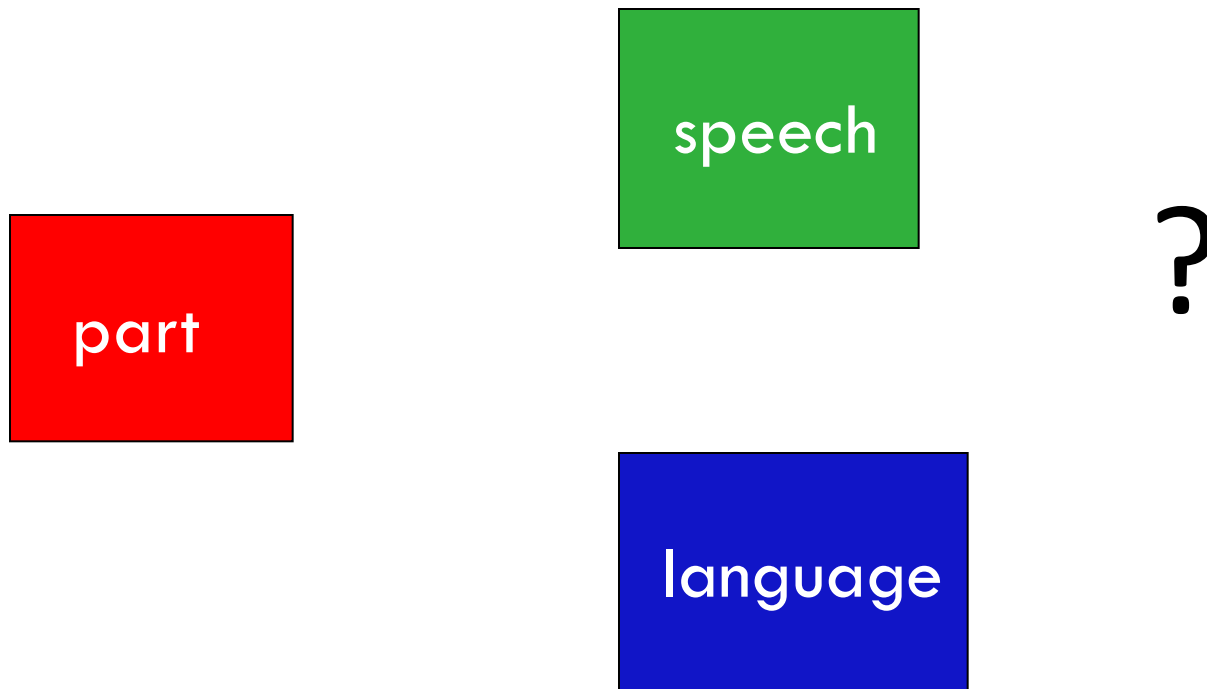# WORD CLASSES IN GRAMMAR

Lecture 3

Outline:

- Traditional parts of speech

- Criteria for their distinguishing.

- The system of parts of speech in English.

- Notional and formal words.
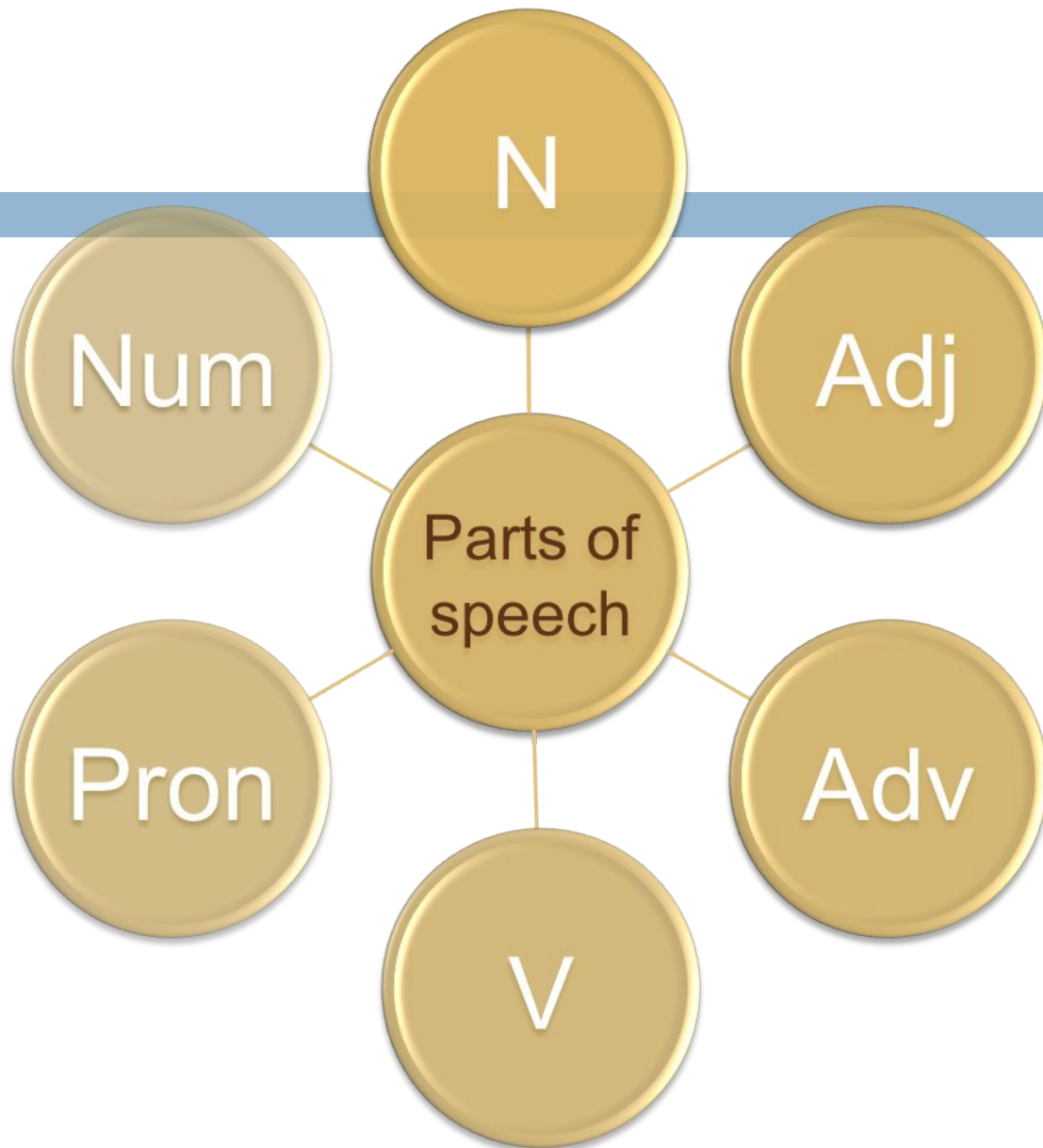
- Other classifications

Parts of speech

Tradional and conventional term
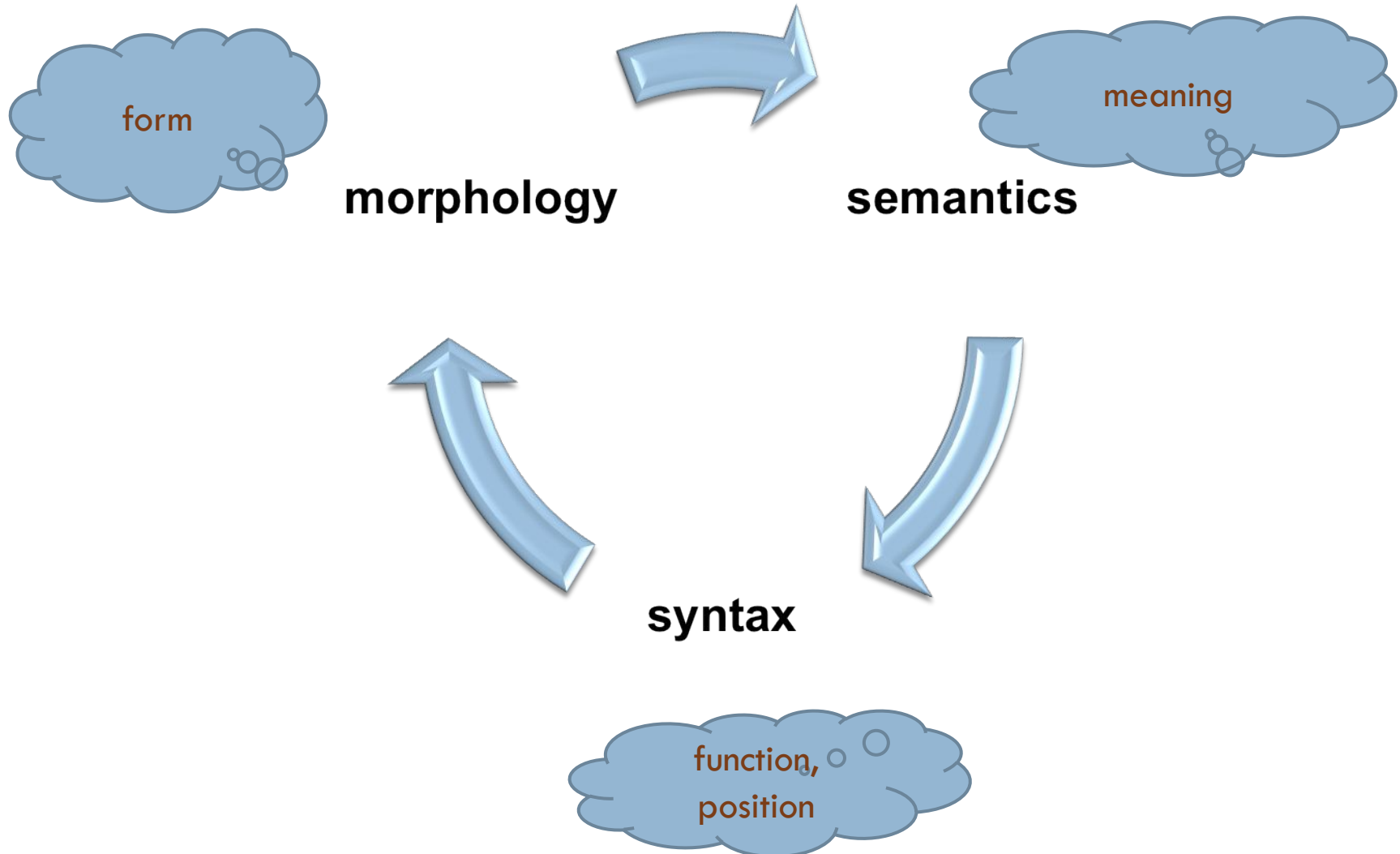
part

speech

?

language

Origin of the term

- Ancient Greece - 2nd century B.C.

A word class is a group of words, which, from a grammatical point of view, behave in the same way.

- (D. Crystal, 1995)

- A part of speech is a type of word differing from other types in some grammatical point. (B.A.Ilyish, 1971)

- V vs. N => tense is a distinctive feature
- *What is the past tense of the word '*city*' ?

Three Criteria for Distinguishing Parts of Speech

form

morphology

meaning

semantics

syntax

function, position

Part of speech criteria

O. Jespersen (1933, 2007).

Three criteria from Russian linguistics:

- V.V. Vinogradov,

- L.V. Scherba

- A.I. Smirnitsky

- B.A. Ilyish

Interrelated criteria (E.Kubryakova 1979)

Part of Speech Criteria

1. **Semantic** – conceptual categorial aspect, generalized abstract meaning common to a class of words:

<u>noun</u> - substance

<u>adjective</u> – property, quality

<u>verb</u>– process /action / state

<u>adverb</u> – aspect of quality, action or state

Generalized grammatical meaning is based on lexical meanings of words.

Part of speech criteria

2. **Morphological** – every part of speech has its own system of grammar forms:

<u>noun</u> – common and possessive case, singular and plural number

<u>verb</u> – mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive), tense and aspect, voice (active-passive), person, number

<u>adjective</u> – degrees of comparison

<u>adverb</u> - indeclinable

Formal criterion provides for the exposition of the paradigmatic **inflectional** and specific **derivational** features of the class.

Part of speech criteria

3. **Syntactical** - **function** as part of a sentence and **position** in the sentence :

<u>noun</u> - subject (SV)

- object (VO)

<u>verb</u> – predicate (primarily)

<u>adjective</u> – attribute (Adj + N)

<u>adverb</u> – adverbial modifier

The **functional** criterion concerns the syntactic **role** of words in the sentence typical of a part of speech and word **combinability**.

e.g., **noun**

1. Semantic criterion:
2. Morphological criterion:

3. Syntactical criterion:

- Substance, thingness
- Singular –plural
- common – possessive case
- Suffixes: *-ness, -tion, -er…*
- *Functions: Subject, object, predicative*
- *Modification by an adj*

adjective

1. Semantic criterion:

2. Morphological criterion:

3. Syntactical criterion:

- Property (qualitative and relative)

- Degrees of comparison (for qualitative adj)

- Suffixes: *-al, -y, -ish*

- Function: attribute, predicative

- Adj + N

verb

1. Semantic criterion:
2. Morphological criterion:

3. Syntactical criterion:

- Process
- Mood, tense, aspect, voice, person, number
- Finite- non-finite forms
- Suffixes: *-ize, -ate*
- Predicate for finite forms; mixed (V + N/Adj) for verbals
- V + Adv

adverb

1. Semantic criterion:

2. Morphological criterion:

3. Syntactical criterion:

- Secondary property (property of a process or another property)degrees of comparison for qualitative adv
- Suffix: *-ly*
- *Adverbial modifier*
- *Adv+V; Adv+Adj*

interjection

1. Semantic criterion:

☐ Express feelings

2. Morphological criterion:

☐ Invariable

3. Syntactical criterion:

☐ Parenthesis

pronoun

1. Semantic criterion:

2. Morphological criterion:

3. Syntactical criterion:

- Indication (deixis) (pointing to things or properties without naming them)

- Some – number, case, person

- Substantival and adjectival functions

Linguistics abroad:
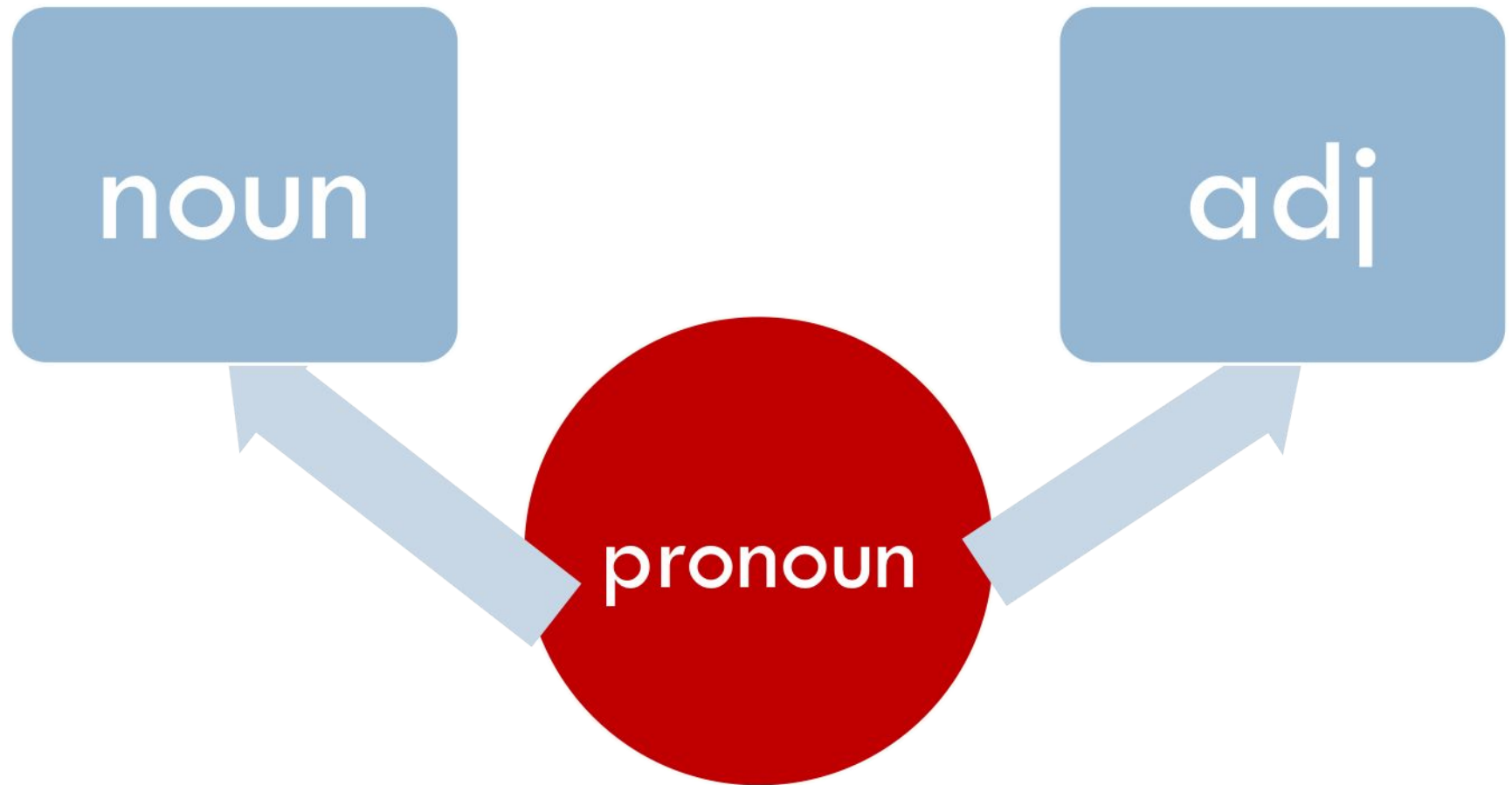
numeral

1. Semantic criterion:

2. Morphological criterion:

3. Syntactical criterion:

- Number (cardinal) or place in a series (ordinal)
- Invariable
- *-teen, -ty; -th*
- Numerical attribute or numerical substantive
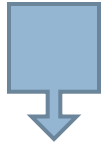- Num+N

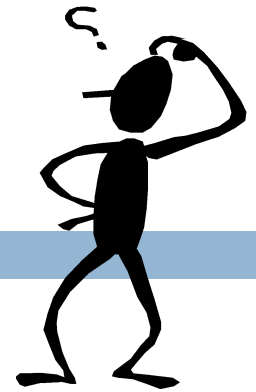# Criticism of parts of speech

- Unevenness of the classificatory criteria
- Transition of parts of speech
- Homophony
- No universal categories within a class

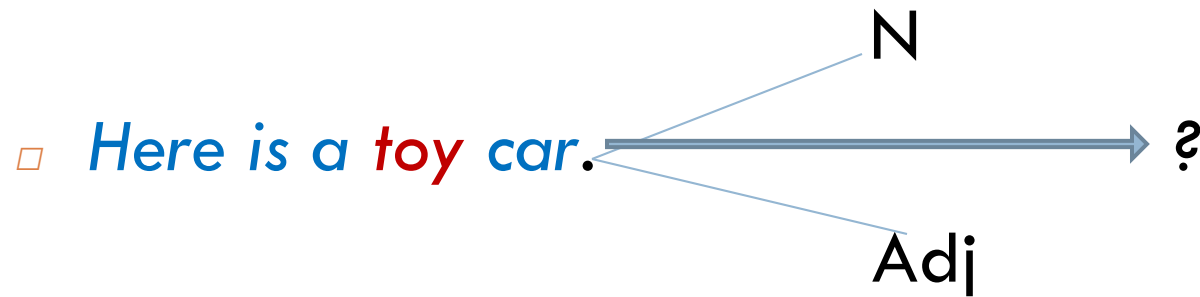# Unevenness of the classificatory criteria

- The criteria are partially contradictory and overlapping

- E.g., **numeral**: meaning = quantity

  - *thousands of people* => **noun**

  - *many* people => **pronoun**

Adjective is a word modifying a noun.

Here is a *toy car*.

N

Adj

?

- **Adverb** - indeclinable
  - *well – better – best*
  - a catch-all class that includes words with many different functions
  - *-ly* is an adverb marker, but *early, friendly, ugly* are adjectives;
  - *tomorrow, fast, crosswise* = adv

- Not all three criteria are applicable to all parts of speech. Some of them may fail.

- E.g. , semantic:
- N vs. V = substance : process
- *We had a walk.*

Transition of parts of speech

- Conversion:
  - *Water, break, outlaw, laser, microwave* and *telephone*
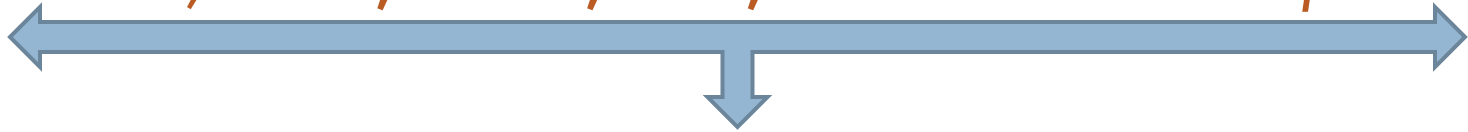
  N or V ?

  - We must look to the *hows* and not just the *whys*.

Homophony

- *I hear a loud **sound**.*
- *They **sound** like bells.*
- *I have a **sound** reason.*

No universality within a class

- Not all nouns have possessive case
- Not all verbs have a passive voice form
- Not all adjectives have comparison forms

□ Are there English words that are not included in any part of speech?

□ *Yes. No.*

Classifications of parts of speech

traditional

- **Parts of speech** are lexico-grammatical (A.Smirnitsky) classes that differ by their general semantic features, morphological forms, and syntactical functions.

Traditional classification

- Eight major classes of words (Plato & Aristotle, Dionysius Thrax; 18th century):

  - noun
  - verb
  - adjective
  - adverb
  - interjection
  - preposition
  - conjunction
  - pronoun

□ Russian linguists (B.A. Ilyish, V. Zhigadlo, I. Ivanova, L. Iofik) add:

- numerals,
- statives,
- modal words, and
- particles.

} not distinguished internationally

Stative: *asleep, afire, afraid* or Adj?

1. Semantic criterion:

   ▫ State (not property)

2. Morphological criterion:

   ▫ Invariable

   ▫ Prefix *a-*

3. Syntactical criterion:

   ▫ *Predicative, attrib.*

   ▫ *Be+Stative; N+S (a man asleep in his chair)*

Particles: *only, even, just* (or Adv?)

1. Semantic criterion:

- Subjective emphasis or limitation

2. Morphological criterion:

- Invariable

3. Syntactical criterion:

- Combine with any part of speech
- No syntactic function

Modal words: *perhaps, possibly (or Adv?)*

1. Semantic criterion:

2. Morphological criterion:

3. Syntactical criterion:

- The speker's evaluation of the relation btw an action & reality
- Invariable
- Parenthesis

Notional and functional parts of speech

Parts of speech

notional

= part of a sentence.
Less frequent

*She turned **round**.*

functional

≠ part of a sentence
= analytical form of a part of the sentence.
More frequent

*She turned **round** the house.*

Parts of speech

notional
= part of a sentence

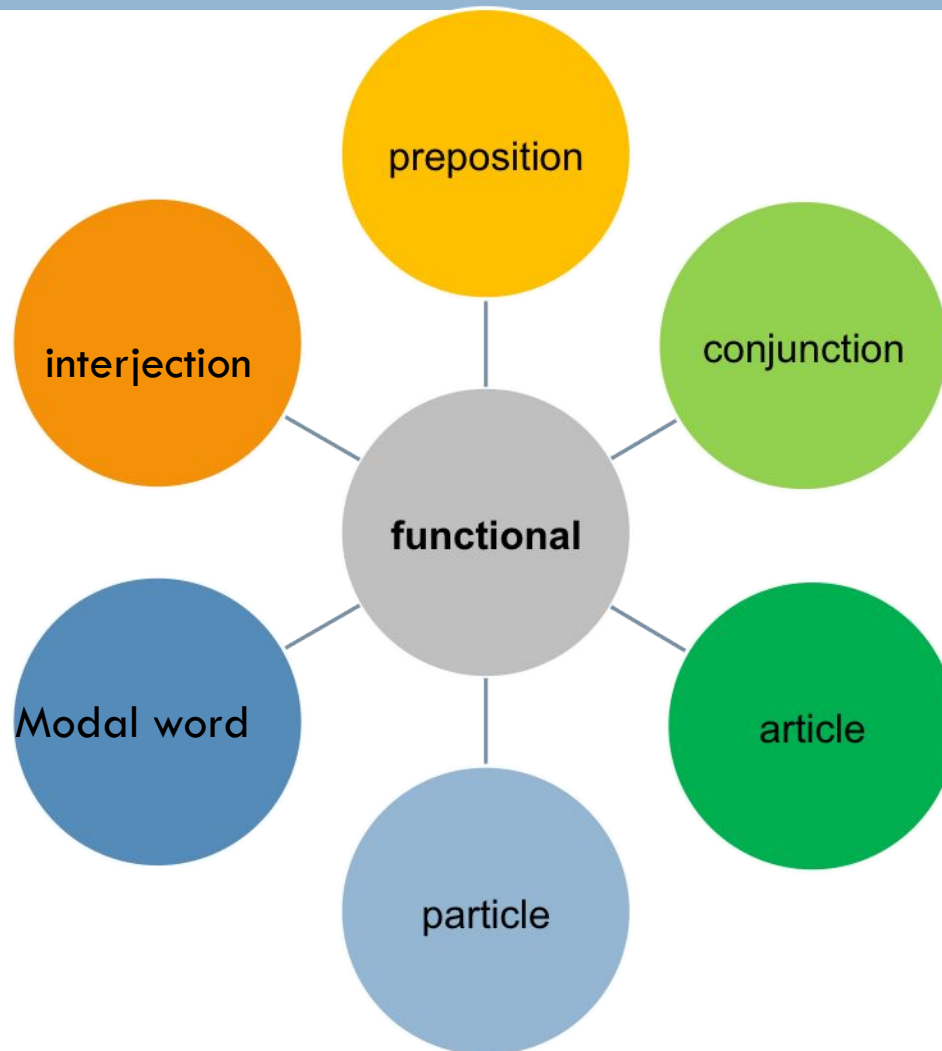*She turned **round**.*

functional
≠ part of a sentence
= analytical form of a part of the sentence

*She turned **round** the house.*

deictic

Notional parts of speech are words with lexical meaning; they have nominative function.

Functional (formal, structural) parts of speech serve to show relations between notional words.

Functional (formal, structural) parts of speech

Syntactic functions

Prepositions

Conjuctions

Morphological functions

Articles

Auxiliary verbs

Functional parts of speech (form)

- Invariable
- Phonetically weak

Functional parts of speech (meaning)

- *The book is on the desk.*
- *The book is under the desk.*

- *She did not speak because she was tired.*
- *She did not speak though she was tired.*

E. Kubryakova (1979): function words also have a nominative function = relating to an extra-linguistic element. They reveal place of objects and actions in time and space.

Functional parts of speech

Part of speech	Role (meaning) in the sentence
□ Article	□ Expresses specific limitation of the substantive function
□ Preposition	□ Expresses (inter)dependencies of substantive referents
□ Conjunction	□ Expresses connections of phenomena
□ Particle	□ Unites functional words of specifying or limiting meaning
□ Modal words	□ Expresses the attitude of the speaker
□ Interjections	□ Signal emotions

Disputable: notional or functional?

- Modal verbs
- Auxiliary verbs

I.P. Ivanova (1981):

- Functional parts of speech vs. functional words

Disputable: notional or functional?
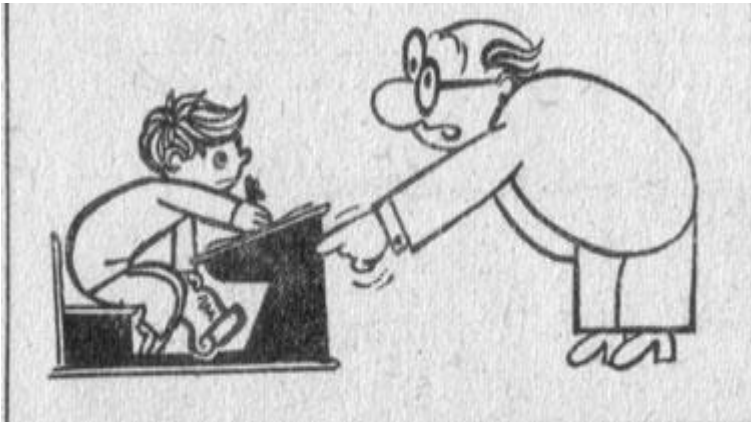
- Modal verbs
- Auxiliary verbs

I.P. Ivanova (1981):

- Functonal parts of speech vs. functional words

- I.P. Ivanova:

- Functional words are notional words that have lost, under certain conditions, their lexical meaning and have maintained only grammatical function.

- Cf. *I have a new TV set.*
-       *I have lost my gloves.*

Deictic function of pronouns

Deictic
(situational)

Anaphoric
(contextual)

Deictic words

- Deictic words (Grk. *deixis* "indicate") refer to the personal, temporal, or spacial aspect of an utterance act. Their designation is, therefore, dependent on the context of the speech situation.–

pronouns
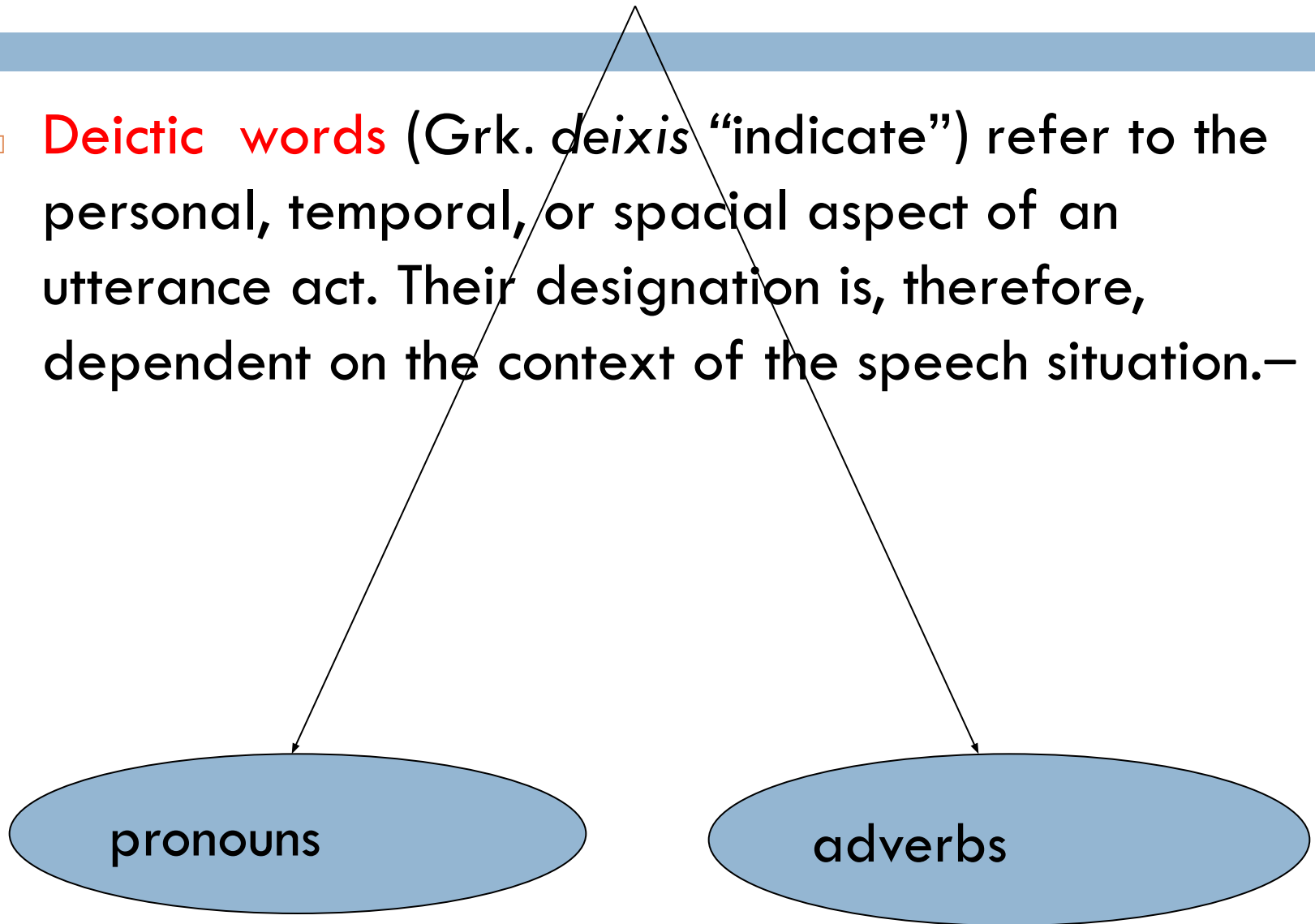
adverbs

Other classifications

Morphological classification

- **H.Sweet:**
- declinables (nouns, adj, verbs)
- Indeclinables (adverbs, prepositions, conjuncts, interjections)

Enlarging classes

- Connectors (W. Plotkin) / connectives (L.Barkhudarov & D. Shteling) / conjuncts (D.Crystal):
  - Prepositions
  - Conjunctions

- Determinatives (L.Barkhudarov & D. Shteling), determiners (D.Crystal, CGE)
  - Adjectives
  - Articles
  - Pronouns

Open and closed classes
(R. Quirk, S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, J. Svartvik, 1972, 1982)

| Open classes	Closed classes (ab. 150)
☐ N	☐ Article
☐ Adj	☐ Pronouns
☐ Adv	☐ Prepositions
☐ V	☐ Conjunctions
	☐ Interjections

Narrower principle of identification

- **Syntactico-distributional classification** (L. Bloomfield, Z. Harris, Ch. Fries)

- No criterion of meaning *(Woggles ugged diggles.)*

- Study of word combinability by means of substitution testing

- 4 main positional (notional) classes (frames): N, V, A(dj), D (adv)

- Words outside the "positions" are functional – 15 groups:
  - Specifiers of nouns, verbs, adj, adv.
  - Relation determiners (prep, conj)
  - Referring to the sentence as a whole (*how, which; lets, please;* attention-getters; *yes, no;* introductory *it & there*)

Field theory
(V. Admoni, 1968; G.Schur, 1974, 2007)

- Nuclear (words possessing all the properties of a certain part of speech) and periphery

- E.g., nouns with the meaning of process (*walk, run)* are in the margin of the noun field, in the overlapping sector with the verb field.

- There is no strict borderline between parts of speech, they are able to converge.
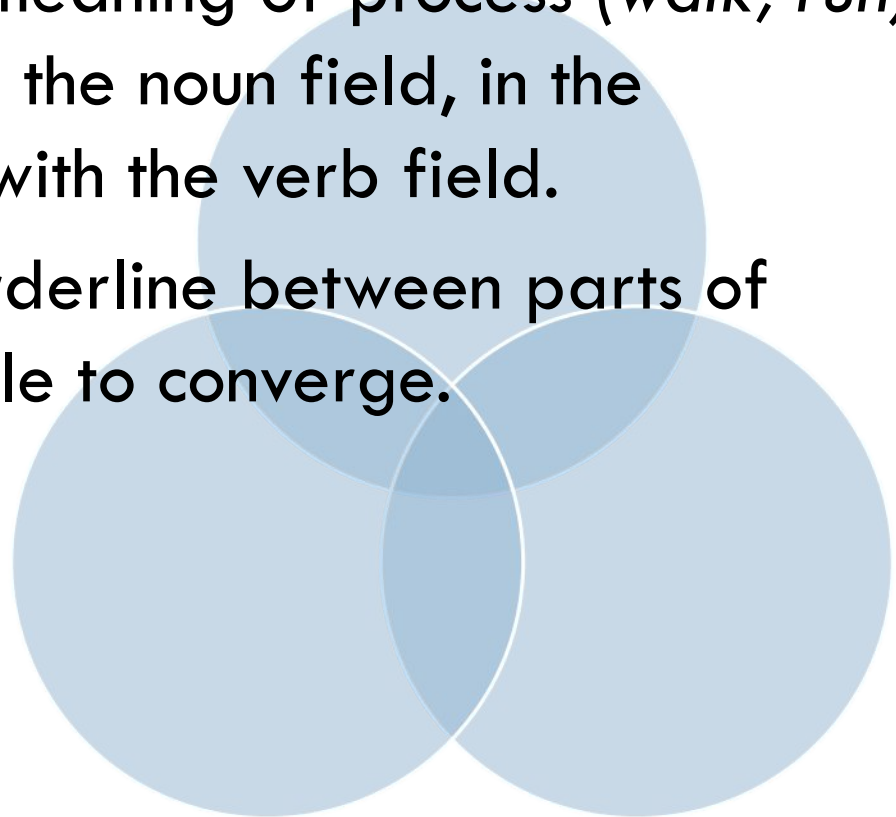
Three little words you often see
Are **ARTICLES**: *a, an,* and *the.*

A **NOUN**'s the **name** of anything,
As: *school* or *garden*, *toy*, or *swing.*

ADJECTIVES tell the **kind** of noun,
As: *great, small, pretty, white,* or *brown.*

VERBS tell of something **being done**:
To read, write, count, sing, jump, or *run.*

How things are done the **ADVERBS** tell,
As: *slowly, quickly, badly, well.*

CONJUNCTIONS join the words together,
As: men *and* women, wind *or* weather.

The **PREPOSITION** stands **before**
A noun as: *in* or *through* a door.

The **INTERJECTION** shows **surprise**
As: *Oh, how pretty! Ah! how wise!*

The whole are called the **PARTS of SPEECH**,
Which reading, writing, speaking teach.

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