

COURSE TITLE: SYNTAX

WEEK 5: GRAMMATICAL/ SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS

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GRAMMATICAL/ SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS

- ▶ In our lesson last week, we looked at the clauses,
- ▶ Types of clauses
- ▶ Functions of clauses
- ▶ In this week, we are going to look at the parts of sentence.
- ▶ We shall focus on the simple sentence.
- ▶ These parts of a sentence are referred by different terminologies:
- ▶ Syntactic functions
- ▶ Grammatical functions
- ▶ Clause/ sentence elements.

Lesson objectives

- ▶ By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:
 - ▶ i. Identify the parts of a sentence
 - ii. Analyze a sentence into its constituent parts.
 - iii. Describe the meaning of the syntactic elements.
 - iv. Construct simple and complex sentences using various elements of the clause.

THE ELEMENTS

- ▶ SUBJECT
- ▶ VERB
- ▶ OBJECT
 - ▶ DIRECT
 - ▶ INDIRECT
- ▶ COMPLEMENT
 - ▶ SUBJECT
 - ▶ OBJECT
- ▶ ADVERBIAL

MAJOR CLAUSE TYPES

TYPE	SUBJECT	VERB	OBJECTS	COMPLEMENTS	ADVERBIAL
SV	The sun	Is shining.			
SVO	The preacher	Inspired	me		
SVC	Your daughter	Seems		Independent(_{sc})	
SVA	My office	is			In the next building
SVOO	I	Will send (Ditransitive)	My parents (IO) a present (DO)		
SVOC	Most people	Have found	Him	Pleasant (oc)	
SVOA	You	Can put	The food		On the table

THE VERB

- ▶ The verb is the most important part of a sentence.
- ▶ A given verb can belong to different classes, and hence enter into a number of different clause types.
- ▶ The clause types above arise because the verb used determines the elements that can be selected (VERB COMPLEMENTATION)
- ▶ There are verbs that can take objects,
- ▶ others take complements,
- ▶ Others do not require objects nor complements

VERB COMPLEMENTATION PATTERNS

Type of complementation	Structural pattern	illustration
Intransitive	Sv	They laughed, Jesus Wept. They are eating.
Copular (Intensive)	Svc	Her idea is crazy. The gifts seem expensive.
Transtive		
a. Monotranstive	Svo	He made a film. She played a great role.
b. Ditransitive		
c. Complex transtive	Svoo	He sent me the video. She gives her friends expensive gifts
	Svoc	I find the video interesting. They elected her our delegate

The adverbial is optional: They ate lunch; They ate lunch quickly.

PRACTICE

- ▶ From the sentences that follow, identify the clause elements:
- ▶ He will get an award.
- ▶ He is very angry.
- ▶ He left through the back door.
- ▶ He got a spectacular reception.
- ▶ He made his house elegant.
- ▶ She got herself into trouble.

SUBJECT

- ▶ Other than the verb, the subject is another important part of the clause.
- ▶ Most present element
- ▶ The element which can give us the greatest number of characteristic features.
- ▶ It will be discussed in terms of form, position and function

Form of the subject

- ▶ Quirk, R. et al (1973) and Quirk, R. et al (1985) describe the form of the subject as
- ▶ Noun phrase: The children have finished the assessment.
- ▶ Nominal clause:
- ▶ What she has done is commendable.
- ▶ That he fought his brother is shocking.
- ▶ Whoever arrives first will get the front seat.
- ▶ There structure- There is nobody here.
- ▶ Anticipatory *it*-It is shocking to see him here.

Quirk, R. et, al. (1973). *A university grammar of English*. London: Pearson Education ltd, pg. 158.

Quirk, R. et, al. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Pearson Education ltd, pg. 725

Position of the subject

- ▶ Normally occurs before the verb in declarative clauses
- ▶ After the operator in yes-no interrogative clauses.
- ▶ Everybody has left to the function.
- ▶ Whoever came to the party received a gift.
- ▶ Has everybody left to the function?
- ▶ Did whoever that came to the party receive a gift.
- ▶ In who- interrogatives, it comes after the operator and before the main verb.
- ▶ What are you doing here?

Syntactic functions

- ▶ A subject is obligatory in finite clauses except in imperative clauses, where it is normally absent but implied.
- ▶ In finite clauses, the subject determines the number and person, where relevant:
 - ▶ John walks to school.
 - ▶ John and Mary walk to school.
- ▶ The subject normally determines the subject complement when that is a noun phrase:
 - ▶ Caroline is my friend.
 - ▶ Caroline and James are my friends.

Syntactic functions

- ▶ The subject determines the number and, where relevant, the person and gender of the reflexive pronoun as direct object, indirect object, subject complement or prepositional complement.
- ▶ *I shaved myself with a razor blade. / He shaved himself with.... / They shaved themselves....*
- ▶ The subject is repeated in the question tag.
- ▶ *The milk is sour, isn't it?*
- ▶ There is systematic correspondence between active and passive clauses;
- ▶ The direct or indirect object of an active clause becomes the subject of a passive clause;

Syntactic functions

- ▶ The subject of the active clause is either omitted or made the complement in a by-agent phrase.
- ▶ *The president has sacked all his ministers- All his ministers have been sacked (by the president).*
- ▶ The implied subject of a subjectless nonfinite or verbless clause is normally identical with the subject of the superordinate clause.
- ▶ Susan telephoned before coming over... (...before Susan coming over)

SEMANTIC PROPERTIES OF THE SUBJECT

- ▶ The theme / topic of the clause.
- ▶ Refers to the information regarded by the speaker as given/ known/shared.
- ▶ The president of Kenya (Subject-Given) is a botanist (new/rheme).
- ▶ Agentive role- the animate being instigating or causing the happening denoted by the verb;
▶ He opened the door.
- ▶ Instrumental role- expresses the material cause of an event.
▶ The storm destroyed many homes.

SEMANTIC PROPERTIES OF THE SUBJECT

- ▶ Recipient role: played by verbs as have, own, possess, benefit from,
He has sold his neighbour a house.
- ▶ Also, the perceptual verbs (hear, listen to)
He tasted the pepper soup.
- ▶ Verbs indicating a mental state may also require a recipient subject.
I thought you were mistaken.

THE OBJECT

- ▶ DIRECT
- ▶ INDIRECT
- ▶ They share some characteristics; hence justification for them to be called objects.
- ▶ FORM: NP or nominal clause.
- ▶ There are constraints on the types of nominal clauses that can be indirect objects; generally, only nominal relative clauses.
- ▶ He gave his children whatever they wanted.

POSITION OF THE OBJECT

- ▶ POSITION
- ▶ Normally follows the subject and the verb.
- ▶ If both objects are present, the indirect object normally comes before the direct object.
- ▶ I gave him my address.
- ▶ Alternative construction:
- ▶ I gave my address to him
- ▶ The indirect object becomes an object of the preposition.

SYNTACTIC FUNCTION

- ▶ If an object is coreferential with the subject, it requires a reflexive pronoun which agrees with the subject in person and, where relevant, in number and gender.
- ▶ You can please yourself./ I have given myself a treat.
- ▶ The object of an active clause may generally become the subject of the corresponding passive clause.
- ▶ We have built the house.- The house has been built (by us).
- ▶ If both objects are present, it is possible to make either the subject in a corresponding passive clause.
- ▶ *I will send Jane enough money*
- ▶ *Jane will be sent enough money. Enough money will be sent to Jane.*

SYNTACTIC FUNCTION

- ▶ The indirect object can generally correspond to a prepositional phrase, which is generally placed before the direct object.
- ▶ Pour me a drink- pour a drink for me.
- ▶ The indirect object can be omitted without affecting the semantic relations between other elements.
- ▶ He bought her parents a house.
- ▶ He bought a house.
- ▶ Hence, if there is only one object present, it is generally the direct object.

SEMANTIC PROPERTIES OF THE OBJECT

- ▶ The direct object typically refers to an entity that is affected by the action denoted in the clause.
- ▶ *He broke the glass.*
- ▶ The indirect object typically refers to an animate being that is the recipient of the action.
- ▶ *The children brought me a horse.*
- ▶ *Baird invented television.*

COMPLEMENT

- ▶ SUBJECT
- ▶ OBJECT
- ▶ Both are in a copular relationship with another clause element..
- ▶ The subject relates to the subject and the verb is copular.

My glass is empty.

We find them very pleasant.

Carol made Joshua her assistant.

- ▶ The implied relationship between the object and the object complement can be expressed by means of a corresponding SVC sentence with copular verbs 'be' / 'become'.

FORM:

- Normally NP/Adjective phrase,
- It can also be a nominal clause
- POSITION
- The subject complement normally follows the subject and the verb

He is a mighty warrior.

He is very wise.

- The object complement follows the direct object.

The students consider Jane an orator.

The students consider Jane wise.

SYNTACTIC FUNCTION

If it is a noun phrase, the subject complement normally has concord of number with the subject,

The object complement has concord with the direct object.

They considered Jane an orator.

They considered Jane and Mary orators.

- Unlike the object, the complement cannot become the subject of a corresponding passive voice.
- There is no corresponding clause for the SVC type.
- With the SVOC type, the direct object can be made the subject of a passive clause.

His friends called him Ted.

He is called Ted by his friends.

His friends consider him an inspiration.

He is considered an inspiration by his friends.

- The object complement becomes the subject complement in the passive construction.
- SEMANTIC PROPERTIES
- The role of the subject complement is that of attribute of the subject:

He is my brother/ He seems happy.

- The role of the object complement is that of attribute of the object:

I prefer coffee black/ He painted the wall green.

ADVERBIAL

- ▶ The most diverse of the clause elements:
- ▶ Can be at the beginning, middle and end of a clause.
- ▶ Typically optional.

FORM

- ▶ An adverb phrase, prepositional phrase, adverbial clause; sometimes a NP.

POSITION

The adverbial is capable of occurring in one or more than one position in the clause.

Constraints on its mobility depends on the type and form of the adverbial.

ADVERBIAL

- ▶ SEMANTIC PROPERTIES
- ▶ The adverbial refers to the circumstances of the situation (adjunct and subjunct)
- ▶ Comments on the form or content of the clause (disjunct)
- ▶ Provides a link between clauses (conjunct)
- ▶ Examples:
- ▶ Your children are *outside*.
- ▶ We all got *into the room*.
- ▶ He will visit London *next month*.

ADVERBIALS

▶ POSITION

- ▶ The adverbial in the SVA type normally follows the subject and verb,
- ▶ And the adverbial in the SVOA type normally follows the direct object.

▶ SYNTACTIC FUNCTION

- ▶ Except for the obligatory adverbial in the SVA and SVOA types, adverbials are optional.
- ▶ They may be added or removed from the clause without affecting its acceptability and
- ▶ Without affecting the relations of structure and meaning in the rest of the clause.

ADJUNCTS, DISJUNCTS, CONJUNCTS

- ▶ Adverbials may be integrated to some extent into the structure of the clause;
- ▶ They may be peripheral to it.
- ▶ If integrated, they are adjuncts.
- ▶ If peripheral, they are termed disjuncts and conjuncts
- ▶ Conjuncts have a connective function.
- ▶ Disjuncts express opinion
- ▶ To my regret, they didn't leave for home.
- ▶ Naturally, females work better with males.

ADJUNCTS, DISJUNCTS, CONJUNCTS

- ▶ CONJUNCTS join clauses,
- ▶ I got home early; to my disappointment, I had forgotten they key in the office.
- ▶ He has a lot of money; shockingly, he spends very little on food.
- ▶ These conjuncts are in form of :
- ▶ To my disappointment- PP
- ▶ Shockingly- Adverb phrase

PRACTICE

- ▶ Analyze these sentences into the the clause elements:

Those lost children came back to school yesterday.

Whoever gets all the points will proceed to the next level.

Bring my books tomorrow.

He is an inspirational to many.

The leader appointed Jane his personal assistant.

SUMMARY

- ▶ Clause elements
- ▶ Subject
- ▶ VERB
- ▶ Object
- ▶ Complement
- ▶ Adverbial
- ▶ Form, position, syntactic and semantic functions .

References

Quirk, R. et, al. (1973). *A university grammar of English*. London: Pearson Education Ltd.

Quirk, R. et, al. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Pearson Education Ltd.

NEXT LESSON

- ▶ SYNTACTIC LINKAGES