# The grammaticalisations of sort of, kind of and type of in English

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#### **Background**

- Diachronic work done by me 2000-02, in part with Evelien Keizer (synchronic PDE).
- Presented in an informal CxG framework (Helsinki 2002).
- I simply assumed much grammaticalisation in history of SKT words (Santiago 2005 abstract).
- Data here from ARCHER unless specified.
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### SKT patterns in Present-day English

Nucleus of set of constructions is  $N_1$ -of- $N_2$  as part of NP, where

- $N_1$  is *sort*, *kind* or *type* (= 'SKT-nouns')
- possible premodifiers before N<sub>1</sub> and/or N<sub>2</sub>
- a determiner is only rarely attached to N<sub>2</sub>
- construction as a whole may be postmodified e.g.  $D_1 \ N_1 \ \textit{of} \ (D_2) \ N_2 \\ \textit{this type of presentation}$

#### The binominal construction

The mind of the victim of this kind of assault must be considered equally with the body.

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#### The qualifying construction

When thanks is not forthcoming, we feel a kind of emptiness

a kind of emptiness

[DP D a] NP A-Qual kind-of N emptiness]]

head

not N

■ *Type* is not found in this pattern.

# The postdeterminer (or complex determiner) construction

<u>Those sort of creatures</u> know no bounds when they think they have a purse in view that will answer their impudent demands

[DP [D those] [PostD sort-of] [NP [N creatures]]]
| | | | | ??head
| ??not N |
| ??not P

#### **Summary of three NP patterns**

	sem.	disc.	$D_1$	N <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	prim.	N <sub>2</sub>	style
	head	fn.			num	Stress	om.	
binom	$N_1$	ana-	free	sort	sg	$D_1$	yes	neut
		phor		kind	or	or		
				type	pl	$N_1$		
qualif	N <sub>2</sub>	hdg	indef	sort	sg	N <sub>2</sub>	no	inf'l
				kind				
post	?	ana-	these	sort	sg	$D_1$	yes	inf'l
det		phor	those	kind		or		
			all	type		$N_2$		

#### **Partial lexicalisations**

a kind of | any kind of | what kind of

all sorts of 'many kinds' → 'much, many'

and the fact was causing all sorts of gossip and unrest

sort of thing

 Not at all clear to me how frequent (how entrenched?) a string has to be for it to take on a life of its own.

#### sort of thing

... by which I take it you mean the mind. Every day in every way I get better and better. <u>That sort of thing</u>.

it's been a an about town sort of thing (WSC)

'Is that a single-engine plane?'.. 'Kind of <u>executive</u> runabout kind of thing.' (*OED*)

Variants of  $D_1 N_1$  of  $(D_2) N_2$ 

 Sort of thing is found as an adverbial hedge, usually in clause-final position:

if he had visitors he used to send her out of the room type of thing

Ellipsis of of  $N_2$  from the binominal or even the postdeterminer patterns:

'They won't last long, mate, these type never do.'

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#### Patterns without of for type only

A variant of the postdeterminer pattern

It's one of those type LPs. I had all 'soul brothers' (1959 [OED])

virtually any type projector (1979 [OED])

■ The semi-suffix *-type* 

This indicated to us not only that <u>quick-reaction</u> <u>type missions</u> are feasible, but also that the results are more than satisfactory.

#### **Adverbial**

You're being kind of melodramatic, aren't you?

I kind of admire what he's doing. It's clever as hell.

I put a thousand dollars in the bank today, in my own name. I drive a car. I am a grownup.

Look, I walk, talk, run. Type. Even fuck. Sort of. I don't understand anything. Anything.

... and I sort of opened the door, and looked out,

and I sort of saw Richard ... [Jen Smith p.c.]

#### **Adverbial**

I <u>sort of</u> reckon by now you must be in Chester but maybe you are not.

I was born in country like this, you know, the real thing. I mean you didn't drive out anywhere to <u>sort of</u> see it. You just sat down on the back porch and – there it was. Something to run from; something to get the hell away from as fast as you could.

■ Only sort and kind, not type.

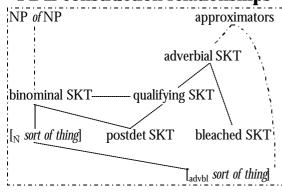
degree modifier

- hedge
- 'as it were'
- bleached
- etc.?
- Some of these are discourse particles.
- Different pragmatics and sometimes different syntax suggest more than one construction.

**Subdivisions of adverbial?** 

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#### PDE construction relationships



#### **History**

The set of SKT-nouns

sort, kind, kin, type, manner, variety, class, brand, species, category

or printing and fixing those variety of Colours in that white Cloth (1655, *OED*)

for all these manner of operations. (1676, *OED*) This class of females are known by the gang as 'Chippies', and most of them come from the slums. (1886, *OED*)

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#### 'Class' meanings

#### kind:

- 'birth, descent, nature'
- 'a natural group of living things having a common origin' [class (specific)]
- 'a class of individuals or objects merely having common attributes' [class (general), from OE]

#### manner

- 'method, mode of procedure, behaviour' (*OED*¹)
- class (general) (from 13C, OED3)

#### 'Class' meanings

#### sort

- from a Romance source meaning 'lot, fate'
- '[u]sed of persons, with special reference to character, disposition, or rank' [class (specific)]
- '[a] kind, species, variety, or description of persons or things' [class (general), from late 14C]

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## 'Class' meanings

- type:
  - 'symbol, emblem'
  - 'figure, picture; distinguishing mark'
  - 'the characteristic which distinguishes a class'
  - '[a] kind, class, or order as distinguished by a particular character' [class (general), from mid-19C]

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#### **Historical development?**

'class (specific)'

'class (gen)' ® binom ® qualif ® adverbial

postdeterminer

■ Later usage transposes the syntactical relation in such constructions as all kinds of trees = 'trees of all kinds', this kind of thing = 'a thing of this kind'. (OED)

#### Is there grammaticalisation here?

- If the postdeterminer use is genuine, then we have a new recruit to the (relatively) closed class Determiner.
- Determiner, like Modal, is a recent addition to the inventory of morphosyntactic categories in English.
- D, like M, is clearly still evolving as a class.
- Development of postdeterminer SKT ought to qualify as an instance of grammaticalisation.

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# Is there grammaticalisation here?

- syntactic reanalysis
- univerbation
- bleaching of meaning
- progress towards functional status
- decategorialisation
- phonetic attrition
- subjectification
- layering

#### **Questions include ...**

- Is qualifying use a grammaticalisation?
- Why did only sort and kind develop qualifying use? Why not type?
  - Lexical meaning?
  - Structure?
  - Date?
- What about manner?
- How interchangeable are the SKT words?
- Development of postposed sort of thing.

#### Are kind of and sort of synonyms?

- Kay (1997: 151): Yes! DD: Yes!
- There are distributional differences between BrE (favours *sort of*) and AmE (favours *kind of*).
- In BrE, most uses belong to informal registers.
- For many Americans, sort of is more formal.
  - This may follow from the preceding.
  - If so, sociolinguistic effects are beginning to skew history: in this case interdialectal influence.

#### Why did manner almost drop out?

There are three manner of rights of Property; that is, Property absolute, Property qualified, and Property possessory. (1708)

I hate republicans, as I do <u>all other manner of fools</u>. (1876)

 Could it be phonological (rhythm)? – the other SKT words are monosyllables and can form a disyllable with reduced of.

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#### Why no qualifying type?

- Because class (general) meaning is too young?
- Because other meanings interfere too much?
- Because other syntactic possibilities interfere?
- Because the development was time-limited, and when *sort* and *kind* underwent it, *type* was not yet a member of the SKT set?
  - Because it isn't frequent enough? Cf. approx.
     ARCHER figures: type 253 vs. sort 494 vs. kind 765.

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#### **Origins of adverbial?**

- Qualifying → adverbial (DD)
  - I suppose it's ... a sort of holiday  $[D_P \ [D_A \ a] \ [N_P \ [Q_{ual} \ sort of] \ [N_A \ holiday]]]$
- Approximator meaning retained, syntactic subcategorisation widened.

and they *kind of* group . put people into *kind of* categories — .

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#### **Origins of adverbial?**

- **■** Binominal → adverbial (Tabor 1993)
- a hundred contradictory views may preserve <u>a kind</u> <u>of imperfect analogy</u> (1743)

 $[N_{
m P}\ a\ [N'\ [N\ kind\ ]\ [P_{
m P}\ of\ [N_{
m P}\ imperfect\ analogy]]]]$  $[N_{
m P}\ a\ [N'\ [A_{
m P}\ [D_{
m egMod}\ kind-of\ [imperfect]]\ analogy]]$ 

The Macaronian is a kind of burlesque poetry  $a \ kind \ [_{PP} \ of \ _{A} \ burlesque \ poetry \ ] \ [_{AP} \ (a) \ kind \ of \ burlesque \ ] \ [_{N} \ poetry \ ]$ 

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#### **Conclusions**

- What do (would) we get by identifying certain episodes as grammaticalisations?
  - Does it help predict pathways of development? (Yes.)
  - Does it tell us anything new about processes of grammaticalisation? (No?)

#### **Selected references**

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