

Some grammar term basics

It is very important when beginning study of any language, to remember that grammar came much later than language. I like to think of grammar as the philosophy of language, since, as I have learned along the way, it is still quite alive and changing. There are theses being pumped out by the pound still in colleges and universities across the globe that continue to challenge and postulate, all in the name of describing how we speak. It's also good to remember that, in the end, it is all about SPEECH, and the rules often exist to preserve smooth speech.

The following terms come from my Spanish 101 personal notebook. Being confounded, as I was at the beginning, wishing I had studied the Latin I was advised to study, I searched out the meaning of these simple, yet profoundly grammatical terms from the Harbrace College Handbook for English, and am happy to say that they also apply to Spanish. You can still buy the handbook, and very cheaply these days, I might add. This information can also be found online, and there are many links to such information on the "References" page on this site.

In case you want a hard copy of the complete reference, here's a link to some:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=harbrace+college+handbook&aq=chrome.0.69i57j0l3.8389j0&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

Preposition-A part of speech (often called a function word) that is used to show the relation of a noun or noun equivalent (like the object of a preposition) to some other word in the sentence. Words commonly used as prepositions include: across, after, as, at, because of, before, between, by, for, from, in, in front of, in regard to, like, near, of, on, over, through, to, together with, under, up and with. (I like to think of them as the word that is "before a place")

Modifier-As it sounds, this element modifies (changes the meaning of) another element in a sentence, usually a noun (adjective modifier) or verb (adverb modifier). Typically, a modifier can be removed without affecting the grammar of the sentence. A modifier can usually (depending on the language being spoken) come either before or after the element modified, and can also be a phrase. See link for further information:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_modifier

Auxiliary-A verb helper in a verb phrase, an auxiliary precedes the main verb (though other words may intervene) and is often called a *verb marker*, because it indicates that a verb is to follow. For more information:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auxiliary_verb

Transitive verb-A verb that requires an object to complete its meaning, transitive verbs can usually be changed from the active to the passive voice.

Transitive: Lydia reads novels. (includes the direct object, "novels")

Intransitive verb-a verb (such as go or sit) that does not have an object to complete its meaning. Linking verbs, which take subject complements, are intransitive.

Intransitive: Lydia reads well. ("well" modifies reads and is not an object)

***Object**- is or functions as a noun, and traditional [grammar](#) defines the **object** in a sentence as the entity that is acted upon by the subject.^[1] There is thus a primary distinction between subjects and objects that is understood in terms of the action expressed by the verb, e.g. *Tom studies grammar* - *Tom* is the subject and *grammar* is the object. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Object_\(grammar\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Object_(grammar))

* The main verb in a clause determines if and what objects are present. The objects that verbs do and do not take is explored in detail in [valency](#) theory.