Meeting IV
Class
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Systemic Grammar

Members of a unit are grouped together and assigned to a particular class according to:

- the way they function in the next largest unit
- how they combine with units of the same rank
- the similarities and differences of their internal structure
Word class

• Words are traditionally allocated to one of the following range of word classes: noun, pronoun, article, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection.

• The allocation of words to word classes is undertaken on the basis of grammatical behaviour.
grammatical behaviour

• Firstly, the wording environment in which the word appears, its location in the word string and the other words with which it can co-occur.
• Secondly, the range of different forms which the word can display.
• With respect to the meanings which they convey, nouns denote what we will call 'entities'.
• Nouns will thus be regarded as a form, indeed the main but not the only form, of nominal word.
• They may be 'concrete' or 'abstract'.
• If concrete, the entities referred to are made of material/physical substance and are thus 'animate' (human or animal), e.g. girl, gorilla, or 'inanimate' (solid or liquid), e.g. chair, water.
• If abstract, they are intangible, e.g. beauty, depth.
Noun

- Nouns are usually associated with the ability to inflect (i.e. change their form) for the plural.
- Nouns are also associated with the property of being able to follow the articles *a* and *the* as well as quantifiers such as *some, many*, e.g. *the car, some warmth*.
- Nouns are traditionally divided into the classes proper and common.
- **Proper nouns** denote the name of entities which have unique reference.
- Proper nouns may well be associated in people's minds with the absence of an article (*a, the*)
Noun

- Common nouns refer to entities which do not have unique reference.
- They are divided into two classes: count/countable and mass nouns.
- Count nouns denote entities which can be counted / are countable using ordinary numbers such as one, two, three, four, five, etc., e.g. compass, map, torch, coagula.
- Mass nouns are nouns which cannot be counted.
Noun

• number of common nouns, however, can occur as either count or mass nouns, as illustrated in the (a) and (b) examples below:
  (a) A dozen eggs, please.
  (b) You've got egg on your tie.
  (a) Two teas, please.
  (b) Tea has gone up enormously
Verb

- In meaning terms, verbs may be said to express processes which can be classified in one of three broad ways.
- Firstly they can denote actions, e.g. *walk, draw, watch, work, feel* (pulse), *sound* (horn), inasmuch as they involve someone doing something and may be identified by questions of the type 'What is X doing / did X do?'
- Secondly, they can record events, e.g. *occur, collapse, melt, become, see*, which involve something happening or a change of state and are identified by 'What is happening / happened?'
- Lastly, they can refer to states (a state of affairs, state of mind ...), e.g. *be, seem, like, feel* (ill), *sound* (noisy), which relate to any point in time - past, present or future -
• Systemic grammarians have also classified processes into:
  material, e.g. *walk, draw, occur, collapse, melt*,
  mental, e.g. *watch, see, listen, hear, expect, like*, and
  relational, e.g. *be, seem, become*.
• The grammatical definition of verbs, however, relates to the fact that
  their form can potentially be Inflected/modified to mark tense, aspect,
  voice, mood and the person form of the subject with which they agree.
Variations of the verb ‘work’

- **tense**
  - present: *work, works*
  - past: *worked*

- **aspect**
  - progressive/continuous: *is working, was working*
  - perfect: *has worked, had worked*

- **voice**
  - active: *worked, is working*
  - passive: *was worked, is being worked*
Variations of the verb ‘work’

• **mood**
  - indicative: She works/worked hard.
  - imperative: *Work* hardier!
  - subjunctive: *They insist that she work* harder.

• **subject agreement**
  - *I/you/we/they work; he/she/it works.*

• In practice, the verb in modern English offers little scope for marking agreement with a change of subject.
Variations of the verb ‘work’

- in the past tense the verb *work* shows no variation to mark agreement with the subject:
  
  I / you / he / I she / I it / I we / I they worked.

- In English it is the present tense of the verb *to be* which displays the greatest range of subject agreement forms:
  
  I am; you / we / they are; he / she / it is.
Main verb vs auxiliary

- Verbs have been traditionally classified as main or auxiliary.
- A main verb is one which can operate as the headword or pivotal element of the verbal phrase, e.g. works, worked, is working, will have been worked.
- If the verbal phrase contains more than one verb word, then the main verb is the rightmost element.
- There is only a limited range of auxiliary verbs, e.g. do, be, have, will, shall, may, can, must (together with would, should, might, could).
Main verb vs auxiliary

• Auxiliary verbs typically co-occur with the main verb, though in conversation it is very possible for repeated mention of the main verb to be omitted.
• In a tensed verbal phrase, it is the leftmost verb word which carries the tense inflection.
• That means that in a single word verbal phrase this is the main verb, e.g. *works*, whereas in a multiple word verbal phrase it is the leftmost auxiliary, e.g. *has been working*.
• *Unlike main verbs, the first auxiliary verb can also frequently take a contracted and 'clitic' form of the negative n 't, e.g. aren't, shan't, won't, mustn't, can't, mightn't, don't.*
Main verb vs auxiliary

- A further distinction is usually made between **primary auxiliaries** *do, be, have* and **modal auxiliaries**, e.g. *can, will, shall, must, may*.
- Verbs display finite and non-finite forms.
- **Finite** forms are those which potentially show marking for tense (present or past), mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive), and agreement with the subject person (first, second or third person).
  
  *I play, he plays, they play,*
  
  *I played, we played;*
  
  *I am playing, she is playing, they are playing;*
Finite vs non finite

- **Non-finite** forms are not marked for tense; they occur either as a base **infinitive** (with or without the particle *to*):
  
  - *She helped him (to) learn Russian.*
  - *She watched him learn Russian.*
  - *She invited him to learn Russian.*

- or **as a participle**. Although participles are not subject to tense as such, they have two forms, a present and a past participle.
The label **phrasal verb** is given to verbs which include after the headword verb element an adverbial particle whose meaning is fused with that of the headword and which is therefore analyzed grammatically within the verbal phrase.

- *She switched on the cooker.*
- *I looked up the word.*
- *He turned off the fire.*

There are several differences between phrasal verbs and verbs which are followed by a prepositional phrase.
Phrasal verbs vs prepositional verb

(i) / looked up the word.
   (ii) / looked up the chimney.
   (iii) He turned off the fire.
       (iv) He turned off the road.

1. With a phrasal verb it is normally possible to switch the particle to the right of the object. This particle switching is possible in (i) and (iii) above:

   / looked the word up.
   He turned the fire off.

But in sentences (ii) and (iv), which contain prepositional phrases, this is not possible:

   */ looked the chimney up.
   *He turned the road off.
2. It is only with non-phrasal verbs that the normal word order can be inverted.

   * Up the chimney I looked.
   * Off the road he turned.

   But not

   * Up the word I looked.
   * Off the fire he turned.

3. In respect of verbs plus a prepositional phrase it is possible to use the preposition within the relative construction.

   * The chimney up which I looked...
   * The road off which he turned...

   But not

   * The word up which I looked...
   * The fire off which he turned...
Phrasal verbs vs prepositional verb

• Some phrasal verbs can in fact be replaced by simple verbs,
  e.g. switch on - ignite, turn off-extinguish, find out - ascertain, hand in - submit, set up - establish.
Verbs acting as main verbs can be classified as **lexical** or **copular** according to whether they have 'content' meaning or merely provide a relational link (denoting the actual/apparent state or change of state) between the subject and the post-verbal completerive element (the complement in traditional grammar).

**lexical verb:**

*Ruth does not sell/ grill/ enjoy/ make cheese.*

**copular verb:**

*Jill is/seems I appear si looked/felt I became I grew I remained tired.*
Lexical verbs

- Lexical verbs are traditionally divided into intransitive, transitive or ditransitive according to the number of objects with which they can combine.
  - Intransitive verbs do not take an object
  - Transitive verbs have one object,
  - And ditransitive verbs have two objects
• The ship sank; Keith slept; The liquid cooled; Tom jell;
• The cats returned home (home here is not an object, it is not 'what' the cats returned but rather 'where');
• She wept all night.
• They sank the ship; I watched the match; First we cooled the liquid;
• The batsman hit the ball with tremendous power;
• Jill sang an Austrian song.


**ditransitive**

- They gave her a beautiful watch; We sent him the photos;
- Pass Jane the butter, please; Mary asked Jill a favour.

- However, in view of the fact that many verbs can operate in more than one category, cf.
  - Jill sang very well; Jill sang an Austrian song;
  - They gave £10; They gave her £10.
- it is perhaps more helpful to think in terms of a verb being **used** intransitively, transitively or ditransitively rather than being assigned to a particular class.
Copular verbs

- Copular or relational verbs combine with a complement - an element which, in the examples below, refers back to the subject.
  (a) Ian is the doctor / the best doctor in Glasgow.
      (identity of the subject)
  (b) Ian is a doctor / a good doctor.
      (classification of the subject)
  (c) Ian is clever / rather clever/ very clever indeed.
      Ian is in good health / in high spirits / out of condition/ of no importance.
      (features/qualities/states of the subject.)
Adjectives

- Thought of in traditional grammar as a 'describing' word, the adjective has the role of ascribing an attribute or feature to a noun.
- It may occur either attributively within the nominal phrase, in which case it serves to modify the headword noun, or
- predicatively outside the nominal phrase to which it relates.
attributive adjective (within the nominal phrase)

• it is mainly found before the headword noun, in a pre-head position (prenominal), but in selected contexts it can come after the headword noun, in a post-head position (postnominal).

(a) prenominal:

- a new car; a responsible child; the principal problem; complete nonsense;

(b) postnominal:

- anything different; somebody new; the child responsible; the court martial; the secretary general; the president elect; the Princess Royal; from time immemorial.
• Where the adjective functions predicatively, it is mostly in relation to the subject, in which case in English it is separated from the subject by the verb.

• If, however, the adjective relates to an object nominal phrase, then it will typically be adjacent to the object but structurally distinct from it.
predicative adjective (outside the nominal phrase):

(a) This car is new.
A child is responsible for this damage.
The problem is simple.
Jack is fond of Jill.
(b) We stood the bookcase upright.
She drinks her tea black.
Adjectives

• Some adjectives can occur in just one of these roles. For example, *main, principal, mere and utter* are found only attributively in the pre nominal position, so one does not hear *The problem is main.*

• Equally, *unwell, alone, afraid, asleep, alive and aware* normally occur only predicatively, so one does not normally hear *the asleep child.*
Adjectives

• In English, unlike many other languages, adjectives have a fixed form: their spelling does not vary according to whether the headword noun is singular or plural, or whether it refers to a male or a female being.
• However, some are able to be modified for gradability by comparison or degree.
• Comparison of the adjective implies (and often includes) reference to a second entity or to a previous state of the first entity, e.g. My bike is cleaner than yours; My bike is cleaner than it was.
Adjectives

- It is formed either by inflecting the base/absolute form of the adjective (mainly by adding -er and -est)
- or by the addition of the words *more* and *most*.
- The -er ending and the word *more* are used to create the comparative form, and -est and the word *most* to create the superlative:
Adjective with modifier

- new, newer, newest'
- happy, happier, happiest;
- good, better, best (note the change of adjective stem);
- luxurious, more luxurious, most luxurious;
- exciting, more exciting, most exciting.
Adjectives

- Adjectives of just one or two syllables, such as *new* or *happy* above, will add the *-er* and *-est* inflections,
- whereas adjectives with three or more syllables, such as *luxurious* or *exciting*, make use of the separate words *more* and *most*.
- Gradability of the adjective by degree requires the use of modifying adverbs to mark the relative state or intensity of the adjectival feature in question, e.g. *This book is very/most/fairly/quite interesting.*
1. Traditionally in grammar, adverbs have been seen as performing a so-called modifying role in relation to verbs.
   • This role is associated with **circumstantial adverbs**.
   • single words marking the circumstances - how, why, when, where - of the verbal process
   • **verbs**, e.g.
     
     *She sings beautifully/tunefully/clearly;*  
     *He came yesterday I annually I here j upstairs.*
2. adverbs operate in relation to adjectives or to other adverbs, where they indicate the degree of the adjectival attribute or adverbial circumstance.

- **adjectives**, e.g. *She is quite tuneful / very clever / extremely kind / particularly keen / really grateful.*

- **other adverbs**, e.g. *He sings very well / quite tunefully / so^ expressively / amazingly clearly / rather delightfully.*
3. Adverbs can modify whole nominal and prepositional phrases or the active or passive verb by focusing in on and heightening or tempering the entity/relator/process concerned.

- They thus indicate the extent or intensity of the phrase and are known as intensifying adverbs or **intensifiers**.

**Nominal phrases**, e.g. *He is rather a nuisance* / *almost a teenager* / *only a lad* / *quite a character*;

**Prepositional phrases**, e.g. *He ran almost into the house* / *fairly near the river* / *right at the back* / *just behind you*. 
• verb,
e.g. She almost fell; I quite forgot;
The house has just been painted;
The potatoes have only been peeled (not cooked).
• adverbs can 'modify' the whole (of the rest) of a clause, though the concept of modification here needs to be interpreted in an increasingly liberal way.
• Three subgroups of adverb can be listed here.
• In the first group, known in traditional grammar as 'sentence adverbs', are those which have the function of providing a connective link between the preceding clause and the present one. A more contemporary term is conjunctive adverb.