

Facoltà di Economia

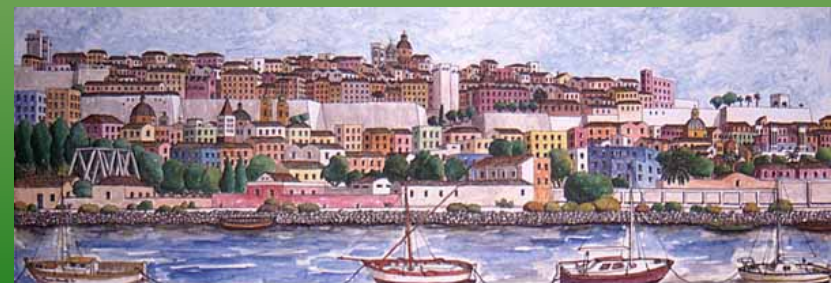


Syntax Corso di Laurea in
Economia e Gestione Aziendale

Economia e Finanza

Economia e Gestione dei Servizi Turistici

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Instructions



- This lesson will teach you how the different **classes of words** function.
- It will tell you how **discourse** develops from the smallest unit of language (the **morpheme**) to the highest level of discourse (the **sentence**)

The Structure of the English Sentence



The International Monetary Fund sent a clear message to the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee.

This sentence contains 5 phrases

The Structure of the English Sentence

1. The International Monetary Fund
2. sent
3. a clear message
4. to the Monetary Policy Committee
5. of the Bank of England

Each of these phrases is made up of **words**.
Each of these words consists of one **morpheme**, except International and Monetary.

UNITS OF LANGUAGE

- 5. Sentence (made up by 1 or more clauses)
- 4. Clause (made up by phrases)
- 3. Phrase (made up by words)
- 2. Word (made up by 1 or more morphemes)
- 1. Morpheme (the smallest unit of discourse)



THE WORD



- The easiest unit of written language to identify is a word
- It is more difficult to identify a word in speech because pauses do not occur between words.

WORD CLASSES

COHERENCE: all the words within a class (part of speech) should behave in the same way.

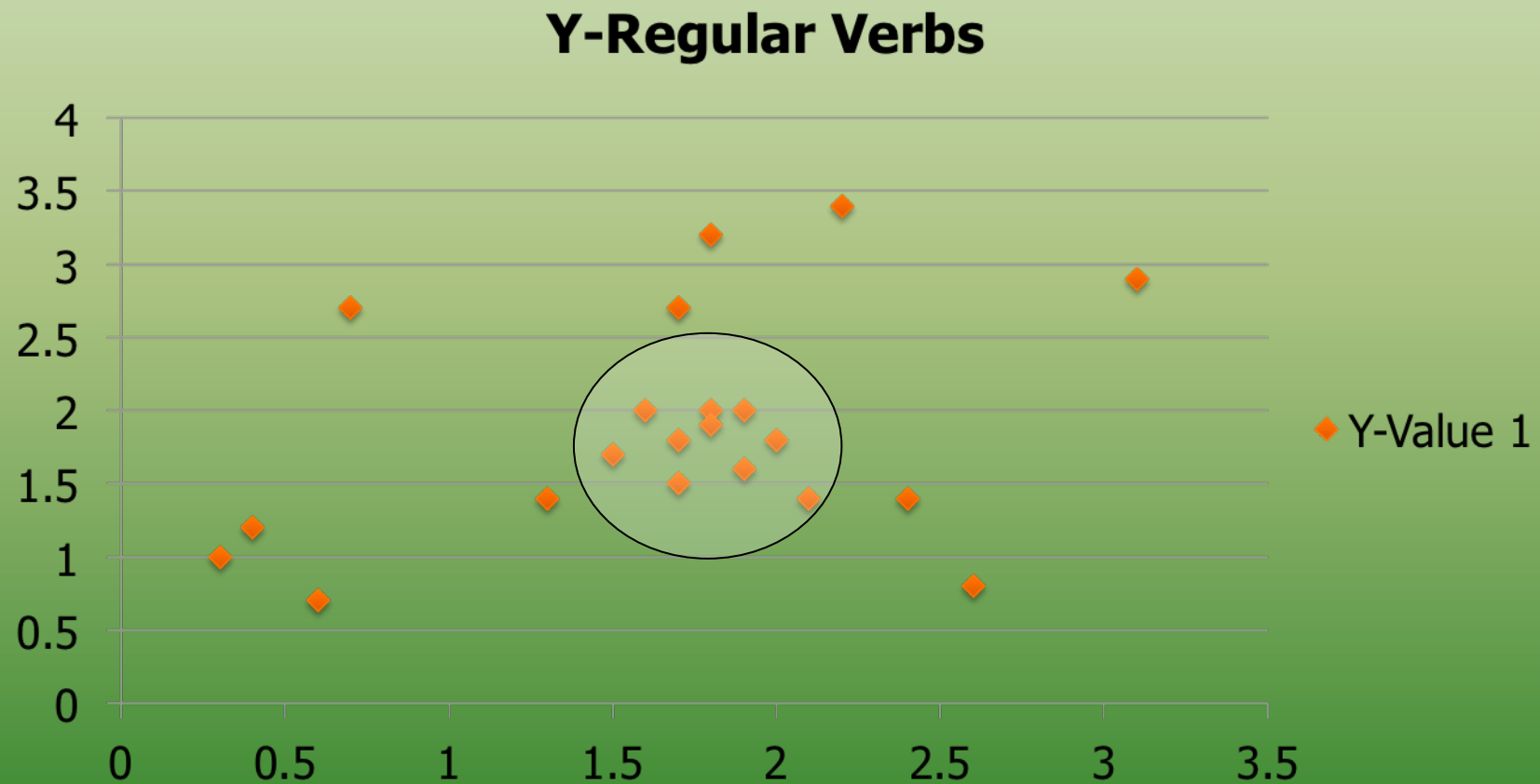
JUMP, WALK, COOK form a coherent class because all the **GRAMMATICAL** and **MORPHOLOGICAL** operations that apply to one (-s; -ed) apply to the others

This leads to establish the important class of **VERBS**.

WORD CLASSES

- Although word classes should be coherent, because of the irregularities in a language, word classes are not totally homogeneous.
- Each word class has a core of words that behaves identically, from a grammatical point of view. But at the edges of a word class are the more irregular words, some of which may behave like words from other classes

Example of Word Classes



Irregularity / Gradience

Within each class, some words behave like words from other classes:

- Some adjectives have a function similar to nouns: **THE RICH**
- The word **ROUND** can belong to any of 5 word classes, depending on the grammatical context:

A ROUND TABLE; ROUND THE CORNER (prep.); **THE BOAT WILL ROUND THE BUOY; IT'S YOUR ROUND; WE WALKED ROUND TO THE SHOP** (adv.).

THE WORD



9 Classes of words:

nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs,
pronouns, determiners,
prepositions, conjunctions,
Interjections.

WORD GROUPS



1. 4 OPEN CLASSES: noun, verb, adjective and adverb.

They are a very large group. More words can be added to them. They have a definable meaning. They are **Lexical Words**.

WORD GROUPS

2.5 CLOSED CLASSES

pronouns, determiners,
prepositions, conjunctions and
interjections

Smaller number, they have a
grammatical meaning, are known as

Structural or **Functional Words.**

THE NOUN

A word which names something.

Factors to be considered when analysing nouns:

1. Syntactic structure (noun phrase);
2. Syntactic function (S/O/C);
3. Grammatical Morphology (cats/cat's);
4. Lexical Morphology (-age; -ment, -tion).

THE NOUN (FACTORS)

1. Syntactic structure (noun phrase)

“The travel arrangements were made by an online booking agency”

In this sentence, the syntactic structures in **red** are **NOUN PHRASES**, where the main words are the **NOUNS arrangements and agency**.

THE NOUN (Factors)

2. Syntactic function (S/O/C);

“I made **the** travel arrangements”

“The travel arrangements **were made by an online booking agency**”

The NOUN *arrangements* is the object in 1st sentence and the subject in 2nd sentence.

In 2nd sentence, the NOUN phrase (**an online booking**) *agency* is the complement

THE NOUN

(Factors)

3. Grammatical Morphology (INFLECTIONAL)

Arrangement/ Arrangements

The Bank of Italy / The Bank of Italy's

4. Lexical Morphology (DERIVATIONAL)

ArrangeMENT; Inflat(e)ION;

PercentAGE; ManageMENT;

EffectiveNESS; efficien(t)CY

Proper Nouns

- They refer to a specific place, time, person, event, publication and are written with a capital letter. In English, names of months and days are also regarded as p.n.'s.

Common Nouns



- They are more general in meaning. They can be classified into *Concrete* and *Abstract* nouns

Common Nouns

- *Concrete* nouns refer to material things that can be observed and measured (cat, desk). *Abstract* nouns refer to non-material things, such as ideas, feelings, conditions (death, hope).

Nouns

- We can also classify nouns according to their **countability**
- Countable nouns
- Uncountable nouns

Nouns

Countable nouns refer to individual, countable entities. They allow a plural:
interest-interests; share-shares.

Uncountable nouns refer to a category or notion. They can be only used as singular nouns, do not allow a plural, occur in the singular with **some/any**:
money; language; music.

Countability

Some nouns can be both countable and uncountable, with a slight change of meaning:

Language is a human characteristic

I speak three languages;

The lights were amazing;

Light travels fast.

Countability

Countable

Meeting, Ticket

Time

Trip, flight, journey

Location

Questionnaire

Network

Uncountable

money

time

transport, travel

accommodation

research

information

Nouns

Morphologically, nouns can be marked for plural with the bound morpheme *-s*.

Some words have different plurals for historical reasons:

child, foot, sheep.


Nouns



Some foreign borrowed words have retained their original plurals:

index – indeces; antenna – antennae; phenomenon – phenomena; datum – data

Nouns



Nouns are also marked to
show **possession**

My father's car

My parents' video recorder

Nouns



A noun occurs as the **headword** of a *noun phrase* (a phrase where a noun or a pronoun is the most important word)

Nouns



“The highest stock in the market” is a noun phrase:
STOCK is the headword,
premodified by *the highest*
and postmodified by *in the market*.

Pronouns

Pronouns are words which stand for a noun, a whole noun phrase, or several noun phrases:

I've got a red hat, and Jane's got a brown one;

My uncle Fred has just arrived. He's very tired;

Pronouns

Pronouns can also refer to a very general concept which includes the meaning of many possible noun phrases:

I can see someone in the distance (men, boys, girls, soldiers...).

They can also refer to some unspecified event of the situation (pointing):

Look at that! He's going to crash

Pronouns



Personal, Reflexive,
Possessive, Relative,
Demonstrative,
Interrogative, Indefinite.

Pronouns



Most pronouns exist in more than one form. They have retained – more than nouns or adjectives – the inflectional form they had in Old English. This is mostly true for **personal pronouns**.

Pronouns

Personal Pronouns have different forms to denote person, number and gender, but they also have a subject, a possessive and an object case: I-MY-MINE-ME

Pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns are marked for person, and Demonstratives for number.

Myself, Yourself Ourselves,
ecc.

This - These; That - Those

Pronouns

Relative pronouns have a subject case, *who*, a possessive case, *whose*, and an object case, *whom*. They generally refer to persons.

Whom is falling into disuse except in formal written English. In expressions such as 'TO **WHOM** IT MAY CONCERN'; he didn't know to **whom** he had to address the letter (he didn't know **who** he had to address the letter to - informal).

Which and that are used as both subject and object when referring to inanimate nouns. **That** can also refer to persons

who



Kimberly went back to Austin on Friday

- When did Kimberly go back to Austin?
- Where did Kimberly go back on Friday?
- **Who** went back to Austin on Friday?

I went out with Jen last Saturday

- **Who** went out with Jen last Saturday?
- **Who** did you go out with...?

The Verb

A word which signifies an **action** or a **state**.

A sentence may contain a single verb, or it may use a cluster of verbs which work together as a **verb phrase**:

I **saw** an elephant, You **didn't see** one.
They **couldn't have seen** one.

The Verb

Three classes of verbs can occur within the verb phrase:

- Lexical Verbs;
- Primary Auxiliary Verbs;
- Modal Auxiliary Verbs.

Classes of Verbs

Lexical verbs have a meaning, as a vocabulary item. They act as main verbs. Morphologically, they have more forms than any other word class:

base form; infinitive; 3rd pers. sing.;
present tense; past tense;
pres. participle; past participle.

Classes of Verbs

Auxiliary verbs are used in conjunction with lexical verbs.

Primary auxiliaries verbs are **be**, **have**, and **do**.

They can **also** be used as lexical verbs (main verbs):

That firm has many employees;

That firm has employed many skilled workers.

They did a good job; Do you play the piano?

He was in New York last year. He was sent to New York on business.

Classes of Verbs

Modal auxiliaries are, can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should, must (with ought to, used to, need and dare having a similar function).

They convey a certain kind of judgements about the probability or possibility of events, or about the ability of performing an action.

They only function as auxiliary verbs

Classes of Verbs

Modal auxiliaries:

Can you do me a favour?

It may rain tomorrow

This might be a problem

May I use the toilet?

He couldn't do it today.

Verb Finiteness

We usually classify verbs into 2 broad types, based on the contrast in meaning they express:

FINITE FORMS: define verb number, tense, person or mood. In combinations of verbs, the finite one is always in first position:

I was being asked; He hadn't done it;

They did not understand the problem.

Verb Finiteness

NON FINITE FORMS do not limit the verb. When a nonfinite form is used (-ing; -ed; infinitive), the verb can refer to any number, tense, person, mood.

A non finite form of the verb stays the same in a clause, regardless of the grammatical variation taking place:

I'm leaving / They're leaving
/ He was leaving / He might be leaving.

Verb Finiteness

A verbal phrase is **finite** if

- 1) it is inflected for tense, and
- 2) it agrees with its subject in number and person.

Question:

Is the underlined verb finite or non-finite?

He walks.

It is finite because

- 1) a different form of verb changes the tense:

He walked.

- 2) a change in number of subject (sing > plural or vice versa) forces agreement change. They walk.

Verb Finiteness

Finite and non-finite verbal phrases are constructed using forms of the verbs **to be** and **to have** as auxiliaries,

<---TENSE CHANGE----->

He is jumping

He was jumping.

NUMBER

CHANGE They are jumping

They were jumping.

Also: He has jumped and They have jumped.

Any of the above kinds of verbal phrases are **finite** and can be substituted for other finite verbal phrases.

Verb Finiteness



Verbal phrases with non-finite auxiliaries look like this:

jumping, be jumped,
to have jumped,
being jumped,
to be jumped,
having jumped.

Verb Finiteness

examples of verbal groups

finite element "f" / non-finite elements "nf"

verbal group

SHE WORKS (f) IN A BANK

SHE HAS (f) WORKED (nf) IN A BANK

SHE HAD (f) BEEN (nf) WORKING (nf) IN A BANK

I AM (f) HAVING (nf) A HOLIDAY

I USED (f) TO WORK (nf) IN A BANK

Adjectives

Adjectives express some quality of a noun or pronoun.
They are defined according to their function.

- In English they normally occur before a noun (ATTRIBUTIVE FUNCTION); a beautiful day; an **important** meeting; a strong inflation
- They can occur alone after forms of the verb be (PREDICATIVE FUNCTION): He is ugly; It's nice.
- They can be immediately preceded by **very** and other INTENSIFYING words (**rather**, **incredibly**...).

Adjectives

3 forms:

base form; comparative;
superlative.

Adjectives can be

pre-modified by intensifiers
such as *very, rather, terribly...*

Adverbs

The relationship between adverbs and verbs is similar to that between adjectives and nouns.

They define the manner, place and time of an action:

He spoke loudly – We live here.

She arrived recently.

Adverbs



Many can be formed by adding the derivational morpheme *-ly* to the adjective.

Many other adverbs are monomorphemic words (*soon, fast, often*)

Determiners



They are used in conjunction with the noun, their function is **to limit** the reference of the noun.

Determiners

They can identify the noun: *a, the* (articles); *this, that, these, those* (demonstrative pronouns); *my, his, ecc.* (possessive pronouns).

■ They can quantify the noun: *some, any, much, no* (indefinite pronouns).

Determiners

A few words such as **all** or **half** are sometimes classed as **predeterminers**: all *the shares*.

Others, such as **numerals**, are called **post-determiners**: *the* five *shares*.

Determiners



Determiners are part of the **premodification** structure of the noun phrase, that part which comes before the head:

“The big strong company on the market”

Prepositions

They are words which come before a noun to form a structural unit, showing how the parts are related in space and time:

through *the years*, under *the table*,
over *the moon*, on *the bench*, at 3.

These resulting structures are known as **prepositional phrases**.

Prepositions

Single-word prepositions include:

About, at, before, by, down, for, from, in, of, on, out, over, round, since, through, to, under, up, with:

Multi-word prepositions include:

Ahead of, because of, due to, instead of, near to, as far as, by means of, in accordance with, in spite of, on behalf of

Conjunctions

CONJUNCTIONS are words which join stretches of language (clauses) to each other. We know

Co-ordinating and Subordinating
conjunctions

Conjunctions

CO-ORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

link units which have the same status in the sentence, such as two clauses, two noun phrases, or two adjectives:

AND, OR, BUT; NEITHER...NOR; EITHER....OR

- My mother and my father;
- My brother plays soccer but my sister hates it
- Neither Richard nor Albert play the piano
- Her stocks are strong and stable

Conjunctions

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

join units which do not have the same grammatical status in the sentence, as when one clause is subordinated to another:

- It started to rain after I had just come in.
- We went out when the rain stopped.
- As it was raining, we couldn't go out.
- Although I was cold, I didn't put my coat on.
- If she didn't study so much, she couldn't pass her exams.