Lesson 19

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

19.1 Introduction

One of the keys to good writing is to understand the countless ways in which basic

sentence structures can be combined and arranged. A sentence consists of words

correctly arranged to form a complete statement or idea. There are many different

ways of organizing words into sentences. As we work to improve our writing, it is

important to understand what these basic structures are and how to use them

effectively. Different parts of speech have specific tasks to perform when they are

put together in a sentence.

19.2 Basic Units of Writing

Even at the advanced level of learning, it is useful to recapitulate one’s previous

knowledge and form a clear idea of these units. The basic units of writing are

· Words

· Phrases

· Sentences

· Clauses

19.2.1 Word

· A word is a combination of speech sounds for conveying the desired

meaning.

· Sounds are denoted by different letters of alphabet.

· A word may be divided into several speaking units.

· The minimum speaking unit in a word is called a syllable.

· Mono-syllabic words: A word may have only one syllable, e.g., come, sit,

love, speak etc.

· Multi-syllabic words: A word may also have two or more syllables, e.g.,

lovely, speaker, quality, democracy, responsibility etc.

19.2.2 Phrase

· A Phrase is a group of words conveying some sense.

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· It does not contain a complete verb though it may have a participle or an

infinitive.

· Ordinary phrases e.g., in the room, on the table, a bunch of flowers’

reading a book.

· Some phrases are idiomatic phrases, e.g. at the eleventh hour. A red-letter

day.

19.2.3 Sentence

· A Sentence is a group of words making a complete sense.

19.2.4 Clause

· A clause is a sentence within a sentence dependent on the main clause.

19.3 Parts of Speech

Words are divided into different kinds or classes, called Parts of Speech, according

to their use; that is, according to the work they do in a sentence. The parts of

Speech are eight in number:

Table 1.1 Parts of speech

1. Noun 2. Adjective

3. Pronoun 4. Verb

5. Adverb 6. Preposition

7. Conjunction 8. Interjection

· A Noun is a word used as the name of a person, place or thing; as

Ram is my elder brother.

Delhi is the capital of India.

 The rose smells sweet.

 The sun shines bright.

Mohan was carried away by her beauty.

Note: The word things includes (i) all objects that we can see, hear, taste, touch, or

smell and (ii) something that we can think of, but cannot perceive by the senses.

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· An Adjective is a word used to add something to the meaning of a noun;

as

 She is a beautiful girl.

 There are fifty boys in this class.

· A Pronoun is a word used instead of a noun; as,

The principal is absent, because he is ill.

She went to Mumbai to make presentation of her work.

· A Verb is a word used to say something about some person, place, or thing;

as,

The girl wrote a letter to her brother.

They are playing in the garden.

There are many students in the class.

· An Adverb is a word used to add something to the meaning of a verb, an

adjective, or another adverb; as,

He solved the problem quickly.

He walks slowly.

· A Preposition is a word used with a noun or a pronoun to show how the

person or thing denoted by the noun or pronoun stands in relation to

something else; as,

There is a peacock in the garden.

The girl is fond of dancing.

The group consists of twenty boys.

· A Conjunction is a word used to join words or sentences; as,

Rama and Shama are sisters.

Two and two make four.

We tried our best, but lost the match.

· An Interjection is a word which expresses some sudden feeling; as,

Hurrah! We have won the lottery.

Alas! She has lost the game.

19.4 Word Order

In the English language there are no different forms for subjects and objects. To

keep subject and object apart, however, we have to stick to the word order.

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In English, Grammatical meaning is largely determined by word order.

Blue sky and sky blue mean different things.

In the first, blue describes the sky

In the second sky describes the blue.

Tile floor and Floor tile

In the first one, tile describes the floor whereas in the second one floor describes the

tile.

· Our new neighbors bought an old house.

· Our old neighbors bought a new house.

19.5 Function Words

Function words, sometimes called grammatical words, are words such as the, and,

but, in, to, because, while, ought, and must. The main use of function words is to

express relationships among other words. Compare the following

· The cook prepared a rich feast.

· The cook prepared the rich a feast.

19.6 Inflections

Inflections are changes in the form of words that indicate differences in

grammatical relationship.

· Stop bothering me.

· Stops bother me.

We should be able to control these grammatical devices –word order, functional

words, and inflections. All this is essential to writing clearly.

19.7 Sentence Structure Analysis

A sentence is a group of words making complete sense. It may be a single sentence

with a complete verb or may comprise two or more clauses. In imperatives, even a

verb can make a complete sense and thus, may be considered a sentence. A clear

understanding of the various kinds of sentences is necessary for effective writing.

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19.7.1 Kinds of sentence (Classification by function)

Assertive sentences

These sentences contain statements and are used for conveying information, e.g.

He is a good player.

She has gone to Germany for a week.

Pattern: Subject + Verb + Object (SVO)

Interrogative sentences

These sentences contain questions which may begin with a helping verb or an

interrogative word like What, When, Which, How, Who, Whose, Whom or Where,

e.g.,

How did you go there?

Do they want to see the movie?

-Pattern: Verb + Subject + Object (VSO)

Imperative sentences

These sentences contain commands, requests, advice, suggestions, orders etc.

Don’t make a noise.

 Let us go for a walk.

Pattern: Verb + Object (VO)

Exclamatory sentences

These sentences contain emotional outbursts and describe feelings of joy, sorrow,

or wonder, e.g.

Aha! How lovely this frock is!

What a beautiful piece of art!

19.7.2 Kinds of Sentence (Classification by structure)

Simple sentences

A simple sentence is a sentence with one finite or complete verb, e.g.,

I go to school.

Hard work is the key to success in life.

Compound sentences

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A compound sentence is made of two or more simple sentences combined with coordinating conjunctions like and, but, or, for, either…or, neither…nor, both…

and, not only…but also, etc. The clauses in a compound sentence are called coordinate clauses. e.g.

I go to college and learn Physics.

He tried his best to win the race but failed.

Complex sentences

A complex sentence is made of an independent clause known as the main or the

principal clause and one or more dependent clauses known as subordinate clauses.

Subordinating conjunctions like when, where, while, so that, if, unless, although,

until, that etc., are used to join the subordinate clause with the principal clause

which does not require any conjunction for itself. e.g.

I go to college so that I may learn Physics.

If the rain continues, the crop will be damaged.

Wait here until I come.

We hope that we shall be able to complete the task.

Multiple sentences

A multiple sentence, also known as a compound-complex sentence, involves the

use of both the compound and the complex sentences. It contains one or more

principal clauses, one or more subordinate clauses, and one or more co-ordinate

clauses, e.g.,

If it continues to rain, we shall not go to office and work at home.

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Module 5. Structural and functional grammar

Lesson 20

MODIFIERS, CONNECTING WORDS AND VERBALS; PHRASES AND

CLAUSES

20.1 Introduction

All sentences in English are not limited to the basic patterns. The variety and

complexity of our sentences is created by the addition of modifying words and by

the use of several different kinds of word groups that can themselves serve as nouns

and modifiers.

20.2 Modifying Words: Adjectives and Adverbs

Modifiers are words or word groups that limit, qualify, and make more exact the

other words or word groups to which they are attached. Adjectives and adverbs are

the principal single-word modifiers in English.

Adjectives and Adverbs are modifying words; that is, they are words that limit or

qualify the meaning of other words. Adjectives modify nouns, and they are usually

placed either immediately before or immediately after the word they modify.

Adverbs normally modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They may

sometimes modify whole sentences. When they modify adjectives or other adverbs,

they are adjacent to the words they modify. When they modify verbs, they are

frequently, but not always, adjacent to the verbs.

Adverbs qualify the meaning of the words they modify by indicating such

things as when, where, how, why, in what order, or how often.

 The office closed yesterday. [Yesterday indicates when.]

 Deliver all mail here. [Here indicates where.]

 She replied quickly and angrily. [Quickly and angrily describe how she

replied.]

Consequently, I left. [Consequently describes why.]

 He seldom did any work. [Seldom indicates how often.]

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20.3 Connecting Words: Prepositions and Conjunctions

Connecting words enable us to link one word or word group with another and to

combine them in way that allow us not only to express our ideas more concisely, but

also to express the relationships between those ideas more clearly.

 We don’t need to say: We had tea. We had toast.

 Rather, we can say: We had tea and toast

 Or

 We had tea with toast.

 We don’t need to say: We talked. We played games. We went home.

 Rather, we can say: After we talked and played games, we went home

 Or

After talking and playing games, we went home.

The kinds of words that enable us to make these connections and combinations are

prepositions and conjunctions.

A Preposition links a noun or pronoun (called its object) with some other word in

the sentence and shows the relationship between the object and the other word. The

preposition, together with its object, almost always modifies the other word to

which it is linked.

The dog walks on the grass. [On links grass to the verb walks; on grass modifies

walks.]

A preposition usually comes before its object; in a few constructions it can

follow its object.

For which company do you work?

Which company do you work for?

Table 20.1 The most common prepositions are listed below

about below into through

above beside near to

across by next toward

after down of under

among during off until

around except on up

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as for out upon

at from over with

before in past within

behind inside since without

Some prepositions combine with other words to form phrasal prepositions, such as

at the point of, by means of, down from, from above, in addition to, with regard to.

Note that some words, such as below, down, in, out, and up, occur both as

prepositions and as adverbs. Used as adverbs, they never have objects.

(Note too that after, as, before, since, and until also function as subordinating

conjunctions.

A Conjunction joins words, phrases, or clauses. Conjunctions show the relationship

between the sentence elements that they connect.

Coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, not, for, so, yet) join words, phrases, or

clauses of equal grammatical rank.

WORDS JOINED We ate bread and butter.

PHRASES JOINED Look in the almirah or under the table.

CLAUSES JOINED We wanted to play, but we were too busy.

Correlative conjunctions are coordinating words that work in pairs to join words,

phrases, clauses, or whole sentences. The most common correlative pairs are

both……and, either…..or, neither……nor, not…..but, and not only…….but also.

both honest and candid

either before you go or after you get back

not only as a father but also as a teacher

Subordinating Conjunctions join clauses that are not equal in rank. A clause

introduced by a subordinating conjunction is called a dependent or subordinate

clauses and cannot stand by itself as a sentences; it must be joined to a main, or

independent, clause.

We left the office early because we were tired.

If the weather is bad, we will have to call off the match.

Whether you like it or not, you will have to take the medicine.

Table 20.2 The following are the most common subordinating conjunctions:

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after even though than where

although even if that wherever

as if though whether

as if in order that unless while

as though since until

because rather than when

before so that whenever

20.4 Verbals

Verbals are special verb forms that have some of the characteristics and abilities of

verbs but cannot function as verbs by themselves. Verbs make an assertion. Verbals

do not; they function as nouns and modifiers. They are three kinds of verbals:

infinitives, participles, and gerunds.

Infinitives are usually marked by a to before the actual verb (to eat, to describe).

They are used as noun, adjectives, or adverbs.

To see is to believe. [Both used as nouns]

It was time to play. [Used as adjective]

I was ready to leave. [Used as adverb]

Participles may be either present or past. The present form ends in –ing (eating,

running, describing). The past form usually ends in –ed (described). But note that

some end in –en (eaten), and as few make an internal change (begun, flown).

Participles are always used as adjectives.

Crying, the child left the room in a huff. [Present participle]

Divided, the members adjourned the proceedings of the house. [Past

participle]

Gerunds have the same –ing from as the present participle. The distinctive name

gerund is given to -ing forms only when they function as nouns.

Running a marathon requires stamina. [Subject of requires]

You should try singing. [Object of try]

20.5 Recognizing Phrases

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A phrase is a group of related words that has no subject or predicate and is used as

a single part of speech. Typical phrases are a preposition and its object (I fell on the

floor), or a verbal and its object (I wanted to take a cup of coffee).

Phrases are usually classified as prepositional, infinitive, participial, or gerund

phrases.

20.5.1 Prepositional phrases

Preposition phrases consist of a preposition, its object, and any modifiers of the

object (under the ground, without thinking, in the blue car). Prepositional phrases

function as adjective or adverbs and occasionally as nouns

 He is a man of principles [Adjective modifying man]

The train arrived on time. [Adverb modifying arrived]

We will be ready in an hour. [Adverb modifying ready]

She came early before sunset. [Adverb modifying early]

20.5.2 Infinitive phrases

Infinitive phrases consist of an infinitive, its modifiers, and/or its object (to play the

game, to dance swiftly, to earn profit quickly). Infinitive phrases function as nouns,

adjectives, or adverbs.

 I wish to sing a song. [Noun, object of verb]

It is time to go to bed. [Adverb modifying time]

We were hungry to eat the food. [Adverb modifying hungry]

20.5.3 Participial phrases

Participial phrases consist of a present or past participle, its modifiers, and/or its

object (lying on the bed, seen in the theatre, running a race). Participial phrases

always function as adjectives.

The man running in the street is my brother.

Covered with snow, the path was slippery.

Harassed by the principal, Mohan quit the job.

20.5.4 Gerund phrases

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Gerund phrases consist of a gerund, its modifiers, and/or its object (working

overtime, knowing the rules, acting swiftly). Gerund phrases always function as

nouns.

Teaching English is my pastime. [Subject]

They got success by working hard. [Objective of preposition]

He hated smoking alone. [Object of verb]

Note that since both the gerund and the present participle end in –ing, they

can be distinguished only by their separate functions as noun or adjectives.

20.6 Recognizing Clauses

A clause is a group of words which forms part of a sentence, and contains a subject

and a predicate. There are two kinds of clauses: (1) main, or independent, clause and

(2) subordinate, or dependent, clause.

20.6.1 Main clause

A main clause has both subject and verb. But it is not introduced by a subordinating

word. A main clause makes an independent statement. The main clause can stand on

its own.

20.6.2 Subordinate clause

Subordinate clauses are usually introduced by a subordinate conjunction (as, such

because, etc.) or by a relative pronoun (who, which, that). Subordinate clauses

function as adjectives, adverbs, or nouns. They express ideas that are less important

than the idea expressed in the main clause. The exact relationship between the two

ideas is indicated by the subordinating conjunction or relative pronoun that joins the

subordinate and the main clause. The subordinate clause cannot stand on its own.

a) An Adjective Clause modifies a noun or pronoun.

This is the athlete that broke the world record. [The subordinate clause modifies

the noun athlete]

b) An Adverb Clause modifies a verb, adjective, or adverb.

The thief escaped when the police arrived. [The subordinate clause modifies the

verb escaped]

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I am sorry he is not well. [The subordinate clause modifies the adjectives sorry,

with the subordinate conjunction that understood]

He does the job more quickly than you do. [The subordinate clause modifies the

 adverb quickly]

c) A Noun Clause functions as a noun. It may serve as subject, predicate

noun, object as a verb, or object as a preposition.

 What Ram wants is a better position. [The subordinate clause is the subject of the

verb is.]

This is what we are looking for. [The subordinate clause is a predicate noun.]

Please inform them I will be late for the meeting. [The subordinate clause is the

object of the verb inform.]

He has no interest in what he is doing. [The subordinate clause is the object of the

preposition in.]

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Module 5. Structural and functional grammar

Lesson 21

CASE: SUBJECTIVE CASE; POSSESSIVE CASE; OBJECTIVE CASE

21.1 Introduction

Nouns and pronouns in English are said to display case according to their function

in the sentence. They can be subjective or nominative (which means they act as the

subject of independent or dependent clauses), possessive (which means they show

possession of something else), or objective (which means they function as the

recipient of action or are the object of a preposition).

The Case shows the function of nouns and pronouns in a sentence.

e.g. He gave me a month’s vacation.

The subjective case form he indicates that the pronoun is being used as the

subject;

The objective case form me shows that the pronoun is an object;

The possessive case form month’s indicates that the noun is possessive.

Table 21.1 Personal pronouns

SUBJECTIVE POSSESSIVE OBJECTIVE

Singular

FIRST PERSON I my, mine me

SECOND

PERSON

you your, yours you

THIRD PERSON he, she, it his, her, hers, its him, her, it

Plural

FIRST PERSON we our, ours us

SECOND

PERSON

you your, yours you

THIRD PERSON they their, theirs them

RELATIVE OR INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN

Singular who whose Whom

Plural who whose whom

21.2 Subjective Case

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Subjective case of pronoun for the subjects of all verbs and for all pronouns after all

forms of the verb be such as is, are, were, or have been. We cannot say: “Us are

happy” or “Him is going away”.

Use the subjective pronoun form in all parts of a compound subject.

He and she wanted to go to the film.

Ram and she went to the film, but Mohan and I worked.

1. After the conjunction than and as, use the subjective form of the pronoun if

it is the subject of an understood verb.

She finishes her job faster than I.

We are as good as they [are].

2. Use the subjective form of a pronoun in an appositive describing a subject

or a subject complement.

An appositive is a word or phrase set beside a noun or pronoun that identifies or

explains it by renaming it.

We three, Ram, Mary and I, studied together. [Ram, Mary and I is an appositive

describing the subject We three.]

We students had studied together for four years. [Not Us students, Students is an

appositive defining the pronoun we.]

3. Use the subjective forms of the relative pronoun who and whoever when they

serve as subjects of a clause.

The man who came to dinner stayed a month. [Who is the subject of came in the

clause who came to dinner.]

Whoever sees the opera will enjoy it. [Whoever is the subject of the verb sees in

the clause whoever sees the opera.]

4. The form of the pronoun is always determined by its function in its clause. If

it serves as subject of its clause, be sure to use the subjective form even

though the whole clause may be the object of a verb or preposition.

 No one can guess who will be selected. [Who is the subject of will be selected.

The clause who will be appointed is the object of the verb predict.]

 The company offered a reward to whoever finished the target. [The entire clause

is the object of the preposition to. Whoever is the subject of the clause.]

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5. The form of the pronoun used as subject will not be changed when such

expressions as I think and he says come between the subject and its verb.

 We invited only the people who he said were his friends. [Who is the subject of

were.]

 Shakuntla is a woman who I think deserves promotion. [Who is the subject of

deserves.]

 Who do you think will buy Mohan’s car? [who is the subject of will buy.]

6. In writing, use the subjective case of the personal pronoun after forms of the

verb be, except in dialogue.

It’s me, using the objective form of the pronoun, is generally used by speakers in all

but the most formal situations, and it’s him, her, us, them are increasingly common.

In writing, these simple conversational constructions seldom occur except in

dialogue. When they do, choose between the formal It’s I and the conversational

It’s me depending upon the character whose speech you are quoting.

Except in dialogue, standard written English requires the subjective case of

pronouns after the form of be.

It was he who took the major decisions, not they, the other family members.

It was they, however, who carried out all the tasks.

7. In writing, use the subjective case for a pronoun following the infinitive to be

when the infinitive has no expressed subject.

Spoken English commonly uses the objective case of the pronoun in this

construction.

WRITTTEN- I would not want to be he. [The infinitive to be has no expressed

subject.]

SPOKEN- I would not want to be Him.

21.3 Possessive case

1. Use the s-possessive (boy’s, Veena’s) with nouns naming living things. With

nouns naming inanimate things, the of-phrase is sometimes preferred, but

the s-form occurs very often.

ANIMATE-Veena’s hair; an outsider’s view; Director’s approval

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INANIMATE-the point of the pen; the wheel of the car; the name of the book;

the magazine’s tone

The s-possessive is commonly used in expressions that indicate time (moment’s

notice, year’s labor) and in many familiar phrases (life’s blood, heart’s content).

Which possessive form to use may also depend on sound or rhythm: The spossessive is terser than the longer, more sonorous of-phrase (the President’s

signature, the signature of the President).

2. In formal English, use the possessive case for a noun or pronoun preceding

a gerund. In informal English, however, the objective case rather than the

possessive case is often found before a gerund.

FORMAL-What was the excuse for his being late?

INFORMAL-What was the excuse for him being late?

FORMAL-He complained of Sharma’s keeping the money.

INFORMAL-He complained of Sharma keeping the money.

Even in formal English the objective case is frequently used with plural nouns.

The police prohibited children playing in the street.

The choice of case sometimes depends on the meaning the writer intends to

convey.

Imagine his playing the guitar. [The act of playing the guitar is emphasized.]

Imagine him playing the guitar. [The emphasis is on him. Playing is here used

as a participle modifying him.]

And note the difference in the meaning of the following sentences.

I hate that woman riding a bicycle.

 I hate that woman’s riding a bicycle.

Revise such sentences to ensure clarity.

 I hate that woman who is riding a bicycle.

 I hate the way that woman rides a bicycle.

3. Use which to refer to impersonal antecedents. However, substitute whose

where the phrase of which would be awkward.

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We saw a house whose roof was falling in. [Compare: We saw a house the

roof of which was falling in.]

This is the car whose steering wheel broke off when the driver was going

seventy miles an hour. [Compare: This is the car the steering wheel of which

broke off when the driver was going seventy miles an hour.]

21.4 Objective Case

Objective pronoun forms are used for the objects of all verbs, verbals, and

prepositions.

OBJECT OF VERB The police sent him home.

Our daughter visited us

OBJECT OF VERBAL Visiting them was pleasant. [Object of

gerund visiting]

I wanted to send him away. [Object of

infinitive to send]

OBJECT OF PREPOSITION Send the information to me.

You must choose between us.

1. Use the objective pronoun forms in all parts of a compound object.

He found Ram and me at home. [Not Ram and I, Me is a part of a compound

object of the verb found.]

They must choose between you and me. [Not between you and I, Me is a part

of a compound object of the preposition between.]

2. After the conjunction than and as, use the objective pronoun if it is the

object of an understood verb.

She likes him more than [she likes] me.

I noticed him as well as [I noticed] her.

3. Use the objective form of a pronoun in an appositive describing an object.

The president invited them-Geeta and her. [Geeta and her is an appositive

describing them.]

4. Standard written English requires whom for all objects.

Whom are you discussing? [Whom is the object of the verb are discussing.]

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Whom are you looking for? [Whom is the object of the preposition for.]

5. In subordinate clauses, use whom and whomever for all objects. Remember

that the case of the relative pronoun in a subordinate clause depends upon

its function in the clause and not upon the function of the whole clause.

The guests whom we had expected did not come. [Whom is the object of the

verb had expected. The clause whom we had expected modifies guests.]

Whomever we asked wanted more funds than we could think of. [Whomever

is the object of the verb asked in the clause whomever we asked. The entire

clause is the subject of the sentence. ]

6. When the infinitive to be has an expressed subject, both the subject and the

object of the infinitive are in the objective case.

He took him to be me. [Him is the subject of the infinitive; me is the object.]

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Module 5. Structural and functional grammar

Lesson 22

CORRECT USAGE OF NOUNS

22.1 Introduction

Function is an important aspect of grammar, for the same word can function in

more than one way.

Recognizing nouns: A Noun is a word used as the name of a person, place or

thing; as

Ram is my elder brother.

Delhi is the capital of India.

 The rose smells sweet.

 The sun shines bright.

Mohan was carried away by her beauty.

Note The word things includes

(i) All objects that we can see, hear, taste, touch, or smell and

(ii) Something that we can think of, but cannot perceive by the senses.

22.2 Kinds of Noun

Common Nouns – dog, man, table (Names general groups, places, people, or

 things)

Proper Nouns – India, France, Sita (Names specific people, places or things-First

letter is always capitalized)

Collective Nouns – crowd, group, team, flock (Name groups)

Concrete Nouns– landscape, bread, lightening (Names things that can be seen,

touched, heard, smelled and tasted)

Abstract Nouns – beauty, charity, friendship, freedom, happiness (Names things

that can’t be perceived through five senses)

Mass Nouns – water, time (Name uncountable things)

22.3 Plurals

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a) Collective nouns, crew, family, team etc. can take a singular or plural verb;

singular if we consider the word to mean a single group or unit:

 Our team is the best.

 (or plural if we take it to mean a number of individuals):

 Our team are wearing their new jerseys.

b) Certain words are always plural and take a plural verb

 Clothes, police

Garments consisting of two parts:

Pants, pyjamas, trousers

And tools and instruments consisting of two parts:

Binoculars pliers scissors

Glasses soles spectacles

Also certain other word including:

Arms (weapons), premises

Damage (compensation), riches

Earnings, savings

Goods, sprits (alcohol)

Stairs, Outskirts, surroundings

Pains (efforts), valuables

c) A number of words ending in ics

Acoustics, athletics, ethics, hysterics, which are plural in form, normally take a

plural verb:

The acoustics of this room are very bad.

But names of sciences such as mathematics, physics, some of the following

plural forms such as mechanics, news, innings are considered singular:

Mathematics is an exact science.

No news is good news.

India won by an innings and three runs.

d) Words plural in form but singular in meaning include news

 The news is good.

Certain diseases:

Mumps, rickets

And some games

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Billiards, draughts

e) Some words which retain their original Greek or Latin forms make their

plural according to the rules of Greek and Latin

Crisis, crises phenomenon, phenomena

Memorandum, memoranda radius, radii

Oasis, oases terminus, termini

But some follow English

rules:

Dogma, dogmas formula, formulas (formulae is used by

scientists)

Sometimes there are two plural forms with different meanings:

Appendix, appendixes or appendices (medical term)

 Appendix, appendices (addition/s to a book)

 Index, indexes (in books), indices (in mathematics)

f) Compound Nouns

Normally, the last word is made plural:

Boy-friends, break-ins

But where man and woman is prefixed, both parts are made plural:

Men drivers, women drivers

The first word is made plural with compounds formed of verb + er. Noun +

adverbs

Runners-up, lookers on

22.4 Uncountable Nouns

a) Uncountable nouns include names of substances considered generally

Bread soap cloth sand dust glass

They also include abstract nouns:

 Advice courage knowledge

Beauty fear information

b) Uncountable nouns are always singular and are not used with a/an:

 I don’t want (any) advice or help. I want (some) information.

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These nouns are often preceded by some, any, no, a little etc. or by nouns such

as bit, piece, slice etc.

 a bit of news a piece of advice a grain of sand

 a drop of water a pane of glass

c) Many of the nouns in the above group can be used in a particular sense and

are then countable and can take a/an in the singular. Below are some such

words:

 Experience meaning ‘something which happened to someone’ is countable

 He had an exciting experience

d) Some abstract nouns can be used in a particular sense with a/an, but in the

singular only:

 My father is a great help to me. a love of music

 It was a relief to sit down. a hatred of violence

 It’s a shame he was insulted.

22.5 The Form of the Possessive Case

a) ’s is used with singular nouns and plural nouns not ending in s:

a man’s job women’s club

a child’s voice the people’s choice

the children’s room

b) A simple apostrophe (’) is used with plural nouns ending in s:

a girls’ school the eagles’ nest

the students’ hostel the people’s choice

c) Classical names ending in s usually, add only the apostrophe:

Pythagoras’ theorem Archimedes’ Law

d) Other names ending in s can take (’s) or the apostrophe alone:

Mr. Jones’s (or Mr. Jones’) house

Keats’s (or Keats’) poems

e) With compound nouns, the last word takes the (’s):

My brother-in-law’s company

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22.6 Uses of the Possessive Case

a) In time expressions:

a week’s holiday ten minutes’ break

today’s paper two hour’s delay

tomorrow’s weather a ten minute’s break

a two hour delay a ten minute break

are also possible.

b) With for + noun + sake:

for heaven’s sake for goodness’ sake

c) Sometimes certain nouns can be used in the possessive case without the

second noun:

at/the chemist’s/florist’s

can mean at the chemist’s/florist’s shop

You can buy it at the chemist’s.

He is going to the dentist’s.

Names of people can sometimes be used similarly to mean “….’s”

We met at Patel’s

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Module 5. Structural and functional grammar

Lesson 23

CORRECT USAGE OF PRONOUNS AND ANTECEDENTS

23.1 Introduction

A Pronoun is a word used instead of a noun; as,

The principal is absent, because he is ill.

Our writing would be dull if we repeated nouns. Consequently, we use a pronoun

(‘pro’ meaning ‘for’) instead of repeating a noun.

23.2 Number, Person and Gender

Possessive, relative and demonstrative pronouns must be of same number,

person and gender as the nouns e. g.

One should not waste his energy over trifles. (Wrong)

One should not waste one’s energy over trifles. (Right)

a) The pronoun is singular when two singular nouns joined by and are

preceded by each or every.

Every day and every night brings its own duty. (Right)

b) The pronoun is singular when two or more singular nouns are joined by or,

either or, or neither nor. Thus:

The manager or the assistant should put his time in investigating the details.

Either Ram or Jagmohan forgot to take his pen.

Neither Sita nor Rekha did her job sincerely.

c) When a plural noun and a singular noun are joined by or or nor, the

pronoun agrees with the noun nearest to it.

Either the manager or the assistants failed in their duty.

Either the assistants or the manager failed in his duty.

Neither he nor they have done their duty.

23.3 Reflexive Pronoun

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When such verbs as avail, absent, acquit, enjoy are used reflexively, never omit the

reflexive pronoun:

 I shall avail of your kind advice. (Wrong)

 I shall avail myself of your kind advice. (Correct)

 He absented from college. (Wrong)

 He absented himself from college. (Right)

23.4 Relative Pronoun

a) After such, use the relative pronoun as and not who or which e. g.

His performance was such as I had expected him to give.

b) A relative pronoun should agree with its antecedent in person and number,

e. g. ;

This is one of the most interesting stories that has appeared this year.

(Wrong).

This is one of the most interesting stories that have appeared this year.

(Correct)

This is the only one of his books that are worth reading. (Wrong).

This is the only one of his books that is worth reading. (Correct)

 (Change are to is, for here the antecedent of that is one).

c) A relative pronoun or relative adverb should be placed as close to its

antecedent as possible e. g.

 I have read Plato’s writings, who was a disciple of Socrates. (Wrong)

 I have read the writings of Plato who was a disciple of Socrates. (Correct)

d) Each other should be used in speaking of two persons or things, ‘one

 another’ in speaking of more than two:

 When we two friends parted, they wished luck to each other.

 We should respect one another.

e) Either should be used in reference to two. When the reference is to more

than two, we should use any one:

 Either of these two medicines will do you good.

 She is more beautiful than any of her four friends. (not either)

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f) Which when used as a relative pronoun, must relate to some noun or

pronoun, i.e. its antecedent previously mentioned. Using which without an

antecedent is wrong:

 He won the gold medal in race, which pleased his parents. (Wrong)

 His winning of the gold medal in race in race pleased his parents. (Right)

No one objected to his suggestion, which was disappointing. (Wrong: Because the

sentence fails to clarify what was disappointing, the suggestion, or the fact that no

one objected).

23.5 Case Forms of Pronouns: ‘He/Him’ , ‘They/Them’

a) A pronoun following any part of the verb be (am, is, are, was, were, been,

be) and referring to the subject is in the nominative case:

The managers of the firm are Rahul, Vikas and I.

It was she who fell ill last night.

Do you think it could have been she who acted in film?

b) The object of a verb or a preposition is in the objective case:

Me, you, her, it, him, us, them

c) Both members of a compound subject must be in the same case:

The doctor sent Geeta and me to hospital.

(Geeta and me are objects of the verb sent)

Between Anil and him there has always been a good rapport.

(Anil and him are objects of the preposition between)

d) In case of an elliptical clause beginning with than or as, if you supply the

missing word or words, you should have little trouble deciding the correct

case of the pronoun.

My friend is taller than I. (I am)

Mr. Verma is as good a person as she. (She is)

Nobody loves you more than he. (than he does)

e) The subject of an infinitive is in the objective case. The infinitive is a verb

that usually has to in front of it:

She asked me to wait for her.

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The boss asked me to go to the head office.

f) The object of an infinitive, Gerund or participle is in the objective case:

 The teacher wants to see us. (us is the object of infinitive to see)

Finding you here is a pleasant surprise. (You is the object of the gerund

finding)

Having seen him instantly, I ran for safety. (him is the object of the participle

having seen).

g) The possessive case of a noun or pronoun should be used before a gerund:

I do not approve of his playing the prank. (Playing is the gerund. It is the

object of the preposition of)

Her cooking could be improved. (Cooking is the gerund)

23.6 Who/Whom, Whom/Whomever

a) The following sentences illustrate proper use of who and whoever

nominative forms serving as subjects of the verbs in the dependent classes:

I demand the opportunity for whoever wishes it.

(‘whoever’ is the subject of the verb ‘wishes’; the whole clause is the object

of the preposition ‘for’).

The question of who can seize the opportunity must be answered.

(who is the subject of can seize; the whole clause is the object of the

preposition of).

b) The following sentences illustrate proper use of whom and whomever,

objective forms serving as objects in the dependent clause.

This is the boy whom I met in the wedding. (direct object of met).

Bring whomever you like. (direct object of ‘like’; dependent clause of bring).

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Module5. Structural and functional grammar

Lesson 24

CORRECT USAGE OF ADJECTIVES

24.1 Introduction

Adjectives modify--describe or limit – nouns, pronouns, and word groups

functioning as nouns.

She is a beautiful girl.

There are fifty boys in this class.

The flowering trees were beautiful.

24.2 Kinds of Adjectives

The main kinds of adjectives are:

a) Demonstrative – this, that, these, those

b) Distributive – each, every, either, neither

c) Quantitative – some, any, no, little/few, many, much

d) Relative– which, what, whose, whatever, whichever, whosoever

e) Interrogative – which, what, whose

f) Possessive – my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their

g) Adjectives of Quality – clever, dry, fat, golden

24.2.1 Participles used as adjectives

Both present participles (ing) and past participles (ed) can be used as adjectives.

Present participle adjectives amusing, boring, tiring etc are active and mean ‘having

this effect”.

Past participle adjectives amused, bored, tired are passive and mean ‘affected in this

way”.

an infuriating woman (She made us furious)

an infuriated woman (Something had made her furious)

24.3 Position of Adjectives

a) Adjective of quality usually comes before their nouns:

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a rich man a happy girl

b) In certain phrases, the Adjective of quality comes after the nouns:

Heir apparent time immemorial notary public

God Almighty viceroy elect

c) After linking verbs such as – be, become, seem

 Jagdish became rich. His mother seems happy.

d) After verb such as – appear, feel, get/grow, keep, look, make, smell,

sound, taste, turn. Verbs used in this way are called Link verbs.

Mohan felt cold. He made her happy.

 He grew impatient. The idea sounds interesting.

Adjectives in this position are called Predicative Adjectives.

e) A Problem with verbs as in (d) above is that they can also be modified by

adverbs. This confuses the student, who tries to use adverb instead of

adjectives after link verbs. Following examples with adjectives and adverbs

help to show the different uses:

He looked calm. (adj.) = (He had a calm expression)

He looked calmly (adv.) at the angry crowd. = (looked here is a deliberate

action)

The drink tasted horrible. (adj.) = (It had a horrible taste)

 He tasted the drink suspiciously. (adv.) = (tasted here is a deliberate action)

24.4 Comparison of Adjectives

a) There are three degrees of comparison:

 Positive Comparative Superlative

 dark darker darkest

 useful more useful most useful

b) One-syllable adjectives form their comparative and superlative degrees by

adding er and est to the positive form:

 bright brighter brightest

Adjectives ending in e add r and st:

 brave braver bravest

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c) Adjectives of three or more syllables form their comparative and

superlative degrees by putting more and most before the positive:

 Interested more interested most interested

 frightening more frightening most frightening

d) Adjectives of two syllables follow one or other of the above rules. Those

ending in ful or re usually take more and most:

 Doubtful more doubtful most doubtful

 Obscure more obscure most obscure

Those ending in er, y, or ly usually add er, est:

 clever cleverer cleverest

 pretty rettier prettiest

 silly sillier silliest

24.5 Constructions with Comparisons

a) With the positive form of the adjective, we use as…as in the affirmative and

not as/not so…as in the negative

 A boy of sixteen is often as tall as his father.

 Coffee is not as/so good as my mother makes it.

b) With comparative, we use than

 He makes fewer mistakes than you (do).

 It was more expensive than I thought.

Do’s and Don’ts of the use of Adjectives

a) Do not use an adjective in the comparative degree when no comparison

expressed or implied is made.

 He is a more intelligent student in the class. (Wrong)

 He is a very intelligent student. (Right)

OR

 He is the most intelligent student in the class. (Right)

b) Following are not compared, nor can most be used with them.

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Perfect, unique, full, infinite, chief, perceptual, extreme, ideal, entire, complete,

 universal, empty, impossible, preferable, unanimous, square, round, golden etc.

He is more perfect than his brother.

(Wrong- Perfect expresses the quality to the utmost extent.)

 He is perfect.

c) The comparative adjectives, superior, inferior, senior, junior, prior,

anterior, posterior, prefer, preferable are followed by to instead of than:

He is senior to me. (not ‘than me’).

d) Avoid double comparatives.

It is rather more important. (Wrong. The word rather is comparative)

It is rather important.

OR

It is more important.

His brother is a more better singer than he. (wrong)

 His brother is a better singer than he.

e) When two persons or two things are compared, it is important to see that

the comparison is restricted to the only two that are compared.

The population of India is greater than the U. S. A. (wrong).

The population of India is greater than that of the U. S. A . (Right)

Use than that of; otherwise your sentence will give the impression that you are

comparing Indian Population with the U. S. A., a country).

f) When a comparison is introduced, followed by than, the thing compared

must always be excluded from the class of things with which it is compared,

by using other. For example,

Delhi is larger than any city in India. (Wrong)

Delhi is larger than any other city in India. (Right)

g) Do not use other or any in the superlative degree. For example,

He is the wisest of all other students in his class. (Wrong)

He is the wisest of all. (Right)

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h) Use an adjective of the superlative degree, only when the noun it qualifies

indicates the possession of a quality to a higher degree than other member

of the same class.

He wrote the best book. (Wrong)

He wrote an excellent book.

i) An adjective in the superlative degree normally takes the and not a or an

before it.

This is a worst example of incompetence I have ever come across. (Wrong)

This is the worst example of incompetence I have ever come across.

(Right)

j) When two adjectives refer to the same noun and one of them is in the

superlative degree, the other must also be in the superlative degree. The same is

the case with the comparatives.

He is the best and honest minister in Parliament. (Wrong).

He is the best and the most honest minister in Parliament. (Right)

He is both charitable and richer than you. (Wrong)

He is both richer and more charitable than you. (Right)

k) The two first is a meaningless expression, for it implies two things may be

first. So is the two last.

The two first chapters of the novel are dull. (Wrong)

The first two chapters of the novel are dull. (Right)

l) Use some in affirmative sentences and any in negative and interrogative

sentences:

I shall buy some books. (not any)

I shall not buy any books. (not some)

Have you bought any book? (not some)

m) Later and latest refer to time. latter and last refer to position:

 He came latter than I. (Wrong)

 He came later than I. (Right)

 Between these two books the later is more interesting. (Wrong)

 Between these two books the latter is more interesting. (Right)

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n) Farther means more distant or advanced, further means additional.

Calcutta is farther (not further) from the equator than Colombo.

After this, he made no further (not farther) remarks,

o) Older and oldest may be used for persons or things, but elder and eldest

apply to persons only. They are chiefly used for comparisons within a family.

He will inherit the property after death of his elder (not older) brother.

He is the oldest (not eldest) inhabitant of this village.

My brother is elder to (not than) me.

p) little, a little and the little are correctly used as follows:

There is little hope of recovery. (not likely to recover) (hardly any hope).

There is a little hope of recovery. (may possibly recover).

 Do not waste the little energy you possess. (the small amount, whatever it is).

q) few, a few and the few are correctly used as follows:

Few women can keep a secret. (Hardly any woman can keep a secret).

A few were present. (Some were present).

The few members who came for the show had to return disappointed. (not many,

but whoever there was).

r) less refers to quantity, whereas fewer denote number. For example,

No less than fifty persons were killed in the accident. (Wrong).

No fewer than fifty persons were killed in the accident. (Right)

We do not buy fewer than one litre of milk. (Wrong)

We do not buy less than one litre of milk. (Right)

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Module 5. Structural and functional grammar

Lesson 25

CORRECT USAGE OF ADVERBS

25.1 Introduction

An Adverb is a word which modifies the meaning of a Verb, an Adjective or

another adverb. Sometimes, Adverb standing at the beginning of sentences even

modifies the whole sentence.

Geeta runs quickly.

This is a very interesting book.

He works quite efficiently.

Fortunately, he escaped unhurt.

25.2 Kinds of Adverbs

Adverbs of Manner: bravely, fast, happily, hard, quickly, well

Adverbs of Place: by, down, here, near, up, there

Adverbs of Time: now, soon, still, then, today, yet

Adverbs of Frequency: always, never, occasionally, often, again, twice

Adverbs of Affirmation and Negation: certainly, definitely, surely

Adverbs of Degree or Quantity: fairly, hardly, rather, quite, too, very

Adverbs of Reason: hence, therefore

Interrogative Adverbs: When, Where, why

Relative Adverbs: When, Where, why

25.3 Comparative & Superlative Adverb Forms

a) With adverbs of two or more syllables we form the comparative and

superlative by putting more and most before the positive form.

quickly more quickly most quickly

Single syllable adverbs, hard and early; add er, est

hard harder hardest

early earlier earliest

Irregular Comparisons:

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Well better best

Little less least

Much more most

far farther farthest (of distance only)

far further furthest (used more widely)

25.4 Position of Adverbs

a) Adverbs of manner, which answer the question ‘How’?(e.g., well, fast,

quickly,

 carefully, calmly) are generally placed after the verb or after the object if

 there is one; as :

It is raining heavily.

She sang beautifully.

He does his work carefully.

He gave me the money reluctantly.

b) When the verb is transitive, an adverb can be placed either before the

verb or after the object, but not between the verb and the object.

 He briefly explained his meaning. (Correct)

 He explained his meaning briefly. (Correct)

 He explained briefly his meaning. (Wrong)

c) If an adverb is placed after a clause or a phrase, it is considered to modify

the verb in that case clause/phrase.

They secretly decide to leave the town. (the decision was secret)

(However, if we move secretly to the end of the sentence above, we change

the meaning)

They decided to leave the town secretly. (The departure was to be secret.)

d) Adverbs of frequency, which answer the question ’How often? (e.g.,

always, never, rarely, usually, generally) and certain other adverbs like

almost, already, hardly, nearly, just, quite are normally put between the

subject and the verb if the verb consists of only one word; if there is more

than one word in the verb, they are put after the first word.

His wife never cooks.

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He has never seen a lion.

I have often told him to write neatly.

I quite agree with you.

I usually have breakfast at nine.

e) Adverbs of degree-absolutely, almost, completely, fairly, far, just, much,

 nearly, only, quite, rather modify adjectives or other adjectives.

You are absolutely right. I am almost ready.

 But enough follows its adjectives or adverb:

The box isn’t big enough. He didn’t work quickly enough.

f) Only can also modify verbs. As a general rule, the word only should be

placed immediately before the word it modifies; as

He had only six apples. (not more than six)

He only lent the car. (He didn’t give it)

g) Fairly and rather

 Both mean moderately, but fairly is chiefly used with favourable adjectives

 and adverb while rather is used in this sense before unfavorable adjectives

and adverbs.

Ram is fairly clever, but his brother is rather stupid.

I walk fairly fast, but my wife walks rather slowly.

He was fairly relaxed; she was rather tense.

Rather can be used before certain favourable adjectives/adverbs such as

amusing, clever, pretty, well’ but then its meaning changes. It becomes nearly

equivalent to very, and the disapproval vanishes:

She is rather clever. (She is very clever)

It is rather a good play. (It is a stronger recommendation than It is a fairly

good play.

h) Else should be followed by the adverb but, not than:

It is nothing else than pride. (Wrong)

It is nothing else but pride. (Correct)

Call me anything else than a fool. (Wrong)

Call me anything but a fool. (Correct)

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Module 5. Structural and functional grammar

Lesson 26

CORRECT USAGE OF ARTICLES

26.1 Introduction

The Adjectives a or an and the are usually called Articles.

A or an is called the Indefinite Article, because it leaves indefinite the person or

thing spoken of , as,

A teacher: i.e. any teacher.

The is called the Definite Article, because it points out some particular person or

thing spoken of; as,

He met the teacher; meaning the particular teacher.

26.2 The Indefinite Article ‘a/an’

a) The form a is used before a word beginning with a consonant, or a vowel

with a consonant sound:

a man a European a university

a hat a one-way street a hole

b) The form an is used before words beginning with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) or

words beginning with a mute h, or before individual letters spoken with a

vowel sound:

an apple an island an M.P.

an egg an hour an orange

an MBA

26.3 Use of ‘a/an’

a) a/an is used before a singular noun which is countable, when it is

mentioned for the first time and represents no particular person or thing:

I need a pen. They live in a bungalow.

b) a/an is used before a singular countable noun which is used as an example

of a class of things:

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A child needs love. (all children, any child).

A car must be maintained. (all cars, any car).

c) a/an is used in certain expressions of quantity with certain numbers and in

expressions of price:

a lot of a couple Rs. 10 a kilo

a great many a dozen a great deal of

a hundred three times a day

a thousand 90 kms an hour

d) In exclamations before singular, countable nouns:

Such a long rope!

What a pretty doll!

e) a can be placed before Mr/Mrs./Miss:

A Mr. Sareen means a man called Sareen and implies he is stranger to the

speaker.

Mr. Sareen, would mean that the speaker knows him.

f) a/an are used in following cases:

in a group of 20 people show an interest in to give an assurance

in a majority of cases a breach of peace lack of a quorum

accepting a bribe run a temperature on a charge of murder.

26.4 Omission of ‘a/an’

a)a/an is omitted before plural nouns and before uncountable nouns.

b) a/an is omitted before names of meals (except when these are preceded by

an adjective)

We have dinner at eight in the night.

 We have a special dinner every Sunday.

The article a is also used when it is a special meal given to celebrate

something:

I was invited to lunch (at his house in the ordinary way)

I was invited to a lunch to celebrate his promotion.

26.5 The Definite Article-The

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a) The definite article is used, when the object or group objects is unique or

considered to be unique:

the earth the equator the moon the sun the stars

b) The definite article is used to talk about people and things we have already

mentioned:

She has two children – a girl and a boy. The boy is fourteen, the girl is eight.

c) The definite article is used before a noun made definite by the addition of a

phrase or a clause:

the girl in blue. the place where I met her

the man with the stick. the bag that he is carrying.

d) The definite article is used before a noun which by reason of locality can

represent only one particular thing.

My wife was in the living room. (the living room of this home)

Please bind the report. (the particular report with him)

e) The definite article is used before superlatives and first, second etc. used as

adjectives or pronouns and before only:

the first week the only way the best plan

f) The definite article is used as an adverb with a comparative:

the sooner the better

g) the + singular noun can represent a class of animals or things:

The elephant is in danger of becoming extinct.

The computer has made life easier for students.

But man used to represent the human race has no article:

Man is mortal.

h) the + adjective represents a class of persons.

the old (old people in general)\

the rich

the poor

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i) the is used before certain proper names of seas, rivers, groups of islands,

chains of mountains, plural names of countries, deserts, regions, famous

buildings, classics, newspapers and abbreviations:

the Atlantic the Ganges the Himalayas

the Persian Gulf The Times of India the Bible

the North Pole the South Pole the UNO

the USA the USSR the Taj Mahal

the Netherlands

j) the is used before other proper names consisting of adjective + noun or

noun + of + noun

the Indian Dairy Association the Gateway of India

k) the is also used in the following cases:

give someone the benefit of doubt go on the rampage

go to the cinema, the theatre at the national level

at the point of the knife give the slip

in accordance with the law put to the vote

in the public interest

26.6 Omission of ‘The’

a) The definite article is not used before names of places or before names of

people.

b) the is not used before abstract nouns except when they are used in a

particular sense:

Men fear death.

The death of his only child made him desolate.

c) the is not used before parts of the body and articles of clothing.

Raise your right hand. He took off his coat.

But notice the sentences of the type:

She seized the child’s collar. I patted his shoulder. He hit his

leg.

Could be expressed –

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She seized the child by the collar. I patted him on the shoulder. He hit him

on the leg.

d) Nature: Where it means the spirit creating and motivating the world of

plants and animals etc. is used without the.

If you interfere with nature you will suffer for it.

e) The omission of the before home, church, hospital, prison, school and before

work, sea:

When home is used alone i. e. not preceded or followed by a descriptive

word or a phrase, ‘the’ is omitted.

He is at home.

But for home preceded or followed by a descriptive word or a phrase,

the is used:

We arrived at the bride’s home.

A mud hut was the only home he had ever known.

Bed, church, court, hospital, prison, school, college, university.

The is not used before the nouns listed above when these places are

visited or used for their primary purpose – thus; we go

to bed to sleep to hospital as patients.

to church to pray to prison as prisoners.

to court as litigants to school/college/university to study.

When these places are visited or used for other reasons, the is necessary:

He went to the church to meet the priest.

He goes to the prison sometimes to give lectures.

Sea: We go to sea as sailors. To be at sea is to be on a voyage. But we can

also live by/near the sea.

Work and office:

Work : [place of work], is used without the

He is on his way to work. He isn’t back from work yet.

Office: Place of work needs the –

He is in/at the office.

To be in office (without the) is to hold an official position (opposite of out

of office)

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f) The is not used in following cases:

Gold is a precious metal. (Material nouns)

Fever, typhoid etc. (before names of diseases unless these names are in

plural form e. g. the measles, the mumps etc.)

Hell, Heaven, God, Parliament (the Pope, the Devil are exceptions)

Red, blue, green (before colours)

Queen Elizabeth, President Lincoln (before certain titles, followed by

names)

26.7 Expressions That Do Not Take Any Article

at night/noon; by car/bus/bicycle/plane/train/boat; on foot;

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Module 5. Structural and functional grammar

Lesson 27

AGREEMENT OF VERB WITH THE SUBJECT: TENSE, MOOD, VOICE

27.1 Introduction

A Verb is a word that tells or asserts something about a person or thing.

· A Transitive Verb is a verb that denotes an action which passes over from the

doer or subject to an object. e.g.

 The boy kicks the football.

· An Intransitive Verb is a verb that denotes an action which does not pass over

to an object or expresses a state or being. e.g.

He ran a long distance. (Action)

The baby sleeps. (State)

There is a flaw in this method. (Being)

27.2 Linking Verbs

Most verbs assert action, but a few express a static condition or state of being (no

action). Most of these inactive verbs are called Linking Verbs.

· The most common linking verb is to be, in its various forms of number, person,

tense and mood.

· Other common linking verbs are appear, become, feel, grow, look, prove,

remain, seem, smell, sound, stand, taste, turn.

· When these verbs are followed by nouns or pronouns as direct objects, they are

not linking verbs, but imply or express action. They are linking verbs if you can

substitute some form of to be for them.

The sky looks cloudy this morning. (Linking Verb)

Ram looks at Mohan as if he hates him. (Action Verb)

The tea tasted too sweet. (Linking Verb)

The girl cautiously tasted the drink. (Action Verb)

27.3 Auxiliary Verbs

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An auxiliary verb helps out a main verb. An auxiliary verb has little meaning of its

own; rather it changes the meaning of the main verb.

Ganesh has left the city.

The machine will be sent this afternoon.

As we were leaving, we were stopped by a policeman.

Among all the auxiliary verbs, particular care should be taken to use the

following correctly:

shall and will

should and would

27.3.1 Shall and will

Many writers still have strong convictions that the only correct way to express the

simple future in formal writing is:

I shall do it. We shall do it.

You will do it. You will do it.

He will do it. They will do it.

a) and that strong determination can only be expressed through:

I will do it. We will do it.

You shall do it. You shall do it.

He shall do it. They shall do it.

Though this distinction is not strictly observed, it is best to follow it.

b) should and would:

Should chiefly implies obligation in the sense of ought to; and would

expresses a customary action with all three persons:

I should urge you to take action fast. (ought to)

You should do everything to protect your reputation. (ought to)

Everyday he would answer his letters as soon as he finished reading the mail.

(habitual action)

 I would always advise a careful revision before signing. (habitual action)

27.4 Verbs: Tense, Mood and Voice

The form of a verb or verb phrase tells us three things about the action or state it

names.

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· It tells us what time the action occurs (tense)

· What the attitude of speaker or writer is (mood)

· Whether the subject is performing the action or receiving it (voice).

27.5 Tense

Tense is the time of the action or state expressed by the verb. The three divisions of

time – past, present, future – are shown in English by six tenses. The three primary

or simple tenses are the present tense, the past tense, and the future tense. The

three perfect (or secondary) tenses are the present perfect, the past perfect, and the

future perfect.

Present I play (I am playing)

Past I played (was playing)

Future I shall play (shall be playing)

Present Perfect I have played (have been playing)

Past Perfect I had played (had been playing)

Future Perfect I shall have played (shall have been playing)

a] Present Tense:

It indicates that the action or condition is going on or exists now:

He takes exercise every morning.

The letters are posted.

b] Past Tense

It indicates that an action or condition took place or existed at some

definite time in the past.

 Yesterday I attended the meeting.

 They were married on Saturday.

c] Future Tense

It indicates that the action will take place or that a condition will exist in

the future.

 We shall move to Bangalore next week.

 The train will leave at midnight.

The future may be stated by present tense accompanied by an adverb (or

adverbial phrase) indicating time:

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 I am going to stop later on today.

 Our trip begins tomorrow.

d] Present Perfect Tense

It indicates that an action or condition was begun in the past and has just been

completed or is still going on. The time is past but it is connected with the

present. The present perfect tense presupposes some relationship with the

present:

 We have lived in Bombay for fifteen years.

 The water has been too cold for swimming.

e] Past Perfect Tense

It indicates that an action or a condition was completed at a time now past. It

indicates action “two steps back”. That is, the past perfect tense presupposes

some relationship with an action or a condition expressed in the past tense:

 The college campus was crowded because new students had joined.

She was employed by Tata Steels Company. She had worked there for five

months.

f] Future Perfect Tense

It indicates that an action or a condition will be completed at a future time:

 By the time you arrive, I shall have finished my work.

27.6 Proper Use of Tenses

a] Simple Present Tense

i) Use the simple present tense to express general truths or accepted facts

and to indicate habitual action. Use the present tense in critical writing

about literature and the other arts.

GENERAL TRUTHS All that glitters is not gold.

 The sun rises in the east.

HABITUAL ACTION The old man exercises daily.

 The bank closes at four o’clock.

 He takes milk every morning.

CRITICAL WRITING In Dickens’ novel David Copperfield, David’s harsh

stepfather sends him to London where every day

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David works in a warehouse pasting labels on

bottles.

Jane Austen’s use of ironic comment is highly

effective.

ii) In exclamatory sentences beginning with here and there to express what

is actually taking place in the present.

Here comes the bus!

 There she goes!

iii) To indicate a future event that is part of a plan or arrangement.

We go to Bombay next week.

 When does the college reopen?

 iv) It is used, instead of the Simple Future Tense, in clauses of time and

condition.

 I shall wait till you finish your lunch.

 If it rains we shall get wet.

b] Present Continuous Tense

Use the present continuous

(i) For an action happening at the time of speaking.

It is raining.

She is singing (now).

Why are you sitting at my desk?

(ii) For an action happening about this time, but not necessarily at the

time of speaking.

He is teaching French and learning Greek.

I am reading Oliver Twist (but I am not reading at this moment).

(iii) For an action that is planned or arranged to take place in the near

future.

I am going to the cinema tonight.

My uncle is arriving tomorrow.

(iv) With always, continually, constantly for a frequently repeated action

or for a particular obstinate habit- something which persists, we use

present continuous tense.

He is always losing his keys.

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He is continually working.

I am constantly making that mistake.

 v) The following verbs, on account of their meaning, are not always used in

the continuous form:

 Verbs of perception: see, hear smell, notice, recognize

 Verbs of appearing: appear, look, seem

Verbs of emotion: want, wish, desire, feel, like, love, hate, hope,

refuse,

 prefer

Verbs of thinking: think, suppose, believe, agree, consider, trust,

remember, forget, know, understand, imagine, mean, mind

 Have (possess): own, possess, belong to, contain, consist of

These verbs are used in the simple present. They may, however, be

used in the continuous tenses with a change of meaning:

I am thinking of (considering the idea of) going to Canada.

c] Present Perfect Tense

(i) Use the Present Perfect Tense to indicate completed activities in

the immediate past.

He has just gone out.

 It has just struck eleven.

(ii) To express past actions whose time is not given and not definite.

I have never known him to be so foolish.

Have you read Gitanjali by Rabindra Nath Tagore?

(iii) To describe past events when you think more of their effect in the

present than of the action itself.

I have finished my work (now I am free).

I have cut my finger ( and it is bleeding now).

(iv) To denote an action beginning at some time in the past and

continuing up to the present moment.

I have known him for a long time.

She has been ill since last week.

(v) The following adverbs (or adverb phrases) can be used with the

present perfect tense: just, often, never, ever (in questions only), so

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far, till now, yet (in negatives and questions), already, since-phrases,

for-phrases, today, this week, this month, etc.

So far this month I have sold three hundred and fifty books.

The Bombay office has corresponded with him ever since the accident.

We read your comments with great interest, but lack of information has

prevented a complete reply until today.

d] Present Perfect Continuous Tense

(i) The Present Perfect Continuous Tense is used for an action which

began at some time in the past and is still continuing.

They have been building the building for several months.

They have been playing since morning.

e] Simple Past Tense

(i) The Simple Past Tense is used to indicate an action completed in

the past. It often occurs with adverbs or adverb phrases of past

time.

 She attended the meeting yesterday.

 She left the school last year.

(ii) The Simple Past Tense is also used for past habits.

He always carried an umbrella.

He studied many hours a day.

f] Past Continuous Tense

(i) The Past Continuous Tense is used to denote an action going on at

some time in the past. The time of action may or may not be

indicated.

We were listening to the music all evening.

The light went out while I was reading.

(ii) The Past Continuous Tense is also used, with always, continually

etc., for persistent habits in the past.

He was always grumbling.

g] Past Perfect Tense

(i) The Past Perfect Tense is used to express an action completed

before a certain moment in the past.

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At 9 pm, I had finished my home work.

I had already known the result when he rang me up.

(ii) The Past Perfect Tense is used to express an action in the past

which was completed before another action, also in the past.

 The doctor had left when I reached there.

 The thieves had escaped by the time the police arrived.

(iii) When two Simple Past Tenses might give the impression that the

two actions happened simultaneously, the Past Perfect Tense is

used after ‘when’.

When she had recited her poem, she sat down.

(iv) The Past Perfect Tense is used to express unfulfilled desires of the

past.

I wish he hadn’t gone. (but he went)

 I would rather you had come alone. (but you did not)

(v) The Past Perfect Tense is used to express impossible (unfulfilled)

condition.

 If you had worked hard, you would have passed.

h] Past Perfect Continuous Tense

(i) The Past Perfect Continuous Tense is used for an action that began

before a certain point in the past and continued up to that time or

stopped just before it.

At that time he had been writing a novel for two months.

(ii) The Past Perfect Continuous Tense is used to express a single

action which occupied a period of time in the past.

He had been washing his car for the last fifteen minutes.

i] Simple Future Tense

(i) The Simple Future Tense is used to express an action that is still to

take place, with or without expression of time.

I shall see you tomorrow.

 They will help us.

 Note: The simple future Tense generally expresses pure or colorless future.

When the future is coloured with intention, going to + infinitive construction

is preferred, e.g. He is going to build a new house.

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j] Future Continuous Tense

(i) The Future Continuous Tense represents an action as going on at

some time in future time.

I shall be reading the paper then.

(ii) The Future Continuous Tense is also used for future events that are

planned.

I shall be staying here till Wednesday.

 He will be meeting us next week.

k] Future Perfect Tense

(i) The Future Perfect Tense is used to indicate the completion of an

action by certain future time.

I shall have written the project by that time.

L] Future Perfect Continuous Tense

(i) The Future Perfect Continuous Tense indicates an action

represented as being in progress over a period of time that will end

in the future.

 By next December we shall have been living here for eight years.

27.7 Mood

Verbs appear in three moods: Indicative, Imperative and Subjunctive.

· Indicative is the mood of actuality. We use this about ninety-nine percent of

the time. It is used for ordinary statements and questions (He is happy, Is he

happy?)

· Imperative mood is the mood of making commands or requests. (Be

happy.)

· This subjunctive is the mood of unreality and is used to expresses

conditions contrary to fact and high desirability (If he were happy).

Subjunctive mood needs to be carefully handled.

a] Use the subjunctive to express conditions contrary to fact.

Reeta could settle the argument if she were here. [But she isn’t here.]

If the rose bush were healthy, it would have more buds. [The bush is not

healthy.]

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Last year, the bush looked as though it were going to die. [But it didn’t die.]

Note that all clauses beginning with if automatically express a condition

contrary to fact.

If I were you, I’d refuse to let him use my office.

 If I were you, I would call on him again.

b] Use the subjunctive were after as though, as if and even if to express doubt or

uncertainty:

 He talks as if he were the only intelligent person in the group.

 She looked as though she were completely exhausted.

 Even if that were to happen, we have substantial reserves to draw upon.

c] As an auxiliary form (that is, part of other verbs), be is used after verbs like ask,

urge, insist, require, vote, move etc.

 He moved that the meeting be adjourned.

 I, therefore, urge that this be reconsidered.

 We must insist that this payment be made in three days.

 He insisted that he be given one more chance.

27.8 Voice

Voice refers to the ability of transitive verbs to show whether the subject performs

or receives the action named by the verb.

When the subject performs the action, the verb is in the active voice. When it

receives the action, the verb is in the passive voice.

ACTIVE Mohan wrote a letter.

 The poison drove its victim mad.

PASSIVE A letter was written by Mohan

 The victim was driven mad by the poison.

Only transitive verbs, that is, verbs that can take an object, can show both active

and passive voices. We can say: The student wrote the paper or The paper was

written by the student, but only He talked, not He was talked.

Most sentences in writing use verbs in the active voice, which is almost always

more direct, more economical, and more forceful than the passive.

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1 Use the passive when the actor is not known. Consider the following:

His proposal was rejected.

The play was first performed in sixteen century.

2 Use the passive when the receiver of the action is more important than

the actor. Consider the following:

The new bridge was completed in April.

 A new video film was prepared.

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Module 5. Structural and functional grammar

Lesson 28

EFFECTIVE SENTENCES

28.1 Introduction

Agreement is the grammatical relationship between a subject and a verb or a

pronoun and its antecedent or an adjective and the word it modifies. Such agreement

frequently poses a few problems in English language. This lesson discusses as to

how we can write effective sentences by making proper use of agreement between a

subject and a verb or a pronoun or its antecedent.

28.2 Subject-Verb Agreement

There are some grammatical patterns, such as the agreement in number of a subject

and a verb, or a pronoun and its antecedent that one must watch carefully.

a) When two singular nouns refer to the same person or thing, the verb is

singular.

 The poet and scholar is dead.

b) Do not be confused by words or phrases that come between the subject and

verb. Find the subject and make the verb agree with it.

 The first two chapters of the book were exciting. [The verb agrees with the

subject, chapters, not with the nearest noun, book].

c) When two singular nouns are practically synonymous, the verb is singular.

 His power and influence is very great.

 Peace and order is the most important issue.

d) When two singular nouns though not synonymous, are intended to express

jointly a single idea, the verb is singular.

 Bread and butter is what he has for breakfast.

 Slow and steady wins the race.

e) When the same singular noun is qualified by two contrasting adjectives, the

verb is plural.

 Mental and physical science are not the sam

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f) Use a singular verb with collective nouns when the group is considered as a

unit acting together. Use a plural verb when the individual members of the

group are acting separately.

Collective nouns have a singular form but name a group of persons or things as

a single unit: audience, bunch, crowd, family, herd, jury and the like.

Our family goes out to dinner fortnightly. [The family acts together as a

 single unit.]

The family have been arriving all morning. [Members of the family arrived at

different times.]

The committee is meeting today. [The singular verb is emphasizes the

committee acting as a unit.]

The committee are unable to agree on a plan. [The plural verb are emphasizes

the members of the committee acting separately.]

g) Subjects indicating sums of money, distance, measurement and the like

ordinarily take singular verbs.

Three quarters of the money is already spent.

Ten rupees is not a large sum.

Forty years is a long time to live in one town.

Six miles is a long distance.

If the items that make up the quantity are thought of as separate parts rather

than as a single unit, the verb may be plural.

 Forty percent of the trees were damaged by the hurricane. [The trees were

damaged separately.]

 One half of the students have finished the examination. [The students finished

individually.]

The expressions the number takes a singular verb, but a number takes a plural

verb.

The number of candidates for the position was large.

A number of candidates were applying for the position.

The number of people moving to the Southwest is increasing.

A number of business firms have moved from New York.

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h) Use a singular verb with nouns that are plural in form but singular in

meaning, such as economics, news, and physics.

Mathematics has always been Betty’s downfall.

The financial news was favorable last month.

i) A plural verb is preferred with nouns which are plural in meaning though

 singular in form. They are: number, plenty, variety, rest, enemy, cannon,

none, pair, dozen, the brave etc.

 None but the brave deserve the fair.

 Plenty of men are charitable.

Plural verb is placed after such nouns, as plenty, number and variety according

to the context. Unless the context shows that those words are used to imply

plurality, the verb must be singular:

Too great a variety of pursuits costs much and pays little.

There is often a number of claims to meet.

j) Two nouns connected by and not, as well as, with, together with, besides, in

addition to, like, are followed by a verb in the singular when the former of

the nouns is in the singular. For example:

 John and not his brother was present.

 The coach, as well as the players, was happy over the victory.

 Reema, together with her friends, was here.

 Silver as well as gold, has fallen in price.

 The commander with all his men has been killed.

 Milk besides butter, is supplied by this dairy.

 Satish like Harish, is a good boy.

 The house with all its fittings and furniture was sold yesterday.

k) When two nouns or pronouns are joined by not only … but also the verb

agrees with the second noun or pronoun. For example:

 Not only the officer, but also six soldiers were killed.

 Not only six soldiers, but also the officer was killed.

l) Two or more singular nouns or pronouns connected by the conjunctions

either …. or, neither …. nor, require a singular verb. If the subjects differ in

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number or person, the verb follows the number and person of the subject

nearest to it.

Either the cat or the dog has done it.

Neither praise nor blame seems to affect him.

Neither the P.M. nor his Ministers desire war.

Either the dean or his assistant was to have handled the matter.

Either you or he has to be here.

Either you or your friends have made this mistake.

Either the Ministers or the P.M. is to be blamed.

m) When either and neither are used as nouns or adjectives they must be

followed by singular verbs.

 He asked me if either of the applicants was suitable.

 Neither men was strong.

n) Any noun qualified by adjectives each and every must be followed by a

singular verb.

 Each one of these qualities is to be found in him.

 Every man and woman was killed.

o) A verb should agree with its subject and not with the complement.

Our only guide was the stars. (Correct)

The stars were our only guide. (Correct)

p) When the subject is the title of a novel, a play, or the like, or a word used as

a word, use a singular verb even though the form of the subject is plural.

Romeo and Juliet is a Shakespeare play.

Songs and satires is a book by Edgar Lee Masters.

Women is the plural of woman.

q) Indefinite pronouns ending in –one, -body and –thing, such as anyone,

everybody, and something, always take singular verbs. The indefinite

pronouns another, each, either, neither and one always take a singular verb.

Everybody in the audience was enthusiastic.

Another of the pesticides has provided harmful to birds.

Each of the students needs individual help.

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Neither of the books was available in the library.

The indefinite pronouns all, any, most, none and some may take either a

singular or a plural verb depending upon the noun they refer to.

Some of the silver is missing. [Some refers to the singular noun silver.]

Some of her ancestors were slaves. [Some refers to the plural noun ancestors.]

None of the work is finished. [None refers to the singular work.]

 None of the birds have migrated yet. [None refers to the plural birds.]

A singular verb is sometimes used with none even when it refers to a plural

noun. The plural is more common, however, in both spoken and written

current English.

r) When the adjectives, much little and less are used as nouns they must be

followed by a singular verb.

 Much of what you have said, has been said by others.

 More than a year has passed since I saw him.

 A little of good manners makes our life sweet.

 Less than a million tons is produced in a year.

s) Many a should always be followed by a singular verb.

 Many a man has lost everything by putting his eggs in one basket.

 Many a soldier has died for the sake of his country.

 BUT

 Many a man and woman were standing there.

t) If the principal clause is in the past tense, it must be followed by a past tense

in dependent clause.

 He told me he does not believe in God. (Wrong)

 He told me he did not believe in God. (Correct)

 However, this rule does not apply to such universal truths as

 We are taught that the earth moves round the sun.

 At last he was convinced of the fact that honest is the best policy.

u) In a subjunctive mood where there is an expression of some wish or

supposition, the verb is plural.

 I wish I were a film actor.

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 Though he were the P.M. of this country, I would say the same.

 If he were here, he would support me.

v) Learn the correct uses of will and shall. To express simple future action

shall is used in the FIRST PERSON and will in the SECOND PERSON and

the THIRD PERSON.

 I shall come. (First Person)

 You will come. (Second Person)

 He will come. (Third Person)

 They will come. (Third Person)

Shall is used in the second and third person to express (a) command, (b)

promise, (c) threat, (d) determination, whereas will is used in the first person to

express (a) willingness, (b) promise, (c) threat or determination.

Thou (you) shall not steal. (Command)

You shall have a holiday tomorrow. (Promise)

You shall be punished for this. (Threat)

I will send you my book. (Willingness)

I will try to do better next time. (Promise)

I will punish you if you do that again. (Threat)

w) Make sure that a demonstrative adjective (this, that, these, those) agrees in

number with the noun it modifies.

These adjectives forms seldom cause difficulty. One frequent error, however, occurs

when the demonstrative adjective is used with kind of or sort of followed by plural

nouns. Demonstrative adjective modifies the singular noun kind or sort and not the

following plural noun. Thus a singular demonstrative is used.

NONSTANDARD These kind of fruitstaste sweet.

STANDARD This kind of fruit tastes sweet.

NONSTANDARD These sort of dresses are expensive.

STANDARD This sort of dress is expensive.

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Module 5. Structural and functional grammar

Lesson 29

BASIC SENTENCE FAULTS

29.1 Introduction

The purpose of writing is to communicate facts, feelings and ideas effectively. For the clarity of expressions, we need

to write correct sentences, which conform to the conventions of written English. This lesson discusses as to how we can

write effective sentences by making proper use of sentence fragments; subordination, coordination and parallelism.

Verbosity, faulty predication, dangling modifiers and illogical comparisons should also be carefully avoided.

29.2 Use of Subordination

A common failing of writers is the expression of ideas of unequal importance in constructions that seem to give equal

weight. Meaning can be grasped more quickly and more easily if subordinate ideas are indicated and put in

subordinating constructions. A sentence should express the main thought in a principal clause. Less important thoughts

should be expressed in subordinate clauses.

üThis machine has been imported from Japan and it is easy to operate.

üThis machine, which has been imported from Japan, is easy to operate.

29.3 Use of the Verb ‘BE’

The verb ‘be’ is often a cause of stylistic problems. Eight basic forms of verb ‘be’ are: am, are, is, was, were, be,

being, been.

Avoid verb ‘be’ followed by adjectives or nouns that can be turned into strong, economical verbs.

e.g. The new policy is violative of the Civil Right Act.

 The new policy violates the Civil Right Act.

 His new skateboard was the cause of an accident.

 His new skateboard caused an accident.

29.4 Faulty Parallelism

In written English, word and phrases joined by ‘and’ are normally similar both in form and its meaning. Violations of

this convention are called “Faulty Parallelism”

üMy hobbies are hunting, fishing and to write.

üMy hobbies are hunting, fishing and writing.

He would like a career in publishing or as a teacher.

üHe would like a career in publishing or in teaching.

Nobody wants wealth without being happy.

üNobody wants wealth without happiness.

His success was generally attributed to his talent, integrity and to his insatiable appetite for work.

üHis success was generally attributed to his talent, integrity and insatiable appetite for work.

29.5 Dangling Modifiers

As a rule, an infinitive or a participle at the beginning of a sentence should modify the subject of the sentence. If it has

nothing to modify either logically or grammatically in the sentence, it is called a ‘dangling modifier’ and the sentence

is grammatically incorrect.

In other words, a dangling modifier is one that that has nothing to modify because what it ought to modify has not

been clearly stated in its sentence. For example:

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üDriving through the mountains, two lions were seen.

üDriving through the mountains, we saw two lions.

üLooking through the telescope, clusters of stars were seen.

üLooking through the telescope, I saw clusters of stars.

29.5.1 Avoid dangling participial phrases

A participle is a verb form used as an adjective to modify a noun or pronoun. A participial phrase consists of a

participle or object.

DANGLING Taking the right turn, the market was closed. [There is nothing in the sentence that can be

sensibly be taking the right turn A revision must identify some person.]

REVISED Taking the right turn, we found the market closed.

When we took the right turn, the market was closed.

DANGLING Being made of glass, Mohan handled the tabletop carefully.

REVISED Because the tabletop was made of glass, Mohan handled it carefully. [The Participial

phrase is expanded into a subordinate clause.]

29.5.2 Avoid dangling phrases containing gerunds

A gerund is an – ing form of a verb used as a noun. A gerund phrase consists of a gerund, its object and any modifiers

of the gerund or object. In typical dangling phrases containing gerunds, the gerund or gerund phrase serves as the object

of a preposition.

DANGLING Before going to the market, our work was done. [Who did it?]

REVISED Before going to the market, we did our work.

29.5.3 Avoid dangling infinitive phrase

An infinitive consists of the infinitive marker to follow by the plain form of the verb. An infinitive phrase consists of an

infinitive, its object and any modifiers of the infinitive or object.

DANGLING To write properly, a cardboard must be used. [Who will use the cardboard?]

REVISED To write properly, you must use a good cardboard.

DANGLING To write effectively, practice is necessary.

REVISED To write effectively, you [or one] must practice.

29.5.4 Avoid dangling elliptical clauses

An elliptical clause is one in which the subject or verb is implied or understood rather than stated. The clause dangles

if its implied subject is not the same as the subject of the main clause. Eliminate a dangling elliptical clause by (1)

making the dangling clause agree with the subject of the main clause or (2) supplying the omitted subject or verb.

DANGLING When a small girl, my grandfather gave me a scarf.

REVISED When a small girl, I was given a scarf by my grandfather. [The subject of the main clause

agrees with the implied subject of the elliptical clause.]

When I was a small girl, my grandfather gave me a scarf. [The omitted subject and verb are

supplied in the elliptical clause.]

DANGLING While going to Delhi, my car overturned.

REVISED While going to Delhi, we overturned the car. [The subject of the main clause agrees with the

implied subject of the elliptical clause.]

While we were going to Delhi, the car overturned [or we overturned the car]. [The elliptical

clause is expanded into a subordinate clause.

29.6 Faulty Predication

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The subject of a sentence is whatever answers the question ‘who’ or ‘what’ before the verb. The ‘predicate’ includes the

verb along with any word that complete or modify its meaning. When a mismatch of meaning occurs between a subject

and a predicate, the result is called “Faulty Predication”. e.g.

üGrammar is where I have most of my writing problems. (the predicate treats grammar as if it were a place)

üI have most of my writing problems in Grammar.

üCollege athletics is a controversy that will not be easily resolved.

üCollege athletics is a controversial subject.

29.7 Incomplete And Illogical Comparisons

A comparison expresses a relation between two things. To make a comparison complete and logical, include both items

being compared, include all words necessary to make the relationship clear, and be sure that the items are in fact

comparable.

a] void incomplete comparisons

INCOMPLETE Our new car gets better mileage. (Better than what?)

REVISED Our new car gets better mileage better than our old one did.

b] Avoid ambiguous comparisons

AMBIGUOUS I like her more than Jane. (More than Jane likes her? More than

You like Jane?)

REVISED I like her more than I like Jane

I like her more than Jane does.

c] Avoid illogical comparisons

ILLOGICAL A doctor’s income is greater than a teacher. (The sentence compares an income to a

teacher.)

REVISED A doctor’s income is greater than a teacher’s.

A doctor’s income is greater than that of a teacher.

d] Avoid grammatically incomplete comparisons

Comparisons using expressions as good as, as strong as and the like always require the second as.

INCOMPLETE He is as good, if not better than, Ram.

REVISED He is as good as, if not better than, Ram.

In comparisons of items in the same class of things, use other or any other. In comparisons of items in different

classes, use any.

INCORRECT Calcutta is bigger than any city in India.

REVISED Calcutta is bigger than any other city in India.

Calcutta is bigger than any city in Pakistan.

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