MASTER OF ARTS

ENGLISH

CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

(CODL)

MEG 104: ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE

BLOCK II

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MEG-104: ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE

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BLOCK II

MODULE IV: INTRODUCTORY SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS	UNIT 7: INTRODUCTORY SYNTAX: BASIC IDEAS OF SYNTAX – HOW SENTENCES EXPRESS IDEAS – LEXICAL CATEGORIES – PHRASE STRUCTURE – TESTS FOR STRUCTURE CONSTITUENCY – WORD ORDER TYPOLOGY – PRACTICE.
	UNIT 8: INTRODUCTORY SEMANTICS: LEXICAL SEMANTICS - COMPOSITIONAL SEMANTICS – PRACTICE.
MODULE V: PRAGMATICS AND LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT	UNIT 9: CONTEXT AND MEANING: THE SPEECH ACT THEORY – THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE – POLITENESS.
	UNIT 10: LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT: THE SAPIR-WHORF HYPOTHESIS.
MODULE VI: HISTORICAL PERIODS OF ENGLISH	UNIT 11: HISTORICAL PERIODS OF ENGLISH: OLD ENGLISH - MIDDLE ENGLISH – EARLY MODERN ENGLISH – MODERN ENGLISH. ENGLISH ACROSS THE GLOBE: WORLD ENGLISHES
MODULEV VII: STRUCTURE OF MODERN ENGLISH	UNIT 12: STRUCTURE OF MODERN ENGLISH: THE BASIC SENTENCE STRUCTURE (SUBJECT AND PREDICATE).
	UNIT 13: THE NOUN PHRASE (NOUNS, REFERENCE, QUANTIFIERS, MODIFIERS)
	UNIT 14: THE VERB PHRASE (VERBS, TENSE, ASPECT, MODALITY, MOOD AND MODALITY, CLAUSE STRUCTURE, COMPLEMENTS, AND ADJUNCTS)

TABLE OF CONTENT

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

MEG104: Aspects of Language, BLOCK II comprises of the following Modules

Module IV consists of Units 7 and 8. **Unit 7** introduces to the students a simplified version of Chomskyan syntax, based on his theory of Universal Grammar. It also discusses the three stages of development of the theory of constituent structure; word order typology and related issues. **Unit 8** deals with lexical and compositional semantics and thus discusses synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, homophones and homographs, homonyms, polysemy, presupposition and entailment.

Module V consists of Units 9 and 10. **Unit 9** discusses three theories that are based on the assumption that language is no way separable from its use. It thus discusses the Speech Act theory as proposed by the philosopher J. L. Austen, the Cooperative Principle as proposed by the philosopher Paul Grice, and the theory of Linguistic Politeness as first theorized by the linguisits Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson. **Unit 10** is on the relation between language and thought and thus discusses the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and some related issues.

Module VI has **Unit 11**, which discusses the English language from a historical perspective. It thus tries to trace the origins of the language and presents an account of the changes it has undergone over the ages.

Module VII consists of Units 12, 13, 14. **Units 12 and 13** discuss the functional categories of a sentence, i.e. subject, object, complement, and adjunct, which are formally nouns or noun phrases; adjectives or adjective phrases; and verbs or verb phrases. The Units thus also discuss their structure and the different functions they have within a sentence. **Unit 14** discusses the structure of modern English in light of the discussion in the preceding Units.

MODULE IV: INTRODUCTORY SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

UNIT 7: INTRODUCTORY SYNTAX

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.0 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 1 of this course, you learnt about the design features of human language and how it differs from animal communication. Language differs from animal communication in having a rich structure. In this

Unit, we will be looking into the structure of a human language at the syntactic level.

From your reading of Unit 3, you have already got an idea of Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar. In this Unit, we will give you some idea of the fundamentals of Chomskyan approach to syntax, based on his theory of Universal Grammar. However, Chomsky's is not the only approach to syntax; there are other approaches to syntax too. Nevertheless, it is the Chomskyan approach to syntax that brought about a revolution in modern linguistics.

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the Unit you should have an idea about

- the syntactic structure of language
- Chomskyan approach to syntax
- the three stages of development of the theory of constituent structure
- word order typology and some related issue

7.2 WHAT IS SYNTAX

Let me start with the meaning of the term *Syntax*. Syntax is a traditional term for the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language. What is a sentence? As all of you know, a sentence is not just a string of words. For example, the following string of words does not form a sentence:

1. *the saw a boy girl.[1]

[1]An asterisk * is used before a form, e.g. a phrase or a sentence, to mean that it is grammatically ill-formed.

In order to form a meaningful sentence, we will have to arrange the words in a particular way as in (2):

2. The boy saw a girl.

In (2) above, the words *the* and *boy* are together forming one unit. That they form a unit is proved by the fact that they can be replaced by one single word, e.g. either by a pronoun (e.g. *he*) or a proper name (e.g. *Hari*). Thus, we have *He/Hari saw a girl* in place of *The boy saw a girl.* Thus, *the boy* is a phrase in (2) above, but not in (1) so that (1) is grammatically ill-formed. Note further that this is true also of the words *a* and*girl.* Again, the two phrases, i.e. *the boy* and *a girl* are combined in a particular way to arrive at a sentence (i.e. with a verb immediately *after* the first phrase, not, for example, after the second phrase as in **The boy the girl saw*).

Thus, syntax is the study of the organization of words into larger units of phrases and sentences.

7.3 PHRASES WITHIN A PHRASE

Phrases can contain other phrases. The following examples exemplify this: 3(a) consists of one phrase (i.e. *the book*); in 3(b) the phrase contains one more phrase (i.e. *of stories*); in 3(c) the phrase in 3(b) contains one more phrase (i.e. *about animals*); On the other hand, the sentence in 4 contains a fourth phrase, i.e. *on the table.*

3a. [The book]
b. [The book [of stories]]
c. [The book [of stories [about animals]]]

4. [[The book [of stories [about animals]]] [is [on the table]]]]

Therefore, the first step of any syntactic analysis is to find out the organization of words into phrases, and then phrases into sentences and here comes the Phrase Structure Rules, as the first step of any syntactic analysis.

We will introduce the Phrase Structure Rules to you soon. However, before that let us refine our notion of a sentence in terms of how it expresses ideas.

7.4 UTTERANCES, PROPOSITIONS AND SENTENCES

An utterance is anything that you say. It can be defined as a stretch of speech preceded and followed by silence. It is the act of expressing something in word(s). Therefore, *yes, oh, John, hot, today,* etc. all are utterances. All of these utterances express something. However, certain utterances of human languages seem to have a special status, in that they express what you might call "complete thoughts". An utterance like *yes, oh, John, hot, today,* etc., in isolation, does not express a "complete thought". On the other hand, if you say, "It's rather hot, today", anybody who knows English will interpret you as conveying a message which is somehow "complete". Note that anyone of your friends can also say exactly the same thing: "It's rather hot, today". However, if you say it on a Sunday, and your friend says it on a Monday, the message communicated is different. We call this message a *proposition* and the proposition expressed in each of these cases is different.

A proposition is that aspect of the meaning of a sentence which allows us to say, "Yes, that's true" or "No, that's false". It describes a state of affairs that holds in the world, and its correspondence with that state of affairs allows us to attribute truth or falsity to the proposition.
Note that, even though you and your friend have expressed different propositions, you have both used exactly the same linguistic form. That

is, you have both said the same sentence. This means that *sentence* and *proposition*are not the same thing.

7.5 IMMEDIATE CONSTITUENT ANALYSIS

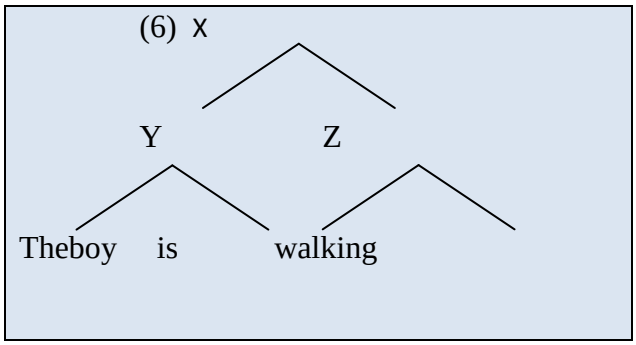
As such, syntax is concerned with the *form* of sentence rather than proposition. Now, let us proceed to see how syntax works.
As said above, the first step of any syntactic analysis is to find out the organization of words into phrases, and then phrases into sentences. The first step of any syntactic analysis is known as *Iimmediate Constituent Analysis* (IC-Analysis).

The term *Immediate Constituent* was first introduced by the American linguist Bloomfield in 1933. It refers to the major divisions that can be made within a sentence. For example, in analysing the sentence *The boy is walking*, the immediate constituents would be *the boy* and *is walking*. They are immediate constituents in the sense that the words *the* and *boy* are more closely related to each other than to the other words in the sentence (you have already seen this in our discussion on the examples (1) and (2) above). The same is true of the words *is* and *walking.* This procedure is known as Immediate Constituent Analysis, which was a major feature of Bloomfieldian structuralist linguistics.

Thus, IC-analysis shows that a sentence is not just a sequence of words, but is made of *immediate constituents.* In other words, sentences have a *constituent structure*.

Consider (5) below for the immediate constituents of the sentence *The boy is walking*:

(5) [[[The] [boy]] [[is] [walking]]]



In the tree diagram (6), X stands for the sentence *The boy is walking*. It is composed of two ICs (i.e. immediate constituents), Y and Z: Y stands for the Noun Phrase *The boy* and Y stands for the verb phrase *is walking*. In turn, each of Y and Z is composed of two words: Y is composed of *the* and *boy*; Z is composed of *is* and *walking*.

Now, IC-Analysis must be carried out until each constituent of the sentence consists of only one word. Words are thus the final constituents of a sentence. They are thus called *ultimate constituent*s. Thus, as the diagram (6) shows, the words, *the*, *boy*, *is*, *walking* are the *ultimate* constituent of the sentence, *The boy is walking*.

IC analysis can resolve ambiguity. Look at the ambiguity of the following structures:

(7) Beautiful girl's dress
(8) Some more convincing evidence

The ambiguity in both the constructions can be accounted for assuming different constituent structures for the constructions. For example, if we assume *beautiful* and *girls'* as one constituent (i.e. *[beauiful girl's] dress*), then (7) will mean, '*These are dresses meant for beautiful girls*'. On the other hand, if we assume *girls'* and *dress* as one constituent (i.e. *beautiful [girl's dress*]), it will mean '*these are girl's dresses which are beautiful*'.

In the same way, we can resolve the ambiguity of the sentence in (8).

Thus, IC-analysis proved to be very useful in handling structural ambiguity, however, in some cases it was found to be inadequate to analyse structural complexities. For example, in cases where we have discontinuous ICs, it became problematic. Consider the following examples, where we have a discontinuous IC in (10):

(9) Pater called up Bill
(10) Peter called Bill up.

Example (9) tells us that *[Peter]* and *[called up Bill]* are the ICs of the sentence. The constituent *[called up Bill]* again consists of *[called up]* and *[Bill]* as ICs. Again, the constituent *[called up]* is composed of *[called]* and *[up]* as ICs. Given this, how do we analyse the ICs in (10)? Obviously, *up* is in constituency with the verb *called*. But in (10), we have *Bill* in between the two. We find another example of discontinuous IC in the following example:

(11) Is John sleeping?

In (11), we have Subject-Auxiliary inversion, where the auxiliary (i.e. *is* in the example) moves to a position before the subject. However, IC analysis, which says that *is sleeping* is one constituent, cannot give a proper explanation of why we find them (i.e. *is sleeping*) as discontinuous ICs.

7.6 THE THREE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEORY OF CONSTITUENT STRUCTURE

There are three distinctive periods of development in the theory of constituent structure.
First, it was Leonard Bloomfield (1887-1949), the American linguist who led the development of structural linguistics in the United States

during the 1930s and the 1940s, introduced the notion 'Constituent Structure'.

Then, his followers, notably, Eugene Nida (1914-2011), Rulon Wells (1918-2008), and Zellig S Harris (1909-1992), formulated the principles of constituent analysis in greater detail.

Finally, the theory of constituent structure was formalized and subjected to rigor by Noam Chomsky (b. 1928). It has since been known as the `Phrase Structure Grammar'.

7.7 PHRASE STRUCTURE RULES

We introduce below the Chomskyan Phrase Structure Grammar, which is made of Phrase Structure Rules (PS rules). Before we deal with PS rules, let us look at different categories of phrases in the immediately following section.

7.7.1 Categories of Phrases

As there are different lexical categories (e.g. noun, verb, adjective, preposition), so are there different categories of phrases (e.g. noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase).

A phrase is, as you have already observed, a string of words that functions as a constituent. Every phrase contains, and is centred on a particular lexical category and is named after it. Thus, if a phrase contains a noun and is centred on it, then it is a Noun Phrase (e.g. *the tall boy*); if a phrase contains a verb and is centred on it, it is a Verb Phrase (e.g *killed a mose*); if a phrase contains a preposition and is centred on it, then it is a Prepositional Phrase (e.g. *on the table*), etc. Thus, a phrase is known after the lexical item on which it is centered. The lexical item is called the *head* of the phrase. Thus, in the above examples the noun *boy*, the verb*kill* and the preposition*on* are the *heads* of the respective phrases.

Now, let us look at the PS rule for a sentence.

7.7.2 Phrase Structure Rulefor a sentence

Consider the following example in (12):

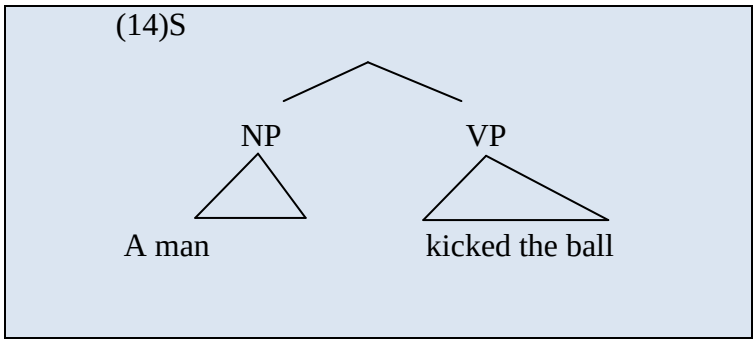
(12) A man kicked the ball.

A simple sentence like (15) above usually consists of a noun phrase and a verb phrase (in the sentence, *A man* is the noun phrase; *kicked the ball* is the verb phrase). This fact can be represented as a general rule in the following statement in (13):

(13) **S → NP – VP**

Here, S, NP and VP are called category symbols. The arrow (→) stands for "consists of" or "is rewritten as". Thus, the rule in (13) can be read as "A S(entence) consists of or is rewritten as an NP and a VP".

The rule in (13) says that the constituent structure of a Sentence is a noun phrase and a verb phrase. The same idea can also be represented by a tree diagram as in (14)



In (14), S, NP, VP are called *nodes*. The lines that connect the S node with the NP node and the VP node are called *branches*. The S node is called the *mother* node and the NP and VP nodes are called the *daughter* nodes. The relationship between the NP node and the VP

node is that of *sisterhood*. The mother node S is said to *dominate* the daughter nodes NP and VP. The triangles below the NP and the VP nodes indicate that the NP and VP can be further divided into its constituent structures.

The same idea can be represented with labelled bracketing, putting the sentence and its constituents in squire brackets as in (15):

(15) $[_{S}\ [_{NP}$ A man$]\ [_{VP}$ kicked the ball$]]$

In (15), we use category labels such as S, NP, VP in the bottom corner of the left hand brackets to indicate that the bracketed thing is a sentence, noun phrase, or a verb phrase, respectively. By the right-hand closing bracket we indicate that the constituent ends here. Thus, the brackets immediately after *man* and *ball* are closing brackets for the NP and the VP, respectively. The second one after *ball* is the closing bracket for the entire sentence.

In (13), (14), and (15), what we have done is developing some useful *tools* for syntactic analysis. Notions like *node, branches*, and relationships like *mother, daughter, domination,* etc. are very important tools for any syntactic analysis.

What we have in (15) is known as the **Phrase Structure Rule** for a sentence.

ACTIVITY 1

Before we look at the constituents of an NP and VP, let us have some more practice with tree diagram and labelled bracketing:

(i) Look at the following sentences and draw tree diagrams to show the constituents.

a. A tall boy threw the ball.

b. The cat chased the small rat.

c. The happy student played the piano.

(ii) Now, use labelled bracketing to show the constituents of the sentences above sentences.

Now that we have finished doing the activity, we are in a position to look into the constituents of NPs and VPs.

7.7.2.1 Constituent structure of an NP

As said, a noun phrase may have only one constituent, i.e. a noun. Thus, in (16) below the proper name *Bijoy* is an NP.

(16) *Bijay* is tall.

Using the *tools* developed in (13), (14), and (15), we can show the PS rule for (16) as in (17):

(17) **NP → N**

The rule in (17) says that the constituent structure of a Noun Phrase is a noun. However, we also know that an NP can also have other constituents as in (18)

(18) Bijay is *a boy*.

What is the structure of the NP *a boy* in (18)?

The NP *a boy* in (18) consists of a determiner and a noun; this can be represented in Phrase structure rules as in (19):

(19) **NP→ Det – N**

The rule in (19) says that the constituent structure of a Noun Phrase is a determiner and a noun.

But we can have more elements in the structure of a NP. For example, we can have an adjective in the NP *a boy* in (18) above and have a new

NP *a tall boy*.Now consider the following noun phrases in (20 - 24)

Now consider the phrases below:

(20a) The first house
(21a) The first beautiful house
(22a) The first three houses
(23a) The first three beautiful houses
(24a) The first three exceptionally beautiful houses

Note that in all the examples above, the lexical items *first* and *three* are used. Lexical items like *first, second, next, last,*etc. are **ordinals** which modify the following noun in a noun phrase. Again, lexical items like *one, three, many, a good number of*, etc. are **quantifiers** which modify the following noun in a noun phrase. Both ordinals and quantifiers are mutually inclusive (i.e. they can occur together). In (22a) they occur before the head noun (i.e. *houses*); in (23a) and (24b) they occur before the adjective phrase (i.e. *beautiful houses* and *exceptionally beautiful houses*; note that *exceptionally* is an intensifier). In (20b-24b) below, we show the phrase structure rules for (20a-24a) above.

(20b) NP→ Det – ordinal – N
(21b) NP→ Det – ordinal – adjective – N
(22b) NP→ Det – ordinal – quantifier – N
(23b) NP→ Det – ordinal – quantifier – adjective – N
(24b) NP→ Det – ordinal – quantifier – intensifier – adjective - N

Now we can form a generalised phrase structure rule of the noun phrases in (20b-24b) as in (25):

(25)**NP→ Det – ordinal – quantifier – intensifier - adjective – N**

The rule in (25) says that the constituent structure of a Noun Phrase is a determiner, an ordinal, a quantifier, an intensifier, an adjective and a

noun. However, except the head noun, all other elements are optional elements in the structure of a NP. Therefore, we put the optional elements in brackets and the generalised Phrase structure rule for an NP would be as in (26):

(26)**NP→ (Det) – (ordinal) – (quantifier) – (intensifier) – (adjective) – N**

The rule in (26) says that a noun phrase must have a noun, which is the head of the *phrase*. This (head) noun may be preceded by a determiner, an ordinal, a quantifier, an intensifier, and an adjective. It also says that the noun is an **obligatory constituent** of the noun phrase and other constituents which precede the head noun are **optional constituents**.

Thus, in this section we have tried to understand the constituent structure of a Noun Phrase in terms of Phrase Structure Rules. In so doing we have tried to understand the procedure of arriving at a phrase structure rule from a given set of examples. In the next section, we will rely on this procedure and try to discover the phrase structure rule for a **Verb Phrase**.

7.7.2.2 Constituent structure of a VP

The term Verb Phrase (VP) includes everything that comes in the predicate (the predicate is the part of a sentence containing a verb and stating something about the subject, e.g. *has gonehome* in *Mary has gone home*). The predicate may consist of the verb only when the verb is an intransitive verb, e.g. *leave*, as in *He left*; the verb and an object when the verb is mono-transitive, e.g. *eat*,asin *John ate a mango*, where *a mango* is the object; a verb and two objects when it is a di-transitive verb, e.g. *give* as in *John gave Mary a book*, where *Mary* and *a book* are the two objects. The one constituent that a verb phrase must contain is the verb. Let us try to represent it with a PS rule:

(27) **VP→ V – (NP) – (NP).**

We know that the objects in the above examples, i.e. *a mango*, *Mary*, and *a book* are NPs (see our discussion about NP in the preceding sections). Thus, the rule in (27) says that a VP must have a verb, which is the head of the *phrase*. This obligatory (head) verb may be followed by one/two NP(s), which function as objects. However, we also know that a verb in a verb phrase may optionally be preceded and modified by auxiliary verbs, such as a perfective auxiliary, as in (28), where the head verb *go* is preceded by the perfective auxiliary *have*:

(28) have gone.

Thus, the phrase structure of the VP in (28) can be presented as (29):

(29) **VP→ (perf) – V.**

Notice that in (29), we put the perf constituent within brackets; this suggests that it is an optional element.

Now, a VP *always* carries a tense auxiliary before the verb. The tense in (28) is present tense. The tense is always reflected in the first auxiliary (e.g. in *They have been playing since morning* there are two auxiliary verbs, *have* and *been*; note that the first auxiliary *has* is carrying the tense, and it is present tense); when there is no auxiliary verb, then tense is carried by the main verb (e.g. in *They played cricket this morning*, there is noauxiliary verb so that the verb *play* is carrying the tense, and it is past tense). Thus, the refined version of the phrase structure for the VP in (29) will be (30):

(30) **VP→ tense - (perf) – V.**

Combining (27) and (30), we can have a general PS rule for a VP as presented in (31) below:

(31) **VP→ tense – (perf) - V – (NP) – (NP).**

Now, as we already know, we can have more auxiliary verbs before the main verb in a VP like (32):

(32) might have been being built.

In (32), the main verb *build* is preceded by a modal verb in the past tense (i.e. *might*), a perfective auxiliary (i.e. *have*), a passive auxiliary (i.e. *been*) and a progressive auxiliary (i.e. *being*). Note that the first auxiliary carries the tense (precisely, the past tense so that it is *might*, not *may*). The phrase structure in (33) show all these:

(33) **VP→ tense – (modal) - (perf) – (prog) – (pass) – V**

Combining (31) and (33), we can have a general phrase structure rule for a VP as in (34):

(34) **VP→ tense – (modal) - (perf) – (prog) – (pass) – V - (NP) – (NP)**

Thus, (34) gives us a general PS-rule for a Verb Phrase in English.

7.7.3 Tools for testing constituency

7.7.3.1 Movement

If a group of words can undergo movement, i.e. preposing, postposing, or fronting for question formation, they are a constituent. Note, however, that the reverse is not *always* true, i.e. if something cannot be moved around, it does not mean that it is not a constituent. There could be independent reasons for why it cannot be moved around.

Thus, movement is a tool for testing constituency. We will discuss below only one type of movement, i.e. *preposing.*

7.7.3.1.1 Preposing

Constituents can be pre-posed. Non-constituents can never be pre-posed.

Noun Phrase (NP) Preposing:

Consider the examples in (35) below. The NP *your young brother* in (35a) is preposed in (35b). Now, (1b) is grammatically correct, which implies that *your young brother* is a constituent. On the other hand, (35c) is incorrect because what is preposed here (i.e. *your younger*) is a not a constituent. In the same way, examples (35d-g) are also incorrect because what is preposed in them are non-constituents.

(35)

a. I can't stand your younger brother.

b. [Your younger brother], I can't stand [__].

c. *Your younger, I can't stand [__ brother].

d. *Younger brother, I can't stand [your __].

e. *Brother, I can't stand [your younger __].

f. *Your, I can't stand [__ younger brother].

g. *Your brother, I can't stand [__ younger __].

Prepositional Phrase Preposing:

In (36a) below, there is a Prepositional Phrase, i.e. *to your brother*, which is preposed in (36b) as a constituent. On the other hand, what is preposed as a constituent in (36e) is *your brother*, which is an NP (i.e. the NP *your brother* is a part of the PP *to your brother*).

(36)

a. John gave a book to your brother.

b. [To your brother], John gave a book [___]

c. * To your , John gave a book [__ brother].

d. * To, John gave a book [__ your brother].

e. [Your brother], John gave a book [to __].

f. * Your, John gave a book [to __ brother].

g. * To brother, John gave a book [__ your __].

Preposing of Adjective Phrases and Verb Phrases:

Preposing of Adjective Phrases and Verb Phrases is usually restricted; still it is possible because they are after all constituents. Thus, the AP (i.e. adjective phrase) *very amazing* in (37a) is preposed (i.e. the original sentence was *Bill said that the new Honda Amaz was amazing and it was very amazing*). In the same way, VPs are preposed in (37b-c).

(37)

a. Bill said that the new Honda Amaz was amazing and [very amazing] it was [$_{AP}$ __].

b. [Give in to blackmail], I never will [$_{VP}$ __

c. John said that he would win the prize, and [win the prize], he did [$_{VP}$ __].

Preposing of Adverbial phrases:

As they are constituents, adverbial phrases can be preposed much more freely. Thus, the adverbial phrase *very shortly* in(38a) is preposed in (38b).

(38)

a. She's going to be leaving for New Delhi [very shortly].

b. [Very shortly], she's going to be leaving for New Delhi.

7.8 WORD ORDER TYPOLOGY

Word order typically refers to the order of subject (S), verb (V) and object (O) in a sentence. For example, in English the word order of a typical sentence is Subject-Verb-Object (SVO). Yet many languages have a different word order. Thus, *word order typology* is the study of

the order of the syntactic constituents of a language, and how different languages can employ different orders.

A language like English uses a relatively fixed word order. Thus, in English, if the order of the words is changed, then there is a change of meaning. For example, *Mary slapped John* and *John slapped Mary* do not mean the same thing. This means that in English the first position (i.e. the position immediately before the verb) is fixed for the Subject; the third position (i.e. the position immediately after the verb) is fixed for the Object. However, this is not true of some other languages. These languages marks the Subject and the Object with morphemes, e.g. in Assamese the Subject is marked with the morpheme *–e*, the Object with the morpheme *–k.* Thus, for example, *Ram-e Hari-k sariale* means *Ram slapped Hari* (note that *sariale* in Assamese = *slapped*). As the Subject and the Object are marked, a change in their order does not lead to a change in the basic meaning. Thus, *Ram-e Hari-k sariale* and *Hari-k Ram-e sariale* basically mean the same thing. Thus, such languages are said to have a flexible word order (e.g.. the word order of Assamese is SOV, but it is flexible in the sense that the order can be changed without changing the basic meaning of the sentence in the SOV order).

7.8.1 Six Possible Word Orders

Linguists have investigated the varieties of word order in the languages of the world, starting in 1963 with Joseph Greenberg of Stanford University. Since Greenberg it has been shown that there are six theoretically possible basic word orders for the transitive sentence. The overwhelming majority of the world's languages are either Subject–Verb–Object (SVO) or Subject–Object–Verb (SOV). Then, some have the following word order: Verb–Subject–Object (VSO). The remaining three arrangements are exceptionally rare, with Verb–Object–Subject (VOS) being slightly more common than Object–Subject–Verb (OSV), and Object–Verb–Subject (OVS) being

significantly rarer than the two preceding orders. The Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages employ the SOV order while English and other Romance languages employ the SVO word order.

7.8.2 Phrase level word order vs. constituent level word order

The order of constituents in a phrase can vary in languages. Thus, in English, for example, we have *preposition - noun*as a constituent (e.g. *in Delhi*); in Assamese we have *noun-postposition*as a constituent (e.g. *Delhi-t =Delhi-in ='in Delhi*).

In the same way, within the noun phrase the position of the modifiers may vary in languages, occurring either before or after the head noun:

- adjective (*red house* vs. *house red*)
- determiner (*this house* vs. *house this*)
- numeral (*two houses* vs. *houses two*)
- possessor (*my house* vs. *house my*)
- relative clause (*the by me built house* vs. *the house built by me*)

There are several common correlations between sentence-level word order (see 7.8.1) and phrase-level constituent order (see 7.7.2.1). For example, SOV languages generally put modifiers before heads and use postpositions. By contrast, VSO languages tend to place modifiers after their heads, and use prepositions.

In many languages, changes in word order occur in topicalization or in questions. However, most languages are generally assumed to have a basic word order, called the unmarked word order; marked word orders can then be used to emphasize a sentence element in order to manipulate meaning.

For example, English is SVO in "I don't know that", but OSV is also possible here as in "That I don't know." This common process is

called topicalization or topic-fronting. Thus, OSV is a marked word order In English because it emphasises the Object.

An example of OSV being used for emphasis:

A: I can't see Alice. (SVO)
B: What about John?
A: John I can see. (OSV) [rather than SVO *I can see John*]

Non-standard word orders are also found in poetry in English, particularly archaic or romantic terms – as the wedding phrase, "With this ring, I thee wed" (SOV) or "Thee I love" (OSV) – as well as in many other languages.

7.9 SUMMING UP

In this Unit, we have seen that a sentence is not just a sequence of words; rather it is made of constituents. Thus, came the procedure called IC Analysis, which was a major feature of Bloomfieldian structuralist linguistics. The theory of constituent structure was then formalized with rigor by Noam Chomsky. Since then it has been known as the `Phrase Structure Grammar'. We have thus looked at the PS rule for a sentence; and then at the constituent structures of NP and VP. We have then discussed Preposing as a tool for testing constituency. Finally, we looked at the word order typology and the common correlations between sentence-level word order and phrase-level constituent order.

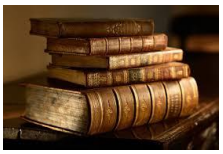
7.10 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is IC Analysis? Explain with examples.
2. What is the constituent structure of NP? Explain with examples.

3. What is the constituent structure of VP? Explain with examples.

4. Write a note on the word order typology.

5. Write a note on the correlations between sentence-level word order and phrase- level constituent order.



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JOT DOWN IMPORTANT POINTS

UNIT 8: INTRODUCTORY SEMANTICS

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.0 INTRODUCTION

The term semantics is used broadly to refer to the study of meaning. Semantics is also a branch of philosophy, but within linguistics it it encompasses the meaning of words, often called, lexical semantics, and the meaning of sentences.

One aspect of word meaning or lexical semantics is semantic relations among words, e.g. the word hot and the word cold are related in a particular way. But, semantic relations involve sentences as well, e.g. there is a semantic relation between the sentences The lion killed the deer and The deer died.

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

At the end of this Unit, you should have a clear idea about

- semantic relations between words
- semantic relations involving sentences

8.2 MEANING IN LEXICAL SEMANTICS

When we talk about meaning in lexical semantics, we take into account two different ways of talking about meaning: reference and sense.

Reference is the relationship between the word and the world. Thus, the the referent of the word 'cat', for example, is the real world cat. Sense is, on the other hand, is a word's semantic relation with other words in a language.

Now, let us see how Sense works. Suppose you are asked the meaning of the word conceal, for example. You can, then, simply say, "It's the same as hide". Again, suppose you are asked to give the meaning of shallow; you may again say: "the opposite of deep". If one asks you the meaning of daffodil, you can say it "a kind of flower". In saying so, what you are doing is characterizing the meaning of each word in terms of its relationship to other words. Thus, the sense or lexical relations we have just exemplified are synonymy (conceal/hide), antonymy (shallow/deep) and hyponymy (daffodil/flower).

In the following few sections we will have a look at such sense or semantic relations.

8.2.1 Synonymy

Two or more words with very closely related meanings are called synonyms. They can often, though not always, be substituted for each other in sentences.

Common examples of synonyms are the pairs: answer-reply, almost-nearly, big-large, broad-wide, buy-purchase, freedom-liberty etc. In the appropriate circumstances, we can say, What was his answer? or What was his reply? with much the same meaning.

We should keep in mind that the idea of 'sameness' of meaning used in discussing synonymy is not necessarily 'total sameness'. There are many occasions when one word is appropriate in a sentence, but its synonym would be odd. For example, whereas the word answer fits in the sentence Sandy had only one answer correct on the test, the word reply would sound odd. Synonymous forms may also differ in terms of formal versus informal uses. The sentence My father purchased a large automobile has virtually the same meaning as My dad bought a big car, with four synonymous replacements, but the second version sounds much more casual or informal than the first.

8.2.2 Antonymy

Two forms with opposite meanings are called antonyms. Some common examples are the pairs: alive/dead, big/small, fast/slow, happy/sad, hot/cold, long/short, male/female, married/single, old/new, rich/poor, true/false.

Antonyms are usually divided into two main types: Gradable Antonyms and Non-gradable Antonyms. Gradable antonyms are opposites along a scale and 'non-gradable' are direct opposites. Gradable antonyms, such as the pair big/small, can be used in comparative constructions like I'm bigger than you and A cat is smaller than a horse. Also, the negative of one member of a gradable pair does

not necessarily imply the other. For example, the sentence 'My car isn't old', doesn't necessarily mean My car is new.

With non-gradable antonyms (also called 'complementary pairs'), comparative constructions are not normally used. We don't typically describe someone as deader or more dead than another. Also, the negative of one member of a non-gradable pair does imply the other member. That is, 'My grandparents aren't alive' does indeed mean My grandparents are dead.

8.3.3 Hyponymy

Hyponymy is the relationship between two lexemes, where the meaning of one form is included in the meaning of another. Examples are the pairs: animal/dog, dog/poodle, vegetable/carrot, flower/Jasmine, tree/banyan. The concept of 'inclusion' involved in this relationship is the idea that if an object is a jasmine, then it is necessarily a flower, so the meaning of flower is included in the meaning of jasmine. In other words, Jasmine is a hyponym of flower.

Again, for the pair red-scarlet, we can say that the sense of red is included in the sense of scarlet. As Yule (2006) puts it, "The relation of hyponymy captures the concept of 'is a kind of', as when we give the meaning of a word by saying, 'an asp is a kind of snake'. Sometimes the only thing we know about the meaning of a word is that it is a hyponym of another term. That is, we may know nothing more about the meaning of the word asp other than that it is a kind of snake or that banyan is a kind of tree."

8.3.4 Homophones and Homographs

A word is a homophone of another word, if they have same the pronunciation but differ in their meaning, e.g. bare-bear, meat-meet,

knight-night, one- won, flour-flower, pail-pale, right-write, and sew-so, etc.

Two words are homographs of each other, if they have the same spelling but different meaning, e.g. bear(n)- bear(v) and rose(n)- rose(v).

8.3.5 Homonyms

Homonymy is the case of an ambiguous word whose different senses are far apart from each other and not obviously related to each other. In such cases, one word-form (written or spoken) has two or more unrelated meanings, as in the following examples:

bank (of a river) – bank (financial institution)
bat (flying creature) – bat (used in sports)
mole (on skin) – mole (small animal)
pupil (at school) – pupil (in the eye)
race (contest of speed) – race (ethnic group)

As you can see from the examples above, homonyms are words that have separate histories and meanings, but have accidentally come to have exactly the same form.

8.3.6 Polysemy

Polysemy is the case where a word has several related meanings. In other words, it can be defined as one form having multiple meanings that are all related by extension. For example, word head may be used to refer to the object on top of your body, on top of a glass of beer, the person at the top of a company or department, and so on. All these meanings are extensions of the basic meaning of head, i.e. the object on top of your body. Other examples of polysemy are foot (e.g. of person, of bed, of mountain) or in (e.g. The coins are in the box, She is in trouble, in 1980s)

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. As you have seen from the above discussion, there is considerable amount of overlapping between homonymy and polysemy. One useful way to decide whether a particular word is polysemous or homonymous is to check it in a dictionary: If the word has multiple meanings (i.e. it's polysemous), then there will be a single entry, with a numbered list of the different meanings of that word. If two words are treated as homonyms, they will typically have two separate entries.

Now, refer to a dictionary and say whether the following words are examples of homonymy or polysemy:

1. bank, mail, mole, and sole.
2. face, foot, get, head and run.

Now, give one sentence with each of these words, illustrating either as homonymy or polysemy.

LET US STOP AND THINK

Remember, it is possible for two forms to be distinguished via homonymy and for one of the forms also to have various uses via polysemy. The words date (=a thing we can eat) and date (=a point in time) are homonyms. However, the 'point in time' kind of date is polysemous in terms of a particular day and month (= on a letter), an arranged meeting time (= an appointment), a social meeting (= with someone we like), and even a person (= that person we like). So the question "How was your date?", could have several different interpretations. (This activity is based on Yule, G: 2006: 107).

8.3 SEMANTIC RELATIONS INVOLVING SENTENCES

In 8.2 above, we have looked at the semantic or sense relations among words. But, semantic relations involve sentences as well. In other words, like words, sentences have meaning that can be analyzed in terms of their relation to each other. In the two subsections below we consider two such relations, namely, Paraphrase and Entailment

8.3.1 Paraphrase

Two sentences with identical meanings are said to be paraphrases of each other. The following pair of sentences provide an example of paraphrase.

(3)

a. The police caught the thief.

b. The thief was caught by the police.

There is a semantic relation between (a) and (b) above in the sense that they are similar in meaning. Thus, they are paraphrases of each other. However, there is a subtle difference in emphasis between the two: while (3a) is about what the police did, (3b) is rather about what happened to the thief.

8.3.2 Entailment

One sentence may entail other sentences – that is, in its meaning, it may include the meaning of another sentence, just as hyponymy includes the meaning of other words. Consider the following sentences in (4) and (5):

(4)
a. The earth goes round the sun.
b. The earth moves.

(5)
a. All men are mortal.
b. John is mortal.

In (4), the (a) sentence entails (includes) the meaning of (b). By the same way, in (5) the (a) sentence entails the meaning of (b).

8.4 SUMMING UP

In this Unit you have seen that a word refers to the world , i.e. a word has an obvious relation with the outside world, but within the language a word has a semantic relation with other words. We have thus discussed these semantic or sense relations among words: Synonymy, Antonymy, Hyponymy, Homophones, and Homographs, Homonyms, Polysemy. Like words, sentences have meaning that can be analyzed in terms of their relation to each other. We have discussed two such relations: Paraphrase and Entailment

8.5 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Define Reference and Sense.

2. What is the sense relation between each pair of words listed here?

(a) damp/moist (c) furniture/table (e) move/run

(b) deep/shallow (d) married/single (f) peace/piece

3. Which of the following opposites are gradable or non-gradable?

(a) absent/present (c) fail/pass (e) fill it/empty it

(b) appear/disappear (d) fair/unfair (f) high/low

4. Frame sentences to show that the following words are polysemous.

a. deliver, get, head, hand, on

5. Discuss semantic relations involving sentences.

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JOT DOWN IMPORTANT POINTS

MODULE V: PRAGMATICS AND LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT

UNIT 9: CONTEXT AND MEANING: THE SPEECH ACT THEORY – THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE – POLITENESS

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.0 INTRODUCTION

Language is always used in specific real-life situations with a specific purpose. If so, speech is rather an act, and study of language without context is unrealistic. We have thus *The Speech Act Theory* as proposed by the philosopher J. L. Austin. On the other hand, in using language in specific contexts, the listener and speaker act cooperatively, e.g. the speaker uses language in such a way that the hearer can easily decode the intended meaning, or the hearer tries to decode the intended the meaning even if it is not explicitly said by using the right amount of language. Thus comes*The Cooperative Principle* as proposed by the philosopher Paul Grice. Again, the speaker uses language in such a way that the hearer does not feel that he is being imposed on, e.g. "Could you please bring me a glass of water?" instead of "Bring me glass of water."

Thus, users of language adopt various politeness strategies as available in his language as first clealry demonstaretd by the American linguisits Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson.

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

i) understand the relation between speech contexts and meaning
ii) apply the theoretical perspectives (Speech Act Theory; the Cooperative Principle; and Politeness) to your own everyday understanding and use of language

9.2 THE SPEECH ACT THEORY

If you request someone to give a formal speech on, say, 'Gandhian Principles and Humanism', perhaps her first query would be, "Who is this speech for and what is the occasion?" In other words, she will be keen to know who her target audience is and where she is supposed to deliver this speech. She would want to know this because if she realizes that her target audience comprises of school children,she would possibly adopt a speech style that is different from the one she would have adopted if the target audience were, for example, corporate clients wishing to incorporate some Gandhian ideals in their marketing strategies. Thus, even within a *formal speech style*, she would want to define the *degree of formality* and the *orientation* of her speech keeping in mind the listeners that she would have. In our everyday life too, we consciously or unconsciously adjust our speech keeping in mind i) our listeners (who is listening to us speak), ii) the context of speech (what is the situation of our speech) and iii) its purpose (why are we speaking): *who is speaking what and to whom* is as important as *how and whysomeone is speaking*. Speech is never encounteredin a vacuum –

every sentence of ours, when uttered, is encountered in a *situation of interlocution* and thus is seen to be having "a situated, purposive and functional aspect" (Fitch and Sanders, 2005: 17).

Thus, in saying something to someone, one is understood to be performing a *speech act* in a social context.

So what exactly is a 'speech act'? In simple terms, *a speech act is an utterance that has a performative function in terms of language and communication*. This performative function of language is at the heart of J.L. Austin's 'Speech Act Theory'and it encapsulates the idea of *speech as action*. A speech act in this theoretical framework of speech as action is any *statement that not only describes or states some facts but also performs a certain kind of action by itself in describing or stating that fact*. Under this view, utterances are actions because when one utters anything, one is not merely *saying* something but also *doing* something. For example, at a marriage ceremony when one says "Yes, I do", one is not merely uttering the three words, "Yes", "I", and "do" but in saying these words, one is actually doing something viz. accepting a person as a life partner at a marriage ceremony. 'Yes, I do" are thus not mere words that are spoken, but an action that is taken i.e. they solemnize a marriage. Austin cites many more examples of the performative: like when one smashes a bottle against the stern of a ship and says "I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth"* or when one says "I give and bequeath my watch to my brother" in a will. In such cases, to use Austin's words:

> …it seems clear that to utter the sentences….is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it (Austin, 1962: 6).

Those utterances then are called *performative sentences* or simply performatives which indicate or infer a doing: "the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action – it is not normally thought of as just saying something" (ibid: 6-7).

LET US STOP AND THINK

If performatives are utterances which indicate a 'doing', what about those utterances that are mere descriptions and do not really 'do' anything. Example, if you say 'The sky is blue', you are not really performing a major action (like solemnizing a marriage or naming a ship or bequeathing a property to someone). Yet, you are still speaking, isn't it? What would such descriptive utterances of yours count as?

9.2.1 Constatives and Performatives

In proposing that while uttering something one may actually be *doing* something rather than merely saying something, Austin makes a distinction between a *constative* and a *performative*: the former is *utterance-as-description* (merely saying something) while the latter is *utterance-as-doing* (performing an action in and by saying something). Let us take another example here: if you were to say "The sun rises in the east", you are merely describing an event in the world – one that might be true or false (in this particular case, true, since the sun *does* rise in the east). If, on the other hand, you utter a performative like "I name this baby 'John'", you are not merely making a statement (like in the "The sun rises in the east" example) but also *doing*something: you are giving a name to a baby. Austin claims that unlike constatives, a performative utterance functions through a *Doctrine of Infelicity* defined as "*the doctrine of things that can be or go wrong on the occasion of utterances*" (Austin, 1962: 14; italics in original). Thus, a simple statement like 'The sun rises in the east' can only be true or false whereas perfomatives like "I name this baby 'John'" or "I promise to

keep you happy all your life" are liable not to a truth/falsity claims but are subject to the Doctrine of Infelicity. Such utterances need to be assessed in some other respects, namely,*whether the baby was named by proper authorization or whether the promise of keeping the person happy was kept or not*. Performatives may be 'happy' or 'unhappy' and for a 'happy' functioning of a performative, Austin gives a few necessary conditions – infelicities need to be avoided at all costs for a happy or felicitous speech act. This list of what he calls the "felicity conditions" for any performative utterance are provided in his *How to Do Things with Words* (1962):

Austin's Felicity Conditions for a 'happy' functioning of a performative

(A.1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,

(A.2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.

(B.1) The procedure itself must be executed by all participants both correctly and

(B.2) completely.

(Γ.1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves and further,

(Γ.2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently" (Austin, 1962: 14-15)

Between the four rules enlisted in A and B and the two rules enlisted in Γ, Austin's distinction vis-à-vis various types of infelicity, comes down

to the difference between what he calls "*misfires*" and "*abuses*": of these, the former are the cases when the intended action *fails to come off* owing to inappropriate circumstances (example: "I pronounce you man and man" instead of "man and wife") and the latter are cases when the act *is executed* but infelicitously - for instance, a promise made in bad faith. In other words, an infelicitymay be in the form of a misfire if the particular persons and circumstances are not "appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked" and the procedure is not "executed by all participants both correctly and completely". Misfires can also be further distinguished as *misinvocation* (infelicity due to speaking vaguely, non-existent or inappropriate procedure), *misapplication* (infelicity on account of inapplicability of procedure in spite of its existence) or *misexecution* (infelicity due to purported act being vitiated by a flaw or hitch in the conduct of the ceremony).

LET US STOP AND THINK

Read the above distinctions again carefully and try and come up with your own examples of 'misinvocation', 'misapplication' and 'misexecution'.

Suppose A said to B "I promise I will marry you on 10 December, 2020 at 3pm." List a few possibilities wherein this performative may become infelicitous.

On the other hand, an infelicity in the form of an abuse may occur when "the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant" (Austin as cited in the box above) is inappropriate. Going by these conditions, "I name this shipthe *Queen*

Elizabeth" or "I name this baby 'John'" are liable to misfire whereas "I promise to keep you happy all your life" is liable to abuse. Stefenescu (2008: 78) notes the success and failure of any utterance is a matter of collective responsibility and depends on the agreements observed by various sociolinguistic communities. If any speech is infelicitous, it is because of a failure of one or more of these reasons.

9.2.2 Locution, Illocution, Perlocution

Austin analyses the kind of performative function that we have just enumerated above in terms of locutionary, *illocutionary*, and *perlocutionary* acts.

> "The doctrine of the performative/constative distinction stands on the doctrine of locutionary and illocutionary acts in the total speech act as the *special* theory to the *general* theory. And the need for the general theory arises simply because the traditional 'statement' is an abstraction, an ideal, and so is its traditional truth/falsity"(Austin, 1962: 148)

Of these three acts, i) the 'locutionary act' is the real performance of an utterance: in other words, it is *the actual utterance and its ostensible meaning, comprising phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts* corresponding to the verbal, syntactic and semantic aspects of any meaningful utterance; ii) the 'illocutionary act' refers to the pragmatic 'illocutionary force' of the utterance, or*its intended significance as a socially valid verbal action* while iii) the 'perlocutionary act' lies in *its actual effect*, such as persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening, inspiring, or otherwise getting someone to do or realize something, whether intended or not.

To go back to our earlier example of the hypothetical person who was asked to give a speech on 'Gandhian Principles and Humanism' (let us call her Speaker B with the person making the initial request being Speaker A), the person who asked her to give the speech actually made a *request* for a speech. A speech act then, is essentially *the performance*

of several acts at once: just as Speaker B would want to know who her target audience for her speech is (so as to prepare herself with a certain orientation), Speaker Awould already be performing a speech act whereby i) he would be saying certain words belonging to a certain language (i.e. performing a physiological act of making sounds belonging to a particular vocabulary and conforming to a certain grammar and which would have definite sense and reference (its *phonetic*, *phatic* and *rhetic*functions) ii) he would be asking Speaker B to give a speech on a particular topic, in this case "Gandhian Principles and Humanism', (i.e. performing a request) iii) he would be using a particular style of speaking even within his request (such as entreating/ pleading/ coaxing/ persuading) so that his request may have the necessary effect – in this case the Speaker B's acceptance of the request.

To put in even more precise terms now, the person who put forth the request to make the speech, Speaker A, performed *a locutionary act in speaking; an illocutionary act in requesting and a perlocutionary act in speaking in a manner (coaxing/ persuading) that would elicit a positive response from his listener*. Austin (1962) has focused exhaustively on the illocutionary act while also making a distinction between the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts – he notes that illocutionary acts are conventional acts whereas the "…perlocutionary act may be either the achievement of a perlocutionary object (convince, persuade) or the production of a perlocutionary sequel" (Austin 1962: 118).

What this means is that while in order to perform an illocutionary act, a speaker must rely on *socially accepted convention* (without which she cannot inspire a social force into her utterance), a perlocutionary act, being an effect of the illocutionary force, deals with consequences which do *not* include conventional effects. Further, given that the illocutionary force has its roots in a conventional system of social interaction, it is (in principle) determinate; perlocutionary effects on the other hand are subjective and virtually unpredictable.

Any speech act will succeed only with i) the understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution taking effect i.e. the utterance by the speaker and ii) inviting a response from the hearer with regard to the locution; in other words, the triad of speaker-utterance-hearer need to be placed within a *social* context, and it is their triadic relation, established only by the interplay of communicative intentions and effects, which constitutes a complete speech act. *A speech performance therefore is inevitably linked to the context of interlocution*: as Austin famously puts it – "the total speech act in the total speech situation" is the only actual phenomenon that he endeavours to elucidate: in a way it crucially reflects Austin's emphasis on the entire spectrum of linguistic communication itself: something that engages with and involves all three facets (speaker-utterance-hearer). Context and meaning in this sense are inevitably dependent on the triadic relation of speaker-utterance-hearer.

LET US STOP AND THINK

Speech acts, as you have just learnt, are utterances having a performative function which may include such acts as promising, ordering, greeting, warning, inviting, congratulating, threatening etc. A speech act typically can be anyalsed on at least three levels: a *locutionary* act (the actual, real world utterance by a speaker), an *illocutionary* act (the force or significance of that utterance), and *perlocutionary* act (the actual effect of the speaker's locution on her audience). Of these the first, the locutionary act, is itself deemed to comprise three acts (see footnote 2): the *phonetic* (uttering certain 'noises' or sounds), *phatic* (uttering of certain vocables or words belonging to particular language/ grammar) and *rhetic* (using words with a certain sense and reference).

Given this background, can you make five sentences and identify

their locution, illocutionary and perlocutionary components?

9.2.3 The Illocutionary Act: Austin and Searle

Of the three Austinian acts mentioned above, the illocutionary act is crucial and central to the speech act and these classes of utterance are classified as per their illocutionary force in Austin (1962) as follows:

i) *Verditives:* which are judicial acts "typified by the giving of a verdict…by a jury, arbitrator or umpire" (Austin, 1962: 151); for example: "Not out" in cricket.

ii) *Exercitives*: which are the "exercising of powers, rights or influence" (Austin, 1962: 151) exemplified by appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, warning etc.; for example: "I appoint you the Chairperson of X Committee"

iii) *Commissives*: which are typified "by promising or otherwise undertaking: they *commit* you to doing something, but include also declarations or announcements of intention, which are not promises, and also rather vague things which we may call espousals" (Austin, 1962: 151-152); for example: siding with (someone).

iv) *Behabitives*: which "have to do with attitudes and *social behaviour*" (Austin, 1962: 152); for example: apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing and challenging

v) *Expositives*: which "make plain how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation, how we are using words, or in general, are expository" (Austin, 1962: 152); for example: 'I reply', 'I argue', 'I concede', 'I illustrate', 'I assume', 'I postulate' etc.

LET US STOP AND THINK

Austin sums up the functions of illocutionary acts as follows: "The verditive is an exercise of judgment, the excercitive is an assertion of influence or exercising of power, the commissive is an assuming of an obligation or declaring of an intention, the behabitive is the adopting of an attitude, and the expositive is the clarifying of reasons, arguments and communications". (Austin, 1962: 163).

Stop and think before you proceed if the roles that people play in real life are related to their performance of the illocutionary acts listed here? What kind of people, for instance, can exercise verditives or excercitives?

Austin, it was Searle (1969, 1975a) who contributed substantially to the Speech Act Theory: like Austin he too considered speech acts to be a form of action. For him (Searle 1969: 23-24), our utterances are called locutions and we perform different kinds of acts when we speak. Most locutions express some kind of intent that a speaker has and they are hereby deemed 'illocutionary acts' having an 'illocutionary force'. A speaker may use different locutions to achieve the same illocutionary force or use one locution for many different purposes. For example, a simple utterance like "Do you want to dance?" can perform multiple functions as a speech act including question, request, offer etc.

Searle (1975a) set up a classification of the Austinian illocutionary speech acts by recasting them as per their *points of purpose*as follows (the Austinian categories of performative are repeated in parenthesis for your understanding):

i) *Assertives* (Expositives):These are speech acts that commit a speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition; for example: reciting a creed.

ii) *Directives* (Verdictives):These are speech acts that cause the hearer to take a particular action i.e. they make the hearer match her/ his behavior with the propositional content of the directive; for example: requests, commands and advice.

iii) *Commissives* (Commissives):These are speech acts that commit a speaker to undertake of action represented in the propositional content i.e. they indicate some future action; for example: promises and oaths.

iv) *Expressives* (Behabitives):These are speech acts that express sincerity conditions and reflect the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition; for example: congratulations, excuses and thanks.

v) *Declarations* (Exercitives):These are speech acts that bring about a change in the world by representing it as having being changed i.e. they change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration; for example: baptisms, pronouncing someone guilty or pronouncing someone husband and wife.

Illocutions that cause listeners to do things are deemed to have a 'perlocutionary force:different forms can be used to perform a single function. For example: i) "It is too cold here", ii) "The door is open", iii) "Could someone please shut the door" – all of these utterances could prompt a listener to close the door. Searle (1999: 145-146) notes that illocutionary acts must be performed 'intentionally': for an utterance by a speaker to be understood by another speaker of that language, the utterance must i) be correctly uttered with its conventional meaning and ii) satisfy a truth condition. In other words, if I say to you "It is a sunny day", not only must it be a sunny day in truth for communication to succeed, but you, as my listener, should also understand what I am

saying and *recognize my intention* of saying that particular utterance in all its conventional meaning. *Searle's work on speech acts concentrates on how a hearer perceives a particular utterance to have the force it has* – what he calls the *uptake* of that utterance. Parties to speech acts must be aware of what constitutes an utterance and Searlean theory is unique in its acknowledgement of the (speaker's) intention and (hearer's) recognition of intention as crucial to the entire act of communication.

9.3. GRICE'S COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

Let us go back to the hypothetical example that we started out with in this unit to understand another aspect of context and meaning: suppose Speaker B who was requested for a speech on 'Gandhian Principles and Humanism' gives a response which is completely unpredictable such as in Example I below – it would mean a refusal to understand the literal force of the illocutionary act of Speaker A who initiates the request:

Example I

Speaker A: "I would like to request you to kindly give a speech on 'Gandhian Principles and Humanism' to our corporate clients".

Speaker B: "Why? Is it because you are yourself incapable of giving this speech or because your clients desperately need Gandhian principles in their work ethics?"

Speaker B's unexpected response totally destroys the 'request' force of the illocutionary act of the Speaker A and replaces it with herown interpretation of the speech act. The implications for such a reply are many: i) perhaps Speaker B disagrees with Speaker A's principles and considers the latter to be a person of dubious morals which is why she

calls him 'incapable' of giving a speech on Gandhian Principles ii) perhaps Speaker B knows that Speaker A is a lousy public speaker and hence is incapable of giving a formal a speech iii) perhaps Speaker B dislikes the corporate world who are the potential audience for this speech and hence is trying to negotiate her way out of the request by Speaker A. There is a whole context that we are unaware of but can also guess about from the interaction of the two hypothetical speakers here. One can surely think of many such possibilities and examples from real life where speaker intention and hearer's recognition of that intention are at variance with each other and where the hearer lends her own meaning and brings her own interpretation into the conversation. Thus, what is of paramount importance is not just the felicity conditions for speech act (as in Austin) or the rules for correct and incorrect language with its emphasis on speaker intention and sincerity (as in Searle), but also *a recognition of the entire speech context* which gives preeminent position to *conversation* as we shall now discuss.

Example I above helped us to understand that the total signification of an utterance would necessarily encompass both what is actually expressed and what is suggestedand Grice (1991) draws on and explicates this idea in detail. Additional *context-specific meaning* is said to be the result of successive pragmatic inferences on the part of the hearer: in our hypothetical case the context-specific meaning derives from the hearer (Speaker B's) initial knowledge about Speaker A (as a person of dubious moral or a bad public speaker) or about the proposed audience of corporate clients (that Speaker B knew to be lacking Gandhian principles in their work ethics). The reason this kind of conversation between Speaker A and B is possible even though as readers we may find it unexpected is because Speaker A and B share a *tacit understanding* of their conversation and the direction it takes. This *shared understanding and recognition of the goals of conversation* is what facilitates conversation in the first case; any conversation can have

only certain kinds of direction at any given point of time because of contextual constraints that operate to govern exchanges. Such constraints limit speakers as to what they can say and hearers as to what they can infer. The context specific meaning which is derived from pragmatic inferences leads us to a new concept of *implicature* which can be considered a general cover term including both *conventional* implicatures and *conversational* implicatures. Of these, the former are non truth-conditional inferences that do not hinge on any pragmatic principles while the latter are identified on the basis on what Grice calls "*Maxims of Conversation*".

Grice stipulates Maxims of Conversation to be those underlying principles that ensure efficient use of language for communicative purposes (in fact, they retain aspects of both Austin's felicity conditions and Searle's rules and axioms). One of the first principles that provides this communicative efficacy is what Grice calls the *Cooperative Principle* which all participants in a speech situation are expected to observe. The Cooperative Principle dictates:

> Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged (Grice, 1991: 307).

Apart from this basic principle for communicative efficacy, there exist four other maxims that follow from the Cooperative Principle which Grice labels as those of i) Quantity, ii) Quality, iii) Relation and iv) Manner reproduced verbatim from Grice (1991) below:

Gricean Maxims of Conversation

The category of QUANTITY relates to the quantity of information to be provided, and under it follow the maxims:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for

the current purpose of the exchange).

2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required [...]

Under the category of QUALITY falls a supermaxim - "Try to make your contribution one that is true" - and two more specific maxims:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Under the category of RELATION I place a single maxim, namely "Be relevant". [...]

Finally, under the category of MANNER [...] I include the supermaxim - "Be perspicuous" - and various maxims such as:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly" (Grice, 1991: 308).

The Cooperative Principle works in the sphere of language in the sense that, for every exchange, a hearer will assume the speaker's utterance to be coherent, sensible and relevant to the conversation going on and the Theory of Implicature explains how, when A says something to B, the latter will understand A's remarks contextually as relevant/ irrelevant/ accommodating/ dismissive/ antagonistic etc. Thus, conversation is as per Grice, always a *cooperative activity* which hinges on speakers and hearers *sharing a set of assumptions* about what is

happening. The maxims that he postulates provide the interpretive framework within which the relevance of every speaker's utterance is mapped and measured against every hearer's following utterance in the situation of interlocution. In our Example I, Speaker B's utterance will be recognized by Speaker A given the kind of contextual knowledge and previous assumptions that they share and although the exchange may seem strange and unexpected to us, we can infer that their conversation is a result of some kind of underlying cooperation.

Despite postulating the maxims as above, Grice's also recognizes the fact the communicative power of language can scarcely be reduced to a set of conventions which is why he allows for the idea that one can *exploit* the maxims in conversation: for every convention or expectation about the use of language, there will always be the possibility of the non-conventional exploitation of that convention or expectation since everyday speech often occurs in less than ideal circumstances. Given that speakers do not always follow the maxims he has described, Grice notes that they may *implicate* something rather different from what theyactually say: for instance, they may violate, exploit, or opt out of one of the maxims, or twoof the maxims may clash in a particular instance. For example, a testimonial letter praising a candidate's minorqualities and ignoring qualities that might be relevant to the position forwhich the candidate is being considered flouts the maxim of 'quantity'. Grice cites other examples of such implicatures that may violate a maxim: 'You're a fine friend' said to someone who hasjust let one down would be an example of *irony* that flouts the maxim of 'quality' and so is an utterance such 'You are the cream in my coffee' since such use of metaphor characteristically involves categorical falsity.As most of our real world experience with people and their use of language will show, whatever *can* be communicated in conversation will inevitably exceed whatever *should* be communicated and the Gricean Maxims are often flouted in favour of communicative advantage.

LET US STOP AND THINK

What would happen if our everyday conversations did *not* adhere at all to the Cooperative Principle? For example, what would happen if every turn of a speaker-hearer is ironic – would it even be possible for interaction to take place?

9.4 POLITENESS

In the last two sections we tried to present an overview of Speech Act Theory from the point of view of Austin's felicity conditions, Searle's rules and axioms and Grice's maxims. In this last section, we now turn our attention to one of those seemingly little nuances of speech that no one pays too much attention to and yet everyone expects to follow: *politeness* in conversation. Whether it is a child receiving a gift from someone, or a fellow-passenger asking for directions on a journey, all our social interactions are expected to conform to certain expected standards of decorum and politeness i.e. most of our social interactions are, in a way, circumscribed by linguistic politeness. To go back to our first example again, it would be considered extremely rude if Speaker B were to respond to the Speaker A's request with a reply such as shown in Example II below:

Example II:

Speaker A: "I would like to request you to kindly give a speech on 'Gandhian Principles and Humanism' to our corporate clients".

Speaker B: "Absolutely not! I have better things to do in life than give speeches to morons!"

No matter how much Speaker B may dislike corporate clients, etiquette demands that she decline the request in a polite and acceptable way. In other words, our linguistic behavior needs to conform to certain acceptable social standards of conversation: we know, for example, that it is okay for a policeman to be impolite while interrogating a thief but *not* okay a passerby to be rude and brusque to a new person asking for direction in the area. So, who determines these socio-cultural and contextual notions of politeness and what determines its position as a socially appropriate behaviour? How have we come to accept politeness as a linguistic prerequisite in conversation? What determines the choice of some words/ speech styles that are deemed polite over other available words/ speech styles? Conventionally, the language that a person uses to avoid direct confrontation, or which displays respect or consideration for others or which routinely uses conventionalized formulaic utterances ('Please', 'Thank you', 'Excuse me', 'Sorry') is often deemed polite. On the flip side, contextually, use of too polite language may label a person 'too-eager-to-please', 'hypocritical', 'dishonest' or simply 'distant'. Politeness, as we shall see below, is crucially linked to key social aspects of human interaction like conflict avoidance, social cooperation, face saving etc.

There have been several theoretical takes on the issue of politeness[2]: many studies in the late twentieth century and the first decade of the current, have conceptualized politeness as *strategic conflict-avoidance* or as *strategic construction of cooperative social interaction* (Eelen, 2001: 21 and Watts, 2003: 47). For the former, politeness is not just a strategic conflict-avoidance but a *social indexing* that is universal. It reflects its social roles/ functions as:

i) a way of controlling potential aggression between interactional parties (Brown and Levinson, 1987:1),

[2] For a detailed summary and the distinction between common and academic interpretations of politeness, readers may refer to Watts (2003) and Eelen (2001).

ii) a vehicle for smooth communication (Ide 1989:225, 230)

iii) a way for avoiding disruption and maintaining the social equilibrium and friendly relations (Leech, 1983:17, 82).

One of the earlier studies on politeness was Fraser (1990) who posited four main ways of viewing politeness in the research literature: the *social-norm view*, the *conversational-maxim view*, the *conversational-contract' view* and the 'face-saving' view. From the foregoing discussion, the first three ways of viewing politeness must be clear to you viz. politeness is a 'social norm' by virtue of being an *expected* feature of social interaction; a 'conversational maxim' since it is assumed to be a *prerequisite* for conversation and a 'contract' since two people in an interaction *tacitly agree* to be polite. Let us take up the 'face-saving' view of politeness here for further discussion.

SThe notion of 'face' has been in use metaphorically in different cultures of the world since a very long time and it has generally been used to refer to individual qualities and/or abstract entities such as honor, respect, esteem and the self. As a theoretical concept, it is discussed in Goffman (1967) where it is conceptualized as the *positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact* .'Face'is a construct and is understood as something that is emotionally invested in (understood from the common English phrase 'to lose face' which means to be embarrassed) and 'face' can be not only lost, but also maintained or enhanced. Brown and Levinson's (1987) study (mentioned earlier), draws on this face-saving view of politeness and states that every individual has two types of face – positive and negative. A *positive face* implies the individual's desire for her/his wants to be appreciated in social interaction, and *negative face* indicates the individual's desire for freedom of action and freedom from imposition. The theory further assumes that *most speech acts*, for example requests, offers and compliments, *inherently threaten either the hearer's or the*

speaker's face-wants, and that politeness is involved in redressing those *face threatening acts* (FTA). In other words, politeness is a linguistic strategy to mitigate the threat and potential damage to the hearer or listener's face wants. Vilkii (2006), in describing Brown and Levinson's take on politeness mentions three main strategies for performing speech acts which are distinguished as: *positive politeness*, *negative politeness* and *off-record politeness*:

> Positive politeness aims at supporting or enhancing the addressee's positive face, whereas negative politeness aims at softening the encroachment on the addressee's freedom of action or freedom from imposition. The third strategy, off-record politeness, means flouting one of the Gricean (1975) maxims on the assumption that the addressee is able to infer the intended meaning (Vilkki, 324).

Further, not only the *kind* (positive, negative, off-record) *but also the amount of politeness* that the speaker applies to a certain speech act is determined by the *weightiness of his speech act*. During the ongoing speech situation, speakers can calculate the weight of their speech acts based on three social variables: *the perceived social distance between the hearer and the speaker, the perceived power difference between them, and the cultural ranking of the speech act.* All of these together determine how polite a particular conversation will turn out to be between two interlocutors.

LET US STOP AND THINK

How do you usually address a stranger? Does the form of address have anything to do with such factors such a person's gender, age, ethnicity, dress, perceived role, physical well-being, or behaviour? Would you consider it a fact that the primary consideration in addressing strangers is 'be polite' and therefore 'be deferential'?

The Japanese are considered to be extremely polite people. Martin

(1964) has shown that Japanese regularly use honorific forms incorporating negatives (analogous to English 'Wouldn't you like to . . . ?') than those without negatives; use longer utterances than short ones; use utterances with a few Chinese loan words in them than local dialect which are considered less polite and are more polite to strangers than to acquaintances. Their gender also determines their use of honorifics, with men differentiating more than women among the available honorifics. Moreover, a Japanese considers *out-groupness, social position, age difference* and *gender differencein that order* in choosing the proper or polite address term for another.

Now think of your mother tongue: does it allow for more/less polite forms? What kind of words are considered taboo and impolite in social interactions? Can you give a few examples?

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usion it can be said that whether theoretically understood as a social norm, a conversational maxim, a face-saving device or a conversational contract which ensures smooth operation of interaction between speakers, *politeness is a definite socially prescribed linguistic strategy* that is conspicuous both by its absence or presence in conversation. For a commonsense term that is extremely value laden and disputable, not quite amenable to definitions, and whose properties are not adequately captured by theory, politeness is still a very tangible sociolinguistic behavior. One can make a claim that as long as one knows the language, politeness as a linguistic phenomenon can be discerned which itself speaks of the universal validity of politeness

LET US STOP AND THINK

Brown and Levinson (1987) claim politeness to be a universal phenomenon of languages even though they themselves based their theoretical assumptions on just three languages English, Tzeltal and Tamil for which they have been criticized too. As multilingual speakers, you are encouraged to test whether illocutionary speech acts invested with politeness has the greater desired perlocutionary effect on hearers than speech divested of politeness. Engaging with actual language in real speech situation often shows the relations between language, thought and human action more efficaciously than any reading material.

9.5 ASSESSMENT QUESTION

1. What is a speech act? What is the difference between a constative and a performative?
2. What do you mean by the 'Doctrine of Infelicity'? What are the Austinian Felicity conditions?
3. What are the various ways in which a speech act become infelicitous? Explain with a few examples.
4. What is the difference between 'locution', 'illocution' and 'perlocution'?
5. Why may each of the following be said to fail in some way as a performative?

a. I sentence you to five years of marriage

b. I promise you I will kill you.

c. I baptize this cat 'Queen'.

d. I pronounce you husband and wife (said by mad man to two passersby).
e. I order you to stop (little boy to buffalo).
f. I congratulate you for your failure in the exam.

6. Name and explain the Austinian classification of the illocutionary speech acts.
7. How is the Austin's Speech Act Theory different from Searle's?
8. What does the Cooperative Principle mean? Elucidate the Gricean Maxims with your own examples.
9. What does 'politeness' mean to you? Explain some common as well as theoretical notions of politeness.
10. What observations can you make about the nature and role of the speaker and hearer from the following sentences? Which of the following forms would be considered polite?
    a. Wouldn't it be a good idea to tidy up your room?
    b. Go and tidy up your room.
    c. If you don't tidy up your room, you don't go out.
    d. Please tidy up your room, my dear.
    e. Upstairs, and tidy up your room RIGHT NOW.

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JOT DOWN IMPORTANT POINTS

MODULE V: PRAGMATICS AND LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT

UNIT 10: LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT: THE SAPIR WHORF HYPOTHESIS

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.0 INTRODUCTION

Different languages, although they talk about the same world, dissect it not the same way, e.g. while some languages have only two basic colour terms (i.e. one for black, the other for white), some others have as many as eleven. But does this mean that the speakers of a language with only two basic colour terms are not as sensitive to differences in colour as the speakers of languages containing several basic colour terms? To put it another way, does this mean that speakers of different languages perceive or think about the same world in different ways? One most well-known theory on this is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which is named after its profounder, the linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf.

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should have clear idea of:

i) the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

ii) the relation between language and thought

Before you start reading this Unit, think about the following:

Does your language distinguish between scarlet, ruby, vermilion, maroon, mahogany, blood, merlot, cherry, rose, wine, brick, sangria, crimson which are all shades of red in the English language? Does your language have separate terms for all of these?

10.2 THE SAPIR-WHORF HYPOTHESIS

It has been long claimed, especially since the time of the German linguist and philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), that the structure of our language determines, or at least influences, our thought. A new interest in this area was spearheaded with the advent of Linguistics as an independent discipline in the twentieth century in the United States of America. Around the early part of that century, American linguistics (with interests and backgrounds in Anthropology) began to examine the links that could exist between language and the world. Amongst them, Edward Sapir was specially intrigued by the possible connections between language and thought which he considered to be near identical. Thus, nearly a century ago, Sapir observed:

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language

and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (Sapir 69; italics added)

Sapir's student Benjamin Lee Whorf developed this idea in greater detail when he started examining Native American languages. To his utter surprise, he observed that different languages appeared to divide up the same world differently, and moreover, concepts were understood differently across languages and cultures. For example, a concept that was represented as a 'thing' in one language might be represented as an 'event' or a 'process' in another (e.g. the word 'pen' in English may mean a thing or an action). Such linguistic differences were seen to reflect genuine differences in the way that speakers of different languages perceived, conceptualized and understood the world. Although he himself never made an explicit statement in this regard, Whorf's idea that the structure of our language in large measure determines the way we perceive the world came to be known as the the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. Whorf's main interest was the Hopi language and culture (Hopi is a Uto-Aztecan language spoken by the Hopi people of northeastern Arizona, United States; according to 2010 census it has approximately 7,000 speakers). Whorf observed that Hopi verbs, unlike the verbs in Indo-European languages of Europe, are not marked for past, present, or future time (in English, for example, the verb is marked with –s for present time; –ed for past time, e.g. He plays vs. He played). The question is: does this mean that speakers of Hopi are not sensitive to the distinction between the three times? Whorf claimed that because of this (i.e.

that verbs are not marked for time) Hopi speakers had a different concept of time, i.e. unlike the speakers of Indo-European languages they believed that time is cyclic rather than linear. Thus, there was, in their consciousness, no new day, it was just the return of the same day. Whorf wrote:

> We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds - and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way - an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and iscodified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees. (Whorf, 213-14).

10.2.1 Linguistic Determinism and Linguistic Relativity

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis has thus two components: linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. According to linguistic determinism, language determines our thought, e.g. if my language has only one term for father and all his brothers (this applies to some languages of the world) I may not be sensitive to the difference bewteen my father and my uncle (i.e. I may view my uncle the same way I view my father). We have already discussed this above. On the other hand, according to linguisitc relativity, which follows from linguistic determinism, different languages carry different world views, i.e. speakers of different languages view the same world in different ways. If so, translation from one language to another is

near impossible. For example, speaker of a language with just one word for both father and his brother will have problem in translating the English word 'Uncle' into his language. The native speaker of English does not view his father and his uncle the same way (which is why he has two terms, i.e. 'father' and 'uncle'). Thus, if 'uncle' is translated by using that word for both father and his brother, the translation will fail to carry the real meaning of 'uncle', i.e. what it actually means to the native speakers of English.

10.2.2 The Weak and the Strong Versions of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

Cross-disciplinary perspectives in the 20th century added to the debate on linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity by introducing the concept of universality in language. By the mid-twentieth century, with the publication of Basic Colour Terms: Their Universality and Evolution (1969), anthropologists like Brent Berlin and Paul Kay had added to the debate on the relation between language and the world when they concluded that even though languages differ markedly in their linguistic systems or naming colours, there were important universal characteristics of colour terms which suggested that universals of perception underlay the linguistic differences. Thus, the colour continuum is not dissected in languages in a random way, e.g. if a language has two basic colour tems, then they would universally be for black and white; if a language has three basic colour terms, then the third would universally be for blue; if a language has four basic colour temrs, then the fourth will universally be red, and so on. This universal pattern, on this view, thus implies that speakers of all languages view the colour continuum the same way

Psychologists like John Lucy and Richard Shweder have, however, provided interesting findings on the behavioural differences of speakers speaking different languages.

Thus, the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis has two versions: a strong and a weak version. According to the strong version, language determines our thought in such a way that you are trapped in your own language, e.g. if you speak a language with two colour terms, i.e. black and white, you cannot distinguish other colours! If you speak a language which has only one word for both father and his uncle, you just cannot distinguish them! At the same time, speakers of two separate languages cannot comprehend each other because they have got two different world views from their respective languages.

However, perhaps no one believes in the strong version of the hypothesis today. According to the weak version, which is largely accepted by all, language determines only our habitual thought (to a certain degree):

> …a weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis works, such that linguistic habits encourage a tendency to think in a particular customary way, but the language itself does not constrain thought (Trask, 1999: 155).

10.2.3 Language and Thought: Gender and Emotion words

The connection between language and thought has also been examined from the point of view of the current gender studies. The debate is: Do men and women speak differently and thus also think differently? A summary of "women's language" as provided in Lakoff (p. 204) is reproduced in Table 1 below in order to provide you with a glimpse of the possible interrelations between our gendered identities and our language:

TABLE 1

- Women often seem to hit phonetic points less precisely than men: for example with lisped 's's, obscured vowels etc.
- Women's intonational contours display more variety than men's.
- Women use dimunitives and euphemisms more than men.

- Women make more use of expressive forms (adjectives and not nouns or verbs and, in that category, those expressing emotional rather than intellectual evolution) than men: lovely, divine.

- Women use forms that convey impreciseness: So, such.

- Women use hedges of all kinds more than men [‘Well…’; ‘I don’t really know, but may be…’].

- Women use intonation patterns that resemble questions indicating uncertainty or need for approval.

- Women’s voices are breathier than men’s.

- Women are more indirect and polite than men.

- Women won't commit themselves to an opinion.

- In conversation, women are more likely to be interrupted, less likely to introduce successful topics.

- Women’s communicative style tends to be collaborative rather than competitive.

- More of women’s communication is expressed non-verbally (by gesture and innovation) than men’s.

- Women are more careful to be correct when they speak, using better grammar and fewer colloquialism than men (Lakoff, 204)

LET US STOP AND THINK

Go through the above purported features of women’s speech once more. As per your experience, are these true or only stereotypical examples of the way women speak? What do these features tell you about gender, language and thought in particular and the role of society in general?

In order to understand clearly the difference between men's and women's speech and whether the differences mean that they think differently, you may refer to such landmark studies as Piaget (1932), Mead (1934), Labov, (1966), Trudgill (1974), Lakoff (1975, 1990), Lever (1976), Kohlberg (1976), Milroy (1980), Maltz and Borker (1982), Tannen (1990).

Difference amongst men and women in these studies are attributed to various socio-psychological factors such as i) separated and gender determined peer play in childhood, ii) the subordinate position of women in society, iii) the 'underdeveloped' superego or stunted moral development of women as compared to men.

Coming to human emotions, are they universal or culture-specific? Do all languages have the same emotion words? Do we feel an emotion for which we do not have a word? Some studies such as Izard (1969: 260) have banked on the "universality of the fundamental emotions". Thus, Izard and Buechlar (1980) have identified the following fundamental emotions: 1) interest, 2) joy, 3) surprise, 4) sadness, 5) anger, 6) disgust, 7) contempt, 8) fear, 9) shame/ shyness and 10) guilt. On the other hand, some linguists claim that emotion words are rather culture-specific. A detailed discussion on the issue is out of the immediate purview of this Unit. You are encouraged to refer here especially to Wierzbicka (1999) and Harkins and Wierzbicka (2001).

10.3 SUMMING UP

In this unit we have learnt chiefly the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, a theory developed by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf. The theory states that the structure of a language determines or greatly influences the modes of thought and behaviour characteristic of the culture in which it is spoken. The principle is often defined to include two versions: the strong hypothesis and the weak hypothesis: The strong version says that language determines thought and that linguistic categories limit and determine cognitive

categories. The hypothesis also states that there are certain thoughts of an individual in one language that cannot be understood by those who live in another language and thus the way people think is strongly affected by their native languages.

10.4 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

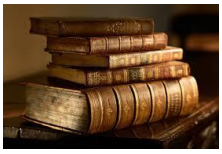
1. What is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis? Explain with suitable examples.

2. What are the Strong and the Weak versions of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis?

3. Write a note on colour terms and linguistic determinism.

4. Write a note on women's speech.

5. What are the emotion words in your language? Do all of them have equivalents in English?



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JOT DOWN IMPORTANT POINTS

UNIT 11: HISTORICAL PERIODS OF ENGLISH: OLD ENGLISH - MIDDLE ENGLISH – EARLY MODERN ENGLISH – MODERN ENGLISH. ENGLISH ACROSS THE GLOBE: WORLD ENGLISHES.

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.0 INTRODUCTION

The English language, the lingua franca of the present-day world, has its own history of development. Thus, we see three periods of the language: the Old English or the Anglo-Saxon Period (600- 1100 AD), the Middle

English Period (1100-1500 AD) and the Modern English Period (1500 - present day). But the history of its development is also the history of how it has become World English, i.e. the lingua franca of the world, and World Englishes, i.e. how it has given birth to regional varieties of English across the globe.

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit you should have a clear idea about

- the development of the language since 600 AD to the present day
- how the language has become a global language or the lingua franca of the world
- the development of regional varieties of the language across the globe to be called together (world) Englishes.

11.2 THE BEGINNING OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Like all other things in the world, languages are also evolutionary, not static. Thus, Chaucer's English, for instance, was quite different from the present day English. This shows that the language has changed considerably in the intervening five hundred years or more. If we go still further, we will find that the form of English used by the Anglo-Saxons is different from Chaucer's and more so from the present day English.

The word English came to be known with the Anglo-Saxons. Before the Anglo-Saxons came to the then Britain, it was inhibited by the Britons. These Britons were ruled for a few centuries by the Romans. The Roman Empire eventually fell and the Britons, a race softened by civilization and colonial rule, were left to any tough invaders who cared to cross from

Europe. Among these invaders were the Angles and the Saxons, and along with them the Jutes, commonly known as the Anglo-Saxons. The Anglo-Saxons comprised people from Germanic tribes who migrated to the island from continental Europe. They had driven the Britons away from Britain and had settled their permanently. Among these tribes, the Angles were the numerous ones and they gave their name to the land: the new home was called the land of the Angles - Anglalond, which by a gradual change became, first Englelond, and then England. For example, King Alfred referred to his beloved land as the 'Englelond' and the brave people as the 'Englisc' people. These 'Englisc' people finally came to be known as the 'English', which is also the name of their language.

It is clear from the above lines that English as a language came into being only after the Anglo-Saxons had come to Britain/England. Before that, the Britons definitely had a culture and language, but they had to flee away and sought refuge in the deep mountains of the Wales, to the west of England, still speaking a language quite unlike English. It is ironical that these people are now known as the Welsh, an Old English word for 'foreigners' when they are much less foreigners than the English!

11.3 GENEALOGICAL ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

As is also evident from the above discussion, English, before the Anglo-Saxons came, was not a separate language. It only came into being as a result of the Anglo-Saxon settlement. Therefore, naturally, English is genealogically related to the forefathers of the Anglo-Saxons. They all spoke a language (or a dialect of it) that was Germanic in origin, which was related to what emerged as the Dutch, Frisian, German, Scandinavian and the Gothic languages. If we still go back in time and space, we find that these languages are all related to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family.

11.4 THE THREE PERIODS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH

Historians of the English language distinguish three main stages in its development.

a. The Old English (or the Anglo-Saxon) Period, extending from 600 to 1100 A.D.

b. The Middle English Period, extending from 1100 to 1500.

c. The Modern English Period, extending from 1500 to the present day.

11.4.1 The Old English Period (600-1000 Ad)

The invading Germanic tribes spoke similar languages, which in Britain developed into what is now called Old English. Old English did not sound or look like English today. Native English speakers now would have great difficulty understanding Old English. Nevertheless, about half of the most commonly used words in Modern English have Old English roots. The words be, strong and water, for example, derive from Old English. Old English was spoken until around 1100.

The Germanic tribes were exposed to Latin before they invaded England, so the languages they spoke did have some Latin influence. After converting to Christianity, Latin had more influence, as evidenced in words pertaining to the church. Celtic did not have a large impact on English, as only a few place names are of Celtic origin, but Danish (Old Scandinavian) did contribute many words.

Now let us turn to the characteristics of Old English.

Nouns in Old English could be of three genders: masculine, feminine or neuter. Numbers could be either singular or plural, and there were four

cases: nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive. In all, there were seven groups of declensions for nouns.

The infinitive of verbs ended in -an. In the present tense, all verbs had markers for number and person. The weak past tense added -de, while the strong past tense usually involved a vowel change. Old English also had many more strong verbs than modern English.

Adjectives could be weak or strong. If preceded by a determiner, the weak ending was added to the adjective. If no determiner preceded the adjective, then the strong endings were used. They also agreed in gender, case and number with the nouns they described. The comparative was formed by adding -ra to the adjective, while the superlative had many endings: -ost, -ist, -est, and -m. Eventually the -ost and -m endings combined to form the word "most" which is still used before adjectives in the superlative today.

Adverbs were formed by adding -e to the adjective, or -lic, the latter which still remains in modern English as -like.

The syntax of Old English was much more flexible than modern English because of the declensions of the nouns. The case endings told the function of the word in the sentence, so word order was not very important. But as the stress began to move to the first syllable of words, the endings were not pronounced as clearly and began to diminish from the language. So in modern English, word order is very important because we no longer have declensions to show case distinctions. Instead we use prepositions. The general word order was subject-verb-object, but it did vary in a few instances:

a. when the object is a pronoun, it often preceded the verb.

b. when a sentence begins with an adverb, the subject often followed the verb.

c. the verb often came at the end of a subordinate clause.

Pronunciation was characterized by a predictable stress pattern on the first syllable. There were seven long and seven short vowels in Old English and their distribution was phonemic. There were also two front rounded vowels that are no longer used in modern English, [i:] and [ɪ:]. The i-mutation occurred if there was a front vowel in the ending, then the root vowel became fronted. For example, fot becomes fot+i (plural) = fet. (Thus feet is the plural of foot).

Pronunciation of Consonants

Letter	Pronunciation	Distribution
f	v	Between voiced vowel
	f	Elsewhere
c	č	Next to a front vowel
	k	Elsewhere
g	j	Next to a front vowel
	ɣ	Between other vowels
	g	Elsewhere
h	h	At the beginning of a word
	x, ç	Elsewhere
s	z	Between voiced vowels
	s	Elsewhere
ð	ð	Between voiced vowels
	θ	Elsewhere
r	trilled	

sc š

cg ǰ

After the Norman conquest of England in 1066, Old English developed into the next historical form of English, known as Middle English.

11.4.2 The Middle English Period (1100-1500 AD)

Old English continues until the end of the eleventh century or slightly beyond. By that time Latin, Old Norse (the language of the Viking invaders), and especially the Anglo-Norman French of the dominant class after the Norman Conquest in 1066 had begun to have a substantial impact on the lexicon, and the well-developed inflectional system that typifies the grammar of Old English, had begun to break down.

In 1066, William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy (part of modern France), invaded and conquered England. The new conquerors (called the Normans) brought with them a kind of French, known as the Anglo- Norman French, which became the language of the Royal Court, and the ruling and business classes. For a period there was a kind of linguistic class division, where the lower classes spoke English and the upper classes spoke French. In the 14th century English became dominant in Britain again, but with many French words added. The upper class tried to learn English, but they often used French words, which were considered somewhat snobbish. French still maintained its prestige elsewhere, and the upper class did not want to lose it completely. Nevertheless, the Hundred Year's War (1337-1453) intensified hatred of all French things. The Black Death also played a role in increasing English use with the emergence of the middle class. Several of the workers had been killed by the plague, which increased the status of the peasants, who only spoke English. By 1362, the Statute of Pleading (although written in French) declared English as the official spoken language of the courts. By 1385, English was the language

of instruction in schools. 1350 to 1400 is known as the Period of Great Individual Writers (most famously, Chaucer), who started writing in English.

Sample of Middle English -----

As is mentioned above, French influence on Old English had a substantial impact on the lexicon; the well-developed inflectional system that typifies the grammar of Old English had begun to break down. The influence of French (and Latin, often by way of French) upon the lexicon continued throughout the period, and many changes took place within the phonological and grammatical systems of the language.

Although the popularity of French was decreasing, several words (around 10,000) were borrowed into English between 1250 and 1500. Many of these words were related to government (sovereign, empire), law (judge, jury, justice, attorney, felony, larceny), social life (fashion, embroidery, cuisine, appetite) and learning (poet, logic, physician). Furthermore, the legal system retained parts of French word order (the adjective following the noun) in such terms as fee simple, attorney general and accounts payable.

Now let us turn to the characteristics of Middle English.

The writing system changed dramatically in Middle English:

- þ and ð were replaced by the (and sometimes y, as in ye meaning the)
- c before i or e became ch
- sc became sh.
- an internal h was added after g.
- hw became wh.
- cw became qu.

- the new symbols v and u were added; v was used word initially, and u was used everywhere else.

- k was used much more often (cyning became king).

- new values were given to old symbols too; g before i or e was pronounced ǰ; ȝ became j, and c before i and e became s in some cases.

- a historical h (usually not pronounced) was added to some words (it was assumed that these words had once begun with an h): honour, heir, honest, herb, and habit etc.

- sometimes words were written with o but pronounced as [ʊ] but later were pronounced [ʌ]: son, come, ton, some, from, money, honey, front, won, one, wonder, and of etc.

During this period, the stress pattern of English began to shift from the end of the word to the beginning of the word. As a result, Middle English lost the case suffixes at the ends of nouns, which characterised Old English. The generalized plural marker became -s, though –n retained its limited use.

In Old English an infinitive verb often ended with –an. In Middle English this –an ending was dropped and to was used before the verb to signify the infinitival form. The third person singular and plural was marked with –(e)th; but the singular also competed with -(e)s from the Northern dialect. More strong (irregular) verbs became weak (regular) as well.

Adjectives lost agreement with the noun, but the weak ending -e still remained. The comparative form became -er and the superlative became -est. Vowels tended to be long in the adjective form, but short in the comparative form (late - latter). The demonstratives these and those were added during this period. The adverb ending –lič became –ly in Middle English.

The dual number disappeared in the pronouns, and the dative and accusative became the object forms of the pronouns. The third person plural pronouns replaced the old pronouns with th- words (they, them, their) borrowed from Scandinavian. She started being used for the feminine singular subject pronoun and you (plural form) was used in the singular as a status marker for the formal.

Syntax was stricter and more prepositions were used. New compound tenses, such as the perfect tense, and the progressive, were used. We also find the use of the passive voice in impersonal constructions. The use of double negation also increased. The use of the verbs will and shall for the future tense was first seen in this period. Formerly, will meant want and shall meant obliged to.

Changes in the pronunciation of the language:

- the initial 'h' sound in words like hleapan (- to leap) and hnutu (- hut) was lost.
- [w] was lost between consonant and back vowel (w is silent in two, sword, answer).
- [č] was lost in unstressed syllable (ič - I).
- [v] was lost in middle of words (heofod - head; hæfde - had).
- Loss of final -n in possessive pronouns (min fæder - mi fæder) and the addition of -n to some words beginning with a vowel (a napron - an apron, a nuncle - an uncle).
- Voiced fricatives became phonemic with their voiceless counterparts.
- [ž] phoneme was borrowed from French as the voiced counterpart for [š].
- Front rounded vowels merged with their unrounded counterparts.

- Vowel length became predictable (lost phonemic status); an open syllable with no consonant following it contained a long vowel, while a closed syllable with at least one consonant following it contained a short vowel.

In addition, there were dialectal differences in the north and south. The north used -(e)s for the plural marker as well as for the third person singular; and the third person plural pronouns began with th- (borrowed from Scandinavian). The south used -(e)n for the plural, -(e)th for the third person singular, and h- for the third person plural pronouns. The north used [a] and [k] while the south used [o] and [č] for certain words. Eventually, the northern dialect would become the standard for modern English regarding the grammatical endings, but the southern pronunciation of [o] and [č] would also remain.

11.4.3 The Modern English Period (1500 AD- to the present day)

11.4.3.1 The Early Modern English Period (1500-1800 AD)

The death of Chaucer at the close of the century (1400) marked the beginning of the period of transition from Middle English to the Early Modern English stage. The Early Modern English period is regarded by many scholars as beginning in about 1500 and terminating with the return of the monarchy (John Dryden's Astraea Redux) in 1660. The 15th century witnessed three outstanding developments: the rise of London English, the invention of printing, and the spread of the new learning.

Modern English is often dated from the Great Vowel Shift, which took place mainly during the 15th century. The speech of the capital was mixed, and it was changing. The seven long vowels of Chaucer's speech had already begun to shift. Diphthongization of high front /i:/ (the ee sound in meet) and high back /u:/ (as in fool) led to instability in the other five long vowels. This remarkable event, known as the Great Vowel Shift, changed

the whole vowel system of London English. As /i:/ and /u:/ became diphthongized to /ai/ (as in bide) and /au/ (as in house) respectively, so the next highest vowels, /e:/ (this sound can be heard in the first part of the diphthong in name) and /o:/ (a sound that can be heard in the first part of the diphthong in home), moved up to take their places, and so on.

English has continuously adopted foreign words, especially from Latin and Greek, since the Renaissance. As a result of the Renaissance of classical learning, many new words and phrases entered the language. Renaissance scholars adopted a liberal attitude to language. They borrowed Latin words through French, or Latin words direct; Greek words through Latin, or Greek words direct. Latin was no longer limited to Church Latin: it embraced all Classical Latin. For a time the whole Latin lexicon became potentially English.

The invention of printing machine also had a tremendous influence on the development of a common language. Books became cheaper and more people learned to read. Printing also brought standardization to the language. Spelling and grammar became fixed, and the dialect of London, where most publishing houses were, became the standard language. The London-based dialect was taken as the standard dialect in government and administration. By the time of William Shakespeare (mid 15th - early 16th century), the language had become clearly recognizable as Modern English. In 1604, the first English dictionary was published.

We now turn to the characteristics of Early Modern English.

Adjectives lost all endings except for in the comparative and superlative forms. The neuter pronoun it was first used as well as who as a relative pronoun. The class distinctions between formal and informal you were decreasing, so that today there is no difference between them. More strong verbs became weak and the third person singular form became -(e)s instead of -(e)th. There was a more limited use of the progressive and

auxiliary verbs than there is now, however. Negatives followed the verb and multiple negatives were still used.

The Great Vowel Shift (1400-1600) changed the pronunciation of all the vowels. The tongue was placed higher in the mouth, and all the verbs moved up. Vowels that were already high ([i] and [u]) added the diphthongs [aj] and [aw] to the vowels of English.

Several consonants were no longer pronounced, but the spelling system was in place before the consonant loss, so they are still written in English today. The consonants lost include:

- voiceless velar fricative lost in night; pronounced as f in laugh.
- [b] in final -mb cluster (dumb, comb).
- [l] between a or o and consonant (half, walk, talk, folk).
- [r] sometimes before s (Worcestershire).
- initial clusters beginning with k and g (knee, knight, gnat).
- [g] in -ing endings (more commonly pronounced [ɪn]).
- Finally, the alveolars [s], [d], [t], and [z] preceded the palatal glide [j], producing the palatal consonants: [š], [ǰ], [č], [ž].

11.4.3.2 The Late Modern English Period (1800- to the present day)

The main difference between Early Modern English and Late Modern English is vocabulary. Late Modern English has many more words, arising out of two principal factors: first, the Industrial Revolution and advances in science and technology; second, the world-wide British Empire. Since 1900, a very large amount of words has been added to English in a relatively short period. The majority of these words are related to science

and technology. Again, due to the world-wide colonial empire, English had spread all over the world and it adopted foreign words from many countries. Thus, English has arrived at its present form, which we will look at in the next few sections.

But before that let us do some activities to see practically what was the form of the English language over the last two periods prior to Modern English.

ACTIVITY 1

Following is a brief sample of Old English prose taken from Aelfric's Homily on St. Gregory the Great, which tells the famous story of how the Pope came to send missionaries to convert the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity after seeing Anglo-Saxon boys for sale as slaves in Rome.

> Eft he axode, hu ðære ðeode nama wære þe hi of comon. Him wæs geandwyrd, þæt hi Angle genemnode wæron. Þa cwæð he, 'Rihtlice hi sind Angle gehatene, for ðan ðe hi engla wlite habbað, and swilcum gedafenað þæt hi on heofonum engla geferan beon'.

Now look at passage and try to find out how different the language was from that of our present day English.

DISCUSSION

The passage illustrates several significant ways in which the language has changed over the time, so much so that at first sight, it would appear altogether a different language. One would require special training to figure out the paraphrase of the passage in Modern English. However, there are several points of similarities which points towards the fact that it is the same language, English.

Let us find out the points of resemblance between the language of the tenth century and our own.

A few of these words can be recognized as identical in spelling with their modern equivalents- he, of, him, for, and, on - and the resemblance of a few others to familiar words may be guessed - nama to name; comon to come; wære to were; wæs to was; but only those who have made a special study of Old English will be able to read the passage with understanding.

Following is a paraphrase of the above passage in modern English:

> Again he [St. Gregory] asked what might be the name of the people from which they came. It was answered to him that they were named Angles. Then he said, 'Rightly are they called Angles because they have the beauty of angels, and it is fitting that such as they should be angels companions in heaven'.

We can infer that some of the words in the original have survived in modern English in alternative forms. These include: axode (asked); hu (how); rihtlice (rightly); engla (angels); habbað (have); swilcum (such); heofonum (heaven); and beon (be). Others, however, have vanished, mostly without a trace. These include (which were quite common words in Old English): eft (again); ðeode (people, nation); cwæð (said, spoke); gehatene (called, named); wlite (appearance, beauty); and geferan (companions).

Other points worth noting include, (a) the fact that the pronoun system did not yet, in the late tenth century, include the third person plural forms: hi appeared where we would use they; (b) Subject and verb are inverted after an adverb—þa cwæð he "Then said he"—a phenomenon not unknown in Modern English but now restricted to a few adverbs such as never and requiring the presence of an auxiliary verb like do or have. In subordinate clauses the main verb must be last, and so an object or a preposition may precede it in a way no longer natural: þe hi of comon "which they from came"; for ðan ðe hi engla wlite habbað "because they angels' beauty have."

Perhaps the most distinctive difference between Old and Modern English reflected in Aelfric's sentences cited above is the elaborate system

of inflections, of which Modern English has only remnants. Nouns, adjectives, and even the definite article are inflected for gender, case, and number: ðære ðeode "(of) the people" is feminine, genitive, and singular; Angle "Angles" is masculine, accusative, and plural, and swilcum "such" is masculine, dative, and plural. The system of inflections for verbs was also more elaborate than that of Modern English: for example, habbað "have" ends with the -að suffix characteristic of plural present indicative verbs. In addition, there were two imperative forms, four subjunctive forms (two for the present tense and two for the preterit, or past, tense), and several others which no longer exist in Modern English. Even where Modern English retains a particular category of inflection, the form has often changed. Old English present participles ended in –ende, not –ing; and past participles bore a prefix ge- (as geandwyrd "answered" above).

11.5 WORLD ENGLISH AND WORLD ENGLISHES

English, as a language of the globe, is quite often referred to as the 'World English'. Five hundred years ago English was spoken only in the British Isle by around five or seven million people. Now, more than 1.8 billion people around the world speak English. How did this happen? Note that the growth of English as a global language has nothing to do with the structure of the language, it is rather a social and political phenomenon.

After developing for almost a millennium on the British Isles, English was taken around the world by the sailors, soldiers, pilgrims, traders and the missionaries of the then all powerful British Empire. Thus, one result of the British colonial power was English becoming the lingua franca of the world.

Thus, today, English is no longer the language of the people of England alone. In many Asian and African countries, English has rather become the dominant language.

But English has taken a distinct shape in such countries (e.g. most Indians do not speak English the way it is spoken by the English people). In other words, regional versions of English have evolved in different parts of the world as a result of non-native speakers' fossilised errors. Thus, for example, many Indian users of English would say, "We discussed about the matter yesterday", which is an error (in British English you do not use an 'about' with 'discuss': "We discussed the matter yesterday"). But this error has been fossilized with many of us.

Now, it has been argued that English with such fossilized errors (of non-native users of English) should be seen as legitimate "dialects" of English. Thus, we now talk of 'World Englishes'. The issue of world Englishes was first raised in 1978 to examine concepts of regional Englishes globally. The rising importance of some of England's larger colonies and former colonies, such as the rapidly developing United States, enhanced the value of the English varieties spoken in these regions, encouraging the belief, among the local populations, that their distinct varieties of English should be granted equal standing with the standard of Great Britain

Again, pragmatic factors such as appropriateness, comprehensibility and interpretability justified the use of English as an international and intra-national language. In 1988, at a Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, the International Committee of the Study of World Englishes (ICWE) was formed. In 1992, the ICWE formally launched the International Association for World Englishes (IAWE) at a conference of "World Englishes Today", at the University of Illinois, USA. There is now an academic journal devoted to the study of this topic, titled World Englishes.

Currently, there are approximately 75 territories where English is spoken either as a first language (L1) or as an unofficial or institutionalized second language (L2) in fields such as government, law and education. It is difficult to establish the total number of Englishes in the world, as new varieties of

English are constantly being developed and discovered; still, to name a few, we can cite American English, Indian English, Canadian English, Philippine English, etc.

It is important, however, to note the difference between World English and World Englishes. World English refers to the English language as a lingua franca used in business, trade, diplomacy and other spheres of global activity, while World Englishes refers to the different varieties of English and English-based creoles developed in different regions of the world.

11.6 SUMMING UP

In this Unit we have looked into the origin and development of the English language through the ages. We begin by looking at the beginning of the word English, which was derived from the Angles of the Anglo-Saxon race. Then we studied the development of the language through three periods: the Old English (or the Anglo-Saxon) Period, the Middle English Period, and the Modern English Period. Finally, we looked into the development of English as World English and World Englishes.

11.7 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

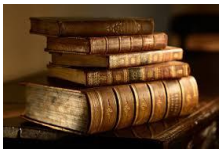
1. Discuss the origin and development of the English language till the end of the Middle English period.

2. Discuss the characteristics of the English language in the Middle English Period with reference to its phonological features.

3. Discuss the differences of the Middle English with that of Modern English in terms of lexical features.

4. Discuss the differences between the notions of World English and World Englishes.

5. Find out some properties of the Indian variety of Engish, i.e. ‘Indian English’.



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JOT DOWN IMPORTANT POINTS

MODULE VII: STRUCTURE OF MODERN ENGLISH

UNIT 12: STRUCTURE OF MODERN ENGLISH: THE BASIC SENTENCE STRUCTURE (SUBJECT AND PREDICATE).

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.0 INTRODUCTION

Having dealt with history of English language and its development from ancient to modern in the previous unit, we shall now take up syntax, that is, the structure of sentences in English. To help you get ready for it we shall ask you to read some excerpts from books and newspapers. We shall then use these excerpts to illustrate the important features of a simple sentence.

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to learn

- the making of a sentence and the essential elements of a sentence
- different types of verbs
- the Constituent Structure of each of the Core Elements in a Sentence

12.2 WHAT IS A SENTENCE

Let us begin our discussion on the structure of modern English (henceforth only English) by asking the question: What is a sentence? We can answer the question in a variety of ways. Some of us may answer: "A sentence is a group of words which express a statement, question, or command." Again, some others may say: "A sentence is the expression of a complete thought". Yet, some others may come up with an answer like: "A sentence is a group of words which consists of a subject and a predicate".

All these answers are, in fact, attempts to define a sentence from different angles. While the first two definitions are **notational** definitions of a sentence, on the basis of its meaning or function, the third one is a **formal** definition, defining a sentence with its constituent elements. Notice, however, that none of these definitions are sufficient alone and yet, each one of them tells us something about a sentence.

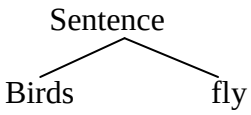
Now, let us take the last definition first: *a sentence is a group of words which consists of a subject and a predicate.* According to this

definition, a sentence is divided into two parts; Subject and Predicate. First, let us try to understand these two parts. We take a very simple sentence (1):

(1) Birds fly.

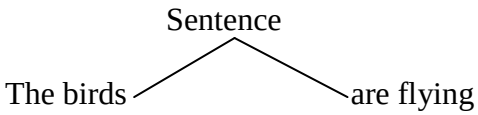
In (1), we clearly have no option but to analyse the sentence into two parts as in (2):

(2)



In (1), we have a very simple English sentence. However, the division shown in (2) can be extended to a more complicated sentence in English. Consider (3) and its divisions in (4):

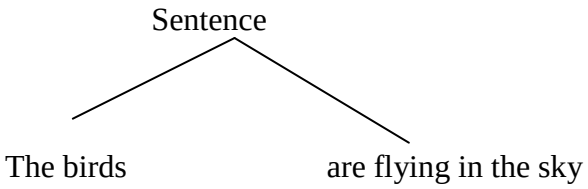
(3) The birds are flying.



(4) could again be extended to even a more complicated sentence like (5) whose division is shown in (6):

(5) The birds are flying in the sky.

(6)



The diagram in (4) and (6) respectively show that (3) and (5) has the same general structure in (1): A sentence is dividable into two parts: *subject* and *predicate*.

Now, before defining these terms let us do a little activity.

ACTIVITY 2

Consider the following sentences and divide each of them into subject and predicate as shown in (2), (4) and (6).

a. The green birds are flying in the blue sky.

b. The green birds that are flying in the blue sky are parrots.

c. Tulika is a teacher.

d. Taslima and Rahul are in the garden.

DISCUSSION

Each of these sentences is dividable into two parts as shown by the slanted line '/':

a. The green birds/are flying in the blue sky.

b. The green birds that are flying in the blue sky/are parrots.

c. Tulika/is a teacher.

d. Taslima and Rahul/are in the garden.

The group of words before the slanted line is the *subject* and the group of words after the slanted line is the *predicate*.

12.2 SUBJECT AND PREDICATE DEFINED

What, then, are a *subject* and a *predicate*? Generally speaking, a subject is what the predicate talks about. Conversely, a predicate is one used to say something true or false about the subject. In each of our

exemplary sentences in Activity 2, the subject is the theme of the predicate and the predicate talks something true or false about the subject. However consider the following example in (7):

(7) There are three cows in the field.

Where does the subject-predicate division falls in (7)? Intuitively, the subject in (7) is *there* and the predicate is *are three cows in the field*. But does the predicate, *three cows in the field*, talks something true or false about the subject *there*? It does not seem to mention anything.

In cases where subject and predicate are not easily notionally definable (i.e. that the subject is what the predicate talk about; and a predicate is one used to say something true or false about the subject), we can take help of a simple formal test. Turn the sentence into a yes/no question. The phrase functioning as subject is the one that undergoes a change in its position when the sentence is so changes:
(7a) Are there three cows in the field?
As seen in (7a), *there* changes position in the yes/no question. It is, therefore, the subject in (7).

Now, let us concentrate on the category of words that functions as subject and predicate in a sentence. What are the categories of words that function as a subject or a predicate in the sentences above? *It is always a noun or a noun phrase that functions as a subject and a verb or a verb phrase that functions as a predicate* (consider the sentences in Activity 2 above).

An important distinction in any grammatical analysis is the distinction between a *functional* and a *formal* label. The labels like Subject, Predicate and Object are **functional** labels while labels like Noun or Noun Phrase and Verb or Verb Phrase are **formal** label. This implies in turn that the same **form** can have different functions. Thus, for example, the noun phrase *the cat* is the subject in *The cat is mewing*

outside; however, in *The dog is chasing the cat* the same noun phrase, *the cat* is functions as an object.

12.3 TYPES OF VERBS

So far we have discussed the sentence structure of English in terms of the functional categories of subject and predicate. But we will soon analyse the sentence structure of English in terms of the functional categories of subject, verbal, object, and complement (note that verbal, object, and complement belong to the predicate part of a sentence).

However, first we turn to verbs (note that a verb is part of the predicate), for it is the nature of the verb that finally determines the sentence structure, i.e. whether the sentence is made of a subject and a verbal (e.g. *Dogs bark*); a subject, a verbal, and an object (e.g. *He killed the rat*); a subject, a verbal, and a complement (e.g. *Taslima is a teacher*) and so on.

Depending on the semantics of the verbs, verbs can be divided into two broad categories: *Transitive* and *Non-transitive*. A transitive verb is one which takes one or more objects. On the other hand, a non-transitive verb is one which does not require any object. Non-transitive verbs can be either *intransitive* or *linking* verbs.

12.3.1 Transitive: Mono-transitive, Di-transitive and Complex-transitive verbs

The idea of a verb being transitive or non-transitive depends solely on the meaning of the verb. A verb denotes an action or state or possession. When a verb denotes an action, it is the number of participants in the verbal action that categorises a verb as transitive or non-transitive. Take the verb *fly*, for example. The verb needs only one participant in the verbal action; it is the one who flies - the doer of the

action. On the other hand a verb like *see* requires two participants: one who looks and the one which is looked. The first participant is the subject and the second is the object. Again, there are other verbs like *give* which requires three participants to take part in the act of giving; first, the one who gives, second, the one who receives and third, the one that is being given.

Now, the first participant in the verbal action is always the subject of the sentence. What is important for us is the verb's requirement of a second and the third participants. When the verb does not require a second participant to complete the verbal action the verb is called a non-transitive verb. If it requires a second participant to complete its action, it is called a mono-transitive verb and when it requires two participants, it is a di-transitive verb. Sometimes, a verb may require an object (the second participant) and an element describing the object. Such verbs are called complex-transitive verbs.

12.3.2 Non-transitive: Intransitive and Linking-verbs

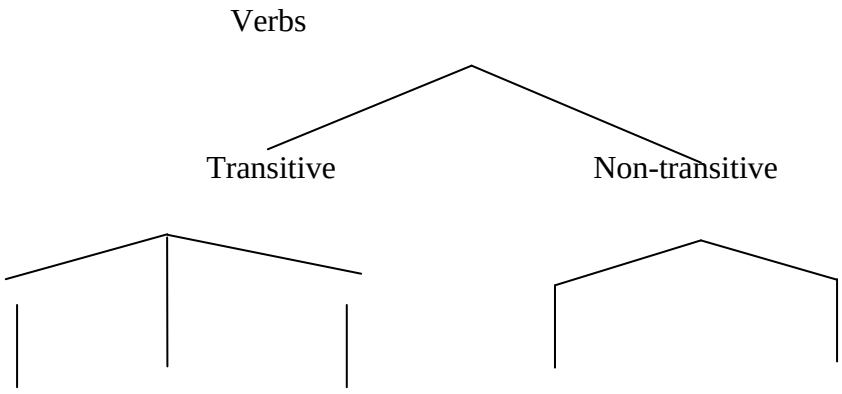
In the beginning of the previous sub-section, we said that there are verbs which require only one participant. For example, *fly* needs only one participant which acts as the subject. Such verbs are called intransitive verbs. A sentence with an intransitive verb ends with the verb. It does not require any element to complete the meaning of the sentence. Anything that occurs after the verb is additional information which is not the requirement of the verb. In our example (5), the string of words after the verb *flying* (i.e. *in the sky*) is additional information; it is an *adjunct*.

Till now we have discussed verbs that denote an action. However, all verbs are not action denoting. There are verbs which simply give the meaning of either possession or state of affairs, e.g. a non-transitive verb like *is/are*. As we know, *is* or *are* is a form of the *be* verb which

can act as a main verb. In such uses, *be* does not denote any action; it simply means a state or possession. In such cases, the question of 'participant in the verbal action' does not arise. Therefore, such verbs do not require an object and are non-transitive. For example, in *Tulika is a teacher* the *be* verb (in its *is* form) only states what Tulika is. Therefore, 'a teacher' in the sentence is not an object of the verb. However, without it, the sentence is not complete. Therefore, it is a *complement*. A complement completes the meaning of a sentence and it is an essential part of the sentence. And since it gives some information about the subject, it is called the subject complement (C_s).

Now, the subject complement always follows a *be* or some *be* like verbs. In such cases, the verb always links the subject and the subject complement. Therefore, such a verb is called a *linking-verb* or a *copula*.

The above discussion shows us the different types of verbs in English. As we said, these verb-types determine the sentence structures in English. Within a short time, we will show that depending upon these five different verb-types, we have five basic sentence patterns in English. However, before that let us try to summarise the verb-types in the following diagram:



Mono-trans. Di-trans. Complex-trans. Intransitive

Linking

As the diagram shows, verbs can be of two types: Transitive and Non-transitive. Transitive verbs are of three types: Mono-transitive, Di-transitive and Complex-transitive. Again, Non-transitive verbs can also be divided into two types: Intransitive and Linking verbs. As noted, depending upon these five verb types, English has five basic sentence patterns.

12.4 THE BASIC SENTENCE PATTERNS IN ENGLISH: CORE ELEMENTS IN A SENTENCE

The following are the five basic sentence patterns in English corresponding to the different verb-types discussed above. Notice that we have two sub-divisions in two of them. Also note that maximally such a basic sentence pattern may have the following *functional* categories. Subject, Verbal, Object, Complement. These are functional categories so that different forms can perform the same functions. For example, the noun phrase *the student* is functioning as the subject in *The student is intelligent*; as the object in *He called the student*; on the other hand, it is functioning as the complement in *She is the teacher*. Conversely, different forms can have the same function. Thus, for example, both *bark* and *is barking* can function as the verbal as in *Dogs bark* and *Dogs are barking outside*.

Now consider the following:

(8) Birds fly

(Subject – verbal) (SV)

(9) (a) Taslima is a teacher.

(Subject – verbal – subject complement) (SVC_s)

(b) Guwahati is in Assam.

(Subject – verbal – adverbial complement) (SVC_a)

(10) Tulika saw a snake.

(Subject – verbal – object) (SVO)

(11) Mohan gave Madhabi a book.

(Subject – verbal – indirect object – direct object) (SVO_iO_d)

(12) (a) Mohan made Madhabi his Secretary.

(Subject – verbal – object – object complement) ($SVOC_O$)

(b) Mohan left Madhabi in the office.

(Subject – verbal – object – adverbial complement) ($SVOC_a$)

In (8)-(12), we have five basic sentences. In the second line of each of these sentences, we have shown the constituent elements of these sentences under labels such as subject, verbal, object and complement. These are the essential elements in the structure of the sentences and therefore regarded as the *nuclear elements* of a sentence where they occur. They are so called because, when they occur in a sentence, one cannot remove any of them without rendering the sentence ungrammatical. For example, if we drop any constituent element in *Guwahati is in Assam* we will have only clusters of words like **Guwahati is*, **is in Assam* and **Guwhati in Assam*, but not an acceptable sentence. (An asterisk is used before a linguistic expression to mean that it is ill-formed).

Let us now discuss the five basic sentence patterns in English.

In (8), we have an intransitive verb and so, the only participant in the verbal action is the subject. Next to the subject is the main verb

which constitutes the verbal. Thus, the subject and the verbal are the nuclear elements in the sentence.

In (9), we have a non-transitive linking verb serving as the verbal. In (9a), the verbal links the subject with a noun phrase which is an attribute of the subject itself. Notice that the noun phrase *a teacher* completes the sense/meaning of the sentence and therefore it is a complement. And, since it is an attribute of the subject, it is labelled as a subject complement (C_S). The most common and obvious linking verb is *be*. Other verbs of this class are *become*, and in some special use, *seem, appear, turn, remain, look, taste, feel, smell,* and *sound*. These verbs are also known as **intensive verbs**.

Coming to (9b), we have the same linking verb in the verbal. However, here we do not have a subject complement. The string of words after the verbal is a prepositional phrase, i.e. *in Assam.* It completes the sense of the sentence. Therefore it is a complement. However, it does not act as an attribute of the subject and is, therefore, not a subject complement. Since *in Assam* is a prepositional phrase, we call it an *adverbial complement*.

In (10), we have a verb which needs two participants in the verbal action. Since the first participant is the subject, we label the second participant as the object to which the verbal action is directed.

In (11) we have a verb which needs three participants in the verbal action. The first participant is the doer of the verbal action and so it is the subject. The rests are the objects on which the verbal action is done; the one who is directly affected by the verbal action is the direct object (O_d) and the one which is affected indirectly is the indirect object (O_i).

In (12a) and (12b), we have two verbs which are transitive. In their normal use, they require two participants for the verbal action to

complete. For example, in a sentence like *He made the table*, *make* requires two participants; the first one is the subject and the second one is the object. Therefore, *make* (in the sense of *create*) is a mono-transitive verb. However, the verb *make* can also be used in the sense of 'cause to appear/happen/become/do, etc.' In such uses, the object alone cannot complete the sentence/verbal action. Therefore, we need a complement to complete the sentence. Since such complements are attributes of the object of the verb, they are called object complements (C_o). In (12a), we have an object complement which is a nuclear element in the structure of the sentence. In (12b) also, we have another transitive verb which takes an object. The object alone, however, cannot complete the sentence/verbal action. It takes an adverbial complement to complete the sentence. Therefore, *in the office* in (12b) is a nuclear element in the sentence.

As noted, *nuclear elements* are the essential elements in the structure of a sentence and when they occur in a sentence, one cannot remove any of them without rendering the sentence ungrammatical. However, in (12b) the picture is completely different. If we remove the adverbial complement we still have a grammatical sentence (i.e. *Mohan left Madhabi*), but it is no longer the earlier sentence – it has now a completely different meaning. It is in this sense that *in the office* in (12b) is a nuclear element in the structure of the sentence.

12.4.1 Marginal elements in a sentence

As we have seen, subject, verbal, object and complement are nuclear elements in the structure of a sentence; they are essential to the structure of the sentence where they occur. As against these, we may also have **marginal elements** in a sentence and they are called **adjuncts**. An adjunct is an optional element providing some additional information about the time, manner, frequency, and place etc. of the verbal action. For example, *Birds fly in the sky*. Here, *in the sky* is an

adjunct of place giving only additional information about the act of flying.

Thus, adjuncts generally provide something additional to what already exists. The implication is that what is added can also be omitted without rendering the basic sentence ungrammatical. Therefore, we can add an adjunct (A) to each of the sentence-types in (8-12). Thus, the sentence pattern SV in (8), for example, can also be SVA, where A is an optional element, an adjunct.

ACTIVITY 3

We have discussed different sentence patterns in English. We find that subject, object, verbal, and complement are different obligatory elements in the structure of a sentence while adjuncts are optional. We also find that it is the requirement of the verb that determines the sentence structure. It is now time to discuss the constituent structure of each of these elements. However, before that let us do a little activity so as to sensitize our understanding of the constituent elements of a sentence.

a. Compare the Verbals in sentences (8) and (9).
b. Compare and contrast sentences in (9a) and (10).

DISCUSSION

The Verbals in sentences (8) and (9) are both non-transitive verbs. However, as non-transitive verbs, both belong to two different categories; while *fly* in (8) is an intransitive verb, *be* in (9) is a linking verb, also called an intensive verb.

Again, in (9a), the Verbal links the subject with a noun phrase

which is an attribute of the subject itself. Notice that the noun phrase *a teacher* completes the sense/meaning of the sentence and therefore it is a complement. And, since it is an attribute of the subject itself, it is labelled as a subject complement (C_S).

At first glance, the sentences in (9a) and (10) may not seem very different. In both the sentences, we have a verb complemented by an NP. In (10), since the verb is mono-transitive, the NP functions as direct object. In (9a), the verb is again complemented by an NP, but the meaning relation between the NP and the verbal (here, we have only the main verb in the Verbal) and between that NP and the subject NP is different. While in (10) we talked about two individuals, one is *Taslima* and the other is *a teacher* and said that the former *met* the latter; however, in (9a), there is only one individual, Taslima. The expression *a teacher* is not used to mention anyone in addition to the person mentioned by means of the subject NP. *A teacher* is used to characterise only the subject, *Taslima* - to attribute to her a property, that of being a teacher. Therefore, the sentence could also be rewritten as *Taslima became a teacher*. *Taslima* and *a teacher* refer to the same individual. The sentence expresses a change in Taslima herself, rather than any kind of relation between Taslima and some other person. Therefore, an NP like *a teacher*, which complements verbs like *be* or *become* functions like a subject complement that distinguishes itself from an object.

12.5 THE CONSTITUENT STRUCTURE OF EACH OF THE CORE ELEMENTS IN A SENTENCE

We now look into the structure of subject, object, complement and adjunct with reference to their formal or syntactic properties.

12.5.1 Subject

The subject of a sentence is, typically, a noun (i) or a noun phrase (ii). In the following, they are typed in italics:

(i) *John* is walking.
(ii) *The tall boy* is walking.

In both the sentences, the noun (i) or the noun phrase (ii) that functions as the subject can be replaced by a pronoun *he*: *He* is walking. Again, a clause with a nominal function can also function as a subject as in (iii) below:

(iii) *That a tall boy is walking* is seen by everyone.

Here also, the subject can be replaced by a single pronoun *it*: *It* is seen by everybody.

The subject occurs before the verbal in statements (iv) and undergoes inversion with the first auxiliary in questions (v). If there is no auxiliary verb and the main verb is any form of *be* or *have*, the subject occurs after it (vi).

(iv) *Namita* is an intelligent girl.
(v) Is *Namita* an intelligent girl?
(vi) Has *she* an umbrella?

The subject of a sentence agrees with the finite verb in number and person in English. This is known as concord:

(vii) *My students* are intelligent.
(viii) *My student, Namita*, is intelligent.

Notice that in sentences with dummy subject ‘there’, the verb agrees with the ‘real’ subject after the verb ‘be’:

(ix) There is *a book* on the table.

(x) There are *many books* on the table.

12.5.2 Object

Like the subject, the object is typically a noun or a noun phrase as in (i) and (ii) or a nominal clause (iii) and so it can be replaced by a pronoun:

(i) John married *Merry*.
(ii) John saw *an old man*.
(iii) John noticed *that the man was weak*.

The object of an active clause generally becomes the subject of its passive clause:

(iv)The hunter killed *a tiger*.
(v) *A tiger* was killed by the hunter.

Notice that when there are two objects in a sentence, often two passives are possible:

(vi) John gave *him a loaf of bread*.
(vii) *A loaf of bread* was given to him by John.
(viii) *He* was given a loaf of bread by John.

12.5.3 Complement

As noted, complements are of three types: Subject Complement, Object Complement and Adverbial Complement. The first two types of complements, Subject Complement and Object Complements are either a noun phrase (i and ii) or an adjective phrase (iii and iv).

(i) Mr. Baruah is *a teacher* (C_S).
(ii) We made him *our president* (C_O).
(iii) He is *very intelligent* (C_S).
(iv) Knowledge made him *prudent* (C_O).

A subject complement always follow a linking verb like 'be' or 'become', often referred to as **intensive** verbs by some grammarians; on the other hand object complements generally follow a mono-transitive verb (such as *make*, *elect* or *consider*) and an object. Such verbs are referred to as **complex-transitive** verbs.

However, adverbial complements are either an adverb (v and vi) or a prepositional phrase (vii and viii).

(v) Madhabi lives *here*.
(vi) He took Madhabi *home*.
(vii) She put her pencils *in the box*.
(viii) Her pencils are *in the box*.

An adverbial complement can follow either the verb (v and viii) or the verb and the object (vi and vii). It typically provides information about location, which is necessary for the 'completion' or 'complementation' of the state (v and viii) or action (vi and vii) denoted by the verb. It is in this sense that an adverbial complement is a nuclear element in the structure of a sentence.

12.5.4 Adjunct

Adjuncts are optional elements in a sentence.

Consider the following examples. The adjunct in (i) is a single adverb; it is an adverbial phrase in (ii); it is a noun phrase in (iii); it is a prepositional phrase in (iv).

(i) She came *quickly*.
(ii) She walked *extremely fast*.
(iii) I saw you *last week*.
(iv) He killed a snake *in this jungle*.

12.6 SUMMING UP

To summarize, in this section we have discussed the functional categories of a sentence. We have seen that subject, object, complement and adjunct are functional categories of a sentence and they are formally realised as nouns or noun phrases; as adjectives or adjective phrases; as verbs or verb phrases. Thus terms like subject, object, complement and adjunct are functional labels or names. We have seen the different functions that these categories play within a sentence. On the other hand, terms like noun phrase, adjective phrase, preposition phrase, adverb phrase, verb phrase etc. are formal labels or names. In the next section to follow, we shall look in to the structure of these formal categories.

12.7 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is the basic sentence pattern in English? Elaborate
2. Broadly explain the Constituent Structure of Each of The Core Elements in a Sentence.
3. Write short notes on
    a) Marginal elements in a sentence
    b) Di-transitive and Complex-transitive verbs

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JOT DOWN IMPORTANT POINTS

UNIT 13: THE NOUN PHRASE IN ENGLISH

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.0 INTRODUCTION

As you already know, a sentence is made of two major divisions, Subject and Predicate. While the Predicate is made of a Verb Phrase, the Subject is normally a Noun Phrase. The structures of the NP and VP, however, vary from language to language. Thus, The English NP and VP have their own structures.

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should have clear idea about

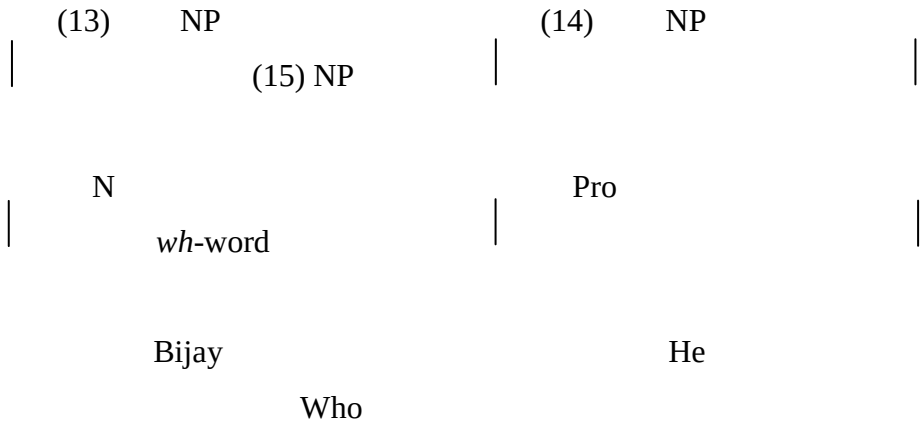
- The structure of the NP in English
- Optional elements in the structure of the NP in English

13.2 THE NOUN PHRASE IN ENGLISH

When we analyse a sentence, we divide it into two groups: subject and predicate. The predicate consists of a verb phrase. On the other hand, the subject normally consists of a noun phrase. Let us now look at the subjects of the following sentences in English:

(13) *Bijay* is tall.
(14) *He* is handsome.
(15) *Who* is standing there?

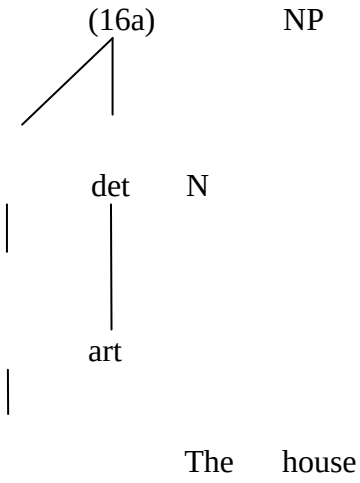
In the sentences in (13-15), we have *Bijay*, *He* and *Who* as the subject of their respective sentences. Notice that *Bijay* in (13) is a proper noun, *He* in (14) is a pronoun and *Who* in (15) is a *wh*-word. They are examples of NP consisting of a noun or pronoun. In both the sentences, the subject is a NP which consists of a single noun or pronoun. This shows that a noun phrase can consist of simply a head noun. The following tree diagrams in (13a-15a) capture the structure of the NPs in the examples:



Now, consider the subjects in (16) below where we have more than one lexical item in the subject:

(16) *The house* is beautiful.

Now, notice that the subject in (16) consists of a common noun *house* preceded by the article *the*. Articles are a type of determiners that indicate a kind of reference a particular noun phrase has. What, then, is the structure of the NP? The following tree diagram captures its structure:



The tree diagram in (16a) shows that the NP consists of a noun preceded by an article,-*a/an* or*the*, which is a determiner.

Now, let us see what other lexical items can appear in the determiner position before the head noun. Consider the noun phrases in the following sentences:

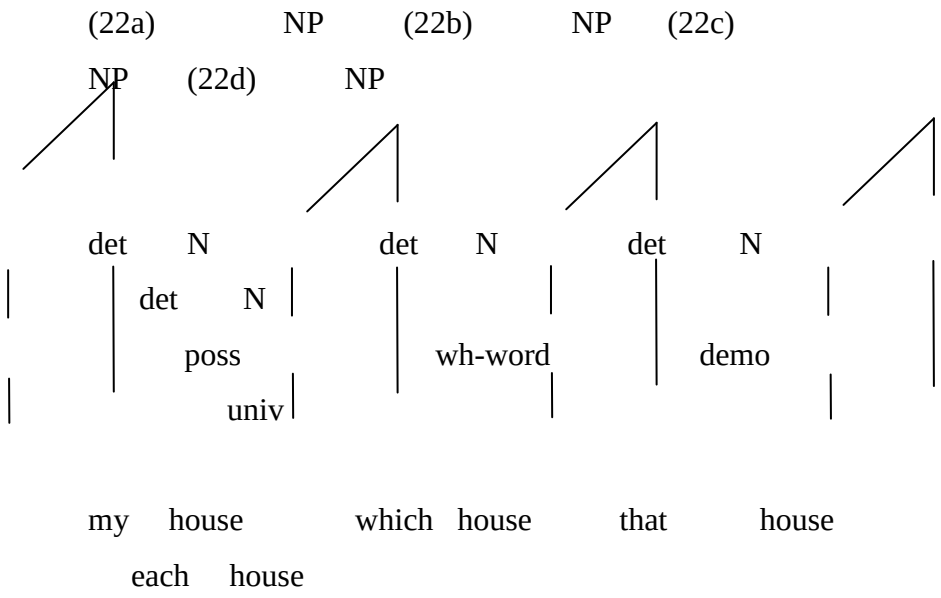
(17) *My/his house* is beautiful.
(18) *Which/whose house* is beautiful?
(19) *That house* is beautiful.
(20) *Each house* is beautiful.

In the subject NPs above, we have the same noun *house*, which is preceded by a possessive pronoun *my/his* (17), or an interrogative

determiner *which* (18), or a demonstrative determiner *that* (19) or a universal determiner *each* (20). What is the structure for each of these NPs? Notice that all of them precede the head noun. Notice also that they are in a mutually exclusive relationship. That is, we cannot have more than one such element before the head-noun as shown in (21):

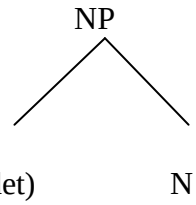
(21) *My that each house is beautiful.

What does (21) suggest? It suggests that *my*, *that*, and *each* occupy the same position in the structure of the concerned NP. It is the position of the determiner. Thus, the structure of each of the above NPs would be as shown in (22a-d):



In the tree diagrams above, we have the NP with a determiner and a noun. The determiner can either be a possessive pronoun; or a wh-interrogative; or a demonstrative; or a universal quantifier. Notice that all these elements come under a determiner. Therefore, the structure of an NP can be rewritten as (23), where the bracketed determiner is optional.

(23)



The determiner is optional because, as compared to the structures in (13-15), the determiner element in (23) is optional. Therefore, (23) represents the generalised structure of an NP, where the noun is the obligatory element (head) and other than the head-noun all other elements are optional.

LET US STOP AND THINK

Do we have any more optional elements other than the determiners in the structure of an NP?

13.2.1 Optional Elements in the NP in English

In order to find out the optional elements other than determiners in the NP in English, let us consider the following NP:

(24) A beautiful house.

In (24), we have *beautiful* between the determiner (article) and the head-noun. As you all know, *beautiful* is an adjective, which modifies the following noun. Thus, (24) suggests that an NP can optionally contain an adjective in the generalised structure in (23).

Now consider (25):

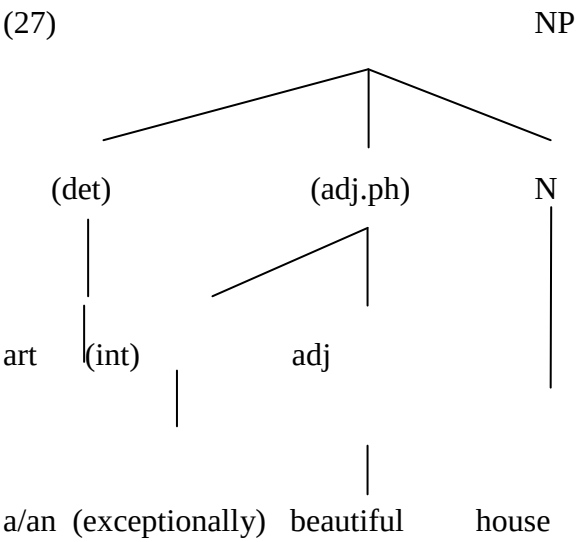
(25) An exceptionally beautiful house.

In (25) we have another lexical item *exceptionally*. What is the relation of exceptionally with reference to the head noun house? Notice that without *beautiful*, we cannot have an acceptable NP:

(26) *An exceptionally house.

The ungrammaticality of the phrase in (26) suggests that *exceptionally* is grammatically related to the adjective *beautiful*; *exceptionally* modifies the adjective as an *intensifier*, and it is a part of the adjective phrase, which, in turn, is a part of the Noun Phrase. Therefore, in the generalised structure of the NP in question, the adjective *beautiful* in (24) and *exceptionally beautiful* in (25) forms an optional element as shown in (27) below:

(27)



Now consider the phrases below:

(28) The first house

(29) The first beautiful house

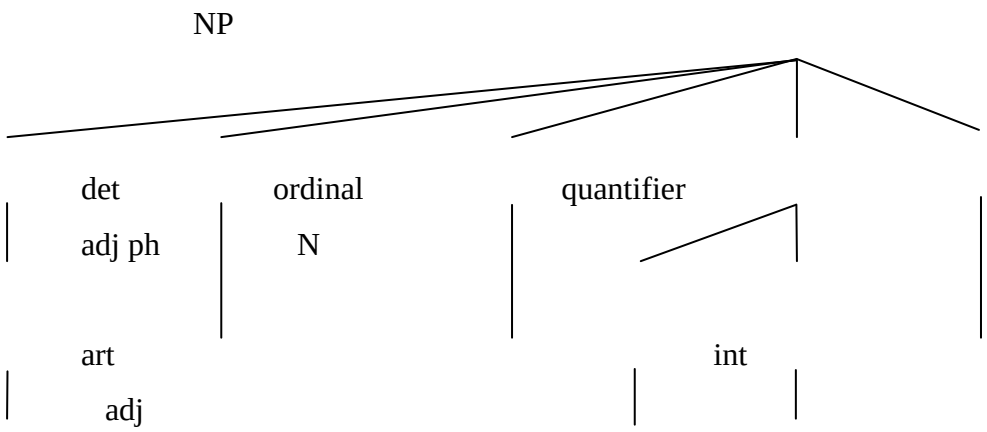
(30) The first three houses

(31) The first three beautiful houses

(32) The first three exceptionally beautiful houses

In (28), as the adjective in (24), the lexical item *first* appears between the determiner (article) and the head-noun house. *First*, however, is not an adjective like *beautiful*; therefore it cannot take the place of an adjective. This is evident from (29), where it appears before the adjective *beautiful*. Is it, then, an intensifier? It is not even an intensifier as evident from (30), where it appears before another lexical item *three*, which is not an adjective. What, then, are the lexical items like *first* or *three* in an NP? Actually, lexical items like *first, second, next, last* etc. are **ordinals** which modify the following noun in a noun phrase. Again, lexical items like *one, three, many, a good number of*, etc. are **quantifiers** which modify the following noun in a noun phrase. Both ordinals and quantifiers are mutually inclusive and can appear in a noun phrase preceding the head noun (30), or the adjective phrase and the head-noun (31-32). Thus, the generalised structure of a noun phrase with a determiner, an ordinal, a quantifier, an adjective phrase could be shown as in (33):

(33)



The first three
exceptionally beautiful houses

The tree diagram in (33) tells that in a noun phrase, the head-noun can be preceded by an adjective phrase, a quantifier, an ordinal and a determiner, which modifies the head-noun. Remember that all the modifiers are optional. However, given the fact that we may still have a noun phrase like the one in (34) below, the tree diagram in (33) does not give a complete picture of a noun-phrase:

(34) The first three exceptionally beautiful RCC houses.

What does *RCC* in (34) stands for? First, look at what function it serves in respect of the noun. Functionally, it modifies the following noun in classifying it as part of a group or subgroup; it classifies a group of houses, which are distinct from some other houses which are not 'RCC'. Again consider another NP in (35):

(35) A green-house effect

In (35), *green-house* modifies the following head-noun in classifying it as part of a group or subgroup; it classifies a particular type of effect on the earth's atmosphere that is caused by an increase of gases such as carbon dioxide.

Thus, pre-modifiers such *RCC* or *green-house* are called **classifiers**. A classifier is a noun or an adjective or a clause which classifies the referent (of a noun) as part of a group or subgroup. Therefore, to the list of pre-modifiers, we can add yet another element,- classifier; which immediately precedes the head-noun.

Now, we come to see the last but, in terms of linear order, the first element in the structure of a noun phrase. It is the **pre-determiner**. Consider the following examples:

(36) All the three houses
(37) Both the houses
(38) What a beautiful house!

In the NPs above, we have *all* (36), *both* (37) and *what* (38) before the determiner. Lexical item that appear before the determiner is known as predeterminer and it functionally modifies the following NP. Remember that it always co-occurs with a determiner and precedes it. In the absence of a determiner, such lexical item can function as the determiner: Compare (39) and (40):

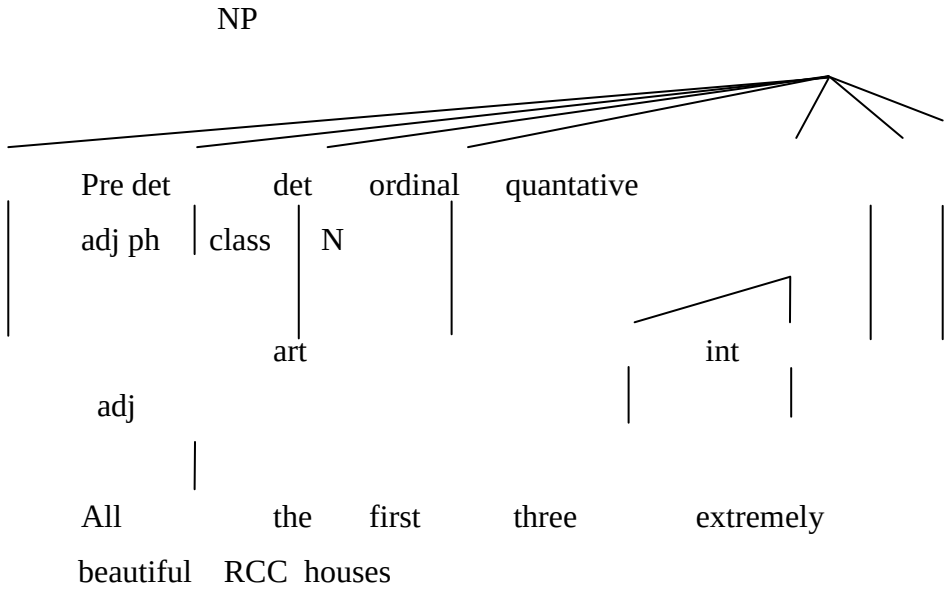
(39) *All* the houses
(40) *All* houses

In (39), since we have *the* as determiner, therefore *all* functions as the predeterminer; in (40) however, in the absence of any determiner, *all* functions as the determiner.

Therefore, the structure of a full-fledged NP like (41) would be as shown in (42) below:

(41) All the first three exceptionally beautiful RCC houses

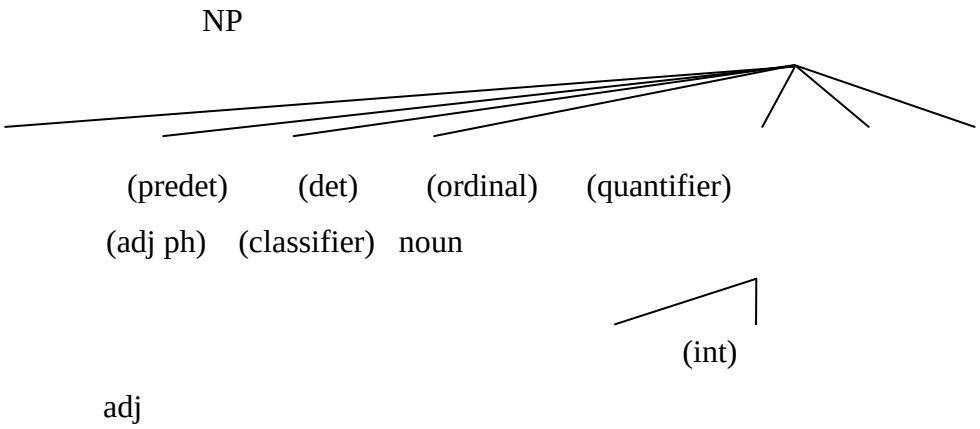
(42)



In (42), we have the structure of a full-fledged NP with predeterminer, determiner, ordinal, quantifier, adjective phrase, classifier and the noun. The noun here is the head of the phrase and all other elements are pre-modifiers. Remember that the pre-modifiers are optional element in the structure of the NP.

Thus, in (43) below we have the generalised structure of a noun phrase in English:

(43)



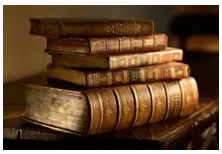
As the diagram shows, the noun is the head of the NP, which can optionally be modified by predeterminer, determiner, ordinal, quantifier, adjective phrase and classifiers.

13.3 SUMMING UP

We begin this Unit by introducing the Noun phrase in English with only the head-noun. Progressively we have seen that there are a lot of pre-modifiers which precedes the head-noun in a noun phrase in the language. These pre-modifiers include predeterminer, determiner, ordinal, quantifier, adjective phrase and classifiers. We also note that a predeterminer exists only when there is a following determiner. We also note that the adjective phrase that pre-modifies a noun also has its internal structure; the adjective which heads the adjective phrase can optionally be modified by intensifiers.

13. 4 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the structure of the NP in English.
2. Discuss the optional elements in the structure of the NP in English.
3. How do ordinals differ from quantifiers?
4. Show that a classifier is a pre-modifier.
5. Present with the help of a diagram the generalised structure of a noun phrase in English.



13.5 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

Burton-Roberts, Noel. 1986. *Analysing Sentences: an Introduction to English Syntax*. London: Longman.

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UNIT 14: THE VERB PHRASE IN ENGLISH

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.0 INTRODUCTION

Of the two basic divisions of a sentence, Predicate is the Verb Phrase. Thus, the Verb Phrase includes everything that comes in the predicate. This is true of English and the Verb Phrase in the language has its own structure.

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the Unit, we should have clear idea about

- All the elements of the Verb Phrase in English
- The structure of the Verb Phrase in English

14.2 THE VERB PHRASE IN ENGLISH

The term verb phrase (VP) includes everything that comes in the predicate; it may consist of the verb only if the verb is an intransitive verb, or the verb and an object, if the verb is mono-transitive, or a verb with two objects, if di-transitive verb or a verb with one object and a complement if the verb is a complex transitive verb. The one constituent that a verb phrase must contain is the (lexical) verb which may optionally be preceded and modified by other (auxiliary) verbs. Let us try to understand it with an activity:

ACTIVITY 4

Look at the verb phrases in the following sentences and draw tree diagrams for them.

(i) Birds fly

(Subject – verbal)

(SV)

(ii) Sasuma is a teacher.

(Subject – verbal – subject complement)

(SVC_s)

(iii) Mohan gave Madhabi a book.

(Subject – verbal – indirect object – direct object)

(SVO_iO_d)

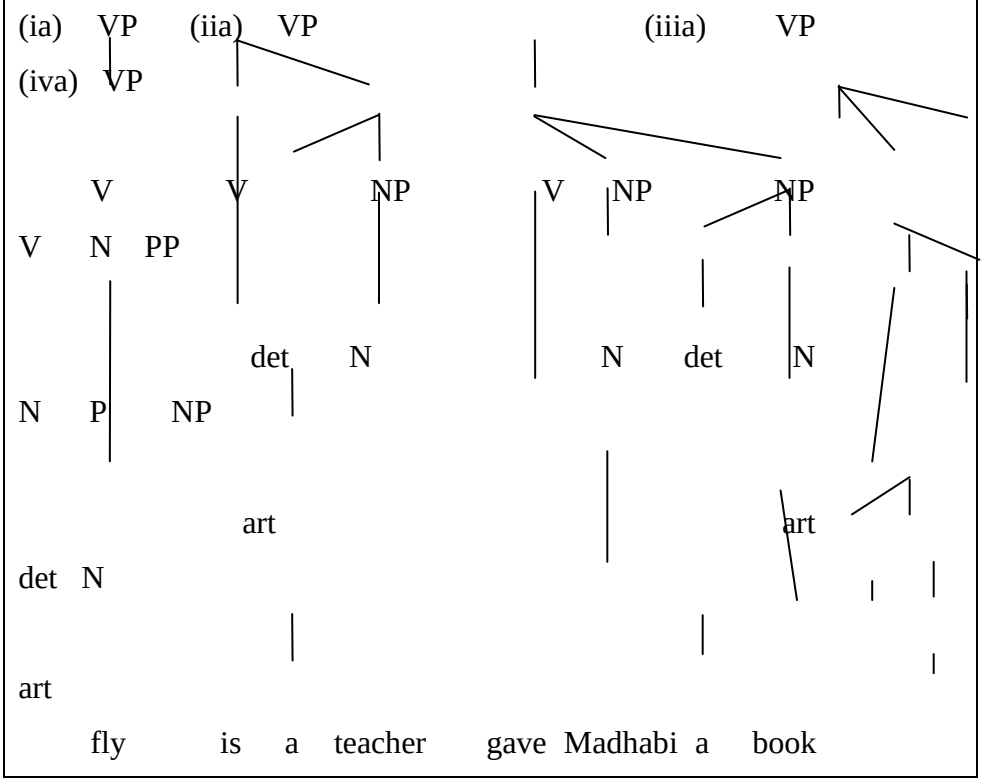
(iv) Mohan left Madhabi in the office.

(Subject – verbal – object – adverbial complement)

($SVOC_a$)

DISCUSSION

In sentence (i) we have an intransitive verb and therefore, the Verb Phrase consists of a single verb. Therefore, the Verb Phrase could be shown in the following tree diagram in (ia) In sentence (ii) we have an intensive verb with an NP complement. The Verb Phrase could be shown as in (iib). In sentence (iii), the verb in di-transitive which takes two NP objects. Therefore, the Verb Phrase is as shown in (iiia). In (iv), the verb is a complex transitive verb which takes an NP object and a PP complement. Therefore, the Structure of the VP is as shown in (iva)



left Madhabi in the office

The tree diagrams above show the structure of the VPs in sentences (i-iv). In our examples we have seen that all the Verb Phrases contain a verb, which is the head of the phrase. The verb is followed by an NP in (ii); it is followed by two NPs in (iii) and in (iv), the same is followed by an NP and a PP. The NPs and the PPs that follow the head-verb are called complements of the verb. The relation between the verb and the Noun Phrase and the Prepositional Phrase is one of complementation; there is a mutual dependency between the verb and the Noun Phrase/Prepositional Phrase. In our example, the verbs are single-word verbs, often called the main verb.

14.3 THE VERBAL IN A VERB PHRASE

In the discussion of our Activity 3, we find that the verb phrase invariably contains a verb. In our exemplary sentences, we have a single-word verb. However, we all know that the verb may optionally be preceded and modified by other (auxiliary) verbs. The main verb, along with any other preceding auxiliary verb forms a verb group, which is often called *the verbal*. Every verbal contains a lexical verb as its head. This lexical verb may optionally be modified by auxiliary verbs. In a full-fledged verbal, the lexical verb appears at the end of the verbal; all other auxiliary verbs precede the lexical verb. Consider the following examples:

(44) Mohan writes.
(45) Mohan can write.
(46) Mohan has written a letter.

In (44), we have the lexical verb *write* which forms the verb phrase in the sentence. As against it, we have another verb phrase in (45) which has the lexical verb *write*, and is preceded by another verb *can*. As we already

know, *can* is an auxiliary verb which precedes and modifies the following head-verb *write*. Now, auxiliary modification of a lexical verb is optional; but what is important is the fact that when such modification happens, the auxiliary becomes a part of the head-verb itself. Consider another example:

(47) Mohan has written a letter.

In (47) also, we have the lexical verb *write* and it is preceded and modified by the auxiliary *has*. Notice that as a result of auxiliary modification there is a change in the lexical verb itself; *write* becomes *written*. What does it mean? It means that both the lexical verb and the auxiliary verb are fused into one; we call it the verbal.

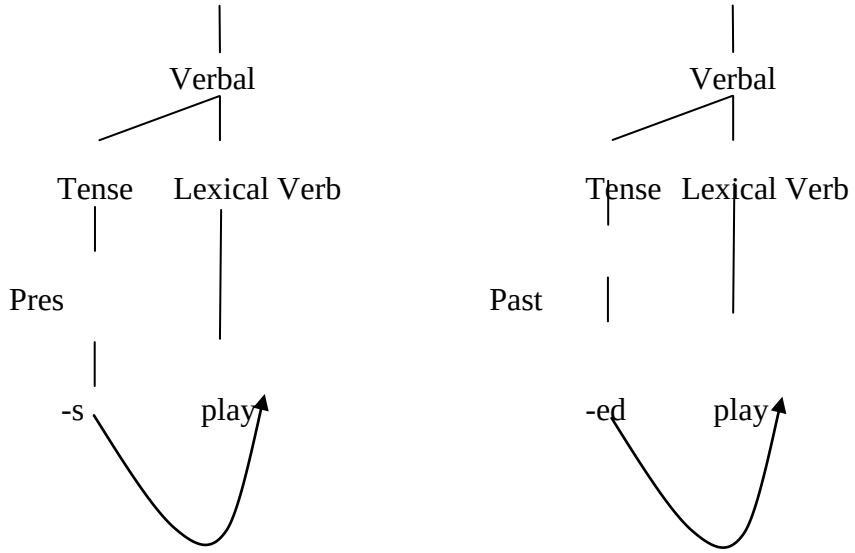
Therefore, to say that the lexical verb heads the VP is not very correct. To be very precise, it is the verbal that heads the VP. What is the case with those VPs where we have only a single-word verb such as the one in (44) above?
In order to get the answer compare (48) with (49):

(48) Mohan plays.
(49) Mohan played.

In both the sentences we have a single-word verb *play*. However, the sentence in (48) is distinguished from the sentence in (49) by a tense distinction in the verb. In (48), the verb appears in present tense form while in (49) it appears in past tense form. As we already know, a finite clause always contains a tensed verb and so the verbs in sentences (48-49) are readily separable into (i) the verb itself, called **the verb stem** and (ii) a present tense inflection (play + -s) or a past tense inflection (play + -ed), which are morphologically fused in the verb. Therefore, in sentences with single-word verbs also, we shall use the term the verbal to indicate the head

of the verb phrase. Therefore the structure of the verb phrases in (48-49) would be the following:

(48a) VP (= plays) (49a) VP (= played)



In (48a), the VP is the lexical verb *plays* which contains the verbal as its head. The verbal itself is composed of the tense element, which is present tense, and the main verb in its stem form. The present tense, here is realised as *–s* (because the subject is in the 3rd person singular; otherwise it is null), which is a bound morpheme. As the curved arrow shows, the bound morpheme gets attached to the following (main) verb, and we get the VP *plays*.

In (49a), the VP is the lexical verb *played* which contains the verbal as its head. The verbal itself is composed of the tense element, which is past tense, and the main verb in its stem form. The past tense here is realised as *–ed*, which is a bound morpheme. As the curved arrow shows, the bound morpheme gets attached to the following (main) verb, and we get the VP *played*.

Let us now look at the internal structure of the verbal in English.

14.3.1 The Internal Structure of the Verbal: Auxiliary Modification

As noted, each verbal contains a lexical verb as its head. This lexical verb may or may not be modified by auxiliary verbs. Lexical verbs are those that belong to the indefinitely large general vocabulary of the language (e.g. *walk*, *drink*, *think*, *act*, *eat*, *draw*, *see*, *look*). These verbs always come in the base form (the stem), and in a finite clause, are used as head of the VP with obligatory tense, and optional auxiliary modification. In this section we shall look into the structure of auxiliary modification.

There are two kinds of auxiliary verbs: primary auxiliaries and modal auxiliaries. The primary auxiliary verbs are *do*, *have*, and *be*. These verbs, in addition to being auxiliary verbs, can function like lexical verbs and when they function as lexical verbs, they become the head of the verbal.

The modal auxiliary verbs are *can, may, must, shall, will, need, dare, used to,* and *ought to*. An auxiliary verb can function as an **operator** when a statement is changed into a yes-no question, as in the following examples:

(50) Mohan can write poems.
(51) Can Mohan write poems?

Again, a sentence with an auxiliary verb can be negated by inserting not after the operator:

(52) Mohan cannot write poems.

Thus, auxiliary verbs help the lexical verb in forming questions and negative sentences; therefore, an auxiliary verb is often called a helping verb also.

Auxiliary modification has mainly four different structures: modal, perfective aspect, progressive aspect and passive voice. We discuss all four structures in the following four sub-sections and come back to tense modification in the last sub-section. Finally we try to arrive at the structure of an English verb phrase with the internal structure of the verbal.

14.3.2 Modal Auxiliary

The modal verbs listed above can modify the following lexical verb. In doing so, the lexical verb is always in the basic stem form. Remember that the stem form of a verb is always non finite. Therefore, tense is displayed in the modal verb itself. However, one peculiarity of the modals is that they do not exhibit subject-verb agreement. That is, they do not change their form in the present tense even with a third person singular subject. Consider the following examples:

(53) Mohan writes poems.
(54a) *Mohan can writes poems.
(54b) *Mohan cans write poems.
(55) Mohan can write poems.

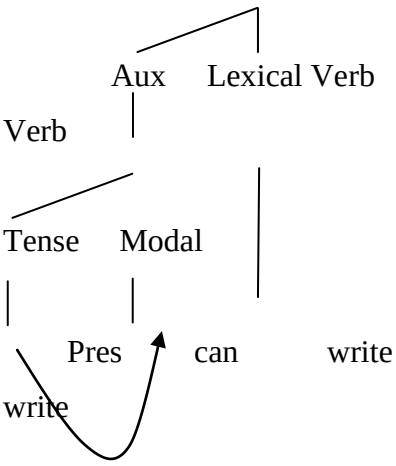
In (53) we have the verbal *write* which is in the present tense. Since the subject NP is in the third person singular, the verbal carries the –s inflection and becomes *writes*. Now, compare and contrast (53) with (54a and 54b). (54a) is ungrammatical because when a modal verb modifies the following lexical verb, it is in the basic stem form, which is non-finite. Therefore, the lexical verb write cannot take the *–s* inflection even when the subject NP is in third person singular. Again, (54b) is ungrammatical because, even though tense is displayed in the modal verb, it does not

exhibit subject-verb agreement. Therefore, the modal verb *can* cannot become **cans*. Notice that (55) is grammatical because, (i) the modal, though it carries tense, it does not show subject-verb agreement and (ii) the lexical verb *write* is in its base stem form.

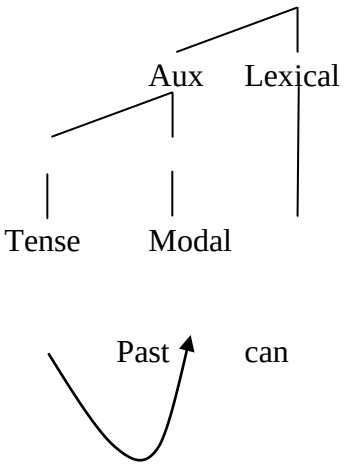
As noted, the modal verb *can* carries tense; the lexical verb is then in its base stem form. This is clear from the example below:
(56) Mohan could write poems.

Now, we can show the structure of the verbals in sentences (55) and (56) in the following tree diagrams:

(55a) Verbal

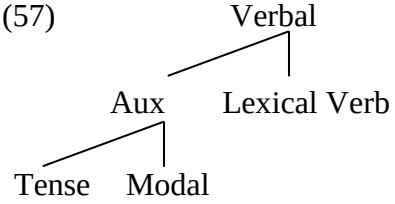


(56a) Verbal



Thus, the structure of a Verbal composed of a lexical verb and a modal verb would be something like (57):

(57)



The diagram in (57) above shows the internal structure of a verbal where the lexical verb is modified by an auxiliary modal verb. Notice that the Tense here is a part of the modal verb. We now move to see the internal structure of a verbal with perfective auxiliary verb.

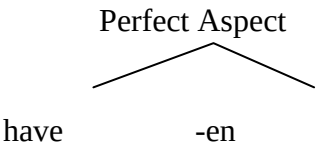
14.3.3 Perfective Aspect

The primary auxiliary verb *have* functions as the perfective marker in a verbal. Consider the following example:

(58) They have written a few letters.

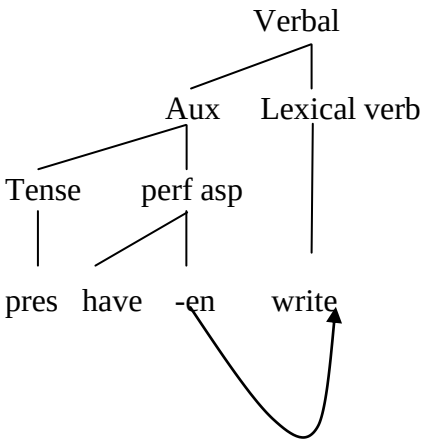
As (58) shows, when the perfective auxiliary occurs, the verb following it occurs in the participle *–en* form. For example, *have given*, *have seen*, *have been*, and so on. (However, there are other verbs also which do not take the *–en* form when modified by perfective auxiliary *have*. The verbs that do not take the *–en* form in perfective are called *irregular verbs*). Thus, the perfective aspect is actually realised as '*have and –en*'. We can express it diagrammatically as in (59):

(59)



Now, when perfective aspect is used in the Verbal, the bound morpheme *–en* gets attached to the following verb, which is shown in the following diagram:

(60)



As the curved arrow shows, the bound morpheme *–en* gets attached to the following verb *write* and we get *written*.

Thus, (60) gives the internal structure of a verbal with the lexical verb and a perfect auxiliary. It tells that perfective aspect is realised as '*have and –en*' and the *–en* participle gets attached to the following verb. However, there are also other verbs like *live, drink, put,* etc. which do not take the *–en* form when modified by perfective auxiliary *have*: *have lived, have drunk, have put*, etc. The verbs that do not take the *–en* form in perfective are called irregular verbs. The regular pattern of perfective formation in English is by adding an *–en* morpheme to the verb. These verbs are irregular in the sense that they do not conform to this regular pattern. (We will find that these verbs do not conform to the regular pattern of past tense-formation also). However, they all take the auxiliary *have* to form the perfective aspect. This suggests that the only difference is that the participle *–en* is not always realised as *–en*. With the irregular verbs, it realises differently. Thus *live* + *-en* becomes *lived*; *drink* + *-en* becomes *drunk*; and *put* + *-en* becomes *put*. So we can say that the perfect aspect is always represented by *have and the participle –en*, but this *–en* remains *–en* or is realised differently depending on the verb it is attached to. Thus whether it is *have done, have brought, or have put*, we assume that the perfect aspect in English is always represented by *have and –en*. In other words, the verb that follows *have* in the verbal always appears in the (non-finite) perfect participle form.

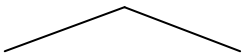
14.3.4 Progressive Aspect

The primary auxiliary verb *be* functions as the progressive marker in a verbal. Remember *be* is also realised as *am*, *are*, *is*, *was*, and *were* depending on the number, the person of the subject and the tense of the verbal. Consider the following examples:

(61a) I am writing a letter.
(61b) Mohan is writing a letter.
(61c) They are writing a few letters.

In all the sentences in (61a-c), we have one of the forms of *be* followed by the lexical verb *write* in the *–ing* form. Just as the perfect auxiliary *have* determines the form of the following verb, so also the progressive *be* requires the following verb to adopt the *-ing* form. This *–ing* form is called the progressive participle. We therefore assume that the structure of a progressive auxiliary is always *be* + *-ing*, and the *–ing* participle, since it is a bound morpheme, gets attached to the following verb as is shown in (62) below:

(62) Progressive Aspect

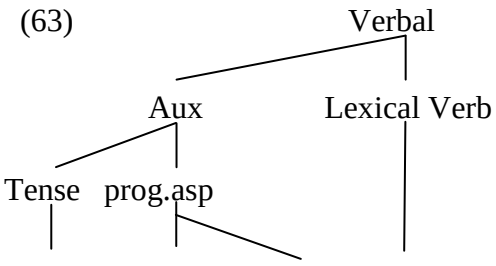


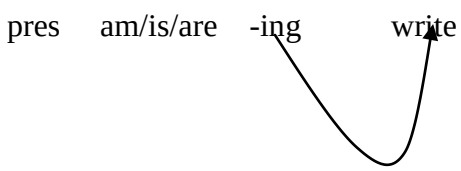
be -ing

Now, when progressive aspect is used in the verbal, the bound morpheme *–ing* gets attached to the following verb.

The internal structure of the Verbal in (62a-c) can be shown as in (63)

(63)





As the curved arrow shows, the bound morpheme *–ing* gets attached to the following verb *write* and we get *writing*.

In (63), the progressive aspectual verb *be* carries tense. This can be proved from the fact that we can have the past tense counterpart of the sentences in (61a-c) by changing the progressive aspectual verb to past tense, as in (64a-c):

(64a) I *was* writing a letter.
(64b) Mohan *was* writing a letter.
(64c) They*were* writing a few letters.

As we already know, *be* can function both as an auxiliary and as a lexical verb. When *be* is used as a lexical verb, it is the intensive verb we talked about earlier and it heads the verbal. Consider the following example:

(65) Mohan is a nuisance.

In (65), is is the intensive verb which heads the verbal. We can also have a progressive aspectual *be* as in (66):

(66) Mohan is being a nuisance again.

In (66), we have a present progressive verbal where *is* is the present tense form of the progressive auxiliary *be* and *being* is the progressive participle of the intensive verb *be*.

ACTIVITY 5

Attempt a tree diagram for the Verbal in (66).

14.3.5 Passive

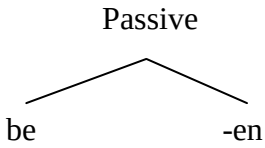
All the verbals we consider so far are in the active voice because they do not contain the passive auxiliary. However, a verbal may also contain a passive auxiliary. In such cases, the verbal is said to be in the passive voice.

In this section we show how passives are a part of the auxiliary itself. As we already know, in active sentences, the auxiliary *be* is used in the progressive aspect. However, *be* can also be used in passive sense. Compare the following verbals in active and passive voice and identify the passive auxiliary:

		Active	Passive
(67a)	simple pres	beat	is beaten
(67b)	pres prog.	is beating	is being beaten
(67c)	pres perf	has beaten	has been beaten
(67d)	pres modal	will beat	will be beaten

Note that all the passive verbals in (67) contain a form of the verb *be*: *is* in (a), *being* in (b), *been* in (c), and *be* in (d). Notice also that in all the passive verbals, the passive *be* is followed lexical verb with the participle –en, which we identify as perfect participle. We, therefore, assume that the structure of a passive auxiliary is always be + -en; and the –en participle, since it is a bound morpheme, gets attached to the following verb. To represent it diagrammatically, we have

(68).

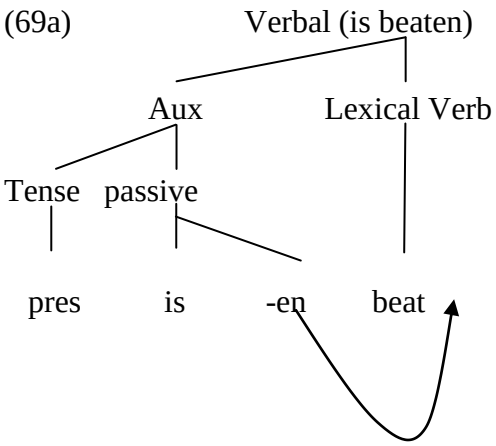


Now, when passive is used in the verbal, the bound morpheme *–en* gets attached to the following verb. In doing so, the passive participle –en, as we see with the perfect participle –en, may be realised differently depending on the verb it is attached with.

Given (68), the internal structure of the Verbal in a passive sentence like (69) would be (69a):

(69) Mohan is beaten by Madhabi.

(69a)



In (69a), *be + -en* is the passive verb under auxiliary. As the curved arrow shows, the bound morpheme *–en* gets attached to the following verb *beat* and we get beaten.

In (69), the passive verb *be* carries tense. This can be proved from the fact that we can have the past tense counterpart of the sentence in (69) by changing the passive verb to past tense, as in (70):

(70) Mohan was beaten by Madhabi.

As seen in (69), the difference between the passive auxiliary and all other auxiliary is that the choice of passive affects not just the verbal but the whole sentence. Compare the active equivalent of (69) in (71):

(71) Madhabi beats Mohan.

In the beginning of this section we said that auxiliary modification has mainly four different structures: modal, perfective aspect, progressive aspect and passive voice. All of them are optional. We have discussed all the four auxiliaries in the foregoing subjections. We considered each of these auxiliaries separately. However, in a verbal, we may have more than one auxiliary before the lexical verb. Theoretically, any combination of them is possible but, whatever be the combination, they always appear in the specific order of modal, perfect aspect, progressive aspect, and passive voice, followed by the lexical verb. Each constituent can only appear once in a verbal. This would allow for exactly sixteen different combinations of the verbal elements as shown in (72). Remember, however, that all of these sixteen verbals are, however, obligatorily preceded by Tense, which is reflected on the first element of the verbal.

(72) [In our examples, we take *write* as the lexical verb and where necessary, *will* as the modal. We assume that all the verbals have a third person singular subject.

(i) Lexical Verb writes

(ii) Modal + Lexical Verb will write

(iii) Perfect + Lexical Verb has written

(iv) Progressive + Lexical Verb is writing

(v) Passive + Lexical Verb is written

(vi) Modal + Perfect + Lexical Verb will have written

(vii) Modal + Progressive + Lexical Verb will be writing

(viii) Modal + Passive + Lexical Verb will be written

(ix) Modal + Perfect + progressive + Passive + Lexical Verb will have been writing

(x) Modal + Perfect + passive + Lexical Verb will have been written

(xi) Modal + Progressive + passive + Lexical Verb will be being written

(xii) Perfect + Progressive + Lexical Verb has been writing

(xiii) Perfect + Passive + Lexical Verb has been written

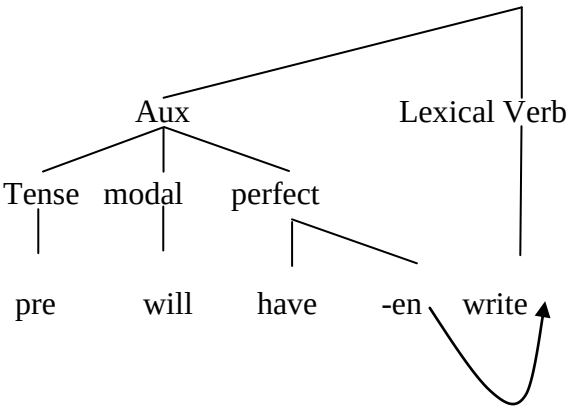
(xiv) Progressive + Passive + Lexical Verb is being written

(xv) Perfect + Progressive + Passive + Lexical Verb has been being written

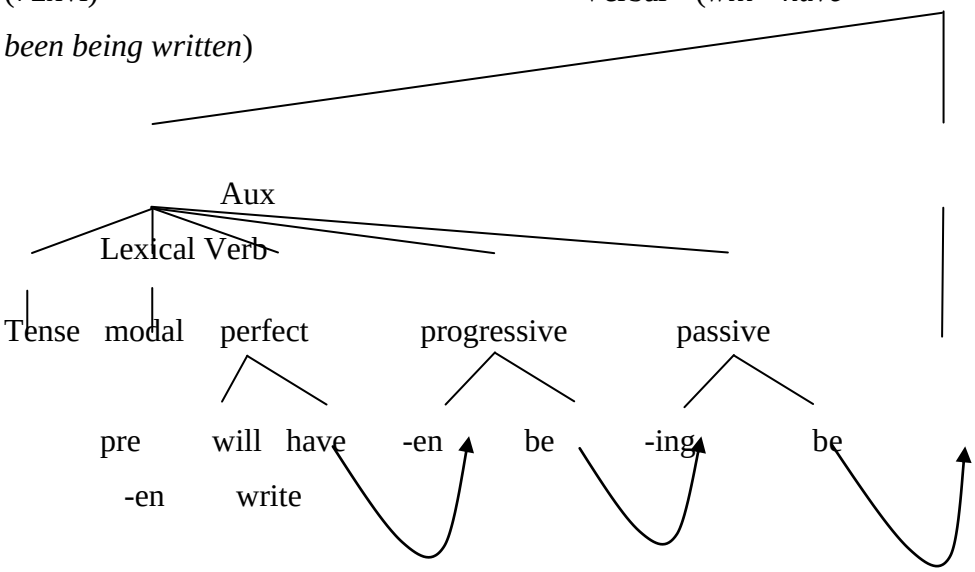
(xvi) Modal + Perfect + Progressive + Passive + Lexical Verb will have been being written

In (72) we have sixteen possible verbals. However, more complicated verbals occur very rarely, with (xvi) the most complicated, hardly occurring at all. Nevertheless, it is a possible verbal available for use. Let us draw tree diagrams for some of the Verbals mentioned in (72).

(72vi) Verbal (*will have written*)



(72xvi) Verbal (*will have been being written*)



In the tree diagrams in (72vi and 72xvi), the perfective participle *–en*, the progressive participle *–ing*, and the passive participle *–en*, since all of them are bound morphemes, get attached to the verb that immediately follows them. Thus in (vi), the perfect participle *–en* gets attached to the lexical verb, since it is the verb that immediately follows the participle. In (xvi), first the perfect participle *–en* gets attached to the progressive *be* which gives us *been*, then the progressive participle *–ing* gets attached to the passive *be* and we have *being*, and finally the passive participle *–en*

gets attached to the lexical verb which immediately follows it, and we have *written*. Thus, we have the verbal *will have been being written*, where the modal carries tense.

ACTIVITY 6

Draw tree diagrams for all the other Verbals in (72).

We now move to see the realisation of tense in the English verbals at some length.

14.3.6 The Realization of Tense in English Verbals

In our discussion of the internal structure of the English verbals, we have noted that a finite clause contains a tensed verb. How is tense realised? We note that tense is realised on the lexical verb itself if there is no auxiliary verb in the verbal. If the verbal is modified by any auxiliary verb, it is realised by the first auxiliary. We, therefore, introduced the term verbal, which includes the Tense element and the following auxiliaries, if any and the lexical verb, which heads the verb phrase. Now, we shall look into this at some length so that we have a better understanding of the realization of tense in an English verbal.

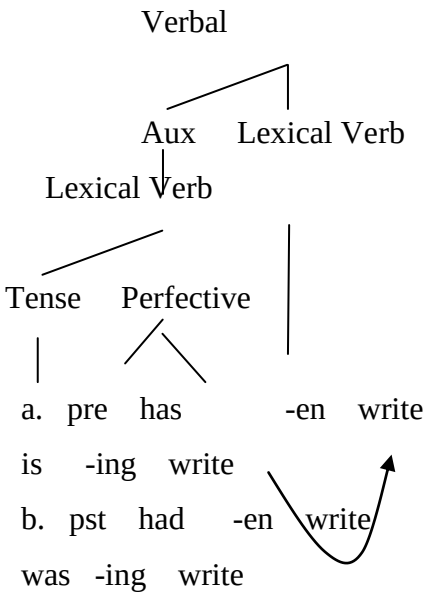
When there is no auxiliary verb in a verbal element of a finite clause, the form of the verbal, say *work*, is easily separable into (i) the lexical verb itself (called the stem), (ii) if the subject is third person singular, a present tense inflection –s (work + -s) and (iii) a past tense inflection –ed. However, the past tense inflection –ed may be realised differently for some verbs.

When there is an auxiliary verb, tense is marked on the auxiliary verb and not on the lexical verb. Thus in (29ii-v) tense is realised on the auxiliary verb, not on the lexical verb.

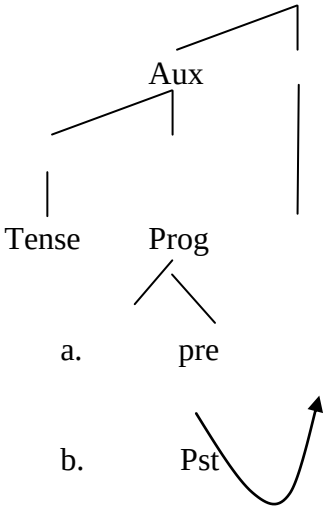
(72ii)	(72iii)	(72iv)	(72v)
a. will write	a. has written	a. is writing	a. is written
b. would write	b. had written	b. was writing	b. was written

In (72ii-v), the form of the auxiliary verbs, *will, has* and *is* indicate that the verbals in (a) are in the present tense and the form of auxiliary verbs, *would, had,* and *was* indicate that the verbals in (b) are in the past tense. If we remove the –en and –ing participles from the lexical verbs (which were originally part of the auxiliary verbs), we find that both in (a) and (b), the lexical verbs are in stem (write),as seen in the following tree diagrams:

(73)



(74)



When we have more than one auxiliary in the verbal, tense is marked on the first auxiliary verb:

(72xv)

a. has been being written

b. had been being written

(72xvi)

a. will have been being written

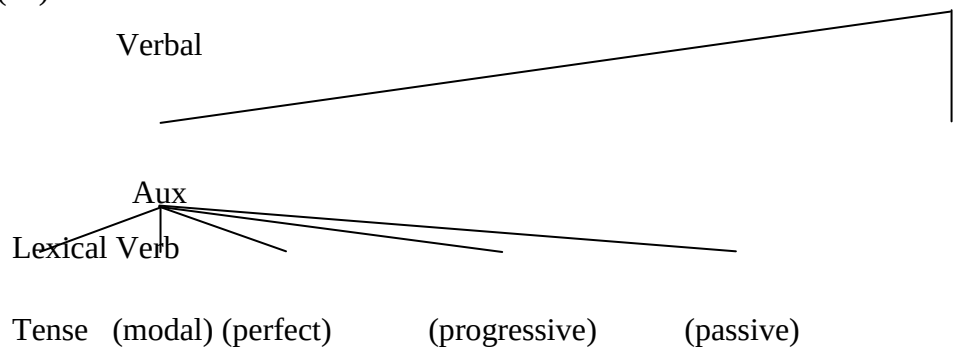
b. would have been being written

A seen from the above, the tense distinction between the verbals in (a) and (b) is marked on the first auxiliary verb.

We, therefore, say that in an English Verbal, tense is marked:
(i) on the lexical verb, if there is no auxiliary verb in the verbal, or
(ii) on the auxiliary verb if there is only one in the verbal and
(iii) on the first auxiliary, if there are more than one auxiliaries in the verbal.

Thus a tree diagram representation of the kind of Verbal we are assuming will something be like (75):

(75)



As (75) shows, every finite verbal will have an auxiliary node and a lexical verb. Every auxiliary node will have a tense node. The auxiliary node may also have the other nodes, viz, modal, perfective, progressive, and passive. It may have all these nodes, or some of them, or none of

them; but it must have the tense node and the tense node is always the first node.

In section **14.3.1** we said that an auxiliary verb functions as an operator. When there is more than one auxiliary verb, the first auxiliary verb functions as the operator and tense is marked on the operator, i.e., the first auxiliary verb. For example:

(76a) He has been writing to her since his childhood.
(76b) Has he been writing to her since his childhood?
(76c) He has not been writing to her since his childhood.

In (76), we have two auxiliary verbs and the first one functions as the operator to make an interrogative question (b) and a negative statement (c). But when there is no such auxiliary verb in a verbal, what functions as the operator? In order to get the answer, let us consider the auxiliary ***do***.

14.3.7 The Auxiliary do

Earlier, we said that there are three primary auxiliary verbs,-**do**, **have**, and **be**. We also noted that have and be can function both as auxiliary as well as lexical verb. However we did not say anything about *do*. In this section we look into the nature of *do* as an auxiliary verb.

We have seen that the auxiliary verb along with the tense node moves in front of the subject to form Yes/ No questions. Thus, (77) becomes (77a):
(77) They have gone.
(77a) Have they gone?

But, as we know, we also have verbals where there is no auxiliary verb except the tense node. In such cases, how do we form interrogative questions or negatives? As the following example shows, we cannot simply

move the tense to the front to make the question because, the tense morpheme is simply a bound morpheme which cannot stand alone.

(78) He liked chocolate.
(78a)* -ed he like chocolate?

Notice that (78a) is ungrammatical despite of the fact that it fulfils all the necessary conditions for question formation, subject-tense (aux) inversion and the lexical verb being in the stem form. Why? The sentence in (78a) is ungrammatical because there is no free morpheme to host the bound tense morpheme in the sentence. In such cases, we use the auxiliary verb *do* to host the tense morpheme; *Do + -ed* becomes *did* and we have the yes/no question as in (78c).

(78c) Did he like chocolate?

Again, since *do*carries tense, it can also form negative of such sentences (with single lexical verb). The rule for negative formation is that the negative particle *not* is placed immediately after the auxiliary that carries tense. Notice that in (78d), the negative particle *not* follows the auxiliary *do* (in its past tense form):

(78d) He did not like chocolate.

Thus, as (78c-d) show, if there is no auxiliary carrying tense, one has to be supplied in order to form the question. The auxiliary verb used for this is *do*. This is known as **do- support** or **do- insertion**. *Do* here is an *empty* or *dummy* operator. The term dummy, used in grammatical analysis, refers to a formal grammatical element introduced into a structure to ensure that a grammatical sentence is produced. Apart from their formal role, dummy elements have no meaning – they are semantically empty. Thus, *do* in

question forms is a dummy auxiliary, which carries the tense/number contrast for the lexical verb in a verbal:

(79a) Do/did you know him?
(79b) Do they/does he know you?

However, do can function as a lexical verb, and like all other single-word verbals, it requires auxiliary do-insertion to form yes/ no questions and negatives:

(80) They did it.
(81a) Did they do it?
(81b) They did not do it.

14.3.8 Finite and Non-finite Verbals

In a finite Verbal the first verb carries tense. They are marked for tense, i.e., they show the contrast between present and past tense.

(82a) He is reading now.
(82b) He was reading a book yesterday.

Main clauses are always finite. Therefore, another property of a finite verbal is that it can occur as the verbal of an independent clause.
A third property associated with finite verbal is that they *may* agree with the subject in person and number:

(83a) I am clever.
(83b) You/We/They are clever.
(83c) He/She/It is clever.

With most of the lexical verbs, this is restricted to a contrast between third person and non-third person singular person subject in the present tense.

(84a) He reads the news paper every morning.
(84b) They read the news paper every morning.

With the modal auxiliaries, however, there is no agreement:

(85) I/You/He/We/They/Mohan can play cricket.

Finite Verbals, as the name suggests, are limited by information about tense, aspect, number, gender and mood. On the other hand, non-finite verbals are not so limited.

There are four types of non-finite verbals: (i) the bare infinitive, (ii) the *to*-infinitive, (iii) the passive participle and (iv) the–*ing* participle.

We discuss these four types of non-finite verbals in the following sub-sections.

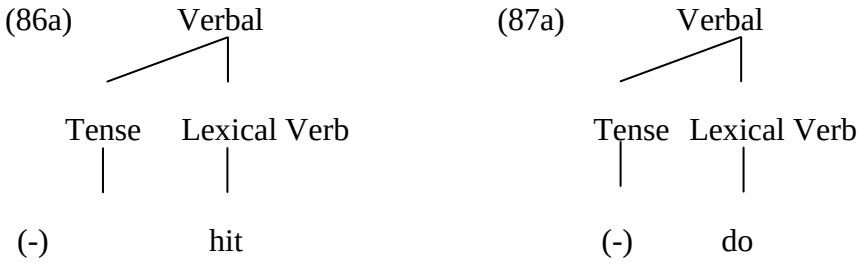
14.3.9 The Bare Infinitive

The bare infinitive consists of just the stem of the verb. It is called the 'bare' infinitive because it lacks the infinitive particle *to*. Examples of sentences containing bare infinitive clauses are:

(86) All I did was [*hit* him on the head].
(87) [Rather than Mohan *do* it], I gave the job to Madhabi.

In (86 and 87), the verbals in the bracketed clause are bare infinitives. Notice that both *hit* in (86) and *do* in (87) are in the un-tensed stem form.

The verbal in the bracketed clauses can be represented in tree diagrams as in 86(a) and 87(a) below:



As the tree diagrams show, the verbal contains the lexical verb in its stem form and an auxiliary containing tense, which is negatively specified.
Bare infinitives do not take a subject.

14.3.10 The to Infinitive

The non-finite Verbals that occur with the *infinitive particle to* is called the *to* infinitive Verbals.

(88) I'd prefer [to go in the morning].
(89a) The terrorist is thought [to be hiding in the Masque].
(89b) I couldn't believe [him to be beaten by the police].
(89c) [For him to have been beaten] is impossible.

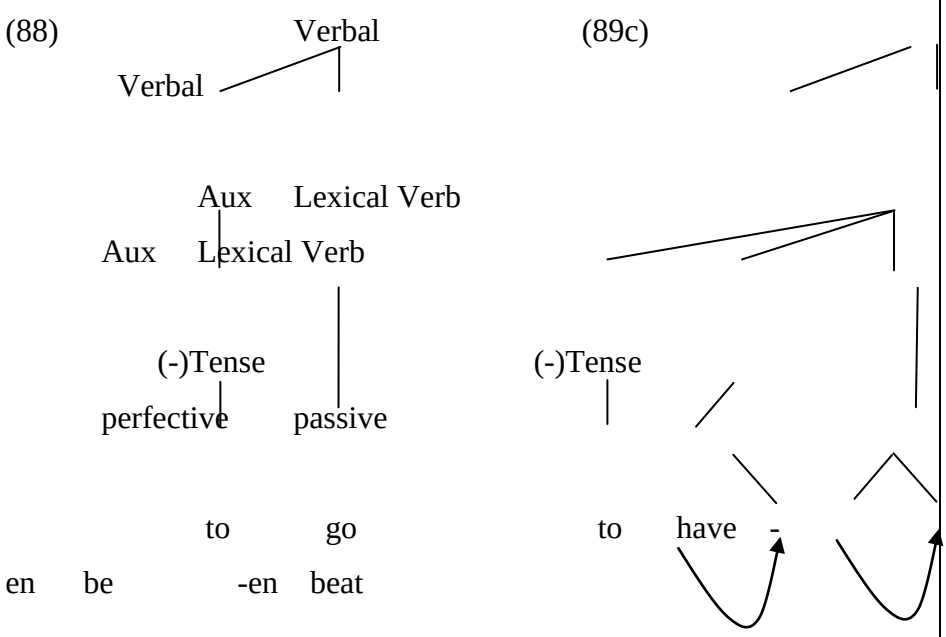
In (88 and 89) the verbals in the bracketed clauses are to-infinitives; the verbals are preceded by the infinitive particle *to*. In (88), *to*is followed by the Lexical verb *go* which is in the stem form. In (89a-c), *to* is followed by the aspectual auxiliaries and the lexical verb. In (89a), it is followed by the progressive (aspectual) auxiliary *be* + *-ing*, where the progressive participle gets attached to the following verb. Notice that *be*, which immediately follows *to*, is in the stem form. In (89b), it is followed by the perfective auxiliary *be* + *-en*, where the perfective participle gets attached to the following verb. Notice that here also *be*, which immediately follows

to, is in the stem form. In (89c) the infinitive particle *to* is followed by two auxiliaries: perfective auxiliary *have* + *-en* and passive auxiliary *be* + *-en*; the passive participle *–en* gets attached to the following (lexical) verb and the perfective participle *–en* gets attached to the following verb *be*. Notice that *have*, which immediately follows *to*, is in the stem form.

Now, as you have noticed in (89a-c), in a to-infinitive verbal, the lexical verb may be preceded by perfective, progressive and passive auxiliaries. However, it cannot be modified by the modal auxiliaries. Why? It is because, non-finite verbals lack tense, and modals are always tensed. Therefore, modals do not appear in any kind of non-finite Verbal.

Activity 7

Draw a tree diagram to represent the bracketed Verbals in (88 and 89a-c). Two of them (88 and 89a) are done for your benefit. Find (88) in (88a) and (89c) in (89d) below:



In both the verbals, Tense under Aux is negatively

specified, indicating non-tensed nature of the verbals. The infinitive particle is hosted under auxiliary (-) tense.

14.3.11 The Passive Participle

The passive participles are the third kind of non-finite verbals. Like the bare infinitives, they are always single word lexical verbs. However, they contrast with the bare infinitives (which are active) in having a passive meaning. Here are some examples:

(90) [*Equipped* with arms], the terrorists went out.

(91) I found [his car *driven* into the garage].

As you see, the verbals in the bracketed clauses are in the passive and their tense is specified for negative (-tense).

14.3.12 The –ing Participle

The fourth kind of non-finite verbals are *–ing* participle verbals. It can be composed of a single lexical verb or the lexical verb may be preceded by any auxiliary except the modals. An *–ing* participle verbal has the same structure with that of a *to*-infinitive except that, instead of the first verb being preceded by *to*, it takes the *–ing* affix. Compare the structure of the following verbals in (92a and 92b):

(92)	(a) To-infinitive	(b) –ing participle
	to go	going
	to have gone	having gone
	to be gone	being gone

to have been gone having been gone

Note that the verbals in (b), as like the verbals in (b), are non-tensed. The first verb in each verbal is in the *–ing* form, not in the stem form. Some examples of *–ing* participle non-finite Verbals are:

(93) [Leaving the room], he went on a scooter.
(94) [Her mother having left the room], Mohan proposed Madhabi.

Again, contrary to the passive participles, we call these Verbals *–ing* participle rather than 'progressive' participle. Here also we differ from traditional grammar because, unlike the passive participles, there is no clear evidence that these *–ing* participles are progressive form of the main lexical verb. The reason for this is that a stative verb like *know*, which cannot take progressive aspect as in (95), can appear in non-finite *–ing* participle forms (96):

(95) * I am knowing him intimately.
(96) [Knowing him intimately] helps me a lot.

14.4 SUMMING UP

In this Unit we looked at the elements and the structure of the VP in English. Thus, we discussed the Verbal in the Verb Phrase and its international structure, i.e. how it may be modified by the auxiliary. We have also looked at how tense is realized in the English verbal. Finally we discussed the Finite and the non-Finite verbals in English. The nature of English structure of modern English. In our study we looked at the structure of different English sentence types in terms of their constituent structures. Then we looked into the internal structure of each of the constituents of a sentence in English.

14.5 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Identify the VPs in each of the folowing sentences.

   i. Rajib opens the door.

   ii. The girl in the balcony has died her hair in the sun.

   iii. Rajib has promised me his car.

   iv. His car should prove useful to me.

   v. We nominated her our class representative.

   vi. Monalisha is our class representative.

   vii. It doesn't sound much fun.

   viii. Madhu has been feeding the boiled milk.

   viii. Ramen put the book on the table.

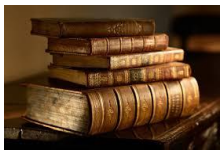
   ix. He has applied for the post.

2. How do modals modify a verb? Show with examples.

3. How does the auxiliary *have* function as the perfective marker in a verbal? Show with examples.

4. How does the auxiliary *be* verb function as the progressive marker in a verbal? Show with examples.

5. How is tense realized in English?



14.6 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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Programme	Eligibility	Programme Coordinator
MA in Mass Communication	Bachelor's Degree in any discipline	Ms. Pragya Sharma pragya@tezu.ernet.in 03712-275359 Dr. Uttam Kr. Pegu uttamkp@tezu.ernet.in 03712-275455
MA in English	Bachelor's Degree in any discipline	Dr. Suchibrata Goswami suchitu@tezu.ernet.in 03712-275358 Dr. Pallavi Jha pjefl@tezu.ernet.in 03712-275215
MA in Sociology	Bachelor's Degree in any discipline	Ms. Ankita Bhattacharyya ankita@tezu.ernet.in 03712-275359 Dr. Amiya Kr. Das amiyadas@tezu.ernet.in 03712-275805
PG Diploma in Human Resource Management	Bachelor's Degree in any discipline	Dr. Runumi Das runumi@tezu.ernet.in 03712-275015
PG Diploma in Environmental & Disaster Management	Bachelor's Degree in any discipline	Dr. N. Gogoi nirmali@tezu.ernet.in 03712-275609 Dr. Dipak Nath dipak@tezu.ernet.in 03712-275306
PG Diploma in Renewable Energy and Energy Management	BE/B.Tech or M.Sc in Physics or Chemistry	Dr. S. Mahapatra sadhan@tezu.ernet.in 03712-275306
PG Diploma in Child Rights and Governance**	Bachelor's Degree in any discipline	Dr. Subhrangshu Dhar sdhar@tezu.ernet.in

The Centre for Open and Distance Learning (earlier Directorate of Distance Education) was established in 2011 with the aim of disseminating knowledge and imparting quality education through open and distance learning mode. The Centre offers various post-graduate, undergraduate, diploma and certificate programmes in emerging areas of science & technology, social sciences, management and humanities with flexible system to cater to the needs of the learners who otherwise cannot avail the regular mode of education. The basic focus of the Centre is to prepare human resources of the region and the country by making them skilled and employable.

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