A SHORT OVERVIEW OF ENGLISH SYNTAX

Based on *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*

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This paper presents a brief account of English syntax based on *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*,[[1]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftn1" \o ") providing an overview of the main constructions and categories in the language. The present version is intended primarily for members of the English Teachers' Association of Queensland (ETAQ), offering an alternative approach to that presented in the 2007 volume of their journal *Words`Worth* by Lenore Ferguson under the title `Grammar at the Coalface' - in particular the articles `The structural basics' (March 2007) and `Functional elements in a clause' (June 2007). I make use of concepts discussed in my own *Words'Worth* paper `Aspects of grammar: functions, complements and inflection' (March 2008), and take over Functional Grammar's useful convention of distinguishing between functions and classes by using an initial capital letter for the former: thus Subject is the name of a function, noun phrase the name of a class.

1 SENTENCE AND CLAUSE

We distinguish two main types of sentence: a **clausal sentence**, which has the form of a single clause, and a **compound sentence**, which has the form of two or more **coordinated** clauses, usually joined by a **coordinator** (such as *and*, *or*, *but*):

[1]       i         *Sue went to London last week.*                                                      [clausal sentence]

ii         *Sue went to London last week and her father went with her.*    [compound sentence]

Note that such an example as *We stayed at the hotel which you recommended* is also a clausal sentence even though it contains two clauses. This is because one clause, *which you recommended*, is **part of** the other, rather than separate from it (more specifically, the *which you recommended* is part of the noun phrase *the hotel which you recommended*); the larger clause is thus *We stayed at the hotel which you recommended*, and this does constitute the whole sentence, like that in [i].

The fact that the two types of sentence are distinguished in terms of clauses implies that we take the clause to be a more basic unit than the sentence, which reflects the fact that in speech it tends to be more difficult to determine the boundaries between sentences than the boundaries between clauses. For most of this overview we will focus on clauses: we return to coordination in Section14.

2 CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL CLAUSES

We can describe the structure of clauses most economically if we distinguish between the most basic and elementary kinds of clause, which we call **canonical clauses**, and the rest. The idea is that we can present the analysis more clearly if we begin with canonical clauses, describing them directly, and then deal in turn with the various kinds of non-canonical clause, describing these indirectly, in terms of how they differ from canonical clauses.

The following paired examples will give some idea of what is involved in this distinction:

[2]                 **Canonical                                                     Non-canonical**

  i   a.    *She has read your article.*                       b.   *She hasn't read your article.*

ii   a.    *Sue is coming for dinner.*                         b.   *Is Sue coming for dinner?*

iii   a.    *They knew the victim.*                              b.   *She said that they knew the victim.*

iv   a.    *He missed the train.*                                b.   *Either he missed the train or it is late.*

v   a.    *The secretary took the key.*                     b.   *The key was taken by the secretary.*

These illustrate the following properties of canonical clauses:

o       They are **positive**; **negative** clauses like [ib] are non-canonical.

o       They are **declarative**; **interrogatives** like [iib] are non-canonical, as are the other clause types: **imperatives** (e.g. *Please stand up*) and **exclamatives** (*What a fool I've been*).

o       They are **main clauses**; the underlined clause in [iiib] is **subordinate** and hence non-canonical.

o       They are **non-coordinate**; the two underlined clauses in [ivb] are **coordinated** and hence each of them is non-canonical.

o       They are **active**; **passive** clauses like [vb] are non-canonical. This is a matter of information packaging and we can say, more generally, that canonical clauses package the information in the grammatically most basic way. Thus *I have now read most of them* is canonical but *Most of them I have now read* is not.

There are two further points that should be made at this point.

(a) In all the above examples the non-canonical clauses differ in their structure from canonical clauses, but this is not always so. In [iiib] the subordinate clause is introduced by *that* but we could omit this, giving *She said they knew the victim*, where the underlined clause is identical with [iiia]; nevertheless it is still subordinate and hence non-canonical. It is subordinate by virtue of being Complement of the verb *said*, but the subordination happens not to be marked in the internal grammatical structure of the clause itself.

(b) A clause is non-canonical if it lacks at least one of the above properties. It may of course lack more than one of them. Thus *Wasn't the key taken by the secretary?* has three non-canonical properties: it is negative, interrogative and passive. In the discussion below we will take the non-canonical properties in turn with the understanding that they can combine.

3 INITIAL LISTING OF THE PARTS OF SPEECH

We distinguish nine primary word classes, or parts of speech, to use the traditional term. In this overview we needn't worry about interjections (*wow*, *ah*, *hello*, and the like), which leaves us with eight classes. They are named and exemplified in [3]:

[3]       i         **Verb**                *He is ill.                       She left early.               We want to help.*

ii         **Noun**                *The dog barked.         Sue won easily.            I love you.*

iii         **Adjective**         *He's very young.         I've got a sore knee.     It looks easy.*

iv         **Adverb**            *She spoke clearly.      You're extremely fit.      He works very hard*

v         **Determinative** *The dog barked.         I've got a sore knee.     We need some milk.*

vi         **Preposition**     *He's in the garden.     It's from your uncle.       We went to Paris.*

vii         **Coordinator**     *We saw Kim and Pat.  Hurry or we'll be late.     It's cheap but good.*

viii        **Subordinator**   *I know that it's true.     Ask whether it's true.     I wonder if it's true.*

Note that we use `determinative' as the name of a class and `Determiner' as the name of a function;[[2]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftn2" \o ") we need to invoke the class vs function distinction here to cater for the construction illustrated in *the doctor's car*. Here *the doctor's* has the same function, Determiner, as *the* in *the car*, but it is not a word and hence not a determinative: as far as its class is concerned it's a noun phrase.

The above scheme differs from that of traditional grammar in three respects:

o       We take pronouns to be a subclass of nouns, not a distinct primary class.

o       Traditional grammars generally take our determinatives to be a subclass of adjectives, though some recognise a class of articles consisting of *the* and *a*. Our determinative class is much larger, containing not just *the* and *a*, but also words like *some*, *any*, *all*, *each*, *every, no*, etc.; these are very different from words like those underlined in [iii].

o       We have coordinator and subordinator as distinct primary classes, whereas traditional grammar has a primary class of conjunctions subdivided into coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

4 PHRASES

For each of the first six of the word classes in [3] there is a corresponding class of phrases whose Head belongs to that class. In the following examples, the phrase is enclosed in brackets and the Head underlined:

[4]       i         **Verb phrase**                   *She* [*wrote some letters*]*.     He* [*is still in London*]*.*

ii         **Noun phrase** [*The new lodger*] *is here.* [*The boss*] *wants to see* [*you*]*.*

iii         **Adjective phrase**            *It's getting* [*rather late*]*.        I'm* [*glad you could come*]*.*

iv         **Adverb phrase**               *I spoke* [*too soon*]*.              It's* [*quite extraordinarily*] *good.*

v         **Determinative phrase**    *I saw* [*almost every*] *card.    We've* [*very little*] *money left.*

vi         **Preposition phrase**        *They're* [*in the garden*]*.       He wrote a book* [*on sharks*]*.*

5 THE STRUCTURE OF CANONICAL CLAUSES

**5.1 Subject and Predicate**

A canonical clause consists of a Subject followed by a Predicate. The Predicate is realised by a verb phrase; the Subject is mostly realised by a noun phrase, but there are other possibilities too, most importantly a subordinate clause:

[5]                 **Subject                        Predicate**

  i         *One of his friends*     |   *called a doctor.*                               [noun phrase as Subject]

ii         *That he was lying*     |   *was obvious.*                         [subordinate clause as Subject]

In canonical clauses describing an action the Subject will be associated with the semantic role of actor, or agent, as in [5i]. But many clauses don't express actions: *we heard an explosion*, for example, describes a sensory experience, and here the Subject is associated with the role of experiencer. There are numerous different kinds of semantic role that can be associated with the Subject: what the role is in a particular instance will depend on the meaning of the clause, especially of the verb.

Meaning therefore does not provide a reliable way of identifying the Subject. But this function has a good few distinctive grammatical properties which together generally make it easy to identify. Here are some of them.

(a) Position. Its default position - the one it occupies unless there are special reasons for placing it elsewhere - is before the Predicate.

(b) Formation of interrogatives. You can generally change a declarative clause into an interrogative by inverting the Subject with the first auxiliary verb; if there is no auxiliary in the declarative you need to insert the appropriate form of ***do***.[[3]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftn3" \o ") In either case the Subject ends up following the auxiliary verb:

[6]                 **Declarative                                                  Interrogative**

  i   a.    *The boss is in her office.*                         b.   *Is the boss in her office?*

ii   a.    *Everyone signed the petition.*                  b.   *Did everyone sign the petition?*

(c) Interrogative tags. To seek confirmation of a statement you can add an interrogative tag, consisting of an auxiliary verb and a personal pronoun Subject which relates back to the Subject of the clause to which the tag is attached: *The boss is in her office, isn't she?*; *Everyone signed the petition, didn't they*?

(d) Subject-verb agreement, Where the verb has person-number properties (in the present tense and the past tense of ***be***), they are normally determined by agreement with the Subject:

[7]          a.    *Her son plays the piano.*                         b.   *Her sons play the piano.*

**5.2 Predicator, Complements and Adjuncts**

At the next layer of structure below the Predicate we distinguish three functions. The Predicator is the function filled by the verb. The verb is the Head of the verb phrase, and Predicator is the special term used for the Head of the verb phrase forming the Predicate of a clause. Thus in [7b] *play the piano* is a verb phrase functioning as Predicate while *play* is a verb functioning as Predicator.

Complement and Adjunct are different kinds of Dependent, distinguished by the **licensing** condition. Complements can occur only if they are licensed by the Head verb: the verb must belong to a subclass that permits (or requires) a Complement of the type in question. Adjuncts are not subject to this restriction. Compare:

[8]                 *I mowed the lawn before it started to rain.*

Here *the lawn* is admissible because the verb ***mow*** (unlike ***disappear***, for example) allows a Dependent of this kind, so *the lawn* is a Complement. But a Dependent indicating time can occur with any verb, so *before it started to rain* is an Adjunct.

We will look further at Complements in the next subsection. As for Adjuncts, they are usually realised by adverb phrases, preposition phrases, subordinate clauses, or a very narrow range of noun phrases. They can be divided into various semantic subtypes, such as Adjuncts of time, place, manner, etc., as illustrated in [9]:

[9]       i         *She spoke very clearly.*                                    [adverb phrase as Adjunct of manner]

ii         *As a result of his action, he was fired.*                  [prep phrase as Adjunct of reason]

iii         *We cycle to work to save the busfare.*      [subordinate clause as Adjunct of purpose]

iv         *They left the country last week.*                               [noun phrase as Adjunct of time]

**5.3 Object and Predicative Complement**

Two important subtypes of Complement are the Object and the Predicative Complement:

[10]        a.    **Object:** *Ed blamed the minister.*              b.   **Predicative Comp**: *Ed was a minister..*

While thousands of verbs license an Object, only a fairly small number license a Predicative Complement, and of these ***be*** is by far the most common: others include ***become***, ***remain***, ***appear***, ***seem***, etc. The term `Predicative Complement' is most easily understood by reference to the construction with ***be***: the verb has little meaning here (it is often called just a `linking verb'), so that the main semantic content of the Predicate is expressed by the Complement.

There are several grammatical properties that distinguish Objects from Predicative Complements, of which the two most important ones are illustrated in [11]:

[11]     i   a.    *Ed blamed the minister.* [Object]              b.   *The minister was blamed by Ed.*

ii   a.    *Ed was a minister.* [Pred Comp]               b.   \**A minister was been by Ed.*

iii   a.    *Ed was innocent.* [Pred Comp]                b.   \**Ed blamed innocent.*

o       The Object of an active clause can usually become the Subject of a corresponding passive clause, but a Predicative Complement never can. Thus the Object of active [ia] corresponds to the Subject of passive [ib], whereas [iib] is not a possible passive version of [iia]. (Here and below the asterisk indicates that what follows is ungrammatical.)

o       A Predicative Complement can be realised not only by a noun phrase, as in [iia], but also by an adjective phrase, as in [iiia], whereas an Object cannot be realised by an adjective phrase, as evident from the ungrammaticality of [iiib].

**5.4 Direct and Indirect Object**

A clause may contain two Objects, distinguished as Direct and Indirect. In canonical clauses, the Indirect Object always precedes the Direct Object, and typically (but not invariably) is associated with the semantic role of recipient or beneficiary:

[12]     i         *He gave the prisoner some water.*              [Indirect Object (recipient) + Direct Object]

ii         *She baked me a cake.*                            [Indirect Object (beneficiary) + Direct Object]

**5.5 Subjective and Objective Predicative Complements**

The Predicative Complements in [10b] and [11iia/iiia] are related to the Subject, but it is also possible for a Predicative Complement to be related to the Object: we accordingly distinguish two subtypes, Subjective and Objective. Compare:

[13]               **Subjective Pred Comp                                 Objective Pred Comp**

  i   a.    *He became angry.*                                   b.   *This made him angry.*

ii   a.    *He was a charlatan.*                                b.   *They considered him a charlatan.*

**5.6 Five canonical clause structures**

On the basis of the presence or absence of the Complement types considered so far we can distinguish the following canonical clause structures:

[14]               **Example                                     Structure              Name**

  i         *They disappeared.*                      S-P                       **(Ordinary) intransitive**

ii         *They were ecstatic.*                      S-P-PCs                **Complex-intransitive**

iii         *They bought a house.*                 S-P-Od                  **(Ordinary) monotransitive**

iv         *They kept it warm.*                       S-P-Od-PCo            **Complex-transitive**

v         *They sent her some flowers.*        S-P-Oi-Od              **Ditransitive**

In the representations of the structures, S stands for Subject, P for Predicator, PCs for Subjective Predicative Complement, Od for Direct Object, PCo for Objective Predicative Complement, and Oi for Indirect Object. The names reflect the fact that there are two dimensions of contrast:

o       One has to do with Objects: an intransitive clause has no Object, a monotransitive clause has a single Object, and a ditransitive clause has two Objects.

o       The other has to with Predicative Complements: if a clause contains a Predicative Complement it is complex, otherwise ordinary, though the latter term is often omitted (as it is in [v], since there is no possibility of adding a Predicative Complement to a ditransitive clause).

         The names apply in the first instance to the clause constructions, and then derivatively to the verbs that appear in these constructions. Thus ***disappear*** is an (ordinary) intransitive verb, ***be*** a complex-intransitive one, and so on. But it must be borne in mind that the majority of verbs can appear in more than one of them, and hence belong to more than one class. ***Find***, for example, commonly appears in [iii] (*We found the key*), [iv] (*We found her co-operative*), and [v] (*We found her a job*).

**5.7 Prepositional and clausal Complements.**

The Complements considered so far have been noun phrases or adjective phrases, but these are not the only possibilities. Complements often have the form of preposition phrases or subordinate clauses:

[15]     i   a.    *She went to Paris.*                                   b.   *She took him to Paris.*

ii   a.    *She relied on her instinct.*                        b.   *He congratulated her on her promotion.*

iii   a.    *He said he was sorry.*                              b.   *He told her he was sorry.*

iv   a.    *We intend to leave on Tuesday.*              b.   *I advise you to leave on Tuesday.*

In the [a] examples here the underlined preposition phrase ([i-ii]) or subordinate clause ([iii-iv]) is the only Complement, while in the [b] ones it follows an Object. We look at different kinds of subordinate clause in Section13, but there is one point to be made here about the prepositional constructions. In [i] *to* contrasts with other prepositions such as *over*, *from*, *via*, *beyond*, etc., but in [ii] *on* is selected by the verb: any adequate dictionary will tell you (if only by example) that *rely* takes a Complement with *on*, *consist* with *of*, *refer* with *to*, and so on. Verbs like these that take as Complement a preposition phrase headed by some specified preposition are called `prepositional verbs'. Most ditransitive verbs also belong to this latter class by virtue of licensing a preposition phrase with *to* or *for* instead of the Indirect Object: compare *He gave some water to the prisoner* and *She baked a cake for me* with [12] above.

6 VERBS

**6.1 Verb inflection**

The most distinctive property of verbs is their inflection: they have a number of inflectional forms that are permitted or required in various grammatical constructions. The present tense form *takes*, for example, can occur as the verb of a canonical clause, whereas the past participle *taken* cannot: *She takes care,* but not \**She taken care.*

The great majority of verb lexemes have six inflectional forms, as illustrated in [16]:

[16]     i         **Preterite**                          *checked          She checked the figures herself.*

ii         **3rd singular present**       *checks*            *She checks the figures herself.*

iii         **Plain present**                   *check*              *They check the figures themselves.*

iv         **Plain form**                        *check*              *She may check the figures herself.*

v         **Gerund-participle**            *checking*         *She is checking the figures herself.*

vi         **Past participle**                 *checked          She had checked the figures herself.*

It will be noticed that although we have distinguished six different **inflectional forms**, there are only four different **shapes**: *checked*, *checks*, *check* and *checking*. By `shape' we mean the spelling or pronunciation. Thus the preterite and past participle of the lexeme ***check*** have the same shape, as do the plain present tense and the plain form. The same applies to all other **regular** verbs, i.e. verbs whose inflectional forms are determined by general rules. But there are a good number of irregular verbs where the preterite and past participle do not have the same shape: ***take***, for example, has *took* as its preterite and *taken* as its past participle.

This means that it is very easy to decide whether any particular instance of the shape *check* is a preterite form or a past participle. What you need to do is ask which form of a verb like ***take*** would be needed in the construction in question. Consider, then, the following examples:

[17]     i         *She may have checked the figures herself.*

ii         *I'm not sure whether she checked the figures herself or not.*

If we substitute ***take*** for ***check*** in [i] the form we need is the past participle *taken*: *She may have taken a break*. So this *checked* is likewise a past participle. And if we make the substitution in [ii] we need the preterite form *took*: *I'm not sure whether she took a break or not*. So the *checked* of [ii] is the preterite form. Note that when making the substitution you need to keep constant what precedes the verb (e.g. *She may have* in [i]) since this is what determines the inflection that is required: what follows the verb is irrelevant and hence can be changed to suit the verb you are substituting.

Let us now briefly review the six forms.

(a) Preterite. This is a type of past tense: the type where the past tense is marked inflectionally rather than by means of an auxiliary verb. Many grammars use the more general term `past tense': we prefer the more specific term to distinguish it from the construction where the auxiliary ***have*** marks the other kind of past tense, as in *She has checked the proofs*.

(b)-(c) The present tense forms. There are two present tense forms, one which occurs with a 3rd person singular subject, and one which occurs with any other subject: 1st person (*I check*), 2nd person (*you check*) or plural (*they check*). We could call this latter form `non-3rd person singular', but `plain present' is simpler. `Plain' indicates that it is identical with the morphological **base** of the lexeme, i.e. the starting-point for the rules that produce the various inflectional forms by adding a suffix, changing the vowel, and so on.

(d) The plain form. This is also identical with the base, but it is not a present tense form. It is used in three constructions:

[18]     i         **Imperative**     *Check the figures yourself!*

ii         **Infinitival**        *It's better to check the figures oneself*. *I will check them myself.*

iii         **Subjunctive**   *It's essential that she check the figures herself.*

The infinitival construction is very often marked by *to*, but it is also found without *to* after such verbs as ***can***, ***may***, ***will***, ***do*** (*She didn't check the figures herself*), ***make*** (*They made me check the figures myself*), etc. The subjunctive is much the least frequent of the three constructions and belongs to somewhat formal style.

There are two major factors that distinguish the plain form from the plain present:

o       The verb ***be*** is highly exceptional in its inflection in that it has three present tense forms instead of the usual two (*is*, *am*, *are*) and all of these are different in shape from the plain form *be*. It's the latter form that appears in the three constructions shown in [18]: *Be quiet* (imperative); *It's better to be safe than sorry*, *I will be ready in time* (infinitival); *It's essential that she be told* (subjunctive). So we can tell whether a given instance of *check*, say, is the plain present or the plain form by using the substitution test illustrated above, but this time substituting the verb ***be***. Thus the *check* of *We must check the figures* is a plain form, not a plain present tense because we need the plain form of ***be*** in this position: *We must be careful*.

o       The plain present doesn't occur with 3rd person singular Subjects, but the plain form does. Compare *She checks the figures herself* (not \**She check the figures herself*) and *She will check the figures herself* (not \**She will checks the figures herself*).

(e) The gerund-participle. This form always ends with the suffix @*ing*. Traditional grammar distinguishes two forms with this suffix, the gerund and the present participle:

[19]     i         *Checking the figures can be onerous*                                            [traditional gerund]

ii         *People checking the figures must be alert*                     [traditional present participle]

The idea was that a gerund is comparable to a noun, while a participle is comparable to an adjective. Thus in [i] *checking the figures* is comparable to *such checks*, where *checks* is a noun; in [ii] *checking the figures* is Modifier to *people* and was therefore considered adjective-like since the most common type of Modifier to a noun is an adjective.[[4]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftn4" \o ") There is, however, no verb in English that has distinct forms for the constructions in [19], and so there is no basis for making any inflectional distinction here in Present-day English: we thus have a single form and the name `gerund-participle' indicates that it covers both traditional categories.

(f) The past participle. This is used in two main constructions, the perfect and the passive:

[20]     i         **Perfect**           *She has checked the figures.*

ii         **Passive**         *The figures must be checked by the boss.*

The perfect is a past tense marked by the auxiliary verb ***have***, while the most straightforward cases of the passive involve the auxiliary verb ***be***. We retain the traditional term `past participle', though the `past' component of meaning applies just to the perfect construction.

**6.2 The inflectional tense system**

We have seen that there are two inflectional tenses in English: preterite and present; we review now the major uses of these tenses.

(a) Preterite. Three uses can be distinguished, as illustrated in [21]:

[21]     i         **Past time**                a. *He arrived yesterday.* b. *She knew him well.*

ii         **Backshift**                a. *Ed said he was ill.* b. *I thought it started tomorrow.*

iii         **Modal remoteness** a. *I wish I knew the answer.*   b. *I'd do it if you paid me.*

o       In [i] we see the basic use, indicating past time. The event of his arriving took place in the past, and the state of her knowing him well obtained in the past (it may still obtain now, but I'm talking about some time in the past). This is much the most frequent use, but it's important to be aware that the preterite doesn't always have this meaning.

o       Example [iia] could be used to report Ed's saying `I am ill': present tense *am* is shifted back to preterite *was* under the influence of the preterite reporting verb *said*. In [iib] my original thought was `It starts tomorrow': again present tense *starts* is shifted back to preterite *started*. This example shows very clearly that the backshift use is not the same as the past time use, for clearly the starting is not in the past.

o       In [iii] the preterite has a modal rather than temporal meaning: it has to do with factuality, not time. In [iiia] the subordinate clause has a counterfactual meaning under the influence of *wish*: you understand that I don't know the answer. The time is present, not past: I don't know it now. The conditional [iiib] is not counterfactual (it doesn't rule out the possibility of your paying me), but it envisages your paying me as a somewhat remote possibility - rather less likely than with the present tense counterpart *I'll do it if you pay me.* Note that the time of your possibly paying me is in the future. We use the term `modal remoteness' to cover both these interpretations (as well as others mentioned briefly in Section6.5).

(b) The present tense. The two most important uses are seen in [22]:

[22]     i         **Present time**           a. *I promise I'll help you.*        b. *She lives in Sydney.*

ii         **Future time**             a. *Exams start next week.*      b. *I'll go home when it gets dark.*

o       In [i] we again have the basic and much the most common use: to indicate present time. In [ia] the event of my promising is actually simultaneous with the utterance, for I perform the act of promising by saying this sentence. In [ib] we have a state, and the present tense indicates that the state obtains at the time of speaking.

o       In [ii] the time is future. In main clauses this is possible only when the event is in some way already scheduled, as in [iia]. But this constraint does not apply in various kinds of subordinate clause such as we have in [iib].

**6.3 Auxiliary verbs**

We turn now to the important subclass of verbs called **auxiliary verbs**, or **auxiliaries**: they are quite markedly different in their grammatical behaviour from other verbs, which are called **lexical verbs**.

*6.3.1 Membership of the class*

The main members of the auxiliary class are shown in [23], where they are divided into two subclasses, **modal** and **non-modal**:

[23]     i         **Modal auxiliaries**          ***can***, ***may***, ***must***, ***will***, ***shall***, ***ought***, ***need***, ***dare***

ii         **Non-modal auxiliaries**   ***be***, ***have***, ***do***

(*Could*, *might*, *would* and *should* are the preterite forms of ***can***, ***may***, ***will*** and ***shall*** respectively, though they differ considerably from other preterites, as we shall see.)

*6.3.2 Distinctive properties*

There are several constructions which require the presence of an auxiliary verb, the two most frequent of which involve Subject-auxiliary inversion and negation.

(a) Subject-auxiliary inversion. We have seen that in canonical clauses the Subject precedes the verb whereas in most interrogative main clauses the Subject follows the (first) verb. The verb that precedes the Subject, however, must be an auxiliary verb: only auxiliaries can invert with the Subject. Compare:

[24]               **Auxiliary verb                                              Lexical verb**

  i   a.    *She has taken the car.*                            b.   *She took the car.*               [declarative]

ii   a.    *Has she taken the car?*                           b.   \**Took she the car?*          [interrogative]

If the declarative doesn't contain an auxiliary, as in [ib], it is necessary to insert the auxiliary ***do*** so that inversion can apply: *Did she take the car?* This ***do*** has no meaning: it is simply inserted to satisfy the grammatical rule requiring an auxiliary.

(b) Negation. The construction where *not* is used to negate the verb likewise requires that the verb be an auxiliary:

[25]               **Auxiliary verb                                              Lexical verb**

  i   a.    *She has taken the car.*                            b.   *She took the car.*                    [positive]

ii   a.    *She has not taken the car.*                      b.   \**She took not the car.*           [negative]

Again, if there is no auxiliary in the positive, ***do*** must be inserted to form the negative: *She did not take the car*.

A further, related, point is that auxiliaries, but not lexical verbs, have negative forms ending in the suffix *n't*: a more informal variant of [25iia] is *She hasn't taken the car*.

*6.3.3 Auxiliaries as Heads*

It is important to emphasise that auxiliaries contrast with lexical verbs, not with what some grammars call `main verbs'. Auxiliaries function as Head, not Dependent, in verb phrase structure. They mostly take non-finite clauses as Complement, like many lexical verbs. Compare the examples in [26], where the verb phrase is enclosed in brackets, the Head is in capitals and underlining marks the non-finite clause functioning as its Complement:

[26]               **Auxiliary verb as Head                                Lexical verb as Head**

  i   a.    *They* [*OUGHT to accept the offer*]*.*          b.   *They* [*INTEND to accept the offer*]*.*

ii   a.    *We* [*CAN answer their queries*]*.*               b.   *We* [*HELP answer their queries*]*.*

iii   a.    *She* [*WAS checking the figures*]*.*             b.   *She* [*BEGAN checking the figures*]*.*

iv   a.    *He* [*WAS attacked by a dog*]*.*                  b.   *He* [*GOT attacked by a dog*]*.*

The particular type of non-finite clause that is used depends on the Head verb, whether auxiliary or lexical. ***Ought*** and ***intend*** license infinitivals with *to*, ***can*** and ***help*** infinitivals without *to*; ***be***, in one of its uses, and ***begin*** license a non-finite clause with a gerund-participle form of the verb; ***be***, in a second use, and ***get*** license one with a past participle form of the verb.

Note, then, that the verb phrase in [iiia], say, is divided into *was* + *checking the figures*, not *was checking* + *the figures*, just as that in [iiib] is divided into *began* + *checking the figures*, not *began checking* + *the figures*. And similarly with the other examples.

**6.4 The non-modal auxiliaries, *be*, *have*, *do***

Little further need be said about ***do***: it is used in constructions like Subject-auxiliary inversion and negation when required to satisfy the requirement that the construction contain an auxiliary. There is also a lexical verb ***do*** used in clauses like *She did her best*, *I did him an injustice*, etc.; here, then, auxiliary ***do*** must be added to form interrogatives and negatives: *Did she do her best?*, *I didn't do him an injustice.*

(a) ***Be***. Three uses of ***be*** can be distinguished, illustrated in :

[27]     i         **Progressive marker**  a. *They are watching TV.*   b. *I've been working all morning.*

ii         **Passive marker**         a. *It was taken by Jill.*         b. *He may be arrested.*

iii         **Copula**                       a. *She was a friend of his.* b. *That is very likely.*

o       In [i], where ***be*** is followed by a verb in the gerund-participle form, it is a marker of progressive aspect. It generally serves to indicate that the situation - the action, event, state, or whatever - was, is or will be in progress at the time in question.

o       The clauses in [ii] are passive; [iia] is the passive counterpart of active *Jill took it*, the presence of ***be*** being one of the major differences between the two forms. There is no active counterpart of [iib] because the latter has no *by* phrase (cf. Section15).

o       In [iii] ***be*** is the only verb, but it still behaves as an auxiliary. Thus the interrogative of [a] is *Was she a friend of his?* and the negative of [b] is *That isn't very likely*. In these examples the auxiliary has as its Complement not a non-finite clause but a noun phrase (*a friend of his*) and an adjective phrase (*very likely*).

(b) ***Have***. This verb belongs to both lexical and auxiliary classes. In *She had a swim* it is a lexical verb, for the interrogative and negative counterparts are *Did she have a swim?* and *She didn't have a swim*. The auxiliary uses are seen in [28]:

[28]     i         **Perfect marker**    a. *He has broken his leg.*    b. *He may have taken it yesterday.*

ii         **Static *have***          a. *She has enough credit.*   b. *We have to invite them all.*

o       The perfect is marked by auxiliary ***have*** + a past participle. It is best regarded as a secondary past tense - the primary past tense being the inflectional preterite. Note, for example, that the preterite is found only in finite constructions such as *He took it yesterday*, so it can't occur after ***may*** (cf. \**He may took it yesterday*: ***may*** takes an infinitival clause as Complement), and perfect ***have*** is then used instead, as in [ib]. Since ***have*** itself can inflect for tense, [ia] is doubly marked for tense: it is `past in present', the past being marked by the lexeme ***have*** and the present by the inflection on ***have***. This reflects the fact that while the event of his breaking his leg is located in past time it is seen as having relevance to the present. The most likely scenario is that his leg has not yet healed, so that he is at present incapacitated. The present tense component also explains why it is not normally possible to add an Adjunct like *yesterday*: \**He has broken his leg yesterday.*

o       ***Have*** in [ii] denotes a state, unlike that of the above *She had a swim*, which is dynamic, denoting an event. Usage is divided as to whether static ***have*** is an auxiliary or a lexical verb. Those who say *She hasn't enough credit* or *Have we to invite them all?* and the like are treating it as an auxiliary, while those who say *She doesn't have enough credit* or *Do we have to invite them all?* are treating it as a lexical verb. Many people use both constructions, though the lexical verb treatment has been gaining ground for some time. Note that in [iia] ***have***, like ***be*** in [27], doesn't have a non-finite clause as Complement.

**6.5 The modal auxiliaries**

In this section we first note that ***need*** and ***dare***, like ***do*** and ***have*** above, belong to both auxiliary and lexical verb classes; we next set out the main grammatical properties that define the class of modal auxiliaries, then consider the preterite forms, and finally look at the kinds of meaning they express.

(a) ***Need*** and ***dare***. These are auxiliaries only when followed by an infinitival construction without *to*, as in *Need I bother?* and *I daren't tell them*, etc. Thus in *I need a haircut*, *I need to get my hair cut*, *I dare you to repeat that*, etc. we have lexical verbs.

(b) Distinctive grammatical properties of modal auxiliaries

o       They have only tensed forms: no plain form, no gerund-participle, no past participle. Hence the impossibility of \**I'd like to may go with you*; \**We're musting invite them all*, \**She has could speak French since she was a child*.

o       They are invariable in the present tense instead of having a distinct form in @*s* used with 3rd person singular Subjects: *She can swim*, not \**She cans swim*, etc.

o       With one exception they license a following infinitival Complement without *to*: *She can swim*, not \**She can to swim*. The exception is ***ought***: *They ought to accept the offer* (=[26ia]).

Note that although *We have to invite them all* has essentially the same meaning as *We must invite them all*, this ***have*** is not a modal auxiliary: it has none of the above three grammatical properties. It is a special case of the static ***have*,** illustrated in [28ii], and as such it is for many speakers not an auxiliary at all, but a lexical verb.

(c) The preterite forms. *Could*, *might*, *would* and *should* are the preterite forms of ***can***, ***may***, ***will*** and ***shall*** respectively, but the use of these preterites differs from that of other preterite forms in Present-day English.

o       Only *could* and *would* have the basic preterite use of indicating past time: *I could do it easily when I was younger*; *I asked him to help but he wouldn't*.

o       The status of *might* and *should* as preterites is established by their use in certain conditional constructions and in those cases of reported speech or thought where present tense forms are excluded. Thus though we can have *may* in *If you come back tomorrow you may find him in*, we need *might* in *If you came back tomorrow you might find him in*.[[5]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftn5" \o ") And if at some time in the past I had the thought `I shall easily finish before she returns' I would report this with *should*, as in *I knew I should easily finish before she returned* (not \**shall*).

o       The major difference is that while with other verbs the modal remoteness use of the preterite is restricted to certain kinds of subordinate clause, with the modal auxiliaries it occurs in main clauses and with a wider range of interpretation; with *might* and *should* it is overwhelmingly the most frequent use. The preterites tend to be weaker, more tentative or polite than the present tense forms.

(d) Types of modal meaning. The modal auxiliaries express a considerable variety of meanings, but they can be grouped into three major types.

o       **Epistemic modality**. Here we are concerned with what is necessary, likely or possible: *He must have overslept*; *Dinner should be ready in a few minutes*; *She may be ill*.

o       **Deontic modality**. Here it is a matter of what is required or permitted: *You must work harder*; *You should be studying for your exam*; *You can*/*may go with them if you like*.

o       **Dynamic modality**. Here it is a question of properties or dispositions of persons or other entities involved in the situation: *She can speak very persuasively* (ability), *Will you help me?* (willingness). This kind of meaning is mainly found with just ***can***, ***will*** and ***dare***.

In some cases there is a clear ambiguity as to which type of meaning is intended. *You must be very tactful*, for example, can be interpreted epistemically (I'm inferring from evidence that you are very tactful) or deontically (I'm telling you to be very tactful). *She can't be serious* may be understood epistemically (She is obviously not being serious) or dynamically (She is unable to be serious).

7 NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES

**7.1 Distinctive properties of nouns**

Nouns form much the largest word class. It contains all words that denote physical entities, but also great numbers of words that do not have this semantic property: in order to be able to identify nouns we therefore need to examine their grammatical properties. We consider them under three headings: inflection, function and dependents.

(a) Inflection. Nouns generally exhibit inflectional contrasts of **number** and **case**:

[29]                        **Number**                             **Case**

                                                               Plain                            Genitive

  i                   Singular                             *student                        student's*

ii                   Plural                                 *students                       students'*

School grammars commonly use the term `possessive' instead of `genitive', but that term is far too specific for the wide range of relationships covered by this case: compare, for example, *Kim's parents*, *the boys' behaviour*, *the train's arrival*, *the mayor's obituary*, *the sun's rays*, *today's news*.

(b) Function. Nouns can function as Head in noun phrases that in turn function as Subject or Complement in clause structure, or Complement of a preposition, as illustrated in [30], where nouns are underlined and noun phrases bracketed:

[30]     i         **Subject in clause**                            [*One student*] *was arrested.*

ii         **Complement in clause**                    *They interviewed* [*all the students*].

iii         **Complement in prep phrase**            *The talk was given by* [*a student*].

(c) Dependents. There are some kinds of Dependent that occur exclusively (or almost exclusively) with a noun as Head:

[31]     i         **Certain determinatives**   *the student*, *a school*, *every book*, *which exam*

ii         **Pre-head adjectives**.       *mature students*, *a new book*, *an easy exam*

iii         **Relative clauses**             *the student who directed the play*, *a book I'm reading*

**7.2 The structure of noun phrases**

Noun phrases typically consist of a Head noun alone or accompanied by one or more Dependents. The Dependents are of three main types: Determiners, Complements and Modifiers.

(a) Determiners. These are found uniquely in the structure of noun phrases. They have the form of determinatives (or determinative phrases, as in *almost all students*, *not many people*, *too few volunteers*) or genitive noun phrases (*the girl's voice*, *some people's behaviour*, *my book*).

Determiners serve to mark the noun phrase as **definite** or **indefinite**.

[32]     i         **Definite**       *the Premier of NSW*, *the key*, *this book*, *both copies, the man's death*

ii         **Indefinite** *a politician*, *some keys*, *any serious book*, *enough copies*, *three dogs*

We use a definite noun phrase when we assume that its content is sufficient, **in the context**, to identify the referent. There's only one (current) Premier of NSW, so the definiteness in the first example is unproblematic, but with the second example there is of course very heavy reliance on context to make the referent clear. *The* is a pure marker of definiteness, known as **the definite article**. Its use effectively pre-empts a *which* question: if I say *Where's the key?* I assume you won't need to ask *Which key?* Note that a genitive Determiner confers definiteness on the noun phrase: *the man's death* means `the death of the man', and *a man's death* likewise means `the death of a man'. Noun phrases like *black coffee* and *friends*, which have a common noun as Head and no Determiner are normally indefinite.

(b) Complements. The clearest cases of Complements involve preposition phrases where the preposition is specified by the Head noun, and certain types of subordinate clause:

[33]     i         **Preposition phrases**   *her review of the play*, *a ban on alcohol, his marriage to Sue*

ii         **Subordinate clauses**   *the idea that he might be ill*, *an opportunity to make friends*

Note that nouns, unlike verbs, do not take Objects: we say *She reviewed the play*, but not \**her review the play*; instead we need *of the play*. With ***ban*** and ***marriage*** the prepositions required are *on* and *to*. The subordinate clauses in [ii] clearly satisfy the licensing test: only a fairly narrow range of nouns can take Complements like these.

(c) Modifiers. The typical pre-Head Modifier is an adjective or adjective phrase: *a good book*, *a very serious matter*. But those are not the only possibilities. In particular, nouns can also function as Modifier to a Head noun: *a school play*, *the unemployment situation*, etc. Post-Head Modifiers are typically preposition phrases and subordinate clauses that occur more freely than Complements in that they do not have to be licensed by the Head noun: *a man of honour*, *the house opposite the post office*, *the play that she wrote*, *the guy who spoke first*.

It is also possible to have Modifiers that precede the Determiner: *all the books*, *both these plays*, *too small a car for our needs*. Note that adverbs can occur in this position, but not after the Determiner: *absolutely the best solution*, but not \**an absolutely* *success*. Instead of the latter we need an adjective, *an absolute success*.

**7.3 Number and countability**

(a) Nouns with fixed number. Although most nouns have an inflectional contrast between singular and plural, there are a good few that do not - that have only singular or only plural forms:

[34]     i         **Singular-only nouns**    *crockery*, *dross*, *harm*, *nonsense*; *news*, *mumps*, *physics*, ...

ii         **Plural-only nouns**        *belongings*, *clothes*, *genitals*, *scissors*; *cattle*, *police*, ...

Note that the last three items in [i] end in @*s* but are nevertheless singular, as evident, for example, from the agreement in *This news is good*. Conversely, the last two items in [ii] don't end in @*s*, but are nevertheless plural: cf. *These cattle are in good health*.

(b) Count and non-count nouns. Related to the distinction between nouns with variable number and nouns with fixed number is that between **count** and **non-count** nouns. Count nouns can take cardinal numerals (*one*, *two*, *three*, etc.) as Dependent, while non-count nouns cannot. Compare count ***student*** (*one student*, *two students*) and non-count ***harm*** and ***clothes*** (\**one harm*/*clothes*, \**two harms*/*clothes*).

However, most nouns can occur with either a count or a non-count **interpretation**:

[35]               **Count interpretation                                     Non-count interpretation**

  i   a.    *He pulled out a white hair.*                       b.   *He has white hair.*

ii   a.    *Have another cake.*                                 b.   *Have some more cake.*

iii   a.    *Can I borrow your football.*                      b.   *Let's play football.*

The interpretations in [a] allow for a contrast between one and more than one (cf., for example, *He pulled out two white hairs*), but those in [b] do not. When we speak of count and non-count nouns, therefore, we are referring to nouns as used with a count and non-count interpretation. Thus *hair* is a count noun in [ia], a non-count noun in [ib], and so on.

(c) Subject-verb agreement. We noted in Section5.1 that where a verb has person-number properties they normally agree with those of the Subject noun phrase, more particularly with those of the Head noun of that noun phrase: *The dog is barking* vs *The dogs are barking*. There are, however, certain semantically-motivated types of departure from this pattern, as illustrated in [36]:

[36]     i         **Measure expressions**             *Two hours isn't long enough for such a job.*

ii         **Quantificational nouns**            *A lot of people like it.*

iii         **Collective nouns**                     *The jury haven't yet reached a decision.*

o       In [i] the hours aren't thought of individually but as making up a single period, so the Subject is treated as singular.

o       In [ii] the verb-form is determined not by the Head noun *lot* but by *people*, which is embedded within the Subject noun phrase.

o       With collective nouns like *jury* in [iii] there is divided usage, with singular *hasn't* also used.

**7.4 Subclasses of noun**

There are three main subclasses of noun: **common noun**, **proper noun** and **pronoun**. Common noun is the default subclass and needs no further comment here.

(a) Proper nouns. This subclass includes nouns such as *John*, *Mary*, *Smith*, *Beethoven*, *Sydney*, *Egypt*, *Nile*, *Easter, Friday*, etc. They characteristically function as Head of noun phrases serving as **proper names**, names individually assigned to particular people, places, festivals, days of the week, and so on. Note, however, that they also occur, derivatively, in other kinds of noun phrase: *That's not the Smith I was referring to*, *Let's listen to some Beethoven*. Conversely, not all proper names contain proper nouns: cf. *Central Avenue*, *New Year's Day*, and so on. And some proper names contain more than just a proper noun: *the Nile*, *Mt Everest*, *King John*.

(b) Pronouns. The grammatically distinctive property of pronouns is that they do not normally combine with Determiners: *He arrived*, not \**The he arrived*. There are several subtypes of pronoun, including:

[37]     i         **Personal pronouns**                                ***I***, ***we***, ***you***, ***he***, ***she***, ***it***, ***they***, ***one***

ii         **Reciprocal pronouns**                             ***each other***, ***one another***

iii         **Interrogative or relative pronouns**        ***who***, ***what***, ***which***, ***whoever***, etc.

We will comment here on only the first of these categories. Personal pronouns are those where we find contrasts of **person**. ***I*** and ***we*** are first person, used to refer to the speaker or a group containing the speaker. (`Speaker' is to be understood as covering the writer in written texts.) ***You*** is second person, used to refer to the addressee or a group containing one or more addressees. The others are third person: this doesn't encode reference to speaker or addressee and therefore usually refers to entities other than the speaker or addressee. But I can refer to myself or to you in the third person: *The writer has noticed ...*; *The reader may recall ...*

The personal pronouns have five inflectional forms:

[38]     i         **Nominative**                  *I*, *we*, *you*, ...               *I did it. It was I who did it.*

ii         **Accusative**                  *me*, *us*, *you*, ...            *It bit me. It was me who did it.*

iii         **Dependent genitive**     *my*, *our*, *your*, ...          *My son is here. I saw your car*.

iv         **Independent genitive**  *mine*, *ours*, *yours*, ...   *Mine was broken. That's mine.*

v         **Reflexive**                     *myself*, *ourselves*, ...   *I hurt myself. We talk to ourselves.*

Nominatives occur mostly as Head of a Subject noun phrase. In formal style they can also occur in certain types of Predicative Complement, with the accusative as a less formal variant: *It was I*/*me who did it*. In other types, however, only the accusative is possible: *The victim was me*, not \**The victim was I*, and the like. Dependent genitives occur when there is a following Head in the noun phrase, independent ones when there isn't. Reflexives usually relate back to the Subject noun phrase, as in the above examples.

8 ADJECTIVES AND ADJECTIVE PHRASES

**8.1 Two major functions of adjectives**

Most adjectives can be either **attributive** or **predicative**:

[39]     i         **Attributive**     *a hot day*, *some new DVDs*, *this excellent play*, *lonely people*

ii         **Predicative**   *It's hot. These look new. I found it excellent. They seem lonely.*

Attributive adjectives are pre-head Modifiers in noun phrase structure; predicative adjectives are Predicative Complements in clause structure (see Section5.5).[[6]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftn6" \o ")

There are, however, some adjectives that are restricted to one or other of these functions:

[40]     i         **Attributive-only**       *the main speaker*, *a mere child*, *the only problem*, *my own car*

ii         **Never-attributive**     *I'm afraid. She's asleep. He looks content. It's liable to flood.*

**8.2 Gradability and grade**

The most central adjectives are **gradable**: they denote properties that can apply in varying degrees. As such, they can be modified by adverbs of degree and (under conditions relating to length and form) be inflected for **comparative** (e.g. *taller*) and **superlative** (e.g. *tallest*) **grade**:

[41]     i         **Degree modification**    *very good*, *quite hot*, *rather young*, *too old*, *incredibly bad*

ii         **Inflection for grade**      *hotter*, *younger*, *older*, *better*; *hottest*, *youngest*, *oldest*, *best*

Gradable adjectives that don't inflect mark comparative and superlative degree by means of the adverbs *more* and *most* respectively: *more intelligent*, *most intelligent*.

There are also a good number of adjectives that denote non-scalar properties and hence are **non-gradable**: *alphabetical order*, *the chief difficulty*, *the federal government*, *her right eye*, *third place*. Some adjectives, moreover, can be used in two different senses, one gradable, the other non-gradable (and usually the more basic). In *The door is open*, for example, *open* is non-gradable, but in *You should be more open with us* it is gradable.

**8.3 The structure of adjective phrases**

Adjective phrases consist of an adjective as Head, alone or accompanied by one or more Dependents, which may be Complements or Modifiers:

[42]     i         **Complements** *good at chess*, *grateful for your help*, *fond of animals*, *keen on golf*,

*glad that you liked it*, *unsure what had happened*, *eager to help*

ii         **Modifiers** *very bad*, *morally wrong*, *this good*, *most useful*, *much better*, *two*

*days long*, *a bit old*, *cautious to excess*, *dangerous in the extreme*

The Complements are preposition phrases or subordinate clauses; in the former case the adjective selects a particular preposition to head the Complement: ***fond*** takes *of*, ***keen*** takes *on*, and so on. The Modifiers are adverbs (e.g. *very*), determinatives (*this*), noun phrases (*two days*) or post-Head prepositional phrases. Adjective phrases containing post-Head Dependents cannot normally be used attributively: *He's good at chess*, but not \**a good at chess schoolboy*.

9 ADVERBS AND ADVERB PHRASES.

**9.1 Adverbs in relation to adjectives**

The majority of adverbs are derived from adjectives by adding the suffix @*ly*: *common* - *commonly*, *rare* - *rarely*, etc. There are a good number of adverbs not formed in this way, some of them very common (e.g. *almost*, *always*, *often*, *quite*, *rather*, *soon*, *too*, *very*), but these are normally recognisable as adverbs by virtue of being replaceable by ones with the @*ly* suffix: compare *It's very good* and *It's extremely good*; *She always wins* and *She frequently wins*; *It'll be over soon* and *It'll be over shortly*, and so on.

The major difference between adverbs and adjectives has to do with their functions. We have seen that adjectives function attributively or predicatively, but adverbs do not normally occur in these functions: compare attributive *a successful meeting*, not \**a successfully meeting*, and predicative *The meeting was successful*, not \**The meeting was successfully*. Adverbs function as Modifier to a wide range of word or phrase classes, as illustrated in [43], where underlining marks the modifying adverb and capitals what it modifies:

[43]               **Adverb modifying:**

  i         **Verb**                    *She SPOKE clearly.                        She PLAYED well.*

ii         **Adjective**             *It's a remarkably GOOD play*            *It looks very GOOD*

iii         **Adverb**                *He spoke virtually INAUDIBLY*.        *They almost NEVER reply.*

iv         **Determinative**     *Nearly ALL copies were sold.*           *Too FEW copies were printed.*

v         **Prep phrase**        *She is completely IN CONTROL.      It's quite BEYOND BELIEF.*

vi         **Rest of clause** *Surprisingly EVERYONE AGREED  Frankly, IT'S USELESS*.

In general adverbs that can modify adjectives and other adverbs can also modify verbs, but there are some exceptions, most notably *very* and *too* (in the sense `excessively'). Compare *He's very FOND of her* and \**He very LOVES her* (we need *He loves her very MUCH*).

A few adverbs inflect for grade (*soon*, *sooner*, *soonest*), but for the most part comparatives and superlatives are marked by *more* and *most*: *more carefully*, *most carefully*.

**9.2 The structure of adverb phrases**

The structure of adverb phrases is broadly similar to that of adjective phrases, but simpler: in particular, very few adverbs license complements.

[44]     i         **Complements** *Luckily for me, it rained. We handled it similarly to the others.*

ii         **Modifiers**             *She sang very well.* *It won't end that soon.* *We left a bit late.*

10 PREPOSITIONS AND PREPOSITION PHRASES.

The most central members of the preposition class have meanings concerned with relations in time or space: *after lunch*, *at school*, *before the end*, *in the garden*, *off the bridge*, *on the desk*, etc. In this section we look at the function of prepositions and then at their Complements, and finally consider the phenomenon of preposition stranding.

(a) Function of prepositions. Prepositions function as Head in preposition phrases, and these in turn function as Dependent (Complement or Modifier) to any of the four major parts of speech:

[45]               **Prep phrase dependent on:**

  i         **Verb**                             *She WENT to London.              They ARE in the garden.*

ii         **Noun**                            *He's a MAN of principle.            It's on the WAY to Paris.*

iii         **Adjective**                     *She's INTERESTED in politics.  I'm RESPONSIBLE for them*

iv         **Adverb**                         *LUCKILY for me, no-one knew. I saw her LATER in the day*.

(b) Complements of prepositions. Usually (as in all the examples in [45]) prepositions take a noun phrase as Complement. There are, however, other possibilities:

[46]     i          **Preposition phrase** *He emerged* [*from under the bed*.  *I'll stay* [*until after lunch*].

ii         **Adjective phrase**    *That strikes me* [*as unfair*].             *I took him* [*for dead*].

iii         **Adverb** **phrase**        *I didn't know* [*until recently* ].          *I can't stay* [*for long*].

iv         **Clause**                     *It depends* [*on what she says*].      *I told her* [*before she left*].[[7]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftn7" \o ")

(c) Preposition stranding. In a number of clause constructions the Complement of a preposition is placed at the front of the clause or omitted altogether, leaving the preposition `stranded':

[47]     i   a.    *What are you looking at?*                    b.   *It's something* [*which I can do without*].

ii   a.    *This is the book* [*I was referring to*].     b.   *He went to the same school as* [*I went to*].

The construction is characteristic of relatively informal style, but it is a serious mistake to say that it is grammatically incorrect.

11 NEGATION

(a) Clausal vs subclausal negation. Negation is marked by individual words such as *not*, *no*, *never*, or by affixes such as we have in *uncommon*, *non-compliant*, *infrequent*, *careless*, *isn't*, *won't*, etc. We need to distinguish, however, between cases where the negative affects the whole clause (**clausal negation**) and those where it affects just a part of it (**subclausal negation**):

[48]     i         **Clausal negation**          a. *He is not well.* b. *Surprisingly, he wasn't ill.*

ii         **Subclausal negation**    a. *He is unwell.* b. *Not surprisingly, he was ill.*

The clauses in [i] are negative, but those in [ii] are positive even though they contain a negative element within them. We say this because they behave like obviously positive clauses with respect to the constructions shown in [49]:

[49]                                   **Interrogative tags              *And so* vs *and nor***

  i         **Positive**  a. *He is well, isn't he?*         b. *Surprisingly, he was ill and so was she*.

ii         **Negative** a. *He is not well, is he?*       b. *Surprisingly, he wasn't ill and nor was she.*

iii         **Positive**  a. *He is unwell, isn't he?*     b. *Not surprisingly, he was ill and so was she*.

o       In [a] we have a clause followed by an interrogative `tag' used to seek confirmation of what has been said. The usual type of tag reverses the `polarity' of the clause to which it is attached - that is, it is negative if attached to a positive clause, as in [ia], and positive if attached to a negative clause, as in [iia]. And we see from [iiia], therefore, that *He is unwell* counts as positive since the tag is negative: the clause is no more negative than *He is sick*.

o       In the [b] examples we have added a truncated clause introduced by *and so* or *and nor*. We get *and so* after a positive clause and *and nor* after a negative one. And *Not surprisingly, he was ill* is shown to be a positive clause because it takes *and so*.

(b) Non-affirmative items. There are a number of words or expressions that occur readily in negative or interrogative clauses but generally not in positive declaratives. Compare:

[50]                                   **Declarative                              Interrogative**

  i         **Negative** a. *He didn't find any cracks.* b. *Didn't he find any cracks?*

ii         **Positive**  a. \**He found any cracks.*           b. *Did he find any cracks?*

Instead of [iia] we say *He found some cracks*. Such items as *any* in [50] are called **non-affirmative** (with `affirmative' understood as combining declarative and positive). They include compounds with *any*@, such as *anybody*, *anyone*, *anything*, etc., *at all*, *either*, *ever*, *yet*, *budge*, ***can*** *bear*, ***can*** *stand*, ***give*** *a damn*, ***lift*** *a finger*, etc. More precisely, these are non-affirmative in at least one of their senses: some of them also have senses in which they can occur in affirmative constructions. The *any* series of words, for example, can occur in affirmative constructions when the meaning is close to `every', as in *Anyone can do that*.

12 CLAUSE TYPE AND SPEECH ACTS

We use sentences to make statements, ask questions, make requests, give orders, and so on: these are different kinds of **speech act** (a term understood, like `speaker', to cover writing as well as speech). The grammatical counterpart is **clause type**, where we distinguish declarative, interrogative, and so on. The main categories we recognise here are illustrated in [51]:

[51]     i         **Declarative**                    *You are very tactful.*

ii         **Closed interrogative**     *Are you very tactful?*

iii         **Open interrogative**        *How tactful are you?*

iv         **Exclamative**                  *How tactful you are!*

v         **Imperative**                     *Be very tactful.*

We use different terms for the clause types than for the speech acts because the relation between the two sets of categories is by no means one-to-one. Consider such examples as [52]:

[52]     i         *You're leaving already?*

ii         *I ask you again where you were on the evening of 14 July.*

iii         *I promise to help you.*

iv         *Would you mind opening the door for me?*

Grammatically, [i] is declarative, but it would be used as a question: a question can be marked by rising intonation (or by punctuation) rather than by the grammatical structure. Example [ii] is likewise declarative but again it would be used as a question (perhaps in a court cross-examination): the question force this time comes from the verb ***ask***, in the present tense with a 1st person Subject. ***Promise*** in [iii] works in the same way: this example would generally be used to make a promise. This illustrates the point that although we have just a handful of different clause types there are a great many different kinds of speech act: one can apologise, offer, congratulate, beseech, declare a meeting open, and so on. Finally, [iv] is a closed interrogative but would characteristically be used to make a request. In this use it is what is called an **indirect speech act**: although it is literally a question it actually conveys something else, a polite request.

All canonical clauses are declarative and we need say no more about this type, but a few comments are in order for the remaining four types.

(a) Closed interrogatives. These are so called because they are typically used to ask questions with a closed set of answers. Usually these are *Yes* and *No* (or their equivalents), but in examples like *Is it a boy or a girl?* they derive from the terms joined by *or*: *It's a boy* and *It's a girl*. Grammatically they are marked by Subject-auxiliary inversion (though such inversion is not restricted to interrogatives: in the declarative *Never had I felt so embarrassed* it is triggered by the initial placement of the negative *never*).

(b) Open interrogatives. These are typically used to ask questions with an open set of answers (e.g. *very*, *quite*, *slightly*, etc. in the case of [51iii]). They are marked by the presence of an interrogative phrase consisting of or containing a so-called `*wh*-word': *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *how*, etc. This phrase may be Subject (*Who said that?*), Complement (*What do you want?*) or Adjunct (*When did he leave?*). If it is Complement or Adjunct it normally occurs at the beginning of the clause, which has Subject-auxiliary inversion, as in the last two examples. It is possible, however, for it to remain in post-verbal position, as in *And after that you went where?* (a construction most likely to be found in a context of sustained questioning).

(c) Exclamatives. These have, at the front of the clause, an exclamative phrase containing either *how*, as in [51iv], or *what*, as in *What a fool I've been!*

(d) Imperatives. The most common type of imperative has *you* understood, as in [51v], or expressed as Subject (as in *You be careful*; *Don't you speak to me like that*). The verb is in the plain form, but ***do*** is used in the negative: *Don't move*. We also have 3rd person imperatives like *Somebody open the window*, distinguished from the declarative precisely by the plain form verb. 1st person plural imperatives are marked by *let's*: *Let's go!*, *Don't let's bother*.

13 SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Subordinate clauses normally function in the structure of a phrase or a larger clause. Whereas main clauses are almost invariably finite, subordinate clauses may be finite or non-finite.

**13.1 Finite subordinate clauses.**

The most central type of **finite** clause is **tensed**, i.e. contains a verb inflected for tense (preterite or present tense), and most finite subordinate clauses are of this type. There is, however, one construction containing a plain form of the verb that belongs in the finite class, the **subjunctive**:

[53]     i         *She says that he is kept well-informed*                     [tensed: *is* is present tense verb]

ii         *She insists that he be kept well-informed*                       [subjunctive: *be* is plain form]

Subjunctive is thus the name of a syntactic construction, not an inflectional category, as in traditional grammar. It has a plain form verb and when the Subject is a personal pronoun it appears in nominative case.

We distinguish three main types of finite subordinate clause: **content clauses**, **relative clauses** and **comparative clauses**.

*13.1.1 Content clauses*

These usually function as Subject or else Complement of a verb, noun, adjective or preposition:

[54]     i         *That they accepted the offer is very fortunate.*                                             [Subject]

ii         *I KNOW she likes it.*                                                                  [Complement of verb]

iii         *The FACT that it's so cheap makes me suspicious.*                  [Complement of noun]

iv         *We stayed in BECAUSE it was raining.*                           [Complement of preposition]

Like main clauses they select for clause type, except that there are no subordinate imperatives:

[55]     i         **Declarative**                    *He didn't know that everybody supported the proposal.*

ii         **Closed interrogative**     *He didn't know whether everybody supported the proposal.*

iii         **Open interrogative**        *He didn't know which proposal everybody supported*.

iv         **Exclamative**                  *He didn't know what a lot of them supported the proposal..*

o       Declaratives are often marked by the subordinator *that*; and since *that* occurs in both the tensed clause and the subjunctive in [53] we include both in the declarative class.

o       Closed interrogatives have *whether* or *if* instead of the Subject-auxiliary inversion found in main clauses (compare the main clause counterpart of the subordinate clause in [ii]: *Did everybody support the proposal?*).

o       Open interrogatives have the interrogative phrase in initial position and normally no Subject-auxiliary inversion (again compare the main clause counterpart of that in [iii]: *Which proposal did everybody support?*).

o       Exclamatives mostly have the same form as their main clause counterparts, as with [iv].

*13.1.2 Relative clauses*

(a) Relative clauses as Modifier. The most central kind of relative clauses functions as Modifier in noun phrase structure:

[56]     i   a.    *I agree with* [*the guy who spoke last*]*.*     b.   *I agree with* [*the guy that spoke last*]*.*

ii   a.    *He lost* [*the key which I lent him*]*.*            b.   *He lost* [*the key I lent him*]*.*

Such clauses contain an overt or covert element which relates back to the Head noun, so we understand in [i] that some guy spoke last and in [ii] that I lent him a key. This `relativised element' is overt in [ia] (the relative pronoun *who*) and [iia] (*which*), but covert in the [b] examples. This is obvious in the case of [iib], and in [ib] *that*, although traditionally classified as a relative pronoun, is better regarded as a subordinator, the same one as is found in declarative content clauses like [55i]; on this analysis there is no overt relativised element in [ib] any more than in [iib].

The relativised element can have a variety of functions in the relative clause: in [56i] it is Subject, in [56ii] Object, and so on.

(b) Supplementary relative clauses. The relative clauses in [56] are tightly **integrated** into the structure of the sentence, but it is also possible for relative clauses to be set off by punctuation or intonation, so that they have the status of more loosely attached **Supplements**, as in:

[57]     i         *I've lent the car to my brother, who has just come over from New Zealand.*

ii         *He overslept again, which made him miss the train.*

In this type the relativised element is almost always overt, and doesn't relate back to a noun but to a larger unit, a whole noun phrase in [i] (*my brother*) and a clause in [ii], where *which* is understood as `(the fact) that he overslept again'.

(c) The fused relative construction. This is structurally more complex than the above constructions:

[58]     i   a.    *Whoever wrote this must be very naive.*   b.   *You can invite who you like.*

ii   a.    *He quickly spent what she gave him.*       b.   *What books he has are in the attic.*

The underlined sequences here are not themselves clauses but noun phrases: clauses don't denote entities that can be naive or be invited or spent or located in the attic. Note, moreover, that *are* in [iib] agrees with a plural noun phrase Subject, whereas Subjects with the form of clauses take 3rd person singular verbs, as in [54i]. *Whoever* in [58ia] is equivalent to *the person who* and *what* in [iia] to *that which*, and so on. This is why we call this construction `fused': the Head of the noun phrase and the relativised element are fused together, instead of being separate, as in [56ia/iia].

These constructions may look superficially like open interrogative content clauses. Compare [58iib], for example, with *I asked her what she gave him*. The meaning is quite different: the latter, where the underlined clause is interrogative, can be glossed as `I asked her the answer to the question, `What did she give him?'', but there is no such question meaning in [58iia]. Similarly compare [58iib], meaning `The (few) books he has are in the attic', with *What books he has is unknown*, where the underlined clause is interrogative and the meaning is `The answer to the question `What books does he have?' is unknown'; note that this time the main clause verb is singular *is*, agreeing with the clausal Subject.

*13.1.3 Comparative clauses*

Comparative clauses generally function as Complement to the prepositions *as* and *than*:

[59]     i   a.    *I'm as ready as I ever will be*.                   b.   *As was expected, Sue won easily.*

ii   a.    *More people came than I'd expected.*     b.   *He has more vices than he has virtues.*

The distinctive property of such clauses is that they are structurally incomplete relative to main clauses: there are elements understood but not overtly expressed. In [ia] and [iia] there's a missing Complement and in [ib] a missing Subject. Even in [iib] there's a missing Dependent in the Object noun phrase, for the comparison is between how many vices he has and **how many** virtues he has. The fact that there's some kind of understood quantifier here is reflected in the fact that we can't insert an overt one: \**He has more vices than he has ten virtues.*

**13.2 Non-finite subordinate clauses**

There are three major kinds of non-finite clause:

[60]     i         **Infinitival**                 a. *He wants to see you.*                b. *I can't help you.*

ii         **Gerund-participial**   a. *Buying a car was a mistake.*      b. *He's the guy standing up*.

iii         **Past-participial**       a*. All things considered, it's OK.*    b. *We got told off*.

Infinitivals contain a plain form of the verb, with or without the special marker *to*; gerund-participials and past-participials have verbs in the gerund-participle and past participle forms; for further examples, see [26] above.

Most non-finite clauses have no overt Subject, but all three kinds allow one under certain conditions.

o       In infinitivals, it occurs in the *to*-variant with initial *for* as subordinator: *For them to be so late is very unusual*.

o       In gerund-participials a personal pronoun Subject usually appears in accusative case, but genitives are found in relatively formal style: *We objected to them*/*their being given extra privileges*.

o       Example [iiia] is a past-participial with an overt Subject.

         Infinitivals are much the most frequent of the three classes of non-finite clause, and appear in a very wide range of functions. These include Subject (*To err is human*), Complement of a verb (as in [60ia/b]: the Head verb determines whether *to* is included), Complement of a noun (*I applaud* [*her willingness to compromise*]), Complement of an adjective (*She's* [*willing to compromise*]), Adjunct (*She walks to work to keep fit*), Modifier of a noun (*I need* [*an album to keep the photos in*]). In general, prepositions take gerund-participials rather than infinitivals as Complement (*He left* [*without saying good-bye*]), but the compound *in order* and *so as* are exceptions (*She stayed at home* [*in order to study for the exam*]).

14 COORDINATION

Coordination is a relation between two or more items of equal syntactic status, the **coordinates**. They are of equal status in the sense that one is not a Dependent of another.

(a) The marking of coordination. Coordination is usually but not invariably marked by the presence of a coordinator, such as *and*, *or*, *nor*, *but*; the first three of these may also be paired with a determinative, *both*, *either* and *neither* respectively. The main patterns are seen in [61]:

[61]     i         *We have no milk and the shops aren't open yet.*

ii         *Her brother came too, but didn't stay long.*

iii         *We can meet on Monday, on Thursday or at the week-end.*

iv         *We can meet on Monday, or on Thursday or at the week-end.*

v         *Both Jill and her husband attended the meeting.*

vi         *He was self-confident, determined, egotistical.*

Examples [i]-[iii] illustrate the most usual case: a coordinator in the last coordinate. In [iv] there is a coordinator in all non-initial coordinates, in [v] a determinative in the first, and in [vi] no overt marking of coordination at all.

(b) Functional likeness required between coordinates. Coordination can appear at more or less any place in the structure of sentences. You can have coordination between main clauses (giving a compound sentence, as in [61i]), between subordinate clauses, between phrases, between words (e.g. *Have you seen my father and mother?*). But the coordinates need to be grammatically alike. Usually they belong to the same class, as in all the examples in [61]. They do not have to be, however: the crucial constraint is that they be alike in function. Compare, then:

[62]     i         *She is very bright and a good leader.*

ii         *I don't know the cause of the accident or how much damage was done.*

iii         *\*We're leaving Rome and next week.*

o       In [i] we have coordination between an adjective phrase and a noun phrase, and in [ii] between a noun phrase and a subordinate clause (an open interrogative content clause). These are acceptable because each coordinate could stand on its own with the same function: in *She is very bright* and *She is a good leader* the underlined units are both Predicative Complements, and in *I don't know the cause of the accident* and *I don't know how much damage was done* they are both Complements.

o       But [iii] is unacceptable, even though the coordinates are of the same class, noun phrase, because the functional likeness condition is not met. The function of *Rome* in *We're leaving Rome* is Complement, whereas that of *next week* in *We're leaving next week* is Adjunct.

(c) Joint coordination. One special type of coordination is seen in [63]:

[63]        a.    *Sam and Pat are a happy couple.*           b.   *Sam Pat and Alex like each other.*

What is distinctive about this type is that the properties concerned, being a happy couple and liking each other, apply to the coordinates jointly rather than separately. So we can't say \**Sam is a happy couple* or \**Pat likes each other*. The functional likeness in this type is that the coordinates denote members of a set to which the relevant property applies. The construction is more restricted than the type illustrated in [61] in that it excludes determinatives (\**Both Sam and Pat are a happy couple*), doesn't allow *but* as coordinator, and does require likeness of class between the ccoordinates.

15 INFORMATION PACKAGING

The grammar of the clause makes available a number of constructions that enable us to express a given core meaning in different ways depending on how we wish to to present or `package' the information. For example, *Kim broke the vase*, *The vase was broken by Kim*, *The vase Kim broke, It was Kim who broke the vase*, *What Kim broke was the vase* all have the same core meaning in the sense that there is no situation or context in which one of them would be true and another false (assuming of course that we are talking of the same Kim and the same vase). The first of them, *Kim broke the vase*, is the syntactically most basic, while the others belong to various **information-packaging constructions**. The most important of these constructions are illustrated by the underlined examples in [64]:

[64]               **Name                     Example                                    Basic counterpart**

  i         **Preposing**         a. *This one you can keep.*          b. *You can keep this one.*

ii         **Postposing**        a. *I've lent to Jill the only copy* b. *I've lent the only copy that*

*that has been corrected.             has been corrected to Jill.*

iii         **Inversion**           a. *In the bag was a gold watch.* b. *A gold watch was in the bag.*

iv         **Passive**             a. *The car was driven by Sue.*     b. *Sue drove the car.*

v         **Existential**         a. *There was a doctor on board.* b. *A doctor was on board.*

vi         **Extraposition** a. *It's clear that she is ill.*             b. *That she is ill is clear.*

vii         **Cleft** a. *It was Kim that suggested it.*   b. *Kim suggested it.*

viii        **Pseudo-cleft** a. *What I need is a cold drink.*     b. *I need a cold drink.*

ix         **Dislocation**        a. *It's excellent, this curry.*           b. *This curry is excellent.*

         In the first three we are concerned simply with the order of elements, while the others involve more radical changes.

o       The basic position for the Complement *this one* in [i] is after the verb, but in [a] it is preposed, placed at the front of the clause.

o       In [ii] the basic position for the Object, *the only copy that has been corrected*, is just after the verb but long or complex elements like this can be postposed, placed at the end.

o       In [iii] the positions of the Subject and Complement of the basic version [b] are reversed in the inversion construction [a]. (More precisely, this is Subject-Dependent inversion, in contrast to the Subject-auxiliary inversion construction discussed earlier. The Dependent is usually a Complement but can also be an Adjunct, as in *Three days later came news of her death.*)

o       In [iv] (the only one where the basic version has a distinct name, `active') the Object becomes Subject, the Subject becomes Complement of *by* and the auxiliary ***be*** is added.

o       The existential construction applies mainly with the verb ***be***: the basic Subject is displaced to follow the verb and the semantically empty pronoun *there* takes over the Subject function.

o       In [vib] the Subject is a subordinate clause (*that she is ill*); in [a] this is extraposed, placed after the verb phrase and this time the Subject function is taken over by the pronoun *it*.

o       In [vii] the cleft clause is formed by dividing the basic version into two parts: one (*Kim*) is highlighted by making it Complement of a clause with *it* as Subject and ***be*** as verb, while the other is backgrounded by relegating it to a subordinate clause (a distinct subtype of relative clause).

o       The pseudo-cleft construction is similar, but this time the subordinated part is put in a fused relative (*what I need*) functioning as Subject of ***be***.

o       Dislocation belongs to fairly informal style. It differs from the basic version in having an extra noun phrase, set apart intonationally and related to a pronoun in the main Subject-Predicate part of the clause. In the **left dislocation** variant the pronoun occurs to the left of the noun phrase; in **right dislocation** it is the other way round, as in *His father, she can't stand him*.

There are two further comments that should be made about these constructions.

(a) Basic counterpart need not be canonical. For convenience we have chosen examples in [64] where the basic counterparts are all canonical clauses, but of course they do not need to be. The basic (active) counterpart of passive *Was the car driven by Kim?* is *Did Kim drive the car?*, which is non-canonical by virtue of being interrogative. Likewise the non-cleft counterpart of *It was Sue who had been interviewed by the police* is *Sue had been interviewed by the police*, which is non-canonical by virtue of being passive: note then that certain combinations of the information-packaging constructions are possible.

(b) The information-packaging construction may be the only option. The second point is that under certain circumstances what one would expect to be the basic counterpart is in fact ungrammatical. Thus we can say *There was an accident*, but not \**An accident was*: here the existential construction is the only option. One difference between actives and passives is that the *by* phrase of the passive is an optional element whereas the element that corresponds to it in the active, namely the Subject, is generally obligatory in finite clauses. Compare, then:

[65]     i         **Passive** a. *Some mistakes were made by Ed.*   b. *Some mistakes were made.*

ii         **Active**       a. *Ed made some mistakes.*                b. \**Made some mistakes.*

Passives like [ib] - called **short passives** - thus have no active counterpart. They are in fact the more common type of passive, allowing information to be omitted that would have to be expressed in the active construction.

[[1]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftnref1" \o ") Written by Rodney Huddleston & Geoffrey K. Pullum in collaboration with a team of thirteen linguists and published by Cambridge University Press in 2002. A shorter version, designed as an undergraduate textbook, appeared in 2005 as *A Student's Introduction to English Grammar*. I am grateful to Geoff Pullum and Anne Horan for comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

[[2]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftnref2" \o ") In my *Words'Worth* paper I relied simply on the convention of upper vs lower case initial to distinguish `determiner' as a class term and `Determiner' as a function term.

[[3]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftnref3" \o ") We use bold italics for lexemes; lexeme is a more abstract concept than word as it ignores inflection, so that *do*, *does*, *did*, etc. are all forms of a single lexeme, ***do***.

[[4]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftnref4" \o ") Traditional grammar also classifies as participles verb-forms which it regards (mistakenly, in our view) as part of a compound verb, such as *checking* in *She was checking the figures* (cf. Section6.3.3).

[[5]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftnref5" \o ") In fact there is divided usage here, and some speakers do allow *may* in this construction. For them it would seem that *may* and *might* are no longer treated as present and preterite forms of a single lexeme, but as present tense forms of distinct lexemes.

[[6]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftnref6" \o ") This is the standard terminology, but note that Functional Grammar uses `Attribute' for the most common type of Predicative Complement.

[[7]](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/grammar/overview.html" \l "_ftnref7" \o ") In traditional grammar it is not *she left* but *before she left* that is analysed as a clause, with *before* being here a subordinating conjunction rather than a preposition. We present arguments in favour of our analysis on pp. 1011-14 and 129-30 respectively of the two books mentioned in footnote 1. We also depart from traditional grammar in treating words like those underlined in *Come in* or *I fell off* as prepositions rather than adverbs.