



Corso di Laurea in
Lingue e Comunicazione
Lingua Inglese 1

a.a. 2022/2023



UNITS OF LANGUAGE



Morpheme

Word

Phrase

Clause

Sentence

DISCOURSE LEVEL

Sentence Connectivity

Larger than the sentence text

We arrived at the shop just as the butcher was clearing away. As a result the big dogs enjoyed their unexpected bones, and the little puppies liked the scraps.

SENTENCE LEVEL

Sentence

the big dogs enjoyed their unexpected bones, and the little puppies liked the scraps.

CLAUSE LEVEL

Clause

the big dogs enjoyed their unexpected bones

PHRASE LEVEL

Phrase

their unexpected bones

WORD LEVEL

Word

un- expect -ed

The Structure of the English Sentence



The International Monetary Fund

2. sent

3. a clear message

4. to the Bank of England's

5. Monetary Policy Committee

Each of these phrases is made up of **words**.

Each of these words consists of one **morpheme** except International and England's which contain two.

THE WORD



The easiest unit of written language to identify. Words have spaces on either sides.

In speech, it is more difficult (French and English), because pauses do not occur between each word.

WORD CLASSES

COHERENCE: all the word 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 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 behave 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.

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



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. Also known as **Lexical Words**.

WORD GROUPS



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”

In these sentences, the NOUN “arrangements” is the object (1st s.) and the subject (2nd s.) . In the second sentence, the noun 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 signify material things that can be observed and measured (cat, desk). *Abstract* nouns signify non-material things, such as ideas, feelings, conditions (death, hope).

Nouns



We can also classify nouns according to their **countability**

Count nouns

Non-count (uncount) nouns

Nouns



Count nouns refer to individual, countable entities. They cannot stand alone in the singular, and they allow a plural:
interest–interests; share–shares.

Non-count (uncount/mass) n.'s refer to an undifferentiated mass or notion. They can stand alone in the singular, do not allow a plural, and occur in the singular with some: money; language; music

Countability



Some nouns can be both count and uncount, 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

research

information

Accommodation

Nouns

Morphologically, nouns can be marked for **plural**. The usual one is the bound morpheme **-s**. Some words have different plural for historical reasons:

child, foot, sheep.

Nouns



Some foreign borrowed words have retained their original plurals:

index – indices;

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 building in the city*” is a noun phrase:
BUILDING is the headword,
premodified by *the highest*
and postmodified by *in the city*.

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. This is because they have retained – more than nouns or adjectives – the inflectional form they had in Old English.

This is mostly true for **personal pronoun**.

Pronouns



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

Pronouns



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

Myself, Yourself....Ourselves,
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).**

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

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 **coundn't have seen** one.

The Verb



Three classes of verbs can occur within the verb phrase:

Lexical Verbs;

Modal Auxiliary Verbs;

Primary 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, and 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

Finite verb forms show tense, person and number (*I go, she goes, we went*, etc.):

*She **was waiting** in the room before he **came** in.*

***Does** your brother **know** my brother?*

*The night before he **had** to leave, they **sat** on the small sofa in the living-room and **looked** at old family photos.*

***Aren't** you a bit late?*

Verb Finiteness

Non-finite verb forms do not show tense, person or number. Typically they are infinitive forms with and without *to* (e.g. *to go, go*), *-ing* forms and *-ed* forms (e.g. *going, gone*):

*She tiptoed round the house so as not **to wake** anyone.*

*You need to paint the whole cupboard, **starting** from the bottom.*

[from a biography]

***Taken** prisoner by the British in December 1776, he was held in New York City for a year ...*

Adjectives

Adjectives express some quality of a noun or pronoun.

They are defined according to their function.

- a) In English they normally occur before a noun (ATTRIBUTIVE FUNCTION); a beautiful day; an **important** meeting; a strong inflation
- b) They can occur alone after forms of the verb be (PREDICATIVE FUNCTION): He is ugly; It's nice.
- c) 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 and 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 car on the street”

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 (also called connectives, or linking words) 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.