

**University of Al-maarif**  
**College of Education**  
**Department of English**



# **A University Grammar of English**

**Randolph Quirk**

**&**

**Sidney Greenbaum**

**Prepared by MA. Mena Ahmed**

# Clause elements syntactically defined

- **A subject**
- (a) is normally a noun phrase or a clause with nominal function
- (b) occurs before the verb phrase in declarative clauses, and immediately after the operator in questions
- (c) has number and person concord, where applicable, with the verb phrase.
- **An object (direct or indirect)**
- (a) like a subject, is a noun phrase or clause with nominal function
- (b) normally follows the subject and the verb phrase
- (c) by the passive transformation, assumes the status of subject
- An indirect object, where both objects are present, precedes the direct object (except in rare instances like BrE Give it me), and is semantically equivalent to a prepositional phrase



- **A complement (subject or object)**
  - (a) is a noun phrase, an adjective phrase, or a clause with nominal function, having a co-referential relation with the subject (or object)
  - (b) follows the subject, verb phrase, and (if one is present) object
  - (c) does not become subject through the passive transformation.
- **An adverbial**
  - (a) is an adverb phrase, adverbial clause, noun phrase, or prepositional phrase
  - (b) is generally mobile, i.e., is capable of occurring in more than one position in the clause
  - (c) is generally optional, i.e., may be added to or removed from a sentence without affecting its acceptability, but cf the obligatory adverbial of the SVA and SVOA patterns.

- **Clause elements semantically considered**
- **Agentive, affected, recipient, attribute**
- The most typical semantic role of a subject is agentive; that is, the animate being instigating or causing the happening denoted by the verb:
  - *John opened the letter*
- The most typical function of the direct object is that of the affected participant; i.e. a participant (animate or inanimate) which does not cause the happening denoted by the verb, but is directly involved in some other way:
  - *Many MPs criticized the Prime Minister*
- The most typical function of the indirect object is that of recipient; i.e. an animate participant being passively implicated by the happening or state:
  - *I've found you a place*



The role of the **subject complement** is that of attribute of the subject, whether a current or existing attribute (with stative verbs) or one resulting from the event described by the verb (with dynamic verbs).

**current attribute:** *He's my brother; He seems unhappy*

**resulting attribute:** *He became restless; He turned traitor*

The role of the **object complement** is that of attribute of the object, again either a current or resulting attribute:

**current attribute:** *I ate the meat cold; I prefer coffee black*

**resulting attribute:** *They elected him President; He painted the wall blue.*

## Note

Although: *I've found a place for the magnolia tree* and *I've found a place for Mrs Jones* appear to be grammatically equivalent, only the second can be transformed into a clause with indirect object.

*I've found Mrs Jones a place*

*I've found the magnolia tree a place*

This is because a tree is inanimate and cannot adopt a recipient role. With the verb give, however, there can be exceptions

*I've given the bathroom a thorough cleaning*



- **Agentive and instrumental subject**

- Apart from its agentive function, the subject frequently has an instrumental role; that is, it expresses the unwitting (generally inanimate) material cause of an event:

- *The avalanche destroyed several houses*

- With intransitive verbs, the subject also frequently has the affected role that is elsewhere typical of the object:

- *Jack fell down*

- *The pencil was lying on the table*

- We may also extend this latter function to subjects of intensive verbs:

- *The pencil was on the table*

- It is now possible to see a regular relation, in terms of clause function, between adjectives or intransitive verbs and the corresponding transitive verbs expressing causative meaning:

$S_{\text{affected}} V$   
The door opened

The flowers have died

$S_{\text{affected}} V C$   
The road became narrower  
I got angry

$S_{\text{agentive}} V$   
My dog was walking

$S_{\text{agent/instr}} V O_{\text{affected}}$   
John/The key opened the door

The frost has killed the flowers

$S_{\text{agent/instr}} V O_{\text{affected}}$   
They narrowed the road  
His manner angered me

$S_{\text{agentive}} V O_{\text{affected}}$   
I was walking my dog



- **Recipient subject**

- The subject may also have a recipient role with verbs such as have, own, possess, benefit (from), as is indicated by the following relation:
- *Mr. Smith has bought/given/sold his son a radio → So now his son has/owns/possesses the radio*
- The perceptual verbs see and hear also require a 'recipient' subject, in contrast to look at and listen to, which are agentive. The other perceptual verbs taste, smell and feel have both agentive meaning corresponding to look and recipient meaning corresponding to see:

Foolishly, he tasted the soup

\*Foolishly, he tasted the pepper in the soup

The adverb *foolishly* requires the agentive; hence, the second sentence, which can only be understood in a non-agentive manner, does not make sense.

Verbs indicating a mental state may also require a recipient subject:


I thought you were mistaken (*cf* It seemed to me . . .)

I liked the play (*cf* The play gave me pleasure)

Normally, recipient subjects go with stative verbs (3.35). Some of them (notably *have* and *possess*) have no passive form:

They have a beautiful house ↔ \*A beautiful house is had by them





Q1- An adverbial is generally optional, i.e., may be added to or removed from a sentence without affecting its acceptability. Discuss mentioning when does the adverbial become obligatory?

Q2- Elucidate the role of the subject complement and object complement. Support your answer with sentences