

Morphosyntax & semantics – lecture 6

Grammatical relations

Elaboration

- **Elaboration** is a process of specifying a concept in more detail.
 - ANIMAL > DOG > POODLE > BLACK POODLE
- More general elements are said to be more **schematic**.

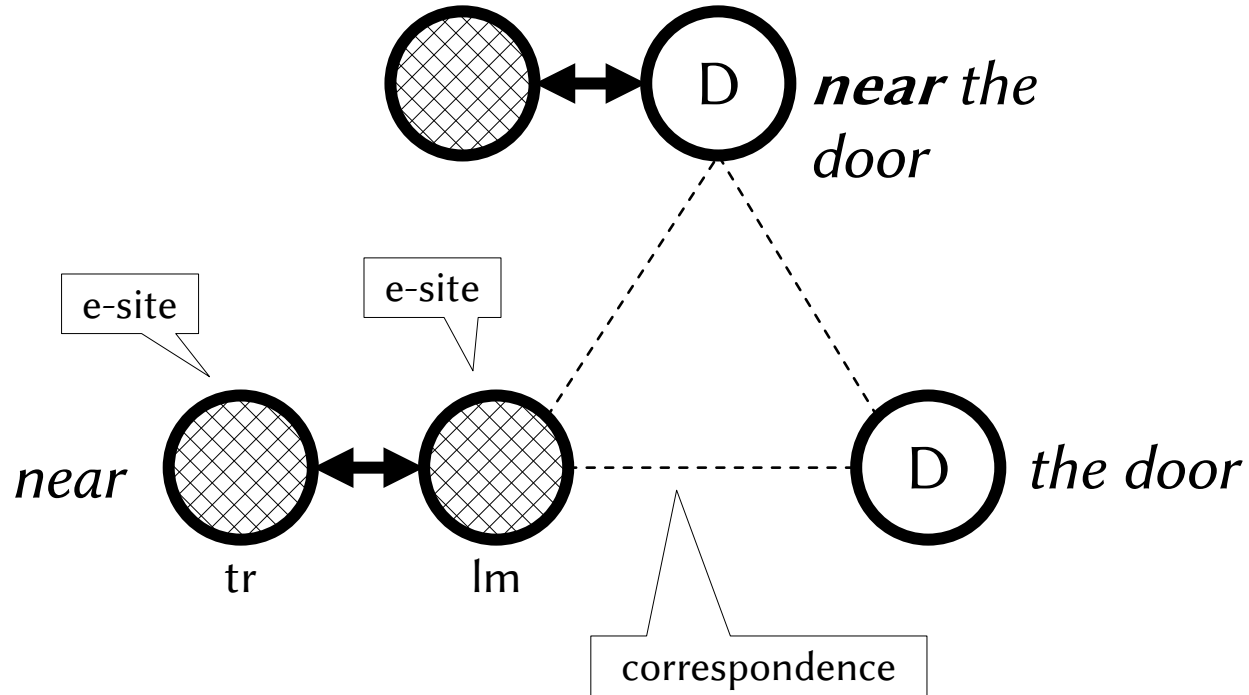
Elaboration sites

- Many concepts evoke schematic (i.e. specified in less detail) elements in their bases; these elements may be elaborated by other elements. Such schematic elements are called **elaboration sites** or **e-sites** for short.
- This is particularly true for relational concepts (adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, etc.), which evoke schematic participants.
- E-sites and the elements that elaborate them are connected with **correspondences**. Corresponding elements have compatible profiles, but the e-sites are more schematic.

Composite expression

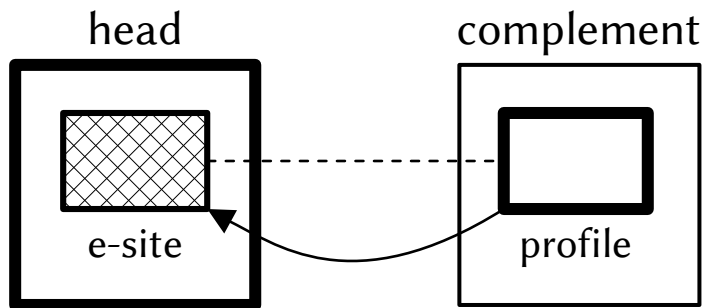
- A **composite expression** is built from several component elements (typically words or morphemes).
- The profile of a composite expressions is typically inherited from one of the elements. The element whose profile is the profile of the entire composite expressions is called the **head**.
- You can determine the head (=the profile) of a composite expression by asking the question “What does the expression refer to?”
 - *yellow **car**_{head}* (a kind of car)
 - ***walk**_{head} slowly* (a kind of walking)
 - ***near**_{head} the door* (a kind of being near)
 - ***want**_{head} to go* (a kind of wanting)

Complements: *near the door*



Complementation

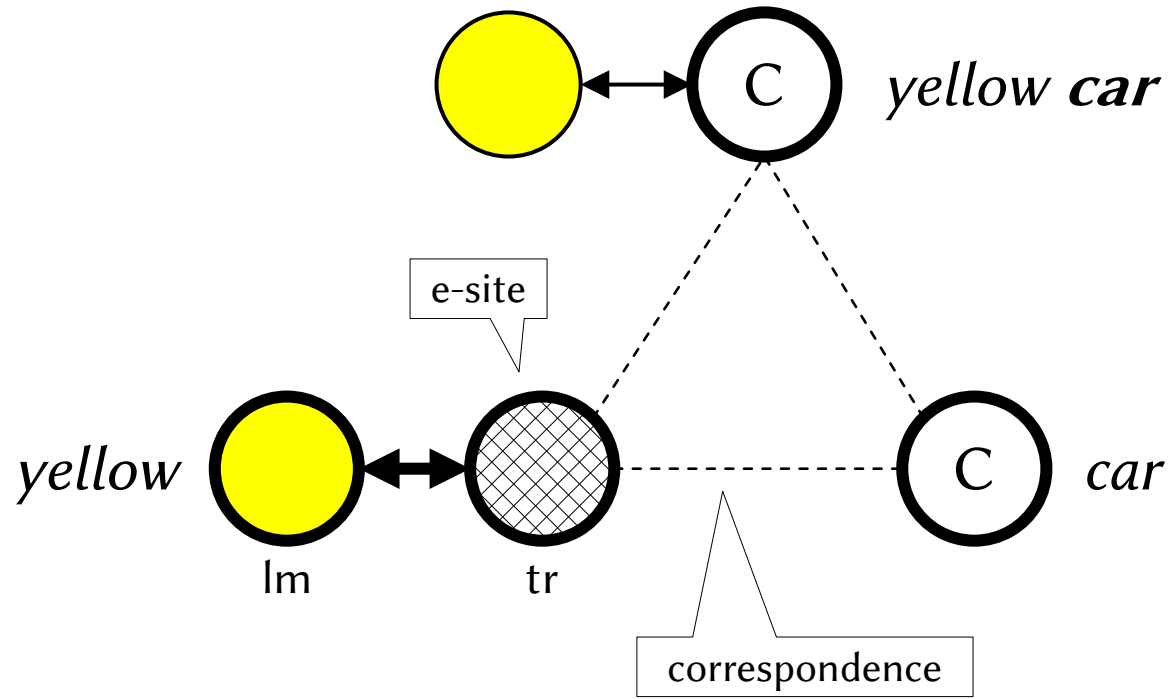
In a complement construction the complement elaborates the e-site of the head of the entire expression.



*near*_{head} *the door*_{complement}

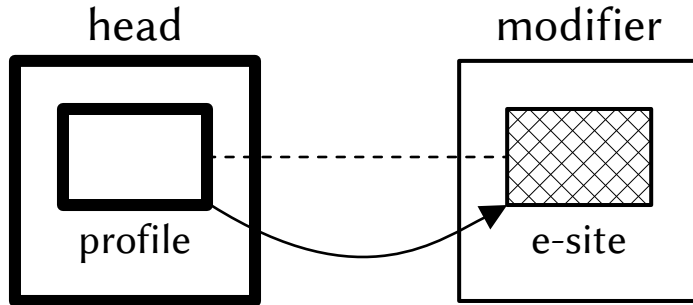
*want*_{head} *to go*_{complement}

Modifiers: *yellow car*



Modification

In a modifier construction the e-site of the modifier is elaborated by the head of the entire expression.



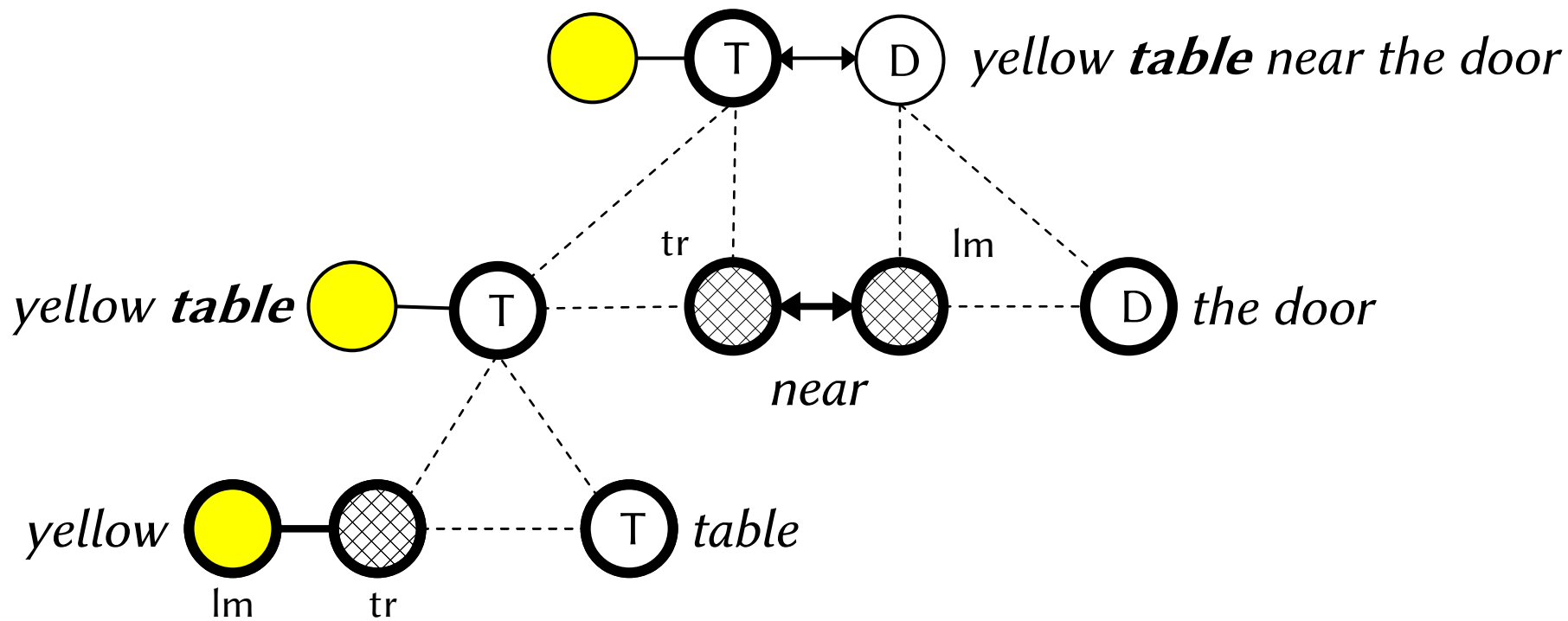
*yellow*_{modifier} ***car***_{head}

walk_{head} *slowly*_{modifier}

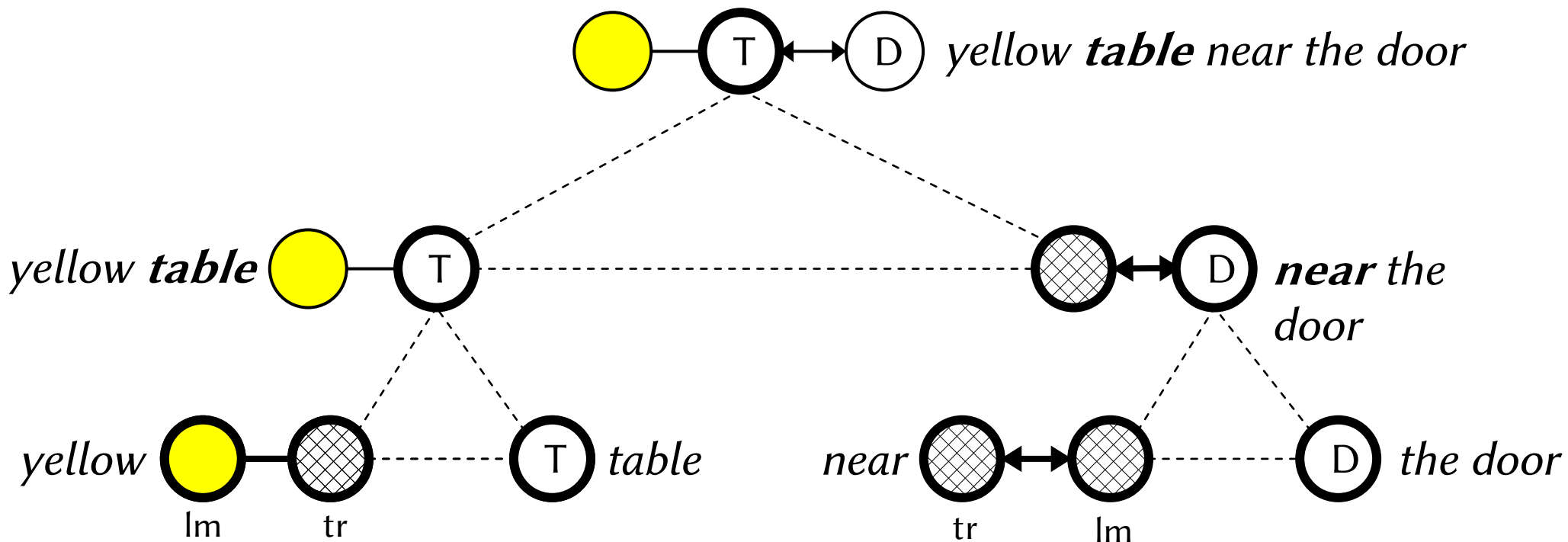
Compositional path

- A **compositional path** is a sequence of modifications, complementations, and other grammatical processes by means of which a composite expression is created.
- The expression *yellow table near the door* has two compositional paths leading to two slightly different grammatical organizations of the sentence.
 - *[[yellow table] [near] [the door]]*
 - *[[yellow table] [near [the door]]]*

[[*yellow table*] [*near*] [*the door*]]



[[*yellow table*] [*near the door*]]



Exercise: which grammatical relation?

- a) *a big black car* 2 x mod. (head: ***car***)
- b) *an elf on a shelf* mod. + compl. (head: ***elf***)
- c) *to want a banana* compl. (head: ***want***)
- d) *to eat with a spoon* mod. + compl. (head: ***eat***)
- e) *to sneeze quietly* mod. (head: ***sneeze***)
- f) *a very noisy cat* 2 x mod. (head: ***cat***)

References

- Langacker, Ronald W. 2013. *Essentials of Cognitive Grammar*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press.
 - Sections 3.2.2, 7.3
- Langacker, Ronald W. 2008. *Cognitive Grammar. A Basic Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
 - Sections 3.2.2, 7.3