

Introduction to Syntax

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BS English (Four-year Program)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
(Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities)

ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

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FOREWORD

The BS English study guides aim to include all possible queries that students may have and gently stimulate their intellect to probe into further questions. The courses intend at professional development of the students in various disciplines of linguistics and literature using versatile methods adopted by course writers while writing the units. The topics and ideas presented in each unit are clear and relevant. Owing to the same reason, the text is comprehensive and accessible to students having no prior knowledge of linguistics and literature.

The BS English study guides are a powerful tool even for BS English tutors teaching in various regions, focusing upon a uniform scheme of studies for all the courses. Also, these courses will help tutors by providing adequate teaching material for independent teaching. All study guides strictly follow the standardized nine-unit sub-division of the course content for optimum understanding. The short introduction at the beginning provides an overview of the units followed by achievable learning objectives. The study guides also define difficult terms in the text and guide the students for accessible learning. The units are finally summed up in summary points and the assessment questions not only guide students but help to revise the content developed upon previously formed concepts. Moreover, they provide links and a list of the suggested readings for further inquiry.

In the end, I am happy to extend my gratitude to the course team chairman, course development coordinator, unit-writers, reviewers, and editors for the development of the course. Any suggestions for the improvement in the programme/courses will be fondly welcomed by the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics.

Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum
Vice Chancellor

INTRODUCITON TO THE COURSE

'Introduction to Syntax' (Course Code 9066) is one of the core modules specifically designed for the four-year BS English degree program at Allama Iqbal open University Islamabad. The subject is considered more important because it is one of the core topics in basic and theoretical linguistics and is instrumental in giving appropriate training to the students and building their confidence in exploring it further. Learning the syntactic patterns of English and Pakistani regional languages can further enhance their critical and creative skills to take up major assignments in the field of syntax and grammar.

This course is, therefore, designed to introduce 'syntax' as a subject and support the learning and teaching of English sentences (and other syntactic constituents) through effective activities given throughout the course.

The following is the distribution of the units in the present module:

- Unit-1: Introduces 'syntax' and important concepts related to grammar comparing various types of grammars and briefly highlighting the need for studying syntax as a subject and for exploring syntactic variations across languages.
- Unit-2: Provides a detailed introduction to the concept of 'traditional' grammar and various terms and terminology used in syntax.
- Unit-3: Introduces in detail lexical categories and their features.
- Unit-4: Explains phrasal categories and further discusses Phrase Structure Rules (PSR) in detail with examples from English.
- Unit-5: Presents the concept of TAM (Tense-Aspect-Mood) as features of Verb Phrase (VP) and provides examples for learning about them in English.
- Unit-6: Introduces and further explores 'clauses' as syntactic unit with appropriate examples.
- Unit-7: Defines 'grammatical functions' and 'semantic rules' as important features of grammar and describes their various forms, functions, and positions for further analysis.
- Unit-8: Deals mainly with 'transformations' as fundamental topic studied in syntax and highlights transformational rules and various possible constructions because of transformational procedures.
- Unit-9: Highlights further development in generative grammar highlighting a number of grammatical theories and models (such as 'relational grammar', 'lexical-functional grammar' and 'Government-binding theory').

This is a book mainly written for the students of BS English at Allama Iqbal Open University. The book, however, also caters for the needs of any university in Pakistan offering English linguistics at undergraduate level. It is also relevant for a course offered as part of BS four-year English program (offered at college level) and MA linguistics and PGD ELT degree programs.

The step-by-step approach used in the book is designed to introduce the aspects of a new and technical topic to the students with no or little background of the subject area. Accordingly, it is hoped that the students would find some interest in the topic towards the end of the course and explore it further for their major research in future.

Happy reading!

Dr. Muhammad Kamal Khan
Associate Professor
Course Coordinator

Islamabad
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The remaining shortcomings in the coursebook are my own and any suggestions for the improvement of the course would be wholeheartedly welcomed and the same will be incorporated in its subsequent revisions.

Dr. Muhammad Kamal Khan
Associate Professor
Course Coordinator

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WHAT IS SYNTAX?

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Reviewed by: Dr. Nadeem Haider Bukhari

Introduction to the Unit

The present unit, being the very first unit of the module on ‘SYNTAX’, introduces the subject field as one of the core areas of linguistics at undergraduate level. While introducing the subject, the focus remains mainly on presenting some of the fundamental concepts of ‘syntax’ preparing the students for taking up more detailed and advanced level courses in the areas of grammar and modern grammatical theory in future. The unit starts with introducing ‘syntax’ and goes on to compare syntax with grammar as two separate approaches to study the structure of a language. The section briefly highlights the types of grammar, and distinguish among descriptive, prescriptive, and mental grammars and further include the concepts of universal grammar also known as UG while focusing on syntactic variation across languages. Towards the end, the unit takes a brief account of ‘why do languages have syntax?’ as well.

The following topics are mainly included in the present unit:

- Difference between grammar and syntax
- Types of grammars
 - Descriptive grammar
 - Prescriptive grammar
 - Mental grammar
- Mental grammar and universal grammar (UG)
- Why do we study syntax?
- Syntactic variations across languages

While presenting these importance topics on the subject, the following major learning objectives were the focus of the unit.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this unit, the students will be able to:

- Explain the overall sketch of ‘syntax’ as a core area of linguistics.
- Distinguish among various concepts used in ‘syntax’ such as:
 - Syntax and grammar
 - Descriptive grammar and prescriptive grammar
 - Universal grammar and mental grammar
 - Principles and parameters
 - Linguistic competence and linguistic performance
- Define certain terms and concepts used in ‘syntax’ such as:
 - Universal grammar and related terms
 - Syntax, grammar and related concepts
- Classify various terms and concepts used in syntactic analysis.
- Explain syntactic variation across languages.

1.1 Introduction to Syntax

Syntax is a Greek term taken from ‘syntaxis’ which is a combination of SYN (together) and TAXIS (arrangement). As a combination, these two words mean ‘arrangement’ or ‘setting out together’. In linguistics, syntax means the subject devoted to the study of word arrangement at sentence level (the study of sentence structure). Syntax means ‘coordination’ or ‘ordering together’. Syntax refers to the set of rules that determines the arrangement of words in a sentence. It implies the set of rules and principles that define the ways in which words and phrases are organized in order to make grammatically correct sentences.

Consider the following examples for understanding ‘arrangement and agreement’ as elements of syntax:

Word order or arrangement:

Word order in a sentence is important. Analyze word order of the following examples:

- a. I work in this office.
- b. *work this office I in.
- c. *in work this I office.

We understand that the word order in ‘a’ is acceptable whereas the arrangement in ‘b’ and ‘c’ are not.

Word agreement:

We need ‘agreement’ among various constituents of a sentence (i.e., subject and predicate (verb phrase), determiner and noun, adverb and adjective, . . .) for making it meaningful. Explore the following examples where other than sentence ‘a’ are not agreeing on certain aspects and are, therefore, not acceptable.

- a. He works in this office.
- b. *He work this office.
- c. *He work this offices.

Agreement among various constituents in a sentence is another important requirement. For examples, how many complements and which prepositions and forms (cases) are to be used in a sentence?

Note the following examples to evaluate the forms and cases used in these sentences:

- a. He gives Akbar a pen.
- b. *He give Akbar a pens.
- c. He sees her.
- d. *He sees she.

Note that 'syntax' is not mainly concerned with meaning. It is the study of structure and arrangement of constituents at sentence level. There may be some sentences which have no sense but are grammatically correct. See the following popular example given by Chomsky:

- a. Colorless green ideas sleep furiously. (It is nonsense, but grammatically correct sentence).
- b. *Sleep ideas colorless furiously green. (*grammatically incorrect).

The above examples show that syntax is the study of the structural frame (features and elements) of the sentence. In many ways creating the structural frame of a sentence is like building the frame of a house making the constituents of a sentence similar to building blocks in a house structure. The elements of syntax include constituents such as words, phrases, and clauses. Remember that 'constituent' means a word or group of words which functions as a single unit.

Here are further examples of the elements of syntax:

Parts of a sentence: Subject, predicate, object, direct object or indirect object

Phrases: A word or a group of words without a subject or predicate

Clauses: A group of words with a subject and verb

Sentence structure: The construction of simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex sentences

Syntactic rules and patterns determine the ways we use arrange the parts of a sentence. For example, a sentence must include a subject and a predicate. With the help of basic syntactic rules, syntax makes it possible for writers and speakers to form sentences in their languages.

With many shared aspects and overlapping interests, many people mix syntax with grammar and treat them as one subject. However, there is a technical difference between the two which is highlighted in the following section.

1.2. Difference between Grammar and Syntax

Sometimes we feel like grammar and syntax share many things and, therefore, they are one and the same thing. However, syntax and grammar are different as there are various thin lines separating and distinguishing them.

Although with a lot of overlapping, syntax and grammar are two different disciplines. Both study the construction of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in any language. The subject matter for both is to deal with the rules, principles related to the syntactic structures of a language with the difference of variations from several perspectives.

Let us define syntax and grammar one by one.

Syntax

Syntax is basically the study of the arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses in a language to create well-formed and well-structured sentences.

Syntax is also defined as a specific field of linguistics exploring the structure of a language at sentence level. It studies the set of rules, principles, and processes governing the structure of sentences in a language. The study of the syntactic structure is so important and any variation in it can change the meaning of a sentence. Syntax, therefore, is considered as an important field in linguistics. The word arrangement (or word order) in a phrase or sentence is very important in realizing the formation and meaning of that sentence.

Features of Syntax

Syntax mainly studies the structure of sentences drawing a clear internal division and showing the connection between different parts in a sentence. Primarily, a sentence is divided into two broad parts namely the subject and the predicate. The elements of syntax include parts of a sentence (subject, predicate, object, direct/indirect objects etc.), phrases (a word or a group of words without a subject or predicate), and clauses (a group of words with a subject and verb), and sentence structure (the construction of simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex sentences etc.). You will study these aspects of syntax in detail in further units of this module.

Grammar

Grammar can be defined as the study of the whole system and structure that govern a language including its morphology and syntax. At times, it also includes the fields of phonology and semantics. Overall, syntax refers to a set structure of rules and principles that governs the processes words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are formed and constructed in a language.

Thus, grammar is broader than syntax as it studies word classes and phrasal categories, their functions, features, inflections, and relations in a particular sentence. Other aspects of grammar also include:

- morphology – the internal formation of words, and the inflection of words
- orthography – referring to spellings
- syntax – referring to the structure of sentences
- phonology – how sounds are arranged in a sound system of a language
- semantics – the meaning of words, phrases and sentences
- pragmatics – how meaning are used and created in certain contexts.

Features of Grammar

There are various perspectives of grammar. It can be either descriptive or prescriptive. Descriptive grammar describes how speakers and writers of a language use the structure of their language. Prescriptive grammar, on the other hand, prescribes how the users/speakers of a language should use the structure of their language. Note the shift of focus from 'use' to 'should use' in prescriptive grammar. Sometimes, prescriptive grammar is referred to as traditional grammar whereas descriptive grammar is called modern grammar. You will study more about these two types of grammar in Section 1.3.

The elements of grammar include morphology (the ways morphemes connect to make words), phonology, (the sounds of words), semantics (the meanings of words and relationships between words), and syntax (the structure of words in a sentence). Grammar dictates the ways how speakers should use words especially parts of speech, e.g., subjects and their verbs must agree with each other in a sentence.

Similarities and differences between syntax and grammar

Both syntax and grammar deal with the principles, rules related to structures of language. As subjects, both of them are to determine what the sentence seeks to convey. While syntax studies the rules and structures related at the sentence level, grammar is the set of rules and principles at all levels.

Syntax is descriptive in its nature as it observes and explains the rules whereas grammar is prescriptive in its nature as it strictly prescribes on how the rules should be used and provides guidance for language use. Moreover, syntax is the rule governing the arrangement of word order at sentence level whereas grammar is the set of rules of a language at all levels.

Syntax is a specific discipline of linguistics and is used with a specific perspective whereas grammar is a more general kind of term and is mostly applied in a general sense in everyday usage.

Table 1.1 further explains the similarities and differences between the two topics.

Table 1.1: Grammar Vs. Syntax: Comparison Table

Features	Syntax	Grammar
Definition	Syntax is a set of principles and rules describing how sentences, clauses, phrases, and words are structured in a language.	Grammar is a set of principles and rules, broader than syntax, and prescribing how a language is used correctly and according to certain standards set under morphological, syntactic, phonological, and semantic rules.
Nature of study	Syntax is a part of grammar mainly describing possible structures along with morphology in most cases.	Grammar is a description of possible patterns in a language at all levels including incidence, orthography, syntax, morphology and phonology.
Subject of study	Syntax is the study mainly about the order of words in, phrases, clauses, and sentences.	Grammar is the study of structures and rules that govern the formation of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences.
Usages	Syntax is a specific field of linguistics and is applied by specialists as per their needs.	Grammar is a general term used in everyday language and related to everyday language consumption.

Here is the summary of the discussion:

Syntax is specific field. It is mainly concerned with the word arrangement and word order at sentence level.

Grammar is broader than syntax in its approach. It is concerned with everything related to the structure of a language - how a language works (including syntax and morphology).

Syntax is mainly studied by experts such as linguists and researchers.

Grammar is studied and used by linguists, grammarians and common people (who may not be familiar with actual linguistics).

Syntax is the study of the internal structure of phrases and sentences, and the hierarchies, grammatical functions and relations between various constituents.

Grammar is a set of rules and principles that governs the correct standard of usage of a language. Grammar rules dictate how speakers should language correctly.

1.3 Types of Grammar

In the above section, we briefly discussed about prescriptive and descriptive grammars. Here in this section, we are going to define these two grammars with examples. In addition, we are also going to briefly introduce the concept of mental grammar as used in syntax. Remember that these are the types of approaches used in grammar – meaning that how grammars are understood, studies and taken in specific situations.

1.3.1 Descriptive Grammar

Descriptive grammar is the modern approach towards grammar. In simple sense, it is the kind of grammar which focuses on how 'is' a grammar used by its native speakers rather than how it 'should be' used by its speaker. This difference between IS and SHOULD BE is important here.

For example, a descriptive approach towards grammar would record that how the native English speakers actually talk, write and use their grammar. While saying this, it might not have any concrete idea of the ways the grammar should be used or structured. In other words, it is not saying about how it should be used. However, it focuses on describing the English grammar as it is used by its speakers. In addition, it is not saying that there is a right or wrong way to use the language.

Consider the following examples from English:

Adjective order: This is a beautiful, small, green, American island.

Pronoun him/he variation: I am younger than he (instead of) I am younger than him.

Preposition deletion: He graduated American university (instead of) He graduated from American university.

Contraction: I ain't going nowhere (instead of) I am not going anywhere.

These examples show that how is this variety of English used by its native speakers. Remember that the use by 'native speakers' is the standard for descriptive grammar.

Descriptive grammar is supposed to be the modern approach towards grammar teaching and learning and is recommended by linguists and linguistic researchers.

Using descriptive grammar improves non-native speakers' pronunciation and helps them speak like native speakers.

Descriptive approach helps non-native learners understand the applied usage of grammar and communicate better with native speakers.

Descriptive grammar might not be sometimes used in formal settings, such as in academic gathering and in exams and speech.

1.3.2 Prescriptive Grammar

The prescriptive approach of grammar tells people how to use a certain language - what forms they should use and utilize, and what functions they should serve. Prescriptive grammar is the traditional approach towards grammar which helps people use the formal grammar of a language in speech and writing. This kind of grammar always focus on the standardized variety of grammar. In addition, the people who follow it claim that by using prescriptive grammar will help them

streamline their language and will make their prose more elegant. Schools, colleges and universities aim to teach prescriptive grammar to provide people a common standard of usage.

For example, in English, 'less' should go with mass nouns such as 'less money' and, 'fewer' should go with count nouns such as 'fewer items'.

In English, speakers should not split infinitives. For example, instead of 'to boldly go' use, write or say 'to go boldly'.

In English, speakers should not use passive voice such as 'The meeting was held by the university' instead, they should write or say 'The university held the meeting'.

Similarly, in English, speakers should avoid phrasal verbs such as 'come over to have some tea' instead, they should write or say 'visit me to have some tea'.

Prescriptive grammar is encouraged in schools and colleges as it is supposed to create formal writers and academic resources.

Prescriptive grammar is supposed to be beneficial for both non-native students and teachers as it has definite rules of language that help reduce confusion related to grammatical issues.

Prescriptive grammar may create some issues for non-native speakers and might confuse them while interacting with native speakers as they might realize that some natives do not use the rules they studied.

1.3.3 Mental Grammar

Mental grammar is an approach initiated by generative grammarians. According to this approach, generative grammar is stored in the brain that allows a speaker to produce language that other speakers can understand. In order to understand the concept of mental grammar, we need to understand two concepts: linguistic competence and linguistic performance.

Linguistic competence:

Grammar rules are stored in the mind of the native speakers of a language. This storage of rules is called competence grammar or/and linguistic competence. This storage of rules (knowledge of grammar) allows a speaker to produce language that is understood by other speakers of that language.

Linguistic performance:

Linguistic performance contrasts with linguistic competence. It is the correctness of actual language use according to a language's prescribed rules. For example, the knowledge of grammar in the mind of a speaker is her linguistic competence which serves as the basis for generating new sentences and new structures. On certain occasions, a speaker would select certain items and structures and would actually use them. That actual use will be the linguistic performance of the speaker.

The concept of mental grammar a modern idea initiated and popularized by American linguist Noam Chomsky in his groundbreaking work *Syntactic Structures* in 1957. This focus on grammar as mental entity served as an initial idea for enormous progress in the field of generative grammar. This concept has led to the innovative work of Chomsky called the Universal Grammar (UG). You will study more about UG in the next section.

Mental grammar or competence grammar is basically the incredible sense of correctness on the part of the speakers of a language and their ability to hear and decide whether something 'sounds odd' in a language.

Speakers of a given language variety are said to have an implicit mental grammar of that variety consisting of the set of grammar rules and lexicon. It is this mental grammar that determines in large part the perception and production of speech utterances. Since the mental grammar plays a role in actual language use, grammarians and linguists conclude that it is represented in the brain of humans and that is why it is called 'mental grammar'.

1.4 Mental Grammar and Universal Grammar

We have discussed in the above section that, according to generative grammar, the grammar rules are stored in the mind of a speaker. We have also studied above that the concept of mental grammar initiated by Noam Chomsky in the last century has led to the discussion on Universal Grammar (UG). Here in this section, we are going to define the concept very briefly for you to understand the concept of UG. Remember that we have simplified the notions related to UG here in this section as you will study them in a bit detail in Unit-2 and further in your advanced courses on syntax.

UG, sometimes as called as mental grammar, is based on the theory of Chomsky establishing that the linguistic ability is innate to human beings. According to this concept, humans by birth have this great ability to learn grammar and this ability is hardwired in the brain (that is why it is also called mental grammar).

According to UG, the large proportion of the properties of human languages are universal as these are shared by all human languages. For example, all languages distinguish among various lexical categories (nouns, verbs etc.) and use them accordingly. Similarly, languages distinguish between function words and lexical words and use them in their grammars.

UG suggests that due to the language faculty, human children have the immense capability to acquire language. So, children acquire their mother tongues easily wherever they are born as the ability to acquire language is programmed in their mind by default (innate). The only condition is the exposure to their mother language under normal conditions for language acquisition under UG.

UG is mainly divided into two parts: principles and parameters

Principles are the properties which are universal to all human languages. So, major properties of human languages are common to all.

Parameters are the properties which are specific to individual languages (and that is why we have different languages in the world).

Here are examples to clarify the concepts of principles and parameters:

Principles: All languages have functional and lexical words, and they distinguish among various word categories (nouns, verbs, and adjectives etc.).

Parameters: Languages have different word orders in their syntax.

For example, the word order in English is (S+V+O):

Subject+Verb+Object (Aslam rides bicycle)

In Urdu, this order is (S+O+V):

Subject+Object+Verb (Aslam cycle chalata hey),

Apart from syntax, UG is also treated as an important aspect of human cognition and is further studied as part of the broad field of cognitive science, which studies the human mind. Cognitive linguistics focuses specifically on the mental grammar: the system that all speakers of a language have in their minds, which allows them to understand each other. The mental grammar (and therefore UG) of every language includes phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

1.5 Why do We Study Syntax?

Syntax is an important aspect of human languages. Syntax helps speakers form clear sentences that are grammatically correct and sound right. In syntax, as a level of linguistic studies, we study words, phrases, and clauses and their arrangement and functions to form and communicate a complete sentence with appropriate meaning.

In syntax, we describe and study rules for combining words into phrases and phrases into sentences. These rules are important for generating logical communication. Note the following examples of different levels of language studies:

Phonetics and phonology: study the sound system (individual units of sound) in language.

Morphology: studies words and other meaningful units (morphemes) of language.

Syntax: studies words, phrases, clauses and sentences, and the rules of grammar that they follow.

Semantics: studies meaning (of words and sentences).

Pragmatics: is the study of meaning in context (use of words and sentences).

So, syntax studies words, phrases and clauses and their order and arrangement - that how people arrange words into their right order to communicate meaningfully. All human languages have their

underlying rules of syntax and morphology. We, therefore, have different grammars for different languages. The arrangement of words in a sentence changes altogether the meaning being conveyed. Consider the difference between ‘the dog is chasing the cat’ versus ‘the cat is chasing the dog’. Both of the sentences do not mean the same thing.

In syntax, we study rules and principles for constructing full sentences out of words and phrases. Since every language has a different set of syntactic rules, all languages have different forms of syntax. We, therefore, need to explain and formulate the syntactic rules of individual languages in detail.

Syntax is mainly the study of syntactic rules and descriptions, but it may also include descriptive words such as adjectives and adverbs that add descriptions to nouns and verbs. Prepositions, like “to” and “above,” communicate the direction or placement of an object or subject. We not only study rules in syntax but also create graphs and tree diagrams for clarifying the syntax of different languages.

You will study the syntax of English in this module, especially from Unit-3 to Unit-9. The tree diagrams and other ways of descriptions will further clarify how important it is to study syntax as a full fledged discipline.

1.6 Syntactic Variations across Languages

Languages have different grammars and, therefore, we have different syntaxes. This variation in grammar and syntax is a characteristic of human languages. These variations allow us to study how languages differ in pronunciation and accent (phonology), word choices (lexicon and vocabulary), internal word structure (morphology), word arrangement and formulation (syntax). All these levels are sometimes called ‘grammar’.

We have different structures at word, phrase, clause, and sentence levels. So, we have different syntax and there is a lot of syntactic variation in different languages. Consider the following noun phrase as an example:

Noun phrase: ‘**The king of England**’ in English (has the head-word ‘king’ at the beginning).

Noun phrase: ‘**Englistan ka badshah**’ in Urdu (has the head-word ‘badshah’ at the end).

This example makes clear that the syntactic variation is a natural phenomenon in human languages.

As a matter of fact, languages and their grammar rules and structures are varied. These differences and variances are the focus of syntactic studies across languages.

Here is one example how the word order is different in English and Urdu languages.

English

Subject+Verb+Object

(S+V+O)

Aslam rides bicycle.

Urdu

Subject+Object+Verb

(S+O+V)

Aslam cycle chalata hey.

Studying syntax across languages is a field wherein experts explore different languages and language families for certain syntactic structures. The field is particularly called 'typological linguistics' where different languages are studied theoretically and descriptively and deeper insight about human languages are gathered.

Summary Points

- Syntax means ‘coordination’ or ‘ordering together’. Syntax refers to the set of rules that determines the arrangement of words in a sentence.
- Syntax refers to the set of rules that determines the arrangement of words in a sentence. It implies the set of rules and principles that define the ways in which words and phrases are organized in order to make grammatically correct sentences.
- Syntax is also defined as a specific field of linguistics exploring the structure of a language at sentence level. It studies the set of rules, principles, and processes governing the structure of sentences in a language.
- Grammar can be defined as the study of the whole system and structure that govern a language including its morphology and syntax. At times, it also includes the fields of phonology and semantics.
- Grammar is broader than syntax as it studies word classes and phrasal categories, their functions, features, inflections, and relations in a particular sentence.
- Syntax is descriptive in its nature as it observes and explains the rules whereas grammar is prescriptive in its nature as it strictly prescribes on how the rules should be used and provides guidance for language use.
- Descriptive grammar is the modern approach towards grammar. It is the kind of grammar which focuses on how ‘is’ a grammar used by its native speakers rather than how it ‘should be’ used by its speaker.
- Prescriptive grammar is the traditional approach towards grammar which helps people use the formal grammar of a language in speech and writing. This kind of grammar always focus on the standardized variety of grammar.
- Mental grammar or competence grammar is basically the incredible sense of correctness on the part of the speakers of a language and their ability to hear and decide whether something 'sounds odd' in a language.
- UG is based on the theory of Chomsky establishing that the linguistic ability is innate to human beings. According to this concept, humans by birth have this great ability to learn grammar and this ability is hardwired in the brain.
- Syntax is an important aspect of human languages. Syntax helps speakers form clear sentences that are grammatically correct and sound right. In syntax, as a level of linguistic studies, we study words, phrases, and clauses and their arrangement and functions to form and communicate a complete sentence with appropriate meaning.

- Languages have different grammars and, therefore, we have different syntaxes. This variation in grammar and syntax is a characteristic of human languages. These variations allow us to study how languages differ in pronunciation and accent (phonology), word choices (lexicon and vocabulary), internal word structure (morphology), word arrangement and formulation (syntax).
- Grammar is a set of rules that set forth the correct standard of usage in a language. These rules dictate how we should say things correctly. For example, agreement between words in relation to other constructions in the sentence.
- We have different structures at word, phrase, clause, and sentence levels. So, we have different syntax and there is a lot of syntactic variation in different languages. Consider the following noun phrase as an example:
- Syntax is the study of sentences and their structure, and the constructions within sentences. Syntax tells us what goes where in a sentence.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is syntax and how it is different from the study of grammar?
2. Define the following terms with examples from English and Urdu:
 - Prescriptive grammar
 - Descriptive grammar
 - Universal grammar
 - Mental grammar
 - Principles and parameters
 - Linguistic competence
 - Linguistic performance
3. What are the elements of syntax?
4. What are the elements of grammar?
5. Why do we need to study syntax?
6. Why do languages have different syntax?

Further Reading

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TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR

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Introduction to the Unit

The present unit is going to introduce some key concepts used in the areas of syntax and grammar. It starts with introducing ‘traditional’ grammar and compares it with the notion of ‘modern’ grammar and highlights various features of traditional or ‘prescriptive’ grammar. The idea is to familiarize students with the important terminology used in the field and prepare students for detailed discussion on the main features of traditional grammar such as parts of speech, open and closed classes of words, analysis, and synthesis of sentence structures, and all. While introducing these features of grammar, the focus remains mainly on presenting some of the fundamental aspects of ‘syntax’ in plain words including the terms and concepts of syntax such as ‘word, phrase, clause, and sentence. The aim here is to prepare students for taking up more detailed and advanced level courses on this subject in future. Towards the end, the main points of the unit are summarized in bullet form.

The following topics are mainly included in the present unit:

- What is traditional grammar?
- Main features of traditional grammar
- Important terminology used in syntax
- Parts of speech
- Open and closed forms of words
- Analysis and synthesis of sentences
- Transformations of sentences
- Important written composition-based activities

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this section, the students will be able to:

- Know about the concept of ‘traditional’ grammar and its importance in connection with syntax
- Compare and distinguish between traditional and modern grammars as separate fields
- Distinguish among various terms and concepts used in syntax and grammar
- Have an idea about the elements of traditional grammar
- Briefly explain about the fundamental focus of traditional grammar, and,
- Recognize and describe about the following topics used in syntax:
 - Parts of speech
 - Closed and open classes of words
 - Words
 - Phrase
 - Clause
 - Sentence

2.1 What is Traditional Grammar?

We have already introduced the concept of traditional grammar in Unit-1 and have compared it with modern grammar and mental grammar. Here in this section, we are going to discuss more about traditional grammar.

Traditional grammar is also known as prescriptive grammar. Traditional grammar and modern grammar are two different branches of language studies. Traditional or prescriptive grammar is the oldest of these two, and its origin runs back to ancient times when classical languages were taught through traditional ways and approaches. Modern grammar is a relatively new branch of language study.

It is also important to note that traditional grammar mainly focuses on the written language whereas modern grammar considers speech as the basic form of language. Thus, we can say that the data analyzed mainly by traditional grammar is written in form whereas the data analyzed by modern or descriptive grammar is oral (in speech form).

The key difference between the two grammars (traditional and modern) is that the traditional grammar is prescriptive in its approach whereas the modern linguistics is descriptive. It means that the traditional approach is to focus on what is right and what is wrong whereas the modern approach records and describes what it sees and listens from the native speakers of a language.

Traditional grammar refers to the collection of prescriptive rules and concepts about the structure of language. The origins of traditional grammar can be traced back to 15th century B.C., and could also be traced among ancient Greek grammarians such as Aristotle and Plato and other Greek writers. However, the most prominent traditional grammarians began writing in the 18th century, when English developed as a separate language. It is also important to note that principles of Latin grammar and other classical languages are the main basis of traditional English grammar.

Traditional grammar includes prescriptive rules that users should follow, and proscriptive rules of usage users should avoid. Books of traditional grammar generally contain lists of grammatical terms, definitions of these terms, and advice on using standard grammar, which includes correct punctuation, spelling, and diction. Even though modern linguists consider traditional grammar as an irrational method to study language and grammar, we can still find basic Latin-based concepts of grammar in English textbooks and usage guides today.

Traditional grammar mainly considers the following features:

Organization: Parts of Speech - traditional grammar organizes words based on eight (sometimes nine) different parts of speech. Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Adverb, Adjective, Preposition, Conjunction, and Interjection (sometimes, also add Articles)

Diction: Diction is the proper use of words – carefully selecting words for specific meaning.

Style: Sentence structure – carefully selecting word order and placement of phrases in sentences.

Style: Spelling and morphological structure – choosing appropriate words/lexical items and their forms.

Proper punctuation: Using proper punctuation and mechanics and other conventions in written language.

Despite the focus of modern linguistics on descriptive grammar, traditional grammar is of great value to language teaching and learning, school and college grammar books and the non-native adult learners of English. There are many reasons for this but the major one is the similarity in the foundational categories and technicalities of both grammars. As a result, a great many people still believe that traditional grammar is a functional, elegant, time-honored way of teaching people what they should know about grammar.

In the next section, we are going to discuss the main features of traditional grammar.

2.2 Main Features of Traditional Grammar

In this section we are going to explore the main features of traditional grammar. The idea is to introduce you to these features.

Traditional grammar has many features, but only the important ones are highlighted here.

2.2.1 Parts of Speech (PoS)

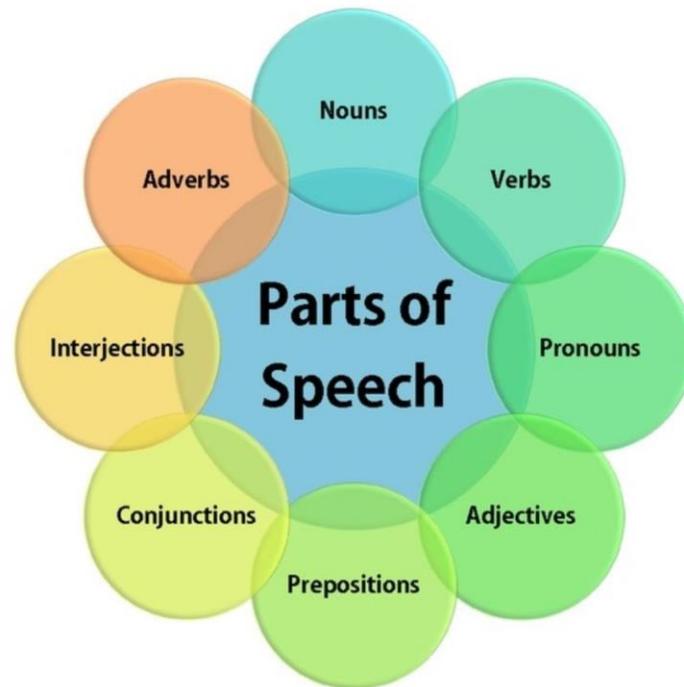
Traditional grammar primarily divides words into parts of speech. This is one of the traditional divisions of words in syntax (and, therefore, in grammar). Words are divided into the following parts of speech: Nouns, Pronouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs, Prepositions, Conjunctions and Interjections. Here are the labels and examples of these categories:

Noun	N	Aslam, Pakistan, London, player, captain, teacher, partner, writer
Verb	V	work, run, play, go, read, write, hide, support, complement, steal
Adjective	Adj/A	new, old, strong, elder, senior, black, golden, resourceful, active
Adverb	Adv	very, actively, carefully, suddenly, slowly, strongly, roughly
Pronoun	Pron	he, she, it, her, him, my, our, they, these, we, I,
Preposition	Prep	on, upon, at, over, from, to, towards, into, in, above
Conjunction	Conj	and, so, but, yet, neither/nor, either/or, as well as
Interjection	Interj	hurrah, oh, waw, ouch, hey, phew, hi

Some grammar books also show article as part of the PoS.

Article	Art	the, a, an
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The main concept behind this division of words into parts of speech is the different behavior of words different contexts. Remember that not each word is entirely different from all other words in the grammar of a language. This concept, therefore, implies that words can be categorized into parts of speech (lexical categories, word classes) based on their morphological, syntactic and semantic properties.



2.1: Parts of Speech

<https://www.bacttraining.com/the-8-parts-of-speech/>

For dividing a word into various parts of speech, and to decide about its category or class, we need to know about three properties (morphological, syntactic and semantic) of it. Also remember that a single word may behave differently in two different contexts and, therefore, these two different forms and categories (morphological, syntactic and semantic) might be totally different from each other in two different situations. For example, the word ‘cook’ has two different categories in the following sentences:

Does the cook, cook the food?

She talks very much. vs. She is giving three talks.

It’s cold. vs. I got a cold.

I can’t bear the noise. vs. There is a bear in the wood.

Tree barks vs. The dog barks.

You also need to remember that while recognizing the class or the category of words, there is a lot of arbitrariness involved. For example:

Should ‘my’ be classified as a pronoun or as a determiner?

Should auxiliary/participles/numerals verbs be a separate class/category?

Similarly, if ‘he’ is a pronoun, should auxiliary verb ‘do’ be a pro-verb?

All the above examples show that there is a certain amount of arbitrariness involved in the classification of words into their parts of speech division.

2.2.2 Open and Closed Class of Words

Parallel to parts of speech (PoS), descriptive grammar divides words into open and closed classes of words. Remember that PoS division of words is feature of traditional grammar whereas ‘open and closed’ division of words is feature of modern descriptive grammar. Here in this section, we introduce this concept for better understanding of the modern descriptive approach towards the characteristics of PoS.

This is another kind of division of words into two classes i.e., open and closed classes of words. Open class is the type of words in which new items are easily added. This class mainly includes four PoS categories nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Closed class includes a small number of word categories in which new items are not easily added. This type of categories mainly includes determiners, pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions etc.

Open class of words

Open class mainly includes Nouns, Verbs, Adverbs and Adjectives. Their brief characteristics based on their morphological, syntactic and semantic features are given with examples for your understanding of them. An important point to remember here is that this class distinction is applicable at single word level (e.g., Noun or Verb), phrase level (e.g., Noun Phrase or Verb Phrase) and clause level (e.g., Noun Clause).

Nouns (N):	cat-s,	dog-s, house, boy-s, men, sheep, Lahore, London, Aslam
Verbs (V):	walk,	go, buy, run, play, write, drink, read, distribute
Adjective	Adj/A	new, old, strong, elder, senior, black, golden, resourceful
Adverb	Adv	very, actively, carefully, suddenly, slowly, strongly, roughly

Closed class of words

The closed class of words mainly includes the following categories:

Determiners (D, Det):	articles (a, the), quantifiers (many, any, all), possessives (my, your)
Auxiliary verbs (Aux/v):	modal/other auxiliary verbs: will, may, must, shall, would, can
Pronouns (Pron):	I, you, he, she, it, we, they, me, him, her, us, them
Prepositions (P/Prep):	on, upon, at, over, from, to, towards, into, in, above
Conjunctions (Conj):	at, to, of, under, in, on, about, with
Particles:	no, not, nor, as

In traditional grammar and specifically in syntax, we normally focus on the structure of language and analyze it in detail. For example, in a very simple sentence of English is going to be analyzed in the following way:

This is going to be an example of the structure of all English ‘sentences’:

Subject + Verb + Object = complete English sentence

He eats apple.

He	eats	apple.
Subject	Verb	Object

This example shows that a sentence should include all three of these items or else it is a sentence fragment. Here are few more examples:

She has a book.

Subject: she

Verb: has

Object: a book

I have a pen.

Subject: I

Verb: have

Object: a pen

Traditional grammar assigns words to grammatical categories by meaning. For example, a noun is the name of a person, place, thing, idea or quality. Sometimes, we may just sense the category of a word because of its 'position' in a sentence and its structure.

Here is an example:

Is 'Kachlach' a noun?

Note this sentence:

Kachlach scored a century in his last one-day international.

Here 'Kachlach' takes the position of a noun in this sentence, and we get the sense.

Similarly, imagine this sentence:

My Kachlach is coming like a storm.

You know it is a noun even if you don't know its meaning in this sentence.

Contrary to traditional grammar, modern grammars assign parts of speech based on function in the sentence, not meaning. In the following table, we are going to compare open class with closed class of words.

2.2 Open and Closed Class of Words

	Open Class	Closed Class
Definitions	Open class words are content words as they carry main content meaning in a sentence. They are called open class words as we can add up to these classes. These words are also called lexical words.	Closed class words are function words as they mainly carry grammatical function in a sentence. They are called closed class because we cannot add up to these classes. These words do not carry clear lexical meaning.
Examples	Nouns: Kamal, jam, answer, horse Adjectives: happy, new, large, gray Verbs: search, grow, hold, have Adverbs: really, completely, very rapidly, beautifully, strongly	Prepositions: of, at, in, without, on Pronouns: he, they, anybody, it, one Determiners: the, a, that, my, much Conjunctions: and, that, when, while Auxiliary: be (is, am, are), got, do Particles: no, not, nor, as

It is prescriptive, rather than descriptive. A prescriptive grammar sets out rules (often of undefined origin or applicability) that must be followed to speak or write correctly. Modern descriptive grammars describe the way people actually use words and form utterances. As languages change, the descriptive grammarians document these changes, but to rail against them.

Modern grammars see the spoken language as the true language and realize that writing is an imprecise attempt to capture speech, just like a musical score is not a performance by an orchestra. Traditional grammars tend to see the written language as primary.

2.2.3. Composition Based Activities

Composition activities are the focus of traditional grammar. Such a grammar always focuses on written skills of language (such as writing and reading). Composition skills being at the core of written language skills are given preference in this kind of grammar. For example, a prescriptive grammar of English will always include teaching and learning activities related to composition such as the following.

Analysis of Sentences:

Analyzing sentence structure by describing sentence-internal relationships among various elements (Subject-Predicate, and/or, Noun Phrase and Verb Phrase etc.). Parsing and tree-diagrams

are important aspects of such analyses. The focus of such analyses and operations show connections and relations within a sentence to clarify meanings.

[You will learn more about these analytical processes in the next units.]

Transformation of Sentences:

Transformation of sentences includes transformation operations of sentences such as active and passive - affirmative and negative - interrogative and assertive - exclamatory and declarative - simple sentences to compound (double) sentences etc. You will study more about it in Section 2.2.4.

Synthesis of Sentences:

Synthesis of sentences includes combining two or more than two sentences such as combination of two or more simple sentences into a single simple sentence - combination of two or more simple sentences into a single compound sentence - combination of two or more simple sentences into a single complex sentence. You will study more about it in Section 2.2.5.

Written Composition Activities:

Written composition activities mainly include writing-based activities and procedures such as paragraph-writing, story-writing, letter-writing, comprehension and precis-writing, essay-writing, dialogue-writing, autobiographies, the appreciation of poetry, paraphrasing and soon and so forth. You will study more about it in Section 2.2.9.

2.2.4. Transformation of Sentences

Traditional grammar includes various transformational activities based on teaching and learning of changing the form of a sentence. The purpose of these activities is to enable learners to interchanging various forms of sentences, for example, change of voice from active to passive, from interrogative to assertive, from exclamatory to assertive, and, from affirmative to negative change of forms. The syntactic form and structure may also include activities based on form changing from simple to compound sentences and/or from compound to complex sentences.

Here we give few examples for clarifying these points:

Active/passive sentences:

The people will make him a leader. (Active)

He will be made a leader by the people (Passive)

Interrogative/assertive sentences:

Transformation of sentences also include the change of form inn terms of interrogative and assertive sentences. Here are few examples:

Interrogative: Was he a good teacher during his school days?

Assertive: He was not a good teacher during his school days.

Note some more examples for this interchangeability of sentences.

Affirmative and Negative Sentences:

Affirmative: He was a good teacher during his school days.

Negative: He was not a good teacher during his school days.

Exclamatory and Assertive Sentences:

Exclamatory: What a happy moment this is!

Assertive: This is a happy moment.

We also have some more possibilities for transforming sentences and interchanging the forms and formation of them. For example, sentences could be of ‘sample’ structure and that could be interchanged with ‘compound’ sentences and vice versa. Similarly, compound sentences could be transformed into ‘complex’ sentences. These topics are discussed in the next section.

2.2.5. Synthesis of Sentences

In traditional grammar, ‘synthesis of sentences’ is another way of teaching grammar and grammatical rules. It is the opposite of transformation of sentences and means combining several simple sentences into one new sentence. In this kind of grammar activities, the sequence of actions is changed, and the sentences are refined and made more worthy and attractive their structure point of view.

Examples:

He will be late. This is certain.

It is certain that her will be late.

They pulled down a tree. They blocked the road.

Pulling down a tree, they blocked the road.

The synthesis of sentences further includes:

Combining two or more simple sentences into a single simple sentence.

Combining two or more simple sentences into a single compound sentence.

Combining two or more simple sentences into a single complex sentence.

2.2.6. Direct and Indirect Speech

Another important area covered by traditional grammar is to work on the speech style of the sentences. While reporting words of a speaker, we have two possibilities:

1. We may report the actual words of a speaker (by quoting the actual words).
2. We may report without quoting the exact text or words of a speaker.

The first kind of reporting is called ‘direct speech’ and the second type is called ‘indirect speech’.

For direct speech, we use inverted commas for the exact words of a speaker. For indirect speech, we mostly use conjunction and change the pronouns, verbs, and adverbs accordingly.

Examples:

Direct speech: He said, ‘I am unwell’.

Indirect speech: He said that he was unwell.

Direct speech: He said, ‘my brother is writing a letter’.

Indirect speech: He said that his brother was writing a letter.

The rules of grammar related to direct and indirect speech are taught very carefully in traditional (prescriptive) grammar activities.

2.2.7. Correct Usage of Grammar

In traditional grammar, as discussed earlier, the correct use of grammar is given a central role and grammar is taught explicitly. Some of the examples in this regard are given very briefly in the following lines:

- Agreement of the verb with the subject
- Spellings
- Formation
- Idioms
- Figures of speech

Examples:

Agreement between verb and subject and other components in a sentence is properly focused and observed. Note the following:

The quality of peaches was not good.	See subject versus verb.
Silver and gold are precious materials.	-do-
My friend and father has arrived.	Friend and father are the same person.
Only Aslam played a century.	Placement of an adverb is important.
I shall not come unless he invites me.	Note the conjunction (unless) here.

Similarly, idioms are also explicitly taught in traditional grammar activities and students are encouraged to learn the rules and use them properly. Here are few examples:

- Bread and butter
- A blessing in disguise
- Under the weather
- Break a leg

Along with idioms, phrasal verbs are also taught in ‘traditional grammar’ classroom. Grammar books written mainly under traditional grammar have a lot of activities based on teaching of idioms both explicitly and implicitly. In such activities, alongside idioms, punctuation and mechanics of language are taught as part of speaking rules.

2.2.8. Structures of Sentences

As discussed earlier, traditional grammar has an explicit focus on syntactic (related to sentences) structure and structural patterns and short questions and question tags. For example:

Structural patterns:

Subject + Verb:	Birds fly
Subject + Verb + Subject Complement:	This is an apple.
Subject + Verb + Direct Object:	I know his village.
Subject + Verb + Indirect + Direct Object:	I lent her my pen.

And many more...

Question Tags:

In traditional grammar activities, it is a common practice to explore and teach various other forms of language structure. These include 'question tags' which are used in conversation while making a statement/giving information and asking for confirmation. See the following examples:

It's very cold, isn't it?

In this example, the later part with a question mark (isn't it?) is called a question tag.

Here are two more examples:

It's snowing, isn't it?

You are busy, aren't you?

As you can see, the pattern in this sentence is: *Auxiliary + n't + Subject*, if the statement is positive, and, *Auxiliary + Subject*, if the statement is negative.

Short Answers:

Among structures of sentences, traditional grammar also concentrates on teaching the rules of 'short answers'. The usual form of short answers to verbal questions (i.e., questions beginning with an auxiliary):

Question: Are you going to college?	Answer:	Yes, I am. / No, I am not.
Question: Can you ride a bike?	Answer:	Yes, I can. / No, I can't.
Question: Is your brother married?	Answer:	Yes, he is. / No, he isn't.

2.2.9. Written Composition Activities

In traditional grammar, 'written' language is always the center of activities. It would not be wrong to mention that the focus of traditional grammar is always on the written skills of language. In written composition, the following areas and topics are covered with a wide range of short and long writing-based activities:

- Paragraph-writing
- Story-writing
- Letter-writing
- Comprehension-based activities such as precis-writing, paraphrasing and summary-writing
- Essay-writing
- Dialogue-writing
- Autobiographies
- The appreciation of poetry and criticism-based writing activities.

Having briefly introduced the main areas of traditional grammar, we are now going to briefly visit the important terminology used in syntax in the next section.

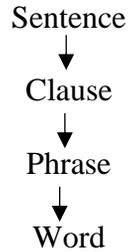
2.3 Important Terminology in Syntax

To analyze syntactic constituents (parts in sentence), we need to explore various phrases (such as noun phrase or verb phrase). A point to remember is that syntax (like other building blocks of language) is based on smaller level of units.

To understand this, note the following structure:

Word → Phrase → Clause → Sentence

This means that words are smaller syntactic unit than phrases, which are smaller than clauses, and clauses are smaller than sentences. In simple sense, a sentence is made of one or more than one clause which, in its turn, is made of one or more than one phrase. Similarly, a phrase is made of one or more than one word. This hierarchic structure is shown in the following figure.



2.3 Hierarchy of Syntactic Units

These syntactic terms are now briefly explained one by one.

2.3.1. Word

We have already discussed open and closed words in the above sections. In traditional grammar, word is the basic unit of language. Words can be classified according to their action and meaning, but it is challenging to define ‘word’.

Here we are giving two definitions of ‘word’.

A word is the smallest unit of grammar that can stand alone as a complete utterance, separated by spaces in written language.

A word is a speech sound or a combination of sounds, or its representation in writing, that symbolizes and communicates a meaning and may consist of a single morpheme or a combination of morphemes.

Examples: Cat Akram Snow Pakistan

The branch of linguistics that studies word structures is called morphology. The branch of linguistics that studies word meanings is called lexical semantics.

You will study more about ‘word’ in detail in Unit-3.

2.3.2. Phrases

In syntax, ‘phrase’ is a unit larger than ‘word’. Here we give two simple definitions of ‘phrase’.

Any group of meaningful words that don’t make complete sense is a phrase.

A phrase is a group of words, but it doesn't contain a subject and a verb.

Examples: The king (NP) The king of Scotland (NP)
 is falling (VP) has been waiting (VP)

A sentence can exist as a single clause, but a single phrase can't make up a sentence. Phrases add meaning to sentences but they can't create a sentence on their own. You will study more about 'phrase' in detail in Unit-4.

2.3.3. Clauses

A clause is comparatively easy to define. A clause is also made of a group of words but this group should have its own subject (an noun phrase - having a noun or a pronoun) and predicate (verb phrase). Similarly, a clause should give a complete sense (that's why it should have its own subject and predicate).

Examples: I have a cat.

The snow is falling since Friday.

As shown in Figure-2.3 above, clause is a unit smaller than sentence.

There are various types of clauses, and you will study about them in detail in Unit-6.

2.3.4. Sentences

Sentence is defined as a collection of words that makes a certain intended sense/meaning. The definition is also sometimes put as:

A collection or group of words that make sense to a reader.

A sentence must have a predefined structure grammatically.

Like a clause, a sentence may primarily contain a subject and a predicate.

Subject: About which something is being said.

Predicate: Tells us something about the subject.

The main difference between a clause and a sentence is the hierarchy - sentence is larger than clause and may contain more than one clause as its parts.

Examples: Alexander was a great king.

Karachi is the city of lights.

He lives in Abbottabad.

There are various types of sentences – it could be a statement, a command, an exclamation or a question etc. It can also have a main clause and sometimes many clauses with at least one main clause.

Examples: Wait a minute.

 Put it on.

 Finish it up now.

You will study more about ‘sentence’ in detail in Unit-6.

Summary Points

- Traditional grammar is also known as prescriptive grammar. Traditional grammar and modern grammar are two different branches of language studies. Traditional or prescriptive grammar is the oldest of these two, and its origin runs back to ancient times when classical languages were taught through traditional ways and approaches. Modern grammar is a relatively new branch of language study.
- The key difference between the two grammars (traditional and modern) is that the traditional grammar is prescriptive in its approach whereas the modern linguistics is descriptive. It means that the traditional approach is to focus on what is right and what is wrong whereas the modern approach records and describes what it sees and listens from the native speakers of a language.
- Traditional grammar mainly considers the following features:
 - **Organization:** Parts of Speech - traditional grammar organizes words based on eight (sometimes nine) different parts of speech. Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Adverb, Adjective, Preposition, Conjunction, and Interjection (sometimes, also add Articles)
 - **Diction:** Diction is the proper use of words – carefully selecting words for specific meaning.
 - **Style:** Sentence structure – carefully selecting word order and placement of phrases in sentences.
 - **Style:** Spelling and morphological structure – choosing appropriate words/lexical items and their forms.
 - **Proper punctuation:** Using proper punctuation and mechanics and other conventions in written language.
- Traditional grammar primarily divides words into parts of speech. This is one of the traditional divisions of words in syntax (and, therefore, in grammar). Words are divided into the following parts of speech: Nouns, Pronouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs, Prepositions, Conjunctions and Interjections.
- Parallel to parts of speech (PoS), descriptive grammar divides words into open and closed classes of words. Remember that PoS division of words is feature of traditional grammar whereas ‘open and closed’ division of words is feature of modern descriptive grammar.
- Open class mainly includes the types of words in which we can easily add up new items such Nouns, Verbs, Adverbs and Adjectives.
- The closed class of words mainly includes those categories in which no further addition is possible, and we are bound to use the already existing items. The following categories make up this class of words. Determiners (D, Det), Auxiliary verbs (Aux/v), Pronouns (Pron), Prepositions (P/Prep), Conjunctions (Conj), and Particles etc.

- Composition activities are the focus of traditional grammar. Such a grammar always focuses on written skills of language (such as writing and reading). Composition skills being at the core of written language skills are given preference in this kind of grammar. For example, a prescriptive grammar of English will always include teaching and learning activities related to written composition activities such as the following.
 - Analysis of Sentences
 - Transformation of Sentences
 - Synthesis of Sentences
 - Written Composition Activities

- Word is the basic unit of language. Words can be classified according to their action and meaning, but it is challenging to define ‘word’.

- A word is the smallest unit of grammar that can stand alone as a complete utterance, separated by spaces in written language.

- A word is a speech sound or a combination of sounds, or its representation in writing, that symbolizes and communicates a meaning and may consist of a single morpheme or a combination of morphemes.

- Phrase is a unit larger than ‘word’.

- Any group of meaningful words that don’t make complete sense is a phrase.

- A phrase is a group of words, but it doesn't contain a subject and a verb.

- A clause is comparatively easy to define. A clause is also made of a group of words but this group should have its own subject (an noun phrase - having a noun or a pronoun) and predicate (verb phrase). Similarly, a clause should give a complete sense (that’s why it should have its own subject and predicate).

- Sentence is defined as a collection of words that makes a certain intended sense/meaning.

- A collection or group of words that make sense to a reader. A sentence must have a predefined structure grammatically.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is traditional grammar and how it is different from prescriptive grammar?
2. Explain the key features of the traditional grammar.
3. Write brief notes on the following features:
 - a. Closed class of words
 - b. Open class of words
 - c. Written composition as the focus of traditional grammar
 - d. Synthesis and analysis of sentences
 - e. Analysis of Sentences
 - f. Transformation of Sentences
4. Define 'word' as the basic unit of language. Also discuss 'phrase' as a unit larger than 'word'.
5. 'A clause is also made of a group of words but this group should have its own subject and predicate'. Explain with examples.
6. Write a note on the basic terminology of syntax.

Further Reading

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WORDS

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Introduction to the Unit

The unit aims to introduce students to the significance that ‘words’ hold in the overall scheme of syntax. After presenting the idea of words as ‘the building blocks of sentence’, two large categories of words, lexical and functional, have been introduced. Syntactic as well as morphological characteristics of each of the lexical categories, including: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, have been discussed in detail. Likewise, syntactic features of each of the functional categories, including: determiners, auxiliaries, conjunctions, complementisers, prepositions and particles, have been discussed. The purpose behind familiarizing students with the characteristic features of major word classes is to make them able to put the words to their correct grammatical usage in their own phrases and sentences.

Learning Objectives

Having gone through the unit, the students will be able to:

- Recognize the significance of words as the building blocks of the structure of a sentence.
- Realize that words possess specific characteristics and, therefore, can be grouped into classes or categories on the basis of their characteristics.
- Identify the characteristics of each of the lexical categories (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs).
- Distinguish the characteristics of each of the functional categories (determiners, auxiliaries, conjunctions, complementisers, prepositions and particles)
- Explain the differences between lexical and functional categories.
- Determine the categories of given words.
- Classify the given words into categories on the basis of their characteristics.
- Employ the ten word categories (discussed in the unit) to correct usage in their sentences.

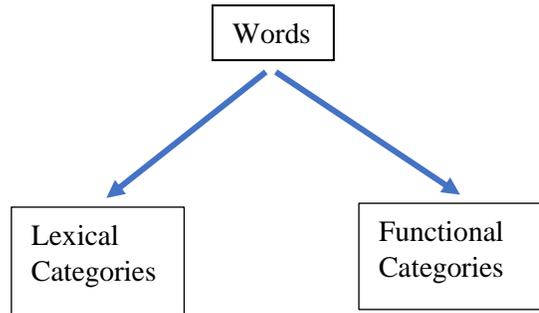
3.1 Word as a Syntactic Unit

It has already been discussed in Unit-1 that syntax is the study of rules, which help us generate infinite number of grammatical sentences. It has also been discussed that sentence is a large unit which is made up of much smaller building blocks. Now, what are those building blocks which help us generate sentences? They are ‘words’ which join together to form a phrase and phrases join together to form a clause. A clause can be a sentence on its own, or it can be a part of a sentence. Diagrammatically:

Words  Phrases  Clause/Sentence

In simpler terms, sentences are made up of words. That is why words occupy a very significant place in the study of syntax. However, all words are not the same; different words perform

different functions in the sentence. It is on the basis of their different functions that the words have been divided into two broad categories:



Below, we will discuss the two categories of words in detail.

3.2 Lexical Categories

There are four lexical categories, which include: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. These four word classes are termed as ‘lexical’ because they convey the content of a message and, therefore, carry meaning. The four lexical categories are generally defined in the following manner:

Noun: A word which denotes a person, place or thing.

Verb: A word which denotes an action.

Adjective: A word which describes a noun.

Adverb: A word which describes a verb.

Let us discuss the above-mentioned four lexical categories in more detail.

3.2.2 Nouns

According to the above-given definition of a noun, *car*, *pencil* and *door* are nouns since they refer to things. Similarly, *kitchen*, *market* and *school* refer to places; whereas, *doctor*, *teacher* and *boy* refer to persons. However, this is a very simplistic way of categorizing words. It is based on the meanings of words and may become misleading. Consider the italicized words in the following sentences:

1a. The residents protested against the *destruction* of the building.

1b. His friends admired his *sincerity*.

1c. *Red* is her favourite colour.

The word *destruction* in (1a) does not refer to a person, place or thing. Instead, it refers to an action and, therefore, should be categorized as a verb. *Sincerity* in (1b) is the quality of a person and, therefore, should be regarded as an adjective. *Red* is generally categorized as an adjective but is serving as a noun in sentence (1c). It, therefore, seems inappropriate to categorize words on the

basis of definitions which are based on meaning. The situation becomes more complex when we find that a word can change its lexical category depending on its use in a sentence. Consider the use of the word 'film' in the following examples:

2a. Jurassic park is my brother's favourite *film*.

2b. The movie was *filmed* on an island.

2c. He is a fine product of the *film* industry.

The word 'film' is used as a noun in (2a), as a verb in (2b), and as an adjective in (2c). This is termed as **syntactic distribution** of a word, which means which words appear before and after a word. For example, nouns usually appear after determiners (a, an, the, this, that, these, those, etc.), such as: a book, the poet, these girls, those students, etc. Nouns can be followed by adjectives, such as: a blue book, the famous poet, these little girls, those intelligent students, etc. Nouns can be followed by prepositions, e.g., in Lahore, to the market, by a car, etc. Nouns can be negated by *no*, e.g., *No students were in the class*. And, nouns are usually the subjects as well as the direct objects in a sentence, e.g.,

3a. *Boys* ate *apples*.

3b. *I* wrote *a letter*.

3c. *The students* liked *the book*.

Syntactic distribution is considered as the most reliable criterion for determining the lexical category of a word. However, there is another slightly less reliable criterion, known as **morphological distribution**, which refers to the kinds of affixes (prefixes and suffixes) that a word attaches to. For example, when nouns pluralize, they take suffixes, such as: *-s* (*books*), *-es* (*boxes*), *-en* (*oxen*), etc. Moreover, there are many suffixes which are typical to nouns, such as:

-ity (*inactivity*), *-ment* (*enjoyment*), *-ness* (*sadness*), *-ship* (*hardship*), *-(t)ion* (*construction*), *-ist* (*journalist*), *-ism* (*professionalism*), *-hood* (*childhood*), etc.

3.2.2 Pronouns

A sub-class of nouns is pronouns. Pronouns are the words which replace nouns, such as: *I*, *we*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *they*. For instance, in the sentence, *Aslam plays football*, the subject *Aslam* can be replaced by *he*, and the sentence will become, *he plays football*.

Pronouns can perform all the functions which nouns perform, such as: they can be subjects in sentences, direct or indirect objects or verb, etc. In other words, their syntactic distribution is the same as those of nouns.

They have different morphological forms depending on their function in the sentence, such as:

- *I* (subject) *me* (direct/indirect object), e.g., *I* saw him or he saw *me*.
- *We* (subject) *us* (direct/indirect object), e.g., *we* hit them or he hit *us*.
- *He* (subject) *him* (direct/indirect object), e.g., *he* greeted *him*.
- *She* (subject) *her* (direct/indirect object), e.g., *she* admired *her*.
- *They* (subject) *them* (direct/indirect object), e.g., *they* followed *them*.

Pronouns also have their possessive forms, such as: *his, her, its, their, my* and *our*.

3.2.3 Verbs

In general terms, a verb is defined as a word which denotes action; for instance, play, laugh, read, write and sleep are verbs. However, words like *remain, seem, appear* and *exist* do not involve any action but are categorized as verbs. Consider the verbs in the following sentences:

- 4a. Some people believe that ghosts really *exist*.
- 4b. The boy *remained* silent.
- 4c. The weather *seemed* pleasant to us.

The verbs in the above sentences suggest that we need to add ‘state’ (as in 4a and 4b) and ‘emotion’ (as in 4c) to the definition of a verb. After doing so, the modified definition would be: “a verb is a word which denotes an action, state or emotion”. The verbs *eat, play, write, hit*, etc. denote action; the verbs *remain, appear* and *exist* denote the state of the subject noun; whereas, the verbs *seem* and *feel* denote a certain emotion.

Now, consider the use of the word ‘wish’ in the following examples:

- 5a. He *wished* good luck to him.
- 5b. Good health and prosperity are my *wishes* for you.
- 5c. Her *wish* list is very long.

The word ‘*wish*’ is used as a verb in (5a), as a noun in (5b) and as an adjective in (5c). These examples show that depending on its syntactic distribution the word *wish* can serve as a noun, a verb or an adjective. In terms of their syntactic distribution, verbs generally follow the subject as in sentences 4a, 4b and 4c, the verbs *exist, remained* and *seemed* are followed by the subjects *ghosts, the boy* and *the weather* respectively. Secondly, an adverb may occur before or after a verb and can therefore help to identify the verb in the sentence, e.g.,

- 6a. He *always* finishes his work on time.
- 6b. The child slept *peacefully*.

Verbs can follow auxiliaries (e.g. *have, will, shall, can, could, may*, etc.). For example,

- 7a. Girls *have bought* new dresses.
- 7b. He *will finish* his work tomorrow.
- 7c. The child *can speak* a few words.

Verbs are negated by *do not, does not* and *did not* as they cannot be directly negated. Consider the following examples:

- 8a. Girls *do not like* their new dresses.
- 8b. He *does not finish* his work on time.
- 8c. The child *did not sleep* peacefully.

A very important distinguishing feature of verbs is that they express tense, e.g., the verb in sentence (4a) indicates present tense; whereas, the verbs in sentences (4b) and (4c) indicate past tense. Certain morphological characteristics of verbs help them express tense as well as some extra information. For example, the suffix –s indicates not only present tense but also

specifies that the subject is third person singular. The suffix *-ed/d* indicates past tense but does not provide any information about the number or person of the subject. Verbs can also take the suffix *-ing* to show the continuity of the action (e.g., *playing, reading, singing*, etc.). Moreover, there are some derivational suffixes which are specific to verbs, such as, *-ize/-ise* (*regularize, advertise*) and *-ate* (*activate, differentiate*, etc.).

3.2.4 Adjectives

Since adjective is a word which describes a noun, in the phrases: *a tall boy, the blue pencil* and *some naughty children*, the words *tall, blue* and *naughty* are adjectives as they are modifying the nouns *boy, pencil* and *children* respectively by describing some qualities of the given nouns. The qualities that the adjectives describe are those which are appropriate to nouns, e.g., colour (*yellow, green, red*), size (*small, large, tiny*), nationality (*Pakistani, Irish, Canadian*), appearance (*beautiful, ugly, shiny*), character trait (*honest, kind, clever*), etc.

So far as the syntactic distribution of the adjectives is concerned, they usually appear between a determiner (*a, an, the, this, that, some*) and a noun, e.g.,

9. a *tall* boy, that *yellow* book, some *naughty* children

Adjectives can also follow the auxiliary (*is, am, are, was, were, been, etc.*) in a sentence, e.g.,

- 10a. The child was *happy*.
- 10b. The car is *red*.
- 10c. Some students are *clever*.

It should be noted that this particular aspect of adjectives' distribution in the sentence overlaps with the syntactic distribution of verbs. Moreover, adjectives can be modified by adverbs, e.g., *very tall, very happy, highly respected, extremely hot*. It is important to mention here that this property of adjectives overlaps with adverbs.

An important morphological characteristic of adjectives is that they have their comparative forms (using *-er* or *more*) and superlative forms (using *-est* or *most*). Consider the following examples:

- 11a. Aslam is *taller* than Bilal. (comparative)
- 11b. Bilal is *more intelligent* than Aslam. (comparative)
- 11c. Of all the boys, Amjad is the *tallest*. (superlative)
- 11d. Bilal is the *most intelligent* student of the class. (superlative)

Some adjectives have irregular comparative and superlative forms, such as: comparative and superlative forms of the adjectives *good* (*better, best*) and *bad* (*worse, worst*).

Another important characteristic of adjectives is that most of them have their antonyms (opposite words), e.g., *tall-short, hot-cold, clean-dirty*. However, some of the adjectives are negated with the help of prefixes, e.g., *un-(unprofessional), im-(impolite), ir-(irresponsible), in-(incapable), dis-(dissatisfied), il-(illogical), non-(nonpoisonous)*.

Some derivational suffixes usually indicative of adjectives include: *-ing* (*alarming*), *-an* (*American*), *-al* (*educational*), *-ed* (*disappointed*), *-en* (*frozen*) *-ive* (*informative*), *-able* (*memorable*), *-ish* (*girlish*), *-ate* (*compassionate*), *-some* (*awesome*), *-ful* (*beautiful*), *-less* (*careless*), *-ly* (*costly*).

However, the below-mentioned derivational affixes can be used with other lexical categories as well:

-ing, -ed, -en, -ly, -er, un-

The first three suffixes can be used with verbs (e.g., *running, walked, eaten*); whereas, *-ly* is more commonly used by adverbs (*nicely, politely, carelessly, etc.*). Although most of the comparative adjectives use the suffix *-er*, some nouns also take this derivational ending (e.g., *teacher, walker*). Finally, the prefix *-un* is also used with some verbs to indicate the reversal of an action (e.g. *undo, unpack, unzip*).

3.2.5 Adverbs

The generally-accepted definition of an adverb as ‘a word which describes a verb’ is not only too simplistic but also misleading in the sense that adverbs not only modify verbs (He sang *loudly*) but also adjectives (*very* hard) and other adverbs (*too* quickly). Moreover, adverbs can modify the whole sentence (*Luckily*, he won the lottery). Few more examples are given below:

- 12a. The child cried *bitterly*. (an adverb modifying a verb)
- 12b. This book is *very* expensive. (an adverb modifying an adjective)
- 12c. He finished his work *very* quickly. (an adverb modifying another adverb)
- 12d. The offer is *incredibly* attractive. (an adverb modifying an adjective)
- 12e. His predictions are *almost* always correct. (an adverb modifying another adverb)
- 12f. *Fortunately*, he escaped the accident. (an adverb modifying the whole sentence)

The above-given examples also illustrate the syntactic distribution of adverbs. We can see that adverbs can appear anywhere in the sentence except before a noun and after a determiner (e.g., *a happily child* is ungrammatical). Most of the adverbs can be modified by the adverb *very*, a property of adverbs which overlaps with adjectives.

As far as the morphological characteristics of adverbs are concerned, a number of adverbs end in *ly-* (e.g., *politely, quickly, slowly, clearly*). A special morphological feature of adverbs is that, unlike the above-mentioned lexical categories, they do not change their form. Only some of the adverbs have their comparative usage and can be followed by *more* (e.g., *more quickly, more slowly*). Adverbs cannot generally be negated with the help of negative prefixes unless the adjectives they are derived from do so, for example, *impolitely* from *impolite*, *unwillingly* from *unwilling*, etc.

3.3 Functional Categories

Functional categories include: determiners, auxiliaries, conjunctions, complementisers, prepositions and particles. They are called ‘functional’ because their job is to express grammatical or structural relationships amongst words; that is why they are also known as grammatical categories. An important feature of

Each of the functional categories is discussed in detail below.

3.3.1 Determiners

Determiners are words placed before the nouns or they introduce nouns (*a* book, *the* book, *that* book, *two* books, *many* books, etc.). They determine whether a noun is general (e.g. *a*, *any*, *some*, *many*) or specific (e.g. *the*, *this*, *those*, *my*, *his*).

Determiners can be categorized into four major types:

- i. Articles
- ii. Demonstratives
- iii. Possessives
- iv. Quantifiers

Let us discuss the four types of determiners in more detail.

i. Articles

Articles are the most commonly used determiners. There are three articles in English: *a*, *an* and *the*. The first two, *a* and *an*, are called the **indefinite articles** as they are used to talk about a general or unspecified noun, for example:

13a. A city can be noisier than *a* village.

13b. He likes to eat *an* orange after every meal.

In the first sentence, the indefinite article *a* has been used to refer to any city and any village in general. Likewise, in the second sentence, the indefinite article *an* has been used to talk about the fruit, orange, in general. Both the indefinite articles are used with singular nouns. The only difference in their use is that *a* is used before a noun which begins with a consonant sound (e.g., *a* cat, *a* house, *a* child); whereas, *an* is used before a noun that begins with a vowel sound (e.g., *an* artist, *an* insect, *an* experiment).

One definite article in English is *the*. Use of *the* before a noun indicates that the speaker or writer is referring to a specific noun. Consider the following examples:

14a. The child is crying bitterly.

14b. The book that he wanted to buy was out of stock.

In the first example, the use of definite article indicates that the noun *child* does not refer to any child in general but to a specific one. Similarly, in the second example, the use of definite article shows that the noun *book* refers to a specific book which the person wanted to buy.

ii. Demonstratives

Probably, the second most commonly used determiners are demonstratives. In English, there are four of them: *this*, *that*, *these* and *those*. Demonstratives are used when the speaker can point to a certain noun and make it very specific, even more specific than the use of definite article. Consider the following examples:

- 15a. Do you want to read *this* book?
- 15b. He didn't want to visit *that* city again.
- 15c. *These* oranges are sweeter than honey.
- 15d. She wanted to buy *those* pink shoes.

It must be noted that demonstratives indicate physical distance, such as: *this* and *these* refer to the nouns which lie closer to the speaker; whereas, *that* and *those* are used to refer to the nouns that lie farther from the speaker. Moreover, *this* and *that* refer to singular nouns while *these* and *those* refer to plural nouns.

iii. Possessives

Possessives show ownership of the noun. They include: *my*, *our*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *their* and *its*. Consider the following examples:

- 16a. Where is *my* blue pen?
- 16b. *Our* grandparents live nearby.
- 16c. What are *your* plans for the upcoming vacation?
- 16d. Everybody admired *his* performance.
- 16e. She lost *her* notebook in the library.
- 16f. It is *their* last day in the school.
- 16g. This product has lost *its* value in the market.

In English, whether a possessive refers to a singular or plural noun does not affect the form of the possessive (e.g., *my* book/*my* books, *his* friend/*his* friends, *their* effort/*their* efforts). The case is not so in other languages, e.g., Urdu.

iv. Quantifiers

As the name indicates, quantifiers specify quantity of the noun that they refer to. Some quantifiers are: *all*, *some*, *few* and *many*. Consider the following examples:

- 17a. *All* children like candies.
- 17b. The little girl saw *some* ducks in the lake.
- 17c. *Few* students had completed their work.
- 17d. There were *many* items on the list.

So far as their syntactic distribution is concerned, determiners occur before the noun or before adjective(s) and the noun, e.g., in the phrases: '*a book*', '*some children*', '*many apples*', the determiners occur before the nouns; whereas in the phrases: '*a tall boy*', '*some expensive books*', '*many cute little naughty children*', the determiners come before the adjective(s) and the nouns.

3.3.2 Auxiliaries

Auxiliaries are generally known as ‘helping verbs’. Unlike lexical verbs (discussed in Section 3.2.2), they do not denote action; instead, they help the lexical verbs to add certain grammatical or functional information to the clause in which they are used.

There are two main types of auxiliaries: primary auxiliaries and modal auxiliaries. We will briefly discuss the two types of auxiliaries below.

i. Primary Auxiliaries

There are three primary auxiliaries in English; they are: *be*, *have* and *do*. These three auxiliaries help the lexical verbs to convey grammatical information about *tense*, *aspect*, *mood* or *voice*. The three primary auxiliaries have their different forms, which are given in the table below:

Three Primary Auxiliaries and their Forms	
Be	Is am are was were being been
Have	has had
Do	Do does did

Through their various forms, the primary auxiliaries enable the lexical verbs to express the following:

Tense	The boy <i>is</i> mowing the lawn. (Present) The children <i>had</i> finished their meal. (Past)
Aspect	The mother <i>was</i> baking a cake for her children. (progressive) The students <i>have</i> submitted their assignments. (Perfect) <i>It has been</i> raining since morning. (Perfect progressive)
Mood	<i>Does</i> he know how to swim? (Indicative) <i>Do</i> try this pineapple cake. (Imperative) If he <i>were</i> a king ... (Subjunctive)
Voice	The thief <i>was</i> caught by the police. (Passive)

Apart from helping the lexical verbs in expressing the above-mentioned grammatical functions, primary auxiliaries behave like lexical verbs in sentences with no lexical verbs, for instance:

- 18a. The father *is* very proud of his son.
- 18b. Fruits and vegetables *are* important for good health.
- 18c. John and Mary *have* a new house.
- 18d. Maria *did* her work before her classmates.
- 18e. The child *had* a large hat on his head.

ii. Modal Auxiliaries

Modal auxiliaries, or simply ‘modals’, help the lexical verb to express necessity, possibility, ability, permission and obligation. Consider the following examples:

- 19a. Students *must* work hard. (necessity)
- 19b. It *might* rain tomorrow. (possibility)
- 19c. Ahmed *can* climb this rock. (ability)
- 19d. You *may* go outside with your friends. (permission)
- 19e. He *must* finish his work on time. (obligation)

There are ten modal auxiliaries in all shown in the following table:

Ten Modal Auxiliaries	
Can	Could
Will	Would
Shall	Should
May	Might
Must	Ought to

There are three major differences between primary and modal auxiliaries, two in their function and the third in their form.

- i. Whereas both types of auxiliaries add some grammatical information to the meaning of the lexical verb, primary auxiliaries add information regarding tense, aspect, mood or voice, while modal auxiliaries specifically indicate ‘modality’ of the action denoted by the lexical verb; modality refers to the possibility, ability, permission or obligation of carrying out the action specified by the verb.
- ii. Another important difference regarding their function is that primary auxiliaries serve as lexical verbs in clauses with no lexical verbs; whereas modal auxiliaries always accompany lexical verbs and cannot serve as lexical verbs. Consider the following examples:
 - 20a. The child *is* happy. (‘is’, a primary auxiliary, serving as a main verb)
 - 20b. *The child *can* happy. (Modal auxiliaries are not able to serve as main verbs)
 - 20c. *The child *will* happy.
 - 20d. *The child *may* happy.
 - 20e. *The child *must* happy.

(*asterisk indicates ungrammaticality)

- iii. The third difference concerns their morphological forms; whereas, the three primary auxiliaries have various forms depending on their function, the ten modal auxiliaries do not change their forms.

However, a major similarity lies in their syntactic distribution. Both the types of auxiliaries, occur before lexical verbs in the clauses. For example:

- John *is* reading a book. He *has* read a book. (primary auxiliaries)
- Maria *can* read a book. She *must* read a book. (modal auxiliaries)

Another similarity between the two types of auxiliaries lies in their manner of negation; primary and modal auxiliaries both are directly negated by ‘not’, e.g.,

- John *is not* reading a book. He *has not* read a book.
- Maria *cannot* read a book. She *must not* read a book.

3.3.3 Conjunctions

Generally known as ‘linking words’ or ‘connectives’, conjunctions join words, phrases and clauses. But, why do we need to join words, phrases and clauses? In response to this question, consider the brief paragraphs (a) and (b) given below:

- a) Ali goes to school. Ahmed goes to school. The school is very far from their home. They are never late for school. They are punctual. They are regular. They are hardworking students. All the teachers like them.
- b) Ali **and** Ahmed go to school. **Although** the school is very far from their home, they are never late. They are **not only** punctual **but also** regular. **Because** they are hardworking students, all the teachers like them.

Without using conjunctions, as in paragraph (a), we are bound to use short and simplistic sentences which sound repetitive as well as underdeveloped. On the other hand, with the use of conjunctions, as in paragraph (b), words, phrases and even whole clauses can be linked, which not only helps to avoid repetition but also makes the information flow in a smooth manner.

Depending on the different parts of the sentences that they join, there are three types of conjunctions:

i. Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions are used to link only those words, phrases or clauses which are of the same grammatical status. For example, they will allow you to link a noun with another noun, an adjective with another adjective or an independent clause with another independent clause. Consider the following sentences:

Ali *and* Ahmed are close friends. (‘and’ linking a noun with another noun)

Saba is rude *but* honest. (‘but’ linking an adjective with another adjective)

All the children were tired yet none of them wanted to leave the game. ('yet' linking an independent clause with another independent clause)

There are seven coordinating conjunctions, which include: *and, but, yet, so, for, nor* and *or*.

ii. Subordinating Conjunctions

A subordinating conjunction joins an independent clause with a dependent clause. An independent clause is a clause that can stand on its own as a sentence. It conveys a complete thought and does not need any additional support to serve as a sentence. For example, the sentence "*Aslam got up very late in the morning*" is an independent clause, also known as *main clause*.

On the other hand, a dependent clause cannot stand on its own as a sentence and is dependent on the independent clause for conveying its meaning. A dependent clause adds some extra information to the independent clause. By itself, a dependent clause is not a complete sentence. For instance, the dependent clause "*because he was unwell*" is not a complete sentence. A dependent clause is also known as *subordinate clause* as it is subordinate to the main clause in a sentence.

On combining the two clauses, independent and dependent, we get:

21a. *Aslam got up very late in the morning because he was unwell.*

This example shows that on combining the two clauses, we get complete information. But, how are the two clauses combined? The answer is: the two clauses are combined with the help of subordinating conjunction '*because*'. Another way of describing the function of subordinating conjunctions is that they introduce subordinate clauses in the sentence. Either of the two clauses, main clause or subordinate clause, can occur first in the sentence, e.g., the sentence (21a) can also be written in the following way:

21b. *Because Aslam was unwell, he got up very late in the morning.*

It must be noted that when subordinate clause comes before the main clause, it is followed by a comma.

Here is a list of commonly used subordinating conjunctions:

Since, though, although, because, unless, until, if, before, while, as, after, how, when, where, whenever, whereas, as much as, etc.

Few more examples illustrating the use of subordinating conjunctions are given below:

22a. **Though** he was very courteous, nobody seemed to like him.

22b. Maria did not own so many books **until** she started writing herself.

22c. **While** his classmates played football in the playground, Basit used to sit quietly in the classroom.

- 22d. Aslam started playing football **when** he was seven.
22e. Everybody wondered **how** the little child could perform such a clever trick.
22f. Salma gets angry **whenever** her friends call her a coward.

iii. Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions occur in pairs. A pair of correlative conjunctions is used in a sentence to compare or contrast two equal parts of the sentence. Some commonly used correlative conjunctions are:

- either/or
- neither/nor
- whether/or
- both/and
- not only/but also

Consider their use in the following sentences:

- 23a. *Either* Maria *or* Salma is going to bake the cake this evening.
23b. After the accident, he can *neither* walk *nor* run.
23c. Aslam will have to stay in the hostel *whether* he likes it *or* not.
23d. The park is open for *both* children *and* adults.
23e. Mr. Hashmi is *not only* wealthy *but also* generous.

Morphologically, all the three types of conjunctions are invariable. They do not change their form.

3.3.4 Complementisers

The function of complementisers is similar to subordinating conjunctions with only one difference. Whereas subordinating conjunctions introduce subordinate clauses in sentences, complementisers introduce a specific type of subordinate clause, which is called *complement clause*.

A complement clause is a clause which takes the place of direct object of the verb. A direct object of the verb is an entity (a thing or person) that receives the action of the verb, e.g., in the sentence, “*Ali kicked the ball*” the phrase *the ball* is the direct object of the verb *kicked*.

Now, consider the following sentences:

- 24a. He knows Ali.
24b. He knows that his name is Ali.
25a. Ahmed doubts his abilities.
25b. Ahmed doubts if he can do this task.
26a. His mother prayed for his success
26b. His mother prayed for him to succeed.

In sentence (24a), the direct object of the verb *knows* is 'Ali'; whereas, in sentence (24b), the direct object of the same verb is a clause 'that his name is Ali', which is a complement clause because it takes the place of the direct object. Likewise, in sentence (25a), the direct object of the verb *doubts* is a phrase 'his abilities'; however, in sentence (25b), the direct object of the verb *doubts* has been replaced by a complement clause 'if he can do this task'. The same goes for sentence (26b) where the verb *prayed* is followed by the complement clause 'for him to succeed'. The worth-noting point here is that just as subordinate clauses are introduced by subordinating conjunctions, complement clauses are introduced by complementisers. In the sentences (24b), (25b) and (26b), *that*, *if* (or *whether*) and *for* are complementisers as they are introducing complement clauses.

In English, there are four complementisers: *that*, *if*, *whether* and *for*. Out of these, the first three, *that*, *if* and *whether*, introduce finite complement clauses (complement clauses which have a tense: present, past or future; e.g., the complement clauses in (24b) and (25b)). On the other hand, *for* introduces non-finite complement clauses (clauses which have no tense, e.g., the complement clause in sentence (26b)).

To ensure clarity, a few more examples illustrating the use of complementisers have been given below:

- 27a. Aslam wondered *if* he would be able to go to Paris next year.
- 27b. Ali asked his father *whether* he could go to the market with his friends.
- 27c. Maria thought *that* she should visit her grandmother.
- 27d. The mother was anxious *for* her son to win the prize.

3.3.5 Prepositions

A preposition is a word which indicates where or when something is (lies or occurs) in relation to something else. For example, consider the following phrases:

- 28a. The cat ***under*** the chair (the preposition 'under' indicates where 'the cat' is in relation to 'the chair')
- 28b. The book ***on*** the shelf (the preposition 'on' indicates where 'the book' is in relation to 'the shelf')
- 28c. The destruction ***after*** the explosion (the preposition 'after' indicates when 'the destruction' occurs in relation to 'the explosion')
- 28d. Chirping of birds ***in*** the morning (the preposition 'in' indicates when the 'chirping of birds' occurs in relation to 'the morning')

In the above examples (28a) to (28d), the prepositions *under*, *on*, *after* and *in* indicate the relationship between two nouns (or noun phrases). Prepositions can also be used to specify the location where an action takes place and thus indicate the relationship between a verb and a noun (or noun phrase). Consider the following examples:

- 29a. The child fell *on* the rock.
- 29b. An apple dropped *from* the tree.

29c. Aslam was driving *down* the street.

The word ‘preposition’ itself provides a clue about its syntactic distribution. In fact, the literal meaning of the word ‘preposition’ is ‘positioned before’ as the word is a combination of a prefix ‘pre-’ (meaning ‘before’) and ‘position’. This is because, in English prepositional phrases, the preposition occurs before a noun or a pronoun (e.g., *on* the table, *in* the evening, *before* the class, *for* him, *with* her, etc.). The job of a preposition, therefore, is to show the relationship between the word which occurs after it to another nearby word. Consider the following examples:

30a. The jar *for* candies (the preposition ‘for’ shows the relationship between ‘the jar’ and ‘candies’)

30b. The story *about* the witch (the preposition ‘about’ shows the relationship between ‘the story’ and ‘the witch’)

30c. The leader *of* the gang (the preposition ‘of’ shows the relationship between ‘the leader’ and ‘the gang’)

30d. A message *from* the teacher (the preposition ‘from’ shows the relationship between ‘a message’ and ‘the teacher’)

On the basis of their form, prepositions can be divided into two types: simple and compound prepositions. Simple prepositions are one-word prepositions, e.g., *at*, *on*, *upon*, *with*, *among*, *beside*, *during*, etc. A compound preposition consists of more than one words but functions as a single preposition. Compound prepositions can further be divided into two-word compound prepositions and three-word compound prepositions. Some examples of two-word compound prepositions are: *according to*, *instead of*, *because of*, *next to* and *out of*. Some examples of three-word compound prepositions are: *in addition to*, *on account of*, *in spite of*, *in front of*, *on top of*, etc.

Consider the following sentences with two-word and three-word compound prepositions:

40a. *According to* the plan, we all reached the park at 2pm.

40b. The crops were destroyed *because of* the flood.

40c. There is a beautiful garden *in front of* his house.

40d. He could not take the exam *on account of* his bad health.

3.3.6 Particles

Particles are words that apparently look like prepositions but show very unique behavior in their syntactic distribution.

Consider the following examples:

41a. Maria switched *off* the fan.

42a. Ahmed put *on* his hat.

The words *off* and *on* in the above sentences do not behave like prepositions as they can change their position in the sentence from before the noun phrase to after the noun phrase and still the sentence remains grammatical. See, for example:

41b. Maria switched the fan *off*.

42b. Ahmed put his hat *on*.

However, prepositions do not allow such flexibility in their syntactic distribution. Consider the following sentences where the same words, *off* and *on*, are behaving like prepositions:

43a. Farid fell *off* the ladder.

44a. We often talk *on* the phone.

Changing the position of the prepositions makes the sentences ungrammatical:

43b. *Farid fell the ladder *off*.

44b. *We often talk the phone *on*.

(Ungrammaticality is indicated by putting an asterisk (*) before the sentences 43b and 44b.)

Whereas prepositions are always followed by a noun phrase (a noun or pronoun), particles do not always need a noun phrase after them. Consider the following examples:

45a. The plane took *off*.

45b. Their car broke *down*.

45c. The athlete gave *up*.

In fact, prepositions make a phrase, called prepositional phrase, by combining with the following noun phrase. On the other hand, a particle joins a verb to form a phrasal verb. Few more examples of phrasal verbs are: *add up*, *call in*, *bring up*, *figure out*, *think over*, *give away*, *blow up*, *call off*, *turn down*, *wake up*, etc.

With this, we close our discussion of major lexical and grammatical categories. The knowledge that you have gained in this unit about ten different classes of words will be utilized in the next unit to group words together to form larger syntactic units called ‘phrases’.

3.4 Major Differences between Lexical and Functional Categories

Lexical categories	Functional categories
1. Lexical categories include: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.	1. Functional categories include: determiners, auxiliaries, conjunctions, complementisers, prepositions and particles.

<p>2. Whenever a message is conveyed using a language, major part of the content is conveyed through lexical categories because they carry meaning. On account of being major contributors to the content of a message, they are also termed as ‘contentives’.</p> <p>3. Lexical categories are able to change their morphological form as they allow affixes (prefixes and suffixes) to be added to them to change their meaning as well as their lexical category.</p> <p>4. Lexical categories are open to change, which means they allow new words to be added to them or some old words to be deleted from them over time. Due to this feature, they are termed as ‘open’ class of words.</p>	<p>2. Functional categories are not able to convey enough meaning on their own. Instead, they provide structure to the message. Since they are more functional in their character, they are termed as ‘functional’ categories or ‘functors’.</p> <p>3. Functional categories are invariable in their morphological form as they do not allow affixes to be added to them.</p> <p>4. Functional categories do not show the tendency of adding new words to them nor of deleting words from them. That is why, they are termed as ‘closed’ class of words.</p>
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Summary Points

- **Lexical Categories:** word classes that convey the content of a sentence.
- **Nouns:** a lexical category which generally serves as the subject and the direct object in a sentence, appears after a determiner, can be modified by adjective(s), is negated with 'no' and has its singular and plural forms.
- **Pronouns:** a sub-class of nouns whose job is to replace nouns, is similar in syntactic distribution to nouns, has its different morphological forms which serve to signal their functions in the sentence, also has possessive forms.
- **Verbs:** a lexical category which denotes an action, state or emotion, follows the subject in a sentence, indicates tense, and is modified by adverb(s).
- **Adjectives:** a lexical category which modifies nouns, appears between a determiner and a noun, can also appear after some auxiliaries (*is, am, are*), is modified by adverb(s), and has its comparative and superlative forms.
- **Adverbs:** a lexical category which is used to modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb and even the whole sentence.
- **Syntactic Distribution:** syntactic environment of a word; in simpler words, which words come before and after a word.
- **Morphological Distribution:** the kinds of affixes (prefixes and suffixes) a word attaches to.
- **Functional Categories:** word classes that express grammatical information in a sentence.
- **Determiners:** a functional category that introduces a noun in a sentence and also specifies whether the noun is general or specific, has four major types: articles, demonstratives, possessives and quantifiers.
- **Auxiliaries:** a functional category which helps the main verb to add certain grammatical information to the clause, has two categories: primary and modal auxiliaries.
- **Conjunctions:** a functional category which helps to join words, phrases and clauses, has three types: coordinating, subordinating and correlative conjunctions.
- **Complementisers:** a functional category which introduces a complement clause in a sentence.
- **Complement Clause:** a clause which takes the place of direct object of the verb.

- **Prepositions:** a functional category which indicates where or when something lies or occurs in relation to something else, is always followed by a noun phrase.
- **Particles:** a functional category which apparently looks identical to prepositions but is different in its syntactic characteristics as it can be moved from its position (from before the direct object of the verb to after it) without affecting the grammaticality of the sentence, can even occur without a noun phrase after it.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Read the following passage from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum. Identify all the adjectives and adverbs that you come across and sort them in the table given below.

Three were men and a woman, and all were oddly dressed. They wore round hats that rose to a small point a foot above their heads, with little bells around the brims that tinkled sweetly as they moved. The hats of the men were blue; the little woman's hat was white, and she wore a white gown that hung in pleats from her shoulders. Over it were sprinkled little stars that glistened in the sun like diamonds. The men were dressed in blue, of the same shade as their hats, and wore well-polished boots with a deep roll of blue at the tops. The men, Dorothy thought, were about as old as Uncle Henry, for two of them had beards. But the little woman was doubtless much older. Her face was covered with wrinkles, her hair was nearly white, and she walked rather stiffly.

Adjectives	Adverbs

2. Read the following passage from the same text. Identify the three types of conjunctions and sort them in the given table.

When Dorothy stood in the doorway and looked around, she could see nothing but the great gray prairie on every side. Not a tree nor a house broke the broad sweep of flat country that reached to the edge of the sky in all directions. The sun had baked the plowed land into a gray mass, with little cracks running through it. Even the grass was not green, for the sun had burned the tops of the long blades until they were the same gray color to be seen everywhere. Once the house had been painted, but the sun blistered the paint and the rains washed it away, and now the house was as dull and gray as everything else.

Coordinating Conjunctions	Subordinating Conjunctions	Correlative Conjunctions

3. Using the complementisers, *if*, *that* and *for*, construct three sentences of your own.
4. What do you understand by the term ‘syntactic distribution’? Does it provide a reliable criterion for classifying words?
5. Differentiate between the following:
 - a) Adjectives and Adverbs
 - b) Verbs and Auxiliaries
 - c) Prepositions and Particles
 - d) Subordinating Conjunctions and Complementisers
 - e) Primary Auxiliaries and Modal Auxiliaries

6. Assignment:

Are there lexical and functional categories in your mother tongue? How many word classes can you identify in each category? Enlist syntactic features of each word class and also collect some examples for each. How similar or different are the word classes in your mother tongue to/from English?

Further Reading

Carnie, A. (2006). *Syntax: A generative introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.

Kim, J. B., & Sells, P. (2007). *English Syntax: An Introduction*. Centre for the Study of Language and Information.

Miller, J. (2002). *An Introduction to English Syntax*. Edinburgh University Press.

Tallerman, M. (2015). *Understanding Syntax* (4th Ed.). Routledge, London.

PHRASES

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Introduction to the Unit

The unit aims to familiarize students with the concept of phrases as meaningful groups of words. After differentiating between well-formed phrases and ungrammatical strings of words, the unit introduces students to Chomsky's idea of generative grammar and phrase structure rules. Next, phrase structure rules for different types of phrases (NP, VP, AP, AdvP, PP and CP) have been presented and demonstrated with the help of tree diagrams. Then, the unit goes on to discuss sentence as a group of phrases and thus throws light on the hierarchical structure of sentence. Next, the idea of recursion has been introduced followed by the syntactic operations of coordination and particle movement. Finally, the unit familiarizes students with the concept of structural ambiguity and also demonstrates how phrase structure rules help to disambiguate ambiguous sentences.

Learning Objectives

Having gone through the unit, the students will be able to:

- Differentiate between well-formed phrases and ill-formed strings of words.
- Recognize that construction of phrases is rule-governed.
- Explore Phrase Structure Rules (PS rules) for different types of phrases.
- Identify different types of phrases, such as: NP, VP, AP, AdvP, PP and CP.
- Analyze how phrases combine to form a sentence.
- Draw tree diagrams with the help of PS rules for different types of phrases and for sentences.
- Explore the idea of hierarchical structure of a sentence.
- Explore and use the concept of recursion and its significance in any language.
- Demonstrate coordination and particle movement.
- Differentiate between structural ambiguity and lexical ambiguity.
- Disambiguate ambiguous sentences.

4.1 Introduction

You have already learnt about classes of words in Unit 3. Towards the beginning of Unit 3, you were told that words group together to form phrases. In this Unit, we are going to see how this grouping takes place.

Consider the following conversation between Speaker A and Speaker B:

Speaker A: What are you reading?

Speaker B: A magazine.

Speaker A: Where did you get it from?

Speaker B: From the library.

Speaker A: What time does the library open?

Speaker B: At seven in the morning.

All the responses of Speaker B are phrases since they are groups of words used as meaningful units in response to particular questions. On the other hand, consider the following:

*big in for, *up see car, *boy a study, *trees some down

Such groups of words cannot be considered phrases as they do not form meaningful units and are, therefore, ungrammatical (which is indicated by putting an asterisk before each of them). Now, the question arises if *'from the library'* is a grammatical phrase and *'*big in for'* is not, are there some rules for putting words together in order to generate grammatical phrases? The answer is, YES. There are rules for grouping words into grammatical phrases. Before we discuss the rules for generating phrases, let's consider another question: If there are rules for generating phrases, where do those rules come from and how do the speakers of a language learn those rules?

The answer to this question is that the knowledge of the structure of phrases is a part of mental grammar, a grammar that all competent speakers of a language have in their mind which makes them able to communicate with each other. In 1950s, Noam Chomsky introduced the term '**generative grammar**' to refer to a small set of rules that the speakers of a language have in their mind to help them generate well-formed (grammatically sound) phrases and sentences. According to Chomsky, this set of rules is small and finite (limited in number) but equips the speakers with the potential for generating infinite (unlimited) number of well-formed phrases and sentences. These rules are called **phrase structure rules or rewrite rules**. As the name suggests, phrase structure rules contain information about the structure of phrases; in other words, a particular phrase structure rule would provide information about the type of constituents and their order in a particular type of phrase.

Next section will discuss phrase structure rules for various phrases in more detail.

4.2 Phrase Structure Rules (PS rules)

Before we discuss phrase structure rules, it is important to understand some basic information about phrases. Every phrase is a projection of its head, which means that in a phrase, there is a head word which projects into a phrase. For example, in the phrase 'a tall boy', the head word is 'boy', which has projected into the phrase 'a tall boy'. So, in any phrase, head is the obligatory constituent and all the other constituents are optional. In the phrase, 'a tall boy', the word 'boy' being the head of the phrase is the obligatory element of the phrase; whereas, the determiner 'a' and the adjective 'tall' are the optional elements of the phrase. The head word gives the phrase its name as well as its grammatical function. The phrase 'a tall boy' is a noun phrase because the head word 'boy' is a noun. Also, the whole phrase will function as a noun owing to the grammatical function of its head.

Another important point to understand is that a phrase can be a single word (the head word on its own) or a group of words (the head word having projected into a phrase). For example, the word ‘*boys*’ in the sentence ‘*Boys play cricket*’ is a noun phrase. Likewise, the group of words ‘*some tall boys*’ is also a noun phrase in the sentence, ‘*Some tall boys play cricket*’.

Keep the above information in mind as we discuss the phrase structure rules below:

4.2.1 Noun Phrase (NP)

A noun phrase is a phrase (a word or group of words) which has a noun (or a pronoun) as its head and performs the grammatical function of a noun.

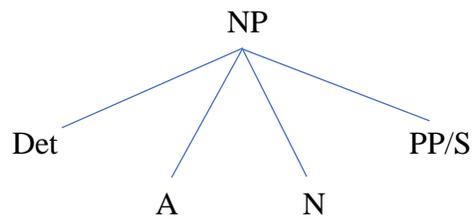
Consider the following examples:

- 1a. *Ahmed* played football.
- 1b. *I* played football.
- 1c. *You* played football.
- 1d. *He* played football.
- 1e. *The boy* played football.
- 1f. *The tall boy* played football.
- 1g. *The boy from Lahore* played football.
- 1h. *The boy who came from Lahore* played football.

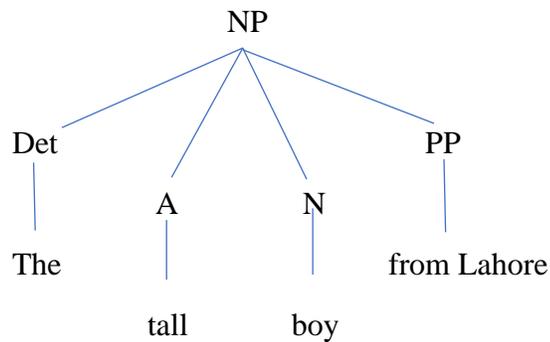
In the above examples, the italicized phrases (*Ahmed*, *I*, *You*, *He*, *The tall boy*, *The boy from Lahore* and *The boy who came from Lahore*) are noun phrases. Each of them has a noun or a pronoun as its head and therefore forms a Noun Phrase (NP). Looking closely into all of these NPs, we can postulate the following rule for generating NPs:

2. NP → (Det) (A) N (PP/S)

This rule provides a blueprint for generating noun phrases and is one of the phrase structure rules. The rule indicates that an NP contains an obligatory noun or pronoun, N or PRN (as in the NPs in 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d), may also contain an optional determiner, Det (as in the NP in 1e), any number of optional adjectives, A (as in 1f), an optional prepositional phrase, PP (as in 1g) or even a sentence, S (as in 1h). All the optional elements are enclosed in brackets. The rule for NP can also be given a diagrammatic representation, known as a tree diagram, as shown below:



On inserting appropriate elements into the nodes, we will get well-formed NPs, for example:



Note that observing the PS rule for NP will only generate grammatical NPs and not the ungrammatical phrases of the sort: *a my book, * He bag book, * the some students, etc.

4.2.2 Verb Phrase (VP)

Just as an NP has a noun (N) as its head, a verb phrase has a verb (V) as its head. A finite verb (a verb marked for tense) on its own can form a VP or it can be accompanied by its direct and indirect objects along with modifiers.

Consider the following examples:

- 3a. The boy *ran*.
- 3b. The boy *laughed*.
- 3c. The boy *writes a letter*.
- 3d. The boy *eats his dinner hurriedly*.
- 3e. The boy *gave a book to his friend*.
- 3f. The boy *met his friend in the park near the school*.

3g. The boy *thought his friend was clever*.

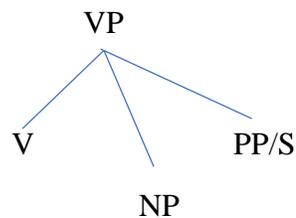
3h. The boy *told his friend a story*.

The italicized phrases in the above examples have a V as their head and are, therefore, verb phrases (*ran, laughed, writes a letter, eats his dinner hurriedly, gave a book to his friend, found a coin in the park, thought his friend was clever, told his friend a story*). A close analysis of these phrases leads us to formulate the following PS rule for a VP:

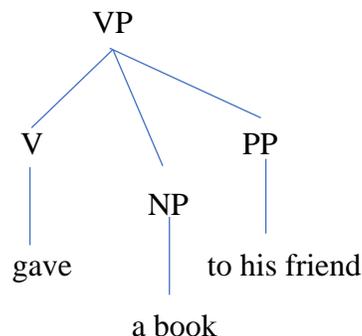
4. $VP \rightarrow V (NP) (PP/S/AdvP)$

The rule indicates that a VP contains an obligatory V (as in 3a and 3b), which can be followed by an optional NP (as in 3c), which can further be followed by any number of PPs (as in 3e and 3f) or a sentence S (as in 3g) or an adverbial phrase AdvP (as in 3d). This rule generates only grammatical VPs and does not generate ungrammatical ones, such as: * the run fast, * run fast park, * run fast the sing, etc.

Representing the VP rule diagrammatically, we get the following tree diagram:



Let's insert appropriate constituents into the nodes:

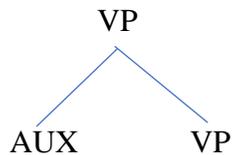


However, while discussing the structure of VP, we must not forget auxiliaries. You have already learnt in Unit 3 (Section 3.3.2: Auxiliaries) that lexical verbs can be accompanied by auxiliaries.

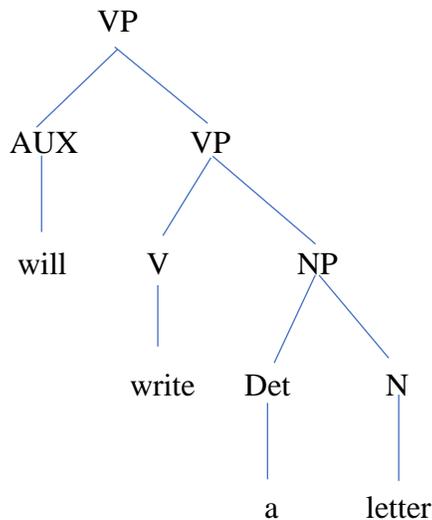
To accommodate auxiliaries, we need a second VP rule, which is stated below:

5. VP \longrightarrow [AUX] VP

The following tree diagram illustrates the second VP rule:



Let's customize this rule for the VP 'will write a letter':



4.2.3 Adjective Phrase (AP)

An adjective phrase is a word or a group of words which has an adjective as its head and serves to modify a noun or a pronoun.

Consider the following examples:

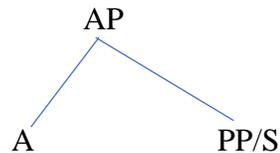
- 6a. The boy is *happy*.
- 6b. The boy is *frightened*.
- 6c. The boy is *proud of his achievement*.
- 6d. The boy is *proud that he won the race*.

In the above examples, the italicized phrases (*happy*, *frightened*, *proud of his achievement* and *proud that he won the race*) are adjective phrases. Each of them has an adjective as its head and

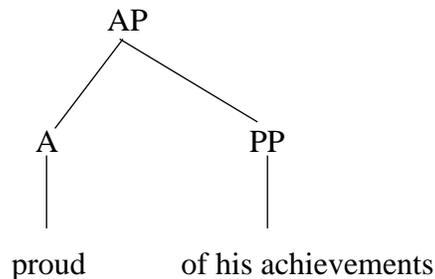
therefore forms an Adjective Phrase (AP). On the basis of the type and sequence of constituents, the following PS rule can be postulated for AP:

7. AP \rightarrow A (PP/S)

The AP rule explains that an AP contains an obligatory adjective (as in 6a and 6b), which can be followed by a PP (as in 6c) or a sentence S (as in 6d). The AP rule can be diagrammatically represented in the following manner:



Following this rule, the tree diagram for the AP '*proud of his achievements*' is given below:



4.2.4 Adverb Phrase (AdvP)

An adverb phrase is a word or a group of words which has an adverb as its head and serves to modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb or even a whole sentence.

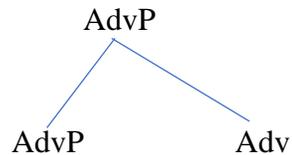
Consider the following examples:

- 8a. The baby slept *peacefully*.
- 8b. She treated the child *very nicely*.
- 8c. The plan went *really well*.
- 8d. He arrived at the party *very late*.
- 8e. The water was *too* hot.
- 8f. The jewelry was *highly* expensive.
- 8f. *Luckily*, he won the lottery.

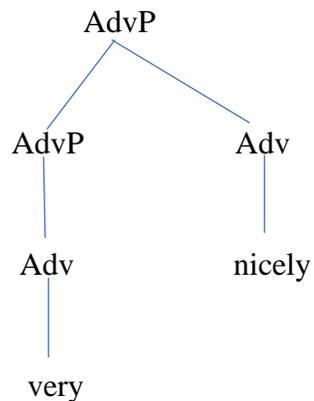
In the above examples, the italicized phrases (*peacefully*, *very nicely*, *very well*, *very late*, *too*, *highly*, *Luckily*) are adverb phrases. On the basis of the structure of adverb phrases, the following PS rule can be posited for them:

9. AdvP \longrightarrow (AdvP) Adv

Diagrammatically, the rule can be represented in the following way:



Following this rule, the tree diagram for the adverb phrase ‘very nicely’ is given below:



4.2.5 Prepositional Phrase (PP)

Prepositional phrase consists of a preposition as its head which is generally followed by an NP.

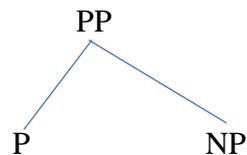
Consider the examples given below:

- 10a. Ali put the book *on the table*.
- 10b. Ahmed borrowed a book *from the library*.
- 10c. They found a kitten *under the bed*.
- 10d. A mosquito flew *into the room*.
- 10e. A puppy was hiding *behind the bush*.
- 10f. He must listen *to his parents*.

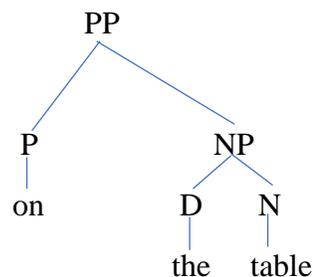
In the above examples, the italicized phrases (*on the table*, *from the library*, *under the bed*, *into the room*, *behind the bush* and *to the parents*) are prepositional phrases. On the basis of these examples, the following PS rule for a PP can be deduced:

11. PP → P NP

The PP rule can also be represented in the form of a tree diagram in the following way:



Using this rule, the tree diagram for the PP ‘on the table’ will be drawn in the following way:



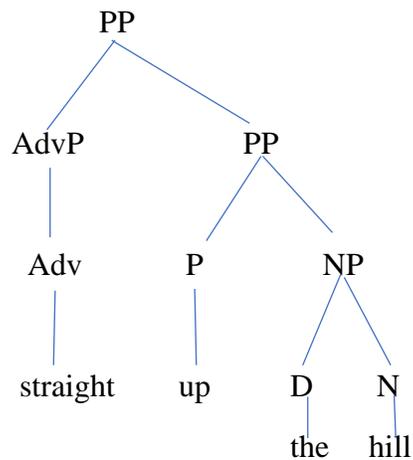
An important feature of PPs is that they can be intensified by two of the adverbs, *right* and *straight*. Consider the following examples:

- 12a. The monkey ran *straight* up the hill.
- 12b. The boss came *straight* to the point.
- 12c. Ahmed knew the plan *right* from the start.
- 12d. They left the home *right* after the lunch.

To accommodate the adverb, the PP rule becomes:

13. PP → (AdvP) P NP

Diagrammatically, it can be represented for the PP ‘*straight up the hill*’:



Having discussed all the major types of phrases and their PS rules, a set of PS rules for the major types of phrases can be compiled in the following way:

- 14a. NP → (Det) (A) N (PP/S)
- b. VP → V (NP) (PP/S/AdvP)
- c. AP → A (PP/S)
- d. AdvP → (AdvP) Adv
- e. PP → P NP

Keeping these five rules in mind, next we will discuss the PS rule for sentence.

4.2.6 Sentence (S)

A well-formed English sentence consists of an NP followed by a (finite) VP.

Consider the following sentences:

14a. The black cat chased the brown mouse in the street.

NP[The black cat]VP[chased a brown mouse in the street]

14b. Boys play cricket in the playground.

NP[Boys]VP[play cricket in the playground]

14c. Some students were making noise in the classroom.

NP[Some students]VP[were making noise in the classroom]

14d. He might arrive in an hour.

$_{NP}[\text{He}]_{VP}[\text{might arrive in an hour}]$

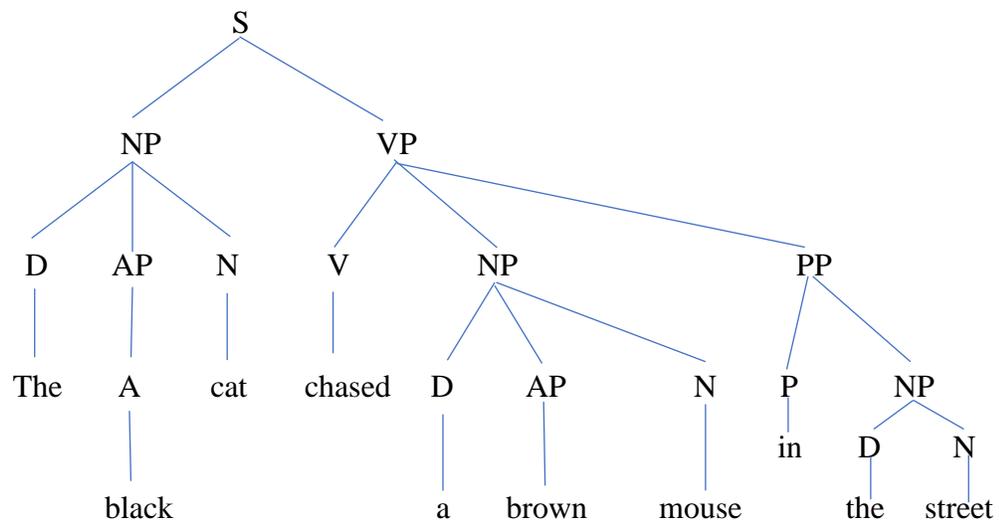
14e. They found some good books on the new bookstore.

$_{NP}[\text{They}]_{VP}[\text{found some good books on the new bookstore}]$

Looking at all the above sentences and their bracketing into NP and VP, the PS rule for sentence S can be represented as follows:

15. $S \longrightarrow \text{NP VP}$

The rule indicates that a well-formed English sentence is a combination of an NP and a VP. As you already know the PS rules for NP and VP, the tree diagram for a sentence S can be drawn in the following way:



The above tree diagram also demonstrates that a sentence has a **hierarchical structure**, which means that in a sentence words group together to form phrases, and phrases group together to form larger phrases and sentences. Having a hierarchical structure is a property which is common to all human languages.

4.2.7 Complementiser Phrase (CP)

A complementiser phrase is a phrase which has a complementiser as its head. In simpler words, a CP is a subordinate clause introduced by a complementiser (subordinating conjunction). CPs are also known as *embedded sentences*.

Consider the following examples:

16a. Maria thought that Amna admired her honesty.

s[Maria thought _{CP}[*that Amna admired her honesty*]]

16b. Ahmed wondered if his boss liked his work.

s[Ahmed wondered _{CP}[*if his boss liked his work*]]

16c. The idea that Asma could join sports club surprised everyone.

s[The idea _{CP}[*that Asma could join sports club*] surprised everyone]

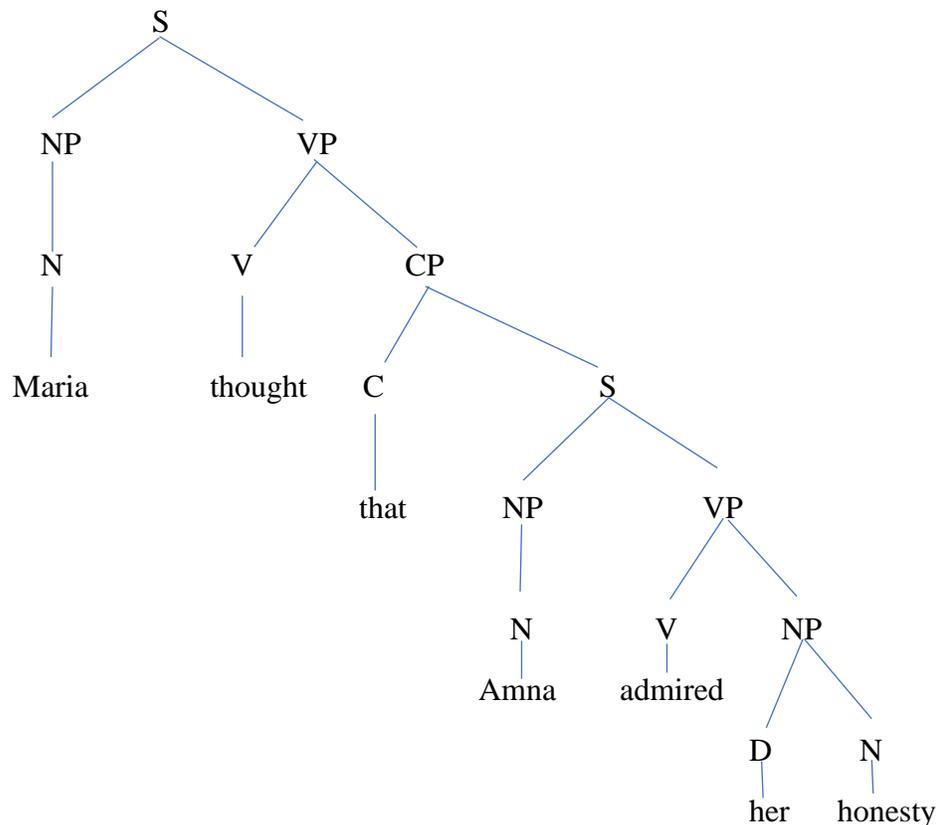
16d. That her children disliked vegetables annoyed the mother.

s[_{CP}[*That her children disliked vegetables*] annoyed the mother]

Looking closely at the structure of phrases bracketed as CP in the above sentences, the following PS rule can be formulated for CP:

17. CP → C S

The CP rule indicates that a CP consists of a complementiser C followed by a sentence S. Following this rule, the tree diagram for the sentence ‘Maria thought that Amna admired her honesty’ can be drawn in the following way:



The tree diagram shows that CP contains a sentence (S) which is literally embedded in another sentence (S).

4.3 Recursion

Consider the following sentences:

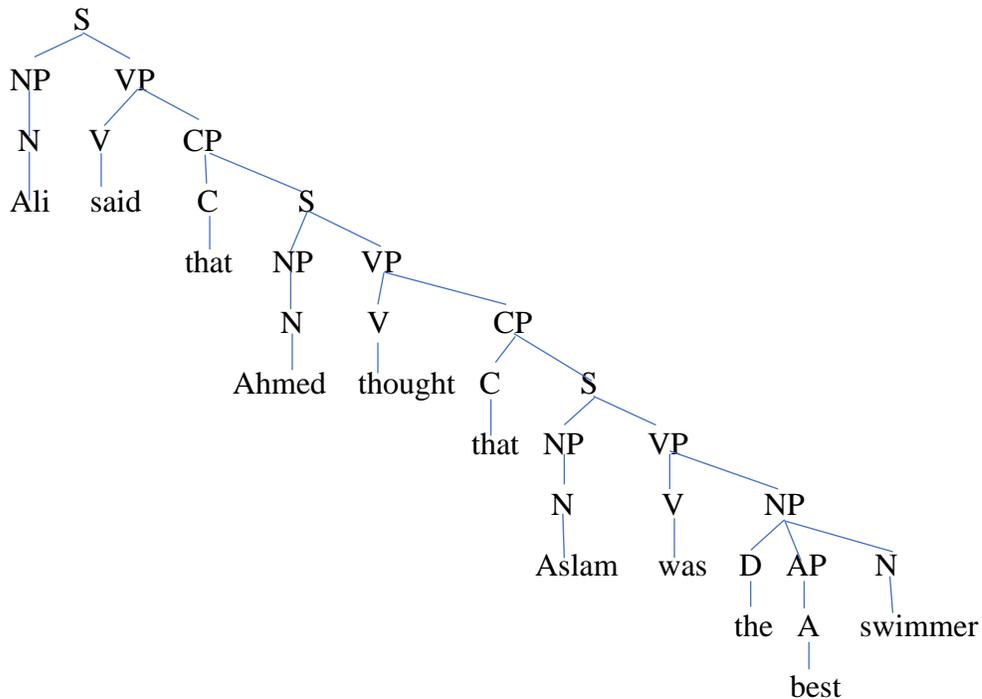
18a. Ali said that Ahmed thought that Aslam was the best swimmer.

18b. Amna doubted that Maria believed that Asma thought that Salma was the best swimmer.

Such embedding of CPs can go on forever. The above sentences indicate that PS rules can be recursively applied which means that one or more rules can be applied more than once in a sentence. To generate the above sentences (18a and 18b), the PS rules for sentence S and complementiser phrase CP have been recursively applied. The two rules are:

S → NP VP
 CP → C S

The below-given tree diagram for one of the above sentences (18a) clearly shows the recursive application of these two rules:



Recursion is a unique property of human languages which allows the speakers to put sentences within sentences. In the tree diagram drawn above for the given sentence, the rule for sentence S

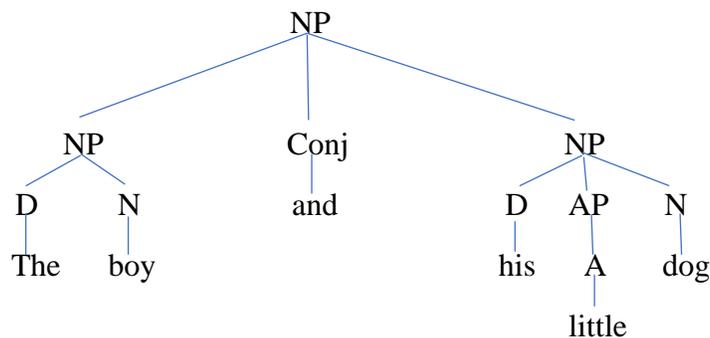
has been applied thrice, which means that two sentences have been embedded within the main sentence.

4.4 Co-ordination

In English sentences, similar categories can be coordinated. In other words, an NP can be coordinated with another NP, a VP can be coordinated with another VP, a PP can be coordinated with another PP and so on. For two like phrases to be coordinated, the PS rule can be written as follows:

19. $XP \longrightarrow XP \text{ Conj } XP$

In this rule, XP can be an NP, a VP, a PP, an AP, etc. The rule indicates that two like phrases can be coordinated with the help of a coordinating conjunction. Applying this rule, coordination of two NPs can be diagrammatically shown in the following way:

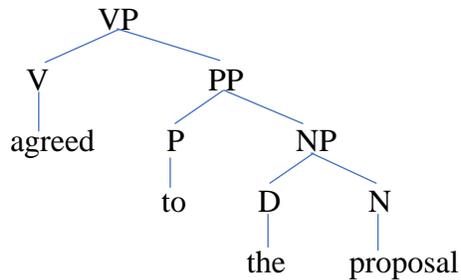


4.5 Particle Movement

In Unit 3 (Section 3.3.6), particles have been differentiated from prepositions. In the same way, the structure of a VP containing a particle (Part) would be different from the one containing a PP. For a VP containing a prepositional verb (a verb followed by a PP, e.g., *agreed to the proposal*, *knocking at the door*, *listens to music*, *relies on his parents*, etc.), the PS rule is given below:

20. $VP \longrightarrow V \text{ PP}$

Diagrammatically, for the VP, *agreed to the proposal*, the rule can be represented in the following way:

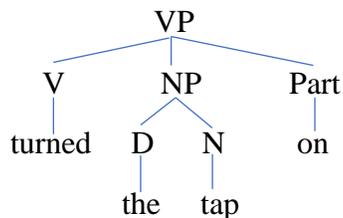
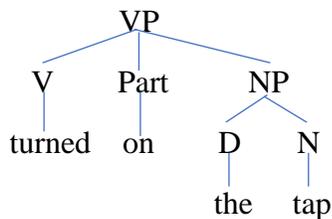


Although apparently a particle looks like a preposition, it does not merge with the following NP to form a PP and, therefore, can be moved (e.g., *turned on the tap* can be changed to *turned the tap on*). This is called **particle movement**. For VPs with particles, following two rules can be introduced:

21. VP → V Part NP

22. VP → V NP Part

The two rules can be diagrammatically represented with the help of the following two tree diagrams respectively:



The above tree diagrams clearly indicate that the particle *neither* merges with the following NP nor with the preceding NP to form a larger phrase.

4.6 Ambiguity

The word ‘ambiguous’ generally means *unclear* or *vague*. However, in linguistics, the word has a special meaning, which is somehow related to its general meaning. If a phrase or sentence is ambiguous, it has two or more distinct meanings. In other words, an ambiguous phrase or sentence can be interpreted in more than one ways. Consider the following examples:

23. The boy strokes the child with a stick.

24. Little boys and girls enjoyed the magic show.

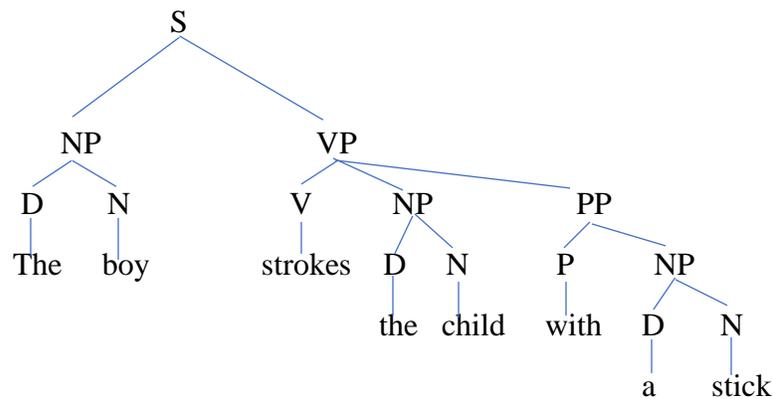
The sentence in example (23) is ambiguous as it can be interpreted in the following two ways:

23 (i) The boy strokes the child using a stick.

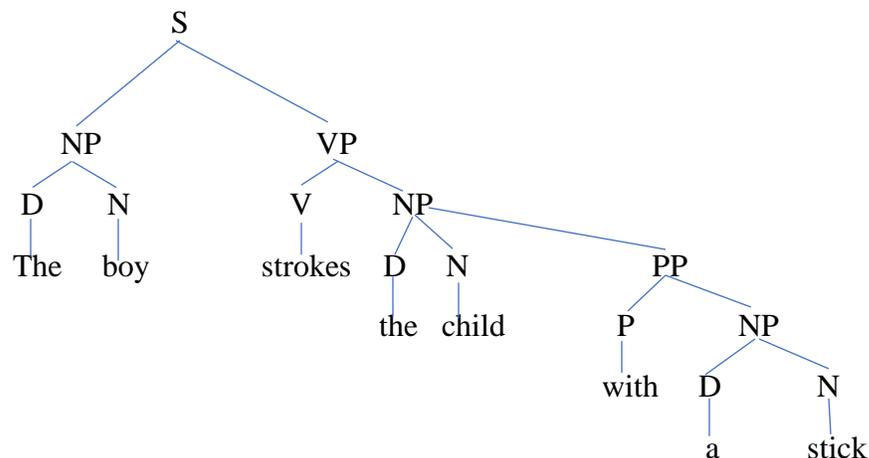
23 (ii) The boy strokes the child, who has a stick.

The two interpretations of sentence (23) can be represented with the help of PS rules in the following ways respectively:

23 (i)



23 (ii)

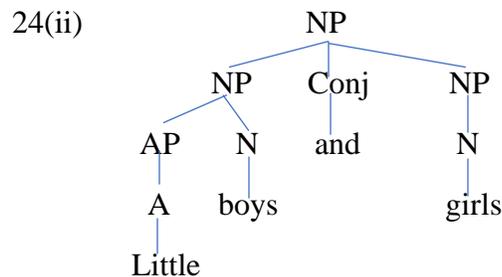
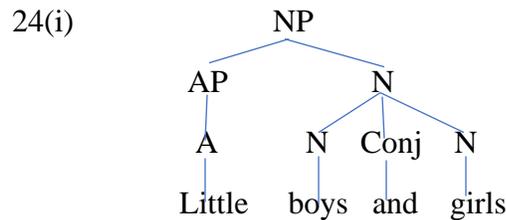


On the basis of the tree diagrams drawn above to show two different interpretations of sentence (23), we can say that PS rules are able to disambiguate ambiguous sentences.

Now, consider the sentence in example (24). In that sentence, it is only the initial NP, *Little boys and girls*, which is ambiguous and can have the two interpretations given below:

- 24 (i) Little boys and little girls
- 24 (ii) Little boy and all the girls

These two interpretations of the NP, *Little boys and girls*, can be diagrammatically represented with the help of PS rules in the following ways respectively:



The kind of ambiguity exemplified in (23) and (24) is known as **structural ambiguity**. A sentence or a phrase having more than one underlying structures is considered structurally ambiguous. The underlying structure of a phrase or sentence is also called **deep structure**; whereas, the way a phrase or sentence is spoken or written is known as its **surface structure**. Example (23) represents the surface structure of the given sentence; whereas, the two tree diagrams 23(i) and 23(ii) represent the two deep structures, which underlie the surface structure given in (23). In terms of deep structure and surface structure, an ambiguous sentence (or a phrase) can be defined as a sentence (or a phrase) which has one surface structure but more than one deep structures.

Apart from structural ambiguity, there is another kind of ambiguity known as **lexical ambiguity**. Whereas a structurally ambiguous phrase or sentence has more than one underlying structures or deep structures, a lexically ambiguous phrase or sentence is one which contains a lexical item (a word) having more than one meaning. Consider the following sentences:

- 25. Ahmed decided to visit the bank.
- 26. The farmer observed that his dog had grown another foot.

The underlined words in the above sentences have more than one meaning and, therefore, make the sentences ambiguous. Such ambiguity is referred to as lexical ambiguity. It is important to be able to distinguish between the instances of structural and lexical ambiguity.

Here, we close the unit on phrases. The next unit will introduce you the important grammatical notions of 'tense, aspect and modality'. After you become familiar with the ideas of tense, aspect and modality, your understanding of 'sentence' as a grammatical unit will be strengthened a great deal.

Summary Points

Generative Grammar: a (finite) set of rules that the speakers of a language have in their mind to help them generate (infinite) grammatical phrases and sentences.

Phrase Structure Rules (PS rules): rules that contain information about the types of constituents and their order in a particular type of phrase. They are also known as rewrite rules.

Noun Phrase (NP): a phrase which has a noun as its head. The PS-rule for NP is:
NP \longrightarrow (Det)(A) N (PP/S).

Verb Phrase (VP): a phrase which has a verb as its head. The PS rule for VP is:
VP \longrightarrow V(NP) (PP/S/AdvP). When verb is accompanied by auxiliary, the VP rule becomes:
VP \longrightarrow [AUX] VP.

Adjective Phrase (AP): a phrase which has an adjective as its head and serves to modify a noun. The PS rule for AP is: AP \longrightarrow A (PP/S).

Adverb Phrase (AdvP): a phrase which has an adverb as its head and serves to modify a verb, an adjective, another adverb or even a whole sentence. The PS rule for AdvP is:
AdvP \longrightarrow (AdvP) Adv.

Prepositional Phrase (PP): a phrase which has a preposition as its head and is generally followed by an NP. The PS rule for PP is: PP \longrightarrow P NP.

Sentence: consists of an NP followed by a (finite) VP. The PS rule for a sentence is:
S \longrightarrow NP VP.

Complementiser Phrase (CP): a phrase which has a complementiser as its head. It is basically a subordinate clause. The PS rule for a CP is: CP \longrightarrow C S.

Recursion: Embedding sentences within sentences is known as recursion.

Coordination: phrases of the same type can be coordinated. For two like phrases to be coordinated, the PS rule is: XP \longrightarrow XP Conj XP

Particle Movement: a particle apparently looks like a preposition but behaves differently in a VP. It neither merges with the preceding verb nor with the following NP and can therefore be moved. For VPs with particles, there are two PS rules depending on the position of the particle in the phrase: (i) VP \longrightarrow V Part NP, and (ii) VP \longrightarrow V NP Part

Ambiguity: In linguistics, a sentence is considered ambiguous if it can be interpreted in more than one ways. A phrase or a sentence is lexically ambiguous if the ambiguity is caused by a lexical item (a word) having more than one meanings. However, a phrase or a sentence is considered structurally ambiguous if it has more than one underlying structure, also termed as deep structure. Therefore, a structurally ambiguous phrase or sentence is one which has a single surface structure (verbal form) but two or more deep structures. With the help of phrase structure rules, the structurally ambiguous sentences can be disambiguated.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. From the below given passage, pick out one phrase of each type (NP, VP, AP, AdvP, PP and CP):

The baby grunted again, and Alice looked very anxiously into its face to see what was the matter with it. There could be no doubt that it had a very turn-up nose, much more like a snout than a real nose; also its eyes were getting extremely small, for a baby: altogether Alice did not like the look of the thing at all, “—but perhaps it was only sobbing,” she thought, and looked into its eyes again, to see if there were any tears.

(From *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll)

2. With the help of PS rules, draw tree diagrams for the following phrases and sentences:
- i. some students in the classroom
 - ii. plays cricket with his friends in the park
 - iii. frightened of thunder
 - iv. very happily
 - v. behind the curtain
 - vi. They found some good books on the new bookstore.
 - vii. Ahmed wondered if his boss liked his work.
 - viii. Amna said that Sana thought that Asma was a liar.
3. Apply the PS rule for coordination to draw tree diagrams for the below-given phrases:
- i. Ahmed and his friend
 - ii. my younger brother and his pet
 - iii. tall and handsome
 - iv. happily but curiously
 - v. in the cupboard and on the shelf
4. With the help of tree diagrams, show particle movement in the following phrases:
- i. put on his hat
 - ii. pushed away the man
 - iii. switched off the fan
 - iv. pulled up the rope
 - v. called off the meeting

5. Each of the below-given sentences is structurally ambiguous – having at least two interpretations. Represent the structural ambiguities by providing two tree diagrams for each sentence:
- i. The old lady bumped into a man with an umbrella.
 - ii. The man saw the scientist with his binoculars.
 - iii. Strawberry pudding and cupcakes are her favorite desserts.

6. Assignment

Note down Urdu phrases of different types (NP, VP, AP, AdvP, PP and CP). Find out if the PS rules given in this Unit are applicable to Urdu phrases. Determine the similarities or differences in the structure of Urdu and English phrases.

Further Reading

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. MIT Press.

Carnie, A. (2006). *Syntax: A generative introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.

Kim, J. B., & Sells, P. (2007). *English syntax: An introduction*. Centre for the Study of Language and Information.

TENSE, ASPECT AND MOOD

Written by: Professor Shakeel Amjad

Reviewed by: Dr Muhammad Kamal Khan

Introduction to the Unit

The present unit is going to explore another important aspect of syntax called Tense-Aspect-Mood, also known together as TAM. The grammatical categories of TAM as a combined concept of an important combination for understanding the grammatical features of verbs and/or Verb Phrases (VPs). The main purpose of introducing this concept here in this module is to introduce the TAM features to BS students and enable them to work further on these features in Pakistani regional languages at advanced level in future. The following topics are the focus of this unit:

- TAM as grammatical features
- Tense and types of tense
- Aspect and its nature
- Mood and modality

Learning Objectives

At the end of the unit, the students will be able to:

- Explore grammatical features as part of verb phrase
- Explain tense and types of tense in verb phrase
- Define and analyze aspect as a grammatical feature
- Recognize the nature and types of mood and modality as grammatical features of verb phrase

5.1 Introduction to Tense-Aspect-Mood

In many languages, a number of different features are marked on the verb which tell us how the verb is used. Tense, mood, aspect, and voice are some of the most common of these types of features. Tense locates an event in time, while aspect refers to the way in which the event unfolds within a time frame. Mood signals the speaker's intent or attitude towards their utterance, and voice distinguishes thematic relationships (agent, experiencer, patient, instrument, location, etc. will be explained later in Unit-7) between the verb and arguments of a sentence. Languages differ in how they are realized. The information the first three refer to is encoded by verbal morphology. We will discuss these concepts briefly in this unit.

5.2 Tense

Every human language has ways of talking about time. In grammar, tense is a category that expresses time reference. Tenses generally express time relative to the moment of speaking. Tense

allows a speaker to locate a situation relative to some reference point in time, most likely the time of speaking. Look at the following examples:

- They are playing cricket. (The action is being carried out at the time of speaking.)
- They played cricket. (The action was carried out in the past compared to the time of speaking.)

However, this information sometimes is given by a temporal adverb especially in English. Compare the following:

- **Yesterday** they cut the grass.
- **Tomorrow** they cut the grass

Most languages have a variety of expressions that can be used to show when something happened or will happen. In English these expressions may include:

- **Temporal Adverbs** such as now, soon, later, then, etc.
- **Prepositional Phrases** (PPs) such as in the morning, at night, after the election etc.
- **Noun Phrases** (NPs) such as next year, last year, that week, the next day, etc.
- **Auxiliary Verbs** such as will, was, has, did etc.
- **Affixes** on the verb, such as plays, played, etc.

The term tense is used only for time reference which is marked grammatically – that is, by purely grammatical elements such as affixes, auxiliaries, or particles. This distinction is reflected in standard definitions of tense such as the following:

Comrie (1985): “Tense is grammaticalised expression of location in time.”

Bybee (1985): “Tense refers to the grammatical expression of the time of the situation described in the proposition, relative to some other time.”

Some linguists use the term tense only when the time reference is indicated by verbal morphology called morphological tense. Considering this tradition, the familiar English paradigm **write, wrote, will write** involves a three-way semantic distinction, but only two morphological tenses: past (wrote) vs. non-past (write). As our two definitions indicate, tense systems provide a way of “locating” an event, i.e., specifying its position, in time. Here another point needs to be noticed while talking about time reference. We often use vocabulary of **spatial location**:

- He put the book on the table.
- He built another room in the house.

The way we think and speak about time and about space is not unique to English but common to many languages. Despite such similarities there are important differences as well. Our experience of space is normally three-dimensional, with no one direction having a specially favored status. However, time is one-dimensional and moves in only one direction.

5.2.1 Absolute Tense vs Relative Tense

As noted in Bybee's definition, tense systems always define the time of a situation with reference to some other time. Normally this reference point is the time of the speech event, in which case we speak of an **absolute tense system**. In some languages, another time can be selected as the reference point; this is called a **relative tense system**.

Relative tense and absolute tense are distinct possible uses of the grammatical category of tense. Absolute tense means the grammatical expression of time reference (usually past, present or future) relative to "now" – the moment of speaking. In the case of relative tense, the time reference is construed relative to a different point in time, the moment being considered in the context. In other words, the reference point is the moment of discourse or narration in the case of absolute tense, or a different moment in the case of relative tense.

An example of a normally absolute tense being used relatively, in English, is provided by indirect speech placed in the future. If Tom says, "John will say that he paid for the chocolate", the past tense **paid** refers to a past time relative to the moment of John's expected utterance, and not necessarily to a past time relative to the moment of Tom's present utterance. The same is found in some languages even in past indirect speech (where English tends to preserve absolute tense or use absolute-relative tense, as described in the previous and following sections). In Russian, for example, the sentence "Jane said that she liked chocolate" would take the grammatical form "Jane said that she likes chocolate", where "likes" refers to the present at the time of Jane's reported utterance, and not necessarily the present at the time at which the utterance is reported.

5.2.2 How Many Tenses?

While our words for speaking about time make a three-way distinction between past, present, and future, it is actually somewhat unusual for a language to encode all three of these categories morphologically. For conveying future in English we use auxiliary for example **will** to make a future. One language which does have this property is Lithuanian; note the different verb forms in the following examples:

- 1a) skaitý-au 'I read/was reading' work
 read -1sg.past
- b) skaitý-u ' I read/am reading'
 read-1sg.pres
- c) skaitý-s-iu 'I will read/will be reading'
 read -fut-1sg

The most common morphological tense systems in world languages involve a two-way distinction: either past vs. non-past, or future vs. non-future. We noted above that English has just two morphological tenses, past and non-past.

5.3 Aspect

Aspect in English is verb form or a grammatical category that indicates time-related characteristics how an action, event, or state, denoted by a verb, extends over time. In other words it relates to the distribution of an event over time: is it instant or a long, slow process?; completed or ongoing?; once only or a recurring event? In other words, the aspect of a tense allows us to describe or understand how an event unfolds over time. English has four aspects: **simple**, **progressive**, **perfect**, and **perfect progressive**. In English, aspect is expressed by means of particles, separate verbs, and verb phrases.

5.3.1 Simple Aspect

The simple aspect of a verb is the same as its past, present, and future tenses, such as the following

- I walked,
- I walk,
- I will walk.

5.3.2 Progressive Aspect

The progressive aspect is for actions that are continuous, but not completed.

- He is learning how to drive.

5.3.3 Perfect Aspect

In English grammar, perfect aspect is a verb construction that describes events occurring in the past but linked to a later time, usually the present. In English, the perfect aspect is formed with has, have or had + the past participle (also known as the -en form).

- History has remembered the kings and warriors, because they destroyed.

Generally, the concept of aspect is combined with the concept of tense in most languages. Although English largely separates tense and aspect formally, its aspects (simple (neutral), progressive, perfect, progressive perfect, and habitual) do not correspond very closely to the distinction of perfective vs. imperfective that is found in most languages with aspect. Furthermore, the separation of tense and aspect in English is not maintained rigidly. One instance of this is the alternation, in some forms of English, between sentences such as:

"Have you eaten?"

and

"Did you eat?".

Like tense, aspect is a way that verbs represent time. However, rather than locating an event or state in time, the way tense does, aspect describes "the internal temporal constituency of a situation", or in other words, aspect is a way "of conceiving the flow of the process itself". English aspectual distinctions in the past tense include:

- I went, I used to go, I was going, I had gone.

In the present tense

- I lose, I am losing, I have lost, I have been losing, I am going to lose.

and with the future modal

- I will see, I will be seeing, I will have seen, I am going to see.

What distinguishes these aspects within each tense is not necessarily when the event occurs, but how the time in which it occurs is viewed: as complete, ongoing, consequential, planned, etc. (Bybee 1985) of the event in time. Aspect relates to questions like the following:

- Is the situation changing or static?
- Is the event spread over a period of time, or is it thought of as being instantaneous?
- Does the situation have a definite end point, or is it open-ended?
- Does the situation involve a single unique event, or an event which is repeated over and over?

However, in this chapter we are mainly interested in morphological aspect, that is, the kinds of aspectual distinctions which are frequently signaled by verbal affixation. However, aspect is also an important part of the basic meaning of many predicates. They are generally referred to these aspectual components of meaning as lexical aspect.

5.3.4 Lexical Aspect

One of the most basic ways of classifying predicates relates to the first of the questions listed above: does this predicate (the verb of the sentence) describe a situation which is changing over time, or a situation which is relatively static (unchanging)? Predicates of the first type are called events (dynamic), while those of the second type are called states. There are several types of simple test proposed by Jackendoff (1983:170) for distinguishing states from events in English.

First Test

First, events can be said to "happen," while states cannot. If a particular verb (or verb phrase) can be used naturally to answer the question 'what happened?', then it expresses an event (2a–2d); if not, it expresses a state (2e–2h).

What happened was that...

2a Mary cooked food.

2b the sun set.

2c Atif sang a beautiful Punjabi folk song.

2d The grapes rotted on the vine.

2e *Sana was Sindhi.

2f *The grapes were rotten.

2g *Ahmed had three younger brothers.

2h *Junaid loved continental food.

Second Test

Only events can normally be expressed in the progressive aspect (3a–3c). When states are expressed in this form, the result is normally ungrammatical as in (3d–3g). Sometimes, however, speakers may use this construction to express temporary states (contrast g with h); or for states that are re-interpreted as events, e.g., behaving in a certain way as in (3i).

3a Mary cooked food.

3b the sun set.

3c Atif sang a beautiful Punjabi folk song.

3d *This room is being too warm.

3e *Sane is being Sindhi.

3f *Waleed is having a headache.

3g * Junaid is loving continental food.

3h Sana is loving all the attention she is getting this week.

3i Ali is being himself.

Third Test

The use of simple present tense involves a third test. We know that in English, events which are expressed in the simple present tense take on a habitual interpretation like *I get up early in the morning*, whereas states do not *I am a teacher*. Examples (4a–4c) below, involve event predicates. All the sentences imply that the subject is in the habit of performing the actions described by the predicate. Examples (4d–4e), however, involving stative predicates, imply only that the state of

affairs being described is true at that particular time. They do not imply that the room is always too warm, or that Waleed always has a headache.

5a Mary cooks food (every Saturday).

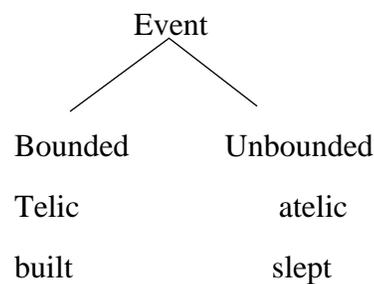
5b The sun sets in the west.

5c Atif sings Punjabi folk songs.

5d This room is too warm.

5e Waleed has a headache.

However, events which are dynamic may be classified into two basic groups, bounded (or telic) vs. unbounded (or atelic).



Telic events are those which have a natural endpoint. For example, consider the verbs *built* and *give birth*. When a building is complete, the act of building is over. When the baby is fully *delivered*, the act of giving birth is over. These end points are an inherent part of the meaning of the predicates (verb) themselves. We can contrast these telic examples with atelic verbs like *sleep*, *walk* or *shine*. Logically, we know that a person must eventually *stop walking*; we even know that the sun must eventually *stop shining*. But there is nothing in the meaning of the verbs themselves that implies the existence of an end point, or specifies when these events can be said to be complete.

Below are the four kinds of situations Vendler identified together with some English verbs and verb phrases exemplifying each type (Vendler 1967: 97–121):

a. **States:** desire, want, love, hate, know, believe

b. **Activities:** (unbounded processes) run, walk, swim, push a cart, drive a car, etc.

c. **Accomplishments:** (bounded processes) run a mile, draw a circle, walk to school, paint a picture, grow up, deliver a sermon, recover from illness, etc.

d. **Achievements:** (point events) recognize, find, stop, start, reach the top, win the race, spot someone, etc.

With this brief introduction to lexical aspect, let us now turn our attention to aspectual features which tend to be marked morphologically.

5.3.5 Perfect vs Perfective

The terms perfective and perfect should not be confused. A perfect tense (abbreviated PERF or PRF) is a grammatical form used to describe a past event with present relevance, or a present state resulting from a past situation. ... e.g., in English *I have arrived* is used to express a past event which is relevant to the present situation. It signals that some event in the past has produced a state of affairs which continues to be true and significant at the present moment.

A perfect tense does not necessarily have to be perfective in aspect. The perfect in English cannot be used with a phrase indicating the specific time of a past event (6a, 6b). It is possible to use phrases indicating the time of relevance (6c) or a span of time within which the past event occurred (6d, 6e). Note, however, that in some other languages (e.g., Spanish) sentences like (6a, 6b) would be acceptable.

6a *I have interviewed ten students yesterday.

6b *I have met 20 car dealers last Monday.

6c I have now arrested 20 drug dealers.

6d I have interviewed ten students today.

6e I have met 20 car dealers in the past year.

Linguists disagree over whether to classify the perfect as tense or aspect. It seems to have features of both, since it includes both the notions of completion (aspect) and location relative to some temporal reference point (tense). This is a good example of the overlap between tense and aspect.

a Present perfect:

- My secretary has destroyed the evidence.

b Past perfect (pluperfect):

- When the police arrived, my secretary had (already) destroyed the evidence.

c Future perfect:

- Before the police arrive, my secretary will have destroyed the evidence.

The past perfect and future perfect forms can be thought of as combinations of absolute and relative tense. The form of the auxiliary *have* indicates the absolute time of the reference point (past or future), while the time of the described situation is always past relative to that reference point.

5.4 Mood and Modality

Modality is about a speaker's or a writer's attitude towards the world. A speaker or writer can express certainty, possibility, willingness, obligation, necessity and ability by using modal words and expressions. There are numerous kinds of expression that have modal meanings, the following is just an example one finds in English:

Modal Auxiliaries

- Sana must/should/might/may/could be home.

Speakers often have different opinions about the same thing. Modality covers a wide range of semantic distinctions. Mood, another grammatical concept, is distinguished from modality. Mood indicates the speaker's purpose in speaking. In many languages, we find that a single affix actually encodes information from more than one of these domains, e.g., tense and aspect, or tense and modality. For this reason, many linguists prefer to treat Tense–Aspect–Modality (TAM) as a single complex category. We treat them as being logically distinct, while recognizing that there is often some overlap in their grammatical expression.

As discussed above the mood conveys the writer's attitude towards the subject. In that, it specifically denotes the tone of a verb making an author's intention to be precise. The wording used can express a question, fact, command, wish or condition. Something to note is that paragraphs that contain commands or requests will have different modality than a sentence expressing wishes. In English Grammar, there are mainly four types of Moods and those are:

Indicative Mood

- The earth revolves around the sun.

Imperative Mood

- Learn English grammar well.

Subjunctive Mood

- I wish I were a king!

Interrogative Mood

- What is in the box?

Mood is used to refer to a verb category or form which indicates whether the verb expresses a fact (the indicative mood), a command (the imperative mood), a question (the interrogative mood), or a wish or possibility (the subjunctive mood), etc. Bybee (1985:22) defines mood as an indication of “what the speaker wants to do with the proposition” in a particular discourse context. In other words, mood is a grammatical reflection of the speaker's purpose in speaking.

However, Linguists refer to the declarative, imperative, and interrogative moods as major mood categories. Each of these categories corresponds to one of three basic speech acts: statements,

commands, and questions, respectively. These are perhaps the most straightforward examples of how mood indicates “what the speaker is doing

Another important category which operates at the sentence level is modality. Modality is a cover term for devices which allow speakers to express varying degrees of commitment to, or belief in, a proposition. A speaker or writer can express certainty, possibility, willingness, obligation, necessity and ability by using modal words and expressions. Speakers often have different opinions about the same thing. We can say that modality is about a speaker's or a writer's attitude towards the world. The term modality covers a fairly wide range of semantic contrasts. In order to get a feeling for some of the parameters involved. Let us consider the behavior of some English modal auxiliary verbs. What type of ambiguity is illustrated in the following examples?

7a The older students may leave school early (unless the teachers watch them carefully).

7b The older students may leave school early (if they inform the headmaster first).

8a Your agent must be a close personal friend of the ambassador (otherwise he would never have gotten into the embassy).

8b your agent must be a close personal friend of the ambassador (in order to carry out this mission successfully).

These two pairs of sentences show that *may* and *must* can be used in two different senses. In the (a) sentences, the modal carries a meaning which relates to the speaker's state of knowledge or belief about the proposition being expressed. *May* in this sense (7a) indicates that the speaker believes the proposition is possibly true; and *must* (8a) indicates that the speaker is fairly certain that the proposition is true, though this certainty is based on inference or supposition rather than direct knowledge. In the (b) sentences, the modal carries a meaning which relates to some kind of obligation or permission on the part of the agent. *May* in this sense (7b) indicates that the agent is permitted to do something, while *must* (8b) indicates that the agent is required or obligated to do something.

There are often connections between modality and tense or aspect. For example, only the deontic interpretation (expressing duty or obligation) is possible for *must* with future time reference, so (9a) can only be interpreted to refer to obligation. Only the epistemic interpretation (certain inference) is possible in the perfect, as in (9b). The ambiguity demonstrated above is only possible with present tense states or habitual actions; so the simple present tense as in (9c,d) allows both interpretations, but the present continuous form (9e) is unambiguous.

9a You must leave tomorrow.

9b You must have offended the Prime Minister very seriously.

9c You must read the market reports every day.

9d You must be very patient.

9e You must be reading the market reports every day.

We cannot attempt a detailed survey of this topic here, but it will be helpful to give some notion about these concepts at BS level. For further clarification and discussion, you are advised to attempt the exercises given at the 'Self-Assessment Questions' and look for the answers.

Summary Points

- In this unit, our primary goal has been to help students understand and correctly use the terminology that linguists have developed for describing TAM systems.
- Tense is a verb-based method used to indicate the time, and sometimes the continuation or completeness, of an action or state in relation to the time of speaking.
- Aspect is a grammatical category that expresses how an action, event, or state, denoted by a verb, extends over time.
- Mood is used to refer to a verb category or form which indicates whether the verb expresses a fact (the indicative mood), a command (the imperative mood), a question (the interrogative mood), a condition (the conditional mood), or a wish or possibility (the subjunctive mood).
- Modality, however, is about a speaker's or a writer's attitude towards the world. A speaker or writer can express certainty, possibility, willingness, obligation, necessity and ability by using modal words and expressions. Speakers often have different opinions about the same thing or action and this variation is expressed in a number of ways.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. We saw that some verbs may describe bounded (telic) or unbounded (atelic) processes, depending on the form of their complements. Thus, while *build a bridge* is a bounded process, *build bridges* is an unbounded process. Below is a list of verb phrases. For each one decide whether it is bounded or unbounded, then see if you can change this value by altering the verb's complement.
 - ate apples cook
 - play direct movies
 - set fire run to the station

2. Identify the tense/aspect forms of the italicized verbs below:
 - a. They *established* a school of medicine.
 - b. A guy *was playing* a joke on me.
 - c. Who *finalizes*?
 - d. They've *eaten* a lot of nuts.
 - e. She *will buy* the book.
 - f. You're *treating* me like a child.
 - g. They *will have reached* the school by now.
 - h. I'm *sitting* here.

3. Below are paired examples containing simple present and present progressive verb forms. Explain what semantic differences you detect (if any) between the pairs.
 - 1 a. My brother studies in France.
 b. My brother is studying in France.
 - 2 a. We leave tomorrow.
 b. We are leaving tomorrow.
 - 3 a. You look good.
 b. You're looking good.
 - 4 a. She lives near the station.
 b. She's living near the station.
 - 5 a. You take too much tea.

- b. You're taking too much tea.
 - 6
 - a. You always laugh at me.
 - b. You're always laughing at me.
- 4. We described the use of modal verbs to convey epistemic modality. In the following sentences discuss what the modal verbs (*in italics*) tell us about the speaker's attitude.
 - a. This *could* be our turn now.
 - b. They *would* be very surprised to meet you.
 - c. You *must* be the bridegroom's father.
 - d. The train *should* be here soon.
 - e. It *might* snow tonight.
 - f. He *will* be home by now.

Further Reading

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CLAUSES

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Introduction to the Unit

The unit aims to equip students with the necessary information regarding the grammatical category of ‘clause’. It enlightens them on how a clause is different from a phrase and a sentence, its major types (main and subordinate), its role in a sentence, types of sentences (simple, compound and complex) on the basis of the number and types of clauses they contain, types of subordinate clauses (complement, relative and adverbial), how to identify subordinate clauses and differences between finite and non-finite clauses. The main purpose behind acquainting students with the grammatical category of clauses is to make them able to generate grammatically correct clauses and sentences to be able to meet their academic and professional requirements.

Learning Objectives

Having gone through the unit, the students will be able to:

- Explore the grammatical category of clause and its types: independent or main clause and dependent or subordinate clause.
- Differentiate between the grammatical categories of phrases and clauses.
- Distinguish between the grammatical categories of clauses and sentences.
- Disambiguate between main clause and subordinate clause.
- Analyze the types of sentence: simple, compound and complex.
- Explore the types of subordinate clause: complement, relative and adverbial.
- Identify the types of sentences.
- Identify the types of subordinate clauses.
- Differentiate between finite and non-finite clauses.
- Recognize the idea of covert subject with reference to a non-finite clause.
- Generate sentences and subordinate clauses of different types.

6.1 Introduction to Clause as a Syntactic Unit

At the outset of Unit 3, you were told that words group together to form a phrase and phrases group together to form a clause, which can be a sentence on its own or it can be a part of a sentence. You have already been introduced to the PS rule for sentence in Unit 4; the rule states that NP and VP merge together to generate a sentence. The two sets of information, one from Unit 3 and the other from Unit 4, need to be reconciled. This is what we are going to do in Unit 5. Before we discuss clauses in more detail, we need to clearly differentiate between the three grammatical categories: phrases, clauses and sentences.

6.2 Phrases, Clauses and Sentences

A phrase is a meaningful group of words but does not express a complete thought.

A clause is a meaningful group of phrases which may or may not express a complete thought.

A sentence is a meaningful group of phrases which always expresses a complete thought.

Consider the examples given below in the table below:

Phrase	in the morning
Clause	when he felt hungry
Sentence	The baby cried when he felt hungry in the morning

Apart from meaning, another significant difference between phrase and the other two categories, clause and sentence, lies in their structure.

As discussed in Unit 4 (Section 4.2), a phrase consists of a head word and may also contain some other words which modify the head word, e.g., *some tall boys in the park* is an NP which has the noun *boys* as its head; *very fond of mangoes* is an AP with the adjective *fond* as its head; and *played cricket in the playground* is a VP with the verb *played* as the head of the phrase.

However, a clause and a sentence both consist of a subject (usually an NP) and a VP. Although they are similar in structure, the difference in their meaning sets them apart. It is already stated that a sentence expresses a complete thought; whereas, a clause may or may not be able to do that. These two possibilities regarding a clause lead us to two types of clause: independent or main clause and dependent or subordinate clause.

6.2.1 Types of Clauses

When a clause is able to express a complete thought, it is called an **independent clause** or a **main clause**. Independent or main clause can stand on its own as a sentence. On the contrary, when a clause is not able to express a complete thought, it is called a **dependent** or **subordinate clause**. Dependent or subordinate clause is not able to stand on its own; instead, it depends on the main clause to convey its complete meaning.

Consider the following examples:

1a. Ali solved the sums.

1b. Ahmed played cricket.

Both (1a) and (1b) are examples of main clauses. Each of them expresses a complete thought and is able to stand independently as a sentence. Moreover, each of them consists of a subject followed

by a VP. In example (1a), the subject, *Ali*, is followed by the VP *solved the sums*. Likewise, in (1b), the subject, *Ahmed*, is followed by the VP *played cricket*.

A subordinate clause, on the other hand, does not express a complete thought. Another significant difference between main clause and subordinate clause is that a subordinate clause is introduced by a subordinating conjunction (already discussed in Unit 3, Section 3.3.3).

Consider the following clause:

2. While Ahmed played cricket

The clause in (2) contains a subject (*Ahmed*) and a VP (*played cricket*); still, it does not express a complete idea. It needs to be joined with a main clause to be able to convey complete information. For example, on joining (1a) with (1b), we get a complete sentence:

3. Ali solved the sums while Ahmed played cricket.

Now, (3) is a complete sentence, which provides complete information. It comprises a main clause (*Ali solved the sums*) and a subordinate clause (*while Ahmed played cricket*).

The above given information about main clause and subordinate clause can be summed up in the following manner:

Main clause = Subject + VP

Subordinate clause = Subordinating conjunction + subject + VP

Since a main clause can stand independently, it can be called a sentence. A subordinating clause cannot stand independently unless it joins a main clause.

Now, having discussed the difference between a clause and a sentence, it is appropriate to explore the various types of sentences.

6.2.2 Types of Sentences

Sentences can be said to have three types depending on the number and types of clauses they contain.

- i. Simple Sentences
- ii. Compound Sentences
- iii. Complex Sentences

Simple sentences consist of a single main clause. For example:

- 4a. Bilal waited for the train.
- b. The train was late.
- c. Ahmed likes football.
- d. Ali likes cricket.

All of the above sentences (4a to d) consist of single main clauses and are, therefore, simple sentences.

Compound sentences, on the other hand, consist of two or more main clauses joined with the help of coordinating conjunctions.

Consider the following examples of compound sentences:

- 5a. Bilal waited for the train but the train was late.
- b. Ali likes football and Ahmed likes cricket.

To generate the compound sentence in (5a), sentence (4a) has been combined with (4b) with the help of coordinating conjunction 'but'. Likewise, to generate (5b), sentence (4c) has been combined with (4d) with the help of coordinating conjunction 'and'. The clauses that have been conjoined in (5a) and (5b) are all main clauses.

The third type of sentence, complex sentence, consists of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

Consider the following examples:

- 6a. Ahmed missed his morning train because he woke up late.
- b. Salma wondered if she could become a space scientist.
- c. The man, who was standing on the bus stop, looked suspicious.

Subordinate clause and its types will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

6.3 Subordinate Clauses

As discussed in the previous section, a complex sentence consists of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. In other words, in a complex sentence, the main clause is dominant and the other clauses, the subordinate clauses, are not only dependent on the main clause for expressing their meaning but also have some structural limitations.

The major types of subordinate clause are:

- i. Complement Clause
- ii. Relative Clause
- iii. Adverbial Clause

6.3.1 Complement Clause

You have already been introduced to the idea of complement clause in Unit 3, Section 3.3.4, under the heading of ‘Complementisers’. You have been told that complement clause is a type of subordinate clause which takes the place of the direct object of the verb. You have also been told that complement clauses are introduced by complementisers, such as: *that*, *whether* or *if*, and *for* (as a complementiser, *for* introduces a non-finite clause, which will be discussed in Section 6.5 of this Unit).

Consider the following examples of complement clauses:

7a. Aslam doubts *if he can do this task*.

8a. Nida knew *that she would pass the exam*.

Traditionally, complement clauses are known as ‘noun clauses’ because they occupy the position in the main clause which is generally occupied by a noun phrase. See, for example:

7b. Aslam believed *his friend*.

8b. Nida knew *the result of the exam*.

The direct objects of the verbs in (7b) and (8b) have been replaced by complement clauses in (7a) and (8a). Therefore, the complement clauses in (7a) and (8a) can be termed as **verb complements**.

Since a complement clause, being a noun clause, can occur in places where a noun phrase occurs, it can also serve as the subject of the main clause. Consider the following examples:

9. *That Natasha considered herself the leader* annoyed her friends.

10. *That their mother was baking a delicious cake* made the children happy

The italicized parts of the sentences in (9) and (10) are complement clauses serving as the subjects of the main clauses. For the kind of sentences in (9) and (10), the PS rule for sentence (as discussed in Unit 4, Section 4.2.6) will undergo the following modification:

11. S \longrightarrow NP VP will be modified to S \longrightarrow CP VP

Another property of complement clause is that it can modify a noun. See, for example:

12. Everybody liked the idea *that they could arrange a party*.

13. The news *that Bilal got a job* delighted the whole family.

In sentence (12), *Everybody liked the idea* is the main clause; whereas, the italicized clause *that they could arrange a party* is the complement clause. The important point to note here is that the complement clause, in this case, is not required by the verb; but, it is adding some information about the content of *the idea*, which is the direct object of the verb *admired*. In this way, the complement clauses in (12) and (13) modify the noun phrases, *the idea* and *the news* respectively, and can therefore be called **noun complements**.

Yet another property of complement clause is that it can modify an adjective. Consider the following examples:

14. Nida was confident *that she would pass the exam*.

15. It seems likely *that the exams will be postponed*.

The complement clauses in (14) and (15) modify the adjectives *confident* and *likely* respectively and can be termed as **adjective complements**.

6.3.2 Relative Clauses

Whereas complement clauses modify verbs as in (7a, 8a), nouns as in (12, 13) and adjectives as in (14, 15), relative clauses modify nouns. Just as complement clauses are introduced by complementisers, relative clauses are introduced either by relative pronouns (*which*, *who*, *whose* and *whom*) or by a subordinating conjunction, *that*. Traditionally, relative clauses are known as adjective clauses owing to the fact that adjectives modify nouns. Whereas adjectives precede the noun in a noun phrase, a relative clause follows the noun that it modifies.

Consider the following examples of relative clauses:

16. The story *which Mrs. Majeed told her class* was very interesting.

17. The boy *who helped the old lady* was Ahmed.

18. The book *which Amna borrowed from the library* was very informative.

19. The house *that we adored* is located in Islamabad.

In sentence (16), the relative clause *which Mrs. Majeed told her class* modifies the noun *story*; in sentence (17), the relative clause *who helped the old lady* modifies the noun *boy*; in sentence (18), the relative clause *which Amna borrowed from the library* modifies the noun *book*, and in sentence (19), the relative clause *that we adored* modifies the noun *house*.

It is important to mention here that, in some cases, the relative pronoun or *that* can even be omitted. Among the above sentences (16 – 19), it is only in (17) that the relative pronoun *who* cannot be omitted; in rest of the cases (16, 18 and 19), the relative pronoun *which* and *that* can be omitted and doing so will not affect the grammaticality of the sentence.

6.3.3 Adverbial clauses

The label ‘adverbial’ seems to suggest that adverbial clauses modify verbs; however, they serve to modify the whole clause. Another significant property of adverbial clauses is that they are adjuncts as they provide additional information in the sentences which they modify. They are divided into five categories on the basis of their meaning. The five categories are: adverbial clauses of reason, time, concession, manner and condition.

To illustrate, examples of each category are provided below:

20. Amna could not chew anything *because she had a severe toothache*. (Reason)
21. The dogs started barking *when they saw the stranger*. (Time)
22. *Although Aslam gave his best*, he could not win the match. (Concession)
23. Natasha walked past *as if she hadn't seen me*. (Manner)
24. *If you save some money every month*, you can buy a new car. (Condition)

The adverbial clause of reason in (20), *because she had a severe toothache*, provides the reason why Amna was not able to chew anything. It serves to modify the main clause *Amna could not chew anything*.

The adverbial clause of time in (21), *when they saw the stranger*, provides information about the time at which a certain event happened, which is the dogs' barking. The adverbial clause modifies the main clause *The dogs started barking*.

The adverbial clause of concession in (22), *Although Aslam gave his best*, conveys a concern. The writer admits that he gave his best performance; even then he could not win the match. The adverbial clause modifies the main clause *he could not win the match*.

The adverbial clause of manner in (23), *as if she hadn't seen me*, describes the manner in which Natasha walked past someone. It modifies the main clause *Natasha walked past*.

The adverbial clause of condition in (24), *If you save some money every month*, provides the reader information about certain conditions under which a particular event may occur. The situation is the possibility of buying a new car for which saving some money every month is a condition.

6.4 Identifying Subordinate Clauses

Three types of subordinate clauses discussed above can be identified with the help of a few rules. Whereas the subordinating conjunction used in a subordinate clause can help identify the type of clause, the idea of modification is a more useful one.

Consider the following rules for identifying any given subordinate clause:

- a. **If a subordinate clause modifies the entire main clause**, it is an adverbial clause. For example:

25. *Although she has been a gold medalist throughout her academic career*, she is working as a receptionist.

In example (25), the italicized subordinate clause modifies the whole main clause and is, therefore, an adverbial clause. Moreover, the meaning of the italicized clause and the subordinating conjunction which introduces the clause help to establish that it is an adverbial clause of concession.

- b. **If a clause modifies a verb, it is a complement clause** (verb complement). For example:

26. His father suggested *that he should visit a dentist*.

The italicized subordinate clause in (26) is the direct object (or complement) of the verb *suggested*. The main clause *His father suggested* would be incomplete as well ungrammatical without the complement clause.

- c. **If a subordinate clause modifies a noun**, there are two possibilities. It can be a relative clause or a complement clause (noun complement).

First possibility: if the subordinate clause is introduced by a Wh-word, it is a relative clause. For example:

27. This is the book *which I wanted to buy*.

28. The student, who came from Lahore, knew all the answers.

Second possibility: if the subordinate clause is introduced by *that*, again there are two possibilities. It can be a relative clause or a complement clause (noun complement).

- i. If *that* can be replaced by a Wh-word, it is a relative clause. For example:

29a. Ahmed liked the dog *that he saw on the road*.

29b. Ahmed liked the dog *which he saw on the road*.

- ii. If *that* cannot be replaced by a Wh-word, it is a complement clause (noun complement).

For example:

30a. The fact *that he is stubborn* annoys everyone.

30b. *The fact *which he is stubborn* annoys everyone.

In a complement clause, *that* cannot be replaced by *which* and, as demonstrated in (30b), doing so makes the sentence ungrammatical.

Although the above-mentioned rules can reliably be used to identify the different types of subordinate clauses, there is one exception to the first part of rule (c). A Wh-clause is not always a relative clause modifying a noun. It can also serve as the complement of the verb. See, for example:

31. He admired *what she said*.

32. They decided *where they should go for vacation*.

Since the subordinate clauses in (31) and (32) are the direct objects of the verbs *admired* and *decided* respectively, they can be termed as **Wh-complement clauses**.

6.5 Finite and Non-finite Clauses

We already know that a clause is a grammatical unit which contains a subject and a verb. A clause, main clause or subordinate clause, whose verb indicates tense (present or past) is called a finite clause. For example:

33. The children were very happy when their mother bought them some chocolates.

In (33), the main clause and the subordinate clause (adverbial clause of time) both contain verbs indicating past tense. Therefore, both the clauses, the main clause as well as the subordinate clause, are finite clauses. All the clauses discussed in this Unit so far were finite clauses.

Next, we are going to discuss non-finite clauses. Before we introduce non-finite clauses, keep in mind that all main clauses are finite clauses as they must indicate the time (tense) at which a certain event or action takes place. Non-finite clauses are subordinate clauses which contain verb in its infinitive form (to + base form of the verb, e.g., *to go, to play, to enjoy*, etc.). The verb in its infinitive form, also called non-finite verb, does not indicate time. Non-finite clauses, therefore, do not specify the time at which an event or action takes place. Such clauses are also known as infinitival clauses.

You already know that a complement clause serves as the direct object of the verb. There are some verbs which require non-finite complement clauses as their direct objects.

Consider the following examples:

34. The father wants *his son to become a doctor*.
35. Ahmed would like *Ali to attend his birthday party*.
36. The lawyer advised *his client to pay the amount by a cheque*.

In the above sentences (34 – 36), *wants, like* and *advised* are finite verbs which are followed by non-finite complement clauses. Each non-finite complement clause contains a subject and a verb which is in its infinitive form; for example, in (34), in the non-finite complement clause *his son to become a doctor*, *his son* is the subject and *to become* is the non-finite verb. Likewise, in (35), the non-finite complement clause *Ali to attend his birthday party* contains *Ali* as its subject, *to become* as the non-finite verb and *his birthday party* is the direct object of the non-finite verb.

Now, consider a few more examples of non-finite complement clauses:

37. Aslam hopes *to become a successful businessman*.
38. Uzma wants *to buy some new dresses*.
39. I like *to go for a walk every morning*.

In sentences (37 – 39), the finite verbs *hopes, wants* and *like* are followed by non-finite complement clauses. However, there is an observable difference between the two sets of sentences (34 – 36) and (37 – 39). The non-finite complement clauses in sentences (34 – 36) have noun phrases as their subjects; whereas, the non-finite complement clauses in sentences

(37 – 39) seem to be subject-less. The infinitive clause in (37) *to become a successful businessman* has no **overt subject** but it is understood that Aslam is the subject of the infinitive clause. We can say that, Aslam is the subject of the main clause and Aslam is also the subject of the non-finite complement clause. Such a subject is called the **covert subject**, traditionally known as the understood subject.

Compare the two sentences given below:

40a. Bilal wants *to be a mountaineer*.

b. Bilal wants *his son to be a mountaineer*.

The italicized non-finite clause in (40a) has *Bilal* as its covert subject; whereas, the non-finite clause in (40b) has the noun phrase *his son* as its overt subject.

In Unit 3, Section 3.3.4 – Complementisers, you were told that there are four complementisers in English, namely: *that, if, whether* and *for*; the first three (*that, if* and *whether*) introduce finite clauses while *for* introduces non-finite clause into the main clause. There are certain verbs which require the complementiser, *for*, to introduce a non-finite clause after them.

Consider the following examples:

41. The mother prayed *for her son to succeed*.

42. The teacher wished *for her students to attend a conference*.

43. Amjad planned *for his parents to take a trip*.

In the above sentences (41 – 43), the non-finite complement clauses are introduced by the complementiser *for*.

Just as some verbs require non-finite verb complements as direct objects, some adjectives also require non-finite adjective complements.

Consider the examples below:

44. The father is anxious *for his son to win the race*.

45. The doctor is hopeful *for his patient to recover soon*.

46. It is crucial *for the participants to be honest*.

In the sentences given above (44 – 46), the italicized non-finite adjective complements are introduced by the complementiser *for*.

With this, we close our discussion on clauses. All the information provided in this unit regarding clauses and their types will equip you for the next important unit on grammatical functions and semantic roles.

Summary Points

Phrase: a meaningful group of words which does not express a complete thought.

Clause: a meaningful group of phrases which may or may not express a complete thought.

Sentence: a meaningful group of phrases which always expresses a complete thought.

Types of Clause: independent or main clause and dependent or subordinate clause.

Independent or main clause: expresses a complete thought and is able to stand on its own as a sentence.

Dependent or subordinate clause: depends on the main clause to convey its complete meaning and is not able to stand on its own as a sentence.

Types of Sentence: simple sentence, compound sentence and complex sentence.

Simple Sentence: consists of a single main clause.

Compound Sentence: consists of two or more main clauses joined with the help of coordinating conjunction(s).

Complex Sentence: consists of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

Types of Subordinate Clause: complement clause, relative clause and adverbial clause.

Complement Clause: a type of subordinate clause which takes the place of direct object of the verb; it is introduced by a complementiser (*that*, *whether* or *if*, and *for* in the case of a non-finite complement clause). Depending on whether it modifies a verb, a noun or an adjective, it has three types: verb complement, noun complement and adjective complement.

Relative Clause: a type of subordinate clause which modifies nouns and is introduced by relative pronouns (*which*, *who*, *whose* and *whom*) or *that*. It follows the noun that it modifies and is traditionally known as ‘adjective clause’.

Adverbial Clause: a type of subordinate clause which modifies the whole main clause. It serves as an adjunct as it provides additional information in the main clause which it modifies. It has been divided into five categories on the basis of its meaning: adverbial clause of reason, manner, time, concession and condition.

Identifying Subordinate Clauses: There are three basic rules:

- I. If a subordinate clause modifies the whole main clause, it is an adverbial clause.
- II. If a subordinate clause modifies a verb, it is a complement clause (verb complement).
- III. If a subordinate clause modifies a noun, there are two possibilities:
 - i. If it is introduced by a Wh-word, it is a relative clause.
 - ii. If it is introduced by *that*, again there are two possibilities:
 - a. If *that* can be replaced by a Wh-word, it is a relative clause.
 - b. If *that* cannot be replaced by a Wh-word, it is a complement clause.

Finite Clause: a clause, main or subordinate, is called a finite clause if its verb indicates tense (present or past).

Non-finite Clause: a subordinate clause which contains verb in its infinitive form.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. The following sentences consist of two or more clauses. Analyze each sentence into its clauses and identify the type of each clause – main clause, complement clause, relative clause, adverbial clause (of condition, manner, reason, etc.) and non-finite clause.
 - i. When Oliver was about ten months old, he was sent to another workhouse.
 - ii. They decided that Oliver should start work the very next day.
 - iii. Oliver was ordered into confinement and a note was hung on the gate outside.
 - iv. Oliver’s mouth watered when he saw his plate filled high with sausages.
 - v. The note said that anyone with information about Oliver’s past or his present whereabouts would be rewarded with five gold coins.
 - vi. As he approached the door, a shadowy figure stepped out from the hedge.
 - vii. If Fagin could make him a thief, he’d get even more money.
 - viii. After Mrs. Bedwin put her glasses on, she rushed over to Oliver.
 - ix. They found the gentleman who owned the box.
 - x. Although I hadn’t met her, he showed me a picture he painted of her.
(The sentences for this exercise have been taken from *Charles Dickens’s Oliver Twist* adapted by Lisa Mullarkey)
2. Differentiate between the following with appropriate examples:
 - i. Phrase and Clause
 - ii. Clause and Sentence
 - iii. Compound sentence and Complex sentence
 - iv. Main clause and Subordinate clause
 - v. Adverbial clause of reason and Adverbial clause of condition
 - vi. Complement clause and Relative clause
 - vii. Finite clause and Non-finite clause
3. Generating different types of sentences (simple, compound and complex) and different types of subordinate clauses, write a story on ‘The best decision I have ever taken’.
4. Assignment

Note down a number of Urdu and English sentences. Draw a comparison between Urdu and English sentences on the following bases:

- i. Types of conjunctions
- ii. Types of sentences
- iii. Types of subordinate clauses

Further Reading

Berk, L. M. (1999). *English Syntax: From word to discourse*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Miller, J. (2002). *An Introduction to English Syntax*. Edinburgh University Press.

GRAMMATICAL FUNCTIONS AND SEMANTIC ROLES

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Introduction to the Unit

The present unit is going to explore ‘grammatical functions’ and ‘semantic roles’ as important aspects of syntax. The grammatical functions that we are going to address in this unit include subjects, direct and indirect objects, predicative and oblique complements, and modifiers. Similarly, the semantic roles which we are going to explore in this unit are agent, patient, theme, benefactive, source and goal etc. The main purpose of introducing these concepts here in this module is to familiarize our BS students with these ideas and enable them to work further on these features in Pakistani regional languages at advanced level in future. The following topics are the focus of this unit:

- Grammatical functions
 - Subjects
 - Direct and Indirect objects
 - Predicative complements
 - Oblique complements
 - Modifiers
- Semantic roles
 - Agent
 - Patient
 - Theme
 - Benefactive
 - Source
 - Goal
 - Location
 - Instrument

Learning Objectives

At the end of the unit, the students will be able to:

- Define various grammatical functions and semantic roles
- Describe syntactic units in terms of their forms, functions, and positions
- Explain syntactic structures in terms of grammatical functions and semantic roles
- Analyze phrases and clauses, and comment on their grammatical functions and semantic roles
- Consider various modes of structural descriptions and evaluate them
- Analyze various forms of words based on their grammatical and/or content meaning

7.1 Modes of Syntactic Description

In syntactic description, we describe syntactic units in terms of their FORM, FUNCTION and POSITION, so these can be considered the modes of structural description. In the following lines, we are going to discuss all these three modes of descriptions briefly.

7.1.1 Form

Form actually refers to the grammatical shape of a unit that we analyze. Another term, sometimes used for this, is category. According to their forms, we distinguish among words by dividing them into two major types:

- 1) Single words
- 2) Word groups (phrases, clauses, sentences)

Single words can be broadly divided into two major classes, according to morphological, syntactic and semantic criteria. These are:

Form classes

These classes are also known as lexical, content, open classes. These include nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

Structure classes

These are grammatical words which are also known as function words and closed sets. These include pronouns, prepositions, auxiliaries and modals, conjunctions, numerals.

7.1.2 Function

The term function can be broadly understood as the grammatical job that a particular unit has within a larger unit. Function therefore means ‘syntactic’ function. For instance, in the sentence *Girls enjoy chocolate*, the nouns *girls* and *chocolate* have the function of the subject and direct object of the sentence, respectively.

7.1.3 Position

The term position usually refers to the position a linguistic unit can take within another unit. Thus, it is common to talk of elements occurring in initial, medial or final positions within the higher-order unit, or about pre- and post-positions in relation to a specific unit. For example, a time modifier can occur either in the initial (3a) or final (3b) position in a sentence:

- (1) a. Yesterday they had an enormous dinner.
b. They had an enormous dinner yesterday

‘Form’ and ‘function’ are two extremely important concepts that you need to know about to fully understand how grammar works.

It is important to be aware that sometimes the function might be ambiguous: it can have a general sense and a grammatical sense. These are often confused. Let’s look at the general sense first. Consider the utterance below:

Fortunately, the pain went away very quickly.

The word *fortunately* in this sentence is an adverb that has a pragmatic function: it signals that the speaker views what follows (namely the pain going away quickly) as a good thing. Very in the adverb phrase very quickly is also an adverb which functions in a general sense to ‘intensify’ the meaning of the adverb quickly. So, from a general functional point of view, we can say that this word is an intensifier. This can be called a semantic function. Turning now to the grammatical sense of ‘function’ (which is actually best referred to as ‘grammatical function’), we need to say different things about the sentence above.

Taking the word *fortunately* again, this time we say that its grammatical function is Adverbial. Words and phrases that have the grammatical function of Adverbial modify a particular unit in a sentence. In this case *fortunately* modifies an entire clause. In the example sentence *very quickly* also has the grammatical function of Adverbial, but in this case, it modifies the verb *go*. More specifically, it expresses the manner in which the pain went away. Adverbials can also express other meanings, e.g., location and time, as in these examples:

We had a picnic in the park (preposition phrase functioning as Adverbial)

They left Hong Kong last week (noun phrase functioning as Adverbial)

7.2. Grammatical Roles

Grammatical roles are basically the specific roles which are played by various syntactic constituents in a sentence due to their specific positions and forms. We are going to discuss important grammatical roles in this section briefly.

7.2.1 Subject

In English, the sentence is made of a noun phrase and a verb phrase. This noun phrase is called the subject and in English is identifiable by position: in a declarative sentence (a sentence which makes a statement) it precedes the verb. The verb phrase is sometimes called the predicate. This is not the same as the ‘predicator’ which is just the verb. The verb phrase contains a verb, which can be followed by a noun phrase which is called the object and is again identified by position as this NP follows the verb. If there is another NP following the object, it can be called second object. The

terms subject and object are called grammatical roles and are purely structural or formal notions in themselves unrelated to meaning. In some languages, grammatical roles are identified not by position but by the morphology of words in the phrase, a morphological characteristic called case. Thus, for example in German, the subject is the noun phrase whose article is morphologically altered to express nominative case. Where case is used to identify grammatical roles, it is often possible for the order of phrases to be fairly free.

Subjects of a sentence is the doer of the action, This definition seems to work for sentences like (2a,b), but is clearly wrong in examples like (2c,d)

- (2) a. Mary slapped John.
b. A dog bit John.
c. John was bitten by a dog.
d. John underwent major heart surgery.

Phrases like “the doer of the action” or “the person or thing acted upon” identify particular semantic roles, namely agent and patient. But, as we can see in example (2), the subject is not always an agent, and the patient is not always an object. John is “acted upon” in all four of these sentences; but the word John appears as the object in (2a,b) and the subject in (2c,d).

Another traditional definition of the subject is “what the sentence is about.” Again, this definition seems to work for many sentences (such as 3a), but fails in others (such as 3b,c). All three of these sentences seem to be “about” Bill; thus we could say that Bill is the topic of all three sentences. But Bill is the subject in (3a), the object in (3b), and neither subject nor object in (3c). These sentences make it clear that the topic is not always the grammatical subject.

- (3) a. Bill is a very crafty fellow.
b. (Jack is pretty reliable, but) Bill I don’t trust.
c. As for Bill, I wouldn’t take his promises very seriously.

It seems that we cannot reliably identify the subject of a sentence with either the agent or the topic. Rather, we must use grammatical criteria to develop a workable definition. What grammatical properties do subjects have that other elements of the sentence do not share? Bickford (1998:43) notes the following properties of subjects in English: a Word order: In

a. Basic English sentence, the subject normally comes before the verb, while the object and other parts of the sentence follow the verb.

b. Pronoun forms: The first and third person pronouns in English appear in a special form when the pronoun is a subject, as illustrated in (4). This form is not used when the pronoun occurs in other positions:

- (4) a. She loves me.
b. I love her.

c. We threw stones at them.

d. They threw stones at us.

c. Agreement with verb: In the simple present tense, an -s is added to the verb when a third person subject is singular. However, the number and person of the object or any other element in the sentence have no effect at all on the form of the verb:

(5) a. She angers him.

b. They anger him.

c. She angers them.

d. Content questions: If the subject is replaced by a question word (who or what), the rest of the sentence remains unchanged, as in (6b). But when any other element of the sentence is replaced by a question word, an auxiliary verb must appear before the subject. If the basic sentence does not contain an auxiliary verb, we must insert did or do(es) immediately after the question word, as in (6d,e):

(6) a. John stole/would steal Mrs. Thatcher's picture from the British Council.

b. Who stole/would steal Mrs. Thatcher's picture from the British Council?

c. What would John steal, if he had the chance?

d. What did John steal from the British Council?

e. Where did John steal Mrs. Thatcher's picture from?

e. Tag questions: A "tag question" is used to seek confirmation of a statement. It always contains a pronoun which refers back to the subject, and never to any other element in the sentence.

(7) a. John loves Mary, doesn't he?

b. Mary loves John, doesn't she?

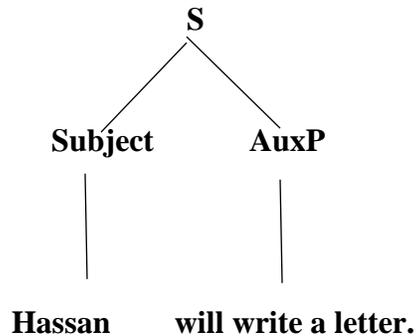
c. *John loves Mary, doesn't she?

A number of other properties could be added here, but many of them cannot be understood without a much deeper knowledge of English syntax than we can assume at this stage. The main point is that these are grammatical properties which uniquely identify the subject of an English sentence. Of course, for another language the list of specific properties would be different. We will not try to define subjecthood as an abstract concept but will assume that for each language there will be a set of grammatical criteria which allows us to identify subjects in that language. The same considerations apply for objects: we cannot in general identify them on the basis of semantic roles or discourse functions. Rather, we need to find a set of grammatical properties which are characteristic of objects in a particular language. However, since subjects are in some sense more "prominent" than objects, there are (in many languages) fewer grammatical properties which are unique to objects; so, it is sometimes more difficult to find objecthood tests than subjecthood tests.

f. Subject-auxiliary inversions: In forming a yes/no question, an auxiliary is placed directly before the subject.

(8) a. Will Hassan write a letter?

g. NP as subject of a clause: Only an N(P) or an S' can be the subject of a clause. The subject of a clause S is the N(P) or S' that is immediately dominated by that S node and that precedes the VP (or AuxP) of the clause.



Predicative Complements

The predicate complement (PC) is also called the subject complement because it restates or describes the subject. The predicate nominative is a noun phrase or pronoun (NPs) that completes the meaning of a linking verb. ... If the sentence still makes sense after being reversed, the word that answers “What?” after the verb is a complement. The function of a Predicative Complement is that of ascribing some property to the Subject of the sentence. This function is normally realized by NPs, but also by AdjPs or PPs, and the verbs that select such a Complement belong to the class of copulas (be, look, seem, etc.). Look at sentences from 9a –d below.

For example:

- (9) a. Ali seemed a good student.
- b. Hassan looked foolish in that tracksuit.
- c. She is an actress.
- d. Bilal was in a filthy mood.

The Head of the VP in (9a) is the copula *seem*. It is followed by an NP. In (b) the VP-Head is followed by an AdjP, in (c) by an NP again, and in (d) by a PP. It is these obligatory constituents following the V which have the grammatical function (GF) of Pc (Predicative Complement). The VP as a whole also has a predicative function: it predicates something of an NP. Characteristically, elements in a predicative relation (NP/Sub and VP, for example) will show agreement:

- (10) a. Hassan is working in Karachi at the moment.

b. Ali and Hassan are working in Karachi at the moment.

Similarly, in (11) the Predicative Complement (to the Subject) agrees in number with the Subject NP:

- (11) a. She is an actress.
b. They are actresses.

In many languages (French, for example) AdjPs also show agreement with the elements they have a predicative relation with. Copulas characteristically serve to 'link' the Subject NP and the property expressed by the Pc. 'Being a good student', for example, is seen as a property of the person referred to as Ali in (9a) above, while in (b) 'foolishness' is ascribed to Hassan.

7.2.3 Direct Object

A transitive verb takes its name from the fact that its action goes “across” from the verb to a receiver of the action. The receiver of the action is called an object. Transitive verbs can take two kinds of object: “Direct Object (DO)” and “Indirect Object (IO).” A direct object actually a noun phrase NP may be a noun phrase, or clause. In order to identify the direct object, take the verb and ask the question “verb what?” or “verb whom?": Look the major constituents in (12) below.

- (12) [s [NP The girl] [was reading the book.]]

The VP contains one constituents in addition to the VP : an NP:

- (13) [VP was reading [NP the book]

The NP the book regarded as obligatory is a Complement of V: read subcategorises for (or selects) an NP:

Read [VP _____ NP]

The NP, the book, cannot be omitted.

If we make a passivize sentence of (12), we find that the NP-Complement becomes the Subject of the passive sentence:

- (14) The book was being read by the girl

An NP-Complement of V which becomes the Subject of a passive sentence is said to have the function of Object. More specifically, the book is the Direct Object (DO) of verb *read*. Verbs such as *read* which subcategorise for a constituent functioning as DO are said to be **monotransitive**.

7.2.4 Indirect Object

Transitive verbs can take two kinds of object: “Direct Object (DO)” and “Indirect Object (IO).” Consider the following example:

(11) She had given the baby a chocolate.

The VP contains two NPs:

(12) [s She [VP had given [NP the baby] (NP a chocolate)]]

Both NPs are Complements to the lexical verb *give*, which is ditransitive. Both NPs are, in fact, Objects since both can become the Subject of a passive sentence:

(13) *A chocolate* had been given to the baby.

(14) *The baby* had been given a chocolate.

But the two NPs (italicized) do not behave in quite identical ways. In (13) we have to add the preposition (P) *to* to the NP the baby, but in (14) we cannot insert *to* before *a chocolate*. This is related to the fact that there is an alternative version of (11), in which the NP the baby can be replaced by a PP with *to*; the NP a chocolate cannot be replaced by a PP with *to*.

- She had given no chocolate to the tramp.
- *She had given the tramp to no chocolate.

Both NPs in (11) are Objects: a chocolate is the Direct Object (Od), and the baby is the Indirect Object (IO). It is characteristic of the Oi that it can often be replaced by a PP with either *to* or *for*.

An example of the latter:

(17) Mother poured the baby a drink.

(18) Mother poured a drink for the baby.

However, occasionally there is only one possibility of realizing the IO, e.g.:

(19) She struck him a blow.

(20) *She struck a blow to him.

Ditransitive verbs like *give*, *offer* and *pour* normally have one of the following subcategorisation frames:

[-NP-NP] or [-NP-NP]
[NP-PP to] [-- NP-PP for,]

7.2.5 Adverbial Complement

Consider the following sentences:

(22) The book remained with Mr. Ali for three hours.

(23) The book [VP remained [pp with Mr. Ali] [pp for three hours]]

(24) The book remained with Mr Ellis. (obligatory)

(25) *The book remained for three hours.(optional)

For three hours is an optional VP-Adjunct while *with Mr. Ali* is a Verb Complement. The verb *remain* in this case requires a PP: (vp--PP]. *Remain* is an intransitive verb: it does not take an DO. But at the same time *remain* subcategorises for a PP. The subcategorised PP specifies the place where the newspaper remained. Constituents which give us more information concerning the place, manner, time, duration, etc. of an activity are said to have an adverbial function, and if such an element (like the PP *with Mr. Ali*) is obligatory, we call it an Adverbial Complement (AC).

Note that *remain* does not just subcategorise for a PP introduced by *with*; other prepositions are also possible:

(26) The book remained *at the house*.

(27) The sun remained *behind the clouds* all day.

(28) The paper remained *on the shelf*.

(29) The books remained *in the library*.

Alternatively, the Adverbial Complement of *remain* may be realised by an AdvP:

(30) He remained *there*.

(31) The women remained *upstairs*.

The AdvP again is a Complement: it is non-omissible. It specifies the location of the activity: it has an adverbial function. The following examples illustrate other uses of verbs which take an AC:

(32) He leaned against the sideboard.

(33) He is in Lahore.

(34) He is at his school.

(35) His birthday is next Sunday.

(36) The performance lasted (for) two hours.

(37) The enterprise cost thousands of pounds.

(38) This parcel weighs two kilos.

In the examples above the verb *be* is not a copula verb: the Complements (in Lahore, at his school, etc.) do not assign a property to the Subject NP, but rather specify the place of 'being' (33), (34), or the time of 'being' in (35). The verbs in the remaining sentences are also intransitive, but they require an Ac to describe the activity or state. An Ac may be realized by various syntactic categories: the verb *last* in (36) takes an Ac realized by either a PP or an NP. Different category which realizes the function Ac:

(39) Hassan belongs to several social clubs.

(40) Amal specializes in physiotherapy.

- (41) My new car drives very smoothly.
- (42) The storm lasted three days.
- (43) Ahmed lives in Paris.
- (44) She stayed at the Hilton.
- (45) He condescended to help us.
- (46) My father lived to be 90.

It is not always easy to decide with certainty whether a constituent following the lexical verb is obligatory or optional. The criterion for deciding on the non-omissibility of a constituent in the VP is whether the remaining part of the sentence is still grammatical or whether the meaning of the lexical verb changes drastically as a result of omitting that particular constituent. Let us see what happens to the sentences above if we leave out the PPs, AdvPs, or Ss that follow the lexical verb.

- (47) *Hassan belongs.
- (48) *Amal specialises.
- (49) *My new car drives.
- (50) *The storm lasted.
- (51) ! Ahmed lives.
- (52) ! She stayed.
- (53) *He condescended.
- (54) ! My father lived.

(The * indicates ungrammaticality and the ! a drastic change in meaning):

NPs such as several social clubs, and physiotherapy, etc. in the examples above cannot become the Subject of corresponding passive sentences. These NPs are not Objects of the lexical verbs, but form part of the PPs which function as Ac here. Hence, there is a difference between the following sentences:

- (54) Hassan belongs to several social clubs.
- (55) Somebody has slept in my bed.

Sentence (55) can be passivized as follows:

- (56) My bed has been slept in.

This suggests that *my bed* in (55) is an DO. Since (39) Hassan belongs to several social clubs cannot be passivized in the same way, several social clubs in (39) is not to be regarded as an DO: to several social clubs is a PP functioning as AC.

Adverbial complements with transitive verbs

Verbs like *remain*, *belong*, *last* require an Ac to complete the VP. The verbs were also seen to be intransitive: they have no DO. Let's see that transitive verbs may also select an Ac. Consider, for example:

- (57) Ahmed put the money in a box.
- (58) Ali worded the letter very carefully.
- (59) My children always remind me of their grandfather.

The verbs *put*, *word* and *remind* are transitive: they take an NP/Od, which can regularly become the Subject of a passive:

- (60) The money was put in a box.
- (61) The letter was worded very carefully.
- (62) I am always reminded of their grandfather.

The VP of sentence (57), for example, has the following structure:

- (63) [NP put [NP the money] [pp in a box]]

It contains an NP and a PP. The PP *in a box* is a Complement of the V and expresses the location of 'putting'. Where did he put the money?: *In a box*. This constituent is an Ac. The Ac for put can also be realised by an AdvP:

- (64) Ahmed put the money there/upstairs.

The verb *put* has the following subcategorisation frame:

- (65) [VP- NP- {PP/AdvP}]

The verb *word* in (58) above is also a transitive verb, which selects both an Od and an Ac. Ac is realized by an AdvP (*very carefully*). While the Ac in (57) expresses location, that in (58) expresses manner. In (58) the AdvP could be replaced by a PP (*in a careful way*). In (59) we find another verb taking an Object NP and a PP as Complement.

- My children always remind me of their grandfather.

Though we can see that the PP is obligatory, it would be difficult to say what semantic contribution the PP makes. It is clear that the PP is non-omissible:

- (66) *My children always remind me--.

Note that in sentence (59) *me* is the Direct Object; the NP *their grandfather* is not an Object, but the Prepc of.

Predicative complement + adverbial complement a complex function

Now consider the following examples:

- (67) The government set the prisoners free.
(68) The teacher flung the door open.

DO obligatory Complement

- (69) The government [VP set [NP the prisoners] [AdjP free]]

What is the function of the AdjP *free*? 'Since it is obligatory, it is a Complement within the VP. It narrows down the meaning of set (and is thus adverbial), but it also links up with the Direct Object NP: it predicates something of the NP the prisoners. The AdjP *free* is thus both adverbial and predicative in function. The same applies to open in sentence (68). The VPs in (67) and (68) have a complex pattern of functional relations. Free is both a Predicative Complement and an Adverbial Complement. This combination of functions could be abbreviated as Pc+Ac. Verbs which select a Pc+Ac are called complex transitive.

- (70) They called their baby Hassan.
(71) The manager called the proposal absurd.

In each case you see that there is an NP which is the Direct Object of the verb (passivisation confirms this). In addition, there is a Complement which narrows down the activity of 'calling'; it is a Complement with an additional adverbial function, just as in (67) and (68). Note that the second NP following the verb in (70) is not an Object: unlike the first NP, Hassan cannot become the Subject of a passive. Compare:

- (72) Their baby was called Hassan.
(73) *Hassan was called her baby

The functional pattern of the VP in (71) is like that given in (70) above. The predicative function of the NP (Hassan) is perhaps stronger than its Adverbial function. There is a clear relation between the NP Hassan and both the verb call and the NP *their baby*. Again the GF of Hassan is that of Pc+Ac, and the verb *call* is here a complex transitive verb. Complex transitive verbs such as *call*, *set* and *fling* require two Complements one of which is the Direct Object, while the other has an adverbial and, perhaps more importantly, a predicative function relating it to the Direct Object.

7.2.6 Oblique Complement

An oblique complement is a PP or an AdvP which behaves like a complement, i.e., it is:

- Semantically implied
- Syntactically necessary

It cannot be used with a pro-VP form such as do so:

(74) Hassan put a book on the shelf and Mary did so (*into the drawer), too.

but: it does not fit the definition of any of the other grammatical functions.

typical examples:

A particular preposition is required by the verb: wait for, substitute with, rely on, talk to ... about
..., ...

The verb requires a directional phrase, independent of how this is lexicalized: put sth. [somewhere]
obl.compl. Oblique complements are always PPs. It is a sister of V and NP and dominated by a VP.

Example:

obl.comp

NP Aux V _PP_

(75) Ahmed will wait for Hassan

No Grammatical Relation may be assigned more than once by a single verb.” This statement seems to be contradicted by examples like those in (76), which have more than one oblique argument:

(76) a Ali carved a whistle [for his daughter] [with his pocket knife].

 b The maid threw breadcrumbs [into the water] [for the fish].

 c The farmer drew water [from the well] [with a wooden bucket].

There is a crucial difference between these examples, which are grammatical, and the ungrammatical example in like the following

(77): *Hassan gave a bouquet of roses to his mother to Sana.

That example is ungrammatical because it contains two oblique arguments of the same kind, namely two recipients. The grammatical sentences in (76), however, each contain two oblique arguments bearing distinct semantic roles.

These observations suggest that we can maintain more than one oblique grammatical relation. The GRs of the various oblique arguments in (76) can be differentiated by reference to their semantic roles: OBLinstr for instrument phrases; OBLben for beneficiary phrases; OBLgoal for goal phrases, etc. These various OBL relations are said to be semantically restricted, since each relation can only be associated with a particular semantic role. In English, the difference between the various Oblique GRs is signaled in the syntax by the choice of preposition: with for OBLinst ; for

for OBLben ;from for OBLsource ; (in)to for OBLgoal ; by for OBLagt , etc. In some other languages, these GRs may be indicated by the use of specific case markers.

7.2.7 Modifier

A modifier (Mod) is a word, phrase, or clause that modifies—that is, gives information about—another word in the same sentence. For example, in the following sentence, the word *food* is modified by the word *Chinese*:

(78) I'm going to the restaurant for Chinese food.

The modifier *Chinese* gives extra information about what kind of food it is.

A modifier can be an adjective phrase AdjP (a word that modifies a noun, like *Chinese*), but it can also be an adverb phrase AdvP (a word that modifies a verb):

(79) The writer carefully proofread his manuscript.

The adverb *carefully* is the modifier in this example—it modifies the verb "proofread," giving important details about how the proofreading was conducted. A modifier can even be a phrase or clause, as in the following example:

(80) Ali studied in the library.

Here, the phrase *in the library* gives us extra information about the verb, *studied*.

A modifier Phrase (Mod) does not behave like a complement, i.e. it is semantically more autonomous, i.e. it makes the same meaning contribution independent of the predicate it combines with. It is syntactically optional.

7.3 Semantic Roles

Semantic roles according to Gawron (2013) are roles that participants play in events and situations. We don't think of words as containers of meaning; rather, we can look at the "roles" the words fulfill within the event or situation described by a sentence. It is the underlying relationship that a participant has with the main verb in a clause. Semantic role is the actual role which a participant plays in some real or imagined situation, apart from the linguistic encoding of those situations. If the situation is a simple event, as in *The boy kicked the ball*, then the verb describes an action (kick). The noun phrases *the boy* and *the ball* in the sentence describe the roles of entities, such as people and things, involved in the action. We can identify a small number of semantic roles (also called "thematic roles" or "case roles") for these noun phrases.

7.3.1 Agent and Theme

Agent is the entity that intentionally carries out the action of the verb whereas theme is the entity that directly receives the action of the verb. In our example sentence, one role is taken by the noun phrase *the boy* as the entity that performs the action, so it is known as the agent. The other role is taken by *the ball* as the entity that is involved in or affected by the action. It is called the theme (or sometimes the “patient”). Agents and themes are the most common semantic roles. Although agents are typically human (the boy), as in our example sentence. They can also be non-human entities that cause actions, as in noun phrases denoting a natural force (The wind), a machine (A car), or a creature (The dog), all of which affect the ball as theme in examples (81)–(84). The theme is typically non-human, but can be human (the boy), as in the last sentence (85).

(81) The boy kicked the ball.

(82) The wind blew the ball away.

(83) A car ran over the ball.

(84) The dog caught the ball.

(85) The dog chased the boy.

7.3.2 Instrument and Experiencer

Instrument is the entity by which the action of the verb is carried out. If an agent uses another entity in order to perform an action, that other entity fills the role of instrument. In the sentences:

(86) The boy cut the rope with an old razor.

(87) He drew the picture with a crayon

In both the sentences (86) and (87), the noun phrases *an old razor* and *a crayon* are being used in the semantic role of instrument. Note that the preposition *with* is often a clue that the following noun phrase has the role of instrument in English. Experiencer is the entity that undergoes an emotion, a state of being, or a perception expressed by the verb. When a noun phrase is used to designate an entity as the person who has a feeling, perception or state, it fills the semantic role of experiencer. If we feel, know, hear or enjoy something, we are not really performing an action (hence we are not agents). We are in the role of experiencer. In the (88) sentence below, the experiencer (The man) is the only semantic role. In the second example, the question is asking if (you) had the experience of hearing the theme (that noise).

(88) The man feels sad.

(89) Did you hear that noise?

7.3.3 Benefactive

Semantic role that denotes the person or persons for whom an action is performed, as for his son in:

(90) He opened the door *for his son*.

The benefactive case is abbreviated BEN, or sometimes B when it is a core argument.

7.3.4 Location

The specification of the place where the action or event denoted by the predicate is situated. Where an entity is (on the table, in the room) fills the role of location.

(91) The child saw a sparrow *on the wall*.

7.3.5 Source

Source is the location or entity from which something moves. Analyze the prepositional phrase (PP) in the following sentence.

(92) She borrowed a magazine *from Ali*.

7.3.6 Goal

Goal is the location or entity in the direction of which something moves.

(93) She handed the magazine back to Ali.

Summary Points

- Syntactic units are described in terms of their form, function and position. Form refers to the shape of the word. Function can be broadly understood as the grammatical job that a particular unit has within a larger unit. The term position usually refers to the position a linguistic unit can take within another unit.
- There are certain grammatical roles in a sentence. In English, a simple sentence is made of a noun phrase and a verb phrase. This noun phrase is called the subject and in English is identifiable by position: in a declarative sentence. The verb phrase is sometimes called the predicate. This is not the same as the 'predicator' which is just the verb. The verb phrase contains a verb, which can be followed by a noun phrase which is called the object and is again identified by position as this NP follows the verb. If there is another NP following the object, it can be called second object.
- Besides there is the predicate complement (PC) which is also called the subject complement because it restates or describes the subject.
- Adverbial complement is another function in a sentence. It is required to complete the meaning of a verb, such that if it is removed, it will yield an ungrammatical sentence or an intrinsically different meaning of the verb.
- An oblique complement, another types, is a PP or an AdvP which behaves like a complement, i.e. it is semantically implied and also syntactically necessary.
- A modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that gives information about another word in the same sentence.
- Semantic roles are the various roles that a noun phrase may play with respect to the action or state described by a governing verb, commonly the sentence's main verb.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Tell the function of the underlined words.

1. Recently, finding a job has become very difficult.

- a) Subject
- b) Predicate
- c) Direct Object
- d) Indirect Object
- e) Adverb

2. Amy sings very sweetly.

- a) Subject
- b) Predicate
- c) Direct Object
- d) Indirect Object
- e) Adjunct

3. I've left my key in the car

- a) Subject
- b) Predicate
- c) Direct Object
- d) Indirect Object
- e) Adverb

4. Raheel promised me that he'd send a postcard

- a) Subject
- b) Predicate
- c) Direct Object
- d) Indirect Object
- e) Adverb

5. Playing football is his only pastime.

- a) Subject
- b) Predicate
- c) Direct Object
- d) Indirect Object
- e) Adverb

2. Match the sentences to the patterns:

1. The wall collapsed.

- A. Subject -- Verb
- B. Subject -- Verb -- Direct Object
- C. Subject -- Verb -- Indirect Object -- Direct Object
- D. (Adverbial) -- Subject -- Verb -- Direct Object
- E. (Adverbial) -- Subject -- Verb -- (Adverbial)

2. During the war, many people lost their homes.

- A. Subject -- Verb
- B. Subject -- Verb -- Direct Object
- C. Subject -- Verb -- Indirect Object -- Direct Object
- D. (Adverbial) -- Subject -- Verb -- Direct Object
- E. (Adverbial) -- Subject -- Verb -- (Adverbial)

3. I promised the children a trip to the zoo.

- A. Subject -- Verb
- B. Subject -- Verb -- Direct Object
- C. Subject -- Verb -- Indirect Object -- Direct Object
- D. (Adverbial) -- Subject -- Verb -- Direct Object
- E. (Adverbial) -- Subject -- Verb -- (Adverbial)

4. When he was 12, Ali moved to Karachi.

- A. Subject -- Verb
- B. Subject -- Verb -- Direct Object
- C. Subject -- Verb -- Indirect Object -- Direct Object
- D. (Adverbial) -- Subject -- Verb -- Direct Object
- E. (Adverbial) -- Subject -- Verb -- (Adverbial)

5. Ahmed hired a bicycle.

- A. Subject -- Verb
- B. Subject -- Verb -- Direct Object
- C. Subject -- Verb -- Indirect Object -- Direct Object
- D. (Adverbial) -- Subject -- Verb -- Direct Object
- E. (Adverbial) -- Subject -- Verb -- (Adverbial)

Thematic Roles

Identify the thematic role(s) of each of the underlined expressions in the following sentences. Note any dual roles.

1. We persuaded Maryam to apply for the job as school teacher.
2. Mother was reading stories to the children this morning.
3. The climber finally reached the summit of the mountain.
4. The captain of the cricket team made 20 runs.
5. I checked a book out of the library yesterday.

Answer

Question 1

1. Subject
2. Adjunct
3. Direct Object
4. Indirect Object
5. Predicate

Question 2

1. Pattern A
2. Pattern D
3. Pattern C
4. Pattern E
5. Pattern B

Question 3

- | | | | |
|----|---------|---|-------------|
| 1. | we | – | Agent |
| | Maryam | – | Theme/Agent |
| | the job | – | Goal |

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|---|-------------|
| | school teacher | – | Role |
| 2. | mother | – | Agent |
| | stories | – | Theme |
| | the children | – | Goal |
| | this morning | – | Location |
| 3. | the climber | – | Agent/Theme |
| | the summit | – | Goal |
| | the mountain | – | Location |
| 4. | the captain | – | Role/Agent |
| | 20 runs | – | Range |
| 5. | I | – | Agent/Goal |
| | a book | – | Theme |
| | the library | – | Source |
| | yesterday | – | Location |

Further Reading

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TRANSFORMATIONS

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Introduction to the Unit

The unit aims at introducing students to theory of Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG). At the outset, the main premise of Generative Grammar has been reinforced followed by an evocation to the set of phrase structure rules. The unit enlightens the students on the limitations of phrase structure rules and thus rationalizes the need for transformational rules. After throwing light on the concept of deep and surface structures, the unit goes on to discuss in detail some of the important transformations, namely: interrogative sentences, passive sentences, sentences with fronted constituents, imperative sentences, and compound and complex sentences.

Learning Objectives

Having gone through the unit, the students will be able to:

- Explore the basic principles of the theory of Transformational Generative Grammar.
- Know the limitations of PS rules and why transformational rules are required.
- Analyze the difference between deep structures and surface structures.
- Appreciate how various surface structures are derived from their deep structures.
- Know about some important transformations (interrogative sentences, passive sentences, sentences with fronted constituents, imperative sentences, and compound and complex sentences).
- Demonstrate their understanding of transformational rules by reconstructing basic sentences for various kinds of surface structures.
- Apply their understanding of transformational rules on sentences in their native languages.

8.1 Transformations

In the introductory part of Unit 4-Phrases, you were introduced to the idea of **Generative Grammar** as a small set of rules that the speakers of a language have in their mind which enables them to generate well-formed (grammatically correct) phrases and sentences. According to Noam Chomsky, American linguist who established the idea of generative grammar, such a set of rules is finite (limited in number) but enables the speakers to generate infinite (unlimited) number of well-formed phrases and sentences. You already know that these rules are called **phrase structure rules (PS rules)** or **rewrite rules**. As the name suggests, phrase structure rules contain information about the structure of phrases; in other words, a particular phrase structure rule would provide information about the type of constituents and their order in a particular type of phrase.

The set of phrase structure rules, as discussed in Unit 4, is given below:

- 1a. S → NP VP
- b. NP → (Det) (A) N (PP/S)
- c. VP → V (NP) (PP/S/AdvP)
- d. AP → A (PP/S)
- e. AdvP → (AdvP) Adv
- f. PP → P NP

With the help of the above given set of PS rules, any number of grammatical phrases and sentences can be generated. However, PS rules are not without limitations.

8.2 Limitations of Phrase Structure Rules

Mainly, there are three ways of categorizing sentences:

- i. On the basis of structure:
Simple, compound and complex sentences
- ii. On the basis of voice:
Active and passive sentences
- iii. On the basis of purpose:
Declarative (statements), interrogative (questions), imperative (commands) and exclamative (exclamations) sentences

A serious limitation of PS rules is that they can only generate sentences which are simple, active and declarative. In other words, PS rules are unable to generate the rest of the types of sentences listed above, which include: compound and complex sentences, passive sentences, and interrogative, imperative and exclamative sentences. In order to generate all of these types of sentences, we need another set of rules along with phrase structure rules. This new set of rules is called **transformational rules** or simply **transformations**. Transformational rules perform different kinds of operations on the simple sentences generated by PS rules. Some of the operations performed by transformational rules include: deletion (e.g., the case of imperative sentences), reordering and insertion (the case of interrogative sentences and passive sentences) and combining (as is the case with compound and complex sentences).

According to the theory of Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG), posited by Noam Chomsky, a speaker acquires a finite set of PS rules along with a finite set of transformational rules. Owing to these two sets of rules, the speaker is able to generate infinite number of grammatical sentences of all the types listed above. The simple sentences generated by PS rules are underlying structures referred to as **kernel sentences** or **deep structures**. Transformational rules act on to deep structures and transform them into **surface structures**.

8.3 Deep and Surface Structures

Consider the following simple sentence:

2. The student submitted his work to the teacher.

The sentence has been constructed using the following PS rules:

- 3a. S → NP – VP
- b. NP → Det – N
- c. VP → Tense – V – NP – PP
- d. PP → P – NP

In the rules (3a, b and c), the following lexical items have been inserted to generate the sentence in (2):

- 4a. N: student, work, teacher, morning
- b. Det: the, his
- c. V: submit
- d. Tense: Past (-ed)
- e. P: to, in

It is important to note here that the sentence in (2) is a surface structure having an underlying or deep structure. On the basis of the two sets of information given in (3a, b, c, d) and (4a, b, c, d), we can hypothesize the following deep structure for the sentence in (2):

5. [s[NPThe student][VP[TensePast][Vsubmit][NPhis work][PPTO[NPthe teacher]]]

Not only sentence (2) but various surface structures can be generated from the deep structure given in (5). For example, consider the following:

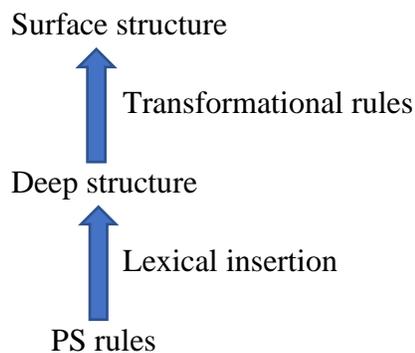
- a) A yes-no question:
Did the student submit his work to the teacher?
- b) A negative yes-no question:
Didn't the student submit his work to the teacher? Or,
Did the student not submit his work to the teacher?
- c) A wh-question:
What did the student submit to his teacher?
- d) A negative wh-question:
Why didn't the student submit his work to the teacher? Or,
Why did the student not submit his work to the teacher?
- e) A passive sentence:

The work was submitted by the student to his teacher.

f) A negative passive sentence:

The work was not submitted by the student to his teacher.

The sentence in (2) as well as all the sentences listed under (a – f) are surface structures which have resulted from the deep structure given in (5). Deep structures are the result of lexical insertion (4a – d) in the structures provided by PS rules (3a – d). Surface structures are the result of applying one or more transformational rules to the deep structure. Diagrammatically, it can be shown in the following way:



Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) adopts a derivational approach; according to this approach, a number of surface structures can be derived from a single deep structure as a result of the application of transformational rules.

8.4 Transformational Rules

To fulfil their various communicative needs, speakers of a language require to produce sentences of different types in different situations. Whereas PS rules enable them to generate deep structures which are simple, declarative and active, transformational rules equip them with the ability to transform those deep structures into appropriate surface structures.

Some of the important outcomes of the application of transformational rules are the following:

- i. Interrogative sentences
- ii. Passive sentences
- iii. Sentences with fronted constituents
- iv. Imperative sentences
- v. Compound and complex sentences

Below, we will discuss the above-mentioned transformations one by one:

8.4.1 Interrogative Sentences (Questions)

Consider the following questions:

- 6a. Have you locked the room?
- b. Did you lock the room?
- c. Why did you lock the room?

These three different questions have been derived from simple declarative sentences, such as:

You have locked the room. And,
You locked the room.

In fact, each of the questions (6a to c) has been derived from the basic sentence by applying a different transformational rule. The three transformational rules responsible for producing the three question (6a, b and c) are termed as: subject-auxiliary inversion, do-support and wh-movement, respectively. Below, we will discuss the three transformational rules one by one:

i. Subject-Auxiliary Inversion

Consider the following questions:

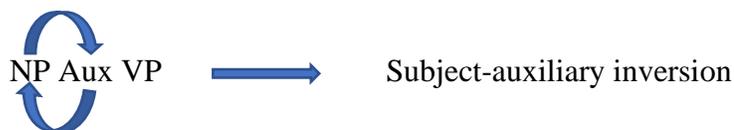
- 7. Has he finished his work?
- 8. Can you draw this picture?
- 9. Is she sleeping?

Compare these questions with the below-given simple declarative sentences from which these questions have been derived:

- 7a. He has finished his work.
- 8a. You can draw this picture.
- 9a. She is sleeping.

What distinguishes (7, 8 and 9) from (7a, 8a and 9a) is the order of the subject NP and the auxiliary. The process which changes the order of elements in a sentence is called **transformation** and the transformational rule responsible for this particular change is known as **subject-auxiliary inversion**.

The formation of questions from their basic counterparts can be represented in the following way:



The change from (7a) to (7) can be represented in the following way:

Declarative sentence: [s[NPHe][VP[Auxhas][VPfinished his work]]]

Interrogative sentence: [s[AuxHas][NP[he][VPfinished his work]]]

The transformational rule, subject-auxiliary inversion, responsible for the formation of yes-no questions can be represented in more abstract terms in the following way:

Deep structure: [S[NP][[Aux][VP]]]

Surface structure: [S[Aux][NP][VP]]

Following this rule, the three yes-no questions (7, 8 and 9) have been formed by moving the auxiliary to the front of the subject NP. The moved auxiliary can be of either type: primary or modal. Moreover, the rule applies equally well if the basic sentences have longer subject NPs. See, for example:

10. Have the students from all the schools arrived?
11. Are some important positions vacant in this office?
12. Will the most senior player of the team receive the trophy?

The three questions (10, 11 and 12) have been derived from the following simple sentences:

- 10a. The student from all the schools have arrived.
- 11a. Some important positions are vacant in this office.
- 12a. The most senior player of the team will receive the trophy.

The three yes-no questions (10, 11 and 12) derived from the declarative sentences (10a, 11a and 12a) clearly demonstrate that the transformational rule of subject-auxiliary inversion equally applies to sentences with more complex NPs.

Subject-auxiliary inversion also applies to negative statements to form negative yes-no questions. Consider the following examples:

13. Hasn't Aslam reached home yet?
14. Wasn't he shouting at the top of his voice?
15. Have they not been working hard?
16. Were they not studying the whole night?

The above yes-no questions (13 to 16) have been derived from the following declarative sentences:

- 13a. Aslam hasn't reached home yet.
- 14a. He wasn't shouting at the top of his voice.
- 15a. They have not been working hard.
- 16a. They were not studying the whole night.

For negative yes-no questions, a worth-noting point is the movement of contracted negator *-n't* along with the auxiliary. The negator *-n't* is not an independent word; it attaches to the tensed auxiliary and, therefore, moves with the auxiliary to the front of the subject. However, the uncontracted negator *not* is an independent word and does not move with the auxiliary.

Another important point concerns sentences with multiple auxiliaries. In the case of such sentences, the subject-auxiliary inversion applies to the first auxiliary. See, for example:

17. Will he have been singing Rock 'n' roll?

The question (10a) has been derived from the following declarative sentence:

17a. He will have been singing Rock 'n' roll.

The yes-no question in (17) as well as the one in (15) illustrates that in the case of more than one auxiliaries, it is the first auxiliary which undergoes subject-auxiliary inversion.

ii. Do-Support

Consider the following questions:

18. Do you go for a morning walk regularly?

19. Did she cook something for the dinner?

Let us suppose that these questions (18 and 19) have been derived from the following simple declarative sentences:

18a. You go for a morning walk regularly.

19a. She cooked something for the dinner.

In the sentences (18 and 19), the VP does not contain any auxiliary apart from the finite verb (verb which is marked for tense and number). The deep structures of these sentences can be indicated in the following way:

18b. [s_[NP>You][_VP[TensePresent]VPgo for a morning walk regularly]]

19b. [s_[NP She][_VP[TensePast]VP cooked something for the dinner]]

In the case of sentences with no auxiliaries, two transformational rules apply. The first rule is subject-auxiliary inversion, which moves the tense element to the front of the subject, and the second rule is termed as **do-support**, which changes the tense element into the appropriate form of *'do'*.

Applying the first rule, subject-auxiliary inversion, to (18b and 19b) would yield the following:

18c. [s_[TensePresent][_NPyou]VPgo for a morning walk regularly]]

19c. [s_[TensePast][_NP She]VP cooked something for the dinner]]

Since tense elements are not independent words, they cannot stand on their own. They need to be attached to either verbs or auxiliaries. That is why a second transformational rule is required in the case of auxiliary-less sentences. The second rule, *do-support*, attaches the auxiliary *'do'* to the tense element. The application of *do-support* on (18c and 19c) can be shown in the following way:

18d. [s_[Do+TensePresent][_NPyou]VPgo for a morning walk regularly]]

19d. [_S[_{Do+TensePast}]_[NP:She]]_[VP:cooked something for the dinner]

Attaching ‘do’ to the tense elements in (18d and 19d) produces the desired results in the form of yes-no questions given in (18 and 19).

Few more examples of yes-no questions produced as the result of sequentially applying the two transformational rules, subject-auxiliary inversion and do-support, are given below:

20. Does Amjad listen to Pop music?

21. Do the buses arrive on time?

22. Did the famous magician from New York perform some wonderful tricks?

The third question formation rule, called *wh-movement*, helps derive wh-questions from the basic declarative sentences. It is discussed in detail below.

iii. Wh-Movement

Consider the following wh-questions:

23. What did you buy?

24. Where does Ahmed live?

Let’s assume that these questions have been derived from the following declarative sentences:

23a. You bought what.

23b. Ahmed lives where.

Next, an attempt to reconstruct the deep structures for the declarative sentences (23a and 24a) produces the following:

23b. [_S [_{NP:You}]_{[VP [_{TensePast}]_[VP:buy what]]]}

24b. [_S [_{NP:Ahmed}]_{[VP [_{TensePresent}]_[VP:live where]]]}

The transformational rule which moves wh-word to the front of the sentences is known as **wh-movement**. Applying this rule to (23b and 24b) will result in the following structures:

23c. [_S [_{Wh:What}]_[NP:You]]_{[VP [_{TensePast}]_[VP:buy -----]]]}

24c. [_S [_{Wh:Where}]_[NP:Ahmed]]_{[VP [_{TensePresent}]_[VP:live -----]]]}

You can see that the structures in (23c and 24c) cannot be accepted as grammatical surface structures. These ungrammatical structures clearly indicate that wh-movement alone does not produce wh-questions. In fact, wh-movement triggers the other two rules of question formation, namely: subject-auxiliary inversion and do-support. Once subject-auxiliary inversion and do-support have been applied to the structures in (23c and 24c), we get grammatical wh-questions given in (23 and 24).

8.4.2 Passive Sentences

Consider the following passive constructions:

- 25. The poem was written by Coleridge.
- 26. Ice-cream is adored by children.
- 27. The match has been lost by our favorite team.

The corresponding active sentences for the above-given passive sentences (25 to 27) have been given below:

- 25a. Coleridge wrote the poem.
- 26a. Children adore ice-cream.
- 27a. Our favorite team has lost the match.

According to the theory of Transformational Generative Grammar, passive sentences are derived from active sentences with the help of transformational rules.

On the basis of the two sets of sentences given above (25 to 27) and (25a to 27a), the following general patterns for active and passive sentences can be formulated:

Active sentence: [s[NP₁ [VP V [NP₂]]]]
 Passive sentence: [s[NP₂ [VP be+V-en [PP by [NP₁]]]]

The above-given patterns for active and passive sentences reveal that three transformational rules are required for transforming active sentences into their passive counterparts. The three rules are listed below:

- i. The subject of the active sentence (NP₁) moves to the object position where it is placed in a by-phrase (a PP). The by-phrase is an adjunct and, therefore, can be removed.
- ii. The object of the active sentence (NP₂) moves to the subject position, the position left vacant by NP₁.
- iii. The finite verb changes into appropriate form of 'be' followed by the past participle form of the verb (generally known as 'third' form of the verb indicated by the suffix 'en' in the above-given pattern for passive sentence).

With the help of these three rules for passivization, an active sentence can be transformed to its passive form. For further illustration, consider the following pairs of active and passive sentences:

- 28a. The teacher graded the papers.
 - b. The papers were graded (by the teacher).
- 29a. The police have threatened the illegal settlers.
 - b. The illegal settlers have been threatened (by the police).
- 30a. The mother handed a rattle to the baby.
 - b. A rattle was handed to the baby (by the mother).

The three pairs of active and passive sentences given above, the passive sentences have been derived from their active declarative counterparts with the help of the three transformational rules for passivization given above. In each of the passive sentences, the by-phrase has been enclosed in parentheses to indicate the optionality of the phrase.

8.4.3 Sentences with Fronted Constituents

In the case of question formation, we have seen that auxiliaries, tense and wh-phrases move to the front of the sentence. Apart from them, other constituents can also be fronted.

See the following examples:

31. From the bookshop Ahmed bought a new book.

32. On the table Ali put the keys.

The PPs in both the sentences have been moved to the front. It can be said that these two sentences have been derived from the following basic sentences:

31a. Ahmed bought a new book from the bookshop.

32a. Ali put the keys on the table.

The underlying structure of the basic sentences (31a and 32a) can be reconstructed in the following way:

[s[NP][_{VP Tense}V [NP][PP]]]

After moving the PPs to the front, we get the following transformed structure:

[s[PP][NP][_{VP Tense}V [NP]]]

Sentences (31) and (32) have been generated out of this transformed structure.

Now, compare the following pairs of sentences:

33a. He threw the pebble out.

33b. *Out* he threw the pebble.

In (33b), the particle (out) of the phrasal verb has been moved to the front of the sentence.

34a. He rushed into the office.

34b. *Into the office* he rushed.

In (34b), the PP (into the office) has been fronted.

35a. They had never before seen such a tall man.

35b. *Never before had* they seen such a tall man.

In (35b), the fronting of *never before* triggers *subject-auxiliary inversion*, which results in the movement of the auxiliary *had*.

8.4.4 Imperative Sentences

Almost all of the transformational rules discussed so far involved *movement*. However, the formation of imperative sentences involves deletion.

Consider the following examples of imperative sentences:

36. Wash your hands.

37. Leave the bag here.

Let us assume that these sentences have been derived from the following declarative sentences:

36a. You will wash your hands.

37a. You will leave the bag here.

On trying to reconstruct the deep structures for the sentences (36a and 37a), we get the following:

36b. [s[NP>You][VP[AuxWill][VPwash your hands]]]

37b. [s[NP>You][VP[AuxWill][VPleave the bag here]]]

On deleting subject NP (You) and the auxiliary (will), we get the required imperative sentences (36 and 37) as surface structures.

36c. [s[NP~~You~~][VP[Aux~~will~~][VPwash your hands]]]

37c. [s[NP~~You~~][VP[Aux~~will~~][VPleave the bag here]]]

8.4.5 Compound and Complex Sentences

It has already been deliberated in Section 8.2 that PS rules generate sentences that are simple, active and declarative and all the other types of sentences are generated through transformations. Compound and complex sentences are no exception.

You already know that compound sentences are generated through coordination, that is, combining two or more simple sentences with the help of coordinating conjunctions. In Unit 4, Section 4.4, a PS rule was introduced for coordinating phrases. The rule (19) from Unit 4 is given below:

$$XP \longrightarrow XP \text{ Conj } XP$$

In this rule XP stands for any phrase (NP, VP, AP, PP, etc.). The same rule can be used for coordinating two or more simple sentences with the following modification:

$$38. S \longrightarrow S \text{ Conj } S$$

Now, consider the following compound sentence:

39. The sun shone brightly and the birds chirped.

Following the rule (38), let us try to reconstruct the deep structure for this compound sentence:

39a. $s[s[\text{The sun Past shine brightly}] \text{ and } s[\text{The birds Past chirped}]]$

The deep structure for the compound sentence (39) indicates that two simple sentences (or main clauses) have been combined with the help of a coordinating conjunction *and*.

However, the formation of a complex sentence involves combining a main clause (simple sentence) with a subordinate clause. Consider, for example, the following complex sentence:

40a. The novel which I borrowed from the library is a classic.

40b. The novel that I borrowed from the library is a classic.

40c. The novel I borrowed from the library is a classic.

The sentences (40a, b and c) are slightly different forms of the same complex sentence. The embedded clause is a relative clause introduced by the relative pronoun *which* in (40a); the relative pronoun has been replaced by the complementiser *that* in (40b); whereas, in (40c) the complementiser has been omitted. (Types of sentences as well as types of clauses have been discussed in Unit 6).

It can be proposed that each of the above-given sentences (40a, b and c) has been derived from two basic sentences given below:

40(i). The novel is a classic.

40(ii). I borrowed the novel from the library.

For generating a complex sentence, the second sentence is embedded in the first one through recursion (discussed in Unit 4, Section 4.3). As a result, we get the following:

40(iii) $s[\text{The novel } s[\text{I borrowed the novel from the library}] \text{ is a classic}]$

At this point, two transformational rules are required: the first transformational rule will delete the second occurrence of the NP *the novel* from the embedded clause; whereas, the second transformational rule will insert *which/that* at the beginning of the embedded clause. The result would be the surface structure given in (40a) or (40b). In the case of (40c), after insertion, the complementiser has been deleted.

With this, we close our discussion on transformations. The next unit will introduce you to some further developments in the theory of Generative Grammar.

Summary Points

The unit provides a brief introduction to the theory of Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG), postulated by Noam Chomsky, which holds that a speaker acquires a finite set of PS rules along with a finite set of transformational rules. Whereas PS rules generate sentences which are simple, active and declarative, transformational rules transform those basic sentences into different types of sentences (e.g., interrogative, imperative, passive, compound or complex) by performing different kinds of operations, which include: deletion, reordering, insertion and combining. The simple sentences generated by PS rules are underlying structures also known as kernel sentences or deep structures. Transformational rules, through different operations, change deep structures into surface structures.

The following transformations are discussed in the Unit:

i. Interrogative sentences

Three transformational rules responsible for transforming declarative sentences into interrogative ones are:

Subject-auxiliary inversion: moves the auxiliary to the front of the subject NP.

Do-support: attaches the appropriate form of 'do' to the tense element in the sentences which do not contain auxiliaries.

Wh-movement: moves wh-word to the front of the sentence.

ii. Passive sentences

Passive sentences are derived from their active counterparts following the three rules given below:

- a) The subject of the active sentence (NP₁) moves to the object position where it is placed in a by-phrase (a PP). The by-phrase is an adjunct and, therefore, can be removed.
- b) The object of the active sentence (NP₂) moves to the subject position, the position left vacant by NP₁.
- c) The finite verb changes into appropriate form of 'be' followed by the past participle form of the verb.

iii. Sentences with fronted constituents

Certain constituents (direct/indirect objects, adjuncts, particles, etc.) can be moved to the front of the sentence.

iv. Imperative sentences

Formation of imperative sentences involves the deletion of the subject NP followed by the deletion of the auxiliary.

v. Compound and complex sentences

Combining two simple sentences with the help of a coordinating conjunction results in the formation of a compound sentence.

For generating a complex sentence, a sentence is embedded in another related sentence through recursion. Later on, a transformational rule deletes the recurring NP from the embedded sentence; whereas, a second transformation rule inserts a complementiser at the beginning of the embedded sentence.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Some yes-no questions have been given below. Discuss their formation in terms of transformational rules.
 - i. Did you wish him good luck for his exams?
 - ii. Has he lost the keys?
 - iii. Were they caught red-handed?
 - iv. Have they been working really hard?
 - v. Does she like to drink coffee?
 - vi. Can the birds swim?
 - vii. Do you think they would like the idea?

2. Form wh-questions from the following sentences by replacing the italicized phrase by a wh-word.
 - i. The convocation will be held *on October 18*.
 - ii. Ahmed borrowed *a thesaurus* from the library.
 - iii. Salma arrived at the airport *by a cab*.
 - iv. Ali will be wearing *his black suit* tonight.
 - v. They were preparing for *their exams*.

3. Identify fronted constituents in the following sentences. Restore them to their original position.
 - i. In about a quarter of a minute the race began.
 - ii. On the morning of the fifth day I was waiting at the railway station.
 - iii. Throughout the day fierce fight continued.
 - iv. Out he came in a princely manner.
 - v. Never will I visit the hill station again.

4. Passivize the following sentences and discuss the transformations involved:
 - i. The peon delivered the letter to Mr. Kaleem.
 - ii. Mrs. Ahmed did not scold the children for making noise.
 - iii. Anam can draw a nice elephant.

5. Combine the following pair of sentences to form complex sentences. Also, discuss the process.
 - i. (a) Ahmed told his friends a story.
(b) The story surprised them.
 - ii. (a) The rumor was terrible.
(b) Aslam spread the rumor in the town.
 - iii. (a) The man turned out to be a crook.
(b) We admired the man so highly.

6. Assignment

Write down ten different interrogative sentences in your native language. For each sentence, reconstruct the basic sentence and discuss the process of deriving interrogative sentence from the basic sentence in terms of transformational rules.

Further Reading

Fowler, R. (2016). *An introduction to transformational syntax*. Routledge.

Haegeman, L., & Wekker, H. (2002). *A modern course in English syntax*. Routledge.

Hayes, C. W. (1967). Syntax: Some present-day concepts. *The English Journal*, 56(1), 89-96.

Kim, J. B., & Sells, P. (2007). *English syntax: An introduction*. Centre for the Study of Language and Information.

**FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN GENERATIVE
GRAMMAR**

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Introduction to the Unit

The aim of this unit is to walk the students through the tradition of generative grammar which started in the late 1950s and mainly progressed through Standard Theory (1965), Extended Standard Theory (1970), Government and Binding Theory (1980, 1981) and, finally, the Minimalist Program (1993). The unit briefly introduces students to these theories and also endeavors to indicate how each theoretical development led to the next. It also aims to show the students that during the course of all these theoretical developments, it was only the theoretical apparatus which underwent modifications; however, the main premise of generative grammar remained intact.

Learning Objectives

Having gone through the unit, the students will be able to:

- Explore the idea of generative grammar.
- Appreciate the development of the idea of generative grammar how it initiated and kept getting mature over the period of almost 50 years.
- Distinguish among major theoretical developments particularly the ones labelled as: Standard Theory, Extended Standard Theory, Government and Binding Theory and the Minimalist Program.
- Critically appreciate the progression from one theoretical development to the next.
- Explore the concept of Universal Grammar.
- Analyze how the main premise of generative grammar remains intact over the course of several theoretical developments.

9.1 Generative Grammar

Generative Grammar is a linguistic theory which views grammar as a cognitive faculty. Transformational-generative grammar, the earliest model of generative grammar, is the first to take syntax as its fundamental concern. It initiated with Chomsky's publication of *Syntactic Structures* (1957) and stimulated an exceptional interest in the study of syntax. Two primary beliefs of this school of generative grammar are apparent from its name. It upholds that sentences are generated by a set of rules or procedures hard-wired in human brain and that most of the sentences are related to each other by the process of transformation; such as, passive sentences are thought to be derived from their active counterparts through the process of transformation.

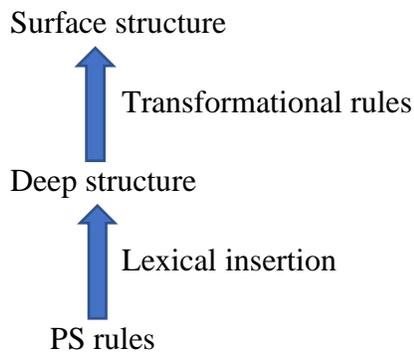
Generative Grammar is not a single theory but a set of theories. It initiated a new tradition in the field of linguistics as it broke away from the behaviorists' way of looking at the human capacity of using language as a form of learnt behavior. The tradition of generative grammar, which began in late 1950s, progressed through the following developments:

- i. Standard Theory (1965)
- ii. Extended Standard Theory (1970)
- iii. Government and Binding Theory (1980, 1981)
- iv. Minimalist Program (1993)

Below, we will briefly discuss the above-mentioned theories one by one.

9.2 The Standard Theory

The label ‘standard theory’ generally refers to the model of generative grammar as illustrated in Chomsky’s *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965). The idea of sentence generation as put forward in this book has already been discussed at length in Unit 8-Transformations. According to this theory, the surface structure corresponds to actual sentences, spoken or written; whereas, deep structure refers to the abstract structure which underlies those actual sentences. Borrowing the diagram from Unit 8, it can be shown graphically in the following manner:



According to standard theory, the grammatical information is specified on the syntactic level of a language, which is referred to as Deep Structure. However, later developments in the theory have gathered substantial support to show that, in several cases, the information related to sentence structure is located in the lexicon (mental storehouse of words). For instance, there are some verbs which allow their indirect object to be shifted to a position before the direct object. The shift is also accompanied by the deletion of the preposition, which was previously placed before the indirect object.

- 1a. Ahmed gave some important tips to Ali.
- 1b. Ahmed gave Ali some important tips.
- 2a. Amna sent a gift to her sister.
- 2b. Amna sent her sister a gift.

(Such shift in the form and position of the indirect object is known as ‘dative movement’.)

There are, however, many other verbs which are ditransitive (i.e., require two objects, a direct and an indirect) but do not allow their direct and indirect objects to switch positions. Consider the following examples:

3a. The teacher explained the matter to the class.

3b. *The teacher explained the class the matter.

4a. Alina put some flowers in the vase.

4b. *Alina put the vase some flowers.

Such behavior of verbs has led linguists to the assumption that some grammatical information is encoded in words themselves. For instance, verbs' selection of their direct objects, termed as sectional restrictions, i.e., restriction on the verbs for the selection of their objects, were later on thought to be specified in the lexicon.

9.3 Extended Standard Theory (EST)

Extended standard theory (EST) is a label given to the version of the theory of generative grammar which advanced in the early 1970s out of standard theory. The model is an extension of the standard theory in the sense that it offers an increase in the range of semantic rules. No longer was the deep structure considered fully responsible for determining the semantic representation of a sentence. This prompted later linguists, particularly the ones working in the field of semantics, to completely disregard the idea of deep structure.

However, EST did not specify the nature of semantic representations which necessitated another revision of the theory. The revised version of EST is known as Revised Extended Standard Theory (REST). In this version, the idea of shallow structure is presented thereby offering a three-fold distinction in the sentence structure: deep, shallow and surface. According to REST, there are two semantic levels of a sentence, labelled as logical form and full semantic representation. The occurrence of transformations has been significantly reduced in this theory; however, movement rules (wh-movement, as in *Aslam is eating the cake* vs. *What is Aslam eating?*) have been more strongly emphasized. Additionally, the notion of *trace* is given more importance which suggests that any element which undergoes transformation leaves a 'trace' behind and the presence of trace is noticeable in the surface structure. The notion of trace offers a means of designating the place which the moved element once occupied in a derivation before its movement during the process of transformation. The place originally occupied by the element is marked by the trace. See, for example:

5a. Nida bought some books.

b. Nida bought *what*?

c. What did Nida buy [*t*]?

In 5c, [t] denotes the trace.

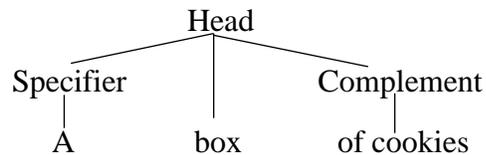
9.3.1 X-bar theory

Extended Standard Theory (EST) also suggested several modifications in the manner of representation of phrase structure and the most significant one is known as X-bar theory. It is a theory of phrase structure representation which was proposed by Chomsky (1970) but further developed by Jackendoff (1977). X-bar theory offers a system for representing specifiers, heads and complements in the structure of clauses and sentences. It attempts to identify different levels in the structure of phrase and assumes that syntactic categories (phrases, clauses and sentences) are projections of their lexical heads (e.g., N, V, A, Adv, P, T, etc.). According to X-bar theory, a phrase may contain a number of intermediate levels between the head, the lexical item which projects into a phrase, and the resulting string, the surface structure of a phrase.

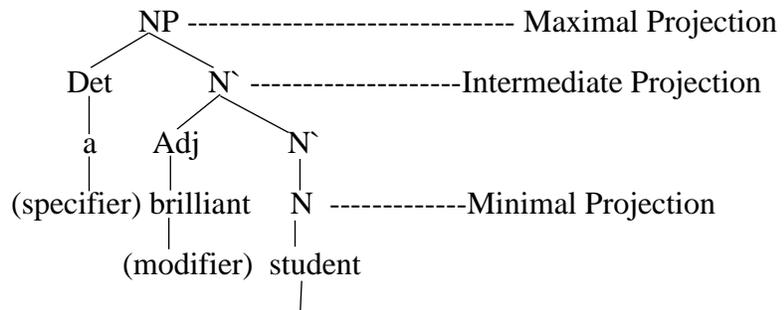
Consider, for example, a typical phrase structure representation according to X-bar theory. It begins from a phrase, which can be referred to as XP (to stand for NP, VP, PP, etc.) The Phrase Structure Rule for XP is:

6. $XP \longrightarrow (\text{specifier}) X (\text{complement})$

Diagrammatically, it can be represented in the following way:

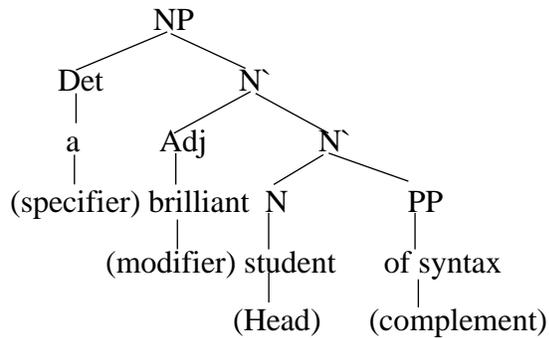


The strength of X-bar theory is that it is able to display a comprehensive arrangement of levels in the structure of a phrase. Also, it is able to represent those generalizations in the phrase structure which had not been formally expressed before. Consider, for example, the noun phrase, *a brilliant student*. In this phrase, the word *student* is a noun but what about *brilliant student*? According to X-bar theory, *brilliant student* is the intermediate level in the phrase. The theory is able to identify three levels in a phrase, which are shown below:

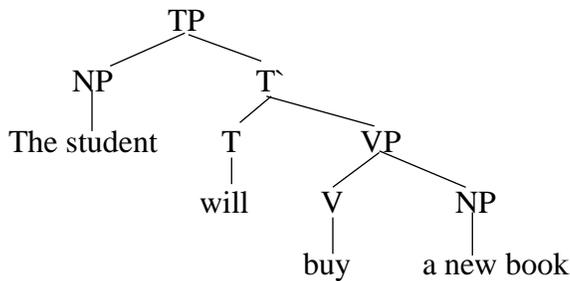


(head)

Furthermore, the theory specifies that the complement of a lexical head projects into an X-bar; whereas, the modifiers project an X-bar into another X-bar. However, specifiers, characteristically the determiners before nouns or the subjects of clauses, project to the left of a lexical head, i.e., an X element without a bar. For example, consider the noun phrase *a brilliant student of syntax*:



A sentence can be represented as TP having a category T as head, where T denotes 'tense'. It stands for the tense of the sentence. According to X-bar theory, a sentence has a structure similar to a phrase; the only difference is that a sentence is obligatorily tensed as all grammatical sentences indicate tense. Consider the sentence *The student will buy a new book*. The sentence can be denoted as TP with T as the head of the sentence and the element to the left of the head as the specifier and the one to the right of the head as its complement. See the tree diagram below:



Furthermore, the X-bar theory is able to accommodate more complex sentence types.

After the X-bar theory was originally devised in the 1970s, an entire series of modifications emerged as linguists attempted to analyze the structure of different languages using the X-bar notation.

9.4 Government and Binding Theory

This theory is also known as Principles and Parameters Approach. It is an outcome of the several modifications of extended standard theory which was presented in 1970. It initiated with Chomsky's article 'On Binding' in 1980 and was elaborated further in the much detailed work, *Lectures on government and binding*, published in 1981. Ever since, the theory has attracted many followers.

The label *government* denotes the conditions which are imposed on the movement of various elements in sentences. It specifies the positions from which movements are restricted. The restrictions are mainly imposed by the traces on the elements which are likely to undergo movement. On the other hand, the label *binding* denotes the conditions which bind potentially-related elements in a sentence; for example, in the sentence, *Ali hurt himself*, the antecedent Ali binds the anaphor *himself*.

The government and binding theory asserts that a sentence has three main levels of structure: D-Structure, S-Structure and Logical Form. The S-Structure is a derivative of D-Structure and Logical Form is a derivative of S-Structure through a single transformation, which is termed as Move Alpha (a generic movement rule which is a combination of all the transformational rules as discussed in Unit 8). Several sub-theories interact with the main government and binding theory to yield the correct structures for an individual language. Owing to its all-encompassing arrangement (a broad theory with specific sub-theories), government and binding theory is viewed as a suitable framework for explaining the syntax of all languages, that is, the syntactic component of universal grammar (discussed below in Section 9.5). Following this theory, the linguists working in the field of syntax give more weightage to parameters rather than rules. Parameters are those structural features which vary across languages. Therefore, for any of the natural languages, each of the universal set of parameters will have a fixed value. For instance, the 'adjacency' parameter specifies that, in a noun phrase in English, adjectives occur before nouns but, in a noun phrase in Spanish, adjectives follow the head noun. A child who is exposed to Spanish will know on hearing '*la cascada hermosa*' (literal translation, '*the waterfall beautiful*') that Spanish is a post-specifying language, in which modifiers are placed after the heads and will be able to correctly predict that adjectives appear after nouns as is the case in the phrase '*el vestido azul*' (literal translation, '*the dress blue*'). Another parameter is known as the 'pro-drop' parameter which permits a language to drop the subjects with certain verb forms, e.g., in Spanish '*es nuevo*' ('*is new*', instead of '*it's new*').

Some important terms in Government and Binding Theory

1) Principles: the grammatical features which are significantly wider in their scope as compared to rules, for example, the basic structure of sentences or the presence of the key lexical categories, such as: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. Government and binding theory assumes that there are some principles which are common to all languages. However, they may acquire a slightly different form in each language.

2) Parameters: the grammatical features which vary across languages. Parameters impose a limit on the range of structural variations; in reality, most of the parameters are limited to one of the two

options, i.e., most of the parameter settings are binary in nature (e.g., pro-drop parameter, wh-movement parameter, etc.). Government and binding theory assumes that in children exposed to a certain language, parameters of that language are set accurately using a minimal linguistic input. Combining the two terms *principles* and *parameters*, the label ‘principles and parameters’ is commonly used to refer to this version of generative grammar.

3) Universals: features which are thought to be existing in all natural languages as well as in any possible (human) language. Basically, there are two categories of universals:

1) Structural universals are the essential conditions imposed on the construction of grammars in order to make them function appropriately. These are all the structural notions that describe how grammars function. They include features, such as: phrase structure rules, transformations, word order constraints, etc.

2) Substantive universals are the fundamental building blocks of languages, e.g., the apparent existence of nouns and vowels in all languages. Universals are likely to exist in all the components of grammar, e.g., syntax, phonology, semantics, etc.

9.5 Universal Grammar

Universal grammar (UG) is the theory of the genetic part of language faculty, generally ascribed to Noam Chomsky. It is the system of mechanisms which is common to all human languages and is considered innate. The mechanisms are commonly thought to include structural universals (e.g., principles and parameters) and substantive universals (such as, lexical categories and their features) as well. However, there is little consensus amongst linguists regarding the nature of these mechanisms. Some linguists consider UG as a very intricate structure comprising a large number of principles, parameters and categories. On the other hand, the minimalists assume that UG may only involve a structure-building operation known as *merge* (two syntactic objects merge together to form a new category; for instance, a verb (V) merges with a noun phrase (NP) to form a VP. Whatever the case may be, both the camps seem to agree on the existence of UG. The question arises: what evidence is there for the existence of UG, which is the innate linguistic knowledge?

Arguments in support of UG

Several arguments have been put forth in the favor of UG. Some of those are given below:

- 1) Language Universals: All human languages share some common features.
- 2) Convergence: Children learning the same language are exposed to different inputs yet acquire the same grammar.
- 3) Poverty of the Stimulus: The linguistic input received by children is not sufficient to explain their comprehensive knowledge of language.
- 4) No Negative Evidence: Children acquire language solely through observing the nature of linguistic input that they are exposed to and there seems to be a fairly insignificant role of any corrections made by their caretakers.

- 5) **Species Specificity:** Language is unique to humans. No other species is known to possess this ability.
- 6) **Ease and Rapidity of Child Language Acquisition:** Children learn the language that they are exposed to remarkably rapidly and effortlessly.
- 7) **Uniformity:** All the children acquiring language pass through the same stages in the same sequence.
- 8) **Maturational Effects:** Language acquisition is highly sensitive to the age of acquisition and more or less insensitive to the environmental factors.

The evidences which have been presented to support the existence of universal grammar are fairly complex as they involve a highly formal analysis of the possible syntactic structures and make use of very specialized terminology. A selection of a few principles of universal grammar has been provided below. These principles concern the form of a possible human grammar with limitations on what is permitted and the generalizations which apply to various categories of words.

- i. **Subjacency:** It is a constraint on movement. This principle regards movement as a strictly local process.
- ii. **Tensed-S condition:** It is one of the conditions imposed on transformations by Chomsky (1973). According to this constraint, extraction out of a tensed constraint is impossible.
- iii. **Bound anaphora condition:** Reflexive pronouns are potentially bound to their intra-sentential co-referents.
- iv. **Cross-categorial generalizations:** Different lexical categories may share some characteristics, e.g., verbs and prepositions take structurally similar complements (for example, *the accusative case: me, him, her, them, etc.*).

Any model of UG must fulfil the following conditions:

- 1) **Universality:** must provide the tools for developing competence in any human language.
- 2) **Descriptive adequacy:** must be able to describe how to form and interpret expressions in the relevant language.
- 3) **Explanatory adequacy:** explain why grammars have the properties they do.
- 4) **Maximally constrained:** should be constrained to describe (natural) human languages only and should not be suitable for describing other communication systems.
- 5) **Learnability:** should be learnable by young children in a fairly brief time period.

9.6 The Minimalist Program

The minimalist program was posited by Chomsky in 1993. It is linked to cognitive science and Chomsky's earlier ideas on transformative generative grammar. The minimalist program basically attempts to answer two psychological questions:

- 1) How is linguistic ability (unconscious knowledge of language) signified in the human mind?
- 2) How do individuals acquire that knowledge?

Throughout the course of development in generative grammar, Chomsky sticks to the distinction that he presupposed in 1965 between the unconscious knowledge of language (which he termed as *competence*) and how the speakers of a language use that knowledge in producing and interpreting sentences (termed as *performance*). Chomsky regards competence as a computational system where structural representations are produced by *derivations*. As far as the question of explanatory adequacy is concerned, he is of the view that a large part the computational system is innate; it is only the properties of particular lexical items that need to be learned. The empirical support for these ideas comes from the close similarities that have been observed amongst the computational systems of languages, even the unrelated ones. Further evidence comes from the fact that the speakers of a language know far more about their language than the input they receive (*poverty of the stimulus* argument).

Chomsky introduced two basic principles in the minimalist program, they are: the economy of derivation and the economy of representation. The two principles ensure that there are no superfluous stages in derivations, no superfluous symbols in representations and no representations beyond the ones that are theoretically required. This program suggests that grammars fashioned for human languages should be minimal, i.e., they should involve a minimum number of syntactic operations to account satisfactorily for the perceptions of the native speakers about their language. The more minimal the apparatus to describe a language, the more likely it is to be maximally learnable by children in their early years. In recent years, considerable research has been devoted to test this model for various languages to determine the advantages it may have over the previous theories.

Summary Points

Generative Grammar: It is a linguistic theory which maintains that sentences are generated by a set of rules or procedures hard-wired in human brain and that most of the sentences are related to each other by the process of transformation; such as, passive sentences are thought to be derived from their active counterparts through the process of transformation.

Since its inception in 1957, the theory has undergone several developments, including the following:

Standard Theory: It was introduced in 1965. According to this model of generative grammar, the surface structure corresponds to actual sentences, spoken or written; whereas, deep structure refers to the abstract structure which underlies those actual sentences.

Extended Standard Theory (EST): This model is an extension of the standard theory in the sense that it offers an increase in the range of semantic rules. It does not consider deep structure as fully responsible for determining the semantic representation of a sentence. This model was further revised to Revised Extended Standard Theory (REST). In this version, the idea of shallow structure is presented thereby offering a three-fold distinction in the sentence structure: deep, shallow and surface.

Government and Binding Theory: Introduced in 1980, the theory asserts that a sentence has three main levels of structure: D-Structure, S-Structure and Logical Form. The S-Structure is a derivative of D-Structure and Logical Form is a derivative of S-Structure through a single transformation, which is termed as Move Alpha (a generic movement rule which is a combination of all the transformational rules).

Universal Grammar (UG): It an attempt to specify which structural elements are common to all the human languages, known as principles, and which structural elements are unique to each language, termed as parameters. It is the system of mechanisms which is common to all human languages and is considered innate.

Minimalist Program: Posited in 1993, this program suggests that grammars made for human languages should be minimal, i.e., they should involve a minimum number of syntactic operations to account satisfactorily for the perceptions of the native speakers about their language.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is the main idea of generative grammar?
2. Briefly discuss the ideas presented in Standard Theory. How does this theory take the idea of generative grammar further?
3. What are the strengths of Extended Standard Theory over Standard Theory?
4. Draw tree diagrams for the following phrases using X-bar notation:
 - i. a big book of poems
 - ii. often visits his friends
 - iii. a beautiful dress in the shop
 - iv. highly interested in syntax
 - v. The children will play in the park.
5. Briefly discuss Government and Binding Theory.
6. Assignment

In keeping with the idea of Universal Grammar, try to find out the following:

- i. Some common structural features amongst English, Urdu and your native language.
- ii. Some unique structural features of English, Urdu and your native language.

Further Reading

Baltin, M., & Collins, C. (Eds.). (2008). *The handbook of contemporary syntactic theory* (Vol. 23). John Wiley & Sons.

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Miller, J. (2016). *Introduction to English syntax*. Edinburgh University Press.

Radford, A. (1997). *Syntax: A minimalist introduction*. Cambridge University Press.