



PÁZMÁNY PÉTER KATOLIKUS EGYETEM
Bölcsészet- és Társadalomtudományi Kar

BALOGNÉ BÉRCES KATALIN

**Az angol nyelv szerkezete
(The Structure of English)**

egyetemi jegyzet

ISBN 978-963-308-269-0

Budapest, 2016.

Balogné Bérces Katalin: Az angol nyelv szerkezete
(The Structure of English)
Egyetemi jegyzet

Készült a PPKE BTK jegyzetíró pályázatának keretében
Lektorálta: Szécsényi Krisztina

PPKE/PPCU

2016

To my father

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About the book

“Never make fun of someone who speaks broken English. It means they know another language.”
H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

This book gives an overview of the morphological and syntactic structure of English. Its intended audience is the students of PPCU at the English Studies BA programme on the one hand, and at the MA programme in TEFL on the other, both full-time and part-time. The two courses involved are called *English Grammar* (for BA students and 5-year MAs) and *English Syntax for Teachers* (for both 2-year and 5-year MAs).

English Grammar introduces the basics of English phrase and sentence structure, and compares the major structural properties of Hungarian and English, thus improving students' active grammatical knowledge and conscious language use. It surveys the terminology necessary for English sentence analysis, and looks into the structure of the fundamental elements of the sentence, the main sentence types, as well as some of the more complex grammatical constructions.

English Syntax for Teachers aims to revise and systematise students' previous knowledge of English grammar; provide deeper insight into English morphology and syntax, occasionally contrasting them with Hungarian; thereby raise students' grammar-consciousness, and develop their ability to recognise and explain morphological and syntactic phenomena both in English and Hungarian, with the needs of the EFL teacher in mind.

The book is structured in such a way that the first 11 topics (Chapters 1-11) it discusses are divided into two parts: in each case, the first part (the x.1 chapter) is meant for *English Grammar*, while the second part (the x.4 chapter entitled *Extension*) is primarily for *English Syntax for Teachers*. Of course, the first part can also serve as revision material for students aiming at the *Extension*, which is in turn also available to interested *English Grammar* students. The first two topics (Chapters 1-2) are suitable for *Introduction to English Linguistics* courses, too (and in fact, Chapter 1.1 is so basic that it may be skipped altogether in *English Grammar* if the schedule is tight). The final chapter (Chapter 12) does not contain an *Extension* section for two reasons. First, its topic does not lend itself to a logical upgrade the way the rest of the topics do. Second, this is how the book is able to offer a “comfortable” set of 11 topics to cover in a single semester in each course: Chapters 2.1-12.1 in *English Grammar*, and Chapters 1.4-11.4 in *English Syntax for Teachers*.

Both parts in each chapter of the book are followed by the list of recommended *Further reading* (also fulfilling the function of (selected) references) and a set of *Practice exercises*. Later, a separate document will supplement the book with the key to the exercises, primarily in order to meet the needs of part-time, correspondence students. At the end, Chapter 13 (*Bibliography*) provides the data of the literature referred to in the text, including the abbreviations used for the sources.

The discussions in the chapters are, for the most part, based on “classical” descriptive grammars, SGE in particular, but also on others like CGEL and T&M; besides, the careful reader will notice traces of syntactic theory (namely, Government and Binding Theory) “looming” in the background. I felt it important to build some of the elements of teaching grammars, especially ALP, into the first parts, too, as our linguistics courses in the BA programme run parallel to language courses preparing students for their basic language exam at the end of the first year. Nevertheless, the book is in no way a self-contained, exhaustive pedagogical grammar: the courses it backs up are not language classes primarily but linguistics courses aiming to introduce terminology and pave the way for more advanced studies in linguistics. Neither are the *Practice exercises* exhaustive with respect to the topics in the text, therefore in class or for further practice they need to be amended from collections like Sylvia Chalker's *A Student's English Grammar Workbook* (Longman, 1992) or R.A. Close's *A University Grammar of English: Workbook* (Longman, 1989). In addition, it is advisable to consider the exercises in other grammar books, e.g., ALP, and the suggested activities in Cowan (2008) are particularly useful for teachers of English. All these provide ideal solutions to the exercises, therefore they are suitable for home practice as well.

The book, then, presents no novel discoveries about the morphological and syntactic structure of English. Rather, it embodies the synthesis of different ideas and viewpoints that I have forged and shaped over the course of learning and teaching English. Besides the literature indicated in the

chapters and the *Bibliography*, I have benefited considerably throughout the years I have spent teaching English grammar and syntax from handouts and other materials produced by, and discussions had with, Zsuzsanna Baky, Tekla Mecsnóber, and Ildikó Tóth. I am grateful to my colleagues also teaching *English Grammar*, too, for their insights and advice, and to all my students, whose number I do not even dare to guess during my more than 20 years spent in teaching, for giving me the inspiration and urge to think over and try to fully understand. Special thanks to Ágnes Piukovics for her never faltering enthusiasm and devotion while she spent her summer holiday in 2015 carefully reading and mercilessly criticising draught versions (and weeding out the two or three typos she managed to find :-P); and to my reviewer Krisztina Szécsényi for sparing no effort and time to thoroughly scrutinise the manuscript, give valuable and detailed feedback, have follow-up discussions and patiently clarify my misconceptions (and locate two further typos ☺). Of course, all the remaining errors are mine.

Finally, referring to the motto at the start of this preface: being non-native speakers of English, we need to accept the fact that we remain its humble learners for a lifetime. That is why we do not make fun of people speaking broken English, since our own English, too, however advanced or refined or eloquent it may be, will necessarily stay “broken” to some extent. Nevertheless, keep in mind we know another language in return – Hungarian, indeed an intriguing basis for contrastive linguistic studies. And of course, our aim at university is to improve our English into one that is as little broken as possible. I hope this book will be of some help to that end.¹

BBK
Budapest/Piliscsaba, 20th February 2016

¹ All the illustrations in the book are either my own copyright or material which is offered by the author free of charge fully or for educational use.

1.1 The basics of word structure. Inflection and word-formation processes

“A writer is someone who writes, and a stinger is something that stings. But fingers don’t fing, grocers don’t groce, hammers don’t ham, humdingers don’t humding, ushers don’t ush, and haberdashers do not haberdash.”
(Richard Lederer)

Native speakers as well as proficient learners of English know how words are composed of smaller, recurrent, usually meaningful units. That is, they know that *writer* can be analysed into *write*, which recurs elsewhere as a verb, and *-er*, which forms a whole lot of nouns from verbs and assigns them the constant meaning of ‘something or someone that performs the action denoted by the verb’.¹ They also know that *finger* and some others, although superficially resembling *writer*, cannot be so analysed. That is:

<i>write</i>	<i>-er</i>	but	<i>finger</i>
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This kind of (knowledge about the) analysis of the structure of words is also called **morphology**, and the units of meaning words are composed of are called **morphemes**. As we have seen, *writer* is made up of two morphemes while *finger* is a **monomorphemic** word. Consider now a slightly more complex example, the word *unbelievable*, which can be divided into three morphemes: *un-*, *believe*, and *-able*.²

<i>un-</i>	<i>believe</i>	<i>-able</i>
------------	----------------	--------------

This example shows how the centre of a word (called the **root** or **stem**³), *believe* in this example (and *write* above), can be preceded and/or followed by non-central elements called **affixes** (*un-*, *-able*, *-er*, etc.). Affixes are morphemes which – as their name suggests – attach to other morphemes: those that attach to the left are called **prefixes** (e.g., *un-*), whereas those that attach to the right are called **suffixes** (e.g., *-able*, *-er*).⁴ Since affixes are smaller than words, they cannot be used as words in isolation, and they are always bound to a base. That is, all affixes are **bound morphemes**, while words are **free morphemes**.

However, it is not only affixes that are bound. Consider now the word *incredible*, meaning basically the same as *unbelievable*. In fact, its component morphemes correspond to those of *unbelievable* in the following way:

<i>un-</i>	<i>believe</i>	<i>-able</i>
‘not’	‘think that sg is true’	‘can be believed’
<i>in-</i>	<i>cred</i>	<i>-ible</i>

A major difference between the two words in their structure is whether the centre, the root, is a word or not: *believe* can be used freely, even without any affixes, and it is consistently used as a verb; but

¹ Note that henceforth italics (that is, characters like *these*) highlight example words or sentences, while inverted commas (‘...’) enclose the meaning or paraphrase of an example.

² Please ignore the tiny “tricks” of English **spelling**: as the letter *e* at the end of both *write* and *believe* is not itself pronounced, it is not “needed” in *writer* or *believable*, but it is still part of the verb when written separately. At the same time, **pronunciation** remains the same in all these examples, which indicates that the forms essentially remain the same.

³ In fact, the root and the stem are not exactly the same, but we will not need to make the distinction here.

⁴ In languages other than English or Hungarian, there are further affix types called infixes and circumfixes.

cred cannot be clearly identified as a verb, or as any word class for that matter, as it is never used in isolation or in any cases other than a few words (of Latin origin, of course): it has no past tense or *-ing* form, etc., as verbs do, it has no plural as nouns do, no comparative form as adjectives do, etc. In sum, *cred* is a bound morpheme, and as such, it is a **bound root**.

A few words of warning are in order here. First, please note that *un-believ-able* contains a free root although the way it is spelt suggests an incomplete form of the root. This, however, only affects spelling but not pronunciation; it is simply a spelling convention in English not to repeat silent letters (e.g., the final *e* in *believe*) in **derivatives** where that letter is “unnecessary” (cf. the footnote above). As opposed to this, *cred* is a non-word in both spelling and pronunciation.

Second, be careful not to equate the suffix *-able* with the adjective *able* (as in *I am able to...*): they are only spelt identically but are pronounced differently (similarly to, e.g., the *-ed* in *played* vs. the name *Ed*) and have different grammatical properties. In fact, upon closer inspection, we notice that *-able* and *-ible* are now pronounced the same by most speakers of English, so they may be simply taken to be spelling variants only (similarly to, e.g., *realise* and *realize* – some English (typically, British) speakers spell it with an *s*, others with a *z*).

In sum, the morphemes composing *unbelievable* are the following:

	free or bound?	root or affix?
<i>un-</i>	bound	prefix
<i>believe</i>	free	root
<i>-able</i>	bound	suffix

In comparison, the root in *incredible* is bound:

	free or bound?	root or affix?
<i>in-</i>	bound	prefix
<i>-cred-</i>	bound	root
<i>-ible</i>	bound	suffix

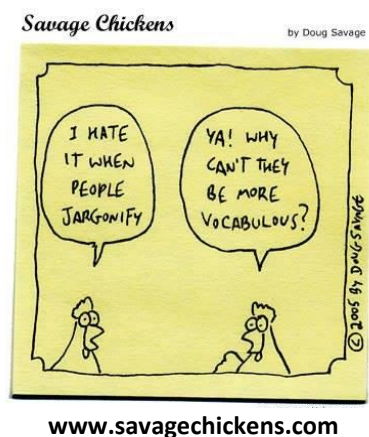
What is common to these two words is the types of affixes they contain: a prefix and a suffix in both. In addition, all these suffixes have the same function: when they are attached to a base, the result is a whole new word. Such affixes are called **derivational affixes**, and the formation of new words with affixes is called **derivation(al morphology)**. Derivational affixes are of two types: they are either **class-changing**, i.e., they change the word class of the base (e.g., *-er*, which makes the verb into a noun, or *-able*, which makes it into an adjective), or **class-maintaining**, i.e., they produce a new word which has the same word class as the base (e.g., *un-*, which simply forms a new adjective meaning the opposite of the base adjective).

Derivation is not the only form of word-formation. New words can also be produced by methods not involving affixes, the most important of which is **compounding**, the combination of two or more roots (rather than a root plus an affix/affixes). The most frequent compounds are compound nouns where both terms are nouns (N+N), e.g., *doghouse*, *laptop* or *Facebook*, but there are A+N (e.g., *sick bag*), V+N (e.g., *pickpocket*), A+A (e.g., *bittersweet*), Preposition+V (e.g., *download*), N+Preposition (e.g., *make-up*) and other compounds as well.⁵ Sometimes bound roots are involved in compounding: words like *lukewarm* (where the first term obviously has nothing to do with the name *Luke*), or the names of some of the berries like *raspberry* or *cranberry* are “famous” such words. The “berries” are particularly interesting examples since in one of their possible pronunciations, when the second term is pronounced the same as the noun *berry* separately, only the first term is bound (*rasp-*, pronounced /rɑ:z/, and *cran-*, respectively). However, in the other pronunciation alternative the *e* in the *berry* part is very weak or may even be absent (/bri/), in which case that second term is bound – in fact, it is so short and weak it is more like a suffix.

⁵ Note that English has no strict spelling rules for most types of compounds: the terms may be written as separate words, they may be hyphenated, or the compound may be spelt as a single word.

Besides the two major word-formation methods, derivation and compounding, there are a handful of minor processes people use to create new words. These are summarised below, together with a couple of examples:

Name of process:	Name of coinage: ⁶	Explanation:	Other examples:
blending	blend	random parts of two words combined: e.g., <i>smog</i> from the underlined parts of <i>smoke</i> and <i>fog</i>	<i>motel, brunch, chunnel, cremains, modem, outro...</i>
back-formation		derivation or compounding applied “backwards”: strings resembling roots or affixes removed: e.g., <i>edit</i> from <i>editor</i> (as if <i>-or</i> was a suffix) ⁷	<i>peddle, swindle, televise, (mono)kini, burger, baby-sit...</i>
clipping (abbreviation)		a random part of a word removed to make the word shorter: e.g., <i>pram</i> from <i>perambulator</i>	<i>coke, prof, lab, doc, vet, ad, advert, phone, gym, bus...</i>
acronym formation	acronym	the initials of words in a long expression combined: e.g., <i>scuba</i> from <i>self-contained underwater breathing appliance</i>	<i>URL, led, laser, YMCA, RSPCA, P.S., RSVP, a.m., p.m. ...</i>
conversion		a word belonging to a certain class used as belonging to a different class without adding a derivational affix ⁸ : e.g., the noun <i>text</i> (‘a text message’) used as a verb (‘to send a text message’)	<i>(to) email, (the) green, (to) co-author, (a) like (on Facebook)...</i>
eponym formation	eponym	using the name of a person/place or a brandname (a proper noun) as a common noun (a subtype of conversion): e.g., <i>sandwich</i> referring to the (4 th) Earl of Sandwich	<i>bobby, jumbo, denim, cardigan, hertz, biro, coach...</i>



There are two interesting aspects of word-formation to mention. One is called **productivity**: this is the ability of a word-formation process to produce new words. In general, derivation is highly productive and creative, and affixes can be used to even invent words that have not existed before (and may not stay), such as *jargonify* or *vocabulous*. Obviously, the minor processes in the chart above are much less productive, that is, much less frequently applied by speakers to create a word (and as a result, may even be used deliberately to produce a special effect, e.g., in branding or advertising). Also, certain affixes are more productive than others, e.g., both *-ness* and *-ity* form abstract nouns from adjectives but *-ness* is far more frequent. The other property of word-formation is **transparency** or **compositionality**, which is about whether the

⁶ In most cases, the name of the coinage is the same as the name of the process. This column gives the name of the coinage only if a different or separate word exists to denote it.

⁷ The difference between derivation/compounding and back-formation is in the **etymology**, i.e., the history of the words: the two are impossible to differentiate unless we are familiar with which words were used earlier and which words were created later. That is, we *know* that *edit* is an instance of back-formation only because we *know* that the word *editor* existed before *edit* appeared. Similarly, we know that analysing *hamburger* as a compound (*ham*+*burger*), using *burger* as a separate word or as a root in new compounds like *cheeseburger*, is back-formation because we know that originally *hamburger* was a derivative (*Hamburg* (the German city) + *er*).

⁸ That is why conversion is also called **zero derivation**.

meaning of the new word is clearly seen, easily calculable, on the basis of the individual meanings of the component morphemes. E.g., the word *personalness* is rather transparent as it means ‘the quality of being personal’; *uneatable* simply means ‘cannot be eaten (e.g., because of the bad taste it has)’; *doghouse* means ‘a house for dogs’. In contrast, *personality* does not simply mean ‘the quality of being personal’; if something is *inedible* you can eat it, and people often do eat it, but it is poisonous; a *superfood* is not simply a food that is very good, or an *earworm* is not a worm in your



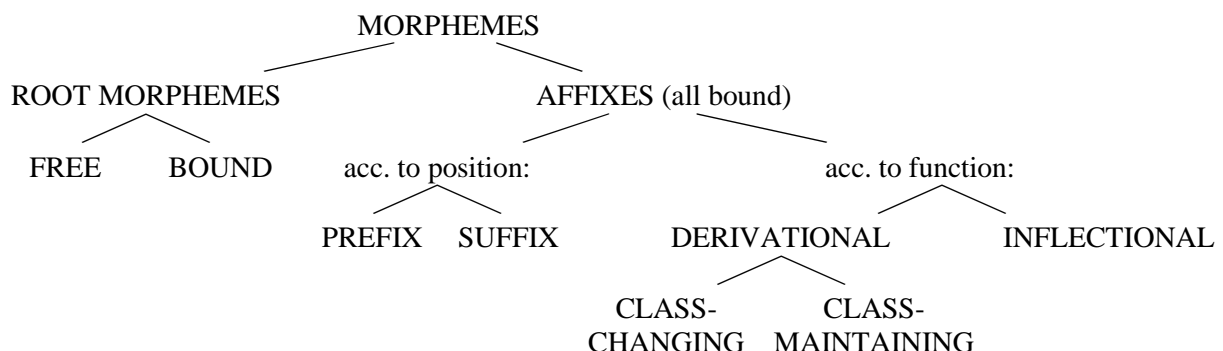
<http://visual.ly/superfood-superguide>

ear: such examples are not (fully) transparent, they are non-compositional or **idiomatic**.

As we have seen, morphology or the morphological knowledge of speakers is responsible for coining new words as well as for analysing (transparent) structures in processing what they hear. Besides derivation, the other function of morphology is to produce the various forms of the same word, e.g., the past tense of verbs (e.g., *played*), the plural of nouns (e.g., *dogs*), or the comparative form of adjectives (e.g., *shorter*). This type of morphology is called **inflection**, and the affixes it uses are inflectional affixes, or inflections for short. The inflectional morphemes of English are as follows:

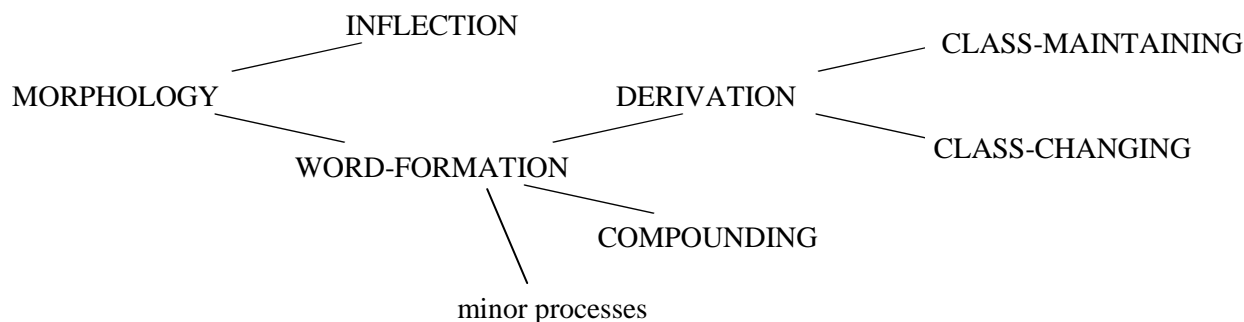
-s	third person singular present	verbal
-ed	past tense ⁹	
-ing	progressive/continuous	
-ed/-en	past participle	
-s	plural	nominal
- 's	possessive	
-s'	plural possessive	
-er	comparative	adjectival/adverbial
-est	superlative	

As you can see, inflectional morphology uses affixes, similarly to derivation. Therefore, affixes may not only be classified according to **position** (prefixes vs. suffixes) but also according to **function** (derivational vs. inflectional). In the languages of the world these types can combine freely with each other, but in English there is one restriction: **all inflections are suffixes**, that is, there are no inflectional prefixes, all prefixes are derivational. The full classification of the major types of morphemes is the following:



The morphological operations that we have introduced and discussed are summarised below:

⁹ Later in this book, this form will be called preterite (see Ch. 4.1).



1.2 Further reading¹⁰

On English morphology in general: Fromkin et al. 2011: 3; Varga 2010: 5; OEG 9 On word-formation: McCarthy & O'Dell 1994: 8–19 On compound nouns: AGU 54–55 On acronyms and clipping: McCarthy & O'Dell 1994: 98.

1.3 Practice exercises

1. Indicate the morpheme boundaries in the following words, then fill the charts with examples. The first one has been done for you.

boy/ish, disregarding, gradual, hardship, incredible, rainbows, shortest, submitted, systematicity

ROOT MORPHEMES	
FREE	BOUND
<i>boy,</i>	

AFFIXES (all bound):

	DERIVATIONAL	INFLECTIONAL
PREFIX		X
SUFFIX	<i>-ish,</i>	

2. Identify the component morphemes in the following words, and classify them along the following dimensions, wherever applicable: root/affix, free/bound, prefix/suffix, derivational/inflectional, class-maintaining/class-changing:

subconscious, responsibilities, holiday, anti-depressant, increasingly, uneatable, inedible, Japanese, shamelessness

¹⁰ Throughout the book, the numbers in the *Further reading* lists refer to chapter/section/unit numbers (rather than page numbers). For the abbreviations, see the *Bibliography* (Ch. 13).

3. Compare the morphological structures of the following words:
- linger, singer, stronger*
 - bedroom, mushroom*
 - hardship, battleship*
 - What are the two meanings of the word *longer*? What is the morphological difference between the two? Do you know what the pronunciation difference is?

4. Complete each of the numbered blanks in the following passage by forming from the base words in brackets ONE word that fits in the text. The first one has been done for you.

Besides its intricate pattern of (0).....**connections**..... (CONNECT) to other languages and its (1)..... (DOMINATE) status on the (2)..... (LANGUAGE) map of the world, English is very special in at least one more respect. Due to a series of (3)..... (HISTORY) events, a (4)..... (DISCUSS) of which is beyond the present purposes, English has developed two standard (5)..... (VARY), that is, two forms, both of which are (6)..... (EQUAL) accepted by the societies of their (7)..... (RESPECT) countries. One is Standard British English in England, the other is Standard American English in the USA.

5. Identify the word-formation processes used to produce the following words. Sometimes multiple processes are involved:
- app, autocorrect, (to) e-mail, emoticon, (to) google, Instagram, internet, iPhone, microblogging, motherboard, pdf, Pinterest, re-tweet, spam, unfriend, USB, winchester, yolo*

1.4 Extension: An outline of Hungarian vs. English morphosyntax

Throughout this book we will constantly compare and contrast English and Hungarian, to be able to understand, express, and resolve the problems and difficulties Hungarian learners of English might experience. The two languages historically come from two unrelated language families (Hungarian being a **Finno-Ugric (Uralic)** language, English being **Germanic (Indo-European)**), which partly explains the amount of differences in form and structure – that is, the fact that in almost any of the relevant aspects they belong to two different language types. When we compare and contrast languages exclusively from the point of view of linguistic structure, and aim to categorise them accordingly, we evaluate them with respect to what is called **language typology**.

In terms of morphology, the classical typological divisions are based on how morphemes are concatenated to form words, namely, on which of three major types of operations is the most characteristic of the language. These three, illustrated by possible combinations of *two* morphemes, are the following:

Examples:	<i>more common</i>	<i>reading</i>	<i>men</i>
The two morphemes denote ...	COMP + <i>common</i>	<i>read</i> + PROGR	<i>man</i> + PLU
They are ...	separate words	in a single word but easily separable	in a single word but inseparable/fused
The names of the types ¹¹ :	isolating	agglutinating/agglutinative	fusional

¹¹ Isolating is sometimes also called **analytic**, while the others are collectively called **synthetic**. Fusional is also referred to as **inflectional**.

The names of the types of morphological operations also serve as the names of the language types. Most languages are, however, mixed types, as you can see in the chart: we can find examples of all three in English (and the same is true for Hungarian, too). Therefore, what decides the type a given language belongs to is which of the three *dominates* the morphological system. Since the vast majority of present-day English morphology is isolating, it is usually classified as an **isolating language**, whereas Hungarian is dominated by agglutinative morphology, and is thus called an **agglutinative language** (cf. Hungarian *be-kék-ít-ett-elek* PERF-blue-MAKE-PAST-I+YOU¹² vs. English *I have made you blue*).¹³

This means that English uses much fewer affixes than Hungarian, especially in inflection: the same word has much fewer different forms, at least in the case of nouns and verbs. To put it more technically, lexical items (called **lexemes**) in Hungarian have much more **word forms** (**syntactic words** different in form), which makes the lists of word forms (called **paradigms**) longer. Hungarian morphology is very rich: e.g., the system of *nominal* inflection (often called **declension**) distinguishes as many as 18 forms (or **cases**), that is, singular nouns have 18 forms in the paradigm. In contrast, English singular nouns have two forms only: one for **nominative** (or subjective) and **accusative** (or objective) case (e.g., *dog*, cf. Hungarian *kutya* and *kutyát*)¹⁴, and one for **genitive** (or possessive) (e.g., *dog's*).



Hungarian *verbal* inflection (**conjugation**) diverges from English even more. Hungarian verbs are inflected for three features: mood, tense and agreement. **Mood** refers to the distinction between **indicative** (i.e., plain statements, e.g., *látasz* ‘you (can) see’), **conditional** (e.g., *látnál* ‘you would see’) and **imperative/subjunctive** (e.g., *láss* ‘see!’; also cf. *Fontos, hogy láss* ‘It is important for you to see/that you (should) see’ with the subjunctive). **Tense** means the distinction between present and past (e.g., *látasz* ‘you see’ vs. *láttál* ‘you saw’ – cf. Ch. 4), while **agreement** refers to the phenomenon that within the clause the verb agrees (i.e., “harmonises”) with the subject in person (first, second, third) and number (singular, plural) (this is also called (**subject-verb**) **concord**). These distinctions produce as many as four paradigms for verbs: present indicative (*látok* etc.), past indicative (*láttam* etc.), present conditional (*látnék* etc.), and imperative/subjunctive (*lássak* etc.).¹⁵ In addition, each of these paradigms has two versions: one for **definite** objects (e.g., *látom* ‘I (can) see it’), and one for **indefinite** objects (e.g., *látok* ‘I (can) see (something)’)¹⁶, so altogether there are eight patterns.

Compare this to English, in which all the forms that *regular verbs*¹⁷ have are:

¹² This is a rough analysis; a number of details are ignored. Also, note the fusional morphology present in the final inflection.

¹³ Besides isolating, agglutinative and fusional morphology, a fourth type is also distinguished in traditional typologies, and accordingly, there is a fourth type of language, which is predominantly characterised by that kind of operation. This is when long strings of roots and affixes constitute words functioning as sentences; it is called **polysynthetic**, and an example of a polysynthetic language is Inuktitut (one of the Eskimo languages of North America). E.g., in Inuktitut, the long word *Qasu-iir-sar-vig-ssar-si-ngit-luinar-nar-puq* consists of the morphemes tired-not-cause-place-suitable-find-not-completely-someone-3/sg and means ‘Someone did not find a completely suitable resting place’, i.e., it corresponds to what is expressed in other types of languages by an entire sentence.

¹⁴ For English, nominative and accusative are traditionally distinguished because, although the two are not formally distinct in the case of nouns, they are relevant to certain pronouns like *I* vs. *me* or *who* vs. *whom* (see Ch. 3.1).

¹⁵ Past conditional and future indicative are expressed **periphrastically**, i.e., in the form of phrases: cf. *láttam volna* ‘I would have seen’ and *látni fogok* ‘I will see’, respectively.

¹⁶ To be precise, the definite conjugation is used in transitive sentences where the direct object is definite and 3rd person (singular or plural), whereas the indefinite forms are for all other cases, i.e., intransitively, with indefinite direct objects, and with 1st or 2nd person direct objects. In addition, there is a special form used when the subject is 1st person singular and the object is 2nd person.

¹⁷ *Irregular verbs* are different: they typically have separate forms for the preterite (the “second form”) and the past participle (the “third form”), e.g., *write*; or some of their forms may coincide, e.g., *cut*. The verb *be* has the most, formally distinct word forms: *be, am, is, are, was, were, been, being*.

- (i) an uninflected, plain form (e.g., *play* – for plain present and the base form),
- (ii) present tense 3rd person singular (e.g., *plays*),
- (iii) past tense (or more precisely, **preterite** form, see Ch. 4.1) and past participle (e.g., *played*),
- (iv) an *-ing* form¹⁸ (e.g., *playing* – for present participle/gerund).

That is, they only have four physically different forms for altogether six functions. Traditional grammar regards the two subtypes of the *-ing* form, **the present participle** (as in *I am playing with my cat*) and **the gerund** (e.g., *I like playing with my cat*), as two separate functions, and indeed, their syntactic properties are different. Here, however, we consider them as a single category as no English verb differentiates them formally. In comparison, the base form and the plain present on the one hand, and the preterite and the past participle on the other hand, fulfil *separate* functions and, at the same time, certain irregular verbs do have differing forms for them (and their fundamental grammatical properties differ, too, cf. finiteness in Ch. 4). E.g., *be* is a base form but *am/are* are (plain) present; *wrote* is preterite but *written* is past participle.

Notice that some of the above forms are clearly marked for tense (the plain present, the *-s* form, and the past tense form) and agreement (the *-s* form), and all of these are indicative; others (the so-called infinitive, the past participle, and the *-ing* form) are not (and will therefore be later called non-finite forms). As a result, the plain present and the infinitive, identical though they may seem, follow two different grammatical patterns: since the former is marked for tense it will undergo backshift (e.g., *The mice play in the cupboard – Garfield knew that the mice played in the cupboard*), while the infinitive always remains unchanged (e.g., *Garfield saw the mice play in the cupboard*) (for backshift, see Ch. 8.1).

The **base form** is not only used as the infinitive, but in as many as four constructions:

- (i) bare infinitive constructions, e.g., *Garfield saw the mice play in the cupboard*
- (ii) *to*-infinitive constructions, e.g., *It was raining outside, so the kids decided to play computer games*
- (iii) the imperative¹⁹, e.g., *Play it again, Sam!*
- (iv) the subjunctive²⁰, e.g., *It is important that all participants play fair*

The imperative and the subjunctive are curious structures because although the verb form used is not visibly marked for tense and agreement, the entire construction itself expresses mood (see above) and contains agreement features (the subjunctive has its own subject determining them, while the imperative is normally second person). (That is, the base form in these two structures is finite – see the discussion of finiteness in Ch. 4.1.)

Recall that we need to distinguish the past tense form from the **past participle** although for regular verbs they are formally identical (“*-ed* form”). The past participle (or *-en* participle) has the same form in all tenses²¹, and is used in two main constructions, the perfect (present or past – this distinction is encoded by the form of the auxiliary *have*: *He has played this tune several times* vs. *He had played this tune several times*) and the passive (e.g., *The music usually played at military funerals is called Taps or Butterfield’s Lullaby*) (for the passive, see Ch. 10.1).

Some of these verbal forms correspond to Hungarian equivalents (e.g., the infinitive to *-ni* forms like *játszani* ‘to play’), others, especially the gerund (e.g., *Playing in the cupboard is their favourite pastime activity*), do not have a direct counterpart and their translations into Hungarian vary with the context.

If we go on comparing morphological/morphosyntactic categories in English and Hungarian, we notice further differences. For instance, inflectional suffixes in Hungarian are traditionally subdivided into *jel* ‘sign’ and *rag* (a back-formation from *ragaszt* ‘stick on’), due to their different

¹⁸ Sometimes also called gerund-participle.

¹⁹ See Ch. 7.1.

²⁰ See Ch. 4.4.

²¹ Therefore, the word *past* in its name is somewhat misleading.



grammatical properties. While the same word form can contain more than one *jel*, it contains *at most* one *rag*; besides, the ordering restriction is that if suffixes of both types are present, the *jel* is (or the *jels* are) closer to the root, whereas the *rag* is the final morpheme of the string. For example, *macská-im-mal* ‘with my cats’ is composed of a root, two *jels*, and a *rag* at the end.

In addition, in Hungarian prefixes are much less common: although one of them is inflectional, a morpheme class non-existent in English (the adjectival superlative *leg-*), most of the others are loan prefixes, mainly of Latin origin (e.g., *ex-főnök* ‘ex-boss’). A category rather unique to Hungarian is that of the **verbal prefix** or **preverb** as in *elmegey* ‘go away’. Since all of them are able to detach from the verb and they rather behave as separate words syntactically (cf. *el szeretnék menni* ‘I would like to go away’ or *nem/később megyek el* ‘I won’t go away/I will go away later’), nowadays they are usually regarded either as separate words or as first terms in compound verbs, rather than as genuine prefixes.

A final major difference between English and Hungarian is the absence of **prepositions** in the latter. The meanings and functions prepositions express in English are carried in Hungarian by the many case forms on the one hand (18 altogether, see above), and the numerous **postpositions**, i.e., short grammar words following their nominal phrases (NPs) rather than preceding them: compare *under the bridge* (Preposition + NP) with Hungarian *a híd alatt* (NP + Postposition).²²

As we have seen, English and Hungarian do not only display differences in morphology or morphosyntax due to the fundamental typological difference (isolating vs. agglutinating), but there are also a few categories that are more common or only found in either one or the other.

Further reading

On Hungarian morphosyntax: Törkenczy–Siptár 2000: 1; É. Kiss 2002: 1  On lexemes, paradigms, etc.: Varga 2010: 5 

1.5 Practice exercises

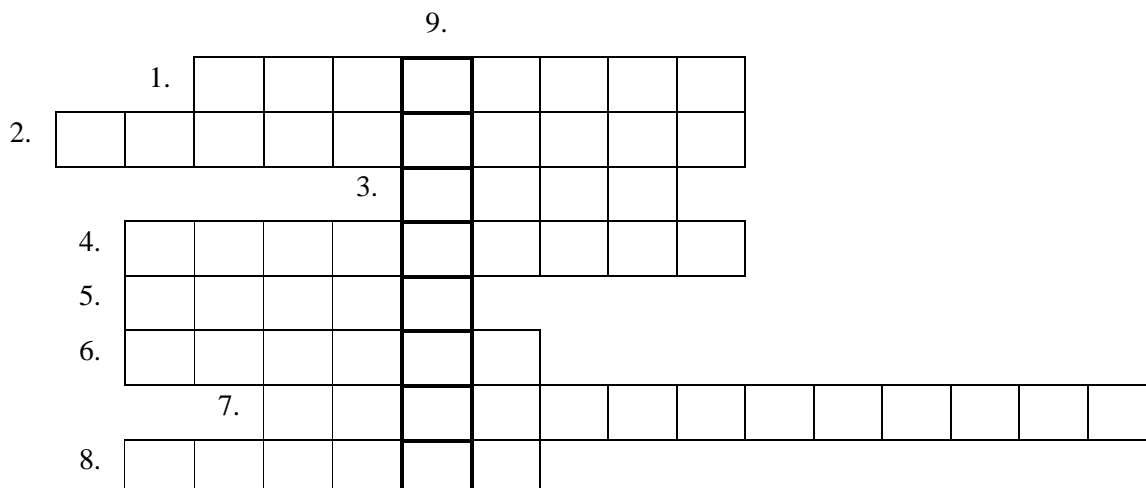
- Any two languages can be related in three ways: (i) **genetically** (whether they have a common ancestor somewhere in the family line); (ii) **culturally** (whether they have been in contact for some time during their histories and borrowed language items or features from each other); and (iii) **typologically** (whether they show any resemblances regardless of where they come from). For example, English is related genetically to Dutch (West-Germanic) and Russian (Indo-European), in the US culturally to North American Indian languages (place names and terms borrowed, e.g., *Wisconsin*, *moose*, *squash*, *sequoia*), and typologically to Chinese (isolating). Consider the following languages and decide in which sense(s) Hungarian is related to them:

Cheremis (Mari), English, Estonian, Finnish, German, Japanese, Latin, Romani, Sami (Lappish), Slavic languages (e.g., Slovak), Sumerian, Turkic languages (e.g., Turkish)

- We know that languages are typically mixed morphological types. Prove this in the case of Hungarian by analysing examples like *házaiban* ‘in his houses’, *Szeretlek* ‘I love you’, and *A ház felett három madár repül el* ‘There are three birds flying over the house’.

²² In English, the only postposition is *ago* in time expressions like *two days ago*.

3. Fill in the crossword. What is the term in 9 down?



1. A word composed of more than one root.
2. Word-formation by affixation.
3. The central morpheme in the word, to which affixes are attached.
4. With respect to its morphology, Present-Day English belongs to this language type.
5. The type of morpheme that cannot stand on its own, in isolation.
6. An affix that is attached to the left of the base.
7. With respect to its morphology, Hungarian belongs to this language type.
8. The abstract word, the common underlier of word forms/syntactic words.
9. ??

4. Match the Hungarian derivational suffix types with the examples.

deverbal verb-forming	<i>ír–írott</i>
denominal verb-forming	<i>rossz–rosszall</i>
deverbal noun-forming	<i>só–sótlan</i>
deverbal adjective-forming	<i>tanul–tanulás</i>
deverbal participle-forming	<i>mos–mosat</i>
denominal noun-forming	<i>szép–szépség</i>
denominal adjective-forming	<i>hisz–hiszékeny</i>
deadjectival noun-forming	<i>falt–foltoz</i>
deadjectival verb-forming	<i>barát–barátság</i>

5. What type of suffixes do the following English examples contain? Use the category labels in Ex. 4 above.

spoonful, useful, Londoner, participant, sanity, monkeyish, manageable, personally, friendly, simplify

6. List all the word forms of the lexemes WRITE, WILL and MUST, and compare their paradigms. What explains the differences?

7. Identify the word-formation process(es) involved in producing the following Hungarian words: *rovar* 'insect' (from *rovátkolt* + *barom*), *szakdolgoz(ik)* 'write a university thesis' (from *szakdolgozat*), *madárijesztő* 'scarecrow', *tévéz(ik)* 'watch television', *garbó* 'poloneck', *sebváltó* 'gear lever'.

8. Identify the morphosyntactic change in each of the following examples of conversion, and decide whether they exemplify **full** (category change) or **partial** (subcategory change) **conversion**. What is the difference between (3) and (4)? (B = before conversion; A = after conversion)

- (1) B: *Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?*
A: *He wolfed down his lunch.*
- (2) B: *Hamlet was written by William Shakespeare.*
A: *You are a new Shakespeare.*
- (3) B: *Jimmie, don't even worry about that.*
A: *Don't Jimmie me!*
- (4) B: *This photocopier was produced by Xerox.*
A: *He xeroxed 3 pages.*

9. Produce all the forms of the Hungarian verbs *vár* 'wait', *kér* 'ask', *tűr* 'tolerate', and organise them into the eight paradigms introduced above (present indicative, past indicative, present conditional, imperative/subjunctive + definite/indefinite). Why do we need *three* example verbs like these to illustrate verbal paradigms in Hungarian? Which aspect of the language is responsible for the differences? Comment on the first person singular conditional forms, also considering differences between standard and non-standard Hungarian.

10. Provide the English equivalents of the following phrases and sentences. In each case, there is some form of agreement between grammatical elements, but in one of the languages only. Underline the suffix indicating the agreement, then specify the elements agreeing and the feature in which they agree. The first one has been done for you.

	Hungarian	English	Elements in agreement	Agreement feature
1.	<i>Szeret<u>lek</u></i>	<i>I love you</i>	<i>verb + subject + object</i>	<i>person and number</i>
2.	<i>Jon macskája</i>			
3.	<i>három kutya</i>			
4.	<i>nélkü<u>lem</u></i>			
5.	<i>lát<u>nod</u> kell</i>			
6.	<i>Garfield szereti önmagát</i>			

2.1 The basics of sentence structure.

Category vs. function

“Marriage is not a word – it is a sentence – a life sentence.”
(Rewa Mirpuri: *Book of Humour*, Rotary Club of Singapore, 1992, p.6)

This chapter is about **words** and **sentences**, and the linguistic units between the two, called **phrases**. Phrases come into being because words in languages are not simply put one after the other in a linear string to form sentences to convey the communicative message. Rather, words cluster together in groups organised into a strict hierarchy, following rules that cannot be broken, with one member dominating and governing the dependent rest – very much like a street gang. In sentence structure, the “gang leader” is called the **head**, while the “members” are called **modifiers** (see below for more explanation). When such a “gang” (recall, it is called *phrase* in linguistics) is formed, it seeks an even higher “gang leader” or “ruler”, acting like a voluntary dependent, to become member in an even bigger “gang”. That is, phrases become members in larger phrases, and this goes on and on until the sentence is formed. In fact, the sentence itself is nothing but the ultimate “gang”, i.e., the largest phrase possible. The study of how this happens, as well as native speakers’ subconscious knowledge of this enabling them to produce and understand sentences, is called **syntax**.



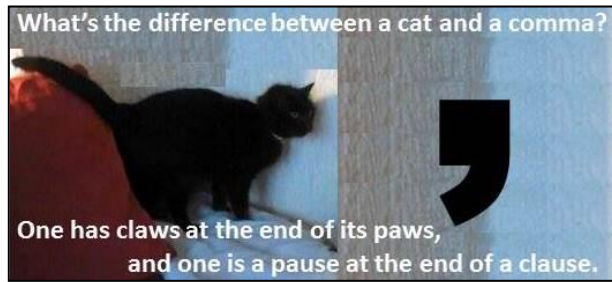
A related notion is **grammar**, and actually, very often what people mean by that word primarily covers syntax, plus some of what we discussed in the previous chapter (morphology) (as well as issues in spelling). We can call this the traditional, more narrow sense of the word *grammar*. Linguists, however, sometimes take *grammar* to mean the linguistic knowledge of the native speaker – everything the native speaker knows, which actually *defines* him/her as a native speaker. This is a wider sense, in which grammar also includes sound structure (**phonology**) and meaning relations (**semantics**). Together with morphology and syntax, these constitute the so-called **rule components** of grammar because these four are made up of rules, i.e., regularities producing systematic patterns, thus guaranteeing the non-random, rule-governed nature of all human languages. Thanks to the knowledge of these regularities, native speakers have intuitions about which forms/structures are acceptable (or **well-formed**, or **grammatical**) in their language and which are unacceptable (**ill-formed**, **ungrammatical**) even if they have not ever seen them – they may not be able to properly explain the reasons, but they are able to make **grammaticality judgements**. That is, native speakers can tell you that a word like **ptitsa* is phonologically ill-formed (at least in English), a word like **beautifuly* is morphologically unacceptable, sentences like **Is nice weather the* or **I put the book in a couple of minutes* illustrate ungrammatical syntactic structures, while others like *My uncle is pregnant* are, though acceptable in all other respects, semantically ill-formed, due to their odd, anomalous meaning.¹

In addition to the rule components, native speakers also “store” in their memory the building blocks with which the rules in these components operate: the morphemes (cf. Ch. 1.1) and the words, even certain phrases. This mental “storehouse” is called the vocabulary or **the lexicon**, and that leaves us with five grammar components altogether: morphology, syntax, phonology, semantics, plus the lexicon. The rest of this book is primarily concerned with aspects of the syntactic component of the grammar of English.

As it was explained above, the units (called **constituents**) of sentence structure are organised into a strict **hierarchy**: words combining into phrases, phrases combining into larger phrases, larger phrases combining into even larger ones and so on, and the largest constituent exhibiting a phrase-like head–modifier structure is the sentence. However, not all sentences are **simple sentences** like *The mice play in the cupboard* – in fact, more often than not, speakers combine sentences to produce

¹ As the usual convention in linguistics, the **asterisk** (or **star**) before a form indicates its unacceptability.

complex sentences like *Garfield knows that the mice play in the cupboard* or **compound sentences**



like *Garfield knows this but does not really care about it* or **compound-complex sentences** like *Garfield knows that the mice play in the cupboard but does not really care about it*. Therefore, it is common practice in grammar descriptions to introduce the term **clause** for simple, sentence-like constituents: then, the so-called simple sentence is one containing a single clause, whereas the other types are composed of

several clauses (see Ch. 7.1 and 8.1 for sentence types). In sum, the hierarchy of syntactic constituents is made up of words (at the bottom of the hierarchy), phrases, clauses, and the sentence (at the top); but keep in mind that clauses and sentences have the same dependency structure of head plus modifiers as phrases do, so the two basic constituent types are **words and phrases**.

There are two aspects of these constituents to study: one is the category of a constituent, the other is its function. As we will see below, the **category** is an inherent, idiosyncratic property of constituents: in the case of words, the **word-level category** (traditionally called **word class** or **part of speech**, i.e., whether the word is a **noun** or **verb**, etc.) is unpredictable from other aspects of the word itself, therefore linguists claim it has to be memorised by children learning a language for each single item, that is, speakers store the information in the lexicon. (Hence the practice in lexicography to include the word class in the entries of words in dictionaries.) In the case of phrases, the **phrase-level** (or **phrasal**) **category** is determined by the head, of course: if the head is a noun, the phrase will be a **Noun Phrase** (**NP** for short) no matter what the modifiers are; similarly, there are Verb Phrases, Adjective Phrases, etc. (see below). In fact, whenever we mentioned words, phrases, clauses, and sentences above, we used **category labels** to refer to these constituents.

The other aspect of syntactic constituents is their **grammatical function**, which, as its name suggests, is relevant within a context only. A function is a role something plays in a given situation; accordingly, the grammatical function is the role a constituent plays in a syntactic context. Traditionally, these roles are called **sentence elements**, since the idea is that these notions are irrelevant and uninterpretable outside of the context a sentence provides: the constituents acquire these roles by becoming elements within sentences. For example, a phrase like *the mice* has no function in itself; but the moment it is used in a sentence like *The mice ignore the cat* it becomes the **subject** of the sentence; the moment it is used in *The cat ignores the mice* it becomes the **object** of the verb. Note how the function changes with the change of the context!

Words alone, however, are unable to play such roles – in fact, most probably this is the motivation for words to form phrases: that is the way for them to contract relations with other constituents and thus get integrated into the hierarchy. Therefore, while the category is relevant to both words and phrases (moreover, it *originates* in words, and phrases only “inherit” it from their heads), the grammatical function is only relevant to phrases. Recall that words crucially need to form phrases: so much so that some are able to do so even on their own, under certain circumstances – these are **one-word phrases** (e.g., *mice* in *Mice are furry rodents with long tails*); others typically always do so (e.g., *Garfield ignores the mice*); but some need modifiers in all cases (e.g., *mouse* or *ignore* in *The mouse ignored Garfield*, cf. **Mouse ignored Garfield* or **The mouse ignored*). (We will learn more about these options in Ch. 3–6.)

In the rest of this chapter, we discuss categories and functions in a bit more detail. First, let us summarise the most important word classes, that is, word-level categories:²

² A detailed discussion of word-level categories and their subcategories follows in Ch. 3.1.

Category	Major subcategories/Examples	
noun	proper noun <i>Jon, Budapest, Trafalgar Square, the Alps, the Danube...</i>	common noun <i>room, answer, apple, equipment, scissors, police...</i>
adjective	gradable adjective <i>happy, steady, large, beautiful...</i>	non-gradable adjective <i>alive, main, certain, proper³...</i>
adverb	<i>steadily, completely, yesterday, there...</i>	
(main) verb	<i>search, grow, play, ignore, contemplate, need, dare, have, do...</i>	
article	definite article <i>the</i>	indefinite article <i>a(n)</i>
demonstrative	proximal demonstrative <i>this, these</i>	distal demonstrative <i>that, those</i>
numeral	cardinal numeral <i>two, eleven...</i>	ordinal numeral <i>first, twentieth...</i>
pronoun	<i>he, they, them, myself, anybody, one, mine, who, each other...</i>	
preposition	<i>of, at, into, without, since, up...</i>	
auxiliary (verb)	modal auxiliary <i>can, must, might, need, dare...</i>	non-modal auxiliary ⁴ <i>have, be_{PROGR}, be_{PASS}, do</i>
conjunction	coordinating conjunction <i>and, but, or...</i>	subordinating conjunction <i>that, although, if, whether...</i>
interjection	<i>oh, ah, ugh, phew, wow...</i>	

The first four are the major categories called **lexical content words** (or **open-class words**), the others are **grammatical function words** (or **closed-class words**) – the basis for the distinction will be discussed in the next chapter (Ch. 3.1).

Recall that phrases receive their fundamental properties from their head words; to express this, they are named after their heads. Accordingly, the phrase-level categories are the following:⁵

³ *Certain* is only non-gradable in its use in examples like *There's certain things that I adore*. Similarly, *proper* is only non-gradable when it means 'exactly', as in *the town proper*, i.e., excluding the suburbs.

⁴ Auxiliaries *have* and *be* are sometimes also called **aspectual auxiliaries**. As you can see, auxiliary *do* is also traditionally listed among the non-modals, however, it also shares many syntactic properties with modals. Therefore it seems to be a special element in English grammar, and will be discussed in more detail later (Ch. 4.1).

⁵ Detailed discussions of VPs, NPs, and other phrases follow in Ch. 4.1, 5.1, and 6.1, respectively.

Head	Phrasal category	Examples
noun	Noun Phrase (NP)	<i>the <u>answer</u>, my <u>book on grammar</u>, <u>mice</u>, <u>Garfield</u>...</i>
(main) verb	Verb Phrase (VP)	<i><u>play</u> in the cupboard, <u>put</u> the cat out, <u>sleep</u>...</i>
adjective	Adjective Phrase (AP)	<i><u>tired</u>, more <u>common</u>, so <u>angry</u> with Odie...</i>
adverb	Adverb Phrase (AdvP)	<i><u>there</u>, more <u>slowly</u>, quite <u>independently</u> of me...</i>
preposition	Prepositional Phrase (PP)	<i><u>with</u> Jon, <u>from</u> under the bed, right <u>in</u> front of you...</i>
conjunction	clause	<i>(Garfield knows) <u>that</u> the mice play in the cupboard</i>

Recall that syntactic categories are inherent, idiosyncratic properties of words. How are they identified, then? In addition, if phrases are determined by their heads, how do we identify their category when we are uncertain about which element the head is? An easy answer to the first question would be to follow the meaning of the words. After all, the name of a person, place or thing will be a noun, while a word denoting action will be a verb. Notice, however, that there is a catch here. If a word that denotes action is a verb, then how about the word *action* itself? Clearly, it is a noun. So relying solely on the meaning of words may be misleading. Moreover, meaning is not even necessary for the identification of word class. Consider the first two lines of a so-called nonsense poem:

*'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.*
(Lewis Carroll, *Jabberwocky* in *Through the Looking-Glass*)

Nonsense texts are special because some of the words in them are not existing words of the language but have been invented by the author in such a way that they are phonologically well-formed – that is, they look/sound like English words and are therefore judged as acceptable, potential words (called **accidental gaps**). However, not all the words are nonsense: a careful look at the poem above reveals that quite a few words are existing English words: pronouns (*it*), auxiliaries (*was*, *did*), conjunctions (*and*), articles (*the*), prepositions (*in*) and the like typically appear in nonsense texts in their “original” form. Notice that these are the categories given in the above chart *below* the line separating the major categories from the so-called grammatical function words: these are the words which are classified as “function words” because they have a function – they provide context for the other words. Try to identify the category of the nonsense words, and surprisingly, even having no clue as to their meaning, you will be able to do so, relying solely on the context. Most probably, *toves* and *wabe* are nouns, *brillig* and *slithy* are adjectives, while *gyre* and *gimble* are verbs – since they appear in positions where nouns, adjectives, and verbs typically appear, respectively. For example:

*the slithy toves
small dogs
white doves
... ..*

*The toves are slithy
dogs small
doves white
... ..*

The nonsense phrases exhibit structural parallelism with phrases composed of existing English words: as long as the nonsense words appear in phrases and sentences, i.e., within a context, the category is identifiable. That is, *slithy*, for example, is an adjective because it is found in the same contexts/positions (it has the same **distribution**, to put it more technically) as, and therefore it is replaceable by, other adjectives like *small* and *white*. This means that **replacement** is a very important test: if a constituent, such as a word or phrase, can substitute for another, then the two are (most

probably) of the same category. Let us see how this test works for phrases. A fragment of the nonsense poem is given below, together with parallel structures with existing English words. Since these can replace each other, they are of the same category:

<i>The slithy toves</i>	<i>did</i>	<i>gimble</i>	<i>in the wabe</i> ⁶
<i>The small dogs</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>barking</i>	<i>in the garden</i>
<i>Cats</i>	<i>can</i>	<i>see</i>	<i>in the dark</i>
<i>Jon</i>		<i>looks</i>	<i>after a cat and a dog</i>
<i>She</i>	<i>could</i>	<i>swim</i>	<i>at the age of three</i>
<i>I</i>	<i>will</i>	<i>survive</i>	
↓	↓	↓	
Noun Phrases (NP)	Auxiliaries (Aux) ⁷	Verb Phrases (VP)	

The first column shows that we know that *the slithy toves* is an NP because *the small dogs* is also an NP; and we know that *the small dogs* is an NP because the nominal element (a noun or a pronoun) is the only obligatory element in that slot. If the noun is the central, dominant constituent, then it is the head, and then its phrase is called an NP. This also proves the claim we made above, viz. that there are one-word phrases: if *the slithy toves* and *cats* or *Jon* have the same distribution, then all of them are NPs.⁸ Moreover, pronouns (at least the subtype called personal pronouns – see Ch. 3.1) seem really odd as they, too, appear to produce NPs.⁹

A look at the internal structure of NPs leads to another surprising discovery: articles, demonstratives, numerals, possessive adjectives, and perhaps a few more categories, occupy the same slot, i.e., they have the same distribution:

<i>the</i>	<i>slithy</i>	<i>toves</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>very small</i>	<i>dog</i>
<i>this</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>man</i>
<i>ten</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>reasons</i>
<i>my</i>	<i>surprisingly young</i>	<i>aunt</i>
	<i>bad</i>	<i>boys</i>
<i>some</i>		<i>cats</i>
		<i>Jon</i>
↓	↓	↓
Determiners (Det)	Adjective Phrases (AP)	Nouns (N)

This observation has become the basis in syntax for grouping these short function words that appear at the left edge of NPs into a “supercategory” called **determiners** (see more in Ch. 3.1).

As we have seen, the identification of the category of a word-level constituent may be based on distribution, i.e., syntactic arguments, but of course there are other clues, too. The meaning of the words may give us a hint but recall that is much less reliable; instead, their morphological properties (cf. the previous chapter) are to be taken into account. E.g., certain affixes can only be attached to certain classes (e.g., a word that has a past tense form is a verb – that is how we know *action* is not a verb despite its meaning; a word that has a comparative form is an adjective, etc.). Consequently, syntax and morphology are the proper indicators, and meaning is secondary: a word-level category is a set of words which share a common set of linguistic (esp. morphological and syntactic) properties.

⁶ Note that this is a special, poetic/emphatic use of *do/did* – see the functions of the operator in Ch. 4.1.

⁷ This position is in fact not simply for any auxiliary but the element we will later call the **operator** (Ch. 4.1).

⁸ The same argument goes for the VPs, including the one-word VP *survive*, in the last column.

⁹ Consequently, pronouns are not what their name means: they do not stand for nouns but for NPs; they are “pro-NPs”.

Besides their category, the other aspect of constituents is their **function**. Recall that it is a phrasal property, so the following discussion focusses on the structure and behaviour of phrases. The first point to note is that the name *sentence elements*, traditionally used for grammatical functions, may be rather misleading as phrases do not only gain functions within (clauses or) sentences, but larger phrases embedding them are sufficient. E.g., a VP like *found the cat* in *Jon found the cat*, containing a V and a NP, already involves the relationship between the head V and its object NP. That is, functions are for phrases, and phrases obtain their functions as soon as they become modifiers in larger phrases (including clauses and sentences).

In addition, the functions are assigned to the modifiers by the head. Accordingly, *the cat* can become an object when combined with *find* because *find* is able to assign that function to it (or: *find* licenses an object), whereas a verb like *sleep* cannot do so, cf. **sleep the cat*. The head also determines whether the modifier licensed is a **premodifier** (e.g., *a syntax student*) or a **postmodifier** (e.g., *a student of syntax*; cf. **a student syntax*); notice that the object of the verb in English is always a postmodifier. However, not all modifiers are licensed by the head; certain types of modifier optionally and loosely connect to heads irrespective of what licensing capacities those heads have. Modifiers expressing time and place are, for example, typically like that: they receive their function (traditionally called **adverbial**) from the verb no matter if it is *find* (cf. *Jon found the cat in the kitchen yesterday*) or *sleep* (cf. *The cat slept in the kitchen yesterday*). Modifiers which need licensing are called **complements** or **arguments**, while modifiers which do not are called **adjuncts**.¹⁰ Objects are typical examples of complements; adverbials, especially time adverbials, are typical adjuncts. The licensing condition on complements as well as the complement/adjunct distinction is perhaps most clearly seen with PPs: in the case of complement PPs, the P is licensed by the head, and thus different prepositions may be selected by different heads, e.g., by head adjectives. Compare *Garfield is fond of pizza* and *Garfield is keen on pizza*: the meanings are nearly identical, yet, the prepositions chosen by the adjectives *fond* and *keen* are different (another idiosyncratic, lexical property of the words).

In sum:

- Each phrase must have one (and only one) head.
- Modifiers are phrases and receive their functions like object or adverbial from the head.
- Modifiers are either premodifiers or postmodifiers.
- Modifiers are either complements or adjuncts.





Later, in Ch. 4.1 and 7.1, we will introduce the elements of the simple sentence in more detail, so a full list and discussion of the “sentence elements” will be given. The major argument of this chapter was that the category and the function of syntactic constituents are two independent properties, and combine rather freely. The same NP, e.g., *the cat*, may function in two different ways in two different contexts (e.g., *Jon found the cat* – object vs. *The cat found Jon* – subject), and the same function, e.g., time adverbial, may be fulfilled by different categories (e.g., *Jon found the cat today* – AdvP vs. *Jon found the cat last week* – NP). We also saw that the category of the constituents is more closely related to their syntactic and morphological properties (primarily, their distribution) than their meaning.

2.2 Further reading

On grammar in general: OEG 2 📖 On grammar, syntax, and constituents: Fromkin et al. 2011: 4; Varga 2010: 6 📖 On constituents: OEG 3; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 2 📖 On word classes: OEG 4; BESE 1.2–3 📖 On the elements of a simple sentence: SGE 2.2–2.3; OEG 3; BESE 2.2; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 3 📖 On the distinction between function and form: SGE 2.4 📖 On complements,

¹⁰ In syntactic discourse, the term *modifier* is sometimes used in a more restrictive sense, referring to adjuncts only, while in this coursebook it denotes all non-head constituents within a phrase.

adjuncts, and licensing: CGEL 2  On the syntactic analysis of modifiers, complements vs. adjuncts: BESE 3.1; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 3  On prepositions licensed by verbs and other heads: ALP 21–22.

2.3 Practice exercises

1. Consider the categorial status of the italicised nonsense words in the following sentences.

1. I used to *shloock* a lot when I was a child.
2. Come on, don't be that *purphy*!
3. There are two *brungies* in the *whirg*.
4. Tegnap elmentem a *bröttybe*, és láttam ott egy *klunkot*.
5. Ez volt életem *legfleyenább* kalandja!

2. Consider the following sentences. How many meanings do they have?

- She can't bear children*
He waited by the bank
He watched the man with a telescope
Is he really that kind?
He is an American history teacher
Flying planes can be dangerous
The parents of the bride and the groom were waiting

Why are these sentences **ambiguous**? Is the **ambiguity** caused by a single word in the sentence having several meanings (**lexical ambiguity**), or by the words forming phrases in different ways (**structural ambiguity**)? Or is it a combination of the two?

3. The following sentences are structurally ambiguous. Explain the ambiguity with reference to the complement/adjunct distinction.

1. *They decided on the boat*
2. *Mary laughed at the ball*
3. *Mary seems very keen on the boat*
4. *They may meet with scepticism*

4. Compare *She laughed at the clown* and *She laughed at 10 o'clock*. How is the status of the underlined PP different in the two cases?

5. Identify the category and the function of the underlined constituents in the following sentences. (Hint: all of these are phrase-level constituents.)

	category	function
1. <i>I <u>want to ride my bicycle</u></i>
2. <i>I want to ride <u>my bicycle</u></i>
3. <i>I want <u>to ride my bicycle</u></i>
4. <i>We found <u>love in a hopeless place</u></i>
5. <i>We found love <u>in a hopeless place</u></i>
6. <i><u>Yesterday</u> all my troubles seemed so far away</i>
7. <i>Yesterday <u>all my troubles</u> seemed so far away</i>

	category	function
8. <i>I can see <u>clearly</u> now the rain is gone</i>
9. <i>I can see clearly <u>now</u> the rain is gone</i>
10. <i>I can see clearly now <u>the rain is gone</u></i>

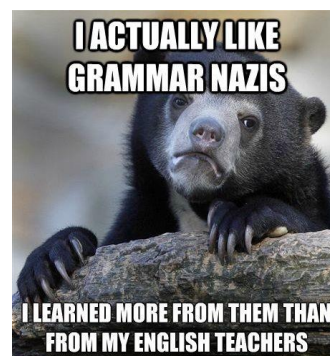
2.4 Extension: More on grammar and grammatical functions

When teaching grammar, language teachers are expected to explain to their students what is and what is not correct in the target language. That may sound trivial and evident, but it has at least two important and complex aspects. One is what we mean by *explain*, and the other is what we mean by *correct*.

It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss methodological issues concerning how we teach grammar in the EFL classroom: *explaining* does not necessarily mean giving formal and frontal *explanations* in the literal sense of the word, using all the morphological and syntactic terminology introduced here. However, whatever the methods chosen are, to be able to act as a reliable, authentic, and self-confident **model** for the students, the teacher of English needs a kind of **conscious** knowledge of English grammar, i.e., of the way native speakers use English in both speaking and writing. In this respect, the teacher is *more* than the native speaker: native speakers unqualified in teaching have subconscious, **tacit** knowledge *only*, which is not sufficient for them to be able to teach their mother tongue. Just try to present something in Hungarian grammar to a foreigner, and you will see! Also, as is the usual case with teachers in general, teachers of English should know *more* about the language than what they actually need to explicitly display in the classroom: the hidden, implicit knowledge endows them with the attitude of an authority on the one hand, and the ability to react to unexpected challenges on the other. Therefore, questions like “Why do I need to have advanced proficiency in English if I only teach in a kindergarten?” or “Why do I need to know what the properties of the non-overt subject of non-finite complement clauses are in English?” (just to give you an example which will make your hair stand on end) are all out of place in our context. At any moment of the time spent in the EFL classroom, teachers should be able to explain, for example by giving examples and counterexamples, with the help of the deep insight they have into their subject, relying on the hidden patterns stored in their minds, which also help them make decisions like where to simplify or which cases to leave out of the explanation in a specific situation.

Of course, no matter how firm the conscious knowledge of non-native language teachers is, in another respect they will always be *less* than the native speaker: their intuitions will remain limited and their grammaticality judgements very often unreliable, which may even fail them when an unknown structure or example is encountered. All in all, they may not be able to solely rely on intuitions, but in fact they should not even do so: explanations like “this is not the right way of saying this in English because it does not sound good” or “I can *feel* that this is correct” are acceptable from the native speaker but not from the language teacher.

The other aspect of teaching grammar is what exactly the word *correct* means. Of course we have many resources like grammar books (or **teaching grammars**) and so-called “writer’s guides” – in fact, this very book is in several respects like one of those. However, it is important to see that such resources typically only present one form of English: the variety widely approved of by the native society and therefore advisable to teach to learners called **standard English**. This variety may be so highly valued by certain speakers that they may even think and say that it is in fact the *only* proper way to use the language, everybody should adopt it, and any forms diverging from it are erroneous and harmful corruptions stemming from lack of education or from disrespect to the mother tongue. This is the so-called **prescriptive** attitude, such people are called prescriptivists or **language purists** (or more recently, **grammar**



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nazis, grammar police or grammar cops), and grammars based on this view are called prescriptive grammars. Teaching grammars are, by definition, for the most part prescriptive, since their function is to teach learners how to imitate native competence. Adult natives, however, do not need such guidance: after all, it is them who possess the competence the learners are aspiring to mirror! Therefore, trying to correct forms of utterances used systematically (and not accidentally) by native speakers is totally nonsensical. What grammar nazis fail to realise is that standard English is not the *only* native variety and there are quite a lot out there who do not happen to be speakers of standard English but use some **non-standard variety** instead. First, there are **regional dialects**; second, there are certain **styles** and **registers** which are not adequate to use in any situation: certain forms belong to **informal** language or even **slang**, or belong to **speech** rather than **written language** (or vice versa).

What this means for the English teacher is that the expression *correct grammar* has at least two senses. On the one hand, it refers to standard forms, the ones considered by the English-speaking society as the speech norm, and as such, it is the one codified in grammar books and usually taught to learners. In fact, all these are the very reasons why we need to stick to teaching this variety in the EFL classroom: this is the one which is the most useful for the learner, and it can also serve as a good starting point for later discoveries in the alternatives.

Correct grammar, on the other hand, also means the set of forms that are acceptable to native speakers in general: any structure systematically used and judged well-formed by (at least a group of) native speakers is correct in this, **descriptivist** sense of the expression, although some may be limited in use to certain styles or media (i.e., either spoken or written language).

Teachers of English are supposed to be familiar with these two concepts and prepared to answer questions about the “correctness” or “incorrectness” of grammatical structures objectively, especially because in fact, *most* native speakers of English are non-standard speakers so their English will diverge from what we learn and teach from grammar books to varying degrees. In addition, most of the native English our students are exposed to through popular culture is non-standard, so they may easily encounter forms which conflict with what happens in the classroom. Therefore, when a student asks why somebody from England or the USA says *We need less chairs* although they should use *fewer chairs* according to the coursebook, the teacher is expected not to simply judge the example “incorrect” and the speaker “uneducated”, one who does not know “proper grammar”, but explain the difference between standard and written English, where the *fewer/less* distinction is maintained, and (certain forms of) spoken English, where *less* has become generalised to be used with all nouns.¹¹

A further important aspect of “correctness” is that what counts as acceptable for the society, that is, what is and is not standard, may change with time. For example, a slightly outdated grammar book may still counsel learners or writers not to use the so-called **split infinitive** (when an adverb separates the particle *to* from the bare infinitive, e.g., *to slowly realise*) or not to end a sentence with a preposition (e.g., *This is the world we live in*), although such forms have been part of the “canon” for decades and are now acceptable even in the EFL classroom and at language exams.



Cartoon via The Telegraph



Consequently, teaching English to Hungarians also includes a contrastive study of the two languages, so our knowledge of Hungarian should also be somewhat more conscious than that of the average native speaker, in order to understand this influence and anticipate

The English teacher, then, needs to constantly tackle¹² issues of acceptability or grammaticality. Very often learners produce ungrammatical examples as a result of the influence of the native language, i.e., the **interference** of Hungarian in our case. Consequently, teaching English to Hungarians also includes a contrastive study of the two languages, so our knowledge of Hungarian should also be somewhat more conscious than that of the average native speaker, in order to understand this influence and anticipate

¹¹ A series of such examples will be discussed in an exercise in Ch. 10.5 later.

¹² Mind my split infinitive! ☺

potential difficulties. That is why we discussed **linguistic typology** in the previous chapter (Ch. 1.4), and concluded that English is predominantly isolating while Hungarian is agglutinating.

Looking at phrase and sentence structure as the primary element of “grammar” in the sense of teaching grammars, it is also possible to set up language types. One of the aspects of syntax that serve as dimensions along which to classify languages is **word order**, more precisely the sequence of subject, verb, and object in simple declarative sentences. Accordingly, using the initials of these sentence elements as shorthand notations, we find that English can be characterised as an **SVO language** (cf. sentences like *Odie likes Garfield*). The question, then, is whether Hungarian can also be classified this way, and the answer is: not really. To explain why that is the case, let us take a brief look at some of the connections between morphology and syntax. Compare the following examples from English in (i) and Hungarian in (ii).

- | | | | |
|-----|--|------|--|
| (i) | a. <i>Odie likes Garfield</i>
b. <i>Garfield likes Odie</i>
c. <i>*Likes Odie Garfield</i>
d. <i>*Likes Garfield Odie</i>
e. <i>*Odie Garfield likes</i>
f. <i>*Garfield Odie likes</i> | (ii) | a. <i>Ubul kedveli Garfieldot</i>
b. <i>Garfieldot kedveli Ubul</i>
c. <i>Kedveli Ubul Garfieldot</i>
d. <i>Kedveli Garfieldot Ubul</i>
e. <i>Ubul Garfieldot kedveli</i>
f. <i>Garfieldot Ubul kedveli</i> |
|-----|--|------|--|

Notice that among the English sentences, only (ia) and (ib) are well-formed; the others are ungrammatical. Moreover, the two sentences do not mean the same: *who* likes *whom* depends on what precedes and what follows the verb. That is, a noun or noun phrase that comes *before* the verb is automatically interpreted as the subject of the clause, while a noun or noun phrase that comes *after* the verb is automatically interpreted as the object of the verb – no matter if the noun is *Odie* or *Garfield*. As a result, the grammatical function of a constituent depends solely on its structural position, its place within the grammatical configuration. This is a general property of English, and in fact, of a number of other languages as well; such languages are called **configurational languages**.

The Hungarian sentences in (ii), however, are all well-formed. In addition, they all mean the same in terms of *who* likes *whom*: the subject is always *Ubul*, the object is always *Garfieldot*. That has a simple and evident explanation: the grammatical functions are *morphologically* encoded; *Ubul* is uninflected, that is, in nominative case, which apparently automatically marks it as the subject of the clause, whereas *Garfieldot* is an accusative case form, which automatically marks it as a potential object for the verb. The structural position of the nouns is unable to influence their grammatical interpretation: Hungarian belongs to the language type called **non-configurational**. This is another typological difference between English and Hungarian, and it also explains why Hungarian cannot easily be classified in terms of SVO – it simply does not have a single fixed, typical word order to serve as the basis for the classification.

However, this does not mean that word order in Hungarian is completely free, although it is often characterised as **a free word-order language**. First, notice that the sentences in (ii) above do *not* mean exactly the same. You would not use them in the same situations since there are differences of emphasis, focalising, in their interpretation. In fact, the order of sentence elements in Hungarian is just as constrained as in English, and interpretation is just as fixed, rule-governed and automatic as we have seen for English above, but it is not the dimension of grammatical functions like subject and object that is relevant for Hungarian, but the dimension of logical relations like **topic** (what the theme of the statement in the sentence is) and **focus** (which constituent is emphasised, also indicated by heavy stress falling on it in pronunciation). To give a quick example, we repeat (iie) and (iif) below, in one possible interpretation for each: the topic is now highlighted with underlining, the focus with small capitals. Try reading them out for yourself, and stress the focus!

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| (iie') <u>Ubul</u> GARFIELDOT kedveli | ‘As for Odie, it is Garfield whom he likes’ |
| (iif') <u>Garfieldot</u> UBUL kedveli | ‘As for Garfield, it is Odie who likes him’ |

Second, if word order in Hungarian was completely free, then all possible orders of constituents would be acceptable and interpretable. This is not true: a trivial case is the order of certain heads and modifiers within phrases, e.g., that of adjectival attributes and head nouns (*kövér macska* and not

macska kövér* ‘fat cat’); a less trivial example is permutations of sentence elements, similarly to the ones in (ii) above, which do not always produce grammatical sentences; e.g., while the equivalents of ‘Odie’, ‘found’ and ‘Garfield’ can be arranged into a number of well-formed structures including *Ubul Garfieldot találta meg*, *Garfieldot találta meg Ubul* and *Megtalálta Ubul Garfieldot*, others, e.g., **Találta meg Ubul Garfieldot*, are out. Again, this must have something to do with the fixed and rule-governed ordering of the topic, the focus, and the rest of the clause, already discussed above. Although non-configurational, Hungarian cannot be regarded as a free word-order language. In fact, it has also been suggested that the name *non-configurational* should be replaced by **discourse configurational for languages like Hungarian, exactly because it does not hold that structural configurations in these languages are unrestricted; on the contrary, they are governed by strict regularities, not purely structural in nature, but closely related to the discourse functions of the sentence (i.e., pragmatics).

Besides the relative order of the subject, verb, and object and configurationality, languages also differ as to whether the subject of a clause is marked on the verb and as a consequence its pronominal form is optional. That is, in certain languages when the subject is expressed by a personal pronoun it is very often (if not always) omitted or dropped. Such languages are called **pro-drop** languages, and Hungarian exemplifies this type. English, in contrast, is not a pro-drop language, and will always contain **overt**, i.e., pronounced (and not hidden, unpronounced but understood, so-called **covert**, subjects) (at least in full, finite clauses; cf. ellipsis in Ch. 12.1, and non-finite clauses in Ch. 4.1 and 8.4). Compare Hungarian *Nem tudom* and *Jon azt hiszi, hogy tud főzni* with their English equivalents, I don’t know and *Jon thinks (that) he can cook*, and notice the underlined pronouns, which are obligatory in them. English is characterised by a **subject requirement** (in finite clauses) that Hungarian does not have.

The subject requirement in English is so powerful that it forces a clause to include an overt subject even when the verb used expresses all the meaning and needs no subject-like element. In such cases the clause will have a meaningless, semantically empty pronoun inserted into the subject position: these are called **nonreferential** or **dummy subjects**, or sometimes they are referred to as **expletive** or **pleonastic pronouns**. The most “famous” examples are with the so-called “weather verbs” like *rain* and *snow*. Their meaning is so self-contained it does not need to be amended with *who* or *what* performs the action of raining or snowing (i.e., these verbs do not license a subject). Notice that consequently such verbs do not take subjects in Hungarian, e.g., *Esik* ‘It is raining’, *Havazik* ‘It is snowing’. The corresponding English sentences, however, are forced by the subject requirement to contain *it*, which is now nonreferential, i.e., it does not refer to any object in the physical world. As a further example, consider *It is getting late*, with a nonreferential *it*, and compare it with *It is getting old*, which can only be interpreted with *it* actually referring to an object which has been previously mentioned. Nonreferential *it* is not only used to talk about weather and time and similar themes, but it is used in certain complex constructions (e.g., *It was Garfield who ate all the pizza* – cleft sentences; *I find it strange to see Garfield awake so early in the morning* – extraposition; for both, see Ch. 10.1). The other nonreferential subject pronoun of English is *there*, as it is used in sentences like *There is a fire starting in my heart* – note the absence of contradiction in examples like *There are too many bosses here*, since this *there* is not a place adverb, it does not refer to either a place or in fact any semantic content.





Hungarian, on the other hand, has no such dummy subjects: as its system does not include a subject requirement similar to that of English, sentences like *Esik* and *Későre jár*, with no overt subject, are grammatical.

Both the pro-drop/non-pro-drop typology and the presence/absence of expletive pronouns as a typological difference between languages indicate that **the subject** is perhaps the most special grammatical function. In configurational languages like English it has a fixed position in the clause: before the verb, as we have seen above. Even if for purposes of emphasis the referential subject is postponed to the end of the sentence, a nonreferential pronoun needs to fill this initial slot, as we have seen in examples like *There are too many bosses here*. Having a fixed default position also grants the subject its function in the SVO linguistic typology. We have also seen that the verb needs to agree with it in person and number (subject-verb concord – Ch. 1.4), and we will see in Ch. 11.1 and 11.4 that major types of inversion in English involve the subject: sometimes it inverts with an auxiliary (the operator, as we will call it – e.g., *Is this the real life?*), sometimes it inverts with the main verb (e.g., *Here comes the rain again*). In fact, these features may even be used as diagnostic tests to help

identify the subject in a clause: the phrase that precedes the verb and agrees with it is the subject; the phrase that inverts with the first auxiliary (the operator) in direct interrogatives is the subject; etc.

The other grammatical functions like object and adverbial are not assigned to direct constituents of the clause, as is the case with the subject, so their presence/absence and form are determined by word-level phrasal heads. E.g., it is the clause (and not, say, a verb) that needs to have a subject, while it is a verb or preposition (and not the clause) that may license an object or receive an adverbial adjunct. Therefore, the other grammatical functions are best discussed in later chapters, dealing with the internal structure of VPs, PPs, etc. (Ch. 4-6).

Further reading

On grammar: Cowan 2008: 1–2  On approaches to teaching grammar: Cowan 2008: 3  On Hungarian syntax: É. Kiss 2002: 1  On the identification of the subject: CGEL 2  On nonreferential subject pronouns: Cowan 2008: 7.

2.5 Practice exercises

- The following sentences are ill-formed or at least do not carry the intended meaning. Decide whether they are truly ungrammatical in English (meaning that no native speaker uses such forms systematically) or are only judged incorrect by “grammar nazis” (meaning that native speakers very often use such forms although they are banned by prescriptive grammars). In the latter case, separate spelling errors (typically labelled “grammar mistakes” by grammar nazis) from genuine grammatical issues.

- If your a grammar nazi and your reading this, your gonna have a bad time*
- Today I don't feel like doing anything, I just want to lay in my bed*
- A lot of researches have been done on this topic*
- Let's eat grandma!*
- It don't matter if you're black or white*
- I care about this alot*
- This happened in the last year*
- We don't need no education*
- His sister is older then him with 5 years*



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- Syntactic structural ambiguity (as discussed in Ex. 2-3 in 2.3 above) may stem from two major aspects of phrases: the location of constituent boundaries (e.g., *He watched the girl with a telescope*), and the assignment of grammatical functions (e.g., *Flying planes can be dangerous*). Identify the source of ambiguity in the following sentences.

- We need more intelligent students*
 - I sent a postcard to my friends from London*
 - I have written a poem on a memorial park bench*
 - Szöke fiúk és lányok szaladgálnak*
 - Fogadták a parlamentben pingpongozó szakosztályunk tagjait*
 - Az oroszlán simogatása veszélyes*
 - Az üzletbe égő cigarettával és kutyával belépni tilos*
- Ch. 1.1 discusses idiomatic meaning in word-formation. But what is an **idiom**? Consider the discussion of grammar components in Ch. 2.1, and decide which of them idioms belong to: are they generated by a rule component, or stored in the lexicon? How about regular and irregular word forms: what is the difference between them with respect to the grammar component they belong to?

4. Which phrase is the subject in the sentence *There are seven girls in her class*? What are the two options? Which properties of the subject discussed in the text above characterise which of the two?
5. Consider the Hungarian sentence *Garfield tegnap megette Ubul vacsoráját* 'Yesterday Garfield ate Odie's dinner'. Insert the negative adverb *nem* 'not' into different positions of the sentence to produce at least 3-4 different word orders in the negative (you may need to somewhat reorganise the other words as well). How do the versions differ from each other in meaning/emphasis? Translate them into English, trying to reflect the meanings as closely to those of the Hungarian originals as possible.

3.1 Word-level categories and their subcategories

This chapter is about word-level categories, that is, word classes (or parts of speech) like adjectives, focussing on their subtypes, forms, and their major properties (like why **importanter* is ungrammatical and can only be used to produce a special effect). Recall how much we learnt about word classes in the previous chapter from the first two lines of this nonsense poem:

*'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.*

(Lewis Carroll, *Jabberwocky* in
Through the Looking-Glass)



On the one hand, phonologically well-formed words (that is, words *sounding* like existing English words) can be used in syntactic contexts as belonging to one or another word class even if they do not have any meaning. On the other hand, it is only the major categories: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, that are nonsense in such texts. That is because the other word classes have much less semantic content; instead, they play prominent and crucial grammatical roles in phrases and sentences: they are consequently called **grammatical function words**, or function words for short, whereas the others are so-called **lexical content words**.

Lexical content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs), as the name indicates, are dominated by their meaning, i.e., their semantic content: as a result, it is relatively easy to come up with definitions (like the ones in dictionaries) to such words. At the same time, it is these categories that can be nonsense, that is, meaningless: it is possible to be devoid of meaning only if meaning is normally present in the first place. Besides, the grammatical role such words play is insignificant and negligible; therefore, when we see nonsense words, we lack semantic content but no grammatical information that would hinder the interpretation of the text as a text.

As opposed to that, the defining property of function words (determiners, pronouns, prepositions and the like) is the role they play in grammar, rather than some clear, easily identifiable semantic content. Take the conjunction *and* as an example: how would you define what it means? Does it actually *mean* anything, or is it rather a word whose *function* is to connect two elements? Or take a pronoun like *you*: its crucial feature is its ability to refer to whoever we are talking to irrespective of who that person is.¹ What is more, certain function words are totally empty semantically: the auxiliary *do* in sentences like *Where do you live?*, for example, carries no meaning but is needed for the question to contain an auxiliary in the right position. If meaning is secondary in function words and they are rather needed for grammar, to help constituents establish relations, then they cannot be nonsense; in fact, they cannot even be omitted from a text since grammar as such collapses without them. Remember, grammar is important: if grammar collapses, the text cannot be interpreted as a text.

Lexical content words are also called **open-class words** and grammatical function words are also called **closed-class words** because there are further differences between them. The members of the open classes come and go much more easily: it is these categories which languages **borrow** from each other (to acquire **loanwords**); which productive word-formation generates; and it is them which may disappear from the language with time (i.e., open-class words may go out of use and “get

¹ That is, its interpretation depends on the context in which it is used. This property, also characterising a few other words like *here* and *today*, is called **deixis**.

forgotten” from one generation of speakers to the next). Furthermore, open-class words are more numerous: notice how much easier it is to list, e.g., all the articles or all the auxiliaries of English than all the nouns or lexical verbs!²

In what follows we will overview the properties and major subtypes of the word classes introduced in Ch. 2.1: the content words first, and then the function words. For ease of reference, we repeat the chart here:

Category	Major subcategories/Examples	
noun	proper noun <i>Jon, Budapest, Trafalgar Square, the Alps, the Danube...</i>	common noun <i>room, answer, apple, equipment, scissors, police...</i>
adjective	gradable adjective <i>happy, steady, large, beautiful...</i>	non-gradable adjective <i>alive, main, certain, proper...</i>
adverb	<i>steadily, completely, yesterday, there...</i>	
(main) verb	<i>search, grow, play, ignore, contemplate, need, dare, have, do...</i>	
article	definite article <i>the</i>	indefinite article <i>a(n)</i>
demonstrative	proximal demonstrative <i>this, these</i>	distal demonstrative <i>that, those</i>
numeral	cardinal numeral <i>two, eleven...</i>	ordinal numeral <i>first, twentieth...</i>
pronoun	<i>he, they, them, myself, anybody, one, mine, who, each other...</i>	
preposition	<i>of, at, into, without, since, up...</i>	
auxiliary (verb)	modal auxiliary <i>can, must, might, need, dare...</i>	non-modal auxiliary <i>have, be_{PROGR}, be_{PASS}, do</i>
conjunction	coordinating conjunction <i>and, but, or...</i>	subordinating conjunction <i>that, although, if, whether...</i>
interjection	<i>oh, ah, ugh, phew, wow...</i>	

We start the discussion with **verbs**, whose two types, **main** (or **lexical**) **verbs** and **auxiliary verbs** are already differentiated in the chart above. Both of them are verbs as they have the morphosyntactic properties of verbs: they follow the subject and may agree with it in person and number; they may be morphologically marked for tense, esp. past tense; etc. However, they also differ since main verbs are content words, while auxiliaries are function words (see the differences above). In the chart, certain verbs are repeated (*need, dare, and have*, but *do* may as well have been given twice, too): this shows that the same verb may belong to both classes, at least in certain senses. For example, in Present-day English negative sentences need to contain at least one auxiliary (the operator, as we will call it later),

² Interestingly, content words and function words also differ in pronunciation: content words are always strong and stressed; function words are usually unstressed and weak, especially the ones that are short, consisting of a single syllable.

which is followed by the adverb *not*. Crucially, main verbs cannot take that position: a sentence like **I know not* is ill-formed; *do* has to be inserted to produce *I do not know*. Consider the following examples:

<i>You <u>need</u> not have said that</i>	<i>You <u>did</u> not need to say that</i>
<i>He <u>dare</u> not tell her the truth</i>	<i>He <u>does</u> not dare to tell her the truth</i>
<i>He <u>has</u> not got a brother</i>	<i>He <u>does</u> not have a brother</i>

In these examples *need*, *dare* and *have* act like auxiliaries on the left hand side but like main verbs on the right, carrying the same meaning. *Have* presents a special case as in its other senses it only functions as a lexical verb (e.g., *I did not have breakfast today*). However, in the so-called perfect tenses *have* is always present as an auxiliary (e.g., *I have not done the homework*), but in that function it has no main verb counterpart. The verb *do* is similarly “split” between the two uses: as an auxiliary it appears in the so-called simple tenses (cf. the sentences on the right hand side) and, as mentioned above, carries no meaning at all, while as a lexical verb it is an ordinary content word (compare the two occurrences of it in *I did not do the homework*).

Both lexical verbs and auxiliaries have subtypes – since auxiliaries are function words (recall that, e.g., they are needed to form questions), they will be discussed later. Main verbs, on the other hand, are lexical content words because they have lexical, semantic content and are therefore also called **lexical verbs**. Most clauses in English contain a lexical verb, in which case it is the dominant element of the clause, determining the number and type of other phrases in it, especially the ones it licenses (cf. Ch. 2.1). One such modifier is the object: recall that the object is a verbal complement, an NP that needs to be licensed by a verb. But it can only be licensed if the clause contains a verb that has the capacity to license objects at all. This is an idiosyncratic property of verbs, stemming from their meaning: a verb like *sleep*, for instance, is not able to license an object (underlined), whereas a verb like *find* is:

**Jon slept Garfield in the kitchen*
Jon found Garfield in the kitchen

At the same time, *sleep* produces well-formed sentences without an object, while *find* does not:

Jon slept in the kitchen
**Jon found in the kitchen*

The two verb types represented by *sleep* and *find* are exact opposites to each other: the first type is called **intransitive**, the latter is called **transitive**. Intransitive verbs do not license objects while transitive verbs do – that is the way lexical verbs determine whether a complement may be present in their VPs.

There are two points to note here. First, notice how the adjunct place adverbial (*in the kitchen*) is possible with both words – recall that adjuncts are not licensed by the head but loosely connect to it, therefore the type of verb does not influence them. Second, the subject NP at the beginning of the sentence (*Jon* in the examples above), although not part of the VP, also receives its meaning role from the verb: according to the meaning of the sentence, *Jon* does the action of sleeping in the first case, and that of finding something in the second. Sometimes an (intransitive or transitive) verb does not assign meaning to a subject NP; then the subject NP will be present but semantically empty, not referring to anything or anybody in the world. E.g., the subject NP in both *It is raining* (with intransitive *rain*) and *It seems that Garfield is hungry* (with transitive *seem*) is the pronoun *it*, in its use when it is devoid of meaning or reference.

In fact, the subcategorisation of lexical verbs on the basis of what complements they license is a rather complex issue, and intransitive and transitive are not the only verb types – we will devote Ch. 4.1 to the particulars of this topic.

The other basic word class of content words is that of **nouns**. As you can see in the chart, their two major subcategories are **proper nouns** and **common nouns**.

noun	proper noun <i>Jon, Budapest, Trafalgar Square, the Alps, the Danube...</i>	common noun <i>room, answer, apple, equipment, scissors, police...</i>
------	--	---

Proper nouns are names of persons and places: their meaning is an interesting issue as it lies in who or what they refer to rather than a literal meaning composed of clearly identifiable semantic properties. Just try to define what *Jon* or *Budapest* means and you will see the easiest way is by naming the person or place they point out. Notice that at the same time they produce one-word NPs. In contrast, common nouns like *room*, *answer*, or *apple* have no direct reference; in addition, most of them are unable to form an NP on their own, at least as long as they are in their **singular** form: the NP **apple* is ill-formed and as such it cannot receive the object function from *find* in **Jon found apple in the kitchen*. Put the noun into the plural (*Jon found apples in the kitchen*) or add a determiner to the singular or plural (*Jon found the apple(s) in the kitchen*) and the sentence is grammatical. This is a feature of so-called **countable** (or **count**) nouns. Not all common nouns are like that, however. The so-called **uncountable** (or **noncount**) nouns do not have a plural form and do not necessarily combine with determiners in an NP: *Jon found mountaineering equipment in the kitchen*. Singular and plural interpretation as well as how this appears in the form of the noun are further discussed in Ch. 5.

The remaining classes of content words are **adjectives and adverbs**. In some respects they are very similar to each other, but they differ in certain basic characteristics. Let us see what these are.

adjective	gradable adjective <i>happy, steady, large, beautiful...</i>	non-gradable adjective <i>alive, main, certain, proper...</i>
adverb	<i>steadily, completely, yesterday, there...</i>	

Adjectives fall into two major subclasses. “Prototypical” adjectives have three forms: a base form (or **positive** form, e.g., *old* or *beautiful*); and **comparative** and **superlative** forms either formed by suffixation (*-er*, *-est*, e.g., *older* and *oldest*) or syntactically, by forming phrases (with *more* and *most* – so-called **periphrastic** forms, e.g., *more beautiful* and *most beautiful* – the forms needed for *important*, too)³. Such adjectives are **gradable**. Other adjectives, however, only have a positive form because the meaning of their hypothetical comparative and superlative forms would be difficult to process (cf. **Jon is more alive than his neighbour*) – such adjectives are **non-gradable**. In fact, this is one of the similarities between adjectives and adverbs: certain adverbs are also gradable (e.g., *more steadily*). This is characteristic of the **manner adverbs** which are derived from adjectives by suffixing *-ly* (cf. *steady* and *steadily*), an extremely productive derivational process creating another link between adjectives and adverbs.

As far as syntactic distribution goes, however, adjectives and adverbs are almost the opposites to each other: one of the typical positions of adjectives is the premodifying adjunct position of a noun (e.g., *steady rain*), which is never an option for adverbs because they favour the (postmodifying) adjunct position of verbs (e.g., *It rained steadily yesterday*). Some of the adjectives are also found in the post-verbal position but only with certain verbs (see Ch. 4.1), which are in turn incompatible with adverbs. Cf.:

<i>It <u>rained</u> steadily</i>	<i>*It <u>rained</u> steady</i>
<i>*The rain <u>was</u> steadily</i>	<i>The rain <u>was</u> steady</i>
<i>*steadily rain</i>	<i>steady rain</i>

³ The choice between inflectional and periphrastic comparison is, roughly speaking, dependent on the length of the base, with monosyllables (like *old*) preferring the inflection, adjectives with three or more syllables (like *beautiful*) allowing for periphrasis only, and two-syllable words vacillating between the two options (cf. *commoner/commonest* or *more/most common*).

The group of adverbs is perhaps the most heterogeneous of all word classes. Any word will fit into it whose phrase typically takes one of the **adverbial** functions in VPs, the most frequent of which are **time** (e.g., *yesterday, soon, immediately, when*; a special subtype is that of **frequency**, e.g., *always, never*), **place** (e.g., *there, upstairs, where*), and **manner** (e.g., *steadily, slowly, well, how*). **Degree adverbs** (e.g., *very, so, too, quite, extremely*) are different because they modify adjectives and other adverbs. But the strangest subtype is constituted by **particles**: as the name suggests, these are very small words, most of which are adverbs of place (e.g., *up, down, away*), but the **negative particle** *not* also belongs here. In fact, particles and some of the degree adverbs are so small and carry so little semantic content that some even consider them as function words: most adverb particles can be analysed as prepositions (cf. PPs like *down the road*), certain degree adverbs resemble determiners (e.g., *so, very*), others resemble pronouns (e.g., *here, there, when, why, wherever*), and the negative particle is also more like a head with an extremely dominant grammatical function (making the whole *clause* negative) than a simple VP-modifier. Therefore, adverbs are indicative that the dividing line between content words and function words is not clear.

Further aspects of the behaviour of adjectives and adverbs will be dealt with in Ch. 6. In the present discussion, we move over to classes belonging to the functional categories, i.e., **function words**, starting with the **types of auxiliaries**. The two basic subclasses, modal auxiliaries (or **modals** for short) and **non-modal** auxiliaries were already differentiated in the chart above:

auxiliary (verb)	modal auxiliary <i>can, must, might, need, dare...</i>	non-modal auxiliary <i>have, be_{PROGR}, be_{PASS}, do</i>
------------------	---	---

To help the description of auxiliaries and their relation to lexical verbs in English, we will introduce the notion of the **verb group**: the string of verbs containing at least one auxiliary and at most one lexical verb. Therefore, the following examples all illustrate verb groups:

<i>could</i>	<i>have</i>	<i>done</i>
<i>shall</i>		<i>swim</i>
	<i>has</i>	<i>arrived</i>
<i>may</i>	<i>have been</i>	<i>written</i>
	<i>has been</i>	<i>singing</i>
	<i>has been being</i>	<i>ignored</i>
<i>will</i>	<i>have been being</i>	<i>built</i>
↓	↓	↓
modals	non-modals	lexical verbs

As you can see, while modals are somewhat more numerous, the list of **non-modals** is rather short. Besides *do*, which is discussed later, it contains the three **aspectuals**:

- perfect *have* (followed by a past participle (**ppt**), e.g., *have done*)
- progressive *be* (followed by an *-ing* participle, e.g., *be singing*)
- passive *be* (followed by a past participle, e.g., *be written*)⁴

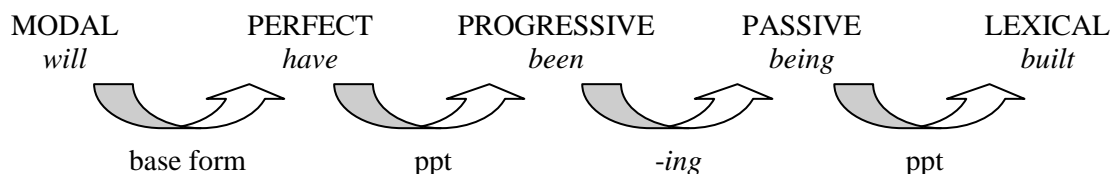
The chart above also shows the strict order in which verbs follow each other in verb groups, and the possible combinations. The points to note are following:

- If there is a modal, it is the very first verb in the verb group.
- Non-modals can be combined with each other; modals cannot.

⁴ Note that *be* is used in two totally different functions here, that is why it is listed in the word class chart twice, differentiated by the indices.

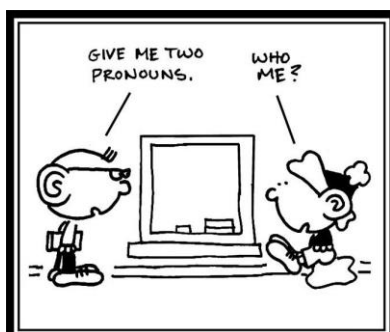
- Within the verb group, the first verb shows tense (present or past⁵) and may agree with the subject of the clause in person and number; the form of the others is determined by the immediately preceding verb.
- Modals are followed by a base/plain form⁶; non-modals are followed by either a past participle or an *-ing* participle, as listed above.

The maximal verb group contains a modal, the perfect, the progressive, the passive, and a lexical verb, *in this order*, as shown in the last example, *will have been being built*, as in *This time next year the railway will have been being built for 5 years*. As you can see in the following diagram, the forms of the second and later verbs in the group are selected by the preceding verb in each pair in such a way that a kind of chain reaction happens:



Of course, steps may be skipped so that shorter verb groups are created; in such cases the effect of the verb on the left “hits” a verb coming later in the maximal verb group. E.g., in *shall swim* the modal puts the main verb into its base form, skipping all the non-modals; in *has been singing* the passive “link” is skipped and progressive *be* produces the form of the lexical verb *sing*.

As we mentioned above, auxiliaries are verbs because they have the grammatical properties of verbs: the non-modals agree with the subject in person and number (cf. *I have arrived* vs. *he has arrived*), and all auxiliaries (except *must*⁷) differentiate present tense and past tense (cf. *I shall swim in the ocean* vs. *he said he should swim in the ocean*). What also unites them is that they cannot be used without a main verb following them. In other respects, however, they are as diverse as can be. The aspectuals are called so because two out of the three are used to express perfect and progressive/continuous (the so-called **aspects** – see Ch. 4.1) whereas the third one forms the passive construction (or **passive voice**). Modals express a third type of notion, **modality** (or modal meaning), itself a non-uniform category: it subsumes all sorts of aspects of the speaker’s attitude towards or opinion about the action or state expressed by the main verb, including possibility, probability, ability, permission, etc. (cf. *can, may, must...*) or even future certainty (*will*). Therefore, what reliably justifies the modal – non-modal – lexical verb classification is their morphosyntactic properties (rather than their meanings, for instance), especially the ordering restriction with the “chain reaction” illustrated above in the diagram. The most difficult to classify is auxiliary *do*, as in *Do you like syntax?* This is because it does not express modal meaning and is therefore traditionally grouped with non-modals in English grammar. At the same time, however, unlike the aspectuals, it has a defective list of forms (*do, does, did* only), and there are arguments that it occupies the modal slot in the “chain reaction” diagram (e.g., it is always the leftmost verb in the verb group, followed by a base-form verb). See Ch. 4.1 for a discussion.



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The next group of function words to discuss is that of **pronouns**. Like auxiliaries, this class also includes a set of dissimilar subtypes, of which so far we have only given a sample list:

⁵ See Ch. 4.1.

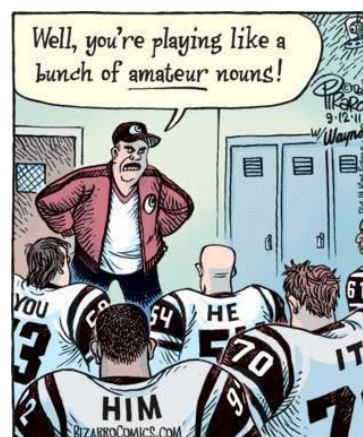
⁶ The verb *ought* exhibits unique and unusual behaviour: in its distribution and morphology, it is like a modal, but it is followed by a *to*-infinitive, rather like some of the lexical verbs, e.g., *want*.

⁷ If *ought* is considered to be a modal auxiliary, it parallels *must* in this respect.

pronoun	<i>he, they, them, myself, anybody, one, mine, who, each other...</i>
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We have seen that pronouns are phrases themselves – since most pronouns are single words, this means they are one-word phrases. The major types of pronouns are the following:

- **central/primary** pronouns:
 - **personal** (e.g., *he, they, them*)
 - **reflexive** (e.g., the *-self* and *-selves* pronouns)⁸
 - **possessive** (e.g., *mine, ours, theirs*)⁹
- **reciprocals** (*each other, one another*)
- **wh-pronouns** (e.g., *who, which, what* + the *-ever* pronouns)¹⁰:
 - **relative** (as in, e.g., *the dog which bit me*)¹¹
 - **interrogative** (as in, e.g., *Whoever bit you?*)
- **demonstrative** pronouns (e.g., *this, those*)
- **quantifying** pronouns (e.g., *some, all, both*)¹²
- **indefinite** pronouns (the *-one, -body, and -thing* pronouns):
 - **positive**:
 - i. **universal** (the *every-* pronouns)
 - ii. **assertive** (the *some-* pronouns)
 - iii. **non-assertive** (the *any-* pronouns)¹³
 - **negative** (the *no-* pronouns)



In addition, there are a few minor types. The pronominal form *one* is used to replace part of an NP rather than a whole NP (in fact, it replaces any fraction of an NP but never the determiner), e.g., *Which one would you like?* or *My cat is cute but this one with the bushy tail is really adorable, too!* (See Ch. 12 for a detailed discussion of pronominal forms and substitution.)

Another special example is **existential there**: in other uses *there* is a place adverb, but in one type of construction, the so-called existential structure (since the verb used expresses existence), it is a semantically empty element and functions as a subject NP, e.g., *There are some mice playing in the cupboard.*

Certain personal pronouns and *wh*-pronouns for persons are unique in the grammar of Present-day English as the only elements formally distinguished for **case**, namely, for **nominative** (subjective) vs. **accusative** (objective), in the following way:

⁸ The two sets differ in number, and they constitute the only case when second person is formally differentiated in Present-day (standard) English between singular (*yourself*) and plural (*yourselves*).

⁹ For the difference between the *mine* set and the *my* set (the possessive pronouns vs. the possessive determiners), see below.

¹⁰ Not all *wh*-words/phrases are pronouns as there are a number of non-nominal items like *why* or *wherever*. They show the same behaviour, though: they are also used in relative clauses and interrogatives alike. Some of them also function as determiners, e.g., in *which cat* or *what type*, in which case they also introduce exclamatives (e.g., *What a beautiful woman!*). Also, note that *how* is a *wh*-word/phrase, too, even though it does not actually start with *wh*.

¹¹ For relative clauses, see Ch. 9.

¹² Demonstratives and quantifying pronouns are also used as determiners – see below.

¹³ For the assertive/non-assertive distinction, see Ch. 7.1.

Nom.	Acc.	Nom.	Acc.
<i>I</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>who</i>	<i>whom</i>
<i>he</i>	<i>him</i>		
<i>she</i>	<i>her</i>		
<i>we</i>	<i>us</i>		
<i>they</i>	<i>them</i>		

The third case relevant to English is **possessive** (or **genitive**). For nouns, it is marked with the -'s suffix; for pronouns, there is a separate set, which, however, needs to be distinguished from the set of **possessive determiners**. Recall that pronouns are NPs in themselves – therefore they stand alone in phrase structure and receive their functions (either that of the subject or some other function from a verb or a preposition) on their own: they are one-word phrases. Determiners, on the other hand, are by definition short function words occupying the initial position of NPs – recall from Ch. 2.1 how we established their “supercategory”. As a consequence, determiners never stand alone but combine with at least a nominal head. Compare the following sentences:

- a. *This land is my land*
- b. *This land is mine*
- c. *This is my land*

Sentence (a) sounds pretty unnatural as the usual strategy in language is to avoid the repetition of known information so that the focus is kept on the new message (cf. Ch. 12.1). Two options are available for not repeating *land* twice: sentence (b) is when it is in the subject NP and the verb is followed by a possessive pronoun; sentence (c) illustrates the case when it is given after the verb in an NP containing a possessive determiner. The two sets are as follows:

Possessive pronouns	Possessive determiners
<i>mine</i>	<i>my</i>
<i>yours</i>	<i>your</i>
<i>his</i>	<i>his</i>
<i>hers</i>	<i>her</i>
<i>its</i>	<i>its</i>
<i>ours</i>	<i>our</i>
<i>theirs</i>	<i>their</i>

While most possessive pronouns and possessive determiners are formally distinct, demonstrative and quantifying pronouns are unusual because they can also be used as determiners with no change in their form.¹⁴ The **quantifiers** include *some, any, each, all, both*; the demonstratives are either proximal or distal, singular or plural:

demonstrative	proximal demonstrative <i>this, these</i>	distal demonstrative <i>that, those</i>
---------------	--	--

In the example sentences above, *this* is used as a determiner in *This land is mine*, and as a pronoun in *This is my land*. In a parallel fashion, sentences like *We haven't got any eggs* or *Both students are bright*, the quantifiers are determiners, whereas in *We haven't got any* or *Both are bright*, they are pronouns.

Again, what we see is that the division between categories, this time between pronouns and determiners, is not always clear-cut.

¹⁴ An exception is the negative quantifier, which has the form *no* as a determiner (as in *We don't need no education*) and *none* as a pronoun.

Determiners, then, include possessives, demonstratives, quantifiers (the ones mentioned above plus a few others like *every*), *wh*-words (e.g., in *which* *cat* or *what* *type*) as well as articles and numerals:

article	definite article <i>the</i>	indefinite article <i>a(n)</i>
numeral	cardinal numeral <i>two, eleven...</i>	ordinal numeral <i>first, twentieth...</i>

Numerals may function as pronouns or determiners. As you can see, there are two types: cardinals and ordinals. The third type of numbers is fractions, which are expressed with the help of words like *half* and *quarter*, and ordinals used as countable nouns (*a half, two-thirds*).

Finally, a few words about **conjunctions**. The two main types according to their function are **coordinating** (when the two constituents linked are equal in status) and **subordinating** conjunctions (when the conjunction straightforwardly belongs to one of the constituents, and it establishes that constituent's role with respect to the other constituent). A special subtype of subordinating conjunctions are **complementisers**, which, as their name indicates, introduce a constituent (usually a clause) that functions as a complement to a head (typically the object). For example, the most frequent use of the conjunctions *that* or *whether* is to produce an object clause for a transitive verb: in *I know that I should feed the cat* or *I don't know whether I should feed the cat*, the transitive verb is *know* and the clause that follows it functions as its object.

conjunction	coordinating conjunction <i>and, but, or...</i>	subordinating conjunction <i>that, although, if, whether...</i>
-------------	--	--

As to the form of conjunctions, there are three types traditionally distinguished: single-word (*and, but, that, although, etc.*), **compound** (*as long as, provided that, etc.*) and **correlative** (*either... or, as... as*) conjunctions.

This concludes this chapter on word classes; their respective phrases will be dealt with in the following chapters: Ch. 4 on VPs, Ch. 5 on NPs, and Ch. 6 on other phrases.

3.2 Further reading

On content words and function words: Fromkin et al. 2011: 3 On word classes: SGE 2.6–2.7
 On types of verbs: T&M 10–11 On auxiliaries: T&M 12–16, 22, 27; ALP 11–12; AGU 17–28
 On numerals: T&M 36 On conjunctions: T&M 32.

3.3 Practice exercises

1. Choose the odd word out in each set – the one that does not belong to that particular category.

Example: *slept, book, smartphone, carpet, wisdom*

Answer: *slept* [The other words are nouns.]

1. *could, may, should, will, want*
2. *are, can, has, be, was*
3. *me, every, ours, someone, they*
4. *after, at, during, into, upwards*
5. *and, because, or, too, when*
6. *college, class, grammar, learn, teacher*
7. *angry, hungry, lonely, obviously, silly*

2. Compare the syntactic behaviour of *have* ‘possess’ in typically British English and typically American English structures like the following.

(i) Typically BrE

ia. *I have (got) a car*

ib. *I haven’t (got) a car*

ic. *Have you (got) a car?*

(ii) Typically AmE

iiia. *I have a car*

iiib. *I don’t have a car*

iiic. *Do you have a car?*

3. Compare the syntactic category and behaviour of *be* in the following examples. What are the differences? What is constant?

(a)

He’s hungry

He isn’t hungry

Is he hungry?

He’s always hungry

(b)

He’s sleeping

He isn’t sleeping

Is he sleeping?

He’s always sleeping

(c)

He’s criticized

He isn’t criticized

Is he criticized?

He’s always criticized

4. a. Put the following pronouns into the right cells of the chart. There is one example of each subtype. How can we fill *ten* table cells with *nine* examples?

anyone, everybody, himself, me, no one, ours, something, this, which

central			relative	interrogative	demonstrative	indefinite			
personal	reflexive	possessive				positive			negative
						universal	assertive	nonassertive	

b. Collect all the central pronouns and put them into the chart.

Person	personal			reflexive	possessive
	number and gender	nominative	accusative		
1 st	singular				
2 nd					
3 rd		masculine			
		feminine			
		neuter*			
1 st	plural				
2 nd					
3 rd					

* sometimes called *nonpersonal* in English

5. Underline the possessives, demonstratives, quantifiers, *wh*-words and numerals in the following sentences, and decide whether they are used as pronouns or determiners.

1. *This used to be my playground*

2. *I’ve looked at clouds from both sides now*

3. *It takes two, baby*

4. *You could be mine*

5. *All I want for Christmas is you*

6. *Some say that we are players, some say that we are pawns*

7. *What a feeling!*

8. *Every time we kiss I swear I could fly*

3.4 Extension: Complementisers

Ch. 3.1 above discussed the subcategories of conjunctions, and said that within the traditional dichotomy of coordinating vs. subordinating conjunctions, it is worth highlighting a subtype of subordinating conjunctions called **complementisers**, which introduce clauses that function as complements to heads (typically as objects of transitive verbs). That justifies the name: complementisers *produce* complements. Besides object clauses to verbs (e.g., *I know that I should feed the cat*), complementisers also introduce clauses that are complements to adjectives (e.g., *I'm not sure whether I should feed the cat*), nouns (e.g., *The fact that I should feed the cat frightens me*) and prepositions (e.g., *I'm thinking about whether I should feed the cat*). In fact, sometimes they introduce clauses with other, non-complement functions: subject clauses (e.g., *Whether I should feed the cat is a thorny issue*) or relative clauses (i.e., nominal adjunct clauses, e.g., *the cat that I should feed*). In all these cases, however, the complementiser is crucially needed to establish the role of the clause; even when *that* is omissible (e.g., *I know I should feed the cat or the cat I should feed*), it is understood, it is part of the interpretation of the clause, so we can suppose that it is covertly present.

With this in mind, recall we said in Ch. 2.1 that (i) clauses have phrase-like dependency structures; and (ii) all phrases have a head. Considering the examples above, we easily conclude that **the head of the clause has to be the complementiser** – after all, it is the complementiser that defines the (complement) clause by granting it the ability to become a complement to a verb, noun, etc. Without the complementiser, the clause does not receive a function (cf. e.g., **I'm thinking about I should feed the cat*). In addition, if the head of the clause is the complementiser, and phrases are named after their heads, then the proper name of clauses is **Complementiser Phrase (CP)**.

Besides establishing the complement function of the clause, the complementiser determines a number of other properties of its clause as well, just like other heads do. Notice, for instance, that the example sentences above use two complementisers: *that* and *whether*. In most cases the choice between the two is not free: the type of main verb determines the type of clause needed, which in turn determines the type complementiser. Compare the following sentences:

I know that I should feed the cat
**I know whether I should feed the cat*

The second sentence is ungrammatical because *whether* introduces questions (that is, it is an **interrogative** complementiser), but *know* (due to its meaning) selects **non-interrogative** complement clauses. Now consider these examples:

**He asked me that I should feed the cat*
He asked me whether I should feed the cat

Since *ask* is a verb that requires interrogative complement clauses, *that* (being a non-interrogative complementiser) does not produce the right type of clause, and as a result the grammaticality judgements are just the opposite this time. We conclude, then, that the head of the CP determines the interrogativity (or interrogative **force**) of the clause: certain complementisers (like *whether*) are interrogative, others (like *that*) are non-interrogative, and this feature of theirs “percolates” onto the CP.

There is one more feature of clauses that crucially depends on the complementiser, i.e., one more dimension along which types of complementisers differ: whether the clause after the complementiser is tensed (or **finite**, cf. Ch. 4.1). Notice how the following examples prove that while *whether* can head either a tensed/finite CP or a non-finite one, *that* always selects a finite clause.

I'm not sure whether I should feed the cat *I'm not sure that I should feed the cat*
I'm not sure whether to feed the cat **I'm not sure that to feed the cat*

There are two more complementisers in English: one of them (*if*) always selects finite clauses, the other (*for*) always selects non-finite ones (so, in fact, the flexibility of *whether* in this respect seems exceptional rather than typical):

I'm not sure if I should feed the cat
 **I'm not sure if to feed the cat*

I'm waiting for Jon to feed the cat
 **I'm waiting for Jon will/should feed the cat*

At the same time, *if* is interrogative¹⁵ while *for* is non-interrogative. Therefore, the full typology of complementisers is as follows:

Types of Complementisers:



C	INTERROGATIVE	FINITE
<i>that</i>	non-int.	finite
<i>for</i>	non-int.	non-finite
<i>if</i>	int.	finite
<i>whether</i>	int.	finite/non-finite

A very important feature of interrogative complementisers is that they are incompatible with the interrogative word order of direct questions (cf. Ch. 11.1), i.e., indirect interrogative (yes/no) clauses *either* contain a complementiser *or* the inversion of the subject with the auxiliary we will call the operator (SAI or SOI, cf. Ch. 4.1), but never both:

Direct int.:	<i>Should I feed the cat?</i>	inversion
Indirect int.:	<i>He asked me whether he should feed the cat</i>	interrogative C
	<i>He asked me should he feed the cat</i>	semi-indirect speech with inversion
	* <i>He asked me whether should he feed the cat</i>	

What this may indicate is that both the complementiser and the inversion aim to mark the clause as interrogative, which need not, or rather, can not be done by both at the same time. If that argument holds, it indicates that interrogative force may originate from the complementiser, which in turn supports the claim that the complementiser dominates the clause.

Further reading

On various word classes: Cowan 2008: 8–14, 24–25  On the analysis of the clause as CP: BESE 7  On word classes in Hungarian: Kenesei 2000.

3.5 Practice exercises

1. Choose the odd word/phrase out in each set.

1. *cause, insist, must, persuade, suggest*
2. *an, how, my, no, whose*
3. *afterwards, badly, friendly, now, soon*
4. *aweful, useful, handful, skilful, wonderful*
5. *that, if, when, whether, and*
6. *the Red Cross, last week, both stars visible, a lot of people, in London*
7. *off the map, just like me, one of us, out of the window, upon arrival*

¹⁵ Note that this *if* is the complementiser in indirect questions synonymous to *whether*, and not the subordinating conjunction of conditional clauses.

2. a. Compare English modals and non-modals by filling in the following chart.
 b. When you have finished, decide where auxiliary *do* fits more.

	MODALS	NON-MODALS
Examples		
How many of them can appear within a single verb group?		
What is their position in the verb group?		
Can they be combined in a single verb group?		
How many forms do their paradigms consist of?		

3. Compare open-class words and closed-class words with respect to the size of their paradigms.
4. The sentence *Write to me if you need my help* is ambiguous. Identify the two meanings and account for the ambiguity.
5. Consider the complementiser used in each of the following sentences, and explain why they are ungrammatical.
1. **I didn't know if to laugh or cry*
 2. **We are anxious for our swimmers win the championship*
 3. **There was a debate at the meeting over if we should recalculate the annual budget*
 4. **I was longing for that she finished her talk*
 5. **She asked me that whether Brad Pitt would also turn up at Jane's hen party*
 6. **The question is if or not this year's crop failure will lead to famine in the affected areas*

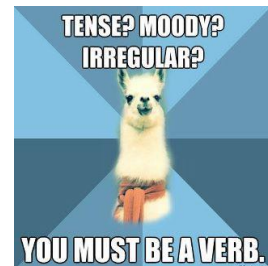
4.1 The structure of the Verb Phrase and the complementation of verbs

“A verb is known by the complements it keeps.”
(Speculative Grammarian, Facebook, 2015)

Whatever the term Verb Phrase refers to may be interpreted in different ways. In its narrow sense it is the phrase the lexical verb projects by grouping together its complement(s) and adjunct(s); in a wider sense, pretty widespread in traditional grammar, it includes the auxiliaries in the clause containing the lexical verb; in certain descriptions it is synonymous or at least very similar to our verb group (introduced in the previous chapter). Here, we will use the term in the narrow sense, focussing on main verbs (auxiliaries are discussed in detail in Ch. 3.1 above), but at times reference will be made to auxiliaries, too, especially in the first part. That is because the distinctions verbs are responsible for fall into two types: auxiliaries also participate in some of them (see the first part of this chapter), but others are exclusively characteristic of lexical verbs (see the second part).

Therefore, first we deal with grammatical categories that apply to all verbs (main verbs and auxiliaries alike). In fact, these do not strictly belong to the verb(s) but affect the whole clause the verb(s) are in, so eventually they become **clausal properties**. They are “the famous seven”:

- **mood**
 - **indicative: declarative** (e.g., *Jon has (not) fed the cat*) or **interrogative** (e.g., *Has Jon fed the cat?*)
 - **imperative** (e.g., *Feed the cat!*)
 - **subjunctive** (e.g., *It is of utmost importance that Jon feed the cat*)
- **modality** (primarily expressed by the modal auxiliaries – cf. Ch. 3.1)
- **tense** (see below)
- **aspect** (see below)
- **voice**: the way the form of the verb varies to indicate the meaning role that the subject plays in relation to the verbal action (see more in Ch. 10.1):
 - **active** (e.g., *Jon fed the cat*: the subject NP *Jon* is the active “doer” of the action)
 - **passive** (e.g., *The cat was fed*: the subject NP *the cat* is a passive “undergoer” of the action)
- **person** (first, second, third)
- **number** (singular, plural)



In what follows, we concentrate on two of these properties: tense and aspect.

All learners of English are familiar with the term **tense** from their grammar books – but what is it? It is a grammatical term that refers to the ways in which different forms of verbs are used to express reference to **time**. Time, then, is not the same as tense – it is a *semantic* concept, understood by us as divisible into past, present, and future. Tense, however, is a *grammatical, formal* property of verbs, and does not necessarily coincide with time. E.g., usually present tense forms express actions, events in present time (cf. *I feed the cat each day* or *I can't talk to you now because I'm feeding the cat*) but present tense can be used for the past (for telling stories; just think of how jokes are usually worded) or for future time (e.g., *The match starts at 4* or *I'm getting married in the morning*) as well. The past tense form also appears in a whole lot of constructions which carry present or future meaning (e.g., *I wish you were here* or *I'd rather you didn't pull the cat's tail*) – that is one of the reasons why very often it is referred to with a neutral name and called the **preterite**. However, the most important example is **future time**, for which no separate tense exists in English (or Hungarian, for that matter): there is no verb form specifically used to express the future; instead, various present tense forms can be chosen, e.g., *will/shall* or *be going to* (plus the infinitive), the present progressive, the present simple, or other constructions like *be (about) to*. Therefore, in the strict sense of the word, there are

only two tenses in English, past and present. It is possible to relate to the future, but there is no separate verb form for it, and in this respect, Hungarian is the same (cf. *Meg fogom etetni a macskát* ‘I will feed the cat’).

The term **aspect** refers to two distinctions that can accompany time relations in English: (i) progressive/non-progressive (or continuous/non-continuous); and (ii) perfect/non-perfect. The **progressive/non-progressive** distinction is only relevant to so-called **dynamic** verbs (verbs expressing dynamic actions) and not to **stative** verbs (verbs like *be, exist; know, believe, think; see, hear, smell, feel; sound, seem, look; love, hate, want; resemble, contain, own, have, cost*; etc.)¹ – these are always non-progressive (i.e., sentences like **This bottle is containing liquid soap* are ungrammatical). However, some stative verbs also have dynamic senses. The verb *have*, for example, only means ‘possess’ (a stative sense) in certain cases but not in others, cf.:

<i>Jon <u>has</u> a cat</i>	<i>*Jon <u>is having</u> a cat</i>
<i>Garfield often <u>has</u> lasagne for breakfast</i>	<i>Garfield <u>is having</u> lasagne for breakfast</i>

Due to the difference between the two senses, the progressive form is ungrammatical in the first case only.

The **perfect/non-perfect** distinction has two major functions, consequently, the perfect can be **resultative** (e.g., *I’ve read the book*) or **continuative** (e.g., *I’ve lived / I’ve been living here for 2 years*). The progressive and (continuative) perfect aspects can combine with each other (e.g., *has been waiting*), and when neither is present (i.e., when non-continuous combines with non-perfect) the form is called a **simple** form (i.e., present simple and past simple).

Notice now that the traditional twelve tenses you are familiar with from your coursebooks are mixtures of aspectual, modal and tense categories. Some grammar books add voice distinctions, which produces as many as 24 “tenses”. However, remember that in the strict sense defined above, i.e., according to how many separate forms inflectional morphology actually distinguishes, English has two tenses only (preterite and present).

With this sense of the term *tense* in mind, we turn to a fundamental distinction between two types of forms verbs have, **finite** and **non-finite**. Finite means **tensed** because these verb forms are marked for tense (sometimes also for **agreement**, i.e., person and number features coming from the subject, also called **concord**). The sentence *Garfield likes playing practical jokes on Odie*, for example, contains two verb forms, *likes* and *playing*. While *likes* is marked for tense (present), even agreement (third person singular), and is therefore finite, *playing* carries no information whatever of these features, and is therefore non-finite. Very often in Present-day English, the finiteness of a verb form is not explicit, not visible: the first verbs in *I like playing practical jokes on Odie* or in *Jon cut himself while shaving* do not seem to be any different from their infinitives *to like* and *to cut*. However, slightly altering the context reveals that these forms are actually sensitive to tense/agreement features, cf. *Garfield thought that I liked playing practical jokes on Odie* and *Jon said that he had cut himself while shaving* – in a past tense context they undergo what is called **backshift** (Ch. 8.1), unlike the forms *playing* and *shaving*, which remain constant whatever the context be. Finite forms, therefore, are limited in what contexts they are suitable for: *like* or *likes* are only for present tense contexts; *likes* is only for third person singular. This is what the name *finite* refers to; non-finite forms, on the other hand, are much less limited (although they are not infinite in their distribution, either).²

¹ Certain sources refer to stative verbs/senses as state verbs/senses, and dynamic verbs/senses as event or action or active verbs/senses.

² English verb forms are always either finite or non-finite; Hungarian, however, exhibits an intermediate category called **semi-finite**: inflected infinitives like *tudnom kell* ‘I have/need to know’ are marked for agreement but are tenseless, cf. *tudnom kellett* ‘I had/needed to know’.

Finite verb forms (but not non-finite ones) can:

- appear in an independent clause;
- express tense contrast;
- participate in person and number concord;
- express mood.

The **non-finite verb forms** are:

- the infinitive forms: the bare infinitive (*write*) and the *to*-infinitive or full infinitive (*to write*);
- the *-ing* participle (or gerund-participle): *writing*;
- the past participle (or *-en* form, *-ed* participle, the “third form”): *written*.

Finiteness is a fundamental feature of verb forms because it is able to determine the properties of the whole clause: recall, for instance, that only clauses containing a finite form can be independent sentences. While *Garfield likes playing practical jokes on Odie* is well-formed and so is *Garfield plays practical jokes on Odie*, a sentence like **Garfield playing practical jokes on Odie*, with no tensed form, is ungrammatical. At the same time, clauses with more than one tensed elements are also ungrammatical: **Garfield likes plays practical jokes on Odie*; within a single clause, even if there are several verbs, only one will be finite. Complex verb groups are made up of a finite verb (if any) followed by non-finite forms (you are invited to check this in the examples in Ch. 3.1!). If there is no finite verb in a clause, it will be a **non-finite clause** (see Ch. 8), but it will necessarily be a dependent clause, contained within a larger sentence (cf. the underlined *-ing* clause functioning as object to the main verb in *Garfield likes playing practical jokes on Odie*).

The two non-indicative moods (**imperative and subjunctive**) are somewhat special in terms of **finiteness**: the clauses realising them may form independent sentences, display person and number features (the imperative typically has an implicit second-person subject (but see Ch. 7.1), while the subject of the subjunctive is always explicitly present), and express mood; therefore, they are finite. This is because, although the verb form they contain is the base form, it is not the infinitive but a finite form: the base form is ambiguous between the non-finite infinitive and its finite version in the imperative and the subjunctive. This ambiguity, however, is not unique: notice that the uninflected form of verbs (e.g., *play*) is similarly ambiguous between a plain present form (as in *I play*) and the base form; or the *-ed* form of (regular) verbs (e.g., *played*) is ambiguous between the preterite (finite) and the past participle (non-finite).

We have seen above that there can be one tensed element in each clause at most. It is either the lexical verb, as in most of the examples above, or an auxiliary, cf. (*Jon said that*) *he had cut himself while shaving* (past tense), or *I have been waiting here for ages* (present tense), or *I don't know* (present tense), or *This time next year the railway will have been being built for 4 years* (present tense!). As you can see, in verb groups the tense-carrying element is always the leftmost auxiliary: the name in English grammar of this very special category is **operator**. It is:

- the leftmost (or only) auxiliary of the verb group;
- provided by *do*-insertion in simple tenses (present and past simple – see below).

Its major functions:

- carrying tense and agreement features (sometimes referred to in syntax as the **inflection** of the clause);



- participating in **subject-operator inversion (SOI)**³ in questions and other inversion structures (e.g., *Do you know this?* or *Never have I seen such a beautiful sight*; see Ch. 11.1);
- expressing negation (cf. *I don't know*);
- receiving emphasis (e.g., *The slithy toves DID gyre and gimble in the wabe* or *She HAS done the homework!* or *I DO know this!*).

The chart below illustrates these functions for the three basic subcases: when the leftmost auxiliary is a modal; when it is a non-modal; and the simple tenses (present and past simple). In the latter, no auxiliary is needed for forming the tense/aspect itself; however, when the operator is necessary for fulfilling a grammatical task, its slot in the clause is filled with a semantically empty auxiliary, *do* (see the shaded areas in the chart). This is called **do-insertion**.

The operator is...	a modal auxiliary	a non-modal auxiliary	not originally present
Example:	<i>I <u>will</u> survive</i>	<i>I <u>have</u> been working on the railroad</i>	<i>We <u>live</u> in a yellow submarine</i>
Finite inflection (backshift test):	<i>She said that she <u>would</u> survive</i>	<i>He said that he <u>had</u> been working on the railroad</i>	<i>They said that they <u>lived</u> in a yellow submarine</i>
SOI:	<i><u>Will</u> you survive?</i>	<i><u>Have</u> you been working on the railroad?</i>	<i><u>Do</u> you live in a yellow submarine?</i>
Negation:	<i>I <u>won't</u> survive</i>	<i>I <u>haven't</u> been working on the railroad</i>	<i>We <u>don't</u> live in a yellow submarine</i>
Emphasis:	<i>I <u>WILL</u> survive</i>	<i>I <u>HAVE</u> been working on the railroad</i>	<i>We <u>DO</u> live in a yellow submarine</i>

You may remember from Ch. 3.1 that auxiliary *do* is a very special auxiliary. It is traditionally classified as a non-modal, since it does not carry modal meaning. In fact, however, it does not carry any meaning at all! At the same time, it functions as the operator, i.e., the leftmost auxiliary – the primary function of modals. In addition, it is restricted to present (*do, does*) and past tense (*did*): it has no non-finite forms, and does not combine with modals, i.e., morphologically and syntactically it is more like a modal auxiliary. Therefore, although it is traditionally considered a non-modal, it is more like a modal in behaviour in a number of respects, and its most significant property is that it is the **semantically empty operator**, the “**dummy**” auxiliary of English.⁴

The fact that the inflection-carrying element in a clause is either a lexical verb or an auxiliary (the operator) demonstrates that tense and agreement are clausal properties which are realised on some kind of verb – all subcategories are potentially involved. Recall from the beginning of this chapter, though, that the distinctions verbs are responsible for have yet another type: the one that is exclusively characteristic of lexical verbs. It is called **complementation**. Only lexical verbs are able to determine the number and type of complements (cf. Ch. 2.1) in the clause; auxiliaries are function words, they fulfil grammatical roles rather than express a verbal action and specify its participants – the task of the main verb and its complements. Thus, in what follows we narrow our scope down to lexical verbs.

The complementation of verbs depends on the subcategory of the verb, i.e., whether it is intransitive or transitive, etc. (as briefly introduced in Ch. 3.1). At the same time, verbs can be classified according to the complements they require (or license (cf. Ch. 2.1) or **subcategorise for**): this is called **subcategorisation**. Therefore, there are two aspects of this topic: (i) the sentence elements verbs license as complements⁵, and (ii) the subcategories of verbs that can be set up accordingly. We start with (i), and deal with (ii) at the end of the chapter.

³ Inversion in questions is traditionally referred to as **Subject-Auxiliary Inversion (SAI)**, but, as you can see, it is more precise to refer to it as SOI.

⁴ Since their function is primarily grammatical in nature, the aspectuals (*be* and *have*) can also be treated as dummy elements realising certain syntactic features – such a treatment is found in BESE 5.3, 6.2.

⁵ Later, in Ch. 7.1, we will introduce the elements of the simple sentence in more detail.

One of the **sentence elements** (or **grammatical functions**) we are already familiar with (from Ch. 2.1 and 3.1) is the **object**: the most frequent verbal post-modifying complement, which is typically an NP (and, if it is a pronominal NP, it will be in the accusative case) but also frequently a clause. Cf.:

Everybody knows Garfield
Everybody knows him
Everybody knows that Garfield likes lasagne more than anything else in the world

Object NPs typically undergo the process called **passivisation** or **passive movement**: the NP which functions as object in the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence when the verb is passivised:

Garfield is known for his greed

In fact, passivisation can be used as a test to detect objects⁶. Together with the use of accusative pronouns, it shows that there are two more cases when we find objects. The first is when certain verbs appear to take two objects; one is called direct object, the other is indirect object:

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. <i>Jon gave <u>Garfield</u> all the pizzas</i> | indirect object , cf. <i>Jon gave <u>him</u> all the pizzas</i> |
| b. <i><u>Garfield</u> was given all the pizzas</i> | passivisation test |
| c. <i>? <u>All the pizzas</u> were given Garfield</i> | the other NP passivised: debatable acceptability |
| d. <i><u>All the pizzas</u> were given <u>to</u> Garfield</i> | passivisation and preposition insertion |
| e. <i>Jon gave <u>all the pizzas</u> to Garfield</i> | direct object , cf. <i>Jon gave <u>them</u> to Garfield</i> |

In (a), there are two object NPs: the indirect object first and the direct object second. This is called the **double object construction**. As you can see in (e), another possibility is the reverse order of the two objects, but in that case the indirect object is realised as a PP, that is, the verb is followed by an NP and a PP (typically headed by *to*). This is the **prepositional indirect-object construction**, while the transformation that produces one version from the other is called **dative movement** or **dative shift**. The debatable acceptability of (c) shows that the direct object in the double object construction does not lend itself easily to passivisation. In fact, if we compare (b), (c) and (d), we conclude that it is always the object which closely follows the verb that can normally be passivised. Also, note that the name of the prepositional indirect-object construction is somewhat misleading, since the PP in it is not an object (the object is an NP by definition) but an adverbial.

The other special object construction is the one containing a **prepositional object**. That is when a verb takes a PP complement, in which the preposition is licensed/selected by the verb (cf. (a) below), and the NP within the PP can be “passivised out of” the PP (cf. (b)). Since the NP complements of prepositions are always in the accusative case (cf. (c)), we conclude that prepositions also have objects, like transitive verbs.

- a. *Garfield often laughs at/*on/*by Odie*
 b. *Odie is often laughed at*
 c. *Garfield often laughs at him*

The passivisation test also shows that not all verbal postmodifiers are objects, though. Certain verbs take NP complements that systematically resist being passivised (cf. (b) below); moreover, in terms of the meaning of the clause, the verbal complement is closely related to the subject (cf. (c)).

⁶ Here we are simplifying matters somewhat because there is an intermediate category between transitive and intransitive verbs called **middle verbs**: these seem transitive in other respects as they are obligatorily followed by an object NP, but they only occur in the active, e.g., *have* ‘possess’, *fit*, *equal*, *lack*, *resemble*, and a few others. Cf. *Jon resembles his aunt* but **Jon’s aunt is resembled (by Jon)*. The objects of middle verbs are often referred to as **quasi objects**.

- a. *Jon became a Philosophy teacher*
- b. **A Philosophy teacher was become by him*
- c. = '*He is/was a Philosophy teacher*'

In such cases the NP after the verb is not an object; it is called **subject complement** (or **subject predicative complement**) since it is a verbal complement structurally but semantically it belongs to the subject. It is also possible for a verbal complement to establish another unusual relationship in the clause, viz., by relating to the object of the verb (rather than directly to the verb). This is called **object complement** (or **object predicative complement**), and it is basically the same as the subject complement, but it semantically belongs to an object:

- a. *Garfield called Odie a stupid dog*
- b. = '*(Garfield said that) Odie is/was a stupid dog*'
- c. **Garfield called a stupid dog to Odie*

As sentence (c) shows, these are different from double object constructions and dative movement is not possible. In fact, sometimes sentences are ambiguous between the double object construction and the object complement construction: try to identify the two meanings of *Garfield called Odie a vet*, and match them to the underlying structure!

The final grammatical function to consider is again one that has been mentioned: the **adverbial**. Although adverbials are typically adjuncts, there are a few cases when they complement verbs, i.e., when they cannot be omitted from a sentence without losing its grammaticality (or losing the original meaning of the verb). Obligatory adverbials may be subject-related (e.g., (a) below) and object-related ((c), (e) and (g)). Cf.:

- a. *Garfield stayed in bed*
- b. **Garfield stayed*
- c. *Jon kept Garfield in bed*
- d. **Jon kept Garfield*
- e. *Garfield put the pizza on the table*
- f. **Garfield put the pizza*
- g. *Jon gave all the pizzas to Garfield*
- h. **Jon gave all the pizzas*

In sum, **the functions of verbal complements**, together with their conventional abbreviations, are the following:⁷

- O_d: direct object
- O_i: indirect object
- C_s: subject complement
- C_o: object complement⁸
- Al: adverbial

Verbs fall into classes according to which of them they select. As we have mentioned above, this is called **subcategorisation**. To conclude the discussion, let us summarise and name the subcategories of English lexical verbs, most of which we have in fact already seen above:

⁷ There are two more grammatical functions, the subject (S) and the attribute (At), but these are not discussed here since they are never directly associated with the verb (the subject is a clausal function, and only holds a "long-distance relationship" with the verb; the attribute is a function within NPs only) – as a result, they do not serve to distinguish subcategories of lexical verbs.

⁸ Although unfortunately this is rather confusing, there are two meanings to the word *complement*: one is the general sense, in which it is the opposite of *adjunct*; the other is as in *subject complement* and *object complement*, referring to complements in VPs that are not objects, in the absence of a separate name.

1. **(Ordinary) intransitive** verbs: followed by no obligatory element

Garfield laughed

2. **Copular** verbs (also called **complex-intransitive, intensive, linking, or copulative** verbs): complemented by C_S or AI⁹

Garfield looks hungry

The show is at 5

Jon became a Philosophy teacher

3. **Transitive** verbs can be further classified:

- **(Ordinary) monotransitive** verbs¹⁰: complemented by O_d

Everybody knows Garfield

- **Ditransitive** verbs: complemented by O_i O_d

Jon gave Garfield all the pizzas

- **Complex-transitive** verbs: complemented by O_d C_o or O_d AI

Garfield called Odie a stupid dog

Garfield put the pizza on the table

Jon gave all the pizzas to Garfield

You may have noticed that one of the most significant grammatical functions, **the subject**, is not mentioned throughout the discussion of complementation and verb subcategorisation. That is partly because the subject is not part of the VP: it is not a complement. In addition, the subject is obligatorily explicitly present in all main clauses in English, as opposed to Hungarian: while a Hungarian sentence like *Fáradtnak tűnsz* is well-formed, its English equivalent *You look tired* is unacceptable without the subject: **Look tired*. Interestingly, even when the subject is not explicit, it is understood and interpretable with the help of other clues: Hungarian *Fáradtnak tűnsz* has a “hidden” second person singular subject, and the (underlined) subclause in *Garfield seems to be hungry* is understood as having the same subject as the main clause, i.e., *Garfield*. (Cf. the sentence *It seems that Garfield is hungry*, which shows that there really are two clauses and two subjects!) This is relevant here because this **subject requirement** is independent of the choice of the verb: it applies with intransitive, copular, and transitive verbs alike. That is, verb subcategorisation is unrelated to the constraints on the subject.

That does not mean, however, that the subject is unrelated to the verb. On the contrary: most verbs license the subject in a way similar to how they license their complements. This is especially apparent in the meaning roles subjects play in clauses, which do depend on the choice of the verb. Compare *Odie watched Garfield* and *Odie saw Garfield*. Although seemingly the only difference is in the verb, the subjects are also different: with *watch*, Odie is an active participant, someone who deliberately performs an action, while with *see*, he is more of a passive observer. Therefore, the verb is able to determine the role the subject plays in the overall meaning expressed by the sentence. Sometimes the same verb assigns different roles to its subjects in different contexts: e.g., in *Jon opened the door*, the subject is the active “doer” of the action; in *The key opened the door*, the subject is rather an instrument (used by someone who is not mentioned); while in *The door opened*, it is a passive “undergoer”, to which something happens. Consequently, the subject is also considered to be an argument of the verb, but since it is outside the VP, it is called the **external argument**.¹¹

Just like certain verbs do not license an object and are therefore intransitive, certain verbs do not license a subject. There even are verbs that do not license any arguments at all: the most “famous” examples are the so-called “weather-verbs” like *rain*: simply because of what it means, there are no participants that would be required to complete its meaning, neither active “doers”, nor passive “undergoers”. When it is used in a sentence, the subject requirement simply enforces the insertion of a

⁹ Copular verbs can be **current** (*be, appear, seem, feel, look, sound, remain happy; taste, smell delicious; lie scattered, stand perplexed, etc.*) and **resulting** (*become older; come true; get ready; go, turn sour; grow tired; fall sick; run wild, etc.*).

¹⁰ Recall that middle verbs constitute an intermediate category between intransitive and monotransitive.

¹¹ Note that previously (in Ch. 2.1) the term *argument* was introduced as a mere synonym of *complement*. Now it should be clear that arguments (the subject plus the complement(s)) are all licensed by their heads, but only complements (a subtype of arguments) are contained within the phrases projected by the heads.

semantically empty, dummy (grammatical) subject: e.g., *It is raining*. That, then, illustrates a case with a special type of intransitive verb which does not take an external argument, either.

In fact, the subcategorisation of verbs (based on the number of complements, i.e., VP-internal arguments) and the licensing of the subject (the external argument) add up to another possible typology of verbs, in terms of the number of arguments they license. Accordingly, there are **zero-argument verbs** (such as *rain*), **one-argument verbs** (e.g., intransitives like *laugh*), **two-argument verbs** (e.g., monotransitives like *know*), and even **three-argument verbs** (e.g., ditransitives like *give*). As expected, the number of arguments equals the number of complements plus one (the subject); e.g., an intransitive verb takes zero objects but it licenses its subject, which makes it a one-argument verb. At this point intriguing questions arise, e.g., whether one-argument verbs with a complement and no external argument exist – such issues go well beyond the scope of an introductory discussion like ours.

4.2 Further reading

On the structure of the VP in general: SGE 3.19–3.26; OEG 5; CGEL 2 On the semantics of the VP: SGE 4.1 On non-finite VPs: SGE 4.35 On the complementation of verbs: SGE 16.2–16.16; CGEL 2; BESE 5.2 On the tenses: SGE 4.7; OEG 5; T&M 17–20; ALP 1–4; AGU 1–16 On the subjunctive: ALP 9; OEG 5; T&M 28.

4.3 Practice exercises

1. Identify the verbal constructions in the following examples. Encircle finite verb forms, underline non-finite verb forms.

1. *Run like you are being chased*
2. *These wings are made to fly*
3. *I have seen that face before*
4. *I have been thinking about you*
5. *Old McDonald had a farm*
6. *I wish it had been a dream*
7. *What to expect when you are expecting*

2. Compare the underlined verb forms in the sentence pairs. Are they grammatically different or the same?

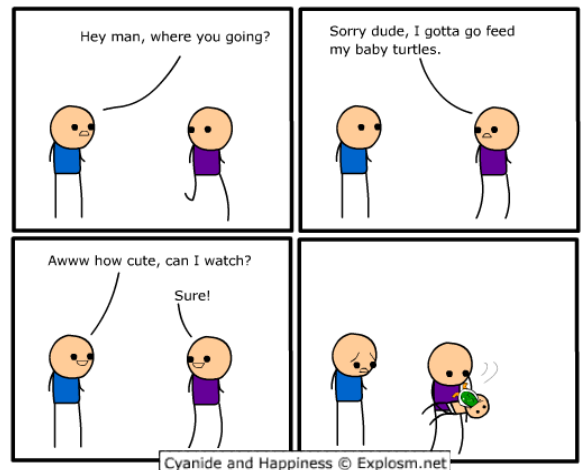
1. *This made me happy – That gadget was made in China*
2. *The kids play in the garden – Let the kids play in the garden*
3. *Several members accompanied the leader on his trip – I received this strange e-mail, accompanied by two attachments*
4. *My friends like swimming in the sea – My friends are swimming in the sea*

3. Compare the perfect and passive constructions. What do they have in common?

4. Compare the imperative, infinitival and subjunctive constructions. What do they have in common?

5. In *If I were you, I would buy a new car* is the verb *be* in past tense? Why (not)?

6. The following verbs have both stative and dynamic senses. Complete the chart with example sentences that clearly illustrate the difference in meaning and usage. The first one has been done for you.



verb	stative sense	dynamic sense
have	Jon <u>has</u> a cat	Garfield <u>is having</u> lasagne for breakfast
see		
consider		
be		
think		

7. Sometimes an adverb is inserted between the particle *to* and the verb in a *to*-infinitive. This is called “**split infinitive**”. Produce split infinitive constructions in the following sentences by adding the adverbs in brackets.

1. *It will take years to master this subject (really)*
2. *We are about to go where no one has gone before (boldly)*
3. *She used to admire him (secretly)*
4. *You have to understand this to be able to answer the questions (really, properly)*

8. We repeat the chart from the text, illustrating the use and functions of the operator. Fill it again with your own examples.

The operator is...	a modal auxiliary	a non-modal auxiliary	not originally present
Example:			
Finite inflection (backshift test):			
SOI:			
Negation:			
Emphasis:			

9. Identify the different subcategories of lexical verbs and the grammatical functions of the phrases in the following examples. Use abbreviations like O_d , C_o , A_l , etc.

1. *It was 9 am*
2. *The postman came*
3. *He rang the doorbell*
4. *The sound of the bell woke up Garfield*
5. *This made him awfully angry*
6. *He didn't let the postman in*
7. *So the postman couldn't hand Garfield his birthday cards*

10. The following sentences all illustrate some form of the **subjunctive** (1–4) and the so-called **Modal Past** (5). Discuss how the form of the verb reveals in each case that they are not simple indicative structures.

1. *I suggest that the committee now retire to discuss the case*
2. *God save the Queen!*
3. *If I were a rich man, I wouldn't have to work hard*
4. *Whatever be the situation, you must not falter*
5. *If only I could turn back time, I would stay for the night*

4.4 Extension: Two highlights: “phrasal verbs” and the “subjunctive”

This chapter discusses two topics related to Ch. 4.1: one is a special subtype of verbs not yet mentioned, the other is a construction briefly touched upon but not dealt with in detail above.

First, we investigate so-called **multi-word verbs** and their subtypes: phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, and phrasal-prepositional verbs. The first two structures resemble each other in being composed of elements which appear to be the same: a lexical verb plus an adverb-like function word. We will see that the difference is that this adverb-like function word is an **adverb particle** in phrasal verbs (e.g., *switch off the lights*), while it is a **preposition** in prepositional verbs (e.g., *live off one's parents*). The difficulty these pose for learners of English stems from the fact that, in spite of the apparent formal similarity (note in the examples that the adverb particle and the preposition may even be identical!), they exhibit crucial differences in syntactic behaviour (e.g., compare the word order in *switch them off* vs. *live off them*). Although a number of coursebooks use the same name “phrasal verb” to refer to both types, we will consistently distinguish them even in terminology and use it as explained above. For learners of English, multi-word verbs are problematic because (i) it is a lexical, idiosyncratic property of V + P sequences whether they belong to one category or the other, that is, this has to be memorised for each single example; and (ii) very often, their meaning is not fully compositional or even totally idiomatic so they need to be learnt as set expressions. Learners often think that all “phrasal verbs” are like that but this is not true: notice that both our examples above (*switch off* and *live off*) are more or less predictable as to the meaning; some phrasal verbs are less idiomatic (e.g., *wake (Garfield) up*) than others (e.g., *put (the meeting) off*); in the same way, some prepositional verbs are less idiomatic (e.g., *climb up (the ladder)*) than others (e.g., *look after (the kids)*). It is not in terms of meaning that the two types primarily diverge, but rather, in terms of the syntactic behaviour they display – and this is what we turn to now.

Consider the following examples:

Odie ran up the stairs
Odie woke up Garfield

Apparently, the two sentences contain the same type of sequence: a verb followed by *up* followed by an NP. However, in the case of *run*, the substring *up the stairs* can be moved around in the sentence as a single constituent, and it may even receive the phrase-initial premodifying adverb *right*; whereas with *wake* none of these constructions works. The substring *up Garfield* does not seem to act like a single constituent:

<p><i><u>Up the stairs</u>, Odie ran</i> <i>It was <u>up the stairs</u> that Odie ran</i> <i>Odie ran <u>right up</u> the stairs</i></p>	vs.	<p><i>*<u>Up Garfield</u>, Odie woke</i> <i>*It was <u>up Garfield</u> that Odie woke</i> <i>*Odie woke <u>right up</u> Garfield</i></p>
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In addition, look at possible word orders in the two cases:

<i>Odie ran up the stairs</i> <i>*Odie ran the stairs up</i> <i>Odie ran up them</i> <i>*Odie ran them up</i>	vs.	<i>Odie woke up Garfield</i> <i>Odie woke Garfield up</i> <i>*Odie woke up him</i> <i>Odie woke him up</i>
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Up the stairs, which proved to be a single constituent above, still behaves as one and strongly resists any changes in the order of its components: whether the nominal element after *up* is a full NP or a pronoun, *up* comes first and the nominal phrase follows. That is, *up the stairs* is very much like an ordinary PP with a P head and an NP complement: *run up* is a **prepositional verb**. In contrast, *up Garfield* does not seem to be a unit; rather, *up* and *Garfield* change positions freely, as sometimes happens in the case of two separate constituents. Moreover, when the NP is a pronoun, the principle of **end weight** (Ch. 11.4), that long or stressed (i.e., “heavy”) constituents move to the end of phrases/clauses whenever possible, sends stressed *up* to the end, to lag behind the unstressed pronoun. We only have this option when *up* is an adverb (particle), independent of the following NP: *wake up* is a **phrasal verb**. Both types have a number of subcategories according to the complements they license:

	phrasal verbs	prepositional verbs
intransitive	e.g., <i>get up, throw up, come round/to</i> ‘become conscious again after fainting’	--
monotransitive	e.g., <i>wake sy up, switch sg off, put sg off, knock sy out</i>	with a prepositional object: e.g., <i>live off sy, climb up sg, look after sy, deal with sg</i>
ditransitive/doubly transitive	--	with a direct object and a prepositional object: e.g., <i>remind sy of sg, spend (money) on sg, stop sy from (doing) sg</i>
copular	e.g., <i>turn out, end up</i>	e.g., <i>turn into, serve as</i>

The third type of multi-word verbs is, as mentioned above, the **phrasal-prepositional verb**, which combines a phrasal verb (i.e., a V plus an adverb) and a PP. Phrasal-prepositional verbs may be monotransitive (with a prepositional object, e.g., *put up with sg*) or doubly transitive (with a direct object and a prepositional object, e.g., *look sg up in the dictionary/on the internet, put sg down to sg* ‘explain sg with sg’).

The second topic in this chapter is the **subjunctive**, mentioned in Ch. 4.1 above as one of the three moods in English (in addition to indicative and imperative). Since the imperative is pretty marginal in English (main clause imperatives are simply formed with the base form of the verb, indirect imperatives are produced with a variety of structures such as *to*-infinitive constructions and the like), we may consider the subjunctive as an umbrella term that covers all verbal constructions which are not clearly indicative. This means that there is a rather broad set of different structures falling under this category: most of them are only found in subclauses with conjunctions, therefore the subjunctive is also often called **conjunctive** (and hence the Hungarian name, *kötőmód*). The subtypes traditionally classified here in the grammar of English are as follows:

(i) **Base-form subjunctive or present subjunctive**

- **formulaic subjunctive**: set phrases expressing a wish or hope, e.g., *God bless you! Heaven help us! God save the Queen! Long live the Queen! Suffice it to say... Come what may...*
- **mandative subjunctive**: in *that*-clauses when the main clause expresses recommendation, resolution, demand; e.g., *They ordered that the prisoner be released; It is vital that he remain in custody*
- **conditional “be” subjunctive**: in real conditional clauses, e.g., *If that be the case..., Whether she be willing or not..., Whatever be the reason...*

- (ii) **were-subjunctive** or **past subjunctive**: *were* used instead of *was* in 1st and 3rd person singular in formal style¹², in unreal conditional clauses, in clauses of comparison (*as if/as though...*) and in subclauses after optative expressions (*I wish, if only...*)¹³; e.g., *If I were a rich man..., If I were you..., As if that were all he wanted..., as it were ('so to speak')*

It is worthy of note at this point that the “simple” use of past tense (or, more precisely, preterite) forms for non-past tense functions is traditionally separated from the subjunctive and referred to as the **Modal Past**: it appears in unreal conditional clauses (second and third conditional, see Ch. 11.1), in clauses of comparison (*as if/as though...*) and in subclauses after optative expressions (*I wish, if only, it's time*): *If I lived near my office..., It's high time he left; I'd rather you paid cash.*

Further reading

On tense and aspect: Cowan 2008: 16 📖 On the double object construction: Cowan 2008: 15 📖 On the subjunctive: ALP 9 📖 On multi-word verbs: ALP 21, 23–25; SGE 16.1–16.10; OEG 5; T&M 38; Cowan 2008: 9; AGU 114; McCarthy & O'Dell 1994: 85–91 📖 A list of common multi-word verbs: Cowan 2008: Appendix A 📖 On the syntactic analysis of phrasal verbs: BESE 5.2.7; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 6.

4.5 Practice exercises

1. Identify the different subcategories of lexical verbs and the grammatical functions of the phrases in the following examples.

1. *The pot calls the kettle black*
2. *The early bird catches the worm*
3. *Don't count your chicks before they hatch*
4. *No man is an island*
5. *Birds of a feather flock together*
6. *The squeaky wheel gets the grease*
7. *Keep your friends close and your enemies closer*
8. *A watched pot never boils*
9. *Actions speak louder than words*
10. *Too many cooks spoil the broth*
11. *Beauty is in the eye of the beholder*
12. *Don't put all your eggs in one basket*

2. Identify the phrasal, prepositional, and phrasal-prepositional verbs in the following examples. Are they transitive or intransitive?

1. *I am beautiful no matter what they say, words can't bring me down*
2. *Now and then I think of when we were together*
3. *But you didn't have to cut me off and make out like it never happened*
4. *You treat me like a stranger*
5. *Now and then I think of all the times you screwed me over*
6. *I don't want to read into every word you say*
7. *We can work it out*
8. *If I keep holding out, will the light shine through*
9. *I have been planning out all that I'd say to you since you slipped away*

¹² In informal style, *was* is more common (i.e., the Modal Past – see below), except for a few set phrases.

¹³ Not all optative expressions take the *were*-subjunctive, though; e.g., *it is time* takes the Modal Past: *It's time I was/*were going.*

10. *Don't let me down*
11. *You never gave up on me*
12. *I know that I'm a lot of work but you put up with me*
13. *I call you up in the middle of the night*
14. *I want to take her out again*
15. *I still haven't found what I'm looking for*

3. Use the correct forms of these phrasal-prepositional verbs to paraphrase the sentences below.

catch up with, come in for, cut down on, fix up with, get along with, look forward to

1. *How can we reduce the risk of STDs?*
2. *I can hardly wait to see Jane's baby boy*
3. *I have a good relationship with most of my colleagues at work*
4. *I hope the police will find the robber soon*
5. *Mary wants to arrange for Jim to meet her sister*
6. *The IMF has received much criticism recently*

4. Complete the sentences with the following verbs in the mandative subjunctive.

be found, be lowered, be made, be raised, pay (2x), postpone, see, solve, study, take, wear

1. *The Congress advised that the minimum salary*
2. *The committee decided that everyone their fees*
3. *The King determined that all his subjects hats*
4. *John insisted that his wife a doctor*
5. *We proposed that the income tax*
6. *I will recommend that the decision today*
7. *The Government requested that all citizens their taxes*
8. *I suggested that Margaret the course again*
9. *It is crucial that we our political problems soon*
10. *It is desirable that the teacher the exam*
11. *It is imperative that a solution to the current crisis quickly*
12. *It is necessary that you hard every day*

5. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given.

1. *Flavia regretted not going to the concert. WISHED*
Flavia the concert.
2. *'Why didn't I ask Linda for her phone number?' thought Vince. ASKED*
'If Linda for her phone number!' thought Vince.
3. *'One thing you can do is give up smoking,' said the doctor. WERE*
'If give up smoking,' said the doctor.
4. *We'd prefer you to pay in cash for the goods. RATHER*
We for the goods.
5. *You really should apply yourself to some serious studying. TIME*
It's high to some serious studying.
6. *Isn't that announcer ever going to stop talking? ONLY*
If talking!

5.1 Nouns and Noun Phrases

“Why are proper nouns useful when you are broke?”

“Because they can be capitalised.”¹

Noun Phrases are either composed of a single word (e.g., a proper noun or a pronoun) or of several words (with the noun head and some modifier(s)). Pronouns were discussed in Ch. 3.1 – recall that personal pronouns are the most important central pronouns, which differ along the dimensions of number (singular, plural), person (first, second, third), case (nominative, accusative), and gender (masculine, feminine, neuter/non-personal). Out of these, number and case also apply to nouns, although there is a difference: while number is normally morphologically marked (by the presence of a suffix for the plural, and its absence for the singular), **case** is **abstract** in Present-day English. What that means is that it is not visibly indicated in the form of the noun or noun phrase (as in several languages including Hungarian – called **morphological case**), but the case forms of the personal pronouns that replace the NPs indirectly show what case the NPs are in. In a sentence like *Garfield ignores the mice*, we know *Garfield* is nominative and *the mice* is accusative from the pronouns that can substitute for them: *he* and *them*, respectively.

In English, nominative and accusative are **structural** cases: mostly, they are assigned to NPs occupying specific structural positions. As you may have already noticed, **nominative** (also called **common case**) is for the NP in the subject position of the sentence (at least in finite clauses) while **accusative** (also called **oblique case**) is what the objects of transitive verbs take (cf. *Garfield and the mice*). Besides transitive verbs, prepositions also assign accusative case (e.g., *with me, after them*), and it is also the accusative that NPs in certain special positions assume, cf. e.g., (*Who is it?*) *It's me* or *Him eating all the pizza surprised us* or *You and me are the best of friends*.

The third case relevant in English is **genitive** (or **possessive**) case. This has two forms: **inflected** (e.g., *Garfield's tail*) and **periphrastic** (i.e., phrasal, e.g., *the centre of the city*). Notice that in both of these examples the genitive is part of a larger NP, which is its usual occurrence, but it is also used for the subject of certain clauses with non-finite verb forms (e.g., *Garfield's eating all the pizza surprised us*) (for non-finite clauses, see Ch. 8.1). Perhaps the most interesting point about the genitive inflection -'s is that it is a so-called **phrasal affix**: it attaches to whole NPs rather than nominal stems. When the NP ends in the head noun, the difference is not evident (e.g., *the cat's tail*) but in cases like *The Wife of Bath's Tale* or *the cat we saw today's tail* we see that the suffix does not appear on the head noun itself but at the very end of the string wherever that is.²

The genitive has four formal subtypes:

- **simple** genitive: *the cat's tail, Garfield's photo*
- **elliptical** genitive: - **independent**: (*Whose pizza is it?*) *Garfield's*
- **local**: *the grocer's, St Paul's, Harrods, Uncle Ben's*
- **group** genitive: *The Wife of Bath's Tale*
- **double** genitive: *a friend of Jon's*

Semantically, i.e., meaning-wise, the genitive is intriguing as it is able to express a number of relations between two nominal elements: it is not only for simple possession (e.g., *Garfield's pizza*), but can also denote a subject (e.g., *Jon's retirement*) or object (e.g., *Jon's promotion*), and a lot of others (cf. *ten days' absence, a man of great courage, a doctor's degree*, etc.).

Recall that the two categories applicable to nouns are case and **number**. In English, there are two numbers, singular and plural. Nouns, however, differ in the extent number is relevant to them: this

¹ © BBK

² Note that for regular nouns, the plural (e.g., *cats*), the singular genitive (*cat's*) and the plural genitive (*cats'*) only differ in spelling – in pronunciation, they are identical.

property is called **countability**. Out of the two major nominal classes, **proper nouns** and common nouns, the former constitute a separate and rather heterogeneous category with a variety of structures (some typically singular like *Jon*, some plural like *the United States* or *the Netherlands*, and in certain cases plural has a specific interpretation as in *the Browns*), but in general, proper nouns are much less flexible syntactically. Due to the fact that they carry more reference (they *name* somebody or something) than some definable semantic content, it is more important for them to be constant than be able to vary and produce all sorts of phrases. **Common nouns**, however, can be classified into subtypes, in the following way:

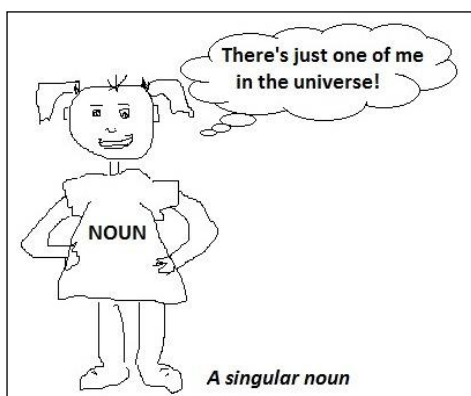
- variable nouns: have an inflectional contrast between singular and plural; they are traditionally called **countable** (count, +Count) nouns: *cat, apple, knife, man, reindeer...*
- non-variable nouns: with fixed number:
 - **singular-only** nouns, called **uncountable** (noncount, mass, -Count) nouns: *hair, coffee, furniture, advice, weather; news, linguistics, mumps, billiards...*
 - **plural-only** (xCount, midcount) nouns (the “twilight zone”): neither count nor noncount: *trousers, clothes, scissors; cattle, police...*

Countability is a fundamental property of nouns because it determines the type of NP a noun is able to produce:

- only count nouns can take cardinal numerals (*one, two, three, etc.*) as determiner, in which case they assume the plural form, e.g., *two cats, eight men*
- only count nouns can combine with the indefinite article, e.g., *a cat, an apple*
- count nouns cannot build one-word NPs on their own in the singular, cf. **Jon found apple in the kitchen* (Ch. 3.1)
- determiners and count nouns agree in number within the NP, cf. *a cat, two cats, *a cats, *two cat, this cat, these cats, *this cats, *these cat*
- certain determiners are marked for countability and combine with nouns accordingly, e.g., *many* is count-only (*many cats, *many furniture*) and *much* is noncount-only (*much furniture, *much cat(s)*); *few* and *less* pair up in the same way; the indefinite article (*a(n)*) and a few others like *each* and *every* are count-only and require singular³; etc.



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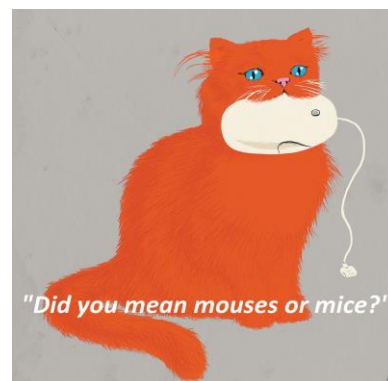
Agreement in number does not only affect the determiner and the noun in the NP, but also the subject NP and the operator in the clause (cf. finiteness in Ch. 4.1). Therefore, since *cat* is singular, *a cat* is grammatical, and the verb in the clause will be singular: *A cat is sitting on the windowsill*. In fact, that is how we know that nouns like *reindeer* are countable and have singular and plural forms: *A reindeer is sitting on the windowsill* and *Two reindeer are sitting on the windowsill*. Such nouns are special because the plural marker is not visible: this is called **zero plural** (see below).

In a parallel fashion, we find that nouns like *news*, although ending in what seems like a plural suffix, are in fact singular (cf. *What is the news?*), whereas nouns like *police* are plural (cf. *The police are after me*). Notice, then, that number is detectable in agreement more straightforwardly than in either the form or the meaning of the noun.

³ Cf. *every cat, *every furniture, *every cats* vs. *all (the) cats, all (the) furniture* (plus **all (the) cat*).

Of course, there still is a connection between the meaning of the noun and its countability: nouns meaning objects and discrete entities (e.g., *cat*, *apple*, *knife*) are countable while **abstract nouns** (e.g., *weather*, *linguistics*) are uncountable, and **collective nouns** (e.g., *police*) can be plural. **Measure expressions** can function as singular even if in plural form since they denote single units of time or distance (e.g., *Three hours is not enough for that job* or *Fifty miles is a long way to ride*). **Quantificational nouns** (like *lot*) may contribute the meaning but be unable to determine the number feature of the clause, cf. *A lot of cats are fond of boxes* vs. *A lot of furniture is unsuitable for its intended purpose*. In addition, different senses of the same noun may differ in this respect: *hair* and *coffee*, for example, are noncount when referring to the mass (e.g., *He has ginger hair* or *How much coffee do you drink a day?*) but count when referring to a single piece or some kind of unit of measurement of that mass (cf. *She found a few white hairs on her head* or *Two coffees, please!*).⁴ In such cases very often the countable sense coincides with that of a phrase specifying the most frequent amount or quantity of the mass, e.g., *two coffees* means *two cups of coffee* (and not two bottles, for instance). Such **phrasal quantifiers** (e.g., *a piece of luggage*, *a spot of rain*; especially food quantifiers like *a glass of water*, *a loaf/slice of bread*, *a bar of chocolate*, *a spoonful of sugar*, *a pound/kilo of meat*)⁵ are frequently used to “make noncount nouns count”, i.e., to specify the quantity or amount in a N+PP phrase (rather than with a simple determiner/numeral, which, recall, is an option only for count nouns, e.g., *two cats*, *eight men*).

Turning back to (ordinary) countable nouns, we now take a look at their **plural forms**. In this respect, i.e., according to how they form their plurals, nouns fall into two major categories: **regular nouns**, which produce the plural morphologically, by suffixing the *-s* inflection (e.g., *cat – cats*); and **irregular nouns**, whose plurals are unpredictable, i.e., lexical (e.g., *mouse – mice*). It often happens that the same noun is regular in certain or most senses (e.g., *brother* ‘male sibling’ – *brothers*) but irregular in others (e.g., *brother* ‘monk’ – *brethren*). The fact that *-s* is the regular, productive suffix guarantees that all new count nouns in English will choose it as the plural inflection (e.g., *yolo – yolos*) and new senses to old words may also get regularised (e.g., *mouse*, the animal, is always *mice* in the plural, but in computing the form *mouses* is also used). A final note on the regular plural is that in spelling it has two forms (*-s* and *-es*, as in *cats* and *boxes*), whereas in pronunciation it has three (/s/, /z/ and /ɪz/, as in *cats*, *dogs* and *boxes*).



As the final topic of the chapter, let us consider the **irregular forms of the plural**, which can be grouped into the following five subtypes:

- **-en plural**: e.g., *brother*, *child*, *ox*
- **mutation(al) plural**: internal vowels change (“mutate”) in the plural form, e.g., *man*, *snowman*⁶, *tooth*, *woman*, *mouse*
- **voicing plural**: stem-final voiceless fricatives /f θ s/ become voiced /v ð z/ before taking the plural suffix (which is then pronounced /z/)⁷

⁴ Using noncount nouns like *coffee* as count may be taken to be a subcase of conversion (Ch. 1.1).

⁵ Such phrasal quantifiers (called *pseudo-partitives* in syntax) contain a countable noun followed by an *of*-phrase. The count noun may specify a conventionalised measure (e.g., *a kilo*, *a litre*), an abstract quantity (e.g., *a (large) amount*), a container (e.g., *a cup*), a fraction or part (e.g., *a slice*) or other units (e.g., *a lump (of sugar)*, *a drop (of milk)*).

⁶ Compound nouns ending in *-man*, like *snowman*, simply copy the plural of *man*. A number of words, however, resemble such compounds but in fact contain *-man* at the end as an unstressed, weak suffix. Typically, these are names of professions and jobs, e.g., *postman*, *policeman*, *chairman*: these words are strange because in writing, there is a difference between the singular (*-man*) and the plural (*-men*), but in pronunciation the two forms are exactly the same. That is, in terms of pronunciation, they have the zero plural.

⁷ Spelling only indicates the change for *f-v*, e.g., *wife – wives*; cf. *house – houses*, *path – paths*.

- voicing plural only: *house; calf, half, loaf, wolf, knife, life, wife, leaf, sheaf, thief, elf, self, shelf; path, mouth, bath, youth*
- both voicing and regular plural possible: *truth, sheath, wreath, oath; hoof, scarf, wharf, dwarf, handkerchief*
- regular plural only: when there is a consonant letter before *-th* (*birth, month, length, etc.*); *belief, safe, chief, roof, proof; faith*
- **zero plural:**
 - nationality names ending in /s/ or /z/: *Swiss, Chinese, Portuguese...*
 - some nouns ending in *-s*: *series, species, means, crossroads, gallows, innings, headquarters, gas works, barracks...*
 - some animal names: always: *reindeer, sheep, grouse, fish*; usually: *pike, trout, carp, quail*; only in huntsmen's usage: *antelope, buffalo, lion, elephant*
 - some quantitative nouns when preceded by numerals: *hundred, thousand, million, dozen, score, gross; foot, pound, stone*
 - some other nouns: *counsel, aircraft, spacecraft, cannon*

- **foreign plurals:**

- from Latin:**

- us
 - i: *alumnus, bacillus, locus, stimulus*
 - i/-uses: *cactus, focus, fungus, nucleus, radius, terminus, syllabus*
 - uses: *campus, chorus, circus, virus*
 - ora: *corpus*
 - era: *genus*
- um
 - a: *curriculum, addendum, bacterium, corrigendum, erratum, ovum, desideratum, stratum*
 - a/-ums: *aquarium, medium, memorandum, symposium, ultimatum*
 - ums: *album, museum, chrysanthemum*
- a
 - ae: *alga, larva, alumna*
 - ae/-as: *antenna, formula, vertebra*
 - as: *area, arena, dilemma, diploma, drama*
- ex
 - ices: *codex*
 - ices/-exes: *apex, index, vortex*
- ix
 - ices/-ixes: *matrix, appendix*

- from Greek:**

- is
 - es: *analysis, axis, basis, crisis, diagnosis, oasis, ellipsis, hypothesis, parenthesis, synopsis, thesis*
 - ises: *metropolis*
- on
 - a: *criterion, phenomenon*
 - a/-ons: *automaton, ganglion*
 - ons: *demon, electron, neuron, proton*

- from French:**

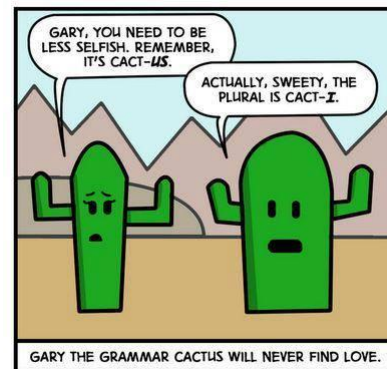
- eau
 - eaux/-eaus: *plateau, tableau, bureau*
- ieu
 - ieux/-ieus: *adieu*
- s
 - s: *chamois, chassis, corps, patois, faux pas*

- from Italian:**

- o
 - i/-os: *tempo, solo, libretto, virtuoso*
 - os: *soprano, concerto*

- from Hebrew:**

- im/-s: *kibbutz, cherub, seraph*



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5.2 Further reading

On nouns and the Noun Phrase: SGE 17.1–17.42; OEG 5; T&M 2; AGU 50–55 📖 On countability: CGEL 2; McCarthy & O’Dell 1994: 26–30.

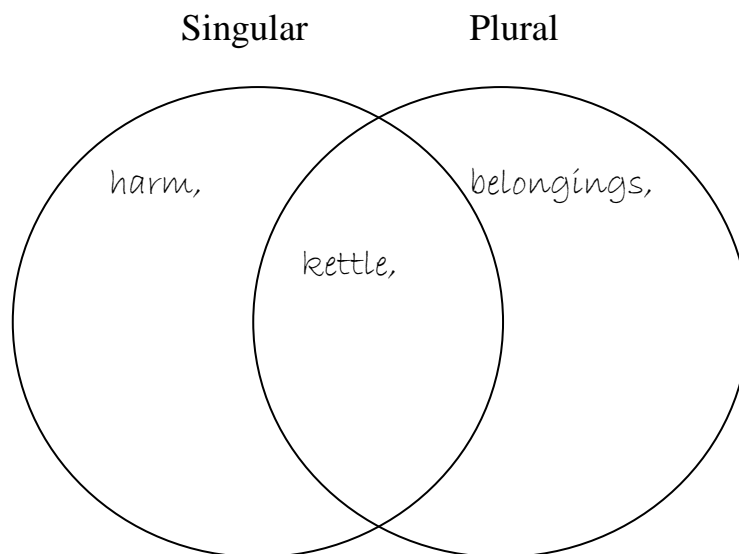
5.3 Practice exercises

1. Locate (definite) NPs in the following sentences by replacing them with personal pronouns. What case are the NPs in? How do they receive their case?

1. *Mrs. Smith is jealous of Jack and Jill*
2. *For this overweight guy wearing jeans to win all the races would be surprising*
3. *Susan expected her husband to be angry with her because of the shoes*
4. *Our new boss suggested that you and I be somewhat more attentive to the customers*
5. *Fred watched the girl with the binoculars*

2. Put the following nouns into the diagram. Do they have a non-variable form (in which case they are either singular-only or plural-only), or is it possible to come up with a plural form for them (in which case they are “ordinary” countable nouns, and go into the intersection of the diagram)? Three have been done for you.

belongings, cattle, clothes, fish, ~~harm~~, ~~kettle~~, mouse, news, nonsense, physics, police, scissors, student



3. Tick the cells in the following chart which denote possible combinations of determiners and nouns. The first one has been done for you.

DETERMINERS	NOUNS		
	<i>student</i>	<i>students</i>	<i>information</i>
<i>a(n)</i>	✓	-	-
<i>two</i>			
∅			
<i>many</i>			
<i>much</i>			
<i>few</i>			

DETERMINERS	NOUNS		
	<i>student</i>	<i>students</i>	<i>information</i>
<i>little</i>			
<i>both</i>			

4. Discuss the grammatical status and behaviour of *jury* in *The jury haven't yet reached a decision.*
5. Use these words to complete the sentences. Do not leave any of the gaps empty. You will need to use one of the words twice.

a(n), are, at, for, is, item, on, piece, some

1. *I'm afraid I've got bad news.*
2. *I wrote e-mail to John telling him all the latest news.*
3. *Friends expressed shock the news of his death.*
4. *There brighter news on the romantic front for my sisters.*
5. *She was delighted by this of news.*
6. *The first of news was the fire at the palace.*
7. *Did you see Tony Blair the news last night?*
8. *The election results terrible news for social welfare programs.*
9. *You think she likes you? Well, I've got news you. She doesn't!*
10. *Jack says he's borrowing your car tomorrow." "That news to me!"*

5.4 Extension: Determiners in complex NPs

Determiners were introduced and discussed in Ch. 2.1 and 3.1, where we saw that this “supercategory” subsumes articles (definite and indefinite), demonstratives (proximal and distal; cf. demonstrative pronouns – Ch. 3.1), possessives (sometimes called possessive adjectives; cf. possessive pronouns – Ch. 3.1), all sorts of quantifiers (e.g., *all, both, every, each, some/any*, etc.), *wh*-words (*what, which*) and numerals (cardinals, ordinals, fractions). Here we add a minor subgroup, that of **multipliers** (e.g., *double, twice*) as they also appear at the left edge of NPs like *double the amount* or *twice the rate of inflation*; however, they always combine with other determiners in the NP (which is, in fact, also true of ordinals and fractions, cf. *the first time, half an hour*) – an option we have not considered.

Nevertheless, it is rather frequent for determiners to cluster together so that the NP starts with **multiple determiners**. The NP *all the five boys*, for instance, contains as many as three determiners: a quantifier, the definite article, and a numeral. What is of some interest here is that the order of these determiners is fixed; none of the other possible orders is well-formed:

**all five the boys*
**the all five boys*
**the five all boys*
**five all the boys*
**five the all boys*

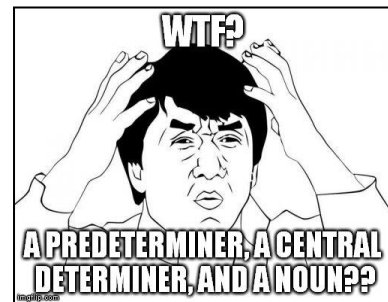
We also notice that not all determiners can participate in such combinations; in fact, the “prototypical”, most frequent determiners (articles, demonstratives, possessives) mutually exclude each other: **the this book* (or **this the book*), **the my cat*, etc. They have exactly the same distribution, cf.:

<i>a</i>	<i>book</i>
<i>the</i>	
<i>this</i>	
<i>my</i>	

For this reason they are regarded as a subgroup of determiners called **central determiners**; they are central both in terms of significance/frequency and in terms of position in determiner sequences. This latter point is illustrated below; notice that (certain) quantifiers, multipliers, fractions and *wh*-words precede them, whereas cardinals and ordinals follow them in the NP:

<i>all</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>five</i>	<i>boys</i>
<i>double</i>	<i>my</i>		<i>salary</i>
<i>half</i>	<i>the</i>		<i>students</i>
<i>what</i>	<i>a</i>		<i>feeling</i>
	<i>the</i>	<i>ninth</i>	<i>century</i>
	<i>this</i>	<i>second</i>	<i>time</i>
↓	↓	↓	
quantifiers multipliers fractions <i>wh</i> -words	articles demonstratives possessives	cardinals ordinals	

Henceforth, determiners which precede central determiners are referred to as **predeterminers**, and those that follow them are called **postdeterminers**. Further observations regarding the subclasses of determiners:



- sequences do not necessarily contain a central determiner, but even in such cases the predeterminer precedes the other constituents, e.g., *all three elephants*
- certain quantifiers exclude articles, demonstratives and possessives, i.e., occupy the same slot in the structure, and are therefore also considered central determiners, e.g., *some/any, every*
- certain quantifiers (*many/much, more, most, few/little, less, least, etc.*) are postdeterminers
- postdeterminers may combine with each other, i.e., they are very much like ordinary premodifying adjuncts (typically, Adjective Phrases) in NPs, cf. *the first two examples, my last few words*

In light of these, the system of word order in NPs we arrive at is the following:

a predeterminer	a central det.	postdeterminer(s)	(rest of NP)
e.g., quantifiers, multipliers, fractions, <i>wh</i> -words	e.g., articles, demonstratives, possessives, <i>some/any, every</i>	e.g., cardinals, ordinals, <i>many/much, more, most, few/little, less, least</i>	

Unfortunately, there are a few problematic cases as certain determiners display ambiguous behaviour. E.g., the intensifier *such* is a predeterminer in some examples (like the *wh*-word *what*, which also has an intensifying function in exclamatives; e.g., *such a shame* – cf. *what a shame*) but a postdeterminer in others (e.g., *few such things*); *many* is normally a postdeterminer (e.g., *the many passengers*) but a predeterminer in a few phrases like *many a happy day*; in examples like *your every wish will be done* central determiners are combined against the usual tendency, etc. In addition, *another* is written as a

single word and behaves as a single central determiner, but in fact it is composed of a central determiner (*an*) and a postdeterminer (*other*).

The most puzzling case, however, is that of **the -'s genitive**, which has the same distribution as a central determiner, i.e., it occupies the same slot in the NP, cf.:

<i>a</i>	<i>book</i>
<i>the</i>	
<i>this</i>	
<i>her</i>	
<i>Joan's</i>	
<i>the girl living next door's</i>	



At the same time, the genitive and the articles mutually exclude each other, just as central determiners generally do (see above), e.g., **the Joan's book* or **Joan's this book*. Therefore, we conclude that although the genitive is not a word-level category but a phrase (and, recall, the -'s is a phrasal affix), thus it cannot be classified as a (central) determiner, it nevertheless *behaves* as one.⁸

The **quantifiers** *all*, *both*, *each* have a number of special characteristics. First, as discussed in Ch. 3.1 above, they can function as pronouns, too. Second, they undergo what is called **Quantifier-Pronoun Flip**: they are predeterminers, i.e. they stand at the very beginning of the NP when it is headed by a noun (e.g., *I want all the money*), but when the head of the NP is a pronoun, the two switch positions (e.g., *I want it all*)⁹. Finally, *all*, *both* and *each* can become so-called **floating quantifiers**: they may not be part of their NP in the clause but start “floating” and land at the beginning of any of the VPs of the clause, which now means before any of the non-modals or the lexical verb. E.g., *All the members have read the circular* has the alternative paraphrase *The members all have read the circular* and *The members have all read the circular*. Although not all alternatives are equally frequent in actual use, their number really only depends on the number of verbs in the clause, cf.:

- a. *This time next year both the railway and the stations will have been being built for 4 years*
- b. *This time next year the railway and the stations will both have been being built for 4 years*
- c. *This time next year the railway and the stations will have both been being built for 4 years*
- d. *This time next year the railway and the stations will have been both being built for 4 years*
- e. *This time next year the railway and the stations will have been being both built for 4 years*
- f. *This time next year they both will have been being built for 4 years*

In (a), *both* is a predeterminer in an NP; sentences (b)-(e) illustrate the options for quantifier floating; and (f) is a “bonus”, exemplifying Quantifier-Pronoun Flip in this sentence.

Our final topic in this chapter is the **reference of determiners**, especially articles, whose two major subclasses show that the definite vs. indefinite distinction is fundamental in NPs. The reference of an NP is **definite** when the person, object or notion the NP refers to can be *uniquely identified* from either the situation or the grammatical context (cf. recoverability in Ch. 12.1). That is, it is either something both the speaker and the listener know (e.g., *The President has announced his resignation* or *The cow jumped over the moon* or *Please put the cat out*) or something that has been mentioned in the sentence or in the broader context (e.g., *Jon has a cat and a dog; the cat is called Garfield, the dog*

⁸ This only applies to the so-called **Specifying Genitive**, i.e., the one that specifies or narrows down the meaning of the head noun (i.e., *Joan's* in *Joan's book* points out which of all books in the universe we mean). The genitive can also function as a premodifying adjunct to the noun, in which case it classifies, i.e., expresses the type of, the item denoted by the noun (“**Classifying Genitive**”); e.g., *a [doctor's degree]*, *this [women's magazine]*, *a [women's university]*. Note the constituent boundaries indicated by the brackets in these examples, and the ensuing number agreement in the NPs.

⁹ Here we ignore the alternative solution *I want all of it* since it is not a simple determiner plus noun sequence but involves a PP.

is called Odie). Some of the other determiners also have definite reference, cf. *this book*, *both examples*, *the cat's tail*.

In the case of **indefinite reference** no such unique identification is possible, cf. *Jon has a cat and a dog*. Again, besides the indefinite article, other determiners also belong here, cf. *some ideas*, *any questions*, *enough time*, *three people*.

The definite vs. indefinite distinction intersects with another dimension, that of **specific vs. generic reference**, as shown in the chart below. An NP with specific reference names a particular item of a kind (e.g., *a mouse*) which may still remain unidentified, i.e., indefinite, as in *I've seen a mouse in the kitchen*; compare this to the same indefinite NP with generic reference, i.e., referring to any mouse, or mice in general, in *A mouse is a small furry animal with a long tail*. You will also see in the chart that the so-called **zero article** (indicated with \emptyset) is an option with plural or noncount nouns for indefinite reference.

	definite	indefinite
specific	<i>The cow jumped over <u>the</u> moon</i> <i>Jon has a cat and a dog; <u>the</u> cat is called Garfield, <u>the</u> dog is called Odie</i> <i><u>This</u> book is about <u>the</u> cat Jon has</i>	<i>I've seen <u>a</u> mouse in the kitchen</i> <i>I've seen <u>some</u> mice in the kitchen</i> <i>I've seen \emptyset mice in the kitchen</i> <i>I've bought \emptyset wine for the party</i>
generic	<i><u>The</u> mouse is a small furry animal</i> <i>What kind of rice do <u>the</u> Chinese use?</i> <i><u>The</u> blind call for more attention</i> <i>We can make <u>the</u> impossible come true</i>	<i><u>A</u> mouse is a small furry animal with a long tail</i> <i>\emptyset Mice are small furry animals with long tails</i> <i>\emptyset Marriage is not a word; it's a sentence</i>

What is highly relevant to us in this regard is that in English, generic definite reference does not work with plural or noncount nouns, cf.:

- **The mice are small furry animals with long tails*
- **The marriage is not a word; it is a sentence*

All this is in contrast to Hungarian, where neither the indefinite article nor the zero article has generic reference, and the definite article is obligatory in these examples:

- **Egy egér egy kicsi, szőrös, hosszúfarkú állat*
- * \emptyset *Egér egy kicsi, szőrös, hosszúfarkú állat*
- * \emptyset *Egerek kicsi, szőrös, hosszúfarkú állatok*
- Az egerek kicsi, szőrös, hosszúfarkú állatok*
- Az egér egy kicsi, szőrös, hosszúfarkú állat*

Further reading

On articles and other determiners: T&M 1, 5, 7; ALP 17; AGU 56–69; Cowan 2008: 10–11; CGEL 2
 📖 On the syntactic analysis of determiners and NPs: BESE 4.

5.5 Practice exercises

1. Decide whether the underlined words are determiners or pronouns.

- ia. *That is my bicycle*
- ib. *That bicycle is mine*
- ii. *Is this his car?*
- iib. *Is this car his?*

iiia. *Many* members hesitated but although *each* was pressed to act, *none* was in the end willing
 iiib. *Each* candidate will be individually interviewed

iva. *All* the students speak French and *some* speak Italian as well

ivb. *Some* students speak French and *all* speak Italian as well

2. Find examples of NPs to specify which subclasses of determiner the following items belong to:
 - a. general ordinals like *last*, *next*;
 - b. the word *no* when used as a determiner.

3. Put the words in these NPs into the right columns of the chart. The first one has been done for you.

all the five boys, all three elephants, every few miles, all those crazy motorists, any two books, his last two American trips, every other day, the most money, her other many accomplishments, all the nine green bottles, a few minutes, the first two examples, my last few words

a predeterminer	a central det.	postdeterminer(s)	(rest of NP)
all	the	five	boys

4. The following NPs all contain the genitive. Compare (a) and (b) with respect to their structure, and explain the semantic difference; then compare (b) and (c) in terms of why they are ambiguous.

1. *both the man's eyes*
2. *both the men's noses*
3. *She lives in an old shepherd's cottage*

5. Discuss the following Hungarian examples. What is the choice of the question word determined by? Why is the first sentence ungrammatical?

1. **Hány pénzéd van?*
2. *Hány forintod van?*
3. *Mennyi pénzéd van?*
4. *Mennyi forintod van?*

6.1 Other phrases

“‘This is the kind of tedious nonsense that I shall not put up with.’ Mr. Churchill said. Such prepositional inelegance is perhaps forgivable in wartime, though from a prime minister of his scholarly background one would normally expect ‘. . . up with which I shall not put.’”
(*Ottawa Citizen*, 4 March 1944)

Whether Winston Churchill really said those famous words or they have simply got attributed to him anecdotally, the story still illustrates one of the most often cited “grammar rules” of English: you should not end sentences with prepositions. Of course, what that actually refers to is that sentences *do* frequently end in prepositions in spoken English, but somehow such cases have become the signs of uneducatedness, so they are better avoided in writing or public utterances. So much so that, as the Churchill story shows, people trying to “correct themselves” may end up with phrases that are otherwise ungrammatical: *put up with* is a verbal expression that is not composed of *put* and *up with* but *put up* and *with*; the expected form is *...with which I shall not put up*. Fortunately, people’s attitudes towards language use is getting more and more tolerant, and nowadays such “grammar rules” are not taken so seriously: it is equally accepted (perhaps except only by very strict “grammar cops” on the internet) to say/write *This is the university which I graduated from* (or *... that I graduated from*, or *... I graduated from*) and to write *This is the university from which I graduated*, although this latter alternative (and in fact all containing *which*) still sounds more formal and is thus more likely to appear in writing (rather than speech).

This example has helped us introduce the first topic of this chapter: **Prepositional Phrases (PPs)**, and we will come back to the positioning of prepositions in certain constructions like the ones above later. **Prepositions** were briefly mentioned in Ch. 2.1 and 3.1: they are grammatical function words expressing time, instrument, direction, location, and a number of other spatial relationships, e.g., *in*, *on*, *to*, *behind*, *after*, *with*. Often they are licensed/selected by a head to produce complement PPs, in which case their meaning and interpretation may be idiomatic and totally dependent on that head (cf. *Jon is angry with Garfield*, *Garfield is keen on pizza*, *All professors of syntax congratulated us on our success*, etc.). They are typically at the very beginning of their phrases (but not always; degree adverbs (cf. Ch. 3.1) or other degree phrases may premodify them, as in *right behind the fence* or *two years after their wedding*). A preposition may be **complemented by**:

- an NP headed by a noun, e.g., *with Garfield*, *on our success*, *behind the fence*, *after their wedding*, *between Jon and the girl living next door*;
- an NP with a pronoun (in the accusative form), e.g., *with him*, *on it*, *between them*;
- another PP, e.g., *because of you*, *out of the window*, *(The dispute dates) from before the war*;
- an *-ing* participle (or gerund-participle: one of the non-finite verb forms – Ch. 4.1) with its modifiers, e.g., *Everybody is looking forward to reading the latest Garfield comic strip* (in fact, a type of non-finite clause, cf. Ch. 8.1).



There are two points to note concerning Ps and PPs. First, since prepositions are function words, they tend to be weak in pronunciation, and as a result, they may sound less prominent in their phrases than, e.g., the nominal heads of their complement NPs. Pronounce the following sentence, and notice how the syllables highlighted in small caps stand out, while the underlined prepositions (syntactically, heads to their phrases) fade!

Nevertheless, we know that syntactically, prepositions still head their phrases since the grammatical function the phrase plays in the sentence is attributable to the preposition. PPs typically fulfil **adverbial functions**, e.g., in *This happened two years after the war*, the PP (underlined) is a time adverbial, whose meaning is determined by *after*.

In fact, exactly because PPs fulfil adverbial functions, prepositions closely resemble certain subtypes of adverbs, particularly the ones called **adverb particles**. As discussed in Ch. 3.1, most adverb particles can actually be analysed as prepositions in certain cases: *down*, for example, is more like an adverb in *Garfield looks down on everybody around him*, whereas in *Odie ran down the road*, it is a preposition. The distinction between preposition and adverb may totally disappear when the P head forms a one-word phrase: *Jon put his hat on his head* parallels *Jon put his hat on*, with a P (underlined) in both cases with or without a complement NP (*his head*).¹ It is not clear at all whether *on* in the second case is an adverb (particle) or a one-word PP, and in fact, the distinction may not even be important to make.

Another set of puzzling examples illustrate the absence of a clear dividing line between prepositions and **conjunctions**. Consider the following sentences:

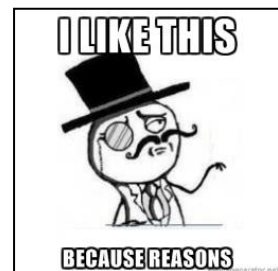
- (1) a. *Garfield has been awfully grumpy since morning*
b. *Garfield has been awfully grumpy since he woke up in the morning*
c. *Garfield has been awfully grumpy since*
- (2) a. *They'd been dating two or three years before their marriage*
b. *They'd been dating two or three years before they got married*
c. *They'd been dating two or three years before*

In these examples, *since* and *before* function as prepositions in the (a) sentences, are more like conjunctions in (b), and form one-word phrases in (c). For the sake of simplicity, and to capture the meaning identity in the three cases, it is possible to analyse all of them as prepositions; the PPs in (a), then, contain NP complements, while the complements in (b) are clauses. This takes us to the second point to note concerning Ps and PPs.

This second issue is the following. "Prototypical examples" of prepositions are rarely complemented by clauses containing finite verb forms (i.e., finite clauses – Ch. 8.1). Note that sentences like (a) below are ill-formed. Sometimes it is possible to simply leave out the preposition (b), but as long as the preposition is present it is either followed by an NP (c-d) or a non-finite clause (e).

- a. **Everybody is surprised by that Garfield is so greedy*
- b. *Everybody is surprised that Garfield is so greedy*
- c. *Everybody is surprised by Garfield's greed*
- d. *Everybody is surprised by the fact that Garfield is so greedy*
- e. *Everybody is surprised by Garfield('s) being so greedy*

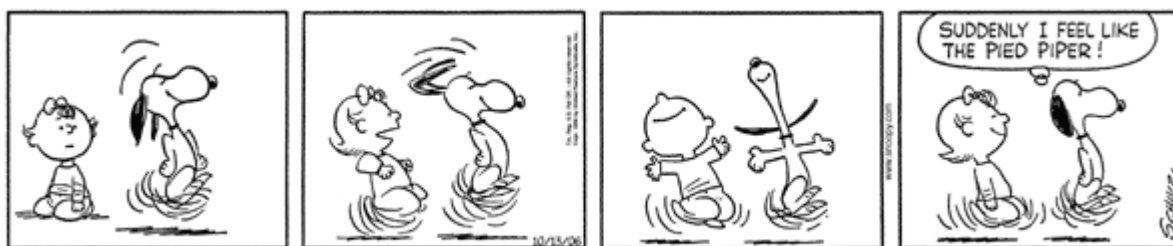
The sentences in (1b) and (2b) above with *since* and *before*, respectively, are exceptions then, and we will remark that certain **time adverbial PPs** (headed by *since*, *before*, *after*, *till*, *until*, (*as soon*) *as*) can contain finite clauses.²



¹ Cf. the VP with a verb and a complement in *Garfield is eating lasagne* but with a single verb in *Garfield is eating*. (In fact, these examples show that *eat* is a transitive verb in all its uses, but its object is sometimes left implicit.)

² This is a restricted set; other, apparently similar items may only function as conjunctions (e.g., *while*) or as prepositions (e.g., *during*). Also note the phrase *in that* (+ clause), which is composed of a preposition followed by a finite *that*-clause, and is used to introduce the reason for something, as in *You are right in that Garfield's greed is larger than what one should tolerate*. Similarly, *because* is used to introduce explanations, and it can also be taken to be a preposition, cf. our example of P+PP, *because of you*, above. In its most recent sense it even

Finally, the Churchill story again. Recall that there are two possible constructions with prepositions: one is when the preposition is at the beginning of a clause, together with a *wh*-phrase (cf. ...*with which* I shall not put up) – this is called **pied piping** ³; the other is the stylistically restricted one, with the preposition at the end of the sentence⁴; cf. ...*which* I shall not put up *with*) – called



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preposition stranding. The basic idea is that in the first case the preposition leaves its original position in a structure and moves to the front of the clause together with (in fact, as part of) the *wh*-phrase; in the second case only the *wh*-phrase moves and the preposition is left behind on its own. The two main situations in which these options are available (or, which these options are available in ☺) are **relative clauses** (see Ch. 9.1) and ***wh*-interrogatives** (see Ch. 7.1):

	pied piping	preposition stranding
relative clauses	<i>the kind of tedious nonsense <u>with which</u> I shall not put up</i> <i>the university <u>from which</u> I graduated</i> <i>a cat <u>by whose greed</u> everybody is surprised</i>	<i>the kind of tedious nonsense <u>which</u> I shall not put up <u>with</u></i> <i>the university <u>which</u> I graduated <u>from</u></i> <i>a cat <u>whose greed</u> everybody is surprised <u>by</u></i>
<i>wh</i>-questions	<i><u>With whom</u> do you share this flat?</i> <i><u>To which city</u> are you travelling?</i> <i><u>By whose greed</u> are you surprised?</i>	<i><u>Who(m)</u> do you share this flat <u>with</u>?</i> <i><u>Which city</u> are you travelling <u>to</u>?</i> <i><u>Whose greed</u> are you surprised <u>by</u>?</i>

Besides PPs, the phrases we are discussing in this chapter are the **Adjective Phrase (AP)** and the **Adverb Phrase (AdvP)**. In Ch. 3.1, we saw that adjectives and adverbs (especially manner adverbs) are very similar: in terms of gradability, both have two subtypes, gradable and non-gradable, and accordingly, gradable adjectives/adverbs have three forms (positive, comparative, superlative). The aspect in which the two classes differ is distribution: what syntactic positions these phrases take in clauses, and what functions they assume in those positions.

Adverb Phrases are typically one-word phrases taking adverbial functions (especially of time, frequency, place, manner, degree – cf. Ch. 3.1). Mostly, these adverbials are optional elements in the clause, i.e., they are adjuncts, except for certain **copular** and **complex-transitive** verbs, which require them as complements (Ch. 4.1):

<i>The cat slept in the kitchen <u>yesterday</u></i>	(time) adjunct
<i>Odie <u>always</u> forgets where he's buried the bones</i>	(frequency) adjunct
<i>The show is <u>tonight</u></i>	(time) complement for copular verb
<i>Garfield put the pizza <u>there</u></i>	(place) complement for complex-trans. verb

takes NP complements; this is called the **prepositional because** or the *because*+noun structure, meaning ‘on account of’ or ‘because of’, as in “Putting root beer in a square cup makes it regular beer because math. I knew this stuff would come in handy one day” (a post on Twitter); however, this use is still uncommon outside internet slang. Its structural simplification from taking *of*-PPs (*because of math*) to taking NPs (*because math*) parallels that of *out (of)* (cf. *She looked out of the window or She looked out the window*).

³ The name refers to the legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, a piper whose magic pipe has a sound that lures anybody into following him.

⁴ In fact, it is not necessarily at the end, it can also be clause-internal, but it definitely does not come at the beginning; cf. e.g., *the man we talked to yesterday*.

Manner adverbs are usually formed from adjectives by suffixing *-ly*, and they have two major grammatical functions: they either modify the meaning of the verb in a VP, or they modify the whole sentence/clause and express the speaker's opinion about, e.g., the probability of the statement of the sentence. In the first case, the AdvP is part of the VP, therefore it is called a **VP-adverb**; in the second case, the AdvP has scope over the whole clause, therefore it is called a sentence adverb or **S-adverb** (or **comment adverb** or **viewpoint adverb**).⁵ Compare these sentences:

- | | | |
|--------|---|-----------|
| (1) a. | <i>Garfield <u>quickly</u> ate all the pizza</i> | VP-adverb |
| | b. <i>Garfield <u>obviously</u> ate all the pizza</i> | S-adverb |
| (2) a. | <i>You could have solved the problem <u>easily</u></i> | VP-adverb |
| | b. <i>You could <u>easily</u> have been killed</i> | S-adverb |
| (3) a. | <i>We all know Garfield only too <u>well</u></i> | VP-adverb |
| | b. <i>We might <u>well</u> take a break and have a coffee</i> | S-adverb |

As you can see, some adverbs are either VP-adverbs (like *quickly*) or S-adverbs (like *obviously*), but many can be used in both ways.⁶

The final major function of AdvPs is that of **degree adverbs**: they do not take the typical adverbial function in VPs or clauses but are found within APs and AdvPs (less frequently, in PPs) and modify their heads there. Adverbs like *very*, *so*, *quite* belong here, together with a number of *-ly* adverbs (*totally*, *extremely*, *completely*, etc.). Cf.:

- Garfield is extremely greedy* (in AP)
- That is actually a pretty good idea* (in AP)
- Thank you very much* (in AdvP)
- Garfield devoured the pizza so quickly that it vanished before we could blink* (in AdvP)
- What you're saying now is completely at odds with your earlier announcement* (in PP)
- The answer is right in front of you* (in PP)

In addition, *more* and *most* are used to form the **periphrastic** comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs (e.g., *more important*, *most probably*).

Therefore, AdvPs are very often modifiers within **Adjective Phrases**. Other modifiers in APs include NPs (e.g., *a bit difficult*, *two years older*), clauses (e.g., *glad that you've come*, *delighted to hear that*), and PPs (in which, recall, the preposition is very often selected/licensed by the adjective, e.g., *good at football*, *fond of pizza*, *surprised by his greed*, etc.). The two major grammatical functions of APs are the following:

- subject or object complement in a VP, e.g., *Garfield is greedy* or *We find Garfield extremely greedy* – this is called **predicative use**
- premodifying adjunct in NPs (called **attribute**), e.g., *Garfield is a greedy cat* – this is called **attributive use**

Most adjective head phrases that can be used in either way – cf. *greedy* above. Others, however, can be **attributive-only** (see (a) below) or **never-attributive** (or **predicative-only** – see (b)) adjectives:

⁵ Recall that adverbs typically stand alone in their phrases, so terminology is frequently simplified: a VP-adverb is in fact a VP-AdvP, an S-adverb is in fact an S-AdvP, etc.

⁶ In such cases sentences may even be ambiguous with both interpretations available. For example, *sadly* at the beginning of *Sadly, he roamed the streets all night* either refers to him feeling sad while roaming or the story itself being sad.






- a. *This is our main problem*
 b. *I'm afraid of spiders*

- cf. **This problem is main*
 cf. **I'm an afraid type of person*

A marginal subtype of attributive APs is postmodifying adjunct, i.e., an adjunct that comes *after* the head noun. In Present-day English this is extremely rare with one-word APs: most of such cases are set expressions with some idiomatic meaning (e.g., *attorney general*, *heir apparent*, *knight errant*, etc.). However, this is the usual word order when the head is an indefinite pronoun (e.g., *something beautiful*, *nothing special*), and when the AP itself has a postmodifier (compare the usual word order in *You're going to need a bigger boat* with the reversed order in *You're going to need a boat bigger than this*). Sometimes the same one-word AP can be used both before and after the noun but with a meaning difference (e.g., *visible*, *proper*, *present*; compare *the present day* 'now' and *the students present* 'the students attending the class').

This concludes our discussion of phrases in English: we dealt with VPs in Ch. 4.1, with NPs in Ch. 5.1, and PPs, APs and AdvPs above. In what follows we investigate clausal structures and more complex constructions.

6.2 Further reading

On prepositions: ALP 21–22; T&M 9; AGU 104–113  On adjectives and adverbs: T&M 3–4; AGU 82–95; CGEL 2  On adverbs and their syntactic functions: SGE 8.12–8.15, 8.40–8.42  On comment adverbs and viewpoint adverbs: AGU 93  On APs, AdvPs, PPs: OEG 5  A list of adjective + preposition collocations: Cowan 2008: Appendix B.

6.3 Practice exercises

1. Underline the prepositions in the following sentences, then put their complements in brackets. The first two have been done for you.

1. *All professors of [syntax] congratulated on [our success]*
2. *The dispute dates from [before [the war]]*
3. *The meeting was cancelled because of Jack's illness*
4. *One of our neighbours threw their television out of the window*
5. *Everybody is looking forward to reading the latest Garfield comic strip*
6. *There are a lot of theatre tickets available from the man standing in front of the hotel*
7. *The bookshop is past the post office, between the bank and the chemist's, opposite the cinema*

2. Find examples to decide whether the following words can be used as prepositions:

while, during, as, beside, besides, despite, than, then

3. Put the following adjectives into the right cell of the chart.

alive, asleep, content, elder, intelligent, liable, little 'small in amount', little 'small in size', married, mere, own, separate

	gradable	non-gradable
ordinary		
attributive-only		
predicative-only		

4. Consider the example sentences to decide whether the underlined words are adjectives or adverbs.

- a. *fast*: *Simon loves fast cars*
We drove as fast as we could to the hospital
- b. *likely*: *They'll quite likely ask you to pay a small deposit*
The study shows some people are more likely to suffer back problems
- c. *well*: *You don't look too well*
A trip to the new museum is well worth the effort
All's well that ends well
- d. *ill*: *She was unlucky enough to fall ill on holiday*
I'm afraid you have been ill informed

5. Account for the grammaticality difference between the following pairs of sentences.

- (1) a. *Garfield will devour all the food quickly, obviously*
 b. **Garfield will devour all the food obviously, quickly*
- (2) a. *These are the costumes which the members of our club are expected to put on*
 b. **These are the costumes on which the members of our club are expected to put*
- (3) a. *On Tuesday all professors of syntax congratulated us on our success*
 b. **On our success all professors of syntax congratulated us on Tuesday*

6.4 Extension: The Inflectional Phrase

In Ch. 3.4, we saw that complementisers are so prominent in syntactic structure that they head the largest constituent having a phrase-like configuration, the clause. That is, the clause is a “projection” of the complementiser, and therefore we analyse it as Complementiser Phrase, or CP. As the head of its phrase, the complementiser determines a number of its fundamental properties, of which we highlighted two: the interrogative force of the clause on the one hand, and its finiteness on the other. Accordingly, we arrived at a possible classification of complementisers, which we repeat below:

Types of Complementisers:

C	INTERROGATIVE	FINITE
<i>that</i>	non-int.	finite
<i>for</i>	non-int.	non-finite
<i>if</i>	int.	finite
<i>whether</i>	int.	finite/non-finite

However, not all clauses contain complementisers. Simple sentences like *Garfield will bite the postman* as well as main clauses like the underlined part of *Jon knows that Garfield will bite the postman* are constituents which lack a complementiser, at least in an overt, visible form⁷. What is more, even within CPs introduced by a pronounced complementiser, there is an independent sentence “hidden”, cf.:

Garfield will bite the postman
Jon knows that Garfield will bite the postman

That is, the string *that Garfield will bite the postman* is a CP, which functions as the object of *know*, but inside, it contains a subconstituent, *Garfield will bite the postman*, which is an independent sentence. The string, then, has an embedded structure: *Jon knows [that [Garfield will bite the postman]]*, a *that*-clause containing a sentence. But what kind of construction is that sentence? On the basis of what we know about syntactic structure, we expect it to exhibit the usual phrase structure with a head and modifiers. Since phrases are determined by their heads, and are thus also named after them, the ultimate question is which element the sentence is headed by. Typically, sentences contain a (subject) NP (*Garfield*) and a VP (*bite the postman*): these are the “gang members”; but who is the “leader”, which defines the sentence as a sentence? To answer this question, let us take a look at a few versions of this sentence:

- a. *Garfield will bite the postman*
- b. *Garfield bit the postman*
- c. *Garfield bites the postman*
- d. **Garfield to bite the postman*
- e. **Garfield biting the postman*

Sentences (a)-(c), containing finite verb forms (*will* and *bites* are present, *bit* is past), are well-formed, whereas sentences (d)-(e)⁸, containing non-finite verb forms, are not. Apparently, independent sentences need a finite verb form: finiteness determines whether the clause can stand alone as a sentence or not. This feature of clauses, referred to as the **inflection** of the clause in Ch. 4.1, carries information about tense and agreement, and is realised on either the operator (*will* in sentence (a)) or the lexical verb (*bit* or *bites*). What we conclude, then, is that the finite inflection defines the independent sentence: it seems to be its head, and consequently, the independent sentence is an **Inflectional Phrase**, or **IP**.⁹

The next question to address is whether the inflection of the clause is really a single, uniform category, as we expect it to be if it is able to head a phrase with a constant identity. After all, now it is an auxiliary, now it appears on a main verb – in what sense is it the same entity, then? The answer lies, as is frequent in syntax, in the distribution of the elements realising the inflection. Consider the following examples, in which we separate the inflection from the VP (underlined) in various ways, and notice that the VP is exactly the same in all the cases:

⁷ Recall that the opposite of *overt* is *covert*.

⁸ Here we ignore marked, special structures like the ones in newspaper headlines, called **block language** (see Ch. 7.1).

⁹ Keep in mind that the independent sentence (the IP) is smaller than, and is contained within, the clause, the CP.

- a. (1) *What Garfield will do is bite the postman*
 (2) *Bite the postman is what Garfield will do*
 (3) *Bite the postman, Garfield will indeed*
- b. (1) *What Garfield did was bite the postman*
 (2) *Bite the postman is what Garfield did*
 (3) *Bite the postman, Garfield did indeed*
- c. (1) *What Garfield does is bite the postman*
 (2) *Bite the postman is what Garfield does*
 (3) *Bite the postman, Garfield does indeed*

Will in the sentences in (a) shows where the inflection-carrying element appears in these constructions. Compare them to the sentences in (b) and (c): the relevant forms of auxiliary *do* systematically correspond to *will*. Recall from Ch. 4.1 that one of the major functions of the operator in English clauses is carrying tense and agreement features – that is why we call it the inflection of the clause. Recall, too, that *do*-insertion applies in simple tenses when an operator is necessary for fulfilling a grammatical task in English; in such cases, its slot in the clause is filled with a semantically empty auxiliary. Auxiliary *do*, then, is the **dummy auxiliary** of English, with similar grammatical functions to those of nonreferential, dummy subject pronouns (Ch. 2.4), and it follows that its forms *did* and *does* in (b) and (c), respectively, stand for past tense *-ed* and present tense *-s* (plus *do*-support). In the example sentences above, *will*, *-ed* and *-s* always occupy the same positions.

In sum, modals and the verbal inflections *-s* and *-ed* are the realisations of the finite inflection in English, which facilitates the potential occurrence of the clause as an independent sentence. Notice that there is one more subcase of the finite inflection, and this is the morphologically unmarked, zero inflection (\emptyset) in the other present tense persons and numbers. Cf.:

f. *Other cats rarely bite the postman*

- (1) *What other cats rarely do is bite the postman*
 (2) *Bite the postman is what other cats rarely do*
 (3) *Bite the postman, other cats rarely do indeed*

In these examples the finite form of *do* is *do- \emptyset* , which adds zero to our list of finite inflections heading finite IPs.

The following diagram shows the clausal structure we have identified so far:

IP				
	CP			
	C	IP		
		NP	I	VP
<i>Jon knows</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>Garfield</i>	<i>will</i>	<i>bite the postman</i>

Clauses with other complementisers and non-finite verb forms can also be integrated into this structure:

IP				
	CP			
	C	IP		
		NP	I	VP
<i>Jon knows</i>	<i>(that)</i>	<i>Garfield</i>	<i>will</i>	<i>bite the postman</i>
<i>Jon expects</i>	<i>(for)</i>	<i>Garfield</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>bite the postman</i>
<i>Jon wonders</i>	<i>if</i>	<i>Garfield</i>	<i>will</i>	<i>bite the postman</i>
<i>Garfield wonders</i>	<i>whether</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>bite the postman</i>
<i>Garfield wonders</i>	<i>whether</i>	\emptyset	<i>to</i>	<i>bite the postman</i>

Note that infinitival *to* also occupies the Inflection position, and that an empty subject appears in the last example. Furthermore, in the other types of non-finite IPs the I position is empty, too:

IP				
	CP			
	C	IP		
		NP	I	VP
<i>Jon saw</i>	\emptyset	<i>Garfield</i>	\emptyset	<i>bite the postman</i>
<i>Garfield likes</i>	\emptyset	\emptyset	\emptyset	<i>biting postmen</i>
<i>James Bond wants</i>	\emptyset	<i>his Martini</i>	\emptyset	<i>shaken, not stirred</i>

Therefore, the inflection of the clause can be considered as a single entity because its forms, however disparate they look, are uniform in distribution: they occupy the position between the subject (NP) and the VP in the unmarked word order, but they also take the same slot in other constructions, too, as illustrated above. These forms are the following:

- finite:** - verbal inflections: *-s, -ed, \emptyset*
- modals: *will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might, must*
- non-finite:** - pre-infinitival *to*
- \emptyset

With so many different realisations, the Inflection seems a structural position housing various categories rather than a single category; in fact, it resembles the supercategory of (central) determiners in this respect, which has also been set up on distributional grounds (cf. Ch. 2.1).

The final question we address is what happens to verbal inflections when there is no *do*-support, and how non-modal auxiliaries become operators. Word order will help us out here. Let us assume that adverbs of frequency (like *always, ever, never*) in English have a fixed position, at the beginning of VPs (shaded in the diagram). Notice, then, that in the simple tenses, when there is no aspectual auxiliary, the verbal inflection, normally in the I position (supported by *do* in, e.g., negation), leaves its position (indicated by the arrow) and “hops” onto the verbal head of the VP; this is called **Affix Hopping**:

IP			
NP	I	VP	
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>doesn't</i>	<i>ever</i>	<i>bite postmen</i>
<i>Garfield</i>	→	<i>never</i>	<i>bite_s postmen</i>
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>didn't</i>	<i>ever</i>	<i>bite postmen</i>
<i>Garfield</i>	→	<i>never</i>	<i><u>bit</u> postmen</i>
<i>Cats</i>	<i>don't</i>	<i>ever</i>	<i>bite postmen</i>
<i>Cats</i>	→	<i>never</i>	<i>bite\emptyset postmen</i>

In contrast, when there is an aspectual auxiliary, which normally heads its VP (cf. its position when the clause contains a modal), the solution is just the opposite: the non-modal auxiliary “moves” from its V position to the I position (i.e., **V-to-I**):

IP			
NP	I	VP	
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>never</i>	<i>have bitten postmen</i>
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>never</i>	← <i>bitten postmen</i>
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>shouldn't</i>	<i>always</i>	<i>be sulking</i>
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>always</i>	← <i>sulking</i>

That is, the I slot in the clause can also be occupied by aspectual auxiliaries, by movement from their original V position: the auxiliary then acts as the operator. In fact, the verb *be* always behaves as a non-modal auxiliary in this respect, whether it is a true aspectual or a copula, cf.:

IP			
NP	I	VP	
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>shouldn't</i>	<i>always</i>	<i>be sulking</i>
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>always</i>	← <i>sulking</i>
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>never</i>	<i>be hungry</i>
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>always</i>	← <i>hungry</i>

In conclusion, in this chapter we have introduced another syntactic head, the Inflection, and its phrase, the IP, which corresponds to the independent sentence when finite, and some obligatorily subordinated clausal string when non-finite. Unlike the other heads discussed in the previous chapters, V (Ch. 4.1), N (Ch. 5.1), P, A, and Adv (Ch. 6.1 above), I is a non-lexical or **functional head**, because its presence in the clause is due to its grammatical function (to define the finiteness of the sentence) rather than the choice of the speaker in his/her decision as to what meaning/message to communicate. In fact, the same is true for the C, discussed in Ch. 3.4, whose function is to produce complement clauses.

Analysing the sentence as the phrase of the inflection and modals as finite inflections also explains the observation we made in Ch. 4.1 that there is at most one modal in the verb group: the modal is the inflection, and one clause can only house a single inflection (involving a single tense feature and a single person/number feature). An additional benefit from the discussion is the identification of auxiliary *do* as the dummy auxiliary of English.

Further reading

On PPs: Cowan 2008: 8 On adjectives and adverbs: Cowan 2008: 12 On comparatives and superlatives: Cowan 2008: 24 On the Inflectional Phrase: BESE 6.

6.5 Practice exercises

1. Identify the CPs in the following sentences by underlining the complementisers. Then put the IPs they contain between brackets. The first one has been for you.

1. *Jon knows that [Garfield will bite the postman]*
2. *I believe that Garfield must be very intelligent*
3. *I don't know whether I should phone Jon*
4. *I'm anxious for Liz to get to work on time*
5. *I know that he knows that I know this*

2. Find examples of the following:

1. a finite clause with Affix Hopping, whose verb is complemented by a CP
2. V-to-I in a clause that functions as complement to an adjective

3. a sentence whose subject is a non-finite clause
4. a sentence that contains prepositional complementiser *for* having an IP complement
5. a sentence that contains complementiser *for* having an IP complement
6. phrases containing modifiers of the same category as the phrase (i.e., a VP containing another VP, an NP containing another NP, etc.)

3. Could *whether* be considered as a *wh*-phrase? What are the arguments for and against that analysis?

4. Specify the subcategory of the underlined words on the basis of the following sentences.

1. *I've got two news for you: a good one and a bad one
2. The police are blocking off the street where the accident occurred
3. *He told that he was hungry
4. *Doctors treat ill people with medication
5. *He asked that could we meet on Friday

5. a. Place the (elements of the) phrases in the diagram. You may leave certain cells empty.

(he asked) whether to take the bus, (we) all like Garfield, as soon as possible, every breath you take, Garfield has eaten all the pizza, six years younger than my brother, two minutes after the explosion,

	modifier	head	modifier
VP			
NP			
PP			
AP			
AdvP			
IP			
CP			

b. How could we place sentences like *Has Garfield eaten all the pizza?* and *What has Garfield eaten?* in the diagram? Where do we need to add arrows (\leftarrow , as used above) in these examples?

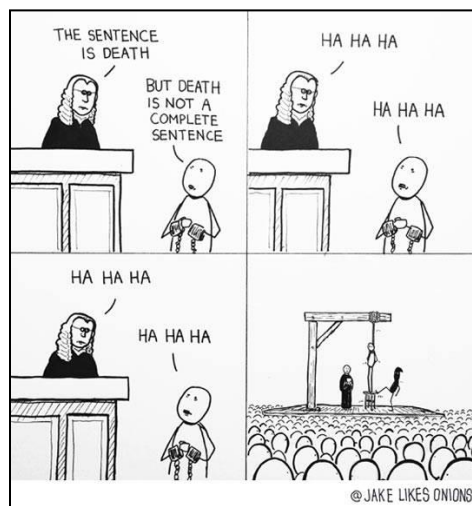
7.1 The simple sentence. Sentence types

“I spend my days kneeling in the muck of language,
feeling around for gooey verbs, nouns, and modifiers that I can
squash together to make a blob of a sentence that bears some likeness to reason and sense.”
(P. J. O’Rourke)

When there is a single clause in a sentence, it is called a **simple sentence**.¹ This chapter is about the types of the simple sentence in English: first, we look at the **structural types**, i.e., how phrases are “squashed together” to make sentences with different configurations; then, in the second part of the chapter, we survey the **functional types**, i.e., what functions they fulfil in the communicative process in spoken or written discourse.

The structural types are based on what grammatical functions the phrases receive in the sentence. The most important sentence elements (the subject, the object and the adverbial) were introduced in Ch. 2.1, then in Ch. 4.1 we looked at the grammatical functions of modifiers in VPs more closely. In the present chapter we supplement that discussion with a view at the elements of the whole clause.

The clause is traditionally divided into two major parts: the subject and the predicate. The **subject** is basically the element that determines the agreement features of the clause (ultimately appearing on its inflection-carrying word: either the operator or the main verb); the **predicate** is what is left of the simple sentence when the subject is removed. In English, the subject is typically realised by an NP (or a lower clause – see Ch. 8.1), while the predicate always contains a VP and often starts with the operator or even more auxiliaries in the verb group. Since the verb group of a clause always contains a single main verb only, and it is only main verbs that assign grammatical functions to phrases (cf. complementation in Ch. 4.1), to our present purposes auxiliaries are irrelevant and verb groups can be taken to fulfil the same function as a single lexical verb (abbreviated to V). Therefore, the predicate can be divided into the V and the rest, which consists of the complements and adjuncts of the (lexical) verb:



SUBJECT	PREDICATE	
	V	(complements and adjuncts)
<i>The mice</i>	<i>play</i>	<i>in the cupboard</i>
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>is having</i>	<i>lasagne for breakfast</i>
<i>The railway</i>	<i>will have been being built</i>	<i>for four years</i>

As you can see, the usual sentence structure in English starts with S-V. What follows that depends on the subcategory of the lexical verb (i.e., whether it is intransitive or transitive, etc.) and the adjuncts optionally added. Recall from Ch. 4.1 that the sentence elements that serve to distinguish the different types of verbs are subject complement (C_S), object complement (C_O), direct object (O_d), indirect object (O_i), and adverbial (AI). Accordingly, we set up a typology of lexical verbs of five major subcategories. If we ignore adjuncts, then, since they can be freely added to clauses and as a result do

¹ Recall from Ch. 2.1 that when two or more clauses compose the sentence, it is either a complex sentence (if the clauses are in subordination), a compound sentence (in coordination) or a compound-complex sentence (the two types combined) (for more detail, see Ch. 8.1).

not distinguish between sentence types, we arrive at a typology of basic English sentences consisting of the following seven possible configurations:²

	Example	Structure	Subcategory of verb
i.	<i>Garfield <u>laughed</u></i>	S-V	(Ordinary) intransitive
ii.	<i>Garfield <u>looks</u> hungry</i> <i>Jon <u>became</u> a Philosophy teacher</i> <i>The show <u>is</u> at 5</i>	S-V-C _s S-V-AI	Copular / Complex-intransitive
iii.	<i>Everybody <u>knows</u> Garfield</i>	S-V-O _d	(Ordinary) monotransitive
iv.	<i>Garfield <u>called</u> Odie a stupid dog</i> <i>Garfield <u>put</u> the pizza on the table</i>	S-V-O _d -C _o S-V-O _d -AI	Complex-transitive
v.	<i>Jon <u>gave</u> Garfield all the pizzas</i>	S-V-O _i -O _d	Ditransitive

Notice that two of the five verb types allow for two options each, that is how seven structures are produced eventually. Also, as the same verb may belong to multiple subcategories, it may participate in various clausal structures. For example, in *Garfield called Odie a stupid dog* the verb *call* is complex-transitive, but in *Jon called Liz on the phone* it is monotransitive (S-V-O_d + adjunct AI). In *Garfield laughed* the verb *laugh* is intransitive, but in *Garfield laughed at Jon* it is either analysed as complex-intransitive (S-V-AI) or as monotransitive (S-V-O_d with a prepositional object) as it has a PP complement. In *Batman returns* the verb *return* is intransitive, but in *Batman returns his books to the library* it is complex-transitive (S-V-O_d-AI).



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In addition to the sentence elements already introduced and discussed, there is one more, which we have not dealt with in detail as it is not assigned by verbs, consequently, it is never found as a function for the immediate constituents of the clause. Rather, it is assigned to premodifying adjunct APs within NPs, and its name is **attribute** (At). It was briefly mentioned in Ch. 6.1, when the attributive and predicative uses of APs were contrasted. Recall, then, that in examples like the following, the AP takes different functions: the AP *stupid* is a direct modifier of the verb in (a), it is its C_o (one of the predicative uses), whereas in (b) it is *part of* the predicate as the attribute of the noun *dog* (the attributive use).

a. *Garfield called Odie stupid*

SUBJECT	PREDICATE		
	V	O _d	C _o
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>called</i>	<i>Odie</i>	<i>stupid</i>

² This typology is primarily based on SGE. The categories introduced in other sources largely overlap with these, although the terminology used may differ. E.g., in CGEL, V is replaced by P(redictator), C is called Predicative Complement (PC), and the second type of complex-transitive verbs is not included.

b. *Garfield called Odie a stupid dog*

SUBJECT	PREDICATE				
	V	O _d	C _o		
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>called</i>	<i>Odie</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>stupid</i>	<i>dog</i>
				At	

The second way to classify sentences is into **functional types**, according to the discourse function they fulfil. In this respect, there are four classes for four basic functions, pairing up as shown here:

4 types of sentence	4 classes of discourse function
declaratives	statements
interrogatives	questions
imperatives	directives
exclamatives	exclamations

Declaratives constitute the usual, unmarked sentence type, so in what follows we take the others under scrutiny and discuss their individual characteristics.

First, direct **questions** or **interrogatives**³ have three major subtypes:

1. **Yes/no questions:** e.g., *Can you swim?*

- expect *either* affirmation *or* negation, i.e., one of a closed set of possible answers; therefore, they are also called **closed interrogatives**
- contain subject-operator inversion in their word order (see Ch. 11.1)
- a special subtype is **tag questions**, e.g., *You can swim, can't you?*

2. **Wh-questions:** e.g., *Where is he going?*

- expect a reply from an open range of replies; also called **open interrogatives**
- contain an information gap indicated by the interrogative phrase (*wh*-phrase), which can take various clause functions (cf. Ch. 9.1)
- contain subject-operator inversion (SOI) in their word order except when the *wh*-element is subject (cf. *Who is going?* or *Who thinks you are beautiful?*; notice in the latter example that *do*-insertion does not take place in subject questions, either)
- have two options for prepositional *wh*-phrases, pied piping and preposition stranding (cf. Ch. 6.1)

3. **Alternative questions:**

- expect a reply from a range of two or more options (i.e., they are closed interrogatives)
- two types:
 - *Would you like blue, white, or red?* – resembles a yes/no question
 - *Which colour would you like? Blue, white, or red?* – resembles a *wh*-question

Questions also have a few **minor types**:

- exclamatory questions: invite agreement, e.g., *Am I tired! Isn't she beautiful!*
- rhetorical questions: expect no answer, e.g., *Isn't this elementary? Haven't you got anything better to do? How should I know?*
- echo questions, e.g., *You saw whom?*

³ Indirect questions are dealt with in Ch. 8.1.

The second type of non-declaratives is imperatives functioning as **directives**. Directives are usually composed of a base-form VP and no pronounced subject; even so, that invisible subject is interpretable as the 2nd person pronoun *you* – examples like *Be good* or *Please sit down* show that they straightforwardly address the listener. Tag questions and reflexive pronouns are also chosen accordingly, cf. *Shut up, will you?* or *Be yourself/yourselves no matter what they say*. However, in certain cases the subject is present in directives: of course, most of the time it is *you* (e.g., *You come here!*); sometimes it is a 3rd person subject (e.g., *Nobody move!*, *Customers in the last carriage move towards the front doors to leave the train!*). A special construction is with the verb *let*, which takes care of 1st person imperatives (e.g., *Let us go = Let's go*; *Let me entertain you*), but it is also possible with 3rd person subjects (e.g., *Let it be*, *Let every man have his own wife*). In form, imperatives are either positive (all the examples above) or negative (with operator *don't*), but even the positive imperative is more emphatic if operator *do* is added (e.g., *Do sit down*).

The final type of non-declaratives is **exclamatives**, which subsume exclamatory utterances introduced by *what* or *how*, e.g., *What a fool I was!* or *How much he looks like you!* These are different from *wh*-interrogatives in that they do not contain subject-operator inversion.

In addition to these four types of sentences, there are marginal, less frequent structures, which do not follow the regular patterns and are therefore treated as **irregular sentences**. They are the following:

- the so-called **formulaic subjunctive**: set phrases expressing a wish or hope, e.g., *God save the Queen!*, *Heaven help me!*
- irregular *wh*-questions, e.g., *How about going to the cinema?*, *Why do linguistics?*, *How come you're here?*, *What if you were unable to wake from that dream?*
- subordinate clauses used as sentences, usually with exclamatory force, e.g., *If only he was more considerate!*, *To think that you might have been killed!*
- adverbials used as commands, e.g., *Hands up!*, *Left, right!*
- **proverbs** with reduced sentence structure, e.g., *The sooner the better*, *First come first served*
- **block language**: the simplified structures of labels, titles, newspaper headlines, headings, notices, advertisements, etc., e.g., *Page under construction*, *David Beckham to come out of retirement?*, *Celeb daughter arrested*

The last topic of this chapter is another distinction between two types of sentence relevant to English. In a number of respects negative and interrogative (i.e., **non-assertive** or non-affirmative) **clauses** exhibit parallel behaviour, standing in contrast to positive declaratives (i.e., assertive or affirmative clauses), the most important of which is the selection of certain words over others. That is, there is a set of determiners, adverbs and pronouns which primarily appear in non-assertive clauses; these are called **non-assertive** (or non-affirmative or negative polarity) **items**. The most frequent ones are listed in the chart below.

Non-assertive item	Example	Assertive counterpart
<i>any</i>	<i>Fish don't have any feelings</i>	<i>some</i>
<i>any</i> - pronouns	<i>I'll never do anything to hurt you</i>	<i>some</i> - pronouns
<i>at all</i>	<i>Nothing changed at all</i>	
<i>ever</i>	<i>Have you ever seen the rain?</i>	
<i>either</i>	<i>I'm not an angel either, but at least I'm trying</i>	<i>too</i>
<i>many/much</i>	<i>I don't care too much for money</i>	<i>a lot (of), a great deal (of)</i>
<i>yet</i>	<i>Are we having fun yet?</i>	<i>already, still</i>

Some of the non-assertive words have assertive counterparts for affirmative contexts, compare *I'll never do anything to hurt you* with *I'll do something to hurt you*, or *Are we having fun yet?* with *We are already having fun*. The examples also show that a sentence does not necessarily become negative due to the presence of the negative particle *not* following the operator (as in *I'm not an angel either*), but negative words like *no*, the *no*- pronouns, *never*, *neither*, etc. are also able to provide negative

polarity for it, which results in the selection of non-assertive items in the rest of the clause, e.g., *No man has ever seen anything like this before* or *I never have much time for the homework* or *Neither do I spend many hours practising*. Intriguingly, such negative words may be considered assertive in the sense that, at least in standard English, they are not found in negative clauses: **I don't need nobody* is replaced by either *I need nobody* or *I don't need anybody*. In most non-standard forms of English, however, the **double negative** or **multiple negation** is well-formed and examples like *A little party never killed nobody* are acceptable.

Finally, note that some of the non-assertive items have senses in which they can occur in assertive constructions, e.g., determiner *any* and the *any-* pronouns may be used in a meaning close to 'every' (e.g., *Anybody could answer that question*); while assertive words may appear in interrogatives under certain circumstances (e.g., *Would you like some tea?*).

7.2 Further reading

On the simple sentence: SGE 10.1–10.6 On sentence types: SGE 11; OEG 3; CGEL 2 On interrogatives: T&M 6; AGU 33–35 On commands, requests, etc.: T&M 27 On negation: SGE 10.33; CGEL 2.

7.3 Practice exercises

1. Identify the subjects in the following sentences.

1. *Garfield and his friends are very popular characters*
2. *Everybody who has seen the film says that it is worth watching*
3. *It is snowing*
4. *It shocked me that she'd left*
5. *Jack seems to have hit the jackpot*
6. *To err is human*

2. Which of the clause types identified in the text (SV, SVO, SVC, SVA, SVOO, SVOC, SVOA) do the following examples belong to? Draw diagrams like the one in the example. Indicate the categories of the modifiers, too. Keep in mind that these elementary clause types are based on the arguments of the verb, and adjuncts only supplement them optionally!

E.g.:

SUBJECT	PREDICATE		
	V	O _d	C _o
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>called</i>	<i>Odie</i>	<i>stupid</i>
NP		NP	AP

1. *The bank is located in the city centre*
2. *Shakespeare died in 1616*
3. *She wanted me to give her a payrise*
4. *She promised me to give me a payrise*
5. *This doctor treated my flu*
6. *Susan treated him badly*
7. *We consider him intelligent*
8. *We regard him as the boss*

3. Collect five newspaper headlines that exemplify block language, then paraphrase them to produce regular sentences.

4. The following sentences are all ill-formed because assertive or non-assertive items are used in the wrong way. Find the mistakes and correct them.

1. *He drinks much at the weekends*
2. *I think there's anybody under the table*
3. *I'm going to the library to borrow any books*
4. *She can't swim, and I can't too*
5. *She's yet in bed, the lazy thing*
6. *That's all I know, there isn't something else I can tell you*
7. *This is really urgent, I need you to do it without some delay*
8. *We've hardly no wine left*

5. Is multiple negation well-formed in Hungarian or other languages you know? What can its function be? After all, as standard English and similar languages show, one negative item is sufficient to express the negative polarity of the sentence. Discuss.

7.4 Extension: Canonical and non-canonical clauses

In traditional grammatical descriptions, it is customary to differentiate between the so-called canonical clauses and the opposite, the non-canonical clauses of English. **Canonical** clauses are the most basic and elementary kinds of clause, which can be defined as *simple (independent) positive statements in active voice*; all the other clause types are **non-canonical**. Let us see in more detail the properties that separate the two subtypes.

Canonical		Non-canonical	
<i>Many people read Garfield comics</i>	positive	<i>Many people don't read Garfield comics</i>	negative

Canonical clauses are positive; negative clauses are non-canonical. **Negation** has two forms: clause (or clausal) negation and local (or subclausal) negation. In **clause negation** there is a negative word, the **negator**, which affects the polarity of the whole clause, and all other elements in the clause behave accordingly. In most cases, the negator is the negative particle *not* following the operator in the clause. Recall that in Present-day English the presence of the operator is necessary for the negative particle, so in simple tenses the dummy operator *do* is inserted for what is called *do*-support. This is one of the forms of clause negation, and it is called **verb** (or **verbal**) **negation**:

subject	operator	particle	rest of predicate
<i>You</i>	<i>can</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>swim</i>
<i>Many people</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>read Garfield comics</i>

In spoken English, most operators normally merge with the particle to produce the so-called contracted forms or **contractions**, e.g., *can't*, *don't* (but see scope of negation below). Note that the whole clause becomes negative in these examples, as, e.g., the choice of non-assertive items (cf. Ch. 7.1), tag questions and “echoing statements” (Ch. 11.1) indicate:

- non-assertive items: *I can't remember anything*
- tag questions: *You can't swim, can you?*
- “echoing statements”: *You can't swim and nor can I*

The other form of clause negation is **non-verbal negation**, when the negator is not the negative particle but a **negative word** or **phrase**. These negative phrases are dealt with in detail in Ch. 11.1 because, at least in formal style (and in written language exams ☺) they readily participate in what is

called **negative fronting** and the accompanying **negative inversion** (see the upcoming examples). These negative phrases can be:

- negative in form and meaning, e.g., *no, not + NP, no sooner, never, neither*, etc. as in *No money can buy happiness, He would say not a word, I have never met such an annoying person*; with inversion: *Never have I met such an annoying person*
- negative in meaning but not in form, e.g., *seldom, rarely, scarcely, hardly, barely, little, few* (but not *a little, a few!*) as in *I hardly remember anything, Few of us have ever done the homework* (cf. *A few of us have never done the homework*); with inversion: *Little did I suspect what was about to happen, Scarcely had I arrived home when the alarm went off*

That the whole clause is negative in these cases is evident from the fact that, although the form of the operator is not negative, i.e., the negative particle is absent, our tests reveal exactly the same properties in these sentences as above:

non-assertive items: *He would say not a word about anything; I seldom buy any CDs, either*

tag questions: *You would never tell a lie, would you?; She's rarely on time, is she?*

“echoing statements”: *They've got no idea and nor have I; Few people donate blood and nor do I*

Besides its form, negation has two more important features: scope and focus. The **scope of negation** refers to the stretch of language over which the negative item has a semantic influence. This normally extends from the negator to the end of the clause. Note how the interpretation of S-adverbs (Ch. 6.1) changes according to whether they are or are not included in the scope of the negator:

Jon possibly couldn't wake up Garfield ‘It’s possible that Jon couldn’t wake up Garfield’

Jon couldn't possibly wake up Garfield ‘It was impossible for Jon to wake up Garfield’

When the operator in verbal negation is a modal auxiliary, a similar contrast is possible according to whether the scope of negation includes the modal:

Jon could not wake up Garfield ‘It was impossible for Jon to wake up G.’ – **auxiliary negation**

Jon could not wake up Garfield ‘It was possible for Jon not to wake up G.’ – **main verb negation**

Note that the modal and the negative particle will only form a contraction in spoken English in the case of auxiliary negation, but that option is not available under main verb negation.

The other feature, the **focus of negation**, refers to which element(s) of the sentence are focalised or stressed in speech. The following examples illustrate how the interpretation of the sentence changes accordingly:

I didn't find Garfield sleeping in the kitchen today – I failed to find him

I didn't find Garfield sleeping in the kitchen today – I found Odie

I didn't find Garfield sleeping in the kitchen today – He was eating pizza

I didn't find Garfield sleeping in the kitchen today – He was sleeping in his bed

I didn't find Garfield sleeping in the kitchen today – It was yesterday

I didn't find Garfield sleeping in the kitchen today – It was Jon who found him

In Hungarian, similar effects of focalising are accompanied by word order changes as well (see below).

Besides clause negation, when the whole clause becomes negative, there is **local negation**, which affects a part of the clause, a word or phrase, only. In such cases a negative element is present but its scope is unable to reach outside its immediate phrase. Negative prefixes like *un-* and *in-* have this effect as well as the particle *not* when referring to a single word. The adjective *untidy*, for example, is negative in meaning since it is the opposite of *tidy*; still, a clause containing it is not necessarily negative. Similarly, the S-adverb *not surprisingly*, although involving the negation of *surprisingly*, does not make the rest of the clause negative. Look at our tests:

no non-assertive items: *She is untidy, too*; *Not surprisingly, Jon forgot something again*
 negative tag questions: *She is untidy, isn't she?*; *Not surprisingly, Jon forgot it, didn't he?*
 “echoing statements”: *She is untidy and so am I*; *Not surprisingly, Jon forgot it and so did I*

Because of this, in cases of local negation what seems to be double negation is possible even in Standard English, e.g., *Not surprisingly, Jon didn't remember anything*; moreover, it can be even used as a rhetorical device for understatement, e.g., *She's not an untidy woman*, or even *She's a not untidy woman*.

As far as **negation in Hungarian** is concerned, there are two points to note here. Recall from Ch. 2.4 that Hungarian word order fundamentally differs from English due to the role the topic and the focus play in syntax. Consequently, besides verbal negation (referred to as **preverbal negation** in Hungarian syntax, as the negative particle *nem* ‘not’ occupies the immediately preverbal position, cf. example (a) below), the most important form of negation is a kind of local negation called **prefocus negation**. It arises when *nem* stands immediately before the focus (given in small caps in (b) and (c) below), and just like in English, it may combine with verbal negation (cf. (c)):

- a. *Nem találtam Garfieldot a konyhában* ‘I didn't find G. in the kitchen’ – preverbal negation
- b. *Nem GARFIELDOT találtam a konyhában* ‘It wasn't G. whom I found’ – prefocus negation
Nem A KONYHÁBAN találtam Garfieldot ‘It wasn't in the kitchen that I found G.’
 etc.
- c. *Nem GARFIELDOT nem találtam a konyhában* ‘It wasn't G. whom I didn't find’ – both

Notice that under prefocus negation ((b) above) it is possible to change the element in the focus rather freely, and consequently, focalise almost any of the elements of the sentence. Therefore, while in English word order is more strict and the focus of negation may only fall on different constituents *in pronunciation* without a change in syntactic configuration, in Hungarian this normally involves the rearrangement of clause structure as well.

The second point to note with respect to Hungarian is that, as opposed to Standard English, it is a so-called **negative-concord language**: double or multiple negation is the norm, and the negative particle *nem* triggers negative concord, i.e., quantifiers and indefinite pronouns agree with it and assume negative polarity, as in *Jont soha senki nem hívja meg sehová* ‘Jon is never invited by anyone anywhere’. Compare the Hungarian sentence with its English translation, and note the appearance of non-assertive items (*anyone, anywhere*) – a category that does not even exist in Hungarian due to its negative concord.

This concludes the discussion of negation; now we continue listing the features of canonical and non-canonical clauses. The next observation is that canonical clauses are independent sentences: they are neither subordinate nor coordinate. Let us see coordination first.

Canonical		Non-canonical	
<i>Many people read Garfield comics</i>	independent sentence	<i>Many people read Garfield comics and they enjoy them</i>	coordinated

Therefore, canonical clauses are independent sentences and non-coordinate; **coordinated clauses** are non-canonical. **Coordination** is a relation between two or more constituents in which they are equal in syntactic status. The elements in coordination are called **coordinates**, and they are equal in the sense that one is not a modifier of (or rather: within) the other, as is the case in subordination (see Ch. 8). Coordination may be marked by:

- a **single-word coordinating conjunction** or **coordinator**, e.g., *and, or, but* in the last coordinate: *Many people read Garfield comics and they enjoy them*; *We can have sandwiches, cook something or order a pizza*
- a single-word coordinator in all non-initial coordinates: *We can have sandwiches, or cook something, or order a pizza*

- no coordinator: the coordinates are simply listed, and the interpretation is with *and* (i.e., addition), cf. *We had a sandwich, cooked something, ordered a pizza*
- a **multi-word coordinator**: some of them are simply composed of more than one word (e.g., *as well as*) but most of them are so-called **correlative coordinators**, i.e., one term (frequently a determiner) appears in the first clause, the other one in the second (*both...and, either...or, neither...nor, not...but, not only...but (also)* and a few others):

He both left his bag in the office and lost his keys

We can either cook something or order a pizza

They robbed the bank not because they needed the money but because they were bored

Not only did he leave his bag in the office but he also lost his keys

The remaining properties of canonical vs. non-canonical clauses will only be mentioned briefly.

Canonical		Non-canonical	
<i>Many people read Garfield comics</i>	independent sentence	<i>It's surprising <u>how many people read Garfield comics</u></i>	subordinated

Canonical clauses are main clauses or independent sentences; **subordinated clauses** are non-canonical. Here you may recall the discussion of complementisers and the CP in Ch. 3.4, but we further investigate the structure of complex sentences in Ch. 8.

Canonical		Non-canonical	
<i>Many people read Garfield comics</i>	declarative	<i>Do many people read Garfield comics?</i>	interrogative
		<i>Read Garfield comics!</i>	imperative
		<i>How many people read Garfield comics!</i>	exclamative

Canonical clauses are declarative; **interrogative, imperative, and exclamative clauses** are non-canonical. These non-canonical clause types were discussed in Ch. 7.1 above.

Canonical		Non-canonical	
<i>Many people read Garfield comics</i>	active	<i>Garfield comics are read by people all around the world</i>	passive






Finally, canonical clauses are active; **passive clauses** are non-canonical. This is a matter of information packaging, and is discussed in Ch. 10.1.

To summarise the main points above, canonical clauses are positive, independent, declarative, and active; e.g., *Many people read Garfield comics*. All the other clauses are non-canonical, i.e., the ones that can be classified into the following types:

Non-canonical clauses	
<i>Many people don't read Garfield comics</i>	negative
<i><u>Many people read Garfield comics</u> and <u>they enjoy them</u></i>	coordinated
<i>It's surprising <u>how many people read Garfield comics</u></i>	subordinated
<i>Do many people read Garfield comics?</i>	interrogative

<i>Read Garfield comics!</i>	imperative
<i>How many people read Garfield comics!</i>	exclamative
<i>Garfield comics are read by people all around the world</i>	passive

Further reading

On canonical vs. non-canonical clauses: CGEL 2  On negation: SGE 10.33–10.41; Cowan 2008: 5; CGEL 2  On negation in Hungarian: É. Kiss 2002: 1  On coordination: Cowan 2008: 25; CGEL 2  On interrogatives: Cowan 2008: 4  On imperatives: Cowan 2008: 6.

7.5 Practice exercises

- The sentence *Transport and Infrastructure Minister Mary Smith today opened the new \$20 million railway line* is canonical. Produce non-canonical counterparts for it in as many different ways as you can.
- A clause is non-canonical if it lacks at least one of the properties introduced above, but of course it may simultaneously lack more than one of them. Identify the non-canonical properties of the following sentences.
 - I haven't seen Odie yet*
 - Didn't you say you loved sushi?*
 - Shut up and dance with me*
 - Aren't they all being terrorised by rockets?*
 - He seems to have got exhausted by running up the hill*
- Paraphrase the following sentences using correlative coordinators as shown in the example. Sometimes several solutions are possible.
Example: *He both left his bag in the office and lost his keys*
Not only did he leave his bag in the office but he also lost his keys
 - He likes helping his friends. And he doesn't expect anything in return*
 - Susan used to date Jack. Or was it Helen?*
 - This place is awfully crowded and the music is too loud*
 - He never listens to or advises his friends when they have a problem*
 - Clouds block the sun and rain on everyone*
 - We should learn to accept our weaknesses and our strengths*
 - Her mother and her sister didn't keep her secret*
 - We didn't go to the event to buy the car. We just wanted a test drive in the new Tesla model*
- Consider the following sentences. What does their grammaticality indicate about coordination?
 - They're rich and famous*
 - Jon got up and washed his teeth*
 - She is very bright and a good leader*
 - I don't know the cause of the accident or how much damage was done*
 - *We're leaving Rome and next week*
 - *I know the truth and that you are innocent*

5. Discuss the following examples.

1. *Jack and Jill met*
2. *Jack met Jill*
3. *Jack and Jill met each other*
4. **Jack met*
5. **Jack met each other*
6. **Both Jack and Jill met (each other)*

8.1 The complex sentence. Formal and functional divisions of subclauses

“What do you call Santa’s little helpers?”
 “Subordinate Clauses.”
 (Christmas joke)

No; in fact, you call them elves.



But what happens in sentence structure is that when clauses combine with each other, they enter into a relationship which can be one of two subtypes: either they are equal in status, i.e., they are **coordinated clauses**, in which case the sentence they form is called a **compound sentence** (e.g., *Garfield bought a huge pizza and devoured it*); or they enter into an asymmetrical relation of **subordination**, in which case one of them is the superordinate, **main clause** (i.e., Santa Claus ☺), the other is the subordinate (or subordinated) clause, or **subclause** for short (i.e., the elf ☺). Subordination actually means that the subclause fulfils a grammatical function *within* the main clause; therefore, such clauses are also referred to as **embedded clauses**. Consider the structure of a simple sentence (Ch. 7.1) like *Garfield devoured the pizza*, which contains an object NP *within* the VP:

SUBJECT NP	PREDICATE VP	
	V	O _d
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>devoured</i>	<i>the pizza</i>

Notice how this parallels the structure of a complex sentence, *Garfield devoured whatever he found in the fridge*, whose object is realised by a subclause:

SUBJECT NP	PREDICATE VP	
	V	O _d
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>devoured</i>	<i>whatever he found in the fridge</i>

The subclause is part of the VP (it is embedded in it), and functions as the object of the verb (i.e., it is subordinated to it in the sense that its function is dependent on the (transitive nature of the) verb).

Similarly, the simple sentence *Garfield devoured a huge pizza* contains a complex object NP, *a huge pizza*, which in turn contains the attributive AP *huge*:

SUBJECT NP	V	PREDICATE VP		
		O _d	D	At N
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>devoured</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>huge</i>	<i>pizza</i>

Clearly, *a huge pizza* is a single NP and as such constitutes the object as a single constituent, since a pronoun can replace it exhaustively (*Garfield devoured it* or *Garfield devoured one*), and it functions as a unit in the object question: *What did Garfield devour?* – *A huge pizza*.

Now compare that case to a construction in which the attribute of the noun is a subclause:

SUBJECT NP	V	PREDICATE VP		
		O _d	D	N At
<i>Garfield</i>	<i>devoured</i>	<i>the pizza</i>	<i>he'd found in the fridge</i>	

The subclause *he'd found in the fridge* (a so-called **relative clause**, Ch. 9.1) describes the pizza in a way similar to *huge* above – it has the same function, and as a consequence it is considered to be embedded within the NP in the same way. Again, *the pizza he'd found in the fridge* is a single constituent, cf. *Garfield devoured it* (the pronoun stands for that long sequence!) and *What did Garfield devour? – The pizza he'd found in the fridge*.

We can say, then, that the main clause equals the whole sentence (*Garfield devoured the pizza he'd found in the fridge*), and the subclause (*he'd found in the fridge*) is contained, embedded in the inside of it. Embedding, however, can be repeated, and thus multiply embedded structures can be produced; e.g., a sentence like *Garfield devoured the pizza he'd bought with the money he found in Jon's pocket* is not a linear string of three clauses but a big clause containing a smaller clause (the first relative clause), which in turn contains an even smaller clause (the second relative clause) – rather like a Russian matryoshka doll! That is, the main clause can be divided into two, and its second half can also be divided into two:



main clause		
<i>Garfield devoured the pizza</i>	relative clause ₁	
	<i>he'd bought with the money</i>	relative clause ₂
		<i>he found in Jon's pocket</i>

In addition, notice that the first relative clause serves as the main clause of the second relative clause, although it is itself also subordinated. Such clauses are called **matrix clauses**; the main clause, then, is the highest matrix clause.

Besides via multiple embedding, it is also possible to build complex configurations by combining subordination and coordination, i.e., by producing **compound-complex sentences** like *Garfield bought a huge pizza with the money he found in Jon's pocket and devoured it*, which can be diagrammed in the following way:

main clause		
clause ₁ <i>Garfield bought a huge pizza with the money</i>		clause ₂ <i>and devoured it</i>
	relative clause <i>he'd found in Jon's pocket</i>	

This time, the first half of the sentence contains an embedded clause, and the two halves, being **coordinates**, are on the same level in the structure.

Recall, then, that simple sentences consist of a single clause, while compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences consist of more than one. In the rest of the chapter we take complex sentences, i.e., subordination, under closer scrutiny, and investigate the types of subclauses. The two dimensions along which they differ are form (or structure) and function (the two aspects of all phrases – cf. Ch. 2.1). First, the **formal/structural divisions of subclauses** are the following:¹

¹ In the examples, the subclauses are underlined.

		according to interrogativity	
		interrogative	non-interrogative
according to finiteness ²	finite ³	<i>I wonder <u>what Jon thinks about this</u></i> <i>I'm not sure <u>if I should feed Garfield</u></i>	<i>Garfield devoured the pizza <u>that he'd found in the fridge</u></i>
	non-finite	<i>I'm not sure <u>whether to feed Garfield</u></i> <i>Jon doesn't know <u>who to turn to</u></i>	<i>Garfield wants <u>Nermal to be sent to Abu Dhabi</u></i> <i>Garfield promised Jon <u>to behave</u></i> <i>Garfield comics always <u>make me laugh</u></i> <i>I hope this helps <u>clarify the situation</u></i> <i>Everybody is surprised by <u>Garfield('s) being so greedy</u></i> <i><u>Playing in the cupboard</u>, the mice noticed a box of cereals</i> <i>Jon's just had <u>the TV set repaired</u></i> <i>All the food <u>stored in the fridge</u> is in danger</i>
	verbless ⁴	--	<i>Garfield considers <u>Odie stupid</u></i> <i><u>Although a bit stupid</u>, Odie is amusing to play with</i>

A few comments are in order here:

- Non-finite and verbless structures may look more unusual, so we include a larger number of examples of them in the chart. They are recognised as clauses because they can be analysed into the same functional elements that we distinguish in finite clauses, i.e., they contain the subject–predicate relationship characteristic of clauses, with both elements potentially containing subconstituents that function as complements or adjuncts. E.g., in *Garfield wants Nermal to be sent to Abu Dhabi*, *Nermal* is the subject of the subclause while *to Abu Dhabi* is an adverbial. In *Garfield considers Odie stupid*, a sentence we analyse as SVOC (cf. Ch. 7.1), the relationship between the object and the object complement is the same as what links a subject with a subject complement: both are subject–predicate relationships. Cf.:

Garfield considers that Odie is stupid – finite clause
Garfield considers Odie to be stupid – non-finite clause
Garfield considers Odie stupid – verbless clause

As you can see, all these structures are parallel, and the difference lies in how they become more and more reduced: when finiteness is lost, the clause contains a non-finite verb form; when the verb is also lost, only a subject and a non-verbal predicate remain. What still characterises such clauses is person and number agreement between its elements, which is apparent in examples like *His popularity makes Garfield too full of himself*, where the reflexive *himself* agrees with *Garfield*, or *I consider them my best friends*, where the two NPs in the verbless clause agree in number. This is why verbless clauses are also called **Agreement Phrases**.

- Any of the non-finite verb forms may appear in non-finite clauses; accordingly, there are **Full Infinitive clauses**, **Bare Infinitive clauses**, **-ing clauses** (or Present Participle clauses or Gerund-Participle clauses,



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² Cf. Ch. 4.1.

³ Recall that main clauses/independent sentences are always finite (except for certain “irregular sentences”, see Ch. 7.1) so it is only subclauses that can be non-finite or verbless.

⁴ Verbless clauses are also called **small clauses**.

usually with progressive meaning), and **-en clauses** (or Past Participle clauses or Passive Participle clauses). There are two examples of each type in the chart above.

- Non-finite and verbless clauses very often leave their subject unpronounced. Still, this **empty subject** is assumed to be present since its interpretation is always possible; e.g., in *Jon doesn't know who to turn to* the subject of the underlined subclause is straightforwardly the same as the subject of its main clause, i.e., *Jon*, and the interpretation is undoubtedly the same as that of *Jon doesn't know who he should turn to*. The empty subject pronoun may also have the same reference as the object in the main clause (e.g., *Jon ordered Garfield to catch some mice*) or it may have a general interpretation (e.g., *To err is human*). It is customarily signalled by **PRO**, which is short for *pronoun*. Therefore, the precise representation of the example sentences above should also include this abbreviation in the relevant place, e.g.:

Jon doesn't know who PRO to turn to
Garfield promised Jon PRO to behave
I hope this helps PRO clarify the situation
PRO Playing in the cupboard, the mice noticed a box of cereals
All the food PRO stored in the fridge is in danger
Although PRO a bit stupid, Odie is amusing to play with

The other option is for the non-finite clause to have a pronounced subject, in which case it is always in the accusative (cf. e.g., *Garfield comics always make me laugh*). As you can check in the chart above, these options are available to non-interrogative non-finite and verbless clauses: the examples are given in pairs in such a way that the first in each pair contains a visible subject, the second an empty subject.

- Infinitive clauses are distinguished for all aspects as well as voice, cf.:

<i>He seems</i>	<i>to be greedy</i> (simple) <i>to be reading the newspaper</i> (progressive) <i>to have inherited a fortune</i> (perfect simple) <i>to have been waiting for hours</i> (perfect progressive) <i>to be moved by the film</i> (passive simple) <i>to have been run over by a car</i> (passive perfect)
-----------------	--

- *-ing* clauses are partially⁵ distinguished for aspect, cf. *I remember leaving my car here* (simple) vs. *I remember having left my car here* (perfect), and they can be passive, e.g., *I hate being kept waiting*. Very often, the *-ing* clause is progressive in meaning as in *I saw the cat climbing over the fence*.⁶
- *-en* clauses have no formal contrast of aspect, and are always passive in interpretation, as in *All the food stored in the fridge is in danger*.

The **functional divisions of clauses** are based on what functions the subclauses fulfil in the matrix clause. These can be of three major subtypes: subject (a clausal function), complement functions and adjunct functions (see Ch. 2.1 for complement vs. adjunct, and Ch. 7.1 for grammatical functions in the sentence):

⁵ Notice that, formally, “simple” and “progressive” aspects are merged.

⁶ Cf. *I saw the cat climb over the fence*.

		FINITE	NON-FINITE / VERBLESS
SUBJECT (S)		<i>That they accepted the offer is very fortunate</i>	<i>To err is human</i> <i>Telling her father was a big mistake</i>
COMPLEMENTS	to V (O _d , C _S)	<i>I wonder <u>what Jon thinks about this</u></i> <i>We all know <u>that people are the same wherever you go</u></i> <i>The idea is <u>that we fill Facebook with cats</u></i>	<i>Her parents didn't want <u>her to marry him</u></i> <i>The mice like <u>playing in the cupboard</u></i> <i>Garfield considers <u>Odie stupid</u></i> <i>Our plan is <u>to cut the annual budget</u></i>
	to P (C _p)	<i>It depends on <u>whether they want to join us</u></i> <i>The report is concerned with <u>which factors are crucial</u></i>	<i>Everybody is surprised by <u>Garfield('s) being so greedy</u></i> <i>You're afraid of <u>not being loved back</u></i> <i>He's lying in the sun without <u>any sunscreen on</u></i>
	to A (C _{adj})	<i>I'm not sure <u>if I should feed Garfield</u></i>	<i>I'm not sure <u>whether to feed Garfield</u></i> <i>You're afraid <u>to accept the reality</u></i>
	to N (C _n) (appositive)	<i>The news <u>that he was playing again</u> came as a surprise</i>	<i>The director has announced plans <u>to cut the annual budget</u></i>
ADJUNCTS	(RESTRICTIVE) RELATIVE CLAUSES ⁷	<i>Garfield devoured the pizza <u>that he'd found in the fridge</u></i> <i>The cartoon character <u>who(m) we like so much</u> is Tweety</i>	<i>Most students <u>enrolling in the training programme</u> come from overseas countries</i> <i>All the food <u>stored in the fridge</u> is in danger</i>
	ADVERBIAL CLAUSES (AI)	<i><u>While the mice were playing in the cupboard</u>, they noticed a box of cereals</i> <i>I'll call you <u>when I've arrived</u></i> <i><u>If I were you</u>, I'd call the police</i>	<i><u>Playing in the cupboard</u>, the mice noticed a box of cereals</i> <i><u>His mother being ill</u>, John had to cancel the trip</i> <i><u>Although a bit stupid</u>, Odie is amusing to play with</i>
	COMPARATIVE CLAUSES	<i>He has more vices than <u>he has virtues</u></i>	<i>The damage wasn't quite as bad as <u>expected</u></i>

In addition, note the following:

- Clauses which function as complements to nouns are called **appositive clauses**. Apposition means that there are two constituents (in our case, a N and a clause) “placed side by side”, and the clause identifies, clarifies the content of the noun. E.g., in *The news that he was playing again came as a surprise*, the *that*-clause specifies what the news is, what it says. Crucially, this is different from (restrictive) relative clauses, whose function is to narrow down the meaning of the head noun, to specify *which* item the predicate is about. Compare *the news that he was playing again* (NP containing an appositive clause) vs. *the news that he announced* (NP containing a relative clause).⁸
- Subject, object, complement and appositive clauses are sometimes grouped together into the category of **nominal clauses**, called so since these functions are typically taken by NPs; and then, nominal and adverbial clauses are considered to be the two subtypes of so-called **content clauses**.
- **Peripheral functions** to clauses include that of supplementary relative clauses (e.g., *my mother, who prefers dogs* or *Garfield couldn't eat all the lasagne, which surprised everyone*,

⁷ See Ch. 9.1.










⁸ In Ch. 9.1, it is argued that relative clauses always contain an information gap and are therefore incomplete in themselves (cf. **he announced*); appositive clauses do not have such a gap (cf. *he was playing again*).

see Ch. 9.1) as well as S-adverbial functions (cf. S-adverbs in Ch. 6.1) like adding comments or joining sentences, e.g., *He has eaten all the pizza, I believe or What's more, he's lost his keys.*

- When non-finite clauses are complements to verbs (and, marginally, to adjectives), the form of the non-finite verb is selected by the head verb (or adjective), the choice being between **infinitive and -ing constructions** (recall the notion of licensing, Ch. 2.1). Certain verbs carry the same meaning with both (e.g., *prefer*), others select either the infinitive (e.g., *advise*) or the *-ing* form (e.g., *suggest*) only; yet another group of verbs convey separate meanings with the two constructions (cf., e.g., *Jon forgot to lock the car vs. Jon forgot locking the car*). Out of the infinitive forms, in most cases it is the *to*-infinitive that is involved, but the bare infinitive may also be selected (e.g., *Garfield comics always make me laugh*; also compare *I saw the cat climbing over the fence vs. I saw the cat climb over the fence*). Adjectival heads may exhibit similar behaviour: *afraid*, for instance, will select an *of*-PP complement (which will, then, contain an NP or an *-ing* clause) in some senses and a *to*-infinitive clause in others, cf. *You're afraid of not being loved back and You're afraid to accept the reality*.
- Another special phenomenon affecting verbal complement clauses is the form of **reported speech** which is not a word-for-word quotation (“*Where's my dog?*”, *Jon asked*) but which incorporates the original into the sentence and thus involves modifications in various aspects of grammar (*Jon asked where his dog was*) – it is called **indirect speech**. Notice that, typically, there is a reporting verb in such cases in the main clause (*asked*), which is complemented by an object clause (*where his dog was*). The two major modifications are: (i) **backshift** (with a past matrix verb, the verb in the subclause is usually put one stage back in the past; cf. *is* → *was*); (ii) changes of time, place and person reference in determiners, pronouns and certain adverbs (cf. *my* → *his*). **Indirect interrogatives** are interrogative subclauses introduced by *wh*-phrases (for indirect *wh*-questions, e.g., *Jon asked where his dog was*) or by *whether/if* (for indirect yes/no questions, e.g., *Jon asked if we had seen his dog*), a major characteristic of which is their word order. While direct questions exhibit Subject-Operator Inversion (Ch. 11.1), resulting in the operator either at the beginning of the sentence (*Have you seen my dog?*) or immediately after the *wh*-phrase (*Where's s my dog?*), indirect questions reconstruct the declarative word order. Finally, **indirect imperatives** typically involve a *to*-infinitive clause in the direct object function (e.g., *Jon ordered Garfield to catch some mice*).
- When the matrix verb is a verb of thinking such as *think*, *expect*, *suppose*, negative subclauses can move (or shift or transfer) the negative to it; therefore, *I think she won't come* very often becomes *I don't think she will come*. This is called shifted or **transferred negation** or negative raising.

This chapter has given an overview of the formal and functional divisions of subclauses in complex sentences. Later, certain clausal structures will be discussed in more detail: relative clauses in Ch. 9, various types of other structures in Ch. 10, conditional sentences in Ch. 11, and comparative sentences in Ch. 12.

8.2 Further reading

On coordination and subordination: OEG 6  On subordinated clauses: SGE 14.1–14.10, 15.1–15.32; OEG 6; CGEL 2; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 3.4.11  On non-finite VPs: SGE 4.35  On non-finite clauses: SGE 16.23–16.37, ALP 18  On nominal clauses: SGE 15.3–15.12, T&M 35  On infinitive and gerund constructions: T&M 23–25; ALP 19; AGU 36–42  On clauses of purpose, reason, result, etc.: T&M 33–34  On indirect speech: SGE 14.18–14.23; OEG 6; T&M 31; ALP 16; AGU 43–49  On backshift: T&M 20  The syntactic analysis of non-finite clauses: BESE 8.

8.3 Practice exercises

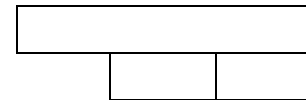
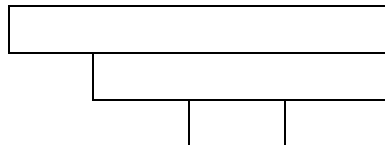
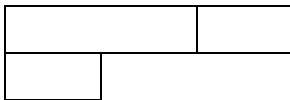
1. We saw in the text that complex and compound-complex sentences can be diagrammed in the following way:

<i>Garfield bought a huge pizza with the money</i>	<i>and devoured it</i>
	relative clause <i>he'd found in Jon's pocket</i>

Such diagrams can be simplified to “mini-diagrams” like this one:

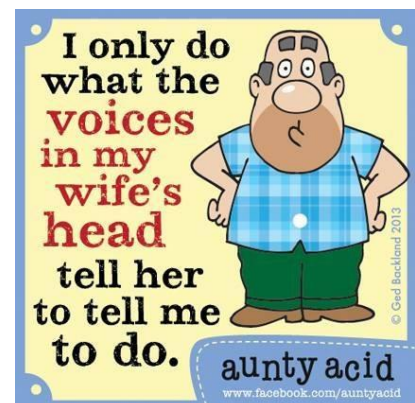


Find example sentences for the following mini-diagrams:



2. Find the subclauses in the following sentences and determine their formal and functional characteristics.

1. *I expect for John to win the race*
2. *Whether we can stay with my mother is another matter*
3. *Süsü likes chasing butterflies*
4. *Paul found Mary very attractive*
5. *When in Rome, do as the Romans do*
6. *Seeing is believing*
7. *Does anybody know what they are looking for?*
8. *There are a hundred billion castaways looking for a home*
9. *Sorry seems to be the hardest word*
10. *This library gets a copy of every book printed in Hungary*
11. *I could feel the earth move*
12. *They don't need to see you cry*
13. *I can't remember to forget you*
14. *I remember every word you said*
15. *I can't stop these feelings melting through*



3. Use the following verbs as matrix verbs in complex sentences with non-finite subclauses. Which non-finite form is needed? In some of the cases, there is more than one option.

accuse, afford, begin, can't help, deny, fail, forget, hear, let, manage, need, promise, refuse, regret, remember, stop, suggest, try

4. You met an old friend, who said a lot of things. Later that day, you told your mother about this. You started your sentences with *She said...* and used complex sentences in indirect speech. These are the things she said to you:

1. *We'll be counting stars*
2. *You may say I'm a dreamer*
3. *I know I've said it a million times*
4. *I thought that we would just be friends*
5. *There's a fire starting in my heart*
6. *My loneliness is killing me no more*

5. The following sentences are ambiguous. Discuss their structure, and the nature of the ambiguity.

1. *He asked me when I got up*
2. *I've forgotten how bad beer smells*
3. *I remember when I first saw her*

8.4 Extension: More on non-finite clauses in English and Hungarian

There are non-finite clauses in both English and Hungarian but, as their characteristics differ from each other, we need to discuss them in some detail. Ch. 8.1 above mentions that one of the distinctive properties of these clauses in English is that their subject may be pronounced (or **overt**, as in *Jon wants Garfield to catch mice*) or invisible (**non-overt** or **covert**, as in *Garfield promised Jon PRO to catch mice*) (recall overt vs. covert from Ch. 2.4). It is also shown above that the empty subject pronoun PRO may receive its reference from (or, may be **controlled** by) a subject or an object in the matrix clause, or may have indefinite, general reference. In the latter case, the reference may also be described as arbitrary since it depends on the context in a way that is unpredictable, arbitrary syntactically. Control (or the absence thereof) is usually indicated with the help of indices: with the **coindexation** of PRO with its controller, or the index *arb* for arbitrary control. Cf.:

<i>Garfield_i promised Jon PRO_i to catch mice</i>	subject control
<i>Jon couldn't persuade Garfield_i PRO_i to catch mice</i>	object control
<i>PRO_{arb} Catching mice is not an easy job</i>	indefinite/arbitrary control
<i>Although PRO_i a bit stupid, Odie_i is amusing to play with</i>	subject control in verbless clause

The choice of the controlling element depends on the matrix verb: in the examples above, *promise* illustrates subject-control verbs and *persuade* illustrates object-control verbs. Control is obligatory in these cases; however, sometimes it is optional: the same sentence ((a) below) may be ambiguous between a definite and an indefinite interpretation, as the choice of reflexives also indicates in (b) and (c).

- a. *Garfield_i is not sure how PRO_{i/arb} to behave in public*
- b. *Garfield_i is not sure how PRO_i to behave himself_i in public*
- c. *Garfield is not sure how PRO_{arb} to behave oneself in public*

In non-finite and verbless clauses functioning as adverbial, however, PRO requires **obligatory subject control** for the sentence to be well-formed or at least interpretable. This is the so-called **Attachment Rule**. Notice the subject control in all of the following examples:

PRO_i Playing in the cupboard, the mice_i noticed a box of cereals
PRO_i Exhausted by the day's work, John_i fell asleep immediately
Garfield_i went to the post office PRO_i to send Nermal in a parcel to Abu Dhabi
Although PRO_i a bit stupid, Odie_i is amusing to play with

Such clauses are treated in EFL coursebooks and writer's guides because it is "too easy" to break the Attachment Rule: even native speakers often do so and only realise it when they notice that their sentence is anomalous and does not convey the intended meaning. The following sentences are examples of such **unattached** or "**dangling**" clauses:

- **PRO_i Opening the closet, a skeleton_i fell out*
- **PRO_i Stuck in the back of the cupboard, the mice_i noticed a box of cereals*
- **PRO_i An author of considerable distinction, students_i flocked to her lecture*

In these cases the intended meaning is such that somebody (but not the skeleton) opened the closet, the box of cereals (and not the mice) was stuck in the cupboard, and of course, “she” was an author and not her students.

Adverbial *-ing*, *-en* and verbless clauses may also contain overt subjects; such clauses are called **absolute clauses**. They are more frequent in written English than in spoken language.

His mother being ill, John had to cancel the trip
The boss having left the room, everybody was hotly debating the issue
The interviews completed, the committee retired to discuss the case
Christmas then only days away, the family was pent up with excitement
He’s lying in the sun without any sunscreen on

Verbless clauses are also called Agreement Phrases because, although they are not marked for tense, certain signs of agreement are present in them (see Ch. 8.1 above). Their structure is composed of a subject (overt accusative or PRO) plus a non-VP predicate (NP, AP or PP), and in some cases they are introduced by subordinators or prepositions like *if*, *unless*, *when*, *while*, *although*; *with*, *without*. The functions they can fulfil in sentences divide them into two major subtypes:

(i) **complement verbless clauses**: complements to a V or a P, containing overt subjects (and are also called **Small Clauses**); the subject and the predicate may be linked with *as*:

<i>Garfield considers <u>Odie stupid</u></i>	complement to V
<i>I regard <u>them as my best friends</u></i>	
<i>We believe <u>these mechanics incapable of mending the car</u></i>	
<i>They want <u>him out of the team</u></i>	
<i>The boys aren’t very keen on <u>an old spinster as their coach</u></i>	complement to P
<i>With <u>the kitchen a mess</u>, how can I possibly cook anything?</i>	
<i>I kept thinking I could never live without <u>you by my side</u></i>	

(ii) in adjunct function: **adverbial verbless clauses**:

- with overt S (absolute clauses, see above): (a) below
- with non-overt S (obligatory subject control, see the Attachment Rule above): (b) below

- a. *There stood the doctor, a baby in each hand*
Over 200 migrants attempting the perilous journey across the Mediterranean are feared to have drowned, many of them children
- b. *PRO_i An overweight, lazy cat with a passion for food, Garfield_i is not on good terms with his scales*
PRO_i Too nervous around beautiful women, he_i always sticks to the back in the bar with his buddies
Whether PRO_i right or wrong, she_i always has the last word in our arguments
Although PRO_i a bit stupid, Odie_i is amusing to play with

Similarly to English, **Hungarian** verbs also have non-finite forms which participate in non-finite clauses: the **infinitive** (*-ni*), and **adjectival** (*-ó/-ő* participles are present, *-t/-tt* participles are past – but see below) and **adverbial participles** (*-va/-ve* participles are simple active, *-ván/-vén* participles are active perfective).

Infinitive clauses can assume the role of a complement (*Garfield szeret aludni* ‘Garfield likes sleeping’) or adjunct (*Garfield bement a szobába aludni* ‘Garfield went into the room to sleep’). In these examples, the subject of the subclause is empty, i.e., PRO, controlled by the matrix subject *Garfield*. When no controller is present, the infinitive has a (dative) case-marked overt or covert subject, and it is inflected for agreement. Recall from Ch. 4.1 that inflected infinitives in Hungarian, like *tudnom kell* ‘I have/need to know’, are called **semi-finite forms**. Now, compare the two cases:

Garfield_i szeret PRO_i aludni ‘Garfield likes sleeping’
Garfieldnak tudnia kell ezt ‘Garfield needs to know this’

Besides subject control, object-control verbs are also found in Hungarian, although they are much less numerous, similarly to the English situation. E.g., *Garfield látta az egereket a konyhában játszani* ‘Garfield saw the mice playing in the kitchen’. An interesting feature of control structures in Hungarian is what is called **long distance object agreement**: when the matrix verb is transitive, it chooses between the definite and the indefinite paradigm (cf. Ch. 1.4) according to the object of the infinitive, e.g.:

<i>Próbálo<u>m</u> megkeresni Jon kutyáját</i>	definite object
‘I am trying to find Jon’s dog’	
<i>Próbálo<u>k</u> megkeresni egy kutyát</i>	indefinite object
‘I am trying to find a dog’	
<i>Próbálla<u>k</u> megkeresni (téged)</i>	second person singular object
‘I am trying to find you’	

In Hungarian, auxiliaries also select the infinitive, e.g., *Garfield egész nap aludni fog* ‘Garfield will sleep all day’, but the division between auxiliaries and subject-control verbs in Hungarian is not straightforward, and a few (e.g., *kezd* ‘begin’, *próbál* ‘try’, *bír* ‘manage’, *mer* ‘dare’, *tud* ‘can’, etc.) can be used both ways, therefore they are sometimes called **semi-auxiliaries**. In Hungarian, the structure of the maximal verb group is illustrated by the following example:

	a (finite) aux.	semi-auxiliary/-ies	an (infinitival) lexical verb
<i>Garfield holnapról fog próbálni kezdeni lefogyni</i>			
‘Garfield will try to start to lose weight tomorrow’			

Notice that a number of further word orders are possible, which we do not discuss here.

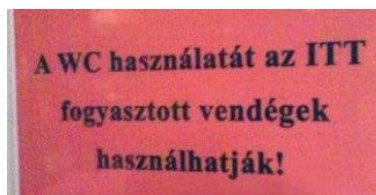
Adverbial participles also produce non-finite clauses. They have two possible functions: (i) manner or time adverbial adjunct; (ii) subject or object complement in the predicate:

- (i) *A konyhaszekrényben játszadoxva, az egerek egy doboz zabpehelyre bukkantak*
 ‘Playing in the cupboard, the mice found a box of cereals’
- (ii) *Jon meg van fázva*
 ‘Jon has a cold’

The type in (ii) resembles the English passive construction, even in the way different copulas convey different aspectual meanings, e.g., *Ez a pizza meg van égetve* ‘This pizza is burnt’ vs. *Ez a pizza meg lett égetve* ‘This pizza has got burnt’. However, it is not passive structure proper, since on the one hand, it also affects intransitive verbs (cf. (ii) above); on the other hand, it is more limited than the English passive as it is only possible if the meaning is such that the subject undergoes a change of state. Cf. *A zabpehely meg van romolva a konyhaszekrényben* ‘The cereals have gone off in the cupboard’ vs. **A zabpehely meg van látva a konyhaszekrényben* ‘The cereals have been spotted in the cupboard’. Hungarian, then, lacks a genuine passive voice, but it has a copula + adverbial participle construction that is very similar to it; therefore, phrases like *Fel vagyok rá készülve* ‘I am prepared for that’ are not passive proper and are well-formed although the verb is intransitive, while sentences like **A macska fel van mászva a fára* ‘*The cat is climbed up the tree’ are ill-formed because climbing does not involve a change of state.

Finally, Hungarian also has **adjectival participle clauses**, which can function as attributes in NPs whose head nouns also provide reference for their PROs, e.g., *Láttunk a konyhában egy PRO₁ pizzát evő macskát és PRO₂ a szekrényben játszó egereket* ‘In the kitchen we saw a cat eating pizza and mice playing in the cupboard’, where PRO₁ is controlled by *macskát* and PRO₂ is controlled by *egereket*. The two adjectival participles of Hungarian are the ones suffixed with *-ól/-ő* called present

participles, and the ones with *-t/-tt* called past participles. Their names are misleading – the real difference between them is that the former is active (meaning that the head noun functions as a kind of subject, cf. *a macska eszi a pizzát* ‘the cat is eating the pizza’ and *az egerek játszanak a szekrényben* ‘the mice are playing in the cupboard’) and the latter is passive (its head noun is object). When *-t/-tt* participles are used as if they referred to past tense or perfect aspect, we get anomalous meaning, as you can see in the sign⁹: *az itt fogyasztott vendégek* is interpreted as customers who have been consumed here (!) rather than the intended meaning, customers who have consumed here.



The main conclusion of this chapter may be that non-finite clauses are diverse in both form and function in both English and Hungarian, but, although the two languages differ from each other in fundamental respects, the structures that they exhibit can be described with reference to the same categories.

Further reading

On finite and non-finite clauses: Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 5 On the subject of non-finite and verbless clauses: SGE 15.34 On participle clauses: T&M 26; AGU 74–75, 102 On subject clauses: Cowan 2008: 20 On complement clauses, including infinitive and gerund constructions: Cowan 2008: 21 On adverbial clauses: Cowan 2008: 23 The syntactic analysis of control: BESE 8.2.2; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 5.4 On non-finite phrases and clauses in Hungarian: É. Kiss 2002: 9.

8.5 Practice exercises

1. Find the non-finite subclauses in the following sentences and identify their functions. Indicate empty subjects where relevant by inserting *PRO* in the right slot.

1. *Cats normally like catching mice*
2. *Garfield standing on the bathroom scales should amuse you*
3. *Having furnished ourselves with garlic, we set off*
4. *I have just seen a TV thrown out of a window*
5. *His first job was selling vacuum cleaners*
6. *I saw her catch the bus*
7. *I strongly object to him receiving this award*
8. *I'll be waiting for love to come around*
9. *Jon is busy making lasagne for Garfield*
10. *Rather than you do the job, I'll do it myself*
11. *The wine finished, we dozed fitfully in our armchairs*
12. *His current research, investigating attitudes to cats, takes up most of his time*
13. *They are reluctant to attend my courses*
14. *The last man to leave the boat is always the captain*
15. *They left the door open for me to hear the baby*

2. Identify the type of control (subject, object, or arbitrary) in the following English and Hungarian examples.

1. *Jon told Garfield to eat less lasagne*
2. *To eat too much lasagne is bad for your health*
3. *Liz didn't remember having eaten such lasagne before*
4. *Exhausted by cooking lasagne all day, Jon fell asleep immediately*
5. *Garfield tried to catch some mice*

⁹ Cf. <http://m.nyest.hu/hirek/a-wc-hasznalat-at-az-itt-fogyasztott-vendegek-hasznalhatjak>

6. *Odie nem merte felébreszteni Garfieldot* ‘Odie did not dare to wake up Garfield’
7. *Félek ráállni a mérlegre* ‘I am afraid to stand on the scales’
8. *Jon hallotta Garfieldot kimenni a konyhába* ‘Jon heard Garfield go to the kitchen’
9. *Nem akarom elolvasni ezt a könyvet* ‘I do not want to read this book’
10. *Vissza fogom tudni fizetni a pénzt* ‘I will be able to pay the money back’

3. Rewrite the following sentences so that they contain verbless subclauses.

1. *Although unemployed now, Sam used to earn a lot*
2. *Davidson fought bravely, and although he was badly wounded, he refused to surrender*
3. *He shared a cell with Al Capone while he was in prison*
4. *When you are in doubt as to how to use a word, look it up in the dictionary*
5. *I always carry a gun when I am in this part of the city*
6. *Robert’s essays are always interesting, even if they are sometimes rather careless*
7. *She used to call me “Tiny” although she was shorter than me*
8. *The stories are basically true, even if they are a little exaggerated*
9. *While she was in Africa, she met Jack and married him*
10. *He unexpectedly appeared at the party, holding a bottle of champagne in his hand*

4. Which is the non-finite verb form that is usually found in non-interrogative non-finite clauses functioning as complements of prepositions? Give an example.

5. What determines how many clauses there are in a sentence? Is it the number of verbs, or the number of lexical verbs? Is it the number of subjects? Discuss.

9.1 Information gap in *wh*-questions and relative clauses

“Listen to me Hillary. I’m not the first guy who fell in love with a woman that he met at a restaurant who turned out to be the daughter of a kidnapped scientist only to lose her to her childhood lover who she last saw on a deserted island who then turned out fifteen years later to be the leader of the French underground.”
(Nick Rivers in *Top Secret*)

This example is packed with **relative clauses**: subordinated clauses which function as postmodifying adjuncts (attributes) in NPs. Their structures can be mapped onto each other in the following way:

Det	postdet/ adjunct	head N	relativiser	rest of relative clause
<i>the</i>	<i>first</i>	<i>guy</i>	<i>who</i>	<i>fell in love with a woman</i>
<i>a</i>		<i>woman</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>he met at a restaurant</i>
<i>a</i>		<i>woman</i>	<i>who</i>	<i>turned out to be the daughter of a kidnapped scientist</i>
<i>her</i>	<i>childhood</i>	<i>lover</i>	<i>who</i>	<i>she last saw on a deserted island</i>
<i>her</i>	<i>childhood</i>	<i>lover</i>	<i>who</i>	<i>then turned out fifteen years later to be the leader of the French underground</i>

Notice that in all these cases there is a **head noun** present, which the clause relates to – hence the name; in addition, in all these cases the clause is introduced by a relative pronoun or conjunction: a so-called **relativiser** (*who* or *that* in these examples). All the *wh*-phrases of English (including *how*!) can act as relativisers, and in fact, they are the most frequent ones (only two other options remaining: *that* and no relativiser), which means most relative clauses start with a *wh*-phrase. For this reason, we analyse relative clauses as involving ***wh*-fronting**.

The other important feature of relative clauses is revealed if you look at their part without the relativiser, i.e., the last column of the chart above that says “rest of relative clause”. Notice that none of those strings constitute a well-formed sentence: something is missing, there is an “information gap” in them. E.g., *fell in love with a woman* lacks *who* fell in love, i.e., the subject; *he met at a restaurant* lacks the object; etc. This **information gap** is what distinguishes relative clauses from the other non-interrogative subclauses. You may be able to recall from Ch. 8.1, when we were looking at NPs with appositive clauses like *the news that he was playing again*, that we compared them to NPs with relative clauses, which apparently resemble them in form, e.g., *the news that he announced*. Compare them again and notice that, the conjunction *that* removed, the remaining chunk is self-contained and therefore well-formed in the appositive clause only (*he was playing again*); the relative clause (*he announced*) contains a gap (viz., *what* he announced, i.e., the object of the verb).

Wh-fronting and the information gap are what characterise relative clauses and *wh*-questions in English. Relative clauses are all subclauses (by definition); ***wh*-questions**¹, on the other hand, have two major subtypes:

- **direct *wh*-interrogatives**, which are independent or main clauses, and contain *wh*-fronting accompanied by **Subject-Operator Inversion** (SOI) in their word order (e.g., *Who did he meet at the restaurant?*), except when the *wh*-element is subject (cf. *Who met him at the restaurant?*)²;

¹ See Ch. 7.1.

² Since SOI is not needed when the *wh*-element is subject, the operator is not necessarily there, either, which means that in simple tenses *do*-insertion does not take place in subject questions.

- **indirect *wh*-interrogatives** (incl. reported questions; cf. Ch. 8.1), which are subordinated clauses (just like relative clauses), and do not contain SOI (e.g., *I wonder who he met at the restaurant*).

Minor, less frequent constructions that also involve *wh*-fronting are (certain) **exclamative** main clauses starting with *wh*-phrases (e.g., *How old you are!*), and so-called **semi-indirect speech**, a form of reported speech in which changes of time, place and person reference are applied but otherwise it is like quoted speech and may include SOI (e.g., *He asked me who did I meet at the restaurant*). In sum, the clause types relevant here can be characterised in the following way:

direct <i>wh</i>-question	main clause	<i>wh</i> -fronting	information gap	SOI
<i>wh</i>-exclamative	main clause	<i>wh</i> -fronting	information gap	-
indirect <i>wh</i>-question	subclause	<i>wh</i> -fronting	information gap	-
semi-indirect <i>wh</i>-question	subclause	<i>wh</i> -fronting	information gap	SOI
relative clause	subclause	<i>wh</i> -fronting	information gap	-

Our chapter concentrates on *wh*-interrogatives and relative clauses. First, **direct *wh*-questions**. They will be very useful to us here because they have a type that helps identify the place of the information gap in our examples: the so-called **echo question**. It is not asked to require some specific information but repeats what somebody has said, with an unclear or doubted element in it replaced by a *wh*-phrase which is pronounced with extra stress. That is, there *is* an information gap, but there is no *wh*-fronting; the *wh*-phrase occupies the information gap³. Cf.:

- (*Brad Pitt has sent me a friend request.*) *WHO has sent you a friend request??*
 - (*I met Brad Pitt at the restaurant.*) *You met WHOM at the restaurant??*
 - (*I have sent a friend request to Brad Pitt.*) *You have sent a friend request to WHOM??*
 - (*I saw Brad Pitt at the party in our garden.*) *You saw Brad Pitt WHERE??*
 - (*I met Brad Pitt between two classes.*) *You met Brad Pitt WHEN??*
- etc.

Therefore, a direct question like *Who did he meet at the restaurant?* contains an information gap since it is incomplete without the *wh*-phrase at the beginning; and the gap is between *meet* and the PP *at the restaurant* since that is the place of the *wh*-phrase. Similarly, an NP with a relative clause like *a woman that he met at a restaurant* contains an information gap in the relative clause; and the gap is again between *meet* and the PP.

The examples above also illustrate the functional diversity of *wh*-phrases in *wh*-questions: they can function as subject (a), direct object (b), prepositional complement (c), etc., as well as various adverbial/adjunct functions such as place (d) and time adverbial (e). In fact, the same goes for relativisers in relative clauses (whether they are pronounced (a *wh*-phrase or *that*) or invisible – see below). Cf.:

- Brad Pitt is the guy WHO sent me a friend request*
 - Brad Pitt is the guy WHOM I met at the restaurant*
 - Brad Pitt is the guy WHOM I sent a friend request to*
 - Brad Pitt is the guy to WHOM I sent a friend request*
 - Our garden is WHERE I saw Brad Pitt*
 - Between two classes is WHEN I met Brad Pitt⁴*
- etc.

³ Similar *wh*-structures include quiz questions (e.g., *Budapest is the capital of what European country?*) and multiple *wh*-questions, in which only one of the *wh*-phrases can be fronted (e.g., *Who brought which present?*).

⁴ The relative clauses in (d) and (e) are so-called headless relative clauses (see below); and the sentences themselves are so-called reversed pseudo-cleft sentences (see Ch. 10.1).

Notice that sentence (c) has two alternatives: the first one exemplifies preposition stranding, its version in (c') contains pied piping (Ch. 6.1), as the usual options for *wh*-phrases in PPs. Another curiosity to notice is what happens in subject *wh*-questions and subject relative clauses (examples (a) in both sets of sentences above): since the normal, “canonical” position of both the subject and the *wh*-phrase/relativiser is at the beginning of the clause, the information gap is not separately visible in these cases, and apparently the *wh*-phrase/relativiser occupies the information gap. For the same reason, the subject echo question is not formally distinct from its direct *wh*-question equivalent.

Now, let us turn to **relative clauses**. They constitute a whole variety of different functional and formal classes; the box below shows their functional subtypes, while the formal subgroups are discussed later. **According to function**, then, we distinguish two major types: **restrictive relative clauses** (RRCs) and **supplementary relative clauses**. RRCs have a noun (i.e., a word) as the head, while supplementary RCs have phrase-level heads. There are two options for that: either an NP (for **non-restrictive** RCs; NRRCs) or a clause (for **sentential** RCs, always introduced by *which*).

(i) **types acc. to function:**

(a) restrictive/defining relative clause (RRC):

the cartoon character who(m) we like so much
the cartoon character that we like so much
the cartoon character we like so much
the topic (which/that) we are discussing

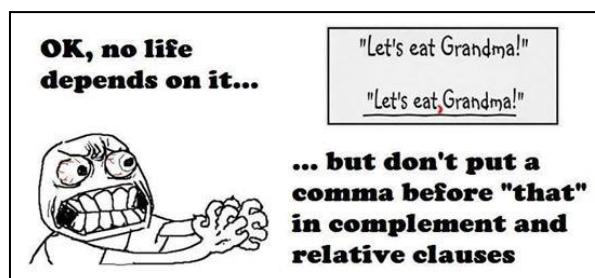
(b) supplementary relative clause:

- non-restrictive/non-defining rel. cl. (NRRC):

my mother, who prefers dogs
the topic, which we already discussed at the meeting
 cf. *my brother who is a vet* vs. *my brother, who is a vet*

- sentential: *Garfield couldn't eat all the lasagne, which surprised everyone*

The fundamental difference is that RRCs are post-modifying adjuncts narrowing down the interpretation of the head noun to which they refer, while supplementary RCs are comment clauses, parenthetical additions to the main message only, therefore their boundaries (the “opening” and “closing brackets”) are indicated in speech by brief **pauses**. It is these pauses that English punctuation shows with the **commas**. That is, the English spelling rule here is that you use the comma to denote the *pause* in speech.⁵ Compare this to the corresponding Hungarian spelling rule, which says that all *clause boundaries* are indicated with punctuation marks.⁶



RRCs and NRRCs, then, as their names suggest, differ in whether they narrow down the meaning of a head noun specifying *which* item we mean (RRC) or serve the comment function. A “classical” example is the contrast between an NP like *my brother who is a vet*, in which case the interpretation is that I have more than one brother and my statement concerns the only one that is a vet, and *my brother, who is a vet*, which is used when we have already mentioned my brother, or I know that the listener knows my brother, and there is no information about how many brothers I have.

The number of examples next to the same category in (i) above already suggests that relative clauses in general, and the RRC in particular, have many different forms. They are listed in (ii). As

⁵ Meme credits go to Ágnes Piukovics.

⁶ Appositive clauses introduced by *that* can also be used as comment clauses (e.g., when the content of the head noun has already been explained, and it is simply repeated), in which case their boundaries are marked with pauses in pronunciation, and commas in writing, cf.: *This problem, that the budget has been cut, needs further discussion.*

you can see, the two major subtypes are headed RCs and headless RCs. **Headed RCs** are the more frequent type, when the head noun is present in the NP, usually together with at least a determiner (the definite article in most cases), whereas **headless RCs** arise when the head “merges” or “fuses” with the relativiser and disappears. In such cases, however, it is always possible to reconstruct the original, headed expression, e.g., *Whoever wakes Garfield up will regret it for the rest of their lives* is identical to *The person who wakes Garfield up...*, which contains the head noun *person*. Because of this, we assume here that headless RCs *do* come with a head, though it is unpronounced (but interpretable).

(ii) types acc. to form:

- headed/proper:

(a) *wh*-relative: *the cartoon character who(m) we like so much*

(b) *that*-relative: *the cartoon character that we like so much*

(c) zero relative:

- finite: *the cartoon character we like so much*

- non-finite (“reduced relative clause”):

(a) *-ing* relative (always subjective): *the person preferring dogs (active)*
the topic being discussed (passive)

(b) *-en* relative (always passive): *the topic discussed*

(c) *to*-relative⁷: *the first to arrive*

the person to ask

there’s nothing to do

there’s nothing to be done

- headless/fused/free: *Whoever wakes Garfield up will regret it for the rest of their lives*

The box also shows that headed RCs can be introduced by a *wh*-phrase (for the ***wh*-relative**), the conjunction *that* (***that*-relative**), or nothing (called **zero relative**), and that the zero relative can be finite or non-finite, with three possible verb forms.

The rules of the relativisers:

- formal/informal distinction: *which* and *whom* are formal, the others are informal (see (1) below); pied piping is formal, preposition stranding is informal (cf. Ch. 6.1) (see (2))
- personal/non-personal distinction: *which* is non-personal only, *who(m)* is personal only (see (3)). N.B. *that* and *whose* are neutral (see (1) for *that* and (4) for *whose*)
- *that* can be omitted (unless it is subject), producing the zero relative. Whenever *that* is possible, the zero relative is also possible (unless it is subject); that is, the zero relative is a version of the *that*-relative (see (1) and (5))
- pied piping is not possible with *that* and *who*. That is, it is only possible with *which* for non-personal, and with *whom* for personal (see (6))
- *what* and *whatever/whoever/whichever* stand alone and can only introduce headless RCs (see (7))
- sentential RCs are always introduced by *which* (see above)

Check these rules in the following examples. Note that most of them are not sentences but NPs only, and pay attention to where you see an asterisk (meaning that the example is ungrammatical)!

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| (1) formal: | <i>the topic <u>which we are discussing</u></i> | <i>the woman <u>whom he met at a restaurant</u></i> |
| informal | <i>the topic <u>that we are discussing</u></i> | <i>the woman <u>who he met at a restaurant</u></i> |
| /neutral: | <i>the topic <u>we are discussing</u></i> | <i>the woman <u>that he met at a restaurant</u></i> |
| | | <i>the woman <u>he met at a restaurant</u></i> |

⁷ *To*-relatives are in fact somewhat more variable in form than suggested here: certain *wh*-relatives may contain the *to*-infinitive as the verb form (e.g., *the person on whom to rely*), and other constructions, unavailable to other verb forms, are also possible, e.g., *the person for you to rely on*.

- (2) formal: *a person on whom you can rely*
 informal *a person who(m) you can rely on*
 /neutral: *a person that you can rely on*
a person you can rely on
- (3) **a person which you can rely on* **the topic who(m) we are discussing*
- (4) *a person whose name is too long* *the topic whose discussion will be long*
- (5) *a woman who/that he met at a restaurant* *the guy who/that fell in love with a woman*
a woman he met at a restaurant **the guy fell in love with a woman*
- (6) **a person on who you can rely* **the topic with that we are dealing*
a person on whom you can rely *the topic with which we are dealing*
- (7) **the topic what we are discussing*
 **whoever who wakes Garfield up*

A final minor subtype of RCs is the so-called **connective relative clause**, which resembles NRRCs in form, but the relativiser has the function of connecting, linking two clauses, more like a conjunction. An example such as *I asked Jon, who said that he met Liz at a restaurant* is identical to *I asked Jon, and he said that he met Liz at a restaurant*.

Non-finite relative clauses are also called **reduced relative clauses** because they do not only lack a pronounced relativiser, but their subject NP is also invisible, i.e., PRO (cf. Ch. 8.1). E.g., *the person to ask* is identical to *the person whom we should ask*. Compare the following options:

Det	postdet/ adjunct	head N	relativiser	rest of relative clause
<i>the</i>		<i>person</i>	<i>whom</i>	<i>we should ask</i>
			<i>who</i>	<i>we should ask</i>
			<i>that</i>	<i>we should ask</i>
			--	<i>we should ask</i>
			--	<i>PRO to ask</i>

The other examples of non-finite RCs also contain PRO:

- (a) *the person PRO preferring dogs*
the topic PRO being discussed
- (b) *the topic PRO discussed*
- (c) *the first PRO to arrive*
the person PRO to ask
there's nothing PRO to do
there's nothing PRO to be done

Keep in mind that at the same time the relativiser is also invisible in these cases: these structures are pretty abstract and, as their name shows, drastically reduced.

Recall, then, that *wh*-fronting (with the information gap) characterises both *wh*-interrogatives and relative clauses. *Wh*-phrases, however, may travel a long way to the left edge of the sentence, skipping other clauses. The question *Which pizza did you say that Jon thought that Garfield would prefer?* ultimately boils down to the question of *Garfield will prefer WHICH PIZZA?*, i.e., the *wh*-phrase is the object of *prefer*, and the structure is a multiply embedded complex sentence with as many as three clauses in a “Matryoshka-doll” construction:



Which pizza did you say

that Jon thought

that Garfield would prefer __

This is called **long *wh*-fronting**. In Hungarian, such sentences may or may not be translated with long *wh*-fronting, cf. *Melyik pizzát mondtad, hogy Jon azt hiszi, hogy Garfield jobban szereti?* (with long fronting) and *Mit mondtál, mit gondol Jon, hogy melyik pizzát szereti jobban Garfield?* (without long fronting, containing a *wh*-phrase at the beginning of each clause). Notice, however, that the latter solution is not available in English: **What did you say, what does Jon think, (that) which pizza will Garfield prefer?* and similar constructions are ungrammatical. The same type of long *wh*-fronting is found with relative clauses, too, as in (*This is*) *the postman the neighbour claims that Garfield has bitten*, where the hidden, zero relativiser is ultimately the object of *bite*: that is the place of the information gap. In sum, *wh*-fronting exhibits basically the same characteristics in all major constructions it appears in.

9.2 Further reading

On relative clauses: T&M 8; ALP 18; AGU 70–73  On reduced relative clauses (active and passive): AGU 74  The syntactic analysis of the “information gap”: BESE 7.3–7.4; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 4.1–4.2.8.

9.3 Practice exercises

1. Find the information gaps in the following examples.

1. *Where have all the flowers gone*
2. *How do you do the things that you do*
3. *What are you waiting for*
4. *All that she wants is another baby*
5. *All that I can see is just another lemon tree*
6. *I don't know what to do with myself*
7. *She's just a girl who claims that I am the one*
8. *How I hate the winter*
9. *Who do you think is the weakest link*
10. *There's nothing you can throw at me that I haven't already heard*
11. *That's what friends are supposed to do*
12. *What do I think I think*

2. Which of the following relative clauses can *only* be interpreted as supplementary? Provide commas.

1. *the dog who stopped the war*
2. *our father who art in heaven*
3. *my mother who is me*
4. *the man who sold the world*
5. *we who are your closest friends*
6. *He who laughs last laughs best*
7. *We haven't seen a Japanese film which is very interesting*
8. *We haven't seen this Japanese film which is very interesting*

3. Underline the zero relative clauses in the following examples.

1. *every breath you take*
2. *the way you look tonight*
3. *just the way you are*
4. *things we lost in the fire*
5. *All we need is somebody to lean on*
6. *I'm not sure I understand this role I've been given*

4. Rewrite the sentences so that they contain reduced relative clauses.

1. *We have got stars that direct our fate*
2. *You are my shoulder on which I can cry*
3. *There's nothing funny that is left to say*
4. *There are a lot of things that go on in the world you don't know about*
5. *There are a hundred billion castaways who look for a home*
6. *We found an island that is lost at sea*
7. *I'm the only one who knows your heart*
8. *Everything that kills me makes me feel alive*

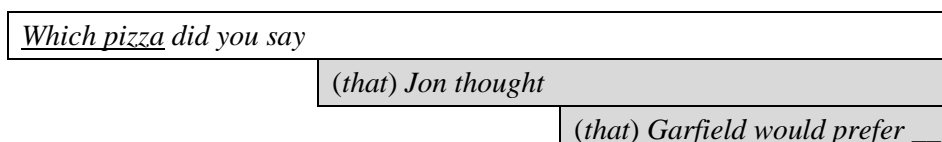
5. Find the relative clauses in the following sentences.

1. *We have been making money since the day that we were born*
2. *That is just the way it is, baby*
3. *This will be the day that I die*
4. *You are the one I want*
5. *Every little thing she does is magic*
6. *Do you remember the time when we fell in love?*
7. *This is how you remind me of what I really am*
8. *All you need is love*
9. *Now you're just somebody that I used to know*
10. *What doesn't kill you makes you stronger*
11. *All I want to say is that they don't really care about us*
12. *The horse raced past the barn fell*

9.4 Extension: More on *wh*-fronting and relative clauses

Here we look at some of the aspects of *wh*-fronting constructions more closely. In the first part, we investigate long *wh*-fronting; in the second part, we make a brief comparison of relative clauses in English and Hungarian, and then deal with headless relative clauses.

Long *wh*-fronting is introduced in Ch. 9.1 above, where it is explained that a *wh*-element may “originate” very low in a multiply embedded structure and move to the front of the direct interrogative, leaving the information gap behind in its original clause. The example *Which pizza did you say (that) Jon thought (that) Garfield would prefer?* can be represented as follows:



Notice that all lower clauses (shaded in grey) behave as simple non-interrogative clauses: no SOI takes place in them, and they all can optionally be introduced by the non-interrogative complementiser *that*. Such constructions can be shown to have been formed in a step-by-step fashion, with more and more

embedding added gradually, and with a potential slot for a *wh*-phrase at the beginning of each clause. Our example, for instance, can be broken down into the following three stages:

Which pizza will Garfield prefer
Which pizza does Jon think (that) Garfield will prefer
Which pizza did you say (that) Jon thought (that) Garfield would prefer

As it is mentioned above, in Hungarian long *wh*-fronting is one of two options in such cases; besides long fronting (*Melyik pizzát mondtad, hogy Jon azt hiszi, hogy Garfield jobban szereti?*), treating the clauses as separate questions (*Mit mondtál, mit gondol Jon, hogy melyik pizzát szereti jobban Garfield?*) is also possible. Crucially, this latter is not an option in English, which causes difficulties for Hungarian learners as a result.

Long fronting can be applied in the two languages in similar ways. The following sentences, e.g., illustrate cases when the *wh*-phrase is subject or complement. Interestingly, subject *wh*-phrases behave as objects and take the accusative at the front of the sentence in both languages, although in English this is not apparent due to the prevalence of *who* in both nominative and accusative.

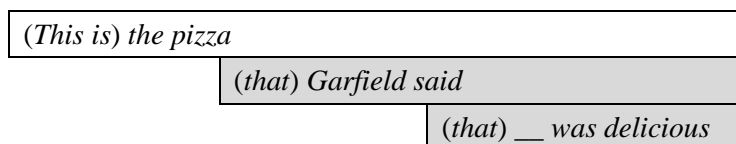
Who(m) did you say (that) __ turned up at the party? *Kit mondtál, hogy __ megjelent a buliban?*
Who(m) did you say (that) you saw __ ? *Kit mondtál, hogy láttad __ ?*

With adjunct *wh*-phrases, on the other hand, **ambiguity** arises in both languages. Since adjuncts are not licensed/selected by their heads, the information gap their fronting produces is not straightforwardly connectable to one or the other verbal heads in the sentence. E.g., in *Who did you say turned up at the party?*, *turn up* is the verb whose subject is “missing”, therefore the interpretation is unambiguous. However, in *When did you say he turned up at the party?*, the adjunct *wh*-phrase *when* can refer to either the time of saying or the time of turning up; being a time adjunct, it is able to modify either head. This difference between complements and adjuncts is found in English and Hungarian alike: in the following sentence pairs, the first contains complement fronting in both languages, while the second fronts an adjunct – in the latter case, the sentence has two possible interpretations, which you are invited to check for yourselves. Also, note that in speech, intonation can differentiate between the senses.

On whom did you say I could rely? vs. *On which day did you say I could come?*
Mikor mondtad, hogy születted? vs. *Mikor mondtad, hogy találkoztatok?*
‘When did you say you had been born?’ ‘When did you say you had met?’

Despite these similarities, English seems more flexible in long fronting than Hungarian, since any constituent is able to participate in it, while in Hungarian not all of them produce grammatical structures. E.g., while *How old did you say (that) you were?* is well-formed, its Hungarian equivalent does not work with long fronting (**Hány évest mondtál, hogy vagy?*), only the other option is available (*Mit mondtál, hány éves vagy?*).

Long movement is also found in **relative clauses** in both languages, e.g.:



The Hungarian equivalent is (*Ez*) az a pizza, amit Garfield mondott, hogy nagyon finom, which mirrors the English example in its structure. It also illustrates a major difference between English and Hungarian restrictive relative clauses (RRCs): in Hungarian, the NP also contains a demonstrative (e.g., *az*, *annyi*, *olyan*), which we have underlined; in contrast, English RRCs do not normally include such an element (cf. **that pizza that is delicious*). Compare the following Hungarian NPs with their English counterparts:

az a srác, aki beleszeretett egy nőbe ‘the guy who fell in love with a woman’
egy olyan nő, akivel egy étteremben találkozott ‘a woman that he met at a restaurant’

Consequently, in Hungarian RRCs and non-restrictive relative clauses (NRRCs) differ not only in pronunciation (via the intonational phrasing produced by pauses in speech, as explained above), but also in syntactic form: NPs with NRRCs have no demonstrative element. Let us see the “classical” example cited in Ch. 9.1 above again, this time the Hungarian NP pair:

a bátyám, aki állatorvos ‘my brother, who is a vet’
az a bátyám, aki/amelyik állatorvos ‘my brother who is a vet’

With respect to **headless (free, fused, nominal) relative clauses**, English is more important to discuss because, unlike in Hungarian, in English they largely differ in form from headed RCs; and because, although they are far less frequent than their headed peers, they show a wide variety in grammatical function.

First, as mentioned briefly above, certain relativisers, namely, *what* and the *-ever* pronouns (*whatever/whoever...*) are restricted to headless RCs. That is, at least in Standard English, they never modify an overt noun – their head is always covert, thus they always stand alone. Recall the examples from Ch. 9.1, of which the first one is of particular significance as it represents a typical mistake learners of English make:

**the topic what we are discussing*
 **whoever who wakes Garfield up*

Second, headless RCs (more precisely, the NPs containing them – see below) fulfil a number of grammatical functions. Here are a couple of examples:

S	<i>Whatever they accused him of turned out to be untrue</i>
O _d	<i>I want <u>what you want</u></i>
O _i	<i>I'll send <u>whoever emails me</u> a signed copy of my book</i>
C _s	<i>This is <u>what I want</u></i>
Al	<i>Home is <u>where the heart is</u></i>
C _o	<i>You can call me <u>what(ever) you wish</u></i>
C _{prep}	<i>From <u>what you say</u>, she's brilliant</i>

In some of their functions, it is easy to mix them up with indirect interrogatives. E.g., *I want what you want* is a headless RC, while *I'm not sure what you want* is an indirect question. The difference is that headless RCs are in fact NPs with a non-overt noun head, and therefore they can be paraphrased and replaced by corresponding overt noun + RRC sequences. Accordingly, *I want what you want* is equivalent to *I want the thing(s) that you want*, but *I'm not sure what you want* cannot be paraphrased as **I'm not sure the thing(s) that you want*. Instead, being an interrogative subclause, it contains a hidden question (*What do you want?*). What this also means⁸ is that in headless RCs there is always a covert noun, so they are always NPs, even though the noun head itself is invisible and therefore this is not straightforward. Therefore, it is not surprising that most of their grammatical functions (see the list above) are nominal functions, i.e., primarily characteristic of NPs.

A final note on headless RCs is the following. Since they are very similar to indirect interrogatives, sometimes it happens that exactly the same words are used for the two structures; i.e., sentences may be ambiguous between containing such a RC and containing some other nominal subclause. For example, the sentence *I know what you saw* may be interpreted as ‘I am familiar with the thing(s) that you saw’ (headless RC) or as ‘I know the answer to the question “What did you see?”’ (indirect *wh*-question); similarly, *What you saw is a mystery* either means ‘You saw a mysterious thing’ (headless RC) or ‘We have no information about what you saw’ (indirect *wh*-question).

⁸ Mind my subject here with a headless RC ☺

3. a. List all the *wh*-words of English, and add *at least 5* multi-word *wh*-phrases with *what*, *which* and *how* (like *how much*).
 - b. Write a direct *wh*-interrogative with each of the *wh*-phrases on your list. Try to use various main verbs, including phrasal verbs, and different constructions, e.g., preposition stranding. Avoid *you* as the subject pronoun.
 - c. Rewrite your questions into long *wh*-interrogatives by adding *do you think* (no backshift needed) and *did you say* (backshift needed).

4. Find the headless relative clauses in the following sentences and identify their grammatical functions.
 1. *What doesn't kill you makes you stronger*
 2. *Whoever needs help from Garfield is going to wait a long time*
 3. *The little statue is for whoever it designates as the award winner*
 4. *You can choose whatever you like*
 5. *She looks pretty whatever she wears*
 6. *Whatever she wears suits her*

5. Compare the following two sentences. Which of them is ambiguous? Why? Why is the other not ambiguous?
 - a. *We'll ask him when we get there*
 - b. *We'll ask him when to get there*



10.1 Information packaging

In Ch. 7.1 we saw how simple sentences are usually structured, i.e., what the most frequent, “unmarked” clause structures are. Then, in Ch. 8.1 and 9.1 we introduced the most frequent types of complex sentences. This chapter deals with a set of special configurations, some of which are clause-level variations (i.e., any single clause can contain them), some involve at least two clauses and are therefore always complex or compound-complex. What they have in common is that they function to help the speaker/writer express their message in communication in different ways depending on how they wish to present (or “package”) the information, what they wish to emphasise, etc. Notice, for example, that passive voice fulfils exactly that function in most cases: *You ate six donuts* can be paraphrased as *Six donuts were eaten* to ignore the “agent”, the “doer” of the action of eating; alternatively, it can be amended with *by you*, as in the example, with the opposite effect: to emphasise the agent. We discuss the passive construction in detail below.

Examples of the Three Voices in Writing	
1. Active Voice	“You ate six donuts.”
2. Passive Voice	“Six donuts were eaten by you.”
3. Passive-Aggressive Voice	“You ate six donuts and I didn’t get any. Don’t worry, it’s cool. I can see donuts are very important to you.”

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However, the passive is not the only method for “packaging” your message. There are a whole lot of constructions for that, listed in the following chart. Most of the examples are variants of the basic sentence *Garfield broke the vase (yesterday)*.

Passive	<i><u>The vase</u> was broken by Garfield yesterday</i>
Preposing	<i><u>The vase</u>, Garfield broke yesterday</i>
Postposing	<i>Garfield broke yesterday <u>the valuable vase that Jon got from Aunt Jill</u></i>
Cleft	<i>It was <u>Garfield</u> who broke the vase yesterday</i>
Pseudo-cleft	<i>What Garfield broke yesterday was <u>the vase</u></i>
Inversion	<i>There lay the vase, broken to pieces Never before has Garfield broken any of Jon’s vases</i>
Existential	<i><u>There</u> used to be a vase on that shelf</i>
Extraposition	<i>It is evident <u>that Garfield broke the vase</u> I don’t find it surprising <u>that Garfield broke the vase</u></i>
Dislocation	<i>He broke the vase, <u>Garfield</u> <u>Garfield</u>, he broke the vase</i>

In what follows we discuss these briefly one by one, skipping the passive in this first part, as that construction is given a thorough analysis at the end of the chapter. So, the first structure to explain here is **preposing**. It means that a phrase moves to the beginning of the sentence to get into focus, as in *The vase, Garfield broke yesterday*. Some sources also call it **fronting** but that may be a bit misleading to us because we use that name for *wh*-fronting, a movement that takes place for a very special reason and is typically accompanied by Subject-Operator Inversion (SOI) in main clauses like the ones relevant here (cf. Ch. 9.1). However, we should not mix the two up because the preposing we are dealing with here is never paired with inversion: simply, a constituent comes forward. As a result, it gets highlighted, either to be emphatic (the **focus** of the clause) or to be able to introduce a **topic** or topic shift. Basically any sentence element for which the initial position is unusual, “marked”, will receive prominence when placed at the front: NPs (other than the subject), complements, adjuncts (other than certain time adverbials – see Ch. 11.1) will sound “odd” at the beginning and thus catch the listener/reader’s attention. Further examples include:

Very good pizza we had yesterday!
Why he did this we will probably never find out
A strange cat, he is indeed

We are planning to survey the syntax of English. To be able to do so, we need to read a few books first
Still packed in white tissue paper, the plates were stacked on the worktop in the kitchen

We mentioned above that the two main functions of preposing are focus fronting and topicalisation. As the names suggest, **focus fronting**¹ moves an element that needs special emphasis with extra stress, frequently because it is contrasted with something already said; whereas **topicalisation** moves a phrase that represents old information (something mentioned before), and the new information (the focus) only follows in the rest of the clause. In clauses with topicalisation, usually a pause is held after the topic in pronunciation, which is frequently signalled in writing with a comma.² Consider the following examples, and also compare them to their Hungarian equivalents. The preposed elements are underlined, whereas the foci, which receive major stress in speech, are in small caps.

(A: *Jon brought the pasta*) B: THE PIZZA Jon brought A PIZZÁT hozta Jon focus fronting
 (We have some pizza and pasta) The pizza, JON brought A pizzát JON hozta topicalisation

The second construction to examine is **postposing**, which is basically the opposite: a phrase moves to the end of the sentence. The motivation, however, is totally different in this case: it happens to facilitate processing the sentence when it contains a particularly long constituent that would normally occur in the middle. In our example above, for instance, we have a transitive verb with two modifiers, a direct object and an adjunct. Normally, the verb is immediately followed by the complement, and the adjunct can only come later:

Garfield broke the vase yesterday
 **Garfield broke yesterday the vase*

However, when the object NP has many modifiers and becomes long as a result, the sentence with that order of the elements sounds “awkward” and hard to process:

Garfield broke the valuable vase that Jon got from Aunt Jill yesterday

Therefore, in such cases the long NP swaps places with the adjunct:

Garfield broke yesterday the valuable vase that Jon got from Aunt Jill

In fact, object NPs are very frequently involved in this phenomenon, and these subcases have their own name, **heavy NP shift**. The other category frequently postposed is the object *that*-clause, e.g., *He explained to me that Garfield is the most unbearable creature on earth*, where the dative PP normally follows the direct object. Sometimes it is not the whole “oversized” phrase that moves but only a part of it, in which case it is divided into the half remaining in the default clausal position (containing the head) and the half shifted to the end of the sentence. That way, so-called **discontinuous** constituents are created, i.e., something intervenes to separate the beginning from the end. E.g., in *I’m so fond in many ways of this overweight orange tabby cat*, the underlined PP is postposed, with the head adjective *fond* left behind, in the original clausal slot. Similarly, when a relative clause is postposed, as in *We will meet a cat tomorrow that hates Mondays and eats pizza and lasagne*, the determiner–noun string is separated from it, and thus the NP is discontinuous.

The next two constructions under scrutiny also involve cutting constituents into two: we “cleave” clauses when we produce two major structures used for focalising: **cleft sentences** and **pseudo-cleft sentences**. What they have in common is that they contain a **focus position**: a slot where

¹ As explained above, *focus preposing* might be a better choice for a name. Still, we use *focus fronting* here since it is somewhat more widespread in the literature.

² Notice my topic, *in clauses with topicalisation*, at the beginning of this very sentence! ☺

a constituent chosen to be emphasised comes, and the rest of the clause is found separated from it. They also both involve a form of *be* (in the relevant tense/aspect) as the main verb, and a relative clause-like element (a *wh*- or *that*-relative in cleft sentences, and a headless RC in pseudo-cleft sentences):

cleft sentence	pseudo-cleft sentences
<i>it (be) ___ that/wh- (rest of clause)</i>	<i>wh- (rest of clause) (be) ___</i>
<i>It was <u>the vase</u> that Garfield broke</i>	<i>What Garfield broke was <u>the vase</u></i>
<i>It was <u>Garfield</u> who broke the vase</i>	<i>Whoever broke the vase was <u>Garfield</u></i>
<i>It was <u>break the vase</u> that Garfield did</i>	<i>What Garfield did was <u>break the vase</u></i>

Because of the headless RC at the beginning, the pseudo-cleft structure is also called **wh-cleft**, and it has two further subtypes: the so-called **reversed pseudo-cleft** (e.g., *The vase is what Garfield broke*), and the **all-cleft** (e.g., *All (that) Garfield did was break the vase*). All of these constructions are primarily characteristic of written and literary language, and are used for focalising, very often compensating for the absence of intonational differences which serve this function in spoken English.

The next method for packaging information in English is **inversion**. It has so many forms that the whole following chapter is devoted to this topic. In a nutshell, they can be grouped into two major formal classes:

Subject-Verb Inversion: *There lay the vase, broken to pieces*

Subject-Operator Inversion: *Never before has Garfield broken any of Jon's vases*

Under **Subject-Verb Inversion**, the lexical verb (marked by single underlining) inverts with the subject (double underlining) to produce the reverse of the normal, “unmarked” word order; at the same time, a constituent is fronted (*there* in our example). Notice that in the neutral word order the clause goes *The vase lay there*. The other main form of inversion is **Subject-Operator Inversion (SOI)**, which we are already familiar with from Ch. 9.1 as the process applying in direct questions. As we will see, it is not only the fronting of *wh*-elements that can trigger it but, e.g., phrases with negative meaning (such as *never before*) can also be focalised by fronting, which is also accompanied by inversion, as you can see in the example sentence above. This time, however, it is not the main verb but the operator (single underlining) that inverts with the subject (double underlining). The various types of inversion, and of SOI in particular, are examined in Ch. 11.

Our example of Subject-Verb Inversion above, *There lay the vase*, is seemingly the same as the so-called **existential construction**, illustrated by *There used to be a vase on that shelf*. Notice, however, that the two *there*'s are different: one is an adverb phrase, the (distal) opposite of (proximal³) *here*, whereas the other functions as the subject NP of the existential construction, more like a pronoun. There⁴ is no contradiction in a sentence like *There used to be a vase here*, whereas **There lay the vase here* is ungrammatical. In addition, inversion occurs with other adverbs as well (see Ch. 11), whereas the existential clause always has *there* as the subject: a semantically empty NP, similar to the semantically empty auxiliary *do* (Ch. 4.1). And the function of the existential construction is as that of the above structures, i.e., to shift focus: *A vase used to be on that shelf* puts stress on the place of the vase, the shelf; *There used to be a vase on that shelf* rather emphasises the very existence of the vase on the shelf.

The next process is **extraposition**, which is similar to postposing and the shifting of “heavy” elements in motivation: a long constituent moves out of its usual position to ease processing. This time, however, the semantically empty pronoun *it* appears in the sentence to mark the original slot of the extraposed constituent, which is either subject or object originally:

³ Cf. proximal and distal demonstratives, Ch. 2.1 and 3.1.

⁴ ;)

extraposed subject: *It is evident that Garfield broke the vase*
extraposed object: *I don't find it surprising that Garfield broke the vase*

Notice that extraposition can be “undone” to yield a well-formed, though odd-sounding, sentence, cf.:

That Garfield broke the vase is evident
I don't find that Garfield broke the vase surprising

This is evidence of the original function of the extraposed constituent. Also, this is the difference between extraposition and cleft sentences:

It is evident that Garfield broke the vase
 cf. *That Garfield broke the vase is evident*
It is Garfield that broke the vase
 cf. **That broke the vase is Garfield*

That is, in a cleft sentence the dummy pronoun *it* does not simply replace an element that has been moved out.

Finally, **dislocation** is another method to move a constituent either to the front or the end of the sentence, but it differs from preposing and postposing in that a pronoun is left behind in the original clause position; and it differs from extraposition in that the pronoun is not semantically empty but it is a true personal pronoun agreeing in person and number with the dislocated NP. When shifting happens to the beginning of the sentence, i.e., to the left edge, it is called **left dislocation** (*Garfield, he broke the vase*); when it happens to the end, i.e., to the right edge, it is called **right dislocation** (*He broke the vase, Garfield*). Compare left dislocation and preposing:

left dislocation: *The vase, Garfield broke it yesterday*
 preposing: *The vase, Garfield broke yesterday*

Recall that preposing simply means moving the constituent to the front, whereas left dislocation also involves the insertion of the personal pronoun, i.e., the constituent is present in the construction twice. In function, left dislocation is like clefting or similar structures: it can be used to emphasise or define a topic. The meaning of *The vase, Garfield broke it yesterday* is similar to that of *It is the vase that Garfield broke yesterday* or *As for the vase, Garfield broke it yesterday*. Right dislocation, on the other hand, is more like adding a clarifying afterthought: in *He broke the vase, Garfield*, Garfield is adduced to clarify exactly who we mean.

This concludes the list of our information packaging constructions. Recall, however, that the most basic is **passivisation**, whose primary function is to shift focus from the “doer” or “agent” of an action to the passive “undergoer” – hence the name. In the vase story, for instance, Garfield is the agent and the vase is the undergoer: this is constant in both the active and the passive versions, since fundamental meaning relations are the same. The categories of these constituents are also constant: the same NPs are “moving around”. What differs is the grammatical functions these phrases receive in the sentences (see the shaded area in the example below): passivisation is a **grammatical function changing** transformation.

active		passive	
<i>Garfield broke the vase yesterday</i>		<i>The vase was broken by Garfield yesterday</i>	
agent	undergoer	undergoer	agent
NP	NP	NP	NP
subject	object	subject	adjunct

Formally, the passive construction is composed of the passive auxiliary *be* followed by the past participle. The role of the passive auxiliary can also be played by *get*, in which case the subtype is

called **the get-passive**. Passive voice is used in English out of two basic, but interestingly opposing, motivations:

- when the identity of the agent is unknown or general, or deliberately avoided because unimportant or obvious:

The vase was broken yesterday

This is called **short passive** (or agentless passive); it is characterised by impersonality, and is therefore more common in written English than in speech, in formal language than in informal contexts. Notice that it has no active counterpart. In addition, notice that the same effect can be produced by other means, e.g., by choosing certain intransitive verbs with non-agent subjects (e.g., *An error has occurred*, as in the example here, which of course does *not* involve the passive voice).

- when the agent is to be emphasised:

The vase was broken by Garfield (and not by Odie)

This is called **long passive** because, in contrast to the short passive, it includes the agent in the form of a PP called the **by-phrase**.

A secondary function of the long passive is to avoid a long, “heavy” subject (a kind of “heavy NP shift”), as in *Nobody is surprised by the fact that Garfield broke Jon’s valuable vase*.

In Ch. 4.1 passivisation was used as a test to identify objects. There we saw that verbs with two objects (i.e., **ditransitive verbs**) can (theoretically) be made passive in two ways, cf.:

The postman handed Garfield the birthday cards
Garfield was handed the birthday cards
?The birthday cards were handed Garfield

In practice, however, the indirect object (*Garfield*) passivises more readily than the direct object (*the birthday cards*). The problem can be solved by extracting the direct object from a **complex-transitive** construction, cf.:

The postman handed the birthday cards to Garfield
The birthday cards were handed to Garfield

The complements of prepositions are also objects in the sense that they can be passivised (cf. *The doctors operated on Jon* vs. *Jon was operated on*). PPs are also frequent in complex-transitive structures, even in collocations such as *take care of sy/sg* (a V-NP-PP string!), and they can be passivised in the same way, cf. *Garfield has been taken care of*. Complex-transitive verbs with a (direct) object and an object complement, like *consider*, also undergo passivisation, but only the object can be passivised. The object complement is not an object (but in fact, a predicative constituent in a verbless clause, cf. Ch. 8.1), cf.:

Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage



www.savagechickens.com

Why shouldn't you listen to music radio while you do English syntax?



Because you start using the Guetta-passive with a Bye-phrase.

Everyone considers Jon a failure
Jon is considered a failure
**A failure is considered (to) Jon*

So-called **multi-word verbs**, when transitive, lend themselves to passivisation, too, e.g.:

Odie woke up Garfield
Garfield got woken up by Odie
(so-called phrasal verb)

Jon has looked after Garfield
Garfield has been looked after
(so-called prepositional verb)

As a final verb class to mention here, the so-called middle verbs (Ch. 4.1) as well as certain transitive verbs can not be used in the passive. These include *become, fit, get, have, lack, let, like, resemble, suit*, and a few others.

As you can see, the passive construction is one of the most frequent information packaging tools, with two major functions (as explained above) and many subcases. In addition, passivised verbs are used in certain other structures like forms of what is called raising (e.g., *Garfield is said to be the most sarcastic cat in the world*) and the causative (e.g., *Jon has had the broken vase fixed*).

10.2 Further reading

On information packaging and emphasis: CGEL 2; ALP 14; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 1.3; AGU 115–120 📖 On Passive Voice: T&M 30; ALP 6–7; AGU 29–32 📖 On fronting movements: BESE 7.5; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 4.1–4.3 📖 On movement to focus position, clefting and pseudo-clefting: Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 4.4–4.5.

10.3 Practice exercises

1. Identify the information packaging constructions in the following examples.

1. *It rained all night the day I left, the weather it was dry*
2. *I let it fall, my heart*
3. *All the things you'd say, they were never true*
4. *Unhappiness, where was when I was young*
5. *My father, he liked me*
6. *What the world needs now is love, sweet love*
It's the only thing that there's just too little of
7. *The sea it swells like a sore head and the night it is aching*
8. *My hands, they're strong*
9. *I was shot down in cold blood by an angel in blue jeans*
10. *All that she wants is another baby*

2. Package the information in the following sentences differently by finishing their variants.

1. *I've come to discuss my future with you*
The reason why ...
2. *Your generosity impresses me more than anything else*
The thing that ...
3. *The jewels are hidden under the floor at 23 Robin Hood Road, Epping*
The place where ...
Under the floor at 23 Robin Hood Road is ...
4. *Mary works harder than anybody else in this organisation*
The person who ...
Mary is ...
5. *The Second World War ended on 7 May 1945 in Europe*

The day (when) ...

7 May 1945 was ...

6. *We now need actions rather than words*

What ...

Actions rather than words ...

7. *I enjoyed the brilliant music most of all in the Ballet Frankfurt performance*

What ...

The brilliant music was ...

8. *The police interviewed all the witnesses to the accident first*

What the police did first was ...

9. *You should invest all your money in telecoms companies*

What you should do is ...

What you should invest all your money in is ...

10. *She writes all her novels on a typewriter*

What ...

11. *Their car broke down on the motorway so they didn't get to Jo's wedding on time*

What happened was that ...

12. *I want a new coat for Christmas*

All I want for Christmas is ...

A new coat is ...

13. *I touched the bedside light and it broke*

All ...

14. *My brother bought his new car from our next-door neighbour last Saturday*

It was my brother ...

It was last Saturday ...

It was a new car ...

It was our next-door neighbour ...

3. Rewrite these sentences with preposed participle clauses as shown in the example.

Example: *He built two schools in the capital city after he had left his hometown*

Having left his hometown, he built two schools in the capital city

1. *Fred has been appointed director as he is known to be an expert in the field*

2. *We went by coach because we found the train way too expensive*

3. *It's a useful book since it explains everything clearly*

4. *I couldn't phone you because I hadn't got your number*

5. *They had dinner before they went to the training*

4. Rewrite the following sentences in such a way that "heavy" constituents are positioned at the end.

1. *That Garfield should spare Odie a slice of pizza is surprising*

2. *The agent got in touch with the secret members of the movement in London*

3. *To say no is not always easy*

4. *Everybody in the team considers how the leading coach talks to his colleagues rude*

5. *I haven't met anyone who is able to eat so much lasagne in one sitting before*

5. Passivise the following sentences.

1. *Garfield is believed to have played a cruel trick on Odie*

2. *I hate others keeping me waiting*

3. *The farmer shouldn't have fed the chickens so early in the morning*

4. *People are likely to re-elect the president*

5. *You may as well have deleted that message because we won't need the information anymore*

6. *This time next year they will have been building the railway for 5 years*

10.4 Extension: Raising and the causative

Raising structures and the various forms of the causative are related to passivisation because both may involve a passive verb form as well as a suppression of the “agent” from the focus in the interpretation of their clauses – this way they can also be considered as modes of information packaging.

In Ch. 10.1 above we saw that passivisation is a grammatical function changing operation in which the object of the active structure becomes the subject. An interesting question arising at this point is whether that is always what happens when a passive verb form is used in a clause – and the answer is no. Consider a verb like *believe* as an example. When it is complemented by a subclause, that may be finite or non-finite:

*Everyone believes [that Garfield is selfish]
Everyone believes [Garfield to be selfish]*

Since *believe* is transitive, it is possible to passivise it, to yield the form *(be) believed*. Recall that the active subject disappears from the “canonical” subject position, either completely (short passive) or being “demoted” to adjunct function (in the *by*-phrase – long passive). Accordingly, the emerging intermediate, incomplete constructions, one with a finite subclause (a) and one with a non-finite subclause (b), are the following:

- a. *__ is believed [that Garfield is selfish] (by everyone)*
- b. *__ is believed [Garfield to be selfish] (by everyone)*

In the case of the finite subclause, there are two options to complete the sentence: by simply moving the *that*-clause into the subject position, exactly the way object NPs move under passivisation, with obligatory long passive (c), or by filling it with expletive *it* (the dummy subject pronoun – Ch. 2.4), producing an extraposition-like construction (d):

- a. *__ is believed [that Garfield is selfish] (by everyone)*
- c. *[That Garfield is selfish] is believed by everyone*
- d. *It is believed [that Garfield is selfish] (by everyone)*⁵

With the non-finite subclause, however, the situation is more problematic, since neither of these strategies produce a well-formed sentence, whether the passive is short or long:

- b. *__ is believed [Garfield to be selfish] (by everyone)*
- e. ** [Garfield to be selfish] is believed (by everyone)*
- f. ** It is believed [Garfield to be selfish] (by everyone)*

Instead, what happens in such cases is that the subject of the non-finite subclause moves up into the subject position of the matrix clause:

- g. *Garfield is believed [__ to be selfish] (by everyone)*⁶

⁵ If the *by*-phrase is present, the *that*-clause is normally postposed: *It is believed by everyone that Garfield is selfish*.

⁶ Alternatively, the object clause moves to the end of the sentence through “heavy shift” (cf. Ch. 10.1): *Garfield is believed by everyone to be selfish*.

This is called **raising** since a subject in a lower clause gets “promoted” to become a subject higher up in the syntactic hierarchy. In the following examples you can see further matrix verbs whose passivisation may trigger raising:

Garfield is said to be selfish
Garfield is thought to be selfish
Garfield is supposed to be selfish
Garfield is alleged to be selfish
Garfield is assumed to be selfish

Besides certain passivised verbs, there are other predicative elements occurring in such constructions: so-called **raising verbs** and **raising adjectives**, cf.:

Garfield seems [__ to be selfish] *Garfield is likely [__ to kick Odie]*
Garfield appears [__ to be selfish] *Garfield is unlikely [__ to spare Odie a slice]*
Garfield happens [__ to be here] *Garfield is certain [__ to kick Odie]*

In all the above cases raising only takes place when the complement clause is non-finite; with finite subclauses the normal solution is with dummy *it*:

It is believed that Garfield is selfish
It seems that Garfield is selfish
It is likely that Garfield will kick Odie

A construction resembling raising affects objects. It is traditionally referred to as **tough movement**, since the “classical” example involves the adjective *tough*:

This problem is tough [PRO_{arb} to solve __]

As with raising, in *tough* movement, too, the alternative with non-referential *it* is available, cf. *It is tough to solve this problem*. Find further adjectives and NPs allowing this construction in the following examples:

Garfield is not easy to please *Jon was a pleasure to meet*
Those cars are too dangerous to drive *The exam was a breeze to pass*
These tips are useful to remember *This cake is delicious, and a cinch to make*
She is fun to be with *Scuba diving is a fun thing to do*
Cigarettes are illegal to buy under 18 *This ballet is a delight to watch*

You are invited to check for yourself that all of these sentences have variants starting with dummy *it*. In addition to such adjectives and NPs, the verb *take* can also raise embedded objects as in *This problem will take Jon a long time to solve*.

The causative is another structure involving relationships between participants which diverge from the simple agent–undergoer setting. It is called so because here the subject *causes* the agent *to do* something (in the type called **active causative**), or *causes* something *to happen* to another participant (in the **passive causative**), with the agent either expressed (in a *by*-phrase) or left implicit (as in short passives).

The patterns of the **passive causative** are the following:

HAVE	sg	DONE	<i>The king <u>had his portrait painted</u> by a famous Italian artist</i>
GET	sg	DONE	<i>The place has been much cosier since they <u>got it redecorated</u></i>

An unusual subcase of the passive causative is what is called the **happenstance passive**. It coincides with it in form, but in meaning it is different: it usually describes an unfortunate event or accident that the subject did not intentionally cause, so in fact the subject is more like an undergoer of the event;

e.g., *She got her purse stolen while on holiday*. Other, apparently analogous structures include the ones in examples such as *I should be able to get the essay finished by midnight*; *Something got me started*; *Let's get the party started*. The meaning in these sentences, however, is not causation since there is no (explicit or implicit) agent separate from the subject (and as a result, the *by*-phrase cannot be present). The verb *make* can also be used in this pattern, with a past participle verb, as in *I finally managed to make myself understood* or *She made it known that she was the CEO's daughter*.




The patterns of the **active causative** are the following:

HAVE	sy	DO sg	<i>I'll have the porter bring your luggage up</i>
GET	sy	TO DO sg	<i>If only we could get him to work harder!</i>
MAKE	sy	DO sg	<i>The boss made us work for 12 hours a day</i>
HAVE	sy	DOING sg	<i>Whenever something went wrong, you had me believing it was always something that I'd done</i>
GET	sy	DOING sg	<i>Fred managed to get my PC working again</i>

Out of these constructions, *make* can be passivised, in which case it changes patterns and requires the *to*-infinitive, e.g., *We were made to work for 12 hours a day*.

As far as meaning is concerned, in certain cases these constructions express persuasion rather than direct causation, and *make* may even convey the meaning of 'evoke a reaction/response' as in *This sad film made me cry*, although normally it is identical to 'force sy to do sg'. The meanings of *have* and *get* are very close, but *get* may imply more force or persuasion. In fact, semantic relations similar to what these constructions express also appear in a series of truly lexical matrix verbs such as *cause, force, compel, persuade, convince*, etc.

Further reading

The syntactic analysis of raising: BESE 8.2.1; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 5.3  On the passive and the causative: Cowan 2008: 17  On extraposition and raising: Cowan 2008: 20  On focus structures: Cowan 2008: 22.

10.5 Practice exercises

1. Consider the constructions exemplified by the following sentences, and discuss whether they are raising structures. Warning: sentence (d) is ambiguous (but (c) is not)!

- These pictures are pretty to look at*
Lee's mattress is too lumpy to sleep on
- Alan is eager to participate*
- This is a nice place to write*
- This lamb is too hot to eat*



2. Identify the constructions discussed above in the following sentences.

- Garfield seems to be likely to kick Odie*
- It seems that it is likely that Garfield will kick Odie*
- It seems that Garfield is likely to kick Odie*
- Jon is unlikely to be chosen for the job*
- Who was invited?*
- Who do you think is likely to have found the solution?*
- Who seems to be said to have been selected?*

3. Complete the sentences to produce the different forms of the causative.

- Dr. Smith _____ his nurse take the patient's temperature*
- How can parents _____ their children to read more?*

3. I _____ the mechanic check the brakes
4. John _____ me drive his new car
5. My teacher _____ me apologise for what I had said
6. She _____ her children do their homework
7. Susie _____ her son to take the medicine even though it tasted terrible
8. The government TV commercials are trying to _____ people to stop smoking

4. Match the examples below to the names of the constructions in the box. Focus on the underlined fragments. Encircle the dummy subjects.

(left) dislocation, (short) passive, active causative, cleft, existential, extraposition, long *wh*-movement, passive causative, postposing, preposing, pseudo-cleft, raising, SOI, subject-verb inversion

1. It's outside that I park my car
2. The Guardian I sometimes read
3. Who do you think you are?
4. John seems to have won on the lottery
5. What I like watching is comedy programmes
6. These pictures lay naked the horror of growing old
7. Beneath this stone lies the body of Samuel Taylor Coleridge
8. It won't take long to do this exercise
9. Never had I expected this
10. The Browns are having their sitting-room redecorated
11. There could hardly have been a more extraordinary coincidence
12. This church was built in the 17th century
13. Monica, she's been living here for 3 years now
14. Did somebody make you wear that ugly hat?

5. The following examples are not acceptable in (Present-day) Standard English, the variety taught in the EFL classroom. Discuss their grammatical structure as well as the circumstances under which they are well-formed.

1. Take on me, take me on
2. Ain't nobody loves me better
3. I'm loving it
4. That don't impress me much
5. Where do you go, my lovely? I wanna know
6. I'm going to Louisiana my true love for to see
7. If I would have known that you wanted me the way I wanted you
8. Tell me what we are seeing
9. Ain't no sunshine when she's gone
10. You and me would write a bad romance
11. There's a whole lot of problems here
12. Men shall know who that I am



11.1 Word order and types of inversion

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by Doug Savage



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The basic, “unmarked” word order in English is **Subject-Verb-Object** – that is, the clause starts with the subject, which is followed by the (lexical) verb. Both elements are obligatory: there are no (full) sentences¹ in English without them; the subject can only be hidden, unpronounced in certain non-finite subclauses; and the verb is only absent in verbless clauses (cf. Ch. 8.1). As the most important complement, the object normally immediately follows the verb (as long as the verb is transitive, of course). In this chapter, in the first part we discuss a few issues concerning typical, neutral word order; then the second part deals with “marked”, unusual word orders produced by the fronting of an element and/or the inversion of others.

Besides the Subject-Verb-Object requirement, the other general rule of word order stems from the difference between **complements and adjuncts** (cf. Ch. 2.1): adjuncts cannot normally intervene between the head and the complement, cf.:

Sometimes Jon buys Garfield a pizza
Jon sometimes buys Garfield a pizza
**Jon buys sometimes Garfield a pizza*
**Jon buys Garfield sometimes a pizza*
Jon buys Garfield a pizza sometimes

As you can see, the indirect object NP *Garfield* as well as the direct object NP *a pizza* have to closely follow the verb *buy*, in accordance with both general rules – objects always come *after* the head, and, what really concerns us here, the adjunct *sometimes* can be inserted into the sentence in several ways as long as it does not separate the verb from its objects.² When adjuncts are “stacked”, however, there is no ordering restriction, and they can freely arrange:

This happened in London in 2001
This happened in 2001 in London

For learners of English, a special difficulty is caused by **adverbials**. Being peripheral adjuncts rather than central complements, place and time adverbials are usually “driven” to the edges of the clause, and generally take either the front position or the end position:

In the kitchen, the mice are playing in the cupboard
The mice are playing in the cupboard in the kitchen

Yesterday Garfield devoured all the lasagne
Garfield devoured all the lasagne yesterday

¹ In speech, of course, these elements may be ellipped (cf. Ch. 12.1), as in *Dunno* or in short answers constituted by sentence fragments like (What did you buy?) *Bread and a dozen eggs*.

² The final logical possibility, **Jon buys Garfield a sometimes pizza*, is out for a slightly different reason: *sometimes* and *a pizza* are two separate phrases both modifying the verb, therefore one cannot “intrude” into the other.

A special subgroup of time adverbs is **adverbs of frequency**: they typically produce one-word AdvPs, which are positioned **after the (place of the) operator**. In addition, a few other time AdvPs (e.g., *soon, yet*) can also stand in that position. In the following examples the (place of the) operator is underlined (note the fronted operator in the interrogative due to SOI) and the adverbs are given in small capitals.

I will ALWAYS love you
I 've NEVER felt this way before
You are ALWAYS on my mind
He NEVER cleans up
Have you EVER really loved a woman?
The day will SOON come

Notice the crucial difference here between verb and operator: when both are present, the adverb of course comes in-between (e.g., *I 've NEVER felt this way before*); when only one is found in the clause, however, the adverb either precedes (e.g., *He NEVER cleans up*) or follows (e.g., *You are ALWAYS on my mind*) the verb. The former case is when the finite inflection of the clause lands on a lexical verb other than *be*; the latter is when the lexical verb is *be*, which, strangely enough, always behaves as if it was an operator, even when it is the only verb in the clause. Cf.:

- a. *Garfield is ALWAYS hungry*
- b. *Garfield is ALWAYS mocking Odie*
- c. *Garfield is ALWAYS woken up by the sound of the doorbell*

Although *be* is a lexical verb (the copula) in (a), the progressive auxiliary in (b) and the passive auxiliary in (c), as long as it is the tense-carrying element in the clause, it occupies the same position and precedes the adverb of frequency.

These are the general principles of the place of adverbials in clauses. Unfortunately, there are a few that exhibit individual behaviour, e.g., *still*, which takes the position of adverbs of frequency (as explained above) when its clause is positive (e.g., *I'm still standing*), but when the clause is negative, it precedes the operator (e.g., *I still haven't found what I'm looking for*). Nevertheless, most adverbials follow the regularities described above.

Marked, i.e., special word orders constitute another source of difficulty for learners of English. They arise when two clause elements swap places, producing the reverse order; such an operation is called **inversion**. Inversion has **two major formal subtypes**:

- when a finite auxiliary inverts with the subject. This is traditionally called **Subject-Auxiliary Inversion (SAI)**; however, as it does not affect *any* auxiliary but the operator only, we refer to it as **Subject-Operator Inversion (SOI)**, cf. Ch. 4.1). It produces the familiar “question word order”.
- when a lexical verb inverts with the subject. This is called **Subject-Verb Inversion (SVI)**. Since it only takes place when certain adverbials are fronted (e.g., *Here comes the summer sun*), in certain idiomatic expressions (e.g., *Long live the Queen*), and in literary style (e.g., *Into the valley of death rode the six hundred*), we will not discuss it here in detail.

Interestingly, the two are formally identical when the finite verb in a clause is *be*: recall from the above discussion that *be* can act as the operator; unlike other lexical verbs, it does not need *do*-support. As a consequence, whether it is SOI or SVI, it is always *be* that moves:

SOI: *When is Garfield hungry?*
 SVI: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*

The function of inversion is in general to bring about a special word order, which signals and supports the special function of a sentence or clause; at the same time, this produces a more dramatic effect, therefore inversion is also a very important stylistic device. In terms of that function, the various types

of inversion can be classified in different ways. For example, we can distinguish four **functional subtypes**:

- grammatical inversion: taking place for grammatical purposes, primarily to achieve “interrogative force” in direct questions (e.g., *(When) is Garfield hungry?*)
- lexical inversion: limited to certain lexical items as triggers (mainly, locative adverbs (e.g., *Here comes the bride, big, fat and wide*) and negative phrases (e.g., *Never have I felt more embarrassed*))
- stylistic inversion: chosen for a stylistic effect (e.g., *Should you have any further questions, do not hesitate to ask me* or *In a canyon dwelt a miner*³)
- information packaging (cf. Ch. 10.1) inversions (e.g., *On the table were two bottles of French wine*)

The chart below provides a summary of the **formal types of inversion**⁴, classifying them into the two major subtypes introduced above (SOI/SVI). Very often the trigger of the inversion is the fronting of a constituent (underlined in the chart), e.g., in *Never have I felt more embarrassed*, the negative adverbial *never* is fronted for emphasis, and subsequently the question word order is formed. In some of the subtypes, especially comparative inversion, the triggering element has not straightforwardly moved out of the clause, but is rather a conjunction (e.g., *as, than*) at the front that allows for the inversion. Whenever no fronting is involved (like yes/no interrogatives and conditional inversion), the marked word order itself carries the special function (and as a result, these constructions are formally identical).

	with fronting	no fronting
SOI	direct <i>wh</i>-interrogatives <i><u>When</u> is Garfield hungry?</i> semi-indirect speech <i>He asked me <u>who</u> did I meet at the party</i> <i>wh</i>-exclamatives <i><u>How beautiful</u> are the flowers!</i> negative inversion <i><u>Never</u> have I felt more embarrassed</i> with <i>so/such</i> (... <i>that</i>) <i><u>Such</u> is Garfield’s popularity that nobody condemns him for his greed</i> with <i>so</i> and <i>nor/neither</i> in short responses ⁵ <i><u>Neither</u> do I</i> comparative inversion with SOI ⁶ <i>The train isn’t any faster <u>than</u> is the coach</i> <i>We travel to Budapest every day, <u>as</u> do most of the people who live in the neighbourhood</i>	direct yes/no interrogatives <i>Had he been more careful?</i> semi-indirect speech <i>He asked me should he feed the cat</i> yes/no exclamatives <i>Doesn’t it rain! Oh boy was I tired!</i> conditional inversion <i>Had he been more careful, he wouldn’t be in trouble now</i> <i>Should you have any further questions, do not hesitate to ask me</i>

³ The full text is “In a cavern, in a canyon / Excavating for a mine / Dwelt a miner forty-niner / And his daughter Clementine.”

⁴ Inversion is also a common literary device characterising poetry in particular (but is also applied in “simple” story-telling in direct quotations like “*I do*”, *answered the bride*), whereby further categories may invert, in a non-productive, creative way. We are not concerned with such cases here.

⁵ These also called “echoing” statements, with two forms: agreeing (*so*) and disagreeing (*neither/nor*).

⁶ Comparative inversion is optional, therefore sentences like *The train isn’t any faster than the coach is* are well-formed, too. As a further alternative, *than* can also function as a preposition, followed by a single NP, as in *The train isn’t any faster than the coach*.

	with fronting	no fronting
SVI	with adverbials (AdvPs and PPs) <i>Here's your coffee</i> <i>Long live the Queen</i> <i>In a canyon dwelt a miner</i> comparative inversion with SVI <i>Usually the train would be very fast, <u>as</u> would be the coach</i>	in conditional-concessive clauses ⁷ <i>Be it so or not, I believe that he is innocent</i> <i>Be they rich or poor, they've got love on their side</i>

Notice that comparative inversion appears twice in the chart since it is not only used with SOI but, in certain cases, with SVI, too. In the rest of the chapter we examine negative inversion and conditional inversion a bit more closely, and at the end we discuss structures involving fronting without inversion.

Negative inversion means inversion after negative adverbials. That happens when a (one-word or multi-word) negative phrase is moved to the beginning of its clause (**negative fronting**), which is accompanied by SOI. Here are a few examples:

one-word negative phrases fronted: *Never have I felt more embarrassed*
Little had Odie noticed Garfield's greed before he devoured his dinner
Hardly had Jon stepped out of the house when Garfield switched on the TV

multi-word negative phrases fronted: *No sooner had Jon stepped out of the house than Garfield switched on the TV*
Not until Jon got back had he realised that Garfield had run up a huge bill
Under no circumstances should you show Garfield where the fridge is
Not only did he eat all the lasagne but he also devoured Odie's dinner

Some of the negative phrases are negative in meaning only but not in form (e.g., *hardly*, *only later*); others are negative in form, too (i.e., contain the negative particle *not* or negative determiner *no*). The phrases most frequently fronted are the following:

- *never (before)*, *rarely*, *seldom*; *little*
- *hardly*, *barely*, *scarcely*, *no sooner*: Note that *no sooner* contains a comparative adverb, therefore the whole sentence will behave as if it was comparative, taking *than* rather than *when* as the conjunction (compare the examples above)
- phrases with *only (only if/when, only then, only later, only (once), only by, only in, only with...)*; *not until*, *not even*: These often introduce their own adverbial clauses and the inversion comes in the second part of the sentence (see the example above)
- *under no circumstances*, *on no account*, *at no time*, *in no way*, *on no condition*, *nowhere else*
- *not only... (but also)*

The other form of inversion we devote some space to here is conditional inversion. Before doing so, however, let us see conditional sentences in general.

Conditional sentences are normally composed of two clauses: the *if*-clause (the condition) and the main clause (the result). The *if*-clause expresses the condition on which the claim of the main clause hinges. English grammars traditionally distinguish four **degrees of conditional clauses**: zero, first, second, and third conditional.⁸

⁷ **Concessive clauses** express a factor *in spite of which* something happens; typical concessive conjunctions are (*even*) *though*, *although*, *even if*. **Conditional-concessive clauses** give choices of conditions in spite of which something happens; typically, they contain an *-ever* pronoun or *whether...or* (e.g., *Whether you like it or not...*). The inversion we see here is only possible with *be* as the verb, when *whether* is omitted from structures like *Whether it be so or not...* (a type of the **base-form subjunctive**). Therefore, it is very similar to conditional inversion.

⁸ T&M (Section 21) uses a different classification and terminology: they call the *would* + plain form construction present conditional, while the *would* + *have* + ppt structure is called perfect conditional. In addition, they merge

Degree	Function, meaning	Example
zero	general statement	<i>If you annoy a cat, it starts wagging its tail</i>
first	prediction for the future	<i>If you annoy Garfield, he <u>will</u> bite you</i>
second	present hypothesis	<i>If you annoyed <u>Garfield</u>, he <u>would</u> bite you</i>
third	past, unreal hypothesis	<i>If you <u>hadn't</u> annoyed Garfield, he <u>wouldn't</u> <u>have</u> bitten you</i>

Since the degrees can be combined with each other (e.g., *If you hadn't annoyed Garfield, he wouldn't be so cross with you now* – third conditional + second conditional), it is more useful not to match the structures in the two clauses of the degrees too strictly but rather remember these three simple, basic rules describing the grammar of conditionals in general:

- there is no *will/would* in the *if*-clause (this is also true of time clauses, so in fact it is a more general phenomenon)⁹
- for hypothetical forms (= Hu. *-na/-ne/-ná/-né*), use the preterite (either of an auxiliary (*would/could/should...*) or of the main verb)
- for past hypotheses (= Hu. *volna*), use some form of (perfect) *have*

These three rules combine in various ways to derive the different degrees. The first two, for instance, are responsible for the *if...preterite...would* pattern in second conditional; all three added together gives you the past perfect form in third conditional *if*-clauses and the modal+perfect infinitive sequence in third conditional main clauses (since modals are followed by bare infinitives, cf. Ch. 4.1).

Two remarks at this point. First, although it is the most frequent one, *if* is not the only conditional conjunction, but there are a couple of others, too, including *unless*, *provided*, *suppose*:

I won't give Garfield any of the pizza unless he promises to save Odie a slice
Suppose you won the lottery; what would you do?

Second, bear in mind that preterite forms in conditional clauses do not express past time (see time vs. tense in Ch. 4.1). All such unusual uses of the preterite are called **Modal Past**, while in the case of *be*, when the form *were* replaces *was*, the construction is called **Were-subjunctive** (cf. e.g., *If I were you...*). Both are found with other expressions as well, e.g., *if only*, *I wish*, *as if*, *it's time*, *I'd rather you*, etc.

Now we are ready to discuss **conditional inversion**. It arises when, for stylistic purposes, the *if* of the *if*-clause is left out – in such cases, inversion takes place to signal the special, conditional function of the subclause. This, however, can only happen in three cases; i.e., there are no more than **three types of conditional inversion**:

- **inversion with *should***, i.e., in a subtype of first conditional; e.g.:

*If you should have any further questions, do not hesitate to ask me*¹⁰ →
Should you have any further questions, do not hesitate to ask me

zero and first conditional in what they refer to as Type 1, and then second conditional and third conditional are called Type 2 and 3, respectively. Other sources call zero and first conditional real conditionals, and the rest (second and third) are unreal conditionals.

⁹ This only applies to true conditionals – *if* in other senses may behave differently, e.g., *if you will...* and *if you would...* are possible as polite requests.

¹⁰ *Should* in conditional clauses carries the meaning of *happen to*; cf. *If you happen to have any further questions...*

- **inversion with *were to***, i.e., with *be to* in second conditional; e.g.:

If I were to fail the exam tomorrow, I would be expelled from university →
Were I to fail the exam tomorrow, I would be expelled from university

- **inversion with *had***, i.e., in third conditional; e.g.:

If you hadn't annoyed Garfield, he wouldn't have bitten you →
Hadn't you annoyed Garfield, he wouldn't have bitten you

The final topic of the chapter is **fronting without inversion**. Recall from the above discussion that time adverbials are frequently fronted (e.g., *In no time you'll be fine, don't worry!*); even certain adverbs of frequency may occupy that clause position (e.g., *Sometimes I feel like I don't have a partner*) as well as other adverbials (e.g., *In the kitchen, the mice are playing in the cupboard*; *Gladly the cross I'd bear*). In addition, Ch. 10.1 introduced preposing (*The vase, Garfield broke yesterday*) and left dislocation (*Garfield, he broke the vase*) as “plain” forms of fronting, used for information packaging. However, one more, very special construction exists, which we have not mentioned: in certain **clauses of concession** in highly formal style, (part of) the predicate can undergo fronting to the very beginning of the clause, even before the conjunction, which is either *though* or *as* in such cases; while the subject and at least the operator are left behind in their original position and order. The clause often contains *may* as the modal auxiliary:

(Al)though he may seem indifferent, he is not inconsiderate →
Indifferent though he may seem, he is not inconsiderate

(Al)though they were talented, they decided not to go to university →
Talented as they were, they decided not to go to university

(Al)though I failed first, I would not give up the fight for all the tea in China →
Fail first though I did, I would not give up the fight for all the tea in China

(Al)though I like your paintings very much, I can't afford to buy any of them →
Much as I like your paintings, I can't afford to buy any of them

Note that, although certain coursebooks refer to such examples as inversion, they do not contain it in our sense of the term: in these concessive clauses neither SOI nor SVI is found.

11.2 Further reading

On the position of adverbs: T&M 4.35–4.41 📖 On conditionals: T&M 21; ALP 8–9; AGU 99–101 📖 On inversion: AGU 119–120; ALP 13–14; T&M 4.45, 21.225; Cowan 2008: 22 📖 On fronting in concession clauses: T&M 34.340.

11.3 Practice exercises

1. Complete the following sentences with adverbs of frequency (such as *always, sometimes, never*). Add the negative particle *not* and non-assertive items (Ch. 7.1) wherever you wish.

1. My mother/father/parents and I agree
2. Finding a new job is a bit of luck
3. There's a pen in my handbag
4. I wonder if all this work is really worth it
5. My dad cooks dinner, and/but my mum does it

- 6. *I eat Chinese food*
- 7. *I throw food away*

2. Identify the type of inversion in the following examples.

- 1. *After many a summer dies the swan*
- 2. *The king is dead, long live the king!*
- 3. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous*
- 4. *Little does she know that I know that she knows*
- 5. *In a hole in the ground lived a hobbit*
- 6. *The sun is shining and so are you*
- 7. *May the force be with you!*
- 8. *Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few* (W. Churchill)



3. Write new sentences with a similar meaning beginning with one of these adverbials. The first one has been done for you.

never before not not until no sooner ~~only by~~ on no account little

- 1. *The door could not be opened without using force*
Only by (using) force could the door be opened
- 2. *This was the first time the race had been won by a European athlete*

- 3. *The plane had only just taken off when smoke started to appear in the cabin*

- 4. *She made no sound as she crept upstairs*

- 5. *This window must not be unlocked without prior permission*

- 6. *He only thought about having a holiday abroad after he retired*

- 7. *She didn't realise what would happen to her next*

4. Identify the degree of the conditional clauses in the following examples. Remember to evaluate the main clauses and the *if*-clauses separately.

- 1. *If happy ever after did exist, I would still be holding you like this*
- 2. *I know if I go, I'll die happy tonight*
- 3. *If I had known then that I'd be feeling this way, I would have never let you go*
- 4. *Come and get it if you really want it*
- 5. *If you ever find yourself lost in the dark and you can't see, I'll be the light to guide you*
- 6. *If I fall for you, I'll never recover*
- 7. *If ever I should falter, your love is an anchor and a refuge for my soul*
- 8. *If I were a boy even just for a day, I'd roll out of bed in the morning and throw on what I wanted and go drink beer with the guys and chase after girls*
- 9. *I never would have hitchhiked to Birmingham if it hadn't been for love*
- 10. *If I had an aeroplane I still couldn't make it on time*
- 11. *If you were a woman and I was a man, would it be so hard to understand?*
- 12. *If I had never let you go, would you be the man I used to know?*

5. Apply conditional inversion in the sentences in Ex. 4 above in which it is possible.

11.4 Extension: Two highlights: Subject-Verb Inversion and the Principle of End Weight

This chapter focusses on two aspects of English word order not dealt with previously: first, as a follow-up of the discussion of Ch. 11.1 above, we examine Subject-Verb Inversion in more detail, listing the groups of fronted constituents that trigger this type of inversion; in the second part, we introduce the so-called Principle of End Weight.

Under **Subject-Verb Inversion** (SVI), the subject of the clause inverts with the main verb, or, more precisely, it inverts with the verb group (the string of verbs from the operator up to and including the lexical verb). This clarification is needed as the example sentence *Usually the train would be very fast, as would be the coach* shows; in most cases a single verb is involved (as in *Long live the Queen* or *The train isn't any faster than is the coach*), and the difference is irrelevant.

It is shown in Ch. 11.1 that SVI has one context in which it applies without the fronting of a constituent, **in conditional-concessive clauses**. In such cases it is similar to conditional inversion in that the inversion is motivated by the omission of the conjunction, this time the complementiser *whether*, in clauses with third-person subjects and the type of the base-form subjunctive called conditional “be” subjunctive (cf. Ch. 4.4). Consequently, this form of SVI is only possible with *be* as the verb:

Whether it be so or not, I believe that he is innocent → *Be it so or not, I believe that he is innocent*

Whether they be rich or poor, they've got love on their side →
Be they rich or poor, they've got love on their side

Whether she be willing or not, she will have to eventually make up her mind →
Be she willing or not, she will have to eventually make up her mind

Comparative inversion is unusual for at least two reasons. First, it is free to apply with SOI or SVI – SOI seems to be more common, although the most frequently used verb is a finite form of *be*, in the case of which the difference is impossible to make (and is in fact irrelevant). Second, as it is mentioned above, it is optional in the sense that the conjunction (*as* or *than*) is present in the same way in both the inverted and the uninverted versions, with only a minor stylistic difference between the two. Therefore, while in the previous examples of conditional-concessive clauses, the choice between the inverted and uninverted variants is similarly optional, the presence vs. absence of *whether* produces a formal difference (in addition to the difference in word order). In comparative inversion, in contrast, the only formal difference is in the order of the subject and the verb group:

The train isn't any faster than is the coach ~ *The train isn't any faster than the coach is*

Finally, perhaps the most “famous” subgroup of SVI types is the one triggered by the fronting of **adverbials**, which has three patterns:

- *here/there* + *be/come/go* + NP subject: e.g., *Here comes the rain again*
This way, *here/there* carry more stress, and there may be a meaning difference, too; in our example, the implication is that it is just starting to rain.
It cannot be used if the subject is a personal pronoun:
cf. *Here it comes* vs. **Here comes it*
- adverb particle + verb of motion + subject NP: e.g., *Away went the balloons*
It involves more drama than the unmarked word order.



It cannot be used if the subject is a personal pronoun:
cf. *Away they went* vs. **Away went they*

- PP + verb of position/motion (plus a few other verbs like *live*) + subject NP: *In a canyon dwelt a miner*; *Into the bar walked a three-legged dog*

It cannot be used if the subject is a personal pronoun:
cf. *Into the bar it walked* vs. **Into the bar walked it*

Note that no inversion is possible when the subject NP is pronominal in all three cases – that may be due to what we are to discuss next: the **Principle of End Weight**. It is also known by a number of other names including the Principle of Given-New Information, Principle of End-Focus, the Given-Before-New Principle, the Given-New Contract, the Known-New Contract. Whatever the name, the idea is the same: given or known information comes first, new or focussed or heavy elements come at the end. We have seen (in Ch. 10.1) that several information packaging methods exist which aim to highlight new information by putting it where it is not expected: at the end of the sentence. These constructions include:

- passivisation, in the long passive: *The vase was broken by Garfield*
- pseudo-cleft: *What Garfield broke yesterday was the vase*
- existential: *There used to be a vase on that shelf*
- extraposition: *I don't find it surprising that Garfield broke the vase*
- right dislocation: *He broke the vase, Garfield*

Recall that End Weight also means that constituents which are phonetically “substantial”, i.e., long or strong due to stress, tend to be placed at the end even if they are not specifically meant to be highlighted: that is the idea behind postposing (especially heavy NP shift), as in *Garfield broke yesterday the valuable vase that Jon got from Aunt Jill*. Turning back to the ban on SVI with pronouns: notice that SVI pushes the subject NP to the end of the clause; when that is realised by a personal pronoun, SVI would move an unstressed function word to the end – the result of which would contradict the Principle. E.g., in *Here it comes*, the stressed content word *comes* ends the clause, whereas in **Here comes it* the “undersized” pronoun at the end produces ill-formed, uneven rhythm in speech, which tends to be avoided. We noted a similar phenomenon in Ch. 4.4, too, in the discussion of phrasal verbs with pronominal direct objects: the adverb particle is stressed and thus will obligatorily choose the end position, cf. *wake me up* vs. **wake up me*.



Most of the other examples of “heavy shift”, however, are optional. But it is important to keep in mind that whenever two alternatives are available, the one *ending in* the element to be highlighted or emphasised is preferred. Recall from Ch. 11.1 the following two sentences:



Yesterday Garfield devoured all the lasagne
Garfield devoured all the lasagne yesterday

If we wish to highlight *yesterday*, it is better to use the second word order. Or look at the examples of the dative shift (repeated from Ch. 4.1):

Jon gave Garfield all the pizzas
Jon gave all the pizzas to Garfield

The meaning of the two versions is basically the same; but the constituent at the end (underlined) receives more emphasis in both, in accordance with the Principle of End Weight. Therefore the two sentences differ with respect to information packaging: the new information is *all the pizzas* in the former, and *to Garfield* in the latter.

Further reading

On inversion: Cowan 2008: 22  On SVI: ALP 14; T&M 4.36  On conditionals: Cowan 2008: 19.

11.5 Practice exercises

1. Rewrite the following sentences so that they contain inversion. Decide whether it is SVI or SOI.

1. *Whether Jon is late or not, the main thing for him is to get there*
2. *All the students in this year are far more talented than anyone in previous semesters has been*
3. *Whether she is invited or not, she attends all her friends' weddings*
4. *You're even better than the real thing*
5. *Garfield's stomach is bigger than all the food in the world*
6. *Whether it is raining or not, we are not going to take a taxi*
7. *Occasionally, Mike makes a personal phone call from the office, as all his colleagues do*
8. *A house in Budapest costs at least three times as much as a similar house in the countryside*
9. *Sue is a good teacher, as her mother before her was*
10. *Whether the students are hard-working or lazy, they all fail this exam for the first time*

2. Rewrite the following sentences so that they contain Subject-Verb Inversion with adverbials.

1. *The sun came down*
2. *Your order is here*
3. *A narrow pathway led through the park*
4. *A flock of white gulls flew over our heads*
5. *Three odd-looking dogs ran into the room*
6. *The bus goes right to the centre*
7. *My hero goes there*

3. Fill the gap in each sentence with a word from the box.

<i>along the street, as, here, neither, never, no sooner, nor, should, so dangerous, such</i>

1. *did weather conditions become that all mountain roads were closed*
2. *have I heard a weaker excuse!*
3. *came a strange procession*
4. *For some time after the explosion Jack couldn't hear, and could he see*
5. *The council never wanted the new supermarket to be built, did local residents*
6. *you need more information, please telephone our main office*
7. *had I reached the door than I realised it was locked*
8. *The cake was excellent, was the coffee*
9. *is the popularity of the play that the theatre is likely to be full every night*
10. *comes Sandra's car*

4. Identify the type of inversion used in these examples.

1. *Research shows that children living in villages watch more television than do their counterparts in inner city areas*
2. *Dave began to open the three parcels. Inside the first was a book of crosswords from his Auntie Acid*
3. *Had Alex asked, I would have been able to help*

4. *Incy Wincy spider climbed up the water spout,
Down came the rain and washed poor Incy out.
Out came the sunshine and dried up all the rain,
And Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout again.*
5. *So successful was her business that Mary was able to retire at the age of 50*
6. *It would be a serious setback, were the talks to fail*
7. *In the doorway stood his father*
8. *Seldom has the team given a worse performance*
9. *I lit the fuse and after a few seconds up went the rocket*
10. *I believed, as did my colleagues, that the plan would work*

5. Match the first halves (1–6) and second halves (a–f) to form full sentences. Then pronominalise the objects of the phrasal verbs and change the word order as necessary.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Finally, he gave</i> | a. <i>away all the reporters who tried to get into the apartment</i> |
| 2. <i>I couldn't make</i> | b. <i>back Susan for what she's done to me</i> |
| 3. <i>I'd do anything to get</i> | c. <i>in the cat – it's freezing outside!</i> |
| 4. <i>The police turned</i> | d. <i>on the lights before it gets really dark</i> |
| 5. <i>You should have let</i> | e. <i>out what he was saying</i> |
| 6. <i>You don't need to switch</i> | f. <i>up the idea of marriage</i> |

12.1 Pro-forms and ellipsis

“I’m a linguist, so I like ambiguity more than most people.”
(Linguistics joke)

The humour of this joke comes from the fact that the sentence in it is itself ambiguous: you can interpret it as ‘I like ambiguity more than most people do’ – most probably, this would be the primary meaning; or you interpret it as ‘I like ambiguity more than I like most people’ – the secondary, humorous meaning, with a kind of “asocial” linguist... The options for the interpretation arise because the sentence has many of its elements omitted: *than* is used as a preposition and followed by an NP, therefore it is not clear whether meaning-wise, that NP is to be taken as an “agent” (in the first sense) or as an “undergoer” (in the second). However, as soon as *than* is followed by a clause, further clausal elements need to appear, and the ambiguity is lost. Therefore, when we reconstruct the sentence to yield the first meaning, we analyse it as having this abstract structure, recovering omitted *do*:

I like ambiguity more than most people do

Notice that in this reconstructed structure, the NP *most people* functions as subject. On the other hand, in the second meaning the structure is the following:

I like ambiguity more than ~~I~~like most people

Crucially, in this case the NP is now direct object – a grammatical function different from the one above, generating an interpretation different from the one above. In sum, the omission of sentence elements in the comparative clause introduced by *than* is responsible for the ambiguity. As we will see presently, such omissions are rather frequent in grammar, and in comparative clauses in particular, because not repeating something that has been said is one important method to “economise” in language and avoid “hoarding” unnecessary, **redundant** information that would only divert attention from the main message in communication. The name of this type of grammatical omission is **ellipsis**. In the first sense of the ambiguous sentence, the verb *do* is ellipped; in the second one, the sequence *I like* is ellipped.

The first sense, however, reveals another technique for the avoidance of redundancy. Notice that the reconstructed version *I like ambiguity more than most people do* contains auxiliary *do* in the subclause, which is the dummy operator we identified in Ch. 4.1. It has no semantic content whatsoever; the only reason why it is used in that case is to signal that the NP is a subject, to which end we need a predicative VP. That is, the single function of *do* is to indicate the place of the VP: the “fully recovered” sentence is *I like ambiguity more than most people like ambiguity*. Again, repeating the VP twice makes the sentence sound odd, and at the same time, the second instance is both redundant and harmful, diverting attention from the rest. Therefore, that second instance is replaced (or substituted for) by an element which is minimally sufficient to fulfil the grammatical function, but which is also “light” both in phonetic form and in semantic content. Grammatical function words or short phrases having this function of substitution are called **pro-forms**. In fact, we have already seen one of the most important pro-forms in languages: **pronouns**, whose primary function is to replace NPs (not nouns! – cf. Ch. 2.1). Compare the following two sentences:

Odie has found the bone that Odie buried in the garden months ago
Odie has found the bone that he buried in the garden months ago

Clearly, the second is the usual variant: *Odie* is known information for the second clause, there is no need to repeat it there in full. The personal pronoun *he* is used instead, only to refer to the same entity as the reference of the NP *Odie*. That is, the two NPs are **co-referential**. The pronoun has no reference in itself – notice that a clause like *He has found the bone* cannot be interpreted out of context; *he* could

as well refer to anybody (masculine) in the world. The pronoun is thus “bound” to another NP for reference, its so-called **antecedent**. That is, in our example above, *Odie* is the antecedent that binds the pronoun *he*. Pronouns may also be antecedents for other pronouns; in a sentence like *He hurt himself*, the personal pronoun *he* is unbounded (and receives its reference from the situation – see below) but the reflexive pronoun *himself* is bound – by the subject NP *he*.

This chapter, then, is about pro-forms and ellipsis. Recall that what unites them is the motivation for their use: they both are modes of abbreviation applied to avoid redundancy, to economise in language. Economy is always achieved in the most optimal way: the element unrepeatable has to be **recoverable**. Therefore, **recoverability** is an important aspect of both substitution and ellipsis; its **three types**, based on where the information comes from to help the listener/reader to recover the missing items, are as follows:

- **textual recoverability**: the information is included in the text; very often, within the same sentence or clause. Two types: **anaphoric reference**: the antecedent is *before* the element
cataphoric reference: the antecedent is *after* the element

substitution:

Odie has found the bone that he buried in the garden months ago – anaphoric
Although he was suspicious, Odie thought it had been left there by someone else – cataphoric

ellipsis:

I'm happy if you are ___ – anaphoric
If you want me to __, I can do the shopping for you – cataphoric

- **situational recoverability (exophoric reference)**: the information is outside the text, only recoverable from the situation

substitution: *He has found the bone*

ellipsis: *___ Hope he's alright now (may be I or we, depending on the situation)*

- **structural recoverability**: the information follows from the grammatical structure

ellipsis: *I think ___ Odie is mistaken (clause analysis reveals that the conjunction is missing)*

We make two remarks here. First, it has been noted that in ellipsis, there is not always a clear dividing line between situational and structural recoverability: e.g., in *See you soon!* the subject may be recovered from the situation or from the knowledge of the grammar of English alike. Second, the reference of personal pronouns and reflexives is a particularly intriguing topic. In a sentence like *He hurt himself*, the reference of *he* is situational, while that of *himself* is textual; and, as the reflexive is bound to the personal pronoun, the two have the same antecedent (they are co-referential). In another sentence, such as *He hurt her*, both references are situational, as is the case in *He hurt him*: crucially, the two pronouns require two separate antecedents; *He hurt him* cannot mean the same as *He hurt himself*.

Pronouns, then, constitute a major group of **pro-forms**. Here is a list of some of the other types, with examples:

- **pro-forms for NPs**: pronouns, *one*, *some*... (cf. determiners which also function as pronouns, Ch. 3.1)

I can see a cat → I can see one
I can see some cats → I can see some

Pronominal *one* can also replace part of an NP: *I don't like this cat – show me another one*

- **pro-forms for VPs:** *do, do so, do it/that, so*

Garfield likes lasagne, and I do (so) too
You're annoying Garfield with this – I wouldn't do that
Garfield asked Jon to make pizza, and he did so
Garfield devoured the lasagne, and so did I¹

The pro-form *do so* can also replace part of a VP: *Garfield bit the postman yesterday, and he will also do so this morning*

- **pro-forms for adverbials:** *here, there, then, so, thus*

He went to university in London, and he also met his bride there

- **pro-form for subject or object complements:** *so*

He may not be that greedy after all, but everybody considers him so
We'd tried to make it a great event, and so it was
(I'm sleepy) So am I

- **pro-forms for object *that*-clauses:** *so, not*

(Will Garfield spare Odie a slice of pizza?) I hope so / not
Jesus loves me, for the Bible tells me so

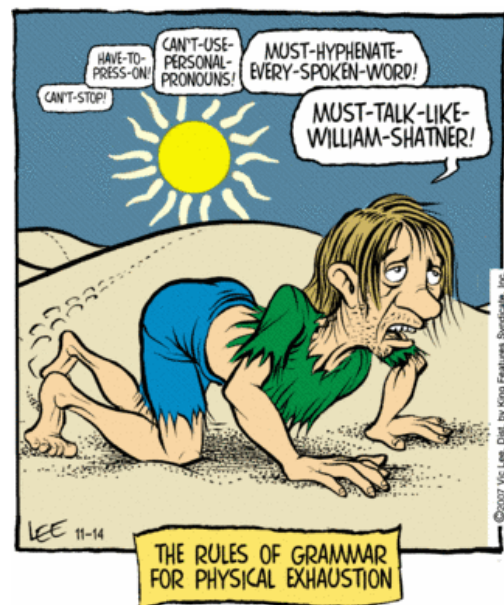
So and thus can also replace other types of clauses:

Will Garfield spare Odie a slice of pizza? And if so, where shall we hide it from the mice?
“... Only in their dreams can men be truly free. ‘Twas always thus, and always thus will be.”
 (John Keating)

Verbs frequently used with *so* and *not* include *believe, expect, guess, hope, imagine, presume, reckon, suppose, suspect, think*.

Types of **ellipsis**, i.e., grammatical omission, can also be classified in various ways. For example, certain coursebooks group them according to the category of the ellipsed element, and set up classes like nominal (e.g., *The first problem is solved; but the second ___ is still ahead of us*) and verbal ellipsis (e.g., *If she works hard, I won't have to ___*). Another option is to classify them in terms of the position of the ellipsis; then, it is possible to distinguish three types:

- **initial ellipsis:** e.g.,
 - the ellipsis of the subject NP:
 ___ *Wish you were here*; ___ *Dunno*; ___ *Can't stop*
 including the ellipsis of the second (and further) subject(s) in coordination (see below):
Garfield bought a pizza and ___ devoured it
 - the ellipsis of conjunction *that* from the beginning



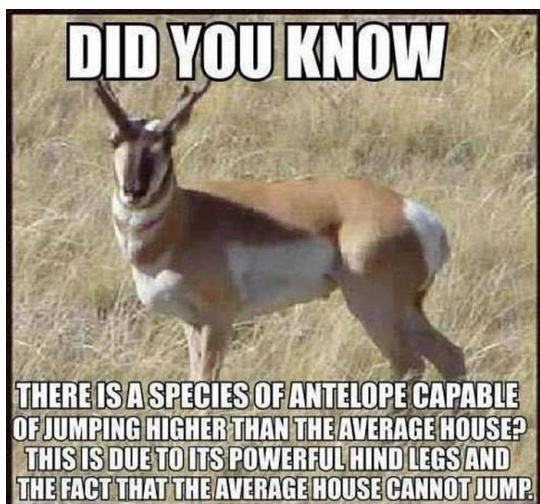
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¹ Note the fronting of *so* here, accompanied by SOI (cf. Ch. 11.1).

of the embedded clause: *I think ___ Odie is mistaken*

- **medial ellipsis:** e.g., **verb gapping:** *Jill owns a Volvo and Fred ___ a BMW*
Jill ordered pizza and Fred ___ lasagne
- **final ellipsis:** e.g., VP ellipsis: *If she works hard, I won't have to ___*

Ellipsis is common in two types of sentences: comparative sentences and coordinated (i.e., compound) sentences. These two are whose properties we discuss in the rest of the chapter.



Recall the example of **ellipsis in comparative clauses** at the beginning; we mention there that omissions are particularly frequent in comparative clauses. As a result, many jokes in English are based on the ambiguity which may arise from the interpretational options produced by the ellipsis. Not only is the sentence *I like ambiguity more than most people* ambiguous but so are similar sentences like *The antelope can jump higher than the average house*. In fact, it is an inherent property of comparative sentences to contain considerable overlap between the clauses – as a result, it is regular for such sentences to reduce their comparative clauses (the second one, introduced by a comparative conjunction), in accordance with the principle of economy and redundancy avoidance.

In general, there are two types of comparative sentences: so-called **equality comparisons** (where the two clauses are linked with *as/so ... as*) and so-called **inequality comparisons** (containing a comparative adjective/adverb in the main clause and *than* introducing the subclause). The two ellipsis in the same way, so we do not need to treat them separately: the number of options in both cases depends on the kind of **overlap** between the main clause and the comparative subclause in the following way. When the clauses have different subjects, the second clause will contain the new subject, with or without the operator (including dummy *do*):

I like ambiguity more than most people like ambiguity → *I like ambiguity more than most people do*
I like ambiguity more than do most people²
I like ambiguity more than most people

When the two clauses require different verb forms, however, the operator will be obligatory:

Garfield will eat more lasagne than you could
Garfield will eat more lasagne than could you

Of course, as the overlap gets smaller, the ellipsed string gets shorter, too, cf.:

Garfield will eat more lasagne than you could imagine

The other possibility is that the subjects of the two clauses are the same, in which case only one option is available:

I like ambiguity more than I like most people → *I like ambiguity more than most people*

Finally, there may only be logical overlap, not formal:

² With comparative inversion (Ch. 11), see some discussion below.

Garfield is more greedy than we thought he would be → Garfield is more greedy than we thought

Here, the string *he would be* is not present in the main clause but is logically deducible and therefore potentially omitted.

A special subcase of comparative sentences is when a **non-finite subclause** (Ch. 8.1) is involved. The gerund-participle (or *-ing*) clause is typically either subject or object; again, several variants are possible in the former case but not in the latter:

Pleasing Garfield is just as difficult as feeding him is
Pleasing Garfield is just as difficult as is feeding him
Pleasing Garfield is just as difficult as feeding him

I find pleasing Garfield just as difficult as feeding him

The other non-finite subclause is the infinitive clause, which typically appears as an extraposed subject in the relevant cases³ (as in *It's difficult to please Garfield*); however, as an unexpected property of such sentences, they offer a free choice between the bare infinitive and the *to*-infinitive in the comparative clause, giving rise to as many as three alternatives:

It's just as difficult to please Garfield as feed him
It's just as difficult to please Garfield as to feed him
It's just as difficult to please Garfield as it is to feed him

In all the examples above the comparative clause copies the structure of the main clause in terms of the verb form: an infinitival main clause is matched with an infinitival subclause, and a gerund-participle clause is paired up with another *-ing*. This is not always the case, though; when the two logical comparative terms are not directly linked but another clause intervenes, the form of the comparative clause can follow several patterns, e.g.:

I'll try to make a pizza; that will be cheaper than ordering one
(to) order one

I tried to make a pizza, which turned out to be more difficult than ordering one
(to) order one

The other construction in which the clauses are more often than not composed of overlapping material, which is then, unsurprisingly, the target of ellipsis, is **coordination**. What we are concerned with here is clausal coordination, i.e., when clauses (rather than phrases) are coordinated, producing compound sentences. Very frequently, the subjects of the clauses are the same, and therefore the subject of the second clause is ellipted, e.g.:

We like Garfield and ___ read the comics each day

We like Garfield but we don't like Odie → We like Garfield but ___ not Odie

Two of the ellipsis types introduced above are worthy of mention here because they are characteristic of compound sentences: one is verb gapping (cf. *Jill owns a Volvo and Fred ___ a BMW*), the other is VP-ellipsis (e.g., *She works hard, but I won't have to ___*). There is, however, a very special form of coordination that we have not discussed. It is called **shared constituent coordination** (or backward gapping, or delayed right constituent coordination) as the overlap between the clauses (now referred to

³ For extraposition, see Ch. 10.1.

as the “shared constituent”) is delayed to the end (the right edge) of the sentence, with “gaps” produced in both clauses in its original position, as in:

I used to __ , but now I won't have to __ , work hard

Notice that this is the optimally “economised” version of something like *I used to work hard, but now I won't have to work hard*, and the VP *work hard* is indeed the shared constituent, which the principle of redundancy avoidance dictates not to repeat twice – similarly to all the other cases of ellipsis and substitution.

A final point to make is that the topic of this chapter (ellipsis and pro-forms) is closely linked to that of the previous one (Ch. 11: inversion), since certain types of **inversion** are systematically accompanied by ellipsis. The strongest case for that is conditional inversion and conditional-concessive inversion, which are actually triggered by the ellipsis of *if* and *whether*, respectively. Cf.:

~~*If*~~ *Had he been more careful, he wouldn't be in trouble now*
~~*Whether*~~ *Be it so or not, I believe that he is innocent*

You may have also noticed that, while comparative inversion is mentioned in Ch. 11, comparative sentences themselves are dealt with in more detail in this one. That is because both inversion and ellipsis are found in this construction, but we judged ellipsis to be more prominent and more generally present in them. However, as a result of this structural complexity of comparatives, very often the alternative structures we present above are possible due to the potential occurrence of inversion. Recall examples such as:

I like ambiguity more than most people ~~like ambiguity~~ → I like ambiguity more than most people do
I like ambiguity more than do most people

Here, the latter version arises exactly because of comparative inversion. This holds for both SOI and SVI, cf.:

We travel to Budapest every day, as do most of the people who live in the neighbourhood ~~travel~~
~~to Budapest every day~~
The train isn't any faster than is the coach ~~fast~~
Usually the train would be very fast, as would be the coach ~~very fast~~

In fact, comparative inversion with SOI resembles VP-ellipsis on the one hand, since the VP (*like ambiguity* and *travel to Budapest every day* in our examples) is deleted, and the operator (carrying the inflection of the clause, basically: *do* in our examples) is left behind; on the other hand, the operator is like a pro-form (and the dummy auxiliary *do* is indeed a pro-form), therefore the construction also resembles substitution. Compare the following examples:

plain VP-ellipsis: *My classmates won't prepare much but I will*
 comp. + VP-ellipsis: *I'm more hard-working so I'm sure I'll prepare more than my classmates will*
 + SOI: *I'm more hard-working so I'm sure I'll prepare more than will my classmates*

plain VP-ellipsis: *(Does Garfield dominate the household?) Yes, he does*
 pro-form: *Cats normally dominate their households, and Garfield does so/it/that, too*
 comp. + VP-ellipsis: *Cats normally dominate their households, as Garfield does*
 + SOI: *Cats normally dominate their households, as does Garfield*



Notice that the conjunction *as* may even be taken as a pro-form substituting for the VP, just like *so* and *neither/nor* in short responses or “echoing” statements (agreeing and disagreeing, respectively).

(Cats normally dominate their households) So does Garfield
(I don't spend many hours practising) Neither do I

The structural symmetry is evident in these examples. But similar connections can be found between inversion and substitution with pro-forms, too: note that *wh*-phrases, for instance, are pro-forms by definition, in both interrogatives and relative clauses, since they substitute the information gap in them.

This concludes the chapter on ellipsis and pro-forms. There are minor types and other forms of both that could not make it into the discussion, like special elliptical constructions such as *the rich* and *the sublime* (so-called “**nominal adjectives**”), which can be analysed as NPs with omitted nouns (cf. *the rich people*, *the sublime thing/notion*); or “**correlative comparatives**” like *the sooner the better* (cf. *the sooner it happens the better it is for us*), and certainly many more. This also indicates the significance of the role these two strategies play in English grammar.

12.2 Further reading

On pro-forms and ellipsis: SGE 12.1–12.23; OEG 7; T&M 35.347; Wekker & Haegeman 1985: 4.6–4.7; AGU 76–81  On ellipsis in comparative clauses: SGE 15.38–15.39; T&M 34.341; Cowan 2008: 24  On ellipsis in coordination: Cowan 2008: 25.

12.3 Practice exercises

1. The chapter introduces many different constructions. Identify them in the following examples.

1. *The sun is shining and so are you*
2. *You were the one that got away*
3. *You tossed it in the trash, yes, you did*
4. *If you loved me half as much as I love you, you wouldn't worry me half as much as you do*
5. *She may be the beauty or the beast*
6. *I'm sexy and I know it*
7. *You say your heart will never break – I hope so for your sake*
8. *Loving is the thing I crave, you gotta give me some*
9. *If I lose myself tonight, it'll be by your side*
10. *Will I wait a lonely lifetime? If you want me to, I will*
11. *Don't wanna be all by myself*
12. *You like my fingers running through your hair, so do I*
13. *When you walk by, I try to say it, but then I freeze and never do it*
14. *I must be sure from the very start that you would love me more than her*

2. Are the following sentences well-formed or ill-formed? Evaluate each separately. Then discuss possible reasons for your judgements.

1. *Garfield painted a picture of Garfield*
2. *Garfield painted a picture of himself*
3. *Garfield watched Odie and painted a picture of him*
4. *Garfield painted a picture of him (him = Garfield)*
5. *Garfield painted a picture of him (him = Odie)*
6. *He painted a picture of himself*
7. *He painted a picture of Garfield (he = Garfield)*
8. *Himself painted a picture of Garfield (himself = Garfield)*
9. *Himself painted a picture of him (himself = him)*

3. Fill the gaps in the sentences with pro-forms from the box.

it, neither, she (3x), so (3x), there, this

1. *My mother-in-law's cat is unwell. ... makes me feel sad*
2. *Their flag is green and yellow, and ... is ours*
3. *I got a dragon here, and I'm not afraid to use ...!*
4. *Garfield is greedy, but he is less ... than we had expected*
5. *Susan couldn't open the bottle. ... could her husband*
6. *If you'll look on the table, you'll find the book ...*
7. *"My grandmother started walking five miles a day when ... was sixty. ... 's 97 now, and we don't know where the hell ... is."* (American comedian Ellen DeGeneres)
8. *"When the czar was seated, everyone else sat, and ... did we."* (L. E. Modesitt, Jr., *Ghost of the White Nights*. Tor Books, 2001)

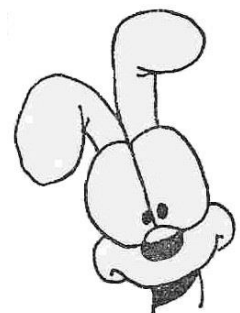
4. The following sentences illustrate ellipsis. Locate the "gaps", and specify the types.

1. *Bill speaks Spanish, and Jack Norwegian*
2. *My mother has Facebook friends in more countries than I have friends in*
3. *Should I email you, or you me?*
4. *She wanted to so she put on his coat; then he put on hers*
5. *He has done it before, which means he will again*
6. *She ordered more beer than we could drink*
7. *I will do the washing-up today if you will tomorrow*
8. *They took a picture of us, and we of them*
9. *I will do two exercises because you have also done two*
10. *If you try my paprika chicken, I will try yours*

5. Rewrite the following sentences so that they contain ellipsis.

1. *This computer programme runs data search more quickly than the old version ran data search*
2. *She has promised to help me so I hope she will help me*
3. *Coffee with sweetener is not as unhealthy as coffee with sugar is unhealthy*
4. *Today's news showed less violence than yesterday's news had shown violence*
5. *I don't want to break the news to the other colleagues but I will have to break the news to the other colleagues*
6. *If Odie wanted to take revenge on Garfield, he surely would take revenge on Garfield*

6. Go back to Ex. 1 in Ch. 11.5, and find examples of ellipsis and pro-forms accompanying inversion.



13. Bibliography

Abbreviations used in the *Further reading* sections:

AGU = Hewings 1999.	OEG = Greenbaum 1996.
ALP = Vince 2003.	SGE = Greenbaum & Quirk 1990.
BESE = Newson & al. 2006.	T&M = Thomson and Martinet 1986.
CGEL = Huddleston & Pullum 2002.	

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