

Lesson 2

- 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)