



An Animated and Narrated Glossary of  
Terms used in Linguistics  
*presents*

# Subcategorization



## Categories

Categorize these words!

**Adjectives**

cat  
dog  
laugh  
city  
belief  
cry  
happy

**Nouns**

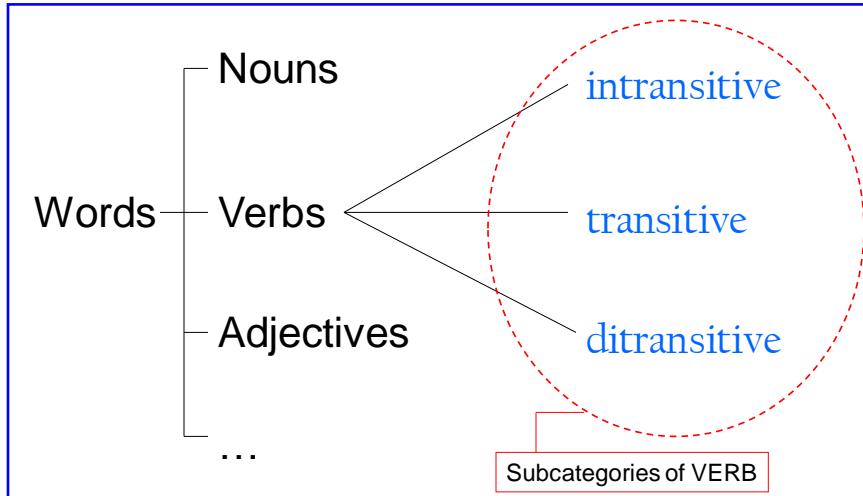
slow  
pinch  
idea  
put  
paint  
eat

**Verbs**

quick  
dance  
believe  
delightful  
give



## Subcategories



Slide 3



## Subcategorization Frames

Frame 1: The elephants \_\_\_\_.

Frame 2: The girls \_\_\_\_ the camel.

cry  
laugh  
dance

pinch  
believe  
paint  
eat

Slide 4



## Subcategorization Frames

English verbs may be said to:

subcategorize for no objects: \_\_\_\_  $\emptyset$

subcategorize for one object: \_\_\_\_ Obj

subcategorize for two objects: \_\_\_\_ Obj<sub>1</sub> Obj<sub>2</sub>

**Subcategorization** can be done by considering the **different frames** in which members of a particular category can fit.

Slide 5



## Subcategorization

- The basic idea is that items in any category can be divided into subcategories.
- Nouns, adjectives etc can be subcategorized too.
- One way of sub-categorization is to think of the frames in which an item occur.
  - Subcategorization Principle  
Any lexical item of category X can be subcategorized with respect to the range of idiosyncratic Complements (i.e. sister constituents) which permits it within the minimal X-bar containing it.  
(Radford1988:365)

Slide 6



## The End

Wee, Lian-Hee and Winnie H.Y. Cheung (2009)  
*An animated and narrated glossary of terms used in Linguistics.*  
Hong Kong Baptist University.

