

Element realization types

Sentence elements can be realized by linguistic structures of very different form. The verb element is always a *verb phrase*. This may, as in all the examples used so far, be ‘finite’ (showing tense, mood, aspect, and voice) or ‘non-finite’ (not showing tense or mood but still capable of indicating aspect and voice). Consider the three types of *non-finite verb phrase* functioning as the V element in the italicized *non-finite clauses*:

Mary wanted [to be (V) a student (Cs) at that university (A)] (Od).
[Carefully (A) searching (V) the room (Oj)] (A), John found a ring.
[Made (V) the chairman (Co) every year (A)] (A), he was very busy

Whether finite or non-finite, the verb phrase can consist of one word, as or of more than one word, in which case the phrase consists of a ‘head verb’ preceded by one or more ‘auxiliary verbs’ as with the verb phrases in the following: (the first three are finite, the fourth non-finite):

He had given the girl an apple.
He may be growing happier.
He had been challenged rudely, and having been challenged he was angry.

The subject of a sentence may be a ‘clause’ as in
That she answered the question correctly pleased him.

But it is usually a ‘noun phrase’, at its simplest a pronoun such as *They* or a proper noun such as *John*. But a noun phrase may be an indeterminately long and complex structure having a noun as head, preceded by other words such as an article, an adjective, or another noun, and followed by a prepositional phrase or by a relative clause; it is by no means uncommon to find all such items present in a noun phrase:

The new gas stove in the kitchen which I bought last month has a very efficient oven.

Subject complements, direct objects, and object complements may be realized by the same range of structures as subjects:

He was the chairman.
She saw the chairman.
They made him the chairman.

But subject and object complements have the additional possibility of being realized by adjective phrases (having an adjective as head), as in:
She made him happy/very much happier.

Indirect objects, on the other hand, have fewer possibilities than subjects, and their realizations are chiefly noun phrases, as in:

He had given the girl an apple.

Unlike direct objects and subjects, they cannot be realized by *that* clauses.

Finally, adverbials can be realized (a) by adverb phrases, having an adverb as head; (b) by noun phrases; (c) by prepositional phrases —that is, structures consisting of a noun phrase dominated by a preposition; and (d) by clauses, finite or non-finite:

(a) *John very carefully searched the room.*

(b) *They make him the chairman every year.*

(c) *She studied at a large university.*

(d) *He grew happier when his friend arrived.*

Seeing the large crowd, John stopped his car.

A part of each of the sentences below is underlined. Indicate by which of the following *linguistic structures* the underlined part is being realized:

- a simple (= one-word) finite verb phrase
- b complex finite verb phrase
- c simple non-finite verb phrase (including infinitive with *to*)
- d complex non-finite verb phrase
- e finite clause
- f non-finite clause
- g prepositional phrase
- h noun phrase
- i adjective phrase
- j adverb phrase

- 1 Fire can cause great damage to any city.
- 2 The Great Fire of London started in a bakery.
- 3 It burnt furiously for four days.
- 4 Pepys has given us a vivid account of it.
- 5 Who has given a vivid account of it?
- 6 The man who has just spoken is Benjamin Hall.
- 7 They suddenly decided to christen the bell Big Ben.
- 8 The idea occurred to them while Hall was speaking.
- 9 The man who won the contract was Dent.
- 10 The next day we were sitting in the car.
- 11 Leaving us at the gate, they disappeared.
- 12 Leaving us at the gate like that was very thoughtless.
- 13 Hand the man at the gate your ticket.
- 14 I never imagined that such a thing could happen.
- 15 The strange thing is that we never heard of him again.
- 16 I thoroughly enjoyed meeting June again.
- 17 Meeting her again has left me very happy.
- 18 There were the cakes, burnt to a cinder.
- 19 GRAVE DOUBTS WHETHER PEACE WILL LAST
- 20 Graves doubts whether agreement can be reached.