

ENGL 157: COMMUNICATION SKILLS (I)

Lecture 3_A: Parts of Speech – Usage (continuity)

-Word classes: Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives & Adverbs

Aims of the lecture

The aims of the lecture are as follows:

- To discuss some of the word formation processes
- To introduce students to the various parts of speech in the English language.
- To demonstrate with examples the use of the parts of speech.
- To enable students to develop writing and speaking skills.

Word Classes

Types of word classes include the following:

- Nouns
- Verbs
- Adjectives
- Adverbs
- Prepositions
- Pronouns
- Conjunctions
- Determiners
- Interjections

Word Classes: NOUNS

- **Nouns** are words used to refer to people, things, animals, and places. They can be simply and traditionally defined as a naming word. It is derived from the Latin word for a name, which is *nomen*.
- They make up one of the most central categories of all word classes (including verbs); and they can be described based on their *forms*, *functions* and *positions*.
- The simplest way to test whether a word is a noun is to isolate it and then see if it is possible to place *the* (the indefinite article) in front of it.
e.g. much to my amazement a large fat cat was sleeping in our garden.
- Nouns in English are either countable (count) or uncountable (uncount).
 - Countable/count nouns** stand for things which can be physically counted, e.g. one banana, ten goats, five students, etc. (They can form their plural easily).
 - Uncountable/Uncount nouns** cannot be counted as their name implies. You cannot count, for example, sand, gari, rice, milk, unless you are talking about heaps of sand or varieties of rice or brands of milk. (They are always singular). Ungrammatical: *These milks are sour; *These rices are sweet
 - Count nouns** can take indefinite article 'a' but **uncount nouns** cannot take the indefinite article. e.g. a glass of...; *a milk of....

Word Classes: Nouns

- **Forms of nouns:** Forms simply refers to the morphological make-up in terms of how nouns are built up and the changes they can undergo.

- *Some common suffixes:*
 - er e.g. taker, writer, teacher, worker, baker, painter
 - ion e.g. administration, propagation, animation
 - or e.g. actor, mentor, sailor
 - ness e.g. calmness, rudeness, waywardness
 - hood e.g. parenthood, brotherhood, childhood

Word Classes: Nouns

- **Properties of nouns:** Nouns have various forms or properties, which are referred to as *the constituents of a noun*. They are **gender, person, number** and **case**.
- **Number:** Number is a morphological category that expresses contrasts involving countable entities. The common number contrast consists of the distinction between singular and plural. Examples:
 - s e.g. penss, bookss, lecturess, studentss
 - 'y' → '-ies' e.g. lady – ladiess, baby – babiess, country – countriess
 - 'o, ss, sh, ch, or x' → '-es' e.g. watch – watchess, box – boxess, mango – mangoess
 - 'f' or 'fe' → '-ves' e.g. half, self, calf, lead, loaf, thief, wife, life, calf, wolf, shelf, and sheaf. (half – halves, scarf – scarves, etc.)
 - Nouns that form their plurals by changing their vowels: e.g. man – men, foot – feet, ox – oxen, goose- geese, tooth – teeth, etc.
- **Gender:** It refers to the sex of a noun whether it is masculine, feminine or neuter.
 - Masculine* e.g. boys, men, and male (pronouns are he/they); *Feminine* e.g. girls, women and female (pronouns are she/they); *neuter* e.g. inanimate things, animals whose sex we do not know and sometimes babies whose sex we do not know (pronouns are it/they)

Word Classes: Nouns

- **Person:** In grammar, there are three persons – the first, second and third.
 - First person:* This refers to the speaker, or thing performing the action. e.g. **I** opened the classroom door; **The dog** wagged its tail when it recognised its master.
 - Second person:* This refers to the person or things spoken to, that is the addressee. e.g. **You** are a good student.
 - Third person:* This refers to the person or thing spoken about. e.g. He is a good cook; She knows how to play football.
- **Case:** The case of a noun (or pronoun) shows how that noun (or pronoun) relates to the rest of the sentences. It has three categories: the **Nominative**, the **Objective** and **Possessive**
 - The Nominative Case:* It is the form of a noun or pronoun that shows that the noun or pronoun is the subject of a verb. The pronouns involved are: I, he, she, we, they, and who. e.g. **She** sings very well.
 - The Objective Case:* It refers to the person or thing that is involved in or affected by the action of the verb. The pronouns in the objective case are: him, her, them, one, us, whom and it. e.g. direct object of an action: I saw **them**.
 - The Possessive Case:* It refers to the form of a noun/pronoun used to indicate possession. The pronouns involved are who, whoever, whomever, etc. e.g. Peter's, her's, etc.

Word Classes: Nouns

- **Nouns** are words used to refer to people, things, animals, and places. They can be described based on their *forms*, *functions* and *positions*.
- **Functions:** A noun can function as:
 - the subject of a verb: e.g. **Joy** came to the lecture.
 - the complement of the verbs ‘be’, ‘become’, ‘seem’: e.g. Rejinder is **a professor**.
 - the object of a verb: e.g. I saw **Kwame**.
 - the object of a preposition: e.g. The Head of Department spoke to **the students**.

Word Classes: Types of Nouns

- **Nouns** are classified according to types and there are four types, which are common nouns, proper nouns, collective nouns, and abstract nouns.
- **Common nouns:** They name *any* class of persons, places, animals, things, ideas or qualities. They are so called because they are names shared in common by everything of the same class, group or kind. The word *girl*, for example, can refer to any girl. Other examples include man, table, baby, building,, etc.
- **Proper nouns:** These are special or specific names for particular people, places, things, animals, and cannot be used for anything else. They are distinguished by an initial capital wherever they occur. They also do not take the definite article *the* in a construction unless they are accompanied by *subordinate* or *dependent clauses* (He is not **the** Mr. Mensah **I know**). e.g. people, places, countries, months, days, holidays, magazines, lakes, mountains, etc.

NB: What distinguishes a proper noun from a common noun is that in a sentence, a proper noun can stand alone in its singular form without an article but a common noun cannot.

- John has fallen
- The boy has fallen

Word Classes: Types of Nouns

- **Collective nouns:** They apply to a group as a whole though they are singular in form. They can either take a singular or plural verb; and they take singular verbs when the classes they name are regarded as units. However, they require plural verbs when the members of the classes are considered individually.
 - The staff is united on the issue. —
 - The staff are arguing among themselves.
- **Abstract nouns:** They name ideas or qualities , concepts or beliefs. They refer to those that exist in thought or those ideas that have no physical or practical existence. e.g. freedom, justice, love, honour, courage, democracy, jealousy, meekness, etc.
 - Concrete nouns means those nouns that can be touched or felt.

Word Classes: VERBS

- **Verbs**, like nouns, are of central importance as a class of words. They could be considered as the most important aspect of language because of their central role in constructing sentences and the influence they exert over other elements in a sentence.
- Verb is derived from the Latin word *verbum* which means ‘word’ and this is an appropriate indication of the importance of this word class. They are sometimes notionally defined as ‘doing words’ but this is not a very accurate way to approach identifying them. This is because verbs do not always refer to actions: they can also refer to state.

e.g. Jane *strolls* into the park where she relaxes and feels content.

- Verbs which refer to physical processes/events, such as *stroll* and *relax* are referred to as **dynamic verbs** in contrast to **stative verbs** which refer to states and conditions.
- A grammatical way to check if a word is a verb or not is to look for a property that only verbs possess, which is the ability to make a contrast between *present tense* and *past tense*.
E.g. walk(s) – walked; relax(es) – relaxed; feel(s) – felt

Word Classes: Verbs

- In general, a verb is a word that expresses a *state*, an *action*, or a *process*.
 - State**: (expresses the states or the conditions of people or things). e.g. It *seems* beautiful; It *appears* odd; You *look* handsome; the soup *tastes* sweet.
 - Action**: (expresses actions), e.g. *speak, sit, jump, clean, cook, feed, type*, etc.
 - Processes**: (expresses series of changes, which can happen naturally or unconsciously). e.g. children *grow*; water *evaporates*
- Verbs are generally classified into two groups: a small set called **auxiliary verbs** and a large group called **main verbs**.
 - Main verbs**: They are also called lexical verbs. e.g. *write, jump, commence, watch*, etc.
 - Auxiliary verbs**: They are also known as helping verbs, and they are indispensable in compound and complex verb phrase. e.g. *primary auxiliaries – do, have & be; modal auxiliaries – can/could, shall/should, need, will/would, dare, ought to & used to.*

Word Classes: Verbs

- **Classification of main verbs:**

❑ **Intensive verbs:** They refer to verbs that denote a characterisation or an attribute of the subject or object; and they are sometimes referred to as a **linking verb** or **copula**. The verb “be” is the most frequently used intensive verb. e.g. The athlete *looked* tired; The boy *became* a teacher; The pineapple *tastes* sweet, etc.

❑ **Extensive verbs:**

-***Mono-transitive verbs***: They refer to verbs that permit one object. e.g. He *cooked* lunch; The bird *built* a nest; The boy *plucked* some coconuts yesterday, etc.

-***Ditransitive verbs***: They refer to verbs that permit two objects. e.g. He *sent* his daughter a photograph; She *wrote* her mother an interesting letter., etc.

-***Complex transitive verbs***: They refer to verbs that permit an object followed by a complement. The complement may be a noun, but it may also be an adjective. e.g. She *painted* the house white; The school *chose* Abena prefect, etc.

-***Intransitive verbs***: They refer to verbs that do not permit objects or complements. (They can be followed by adjuncts or adverbials.) e.g. John *snores* (noisily); She *paused* (in the middle of the lecture); He *surrendered* (here yesterday), etc.

NB: Regular vs. Irregular verbs

Word Classes: ADJECTIVES

- **Adjectives** are one of the open word classes and they generally say something about a noun. They therefore denotes one quality of the noun they modify.
- That is, adjectives are words that describe or modify a person or a thing.

e.g. a *good* girl

 a *naughty* girl

 an *innocent* girl

 an *unfriendly* girl

 a *guilty* person

 an *exaggerated* answer

 a *month's* pay

 the *richest* man

 a *busy* street

 a *faithful* husband

Word Classes: Adjectives

- **Adjectives** come in many different forms. Most of these forms enable us to identify a word as an adjective. Examples:

- able	- adaptable, reliable, readable	- less	- lawless, helpless
- ible	- irreducible, irresponsible, irresistible	- ish	- childish, greenish
- al	- natural, educational, functional	- ar	- circular (shape), popular (request)
- ant	- resistant, resultant	- ly	- earthly, brotherly, lovely
- ial	- official, prejudicial	- ed	- talented, level-headed
- ent	- abhorrent, consistent	- en	- woollen, written, fallen (heroes)
- ual	- sensual, residual		
- an	- republican (status), African (tradition)		
- y	- guilty, faulty		
- ful	- hopeful, careful, dreadful		
- ic	- academic, cubic, romantic		
- ive	- active, attractive, impressive		
- eous	- courageous, erroneous		
- ious	- furious, injurious		
- ous	- marvellous, desirous		

Word Classes: Adjectives

- Some common, usually, one-syllabic words are adjectives. e.g. big, fat, great, wide, tall, small
- Some adjectives also share the same form with adverbs and so are difficult to tell in isolation. e.g. an early (bird), a fast (runner), a hard (worker).
- One major characteristic of adjectives is that they may be modified by intensifiers like “very”, “quite”, “rather”, “somewhat”, “extremely”

very gentle

somewhat reliable

quite innocent

rather friendly

- Some other intensifiers can include “considerably”, “understandably”, “decisively”, etc

Word Classes: Adjectives

- **Functions of adjectives:** Adjectives, as a rule, perform functions such as the following: *attributive*, *predicative* and *nominal*.
 - **The Attributive Function:** This function is when an adjective pre-modifies or comes before a noun or noun phrase. They usually occur between the determiner and the head of the noun phrase which they modify. e.g. a friendly girl; a busy street, the main door, a faithful husband, etc.
 - **The Predicative Function:** An adjective is used predicatively when it complements the verb or comes after the main verb in a sentence. *A subject complement:* The tea is hot, The car is expensive, Your wife is beautiful, etc. *As object complement:* They made us happy, We made her rich.
 - **The Nominal Function:** This is when an adjective acts as the head of the noun phrase and so can function as the subject or object of the sentence. e.g. The poor are always exploited, The rich are not always happy, The wicked are always punished at the end.

Word Classes: Adjectives

- **Comparison:** Adjectives denote one quality of the noun they modify, and they can often be used to compare one quality to another. Most adjectives can take comparative and superlative forms in comparison. Examples:

- Comparison expressed by the inflected endings, -er and -est, added to the adjective.

tall taller tallest; rich richer richest; hard harder hardest

- By introducing the adverbial particles “more” and “most” before the adjective.

attractive more attractive most attractive;

intelligent more intelligent most intelligent

- Those that neither use the inflections –er and –est, nor the adverbial particles “more” and “most”

Good/well better best; Bad/ill worse worst

- Equal comparisons using the structural forms: as... as

Kofi is **as** clever **as** Kwabena, She is **as** courageous **as** her mother.

- For negative equal comparisons using the forms: not as ... as

Kojo isn't **as** troublesome **as** his brother;

The journey wasn't **as** rough **as** we had thought.

Word Classes: ADVERBS

- **Adverbs** are words which give more information about the time, place or manner of an action or an idea. Traditionally, they express a range of ideas including degree, quantity, purpose, result and means.
- Adverbs like adjectives are modifiers. Generally, they modify or add to the meaning of verbs, adjectives or other adverbs.
- They often tell *when*, *where*, *why* or *under what conditions* something happens or happened.

Word Classes: Adverbs

• Forms:

- a. Most adverbs are derived from adjectives by the addition of the suffix “-ly” to the adjective: great – greatly; quick – quickly; hopeful – hopefully; happy – happily; slow – slowly; neat – neatly; leisure – leisurely (NB: This is the commonest adverbial form.)
- b. By adding the prefix “a-” to certain words: Nouns: head – ahead; breast – abreast; part – apart.
- c. By adding the suffix “wards”, e.g. backwards, forwards, towards
- d. A few adverbs share the same form with adjectives: fast, hard, early, high, right, direct, weekly, straight, low, quarterly, etc.

Adjective	Adverb
High prices	Prices climbed high
The fast runner is in.	He runs fast
He is an early riser.	He gets up early .
This is the right place.	The wind blew right in our faces.
This is hard work.	They work hard .

Word Classes: Adverbs

- **Kinds of adverbs:**

- Manner:** They express how an action was performed. e.g. cowardly, fast, hard, quickly, actively, gladly, bravely, etc.
- Time:** They express **when** an action is or was done. e.g. afterwards, already, immediately, before, once, shortly, soon, today, yet, etc.
- Frequency:** They answer the question **how often?** They are adverbs of time when even though they differ in the position they occupy in the sentence. e.g. seldom, never, always, occasionally, often, twice, continually, frequently, rarely, scarcely, hardly, etc.
- Place:** These express **where** an action is or was done. e.g. here, there, near, by, up, down, above, across, below, downstairs, upstairs, etc.

Word Classes: Adverbs

- **Kinds of adverbs:**

- **Degree:** They express **to what extent** or **to what degree**. e.g. fairly, quite, awfully, absolutely, exactly, easily, perfectly, thoroughly, etc.

- **Interrogative:** They ask questions using **when, where, why** and **how**.

- **Relative:** They are **when, where** and **why** which are sometimes used to introduce a clause. If this is done they then take the place of a relative pronoun plus a preposition.

e.g. I remember the day when (=on which) you told me you were going to Accra.

This is the room where (=in which) the children slept.

This is the reason why (=for which) they attended the fashion show.

- **Quantity:** They are the same as adverbs of amount or number. e.g. little, much, once.

Word Classes: Adverbs

- **Adverbial function:** Adverbs perform two major functions in English, namely modification and complementation of a preposition.

-Modification:

- **Verbs:** They arrive late; We flew direct to London
- **Adjectives:** Kofi is a very diligent student; extremely beautiful
- **Other adverbs:** Mary is working rather **later** these days; rather quickly, too much
- **Nouns:** Adverbs occasionally modify nouns. Most often, the modifying adverbs comes immediately after the noun, that is, it post-modifies the noun. e.g. The meeting today will be noisy; The journey home was exciting; The room upstairs is ready for occupation; The statement below has not been approved.
They can also pre-modify nouns: e.g. The above statement is authorises; The upstairs balcony is exposed.
- **Phrases:** I am almost through with my work; They live nearly on top of that hill.
- **Sentences:** Indeed, I won't do it again; Unfortunately, I couldn't recognised them.

Word Classes: Adverbs

-As Complement of a Preposition:

An adverb as a prepositional complement tends to be placed at the end of a clause. Examples with the preposition in bold letters and adverb complements in italics/underlined.

- Everybody was **at** home.
- We called them **from** upstairs.
- Do you know anybody **near** here?
- The suggestion come **from** above.
- They have just returned **from** abroad.
- There will be no more meetings **after** tomorrow.
- They haven't responded **since** yesterday.

Word Classes: Adverbs

- **Comparison:** Like adjectives, some adverbs are gradable but others are not.

Ungradable adverbs include: above, ago, away, below, already, upstairs, tomorrow, then, there, here, still, yet, etc. (NB: They cannot take comparative and superlative forms.)

Gradable adverbs include: quickly, hard, pleasantly, etc. Like adjectives, adverbial comparison is expressed by the following:

-the reflected endings **—er** and **—est** added to the adverb.

soon	sooner	soonest
early	earlier	earliest
high	higher	highest

-introducing the adverbial particles “**more**” and “**most**” before the adverb.

pleasantly	more pleasantly	most pleasantly
beautifully	more beautifully	most beautifully
surprisingly	more surprisingly	most surprisingly

References

- Adolinama, P. P. (2005). *Communication Skills for University Students*. Accra: ANEST Company Ltd.
- Afreh, E.S. (2006). *Grammar and usage for tertiary students*. Kumasi: C & C.
- Sekyi-Baidoo, Y. (2003). *Learning and communicating* (2nd Ed.). Accra: Infinity Graphics Ltd.