

# English Grammar

A University Course

Third Edition

**Angela Downing**



# ENGLISH GRAMMAR

This best-selling comprehensive descriptive grammar forms a complete course, ideal for all students studying English Language, whether on a course or for self-study. Broadly based on Hallidayan systemic-functional grammar but also drawing on cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis, *English Grammar* is accessible, avoiding overly theoretical or technical explanations.

The book consists of twelve self-contained chapters built around language functions, and each chapter is divided into units of class-length material. Key features include:

- Numerous authentic texts from a wide range of sources, both spoken and written, which exemplify the grammatical description;
- Clear chapter and unit summaries which enable efficient class preparation and student revision;
- Extensive exercises with a comprehensive answer key.

This new edition has been thoroughly updated with new texts, a more user-friendly layout, more American English examples and a companion website, providing extra tasks, a glossary and a teachers' guide.

This is the essential coursebook and reference work for all native and non-native students of English grammar on English language and linguistics courses.

**Angela Downing** is Professor Emeritus at Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain. She was General Editor of *Atlantis (Journal of the Spanish Association of English and American Studies)* from 2006 to 2012 and has published numerous articles on grammar and discourse.

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A university course

Third edition

Angela Downing

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## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

In consonance with the welcome suggestions made by Routledge and reviewers alike, this book has been revised again for its third edition with certain aims in mind. The first, in this age of cuts, was to slim down the content as regards the length of the text, without losing the character and coherence of the whole. This I have proceeded to do, reducing the length of each chapter as well as that of other sections.

Offsetting this pruning, there was the need to cover or amplify certain areas of the grammar that had been underdeveloped in previous editions, despite their importance. Such is the case with conditional sentences. They are complex enough for non-native students to be wary of using them, yet at the same time common enough in interpersonal interaction, both spoken and written, to warrant careful attention and practice. They also have interesting variants which students may be unaware of. The gap is now filled in Chapter 7.

A further aim has been to increase the projection of the grammar to an American readership. Differences of grammar between Standard American and Standard British English, which already appear in the second edition, are now more numerous and explicit; wherever possible, they are accompanied by authentic illustrations. It is well-known that the major differences between these two standard forms of English lie in the lexis rather than in the grammar, and that features of American grammar are soon taken up and adopted, especially by young British speakers. New illustrations, both one-liners and short texts, have been selected so as to provide, at the same time, American lexical items that differ from their British English counterparts. Comparisons of American with British English as regards grammar in use are made where the grammatical point in question is being discussed, and are signalled as AmE vs BrE. A further detail is that the term Module is now replaced by Unit, as being more transparent to American readers.

I feel confident that Philip Locke, were he still alive, would welcome these further changes, together with those already carried out in the second edition of 2006. Without his invaluable collaboration in the writing of the first edition, published in 1992, it is likely that the whole conception of *English Grammar, A University Course* might have been different. I am particularly indebted to him for his enormous enthusiasm combined with unflappability, which made our joint collaboration so enjoyable.

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I am grateful for access to BYU-BNC (based on the British National Corpus from Oxford University Press) (Davies (2004–) and for the use of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies (2008–).

I am indebted to the many friends, colleagues and consultants who have made helpful comments on the previous editions. Among the consultants I was pleased to receive the reports and suggestions made by Joyce Stavick, of the University of North Georgia, by Pentti Haddington, of the University of Oulu, Finland and by the anonymous reviewer who provided perceptive comments and questions. I have implemented as many of their suggestions as has been possible in the time allowed. Also much appreciated were the many useful comments made by Mike Hannay (Free University, Amsterdam), Andrei Stoevsky (University of Sofia), Chris Butler (University of Wales, Swansea), Hilde Hasselgård (University of Oslo) and Bruce Taylor (University of Boston). I owe thanks to Geoff Thompson (University of Liverpool) for allowing me to use the best real-life spontaneous utterance of multiple left-detachment, and more recently, some of his striking examples of adjective-headed generic nouns. Thanks also to Thomas Givón and White Cloud Publishing for allowing me to insert an extract from his novel *Downfall of a Jesuit*. I remember with affection Emilio Lorenzo of the Real Academia Española, and his words of encouragement when the first edition was at an embryonic stage. I would especially like to express my thanks to Chris Butler and to Jorge Arús (Universidad Complutense) for their unfailing willingness to come to my

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD EDITION

## AIMS OF THE COURSE

This book has been written primarily for undergraduate and graduate students of English as a foreign or second language. It is also addressed to teachers and lecturers, whether native or non-native speakers of English, and to others interested in applying a broadly functional approach to language teaching in higher education. It assumes an intermediate standard of knowledge and practical handling of the language and, from this point of departure, seeks to fulfil the following aims:

- 1 to further students' knowledge of English through exploration and analysis;
- 2 to help students acquire an integrated vision of English, rather than concentrate on unrelated areas;
- 3 to see a grammar as providing a means of understanding the relation of form to meaning, and meaning to use, in context;
- 4 to provide a basic terminology which, within this framework, will enable students to make these relationships explicit;
- 5 to stimulate the learners' capacity to interact with others in English and to express themselves appropriately in everyday registers, both spoken and written.

While not pretending to be exhaustive, its wide coverage and functional approach have been found appropriate not only in first degree courses but also in postgraduate programmes and as a background resource for courses, publications and work on translation, stylistics, reading projects and discourse studies.

## A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO GRAMMAR

A functional grammar is functional in various ways. In the first place, it does not consist of a set of rules governing all forms of grammatical structures and their relation to one another, with a concern that they are 'well-formed'. Rather, a functional approach is geared towards meaning and aims to show how meanings are expressed in different forms according to speakers' and writers' communicative goals. This view is based, following Michael Halliday, on the assumption that all languages fulfil two higher-level functions (metafunctions) in our lives. One is to express our interpretation of the world as we experience it (sometimes called the 'ideational' or the 'representational' function); the other is to interact with others in order to bring about changes in the environment (the 'interpersonal' function). How we put together or 'organise' what we say or

write in such a way that the ‘message’ is coherent and relevant to the situation represents a third (the ‘textual’ meta-function), and this, too, is given its place in a functional grammar.

Second, the regular patterns of different kinds that can be distinguished in language reflect the uses which a language serves. For instance, the clause types known as ‘declarative’, ‘interrogative’ and ‘imperative’ serve the purposes of expressing a multitude of types of social behaviour, such as making statements, asking questions and giving orders. In this area the pragmatic concepts of speech acts, politeness, relevance and inference are brought in to explain how speakers use and interpret linguistic forms and sequences in English within cultural settings.

In describing the more detailed mechanisms of English, the notion of ‘function’ is used to describe syntactic categories such as Subjects and Objects, semantic roles such as Agent and informational categories such as Theme and Rheme, Given and New. We shall see, for instance that in English the Agent, that is, the semantic role indicating the one who instigates or carries out an action, typically conflates with the Subject: ‘Tom’ in *Tom spent all the money*; furthermore, the grammatical Subject in a clause tends to occur initially in English, thus occupying the same position as Theme as well as Agent. Subject, Agent, Theme is not a rigid choice, however: the elements can be moved around, as shown in 1.3.2. A functional approach also will point out the formal differences, but the principal aim will be to explain how different variations of form affect meanings, and how speakers and writers use meanings and forms to interact in social settings.

Third, this type of grammar is functional in that each linguistic element is seen not in isolation but in relation to others, since it has potential to realise different functions. Structural patterns are seen as functional patterns of constituents, whether of participants and processes, of modifiers and head of, for instance, a noun, or of Subject, verb and Complements, among others. These in turn are realised in a variety of ways according to the communicative effect desired. Speakers and writers are free, within the resources a particular language displays, to choose those patterns which best carry out their communicative purposes at every stage of their interaction with other speakers and readers.

With these considerations in mind, the present book has been designed to place meaning firmly within the grammar and, by stressing the meaningful functions of grammatical forms and structures, to offer a description of the grammatical phenomena of English in use, both in speech and writing. This book, we hope, may serve as a foundation for further study in specific areas or as a resource for the designing of other materials for specific purposes.

## PRESENTATION OF CONTENT

The grammatical content of the course is presented in three blocks:

- a first chapter giving a bird’s-eye view of the whole course and defining the basic concepts and terms used in it;
- seven chapters describing clausal and sentence patterns, together with their corresponding elements of structure, from syntactic, semantic, textual and communicative-pragmatic points of view; and



- five chapters dealing similarly with nominal, verbal, adjectival, adverbial and prepositional groups and phrases.

In each case the aim is that of describing each pattern or structural element in use, rather than that of entering in depth into any particular theory. Chapter titles attempt to reflect, as far as possible, the communicative viewpoints from which the description is made.

The twelve chapters are divided into 'units' (fifty-nine in all), each one being conceived as a teaching and learning unit with appropriate exercises and activities grouped at the end of each chapter.

Each unit begins with a summary, which presents the main matters of interest. It is designed to assist both teacher and students in class preparation and to offer a review for study purposes.

## **Exemplification**

Many of the one-line examples which illustrate each grammatical point have been drawn or derived from actual observation. Some of these have been shortened or simplified in order to illustrate a grammatical point with maximum clarity. A further selection of examples is taken from the BYU-BNC corpus, based on the British National Corpus, and other acknowledged sources, both American and British, including short excerpts of connected speech. These have not been modified. They are intended to illustrate the natural use of the features being described.

## **Exercises and activities**

Each of the units which make up the course is accompanied by a varying number of practice exercises and activities. Some involve the observation and identification of syntactic elements and their semantic functions, or of the relations between them; others call for the manipulation or completion of sentences in various meaningful ways.

The different areas of grammar lend themselves to a wide variety of practical linguistic activities limited only by the time factor. Those proposed here can be selected, adapted, amplified or omitted, according to need.

An answer key is provided at the end of the book for those analytical exercises which have a single solution, which are now the vast majority. Activities that have no solution of this kind, such as discussions, have been mostly avoided in this edition. Where a suggestion seems useful, it has been provided.

It is the opinion of the author that university study should not attend solely to the attainment of certain practical end-results. Its value lies to a great extent in the thinking that goes on in the process of ensuring the results, not only in the results themselves. It is rather in the performance of a task that the learning takes place. The premature reference to a key negates the whole purpose of the tasks and should be resisted at all costs.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE BOOK**

The chapters which comprise this book can be used selectively, either singly or in blocks. In starting with the clause, the aim has been to provide a global frame, both

syntactic and semantic, into which the lower-ranking units of nominal, verbal and other groups naturally fit, as can be seen in Chapter 2. Moreover, experience shows that to reach a suitably advanced level and coverage for future use of English professionally, a knowledge of the clause and the ability to handle such areas as clause combining, tense, aspect and modality are essential, and have perhaps not been acquired earlier, whereas nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs will have been taught at least on a basic level.

It is perfectly possible, however, to reverse the order of chapters, starting for instance with the verbal or nominal groups and using the subsequent chapters as a course on grammar 'below the clause', if this is found more convenient. The function of each of these groups within the clause is described briefly with examples. Morphological information is provided in each of these chapters.

The overview which comprises Chapter 1 may be found by instructors to contain formal material already known to their students, in which case it will be more profitable to start at a more relaxed pace with Chapter 2 and use the overview for checking specific constructions.

Chapters 2 and 3 together provide an introduction to functional syntax, including complementation of the verb, while Chapter 4 addresses the grammar of interpersonal interaction and 5 that of basic semantic roles. Chapter 6 on the grammatical resources used in information packaging, Chapter 7 on clause combining and 9 on tense, aspect and modality, respectively, could make up a short specialised course. Related areas and topics are 'signposted' by cross-references.

Whether the book is studied with or without guidance, access to contents of each chapter the grammatical terms and topics treated in it is facilitated in four ways:

- 1 by the initial list of chapter and unit headings;
- 2 by the Summary that precedes each unit and specifies the main points dealt with;
- 3 by the section and subsection headings listed at the beginning of each chapter;
- 4 by the alphabetical list of items, terms and topics given in the general Index at the end of the book.
- 5 by the abundant cross-references which facilitate the linking of one area to another.

Reference is made to the number and section of the unit in which an item is explained.

# TABLE OF NOTATIONAL SYMBOLS

## NOTE TO READERS:

Examples of British English with a three-character identifier are taken from the *BYU-BNC* (Davies 2004–), based on The British National Corpus from Oxford University Press. Available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc>.

Examples of American English, also with a three-character identifier, are taken from *The Corpus of Contemporary American English: 450 million words, 1990–present* (COCA) (Davies 2008–). Available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca>.

## CLASSES OF UNITS

cl	clause
fin.cl	finite clause
non-fin.cl	non-finite clause
-ing cl	-ing participial clause
-en cl	past participial clause
inf.cl	infinitive clause
to-inf. cl	to-infinitive clause
wh-cl	wh-clause
NG	nominal group
AdjG	adjectival group
AdvG	adverbial group
PP	prepositional phrase
VG	verbal group
n	noun
pron	pronoun
adj	adjective
adv	adverb
conj	conjunction
prep	preposition
v	verb (as word class)
v-ing	present participle
v to-inf	to-infinitive
v-en	past participle (of both regular and irregular verbs)
p	particle

## SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS AND ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE

S	subject
P	predicator
O	object
Od	direct object
Oi	indirect object
PO	prepositional object
C	Complement
Cs	Complement of the subject
Co	Complement of the object
C <sub>loc</sub>	Locative/ Goal Complement
PC	Prepositional Complement
A	adjunct
F	finite
h	head
m	modifier (pre- and post-modifier)
d	determiner
e	epithet
clas.	Classifier
des	descriptor
c	complement (of noun, adjective, adverb and preposition)
o	operator
x	auxiliary verb
v	lexical verb, main verb

**SEMANTIC FUNCTIONS**

Ag	Agent
Aff	Affected
Rec	Recipient
Ben	Beneficiary

**UNIT BOUNDARIES**

	complex sentence
	clause
	group

**Tonicity**

//	end of tone unit
/	rising tone
\	falling tone
Λ	rising-falling tone
V	falling-rising tone
CAPITAL	letters are used to indicate the peak of information focus in the tone unit

**Pauses from brief to long**

— — — — —

**OTHER SYMBOLS**

*	ungrammatical or unacceptable form in Standard English
(?)	doubtfully acceptable
()	optional element
/	alternative form
+	coordination, addition
X	dependency
[ ]	embedded unit
†	keyed exercise
1, 2, etc.	superscript    marking    item    in
extract	
BrE	British English
AmE	American English
vs	versus

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# BASIC CONCEPTS

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A functional grammar aims to match forms to function and meaning in context. This Unit introduces three strands of meaning that form the basis of a functional interpretation of grammar: the representational, the interpersonal and the textual.

Each of these strands is encoded in the clause (or simple sentence) as a type of structure. The three structures are mapped onto one another, illustrating how the three types of meaning combine in one linguistic expression.

## 1.1 COMMUNICATIVE ACTS

Let us start from the basic concept that language is for communication. Here is part of a recorded conversation taken from a sociological project of the University of Bristol. The speakers are Janice, a girl who runs a youth club and disco in an English town, and Chris, one of the boys in the club, who is 19 and works in a shop. In the dialogue, we can distinguish various types of communicative act, or **speech act**, by which people communicate with each other: making statements, asking questions, giving directives with the aim of getting the hearer to carry out some action, making an offer or promise, thanking or expressing an exclamation.

Offer	J: If you like, I'll come into your shop tomorrow and get some more model aeroplane kits.
Reminder	C: O.K. Don't forget to bring the bill with you this time.
Promise	J: I won't.
Question	Do you enjoy working there?
Statements	C: It's all right, I suppose. Gets a bit boring. It'll do for a while.
Statement	J: I would have thought you were good at selling things.
Statement	C: I don't know what to do really. I've had other jobs. My Dad keeps on at me to go into his business. He keeps offering me better wages,
Exclamation	but the last thing to do is to work for him!
Question	J: Why?
Echo question	C: Why? You don't know my old man! I
Exclamations	wouldn't work for him! He always
Statement	wanted me to, but we don't get on. . . .



Question	D'you think it's possible to get me on a part-time Youth Leadership Course?
Offer/Promise	J: I'll ring up tomorrow, Chris, and find out for you.
Thanking	C: Thanks a lot.

In a communicative exchange such as this, between two speakers, the kind of meaning encoded as questions, statements, offers, reminders and thanks is **interpersonal** meaning. Asking and stating are basic communicative acts. The thing asked for or stated may be something linguistic – such as information or an opinion (*Do you enjoy working there? It's all right, I suppose*) – or it may be something non-linguistic, some type of goods and services, such as handing over the aeroplane kits.

This non-linguistic exchange may be verbalised – by, for instance, *Here you are* – but it need not be. Typically, however, when goods and services are exchanged, verbal interaction takes place too; for instance, asking a favour (*Do you think it's possible to get me on a part-time Youth Leadership Course?*) or giving a promise (*I'll ring up tomorrow, Chris, and find out for you*) are carried out verbally.

The grammatical forms that encode two basic types of interpersonal communication – stating and questioning – are illustrated in section 1.3.2. The whole area is dealt with more fully in Chapter 4.

## 1.2 THE CONTENT OF COMMUNICATION

Every speech act, whether spoken or written, takes place in a social context. A telephone conversation, writing a letter, buying a newspaper, giving or attending a lecture, are all contexts within which the different speech acts are carried out. Such contexts have to do with our own or someone else's experience of life and the world at large, that is, the doings and happenings in which we are involved or which affect us.

Any happening or state in real life, or in an imaginary world of the mind, can be expressed through language as a **situation** or **state of affairs**. Used in this way, the terms 'situation' or 'state of affairs' do not refer directly to an extra-linguistic reality that exists in the real world, but rather to the speaker's conceptualisation of it. The components of this conceptualisation of reality are **semantic roles** or **functions** and may be described in very general terms as follows:

- 1 **processes**: that is, actions, events, states, types of behaviour;
- 2 **participants**: that is, entities of all kinds, not only human, but inanimate, concrete and abstract, that are involved in the processes;
- 3 **attributes**: that is, qualities and characteristics of the participants;
- 4 **circumstances**: that is, any kind of contingent fact or subsidiary situation which is associated with the process or the main situation.

The following example from the text shows one possible configuration of certain semantic roles:

I	'll come	into your shop	tomorrow
Participant	Process	Circumstance	Circumstance

Figure 1.1 Participant, process and circumstances.

The kind of meaning expressed by these elements of semantic structure is **representational** meaning, or meaning that has to do with the content of the message. The various types of process, participants, attributes and circumstances are outlined in the following sections and described more fully in Chapter 5.

### 1.3 THREE WAYS OF INTERPRETING CLAUSE STRUCTURE

The clause or simple sentence is the basic unit that embodies our construal of representational meaning and interpersonal meaning. The clause is also the unit whose elements can be reordered in certain ways to facilitate the creation of **textual** meaning. The textual resources of the clause, such as the active–passive alternative, enable the representational strand and the interpersonal strand of meaning to cohere as a message, not simply as a sentence in isolation, but in relation to what precedes it in the discourse.

Each type of meaning is encoded by its own structures; the three types of structure combine to produce one single realisation in words.

To summarise, the three kinds of meaning derive from the consideration of a clause as: (a) the linguistic representation of our experience of the world; (b) a communicative exchange between persons; (c) an organised message or text. We now turn to the three types of structure that implement these meanings.

#### 1.3.1 The clause as representing situations: transitivity structures

The representational meaning of the clause is encoded through the transitivity structures, whose elements of structure or functions include: Agent, Recipient, Affected, Process, Attribute and Circumstance, as described in Chapter 5. Some of these make up the semantic structure of the following example:

Janice	will give	Chris	the bill	tomorrow
Agent	Process (action)	Recipient	Affected	Circumstance (time)

Figure 1.2 Semantic roles.

With a process of ‘doing’ such as the action of giving, the Agent is that participant which carries out the action referred to by the verb; the Recipient is that participant who receives the ‘goods’ or ‘information’ encoded as the Affected. Circumstances

attending the process are classified as locative, temporal, conditional, concessive, causal, resultant, among others.

### 1.3.2 The clause as interaction: mood structures

The clause is also the major grammatical unit used by speakers to ask questions, make statements and issue directives. Unless the conversation is very one-sided, the roles of ‘questioner’ and ‘informant’ tend to alternate between the interlocutors engaged in a conversation, as can be seen in the exchange of speech roles between Chris and Janice.

The exchange of information is typically carried out by the indicative mood or **clause type**, as opposed to directives, which are typically expressed by the imperative mood. Within the indicative, making a statement is associated characteristically with the declarative mood, and asking a question with the interrogative. More exactly, it is one part of these structures – consisting of the **Subject** and the **Finite** element (→ 3.1.1) – that in English carries the syntactic burden of the exchange. The rest of the clause remains unchanged.

In a declarative clause, the Subject precedes the Finite.

#### *Declarative*

Janice	will	give	Chris	the bill	tomorrow
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Object	Object	Adjunct

Figure 1.3 Order of syntactic elements in the declarative clause.

#### *Interrogative*

Will	Janice	give	Chris	the bill	tomorrow?
Finite	Subject	Predicator	Object	Object	Adjunct

Figure 1.4 Order of syntactic elements in the interrogative clause.

In the interrogative structure, the positions of Finite and Subject are reversed, the Predicator and the rest of the clause remaining the same. The Finite is that element which relates the content of the clause to the speech event. It does this by referring to present or past time, through tense, or by expressing an attitude of the speaker, through the modal auxiliaries, such as *will*, among other features (→ 3.1.1 and 14.3 for the interrogative).

### 1.3.3 The clause as message: thematic structures

Here, the speaker organises the informational content of the clause so as to establish whatever point of departure is desired for the message. This is called the **Theme**,

which in English coincides with the initial element or elements of the clause. The rest of the clause is the **Rheme**:

Janice	will give	Chris	the bill	tomorrow
Theme	Rheme			

Figure 1. 5 Theme-Rheme order.

The Theme may coincide with one of the participants, as in this example, or it may ‘set the scene’ by coinciding with an initial expression of time, place, etc. These possibilities are treated fully in Chapter 6.

### 1.3.4 Combining the three types of structure

The three types of structure are here mapped simultaneously onto the example clause, in order to show the tripartite nature and analysis of English clauses from a functional point of view. Predicator, Objects and Adjunct are included as **syntactic elements** or **functions**, which correspond to the semantic roles. We examine the syntactic functions more closely in Chapter 2.

	Janice	will give	Chris	the bill	tomorrow
Experiential	Agent	Process	Recipient	Affected	Circumstance
Interpersonal	Subject	Finite + Predicator	Object	Object	Adjunct
Textual	Theme	Rheme			

Figure 1. 6 Combining the three structures.

In a typical active declarative clause such as this, Agent, Subject and Theme coincide and are realised in one wording, in this case *Janice*. But in natural language use, a situation can be expressed in different ways, in which the order of clause elements can vary, since different elements of structure can be moved to initial position. Our present example admits at least the following possible variants:

Chris            will be given the bill (by Janice) tomorrow.  
 The bill        will be given to Chris tomorrow (by Janice).  
 Tomorrow, Chris will be given the bill (by Janice).

The motivation for these and other variants is not to be found in the clause in isolation, but in its relationship to that part of the discourse at which it is located. Speakers organise the content of the clause in order to achieve the best effect for their communicative purpose. This involves establishing the point of departure of the clausal message – that is, the Theme – in relation to what has gone before. This choice conditions to a large extent the way the clausal message will develop.

As we shall encounter instances of the passive voice in use in the forthcoming pages, it may be useful at this point to provide a brief summary of this important option.

### 1.3.5 Active vs passive voice

In an active clause the participant that carries out the action (the Agent) is also the grammatical Subject of the verb:

Chris (S) *posts* (V) *the letters* (O) *every day*.

In a corresponding passive clause, the grammatical constituent *the letters* is moved to the front and becomes the subject, while *Chris* is placed at the end in a *by*-phrase, which is usually optional:

*The letters* (S) *are posted* (V) *every day* (A) (*by Chris*) (A).

The active verb *posts* is replaced by the passive verb *are posted*. The passive verbal structure typically consists of a form of *be* and a past participle. Verbs which can take the passive are transitive verbs such as *post* or *eat*, which take one Object, or those such as *give*, which take two Objects. The latter typically have two passive alternatives (→ 4.2.3).

By using the **passive** instead of the **active voice** in all three variants listed above, the Agent can be omitted altogether, leaving other semantic roles to take its place (→ 20.1C, 30.3).

By means of such reorganisations of the clausal message, the content of the clause can be made to relate to the rest of the discourse and to the communicative context in which it is produced.

We shall now look at the full range of grammatical units in a hierarchy where the clause is central. We shall then look briefly at the unit above the clause, the ‘complex sentence’, and the units immediately below the clause, the ‘groups’.

# LINGUISTIC FORMS AND SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS

## UNIT 2

### 2.1 SYNTACTIC CATEGORIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

In this Unit we shall outline the basic syntactic concepts on which our structural analysis is based. These include the structural **units** which can be arranged by **rank**, the **classes** into which these units can be divided, and the **elements** of which they are composed. We shall also consider the ways units of one rank are related to those above or below them.

### 2.2 TESTING FOR CONSTITUENTS

Before attempting to see how a stretch of language can be broken down into units, it is useful to be able to reinforce our intuitions as to where boundaries lie. This can be done by applying certain tests in order to identify whether a particular sequence of words is functioning as a constituent of a higher unit or not.

For instance, the following sequence, which constitutes a grammatical clause or simple sentence, is ambiguous:

Muriel saw the man in the service station

Two interpretations are possible, according to how the units that make up the clause are grouped into constituents, expressed graphically as follows:

1 || Muriel | saw | the man in the service station ||

2 || Muriel | saw | the man || in the service station ||

In version **1**, the prepositional phrase *in the service station* forms part of the constituent whose head-word is *man* (*the man in the service station*) and tells us something about the man; whereas in version **2** the same prepositional phrase functions separately as a constituent of the clause and tells us where Muriel saw the man.

Evidence for this analysis can be sought by such operations as (a) coordination, (b) *wh*-questions, (c) clefting, (d) passivisation and (e) fronting. Tests (b) to (e) involve moving the stretch of language around and observing its syntactic behaviour. Testing

by coordination involves adding a coordinate that realises the same function; only stretches of language that realise the same function can be coordinated:

- (a) It can be seen that different types of conjoin are required according to the function of *in the service station*:

- (i) Muriel saw *the man in the service station* and *the woman in the shop*.
- (ii) Muriel saw the man *in the service station* and *in the shop*.

- (b) The *wh*-question form and the appropriate response will be different for the two versions:

- (i) *Who* did Muriel see? – *The man in the service station*.
- (ii) *Where* did Muriel see the man? – *In the service station*.

- (c) Clefting by means of *it* + *that*-clause highlights a clause constituent (→ 30.2) and thus yields two different results:

- (i) It was *the man in the service station* that Muriel saw.
- (ii) It was *in the service station* that Muriel saw the man.

*Wh*-clefting (→ 30.2) gives the same result:

- (i) The one Muriel saw was the *man in the service station*.
- (ii) Where Muriel saw the man was *in the service station*.

The form *the one* (*that . . .*) is used in this construction since English does not admit *who* in this context (\**Who* Muriel saw *was the man in the service station*).

- (d) Passivisation (→ 4.2.3 and 30.3) likewise keeps together those units or bits of language that form a constituent. The passive counterpart of an active clause usually contains a form of *be* and a past participle:

- (i) *The man in the service station* was seen by Muriel.
- (ii) The man was seen by Muriel *in the service station*.

It is not always the case that a sequence responds equally well to all five types of test. Certain types of unit may resist one or more of these operations: for instance, frequency adverbs such as *often* and *usually*, and modal adverbs like *probably*, resist clefting (\**It's often/usually/probably that Muriel saw the man in the service station*), resulting in a sentence that is ungrammatical. Unlike some languages, in English the finite verbal element of a clause normally resists fronting (\**Saw Muriel the man in the service station*). Nevertheless, if two or more of the operations can be carried out satisfactorily, we can be reasonably sure that the sequence in question is a constituent of a larger unit.

We now turn to the description of units, their classes and the relationship holding between them.

## 2.3 GRAMMATICAL UNITS AND RANK OF UNITS

The moving-around of bits of language, as carried out in 2.2, suggests, in Randolph Quirk's famous simile, that language is not a series of words strung together like beads on a string. Language is patterned, that is, certain regularities can be distinguished throughout every linguistic manifestation in discourse. A **unit** will be defined as any sequence that constitutes a semantic whole and which has a recognised pattern that is repeated regularly in speech and writing. For instance, the previous sentence is a unit containing other units such as *a recognised pattern* and *in speech and writing*. Sequences such as *defined as any* and *repeated regularly in*, which also occur in the same sentence, do not constitute units since they have no semantic whole and no syntactic pattern. The following sequence, which comments on the effects of a nuclear accident, constitutes one syntactic unit which is composed of further units:

The effects of the accident are very serious.

In English, it is useful to recognise four structural units which can be arranged in a relationship of componence on what is called a **rank-scale**:

Unit	Boundary marker	Example
Clause:		the effects of the accident are very serious
Group:		the effects of the accident   are   very serious
Word:	a space	the effects of the accident are very serious
Morpheme:	+	{EFFECT} + {PLURAL}, realised by the morphs effect and -s

Figure 1.7 Units on the rank scale.

For the initial stages of analysis it may be helpful to mark off the boundaries of each unit by a symbol, such as those adopted in the example. The symbol for 'clause boundary' is a double vertical line ||, that for 'group boundary' is a single vertical line |, and that for 'word boundary' is simply a space, as is conventionally used in the written language. The independent clause is the equivalent of the traditional 'simple sentence'. Combinations of clauses, the boundaries symbolised by |||, are illustrated in 2.4.1 and treated more fully in Chapter 7.

The relationship between the units is, in principle, as follows. Looking downwards, each unit consists of one or more units of the rank below it. Thus, a clause consists of one or more groups, a group consists of one or more words and a word consists of one or more morphemes. For instance, *Wait!* consists of one clause, which consists of one group, which consists of one word, which consists of one morpheme. More exactly, we shall say that the elements of structure of each unit are realised by units of the rank below.

Looking upwards, each unit fulfils a function in the unit above it. However, as we shall see in 3.6.3 and in later chapters, units may be 'embedded' within other units, such as the clause *who live in the north* within the nominal group *people who live in the*



*north*. Similarly, the prepositional phrase *of the accident* is embedded in the nominal group *the effects of the accident*.

We shall be concerned in this book mainly with two units: clause and group. The structure and constituents of these units will be described in later sections, together with their functions and meanings.

## 2.4 CLASSES OF UNITS

At each rank of grammatical unit mentioned in 2.3, there are various classes of unit.

### 2.4.1 Classes of clauses

#### A. Finite and non-finite clauses

At the rank of ‘clause’, a first distinction to be made is that between **finite and non-finite** clauses. As clauses have as their central element the verbal group, their status as finite or non-finite depends on the form of the verb chosen. Finite verbs, and therefore also finite clauses, are marked for either tense or modality, but not both. Their function is to relate the verb to the speech event. **Tensed** forms distinguish the present tense (*lock, locks*) from the past tense (*locked*) in regular verbs and many irregular verbs also, as in *eat, ate; go, went*. This distinction is not made on all irregular verbs, for example *shut*, which has the same form for the present and past tenses. **Person** and **number** are marked only on the third person singular of the present tense (*locks, shuts*) – except for the verb *be*, which has further forms (→ 3.1.1).

Tense is carried not only by lexical verbs but also by the **finite operators**. Modality is marked by the modal verbs, which also function as operators (→ 3.1.1). If the speaker wishes to express tense or modality, together with person and number, a ‘finite’ form of the verb is chosen, therefore, such as *is, eats, locked, went, will stay* and the clause is then called a **finite clause (fin.cl)**. For example, in the following paragraph all the verbs – and therefore all the clauses (marked <sup>1</sup>, <sup>2</sup> etc.) – are finite:

|| I *had* a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong hills. ||<sup>1</sup> || The Equator *runs* across these highlands a hundred miles to the north, ||<sup>2</sup> and the farm *lay* at an altitude of over six thousand feet. ||<sup>3</sup> || In the daytime you *felt* that you *had got* high up, near to the sun, ||<sup>4</sup> || but the early mornings and evenings *were* limpid and restful, ||<sup>5</sup> || and the nights *were* cold. ||<sup>6</sup> ||

(Karen Blixen, *Out of Africa*)

If the verb-form does not signal either tense or modality, the verb and the clause are classified as **non-finite (V-non-fin; non-fin.cl)**. The non-finite verb forms are:

- the **infinitive** (inf.) (*be, eat, lock, go*) sometimes called the ‘bare’ infinitive;
- the **to-infinitive** (*to-inf*); *to be, to eat, to lock, to go*
- the participial **–ing** form (*–ing*) (*being, eating, locking, going*); and
- the past participial form, symbolised in this book as **–en** (*been, eaten, locked, gone*).

These forms are said to be **non-tensed**. Non-finite clauses are illustrated by the following examples:

They want <i>to hire a caravan</i> .	<i>to</i> -infinitive clause
Tim helped her <i>carry her bags upstairs</i> .	bare infinitive clause
We found Ann <i>sitting in the garden</i> .	<i>-ing</i> participial clause
The invitations were sent <i>written by hand</i> .	<i>-en</i> participial clause

The past participial type is illustrated in the following extract from Severin Carrel in *The Guardian*:

Had she been born,<sup>1</sup> Tian Tian's cub would have spent her life *denied freedom, besieged by a constant onslaught of visitors, separated from her mother, shunted from one zoo to another, artificially inseminated and treated as a commodity*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The structure **Had + subject + Past participle** is an alternative to the conditional clause with 'if' (→ 34.3) 'If she had been born'.

<sup>2</sup> The same forms serve for both the finite and non-finite status of many English verbs; *denied* and *besieged*, and the other verbs here, can all function both as a tensed (past) form and as a non-finite *-en* participle.

### B. Independent and dependent clauses

A further necessary distinction to be made is that between **independent and dependent** clauses. An independent clause (indep.cl) is complete in itself, that is, it does not form part of a larger structure, whereas a dependent clause (dep.cl) is typically related to an independent clause. This is illustrated in the following sentence:

They locked up the house (**indep.cl**), before they went on holiday (**dep.cl**).

All grammatically independent clauses are finite. Dependent clauses may be finite or non-finite. In the previous example, the finite dependent clause *before they went on holiday* can be replaced by a non-finite clause *before going on holiday*. The dependent status of non-finite clauses is signalled by the form itself.

Only independent clauses have the variations in clause structure that make for the different clause types: declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamative (→ Unit 23):

<i>Jack's flat is in Hammersmith.</i>	(declarative)
<i>Is his address 20 Finchley Road?</i>	(interrogative)
<i>Give me Jack's telephone number.</i>	(imperative)
<i>What a large apartment he has!</i>	(exclamative)

Dependent clauses, even when finite, do not have these possibilities.

### C. Finite dependent clauses

Seven kinds of finite dependent clause are illustrated in this section, along with three important sub-types of the nominal clause.

The subordinate status of a finite dependent clause is normally signalled by means of subordinating conjunctions ('subordinators') such as *when, if, before, as soon as* in **circumstantial clauses**, as in 1 below (→ also 35.2), or by 'relativisers' such as *which, that* in **relative clauses** as in 2 (→ 49.3):

- 1 *As soon as she got home*, Ann switched on the television.
- 2 Paul took one of the red apples *that his wife had bought that morning*.

**Nominal clauses** fulfil the functions of Subject, Object and Complement in clause structure. In a sentence such as *He saw that the bottles were empty*, the clause [*that the bottles were empty*] is **embedded** as a constituent (in this case as Object) of the **superordinate** clause *he saw x*. The part without the embedded clause is sometimes called the **matrix** clause.

The main types of nominal clause are the **that-clause 3**, the **wh-nominal relative clause 4** and the dependent **wh-interrogative clause 4** and **5**. The **dependent exclamative 6** is a further type of *wh*-clause:

- 3 He saw *that the bottles were empty*. (*that*-clause)
- 4 *What I don't understand is why you have come here*. (nominal relative clause + dependent *wh*-interrogative)
- 5 I'll ask *where the nearest Underground station is*. (dependent *wh*-interrogative)
- 6 She said *how comfortable it was*. (dependent exclamative clause)

Embedded clauses are discussed and illustrated in chapters 2 and 3.

**Comparative clauses** occur following the comparative forms of adjectives and adverbs. The comparative clause, introduced by *than*, provides the basis of comparison:

- 7 The results are much better *than we expected*.

**Supplementive units** are not integrated into the main clause, as embedded units are, but add supplementary information. They are subordinate but not embedded. They are set off from the main clause by commas, or by a dash, and have their own intonation contour. Here is an example of a supplementive non-finite *-en* clause:

*Rescued in 1970 from the path of highway construction*, the house was moved to a new site and donated to the National Trust.

In spoken discourse, and in written texts that imitate spoken language, such as fictional dialogue, we can often come across supplementives that are freestanding, despite their subordinate form, as in the following italicised example (→ chapters 5, 7 and 10):

The large size doesn't seem to be available. *Which is a pity*.

Not only clauses, but other units can have the status of 'supplementives' (→ 49.2).

A subsidiary type of clause is the **verbless** clause. This is a clause which lacks a verb and often a subject also. The omitted verb is typically a form of *be* and is recoverable from the situational or linguistic context, as in:

Book your tickets well in advance, *whenever possible*. (= whenever it is possible)

The following extract from Elaine Morgan's, *The Descent of Woman* illustrates this type very well:

**Man, apes and monkeys can all be observed to cry out *when in pain*, flush *when enraged*, yawn *when tired*, glare *when defiant*, grin *when tickled*, tremble *when afraid*, embrace *when affectionate*, bare their teeth *when hostile*, raise their eyebrows *when surprised*, and turn their heads away *when offended*.**

We shall also classify as verbless clauses many irregular constructions such as the following:

<i>Wh</i> -questions without a finite verb:	Why not sell your car and get a new one?
Adjuncts with the force of a command, sometimes with a vocative:	Hands off! Into the shelter, everybody!
Ellipted interrogative and exclamative clauses:	Sure? (Are you sure?) Fantastic! (That/It is fantastic)
Proverbs of the type:	<i>Out of sight, out of mind.</i>

Finally, we shall call **abbreviated clauses** those such as *can you? I won't, has she?* which consist of the Subject + Finite operator alone, with the rest of the clause ellipted because it is known. These clauses typically occur as responses in conversational exchanges and as tags (→ 22.4), but can also express such speech acts as reprimand (*Must you?*), given an appropriate social context.

## 2.4.2 Classes of groups

Groups are classified according to the class of the word operating as the main or 'head' element. Headed by a noun, an adjective, an adverb and a verb respectively, we can identify the following classes:

Nominal Groups	(NG)	<i>films,</i>	wonderful <i>films</i> by Fellini
Verbal Groups	(VG)	<i>return,</i>	will <i>return</i>
Adjectival Groups	(AdjG)	<i>good,</i>	quite <i>good</i> at languages
Adverbial Groups	(AdvG)	<i>fluently,</i>	very <i>fluently</i> indeed

Units such as these centre round one main element, which typically cannot be omitted. Furthermore, the main element can replace the whole structure: *films*, *return*, *good* and *fluently* can have the same syntactic functions as the whole group of which each is head, or, in the case of *return*, as lexical verb. By contrast, the unit formed by a preposition and its complement, such as *on the floor*, is rather different. The preposition can't function alone as a unit. Both elements are obligatory. This unit will therefore be called the '**Prepositional Phrase**' (PP).

### 2.4.3 Classes of words

Words are classified grammatically according to the traditional terminology, which includes **noun**, **verb**, **adjective**, **adverb**, **preposition**, **pronoun**, **article** and **conjunction**. These 'parts of speech' are divided into two main classes, the **open** and the **closed**. The open classes are those that freely admit new members into the vocabulary. They comprise **noun**, **verb**, **adjective** and **adverb**. The closed classes (**preposition**, **pronoun** and **article**) do not easily admit new members. Prepositions have gradually expanded their membership somewhat by admitting participles such as *including*, *concerning*, but the remaining classes are very resistant to the introduction of new items. This has been noticeable in recent years when attempts have been made to find gender-neutral pronouns.

### 2.4.4 Classes of morphemes

Words are made up of morphemes. We shall consider the morpheme to be an abstract category that has either a lexical or a grammatical meaning. We have already indicated in 2.3 that a word such as *effects* can be considered as formed from the lexical morpheme {EFFECT} + the {PLURAL} morpheme. These abstract categories are realised by **morphs** such as *effect* and *-s* or /ifekt/ and /s/, the actual segments of written and spoken language, respectively.

Since the study of words and morphemes takes us out of syntax, and into morphology and phonology, the scope of this book does not allow for further treatment of these units.

## 2.5 THE CONCEPT OF UNIT STRUCTURE

The term 'structure' refers to the relationships that exist between the small units that make up a larger unit

Everything in our lives has structure. A house may be built of bricks, but its structure consists of rooms having different formal, functional and distributional characteristics. All objects are composed of functionally related 'formal items'; and the same applies to activities such as board meetings, plays, symphonies and football matches. It is natural that languages, which are the spoken and written representation of our experience of all these things, are also manifested in structured forms. Grammatical structures are described in terms of the semantic functions of their various elements and the syntactic forms and relationships which express them.

We have seen in 1.3.1 a brief preview of the main semantic elements of the clause, together with some of the possible configurations produced by the combinations of these elements. Groups, whose function it is to express the things, processes, qualities and circumstances of our experience, also have semantic elements and structures. These are different for each type of group and are treated in the relevant chapter on each of these classes of unit. Here we shall briefly present the syntactic elements of all ranks of unit.

### 2.5.1 Syntactic elements of clauses

Clauses have the greatest number of syntactic elements or functions of all classes of unit. The criteria for their identification, the syntactic features and the realisations of each are discussed in Chapter 2. Here we simply list and exemplify the clause elements within common clause structures. The type of structure used in order to express a 'situation' or 'state of affairs' depends to a great extent on the verb chosen. Verb complementation types are treated in Chapter 3.

Subject (S)	<i>Jupiter</i> is the largest planet.	SPCs
Predicator (P)	The election campaign <i>has ended</i> .	SP
Direct Object (O)	Ted has bought <i>a new motorbike</i> .	SPO
Indirect Object (O)	They sent <i>their friends</i> postcards.	SPOO
Subject Complement (Cs)	He is <i>powerless to make any changes</i> .	SPCs
Object Complement (Co)	We consider the situation <i>alarming</i> .	SPOCo
Locative/Goal Complement (C <sub>loc</sub> )	We flew to <i>Moscow</i> .	SPC <sub>loc</sub>
Circumstantial Adjunct (A)	The news reached us <i>on Tuesday</i> .	SPOA
Stance Adjunct (A)	Sadly, we could not reach Ely in time.	ASPOA
Connective Adjunct (A)	<i>However</i> , other friends were present.	ASPCs

It will be seen that for interrogative and negative clauses we use an additional function, the Finite (→ 3.1 and 14.3).

### 2.5.2 Syntactic elements of groups

Nominal groups, adjectival groups and adverbial groups are composed of three primary elements or functions: a head (**h**) preceded by a pre-modifier (**m**) and followed by a post-modifier (**m**). In the chapters devoted to these groups we also distinguish 'complement' (**c**) as a special type of post-head element. Complements of nouns and adjectives are introduced by a preposition or by a *that*-clause which is controlled by the head-word of the group. For example, the adjective *good* controls a complement introduced by *at*: *good at chess*. The noun *belief* controls a *that*-clause: *the belief that he is always right*. In the case of **nominal groups**, we also distinguish between 'modifiers', which describe or classify the head, and 'determiners' (**d**), which specify it

in terms of definiteness, quantity, possessiveness, etc. Thus, we give the determiner and the pre- and post-modifiers equal syntactic status as primary elements of nominal groups (→ 45.2). The following are examples of these group structures:

NG:	dmhm:	those   beautiful   paintings   by Goya
AdjG:	mhc:	extremely   difficult   to translate
AdvG:	mhm:	very   carefully   indeed

In **Verbal Groups**, the lexical verb is regarded as the main element (**v**), which either functions alone, whether in finite or non-finite form, as in the example ***Walking** along the street, I **met** a friend of mine*, or is preceded by auxiliaries (**x**), as in *will go* or *has been reading*. The first auxiliary (or the auxiliary, if there is only one) is called the ‘**finite operator**’ (**o**). It is the element that contributes information about tense, modality, number and person, and so helps to make the VG finite and fully ‘operative’. It is also the element that operates in the syntactic structure to make the clause interrogative and/or negative (→ 3.1.1), and to make ellipted responses:

*Have you been driving for many years? – Yes, I have.*

*Do you enjoy driving? – Yes, I do.*

In the more complex verbal groups, each element is telescoped into the following one (→ 38.7):

v:	plays	
ov:	has   played	[have + -en]
oxv:	will   be   playing	[will + [be + -ing]]
oxxv:	must   have   been   played	[must + [have + -en] [be + -en]]

The lexical verb is sometimes followed by an adverbial particle (symbolised by ‘**p**’) as in *ring up, break out, take over*. Many such combinations form integrated semantic units which are idiomatic (→ 6.4). Transitive combinations can be discontinuous as in *I’ll ring you up, They’ve taken it over*.

The syntax of phrasal verbs and other multi-word combinations is discussed in 6.4 and the semantics (in terms of Source, Path and Goal) in 40.2.

In **Prepositional Phrases (PP)** there are two obligatory elements: the prepositional head (**h**) and the complement (**c**). There is also an optional modifier (**m**), which is typically realised by an adverb of degree (e.g. *right, quite*). The structure of PPs is illustrated as follows:

mhc:	right   across   the road
	quite   out of   practice.

The structure and grammatical functions of the prepositional phrase are treated in Chapter 12, together with prepositional meanings, which are described in terms of containment, location etc. in literal, metaphorical and abstract uses.



### 2.5.3 Componente, realisation and function

Any structure can be considered to be composed of elements which form a configuration of elements or 'functions', whether semantic such as Agent-Process-Affected or syntactic such as the clause configuration Subject-Predicator-Object or the modifier-head-modifier structure of the nominal group.

Each of these is in turn realised by a unit which is itself, at least potentially, a configuration of elements, and these in turn are realised by others until the final stage is reached and abstract categories such as subject, head, modifier, etc., are finally realised by the segments of the spoken or written language. The 'structural tree' on page 19 diagrams this model of analysis at the three unit ranks of clause, group and word, to illustrate the clause *The bus strike will affect many people tomorrow*.

An important property of language is the fact that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the class of unit and its function. While it is true that certain classes of unit *typically* realise certain functions, Nominal Groups at Subject and Object functions, for instance, it is nevertheless also true that many classes of unit can fulfil many different functions, and different functions are realised by many different classes of unit. For instance, the NG *next time* can fulfil the following clause functions, among others:

- Subject:     *Next time* will be better.
- Adjunct:    I'll know better *next time*.

The nearest to a one-to-one relationship in the grammar is that between the process and the verbal group that realises it.

This many-to-many relationship is fundamental for understanding the relationship of the grammar of English to discourse. By this it is not implied that discourse (or even a text) is a kind of super-sentence, a grammatical unit that is simply 'larger' than a sentence and with the same kind of relationship holding between its parts as that

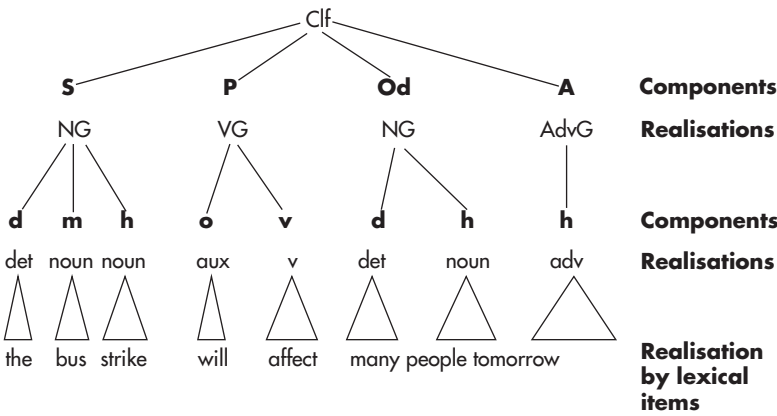


Figure 1.8 Components and realisations



which holds between grammatical units. A piece of discourse is quite different in kind from a grammatical unit. Rather than grammatical, it is a pragmatic-semantic unit of whatever length, spoken or written, and which forms a unified whole, with respect both to its internal properties and to the social context in which it is produced.

To take a minimal instance, a pragmatic act such as 'leave-taking' may be realised by a modalised declarative clause (*I'll be seeing you*) or by the formulaic expression *Goodbye*, among others. Typically, a discourse is made up of various types of pragmatic acts, which in turn are realised semantically and syntactically. In this book, although we start from the grammar rather than from the text, the relationship between the two is of primary interest.

## 3.1 NEGATIVE AND INTERROGATIVE CLAUSE STRUCTURES

Negating and questioning are basic human needs, which are encoded grammatically by negation and by the interrogative, respectively. English is unlike many other languages in using a **finite operator** to form negative and interrogative clause structures.

The verb's corresponding negative forms normally have *n't* added to the positive forms. The following are irregular: *can't* (from *cannot*), *shan't* (from *shall not*), *won't* (from *will not*). *May not* is not usually abbreviated to *mayn't*. When *n't* follows a consonant

– as in *didn't*, *wouldn't* – it is pronounced as a separate syllable. The inflectional *n't* forms are used in spoken English and in informal written styles that imitate speech, such as fictional dialogue. The full form *not* is used in formal written styles and for emphasis

– as in *The play was not a success*, rather than *The play wasn't a success*.

### 3.1.1 The finite operator

The **operator** is a **verb**, of one of the following types: primary, modal or *do*, as explained below.

<b>primary:</b>	positive: <i>am, is, are, was, were, have, has, had</i> negative: <i>am not (aren't in negative-interrogative), isn't, aren't, wasn't, weren't, haven't, hasn't, hadn't</i>
<b>modal:</b>	positive: <i>can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, ought</i> negative: <i>can't, couldn't, won't, wouldn't, shan't, shouldn't, may not, mightn't, oughtn't</i>
<b>the 'do' operator:</b>	positive: <i>does, do, did</i> negative; <i>doesn't, don't, didn't</i>

Worthy of mention here are the **lexical auxiliaries** based on the primary verbs *be* (*be about to, be sure to, be going to, etc.*) and *have* (*have to, have got to*), which are discussed in 37.3. The primary verb functions as a normal operator in these combinations.

Less commonly in use are the semi-modals **dare** and **need**, which as modals are used in negative and interrogative clauses, and admit the abbreviated forms *daren't* and *needn't*, respectively. (*Dare you tell her? I daren't tell her. How dare you speak to me like that? Need I go? You needn't go*).

*Dare* can be used with *will*, *should* and *would*, a possibility that is not open to modals in general: Nobody *will dare* vote against the proposal; I *wouldn't dare* take a space-trip even if I were offered one.

*Dare* and *need* also behave like full lexical verbs requiring the *do*-operator: *I didn't dare go. I didn't need to go. Didn't you dare go? Didn't you need to go? Didn't dare* is more common now than *dared not* (He *dared not* say a word, He *didn't dare* say a word).

## 3.2 CLAUSAL NEGATION

In clauses, negation is usually made with the particle *not*, by negating the finite operator (*is not*, *cannot/isn't*, *can't*, etc.), or a non-finite verb in a dependent clause (*not wishing to disturb them*). \**Amn't* is not used in Standard English for the first person singular; instead, I'm not (declarative) and Aren't I (interrogative) are used. If no other auxiliary is present, a form of *do* (*do*, *does*, *did*) is brought in as operator. Compare the following positive and negative declarative clauses:

That man <i>is</i> the Secretary.	That man <i>is not/isn't</i> the Secretary.
He <i>took</i> the car.	He <i>didn't take</i> the car.
Ed always <i>does</i> the dishes.	Ed <i>doesn't</i> always <i>do</i> the dishes.

The last example here illustrates the use of *does* both as a lexical verb and as operator.

*Don't* is the regular negative form used in second person imperatives: *Don't be late!*

Some operators admit an alternative type of abbreviation with the subject in negative clauses. This occurs usually only with a pronoun. Both types are used in spoken English, the 'not' type being preferred in AmE:

They aren't ready.	They're not ready.
She isn't coming with us.	She's not coming with us.
He hasn't finished.	He's not finished.
We haven't got enough.	We've not got enough.

### 3.2.1 Interrogative clauses

These invert the operator with the subject of the clause:

Positive-interrogative	Negative-interrogative
Is that man the Secretary?	Isn't that man the Secretary?
Did he take the car?	Didn't he take the car?
Does Ed always do the dishes?	Doesn't Ed always do the dishes?

There are two types of interrogative clause. One is the **yes/no type**, illustrated here, which simply asks for an answer in terms of *yes* or *no*. The other is the **wh-type**, which asks for the information represented by the *wh*-word *what?* *who?* *where?* and so on. The inversion of subject–operator is the same as for the *yes/no* type, except when *who* functions as subject:

*Who came to see you?*      *When can you come to see us?*  
*What does Ed do?*          *When did you see him last?*

### 3.3 NO-NEGATION VS NOT-NEGATION + ANY

Another way of negating a clause is by using a non-verbal ‘nuclear’ negative word such as *nobody*, *nothing*, *no* or *never*. When we need a negative element as subject, a nuclear form is necessary: *Nobody* came after all, *Nothing* was said, *No money* was found (see below, and also Chapter 10). Nuclear negative words are also common in existential clauses: *There’s nothing to worry about*.

In many cases a similar idea can be expressed by using either *no*-negation or *not*-negation + *any*:

Have you <i>any</i> money?	I haven’t <i>any</i> money. I have <i>no</i> money.
Do you know <i>anyone</i> called Stern?	I don’t know <i>anyone</i> called Stern. I know <i>no-one</i> called Stern.

In questions, either alternative is possible even when the negative item is subject, as opposed to the single possible structure in negative declarative clauses. Compare:

Declarative negative:	<i>Nobody</i> has called this afternoon.
Interrogative negative:	Has <i>nobody</i> called this afternoon? Hasn’t <i>anybody</i> called this afternoon?

When both are possible, the *no*-form tends to be more emphatic or more suited to writing or formal spoken English. A very emphatic negative meaning is conveyed in spoken English also by, for example, *She’s no friend of mine*. *He’s no actor*.

### 3.4 ANY AND OTHER NON-ASSERTIVE WORDS

Unlike many languages, Standard English does not favour cumulative negation, that is a ‘not’ negative together with one or more nuclear negatives in one clause, such as \*We’re **not** going **nowhere**, although this is a feature of certain dialects. Instead the first negative item is followed throughout the rest of the clause by one or more non-assertive items such as *any* or its compounds, as in:

We’re *not* going *anywhere* with *any* of our friends.  
 I didn’t say *anything* about it to *anyone*.

It is important to remember that the ‘*any*’ words in English (*any, anyone, anybody, anything, anywhere*, AmE *anyplace*) are not in themselves negative. In order to be used in a negative clause they must be preceded by *not* or a negative word; they must be within the ‘scope of negation’ (→ 3.5). So instead of *Nobody came*, it is not acceptable to say \**Anybody came* or \**Anybody didn’t come*. These are ungrammatical and meaningless, hence the deliberate oddity of e.e. cummings’ poem ‘Anyone lived in a little how town’.

The *any* words (together with *ever* and *yet*, among others) are what we call ‘non-assertive’ items, as opposed to *some* and its compounds, which are ‘assertive’. Assertive forms have **factual meanings** and typically occur in positive declarative clauses. Non-assertive words such as *any* are associated with **non-factual meanings** in the sense of **non-fulfilment** or **potentiality**, which is a feature of negative, interrogative, conditional and comparative clauses, and semi-negative words such as *without* and *hardly*, among others. It is, in fact, the general non-factual meaning, rather than any particular structure which provides the context for non-assertive items to be used:

We have *some* very good coffee. (declarative, factual)  
 This coffee is better *than any* I have ever tasted. (comparative, non-factual)  
 If you want *any* more coffee, you must make it yourself. (conditional, non-factual)  
 Did you say *anything*? (interrogative, non-factual)  
 Didn’t you go *anywhere* interesting? (interrogative-negative, non-factual)  
 Without *any* delay.  
*Hardly* anyone knew his name.

Stressed *any* is used in positive declarative clauses, and has a non-factual meaning (= it doesn’t matter which/who); (→ 47.1.)

Choose *any* of the questions in section 1.  
*Anybody* with a bit of sense would have refused to go.  
*Any* house is better than *no* house.

Here is a summary of assertive and non-assertive items:

	<b>Assertive</b>	<b>Non-assertive</b>
Determiners/pronouns	some someone somebody something	any anyone anybody anything
Adverbs	somewhere sometimes already still a lot	anywhere ever yet any more/any longer much

Biased *yes/no* questions with *some* and *any* words are explained in 17.4.

### 3.5 THE SCOPE OF NEGATION

By the scope of negation we mean the semantic influence that a negative word has on the rest of the clause that follows it. Typically, all that follows the negative form to the end of the clause will be non-assertive and within the scope of negation. Thus, in *Some people don't have any sense of humour*, *some* is outside the scope of negation, whereas *any* is inside it.

As the non-assertive forms are not in themselves negative, they cannot initiate the scope of negation by standing in initial position in the place of a nuclear negative form. Assertive forms such as *some* and its compounds can occur after a negative word, but they must necessarily stand outside the scope of negation. Compare the difference in meaning between the two following clauses:

- 1 He didn't reply to any of my letters. (*None of my letters received a reply*)
- 2 He didn't reply to some of my letters.  
(Some of my letters received a reply, others did not)

The non-assertive form *any* in example 1 expresses the scope of negation as extending to the end of the clause. In example 2, on the other hand, *some* must be interpreted as outside the scope of negation.

The scope of negation is closely related to the function of Adjuncts in the clause. Compare the difference in meaning between examples 3 and 4 below, in which the manner Adjunct *clearly* is within the scope of negation in 3, while the attitudinal sentence Adjunct *clearly* in 4 is outside it:

- 3 She didn't explain the problem *clearly*.
- 4 She *clearly* didn't explain the problem.

The scope of negation can also explain the occasional occurrence of two negative words in the same clause as in *You can't NOT go*. Here each negative item has its own scope.

### 3.6 LOCAL NEGATION

Our discussion so far has centred on clausal negation. Groups, words and non-finite clauses can be negated by *not*, without the entire finite clause being negated:

- She was admitted into hospital *not long ago*.  
*Not* realising the danger, she walked in the dark towards the edge of the cliff.  
 Try *not to get too tired* playing tennis.  
 She would prefer *not to go on a Mediterranean cruise* for a holiday.

Negative declaratives typically express a negative statement, but they can also be used to ask tactful questions, as in the following extract from a detective story. The person questioned replies mostly with straight negative statements, adding in<sup>2</sup> the expression of polite regret *I'm afraid*, but in<sup>8</sup> she avoids total commitment:

'You don't know the actual name of the firm or association that employed her?'<sup>1</sup>

'No, I don't,<sup>2</sup> I'm afraid.'

'Did she ever mention relatives?'

'No. I gather she was a widow and had lost her husband many years ago. A bit of an invalid he'd been, but she never talked much about him.'<sup>3</sup>

'She didn't mention where she came from<sup>4</sup> – what part of the country?'

'I don't think she was a Londoner.'<sup>5</sup> Came from somewhere up north, I should say.'

'You didn't feel there was anything – well, mysterious about her?'<sup>6</sup>

Lejeune felt a doubt as he spoke. If she was a suggestible woman – but Mrs. Coppins did not take advantage of the opportunity offered to her.<sup>7</sup>

'Well I can't really say<sup>8</sup> that I did. Certainly not from anything she ever said.'<sup>9</sup> The only thing that perhaps might have made me wonder was her suitcase. Good quality it was, but not new.'

(Agatha Christie, *The Pale Horse*)

<sup>1</sup>question; <sup>2</sup>negative statement; <sup>3</sup>negative statement; <sup>4</sup>question; <sup>5</sup>transferred negation; <sup>6</sup>question; <sup>7</sup>negative statement; <sup>8</sup>hedge; <sup>9</sup>negative statement.

**Transferred negation** consists in displacing the negative element from its logical place in the reported clause to negate the verb in the main clause. So in note 5, instead of *I think she wasn't a Londoner*, we have *I don't think she was a Londoner*. This is very common in English.

### 3.7 EXPANDING LINGUISTIC UNITS

Each of the grammatical units outlined in Unit 2, 2.4.1 to 2.4.3, has been illustrated by single occurrences of that unit, for instance, one Nominal Group functioning at Subject or Object, one modifier of an adjective or an adverb. Quite frequently our everyday communication requires no more. But units can be expanded to enable the speaker or writer to add further information which is, nevertheless, contained within the chosen structure at any point in the discourse. Here we simply exemplify **coordination**, **subordination** and **embedding** of various classes of elements, with the reminder that most elements of structure can be realised more than once.

#### 3.7.1 Coordination

The following are examples of **coordination** of various classes of elements:

**morphemes in a word:**

*pro-* and *anti-* abortionists

**heads of nominal groups:**

*books, papers* and *magazines*

**modifier in a NG:**

*a beautiful* and *astonishing* sight

**modifier in an AdjG:**

He says he is *really* and *truly* sorry for what happened.

**adjuncts in a clause:**

You can put in the application *now* or *in a month's time* or else *next year*.

**independent clauses:**

She *got dressed quickly*, *had breakfast* and *went out* to work

**dependent clauses:** I will take a holiday *when the course is over* and *if I pass the exam* and also *provided I can afford it*.

If the various conjoined clauses share the same subject or the same operator, these elements are regularly ellipted because they are recoverable (→ 5.1.5B), and are implicit in subsequent conjoined clauses. This occurs in the above example of independent clauses where ‘she’ is ellipted before the predicates *had breakfast* and *went out to work*.

### 3.7.2 Subordination

Similarly, the following are examples of **subordination** of various classes of elements (in brackets):

**modifier in a NG:** *A very lovable (if rather dirty), small boy.*  
**Cs in a clause:** *He is quite brilliant (though totally unreliable).*  
**adjuncts in a clause:** *We arrived (late (though not too late)) for the wedding.*  
**dependent clauses:** *I’ll let you borrow the CDs (as soon as I’ve finished) [provided you bring them back (when I need them)].*

In this complex sentence, the fourth clause *when I need them* is dependent on the third clause *provided you bring them back*; these together form a block which is dependent on the block formed by the first (independent) clause *I’ll let you borrow the CDs* and its dependent clause *as soon as I’ve finished*.

‘Sentence’ is the term traditionally used to denote the highest grammatical unit on a scale of rank. While not rejecting this term, we shall prefer, however, to use the term ‘clause’ to refer to one independent unit. This applies also to a superordinate clause with embedded clauses in one or more functions, as illustrated in the next section. We keep the traditional term ‘compound sentence’ for units of two or more coordinated clauses, while the equally traditional term ‘complex sentence’ applies to units containing dependent clauses or dependent and conjoined clauses, as we have seen in some of the examples above. We shall say that in a complex sentence any number of clauses can be involved. These questions are further illustrated in Chapter 7 under the heading ‘Clause combining’.

### 3.7.3 Embedding

A third way of expanding the content and the structure of a linguistic unit is by **embedding**, a kind of subordination by which a clause functions as a constituent of another clause or of a group. This is a pervasive phenomenon in both spoken and written English and is found in elements such as the following, where the embedded clause is enclosed in square brackets:

**clause at S:** *[That he left so abruptly] doesn’t surprise me.*  
**clause at O:** *I don’t know [why he left so abruptly].*  
**clause at c in a PP:** *I’m pleased about [Jane’s winning a prize].*  
**clause at m in NG:** *Thanks for the card [you sent me].*



**clause at A:** [After they had signed the contract] they went off to celebrate.  
**group in group:** [[[Tom's] sister's] husband's] mother  
 the box [on top of the cupboard [in my bedroom]]

## EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 1

### Basic concepts

#### Unit 1

- 1 †For each of the following clauses say whether a participant or a circumstance has been chosen as Theme (the first constituent in the clause):
  - (1) Main Street is usually crowded on late shopping nights.
  - (2) The girls armed with hockey-sticks chased the burglar.
  - (3) Quite by accident I came across a very rare postage-stamp.
  - (4) Away in the distance you can see Mount Kilimanjaro.
  - (5) What I am going to tell you must not be repeated.
- 2 †In each of the following clauses say whether the Subject, the Direct Object or the Adjunct has been chosen as Theme:
  - (1) About fifty or sixty thousand years ago, there lived on earth a creature similar to man.
  - (2) Skulls and bones of this extinct species of man were found at Neanderthal.
  - (3) By 40,000 years ago new migrants had reached Europe, supposedly from Africa.
  - (4) What species would be the definitively human we can only guess.
  - (5) In Asia or Africa there may be still undiscovered deposits of earlier and richer human remains.

#### Unit 2

- 3 †Look at the clauses below and apply the tests outlined in Unit 2.2 to answer the questions following them:
  - (1) The little boy in the red jersey is making a sand castle on the beach.
    - (a) Is *the little boy* a constituent of the clause?
    - (b) Is *on the beach* a constituent?
    - (c) Is *in the red jersey* a constituent?
    - (d) Is *castle* a constituent?
  - (2) Tom took the road to the factory by mistake.
    - (a) Is *the road* a constituent?
    - (b) Is *to the factory* a constituent?
    - (c) Is *by mistake* a constituent?
    - (d) Is *took* a constituent?
- 4 †Identify each of the uncontextualised clauses listed below as (a) independent; (b) dependent finite; (c) dependent non-finite; (d) abbreviated; (e) verbless. Punctuation and capitals have been omitted.

- (1) the complacency of the present government amazes me
- (2) although presumed dead
- (3) not being a tele-viewer myself
- (4) as I am the principal at a large boarding-school for girls
- (5) her future husband she met on a course for playleaders
- (6) I certainly will
- (7) while on vacation in Bali
- (8) because he is over-qualified for this job
- (9) just when he was starting to get himself organised
- (10) we'll probably get only a fraction of the factory's worth

**5** †Say to which class of group each of the following belongs:

- (1) the anti-terrorist laws
- (2) not quite hot enough
- (3) within three quarters of an hour
- (4) pretty soon
- (5) aren't playing
- (6) wide awake
- (7) his departure from Moscow
- (8) in spite of the bad weather

### Unit 3

**6** †Make the following sentences (a) negative and (b) interrogative-negative:

- (1) It will be difficult to find a nice present for Henry.
- (2) Sheila has something to tell you.
- (3) Someone has left a bag on a seat in the park.
- (4) He knows someone who lives in Glasgow.
- (5) It is worth going to see some of those pictures.

**7** †Fill in the blanks with an appropriate non-assertive item. Say why such an item is needed in this context:

- (1) That's a pretty kitten you have there. Have you got . . . more like it?
- (2) She hardly . . . complains about . . . he does.
- (3) I honestly don't think I could recommend . . . within ten miles of the coast.
- (4) I don't remember seeing . . . talking to Milly.

**8** †Account for the acceptability of the forms without an asterisk and the unacceptability of the forms marked by an asterisk (\*) in each of the following sets:

- (1) (a) He has never spoken to anyone here.  
(b) He hasn't ever spoken to anyone here.  
(c) \*He has ever spoken to anyone here.
- (2) (a) Nobody was able to work out the puzzle.  
(b) There wasn't anybody able to work out the puzzle.  
(c) \*Anybody was able to work out the puzzle.

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# THE SKELETON OF THE MESSAGE

## CHAPTER 2

### Introduction to clause structure

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# SYNTACTIC ELEMENTS AND STRUCTURES OF THE CLAUSE

## UNIT 4

### SUMMARY

- 1 The independent clause (or simple sentence) has two basic constituents: subject and predicate. The Subject (S) encodes the primary participant in the clause.
- 2 The predicate may consist simply of the Predicator (P), realised by a verb, or of a Predicator followed by one or more central constituents. These central elements, the Object (O) and the Complement (C) are, together with the Subject and the Predicator, the major functional categories of the clause.
- 3 More specifically, we distinguish two main types of Object: Direct (Od) and Indirect (Oi) and two main types of Complement (Subject Complement (Cs) and Object Complement (Co). A subsidiary type of Complement is the Prepositional Complement (PC). A further type of Complement is the circumstantial Complement, the most frequent being the Locative/Goal type (C<sub>loc</sub>).
- 4 In addition, the clause may contain a number of Adjuncts (A). These are usually syntactically able to be omitted. Those of the largest class, the circumstantial Adjuncts, are the most integrated in the clause. Somewhat separated from clause structure by a pause or a comma, stance Adjuncts express a speaker's or writer's attitude, while connective Adjuncts link clauses or parts of clauses, and paragraphs.
- 5 Objects and Complements are determined by verb type and are limited in number in any one clause. Adjuncts are not limited in number.
- 6 On the simplest level, the central functional categories of the independent clause are: S, P, O and C, with A usually optional.

## 4.1 SUBJECT, PREDICATOR, OBJECT, COMPLEMENT, ADJUNCT

### 4.1.1 Subject and Predicate

The single independent clause (or simple sentence) is divided into two main parts, **subject** and **predicate**. Semantically and communicatively, the **subject** encodes the main participant (*the plane/Tom*) in the situation represented by the clause and has the highest claim to the status of **topic**. The predicate can consist entirely of the **predicator**, realised by a verbal group, as in **1** below, or the predicator together with one or more other elements, as in **2**:

Subject	Predicator
<b>1</b> The plane	landed
<b>2</b> Tom	disappeared suddenly after the concert

Figure 2.1 Subject (S) and Predicator (P).

It is the predicator that determines the number and type of these other elements. Syntactically, the **Subject (S)** and the **Predicator (P)** are the two main functional categories. For the purpose of analysing and creating discourse it is helpful to see how the predicate is made up, since this tends to be the most informative part of the clause. A first distinction can be made between elements that are essential and elements that are usually optional. This can be seen by comparing **1** and **2**.

The two clause elements in **1**, the Subject (*the plane*) and the Predicator realized by the verb *landed* are essential constituents. In **2** on the other hand, the predicate contains, as well as the predicator (*disappeared*), two elements, *suddenly* and *after the concert*, which are not essential for the completion of the clause. Although they are to a certain extent integrated in the clause, they can be omitted without affecting the acceptability of the clause. Such elements will be called **Adjuncts (A)**.

### 4.1.2 Object and Complement

In other cases the predicate consists of the Predicator followed by one or more central constituents that complete the meaning. The two main functional categories which occur in post-verbal position are the **Object (O)** as in **3** and the **Complement (C)** as in **4**:

S	P	O
<b>3</b> The students	carried	backpacks
<b>4</b> Jo	is	a student
S	P	C

Figure 2.2 Object (O) and Complement (C).

Without these, each of the above clauses would be incomplete both semantically and syntactically: [*\*The students carried*] and [*\*Jo is*], respectively. There are two main types of Object, the **Direct Object (Od)** as in **5**, and the **Indirect Object (Oi)** as in **6**. If there is only one Object, it will be the Direct Object.

S	P	Oi	Od
<b>5</b> All the men	wore		dark suits
<b>6</b> Tom	sent	me	an email

Figure 2.3 Direct Object (Od) and Indirect Object (Oi).

Semantically, the objects encode the key participants in the event other than the subject: *dark suits*, *an email* (Od) and *me* (Oi) in these examples. Note that participants include not only human referents, but inanimate things and abstractions (→ Chapter 5).

Complements encode constituents that, semantically, are not participants but are nevertheless normally required both syntactically and semantically, such as *useful* in **7** and *President* in **8**.

There are two main types of Complement, the **Complement of the Subject (Cs)** (Subject Complement) as in **7a** and **8a**, and the **Complement of the Object (Co)** (Object Complement) (**Co**), as in **7b** and **8b**:

S	P	Cs	S	P	Od	Co
<b>7a</b> That map	was	<i>useful</i>	<b>7b</b> We	found	that map	<i>useful</i>
<b>8a</b> Ken Brown	is	<i>President</i>	<b>8b</b> They	made	Ken Brown	<i>President</i>

Figure 2.4 Complement types.

The Subject Complement and Object Complement do not encode a different kind of participant. Rather, they characterise or identify the Subject or the Object, respectively.

The basic clause structures formed by configurations of these functions are as follows:

S-P    S-P-Od    S-P-Oi-Od    S-P-C    S-P-Od-Co

### 4.1.3 The Adjunct

There are three main classes of Adjunct:

- 1 **Circumstantial Adjuncts**, which provide the setting for the situation expressed in the clause, as regards place, time and manner, among others: The new liner 'Queen Elizabeth 2' sails *tomorrow from Southampton*.
- 2 **Stance Adjuncts**, which express the speaker's attitude to or evaluation of the content of the clause: *Obviously*, he'll rely on you even more now.



- 4 **Connective Adjuncts**, which link two clauses, signalling the semantic relation holding between them: *The hotel was rather noisy. On the other hand, it wasn't expensive* (contrast).

## 4.2 CRITERIA FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF CLAUSE ELEMENTS

The formal criteria adopted for the classification of clausal elements are four: determination by the verb, position, ability to become the subject and the structural realisations of these functions.

### 4.2.1 Determination by the verb

The number and type of objects and complements that can occur in a clause are determined by the verb according to its potential – described in Chapters 3 and 5 as its ‘valency’. We say that a certain verb allows an object or a complement. One sense of *carry* allows an Object that refers to the thing carried (*They carried backpacks*). By contrast, *send* allows two Objects, the thing sent and the recipient (*Send me an email*). *Disappear*, however, does not admit an object (*\*He disappeared the money*). Determination is related to verb class.

**Transitive** verbs usually require one or more objects. They occur in type SPO (*carry*), type S-P-Oi-Od (*send*), and type S-P-O-C (*consider*) in one of its uses.

**Intransitive** verbs such as *disappear* occur in type S-P. They do not admit an object, but certain intransitive verbs predict a complement of space or time, as will be explained shortly. → see Chapter 3. *Land* is transitive in *The pilot landed the plane safely*, but intransitive in *The plane landed*. *Carry* is transitive in *They carried backpacks*, but it has an intransitive use in *His voice carries well* (= ‘projects’).

A **locative element** is required by a few transitive verbs such as *put* and *place* (*Put the scarf in the drawer*; *Place the casserole in the microwave*). Without this locative element, the clause is syntactically and semantically incomplete (*\*Put the scarf*). It therefore has the status of a central clause element. A locative element is also predicted by many intransitive verbs of motion such as *come*, *go*, *fly*, *drive*, which can predict such meanings as Direction (flying *south*) and Goal, which marks an end-point (go to *Rome*). Both types will be represented here as Locative/Goal Complements subsumed under the abbreviation ( $C_{loc}$ ). However, it is also possible to use these verbs without a locative, as in for example *Are you coming? Don't go! I'll drive*. (*Drive* in fact predicts an object or a locative or both, as in *I'll drive you to the station*.)

From these we can see that prediction is less strong than requirement. An expression of manner is required with one sense of *treat* (*they treated the prisoners badly*) and with the intransitive verb *behave* (*she has been behaving strangely lately*). The verb *last* predicts an expression of extent in time (*the concert lasted three hours*); however, sometimes the lack of duration can be inferred as in *Their love didn't last*. When predicted or required by the verb, elements such as place or time are analysed as circumstantial Complements, the equivalent of obligatory adverbials in some grammars. A cognitive-semantic view in terms of Source, Path and Goal, following verbs of motion, is given in Chapters 8 and 12.

**Copular verbs**, a type of intransitive, require a Subject Complement. Only verbs capable of being used as copulas can be used in this way. So, for instance, *be* and *feel* as in *I am cold*, *I feel cold* can be used as copulas in English but *touch* cannot (\**I touch cold*).

Besides predicting an attribute, verbs of being such as *be*, *remain*, *stay* predict being in a location. Their Complements are then analysed as locative ( $C_{loc}$ ).

The following examples illustrate the parallel between attributes as Subject and Object Complements and the Locative/Goal types. Evidently there are many other verbs which function in only one of these patterns:

<b>Attributive</b>	<b>Locative/Goal</b>
He stayed <i>calm</i>	He stayed <i>in bed</i>
She went <i>pale</i>	She went <i>to work</i>
He drives me <i>mad</i>	He drives me <i>to the airport</i>
A bicycle will get you <i>fit</i>	A bicycle will get you <i>to work</i>

By contrast, adjuncts are not determined by any particular type of verb. *Suddenly*, for instance, can be used with intransitive verbs like *disappear* and transitive verbs like *carry*. Moreover, adjuncts differ from subjects and objects in that there is no limit to the number of adjuncts that can be included in a clause.

#### 4.2.2 Position

Objects occur immediately after the verb, with the indirect object before the direct object when both are present (*The bomb killed a policeman* (Od); *He sent me* (Oi) *an email* (Od)). Complements also occur after the verb or after an object. Adjuncts occupy different positions according to type, and are often moveable within the clause.

#### 4.2.3 Ability to become the subject

Objects can normally become the subject in a passive clause, since the system of voice allows different semantic roles to be associated with Subject and Object functions (*The bomb killed the policeman*/ *The policeman was killed by the bomb*; *I sent her an email*/ *She was sent an email*).

However, passivisation with ‘promotion’ to subject is not a watertight criterion for the identification of object functions. It can be too exclusive and too inclusive. Passivisation excludes from object status NGs following verbs such as *fit*, which otherwise fulfil the criteria for objects (6.1.1).

Conversely, passivisation can promote to subject NGs that are not objects. Such is the case in the well-known example *This bed was slept in by Queen Victoria*, derived from the active *Queen Victoria slept in this bed*, in which *this bed* is part of a prepositional phrase (PP) functioning as a locative Complement, not as an object. A prepositional phrase has within it a nominal group, however, which increasingly in present-day English is able to become subject in a corresponding passive clause. Examples of this kind, such as *The flowerbeds have been trampled on* occur when the subject referent is

visibly affected by the action, as is the case of the flowerbeds, or acquires some importance, as in the case of the bed slept in by Queen Victoria.

#### 4.2.4 Realisations of clausal elements

As participants, Objects, like the Subject, are typically realised by NGs and answer questions with *who*, *what* or *which*, as in *What did they carry?* in response to example 3 in 4.1.2.

Complements of the Subject or Object can be realised by adjectives such as *useful* (7a and 7b) or by an NG (*a student*) (8a and 8b).

Circumstantial Adjuncts are realised by PPs (*drive on the left*) or AdvGs (*drive slowly*). They generally answer questions with *where*, *when*, *how*, *why?* as in *Where does he work? How did it happen?*

These are the typical options. We must be aware, however, that with the exception of the Predicator, there is no one-to-one correspondence between class of unit and syntactic function in English. While the Predicator is always realised by a verbal group, the other functions display a considerable range of possible realisations. The versatility of the language is such that almost any group or clause can realise these functions and that each function can be realised by different classes of unit.

In the following pages, the realisations are arranged in order of typicality. The more exact word **prototypical** is sometimes used, for something that shows most of the characteristics of its type, and is therefore a good example of the type or function, and **non-prototypical** for something that is a less good example. For instance, a nominal group is a prototypical realisation of the Subject function, while a prepositional phrase is non-prototypical in subject function.

### 4.3 BASIC SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES OF THE CLAUSE

Clausal elements or functions enter into varied relationships with each other to express different types of proposition concerning different states of affairs. These are exemplified as follows, and are treated further in Chapter 3.

S-P	Tom   disappeared
S-P-Od	We   hired   a car
S-P-Oi-Od	I   have sent   them   an invitation
S-P-Cs	My brother   is   a physiotherapist
S-P-A	He   works   in London
S-P-Od-Co	They   appointed   James   First Secretary
S-P-Od-C <sub>loc</sub>	I   put   the casserole   in the microwave

The following extract illustrates some of the possible configurations of clause elements (where + stands for a coordinating element):

At the hotel | I | paid | the driver | and gave |

A        S    P        Oi        +    P

him | a tip. || The car | was | powdered with dust. ||

Oi   Od        S        P                Cs

I | rubbed | the rod-case | through the dust. ||

S    P                Od                A

It | seemed | the last thing that connected me with

S    P                                Cs

Spain and the fiesta. || The driver | put | the car |

S        P        Od

in gear | and | went | down the street. | I | watched

C<sub>loc</sub>        +        P                C<sub>loc</sub>        S        P

it turn off to take the road to Spain. || I | went |

Od                                S        P

into the hotel | and | they | gave | me || a room. ||

C<sub>loc</sub>                        +        S        P        Oi        Od

It | was | the same room I had slept in when Bill and

S    P                Cs

Cohn and I were in Bayonne. || That | seemed | a very long time ago. |

S        P                        Cs

Ernest Hemingway, *Fiesta* (*The Sun Also Rises*)

Clause elements such as Subject and Predicator are capitalised when first introduced. Later mentions are usually in lower case, with the exception of Complement as a clause element, which is always capitalised, in order to distinguish it from the complement of a noun, adjective or preposition.

### SUMMARY

- 1 The Subject is the syntactic function identified by the features of position, concord, pronominalisation and reflection in question tags. Semantically, almost all participant roles can be associated with the subject. Cognitively, it is that element which has the highest claim to function as Topic in a specific clause in context. Syntactically, it is typically realised by a NG, but can also be realised by a wide variety of groups and clauses.
- 2 The Predicator is the syntactic function that determines the number and type of Objects and Complements in a clause. It is identified syntactically by position and concord. It is associated with a number of semantic domains.

## 5.1. THE SUBJECT (S)

### 5.1.1 Semantic, cognitive and syntactic features

#### *A Semantic and cognitive features*

The Subject is that functional category of the clause of which something is predicated. It represents the primary participant in the clause and has the highest claim to the cognitive status of Topic that is who or what the clausal message is primarily about (→ 28.4).

With voluntary verbs of action, the subject fulfils the role of Agent, the one that initiates or carries out an action. If there is an Agent in the event expressed by such a verb, that element will be the subject.

However, the subject can be associated with almost every other semantic role (→ Chapter 5), such as:

*Jones* kicked the ball into the net. (Agent)

*The ball* was kicked into the net. (Affected in a passive clause)

*Lightning* struck the oak tree. (Force)

*His secretary* has been given too much work. (Recipient in a passive clause.)

## B Syntactic features

The Subject must be present in declarative and interrogative clauses but is not required in the imperative:

Fasten your seat belts! (Normally no subject in imperative clauses.)

- (a) It is that element which is picked up in a **question-tag** (→ 14.8) and referred to anaphorically by a pronoun:

*Your brother is a journalist, isn't he?*

- (b) It is in the subjective case if a **pronoun** is used – *I, he, she, we* and *they* in contrast to the objective forms for Objects: *me, him, her, us* and *them*. *You* and *it* are invariant:

*We* all left early.

- (c) Possessive pronouns and genitive nouns can function as subject:

*Yours* was rather difficult to read.

*Jennifer's* got lost in the post/ mail (BrE vs AmE).

- (d) It is placed **before the finite verb** in declarative clauses, and in *wh*-interrogative clauses where the *wh*- element is subject:

*Susie* is staying with us.

*Who* was the last to leave? (*Who* is subject)

- (e) It is placed **after the finite operator** (the first element of the VG) in *yes/no* interrogative clauses, and in *wh*-interrogative clauses where the *wh*- element is *not* subject (→ 14.1):

*Are you* pleased with the result?

*What film* did you see last night? (*What film* is Object)

*When* is Silvia coming back? (*When* is Adjunct)

- (f) It determines the **concord** of **number** (singular or plural) and **person** (*he/she/it*). Concord is manifested only in those verb forms that show inflectional contrast:

The librarian / *he/she* has checked the book.

The librarians/ *you / we / they* have checked the book.

Where *is my credit card?* Where *are my credit cards?*

- (g) It determines the present and past tense of the verb *be*:

*Our next concert* *is* on Thursday, and *the last one* *was* in April.

- (h) It determines number, person and gender concord with the Complement of the Subject and with reflexive pronouns at Cs, Oi and Od:

*Jean and Bill* are my friends. (Cs)  
*She* cut *herself* (Od) on a piece of broken glass.  
 Why don't *you* give *yourself* (Oi) a treat?

- (i) In discourse, when two or more conjoined clauses have the same subject, all but the first are regularly ellipted:

He came in, sat down and opened his lap-top.

- (j) When the subject is realised by a collective noun, concord depends on how the referent is visualised by the speaker:

The committee *is* sitting late. (sing. seen as a whole. AmE prefers this option)  
 The committee *have* decided to award extra grants. (plur. seen as a number of members. BrE uses either.)

### 5.1.2 Realisations of the Subject

There are two main types of unit that can fulfil Subject function: nominal groups and clauses.

#### *A Nominal Groups – That man is crazy*

Nominal groups are the most typical realisation of subject, as they refer basically to persons and things. They can range from simple heads (→ 45.3.1) to the full complexity of NG structures (50.1):

*Cocaine* can damage the heart as well as the brain.  
*The precise number of heart attacks from using cocaine* is not known.  
*It* is alarming.

*Pronouns* (2.4.3; 45.7.1) account for a high percentage of subjects in the spoken language, as can be seen in the following recorded dialogue:

- B. So *what's* new, Ann?  
 C. Well I don't know if *anything's* terribly new at all really or is it all much the same?  
 B. *You* still living with Deb?  
 C. No, *she* moved out at the end of April.  
 B. Oh.

(Adapted from Jan Svartvik and Randolph Quirk (eds),  
*A Corpus of English Conversation*)

### B Finite and Non-finite clauses (→ 3.6.3)

Clauses can realise every element or function of clause structure except the predicator. Cognitively, this means that we as speakers encode, as the main elements of clauses, not only persons and things but facts, abstractions and situations.

- (a) **Finite clauses:** The main types of embedded finite clause have been outlined in 2.4.1 C and in 3.7.3, 31.3. They are **that-clauses** and **wh-clauses**; the latter include **nominal relative clauses**. These are illustrated below:

**That-clauses** at subject represent an attitude, usually that of the writer.

*That we've gotten to this point* is astonishing to me. (AmE) (*The Guardian*)

*That he failed his driving test* surprised everybody. (*that-clause*)

**Wh- interrogatives** encode indirect questions.

*Why the library was closed for months* was not explained. (*wh-interrogative*)

*What he said* shocked me. (*wh-nominal relative clause*)

They do not take the inversion characteristic of ordinary interrogatives, however:

\**Why was the library closed for months was not explained* is not acceptable.

- (b) **Non-finite clauses** are commonly of the **-ing type** or the **to-inf type**. The latter can be introduced by a *wh*-word. A less commonly used type is the **bare infinitive**:

*To take such a risk* was rather foolish (*to-inf clause*)

*Having to go back for the tickets* was a nuisance. (*-ing clause*)

*Sign the petition* was what we did. (*bare inf clause*)

- (c) **To-infinitive and -ing clause with own subject**

*To-infinitive* and *-ing* clauses at subject can have their own subject; bare inf clauses cannot. A *to-inf* clause with its own subject is introduced by *for*

*For everyone to escape* was impossible. *For* + S + *to-inf*.

*Sam's/ Sam/ His/ Him forgetting the tickets* was unfortunate. S + *ing-cl*.

The **pronominal subject of an -ing clause** may be in the genitive or the objective case, as in the examples above. The objective form is the less formal. With short NGs such as proper names the 's genitive can be used, and is preferred when it is initial in the sentence. Many speakers, however, would prefer to avoid both genitive and objective forms, if another option is available. This could be anticipatory *it* + a *that-clause*:

It was unfortunate that Sam forgot the tickets.



### C Anticipatory *it* + end-placed subject

*That*-clauses at subject tend to sound formal in English and are reserved for formal speech and writing. They are more acceptable if they are preceded by ‘the fact’, which makes them complement to an NG (the fact) functioning as subject. Even so, they can be awkward and rather top-heavy:

*The fact that he failed his driving test surprised everyone.*

A ‘lighter’ alternative, *anticipatory it*, is now generally preferred, particularly in spoken English, both BrE and AmE. It is much easier to handle and the pronoun *it* is the lightest possible subject filler. The *that*-clause or *to*-inf clause are then placed at the end of the sentence. This is known as ‘**extraposition**’ with the *that*-clause as ‘**extraposed subject**’. It also expresses an attitude.

S	P	Od	S
It	surprised	us	that he failed his driving test
S	P	Cs	S
It	was	impossible	for everyone to escape

Figure 2.5 Anticipatory ‘it’ as stand-in for displaced Subject.

In this way, a long and heavy subject is placed at the end, in accordance with the informational and stylistic principle of ‘end-weight’ (→ 30.3.2).

For clauses such as ‘It is (high) time (that) he stopped fooling around’ (→ 30.5). Though apparently extraposed, there is no corresponding pattern with the clause in initial position (\*That he stopped fooling around is high time.) Extraposition is then said to be obligatory.

Likewise, the clause following *it* + the verbs *seem*, *appear*, *happen*, *turn out* is obligatorily extraposed:

It turns out you were right after all. (\* That you were right after all turns out)  
It seems the driver lost control. (\*That the driver lost control seems)

### D Minor realisations: dummy *it*; unstressed *there*

#### D1 Dummy *it* – *It’s hot*

This is a non-referential or semantically empty use of *it*, which occurs in expressions of time, weather etc.

*It’s* nearly three o’clock. *It’s* raining. *It’s* a long way from here to London.

Syntactically, English requires the presence of a subject even in such situations, in order to distinguish grammatically between declaratives and interrogatives. Is it raining? How far is it from here to London?

### D2 Unstressed *there* – *There's plenty of time*

Unstressed *there* (→ 25.3, 30.4) fulfils several of the syntactic criteria for subject: position, inversion with auxiliaries and repetition in tag phrases; but unlike normal subjects, it cannot be replaced by a pronoun. Concord, when made, is with the following NG:

There was only one letter delivered today, wasn't there?  
There were only two letters delivered yesterday, weren't there?

Concord is made in writing, but not always in informal spoken English with the present tense of *be*, and is never made when the NG is a series of proper names:

How many are coming? Well, there's Andrew and Silvia, and Jo and Pete.  
\*There are Andrew and Silvia, and Jo and Pete.

Because of the lack of concord and pronominalisation, unstressed *there* can be considered as a subject 'place-holder' or 'syntactic filler', rather than a full subject, since the unit following is clearly the notional subject. For its function as a presentative device (→ 30.4).

### D3 Adjectival NG head.

The AdjG as such does not function as subject. However, certain adjectives, preceded by the definite article to denote (a) human characteristics or condition such as *the brave and the beautiful, the fast and the furious, the poor, the rich, the good, the bad, the handicapped, the wounded, the computer-savvy, the I-Pad fixated* or (b) abstractions such as *the impossible, the supernatural* are quite common:

The handicapped are given special facilities in public places.  
The novel plunges the reader into a universe in which *the comic, the tragic, the real* and *the imagined* dissolve into one another.

## 5.2 THE PREDICATOR (P)

The Predicate is the clause element present in all major types of clause, including the imperative (in which the subject is not usually present in English).

The predicate is the clause function that largely determines the remaining structure of the clause, by virtue of being intransitive, transitive or copular.

As seen in 4.1, the predicate may constitute the whole of the predicate, as in *The plane landed*, or part of it, as in *The plane landed on the runway*. It:

- is identified by position in relation to the subject.
- is realised by finite lexical (e.g. *waits*), primary (*was*) and non-finite (*waiting*) verbs.
- Finiteness is often carried by an auxiliary verb – such as *is, was* – to specify tense (past/present) and voice (*be* + *-en*), and is then followed by the predicate (*is making, was made*). For the Finite–Subject relation in interrogative structures → Chapter 5.

Semantically, the predicator encodes the following main types of ‘process’:

- material processes of ‘doing’ with verbs such as *make*, *catch*, *go*;
- mental processes of ‘experiencing’, with cognitive verbs of perception (e.g. *see*), cognition (*know*), affectivity (*like*) and desideration (*hope*);
- relational processes of ‘being’ with verbs such as *be* and *belong*.

These, and certain subsidiary types, are discussed in Chapter 4. The following text illustrates realisations of the Predicator:

It [the Valley of the Kings] lies about six hundred kilometres south of Cairo, the present-day capital of Egypt, near the Nile.<sup>1</sup> Across the river is the city of Luxor,<sup>2</sup> once called Thebes and one of the greatest capitals of the ancient world.<sup>3</sup> This dusty, dried-up river valley is the most magnificent burial ground in the world.<sup>4</sup> During the second millennium B.C., Egyptian workers quarried a series of tombs beneath this valley,<sup>5</sup> decorating them with mysterious predictions of the underworld<sup>6</sup> and filling them with treasures.<sup>7</sup> There, with infinite care and artistry, they laid out the mummified and bejewelled bodies of their rulers<sup>8</sup> and surrounded them with their belongings,<sup>9</sup> making the valley one of the greatest sacred sites in history.<sup>10</sup>

(Gerald O’Farrell, *The Tutankhamun Deception*)

# DIRECT, INDIRECT AND PREPOSITIONAL OBJECTS

## UNIT 6

### SUMMARY

- 1 The Direct Object (Od) and Indirect Object (Oi) are central syntactic functions which encode participants in transitive clauses, and are identified by the following features:
- 2 *Position*. In clauses with one Object, The Direct Object follows the verb (She wanted to borrow *a video*). When there are two Objects, the Direct Object follows the Indirect Object (So I lent *her* (Oi) *one* (Od)).
- 3 *Paraphrase*. The Oi and Od usually have alternative prepositional paraphrases, with the status of a Prepositional Complement.
- 4 *Pronominalisation*. Since objects encode participants, they are realised by objective case pronouns (*me, him, her, us, them*).
- 5 *'Promotion' to subject in a passive clause*. Both direct and indirect objects usually have the potential of being subject in a corresponding passive clause (He sent *them* a fax. *The fax* (S) was sent. *They* (S) were sent a fax).
- 6 *Semantic roles*. The indirect object is associated with the Recipient and Beneficiary roles, the direct object with the Affected, among others.
- 7 *Realisations*. Both Objects are realised typically by Nominal Groups expressing entities; less typically by other classes of unit.

## 6.1 THE DIRECT OBJECT (Od)

### 6.1.1 Syntactic and semantic features

After the subject and the predicator, the direct object is the most central of all clause constituents. It is characterised by the following features:

- 1 It occurs only in transitive clauses with transitive verbs such as *hit, buy, send*. It is placed immediately after the predicator, as in (a), but follows an indirect object, if there is one as in (b):

- (a) I have sent *the invitations* (Od).  
 (b) I have sent *everyone* (Oi) *an invitation* (Od).

- 2 It is typically realised by a NG, as in (a) but may also be realised by clauses, as in (b):

- (a) I saw *the burglar* (NG)  
 (b) I saw *what he did* (nominal cl.)

- 3 It can generally be 'promoted' to become subject in a corresponding passive clause:

*The invitations* (S) have been sent. (corresponding to the Od in *I have sent the invitations*)

- 4 Direct objects can be tested for by questions beginning with *Who(m)? What? Which?: How much/ many?* and by *wh*-clefts.

What did you send?  
 What I sent were the invitations (*wh*-cleft)

- 5 Semantically, a prototypical direct object occurs in a high-transitivity situation (→ 21.4) – that is, in a process of 'doing' in which the referent's state or location is affected in some way, as in the first example below.  
 6 However the Od is associated with a wide variety of semantic roles in which 'affectedness' is not a feature, and with many types of verbs (→ Chapter 5), some of which are illustrated in the following examples:

He headed *the ball* into the net. (Affected)  
 The burglars used *an acetylene lamp* to break open the safe. (Instrument)  
 I felt *a sudden pain in my arm*. (Phenomenon: i.e. that which is experienced)  
 He gave the door *a push*. (Range: i.e. the nominalised extension of the verb; → 20.2)  
 He swam *the Channel*. (Affected locative)

- 7 The highly non-prototypical Range Ods (26.2) include *have a rest/smoke/drink; take a sip/nap, give a kick/nudge, do a dance*, and many others. The NG in these cases is a deverbal noun (i.e. derived from a verb) which follows a verb that is 'light' in semantic content such as *have*. Such combinations are very common.

*The Channel* in *swim the Channel* is a direct object, whereas in *swim across the Channel* it is the NG complement of a prepositional phrase functioning as Adjunct. The difference is that the Od version is more integrated within the clause, and perhaps for this reason appears to present the event as more of an achievement. The same difference is present in *climb Everest* and *ride a horse* vs *climb up Everest* and

*ride on a horse*, respectively. The achievement is clearly completed in the former case, but leaves open the possibility of incompleteness in the latter.

### 6.1.2 Realisations of the Direct Object

The Direct Object can be realised by groups and by clauses. There are five main possibilities:

#### A. Nominal Group – *We hired a caravan*

The typical realisation of the Direct Object function is the nominal group, ranging from a pronoun **1** or proper name to full NGs **2**. As new entities are often introduced into the discourse in object position, the principle of end-weight (30.3.2) can make for the frequent occurrence of longer and more complex NGs at Direct Object in certain registers as in **3**:

- 1** I don't understand *it*.
- 2** Have you read *that new novel I lent you?*
- 3** Forest fires are threatening *the world's remaining population of orang-utangs*.

A small number of common verbs take **non-typical direct objects**. They include verbs such as *have* (They have *two cars*), *cost* (it cost *ten pounds*), *lack* (She lacks *confidence*), *resemble* (She resembles *her elder sister*), *fit* (Do these shoes fit *you?*), *suit* (That colour doesn't suit *me*), *weigh* (The suitcase weighs *twenty kilos*), *contain* (That box contains *explosives*) and *measure* (It measures *two metres by three*.) All these answer questions with *What? Who? How much/how many?*, as is usual with Ods. These verbs don't passivise, but their Ods pass the *wh-cleft* test: *What she lacks is confidence*.

#### B. Anticipatory *it* – *I find it strange that she left*

The semantically empty pronoun *it* is necessary as an 'anticipatory Direct Object' in SPOdCo structures in which the Od is realised by a finite or non-finite clause:

S	P	(Od)	Co	Od
You	must think	<i>It</i>	strange	<i>that he refuses to come.</i>
She	might consider	<i>it</i>	insulting	<i>for you to leave now.</i>
He	finds	<i>it</i>	flattering	<i>having so many fans.</i>

Figure 2.6 Anticipatory '*it*' as Object + clause as Object.

#### C. Finite clause – *You know (that) I'm right*

The two types of finite clause found at subject can also function as a less typical Direct Object: nominal *that*-clauses, *that* often being omitted in informal styles, and *wh*-clauses (→ Chapter 3).

They fear *that there may be no survivors*. (nominal *that*-clause)

No-one knows *where he lives*. (*wh*-clause)

You can eat *whatever you like*. (*wh*-nominal clause)

Both *that*-clauses and *wh*-clauses at Od can sometimes become subject in a passive clause and then extraposed:

It is feared *that there may be no survivors*. (extraposed *that*-cl.)

It is not known *where he lives*.

However, passivisation is not a unique criterion for assigning object status. A more reliable test is the *wh*-cleft paraphrase, as in 6.1.1. We can apply this to the following example with *wonder*, which rejects passivisation but fulfils the *wh*-cleft test:

I wonder *whether they know the truth*.

\*Whether they know the truth is wondered.

*What I wonder* is whether they know the truth.

#### D. Non-finite clause – *They enjoy travelling by train*

Non-finite clauses realising Direct Object function are of two types: infinitive clauses with or without *to*, and *-ing* clauses.

Many Londoners prefer *to travel by train*.

Many Londoners prefer *travelling by train*.

We analyse such clauses as embedded at Od on the strength of the following criteria:

The non-finite clause can be replaced by a NG (*prefer the train*) or by *it/that* (*prefer it/that*).

The non-finite clause can be made the focus of a *wh*-cleft sentence (*What many Londoners prefer is to travel/travelling by train*).

However, not all non-finites pass these tests. We do not analyse as embedded clauses chain-like structures (**catenatives**) as in *He failed to appear, I tried to speak* (→ 39.2). Although superficially similar, they do not fulfil the above criteria. Taking *He failed to appear*, we can't say \**He failed it*, nor make a corresponding cleft \**What he failed was to appear*. As a full lexical verb, as in *fail the exam*, *fail* does of course fulfil these criteria.

Many embedded clauses at direct object, as with subject → 5.1.2B c, occur with an **explicit subject** of their own; otherwise, the implicit subject is the same as that of the main clause:

##### (a) *to*-infinitive clause –

The villagers want *to leave immediately*. (implicit subject [*they*])

The villagers want *the soldiers/them to leave immediately*. (explicit subject *the soldiers*)

(b) *-ing* clause subject – (with genitive or objective case)

Do you mind *waiting a few minutes?* (with implicit subject)

Do you mind *my/me waiting a few minutes?* (with explicit subject in objective or possessive case) → 5.1.2 B c

(c) *to*-infinitive or *-ing* clause –

He hates *telling lies.* (implicit subject)

He hates *people telling lies.* (explicit subject)

He hates *for people to tell lies.* (*for* + explicit subject + *to*-inf) (AmE)

Again, non-finite clauses are very non-prototypical direct objects. They represent situations, not entities, and do not easily passivise. However, many can become the focus in a *wh*-cleft: What he hates is *people telling lies/for people to tell lies.*

E. Prepositional Phrase – *The boss prefers before 10 for the meeting*

Prepositional phrases of time or place can marginally realise direct object and subject:

*Just before breakfast* is not a good time.

## 6.2 THE INDIRECT OBJECT (Oi)

### 6.2.1 Syntactic and semantic features

The indirect object occurs only with verbs which can take two objects such as *give*, *send*. Its position in clause structure is between the verb and the direct object: I sent *them* a fax. It:

- is typically realised by a NG, but occasionally by a *wh*-nominal clause. As a pronoun, it is in the objective case.
- is associated with two semantic roles, Recipient (the one who receives the goods or information), and the Beneficiary or ‘intended recipient’. The differences between the two are reflected in the syntax.

Recipient <i>Oi</i>	Beneficiary <i>Oi</i>
She has lent <i>me</i> a few CDs.	I’ll buy <i>you</i> a drink.
The doctor gave <i>the injured man</i> oxygen.	He got <i>us</i> the tickets.
Sammy Karanja is teaching <i>the students</i> maths.	She left <i>him</i> a note.

Figure 2.7 Recipient as Indirect Object and Beneficiary as Indirect Object.



In passive counterparts the Recipient **Oi** corresponds to the subject. By contrast, most Beneficiary Objects do not easily become subject in a passive clause, although this restriction is not absolute, at least for some speakers:

<i>Recipient as Subject in passive clause</i>	<i>Beneficiary as Subject</i>
<i>I have been lent a few CDs.</i>	* <i>You'll be bought a drink.</i>
<i>The injured man was given oxygen.</i>	* <i>We were got the tickets.</i>
<i>The students are being taught maths by Sammy Karanja.</i>	<i>He was left a note.</i>

Figure 2.8 Recipient as Subject and Beneficiary as Subject.

- Both Recipient and Beneficiary **Oi** have an optional prepositional paraphrase, which functions as a PC or PO ( $\rightarrow$  6.3). For the Recipient, the preposition is *to*, for the Beneficiary it is *for*. The prepositional form is often used to bring the **Oi** into focus, particularly when it is longer than the **Od**:

The doctor gave oxygen *to the injured man*.      I'll buy drinks *for you all*.  
 She lent a few CDs *to her next-door neighbour*.      He got the tickets *for us all*.  
 He is teaching maths *to the first-year students*.      She left a note *for her husband*.

- The **Oi** can generally be left unexpressed without affecting the grammaticality of the clause:

The doctor gave oxygen.      I'll buy the drinks.  
 He doesn't like lending his CDs.      He got the tickets.  
 Sammy Karanja is teaching maths.      She left a note.

- With some verbs (*show, tell, teach*, etc.) the **Od** may be unexpressed:

Who told *you* (the answer)?  
 Perhaps you could show *me* (how to do it).  
 He's teaching *immigrant children* (maths).

## 6.2.2 Realisations of the Indirect Object

Both Recipient and Beneficiary Indirect Objects are typically realised by NGs, and less typically by *wh*-nominal relative clauses, which occur more usually as a prepositional alternative:

The clerk handed *him* the envelope. (Recip./NG)  
 You can lend the dictionary *to whoever needs it*. (Recip./PC)  
 Phil has booked tickets *for all his friends*. (Ben/PC)

### 6.3 PREPOSITIONAL VERBS AND THE PREPOSITIONAL COMPLEMENT (PC) or OBJECT(PO)

Many common verbs in English take a specific preposition. They are called prepositional verbs. The preposition + the following NG are often analysed as the Prepositional Complement (PC). Alternatively, the verb and preposition are seen as a whole and the following NG as the Object mediated by a preposition (PO). Examples are:

I looked after their cat.  
You can rely on Jane in an emergency.

These examples have in common the following characteristics:

- The NG following the preposition encodes a participant which may function in the clause structure.
- The preposition is associated with a particular verb, often called a prepositional verb. Idiomatic prepositional verbs have separate lexical entries in dictionaries.
- Without the preposition, the clause would either be ungrammatical (\*look their cat, \*count Jane) or, in some cases, have a different meaning altogether, as in *see to the baggage* (attend to it) as opposed to *see the baggage*.
- The preposition can't be replaced by another preposition without changing the meaning (*look after the cat*, *look for the cat*, *look at the cat*).

#### 6.3.1 Types of verb + preposition combinations

There are three main types of prepositional verb, as illustrated by the previous examples.

##### *Type A (look + after)*

This combination functions as an idiomatic semantic unit in which the verb + the preposition together have a different meaning from their separate words. 'Look after' has nothing to do with looking, nor with the usual meaning of 'after' in relation to space or time. Other verbs of this type are exemplified here:

I <i>came across</i> some old photos (find)	She <i>takes after</i> her mother (resemble)
How did you <i>come by</i> that job (obtain)	I <i>ran into</i> an old friend (met by chance).
Sandy has <i>come into</i> a fortune (inherit)	We can't <i>do without</i> water (must have)

##### *Type B (rely + on)*

This is a less idiomatic combination whose meaning is sometimes, though not always, transparent. Verbs in this group – *account for* (explain), *refer to*, *tamper with* (interfere with), *deal with* – are not used without their specific preposition:

How do you *account for* the lack of interest in the European elections?  
Someone has been *tampering with* the scanner.

### Type C (apply + for, approve+ of)

The verb + preposition represents a special use, usually with a distinctive meaning, of a verb which otherwise can function without the preposition (for example, *keep to the plan*). Other verbs include *look (at)*, *believe (in)*, *count (on)*, *hear (of)*, *wait (for)*, *hope (for)*, *arrange (for)*, *swear (by)*:

look at the sky	glance at the clock
laugh at the joke	bank on winning the race
wait for the bus	hope for a rise in salary

### 6.3.2 Stranding the preposition

When the preposition stays close to the verb as in ‘the food they can’t *do without*’ we say that it is stranded, that is, displaced from its position in a PC. The verb and the preposition stay together, with the stress usually on the verb. Stranding of prepositions occurs in several constructions, one of which is the relative clause.

Relative clauses have two alternatives, one in which the preposition is fronted to the position before its complement, as in 2a and 2b; the other is stranded, that is, separated from its complement *which*, as in 3a and 3b in the examples below:

1a We listened to some music.	1b I looked after their cat.
2a The music [to which we listened ]	2b *The cat [after which I looked]
3a The music [which we listened to]	3b The cat [which I looked after]

Comparing the behaviour of *listen +to* with that of *look+after*, we can see that *listen +to* admits both fronting, as in 2a and stranding, as in 3a. By contrast, *look + after* admits only stranding, as in 3b. The fronted type, as in 2b, is ungrammatical.

Many prepositional verbs, in particular those of Types 2 and 3, admit both the fronted and the stranded variants. A considerable number of idiomatic prepositional verbs, however, admit only stranding. Type 1 verbs, the most idiomatic, are of this kind.

Verbs of both types are illustrated in the following block:

Non-stranded and stranded	Stranded only
The transport on which they rely The transport they rely on	The matter I looked into *The matter into which I looked
The friends for whom we care The friends we care for	The house they broke into *The house into which they broke

Although, grammatically, stranding is the marked form, it has become the normal, unmarked form used in conversation. The non-stranded form, when it occurs, is reserved for formal contexts and genres such as academic prose. But even in highly formal situations, the stranded form is usually preferred in the spoken language, both BrE and AmE, as the following quotation illustrates. The speaker is the then US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, addressing the United Nations Council in February 2003:

What we need is not more inspections. What we need is not more immediate access. What we need is immediate full unconditional cooperation by Iraq. To this day we have not seen the level of cooperation that was expected, *looked for*, *hoped for*.

### 6.3.3 The prepositional passive

The previous quotation also illustrates stranding in the prepositional passive (was looked for, hoped for). In many combinations, although not in all, the NG complement of a PP can become subject in a passive clause. The preposition is obligatorily stranded:

My cat was looked after	*After my cat was looked
Jane can be relied on	*On Jane can be relied

### 6.3.4 Realisations of the Prepositional Object

Experientially, the unit following the preposition is in many cases seen as a participant in the situation, for reasons of affectiveness among others previously discussed. In such cases idiomatic combination such as *run over* are interpreted as transitive and the following NG as an Object mediated by a preposition (PO), as in 1.

- 1 He ran over *a rabbit* on a country road last night. (NG)
- 2 I strongly object to *what you are insinuating*. (nominal clause)
- 3 He believes in *getting things done quickly*. (-ing cl.)
- 4 She certainly likes being *waited on*, doesn't she?

Passivisation and *what/who?* questions are usually reliable probes for Objects:

*What (animal) was run over?*

NGs are the typical realisations of the PO, but nominal clauses and non-finite *-ing* clauses also occur, and can be probed likewise:

*What I strongly object to is what you are insinuating.*  
*What he believes in is getting things done quickly.*

Conversely, fronting the whole prepositional phrase is not acceptable in 1:

\*Over what did he run?

It is possible though somewhat stilted in 2 and 3:

*To what do you object?*  
*In what does he believe?*

By contrast, 4, meaning 'serve', is easily passivised and is in current use.

Some *wh*- questions admit only the discontinuous structure (stranding):

What's the weather like?	[*Like what is the weather?]
What have you come for?	[*For what have you come?]

Short questions in response to statements are very common in English:

We are leaving tomorrow.	Where <i>from</i> ?
I have to speak to your headmaster?	What <i>about</i> ?

Certain PPs which constitute fixed phrases are very rarely discontinuous:

To what extent do they disagree?	[*What extent do they disagree to? ]
In which respect do you think I am wrong?	[*Which respect do you think I am wrong in?]

- Two-word or three-word prepositions can be discontinuous, though perhaps less often than simple prepositions:

His death was due to natural causes.	What was his death due to?
There are certain regulations which are in conflict with these proposals	There are certain regulations which these proposals are in conflict with.

It is clear that verbs which control prepositions do not constitute a homogeneous class. There are various degrees of integration, ranging from the relatively loosely integrated such as *smile (at)* and *wait (for)*, where the verb can function without a preposition, to those which bond with the preposition to form a new lexical unit (*look after*, *take to*). The latter are given separate entries in dictionaries and, in those dictionaries which provide grammatical information, are given different analyses. The PP following Type 3 verbs such as *smile* and *wait* is often classified as Prepositional Complement (PC). Cognitive factors of attention and salience intervene to allow some of the NGs in circumstantial PPs to become subjects, as in *this house hasn't been lived in*.

According to use in context, one analysis may be more suitable than another.

## 6.4 PHRASAL VERBS: THE VERB + PARTICLE COMBINATION

Phrasal verbs consist of a lexical verb + an adverbial 'particle' (p). They can be intransitive (without an Object: *get up*) or transitive (taking a Direct Object: *switch it off*).

Phrasal prepositional verbs consist of a lexical verb + a particle + a preposition (*put up with*). They function like idiomatic prepositional verbs.

### 6.4.1 Syntactic features

Phrasal verbs are combinations of a lexical verb and an adverbial particle (**p**) (*get up*, *switch on/off*, *take back*, *sit down*). They may be intransitive, with no object, as in **1** or transitive (with a direct object) as in **2** and **3**:

- 1 What time do you usually *get up* in the morning?  
 2a She *switched off* the light. 2b She *switched* the light *off*.  
 3 She *switched it off*.

With a noun as Object, the particle in most cases may either precede or follow the object as in **2**. But if the Object is a pronoun, the particle is placed after it, as in **3**.

The motivation for this choice has to do with the distribution of information. We focus on the new information by placing it last. So in **2a** the new information is the light; while in **2b** and **3** it is the switching off (see Chapter 6). Pronouns do not usually represent new information and are placed before the particle.

This choice of emphasising either the noun or the particle is not possible with a synonymous one-word verb. Compare:

- They *cancelled* the wedding. (focus on *wedding*)  
 They *called off* the wedding. (focus on *wedding*)  
 They *called* the wedding *off*. (focus on *off*)

Some verb + particle combinations can be used both transitively and intransitively, e.g. *blow up* (= explode), *break down* (= reduce to pieces). In some cases the transitive and intransitive clauses form an ergative pair (→ 15.1) with a causative meaning in the transitive:

- Terrorists have *blown up* the power station. (transitive)  
 The power station has *blown up*. (intransitive)

while in others the meaning is related by metaphorical extension:

- They *broke down* the door to rescue the child. (transitive)  
 Her health *broke down* under the strain. (intransitive)  
 The car has *broken down*. (= stop working) (intransitive)

#### 6.4.2 Differences between phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs

We explain here differences of position, stress and adverb insertion in the clause, illustrating them with the phrasal verb *break up* and the prepositional verb *break with*, as in *He broke up the party* (phrasal verb) and *He broke with his girl-friend* (prepositional verb).

A pronoun follows a preposition but precedes the particle of a phrasal verb (as elsewhere, the asterisk indicates an ungrammatical sequence):

- He broke with *her*. He broke *it up*.  
 \*He broke *her* with. \*He broke *up* *it*.

The particle in phrasal verbs is stressed, especially when in final position in the clause, whereas a preposition is normally unstressed. In prepositional verbs the stress normally falls on the verb (→ 29.2) (capitals indicate the stressed syllable):

- He broke *it UP*. He has BROken with *her*.  
 Which party did he break *UP*? Which girl has he BROken with?

As seen in 6.3.2. Type B, an adverb can sometimes be placed between a verb and its following preposition. Phrasal verbs do not normally admit an adverb between the verb and the particle:

\*He broke *completely up* the party. He broke *completely* with his girl-friend.

In idiomatic phrasal verbs the particle is usually analysed as part of the verb (*peter out*. There is no separate verb '*peter*') In 'free' combinations in which the adverb particle is directional, this is analysed as Complement, as in *The rain came down*.

The adverbial particle can be fronted (*Down came the rain*) for rhetorical purposes, and this mobility is a feature of Complements and Adjuncts. With non-directional meanings, the adverbial particle is inseparable from the verb, and can't be fronted (*The car broke down*, \**Down broke the car*).

The semantics of phrasal verbs is described in Chapter 8.

### 6.4.3 Phrasal-prepositional verbs

Phrasal-prepositional verbs consist of a lexical verb followed by an adverbial particle and a preposition, in that order: *run up against*, *do away with*. They are particularly characteristic of informal English, and new combinations are constantly being coined. Phrasal-prepositional verbs function like prepositional verbs, taking a prepositional object or a PC in the clause:

We *ran up against* difficulties. (= encounter)

They have *done away with* free school meals. (= abolish)

Finally, it is important to realise that many verbs, whether single- or multi-word, can be followed by a PP functioning as a circumstantial Locative/Goal Complement in the clause, as in *They went into the garden*. They express meanings of place, direction, time or means. They are generally questioned by *Where*, *when* or *how* (*Where did they go (to)? How did you come?*) as opposed to *What? Who?* as is usual with Objects.

Multi-word verb	Prepositional Object	PP as Adjunct or Comp.	
I'll call on	Dr. Jones	I'll call	on Friday
They looked into	the matter	They looked	into the cave
She came by	a fortune	She came	by bus
He stood up for	his brother	I'll stand up	for the old woman
We put up with	the noise	We put up	at a hotel
They played on	our sympathy	They played	on their home ground

Figure 2.9.1 Multi-word verb and Object.

Figure 2.9.2 Verb and PP as Adjunct or Comp.

Furthermore, there is a parallel between intransitive phrasals like *walk down* and single verbs of movement followed by a directional Complement (*walk down the stairs*). In many cases, it is possible to analyse the former as the ellipted version of the latter, especially when the situation is known.

These alternatives also allow us to specify direction as Path + Ground or as Path alone. (These notions are explained in Unit 40.) Compare:

He	walked	down the stairs.	He	walked	down.
S	P	C (Path + Ground)	S	P	C (Path)



# SUBJECT AND OBJECT COMPLEMENTS

## UNIT 7

### SUMMARY

- 1 There are two main types of Complement: that which complements the Subject (Cs) and that which complements the Object (Co). The Subject Complement completes the predicate after a copular verb by specifying an Attribute of the Subject or its identity. No passivisation is possible. The Subject Complement can be realised by AdjGs, by definite and indefinite NGs, and by clauses.
- 2 The Object Complement (Co) completes the predicate with an AdjG or a NG following a direct object. The Direct Object, but not the Complement, can become subject in a passive clause. The Co is realised by AdjGs, definite and indefinite NGs and clauses.
- 3 When the Cs is a pronoun, use is divided between the subjective and the objective case. The Co pronoun is always objective.

### 7.1 THE COMPLEMENT OF THE SUBJECT (Cs)

#### 7.1.1 Syntactic and semantic features

The Subject Complement is the obligatory constituent which follows a copular verb and which cannot be made subject in a passive clause:

Who's there? *It's me/It's I.*

She became *a tennis champion* at a very early age.

Feel *free to ask questions!*

The Subject Complement does not represent a new participant, as an Object does, but completes the predicate by adding information about the subject referent. For this reason the Subject Complement differs from the Object in that it can be realised not only by a nominal group but also by an adjectival group (AdjG), as illustrated in the previous examples.

The objective case (*me*) is now in general use (*It's me*) except in the most formal registers, in which the subjective form (*it's I*) or (*I am he/she*) are heard, especially in AmE.

As well as *be* and *seem*, a wide range of verbs can be used to link the subject to its Complement; these add meanings of transition (*become, get, go, grow, turn*) and of perception (*sound, smell, look*) among others, and are discussed in Units 12 and 17.

The constituent following such verbs will be considered Subject Complement if the verb can be replaced by *be* and can't stand alone, without a change of meaning:

I know it <i>sounds stupid</i> , but . . .	(= <i>is stupid</i> )	cf. *I know it <i>sounds</i> .
That <i>looks nice</i> .	(= <i>is nice</i> )	cf. *That <i>looks</i> .

More problematic is the constituent following other verbs that could be used intransitively with the same meaning, as in:

Saint Etheldreda was born *a Saxon princess*. (she was born)  
 He returned *a broken man*. (he returned)  
 He died *young*. (he died)

We shall consider such constituents as Complements on the strength of the possible paraphrase containing *be* (*When he returned he was a broken man; When he died he was young*).

There is, typically, number agreement between the subject and its Complement, and gender agreement with a reflexive pronoun at complement, as in Janet isn't *herself today*. There are, however, several common exceptions to number agreement:

Joan and Lionel make *a good couple*.  
 My neighbour's cats are *a nuisance/a joy*.  
 Are these socks wool? No, they're *cotton*.  
 The twins are *the same height*.

Complements of the type *a good couple* in *Joan and Lionel make a good couple* are explicable on semantic grounds, *couple* being inherently plural in meaning. Semantic criteria may also be invoked to explain the use of *a nuisance/a joy* in *My neighbour's cats are a nuisance/a joy*, since abstractions such as these are equally applicable to singular or plural subjects.

A third type, exemplified by expressions such as *wool, cotton, rather an odd colour, the same height/length/shape*, etc., can all be paraphrased by a PP with *of* (*of wool, of rather an odd colour, of the same height*, etc.), which formerly had greater currency. They all express qualities of the subject, and in present-day English the NG form without a preposition is the more common.

Copular verbs predict meanings of being something, describing or identifying the subject referent. The identifying type is typically reversible, the attributive is not:

The concert was <i>marvellous</i> . (attributive)	*Marvellous was the concert.
The concert was <i>a great success</i> . (attributive)	*A great success was the concert.
The orchestra was <i>the London Philharmonic</i> . (identifying)	(The London Philharmonic was the orchestra.)

When *be* is followed by an expression of location in space or time (*in the garden, at 10 o'clock*), this Complement is analysed as locative (→ 4.2.1; 9.2). Sometimes a circumstantial expression (e.g. *out of work*) is semantically equivalent to an attributive one (e.g. *unemployed*).

### 7.1.2 Realisations of the Subject Complement

Attributive subject complements are realised by AdjGs and NGs. Identifying Subject Complements can be realised by NGs and by clauses.

#### (a) Attributive Complements (S-P-Cs) – *She was ambitious*

AdjG	She is <i>twenty-two years old</i> .
NG	Sam is <i>a very lucky man</i> .
As + NG	His research was recognised <i>as a great contribution to science</i> .
	The Rolling Stones' concert was acclaimed <i>as the event of the season</i> .

#### (b) Identifying Complements (S-P-Cs) – *Her name was Bettina*

NG	Sierra Leone is <i>one of the world's biggest producers of diamonds</i> .
Fin. <i>that</i> -cl.	Ken's belief is that <i>things can't get any worse</i> .
Nominal relative cl.	He has become <i>what he always wanted to be</i> .
Non-fin. bare inf.cl.	The only thing I did was <i>tell him to go away</i> .
Non-fin. <i>to</i> -inf. -S	My advice is <i>to withdraw</i> .
+ <i>for</i> + S	The best plan is <i>for you to go by train</i> .
Non-fin. <i>-ing</i> cl -S	What I don't enjoy is <i>standing in queues</i> .
+S	What most people prefer is <i>others doing/for others to do the work</i> .

Note that NGs and AdjGs can occur as attributive or identifying Subject Complements, in passive clauses derived from S-P-Od-Co structures:

You are regarded <i>as a friend of the family</i> .	(We regard you <i>as a friend of the family</i> )
The gates were left <i>open</i> all night.	(Someone left the gates <i>open</i> all night)

Some realisations of Subject Complement are illustrated in the following passage:

**Cyclists are not only healthy<sup>1</sup> – they are smart.<sup>2</sup> Bike riding is one of the most efficient ways of getting about.<sup>3</sup> When comparing the energy expended with speed and distance covered, even the rustiest two-wheeler outstrips the hummingbird, the cheetah and the jumbo jet.**

**There are an estimated 14 million bikes in Britain – with 5 million of them gathering dust in garages. A pity, because bicycles are so versatile as transport or for simple pleasure.<sup>4</sup>**

**While getting you to work,<sup>5</sup> a bicycle also gets you fit.<sup>6</sup> For every half an hour's pedalling, a 150lb person burns up 300 calories. The heart and back leg muscles are strengthened – all while sitting down. Because the bodyweight is supported, cycling is effective exercise.<sup>7</sup>**

## 7.2 THE COMPLEMENT OF THE OBJECT (Co)

### 7.2.1 Syntactic and semantic features

The Object Complement is the constituent that completes the predicate when certain verbs such as *find*, *make* and *appoint* lead us to specify some characteristic of the Direct Object. The Co is normally placed immediately after the direct object:

You (S) are making (P) me (Od) *angry* (Co).

There is typically number agreement between the Direct Object and the nominal group realising the Object Complement, as in: *Circumstances* (S) *have made* (P) *the brothers* (Od) *enemies* (Co). But there are occasional exceptions – expressions of size, shape, colour, height, etc. – which are to be explained in the same way as those seen in 7.1.1:

You haven't made the sleeves *the same length*.

The Object Complement can characterise the direct object by a qualitative attribute or by a substantive attribute expressing the name or status of the object referent.

Police found the suspects *unwilling to cooperate*. (qualitative)

They have elected Ken *captain of the golf club*. (substantive)

The burglars left the house *in a mess*. (circumstantial)

Sometimes a Co realised by a prepositional phrase (The burglars left the house *in a mess*) is similar in meaning to an adjectival complement (The burglars left the house *untidy*). We can distinguish its status as Complement from the superficially similar realisation by an optional Adjunct (*in five minutes* in *The burglars left the house in five minutes*) by the intensive relationship linking the Od and its complement. This can be tested by paraphrase with *be* (The house was *in a mess*; \*The house was *in five minutes*). The two meanings are dependent on the related meanings of *leave*: 'leave something in a state' and 'go away from', respectively.

### 7.2.2 Realisations of the Object Complement

Attributive Object Complements can be realised by:

AdjG	A sleeping pill will rapidly make you <i>drowsy</i> .
NG	His friends consider him <i>a genius</i> .
Finite nominal cl.	Dye your hair <i>whatever colour you like</i> .
Non-finite <i>-en</i> cl.	The authorities had the demonstrators <i>placed under house arrest</i> .

Nominal Co elements are sometimes introduced by the prepositions *as* or *for*, and are then analysed as 'oblique' Object Complements, though strictly they are PCs. That is, the relationship between the NG and the verb is not direct, but mediated by a preposition. Some verbs require this; with others such as *consider* it is optional:

<i>as</i> + NG	Party members regard him <i>as the best candidate</i> .
<i>for</i> + NG	Do you take me <i>for a complete idiot</i> ?

### SUMMARY

- 1 Adjuncts (A) are optional elements of a situation expressed by a clause. There are three main types according to their function.
- 2 Circumstantial Adjuncts provide information concerning time, place, manner, means etc. These are treated more fully in Unit 20.
- 3 Stance adjuncts provide an attitudinal comment by the speaker on the content of the clause or sentence. There are three classes of stance adjuncts: epistemic, evidential and evaluative.
- 4 Connective adjuncts are not elements of structures, but connectors of structures. They signal how the speaker intends the semantic connections to be made between one part of the discourse and another. In discourse studies, many connective adjuncts are analysed as discourse markers.
- 5 Adjuncts are realised by groups and clauses, according to type and function.

### 8.1 SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC FEATURES

In contrast with the more central clausal constituents, which are realised only once in a clause it is common to find a number of adjuncts in a single clause. The following illustration has five circumstantial adjuncts, which in this clause are all optional: they can be omitted without affecting the grammaticality of the clause. The bracketed items are adjuncts:

(If at all possible) I'll see you (tomorrow) (after the show) (outside the main entrance).

Adjuncts can be added to any of the basic clause structures:

SP(A)	The bells rang <i>all day long</i> .
SPOd (A)	Tom hired a car <i>at Doncaster</i> .
SPPC(A)	You must allow for delays in <i>holiday periods</i> .
SPOiOd(A)	He sends me flowers <i>through Interflora</i> .
SPCs(A)	The weather is rather unpredictable <i>in these parts</i> .
SPOdCo(A)	They expected to find themselves up against opposition <i>any day soon</i> .

Whereas the more central elements of clause structure typically have fixed places in the clause, many adjuncts are characterised by their flexibility as regards position:

*Hastily* she hid the letter.  
 She *hastily* hid the letter.  
 She hid the letter *hastily*.

While the great majority can occur at the end of the clause, they also occur frequently in initial and medial positions, these being determined to a great extent by semantic and pragmatic considerations (→ 55.2).

Semantically, adjuncts represent circumstances, specifications and comments of many different types which are attendant on the verb or the whole clause. A further characteristic of adjuncts is the tendency of different types of meanings to be expressed by different adjuncts in a single clause, not as coordinated realisations of a single adjunctive element, but as separate, multiple adjuncts:

*Surprisingly* (stance), she *almost* (degree) forgot to set the alarm clock *last night* (time).

## 8.2 MAIN CLASSES OF ADJUNCTS

Adjuncts (A) are grouped into three main classes according to their function in the clause: **circumstantial adjuncts** (8.2.1), **stance adjuncts** (8.2.5) and **connective adjuncts** (8.2.7).

A fourth group consists of **operator-related adjuncts**. Certain single adverbs and adverbial groups which can function as adjuncts of **usuality** (*usually*), **frequency** (*sometimes, never*), **degree** (*just*), **modality** (*probably*) and **aspectuality** (*still, yet, already*), among others, relate closely to the verb. These tend to be placed near the finite operator (*We have just finished; she is probably waiting*). They are discussed in Chapter 11, together with the distribution, position and function of adverbs.

### 8.2.1 Circumstantial Adjuncts

Circumstantial adjuncts provide experiential details about the action or state described by the verb, and answer such questions as *where? when? how? why?* and occasionally *what?* as in *What do you want it for? What did he die of?* Of all the types of adjunct, the circumstantials are the ones most similar to clause constituents: like subject and object they may be made the focus of a cleft. So in the example *Tom bought a new car last month*, we may highlight each element except the verb, including the adjunct of time. Other types of circumstantial adjunct don't pass this test, however:

It was *last month* that Tom bought a new car. (adjunct)  
 It was *a new car* that Tom bought last month. (object)  
 It was *Tom* who bought a new car last month. (subject)  
 \*It was probably/\*usually/\*surprisingly/\*still that Tom bought a new car last month.

### 8.2.2 Realisations of the Circumstantial Adjunct: summary

Circumstantial adjuncts are realised by a wide variety of units:

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. She called me <i>yesterday</i> .                  | Adverb                     |
| 2. She called me <i>too late</i> .                   | AdvG                       |
| 3. She called me <i>from the office</i> .            | PP                         |
| 4. She called me <i>this morning</i> .               | NG                         |
| 5. She called me <i>while I was out</i> .            | Finite clause              |
| 6. She called <i>to tell me the news</i> .           | Non-fin. <i>to</i> -inf.cl |
| 7. She called me, <i>using her mobile</i> .          | Non-fin.-ing cl.           |
| 8. She called me, <i>scared out of her wits</i> .    | Non-fin.-en cl.            |
| 9. <i>Afraid to leave the house</i> , she called me. | Verbless clause            |

While non-finite *-ing*, *-en* and verbless clauses undoubtedly give background information, syntactically it is more problematic to analyse them as adjuncts. They are more loosely integrated into the clause and can't be made the focus of a cleft (\*It was *scared out of her wits* that she called me) as can other circumstantials, including *to*-infinitive clauses (It was *to tell me the news* that she called me).

Units that are set off from the main clause by a comma or a pause are called **supplementives** (see also Chapter 10 for various types of supplementive). The *-ing* and *-en* types, as well as verbless clauses such as *afraid to leave the house* fall into this category. Semantically, they may be understood as reduced clauses of means or reason with an adjunctive function. Here, *Afraid to leave the house* not only lacks a main verb and a subject but is related to the predicate. (*She was afraid to leave the house*.) Such 'detached predicatives' are used in written genres, where they economically add information, typically in initial position as part of Theme (→ 28.10 and 51.5).

### 8.2.3 Circumstantials functioning as central clause elements

As explained in 4.1, certain verbs predict a circumstantial element, without which the clause is incomplete syntactically and semantically. They then have the status of a Complement, and are summarised again here:

- **Location in place or time**, after a verb of position such as *be*, *stay*, *live*, *lie*, etc., as in: We live *in troubled times*, The farm is situated *in a valley*.
- **Extent in time or place** with verbs such as *take*, as in The journey takes *several days*, or *last*, as in The performance lasts *(for) three hours*, in which the preposition is optional. In discourse, the time duration may be omitted if it is understood, as in *Their love didn't last*, meaning 'didn't last a long time'.



- **Direction and Goal** after verbs of movement such as *go*, *come* or of movement + manner such as *fly*, as in *We flew south* (Direction), *We flew to New York* (Goal).
- **Source** in *She tiptoed out of the bedroom*, *We flew from London*.
- **Manner** with *behave*, as in, *She is behaving rather strangely*. Also with one sense of the transitive verb *treat*, as in: *They treated the prisoners badly*.

### 8.2.4 Circumstantials and their ordering in discourse

There is a strong tendency to add circumstantial information, even when it is not strictly required by syntactic or semantic criteria for a single clause, one reason being that it is often crucial to the development of the discourse. So, rather than saying *Tom disappeared*, we might add an optional circumstantial such as *among the crowd*, *into the Underground* or *below the surface of the lake*.

Even more clearly, the conditional clause adjunct – as in *If you don't learn, you're not much good as a teacher* – is necessary for a full understanding of the speaker's intended meaning. Without it, the message is very different. Conversely, with verbs such as *leave*, *arrive* and *go*, Source, Goal and Location adjuncts are omitted if they are contextually understood (*haven't they left/arrived/gone yet?*). The semantic classification of circumstantial elements is described in Unit 20.

When a number of circumstantials cluster at the end of a clause, they tend to be placed in certain semantic orderings, such as Source-Extent-Path-Goal. This is partly illustrated in this slightly adapted sentence from a report. We can see that 'Source' does not figure, while 'Purpose' does. Manner of movement is realised by the verb.

I slithered	a few yards	down the steep bank	to the stream	for a wash
(Manner)	Extent	direction (Path)	Goal	Purpose

Figure 2.10 Manner of movement – Extent – Path – Goal – Purpose.

### 8.2.5 Stance Adjuncts

These express the speaker's evaluation or comment on the content of the message, or the viewpoint adopted. Syntactically, they often remain somewhat separate from the clause, since their message refers to the whole of the clause or sentence. For this reason, they are usually found before the clause or after it, as in the first two examples below. But they can also be placed parenthetically or between commas, within a clause or sentence, as in the last two:

*Naturally*, he spoke to me when he saw me.  
 He spoke to me when he saw me, *naturally*.  
 He *naturally* spoke to me when he saw me.  
 He spoke to me, *naturally*, when he saw me.

Textually, stance adjuncts are of three main kinds: **epistemic**, **evidential** and **evaluative** (→ also 28.12, as Theme).

*A. Epistemic stance adjuncts – Do you believe me? Of course I do*

These express the speaker's opinion regarding the validity of the content, commenting on the certainty, doubt, possibility and obviousness of the proposition:

*Undoubtedly*, he is the finest pianist alive today.

*Obviously*, he'll rely on you even more now.

*B. Evidential adjuncts – Apparently, the picture is a fake*

These signal the source of knowledge or information. Sources range from the speaker's own experience or belief (*In my view/In my experience*) to the beliefs or accounts of others (*According to . . . In the words of . . .* and finally hearsay – *supposedly, apparently*):

*According to* the weather forecast, there's a hurricane on the way.

*C. Evaluative adjuncts – Amazingly, he won a gold medal*

These are attitudinal, reflecting the subjective or objective attitude of the speaker towards the content and sometimes also towards the addressee:

*Surely* you can make up your own mind!

*Broadly speaking*, the Health Service is satisfactory. (objective)

*Unfortunately*, our team didn't win. (subjective)

*D. Style and domain adjuncts*

Two further types of stance adjunct are Style and Domain adjuncts. Style adjuncts are the speaker's comment on the way s/he is speaking (honestly, frankly, confidentially).

Domain adjuncts signal from what viewpoint the message is orientated (technologically, legally, saleswise, etc.):

*Quite frankly*, it seems to me a lot of bullshit (AmE).

*Medically*, the project has little to recommend it.

## 8.2.6 Realisations of the Stance Adjunct: summary

Stance adjuncts can be realised by adverbs, prepositional phrases, finite and non-finite clauses:

Adverbs:	surely, obviously, frankly, honestly, confidentially, hopefully, probably
PPs:	in fact, in reality, at a rough guess, by any chance, of course
Non-fin cl:	to be honest, to tell the truth, strictly speaking
Fin. cl:	if I may be frank with you . . . ; don't take this personally, but . . .

### 8.2.7 Connective Adjuncts

These tell us how the speaker or writer understands the semantic connection between two utterances, or parts of an utterance, while indicating the semantic relationship holding between them: The hotel was rather noisy. *On the other hand*, it wasn't expensive (contrast). They are not therefore elements of structure, but connectors of structure:

Between groups:	Lord Shaftesbury was a persuasive speaker and <i>furthermore</i> a great pioneer of social reform.
Between clauses:	The students are on strike; <i>nevertheless</i> , the examinations will not be cancelled.
Between sentences:	He has been undergoing treatment for asthma since he was a boy. <i>Consequently</i> , he never went in for sports.
Between paragraphs:	<i>In addition to all this . . .</i> <i>First of all . . .</i> <i>In conclusion . . .</i>

That is to say, such connectors occur at some boundary established at a significant point in the organisation of the text. They have a textual function.

Semantically, many different types of connection can be expressed. Here, we shall briefly exemplify four main types (→ Chapters 6 and 7):

additive:	besides, in the same way, what's more, moreover, plus (AmE), as well, also
contrast:	instead, on the contrary, on the other hand, nevertheless, rather, yet
causal:	for, because, so, therefore, then, in that case, consequently, thus
temporal:	first, then, next, after that, finally, at once

### 8.2.8 Realisations of the Connective Adjunct: summary

Adverbs:	nevertheless, moreover, first, therefore, next, now namely, accordingly, consequently, alternatively
PPs:	in other words, by the way, on top of that
AdjGs:	last of all, better still
AdvGs:	more accurately
Fin.cl:	that is to say, what is more
Non-fin.cl:	to sum up, to cap it all

In daily life, turns in conversation are often initiated by a common institutionalised connective adjunct, such as *Well . . .*, *Now . . .*, *Oh . . .*, *So . . .*, *Right . . .*, functioning as **discourse markers**. Their role is double: they mark a new speaker's turn in

the conversation, and at the same time they mark the management of information, as well as the speaker's attitude to the message. *Well* has a variety of meanings, signalled by intonation, ranging from decision to deliberation. *Oh* is a surprisal, indicating that the information received is contrary to expectations, or that the speaker is adjusting to the new information or perception. *I mean, you see* and *you know* regulate shared and unshared knowledge. *Look* and *Hey* are attention signals, while *yes, yeah, no* and *nope* are responses that can occur together with other markers. Here are some examples of discourse markers in spoken English:

Oh my coffee's gone cold!	[KCU] <sup>1</sup>
It was dreadful! That shop.	Oh, that's supposed to be a good shop! [KST]
I've lost my keys!	Well, what do you expect? You never put them away.

The semantic and textual functions of circumstantial, stance and connective adjuncts are described and illustrated in Chapters 6 and 7, and – as realised by adverbs – in Chapter 11.

Several of these markers, as well as stance and connective adjuncts, occur in the following extract from Alan Ayckbourn's play *Just Between Ourselves*, in which Neil comes to Dennis's house to inspect a car for sale.

**Dennis:** It's the pilot light, you see. It's in a cross draught. It's very badly sited, that stove. They should never have put it there. I'm planning to move it. *Right, now.*<sup>1</sup> You've come about the car, haven't you?

**Neil:** That's right.

**Dennis:** *Well,*<sup>2</sup> there she is. Have a look for yourself. That's the one.

**Neil:** Ah.

**Dennis:** *Now*<sup>3</sup> I'll tell you a little bit about it, shall I? Bit of history. *Number one,*<sup>4</sup> it's not my car. It's the wife's. *However,*<sup>5</sup> *now*<sup>6</sup> before you say ah-ah – woman driver, she's been very careful with it. Never had a single accident in it, touch wood. *Well,*<sup>7</sup> *I mean*<sup>8</sup> *look,*<sup>9</sup> you can see hardly a scratch on it. *Considering the age.*<sup>10</sup> *To be perfectly honest,*<sup>11</sup> *just between ourselves,*<sup>12</sup> she's a better driver than me – when she puts her mind to it. *I mean,*<sup>13</sup> *look*<sup>14</sup> *considering it's what now – seven – nearly eight years old.*<sup>15</sup> Just look for yourself at that body work.

**Neil:** Yes, Yes.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>1</sup>marker/connective; <sup>2</sup>connective; <sup>3</sup>connective; <sup>4</sup>connective; <sup>5</sup>connective; <sup>6</sup>connective; <sup>7</sup>marker; <sup>8</sup>marker, <sup>9</sup>attention signal; <sup>10</sup>stance; <sup>11</sup>stance; <sup>12</sup>marker; <sup>13</sup>stance; <sup>14</sup>attention signal; <sup>15</sup>stance; <sup>16</sup>response signal.

<sup>1</sup>This and other examples with a three-character identifier are taken from the BYU-BNC (Davies 2004-), based on The British National Corpus from Oxford University Press. Available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc>.

## FURTHER READING

Biber et al. (1999); Downing (2001 and 2006); Fawcett (2000); Halliday (1994); Huddleston and Pullum (2002); Quirk et al. (1985); Schiffrin (1987); Thompson (2002).

## EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 2

### The skeleton of the message: Introduction to clause structure

#### Unit 4

1 †Bracket the non-essential constituent(s) in each of the following clauses

- (1) Many of the houses must have disappeared since my father's day,
- (2) I explained briefly to Mrs Blake that there was a power cut.
- (3) It seemed a good idea at the time.
- (4) The war lasted more than forty years.
- (5) I felt my face turn red.
- (6) Somebody snatched my bag in the park.
- (7) Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, spying practically dominated the political life of that capital.
- (8) I'll just put something in the microwave.
- (9) The telephone began to ring insistently at six o'clock on a cold November day.
- (10) Arsenal became League champions for the fifth time on Monday.

#### Unit 5

1 †Identify the constituent that realises Subject function in each of the following clauses:

- (1) The use of caves for smuggling is as old as the hills.
- (2) There were about half a dozen men seated in the bar.
- (3) The light of a torch flickered.
- (4) What the critics failed to understand is that his art was not sacrificed to popularity.
- (5) The list of people who she says helped her is long.
- (6) It was my great good fortune to meet him before he died.
- (7) Run like mad was what we did.
- (8) It makes sense to tell the neighbours you are going away on holiday.
- (9) It is sometimes argued that there is no real progress.
- (10) Reading in a poor light is bad for your eyes.

2 †Extrapose the Subject in the following clauses. Start with 'It . . . :

- (1) That Pam is seeking a divorce surprised us.
- (2) To leave without saying goodbye was bad manners, really.

- (3) Who she goes out with doesn't interest me.
- (4) For such a man to succeed in the world of politics requires a lot of nerve.
- (5) That recognising syntactic categories at first sight is not easy is obvious.

**3** Read the passage on the Valley of the Kings in 5.2 (p. 46). Underline the words that realise the Predicator function and say which are finite and which non-finite.

## Unit 6

**1a** †Identify the constituent which functions as Direct Object in each of the following clauses, and the class of unit which realises this function.

- (1) I've lived most of my life in the country.
- (2) He banged the door shut as he went out.
- (3) He pointed out that foreign doctors were not permitted to practise in that country.
- (4) The negotiations have achieved very little.
- (5) She lacks discretion.
- (6) A team of divers have discovered what they believe to be sunken treasure.
- (7) He considers it unlikely that the money will be refunded
- (8) One doubts that many will survive the long trek over the mountains.
- (9) You might ask what the use of all this is.
- (10) He shovelled a ton of gravel into the back garden.

**1b** †Discuss these realisations from the point of view of their prototypicality as Od.

**2** †Which of the following clauses contain a constituent that functions as Recipient Indirect Object, and which contain a Beneficiary Indirect Object? Apply the passivisation and prepositional tests to distinguish between the two:

- (1) They did not give the leaders time to establish contact.
- (2) Why should I write him his French essays?
- (3) I am going to get myself another coffee.
- (4) Can I get you girls anything?
- (5) He is offering us a chance in a million.
- (6) Can you give me a lift as far as the station?
- (7) You owe me 7 Euros for that pair of tights from the Sock Shop.
- (8) She has bought her boy-friend a butterfly pillow to use on long flights.

**3** †Applying the criteria discussed in 6.4, identify the phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs and phrasal-prepositional verbs in the following clauses:

- (1) Does it put you off to enter a room and find everyone staring at you?
- (2) They don't approve of what we are doing.
- (3) Is that the time? I'd better get back.
- (4) A burglar could not easily break into this house.
- (5) So he didn't turn up after all at McDonald's?

- (6) His work-mates are always getting at him, he says.
- (7) Things don't always come up to our expectations.
- (8) This is our stop. We get off here.

**4a** †Sort the following examples according to whether they contain PO or Adjunct:

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a She ran through the film script. | c You can see through the trees    |
| b She ran through the streets.     | d You can see through his excuses. |

**4b** †Why is *\*Up large bills she ran* ungrammatical while *Up the stairs she ran* is acceptable?

**4c** †*She decided on the bus* is ambiguous. Explain the two readings, adding material if necessary.

**4d** †For the following sequences provide an ellipted version consisting of verb + adverb:

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| He rode out of the courtyard. | They jumped over the fence.   |
| We swam across the lake.      | Get into the car, all of you! |

## Unit 7

**1** †Identify the types of Complement (Subject, Object) in each of the following clauses and state the class of unit which realises each of these.

- (1) Acting is not very hard. The most important things are to be able to laugh and to cry (Glenda Jackson in *The Times*).
- (2) They must prove themselves fit for the task.
- (3) Spying on firms has become a multi-million pound industry.
- (4) What will they call the baby?
- (5) Life is a series of accidents. That's what he thinks.
- (6) He made his films accessible to a wide public.
- (7) The weather has turned unexpectedly cold.
- (8) Video-games keep them happy for hours.
- (9) She looked utterly miserable.
- (10) Sweden has made it illegal for parents to smack their children.

**2a** †Turn to *Cyclists*, the short text on bike riding in 7.1.2. Underline the part of each numbered unit which realises an obligatory Complement and state whether it is Cs, Co, Locative/Goal or any other type.

## Unit 8

**1** †Distinguish between the different types of Adjunct (circumstantial, stance and connectives) in the clauses below:

- (1) He was chairman of the English Tourist Board for five years.
- (2) First, we booked the seats, then we went for dinner, and after that we took a taxi to the theatre.
- (3) The soldier allegedly crawled under the barbed wire to reach the arms depot.
- (4) Hopefully, student admissions will continue to rise.
- (5) Shaped like a spiral staircase, the 'double helix' of DNA continues to transform our understanding of the story of life.

- 2** †Analyse the constituents following the verb *find* in these two clauses:
- (1) The police found the gang's hide-out without much difficulty.
  - (2) The police found the gang's hide-out more elaborately equipped with technology than they had expected.
- 3** †In the following extract from Kathleen Mayes' *Beat Jet Lag*, mark each constituent of the clauses with |. Then give (a) the function, and (b) the class of unit which realises the function:

**The sun never sets on the tourist empire. But travel pictures, business contracts and sports programmes don't tell the full story: getting there may be no fun at all. Aircraft perform flawlessly, but what happens to passengers, flight crews and cabin staff? Jet lag. A mass phenomenon, almost as universal as the common cold.**



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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MESSAGE

## CHAPTER 3

### Complementation of the verb

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## INTRODUCTION: MAJOR COMPLEMENTATION PATTERNS AND VALENCY

Complementation of the verb refers to the syntactic patterns made up by configurations of the clause elements that we examined individually in the previous chapter. Each pattern contains a Subject and a Verb. The number and type of other elements in each pattern is determined by the verb, as we saw in Chapter 2. Complementation of the verb is a very rich and complex area of English grammar.

The aim here is to outline as simply as possible the main choices open to speakers from the standpoint of the verb. Choices are, however, balanced by requirements. Certain verbs in English may not admit a pattern, or a realisation of a pattern, that is perfectly normal in another language.

There are three main types of complementation: intransitive, copular and transitive. The transitive has three sub-types.

<i>Type of complementation</i>	<i>Structural pattern</i>	<i>Illustration</i>
Intransitive	S-V	Ted laughed
Copular	S-V-C	The idea is crazy
Transitive		
Monotransitive	S-V-O	He bought a video
Ditransitive	S-V-O-O	He gave Jo the video
Complex-transitive	S-V-O-C	I find the idea crazy

The number of verbs in common use in English is very large, especially in certain constructions, such as the monotransitive. In addition, many verbs – especially those of general meaning, such as *get*, *turn* and *make* – admit more than one type of complementation, each of which reflects a different type of situation. *Make*, for instance, can enter into all but intransitive patterns:

I'll make some tea.	SVOd
I'll make you a pizza.	SVOiOd
He made the coffee too strong.	SVOdCo
They make a good couple.	SVCs
It makes for good relations.	SVPC

The potential number of participants, including the subject – that is, the number of places' in the clause that the verb controls – is sometimes referred to as its **semantic valency**. Different classes of verbs have different semantic valencies. The verb *eat*, for example, is a two-place verb: it has a semantic valency of two, because in any event of eating there must be an eater and a thing eaten. There are one-place verbs, which have a subject only, belonging in principle to the SV pattern. Two-place verbs have a subject and one other element, as in the SVC and SPO patterns. Three-place verbs have a subject and two other elements as in the SVOO and SVOC patterns. Syntactic valency refers to the number of nominal elements present in any given clause that have a direct

grammatical relation to the verb. In *The lions ate away at their prey*, there is one nominal element, as *their prey* does not have a direct grammatical relation to the verb. Syntactic valency often corresponds to its semantic valency, but not always. Weather verbs such as *rain* and *snow*, for instance, have no semantic participant and so have a semantic valency of zero. As finite clauses in English require a subject, however, dummy *it* is used with such verbs, giving a syntactic valency of 1. Valency is reduced when one or more elements are omitted in use. For instance, *eat* has a semantic valency of 2 as in *He ate an orange*; the valency is reduced to 1 in *What time do you eat here?*

# INTRANSITIVE AND COPULAR PATTERNS

## UNIT 9

### SUMMARY

- 1 Where there is no complementation the verb is said to be **intransitive**. The structure is S-V. Some verbs are always intransitive (*arrive, snow, blink, vanish*). Others represent intransitive uses of basically transitive verbs (*eat, drive, read*).
- 2 Some intransitive verbs, particularly those of position (*live, lie*) or movement (*go, walk*), usually require a Locative or Goal Complement, respectively.
- 3 Locative Adjuncts are commonly present but not necessarily required after many verbs such as *work, arrive, retire* and *stop*. Locative and other circumstantial information is often pragmatically inferred in discourse.
- 4 The S-V-Cs pattern contains a copular verb that links the subject to a Complement encoding what the subject is or becomes. The most typical copula is *be*. Other verbs used as copulas in English provide additional meaning to the mere linking. This may be sensory (*look, feel, smell, sound, taste*) or refer to a process of becoming (*become, get, go, grow, turn*). The notion of 'being' also includes being in a place, expressed by a circumstantial locative Complement, as we saw in 8.2.3.
- 5 We now use **Verb** instead of Predicator as it is the verb that controls the type of complement.

### 9.1 SUBJECT – VERB

The pure intransitive pattern contains a one-place verb such as *sneeze*, which has a subject but no complement. We distinguish the following types of intransitive verb:

verbs of **behaviour** which is typically involuntary or semi-voluntary: laugh, smile, cry, blink, blush, cough, sneeze, sigh, tremble, yawn; wait, stay; die, collapse, faint, fall (They all laughed, someone yawned, one soldier fainted.)

verbs of **weather**: rain, snow (It's raining. It's snowing. The sun rose.)

verbs of **occurrence**: appear, disappear, go, come, arrive, depart, vanish, fade, happen: What happened? Hopes of avoiding war are now *fading*.

**idiomatic intransitive phrasal verbs** such as *crop up* as in *a problem has cropped up*, where there is no verb 'crop' of the same meaning (→ 6.4.2). By contrast, with free combinations of verb + particle used literally as in *the bird flew away*, the particle is analysed as a directional Complement (6.4.2 and 9.2). Opinions differ in this respect, however, some preferring Adjunct in the case of free combinations.

Note that some of these 'pure intransitives' can also function in other structures, as we shall see later on.

## 9.2 SUBJECT – VERB – LOCATIVE COMPLEMENT (C<sub>loc</sub>)

Other intransitives of the following types typically require a Complement of place, direction or destination to complete their meaning. Location in space is extended to include location in time (→ 10.8 for certain transitive verbs with similar requirements):

- Location in place or time: be, stand, live, lie, remain
- Movement + manner of movement: walk, run, stroll, crawl, fly

The National Theatre stands *near the river*.

The amusement park is *just over there*

She is lying *in a hammock*.

We walked *home*.

The soldier crawled *under the wire fence*.

We can compare this verb *lie*, meaning to be in a prone position, with *lie*, a 'pure' intransitive, meaning to tell lies: *He is lying in a hammock* vs *He is lying*.

We can also contrast uses of the same verb, such as *run*, which can occur either as a pure intransitive in the answer to *How does Tom keep fit?* – *He runs*, or with a Goal Complement in *He runs to the bus-stop every morning* (→ 8.2.3).

Note that, for brevity, the term C<sub>loc</sub> is used to encompass both Locative and Goal meanings.

### 9.2.1 Pragmatic inference of circumstantial meanings

Similarly, other verbs of position, such as *wait* and *stay*, and verbs of movement such as *go*, *leave*, *come* and *walk* can either function as pure intransitives or be followed by a Locative/Goal Complement. The choice depends to a great extent on whether there is sufficient support from the context to sustain the intransitive. For example, if a contrast is being made – as in *Do you want to leave or would you rather stay?* – the intransitive verb alone is sufficient, because the location is pragmatically inferred as being the place where the addressee is. Similarly, in *You can either take the bus or walk*, the destination is clearly known from the context, and a suitable reply would be *'I'll walk'*. However, if the location or destination are not inferrable, a locative or Goal Complement becomes

necessary as in *We went home*. Without the specification ‘home’, the verb would carry insufficient semantic ‘weight’ and informativeness to complete the predicate. Complements are more tightly integrated than Adjuncts, the tightest being the Subject and Object complements following copular verbs (→ 9.4; 10.7).

### 9.3 SUBJECT – VERB – ADJUNCT

With other verbs such as *work*, *arrive*, *retire*, *stop* a circumstantial Adjunct is commonly added, but it is not a requirement because the verb has sufficient weight in itself. This may be for cultural reasons, for example, *work* being interpreted as ‘have a job’ (**1b** below), *retire* as ‘retire from employment’ (**3b**), or because of the aspectual meanings conferred by the perfect (**3b**, **4b**) and progressive (**2b**) aspects, which lend ‘weight’ to the verb (→ 43.3). Compare:

#### S-V-A

- 1a** Tom works in London.
- 2a** What’s up?
- 3a** He retired last year.
- 4a** We stopped at Wimbledon.

#### S-V

- 1b** Does his sister Priscilla work?
- 2b** What’s happening?
- 3b** He has retired.
- 4b** The clock has stopped.

### 9.4 SUBJECT – VERB – COMPLEMENT OF THE SUBJECT

**Copular verbs** link the subject with a complement which characterises or identifies the subject referent:

A couch potato (S) is (V) someone who lies watching television all day (Cs).

This new game (S) is (V) incredibly simple and endlessly gripping (Cs).

The most prototypical copular verb is *be*, which can be followed by a wide range of adjectives and NGs. Others, such as *remain*, *keep*, *taste*, *smell*, *sound*, *fall*, *feel*, *come*, *grow* and *turn*, are followed by a more limited range of adjectives which are often specific to a particular verb, as specified here:

#### 9.4.1 Verbs of being and becoming

**Verbs of being** are stative and introduce current or existing attributes:

The reason *is* simple.

Lloyd George *was* a man of principle but he *was* also intensely pragmatic.

We have to *remain* optimistic about the future.

*Will* you keep still!

**Verbs of becoming** are dynamic and introduce resulting attributes. In addition, *grow* suggests gradual change, while *go* is used to indicate drastic changes:



Her latest novel has *become* a best-seller.  
 We began to *grow* uneasy when the skin-diver didn't appear.  
 His face *went* pale.

<i>Current</i>	<i>Resulting</i>
be careful	become dangerous
seem annoyed	get stressed
look cheerful	turn nasty
sound familiar	prove unsatisfactory
smell spicy	go bald

### 9.4.2 Other linking verbs

A small number of verbs that are normally used without a complement (fall, come, run) can function as copulas with specific adjectives as Cs:

The child *fell flat* on its face.  
 The soldiers all *fell asleep*/ *fell ill*.  
 The label has *come unstuck*.

As *be* predicts not only being something but being somewhere, it can also link the subject to a circumstance, usually of position, place or time. The Complement is then identified as C<sub>loc</sub>, as in The Tube station is *over there*. (→ 4.2 and 9.2).

### SUMMARY

- 1 **Monotransitive** patterns contain a two place verb (*carry, say*) and have a Direct Object or a Prepositional Complement (PC). Objects, like Subjects, most typically represent an entity (a person or thing), less typically a fact or a situation within the main situation. Entities are typically realised by group structures, facts and situations by clauses. We will postpone the discussion of clausal realisations to Unit 11.
- 2 **Ditransitive** patterns contain a three-place verb (*give, offer, rob, blame*). Semantically, they express situations in which three participants are involved, encoded syntactically as the subject and the two objects. There are two main patterns.
- 3 One pattern contains a verb such as *give, send, owe*, which takes two Objects, Indirect and Direct, sequenced in that order (*give Jo a copy*), each of which can potentially become subject in a passive clause.
- 4 The second pattern, with verbs such as *remind* and *rob*, takes a Direct Object followed by a PC, whose preposition is controlled by the verb (*It reminds me of Italy*). Only the Direct Object can become subject in a passive clause.
- 5 The **complex-transitive** pattern has one Object and one Complement, after verbs such as *appoint, name* and *find*.
- 6 We here use **Verb** instead of Predicator as it is the verb that controls the type of complement.

### 10.1 SUBJECT – VERB – DIRECT OBJECT

Verbs which take a direct object are very numerous and of different semantic types (**carry** the luggage, **know** the answer, **feel** the heat of the flames, **enjoy** the film, **want** a copy). The semantic types are described in Chapter 4.

I (S)	ate (V)	<i>a toasted cheese sandwich (Od) [for lunch today A]</i>
She	was wearing	<i>one of her father's extra-large T-shirts.</i>
They	don't watch	<i>kids' TV programmes.</i>
We	must put away	<i>all this stuff.</i>

## 10.2 VERBS USED TRANSITIVELY AND INTRANSITIVELY

Many verbs in English are used both transitively and intransitively with the same meaning. They include several types:

- 1 **Verbs with an implied Object**, such as *smoke (cigarettes)*, *drive (a car)*, *park (a car)*, *drink (alcohol)*, *save (money)*, *wave (one's hand)*, as in *Do you smoke? He doesn't drive.* Such intransitive uses can be considered as instances of valency reduction, that is, the normal valency of two of these verbs is reduced to one. As these reductions are based on cultural schemas and tend to have an implication of habituality, they are not extended to other object referents such as *wave a flag*, *drink milk*. With certain verbs such as *read*, *write*, *eat* and *teach* the deleted direct object is not specific, and is perhaps unknown, as in *He teaches and she writes*.

*Drinking* and *driving* don't match.

It is impossible to *park* in the city centre.

They are *saving* to buy a house.

He *waved* to us from the bridge.

- 2 Causatives with an intransitive counterpart, constituting an ergative pair (→ Chapter 4):

He opened the door. (SVOd)      The door opened. (SV)

She clicked the camera.      The camera clicked.

- 3 Verbs with a reflexive meaning:

He shaved (himself), She dressed (herself).

- 4 Verbs with a reciprocal meaning:

Tom and Jo met at a concert (met each other).

## 10.3 SUBJECT – VERB – PREPOSITIONAL COMPLEMENT

Verbs which take a PC are: prepositional verbs such as *see + to*, *deal + with* (*see to the plane tickets*, *deal with an emergency*), phrasal prepositional verbs as in *run out of petrol*, and multi-word combinations that end in a preposition as in *get rid of old newspapers*. The criteria for distinguishing these verbs from phrasal verbs are discussed in Chapter 2.

Here is a short list of some common verbs followed by a preposition. Certain verbs, such as *think* and *hear*, control more than one preposition with a slight difference of meaning.

<i>Common verbs that can be followed by a preposition</i>							
<i>For</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>at</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>after</i>
account	bank	admit	aim	deal	believe	dispose	look
allow	call	consent	get	reason	confide	think	take
hope	count	keep	hint		consist	hear	
long	rely	refer	look				
look		resort					

The Prime Minister (S) can't account (V) for the loss of votes (PC).  
 We're banking on everyone's support for the rally.  
 He would never resort to cheating. What are you hinting at?

## 10.4 SUBJECT – VERB – INDIRECT OBJECT – DIRECT OBJECT

There are two main types of ditransitive complementation: the basic type, in which an Indirect Object precedes a Direct Object, and another, in which a Direct Object is followed by a prepositional Complement. The first is discussed now, the second in 10.5.

### 10.4.1 Verbs of transfer (*give, lend*) and intended transfer (*buy, get*)

*Types: I gave her a present      I got her a present*

This is the basic ditransitive pattern. Three-place verbs like *give* have a subject and two Objects, representing the transfer of goods or information from one person to another. They also include speech act verbs such as 'offer' and 'promise'. Here are some more verbs like *give*:

hand	lend	offer	owe	pass	promise	read	send	show	teach	throw	write
------	------	-------	-----	------	---------	------	------	------	-------	-------	-------

He showed *the policeman* his driving licence. (He showed his driving licence *to the policeman*.)  
 We are offering *our clients* a unique opportunity. ( . . . to our clients)  
 She owes *several people* large sums of money. ( . . . to several people)

As the examples show, the indirect Object has a prepositional counterpart, the *give* type with *to*, the *get* type with *for* (*I gave a present to her. I got/bought a present for her*). The PP functions as a prepositional Complement.

Verbs of intended transfer carry out a service for someone, or even a disservice, as in *They set him a trap/ They set a trap for him*. Other verbs like *get* and *buy* include the following:

book bring build buy cash cut fetch find leave spare keep make pour  
save

Book *me* a sleeper on the night train. ( . . . a sleeper *for me*)

Will you call *me* a taxi, please? ( . . . a taxi *for me*)

Paul got *us* a very good discount. ( . . . a good discount *for us*)

With the 'give' type, two passives are usually possible:

Active: I gave Jo a copy.

Passive 1: Jo was given a copy. (Oi in active clause → S in passive clause)

Passive 2: A copy was given to Jo. (Od in active clause → S in passive clause)

?A copy was given Jo. (? Indicates divided acceptability)

The 'first passive' brings the Recipient participant to subject (*Jo*). The 'second passive' brings the thing given to subject, followed by the Recipient as prepositional Complement (*to Jo*). The non-prepositional form *A copy was given Jo*, is considered ungrammatical by many speakers, but is accepted by others. Two orderings whose equivalents are acceptable in certain languages but which are ungrammatical in English are the following: \**To Jo was given a copy* and \**To Jo it was given a copy*.

The difference between the two valid passive forms is a question of information packaging (→ 29.1). They are useful alternatives when the active subject is not known or is not important in the discourse.

### 10.4.2 Less prototypical but common three-place verbs

There is a good deal of variation in ditransitive verbs. Not all verbs display the alternative structures of those listed in 10.4.1. Here are a few of the most common variants:

*Type: explain + Od + Prepositional Complement – He explained the problem to us*

Typical verbs are: *announce, confess, deliver, mention, return* and *say*. There is no corresponding structure with the Oi in its usual place: \**He explained us the problem*. That is, these verbs take only the prepositional Complement after the Od.

Did she *say* hello *to* you?

I never *mentioned* her name *to* anyone.

\* Did she say you hello?

\* Mention no-one her name.

Type: *deliver + Od + Goal complement* – *They'll deliver the pizza to your house this evening.*

There is no non-prepositional counterpart of a Goal Complement \**They'll deliver you/ your house the pizza.*

Type: *wish + Oi + Od* – *We wish you luck*

Other verbs: *allow, cost, wish, refuse* and 'light' uses of *give* (→ 20.2).

Conversely, these verbs have no prepositional counterpart with *to*. Note that the starred counter- parts on the right are ungrammatical. *Ask something of someone* is possible, however, as in *I must ask a favour of you.*

They allow everyone a ten-minute break.	*They allow a ten-minute break to everyone.
He gave the door a push.	*He gave a push to the door.
Let's ask someone the way.	*Let's ask the way to someone.

Many three-place verbs allow valency reduction from 3 to 2 when there is contextual support, as in *He called a taxi, he got a discount, they blamed me, let's ask the way.*

## 10.5 SUBJECT – VERB – DIRECT OBJECT – PREPOSITIONAL COMPLEMENT

Although predicted by the verb, the PC in this ditransitive pattern (e.g. *It reminds me of you*) is further away from the verb and the NG is not a central participant. However, it encodes a participant that can be formally questioned (Of whom **1**, For what **2**) placed before the preposition or, informally, stranded (→ 6.3.3). It can also occur in a *wh*-cleft **3**:

- 1** *Who* does it remind you of? (*Of whom* does it remind you? )
- 2** *What* are you thanking me for? (*For what* are you thanking me?)
- 3** *What* it reminds me of is Italy.

In discourse, the PC may be omitted when its referent is understood, as in *They blamed me* (for something already mentioned). The Direct Object is usually a person and the PC may be an entity or an event.

Some of the verbs taking this construction are listed here according to preposition. Remember that a NG is placed between the verb and the preposition.

<i>Complement as well as Direct Object</i>					
<i>For</i>	<i>from</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>On</i>
blame	prevent	accuse	introduce	charge	blame
thank	protect	convince	help	compare	compliment
		deprive	sentence	supply	congratulate
		rob			

S	V	Od	PC
This sunblock	will protect	your skin	from <i>the sun's rays</i> .
They	robbed	her	of <i>her watch and jewels</i> .
They	charged	him	with <i>assault</i> .
I	congratulated	Janet	on <i>her success</i> .

Only the direct object constituent can become subject in the passive clause:

*Your skin* will be protected from the sun's rays.

*She* was robbed of her watch and jewels.

*He* was charged with assault.

*Janet* was congratulated on her success.

*Blame*, a three-place verb, admits two alternative constructions with different prepositions, which reflect the way the event is viewed in each case. The more central of the two participants is placed first, as Od. In one version this is Jane; in the other the accident.

blame someone (Od) for something (PC)	<i>He blamed Jane for the accident</i>
blame something (Od) on someone (PC)	<i>He blamed the accident on Jane.</i>

There are thus two passives – *Jane was blamed for the accident*, *The accident was blamed on Jane* – which centre respectively on ‘Jane’ and on ‘the accident’.

Likewise, the NG following the preposition can be questioned by *who* or *what* (*What was Jane blamed for? Who was the accident blamed on?*).

Other verbs that present a similar variation are *supply*, *load* and *drain*:

We supply the school <i>with paper</i> (PC).	We supply paper(Od) <i>to the school</i> (PC).
They loaded the cart <i>with hay</i> . (PC).	They loaded hay <i>on to the cart</i> . (C <sub>loc</sub> ).
They drained the pool <i>of water</i> . (PC).	They drained water <i>from the pool</i> . (C <sub>io</sub> ).

With *load* and *drain* the cognitive representation is rather different with each alternative. With the receptacle *the cart* and *the pool* as object, there is a notion of totality: the cart is completely full of hay, the pool completely drained of water. By contrast, with *hay* and *water* as object, there is an impression of partialness: some hay is loaded, some water is drained. If the definite article is used (*the hay*, *the water*), the implication is of totality.

## 10.6 FRAME, PERSPECTIVE AND ATTENTION

The cognitive notion of **frame** allows us to conceptualise a situation from different **perspectives**. For instance, Fillmore's ‘commercial event’ frame for [BUY] includes a reference to four other variables, namely to a BUYER, a SELLER, GOODS and MONEY. A syntactic pattern formulated from the perspective of the BUYER could be as follows:

Tom bought some old CDs from Phil for twenty euros.

In this sentence all four variables of the BUY frame are encoded linguistically, each filling a different syntactic function: the BUYER (Tom) as subject, the GOODS (the CDs) as direct object, the SELLER (Phil) as the first adjunct and the MONEY (for twenty euros) as the second adjunct. This distribution of syntactic functions is the syntactic perspective, which here is largely controlled by the choice of the verb BUY.

Within the same frame, it would be easy to take a different perspective by choosing another related verb such as SELL, CHARGE or PAY. The verb *sell* perspectivises SELLER and GOODS as subject and object, *charge* also perspectivises the SELLER as subject but the BUYER as object, and *pay* perspectivises the BUYER and MONEY, with the SELLER as optional indirect object.

Phil sold some old CDs to Tom for twenty euros.

Phil charged Tom twenty euros for some of his old CDs.

Tom paid Phil twenty euros for some old CDs.

The notion of perspective draws on the cognitive ability to direct one's **attention**. To a large degree, we conceptualise events in different ways according to what attracts our attention. As language users, we use the verb *buy* when describing a commercial event in order to draw attention to the BUYER and the GOODS, functioning as subject and object respectively. We use the verb *sell* to focus attention on the SELLER and the GOODS. By means of the frame we can even call up cognitive categories that had no prominence and were not expressed (though they were implied) in the frame itself, for instance SPEND and COST. These can be externalised in sentences such as the following:

Tom spent twenty euros on some old CDs

The old CDs cost Tom twenty euros.

For complementation by clauses → Units 11 and 12.

## 10.7 SUBJECT – VERB – DIRECT OBJECT – OBJECT COMPLEMENT

### SUMMARY

- 1 Three-place verbs with one Object and one Complement of the Object are called complex transitive. The Direct Object typically represents a person or thing, and the Object Complement adds information about this referent in the form of an attribute:  
*I found the house **empty**, He got his shoes **wet**.*
- 2 The attribute is either current (as with *find*) or resulting (as with *get*).
- 3 The participant encoded as direct object can typically be made subject in a corresponding passive clause.



### 10.7.1 Current and Resulting Attributes – He got his shoes wet

This three-place pattern is essentially an S-V-Od pattern with an attributive Object Complement added. As attribute the complement specifies the state or status of the Od referent in relation to the situation described by the verb. The attribute may be 'current', contemporaneous with the verb (*He keeps the garden beautiful*), or the result of the action denoted by the verb (*They elected her Vice-President*).

Verbs that take a current attribute after the object are stative, and include:

- verbs of causing to remain in a certain state such as *hold* and *keep*
- verbs such as *believe*, *consider*, *think*, *find*, *imagine*, *presume*, *hold*
- verbs such as *want*, *like* and *prefer*

Keep your hands *steady*!

I imagined him *much older*.

Verbs that take resulting attributes represent processes of doing, and include *bake*, *drive (mad)*, *get*, *leave*, *make*, *paint*, *turn*, *wipe* as well as verbs of declaring, such as *appoint*, *elect*, *call*, *name*, *declare*, *report* and *certify*, which confer an official status.

With AdjG Complement:

It wipes the windscreen *dry*.

The heat has turned the milk *sour*.

That barking dog is driving me *mad*.

They presumed her *dead*.

With NG Complement:

They appointed him *Manager*.

The direct object referent in complex transitive structures can be made subject in a passive clause, which then has an S-V-Cs structure. In fact, with some verbs the passive is more common than the active, particularly when the Agent is unexpressed, as in *she was presumed dead*; *he is reported missing*; *he was certified insane*.

With some verbs, the attribute is not essential to make a grammatical clause (*It wipes the windscreen*). This is because many verbs enter into more than one structure: *wipe* can function in a monotransitive structure (*wipe the windscreen*) or in a complex transitive structure (*wipe the windscreen dry*). Other examples which, without the complement, also fit the monotransitive structure include *You've cut your hair (short)*; *we got the books (cheap)*.

A further type of attribute is that of *respect*. This is expressed by *as* + NG when introduced by such verbs as *regard*, *refer to*, *write off*, *acclaim*:

Churchill referred to him as an outstanding leader.

Fans acclaimed the Rolling Stones' concert as the event of the season.

As a consequence of the multi-functionality of many verbs, examples can be invented in which one type of unit such as a NG can realise two different types of constituent:

He called her an angel. S-V-Od-Co He called her a taxi. S-V -Oi-Od

## 10.8 SUBJECT – VERB – DIRECT OBJECT – LOCATIVE COMPLEMENT – *Hang the picture on the wall*

Verbs such as *put*, *place*, *stand*, *lead* occur with a Locative/Goal Complement:

Stand the lamp *near the desk*.

The track led us *to a farm*.

Many other verbs such as *talk*, *take*, *bring* and *show* can be used in this way, while *keep* and *hold* can function with both Attributes and in Locative/Goal patterns.

I didn't want to go, but she talked me *into it*. (C<sub>loc</sub>)

Hold your head *up!* (C<sub>loc</sub>) We hold you *responsible*. (Co)

# COMPLEMENTATION BY FINITE CLAUSES

## UNIT 11

### SUMMARY

- 1 All clausal complements are determined by the verb. Many verbs admit more than one type of complementation.
- 2 *That*-clauses form the largest group of finite clause complements and are controlled by transitive verbs. They are classed according to communicative function and meanings, which include facts, perceptions, reports and proposals.
- 3 *Wh*-clause complements are of three types: a) indirect *wh*-interrogatives, b) *wh*-nominal clauses and c) indirect exclamatives. They occur after verbs such as a) *ask, inquire* b) *advise, show, teach, tell*, and c) *say, tell, believe* respectively.
- 4 Clausal complements can be considered non-prototypical realisations of clause constituents. In these sections, however, we concentrate mainly on the patterns.

In Chapter 1, section 2.4.1 C, the concept of **embedding** was introduced in relation to clauses. In a sentence such as *The doctor knows that you are waiting*, we say that the **subordinate clause** *that you are waiting* is embedded in the **main clause** *The doctor knows*. Another term is the matrix.

The embedded clause, introduced by a complementiser (subordinator), functions as a non-prototypical direct object.

The complementiser *that* has little semantic value and is purely functional. By contrast, a *wh*-word has meaning and functions as a constituent of the embedded clause, as in *The doctor knows what you need*. The structure of this sentence is shown in the following diagram.

The main verb is said to determine or control the dependent clause.

Here, the clauses will be discussed as realising Object and Complement functions (Cs and Co). For clauses fulfilling subject function → 5.1.2.

The four main types of dependent complement clause are: ***that***-clauses, ***wh***-clauses, ***to***-infinitive clauses and ***-ing*** clauses. They are distinguished by their complementiser (subordinator) such as *that* or a *wh*-word, and by their own structure. They are shown here complementing monotransitive verbs.

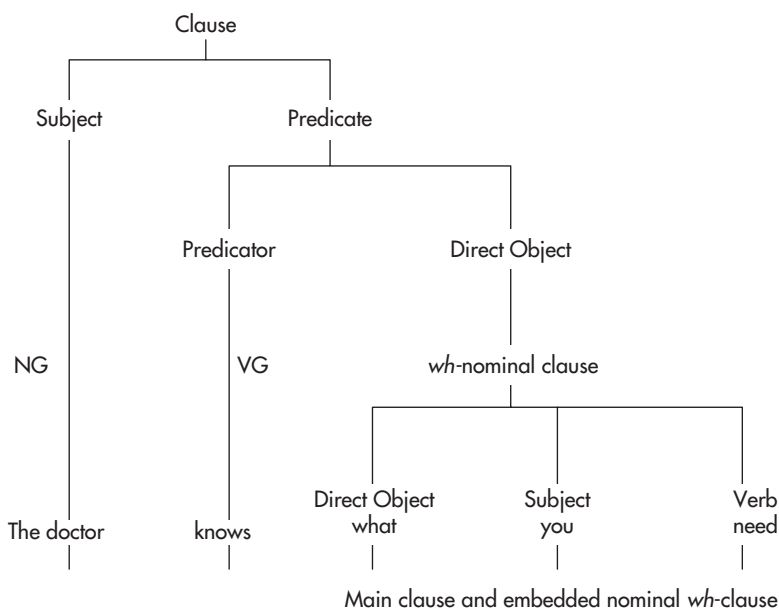


Figure 3.1 Main clause and embedded nominal *wh*-clause.

#### Clause as complement with monotransitive verbs

finite <i>that</i> -clause:	He believes that <i>he's right</i> .
finite <i>wh</i> -clause:	He asked <i>what I meant</i> .
	He <i>believed what I told him</i> .
	I said <i>how nice it was</i> .
<i>non-finite to-infinitive clause</i> :	
without dep.cl subject	He wants <i>to stay</i> .
with dep.cl. subject	He wants us all <i>to stay</i> .
<i>non-finite -ing clause</i> :	
without dep. cl. subject	He doesn't like <i>driving in fog</i>
with dep. cl. subject	He doesn't like <i>her driving</i> in fog.

*That*-clauses and *wh*-clauses are finite, having a subject and tense-modality features, while *to*-infinitive and *-ing* clauses are non-finite, and lack these distinctions. All of these types can be used to complement verbs and adjectives. Less versatile are the 'bare' infinitive (*He helped me **carry** the bags*) and the **-en** participle clause, which occurs in the complex-transitive structure (*I heard two shots **fired***). Non-finite complementation is discussed in Unit 12.

## 11.1 MEANINGS AND PATTERNS OF THAT-CLAUSE COMPLEMENTS

A *that*-clause complement can be used to express factual or non-factual information which is reported, known, believed or perceived; it can be used to make proposals and suggestions and to describe situations that produce an emotive effect on the subject. The choice of verb combines with the meaning to determine the structural pattern.

### 11.1.1 Verb + *that*-clause – *I think it's beautiful*

*Facts, beliefs, doubts, perceptions – I believe you are right*

These meanings are expressed by a *that*-clause containing an indicative. This represents an indirect statement and follows verbs of certain types:

- Verbs of cognition – knowing, doubting, perceiving – such as *think, know, believe, imagine, see, doubt*; with *doubt, don't know*, the subordinator is *if* or *whether*.

We know *that* you have lived abroad for some time.  
He could see *that* she was not at all happy.  
I doubt/I don't know *if/whether* we'll get there before dark.

- Verbs of expectation – *expect, hope, suppose* and *wish* – which refer to potential situations rather than facts, frequently take a modal auxiliary in the indicative *that*-clause.

I expect (that) you would like something to drink after your journey.  
I suppose (that) he must have lost his way.

For omission of complementiser *that* → 11.2.

*Reports – Jo says she is ill*

Reports encode things that people have said. They are introduced by verbs of communicating, such as *say, announce, answer, explain, mean, mention, report*, and performatives such as *admit* and *confess*. Reports are treated in Chapter 7 under 'indirect speech'.

The Minister answered *that he didn't know*.  
You never mentioned *that you were married*.

*Proposals – The party suggests he call/should call an election*

Verbs such as *propose, suggest, recommend* and *demand* aim at getting someone to do something. The meaning in the complement clause is therefore potential, for which many European languages require a subjunctive. English has traditionally two

possibilities: an uninflected subjunctive (e.g. *be*), common in AmE, or *should* + infinitive, common in BrE. Both are illustrated in **1** and **2**, below. The same choices are open before an *it* + *adj* construction. Illustrated here is a formal use:

It is right *that this House debate this issue and pass judgement*. (PM Tony Blair in the House of Commons, 18 March 2003)

A third choice, adopted by some speakers, is the indicative, as illustrated in a news report **3**:

- 1** He demands *that she pay/should pay him back*.
- 2** The chairman proposed *that a vote be taken/ should be taken*.
- 3** They demand *that he apologises to the Iraqi people*.

(For complementation by *to*-infinitive clause → 12.2.)

### 11.1.2 Dropping or retaining the complementiser *that*

We can drop or retain the complementiser (or subordinator) *that* without affecting the meaning of the clause. Certain factors appear to favour one choice or the other.

**Omission of *that*** is favoured by the following factors:

- (a) when think or say is the main verb – I **think** it's worth doing, Tim **says** it's easy
- (b) when the subject refers to the same entity in the main clause and in the *that*-clause, as in **Tim** promised **he'd** do it
- (c) when there is a pronoun rather than a noun head in the *that*-clause (I think **I'll** have a cola, She knew **he** would do it).

It has also been suggested that *I think* and *I know*, for example, are not main clauses at all, but are better analysed as epistemic, evidential or evaluative parentheticals, while what is traditionally classed as the complement clause in fact carries the main proposition. This view is based on two pieces of evidence: the verb + its subject can be placed parenthetically after the clause – *I'll have a cola, I think; He'll do it, I know* – and the tag-question relates to the complement clause, not to the main clause – *I think she'll have a cola, won't she?* (not *\*don't I?*).

**Retaining *that*** after a verb is favoured by:

- (d) coordinated *that*-clauses: Many people believe *that* big is best and *that* war is right.
- (e) passive voice in the main clause: It is believed *that* peace is in sight.
- (f) a NG or PP (or clause containing a NG) placed between the main clause and the *that*-clause: Can you prove to the commission *that* the effects are not harmful?

Overall, *that* is omitted most in informal spoken registers, which is where the 'abc' factors tend to cluster, while the subordinator is retained most in formal written registers, which are characterised by the 'def' factors. These are not strict divisions, however, as

even formal registers nowadays are often a mix of the formal and the less formal. The following short extract from *The Peacemakers* illustrates the tendencies:

People have often assumed that, because Lloyd George opposed the Boer War, he was not an imperialist. On the contrary, he had always taken great pride in the empire but he had never thought it was being run properly.

**That-clauses** do not follow **prepositions** in English and consequently cannot realise the PC function. Instead, one of three solutions is adopted: a) the preposition (e.g. *on*) is omitted; b) the preposition is retained and is followed by anticipatory *it*, or c) *the fact* can be inserted before a *that*-clause with a factual meaning:

- (a) He insists that we all go.
- (b) He insists on it that we all go.
- (c) You must allow for the fact that they are handicapped.

### 11.1.3 Verb + NG + *that*-clause – I told you I'd be late

Many verbs of communicating (*tell, inform*), verbs of causing someone to think or believe or know something (*convince, persuade, remind, teach*), and the performative verbs *promise* and *warn*, can take a *that*-clause after the direct object:

He finally convinced the jury *that he was telling the truth*.

Experience has taught them *that a back-up copy is essential*.

## 11.2 SAY AND TELL

Note that *say* and *tell* have different complementation patterns:

- *Say* is monotransitive, controlling a direct object (*Say that number again; He said he was sorry*), while *tell* is ditransitive, with two objects (*Tell me your name, tell me you love me*).
- *Say* can take an added prepositional Complement (*What did you say **to him**?*), but not an indirect object (*\*What did you say **him**?*).
- Quoted speech may realise the object of *say*, but not that of *tell* (*Jill said 'Hello'*, but not *\*Jill told me 'Hello'*). →36.5.

A series of clauses may be embedded, each within the previous one: *I reminded him that he'd said (that) he'd find out about the flight schedules*. In speech, the second *that* complementiser would most likely be omitted.

### 11.3 MEANINGS AND PATTERNS OF WH-CLAUSE COMPLEMENTS

There are two main patterns, which are controlled by specific verbs. Pattern 1 has simply a *wh*-complement. Pattern 2 has an intervening NG (a Recipient). Certain verbs such as *ask* can function in both patterns. A third type, with a *to*-infinitive complement, is a variant on types 1 and 2 and is very common, especially in spoken English.

#### 11.3.1 Indirect interrogatives

##### V + *wh*-clause – Ask where the station is

The verbs *ask*, *wonder*, *doubt*, *enquire*, *don't know* control indirect interrogatives. The subordinator *if* is often used as an alternative to *whether* in indirect questions where the answer is either *yes* or *no*:

We asked *what we should do/what to do*.  
 The tourist enquired *why the museum was closed*.  
 Pat wondered *whether/if her friends would recognise her*.

As indirect interrogatives contain an embedded question, it is important to remember that subject–operator inversion does not normally occur in embedded questions, unlike the obligatory inversion found in most independent interrogatives. Compare:

<b>independent interrogative</b>	<b>dependent interrogative</b>
<i>Where is the dining-car?</i>	Let's enquire <i>where the dining-car is</i> .
	Not *Let's enquire where is the dining-car.

#### 11.3.2 Nominal relatives

##### V + NG + *wh*-clauses – Give them what they want

These verbs – common ones include *advise*, *give*, *show*, *teach* and *tell* – can control nominal relative clause complements, which represent factual information and can be distinguished by replacing the *wh*-word by a more general word, such as 'the thing(s)/person(s) that', and in some cases by a *to*-inf. clause:

He told me *what I already knew*. (the things which I already knew)  
 Tom will show you *where you can send it/the place where you can send it to/where to send it*.  
 The instructor taught *the dancers how they should breathe/the way they should breathe/how to breathe*.



### 11.3.3 Non-finite variants

#### V + NG + **wh** + to-infinitive clause – Ask (him) how to do it

This combination provides a shorter variant of 11.3.1 and 11.3.2, with verbs such as *ask*, *know*, *show*, *tell*, *teach* and *wonder*. The NG recipient is obligatory with *tell*, *show* and *teach*, optional with *ask*, and not used at all with *know* and *wonder*.

We didn't know **where to go**. (indirect interrogative)  
 Tom told us **what to do**. (nominal relative)

Ambiguity can sometimes occur with *wh*-complements, as in *He asked me what I knew*, which can be analysed as an indirect interrogative (compare with the direct form *What do you know?*) or as a nominal relative (*the things I knew*) – the latter, for example, in the context of reporting on an examination.

### 11.3.4 Indirect exclamatives

#### V + (NG) + **what** + NG or **how** + AdjG – I said how nice it was

The embedded **exclamative** is introduced by either *how* (+ *adjective*) or *what* (+ NG) after two types of verbs: verbs of communicating such as *say* and *tell*, and mental verbs such as *believe* and *think*. Like ordinary exclamatives, it has an emotive quality (→ 24.1):

You'll never believe *what a good time we had*.  
 I told her *how sorry I was*.

# COMPLEMENTATION BY NON-FINITE CLAUSES

## UNIT 12

### SUMMARY

- 1 Non-finite clauses are more loosely integrated into the superordinate clause than are finite clauses. Only the *to*-infinitive complements of certain verbs such as *want*, *like* and *prefer* and the *-ing* complements of *like*, *hate* among others, can be treated as (non-prototypical) object constituents.
- 2 A series of non-finite clauses can be analysed as a chain-like structure of embedded non-finite complements.
- 3 *To*-infinitive clauses tend to evoke potential situations, whereas *-ing* clauses are factual and bare infinitive clauses evoke an event in which the end-point is included.
- 4 Participial *-en* clauses function as Object Complements after four types of verb.

### 12.1 CATENATIVE COMPLEMENTS

A **catenative verb** is a verb that controls a non-finite complement. ‘Catenative’ means ‘chaining’ and reflects the way that the verb can link successively with other catenatives to form a chain, as in:

We decided to try to rent a house near the sea.

Here there is a chain of three verbs: *decide*, *try* and *rent*, with *to try to rent a house near the sea* functioning as the catenative complement of *decide*, and *to rent a house near the sea* functioning as the catenative complement of *try*.

We can add further catenative verbs to produce an even longer chain of four catenatives, two of which, *persuade* and *help*, have a NG object. The final verb *rent* is not a catenative: We decided to try to persuade Bill to help us rent a house near the sea.

- i Decide to try to persuade Bill to help us rent a house near the sea.
- ii Try to persuade Bill to help us rent a house near the sea.
- iii Persuade Bill to help us rent a house near the sea.
- iv Help us rent a house near the sea.

Further catenatives appear in the following section. A special type of catenative construction – as in *He failed to appear* – is discussed in 39.4. Not all catenatives behave in the same way. Only the complements of a few catenatives such as *want*, *like* and *prefer* can be analysed as (untypical) objects. Others cannot (→ also 6.1.2E).

## 12.2 MEANINGS EXPRESSED BY TO-INFINITIVE CLAUSES

### 12.2.1 Type 1: V + to-infinitive – I want to go

These three groups of verbs take **to-infinitive clause complements**:

- (a) *want, wish, intend, arrange*
- (b) *like, love, prefer, can't bear, hate*
- (c) *promise, agree, learn, forget, decide*

The *to*-infinitive clause in Type 1 has no explicit subject, the implied subject being that of the main clause. Semantically this is clear. If I want to go, the going is to be done by me. For the (c) group of speech-act verbs, there is an equivalent *that*-clause complement with the same meaning, but this alternative is not available to the (a) and (b) groups of desiderative and affective verbs:

- 1 The boss wants to see us immediately. (no *that*-clause counterpart in 1 and 2)
- 2 I have arranged to go to London tomorrow.
- 3 I *promise to ring* you later. (compare: I promise *that I will ring* you later)
- 4 They *agreed to wait* a bit longer. (compare: they agreed *that they would wait* a bit longer)

*To*-infinitive clauses tend to evoke a situation that is potential. Cognitively, the infinitive reflects an event, with *to* symbolically reflecting the movement towards the event. For this reason the controlling verb typically 'looks forward' to the moment when the event begins.

### 12.2.2 Type 2: V + NG + to-infinitive clause with subject – He wants us to go

The 'want' verbs include: *want, like, love, prefer, can't bear, dislike, hate, wish, arrange*.

The people want the troops to leave.

He did not like her to leave his side for more than a day.

I only want us to be together, always.

I have arranged for the students to go to London tomorrow.

[EFX]

[GWH]

The 'want' type verbs in this section take a *to*-infinitive clause that has an explicit subject. Semantically, what the people want, what 'he'did not like are situations, not persons or things. For this reason, the non-finite clause, together with its subject, is analysed as a single unit which can be considered an untypical direct object. This can be tested by (a) replacement by a pronoun (He did not like *that*), (b) coordination (*and she herself did not like it either*), and (c) clefting: the non-finite clause and its subject can become the focus of a *wh*-cleft (*What he did not like was for her to leave his side for more than a day*).

Furthermore, although these subjects of *to*-infinitive clauses are in the objective case (*us, her*) they can't be analysed as objects of the main verb. The complete clause does not entail *The people want the troops* or *He did not like her*. Nor can they become subject in a passive clause: \**The troops were wanted to go*, \**She was not liked to leave his side for more than a day*. In this respect, verbs like *want* contrast with those of Type 3 (in the next section) such as *ask, advise* and *expect*, in which the NG does represent a separate clause element.

Note the use of *for* as a subordinator, introducing the non-finite clause with its subject (*for the students to go to London tomorrow*) after the main verb *arrange*. In AmE this use of *for* is extended to other verbs such as *want* and *prefer*.

Finally, we can test *want*-type verbs with a *What* question: *What do you want?* rather than a *Who* question: *Who do you want?* The object of my wanting is (*for*) *us to be together, always*.

### 12.2.3 Type 3: V + NG + *to*-infinitive –We asked the taxi-driver to stop

The verbs in this type are speech-act verbs: *advise, allow, ask, beg, expect, invite, tell, persuade, urge*. For this reason the referent of the NG is always human. The NG is both the object of the main verb and the implicit subject of the embedded *to*-infinitive clause. This NG behaves as if it were the object of the finite verb and can become subject in a passive clause. This divisibility of the NG is an important feature of ditransitive and most complex transitive complements. As with other verbs of this type, passives are common.

They persuaded *us to stay*.  
A television campaign is advising  
*teenagers to keep off drugs*.

*We were persuaded to stay.*  
*Teenagers are being advised to keep off*  
*drugs.*

Semantically, we persuade, advise and invite someone, not a whole situation. Note that, when a *to*-infinitive clause is ellipted (→ 29.5), *to* remains (*They invited us to stay and we agreed to*).

Factual verbs such as *believe, consider, know, report, suppose* also take NG + *to*-infinitive as a 'raised object' alternative **2** to a *that*-clause complement **1** (→ 37.4). Passive forms are common in formal styles **3**:

- 1** People consider that he is a great actor.
- 2** People consider him to be a great actor.
- 3** He is considered (to be) a great actor.

## 12.3 MEANINGS EXPRESSED BY BARE INFINITIVE CLAUSES

### 12.3.1 Type 4: V + NG + bare infinitive – We let them go

Typical verbs are: let, have, make; see, hear, feel; help.

**Bare-infinitive clauses** evoke an event in which an end-point is included, as in *we let them go, we saw them go*. Relatively few verbs occur in this pattern. They include three verbs of coercion, illustrated below, a few verbs of perception and the verb *help*.

Don't let anxiety spoil your life.  
They made the prisoners stand for hours.  
I'll have my secretary make you a reservation.

Syntactically, we analyse the non-finite clause of the *make* type as an object complement, complementing the direct object. Notice the parallel between: *She made them angry/ She made them sit down*.

Analysis of the NG + bare-infinitive complement of perceptual verbs illustrated below is more problematic. Is the NG the object of the matrix clause or the subject of the non-finite clause? Does the NG + bare infinitive refer to a whole situation, as with *want*?

I saw someone enter the shop late at night.  
She felt something hard hit her on the head.

While the 'whole situation' view appears to be semantically acceptable, 'I saw someone enter the shop' entails 'I saw someone', this entailment not being the case with the *want* type. Syntactically, the NG is the object of the matrix clause and is also the subject of the bare-infinitive clause.

Some of the clauses of coercion and perception (but not with causative *have*, or with *feel*) can be passivised, with the NG as subject and the bare infinitive replaced by a *to*-infinitive, as in: *The prisoners were made to stand for hours, Someone was seen to enter the shop. Let is usually replaced by allow (They were allowed to go)*. In this respect we find the same divisibility of the NG as occurs with the 'ask' type.

It is notoriously difficult to pin down the difference in meaning between *help* + bare infinitive and *help* + *to*-infinitive. One analysis sees the bare infinitive as direct or active involvement in bringing about the action expressed by the infinitive, as in: *I'll help you carry your luggage upstairs*. With *help* + *to*, by contrast, the event is seen to be the consequence of the helping, and often means 'contribute to' rather than active involvement by the helper, as in *Acupuncture can help people to give up smoking*.

## 12.4 MEANINGS EXPRESSED BY -ING CLAUSES

Non-finite *-ing* clauses as complements tend to express factual meanings. Syntactically they function as non-prototypical direct objects, following the criteria adopted for analysing *to*-infinitive clauses as objects in 12.2, Type 2.

### 12.4.1 Type 5a: V + -ing clause – I like listening to music

Verbs of affective stance: like, love, dislike, feel, like, hate, enjoy, miss, mind, resent, risk, can't help.

There are two patterns: (a) with no explicit subject in the -ing clause; and (b) with an explicit subject in the -ing clause.

Type 5a has no explicit subject in the -ing clause. The subject of the main clause is implicitly the same as that of the -ing clause

They disliked living in a big city.

I don't feel like travelling on the Tube in the rush hour.

### Type 5 b: V + NG + -ing – We deplore his/him risking his life in this way

The -ing clause has an explicit subject. The pronominal subject of the -ing clause may be in the objective or the genitive case. The genitive is the more formal:

I hope you don't mind *my/me bringing* you a T-shirt with no message on it.

Common and proper nouns can also take both options, but long NGs and titles tend to be awkward, particularly with the genitive:

Students resent *the Minister of Education's cutting* back Erasmus grants.

### 12.4.2 Type 6: V + NG + -ing clause – I saw them waiting

**Pattern 1 with verbs of perception and discovery** such as see, hear, feel, smell, find, leave, catch, discover, come across, keep

The subject of the -ing clause is also the object of the superordinate clause. It can become subject in a passive clause.

They caught *him stealing from the till*.

He was caught stealing from the till.

She found *the child sleeping peacefully*.

The child was found sleeping peacefully.

Note that verbs of *starting*, *stopping* and *continuing* among others, when followed by either *to*-infinitive or -ing clauses, are analysed in this book not as lexical verbs followed by a complement, but as concatenated verbal groups that express aspectual meanings such as ingressive, egressive and continuative (→ 39.2), as in *He started smoking at the age of fifteen*.

**Pattern 2 with verbs of retrospection** such as *regret*, *remember* and *forget* (but not *recall*, which takes only -ing) mark a difference of time reference in relation to the main verb. With a *to*-infinitive clause, the action expressed is seen as *following* the mental process of remembering or forgetting, whereas an -ing form marks the action as *previous* to the mental process:

I remembered <i>to turn off the gas</i> .	(I remembered that I had to turn off the gas and I did.)
I remembered <i>turning off the gas</i> . (I forgot <i>to turn off the gas</i> .)	(I remembered that I had turned off the gas and I forgot that I had to turn off the gas and didn't turn it off.)
I regret <i>telling/having told you the bad news</i> .	(I am sorry that I told you the bad news.)
I regret <i>to tell you there is some bad news</i> .	(I am sorry to have to tell you bad news.)

*Regret* + *to*-infinitive is always followed by a verb of communication – *say, tell, announce, inform* – used with present time reference. Both the regretting and the telling occur at the moment of speaking, whereas *regret* + *-ing* has no such limitation (She regretted *going out without an umbrella*).

### 12.4.3 Potential and factual meanings contrasted: *to*-infinitive and *-ing* clauses

Because the *to*-infinitive looks forward to the event, it tends to be used when a specific occasion is referred to, often of a future or hypothetical kind, as in *I would like to go to Paris*. An *-ing* clause, by contrast, expressing factual meanings, as in *I like going to Paris*, entails that I have been to Paris, whereas *I would like to go to Paris* does not.

Emotive verbs such as *like, love, hate* and *prefer* (but not *enjoy, detest* and *dislike*, which admit only *-ing* clauses) can establish this distinction clearly.

I like <i>listening to music</i> .	I'd like <i>to buy a good stereo</i> .
Most people hate <i>standing in queues</i> .	Most car-owners would hate <i>to be without a car</i> .

For many speakers, however, the *to*-infinitive is a valid alternative in the expression of factual meanings, especially with a notion of habit: *I like to cook for my friends*.

## 12.5 PAST PARTICIPIAL CLAUSES

### 12.5.1 Type 7: V + NG + *-en* clause – We'll get it mended

These are S-V-Od-Co structures with a past participial complement. They are controlled by four types of verb:

- the causative verbs *get* and *have* – We'll have some repairs *done to the house*,
- volitional verbs: *want, like, prefer* – The boss wants *these records updated*;
- verbs of perception: *see, hear, feel* – I felt *my arm grasped from behind*; and
- verbs of finding and leaving – Airport officials have found an unidentified bag *abandoned in the coffee-shop*.

## SUMMARY OF MAJOR VERB COMPLEMENTATION PATTERNS

### 1 No-complement patterns with intransitive verbs

V only ('pure' intransitive)	The post <i>has arrived</i> .
V + implied object	That dog <i>bites</i> .
V (reciprocal meaning)	They <i>met</i> at a party.
V + obligatory locative	She lives <i>in Tokyo</i> .

### 2 One-complement patterns with copular verbs

V + AdjG	The game is <i>very simple</i> .
V + NG	This road is <i>the M40</i> .

### 3 One-complement patterns with monotransitive verbs

V + NG	That dog bit <i>me</i> .
V + prep + NG	I'll see <i>to the sandwiches</i> .

### 4 Finite clause

V + finite <i>that</i> -clause	He believes <i>that he is right</i> .
V + finite <i>wh</i> -clause (indirect interrog.)	She asked <i>what I meant</i> .
(nominal relative)	He believed <i>what I told him</i> .
(indirect exclamative)	I said <i>how glad I was</i> .

### 5 Non-finite clause

V + non-finite <i>to</i> -infinitive clause	
With implicit subject	He wants <i>to stay</i> .
With explicit subject	He wants <i>us all to stay</i> .
V + non-finite <i>-ing</i> clause	
With implicit subject	They like staying out late.
With explicit subject	She doesn't like their/ them staying out late.

### 6 Two-complement patterns with ditransitive verbs

V + NG NG	I gave <i>Jo a copy</i> .
V + NG + prep + NG	We reminded <i>her of the time</i> .

#### Finite clause

V + NG + <i>that</i> -clause	He assured her that he cared.
V + NG + <i>wh</i> -interrog. clause	She asked me where the library was.
V + NG + nominal <i>wh</i> clause	He told me what I needed to know.



**Non-finite clause**V + NG + *to*-inf clauseShe told *us to sit down*.**7 Two-complement patterns with complex-transitive verbs**

V + NG + AdjG

I found *it useful*.

V + NG + NG

They consider *him a genius*.V + NG + *as* + NGThey denounced *the bill as unconstitutional*.

V + NG + obligatory locative

Put *the dish in the microwave*.**8 Non-finite clause**V + NG + *to*-infinitive clauseThey believe *him to be a genius*.

V + NG + bare inf clause

He made *them stand up*.

V + NG + bare infinitive

She saw *two men enter the shop*.V + NG + *-ing* clauseHe kept *us waiting*.V + NG + *-en* clauseI heard *two shots fired*.**FURTHER READING**

Biber et al. (1999); Duffley (1992); Huddleston and Pullum (2002); Levin (1993); Quirk et al. (1985); Ungerer and Schmid (1997); on the infinitive: Duffley (1992); on frames: Fillmore (1982); on valency: Payne (1977); on *that*-clauses: Thompson (2002).

**EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 3****The development of the message: Complementation of the verb****Unit 9**

- 1** †With the help of a monolingual dictionary, say whether the verbs in the examples below are (a) exclusively intransitive or (b) can be used either transitively or intransitively:

- (1) Women today *are achieving* in many professions which were previously open only to men.
- (2) The two planes *collided* in mid-flight.
- (3) He *has exhibited* in all the major art galleries over the last five years.
- (4) You *must be joking!*
- (5) Most of our students *baby-sit* two or three evenings a week.
- (6) Pete doesn't *adapt* easily to new situations.
- (7) My brother-in-law *ghost-writes for* at least two politicians.
- (8) The little bird *quivered in* my hands.
- (9) He thinks he can take me in, but I know when he's *bluffing*.
- (10) Those couples who have no children of their own are often eager to *adopt*.

- 2** †Of the verbs which could be used transitively in exercise 1, which ones can be considered

to have an Object unexpressed (a) by social convention, (b) with reflexive meaning, (c) with reciprocal meaning?

- 3 †Suggest the underlying semantic valency of the verb *pay*.

## Unit 10

- 1 †(a) Choose the most appropriate prepositional verb from the list in 10.3 to fill the gap in each of the sentences below. Then (b) put each sentence into the passive:

- (1) You can't . . . . Cecil, he has such fixed ideas.
- (2) It is not easy to . . . . old broken furniture.
- (3) They will . . . . the Minister of Defence to explain the charges of negligence.
- (4) The target they are . . . . is too high.
- (5) You should . . . . your schedule if you hope to deliver the goods on the agreed date.

- 2 Explain the semantic difference between 'She wrote a letter to her brother' and 'she wrote a letter for her brother'.

## Unit 11

- 1 †Combine the following pairs of clauses so that the first clause can be analysed as an embedded constituent of the superordinate clause. Add or omit whatever is necessary. The first is done for you:

- (1) He has lived abroad for several years. I gather that from what he says. From what he says, I gather (that) he has lived abroad for several years.
- (2) Have we enough petrol to reach Barcelona? I doubt it.
- (3) Is there an emergency kit in the building? Who knows?
- (4) Where is the nearest Metro station? I asked.
- (5) You keep the keys. We have all agreed on that.
- (6) Some of the documents are missing. The Under-Secretary can't account for it.
- (7) Why doesn't he look in the safe? I suggest that.
- (8) We have just heard that. The spokesman confirmed it.
- (9) He has been under great strain lately. We must allow for that.
- (10) These letters must be posted today. Will you see to it please?

- 2 †Give a reason for the omission or retention of *that* before the embedded clauses in:

- (a) In a friendly way Wilson had also suggested that Koo travel to France on the same boat as the Americans. (*The Peacemakers*)
- (b) I said I thought she was still crazy about him.

- 3 †Say which of the italicised clauses in the examples below are nominal relative clauses, which are indirect interrogative clauses and which are embedded exclamatives:

- (1) He asked where I had been all afternoon.
- (2) The spokesman announced what we had all been hoping to hear.
- (3) You've no idea how cold it was in Granada at Easter.

- (4) They don't know who sprayed the graffiti on the Faculty walls.
- (5) I said what a pity it was they couldn't be with us.
- (6) He's sure to fall in with whatever you suggest.

**4** †Explain why the following constructions are ungrammatical:

- (a) \*They suggested to start at 8.00.
- (b) \*She explained me the difference between the two constructions.

## Unit 12

**I** †Write out the complementation pattern of each of the following. The first is done for you:

- (1) He never allowed Thomas to drive the jeep in his absence. *v + NG + to-inf.*
- (2) The shopkeeper asked me what I wanted.
- (3) His powerful imagination makes him quite different from the others.
- (4) Keep your shoulders straight.
- (5) He left her sitting on the bridge.
- (6) They like their next-door neighbours to come in for a drink occasionally.
- (7) I would prefer Mike to drive you to the station.

# INTERACTION BETWEEN SPEAKER AND HEARER

## CHAPTER 4

### Linking speech acts and grammar

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# SPEECH ACTS AND CLAUSE TYPES

## UNIT 13

### SUMMARY

- 1 Speech acts are the acts we perform through words. Certain general types of speech act are basic to everyday interaction; these are statements, questions, exclamations and directives, the latter covering orders, requests and instructions among others.
- 2 Each of these basic speech acts is associated in the grammar with a type of clause: the declarative is typically used to encode a statement, the interrogative a question, the imperative a directive and the exclamative an exclamation. These are the direct correspondences between form and function that we refer to as direct speech acts.
- 3 Indirect correspondences are also common in English. Thus declaratives, as well as encoding statements, can be used to ask questions, utter exclamations and issue directives, in addition to other speech acts such as promising and warning. In such cases the form is used to convey an 'intended meaning' or 'illocutionary force' that is different from its basic one. *You're staying here, then?* has the form of a declarative – but, with appropriate intonation, the force is that of a question, as is indicated by the punctuation. The relationship between clause type and force is therefore not one-to-one but many-to-many.
- 4 Even more indirectly, the words we use do not always fully express our intended speech act. For example, *It's cold in here* might be intended, and interpreted, as a request to turn up the heating. Hearers use inference to recover the intended meaning at specific points in a conversation, based on assumptions of cooperativeness, truth, relevance and cultural knowledge.

### 13.1 THE BASIC CORRESPONDENCES

When we speak or write to each other, we perform acts through words, such as thanking and promising. These are ‘speech acts’. Certain general types of speech act are very basic, in that most, if not all, languages have ways of representing them by means of the grammar. These are **statements**, **questions**, **exclamations** and **directives**.

These basic speech acts are encoded in the grammar in the system of clause types or moods, as shown in the diagram below. The indicative is the grammatical category typically used for the exchange of information, in contrast to the imperative, which grammaticalises our acting on others to get things done by requesting, ordering and so on. The exclamative grammaticalises the expression of emotion.

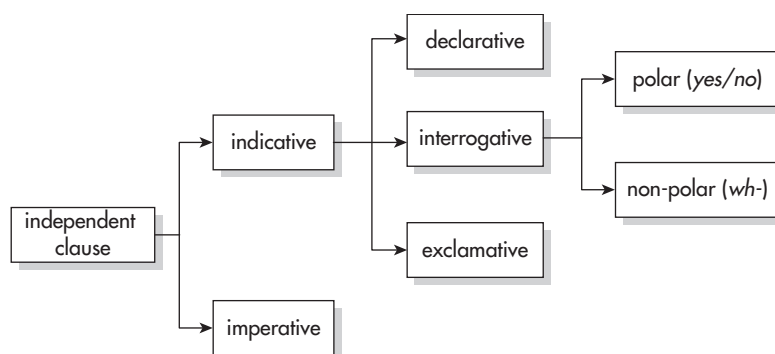


Figure 4.1 Clause type or moods

Interrogative clauses can be either polar (*yes/no* interrogatives) or non-polar (*wh-* interrogatives). These are discussed in Unit 14.

The basic correspondences between clause types and speech acts are summarised as follows:

Clause type	Basic speech act	Example
Declarative	making a statement	You are careful.
Interrogative ( <i>yes/no</i> )	asking a question	Are you careful?
Interrogative ( <i>wh-</i> )	asking a question	How careful are you?
Exclamative	making an exclamation	How careful you are!
Imperative	issuing a directive	Be careful!

Figure 4.2 Correspondence between clause types and speech acts.

The traditional term ‘command’ is nowadays applicable only in contexts of great inequality and power such as the military. The term **directive** is used instead in everyday environments, to cover such acts as requests, prohibitions and instructions, as well as orders and commands.

### 13.2 DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS: WHAT THE UTTERANCE 'COUNTS AS'

It is important to separate the concepts of statement, question and directive, which are semantic-pragmatic categories of meaning in use, from the grammatical categories of declarative, interrogative and imperative, which are typically associated with them. When a clause type is used to carry out the speech act typically associated with it, it is considered to be a **direct speech act**. Thus, in a direct speech act the declarative is said to have the **illocutionary force** of a statement, an interrogative has the force of a question, an imperative has the force of a directive, and an exclamative has the force of an exclamation. The force is the speaker's 'intended meaning' at that particular point in the discourse. The table shows this basic or typical correspondence between the two sets of categories; and in the following invented dialogue based on an advertisement, each clause type in the independent clauses realises its typical speech act:

Is that you Dan? Geoff here.

Hi, Geoff.

Has the board reached a conclusion?<sup>2</sup>

They've decided to launch the product,<sup>3</sup> if the terms are right.

How do ours compare?<sup>4</sup>

Very well. But are you sure you can put up the necessary capital?<sup>5</sup>

We've got a huge loan from the Bank of England.<sup>6</sup>

In that case, let's go.<sup>7</sup>

Have we got the deal, then?<sup>8</sup>

You've got it.<sup>9</sup>

Fantastic. How soon do you expect to be able to sign?<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup>interrog./question; <sup>2</sup>interrog./question; <sup>3</sup>declar./statement; <sup>4</sup>interrog./question;

<sup>5</sup>interrog./question; <sup>6</sup>declar./statement; <sup>7</sup>imper./directive; <sup>8</sup>interrog./question;

<sup>9</sup>declar./statement; <sup>10</sup>interrog./question

In interpersonal interaction, however, the relationship is frequently more complex – and more flexible. Every clause type can carry out different speech acts. When a clause type has any other but its typical force, we consider it an **indirect speech act**. That is, it 'counts as' an act different from its typical correspondence.

We can rewrite one of the executives' utterances so that the correspondence between grammatical form and its function is no longer direct:

So *we've got* the deal, then? (declarative which 'counts' as a question)

Looking at it the other way round, our new version of this utterance still 'counts as' a question, as in the original text, even though it's expressed by a different clause type. Even more indirectly, the words we use do not always express the full meaning of our intended act, as we can see in the following familiar situational dialogue:



- A. The door-bell's ringing.
- B. I'm in the bath.
- A. Okay, I'll go.

A's first utterance is to be interpreted as a directive to B: 'Answer the door'. B's utterance counts as a statement explaining why she can't answer the door ('I'm in the bath'), at the same time implying that A should answer the door. A's second utterance shows that he has inferred the implied request and will comply with it. Notice that neither participant has made specific reference to answering the door.

In this chapter we shall be more concerned with the first type of indirect correspondence, the relationship between grammatical form and pragmatic meaning. In interpersonal interaction, however, especially in conversation, the second type – 'not saying exactly what you mean' and expecting the addressee to infer your meaning – is also extremely common in English.

The motivation for using indirect speech acts is often that of tact, politeness or simply economy of effort. Assuming that speakers are cooperative and make their utterances relevant, hearers use inference in order to recover the intended meaning. For instance, a colleague's question on leaving the office *Have you come by car today?* may lead the addressee to infer that the colleague is politely requesting to be given a lift. Inference is also based on cultural knowledge, for example, that people who have cars often give lifts to those who don't.

In inferring the speaker's meaning, the situational context is all-important, as is the relationship between speaker and hearer. In different situations, or at different points in a conversation, any one utterance may take on a different pragmatic force. If an explosion has just been heard in the car-park, *Have you come by car today?* will suggest a very different intended meaning, perhaps that of a warning, or a suggestion to go and see what has happened. As in other areas of the grammar, a form can fulfil more than one function, and a function can be fulfilled by more than one form. There is no one-to-one relationship between form and function.

It is not always possible to make a clear-cut distinction between one type of indirect speech act and another. *Sit over here by me* may be a request or an invitation, or a combination of the two. Similarly, Geoff's response *We've got a massive loan from the Bank of England* is at once a statement and an assurance in answer to Dan's somewhat anxious question. This indeterminacy of pragmatic meaning is not, in general, a disadvantage, as it allows the interlocutors in a situation to negotiate the outcome of any one utterance as they go along.

# THE DECLARATIVE AND INTERROGATIVE CLAUSE TYPES

## UNIT 14

### SUMMARY

- 1 Syntactically, the five clause types are distinguished in English by the presence or absence of Subject and the ordering of Subject (S) and a finite verb (F). The rest of the clause remains the same. The Finite is realised by a primary verb (*am, is, are, was, were, has, had*), a modal verb (*can, must, etc.*) or a tensed lexical verb (*sells, sold, etc.*), and is the first or only element of the verbal group.
- 2 The declarative is the basic clause type, with Subject-Finite ordering (***It is*** ready, ***I can*** swim, ***Ice melts***). Interrogative and negative clauses in English require a finite operator. The primary verbs *be* and *have*, and the modal verbs (*can, will, etc.*) function as finite operators, carrying inversion (***Is it*** ready? ***Can you*** swim?), polarity (the positive–negative distinction) – as in ***It is*** ready vs ***It isn't*** ready – and emphasis (***I am*** ready). If there is no primary or modal verb in the clause, a form of *do* is used as operator (***Does*** she smoke? She ***doesn't*** smoke).
- 3 Interrogative structures in English are of two main types: yes/no (polar) and *wh*- (non-polar), the latter with a preceding *wh*-element. Both have Finite-Subject ordering except when *Who* is Subject (*Who said that?*). A sub-type, the alternative interrogative, consists of two polar interrogatives joined by *or* (*Do you want it or don't you?*). The *wh*- words ending in – *ever* act as intensifiers (*Whatever do you mean?*), as do more colloquial items (*What the devil . . .*).
- 4 Echo questions repeat all or part of a previous speaker's utterance (*We leave at 5 a.m. – 5 a.m?*). Double interrogatives consist of one interrogative embedded within another (*Do you know what time it is?*), the answer being pragmatically determined.
- 5 Abbreviated clauses (*I can't, Is it? You did? (AmE)*) are independent ellipted clauses based on Subject–operator and operator – Subject patterns. They are commonly used as short interactive responses after questions, statements, exclamations and directives.

- 6 Question tags are also abbreviated *yes/no* interrogatives. They are not independent, but appended to a main clause. There are two types in BrE, reversed and constant, distinguished by polarity and, in part, intonation. A third type, the copy tag, is common in AmE. Invariant tags include *right* and *okay*. Like other elliptical forms, tags are an important interactive device in spoken English.

### 14.1 CLAUSE TYPES AND THE MOOD ELEMENT: SUBJECT-FINITE VARIATION

In English, the declarative, interrogative and imperative moods of a clause are distinguished syntactically by variation in one part of the clause, the Subject (S) and the Finite (F), while the rest of the predicate remains unchanged. Variation consists in the presence or absence of Subject and the ordering of the two elements, as summarised in the table below. These different syntactic variations are referred to as ‘clause types’:

Clause type	Order	Example
Declarative	Subject-Finite	Jane sings.
Interrogative (yes/no)	Finite + Subject	Does Jane sing?
Interrogative (wh-)	wh + Finite + Subject	What does Jane sing?
Exclamative	wh + Subject + Finite	How well Jane sings!
Imperative	no subject, base form of verb	Sing!

Figure 4.3 Clause types and the ordering of the subject and finite.

### 14.2 THE DECLARATIVE CLAUSE TYPE

The **declarative** is the basic clause type, with Subject-Finite ordering, as in:

	Subject	Finite	Predicator		
1	<i>We</i>	<i>are</i>	meeting	again tomorrow.	[AON]
2	<i>You</i>	<i>might</i>	need	a holiday.	[AYP]

The Finite, specified for tense or modality, is always the first or only element of a verbal group → (chapters 1 and 8). It is realised by either a **verbal operator** (*was*, *will*, *has*, etc.), as in **1** and **2**, or a **tensed** (past or present) form of the lexical verb, as in **4** and **5**. The primary verbs function both as operators **1** and as main verbs **3**:

	Subject	Finite	Predicator
3	<i>We</i>	<i>are</i>	late again.
4	<i>She</i>	<i>arrives</i>	tomorrow.
5	<i>They</i>	<i>sell</i>	fish and chips here.

More exactly, in positive declarative clauses, Finite and Predicator fuse in the present and past tensed forms of lexical verbs and of *be* and *have* when used as main verbs. The operator is always realised by a verb: primary, modal or *do*, as explained and illustrated in 3.1.

The Finite element relates the proposition to a point of reference: either a time reference, by tense, or the speaker's judgement by means of modality, as discussed in Chapters 8 and 9.

### 14.3 INTERROGATIVE CLAUSES, NEGATION AND THE DO-OPERATOR

In **interrogative clauses**, the Finite verb precedes the Subject, the rest remaining the same.

Finite	Subject	Predicator	
<i>Are</i>	<i>We</i>	meeting	again tomorrow?
<i>Do</i>	<i>you</i>	need	a holiday?
<i>Does</i>	<i>She</i>	expect	us soon?
<i>Did</i>	<i>They</i>	emigrate	to Australia after all?

When no operator is already available in the clause, a form of *do* (*do*, *does*, *did*) is brought in as a dummy operator. That is, it has no semantic value but simply fulfils the syntactic requirement of 'finite operator' (→ 3.1.1), as illustrated in the last three examples. The functions of the operators that interest us here are, first, that they signal by position that the clause is interrogative, and second, they carry **polarity**, that is, they are either **positive** or **negative**. This positive–negative contrast is an essential semantic feature associated with finiteness. In order to be affirmed or denied, a proposition has to be either positive or negative.

**Negation**, as we saw in 3.2, is usually expressed by the negative particle *not*, which follows the operator or is joined to it as *n't*. Note that the negative interrogative with 1st person singular 'I' is not *\*amn't* but *aren't* in Standard English. Other exceptions include *can't*, *won't* and *shan't*. (Operators also function in question tags, both positive and negative, as illustrated here and discussed with further examples shortly; → Chapter 8.)

Subject	Finite	Predicator	
I	<i>won't</i>	be going	home for lunch. [KNY]
It	<i>doesn't</i>	seem	right, does it? [FUL]
You	<i>don't</i>	sell	bibles, do you? [C86]

Negative-interrogative forms (→ Unit 3) are illustrated as follows:

**Finite Subject Predicator**

Won't	you	be going	home for lunch?
Don't	you	sell	bibles?

The *do* forms can be used to add emphasis with lexical verbs in the declarative:

**Subject Finite Predicator**

They	<b>do</b>	sell	them	[HTR]
You	<b>do</b>	know	about the body, don't you?	

Interrogative clauses typically occur in interpersonal situations, and their direct speech-act function or force is to ask for information. There are two main types of interrogative, the **yes/no** type and the **wh**-type. The examples we have seen so far are of the *yes/no* type.

## 14.4 YES/NO INTERROGATIVES AND THEIR RESPONSES

In the *yes/no* type it is only the polarity that is in question. The speaker asks for confirmation or denial of the clause content, to be expressed by *yes* or *no*. Such minimal replies often sound rather abrupt, however:

- A. Do you sell fish fingers?  
 B. No.  
 A. At all? You don't? [KBC]  
 (B's first response overlaps with A's question; B's reply might be):  
 B. You can get them from the supermarket.

A feature of spoken English is the use of ellipted responses such as *Yes, it is*, *No, we don't*, *I can't*, *has he?* based on the Subject-operator (declarative) and operator-Subject (interrogative) patterns. These are independent **abbreviated clauses**. They are used in response to questions, statements, exclamations and directives. They show more interest and involvement than a mere *Yes* or *No*, and even more than mere silence! In conversation they keep the talk alive by passing the turn from one speaker to another:

- A. Always drunk isn't he?  
 B. He's a sweet old man though.  
 A. Is he?  
 B. Gets me nice birthday presents.  
 A. Does he?  
 B. Mm. [KBL]

A common variant in AmE is the ‘**copy tag**’ with rising intonation, such as ***He does?*** This replaces A’s *Does he?* in the previous exchange. It is not common in BrE, although it resembles the BrE **echo question**. This repeats part, or all, of an immediately preceding utterance by another speaker. The motivation for using echoes is that the hearer did not comprehend, found difficult to believe, or did not hear properly what had been said:

I’m going to sell my golf clubs.	Sell them?
What did you say to him?	What did I say to him?

In interactive situations, in fact, a wide range of responses occurs, as speakers often express greater or less certainty about the proposition:

Have you got any stamps?	
No, I don’t think I have, in fact I know I haven’t.	[KCX]

## 14.5 ALTERNATIVE INTERROGATIVES

**Alternative interrogatives** also start with an operator, like the *yes/no* type, but *yes* or *no* is no longer an appropriate answer. Instead, one of the two alternatives presented in the question is expected to be chosen, but again, variants are possible, as shown in B’s answers:

A	Do you study for enjoyment or to advance your career?	[BNA]
B	– For enjoyment	
	– To advance my career	
	– Both	

## 14.6 WH-INTERROGATIVES

*Wh*-interrogatives contain an element of missing information which is embodied in the *wh*-word. What the speaker is seeking in this type of interrogative is the identity of that element. The rest is presupposed, that is, taken as given. For instance, *What do you want?* presupposes that you want something. The *wh*-word can fill a syntactic function of the clause or be part of a group or phrase.

<i>Wh</i> -word	Finite	Subject		Syntactic function
<b>What</b>	do	you	want?	(Od)
<b>What</b>	is	it	for?	(complement of a prep.)
<b>Who(m)</b>	have	they	appointed?	(Od)
<b>Who</b>	can	it	be?	(Cs)
<b>Whose dog</b>	is	it?		(determinative in NG)
<b>When</b>	shall	we	go?	(A)
<b>How</b>	did	it	happen?	(A)
<b>How old</b>	is	she?		(Cs)
<b>How long</b>	have	you	known him?	(A)
<b>Why</b>	would	I	do that?	(A)
<b>Where</b>	have	you most	enjoyed working?	(A)

[BNA]

There is one exception to the Finite-Subject order in *wh*-interrogative clauses. This is when the *wh*-element itself functions as subject or as part of a NG at subject:

Subject	F/P	
<b>Who</b>	told	you that?
<b>Which</b> glass	got	broken? (determinative in NG)

The functional motivation for the ordering of interrogatives in English is that whatever is questioned comes first. If it is the polarity that is questioned, the finite operator comes first. If it is the identity of an unknown element, a *wh*-element comes first, followed by the Finite-Subject ordering. If the unknown element is the Subject, that (in the form of a *wh*-element), comes first.

This means that, basically, the entire interrogative system in English has Finite-Subject ordering, except when the Subject's identity is itself questioned.

Note that, in some languages, interrogative inversion is that of the Subject and the whole verbal group, as in Spanish *¿Ha llegado Pedro?* We must be aware that this variation is ungrammatical in English (*\*Has arrived Peter?*), except with primary verbs (*be* and *have*) in simple tenses. Compare: *Has Peter a bicycle?* is possible, but *\*Has had Peter lunch?* is ungrammatical. Furthermore, certain languages rely on intonation to express a question, using only the declarative form. This is also possible in English (→ 26.4) but it does not regularly replace the use of the interrogative structures.

The following dialogue between two friends illustrates declarative clauses and the two main interrogative types. Finite elements are italicised:

**So what *did* you do at the weekend, Janet?**

**Well, Jeff and I *went* off to Whitby to visit our in-laws. We *took* the dog with us and we all *ended up* having a walk along the beach.**

***Can* you walk right along the cliffs to Robin Hood's Bay?**

**I *think* you probably *could* do, but it's quite dangerous. You *can* get through occasionally when the tide's out, but it *doesn't* stay out for very long and you *can* get caught.**  
(authors' data)

The combination of a *wh*-interrogative word with *-ever* acts as an intensifier expressing the surprise, perplexity or disbelief of the speaker. *Why ever* is often spelt as two words, the other items as either one or two:

*Whoever* would believe such a story?

*Wherever* did you hear that?

*Why ever* didn't he let us know he was coming?

Alternatively, *wh*-interrogative words can be intensified informally by certain lexical items which include *on earth*, *in the world*, and other more marked colloquialisms including semi-taboo words, such as *the devil*, *the hell*.

*Why on earth* didn't you get in touch?

(→ 3.1 and Unit 16 for negative-interrogatives.)

## 14.7 DOUBLE INTERROGATIVES: QUESTIONS WITHIN QUESTIONS

We saw in 11.3 that a yes/no question can have a *wh*-interrogative as object, producing a question within a question, as in *Do you know what time it is?*, (not *\*Do you know what time is it?*) Pragmatically, there are two possible interpretations involved in this case: (a) whether the addressee knows the answer to the *wh*-question; and (b) the content embodied in the *wh*-element. The intention of the speaker, together with the context, will favour one or other in importance. For example, if the addressee is slowly packing a suitcase to catch a train (a) 'knowing the time' is likely to be more important. On the other hand, if the speaker's watch has stopped, (b) 'the time is x' is likely to be of greater interest to the speaker. The force is different too. In (a) *Do you know what time it is?* has the force of a polite reminder, while in (b) it will be interpreted as a request.

## 14.8 QUESTION TAGS

Question tags are not independent clauses, but they do require a response, and are highly interactive. Structurally, tags are abbreviated *yes/no* interrogatives consisting of an operator (either positive or negative) and a pronoun, which repeats the subject or substitutes for it. Question tags are attached to one of the following clause types:

<b>a declarative clause:</b>	It was quiet in there, <i>wasn't it?</i>
<b>an exclamative clause:</b>	How quiet it was in there, <i>wasn't it?</i>
<b>an imperative clause:</b>	Be quiet for a moment, <i>will you?</i>

Of these, the declarative is by far the most common. The tag is usually placed at the end, **1–5**, but sometimes in the middle, **6**:

- 1** Ben is in South Africa, *isn't he?*
- 2** He isn't with Gordon, *is he?*
- 3** You live in Hammersmith, *don't you?*
- 4** You don't live in Chelsea, *do you?*
- 5** It doesn't really matter, *does it?*
- 6** It's easy, *isn't it*, to get into the habit?

## 14.9 FEATURES OF THE MAIN TYPES OF TAG

There are two main types of declarative mood tag, distinguished by polarity sequence. Type 1 tag has opposite polarity to that of the main clause. That is, if the main clause is positive, the tag is negative, and vice versa, as in the examples so far.

There is either **rising** or **falling intonation** on the tag. A rising tone on the tag indicates doubt, and so the meaning is 'Am I right?' If however the intonation is falling, it expresses greater certainty, so that the meaning of the tag is more like 'I'm asking you to confirm this' and simply seeks agreement.

The **Type 2 tag** has constant polarity, that is, the same as the main clause. It occurs mostly in combinations of positive declarative clauses with positive tags. Type 2 tags



typically have a rising tone on the tag, and the statement is often preceded by a discourse marker, such as *Oh*, *So* or *Well now*, which indicates that the speaker is expressing a conclusion or inference drawn from the situation or from what has been said before. The effect is often emotive and can either express an agreeable surprise or else sound pejorative, depending on the implication.

*Oh*, so you're the new assistant, *are you?*  
*Oh* so that's what she said, *is it?*  
*Well now*, this is the Norman chapel, *is it?*  
 You found the address, *did you?*

A third type of tag is the **copy tag**, introduced in 14.4 as *He does?* It is declarative in form and is used with rising intonation as a response showing interest or involvement, mainly in AmE:

A (driver leans out of his window addressing the driver of another car)  
 I think I've lost my way.  
 B You do? / You have?  
 BrE would prefer *Have you?*

James Saunders' parody of a doctor in *Over the Wall* contains a number of positive tags:

Falling hair, loss of weight, gain of weight, tenseness, got a drink problem *have you*, smoking too much, hallucinations, palpitations, eructations, on drugs *are you*, can you read the top line, overdoing it at work perhaps, worrying about the work, about the spouse, about where to go for your holiday, about the mortgage, about the value of the pound, about the political situation, about your old mother, about the kids, kids playing up *are they*, not doing well at school, got a drink problem *have they*, smoking, on drugs *are they*, suffering from loss of weight, falling hair, got any worries *have you?*

Yes!

In both types of question tag, the pronoun in the tag is co-referential with the subject; the operator, not the pronoun, carries the tonic stress.

There is a third, very useful, common variant, heard mainly in women's speech, illustrated by the following example:

Ooh! I love squirrels, don't **you**? [KBW]

Here the pronouns are not co-referential. The sentence subject is invariably *I* and that of the tag, *you*. It is *you*, not the operator, that carries the tonic stress, marking a contrast with the 1st person, the speaker. The tag invites the addressee to agree or disagree with the speaker's opinion.

When a clausal fragment such as *I think* or *I suppose* introduces an embedded clause that encodes the main propositional content of the sentence, the tag refers to the embedded clause, not to the clausal fragment (→ 36.2). The stance expression can be placed parenthetically:

*I think* he left before lunch, *didn't he?* (not \**don't I?*)  
(He left, *I think*, before lunch, didn't he?)

Indefinite human singular pronouns take *they* in the tag:

*Everybody* seemed to enjoy themselves, didn't *they*?  
*Nobody* will agree to that, will *they*?  
*Somebody* should be told, shouldn't *they*?

The discourse function of tags following declaratives is to seek confirmation or agreement with the previous statement and to keep the conversation going. Tags are questions and so require an answer. They enable the speaker to elicit a response from the hearer, where a tagless declarative or imperative would not necessarily achieve this end. Together with abbreviated clauses and fragments as short responses, tags provide the main structural-functional devices for furthering speaker-hearer involvement.

With certain speech act functions, such as good wishes and warnings, a question tag is not used. Instead, other forms such as the following are used, in which the adverbs do not have their normal ideational value:

See you later, <i>then!</i>	Have a good journey, <i>then!</i>	
That plate is hot, <i>mind</i>	Look out, <i>there!</i>	Come on, <i>now!</i>

## 14.10 INVARIANT QUESTION TAGS

Invariant tags are those such as *Right?* 1 and *okay?*, which are not derived from the structure of the main clause. Like other tags, *Right?* seeks confirmation or agreement from the addressee. *Right* and *okay*, however, also function (like *all right*) as responses indicating agreement or compliance, and also as discourse markers to call attention and initiate an action 3:

- |   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | Getting over a cold, <i>right?</i>  | [KBF] |
| 2 | ... whenever you want to read there, you can do that.<br><i>Okay right right.</i> | [KCV] |
| 3 | <i>Right</i> , er, let's have a look then   | [KB3] |

The form *innit*, (*in n t* AmE) originally derived from *isn't it*, is used in popular, non-standard speech as a tag appended to a declarative 4. In the vernacular it is also used as a negative interrogative main verb and a question tag, in the same sentence 5. Furthermore, in some communities it is becoming a generalised tag 6. However, it is highly stigmatised in all its uses and is avoided by speakers of Standard English.

- |   |                                       |       |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 4 | It's a nice pattern <i>innit?</i>     | [KB8] |
| 5 | Ah <i>innit</i> lovely <i>innit?</i>  | [KBE] |
| 6 | You know our life story <i>innit?</i> | [KCS] |

# THE EXCLAMATIVE AND IMPERATIVE CLAUSE TYPES

## UNIT 15

### SUMMARY

- 1 Exclamative clauses open with a *wh-* element *what* or *how*, followed by a NG or adjective/adverb, respectively. Like the declarative, they have Subject-Finite ordering. Exclamative *what* is a determinative (*What a mess!*), while *how* functions as a degree adverb (*How strange it was!*), unlike pronominal *what* and manner adverb *how* in *wh-* interrogatives (*What is it? How is she?*). They are used to make exclamative statements.
- 2 The imperative consists of the base form of the verb alone, without modals, tense or aspect (*Stop!*). This can be preceded by the negative form *don't* or emphatic *do*. There is no overt subject, but a 2nd person subject (stressed *you*) can be added, usually for purposes of contrast with another person (**You** *sit down and I'll stand*). *Somebody, everybody, nobody* can also be used and, like *you*, refer to the addressee(s). These, and other forms, can also be used as vocatives. A polite clause tag is *will you?* *Let's* is the imperative particle used for a 1st person imperative, typically suggesting a joint action. It is to be distinguished from the lexical verb *let*, from which it derived. The unmarked function of imperatives is to issue a directive.
- 3 Reduced clauses are extremely common in spoken English and fulfil an important interactive function. They include abbreviated clauses (basically S-F or F-S in structure) that function independently, question tags, verbless clauses of various degrees of ellipsis, echoes, and freestanding subordinate clauses (*which it does*). In this unit we refer mainly to the typical speech act associated with each clause type.
- 4 The subjunctive is not a clause type but a verb form. It remains outside the system of clause types and has a very limited use in British English, rather more in American English.

## 15.1 THE EXCLAMATIVE

The exclamative clause type starts with a *wh*- word, either the determinative *what*, followed by a nominal group or the degree adverb *how* and an adjective, adverb or statement:

### ***Wh*- element**

<i>What a shock</i>	they'll have!	
<i>What a mess</i>	we have made.	[G16]
<i>How dark</i>	it is!	
<i>How</i>	it snowed!	

Exclamatives have the Subject-Finite ordering that is characteristic of the declarative; the element following the *wh*- word is a clause constituent which has been brought to the front of the clause. For these reasons exclamative clauses are sometimes considered as an emotive element superimposed on the declarative rather than as a distinct mood.

The declarative clauses corresponding to these examples are as follows:

They'll have a shock.  
 We've made a mess.  
 It is dark.  
 It snowed.

*How*-exclamative clauses can sound somewhat theatrical nowadays, especially when followed by an adverb (*How well he played!*). More commonly heard than clausal exclamatives in everyday spoken English are abbreviated noun-headed or adjective-headed forms.

Embedded (or indirect) exclamatives occur regularly in both spoken and written English. We refer to them in 11.3.4 under *wh*- complements, and simply illustrate them here:

You wouldn't believe *how badly the prisoners were treated*.

## 15.2 THE IMPERATIVE

The most striking feature of an imperative clause is that it requires no overt Subject in English. In this it differs sharply from the other clause types:

*Be careful!*  
*Come on! Hurry up!*

The subject is pragmatically understood to be the addressee, and this is confirmed by the presence of a reflexive pronoun (*yourself, yourselves*) **1**, a question tag (*will you*) **2** or by a vocative (*you, you people, you guys*, used to address women as well as men) **3, 6**. Stressed *you* positioned immediately before the imperative is usually interpreted as subject, and is typically used to mark a contrast with the speaker or a 3rd person **4**. Subject and vocative are less distinct when realised by *someone* **7**, *everyone*, or a NG such as *passengers on flight IB580 to Vigo* **8** preceding the verb. They could be either subject or vocative, or even merge. Both are optional and both refer to the addressees, representing either all or a sub-set of those persons present in the speech situation. When placed in final position **1**, a pronoun or NG would normally be considered a vocative.

- 1** Help *yourselves, everyone*!
- 2** Be quiet, *will you*!
- 3** Shut up, *you two*!
- 4** *You* stay here and I'll get the tickets.
- 5** Hey *Helena* calm down! [KCE]
- 6** Come on, *you guys*, the movie will be starting soon. [KCE]
- 7** *Someone* call an ambulance!
- 8** *Passengers on flight number IB580 to Vigo* please proceed to gate number 17.

**Vocatives** are able to occupy various positions, typically final **3**, but also medial **6** and initial, often preceded by an attention-getter **5**. Common vocatives are first names, *Johnny, Pat*, kinship names *Mum(BrE)/Mom(AmE), Grandad*, endearments *darling, love, honey, pet*, pronoun *you* + noun *you guys*, surnames and titles, *Mr Roberts*, and (now less common) honorifics *madam, sir*. Vocatives fulfil important interpersonal functions in getting some- one's attention, singling out one individual among a group and maintaining relationships, either of a close or friendly nature or, less commonly nowadays, marking distance and respect.

As these examples illustrate, imperatives typically encode directives, which range from orders **2, 3** to encouragement **6**, urgent request **7**, invitation **1** and instructions **8** (→ 27.1).

The following exchange between two women friends was overheard on the London Underground when a seat became vacant. Two functions of *you* occur; as subject of an imperative and as vocative after an imperative:

- A<sub>1</sub> Sit down!
- B<sub>2</sub> No, you sit down!
- A<sub>3</sub> You're the one with the feet.
- B<sub>4</sub> So are you. You sit down!
- A<sub>5</sub> Sit down with the feet, you!

*You* in B<sub>2</sub> and B<sub>4</sub> subject of imperative. *You* in A<sub>5</sub> vocative after an imperative.

### 15.2.1 The verb in the imperative

Another important structural feature of the imperative is that it uses the base form of the verb, with no modals or tense-aspect forms. This is shown by the use of *be* in *Be careful!* (not *\*are (being) careful*, *\*can be careful*). The grammatical status of the base form as a non-finite is somewhat problematic, however. It does not share functions with other non-finite verb forms; rather, the imperative has more in common, functionally, with finites than with the non-finites. Like interrogatives, it relates the speaker to the hearer and to the here-and-now, typically in face-to-face interaction.

Because the base form is indistinguishable from some declarative forms, there is potentially structural ambiguity between an imperative with a *you*-subject and a declarative. This is disambiguated only in speech, by stress on the imperative subject:

- A How do we get tickets for this show?  
 B *You* go and stand in the queue/ AmE in line. (unstressed, declarative, use of 'generic' *you* = 'one')  
 A What shall we do, then?  
 B ***You*** go and stand in the queue while ***I*** park the car. (stressed, imperative)

There is, however, a distinction between declarative and imperative when the verb is *be*, as in role-taking. This is because *be* has retained different forms for person and tense (*am*, *is*, *are*). Compare:

- You *be* the doctor and I'll be the nurse. (imperative)  
 You're the doctor and I'm the nurse. (declarative)

The declarative 3rd person singular finite form *-s* avoids ambiguity with a 3rd person subject imperative. Note however that *please* always points to a directive meaning:

Imperative	Declarative
Everybody sit down, please!	Everybody sits down.
No-one say a word!	No-one says a word.

Figure 4.4 Imperative and declarative.

If the Subject is plural, the verb form is the same in both types, but intonation, pause, gesture and common sense serve to clarify the meaning in a specific context.

- Ticket-holders (pause) come this way!      Ticket-holders come this way.  
 Those in agreement (pause) raise their hands!      Those in agreement raise their hands.

### 15.2.2 Negative and emphatic imperatives

*Don't* (placed before a subject) and *do* are used to negate or emphasise 2nd person imperatives, respectively. (To some speakers, *do* sounds rather old-fashioned now.)

Negative & emphasis	Subject	Base/Predicator	
Don't	You	be	careful, now!
Don't		be	silly!
Do	you	speak	to me like that!
		keep	still, Pat!

Figure 4.5 Negative and emphasis.

### 15.2.3 *Let's* and *Let us*

Another feature of the imperative in English is the use of *let's* to form a 1st person plural imperative with the implicit Subject *we*. Its typical use is to suggest or urge a collaborative action that includes both speaker and addressee(s). It is also used, however, as a disguised order by speakers in authority, as in the third example. The tag question used with 1st person imperatives is *Shall we?*

Let's take a few photos, shall we?

Let's go home, shall we?

Let's have some silence now!

*Let's* is historically derived from *let us* and in very formal settings, including church services, the unabbreviated form is heard:

Let us pray.

Let us consider the possible alternatives.

It may be that *let's* is beginning to function as an unanalysed pragmatic particle, as in non-standard *let's you and I do it*. The negative form of *let's* is *let's not*, although *don't let's* is also heard:

*Let's not* waste any more time.

[AMB]

Oh, *don't let's* talk about it, Len.

[GVT]

*Let's* is not to be confused with the normal imperative of the lexical verb *let* meaning *permit, allow*, as in:

*Let* me do it!

*Let* me help you.

As an illustration of the differences between the particle *let* and lexical *let* (= *allow*), compare:

*Let's go* and see that new film! (particle *let*)  
 Please *let us go* and see that new film. (lexical *let*)

Let's go! ( <i>let</i> as particle)	Let us go! (lexical verb <i>let</i> )
<i>Us</i> = <i>I</i> + <i>you</i>	<i>us</i> = <i>me</i> + <i>other(s)</i>
Pronoun <i>us</i> reduced to 's	Pronoun <i>us</i> not reduced
No subject pronoun can be added	2nd person subject <i>you</i> can be added: <i>You let us go!</i>
The tag is <i>shall we?</i>	The tag is <i>will you?/can't you?</i>
The verb is not ellipted	Phrasal verb is ellipted with verbs of direction: <i>let us in/out</i> (= <i>come/go in/out</i> )

Figure 4.6 *Let's* and *Let us*.

Obviously, both uses of *let* can occur in the same clause, as in *Let's let them in now*. The pragmatic particle *let* can also introduce a wish (the optative mood) as in *Let there be light* and is used only in formal registers (for inclusive and exclusive *we/us*, (→ 45.7.1).

### 15.3 VERBLESS AND FREESTANDING SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Spoken English and genres which imitate it are rich in ellipsis and reduced forms in general. We have already seen examples of abbreviated clauses, echo questions and tags.

#### *Verbless clauses*

We use the term 'verbless clause' to cover ellipted clauses which lack one or more structural elements: Subject and Finite verb **1, 2, 3, 5**, Finite verb **4**. They therefore lack the alternative orderings characteristic of abbreviated clauses. Some can take question tags, however, with either rising or falling intonation. Without a tag, intonation indicates the force of a statement, question or exclamation.

- 1** (He is) in New York, isn't he? (question)
- 2** What a waste of time, (it was) wasn't it! (exclamation)
- 3** (This is) Geoff here. (self-identifying statement on the phone)
- 4** (Are) you ready? (question)
- 5** (It's) fantastic! (exclamation)

In conversational exchanges in English, certain *wh*- questions without a finite verb play a part as initiators and responses. They can have the force of an invitation (*How about some lunch?*), an encouraging suggestion (*Why not give it another try?*), an inquiry (*How come Sheila's not with you?*)



### *Freestanding subordinate clauses*

These also are characteristic of ongoing conversation. Two very common types are the sentential relative clause introduced by *which* **1** and clauses of reason introduced by *because* or *cos* **2** (→ 35.3). The interesting feature is that they are not attached to a previous clause, but are freestanding, both intonationally and as regards punctuation. Functionally, they reinforce or give the reason for making the previous utterance:

- 1** and, he said, well with the coal fire and all that, he said, it'll, it'll get dirty  
Mm *which it will*, won't it? [KE6]
- 2** Did you see King Lear when it was on on the television? *Cos I taped that as well*. [KDM]

## 15.4 THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN ENGLISH

In English, mood has to do with clause types rather than verb inflection. It leaves the subjunctive somewhat isolated, since this is not a clause type, but a verb form which in present-day British English plays a very marginal role, although it is rather more common in American English.

As regards the expression of non-factual meaning, the subjunctive has also lost ground. In independent clauses the subjunctive can express a wish, but only in fossilised stereotyped expressions like *Long live the Queen! So be it, Heaven help us! Far be it from me to doubt your word*. Even in subordinate clauses, a clearly identifiable present subjunctive is limited to the uninflected VG occurring with a 3rd person singular subject in *that*-clause complements of certain verbs and adjectives, as in: *It is right that this House **debate** this issue*. In less formal contexts the indicative or *should* + infinitive are now used by many speakers. (We recommend that *he **gets/should get** a visa*.)

A past subjunctive can be identified only in the form *were* in the 1st and 3rd persons singular of *be* (*If I were you . . . If he were to return alive . . .*) in subordinate clauses of condition and concession, where it is still current in the best usage. Most non-factual notions, such as the expression of doubt and hypothesis, are conveyed in English by other grammatical means, principally *any* and its compounds and the modal auxiliaries, especially *should*, *could*, *may* and *might* (→ Unit 44).

One area in which an indicative–subjunctive contrast is made is in a certain type of *if* clause, as in:

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| If he <i>was</i> here I didn't see him.        | (indicative)  |
| If he <i>were</i> here I would surely see him. | (subjunctive) |

Only the second *if* clause is truly conditional. The first, meaning 'if it is true that he was here', is rhetorical condition in that his being here is not a condition for my seeing him. This is also referred to as pragmatic conjunction (→ 35.3).

# INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS, CLAUSE TYPES AND DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS

## UNIT 16

### SUMMARY

- 1 All language performs acts, but there is no one-to-one correspondence between clause type and speech-act function. Here we look at some of the indirect correspondences, together with other discourse functions.
- 2 Certain verbs such as *promise*, *advise* and *warn*, when used in the declarative, are potentially explicit performatives, that is they can carry out the act they name. This is the case with a 1st person subject and the present tense (*I promise*).
- 3 Exclamations can be made, with appropriate intonation, by all clause types, as well as by verbless clauses reduced to a nominal group or an adjective.

### 16.1 PERFORMATIVES AND THE DECLARATIVE

All language in use carries out acts, and this is what distinguishes an utterance from a sentence. A sentence is a grammatical object, but when it is used in context what we have is an utterance. The meaning of an utterance depends on what it is being used to do – what kind of speech act is being performed.

We have seen that making a statement is the basic function of the declarative. A statement describes a state of affairs in the world and has a truth value, which can be confirmed, questioned or denied (*She is at home; Is she at home? She is not at home*). Stating something is performing the verbal act of stating. The declarative is unique among clause types, however, in its ability to carry out certain acts by naming them. These are **explicit performatives**.

With certain verbs – such as *promise*, *advise* and *warn* – a declarative carries out the speech act it names. Such declaratives usually address the hearer directly, as in:

- |   |   |                |
|---|---|----------------|
| 1 | I <i>promise</i> I'll be careful.   | [B3J]<br>[B3J] |
| 2 | We <i>advise</i> you to book early to avoid disappointment.                                       | [AMW]<br>[AMW] |
| 3 | If you insist on staying, I <i>warn</i> you, you'll get no help from me.                          | [H94]          |
| 4 | And we have a very good selection of Indian restaurants: [HDT]<br>I <i>recommend</i> the Kashmir. |                |

That is, the speaker carries out the act of promising, advising, warning and recommending, respectively. Declaratives such as these don't have truth value. It makes no sense to ask if they are true or false. Instead, we can ask if they work as performatives. With a 1st person speaker and present tense, as in *I promise I'll be careful*, the performative is explicit and the speaker is fully accountable as the doer of the speech act.

As long as the underlying Subject is the speaker or the writer, the passive forms **5**, **6**, or an active form with an impersonal NG Subject **7**, have the same effect:

- 5 *You are advised* to book early to avoid disappointment.
- 6 *Passengers are requested* to have their boarding cards ready.
- 7 *John Lennon Airport apologise* for any inconvenience caused to the public during building works.

Performatives become less explicit when modalised (with *can* or *must*), when introduced by *let*, *want*, *I'm afraid* or when nominalised. They still count as performatives, however:

- 8 I *can offer* you beer, whisky, gin, cola . . .
- 9 *Let me thank* you once more for your collaboration.
- 10 *My apologies* for cross-postings.
- 11 I *must beg* you not to tell anyone about this.
- 12 I *am afraid I have to request* you to move to another seat.
- 13 I *wanna thank* you all. God bless you. (President George W. Bush to the American people in the aftermath of 11 September 2001)

These 'hedged', that is, indirect, forms are felt to be still performing the act named by the verb. In addition, they are more polite than direct forms because they avoid invoking power and status. Hearers may perceive them to be more sincere, as is also the case with the informal use of *wanna* instead of *want to* in the President's thanks.

Other verbs that can be used as explicit performatives include: *agree*, *bet*, *congratulate*, *declare*, *guarantee*, *object*, *wish* and many others.

With pronouns other than *I/we*, or with past tense or perfect aspect, such verbs do not carry out the act they name; instead, they are statements which report a speech act:

I offered them beer, whisky, gin, cola . . .

They have requested passengers to have their boarding cards ready.

You might wonder why we don't use performatives all the time, if they are so efficient. One reason is that not all verbs are potentially performative. For instance, we can't threaten someone in English by saying 'I threaten you', nor hint by saying 'I hint that you are wrong'. These acts have to be done indirectly.

A second reason is that explicit performatives sometimes appear to invoke authority or status. The power factor is most obvious in 'ritual performatives' such as:

Then I *declare* the meeting closed.

[GUD]

I *name* this ship Aurora. (Authorised person at launching of  
the ship)

[9W7]

**Negative declaratives** typically express a negative statement, which may have the force of a rejection **1**. Negating an explicit performative can have the effect of greatly attenuating the force, as in **2**, though this is not the case with passives **5**. Negative declaratives can also express a polite question **3**, an exclamation **4** or a prohibition **5**:

**1** I don't need any more calendars, thank you.

**2** I don't promise you that I'll convince him.

**3** Bill hasn't said anything about the weekend?

**4** I never heard such rubbish!

**5** Smoking is not allowed in here

With some performatives such as *advise*, what we have is **transferred negation**. The negative particle *not* is transferred from its logical place in the dependent clause to the main clause (→ 3.6 for other verbs, such as *think*, which behave this way):

I *don't advise* you to buy those shares (= I advise you not to buy those shares).

Certain verbs such as *promise* and *bet* are sometimes used performatively to carry out a different act from the one they name. Basically, *promise* carries out acts which benefit the addressee, while *bet* is used to lay a wager. But, in the examples that follow, this is not the case: *promise* is being used to threaten the addressee while *bet* informally expresses strong probability:

And don't you dare make fun of me!

[JXV]

One sound from you and you won't make another, I *promise* you.

I *bet* they have their problems, like us.

[H94]

## 16.2 EXCLAMATIONS

Appropriate intonation can be imposed on any type of unit, including a single word, to express an exclamation (*Splendid! Gotcha!*). [AmE]

With appropriate intonation, all the clause types can be used to make exclamations: the exclamative structure **1, 2**; an interrogative **3, 4**; a declarative **5, 6**; an imperative **7**; a verbless clause **8, 9**; a nominal group **10**:

<i>Using the exclamative structure:</i>	<b>1</b> What an idiot he is!
	<b>2</b> How tall you've grown!
<i>Using an interrogative</i>	<b>3</b> Isn't it a lovely day!
	<b>4</b> Would you believe it! (expressing disbelief)
<i>Using a declarative</i>	<b>5</b> You must be joking!
	<b>6</b> You can't be serious!
<i>Using an imperative</i>	<b>7</b> Fancy meeting you here!
<i>Using a verbless clause</i>	<b>8</b> What an idiot!
	<b>9</b> Amazing! Rubbish!
<i>Using a nominal group</i>	<b>10</b> The trouble I've had with Jamie!

Interrogative exclamations, unlike basic exclamatives, call for agreement or disagreement from the hearer: A. *Isn't it a lovely day!* B. *Yes, it is.*

*Such, so* and other intensifying items such as *terribly* also confer exclamative force on a declarative:

He's such a bore!	It's so tiring!
It's terribly hot!	It was extraordinarily beautiful!

# QUESTIONS, CLAUSE TYPES AND DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS

## UNIT 17

### SUMMARY

Questions typically seek information from the hearer that the speaker does not know. Responding to different motivations are questions functioning as preliminaries, rhetorical questions and leading questions of various types. The latter include interrogatives that are biased according to the kind of answer the speaker expects, towards a neutral, positive or negative assumption. These are marked by non-assertive forms (*any*), assertive forms (*some*) and negative forms (*no*, *not any*), respectively. Positive assumptions allow for positive forms, with *some* even in negative questions. Other leading questions consist of tentative declaratives with conducive markers and appropriate intonation. Ellipted verbless clauses rely heavily for interpretation on intonation and their position in the exchange.

The most basic intention in asking questions is to get information that we believe the addressee knows. It is not the only one, however. We here refer to two others.

### 17.1 RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

Do you expect me to wait here all day?  
What could I say?  
Why bother?

Rhetorical questions are used to make a comment or an exclamation. A response is not expected.

### 17.2 QUESTIONS AS PRELIMINARIES

In interpersonal interaction the *yes/no* interrogative is sometimes used as a preliminary to something else. That is, the question is not so much seeking information as serving as a preliminary to an expansion of the speaker's topic **1** or a veiled request **2**:

- 1 A. Have you read this book?  
B. No, no.  
A. It's about a plane that crashes in the Andes and no-one comes to their rescue
- 2 A. Are you going to the hospital this morning?  
B. No.  
A. Well if you do it'll give us a chance to find out whether he's coming home today or tomorrow [KP1]

This function of *yes/no* questions would appear to be the basis of advertisements which use this type of interrogative in their text in imitation of speech patterns

Using a problem-solution schema, something like *Ashamed of your mobile/ cell phone?* will be followed by the supposed solution.

### 17.3 SOME, ANY AND NEGATIVE FORMS IN BIASED QUESTIONS

The questions expressed by *yes/no* interrogatives are often biased according to the kind of answer the speaker expects, and are based on neutral, positive or negative assumptions.

If the speaker has a neutral assumption about the answer, **non-assertive** forms (*any, anybody, ever, yet*, etc. (→ 3.3) will be added to a positive interrogative:

Do you know *anyone* in Westminster?  
Is the bank open *yet*?

With a positive assumption, **assertive** forms (→ 3.3) – *some, somebody, always, already, too*, etc. – are added to the positive interrogative:

Do you know *someone* in Westminster?  
Is the bank open *already*?

Negative-interrogative *yes/no* questions are based on conflicting attitudes. The speaker had originally expected that the answer would be or should be positive, but new evidence suggests that it will be negative. This conflict produces a feeling of surprise, disbelief or disappointment. If the addressee is directly involved, the biased question can imply a reproach. In this type of question, nuclear **negative** forms (→ 3.2) – *no, nobody, no-one, never*, etc. – can be added to a positive interrogative:

Is there <i>no</i> butter?	(There should be some butter, but it seems there isn't.)
Do you know <i>no-one</i> in Westminster?	(You ought to know someone, but it seems you don't.)

Alternatively, **non-assertive** forms can be added to a negative interrogative:

Isn't there *any* butter *anywhere* (BrE)/*anyplace* (AmE)?  
 Don't you know *anyone* in Westminster?

**Assertive** forms can be added to a negative interrogative to reflect a positive bias despite an originally negative assumption:

Isn't there *some* butter *somewhere*? (It seems there isn't, but I expect there is.)

Don't you know *someone* in Westminster? (It appears that you don't, but I think you must know someone.)

With offers, it seems more polite in English to assume a positive outcome, namely that the offer will be accepted. For this reason, the *some* forms are normal in such cases:

Would you like *some* more coffee? [BYU-BNC: KBK]  
 Do you want *something*, a soft drink before you go? [BYU-BNC: KCA]

Negation by nuclear negative elements – as opposed to negation by the negative particle *not* – is explained in Chapter 1(→ 3.3), together with assertive and non-assertive items (→ 3.4).

## 17.4 BIASED DECLARATIVES WITH ATTITUDINAL MARKERS

Speakers also use declaratives to seek confirmation of their assumptions in a tactful way. Most simply, the declarative is accompanied by appropriate intonation: *You are seeing her?* *You don't mind if I stay?* They are, in fact, leading questions. Frequently, certain items function as **attitudinal markers** to 'draw out' the desired information by reinforcing the speaker's assumption:

Examples are:

<i>I suppose</i> you've heard the news?	(epistemic verb)
<i>I understand</i> you're leaving your job?	(hearsay verb)
<i>I hear</i> you've been offered a new post?	(hearsay verb)
She wasn't invited to the wedding, <i>then</i> ?	(inferential connective)
<i>So</i> there's nothing we can do?	(inferential connective)
She knows all about it, <i>of course</i> ?	(attitudinal adjunct)
But <i>surely</i> you can just defrost it in the microwave?	(attitudinal adjunct)
So you took the documents to <i>which Ministerial office</i> ? And you left them <i>where</i> ?	(displaced <i>wh</i> -element)

More indirectly still, speakers can hint that information should be provided by *You were about to say . . .?*



Conversely, an interviewer in a chat show might press a participant to admit that she had left her husband and child, which she denies:

Interviewer:        So you've reported, basically, that you walked out?  
 Young woman:      No, I didn't walk out.

**Ellipted *yes/no questions*** (a type of verbless clause) are extremely common in spoken English. With these, it is even more important than usual to use appropriate intonation.

For example, if you are pouring coffee for someone, you might offer sugar and milk by saying simply *Sugar? Milk?* with a rising tone. A falling tone would be inferred as a statement, 'Here is the sugar, here is the milk', but wouldn't necessarily be interpreted as an offer; quite the opposite – you might be considered unhelpful.

# DIRECTIVES: GETTING PEOPLE TO CARRY OUT ACTIONS

## UNIT 18

### SUMMARY

- 1 The clearest way of trying to get someone to do something is by an imperative. Strong impositions that invoke power and status are not socially acceptable in English in many everyday situations, even when accompanied by *please*. Orders are usually avoided and are preferably made indirectly as requests by using other clause types. Question tags either soften or heighten the force of the directive; with imperatives, tags tend to sound familiar.
- 2 Modalisation is another resource for producing directives. With modalised declaratives the effect is usually stronger and more formal, while modalised interrogatives tend to sound more polite. In contexts of urgency (*Help! Stop!*) the imperative can be used, as in others in which the hearer's welfare is referred to (*Sleep well! Have fun!*).
- 3 Besides directing other people to do things, the speaker can commit him/herself to carrying out an act. Performative uses of *promise* and modal *will* with a declarative do precisely this. The particle *let's* is used to make suggestions for actions, usually to be carried out jointly with the addressee. It can also function, however, as a disguised order or request.

### 18.1 DIRECTIVES AND THE IMPERATIVE

Although the basic speech act associated with imperative clauses is commonly held to be that of expressing a command, the imperative is used more frequently in English for less mandatory purposes. It can imply attitudes and intentions that are not actually formulated in the clause, and which can only be interpreted through a knowledge of the background context and of the relationships that exist between the persons involved.

In fact, the difference between commands and other directives such as requests, invitations and advice is, as we have already seen, not clear-cut. It depends on such factors as the relative authority of the speaker towards the addressee and whether the

addressee is given the option of complying or not with the directive: in the case of a command there is no option, whereas with a request there is.

Other factors include which of the two interlocutors is judged to benefit from the fulfilment of the action: a piece of advice benefits the addressee, whereas a request benefits the speaker. Good wishes (*Get well soon!*) rarely refer to agentive acts (→ 14.1) and so aren't directives.

Politeness is also a major factor. The more the action is likely to benefit the addressee, the more socially acceptable an imperative will be. Otherwise, an imperative is likely to sound abrupt or demanding in English.

Consider the following cost–benefit scale on which the imperative is kept constant. The utterances at the lower end of the scale sound more polite than those at the top, even though there are no specific markers of politeness present:

1	Peel those potatoes	more cost to addressee	less polite
2	Pick up those papers		
3	Sit down		
4	Listen to this		
5	Enjoy your holiday		
6	Have another sandwich	more benefit to addressee	more polite

(Adapted from Leech 1983)

Other factors override politeness, however, such as emergency (*Help!*) or attention-seeking in conversation (*Look, what I meant was . . .*); the imperative can also be used when the speaker and hearer are carrying out a joint task (*Pass me the spanner*), when the hearer's interests are put first (*Don't worry! Cheer up! Take care!*), and even as a discourse initiator or topic introducer (*Guess who I saw this morning at the bank*).

The speech-act force of imperatives has, therefore, to be worked out by the addressee from the logical meaning of the sentence combined with the inferences made on the basis of context and the speaker–hearer relationship. Isolated examples can simply illustrate some typical interpretations:

Get out of here!	command
Keep off the grass.	prohibition
Please close the window!	request
Don't tell me you've passed your driving test!	disbelief
Do that again and you'll be sorry.	condition of threat
Pass your exams and we'll buy you a bike.	condition of promise
Don't forget your umbrella!	reminder
Mind the step!// Be careful with that hot plate!	warning
Feel free to take as many leaflets as you like.	permission
Just listen to this!	showing interest/involvement
Try one of these!	offer
Let's go jogging!	suggestion
Come on now, don't cry!// Go on, have a go!	encouragement
Sleep well! Have a safe journey!	good wishes

Suppose he doesn't answer.	considering a possible happening
Think nothing of it.	rejecting thanks
[Some people make easy profit.] <i>Take</i> drug handlers.	illustrative example of a claim

## 18.2 THE DISCOURSE FUNCTION OF *LET'S* IMPERATIVES

Imperatives (especially with *let's*) can fulfil a textual function in regulating the conversational flow, in many cases to the advantage of the more powerful speaker:

Let's get started	a call to attention
Let's start by . . .	management of the topic
Let's see/let me see	hesitation marker, to avoid silence and keep the floor
Let's just stick to the main concern	disallowing an interruption/topic management
More people read magazines than, <i>let's say</i> , historical treatises.	giving a possible example

## 18.3 POLITENESS IN DIRECTIVES

After an imperative, a modal tag acts as an intensifier, either softening or heightening the insistence of the directive. *Will you?* and *could you?* convey a high degree of optionality while *can't you?* questions the hearer's apparent inability to do something, conveying impatience and low optionality. The more optional the act appears to be, the more polite is the request.

Intonation and the words used can make even *will you* less polite, however; *Shut up* and *Drop dead* don't become polite by adding *will you*. Rising intonation is typically polite and persuasive, falling intonation more insistent.

Check this for me, will you?	polite, anticipates willingness
Sign this for me, would you?	polite, anticipates willingness
Keep this for me, can you?	familiar, anticipates willingness
Hold this for me, could you?	less familiar, anticipates willingness
Keep quiet, can't you?	insistent, anticipates unwillingness

These examples are characteristic of contexts of familiarity. With the exception of *can't*, they question and anticipate the addressee's willingness to carry out the action, and are polite but familiar, expressing solidarity. The negative imperative tag *will you?* is also familiar as in *Don't be late, will you?*, while the invariable tag *mind* is more insistent: *Don't be late, mind!*

Where there is no relationship of closeness between the speakers, these forms may sound over-familiar. In such cases most modalised interrogatives are safer without tags.

## 18.4 MODALISED INTERROGATIVES AS POLITE DIRECTIVES

The directive force is overlaid onto the interrogative. Such directives are more polite precisely because as interrogatives they appear to give the addressee the option of refusing, as in the following examples:

- 1 Can you close the door?
- 2 Will you close the door?
- 3 Could you close the door?
- 4 Would you close the door?
- 5 Won't you close the door?
- 6 Can't you close the door?
- 7 Must you leave the door open?
- 8 Do you mind closing the door?

The modals in **3** and **4** *Could you?* and *Would you?* are most polite because by the use of oblique ('past') forms they create conceptual distance between themselves and the speech act. Furthermore, distance correlates with less social involvement. The speaker conveys the impression that closing the door is of no great personal benefit; this gives the hearer a wider margin for possible refusal. As in the imperative tag, *can't* **6** is not polite as a request. *Won't* **5** is not polite either, as it appears to question the hearer's unwillingness to carry out the rather trivial act of closing the door. Such unwillingness to carry out simple actions that obviously need doing also violates cultural conventions of cooperation. By contrast, *won't you?* as an offer or invitation (*make yourself at home, won't you?*) is polite because it expresses warmth and generosity, and presumes that the act benefits the addressee. *Must* **7** is ironical, implying that the hearer has an insurmountable urge to leave the door open.

### Responding to directives

Requests are sometimes responded to by a standard phrase: A. *Do you mind closing the door?* B. *Not at all/Certainly/Sure*. Of these, *not at all* responds to the sentence meaning of *Do you mind?*, whereas *certainly* and *sure* clearly respond to the pragmatic meaning of 'request' rather than to the sentence meaning, since they are not to be taken as *certainly/sure I mind closing the door*. Offers can be accepted by *Yes, please* or *Thanks*, and refused by *No, thanks*. *Thank you* alone is not interpreted as a refusal in English. Suggestions are responded to in many different ways such as *okay, I might, it's an idea*.

## 18.5 DECLARATIVES AS DIRECTIVES

A declarative which contains a modal auxiliary (e.g. *can, shall, will, may, might, must, ought, should*) and refers to an action to be carried out by the addressee can be used with the force of a directive. They are usually quite strong, invoking authority:

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| You <i>will</i> report to Head Office tomorrow, Bond. | (command)           |
| Dogs <i>must</i> be kept on a lead.                   | (strong obligation) |

You <i>may/can</i> leave now.	(permission)
Surely you can take your own decisions!	(exclamative-directive)

A 1st person declarative with a modal can have the effect of committing the speaker to a course of action:

I'll meet you at the entrance at about nine.  
I *must* rush off now to my aerobics class.

For meanings of prediction (*will, shall*), logical necessity (*must*), possibility (*may, might*) and reasonable inference (*should, ought*) → 44.3. These meanings are almost always clearly distinguishable from the directive meanings, as in:

There <i>will</i> be time for a few questions.	(prediction)
It <i>must</i> be almost half-past nine.	(logical necessity/deduction)

## 18.6 INDIRECTNESS, IMPOLITENESS AND CONFRONTATION

Indirectness is part of everyday interaction in spoken English. It is important to learn to handle and interpret the conventional politeness forms and the force each carries, as these serve to construct and negotiate meanings and actions which lead to a satisfactory outcome for both or all the participants.

This does not mean that speakers are invariably polite to each other. Far from it. Mutual insults among some communities represent a form of solidarity. In many other contexts, competitiveness or a desire to score off the adversary lead quickly to confrontational attitudes and acrimonious exchanges. Indirectness and implicit meanings are common in such cases also, as is illustrated in the following extract from Ian Rankin's novel *Set in Darkness*.

Detective Inspector Linford is sitting in his BMW in the only spare bay belonging to a large office block in Edinburgh. Another car approaches and stops, its driver sounding the horn and gesturing:  
Linford slid his window down.

'That's my space you're in, so *if you wouldn't mind.....?*'<sup>1</sup>

Linford looked around. '*I don't see any signs.*'<sup>2</sup>

'*This is staff parking.*'<sup>3</sup> A glance at a wristwatch. '*And I'm late for a meeting.*'<sup>4</sup>

Linford looked towards where another driver was getting into his car. '*Space there for you.*'<sup>5</sup>

'*You deaf or what?*'<sup>6</sup> Angry face, jaw jutting and tensed. A man looking for a fight.

Linford was just about ready. '*So you'd rather argue with me than get to your meeting?*'<sup>7</sup> He looked towards where another car was leaving. '*Nice spot over there.*'<sup>8</sup>

'*That's Harley. He takes his lunch hour at the gym. I'll be in the meeting when he gets back, and that's his space.*'<sup>9</sup> Which is why you move your junk heap.'<sup>10</sup>

'*This from a man who drives a Sierra Cosworth.*'<sup>11</sup>

*'Wrong answer.'*<sup>12</sup> The man yanked Linford's door open.

*'The assault charge is going to look bloody good on your CV.'*<sup>13</sup>

*'You'll have fun trying to make a complaint through broken teeth.'*<sup>14</sup>

*'And you'll be in the cells for assaulting a police officer.'*<sup>15</sup>

The man stopped, his jaw retreating a fraction. His Adam's apple was prominent when he swallowed. Linford took the opportunity to reach into his jacket, showing his warrant card.

*'So now you know who I am.'*<sup>16</sup> Linford said, *'But I didn't catch your name . . . ?'*<sup>17</sup>

*'Look. I'm sorry.'*<sup>18</sup> The man had turned from fire to sun, his grin trying for embarrassed apology. *'I didn't mean to . . .'*<sup>19</sup> (see exercise)

You will see that the numbered sentences of the fictional dialogue are either declaratives or interrogatives, although some of the clauses are verbless. Notice how the two speakers overlay the basic force of question and assertion with other more implicit forces such as **explanation, reason, warning, threat, apology, challenge, provocation, suggestion, excuse**. It is these indirect meanings that are inferred and which interest us here.

## 18.7 CLAUSE TYPES AND SPEECH ACT FORCE: SUMMARY TABLE

This table illustrates some of the more conventional correspondences between clause types and their illocutionary force. Many speech acts can also be expressed by units both larger and smaller than the clauses, as well as by non-linguistic means such as gestures.

Clause type	Speech act force	Example
DECLARATIVE	Statement	We are ready to go.
	Explicit performative	I beg you to reconsider your decision.
	Hedged performative	We wish to thank you for all your help.
	Biased question	So you went out with her?
	Question (displaced <i>wh</i> )	You took the documents to which ministry?
	Exclamation	It was so hot!
	Directives:	
	order	Papers are to be in by April 15.
	request	I wonder if you would lend me your car. I suppose you haven't got any change on you.
	prelude to request	I'm terribly sorry, but could you . . . ?
	advice	I'd sell if I were you.
	warning	That plate's hot!
	offer	You must try one of these.

EXCLAMATIVE	Exclamation	What an angel you've been!
INTERROGATIVE	Question Rhetorical question rebuke Exclamation rebuke  Directives:  order request suggestion/advice offer/invitation	Who is that man over there? Who will believe that story. How could you be so careless? Isn't it wonderful! How dare you speak to her like that!  Will you please be quiet! Could you lend me a pen . . . ? Why don't you see a doctor? Won't you sit down?
IMPERATIVE:	Directives:  order request offer warning instructions disbelief	Shut up! Save some for me! Have a drink! Mind your head! Twist off. Don't tell me you've passed!

Figure 4.7 Clause types and illocutionary force.

### 18.7.1 Clause combinations

Combinations of clauses can be used in English to express a polite request. The greater the imposition on the hearer, the longer the combination is likely to be, and it may be preceded by an apology:

I'm terribly sorry to bother you. I wonder if you could possibly write me a testimonial. If it's not too inconvenient, perhaps you could let me have it by tomorrow.

#### *Clauses without subject or finite verb*

How about a swim?

Why not start again?

Why all this fuss?

What to do in case of fire

How to boost your self-esteem

*Wh*-questions as suggestion

verbless *Why*-questions as inquiry

*Wh-to-inf.* clauses as directive headings

#### *Subordinate clauses*

To think what we might have missed!

Not to worry!

If only I had taken his advice!

What if we all go for a drink?

*to*-infinitive clauses as exclamations

or as friendly advice

*if only* clauses, indicating regret

*Wh-if*-clauses as suggestions



*Groups and words with speech act force*

Straight ahead!  
 Down with war!  
 Careful!  
 Silence!  
 Scalpel!

**FURTHER READING**

For clause types, distribution and conversational grammar: Quirk et al. (1985); Biber et al. (1999). The mood element and interpersonal interaction: Halliday (1994). Direct and indirect speech acts: Searle (1975); Levinson (1983). Performative(ness): Austin (1962); Thomas (1995). Cooperativeness and inferencing: Grice (1975); Panther and Thornburg (1998); Sperber and Wilson (1986). Politeness and the cost-benefit scale: Leech (1983); Brown and Levinson (1987); Hidalgo-Downing, L., Hidalgo-Downing, R. and Downing, A. (2014). Types and functions of questions: Taylor (1989); *surely* as a stance marker: Downing (2001 and 2006); intonation in ellipted questions: Gumperz (1982).

**EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 4****Interaction between speaker and hearer****Units 13 and 14**

- 1 †Underline the Subject and Finite elements in each of the following clauses. Then (a) make the declarative clauses negative; (b) convert the negative declaratives into *yes/no* negative interrogatives (main clause only):
  - (1) I am going to be the last one to hear about it.
  - (2) Nora's mum bought enough blue denim to make two skirts.
  - (3) He tells everyone his life history every time he meets them.
  - (4) Sheila knew where the keys were all the time.
  - (5) Bill took on a great deal of responsibility in his previous job.
- 2 †If both abbreviated clauses and tags are based structurally on Subject-Finite variation, in what way do they differ? Look again at the second dialogue in 14.4 and identify the instance(s) of each. For greater clarity replace B's *Mm* by *He does*.
- 3 †Provide abbreviated clauses as (a) confirming and (b) disconfirming responses to each of the following utterances:
  - (1) It doesn't seem to matter who you are.
  - (2) You have two children, haven't you, Charles?
  - (3) Will you be going to the concert this evening?
  - (4) Let's find a seat.

- 4 †Add (a) a reversed polarity tag to each of the following clauses, when possible; (b) a constant polarity tag when possible:

- (1) This wallet is yours.
- (2) You've got a new bicycle.
- (3) Susie likes doing crossword puzzles.
- (4) Don't be late.
- (5) Be careful!
- (6) Your father used to work for the City Council.
- (7) Some of these shops overcharge terribly.
- (8) So he fell on his hand and broke it.

## Unit 15

- 1 †Decide whether the italicised item is a subject, a vocative or either. Give reasons.

- (1) Keep still, *Edward*, there's a good boy.
- (2) *Somebody* pass me the insect repellent, quick! Thank you, *dear*. Now *you* take some.
- (3) *Everybody* lift at the same time! Right, one, to, three, up she goes, *everybody*!
- (4) Do shut up, *Helen*, you're making a fool of yourself.
- (5) *You all* wait here, that will be best. I'll be back in a moment.
- (6) *You* just leave him alone, do you hear?

- 2 †The following extracts are from Al Gore's concession speech at the conclusion of the 2000 US presidential campaign, after he had lost the election. For each extract, say whether *let* is (a) a 2nd person imperative of the verb *let* (= *allow*), (b) the pragmatic particle *let* introducing a wish (the optative), or (c) the same particle in its function of suggesting an action to be carried out by speaker and addressee (a 1st person plural imperative). Say which type is not represented and suggest a reason for its absence:

- (1) Let there be no doubt, while I strongly disagree with the court's decision, I accept it.
- (2) Let me say how grateful I am to all those who've supported me.
- (3) And I say to our fellow members of the world community: Let no-one see this contest as a sign of American weakness.

## Unit 16

- 1 †Say which of the verbs in the following clauses perform the act they name and which don't:

- (1) I *admit* I was to blame.
- (2) I *appeal* to you as an honorary Roman to nip over here in your Popemobile and put an end to this wanton destruction. [ACK]
- (3) I *demand* to be paid for the hours I put in, whether your cousin passes her exams or not. [JXT]
- (4) Neil and I *argue* about football all the time. [CH6]
- (5) I'll *say* goodnight and I *apologise* for disturbing you so late. [HWP]
- (6) No really I *insist* please, after you [HNS]
- (7) The bed in the room next to you is perfectly adequate for me, I *promise*. [JYC]
- (8) Much as I love the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, I *refuse* to call any dog Bilbo Baggins, so Bill he has become. [EWB]

- (9) I *bet* you didn't sit on the sofa with him holding hands [BMS]  
 (10) Referring to an elusive particle that is crucial to standard theories of physics, Stephen Hawking is said to have placed a wager with Professor Gordon Kane, saying, 'I'll *bet* you \$100 it has not been discovered'. (It has now: the Higgs boson!)

## Unit 17

1 †Identify the clause type and suggest the possible **force** each utterance has:

- (1) Is there any coffee?
- (2) Coffee?
- (3) Could you tell me the way to the nearest Tube station, please?
- (4) What could I say?
- (5) She didn't leave a message, then?
- (6) Wasn't it exciting!
- (7) Where would we be without tin openers?
- (8) Are you going to the Post Office? Yes. Then could you get me some stamps?
- (9) He is aware of the risk, of course?
- (10) So it wasn't you who rang just now? No. I wonder who it was.

2 †(a) Provide whichever biasing element seems most suitable in the following questions (that is, neutral, positive or negative, realised by *any*, *some*, *not* . . . *any/no* or their compounds, respectively). (b) Answer the questions, using a suitable orientational element.

- (1) Have you . . . copies of *The Times* and *The Guardian*?
- (2) Could you get me . . . orange juice, please?
- (3) So there isn't . . . we can do?
- (3b) So there is . . . we can do?
- (4) Did you meet . . . interesting at the party?
- (5) Do you know . . . nice to stay for a quiet holiday near the coast?
- (6) Would you like . . . more cake?

## Unit 18

1 †If someone says to you 'Have you change of a pound?' and you say 'Yes' without bringing out the change, you are reacting to the structural meaning of the interrogative, but not to the pragmatic meaning, the force of 'request'. Such a response can be uncooperative or impolite. Suggest (i) an uncooperative and (ii) a cooperative response for the following utterances:

- (a) Would you mind signing this petition in favour of genetically modified crops?
- (b) Do you know the way to the Victoria and Albert Museum?

However, the power factor may skew the reply. The following exchange occurred in a film:

Lord Longhorn to his butler: Do you mind taking this book back to the library?  
*(handing over the book)*  
 Butler: Yes sir *(taking book and leaving)*.

- (c) What is the butler responding to? Is it polite? Why does he say yes rather than no?
  - (d) And what would the butler say if he were responding to the structural meaning of 'Do you mind . . . ?'
- 2** †(a) Suggest what illocutionary force would conventionally be assigned to each of the following utterances. Final punctuation is omitted. (b) Identify the clause type of each, specifying those which are performatives.
- (1) I order you not to smoke in the dining-room.
  - (2) Do not smoke in the dining-room.
  - (3) Members will refrain from smoking in the dining-room.
  - (4) No smoking in the dining-room.
  - (5) Smoking is not allowed in the dining-room.
  - (6) Would you mind not smoking in the dining-room?
  - (7) Members are requested not to smoke in the dining-room.
  - (8) Thank you for not smoking in the dining-room.
- 3** †Directives: Suggest a specific directive speech act for each of the following questions:
- (1) Must you make so much noise?
  - (2) Can you pass me that hammer?
  - (3) Would you mind signing here?
  - (4) Will you have some more ice-cream?
  - (5) Why don't you help yourself?
  - (6) Why don't you apply for that job?
- 4** †Turn to the extract from Ian Rankin on pages 145–146 and suggest the intended meaning conveyed or inferred by each numbered sentence. Bear in mind such speech acts as **explanation, reason, threat, apology, challenge, provocation, insult, suggestion, excuse**.

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# CONCEPTUALISING PATTERNS OF EXPERIENCE

## CHAPTER 5

Processes, participants, circumstances

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# CONCEPTUALISING EXPERIENCES EXPRESSED AS SITUATION TYPES

## UNIT 19

### SUMMARY

- 1 Semantically, a clause represents a pattern of experience, conceptualised as a situation type.
- 2 Situation types comprise three main types: material, mental and relational. There are also three subsidiary types: behavioural, verbal and existential.
- 3 Each situation type consists of the following:
  - The process: the central part of the situation, realised by a verb. Process types include those of doing, happening, experiencing, being and existing.
  - Participant roles: these symbolically represent the persons, things and abstract entities involved in the process.
  - Attributes: the elements which characterise, identify or locate the participant.
  - Circumstances: those of time, place, manner, condition, etc. attendant on the situation.
- 4 The type of process determines the nature and number of the participants. Certain inherent participants can remain unactualised when understood in the context.
- 5 The valency of the verb specifies the number of inherent participants of any process, and by reduction indicates the result of unactualising one or more participants. This type of analysis runs parallel to the traditional transitive–intransitive analysis.

### 19.1 PROCESSES, PARTICIPANTS, CIRCUMSTANCES

In this chapter we look at the clause as a grammatical means of encoding patterns of experience. A fundamental property of language is that it enables us to conceptualise



and describe our experience, whether of the actions and events, people and things of the external world, or of the internal world of our thoughts, feelings and perceptions. This is done through transitivity, contemplated in a broad sense, which encompasses not only the verb but the semantic configuration of situation types.

The clause is, here too then, the most significant grammatical unit. It is the unit that enables us to organise the wealth of our experience, both semantically and syntactically, into a manageable number of representational patterns or schemas. Our personal 'construals' of each individual situation are then selected from these patterns. In describing an event, for instance, we might say that it just happened, or that it was caused by someone's deliberate intervention, or that it is unusual, or that we feel sad about it, among other possible construals. In this chapter we will be talking about patterns of 'doing', 'happening', 'experiencing' and 'being' as the main types, together with a small number of subsidiary types.

As language-users, we are interested in events and especially in the human participants involved and the qualities we ascribe to them, what they do, say and feel, their possessions and the circumstances in which the event takes place. The semantic schema for a situation, therefore, consists potentially of the following components:

- the process (a technical term for the action (e.g. hit, run), state (e.g. have) or change of state (e.g. melt, freeze) involved.
- the participant(s) involved in the process (basically, who or what is doing what to whom);
- the attributes ascribed to participants; and
- the circumstances attendant on the process, in terms of time, place, manner, and so on.

### 19.1.1 The process

There is no satisfactory general term to cover that central part of a situation, the part which is typically realised by the verb and which can be an action, a state, a meteorological phenomenon, a process of sensing, saying or simply existing. Following Halliday, we here use the term 'process' for all these types. We can also analyse them as dynamic processes and stative processes.

#### *Dynamic and stative processes*

**Dynamic** situations and processes involve something that occurs or happens; they can be tested for by means of the question 'What happened?' **Stative** situations and processes are conceived of as durative over time, and as existing rather than happening, so it doesn't make sense to ask 'What happened?' in such cases. Generally, dynamic processes easily occur in the progressive (*Pete is going away*) and the imperative (*Go away, Pete!*), whereas most stative processes don't usually accept the progressive or the imperative (*\*Pete is seeming kind. \*Hear a noise!*) (→ 43.5.1).

### 19.1.2 The participant roles (semantic functions) involved in the situation

In classifying situations into schemas, we filter out the wealth of detail that we find in our personal experiences, to focus on the salient participant(s) that belong to different types of situation. These are usually just one or two, at the most three. When one of the participants is human, it is typically assigned the primary role (Agent/Subject) in the semantic and syntactic constructions. This is a consequence of our anthropocentric orientation in conceptualising events.

While human participants occupy a prime place among the semantic roles, the term ‘participant’ does not refer exclusively to persons or animals, but includes things and abstractions. A participant can be the one who carries out the action or the one who is affected by it; it can be the one who experiences something by seeing or feeling; it can be a person or thing that simply exists. The terminology used to identify participant roles may be less familiar to you than the corresponding syntactic terms. As we go on, you will find that labels are useful in semantics, just as in syntax, in order to talk about concepts. We will try to keep them as simple and transparent as possible.

The **Attributes ascribed to entities** either identify or characterise the entity, or state its location in space or time. They are realised syntactically by the intensive Complements (Complement of the Subject and Complement of the Object).

### 19.1.3 The circumstantial roles associated with the process

These include the well-known circumstances of time, place, manner and condition, as well as a few others. They are typically optional in the semantic structure, just as their adjunctive counterparts are in the syntactic structure. Circumstances can, however, be inherent to the situation: for instance, location is obligatory with certain senses of ‘be’, as in *the ice-cream’s **over there***, and with ‘put’ in its sense of ‘placing’ as in *let’s put it **in the freezer*** (→ 4.2.1; 10.8).

Fred	bought	a new shirt	in Oxford Street	yesterday
Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance	Circumstance
At the present time	the state of the economy	is	Critical	
Circumstance	Participant	Process	Attribute	

Figure 5.1 The circumstantial role.

We have now outlined the framework that will serve to carry the different configurations of semantic functions that go to make up semantic structures. It is not the case, however, that any particular configuration is inherently given in nature. There are various ways of conceptualising a situation, according to our needs of the moment and what the lexico-grammatical resources of a language permit.

For instance, on the day planned for a river picnic we may look out of the window and say *it's cloudy*, specifying simply a state (*is*) and an Attribute (*cloudy*); alternatively, that *the sky is cloudy*, adding a participant (*the sky*) for the Attribute. More ominously, someone might say *the clouds are gathering*, in which the situation is represented as a dynamic happening rather than as a state, with a participant (*clouds*) and a dynamic process (*are gathering*), leaving implicit the circumstance of place (*in the sky*).

There is no one-to-one correlation between semantic structures and syntactic structures; rather, the semantic categories cut across the syntactic ones, although with some correlation. Semantic structures and syntactic structures do not, therefore, always coincide; rather, they overlap. In both cases, however, it is the process, expressed by the verb, that determines the choice of participants in the semantic structure and of syntactic elements in the syntactic structure. In Chapter 3 the possible syntactic combinations are discussed from the point of view of verb complementation and verb type. In this chapter we shall start from the semantics; at the same time we shall try to relate the choice of semantic roles to their syntactic realisations.

One obvious problem in the identification of participants and processes is the vastness and variety of the physical world, and the difficulty involved in reducing this variety to a few prototypical semantic roles and processes. All we can attempt to do is to specify the paradigm cases, and indicate where more detailed specification would be necessary in order to account semantically for the varied shades of our experience.

## 19.2 TYPES OF PROCESS

There are three main types of process:

- (a) Material processes are processes of 'doing' (e.g. *kick, run, eat, give*) or 'happening' (e.g. *fall, melt, collapse, slip*).
- (b) Mental processes, or processes of 'experiencing' or 'sensing' (e.g. *see, hear, feel, know, like, want, regret*).
- (c) Relational processes, or processes of 'being' (e.g. *be, seem*) or 'becoming' (e.g. *become, turn*), in which a participant is characterised, or identified, or situated circumstantially. A sub-type of relational process is that of 'having' or 'possessing' (e.g. *have, own*).

There are also three subsidiary processes: behavioural, verbal and existential. We shall see, as we go on, that the presence or absence of volition and energy are important factors in distinguishing between processes.

## 19.3 INHERENT PARTICIPANTS AND ACTUALISED PARTICIPANTS

Most processes are accompanied by one or more inherent participants; the nature of the process determines how many and what kind of participants are involved. The material process represented by the verb *fall* for instance, has only one participant, whereas *kick* typically requires two: one participant is the Agent who carries out the

action, and must be ‘animate’ and typically ‘human’; the other is the participant affected by the action of kicking, and is not required to be human, or even animate.

In the example *Ted kicked the ball* both the inherent participants are **actualised** as *Ted* and *the ball*. If we say *Ted kicked hard*, however, only one participant, the Agent, is actualised. The second participant, the one affected by the action, is **unactualised but understood**. In everyday uses of English, speakers frequently find it convenient not to actualise certain inherent participants. *Give*, for instance, is typically a three-participant process as in *Mary gave the Red Cross a donation*. Only two participants are actualised, however, in *Mary gave a donation* and only one in *Mary gave generously*.

Certain participants are omitted in this way when they are conventionally understood from the context of culture or context of situation, for example:

Do you drive?	(a car)	Shall I pour?	(the tea/coffee)
Have you eaten yet?	(lunch/dinner)	Our team is winning	(the match/race)

The participant is not specific in *electricity can kill*, *remarks like that can hurt*, *elephants never forget*, *Enjoy!* and is perhaps not even known to the speaker in *he teaches*, *she writes*. Processes such as *meet* and *kiss* can be understood as having implicit reciprocity in, for instance, *your sister and I have never met* (each other).

Some processes have typically no participants; for example, statements about the weather, time and distance such as *it’s snowing*, *it’s half past eleven*, *it’s a long walk to the beach*. In these the pronoun *it* is merely a surface form required to realise the obligatory Subject element. It has no corresponding semantic function.

In Chapter 3 the term **intransitive** has been used to refer to verbs that express one-participant processes such as *fall* or no-participant processes such as *rain*, whose action does not extend to any Object. The term **transitive** has been used to refer to verbs and clauses in which the process is extended to one or more Objects. Following this convention, *give* is transitive in *Mary gave a donation* but intransitive in *Give generously!*

Similarly, the **semantic** analysis into actualised and unactualised participants is paralleled by the **syntactic** analysis of verbs such as *drive*, *eat* etc. as being either **transitive** (taking an Object) or **intransitive** (with no Object).

In this book we shall use ‘transitive’ and ‘intransitive’ as syntactic terms, while referring semantically to one-, two- or three-participant processes, with ‘actualised’ or ‘unactualised’ inherent participants.

The number of participants (including the subject) involved in a process can also be referred to as its **valency**. A process with one participant is said to be **monovalent** – as in *the ice melted*. A process with two participants is **bivalent** – as in *the postman rides a motorcycle*; a process with three participants is **trivalent** – as in *Mary gave the Red Cross a donation*. The valency is reduced from three to two, or from two to one when participants are not actualised, as in the examples above (→ Chapter 3, Introduction).

To sum up, processes such as *eat* and *drive* each have two inherent participants (the one who eats or sees, and the one that is eaten or driven). But in our listed examples only one is actualised. The items in brackets represent the conventionally understood second participant. As regards valency, in each case the normal valency of two is reduced to one. As regards transitivity, each of the verbs is potentially transitive, but as the second participant is unactualised, the use is intransitive.

# MATERIAL PROCESSES OF DOING AND HAPPENING

## UNIT 20

### SUMMARY

- 1 The first main category of processes, material processes, includes several kinds: 'doing', 'happening', 'causing' and 'transferring'. Typically, the action of 'doing' is carried out by a volitional, controlling human participant: the Agent. A non-controlling inanimate agent is called Force, for instance an earthquake.
- 2 In processes of doing, the action either extends no further than the Agent itself, as in *she resigned*, or it extends to another participant, the Affected (*the ball* in *Pelé kicked the ball*). A special type of 'doing' is the process of transfer, in which an Agent transfers an Affected participant to a Recipient or is intended for a Beneficiary (*give someone a present, make someone a cake*, respectively).
- 3 In involuntary processes of happening, the Affected undergoes the happening (*the roof fell in, the old man collapsed*).
- 4 The order of elements in the semantic structures is iconic, that is, the linguistic ordering of the event reflects our conceptualisation of the event.

### 20.1 AGENT AND AFFECTED IN VOLUNTARY PROCESSES OF 'DOING'

Material processes express an action or activity which is typically carried out by a 'doer' or Agent. By 'Agent' we mean an entity having energy, volition and intention that is capable of initiating and controlling the action, usually to bring about some change of location or properties in itself or others. Agents are typically human.

#### A. Agentive Subject of a voluntary process of 'doing' – They all left

A voluntary one-participant process can be carried out by an Agent as Subject operating on itself:

Agent	Process
The Prime Minister	resigned
We	sat down

Figure 5.2 Agentive Subject of a voluntary process of 'doing'.

One-participant voluntary material processes answer the question **What did X do?** (What did the Prime Minister do? The Prime Minister *resigned*.) To test for Agent, we can ask the question **Who resigned?** (The Prime Minister did).

### B. Affected participant in a voluntary process of 'doing' – Ted hit Bill

With action processes such as resigning and sitting down, the action does not extend to another participant. With others, such as hitting and carrying, it does. The second participant is someone or something affected by the action denoted by the verb in an active clause, as a result of the energy flow. This participant is called the **Affected** (other terms in use for this participant are **Patient** and **Goal**).

Agent	Process	Affected
Ted	hit	Bill
Pelé	kicked	the ball
The porter	is carrying	our baggage

Figure 5.3 Affected participant in a voluntary process of 'doing'.

For those material processes that have two participants, an Agent and an Affected, it also makes sense to ask the question What did Ted do? (He *hit Bill*), and to identify the Affected by the question 'Who(m) did Ted hit?'

### C. Affected Subject in a passive clause – Bill was hit by Ted

Consequently, if the process extends to an Affected participant, the representation can be made in two forms, either active, in which Agent conflates with Subject, as above, or passive, in which Affected conflates with Subject:

Affected	Material process	Agent
Bill	was hit	by Ted
The ball	was kicked	by Pelé
Our doorbell	is being fixed	by the electrician

Figure 5.4 Affected Subject in a passive clause.

A further kind of material process is illustrated in *Fiona made a cake* and *Dave wrote a message*. Neither the cake nor the message existed before the process of making or writing, so they cannot be classed as 'Affecteds'. Rather, they are created as a result of the process, and can be called 'Effected participants'. However, no syntactic distinction is made between Affected and Effected participants; the distinction is purely semantic.

## 20.2 FORCE

The notion of **agency** is a complex one, which includes such features as animacy, intention, motivation, responsibility and the use of one's own energy to initiate or control a process. In central instances, all these features will be present. In non-central instances, one or more of these features may be absent. If we say, for example, that *the horse splashed us with mud as it passed* we do not imply that the horse did so deliberately. We do not attribute intentionality or responsibility or motivation to the horse in this situation. We might call it an 'unwitting Agent'.

The higher animals, and especially pets, are often treated grammatically as if they were humans. Nevertheless, rather than devise a different term for every sub-type of agency we will make just one further distinction: that between animate and inanimate Agents. This is useful in order to account for such natural phenomena as earthquakes, lightning, electricity, avalanches, the wind, tides and floods, which may affect humans and their possessions. They are inanimate, and their power or energy cannot therefore be intentional. They can instigate a process but not control it. This non-controlling entity we call **Force**; it will include such psychological states as anxiety, fear or joy.

Force	Process	Affected
The volcano	erupted	
Lightning	struck	the oak tree
An earthquake	destroyed	most of the city
Anxiety	can ruin	your health

Figure 5.5 Force.

In the following description, the subject in *italics* realises the role of Force and most of the verbs encode material processes:

*The cold crept in from the corners of the shanty, closer and closer to the stove. Icy-cold breezes sucked and fluttered the curtains around the beds. The little shanty quivered in the storm. But the steamy smell of boiling beans was good and it seemed to make the air warmer.*

(Laura Ingalls Wilder, *The Long Winter*)

## 20.3 AFFECTED SUBJECT OF INVOLUNTARY PROCESSES OF 'HAPPENING'

Not all material processes involve a voluntary action carried out by an Agent. In situations expressed as *Jordan slipped on the ice, the roof collapsed, the children have grown, the vase fell off the shelf*, the participant, even when animate, is neither controlling nor initiating the action. This is proved by the inappropriateness of the question 'What did X do?' and of the *wh*-cleft test (\**What the children did was grow*). Rather, we should

ask 'What happened to X?' The participant on which the action centres in such cases is, then, Affected. It is found in involuntary transitional processes such as *grow* and *melt*, which represent the passage from one state to another, and in involuntary actions and events such as *fall*, *slip* and *collapse*, which may have an animate or an inanimate participant.

Affected Subject	Involuntary process	Circumstance
Jordan	slipped	on the ice
The children	have grown	
The roof	collapsed	
The vase	fell	off the shelf

Figure 5.6 Involuntary processes of 'happening'.

In the following passage almost all the clauses are intransitive: the Subject participant varies from Force (the 11-metre-high tidal wave) to Affected (doors, windows, roofs, canopies, all inanimate).

***The 11-metre-high tidal wave crashed over the beach restaurants and engulfed the people walking along the promenade. Doors swung open, windows shattered; roofs caved in and canopies tore apart.***



**SUMMARY**

- 1 In causative material processes some external Agent or Force causes something to happen. In the paradigm case, a responsible, purposeful human Agent directly causes an Affected to undergo the action named by the verb. The Affected, not the Agent, is the inherent participant that undergoes the process, as in *I rang the bell*.
- 2 When the Affected object of a transitive-causative clause is the same as the Affected subject of the corresponding intransitive clause, we have an 'ergative pair'.
- 3 A 'pseudo-intransitive' expresses the facility of a participant to undergo a process: *Glass breaks easily*.

**21.1 CAUSATIVE MATERIAL PROCESSES AND ERGATIVE PAIRS**

The prototypical pattern of direct causation is quite complex. A controlling, purposeful, responsible Agent directs its energy towards something or someone (the Affected), so that this undergoes the action named by the verb, with a consequent change of state. The following examples illustrate this **transitive-causative** structure.

Initiating Agent	Process	Affected
Paul	opened	the door
Pat	boiled	the water
I	rang	the bell

Figure 5.7 Transitive-causative structure.

From this perspective, the action of boiling, ringing, etc. is initiated by a controlling Agent or a Force participant: *The sun melted the ice*.

The Affected is, however, the essential participant, the one primarily involved in the action. It is the door that opens, the water that boils and the bell that rings.

If we conceptualise the situation from a different angle, in which no Agent initiator is present, we encode the process as ‘happening’ of its own accord. An Agent can’t be added. This is the **anti-causative** structure.

Affected	Process
The door	opened
The water	boiled
The bell	rang

Figure 5.8 Anti-causative structure.

When the Affected object of a transitive clause (e.g. *the bell*) is the same as the Affected subject of an intransitive clause, we have an **ergative alternation** or **ergative pair**, as in *I rang **the bell*** (transitive) and ***the bell** rang* (intransitive). This key participant in both cases is sometimes called the Medium. Ergative systems in many languages are ordinarily characterised by morphological case marking, the subject of the intransitive clause and the object of the transitive clause being marked in the same way, while the Agentive subject is marked differently. This is not the case with English which instead marks both the subject of an intransitive clause and that of a transitive clause as nominative, and the object of the transitive as accusative. We can see this in the two meanings of *leave*: ***he** left* (*went away*, intrans.), ***he** left **them*** (*abandon*, trans.).

Nevertheless, the term ‘ergative’ has been extended to English on the basis of the semantic association between S (intrans.) and O (trans.) in alternations illustrated by *boil*, *ring*, etc. The semantic similarity between these two is one of change of state.

The test for recognising an ergative pair is that the transitive-causative, two- participant structure must always allow for the corresponding one-participant, anti- causative structure. Compare the previous examples (e.g. *he opened the door/the door opened*) with the following, in which the first, although transitive, is not causative. There is no intransitive counterpart, and consequently, no ergative pair:

Pelé kicked the ball. \*The ball kicked

The ergative alternation allows us to express a situation from both perspectives, **1** the transitive-causative and **2** the intransitive:

- 1** A gust of wind **fluttered the papers** on the desk and **whirled them** in a spiral on to the floor.
- 2** **The papers fluttered** in the gust of wind and **whirled** in a spiral to the floor.

Ergative pairs account for many of the most commonly used verbs in English, some of which are listed below, with examples:

<i>burn</i>	I’ve burnt the toast. The toast has burnt.
<i>break</i>	The wind broke the branches. The branches broke.
<i>burst</i>	She burst the balloon. The balloon burst.

<i>close</i>	He closed his eyes. His eyes closed.
<i>cook</i>	I'm cooking the rice. The rice is cooking.
<i>fade</i>	The sun has faded the carpet. The carpet has faded.
<i>freeze</i>	The low temperature has frozen the milk. The milk has frozen.
<i>melt</i>	The heat has melted the ice. The ice has melted.
<i>run</i>	Tim is running the bathwater. The bathwater is running.
<i>stretch</i>	I stretched the elastic. The elastic stretched.
<i>tighten</i>	He tightened the rope. The rope tightened.
<i>wave</i>	Someone waved a flag. A flag waved.

Within this alternation – described here as an ‘ergative pair’ – there is a set of basically intransitive volitional activities (*walk, jump, march*) in which the second participant is involved either willingly or unwillingly. The control exerted by the Agent predominates in the transitive-causative:

He <i>walked</i> the dogs in the park.	The dogs <i>walked</i> .
He <i>jumped</i> the horse over the fence	The horse <i>jumped</i> over the fence.
The sergeant <i>marched</i> the soldiers.	The soldiers <i>marched</i> .

It is also possible to have an additional agent and an additional causative verb in the transitive clauses of ergative pairs; for example, *The child got his sister to ring the bell, Mary made Peter boil the water.*

## 21.2 ANALYTICAL CAUSATIVES WITH A RESULTING ATTRIBUTE

One final type of causative we will consider is the analytical type, based on combinations with verbs such as *make* and *turn*. In these an Agent brings about a change of state in the Affected participant. The resulting state is expressed by an Attribute (Complement of the Object in a syntactic analysis).

Agent/Force	Process	Affected	Resulting Attribute
They	are making	the road	wider and safer.
This machine	will make	your tasks	simple.
The heat	has turned	the milk	sour.
Pat	had	her hair	cut.

Figure 5.9 Analytical causatives with a resulting attribute.

The resulting change of state in the Affected participant is sometimes part of the meaning of a morphologically related causative verb: *widen* is the equivalent of *make wide* and *simplify* means *make simple*. With such verbs there are alternative SPOd causative structures: *They are widening the road; This machine will simplify your tasks.* For other adjectives such as *safe* there is no corresponding causative verb. Certain dynamic verbs such as *turn* can be used in specific causative senses in English. *Have* introduces a passive sense, expressed by a participle (cause to be *-en*).

Intransitives and transitive-causatives are illustrated in the following text:

Suddenly there was no sunshine. It went out,<sup>1</sup> as if someone had blown out the sun like a lamp.<sup>2</sup> The outdoors was grey, the windowpanes were grey, and at the same moment a wind crashed against the schoolhouse,<sup>3</sup> rattling windows and doors<sup>4</sup> and shaking the walls.<sup>5</sup>

(Laura Ingalls Wilder, *The Long Winter*)

<sup>1</sup>intransitive; <sup>2</sup>causing the Affected participant (the sun) to undergo an action (be blown out); <sup>3</sup>Force (a wind), intransitive (crashed); <sup>4</sup>indirectly caused the Affected (windows and doors) to rattle; and <sup>5</sup>causing the Affected (the walls) to undergo an action (shake).

### 21.3 PSEUDO-INTRANSITIVES

A further type of Affected Subject occurs with certain processes (*break, read, translate, wash, tan, fasten, lock*) which are intrinsically transitive, but in this construction are construed as intransitive, with an Affected subject.

Glass breaks easily.

This case doesn't shut/close/lock/fasten properly.

Colloquial language translates badly.

Some synthetic fibres won't wash. Usually they dry-clean.

Fair skin doesn't tan quickly, it turns red.

Pseudo-intransitives differ from other intransitives in the following ways:

- They express a general property or propensity of the entity to undergo (or not undergo) the process in question. Compare *glass breaks easily* with *the glass broke*, which refers to a specific event.
- Pseudo-intransitives tend to occur in the present tense.
- The verb is accompanied by negation, or a modal (often *will/won't*), or an adverb such as *easily, well*, any of which specify the propensity or otherwise of the thing to undergo the process.
- A cause is implied but an Agent can't be added in a *by*-phrase.
- There is no corresponding transitive construction, either active or passive, that exactly expresses the same meaning as these intransitives. To say, for instance, *colloquial language is translated badly* is to make a statement about translators' supposed lack of skill, rather than about a property of colloquial language. The difficulty of even paraphrasing this pattern shows how specific and useful it is.

For the similarity of intransitive subjects and transitive objects as conveyors of new information (→ Chapter 6). These are the roles in which new information is overwhelmingly expressed.

See 30.3 for passive counterparts of active structures and 30.3.3 for the *get*-passive. These, like copular counterparts, are not identical in meaning to the structures discussed here, but demonstrate some of the many ways of conceptualising an event.

Ed broke the glass	active
The glass was broken (by Ed)	<i>be</i> -passive
The glass got broken	<i>get</i> -passive
The glass was already broken	copular (state)
The glass broke	(anti-causative)
Glass breaks easily	(pseudo-intransitive)

## SUMMARY

- 1 There are three participants in the processes of transfer: Agent, Affected and Recipient or Beneficiary.
- 2 The Recipient is a central participant in three-participant processes such as *give*. It encodes the one who receives the transferred material.
- 3 The Beneficiary is the optional, non-central participant in three-participant processes such as *fetch*. It represents the one for whom some service is done.

## 22.1 RECIPIENT AND BENEFICIARY IN PROCESSES OF TRANSFER

With processes that encode transfer – such as *give*, *send*, *lend*, *charge*, *pay*, *offer* and *owe* – the action expressed by the verb extends not only to the Affected but to a third inherent participant, the **Recipient**, as in:

Ed gave *the cat* a bit of tuna.  
Bill's father has lent *us* his car.  
Have you paid *the taxi-driver* the right amount?

The **Recipient** is the one who usually receives the 'goods', permission or information. (With *owe* there is a 'moral' Recipient who has not yet received anything.) The **Beneficiary**, by contrast is the optional, not inherent, participant for whom some service is done. This often amounts to being the intended recipient. However, it is not necessarily the same as receiving the goods. I can bake you a cake, but perhaps you don't want it.

This difference is reflected in English in the syntax of verbs such as *fetch*, *get*, *make*, *buy*, *order* and many verbs of preparation such as *cook*, *bake* and *mix*, which can be replaced by *make*. These can represent services done for people rather than actions to people.

Nurse, could you fetch *me* a glass of water?

Yes, but soon I'll *bring* you your orange juice. I'll get *you* something to read, too.

Semantically, both Recipient and Beneficiary are typically animate and human, while syntactically both are realised as indirect object (→ 6.2.1). Occasionally an inanimate Recipient occurs as in: 'We'll give the unemployment question priority.' An inanimate Beneficiary is possible, but unlikely: ?I've bought the computer a new mouse. Some become more acceptable with the prepositional alternative as in 'I've found a good place for the magnolia.'

The two syntactic tests for distinguishing Recipient from Beneficiary, namely passivisation and the prepositional counterpart, are discussed in 6.2.1 and 10.4.1.

Recipient and Beneficiary can occur together in the same clause, as in the following example, which illustrates the difference between the one who is given the goods (*me*) and the intended recipient (*my daughter*): She gave *me* a present for *my daughter*.

Both Recipient and Beneficiary may be involved in processes of an unbeneficial nature such as *they sent him a letter-bomb*, in which *him* is Recipient; and *they set him a trap* in which *him* is Beneficiary.

## 22.2 TRANSITIVITY STRUCTURES IN MATERIAL PROCESSES

Example	Participant(s)	Type
The Prime Minister resigned	Agent	doing (intrans.)
Ed kicked the ball	Agent + Affected	doing (trans.)
The volcano erupted	Force	doing (intrans.)
The dog died	Affected	happening (intrans.)
Ed broke the glass	Agent initiator + Aff/Medium	causative-trans.
The glass broke	Affected/Medium	anti-causative
Glass breaks easily	Affected	pseudo-intrans.
The glass was broken (by Ed)	Affected (+ optional Agent)	passive
The glass got broken	Affected	get-passive
They made the road wider	Ag. + Aff + Attribute	analytical causative
Ed gave the cat a bit of tuna	Ag. + Rec + Aff	transfer (trans.)

Figure 5.10 Summary of examples of transitivity structures in material processes.

# CONCEPTUALISING WHAT WE THINK, PERCEIVE AND FEEL

## UNIT 23

### SUMMARY

- 1 Mental processes comprise processes of perception (*see, hear, feel*), of cognition (*know, understand, believe*) and of affection and desideration (*like, fear; want, wish*).
- 2 There is always a conscious participant, the **Experiencer**, who perceives, knows, likes, etc. There is usually a second participant, the **Phenomenon** – that which is perceived, known, liked or wanted.

### 23.1 MENTAL PROCESSES

Not all situations that we wish to express linguistically centre on doings and happenings. Mental processes are those through which we organise our mental contact with the world. There are four main types: **cognition**, such as *know, understand, believe, doubt, remember* and *forget*; **perception**, encoded by verbs such as *see, notice, hear, feel* and *taste*; **affectivity**, such as *like, love, admire, miss* and *hate*; **desideration** such as *hope, want, desire* and *wish*. Some of these are illustrated in the following invented sequence:

Tom *saw* a ball in the tall grass. He *knew* it wasn't his, but he *wanted* to get it. He didn't *realise* there were lots of nettles among the grass. He soon *felt* his hands stinging. He *wished* he had *noticed* the nettles.

With mental processes it makes no sense, as it does with material processes, to talk about who is doing what to whom. In, for example, *Jill liked the present*, Jill is not doing anything, and the gift is not affected in any way. We can't apply the 'doing to' test to processes of liking and disliking, asking for instance 'What did Jill do to the present?' In many cases, a better test is to question the Experiencer's reaction to something. It is therefore inappropriate to call Jill an Agent and *the present* the Affected. Rather, we need two more semantic roles:



<i>Jill</i>	<i>liked</i>	<i>the present</i>
Experiencer	Process	Phenomenon

The **Experiencer** (or **Senser**) is the participant who sees, feels, thinks, likes, etc., and is typically human, but may also be an animal or even a personified inanimate object (*The rider heard a noise, the horse sensed danger, your car knows what it needs*). The use of a non-conscious entity as Experiencer in a mental process is often exploited for commercial ends, as in this last example.

The second participant in a mental process, that which is perceived, known, liked, etc., is called the **Phenomenon**. Mental processes are typically stative and non-volitional. When they occur in the present tense they typically take the simple, rather than the progressive, form. Compare this feature with material process verbs, for which the more usual, 'unmarked' form for expressing a happening in the present is the progressive. Another feature of stative verbs is that they do not easily occur in the imperative (*Know thyself* is a famous exception).

*Jill is liking the present	*Like the present, Jill!	(mental)
Bill is mending the bicycle.	Mend the bicycle, Bill!	(material)

Mental processes can sometimes be expressed with the Phenomenon filling the Subject slot and the Experiencer as Object, although not necessarily by means of the same verb. This means that we have two possible construals of the mental experience: in the one case, the human participant reacts to a phenomenon, as in **1** and **2**, while in the other the phenomenon activates the attention of the experiencer, as in **3** and **4**. Reversibility is helped by the fact that the passive is possible with many mental processes:

Experiencer	Process	Phenomenon
<b>1</b> I	don't understand	his motives
<b>2</b> Most people	are horrified	by the increase in violence
Phenomenon	Process	Experiencer
<b>3</b> His motives	elude	me
<b>4</b> The increase in violence	horrifies	most people

Figure 5.11 Examples of mental processes.

Similarly, English has the verb *please*, which is used occasionally in this way: *I don't think her choice pleased her mother* [931]. More often '*pleased*' is used as an adjective, as in *he was very pleased with himself*, which adjusts to the predominant pattern by which human subjects are preferred to non-human ones. '*Pleased*' also tends to be equivalent to '*satisfied*' or polite '*willing*' as in *University officers will be pleased to advise anyone . . .* [931], which is quite different affectively from '*like*'.

In all the examples so far, the Phenomenon has been a single entity, expressed as a nominal group as the Object of the verb. But it can also be a fact, a process or a whole situation, realised by a clause (→ 11.1), as in the following examples:

We	knew	that it would be difficult
Nobody	saw	the train go off the rails
I	fancy	going for a swim

## 23.2 COGNITIVE PROCESSES: KNOWING, THINKING AND BELIEVING

Cognitive processes are encoded by such stative verbs as *believe*, *doubt*, *guess*, *know*, *recognise*, *think*, *forget*, *mean*, *remember*, *understand*. A selection of examples is given below. *Feel* is also regularly used as an equivalent of 'believe'. Most verbs of cognition have as their Phenomenon a wide range of things apprehended, including human, inanimate and abstract entities encoded as nominal groups (a) and (b). Facts, beliefs, doubts, perceptions and expectations are encoded as finite *that*-clauses (c) and (f), finite *wh*-clauses (e), or non-finite clauses (d), as discussed in units 11 and 12.

Experiencer	Cognitive process	Phenomenon	
I	don't know	anyone of that name (entity)	(a)
Everybody	remembered	his face (entity)	(b)
Susan	felt	that the first idea was the best (fact)	(c)
She	has forgotten	to leave us a key (situation)	(d)
Nobody	realised	that it was too late (situation)	(e)
Beryl	thought	that you were ill (belief)	(f)

Many cognitive processes allow the Phenomenon to be unexpressed when this is 'Given information', for example *I don't know*, *Jill doesn't understand*, *Nobody will remember*.

In the following short extract, the author has chosen processes of cognition, perception, affection and one behavioural to reflect the mental make-up of a meteorologist whose work contributed to chaos theory:

Lorenz *enjoyed*<sup>1</sup> weather – by no means a prerequisite for a research meteorologist. He *savored*<sup>2</sup> its changeability. He *appreciated*<sup>3</sup> the patterns that come and go in the atmosphere, families of eddies and cyclones, always obeying mathematical rules, yet never repeating themselves. When he *looked*<sup>4</sup> at clouds he *thought*<sup>5</sup> he *saw*<sup>6</sup> a kind of structure in them. Once he had *feared*<sup>7</sup> that studying the science of weather would be like prying a jack-in-the-box apart with a screwdriver. Now he *wondered*<sup>8</sup> whether science would be able to penetrate the magic at all. Weather had a flavor that could not be expressed by talking about averages.

(James Gleick, *Chaos, Making a New Science*)

<sup>1</sup>affection; <sup>2</sup>perception; <sup>3</sup>cognition; <sup>4</sup>behavioural; <sup>5</sup>cognition; <sup>6</sup>perception; <sup>7</sup>affection; <sup>8</sup>cognition

## 23.3 PERCEPTION PROCESSES: SEEING, HEARING AND FEELING

As expressed by the non-volitional senses of *see* and *hear* in English, perception is an involuntary state, which does not depend upon the agency of the perceiver, who in fact **receives** the visual and auditory sensations non-volitionally. However, as the term Recipient has been adopted for the one who receives goods and information in three- participant processes, we will keep to the terms **Experiencer** or **Senser**. In the following illustrations you will notice that *can* is used when expressing non-volitional perception at the moment of speaking. This use replaces the present progressive, which is ungrammatical in such cases (\**I am smelling gas*).

Tom *saw* a snake.      Can you *taste* the lemon in the sauce?  
I *can feel* a draught.    I *can smell* gas.  
We *heard* a noise.

The verbs *see* and *feel* are often used in English as conceptual metaphors for the cognitive processes of understanding and believing, respectively, as in *You do see my point, don't you? – No, I don't see what you mean. I feel we should talk this over further*. In addition, *see* has a number of dynamic uses, such as *See for yourself!* with the meaning of 'verify', and *see someone off*, meaning 'accompany someone to the station, airport', among many others. The progressive can be used with these (→ 43.5).

Corresponding to non-volitional *see* and *hear*, English has the dynamic volitional verbs *look*, *watch* and *listen*, among others. These are classed as **behavioural** processes.

The perception processes of 'feeling', 'smelling' and 'tasting' each make use of one verb (*feel*, *smell* and *taste*) to encode three different ways of experiencing these sensations: one stative and non-volitional (*I can smell gas*), a second dynamic and volitional (*Just smell these roses!*) and the third as a relational process (*This fish smells bad*). In languages other than English, these differences may be lexicalised as different verbs.

In processes of seeing, hearing and feeling, English allows the Phenomenon to represent a situation that is either completed (*I saw her cross the road*) or not completed (*I saw her crossing the road*) (→ 12.4).

## 23.4 AFFECTIVE AND DESIDERATIVE PROCESSES: LIKING AND WANTING

### 23.4.1 Affective processes: loving and hating

Under affectivity process we include those positive and negative reactions expressed by such verbs as *like*, *love*, *please*, *delight*, *dislike*, *hate* and *detest*. Common desiderative verbs are *want* and *wish*.

We both *love* dancing.  
I *detest* hypocrisy.  
The ballet performance *delighted* the public.  
Do you *want* a cup of coffee?

The Phenomenon in affectivity processes can be expressed by a nominal group which represents an entity, or by a clause representing an event or a situation. The situation is represented as actual or habitual by means of an *-ing* clause, while a *to*-infinitive clause will be interpreted as potential. For this reason, the latter is used in hypothetical meanings. Some verbs admit only one or other of the forms. Other verbs such as *like*, *love* and *hate* admit either (→ 12.4), and illustrate this semantic distinction in the following examples:

<b>-ing clause</b>	<b>to-infinitive clause</b>
They enjoy <i>walking in the woods</i> . She likes <i>visiting her friends</i> . I hate <i>having a tooth out</i> .	They love <i>to walk in the woods</i> . She would like <i>to visit Janet</i> . I would hate <i>to have my teeth out</i> .

Figure 5.12 Examples of cognitive processes.

### 23.4.2 Desiderative processes: wanting and wishing

These are expressed by such verbs as *want*, *desire* and *wish*. The Phenomenon role of *want* and *desire* can be expressed as either a thing or a situation, encoded by a nominal group or a *to*-infinitive clause, respectively; with *wish* only the situation meaning is possible. Both *desire* and *wish* can be used as very formal variants to *want*, and consequently occur in quite different registers and styles.

Do you *want* anything else? (thing)

If you *want* to stay overnight, just say so. (situation)

If you *wish* to remain in the college, you must comply with the regulations. (situation)

If you *desire* to receive any further assistance, please ring the bell (situation)

Wishing, however, can also express in the Phenomenon role a longing for an event or state that is counter to reality. This notion of unreality is expressed by a simple Past tense (or the Past subjunctive *were* if the verb is *be*) or a Past Perfect. These Past tenses have the effect of ‘distancing’ the event from speech time. *Wish* takes modal *would* + infinitive to refer to future time. The complementiser *that* is normally omitted (→ 11.1):

**present-time reference**

I wish Ted *were* here with us.

**past-time reference**

I wish Ted *had been* here with us.

**future-time reference**

I wish Ted *would come* soon.

# RELATIONAL PROCESSES OF BEING AND BECOMING

## UNIT 24

### SUMMARY

- 1 The third main category of processes, relational processes, expresses the notion of being, in a wide sense. In English there are two main patterns of 'being': the **Attributive**, as in *Tom is a pilot*, and the **Identifying**, as in *Fred is the doorman*.
- 2 The participant in the Attributive structure is the *Carrier*, the entity to which is ascribed an **Attribute**. The relations are of three kinds: **attributive**: *Tom is keen, Tom is a pilot*; **circumstantial**: *The bus stop is over there*; **possessive**: *The baby has blue eyes. That car is mine*. In possessive structures the participants are known as the **Possessor** and the **Possessed**.
- 3 The identifying pattern is reversible: it identifies one entity in terms of another. These are the **Identified** and the **Identifier** as in *Fred is the doorman/The doorman is Fred*.
- 4 The process itself is encoded by linking verbs (mainly *be* and *have*) whose function is to carry tense and to relate the Carrier to its Attribute, the Identified to its Identifier and the Possessor to the Possessed. Others like *lack* and *feel* encode additional meanings.

### 24.1 TYPES OF BEING

Relational processes express the concept of being in a broad sense. They answer the questions 'Who or what, where/when or whose is some entity, or What is some entity like?' In other words, relational processes cover various ways of being: being something, being in some place/at some time, or in a relation of possession, as illustrated here:

- |   |            |    |  |
|---|------------|----|--|
| 1 | Mont Blanc | is | a (high) mountain. (an instance of a type) |
| 2 | Mont Blanc | is | popular with climbers. (attribution)       |

- 3 Mont Blanc is the highest mountain in western Europe. (identification)  
 4 Mont Blanc is in the Alps. (circumstance: location)  
 5 Those gloves are yours. (possession)

There are two main patterns, the attributive as in **1**, **2**, **4** and **5** and the identifying, as in **3**. We shall take a look at each in turn.

## 24.2 THE ATTRIBUTIVE PATTERN

There is one participant, the Carrier, which represents an entity. Ascribed to the Carrier is an Attribute, which characterises the entity in some way. Here are some examples:

Carrier	Process	Attribute
Their eldest son	was	a musician
The unemployment figures	are	alarming
Sports equipment	is	on the third floor

Figure 5.13 Carrier with its Attribute.

In the examples seen so far, the Attribute characterises the entity in the following ways: as an instantiation of a class of entities (*a mountain*, *a musician*) or a sub-class (that of high mountains, as in (1)); by a quality (*popular with climbers*, *alarming*); by a location (*in the Alps*, *on the third floor*); or as a type of possession (*yours*) (→ 18.4).

There is an intensive relationship between the Carrier and its Attribute. That is to say, the Carrier *is* in some way the Attribute. The Attribute is not a participant in the situation, and when realised by a nominal group the NG is non-referential; it can't become the Subject in a clause. Attributive clauses are non-reversible in the sense that they don't allow a Subject–Complement switch. They allow thematic fronting (→ 28.7) as in ... *and a fine musician he was too*, but *a fine musician* is still the Attribute, and *he* the Subject.

The process itself, when encoded by *be*, carries little meaning apart from that of tense (past time as in *was*; present as in *is*, *are*). Its function is to link the Carrier to the Attribute. However, the process can be expressed either as a state or as a transition. With stative verbs such as *be*, *keep*, *remain*, *seem* and verbs of sensing, such as *look* (= 'seem'), the Attribute is seen as existing at the same time as the process described by the verb and is sometimes called the **current Attribute**.

With dynamic verbs of transition such as *become*, *get*, *turn*, *grow*, *run*, the Attribute exists as the result of the process and can be called the **resulting Attribute**. Compare *The weather is cold* with *The weather has turned cold*.

Current Attribute	Resulting Attribute
We kept quiet	We fell silent
He remained captain for years	He became captain
Your sister looks tired	She gets tired easily
The public are weary of strikes	The public has grown weary of strikes

Figure 5.14 Current Attribute and resulting Attribute.

There is a wide variety of verbs in English to express both states and transitions (→ 9.4). As states, the most common verbs of perception such as *look*, *feel*, *sound*, *smell* and *taste* keep their experiential meaning in relational clauses. An Experiencer participant (e.g. *to me*) can be optionally added to this semantic structure:

<i>feel</i>	The surface feels too rough (to me)
<i>feel as if</i>	My fingers feel as if they were dropping off with the cold
<i>look</i>	Does this solution look right? (to you)
<i>look like</i>	[What's that insect?] It looks like a dragonfly (to me)
<i>sound</i>	His name sounds familiar (to me)
<i>smell</i>	That fish smells bad (to me)
<i>taste</i>	This soup tastes of vinegar (to me)

The verb *feel* can function in two types of semantic structure: with an Experiencer/Carrier (*I feel hot; she felt ill*), or with a neutral Carrier (*the surface feels rather rough*). In expressions referring to the weather, such as *it is hot/cold/sunny/windy/frosty/cloudy/foggy*, there is no Carrier and much of the meaning is expressed by the Attribute.

### 24.3 CIRCUMSTANTIAL RELATIONAL PROCESSES

These are processes of being in which the circumstantial element is essential to the situation, not peripheral to it (→ 9.2). The circumstance is encoded as Attribute in the following examples and stands in an intensive relationship with the Carrier:

Location in space:	The museum is <i>round the corner</i> .
Location in time:	Our next meeting will be <i>on June 10</i> .
Means:	Entrance to the exhibition is <i>by invitation</i> .
Agent:	This symphony is <i>by Mahler</i> .
Beneficiary:	These flowers are <i>for you</i> .
Metaphorical meanings:	He's <i>off alcohol</i> . Everyone's <i>into yoga</i> nowadays.

The circumstance is encoded by the verb in *The film script **concerns** (= is about) a psychopath who kidnaps a girl*, *The desert **stretches** as far as the eye can see*, *The carpet **measures** three metres by two*, *The performance **lasted** three hours*.

Examples such as *Tomorrow is Monday*; *Yesterday was July 1st* are reversible and can be considered as identifying circumstantial processes.

### 24.4 POSSESSIVE RELATIONAL PROCESSES

The category of possession covers a wide number of sub-types, of which the most prototypical are perhaps part-whole (as in *your left foot*), ownership (as in *our house*) and kinship relations (*Jane's sister*). Other less central types include unowned possession (*the dog's basket*), a mental quality (*her sense of humour*), a physical quality (*his strength*), occupancy (*his office*) and an association with another person (*my friends and colleagues*). All these types and others are grammaticalised at the level of the clause in possessive

relational processes. A relatively small number of verbs occur, principally *be*, *have*, *own* and *possess*. The two participants involved are the **Possessor** and the **Possessed**. The notion of possession is expressed either by the Attribute, as in *That computer is mine*, or by the process itself, as in *I have a new computer*.

### A. Possession as Attribute

In this, the verb is *be* and the Attribute/Possessor is encoded by a possessive pronoun (*mine*, *yours*, *his*, *hers*, *ours*, *theirs*) or by an *'s* phrase such as *John's* in *The green Peugeot is John's*. The sequence is similar with *belong*, although it is then the verb that conveys the notion of possession:

Possessed/Carrier	Process	Possessor/Attribute
These keys	are	my brother's
This glove	isn't	mine
This mansion	belongs	to a millionaire

Figure 5.15 The *be/belong* possessive structure.

### B. Possession as process

English has several verbs to express possession. With ***be***, ***have***, ***own***, ***possess*** and the more colloquial ***have got***, the Carrier is the Possessor and the Attribute is the Possessed.

Also included in the category of 'possessing' are the notions of not possessing (***lack***, ***need***), of being worthy to possess (***deserve***), and the abstract relations of inclusion, exclusion and containment:

Possessor/Carrier	Process	Possessed/Attribute
The baby	has	blue eyes
His uncle	owns	a yacht
I	don't possess	a gun
He	lacks	confidence
Plants	need	water
You	deserve	a prize
The price	includes	postage
The price	excludes	breakfast
That can	contains	petrol

Figure 5.16 Verbs of possession in the *Possessor/Possessed* structure.

Relational processes are extremely common in all uses of English. The following extract is based on an interview with a young farmer who breeds pigs. He describes them, not by what they do, but as they are; this view is reflected in the large number of Attributes.



*Pigs are different. A pig is more of an individual, more human and in many ways a strangely likeable character. Pigs have strong personalities and it is easy to get fond of them. I am always getting fond of pigs and feel a bit conscience-stricken when I have to put them inside for their whole lives. Pigs are very clean animals but, like us, they are all different; some will need cleaning out<sup>1</sup> after half a day and some will be neat and tidy after three days. Some pigs are always in a mess and won't care. Pigs are very interesting people and can leave quite a gap when they go off to the bacon factory.*

(Ronald Blythe, *Akenfield*)

## 24.5 THE IDENTIFYING PATTERN

The participant roles in an identifying relationship are known as **Identified** and **Identifier**. Identification means that one participant, the Identified, is identified in terms of the other (the Identifier), in a relation of symbolic correlates. The Identifier is the one that fills the *wh*-element in a *wh*-question corresponding to the identifying clause:

- (a) [What/Which is Mont Blanc?]  
Mont Blanc (Identified) is the highest mountain in western Europe (Identifier).
- (b) [Which is your father-in-law? Looking at a photograph]  
My father-in-law (Identified) is the one in the middle (Identifier).

Identifying processes are reversible. The previous illustrations can be turned around, with the Identified/Identifying roles now represented by the opposite constituent:

- (c) [What/Which is the highest mountain in western Europe?]  
The highest mountain in Europe (Identified) is Mont Blanc (Identifier).
- (d) [Who/Which is the one in the middle?]  
The one in the middle (Identified) is my father-in-law (Identifier).

The difference between the two sequences lies in which element we want to identify; for instance, do we want to identify Mont Blanc or do we want to identify the highest mountain in Europe? In a discourse context this is a matter of presumed knowledge. Question (a) presumes that the listener has heard of Mont Blanc but doesn't know its ranking among mountains. The answer could be 'Mont Blanc (Identified) is the highest mountain in Europe (Identifier)', in which the highlighted part represents tonic prominence (29.1) and the new information. Question (c) presumes that our listener knows there are high mountains in Europe, but not which one is the highest, receiving the answer 'The highest mountain in Europe (Identified) is Mont Blanc (Identifier)'. Alternatively, in answer to the same question *Which is the highest mountain in Europe?* we could say 'Mont Blanc (Identifier) is the highest mountain in Europe (Identified)'.

In spoken discourse it is the Identifier that typically receives the tonic prominence that is associated with new information, whether this is placed at the end (the usual position) or at the beginning of the clause. In each sequence, then, one half is typically something or someone whose existence is already known (the Identified), whereas the Identifier presents information as unknown or new to the listener. (These notions are explained more fully in Unit 29 on information packaging.)

Reversibility in Identifying clauses		
Identified		Identifier
Mont Blanc	is	<b>the highest mountain in Europe.</b>
My father-in-law	is	<b>the one in the middle.</b>
Identifier		Identified
<b>Mont Blanc</b>	is	the highest mountain in Europe.
<b>My father-in-law</b>	is	the one in the middle.

The following passage, *Colours in Rugs across Cultures*, illustrates such correspondences:

The meaning of individual colours varies from culture to culture. In Muslim countries, green – the colour of Mohammed’s coat – is sacred and is very rarely used as a predominant colour, but it forms an important part of the dyer’s palette in non-Muslim cultures, particularly in China; here, the sacred colour is yellow, in which the Emperor traditionally dressed. White represents grief to the Chinese, Indians and Persians. Blue symbolises heaven in Persia, and power and authority in Mongolia. Orange is synonymous with piety and devotion in Muslim countries, while red, the most universal rug colour, is widely accepted as a sign of wealth and rejoicing.

[OX0]

Finally, the difference between the Attributive and the Identifying patterns is reflected in the syntax in three ways: Only the identifying type is reversible (cf. *\*A high mountain is Mont Blanc*); only the characterising type can be realised by an adjective (*The unemployment figures are alarming*); and nominal groups that realise characterising Attributes are usually indefinite (*a musician*), while NGs that realise identifying Attributes are usually definite (*the club Secretary*).

Certain relational processes of possession can be analysed by the Identifying pattern, and are reversible if suitably contextualised as identifying people’s possessions. For example, sandwiches: *Yours is the ham-and-cheese; Tim’s is the egg-and-lettuce and mine is the tomato-and-tuna*. Similarly, circumstantial Attributes can be reversed when explaining the layout of an area: *Across the road, past the fountain is the Prado Museum. On your left is the Ritz Hotel. Further back is the Real Academia*.

# PROCESSES OF SAYING, BEHAVING AND EXISTING

## UNIT 25

### SUMMARY

- 1 Processes of saying and communicating are verbal processes. The participant who communicates is the Sayer, and is typically human, while what is communicated is the 'Said' and may be a reported statement, a reported question or a reported directive (order, request, etc.). A Recipient, the addressee, is required with *tell*, and a Target may also be present in some verbal processes.
- 2 Behavioural processes are half-way between material and mental processes, in that they have features of each. They include involuntary processes (*cough*) and volitional processes (*watch, stare, listen*).
- 3 Existential processes, rather than stating that things simply exist, tend to specify the quantification and/or the location of something: *There are bits of paper everywhere*. The single participant is the Existent, which may be an entity or an event.

### 25.1 VERBAL PROCESSES

Verbal processes are processes of 'saying' or 'communicating' and are encoded by such verbs as *say, tell, repeat, ask, answer* and *report*. They have one participant which is typically human, but not necessarily so (**the Sayer**) and a second essential participant, which is what is said or asked or reported (the **Said**). A **Recipient** is required with *tell* and may be present as a PC (e.g. *to me*) with other verbal processes:

Sayer	Verbal process	Recipient	Said
Silvia	had to say	him	her name twice
That clock	says		five past ten
The police officer	repeated		the question
Jill	told		what she knew
Our correspondent	reports		renewed fighting on the frontier

Figure 5.17 Verbal processes.

The Sayer can be anything which puts out a communicative signal (*that clock, Jill, our correspondent*). What is said is realised by a nominal group or a nominal *what*-clause (*what she knew*). As these examples show, verbal processes are intermediate between material and mental processes. From one point of view, communicating is a form of ‘doing’, and in fact the Sayer is usually agentive or made to appear agentive, as in the case of the clock. Like material processes, verbal processes readily admit the imperative (*Say it again!*) and the progressive (*What is he saying?*).

On the other hand, the action of communicating is close to cognitive processes such as thinking. Verbs of saying, telling and others can be followed by a clause that represents either the exact words said (direct report) or a reported version of the meaning (indirect report). Many speech-act verbs can function in this way, to report statements, questions, warnings, advice and other speech acts:

She said: ‘I won’t be late’ (quoted statement or promise)  
 She said she wouldn’t be late (reported statement or promise)  
 She said: ‘Don’t go to see that film’ (quoted directive: advice)  
 She told us not to go to see that film (reported directive: advice)

These alternative encodings are described more fully in Chapter 7. For the syntactic-semantic differences between *say* and *tell* in English, (→ 11.2).

When however, the message is encapsulated as a speech act by means of a nominal – such as ‘apology’, ‘warning’ and many others – it is treated as a participant in the verbal process. The verb then may express the manner of saying:

The airport authorities issued an apology  
 Someone shouted a warning  
 Retired cop vows revenge (press headline)

*Wish* in *I wish you a merry Christmas* is clearly both mental and verbal. *Talk* and *chat* are verbal processes, which have an implicit reciprocal meaning (*They talked/chatted [to each other]*). *Talk* has no second participant except in the expressions *talk sense/nonsense*. *Speak* is not implicitly reciprocal and can take a Range participant (→ 20.1). (*She speaks Spanish. He speaks five languages*).

## 25.2 BEHAVIOURAL PROCESSES

A borderline area between mental processes and material processes is represented by **behavioural** processes such as *cough*, *sneeze*, *yawn*, *blink*, *laugh* and *sigh*, which are usually one-participant. They are considered as typically involuntary; but it may be that there is a very slight agency involved. They can be deliberate, too, as in *he coughed discreetly*, *he yawned rudely*, in which the adjunct of manner implies volition. Acting excepted, most volitional adjuncts could not be used with *die*, *collapse* and *grow*, which are typically lacking in agency and volition.

We have already seen that mental processes such as *see* and *hear* have behavioural counterparts (*watch* and *listen*, respectively), which are dynamic and volitional, and have agentive Subjects, while *see*, *taste* and *feel* have both non-volitional and volitional senses. Similarly, *think* (in the sense of *ponder*) and *enjoy* can be used dynamically:

What are you thinking about?  
I am enjoying the play enormously.  
Enjoy!

## 25.3 EXISTENTIAL PROCESSES

Existential processes are processes of existing or happening. The basic structure consists of unstressed *there* + *be* + a NG (*There's a man at the door*; *there was a loud bang*). *There* is not a participant as it has no semantic content, although it fulfils both a syntactic function as Subject (5.1.2) and a textual function as 'presentative' element (30.4). The single participant is the **Existent**, which may refer to a countable entity (*There's a good film on at the Scala*), an uncountable entity (*There's roast lamb for lunch*) or an event (*There was an explosion*).

Semantically, existential processes state not simply the existence of something, but more usually expand the Existent in some way:

- by adding a quantitative measure and/or the location of the Existent:

I went for a walk in the woods. It was all right, *there were lots of people there*.  
[GUK]

There were all sorts of practical problems.

- with quantification and an Attribute characterising the Existent:

There are some pages blank.  
There were few people in favour.

- with quantification and expansion of the Existent by the addition of clauses:

There are few people who realise the danger.  
There's nothing to be done about it.

The process in existential clauses is expressed by the following verbs:

- most typically by *be*;
- certain intransitive verbs expressing positional states (*stand, lie, stretch, hang and remain*);
- a few intransitive dynamic verbs of ‘occurring’, ‘coming into view’ or ‘arrival on the scene’ (*occur, follow, appear, emerge, loom*) (→ 30.4.3 for discourse functions ).

There remain many problems.

There followed a long interval.

There emerged from the cave a huge brown bear.

Existential *there* may be omitted when a locative or directional Adjunct is in initial position:

Below the castle (there) stretches a vast plain.

Out of the mist (there) loomed a strange shape.

Without ‘there’ such clauses are very close semantically to reversed circumstantial clauses. However, the addition of a tag question – with *there*, not a personal pronoun (*Close to the beach stands a hotel, doesn’t there? \*doesn’t it?*) – suggests that they are in fact existentials.

# EXPRESSING ATTENDANT CIRCUMSTANCES

## UNIT 26

### SUMMARY

The circumstantial element in English covers a great variety of meanings, of which some of the most common are those related to place and time, manner, accompaniment, degree, role, matter and evidence. Range is the non-prototypical participant that specifies the domain or scope of the verb. In certain cases Range elements are morphologically related, as in *sing a song, sigh a deep sigh, smile a mysterious smile, live a quiet life, the frost froze hard, day dawned*. The Range element today is mostly derived from deverbal nominals as in *have a chat, a rest, a smoke* in combination with a 'light' verb such as *have* or *do*.

### 26.1 PLACE, TIME AND OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

There are many parallel expressions of place and time, in many cases introduced by the same preposition (→ Unit 59):

	Place	Time
location	at home, in the park, on the desk	at 5 o'clock, in May, years ago, on Tuesday
source	from the library, from Ed	from January
path	the plane flew over the hills, through the clouds	They stayed over the weekend
direction	towards the south	towards midnight
goal	to Canada [we went] home	to the end of May
extent	for several miles	for several years
extent + goal	as far as Granada	until 10 o'clock, by Tuesday
relative	nearby, in front, behind us AmE in back of us	now, then, recently, before/after dinner
distributive	at intervals, every 100 yards	at intervals, every so often, now and then, off and on

Figure 5.18 Place and time.

Locative, goal and directional meanings are questioned by *where?* (the preposition *to* is not used in questions other than the verbless *Where to?*); source meanings by *where . . . from?* and for time, *since when?* extent by *how far?* *how long?* and distribution by *how often?*

A. *Manner*: The notion of manner (*How?*) is extended to include the notions of means (*By what means?*, comparison (*What like?*) and instrumentality (*What with?*):

Manner	how?	Don't do it <i>that way</i> ; do it <i>gently</i> .
Means	how?	It's cheaper <i>by bus</i> .
Comparison	what . . . like?	She was sobbing <i>like a child</i> .
Instrumentality	What . . . with?	He drew out the nail <i>with a pair of pliers</i> .

B. *Cause, Purpose, Reason, Concession and Condition*:

Cause	what cause?	The child took the pen <i>out of envy</i> . They are dying <i>of hunger</i> .
Purpose	what . . . for?	He is studying <i>for a degree</i> . The team is training <i>to win</i> .
Reason	why?	We stayed in <i>on account of the rain</i> . He stopped <i>because he was tired</i> .
Concession	despite what conditions?	<i>In spite of the delay</i> , we reached the concert hall in time.
Condition	under what conditions?	Book on an earlier flight, <i>if necessary</i> .

C. *Accompaniment* involves either the notion of 'togetherness' or that of 'additionality'. Each of these can be either positive or negative:

togetherness	positive	Tom came <i>with his friend/with a new haircut</i> .
togetherness	negative	Tom came <i>without his friend/without the car</i> .
additionality	positive	Tom came <i>as well as Paul</i> .
additionality	negative	Tom came <i>instead of Paul</i> .



D. *Degree*: Circumstantial expressions of degree either emphasise or attenuate the process:

emphasis      I *completely* forgot to bring my passport.  
attenuation    You can *hardly* expect me to believe that.

E. *Role* answers the question What as? or In what capacity?

I'm speaking to you *as a friend*.  
As *an actor* he's not outstanding, but *as a dancer* he's brilliant.

F. *Matter*: This element adds the notion of 'with reference to ...' and is realised by a wide variety of simple and complex prepositions, including those bound or grammaticised prepositions that follow certain verbs and nouns such as *deprive of*, *news of*, (→10.3 and 59.1):

We have been talking *about* the current economic crisis.  
Is there any news *of* the missing seamen?  
*With regard* to your order of July 17 ...  
*As for that*, I don't believe a word of it.

G. *Evidence* relates to the source of information in verbal processes and is expressed by *as x says*, or *according to x*:

*According to the weatherman*, there will be heavy snowstorms this weekend.

## 26.2 RANGE

Range is a non-prototypical participant: the nominal concept that is implied by the process as its scope or range: *song* in *sing a song*, *games* in *play games*, *race* in *run a race*. Some, such as *live a happy life*, *die a martyr's death*, are derived from a related verb; others such as *games* in *play games* are not.

Perhaps the most common type of Range element today are the deverbal nominals which complement lexically 'light' verbs such as *have* and *give*:

**Have** *an argument, a chat, a drink, a fight, a rest, a quarrel, a smoke, a taste, an experience*

**Give** *a push, a kick, a nudge, a shove, a smile, a laugh, a kiss; a presentation, a lecture*

**Take** *a sip, a bath, a nap, a photograph, a selfie, a shower, a walk.*

**Do** *a dance, a handstand, a sketch, a translation, some work, some cleaning, some painting*

**Ask** *a question, favour*

**Make** *a choice, a comment, a contribution, a mistake, a payment, a reduction, a suggestion. American English: a left/right turn.*

Using this type of range participant (*a kick, a push*, etc.) with a 'light' verb entails the meaning of the nominal as verb. In other words, if you take a sip of the juice, you *sip* the juice. If we have a chat, we *chat*. In some cases, such as *make an effort*, there is no corresponding verb. One reason for the popularity of this construction today is the potential that the noun has for being modified in various ways. It would be difficult to express by a verb, even with the help of adverbs, the meanings of specificness, quantification and quality present in *she took a long, relaxing hot bath, they played two strenuous games of tennis, I had such a strange experience yesterday*.

As a result of modification, the nominal is longer and heavier than the verb which precedes it. This allows us to have the important information at the end, where it receives end-focus (→ 30.3.2). Furthermore, the Range nominal can initiate a *wh*-cleft structure more easily than a verb can (→ 30.2) as in *A good rest is what you need*.

# CONCEPTUALISING EXPERIENCES FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

## UNIT 27

### Nominalisation and grammatical metaphor

#### SUMMARY

- 1 The semantic structures described so far reflect the basic semantic-syntactic correspondences we use when encoding situations. They reflect the typical way of saying things. Agents carry out actions that affect other participants, Experiencers perceive Phenomena. Furthermore, processes have been realised by verbs, entities by nouns, and Attributes by (for instance) adjectives and possessives. These are the basic realisations which are found in the language of children and in much everyday spoken English. But any state of affairs can be conceptualised and expressed in more than one way. A more nominalised version encodes actions and states as nouns, which involves a complete restructuring of the clause. This has been called 'grammatical metaphor'. Its most obvious characteristic is nominalisation.
- 2 Thus, a process can be realised as an entity: *government spending* is one example. Similar transferred functions occur with attributes and circumstances. These alternative realisations of the semantic roles involve further adjustments in the correspondences between semantic roles and syntactic functions in the clause.
- 3 Grammatical metaphor is a feature of much written English and of spoken English in professional registers.
- 4 The 'transitivity hypothesis' offers an alternative view, in which transitivity is a matter of gradation from high to low.

#### 27.1 BASIC REALISATIONS AND METAPHORICAL REALISATIONS

Situations and events can be conceptualised and expressed linguistically in two major ways. More transparent, because they are closer to the speaker's experience, are the basic transitivity patterns that we have examined so far throughout this chapter. In these semantic structures the processes, participants and circumstances are encoded by their typical clause functions, with agency and chronological sequencing made explicit. That is, in active clauses, the inherent participants such as Agent, Affected,

Experiencer and Carrier are realised by NGs, processes are realised by VGs and circumstantials by PPs and by AdvGs. This correspondence between the semantics and the syntax of English structures is indeed the typical one, but it is by no means the only one.

We have to beware of assuming that a one-to-one correspondence exists between any semantic function and any syntactic function. We have to beware of assuming that entities such as people and things are necessarily expressed by nouns, that actions are necessarily expressed by verbs and that qualities are necessarily expressed by adjectives. Except in the language of children and in very basic English, our linguistic representation of reality tends to be more complex. Any situation can be expressed in more than one way; the first or typical realisation may be called the ‘iconic’ one, in which the form mirrors the meaning; the other is the ‘metaphorical’ or ‘nominalised’. The two forms may be illustrated by an example.

Suppose that I wish to tell you that my friends and I walked in the evening along the river as far as Henley. In the ‘typical’ or ‘iconic’ version, I first select the process type from the options ‘material’, ‘mental’ and ‘relational’ processes. A process of ‘doing’ fits the conceptualised situation best, and more specifically, a process of motion which includes manner. Among possible types of motion I select a material process *walk*. To accompany a process such as *walk* used intransitively, I then select an Agent, or ‘doer’ of the action, and a number of circumstantial elements, of time, place and direction as a setting, to give the following semantic structure and its lexico-grammatical realisation:

Agent	Material process	Time circ.	Place circ.	Goal circ.
NG We	VG walked	PP in the evening	PP along the river	PP to Henley

Figure 5.19 Basic realisations of semantic roles.

This is not the only way of expressing this situation. Instead, I could have said *Our evening walk along the river took us to Henley*. In this ‘nominalised’ interpretation the semantic functions are ‘transferred’ in relation to the syntactic functions. The material process *walk* has now become Agent, and the circumstances of time (*in the evening*) and place (*along the river*) have become classifier and post-modifier, respectively, of the new Agent realised at subject (*evening walk along the river*). The original Agent *we* is now divided into two; one part functions as possessor of the Subject entity (*our evening walk along the river*), the other as Affected (*us*) of a new material process expressed by the verb *took*. Only the Goal circumstance *to Henley* is realised in the same way in both interpretations:

Agent	Material process	Affected	Goal
NG Our evening walk along the river	VG took	NG us	PP to Henley

Figure 5.20 Nominalised realisations of semantic roles.

This second interpretation is a very simple instance of ‘grammatical metaphor’ or alternative realisations of semantic functions, and is a phenomenon which occurs all the time, in different degrees, in adult language, especially in certain written genres.

Even in everyday spoken language it sometimes happens that the metaphorical form has become the normal way of expressing a certain meaning. We have seen that the Range element (→ 20.1) *drink/chat/rest* in *have a drink/chat/rest* is the one that expresses the process, while the syntactic function of Predicator is now realised by the ‘light’ verb *have*. These are simple types of transferred semantic functions which have been incorporated into everyday language. Now compare the ordinary correspondences in example **a** below with the nominalised version of **b**:

<b>Agent/Subject</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Place/Adv</b>	<b>Comparison/Adv</b>
<b>a</b> People in all countries	are [now] travelling	abroad	much more than they used to.
<b>Abstract Subject</b>	<b>Relational process</b>	<b>Time/Adv</b>	<b>Abstraction</b>
<b>b</b> Foreign travel	is	everywhere	on the increase.

Figure 5.21 Two cognitive mappings of a situation.

In **a** we have a process of ‘doing’ (*are travelling*), with an Agent/Subject and three circumstances (*now*, *abroad* and *much more than they used to*). In **b**, by contrast, the process is relational with *be*, the human Agent has disappeared, and instead we have an abstract subject based on the verb ‘travel’ (*foreign travel*), followed by two circumstances. Apart from these differences, we note that the two meanings are not quite equivalent. The notion of ‘all countries’ is replaced by the less explicit ‘everywhere’, that of ‘abroad’ is replaced by ‘foreign’, while the notions expressed by ‘now’ and ‘used to’ are not encoded at all, but remain implicit.

More importantly, the two versions represent two different cognitive mappings of a situation on to different semantic and syntactic structures. The event is ‘perspectivised’ differently in each case, with attention centred in the second on the salient abstraction ‘foreign travel’, rather than on persons.

## 27.2 NOMINALISATION AS A FEATURE OF GRAMMATICAL METAPHOR

It is clear that a choice of transferred realisations such as these has as one result the loss of human agency, which is usually replaced by an abstraction related to the original Agent (*government spending*, *foreign travel*). A second result is an increase in lexical density: Nominal groups become long and heavy. For this reason, nominalisation is the form of grammatical metaphor most consistently recognised under different labels. It distances us from the event, raising the representation of a situation to a higher level of abstraction. Once objectified and depersonalised in this way, the event or abstraction is conceptualised as if it had temporal persistence, instead of the transience associated with a verb.

At the same time, nominalisations are more versatile than verbs. The noun ‘explosion’ from ‘explode’ can carry out all the functions realised by nominals, such

as a Subject or Direct Object (*The explosion occurred at 6 a.m.; leaking gas caused an explosion*). With this new status as a referent, a nominalisation can give the impression that what it expresses is a recognised piece of information, whose validity is beyond dispute. Compare the following **a** extract from a news item with the non-nominalised **b** version:

- a.** *Government spending showed positive growth* in the last quarter in contrast to *its sharp fall* in the previous one.
- b.** *The government spent much more* in the last quarter than was planned, whereas *it spent considerably less* in the previous one.

As soon as we examine samples of more formal English – that used in specialised fields such as the natural sciences, the social sciences, politics, administration and business, finance and technology – we find a great number of such nominalisations. These tend to be abstract nouns derived from verbs and other parts of speech, which can encode quite complex meanings.

Lexical metaphor can occur together with grammatical metaphor, as illustrated by ‘growth’ and ‘fall’, so common in texts on economics. Here, grammar borders on lexis, and different languages have different means of visualising one semantic function as if it were another. Here we can do no more than briefly outline some of the transfers of semantic functions. In the following sections, ‘metaphorical’ forms are given first, with a basic corresponding meaning suggested in the right-hand column.

### 27.2.1 Process realised as entity

This is by far the most common type of grammatical metaphor. Many are institution-alised nominalisations, such as the following:

Nominalised form	Basic form
<b>a.</b> Without the slightest <i>hesitation</i> .	Without <i>hesitating</i> at all.
<b>b.</b> Take a deep <i>breath</i> .	<i>Breathe</i> deeply.
<b>c.</b> There was a sudden <i>burst of laughter</i> .	X <i>burst out laughing</i> suddenly.
<b>d.</b> The <i>exploration and mapping of the world</i> went on.	X continued to <i>explore and map</i> the world.

Many others, however, represent a more original view of reality on the part of the speaker or writer, as in example **e**:

<b>e.</b> <i>His conception of the drama</i> has a very modern <i>ring</i> .	He conceives of the drama in a way that <i>sounds</i> very modern to us.
--	--

### 27.2.2 Attribute realised as entity

An Attribute can be realised as an entity by means of an abstract noun. The forms may be morphologically related: *bigness*–*big* as in example **a** and *usefulness*–*useful* in **b**. The remaining parts of the sentence may have different correspondences, which are not in a one-to-one relationship with the forms of the nominalised version.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>a.</b> <i>Bigness</i> is paid for, in part, by <i>fewness</i>, and <i>a decline in competition</i>.</p> <p><b>b.</b> The <i>usefulness</i> of this machinery is dwindling.</p> | <p>If firms are very <i>big</i>, they will be <i>fewer</i> and will have less need to compete.</p> <p>This machinery is becoming less <i>useful</i>.</p> |
|--|--|

### 27.2.3 Circumstance as entity

A common shift is to have a temporal circumstance functioning as a locative Subject. This involves a new verb, such as 'find', 'witness' and 'see' in these examples:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>a.</b> August 12 found the travellers in Rome.</p> <p><b>b.</b> The last decade has witnessed an unprecedented rise in agricultural technology.</p> <p><b>c.</b> The seventeenth century saw the development of systematic scientific publication.</p> | <p>The travellers were/arrived in Rome on August 12.</p> <p>During the last decade agricultural technology has increased as never before.</p> <p>In the seventeenth century scientific works began to be published systematically.</p> |
|--|--|

As these new processes are transitive, typically taking an Object, further nominalisations are to be expected, such as *rise (or increase) in agricultural technology*, instead of *increase* as a verb. In many cases, such as **c** it is difficult to 'unpack' the metaphorical encoding completely into a simpler form. The two forms of expression are the result of different cognitive encodings.

### 27.2.4 Dependent situation as entity

A whole state of affairs, which in its congruent form would be realised as a subordinate clause, can be visualised as an entity and expressed by a nominal:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Fears of disruption to oil supplies from the Gulf</i> helped push crude oil prices up dramatically.</p> | <p>Because people feared that oil would not be supplied as usual from the Gulf, the price of crude oil rose dramatically.</p> |
|---|---|

We can observe that, in many cases of nominalisation, normal human Agents and Experiencers are absent, replaced by abstractions that are in some way related to them ('fears', 'laughter') and may be more emotionally charged. In other cases, those where a temporal entity 'witnesses' the event, the human Agent may not be recoverable at all, as in **b** and **c** above.

These few examples may serve to show that in English grammatical metaphor is a powerful option in the presenting of information. It reconceptualises an event as a participant, with the consequent restructuring of the rest of the clause, which influences the way the information is perceived. It presents a different cognitive mapping from that of the 'congruent' or iconic correspondence between syntax and semantics that is found in basic English. In institutionalised settings, the concept of grammatical metaphor goes a long way towards explaining professional jargons such as *journalese*

and officialese as written forms. Others, such as the language of business management, use nominalisation in spoken as well as written English (→ summary of processes, participants and circumstances).

### 27.3 HIGH AND LOW TRANSITIVITY

A different approach to transitivity, which has not been discussed in this chapter for reasons of space, is the ‘transitivity hypothesis’. This views transitivity in discourse as a matter of gradation, dependent on various factors. A verb such as *kick*, for example, fulfils all the criteria for high transitivity in a clause with an expressed object such as *Ted kicked the ball*. It refers to an action (B) in which two participants (A) are involved, Agent and Object; it is telic (having an end-point) (C) and is punctual (D). With a human subject it is volitional (E) and agentive, while the object will be totally affected (I) and individuated (J). The clause is also affirmative (F) and declarative, realis, not hypothetical (irrealis) (G). By contrast, with a verb such as *see* as in *Ted saw the accident*, most of the criteria point to low transitivity, while the verb *wish* as in *I wish you were here* includes even irrealis (G) in its complement as a feature of low transitivity. *Susan left* is interpreted as an example of reduced transitivity. Although it has only one participant, it rates higher than some two-participant clauses, as it fulfils B, C, D, E, F, G and H.

	high transitivity	low transitivity
A. Participants	2 or more participants	1 participant
B. Kinesis	Action	non-action
C. Aspect	telic (end-point)	atelic (no end-point)
D. Punctuality	Punctual	non-punctual
E. Volitionality	Volitional	non-volitional
F. Affirmation	Affirmative	Negative
G. Mode	Realis	Irrealis
H. Agency	Agent high in potency	Agent low in potency
I. Affectedness of O	Object totally affected	Object not affected
J. Individuation of O	Object highly individuated	Object non-individuated

Figure 5.22 High and low transitivity.



## 27.4 SUMMARY OF PROCESSES, PARTICIPANTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

Process	Example	Participant	Attribute	Circumstance
Material	1 The Prime Minister resigned 2 Ted kicked the ball into the net 3 Lightning struck the oak tree 4 Jordan slipped on the ice 5 Pat boiled the water 6 The water boiled 7 They're making the road wider. 8 Glass breaks easily 9 Do you drive? 10 I gave the cat some tuna. 11 Will you fetch me a newspaper? 12 Tom watched the snake.	Agent Agent + Affected Force + Affected Affected Agent + Affected Affected Agent + Affected Affected Agent + unactualised Affected Agent + Rec. + Affected Agent + Ben. + Affected	Resulting	Locative/Goal Locative Manner
Behavioural	12 Tom watched the snake.	Experiencer (volitional) + Phenom.		
Mental	13 Tom saw the snake. 14 Tom knows the answer. 15 We were pleased by the news. 16 The news pleased us very much. 17 I wish you were here.	Experiencer (non-volitional) + Phenom. Experiencer + Phenom. Rec. Experiencer + Phenom. Phenom. + Rec. Experiencer Experiencer + Phenom. (unreal)		Degree
Relational	18 Tom is generous. 19 Tom is the secretary. 20 The baby has blue eyes. 21 Those gloves aren't mine.	Carrier Carrier Possessor/Carrier Possessed	Characterising Identifying Possessor	
Verbal	22 I didn't say that. 23 Mary told me a secret.	Sayer + Said Sayer + Rec. + Said		
Existential	24 There's a notice on the door. 25 There are some pages blank.	Existent Existent	Current	Locative

Figure 5.23 Main types of processes, participants and circumstances.

## FURTHER READING

Halliday (1994); Thompson (1996). On causation and possession: Davidse (1996). On types of 'being' and 'possessing': Davidse (2000); Langacker (1991). On grammatical metaphor and nominalisation: Chafe (1994); Martin (1992). On object omission, pseudo-intransitives, ergatives: Martínez Vázquez (1998); Payne (1997). On valency: Payne (1997). On verb classes and alternations: Levin (1993). On 'take a sip' etc.: Round (1998). On the 'transitivity hypothesis': Hopper and Thompson (1980).

## EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 5

### Expressing patterns of experience: Processes, participants, circumstances

#### Units 19 and 20

- 1 †Identify each process in the following examples as a process of 'doing' (material), a process of 'experiencing' (mental) or a process of 'being' (relational):

- (1) This country exports raw materials.
- (2) I prefer ballet to opera.
- (3) The abbey is now a ruin.
- (4) Do you know the author's name?
- (5) The wounded soldier staggered down the road.
- (6) The weather has turned warm. The days are becoming longer.

- 2 †Work out for each of the examples below:

- the number of inherent participants (the verb's semantic valency)
- the number of actualised participants in this use
- whether the verb's valency is reduced in this use

- |                                      |                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| (1a) She teaches 12-year-olds maths. | (2) This dog bites. |
| (1b) She teaches maths.              |                     |
| (1c) She teaches.                    | (3) Cats purr.      |

- 3 †Say whether *it* in each of the following clauses refers to a participant or is merely a Subject-filler:

- (1) *It* rained heavily last night.
- (2) I can lend you ten pounds. Will *it* be enough?
- (3) Her baby is due next month and she knows *it* is a girl.
- (4) Where's your bicycle? *It's* in the garage.
- (5) *It's* our first wedding anniversary today.

**4** †Fill in the blank space with a suitable Force participant:

- (1) As we left the hotel, . . . . . was blowing off the sea.
- (2) Huge . . . . . crashed onto the beach and broke against the rocks.
- (3) Several bathers were caught by the incoming . . . . . and had to be rescued by the coastguard patrol.
- (4) Further inland, a usually tranquil . . . . . broke its banks and flooded the surrounding fields.
- (5) In the mountains above the village, campers were surprised by a sudden . . . . . which threatened to engulf their tents.

**5** †Say whether the italicised nominal group is an Agentive Subject or an Affected Subject:

- (1) *Beatrice* writes black-humour comedies for television.
- (2) *The little bird* died of cold.
- (3) *Angry housewives* attacked the striking dustmen with umbrellas.
- (4) *Three shop-assistants* were sacked by their employer.
- (5) *Many buildings* collapsed during the earthquake. <<EX>>

**6** †Identify the italicised participant as Affected or Effected:

- (1) He paints surrealist portraits of his friends.
- (2) Don't pick the flowers!
- (3) In their youth they wrote pop-songs and made fortunes.
- (4) They carve these figures out of wood.
- (5) Engineers are installing a telephone booth.

**Unit 21****1** †Say which of the following clauses are causative and write underneath these the corresponding anti-causative constructions where appropriate.

- (1) The stress of high office ages most Prime Ministers prematurely.
- (2) Smoking can damage your health.
- (3) Swarms of locusts darkened the sky.
- (4) They sprayed the crops with insecticide.
- (5) Pain and worry wrinkled his brow.
- (6) The photographer clicked the camera.
- (7) The truck tipped a load of sand onto the road.
- (8) This year the company has doubled its sales.

**2** †Say whether the participant in the following one-participant situations is acting (Agent), is acted upon (Affected) or whether the propensity of the participant to undergo the action is being expressed, i.e. the construction is pseudo-intransitive.

- (1) This kind of material creases easily.
- (2) The car broke down.
- (3) Glass recycles well.
- (4) Two of the deputies arrived late.
- (5) He ruled with an iron hand.

- (6) This cream whips up in an instant.
- (7) Peaches won't ripen in this climate.

**3** †Explain the difference in meaning, in terms of participants and processes, and the types of relations we have examined, between the following representations:

- (a) Sarah is cooking the rice.
- (b) Sarah is cooking.
- (c) The rice is cooking.
- (d) Sarah cooks beautifully.
- (e) Rice cooks easily.
- (f) Why would you not expect to hear normally 'Sarah cooks easily'?

**4** †Comment on the italicised processes in the following quotation from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (Act 2, Scene 2, l.224):

**Age cannot *with*er her, nor custom *stale***  
**Her infinite variety: other women *cloy***  
**The appetites they feed, but she *makes* hungry**  
**Where most she *satisfies*.**

## Unit 22

**1** †Identify the italicised participant as Recipient or Beneficiary:

- (1) Don't forget to send *us* a postcard.
- (2) *My brother-in-law* has been offered a job analysing mud for an oil company.
- (3) Can I get *you* something to eat?
- (4) I think Sammy would like you to buy *him* an ice-cream.
- (5) How much do we owe *your parents* for the tickets?

## Unit 23

**1** †Identify each of the processes in the main clauses of the following sentences as one of perception, cognition or affectivity. Say whether the Phenomenon is an entity, a fact or a situation:

- (1) He recognised a group of fellow Americans by their accent.
- (2) Yesterday I saw a mouse in the supermarket.
- (3) The miner knew he wouldn't see the light of day again for many hours.
- (4) Most people hate going to the dentist.
- (5) Did you watch the World Cup Final on television?
- (6) He wondered whether he had heard correctly.
- (7) He could hardly believe that what had happened to him was true.
- (8) With a cold like this I can't taste what I'm eating.

- 2** †Write an alternative construction for each of the following clauses so that Experiencer is made to coincide with Subject, as in (b) below:

- (a) The news delighted us.
  - (b) We were delighted with the news.
- (1) Neither of the proposals pleased the members of the commission.
  - (2) His presence of mind amazed us.
  - (3) The dramatic increase of crime in the cities is alarming the government.
  - (4) The fact that she seems unable to lose weight worries her
  - (5) Will the fact that you forgot to phone annoy your wife?

## Unit 24

- 1** †Identify the types of 'being' and the participants in the following relational processes 1–8.

- (1) The dormouse is a small rodent related to the mouse.
- (2) The dormouse is famous for its drowsiness and long winter sleep.
- (3) The Dormouse is one of the characters in *Alice in Wonderland*.
- (4) I felt quite nervous all through the interview.
- (5) I haven't any change, I'm afraid.
- (6) The concert will be in the sports stadium at nine o'clock.
- (7) Food is the supreme national symbol.
- (8) What we call civilisation or culture represents only a fraction of human history. [HRM]

- 2** †Add a suitable Attribute or circumstance to each of the following clauses and say whether it is current or resulting:

- (1) After wandering around in circles for more than an hour, we ended up . . . . .
- (2) Keep your money . . . . . in this special travelling wallet.
- (3) Growing coffee proved to be more . . . . . than they had expected.
- (4) Stand . . . . . while I bandage your hand.
- (5) Feel . . . . . to do as you like.

## Unit 25

- 1** Add a suitable Existent to each of the following existential clauses and say whether your Existent represents a countable entity, a non-countable entity or an event:

- (1) There appeared on the horizon . . . . .
- (2) There was . . . . . and all the lights went out.
- (3) There's . . . . . in the next village, where you can get quite a good meal.
- (4) On the floor there lay . . . . .
- (5) Just opposite the cinema there is . . . . .: you can send an email from there.
- (6) There's no . . . . . to lose; the taxi will be here in five minutes.

## Unit 26

1 †Identify the italicised circumstantial element in each of the following:

- (1) Trains to Lancing run every twenty minutes in off-peak periods.
- (2) It's supposed to be quicker by first-class mail.
- (3) In spite of the forecast for storms, they set off in a rowing-boat to cross the lake.
- (4) Someone may have done it out of spite.
- (5) Payments must be made by the end of the month.
- (6) The horse show was cancelled on account of the epidemic.
- (7) As a do-it-yourself decorator, I'm not the most enterprising.
- (8) As for the dog, he'll have to go to a kennels for a month.

2 †Say which of the following italicised items is Instrument, which is Means and which Range:

- (1) They blocked the road *with dustbins*.
- (2) We crossed the Channel *by ferry*.
- (3) Rita and Pam had *a fierce quarrel*.
- (4) She managed to open the suitcase *with a hairpin*.
- (5) They lead *a quiet life*.

## Unit 27

1 †Give a possible basic form for each of the following sentences. Comment on the semantic-syntactic changes involved in the nominalised form here. Provide a translation into another language of the 'metaphorical' (i.e. more nominalised) form, if possible.

- (1) We had a long chat.
- (2) Bombing continued throughout the night.
- (3) Canada saw the launch of a 50-day election campaign last weekend.
- (4) His obvious intelligence and exceptional oratory won him [Franz Josef Strauss] a place in Konrad Adenauer's 1951 cabinet as minister without portfolio.

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# ORGANISING THE MESSAGE

## CHAPTER 6

### Thematic and information structures of the clause

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# THEME: THE POINT OF DEPARTURE OF THE MESSAGE

## UNIT 28

### SUMMARY

- 1 Theme is an element of the thematic structure of a clause; the other element is Rheme. It is therefore a different category from the syntactic Subject and from the discourse category of Topic – what the message is about – although these three often coincide in one wording.
- 2 It is convenient to think of Topics as organised hierarchically according to their level of operation: a global topic is what the whole text or discourse is about, an episode topic represents what a shorter, but integrated, stretch of talk or writing is about. Local topics are the main referents that persist throughout a stretch of text by means of anaphora, establishing a participant frame or referent chain. They are the topics most clearly related to grammatical categories. English makes use of certain devices to introduce new referents, potential topics, into the discourse and to maintain topic continuity.
- 3 Theme is identified as the first clause constituent and communicatively is the point of departure of the message. When Theme conflates with Topic and Subject it can be called topical Theme. When Theme is realised by a temporal or spatial Adjunct it is a circumstantial Theme, which sets up a time/space frame within which the participant chain develops. More marked Themes such as fronted Complement and Object have a local textual function, such as initiating a change of direction by means of contrast. Relating Theme to grammar, Theme is unmarked when it coincides with the expected element, such as Subject in a declarative clause. When some other element is brought to initial position it is a marked Theme, and carries some additional significance in the discourse. Objects, Complements and Adjuncts can be thematised/fronted. Whole clauses can be thematised in complex sentences.
- 4 Other items which tend to be placed at the beginning of the clause may be considered to be part of the Theme. These include connective Adjuncts such as *however*, stance Adjuncts such as *personally*, vocatives (*Doctor!*) and discourse markers such as *Well*. In this way we can talk of 'multiple Themes'. They are not, however, topics. A subordinate clause in initial position may be considered as Theme of a clause complex.

Our attention in the two previous chapters has centred on two kinds of meaning: **experiential meaning**, which is encoded in the grammar in terms of participants, processes and circumstances, and **interpersonal meaning**, as encoded by the mood structures. We now turn to a third type of meaning, which helps us to organise and relate individual sentences and utterances within our discourse. This is **textual meaning**. We will be considering three important dimensions of textual meaning which have a place in English grammar and contribute to discourse coherence: first, the **Theme–Rheme** textual structure and its relation to **Topic**; second, the **order of constituents** in the clause and how the normal order may be altered to achieve different textual effects; and third, the **distribution and focus of information**, which makes an essential contribution to coherence and understandability in spoken and written English.

## INTRODUCTION

To start, consider the following versions of the same piece of information about a coach tour:

- 1 We'll reach Lancaster, but not Carlisle, by noon
- 2 By noon we'll reach Lancaster but not Carlisle.
- 3 Lancaster, but not Carlisle, we'll reach by noon.

All three utterances have the same **experiential** meaning: the content is the same. All three would normally be used to make a statement, and so they are **interpersonally** equivalent too. The difference between **1**, **2** and **3** lies in the **textual** component of meaning: the information is the same, but the message is arranged or 'packaged' in different ways, and the different forms highlight different aspects of the message. More specifically, the element which occupies first position in the clause is different in the three examples: in **1** it is *we*, in **2** it is *before noon* and in **3** it is *Lancaster*. This element is the Theme of the clause. Since first position is salient, what to put in it is an important choice, particularly in connected discourse.

### 28.1 THEME AND RHEME

Theme and Rheme are the two components which together make up the organisational construct that is the thematic structure of the clause. The Theme comes first and is identified as the first constituent in the clause. What follows is the Rheme.

Looking at the clause as a unit of communication, we can say that Theme is the clause constituent which, whatever its syntactic function, is selected to be the point of departure of the clause as message. What goes in initial position is important for both speaker and hearer. It represents the angle from which the message is projected and sets up a frame which holds at least to the end of the clause. For the speaker, the communicative choice associated with Theme is 'What notion shall I take as my starting-point in this clause? Shall I start by saying where we are going? Or shall I start with the 'time-frame' – *by noon*? Or with the places we'll visit?' From whichever point of departure we choose, the rest of the clause must proceed. For the hearer or reader Theme acts as a signal, creating expectations and laying the foundation

for the hearer's mental representation of how the message will unfold. Given these cognitive and communicative functions, it is not surprising that the element in initial position is so important.

While the Theme lays the basis of the message, the Rheme says something in relation to it. Typically, important new information is presented in the Rheme. Let's diagram this thematic structure on to our previous examples:

Theme	Rheme
<b>1</b> We	'll reach Lancaster, but not Carlisle, by noon.
<b>2</b> By noon	we'll reach Lancaster, but not Carlisle.
<b>3</b> Lancaster, but not Carlisle	we'll reach by noon.

## 28.2 UNMARKED THEME AND MARKED THEME IN DECLARATIVE CLAUSES

In selecting Theme, speakers must choose between a neutral order of clause constituents or a marked order. The order of clause elements in **1** has the Subject as Theme. This is the neutral, **unmarked** choice in a declarative clause, used when there is no good reason to depart from the usual. Any other constituent but the Subject will be **marked**, and signals an additional meaning. In the case of **2** the Theme is a circumstance of time, syntactically an Adjunct, and is marked. However, it does not strike us as very unusual. This is because adjuncts of time can occupy several positions in the clause. Theme **3** is an Object participant whose normal position is after the verb. Objects are not so mobile and sound highly marked in English when brought to initial position. Marked constituent orders always signal some additional meaning and have to be motivated. Thematised Objects tend to express a contrast with something said or expected by the hearer. By specifying *Lancaster but not Carlisle* as the Object, the speaker refers explicitly to a contrary expectation and justifies the thematised element. We will return shortly to the most frequent types of marked Theme. For the moment, you can 'feel' that certain elements sound more striking than others when in initial position.

From these considerations, it is clear that the Theme of a clause represents a choice, both as the absolute point of departure of a discourse and also that of each subsequent clause and of each paragraph. It gives us the choice of taking as point of departure one or other participant in the situation described, or something else, such as a circumstance. It can serve to link up with what has gone before in the discourse and it helps to push the message forward. Because sentences do not normally occur in isolation, and previous sentences and utterances condition later ones, not all thematic choices will be equally appropriate from the point of view of creating a coherent whole.

## 28.3 THEME IN NON-DECLARATIVE CLAUSES

All the examples seen so far are of declarative clauses. In these the unmarked Theme is Subject. Non-declarative clauses, that is, interrogatives and imperatives, have

unmarked Themes derived from their respective clause type, as illustrated in the examples below.

In examples, **4** to **7**, the starting-point of the clause is the expected one, which announces the clause-type. Theme is marked when any other but the expected one is placed in initial position, as in examples **8** to **10**. Marked Themes in non-declarative clauses are relatively uncommon.

#### *Unmarked Themes*

<b>4</b> <i>Are we going to Carlisle?</i>	Operator + subject in <i>yes/no</i> interrogative
<b>5</b> <i>When will we get there?</i>	<i>Wh</i> -word in <i>wh</i> -interrogative
<b>6</b> <i>Have your tickets ready!</i>	Base form of verb in 2nd person (imperative)
<b>7</b> <i>Let's go for a swim instead.</i>	<i>Let's</i> in 1st person (imperative)

#### *Marked Themes*

<b>8</b> <i>We are going where?</i>	Non <i>wh</i> -subject in a <i>wh</i> -interrogative
<b>9</b> <i>Do hurry up, all of you!</i>	Emphatic <i>do</i> in an imperative
<b>10</b> <i>You keep quiet!</i>	Subject in an imperative

In *yes/no* interrogatives in English, unmarked Theme is the Finite operator (→ 3.1), together with the Subject, as in **4**. In *wh*-interrogatives, the Theme is the *wh*-word as in **5**. In 2nd person imperative clauses, unmarked Theme is the verb, as in **6**, and *let's* in first person imperatives, as in **7**. Any other order is marked. When the *wh*-element is displaced, as in **8**, the element that remains as Theme (*we*) is marked for a *wh*-interrogative. Emphatic *do*, as in **9**, and the Subject *you*, as in **10**, are marked Themes in the imperative.

## 28.4 TOPIC, THEME AND SUBJECT

Topic is a discourse category which corresponds to 'what the text, or part of the text, is about'. A whole book, chapter, essay or lecture can have a topic, for instance, 'car maintenance' or 'the English novel in the 20th century'. A topic which coherently organises a whole piece of language can be called a **global topic**. (More exactly, of course, it is speakers and writers who have topics and do the organising of the text.) On an intermediate level, **paragraphs** or sections in writing and '**episodes**' in talk each have their own topics. In writing, these will typically be organised under the 'umbrella' of the global topic, but they display an internal coherence of their own. Finally, utterances and sentences have topics which contribute to the episode and help to build up the discourse as a whole. We call these **local topics**.

All three levels of topic are integrated in normal texts and discourses. Local topics are usually the only ones that have a direct grammatical realisation. They are associated with the main referential entities represented in speakers' sentences and utterances, which to be coherent will have to relate in some way to the higher levels of topicality of the discourse as a whole. Sentence and utterance topics are the most relevant to the study of grammar, because this is one area in which discourse interfaces with a 'pragmatic grammar'. In a functional grammar of English, we are interested in seeing how the category of mainly local topic interacts with Subject and with Theme.

## 28.5 COGNITIVE FEATURES OF THE TOPIC

A number of cognitive features have been associated with major topic entities. First, the topic entity is **inherent** to the event described and it initiates the action.

Second, the topic entity is typically high on what is called the **empathy hierarchy**. This has to do with what attracts our empathy. It starts from the speaker, since we all empathise most with ourselves, and continues as follows:

Speaker > hearer > human > animal > physical object > abstract entity

After the speaker, the hearer – as co-participant in a conversation – can be important, and is included with the speaker in the inclusive use of ‘we’, as in 1. But in many discourses a 3rd person topic is even more common, in that we frequently talk and write about people, creatures and things distinct from the speaker and hearer. Abstract entities come last in the empathy hierarchy.

A third feature is **definiteness**. This is a subjective factor since it depends on whether speakers and hearers have established empathy with the topic. When contact has been established, the topic is easily accessible and is definite.

Fourth, the topic is the most **salient** participant on the scene of discourse.

From the point of view of cognitive salience, all these features are closely associated with the Subject function in English. The prototypical Subject referent is inherent to the event described in the clause; it fulfils the semantic function of Agent, if there is an Agent, and initiates the action. It is typically human and definite and is the main participant at any one point on the scene of discourse as represented in a particular clause or utterance. Subject and Topic are therefore closely related in English. (It must be pointed out that this does not imply that all Subjects have these characteristics.)

These features are not, however, necessarily associated with Theme. Theme and Topic are quite different types of category. Topics are what a text, section or clause is **about**, and Topic is always conceptualised as an entity or a nominalisation (→ Unit 21). Theme, on the other hand, is what the speaker or writer chooses as the point of departure for the message in any one clause or sentence. It may be an entity, a circumstance or an attribute. Only entities initiate referential chains. Let’s look now at the main types of themes, starting from the most central.

## 28.6 TOPIC AND SUBJECT AS THEME

Themes which conflate with Subject are participants in the transitivity structures and typically refer to persons, creatures and things. As such, they are the most likely candidates to fulfil the discourse role of Topic or ‘topical Theme’ at clause level. They are typically presented by the speaker as identifiable or at least accessible to the hearer and are usually encoded by full nominal groups or proper names when introduced for the first time. Important Theme-Topic-Subject referents set up referent chains which can transcend clausal boundaries, maintaining topic continuity as long as the speaker or writer wishes. This is an important test for ‘aboutness’. Many referents enter the discourse, but only a few are selected to be major topics.

We can track the referent chain, which can also be seen as an **identity chain**, of a major referent as it is repeated across several clauses by an anaphoric pronoun, by an alternative NG or by repetition of the name or proper noun. Such is the case in the extract adapted from the obituary by Clancy Sigal in *The Guardian* of the American actress Bette Davis:

Bette Davis was the most formidable screen actress of her time. She imposed her will on audiences, and on often inferior material, with determination and galvanic force . . . For better, and sometimes worse, she personified the 'new woman' with all her contradictions and hysterics . . .

Davis was building a certain kind of woman on the screen, the like of which had often been hinted at but never fully revealed. Tortured and self-torturing, she won her fans often by playing against their sympathies . . .

Unlike many actresses of her generation who retired rather than let audiences feast voyeuristically on the fading remnants of their beauty, Davis – the ugly duckling – positively gloried in exposing her wrinkles and bloodshot, staring eyes. In the 1960s she played a succession of grotesque old dears, in pictures like *Whatever Happened To Baby Jane* (opposite her one-time rival, Joan Crawford).

The 'referent chain' of this paragraph can be shown graphically as follows: *Bette Davis* (Subject, proper name) – *she* (Subject pron., three times) – (Subject, surname) – *Davis* (+alternative NG *the ugly duckling*).

Indefinite, and therefore unidentified, but specific referents as Subject Themes are also found in English, however. We might start up a conversation by saying *A man I met in Beirut once told me a good story*. At this point in the discourse we haven't established contact with either the man or the story, and for this reason both are presented as indefinite. Similarly, news items often present an indefinite, but specific (→ 46.2), Subject Theme such as the following adapted item in which both the commission and the man are indefinite but specific:

A special commission set up by the Kremlin in an attempt to improve the status of Russian women is to be presided over by a man.

## 28.7 INTRODUCING NEW POTENTIAL TOPICS INTO THE DISCOURSE

New referents have to be introduced into the discourse in order to be discussed. Some languages have specific morphological markers to indicate that something is being presented as a potential new topic. English has no such morphological devices, but there are still ways of presenting new referents into the discourse. These include the following:

- 1 The subject of an intransitive clause (including copular clauses) can present or identify a new entity. Such is the case with ***an urban fox*** in the sentence *An urban fox appears in our garden every morning*. When spoken, extra pitch and stress (→ 29.1) help the hearer to make contact with the new referent.
- 2 When the Subject is known, the direct object often introduces a new entity: *I saw **a most extraordinary person** in the park this afternoon*. It has been estimated that between them the subject of an intransitive verb and the object of a transitive verb account for the majority of new entities introduced in spoken discourse.

- 3 Unstressed *there* with *be* – or a presentative verb such as *appear*, which has the same effect – can introduce a new referent, as in *There was **a good programme** on television last night* (→ 30.4).
- 4 A statement can explicitly inform the hearer what the Topic is going to be, as in *Today I want to talk to you about **genetic engineering***.
- 5 Inversion of a copular clause can introduce a new Topic, as in *Worst of all was **the lack of fresh water*** (→ 28.9).

It must be emphasised that not every entity introduced into the discourse is maintained as a major topic with its own identity chain. Many do not survive the first mention, such is the volume of incoming detail to be processed mentally. In conversation, establishing a discourse topic is eminently collaborative, and some new entities may not be considered newsworthy enough to survive.

## 28.8 CIRCUMSTANTIAL ADJUNCTS AS THEMES

Among the marked Themes, Circumstantial Adjuncts – particularly those of time and place – are the least unusual. Comparing the examples below, we can say that the circumstantials in *London last year* have been transferred from their normal position in the Rheme in 1 to initial position in 2; that is, they have been **thematised** or ‘fronted’.

### Theme

- 1 We
- 2 *In London last year*,

### Rheme

- did a lot of sightseeing *in London last year*.
- we did a lot of sightseeing.

The function of such circumstantials is to set the necessary temporal and/or spatial coordinates of the text world within which the participants move, establishing a **time-frame** or **place-frame** for the rest of the message. Such frames or settings can hold over wide spans of discourse, until a different frame is set up. Such is the case with this text by Caroline Law in *The Week*:

*One morning earlier this month*, I awoke to the peaceful sound of a babbling brook, which was odd, since I live in inner London. Outside my bedroom window, water was coursing down the gutter. *After a couple of days*, I realised it was possibly my civic duty to report the leaks to Thames Water, which I duly did.

*A week later*, the water was still pouring down the street. Surely, I reasoned, with reservoirs empty and threats of hose pipe bans, they wouldn’t knowingly allow thousands of gallons to go to waste. There must have been a misunderstanding. I rang back. There was no mistake: a contractor was on the case.

*By 15 February* the babbling of the brook was beginning to get on my nerves. I rang again, to be told nothing could be done until the 24th – fully three weeks from the date the leak was first reported. I sent off a furious email – and immediately received an automatic reply, containing this little homily: ‘Water is precious. A running tap can waste up to six litres of water a minute . . . Help save water by putting a plug in the sink when you run the tap. It’s the non-rainy days we all need to save for.’



Initial circumstantials of time constitute a useful device for structuring lengthy stretches of text on a chronological basis. Time and place adjuncts do not initiate cohesive chains, however, although they can be referred to anaphorically in subsequent clauses by the adverbs *there* and *then*, respectively: *We went to the theatre in London, and it was there that I learned some Cockney slang.*

There is competition between subject and adjunct Themes for initial position. If chronological sequencing is adopted as a method of development of the text, as in this extract, temporal Themes are chosen to mark crucial points, while the topic (*a babbling brook, water*) takes second position, although it is Subject. The topical participant chain of the running water is built up within the time-span created by the Theme. While circumstantial Themes are important in mapping the surface development, it is the topic referents, (participant Themes when initial), however, which structure the cognitive development of the text as a whole, in terms of its global topic.

## 28.9 OBJECTS AND COMPLEMENTS AS THEMES

Apart from contrast, another motivation for thematising direct objects is that of retrospective linking to something in the previous sentence or context:

*Moussaka* you ordered, and *moussaka* you've got.  
Janet asked me to bring her some tea from London. *This* I did.

When **subject complements** are thematised they tend to occur as evaluative comments made spontaneously in context, often in response to another speaker. In each case, there is retrospective linking. **Identifying clauses**, such as *The music was the best of all*, are reversible. When reversed, as in **2**, they look both backwards and forwards, linking to something just said, but also marking a shift to something new.

- 1 [How did the meeting go?] – *A complete waste of time* it was (Subject Complement. The unmarked order: *It was a complete waste of time.*)
- 2 [Was the festival a success?] Not bad. *The best was the music.* (reversed identifying clause from *The music was the best.*)
- 3 *Fantastic* I call it! (Object Complement. Unmarked order: *I call it fantastic.*)

## 28.10 LESS COMMON THEMATISATIONS IN THE DECLARATIVE CLAUSE

### 28.10.1 Negative adverbs

When we place negative adverbs such as **never** in initial position, we seem to be responding to a communicative human need to foreground and emphasise the negation. But while *Never!* can be used as a one-word negative response in conversation, thematised negative constituents are much less easy to use in English than in some other languages. This is because they trigger the inversion of an existing auxiliary (or *do*-operator) with the subject. Furthermore, thematised negatives have an emphatic, marked effect, as can be seen from the following famous utterance made by Winston

Churchill after the Battle of Britain in the Second World War. The second utterance was made as a comment on television about the IRA's apology in 2002 for the loss of life of non-combatants over three decades.

**Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.**

**Never before has the IRA acknowledged the loss of life in its 30-year paramilitary campaign.**

In everyday use such a rhetorical effect may be undesirable, and it is best to reserve fronted negative elements for emphatic statements or directives. With the imperative, there is no inversion, as the base form of the verb is used: *Never say 'never again'!* Certain dependent clauses of condition are likewise fronted: *Should you wish to change your mind*, please let us know. The negative adjuncts *never* and *under no circumstances*, fronted semi-negatives such as *hardly*, *scarcely* and *only* + an adverb of time all have a marked effect when fronted. Their unmarked position before the main verb avoids this problem (*I have never seen . . . You must under no circumstances leave . . .*).

The positive and negative elements most commonly thematised in everyday spoken English are *so* and *neither* or *nor* as substitute words (→ 29.6). They behave like initial negatives, provoking operator-subject ordering, but they have no rhetorical effect.

All my friends passed the driving-test and **so** did I.

**A. Never** have I seen such a mess! **B. Nor** have I.

**Under no circumstances** must medicines be left within reach of children.

**Only then** did I realise what he really meant.

### 28.10.2 Negative Objects

These produce the same inversion, but are much less common. Negative subjects do not produce inversion. Compare: **Not a thing** could the patient remember, where *not a thing* is Object, with **No-one** could remember a thing, where *no-one* is Subject.

### 28.10.3 Adverbs followed by verbs of motion

Initial adverbs such as *up*, *down*, *in* and deictics such as *here*, *there* and *then* are commonly used with verbs of motion such as *come*, *go*, *run*. In short spoken utterances they accompany or signal actions, such as *In you get!* (helping someone into a car) or *There/Here you go!* (handing something to someone). There is no inversion when the subject is a pronoun. With a full nominal group, however, the verb and the subject invert: *Down came **the rain** and up went **the umbrellas**: There goes **my last dollar**! Here comes **the bus***. In certain types of written texts such as historical narrative in tourist brochures, this structure can be used to mark a new stage in the narrative, and in such cases usually initiates a new paragraph, as in:

Then came the Norman Conquest.

Only simple tenses are used in this structure, that is, not the progressive or perfect combinations.

Thematised verbs rarely occur in the declarative clause in English. When they do, it is the non-finite part that is thematised:

He told me to run, so *run I did*. (Unmarked order: *He told me to run, so I did run*.)

In the media non-finite and finite forms are sometimes fronted, together with the rest of the clause:

*Coming up to the stage now* is this year's winner of the Oscar . . . *Snapped back* the 18-year-old princess: 'No comment'.

### 28.10.4 Detached predicatives

These are units headed by a noun, an adjective or a participle. They are closely tied to the subject but, instead of occupying a position after the verb, they are fronted, and have the status of **supplementives**, with an adjunctive function:

*A Saxon princess*, she was born at Exning near Newmarket around AD 630, the daughter of Anna, King of the East Angles.

These fronted phrases are common in such genres as fiction, history, advertising and tourism, where they provide an economical means of packing information around a main topic entity, without holding up the narrative.

N.B. When thematic, they are retrospective, linking up with the immediately preceding text. When they are placed after the subject, they add extra details about the topic entity as in *the daughter of Anna, King of the East Angles*.

## 28.11 DETACHED THEMES: ABSOLUTE THEME, DISLOCATIONS AND DOUBLE THEMES

### 28.11.1 Absolute Theme

The Themes analysed so far all have a place within the syntax and semantics of the clause. This is not the only type, however. Across the world's languages, a very basic way of presenting a 'newsworthy' piece of information is by means of a **detached** lexical NG standing outside the clause. This 'Chinese-style topic' is always a definite NG or proper name which does not function as a constituent of the clause which follows it. The construction, here called Absolute Theme, is common in the spoken registers of many European languages, as illustrated by the following sentence, from Spanish (Jiménez Juliá, T):

Los Beatles, sin *Sgt. Pepper* no tendríamos ni la mitad de la música pop de ahora. (*The Beatles*) (without *Sgt. Pepper*) (we wouldn't have) (even half the pop music [we have] now)

The Theme *The Beatles* is completely detached, with no grammatical relations connecting it to the second part of the message. Nevertheless, it provides a pragmatic frame by which the connection is made inferentially, based on contextual knowledge.

Absolute Themes in English occur sometimes in spontaneous talk; they do not occur normally in written text. Here are two instances, both from news interviews on television. The first is in the context of a public appeal in a police inquiry, the second during the anthrax alarm in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. In both, the Absolute Theme provides a personal frame to the utterance.

Now *Manchester United*, their players have been holding up a banner.

*The woman who died in New York*, that's obviously affecting her colleagues who work in the hospital.

### 28.11.2 Dislocations

Dislocations are different from Absolute Themes in that the 'dislocated' element is a constituent of the clause, frequently subject (as in *That letter*, was it from Bruce?), and is repeated by a co-referential pronoun (*it* in this case) in its normal position within the clause. The connection is therefore encoded grammatically, not established inferentially. **1** and **2** illustrate what are usually known as **left-dislocations**, while **3** is a **right-dislocation**:

- |          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
| <b>1</b> | <i>That letter</i> , was it from Bruce?  | (compare: Was that letter from Bruce?)           |
| <b>2</b> | And <i>those flood waters</i> that affected the Czech Republic, <i>those</i> are the ones that are sweeping towards Germany. | (declarative structure instead of interrogative) |
| <b>3</b> | Is <i>it</i> new, <i>that top</i> – No, I bought it last year.   | (Non-dislocated: Is that top new?)               |

One explanation sometimes given of left-dislocation is that the speaker presents the main person or thing s/he wishes to talk about (*that letter*, *those flood waters that affected the Czech Republic*) without having worked out the structure to be used. A more positive view, cognitively and communicatively, is that by 'detaching' the salient referent and putting it first, the speaker side-steps grammatical complexity, presenting a 'topic-comment' structure that is more easily grasped than the normal one. Interrogatives and relatives are complex structures in English, and it is in these cases that we can find left-dislocation.

Right-dislocations are more problematic to analyse as Themes, as they are not initial, but instead are placed after the clause as a full NG, (*that top*) whose referent had been just introduced as a pronoun (*it*). The traditional view is that the final nominal is an after-thought, which again, implies a construction failure on the part of the speaker. A cognitive-functional explanation, however, suggests a motivation for this structure, namely, that of making explicit a referent (*that top*) which was accessible to the speaker in the context, but perhaps not so obvious to the hearer, or not in the speaker's mind at the moment.

Affectivity may provide a different kind of motivation, as in the next two examples. In the first the referent was an escaped pig, called McQueen; the second a relative of the speaker. In the third, a deictic pronoun *this* refers to the immediate context:

And *he* not only flew over the fence, *he* could swim, *that pig*. (author's data)  
*He's* a cool dude, *Sam* (AmE). (author's data)  
*It's* a nice place, *this*.

### 28.11.3 Double detached Themes

Two detached Themes may occur together, the first an Absolute, the second a left-dislocation. The relationship between them must be pragmatically relevant.

- 1 And *Ben, his sister*, she has disabling osteo-arthritis.
- 2 And *this consultant*, what I like about *him* is that *he* doesn't pass everyone on to his underlings; *he* attends to you himself.
- 3 *The white house opposite, the woman who lives there, her dog*, *he's* had to be put down.

In **2** there is a *wh*-cleft, *what I like about him* (→ 30.2), which is not detached. Both of these combinations are heard in spoken English, but rarely find their way into the written language. In fact, for many speakers, multiple and even single left-detachments do not occur in the best usage. In **3** there are three detached nominal groups, the last of which, *her dog*, is picked up by the pronoun *he*. The function of multiple detachments is to 'anchor' the final referent to other related referents, which are presumed to be accessible to the hearer.

## 28.12 NON-EXPERIENTIAL THEMES

The Theme of an utterance in English is typically an element in the transitivity structures. We can allow for a number of non-experiential Themes, which precede the experiential Theme. These can be grouped into two main kinds: **interpersonal** Themes and **textual** Themes.

### Interpersonal Themes

These include three main sub-types. **Continuative Themes** (or discourse markers), such as *Now, Oh, well, Ah, please* (→ 8.2.8), have various functions as markers of attention, response, request, state of knowledge, surprise and hesitation, among others. Overall, they signal acknowledgements by speakers and transitions from one speaker to another or a move to another point in spoken discourse. Examples are:

*Now* who wants to come to the castle? – *Oh, actually* I have to do some shopping.

*Well*, we'll see you later, then.

Another group of interpersonal Themes, **Adjuncts of stance**, include three main sub-types: **epistemic**, (*certainly*), **evidential** (*apparently*) and **evaluative** (*surely, surprisingly*)

1. Further sub-types include style adjuncts, such as *frankly, honestly*, and domain adjuncts, such as *legally, technologically, consumerwise* **2**, which limit the domain of reference of the rest of the sentence. All are discussed and illustrated in section 8.2.5.

A third type is made up of **vocatives**, such as *Doctor! Mum!*, and **appellatives** – *ladies and gentlemen* – which address people by name or by role or status **3**.

- 1** *Surely* you could find yourself a job somewhere? *Honestly*, I've tried.
- 2** *Technologically*, though, the new model has not been a success.
- 3** *Ladies and gentlemen*, please take your seats. The coach will depart in five minutes.

## Textual Themes

Textual Themes include a variety of connectors or **connective adjuncts** such as *however, besides, therefore, now, first, then* (non-temporal) *next* and *anyway*. These connect the clause to the previous part of the text by indicating relations such as addition, concession, reason, consequence, and so on (→ 8.2.7 and 8.2.8).

I don't feel like playing tennis. *Besides*, it's starting to rain.

All these different types of element can be considered as being part of the Theme, as long as they are placed before the experiential theme (Subject, Circumstantial, Object or Complement). Most of them can function in other positions in the clause, and so represent a real choice when used thematically. Coordinators such as *and, but and or*, conjunctions such as *when* and relative pronouns such as *who, which, that* are inherently thematic and do not have alternative placements. For this reason, they will not be taken into account in our analyses.

Non-defining relatives, however, because they are analysed as supplementives (→ 2.4.1, 49.2), may be considered as having Themes and Rhemes in their own right. The following sentence may be analysed as two Theme–Rheme units as follows:

Ladies and gentlemen, this afternoon we are going to visit the cathedral, which was built in 1241 not long after the last of the great wars.

Ladies and gentlemen, this afternoon		we are going to visit the cathedral	
Theme		Rheme	
which	was built in 1241 not long after the great wars.		
Theme	Rheme		

Figure 6.1 Theme and Rheme.

By including the many different classes of items within the Theme category, it is possible to claim that the three macro-functions of language, the experiential, the interpersonal and the textual, can be represented by items within the Theme. Here is an examples of **Multiple Themes**.

Well	now,	Mrs Jones,	what	can I do for you?
Continuative	Connective	Vocative	Experiential	
Interpersonal	Textual	Interpersonal	Experiential	
<b>Theme</b>				<b>Rheme</b>

Figure 6.2 Multiple Themes.

## 28.13 CLAUSES AS THEMES

Time and place are not the only types of circumstance that can be thematised: other types of situational frame can be established.

**Coordinated clauses** joined by 'and' reflect the chronological order of the events described. The first clause is therefore the natural temporal and factual starting-point of the sequence. For this reason not all coordinate clauses are coherently reversible:

The lone rider got on his horse and rode into the sunset.

\*The lone rider rode into the sunset and got on his horse.

Even when the clauses are reversible, the resultant meanings are likely to be different; for, as well as chronological sequence, other meanings such as cause and effect are implied:

He bought an oil-tanker and made a fortune. (i.e. his fortune resulted from his buying the tanker)

He made a fortune and bought an oil-tanker. (i.e. it is implied that he bought the tanker after making a fortune)

**Subordinate clauses** impose no obligation to maintain chronological sequencing. However, an initial subordinate clause takes as starting-point the meaning it encodes, such as reason **1**, simultaneity **2** and condition **3**:

**1** *As you weren't at home*, I left a message on your answer-phone.

**2** *As she stepped off the kerb*, a cyclist crashed into her.

**3** *If you don't like it*, you can probably change it for something else.

Such initial clauses also set up expectations, which obviously does not happen when the subordinate clause is final. For instance, compare examples **4** and **5**. Each contains a **non-finite to-infinitive clause of purpose** in either initial or final position, respectively:

**4** *To cure stress*, try a Jacuzzi whirlpool bath.

**5** He braked hard *to avoid hitting the cyclist*.

The initial purpose clause in **4** not only sets up a purpose frame, but also names the goal to be achieved. For this reason, the *to*-infinitive clause here emphasises a sense of premeditated purpose, which is much less explicit in **5**, where the purpose clause is in final position.

The two remaining types of non-finite clause, the **participial -ing clause** and the **-en clause**, are closely tied to the main participant in the discourse (→ Chapter 7). The *-ing* clause **6** is active in meaning and expresses an action or state dependent upon the main situation. The *-en* clause **7** is passive in meaning and is retrospective, summing up a previous situation:

- 6** *Taking advantage of his present popularity*, the Prime Minister called an election.  
**7** *Thwarted in the west*, Stalin turned east. (H.G. Wells, *A Short History of the World*).

It is useful to remember that speakers adjust their choice of Theme to the context, 'attending first to the most urgent task'. When the tourist guide starts with 'Ladies and gentlemen', for instance, s/he is doing just that: attracting the hearers' attention before giving them the information they need. **Context** is understood here to include potentially:

- the context of culture and the situational context in which the participants interact, including the place, the time and the participants themselves;
- the textual context, or 'co-text', which covers the previous spoken or written discourse; and
- cognitive features such as the participants' knowledge, beliefs and assumptions, in so far as these are relevant at any particular point in the discourse.



# THE DISTRIBUTION AND FOCUS OF INFORMATION

## UNIT 29

### SUMMARY

- 1 In order to be understood, messages are divided into chunks called **information units**, which are represented in speech by **tone units**. These do not correspond to any one grammatical category, since the speaker is free to break up the message as desired into units which are smaller or larger than a clause.
- 2 Each tone unit contains a **tonic syllable**, which represents the highest point of the **focus of information**. Information focus extends to the syntactic unit in which the tonic occurs.
- 3 The tone unit in English signals the distribution of information into Given and New. Each information unit contains an obligatory New element and, optionally, a Given element, the unmarked order being Given–New. The Given is the information that the speaker presents as recoverable by the hearer; the New is the information that is presented as not recoverable by the hearer.
- 4 The devices of **ellipsis** and **substitution** are used to avoid repeating information that is recoverable.
- 5 Unmarked focus falls on the last non-anaphoric lexical item of the information unit. If the intonation nucleus is made to fall on some other item, it is marked and unequivocally represents New information. This is **marked focus**. Its function is to contrast one item with another or to add emotive colouring to the utterance. Focus can coincide with marked Theme and is a cohesive device in texts.

### 29.1 THE INFORMATION UNIT

Speakers divide their messages into chunks called **information units**. In the spoken language these are not represented directly by any one type of grammatical unit, although there are certain correlations. Rather, they are signalled prosodically,

by means of the intonation system of the language. Information units are therefore defined in terms of the spoken language and how speakers organise it. Readers of a written text, however, interpret what they read by mentally assigning information units to the text, helped by punctuation and the grammar.

The prosodic unit that represents a unit of spoken information is the **tone unit**. A tone unit consists potentially of a series of stressed and unstressed syllables, and always contains one syllable, the **tonic**, which is singled out by **tonic prominence**. That is, it carries the main pitch movement (for instance, falling, rising, falling and then rising, rising and then falling), a jump, up or down, in pitch and possibly extra stress and added duration. Its function is to mark the **focus of information**. Or rather, it signals the nucleus or highest point of the unit which is informationally in focus, as in the example below (the capitals represent the tonic syllable):

He's arriving on THURSDay.

This utterance would be likely to have a jump in pitch up to THURS and a pitch fall on 'day'. In this example, the tone unit coincides with a clause. But speakers can choose to make tone units longer **1** or shorter **2** than a clause, depending on how much of the information they want to make prominent. (The symbol // indicates the end of a tone unit.) Short answers, questions and commands can consist of a single prominent syllable, such as YES! WHY? or DON'T! If a speaker wishes to make the message highly informative and emphatic, each lexical word may be treated as an information unit, with as many tonics as there are words, as in **2** (where the tonic syllable in *immediately* is *ME*):

- 1** I think it's a great pity she didn't GET the job //
- 2** COME // HERE // IMMEDIATEly //

Speakers shorten or lengthen tone units in response to their communicative needs. This response is emotive rather than deliberate, and is therefore less likely to be controlled than, for instance, the choice of a lexical item. Variation in the length of tone units also depends on several factors, some cultural, others personal. According to one cognitive view, the intonation unit or tone group represents the limited amount of information that our consciousness can focus on at any one time. This has led to the 'one chunk per clause principle' or 'one new idea constraint', in conversation at least. For spoken English a short independent clause with few content words represents the typical information unit.

Other grammatical units which may correspond to tone groups include various kinds of adjunct, especially when initial (*in the late nineteen thirties, better still, unfortunately*); a dependent clause (*although it wasn't your fault*); a main clause with an embedded clause (*I thought we were leaving*), coordinated predicates with the same Subject (*he's seen the pictures and likes them*) and possibly NG Subjects (*all the lonely people*). The following are examples of utterances consisting of two tone units:

// in the late nineteen THIRties // he went to HOLLYwood //  
 // better STILL // send an E-mail //

The following transcription from Crystal and Davy illustrates how one speaker organises an episode into tone units of varying length, with overlapping units (in brackets) by speaker B. The dots and dashes (· -) represent progressively longer pauses. The speakers have been talking about football grounds in Britain, many of them quite old.

The prosodic features indicated are as follows:

- // tone unit boundary
- | first prominent syllable of the tone unit ('onset')
- ↑ the next syllable is stressed and also steps up in pitch
- } pauses, from brief to long
- }
- }

Capitals are used to indicate the nucleus.

Of course // the CONTINENTALS I suppose // they came in LATE // and they  
 · build them – (B: PROPERLY //) you know// this MILAN ground // · there's a  
 famous one THERE · ISN'T there? // · (B: erm) you know// they were saying how  
 SUPERB they were // · But the one in SPAIN // was the BEST // – (B: of course //)  
 I thought it was in MADRID // – was it Real MADRID// they were fan (b: they're all  
 erm . . .) oh they were FANTASTIC // it showed the PHOTOGRAPHS of them // ·  
 people sitting there in the hot SUN // you know // smoking CIGARS// and it showed  
 the crowds · EMPTYING // – (B: they had a practice – erm) EXIT //// (B: YEAH //)  
 and about · thirty seconds LATER // or a minute later they were CLEAR //

## 29.2 GIVEN AND NEW INFORMATION

The distribution of 'Given' and 'New' information is to a great extent the motivation for the information unit. Each information unit contains an obligatory 'New' element, which is associated with the tonic of the tone unit, the focus of information. There can also be optional 'Given' elements of information, which are associated with the rest of the tone unit. Rather than a clear-cut distinction between 'Given' and 'New', however, there is a gradation of givenness and newness. This is compatible with the notion of communicative dynamism, by which the message typically progresses from low to high information value (→ 29.3).

The **Given element** is concerned with information that the speaker presents as recoverable by the hearer, either from the linguistic co-text, that is, what has been said before, or because it can be taken as 'known' from the context of situation or the context of culture. The **New element** is concerned with whatever information the speaker presents as not recoverable by the hearer. The following exchange illustrates the possible relationship of Given and New to information focus:

- A. What's NEW then?
- B. Well, Jim's bought a new CAR, //, Norma's getting a DIVORCE // and Jamie's got CHICKEN-POX //, but apart from that . . .

In each tone unit, the tonic syllable, identified here by capitals, represents the culmination of the New information. The syntactic unit in which the tonic occurs (*a new CAR, a*

*DIVORCE, CHICKEN-POX*) is in each case 'in focus'. The referents of the proper names *Jim*, *Norma* and *Jamie* are treated as identifiable and Given, or at least accessible, in the discourse situation (that is the function of proper names) and there is a gradation from Given to New, with the verbs *bought*, *getting* and *got* marking the transition:

Jim's	bought	a new CAR
Norma's	getting	a DIVORCE
Jamie's	got	CHICKEN-POX
Given	-----	New

### 29.3 UNMARKED FOCUS AND MARKED FOCUS

In normal, unemphatic discourse, it is customary to start our message from what we think our hearer knows and progress to what s/he does not know. In other words, the unmarked distribution starts with the Given and progresses towards the New. This is often called the principle of **end-focus**.

The neutral position for information focus is therefore towards the end of the information unit. In grammatical terms, this usually means that **unmarked (end-)focus** falls on the last non-anaphoric lexical item or name in the clause, as in the above exchange. Items which occur after the tonic can be taken as Given and are always unstressed, like *about it* here:

Pete's just	COMPLAINED	about it.
Given	----	New ----- Given

Here, the words after *complained* are both grammatical rather than lexical words: that is, they have a largely grammatical meaning. Pronouns such as *it* always refer to something known, unless they are contrastive and therefore marked (see below). In the following example, the second use of WANT is anaphoric (the notion of 'wanting' occurs in the question), and is therefore not marked. Instead, DON'T is marked:

A. Don't you WANT it then? B. No, I DON'T want it.

When the focus of information is placed on the last non-anaphoric lexical item in the clause, almost the whole clause may be New or just one part of it. For example, *Jane dropped the COFFEE-POT* could be intended to mean that it was just the coffee-pot and not something else that Jane dropped; or the whole unit could contain new information. The amount of New material can be verified by formulating questions. In answer to the first, only the coffee-pot would be New and the rest Given (and probably ellipted in speech; → 29.3), while in answer to the second, the whole unit would represent new information:

What did Jane drop?	[Jane dropped] the COFFEE-POT
	New -----

What happened?	Jane dropped the COFFEE-POT
	----- New -----

**Marked focus** occurs when the tonic is placed on any other syllable than the tonic syllable of the last non-anaphoric lexical item. Marked focus is used for the purpose of **contrasting** one item with another, as in **1** and **2**, or to add an **emotive overlay**, as in **3**:

- 1** SHE didn't make the phone call, ROBERT did.
- 2** The kids didn't SIT on the sofa, they JUMPED on it.
- 3** I'm SO THIRSTY!

The first would be used in a context in which the speaker assumes that the hearer knows they are talking about someone making a phone call ('make the phone call' is Given information). As contrastive focus treats the focused element as New information, both *she* and *Robert* are treated as New, even though both must be identifiable in the context.

Focus can fall on other, non-lexical items such as pronouns, prepositions and auxiliaries, again with an implied contrast or correction. The following examples illustrate some of the possibilities of marked focus. When auxiliaries receive focus it is meanings such as those of polarity contrast (i.e. positive/ negative) or tense which are presented as New or important information:

MY brother sold his motorbike.	[not someone else's brother]
Put the dog's bowl UNDER the table.	[not ON the table]
[Wait for me!] I AM waiting for you.	[corrects first speaker's assumption that x is not waiting]
[Don't forget to return the video!]	[corrects the assumption that the video has not been returned.]
I HAVE returned the video.	
[Why didn't you tell the truth?]	[corrects the assumption that x did not tell the truth]
I DID tell the truth.	

Whether for emotive reasons or for the purpose of emphasising or contrasting, it can happen that a single tone group contains more than one nucleus. The fall-plus-rise or the rise-plus-fall tones often accompany focusing of this kind.

//It was QUITE exciting REALLY.//  
 //I DO wish you'd shut UP.//

## 29.4 EVENT UTTERANCES

**Event utterances** are usually short and typically intransitive. They provide an interesting exception to the principle of end-focus, in that a NG Subject receives the tonic stress. The reason for this is that the whole event is in Focus, and there is no pre-supposition (assumption) such as 'something is bleeding', 'something has gone out', 'someone is coming':

My NOSE is bleeding! The LIGHT's gone out!  
 [I won't be able to go away this weekend.] My PARENTS are coming.

Event sentences are extremely common in conversation. They often occur 'out of the blue', that is, unrelated to what was previously said, as surprisals or interruptions of

an ongoing discourse topic. This is not always the case however. In the third example, the event utterance is incorporated into the dialogue as a reason for not going away this weekend. In languages with flexible constituent order, this type of message would probably be conveyed by inversion of S–P. In English, inversion is not an option here; instead, stress and intonation patterns are used.

## 29.5 ELLIPSIS

By means of **ellipsis** we leave out those elements of the clause that are recoverable. As a result we highlight the new information and our discourse gains in cohesion and coherence. Information can be recovered from the linguistic co-text or from the social context. Ellipsis of the first type is **textual** and of the second **situational**.

### 29.5.1 Textual ellipsis

Textual ellipsis occurs when two consecutive clauses have elements in common. The two clauses may form part of the same utterance by one speaker **1**, or they may be distributed between two speakers, as in **2**. The words in common are omitted in the second clause. In English the remaining part often ends with an auxiliary or a pronoun. (In the examples, ellipped material is recovered in italics.)

- 1** I'm sure he would help you, if he could (*help you*).
- 2** Shall we go for a walk? – Yes, let's (*go for a walk?*).
- 3** Why can't he just send a message? And for that matter, why can't *YOU?* (*just send a message*)

Catenative verbs which take *to*-infinitive clauses such as *want*, *mean* (= *intend*), *used to* and *like* obligatorily retain the *to*, with the rest of the clause ellipped, as in **4**. *Wh*- complement clauses and questions can be ellipped, leaving the *wh*-element as in **5**:

- 4** A fine mess you've made of things. – I didn't *mean to* (*make a fine mess of things*).
- 5** Why can't he find you a comfortable job? – He will (*find me a comfortable job*), but I don't know when (*he'll find me a comfortable job*.)

These examples illustrate final ellipsis. Medial ellipsis is featured in **6** and **7**, while **8** illustrates initial ellipsis, where ellipsis of the pronoun is an alternative analysis to zero anaphora.

- 6** What time does this party of Robin's start? He said [*it starts at*] six-to-eight.
- 7** Shirley wore jeans and Tina (*wore*) a miniskirt.
- 8** They got on the bus and (*they*) sat down in the front seat behind the driver.

### 29.5.2 Situational ellipsis

In conversation and writing that imitates speech, unstressed pronouns and other functional items are frequently ellipped, as they are recoverable from the interactional context.

Can't hear a word	(Subject <i>I</i> ellipted)
See you soon	( <i>I'll</i> ellipted)
Like a drink?	( <i>Would you</i> ellipted)
Any news?	( <i>Is there</i> ellipted)
You staying or leaving? (AmE)	( <i>Are</i> ellipted)

Situational ellipsis is also the organising factor in 'block language', which includes newspaper headlines, telegrams and other announcements. We soon reach a point, however, both in textual and situational ellipsis at which the exact material ellipted is no longer recoverable. In such cases the concept of ellipsis is strictly not applicable. Instead, it is through inference that we know to what each of these notices applies:

To let. For hire. For sale. Vacancies. Bed and Breakfast. No parking.

## 29.6 SUBSTITUTION

Substitution likewise avoids the repetition of recoverable information; but while ellipsis leaves a structural slot empty, substitution replaces it by a 'filler' word. Consequently, the exact words which have been ellipted are not recoverable. A commonly used clausal substitute is *do so*, as in **1** below. This is not acceptable, however, where the verb is not agentive (for instance, *know*, *like*) and in such cases ellipsis is used, as in **2**.

- 1** You can hire a self-drive car, but I wouldn't advise you to *do so*. (i.e. hire a self-drive car)
- 2** Some people like mangoes, others don't. (\*don't do so).

*So* substitutes for clause complements after verbs such as *say*, *hope*, *think*, *expect*, *be afraid*, *suppose* and *believe*. *Not* is the negative substitute with *hope*, *be afraid* and *suppose*:

Is it going to rain tomorrow? The weather man *says so* (i.e. that it is going to rain).  
I *hope not*. (i.e. that it's not going to rain).

*So* can also be used as an alternative to an auxiliary + *too* to substitute positively, just as *neither* alternates with auxiliary + *either* to substitute negatively:

This hair-dryer makes an dreadful noise. *So does mine./Mine does too./Mine too.*  
I wouldn't like to live in this climate. *Neither/Nor would we./We wouldn't either.*

### *Ellipsis and substitution in nominal groups*

In nominal ellipsis we replace the head element by pronouns such as *these*, *any*, *each*, *all*, *both*, *either*, *neither*, *none* (*I'll take these*, *There aren't any left*); possessives such as *John's*, and numeratives such as *the first*, *the next three* (→ Units 46 and 47). Nominal substitution makes use of *one/ones* (*I prefer the dark one(s)*) *this*, *that* and the pronouns (*an*)*other* (→ 45.7.4).

# THE INTERPLAY OF THEME–RHEME AND GIVEN–NEW

## UNIT 30

### SUMMARY

- 1 From the point of view of communicative effect, the important positions in the clause are the **initial** position and the **final** position. We have examined separately the two structures involved, which are mapped on to each other: the **Theme–Rheme** thematic structure and the **Given–New** information structure. We now turn to the interplay between the two. We start by going beyond the clause to look at **thematic progression** in a paragraph.
- 2 We then turn to a few of the major resources used in English for shifting information either to the beginning of the clause or to the end. We have already seen **thematisation** (thematic fronting), which brings an element to initial position. We shall next examine the much more common device of **clefting**, which places an element to be focused near the front of the clause.
- 3 Equally important are the resources for shifting information towards the end of the clause where it receives **end-focus** without being marked. The function of the **passive** voice, of the existential **sentence** and of **extraposition** is in part just this. At the same time, a different Theme is selected. Speakers and writers of English make great use of all these devices to achieve coherence and liveliness in their speech and writing.
- 4 The highlighting of newsworthiness is not the only motivation of information flow. Pragmatic motivations of an interpersonal kind, such as politeness, may be the influencing factor in the selection and ordering of clausal elements, in particular the order of clauses in complex sentences.

### 30.1 THEMATIC PROGRESSION

The unmarked correlation between Given–New and Theme–Rheme is for Given to coincide with the Theme, and New information with some part of the Rheme. Going beyond the clause, a consistent progression from Given to New will help the reader's understanding of the text. Three basic types of thematic progression are identified: **simple linear**, **continuous** and **derived**.

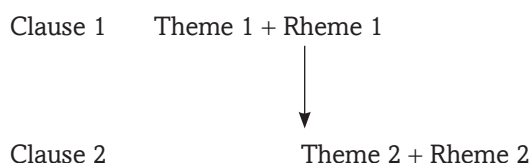


### 30.1.1 Simple linear progression

In this type, something introduced as new information in the Rheme of the first clause is taken up to be the Theme of the second. The wording need not be identical.

*She* has a huge team of people working for her.<sup>1</sup> *Some of them* have been with her for years.<sup>2</sup>

In this example Theme 1 is *she*, while a *huge team of people* is the focused part of Rheme 1. A semantic sub-set, *some of them*, then becomes the Theme of the second clause. We can present it graphically as follows:



(Based on Daněš 1974)

### 30.1.2 Continuous progression (constant Theme)

In this type, the same Theme, *Mum*, is maintained across a series of coordinated clauses, each with its own Rheme:

*Mum* was always a hard worker<sup>1</sup> and (*zero*) had plenty of drive<sup>2</sup> but, in a small way, *she* was also proving to be quite a successful business woman.<sup>3</sup>

This type of progression can be diagrammed as follows. Note that the same Theme is maintained in the second clause by 'zero anaphora', which could be replaced by the corresponding pronoun *she*.

*Mum* (T1) was always a hard worker<sup>1</sup> (R1) and (*she*)(T1) had plenty of drive(R2),<sup>2</sup> but, in a small way, *she*(T1) was also proving to be quite a successful business woman (R3).<sup>3</sup>

Clause 1 Theme 1 + Rheme 1  
 Clause 2 Theme 1 + Rheme 2  
 Clause 3 Theme 1 + Rheme 3

In the illustrations of these two first types of thematic progression, we find that the progression is made on the basis of topic referent chains.

### 30.1.3 Derived Themes

In this third type, the different themes of a number of Theme–Rheme structures all relate to a 'hypertheme' or 'global topic'. The following text comes from Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, in which he describes research on the drug mescaline. The Hypertheme is stated in the first sentence.

*Mescaline research* has been going on sporadically ever since the days of Lewin and Havelock Ellis. *Chemists* have not merely isolated the alkaloid; *they* have learned how to synthesize it, so that the supply no longer depends on the sparse and intermittent crop of a desert cactus. *Alienists* have dosed themselves with mescaline in the hope thereby of coming to a better, first-hand understanding of their patients' mental processes. Working unfortunately upon too few subjects within too narrow a range of circumstances, *psychologists* have observed and catalogued some of the drug's more striking effects. *Neurologists and physiologists* have found out something about the mechanisms of its action upon the central nervous system. And *at least one professional philosopher* has taken mescaline for the light it may throw on such ancient, unsolved riddles as the place of mind in nature and the relationship between the brain and consciousness.

The Hypertheme is mescaline research. From this, the passage develops in terms of the classes of researchers (the Themes, derived from the Hypertheme) and what they did (the Rhemes).

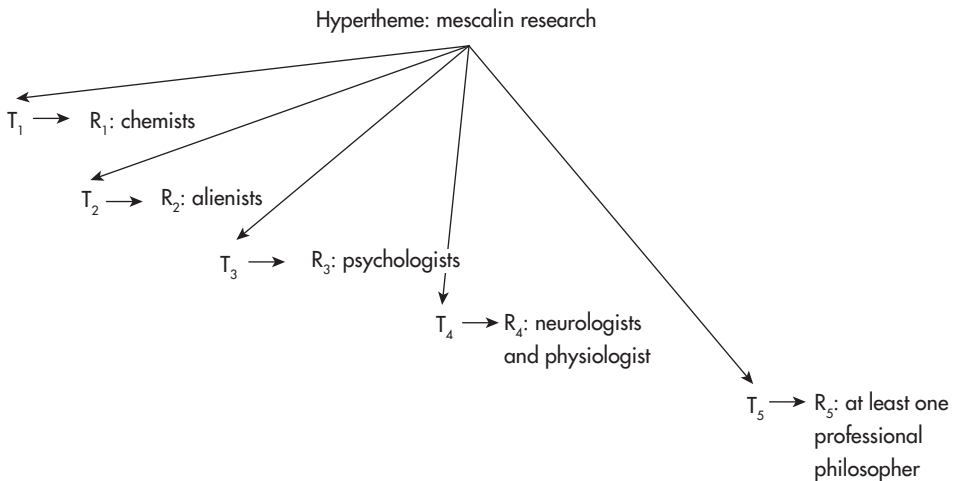


Figure 6.3 Themes derived from a Hypertheme.

### 30. 1. 4 Split Rheme

A fourth type of progression has a **split rheme**, which is a combination of types **1** and **2**. This can be illustrated by the following item about some photographs of the Iraqi president:

I had two particular favourites: in one he sported a green eyeshade and carried a tennis racket; in the other he wore a university gown and had a mortar-board on his head.

Clause 1 I had two particular favourites

Clauses 2–3 In one he sported a green eyeshade and carried a tennis racket

Clauses 4–5 In the other he wore a university gown and had a mortar-board on his head.

This can be expressed graphically.

Clause 1	T1 – R1. The Rheme implies two items, A and B:
Clauses 2–3	In one (A) _____ (T2 _____ R2)
Clauses 4–5	In the other (B) _____ (T2" _____ R2")

## 30.2 CLEFTING: *IT*-CLEFTS AND *WH*-CLEFTS

In clefting, we re-organise the content of a single clause into two related parts. The effect of the resulting structures is to focus on one element, the New, which always follows a form of the verb *be*. There are two kinds of cleft: the ***it*-cleft** and the ***wh*-cleft**. Here is an example of each. Compare these with the plain version: *They need money*.

It's MONEY (that) they need (*it*-cleft)  
 What they need is MONEY (*wh*-cleft)

Both types of cleft have MONEY in strong focus; the *it*-cleft brings the focus (marked by tonic stress) near the front of the first unit; the *wh*-cleft has the focus at the end of the second unit. There is a lesser stress, here underlined, on need, the last word of the unit containing Given or **presupposed** information. Presupposed information is that which is assumed by the speaker, without being asserted. Here what is assumed is 'they need something'.

If spoken, then, the devices of intonational prominence and syntactic structure reinforce each other to single out *money* in these examples. Let's look first at the ***it*-cleft**. This consists of the pronoun *it*, + a form of the verb *be*, + the strongly focused item + a clause starting with a relative pronoun such as *who*, *that* or *which*:

It was *last TUESDAY* that I met Richard (compare: I met Richard last TUESDAY)  
 It was *the WOMEN* that did the bartering. It was *the WOMEN* that actually got enough to feed the family. [F71] Who must register for VAT? It's *the PERSON*, not *the BUSINESS*, *who is registered for VAT*. [FAU]

In such examples, *it* is a dummy element with no other function but to provide a subject for the verb *be*. The item in focus can be a noun group, a prepositional group, a pronoun or a clause.

### 30.2.1 Discourse functions of the *it*-cleft

The main function of the *it*-cleft is to mark **contrastive focus**. The contrast is very often implicit, as in *Tuesday* (not another day), *the women*, not *the men*; but the contrast may be made explicit, as in *It's the person, not the business*, who is registered for VAT.

A different, non-contrastive use, is illustrated in the following sentence from Huxley's work:

- 1 *It was in 1886* that the German pharmacologist, Louis Lewin, published the first systematic study of the cactus, to which his own name was subsequently given.

The function here is not to contrast 1886 with a different date. Rather, the function of such clefts, which often highlight expressions of time or place, is to signal the beginning of an episode in discourse. It may be the very beginning of the text, as in **1**, or an oral announcement, **2**; otherwise, the cleft may signal a shift to a new episode **3**:

- 2** It is with great pleasure that I announce the name of this year's winner . . .
- 3** It was only years later that I realised what he meant.

### 30.2.2 Discourse functions of the *wh*-cleft

- 1** What we want is WATney's.

This was a famous advertising slogan, at one time, for Watney's beer. It is clearly much more emphatic than the plain version **2** and even more than the *it*-cleft **3**.

- 2** We want WATney's.
- 3** It's Watney's (that) we want.

In both types of cleft there is presupposed information: in this case, that we want something. But while the *it*-cleft **3** suggests contrast (Watney's, not other beers), the *wh*-cleft **1** suggests exclusiveness. (It's ONLY Watney's we want, and no other). The *wh*-cleft consists of a *wh*-word, of which by far the most common is *what*, followed by a clause containing Given or presupposed information, then a form of *be*, followed by the New information:

//What we want// (it is presupposed: that we want something) is  
Watney's//Given      New

This structure is also sometimes called a **thematic equative**, since it is of the form 'X = Y'.

### 30.2.3 Variants of the *wh*-cleft

**The one(s) who/that** acts as replacement for the now ungrammatical *who*-cleft:

*The one who* told me the news was Lizzy herself. (\**Who* told me the news was Lizzy herself)

**All (that)** is used instead of \**all what*. '*That*' is usually omitted.

*All* you need is love.

**Reversed *wh*-clefts** have the main focus at the beginning of the first unit, not at the end after *be*, as in regular *wh*-clefts. Some combinations (*that's what/why/how/the way*) are stereotyped, as are *the thing is/the problem is*, which can also be included here:

All you need is LOVE. (regular *wh*-cleft)  
LOVE is all you need. (reversed *wh*-cleft)

What you should do is *THIS*. (regular *wh*-cleft)  
*THIS* is what you should do. (reversed *wh*-cleft)

That's what I told you.  
 That's why we came.

The effect is to put the new information as end-focus, but to indicate its selectively New status very clearly. The exclusiveness inherent in an element focused in this way allows the *wh*-cleft to be used for two important discourse purposes: (a) to introduce a new topic (in the New part), as in **1**; and (b) to correct a previous statement or assumption, as in **2**.

- 1** What I don't understand is why they don't have a secretary in that place.
- 2** What he did was take the money and run.

The *Wh*-cleft identifies a particular element exclusively. In this it differs from the basic clause structure and from the ordinary cleft. Compare:

We all need a holiday.	(neutral: no doubt we need other things too)
It's a holiday we all need.	(implied contrast with something else)
What we all need is a holiday.	(the only thing focused on)

*Wh*-clefts are always reversible, and this property distinguishes them from *wh*-embedded clauses which are not clefts. Compare the following:

*What he said* was that he didn't like the play. (*wh*-cleft)  
*What he said* was very interesting. (nominal relative clause)

The first is a *wh*-cleft, corresponding to the plain version *He said that he didn't like the play*. The next is NOT a *wh*-cleft. There is no equivalent to the form *\*He said very interesting*. Another way to test this is to try for reversibility. The first is reversible, the second is not:

That he didn't like the play was what he said.  
 \*Very interesting was what he said.

Certain stereotyped *wh*-clefts (which are not all reversible) such as *What happened was . . .*, *What I mean is . . .* and *The thing is . . .* are also used for a variety of purposes such as pre-signals to certain speech acts, such as giving an excuse or an explanation:

*What happened was* that I missed the last train.  
*The thing is*, we have tickets for a concert that evening.  
*What I mean is* we should all try to convince him.

### 30.3 THE ACTIVE-PASSIVE ALTERNATIVE

In describing situations which involve two participants, it is usually possible to take one or other participant as Subject and Theme/Topic. This is done in English by means of the active-passive voice alternative:

*The President* has released the prisoners. (active voice)

*The prisoners* have been released [by the President]. (passive voice)

In the active construction, the Agent is mapped on to Subject and Theme/Topic, while the Affected is in final position and receives normal, unmarked end-focus:

The President	has released	the prisoners.
Agent		Affected
Subject		Direct Object
Theme/Topic	_____	Rheme _____
		Unmarked end-focus

In the passive construction these correspondences are reversed. The Affected is now promoted to Subject and provides the point of departure, while the Agent is demoted from its privileged position as Subject and is usually omitted. If present, it occupies final position and receives normal end-focus:

The prisoners	have been released	[by the President]
Affected		Agent
Subject		Adjunct
Theme/Topic	_____	Rheme _____
		[optional end-focused element]

We can see that the active–passive alternative allows speakers and writers to exploit the two main positions in the clause, the beginning and the end. In each case, a single clause can be arranged so that important new information is placed in end-position, while already known information is placed at the beginning. What is new and important and what is known is of course estimated by the speaker, and is dependent on the context and the estimated state of knowledge of the hearer at that point in the discourse.

### 30.3.1 Promoting one participant, demoting another

From the point of view of the textual organisation of what the speaker wants to say, it follows that any of three possibilities may condition the choice between active and passive:

- 1 An element which is not Agent is desired as Theme/Subject/Topic.
- 2 The Agent is New information, so will be placed last.
- 3 The Agent is not New and is silenced. Some other element is New and is placed last.

It is not simply a change of position that is involved in the re-structuring of the passive clause. It is also a question of topic promotion and demotion. In the active clause, the Agent–Subject has the discourse role of Topic. That is, it is the most important

participant of the discourse at the point when the clause is produced. In the passive clause, the Agent ceases to be Subject/ Topic. Another participant (usually the Affected) takes on the roles of both Subject and Topic. The Recipient (→ 6.2.1) can also become Subject in a passive clause, as in *The boy was given a mountain bike for his birthday*.

The demotion of one participant and the promotion of another are two sides of the same coin. If we demote the Agent (or Experiencer, or Sayer), then a different participant (Affected, Recipient) is automatically promoted to Subject. It is clear, therefore, that, first, the passive is not a type of fronting or thematisation; second, it does not produce a marked Theme, but a different unmarked Theme; and third, the type of Theme involved is a participant Theme, which in this book we call Topic. Circumstantial Themes and textual Themes are optional additions to the core clause and play no part in restructuring the clause as passive.

We now turn to the discourse motivations that involve the choice of passive. Basically, these are: to cut out unnecessary Given information; to manoeuvre important information into end position; to establish smooth connections between clauses, making for good information flow. These motivations work together in connected discourse. Choices of passive against active are not open, but are conditioned in each individual case by the immediate contextual environment.

### 30.3.2 Choosing to be informative

Using the passive gives us the choice of *not* stating who carried out the action. This is an important factor, because in the active clause this information can't be omitted. What conditions our choice, then, between a passive without an agent and one in which we keep the Agent in a *by*-phrase at the end? The answer is: informativeness. If the Agent is new important information, keep it. If not, omit it. In this extract from Stephen Hawking writing about black holes, there is an example of each type:

Although the concept of what we call a black hole goes back more than two hundred years, the name black hole *was introduced only in 1967 by the American physicist John Wheeler*. It was a stroke of genius: the name ensured that black holes entered the mythology of science fiction. It also stimulated scientific research by providing a definite name for something that previously had not had a satisfactory title. The importance in science of a good name *should not be underestimated*.

In this passage, Hawking gives credit to the originator of the term *black hole*, with the full name of the physicist encoded as an Agent *by*-phrase. The second passive has no Agent because it is generic and implied (by *anyone working in science*).

An additional motivation for the use of a passive with an Agent *by*-phrase occurs when the Agent is long. By putting it at the end we follow the principle of **end-weight** ('shortest first, longest last') as in the following examples, in which the Agent is 'weightier' than the passive Subject:

The front seats were filled by members of the families of the victims.  
 The goal was scored by Messi, the player with most goals to his credit this season.

It is clear that **end-focus**, **end-weight** and **informativeness** are closely linked. New participants introduced onto the scene of discourse need to be described and defined in more detail than known ones. They are, consequently 'heavy' and are better placed at the end, whereas the subject in a passive clause tends to be 'light' (*the front seats, the goal*), pronouns being the lightest.

Instead of an Agent, an event or a force of nature may occur in final position, as in the examples below, while *Scotland's railway network* and *the house* will be considered important enough to become subject:

Scotland's railway network has been paralysed *by the one-day strike*.  
 The house was struck *by lightning*.

### 30.3.3 Passives without an Agent

We have seen that uninformative Agents are silenced in discourse. More exactly, this may happen because the Agent is implied by the nature of the verb, but is unknown because 1; anaphorically predictable 2; predictable by general knowledge 3; universal or general 4; irrelevant at this point in the discourse 5; deliberately silenced in order to avoid giving or taking blame or responsibility 6 or to maintain privacy 7; finally, recoverable as the author of the text. Authorial 'I' is preferably not mentioned in formal writing 8:

- 1 My car has been stolen.
- 2 When he won his gold medal he gave a huge party. Everyone was invited. [by him]
- 3 The heart transplant was carried out successfully. [by one or more surgeons]
- 4 It is hoped that war can be avoided. [Everyone has this hope]
- 5 Ten thousand soldiers will be needed to operate the emergency service.
- 6 The documents have been shredded and the fax hasn't been sent.
- 7 It was given to me as a present. [speaker doesn't want to reveal the sender.]
- 8 This point will be dealt with in a later chapter.

When the Agent *by*-phrase is omitted in a passive clause, some other element necessarily receives end-focus. This may be a verb **9**, an Adjunct **10**, or a Complement **11**. For a verb to be focused, it must contain the main New information and the Agent must be dispensable.

- 9 *Is this seat taken?*
- 10 Nothing has been heard of him *for months*.
- 11 The letters had been sent *unstamped*.



### 30.3.4 Making smooth transitions

Look at the following examples. Version **A** is based on a real occurrence:

- A.** Ann: Where did you get *that wallet*?  
 Joe: It was given to me by my *GIRL-friend*.  
 Given ..... New

In this exchange *that wallet* is introduced at the end of the first clause and is picked up as subject pronoun in the second. Here we have again the simple linear Theme–Rheme pattern, but in this case it is the choice of the passive that enables the speaker to maintain topic continuity, as well as unmarked end-focus. Now look at version **B**:

- B.** Ann: Where did you get *that wallet*?  
 Joe: My *GIRL-friend* gave it to me.  
 New ..... Given

In this version, instead of initiating a topic chain headed by *that wallet*, a new participant (my *GIRL-friend*) is introduced, as subject, necessarily with heavy stress (marked focus). This compensates for the lack of topic continuity, since in English, stress patterns override the usual Given–New pattern, producing instead a New–Given pattern.

It is not necessarily the passive which serves to maintain topic continuity, however. Compare the versions **b** and **c** in each of the following sets of clauses. In each case **c** rather than **b** preserves the continuity better with **a**, whether by means of the passive (1 and 2) or the active (3). Moreover, **2b** violates the ‘animacy’ and ‘empathy’ hierarchies, which give priority to human referents. All are grammatically acceptable, however.

- 1a** The Prime Minister stepped off the plane.  
**1b** Journalists immediately surrounded her.  
**1c** She was immediately surrounded by journalists.

- 2a** The Prime Minister stepped off the plane.  
**2b** The wind immediately buffeted her.  
**2c** She was immediately buffeted by the wind.

- 3a** The Prime Minister stepped off the plane.  
**3b** All the journalists were immediately greeted by her.  
**3c** She immediately greeted all the journalists.

### 30.3.5 The get-passive

The *get*-passive is used much more in speech than in writing and has an informal flavour, the reverse of the *be*-passive. Here are some examples from conversation:

- Poor fellow, he *got knocked down* in a road accident.  
 She *got bitten* by a new bug of some sort in France.  
 I *got attacked* by a fan at a football match.  
 He *got promoted*, the lucky devil!

The *get*-passive grammaticalises affective meaning, and so potentially reflects speakers' **involvement**, whereas the *be*-passive is more objective. The use of the *get*-passive is therefore an option. Speakers' interest centres on the *get*-passive subject and what happens to it, while with the *be*-passive interest centres on the event. Involvement of the subject referent is also implied by the *get*-passive, in that the subject is partly responsible for the significant result, whether this is beneficial or adverse. The *be*-passive, by contrast, is neutral. Compare:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>a</b> She <i>got</i> (herself) <i>promoted</i> . | <b>b</b> She <i>was promoted</i> .     |
| <b>a</b> I <i>got stung</i> by a wasp.              | <b>b</b> I <i>was stung</i> by a wasp. |

The action undergone by the subject of the *get*-passive is more often adverse than beneficial. In fact, all the adverse and violent things that can happen to a person or thing are expressible by the *get*-passive: *get arrested, abused, fined, fired, beaten up, burgled, kidnapped, killed, mugged, raped, sacked, shot, vandalised* and many more. The subject referent is either unlucky or has made an error of judgement (being at the wrong place at the wrong time) when bad events are described. On happier occasions, such as getting invited or promoted, there is often an implication that the subject referent has contrived to be promoted, invited and so on, or was lucky, being at the right place at the right time. Here is another extract from Hawking's *Black Holes and Baby Universes*, with an example of each type of passive. He is discussing the idea that:

if one could pass through a black hole, one might re-emerge anywhere in the universe. Quite how to choose your destination is not clear: you might set out for a holiday in Virgo and end up in the Crab Nebula.

I'm sorry to disappoint prospective galactic tourists, but this scenario doesn't work: if you jump into a black hole, you will *get torn apart and crushed out of existence*. However, there is a sense in which the particles that make up your body will carry on into another universe. I don't know if it would be much consolation to *someone being made into spaghetti* in a black hole to know that his particles might survive.

### 30.4 THE PRESENTATIVE FUNCTION OF EXISTENTIAL CLAUSES

There are several reasons for thinking that existential *there* has acquired a new role:

- We saw in 25.3 the structure of the existential clause (unstressed *there* + a form of *be* + a NG), as in *There was a fight*. The semantic role of Existent is associated with the NG, which occupies the position after the verb and is, experientially, the notional subject.
- Unstressed *there*, however, fulfils most of the syntactic requirements for subject, as seen in 5.1.2.D2, including its use in the tag: *There's a café just round the corner, isn't there?*
- Plural concord is not always maintained in spoken English, as for example: *There's some chocolate chip cookies out there if you want some.*
- Existential *there* can occur with the stressed adverb of place *there* in the same clause, as in *There's plenty more over there.*

These facts support the view that existential *there* (and especially *there's*) has lost its original locative meaning and is on the way to becoming a kind of introductory particle. An alternative view is that its locative and deictic meaning is not entirely lost: rather, *there* points to the upcoming noun.

Unstressed *there* is a presentative device in discourse. *There* points to the New information conveyed by the noun group placed at the end of the clause, where it carries end-weight and end-focus. In the basic types, the reverse order is not allowed, as we can see in the examples below. In these, a verb of very low communicative dynamism, *be*, placed in final position and preceded by an indefinite subject, violates the Given–New progression. The result is an ungrammatical clause in most cases. The corresponding existential clauses in 1–4 here are therefore **basic existentials**: they have no corresponding plain clause.

- |   |                                     |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | *Hundreds of millions of stars are. | There are hundreds of millions of stars. |
| 2 | *Plenty of time is.                 | There is plenty of time.                 |
| 3 | *A storm was last night.            | There was a storm last night.            |
| 4 | *Seven of us are in the family.     | There are seven of us in the family.     |
| 5 | A man is at the door.               | There's a man at the door.               |

### 30.4.1 Derived existential

These are existentials that have a corresponding plain clause, based on a 'weightier' verb than *be*. In the following examples, the verb of the plain clause (*bark*, *hijack*) appears in the post-modifier position of the existential NG:

Existential clause	Plain clause
There's a dog barking outside.	A dog is barking outside.
There was another plane hijacked yesterday.	Another plane was hijacked yesterday.

Semantically, the location and/or the quantification of the NG referent are important (→ 25.3) because such features may well be the most informative part of the utterance. When we say, for instance, *there's no milk*, it is not the non-existence of milk that we are predicating, but rather the fact that there is no quantity of milk available at the moment of speaking. The spatial location is implicit. 'Existence', then, has to be understood in a very broad sense.

### 30.4.2 Short existentials

Short existentials, many containing a negative word specifying no quantity or number such as *no*, *none*, *nobody*/ *no-one* and *nothing*, are common in everyday English, as in the following examples:

- 1 There's no problem.
- 2 There's no point staying on then, is there?
- 3 There's nothing wrong, nothing at all.

- 4 There's nothing on television.
- 5 There's no-one around today.
- 6 There's none left.

One of the functions of negation is to deny something previously said or implied, and this may be the motivation for some utterances in context (**3** and **6**, for instance). But speech acts such as reassurance (**1** and **3**) may be the motive for the denial. Positive declarative existentials may provide factual information (**8**) or, when they refer to the future, may be interpreted as predictions (**7**) or assurances (**9**):

- 7 I think this is a long-term battle. *There will be battles.* (George W. Bush, remarks to the employees of the Pentagon, 17 September 2001)
- 8 There *have been* heavy snowfalls in the north.
- 9 There *is bound to be* another opportunity.

### 30.4.3 Extended existentials

These occur as the result of expansions of the noun group (→ 25.3). Common expansions include *-ing* clauses, which present an entity in action **1** or in a state **2**. Certain postposed adjectives can express a temporary state **3**, **4**. Passives and comparatives are also common, especially with the constructions *there's nothing better/worse than . . .* in **5** and **6** respectively:

- 1 There are hundreds of people *clamouring for food*.
- 2 There is a box *containing dynamite* in the corner.
- 3 There was plenty of food *available*.
- 4 There are not many shops *open* at this hour.
- 5 There were several civilians *killed in a terrorist attack yesterday*.
- 6 There's nothing worse than being stuck in a traffic jam when you're late for an appointment. (comparative clause)

The function of these expansions is to establish the relevance and coherence of the new referent at the point when it is introduced into the discourse.

In formal English and in fiction, verbs of **appearing** and **emerging** lend themselves naturally to the presentation of New information (→25.3) as in *Fossil records suggest that there emerged a fern resistant to this disease*. However, existence or appearance should not always be taken in a literal sense, but rather in relation to the discourse: it is appearance on the scene of discourse, or cognitive awareness, that counts. Because of this, even a verb like *disappear* may, in an appropriate context, function as a presentative, as in the first sentence of the novel by H.P. Lovecraft, *The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward*:

From an asylum for the insane near Providence, Rhode Island, *there recently disappeared an exceedingly singular person.*

From this it becomes clear that the notions 'bringing something into cognitive awareness' or 'onto the scene of discourse' are the key to the discourse function of

*there*-structures. In this sense we can also apply the traditional term ‘existential’: once introduced, the new referent is ‘present’ in the discourse, and can be taken up and developed as a topic.

### 30.4.4 *There*-structures as states of affairs

A *there*-structure is commonly used in English to express events, happenings and states of affairs in a schematic way, without the intervention of participants. Frequently, the noun is a nominalisation of a verbal process (→ 27.2):

- 1 There was *a fight*.
- 2 There was *an abrupt knock at the door*.
- 3 There has been *unprecedented industrial expansion*.
- 4 There was *a sudden feeling of panic*.
- 5 There is still *bribery*, there is *still corruption*. No doubt there always will be.

*There*-constructions with nominalisations have the effect of silencing the Agent of the action. We don’t know who knocked at the door, who panicked, who bribes whom, who fought whom. The occurrence is the only important part of the message.

While the NG is typically indefinite, even definite NGs – which represent referents that are already accessible – can be introduced by a *there*-construction.

This is how a woman described her new portable sauna bath, introducing each part by means of a *there*-construction:

There’s an oval mat you put down on the floor,<sup>1</sup> then there’s the box which holds the heating element,<sup>2</sup> with a wooden seat on it – I put a towel on top, otherwise it gets too hot – then there are the sides which are soft and which you zip up.<sup>3</sup> It all packs away neatly afterwards.

<sup>1</sup>indefinite NG; <sup>2</sup>definite NG; <sup>3</sup>definite NG

## 30.5 EXTRAPOSITION OF CLAUSES

We have seen that certain types of long subject clauses are usually avoided in English because they violate the end-weight principle, and sound awkward (→ 5.1.2C). **Finite *that*-clauses, *wh*-nominal clauses and *to*-infinitive clauses** can all be shifted to the end of the sentence and replaced by ‘anticipatory *it*’ in subject position. The resulting structure is called **extraposition**.

### Clause as Subject

*That the banks are closed on*

*Saturday* is a nuisance.

*What they are proposing to do* is  
horrificing.

*To interfere* would be unwise.

### Extrapolated clause

*It’s a nuisance that the banks are closed on*  
*Saturday.*

*It’s horrifying what they are proposing*  
*to do.*

*It would be unwise to interfere.*

Extrapolated clauses are much preferred in spoken English to the non-extrapolated, as they sound much less awkward. The reason for this is that they satisfy the principles of

end-weight and end-focus, thus ‘packaging’ the information in a way that is easier to process. A non-extraposed *that*-clause, if not too long, may be preferred, however, as in ‘That we’ve gotten to this point is astonishing’ (AmE).

Extraposition is often used to express an opinion or to argue one’s case. An evaluative word, such as *a nuisance*, *horrifying*, *unwise* comes in the middle, carrying a certain amount of stress. The main focus falls at the end of the sentence, reversing the distribution of information in the non-extraposed clause.

Normal *-ing* clauses as subject are not perceived to be awkward, and there is less motivation to extrapose them. When they are extraposed, they are usually short and do not necessarily carry the main focus. For this reason they give the impression of being additions to the main clause, rather than extraposed subjects:

Having you with us has been a PLEASURE.	It’s been a PLEASURE, having you with us.
Seeing all the family again was NICE.	It was NICE seeing all the family again.

In formal language, English does not normally allow extraposed NGs as in *\*It was amazing his insolence* – though, as a right dislocation (→ 28.11) with appropriate intonation, it is possible to have *It was amazing, his insolence*, where a pause or a comma signals the dislocated NG. In spontaneous speech extraposed NGs do occur:

It’s been amazing the support we’ve had.  
It’s unbelievable *the lengths some people are prepared to go to*.

Obligatory extraposition after *seem*, *appear*, *happen*, *look as if* – after the expressions *it’s high time*, *it’s a pity*, *it’s no use*, and the passive of *say*, *hope* and *intend* – is illustrated in 5.1.2.

N.B. Certain constructions do not admit extraposition. One of these is the *wh*-cleft with a clause as subject, as in *What we should do next is the main problem*. (*\*It is the main problem what we should do next*.) Another case is multiple embedding, as in *That he failed his driving test the seventh time demonstrates that he lacks confidence*. Here the first *that*-clause cannot be extraposed over the second (*\*It demonstrates that he lacks confidence that he failed his driving test for the seventh time*).

### 30.5.1 Raised elements as new Themes

A person or thing mentioned in the extraposed clause, as direct object or even as part of the adjunct, can sometimes be brought forward (‘raised’) to stand as Theme. The result is a new subject Theme which is a person or thing (→ 37.4):

To cook *rice* is easy – It is easy to cook *rice* – *Rice* is easy to cook.  
To live with *Bill* is difficult – It is difficult to live with *Bill* – *Bill* is difficult to live with.

Only certain adjectives and nouns permit the final raising stage. They express an evaluative attitude to the situation, most commonly regarding the ease or difficulty involved. Interestingly, the new Subject/Theme appears to be made responsible for the situation.

### 30.6 POSTPONEMENT

Units can be made discontinuous when we want to avoid the awkwardness of having long, heavy units to the left of the main verb, especially when this is 'light'. Postmodifiers in NGs **1**, appositive reflexive pronouns **2** and clauses of comparison **3** can all occur:

- 1** [?The time when no-one will write by hand any more will come]  
The time will come when no-one will write by hand any more.
- 2** [You yourself did it] You did it yourself.
- 3** [?More people than used to twenty years ago are buying a second car]  
More people are buying a second car than used to twenty years ago.

#### 30.6.1 Postponement with ditransitive verbs

We saw in 10.4 that certain ditransitive verbs – such as give, deny, grant, lend, owe, show among others – allow two alternative structures:

We've given the children bicycles. (SPOiOd)  
We've given bicycles to the children. (SPOdPC)

This alternative allows us to place end-focus either on the Recipient (*the children*) or on the other participant, without using the passive. This way of adjusting the clause, to get the end-focus where we want it, is especially useful when one of the participants is Given information, often realised by a pronoun; this will normally be placed in medial position:

We've given *them* bicycles.  
We've given *them* to the children.

N.B. With certain verbs such as *deliver* which take a Goal Complement only the prepositional version is valid:

They'll deliver the pizza to your house (→ 10.4.2.) .

### FURTHER READING

On Theme and Rheme, Halliday (1994). On information structure: Chafe (1994); Downing (1991); Halliday (1994); Thompson (2014); Jiménez Juliá (2000). On thematic progression: Danes~ (1974). On functional sentence perspective: Danes (1974); Firbas (1992). On topicality and coherence: Downing (2002 and 2004); Givón (2001). On dislocations and existentials: Givón (1993); Biber et al. (1999); Huddleston and Pullum (2002). On Absolute Theme: Matthiessen (1995). On discourse markers: Schiffrin (1987). On negation in discourse: Hidalgo-Downing, L. (2000). On clefting: Collins (1991). On detachments and left/right dislocations: Lambrecht (1994). On postpone-ment with ditransitive verbs: Collins (1995). On the *get*-passive: Downing (1996).

## EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 6

### Thematic and information structures of the clause

#### Unit 28

- 1 †Underline the Theme in each of the following examples and say whether it is marked or unmarked. If marked, say which clause constituent has been thematised (fronted) in each case:

- (1) Paul telephoned an antique dealer in Brussels.
- (2) Abruptly they were cut off.
- (3) Is he a friend of yours?
- (4) Celebrating her victory today is downhill ski champion Marina Kiehl of Germany.
- (5) Freezing cold it was.
- (6) Meet me at eight at the Café de Paris.
- (7) In the American soft-drinks industry, plastic bottles are extensively used.
- (8) For months, all had been quiet in the Holy Wars.
- (9) Crazy I call it.
- (10) Never again will I fly with that airline.

- 2 †Thematisise one constituent of the second clause so that it links up with the first clause:

- (1) He asked me for paper, glue, sticky tape and clips. I bought him all of these.
- (2) I swim thirty lengths a day for fun. You call it fun!
- (3) He told us the history of the place. We already knew most of it.
- (4) I can't remember what post Biggins occupies in the Government. He is Government spokesman.
- (5) I thought I would never get there but I did get there.

#### Unit 29

- 1 †Read the following exchange aloud, trying to identify the intonation nucleus of each tone

- A. What did she say?  
 B. I don't know. I didn't hear her.  
 A. Didn't you hear anything?  
 B. No, I've told you, I was in the other room.  
 A. I don't think you care about Leslie.  
 B. I do care.  
 A. Why don't you talk to her then?  
 B. I'm always talking to her.

- (1) Write in capitals the syllable which contains the nucleus of each tone unit.
- (2) Which of the units have unmarked focus and which have marked focus?



- 2 †Complete each of the sentences below using elliptical or substitution forms. Some have more than one possible form.

- (1) If YOU can't do it, I very much doubt whether I . . .
- (2) I told you I'd given it back and I . . .
- (3) They arranged to come and put in a new water-heater, but they . . . yet
- (4) Peter asked the girls if they would like to go for a sail and they said Yes, they . . .
- (5) Ed has the ambition to do some script-writing, but he really doesn't know . . .
- (6) Sue's children usually want to spend a long time on the swings, but today they . . .
- (7) He told me to turn down the next side-street and I . . .
- (8) And it was a one-way street? – Yes, I'm afraid . . .

### Unit 30

- 1 †The following extract of The 'lost' Van Gogh is part of a news item in The Week. Identify the thematic progression type used to link each clause to the next in the paragraph.

When *Vincent Van Gogh* left his home in the Dutch village of Nuenen in 1895,<sup>1</sup> having had a blazing row with the parish priest over his use of female models,<sup>2</sup> he left hundreds of his early pictures behind in his mother's keeping.<sup>3</sup> Soon after, *his mother*, too, left the village for the nearby town of Breda.<sup>4</sup> *She* packed all her belongings, including a chest containing her son's works, onto a cart,<sup>5</sup> and then left the chest in storage with a family friend.<sup>6</sup> *The friend*, a local merchant, threw many of the pictures away<sup>7</sup> and sold others off the back of his cart for about five cents a-piece.<sup>8</sup>

- 2 †Change the information structure of each of the following clauses into one *it*-cleft and, when possible, two *wh*-cleft structures:

- (1) Experts are working on the recycling of plastic.
- (2) Last thing at night I unwind by reading and listening to the radio.
- (3) The computer industry is fighting against viruses.

- 3 †The following extract is the opening paragraph of a short story, 'Lord Mountdrago' by Somerset Maugham, in *The World Over: The Collected Stories*, vol. 2:

Dr. Audlin was a psycho-analyst.<sup>1</sup> He had adopted the profession by accident and practised it with misgiving.<sup>2</sup> When the war broke out he had not been long qualified and was getting experience at various hospitals;<sup>3</sup> he offered his services to the authorities and after a time was sent out to France.<sup>4</sup> It was then he discovered his singular gift.<sup>5</sup>

- (1) Identify the single cleft sentence in the paragraph and say which element is focused.
  - (2) What is the discourse function of this type of cleft?
- 4 †(a) For each of the sentences below, write the corresponding passive form, if passivisation is possible.

- (1) They founded the first kindergarten in the United States in 1856 in Watertown, Wisconsin.  
.....
- (2) That legacy has traditionally benefited Milwaukee residents.  
.....
- (3) People have taken four-year-old kindergarten as much for granted as summer breezes off Lake Michigan.  
.....
- (4) Now there is a severe budget crunch. Milwaukee Public School officials have proposed the unthinkable: eliminating four-year-old kindergarten.  
.....
- (5) 'Are we to raise property taxes or are we to keep four-year-old kindergarten? These are the choices we may have to make,' said a school board member.  
.....
- (6) Gov. O'Keefe's new budget has produced the dilemma.  
.....
- (7) The budget reduces the proportion of the state's share of education costs and imposes cost controls on local district spending.  
.....
- (b) You now have a number of active–passive alternatives. Note that (2) does not passivise, but that the verb 'benefit' allows different postponed alternatives.

Now make the sentences into a text, choosing the active or passive alternative in each case, according to which you find more cohesive. Add conjunctions and conjunctive expressions wherever these help to clarify the logical connections.

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# COMBINING CLAUSES INTO SENTENCES

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# CLAUSE COMBINING

## UNIT 31

### The complex sentence

#### SUMMARY

Grammatically, the sentence is the highest unit. Traditionally, sentences are said to be simple, compound or complex. A simple sentence consists of one independent clause; a compound sentence of two independent clauses in a relationship of coordination. A complex sentence consists minimally of one independent and one or more dependent clauses in a relationship of dependency.

- 1 In everyday uses of English, clause combinations can be more complex. Coordination and dependency typically interrelate in various combinations which we refer to as complex sentences or clause complexes. There is no grammatical limit to the number of coordinated or subordinated clauses that can combine to form a complex unit.
- 2 In conversation and certain types of written English such as public notices, headlines and plays, units of a lower rank than clause such as words and groups can be treated as independent rhetorical units. It is useful to distinguish between clausal and non-clausal material when analysing such sources.

#### 31.1 Independent and dependent clauses

In the preceding chapters we have seen how a clause can be embedded within another clause, as a realisation of subject, object or complement in the superordinate clause (→ Chapter 2). As such, these clauses occupy well-defined positions and are tightly bound to the host clause. An embedded clausal complement is also bound by stringent grammatical constraints determined by the verb.

We now turn to how clauses can be combined to form complex sentences or clause complexes. The inter-clause relationships involved are of a looser kind than that of embedding. Clauses are either independent or dependent (→ 2.4.1B). An independent clause is complete in itself; it does not form part of a larger structure. It can function as the main clause in a complex sentence.

The independent clause is considered primary in that it comprises minimal completeness and unity.

A dependent clause is syntactically dependent on a main clause or on another dependent clause. It cannot function as a main clause, even when finite.

### 31.2 The complex sentence

The highest grammatical unit is traditionally called the sentence. Three possible types are usually distinguished:

- The simple sentence consists minimally of one independent clause, as in *Sam bought the tickets*.
- The compound sentence consists basically of two independent clauses, linked in a relationship of coordination, as in *Sam bought the tickets and Sue parked the car*.
- The complex sentence consists minimally of one independent clause and one dependent clause, linked in a relationship of dependency, as in *Sam bought the tickets while Sue parked the car*.

In connected discourse, however, the combinations may be more complex and variable than this simple outline suggests. Coordination and subordination of clauses do not occur unrelatedly, each in combination with a main clause. More often they interrelate. Numerous combinations are possible. Here are two examples. In these examples the + sign indicates coordination, the x sign subordination. Example 1, based on a news item, has one main clause with two dependent clauses successively subordinated as adjuncts:

1 A boy of six saved the lives of his brother and two sisters yesterday (1) when fire broke out (2) while they were at home alone (3). [AHX]

The three clauses are organised in a hierarchical relationship. The independent clause encodes the main content – *A boy saved the lives of his brother and two sisters yesterday*. The two subordinate clauses encode the circumstances of time and place. The first functions as adjunct in the main clause, the second as adjunct in the previous subordinate clause. This is a case of **double**, or **'layered' subordination**:

A boy saved the lives of his brother and two sisters yesterday)  
 × [when fire broke out  
     Adjunct  
         × [while they were at home alone]]  
             Adjunct

Example 2 warns of the dangers of walking on hills:

2 (However,) hillwalking is largely safe (1) but there are risks (2) and we have to educate people about these risks (3) if we are going to improve safety (4).

Leaving aside the connective adjunct *however*, two coordinated clauses (1 and 2) are followed by a unit consisting of a third coordinated clause (3) in which a conditional clause is subordinated as adjunct.

(hillwalking is largely safe) + (but there are risks) + (and we have to educate people about these risks) × (if we are going to improve safety)  
Adjunct

Adopting a broader application of the term, we will say that a complex sentence can consist of any number of clauses of different types and in different combinations.

### 31.2.1 The sentence as an orthographic and rhetorical unit

The structural criteria outlined in the preceding section are not the only criteria that have intervened in the traditional and widely accepted concept (or ‘concepts’) of ‘sentence’. For most native speakers of English, a sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (AmE ‘period’), a question mark or an exclamation mark. It is, then, a category associated primarily with the written language and as such can be described as an orthographic and rhetorical unit.

### 31.2.2 Clausal and non-clausal material

We have already seen in Chapter 5 how units of a lower rank than an independent clause such as nominal and adjectival groups, as well as incomplete clauses, appear in plays, stories and advertisements between a capital letter and a full stop, functioning independently as responses in dialogues. Such is the case with the italicised expressions in the following examples:

The large size is unavailable.	<i>Which is a pity.</i>	
	(freestanding subordinate clause)	
A: We’ve got the deal	B. <i>Fantastic!</i>	
	(adjective-headed exclamation)	
You deaf or what?	(verbless clause)	
A. Have you seen the satellites,	B. <i>Oh those, no, no</i>	
erm, you know, our satellite places?	(non-clausal)	[KBB]

The following small text uses full stops and a dash to reflect tone units, which, as seen in Chapter 6, need not always coincide with clauses or sentences. Here, lines 2, 3 and 4 could be combined to form one grammatical sentence. As it stands, punctuation is used to reinforce the presentation of each unit as if it were independent, as would be done equally clearly if the text were read aloud.

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To summarise, if we take the complex sentence as the highest grammatical unit, we can say that structurally, a sentence is composed of clauses. However, both in conversation and in written texts that simulate the spoken mode, as well as in news headlines, slogans, banners and public notices such as *Vacancies* or *For Hire*, we can find units that are non-clausal among others that are clausal. In written texts orthographic units may be single words or what are known as text fragments, such as *Ashamed of your mobile?* Non-clausal material has two defining features: internally, it cannot be analysed in terms of clause structure; nor can it be analysed as part of an adjacent clause.

# RELATIONSHIPS OF EQUIVALENCE BETWEEN CLAUSES

## UNIT 32

### SUMMARY

Clauses are related syntactically in one of two ways: they are either equivalent in status or non-equivalent.

- **Coordination** is the syntactic relationship between units of equal status that conjoin to form a larger unit. Each of the units is called a *coordinate*. They are linked by the coordinators *and*, *or* and *but*.
- **Correlative coordination** of alternation is carried out by *either . . . or* and negatively, by *neither . . . nor*. *Not only . . . but also* has an additive meaning.

It is not only clauses that can be coordinated. Various classes of grammatical elements can likewise be coordinated (→ 3.7.1) and seen in authentic illustrations. Lower level coordination deals with units below the clause.

Cohesive **connectives** such as *besides*, *actually*, serve to clarify the relationships between coordinated clauses.

Intermediate coordination consists of a coordinator + another item such as *and then*, *and so*, *and yet*. The result is intermediate between coordination and subordination.

### 32.1 COORDINATION AND ITS VARIANTS

Clauses are related to each other basically in one of two ways; either the relationship is one of equivalence, both or all the clauses having the same syntactic status, or the relationship is one of non-equivalence, the clauses having a different status, one clause being dependent on another. Coordination displays relationships of equivalence, while dependency is based on non-equivalence.

### 32.1.1 Coordination and coordinators *and*, *or*, *but*

Two or more units can combine to form a larger unit. Each of the units is called a coordinate. Clauses can be conjoined when they share related meanings and fulfil the same function. Coordinates are typically syntactically similar. Semantically also, the contents of the two clauses have to be seen as relevant to each other in some way:

I don't like it *and* I don't want it.

You can keep it *or* you can give it away.

It's a fine piece of furniture, *but* (it is) too large for this room.

The linking relationship is made explicit by the coordinating conjunctions ('coordinators' for short), *and*, *or* and *but*.

### 32.1.2 Listing

In listing a series of elements, the explicit links may be omitted, although the coordinator is typically retained between the last two items, as in **1**. Moreover, the repetition of a coordinate adds extra emphasis to the relation expressed, as in **2**:

**1** We have bought bread, ham, cheese, fruit and beer for the picnic.

**2** They would walk and talk and bathe and read and joke.

### 32.1.3 Correlative coordination

Meanings can be reinforced by using correlative coordinates. *Else* (*or else*) and the correlative coordinators *either* . . . *or* make explicit the meaning of alternation (*either* we stay *or* (*else*) we leave now), which excludes one alternative, while the negative correlates *neither* . . . *nor* exclude both (He likes *neither* tea *nor* coffee).

You should *either* accept his offer *or* (*else*) never see him again.

*Either* we give the tickets back *or* (*else*) we drop everything and go.

You should *neither* ask him for money *nor* accept it if he offers.

With an additive meaning, the correlates *not only* . . . *but also* function in a similar way:

Mary *not only* runs a kindergarten *but also* writes books on childcare

If *not only* is placed in clause initial position, subject-verb inversion is obligatory, in this case involving the use of a form of *do*:

*Not only does* Mary run a kindergarten *but she also* writes books on childcare.<sup>1</sup>

The same applies to *neither* and *nor* in clause-initial position, following a previous negative statement (→ 29.6).

I was not satisfied with the result and *neither / nor* were they.

### 32.1.4 Clarifying connectives

Unlike coordinators, which have fixed positions at the clause boundary, cohesive connectives, such as *instead* or *actually*, are more moveable. They can be used to reinforce the additive, contrastive or replacive meanings of the coordinators.

He doesn't like bacon and *also*, he's better without it. (additive)

I have no intention of going, *nor in fact* did I ever promise to. (replacive)

It's an extremely simple device, *but actually*, it's very effective. (upgrading)

**Additive connectives** include *also*, *furthermore*, *in addition*, *besides*.

**Upgrading connectives** include *in fact*, *as a matter of fact*, *actually*, *indeed*. *Actually* can indicate surprise; it signals that what follows may be contrary to expectations. These features make it especially useful with the adversative conjunction *but*, since contrast and surprise are compatible. *Yet* shares these features of surprise and contrast, and can be used as an alternative to *but* with surprisal and concessive meanings:

A four-year-old child was buried for three days under rubble, *yet* survived.

He didn't stay even an hour, *but instead* returned to London on the next train. (replacive).

She promised to keep in touch, *but in fact*, she never wrote or phoned us. (upgrading)

## 32.2 UNLINKED COORDINATION

Linking by means of *and*, *or* or *but* is the most usual pattern, but it is not the only one. When no explicit formal link is present, but the relationship is one of equivalence, we have **unlinked coordination**, as long as a relation of relevance can be inferred. We interpret the meanings of the conjoins by inferring the semantic connection between them, based on our cultural knowledge. For instance, **1** relies on the knowledge that a hallmark guarantees authenticity.

- 1 It must be genuine; it has the hallmark.
- 2 It's like going out with a child; she stops dead and refuses to go any further.
- 3 He had been drinking very hard – only I knew how hard.
- 4 You must make up a better excuse: no-one will believe that.

In the spoken language, intonation is a helpful guide, while in writing the symmetry of this type of clause relationship is reflected in punctuation by the use of the semi-colon, colon or dash, the latter most common in fictional dialogue. In essays and other academic genres the correct use of the semi-colon is approved of as it reflects balance, while a dash could seem too informal.

Instead of relying on implicit semantic connection between the clauses, **clarifying connectives** can also prove useful here in making explicit the type of connection in each case. Ultimately, it is the choice of the speaker or writer to present the relationships as s/he sees them, relying on the hearer's ability to make the connection:

This picture is not the original; *in other words*, it's a forgery. (restating)  
 We need someone to fix this machine; *that is to say*, we need a mechanic. (restating)  
 You can't count on trains being punctual here; *for instance*, the 10.55 left at 11.15 yesterday. (exemplification)  
 I was completely ignorant of women; *in fact*, I knew none except my own sisters. (upgrading)  
 I didn't mind their questions – *indeed*, I was glad to be able to answer them. (upgrading)

## 32.3 LOWER LEVEL COORDINATION

It is not only finite clauses that can be coordinated. Other levels of conjoined grammatical units include the following:

non-finite subordinate clauses of time: While talking on their cell-phones or smoking cigarettes  
 complements of a preposition: fear of heights, crowds, open spaces  
 a non-clausal unit coordinated with a clausal one: One tidal wave and half a fishing village is wiped out.

This latter type of coordination is in fact a type of condition, based on inference.

This ability of most types of units to admit coordination, from morphemes in a word to adjuncts in a clause, is one of the ways of expanding on a topic while staying within the chosen structure at any point in the discourse. This aid to creativity is first introduced in 3.7.1, in Basic Concepts.

### 32.3.1 Free and fixed order of coordinates

In simple coordination, the coordinates can generally be reversed:

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (a) You can have eggs and bacon   | (b) You can have bacon and eggs   |
| (a) We can go by bus or by train. | (b) We can go by train or by bus. |

However, there are a number of expressions in which the order is fixed by convention, such as *bread and butter*, *in and out*, *fast and furious*, *now or never*, *over and above*, *sooner or later*, *time and again*, *up and down*, *wait and see*, *young and old*.

There are also many others which, while not rigidly fixed, are conventionally used in a preferred order: *black or white*, *bride and groom*, *common or garden*, *hope and pray*, *knife and fork*, *men and women*, *salt and pepper*.

### 32.3.2 Intermediate coordination-subordination

There is a kind of clausal coordination, that is intermediate between that of the 'pure' coordinators – *and*, *but* and *or* – and subordination. The secondary clause is introduced by one of the following:

a conjunctive combination formed by *and* plus another item: and then, and this, and there, and so, and yet, and still, and consequently/as a result.  
and plus a connective such as at that time, soon afterwards, till then, in that case.

He criticises his colleagues and yet relies on them for support.

She turned the corner and there stood Paul waiting for her.

He had not taken the precaution of being vaccinated and as a result he got malaria.

# RELATIONSHIPS OF NON-EQUIVALENCE

## UNIT 33

### Dependency in clause combinations

#### SUMMARY

- 1 The sentence relative is a free-standing dependent clause which has become popular in speech and informal writing. Speakers use it to make a neat evaluative comment or response as the talk evolves. *Which* or *Which is what* are the relative pronouns used, as in *Which is what I meant*.
- 2 Non-finite *-ing* and *-en* clauses such as *eating chocolate* or *enveloped in mist* are used to add background information to a main clause. They can be introduced by a preposition as in *without realising the danger*.
- 3 Implicit meanings of *-ing* forms are not spelt out but are easy to interpret, as in *wondering what to say*.
- 4 Meanings of contrast and exception are expressed by *whereas*, *while* and *except for*.

### 33.1 SENTENCE RELATIVE CLAUSES

The sentence relative is one type of supplementary clause. It has as its antecedent the whole first clause, or its complement. The relative pronoun is *which*. *Which is what / why / where* are also used, particularly in spoken English.

They decided not to go, *which turned out to be a mistake*.

We promised you the sun would shine, *which it did*.

He'll probably forget I ever mentioned it. *Which suits me fine*.

The sentence relative is characterised by certain features:

- It is only loosely connected to its antecedent clause. Although its subordinate status is signalled by the relativiser *which*, it is a parenthetical supplementary that has considerable semantic independence.
- Semantically, the sentence relative makes an independent statement, which is an extension of the already complete unit. It adds an evaluative comment or a justification to something that is already identified.

- Intonationally, the supplementive clause constitutes an independent intonation unit which is signalled by a comma or, more informally, by a dash.
- The discourse function of such clauses is to assert new information in the form of a comment without making it the main point of the utterance.

Sentence relative clauses have become versatile in English. It is now quite common to find them functioning as freestanding subordinate clauses after a pause. They may be uttered by the same speaker or added by the addressee as a collaborative response, usually of an evaluative nature:

- A. Perhaps she thinks it sounds better.      B. *Which it does really.* [KD8]
- A. He goes out playing squash, then  
he's not eating his main meal until  
eleven o'clock at night.      B. *Which is stupid* [KBC]

Many such clauses can be paraphrased by a coordinated clause (e.g. *and it does; and it's stupid.*). The relativiser *which* in a supplementive clause marks the closeness of the comment to the previous discourse. *Which* is sometimes considered as a one-word substitute for the coordinated or the unlinked structure.

### 33.2 NON-FINITE SUPPLEMENTIVE CLAUSES: SPECIFYING AND COMMENTING

The non-finite participial forms *-ing* and *-en* are used as supplementives to elaborate on the main clause by making an explanatory comment. The non-finite form may have its own explicit subject, as in 3 and 4:

- 1 At that moment Ivan appeared in the hall, *propelling himself in a wheelchair.*
- 2 The mountains were invisible, *enveloped in a thick mist.*
- 3 That was the last time I saw him, *his face all covered in bandages.*
- 4 The soldiers filled the coaches, *the younger ones eating sandwiches and chocolate.*

### 33.3 Conjunctive prepositions + *ing* forms

This combination, through dependency, expresses additive, adversative and replacive meanings which correspond to those found with coordination:

*Besides / As well as being* a professional pianist he is also a keen amateur singer.  
(additive)

*With / what with* moving house and starting a new job, they are finding it all  
a bit too much. (informal)

He has embarked on a huge project *without realising what is involved.* (adversative)

*Instead of turning left,* you should have gone straight ahead. (replacive)



### 33.4 IMPLICIT MEANINGS OF -ING SUPPLEMENTIVES

Without a preposition, the *-ing* form is indeterminate in meaning. This is not to be considered as some sort of deficiency, but rather as an economical means of expressing relationships that are not required to be further specified, since hearers and readers infer the relevance of the relationship intended by the writer.

With the *-ing* form and a main clause with a finite verb, the following implied meanings are typical:

- an action and a mental process occurring simultaneously:

They drove on, *wondering how long their petrol would last*. (additive = and wondered)

- a mental process, with the *-ing* clause implying an adversative meaning

*Not realising the danger*, she stumbled towards the edge of the cliff.

- two or more actions occurring simultaneously.

The dog leapt forward, *baring its teeth*. (additive)

- two consecutive actions:

*Leaving the car unlocked*, he walked quickly towards the group of people.

Unlike coordinated clauses, these combinations tend to be reversible, as for instance: 'Baring its teeth, the dog leapt forward'. Considerations of end-weight (→ 30.3.2) and discourse connectivity (→ 35.5) will determine the choice.

### 33.5 CONTRASTIVE DEPENDENCY: *WHILE, WHEREAS, BUT FOR THE FACT THAT*

Meanings of contrast and exception similar to those encoded by coordination can also be expressed by dependency. The conjunctions *whereas* and *while* introduce finite subordinate clauses which contrast in some way with the main clause, particularly when there is some point of similarity between the two, as in:

Jamie already speaks two foreign languages, *whereas* her brother hasn't yet learned any.

Michelle, 24, works in an electronics factory, *while* Colette, 15, is still at school.

*But for the fact that* and *except* express the meaning of exception:

I would take you to the station, *except that* the car is being repaired.

It would have been a disaster, *but for the fact that* everyone helped to save the situation.

# SUBORDINATION AND SUBORDINATORS

## UNIT 34

Adverbial clauses of time, condition, concession and manner

### SUMMARY

- 1 Subordinating conjunctions (subordinators, for short) are of three types: simple (consisting of one word), conjunctive groups (two words) and complex (derived from verbs or phrases).
- 2 Clauses of condition are basically introduced by the simple subordinator 'if'. Conditional meanings and constructions are also of three types: open (or real), hypothetical, and counterfactual. Conditionals represent the most important of all circumstantial clauses discussed here.

### 34.1 FINITE DEPENDENT CLAUSES AND THEIR SUBORDINATORS

Finite clauses are introduced by a subordinator, which serves to indicate the status of the clause together with its circumstantial meaning. Formally, subordinating conjunctions can be grouped as follows:

- simple conjunctions *when, wherever, where, wherever, because, if, unless, until, while, as, although*
- conjunctive groups *as if, as though, even if, even though, even when, soon after, no sooner*
- complex conjunctions there are three sub-classes:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (i) derived from verbs, usually from present or past participles, and occasionally from imperatives (suppose that). All but the adverbial types have optional <i>that</i> : | <i>provided (that), granted (that), considering (that), seeing (that), supposing (that), so (that).</i> |
| (ii) containing a noun:   | <i>in case, to the event that, to the extent that, in spite of the fact that, the day, the way</i>      |
| (iii) adverbial:  | <i>so/as long as, as soon as, so/as far as, much as, now (that)</i>                                     |

Some of these conjunctions and their meanings are illustrated in 34.3.

### 34.2 ADVERBIAL CLAUSES OF TIME, CONCESSION, REASON, PURPOSE, RESULT AND MANNER

Certain circumstantial meanings, such as time, have several sub-types: for instance, 'realis' refers to an event that really occurs or occurred, whereas 'irrealis' refers to an event that hasn't yet occurred and perhaps won't occur. Most conjunctions of time can be used to introduce either meaning.

#### *Time*

As (simultaneous)	The crowd roared as the ball hit the net.
After (realis)	Soon after the war ended the men returned.
Before (irrealis)	He got away before they could stop him.
Since	(starting-point of duration) We haven't met since we were at school.
When (realis)	When he saw me he waved.
When (irrealis)	When you reach the station, give me a ring.
Whenever (realis/irrealis)	He comes round whenever he can. Come round whenever you like.
While (simultaneous)	The burglar broke into the house while they were asleep.
Now that (time-reason)	Now that the days are longer, it's worth driving up to the Lakes.
As soon as (realis)	As soon as she got into bed, the phone rang.
As soon as (irrealis)	Call me as soon as the plane lands.
The day (realis)	We first met the day we went on a staff excursion.
The moment (irrealis)	The moment you hear the car draw up, give me a shout.
Until (duration + end-point)	Stay in bed until the pain goes away.

#### *Approximations*

As far as (to the extent that)	As far as I know, no date has been fixed for the wedding.
--------------------------------	---

Insofar as (to the degree that)	Insofar as change has occurred, it has been due to outside pressure
Provided that (condition)	Provided (that) you give us the order, the goods will be delivered in ten days' time.
Before (condition)	Get out before I call the police!
Although/though (concession)	He'll probably say no, though it's worth trying.
While (concession)	While I admire his tenacity, I deplore his ruthlessness.
For all that (AmE)(concession)	For all that he's a star player, his tax dodging has caught him out.
As (reason)	As he's an only child, he gets a good deal of attention.
Since (reason)	Since he won't be at home, we'll use the mobile (cell phone AmE).
So that (purpose)	Fasten the sunshade securely, so that it won't blow away.

### Manner

As if/as though	He talks as if/as though he owned the place.
The way	The way things are going, there'll be more tourists than residents here.

Note that, unlike some languages, English does not use a subjunctive nor a future perfect tense when referring to irrealis states or events. Instead, a normal present or past form, occasionally *will* or *should* + infinitive are used; for instance: '*In order that* no mistakes *should* be made, everyone was informed by letter' (formal). Fasten the sunshade securely *so that* it *won't* blow away.

## 34.3 CONDITIONAL CLAUSES

Among the wide range of meanings expressed by subordinate clauses, condition is of particular interest to both native and non-native speakers of English. In contrast to certain other European languages, which use a wide range of verb forms in both the conditional clause and the main clause, English uses only one of three tenses in the conditional clause: present, past and past perfect tenses. A modal may be used in the main clause.

Conditional clauses are typically introduced by the subordinating conjunction *if*:

- 1 *If it's not too expensive, we'll buy it straight away.*
- 2 *If you leave right now, you'll be able to catch the last train.*
- 3 *If Tom passes his driving test, he will soon be buying a car, for sure.*

Conditions are divided into three main types: **open**, **hypothetical** and **counterfactual**. The first type is a real condition, while the other two types show varying degrees of remoteness (irrealis).

### 34.3.1 Open conditional clauses

An **open condition**, in real situations, is said to be ‘real’ or ‘neutral’ in that it leaves open the possibility of being fulfilled. The speaker does not know whether or not Tom will pass his driving-test, for instance. An open condition implies futurity, and a future-related outcome is typically marked by a modal verb in the main clause. The conditional structure is basically as follows:

*If* + present tense in the conditional clause. Modal verb with future reference or some other irrealis operator in the main clause:

- 4 *If he leaves*, you can bet your bottom dollar *he'll take* a lot of the best customers with him.
- 5 *If you decide* to come to the concert *you should hurry and get* tickets before they're sold out.

Habitual meanings and facts can be expressed by the present tense in both the *if*-clause and the main clause, as in the extract from Alan Ayckbourn's *Just between Ourselves*; and also as in **6**. In open conditions the simple past tense is also possible with reference to a past event, as in **9**. The main clause generally makes a statement, but a question **7** or an imperative, as in **1** and **7**, respectively, are also common.

I haven't got time, mother, to start putting things in tins. *If I want a nail, there's a nail. I bang it in and that's that. If I can't find a nail I use a screw. And if I can't find a screw, I don't bother.*

- 6 If you pour oil on water it floats /it will float.
- 7 If she lives next door to you, how is it you never see her? (AmE How come . . . ?)
- 8 If you have just heard it on the late night news, it will be in all the papers tomorrow.
- 9 If you insist on staying, kindly take a seat over there.

In open conditions *unless* can often be used with the meaning of ‘except if’, with a similar meaning to *if*. . . *not*:

- 10 **Unless** Tom passes his driving test, he won't be buying a car yet. (If Tom doesn't pass . . . )
- 11 There'll be no newspapers tomorrow unless the strike is called off. (If the strike is not called off . . . )

In questions, *if not* is used, as in **12a**, where *unless* is ungrammatical. The same applies to a statement within a context of surprise, as in **12b**:

- 12a Where is she staying, *if not* with her parents? /\*unless with her parents?
- 12b I shall be surprised if the flight is not cancelled /\*I shall be surprised unless the flight is cancelled. (The asterisk marks ungrammaticality).

Note that modal *will*, *shall*, *would*, *could* are not normally used in the conditional *if* clause to express a condition; for instance we don't say \*If you will have a problem or \*If Tom will pass his driving test. However, *would* + *if* clause is found in three conventional situations, namely: (a) expressing willingness; (b) in polite requests, showing deference, and in (c) expressing a wish. In the latter case 'only' is necessary:

- 13a I should be grateful if you would reply as soon as possible. (willingness)
- 13b If you would accompany me to Reception . . . (deference)
- 13c If only the rain would stop! (wish)

### 34.3.2 Hypothetical conditional clauses

In the second type of conditional clause, the **hypothetical conditional**, the past tense is used to indicate **modal remoteness**; the event or state coded in the condition is seen as less likely to be fulfilled, though not hypothetically impossible. The structure is **If** + **past tense remote** (i.e. without any relation to past time) + **would** or another 'remote' modal such as *could* or *might* preceding the lexical verb in the main clause.

- 14 *If you left now, you would / might catch the last train.*
- 15 *If Tom passed his driving test, he would soon be buying a car.*

If the verb in the conditional clause is **be**, the subjunctive mood form **were** is preferred, in good usage, to the indicative **was**, not only with plural subjects but also singular. The expression *If I were* you is conventionally used to give advice:

- 16 *If I were you, I wouldn't agree to carry a package for someone on a flight.*

*Were* and the modal **should** are also used to add an element of tentativeness. In 17, *if* is replaced by subject-operator inversion using the subjunctive *were* + *to*-infinitive. In 18 the verb is **should** with subject-operator inversion, and in 19 *should* occurs together with *if*. All three forms imply a greater degree of remoteness, whether of unlikelihood, politeness or deference.

- 17 *Were anyone to ask me to carry a package on a flight, I would certainly refuse.*
- 18 *Should you decide to come to the concert, we can meet at the concert hall.*
- 19 *If you should change your mind, just let me know.*

### 34.3.3 Counterfactual conditional clauses

The third type of conditional clause is the **counterfactual conditional**. In this type the event or state is presented as counter to reality: it didn't happen. This is the highest degree of remoteness. The structure has **If** + **a past perfect** in the conditional clause, and a **modal perfect** (**would** + *have* + past participle of the lexical verb) in the main clause.

- If you had given me a ring (BrE) / a buzz (informal) / called me (AmE), we might have met somewhere.*
- If anyone had asked me to carry a package on the flight I would have refused.*

Subject-operator inversion with the auxiliary *had* is also a rather formal alternative to *if* in a counterfactual conditional clause:

***Had you*** given me a ring/called me, *we might have met* somewhere.

The counterfactual construction is associated not only with conditional clauses; it can occur in other discourse contexts such as expressing regret or reproof at something that didn't take place:

*It would have been* a pleasure to meet your son. (but we didn't meet him)

*You should have told* us he was coming. (but you didn't)

*We would have very much liked* to see the Cup Final. (but we didn't)

### 34.3.4 Rhetorical conditional clauses

It's a stupid idea, *if you ask me*.

Let me introduce myself, *if I may*. (In which the speaker pretends to ask permission of the hearer to introduce herself)

Expressions such as *If Jack Jones is the best golfer in Scotland, I'm Tiger Woods*, are also instances of rhetorical condition.

### 34.3.5 Condition-Concession

***Even if*** combines the meanings of condition and concession:

*Even if you take* a taxi you *will still miss* your train.

*If*-clauses are sometimes used in which the condition is not contingent on the main clause (→ Pragmatic conjunction)

# DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF CONJUNCTIONS, CIRCUMSTANTIALS AND THEIR MEANINGS

## UNIT 35

### 35.1 Pragmatic conjunction

Conjunctions express the semantic relationships between the units they connect, reflecting the speaker's view of the connection between states of affairs in the world. Pragmatic conjunction, on the other hand, has more to do with speech acts than with experiential organisation. Compare:

- 1 *If all goes well*, we'll reach Dover by four. (experiential)
- 2 *If you're looking for Amy*, she's left. (pragmatic)

In **1** reaching Dover by four is conditional on all going well. In **2**, this is not so. The fact that Amy has left is not conditioned by the possibility that you are looking for her. Rather, **2** specifies a situation in which the main clause *she's left* would be relevant. Now compare the following:

- 3 Sam arrived late because he missed his train.
- 4 Is there a fire somewhere? 'Cos I can smell smoke.

In **3** the *because*-clause states the reason Sam arrived late – he missed his train. In **4** on the other hand, my smelling smoke is not the reason for the fire. Rather, the *because*-clause, in its abbreviated form 'cos, gives the reason for the speech act of enquiring whether there is a fire.

Pragmatic clauses with 'cos as in **4** have something in common with sentential relative supplementary clauses: both are semantically and prosodically independent while syntactically marked as dependent (by a conjunction and by a *wh*-relative, respectively). These somewhat conflicting properties lead one to think that both pragmatic conjunction and the *wh*-non-restrictor are taking on functions in discourse different from the traditional functions ascribed to them.

Pragmatic conjunctions occur sentence-initially and paragraph-initially, often at the beginning of a speaker's turn in conversation, typically (though not necessarily) in direct relation to what the previous speaker has just said.



*And* is the most difficult to characterise. One possibility is that pragmatic *and* makes an explicit point of departure for a new direction in spoken discourse, as in **5B**. It is common at turn boundaries in conversation and also in radio and television presentations, **6**.

- 5**    **A** He stopped me and said 'Where are you going, love?'  
       **B** *And* I said 'What is it to you? *And* don't call me 'love'.'  
**6**    *And* now it's time for the nine o'clock news.

*So* indicates that a conclusion has been drawn **7** while pragmatic *or* introduces a question, **8** Both *so* and *or* elicit a response.

- 7**    *So* this is where you live.  
**8**    Can you give me a hand with this? *Or* don't you want to have it fixed?

## 35.2 Non-finite clauses expressing circumstantial meanings

### 35.2.1 Explicit markers of circumstantial meanings

Not all conjunctions and prepositions are able to function as introducers of non-finite clauses. Those that can do form a sub-set of the total class of each.

Sub-set of conjunctions

<i>when</i>	Take extra care when driving at night
<i>while</i>	(concession) While agreeing basically with your proposal, we would nevertheless suggest certain amendments.
<i>although</i>	Although feeling unwell, she made an effort to appear cheerful.
<i>if</i>	If travelling abroad, watch out for pickpockets.

Sub-set of conjunctive prepositions

<i>before</i>	Look both ways before crossing.
<i>since</i>	Since receiving your message, I have pondered long on the problem.
<i>from</i>	From being a junior clerk, he rose to become General Manager.
<i>in</i>	In learning a foreign language, several skills are involved
<i>on</i>	On entering the mosque, we were impressed by its spaciousness.
<i>without</i>	(reason) Without having read the book, I can't give an opinion.

### 35.2.2 Verb forms as circumstantial markers

Certain circumstantial meanings are frequently expressed by the *to*-infinitive, the *-ing* and the *en*-participial forms alone. Of these the *to* infinitive is the most explicit since it usually expresses purpose:

<i>to</i> -infinitive clauses	To relieve backache, apply liniment daily.
<i>-ing</i> clauses:	Living abroad, he rarely sees his parents (because).
<i>-en</i> clauses:	Too excited to sleep, he paced up and down the room (because).

Conventions of good English require that the implicit subject of a non-finite clause should be identical with the explicit subject of the main clause. Compare the acceptable (a) with the less acceptable (b), which unintentionally suggests that the jellyfish was bathing in the sea.

- (a) Bathing in the sea, I got stung by a jellyfish.
- (b) Bathing in the sea, a jellyfish stung me.

That this norm is not always adhered to is illustrated by the following 'editor's comment' from the BBC series *Yes, Prime Minister*:

[Working funerals are the best sort of summit meeting. Ostensibly arranged for another purpose, statesmen and diplomats can mingle informally at receptions, churches and gravesides, and achieve more than ten 'official' summits for which expectations have been aroused Ed. ]

Evidence from a cognitive study suggests that the cognitive weight of the most prominent discourse referent overrides syntactic constraints. In the circumstances, the cognitive weight of the statesmen and diplomats, not to mention the jellyfish, would override the finer syntactic requirement in each case (→ Further reading).

### 35.3 Discourse connectivity and cohesion: Initial vs final circumstantial clauses

Adverbial clauses are placed either before the main clause, as in **1**, or after it, as in **2**:

- 1** If you have a problem, call us immediately.
- 2** Call us at any time if you need advice.

Position is related to the degree of integration between the two clauses. Semantically a circumstantial in final position tends to have tight connections with the main clause, to which it may be linked without a comma in writing or a pause in speech. In such cases it is closely integrated into the semantic structure of the main clause:

- 3** The problem arises because there is nothing in our day to day life to provide us with sufficient exercise. [AYK]

From a discourse perspective, an initial circumstantial clause tends to have wider textual connections with what preceded it, often reaching back some distance. It also provides a frame for what follows and can be paragraph-initial. It is likely to be followed by a comma or pause. Consequently, an initial circumstantial is likely to be less integrated into the main clause, as in **4**:

- 4** *Because tranquillisers simply mask symptoms rather than provide a cure*, you may need to seek help to deal with the problem which caused you to need the tablets in the first place. [AYK]

Example 4 illustrates the greater integration of the *to*-infinitive clause compared with the framing function of the *because* clause.

An initial dependent clause, often with progressive aspect (→ 43.4) can provide a background state or activity for the event in past tense:

*While all the other kids were pulling on their coats,* the teacher found Harry sitting sobbing in the cloakroom. [CHR]

# REPORTING SPEECH AND THOUGHT

## UNIT 36

### SUMMARY

- 1 Speakers report the utterances of other speakers, or their own, in one of two ways: either directly by 'direct reported speech' (also known as 'quoted speech'), or indirectly by 'indirect reported speech'. Thought processes can also be reported. Quoted speech supposedly repeats the exact words spoken, whereas indirect speech reporting gives the content or even only the gist of what was said.
- 2 Verbs of saying and of thinking are used to introduce direct speech and thought, respectively. Idiomatic uses of the verbs *go* and *be like* are also used by some speakers as alternatives to verbs of saying.
- 3 Indirect reporting of speech (traditionally known as 'indirect speech' ) reports the content of statements, questions and directives. A number of formal adjustments are made, referred to as 'backshift', which shift deictic elements away from the speech situation to the reported situation.
- 4 In fictional dialogue, and to a lesser extent in conversation, a wide variety of reporting verbs occur, many not strictly verbs of speaking, which aim to convey such features as speaker's stance, voice quality and speech-act force.
- 5 In addition, and in order to give the reader the illusion of entering a character's mind, writers of fiction combine features of quoted and reported speech to produce the varieties known as 'free direct speech' and 'free indirect speech'.

### 36.1 DIRECT AND INDIRECT REPORTING

There are two main ways of reporting what someone said or what we ourselves said: directly **1**, and indirectly **2**:

- 1 She said 'I'll wait for you'.
- 2 She said she would wait for us.

**Direct ('quoted') speech** reporting supposedly repeats the exact words that someone said or wrote, while **indirect speech** reporting gives the meaning, or the gist of the content. Depending on the verb used, a good deal of further information can also be provided – for instance, the type of speech act being carried out, such as asking, complaining, responding, or the voice quality of the speaker:

'I hear you've been having a tough time,' he *responded*.  
 'You haven't sent me the Sunday supplement,' she *complained*.

Between quoted and indirect reported speech, there is a difference of immediacy. In quoting, the quoted clause appears to have independent status; its effect, therefore, is more dramatic and life-like. Tenses, pronouns and other deictic elements are orientated towards the speech situation, while in reported speech they shift away from it. The formal modifications of this shift are explained in section 36.3.

N.B. There is also a difference in referring back to something which has been quoted and something which has been reported. To refer to the actual words quoted, a reference word such as *that* is typically used, whereas to refer to an indirect report, a substitute form such as *so* or *not* is used:

He said, 'I'll pay this time.'	Did he really say that?
He said he would pay that time.	Did he really say so?

## 36.2 DIRECT REPORTING OF SPEECH AND THOUGHT

**Direct ('quoted') speech** is a common feature of everyday conversation, of fictional dialogue and, to a lesser extent, news and other genres. In direct speech, the reporting clause contains a verb of saying, while the reported clause contains what is said. The reporting clause may be placed initially, finally or medially. If it is placed medially, the quoted speech is discontinuous as in **c**. With a proper name, inversion of subject and verb is another option **d**. However, with a pronoun (*said she*), inversion is archaic.

- (a) She said, 'I'm a telly addict and I always have been'.
- (b) 'I'm a telly addict and I always have been,' she said.
- (c) 'I'm a telly addict', she said, 'and I always have been.'
- (d) 'I'm a telly addict', said Danielle, 'and I always have been.'

As there is no linking or subordinating element in **a** between the reporting verb and the quoted speech, the structural relationship between them is indeterminate. In **b**, **c** and **d** the reporting clause is clearly parenthetical.

In spoken English, the reporting clause receives less prosodic prominence than what is reported, in whatever position it occurs. This reflects the fact that what is said is more important than the introductory clause of saying.

These two features – the mobility of the reporting clause and the importance of what is said – are sometimes interpreted as evidence that *I think*, *he said*, for example, in whatever position, are not main clauses at all, but are better analysed as epistemic, evidential or evaluative **parentheticals**, while what is traditionally classed as the complement clause is in fact the main proposition.

A further view sees the relationship between the clauses as one of projection: the reporting clause ‘projects’ the projected clause as either a locution or an idea.

## Quoted speech in conversation and written dialogue

Verbs used to introduce quoted speech in conversation and writing are summarised in the table below.

Conversation	Written dialogue
<i>say</i> (and, less commonly, <i>tell</i> ) <i>go</i> , <i>be like</i>	<i>Say</i> is the basic verb <i>Tell</i> , <i>write</i> (the latter quoting written sources is used only to characterise a type of user)
not normally used	Verbs quoting statements: <i>announce</i> , <i>explain</i> , <i>observe</i> , <i>point out</i> , <i>remark</i> , <i>report</i>
<i>ask</i> is used – the others not normally used	Verbs quoting questions: <i>ask</i> , <i>demand</i> , <i>enquire</i> , <i>query</i> , and exclamations: <i>exclaim</i>
not normally used	Verbs indicating speech act force: <i>affirm</i> , <i>answer</i> , <i>argue</i> , <i>beg</i> , <i>complain</i> , <i>object</i> , <i>protest</i> , <i>urge</i> , <i>warn</i> , or verbs which refer to the circumstances of the speech act: <i>interrupt</i> , <i>reply</i> , <i>respond</i>
normally only <i>shout</i>	Verbs indicating manner of locution: <i>bark</i> , <i>bleat</i> , <i>chirp</i> , <i>cry</i> , <i>drawl</i> , <i>grumble</i> , <i>hiss</i> , <i>holler</i> , <i>moan</i> , <i>mumble</i> , <i>murmur</i> , <i>mutter</i> , <i>scream</i> , <i>shout</i> , <i>shriek</i> , <i>snap</i> , <i>snarl</i> , <i>stutter</i> , <i>whine</i> , <i>whisper</i> , <i>yell</i>
not normally used	Non-utterance emotive verbs accompanying speech: Laughter: <i>chuckle</i> , <i>grin</i> , <i>giggle</i> , <i>laugh</i> , <i>smile</i> , <i>twinkle</i> Weeping: <i>moan</i> , <i>sob</i> , <i>wail</i> Excitement, concern: <i>breathe</i> , <i>pant</i> Incredulity: <i>gasp</i> Pain, anger: <i>bellow</i> , <i>choke</i> , <i>flash</i>

For the difference between **say** and **tell** → 11.2, ch. 3. Basically, *say* is a two-place verb which does not take a core Recipient, not admitting, for example, *\*say me your name*. *Tell* is a three-place verb with a core Recipient (*tell me your name*). Pragmatically, *say* is used to report what is said, while *tell* typically informs.

**Go** and **be like** are becoming widely used as **quotative** alternatives to *say*, both in younger speakers’ conversation and in the popular media. Like *says* and *said*, *go* and *be like* signal that the speaker is moving into direct speech mode. Normal combinations of tense and aspect occur with *go* and *be like*; however, the present tense appears to predominate even for past time reference (*I’m like*, *she’s like*):

... and I *was going* ... I’ll have to take my stereo home and *he goes* yeah your stereo’s quite big isn’t it, and I *went* when have you seen my stereo and *he goes* oh

I came up the other day to see if you were in. *I went* why why, he *said* I just came round to your room and you weren't there but your music was on.

[KPH]

'It's just happened so fast,' says the former Shanna Jackson. 'Some days people will call me "Paris" and I'm like, "Who?" My mother still refuses to call me Paris.'

[HSJ]

The range of verbs used as 'quotatives' is wider in written dialogue than in spoken because writers attempt to heighten interest by conveying not only the words said but also something of voice quality, attitude and manner of speaking of the character, whether fictional or real. All these are perceived by hearers in a speech situation but are absent from basic verbs of saying.

'I'll take the cases,' he *whispered*.

'Trainers,' I *echoed*, 'What trainers?'

'Come on, lads,' Tommy *yelled*.

'You're mad at me, aren't you?' she *wailed*.

'I said come in, Mrs Friar!' John *barked* at her.

### *Direct reporting of thought*

Not only words may be quoted, but also thoughts. The first two examples below are often heard in the spoken language, the third would be typical in fiction:

I think I'll have a beer.

I wonder what he's doing.

'I'll have to get a new bulb for this lamp,' thought Peter.

Mental process verbs which occur as quotatives are few in number in English, in comparison with the wide variety of verbs used in quoted speech. They include *think*, the basic verb, and other verbs of cognition which express some additional, often aspectual meaning: *muse, ponder, reflect, wonder*.

In representing their characters' thought, writers of fictional narrative often omit the prosodic signals of quoting (inverted commas or dashes), and make the clause of thinking parenthetical. The following extract from Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* illustrates this technique:

He's very well dressed, thought Clarissa, yet he always criticises me.

Here she is mending her dress; mending her dress as usual, he thought; here she's been sitting all the time I've been in India; mending her dress; running to the House and back and all that, he thought, growing more and more irritated, more and more agitated, for there's nothing in the world so bad for some women as marriage, he thought; and politics; and having a Conservative husband, like the admirable Richard. So it is, so it is, he thought, shutting his knife with a snap.

### 36.3 BACKSHIFT IN INDIRECT REPORTING

Indirect speech reporting is characterised by a series of formal features that distinguish it from quoted speech reporting. They have the effect of shifting all deictic elements (personal pronouns, demonstratives, tense and adverbs of time and place) away from direct reference to the speech situation, and instead to the reporting situation, as in the following example (we don't give all the possible personal pronoun shifts, which depend on context):

'I want you to drink this juice.' I/you/he/she said she wanted him/me to drink that juice.

The shifts involved are as follows:

- **Personal pronouns** in the 1st person, which refer to the speaker, are shifted to 2nd or 3rd person, unless the speaker is reporting him/herself, as in **1** below. The 2nd person pronoun, which refers to the listener, is shifted to 1st or 3rd, according to the identity of the listener, again as in **1**.
- **Demonstratives** and **deictic adverbs** which refer to the here and now (*this, these, here, now*) are replaced by more remote forms (*that, those, there, then*) **1** and **4**.
- **Verb tenses** are 'back-shifted' – that is, present forms are replaced by past forms **1, 2, 4, 5**. This shift is not obligatory if the described state still holds, as in **3**.
- **Clause type** is also affected. A quoted interrogative with *say* is replaced by a declarative introduced by *ask* in reported speech **7**. Imperatives and verbless clauses have less clear correspondences, and are discussed later in this and other sections.

Direct (quoted) speech	Indirect speech
<b>1</b> 'I want you to drink this juice.'	I/you/he/she said I/she wanted him/me to drink that juice.
<b>2</b> 'I won't be long,' she said.	She said she wouldn't be long.
<b>3</b> He said 'We are naked apes. They are the same as us inside.'	He said that we are/were naked apes and that they are the same as us inside.
<b>4</b> 'Can you leave this book here?' he said.	He asked if I/we/she could leave that book there.
<b>5</b> 'It's good!' Magda says.	Magda said that it was good.
<b>6</b> 'Do it yourselves!' I said.	I told them to do it themselves.
<b>7</b> 'Must you go so soon?' she said.	She asked whether we/they had to go as soon as that.

Figure 7.1 Direct and indirect speech.

Verbs used in indirect statements and questions are essentially the same as those used in quoting. The main exceptions are shown in the table.



Verbs used only in quoting	Verbs used only in indirect reporting
	(a) verbs which express rhetorical processes: <i>claim, deny, hypothesise, imply, insinuate, maintain, make out, pretend.</i>
	(b) verbs of cognition, wishing and affection: <i>believe, feel, hold (=believe), imagine, understand, fear, suspect, think, hope, wish, want, like.</i>
(c) Non-utterance verbs as in 36.2, such as <i>laugh, smile, sob, moan, gasp</i> :  'Thank you,' she smiled. 'Yes,' he sighed.	Occasionally, these verbs are used in indirect reporting, for instance:  She smiled her thanks. He sighed his consent.

- (a) Verbs such as *claim, deny, insinuate* represent an interpretation on the part of the reporter of the speech act in the original situation, and can indicate a certain stance, for instance of reservation or disbelief:

She *claims* her mother was related to a Polish aristocrat.  
He *denies* being involved in the incident.  
Are you *insinuating* that he knows something about it?

- (b) The combination of mental processes with a reporting clause is the normal way of representing what people think, believe, hope, want and like. These typically occur as reported states of wishing, wanting, and so on, since such mental states are rarely quoted; even the possible form with *let* as in '*Let me be the first to speak to him*', *Janet wished* is relatively infrequent. Syntactically, they are no different from the complementation patterns described in Chapter 3:

I hope that no damage has been done  
It is feared that many lives have been lost.  
She wishes she had never met him.

- (c) Conversely, verbs which are not intrinsically verbs of saying are not normally used in indirect reporting. These include verbs of laughing, weeping, and the like, as exemplified in section 36.2. A quoted locution such as '*So what?*', *he sneered* would be difficult to report in a similar form, and even perhaps with a similar meaning. A paraphrase such as *He asked with a sneer what it mattered* might be considered acceptable within a certain context.

### 36.4 REPORTED OFFERS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMMANDS

So far we have considered quoted or reported statements and questions. We now turn to the reporting of directives – reported offers, suggestions and commands – which typically involves summary and paraphrase. Certain verbs are used in quoted

directives but are not used for reporting. Conversely, there are many verbs used in reported directives that are not used in quoting. There is some overlap, however, as may be seen from the table below.

Quoted directives	Reported directives
the general verb <i>say</i>	the general verb <i>tell</i>
verbs specific to offers, suggestions and commands: <i>offer, order, request, tell</i>	<i>suggest, order, command, request, tell</i>
verbs embodying some circumstantial or <i>promise, agree, beg, insist, plead, urge, warn</i>	the same as in quoted directives semantic other features: <i>threaten, vow,</i>
verbs with a connotative meaning: <i>bark, bleat, sob, gasp</i>	not used
not used	verbs expressing a wide range of complex rhetorical processes: <i>encourage, forbid, persuade, recommend</i>

### 36.5 CLAUSE TYPE IN THE REPORTED CLAUSE

When we quote an offer, order or suggestion directly, there is typically an imperative in the quoted clause:

- 1 'Hurry up!', she said (to us).
- 2 'Do eat more slowly', she begged the child.
- 3 'Come in and sit down', I suggested (to her).

In reported directives, the imperative of the quoted type is replaced by a *to*-infinitive or a *that*-clause. The examples 1–3 of quoted directives would be reported as follows:

- 4 She told/urged us to hurry up.
- 5 She begged the child to eat more slowly.
- 6 I suggested that she (should) come in and sit down.

*Say* takes a *that*-clause containing either the semi- auxiliary *be to* or a modal of obligation (*should, must, have to*); see 11.2 for the complementation patterns of *say* and *tell*.

Using *say*, example 1 could be reported as follows:

- 7 She said (that) we were to hurry up.
- 8 She said (that) we should/must hurry up.

*Say* can also report a *to*-infinitive clause with no subject (9). In AmE a subject of the reported clause is here preceded by *for* (10). In both cases the use of *say* rather than *tell* suggests that the message is being relayed by a 3rd person. Compare these with 11:

- 9 She said to hurry.
- 10 She said for us to hurry.
- 11 She told us to hurry.



crazy about that woman,<sup>4</sup> her mother's new husband told the girl when her mother was in the powder room, Your mother is a high-class lady, he said.<sup>5</sup> He shifted his cane chair closer, leaned moist and warm, meaty, against her, an arm across her shoulders. There's nobody in the world precious to me as that lady, I want you to know that, he said,<sup>6</sup> and the girl said Yes I know it,<sup>7</sup> and her mother's new husband said in a fierce voice close to tears, Damn right, sweetheart, you know it.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>indirect speech; <sup>2</sup>free indirect speech; <sup>3</sup>free direct speech; <sup>4-8</sup>direct speech

### 36.7 FREE INDIRECT THOUGHT

In the following passage from *Lightning in May*, John suspects for the first time that his wife may have tuberculosis. His reaction is expressed partly in direct speech introduced by verbs of manner (italicised) and partly in free indirect thought (underlined). By means of the latter, the writer or oral storyteller aims to represent the thoughts of a character. No reporting verb is used; indeed, there is no overt signal that the character's, rather than the author's, view or thought is being portrayed. What alerts us to the change of perspective is some 'perspective-changing' detail in the immediately preceding narrative – in this case 'he opened the handkerchief' and 'he looked at her':

'Ruth,' he *breathed*, 'how long have you had this cough?' He stood up and she followed. He opened the handkerchief again. There was no mistake. Silently he cursed himself. He saw her now in a completely different light. 'How long?' he *demanded*.

He looked at her then held her to him. It became bluntly clear to him now. The pale, tired face that was thinner; the droop of her body. All the symptoms that he had put down to her mental state had matured into a physical one. And now a cough. How could he have been so stupid? Yet he had to make sure.

'Ruthy,' he *whispered*. 'Let's get back to the surgery. I want Dr. Jenkins to see you.'  
'What is it, John?' she *queried*.

(Gordon Parker, *Lightning in May*)

### FURTHER READING

On coordination, subordination and spoken English: Biber et al. (1999); Carter and MacCarthy (2006); Halliday (1994). On sentence relative clauses: Huddleston and Pullum (2002 and 2005). On circumstantial (adverbial) clauses, degrees of event integration and dependency: Givón (2001b); Matthiessen and Thompson (1988). On epistemic parentheticals: Thompson (2002); Kärkkäinen (2003). On pragmatic (internal) conjunction: van Dijk (1979); Stenström (1998); Quirk et al. (1985), Smith and Jucker (2000). On deviance from the (prescriptive) rule that implicit subjects of non-finite clauses should match the explicit subject of the main clause (Martínez 2012).

## EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 7

### Combining clauses into sentences

#### Units 31 and 32

- 1 Analyse the clauses that make up the following news item. Which is its main clause? Identify each remaining clause and state its type and function: On the tiny island of Lampedusa in the Mediterranean, Pope Francis used his first official trip outside Rome to draw attention to the thousands who perish during the perilous crossing from North Africa to Europe, condemning the "globalisation of indifference" shown to the victims.
- 2 †In each of the following clause combinations, say which consist of clauses in a relationship of equivalence and which hold a relationship of non-equivalence:
  - (1) To advertise in the Homes and Gardens section, please contact one of our sales teams for further information.
  - (2) Clean your arteries – it could save your life.
  - (3) Heart disease is the UK's number one killer – and one of the main causes is clogged arteries.
  - (4) Scottish children receive the most pocket money in the UK, while those in East Anglia receive the least.
  - (5) The ginkgo tree once flourished around the world but survived the last Ice Age only in remote eastern China.
- 3 Combine the items in A with those in B, inserting *and* or *or* + a circumstantial element such as *there*, *so*, *in that way*, *consequently*, *as a result*, *otherwise* as links: The first is done for you.

#### A

- (1) I opened the front door
- (2) The new law came into force
- (3) We left the casserole too long
- (4) Don't forget to put a stamp  
on your letters
- (5) The milk has turned sour

#### B

- and there stood two policemen.  
the food was uneatable.  
they won't be delivered.  
we can't drink it.  
there are fewer road accidents.

#### Unit 33

- 1 †Taking the clause as antecedent, add (i) finite and (ii) non-finite, non-defining relative clauses to each of the following primary clauses, so as to form complex sentences:
  - (1) She blamed herself for the accident.
  - (2) Most party members were disheartened by the congress.
  - (3) A high-rise building collapsed in Ankara yesterday.
  - (4) Certain parts of the Pacific are notorious for typhoons.
  - (5) Several hostages were released by the plane hijackers today.

- 2** Match clauses from A and B, inserting one of the clarifying connectives *or rather, that is to say, in other words, for instance, in fact, indeed, actually*:

**A**

- 1 For ten days she ate nothing but yoghurt
- 2 The bar is open only to other members of the club
- 3 It's not clear how much she understands
- 4 He's no good at mending things
- 5 The week started badly
- 6 She looks marvellous in a sari

**B**

- 7 he won't try.
- 8 things only got worse
- 9 she had no solid food.
- 10 she could be an Indian film star.
- 11 non-members are excluded.
- 12 she doesn't answer questions.

**Unit 34**

- 1** Analyse the following news item in terms of dependency and meaning:

The fact is many consumers will have cut back on heating in order to save money in the face of spiralling prices of energy.

*(The Guardian)*

- 2** Classify the following examples as open, hypothetical or counterfactual conditions. For the open ones give the remote counterparts. For the remote ones give the other two counterparts:

- 1 If your handwriting is almost illegible, the invitation may go to the wrong address.
- 2 I'll pay him extra if he finishes the job before the weekend.
- 3 They would have the party in the garden, unless it rained.
- 4 It would have been nice if we had had time to see you.
- 5 If an emergency occurs during the flight, what will I do?
- 6 If I am in or near an exit row, can I open that door?

- 3** Rewrite the following sentences, starting with the word given.

- 1 If you suffer from severe back pain, a massage will help relieve it. (Were )
- 2 You must ring the local police station immediately if you happen to witness a kidnapping. (Should)
- 3 I would have been interested in following the course on statistics if only I had known about it. (Had)
- 4 It will be a tragedy if this lovely building is destroyed. (Were).
- 5 There's a good film on at the Odeon this week, if you feel like going to the cinema. (Should)
- 6 If the results of the vote are inconclusive, a further ballot will be called for (Were)

Match clauses from A and B, using the conjunctive prepositions *besides*, *as well as*, *except for*, *but for the fact that* and *without*, where possible.

**A**

- 1 Jill buys all her clothes in boutiques
- 2 The trip would have been most enjoyable
- 3 The singer has filed a lawsuit against her video company
- 4 It might have been a good idea to wait a little while
- 5 We sat there in silence

**B**

- 6 the mosquitos everywhere.
- 7 not knowing what to do next.
- 8 it was getting so late.
- 9 convinced that she will win.
- 10 worrying about the cost.

**Unit 35**

- 1 †Say which of the following uses of conjunctions are pragmatic (internal) rather than entirely semantic (external). Give an explanation if pragmatic:

- (1) *If* you don't mind my saying so, your hair looks much nicer short than long.
- (2) Did you see King Lear when it was on on the television? 'Cos I taped that as well.
- (3) I'll lend it to you *if* you lend me your video of Hamlet. [KDM]
- (4) Many birds lose the power of flight, *for* there are no longer predators to make it worthwhile. [AMS]
- (5) *Since* there is no means of changing the weather, there is no question of protest. [AN4]
- (6) I've only seen Shirley once *since* she and her husband went to live in New York.
- (7) When you gonna find your way up around my way? *But* you know I've been terribly busy lately! Yeah [KBO]

**Unit 36**

- 1 †Give one or more possible reported forms for each of the following statements and questions. Replace *say* and *ask* by verbs with connotative meanings:

- (1) 'I'm sorry to interrupt you while you are reading.' said Bill.
- (2) 'What exactly is your job?' Jean said to her daughter's boyfriend.
- (3) You realise the paparazzi will be chasing you?  
'Really?' I smiled at him. 'How scary!'
- (4) 'You want a burger?' the chef said to Mark.
- (5) 'Sit there. Don't move. This burger's going to be fantastic.'

**2** †Give a possible reported form for each of the following quoted directives:

- (1) 'Won't you have a drink?' Jenny said to the Headmaster.
- (2) 'Why don't you wear an overcoat?' Shirley asked her father.
- (3) 'How about looking for a different parking-place?' the gatekeeper said to the detective.
- (4) 'Don't be silly, Tim' his Mum said, 'You're lucky to have the opportunity.'

**3** Provide as many alternatives as you can to the verb 'went' in the following extract from *All American Girl*:

**Then the agent who was going through my pockets went, 'This one seems to be unarmed.'**  
**'Of course I'm unarmed,' I yelled'. I'm only in the tenth grade.'**

**Which is a totally lame thing to have said, because of course there are tenth graders who have guns. They just don't happen to go to Adams Prep School.**

**4** A variant of free indirect speech, is to retain the reporting clause, together with the features enumerated above. Here is an instance from *Mrs Dalloway*. Identify the type of shift in each case:

**And she opened her scissors, and said, *did<sup>1</sup> he<sup>2</sup> mind her<sup>3</sup> just finishing what she<sup>4</sup> was doing<sup>5</sup> to her dress, for they<sup>6</sup> had<sup>7</sup> a party that night?*<sup>8</sup>**



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# TALKING ABOUT EVENTS

## CHAPTER 8

### The Verbal Group

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# EXPRESSING OUR EXPERIENCE OF EVENTS

## UNIT 37

### SUMMARY

- 1 Verbal Groups (VG) encode our experience of events. The term 'event' is used here in representation of all types of process, including events, states and activities.
- 2 The VG consists of a lexical verb (v), either alone (*takes*) or preceded by one or more auxiliaries (*is taking/has been taken*). The first auxiliary, the operator, has a special status and is distinguished by certain syntactic features.
- 3 The operator is of the utmost importance in English as it carries the four 'NICE' functions of **N**egation, **I**nversion, **C**ode (substitution) and **E**mphasis. It is realised by various types of auxiliary: primary, modal and lexical auxiliaries, which help to build up the symbolic representation of the event and carry a wide range of modal and aspectual meanings.
- 4 Certain of the lexical auxiliaries (e.g. *be bound to*) have 'raised' Subjects.

### 37.1 SYNTACTIC ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE OF THE VERBAL GROUP

The Verbal Group is the grammatical unit by means of which we most typically express our perception of events. 'Event' will be used in this chapter to cover all types of process in the transitivity structure, whether events, activities, states or acts of consciousness. These are described from the point of view of their place in the semantics of the clause in Chapter 5.

A simple verbal group consists of one lexical verb (e.g. *take*) or primary verb (a form of *be*, *have*, *do*) which indicates tense (past or present), as in *takes*, *is*, *has*, *does*, *danced*, *flew*. More complex verbal groups consist of a main verb (v) preceded by one or more grammatical elements – the auxiliary verbs (x), as in *has been*, *has taken*, *is dancing*.

The lexical and grammatical elements are all integral parts of an analytical form. The first auxiliary has a special status and is usually called the Finite operator, 'operator' for short (o) (→ 3.1.1), for reasons which are explained in section

The constituent elements of the English verbal group can therefore be represented and exemplified as in the diagram.

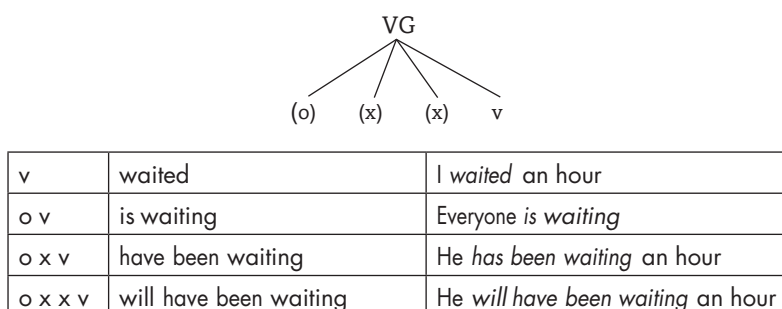


Figure 8.1 Constituent elements of the English verbal group.

### 37.2 REALISATIONS OF THE ELEMENTS: LEXICAL VERBS AND AUXILIARIES

The elements of the VG are realised by the following classes and forms of verbs:

- lexical verbs: *wait, come, rain, bring*, etc.
- primary verbs: **be**: *am, is, are, was, were, being, been*; **have**: *has, had, having*; **do**: *does, did*
- modal auxiliaries: *shall, should, will, would, can, could, may, might, must, ought to*
- semi-modals: *need, dare, used to* (modals in certain uses)
- lexical auxiliaries:
  - (1) be able to, be about to, be apt to, be bound to, be due to, be going to, be liable to, be likely to, be certain to, be sure to, be to, be unlikely to, be supposed to
  - (2) have to, have got to
  - (3) had better, would rather, would sooner

The primary and modal verbs are limited in number, as this list shows, and form closed sets. Lexical verbs, the **v** or main element, constitute an open set; new ones can be coined and added to the lexicon at any time.

The primary verbs carry grammatical meaning (tense, aspect, person, number), the modal auxiliaries express modal meanings (obligation, possibility, probability, necessity) (→ Unit 44) rather than lexical or grammatical meaning. On the other hand, the lexical element of the verbal group expresses both lexical meaning and grammatical meaning.

The primary verbs *be, have, do* can function both as auxiliary and as lexical elements of the VG (with the exception of *doing* and *done*, which function only as lexical elements). The syntactic function determines the type of meaning expressed, whether grammatical or lexical, as shown here.

functioning as auxiliary verb	functioning as lexical (main) verb
Elections <i>are</i> approaching. We <i>didn't</i> do anything about it. He <i>has</i> had nothing to eat..	Elections <i>are</i> imminent We <i>did</i> everything. He <i>had</i> nothing to eat.

Figure 8.2 Be, have and do.

In addition to its function as a main verb, *be* therefore has three auxiliary functions: as an aspect auxiliary in the progressive: *is taking*; as a passive auxiliary: *is taken* (→ 38.4); and as the basis of the lexical auxiliaries that take *be*.

### 37.3 TYPES OF LEXICAL AUXILIARY

**Lexical auxiliary** is the term used for a set of verbs of modal or aspectual meaning which form chain-like structures with the main verb of the VG. The majority are followed by a **V-to-infinitive** form, but a few take the infinitive without *to*. They can be divided into three types according to whether their first word is (1) *be*; (2) *have*; (3) a modal idiom.

As with other *to*-infinitive uses (→ 12.2), the lexical auxiliaries tend to point to a future event, though not invariably so. They express subjective estimations of different kinds, as indicated in the brackets. Some of these auxiliaries have undergone semantic change, so they are not what they seem at first sight. (→ 41.6 for more on future time.)

#### 37.3.1 *Be* + Lexical item + *to*-infinitive

	<i>Be</i> + lexical item + V-to-inf	Meanings
be going to BrE	AmE <i>gonna</i> We're <i>going to</i> need more staff here.	(prediction based on evidence)
	They're <i>gonna</i> have to be here.	
be due to	He's <i>due to</i> arrive at any moment.	(expectation of scheduled event)
be about to	The plane <i>is about to</i> take off	(imminence of event)
be to	As a young girl, she little knew she <i>was to</i> marry the heir to the throne.	(planned event or destiny)
be bound to	There's <i>bound to</i> be some cheese in the fridge.	(confident anticipation)
be certain to	She <i>is certain to</i> resign.	
be sure to	He's <i>sure to</i> be waiting outside.	
be likely to	They're <i>likely to</i> win by several goals.	(probability)
be apt to	He's <i>apt to</i> ask awkward questions.	(tendency or usualness)
be liable to	This machine <i>is liable to</i> break down.	

be supposed to	We're <i>not supposed to</i> smoke in here.	(duty, general belief)
be able to	I <i>am not able to</i> guarantee the results.	(ability, possibility)

Note that a few of the lexical words in this list can also function as adjectives: an *able* mechanic; an *apt* quotation; a *certain/sure* winner; the *likely* winner of the elections.

### 37.3.2 Have or Have got + to-infinitive

	<b>Have and have got + V-to-inf</b>	<b>meanings</b>
have to	I have to finish these letters.	(obligation)
	There has to be a solution.	(necessity)
have got to	I've got to go now. Oh, do you have to?	(obligation)
	There's got to be a solution.	(necessity)

Like *must*, these combinations have meanings of both obligation and necessity (→ 44.5). With these modal meanings, *have got to* is more common in spoken BrE, while *have to* is the preferred form in AmE (Do you have to go?) Both *gonna* ('going to') and *gotta* ('got to') are informal uses.

The Subject-Finite operator inversion characteristic of *be*, *have* and other auxiliaries in interrogative and negative clauses is explained in Unit 23, together with the requirement of a *do* operator by lexical verbs. As a reminder here, we exemplify *have to* and *have got to* in interrogative clauses, showing that while *have to* can function either as a primary auxiliary or as a lexical verb, *have got to* functions only as an auxiliary:

<b>Have to</b>	<b>Auxiliary</b>	<b>Lexical verb</b>
Interrogative	Have you to go?	Do you have to go? Don't you have to go?
Negative declarative		You don't have to go

Furthermore, *have got + to-infinitive* has no non-finite forms and does not combine with modals. None of the following starred structures are possible, therefore, all being used with *have to*:

<b>Incorrect</b>	<b>Correct</b>
* <i>To have got to</i> live there must be dreadful	<i>To have to</i> live there . . . dreadful
*I don't like <i>having got to</i> get up early.	<i>I don't like having to</i> get up early.
*We <i>have had got to</i> repaint the kitchen.	We <i>have had to</i> repaint the kitchen.
*You will <i>have got to</i> watch out for bugs there.	You <i>will have to</i> watch out for bugs.

### 37.3.3 Modal idioms: had better, would rather

	Modal idioms with had and would + V-inf	meanings
had better	You <i>had better</i> come back tomorrow.	(I advise you to . . .)
would rather	I <i>would rather</i> stay here with you.	(I would prefer to . . .)
would sooner	I <i>would sooner</i> pay in advance.	(I would prefer to . . .)

### 37.4 'RAISED' SUBJECTS

You may have noticed that in clauses such as *They are likely to win*, the NG at Subject does not appear to be the logical Subject of the Complement *likely to win*. In fact, the likelihood refers not to the subject *they*, but to the situation of winning. Syntactically, then, the nominal group (*they*) is the logical subject of a clause embedded at subject, as in (a) below (that *they* will win), which is then extraposed, as in (b). Finally the subject of the sub-ordinate clause is raised to become subject of the main clause, as in (c):

- (a) That *they* will win is likely.
- (b) It is likely that *they* will win.
- (c) *They* are likely to win.

This is known as **subject-to-subject raising** (→ 30.5.1). *Likely* is used a great deal in this construction, perhaps because its apparent synonym *probable* does not admit raising (\**He is probable to win*). Other lexical auxiliaries that are the result of raising are *be certain to*, *sure to* and *supposed to*.

**Object-to-subject raising** occurs when a NG Object of a clause embedded at subject (*them* in (a) below) is extraposed as in (b) and then is raised to subject of the main clause, as in (c):

- (a) To find *them* is hard.
- (b) It is hard to find *them*.
- (c) *They* are hard to find.

Raised subjects have the advantage of referring to persons or things by names, nouns or pronouns in a clause that is shorter and simpler than the corresponding *that*-clause or extraposed structures. They also provide a different Theme and Topic (→ 28.4).

### 37.5 SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF THE OPERATOR ELEMENT

Any of the primary verbs or the modal auxiliaries can stand in initial position and so function as operator in a VG.



The operator element has four major distinctive properties which are not shared by lexical verbs. They carry the ‘operations’ in what have been called the NICE constructions: **N**egation, **I**nversion, **C**ode and **E**mphasis. Compare:

operation	operator aux.	lexical vb
1 <b>Negation</b> : contraction with neg. particle	I <i>don't</i> eat meat	*I eatn't . . .
2 <b>Inversion</b> with S in interrogatives	<i>Will</i> you sign?	*Sign you?
3 <b>'Code'</b> , that is, substitute for the Predicator and predicate in a clause (→ 29.5)	I'll go, if Ed <i>will</i>	I want to go if you <i>do</i> (if you * <i>want</i> )
4 <b>Emphasis</b> (by tonic stress)	Yes, I <i>will</i> go	I <i>do</i> want to go

Four more features also distinguish the operator from a lexical verb:

operation	operator aux.	lexical vb
5 †Position of frequency of adverb: in BrE follows the auxiliary aux, operator aux but precedes lex.vb	I can <i>always</i> go	I <i>always</i> want to go *I want always to go
6 Postposition of quantifiers <i>all</i> and <i>both</i>	They <i>have all/ both</i> gone	*They went <i>all/ both</i> They <i>all/ both</i> went
7 Verbal element in a tag question	You <i>will</i> come, <i>won't</i> you?	. . . *comen't you?
8 Independence of subject	Ed will teach the Juniors The juniors will be taught by Ed	Ed expects to teach the Juniors The juniors expect to be taught by Ed

With verbs which have the active–passive contrast, operators usually show no change of meaning, whereas with some finite lexical verbs (e.g. *expect*) there is a change of meaning.

† While in AmE adverbs of frequency (*always, often, seldom, never*) also follow the above position, they tend to appear preferably before the auxiliary or auxiliaries:

AmE	You <i>always, often, seldom, never</i> can do it.
AmE	I <i>never</i> would have done it.
BrE, AmE	I would <i>never</i> have done it.

# BASIC STRUCTURES OF THE VERBAL GROUP

## UNIT 38

### SUMMARY

- 1 The experiential structure of the VG consists of Finite + Event + auxiliaries. The Finite expresses tense, person, number and modality (the latter when realised by a modal auxiliary). These relate the verbal process to the 'speaker-now' and establish the Verbal Group in relation to the speech exchange. The Event expresses lexical meaning, which provides the representational content. Finite and Event are fused in e.g. *runs*, *asked* and *was*, *has* (as primary auxiliaries).
- 2 Verbal Groups can be marked for tense or modality but not both.
- 3 Verbal Group structures can be **simple**, consisting of one element only (*runs*, *asked*), or **extended**, consisting of one or more auxiliaries + a main verb (*may have been running*).
- 4 Up to four auxiliaries can occur, or five if a lexical auxiliary is included.
- 5 The meanings expressed by the auxiliaries are: **modal**, **perfect**, **progressive**, **passive**, in this order. The structures which realise these meanings are telescoped in the G.
- 6 The longer combinations are more frequent in spoken than in written English.
- 7 Non-finite VGs (*having been seen*) can express perfect, progressive and passive meanings, but not tense or modality.
- 8 Verbal Groups are **discontinuous** in English when the sequence of elements is interrupted by other clause elements or by intensifiers.

### 38.1 EXPERIENTIAL STRUCTURE OF THE VERBAL GROUP

In finite clauses the experiential structure of the Verbal Group is Finite + Event. The Finite carries tense, number and, to a limited extent, person. A modal auxiliary provides an alternative to a tensed auxiliary, for instance *is going/may go*. A tensed form and a modal auxiliary do not occur together: \**is may go*. In one-word VGs, such as *takes*, *has*

(she *has* long hair), the finiteness is realised on the lexical verb. In longer sequences the Finite is realised by an operator and may be followed by one or more auxiliaries: It *has been* snowing all day.

## 38.2 SIMPLE STRUCTURES OF THE VERBAL GROUP

A simple Verbal Group structure consists of a single element, usually the lexical element, realised by a finite or non-finite form of a lexical verb, for example *drive*:

### Finite forms

drive (pres. indic.)	They <i>drive</i> on the left in the UK.
drives (pres. indic.)	He <i>drives</i> to work every day.
drove (past indic.)	He <i>drove</i> out of the garage.

### Non-finite forms

(to) drive (inf.)	It's important to <i>drive</i> with care.
bare infinitive	They won't let you <i>drive</i> without a licence.
driving (pres. part.)	<i>Driving</i> to work this morning, I heard the 9 o'clock news.
driven (past part.)	<i>Driven</i> away by night, the car was then abandoned.

## 38.3 EXTENDED STRUCTURES OF THE VERBAL GROUP

The features of grammatical meaning which can be expressed in an extended VG comprise the following pairs, of which *tense*, *finiteness*, *polarity* and *contrastiveness* are obligatory:

tense	past, present
finiteness	non-finite, finite
anteriority	perfect, non-perfect
aspect	progressive, non-progressive
modality	modal, non-modal
polarity	negative, positive
emphasis	contrastive, non-contrastive

These major features of grammatical meaning represent sets of options between which speakers choose every time they combine elements to form a Verbal Group.

The following extract from a story by Raymond Carver in *Cathedral* uses the options of tense (*put*, *went*, *opened*, *came*, *was*) all past; perfect + past (*had melted*, *had gotten*), modality + past + negative (*couldn't believe*); finiteness: all finite except *to get* and the participles *melted*, *run*, *gotten*, *pooled* (*boxed-in* is adjectival); all positive polarity except for *couldn't*; all non-contrastive:

**She put her purse on the table and went over to the fridge to get herself some yogurt. But when she opened the door, warm, boxed-in air came out at her. She couldn't believe the**

mess inside. The ice-cream from the freezer had melted and run down into the leftover fish sticks and cole slaw. The ice cream had gotten into the bowl of Spanish rice and pooled on the bottom of the fridge. Ice cream was everywhere.

An ‘extended’ Verbal Group structure consists of a lexical verb at the head, preceded by up to four auxiliaries – five if we include the lexical auxiliaries. The order in which the auxiliaries occur is fixed and depends upon the grammatical meanings they convey.

The auxiliaries serve to build up the meanings expressed by the **modal**, **perfect**, **progressive** and **passive** combinations, operating not in isolation but each telescoping with the next, as is explained shortly. In the following examples, we let *has* and *is* stand for any form of **have** and **be**, *must* for any of the modal auxiliaries and *be about to* for the set of lexical auxiliaries.

### 38.4 STRUCTURES WITH ONE GRAMMATICAL AUXILIARY: O V

In the finite VG with only one auxiliary, this auxiliary is necessarily the operator and, according to its type, selects a corresponding form of the lexical verb. The o v structure can express the following features of grammatical meaning, in addition to the obligatory choices of tense, finiteness, polarity and contrastiveness:

		features	realisations	example
A	1	modal	modal aux.+ V-inf	must drive
B	2	perfect	have + V-en	has driven
C	3	progressive	be + V-ing	is driving
D	4	passive	be + V-en	is driven

And with a lexical auxiliary:

- 5 be + about to + V-inf is about to drive

The four basic combinations also combine with each other to make up more complex Verbal Groups, all of which function as one VG at Finite + Predicator in clause structure. The features **modal**, **perfect**, **progressive**, **passive** occur in ordered combinations, like the letters of the alphabet ABCD. Thus, for instance, B can follow A, or D can follow C, but not vice versa. A certain feature may be omitted, as in ACD, BD. Lexical auxiliaries can occur with any combination, as illustrated in the next section.

### 38.5 STRUCTURES WITH TWO GRAMMATICAL AUXILIARIES: O X V

6	modal + perfect	must have driven
7	modal + progressive	must be driving
8	modal + passive	must be driven
9	perfect + progressive	has been driving
10	perfect + passive	has been driven

In combination with a lexical auxiliary:

11	modal + lexical-aux	must be about to drive
12	perfect + lexical-aux	has been about to drive
13	lexical-aux + progressive	is about to be driving
14	lexical-aux + passive	is about to be driven

Structures with two auxiliaries occur widely in both spoken and written English. The following extract is adapted from a report about problems facing language-school students when they come to the UK to study English:

It *must be realised*<sup>1</sup> that many students *will be going*<sup>2</sup> abroad for the first time and *may well be likely to feel*<sup>3</sup> anxious about the kind of reception they *will be given*,<sup>4</sup> about the kind of work they *are about to have to do*<sup>5</sup> or about the host family to which they *happen to have been assigned*.<sup>6</sup> Many of these worries *can easily be allayed*<sup>7</sup> by giving them as much information as possible beforehand. In the past, some students *have been apt to complain*<sup>8</sup> that they *have had to face*<sup>9</sup> certain difficulties in the first weeks owing to lack of sufficient information.

<sup>1</sup>modal + passive; <sup>2</sup>modal + progressive; <sup>3</sup>modal + lexical-aux; <sup>4</sup>modal + passive; <sup>5</sup>lexical-aux + lexical-aux; <sup>6</sup>catenative (*happen to*) + perfect + passive; <sup>7</sup>modal + passive; <sup>8</sup>perfect + lexical-aux; <sup>9</sup>perfect + lexical-aux

### 38.6 STRUCTURES WITH THREE GRAMMATICAL AUXILIARIES: O X X V

15	modal + perfect + progressive	must have been driving
16	modal + perfect + passive	must have been driven
17	modal + progressive + passive	must be being driven
18	perfect + progressive + passive	has been being driven

Verbal groups of three grammatical auxiliaries are more common in speech than in writing. With a modal or a lexical auxiliary, complex forms easily occur in spoken English, as in the following examples:

... and (they) think the killer *could be being protected* locally [KIE]  
 The matter *could and should have been dealt with* as set out above [FD6]

Groups with the two forms *been being* are uncommon, but they can occur if they are needed.

With a lexical auxiliary added there are now four auxiliaries:

- |           |                                  |                               |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>19</b> | modal + perfect + lexical-aux    | must have been about to drive |
| <b>20</b> | modal + lex.-aux + progressive   | must be about to be driving   |
| <b>21</b> | modal + lex.-aux + passive       | must be about to be driven    |
| <b>22</b> | perfect + lex.-aux + progressive | has been about to be driving  |
| <b>23</b> | perfect + lex.-aux + passive     | has been about to be driven   |
| <b>24</b> | progressive + lex.-aux + passive | is about to be being driven   |

Then his application *would have to have been made* to the Commission by March. [FBK]

We will go no further with the structure of the finite extended VG, as no examples of five auxiliaries have been found in a large corpus. In principle, however, there is no grammatical constraint on their composition and the telescoped order of elements allows for their use if the context requires them.

### 38.7 TELESCOPED ORDER OF ELEMENTS OF THE VERBAL GROUP

It is important to note that each semantic-syntactic feature of a complex VG (tense and modality, perfect, progressive and passive) is expressed, not by one element only, but by each element telescoping into the following one:

modality:	must + V-inf				
perfect:		have + V-en			
progressive:			been + V-ing		
passive:				being + V-en	
main verb:					driven
= Verbal Group:	must	have	been	being	driven

(four grammatical auxiliaries)

With respect to the other auxiliaries, lexical auxiliaries have a relatively free ordering, the basic requirement being that they are followed by an infinitive. This blocks such combinations as *\*is likely to can drive* and *\*is bound to must drive*. However the meaning of *must* can be expressed by the lexical auxiliary *have + to-infinitive*, and of *can* by *be able to*, giving the acceptable combinations *is likely to be able to drive* and *is bound to have to drive*, as illustrated in the following spoken example:

If pain and other symptoms *were being* so badly *managed* these patients *should have been referred* promptly to other health care professionals *who might have been able to provide* a better quality of analgesia. [FT2]

### 38.8 EXTENDED NON-FINITE STRUCTURES

Non-finite VGs do not possess the full set of sequences that we find in finite groups because they do not express the grammatical meanings of tense, mood or modality.

The perfect, progressive and passive meanings can, however, be expressed in the non-finite VG, giving the following possible combinations (the bracketed form is not common):

Infinitive structures	Participle structures
25 to have driven	having driven
26 to have been driving	having been driving
27 to have been driven	having been driven
28 to be driving	(being driving)
29 to be driven	being driven

Lexical auxiliaries can of course also be incorporated into non-finite structures, making for even longer combinations, which can be produced spontaneously when they are needed, as in the example:

***Having been about to be operated on*** *more than once*, he was sent home without having had the operation.

With an appropriate lexical verb and an appropriate context, such as someone who is teaching needing extended time to complete an essay on a course she is following, the participial sequence of *being* + *V-ing* is acceptable, as in the following well-known example from Michael Halliday:

You might get an extension on the grounds of *being teaching*.

### 38.9 RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF COMPLEX VERBAL GROUPS

Extended VG structures have developed and become acceptable over time, and this process has not yet been completed. Even short progressive + passive combinations such as *are being killed* were avoided by writers before the second half of the nineteenth century. (Macaulay is said to have written 'Good soldiers are killing. . .' because he was reluctant to write 'are being killed'.) There is still a certain reluctance to use the longer forms such as *might have been being killed*. The language's resources, nevertheless, can generate them so that they are at the user's disposal when they are needed. The reason that longer VGs occur more frequently in spoken English than in written lies partly in the on-line nature of spontaneous speech and the kind of meanings conveyed by the verbal group. Such meanings are related not simply to an objective point of

time at which an event occurred, but also more subjectively and spontaneously, to evaluations, speculations and predictions made by the speaker as to what may happen in the future or to what could, should or might have happened in the past.

### 38.10 DISCONTINUOUS VERBAL GROUPS

The sequence of elements in VGs is often interrupted by other clause elements, such as subject, adjunct and intensifiers as in *has not yet been completed* and *were being so badly managed*.. Such interruptions are seen in the following exchange, in which A asks B about her father, who is a wine dealer:

A. *Did he import*<sup>1</sup> *from any particular place in France, or all over?*

B. Well, he *used to sort of be*<sup>2</sup> *forever going*<sup>3</sup> *to Bordeaux, so I assumed from that that that was his main connection.*

(adapted from J. Svartvik and R. Quirk, *A Corpus of English Conversation*)

<sup>1</sup>interrupted by Subject; <sup>2</sup>interrupted by intensifier; <sup>3</sup>interrupted by Adjunct

As well as in interrogative structures, separation of the VG by the subject is produced in certain types of thematisation (Only then *did he realise* the harm he had done; *Had we known* your address, we would have got in touch with you). This is explained in 28.10.

Discontinuity of the VG is also produced by negative or semi-negative items (*I would never have believed* that of him; *You can hardly expect* them to wait all day).



# ORGANISING OUR EXPERIENCE OF EVENTS

## UNIT 39

### SUMMARY

- 1 Verbal groups can be linked by coordination to express sequences of related events.
- 2 VGs in a dependency relationship are described by the semantic notion of catenation. They form chain-like sequences which symbolise a complex event (*appear to understand*).
- 3 The first VG is a catenative (*appear, decline, fail, get, happen, tend, seem*) and can express such meanings as manner, chance and usuality. The second verb is a *to*-infinitive.
- 4 These catenatives are mid-way between lexical verbs and auxiliaries. They are not able to function as operators, and so require the *do*-operator.
- 5 These catenatives are not transitive and so do not occur in the passive. Voice can be expressed in the second verb: *He seems to be widely known in the media*.

We now begin to examine some of the means used in English to express the internal nature or character of the event for which the verb is a linguistic symbol.

### 39.1 CONJOINING AND CHAINING

#### 39.1.1 Conjoining

Verbal groups can be joined, either by coordination or by dependency to express events which occur in sequence, or are 'catenated', respectively.

When linked by **coordination**, VGs are **conjoined**. They express two events with the same subject which occur in sequence and are semantically related (*washed and dressed*). Just as with the conjoining of other types of grammatical unit, the VGs may be

linked in three ways: by the linking words *and*, *or* and *but*; without any linking item; or by a combination of both when more than two events are related (→ Unit 32):

She washed and dressed the child.

Our last typist just left, disappeared without saying a word.

He was born, lived and died in Bristol.

### 39.1.2 Catenative verbs – appear to, happen to, seem to, tend to

In section 12.1 we considered verbs which can set up a chain of non-finite complements as catenatives, and the non-finite clauses themselves as catenative complements. Here we look at a largely different set of verbal groups which include the following: *appear to*, *come to*, *fail to*, *get to*, *happen to*, *manage to*, *seem to* and *tend to*.

There are certain features which together distinguish them from other verbs:

- 1 Similarity to modals: These verbs express meanings that are similar to certain modal or aspectual meanings of chance and usuality, achievement or completion. They have in common with the lexical auxiliaries the ability to form chained sequences of non finites as in *Those pears don't seem to be getting eaten*.
- 2 Operators *do* and *have*: Syntactically, however, they behave like lexical verbs in that they use forms of *do* and *have* as operators (*Did he come to* realise the problems he would have to face? *Have you ever happened to* see a volcano in eruption?)
- 3 A feature of these verbs is that they can be 'dispensed with' or removed without substantially affecting the meaning:

The other day, I *happened to come across* some old photos (or: I came across some old photos.)

Children *tend to dress and talk* like TV characters they admire. (B. Bettelheim cited in the OED.) (or: Children dress and talk like TV characters they admire.)

The sky *seemed to be getting* darker. (or: The sky was getting darker.)

With those verbs that imply not fulfilling something that is usually or previously done, such as *fail to*, *decline to*, *neglect to*, *cease to*, the catenative can be replaced by a negative word or phrase; sometimes by a lexical item:

The alarm *failed to go off*. (The alarm *didn't go off*.)

We *neglected to lock up* the house last night. (We *didn't lock up* / We forgot to lock up . . .)

The Prime Minister *declined to give* an explanation. (*didn't give* / *refused to give* . . .)

I have *ceased to mind* the harsh climate. (I *no longer mind* the harsh climate.)

Non-catenatives cannot be dispensed with in this way without changing the meaning. For instance, *wish to* in they wished to make lots of money is not equivalent to they made lots of money.

- 4 Catenative verbs are not related to transitive structures even when there exists a corresponding transitive use, as is the case with neglect (the garden has been neglected) and decline (her invitation was politely declined). Consequently, catenative verbs are not used with the passive. Passive voice can occur with the verb following the catenative, as in:

No-one *appeared to realise* the implications of the decision (active).

The implications of the decision *appeared to be realised* by no-one (passive).

### 39.1.3 Further catenative verbs according to meaning

**Result:** come to; get to; prove to; turn out to

He *came to be* highly regarded by all his colleagues.

John Le Carré *proved to be* a fine story-teller at the Hay Festival.

They *got to know* each other well.

The stranger *turned out to be* a neighbour – after all.

**Manner or attitude:** The manner in which a person performs an action and an attitude of mind towards performing it are expressed by verbs such as **decline** to happen to; hasten to; hesitate to; regret to; venture to

I *happen to* like her a lot, so shut up = showing annoyance at something said.

I *regret to* inform you = inform with regret.

I *hesitate to* ask you this favour = ask reluctantly.

They *hastened to* reassure her = reassure immediately.

No-one *ventured to* contradict him = dare to.

May I *venture to suggest* a different direction? = suggest politely (formal).

### Chance and tendency chance to; happen to; tend to

I *chanced to overhear* part of their conversation = heard by chance.

She *happened to notice* the number-plate = noticed by chance.

He *tends to be* nervous, doesn't he? = often is

One day, as you are washing<sup>1</sup> your hands, you *happen to* glance<sup>2</sup> into the mirror over the basin and a sudden doubt *will flash*<sup>3</sup> across your mind: 'Is<sup>4</sup> that really me?' 'What am I doing<sup>5</sup> here?' 'Who am<sup>6</sup> I?' Each one of us *is* so completely *cut off*<sup>7</sup> from everyone else. How *do you know*<sup>8</sup> you are reading<sup>9</sup> a book? The whole thing *may be*<sup>10</sup> an illusion. How *do you know*<sup>11</sup> that red *is*<sup>12</sup> red? The colour *could appear*<sup>13</sup> blue in everyone else's eyes. A similar doubt, differently expressed, *is*<sup>14</sup> inherent in the well-known question: 'A tree that *has fallen*<sup>15</sup> in the forest, far from the nearest man – when it *fell*,<sup>16</sup> *did it make*<sup>17</sup> any noise?'

(Magnus Pyke, *The Boundaries of Science*)

Be as main verb: <sup>4</sup>, <sup>6</sup>, <sup>12</sup>, <sup>14</sup>. Be as aux. progressive: <sup>1</sup>, <sup>5</sup>, <sup>9</sup>. Be as aux. passive: <sup>7</sup>. Have as aux. perfect: <sup>15</sup>. Do as aux. present: <sup>8</sup>, <sup>11</sup>. Do as aux. past: <sup>17</sup>. Modal aux: <sup>3</sup>, <sup>10</sup>, <sup>13</sup>. VG with catenative *happen to*: <sup>2</sup>.

# THE SEMANTICS OF PHRASAL VERBS

## UNIT 40

### SUMMARY

- 1 **Phrasal verbs** consist of a lexical verb + an adverb-like particle (*She walked out*). The syntax of these verbs, as of other multi-word combinations, is described in Chapter 2.
- 2 The function of many of the particles is to modify the nature of the activity expressed by the verb. The result is an extended meaning which is often quite different from the meaning(s) of the verb when it functions alone.
- 3 The more transparent combinations combine the meaning of the verb and the particle, and these allow substitution (*go out/run out/hurry out: go away/run away/hurry away*).
- 4 In a Motion Event analysis the lexical verb in such combinations expresses Motion, while the particle expresses the Path taken by the moving Figure with respect to the Ground.
- 5 The notions of Manner and also Cause are typically incorporated, together with Motion, in English verbs.
- 6 Phrasal verb particles can also draw attention to the beginning or end of an activity, to its continuation, slow completion, increased or decreased intensity and many other meanings.

### 40.1 PHRASAL VERBS

No student of English can fail to notice that phrasal verbs are one of the most distinctive features of present-day informal English, both in their abundance and in their productivity. New combinations are constantly being coined. A phrasal verb is a combination of a lexical verb and an adverb-like particle such as *run in, fly away, get off, walk back, drive past, come over*. The syntactic behaviour of phrasal verbs is compared with that of prepositional verbs in 6.4.2, Chapter 2.

In this section we turn our attention to the combinations of meanings provided by the lexical verb together with its particle. The aim is to show how the concept of Motion Event offers a cognitive explanation for these combinations in English that should help to dispel the opaqueness often ascribed to phrasal verbs. (Only a small part can be presented here of what is a far-reaching model, which provides a typology of motion events across languages.)

The function of many of the particles is to modify the nature of the activity expressed by the verb. The result is an extended meaning which is often different from the meaning(s) of the verb when it functions alone.

### 40.1.1 Semantic cohesiveness and idiomaticity

Phrasal verbs are semantically highly cohesive. The verb and particle function as a whole, and the more idiomatic combinations frequently have a unique, idiomatic meaning which is not merely the sum of the two parts.

Other verb + particle combinations, however, present varying degrees of cohesiveness and little or no idiomaticity. For practical purposes, the following three degrees will be recognised: **non-idiomatic**, **semi-idiomatic** and **fully idiomatic**. Each type will be dealt with separately.

## 40.2 NON-IDIOMATIC PHRASAL VERBS: FREE COMBINATIONS

The lexical verb and the adverbial particle each keep their own meaning, the sum of the meanings being one of **movement + direction**. The particle encodes the direction of the movement, while the lexical verb encodes the movement, as in:

The children *went down* to the beach.

### 40.2.1 The Motion Event: Figure, Ground, Path and Manner

It is here that the concept of Motion Event is revealing. The components in the Motion Event are Figure, Ground, Motion, and optionally, Path and Manner. **Figure** is the salient moving or stationary object in a motion event (we centre here on moving objects). In our previous example *the children* functions as Figure, while *the beach* serves as a point of reference or **Ground** with respect to which the Figure's Path is conceptualised. **Path** refers to the one or more paths occupied by the Figure. In the example Path is fully expressed by the adverb-like particle *down* plus the preposition *to*. The lexical verb *went* expresses **Motion**.

Figure	Motion	Path	Ground
The children	went	down to	the beach.
	ran		
	walked		

In English the notion of Manner is easily incorporated together with Motion in the lexical verb, giving combinations such as *ran down* and *walked down*, which encode the

different ways in which the movement is carried out. *Talk +down* or *+ through* are now being used to mean ‘effect an action, giving instructions by radio or internet’, as in the following true instance of a passenger taking over and landing the plane after the pilot suffered a heart attack:

The passenger flew over the airport a couple of times and was then *talked down* by two flight instructors. (*The Guardian*)

In this way, the manner of movement is integrated into the verbal group without the need to add an adverbial phrase or clause of manner.

Both Path and Manner are important components of phrasal verbs. In many clauses which express motion in English, the particle expressing Path can stand alone without the preposition, and also without the rest of the Ground, as in *The children went down/ walked down*. When the information in the Ground can be inferred from the context, it is conventionally omitted, as is the bracketed part in **1** and **2**. In **3** the whole of the Ground is retained (*back on the shelf*):

- 1** The bus stopped and we *got on/ got off* (it, the bus).
- 2** We *turned off* (the main road) down a side-road.
- 3** *Put* all the books *back* on the shelf.

Non-literal uses of Path combinations may not admit this reduction of the Path component. Compare the literal use of *into* as in *go into* the house with the non-literal use as in *go into* (examine) the matter: *They went into the house/ They went in. They went into the matter/ \*They went in*.

While many adverb-particles have the same form as prepositions (*get on/off the bus – get on/ off*), the two categories are distinguished by certain features:

- A preposition is unstressed or lightly stressed; a particle receives heavy stress, even when they have the same form: compare *come to class* vs *come TO* (= recover consciousness).
- A preposition is followed by a nominal element (noun, pronoun, *-ing* clause), a particle does not need to be followed by anything cf. *climb up the cliff* vs *climb up*.
- The category of particle includes words that don't function as simple prepositions: *apart*, *together*. Conversely, *from* and *at* are always prepositions, never particles; consequently, *apart from* and *together with* are complex prepositions (→ Chapter 12).

English admits multiple expressions of Path, which include both particles and a preposition, as in:

Paul ran back down into the garage.

In this very ordinary English sentence, a great deal of information has been packed in: that the manner of motion was by running (*ran*); that Paul was returning to the place where he had been before (*back*); that his starting-point was higher than the garage, so that he had to descend (*down*), and that he went inside the garage, which was an

enclosed place (*into*). Note that, in a semantic roles analysis, the preposition (*in*)*to* is a marker of Goal, the final location after the movement (→ 59.2).

A further (optional) component of the Motion Event is Cause. This is incorporated into English verb roots such as *blow* and *knock*, while the particle encodes Path as usual:

The paper <i>blew</i> off the table.	=	The Figure (the paper) moves from the Ground (the table) (due to the air blowing on it)
I <i>blew</i> the crumbs <i>off</i> the table.	=	The Figure (the crumbs) moves from the Ground (the table) (due to my blowing on it)
He <i>knocked</i> the lamp <i>over</i> .	=	The Figure (the lamp) moves from a vertical position (on an unspecified Ground) to a horizontal one (due to his giving it a blow with his hand)

The causer is not necessarily expressed, and when it is, the cause may be deliberate or accidental.

#### 40.2.2 Translating Motion, Manner and Path combinations

It is characteristic of everyday colloquial English, and of a number of other languages, to express Path by particles (+ preposition) and to combine Manner with Motion in the verb.

This is not so in the Romance languages, however. Spanish and French, for instance, have a different pattern. Let us take the sentence *Paul ran back up into the attic*. Spanish can combine Motion in the lexical verb with just one of the above components, either Manner alone (*corrió* = ran), or just one of the Path notions (*subir* = go up; *entrar* = go in, *volver* = go back, followed by a participle expressing Manner). The literal equivalents of these are not idiomatic English and should be avoided:

Pablo <i>corrió</i> al ático.	(‘Paul ran to the attic’)
Pablo <i>volvió</i> al ático <i>corriendo</i> .	(‘Paul went back to the attic running’)
Pablo <i>subió</i> al ático <i>corriendo</i> .	(‘Paul went up to the attic running’)
Pablo <i>entró</i> en el ático <i>corriendo</i> .	(‘Paul went into the attic running’)

To attempt to put in more would be awkward and stylistically unacceptable; even these versions are unnatural. For this reason, translators working from English to Spanish are obliged to under-translate, usually omitting Path or Manner meanings. Conversely, in translations from Spanish into English over-translation is common through the addition of Path or Manner meanings. In both cases the aim is to provide a natural text in the target language.

English phrasal and prepositional verbs often require to be translated into other languages by transposing the meanings of the verb and particle in the target language. For example, *row across the lake* can be translated into Spanish as *cruzar el lago remando* [literally *cross the lake rowing*]. The English particle *across* is translated as the main verb, *cruzar*, while the verb *row* is translated as a participle, *remando*. This process has been

called **cross transposition**. In this case the transposition was complete, since both verb and adverb were translated. In other cases, either the verb or the particle is better not expressed, being inferred, as in: *A bird flew in: Entró un pájaro*. The transposition is then ‘incomplete’ since the notion of flying has been omitted as not salient.

### 40.2.3 Substituting Manner and Path elements

The lexical verbs in non-idiomatic combinations are among the most frequently used English verbs, denoting basic movement, either with the whole body (*go, carry, come, walk, etc.*) or, more specifically, with part of the body (*kick, hand, head, elbow, etc.*), whereas others have very general or directional meanings (*get, put, bring, take*).

They combine with a wide variety of adverb-particles. Since they allow substitution, we can start from each lexical verb such as those below and make combinations with various particles. Obviously, other lexical verbs and other particles can be used. Not every lexical verb can combine with every particle. Here is a small selection:

take	up	go	up	carry	up	Take it up
	down		down		down	Take it down
	in		in		in	Take it in
	out		out		out	Take it out
	off		off		off	Take it off
	back		back		back	Take it back
	away		away		away	Take it away

Figure 8.3 Verbs and particles (phrasal verbs)

Alternatively, you can replace the basic lexical verb by a more specific verb of movement, while retaining the same adverbial particle. Instead of the basic *go out*, for instance, we can specify the manner of movement more exactly: *walk out, run out, hurry out, rush out*. With the notion of Cause added (= make come out), we have *bring out, print out, squeeze out* (*You squeeze the toothpaste out like this*). Such combinations have frequently developed a non-literal meaning, as in the following business news item:

More supermarkets opening in-store chemists could *squeeze out* High Street pharmacies.

## 40.3 BASIC MEANINGS OF A PARTICLE: BACK

A great deal of the opaqueness that learners find in phrasal verbs can be dispelled by acquiring a grasp of the basic meaning of each adverb-particle, together with some of the derived meanings. Take *back*, for instance. *Back* has two basic Path meanings.

First, *back* can represent **a circular path in which the Figure ends up where it started**. This is the one expressed by *I'll come back tomorrow*, *Put the books back on the shelves*. The person or thing comes to be in the place or position where they were before, so that *I'll be back at 4.30* means ‘I’ll be again in this place where I am now’.

Close to the basic meaning is *give back* and *pay back* as in *I'll give/ pay you back the money tomorrow* (that is, I’ll return the money to you tomorrow). By a short extension,



we have the meaning of reciprocity 'in return, in reply' as in *I'll ring you back this evening*. A metaphorical extension of *pay back* occurs as a threat in *I'll pay you back for this!*

Second, *back* can have the meaning '**in the opposite direction to the one a person is facing**' as in:

*stand back* (intrans.): *Stand back* from the edge of the platform!

*keep back* (trans.): The police kept the crowd *back* as the royal car drew near.

This meaning is given a figurative extension in *His illness has kept him back all this term*. With this second meaning, the end-point is not the same as the initial point.

#### 40.4 SEMI-IDIOMATIC PHRASAL VERBS

In semi-idiomatic combinations the lexical verb, generally speaking, keeps its literal or metaphorical meaning, while the particle is used as an **aspectual marker** of various kinds. By this we refer here to the way a particle with a verb in English can express the completion, beginning-point, end-point or high intensity of an event. Continuation, a kind of non-completion, can also be expressed. These notions are explained and discussed in Chapter 9 under the concepts of perfectivity and imperfectivity, respectively.

Aspect is seen here as the pattern of distribution through time of an action or state, and relates to such questions as its completion, beginning-point, end-point or high intensity, all kinds of perfectivity. Non-completion, which is a type of imperfectivity, can alternatively be expressed.

The following connotations of particles have been suggested:

- 1 beginning of an activity: *doze off*, *switch on*, *start out*

He sat in an armchair in front of the television and soon *dozed off*.

- 2 momentary character of an activity: *cry out*, *sit down*, *wake up*, *stand up*

Everyone *cried out* in fear when the boat capsized.

- 3 the bringing of an activity to an end or getting to a certain limit: *eat up*, *catch up*, *drink up*, *fill up*, *heat up*, *mix up*, *use up*, *sweep up*; *count out*, *hear out*, *knock out*, *sort out*, *throw out*, *wear out*; *break off*, *call off*, *cut off*, *sell off*, *switch off*

*Heat up* the milk but don't let it boil over.

He hit the burglar so hard that he *knocked* him out.

The two countries have *broken off* diplomatic relations.

- 4 the slow completion of an activity: *melt down*, *wind down*, *die away*, *fade away*, *melt away*, *pine away*, *waste away*; *chill out*, *peter out*

The sound of thunder gradually *died away/faded away*.

We are all stressed out. Let's go and have a drink to *wind down/chill out*.

- 5** the completion of an activity from beginning to end: *read through, rush through, think through*  
I don't think they have really *thought* the problem *through*.
- 6** reach a different, non-integral or denatured state: *break up, burn up, tear up*  
Their marriage *broke up*.  
She *tore up* the letter and threw the bits of paper into the fire.
- 7** the continuation or resumption of an activity: *carry on, go on, keep on, work on, stay on, walk on*  
George *carried on* the family business.  
The orchestra *went on/kept on* playing as the Titanic sank.  
We stopped for a ten-minute break and then *worked on* until 7 o'clock.
- 8** the continuation of an activity with dedication or abandon: *work away, chat away*  
They'll sit *gossiping away/chatting away* happily for hours.
- 9** end of motion: *settle down*  
Isn't it time he got a job and *settled down*?
- 10** distribution: *give out, share out*  
What are those leaflets that are being *given out*?
- 11** decreased intensity: *slow down, die down*  
*Slow down* before you reach the crossing. The clamour finally *died down*.
- 12** mass character of an activity in progressive sequence: *die off, kill off*  
All the rabbits have *died off* in this area.  
When winter arrives the cold *kills off* all the flies.
- 13** reciprocity of an activity: *hit back*  
Tom hit Bill and he *hit him back*.

In phrasal verbs the notion of completion or bringing to an end is most clear in those cases in which there is a contrast with a single verb, as *in use* vs *use up*, *eat* vs *eat up*, *drink* vs *drink up*, *knock* vs *knock out* and so on. Compare *I've used this detergent* (i.e. some of this detergent) with *I've used up this detergent* (= there is none left); *He knocked the burglar down the stairs* with *He knocked him out* (= left him unconscious).

#### 40.5 FULLY IDIOMATIC PHRASAL VERBS

Fully idiomatic combinations are those in which the meaning of the whole is not easily deduced from the parts, although it may well be deduced from the context:

The conversation *petered out* after about ten minutes. (gradually came to an end)  
 Someone *tipped off* the police that a robbery was being planned. (warn, give secret information)

The government has decided to *crack down* on antisocial behaviour. (impose sanctions)

The nonsense song *caught on* and was soon being heard everywhere. (become popular)

Please stop *butting in*. We are trying to balance the accounts. (interrupt)

The illustrations given in these sections show that it is by no means easy to establish boundaries between what is idiomatic and what is not. Many verbs, both one-word and multi-word, have a number of related meanings according to their collocation with different nouns and depending on the contexts in which they are used. Particularly characteristic of phrasal verbs are their metaphorical extensions of meaning, from concrete to abstract or abstract to concrete; and from one context to another less typical one. A simple phrasal verb such as *put up* offers the following examples, among others:

The boys have *put up* the tent. (erect)

They're *putting up* a new block of flats. (build) They've *put* the bus fares *up*. (raise)

I can *put* two of you *up* for a couple of nights. (provide a bed for)

The others will have to *put up* at a hotel. (lodge)

The project has been approved, but someone will have to *put up* the necessary funds. (provide)

Our neighbours have *put* their house *up* for sale. (announce, offer)

An illustration of the occurrence of complex and catenative VGs (together with lexical auxiliaries and phrasal verbs) in spoken English is provided by the following short extract from a recorded conversation:

- Rachel: We *got locked out*<sup>1</sup> of the flat yesterday. Harry: How did you *get back*<sup>2</sup> in?  
 Rachel: We *had to borrow*<sup>3</sup> a long ladder and *climb up*<sup>4</sup> to the first floor balcony.  
 Harry: I thought that with the kind of security lock you've got, you're *not supposed to be able to lock yourself out*.<sup>5</sup>  
 Rachel: That's true. But if you *happen to bang*<sup>6</sup> the door a bit too hard, it locks itself.  
 Harry: It's better *to have to lock*<sup>7</sup> it from the outside.

<sup>1</sup>get-passive, phrasal verb; <sup>2</sup>phrasal verb; <sup>3</sup>lexical aux; <sup>4</sup>phrasal verb; <sup>5</sup>lexical aux. + lexical-aux. + phrasal verb; <sup>6</sup>phased VG; <sup>7</sup>lexical-aux

## FURTHER READING

On structure of the verbal group: Halliday (1994). On catenatives: Carter and McCarthy (2006). On multi-word verbs: Quirk et al. (1985). On aspectual meanings of phrasal verbs: Slobin (1996); Spasov (1978). On motion event: Talmy (2002); Goldberg (1995). (North) American English: Tottie (2002).

## EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 8

### Talking about events: The Verbal Group

#### Unit 37

- 1 †Read the following extract and identify the functions of *be*, *have (got)* *to* and *get* as primary verb, as part of a lexical auxiliary or as a lexical verb:

Imagine then you're out,<sup>1</sup> you're in Wolverhampton,<sup>2</sup> and you're about to cross the street,<sup>3</sup> and round the corner comes a big lorry. What happens? Your sense organs have told you there's a big lorry. You've got to deal with it,<sup>4</sup> you can't fight it. You've got to<sup>5</sup> get across that road quickly.<sup>6</sup> All those things happen to you, all those hormones, particularly adrenaline have got into your bloodstream<sup>7</sup> because you need this sudden burst of energy to get you across the road.<sup>8</sup> [JJH]

- 2 †Underline the Verbal Groups in the sentences below and then answer the questions:

- (1) A bicycle whizzed past me as I was crossing the road.
- (2) It startled me.
- (3) It also startled the elderly woman just ahead of me. She was clutching a bag or bundle or something, and almost fell.
- (4) 'Can't you be more careful?' I shouted after the cyclist.
- (5) He just turned his head a little, but said nothing.
- (6) He was pedalling fast and was soon lost in the traffic.
- (7) He could have injured us both.
- (8) The elderly woman's bundle had fallen open into the middle of the road. A strange collection of objects was rolling everywhere.
- (9) 'Are you all right?' I asked, as we scrambled to pick up the things before the lights changed.

In sentences 1–9 above:

- 1 List the Verbal Groups of one element (v).
- 2 List the Verbal Groups of two elements (o v)
- 3 Are there any Verbal Groups of three elements (o x v)?
- 4 What is the syntactic status of *are* in sentence 9?

- 3 Rewrite the following sentences, which contain *that*-clauses, so that they have a raised subject with the same lexical auxiliary:

- (1) It's likely that the main markets will be France, Germany and Spain.
- (2) It was virtually certain that Diana and Charles would divorce.
- (3) It is sure that you will be among the first three.
- (4) It is supposed that he is her boyfriend.
- (5) It's not likely that you'll get a question like that.

**Unit 38**

- 1 †What is the function of *be* in the following examples: lexical verb, progressive auxiliary, passive auxiliary or lexical auxiliary?

- (1) It's getting late.
- (2) I have never been here before.
- (3) Has he been invited to the reception?
- (4) There is sure to be some delay at airports this summer.

- 2 †Give the syntactic structure of the Verbal Groups in the sentences below, and analyse them for the tense and ABCD features they contain. Do you see any discontinuous VGs?

- (1) Someone *should be telling* the present administration about Kenya.
- (2) Kenya *was about to take off* economically.
- (3) Our population *has been* greatly increased.
- (4) That increase *should have been* expected.
- (5) It *was realised* that modern medicine *was cutting back* the death rate dramatically.
- (6) But numerous mistakes *were being made* in the allocation of scarce national resources.
- (7) Our exports *were earning* less in real terms than *they had been earning* a decade ago.
- (8) Many developing nations *are gradually shifting* their economic policies towards free enterprise.
- (9) We feel that the country *has not yet been able to achieve* its potential.
- (10) But that potential *should at least be receiving* recognition.

- 3 †Complete the sentences below (which make up a text) with Verbal Groups containing two, three or four auxiliaries, using the verbs indicated. Example 1 is done for you:

- (1) The last photograph ( ) (prog. + pass.+ *take*) when I arrived. (was being taken)
- (2) Pete ( ) (*past* + perf. + prog. + pass.+ *instruct*) on how to use a wide-angle lens.
- (3) He ( ) (*must* + perf. + prog. + *use*) a filter.
- (4) He ( ) (*can't* + perf. + prog.+ *use*) a filter.
- (5) She ( ) (*must* + perf.+ *move*) when the photograph ( ) (*take* + prog. + pass.)
- (6) More cameras ( ) (*be likely* + *pass.* + *sell*) than ever this year.

**Units 37 and 38**

- 4 † Underline the Verbal Groups in the following passage and then answer the questions below:

A car with a trailer coming our way is passing and having trouble getting back into his lane. I flash my headlight to make sure he sees us. He sees us but he can't get back in. The shoulder is narrow and bumpy. It'll spill us if we take it. I'm braking, honking, flashing. Christ Almighty, he panics and heads for our shoulder! I hold steady to the edge of the road. Here he COMES! At the last moment he goes back and misses us by inches.

(Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*)

- (1) Which are more important to this text – actions or states?
- (2) Identify the finite VGs in the text. List separately the VGs in which finiteness is realised on the verb (the Finite is fused with the Event), and those in which the Finite is realised by an operator.
- (3) Are there any non-finite Verbal Groups in this extract?
- (4) What tense choice has been made in this text?
- (5) What aspectual (progressive) choices have been made?
- (6) What modality choices have been made?
- (7) What positive–negative polarity choices have been made?
- (8) What choices of contrastiveness have been made?

## Unit 39

- 1** †Discuss the different behaviour of the italicised verbs in (a) their use as an ordinary lexical verb and (b) as a catenative in verbal groups. Consider ‘raised subjects’ (37.3), and take into account possible lexical alternatives:

- (1) (a) What has *happened*? I pressed the switch but nothing *happened*.  
(b) We all *happened* to be away when the burglar broke in.
- (2) (a) A strange figure *appeared* in the doorway.  
(b) He *appears* to have misunderstood your explanation.
- (3) (a) Pete has *failed* the driving test again.  
(b) He *fails* to realise how important it is to

- 2** †Using the VGs listed in 39.2, fill in the brackets with a catenative s Verbal Group in the sentences below.

The first one is done for you:

- (1) The supposedly quiet fishing village turned out to be/proved to be quite different from what the travel agency had led us to expect.
- (2) Did you go all the way to the other side of town to take part in the demonstration? – No, I just ( ) there.
- (3) Some years ago we ( ) to enquire whether a visa was necessary and were held up at the frontier for two days.
- (4) After trying unsuccessfully on several occasions to pass the seamanship test, he eventually ( ) do so at the fourth attempt.
- (5) Isn’t there any washing-up liquid anywhere? – Well, there ( ) be a little left at the bottom of the container.
- (6) The shop assistant ( ) reassure the child that her mother would come soon.
- (7) Even old black-and-white films ( ) coloured these days.
- (8) He ( ) convince the Customs official that he was not smuggling anything, but it ( ) be impossible.

## Unit 40

- 1 †Underline the Figure and Path(s) in the following examples. Decide whether the verb expresses (a) just Motion, (b) Motion + Manner or (c) Motion + Cause.
- (1) The ship slid out of the New York dock past the Statue of Liberty to the Atlantic.
  - (2) She accidentally knocked a book off the bedside table.
  - (3) Several trees were blown down.
  - (4) He gulped down his beer.
  - (5) We cycled back home.
- 2 †Suggest an aspectual meaning for the italicised words in each of the following examples:
- (1) *Fill up* the tank, please.
  - (2) He was *kept on* by his firm.
  - (3) A lot of this scrap metal can be *melted down* and used again.
  - (4) His vocation *urged him on*.
  - (5) She *woke up* suddenly when the alarm went off.
- 3 † With the help of a good dictionary, try to work out the Path meaning(s) of *over* from the following examples (see also 59.2.3).
- (1) The travel agency is just *over the road*.
  - (2) You can walk *over the moors* to Robin Hood's Bay.
  - (3) The cracks in the wall have *been plastered over*.
  - (4) The milk has *boiled over*.
  - (5) Many smaller firms have been *taken over* by larger ones.
- 4 † The 'three men in a boat' have tried unavailingly to open a tin of pineapple without a tin-opener.

Then we all got mad. We took the tin out on the bank, and Harris went up into a field and got a big, sharp stone, and I went back into the boat and brought out the mast, and George held the tin and Harris held the sharp end of the stone against the top of it, and I took the mast and poised it high in the air, and gathered up all my strength and brought it down.

It was George's straw hat that saved his life that day, while Harris got off with merely a flesh wound.

After that I took the tin off by myself, and hammered at it with the mast till I was worn out and sick at heart, whereupon Harris took it in hand.

We beat it out flat; we beat it back square; we battered it into every form known to geometry, but we could not make a hole in it . . . Harris rushed at the thing, and caught it up, and flung it far into the middle of the river, and as it sank we hurled out curses at it, and we got into the boat and rowed away from the spot, and never paused till we reached Maidenhead.

(Jerome K. Jerome, *Three Men in a Boat*)

- (1) Identify the phrasal verbs in this passage
- (2) Do they have an aspectual function or a Path function? Suggest a meaning associated with each one.

# VIEWPOINTS ON EVENTS

## CHAPTER 9

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# EXPRESSING LOCATION IN TIME THROUGH THE VERB

## UNIT 41

### Tense

#### SUMMARY

- 1 Tense is the grammatical expression of the location of events in time. It anchors an event to the speaker's experience of the world by relating the event time to a point of reference. The universal, unmarked reference point is the moment of speaking – speech time. In narrative, a point in past time is usually taken as the reference point.
- 2 English has two tenses, the present and the past, the past being the marked form, both morphologically and semantically.
- 3 The basic meaning of the present tense is to locate a situation holding at the present moment. This may be an instantaneous event (I promise to wait), a permanent state, a fact held as true (The law of gravity is universal), or an habitual occurrence (He works in an office). Secondary meanings of the Present include reference to past and future events, 'historic present' (*This man comes up to me . . .*) and the quotative (*and she goes/she's like 'I don't believe it'*).
- 4 The past tense primarily refers to a definite event or state that is prior to utterance time. Its secondary uses refer to a present event or state as hypothetical (*If I were you*).
- 5 English has no verbal inflection to mark a future tense. Instead, English makes use of a number of forms to refer to future events.
- 6 Finite clauses in English can be marked for either tense or modality but not both. Verbs marked for tense are said to be 'tensed'. Non-finite clauses are not tensed.

## 41.1 THE MEANING OF TENSE

**Tense** is the grammatical expression of the location of events in time. It anchors (or 'grounds') an event to the speaker's experience of the world by relating the **event time** to a point of reference. The normal, universal point of reference is the moment of speaking – **speech time**, what has been called 'the inescapable and constantly changing **now** in which all verbal interaction takes place'. Past events take place before the 'now', while future events are thought of as taking place after it.

The location of the speaker, the moment of speaking and the speaker her/himself make up 'the *I*, the *here* and the *now*'- the '**deictic centre**' – which serves as the point of reference for definiteness and proximity (→ Chapter 10). The 'now' can be diagrammed as shown.

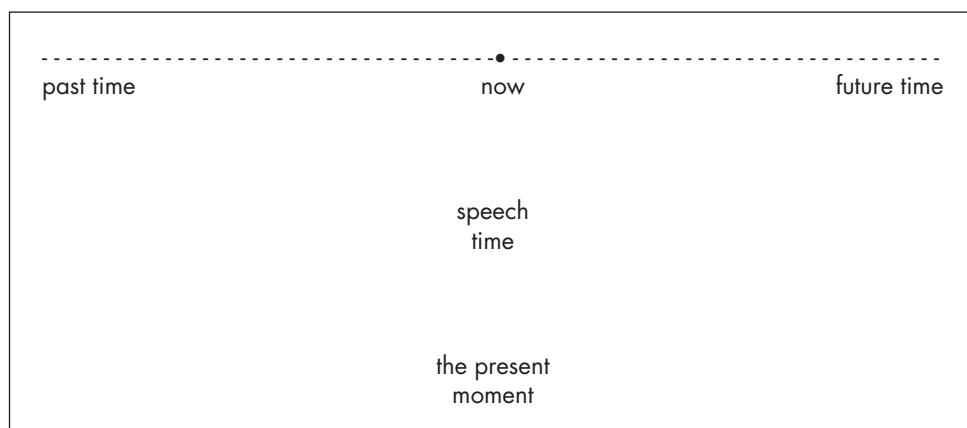


Figure 9.1 Speech time as reference time.

### 41.1.1 Present tense, Past tense and future time

Tense is a grammatical category that is realised in English morphologically on the verb. In accordance with this criterion, English has just two tenses: the Present and the Past, as in *goes/went*, respectively. English has no verbal inflection to mark a future tense. The forms *shall* and *will* are not verbal inflections but modal auxiliaries which, when reduced, are attached to pronouns, not to the verb root (*I'll wait outside*). Also important are the form–meaning relationships. *Shall* and *will* belong to a set of modal auxiliaries and can express meanings other than reference to future time, as we shall see later in this chapter (→ 44.1). Instead of a future tense, English makes use of a number of combinations such as *be going to* to refer to future events (→ 41.6). Compare:

They *do* the shopping on Saturdays. (present tense)

They *did* the shopping on Saturday. (past tense)

They *are going to do/will do* the shopping on Saturday. (lexical auxiliary/modal)

In English, therefore, the three-term semantic distinction between past, present and future time is grammaticalised as a two-term tense distinction between Past tense and Present tense.

Besides tensed forms of verbs, adverbs of time such as *now*, *then*, *tomorrow*, PPs such as *in 1066* and lexico-grammatical expressions such as *ten minutes after the plane took off* can make reference to time. English, in fact, relies to a considerable extent on such units to make the temporal reference clear.

The **Past tense** in English is the marked form. Morphologically, the vast majority of verbs in English have a distinctive past form, (*played*, *saw*, *flew*) and, semantically, the past tense basically refers to a situation that is prior to the present, as in *Yesterday was fine*. Cognitively, the situations conceptualised by the speaker as past have the status of known, but not immediate, reality; they are not currently observed.

The **Present tense** is the unmarked tense. Morphologically, it uses mainly the base form. It is marked only on the 3rd person singular (with the exception of *be*, which has three forms (*am*, *are* and *is*)). Semantically, it covers a wider range of temporal references than the Past tense, including reference to future time (*Tomorrow is a holiday*). Cognitively, it expresses situations which have immediate reality, that is, what is currently observed.

Even in our everyday use, ‘at present’ and ‘at the present time’ have a wider application than simply to the present moment of speech time. The present tense refers to general or permanent situations, facts and truths, which hold not only at the present time but have also held in the past, and will conceivably continue to hold in the future.

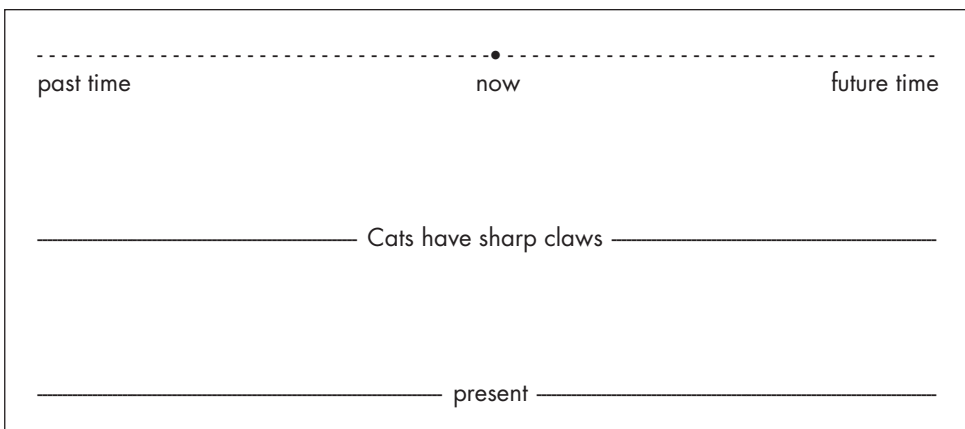


Figure 9.2 The scope of the simple Present tense.

#### 41.1.2 Stative and dynamic uses of verbs

The meaning expressed by a verb in present or past tense depends to a great extent on whether the verb refers to a single constant state, as in *I know Tim's email address*, or to a dynamic occurrence, as in *He goes to work by train*.

More exactly, the meaning depends on whether the verb is being used statively or dynamically, since many verbs lend themselves to both interpretations. ‘Have’ usually refers to a permanent state, as in *cats have sharp claws*, but it also has dynamic uses as in *have breakfast*.

In general, dynamic but not stative senses can occur with the imperative and progressive, and after *do* in *wh*-cleft sentences:

Have breakfast!	We are having breakfast.	What we did was have breakfast.
*Have claws!	*Cats are having claws	*What cats do is have claws.

In the following sections, we refer to the present tense as the ‘simple Present’, more exactly as the ‘non-progressive Present’. The Progressive, consisting of a form of *be* + *-ing*, combines with tense to encode a single event observed in the process of happening. There is a meaningful distinction – and an obligatory choice in English – between expressing a situation by means of the Present tense alone and expressing it by the Present Progressive. Compare:

The sun *doesn't shine* every day in Brussels, (non-Progressive Present)  
but *it is shining* today. (Progressive Present)

## 41.2 BASIC MEANINGS OF THE PRESENT TENSE

The basic meaning of the Present tense is to locate a situation holding at the present moment. The tense itself does not say whether that same situation continues beyond the present moment and whether it also held in the past. These are implications which we derive from our knowledge of the world and from the type of situation encoded in the clause.

In fact it is relatively rare for a situation to coincide exactly with the present moment, that is, to occupy a single point in time, literally or conceptually. Situations of this nature do occur, however and can be classed together as types of the Instantaneous Present.

### 41.2.1 The Instantaneous Present

These are events which coincide, or are presented as coinciding, with speech time and have no duration beyond speech time:

Speech act verbs which perform the act they name: I'll be careful, I *promise*.  
(→ 25.1)  
Exclamations with initial directional adverb: Off they *go*! (at the start of a race)  
In you *go*! (helping someone to get in a car, etc.)  
Commentaries: Jones *passes* and Beckham *kicks* the ball into the net.  
Demonstrations: I *place* the fruit in the blender, *press* gently, and then *pour* out the liquid.

More characteristically, the Present is used to refer to situations which occupy a longer period of time than the moment of speaking, but which nonetheless include speech time. Traditionally these situations are classed according to the verb as stative uses and habitual uses of the Present.

### 41.2.2 The State Present

Used with stative verb senses, the Present refers to a single uninterrupted state, which began before the moment of speaking and may well continue after it. They include facts, general statements and **timeless statements**, that is, statements which apply to all time, including speech time:

The law of gravity *is* universal

They also include states whose time span is not endless, e.g. *know, think, believe, belong, stand for*. They are nevertheless states in which no change or limitation into the past or future is implied. Here too the temporal reference includes speech time.

I *think* you are right.

MP *stands for* Member of Parliament.

### 41.2.3 The Habitual Present

This is used with dynamic verbs to encode situations that occur habitually over time, even if the action is not being carried out at the moment of speaking. For instance, referring to the following examples, Tim may not actually be working, nor the leaves falling at the moment of speaking. Nevertheless, the recurrent situation holds as the normal course of things and is appropriately referred to by the simple Present tense.

Tim *works* in an insurance company.

Many trees *lose* their leaves in autumn.

Again, the simple Present used for habitual and other meanings contrasts with the Present Progressive, which encodes an actual occurrence of a dynamic action observed in the process of happening, as in *The trees are already losing their leaves* (→ 43.4–43.7).

## 41.3 SECONDARY MEANINGS OF THE PRESENT TENSE: REFERENCE TO PAST EVENTS

The Present can be used to refer to past events in certain limited ways.

In newspaper headlines and captions to photographs

Thousands *flee* persecution.

Demonstrators *clash* with armed police as violence *increases*.

In relating incidents in informal, casual speech: the historic present and the quotative

He was only an average athlete, and then suddenly he *wins* two Olympic medals.

I had just left the bank when *this* guy *comes* up to me and *asks* for money.

The Present tense in headlines and the sudden switch from Past to Present in speech have the effect of dramatising the event, bringing it before the reader's eyes as if it were an instance of the instantaneous Present. However, the headline stands apart from the text, while the **'historic present'** switch occurs within the discourse at a key point in the narrative, and is frequently paralleled by a switch to a proximal demonstrative (*this*), as in the example: *this guy comes up*.

*Go* and *be like* are used by young speakers talking among themselves, as **quotative** verbs like *say*, to introduce direct speech as in: 'and she goes "What's he like?" and I'm like "Gorgeous".' They usually occur in the Present tense. These verbs are not used in this way by all speakers.

### *In reporting information*

With verbs of communicating (*say, tell*) and of perception (*see, hear, understand*) the use of the Present implies that the reported information is still valid, even though the communicative process took place in the past. With a Past tense, the validity is not implied:

The weather forecast *says* that rain is on the way.  
I *understand* you would like to move to London.

### *In subordinate clauses of time and condition*

The present tense is usual in open conditions and in clauses introduced by *when, as soon as, the minute* etc., with a potential (irrealis) meaning, where certain languages require a subjunctive (→ Unit 34.3) as in: Text me *when you get here*.

The following short extract illustrates the basic meanings of the Present tense in contrast to that of the past tense. This extract is taken from *The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA): 450 million words, 1990–present*. Available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca> (Davies 2008–).

Yes, it's the journey that counts. But every trip is better with fast, delicious food like this. Around day four of any backpacking trip, the thought of another freeze-dried pasta dish sounds as appealing as a few fresh blisters. Which is why, after a ten-mile hike along a dusty dirt road in Chile that followed a 5,000-plus-foot descent at the end of our volcano trek – we were thrilled to have saved this curry dish for the end. The smell of coconut milk and curry alone was enough to give us a lift. Then the texture of the al dente Israeli cous-cous woke up tired taste buds. And the combination of chicken (not tough and chewy) and peas (not mushy) in the coconut-curry sauce caused camp chaos: Was there enough to go round? And could we make another batch fast? Thankfully the make lives up to its name.  
[COCA: MAG]

## 41.4 BASIC MEANINGS OF THE PAST TENSE

The basic meaning of the Past tense in English is to locate an event or state in the past. It situates the event at a 'temporal distance' from the moment of speaking, whether in

time, towards the past, or with regard to potential or hypothetical events which have not yet occurred in the present or the future.

When used to refer to a definite past event or state, the Past in English contains two semantic features:

- The speaker conceptualises the event as having occurred at some specific time in the past.
- The event is presented as wholly located in the past, in a time-frame that is separated by a gap from the present.

These features are illustrated in the following examples:

James Joyce *was born* in Dublin in 1882.

He *lived* in Ireland until 1904 and *spent* the rest of his life abroad.

The Past tense in English says nothing about whether the event occupied a point in time or a longer extent. These additional meanings are understood from the lexical verb used and from the whole situation represented by the clause. In the examples above referring to one single person, *was born* is interpreted as referring to a point in time, while *lived* and *spent* are interpreted as being of longer duration. With a plural subject, the Past tense *were born* is interpreted here as referring not to one single point in time but to many:

Generations of writers *were born* who were influenced by Joyce.

In using the Past tense, speakers do not need to specify a past occurrence by means of an Adjunct, however. As long as the speaker has a specific time in mind and can assume that the hearer infers this from the situational context, the Past tense is used, as in:

*Did you see* that flash of lightning?  
[Who *said* that?] It *wasn't* me.

#### 41.5 SECONDARY MEANINGS OF THE PAST TENSE: PRESENT AND FUTURE REFERENCE

The Past tense can refer to time-frames other than the past in the following three ways:

- **In 'closed conditionals' (→ 34.3) and other hypothetical subordinate clauses** which express a counterfactual belief or presupposition on the part of the speaker. The reference is to present time. The past in such expressions was originally a subjunctive whose only relic remains in the form *were* for all persons of *be*.

If we *had* enough time . . .

He talks as if he *owned* the place.

I often wish I *were* somewhere else.

(presupposes we haven't enough time)

(he doesn't own the place)

(I am not somewhere else)



- **In reported speech or thought:** after a reporting verb in the Past tense, the reported verbs in the dependent clauses are also in the Past. This phenomenon is known as 'backshift' (→ 36.3). Present tense forms are optional, as in *She said she prefers/preferred vanilla ice cream*, as long as the situation is still valid.
- **In polite requests and enquiries,** the past form 'distances' the proposed action, so making the imposition on the hearer less direct:

*Did you* want to speak to me now?  
*I wondered* whether you needed anything.

## 41.6 REFERRING TO FUTURE EVENTS

We cannot refer to future events as facts, as we can to past and present situations, since future events are not open to observation or memory. We can predict with more or less confidence what will happen, we can plan for events to take place, express our intentions and promises with regard to future events. These are **modalised** rather than factual statements, and are treated in 44.3. Here we simply outline the main syntactic means of referring to future events as seen from the standpoint of present time.

### 41.6.1 'Safe' predictions

These are predictions which do not involve the subject's volition, and include cyclical events and general truths. *Will* + infinitive is used, *shall* by some speakers for 'I' and 'we':

Susie *will be* nineteen tomorrow.  
 You'll *find* petrol more expensive in France.

*Will/shall* + progressive combine the meaning of futurity with that of focusing on the internal process, in this way avoiding the implication of promise associated with *will* when the subject is 'I' or 'we'. Compare:

I *will* (I'll) speak to him about your application tomorrow. We *shall* (we'll) be studying your application shortly.

### 41.6.2 Programmed events

Future events seen as certain because they are unalterable 1 or programmed 2, 3 and 4 can be expressed by the Present tense + time adjunct, by *will* or by the lexical auxiliaries *be due to* + infinitive and *be to* (simple forms only):

- 1 The sun *sets* at 20.15 hours tomorrow.
- 2 Next year's conference *will* be held in Milan.
- 3 He *is due to retire* in two months' time.
- 4 She *is to marry* the future heir to the throne.

### 41.6.3 Intended events

Intended events can be expressed by *be + going to + infinitive* **1** and by the Progressive (*be + -ing*) **2**. These forms can be marked for tense. The past forms refer to an event intended at some time in the past to occur in some future time **3**. As with all intended events, they may or may not actually take place. (→ modal *will*, 44.6.)

- 1** I am *going to get* more information about this.
- 2** Pete *is thinking of* learning Chinese.
- 3** I *was going to leave* a note but there was no-one at Reception. [BMR]

### 41.6.4 Imminent events

An event seen as occurring in the immediate future is expressed by *be + going to* or by combinations such as: *be about to + infinitive*, *be on the point of/be on the verge of + -ing*. There is usually some external or internal sign of the imminence of the happening.

In AmE 'gonna' is the usual abbreviation of 'going to' in spoken English.

We're not *gonna* stand for this.

This company is *about to be/on the verge of* being taken over by a multinational.

An expectation orientated to past time is expressed by the corresponding forms in the past:

It's not what I *thought* it was *going to be*.

. . . the territory which *was* later *to be* part of Lithuania.

### 41.6.5 Future anterior events

A future event anterior to another event is expressed by the **Future Perfect**:

The programme will *have ended* long before we get back. By the time he is twenty-two, he'll *have taken* his degree.

Otherwise, the Future Perfect expresses the duration or repetition of an event in the future. The addition of the Progressive emphasises the incompleteness of the sequence (→ 43.4):

We'll *have lived* here for ten years by next July.

We'll *have been living* here for ten years by next July.

# PAST EVENTS AND PRESENT TIME CONNECTED

## UNIT 42

### Present Perfect and Past Perfect

#### SUMMARY

- 1 Both tense and aspect have to do with time relations expressed by the verb, but from different perspectives. While tense basically situates an event or state in present or past time, aspect is concerned with such notions as duration and completion or incompleteness of the process expressed by the verb. English has two aspects, the Perfect and the Progressive. We first consider **the Perfect aspect**, noticing how it differs from the simple tenses. In Unit 43, we go on to consider the **Progressive aspect**.
- 2 The **Present Perfect** is a retrospective tense-aspect which views a state or event as occurring at some indefinite time within a time-frame that leads up to speech time.
- 3 The event is viewed as psychologically relevant to the present. By contrast, an event encoded in the Past tense is viewed as disconnected from the present.
- 4 Consequently, the Perfect is not normally interchangeable in BrE with the Past tense. For the same reason, the time adjuncts accompanying them are normally different. In AmE, but not BrE, the Past tense is often used, with the adverbs *already* or *just* (I *just* got up) where BrE uses the Perfect.
- 5 Implications of recency, completion and result, derived from the combination of Present Perfect and verb type, are all manifestations of **current relevance**.
- 6 The Past Perfect is used to refer to events more remote than, previous or relevant to those expressed by a past tense, but is also used in backshift and with a counterfactual meaning.

#### 42.1 PRESENT PERFECT ASPECT AND PAST TENSE COMPARED: ANTERIORITY VS DEFINITE TIME

The Perfect construction in English relates a state or event to a relevance time. This is speech time for the Present Perfect, some point in time prior to speech time for the Past Perfect and some point in time after speech time for the Future Perfect.

The Present Perfect is a subtle retrospective tense-aspect which views states or events as occurring in a time-frame leading up to speech time. Expressed by *have* + past participle, the *have* element is present, the participle is past. The event is psychologically connected to the present as in the following example:

\_\_\_\_\_ speech time

His marriage *has broken down* and he *has gone* to live in another part of England

These and other features contrast with those of the Past tense:

<i>Present Perfect</i>	<i>Past Tense</i>
a. Its time-frame is the extended <b>now</b> , a period of time which extends up to speech time.	Its time-frame is the <b>past</b> , which is viewed as a separate time-frame from that of the present.
b. The event occurs at some <b>indefinite</b> and <b>unspecified time</b> within the extended now. The Perfect is <b>non- deictic</b> – it doesn't 'point' to a specific time but relates to a relevant time.	The event is located at a <b>specific and definite time</b> in the past. The Past tense is <b>deictic</b> – it points to a specific time in the past.
c. The event has ' <b>current relevance</b> ', that is, it is viewed as <b>psychologically connected</b> to the moment of speaking.	The event is seen as <b>psychologically disconnected</b> from the moment of speaking.

Figure 9.3 The Present Perfect and the Past tense.

Within the extended now, the Present Perfect is used in English when the speaker wishes to refer, not to a definite moment of occurrence of the event, but simply to the **anteriority** of the event. This is in marked contrast with the definite time use of the Past tense. Compare:

They *have left* for New York.  
 They *left* for New York an hour ago.

Similarly, the Present Perfect is not normally used in main clauses with interrogative adverbs, which imply definite time and require the Past tense.

We can say	Have they started?	Have they finished? (Present Perfect)
Or	When did they start?	At what time did they finish?
		(Past tense)
But not	* <i>When have they started?</i>	* <i>At what time have they finished?</i>

When a definite time is not implied by the verb the Present Perfect is possible:

Where have you most enjoyed working? [BNA]

In subordinate clauses, with future reference, the Present Perfect can follow *when*, since this use refers to an unspecified time: *When I have finished, I'll call you.*

Furthermore, the Present Perfect operates in a time-frame that is still open, blocking examples such as **1a** and **2a**. By contrast the **b** examples are grammatical, as are **3** and **4**:

- 1a** \*James Joyce *has been born* in Dublin.    **1b** James Joyce *was born* in Dublin.  
**2a** \*He *has lived* in Ireland until 1904.    **2b** He *lived* in Ireland until 1904.  
**3** Michael *has lived* in Ireland all his life (implying that he still lives there).  
**4** Generations of writers have been influenced by Joyce (and are still influenced).

In **1a** and **2a** the Perfect is blocked because Joyce's life-span is over. In **3** this is not the case. In **4** the plural subject 'generations of writers' allows for a time-frame that is open.

The perspective of the 'extended now' time-frame in contrast with that of the Past tense is illustrated in this passage from Penelope Lively's *Moon Tiger*:

*I've grown old with the century; there's not much left of either of us. The century of war. All history, of course, is the history of wars, but this hundred years has excelled itself. How many million shot, maimed, burned, frozen, starved, drowned? God only knows. I trust He does; He should have kept a record, if only for His own purposes. I've been on the fringes of two wars; I shan't see the next. The first preoccupied me not at all; this thing called War summoned Father and took him away for ever. I saw it as some inevitable climatic effect: thunderstorm or blizzard. The second lapped me up but spat me out intact. Technically intact. I have seen war; in that sense I have been present at wars, I have heard bombs and guns and observed their effects.*

## 42.2 TIME ADJUNCTS AND THE PRESENT PERFECT ASPECT

The Present Perfect aspect is frequently accompanied by time Adjuncts that refer to a period of time that is still open at the moment of speaking, e.g. *this week, this month, this year*, etc. Adjuncts which refer to a period of past time that is now over (e.g. *last month, last year, yesterday, ago*) are incompatible with the Perfect. Compare:

Have you seen any good films this month?    \*Have you seen any good films last month

A period of time expressed by an adjunct such as *in July* is either open or closed depending on the speaker's vantage-point. If closed, the verb is in the Past tense:

Temperatures *have reached* an all-time high *in July*. (July is not yet over)  
 Temperatures *reached* an all-time high *in July*. (July is over)

Adjuncts of indefinite or unspecified time used with the Perfect, such as:	Adjuncts of definite or specific time used with past tense, such as:
sometimes, often, always, ever, at times twice, three times in the last ten years lately, recently, now, to date, so far	yesterday last week, last year, last month an hour ago, two years ago last June, in 1066 at 4 o'clock, at Christmas, at Easter

Figure 9.4 Adjuncts of indefinite time and adjuncts of definite time.

### 42.3 CURRENT RELEVANCE

By 'current relevance' we mean that the event referred to by means of the Present Perfect is psychologically connected to speech time, and has some (implicit) relevance to it.

This meaning is quoted in all accounts of the present perfect and is considered by some to be the main one. It is undoubtedly of the utmost importance. Nevertheless, current relevance will here be considered as a pragmatic implication deriving from the combination of time-frame, perfect aspect and verb type. This will become clear as we turn to the interpretations of the perfect in discourse.

At this point the notion of current relevance is essential: *They have been out* implies that they have now come back, whereas *They went out* has no such implication. It would not be normal to say \**They have been out a moment ago* (since an adjunct such as 'a moment ago' visualises a definite point of time in the past, whereas the Perfect does not).

Occasional occurrences in spoken English of forms which appear to combine the two can be explained as mental switches from an indefinite to a definite time-frame produced as speakers modify their messages as they go along. Regional variation may also be a factor.

### 42.4 FUNCTIONS AND DISCOURSE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PRESENT PERFECT

Interpretations of the functions of the Perfect are described under certain well-known labels, as follows.

#### 42.4.1 The experiential Perfect

This refers to the fact that there have been one or more experiences of the event in the recent history **1** and **2**, or in the life-span **3** of a certain person **up to the present time**, as in:

- 1 I've *been* ill.
- 2 Jim's *been* away.
- 3 You've *lived* in Brighton, and you've *lived* in Kingston and now you live in Lewes. [KRG]

Included in this type is the **first-time experience** use, as in *It's the first time I've been here*, for which certain languages use a Present tense.

Another is the contrast between the one-way **have gone to** and the cyclic **have been to**, as in:

Jim has gone to England	=	he's still there
Jim has been to England	=	he has returned after a visit to England

This explains the anomalous *\*I've gone to England*, and the fact that *I've been to England several times* is normal, whereas *\*I've gone to England several times* is odd.

#### 42.4.2 The continuous Perfect

This is a state, duration or repeated occurrence of a process such as *walk*, lasting up to speech time. An adjunct of extent is virtually necessary to complete the meaning.

*I have known* Bill since we were at school together. (i.e. and I still know him)  
*We have walked* for hours. (up to the present moment)  
 For the last ten years he *has lived* and *worked* in Brussels. (i.e. He still does)  
 Over the last three years the pressure group *has staged* a number of hunger strikes.

*For* and *over* + a unit of time (*for hours*, *over the last three years*) express the duration of the event from the vantage point of speech time, and this form is retrospective. *Since* + a point of time expresses extent viewed from the initiation of the event, and is prospective.

#### 42.4.3 Implied meanings of the Present Perfect

Deriving from the features and main uses of the present perfect, certain implications are associated with it, especially in BrE. These are recency, completion and resulting state.

##### *Recency*

The Present Perfect lends itself to a '**hot news**' interpretation, which can be reinforced by *just*. In AmE the Past is used.

The Prime Minister *has resigned*.  
 He's *done* it! (played the winning ball in a golf tournament) (sports commentary)  
 We've *just eaten*/had lunch (BrE) We *just* /*already ate*. (AmE)  
 Have you *been* up long? (BrE) You *been* up long? (AmE) (ellipsis of *have*)  
 No, I've *just got up* (BrE) No, I *just got up*. (AmE)  
 What on earth *have you done* to your hair? (BrE)  
 What on earth *did you do* to your hair? (AmE)

### Completion

This is the pragmatic implication arising from the combination of the Perfect with processes having an end-point (→ 43.2), as in *grow up*, *tape something*:

Hundreds of people have been evacuated from their homes, which have been burnt to rubble. (news)  
 His brothers have grown up and have left home.  
 You can listen to what you've taped. Oh yeah, you can play it back. [KCL]

### Resulting state

Such situations with the Perfect are in many cases interpreted as having a visible result as in:

Their homes have been burnt to rubble.  
 You've squashed my shoe! (The shoe is in a squashed state) [KPO]

The result may be knowledge or know-how, as implied in *He has learned to drive*. These are all forms of current relevance.

## 42.5 THE PAST PERFECT

The Past Perfect consists of two elements of past time: the auxiliary *had* and a past participle. It is used to refer to a past event or state that is anterior to or parallel with a time of orientation in the past:

In 1962 the world *had come* to the brink of nuclear war during the Cuban missile crisis. (Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain*)  
 The film *had already started* by the time we reached the cinema.  
 He opened the door. The flowers he *had bought* for Jane were strewn all over the floor.

Parallel to the time-frame of the Present Perfect which leads up to speech time, or 'time now', the time-frame of the Past Perfect leads up to a point in the past, or 'time then' (*In 1962, the time we reached the cinema, he opened the door*. The reader infers 'he saw' the flowers).

### 42.5.1 Discourse interpretations of the Past Perfect

#### (a) *Duration of states*

The continuous Past Perfect expresses the duration of a state up to 'time then':

He realised he *had left* the book *he had been reading* on his seat in the train.



(b) *Modal remoteness*

The Past Perfect is similar to the simple past tense in that they can both express modal remoteness. This is not past time, but a hypothetical or counter-factual meaning. This occurs in the complement of the verb *wish*:

- (i) I wish she *had told* me the truth (She did not tell me the truth).

AmE sometimes prefers the form *would* instead of the Past Perfect:

I wish she *would have* told me the truth. This is ungrammatical in BrE.

The other use is the counterfactual conditional:

- (ii) If only they *had realised* a hurricane was imminent, they might have run to safety (They did not realise). (→ 34.3, 43.3 and 44)

In hypothetical conditional sentences such as this, the past perfect can occur only in the conditional (*if*-clause), not in the main clause. A further variant is as follows:

*Had* Britain *been involved* from the start as even the French wanted, the EEC, eventually the EC, would have developed differently. (*A History of Modern Britain*)

(c) *Backshift in reporting*

The third function that the past perfect shares with the past tense is that of backshift when the reporting verb is in the past. This may be a verb of perception:

One could see he *had aged* considerably.  
Sheila said they *had had* a puncture and would probably be late.

d) *Stressed had*

The past perfect auxiliary *had* is often stressed in speech when the speaker is referring to a previous situation that no longer holds:

We ***had*** planned to go to the New Delhi conference, but we've had to give up the idea.

As the Past Perfect refers to a time previous to a time signalled somewhere else in the context, it is not always easy to determine its time reference. For this reason, the Past Perfect often occurs in subordinate clauses accompanied by time Adjuncts, both of which help to establish the temporal links between events. The following extract from Raymond Carver illustrates uses of the Past Perfect:

It was just past six o'clock. Myers *hadn't slept* since *he'd* boarded the train in Milan at eleven the night before. When the train *had left* Milan, *he'd considered* himself lucky to have the compartment to himself. He kept the light on and looked at guidebooks. He read things *he wished he'd read* before *he'd been* to the place they were about. He discovered much that he should have seen and done. In a way, he was sorry to be finding out certain things about the country now, just as he was leaving Italy behind after his first and, no doubt, last visit.

## 42.6 NON-FINITE PERFECT FORMS

The distinction between present and past does not apply to non-finite verb phrases. The non-finite Perfect forms *to have* + participle and *having* + participle have the general meaning of anteriority and serve as secondary tenses of both Present and Past Perfect:

*Having satisfied* himself that everything was in order, he locked the safe.  
She was said *to have been* the foremost opera singer of her time.

# SITUATION TYPES AND THE PROGRESSIVE ASPECT

## UNIT 43

### SUMMARY

- 1 Important aspectual contrasts include **perfectivity** (viewing the event as a whole) vs **imperfectivity** (viewing the event as incomplete). These distinctions remain indeterminate in English in the simple Past and Present tense forms. Perfectivity then must be interpreted from the whole clause.
- 2 The only grammaticalised aspectual contrasts in English are the Progressive vs non-progressive and the Perfect vs non-perfect. (The Perfect is not identical to perfectivity!)
- 3 Progressiveness is a type of imperfectivity which focuses on the continuousness of the internal part of the event. Another type, that of past habituality, is expressed by the lexical auxiliary *used to* + inf.
- 4 Situations (and verbs) can be classed according to their inherent aspectual meaning as states (with no internal change: *It's hot*), as punctual occurrences (*the cable snapped*), as durative occurrences without an end-point: *we walked along* (activities) and as durative with an end-point: *we walked home* (accomplishments).
- 5 The Progressive and Perfect aspects add their communicative perspectives to the inherent aspectual meaning of the verb. Other factors to be taken into account, in order to understand the aspectuality of a particular verbalised situation, are the single or multiple nature of the subject and object, and the presence of Adjuncts.

### 43.1 THE MEANING OF ASPECT

While tense is used to locate events in time, aspect is concerned with the way in which the event is viewed with regard to such considerations as duration and completion when encoded by a verb. This is sometimes defined as the internal temporal contour of the event. Compare, for instance, the following representations of a situation:

**1a** He *locked* the safe.

**1b** He *was locking* the safe.

As regards tense, both are the same – the Past. They both locate the situation in past time. The difference is one of aspect, expressed by the verbal form *was locking* as opposed to the ordinary past *locked*. What we have is a difference of viewpoint and of focus of attention.

A basic aspectual distinction is that of perfectivity vs imperfectivity:

- Perfective: the situation is presented as a complete whole, as if viewed externally, with sharp boundaries, as in **1a**. (Note that perfectivity is not the Perfect aspect!)
- Imperfective: the situation is viewed as an internal stage, without boundaries and is conceptualised as ongoing and incomplete; the beginning and end aren't included in this viewpoint – we see only the internal part, as in **1b**. The Progressive is thus a kind of imperfectivity.

In many languages the perfective/imperfective pairs are related morphologically. Having fewer aspectual inflections, English has fewer grammaticalised aspectual choices than some languages. Take for instance the following examples containing the verb *speak*, together with their Spanish counterparts:

- 2a** He stopped and *spoke* to me in English. (Spanish *habló*)  
**2b** He *spoke* English with a Welsh accent. (Spanish *hablaba*)

The Past tense in English does not distinguish formally between the single event represented in **2a**, whose counterpart in Spanish is marked as perfective (*habló*), and the habitual event represented in **2b**, which is marked as imperfective in Spanish (*hablaba*).

In other words, the Past tense in English is indeterminate between a perfective and an imperfective interpretation. This distinction is captured inferentially by speakers according to the relevance of one meaning or other within a context, but is not grammaticalised.

### 43.2 LEXICAL ASPECT OF ENGLISH VERBS

Before examining the second grammatical aspect available to speakers of English, the Progressive, we turn for a moment to lexical aspect. All verbs (and predicates) have an inherent lexical aspect. We have touched on this concept in outlining the stative vs dynamic distinction, verbal groups and the behaviour of particles in phrasal verbs.

Lexical aspect proves to be an invaluable tool for understanding the functioning of the Progressive and the Perfect aspects. In fact, it is not easy to grasp the contribution made by the grammatical aspects without realising how they interact with the lexical aspect of the verb. In taking a little further the stative–dynamic distinction, we will now be considering whole situations to which the verb brings its own inherent aspectuality, in terms of two factors:

- temporal boundaries: whether the situation is bounded (i.e. has an end-point) or unbounded (has no end-point)
- duration or non-duration (through time)

The diagram illustrates the main situation types.

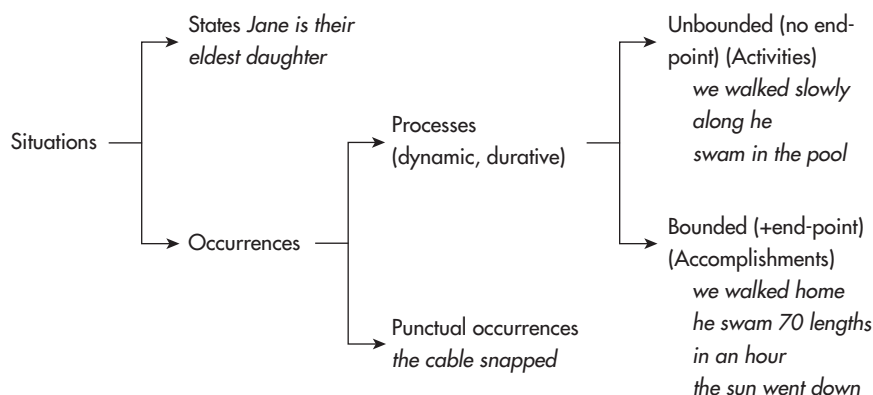


Figure 9.5 Lexical aspect of English verbs.

Reading from left to right in the diagram, situations can be classified as follows:

- 1 **States vs Occurrences.** States have relatively long duration but do not have boundaries: they are unbounded, as with verbs such as *be*, *stand* (The house *stands* on a hill). Occurrences are dynamic and more complex. They are subdivided according to duration into:
- 2 **Processes vs punctual occurrences.** Processes are durative, they last through time, while punctual occurrences occupy little or no appreciable time and have sharp boundaries, e.g. *the cable snapped*.  
(Note that 'process' is used here differently from its use as a general term for the semantic structure of clauses, as discussed in Chapter 5.)
- 3 **Durative processes** are divided into those that have **no end-point** (unbounded Activities), as in *He walked slowly along*, and those that have **a sharp end-point** (bounded Accomplishments), as in *he walked home*. The latter consist of two phases, a durative phase, the walking, and a terminative phase, the arrival home. The durative phase is usually not in focus unless combined with progressiveness (→ 43.5.4).

Note that although the traditional terms, Activities and Accomplishments, suggest human agency, it is not the case that all processes are agentive. *It rained heavily*, for instance, is a non-agentive activity. The key concept here is boundedness, that is, whether or not there is an end-point.

The way in which a situation is viewed can be modified in various ways:

- By adding an adjunct or an adverbial particle such as *up*, which establishes an endpoint: In this way an unbounded situation can be made bounded. Compare:

**unbounded process**

It rained heavily.

The children have grown in your absence.

**bounded process**

It rained heavily *until six o'clock*.

The children have *grown up* in your absence.

- By including a multiple subject or object instead of a single element, a situation is presented as repeated or 'serial'. This effect can also be achieved by adjuncts.

He rang his agent last week. They rang their agents every day last week.

- By grammatical aspect, which we deal with next.

Verbs corresponding to each of the four groups include:

**Stative verbs:** be, belong, seem, stand, lie, have, want, know, understand, see, hear, feel, like, dislike, hate, love.

**Punctual or momentary verbs:** cough, blink, flash, hit, tap, slam, slap, kick, shoot.

**Unbounded-process verbs:** bend, dance, drive, read, sleep, write, walk, work.

**Bounded-completion verbs:** be born, die, fall, drop, arrive, sit down, stand up.

### 43.3 GRAMMATICAL ASPECTS IN ENGLISH

English has two clearly grammaticalised aspectual distinctions: the **Progressive**, as in *was locking* vs the non-progressive in *locked*; and the **Perfect**, as in *has locked* vs the non-perfect *locked*. We have seen that the Perfect is a subtle tense-aspect which is not to be confused with perfectivity. Perfect and Progressive may combine in one VG and are marked for present or past tense:

Present + progressive	is locking
Past + progressive	was locking
Present perfect	has locked
Past perfect	had locked
Present perfect + progressive	has been locking
Past perfect + progressive	had been locking

As we saw in Chapter 8, progressive and perfect aspects also combine with modals, lexical auxiliaries and the passive.

### 43.4 THE MEANING OF THE PROGRESSIVE

The basic function of the English progressive aspect is to indicate a dynamic action in the process of happening. Attention is focused on some internal stage of the process which, cognitively, is viewed as something directly observed, unfolding before our eyes. English makes a grammatical contrast between the progressive and the non-progressive. That is to say, there is an obligatory choice between viewing the situation as in the process of happening and viewing it as a complete whole:

What was he doing?  
(Past + progressive)

What did he do?  
(Past, non-progressive)

There is more to grammatical aspect than obligatory choice, however. The best way to understand grammatical aspect is to see it working in conjunction with the lexical aspect of verbs. The Progressive (and, in a different way, the Perfect) add a communicative perspective to events and states that is different from their lexical aspect.

### 43.5 LEXICAL ASPECT AND THE PROGRESSIVE

As the Progressive is essentially dynamic in character, it lends a dynamic interpretation to whatever verbal action it is applied to. For this reason, not all types of verbal situation admit the Progressive, as in **1a**, and those that do admit it are affected in different ways.

#### 43.5.1 States and the Progressive

Most stative situations are in general incompatible with the progressive. Permanent qualities such as *be tall*, *be red* and relations expressed by such verbs as *own*, *belong*, *seem* are conceptualised in English as invariable and therefore non-dynamic. When normally stative verbs are used with the Progressive the situation is viewed as a temporary state, often with the implication of a type of behaviour or stance, as in **1b**. Compare:

- 1a** \*You *are being tall*, George.      **1b** You *are being far too optimistic*, George.

The stative meanings of verbs such as *see*, *hear* (involuntary perception), *like*, *love*, *hate* (affectivity) and *know*, *believe*, *understand*, *wonder* (cognition) are in general incompatible with the progressive. However, many such verbs have taken on dynamic uses and these admit the progressive, as in the following examples:

I'm *seeing* the doctor tomorrow. (= consulting) (programmed event)  
 Janet is *seeing* her friends off. (= taking leave of)  
 They *were seeing* so much of each other, he was almost one of the family.  
 How *are you liking* your visit to Disneyland? (= enjoying)  
 Pat: Oh, I'm *just loving* it. / I'm *enjoying* it. Ben: Frankly, I'm *hating* it.

#### 43.5.2 Punctual occurrences and the Progressive

With punctual verbs such as *tap*, *kick*, *fire*, *sneeze*, *bounce*, *flash*, *hit* and the progressive, the situation is interpreted as iterative, that is, repeated:

Someone *is tapping* on the wall next door.  
 The rain *is hitting* the windows harder now. [FP6]

These categories are approximate, rather than absolute. Some processes appear to be more punctual than others. Some end-points appear to be more final than others. It would, for instance, be unusual to hear *He's slamming the door* for it is not possible to keep on slamming the same door unless you keep on opening it. *He kept slamming the door* would imply this process, but would nonetheless be unusual. A multiple situation in which several doors slammed can be expressed by the Past tense, as in the following:

Behind the swing door, cupboards opened and slammed shut. Pots cracked against work tops.

Punctual verbs are frequently used metaphorically with the progressive, in which case the resulting situation may perhaps be considered durative:

The recession *is hitting* the stores hard. (= affecting adversely) [ABE]

### 43.5.3 Verbs with no end-point and the Progressive

With those durative verbs that have no end-point (*play, sing, work, talk, dance, rain, snow*, etc.), including verbs of bodily sensation (*ache, hurt, itch, feel cold*), the Progressive has the effect of **perspectivising** the process as seen in progress by an observer (the speaker when the reference point is speech time, the relevant participant when it is in the past):

Something very strange *is going on* here.  
That's what we *were talking* about.

There is a noticeable contrast between the temporary, ongoing nature of the progressive as seen by an observer and unbounded duration expressed by the simple Past or Present:

#### Observed ongoing process

were glowing in the dark.  
Snow was falling gently.  
My back is aching.

#### Unbounded duration Lamps

Lamps glowed in the dark.  
Snow fell gently.  
My back aches.

Similarly, **habitual events**, when combined with the progressive, have limited duration. The use of the progressive implies a temporary situation, whereas the ordinary Present tense suggests greater permanence. Compare:

She is running a fringe theatre group (over the summer holidays). She runs a fringe theatre group (as her permanent job).

### 43.5.4 End-point-completion verbs and the Progressive

With these bounded processes (e.g. *die, heat up, recover*) the effect of the progressive is to bring into our focus of attention the durative phase of the process before the endpoint:

The atmosphere *is heating up* and the seas are rising. [CER]  
Last night the 53-year-old father-of-two *was recovering* in intensive care. [CH2]

Plurality can lead to an interpretation of multiple accomplishments. *Arrive*, with a singular subject, will be interpreted as a single event, the Progressive stretching the stage previous to the endpoint, as in *Hurry! The taxi is arriving*. With a plural subject and the progressive, *arrive* will be interpreted as a series of arrivals: *The guests are arriving*.



### 43.6 THE DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF THE PROGRESSIVE

The Progressive presents an ongoing event as something directly observed **in relation to** some point in time. This is either explicitly mentioned, as in **1** and **2** or else inferred as coinciding with speech time, **3**:

- 1** By the end of January 1919 the main outlines of the peace settlement *were emerging*. (*Paris 1919*)
- 2** At half-past five, crowds *were pouring* into the subways.
- 3** What *are you doing*? I'm *switching on* the answer-phone. (coincides with speech time)

Progressive aspect provides a frame within which another event takes place. That is to say, the time-frame of the progressive event includes the bounded event:

We finally *reach* the supermarket and they *are just closing* the doors.  
 When they awoke, the frost *was melting* on the window and *freezing* into thin sheets of ice over the cold glass.  
 The girls *were wearing* their school uniforms when they came to my house.  
 (temporary state framing bounded event in simple past 'came')

Two simple forms, by contrast, are normally interpreted as a sequence:

We finally *reach* the supermarket and they *close* the doors.  
 Crowds *poured* into the subways and *boarded* the trains.

### 43.7 PRESENT PERFECT AND PROGRESSIVE ASPECTS COMBINED

When these two aspects combine in one VG, the progressive brings into focus the continuous nature of the situation, whereas the Perfect leads the situation from an indefinite time in the past up to the present, usually to speech time. The possible situations include:

**(a) continuous state lasting up to the present**

*I have been wanting* to meet him for ages.  
*He has been hearing better since he started using the hearing-aid*

**(b) continuous habitual process**

The government has been spending beyond its means. [416]  
 Leo, now eight, has been skiing for only two years.

**(c) iterative occurrence lasting up to the present**

*You have been coughing* since you got up.

**(d) unbounded situations lasting up to the present**

*We have been waiting here* for some time.

**(e) normally bounded situations become unbounded**

I have been fixing the lamp.  
So people have been taping this talk?

The non-progressive forms would remain bounded: I *have fixed* the lamp, So people *have taped* this talk?

The Past Perfect Progressive combines the anteriority of the Past Perfect with the features of the Progressive:

He *had been seeing* her quite a lot at that time.

The unbounded result does not necessarily mean that the event was not completed; simply that the Perfect Progressive concentrates on the internal phase of the process.

**43.8 HABITUALITY: PAST HABIT OR STATE**

Progressiveness is considered here as a type of imperfectivity, or incompleteness. Other types of imperfectivity include habituality and iterativity. **Habituality** is, as we have seen, expressed by both present and past tenses in English. Present tense uses are almost invariably imperfective, the only perfective uses being performatives (e.g. *I promise not to be late*) and the others classed as 'instantaneous present'. **Past habit or state** is expressed by the lexical auxiliary *used to* + *infinitive* as in the following examples. There is a strong pragmatic implication that the state or event no longer holds:

He knew he *used to speak* too fast.  
We *used to see* each other quite often.  
There *used to be* trees all round this square.

*Used to* avoids the temporal indeterminacy of the past tense (e.g. *visited* = on one occasion or on many occasions) by making clear the habitual. Compare:

She visited us. (perfective or imperfective)  
She *used to visit* us. (imperfective only)

Furthermore, although a time expression such as *not any longer* may be added, the implicit meaning of discontinued habit is so strong that an additional expression is unnecessary.

'He's the top tennis player,' Westfield said, 'the grand slammer. He's played in all the big places.'  
'He *used to*. Doesn't play anymore.'

*Used to* + *infinitive* is not to be confused with *be used to* + *-ing* 'be accustomed to' + *-ing* as in: He *is not used to* working late hours.

**Iterativity** is interpreted from the progressive with punctual verbs, and also from *keep on/continue* + *-ing* (*kept on shouting*) and from the phrasal verb particle *away* (*he*

*hammered away*). As regards perfectivity, ingressive aspect focuses on the initial point of a situation and egressive aspect on the end-point. These are not expressed by inflections in English, but by combinations such as (*start to rain/raining*) and phrasal verb particles (e.g. *She came to*, *We ended up exhausted*).

*Summary of certain aspectual distinctions realised in English in the lexico-grammar*

Prospective: I am going to write a note

Immediate prospective: I am about to write a note

Ingressive: I started to write a note    Progressive: I am/was writing a note    Iterative: I kept writing notes

Habitual in the past: I used to write notes

Egressive: Finish writing the note

Retrospective, Recent Perfect: I have just written a note

Retrospective, Perfect: I have written a note.

# EXPRESSING ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EVENT

## UNIT 44

### Modality

#### SUMMARY

- 1 Modality is the semantic category by which speakers express two different kinds of attitude towards the event.
- 2 One attitude is that of assessing the truth of the proposition or the potential occurrence of the event in terms of modal certainty, probability or possibility. This is epistemic modality as in *The key must be here somewhere. It may be in your pocket.*
- 3 A different kind of attitude is expressed when speakers intervene in the speech event, by laying down obligations or giving permission. This is deontic modality as in *You must go now; the others may stay.*
- 4 The modal auxiliaries (except *can*) in English express both types of modal meanings, which have in common the fact that they express the speaker's attitude to a potential event. Closely related to these meanings are those of ability and dynamic possibility as in *We can take the early train.* In addition, a number of other forms are available for the expression of particular modal meanings.

#### 44.1 THE MEANING AND FUNCTIONS OF MODALITY

Modality deals with speakers' attitudes towards a state of affairs. It is to be understood as a semantic category which covers such notions as possibility, probability, necessity, volition, obligation and permission.

Each of these modal concepts is realised by the core modals in two related clusters of meanings: the epistemic, based on the Greek word for knowledge, and the deontic, based on the Greek word for obligation. The epistemic meaning is used by a speaker to assess the possibility, probability or otherwise of a state of affairs, according to the speaker's limited knowledge or belief. An unmodalised utterance, by contrast states a plain fact or assertion. Compare:

- 1 That man over there is the Queen's bodyguard. (assertion)
- 2 That man over there *must* be the Queen's bodyguard. (inference)
- 3 That man over there *may / might / could* be the Queen's bodyguard. (possibility)

With the second cluster of meanings, the deontic, the speaker brings about an action, using modals to express different degrees of obligation, advisability or permission.

- 4 The opening ceremony starts in half an hour. (a plain assertion)
- 5 I *must* leave now. (presented as a binding, inescapable obligation)
- 6 You *should / ought to / had better* come, too. (presented as less binding, but desirable)
- 7 The rest of you *may stay / can stay*. (presented as permission)

Both epistemic and deontic meanings are linked by the concepts of necessity and possibility. Epistemic meanings tend to correlate with stative verbs, as in **2** and **3**, and can take non-human subjects, including *there* (*there must be some mistake*). Deontic meanings tend to correlate with human subjects as agents of dynamic verbs, as in **5** and **6**. Essentially, both are subjective: the speaker is involved; and by means of modality, speakers are enabled to carry out two important communicative functions:

- to comment on and evaluate interpretations of reality,
- to intervene and bring about changes in events.

A third type, dynamic modality, is less central, as it is concerned with ability and natural tendency, but also overlaps as regards permission (*can*) with epistemic modal *may*. These meanings are explained and illustrated in 44.6.

## 44.2 FORMS OF MODAL VERBS

Modality covers a broad semantic area and can be expressed by many forms.

- (a) In English, the core forms are the nine modal auxiliaries (→ 37.2) repeated here: *can, could, may, might, will, shall, would, should, must*. These are invariant forms which are followed by a bare infinitive; they negate with 'not' and invert with the subject in yes-no questions.
- (b) The lexical-modal verbs or auxiliaries listed in 37.3, composed of *be* or *have* + usually another element + infinitive (have to, have got to, be bound to, be supposed to, had better, be likely to etc.)
- (c) There is also a cluster of semi-modal verbs: *dare, need, ought*. These verbs behave syntactically like modals (*daren't, needn't, oughtn't*) as in 8 and 9. They are fairly rare and are mainly used in BrE. *Dare* and *need* are also used as full lexical verbs, as in 10 and 11. AmE favours the latter option. *Ought* is the only modal to be followed by a *to*-infinitive.

- 8 I *daren't* say anything to her about the broken vase.
- 9 You *needn't* wait.
- 10 *Did* he *dare* to ask you if you *needed* anything?
- 11 How much money *do* you *need*?

Other means of expressing modality are mainly lexical: they comprise modal adverbs, adjectives, nouns and verbs, and will not be discussed in this chapter. These other modal elements tend to reinforce the core modals, as in 'I'm *sure* she *couldn't possibly* have said that'. This is sometimes called *modal harmony* and illustrates how modality can be expressed not simply at one point in an utterance by a modal auxiliary, but at different points right through the clause.

### 44.3 REALISATIONS OF MODAL MEANINGS

We now turn to the actual uses of the core modals, comparing the epistemic uses with the deontic and the dynamic. Lexical modal auxiliaries and semi-modals are included where relevant.

#### 44.3.1 Modal certainty: *will*, *must*, *be bound to*

What we call modal certainty is not the hundred per cent certainty of a categorical assertion. If for instance I know for a fact that Pat forgot your birthday, I simply say 'Pat forgot your birthday'. If instead I say 'Pat *must* have forgotten your birthday', or 'Pat *may* have forgotten' I am admitting an element of doubt. Modal certainty is therefore diminished certainty, chosen because either the speaker's knowledge does not permit a plain assertion or because the speaker does not want to exteriorise commitment at that particular moment in an interpersonal interaction. In many cases, reasons of politeness or the desire to avoid commitment provide the motivation for modalising an assertion.

**Will** and **must** are the core modals that most strongly express modal certainty.

The concert *will* be over now.

The concert *must* be over.

*Assumption or prediction: will, shall*

Epistemic **will** expresses a confident assumption by the speaker as observer, based on experience, known facts or what is usually the case. It can be glossed by 'I assume that . . .':

Her mother *will* know her age.

That'*ll* be the postman.

She'*ll* understand, *won't* she?

*Will* + *have* + *en* expresses a prediction made at speech time (present) with reference to an action carried out previously:

The fact is many consumers *will have cut back* (on fuel) in order to save money in the face of spiralling prices (of energy) (*The Guardian*) .

*Will* can also be used to refer to future time, expressing a modal judgement or prediction.:

There *will* be time for a few questions after the lecture.

Scotland *will* be dry tomorrow with a fair amount of cloud. (weather forecast).

Any travel agency *will* arrange it for you.

When the orientation frame is past time, as in a narrative, the remote form **would** is used:

- A: Bill *would* be about thirty when I first met him. He *'ll* be about forty-five now.  
 B: Oh no. He *must* be at least fifty.

Predictive **shall** is much less common than *will*. It is used by some speakers for the 1st person singular and plural (→ 27.5) and, like *will*, is usually contracted, though not by all speakers, to *'ll* (I'll, we'll):

I must have an early night, otherwise I *shall* (I'll) be worn out tomorrow.

### 44.3.2 Volition: willingness and intention *will*, *shall*, *'ll*

#### *Willingness*

This can be paraphrased by *be willing to*. Willingness is expressed in speech time, while the action predicated by the main verb either coincides with speech time or refers to a future event. Unwillingness is expressed by *will not*, more usually contracted to *won't*:

*Will* you give a donation to the Wildlife Society?  
 Yes, I *will*. I'm sorry, I *won't*.

*Will* may also be used with inanimate objects when they apparently respond badly to what is expected of them.

The car *won't* start.

The meaning of willingness, realised by *will*, readily lends itself to various pragmatic uses. *Will* would be interpreted as a directive in *Will you listen to me and stop interrupting?* and as a polite offer followed by acceptance in *Will you have another whisky? Yes, I will*.

Interrogative *shall* is used in the 1st person to consult the addressee's wishes or to ask for advice. This is the most widespread use of *shall* in present-day English:

*Shall* I carry those bags for you?  
*Shall* we go home now?

#### *Intention*

This can be glossed by *intend to*. When a speaker expresses an intention, the intention naturally coincides with speech time, but the intended action is in the future:

We'll pick you up outside your house at 9.  
 I *shall* /I'll be back in a minute.

The speaker's commitment in using these modals is as strong as in the epistemic meanings. For this reason, the modals of intention can have the force of either a promise or a threat, according to whether the action is beneficial to the addressee or otherwise. These interpretations are reinforced by the addition of such verbs as *promise* and *warn*.

They *shall* be paid tomorrow. (formal)  
 I *shan't* overcharge you, I assure you. (formal)  
 I'll bring you something back from Paris, I *promise*.  
 I *warn* you that if you keep talking in this way, I'll hang up.

The full form *shall* /negative *shan't* used with a 2nd or 3rd person subject counts as the speaker's guarantee.

### 44.3.3 Logical necessity: *must*, *be bound to* (BrE), *have to* (AmE)

The second type of epistemic modal certainty is that of logical necessity, meaning 'it is necessarily the case that the assertion is true'. *Must* is the modal most used in BrE to express strong conviction based on deduction or inference from evidence, which may or may not be stated. *The concert must be over* might be said, for instance if the speaker sees that the lights are off or the concert hall is closed. When B contradicts A saying *Oh no. He must be at least fifty*, *must* indicates that B does not actually know Bill's age but is convinced that Bill is fifty at least. With *will* and *must*, the speaker does not admit any possibility of the assertion not being true. For this reason, adding 'but it/he may not be' would result in a contradiction: '*He must be at least fifty, \*but he may not be*' is contradictory.

*Must* in general is far more frequent in BrE than in AmE, but the logical-predictive meaning of *must* in AmE is more common than its obligation meaning as in *I/you must leave now*. For both meanings AmE prefers the lexical verb *have to*. This alternative is also making headway in spoken BrE, since it is more objective than subjective *must* with the meaning of logical necessity, and also with that of obligation, as we shall see in 44.3.5:

The key *must* be in your pocket. (BrE and AmE)

The key *has to* be in your pocket. (AmE and with younger speakers of BrE)

The key *is bound to* be /*is sure to* be in your pocket. (BrE)

If Jane is Pat's sister and Jill is Jane's daughter, Pat *must* be Jill's aunt. (This example illustrates a strict interpretation of logical necessity ('this is the only possibility there is'.))

### 44.3.4 Probability or reasonable inference: *should*, *ought*

A more flexible degree of prediction is expressed by *should* and the less common *ought*. A driver might say, studying a map, 'It *should* be easy to reach York from here', glossed as 'it is probably easy'. Here we have the notion of probability or what is reasonable to expect, based on deduction from facts known to the speaker.

There *shouldn't* be any difficulties.  
 We *should* have enough petrol.

The main semantic feature distinguishing these modals from *must* and *will* is that they implicitly admit non-fulfilment of the predicated event, whereas *must* and *will* do not. We can say:



Where's the map? *It should / ought* to be here in the glove compartment, but it isn't,  
but not:

Where's the map? \**It must* be here, but it isn't.

We *should / ought* to have reached York by now, but we haven't,  
but not

\*We *must have* reached York by now, but we haven't.

The probability meaning of *should* and *ought* is sometimes merged with that of non-binding obligation (→ 44.5.4), as in *For this price, the hotel should be / ought to be much better*, i.e. one would expect it to be better / it has the obligation to be better.

*Likely* and the noun *likelihood*, with the corresponding negative forms *unlikely* and *unlikelihood*, unambiguously express probability:

All flights are *likely* to be delayed.

There's no *likelihood* of frost tonight.

The most *likely* outcome of Saturday's match is a draw.

#### 44.3.5 Possibility: *may, might, could*

Weaker conviction regarding the truth of an assertion is expressed as the epistemic possibility of an event occurring or being true. English speakers make use of the modal auxiliaries *may, might* and *could*, all glossed as 'it is possible that . . . '.

This *may* be a dinosaur's footprint.

This *might* be a dinosaur's footprint.

This *could* be a dinosaur's footprint.

*Might* and *could*, though historically past forms, do not in such cases refer to past time, but to a present state of affairs. Past time is expressed by *have + en*.

This *may/might/could have been* a dinosaur's footprint.

*Can* is not used in positive declarative clauses that express epistemic possibility. Instead, *could* has been taken up for this purpose. *Can't* replaces *must*, however, in the negation of possibility (= it is not possible that). (The modal adverb *possibly* is typically added for emphasis):

It *can't possibly* be a dinosaur's footprint.

It is not easy to claim with certainty that *may, might* and *could* represent points on a scale of confidence or, in other words, that one or other expresses either a stronger or a remoter possibility. In the positive examples, the three modals are interchangeable, with little difference to the message. They may all occur in one utterance, as in the following:

I *may* be a few minutes late; it *might* be seven o'clock before I can get away; it *could* even be half-past.

They can all be intensified by (*very*) *well*, which heightens the possibility, and by *just about*, which lowers it:

It could *very well* /*just about* be a dinosaur's footprint.

We must consider where we've been before in this House, that our intelligence as it stands *might just be wrong* because it was before and we've got to be very very hard in testing it . . . (David Davies in the House of Commons).

The use of these modals in the press seems to suggest *may* and *might* as tentative, with *could* expressing a stronger possibility, as shown in these extracts from *The Guardian*:

The change in Britain's ethnic make-up *may* already be enough to cost (the Government) the next election.

The ethnic minority vote *could* be a key factor in the next elections.

(with regard to fracking) In Texas alone, about 30 communities *could* run out of water by the end of the year.

## 44.4 MODAL OBLIGATION

### 44.4.1 Inescapable obligation and necessity: *must*, *have to*, *have got to*, *gotta*, *shall*

In English, deontic obligation and necessity can be thought of as an inescapable duty or requirement, realised by *must*, *have to*, *have got to*, and in a lesser degree by *shall*; or else simply as an advisable course of action, realised by *should* and *ought*. *Must* can have the force of a command.

#### *Must as a modal of obligation*

When realised by *must* and with the addressee as subject, obligation can have the force of a direct command, as in **1**, although modal lexical verbs are more explicit. Compare *You must go* with *I urge you to go*, *I order you to go*. *Order* with a 1st person subject is too strong for ordinary use.

- 1** You *must* try harder.
- 2** We *must* do better than this. (MP after an election result, sharing the responsibility with others)

This force derives from the fact that (a) in certain cultural contexts such as school, family, the Armed Forces, the speaker has authority over the addressee, who is the subject 'you'; (b) the speaker takes the responsibility for the action being carried out; and (c) the verb is agentive and in active voice.

The force of *must* is diminished if one of these factors is modified, providing useful strategies to mitigate the directness of the obligation, although not its inescapability. Such is the case in **3**.

- 3 Crimes of violence *must* be punished. (non-human subject, authority doesn't reside in the speaker, passive voice)
- 4 Applications *must* be in by May 1st. (non-agentive verb; passive, 3rd person subject)

When no human control is implied, the meaning is that of deontic necessity.

- 5 Lizards *must* hibernate if they are to survive the winter. (it is necessarily the case that)

### *Shall, have to, have got to, gotta as modals of obligation*

Of all the modals of obligation, *shall* is the most imperious, direct and subjective, and for this reason is little used in the spoken language. It occurs in legal and other formal contexts such as the regulations of the Olympic Games.

Of the lexical modals, *have to* is objective (the obligation is external), and *have got to* subjective (the obligation is internal). Compare **2** and **3**:

Syntactically, *have to*, unlike *must* and *have got to*, has non-finite forms, *having to* and *have to*. Both *have to* and *have got to* have a past form *had (got) to*. Only *have to* can combine with the modal auxiliaries (\**may have got to / may have to*), as in:

*I may have to go to Washington for a few days .*

\**I may have got to go to Washington for a few days.*

*Must* has no past form as it is, historically, itself a past form. Forms of *have to* are therefore brought in to express past and future obligation.

- 1 All competitors in the Games *shall* wear a number.
- 2 *I've got to* go now. (contracted colloquially to *I gotta go* now, especially in AmE) (obligation internal)
- 3 *I have to* go and see the Dean. (obligation external, both AmE and BrE)
- 4 It has to be unacceptable. (Foreign Secretary William Hague referring to chemical warfare)
- 5 We *had to* pay in advance. We'll *have to* pay in advance. (external)

### **44.4.2 Non-binding obligation: should, ought**

*Should* and *ought* express a less strong obligation, which is not binding and may be unfulfilled. Referring to a past event, with *should* and *ought + have + en*, the speaker implies that the obligation was not fulfilled, as in **3**:

- 1 People *should* drive more carefully.
- 2 You really *ought* to cut down on smoking.
- 3 I *should have* texted my mother.

These modals are used instead of *must* when the speaker lacks authority to impose the obligation. Tact, politeness or a lack of conviction of the absolute necessity of the predicated action are further motivations. The following invented advertisement clearly distinguishes the necessary from the merely desirable:

Candidates *must* be university graduates.  
 Candidates *must* be between 21 and 35.  
 Candidates *should* have knowledge of two foreign languages.  
 Candidates *should* have at least three years' experience.

Functionally, these modal meanings are used to establish and maintain social relations and interaction. Through them speakers influence and control others, and commit themselves to certain courses of action. They may bring about changes in their surroundings by obligations which are met, permissions given, promises kept, and so on.

#### 44.4.3 Negation of the modals *must* and *may*

Negation of the modal verbs *must* and *may* is complex because either the modal concept (in the 'a' examples) or the lexical concept (in the 'b' examples) can be negated.

##### 1. Obligation and permission (intrinsic meanings)

positive		negative	meaning
You <b>must</b> go now	a <sub>1</sub>	You <b>needn't</b> go now	= you are not obliged to go
You <b>must</b> go now	a <sub>2</sub>	You <b>don't have to</b> go now	= you are not obliged to go
	b	You <b>must</b> not (mustn't) go	= you are obliged not to go
You <b>may</b> go now	a	You <b>may</b> not/ <b>can't</b> go	= you have not permission to go
	b	You <b>may/can</b> not go	= you have permission not to go

##### 2. Necessity and possibility (extrinsic meanings)

positive		negative	meaning
It <b>must</b> be true	a	It <b>can't</b> be true	= It is not possible that it is true
It <b>must</b> be true	b <sub>1</sub>	It <b>needn't</b> be true	= It is not necessarily true
	b <sub>2</sub>	It <b>doesn't have to</b> be true	= It's not necessarily true
It <b>may</b> be true	(a)	It <b>can't</b> be true	= It is not possible that it is true
	(b)	It <b>may</b> not be true	= It is possible that it is not true

When *might* and *could* express possibility, they negate in the same way as *may*, with replacement by *can't* for modal negation and *not* to negate the lexical verb.

*Need not* (*needn't*) is often replaced by the objective form *doesn't/don't have to* in both kinds of modal meaning, the epistemic and the deontic. *Have to* is also used by many speakers in the interrogative: *Do you have to go now?* for *Need you go now?*, especially in the meaning of obligation. Questioning is less common with meanings of possibility and necessity, for example: *Does it have to be true?*

*Mustn't* is usually reserved for the obligation meaning of *must*, for example, We *mustn't* forget to ask Sue to water the plants (= obligation not to forget).

*May* in its meaning of permission does not have a full set of unambiguous forms: *you may not go* serves for both modal and lexical negation. The meaning 'you have permission not to go' can be conveyed by stressing the negative particle *not* – *You may **not** go, if you like.*

*Can* and *can't* have replaced *may/may not* in the expression of permission except in the most formal contexts.

*Can't*, *needn't* and *don't have to* negate and question the modal concept. When the lexical concept is negated, this is achieved by *not*, which can be attached as *n't* to *must* (*mayn't* is not normally used).

*Can't* is the usual form used to negate *must* (necessity) and *may* (possibility).

#### 44.4.4 Summary of epistemic (predictive) modal and lexico-modal auxiliaries and their meanings

He will be there by now.	(assumption/prediction based on experience or common sense)
I shall be back before you.	(prediction)
He must be there by now.	(logical necessity, deduction)
He can't be there yet.	(logical necessity, negative, subjective, deduction)
He's bound to be there.	(modal certainty + inevitability)
He has to be there by now.	(logical necessity, objective, deduction)
He's likely to be there by now.	(probability)
He should be there by now.	(reasonable inference, based on deduction)
He could be there by now.	(strong possibility, probability)
He might be there by now.	(neutral possibility)
He may be there by now.	(weak possibility)

#### 44.4.5 Summary of deontic (obligative) modal and lexico-modal auxiliaries and their meanings

Will you sign here?	(willingness)
Shall we go to the theatre?	(suggestion, consulting addressee)
I'll let you know tomorrow.	(intention)
You must/gotta try harder.	(inescapable obligation formal and informal)
You have to try harder	(inescapable obligation, objective)
We must go/we've got to go/gotta go.	(inescapable obligation self-imposed)
You needn't go; You don't have to go.	(absence of obligation)
All competitors shall wear a number.	(inescapable obligation, formal)
You should drive more carefully.	(medium obligation, not necessarily fulfilled)
You can do it.	(ability, possibility, informal permission)
It can be cold in Edinburgh.	(tendency)
You may go now.	(permission, formal)
You can go now.	(permission, informal)

#### 44.5 DYNAMIC MODALITY: ABILITY, POSSIBILITY, PERMISSION, PROPENSITY, TENDENCY: CAN, BE ABLE, COULD, WILL, WOULD, MAY

Dynamic modality expresses properties or dispositions of the subject referent

##### 44.5.1 Ability, dynamic possibility, permission, propensity

*Can* (negative *can't*, *cannot*) is the modal verb that expresses these three types of dynamic modality:

###### *Ability*

*Can* you reach the top shelf? (Are you able to reach . . . ?)

Ability includes mental and acquired accomplishments:

*Can* you read Arabic? (Are you able /Do you know how to read Arabic?)  
If you *can't* swim, stay close to the shore. (If you are not able to swim . . . )

###### *Possibility*

This paint *can* be applied with a spray. (It is possible to apply this paint . . . /for this paint to be applied) (dynamic possibility)

It is important to distinguish dynamic possibility, which is glossed as 'It is possible to . . . /for' from epistemic (predictive) possibility, which is glossed as 'It is possible that . . . '.

*Can* is not used for the expression of epistemic possibility ( \*It can be true) except as the negation of must (It *can't* be true (→ 44.4.3). Compare:

I <i>can</i> be there by 10.	(= It is possible for me to be there by 10) (dynamic possibility)
I <i>may</i> / <i>might</i> be there by 10.	(= It is possible that I may /might be there by 10) (epistemic possibility)
I <i>could</i> be there by 10.	(either predictive or dynamic meanings, or both)

###### *Permission: can, may*

**May** is a more formal alternative to *can* in the meanings of permission , and is extended to such meanings as polite offer:

*May* I come in? Yes, you *may*. (permission to enter requested and granted)  
*May* I help you with the luggage? (polite offer)

Permission in a past event is expressed by *be allowed to*: They *were allowed to* go.

**Can** is far less formal than *may*, and has supplanted *may* except in the most formal registers.

*Can* we smoke in here? I'm afraid not. You *may not* / *can't* smoke.  
*Can* I borrow your car? Oh, all right, but be careful.

**Might** is sometimes used for an indirect request:

You *might* fetch me a coke and a packet of crisps.  
**Can** is used with verbs of perception such as *see, hear, feel* and *taste*, and with cognitive verbs such as *imagine, guess, grasp* and *understand*:  
 I *can't hear* anything with all this noise. \*I don't hear  
*Can* you *see* the time on Big Ben over there?  
 I *can taste* the pepper in this soup.  
*Can* you *smell* gas?  
 I *can feel* the spray from the waterfall on my face.  
 You *can imagine* how we felt.  
 The students *couldn't follow* his train of thought.

*Could* / *was able* as the past of *can*

Dynamic *could* is used as the past of *can* only to express an action or state extended indefinitely, that is, imperfective aspect. *Was/were able* is used for single, holistic achievements:

You *could* hear the sound of the rocket in the air.  
 He *was able* to escape in time. (not \*he *could* escape)

This distinction is obligatory only in the affirmative and interrogative. In the negative, *couldn't* and *be able* are interpreted as having the same result and are therefore interchangeable.

He *wasn't able* to escape; he *couldn't* escape.

Since *can* has no infinitive, *be able* is used whenever an infinitive is required, as in:

She would like *to be able* to dive.  
 I would have helped you if I *had been able* to.

#### 44.5.2 Propensity, tendency

*Propensity/tendency* – *can, will, would*

This is a dynamic meaning which involves a property or a propensity of the subject referent. From our knowledge of people and things we are able to predict not only single instances of behaviour but regular occurrences. *Would* is used in a past time-frame:

It *can* be very cold in Edinburgh in August.  
 These tablets *can* cause drowsiness.  
 Ice *will* melt at room temperature.  
 They *would* sit and gossip for hours.

Heavy stress on **will** and **would** is emotive and can suggest that the propensity is not welcome to the hearer, as in *He WILL ring up late at night, asking silly questions.*

#### 44.6 Hypothetical uses of the modals

Apart from their other meanings, the past form modals *would*, *might* and *could* can be used in a 'remote' or hypothetical sense in both main and subordinate clauses. Compare:

I <i>will</i> help you if I <i>can</i>	I <i>would</i> help you if I <i>could</i> .
She <i>may</i> pass if she works hard.	She <i>might</i> pass if she worked harder.

To refer to a past event *have + en* is used. The event is understood to be contrary to fact:

I *would* have helped you if I had been able to.  
She *would/might* have passed if she had worked harder.

*Should* is also used, especially in BrE, as the replacement of a subjunctive in referring to states of affairs that may exist or come to happen:

It is only natural that they *should* want a holiday.  
I am amazed he *should* think it is worth trying.

For further uses of *should* in conditional clauses, → 35.2.

In the following extract from David Lodge's novel *How Far Can You Go?*, in which members of a family debate possible courses of action, the modal meanings are more numerous in the dialogue than in the narrative. What is the reason for this?

Their Dad *would be coming*<sup>1</sup> home the next day and they *would*<sup>2</sup> have to<sup>3</sup> look after him until he was too ill to stay out of hospital. The question was, *should*<sup>4</sup> he be told?

'How long . . . ?' somebody wondered.<sup>5</sup> The doctor hadn't been specific. A matter of months rather than weeks. One *could*<sup>6</sup> never be sure. 'Who *would*<sup>7</sup> tell him?' 'I *couldn't*. I just *couldn't*,<sup>8</sup>' said their mother and wept. 'I *would*,<sup>9</sup>' said Angela, 'if we agreed that was the right thing to do.' 'Why tell him?' said the youngest sister. 'It *would*<sup>10</sup> just be cruel.' 'But if he asks . . . ' said another. 'Are you going to<sup>11</sup> lie to your own Dad?'

<sup>1</sup>past time prediction; <sup>2</sup>past time prediction; <sup>3</sup>obligation; <sup>4</sup>advisability; <sup>5</sup>doubt; <sup>6</sup>intrinsic possibility; <sup>7</sup>willingness; <sup>8</sup>incapability; <sup>9</sup>willingness; <sup>10</sup>hypothetical; <sup>11</sup>intention.

#### FURTHER READING

On tense: Brazil (1995); Givón (2001a); Kravchenko (2002); Langacker (1991). On situation types: Huddleston and Pullum (2002); Mourelatos (1981). On Perfect aspect McCoard (1978); Stoevsky (2000). On modality Coates (1983); Perkins 1983.



## EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 9

### Viewpoints on events: Tense, aspect and modality

#### Unit 41

- 1 †Identify the Present tense verb in each sentence as a state or an event. If an event, is it instantaneous, habitual, 'historic', past referring, reporting or quotative?

- (1) They cycle to work on a tandem most days.
- (2) Ignorance is bliss.
- (3) I had just got off the bus when up comes this guy and asks me for a light.
- (4) And he's like 'But she looks just like a little kid.'
- (5) Finally, I plug in and press the button.
- (6) Wounded tell of terror march.
- (7) Many believe that violence on television is partly the cause of violence in real life.
- (8) Clinical tests prove conclusively that untreated gum disease leads to tooth loss.

- 2 †Decide which is more meaningful, the Past or the Perfect, in the sentences below and write the correct form of the verb (given in brackets) below:

- (1) We \_\_\_\_\_ (set off) early and \_\_\_\_\_ (leave) the car by the bridge.
- (2) 'I \_\_\_\_\_ (get) it,' he shouted, 'I think I really \_\_\_\_\_ (get) it.'
- (3) During his short lifetime, he \_\_\_\_\_ (compose) some of the most beautiful organ music of his time.
- (4) How many plays \_\_\_\_\_ Shakespeare (write)?
- (5) I \_\_\_\_\_ (wake up) late this morning and \_\_\_\_\_ (have) any breakfast yet.
- (6) What \_\_\_\_\_ you (say) your name \_\_\_\_\_ (be)?
- (7) \_\_\_\_\_ you (come) for a work permit, or for something else?
- (8) When \_\_\_\_\_ your son (qualify) as a doctor?
- (9) \_\_\_\_\_ the children (like) the circus?
- (10) I'm afraid there \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a mistake. You \_\_\_\_\_ (put, passive) in the wrong group.

#### Unit 42

- 1 †Discuss the difference in meaning between the use of Past tense and Perfect aspect in the following sentences. What pragmatic inferences would be made to establish the psychological link between past and present time in the case of the Perfect uses?

- (1) (a) His last film set a new standard in horror and violence.  
(b) His latest film has set a new standard in horror and violence.
- (2) (a) I was a colleague of hers, working in the same Department, for several years.  
(b) I have been a colleague of hers, working in the same Department, for several years.
- (3) (a) How far did you get?  
(b) How far have you got?
- (4) (a) Where did you go?  
(b) Where have you been?
- (5) (a) What did you do?  
(b) What have you done?
- (6) (a) She made a fool of herself in public.

- (b) She has made a fool of herself in public.
- (7) (a) Smart mobile phones suddenly became popular.
- (b) Smart mobile phones have suddenly become popular.
- (8) (a) That report that you gave us has a couple of serious errors.
- (b) That report that you've just given us has a couple of serious errors.

**2** †Use the Past Perfect of the verb in brackets to complete each of the following:

- (1) This was the first time I \_\_\_\_\_ (be) inside the Tower of London, although I \_\_\_\_\_ (see) it from the outside.
- (2) The children \_\_\_\_\_ (fall) asleep on the train and \_\_\_\_\_ (sleep) for the rest of the journey.
- (3) Tim wished he \_\_\_\_\_ (not spend) all his money on gambling.
- (4) Paul \_\_\_\_\_ (forget) he \_\_\_\_\_ (invite) us to see his new house and when we arrived he \_\_\_\_\_ (go out).

†In the following short news item from *The Week*, identify each of the verb combinations as Past, Present, Present or Past Perfect:

Three years after it was stolen from a café in Euston Station,<sup>1</sup> a £1.2m Stradivarius violin has finally been returned to its owner.<sup>2</sup> Min-Jin Kym, an internationally acclaimed musician, had played the instrument since she was a teenager,<sup>3</sup> and described its theft as a "crushing blow".<sup>4</sup> But after a mystery tip-off to police two weeks ago, the violin was discovered in a warehouse in the Midlands.<sup>5</sup> Kym said<sup>6</sup> she had gone from "devastation to the other end of the scale".<sup>7</sup>

## UNIT 43

**1** †Discussion: Comment on the aspectual meaning of the past tense in: *His rubber-soled shoes squeaked on the vinyl floor*. Does it refer to one occurrence or more?

**2** †Decide whether the situation expressed in each sentence below is bounded (with an end-point) or unbounded (without an end-point).

- (1) They dumped their bags on the floor.
- (2) They are negotiating with the Chinese to buy a panda.
- (3) The west wind blows constantly across the beaches of Almería.
- (4) The cat pounced on the unwary mouse.
- (5) Snow fell gently on the city streets.
- (6) He dragged himself along the road.
- (7) A man in a pin-striped suit stepped off the bus.
- (8) He slipped the pen into his pocket.
- (9) The sofa cast a shadow on the wall.
- (10) She handed me the paper bag containing the mushrooms.

**3** †Put the main verb in each of the sentences below into the Progressive, and say what kind of meaning ensues:

- (1) Paul drove us home.
- (2) Sue crossed the street when she saw us.
- (3) The children jumped up and down with excitement.
- (4) I have tried to trace an old friend.

- (5) Peter sees the Health Officer tomorrow.
- (6) A big fire crackled in the grate.
- (7) I shiver and cough.
- (8) The police car pulled up in front of the hotel.

## Unit 44

1 †Modals in context: Identify the meaning of the italicised words in the following text :

- (a) 'He surrounds himself with people that want to win. He taught me to win at all costs. Quite simple. *Must* win. No secret to it. But you *have to* manage your way, because if you fail, it's you that's done it.' [*He* refers to Sir Alex Ferguson, the former manager of Manchester United FC]
- (b) Motorists who use their mobile phones at the wheel *are to* face fines of up to a thousand pounds from this December. But the real question *may* be whether these fines *can* or *could* be enforced.

2 †Supply the modal verb which corresponds to the paraphrase in each case. In some cases more than one form is acceptable:

- (1) I \_\_\_\_\_ let you know as soon as I have any news. (intention, promise)
- (2) We \_\_\_\_\_ get away until the end of August. (It will not be possible for us to get away.)
- (3) There \_\_\_\_\_ be something burning. I can smell it. (It is necessarily the case that . . .)
- (4) The banks \_\_\_\_\_ be closed at this time of day. (prediction)
- (5) You \_\_\_\_\_ have forgotten your house keys! (It's not possible that you have forgotten.)
- (6) This 12-can pack of beer \_\_\_\_\_ be enough. (probability, reasonable inference)
- (7) Because of his wide experience, he \_\_\_\_\_ to find an acceptable solution. (ability, past)
- (8) That young man \_\_\_\_\_ be our next Prime Minister. (It is possible that . . .)
- (9) You \_\_\_\_\_ not feed the animals at the zoo. (You are under the obligation not to . . .)
- (10) You \_\_\_\_\_ (not) tip the waiter. (It is not necessary that you tip the waiter.)

3 †Change the modalised verb form in each sentence below to the past. Make any adjustments necessary to tenses or adverbs, for instance, in the rest of the sentence.

- (1) They *will not wait* for us more than ten minutes.
- (2) He *must be mistaken* about his daughter's age.
- (3) You *can't be listening* to what I'm saying.
- (4) Ben *should take* two tablets every day this week.
- (5) Lying in our tent, we *can hear* the wind howling down from the heights.
- (6) With their fast patrol-boats, the police *can capture* drug-traffickers operating in the Strait.
- (7) There *may be* a hold-up on the motorway this afternoon.
- (8) I *must have* the baby vaccinated.
- (9) He will *telephone us* immediately if he *can*.
- (10) They *oughtn't to be talking* while the pianist is playing.

Suggest each meaning of *can* in this extract from *The Guardian*:

It is not uncommon for scientists to work with fossil dealers, but it *can* be a risky business. Unless experts *can* confirm where a fossil came from, it *can* be impossible to gauge its age.

# TALKING ABOUT PEOPLE AND THINGS

## CHAPTER 10

### The nominal group

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# EXPRESSING OUR EXPERIENCE OF PEOPLE AND THINGS

## UNIT 45

### SUMMARY

- 1 **Nouns refer to classes of entities:** persons, objects, places, institutions, actions, abstract ideas, qualities, phenomena, emotions, etc.
- 2 **How we experience entities:** experiential features: countability, definiteness, quantity, description, classification, identification.
- 3 **Structural elements that realise experiential features:** the head, the determiner, the pre-modifier, the post-modifier.
- 4 **Noun heads**
  - 1 **Common nouns.** Countability. The notion of 'count' and 'non-count' (or 'mass').
  - 2 **Proper nouns.**
  - 3 **Pronouns.** Personal pronouns: subjective form: *I, you, we, he/she, it, they, one*; objective form: *me, us, him, her, them*. *You* and *it* are invariant. Demonstrative pronouns: *this, that, these, those*. Interrogative pronouns: *who, which, what*. Substitute words: *one/ones*.

### 45.1 NOUNS AND NOMINAL GROUPS

The main function of nominal groups is to refer to the participants in situations. These are not only persons, places, objects, institutions and other collectives, but also activities (swimming), abstractions (thought), qualities (beauty), emotions (anger) and phenomena (thunder, success).

Structurally, a nominal group can be realised basically by a noun or pronoun acting as the head of the NG: *gardens, children, winter, food, news, they*. On the other hand, nominal groups can be long and complex.

When we name an entity, we usually add some information about it which shows how we perceive it. In expressing this 'experiential' information about an entity, some of it is placed before the noun and some after it, as we can see in some of the groups contained in the example text:

One fine morning in October 1969, a celebrated visitor was due to appear at the Hilton Hotel on Castellana Avenue. A huge crowd had already gathered before the main entrance to the hotel – casually dressed men and women, excited schoolchildren holding US flags, and a number of interested tourists out for a stroll. A buzz of expectation filled the air. Suddenly, the wide glass doors opened and uniformed aides lined either side of the drive. Shouts of acclamation greeted the visitor walking down the steps: Neil Armstrong, the first human being to set foot on the moon.

Pre-Head		Head	Post-Head	
Determiner	Premodifier		Complement	Postmodifier
one	fine	morning		in October 1969
a	celebrated	visitor		
the	Hilton	Hotel		on Castellana Avenue
a	huge	crowd		to the hotel
the	main	entrance		
	casually dressed	men and women		holding US flags
	excited	school-children		out for a stroll
a number of	interested	tourists	of expectation	
a		buzz		
the		air		
the	wide glass	doors		
either	uniformed	aides		of the drive
		side		
		shouts	of acclamation	
the		visitor		walking down the steps
		Neil Armstrong		
the	first	human being		to set foot on the moon

Figure 10.1 Pre-head, head and post-head in nominal groups

In this text, we see that the post-head information, given on the right about the head nouns in the middle column, also contains nouns with their own pre-head and post-head information.

## 45.2 OVERVIEW: THE STRUCTURE OF THE NOMINAL GROUP

The full nominal group structure has four primary elements: the **head**, which is the central element, the **determiner** and the **pre-modifier** in the pre-head position, and the **post-modifier** in post-head position. Of all these elements, the head together with the determiner, when present, may realise the NG itself: *air, the air*. Syntactically, pre- and post-modifiers are usually not essential; for instance, *one morning, the moon* are both complete nominal groups.

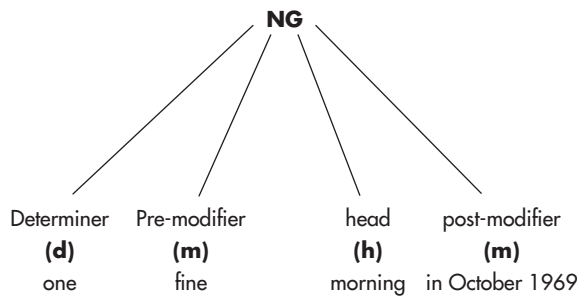


Figure 10.2 Basic structure of the nominal group.

### The head

The head is typically realised by a noun or pronoun (*book, it*). Instead of a noun we may find a **substitute head**, realised most commonly by *one/ones* (a good *one*/good *ones*).

### The determiner

The determiner particularises the noun referent in different ways:

- the **articles** establish its reference as definite (*the man*) or indefinite (a man).
- the **demonstratives** (*this, that, these, those*) signal that the referent is near the speaker (*this book*) or not near (*that occasion*) in space or time.
- the **possessives** (*my, your, his, her, our, their, 's*) signal to whom the referent belongs, (*my room, the Minister's reasons*) and are sometimes reinforced by *own* (*my own room*).
- other words which particularise are **wh-words** (*which book? whatever reason*) and the **distributives** (*each, every, all, either, neither*). (*Each child, every day, all the time, either hand, neither twin*).
- **quantifiers** may comprise exact numerals (*twelve, a hundred, first, second, etc.*), or may be non-exact (*many, a lot, a few, some, any*).



All these classes of item that realise the determiner function are called **determinatives**. (→ Units 46 and 47 with a summary table on page 391)

#### *The pre-head modifier, pre-modifier for short*

After the determinatives, the **pre-modifier** describes and classifies the referent. Within this function the **descriptor** attributes qualities to it, realised by adjectives (smartly *dressed*), while the **classifier** restricts the referent to a sub-class (*main* entrance, *Saturday* morning), realised by nouns.

#### *The post-head modifier, post-modifier for short*

This function helps define the referent still further by means of finite and non-finite clauses. Relative clauses are either defining (the man *who first set foot on the moon*) or non-defining (the astronaut Neil Armstrong, *who first set foot on the moon*).

a street leading to the flower market in Covent Garden (non-finite *-ing* clause)  
Further realisations of the post-modifier are explained and illustrated in Unit 49.

Different from the post-modifier is the **complement**. Certain abstract nouns such as *fact*, *belief*, *claim*, *suggestion*, *news* control a complement which is realised by a **content clause**:

the fact that inflation has gone down; his belief that he is always right.

Nouns which control complements are usually derived from verbs and can take a complement mediated by a preposition: *a lack of knowledge*; *an expression of delight*. (→ Unit 50 for complement and content clause)

## 45.3 THE HEAD ELEMENT 1: NOUNS

Nominal heads fall into two main categories: **nouns** and **pronouns**. In English the main major grammatical distinction between nouns is whether they are countable or uncountable. **Count nouns** are the largest category and are characterised by having number contrast (i.e. having both singular and plural forms).

## 45.4 REGULAR AND IRREGULAR PLURALS

**Regular plurals** are formed by the addition of a suffix: /iz/ after a sibilant, as in *kiss* – *kisses*, *church* – *churches* (with the spelling *-es*); /s/ after a voiceless consonant as in *books*, *cakes*; or /z/ after a voiced consonant, as in *pole* – *poles*, *streams* – *streams*, or a vowel *eye* – *eyes*, *cry* – *cries* (the spelling is *-s*, with *y* becoming *i* after a consonant, but not after a vowel: *day* – *days*). A number of words of classical origin retain their original plurals, for example: *phenomenon* – *phenomena*; *criterion* – *criteria*.

Most common **irregular plurals** are formed by a change of vowel (or of two vowels): *woman* – *women*, *man* – *men*, *tooth* – *teeth*. *Child* – *children* has developed a

‘double’ plural, having both a vowel change and a suffix. Another group marks the plural by a consonant change: *half* – *halves*; *calf* – *calves*; *loaf* – *loaves*. A third group of nouns have the same form for both singular and plural. This is known as ‘**zero plural**’: *trout*, *salmon*, *sheep*, *deer*, *series*, *species*, *aircraft*.

## 45.5 COUNTABILITY: COUNT AND NON-COUNT NOUNS

English obliges us to make a distinction with regard to how a referent is cognitively perceived: whether as a discrete, countable entity, such as *cow*, or as an indivisible, non-countable ‘mass’ entity, such as *beef*.

Other languages make a count–mass distinction, but we must never assume that particular items are conceptualised and lexicalised in the same way in different languages. *News*, for instance, is a singular mass noun in English (*the news is good*); *\*one news*, *\*a news*, *\*many news* are ungrammatical.

Note that we use the terms ‘non-count’ and ‘mass’ without distinction, as both are in common use.

A **count noun** is basically one whose referent can be counted, as in *one cow*, *two cows*, but not *\*one beef*, *\*two beefs*. The referents of these nouns are viewed as individuated things or persons. The following count nouns include both regular plurals in *-s* and invariable or ‘zero’ plurals:

ten cyclists	two trout	a dozen eggs	two radio series
five minutes	five salmon	one grapefruit	four crossroads
two and a half kilos	a hundred sheep	two US aircraft	two spacecraft

A **non-count noun** is one whose referent is cognitively perceived as not countable. We don’t say, for example *\*three furnitures*, *\*one luggage*. Both *furniture* and *luggage*, as well as *news* can be individuated by a preceding ‘counter’ – ‘a piece of’ – as explained shortly.

### 45.5.1 Grammatical features of countability

Although individuation by cardinal numerals is a useful guide to countability, to get a more accurate description we have to consider the range of determiners that a noun admits.

#### *Grammatical features of count nouns*

- the cardinal numerals *one*, *two*, *three*, etc. (*four miles*)
- other quantifiers which imply numerals: *both*, *a dozen*, etc. (*both hands*, *a dozen eggs*)
- the article *a(n)* taking a singular form:

I’m looking for *a new job*.

- the determiners *each*, *every*, *either*, *neither*, which precede singular heads.

*Each day* is different. We go there *every year*.

- the plural (including 'zero') form of the noun preceded by a plural determiner: *many, several, few, these, those*.  
cats and dogs; many choices, few opportunities; these aircraft, those sheep, several series.
- the plural with number contrast marked on the noun: *lion/lions; child/children; mouse/mice; stimulus/stimuli*.  
plural number concord with verb or pronoun.
- *People want to be happy, don't they?*

### *Grammatical features of non-count (mass) nouns*

- the singular form of the noun with zero determiner:  
*Water is necessary for animal and plant life.*
- the singular form of the noun preceded by *all*:  
*I say this in all sincerity. All equipment must be regularly inspected.*
- the singular form of the noun, quantified by *much, little, a little*:  
*There isn't much room in our apartment so we have little furniture.*

### *Nominal Groups that are not marked for countability*

The determiners *the, this, that, my, your, his, her, its, our, their* are neutral to the mass-count distinction and can be used with both types of reference: *this house, this bread; our friend, our friendship*.

## **45.5.2 Selected classes of non-count nouns**

As non-count nouns are the most problematic for students of English, a selection is listed here according to type, starting with singular only or plural only.

### 1 *Non-count singular nouns: The news is good*

#### (a) Food, substances, natural phenomena:

bread butter coffee rice spinach fruit spaghetti rain mud snow hail sand soil  
water weather

The notion of substance is useful and may be extended to oxygen, heat, light, electricity, cocaine and so on.

#### Abstractions:

advice anger fun information love silence peace music knowledge health  
childhood

- (b) Nouns which end in *-ics* and appear to be plural, but are in fact singular:

Aerobics athletics logistics mathematics ethics linguistics pragmatics phonetics physics politics

- (c) Nouns which refer to a number of items conceptualised as an aggregate:

baggage luggage cutlery jewellery furniture

- (d) Activities:

research work homework housework travel

*Travel*, which has a generic meaning, is not to be confused with *journey*, which is a count noun:

It is best to book through a *travel* agency these days, especially for long *journeys*.

## 2 Non-count plural nouns: *pyjamas and jeans, scissors*

- (a) Clothes and artefacts:

These nouns have the plural morpheme 's' but do not combine with numerals. They have no singular form. In English such items consisting of two equal parts are individuated by 'a pair of' (trousers, jeans, shorts). AmE and BrE sometimes differ, though many American words gradually become current in the UK.

<i>AmE</i>	<i>BrE</i>
pants	trousers
underpants	pants
panties	knickers
antyhose	tights
(Compare: a run in your antyhose vs a ladder in your tights)	
pajamas	pyjamas
leggings	leggings
suspenders	braces
sneakers, running-shoes	trainers
pumps	high heels, stilettos, court shoes
gym shoes	pumps (in fashion again)

Artefacts for the eyes and tools of two joined pieces are a second type of plural-only noun, individuated by 'a pair of':

glasses sunglasses binoculars goggles; scissors shears

- (b) Miscellaneous

belongings earnings goods riches savings remains

surroundings outskirts premises (buildings) proceedings

In addition to the collective plural *baked goods*, AmE, but not BrE, has the individuated singular a *baked good*.

More problematic are *people*, *police* and *cattle*. All three are singular in form but plural in meaning. In other ways, however, they differ. *People* and *police* can be numerated: *two or three people*, *six police*. *People* generally replaces *persons* with definite reference (*The people who live in our street*).

*Police* is a collective (*the police*) and can be individuated by a noun compound *policeman* /*policewoman* /*police officer* /*police constable*, all count nouns.

*Cattle* is individuated by 'head': *sixty head of cattle*, used in specific registers.

### 3 Nouns with count and non-count uses: *some coffee*, *two coffees*

Many mass nouns can be interpreted as count when they refer to conventional instances or quantities of the mass referent:

One baked good vs baked goods (AmE)

One beef and two chickens, please (restaurant or in-flight context)

In other cases, shape matters. Eatable entities visualised as having a definite shape are count: a cheese, a cake, a ham, an egg, a potato, while the substance or flesh is conceptualised as mass: (some) cheese, (some ham) etc.

You've got *egg* on your tie.

The kitchen smells of fried *fish*.

The non-count is lexicalised differently in pairs such as cow (count) vs beef (mass). The animal itself is count, the flesh is mass: pig-pork, sheep-mutton, calf-veal, deer-venison. Shellfish is always non-count.

#### 45.5.3 Countability markers of non-count referents

The 'counters' *a piece of*, *a bit of* are the most common, applicable to a variety of substances:

a piece of paper, cheese, toast, information, advice, news

a bit of paper, ham, information, advice, news

Others are more specific:

A drop of	whisk(e)y, milk, water, blood
A clove of	garlic (vs a head of garlic)
A loaf of	bread
A pinch of	salt
A ray of	sunshine, light, hope
A slice of	bread, ham, cheese, beef, turkey
A scrap of	paper, cloth, evidence

A speck, a scrap and a shred are used negatively, to stress the absence of the referent:

Not a shred/scrap of evidence  
Not a speck of dust/dirt

As well as these, various types of container are used to quantify both mass and count referents:

A bottle of	wine, beer, whisk(e)y
A pack of	cards, yoghurts, tennis balls
A carton of	milk, fruit juice
A tin of	tomatoes, soup, sardines, biscuits

## 45.6 THE HEAD ELEMENT 2: PROPER NOUNS

Traditionally, a distinction is made between **proper nouns** and **proper names**. Proper nouns such as *Hilary*, *Joyce* are nouns that have no definable meaning in the language. They are arbitrary. That is, we can't specify characteristics of entities called *Hilary* or *Joyce* as we can for the entities referred to by the common noun *horse*. Proper names potentially have a more complex structure. They may consist of a proper noun such as *Coca-Cola* or include a proper noun as in *Leicester Square*, the *University of Oxford*. This is not necessarily the case, however, as can be seen from the titles of films and TV series with names such as *Mad Men* or *Neighbours*. The names of universities, hospitals and other institutions, are – or started out as – descriptive labels.

All are definite (→ 46.1) and many contain a definite article as part of the name. Proper nouns such as *Washington*, *Moscow*, *Brussels* are used metonymically to stand for the administrative centre of the state or entity of which they are the capital.

Artefacts such as cars, designer clothes and paintings are commonly referred to by their owners by proper nouns functioning as common nouns: a *Volvo*, an early *Picasso*, your *Reeboks*.

## 45.7 THE HEAD ELEMENT 3: PRONOUNS

### 45.7.1 Personal pronouns and reflexive pronouns

The personal pronouns *I*, *we* (1st person), *you* (2nd singular and plural), *he*, *she*, *it* and *they* (3rd person) derive their functions directly from their relation to the speaker in the speech event. They are therefore a type of 'pointing' element or deictic in that some of their meaning is derived from the context. Others include the demonstrative and possessive pronouns and determiners.

*I* and *you* refer directly to the participants engaged in the discourse exchange. *I* is the current speaker and *you* the addressee(s). The 3rd person pronouns *he*, *she*, *it* and *they* refer to persons and things who are not, at the moment of speaking, addressees. They may be either physically present or completely outside the discourse event.

*One* is an impersonal singular pronoun which is sometimes used in formal styles to make general statements, often of (the speaker's own) opinion, or simply to avoid using *I*, as in examples **1** and **2**, quoting the actor Edward Fox in *The Times*.

The pronoun *you*, as in **3**, can refer informally to people in general to describe a common kind of happening or experience. These are non-deictic (non-pointing) uses:

- 1** 'One thinks about life a lot more as time goes by.'
- 2** 'My two years' there [at RADA, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art] were an utter waste of time but I did meet one's first wife and had one's first child'.
- 3** It's embarrassing when *you* can't remember someone's name.

### *I and we*

Whereas *I* refers to the current speaker, *we* is not the plural of *I*, but rather *I* plus one or more other persons. The pronouns *we/us* either include or exclude the addressee:

inclusive <i>we</i> :	Shall <i>we</i> sit together over there?
inclusive <i>us</i> :	Let's go! Let us pray. (formal)
exclusive <i>we</i> :	<i>We</i> wanted to ask you a favour.
exclusive <i>us</i> :	Let <i>us</i> go! (→ 24.2.3)

Strong stress (→ marking information focus 29.3) on *we* can disambiguate a potentially ambiguous reference. Otherwise, the addressee has to work out the meaning from the context:

- A How are we going to get there? (ambiguous: speaker's intended meaning was probably inclusive)
- B Well, *WE*'re going in Tom's car. (exclusive)

*We/us* can refer to 'everybody in general':

We don't seem to be near world peace yet.

The following letter, which appeared as a question in the Dear Doctor section of *The Guardian*, illustrates how context enables us to identify the referents of personal pronouns. For instance, who are the referents of the pronoun 'I', 'he/she' and 'we'?

I live on the outskirts of London and have noticed a tame fox getting increasingly bold and coming near the house. Last week, he (she?) even stuck his nose into the kitchen and we spotted him playing on the kids' swings and eating leftovers on the picnic table.

### *He, she and they as gender-neutral pronouns*

Until fairly recently the pronouns *he* and *his* (in both pronominal and determiner function) were regularly used, not only to refer to a male referent, but also as a

supposedly gender-neutral pronoun to include a female referent, as in **1** below. Such a discriminatory use in favour of males has become unacceptable to many speakers, particularly with reference to occupations, jobs and roles. One alternative, to use *she* as the unmarked form, has not caught on extensively, presumably because it discriminates in favour of females, as in **2**, so it does not solve the problem, which is essentially the fact that English does not have a gender-neutral 3rd person singular pronoun.

In writing, the combination *s/he* is becoming common, but it is not transferable to the spoken language. The disjunctive *he or she* becomes cumbersome if repeated too often. A further alternative, the use of *they* with both singular and plural verb forms, is becoming more extensive as in **2**:

- 1** Every human being of adult years and sound mind has a right to determine what shall be done with *his* own body. [ASK]
- 2** . . . the non-distressed parent may choose to make explicit to the friend *her* own thinking, such as 'well, the children do usually obey us and every parent gets wound up from time to time with *their* child.' [ALN]

### *The pronoun it*

The pronoun *it*, besides referring to specific objects and animals, can refer to a situation **1** or a fact **2**. It is also used to refer to babies and infants, especially if the sex is undetermined by the speaker **3** or the reference is generic **4**. In addition, *it* is often non-referring as in **5**, its presence responding to the need, in English, for an overt syntactic subject (except in the imperative) (→ 24.2).

- 1** They were all shouting and fighting; *it* was terrible.
- 2** She was very scared, but she tried not to show *it*.
- 3** Olga's baby is due in October. – Oh, is *it* a boy or a girl?
- 4** After the child is born, *it* needs constant care.
- 5** *It* won't be easy to pass the driving test first time.

The pronouns *he* and *she* are often used to refer to animals, especially when they are in contact with humans. Otherwise they are referred to as *it*.

### *The reflexive pronouns*

These pronouns – *myself*, *yourself*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *ourselves*, *yourselves*, *themselves* – have three functions: co-reference with the subject **1**; an emphatic use, in which the pronoun is either appositive to the subject or postponed **2**; and where they are required by the verb **3**:

- 1** *They* learned to take care of *themselves*.
- 2** *Susan herself* told me so. *Susan* told me so *herself*.
- 3** She knows how to fend for *herself*. *One* should avail *oneself* of such opportunities.



### Interrogative and indefinite pronouns

The **interrogative pronouns** – *who, whose, which, what* – are described and illustrated in their pronominal and determinative functions in Chapter 5.

Rather different are the **indefinite pronouns** compounded from *some, any, no* and *every*:

somebody, someone, something	anybody, anyone, anything
everybody, everyone, everything	nobody, no-one, nothing

These pronouns refer directly to an indefinite person or thing, or a broad class or persons or things, not to a referent already present in the discourse. In this respect they behave more like nouns than like pronouns, and are often post-modified, as in *nothing new, someone like you*.

### 45.7.2 The pronouns *this* and *that*

The deictics *this* and *that* can function as NG heads to refer to a whole proposition or situation or something inferred from it, a use classified here as pronominal. (For their function as determiners, → 47.2.) These pronominal references may be anaphoric (to a previous part of the discourse), cataphoric (to a later part of the discourse) or exophoric (to something outside the discourse):

- Anaphoric reference: Hilda was making a Dutch Delft cake at the oven. *This* was her speciality and she made it on every occasion. [ATE]
- Cataphoric reference: *This* is a security announcement: Would those passengers who have left bags on their seats please remove them.
- Exophoric reference: I never thought things would come to *this*. (= to this extreme)

We can see that all the referents in these examples are inanimate and general, and some of them refer to pieces of extended discourse.

**Reference to persons** by the pronouns *this* and *that* is limited in English to the following uses:

- |           |  |   |
|-----------|--|---|
| <b>1a</b> | <i>This</i> is Sally Jones speaking                | (non-face-to-face self-identification, (not * <i>I am Sally Jones</i> ) for instance, on the telephone) |
| <b>1b</b> | <i>I am</i> Sally Jones (not * <i>This is</i> )    | (face-to-face self-identification) <i>Sally Jones</i> )   |
| <b>2</b>  | <i>This</i> is my friend June.                     | (introducing one person to another)   |
| <b>3</b>  | Who is <i>that</i> ? <i>That's</i> my friend Iona. | (identification of a 3rd person at some distance away from the speaker, or looking at a photograph)     |

So far we have seen *this* indicating proximity to the speaker and *that* distance. However, these terms are often interpreted subjectively. For instance, an event distant in time may be referred to as *this* if it has just been mentioned:

Columbus discovered the Bahamas in 1492 and *this* changed the course of history.

Conversely, events near in time may be referred to by *that* when an effect of psychological distancing is required. In many cases, however, the choice is open:

If the Opposition wins the motion of 'No Confidence' today, *that/this* will mean the end of the present government.

### 45.7.3 The discourse function of pronouns

The principal function of personal pronouns is to help establish major referents in the discourse by setting up **referential** (or identity) **chains** by means of anaphora (→ Chapter 6). This is an important part of **referential coherence**, of making important referents continuous and salient enough to be perceived and remembered by listeners and readers. In conversation, interlocutors participate in the joint construction of referential chains, as can be seen in our next illustration.

A new referent is likely to be introduced first by a proper noun such as *Vera* or *Mother*, when the speaker expects the addressee to be able to identify the referent. Otherwise, a full nominal group containing descriptive information is used (*a/the girl I met this morning at the Post Office*). Subsequent mentions can be carried out by pronouns, which are 'lighter' than nouns and much lighter than extended nominal groups. Finally, zero anaphora (*She came in and (0) sat down*) is even lighter than the pronoun. From time to time, especially if ambiguity might arise through two referents having the same gender ('Vera' and 'Mother', *she . . . she*), the pronoun is replaced by the proper noun. Anaphoric reference has also been described as a device of **cohesion**.

In the following extract from *Just Between Ourselves*, by Alan Ayckbourn, the italicised pronouns function in referential chains:

- Neil: Vera's looking better.  
 Dennis: Oh, *she* is. *She's* a lot better. *She's* getting better every day. Once *she* and mother can bury the hatchet, we'll be laughing.  
 Neil: Are *they* still . . . ?  
 Dennis: Not talking at all.  
 Neil: Really.  
 Dennis: Well, actually, it's Vera *who's* not talking to mother. Mother comes in one door, Vera goes out the other. Ridiculous. Been going on for weeks. I said to *them* – look, girls, just sit down and have a laugh about *it*. There's only one life, you know. *That's* all you've got. One life. Laugh and enjoy *it* while you can. We'll probably all be dead tomorrow so what's the difference? Do *they* listen to *me*? Do *they* hell!

When two referents share identifying properties, naming may not be sufficient to avoid ambiguity in the use of a pronoun. In the following example, inference based on the interpretation of concession in 'though', and of reason in 'because' enables the hearer or reader to correctly assign the referent of *he* in the subordinate clauses:

Tom jumped in the river to save Bill *though he* couldn't swim. (*he* = Tom) Tom jumped in the river to save Bill *because he* couldn't swim. (*he* = Bill)

#### 45.7.4 Substitute one/ones

An object that has already been mentioned or is visible in the discourse can be referred to by the head-word *one*, plural *ones*. These words have no semantic identity of their own, but only the grammatical function of substituting for a noun or NG in order to avoid repetition. When used in this way, these items are classed as 'substitute heads', to distinguish them from the classes of 'pronominal heads' of NGs.

It is important to note that *one/ones* can replace either a whole antecedent NG or only part of it. Compare **1** and **2** with **3**. In **4**, the elliptical plural *some*, not *ones* is the plural of *one*:

- 1** I knew Mavis wanted a blue scarf, so I bought her *one*. (*one* = whole NG *a blue scarf*)
- 2** I knew Mavis wanted a blue scarf, so I bought her a lovely *one*. (= *blue scarf*).
- 3** I couldn't find a blue scarf for Mavis, so I bought her a green *one*. (= *scarf*)
- 4** I know Mavis likes scarves, so I bought her *some* lovely *ones*. (= *scarves*)

The substitute item *one/ones* may be accompanied by a determiner, a pre-modifier or a post-modifier, thus producing NGs of varying structures:

- dh:** this one, each one, either one, which ones, any ones
- dmh:** the only one, that big one, a small red one, a few ripe ones
- dhm:** that one over there, any one you like
- dmhm:** some fresh ones from the country

Possessive determinatives are rarely used before *one/ones* in standard English. In informal language – but not in best usage – some speakers might say *my one*, *Peter's one*, *my friend's ones*, *those ones*. For other comments on substitution and ellipsis in the NG, → 29.6.

# REFERRING TO PEOPLE AND THINGS AS DEFINITE, INDEFINITE, GENERIC

UNIT 46

## SUMMARY

- 1 Definiteness is marked by the definite article *the* and by the determinatives *this, that, these, those* or by the possessives *my, your*, etc. + noun.
- 2 Indefiniteness is marked by *a(n), some, any* and *zero*. Indefinite nouns are specific or non-specific.
- 3 Generic reference is marked by *zero* (+ singular mass, plural count nouns); by *a(n)* and by *the*.

## 46.1 DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE REFERENCE

In English, the grammar obliges us to refer to people and things as definite, indefinite, or generic. This is done syntactically by the use of determinatives, and among these, in particular, by the **definite, indefinite** and **zero articles**. Definite reference is made by *the* or a deictic determinative (*this, that, these, those*) or a possessive (*my, your*, etc.). Indefinite reference is made by *a(n)*, unstressed *some, any* or the absence of a marker, which, since its absence is grammatically significant, is called the '**zero article**'. 'Zero' doesn't mean that an article has been omitted, as may occur in a newspaper headline, such as *Plane crashes on village*, but is a category in its own right.

The three articles are distributed as follows with mass and count nouns:

	Mass	Singular count	Plural count
definite	the butter	the woman	the women
indefinite	– (zero) butter	a woman	– (zero) women
	(unstressed) some butter	–	(unstressed) some women

Figure 10.3 Definite and indefinite reference.

An entity is considered as ‘indefinite’ if there is nothing in the discourse or the situation or our general knowledge of the world that identifies it for us. This is the case with *an amateur musician*, *a 70-strong orchestra*, *a violinist*, all introduced for the first time by the indefinite article *a(n)* in the news item from *The Week* below:

**An amateur musician has formed a 70-strong orchestra by approaching strangers on the London Underground. Shaun Buswell, 36, came up with the idea after meeting a violinist on the Tube in 2011. Having drawn up rules – musicians had to be carrying their instruments when he met them – he approached more than 300 people in 12 months. His orchestra, which includes students from the Royal Academy of Music, played their first gig at the Shepherd’s Bush Empire on Saturday, raising money for a children’s charity.**

Once the entity has already been mentioned it can be considered as ‘definite’: *Shaun Buswell*, *his orchestra*. Definiteness is inferred if there is sufficient information to identify it, either in the text (*the idea*) or in the non-linguistic situation (*the London Underground*, *their first gig*) or in general knowledge (*the Tube*). Note that the gig had not been previously mentioned. We identify it in relation to *orchestra* and *musician* through general knowledge and inference: gigs are performances, especially by pop musicians. This is known as **indirect anaphoric reference**.

## 46.2 INDEFINITE REFERENCE: SPECIFIC AND NON-SPECIFIC

Although the term ‘indefinite’ might appear to be synonymous with ‘non-specific’, it can in fact be applied to both non-specific and specific entities, whether these are count or mass:

singular:	I’ve bought <i>a new car</i> .	(indef. specific)
	I need <i>a new car</i> .	(indef. non-specific)
plural:	I’ve got <i>some friends</i> in London.	(indef. specific)
	I’ve got <i>friends</i> in London.	(indef. non-specific)
mass:	I managed to find <i>some work</i> .	(indef. specific)
	I managed to find <i>work</i> .	(indef. non-specific)

The examples show that with singular count nouns (*a car*), the article *a(n)* refers to both specific and non-specific entities, the different interpretations being deduced pragmatically from shared knowledge and also from the different predicates. When we need a car, it is obviously not yet specific, but potentially any car. When we have bought a car, it is obviously a specific one. The article *a(n)* can be indeterminate, however, between specific and non-specific interpretations:

Ted wants to buy *a house in Sussex*. (= any house, as long as it’s in Sussex)  
 Ted wants to buy *a house in Sussex*.  
 It’s number 2, Farm Road, Brighton. (= a specific house)

As an indefinite determinative, *some* (unstressed) is used mainly with mass and plural count nouns, but the stressed form is sometimes used with mass or count nouns with the meaning of indefinite specific as in: *There is still some hope of recovery*, or non-specific as in *I'll need some book or other to read on the beach*. Either would be meaningful here.

### 46.3 INDEFINITE PROPER NOUNS

Since proper nouns (Albert Einstein, William Shakespeare) refer to unique entities, they are already definite and cannot logically be conceived of as indefinite. On the other hand, since it is often possible for several entities to be denoted by the same name, such as persons or days of the week, they can be treated sometimes as classes composed of individual members. This allows expressions such as the following:

Is there <i>a John Smith</i> in this class?	(indef. specific)
It would be better to meet on <i>a Monday</i> .	(indef. non-specific)
We had <i>a very hot June</i> last year.	(indef. specific)

Indefinite reference can be made to proper nouns used as common nouns: I'd like a Martini.

### 46.4 DEFINITE REFERENCE

The definiteness of a common noun is indicated by the article *the*. It means that what you are talking about is already anchored in your hearer's knowledge and can be identified in one of three ways: (a) within the discourse, by previous mention, with the indefinite article a(n) in the case of a common noun; (b) outside the discourse, in the context or situation; and (c) from general knowledge (→ 46.1). Within the discourse, the reference may be anaphoric (looking backwards) or cataphoric (looking forwards). The anaphor often expresses the antecedent in different words, as in the following news item in *The Week*. *They* refers back to the male members of the Nuseibeh clan; *the most revered site in Christendom* refers forward to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem:

**The male members of the Nuseibeh clan have a long and proud tradition. For more than a thousand years, they have been the custodians of the most revered site in Christendom: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.**

The referent of a definite head noun can be identified cataphorically by the information contained in the post-modifier, as in: *the bus coming now*, *the journey home*, *the Ministry of Health*; or by a determiner or pre-modifier: *this bus*, *the first bus*, *the red bus*.

Reference to shared knowledge immediately identifies the referent of, for example, *the sun*, *the sky*, *the floods*, *the government*, *the political situation*.

Clearly dependent upon inference for their interpretation, but totally normal in certain professional registers of English, are metonymic uses, where the thing stands for the person, as in the following examples:

*The ham sandwich* has left without paying.  
*The kidney transplant* in 104 is asking for a glass of water.

When a personal noun, such as *secretary*, *queen*, *director*, *head*, functions as Subject Complement (Cs) in a clause and refers to a unique social role, definiteness can be marked either by *the* or by *zero*. As Cs in a verbless clause introduced by *when*, *while*, *if*, *although*, only *zero* is possible:

He soon became *director/the director* of the firm.  
*While Minister of Health*, he introduced many reforms.

## 46.5 DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE NOMINAL GROUPS

The semantic function of the articles is to present the referents of NG heads as definite, indefinite or generic.

The first two meanings are basically discourse functions, associated with the information packaging of the content of a clause, sentence or extended discourse into **Given** and **New** information; that is, what is taken by the speaker as known to the hearer, and what is taken as not known, respectively (→ Unit 29). Such is the case in the following short news item from *The Times*. With the indefinite article, the referent is marked as unknown to the reader and is being introduced for the first time. Once introduced, the referent can be referred to by the definite article *the* or by a pronoun (*he*, in this case) and identified by a proper name.

*An amateur yachtsman* has spent four days fearing that *he* was in the middle of the North Sea, unaware that *he* was 100 yards from shore. *Allan McKeand*, a retired industrial chemist from Skipton, North Yorkshire, ran into fog off the North East coastal town of Redcar on Monday.

Quite commonly in fiction a writer introduces a new referent at the beginning of a story as if it were already known. This happens in the novel *Watership Down*, where the first sentence is 'The primroses were over'. The use of the definite article here perspectivises the story from a particular viewpoint: that of the rabbits, the protagonists of the story, as readers soon discover.

## 46.6 GENERIC REFERENCE

Each of the articles can also be used when we wish to refer to a whole class of entities, usually with regard to their typical characteristics or habitual activities:

<i>the</i> + singular count noun:	They say <i>the elephant</i> never forgets.
<i>a(n)</i> + singular count noun:	They say <i>an elephant</i> never forgets.
<i>zero</i> + plural count noun:	They say <i>elephants</i> never forget.
<i>zero</i> + mass noun:	They say <i>exercise</i> keeps you healthy.

In the everyday use of English, the zero form with plural count nouns (elephants) is most applicable, while with mass nouns (e.g. *love*) the zero form is obligatory. The three articles express genericity from different points of view, which we will gloss as follows:

- *the* represents the referent of the noun as a single undifferentiated whole class of entities;
- *a(n)* represents any individual member of a class of entity as typical of the whole class;
- zero implies that all or most members of the class of entity possess the characteristic that is predicated of it.

The four structures mentioned above are not freely interchangeable in all generic statements. The generic use of *a(n)* is restricted, in that it can't be used in attributing properties which belong to the class as a whole. For example, *the* but not *a* is acceptable in the following, since an individual kangaroo does not constitute a species, whether near extinction or not, whereas the class as a whole, represented by *the*, does:

*The* kangaroo is far from being extinct.

\**A* kangaroo is far from being extinct.

Both *the* and *a(n)* are acceptable with a characterising predicate, as in our next example, since carrying its young in a pouch is characteristic of each and every female kangaroo:

The female kangaroo carries its young in its pouch.

A female kangaroo carries its young in its pouch.

The article *the* tends to generalise more readily than *a(n)*. *The* + singular count noun may have a generalising value, even when not used in a generic statement:

Do you play *the piano*?

Some people sit for hours in front of *the television*.

The definite article is also used:

- with certain adjectival or participial heads of NGs referring to abstract qualities (*the unknown*);
- for groups of people named by a nominalised Attribute (*the underprivileged*, *the vulnerable*);
- with nouns derived from PPs (*the under-fives*, *the over-forties*);
- for nationalities (*the Dutch*, *the Swiss*).

All but abstract qualities have plural concord with the verb:

Science proceeds from *the known* to *the unknown*.

Nursery schools for *the under-fives* are desperately needed in this area.



Not all adjectives and PPs can function in these ways and the non-native speaker should be cautious in choosing them.

The loosest and therefore most frequent type of generic statement is that expressed by the **zero article with plural count nouns or with mass nouns**:

*Kangaroos* are common in Australia.

*Wine* is one of this country's major exports.

Zero article with plural count nouns may have generic or indefinite reference according to the predication:

*Frogs* have long hind legs. (generic = all frogs)

He catches *frogs*. (indefinite = an indefinite number of frogs)

**A mass noun with zero article** can be considered generic even if it is modified: *Colombian coffee is said to be the best*. It is definite, however, if preceded by *the*. Contrast, for example:

**generic:** *Nitrogen* forms 78% of the earth's atmosphere.

**definite:** *The nitrogen* in the earth's atmosphere is circulated by living organisms.

# SELECTING AND PARTICULARISING THE REFERENT

UNIT 47

## The determiner

### SUMMARY

#### 1 The determiner

The first element of the nominal group, the determiner, particularises by 'selection'. Four main types of selection: demonstrative and possessive, quantification and distribution.

#### 2 Demonstrative and possessive determinatives

Demonstrative: this week, that day, these events, those ideas

Possessive: my coat, Tom's house, their university, our bus, the moon's orbit . . .

#### 3 Wh- determinatives:

which, what, whose, whichever, etc.

#### 4 Quantifying determinatives

Exact quantifiers (numeratives): cardinal and ordinal numerals

Non-exact: some, any, no, much, many, little, few, several

#### 5 Distributors:

all, both, each, every, either, neither

#### 6 The semi-determinatives: such, same, certain, another, other, former, latter, last, next

#### 7 Summary of determinative elements

### 47.1 THE DETERMINER FUNCTION

Common nouns in the dictionary refer to classes of things, but when they are used in discourse they need to be particularised. This is done by the first element of the nominal group, called the **determiner**. The basic function of this element is to particularise and so help to identify the NG referent in the context of the speech situation.

As in other areas of the grammar, we distinguish between a function, in this case the determiner, and the classes of units, here called **determinatives**, which realise the function.

Determiners identify a nominal group referent by telling us which or what or whose it is, how much, how many, what part or degree of it we are referring to, how big or frequent it is, how it is distributed in space or time. The following short passage from *The Time-Traveler's Wife* illustrates some American uses:

**Henry:** The ceremony is at 2:00 p.m. and it will take me about half an hour to dress and twenty minutes for us to drive over to St. Basil's. It is now 7:16 a.m., which leaves five hours and forty-four minutes to kill. I throw on jeans and a skanky old flannel shirt and high-tops and creep as quietly as possible downstairs seeking coffee. Dad has beat me to it; he's sitting in the breakfast room with his hands wrapped round a dainty cup of steaming black joe. I pour one for myself and sit across from him. Through the lace-curtained windows the weak light gives Dad a ghostly look; he's a colorized version of a black-and-white movie of himself this morning. His hair is standing up every which way and without thinking I smooth mine down, as though he were a mirror. He does the same, and we smile.

## 47.2 DEMONSTRATIVE AND POSSESSIVE DETERMINATIVES

*Demonstratives: this, that, these, those*

These items particularise the NG referent by indicating whether it is near (*this, these*) or not near (*that, those*) the speaker, in space or time or psychologically, as explained in 45.7.2 for demonstrative pronouns. They can refer to both human and non-human entities in both singular and plural (*this century, these girls, that cat, those brakes*).

Like the demonstrative pronouns, the determinatives are used with anaphoric, cataphoric and situational reference (→ 45.7.2).

The determinatives *this* and *these* are also used to introduce a new topic entity into the discourse. This use is particularly common in anecdotes, stories and jokes:

I'm walking along the street when *this man* comes up to me and says . . .

*Possessive determinatives*

These include not just the possessive determinatives *my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their*, but also the inflected 's genitive form. The 's determinative is formally a NG plus an inflected genitive morpheme. By convention, the apostrophe is placed before the *s* with a singular noun, but after it with a regular plural noun in *s*. Compare: *the boy's bicycle, the boys' bicycles*. With a name of three syllables or more ending in *-s*, the apostrophe tends to be placed after the *s*: *Socrates' wisdom*. With a name of two syllables, the placement of the *s* is optional: *Dr. Davis' surgery, Dr. Davis's surgery*, the latter case reflecting the additional syllable in speech: /deivisiz/.

The inflection is added not merely to the head noun but to the group as a whole:

My supervisor's advice; my mother and father's wishes. I liked those other children's paintings very much.

That young Japanese pianist's performance was wonderful.

### 47.2.1 Functions of the 's phrase

The examples seen so far have all illustrated the central function of the 's phrase: to **specify** the nominal group referent, as in *that girl's name*.

Some 's NGs may also function as **classifiers**, as in *girls' names, children's clothing, a men's club*. With the article *a(n)* the interpretation is non-specific rather than specific, as in the following:

I need a specialist's opinion, not a journalist's.

### 47.2.2 Possessives as nominal group heads

The possessive pronouns *mine, yours, his, hers, (its), ours, theirs* function not as determinatives but as pronominal heads. (*Its* is not used to realise this function.)

This suitcase is *yours*. Where is *mine*? It's over there with *Tom's*.

The 's phrase stands alone as an ellipted head of the NG when the noun head is recoverable, either because it is known already, or by convention. In the latter case the 's element often refers to people's homes or establishments such as restaurants and shops, as well as to individuals:

Let's have dinner at Archy's. These gloves aren't mine, they're Daniel's.

I have to go to *the cleaner's* (dry cleaner's), *the hairdresser's*, *the florist's*.

A friend *of mine*, a friend *of my sister's*

The post-modifying possessive phrase *of mine, of yours* etc. is equivalent to the 'double possessive' as in *a friend of my sister's*. They have the meaning of 'one among several' as opposed to the more exclusive meaning of 'my friend', 'my sister's friend'. An exclusive meaning, which may also express an attitude on the part of the speaker, is found, however, when the phrase occurs together with another determinative (*this, that, a, the, other*, etc.), a combination that is not possible otherwise:

That motorcycle of your brother's

## 47.3 WH- DETERMINATIVES: WHICH, WHOSE, WHAT

*Which, whose* express specific selection among a known number; *what* asks about the identity or kind of thing something is. *Whatever, whichever* express non-specific selection, meaning 'it doesn't matter what', 'it doesn't matter which', respectively, when the speaker is not able to specify a particular type. *What* can also be used as an equivalent to *whatever* or stressed *any* (→ 47.4.1):

*Which bus* do you take?

*Whose car* did you come in?

*What plans* have they made for the summer?

You'll have to rely on *whatever transport* is available.

You'll find plenty of traffic *whichever road* you take.

*What hopes* we had are now fading. (= *whatever hopes, any hopes*)

## 47.4 QUANTIFIERS

A speaker may particularise a referent by referring to its quantity, which may be exact (*three friends*), non-exact (*many friends*), ordinal (*the first friend*), or partitive (*three of my friends*).

### *Exact numeratives*

These include the **cardinal numerals** one, two, three . . . twenty-one, twenty-two . . . a hundred and five . . . one thousand, two hundred and ten, and so on. These function directly as determinatives.

The **ordinal numbers** – first, second, third, fourth, fifth . . . twenty-first . . . hundredth . . . hundred and fifth and so on – specify the noun referent in terms of order. They follow a determinative, as in: *the first time, a second attempt, every fifth step*, and in this respect are more like the semi-determinatives, including *the next, the last*.

### *Non-exact quantifiers*

The two types select referents by referring to:

their indefiniteness: *some, any, no, much, many, little, few* (*a(n)* → 46.1).

their distribution: *all, both, either, neither, each, every, another, other*

### 47.4.1 Indefinite quantifiers

#### *Some, any, no, (none)*

*Some* specifies a quantity (with mass nouns) or a number above two (with count nouns) as in *some money, some time, some friends, some details*. Other quantifiers are used to express very small or very large amounts. The word *some* is pronounced in two ways, according to its function. It has a weak form when used non-selectively as an indefinite determiner (→ 46.1), but it is strong when used as a selective quantifier:

<b>non-selective</b>	/səm/	We're spending some days by the sea.
<b>selective</b>	/sʌm/	Some days it's hot, other days it's cold.

Stressed *some* can also be used with various types of evaluative force:

<b>quantifying:</b>	I haven't seen you for some time.	(= a long time)
<b>appreciative:</b>	That really was some meal!	(= a wonderful meal) >

**Any** has two meanings, as illustrated in the following examples (→ also 3.3):

- 1 Have you *any change/any* coins? I haven't *any change/any* coins.
- 2 *Any* information would be useful.

In **1**, *any* specifies an indeterminate amount or number of something. It occurs in non-affirmative clauses, that is, in negative and interrogative clauses mainly (→ non-assertion, 3.4). It is typically unstressed.

In **2**, *any* is equivalent to 'no matter which or what'. It occurs typically in affirmative clauses and is stressed. Compare this use of *any* with *anything* and *either*:

You can choose <i>any</i> of the main courses on the menu.	(it doesn't matter which)
You can choose <i>anything</i> on the menu.	(it doesn't matter what)
You can choose <i>either</i> meat or fish.	(one or the other, not both)

**The negative determinative *no*** has mass, count, singular and plural references: *no time, no change, no changes*.

There is *no* need to worry. *No* changes will be made. *None* (pronoun) will be made.

*Some* and *any* – but not *no* – can function as elliptical heads of the NG. Instead of *no*, the pronoun ***none*** is used, as in the previous example, and also for the partitive ('none of the men').

Have you any change? Yes, I have *some*. No, I haven't *any*. I have *none*.  
Did you have any difficulties with your papers? No, *none*. (= *no difficulties*)

Note that *not* is a negative particle, and does not function as a determinative or a pronoun. It can precede the quantifiers *much* and *many* in ellipted responses.

Isn't there anything to eat?	<i>Not</i> much.
Haven't you any <i>friends</i> ?	<i>Not</i> many.

*Much, little, a little, many, few, a few*

These quantifiers are used with both indefinite and definite NGs. With definite reference they are followed by *of* and have **partitive** reference: that is, a part, rather than the whole of a previously selected set is being referred to:

<i>Indefinite reference – non-partitive</i>		<i>Definite reference – partitive</i>
much food	(+ mass n.)	much of the food
little time	(+ mass n.)	little of the time
many pubs	(+ count n.)	many of the pubs
few seats	(+ count n.)	few of the seats
a few people	(mass plur. n.)	a few of the people (→ 45.5.2b)

Is there much food? There's very little. There's a lot. \*There's much. There's not much. There aren't (very) many people.

*Much* and *many* are used mainly in negative and interrogative clauses, as illustrated above. In speech and dialogue *much, little and few* are replaced by *a lot, not very much*

*and not many*, respectively; but they occur in formal written styles, together with *no* rather than *not . . . any*, as in the following extracts from T. Givón, *Downfall of a Jesuit*:

No enemy troops can be seen.

In the narrow confines between the town walls and the church-topped rise, little room is left for the mounted Dragoons to manoeuvre.

No sound is coming from the high ground on which they are advancing.

'How are you doing?' 'Don't feel much . . . Better leave me be . . .'

*A lot of, lots of, plenty of, a great deal of, a number of a lot of/lots of*

These quantifiers are determinatives with noun heads followed by a PP complement. They range from the informal (*a lot/lots of*) to the formal (*a great deal/a number of*). Some of them admit both mass and count nouns, others do not:

<b>Singular mass and plural count:</b>	a lot of, plenty of lots of	a lot of/lots of/plenty of money a lot of/lots of/plenty of friends
<b>Singular mass only</b>	a great deal of	a great deal of money
<b>Plural count only:</b>	a number of	a number of policemen

More informal combinations of this type which function like *a lot/lots of* include *loads of, heaps of, masses of*.

These phrasal quantifiers are not partitives even though they contain the preposition *of*. Partitives have definite reference and represent sub-sets from already selected sets. Here is a selection of examples of non-partitive quantifiers, together with their partitive counterparts:

Non-partitive quantifiers	Partitive quantifiers
A lot of money was wasted.	A lot of the money was wasted.
No money was wasted.	None of the money was wasted.
They spent a great deal of time in pubs.	They spent a great deal of the time in pubs.
Some books were damaged in the fire.	Some of the books were damaged in the fire.
Three people were injured.	Three of the people were injured.
Their first child was born in Wales.	The first of their children was born in Wales.

#### 47.4.2 Distributors: All, both, either, neither, each, every

Of the distributive determinatives, *all* refers to a totality; it can be used with mass nouns (*all power corrupts*), plural nouns in a generic sense (*all men are mortal*) and certain temporal and locative nouns (*all day, all night, all America*). When the reference is not generic, *all* is optionally followed by *of* + noun (*all the pie/all of the pie; all the pages/all of the pages*).

*Both* refers to two entities together. *Either* and the negative form *neither* refer to two entities as alternatives. *Each* and *every* refer to one of a group or series, but while *each*

emphasises the separateness of the entity, *every* makes collective reference to a group of three or more (*every child, every day*). *Each* can refer to two entities individually (*each hand, each foot*); *every* can individualise by using the pronoun *one*, particularised optionally by 'single' (*every single one + of + noun*) (partitive). In this way, *every* is able to express partitive reference (*every single one of my friends*) which otherwise would not be possible, since \**every of* is ungrammatical. *Both, either, neither* and *each* (but not *every*) can be followed immediately by *of* before the noun (the partitive use). Here are some examples of the distributive determinatives:

*All* birds have feathers, but *not all* birds can fly. (generic)  
*All* of the bedrooms have a balcony and telephone, and *some* take a third and fourth bed. [AMD]  
 Keep hold of the wheel with *both* hands.  
*Both* children/*both the* children/*both of the* children had measles at the same time.  
 He can write with *either* hand/*with either of* his hands.  
*Neither* twin/*neither of the* twins is very good at maths.  
*Each* player/*Each of the* players was given a premium.  
 This applies to *each of* us – men as well as women. [AT9]  
 Two out of *every* five people catch more than one cold a year.  
*Every* known criminal of New York was there. [ATE]  
*Every single one* of their songs was a success.

#### *All, both and each following pronouns*

These distributors can follow pronouns, whether subjective or objective, for emphasis:

They *all/both/each* carried backpacks.  
 We've bought them *all/both* bicycles. We've bought them *each* a bicycle.  
 All of them have bicycles. Both of them have bicycles. Each of them has a bicycle.

#### *All, everything, everyone/everybody*

In formal styles *all* is marginally used as an alternative to *everything* to refer to a situation, ideas, objects, actions in general terms.

*All* went well. *Everything* went well.  
*All* is ready. *Everything* is ready.

*All* is much less common than *everything* and *everyone* however. Furthermore, it cannot stand alone (as an elliptical head) in Object and Complement functions, where it can be used with a pronoun. Compare:

\*I liked all. I liked everything. I liked it all.

*All people* is more common when modified by a relative clause:

*All people* who need special medical care must go to a hospital.



*Everyone* and *everybody* refer to all the people in a particular group. The notion of generality can be extended to wider groups and even everyone everywhere:

*Everyone* enjoyed the show.  
He poured drinks for *everybody*.

*Everyone* condemned the terrorist attack.  
*Everyone* has their own opinion.

*All* is not normally used in this way, without a head or modifier. Compare:

\*All enjoyed the show.      All those present enjoyed the show.  
\*He poured drinks for all.      He poured drinks for all present/for us all/for them all

*All people* is not always an acceptable alternative to *everyone/everybody*. *All the people there* would refer to definite people on a specific occasion, rather than the more general meaning of totality expressed by *everyone*.

The following horoscope illustrates some of these quantifiers:

#### Libra (Sept 24– Oct 23)

*None* of it matters quite as much as we think. *All* of it is a journey, a dream. Of course, it seems real. Dreams always do while we are dreaming them. This does not make life any the less precious. To the contrary. We should treasure *every* moment because we never know *how many more moments* we will have left. Yet sometimes, we cannot properly treasure *each* moment because we are too worried about making the most of *our every* moment. This weekend brings magic. Enjoy it.

### 47.5 THE SEMI-DETERMINATIVES: *SUCH*, *WHAT*, *CERTAIN*, *SAME*, *(AN)OTHER*, *FORMER*, *LATTER*

These words (except *such*) are sometimes classed as adjectives. However, they do not describe the referent and appear to have a specifying function. They precede either a definite or an indefinite determiner.

*Such* and exclamatory *what* are among the few elements of this kind which precede the indefinite article. They require *a(n)* before a singular count noun, zero before non-count and plural nouns. *Such a nuisance! What a mess!*

***Such*** classifies an entity by kind or intensifies it by degree. It usually relates to something already mentioned in the discourse.

*Classifying*: (= of that kind)  
I've never heard of *such an animal*.  
*Such cruelty* is incomprehensible.  
*Such people* are dangerous.

*Intensifying*:  
Don't be *such a fool*!      They are *such idiots*!      (= of that degree)

**Certain**, by contrast, follows *a(n)* or is followed by zero. It helps to pick out a specific, but as yet not identified, person or thing:

There is a *certain* opposition to the Government's proposals. A *certain* person in this room might disagree with you.

**Same** indicates that the person or thing referred to is exactly like one previously mentioned.

He always asks *the same* two questions.

**Another** (+ singular count noun) has two meanings: (a) it indicates that the entity referred to is different from one already mentioned; and (b) it refers to a subsequent entity of the same kind as the one already mentioned in the discourse. The indefinite plural **other** (+ plural count noun) is used mainly in the first sense.

(a) Couldn't you choose *another* title? (= a different title)

(b) Would you like *another* beer? (= of the same, not of a different kind)

I saw him *the other* day. We talked about *other* things.

**Former** and **latter** refer back to the first and the second respectively of two entities already mentioned. They are preceded by the definite article and can occur together with the 's possessive determinative.

Bill and Steve both made proposals. The *former's* was rejected, the *latter's* approved.

*Former* is also used adjectivally with the meaning of 'previous' when referring to jobs, positions or roles. In this function it may be preceded by a possessive determinative such as *my*, *your*.

A *former* President of the Royal Society.

*His former* partner has set up business on his own.

Note that *such* and *the same* can function as substitute heads (→ 45.7.4), as in:

Is this a dangerous area? I wouldn't consider it as *such* (= a dangerous area)

Alice had a cola and Sue had *the same* (= a cola)

## 47.6 SUMMARY OF DETERMINATIVE FEATURES

The following figure summarises the four broad experiential types of determination by which referent things can be particularised in English, together with their sub-types and principal exponent.

1 Defining and Particularising	2 Quantifying and Distributing	3 Numbering and Ordering	4 Semi-determinatives
<b>Definite</b> the	<b>Fractional</b> ( $\pm$ of) half, (a) quarter, two-thirds, four-fifths, etc. a dozen, a thousand	<b>Cardinal</b> one, two, ten, two hundred, etc.	such, certain, former, latter; same, other, last, next, own
<b>Indefinite</b> a(n), some zero (0)	<b>Multiplying</b> (*of) double, treble, twice,  hundreds of, thousands of,	three times,	
<b>Demonstrative</b> This, that, these, those			
<b>Possessive</b> my, your, his, her, its, our, their Sam's, my friend's etc.	<b>Non-exact</b> some, any, no, much, (a) little, (a) few, many, several, enough	<b>Ordinal</b> first, second, third . . .	
<b>Interrogative/relative</b> what, whose, which, whichever	<b>Other quantifiers</b>  A lot of, lots of, plenty of, a great deal of, a number of		
<b>Exclamative</b> What (a) . . .	<b>Distributives</b> all, both, either, neither, each, every (one of), none (of)		

Figure 10.4 Summary of determinative features.

## 47.7 ORDERING OF DETERMINATIVES

The governing principle of placement of multiple determinatives is the same as that of a whole NG, that is, a gradual process of dependency selection from right to left, as in:

Pre-determinatives and partitives	Central determinatives	Post- determinatives		HEAD
Half	his	last	sixty	dollars
A few of	my	many	other	friends
Some of	the doctor's	former		patients
None of	those	several		options
Such	an			experience
	Their	own		house
	The	same		day
	That	certain		feeling
What	an			idea!

Here, from all *dollars*, we first select *sixty*; these are particularised as his *last sixty dollars* and of these we select *half* and say: 'He paid only *half his last sixty dollars* for his seat'.

# DESCRIBING AND CLASSIFYING THE REFERENT

## UNIT 48

### The pre-modifier

#### SUMMARY

- 1 The pre-modifier function is realised typically by adjectives and nouns.
- 2 Adjectives are used to describe or classify the head noun. Nouns classify the noun or cohere with it to form noun compounds.
- 3 The descriptor function is realised by adjectives and participles whose reference may be:

**descriptive:** *a popular disco, a sunny day, a galloping horse, an abandoned car*

**evaluative:** *a princely meal, a horrendous crime*

**either of the above:** *absolute zero, absolute rubbish (= nonsense)*

- 4 The classifier function limits the entity to a sub-class in relation to:

**affiliations:** *Indian art, French window, a Buddhist monk*

**quality:** *a poisonous snake, a non-alcoholic drink*

**norms:** *average age, standard size, top ten*

**process:** *rising prices, a growing population*

**society and institutions:** *metropolitan police, a football club; social status*

**technology:** *a nuclear power-station, electric light, solar energy*

- 5 Some words can function as either descriptors or classifiers:

*civil:* *a civil manner* (descriptor); *civil rights* (classifier)

- 6 The elements of a NG are organised in a relationship of successive dependency and selection, from the head leftwards to the classifier, the descriptor and the determiner, and rightwards to the post-modifier, as indicated by the arrows in the following example:

d←	des.d	clas.	←h→	fin. Cl.
That	short	summer	course	we went on

- 7 The order of epithets is semantic and partly conventional, rather than grammatical.

## 48.1 THE PRE-MODIFIER FUNCTIONS: DESCRIPTOR AND CLASSIFIER

The pre-modifier describes or classifies the referent by means of open-class items, mainly adjectives and nouns. Unlike the determiner, these are optional. Furthermore, and again unlike determinatives, there is no grammatical constraint on the number of modifiers placed before a noun. The main types of structural element that either describe or classify will now be illustrated.

### *Descriptor and classifier elements*

---

(a) adjectives	<i>smart clothes</i> , a <i>tall</i> building, <i>good</i> weather (descriptor);
<i>rented</i> rooms, <i>digital</i> camera (classifier)	
(b) <i>en</i> -participle	broken promises, <i>melted</i> ice-cream (descriptor);
<i>worn-out</i> machinery, <i>fallen</i> leaves (classifiers)	
(c) <i>ing</i> -participle	a <i>disappointing</i> finish (to a match), <i>breathhtaking</i> speed (descriptor); <i>running</i> water, a <i>leading</i> article, <i>upcoming</i> events (classifier)
(d) noun	the <i>flower</i> market, a <i>Paris</i> café (classifier)

---

In addition, the following are also used, though less commonly, as modifiers:

(e) nominal group	a <i>no-frills</i> airline
(f) adverb	the <i>then</i> President
(g) coordinated clauses	a <i>take-it-or-leave-it</i> attitude

---

The true *-en* participial derived from a verb, such as *broken* in *a broken cup*, is distinguished from ‘**pseudo-participials**’, which are derived from nouns, as in:

A dark-green, *big-leaved*, *long-stemmed* plant with orange flowers  
 A *dark-haired* girl  
 a *baseball-capped* teenager

Pseudo-participials are often modified, as the modification represents some non-essential feature. We don’t say \*a *leaved* plant, \*a *haired* girl, because plants normally have leaves and girls have hair. Not all leaves are big and not all girls’ hair is dark, however, allowing the formation of *big-leaved* and *dark-haired*. In *a baseball-capped teenager*, by contrast, no modifier is needed because wearing a baseball-cap is not an essential feature of a teenager.

## 48.2 ADJECTIVES AS EPITHET: DESCRIPTIVE AND ATTITUDINAL USES

As a descriptor the adjective is used to ascribe a quality (*big*, *old*, *red*, etc.) to the referent. This may be an objective quality (e.g. a *round* table, a *blue* truck, *old* magazines)

while others are subjective and represent the speaker's or writer's attitude towards the referent (*good, nice, lovely, bad, stupid, horrible*, etc.).

The subjective-objective distinction is not as clear as we might think, however. The act of appreciation is bound to be subjective, because the quality is inevitably presented through the eyes of the speaker, and yet the appreciation is objectivised because it is related to some cultural norm. Some 'objective' qualities are culture-specific. What counts as a tall man or a narrow street in one culture may not appear to be so to members of another.

The **attitudinal** adjective expresses the speaker's or writer's subjective evaluation of the referent. There are two broad kinds of evaluation:

**appreciative:** good, wonderful, heavenly (a *good* film, an *intelligent* remark)

**pejorative:** bad, idiotic, monstrous, appalling (a *horrible* film, a *foolish* remark)

Certain adjectives can be used both to describe objectively and to express attitude:

Descriptive

a *poor* part of the city

a *huge* piece of machinery

Attitudinal

*Poor* you! *Poor* little boy!

The show was a *huge* success.

Attitudinal adjectives are usually placed before descriptive ones: a *marvellous sunny day*; a *sickly greenish yellow*. They also tend to be preceded or followed by others which express similar or related meanings and so reinforce or intensify the attitude or emotion in question:

a lumbering great lorry

that splendid, delicious meal

a whopping big lie

a sweet little girl

The superlative preceded by *the* with attitudinal adjectives simply intensifies the effect but does not define. Compare:

We saw the sweetest little girl/the most horrible film (attitudinal) with we saw the poorest part of the city (objective and defining).

### *Multiple descriptors*

Sequences of two epithets (mainly adjectives and participles) are found in many types of speech and writing. Strings of three, four or five adjectives can have a rather marked effect. They are common in certain genres, such as advertisements, especially personal classified ads, as the second and fourth below [square brackets enclose other elements]:

Two items: long, winding roads; hard, stale cheese

Three items: exotic, exciting, adventure-loving woman [seeks professional man, 38+, to live life to the max with]

Four items: [what an] absurd, cruel, strange, mad thing [to do]

Five items: educated, kind, slightly shy, wealthy, good-looking male, [45, seeks partner with a view to marriage]

### 48.3 ORDERING OF MULTIPLE ADJECTIVES

Descriptors are not necessarily ordered in a relation of dependency, as classifiers are (→48.5). Nevertheless, their order of occurrence is not totally free, and various suggestions have been offered of preferred orderings. Here is one:

- attributes of **size**, **age**, **shape** and **colour** usually occur in that order: *a large, rectangular, black box*.
- **de-verbal adjectives** (i.e. derived from verbs) before **denominal** ones (derived from nouns; (→ 51.2)), as in: *an attractive, ambitious woman*.
- **short adjectives** before **long** ones, as in: *a small, pretty, well-kept garden*.
- **well-known words** before **less common ones**: *a strange, antediluvian monster*.
- the **most forceful or 'dynamic' adjective** tends to be placed at the end: *a sudden, loud, ear-splitting crash*; such sequences are also felt to be more satisfying rhythmically, compared with *an ear-splitting, loud, sudden crash*.

We shall return to the ordering of pre-modifiers in the following section, since many sequences are mixed, consisting of both descriptors and classifiers.

### 48.4 FUNCTIONS AND PROPERTIES OF THE CLASSIFIER

The function of the classifier is to sub-classify the noun referent; for instance, *dental treatment* is a sub-classification of *medical treatment*, *dental* contrasting with other sub-domains of medicine. Although certain words can function as both descriptors and classifiers, these functions can normally be distinguished by the following criteria:

- (a) Classifiers are **not gradable**, as descriptive adjectives are; that is, they don't admit degrees of comparison or intensity; we can't say *\*more dental treatment*, *\*very dental treatment*, as we can with descriptors: *more effective treatment*, *very effective treatment*.
- (b) Classifiers tend to be organised into mutually exclusive sets, as in *presidential election*, *the presidential airplane* (AmE), which contrast with other elections and airplanes (BrE aircraft) not relative to a president or a presidency. Another set in a different domain, that of ways of cooking eggs, includes *fried*, *boiled*, *poached*, *scrambled* [eggs].
- (c) The classifier function is realised by adjectives, nouns, participles, ordinal numbers and, to a lesser extent, adverbs, phrases and clauses. These will be briefly treated in turn.

### 48.5 ADJECTIVES, PARTICIPLES AND NOUNS AS CLASSIFIERS

Adjectives as classifiers are frequently derived from nouns and restrict the noun head in relation to another referent. There is a wide variety of relations expressed, including:

- (a) *affiliations to national, political or religious groups*, such as: African, American, British, Buddhist, Canadian, Chinese, Christian, Conservative, Dutch, Finnish,



Greek, Indian, Liberal, Muslim, Norwegian, Russian, Socialist, Swiss (all written with a capital letter);

(b) *related to norms, sequences, sizes, ratings, scales*, for example: average, chief, main, standard, regular, top; previous, following, initial, final; personal, particular, external, internal;

(c) *related to areas of study, art, science and institutions*, as in the following examples:

<b>affiliations:</b>	Russian politics, Swedish voters, Danish bacon;
<b>norms, ratings:</b>	average age, regular doctor, standard size, top ten, main road, personal contribution, particular occasion;
<b>time, place:</b>	former boss; old friend; previous page; left leg; right hand;
<b>periods:</b>	prehistoric remains, modern times, classical music;
<b>institutions:</b>	municipal authorities, industrial unrest, metropolitan police;
<b>professions:</b>	medical student, social worker, agricultural expert;
<b>devices:</b>	atomic energy, digital watch, mobile phone (BrE)/cell phone (AmE);
<b>processes:</b>	both <i>-ing</i> and <i>-en</i> participles classify an entity by a process: <i>coming</i> events, <i>sun-dried</i> tomatoes

Here too, a participle + noun may be a **compound**: *guided missile*, *leading article*. The *-ing* classifiers mentioned here are different from de-verbal nouns such as *boxing* as in *boxing-gloves*, *snorkeling gear*, *reading materials*, which belong to the noun class.

When the adjective and noun are written as one word, as in *software*, *hardware*, they are compounds, referring to a single class referent, not to a sub-type of a class. The same may happen with separate or hyphenated words: *fancy dress*, *fast-food*, *first-aid*.

### Types of noun classifier

simple (*apple blossom*)

genitive (*a girls' school*)

compound (*farmyard animals*)

short NGs (*Social Security contributions*)

Nouns as classifiers are not usually pluralised: **trouser belt**, **car production**, **rebel forces**, but certain plural nouns are regularly used, including **women drivers**, **sales campaign**. Plural forms are also used when the referent of the classifier has come to be regarded as a collective noun, as in *arms race*, *sports field*, *Olympic Games medal*, *the Arts Council*.

When the semantic relation between a classifier and a noun is very cohesive, they frequently become fused as a **noun compound** denoting a single referent, rather than a sub-class of a larger class of referents. The dividing line between a noun modifier + noun and a noun compound is not entirely clear. Punctuation provides only a rough guideline to the degree of integration achieved by the two nouns.

When the combination is written as separate words, it is likely to be a noun with a noun modifier (*season ticket*); if written as a single word it is more likely to be a noun compound (*blackboard*, *whiteboard*, *painkiller*). Hyphenation signals those elements which form a compound (*walkie-talkie*) and which otherwise would appear to be separate pre-modifiers. This is a useful guide with units occurring within a larger unit (*high-rise block*, *high-speed bullet train*).

Stress-patterning is not always reliable. The preferred stress for compounds is said to have the tonic stress on the first item as in *safety belt*, *hearing aid*, *hunger strike*. However, many compounds do not follow this pattern (*cotton wool*, *head waiter*, *zebra crossing*), while some classifiers do (*rose-bush*). American English appears to be more regular than BrE in this respect: *icecream*, vs *ice-cream* (BrE)

The factor that best distinguishes noun classifiers from noun compounds is that classifiers can enter into relations of coordination and modification. Compare:

#### **Coordinated classifiers**

new and second-hand stereos  
lunch and dinner menus  
silk and cotton shirt  
bus and coach stations

#### **Modified classifier**

brand-new stereos  
early Chinese pottery  
pure silk shirt  
inter-city coach station

Compound nouns do not admit coordination or modification of their component elements:

*soft and hardware	*extremely software
*pain and insect killers	*persistent painkiller
*silk and earth worms	*pure silkworm

#### *Classification by other classes of units*

Certain institutionalised word, group and clausal expressions are sometimes used:

<b>morpheme:</b>	pro- and anti-abortionists
<b>adverb:</b>	an only child, an away match
<b>PP:</b>	over-the-counter sales, on-line editing
<b>NG:</b>	a New Year's Eve party
<b>VG:</b>	a stop-and-go policy, a live-and-let-live philosophy
<b>AdjG:</b>	a bored-with-life attitude
<b>clause:</b>	a couldn't-care-less attitude.

## **48.6 WORDS FUNCTIONING AS BOTH DESCRIPTOR AND CLASSIFIER**

Many words can function as both descriptor and classifiers. Some classifiers can be modified and then lose their classifier function: a very British attitude.

#### **Descriptor**

*fresh* bread (= freshly made)  
a sick person  
*new* houses (= recently built)  
to do that would be *criminal*  
a *provincial* attitude

#### **Classifier**

*fresh* water (i.e. not salty, not sea-water)  
*sick* pay, *sick* leave  
*new* rooms (new to the occupier)  
the *criminal* court  
a *provincial* town

## 48.7 MULTIPLE CLASSIFIERS

Classifiers are related by coordination or dependency. A lot is left implicit in classifier + noun combinations, and with more than two elements the complexity increases.

### *Related by coordination*

The History and Geography Faculty	Apple and blackberry tart
The Management and Finance Committee	A plane and coach trip

The singular head noun indicates that there is only one Faculty, committee, tart and trip, each of a dual kind. Ambiguity may arise if the head noun is plural. For example, 'plane and coach trips' could refer to several trips of a plane + coach type, or to plane trips separate from coach trips, analysed as : [[plane and coach] trips] or [[plane] and [coach] trips]], respectively.

### *Related by dependency*

Sequences of two classifiers can occur before a noun head, as in the following:

chrome bathroom fittings  
Madrid terrorist bombings

In these examples the semantic relations can be inferred directly as increasing dependency from the head noun towards the left. That is, *chrome* modifies *bathroom fittings*, not *bathroom*, and *Madrid*, in the actual sense used, modified the *terrorist bombings*. This combination is ambiguous, however, as another reading could be 'bombings by Madrid terrorists'.

It is common, then, to find combinations in which either the classifier or the head is itself sub-modified, or rather, sub-classified, as in the following examples:

<i>Sub-modified classifier</i>	<i>Sub-modified head</i>
dining-car service	pocket address book
state school pupils	<i>The Observer</i> book reviews
two-litre plastic jug	Italian graduate students

Such combinations reflect cultural realities. In everyday contexts as well as in more specialised areas of knowledge and activity, there is a tendency in English to 'encapsulate' experiences, devices and phenomena of all kinds into short but complex NGs. The 'telescoped' effect of such ordered sequences means that, on a first encounter, not only non-native speakers but also natives sometimes have to put in some inferencing to work out the semantic relations.

In medical, political and other institutionalised contexts, the NG is often represented as an acronym, that is, initial letters which themselves are pronounced as a word, or, if that is not possible, as initials:

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
VIP	Very Important Person

Note that with reference to the AIDS sequence, 'Acquired' does not modify 'Immune' but 'Immune Deficiency'.

## 48.8 MIXED PRE-MODIFIERS AND THEIR ORDERING

Between the head of a NG and the other elements, there is one basic logical relationship, that of successive dependency: leftwards from the head to the pre-head elements and rightwards in the case of the post-head elements, as indicated by the arrows in the following example:

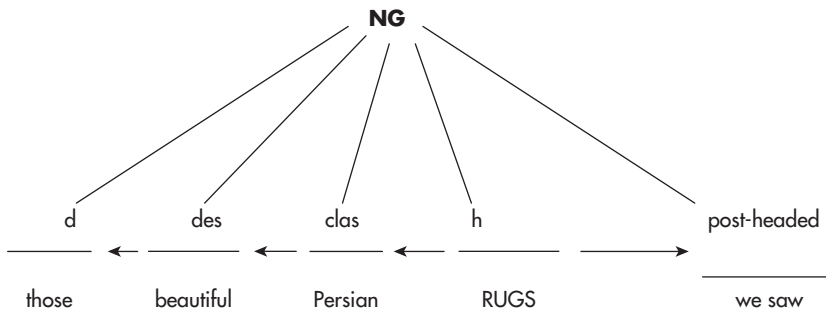


Figure 10.5 Descriptors and classifiers and their ordering.

Within this logical framework, speakers seem to use semantic criteria, based on degrees of permanence and objectivity, to decide the order of pre-modifiers. Those properties perceived as permanent, intrinsic and undisputed are placed nearest the head of the nominal group. Those that are more variable, subjective or attitudinal are placed further from the head.

Immediately to the left of the head is the classifier, since this is the closest relationship, as in *Persian rugs*, *radio programme*, *park entrance*, *leather suitcases*.

Where there is more than one classifier, affiliation precedes substance as in *German leather suitcases*, *Indian lamb curry*. If there is no affiliation, substance precedes other classifiers (*steel medical instrument*, *cotton gardening gloves*).

The next place, moving to the left, is occupied by colour adjectives, and before them come any participial modifiers (*battered brown German leather suitcases*, *stained blue plumbers' overalls*). Preceding these are the most central adjectives, such as *tall*, *young*, *long*, *hot* (for ordering of these, → 48.3). At the start of the list are the attitudinal adjectives – such as *beautiful*, *ugly*, *marvellous*, *horrible*, *nice*, *nasty* – after any determinatives. This is the unmarked order, which causes us to say:

a large oil tanker  
 increased income tax rebates  
 a beautiful blue silk scarf  
 a nice hot Indian curry

and not \*an oil large tanker  
 and not \*income tax increased rebates  
 and not \*a silk beautiful blue scarf  
 and not \*a hot Indian nice curry

Participial modifiers can occupy various positions. Those that are verbal nouns, such as *gardening* in *gardening gloves*, always stay close to the head noun, whereas those that have become gradable adjectives, such as *interested*, *bored*, *exciting*, may occur nearer the determinative, if there is one. If the participial seems to have an evaluative tinge, it is even more likely to precede other adjectives:

interested foreign spectators  
 an exciting new adventure story  
 a battered old leather suitcase

The following extract from *All American Girl* shows how a teenager sees herself at a particular moment:

**I stood on the kerb across from the Founding Church of Scientology, squinting into the light drizzle and headlights in the direction Theresa was supposed to come. As I stood there, I couldn't help feeling *kind of sorry for myself*. I mean, there I was, a *fifteen-year-old, left-handed, red-headed, boyfriendless, misunderstood middle-child reject, broke*, standing in the rain after skipping her drawing-class because she couldn't take criticism.**

# IDENTIFYING AND ELABORATING THE REFERENT

UNIT 49

## The post-modifier

### SUMMARY

- 1 The function of the post-modifier is essentially that of providing further information about the referent of the nominal group in order to identify and define it further, or to furnish supplementary information.
- 2 For this reason, most of the units (clauses, phrases, groups) which occur in post-head position of the NG can be either **defining** (integrated) or **non-defining** (supplementive). Defining post-modifier units are embedded in the NG structure, whereas non-defining units are not embedded. The latter are classed as **supplementives**.
- 3 The post-modifier is realised by a wide variety of units, including the following, which are here presented as defining:

PPs	the house on the corner, a new album by a top musician
finite relative clauses	the man who is standing in the corridor
non-finite relative clauses	the man standing in the corridor (-ing cl.)
	the man to consult is Jones (to-inf. cl.)
	the email I sent this morning (-en cl.)
adj or adjG	a room full of furniture; the best hotel available
adverb	the flat upstairs apposition
	NG my friend the doctor
reflexive pronoun	the doctor himself
- 4 Complements of nouns are a different type of post-head element.

## 49.1 COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE POST-MODIFIER ELEMENTS

The post-modifier elements have two basic communicative functions:

- (a) to supply information enabling the hearer/reader to specify and identify the person or thing referred to by the NG, as in:

**1** This is the house *where the Prime Minister lives*.

- (b) to add supplementary information about the referent when it has already been identified, as in:

**2** This is Number 10 Downing Street, *where the Prime Minister lives*.

These two roles or functions are encoded as defining (or restrictive) and non-defining (or non-restrictive) units, respectively. Both terms are in current use, but 'non-defining' is preferred here as more transparent. In **1**, the defining type, the clause *where the Prime Minister lives* is integrated (embedded) within the nominal group structure. Its function is to identify the house where the Prime Minister lives from all other possible houses.

When the referent is already identified or assumed to be known, as in **2**, the non-defining unit is subordinate but not embedded. Its function is to add descriptive, supplementary information. Thus the same clause *where the Prime Minister lives* does not identify the house where the Prime Minister lives in **2**, because Number 10, Downing Street is already identified or assumed to be known. Rather, it makes a linked, but separate assertion and has the status of a **supplementive**.

The difference between the two types of unit is marked both prosodically and in writing. Defining units such as **1** are not separated from their antecedent by either pauses or punctuation. By contrast, non-defining units are usually written between commas, dashes or brackets and pronounced between short pauses as separate information units (→ 33.2). Punctuation is not a hundred per cent reliable, however, and it is possible that prosodic features such as pauses are not generalised either. We shall see further distinguishing characteristics in the section on relative clauses (→ 49.3)

## 49.2 DEFINING AND NON-DEFINING REALISATIONS OF THE POST-MODIFIER

Most of the various units that occur as post-modifiers or as complements of the noun (→ Unit 50) can be either defining or non-defining. We shall look at each type in turn, starting with the defining.

### *Defining (embedded) realisations of the post-modifier*

The post-modifier is realised by a wide range of units, including clauses, phrases and groups.

Type of unit	Example
1 finite relative clause	Perhaps the people <i>who were waiting</i> are still there.
2 non-finite clauses	
<i>to</i> -infinitive clauses	It's time <i>to say good night</i>
<i>-ing</i> clause	an envelope <i>containing a white powdery substance</i>
<i>-en</i> clause	spring water <i>bottled in the Malvern hills</i>
3 prepositional phrase	a policeman <i>on a motor-cycle</i> ; a new album <i>by a top musician</i>
4 adjectival group	a box <i>full of spiral pads, erasers and pots of glue</i> (AmE)
5 adverbial group	the Prime Minister's speech <i>yesterday</i>
6 appositive NG	our son <i>Barney</i> ; the explorer <i>Marco Polo</i>
7 reflexive pronoun	the Americans <i>themselves</i>
8 noun complement clause	expectations <i>that we'll win the Cup</i> ; their plans <i>to go on strike</i>
9 PP complement	reliance <i>on public transport</i> ; a threat <i>to our security</i>

*Non-defining (supplementive) realisations of the post-head element*

1 finite relative clause	an apartment shared with Marcia, <i>who was taking her own stand against the system.</i>
2 non-finite clauses	
<i>-ing</i> clause	... and the taps, <i>gleaming as gold</i> , were surrounded by a platoon of little bottles and cases, <i>all matching the enormous volume</i> , <i>dedicated to his wife</i> , lay on the desk
<i>-en</i> clause	
3 prepositional phrase	The departure time, <i>at 5 a.m.</i> , was uncomfortably early.
4 adjectival group	and he opened out the big, blue toolbox, <i>full of screwdrivers and spanners</i>
5 circumstantial clause	We were all just trying to get through high school so we could hurry up and get to college, <i>where, we'd heard, things were better</i> ( <i>All American Girl</i> )
6 appositive NG	our youngest son, <i>Barney</i> ; Marco Polo, <i>the explorer</i>
7 verbless clause	and the Minister, <i>himself a Quaker</i> , made no objection
8 complement clause	her life-long wish, <i>to own a horse</i> , was at last fulfilled

Complements of nouns, whether defining or non-defining, differ from post-modifiers in being controlled by the noun and are dealt with separately in Unit 50.



## 49.3 FINITE RELATIVE CLAUSES AS POST-MODIFIERS

### 49.3.1 The relativisers

Finite relative clauses are introduced by a relative pronoun or adverb (called a **relativiser**). English uses several different relativisers: *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *that*, *where*, *when*, *why* and zero (0). The relativiser refers back to the head of the nominal group, which is termed the **antecedent**, for example, 'people' in *the people who were waiting*.

**Who** (objective **whom**) is used after an animate, particularly a human, head noun. The relativiser *who* is not omitted when it functions as **subject** in the relative clause:

Perhaps the people who were waiting are still there. (perhaps \*the people were waiting are still there)

The only exceptions are introduced by unstressed *there* or by a cleft. They are on the borderline between dialectal and very colloquial speech, and are not standard uses:

There's a man outside (0) *wants to speak to you*. It was John (0) *told me about you*.

**Whom** is always used when it directly precedes a preposition, as in **1**. This is a formal use. In less formal speech and writing *whom* is commonly avoided by 'stranding' the preposition (→ 6.3.3) and replacing *whom* by *who*, *that* or zero, as in **2**. Compare:

- 1** the students with *whom* I share a flat.
- 2** the students *who* I share a flat with/*that* I share a flat with/(0) I share a flat with

**Which** is used with inanimate heads in both subject and object functions in the relative clause, and before a preposition. The same alternatives are open for *which* as for *whom*:

the matter *which* concerns us at present (subject)  
 there is one matter *which* I must bring up (object)  
 Their life was one *for which* she was unprepared. (following a preposition)  
 Their life was one *that/which/(0)* she was unprepared for.

**That** is used in both subject and object functions and for both animate and inanimate heads in integrated relative clauses. It is a useful alternative to *who(m)* and *which* when the speaker prefers to avoid the animate–inanimate distinction:

The large Alsatian *that* belongs to the people next door is rather fierce.

However, *that* is not normally used after a personal proper name, as such a use is typically non-defining (see below). Neither is *that* used following a preposition.

As a relative pronoun, *that* is more common than *which* in spoken and in much written English, but *which* is said to be more common than *that* in academic writing. When the antecedent is a demonstrative pronoun, *that* tends to be avoided (*What's that [that] you have there?*), zero being preferred over both *that* and *which* (*What's that [0] you have there?*). When the antecedent is an indefinite pronoun, *that* is more common than

*which* in subject function (*Anything that might happen . . .*) whereas zero is common in object function (*Everything [0] we know . . .*).

**Zero** (that is, the non-use of the relative pronouns *whom*, *which* or *that*) is common practice when these pronouns function as object in the relative clause. Compare the various options, ranging from most formal to informal, in the following example:

the girl *to whom* I lent my coat the girl *whom* I lent my coat to the girl *that* I lent my coat to the girl (0) I lent my coat to

**When** and **where** as relativisers introduce circumstantial information, of time and place respectively: the place *where he was born*; the time *when he's sure to be at home*.

**Why** occurs as a relative only after the noun 'reason' and the like – cause, explanation, excuse: There's no reason *why we shouldn't be friends*. Many speakers consider it superfluous after 'reason'.

**Whose** is the possessive form and is used not only to refer to animate head nouns but also to inanimates, as a shorter alternative to *of which + determiner*:

children *whose parents* both go out to work  
the houses *whose roofs* were in need of repair

### 49.3.2 Features of the defining relative clause

The defining (or restrictive,)relative integrates with the head noun together with its pre-modifiers to form a larger unit, syntactically, prosodically and semantically.

- Syntactically it is embedded in the NG structure.
- Prosodically, it shares the intonation contour of its antecedent, as the two together constitute one information unit:

You had better buy milk *that hasn't passed its sell-by date*. (= only the milk that hasn't passed its sell-by date)

- Semantically, the defining relative is an integral part of the meaning of the whole nominal group. It helps to establish what (or whom) the speaker is talking about. It picks out the referent(s) from other possible referents by some distinguishing property: in this case the freshness of the milk.

### 49.3.3 Features of the non-defining relative clause

Unlike defining (integrated) relative clauses, non-defining relative clauses are not embedded in the nominal group structure. Although they are marked as subordinate by a relativiser, they are parentheticals which have considerable semantic independence.

Prosodically, they don't share the intonation contour of the matrix clause. Instead, they have their own intonation contour, which constitutes an independent information unit:

You had better buy Celtic, *which has not passed its sell-by date*.

They don't identify one referent from other possible referents. The antecedent is already restricted and the clause is complete.

Consequently, unlike integrated relatives, non-defining relatives can have as antecedent a proper noun or name, as above, which identifies a particular person or persons, object(s) or institution(s). The pronouns used are *who*, *whom*, *whose* and *which*, rarely *that*:

I'll give the CD to Ben, *who* likes music. (\*that likes music)

The injured child was taken to Alder Hey Children's Hospital, *which* is in Wavertree.

Semantically, the supplementive provides additional new information which is not essential, but may explain or elaborate on the content of the previous clause.

When placed medially, the non-restrictive relative is enclosed:

Plans for extending the John Lennon airport, *which will cope with ten times the present air traffic*, are now under way.

You would think that my dad, *who is an international economist with the World Bank*, would understand this. (*All American Girl*)

As it makes an independent statement, which is an extension of the already complete unit, non-defining relatives are increasingly found functioning as freestanding subordinate clauses, which may initiate a new paragraph in written discourse. (→ 33.2 for spoken examples of 'sentential' relatives, whose antecedent is the whole clause.)

And into the room walked David, the President's son.

*Who also happened to be David from my drawing class with Susan Boone.*  
(*All American Girl*)

## 49.4 NON-FINITE RELATIVE CLAUSES AS POST-MODIFIERS

*-ing clauses and -en clauses*

**He wrote a book containing his reminiscences of five U.S. Presidents.  
The book also described his own life as a press officer serving them in the White House.**  
(*Libra*, journal of Foyle's Ltd)

The value of these defining *-ing* clauses is similar to that of a finite relative clause: *a book that contained ...a press officer who had served them*. As we saw in Chapter 7, the *-ing* form is, in many constructions, an economical resource for expressing relationships where tense or aspect do not need to be further specified.

This property of the *-ing*, as also the *-en* clauses, which are always passive, is particularly evident in their non-defining function as supplementives.

*-ing* clauses He was sent several letters, *all containing a white, powdery substance*.

The stained-glass windows, *illustrating biblical scenes*, are splendid.

*-ed* clauses The enormous volume, *dedicated to his wife*, lay on the desk.

### *to*-infinitive clauses – *nothing to fear*

As post-modifiers, *to*-infinitive clauses can correspond to full relative clauses in which the relative pronoun is S, Od or C:

- S** The next train *to arrive at Platform 5* is the express train to York  
(= the train *which/that will arrive*)
- Od** They have nothing to eat. (= nothing *which* they can eat)  
The man *to consult* is Jones. (= the man *whom/that* you should consult is Jones)
- C** The commonest kind of worker *to become nowadays* is an unemployed one.  
(= The commonest kind of worker *that one can become*)

## 49.5 OTHER TYPES OF UNIT AS POST-MODIFIERS

### 49.5.1 Prepositional phrases

This is by far the commonest class of circumstantial post-modifier used in English NGs. It is also the most economical. The listed examples are all defining, except the last, which is non-defining (supplementive):

the concert on Monday	a clown with a red nose
the plane from Oslo	a job for the experts
a ticket to Paris	the man in the dark suit
the end of the story	the back wheels of the car

The departure time, *at 5 o'clock in the morning*, was uncomfortably early for most passengers. (non-defining)

Multiple PP post-modifiers can be either coordinated or embedded:

The path over the cliffs and down to the beach. (coordinated)  
Those books [on the top shelf [of the bookcase [in my bedroom]]]. (embedded)

### 49.5.2 Adjectival groups

Single adjectives are rarely used as post-modifiers and are limited to the following types:

- a small number of fixed expressions, the relic of a French structure: a court *martial*, the devil *incarnate*, from time *immemorial*;
- after certain pronominal heads: those *present*, something *nice*, nobody *interesting*.

Adjectival group post-modifiers usually contain their own modifier elements:

We chose the solution *most likely to succeed*.  
He always wore socks *full of holes*.

### 49.5.3 Adverbial groups

Adverbial group heads used to post-modify nouns express notions such as space, time and reason. In many cases they may be analysed as ellipted adverbial groups or clauses:

**place:** Is this the way *out*?  
**time:** He came, and left the week *after*.  
**reason:** She fell out with her sister, but I never knew *why*.

#### *Relative adverbial clauses as post-modifiers*

The relative adverbs *where*, *when* and *why* introduce clauses which post-modify nouns denoting places, times or reasons. *Where* and *when* have corresponding supplementary uses.

Defining	Supplementary
1a She took her degree at the university <i>where she was studying</i> .	1b She took her degree at London University, <i>where she was studying</i> .
2a The week <i>when the exams take place</i> , I intend to be ill.	2b The week after, <i>when the exams took place</i> , I was ill.
3a The reason <i>why I ask</i> is very simple.	

Figure 10.6 Defining and supplementary adverbs.

The relative adverbs *when* and *why*, but rarely *where*, can be replaced by *that* or *zero* in restrictive clauses:

In the week (*that*) the exams take place . . . The reason (*that*) I ask you . . .  
The town where I was born but not \*The town that I was born.

Zero is also common after the head noun *way*:

That's not the way (0) we do it here.

### 49.5.4 Appositive nominal groups

The closest post-modifying relationship is that between the head of a NG and an appositive unit, that is, a nominal unit that has the same referent. The relation between

them and the head noun may be integrated (*my friend the doctor . . .*) or supplementary (*my friend, the doctor I told you about . . .*).

The following are some of the appositive relationships these may express:

definition:	My friend the doctor.
naming:	The explorer Marco Polo.
role:	Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon.
description:	Chivalry, the dominant idea of the medieval ruling classes, was symbolised by the Round Table, nature's perfect shape.
particularisation:	The members voted for a change in the statutes: <i>the election of the chairman by popular vote.</i>

### SUMMARY

- 1 A different type of post-head element is the complement clause, which is controlled by head nouns.
- 2 The two main types of noun complement clause are *that*-clauses and *to*-infinitive clauses. Less common types are *of* + *-ing* clauses and *wh*-complement clauses.
- 3 Complements complete the meaning of the head. They precede post-modifiers.

### 50.1 FEATURES OF THE THAT-COMPLEMENT CLAUSE

Although they look superficially similar to relative clauses, complement clauses are in fact quite different. The *that*-clause which complements the noun is a **content clause**, not a relative clause. *That* is not normally omitted from complement clauses. Compare:

The news that *the President had fled the country* was expected. (complement clause)

The news (*that*) *we received* was worse than expected. (relative clause, admits zero)

While relative clauses can modify all types of nouns, complement clauses are dependent on a relatively small number of abstract nouns, such as *fact*, *belief*, *suggestion*, *hope*, *idea*, *expectation*, *wish*. They can be used non-definingly following a relative clause that post-modifies the same noun:

The rumour that was circulating, *that the Chancellor was about to resign*, proved to be false.

The content clause expresses the whole content of the head noun, as in: the news *that the President had fled the country*, his belief *that he was always right*.

The nominal groups taking noun complements tend to be definite and singular, as illustrated in the present examples.

Head nouns that take complement clauses are mainly nominalisations which have corresponding verbs or adjectives, though a few are simple. Here is a sample:

<b>With a corresponding verb:</b>	knowledge, belief, assumption, claim, thought, report, hope, reply, wish, proof, expectation, suggestion, hypothesis
<b>With a corresponding adjective:</b>	awareness, confidence, probability, eagerness, possibility, likelihood
<b>simple:</b>	fact, story, idea, news, notion, rumour

The notion *that the earth is flat* was discredited centuries ago.

The fact *that inflation is going down* is a sign *that our economy is improving*.  
The possibility *that they might be beaten* never crossed their minds.

The function of the *that*-complement clause is to report a proposition (*that the earth is flat*, *that they might be beaten*) derived from the previous discourse. The head noun conveys different types of stance, depending on the type used:

- nouns of cognition and reasoning:** knowledge, belief, idea, assumption, hypothesis, conclusion;
- speech-act nouns,** such as suggestion, proposal, claim;
- personal assessment:** possibility, doubt, fact, fear, hope, chance, or
- the source of knowledge** (evidence, rumour) (→ 8.2.5 for epistemic, evidential and evaluative stance).

Stance in complement clauses is much less direct than in *that*-clauses following a verb, such as 'he believes that . . . etc.' (→ 11.1). Furthermore, as the head noun often takes the form of a nominalization and is typically definite, it presents the following proposition as Given information and therefore beyond dispute. These factors make the complement clause a useful tool in argumentation. (→ Given and New information 29.2)

Noun complement clauses occur mainly in formal written and spoken English. They are less common in conversation. They are undoubtedly related to nominalisation and grammatical metaphor in discourse (→ Chapter 5) and are less common in conversation.

## 50.2 TO-INFINITIVE COMPLEMENT CLAUSES

Head nouns which take *to*-infinitive complement clauses are likewise often related to a verb or an adjective and include the following:

de-verbal:	attempt, decision, desire, failure, plan, tendency, permission
de-adjectival:	ability, inability, right, capacity
simple:	chance, effort, opportunity



The function of *to*-infinitive complements is to point to human acts or goals, as in:

attempts to trump up facts and  
evidence failure to warn the students in advance

The following quotation illustrates the difference between a PP complement and a *to*-infinitive complement:

The global threat *to our security* was clear. (PP complement = x threatened our security)  
So was our duty *to act* to eliminate it. (*to*-infinitive complement)  
(Prime Minister Tony Blair's speech on the threat of international terrorism, 5 March 2004)

### 50.3 OF + -ING COMPLEMENT CLAUSES

Head nouns which take *of* followed by *-ing* complement clauses include: *thought, habit, importance, way, effect, danger, risk*

There is overlap with the *to*-infinitive construction in that some nouns (*idea, way, possibility, thought, hope*) can take either of these constructions as complement, besides taking a relative clause with *that* as post-modifier:

The risk *of losing* your way in the forest/*that* you might lose your way. (comp.)  
The possibility *of not being rescued*/*that* you might not be rescued. (comp.)  
The risk/possibility *that* you told us about was very real. (defining relative clause)

### 50.4 WH-COMPLEMENT CLAUSES

A further type of post-head complement is the *wh*-clause. It is most common when following the preposition *of* or *about*. Both finite clauses and non-finite *to*-infinitive clauses can occur:

The question (of) how much we should spend on our holidays.  
He has strong doubts (about) whether he should accept the post.

The question (of) how much to spend on our holidays . . .  
He has strong doubts (about) whether to accept the post.

### 50.5 PREPOSITIONAL COMPLEMENTS OF NOUNS

These are typically controlled by nouns which have corresponding verbs:

A desire <i>for</i> fame	x desires fame
Reliance <i>on</i> public transport	x relies on public transport
A lack <i>of</i> knowledge	x lacks knowledge

The preposition *of*, however, is controlled by many nouns which are not related to verbs: *advantage, danger, effect, importance, means, method, problem, purpose, task, way*.

## 50.6 FUNCTIONS OF THE NOMINAL GROUP

In clauses, NGs can realise any structural element except the Predicator. At group rank they can be embedded in PPs as complements of the preposition and in NGs as pre- or post-modifiers, or as supplementives, of the head element. Here are examples of the functions that can be realised by a simple NG such as *the best player available*.

### NGs as clause elements

<i>The best player available</i> was a Welshman.	<b>S</b>
The committee engaged <i>the best player available</i> .	<b>Od</b>
They offered <i>the best player available</i> a high salary.	<b>Oi</b>
Bale seemed to be <i>the best player available</i> .	<b>Cs</b>
Everybody considered him <i>the best player available</i> .	<b>Co</b>
He signed the contract <i>last week</i> .	<b>A</b>

### NGs as group elements

They paid a high price for <i>the best player available</i> .	<b>c</b>
<i>The best player-available</i> topic was not discussed	
<b>pre-modifier</b>	
Gareth Bale, <i>the best player available</i> , earns a high salary.	<b>Appos. sup.</b>

## 50.7 NOMINALISATION

In many professional registers, above all in written genres, the use of **nominalisation** has become extremely common. Superficially, it consists of the use of a nominal form, such as 'starvation' in the following text, instead of the corresponding verb 'starve', from which the nominal is derived. Other examples from the text are:

accuracy	derived from the adjective 'accurate'
explanation	derived from 'explain'
increase	has the same form as the verb 'increase'
speed	has the same form as the verb 'speed'

It has been known for nearly a century that starvation for about two weeks<sup>1</sup> increases the speed and accuracy of mental processes,<sup>2</sup> especially mental arithmetic.<sup>3</sup> This is probably the explanation of the huge increase in self-starvation among young women doing academic work.<sup>4</sup> An extreme form of this condition known as 'anorexia nervosa'<sup>5</sup> is now common and our studies<sup>6</sup> have shown that in 75% of cases<sup>7</sup> they start crash-dieting<sup>8</sup> in the year in which they are working for a major examination.

It is clear that nominalisation is no mere substitute for a verb or adjective, however. Instead, the use of a nominalised expression requires an entirely different organisation of the whole sentence, and indeed a completely different semantic conceptualisation. (This is discussed in Chapter 5.) In this way, a great deal of information, which would otherwise be expressed as verbs, adjectives and PPs, is packed into the nominal groups. The result is very long, dense NGs, which tend to be abstractions, instead of referring to concrete persons who act as Agents. In fact, personal participant subjects in heavily nominalised styles tend to be no longer the head of the NG.

A non-nominalised equivalent of the first four NGs in the extract above might look something like this:

**1 If you/people starve for about two weeks, 2 you/they think faster and more accurately, 3 especially when doing arithmetic; 4 This probably explains why young women who are doing academic work starve themselves.**

One reason for the use of nominalisation is that it is shorter than the non-nominalised form. More important, the nominalised form encapsulates a whole situation in one word, such as ‘self-starvation’, ‘crash-dieting’. Because density and brevity prevail over clarity, heavy nominalisation can become difficult to understand in unfamiliar contexts. For those familiar with the subject-matter, on the other hand, nominalisation provides them with a kind of shorthand by which complex concepts and processes are easily handled without further explanation. All adult speakers of English handle at least some specialised registers such as education, business, sport, etc. and pick up nominalised expressions such as ‘infant primary schools’ or ‘mixed comprehensive schools’. Such expressions become relatively fixed until new cultural developments give rise to new combinations – something which is happening in all areas of life.

## FURTHER READING

On articles and proper names: Berezowski (2001). On ordering of pre-modifiers: Quirk et al. (1985). On supplementary units and noun clause complements, frequencies of occurrence: Biber et al. (1999); Huddleston and Pullum (2000). On referential chains/coherence Givón (1993 and 2001). On experiential and interpersonal meanings, subjective and objective epithet: Halliday (1994).

## EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 10

### Talking about people and things: the Nominal Group

#### Unit 45

- 1** †Identify all the nominal groups in the following examples. Remember that NGs may have other units embedded in their structure, especially in post-head position. Identify the head of each NG:

- (1) Everyone in the library was concentrating on what they were doing.
- (2) There were old men reading newspapers and there were high-school boys and girls doing research.
- (3) The outcome of the current crisis would determine the pattern of international relations for the next generation.
- (4) Someone here once told me a story about the most notorious of the dictators who ruled this country at the turn of the century. [BMR]
- (5) The seat on my left was occupied by a fat lady who was busy peeling an orange. On my right was a thin-faced man with a moustache and a blotchy skin. He was the one who gave a friendly smile and a cheery 'Good evening!' I nodded amiably. [BN3]
- (6) The violent attacks on the police by the counter-demonstrators who used bottles, bricks and other assorted missiles resulted in a large number of casualties. [BNE]

- 2** †Underline the nominal groups marked in the following text based on an advert, and then write each one out in three parts as for the description of the art sale in 45.1:

Fit, fun, funky, single parent seeks gorgeous, good-humoured, intelligent, London-based man interested in a loving and lasting relationship

## Unit 46

- 1a** †Are the NGs in the following examples interpreted as mass or count?

- (1) I haven't time<sup>1</sup> to go to the gym<sup>2</sup> these days. But I'm really keen on gym.<sup>3</sup>
- (2) The only things my sister likes are fashion<sup>4</sup> and shopping.<sup>5</sup>
- (3) I'll see you in class<sup>6</sup> on Tuesday – unless, of course, I'm moved to a different class.<sup>7</sup>
- (4) My agent will be handling my appearance<sup>8</sup> in the show next week.
- (5) Cynthia and I are going over to Jean's this evening to do our homework<sup>9</sup> together.
- (6) My sister's boy-friend is really good at football.<sup>10</sup>

- 1b** †Say which of these NGs (apart from those in sentences 2 and 3) could be used in the other sense.

- 2** †The following are generic statements in which the first noun is preceded by a definite or indefinite or zero article. Test each noun for its use with the other two articles, and say whether either of them can also be used to express generic reference.

- (1) *A liquid* has no shape.
- (2) *Gases* have no mass.
- (3) *A human being* needs the company of others.
- (4) *War is* politics carried out by violent means.
- (5) *Animals* that live in captivity play with their food as if it were a living animal.
- (6) *Television is* a mixed blessing.
- (7) *The bicycle is* a cheap form of private transport.
- (8) *The computer* has revolutionised business methods.

- 3** †Which of the following statements do you interpret as indefinite and which as generic, according to the definition of genericity given in 46.6?

- (1) *Bicycles* are very useful during a holiday.

- (2) We always hire *bicycles* during our holidays.
  - (3) I have *official information* for you.
  - (4) *Official information* is usually difficult to obtain.
- 4 †What are the two possible interpretations of the final noun in the following sentence?  
My sister wants to marry *an American*.

## Unit 47

- 1 Express the following sentences differently, using 's determinatives if you consider this structure acceptable:

- (1) I should like the opinion of another doctor.
- (2) Have you read the report of the chairman of the examination committee?
- (3) The failure of the Regional Training Scheme was inevitable.
- (4) The dog belonging to my next-door neighbour barks all night.
- (5) The grandmother of one of the girls in my class has died.
- (6) Here's the address of the only person I know in London.

- 2 Complete each sentence with a suitable determinative of the class indicated on the left:

- (1) (Non-specific): . . . . . member of our family has a driving licence
- (2) (Non-exact cardinal)      My young brother has collected — of butterflies.
- (3) (Non-specific):      I had \_\_\_\_\_ very good news today.
- (4) (Specific) (indef):      \_\_\_\_\_ people wouldn't agree with that opinion.
- (5) (Partitive):      \_\_\_\_\_ of the people in this office have a car.
- (6) (Negative):      \_\_\_\_\_ of this work will be wasted.
- (7) (Specific comparative):      You will never have \_\_\_\_\_ opportunity again.
- (8) (Fractional):      \_\_\_\_\_ my friends have given up smoking.

- 3 †Complete the following sentences with one of the following: *each, every, both, either, neither, all, any, none, no*. (In some cases more than one determinative is possible.):

- (1) She tells me she plays golf almost . . . . weekend.
- (2) ----- of the brothers applied for the job but -- was successful.
- (3) Draw a line between ---- item and the next.
- (4) — child should spend some of its leisure time with -- parent.
- (5) There are two good films on the television this evening, but I have seen them  
-----
- (6) Ah, in fact there are three and I haven't seen ----- of them/I have seen  
-----
- (7) He has passed ----- exam so far.
- (8) ----- type of coffee except the soluble kind will do.

- 4 †Complete the following sentences with either *all* or *everything*:

- (1) If that happened, she would lose her job. It would be the end of -----
- (2) You need a sports bag to carry ----- your things in.
- (3) But how much would ----- this cost?
- (4) My father paid for -----
- (5) They did ----- together and people thought they were twins.

## Unit 48

- 1 †Which of the adjectives in the following NGs function as epithets and which as classifiers? Remember that classifiers are non-gradable.

(1) cultural activities	popular activities
(2) a professional attitude	a professional opinion
(3) medical treatment	a medical student
(4) a mechanical engineer	a clever engineer
(5) quick agreement	international agreement
(6) efficient workers	mining workers
(7) electric light	bright light

- 2 †Consider the order of the epithets and classifiers in the following sentences. Change the order if you think it is necessary, and say why. Insert a coordinator or subordinator where you think it is required, and insert commas where needed (see 48.1).

- (1) It was an unforgettable, heart-breaking sad sight.
- (2) We heard a tinkling, mysterious, faint sound.
- (3) Her artistic, slender, long hands fluttered in the air.
- (4) She had a pair of designer, exotic-looking, smart sunglasses.
- (5) The lavatory was a wooden, brown, smallish box inserted in the floor.
- (6) We drove through the granite, wooded, threatening, dark mountains.

## Unit 49

- 1 †In the following sentences which NG post-modifiers are integrated (defining) and which are supplementary (non-defining)?

- (1) The morning we were supposed to leave my car broke down.
- (2) I didn't like certain strange noises coming from the engine.
- (3) These noises, which I had never heard before, worried me.
- (4) We went to Greece, a country which I didn't know.
- (5) An archaeologist, an American from Yale, was in the party.
- (6) Excursions with a well-informed guide are more interesting.
- (7) I finally achieved my ambition, to see the Parthenon.
- (8) It was the main reason we went to Greece.
- (9) The narrow streets, full of chaotic traffic, made progress slow.
- (10) We gazed up at the night sky, studded with stars.

- 2 †Identify the type of post-modifier in the following sentences:

- (1) My sister Jessica lives in Milan.
- (2) The new Youth Training Scheme, a failure by any standard, has been abandoned.
- (3) Inflation, the curse of twentieth-century democracy, is once again out of control.

- 3 †Give the symbol for each element of the following NGs, repeating the symbol if an element is realised more than once, e.g. (2) **des des h**.

- (1) university students
- (2) clear, cool water

- (3) our first day in London
- (4) that new colour magazine about photography that I bought
- (5) six beautiful old Chinese Ming vases
- (6) somebody more knowledgeable with teaching experience

**4a** † Give a paraphrase of the following NGs.

- (1) television aerial repair service
- (2) Manchester University Research Fellowship Appointments
- (3) daytime telephone calls price reduction
- (4) adult education reform proposals alarm
- (5) university athletics teams gold medals award

**4b** † Express the following as single NGs.

- (1) missiles based on land and carrying multiple warheads
- (2) weapons of a nuclear type having an intermediate range
- (3) an exhibition of robots designed for use in the home and now available all over Europe
- (4) a lady's suit for wearing in the evening made of velvet and having the blue colour of midnight in a classic style
- (5) a farmhouse made of stone having the colour of honey and built two years ago in Malta

## Unit 50

**1** † Identify the extent of the NGs in the following sentence from *The Times*. Then consider whether the numbered sections have a post-modifier or complement function. Give evidence for your decision.

The annual celebration of a pagan Spanish ritual<sup>1</sup> honouring the coming of spring<sup>2</sup> is always an expression of unity and fun.<sup>3</sup>

**2** † Read the following sentence and decide whether the post-head part of the nominal group consists of a complement or a type of clause:

There is growing criticism of how the Government reacted to the attack.

# DESCRIBING PERSONS, THINGS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

## CHAPTER 11

### Adjectival and Adverbial Groups

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# ADJECTIVES AND THE ADJECTIVAL GROUP

## UNIT 51

### SUMMARY

- 1 AdjGs and typical AdvGs have potentially the same structure: head (*clear, clearly*), pre-modifier (**very** *clear*, **very** *clearly*) and post-modifier (*very clear indeed*, *very clearly indeed*).
- 2 Both AdjGs and AdvGs are frequently realised by the head element alone (*a fast train*; *drive fast*).
- 3 Their main functions and uses, however, are different. The AdjG typically provides information about people, places and things, while the adverb typically characterises the process expressed by the verb. For this reason we deal first with adjectives and the adjectival group, and later with adverbs and the adverbial group.
- 4 Formally, adjectives may be simple (*tall, brilliant*), prefixed (*un-, im-, dis-, ab-*), suffixed (*-ful, -able, -ous, -ive*), participial (*-ing, -en*) or compound (*home-made, duty-free, sunburnt*).
- 5 Syntactically, AdjGs typically function attributively as pre-modifier (in NG) (*hot water*) and predicatively as Complement of the Subject in clauses (*the water is hot*). In addition they can function as Complement of the Object (I like it *hot*) in clauses and, less commonly, in various other functions in groups and clauses.
- 6 Semantically, AdjGs can express a state (*lonely*), a quality (*narrow*), a sub-class (*northern*) or a property (*creative*). They can indicate an attitude (*lovely, odious*) or a judgement (*true*).
- 7 Many adjectives may take a complement in post-head position which completes their meaning (*good at chess, glad (that) you came*).

## 51.1 STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERISTIC USES OF THE ADJECTIVAL GROUP

The adjectival group is composed potentially of three structural elements: a head (**h**), a modifier (**m**) and a post-head element, which will be either a modifier (**m**) or a complement (**c**). Post-modifier and complement can occur together in the same AdjG. The basic structures are as follows:

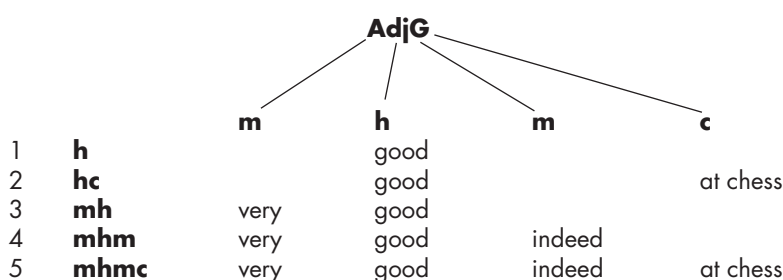


Figure 11.1 Structure of the adjectival group.

Other examples of full AdjG structures are:

extremely	hot	for this time of the year (mhm)
very	glad	that you won the match (mhc)
quite	fond	of music (mhc)

The difference between a post-modifier and a complement is that the complement is controlled by the adjectival head (*good at . . .*, *fond of . . .*, *glad that . . .*, *glad to . . .* etc.), whereas the post-modifier is not.

The head of an AdjG is always realised by an adjective, which may function alone in representation of a whole AdjG, as in *The food was **good***.

The following blurb of a novel from *The Review* contains adjectives of different types. Mostly, they characterise NG referents in evaluative and emotive terms. By contrast, the **classifying** use is illustrated in *best* friends and *new* friend.

For as long as they can remember Ben and Olly have been *best*<sup>1</sup> friends and *close*<sup>2</sup> neighbours. Then Carl moves into their street, Carl is *bad*.<sup>4</sup> Carl is *very bad*.<sup>5</sup> His games are *rough*,<sup>6</sup> *dangerous*<sup>7</sup> and *strangely exciting*.<sup>8</sup> But soon Ben begins to wonder where their *new*<sup>9</sup> friend is leading them.

## 51.2 SIMPLE, DERIVED AND COMPOUND ADJECTIVES

The most frequently used adjectives in English are monosyllabic, or disyllabic words of native origin. They tend to be paired as opposites such as **good-bad**, **big-little**, **large-small**, **tall-short**, **black-white**, **easy-hard**, **soft-hard**, **dark-light**, **alive-dead**, **hot-cold**, which have no distinctive form to mark them as adjectives.

Many adjectives, such as *sandy*, *milky*, are derived from nouns, other adjectives or verbs by the addition of certain characteristic suffixes. Some of these are of native origin, as in *greenish*, *hopeful*, *handsome*, *handy*, *foremost*, *useless*, while others are formed on Greek or Latin bases, as in *central*, *secondary*, *apparent*, *civic*, *creative*, and yet others via French such as *marvellous* and *readable*.

### *Suffixes typical of adjectives*

-able, -ible	advisable, sensible	-ical	magical, political
-al, -ial	central, financial	-ish	feverish, yellowish
-ed	paved, scared	-ive	active, attractive
-ful	eventful, meaningful	-less	useless, meaningless
-ic	tragic, frantic	-ious, -ous	luxurious, famous
		-y	watery, risky, sugary

Most adjectival prefixes are added to words which are already adjectives: *unhappy*, *insecure*, *discourteous*, *abnormal*, *irrelevant*. Some adjectives were formed by adding the prefix *a-* to an adjective (*asleep*, *awake*, *ablaze*, *alive*, *alone*, *alike*).

Many adjectives have compound forms composed of various classes of words, for example:

noun + adjective	tax-free (goods)
determinative + noun	all-American (girl)
number + noun	four-wheel (drive)
adverb + participle	hard-earned (money, rest)
adverb + adverb	well-off (people)
phrase	state-of-the-art (stadium)

Adjectives in English are invariable in form. They are not marked for gender or number.

A long-haired dog, long-haired dogs; a tough character, tough characters

## **51.3 PARTICIPLES AND PARTICIPIAL ADJECTIVES**

### *Participial adjectives commonly used as Verbal Groups*

A large number of participial adjectives derived from transitive verbs can be used as modifiers in a NG and as Complements in a clause, while also retaining their ability to function as part of a VG: A *confusing* remark (m); That is *confusing* (Cs); You are *confusing* me (part of VG). Forms which can carry out these functions include the following:

-*ing*: annoying, exciting, frightening, surprising, boring, distressing, satisfying, tiring, misleading

-*en*: annoyed, excited, frightened, surprised, bored, distressed, satisfied, tired, misled

Remember that -en symbolise both -ed and -en participle forms.

In both their attributive and predicative functions, these participial adjectives can be graded and intensified (→ 52.1 and 52.2):

Attributive	Predicative
-ing: <i>very encouraging</i> news	the news is <i>most encouraging</i>
-en: <i>rather frightened</i> tourists	the tourists seemed <i>quite</i> frightened

### *Participial adjectives seldom used in VGs*

A small set of *-ing* forms are rarely or never used as part of a Verbal Group, but only as attributive or predicative adjectives:

-ing: interesting, amazing, charming, disappointing, pleasing

### *Pseudo-participial adjectives*

An increasing number of adjectives are coined by adding *-ing* or *-ed* not to verbs but to nouns. These are termed **pseudo-participial adjectives**, such as:

-ing: enterprising, neighbouring, appetising, promising  
 -en: talented, skilled, gifted, bearded, detailed, jet-lagged

### *Participial modifiers*

To distinguish the *-ing* adjectives from participial modifiers such as *rising prices* (→ 48.5), the following criterion is useful: if the *-ing* form cannot be graded, or intensified by *very*, as in **1**, it will be considered a participial modifier. If it can be graded, or intensified by *very*, it is an adjective. Compare *a sleeping child* with *a horrifying story*:

<b>1</b> (participial modifier)	*a <i>more</i> /* <i>very</i> sleeping child	*the child is <i>more</i> / <i>very</i> sleeping
<b>2</b> (adjective)	a <i>more</i> / <i>very</i> horrifying story	the story is <i>more</i> / <i>very</i> horrifying

### *Compound forms*

Many participial forms are compounded with a noun, an adjective or an adverbial prefix:

-ing: heart-breaking news; good-looking girl; fast-selling magazines  
 -en: semi-skimmed milk; sun-tanned legs; well-known brands

Compound forms are extremely common in English, where new ones are freely coined every day. A variety of the possible forms that adjectives and modifiers take is illustrated in the following blurb from *The Review*:

In a rising Saudi Arabian city, far from weary, recession-scarred America, a struggling businessman pursues a last-ditch attempt to stave off foreclosure, pay his daughter's college tuition, and finally do something great. Dave Eggers takes us around the world to show how one man fights to hold himself and his splintering family together in the face of the global economy's gale-force winds. This taut, richly-layered, and elegiac novel is a powerful evocation of our contemporary moment – and a moving story of how we got here.

## 51.4 SEMANTIC CLASSES OF ADJECTIVES

As seen in Unit 48, when discussing modifiers of nouns, adjectives in use fall into two broad groups: those that describe the referent (descriptors) and those that sub-classify it (classifiers). Here we simply provide some further sub-types and examples of each, with the reminder that many adjectives have both uses (→ 48.5).

### 51.4.1 Descriptors

Such adjectives express the following types of meaning:

**size, weight, extent:** thick-thin, high-low, wide-narrow, deep-shallow, young-old

**colour:** blue, brown, grey, yellow, purple

**shape:** round, square, oval, oblong, triangular

**meanings related to time:** new, recent, early, late, weekly, daily

**evaluative:** awesome (AmE), pretty, beautiful, nice, dreadful, shocking, state-of-the-art

**an active or passive process:** puzzling, surprising, soothing, worrying, broken, celebrated, exhausted

**general qualities:** warm-cool, full-empty, sweet-sour, strong-weak, bright-dull

**a temporary state:** alight, alone, awake, aghast, ajar (with predicative function only)

### 51.4.2 Classifiers

These are of three types:

**restrictive:** they restrict the referent of a noun in relation to another referent:

average, additional, chief, complete, entire, final, following, initial, main, major, only, particular, primary, public, single, sole an *only* child, , the *sole* reason, the *entire* novel, her *current* boyfriend

**relating to groups** such as nationalities, religions, politics:

Brazilian, Christian, Muslim; Iraqi territory, *Greek* sculpture, the *Western* powers, *African* music

**category-specific meanings** associated with culture, technology, science, and so on.

*heavy* industry, *light* aircraft, *the financial* crisis, a *nuclear* plant, *parliamentary* debates

All these are listed more extensively according to topic in 48.5.

### 51.4.3 Degree emphasisers

In addition to these two main types, certain adjectives can function as degree emphasisers with a strongly emotive tinge:

*sheer* nonsense; *mere* repetition; *utter* rubbish; a *real* mess; a *true* genius; *absolute* folly; a *perfect* fool; *pure* ignorance

Of these *mere* and *utter* have no other meaning as adjectives and cannot be used predicatively; the words *real*, *true*, *absolute*, *perfect*, *sheer*, *pure* can be used as central adjectives when they have qualitative, not restrictive, meaning as in *a sheer* cliff – the cliff is *sheer*; a *true* story – the story is *true*; *pure* water – this water is *pure* (→ 51.6).

## 51.5 SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS OF THE ADJECTIVAL GROUP

AdjGs can realise functions in both group and clause structures, as follows:

### AdjGs in groups

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • (pre-)modifier in a NG:      | a <i>very good</i> actor, <i>heavy</i> rain, an <i>old friend</i> |
| • (post-)modifier in a NG      | something <i>cheap</i> , the person <i>responsible</i>            |
| • head of a NG:                | the <i>French</i> , the <i>sick</i> , the <i>most expensive</i>   |
| • complement of a preposition: | at <i>last</i> , for <i>good</i> , in <i>short</i>                |
| • modifier in an AdjG:         | <i>bright</i> red, <i>pale</i> blue, <i>red</i> hot               |

### AdjGs in clauses

- |                       |                                    |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Subject Complement: | The acting was <i>brilliant</i> .  |
| • Object Complement:  | I consider that <i>offensive</i> . |

### Peripheral AdjGs

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| • Stance Adjunct:                  | <i>Strange</i> , I never suspected him.      |
| • Detached predicative supplement: | <i>Angry and tearful</i> , Susan walked out. |
| • Exclamation:                     | <i>Fine! Great! Right! Fantastic!</i>        |

Among adjectives as modifiers, the type ‘a *good* actor’ constitutes a special use of certain adjectives, as in a *slow* reader, a *hard* worker, a *big* eater. This is sometimes called the **process-oriented** use, as the adjective doesn’t modify the noun directly, but rather the manner of performing the action. However, the manner of performing

the action may become a characteristic feature of the entity: *I'm a sound sleeper* means, in effect, 'I always sleep soundly'.

**Stance Adjuncts** make an evaluative comment on the content of the whole clause. In common use in this function are: *odd, strange* (*Odd, I never noticed*). Others such as *More important still* can also function as **connectives** between clauses.

**Detached predicatives** such as *angry and tearful* are a type of supplementive unit, that is, a unit used non-restrictively (→ 49.2) They are common in certain written genres and generally absent from conversation.

**Adjectives as exclamations** as in *Great!* can be considered as ellipted copula clauses: *That's great! That was awesome* (*AmE*)

## 51.6 CENTRAL AND PERIPHERAL ADJECTIVES

Of these functions the most central are the **attributive** function, as modifier in the NG, and the **predicative** function, as Subject Complement in the clause. It is normal to classify as **central** those adjectives which fulfil these two functions, and as **peripheral** those which realise other functions, or only one, or neither of these central functions.

Central adjectives are also descriptors. They add information which fills out and enlivens the description of people, places and things. Central adjectives also play an important role as evaluators, expressing the subjective or objective evaluation of the speaker (→ 48.2).

By contrast, the classifiers, degree emphasisers and process-oriented adjectives are all peripheral.

Summarising, then, we have:

- 1 **Central adjectives:** descriptors
- 2 **Predicative adjs only:** *afraid, asleep, ablaze, adrift, alive, alone, alike, aware, averse*
- 3 **Attributive adjs only:** these can be grouped into the following types:

- restrictive classifiers: the *chief/main* reason; *sole* responsibility; an *only* child
- time/space: the *previous* page; my *old* school; a *new* baby; your *left* leg
- associative classifiers: an *agricultural* college, *foreign* affairs, a *nuclear* weapon
- degree emphasisers: *sheer* nonsense; *utter* rubbish; an *outright* lie
- process-oriented: a *big* eater; a *hard* worker, a *light* sleeper, a *slow* reader

The following excerpt from *Paris 1919* illustrates the latter and other uses of the adjective:

Although he (Lloyd George) was a wonderful conversationalist, he was also a very good listener. From the powerful to the humble, from adults to children, everyone who met him was made to feel that he or she had something important to say.

Most peripheral adjectives have a further restriction in that they cannot be graded or intensified: *\*very main, \*extremely chief, \*more utter*. This also applies to adjectives functioning as classifiers: *\*a very nuclear weapon, \*a rather Egyptian mummy, \*fairly prehistoric remains* (→ Unit 52). However, as explained in Chapter 10, a number of classifying adjectives can also be used as descriptors and graded, some more easily than others: *British* exports (classifier), a very *British* attitude (descriptor).



# DEGREES OF COMPARISON AND INTENSIFICATION

## UNIT 52

### SUMMARY

- 1 **Comparative and superlative** forms in *-er*, *-est* and *more*, *most*, respectively. Irregular forms: *better*, *best*; *worse*, *worst*; *farther/further*, *farthest/furthest*. Comparative constructions with *the* + adjective. Structures of sufficiency (*enough*) and excess (*too*).
- 2 **Intensification**: high: *very*, *most*, *extremely*, *extra*, *seriously* (stupid); medium: *quite*, *rather*, *pretty*, *fairly* (cool).
- 3 **Attenuation**: *slightly* (better), *a little* (different), *a bit* (salty); *not very* (good), *hardly* (likely).
- 4 **Quantification**: exact: *one-mile*; *a mile (long)*; *2-foot-thick*; *2 feet thick*; *3-year-old*; *3 years old*; non-exact: *not that long*; *this big*.
- 5 **Description**: by adjs: *pale green*, *dark blue*, *deep red*; by advs: *strangely* silent, *cheerfully* confident; by nouns: *pitch black*, *paper-thin*, *world-wide*.
- 6 **Sub-modification**: *just as easy*, *really quite angry*, *far too expensive*, *quite old enough*.

An important feature of central adjectives is that they are **gradable**, that is, the quality they express can be held in differing degrees. We can question and express the degree by a degree adverb **How** *important is it?* *It is **extremely** important.* Many descriptive adjectives are gradable, classifiers in general are not.

### 52.1 COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE DEGREES

When we want to express the notion that a person, thing or situation has more or less of a quality, we can mark a gradable adjective for **comparative (1)** or **superlative (2)** degree.

This is done grammatically in one of two ways: by inflection, adding *-er* and *-est* to the base form, or analytically by the adverbs *more* and *most*:

Base form	Comparative	Superlative	
big	bigger	biggest	(inflectional)
comfortable	more comfortable	most comfortable	(analytic)

### Inflected forms are used with:

- Short adjectives of one syllable, and disyllabic adjectives ending in *-y* (*hot–hotter–hottest*; *old–older–oldest*; *easy–easier–easiest*; *ugly–uglier–ugliest*). Exceptions are *right*, *wrong* and *real*.

The *ugliest* concrete building imaginable.

- Disyllabic adjectives in *-ow* (*narrow*, *shallow*, *hollow*, *mellow*) can be inflected, as can other short adjectives ending in weak syllables such as *-le* (*simple*, *able*, *noble*).

### Analytic forms are used with:

- adjectives of more than two syllables (e.g. *encouraging*); and
- adjectives which are already inflected (e.g. *lovable*, *famous*, *greenish*, *pleased*).

However, ease of pronunciation and smoothness of sound are important factors, and speakers sometimes improvise if the result sounds acceptable. Lewis Carroll, the creator of *Alice in Wonderland*, is said to have introduced ‘curiouser and curiouser’, which is still used, though jocularly, by some speakers.

Adjectives in *-y* which commonly take *-er* and *-est* include: *happy*, *lazy*, *cosy*, *crazy*, *dirty*, *empty*, *lucky*, *nasty*, *pretty*, *silly*, *sexy*, *tidy*, *tricky*. The letter ‘y’ is replaced by ‘i’ before an inflection: *happier*, *luckiest*.

The following adjectives have **suppletive forms** for grades **1** and **2**:

good, better, best	far, farther, farthest
bad, worse, worst	far, further, furthest

The word *further* can also be used with the sense of ‘other’, ‘later’, ‘additional’:

The theatre is closed until *further* notice.

### Asking and answering questions about degree

**How old** is he? He’ll be ten next May. He’s nine years eight months old now.

**How old** is this church? It must be at least four hundred years old.

**Who is taller**, you or your sister? I am taller, but James, our brother, is the tallest.

The adjectives *elder*, *eldest* (alternative to *older*, *oldest*) refer only to persons.

my elder son; our eldest daughter; an elder brother or sister

John is the elder of the two.

I was the second eldest.

[FY1]

The adjective *elderly* is not comparative, but refers euphemistically to a person approaching old age. The comparative degree of certain other adjectives has the value of a classifier:

junior rank (= low)   inferior quality (= bad)   major error (= great)

senior rank (= high)   superior quality (= good)   minor error (= small)

your upper/lower jaw   my inner life   the outer walls (of the city)

There are no inflections of lower and lowest degree corresponding to *-er* and *-est*. For this meaning *less* and *least* are used as modifiers. The following table summarises the grading options in English:

The scale of degree	Inflectional	Analytic
1 Comparative superiority	easier	more difficult
2 Superlative superiority	the easiest	the most difficult
3 Equality		as easy, as difficult
4 Comparative inferiority		less easy, less difficult
5 Superlative inferiority		the least easy, the least difficult
6 Sufficiency		easy enough, difficult enough

Figure 11.2 Grading options in English for comparative and superlative adjectives.

Adjectives and adverbs whose meanings are inherently superlative such as *unique* and *perfect* are prescriptively banned from comparative and superlative marking. They can be intensified by *truly*, *absolutely*, *utterly*, however, to express the highest degree of a quality:

The feeling is *truly unique*. It was a *truly unique* experience.

### 52.1.1 Functions of comparatives and superlatives

Adjectives graded for comparative and superlative degree can function both attributively and predicatively. Most descriptive adjectives are gradable:

*As modifiers of a noun*

Have you got a *larger* size?

I think you need a *more up-to-date* stereo.

What's the *funniest* joke you've heard recently?

It wasn't *the most exciting* match of the season.

The *cleverest* animals, as well as the *better-looking*, *better-humoured* and *more classy*, are not the ones holding the leads. (Philip Howard in *The Times*)

### As *Cs* in clauses

This house is *smaller*, but it's *nicer*, and it's got a *bigger* garden.

I think we need something *more central*.

Inflected forms of the comparative are illustrated in this short extract from H.G. Wells's *A Short History of the World*:

For a hundred years power has been getting cheaper and labour dearer. If for a generation or so machinery has had to wait its turn in the mine, it is simply because for a time men were cheaper than machinery.

## 52.1.2 The *-er* and *-er* construction

The repeated comparatives joined by *and* are used to express a gradually increasing degree of the quality denoted by the adjective (or adverb; → 56.1). Verbs of becoming such as *become*, *get* and *grow* are commonly used with adjectives. *More and more* occurs with adjectives which don't admit the comparative inflection.

It's growing darker and darker.

This crossword is getting more and more difficult.

## 52.1.3 The *nice and* construction

*Nice and* is often used in informal speech to intensify a second adjective: *nice and hot*, *nice and cold*, *nice and dry*. *Good and* is sometimes used in the same way.

## 52.1.4 The degree of sufficiency

This comprises three terms: 'excess', 'sufficiency', 'insufficiency', realised by the adverbs *too*, *enough*, *not enough*, respectively. When functioning predicatively, that is at **Cs**, the AdjG structure is as follows:

<b>excess:</b>	This knife is <i>too sharp</i> .
<b>sufficiency:</b>	Is this knife <i>sharp enough</i> ?
<b>insufficiency:</b>	This knife is <i>not sharp enough</i> .

When the AdjG modifies a count noun, the NG structures are as follows:

- excess:** This is *too sharp a knife*.  
**sufficiency:** This is *a sharp enough knife*.  
**insufficiency:** This is *not a sharp enough knife*. / These are *not sharp enough knives*.

If the noun is uncountable or plural (e.g. *weather, knives*), only the predicative structure is used for the expression of 'excess':

- excess:** The weather was *too wet*.      \*It was *too wet weather*.  
 These knives are *too sharp*.      \*These are *too sharp knives*.

The degree of excess can be expressed by the lexical item *over* (AmE *overly*) used as a compound adjective: Don't be *over-anxious* about the future.

## 52.2 INTENSIFYING THE ATTRIBUTE

Intensification is a kind of grading and will be described here in terms of three degrees: 'high', 'medium' and 'attenuated'. They constitute a cline rather than a scale of fixed points, since they are realised exclusively by lexical items rather than by varied structures. In spoken English, the intended degree of intensification can be reinforced by stress and intonation patterns.

### 52.2.1 High intensification

This is expressed by adverbs, adjectives and, exceptionally, nouns:

- |          |   |                         |
|----------|---|-------------------------|
| very:    | the very latest techniques                                      | That's very kind of you |
| really:  | a really good film  | It was really good      |
| awfully: | an awfully nice man   | He looked awfully tired |
| most:    | a most extraordinary performance                                | His ideas are most odd  |
| way:     | I am <i>way</i> concerned about the environment (AmE) (Cs only) |                         |

Some intensifiers, such as *very* and *extremely*, can intensify almost any adjective. Others are more limited to specific types of adjectives or to individual ones. The original meaning of some high intensifiers has undergone semantic change. For example, *terrifically* indicates approval, *awfully*, *terribly* and *jolly* (informal BrE) can intensify both good and bad qualities, while *dreadfully* and *horribly* are used only with bad ones. The following are common collocations:

dripping wet; boiling hot; freezing cold; blind drunk; stone deaf; wide awake; fast asleep; frozen stiff; extra special; fully aware; raving mad; highly controversial; radically opposed; eminently suitable; deeply moving; seriously stupid; hugely successful; supremely confident; terrifically good-looking; horribly disfigured.

**Quite**, which normally expresses a medium degree of intensification, can express a high degree in the sense of indicating a complete degree or extent to which something is the case: *I stood quite still*. To convey this meaning, *quite* is spoken with higher

pitch and emphasis. *Quite* always takes on a high degree when it modifies an emotive adjective as in *quite amazing*, *quite incredible*, *quite disastrous*.

medium intensification: He looks *quite* different in his everyday clothes.

high intensification: You are *quite* right.

### 52.2.2 Medium intensification

A medium degree of intensification is expressed by the four adverbs *quite*, *pretty*, *rather*, *fairly*. Within the medium degree, we can recognise four sub-degrees in order of descending intensification:

It's *quite* cold here in winter.

It's *rather* cold here in winter.

It's *pretty* cold here in winter. (informal, spoken style)

It's *fairly* cold here in winter.

**Quite** denotes moderate but unequivocal intensification of the adjective, whether this is appreciative as in *quite pleased*, *quite satisfactory*, *quite nice*, unappreciative as in *quite dangerous*, *quite pessimistic*, *quite nasty*, or neutral as in *quite tall*, *quite cheap/expensive*.

She felt there was something **not quite right** about the room.

It's **quite straightforward** to Carlisle – just follow the signs.

In informal speech **that** as intensifier adds the factor of being contrary to expectation:

I didn't expect it to be **that cheap**.

Politeness or lack of certainty are often the motivations of the use of *quite*, as in *I'm not quite sure*. *Quite* is used to modify not only adjectives but also verbs and adverbs: *I don't quite know*, *I didn't quite understand*.

**Rather** can lower the force of a statement by indicating a certain limited degree, as in *it looks rather difficult*. It becomes related to indirectness (→ Chapter 4) when used in situations which warrant a stronger word such as *very* or *extremely*. Politeness is sometimes the motivation for the use of *rather*, for example, to avoid direct criticism of others, *I'm rather worried about your exam results*, or to mitigate the expression of the speaker's own emotions, as in *I was rather pleased at winning the lottery*. At the same time it implies that a larger degree or extent is to be understood, for instance *very worried*, *very pleased*. This ability to say one thing while implying another makes *rather* a subtle tool in interpersonal interaction. *Rather* is a word that has contributed greatly to the notion of 'English understatement', as in:

Buying that second-hand car may turn out to be **a rather costly mistake**.

**Pretty** expresses the notion of *quite but not completely*. It is used with all types of gradable adjective, but has an approximative value characteristic of informal speech; e.g. *She's pretty good-looking*, *I feel pretty tired after that long walk*, *That film was pretty awful*, *don't*

you think? Like rather, it can also imply a stronger degree, especially when expressing a negative evaluation: That paper of his was a pretty poor effort (= very poor). The idiomatic combinations pretty well, pretty much can modify certain adjectives and determinatives, for instance, pretty well impossible, pretty much the same.

He's going to have a **pretty bad** headache for a while, and the cut is *pretty* deep, so it's bound to be sore [JXW]

**Fairly** as a modifier indicates an almost large or reasonable degree of a quality (*fairly accurate, fairly well-off*). It can be used more easily with favourable and neutral adjectives than with strongly unfavourable ones, as with *fairly honest, fairly intelligent, fairly reasonable*, but not *?fairly dishonest, ?fairly foolish, ?fairly unreasonable*:

He seems to have a **fairly good idea** of what he wants to do.

Other adverbs which suggest that something is very close to having the quality named are: *almost, nearly, roughly, approximately, partly, largely*.

The following ironical statement illustrates a normal everyday use of intensified adjectives in English:

A remarkable *entirely new* economic cure-all has just emerged from *widely* intensive tests. The miracle drug, called taxcuts, is *the most versatile* drug since penicillin. If applied in *sufficiently liberal* doses, it will make people *more hard-working* and *less worried* about their financial problems.

### 52.2.3 Attenuation

Attenuation refers to a slight degree of the quality or its entire absence, and is expressed as follows:

<i>slightly</i> better	<i>a little</i> disappointing	<i>a bit</i> salty
<i>kind of</i> weird	<i>sort of</i> greyish hair	<i>somewhat</i> odd (formal)

*Sort of* and *kind of* are used, in very informal English, when the speaker is uncertain how to express the exact quality of something.

*At all* can be used as an attenuator in *yes/no* interrogative, negative and conditional clauses, as a politeness strategy in the case of conditionals. It is placed before or after the adjective:

Are you *at all* worried? Are you worried *at all*?  
We'd like to stay another week, if it's *at all* possible.

Slight attenuation or reservation can be expressed by negating a high degree:

<i>not very</i> likely	<i>not quite</i> sure of her name
<i>not entirely</i> true	<i>not particularly fond</i> of insects

The following modifiers express in **1** a minimal degree of attribution and often imply a certain degree of the opposite quality; in **2** they express absence or denial of the quality named:

- 1** *hardly* likely, *barely* necessary, *scarcely* believable, *none too* happy
- 2** *I'm not at all* surprised at the result, or, I'm *not* surprised *at all* at the result.

## 52.3 QUANTIFYING MODIFIERS

### *Exact quantification*

If we ask the questions *How old is she?* *How long was the queue?* *How high is Everest?* *How bad was the traffic-jam?* the depth, length, height and age can be measured or quantified by saying:

She is 20 years old.	The queue was 100 yards long.
Everest is 8,708 metres high.	The cars were four deep on the motorway.

These AdjGs can be lexicalised as *compound adjectives* to modify nouns:

a twenty-year-old girl	a hundred-yard-long queue
an 8,708-metre-high mountain	a four-deep traffic-jam on the motorway

### *Non-exact quantification*

With predicative function, non-measurable quantification is expressed by the determinatives *the*, *that*, *this*, *any*, *all*, *little* and *no*, as in:

Things are not getting *any* better. Well, as long as they're not getting *any* worse . . .  
 The situation is *no* worse than it was before. The trip wasn't *that* interesting after all.  
 We need a box *this* big. (with a suitable gesture)  
 She looked *all* upset.

## 52.4 DESCRIPTIVE MODIFIERS

If adjectives serve to describe nouns, they themselves can also be described, by reference to (a) a quality or (b) a specific context:

(a) Qualitative modification of adjectives is realised by the following classes of units:

<b>-ly adverbs:</b>	strangely attractive; deathly pale; reasonably friendly
<b>adjectives:</b>	light brown; deep red; dark blue; vivid green; bright yellow
<b>nouns:</b>	pitch black; emerald green; rose pink; paper-thin; feather-light; day-long; world-wide



Note that an expression like *a strangely attractive city* does not mean ‘a strange and attractive city’ but ‘a city which is attractive in a strange way’; it is the adjective (*attractive*) which is modified, not the noun (*city*). The structure ‘adj + adj’ (e.g. *light brown*) is used especially with colour adjectives. When it modifies a noun, ambiguity may occur: *The deep blue sea* (a sea of deep blue? or a deep sea which is blue?)

(b) Relational modification indicates the sense in which the adjective is to be understood. It is realised by:

**-ly adverbs:** socially acceptable; economically difficult; technologically impressive; financially independent; physically challenged  
**nouns:** music-mad; foot-weary; duty-free

## 52.5 SUB-MODIFYING THE ADJECTIVE

Modifiers of degree (e.g. *less* in *less interesting*) are often themselves graded or intensified by a sub-modifier (**sm**) placed before them, e.g. *rather less* interesting. The following are examples of this **smmh** structure which occur in both spoken and written discourse.

Sm	m	h	sm	m	h
not	quite	right	only	too	pleased
much	more	productive	not	nearly as	nice
far	too	expensive	just	as	complicated

This type of AdjG structure reflects two converse types of intensification which are characteristic of many English speakers: (a) That of **attenuating the negative value** of an Attribute, as in **1**, and (b) that of **reinforcing a positive value**, as in **2**:

- 1** This time the results are *not quite so* clear-cut. [KRL]
- 2** We would be *only too pleased* to provide information on the Association. [GX9]

As is usually the case, *enough* is placed immediately after the adjective:

*hardly* good enough; *not nearly* clever enough; *quite* old enough

# COMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADJECTIVE

## UNIT 53

### SUMMARY

- 1 When an adjective (e.g. *happy*) functions in a clause as Complement of the Subject (e.g. *I am happy*) or of the Object, it is often followed by a complement relating it to a fact (e.g. *that you are here*), a process (e.g. *to see you*), or a circumstance (e.g. *about your success*). This information indicates the way in which the adjective is to be understood and is expressed mainly by finite and non-finite clauses, and by prepositional phrases (PPs).
- 2 When the complement is a PP, the preposition is determined by the adjective and the context: *dependent on*, *clever at*, *clever with*, *fond of* (→ Chapter 12).
- 3 When the adjective is modified (graded, intensified, etc.), the modifier partly determines the type of complement or post-modifier: *too cold for us*, *too cold to swim*, *too cold for us to swim*, *too cold for swimming in the sea*.
- 4 When the adjective modifies a NG, it is separated from its complement: *too difficult a problem to solve*.

### 53.1 ADJECTIVAL COMPLEMENTS

All adjectives which can take complements indicate the speaker's or writer's stance with respect to the proposition stated in the complement. They comprise three semantic types: epistemic (*sure*, *certain*, etc.), affective (*glad*, *sorry*, etc.) and evaluative (*right*, *wrong*, etc.).

#### 53.1.1 Complementation by finite clauses

Adjectives which take embedded *that*- clauses indicate the speaker's or writer's stance with respect to what is expressed in the complement. Semantically, they fall into two main types:

**degrees of certainty**, such as: sure, certain, positive, convinced

**affective meanings**, such as: glad, sorry, happy, sad, afraid, grateful, pleased, amazed, annoyed

After some adjectives of emotive or modal meaning, such as *anxious, willing, eager, insistent, determined, essential*, the non-factual auxiliary *should* (in Br E), or the subjunctive (especially in Am E), can be used in the *that*-clause to suggest a present or future action. An indicative is used by some speakers, as in **3** (→ 11.1).

- 1 The public is anxious that the truth *should be known* (BrE)/*be known* (AmE).
- 2 We are not willing that justice *should be forgotten* (BrE)/*be forgotten* (AmE).
- 3 Bill's wife is *insistent that he give*/gives up smoking.

Certain adjectives such as *clear* can take a *wh*- complement clause, as in:

It is not *clear what you mean*.

### 53.1.2 Complementation by non-finite clauses

This AdjG structure is used to describe the relation between an Attribute and a situation. The Attribute and situation both refer to the same Subject in examples (a–g) below:

- (a) The adjective evaluates the act performed by the subject:

She must be *strong-willed to have survived* such an ordeal.

- (b) The adjective expresses an emotion caused by the situation:

Everyone was sorry to hear about the accident.

- (c) The adjective expresses an attitude or state concerning the act/situation:

The police are powerless to take action in this matter.

- (d) The adjective expresses a property of the subject:

Are these pamphlets *free to take away*?

- (e) The adjective forms part of a lexical auxiliary (*be sure to, be likely to, be bound to*) in a VG (→ 37.3). It denotes a degree of certainty or the tendency of the process to occur. The subject is a 'raised subject' (→ 37.4):

He is sure to arrive late.      It is bound to rain.

- (f) The adjective evaluates the process realised by an *-ing* clause or a *to*-inf:

He must have been crazy driving/to drive as fast as that.

- (g) The following example refers to a process not performed by the Subject:

Smoking is hard/difficult to give up.

This sentence does not mean that smoking is difficult, but that to give up smoking is difficult. Structurally, it is a 'raised object' (→ 37.4).

### 53.1.3 Prepositional phrase complements

Especially in conversation, where speakers can assume a knowledge of what has been said, it is frequently unnecessary to add a complement. We can say *I was angry, we were anxious, everyone was delighted* without specifying the reason. In writing, however, we often need to make the motivation more specific.

We here offer a small representative selection of everyday examples. These are grouped according to the preposition and the types of meaning conveyed by the adjective.

- 1 adjective + **about** is used for emotional reaction to something:

mad about music                      concerned about his safety

- 2 adjective + **at** has two meanings: (a) emotional reaction to something or someone, and (b) an ability:

(a) *alarmed at* the news                      *indignant at* the accusation  
(b) *clever at* getting what he wants      *hopeless at* remembering names

Other adjectives used with *at*: (a) pleased, annoyed (b) bad, brilliant, terrible, adept, skilled, marvellous

- 3 adjective + **by** (with adjectives derived from past participles and passive in meaning):

*puzzled by* the question                      *worried by* their failure to return

- 4 adjective + **for** means the value the adjective has for something or someone:

*good for* the health      *responsible for* their welfare

- 5 adjective + **from** has two meanings: (a) separation and distancing; (b) effect-cause:

(a) *remote from* civilisation      *different from* everyone else  
(b) *sleepless from* anxiety      *tired from* overworking

- 6 adjective + **in** is used for an existing or resulting state:

*dressed in* white                      *lost in* thought

- 7 adjective + *of* is used for (a) mental state in terms of the antagonist or process; (b) mental state in terms of the protagonist; (c) containment:

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) <i>afraid of</i> wild animals | <i>capable of</i> great concentration |
| (b) <i>kind of</i> you            | <i>stupid of</i> him                  |
| (c) <i>full of</i> enthusiasm     | <i>sick of</i> it all                 |

The (b) sequence occurs in clauses beginning *It is* + adjective + extraposed subject:

It is *kind of you* to take such trouble. It was *stupid of him* to lose the keys.

- 8 adjective + *on* is used for dedication, dependence or aim:

*keen on* sport                      *intent on* divorce

- 9 adjective + *to* means (a) mental state or attitude related to a phenomenon; (b) equivalence, similarity or comparison:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| (a) opposed to innovation | kind to old people; accustomed to hardship |
| (b) similar to the others | equal to half a kilo                       |

- 10 adjective + **with** can be (a) emotional reaction or physical state due to a cause, or (b) property or ability:

- |                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| (a) fed up with the weather | pale with fear     |
| (b) skilful with his hands  | good with children |

Note that 2(b) describes ability in relation to the task; 10(b) describes ability in relation to the tools or raw material.

- 11 adjective + *beyond* means to an extreme degree (with non-count nouns):

*cruel beyond* endurance                      *injured beyond* recovery

The following extract from Roald Dahl's *Boy* illustrates the use of adjectives and their grading:

Fives is possibly the fastest ball-game on earth, far faster than squash, and the little ball ricochets around the court at such a speed that sometimes you can hardly see it. You need a swift eye, strong wrists and a very quick pair of hands to play fives well . . .

## 53.2 DEGREE COMPLEMENTS

When the adjective is graded, the complement is dependent, not on the adjective directly, but on the grading element (*-er, more, less, as, etc.*), and is realised according

to the type and structure of the grading element. The following examples serve as a brief summary of this area of English grammar.

### *Comparative degree*

This takes one of two forms: either adjective + *-er* + *than*, or *more/less* + adjective + *than*, plus a word, phrase or clause:

Adj + <i>-er</i> + <i>than</i> + PP	It was cooler <i>than</i> in Russia
Adj + <i>-er</i> + <i>than</i> + clause	It was better <i>than</i> we expected
more + adj + <i>than</i> + AdvG	It was more comfortable <i>than</i> usual
less + adj + <i>than</i> + clause	It was less complicated <i>than</i> any of us expected
more + adj. + <i>than</i> + <i>-ing</i> clause	It was more enjoyable <i>than</i> travelling by air

### *Superlative degree*

Adj + <i>-est</i> + PP (in)	It is the longest in the world
most + adj + PP (of)	It is the most famous of all his plays
least + adj + <i>that</i> -clause	It is the least interesting novel (that) I have ever read

### *Degree of equality*

<i>as</i> + adj + <i>as</i> + AdvG	It was <i>as</i> lovely <i>as</i> ever
neg + <i>as</i> + adj + <i>as</i> + clause	It was not <i>as</i> easy <i>as</i> most of us expected
<i>so</i> + adj + <i>as</i> + <i>to</i> -clause	It was <i>so</i> difficult <i>as to be</i> impossible

If the comparison is between two adjectives, the complement of equality is realised by a finite clause:

She is as good-looking *as she is intelligent*.

\*She is as good-looking as intelligent.

If the comparison is negative, the modifier *not as* may be replaced by *not so*, though *so* suggests intensification besides equality: In winter, London is *not as/so cold as* New York.

### *Degree of sufficiency (enough) and excess (too)*

Heads modified by postposed *enough* and preposed by *too* are qualified by similar units to the above:

<b>Sufficiency:</b>	Adj + <i>enough</i> + PP	Is the water <i>hot enough</i> for you?
	Adj + <i>enough</i> + <i>to</i> -cl	Is the water <i>hot enough to take a shower</i> ?
	Adj + <i>enough</i> + PP + <i>to</i> -cl	Is the water <i>hot enough for you to take a shower</i> ?

<b>Excess:</b>	<i>Too</i> + adj + PP	This coffee is <i>too hot for me</i> .
	<i>Too</i> + adj + <i>to</i> -cl	This coffee is <i>too hot to drink</i> . (not *to drink it)
	<i>Too</i> + adj + PP + <i>to</i> -cl	This coffee is <i>too hot for me to drink</i> . (not *for me to drink it)

If the *to*-infinitive verb is prepositional (e.g. *think about*), the preposition is stranded (see 6.3.3):

<i>To</i> -inf cl + prep.	Your project is too expensive to think about. (*about it)
	This knife is too blunt to cut with. (*with it)

Notice the emotive use of *too* in expressions such as: The film was *too* awful for words! and its equivalence to very in: I shall be only too pleased to help you (= very pleased).

### 53.2.1 Discontinuous degree complements

A degree complement is separated from its adjective when the AdjG pre-modifies a noun. The AdjG is said to be **discontinuous**, as in examples **1** and **2** below.

- 1** It was the most comfortable journey (that) we have ever made.
- 2** It's as nice a country garden as you could ever find.

When an adjective is graded by a modifier, e.g. *more convinced*, one complement may relate to the modifier as in *more (convinced) than I was*, and a second one to the head, as in *(more) convinced of the man's guilt*. They may be placed in either order, the emphasis normally being on the second one:

The judge seemed more convinced than I was *of the man's guilt*.  
The judge seemed more convinced of the man's guilt *than I was*.

If one complement is notably longer than the other(s), it is usually placed at the end:

The judge seemed more convinced than I was by the evidence that had been given by one of the witnesses.  
\*The judge seemed more convinced of the man's guilt after listening to the evidence given by one of the witnesses than I was.

When complements are coordinated by *and*, *but*, *or*, they are often of the same class form:

**to-inf cl:** The programme was delightful *to watch and to listen to*.

# ADVERBS AND THE ADVERBIAL GROUP

## UNIT 54

### SUMMARY

- 1 **AdvGs** have certain general characteristics similar to those of AdjGs:
  - Potentially three structural forms: a **head**, a **modifier**, and a **post-head** element, which may be a post-modifier or a complement.
  - They are frequently represented by the head element alone.
  - Morphologically, the adverbial head may be simple, derived or compound.
  - Semantically, many adverbs express qualities of processes and situations, just as adjectives express qualities of people and things.
  - Not all adjectives and adverbs have the potential of heading a group structure: e.g. *mere*, *merely*; *sole*, *solely*.

- 2 In other respects, AdvGs are different from AdjGs:

Adverbs are a more heterogeneous word class, and can be roughly grouped into three main semantic sets:

- circumstantial: place, time, manner
- degree or focus
- connective: addition, reinforcement, result, concession, and the like

Many adverbs fulfil several functions, however, and their meanings may change according to the function.

### 54.1 STRUCTURE AND GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ADVERBIAL GROUP

The structure of the adverbial group is similar to that of the adjectival group; that is, it is composed potentially of three elements: the head **h**, the modifier **m** and the post-head element, either **m** (post-modifier) or **c** (complement). These elements combine to form the following four basic structures:



AdvG				
1	h		yesterday	
2a	h		early	
2b	hm		early	in the morning
3	mh	very	early	
4	mhm	very	early	in the morning

Other examples of full AdvG structures are:

mhc	more	slowly	than necessary
mhc	far	away	from civilisation
mhc	so	fast	(that) I couldn't catch him
mhc	quite	clearly	Enough

The head element is always realised by an adverb. The modifier (→ 56.1–2) is realised typically by grading and intensifying adverbs, as in these examples, and less typically by quantifiers (*ten miles across*). The complement (→ 56.3) expresses the scope or context of the meaning expressed by the head (e.g. *luckily for us*); alternatively, it can serve to define the modifier more explicitly (e.g. *more correctly than before*).

## 54.2 FORMS OF ADVERBS

Morphologically, English adverbs are either **simple**, **derived** or **compound**.

### *Simple forms*

These are words of one or two syllables, usually of native origin, that are not compounded and do not have derivational affixes. Examples:

now,	then,	here,	there,	far,	near,	soon,	as,	such,
pretty,	quite,	rather,	else,	well,	even,	ever,	ago.	

Many adverbial forms also function as prepositions. However, prepositions are best contrasted with **adverbial particles**: *up, down, in, out, on, off, over, away, back*, and so on, in their directional use of 'path', among others: *walk down the street – walk down; get off the bus – get off* (→ 40.2).

Adverbs are also used to form **complex prepositions**, such as *far from, as well as, instead of*.

Certain simple adverbs have **the same form** as **the corresponding adjective**:

A <i>hard</i> worker – he works <i>hard</i>	a <i>fast</i> car – she drives <i>fast</i>
An <i>early</i> arrival – we arrived <i>early</i>	a <i>late</i> performance – we left <i>late</i>

### *Derived forms*

- Those formed from adjectives by the addition of **the suffix -ly** include:

*badly, carefully, happily, fairly, freely, slowly, principally, honestly, cheerfully, sadly, suddenly, warmly*

- Some adjectives already have the *-ly* suffix (*friendly, likely, princely, daily, weekly, monthly, annually*), and this form is also that of the adverb. That is to say, another *-ly* suffix is not added: we don't say *\*monthlily*.
- Some adjective–adverb pairs have quite unrelated meanings:

hard–hardly; bare–barely; scarce–scarcely; present–presently; late–lately; short–shortly; wide–widely

*We had hardly / barely / scarcely* opened the door when all the lights went out.

- Furthermore, some of these adverbs have different meanings with and without *-ly*:

All the windows were *wide open*. 'Open *wide*', said the dentist to the boy.  
He is *widely* recognised as an expert. His books are *widely* available.

The interview was *cut short* to issue an emergency flood warning and was resumed *shortly after*.

They started *late* and finished *late*. None of the family has heard from Richard *lately* (recently).

- A few adverbs in *-ly* are not derived from adjectives: *accordingly, namely, jokingly*, among others.
- Certain very common adjectives expressing very basic meanings don't lend themselves to adverb formation: *big, small, young, old, tall, tiny, fat*, among others.
- Those formed from nouns, by the addition of *-wise, -ways, -ward(s)*, include:
- *clockwise, moneywise; sideways, lengthways; backward(s), forward(s)*. (AmE without 's')
- A small group of adverbs beginning *a-* indicate mainly position or direction: *about, above, across, again, ahead, along, aloud, apart, around, aside, away*. *Ago*, by contrast, is used with units of time: a few minutes ago, centuries ago.
- Another small set of adverbs has *be-* as first syllable, also indicating position or direction: *before, behind, below, beneath, besides, between, beyond*. These can also function as prepositions: I've been here *before* (adv.); It was *before* the war (prep.).

### Compound forms

There are two types:

- shortened forms of what were originally PPs: downhill, indoors, inside, outside, downstairs, overhead, overall, overnight, and others;
- combinations with other classes of word: somewhere (AmE someplace,) anywhere, nowhere, everywhere; however, moreover, nevertheless; anyway, anyhow.

**Phrasal adverbs** are those which do not form compounds, but consist of more than one word: *of course; at all; kind of, sort of; in fact; as well.*

### 54.3 TYPES OF MEANINGS EXPRESSED BY ADVERBIAL GROUPS

Adverbs express five broad types of meaning in clauses and groups: **circumstantial, stance, degree, focusing, connective**. As with many adjectives and other word classes, however, the meaning of a particular adverb must be seen together with its function in context. The literal meaning of many adverbs can become figurative, or completely different, when used as an intensifier. So, although *far* is listed in section A (below) as meaning distance, *Don't go too far*, it expresses degree in *Prices won't go down very far*. When it functions as an intensifier it takes on a meaning similar to *much*: *far too short, a far nicer place*, while *so far* expresses time, similar to *up to now*.

A *Circumstantial adverbs: where, when and how things happen*

#### Space

Position: Put the chairs *here/ outside/ upstairs*. An *away* match.  
 Direction: Push it *inwards/ down/ through/ out/ away*. The trip *back*.  
 Distance: Don't go too *far/ near/ close*.

#### Time

Moment: They will be coming *tomorrow/ sometime/ then/ soon/ later*.  
 Frequency: The doctor came *once/ daily/ frequently/ now and again*.  
 Duration: We didn't stay *long*. We spoke *briefly*.  
 Relation: The taxi will arrive *soon*. It isn't *here yet*.  
**Sequence:** *first, second, next, then, last, finally*.

#### Manner

Hold it *carefully*.

#### Domain

The concert was a success *artistically* but not *financially*.

B *Stance: expressing a personal angle*

Certainty, doubt: You are *certainly right*. *Perhaps* I'm wrong.  
 Evidential: *Apparently*, they emigrated to Australia.  
 Viewpoint: We are in good shape *financially*, and *healthwise*, too.  
 Emphasis: He is *plainly just* a creep. *Indeed* he is.  
 Judgement: The Minister has *wisely* resigned.  
 Attitude: *Thankfully*, it didn't rain. *Hopefully*, it will be fine tomorrow.

### C Degree adverbs: comparing, intensifying

Comparison:	This is the <i>most</i> /the <i>least</i> efficient scanner we've had so far.
Intensification:	He lives <i>all</i> alone but seems <i>quite</i> / <i>fairly</i> / <i>pretty</i> happy.
Attenuation:	It was <i>kind of</i> strange to see her again.
Approximation:	There were <i>about</i> / <i>roughly</i> / <i>more or less</i> 20 people there.
Sufficiency:	Is the water hot <i>enough</i> ?
Excess:	Well, actually, it's <i>too</i> hot.

### D Focusing adverbs: restricting the scope

Restriction:	That is <i>merely</i> a detail. He is <i>just</i> interested in money. He <i>hardly</i> ate anything, <i>only</i> a yoghurt.
Reinforcement:	The hotel had everything, <i>even</i> a fitness centre.

*Even* is a scalar adverb which carries an implication that the unit modified by *even* is either high or low on a scale of expectedness, in the context. In the example, a fitness centre is higher than expected, as not all hotels have a fitness centre. In *he wouldn't stay even for one day*, it is implied that *one day* is a shorter stay than had been expected. Both are interpreted as slightly surprising.

### E Connective adverbs: logical connection

Sequence:	<i>First</i> , we have no money, and <i>second</i> , we have no time.
Reinforcement:	The house is small and <i>besides</i> / <i>furthermore</i> has no garden.
Conclusion:	It was a tiring trip, but <i>altogether</i> very interesting.
Restating:	We've got two pets, <i>namely</i> a rabbit and a canary.
Reason:	I couldn't find you, <i>so</i> I left.
Condition:	Take an umbrella; <i>otherwise</i> (= if not), you'll get wet.
Clarification:	He wants to live abroad, <i>or rather</i> anywhere away from home.
Contrast:	They accept his invitations, <i>yet</i> they run him down.
Alternation:	There's no tea. Would you like a cup of coffee <i>instead</i> ?
Concession:	What you said was true; <i>still</i> it was unkind.
Attention-seeking:	<i>Now</i> , you listen to me! <i>Now then</i> , what's all this about?

Technical description often makes use of adverbs of degree and quantity as in the following extract from an elementary textbook on *Metals* by H. Moore.

Some metals are used in a *relatively*<sup>7</sup> pure state, for example aluminium, whose lightness and corrosion-resistance make it *especially*<sup>8</sup> useful. But metals are used *mostly*<sup>9</sup> with other elements to form alloys and *so*<sup>10</sup> in this way their properties can be improved and their range of uses *widely*<sup>11</sup> extended.

# SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS OF ADVERBS AND ADVERBIAL GROUPS

UNIT 55

## SUMMARY

- 1 Just as adverbs express many meanings, they also realise many kinds of syntactic functions:
  - as Adjunct in the clause;
  - as stance adjuncts associated with whole clauses;
  - as connectives between clauses.
  - as modifiers, and complements in AdjGs, AdvGs, NGs, VGs and PPs;
- 2 Some adverbs have fixed position; others are mobile between initial, middle and end positions.
- 3 Some adverbs vary their meaning according to their functional role, so *just* may denote an event near to speech time, *We've just finished*, or be used to intensify, as in *That's just fine*.

## 55.1 SUMMARY OF THE SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS OF ADVERBS AND ADVERBIAL GROUPS

Adverbs have three main functions:

- as Adjunct in clause structures;
- as modifier in group structures; and
- as connectives between clauses.

*In clause structures*

I knew her *pretty well*.

Thankfully, no-one was injured.

So you don't want to come, *then*.

Everyone rushed *out*.

Adjunct

Stance adjunct

Inferential connective

Directional complement

*In group structures*

<i>All</i> wet; too long; <i>completely</i> new	modifier in AdjG
<i>Nearly</i> there; <i>very</i> often; <i>more</i> quietly	modifier in AdvG
The <i>then</i> Minister of Health; a nearby pub	modifier in NG
<i>Right</i> on target; <i>just</i> down the road	sub-modifier in PP
<i>Much</i> too short; <i>far</i> too frightening	sub-modifier in AdvG
(Not) <i>all</i> that easily;	sub-modifier in AdvG
Fast <i>enough</i> ; very tired <i>indeed</i>	post-modifier in AdvG
Never <i>again</i> ; nowhere <i>near</i> ;	post-modifier in AdvG
The way <i>out</i> ; the journey back	post-modifier in NG
Somewhere <i>else</i> BrE /Someplace <i>else</i> AmE	complement of determinative
Over <i>there</i> ; from <i>inside</i>	complement in PP
Pick <i>up</i> ; pull <i>off</i> ; take <i>out</i>	particle in VG

## 55.2 POSITIONS OF ADVERBS IN THE CLAUSE: INITIAL, MIDDLE AND FINAL

In their function as modifier in group structure, adverbs occupy fixed positions. In their function as adjuncts, however, adverbs are mobile, occupying initial, middle or end positions, as the following examples show:

- 1 ***Really***, I don't like driving.
- 2 I ***really*** don't like driving.
- 3 I don't ***really*** like driving.
- 4 I don't like driving, ***really***.

Not all adjunctive adverbs are equally mobile. The choice of position is determined by its type (circumstantial, modal, degree, etc.), the scope of its meaning (whole clause or part of a clause), the degree of emphasis the speaker wishes to give to it, and the general information structure of the clause (→ Chapter 6).

### 55.2.1 Adverbs in initial position

When an adverb is placed in initial position as adjunct, its scope extends to the whole clause. In this position, the meaning may be one of two broad kinds:

- It may be 'fronted' (→ 28.8), that is transferred from its normal position to function as what is traditionally called a 'sentence adjunct', having the same status as the other clause elements, though referring to them all together, as in:

*Slowly*, the rising sun appeared over the distant horizon.

- It may function as (1) a stance adjunct, expressing the speaker's attitude to the content of the clause or (2) a comment on its truth value **2**. Stance adjuncts stand outside the clause structure (→ Chapter 2), separated by a comma.

*Seriously*, though, you ought to devote more time to preparing for your exams.

*Honestly*, where we live, we couldn't do without a car.

*Honestly* and other similar adverbs such as *seriously*, *frankly*, may also function as adjuncts of manner, within the clause:

He doesn't seem to take exams *seriously*, does he?

### 55.2.2 Scope of reference of adverbs as adjuncts

The different positions an adverb may occupy determine the scope of its reference. Compare the examples at the start of section 55.2, all containing the adverb *really*. In **1** the scope of the adverb comprises the whole sentence, with the adverb fully focused. In **2** the scope of *really* covers less than the whole, but includes the negative auxiliary (*don't*). Negation is here focused even more than in **3**. In **4**, as in **1**, the adverb is parenthetical, separated from the clause. In such cases *really* functions as a stance adverb whose scope comprises the whole clause, the first strongly, the second weakly, as if it were an afterthought.

Other elements are sometimes focused, for example by restrictive adverbs: *He alone*, *for your eyes only*.

### 55.2.3 Adverbs of place, time and manner

Adverbs referring to the **place**, **time** and **manner** of an event are placed most naturally in final position. This is equivalent to 'immediately after the verb'. When there is a direct object, however, the adverb must be placed after the object, as in **1** and **2**:

- 1** I didn't expect you so *early*.
- 2** We caught the bus *easily*. Not \*We caught *easily* the bus.

This is because in English, unlike some languages, an object is not separated from the verb which selects it, even by adjuncts of degree:

I like apples *very much*.      Not \*I like *very much* apples.

The only exception to this is when the direct object is exceptionally long and so requires end-focus (→ 29.3).

**Indefinite time** adverbs such as *sometimes*, *eventually*, *immediately*, *finally*, *recently*, *previously*, can be placed in final, pre-verbal or initial position. Again separation of verb-object is excluded:

- (a) He stopped the machine *immediately*.
- (b) He *immediately* stopped the machine.

- (c) *Immediately*, he stopped the machine.  
 (d) \*He stopped *immediately* the machine.

Of these, (a) is the normal unmarked position, (b) focuses on the process *stop*, and (c) on the whole of the clause. By contrast, (d) is unacceptable.

Certain adverbs of **frequency** – *always, never, seldom, hardly ever, often, rarely, sometimes, usually* – do not normally occur in initial position; instead they are placed between Subject and Predicator or between operator and main verb.

They ***always*** spend their holidays abroad. (\*Always they spend . . . )

We have ***never*** been to Africa. (\*Never, we have . . . )

Lawyers ***often*** love to tell you about how good they are. [J75]

The adverbs of **negative import** – *never, seldom, rarely, hardly ever* – are occasionally fronted and followed by Subject–operator inversion for purposes of emphasis, though this structure is formal in style or emphatic (→ 28.10.1):

***Rarely does one find*** such kindness nowadays.

***Never in my life have I*** heard such crazy ideas!

The adverbs ***still, yet, already*** express certain time relationships which are described briefly and illustrated in the table (→ 55.2.4.) with question-and-answer structures which show their contrasting meanings.

The examples given of these three adverbs show that their scope of meaning extends to the process or the whole predicate, and for this reason they normally occur in mid- or end-position.

Finally we may observe the similarity of meaning of *still* and *yet* in a *be* + *to*-infinitive structure, and as concessive connectives:

He'll make a champion of you *yet/still*.

A cure for chronic bronchitis is *still/yet* to be found. It was a hard climb. *Still*, it was worth it. (concessive)

He's rather uncommunicative, *yet* everyone seems to like him. (concessive)

Spatial adverbs such as *abroad, across, back, everywhere, downstairs, inside, uphill, forwards, sideways*, expressing position and direction, are normally placed after the Predicator or in end-position: *Push it **forwards**; turn it **sideways***.

### *Adverbs of manner*

The unmarked position for adverbs of manner is at the end of the clause, as in *He speaks English fluently*, not \**He speaks fluently English*. If the Object is long, and the adverb is a single word, the Od may be placed at the end, as in *He speaks fluently several European and oriental languages*. If the adverb is modified or complemented, it may still occupy end-position, according to the principles of end-focus and end-weight (→ 30.3.2) even if the Od is also long:



He speaks English *fluently*.

He speaks several European and oriental languages as well as Arabic ***very fluently indeed***.

Adverbs in *-ly* include many of manner: *carefully, easily, correctly, cheaply, politely, peacefully, urgently*, and also some emotive ones: *angrily, gladly, desperately*. Both can also occur as adjuncts in mid-position, before the lexical verb. Together such combinations constitute a useful pattern, as they lend force to what immediately follows:

We ***sincerely*** hope you enjoyed your stay with us.

I have been ***seriously*** thinking of changing my job. I will ***gladly*** help you if you need me.

#### 55.2.4 Adverbs of modality, evidence and degree

The tendency to occupy mid-position extends also to these semantic types:

They're ***probably*** still partying. (modal) [JY7]

She is ***supposedly*** a rich woman. (hearsay evidential)

I ***totally*** disagree with you. (degree)

The adverbs <i>still</i> , <i>yet</i> , <i>already</i>		
These three adverbs express, in broad terms, the following time relationships:		
<p><i>Still</i> refers to processes or states which continue to occur or not occur up to the present.</p> <p><i>Yet</i> refers to processes or states which may occur in the future or have not occurred up to the present moment.</p> <p><i>Already</i> refers to processes or states which occurred before the present moment.</p>		
The following table shows their interrelated uses in questions and answers, as in interpersonal communication. In negative replies, there is sometimes an equivalence between the <i>not yet</i> and the <i>still not</i> constructions. When used in monologues or continuous prose, these adverbs may be found in other syntactic frames, but mostly in the same basic placements as those shown in the table.		
Question	Affirmative answer	Negative answer
1 Does Tom <i>still</i> visit you?	Yes, he <i>still</i> visits us. Yes, he <i>still</i> does.	No, he doesn't visit us <i>any more</i> . No, he doesn't visit us <i>any longer</i> . No, he no longer visits us.
2 Is Tom <i>still</i> working?	Yes, he is <i>still</i> working. Yes, he <i>still</i> is.	No, he isn't working <i>any more</i> . No, he isn't any more. No, he isn't working <i>any longer</i> . No, he is no longer working.
3 Is Tom working <i>yet</i> ?	Yes, he is <i>already</i> working. Yes, he <i>already</i> is.	No, he isn't working <i>yet</i> . No, he <i>still</i> isn't working.
4 Has Tom arrived <i>yet</i> ?	Yes, he has arrived <i>already</i> . Yes, he <i>has already</i> arrived. Yes, he <i>already</i> has.	No, he hasn't arrived <i>yet</i> . No, he <i>still</i> hasn't arrived. No, he hasn't yet.
5 Has Tom <i>already</i> gone? Has Tom gone <i>already</i> ?	Yes, he has <i>already</i> gone. Yes, he has gone <i>already</i> . Yes, he <i>already</i> has.	No, he hasn't gone <i>yet</i> . No, he is <i>still</i> here.
6 Does Tom know <i>yet</i> ?	Yes, he <i>already</i> knows. Yes, he knows <i>already</i> . Yes, he <i>already</i> does.	No, he doesn't know <i>yet</i> . No, he <i>still</i> doesn't know. No, he doesn't yet.

Figure 11.3 Interrelated uses of certain time adverbs.

### 55.2.5 Function and type

Since there is rarely a one-to-one relationship between function and type, many words can realise more than one syntactic function, with the position of the adverb varying according to its function. This is illustrated by the adverbs ‘altogether’ and ‘later’:

*Altogether:* He owes me a hundred dollars **altogether** (adjunct)  
 I think you are **altogether** wrong (modifier of adj.)  
 There were a lot of interesting people there, so **altogether** we had a  
 very good time. (connective)

*Later :* There will be another performance **later**. (adjunct)  
 The performance **later** will be a better one. (post-modifier of noun)

In conversation, adverbs sometimes occur alone, as responses to something said by the previous speaker. In such cases the adverb can carry out such discourse functions as agreeing emphatically, expressing mild interest, asserting strongly or granting permission in particular contexts:

Maybe that's a way to do it.	[F76]
<i>Absolutely</i>	(emphatic agreement)
<i>Oh really?</i>	(mild interest)
Now that's what I call a first-class meal!	
<i>Definitely!</i>	(emphatic agreement)
Did you enjoy the outing?	
<i>Tremendously, yes!</i>	(emphatic assertion)
Can I have a look at the contract?	
<i>Certainly.</i>	(granting permission)
<i>Well, alright.</i>	(reluctantly agreeing)
<i>Frankly, no.</i>	(refusing permission)

# MODIFICATION AND COMPLEMENTATION IN THE ADVERBIAL GROUP

UNIT 56

## SUMMARY

- 1 Adverbs are graded in the same way as adjectives by *more*, *less*, *as* and so on, and the same suppletive forms are used for *well* and *badly* as for *good* and *bad*.
- 2 Similarly, intensification is carried out by *very*, *quite*, *rather*, *pretty*, *fairly*, among others.
- 3 Adverbs of space or time are frequently modified by other adverbs of space or time (*out there*, *back home*). Adverbs of manner are not normally used to modify other adverbs of manner, except when expressing modal attitudes.
- 4 Few adverbs take direct complements with prepositions or clauses (Luckily for us, long to wait). Indirect complements of graded forms function in the same way as with adjectives.

## 56.1 COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE USES

Adverbs are graded by the same words as adjectives:

**more** often, **most** often, **less** often, **least** often, **as** often, often **enough**, **too** often

Although the adverb *enough* is placed after the head adverb, we shall consider it as a modifier as we do with adjectives, since it can itself be sub-modified by an adverb placed before the head: not quite often enough (\*not quite enough often).

The following suppletive forms are used as comparative and superlative forms of the adjectives *good*, *bad* and *far*, and the adverbs *well*, *badly* and *far*.

Good/well: **better**, **best**; bad/badly: **worse**, **worst**; far: *further*, *furthest*

Tomorrow morning would suit me *best*, for the meeting. It was the driver who came off *worst* in the accident.

The forms shared by adverbs and adjectives *early*, *late*, *quick*, *fast*, *long*, *soon* take *-est* and *-er* in grades 1 and 2.

His speech was *longer* than mine. He spoke *longer* than I did.  
I arrived *later* than Monica, because I came by a *later* train.  
Please come the *earliest* you possibly can. Take the *earliest* train.

### Correlative forms

The constructions formed by *the more... the more* (or *-er... -er*), *the less... the less*, *the more... the less* can be used correlative to indicate a progressive increase, or decrease, of the quality or process described. Both adjectives and adverbs can occur in this construction:

*The bigger* they are, *the harder* they fall, don't they? (adj-adv) [KBB]  
*The sooner* you forget the whole incident, *the better*. (adv-adv)  
The *more closely* I look at the problem, the *less clearly* I see a solution. (adv-adv)

This construction is illustrated in the following extract from an in-flight magazine:

**Don't eat a large high-fat meal if you want to be mentally sharp afterwards. Too much food brings on lethargy. Fat stays in the digestive tract longer, prolonging tiredness. The fatter and heavier the meal, the longer it takes you to recover mental alertness and energy.**

## 56.2 INTENSIFYING THE ADVERBIAL MEANING

As with adjectives, intensification may be (a) high, or (b) medium.

- |                        |                       |                     |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| (a) <i>very soon</i>   | <i>quite recently</i> | <i>right now</i>    | <i>high up</i>  |
| <i>just then</i>       | <i>far back</i>       | <i>soon after</i>   | <i>close by</i> |
| (b) <i>fairly well</i> | <i>pretty easily</i>  | <i>rather badly</i> |                 |

We saw in 52.1.2 that coordinated comparative adjectives indicate a progressively higher degree of the quality expressed: it's getting *colder and colder*. Adverbial heads also participate in this structure, with the adverb as head or as modifier:

He drove *faster and faster* along the motorway.  
Her paintings are selling *more and more successfully* every day.

Reduplicative adverbs have an intensifying effect:

- |                       |                         |                        |                            |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>very very fast</i> | <i>much much better</i> | <i>never ever</i>      | <i>through and through</i> |
| <i>over and over</i>  | <i>up and up</i>        | <i>again and again</i> | <i>round and round</i>     |

*Attenuation*

<i>a bit harshly</i>	<i>kind of hesitantly</i>	<i>almost never</i>
<i>somewhat casually</i>	<i>sort of sarcastically</i>	<i>hardly ever</i>

*Quantification*

As with adjectives, this refers mainly to circumstantial adverbs of space and time and may be either exact, or non-measurable:

**Exact:** Our houses are *only two streets* apart.  
I saw her *a moment* ago.

**Non-measurable:** quantity is expressed by modifiers such as: *soon* after, *long* before, *quite* near, *shortly* afterwards.

These circumstantial adverbs can be questioned by *how* + adj/adv:

<i>How long</i> have you been waiting?	Not long.
<i>How far</i> is it to the railway station?	Not far.

*The focusing modifier: only*

*Only* is a restrictive focusing adverb which can modify different units:

I wanted *only* one piece of toast.  
We go there *only* once a year.

There is a tendency in spoken English to front the adverb to a position before the verb:

I *only* wanted one piece of toast.  
We *only* go there once a year.

*Describing and reinforcing*

Adverbs of space or time are often preceded by other adverbs of space or time which reinforce or describe them more explicitly:

straight ahead	back home	up above	early today
out there	late yesterday	down below	out here

As with adjectives, we may note the **emotive modification** of adverbs by swear words such as *damn(ed)*, as in *You behaved damn foolishly*, and other less polite ones.

Though less common in adverbial groups than in adjectival groups, modifiers can be found **sub-modified**, or even **sub-sub-modified**, especially in spoken English:

rather	less	fluently	
very	much	more	profitably

## 56.3 COMPLEMENTATION OF ADVERBS

The *wh*-items *when*, *where*, *why*, *how* and their compounds (*somewhere*, *anywhere*, etc.) have nominal as well as circumstantial value, as is shown in their post-modification by AdjGs (*somewhere more exotic*), PPs (*everywhere in the world*), non-fin cl (*nowhere to sleep*) and the adverb *else*:

where else?	= in what other place?
when else?	= at what other time?
how else?	= in what other way?
why else?	= for what other reason?

The forms *somewhere*, *anywhere*, *nowhere* are often replaced in informal AmE by *someplace*, *anyplace*, *no place*, though not in *wh*-questions, e.g. *someplace else*, *anyplace else*, *no place else*. Circumstantial adverbs are sometimes qualified by others of a similar type, so that it is not always clear which is the head and which the modifier:

We'll be meeting them sometime soon.  
I need a drink. There must be a pub somewhere near.

In informal speech intensification and reinforcement of circumstantial adverbs may be expressed by post-modifiers, such as the following:

The train will be arriving *now any minute/any minute now*.  
It always arrives *punctually on the dot* (= on time).

Stance adverbs are sometimes modified by *enough*, in the sense of intensification rather than sufficiency:

*Curiously enough*, he doesn't seem to mind criticism.  
The police never found out, *oddly enough*, who stole the jewels.

### 56.3.1 Complements of comparison and excess

Complements of adverbs are almost exclusively of one type, namely grading. As with adjectives, many adverbial heads admit indirect complements, which depend, not on the adverb itself, but on the degree modifier.

more, less . . . than	Bill speaks Spanish much more fluently than his sister.
-er . . . than	It rains less often here than in some other countries.
as . . . as	Our coach left earlier than it should have done.
	I don't translate as accurately as a professional.

so . . . as ...to-infinitive	He spoke so fast as to be unintelligible.
too . . . to-inf	We reached the castle too late to go inside
not adv enough . . . to-inf	We didn't leave early enough to get there in time.

Such structures may be considered (as with AdjGs) as discontinuous complementation, though the two parts of the structure, before and after the head, differ in position and content. The modifiers *more* (-er) and *less* do not necessarily require the *than*-complement; on the other hand, complements introduced by *than* cannot be used without a previous modifier which controls this construction.

Adverbs modified quantitatively by *so* and *that* are also complemented in the same way as adjectives. The sequence of the clauses can be inverted, the second one then becoming an explanatory comment on the first:

He explained the problem *so clearly (that)* everybody understood. Everybody understood the problem, he explained it *so clearly*.

### 56.3.2 Adverbs taking direct complements

Whereas a good number of adjectives take prepositional and clausal complements, only a few adverbs, all ending in *-ly*, take direct complements in this way. The preposition or clausal complement associated with an adjective is in most cases not extended to the adverb: Compare *mad about music*, *safe to drink*, but not *\*madly about music* or *\*safely to drink*. Only a few prepositions complementing adjectives are also found with an adverb. These include: similarly to, independently of, separately from and differently from. Apart from these, luckily, fortunately, when used as stance adjuncts, can be complemented by for + NG, while the adverbs long (= a long time) and far (= a great distance), take a to-infinitive and tend to occur in non-assertive contexts (→ 3.4), e.g. negative, interrogative:

*Luckily/fortunately for us* another coach came along shortly afterwards.  
We didn't have *long to wait*.  
Do you have *far to go*?

## FURTHER READING

Some of the ideas presented in the revised version of this chapter are indebted to the following publications: Biber et al. (1999); Halliday (1994); Huddleston and Pullum (2002); Quirk et al. (1985).

## EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 11

### Describing persons, things and circumstances

#### 1 ADJECTIVES AND THE ADJECTIVAL GROUP

##### Unit 51

- †Express the following sentences differently using a pseudo-participial adjective in *-ing* or *-en* formed from the noun shown in italics. The first is done for you:

(1) Lots of people drink spring water *sold in bottles*. Lots of people drink *bottled* spring water.



- (2) You have shown great *enterprise* in setting up this firm.
- (3) The newspapers reported all the *details* of the case.
- (4) Conflicts often arise between countries that are *neighbours*.
- (5) We live in an ancient town with a great *wall* round it.
- (6) There are often better opportunities for workers who have *skills* than for those who *have not*.

**2** †Turn to the passage about Lloyd George in 51.6. Underline each adjective and state its type. (See Chapter 10, 5.1.2 D3 for definite article plus adjective).

**3** †Say whether the *-ing* forms derived from transitive and intransitive verbs in the following phrases are participial adjectives or participial modifiers. Give a grammatical reason to support your analysis:

transitive: an *alarming* inflation rate; *disturbing* rumours; a *relaxing* drink.  
 intransitive: a *ticking* clock; *fading* hopes; a *growing* debt.

**4** †Provide an appropriate noun for each of the following combinations as modifier. If you are not sure of the meaning, consult a good dictionary:

- (1) Adj + V-*ing*: nice-looking, good-looking, easy-going, hard-wearing.
- (2) Adj + V-*en*: deep-frozen, big-headed, sharp-eyed
- (3) Noun + Adj: world-famous, waterproof, self-confident.

**5** Suggest appropriate nouns or adjectives to form compounds with the following adjectives, e.g. sea-green.

-blue, pink, -red, -cold, -hot, -black, -sweet, -white.

**6** †Express the following NGs differently, using a compound adjective as modifier of the head noun. The first is done for you:

- (1) a story so scarifying that it raises the hair on your head = a *hair-raising* story
- (2) an activity that consumes too much of your time
- (3) cakes that have been made at home
- (4) a speed that takes your breath away
- (5) troops that are borne (= transported) by air
- (6) a city that is growing fast
- (7) the performance that won an award
- (8) a device that saves a great deal of labour

## Unit 52

**1a** †Say which of the following adjectives take the inflected forms (*-er*, *-est*) for grading and which the analytical (*more*, *most*): risky, real, varied, blue, typical, mistaken, friendly, user-friendly, small, tight, generous, bitter.

**1b** †Say which of the adjectives as used in the following phrases can be graded:

- (1) *shallow* water;
- (2) the *closing* date;

- (3) a *daily* newspaper;
- (4) a *small* size;
- (5) the *probable* outcome;
- (6) the *main* reason;
- (7) a *fast* driver; (8) the *political* consequences.

- 2** † Your friend will ask you for your opinion, and you will answer using adjectives that are moderately intensified by *quite*, *pretty*, *rather*, *fairly*, *reasonably* or attenuated by expressions such as: *a bit*, *a little*, *slightly*, *not particularly*, *not very*, *not really*, *to some extent*, *in some respects*, *kind of*, *sort of*, *not at all*.

- (1) Did you have an interesting time in Egypt?
- (2) Was it very hot there at that time of the year?
- (3) Were you in a very large group?
- (4) What were the hotels like?
- (5) Did you find it difficult to communicate with people?
- (6) Didn't you find all that travelling tiring?

- 3** † Add qualitative modifiers to the adjectives in these sentences, choosing them from the following list: *essentially*, *genuinely*, *imaginatively*, *pleasantly*, *ferociously*, *radically*, *ideally*.

- (1) The new cultural centre is a(n) ----- international project.
- (2) It will be in a style ----- different from the usual urban architecture.
- (3–4) It will be ----- i placed outside the city, and ----- surrounded by fields and trees
- (5) Some traditionalists have been ----- critical of the design.
- (6) The architect has said: 'We have tried to combine the ----- old with the ----- new'.

- 4** † Express these sentences differently by using a 'relational modifier + adjective' unit, as in the following example:

From a scientific point of view that opinion is not based on facts or evidence.  
That opinion is scientifically unfounded.

- (1) Drugs are necessary for medical purposes, but if abused they may be dangerous from a social point of view.
- (2) The new oral examinations are very good in theory but have proved somewhat time-consuming to administer.
- (3) Countries which are advanced in technological matters should help those in which science is under-developed.

## Unit 53

- 1** † Complement the following adjectives with PPs expressing the types of information mentioned on the left. The first one is done for you.

- (1) a cause: I'm angry *about what you said yesterday*
- (2) a reason: I was *delighted* -----
- (3) a process: Not all the students are *satisfied* -----

- (4) a phenomenon: Many of them are *opposed* .....  
 (5) an emotion: He went *white* .....  
 (6) an activity: He is really *expert* .....  
 (7) an activity: Aren't you *tired* .....?  
 (8) a subject: I'm very *keen* .....

- 2 †The following extract comes from the *Time* discussion transcript archive. The topic was the cloning of humans. Read the passage, underlining whole groups containing adjectives and adverbs. Use these in sentences of your own on the same topic:

**Timehost presents question:** I would like for you to clearly define why you think it is morally wrong to clone a human being. So far that has been totally unclear.

**Thomas Murray says:** 'I think the reasons have been made abundantly clear in much of the conversation that has taken place since June. The immediate and most compelling reason is that cloning, from all the evidence, appears to be an extremely unsafe activity right now. The US, and other nations as well, have very strong traditions of protecting the human subjects of research. At this time, and for the foreseeable future, trying to clone a human being would be clearly unethical experimentation.'

## ADVERBS AND THE ADVERBIAL GROUP

### Unit 54

- 1 †Insert in the following sets of sentences, in appropriate places, suitable adverbs chosen from the list of examples suggested for each set.

- (a) **Stance adverbs:** *certainly, reportedly, obviously, allegedly, admittedly, undeniably, actually, clearly, undoubtedly, eminently.*

- (1) This novel is well suited to the cinema.
- (2) The film is brilliant and moving, though it might have been even more so.
- (3) A visit to the National Theatre is an educational experience for anyone interested in twentieth-century architecture.
- (4) The President has not decided yet on seeking a second term.
- (5) The collection includes a poem written by Hitler.
- (6) It was not a well-planned 'coup', because it failed so quickly.
- (7) He became a star during the revolt, which allowed him to turn it into a political asset.
- (8) Their popularity is rising, judging by the number of fans at their concerts here.

- (b) **Adverbs of respect:** *historically, stylistically, politically, socially, racially, ideologically, morally, constitutionally, clinically, formally.*

- (1) Though not 'true enemies', they are unyielding.
- (2) He is well connected.
- (3) The sentences are too long and complex.
- (4) The British are mixed.
- (5) The higher ranks were responsible for the harsh treatment of the prisoners.
- (6) The costumes designed for the play are accurate in every detail.

**(c) Restriction and reinforcement:** merely, hardly, solely, alone, exclusively, simply; just, even; also, too, again, as well, similarly.

- (1) The doctor who begins by searching for a heart-beat on the right-hand side will convince the patient that he will be able to help him.
- (2) These taxis are always there when you need one, in the rain.
- (3) To put it in a few words, we do not know the answer.
- (4) The emphasis in language study was for a while on formal grammar.
- (5) Harry said that the river trip would suit him perfectly, and I said so.
- (6) What has happened explains many problems of the past and will help us avoid future ones.

**(d) Process adverbs of manner:** carefully, soundly, surreptitiously, heavily, momentarily, secretly, endlessly, rigorously, slowly, mechanically.

- (1) Yusuf was sleeping on his back.
- (2) Apparently, the man was suspected of carrying diamonds and should be searched.
- (3) Behind the barrier, Wilson worked at his code books.
- (4) He went on speaking, choosing his words.
- (5) It was said that he drank.
- (6) The rain had stopped.

## Unit 55

**1** †Revise the table of uses of *still*, *yet*, *already* given on p. 000. Then answer the following questions, (a) affirmatively, and (b) negatively. Give two or three answers to each question.

- (1) Is it time to go yet? .....
- (2) Have you had your lunch yet? .....
- (3) Do you still love me? .....
- (4) Are you still studying Russian? .....
- (5) Is it ten o'clock already? .....
- (6) Have you already been to Venice? .....

**2** †In the following sentences, insert the adverb given on the left in its appropriate position, indicate alternative positions where they are acceptable, and say whether this affects the meaning in any way:

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| (1) <i>sometimes</i> : | We take long holidays in mountainous areas.                  |
| (2) <i>often</i> :     | Journalists working in war zones are in danger.              |
| (3) <i>abroad</i> :    | She gets on well with people.                                |
| (4) <i>yesterday</i> : | They gave a concert.   |
| (5) <i>longingly</i> : | The cat gazed at the brightly coloured fish in the aquarium. |
| (6) <i>perhaps</i> :   | You'd better take an overcoat with you.                      |
| (7) <i>probably</i> :  | We shall leave tomorrow.                                     |
| (8) <i>hopefully</i> : | They have arrived at their destination.                      |

## Unit 56

**1** †Modify the adverbs marked in the following sentences, in the senses indicated on the left:

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| (1) Intensification:        | She answered <i>automatically</i> , without thinking.                  |
| (2) Medium intensification: | He recovered <i>quickly</i> after the operation.                       |
| (3) Description:            | The book is selling <i>well</i> .                                      |
| (4) Attenuation:            | The look on his face was <i>weird</i> .                                |
| (5) Quantification:         | He had a few drinks and <i>afterwards</i> was involved in an accident. |
| (6) Description:            | The winner of the car rally drove <i>fast</i> .                        |
| (7) Intensification:        | Our team didn't play <i>well</i> on that occasion.                     |

**2** †Add a post-modifier or complement to the AdvG in the following sentences:

- (1) It's hotter in the Sahara than *anywhere* -----
- (2) When we came out of the Pyramids, I said to myself: '*Never*' -----
- (3) I can't find my glasses. They must be *somewhere* -----
- (4) *Curiously* ----- he used exactly the same word as I did.
- (5) Do your friends live *far* -----
- (6) She doesn't dance as *beautifully* -----

# **SPATIAL, TEMPORAL AND OTHER RELATIONSHIPS**

## *CHAPTER 12*

### The Prepositional Phrase

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# PREPOSITIONS AND THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (PP)

UNIT 57

## SUMMARY

- 1 Prepositions have a relating function: they establish relations between nominal units, mainly nouns and nominal groups, and other units in the surrounding discourse.
- 2 The prepositional phrase consists of a preposition together with its complement, typically a nominal group, as *under the bed*, *in the office*.
- 3 The preposition may optionally be preceded by a modifier: *right through the window*.
- 4 Prepositions may consist of one word (*from*), two words (*because of*) three (*in contact with*) and occasionally four words (*as a result of*). All are single prepositions.
- 5 Not only a noun (*in town*) or full nominal group (*on the floor*) may function as complement of a preposition: an adverb (*until now*), an adjective (*at last*) or a clause (*because of what happened*, instead of *waiting*) may also fulfil this function.

## INTRODUCTION

A notable feature of the English language is the extremely wide use it makes of prepositions; and where there is a preposition there is a PP, since prepositions cannot normally stand alone, although they can be separated from their complement by 'stranding' (→ 6.3.2).



## 57.1 INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (PP)

The structure of the prepositional phrase is different from that of groups. While nouns, adjectives and adverbs each function as head of their respective group and can be used alone, a preposition cannot normally occur without a nominal unit, and a nominal unit is not part of a PP if there is no preposition. Both are equally necessary to form the phrase. For this reason we refer to such a unit as a prepositional phrase.

The internal structure of a PP consists of a preposition and its complement, both of which are obligatory, and an optional modifier. It can be represented as follows:

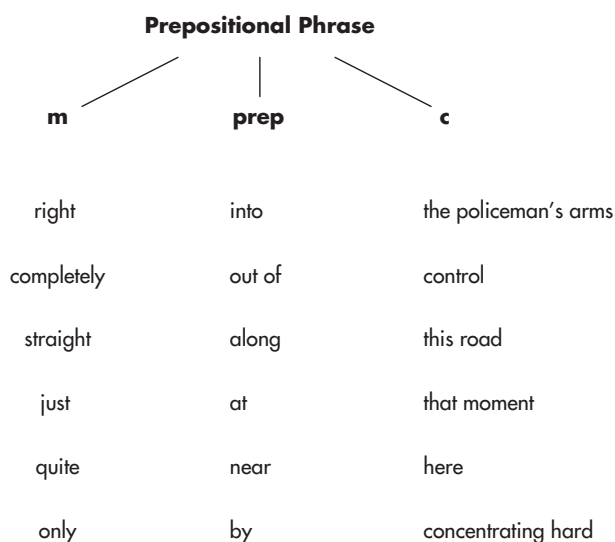


Figure 12.1 Structure of the prepositional phrase.

Not all PPs contain a modifier but all of them contain a preposition and a complement. The modifier typically intensifies the preposition by adding something specific to its meaning, such as exactness in the case of *straight* (*straight along this road*) or exclusiveness with *only* (*only by concentrating hard*).

Here is a recorded conversation between three students and a teacher (T), which illustrates the abundant use of prepositional phrases in English:

**T:** *What's this about?*<sup>1</sup>

**B:** Oh, animals.

**T:** Oh, yes. People are obsessed *in this country*<sup>2</sup> *with being kind*<sup>3</sup> *to animals*,<sup>4</sup> aren't they?

**A:** Alison and her cat . . .!

**B:** Don't talk *to us*<sup>5</sup> *about Alison's cat*!<sup>6</sup>

**C:** That cat is definitely not popular *in our house*!<sup>7</sup>

**B:** That cat moults constantly *all over our carpet and sofa*!<sup>8</sup>

T: But is it true, though? See what I mean? She hates cats! A: *Just for that silly reason?*<sup>9</sup>  
 T: No, but there seem to be more cases of *animal cruelty*<sup>10</sup> going on here *than anywhere else*.<sup>11</sup>  
 A: Yeah. I get the impression *from the little I know*<sup>12</sup> they're *just as crazy about dogs*<sup>13</sup> in *Belgium and Holland and France and Italy*<sup>14</sup> as they are *over here*.<sup>15</sup>  
 T: Is it just one of those myths that we perpetuate *regarding the British character?*<sup>16</sup> Is it true?  
 A: I think it probably is a myth.

(recorded conversation)

## 57.2 FEATURES OF PREPOSITIONS AND PPS

### 57.2.1 Free or bound

The meanings of prepositions are either 'lexical' and 'free' or 'grammaticised' and 'bound'. Grammaticised uses of prepositions are those which are controlled by a verb, adjective or noun, as happens with *talk to* them, *obsessed with* being, *kind to* animals, *cases of* cruelty (→ 59.5). Their meaning is not independent, whereas lexical prepositional meanings are those freely chosen according to the speaker's communicative intention (*in* this country, *all over* our carpet and sofa.)

### 57.2.2 Potential for structural ambiguity

As **PPs** are frequently **embedded** in other PPs, structural ambiguity may occur with a **prep+Ng+prep+Ng** sequence: 'near the bar on the corner' admits two analyses:

- (a) near [the bar on the corner] in which 'on the corner' is the post-modifier of 'the bar'.
- (b) near [the bar] + [on the corner] consists of two independent adjuncts which might be reversed in order:  
 on [the corner] + [near the bar]

### 57.2.3 Stranding of the preposition

As seen in 6.3 and 10.5, the preposition is often stranded at the end of a clause and is thus separated from its nominal complement. The alternative construction called 'fronting' keeps the preposition at the beginning of the clause, next to its complement.

#### Stranded preposition

*Which day* are you referring *to*?

Do you know *who* this book belongs *to*?

Bill is the kind of guy you'd be

happy *to* have a drink with

#### Fronted preposition

(*To which day* are you referring?)

(Do you know *to who(m)* this book belongs? )

the kind of guy *with whom*

you'd be happy *to* have a drink) (formal)

Stranding is typical of spoken and informal written English, while the fronted counterparts are formal, and might be found in planned formal discourse.

When verb and preposition are tightly bound, the fronted alternative with a *wh*-interrogative may become so awkward as to be impossible. Not all combinations admit both versions (→ 6.3), as for example *be about*, particularly if the subject (*this*) is not identified:

*What's this about? (What functions as the complement of about) About what is this?*  
(This version sounds awkward and strange, and would be avoided.

### 57.3 ONE-WORD, TWO-WORD AND MULTI-WORD PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions may be 'simple' (consisting of a single word) or 'complex' (consisting of two words or more).

#### 57.3.1 One-word prepositions

The short, simple forms are by far the commonest, such as:

about	across	after	against	as	at
behind	before	beside	between	but	down
during	for	from	in	like	near
of	off	on	over	past	round
since	through	to	towards	under	until
with	without				

The preposition *but* tends to follow a non-assertive word as in '*Anything but* barley-water, please! '*Nothing but trouble* will come of this'.

#### 57.3.2 Complex prepositions

Some complex prepositions function in the same way as single ones, ending in a simple preposition.

*Two-word prepositions* have as second element one of the simple prepositions *as, for, from, of, to, with*:

- + such as
- + for: as for, except for, but for
- + from: apart from, away from, as from
- + of: ahead of, because of, instead of, regardless of, out of
- + to: according to, close to, contrary to, due to, owing to, thanks to, up to
- + with: along with, together with

Also included are: as against, as regards, rather than:

Once outside, I stood blinking **against** the glare of the sun.

He has his whole life **ahead of** him.

**Rather than** risk an unpleasant surprise, keep a lock on your bicycle.

Three-word prepositions typically consist of a simple preposition + noun + another simple preposition

as far as	as well as	by means of	by way of	in charge of
in view of	in spite of	in need of	in front of	in back of (AmE)
in search of	for want of	on top of	with regard to	with reference to

*Four-word prepositions* include a **definite** or **indefinite article**:

for the sake of	in the hands of	with the exception of
-----------------	-----------------	-----------------------

A few prepositions ending in *of* have an alternative structure with *'s*

<b>for the sake of</b> the children	<b>on behalf of</b> the committee
for the children's sake	on the committee's behalf

However, non-personal reference with *'s* is limited to exclamative expressions such as *for heaven's sake*.

## 57.4 THE COMPLEMENT ELEMENT

The complement of a preposition is most typically realised by a noun or common use. A PP as complement of a preposition is totally regular, as are *-ing* and *wh*-clauses:

noun/NG:	at <i>home</i> (BrE), <i>home</i> (AmE); after <i>which</i> , on account of <i>his age</i> , on <i>Friday</i> , in <i>June</i>		
adj	in <i>private</i>	at <i>last</i>	for <i>good</i> (= for <i>ever</i> )
adv	for <i>ever</i>	since <i>when</i>	until <i>quite recently</i>
PP	except <i>in here</i>	from <i>out of the forest</i>	

Pull it out *from under the letters in the drawer*

<i>wh</i> -cl	Have you decided on <i>when you are leaving</i> ?
<i>wh</i> + <i>to</i> -inf cl	Have you any problem apart from <i>where to stay</i> ?
<i>-ing</i> cl	The miners charge the employers with <i>ignoring their claims</i>

With *home*, *days* and *months* etc . . . as locatives, AmE does not use a preposition.

I don't sleep **nights** for thinking of my daughter.  
 'I'd much rather stay **home** tonight,' he said.  
**Summers**, I visit my father in Maryland.

The following restrictions exist on the types of complement possible:

Adjectival and adverbial groups are infrequent and are limited to idiomatic expressions such as *at last*, *for good*, *for ever*, as in:

*At last* I'm free! [GWH]  
 . . . the family left Ireland *for good* and made its future in England [EDA]  
 I could stay here *for ever*, it's so beautiful.

### *Clauses as complements of prepositions*

English prepositions are not followed by *that*-clauses (→ 11.1.2). The only type of finite clause admissible is the *wh*-clause, and the only non-finite type the *-ing* clause. *To*-inf clauses are not admissible after a preposition either, except when introduced by a *wh*-item, as in *apart from where to stay*. Combinations 1b and 2b, therefore, are ungrammatical. An *-ing* clause can often provide an acceptable alternative, as in 1a and 2a:

- 1a I was pleased *about our team winning* the prize /that our team won the prize.
- 1b \*I was pleased about that our team won the prize.
- 2a We were disappointed *at not getting* any news from you.
- 2b \*We were disappointed at not to get any news from you.

### *Use of -ing clauses*

'To'+ the base form of a verb is a 'to-infinitive', and must be distinguished from the preposition *to*, which can take an *-ing* clause, as in the first example below. Most other prepositions likewise take the *-ing* form, as this is the most nominal among clauses:

He devoted his career *to helping* needy and deprived children.  
 The intruder escaped *by climbing* over a back fence.

*But* and *except* may be followed by *to*-infinitives. They typically follow a negative element: Jean and Bill will have *no choice but to send* their children to another school.

The following continuation of the recorded student–teacher conversation shows that the largest number of complements are realised by nouns, pronouns and full NGs, with a sprinkling of finite and non-finite clauses:

#### The 'Green' Party

A: It's really making a come-back *all of a sudden*.<sup>1</sup>

B: Seems to come *in and out of fashion*.<sup>2</sup>

A: Yeah.

B: We had elections *at school*<sup>3</sup> and the 'Green' party did win, actually.

A: So did we. It was a big surprise *to everyone*,<sup>4</sup> so many anti-establishment adherents *amongst us*.<sup>5</sup>

T: I get the impression that it's a non-vote, just a comfortable way *of not having to take a decision*.<sup>6</sup>

B: Yeah, a pressure vote, so that you don't have to vote either *for the Conservatives*<sup>7</sup> or *for the Labour Party*.<sup>8</sup> People just can't be bothered *with comparing programmes and thinking*<sup>9</sup> about *who to vote for*.<sup>10</sup>

T: And you think this has a significant impact *on the way the other parties have formed their policies?*<sup>11</sup>

B: Yeah, but it's . . . it's just waffle, just an excuse *for getting votes.*<sup>12</sup>

T: Do you feel very cynical *about them,*<sup>13</sup> then?

B: Suppose I do, a bit.

T: One of the things people say *about, well, at least some of the younger generation,*<sup>14</sup> not all of *them,*<sup>15</sup> but *on the whole*<sup>16</sup> is, there's no radicalism *among people today*<sup>17</sup> who are *in their late teens and twenties.*<sup>18</sup> It's what the forty-year-olds say *about the twenty-year-olds.*<sup>19</sup> They think back *to when they were young*<sup>20</sup> and *what they were like then*<sup>21</sup> and say that the younger generation don't have any radical or controversial views any more.

A: I don't think radicalism has disappeared. Maybe it has been channelled *into that 'green' area.*<sup>22</sup>

B: Yeah. A lot of former ideas have been ditched in favour *of moving towards a position much closer to the centre than before.*

## THE MODIFIER ELEMENT

Prepositional phrases can be pre-modified by other elements, in particular adverbs, and to a lesser extent nouns:

### Adverbs

(intensifying)

*absolutely on top of* the world.

*almost at* the same moment

*badly in need of* a coat of paint.

*right through* the window

*sort of* like his father

(directional)

*down to* the basement

*out on* the other side of town

*up over* the clouds

(focusing)

*just for the sake of* arguing

*quite near* the main square

### Nominal groups

*a bit out of* touch with reality

*streets ahead of* her rivals

*way back in* history

**Grading** by comparative or superlative forms appears to be more restricted. The following are attested examples:

It was a wonderful day. A day that seemed *more like a dream* than real life.  
[FRY]

Later, the two houses *nearer* the church were made into one. [B13]

# SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS OF THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE

## UNIT 58

### SUMMARY

- 1 The basic grammatical role of a preposition is to establish a functional relationship between its complement and another syntactic element in a nearby structure, whether a clause or a group.
- 2 In doing this, the whole PP functions as an element of a clause (e.g. as an adjunct in: He works *at Heathrow Airport*) or as a post-modifier in an NG (the bridge *over the river*) or as complement of an adjective (fed up *with the weather*).
- 3 Some words can be used not only as prepositions but as conjunctions (*after, before*), adverbs (*over, past*) or verbs (*considering, including*). (*after the rain; after it stopped raining; the horse jumped over the fence; a lot of food was left over*).

### 58.1 THE SYNTACTIC FUNCTION OF PPS

When a preposition links its complement to another element of a clause or group, the whole PP itself becomes a functional element of the clause or group.

The main syntactic functions of prepositional phrases are as adjuncts in clauses and as post-modifiers or complements of nouns. All three types of adjunct, circumstantial, stance and connective can be realised by PPs.

#### 58.1.1 PPs as adjuncts in clauses

As **circumstantial** adjuncts, PPs typically occur in either final or initial position:

Final position: The two friends drank their coffee *in silence for a few moments*.

Initial position: *Behind us*, we saw that the tail-back of traffic on the motorway stretched for miles.



As **stance** adjuncts, PPs express a comment on, or an attitude to the form or content of a whole clause:

*In all honesty*, I don't believe a word he said.

*By all means*, do as you think best.

*From any point of view*, the proposal is rubbish

As **connective** adjuncts, PPs can be used to link clauses or groups and words within clauses

I'm leaving now. *In that case* I'll go too.

Are you feeling bored? *On the contrary*, I'm enjoying it all.

In addition PPs can realise the functions of Complements in clauses:

Marcia must be *out of her mind* to reject such an offer (Subject Complement)

His illness left him *without a job*. (Object Complement)

The 4.15 train to London is now standing *at Platform 3*, and the high-speed train from York is drawing *into the station*. (Locative/Goal Complement)

### 58.1.2 As modifiers and complements in groups

There's a light *in the window*. (post-modifier of noun in nominal group) (→ ch. 10, 49.2, 49.5.1)

*Off-the-record* comments should not be printed in a newspaper. (pre-modifier of noun in nominal group.)

The man over there has a request *for further information*. (complement of noun in NG) (→ ch.10, 50.5)

My son-in-law is brilliant *at mathematics*. (Complement of adj in AdjG)

They don't live far *from here*. (Complement of adv in AdvG)

Turn to the left *after the tunnel under the motorway*. (Complement in a PP)

## 58.2 CLASSES OF WORDS WITH THE SAME FORM AS PREPOSITIONS

### 58.2.1 Prepositions and conjunctions

Some of the one-word prepositions listed in 57.3 can also function as conjunctions. The most common include *after*, *as*, *before*, *given*, *since*, *until*. The participial prepositions such as *considering* can also function as conjunctions. When these words are followed by a noun they function as prepositions: when they are followed by a clause they function as conjunctions

**(prep)** *After* the rain, the sun came out.

**(conj)** *After* it stopped raining, we fetched our bicycles and took to the road.

**(prep)** *Since* our meeting last September I haven't heard from him.

- (conj) *Since* we met last September I haven't heard from him.  
 (prep) **Considering** his age, he did very well.  
 (conj) *Considering* how young he is, he did very well.  
 (prep) **Given** the rise in cyberbullying, parents must take precautions to address the problem.  
 (conj) *Given* that cyberbullying is increasing, parents should set up filters on phones and computers.

### 58.2.2 Prepositions and verbs

Certain participials can function both as prepositions and as non-finite verbs: *excepting*, *excluding*, *following*, *including*, *regarding*:

- (prep) These prices refer to a double room, *including* breakfast.  
 (verb) We are *including* two new colleagues in the research group.

### 58.2.3 Prepositions and adverbs

These are sometimes called prepositional adverbs, as they can function as either class. Common examples include the following:

Aboard about across above before below down in inside near off out  
 outside through throughout under underneath up.

- (prep) Their behaviour is *beyond* belief.  
 (adv) From the top of the hill you can see the manor house and the woods *beyond*.

Here are some structural criteria for distinguishing prepositions from adverbs:

- A preposition, but not an adverb, requires a nominal complement, and when this is a pronoun, the preposition governs its case (*for him*, *without them*).
- In paired examples such as *We went **into** the café* – *we went **in***, what was a preposition in the first version is replaced by an adverb in the second.
- The adverb is heavily stressed, whereas the preposition is normally unstressed, or only lightly stressed (*lower down the scale* vs *lower **DOWN***; *we walked past the café*; *we walked **PAST*** (→ 6.4.2).

In certain positions prepositions are stressed; for instance, when stranded at the end of a *wh*-question: What is it *FOR*? Where is it *FROM*? The preposition *with* is stressed in the expression *with it* (trendy), and also in the adjunctive use *I'll take it **WITH** me*. *Without* is similarly stressed in *I can't do **WITHOUT** it*, ***WITHOUT** you*. In combinations with *do* – (*do without*, *go without*, meaning 'must have'), the word *without* functions as an adverbial particle. *There's no milk left, so we'll just have to do without* (meaning 'not have').

With regard to the phrasal verb 'come to', meaning 'regain consciousness', the particle *to* is heavily stressed: *The unconscious boy came **TO***.

	<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Preposition</b>
There are always two pilots	aboard	aboard the plane.
All the children were running	around	around the playground.
The last time I met Monica was in September, but I haven't seen her	since	since then. (cohesive with September)
The rule is that workmen must go	outside	outside the factory if they want to smoke during the morning break.

*Figure 12.2* Prepositions and adverbs.

# SEMANTIC FEATURES OF THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE

## UNIT 59

### SUMMARY

- 1 The choice of preposition in a PP may be (a) governed by the particular noun, verb or adjective that precedes it (a *threat to*, *depend on*, *bored with*), or (b) chosen freely from a set of prepositions expressing different relationships (*under*, *over*, *between*, *across*, *along*, etc.), as in *Let's place the lamp in the corner/on the desk/by the armchair*. The former type is said to be 'grammaticised' or 'bound'. The latter type is 'lexical' or 'free'.
- 2 Location in space and change of location are the most basic types of prepositional relations. When speakers use *in* or *on* or *under* in English, for example, they make use of cognitive patterns or mental image schemas of each relationship, in accordance with the way each relation is perceived in the culture.
- 3 The concepts of Figure and Ground (or, more specifically, Trajector and Landmark) are used to refer to the salient object, whether moving or stationary, and the point of reference, respectively, in a spatial event. The preposition expresses the relation between the two – such as 'containment' (*in*), or 'support' (*on*) – in the most basic use. Further uses can then be explained as modifications of the basic image schema, as these mental pictures are perceived and derived from our experience of the world.
- 4 Many basic patterns of spatial location are carried over to time relations, such as *in the house*, *in November*, *in 1492*, and to ordinary metaphorical uses which form part of our daily interaction (*in love*, *in time*, *in pain*).

### 59.1 TWO TYPES OF PREPOSITIONAL MEANINGS

Prepositional meanings can be divided into two broad types:

- those in which the choice of preposition is determined by the verb, noun or adjective preceding it; and
- those in which a preposition is chosen freely in accordance with the speaker's intentions.

We say that the first type has become ‘grammaticised’ or ‘bound’, while the second type is more ‘lexical’ and ‘free’:

<b>grammaticised</b>	I agree <i>with</i> you; we rely <i>on</i> you; fruit is good <i>for</i> you.
<b>lexical</b>	We flew <i>in/into/out of/through/above/below/close to/near/a long way from</i> the clouds.

In previous sections we have discussed those prepositions which are determined by nouns (→ 50.5), adjectives (→ 53.1.3) and verbs (→ 6.3.1; 10.5) (e.g. look after, rely on, put up with). These are all grammaticised; that is to say, in such cases the preposition does not have its full lexical meaning and is not in open choice with other prepositions. We noticed that nouns which take prepositional complements are related to cognate verbs or adjectives that often take the same prepositional complement, as in the following examples:

<b>nouns:</b>	compatibility with, reliance on, damage to, a liking for, an attack on, a quarrel with
<b>adjs:</b>	compatible with, opposed to, free of/from, lacking in
<b>verbs:</b>	to rely on, to dispose of, to amount to, to hope for, to quarrel with, give it to me (with the Recipient encoded as a prepositional phrase) But notice that, when a noun or adjective takes <i>of</i> , the verb (if it exists) does not necessarily take the same preposition; for instance, ‘hope(ful) <i>of</i> success’ but ‘hope <i>to</i> succeed’.

## 59.2 LEXICAL PREPOSITIONAL MEANINGS

### 59.2.1 Location in space

The most basic prepositional meanings have to do with location in space. When we express spatial relationships we use a mental picture or image schema for each type of relationship, in which a salient Figure, typically a person or thing, is located – or moves – with relation to a reference point or Ground (usually another entity). It is the principle of **salience** or prominence which enables us to explain why it is more natural to say ‘the book is on the table’ than ‘the table is under the book’. In Chapter 8, we encountered Figure and Ground, together with Path and Manner, when describing a Motion Event, with the example: *The children went down to the beach*, in which the Figure is ‘the children’ and the Ground is ‘the beach’.

In **1** (below), the Figure (the boy) is stationary with respect to the Ground (the water), while in **2** the Figure (the boy) is moving with respect to the Ground

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1</b> The boy is <i>in</i> the water. | <b>2</b> The boy is going <i>into</i> the water. |
|--|--|

As we examine the different spatial relationships expressed by prepositions, we see that the nominal group or clause following the preposition represents the Ground, while the Figure is a nearby entity in the clause, like *the boy*. (Other, more specific terms which have been widely adopted in the analysis of prepositions are ‘Trajector’ and ‘Landmark’ for Figure and Ground, respectively.)

We now turn to the main types of meaning expressed by spatial prepositions in English, in terms of Figure and Ground:

<b>At:</b> point in space:	Tim is at home, at the football match, at the cinema, at the supermarket, at work
<b>On:</b> in contact with a surface:	on the floor/wall/ceiling; on the corner of Bond Street; on a bicycle; on the train/bus/on board ship; on the map; a wasp on my hand
<b>In:</b> containment:	in the universe, in the world, in France, in the garden; in the corner, in the car, in a boat, the coin in my hand, in the rain, in my imagination

The preposition **at** is used when the typical function of the premise is implied (e.g. *at the cinema* in order to see a film; *at church* to attend a religious service, *at school* attending a class), all when the speaker is not at the same location as the Figure. In visualising Tim's location at the cinema, the speaker is deliberately vague about exactly where at the cinema Tim is. Tim may in fact be in the queue outside the cinema, or inside, seeing the film. If the speaker were already outside the cinema and asks where Tim is, the answer would be specific: *He's in the cinema, he's inside*.

**On** typically has the Figure in contact with and supported by a surface (the Ground), whether horizontal (*there's a pen on the floor*) or vertical (*there's a fly on the wall*). The Ground includes vehicles and animals on which one rides (*on a bicycle/motorcycle/horse*), and larger vehicles in transit which have a walkway (*on the bus/train, plane, on board a ship*), whereas *in* is used where no such walkway exists (*in a boat, in a car, in a helicopter*). However, as trains have cafeterias and dining cars, we say *in the cafeteria/the dining-car, in the first-class compartment*, which are conceptualised as containers. When the vehicle is not in active use, it is conceived as a container and *in* may be used (*The children were playing in the abandoned bus*).

**In** implies containment: *There are strong security forces in the stadium*. Containment may be complete (*the coins in my purse*) or in part (*Put the flowers in water, a man in a blue shirt and jeans*). The difference between *in the corner* (of a room) and *on the corner* (of the street) is one of perspective, whether the right-angle is perceived as containing or projecting.

### 59.2.2 Change of location

Change of location implies motion. Source (→ 8.2.3) represents the initial location, and is typically marked by the preposition **from**, while Goal represents the final location and is most often marked by **to**, or by *to* in combination with *on* for a surface (**onto**) or *in* for a container (**into**). 'Home' in *go home* is an exception in not expressing the notion of final location (Goal) explicitly. (Note the explicit encoding of location in BrE 'stay **at** home' against the inexplicit AmE 'stay home').

<b>From</b> (source) . . . <b>to</b> (goal)	<i>From the bus-stop to the stadium.</i>
<b>Off</b> . . . (source) . . . <b>onto</b> (goal)	The vase fell <i>off</i> the table <i>onto</i> the floor.
<b>Off</b> . . . (source) . . . <b>into</b> (goal)	The boy fell <i>off</i> the cliff <i>into</i> the sea.
<b>Out of</b> (source)	I took the money <i>out of</i> my purse. The wasp flew <i>out of</i> the window (BrE), <i>out the window</i> (AmE).

**Across, along** (path)

We went *from* the bus-stop, *along* the street *to* the stadium.

**Through** (passage)

We went *through* the tunnel.

**Out of** is visualised as exit from a container. Note that the adverb *out* + the preposition *of* provides the converse meaning with respect to *into*: *into the water/out of the water*, while **away + from** indicates greater distancing: *away from the water*. Similarly, **off** is the converse of **on** and **onto** (*off the table onto the floor*, both implying movement).

As we saw in 40.2.2, embeddings of prepositional phrases within adverbial groups express complex spatial meanings which are difficult to translate, for example: *back from the front line*, *in from the fields*, *over to the left*, *up from below*.

**Across, along** express **Path**. The difference is that *along* simply follows a horizontal axis (We walked *along the river bank*, Cars were parked *along the street*), while *across* involves crossing the axis, or an open space, at an angle, from one side to another (She walked *across the street/the field*).

**Through** typically has the meaning of **Passage** (motion into a point and then out of it (He hurried *through* the doorway). The Ground can also be two-dimensional (You could go *through the park, through a maze of streets*) or three-dimensional, with volume (We drove *through the tunnel*).

**Past** is similar to *along*, but with respect to some fixed point: Go *past the stadium* and you'll come to a supermarket.

### 59.2.3 Other spatial prepositions

Other basic spatial prepositions include **over**, **under**, **up** and **down**. **Over** is used in several ways:

- (a) A picture hangs *over the fireplace*.
- (b) A helicopter flew *over our heads*.
- (c) They live *over a sweet-shop*.
- (d) He wore a raincoat *over his suit*.
- (e) The lake is *just over the hill*.
- (f) They sprayed paint *all over the wall*.
- (g) The horse jumped *over the fence*.
- (h) I fell *over a stone* and broke my leg.

In (a) and (b), one entity is higher than the other, with a space between, the difference being that (a) is static location (b) involves motion. The notion of 'higher' is still clear in (c) but less clear in (d) where, in addition, 'space' is reduced to the meaning of 'on top of'. In (e), *over* implies location at the end of a path. One has to go over the hill to reach the lake. In (f) *all over* is 'pervasive' or 'covering', whereas (g) signals a movement of going up higher than an obstacle and down again on the other side, and (h) moving from an upright to a non-upright position. (Compare *fall over* as an intransitive phrasal verb with an adverbial particle: The lamp *fell over* and broke.)

**Under**, meaning vertically below, but with some intervening space, is the converse of **over**. It can function with verbs of location and motion, and the distance may be greatly reduced:

There's a rug *under the table*; a bench *under the tree*. (i.e. under the branches of the tree!)

I pushed the letter *under the door*.

He's wearing a T-shirt *under his sweater*. (conversely, a sweater *over his T-shirt*)

**Above** and **below** are similar to *over* and *under*, but absolute verticality is not a requirement:

The castle stands *above the town*; *below the castle* there is a river.

**Up** and **down** indicate a higher or lower position respectively, as in (a), or motion towards that position, as (b). Like *under*, they can imply the path taken to the higher or lower location, as with (b):

- (a) There's a pub *just up/down* the road.
- (b) We had to walk *up/down* three flights of stairs.

*Up* and *down* are, however, more commonly used as adverb particles in phrasal and phrasal-prepositional verbs, such as *If you **take it up**, I'll **bring it down*** (→ 6.4).

**Round/around** express circular movement along a path in *She danced around the bonfire*, but circular position on a path in *The children sat round the teacher* (though probably the circle was not a full one). In the sentence *They drove furiously round the race track*, the track was probably irregularly curved, not circular. Sometimes the meaning is indeterminate movement in different directions within an area, as in *We walked for hours round the streets looking for a cheap hotel*. At other times, the movement may be neither circular nor along a clear path, but varied and indeterminate in a volume of space (e.g. *The bees swarmed around us*.) These differences may be regarded as different senses of the general meaning of 'circularity'.

**By, beside, at my side, next to, in front of, behind** (AmE **in back of**), **on the left, on the right, facing, opposite** (AmE **across from**) all express degrees of proximity. They correspond to the physical orientation of our bodies, and are extended to certain objects such as cars and houses which have a front, a back and sides.

*By* has also the meanings of agency (*a novel by Tolstoy*) and means (*by train, by bus, by air*).

**Between** and **among** express relative position, referring to two entities, or more than two, respectively.

#### 59.2.4 Non-locative meanings

**For** has been explained in Chapters 2 and 3 as the Beneficiary meaning, that is, intended Recipient. It also expresses purpose and intended destination (*I've brought it for you*; *an extra-fast machine for copying*; *they're making for the coast*).

**Like** expresses similarity of features or character (*She looks rather like Lady Macbeth*, *What is she like as a person?*) It can also introduce a simile (*The lake shone like a mirror*) and draw on a more vague similarity of situations (*Let's not quarrel over a silly thing like this*). *Like* is related to the predicative adjective *alike* (*The brothers look alike*) and to the adverb *alike* (*The changes in climate affect young and old alike*).



**As** is used when referring to roles, jobs or functions (He made his name *as a pop singer*; Have you ever worked *as a shop assistant*?). *As* is grammaticised in comparisons (*as clear as crystal*) and is related to the conjunction *as* (*As I was saying, . . .*).

**With** and **without** can signal (a) accompaniment and lack of it, respectively (I'll go *with you*; she turned up at the gala dinner *without her husband*); (b) possession (a girl *with red hair*, a street *without a name*) or a part-whole relationship (a cup *without a handle*); or (c) instrument (he broke the lock *with a hammer*; she pushed her hair back *with her hand*).

### 59.3 TIME RELATIONS

Certain prepositions expressing location in space are also used to express location in time. Other prepositions – such as *during*, *until* and *since* – are not used with spatial meanings.

	examples	usage
<b>At:</b>	<i>at one o'clock; at Christmas; at midday</i>	point in time: clock time, fixed holidays
<b>On:</b>	<i>on Friday, on June 2nd</i>	for specific days and dates
<b>In:</b>	<i>in May, in the year 1888, in the evening</i>	regarding the occurrence of events months, years, times of day, seasons, centuries and other periods of time, all conceptualised as containers; note however, <b>in the morning/ afternoon/ evening</b> , but <b>at night</b>
<b>Over:</b>	<i>We stayed with them over the weekend, over Christmas</i>	periods of short duration
<b>During:</b>	<i>during the war, during my stay in Rome</i>	experiential periods of time
<b>For:</b>	<i>We read for hours (cf. spatially, We walked for miles); We are camping here for the summer, for a long time, for good (= 'for ever')</i>	duration of time
	<i>for the third time</i>	frequency
<b>Since:</b>	<i>I've been here since 10 a.m.</i>	retrospective, referring to the initiation of the duration
<b>Until:</b>	<i>We'll wait until 4 o'clock; until the plane takes off; We didn't eat until four o'clock; from morning till night; up till now</i>	typically marks end-point of duration, but marks a starting-point with negative sentences; <i>till</i> and <i>up till</i> are informal variants, but <i>till</i> is not used to start a sentence

<b>Before and after:</b>	<i>before Easter, the week after next</i>	almost always express time meanings, but note the formal spatial expression 'He appeared <i>before the judge</i> '
<b>By:</b>	(a) Essays must be handed in <i>by Friday</i>	(a) a time deadline
	(b) <i>By the summer</i> , she was feeling stronger	(b) before a certain time

## 59.4 METAPHORICAL AND ABSTRACT USES

Many spatial prepositions are used in abstract or metaphorical expressions. For example, **about** in *walk about the house* expresses 'indeterminate spatial movement', whereas in *talk about the house* it expresses the notion of 'reference'.

Although many abstract and metaphorical uses of prepositions (and adverbs) may at first sight appear arbitrary, metaphor and metonymy can provide enlightening explanations. For instance, the expressions *in love*, *in pain*, *in anger* construe these emotions as containers, yet this construal is not applicable to happiness and hate (\**in happiness*, \**in hate*.) For these, *full of happiness/joy/hate* and also *anger* are normal uses, with the body in this case construed as the container. The field of vision as well as the mind are also seen as containers, as in the expressions '*in full view*', '*out of sight*, *out of mind*', *in your imagination*.

**Between**, meaning relative position, is extended to both temporal and abstract meanings: *Between six and seven* this evening; the discussion *between them* turned into a quarrel.

**Into**, used metaphorically, indicates active participation in something, as in *he's into rugby these days*.

**Over** and **under** have non-spatial meanings as in: it weighs *over a kilo*, it cost *under ten euros*, while in the verbs *overact*, *overcharge*, *under-estimate*, *undernourished* the meaning is 'excess' and 'insufficiency', respectively. A different extension of meaning, something like 'subordination' or 'subjection to' is illustrated in: *under the influence* of drugs; *under his leadership*; *under the threat* of expulsion; *under control*; *under the circumstances*; *under contract* for a year.

With *over*, the meaning of 'surmounting an obstacle' is extended to that of illness and difficulties – *get over an operation* has the sense of recovering from its effects – while *control over/power over* someone, or something, is an extension of the basic higher-vs-lower spatial meaning, as is also the use of *over* in 'let's discuss it *over a cup of coffee*'. Here the mental image is of persons leaning slightly forward, engaged in talk, with the coffee on the table between them.

**Out of** as 'exit from a container' is extended to expressions such as *out of petrol*, *out of sugar*, *out of work* (= jobless), *out of date* (= obsolete). *Out* also responds to the 'emergence metaphor' as in *He did it out of despair*, *out of love for his family*, and to the 'object comes out of a substance' metaphor, as in *Mammals developed out of reptiles*. The opposite is the 'substance goes into the object' metaphor, as in *I made a sheet of newspaper into a plane*.

**Off** and **on** have converse meanings in relation to the notion of support as the Ground: the pen fell *off* the table *onto* the floor. They are used colloquially as converses in expressions such as *he's off alcohol*, *he's on drugs*.

**Up** and **down** are often metaphorically construed as converses, with positive and negative connotations respectively, in expressions such as *coming up in the world*, *going down in the world*, *look up to someone* and *look down on someone*. *Up north* and *down south* reflect geographical orientation, whereas *up to London*, *down to the country* reflects the status of the capital.

**Through** can have the meaning of completion and result: He went *through* a fortune in a year; I finally got *through* that long novel.

**With** can metaphorically signal the manner of doing something (*Say it with a smile* = smiling; *With a wave of his hand, he left*) or result, in *black with the smoke*, together with increasing or decreasing value (*This wine has improved with age*).

The following extract from *Gone Girl* illustrates the use of lexical prepositions:

'Amy' I began running, bellowing her name. Through the kitchen,<sup>1</sup> where a kettle was burning, down to the basement,<sup>2</sup> where the guest room stood empty, and then out the back door.<sup>3</sup> I pounded across our yard<sup>4</sup> into the slender boat deck<sup>5</sup> leading out over the river.<sup>6</sup> I peeked over the side<sup>7</sup> to see if she was in our rowboat,<sup>8</sup> where I had found her one day, tethered to the dock,<sup>9</sup> rocking in the water,<sup>10</sup> her face to the sun,<sup>11</sup> eyes closed, and as I peered down into the dazzling reflections<sup>12</sup> of the river, at her beautiful, still face,<sup>13</sup> she'd suddenly opened her blue eyes and said nothing to me,<sup>14</sup> and I'd said nothing back and gone into the house alone.<sup>15</sup>

## 59.5 GRAMMATICISED PREPOSITIONS

Outlined next are some of the most common grammaticised prepositions, functioning mainly as complements of verbs.

**At** is the preposition controlled by certain verbs such as *laugh*, verbs of looking – *look*, *glance*, *gaze*, *stare* – and verbs of aiming: *aim*, *shoot at* someone or something. The latter implies that the attempt failed, whereas transitive *shoot* + Od is effective: The terrorist *shot* two policemen dead (i.e. killed them; the addition of the Object Complement *dead* clarifies the difference between a fatal shooting and an injury); he *shot at* the escaping criminal, but missed.

**In** is used with the verbs *believe*, *confide*, *trust*, *engage*, *interest* and *succeed* (I tried to *engage her in conversation*, *to interest them in world affairs*, *to get them interested in politics*).

**On** is the preposition selected by *agree*, *rely*, *count*, *concentrate*, *depend*, and by the ditransitive verbs *feed* and *spend* (spend a lot *on entertainment*; feed them *on cereals*).

**By** has so many meanings in addition to those already mentioned that it appears not to call up one basic mental image. Here are just a few:

Agency: The goal was scored *by Evans*.

Means: They travelled *by bus*, *by air*, *by plane*.

Extent: The envelopes measure 9cm *by 6 cm*.

Time during: Travel *by day* or *by night*.

By is also used with intransitive or transitive phrasal verbs: stand by, get by, pass by; Don't let the opportunity **pass** you **by**.

**For** is used with the verbs *allow* (allow for delay), *ask* (ask for help), *exchange* (exchange one coin for another); (hope) hope for the best, (wait) I'm waiting for you.

**From** is used with verbs of preventing (keep, discourage, exclude, exempt, prevent, restrain someone from doing something), among other meanings.

**Of** is also highly grammaticised, and occurs after verbs (think, hear, approve, convince someone, die), adjectives (full, tired) and nouns (a bottle of wine, the home of a former PM). These and other prepositions are discussed and illustrated in the chapters referred to above.

## FURTHER READING

On the structure of the prepositional phrase: Halliday (1994). On the semantics of prepositional phrases in terms of Figure, Ground, Path: Talmy (1986). In terms of Trajector, Path and Landmark: Langacker (1987). On the container schema and other metaphors: Lakoff and Johnson (1980); Lakoff (1987). As an introduction to these concepts: Ungerer and Schmid (1997). On grammaticised vs lexical prepositions: Huddleston and Pullum (2002). On stranded vs fronted prepositions, bound vs free: Biber et al. (1999).

## EXERCISES ON CHAPTER 12

### Spatial, temporal and other relationships: The Prepositional Phrase

#### Unit 57

1 † Complete the PPs in these sentences with units of the classes indicated on the left:

- (1) NG: We were woken up by a sound like .....
- (2) AdjG: The couple left Scotland for ..... and settled in Brussels.
- (3) AdvG: I was sitting in the back row and couldn't hear the speaker from .....
- (4) PP: The shops are open every day except .....
- (5) fin. *wh*-cl: Can you see the sea from ..... ?
- (6) *wh* + *to*-inf. cl: Have the judges decided on ..... ?
- (7) -ing cl: Are you worried about .....

2 † Read again the conversation on 'The Green Party' on p. 472. Write a list of the complements of the PPs used, and say what classes of unit they belong to. Compare the relative frequency of the classes. Which classes are not represented in this text?

#### Unit 58

1 † To illustrate the syntactic potential of PPs in English, re-read the conversation about animals on p. 468–9 and identify the syntactic function of each PP.

- 2 †In the following sentences, classify the italicised words as prepositions or adverbs. Can you spot the one which is neither a preposition nor an adverb?

- (1) The children had left their toys lying *about* all over the floor.
- (2) Our friends live just *across* the road from us.
- (3) It's cold on deck. Why don't you go *below* to your cabin? (4) Some people have the television *on* all day.
- (5) Keep *on* walking.
- (6) Keep *on* the right side.
- (7) We usually go to a little pub *up* the street.
- (8) Come on, drink *up* your beer.
- (9) Tell me all *about* what happened.
- (10) I'll run *off* enough copies for all the students.
- (11) Everything is going to change in the *near* future.
- (12) In debates he puts his ideas *across* very well.
- (13) Some plants can live at temperatures *below* freezing.
- (14) The picture is not finished yet, but I'll paint *in* the sky later.
- (15) There were just a few light clouds high up *in* the sky.
- (16) We're a long way *off* understanding the real causes of this situation.

## Unit 59

- 1 †Identify the different contextual meanings of the preposition *over* in the following:

- (1) They built a bridge *over* the river.
- (2) We live *over* the road.
- (3) He weighs *over* 80 kilos.
- (4) He looked at the blue sky *over* his head.
- (5) We had to climb *over* the wall.
- (6) She laid a blanket *over* his bed.
- (7) The baby fell *over* a toy.
- (8) The thief knocked me *over* the head.

- 2 †Insert the most appropriate of the following prepositions in each sentence: *across* (*from*), *along*, *over*, *through*, *under*.

- (1) He turned away and began to walk \_\_\_\_\_ the meadow.
- (2) There is everything \_\_\_\_\_ the sun to choose from in this bazaar.
- (3) Our neighbours are trying to train their dog to jump \_\_\_\_\_ a hoop.
- (4) Willow trees grew \_\_\_\_\_ the river bank.
- (5) The two sisters had a heart-to-heart talk \_\_\_\_\_ a pot of herbal tea.
- (6) The man \_\_\_\_\_ him \_\_\_\_\_ the dining-car was yawning and looking \_\_\_\_\_ the window (AmE).

- 3 †There are many fixed PPs in common usage. Can you formulate a basic meaning that relates the preposition in each column to its five complements?

<b>at</b> once	<b>on</b> duty	<b>out of</b> work	<b>in</b> a hurry	<b>under</b> stress
at times	on purpose	out of practice	in full view	under control
at sea	on business	out of fashion	in luck	under-privileged
at work	on time	out of sight	in danger	under the tyrant's thumb
at war	on holiday	out of breath	in charge	under-weight

- 4 †The following sentences all express processes taking place in a period of time. Can you explain the different semantic relations between process and period which motivate the choice of a different preposition in each sentence?

- (1) I have worked here *for* two years.
- (2) I have been happy here *over* the two years.
- (3) We have had problems *during* the two years.
- (4) We have lived *through* two years of problems.
- (5) There has been steady progress *throughout* the two years.
- (6) The building will be finished *in* two years.
- (7) The building will be finished *within* two years.

- 5 †The extract from *Gone Girl* in 59.4 includes many examples of location and change of location. Underline each preposition + its complement and suggest a semantic function such as Source, Path, Goal, Location, Exit, for each.

- 6 †Many verbs and adjectives allow only one or two specific prepositions. Test your knowledge with the following items:

### Verbs

ask	plot
agree	hope
aim	pay
appeal	suffer
depend	reduce
point	insist

### Adjectives

bored	aware
tired	surprised
delighted	prone
anxious	related
sorry	fraught
suspicious	lacking

### Nouns

answer
damage
desire
search
anger
effect

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# ANSWER KEY

## CHAPTER 1

### Unit 1

- 1 (1) participant; (2) participant; (3) circumstance; (4) circumstance; (5) participant.
- 2 (1) Adjunct; (2) Subject; (3) Adjunct; (4) Direct Object; (5) Adjunct.

### Unit 2

- 3 (1a) No; (1b) Yes; (1c) No; (1d) No; (2a) No; (2b) No; (2c) Yes; (2d) Yes.
- 4 (1) independent; (2) verbless; (3) dependent non-finite (as in *Not being a tele-viewer myself, I have no preferences as regards programmes*; it could also be embedded, as in *Not being a tele-viewer myself does not worry me*); (4) dependent finite; (5) independent; (6) abbreviated; (7) verbless; (8) dependent finite; (9) dependent finite; (10) independent.
- 5 (1) NG; (2) AdjG; (3) PP; (4) AdvG; (5) VG; (6) AdjG; (7) NG; (8) PP.

### Unit 3

- 6 (1a) It won't be difficult . . . (1b) Won't it be difficult . . . ? (2a) Sheila hasn't anything/ has nothing to tell you. (2b) Hasn't Sheila anything/

Has Sheila nothing to tell you? (3a) No-one has left a bag on a seat in the park. (3b) Hasn't anyone/ Has no-one left a bag. . . . ? (4a) He doesn't know anyone/ He knows no-one who lives in Glasgow. (4b) Doesn't he know anyone . . . / Does he know no-one . . . ? (5a) It isn't worth going/ It's not worth going to see any of those pictures. (5b) Isn't it worth going to see any of those pictures?

- 7 (1) any (in an interrogative clause); (2) ever . . . anything (*hardly* is a semi-negative word) (3) anywhere/ anything/ any place (in an embedded clause after negative *don't think*); (4) anyone/ anybody (in an embedded clause after negative *don't remember*).
- 8 (1) The alternative negative forms *never* in (a) and *not . . . ever* in (b) establish negative clauses and within this scope are followed by non-assertive items such as *any*. (1c) by contrast contains *ever*, which is not a negative word, but a non-assertive word. The clause is therefore not negative as it would be with *never*, but neither is it correctly positive. (2) Similarly, *no*-negation and *not*-negation are used correctly in (a) and (b) respectively. In (c) as *anybody* is non-assertive but not negative, it can't make a clause negative.



## CHAPTER 2

### Unit 4

- 1 (1) (since my father's day); (2) (briefly) (to Mrs Blake); (3) (at the time); (4) none; (5) none; (6) (in the park); (7) (before the fall of the Berlin Wall) (practically); (8) (just); (9) (insistently) (at six o'clock in the morning) (on a cold November day); (10) (for the fifth time) (on Monday). Note that although 10 is grammatically complete, the use of the past tense 'became' creates expectations of at least an adjunct expressing a point in time (see Chapter 7). With a present perfect 'has become' this would not be the case.

### Unit 5

- 1 (1) the use of caves for smuggling; (2) there (Subject place-holder), half a dozen men (notional Subject); (3) the light of a torch; (4) what the critics failed to understand; (5) the list of people who she says helped her; (6) it (anticipatory) to meet him before he died (extraposed Subject); (7) Run like mad; (8) it (anticipatory) to tell the neighbours you are going away on holiday (extraposed Subject); (9) it (anticipatory) that there is no real progress (extraposed Subject); (10) reading in a poor light.
- 2 (1) It surprised us that Pam is seeking a divorce. (2) It was bad manners, really, to leave without saying goodbye. (3) It doesn't interest me who she goes out with. (4) It requires a lot of nerve for such a man to succeed in the world of politics. (5) It is obvious that recognising syntactic categories at first sight is not easy.
- 3 (1) lies, finite; (2) is, finite; (3) called, non-finite; (4) is, finite; (5)

quarried, finite; (6) and (7) decorating, filling, non-finite; (8) laid, finite; (9) surrounded, finite; (10) making, non-finite. Note that *dried up*, *mummified* and *bejewelled* do not realise clause constituents but are participial modifiers in nominal groups.

### Unit 6

- 1a (1) most of my life (NG); (2) the door (NG); (3) that foreign doctors were not allowed to practise in that country (finite *that* clause); (4) very little (AdvG as quantifier); (5) discretion (NG); (6) what they believe to be sunken treasure (nominal relative cl.); (7) Anticipatory *it* as place-holder; that the money will be refunded as extraposed object. (8) that many will survive the long trek over the mountains (finite *that*-clause); (9) what the use of all this is (*wh*-interrogative clause); (10) a ton of gravel (NG).
- 1b All the NGs are prototypical, except (5) discretion, which is non-prototypical. The verb 'lack' does not passivise. However, in other respects, 'discretion' fulfils the criteria for Od. (4) 'very little' might be considered as an ellipted NG, but in this case the ellipted part is not as easily recoverable as it is in 'we ate very little' i.e. (food). The *that*-clauses are less prototypical realisations, as are the *wh*-clauses, but are nevertheless perfectly normal. Anticipatory *it* is not prototypical, but is a requirement in extraposition.
- 2 (1) Recipient; (2) Beneficiary; (3) Beneficiary; (4) Beneficiary; (5) Recipient; (6) Beneficiary; (7) Recipient; (8) Beneficiary.
- 3 (1) put off (phrasal, trans.); stare + prep at; (2) approve + prep of; (3) get back (intrans phrasal); (4) break into (prepositional); (5) turn

up (intrans phrasal); **(6)** get at (prepositional); **(7)** come up to (phrasal prepositional); **(8)** intrans phrasal (ellipted version of prepositional get off (the bus/train)).

**4a** **(a)** Prepositional Object; **(b)** Adjunct; **(c)** Adjunct; **(d)** Prepositional Object. Sentences **(a)** and **(d)** can be passivised, and the verb + preposition have lexical equivalents (*rehearse* and *be wise to*, respectively). Sentences **(b)** and **(c)** don't have these possibilities. In **(b)** *through the streets* can be fronted, but **(c)** *through the trees* can't.

**4b** In *run up large bills*, *run up* is a transitive phrasal verb, with *large bills* its Od. *Run up* can be discontinuous, as in *she ran large bills up*. But *up large bills* is not a constituent, and consequently can't be fronted. Furthermore, only directional/locative adverbs in phrasal verbs can be fronted. *Up* in *Run up bills* is not directional/locative, whereas in *run up the stairs* it is.

**4c** In one meaning *decided* is intransitive and *on the bus* is a locative Adjunct; in another, *on the bus* is a Prepositional Complement, equivalent to *she opted for the bus*.

**4d** He rode out; we swam across; they jumped over; get in, all of you!

## Unit 7

**1** **(1)** not very hard Cs (AdjG); to be able to laugh and to cry Cs (conjoined *to*-inf clauses); **(2)** fit for the task Co (AdjG); **(3)** a multi-million pound industry Cs (NG); **(4)** what Co (pronominal head of NG); **(5)** a series of accidents Cs (NG); what he thinks Cs (finite nominal clause); **(6)** accessible to a wide public Co (AdjG); **(7)** unexpectedly cold (AdjG); **(8)** happy Co (AdjG); **(9)** utterly miserable Cs (AdjG); **(10)** illegal Co (AdjG).

**2a** **(1)** healthy; **(2)** smart; **(3)** one of the most efficient ways of getting about; **(4)** so versatile as transport or for simple pleasure; **(5)** to work; **(6)** fit; **(7)** effective exercise. All are Subject Complements except **(5)** Locative/ Goal and **(6)** Object Complement. The particles of phrasal verbs in **(3)** *about* and in sitting *down*, because predicted by the verb, can be considered circumstantial Complements.

## Unit 8

**1** **(1)** *for five years*, circ.; **(2)** *first, then, after that*, connectives; **(3)** *allegedly*, hearsay evidential; *under the barbed wire*, circ. directional/locative Complement; *to reach the arms depot*, circ. purpose; **(4)** *hopefully*, stance, attitudinal; **(5)** *shaped like a spiral staircase*, supplementive.

**2** **(1)** *the gang's hideout* is Direct Object, *without much difficulty* is Adjunct; **(2)** *the gang's hideout* is Direct Object, *more elaborately equipped with technology than they had expected* is Object Complement.

**3** The sun |never |sets |on the tourist empire. | | But

S		A		P		A
(conj.)	NG	Adv.		VG		PP

travel pictures, business contract-sand sports programmes | S

NG + NG (conj.) + NG

don't tell | the full story: | | getting there |may be |no fun at all.

P	Od	S		P		Cs
VG	NG	-ing cl.		VG		NG
(appositive clause.....)						

| | Aircraft | perform | flawlessly, | | but what |

S	P		A		(conj)
NG	VG		Adv		WH

happens|to passengers, flight crews  
and cabin staff?| | PC

VG PrepG + (ellipted prep. + 2 NGs)

Jet lag.|| A mass phenome-  
non, almost as universal as the  
commoncold.||

Verbless cl.                      verbless cl.

NG            NG            Suppletive

## CHAPTER 3

### Unit 9

- 1 Exclusively intransitive **(a)**: 2, 4 and 8. Those that can function either as intransitives or transitives: **(b)** 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10.
- 2 **(a)** Objects unexpressed by social convention 1, 3, 7, 9, 10. **(b)** With implied reflexive meaning 6 (adapt himself). **(c)** With reciprocal meaning 2 (collided with each other).
- 3 A valency of 4: for example, I, [PAY] Tom, a lot of money, for his mountain bike.

### Unit 10

- 1 **(1)** *reason with*: Cecil can't be reasoned with; **(2)** *dispose of*: Old, broken furniture is not easily disposed of; **(3)** *call on*: The Minister of Defence will be called on . . . ; **(4)** *aim at*: The target that is being aimed at . . . ; **(5)** *keep to*: Your schedule should be kept to . . .
- 2 I wrote a letter to my brother means that 'my brother' is the Recipient of the letter, while *for my brother* means he is the Beneficiary: you have done him a favour in writing the letter.

### Unit 11

- 1 **(2)** I doubt whether we have enough petrol to reach Barcelona. **(3)** Who knows whether/ if there is an

emergency kit in the building? **(4)** I asked where the nearest Metro station was. **(5)** We have all agreed (on it) that you keep/should keep the keys. **(6)** The Under-Secretary can't account for the fact that some of the documents are missing. **(7)** I suggest he look/should look/looks in the safe. **(8)** The spokesman confirmed what we had just heard. **(9)** We must allow for the fact that he has been under great strain lately. **(10)** Will you see to it that these letters are posted today, please?

- 2 **(a)** noun head (proper name) in the *that*-clause favours retaining *that*; **(b)** verbs *say* and *think* followed by pronouns in *that*-clauses favour omission.
- 3 **(1)** indirect interrogative; **(2)** nominal relative; **(3)** embedded exclamative/ indirect interrogative; **(4)** indirect interrogative; **(5)** embedded exclamative **(6)** nominal relative nominal relative.
- 4a *Suggest* does not take *to*-infinitive complements. (It takes non-finite *-ing*-complements when only the same subject is involved, and finite *that*-clause complements when a different subject is involved.)
- 4b *Explain* does not allow an Indirect Object (*me*). But it does allow a prepositional Complement (*to me*). Otherwise just the *that*-clause Object.

### Unit 12

- 1 **(1)** He never *allowed*/Thomas/ to drive the jeep in his absence./ V+NG+*to*- inf cl.  
**(2)** The shopkeeper *asked*/me/what I wanted./ V+NG+*wh*-interrog cl.  
**(3)** His powerful imagination *makes*/him/quite different from the others./ V+NG+AdjG  
**(4)** *Keep*/ your shoulders/straight./ V+NG+AdjG

(5) He *left*/her/sitting on the bridge./ V+NG+ *-ing* cl.

(6) They *like*/their next-door neighbours to come in for a drink occasionally./ V+*to*-inf cl. with overt subject

(7) I would *prefer*/Mike to drive you to the station./ V+*to*-inf with overt subject

2 (1) pragmatic particle introducing a wish (optative mood); (2) 2nd person imperative (= 'allow'); (3) optative. Type c, suggesting a joint action, is not represented, no doubt because Gore did not win the election and so was not in a position to invite the American people to collaborate in joint action with him.

## CHAPTER 4

### Units 13 and 14

- 1 (1) I am not going . . . / Aren't you going . . . ? (2) Nora's Mum didn't buy . . . / Didn't Nora's Mum buy . . . ? (3) He doesn't tell/ Doesn't he tell . . . ? (4) Sheila didn't know . . . / Didn't Sheila know . . . ? (5) Bill didn't take on much/any responsibility. . . / Didn't Bill take on much/any responsibility. . . ?
- 2 Abbreviated clauses have the same polarity as the previous utterance, and are typically said by a partner in the conversation. Question-tags usually have reversed polarity, and are typically said by the speaker making the previous utterance.
- 3 (1) Yes it does, No it doesn't; (2) Yes, I have, No, I haven't; (3) Yes, I will/ shall, No, I won't/shan't; (4) O.K. All right/ Let's; Oh no, let's not sit down.
- 4 (1) isn't it? (2) haven't you?/have you? (3) doesn't she? (4) will you? (5) won't/can't you? (6) didn't he?/ did he? (7) don't they? (8) did he?

### Unit 15

- 1 (1) vocative, (2) *Somebody*: subject-vocative; *dear*: endearment, vocative; *you*: subject, contrastive; (3) *Everybody* (initial), subject-vocative, (final) vocative; (4) vocative; (5) subject; (6) subject-vocative.

### Unit 16

- 1 (1) Yes; (2) Yes; (3) Yes; (4) No; (5) Modalised performatives are less explicit, but yes, it counts; Yes; (6) Yes; (7) No, the speaker is assuring, not promising; (8) Yes; (9) No, it means 'I suppose'; (10) Yes, this really was a wager. The 'll form is conventionally used with 'I bet'.

### Unit 17

- 1 (1) *yes/no* ('polar' is also used) interrog., query; (2) verbless clause; offer; (3) modalised *yes/ no* interrog., polite request; (4) *wh*-interrog., rhetorical question; (5) declarative, leading question (with marker); (6) polar interrog., exclamation; (7) *wh*-interrog., rhetorical question; (8) polar interrog. as preliminary to request; (9) declarative as leading question (with marker); (10) the same, but negative.
- 2 (1) any; (2) some; (3a) anything; (3b) nothing; (4) anyone/ anybody; (5) anywhere; (6) some.

### Unit 18

- 1 (a) Uncooperative: Yes, I would mind (without signing). Cooperative: No, I wouldn't mind/ Not at all (signing); (b) Yes, without explaining, or No, I'm afraid I don't; Yes (explaining); (c) The butler is reacting to

the pragmatic meaning of an order, and says 'yes' in compliance; **(d)** He might say 'Not at all, sir'.

**2a** **(1)** declarative, explicit performative; **(2)** negative imperative; **(3)** declarative, modalised performative; **(4)** nominal group; **(5)** passive declarative; **(6)** modalised polar interrog.; **(7)** passive declarative, performative; **(8)** declarative, explicit performative of thanking (although the thanking is given beforehand!).

**2b** 1–5 are orders (4 and 5 are more specifically prohibitions), 6–8 are requests, 8 is an indirect request.

**3** **(1)** reprimand; **(2)** request; **(3)** request; **(4)** offer; **(5)** permission; **(6)** suggestion.

**4** **(1)** indirect request following reason for request; **(2)** ignoring the reason and refusing the request; **(3)** and **(4)** further reasons for request; **(5)** suggestion; **(6)** challenge; **(7)** provocation; **(8)** suggestion; **(9)** explanation; **(10)** order; **(11)** provocation; **(12)** provocation; **(13)** warning; **(14)** threat; **(15)** threat; **(16)** self-identification / implied warning; **(17)** request; **(18)** apology; **(19)** excuse.

## CHAPTER 5

### Units 19 and 20

**1** **(1)** material; **(2)** mental; **(3)** relational; **(4)** mental; **(5)** material; **(6)** relational.

**2** **(1a)** *Teach* has a semantic valency of 3: it is trivalent. In 1a all the participants are actualised. In **(1b)** they are reduced to 2, and in **(1c)** they are reduced to 1.

**(2)** *Bite* has a semantic valency of 2. In this example only one is actualised, the valency is reduced to 1. **(3)** *Purr* has a valency of 1, as in this example.

**3** **(1)** Subject-filler; **(2)** participant (the sum of ten pounds); **(3)** participant (the baby); **(4)** participant (the bicycle); **(5)** Subject-filler.

**4** Suggested participants might be: **(1)** a strong wind; **(2)** waves; **(3)** tide; **(4)** river; **(5)** landslide.

**5** **(1)** Agentive; **(2)** Affected; **(3)** Agentive; **(4)** Affected; **(5)** Affected.

**6** **(1)** Effected; **(2)** Affected; **(3)** Effected; **(4)** Effected; **(5)** Affected.

### Unit 21

**1** **(1)** Yes; *Most Prime Ministers age prematurely*; **(2)** No; **(3)** Yes; *The sky darkened*; **(4)** No; **(5)** Yes; *His brow wrinkled*; **(6)** Yes; *The camera clicked*; **(7)** Yes; *The load of sand tipped onto the road*; **(8)** Yes; *The company's sales have doubled*.

**2** **(1, 3, 6 and 7)** the facility to undergo the action expressed; **(2)** acted upon; **(4)** acting Agent; **(5)** acting Agent.

**3** **(a)** is transitive-causative: Sarah causes the rice to cook; **(b)** is transitive with an unactualised Affected participant; **(c)** is anti-causative. It forms an ergative alternation with **(a)**; **(d)** *cook* is basically a bivalent process, but in this case its valency is reduced to 1 (the same applies to **(b)**); **(e)** is a pseudo-intransitive involving the facility of rice to undergo cooking; **(f)** Do you often hear of persons being cooked?

**4** All the italicised verbs are used causatively in this extract. (*Wither* = make x shrivel and dry up; *stale* = make x stale; *cloy* = make x sick with sweetness; *satisfy* = make x satisfied).

### Unit 22

**1** **(1)** Recipient; **(2)** Recipient; **(3)** Beneficiary; **(4)** Beneficiary; **(5)** moral Recipient.

**Unit 23**

- 1 (1) cognition, Ph = entity; (2) perception, Ph = entity; (3) cognition, Ph = fact; (4) affectivity, Ph = situation; (5) behavioural, Ph = entity, or rather, an event, (6) perception, Ph = fact; (7) cognition, Ph = fact; (8) perception, Ph=entity.
- 2 (1) The members of the commission were not pleased by/with either of the proposals. (2) We were amazed at/by his presence of mind. (3) The government is alarmed at/by the dramatic increase of crime in the cities. (4) She is worried by the fact that she seems unable to lose weight. (5) Will your wife be annoyed by the fact that you forgot to phone?

**Unit 24**

- 1 (1) instantiation of a type, attributive, Carrier-Attribute; (2) the same as 1; (3) identifying, Identified-Identifier; (4) attributive, Carrier-Attribute; (5) possessive, Possessor-Possessed; (6) circumstantial; Carrier-(intensive)-circumstance; (7) identifying, Identified-Identifier; (8) identifying, Identified-Identifier.
- 2 (1) e.g. exhausted, resulting; (2) e.g. safe, current; (3) e.g. risky, profitable etc., resulting; (4) e.g. still, current; (5) free, current.

**Unit 25**

- 1 (1) a large ship; (2) an explosion; (3) a pub; (4) a pile of blankets; (5) a post office: you can send an email from there; (6) time.

**Unit 26**

- 1 (1) time (distribution); time (location); (2) manner (means); (3) (concession); (4) (cause); (5) goal/

destination in time; (6) (reason); (7) role (capacity); (8) matter.

- 2 (1) Instrument; (2) Means; (3) Range; (4) Instrument; (5) Range.

**Unit 27**

- 1 (1) *We chatted for a long time*; process is realized as entity (*chat*), circumstance (for *a long time*) as part of entity. (2) *X continued to drop bombs (on Y) throughout the night*; process as entity (*bombing*). (3) *An election campaign that would last for 50 days was launched in Canada last weekend*; circumstance of place (locative) as entity (*Canada*), process as entity (*launch*), new process *see*, circumstance (extent in time) as part of entity (*50-day*). (4) *Because he (Franz Josef Strauss) was obviously intelligent and spoke exceptionally well in public, Konrad Adenauer appointed him minister without portfolio in his cabinet in 1951*; Attribute as entity (*his obvious intelligence*), circumstance (reason) as entity (*exceptional oratory*), both of these being causative Agents in the metaphorical version *won him a place*.

**CHAPTER 6****Unit 28**

- 1 (1) *Paul*, unmarked; (2) *Abruptly*, marked, Adjunct; (3) *Is he*, unmarked; (4) *Celebrating her victory today*, marked, non-finite Predicator + operator *is*; (5) *freezing cold*, marked, Subject Complement; (6) *meet*, unmarked; (7) *In the American soft-drink industry*, marked, Adjunct; (8) *For months*, marked, Adjunct; (9) *crazy*, marked, Object Complement; (10) *Never again*, marked, negative Adjunct.



- 2 (1) *all of these* I bought him; (2) *fun* you call it; (3) *most of it* we already knew; (4) *Government spokesman* he is; (5) *get there* I did.

## Unit 29

- 1 (1) *say; know; hear; anything; told; room; care; do; talk; always*; (2) marked focuses are *care, do* and *always*.  
 2 (1) *can*; (2) *have/'ve done so*; or *did/did so*; (3) *haven't/haven't done so*; (4) *would/would like to*; (5) *how/how to*; (6) *didn't/didn't want to*; (7) *did/did so*; (8) *so/it was*.

## Unit 30

- 1 The thematic progression type between 1, 2 and 3 is Type 2, constant theme (*Vincent van Gogh* – (zero) – *he*, with the subject in 2 being implicit. Between 3 and 4 we have Type 1, simple linear (*his mother's keeping* – *his mother*). Between clauses 4, 5 and 6 the progression type is constant theme (*his mother – she – she*). From 6 to 7 we have Type 1, simple linear, (*with a family friend – the friend*) and from 7 to 8 constant theme with zero anaphora after *and*.  
 2 (1) It is on the recycling of plastic that experts are working; The ones who are working on . . . are experts; What experts are working on is . . . ; (2) It's by reading and listening to the radio that I unwind last thing at night; how I unwind last thing at night is . . . ; when I unwind by reading is . . . ; (3) It's against viruses that the computer industry is fighting; it's the computer industry that is fighting . . . ; what the computer industry is fighting against are viruses.  
 3 (1) Sentence 5; *then*. (2) Its discourse function is to signal an upcoming shift in the story.  
 4a Suggested preferences for active and passive: (1) passive, because *the first kindergarten in the United*

*States* announces the main topical referent, whereas *they* refers to people in general; (2) either: active makes for topic continuity with 1, while passive achieves topic continuity with 3; (3) better active; (4) active effectively gets *the unthinkable* in apposition with its explanation, while passive would separate these; (5) either is possible, but when the passive does not fulfil a specific purpose, it is wise to opt for the simpler active form; (6) the passive effectively brings *the choices* in topic continuity with *the dilemma*, leaving *budget* in final position, where (7) active maintains topic continuity with *budget*.

- 1 Active and passive combined: The first kindergarten in the United States was founded 1856 in Watertown, Wisconsin (passive).  
 2 Milwaukee residents have traditionally benefitted from that legacy (active).  
 3 Four-year-old kindergarten has been taken as much for granted as summer breezes off Lake Michigan (by people omitted) (passive).  
 4 Now there is a severe budget crunch. (no passive).  
 5 Milwaukee Public School officials have proposed the unthinkable: eliminating four-year-old kindergarten (active).  
 6 'Are we to raise property taxes or are we to keep four-year-old kindergarten? These are the choices we may have to make,' said a school board member (active).  
 7 The dilemma has been produced by Gov. O'Keefe's new budget (passive).  
 8 The budget reduces the proportion of the state's share of education costs and imposes cost controls on local district spending (active).

This version sounds more professional for a newspaper. It is said that the passive is not favoured in AmE. Perhaps this explains the fact that in the original no passives were used.

## CHAPTER 7

### Units 31 and 32

- 1 The main clause is: 'Pope Francis used his first official trip outside Rome'; the second clause 'to draw attention to the thousands who perish during the perilous crossing from North Africa to Europe' is a *to*-infinitive subordinate clause of purpose; the third clause 'condemning the "globalisation of indifference" shown to the victims' is an *-ing* supplementive clause which provides additional information. The unit at the beginning is not a clause but a PP functioning as Adjunct.
- 2 (1) non-equivalence (subordinate clause of purpose + imperative clause); (2) syntactic equivalence (although different in type, since the first clause is an imperative and the second a declarative, the two clauses have a semantic relationship of relevance and implied cause-effect (3) equivalence (two clauses in a relationship of relevance, the second joined with pragmatic *and*); (4) non-equivalence (contrastive dependency); (5) equivalence (contrastive coordination).  
(2) The new law came into force last year and, consequently, there are now fewer road accidents. (3) We left the casserole too long in the microwave, and as a result the food was uneatable. (4) Don't forget to put a stamp on your letter, or otherwise, it won't be delivered. (5) The milk has turned sour and so we can't drink it.

### Unit 33

- 1 Suggested completions: (1) which she needn't have done/ causing herself much remorse; (2) which was totally to be expected/ resulting in many absences in the following weeks; (3) which has happened several times before/ injuring many people; (4) which makes them

dangerous areas/ causing merchant vessels to avoid them; (5) which is good news/ ending their families' distress.

- 2 (1) 1A + in other words + 9B  
(2) 2A + that is to say + 11B  
(3) 3A + for instance + 12B  
(4) 4A + or rather + 7B  
(5) 5A + in fact + 8B  
(6) 6A + indeed + 10B

### Unit 34

- 1 *The fact is* introduces a *that*-clause which is the main clause, followed by a *to*-infinitive clause of purpose; lastly, a PP Adjunct of reason.
- 2 (1) Open. Was/were \_\_\_\_ might go. Had been \_\_\_\_ might have gone.  
(2) Open. I'd (I would) \_\_\_\_ finished. Would have \_\_\_\_ had finished.  
(3) Hypothetical. Will have \_\_\_\_ unless it rains. Would have had ... unless it had rained.  
(4) Counterfactual. Will be nice ... have time. Would be nice... had time.  
(5) Open. Occurred / What would I do? Had occurred / What would I have done?  
(6) Open. Were \_\_\_\_ Could I open...? Had been \_\_\_\_ Could I have opened?
- 3 (1) Were you to suffer \_\_\_\_ would help \_\_\_\_  
(2) Should you happen to witness \_\_\_\_ would have to ring.  
(3) Had I only known... I would have been...  
(4) Were this lovely building to be destroyed, it would be a tragedy.  
(5) Should you feel like going \_\_\_\_ there's \_\_\_\_  
(6) Were the results of the vote inconclusive, a further ballot would be called for.
- 4 1A + without + 10 B  
2A + except for + 6 B  
3A + 9 B  
4A + but for the fact that 8B  
5A + 7B



**Unit 35**

- 1 (1) pragmatic; (2) pragmatic; (3) semantic; (4) pragmatic; (5) pragmatic; (6) semantic; (7) pragmatic. The pragmatic uses give a reason or justification for the speech act expressed in the main clause.

**Unit 36**

- 1 (1) *Bill said* he was sorry/*Bill apologised* for interrupting us while we were reading. (2) *Jean asked* her daughter's boyfriend what exactly his job was. (3) *X demanded* whether I realised that the paparazzi would be chasing me/us. *I agreed* with a smile that indeed it would be scary. (4) *The chef asked* Mark if he wanted a burger. (5) *He told Mark* to sit there and not move. *He said* that burger was going to be fantastic.
- 2 (1) *Jenny asked* the headmaster if he would have a drink (2) *Shirley suggested* to her father that he (should) wear an overcoat. (3) *The gatekeeper suggested* that the detective should look for a different parking-place. (4) *Tim's Mum told* him not to be silly, and pointed out that he was lucky to have the opportunity. Goes, is/was like, said.
- 4 1 direct interrogative; 4+ past form; 2–4, 6 pronominal shifts; 5–7 tense shifts; 8 temporal deictic shift.

**CHAPTER 8****Unit 37**

- 1 (1) primary verb; (2) primary verb; (3) part of lexical aux. *be about + to-inf*; (4) lexical aux. *have got + to-inf*; (5) same as 4; (6) lexical verb *get*; (7) lexical verb *get*; (8) lexical verb *get* (causative).

- 2 (1) one-element VGs: *whizzed, startled, fell, shouted, turned, said, are, asked, scrambled, pick, changed*; (2) two-element VGs: *was crossing, was clutching, can't . . . be, was pedalling, was lost, had fallen, was rolling*; (3) three-element VG: *could have injured*; (7) *are* in (9) functions as a main verb.
- 3 (1) The main markets are likely to be France, Germany and Spain. (2) Diana and Charles were virtually certain to divorce. (3) You are sure to be among the first three. (4) He is supposed to be her boy-friend. (5) You are not likely to get a question like that.

**Unit 38**

- 1 (1) as aux in progressive; (2) as lexical verb; (3) as aux in passive; (4) lexical aux (*is sure to*) and lexical verb (*be*).
- 2 (1) oxv, present, modal, progressive; (2) oxv, past, lexical-modal; (3) oxv, present, perfect, passive; (4) oxxv, modal, perfect, passive; (5) ov, past, passive; oxv, past, progressive; (6) oxv, past, progressive, passive; (7) ov, past, progressive; oxv, past, perfect, progressive; (8) ov, present, progressive; (9) oxv, present, perfect, lexical-modal; (10) oxv, present, modal, progressive. Those containing discontinuous structures are 3, 8, 9 and 10.
- 3 (1) was being taken; (2) had been being instructed; (3) must have been using; (4) can't have been using; (5) must have moved; was being taken; (6) are likely to be sold.

**Units 37 and 38**

- 1 (1) There are only three occurrences of states: the stative verbs (*is, sees, sees*); all the rest are dynamic, showing

actions; **(2)** Finiteness is realised on the lexical verb (i.e. Finite is fused with Event) in *flash, sees, is, take, panics, heads, hold, comes, goes, misses*; Finite is realised by an operator in *is passing, (is) having, can't get, (will) spill, 'm braking, honking, flashing*; **(3)** Yes: *coming, getting, to make* (sure); **(4)** Present; **(5)** five progressive choices, the rest non-progressive; **(6)** One instance of *can't* meaning inability or impossibility, one instance of *will* with a predictive meaning (→ Chapter 9); **(7)** One instance of negative polarity, the rest positive; **(8)** One instance of emphasis (*COMES*); **(9)** Briefly, the non-progressive forms are used to express a series of actions presented as complete and, in this text, sudden and for this reason alarming. The sense of imminent danger is heightened by the use of emphasis (*COMES*) and by modalising the declarative in two cases (*can't* and *it'll*); the sequence of progressives (*I'm braking, honking, flashing*) also contributes to the sense of urgency.

## Unit 39

- 1 Clues for the discussion: The italicised verbs in the **(a)** sentences are lexical verbs; in the **(b)** sentences they are catenatives. The subjects of 1b and 2b are 'raised' from being subjects in *that*-clauses to subjects in the sentence: 'It happened that we were away' to 'We happened to be away'; 'It appears that he has misunderstood your explanation' to 'He appears to have misunderstood your explanation.'
- 2 **(2)** happened to be/chanced to be; **(3)** neglected to/failed to; **(4)** trying; managed to do so; **(5)** seems to be; **(6)** hastened to; **(7)** tend to be/tend to be being; **(8)** tried to; proved to be.

## Unit 40

- 1 **(1)** Figure: The ship; Path: *out of* . . . past. Verb: Motion + Manner; **(2)** Figure: She; Path: *off*. Verb: Motion + Manner + cause; **(3)** Figure: several trees; Path: *down*; Verb: motion + Manner + Cause; **(4)** Figure: he; Path: *down*; Verb: motion + Manner; **(5)** Figure: we; Path: *back*; Verb: motion + Manner. The preposition *to* + a nominal group, as in **(1)** can be analysed as marking Goal, i.e. as end of Path. *Home* is also Goal, without a preposition.
- 2 **(1)** bring activity to end by reaching a certain limit (a form of completion); **(2)** continuation of an activity; **(3)** slow completion of an activity; **(4)** continuation of an activity; **(5)** momentary character of an activity.
- 3 **(1)** location at end of Path; **(2)** walking down to Goal; **(3)** completely cover the cracks with plaster; **(4)** movement of rising then falling outside a container; **(5)** acquired.
- 4 **(1)** Particles with Path meanings: (took)\_\_\_\_out on; (went) up into; (went) back into; brought out; take\_\_\_\_ off; rowed away from (both off and away indicate distancing from a point). **(2)** Particles with aspectual meanings: (*gathered*) up (bringing to a certain limit – intensifying function; (*worn*) out (bringing to a certain limit) – intensifying function; (*caught*) . . . up.

## CHAPTER 9

### Unit 41

- 1 **(1)** event, habitual; **(2)** state; **(3)** comes . . . and asks, both events, historic present; **(4)** events, quotative; **(5)** instantaneous events (a

demonstration); **(6)** events, referring to past (in press headline); **(7)** states; **(8)** 'prove' reporting an event that is still valid, 'leads' habitual.

- 2** **(1)** Set off, Left, Past in both; the Perfect is marginally possible (*have left*), in which case the car is still by the bridge; **(2)** I've got it (twice), Perfect in both; **(3)** composed, Past, since the referent of 'he' is no longer alive; **(4)** did, Past, for the same reason as in 3; **(5)** woke up (Past), haven't had (Perfect), note 'yet'. Can still have it. **(6)** Past (did you say), Past (was) with back-shift, or Present (is), since one's name is presumably still the same; **(7)** Have you come, Perfect, the addressee still being present; **(8)** did, Past, a specific point in time implied; **(9)** did, Past, a specific event is visualised; **(10)** has been, have been both Perfect 'you are still in the wrong group'.

## Unit 42

- (1)** In **(b)** recency prevails, Past not necessarily so in **(a)**. **(2)** Implied that the past situation in **(a)** no longer holds whereas in **(b)** it holds. **(3)** **(a)** asks which point you stopped in the past; **(b)** asks about the point at which you are now. **(4)** **(a)** asks about a destination in the past whereas **(b)** infers that you have (recently) been somewhere and have now returned. **(5)** In **(a)** the action is over, in **(b)** it is recent and its effects still felt or visible. **(6)** is similar to 5. **(7)** In **(b)** smart mobile phones are hot news; whereas no such implication exists in **(a)**. **(8)** In **(b)** the action of giving is recent, in **(a)** there is no such implication.
- 2** **(1)** had been, had seen; **(2)** had fallen, had slept; **(3)** hadn't spent; **(4)** had forgotten, had invited, had gone out.

- 3** **(1)** Past, was stolen; **(2)** Present Perfect, has been returned; **(3)** Past Perfect, had played; **(4)** Past, described; **(5)** Past, was discovered; **(6)** Past, said; **(7)** Past Perfect, had gone.

## Unit 43

- 1** The Past form 'squeaked' is indeterminate between an imperfective (repeated) and a perfective (single) occurrence. As 'squeak' is a punctual verb whose subject is 'shoes', it makes more sense to interpret it as repeated (iterative).
- 2** **(1)** bounded **(2)** unbounded **(3)** unbounded **(4)** bounded or punctual, depending on how you visualise the pouncing **(5)** unbounded **(6)** unbounded **(7)** bounded, comprising the stepping and the landing phases **(8)** bounded **(9)** unbounded **(10)** bounded.
- 3** **(1)** *was driving*, focuses on the internal phase of the process before the end-point *home*; **(2)** *was crossing*, extended internal phase of the process. Provides a frame for *when she saw us*; **(3)** *were jumping*, iterative; **(4)** *have been trying*, continuous; **(5)** *is seeing*, dynamic use of stative verb, *see* (= 'visit', future reference); **(6)** *was crackling*, ongoing event of temporary duration as seen by an observer; **(7)** *am shivering and coughing*, iterative, speaker observing the process at speech time; **(8)** *was pulling up*, focuses on the internal phase of the process before the end-point expressed by 'up'.

## Unit 44

- 1** **(a)** deontic, obligation self-imposed; deontic, obligation external; **(b)** deontic, obligation, planned event in future; epistemic possibility; dynamic possibility.

- 2 (1) will/'ll/shall; (2) can't/won't be able to; (3) must, BrE, has to, AmE; (4) will; (5) can't; (6) should; (7) was able to; (8), might, could; (9) must; (10) needn't/don't have to.
- 3 (1) ambiguous: with volitional meaning, wouldn't wait; with predictive meaning, won't have waited; (2) must have been mistaken; (3) can't have been listening . . . was saying; (4) should have taken; (5) could hear; (6) were able to capture; (7) may have been; (8) had to have . . . vaccinated; (9) would have telephoned, had been able; (10) oughtn't to/shouldn't have been talking, was playing.
- 4 Dynamic possibility; ability; dynamic propensity.

## CHAPTER 10

### Unit 45

- 1 (1) [*The head is underlined*] Everyone in the library; (2a) old men reading newspapers; (2b) high-school boys and girls doing research; (3a) the outcome of the current crisis; (3b) the pattern of international relations; (4a) Someone here; (4b) a story, etc. (to end of sentence), the most notorious of the dictators . . . to end; this country; (at) the turn of the century (5a) the seat on my left; (5b) a fat lady who, etc. (to end of sentence); an orange; (5c) my right; a thin-faced man etc. (to end of sentence); a moustache; a blotchy skin; (5d) the one who . . . etc. (to end); a friendly smile; a cheery 'Good evening'; (6a) The violent attacks . . . missiles; the police; the counter-demonstrators, bottles, bricks and other assorted missiles; (6b) a large number of casualties.

- 2 (1) pre-head head post-head  
fit, fun, funky, parent  
single  
(2) gorgeous, man interested  
good- in a loving  
humoured, and lasting  
intelligent, relationship  
London-based

- (3) a loving and lasting relationship

### Unit 46

- 1a (1) mass; (2) count [= gymnasium]; (3) mass [= gymnastics]; (4) and (5) mass; (6) mass; (7) count; (8) ambiguous: appearance<sup>1</sup> = performance, count; appearance<sup>2</sup> = looks, mass; (9) mass; (10) mass.
- 1b *Fashion* and *football* can be used as count nouns (*new fashions*; *a new white football*); *shopping* and *home-work* can't be used as count nouns.
- 2 As alternatives the following are possible:  
(1) Zero article + plural noun: liquids  
(2) zero article + singular: gas; indefinite article: a gas  
(3) zero article plural noun: human beings  
(4) zero article + plural noun: wars; indefinite article + sing. noun: a war  
(5) indefinite article + singular noun: an animal  
(6) indefinite or definite article + singular noun: a/the television  
(7) zero article + plural noun: bicycles; indefinite article + singular noun: a bicycle  
(8) zero article + plural noun: computers
- 3 (1) generic; (2) indefinite; (3) indefinite; (4) generic.
- 4 Either: an indefinite but specific American; or: any man who is American (indefinite- non-specific).

### Unit 47

- 1 (1) I should like *another doctor's* opinion. (2) Have you read the

chairman of the *examination committee's report*? (3) The Regional Training Scheme's failure was inevitable. (4) My next door neighbour's dog barks all night. (5) No change, in order to avoid *in my class's grandmother*. (6) Preferably no change, for similar reasons to 5.

- 2 (1) Every member . . . ; (2) . . . hundreds of butterflies; (3) . . . some very good news; (4) SOME people . . . ; (5) Most of the people in this office have a car. . . ; (6) None of this work . . . ; (7) . . . such an opportunity; (8) Half my friends.
- 3 (1) every; (2) each/ both . . . neither; or, all . . . none; (3) each; (4) every . . . each; (5) both; (6) any/ none; (7) every; (8) any (= it doesn't matter which) or, no (= only the soluble kind will do).
- 4 (1) everything; (2) all; (3) all; (4) everything; (5) everything.

## Unit 48

- 1 (1) classifier descriptor  
(2) descriptor classifier  
(3) descriptor classifier  
(4) classifier descriptor  
(5) descriptor classifier  
(6) descriptor classifier  
(7) classifier descriptor
- 2 (1) Place the shortest first and place the one which you prefer to emphasise last; separate them by commas.  
(2) Most speakers would say: *We heard a mysterious, faint tinkling sound*; that is: subjective + short objective + participial epithets.  
(3) Place shortest first, longest last; also in order of ascending 'dynamism': *her long, slender, artistic hands*.  
(4) Shortest first, then sub-modified *-ing* epithet, then classifier (a) *She had a pair of smart, exotic-looking designer sunglasses*.  
(5) The most natural order is: size + colour + material: *The lavatory was*

*a smallish, brown, wooden box*. Place *wooden* last as classifier.

(6) The most likely order is: two subjective + two objective epithets. Classifier *granite* nearest the noun: *We drove through the dark threatening, wooded, granite mountains*. No comma after *dark* (threatening because dark).

## Unit 49

- 1 (1) integrated/defining; (2) integrated; (3) supplementive/ non-defining; (4) a country which I didn't know, supplementive; (5) supplementive; (6) integrated; (7) supplementive; (8) integrated; (9) supplementive; (10) supplementive.
- 2 (1) *Jessica*: appositive integrated; (2) *a failure by any standard*; and (3) *the curse of twentieth-century democracy* appositive, both supplementive NGs.
- 3 (1) clas. h; (2) des des h; (3) ddhm; (4) de clas. hmm; (5) ddes des clas. clas. h; (6) hmm.
- 4a (1) service for the repair of television aerials; (2) Appointments of Research Fellows at the University of Manchester; (3) reduction of the prices of telephone calls made during the daytime; (4) alarm about the proposals for the reform of education for adults; (5) awards of gold medals made to the teams of athletes at universities.
- 4b (1) land-based multiple-warhead missiles; (2) intermediate-range nuclear-type weapons; (3) an all-European home-robots exhibition; (4) a classic midnight-blue lady's velvet evening suit; (5) a two-year-old Maltese honey-coloured stone farmhouse.

## Unit 50

- 1 First NG *The . . . ritual*; second NG *the coming of spring*; third NG *an expression*



of unity and fun. (1) complement, (2) complement, (3) complement. All take prepositional complements, as the nouns *celebration*, *coming* and *expression* are derived from verbs.

- 2 A possible analysis contains both. The noun criticism is related to the verb criticise, and controls the preposition 'of'. This preposition 'of' can be followed by a wh-clause: 'criticism of how the Government reacted to the attack'.

## CHAPTER 11

### Unit 51

- 1 (2) You have been *very enterprising* in setting up this firm. (3) The newspapers have published/ given *detailed reports* of the case. Newspaper reports *of the case were very detailed*. (4) Conflicts often arise between *neighbouring countries*. (5) We live in *an ancient walled town*. (6) There are often better opportunities for *skilled workers than for unskilled* (ones).
- 2 (1a) *Wonderful conversationalist* and (1b) *very good listener* are both process-orientated. (2a) *the powerful* and (2b) *the humble* are adjective-headed generic nominal groups.
- 3 The transitive ones are participial adjectives; they can be graded by *more*, *most* and intensified by *very*. They can also function as Complements of the Subject and of the Object. The intransitive ones do not fulfil these criteria. *Ticking*, *fading* and *growing* are participial modifiers of the head noun. (Notice that, in 'the clock is ticking', *is ticking*, *are fading*, etc. are verbs.)
- 4 (1) *man, jacket; girl, woman; parents; shoes, boots*; (2) *fish; teenager; doorkeeper*; (3) *actor, footballer; raincoat; manner*.
- 5 navy/sky/royal blue; grass/olive green; shocking pink; brick-red; ice-cold; boiling hot; pitch black; bitter-sweet; snow-white.
- 6 The compound adjectives are: (2) *time-consuming*; (3) *home-made*; (4) *breath-taking*; (5) *airborne*; (6) *fast-growing*; (7) *award-winning*; (8) *labour-saving*.

### Unit 52

- 1a Inflected for grading: *risky, blue, friendly, small, tight*. (*Bitterest* is normal but *more bitter* is probably preferred to *bitterer*). The remaining adjectives take analytic forms.
- 1b Gradable are: *shallow (er/more), small, probable* and *fast*. The rest are not gradable.
- 2 (1) *Yes, very / quite interesting*; (2) *Fairly hot/ pretty hot*; (3) *Well, not too large a group*; (4) *reasonably good*; (5) *a bit, yes*; (6) *Not at all*.
- 3 Suggested correspondences: (1) *essentially*; (2) *radically*; (3) *ideally placed* and (4) *pleasantly surrounded*; (5) *ferociously*; (6) *genuinely old, imaginatively new*.
- 4 (1) *medically necessary, socially dangerous*. (2) *theoretically very good/ very good theoretically*; (3) Countries which are *technologically advanced* . . . those which are *scientifically under-developed*.

### Unit 53

- 1 Introduce your PPs with the following prepositions: (2) (*delighted*) **at**; (3) (*satisfied*) **with**; (4) (*opposed*) **to**; (5) (*white*) **with**; (6) (*expert*) **at**; (7) (*tired*) **of**; (8) (*keen*) **on**.
- 2 (1) morally wrong to clone a human being; (2) so far; (3) totally unclear; (4) the immediate and most compelling reason; (5) an extremely unsafe activity; (6) very strong traditions

protecting the human subjects of research; (7) for the foreseeable future; (8) clearly unethical experimentation.

### Unit 54

- 1a** (1) *eminently* well suited; (2) *certainly* brilliant and moving, though *admittedly* it might; an *undeniably* educational experience; (4) *Reportedly*, the President; (5) a poem *allegedly* written by Hitler; (6) it was *obviously/ clearly*; (7) He *actually* became a star . . . which *clearly* allowed him to; (8) Their popularity is *undoubtedly* rising.
- 1b** (1) *ideologically* unyielding; (2) *socially* well-connected; (3) *stylistically* too long and complicated; (4) *racially* mixed; (5) *morally* responsible; (6) *historically* accurate.
- 1c** (1) *hardly* convince; (2) *even* in the rain; (3) we *simply* do not know; (4) *solely/ exclusively* on formal grammar; (5) and I said so *too/ also*; (6) and will *similarly* help us.
- 1d** (1) sleeping *soundly*; (2) *surreptitiously* carrying diamonds; (3) Wilson worked *endlessly*; (4) speaking *slowly, carefully* choosing; (5) he drank *heavily*; (6) *momentarily* stopped.

### Unit 55

- 2** (a) Affirmative answers: (1) Yes, it's *already* time. (2) Yes, I've *already* had it. Yes, I've had it *already*. (3) Yes, I *still* love you. Yes, I *still* do. Yes, I love you *still*. (4) Yes, I'm *still* studying it. Yes, I *still* am. (5) Yes, it's *already* ten. Yes, it's ten *already*. (6) Yes, I've *already* been there. Yes, I've been there *already*. Yes, I *already* have. (b) Negative answers: (1) No, it *isn't* time to go yet. It *isn't* yet time to go. (2) No, I haven't had it yet. I haven't yet had lunch. (3) No, I don't love you any *more/ any* longer. I no *longer* love you. (4) No, I'm *not* studying it *any more/ any* longer. No,

I'm no *longer* studying it. (5) No, it's *not* ten o'clock yet. No, it's *not* yet ten o'clock. (6) No, I haven't been there yet. No, I haven't yet been there.

- 3** Possible positions are indicated by #. The adverb is given in the unmarked, preferred position. (1) #We *sometimes* take long holidays# in mountainous areas#. (2) #Journalists #working in war zones are *often* in danger. (3) #She gets on well with people *abroad*. (4) #They gave a concert *yesterday*. (5) #The cat gazed *longingly* at the brightly coloured fish in the aquarium#. (6) *Perhaps* you'd better take an overcoat with you#. (7) #We shall *probably* leave tomorrow#. (8) Hopefully, they have arrived at their destination. They have arrived *hopefully* at their destination. Comments: Remember that the different positions an adverb may occupy determine the scope of its reference. When the adverb is in initial position, the whole clause is in its scope, and may express either stance or judgement. Within the clause, it focuses mainly on the predicator and so is placed closely before, after or within the Predicator: *sometimes take, are often, gaze longingly, shall probably leave*. Other elements are sometimes focused, for example by restrictive adverbs: *He alone, only for them*. In end-position, the adverb is either in focus, or else is almost parenthetical, as in: *We shall leave tomorrow, probably*.

### Unit 56

- 1** (1) quite; (2) fairly/ pretty; (3) *marvellously*; (4) sort of; (5) *shortly*; (6) *alarmingly*; (7) all that.
- 2** (1) else in the world; (2) *again*; (3) *else*; (4) *enough*; (5) *away / from here*; (6) *nearly* as ... as her rival.

## CHAPTER 12

### Unit 57

- 1 (1) e.g. rushing water; thunder; (2) good; (3) there; (4) e.g. Sunday; (5) e.g. where you live; (6) e.g. what to do / which competitor wins on points; (7) e.g. walking home at night alone.
- 2 (1) *a sudden*: The determiner *a* gives the impression that we have here a NG.  
However, the whole phrase is an invariable idiom, which functions as Adjunct NG; (2) *fashion*: noun; (3) *school*: noun; (4) *everyone*: pronoun; (5) *us*: pronoun; (6) *not having to take a decision*: -ing cl; (7) *the Conservatives*: NG; (8) *the Labour Party*: NG; (9) *comparing programmes and thinking*: -ing cl; (10) *who to vote for*: PP; (11) *the way etc*: NG; (12) *getting votes*: -ing cl; (13) *them*: pronoun; (14) *at least some of the younger generation*: NG; (15) *them*: pronoun; (16) *the whole*: NG; (17) *people*: NG; (18) *their late teens and twenties*: NG; (19) *the twenty-year-olds*: NG; (20) *when they were young*: fin. cl; (21) *what they were like*: PP with *wh*-complement; (22) *that 'green' area*: NG; (23) *moving towards* (24) *a position etc*: -ing cl. (25) *to the centre*: NG.

Comments: (a) distribution of these complement forms is as follows: NG (12), noun (2), pronoun (4), -ing cl (4), *wh*-cl (2); (b) AdjG, AdvG, PP (0). (9) consists of two coordinated non-finite -ing clauses, the second containing a PP whose complement is another PP *who to vote for*, with stranded preposition. (13) is a NG containing a finite relative clause post-modifier, *people say*. (14) itself contains a PP, *about . . .*, whose complement is a NG containing another PP, *of . . .* whose

complement is a NG (14). (17) is a NG, *people today*, whose post-modifier contains a finite relative clause, itself containing a PP, *in . . .* with a NG as complement (18). Nos. (20) and (21) are coordinated finite clauses, functioning together as a complex complement of the preposition *to*. *Of* in (13), (14) and (15) is a grammaticised preposition functioning as part of a quantitative modifier (→ 47.4). AdjGs and AdvGs are not represented; they are in fact very restricted in this function.

### Unit 58

- 1 (1) Cs (with stranded preposition) in clause; (2) A in clause; (3) c of *obsessed*; (4) c of AdjG *kind*; (5) PC in clause; (6) A in clause; (7) A in clause; (8) A in clause; (9) A in clause (of previous speaker); (10) comp of noun; (11). Graded pre- and post-modifier (*more cases of . . . than . . .*) form one discontinuous unit; (12) A in clause; (13–15) *just as . . . as* graded pre- and post-modifier; (14) A in clause; (15) A in clause; (16) in NG headed by *myths* post-modifier.
- 2 (1) adverb; (2) prep; (3) adverb; (4) adverb; (5) adverb; (6) prep; (7) prep; (8) adverb; (9) prep; (10) adverb; (11) neither adverb nor preposition, but an adjective; (12) adverb; (13) prep; (14) adverb; (15) prep; (16) prep.

### Unit 59

- 1 (1) static, extending from one side to the other, space below; contact only at each end; (2) path leading to position; on the other side; contact with surface; (3) non- locational; more than a mentioned quantity; (4) position; higher than; without contact; (5) movement up one side and



- down the other; with contact; **(6)** extent; covering a horizontal surface; with contact; **(7)** movement downwards from an upright position; caused by an obstacle; making contact with the obstacle; **(8)** indeterminate position of a blow on an object. Comment: some different semantic features can be expressed by the preposition *over* in other contexts; e.g. *to fall over a cliff*; *to be over an operation*; *to be over the worst*; *all over the world*; *conversation over lunch*; *over the telephone*; *to take a long time over something*; *to have difficulties over something*.
- 2** **(1)** across; **(2)** under; **(3)** through; **(4)** along; **(5)** over; **(6)** across from; in; out (AmE), out of (BrE)
- 3** *At*: related to points in space (*sea*), time (*once, times*), and engagement in an activity (*work, war*). *On*: related to a state or activity. *Out of*: related to a lack of, or absence of something, derived from the basic meaning of exit from a container; *out of sight*, not within the field of vision. *In*: related to a state, or field of vision (*in full view*) abstracted from the container metaphor. *Under*: in a disadvantaged state, abstracted from the basic meaning of 'in a lower position' relative to something else.
- 4** **(1)** *for* is the preposition most often used for the simple expression of the extent of a period; **(2)** *over*, metaphorical use, spanning the period as a whole; **(3)** *during* refers to points or

short periods at different times during the whole period; **(4)** *through*, metaphorical use, treating the years of problems as having volume, like a forest or a tunnel; **(5)** *throughout* intensifies the notion of 'the entire period' and 'constant activity'; **(6)** *in* means 'at the end of the next two years'; **(7)** *within* means during the next two years or a period not longer than two years.

- 5** **(1)** *Through* Passage; **(2)** *down* Path; *to* Goal; **(3)** *Source*; **(4)** *Path*; **(5)** *Goal* container; **(6)** *Location* higher than something below; **(7)** *Motion* of looking from higher *Location* in space to lower *Location*; **(8)** *Location* container; **(9)** *container*; **(10)**; **(11)** *Location*; *Motion* of looking from higher *Location* in space to lower *Location*; **(12)** *container* *Goal*; **(13)** *part-whole*; **(14)** *part-whole*; **(15)** *Recipient*; **(16)** *Motion* *Goal*.

## 6

Verbs	Adjectives		Nouns	
Ask for	Plot against	Bored with	Aware of	Answer for
Agree to	Hope for	Tired of	Surprised at	Damage to
Aim at/to	Pay for	Delighted at, with	Prone to	Desire for
Appeal to	Act as, on	Anxious about, to	Related to	Search for
Decide on	Reduce to	Sorry for, about	Fraught with	Anger at

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