Word Classes and Grammatical Categories

Word Classes or Parts of Speech

Sentences are composed of units which can be referred to as **parts of speech** or **word classes** as **articles, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions** etc. These can be exemplified in English as follows:

> **Closed -system items:** the set of items are closed in the sense that they cannot normally be extended by the creation of additional members. The decision to use one item in a given structure excludes the possibility of using any other.

> e.g.: articles (the, a(n)), demonstratives (this, that, etc.), pronouns (he, which, anybody, etc.), prepositions (of, at, without, etc.), conjunctions (and, but, when, etc.) and interjections (oh, ah, ugh, etc.).

> **Open -class items:** The class is open in the sense that it is indefinitely extendable. New items are constantly created.

> e.g.: nouns (John, room, answer, etc.), adjectives (happy, large, new, etc.), adverbs (completely, then, very, etc.), and verbs (search, be, grow, have, etc.)

Grammatical Categories

In many languages, the forms of a word vary, in order to express such contrasts as **number, gender, case, voice, tense, aspect, person and mood.**

Number: Number is a category referring to quantities. There is a category for one, **singular** (table, man, sheep, knife), and a category for more than one,

plural (tables, men, sheep, knives). The Arabic number system has a category for two, dual (شخصان - منزلان - فتاتان) .

Gender: gender is traditionally associated with sex: **feminine, masculine** and sometimes **neuter**. English makes very few gender distinctions compared to other languages. There is no gender concord in English as is the case in French and Arabic.

e.g.: **Il est beau, elle est belle**
Il est venu, elle est venue

ما أجمله ، ما أجملها
هو قادم ، هي قادمة

Gender, in English depends upon the classification of persons and objects as **male (uncle)**, **female (aunt)**, or **inanimate (box)**. **Dual gender** includes words such as: **artist, doctor, teacher, professor, neighbour**, etc. For clarity, it is sometimes necessary to use a **gender marker**:

e.g.: **boy friend   girl friend**
man student   woman student

Case: The English noun system has two cases: the **-s genitive** and the **of genitive**. The -s genitive is sometimes called the possessive, but it can express other meanings than possession.

e.g.: **A women's college**, i.e., **A college for women**
Ten days' absence, i.e., **the absence lasted ten days**
A summer's day, i.e., **a day in the summer**
The general's letter, i.e., **the general wrote a letter**

Voice: voice is a category specifying the relation of the subject to the action expressed by the verb. English has two voices: an **active**, indicating that the subject performs the action expressed by the verb and a **passive**, indicating that the subject undergoes the action.

e.g.: I read many books
      Many books were read by me

Tense: tense is one of the categories directly associated with the <u>verb</u> where traditionally a division is made between **past, present** and **future**. But tense is not a universal category and there is not always correspondence between tense and time. In fact, tense is not found in all languages. For instance, we cannot say that English has a proper future tense because what is traditionally described as such is realized by means of the auxiliaries: **will** and **shall**. But **will** and **shall** do not necessarily occur in sentences with a future time reference.

e.g.: **Shall we go?**
      Will you close the door, please? } **No future in these cases**

Future time can be referred to by means of other tenses.

e.g.: **I finish my course in June**
      She is coming next week.

Aspect: reflects the status of the action. An action may be completed or incompleted. If completed, the aspect is called **perfective**, if incompleted, the aspect is **imperfective**. The imperfective is also referred to as **continuous** or **progressive** aspect.

e.g.: **The girl drowned in the lake** (She died)
      The girl was drowning in the lake (someone rescued her)

      He has eaten my chocolates (they are all gone)
      He was eating my chocolates (but I stopped him)
      He has been eating my chocolates (but there are some left)

Person: There are three persons. Persons refer to **the speaker** (first person), **the person addressed** (second person), and **the person referred to but not addressed** (third person). Different forms for each person category are found; they are distinguished as singular and plural in the category number.

<u>Mood</u>: This category relates the action to such conditions as **certainty**, **obligation, necessity, possibility**, etc. Mood can be realized by means of **modal auxiliaries** expressing statements, commands, probabilities, wishes etc. as illustrated in the following examples:

e.g.: - **He can speak English but he can't write it very well.** (He is able to speak.../ capable of speaking...)
- **Can/ May I smoke in here?** (Am I allowed to smoke...?)
- **The road may be blocked.** (It is possible that the road is blocked)
- **I will do it, whatever you say.** (I insist on doing it)
- **That would be his mother.** (probability)
- **I must be back by 10 o'clock.** (obligation)
- **Come here.** (command)

Standard Arabic has only two moods: **indicative** (past, present and future) and **imperative**.

e.g.: ‎اُصغِي إلى الأستاذ
‎قد تتغير النتيجة.

Grammatical Functions

Some word classes or parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs play different roles or **functions** in the sentence such as **subject, object, predicate, complement.**

Subject and Predicate

In traditional grammar as well as in modern linguistic theory, the sentence is composed of two obligatory major constituents: a **subject** and a **predicate** (**verb+ object** or **verb + complement** etc.). For example, the sentence **he had given the girl an apple** can be divided into subject and predicate as follows:

Sentence

subject — predicate

auxiliary as operator — predication

He — had — given the girl an apple

Had — he — given the girl an apple?
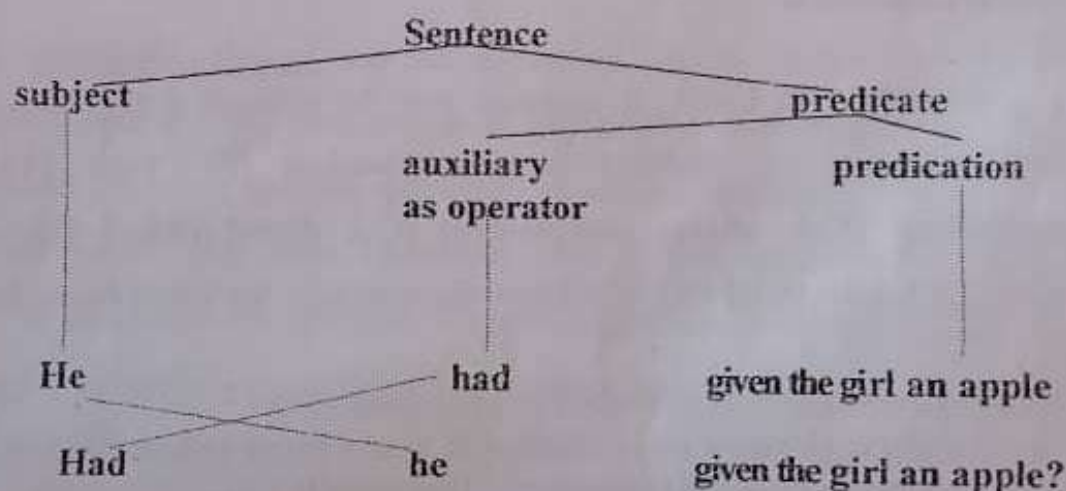
This particular division of the sentence helps us understand how interrogative and negative sentences are formed. The subject is then the part of the sentence that changes its position as we go from statement to question. When the sentence has no auxiliary, **do** is introduced as an operator.

e.g.: She studies English.
Does she study English?
No, she doesn't.

Sentences may also contain one or more **adjuncts** (of **place, time, manner** etc.) and **complements**. The following examples from Lyons illustrate the difference between the two:

1. **John killed Bill on Sunday.**
2. **The demonstration was on Sunday.**

In sentence 1, **on Sunday** is an adjunct because it is an optional constituent of the sentence. This means that it can be removed without affecting the rest of the sentence which will still be **grammatical**.

In sentence 2, **on Sunday** is a complement because it is an obligatory constituent of the sentence. This means that without it, the sentence will be **ungrammatical**.

Sentence Elements

According to Quirk, a sentence may be seen as comprising five units called elements of sentence structure: **subject (S)**, **verb (V)**, **subject complement (Cs)**, **object complement (Co)**, **direct object (Od)**, **Indirect object (Oi)**, **adverbial (A)**. The following examples are taken from Quirk:

- John (S) carefully (A) searched (V) the room (O).
- The girl (S) is (V) now (A) a student (Cs) at a large university (A).
- His brother (S) grew (V) happier (Cs) gradually (A).
- It (S) rained (V) steadily (A) all day (A).
- He (S) had given (V) the girl (Oi) an apple (Od).
- They (S) make (V) him (Od) the chairman (Co) every year (A).

It should be specified that **adjunct** is part of what Quirk calls here **adverbial**.

Macro-linguistic Branches or the scientific study of language in relation to the extra-linguistic world

Macrolinguistics is generally defined as the study of language <u>beyond</u> the language, i.e., in relation to what is not purely linguistic or non-linguistic such as the social and cultural context in which the language is used, the psychological features involved, the various fields of application or domains for which we need the language and so on. In a macro-linguistic study, language is therefore viewed not as a system in itself and for itself but as a system in relation to the world of experience or extralinguistic world. Some of the most significant branches are defined below:

> **Psycholinguistics**: this sub-discipline can be defined as Lyons (1984, p. 240) puts it "The intersection of psychology and linguistics". This branch is about language and the individual or more particularly the study of language and mind. The most important area is the investigation of the acquisition of language by children. Psycholinguistics investigates also the psychological mechanisms responsible for linguistic behaviour.

> **Sociolinguistics**: similarly, this sub-discipline can also be seen as the intersection of sociology and linguistics. This branch is about language and the community or more particularly the study of language in relation to society as it is commonly defined by linguists. It studies the ways in which language interacts with society. It is the study of the way in which the structure of language changes in response to its (i.e., language) different social functions. Sociolinguistics is also concerned with the definition of the different functions of language.

➤ **Ethnolinguistics**: this branch refers to the linguistic correlates and problems of ethnic groups, for example, the linguistic consequences of immigration. To some extent, it overlaps with anthropological linguistics in the sense that it can also be defined as the study of language in relation to culture.

➤ **Anthropological linguistics**: this branch studies languages as part of the investigation of their associated cultures.

➤ **Applied linguistics**: A very important branch which is concerned with the application of linguistic knowledge to practical areas or domains such as language teaching and learning, translation, lexicography or dictionary making etc.

Some other branches can be considered as intermediate, i.e., between micro and macro-linguistics:

➤ **Comparative linguistics**: It studies the similarities between different languages at different levels: phonological, grammatical or lexical.

➤ **Contrastive linguistics**: A very important branch which studies the differences or contrasts between different languages at different levels: phonological, morpho-syntactic, grammatical, lexical or semantic. Contrastive linguistics studies are undertaken mainly for applied linguistic purposes.

➤ **Historical linguistics**: It is the study of language history. It studies the changes that occur in a language through time in order to determine what changes have taken place in the course of the historical development of language.

Some Suggested Exercises

1. Divide these words into their separate morphemes:

Retroactive, irreplaceable, predetermination, tourists, alcoholic, American, reprint, accusation, affectionate, reddish

تـوافد ـ إستـقامة ـ جالس ـ

طمطنائي ـ تعالم ـ مستشرق .

2. Think of five morpheme suffixes. Give their meaning, what types of stems they may be suffixed to, and at least two examples of each.

Example: *-er*   meaning: 'doer of', makes an agentive noun

     stem type: added to verbs

     examples: **teacher**, 'one who teaches'

       rider, 'one who rides'

3. Think of five morpheme prefixes. Give their meaning, what types of stems they may be prefixed to, and at least two examples of each.

Example: *a-*   meaning: 'lacking the quality'

     stem type: added to adjectives

     examples: **amoral**, 'lacking morals'

       asymmetric, 'lacking symmetry'

4. - The morpheme meaning 'the' in Arabic is...................

  - The morpheme meaning 'a' in Arabic is   ....

   - What is the Arabic for : a. they weave   ....

       b. they travel   ....

       c. he sings   ....

- Formulate a morphological rule which states how to form the plural verb from the singular verb form in Arabic and compare with English.

5. Bound morphemes may be **infixes**. Exempify.

6. English **nouns** are inflected in four forms, and **verbs** can be inflected in five forms. Explain.

7. Indicate the **allomorphs** of the regular plural and the regular past-tense morphemes. Give examples.

8. Indicate the processes of word formation in the following examples:
disobey, kindness, carpet (Noun and verb), Blackbird, washing machine, ad, flu, UNESCO, NATO, VIP, DJ, brunch, telex.

9. How would you call the following pairs: **bear, bare; flour, flower; ground, ground (past of grind); tale, tail; mature, ripe; deep, profound; extinguish, put out; alive, dead; married, single; discrete, indiscrete.**

- When a word has several meanings, that word is...........

10. Specify the function of the constituent parts of the following sentences:
  - He is talking.
  - His daughter lives in Sweden.
  - I am writing a letter.
  - She was a teacher.
  - He sends an e-mail to his friends.
  - You can put your pen on the desk.
  - They have made their parents very happy.
  - Their work is in the early stages.
  - He had given the boy a book.
  - She is now a sales' manager in an important company.

  - J'ai acheté une montre neuve.
  - Sarah range ses livres sur cette étagère.
  - L'ordinateur de la cinquième génération vient d'être installé.
  - Vos conseils m'étaient nécessaire dans cette situation difficile.

11. Specify the grammatical or word class of the underlined words:

- I <u>walk</u> half an hour everyday.
- What about going for a <u>walk</u> today?
- I <u>dream</u> of living in a palace.
- I had a very nice <u>dream</u> last night.
- The second <u>round</u> was hard.
- Any <u>round</u> table will do.
- Some drivers <u>round</u> corners too.
- The sound goes <u>round</u> and <u>round</u>.
- He lives <u>round</u> the corner.
- He falls <u>down</u>.
- He lives <u>down</u> the river.
- In life, there are ups and <u>downs</u>.
- You are <u>down</u> to speak next.
- The <u>down</u> train will leave soon.

12. Divide the following sentences into subject and predicate:

- The child found the cat.
- The lazy child slept.
- The woman found a cake in the cupboard.
- Mary says they think you laughed at them.
- The detective looks up the address.
- That worries me.
- Cleaning the house everyday is unnecessary.