

Chapter 10 How Words Stick Together: The Case for Phrases

Additional paper or project ideas

Projects

1. Identify as many phrases as you can in your own writing. Pick a writing assignment you are proud of or at least feel good about! Then, try to find as many phrases as you can. Are you finding many simple phrases consisting of just a head? Many embedded phrases? Compare your work with at least one peer.
2. Practice your phrase identification skills by analyzing the texts you are reading: e.g., literature, textbooks, research articles, legal briefs, advertisements. One study could be an analysis of the stylistics of a particular genre. Do STEM articles or marketing executives or a particular poet prefer certain pre- or post-modification structures? This could be a course paper as linguists study these types of patterns. You can also consult this article as an example:

Maestre, M. D. L. (1998). Noun Phrase “complexity” as a style marker: An exercise in stylistic Analysis. *Atlantis*, 20(2), 91–105.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41055516>

3. Sentence Ambiguity. Sentences can be ambiguous. Below are three sentences that can be interpreted differently, in part of how various constituents and phrases are interpreted (as adverbials, as postmodifiers, for example). Explain the different interpretations for each sentence and explain how phrase structure and constituency helps explain this ambiguity. Next, create your own sentences that can be interpreted ambiguously. Share your sentences with at least one peer.
 - a. I saw the baby on the way to work.
 - b. My friend finds motivation in cooking her cat and her spouse.
 - c. We saw the student with the opera glasses.