

Language and Mind
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Module - 05
Lecture - 22
Sentence
Categories and Phrase

We have started looking at sentences in order for us to understand the pattern underlying construction of sentences. In simpler terms, we want to understand how we make a sentence. We know that sentences are not random collection of words. If that is true, then what makes a sentence? What are those categories, overt or not overt, that help us construct a sentence? In order to understand these things and several other questions related to a sentence for us to say the role of human mind in understanding language and the structure of language that help us understand functioning of human mind, we are trying to understand sentences.

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Questions about sentence

- What is a sentence?
- How do we make one?
- What is a subject in a sentence?
- How do we define it?
- What is a predicate in a sentence?
- How do we describe nature of verb?
- What is an object?
- What is the relationship between Subject, Predicate and an Object?

So, in that order, we have started looking at several questions like: What is a sentence? How do we make one? What is a subject in a sentence? How do we define a subject? What is a predicate in a sentence? How do we describe nature of verbs? What is an object and what is the relationship between subject, predicate and an object?

We have looked at lot of these questions in somewhat great details for us to understand a sentence and it is parts. We have not spent too much time defining a subject in the sense that we understand all possible types of subjects. But we have spent some time and we have underlined the notion of subject in the sense that subject remains outside the predicate and there needs to be a relationship between subject and predicate and that relationship is called agreement. In such a scenario, we have looked at the nature of verbs as well in terms of it is transitivity and intransitivity.

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Components of a Sentence

- Subject
- Predicate
 - Verb and everything other than subject
 - Objects
- Lexical Category
 - Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Prepositions
- Functional Category
 - Number, Person, Gender, Tense, Aspect, Agreement

So, let us look at some of these things that we have already looked at: subjects, predicate and here I want to again underline that verbs and everything which is part of the verb and not the subject of the sentence, everything is part of predicate. Now, the new part that I want you to understand that components of a subject that are visible to us are called lexical categories; such as, the nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions and many more - these are called lexical categories.

We can see them. We know for example - a subject, if it is a noun, then we can see the subject like, John, Mary, Bill and so on. Verbs like love, eat, drink, sleep, all of them are verbal elements and therefore, again lexical category; good, bad, beautiful, smart these are adjectival elements and again lexical categories. In, on, at - all of them are prepositions in a language like English and when these elements follow a noun, same

thing is called a postposition. And then, the term preposition or postposition will vary depending on languages.

So, some languages like English, French, German will take prepositions whereas, languages like Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati would have postpositions instead. So, such are the lexical categories which are part of a sentence which help us make a sentence. Then, we have functional categories and we have seen some of them.

I only want to put them in terms of categories, because today we are trying to understand elements of a sentence in terms of two categories namely, lexical category and functional category. So, the elements that were participating in agreement like number, person, gender, tense, aspects are part of functional category. Another way to put this distinction for us to understand is, elements that are not visible in its so overt way are called functional categories.

However, please keep it in mind that these are not always invisible; at times they are going to be invisible, at times they are going to be partially visible, and at times they are going to be totally visible; and there are more to this category that we are not adding like case. And all these are the categories of sentences, parts of sentences, which are important for formation of a sentence.

And thus we are not repeating this every time. But I want you to keep this thing in mind - every time that these things, these structures are parts of sentence, and while learning a language, sentences of that particular language comes out and a native speaker is capable of making a sentence of that language, because all these elements are overt have been sensitized and as part of universal grammar, they are totally active in terms of human's generative capacity, for us to help come up with sentences. And we are looking at it in reverse order to see, what is it that helps us to come up with a sentence. So, let us look at these aspects in some details and then we will understand the construction of a sentence, the process underlying the construction of a sentence, and the patterns that help us build a sentence.

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Nature of Verb

- Every sentence in every language must have a subject.
- Verbs determine the number of objects it requires in a sentence.
- Intransitive
 - No objects
- Transitive
 - One object
- Di-transitive
 - Two objects

In understanding nature of verb, we have looked at it in terms of its two types; broadly they are either intransitive or transitive and then, we know intransitive verbs do not take an object, that is intransitive verbs will not allow any object; it does not need one and transitive verbs are going to need objects. And again, depending upon the number of objects, transitive verbs need... for example, a transitive verb will need one object, then it is called transitive. When they need two, they are called Di-transitive verbs. We have seen lot of examples of these things; we will see some more today as well.

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Verbs and Objects

- Sleep John was sleeping.
- Go Bill was going **home**.
- Come Mary was coming **from school**.
- Sit Chris was sitting **in a chair**.
- Dance Nancy was dancing.

- Eat Bob was eating **pizza**.
- Read Chirs was reading **a novel**.
- Write Liza was wring **a letter**.

- Give Tony gave a **pen to his daughter**.
- Teach Nancy was teaching **Japanese English**.

So, verbs like sleep, go, come, sit and dance - these are examples of intransitive verbs in short, because you can see, the use of these verbs in a sentence and can see that these verbs do not sub categorize for an object. For example, John was sleeping, John sleeps early every day - you can come up with all kinds of sentences and you will see that the verb sleep does not need an object. Again, please remember that the one of the ways to find out whether a verb really has an object or not in a given sentence is to question the verb with - what?

Please remember, no other questions have to be used for identifying this thing. We only need to use - what? We only need to question the verb with – what? If we can come up with a question, legitimate question, then the verb is a transitive verb; if we cannot, then the verb is an intransitive one. So, you can question all of these verbs like sleep; sleep – what? It does not sound like a legitimate question. Therefore, categorically this is an intransitive verb, go - again cannot be question with – what?

Therefore, it also appears like an instance of an intransitive verb. Come, sit, dance - all of them fall in this category; therefore, we say all of them are intransitive verbs. Now, in the slide you can see the use of some of the nouns which have been marked red. These look like these elements, these parts of sentences look like objects, but they are not. And that is an important part for us to understand that identifying objects are important and identification of object is dependent upon the nature of the verb, particularly in terms of its requirement.

So, in a sentence - Bill was going home, home is not the object. Mary was coming from school - from school as a postpositional phrase is not an object of this verb. Chris was sitting in a chair; in a chair again is not an object of the verb - sit. Nancy was dancing - this does not have one. But if it has something following the verb dance, something like Nancy was dancing in the auditorium, again - in the auditorium - would not qualify to be an object of this verb.

So, there is ample evidence to substantiate the point that these are intransitive verbs; likewise, we can see some examples of transitive verbs like, eat, read and write. When we see the examples again in the slide - Bob was eating pizza. Here, I have identified, I have marked objects in blue and you can try questioning the verbs with – what? – and you will see, we can question the verb eat with – what?, eat what? - and this type of

question sounds like a legit question; and therefore, it may have an answer too and the answer qualifies to be the object of the verb.

We do not need to wait for an answer; the trick that I was trying to explain little earlier was if at all we can question the verb, that itself tells us about the transitive nature of the verb. Chris was reading a novel; reading what? - Then the answer is perhaps - a novel; and therefore it is a transitive verb. Lisa was writing a letter; writing what? - a letter, is the answer; therefore write again is an example of transitive verb.

Then, we have two examples again here which are examples of Di-transitive verbs and see the examples and please pay attention to them. Tony gave a pen to his daughter; a pen is one object and to his daughter is another one. Now, this means that the verb give needs two objects. So, if we say something like - Tony gave a pen, the sentence sounds incomplete to speakers of English. Teach is another verb which is a Di-transitive verb. Nancy was teaching. Of course, this is an incomplete sentence. Nancy was teaching Japanese - it is also an incomplete sentence. And if we say Nancy was teaching Japanese, Nancy was teaching Japanese English, still it remains incomplete. We need to say - Nancy was teaching Japanese to English students, and then it will be a complete sentence. So, we need to say that Di-transitive verbs need two objects, pen and to his daughter. So, in... So, these are the two objects and two different types of categories.

Now, this discussion brings us to the point of categories of words together and we started our discussion on phrase and then at that point I promise to you that we will come back to this. Now, please pay attention to what we have said about phrases. We said that a group of words seem to form a unit and that unit is called a phrase. So, in the example like Tony gave a pen to his daughter, a pen is one category; the element a and the other element pen, the two items seems to be forming one unit.

Similarly, daughter, his daughter and to his daughter - all three of these elements in this sentence seem to be forming one category; therefore, it can be one phrase. Now, that is the elementary description of a phrase. However, when we look at the structure of a phrase, we need to identify the parts of phrases which are required and some parts which may not be required. So, a phrase must have a head and rest of the elements in that phrase is around that head and the whole phrase is identified by the head. We will be looking at these examples also shortly.

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Lexical Categories

- [John eats pizza with his friends in the evening.]
 - Subject: John
 - Predicate: eats pizza with his friends in the evening
 - Verb: like
 - Object: pizza
 - with his friends
 - in the evening
- Nouns
- Verbs
- Adjectives
- Prepositions
- Students of physics eat pizza with his friends in the evening.

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Let us look at the next one. We have again looked at this thing to identify lexical categories. So on this slide if you see, if you take a sentence like John eats pizza with his friends in the evening, this is going to again reemphasize or give you one more example of what we have discussed. You can take more and more examples from your English or your language that you speak to see whether these things are making sense or not.

So in this sentence, if we look at the category of words from the perspective of grammatical relations, we can identify subject as John, that nominal element which is a noun. So, it is nominal category, it is a lexical category and the category is a noun, and its grammatical relations with the rest of the thing is subject; rest of it is a predicate like - eats pizza with his friends in the evening - all of that is part of predicate. Within the predicate, the verb is like, and the object is pizza.

Rest of the things that you see, like two phrases - with his friends and in the evening - are two different prepositional phrases which are not objects; but they are still part of the phrase, part of the predicate. Now, several times we have mentioned these phrases and we said these are not objects. Then, it calls for an explanation that - what are they if they are not objects? You can look at one part and you can derive it from what we have discussed so far that... look at the nature of the verb and look at the relationship between verbs and objects.

Objects are required by verbs or not required by verbs. So, what we can say that the rest of the elements are not required by verbs. The ones that are required by verbs are objects and the other, there could be elements which are essential for providing information about the context of the sentence. But, they are not required by the verb. Therefore, there is a separate name for it. We will be talking about that name as well. We will not leave this as they are. We will look at them in details for us to understand the category of these things. So far we are looking at the categories and we have looked at identification of phrases; and the next time, we will go into the details of the structure of phrase.

Thank you.