**List of Shortenings**

N noun

NP noun phrase

Adj adjective

AdjP adjective phrase

Adv adverb

AdvP adverb phrase

V verb

VP verb phrase

P preposition

PP preposition phrase

S sentence

**Introduction**

The theme of the present paper is investigation of verb phrases in the structure of the modern American text.

Verb phrases are examined in the research work paper as a method included into utterance extra linguistic context in prism of human comprehension of the surrounding life.

Novelty of the semester paper lies in cognitive and communicative approaches to linguistic analysis of verb phrases aimed at acquiring the communicative competence.

The aim of the work is to describe the workings of the system of special verb forms used in English to locate situations in time.

Object of the research is the verb within syntax and morphology.

Subject of the research is semantic relations of verb phrases in the discourse structure.

The objective of the work is to lay the terminological and conceptual groundwork which is necessary in providing precise definitions of the basic linguistic terms dealing with the English verb phrases.

The methods of linguistic analysis used in this research paper work are:

1. Componential analysis, which helps to research lexemes that have a common range of meaning and constitutes a semantic domain of this project.

2. Discourse analysis, that enables to reveal the hidden motivations behind a text or behind the choice of a particular method of research to interpret that text.

3. Semantic analysis which is used to divide all the verb phrases of the text into groups, concerning their semantic meanings.

4. Distinctive analysis, which purpose is to measure the preference of one verb phrase over another particular construction.

Theoretical value of the paper is based on the analyzed data of 20 pages with verb phrases used in the novel.

Practical value of the work may be useful in theoretical grammar and general linguistics.

Structurally the term paper consists of three parts. The first part is dedicated to syntax and functions of the verbs within syntax and morphology. The second part defines basic linguistic terms, such as ‘verb’, ‘verb phrase’, ‘categories of the verb’, etc. Since this study is intended as the part of a theoretical grammar, it seems necessary to make explicit the way in which we use such terms. The third part presents the discourse analysis of the verb phrases in the novel “Forsyte Saga” by John Galsworthy. Each part has conclusions that carry the most useful and important information concerning the theme of the paper. In the end of the paper there are supplements providing the most important notions and terms, and also a list of abbreviations that can be found in the paper; and the list of bibliography used while making the research.

Part I. Syntax

* 1. **Peculiarities of the English Syntax**

Language plays a unique role in capturing the breadth of human diversity. We are constantly amazed by the variety of human thought, culture, society, and literature expressed in many thousands of languages around the world. We can find out what people think only through their language. We can find out what they thought in the past only if we read their written records. We can tell future generations about ourselves only if we speak or write to them. If we want other civilizations in space to learn about us we send them messages in dozens of our planet's six thousand languages.

Language has often been characterized as a systematic correlation between certain types of gestures and meaning. For spoken language, the gestures are oral, and for signed language, they are manual.

It is not the case that every possible meaning that can be expressed is correlated with a unique, unanalyzable gesture, be it oral or manual. Rather, each language has a stock of meaning-bearing elements and different ways of combining them to express different meanings, and these ways of combining them are themselves meaningful. The two English sentences Chris gave the notebook to Dana and Dana gave the notebook to Chris contain exactly the same meaning-bearing elements, i.e. words, but they have different meanings because the words are combined differently in them. These different combinations fall into the realm of syntax; the two sentences differ not in terms of the words in them but rather in terms of their syntax. Syntax can thus be given the following characterization, taken from Matthews [40, p.48]:

The term ‘syntax’ is from the Ancient Greek syntaxis, a verbal noun which literally means ‘arrangement’ or ‘setting out together’. Traditionally, it refers to the branch of grammar dealing with the ways in which words, with or without appropriate inflections, are arranged to show connections of meaning within the sentence.

First and foremost, syntax deals with how sentences are constructed, and users of human languages employ a striking variety of possible arrangements of the elements in sentences. One of the most obvious yet important ways in which languages differ is the order of the main elements in a sentence. In English, for example, the subject comes before the verb and the direct object follows the verb.

The connection between the words in a sentence is realized through the changes in their forms and these changes in the form of the words to indicate their function in the sentence are what Matthews referred to as ‘inflections’, and the study of the formation of words and how they may change their form is called morphology.[40, p.53] Something which may be expressed syntactically in some languages may be ex-pressed morphologically in others. Which element is subject and which is object is signaled syntactically in the examples from English, while it is expressed morphologically in the Ukrainian examples.

Syntax and morphology make up what is traditionally referred to as ‘grammar’; an alternative term for it is morphosyntax, which explicitly recognizes the important relationship between syntax and morphology.[40, p.56]

Syntax deals with simple sentences, like:

(1) Bosinney was waiting for the answer. [59, p.25]

(2) Mrs. Small grew nervous.[59, p.54]

But one of the most important syntactic properties of language is that simple sentences can be combined in various ways to form complex sentences. Syntax makes possible the formulation of expressions with complex meanings out of elements with simple meanings. One of the defining features of human language is its unlimited nature; that is, the number of meaningful expressions that can be produced by users of a human language is potentially infinite, and this expressive potential comes from the combination of the basic meaningful elements with syntactic principles.

Much of the interest in language in psychology and cognitive science comes from what the study of the cognitive mechanisms underlying language use and acquisition can reveal about the human mind.

To many people the term ‘grammar’ evokes bad memories of prescriptive rules learned in school, e.g. ‘don’t split infinitives!’ Since the early part of the twentieth century, linguistics has rejected the prescriptive tradition which underlies school grammars and focuses instead on describing what users of human language actually do, not on prescribing what they should do.

A central part of the description of what speakers do is characterizing the grammatical (or well-formed) sentences of a language and distinguishing them from ungrammatical or (ill-formed) sentences.[22, p.53] Grammatical sentences are those that are in accord with the rules and principles of the syntax of a particular language, while ungrammatical sentences violate one or more syntactic rules or principles. For example, (1) is a grammatical sentence of English, while Was waiting Bossiney for the answer would not be. This sentence is ungrammatical because it violates some of the word order rules for English, that is basic word order in English clauses is subject–verb–object, subject Bossiney precedes the predicate was waiting, and auxiliary verbs like was precede the main verb, in this case waiting. It is important to note that these are English-specific syntactic rules.

Well-formed sentences are those that are in accord with the syntactic rules of the language; this does not entail that they always make sense semantically. For example, the sentence the answer was waiting Bossiney is nonsensical in terms of its meaning, but it violates no syntactic rules or principles of English; indeed, it has exactly the same syntactic structure as (1). Hence it is grammatical (well-formed), despite being semantically odd.

**1.2 Aspects of syntactic structure**

In the syntactic structure of sentences, two distinct yet interrelated aspects must be distinguished. The first one has already been mentioned: the function of elements as subject and direct object in a sentence. ‘Subject’ and ‘direct object’ have traditionally been referred to as grammatical relations. Hence this kind of syntax will be referred to as ‘relational structure’. It includes more than just grammatical relations like subject and direct object; it also encompasses relationships like modifier–modified, e.g. tall building or walk slowly (tall, slowly = modifier, building, walk = modified) and possessor–possessed, e.g. Pat’s car (Pat’s = possessor, car = possessed).

The second aspect concerns the organization of the units which constitute sentences. A sentence does not consist simply of a string of words; that is, in a sentence like The shaft of a passing cab brushed against his shoulder.[59] The teacher reads a book in the library, it is not the case that each word is equally related to the words adjacent to it in the string. There is no direct relationship between brushed and a or between of and the; a is related to cab, which it modifies, just as the is related to shaft which it modifies. The is related to brushed only through the shaft being the direct object of brushed. The words are organized into units which are then organized into larger units. These units are called constituents, and the hierarchical organization of the units in a sentence is called its constituent structure. This term will be used to refer to this second aspect of syntactic structure.

Consider the eight words in the sentence:

(3)The shaft of a passing cab brushed against his shoulde,[59, p.64]

What units are these words organized into? Intuitively, it seems clear that the article the or a goes with or forms a unit with the noun following it. Is there any kind of evidence beyond a native speaker’s intuitions that this is the case? If the article forms a unit with the noun that follows it, we would expect that in an alternative form of the same sentence the two would have to be found together and could not be split up.

Thus, these two aspects of syntactic structure are always present in a sentence, and when one or the other is emphasized, the sentence is being described from one of the two perspectives. It will be seen later that different grammatical phenomena seem to be more easily analyzed from one perspective rather than the other.

**1.3 Phrases as the basic element of syntax**

In the passive version of the sentence (3) The shaft was brushed against his shoulder by a passing cab the unit the shaft serves as subject, and the unit the passing cab is the object of the preposition by. The constituent composed of a noun and an article is called a noun phrase [NP], e.g. by the teacher; NPs can be very complex. Here is a list of some examples of NP:

the girl beautiful weather

this boy those sunny days

a dog stupid question

that large bicycle nice try

women the Pacific Ocean

elderly men brilliant student

David this year

Queensland judgment day

##### They water rat

What structure do noun phrases have in English? Based on the noun phrases listed above (there are more complicated ones), a noun phrase seems to consist of a determinative followed by a noun, or a determinative followed by an adjective followed by a noun, or just a noun, or an adjective followed by a noun.

We can represent these structures using what are called phrase structure rules, like:

NP → Detv N

This rule says that a noun phrase (NP) “goes to” (arrow) a determinative (Detv) followed by a noun (N). We could thus separately list the rules that we would need to cover all the structures:

NP → Detv N

NP → Detv Adj N

NP → N

NP → Adj N

In fact, there’s a simpler way to write all of these different forms with a single rule. There is a convention in writing phrase structure rules so that if something is in parentheses, it can either be there or not. So we could rewrite our rules just as:

NP → (Detv) (Adj) N

This rule says that a noun phrase consists of a noun, possibly preceded by a determinative.

The preposition by and the NP following it in the sentence also form a constituent in this sentence (by a passing cab); it is called a prepositional phrase [PP].

# Some examples of the PP are:

to the shops in a weak

after the party next to the bus stop

into the large kitchen nearby

near those very large buildings under the tree

A preposition doesn’t have to be followed by anything, so we can have a preposition phrase that consists of just a preposition (John went outside ) . So a preposition phrase consists at least of a preposition, possibly with a noun phrase following it. We could write this as:

PP → P (NP)

The verb plus the NP following it form a unit as well, as shown by a sentence like A cab rolled out of blackness, and into blackness disappeared[59]. The constituent composed of a verb plus following NP is called a verb phrase [VP]. As with NPs, VPs can be quite complex. In our discourse, we have various different verb phrase structures, like the ones we can see in the following sentences.

He stood quite still, listening with all his might. [59, p.34]

He ran forward and back, felt his heart clutched by a sickening fear.[59, p.23]

He had just put together a neat break of twenty-three,--failing at a 'Jenny.'[59, p.23]

The murky blackness of the fog was but faintly broken by the lamps of the 'Red Pottle,' and no shape of mortal man or thing was in sight.[59, p.35]

George turned on him, looking really formidable, with a sort of savage gloom on his big face.[59, p.65]

Bumley Tomm was rather a poor thing, though he had been so successful.[59, p.53]

The expression he had used was 'a free hand in the terms of this correspondence.'[59, p.55]

So our verb phrase can have just a verb, or a verb followed by a PP, or a verb followed by an NP, or a verb followed by an NP and a PP, or a verb followed by an NP and more than one PP, or a verb followed by two NPs or a verb followed by two NPs and a PP, or a verb followed by two NPs and more than one PP.

While these structures are more and more complex, we can actually write them very simply with a single phrase structure rule:

# VP → V (NP) (NP) (PP)\*

In this rule we have explicitly written two separate NPs, rather than (NP)\*, because (in general) there is a maximum of two NPs in a VP, whereas it is possible to continue adding as many PPs as you like.

# There are two more types of phrases, that also need to be paid attention to: adjective phrases and adverb phrases.

#### Adjective phrases. As well as noun phrases, there are also adjective phrases.

Why do we need them ? Well, consider the following sentences.

##### He was a very talented architect [59]

##### As an architect he was very talented

In these two sentences, the words very happy form a phrase. So we have an adjective phrase. Just as with nouns and noun phrases, we will say that whenever an adjective appears it is inside an adjective phrase, although it may be the only element in the adjective phrase. So we can write phrase structure rules showing the structure of simple adjective phrases:

AdjP → (Adv) Adj

Now that we’ve seen adjective phrases, we need to go back and modify our rule for noun phrases. We said that an NP → (Detv) (Adj) N, but there are several problems with that rule. Firstly, we’ve said wherever an adjective appears it’s inside an AdjP, so our rule should have an Adj P in it, not just an adjective. In fact, we need an AdjP because NPs can be more complicated than the ones we’ve seen so far. We can say things in English like: a very talented architect.

Here, clearly, we have an AdjP very talented inside the NP. But we also need to expand our NP rule further, because rather than just a single AdjP, an NP can contain several AdjPs: the rather famous very talented architect.So we must change our rule for an NP to:

# NP → (Detv) (AdjP)\* N

The asterisk is used to indicate that there can be more than one of a constituent.

**Adverb phrase**. Just as we have adjective phrases, we also have adverb phrases, to take account of things like very quickly, rather carefully and so on. An adverb phrase normally consists of an adverb possibly preceded by a degree adverb, e.g.:

##### Very interesting friendly indeed

# really good-looking always hungry

rather annoying incredibly miserable

So there is a small set of very simple phrase structure rules, which can account for many, many English sentences. Obviously, to account for all sentences of English, we would have to develop more complex rules.

In each of these alternative forms, a combination of words from the original sentence which one might intuitively put together in a single unit also occurs together as a unit, and this can be taken as evidence that they are in fact constituents. Using square brackets to group the words in constituents together, the constituent structure of The shaft of a passing cab brushed against his shoulder may be represented as in (4) (‘S’ stands for ‘sentence’.)

(4)[S [NP The [N shaft]] [P of NP[ a [Adj passing] [N cab]]VP [V brushed] [AdvP against][NP [P his] [N shoulder]]

**1.4 Tests for phrases**

Consider the following sentence:

The rich brown atmosphere was peculiar to back rooms in the mansion of a Forsyte. [59]

All speakers of English would agree that in this sentence, some of the words go together with each other more closely than others. For example, the words the rich brown atmosphere seem to go together more closely than, say atmosphere was peculiar. Likewise in the mansion seems to go together as a unit (often referred to as a constituent), more than the mansion of.

For our native language we could rely on intuition to decide about phrases. But that is not going to work if we have to describe a language which we don’t know very well.

What sorts of formal tests can we find to decide whether something is a phrase or not?

## Substitution test

One of the simplest tests for phrases is what is called the substitution test. If we can substitute a set of words with a single other word, without changing the overall meaning, then we can say that those words form a phrase.

For example, looking back at the earlier sentence, we can substitute various of the phrases for single words:

The rich brown atmosphere was peculiar to back rooms in the mansion of a Forsyte

It was peculiar to back rooms in the mansion of a Forsyte that it was the rich brown atmosphere.

The rich brown atmosphere was peculiar to back rooms in the mansion of a Forsyte

The rich brown atmosphere was peculiar there.

We can see from this that the words the rich brown atmosphere form a phrase, as do the words back rooms, the mansion and in the mansion.

Substitution also can be seen with what is called anaphora, where a single item substitutes for an earlier mentioned item, in question and answer sequences or in long sentences. For example, we could have a question and answer sequence:

"There's no money in that," he said. ‘Yes, he went bankrupt," replied Nicholas.[59, p.66]

In the second sentence here, the word bankrupt has replaced no money, showing us that no money must be a phrase.

While substitution usually works on the basis of a single word, it is also possible to substitute using the phrase do so or so do. We can see this sort of substitution in:

Old Jolyon's hand trembled in its thin lavender glove, and so did his son’s.[59, p.45]

So the words hand trembled in our original sentence form a phrase.

## Cleft test

As well as substitution, another test we can use to see if something is a phrase is what is called the clefting. Cleft sentences have the form

It is/was/will be \_\_\_\_ that/who \_\_\_\_

The important thing for a cleft test is to take the original sentence, and try putting it into this frame, without changing it in any way except for taking one part of it out and putting it in the first slot, and putting the rest of the sentence in the second slot. For example:

The rich brown atmosphere was peculiar to back rooms in the mansion of a Forsyte

It was the rich brown atmosphere that was peculiar to back rooms in the mansion of a Forsyte

Old Jolyon's hand trembled in its thin lavender glove.[59.p.23]

It was Old Jolyon's hand that trembled in its thin lavender glove.

When applying the cleft test, it is important not to change anything about the sentence, except for taking one part out and putting it between it is/was/will be and that/who.

If it is possible to cleft a sentence, then the part of the sentence which occurs between it is/was/will be and that/who forms a phrase. Note that if it is possible to cleft a group of words, then that group of words forms a phrase; but just because you can’t cleft something, that doesn’t mean that it isn’t a phrase. For example, we know that in our original sentence the words the rich brown atmosphere form a phrase, but we can’t cleft it:

It was peculiar to back rooms in the mansion of a Forsyte that the rich brown atmosphere.

## Movement tests

Phrases often behave as units for various movement operations, with the entire phrase moving together. For example, we could move the phrase on that shelf in our original sentence:

The rich brown atmosphere was peculiar to back rooms in the mansion of a Forsyte.

To back rooms in the mansion of a Forsyte was peculiar the rich brown atmosphere.

A specific case of movement is the formation of a passive sentences. As we can see the set of words the key and the words in the lock in our sentence must each be a phrase because each set of words moves together under passivization:

Old Jolyon turned the key softly in the lock[59,p.58] (active sentence)

The key was softly turned in the lock[59] (passive sentence)

Noting the nesting of constituents within constituents in this sentence, e.g. the NP the lock is a constituent of the PP in the lock which is a constituent of the VP turned in the lock. At the beginning of this section it was noted that the two aspects of syntactic structure, relational structure and constituent structure, are ‘distinct yet interrelated’, and it is possible now to see how this is the case. For example, a VP was described as being composed of a verb and the following NP, but it could alternatively be characterized as involving the verb and its direct object. Similarly, a PP is composed of a preposition and its object. NPs, on the other hand, involve modifiers, and accordingly the relation between the and lock could be described as one of modifier–modified.

**1.5 Lexical categories**

In the discussion of the constituents of sentences, reference has been made to nouns and noun phrases, verbs and verb phrases, and prepositions and prepositional phrases. Nouns, verbs and prepositions are traditionally referred to as ‘parts of speech’ or ‘word classes’; in contemporary linguistics they are termed lexical categories. The most important lexical categories are noun, verb, adjective, adverb and adposition, which subsumes prepositions and postpositions. In traditional grammar, lexical categories are given notional definitions, i.e. they are characterized in terms of their semantic content [9,pp.25-67].

For example, noun is defined as ‘the name of a person, place or thing’, verb is defined as an ‘action word’, and adjective is defined as ‘a word expressing a property or attribute’. In modern linguistics, however, they are defined morphosyntactically in terms of their grammatical properties.

Nouns may be classified in a number of ways. There is a fundamental contrast between nouns that refer uniquely to particular entities or individuals and those that do not; the best example of the first kind of noun is a proper name, e.g. Sam, Elizabeth, Paris or London, and nouns of this type are referred to as proper nouns.

Nouns which do not refer to unique individuals or entities are called common nouns, e.g. dog, table, fish, car, pencil, water. One of the important differences between proper and common nouns in a language like English is that common nouns normally take an article, while proper nouns do not, e.g. : The boy left versus \*The Sam left (cf. \*Boy left versus Sam left). Common nouns may be divided into mass nouns and count nouns. Count nouns, as the name implies, denote countable entities, e.g. seven chairs, six pencils, three dogs, many cars. Mass nouns, on the other hand, are not readily countable in their primary senses, e.g. \*two waters, \*four butters, \*six snows. In order to make them countable, it is necessary to add what is sometimes called a ‘measure word’, which delimits a specific amount of the substance, e.g. two glasses/bottles/drops of water, four pats/sticks of butter, six shovelfuls of snow. Measure words can be used with count nouns only when they are plural, e.g. \*six boxes of pencil versus six boxes of pencils, \*two cups of peanut versus three jars of peanuts. Pronouns are closely related to nouns, as they both function as NPs. Pronouns are traditionally characterized as ‘substitutes’ for nouns or as ‘standing for’ nouns, e.g. John went to the store, and he bought some milk, in which he substitutes or stands for John in the second clause. This, however, is true only of third-person pronouns like he, she, it, or they; it is not true of first-person pronouns like I or second-person pronouns like you. First- and second-person pronouns refer to or index the speaker and addressee in a speech event and do not replace or stand for a noun.

Verbs can likewise be categorized along a number of dimensions, such as:

person, number( in Modern English there are but few form indicating them in the synthetic forms of the verb. These are (1).the 3rd person singular Present Indefinite Indicative; (2) the Future Indefinite tense; (3) the suppletive forms of the verb to be for different persons of singular and plural), aspect (perfect and progressive), voice (active and passive), mood (indicative, imperative and subjunctive) and tense (there are four groups of tenses: Indefinite, Continuous, Perfect and Perfect Continuous; each of these forms includes four tenses: Present, Past, Future and Futute-in-the-Past. Thus there are 16 tenses in English.)

Conclusions to Part I

1 .Syntax is the branch of grammar dealing with the ways in which words, with or without appropriate inflections, are arranged to show connections of meaning within the sentence.

2. The main object of syntax is sentence construction.

3. One of the most obvious yet important ways in which languages differ is the order of the main elements in a sentence.

4. The basic word order in English clauses is subject–verb–object, articles precede the noun they modify, and auxiliary verbs precede the main verb. These are English-specific syntactic rules.

5. The connection between the words in a sentence is realized through the changes in their forms and these changes in the form of the words to indicate their function in the sentence are called ‘inflections’, and the study of the formation of words and how they may change their form is called morphology.

6. Syntax investigates simple sentences, as well as their combinations called complex sentences.

7. A central part of the description of what speakers do is characterizing the grammatical (or well-formed) sentences of a language and distinguishing them from ungrammatical or (ill-formed) sentences.

8. Two interrelated aspects of syntax: relational structure and constituent structure.

9. Words organization into phrases. Types of phrases.

10. In order to check if word combination is a phrase, the tests for phrases are to be done.

11. Lexical categories. Their semantic content.

**Part II. English Verb. Verb Phrases**

**2.1 Peculiarities of the Verb**

The term “verb” is used in two senses:

1. the verb is one of the elements used in the clause structure, like the subject and the object.
2. a verb is a member of a word class, like a noun, and an adjective.

The two senses are related in this way: a verb phrase consists of one or more verbs (sense 2) e.g. linked, is making, can believe, might be leaving in the sentences below; the verb phrase operates as the verb (sense 1) in the clause, e.g.:

They linked hands. He is making a noise.

I can believe you. She will be leaving soon.

Verbs are the very large lexical word class in English, and were traditionally called ‘doing’ words when taught to young children. The lexical verb class is more inclusive than the label implies as there are verbs (for example have, be) which do not describe doing, but being, or states, rather than processes and still others that describe events with no intentional action behind them (for example die, fall).

In order to group these words together, then, we need to identify their formal nd functional features. The inflectional morphemes can be used to modify the verb in English. These include the present-tense, third-person singular morpheme, which is written as -s in most cases; the past tense morpheme, written as -ed in all regular verbs in English; and the progressive form, which is written as -ing for all English verbs.

Many minor sentences, and many spoken ones, consist of a single word that is not necessarily a verb:

No! Natalie! Me. Singing. Slowly.

It is possible to work out likely contexts in which these words will occur as utterances in their own right. However, they must have a context in order to have a viable meaning.

With the exception of these and other minor utterance types, clauses in English need to have a verb in them. This verb may be the head of a verb phrase, but it may stand alone as a verb phrase too. The following clauses have a single verb functioning in the predicator role:

Young Jolyon looked round the room. [59, p.65]

The old face looked worn and hollow again [59, p.34]

His eyes roved from bottle to bottle.[59, p.74]

Two ladies advanced. [59, p.44]

##### The fixity of Swithin's eye alone betrayed emotion[59, p.52]

As a word class verbs can be divided into three main categories, according to their function within the verb phrase: the open class of Full Verbs (or lexical verbs), and the very small closed classes of Primary Verbs, and Modal Auxiliary Verbs. Since the primary verbs and the modal auxiliary verbs are closed classes, we can list them in full.

Full Verbs believe, follow, like, see,…

Primary Verbs be, have, do

# Modal Auxiliaries can, may, shall, will, must, could, would,…

If there is only one verb in the verb phrase, it is the Main Verb. If there is more than one verb, the final one is the main verb, and the one or more verbs that go before it are auxiliaries. For example transmit is the main verb in this sentence, and might and be are auxiliaries:

… to whom he might transmit the money he saved,…[59, p.66]

Of the three classes of verbs, the full verbs can act only as main verbs, the modal auxiliaries can act only as auxiliary verbs, and the primary verbs can act either as main verbs or as auxiliary verbs. Let us investigate the auxiliary verbs closer.

Auxiliary verbs. Auxiliaries have little or no lexical meaning. They are ‘helper’ verbs, in the sense that they help to form complex verb forms. In doing so they express either a grammatical notion (like ‘passive’, ‘progressive’ or ‘tense’) or one or more modal ideas. This is not to say that auxiliaries are devoid of meaning, but their meanings are more schematic (i.e. more ‘skeletal’, more ‘abstract’, less ‘full’) than those of lexical verbs.

Within the auxiliaries we can make a distinction between two classes: grammatical auxiliaries and modal auxiliaries. The former, which are sometimes referred to as ‘primary auxiliaries’, have a purely grammatical function:

1. the ‘tense auxiliary’ have, which is used in forming perfect tense forms;
2. the ‘aspect auxiliary’ be, which is used for building progressive verb orms;
3. the ‘voice auxiliary’ be, which is used in the passive;
4. the ‘periphrastic auxiliary’ do, which is used as a ‘dummy’ (pro-form) when a VP that does not contain an auxiliary (e. g. love her) is used in a construction that requires one (e. g. I don’t love her, Do you love her?, I do love her, etc.)

Next, there are the ‘modal auxiliaries’: can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, ought to, will, and would. These auxiliaries express special shades of meaning, such as volition, possibility, permission, necessity, intention, obligation, expectation, inference, ability, determination, etc. The modal auxiliaries differ semantically from the first group in that they add lexical meaning rather than fulfill a grammatical function. However, they still have less concrete, and hence more widely applicable, meanings than most lexical verbs. This wider applicability explains why auxiliaries form a relatively small set when compared with lexical verbs.

Because an auxiliary does not have a full lexical meaning, it cannot be used without a main (lexical) verb, except in ‘code’, where the auxiliary is used as pro-form for an entire verb phrase (as in If I do the thing, I will do it thoroughly, but I must have a free hand). In other words, an auxiliary cannot be the only or last verb form in the VP (except in ‘code’). In the following example the main verbs are italicized while the auxiliaries are underlined:

[“What did he do last night?”] - “He {studied / worked / may have slept / could /had to / would}.”

Unlike lexical verbs, auxiliaries have the so-called ‘NICE-properties’. ‘NICE’ is an acronym (coined by Huddleston 1976) consisting of the initial letters of the terms negation, inversion, code and emphasis. The reference is to the four cases in which the English VP requires an auxiliary. If there is no auxiliary, the ‘periphrastic auxiliary’ do has to be added. In that case we say that the lexical verb requires ‘do-support’. In other words, the statement that ‘auxiliaries have the NICE-properties’ means that they do not combine with the periphrastic auxiliary do in clauses made negative by the use of not, in clauses involving subject-auxiliary inversion, in code and in cases of emphasis. By contrast, clauses without an auxiliary need ‘do-support’ (i.e. the insertion of do) in these four cases. Compare:

He went / He didn’t go / Did he go? / Yes he did / He did go.

He will go / He won’t go / Will he go? / Yes he will / He will go.

The auxiliary verbs are made up of the modals (may, must, might and so on), have (perfective) and be (progressive and passive). Here it is worth noting some of the uses of the auxiliary function: to construct questions, to provide emphasis and to carry negation.

Looking at questions first, the first auxiliary in a verb phrase can be put before the subject in order, to ask a question:

She will be coming. Will she be coming?

The emphatic use of the auxiliary is connected with stress and intonation patterns, but it is again the first auxiliary that carries the extra emphasis of an emphatic version:

Will you ask Mr. Bosinney, and I will get young Flippard.[59, p.66]

I will call for you and your young man at seven o'clock.[59, p.23]

A Forsyte will require good, if not delicate feeding, but a Dartie will tax the resources of a Crown and Sceptre [59, p.34]

His drink, too, will need to be carefully provided; there is much drink in this country 'not good enough' for a Dartie; he will have the best.[59, p.52]

The negation of English sentences is usually carried by the verb phrase in the form of a negative particle, which intervenes in the verb phrase after the first auxiliary and before the following auxiliary or lexical verb:

If you exceed that sum by as much as fifty pounds, I will not hold you responsible Jane hasn’t been hurt.[59, p.33]

He knew it was done that he might not feel she came because of her dead lover.[59, p.23]

The feeling of shame at what might be called 'running after him' was smothered by the dread that he might not be there, that she might not see him after all 59, p.35]

As these examples show, the negative particle is often attached to the auxiliary verb, though in the case of might the reduced form (mightn’t) is less common now.

All three of these special uses of the auxiliary require some attention to the first auxiliary of a verb phrase. This may be a modal auxiliary or it may be have or be.

Whichever it is, this verb is known as the ‘operator’ because it has the special functions described above. In the absence of an auxiliary (that is, where there is only a lexical verb), the dummy operator – the verb do – is used instead:

But I suppose you feel it much as I do when I part with a picture--a sort of child?"[59, p.34]

But if you ask me how I do it, I answer, because I'm a Forsyte."[59, p.67]

The dummy operator, then, performs the three functions of the other auxiliaries, but it does not carry any meaning of its own to add to the verb phrase.

Though some verbs have a status intermediate between that of main verbs and that of auxiliary verbs. Sometimes the main verb (and perhaps the other words too) is understood from the context, so that only auxiliaries are present in the verb phrase:

I can’t tell them but you can. [i.e. ‘can tell them’]

Your parents may not have suspected anything but your sister may have. [i.e. ‘may have suspected something’].

There also multi-word verbs, which consist of a verb and one or more other words turn on, look up, take place, take advantage, put up with,…

Let us consider at the individual forms of lexical verbs in English and how they function. The first of the two clauses above also form complete sentences, whereas the third, fourth and fifth are only part of an utterance. These incomplete utterances are examples of subordinate clauses, which we shall investigate in a later section. We are using them here simply to demonstrate the use of particular forms of verb: non-finite forms. These forms, often known as the -ing form, the -en form and the i- form, are also called the progressive form, the perfective form and the infinitive form. These forms can be part of full verb phrases that function as the predicator in a complete clause. On their own, however, they do not link to the subject in a clear way (for example by an ending that indicates a person) and they do not establish the tense of the verb as either present or past.

Note how they need auxiliaries to establish such aspects of the meaning of the predicator:

Who shall tell of what he was thinking? [59, p.44]

And now you have your son and June coming back you will be so happy.[59, p.24]

I shall sit in the sun with a drink in my hand.[59, p.20]

Lexical verbs that do not need an auxiliary verb in order to function in main clauses are known as finite forms. They include the present tense form, which is normally indistinguishable from the infinitive form in terms of having no morphological suffix (for example catch, sing), the third-person present tense form, which normally adds an -s to base forms, and the past tense form, which adds -ed to regular verbs.

Table 3.1 shows some examples of all the forms of English lexical verbs.

Table 3.1

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Citation form | Break | Play | Sing | Forget |
| Present tense | break | play | sing | forget |
| Present third person | breaks | plays | sings | forgets |
| Past tense | broke | played | sang | forgot |
| Progressive participle | breaking | playing | singing | forgetting |
| Perfective participle | broken | played | sung | forgotten |
| Infinitive | break | play | sing | forget |

#### The most common pattern of forms in English verbs is the one represented n the table by play. There are effectively only four different forms (play, plays, playing, played), but because other common, but irregular, verbs distinguish, for example, the past tense (-ed) from the perfective form (-en), the regular verbs are also treated as though these forms were different.

The irregular forms tend to belong to common verbs derived from Old English, rather than those with Romance language influences, such as French. Because they are very common they have not changed to match the sheer quantity of verbs with a pattern such as play, although there is some evidence that some such thing is happening. If you think about the way that people these days often muddle sung and sang and rung and rang, it seems that the distinction between past tense and perfective markers is less clear-cut than in the past. However, although the two forms might be merging in irregular verbs too, they are not moving towards matching the regular verbs, which would result in forms such as \*singed and \*ringed.

The subclasses of lexical verb that can be identified tend to depend on the context in which they occur. Whilst the traditional grammars distinguished between transitive and intransitive verbs, we find it useful to distinguish further categories, depending on the clause structures in which they typically occur.

The intransitive verb will not be found with an object, and thus will occur n subject and predicator structures: I’m dying. The transitive verb occurs with an object in subject-predicator-object structures: She hates you. Ditransitive verbs occur with both indirect and direct objects: They gave me a beautiful present. There are also subclasses of verb that tend to occur with compulsory adverbials: John went home and I put the cigarette back in the packet.

Two further important subclasses of verb are intensive verbs (such as be) that occur with subject complements (She was really tired), and those which occur with objects and object complements: (You make me happy). The intensive verbs have a particular semantic effect in that they invoke existence (there is a tree) and equivalence (she is my daughter). These subcategories of verb are not watertight and some verbs can occur in a range of grammatical contexts. However it is useful to think in terms of verbs typically occurring in certain clause structures.

**2.2 Verbs within Syntax and Morphology**

What is the essential property that makes verbs behave differently from nouns nd adjectives in morphology and syntax? There is actually an obvious starting-point in the widespread recognition that verbs are the quintessential predicates. They are inherently unsaturated expressions that hold of something else, and thus the nucleus around which sentences are typically built. Many linguists of different schools have recognized the significance of this. Among the formalists, Jackendoff (1977) partially defines verbs with the feature “+subject” (although this does not distinguish them from nouns, in his view). Among the functionalists Buechler[16, p.54] , identifies predi-cation as the pragmatic function that provides the external motivation for the category verb. The precise version of this intuition stated in (3)

(3)X is a verb if and only if X is a lexical category and X has a specifier.

Whether an item takes a specifier or not is thus an important characterizing feature for the functional categories. (3) claims that this property subdivides the lexical categories too. Those lexical categories that take a specifier are verbs; those that do not are nouns and adjectives.

The way a verb comes to have a specifier is somewhat different from the way ost functional categories do, however. Tenses and complementizers acquire their specifiers by movement: some constituent contained inside their complement moves to become the specifier of the phrase. This is not the case for verbs. Rather, the specifier of a verb usually comes from direct combination with some other phrase that is constructed independently. In Chomsky’s terms, verbs typically get specifiers from “External Merge,” whereas tenses and complementizers get specifiers by “Internal Merge.” In practice, this means that verbs usually assign a thematic role to the phrase that is their specifier. Following Chomsky’s[21, p.56-366] adaptation of Hale and Keyser (1993), there are two domains in which this happens (also Bowers [1993] and others). A verb that takes an AP or PP complement assigns a theme role to its specifier:

(5) a.Cigar made [VP him[ feel faint []] (him is theme of feel) [59]

A verb that takes an NP complement assigns an agent role to its specifier:

(6). It made [VP him [sick to look at them]] (him is agent of sick)

A verb can also take a VP complement, in which case it again assigns an agent ole to its specifier. The head of the lower VP almost always combines with the head of the higher VP, deriving a surface representation with only one spelled-out verb:

Examples in which a single verb appears to take two complements are always to be analyzed this way, as consisting of two verbal projections that take one comple-ment each, following Levinson [36] Palmer [41], and using Chomsky’s [21] terminology, we can call the higher verbal position in structures like (5)(in lower case), and the lower position V (in upper case). Both, however, qualify as verbs, as long as they have lexical content, given the definition in (1)

The structures in (5) (6) also exist without an overt NP, AP, or PP complement o the verb:

(7) a Cigar made [him [feel – ]] [59, p.76]

b It made [him [sick – ]] [59, p.76]

# So the verbs have a covert complement in these cases, so that the theme and agent arguments are still in specifier positions. Hutchby and Wooffitt [30] actually make a somewhat stronger claim: they say that these phrase-structural configurations are the only ones in which NPs that bear theme and agent roles can be found. Let us consider the following:

Agent and theme roles can only be assigned to specifier positions.

This is a subpart of the Uniformity of Theta Role Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH) of Baker (1988a), which Hutchby and Wooffitt [30, p.543] seek to derive. (6) is weaker than Hutchby and Wooffitt’s view, the agent role simply is the [−−V VP] configuration, they believe, and the theme role is the [−−V AP/PP] configuration. (In this, they were presumably inspired by Carter’s [19, p.45] view that thematic roles are designated positions in a conceptual structure.) The definitional view seems too strong, however. (6) is strong enough to have consequences: taken together with (4), it implies that simple nouns and adjectives can never assign agent or theme thematic roles.

It is tempting to try to combine (4) and (6) and make it the defining property of verbs that they assign agent and theme theta-roles.3 This would be a mistake, however. First, if these particular thematic roles were built into the definition, one would have to be sure one could distinguish them from other thematic roles in a reliable way. This is a notoriously difficult enterprise, the thematic roles having clear central instances but fuzzy boundaries. More importantly, there are a few verbs that do not assign any thematic role to their specifier. Verbs like seem and appear are the clearest case; perhaps weather predicates are another.

But even though these verbs have no thematic role to assign to a specifier, they must still have a specifier, in the form of the pleonastic pronoun it:

(8) a He made [(it) seem/appear that he was happy]

b Sowing the clouds made [∗(it) rain /snow]

This may seem like a peculiarity of English, since many languages do not require an overt pronoun with these verbs. However, this is simply because many languages never require overt pronouns, often because the person/number/gender features of the pronoun are adequately expressed in the verbal morphology, as in Spanish and Italian. Not surprisingly, the required subject of the verb shows up not as a pleonastic pronoun, but as a pleonastic subject agreement in these languages.

Auxiliary verbs also illustrate this same point. These are verbs that do not assign any thematic roles, but express only aspectual information, such as the progressive or the perfect:

a The box broke open

b The box has broken open.

c The box is breaking open.

The nominal the box is thematically related only to the verb break in these examples, and semantically the aspect has scope over the entire eventuality, including the subject. Therefore, on purely semantic grounds, one might expect the structures in (5).

(5) a has [VP the box [broken open]]

b is [VP the box [breaking open]]

But this is not what we find on the surface. Have and is are (nonprototypical) verbs, and as such they must have a specifier. In this case, they acquire one, not by theta-role assignment, nor by pleonastic insertion, but by NP-movement:

(6) a[VP the box has [VP [broken open]]

b [VP the box is [VP t[breaking open]]

Again, this is not a peculiarity of English. The semantically plausible Aux–Subject–Verb–Object order in (6) is not found in any SVO language, based on the data from 530 languages summarized in Julien (2000). Orders like (5) are found in the Celtic languages, but these are crucially VSO languages, where there is independent evidence that all verbs (not just auxiliaries) move to the left of their subjects.

The most challenging aspect of defending (1) is not to show that all verbs have specifiers, but to show that the other lexical categories cannot have them.

Nouns and adjectives certainly can appear without specifiers, as seen in (6)

(7) a Water is refreshing. (specifierless N)

b Cold water is refreshing. (specifierless A)

But they can also be used predicatively, in which case they seem to take subjects just as much as verbs do. I illustrated the subject-taking properties of various verbs in English by embedding them under the causative verb make, because make selects a bare VP complement (I assume), with no obvious functional head. Thus, in this context we can be relatively certain that it is the verb that requires a subject, not tense or some other functional head. But NPs and APs can also be embedded under make, in which case they too are preceded by a subject:

(8) a The chemist took a hydrogen and oxygen mixture and made [#(it) water].

b Then she put the water into the refrigerator to make [(it) cold].

# This subtle contrast between verbs and other categories has no obvious connection to the superficial inflectional properties of verbs, but it does suggest that there is a structural difference between verbs and predicate nouns/adjectives. A theory that starts with the assumption that only verbs take subjects directly gives us immediate leverage on this paradigm.

So we encountered the different word classes of English and looked at the internal structure of words. In the following part we shall consider structures that are usually made up of more than one word, and look at how they are put together out of the word classes we have already examined. Here, then, we shall be considering the ways in which words are combined to make phrases, and investigate the structure of clauses, sentences and utterances.

**2.3 Verb phrases. Their composition and functions**

# Alternative definitions of ‘verb phrase’

Verb phrase is that part of the predicate constituent that does not contain optional adverbials. (In many cases the predicate consists of a VP only.) We will stick to this definition in this work. However, it may be useful to know that some linguistic works use the term in a different sense.

Some use it in the sense of our ‘predicate (constituent)’, i.e. to refer to the sum of all those constituents of the clause that do not belong to the subject NP. Others use the term in a much narrower sense, to denote no more than the main verb and any auxiliaries accompanying it. Thus seen, the VP of He may have been reading a book is may have been reading (rather than may have been reading a book). In the present work a string like may have been reading or will read will be referred to as a ‘verb form’. A verb form consists either of a verb (in the form of a participle or infinitive) plus one or more auxiliaries (e. g. will see, would have seen) or of a (usually inflected) verb only (as in They take drugs, John smokes).

The verb phrase is the pivotal phrase in English clauses. It fulfils the role of predicator in the clause and effectively introduces a process (action, event and so on). Unlike in the noun phrase, recursion is not possible in the verb phrase, and with only a small number of exceptions all verb phrases fit into a fairly predictable and clear pattern, as described in this section. It is important to note that some approaches, notably those deriving from generative theory, use the term verb phrase to refer to the whole of the predicate of the clause, that is, the verb and all that follows it. In the approach used here the term is used to describe only the verbal element of the clause, functioning as the predicator. To avoid confusion it is essential when reading other textbooks to establish which of these approaches is in use.

The first thing to note is that the simplest verb phrase will be a main lexical verb on its own. This is true of the vast majority of English verb phrases, and also of the clauses below, where the verb phrase is underlined:

She crumpled the letter in her hand [59, p.76]

Give them my love.[59, p.43]

Winifred recited the story of the pearls calmly. [59, p.33]

We have already examined the form of English verbs, so the above should be as examples of the past tense, the present third person singular and the present second person singular respectively. As English has no future tense and things such as voice (active and passive), perfective and progressive are not built into its morphology (unlike, for example, French and Spanish), there is a range of auxiliary verbs instead. These precede the main lexical verb and introduce all of the variations of meaning that some other languages include in the form of the verb itself.

The full form of the verb phrase is as shown in Table 4.1, though as we shall see it is rare for all of these potential places to be filled at once.

Table 4.1

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Modal auxiliary | Perfective auxiliary | Continuous auxiliary | Passive | Main verb |
| might | have | been | being | followed |

We shall consider each of the four auxiliary positions in turn. The modal auxiliaries in English are a subclass with at least the following members:

may, might, will, would, shall, should, can, could, ought (to)

There are other potential members of the modal class, including need and dare, but these are increasingly falling out of usage as modal verbs. Modality is an important semantic contribution to the interpretation of any text, and it is not found in modal verbs alone but here we shall mainly consider the structure of the English verb phrase, rather than detailed variations in meaning and usage. In general, then, modal verbs are responsible for bringing in the speaker’s own opinion about the substance of the clause being uttered, by indicating either how true or how desirable or acceptable he or she considers the circumstance being described. The likelihood or truth of an utterance is called epistemic modality, and its desirability is known as deontic or boulomaic modality. These two aspects of modal meaning can be represented by the same modal verb, with the semantics and context enabling the hearer to distinguish between them.

He should have written to her, because and she had promised to answer. (she knows that he has plenty of time).[59, p.23]

He should have written to her, because and she had promised to answer. (It’s not polite, because she is still waiting).[59, p.65]

The first example shows the use of should as an epistemic modal, with the speaker indicating some doubt about the truth of the statement. The second example demonstrates the deontic use of modals, whereby the speaker indicates what she or he thinks is the proper thing to happen. The modal verbs have no formal variation in morphology, and therefore they are always the same, irrespective of the person (first, second, third) or number (singular or plural) of the subject they follow:

I should go.

You should eat.

He/she/it should play.

We should sing.

They should leave.

More important, perhaps, is the fact that the modal verbs do not occur on their own, hence the inclusion of a range of lexical verbs in the examples given above. It is only when the lexical verb is completely predictable that the modal can stand in for the whole verb phrase. The following exchange provides an example:

A: Might they bring a present with them?

B: They might.

When a modal auxiliary is included in the verb phrase the subsequent verb form must be the infinitive form of the verb – one of the non-finite forms of the verb. In the above examples the lexical verbs follow the modal in infinitive forms – go, eat, play, sing, leave – but because the infinitive form is the same as other forms for many verbs, it is only clear that these are infinitives when the subsequent verb is one with a distinctive infinitive, such as the verb be: You should be . . .

Later we shall look at more complex cases, where some of the other auxiliary positions are also filled in. For now the significant points to remember are that modals do not change their own morphology but do influence the form of any subsequent verb, so that it is obliged to be an infinitive.

The second auxiliary position is the perfective auxiliary. This function is fulfilled by the auxiliary verb have which looks identical in all its forms to the lexical verb have, but must be kept separate for analytical purposes. The lexical verb have has a clear meaning or ‘semantic content’, approximating to the notion of ownership, though this is sometimes more metaphorical than literal (for example I have a longing for a cool drink). The perfective auxiliary, by contrast, brings the idea of completion to the meaning of the verb phrase:

She has broken the glass.

I had cooked the dinner.

The perfective auxiliary, unlike the modal verbs, will agree with its subject as long as it is the first verb in the verb phrase. It can also take the present (has) or past (had) tense form, and this choice will differentiate between actions or processes completed in the immediate past and those completed at an earlier moment.

The other important feature of the perfective is its effect on the subsequent verb, whether that is another auxiliary or a main (lexical) verb. Those verbs which follow the perfective auxiliary have to take the -en form, which is another of the non-finite forms of the verb.

She has taken the dog. They had sold their house.

The -en form of many verbs is either irregular (for example sold ) or similar in form to the past tense -ed form (asked). Nevertheless, whenever the perfective auxiliary is followed by a verb for which a distinctive -en form is possible, this is the form that is used (for instance taken).

The next auxiliary position in the English verb phrase is the progressive auxiliary verb, be. Like the perfective it has the same range of forms as a very common lexical verb, but they should be considered as different verbs. The lexical meaning of be is hard to capture, but it can be summed up as to do with existence and equivalence:

Why is it necessary at all? Mother doesn't want to marry again.[59, p.27]

That's only to show you how impossible your father is![59, p.29]

The auxiliary verb, be, however, conveys the idea that the process being described by the utterance is in some sense continuous – either in the past or in the present:

Warmson is smiling faintly--in his opinion Val is a young limb.[59, p.30]

James' voice was sounding from the other end.[59, p.42]

In the first of these examples the verb phrase, was making, tells the hearer that the process is ongoing since the auxiliary is in the present tense. In the second example the process is in the past because the auxiliary is in the past, but there is a focus on the duration of the process that is lacking in a past tense or perfective version:

James' voice has sounded from the other end.[59, p.67]

These three versions all place the action in the past, and none of them evokes the length of time during which the prayer was being said, unlike the progressive version.

The final auxiliary to discuss is the passive auxiliary, which also takes the form of the verb be. Again this needs to be distinguished from the lexical verb be, and from the progressive auxiliary, which is formally identical to it. In fact the only way that we can tell the difference is by what follows it. In the case of the passive auxiliary, the subsequent verb has to be in the -en form rather than the -ing form, which follows the progressive.

Madame Lamotte was wearing black with touches of lilac colour (progressive).[59, p.11]

And suddenly he was certain as he was caught on the idea that there was no sentiment in either of them. (passive).[59, p.56]

The significant contribution of the passive voice to meaning is that it changes the relationship between the subject and the predicator. In all active (nonpassive) verb phrases, in some sense the subject is the doer of the process (even if the verb is a fairly inactive one, such as notice or fall). With passive verb phrases the subject is the goal of the process, and suffers the consequence of the process described, rather than being the initiator. This can be seen in the examples above, where Jessica is doing the throwing in the first sentence but is affected by it in the second. The passive auxiliary, like the perfective and the continuous, carries person/ number agreement and tense if it is the first auxiliary in the verb phrase:

Soames could not tell whether he was surprised of that knowledge or no.[59, p.56]

The fine reading-room was decorated in the Adam style.[59, p.75]

When the passive auxiliary is no longer the first auxiliary in the verb phrase the usual restrictions apply. Thus after a modal auxiliary its form will be an infinitive, after a perfective it will be -en and after a continuous it will have the -ing form.

We are now in a position to summarise the English verb phrase structure and the formal restrictions that the auxiliaries place on the subsequent verb.

###### Summary of English verb phrase structures

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Modal | Perfective | Progressive | Passive | Main (lexical) |
| might | have |  |  | seen |
|  | has | been |  | trying |
|  |  | is | being | turned |
| should |  | be |  | buying |
| can |  |  | be | bought |
|  | have | been | being | considered |
| will | have | been | being | thought |

**2.4 The Structure of Verb Phrases. Their Grammatical Categories.**

The Verb Phrases exist of two types: finite VP and nonfinite VP. A finite VP is a verb phrase in which the first or only word is a finite verb, the rest of the verb phrase consisting of nonfinite verbs. Finite VPs can be distinguished as follows:

1. Finite verb phrases can occur as the VP of independent clauses.
2. Finite verb phrases have tense contrast, i.e. the distinction between present and past tenses:

Dear June is so original [59, p.87]

James sat down, all knees, elbows, frock-coat, and long white whiskers.[59, p.66]

c)There is person concord and number concord between the subject of a clause and the finite verb phrase. Concord is particularly clear with the present tense of be:

I am He/She/It is

} here } here

You are We/They are

But with most full verbs overt concord is restricted to a contrast between the 3rd person singular present and other persons of plural number.

He/She/Jim reads

} the paper every morning.

I/We/You/They read

With modal auxiliaries there is no overt concord at all:

I/You/She/ We/They can play the cello.

1. Finite verb phrases have mood, which indicates the factual, or counterfactual status of predication. In contrast to the “unmarked” Indicative Mood, we distinguish the “marked” moods Imperative (used to express commands and other directive speech acts), and Subjunctive (used to express a wish, recommendation, etc.)

A clause with a finite verb phrase as its Verb element is called a “finite verb clause” or, just a “finite clause”. Similarly, a clause with a nonfinite verb phrase as its Verb element is called a “nonfinite (verb) clause”.

The infinitive ((to)call), the –ing participle (calling), the –ed participle (called) are the nonfinite forms of the verb. Hence any phrase in which one of these verb forms is the first or only word (disregarding the infinitive marker to) is a nonfinite verb phrase. Such phrases do not normally occur as the verb phrase of an independent clause. Compare:

The past subjunctive (or were-subjunctive) survives only in were as a past form of be. It is distinguishable from the past indicative of be only in the 1st and 3rd persons singular:

If she was leaving, you would have heard about it. [indicative]

If she were leaving, you would have heard about it.[subjunctive]

The indicative was is more common in less formal style.

Uses of the subjunctive. We distinguish two main uses of the present subjunctive:

1. the Mandative Subjunctive is used in a that-clause after an expression of such notions as demand, recommendation, proposal, intention (e.g. We insist, prefer, request; It is necessary, desirable, imperative ; the decision, requirement, resolution ).
2. The Formulaic (or optative) Subjunctive is used in certain set expressions:

God save the Queen Heaven forbid that…

Long live the King Be that as it may…

Come what may Suffice it to say that…

The past subjunctive is hypothetical in meaning. It is used in conditional and concessive clauses and in subordinate clauses after wish and suppose:

If I were a rich man, I would…

I wish the journey were over.

Just suppose everyone were to act like you.

Subjunctive were is often replaced in informal style by indicative was.

**Voice. Active and Passive**. The distinction between active and passive applies only to sentences where the verb is transitive. The difference between the active voice and the passive voice involves both the verb phrase and the clause as a whole. In the verb phrase, the passive adds a form of the auxiliary be followed by the –ed participle of the main verb. For example:

Kisses is kissed

Has kissed has been kissed

May be kissing may be being kissed

At the clause level, changing from active to passive has the following results:

1. the active subject, if retained, becomes the passive agent.
2. the active object becomes the passive subject.
3. the preposition by is inserted before the agent.

**Aspect**. Aspect is a grammatical category that reflects the way in which the action of a verb is viewed with respect on time. We recognize two aspects in English, the perfect and the progressive, which may combine in a complex verb phrase, and are marked for present or past tense:

Present perfect - has examined

Past perfect - had examined

Present progressive - is examining

Past progressive - was examining

Present perfect progressive - has been examining

Past perfect progressive - had been examining

**Conclusions to Part II**

1. Verbs are the very large lexical word class in English. Verb is a part of speech which denotes an action.
2. The verb has the following grammatical categories: person, number, tense, aspect, voice and mood. These categories can be expressed by means of affixes, inner flexion and by form words.
3. As a word class verbs can be divided into three main categories, according to their function within the verb phrase: the open class of Full Verbs (or lexical verbs), and the very small closed classes of Primary Verbs, and Modal Auxiliary Verbs.
4. The verb has finite and nonfinite forms (called verbals). There are three verbals in English: the participle, the gerund and the infinitive.

5. The subclasses of lexical verb that can be identified tend to depend on the context in which they occur. Whilst the traditional grammars distinguished between transitive and intransitive verbs.

6. Verbs are the nucleus around which sentences are typically built.

7. Whether an item takes a specifier or not is an important characterizing feature for the functional categories. Those lexical categories that take a specifier are verbs; those that do not are nouns and adjectives.

8. Verb phrase is the part of the predicate constituent that does not contain optional adverbials.

9. The simplest verb phrase will be a main lexical verb on its own. The other constituents of the verb phrase will be modal auxiliary, perfect auxiliary, progressive auxiliary, and passive verb.

10. The Verb Phrases exist of two types: finite VP and nonfinite VP. They have the grammatical categories of the verb itself.

Part III. Discourse Analysis of Verb Phrases in John Galsworthy’s

FORSYTE SAGA. Part I. THE MAN OF PROPERTY (pp.1-10)

## In his novel “FORSYTE SAGA” John Galsworthy preferably uses perfective and lexical verb phrases.

## The following table shows the prevailing quantity of lexical verb phrases, that mainly denote human feelings, emotions, thoughts, decisions. And the other major group of verb phrases the author uses is the perfective verb phrases. Galsworthy uses them in order to show, how his personages’ intentions are put into life, what means do they use, and what kind of results they bring out. Rarely he uses modal verbs, passive voice, and progressive verbs.

# Summary of verb phrase structures

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of VP | Example | Sum | % |
| Modal | She ought to be very happy.  This it was that she would have to lay down when it came to her turn to die.  How impossible and wrong would it have been for any family, with the regard for appearances which should ever characterize, the great upper middle-class, to feel otherwise than uneasy! | 11 | 16 |
| Perfective | A very sweet look had come into the old lady's face, she kissed the girl's check with trembling fervour.  It was her world, this family, and she knew no other, had never perhaps known any other.  Still, he had forfeited his right to be there, had cheated her of the complete fulfilment of her family pride, deprived her of the rightful pleasure of seeing and kissing him. | 20 | 22 |
| Progressive | Old Jolyon's coachman, was driving June and Bosinney to the theatre, and remarked to the butler…..  At the window his father, James, was still scrutinizing the marks on the piece of china.. | 6 | 12 |
| Passive | Soames Forsyte, flat-shouldered, clean-shaven, flat-cheeked, flat-waisted, yet with something round and secret about his whole  appearance, looked downwards and aslant at Aunt Ann.  Her hands, gloved in French grey, were crossed one over the other, her grave, charming face held to one side, and the eyes of all men near were fastened on it. | 9 | 15 |
| Lexical | Aunt Ann turned her old eyes from one to the other.  When Winifred married Dartie, I made him bring every penny into settlement--lucky thing, too--they'd ha' had nothing by this time!" | 33 | 35 |

The verb phrase can have just a verb, or a verb followed by a noun phrase, or a verb followed by an adjective phrase, or a verb followed by an adverb phrase, or a verb followed by a preposition phrase, or a verb followed by preposition phrase+ verb phrase, or a verb followed by two or more different phrases.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Verb phrase followed by other phrases | Example | Sum | % |
| VP having just a verb | “What are you givin?”  If Irene had no money she would not be so foolish as to do anything wrong; for they said--they said--she had been asking for a separate room; but, of course, Soames had not....  Timothy, indeed, was seldom seen. | 17 | 9 |
| VP followed by a NP | He was an architect, not in itself a sufficient reason for wearing such a hat.  Never had there been so full an assembly, for, mysteriously united in spite of all their differences, they had taken arms against a common peril.  There was warmth, but little colour, in her cheeks. | 37 | 20 |
| VP followed by an AdjP | If he were sleek, well-brushed, prosperous-looking, it was more necessary to give him nice things.  Her large, dark eyes were soft. | 21 | 11 |
| VP followed by AN AdvP | In the end each gave exactly what was right and proper.  His forehead sloped back towards the crown of his head, and bulged out in bumps over the eyes, like foreheads seen in the Lion-house at the Zoo.  And every now and then a Forsyte would come up, sidle round, and take a look at him. | 27 | 14 |
| VP followed by PP | Had she not said to Mrs. Soames--who was always so beautifully dressed—that feathers were vulgar?    Like cattle when a dog comes into the  field, they stood head to head and shoulder to shoulder, prepared to run upon and trample the invader to death.    How impossible and wrong would it  have been for any family, with the regard for appearances which should ever characterize, the great upper middle-class, to feel otherwise than uneasy!  A tall woman, with a beautiful figure, which some member of the family had once compared to heathen goddess, stood looking at these two with a shadowy smile. | 34 | 17 |
| VP followed by a PP+VP | He had never committed the imprudence of marrying, or encumbering himself in any way with children. | 11 | 6 |
| VP followed by two or more phrases. | The eldest by some years of all the Forsytes, she held a peculiar position amongst them.    The author of the uneasiness stood talking to June by the further door.  He stretched out his hand to meet that of a dapper, clean-shaven man, with hardly a hair on his head, a long, broken nose, full lips, and cold grey eyes under rectangular brows. | 42 | 23 |

**Conclusions to Part III**

1. We have made a discourse analysis of the verb phrases in Forsyte Saga by John Galsworthy. As we may conclude the author frequently uses verb phrases.
2. According to the data from the tables we come to a conclusion that Galsworthy mainly describes people’s acts, deeds and the results of these acts. This is why the author preferably uses the verb phrases of movement.
3. Galsworthy also uses simple lexical verbs to show feeling, emotions, thoughts of his heroes.

Conclusions

1. Syntax is the branch of grammar dealing with the ways in which words, with or without appropriate inflections, are arranged to show connections of meaning within the sentence.

2. The main object of syntax is sentence construction.

3. One of the most obvious yet important ways in which languages differ is the order of the main elements in a sentence.

4. The basic word order in English clauses is subject–verb–object, articles precede the noun they modify, and auxiliary verbs precede the main verb. These are English-specific syntactic rules.

5. The connection between the words in a sentence is realized through the changes in their forms and these changes in the form of the words to indicate their function in the sentence are called ‘inflections’, and the study of the formation of words and how they may change their form is called morphology.

6. Syntax investigates simple sentences, as well as their combinations called complex sentences.

7. A central part of the description of what speakers do is characterizing the grammatical (or well-formed) sentences of a language and distinguishing them from ungrammatical or (ill-formed) sentences.

8. Two interrelated aspects of syntax: relational structure and constituent structure.

9. Words organization into phrases. Types of phrases.

10. In order to check if word combination is a phrase, the tests for phrases are to be done.

11. Verbs are the very large lexical word class in English. Verb is a part of speech which denotes an action.

12.Verb has the following grammatical categories: person, number, tense, aspect, voice and mood. These categories can be expressed by means of affixes, inner flexion and by form words.

13. As a word class verbs can be divided into three main categories, according to their function within the verb phrase: the open class of Full Verbs (or lexical verbs), and the very small closed classes of Primary Verbs, and Modal Auxiliary Verbs.

14.The verb has finite and nonfinite forms (called verbals). There are three verbals in English: the participle, the gerund and the infinitive.

15.The subclasses of lexical verb that can be identified tend to depend on the context in which they occur. Whilst the traditional grammars distinguished between transitive and intransitive verbs.

16. Verbs are the nucleus around which sentences are typically built.

17.Whether an item takes a specifier or not is an important characterizing feature for the functional categories. Those lexical categories that take a specifier are verbs; those that do not are nouns and adjectives.

18.Verb phrase is the part of the predicate constituent that does not contain optional adverbials.

19. The simplest verb phrase will be a main lexical verb on its own. The other constituents of the verb phrase will be modal auxiliary, perfect auxiliary, progressive auxiliary, and passive verb.

20. The Verb Phrases exist of two types: finite VP and nonfinite VP. They have the grammatical categories of the verb itself.

21. We have made a discourse analysis of the verb phrases in Forsyte Saga by John Galsworthy. As we may conclude the author frequently uses verb phrases.

22. According to the data from the tables we come to a conclusion that Galsworthy mainly describes people’s acts, deeds and the results of these acts. This is why the author preferably uses the verb phrases of movement. Out of about 80 sentences examined on pp.1-10 35% contain simple lexical verb phrases, 22% - perfective verb phrases, 16% - with mostly modal verbs, in 15% of the sentences are preferably used passive VP and only in 6% of all sentences Galsworthy uses progressive verb phrases.

23. To make his language rich and colorful John Galsworthy uses verb phrases in combination with another word phrases. According to our research verb phrases are mainly proceeded by two or more different word combinations – 23% out of 226 sentences investigated, including 20% of the noun phrases. Verb phrases are also followed by preposition phrases – 17%, adverb phrases – 14%, adjective phrases – 11%. The minority of the word combinations following verb phrases is after verb phrases containing just a verb itself – 9%, and phrases including preposition phrase and verb phrase again.

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**Glossary of Linguistic Terms**

Adjective – is a word expressing a quality of a substance.

Adverb – is a part of speech which expresses some circumstances that attend an action or state, or points out some characteristic features of an action or a quality.

Article – is a structural part of speech used with nouns.

Aspect - is a grammatical category that reflects the way in which the action of a verb is viewed with respect on time.

Auxiliary verbs – verbs that have little or no lexical meaning. verbs, they help to form complex verb forms.

Cleft test - taking the original sentence, and putting it into the frame like: It is/was/will be \_\_\_\_ that/who \_\_\_\_, without changing it in any way except for taking one part of it out and putting it in the first slot, and putting the rest of the sentence in the second slot.

Constituent structure - the hierarchical organization of the units into a sentence.

Finite forms - lexical verbs that do not need an auxiliary verb in order to function in main clauses.

Intransitive verb - occurs with both indirect and direct objects.

Modal verbs express the attitude of the speaker to the reality, possibility or probability of the action he speaks about.

Morphology - the study of the formation of words and how they may change their form.

Movement test – a specific case of movement and the formation of a passive sentence.

Nonfinite forms – verbs that do not express person, number or mood and cannot be used as the predicate of a sentence.

Noun – is a word expressing substance in the widest sense of the word.

Noun phrase - the constituent composed of a noun and an article.

Object – is a secondary part of the sentence which completes or restricts the meaning of the verb or sometimes an adjective, a word denoting state, or a noun.

Predicate – is the second principal part of the sentence which expresses an action, state, or quality of the person or thing, denoted by the subject.

Preposition – is a part of speech which denotes the relations between the objects and phenomena.

Pronoun – is a part of speech which points out objects and their qualities without naming them.

Relational structure – kind of syntax investigating grammatical relations like subject and direct object; encompassing relationships like modifier–modified possessor–possessed .

Sentence – is a unit of speech whose grammatical structure conforms to the laws of the language and which serves as the chief means of conveying a thought.

Subject – is the principal part of two-member sentence which is grammatically independent of the other parts of the sentence and on which the second principal part (the predicate) is grammatically dependent, i.e. in most case sit agrees with the subject in number and person.

Substitution test - substitution of a set of words with a single other word, without changing the overall meaning, in order to check if the words form a phrase.

Syntax - the branch of grammar dealing with the ways in which words, with or without appropriate inflections, are arranged to show connections of meaning within the sentence

Transitive verb - occurs with an object in subject-predicator-object structures

Verb – is a part of speech which denotes an action.

Verb phrase - that part of the predicate constituent that does not contain optional adverbials.