



ENGLISH GRAMMAR


SYNTAX.

LECTURE 1



The Simple Sentence

- Simple and multiple sentences
- Clause structures
- Multiple class membership of verbs
- Verb complementation

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- Sentences are either simple or multiple
 - Simple s. – single independent clause
 - Multiple s. – one or more clauses as its immediate constituents
 - Multiple sentences are either COMPOUND OR COMPLEX
 - Compound s. – the immediate constituents are 2 or more COORDINATE clauses
 - Complex s. – 1 or more of its elements, such as Obj. or Adv. are realized by a SUBORDINATE clause

Note: *Simple s. is an independent clause that does not have another clause functioning as one of its elements.*

- Subject and verb are CONSTITUENTS of sentences and also of clauses within sentences.
- CLAUSES and CLAUSE STRUCTURE
- Eg.: **You can borrow my car if you need it.**

Clause structures

- Five functional categories of clause constituents, three of which are further subcategorized.

subject (S)

verb (V)

**object (O) – direct object (Od)
– indirect object (Oi)**

**complement (C) – subject complement
– object complement**

**adverbial (A) – subject– related (As)
– object related (Ao)**

Multiple class membership of verbs

- A given verb can belong , in its various senses, to number of different classes and, hence enter into a number of different clause types.

SVO He'll get a surprise.

SVC He's getting angry.

SVA He got through the window.

SVOO He got her a splendid present.

SVOC He got his shoes and socks wet.

SVOA He got himself into trouble.

- Cf. also:

I found her an entertaining partner

SVOC/SVOO

She called him her favorite waiter

The elements *Od*, *Cs*, *Co* and *A* are obligatory elements of clause structure in that they are required for the complementation of the verb. Given the use of verb in a particular sentence, the sentence is incomplete if one of these elements is omitted, e.g.: *Your dinner seems (type SVC) and *You can put the dish (type SVOA) are unacceptable.

- In some cases Od or an object complement can be considered grammatically optional:

They are eating [SV] ~ cf. They are eating lunch [SVO]

We elected her [SVO] ~ cf. We elected her our delegate [SVOC]

He's eating [SV] ~ cf. He's teaching chemistry [SVO]

He's teaching them chemistry [SVOO]

These are the cases of conversion. The verb eat if transferred from the transitive to the intransitive category. The latter solely applies to some transitive verbs:

They are hunting deer ~ They are hunting.

They're chasing cats ~ * They are chasing.

- A similar approach may be taken to instances where the indirect object is omissible:

She gives expensive presents [SVOd]

She gives her friends expensive presents [SVOiOd]

Types of objects omissions:

- (1) A specific object is coverable from the preceding context:

A: Show me your essay. B: I'll show you later.

Let's do the dishes. I'll wash and you dry (genuinely transitive verb with ellipsis of Od).

- (2) A specific reflexive object is understood from the situational context:

Keep off (a sign on the grass)

Shake well before use.

Watch!

Don't touch.

(3) A specific reflexive object is understood when the verb allows such an object.

A am *shaving*.

They are *dressing*.

(4) A nonspecific object is semantically entailed:

Are you *eating* again?

Do you *drink*?

He teaches.

I don't want to catch you smoking again.

Note: In some cases the omission of a sentence element radically changes the sense of the verb. Contrast the use of the verb *find* and *run* in these examples: *I have found her reasonably helpful* [SVOC]. *I have found her* [SVO]; *He is running business* [SVO]; *He's running* [SV].