



English in Use
Seminar 2:

Identifying, describing, explaining and addressing potential problem areas for Norwegian learners of English

Concord between subject and verbal
Tense and aspect





Seminar 2 – 11-12.04

- A brief return to syntactic analysis and the different levels of description (Monday)
- **Identifying, describing, explaining** and **addressing** potential problem areas for Norwegian learners of English
 - Subject-verbal concord, ch. 9 (+ ch. 8, ++!) (Monday)
 - Tense (the past and the present) and aspect (the progressive and the perfective), ch. 10 (Tuesday)

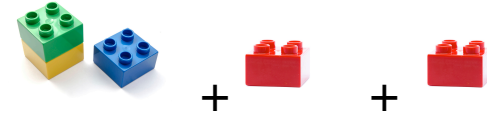


Høgskolen i Hedmark

KfK 1 1-7 *English in Use*
Spring 2016
Hege Larsson Aas

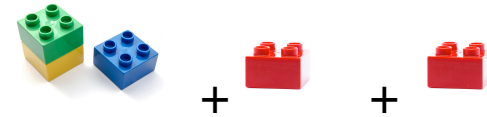
Identifying clause elements

Recipe



1. What is going on here? → **V**
➤ *bought*
2. What/who V? → **S**
➤ *He bought*
3. What does S V? → **dO**
➤ *He bought a Lego piece*
4. Who does S V dO? → **iO**
➤ *He bought her a Lego piece*
5. A linking verb? What is S? → **sP**
➤ *He was a nice guy*
6. How does S V dO? → **oP**
➤ *She found him a nice guy*
7. When, where, how, why, (etc.) V? → **A**
➤ *She opened the gift, beaming with excitement*

+ Identifying clause elements



Linking verb? What is S? → **SUBJECT PREDICATIVE (sP)**

- Always occur with verbs such as *be* and *become* (**linking** or **copular** verbs)

S

-----**sP**-----

The Lego piece was my most precious possession

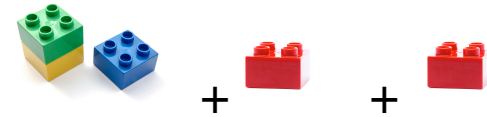
- A verbal is usually **copular** if you can replace it by some form of *be* or *become* without a major change in meaning

S

sP

She seemed nice

+ Identifying clause elements



Linking verb? What is S? → **SUBJECT PREDICATIVE (sP)**

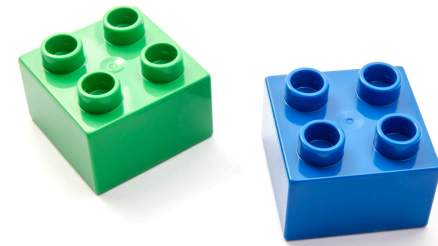
- Remember that adjectives and other words or clauses that describe a subject or object are not necessarily separate clause elements!

S **V** -----**dO**-----
 NP
 det. head -----postmodifier-----

I binned the lego pieces from my childhood

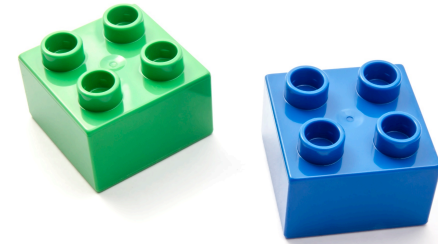
-----**S**----- **V** **sP**

The lego pieces looked ugly



She always gives the students difficult tasks that are quite tricky.

1. What is going on here (find the verb phrases)?

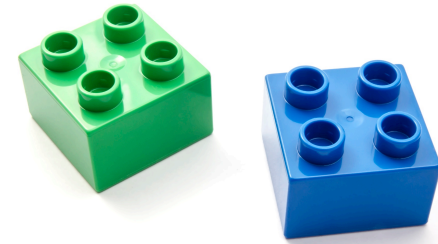


She always **gives** the students difficult tasks that **are** quite tricky.

1.1 Simple, compound or complex?

1.2 What is the main action here?

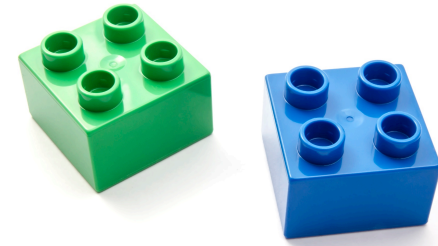
- **Simple sentence** = a single main clause
- **Compound sent.** = two or more clauses linked together by a coordinating conjunction
- **Complex sent.** = containing one or more dependent clauses (clauses that have a syntactic function inside a phrase or clause)



V

She always **gives** the students difficult tasks that **are** quite tricky.

2. Who gives?

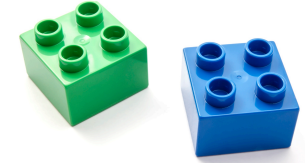


S

V

She always **gives** the students difficult tasks that **are** quite tricky.

3. What does she give?



**Adjectival relative clause
(p. 181-185, IEG)**

S

V

-----dO-----

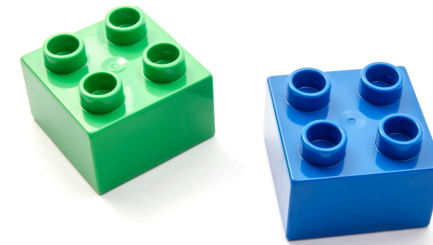
She always gives the students **difficult tasks that are quite tricky.**

Substitution → *She always gives the students **that**.*

Movement → ***Difficult tasks that are quite tricky** is what she gives the students.
→ *Difficult tasks is what she gives the students that are quite tricky.*

(Co-ordination → ***difficult tasks that are quite tricky** and some that are easier
→ *the students difficult tasks that are quite tricky and...)*

4. Who does she give difficult tasks that are quite tricky to?



S V -----iO----- -----dO-----

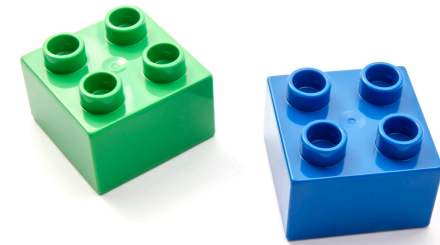
She always gives the students difficult tasks that are quite tricky.

5. , 6. → No linking/copular verbs here (in the main clause) = no **sP** or **oP**

A verbal is usually **copular** if you can replace it by some form of *be* or *become* without a major change in meaning

S sP S -----sP-----
She seemed nice The Lego piece was my most precious possession

7. When, where, how, why, (etc.) does she give the students difficult(...)?

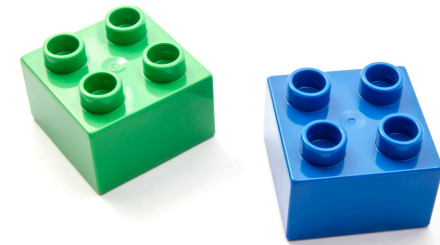


S A V -----iO----- -----dO-----

She **always** gives the students difficult tasks that are quite tricky.

→ **Phrases and words**

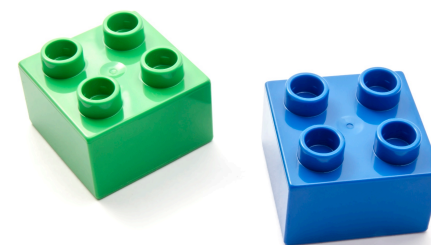
S = Subject
A = Adverbial
V = Verbal
iO = Indirect object
dO = Direct object



S A V -----iO----- -----dO-----
NP AdvP VP NP NP

She always gives the students difficult tasks that are quite tricky.

NP = Noun phrase
AdvP = Adverb phrase
VP = Verb phrase



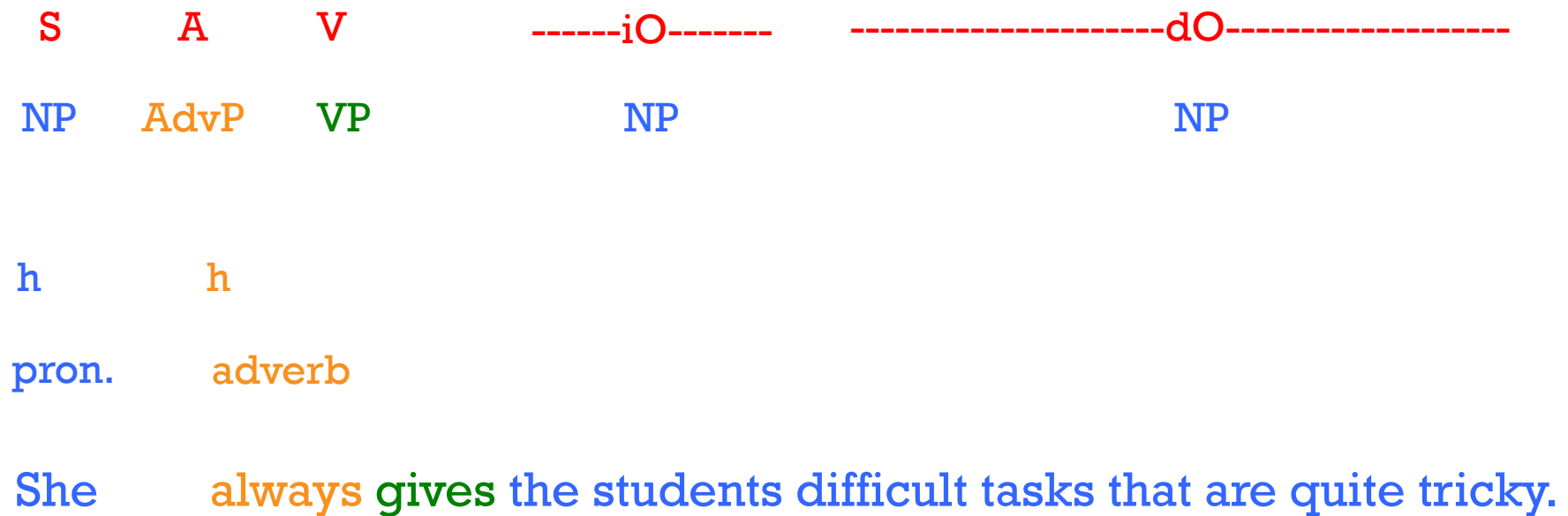
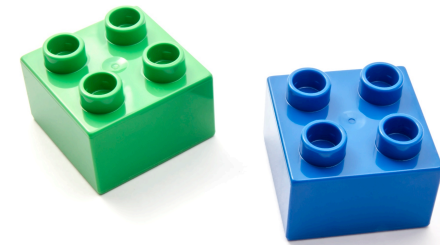
S A V -----iO----- -----dO-----
NP AdvP VP NP NP

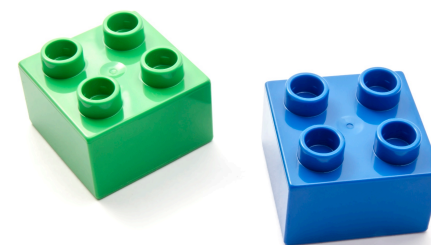
h

pron.

She always gives the students difficult tasks that are quite tricky.

h = head
pron. = pronoun





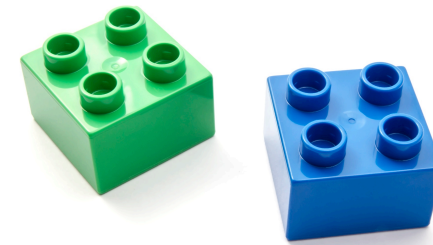
S	A	V	-----iO-----	-----dO-----
NP	AdvP	VP	NP	NP

h	h	mv
---	---	----

pron.	adverb
-------	--------

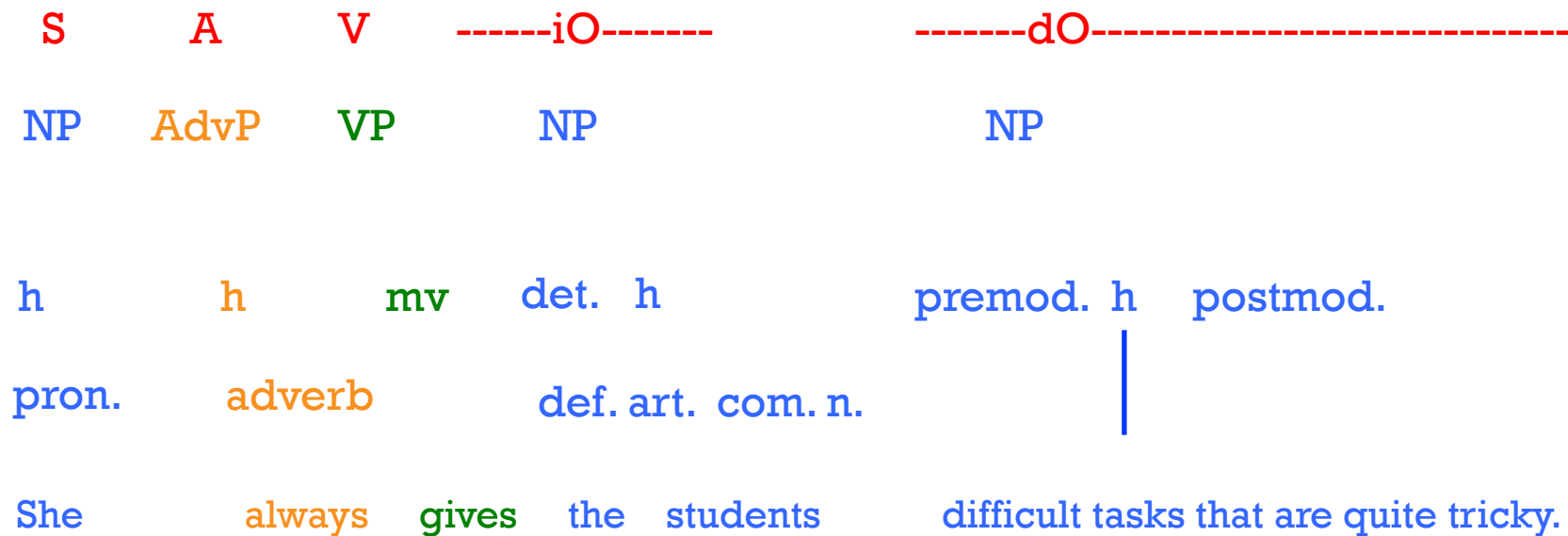
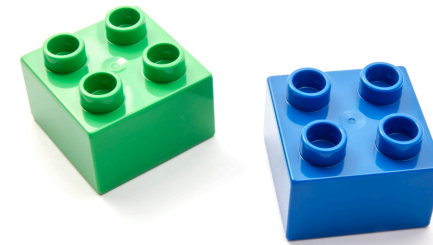
She always gives the students difficult tasks that are quite tricky.

mv = main verb

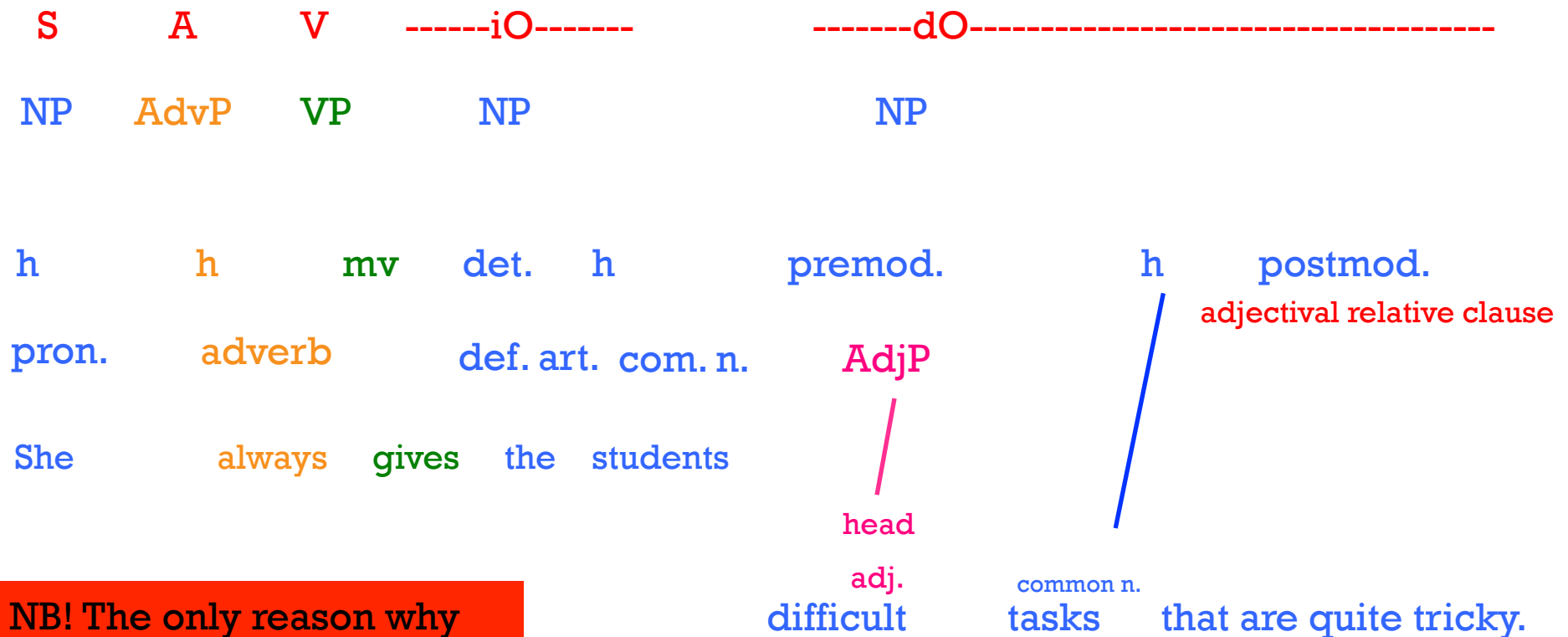
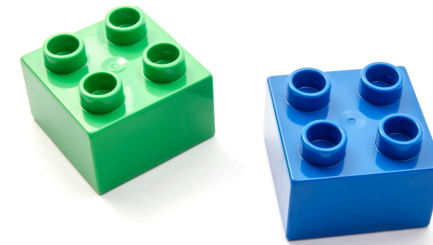


S	A	V	-----iO-----	-----dO-----
NP	AdvP	VP	NP	
h	h	mv	det.	h
pron.	adverb		def. art.	com. n.
She	always	gives	the students	difficult tasks that are quite tricky.

det. = determiner
 def. art. = definite article
 com. n. = common noun



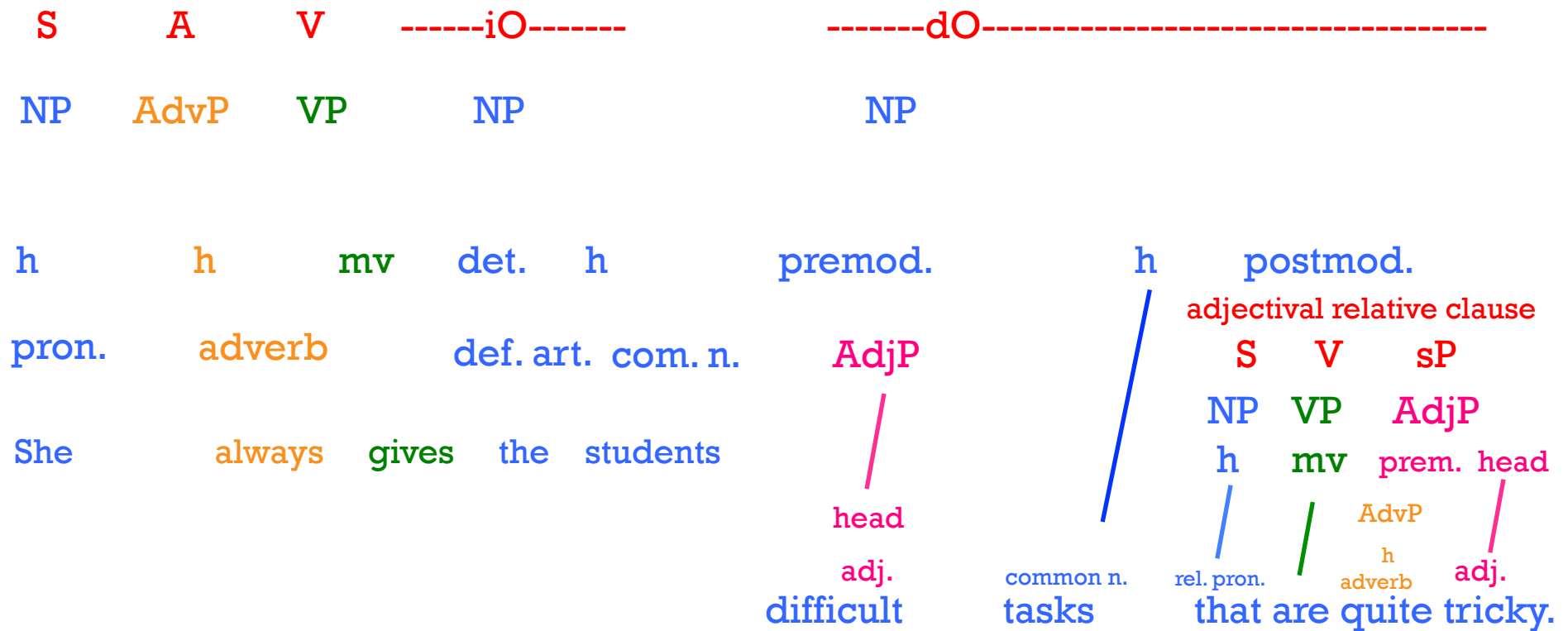
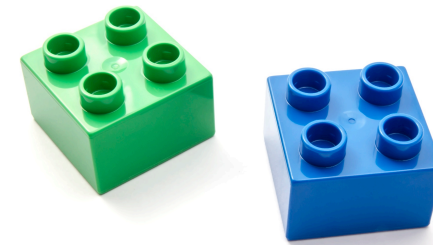
premod. = premodifier
postmod. = postmodifier



NB! The only reason why the text is moved here is to create more space!

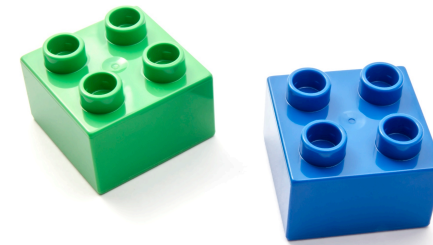
AdjP = Adjective phrase

Adjectival relative clause
(p. 181-185, IEG)



Rel. pron. = Relative pronoun

Adjectival relative clause
(p. 181-185, IEG)



S A V -----iO-----
 NP AdvP VP NP

h h mv det. h
 pron. adverb def. art. com. n.
 She always gives the students

= Complete syntactic analysis

-----dO-----
 NP

premod.
 AdjP
 /
 head
 adj.
 difficult

h postmod.
 /
 common n. adjectival relative clause
 tasks S V sP
 NP VP AdjP
 h mv prem. head
 / / /
 rel. pron. h adv. adj.
 that are quite tricky.

Concord



*“agreement, harmony, accord, consensus,
concurrence, unity, unanimity, unison, oneness”*

Grammatical concord = the **subject** and **verbal** must agree in person and number

= *samsvarsbøying*

je suis
tu es
il; elle est
ns sommes
vs êtes
ils; elles sont

ek
þú
hann/hún/þat
vér
þér
þeir/þær/pau

Sg. 1. em
2. ert
3. er
Pl. 1. erum
2. eruð
3. eru

≈ year 800-1350

Haugen (2009)

ég	þú	hann/hún/það	við	þið	þeir/þær/pau
er	ert	er	erum	eruð	eru



jeg er
du er
han er
vi er
dere er
de er

I am
you are
he is
we are
you are
they are



✗ *The students now knows about grammatical concord.*



|-----S-----| A V |-----dO-----|



The students now know about grammatical concord

- For most English verbs, third person singular subjects require the ending -(e)s in the present tense:



|----S----| V |---A---|
All my pupils sleep during class.



|-----S-----| V |---A---|
One of my pupils sleeps during class.

- To see this more clearly, try replacing the subject with a pronoun!

S V |---A---|
They sleep during class.

substitution →

S V |--A-----|
She sleeps during class.

- The verb *be* has three different present tense forms, and two past tense forms:



Present

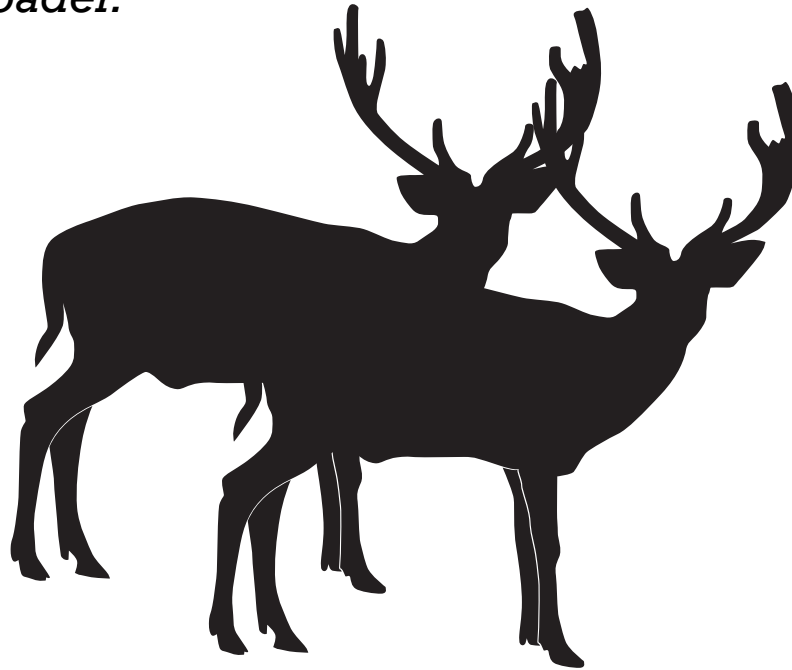
Past

S_v A V <i>I am NOT sleeping!</i>	S V A A <i>She is in bed now.</i>	<i>I was only sleeping.</i>	<i>She was in bed already.</i>
S V sP <i>You are lazy!</i>	S V A A <i>They are up all night.</i>	<i>You were lazy!</i>	<i>We were up all night.</i>

- Modal auxiliaries have no s-form at all - they only have one form (like all Norwegian verbs!):

<i>They should go to bed earlier.</i>	<i>She should go to bed earlier.</i>
---------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

*The deer was just crossing an opening
about 120 yards away when I touched off
the muzzleloader.*



*The deer were just crossing an opening
about 120 yards away when I touched off
the muzzleloader.*

Rely on your knowledge of clause analysis, since it is the **subject** that determines whether a singular or plural verb form is appropriate.



Example:

✗ *The difference between these two simple sentences, are in the lexical meaning of the verb phrase found.*



|-----S-----| V

|-----NP-----|

det. head |-----postmodifier-----|

✓ *The difference between these two simple sentences, is*

|-----A-----|

in the lexical meaning of the verb phrase found.

1. For example, there have been a focus on working with parents
2. Jenny and her husband was coming to dinner
3. He meet a girl, Allie, a rich woman who's studing to be a good wife
4. Drinking in Sweden has dicreased among younger people, but health problems related to alcohol consumption has not
5. Also, children from families with alcohol abuse is in a greater risk
6. He found his uncles car and there was gunholes in it
7. The population have increased a lot
8. There are a very fine line between genius and insanity
9. That he couldn't find the answers were frustrating
10. After beating Abdul, who are brought to tears after having his toe stepped on by Sir Cedric, Hubert is knighted
11. It has been shown by a lot of scientists that whoever wants to be creative, have to work hard and let the imagination flow



1. For example, there **have** been a focus on working with parents
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“Concord is really a **trivial** grammatical problem.” (Hasselgård, Lysvåg & Johansson, 2012, p. 266)

“However,



consistent failure to observe the rules of concord may **annoy** readers to such a degree that they lose interest in the message” (ibid.)



Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Co-ordinated noun phrase as subject

- **Cameron and Obama** **were** *doing selfies with the Danish PM*

= two people

- **Either Cameron or Obama** **was** *doing selfies with the Danish PM*

= one of them did it

- **Either the heads of state or the camera guy** **was** *responsible for the outcome*

– the singular noun phrase is closest to the verbal



→ sentence 2

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Verbal in sentences with existential *there* (ch. 8)

- The subject is pushed to a position after the verbal in existential *there* constructions:
 - *A book was on the table*
aS V |-----S-----|
 - *There was a book on the table.*
- anticipatory subject (*there*) and notional (or “true”) subject (*a book on the table*)
- The true subject (aS) decides the form of the verbal:
 - *There **is** a tiger in the backyard*
 - *There **are** two tigers in the backyard*
- Co-ordinated NPs: the phrase closest to the verbal decides
 - *There **are** two novels and a short story that I'd like to read*
 - *There **is** a short story and two novels that I'd like to read*



→ sentences 1 & 8

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners

Everyone
needs a friend
sometimes



Subjects with indefinite pronouns and determiners

- count as third person **singular**

Nobody knows
the trouble I've
seen

- **Everyone** is hungry
- **Each** student has received a hand-out
- **Nobody** has ever done this before
- **Every** student in class is ready for the exam
- Norwegians tend to associate **plural** meaning with these words!

✗ **Nobody** have ever done this before

✗ **Each of us** receive a copy



→ sentence 11

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Uncountable (“mass”) nouns ...are singular

Snow

*One **snow**

*Two **snows**

*Some **snow***

***Snow** is falling*

- Some nouns that are countable in Norwegian are uncountable in English (p. 46-47, IEG)

*The **advice** he gave me was brilliant*
- Rådet/rådene han ga meg var brilliant(e)

*All the **furniture** is in the van*
*- Alle **møblene** er i bilen*

*All our **money** is gone*
*- Alle **pengene** våre er borte*

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners

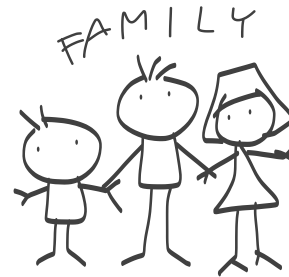


Collective nouns = nouns that refer to groups of people

- e.g. *family, crew, team*
- generally treated as singular nouns

*My **family** is important to me*

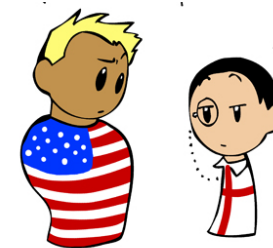
*The **committee** makes decisions every day*



NB!

- **Unit** meaning (American English & British English)
– the focus is on the unity of the group

*The **team** is performing well*



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- **Distributive** meaning (British English) – the focus is on the members of the group

*The **team** are performing well*

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Singular nouns ending in -s

- These nouns look plural, but have a singular meaning and combine with singular verbs

News travels fast.

Linguistics has undergone two great revolutions.

Measles is dangerous.



Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Plural-only nouns

- Some look singular (no -s ending), but have a plural meaning:

*The **police** have arrived*

*There are **people** everywhere!*

- Remember the plural-only nouns that do have the -s ending, but have singular counterparts in Norwegian:

X **Your jeans is dirty*

→ *Your jeans are dirty (Buxsa di er møkkete)*

X **Your stairs is very hard to climb*

→ *Your stairs are very hard to climb*

(Trappa di er veldig vanskelig å gå opp)

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Nominalized adjectives = adjectives being used as nouns

- Nominalized adjectives that refer to **people** combine with plural verbals:

The [determiner] old [premodifier] people [head]

→ *The [determiner] old [head]*

*The **old** need a great deal of attention*

- Nominalized adjectives that refer to **abstract entities** combine with singular verbals:

*The **impossible** is happening*

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Nominalized adjectives = adjectives being used as nouns

- A difference between English and Norwegian:

It is possible to say *en hjemløs*, i.e. to use the nominalized adjective to refer to just one person.

In English, the reference will always be to a group of people, so **one homeless* is not correct. If you want to refer to just one member of a group, you have to use a noun:

- *one homeless person*

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Sentences with subject predicative

The verbal usually agrees with the subject:

| ----**S**----- | **V** | ----**sP**----- |
What I want is two volunteers

Sometimes the verbal can agree with the subject predicative (“general meaning”):

All I bought was these three CDs - (agreeing with the subject)

All I bought were these three CDs - (agreeing with the sP)

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Dependent clause as subject = singular verbal

|-----S-----| V sP

How many countries you have been to is totally irrelevant

Substitution: ***That*** *is totally irrelevant*



→ sentence 9

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Quantifying determiners with *of*

- **Plural** verbal if the quantifying determiner can be replaced by *many*:

A number of students are not working hard enough

- But if the head of the subject NP is *number*, a **singular** verbal is used:

The number of students is growing

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Relative clauses (→ ch. 13)

- In many relative clauses, the relative pronoun (*who, which, that*) represents the subject. The verbal is in agreement with the word the relative pronoun refers to:

-----NP-----
det. det. h postmodifier (relative clause)

*These are all the **books** that are available on the subject*

-----NP-----
det. h postmodifier (relative cl.)

*The **students** who weren't here last time must read chapter 8 on their own*

*The **student** who wasn't here last time must read chapter 8 on her own*



→ sentence 10

Some constructions that may present problems for Norwegian learners



Notional concord = the verbal agrees with the meaning rather than the form of the subject

Fish and chips is my favourite food.

Her love and devotion makes/make him very happy.

The United States is a wonderful country.

Five hundred years is not a very long wait.

Three hundred pounds is what I need.



Exercises & Key (suggested answers)



Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

There were a girl at the bus station.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

There **were** a girl at the bus station.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

There **were** a girl at the bus station.

Describe:

Existential *there*-construction; the notional (“true”) subject is *a girl* (singular)

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

There is two books that I still haven't bought.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

There **is** two books that I still haven't bought.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

There **is** two books that I still haven't bought.

Describe:

Existential *there*-construction; the notional (“true”) subject is *two books that I still haven't bought* (plural)

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Every pupil have written an essay.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

Every pupil **have** written an essay.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

Every pupil **have** written an essay.

Describe:

NPs with indefinite pronouns or determiners (*every*) are syntactically third person **singular**.

Explain:

Norwegian often expresses this meaning with a plural noun phrase (“**Alle elevene** har skrevet et essay”), and Norwegians are thus likely to associate these constructions with plural meaning.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

The police is trying to catch the killer.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

The police **is** trying to catch the killer.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

The police **is** trying to catch the killer.

Describe:

Police is a plural-only noun (like *cattle* and *people*). These nouns agree with plural verbals.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

The homeless is causing trouble.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

The homeless **is** causing trouble.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

The homeless **is** causing trouble.

Describe:

homeless is a nominalized adjective referring to a group of people.

Nominalized adjectives typically combine with plural verbals.

Explain:

Nominalized adjectives may refer to one person in Norwegian (*den hjemløse*), whereas English has to insert a head noun to express this meaning (*the homeless person*).

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Three hundred pounds are missing.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

Three hundred pounds **are** missing.

Exercises



What is wrong in the following sentences and why?

Identify:

Three hundred pounds **are** missing.

Describe:

Amounts and measurements are singular (***It*** is missing).

Address...?



Exercises



- The news _____ (BE) good. (*is* – ‘news’ is uncountable and singular)
- His clothes _____ (BE) expensive. (*are* – ‘clothes’ is plural)
- Knowledge of the matters _____ (BE) needed. (*is* – ‘knowledge’ is the head of the subject noun phrase and is uncountable)
- His family _____ (BE) old. (unit reading: *is*; distributive reading: *are* – ‘family’ is a collective noun)
- The committee _____ (DISAGREE) on the matter. (BrE: *disagree* (distributive reading) = preferable; AmE: *disagrees*)
- The homeless _____ (HAVE) nowhere to go. (*have* – ‘homeless’ = nominalized adjective referring to a group of people)

Exercises



- The police _____ (BE) coming. (*are* – ‘police’ is a plural-only noun)
- People _____ (BELIEVE) anything. (*believe* – ‘people’ is a plural-only noun)
- Two hundred dollars _____ (BE) needed to cover the expenses. (*is* – amounts are singular)
- What you see here _____ (BE) the crown jewels. (*are* – agrees with the number of the sP noun phrase ‘the crown jewels’; *is* – agrees with the subject, which is a dependent clause)
- *The Times* _____ (HAVE) changed. (*has* – title of newspaper)
- Times _____ (HAVE) changed. (*have* – plural noun)
- ‘The Dead’ _____ (BE) a short story by James Joyce. (*is* – title)
- There _____ (BE) a boy and a girl in the picture. (*are* – 2 people)
- There _____ (BE) a lot of things to do. (*are* – the head of the subject noun phrase is ‘things’)
- Neither Mr nor Mrs Blake _____ (HAVE) signed the contract. (*has* – nobody has signed)

Exercises

Sentence pairs



a) The TV series is endless.

b) The TV series are endless.

Exercises

Sentence pairs



a) The TV series *is* endless.

b) The TV series *are* endless.

The sentences have two different forms of the verb *BE*, resulting in a singular verbal (*is*) in 1a, and a plural verbal (*are*) in 1b. The noun *series* in the subject of each sentence is a “same form”-noun, which means that it has the same form in the singular and in the plural. The meaning difference is that 1a) is about one particular TV series - perhaps one which has been running for many seasons - while 1b) is about a number of TV series (more than one).

Exercises

Sentence pairs



- a) A number of accidents have escaped media attention.**
- b) The number of accidents has escaped media attention.**

Exercises

Sentence pairs



-----S-----

-----NP-----

----det.----- h

a) **A number of accidents** **have** escaped media attention.

-----S-----

-----NP-----

det. h postmodifier

b) **The number of accidents** **has** escaped media attention.

2a) has a plural verbal because the subject NP consists of the determiner *a number of* and the head *accidents*, which is a plural noun. The sentence means that many accidents have not been noticed by the media. 2b) has a singular verbal because the head of the subject NP is the singular noun *number* (*the* functions as determiner and *of accidents* as postmodifier). The sentence means that the media do not know the exact number of accidents.

Exercises

Sentence pairs



a) French was difficult.

b) The French were difficult.

Exercises

Sentence pairs



S

NP

head

a) **French** **was** difficult.

S

-----NP-----

det. head

b) **The French** **were** difficult.

French occurs with the definite article in 3b), and with the zero article in 3a). In 3a) it refers to the French language, which is described as being complicated or difficult to learn, and therefore the verb is singular. In 3b) *French* is a nominalized adjective referring to a group of people, and therefore the verb is plural. Here the adjective *difficult* describes a group of French people, maybe the speaker has been in an argument with one.

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