

## Week Two

### - syntactic characterization of clause elements

(see Chalker, chapter 2, p 8)

- when we talk of PHRASES we are talking of FORMAL CATEGORIES – the way phrases are formed
- when we talk of CLAUSE ELEMENTS we are thinking of the way different kinds of formal phrases FUNCTION, how the same kind of phrase can express different elements

**VERB (V)** – always realized by a VP; normally present in all clauses; determines what other elements must occur; in a simple sentence always a finite verb phrase

**SUBJECT (S)** – typically a NP (head word: either a noun or a subjective form of pronouns); determines the number and person of the verb, where relevant

**OBJECT (O)** – typically a NP (head word: either a noun or an objective form of pronouns); normally follows the S and V, if two objects, then usually the indirect one precedes the direct one; can become the S of the corresponding passive clause

**COMPLEMENT (C)** – typically a NP or an AdjP; subject complement relates to the S x object complement relates to the O; does not have a corresponding passive subject

**ADVERBIAL (A)** – can be realized by an AdvP, PP, NP or a CLAUSE:

*e.g. I'm coming later / in the afternoon / this evening / when I've finished my homework. ;*

adverbial can occur in more than one position in the clause; frequently optional except in SVA and SVOA.

- o *Which verbs can normally build the passive?*

transitive verbs (there are exceptions, though – so called MIDDLE VERBS that seem

transitive but normally occur only in the active: *They have three daughters. This jumper doesn't fit you. Three times three equals nine.*

(see Chalker, chapter 16, exercise 161 for more detail as regards middle verbs)

## - 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

- How many 'CENTRAL MODAL AUXILIARIES' are there in the English language?

9 (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.

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*