will be at the Dining Hall *tonight*.
d) We had no classes *yesterday*.
e) They are going to visit Niagara Falls *this weekend*.
f) We have had unusually heavy snow *this year*.
g) She died *the day before yesterday*.
h) We took a trip to Mexico *last summer*.
i) I'll see you *tomorrow*.

Finally, let us examine how the prepositional phrase can play the part of a Manner Adverbial in English sentences. Manner Adverbials, which are most often derived from adjectives by suffixation, e. g. *carefully* or *elegantly*, can usually be paraphrased by a prepositional phrase of the form "in an adjective way/manner" such as *in a careful way/manner* or *in an elegant way/manner*. According to Chomsky (1965), many Manner Adverbials are Sentence transforms with deleted Subjects. For example,
(PP. 218–219)

- (30) John gave the lecture *with great enthusiasm*.

has for its last part the base string

John has great enthusiasm.

Since "with" is generally a transform of "have" and the repeated NP "John" is obligatorily deleted, we may obtain the sentence

John gave the lecture with great enthusiasm.

Manner Adverbials, which generally modify action verbs like *sing*, *run*, or *dance*, are dominated by Verb Phrase (VP) as defined by Chomsky (1965). Therefore, the phrase structure rule might be:

- (31) VP → V (NP) (PP)*

Prepositions have developed out of adverbs. As adverbs, prepositions were originally connected with a verb and not with a noun. In the course of time, however, the adverb lost its close connection with the verb and became linked to the noun, finally taking its position before it. Prepositional phrases seem better accounted for if they are treated as constituents in the deep structure from the beginning, particularly because the role of the preposition has been immensely increased to the extent that what seems to have been originally a superfluous addition to an adverbial phrase has become an essential connecting link between nouns and nouns and nouns and verbs. Prepositions also govern noun-equivalents, e. g. *till late*, *from above* or *for ever*.

Now, let us consider how such prepositional phrases as Manner Adverbials behave in sentences. The prepositional phrase plays the role of manner adverbial in a different way from its corresponding *ly*-adverb; for instance, we may say:

(32) Carol speaks French *naturally*.

(33) Carol speaks French *in a natural way/manner*.

Applying the cleft sentence test to the sentences above, the result will be:

(34) *It is *naturally* that she speaks French.

(35) It is *in a natural way/manner* that Carol speaks French.

Although some native speakers claim that (35) is slightly unusual, it is not considered ungrammatical. None, however, accepts (34). Many adverbs indicating manner have end position, e.g. *She sings beautifully*. *Naturally* in (32), for instance, in initial position provides a different meaning:

(36) *Naturally*, she speaks French.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) say that when an adverb exists, it is preferred over a corresponding prepositional phrase with *manner* or *way*. However, prepositional phrases beginning with either *in* or *with*, e. g. *in earnest* or *with care*, are often used as Manner Adverbials, which may be due to that category's less restricted usage, as mentioned above. Here are some examples:

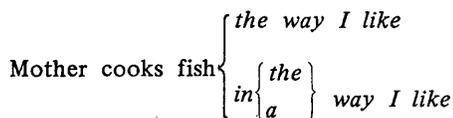
- (37) a) I would then have to read out slowly what I have written *in haste*.
b) *In despair and terror* they waited, expecting to hear an alarm.
c) The Revolutionary Army of Mao Tse-tung marched *in triumph* in 1949.
d) We parted *in silence and tears*.
e) "I remembered two very striking facts," he replied *in a whisper*.
f) She answered the summons *in person*.
g) They were received *with the utmost courtesy*.
h) "I think I'll kill him", she said *with a smile*.
i) She pushed the trunk *with all her strength*.
j) Hoover came to hate the late Attorney General Robert Kennedy *with a passion*.
k) America today must act *with realism* and *with unity* in the interest of the world as a whole.
l) The East European nations have not suffered from Western penetration because they rule *with an iron hand*.
m) He wagged his head *with a knowing air*.
n) Then, *with a flash and a roar*, the house blew up.
o) Talk *with the tongue of serpents*, sing *with the voice of angels*, but most of the time say little *with the silence of the knowing*.
p) They elected him *without argument*.
q) The meeting was held *without prior notice*.
r) He handed it to Ramsay *without a word*.
s) Everything grows *at great speed*.
t) Nor is there any evidence that Mr. Brown took poison *by mistake*.

We also have examples of Manner Adverbials in the *in a...manner/way* pattern with the adjectival form in the vacant slot:

- (38) a) Mrs. Ramsay *in her modest way* flushed a little.
 b) Friendship became, *in a strange sort of way*, a code of honor.
 c) So everything, *in an odd way*, is changing in Washington.
 d) They are calling us back, as George McGovern tried, *in a different way*, to do in the last Presidential election.
 e) He replied politely *in a sharp, business-like manner*.
 f) The task was done *in a woman-like manner*.

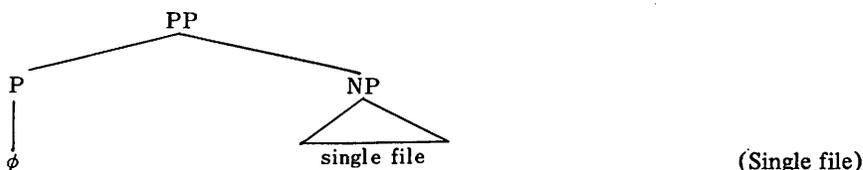
Although most Manner Adverbials are realized by adverb phrases and prepositional phrases, there are some realized by noun phrases:

- (39) They marched *single file*.

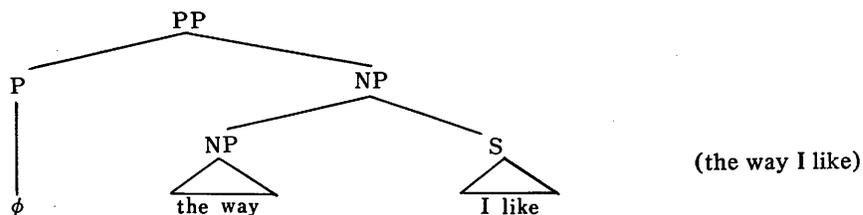


These noun phrases *single file* and *the way I like* may be regarded as having omitted the preposition *in*. Instead, we may assume again that the above noun phrases are dominated by the node Prepositional Phrase (PP), where the preposition is null, as represented in the following tree diagrams:

- (40)



- (41)



What has been treated in this paper is the notion that both sentential modifiers and manner adverbials appear in deep structure from the beginning of a derivation and that prepositional phrases frequently assume the role of adverbials in English sentence constructions. Although English is a language which has a relatively fixed word order indicating grammatical relationships, prepositions still behave like case-markers in Japanese. The examples discussed above hopefully have elucidated the functions of prepositional phrases and should help familiarize learners of English with prepositional phrases often used in Modern English.

NOTES

- (1) Lakoff, George, "Pronominalization, Negation, and the Analysis of Adverb" in Jacobs and Rosenbaum (eds.) (1970), P157.
- (2) and (3) "Upstairs" and "outside" are intransitive prepositions, which do not take an object, unlike *on* in *on the table*.

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〔内容抄録〕 古代英語には、かなり複雑な格語尾を保存し、語順は比較的自由であったが、格語尾の消失とともに、もと格語尾によって表わされた関係は、あるいは固定した語順により、あるいは前置詞によって表わされるようになった。したがって、近代英語における前置詞の果たす役割は非常に大きくなった。本文では、主として、現実に使われている前置詞句の例題を言語理論に基づいて分析し、その扱い方を英語教授上から解明したい。