

## Lesson Two

### - syntactic characterization of clause elements

(see Lesson 1 for more detail)

### - semantic roles of clause elements

We talk about so called PARTICIPANTS, i.e. entities realized by NOUN PHRASES

Some examples of the most common semantic roles:

**SUBJECT** has got a typical semantic role of the **agentive participant**, i.e. the animate participant that causes the happening denoted by the verb:

*John is cleaning the windows.*

**DIRECT OBJECT** has got a role of the **affected participant** – animate or inanimate, not causing the happening but directly involved in the action expressed by the verb:

*We've sold our house.*

**INDIRECT OBJECT** has got a role of the **recipient participant** – animate being, passively involved by the happening or state:

*I bought him a book.*

**SUBJECT or OBJECT COMPLEMENT** has got a role of the **attribute** – two subtypes:  
**identification** and **characterization**:

IDENTIFICATION: *She is a teacher. They named their son James.*

CHARACTERIZATION: *She is a good teacher. I find him very intelligent.*

**attributes** may be **current** or **resulting**:

CURRENT ATTRIBUTE: *She's my sister. She seems unhappy. I consider him my best friend.*  
(with verbs used statively)

RESULTING ATTRIBUTE: *She became a teacher. He turned traitor. She drives me mad.*  
(with verbs used dynamically)

## Introduction to Modal Verbs

There are 9 CENTRAL MODAL AUXILIARIES in English:

*can – could, may – might, shall – should, will – would, must*

We distinguish 2 main kinds of meanings for modal auxiliaries:

- 1) INTRINSIC modality (DEONTIC) involves some intrinsic human control over events and includes **permission, obligation, and volition, (ability)**
- 2) EXTRINSIC modality (EPISTEMIC) involves human judgment of what is or is not likely to happen and includes **possibility, necessity, and prediction**

Each of the modals has both intrinsic and extrinsic uses, e.g. *I must go home.* X *She must be crazy.*, or *May I open the window?* X *She may come tonight.*

Most of the modals can be paired into present and past forms (see above). From the point of view of meaning, the past forms are often merely more tentative or more polite variants of the present forms, e.g.:

*Could I see your passport?* is more polite than *Can I see...?*

*Would you lend me your book?* is more polite than *Will you lend...?*

MARGINAL MODAL AUXILIARIES: *used to, ought to, dare, need*

MODAL IDIOMS: (a combination of auxiliary and infinitive or adverb): *had better, would rather, have got to, be to*

SEMI-AUXILIARIES: (a set of verb idioms introduced by *have* and *be*): *be able to, be about to, be bound to, be due to, be going to, be likely to, be supposed to, have to*

## References:

Greenbaum, S. and R. Quirk (1990) *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. Essex: Longman. – Chapters 4 and 10, pp. 60, 209 – 210.