



# A University Grammar of English

Lecture No. 3

# Transformational Relations

One can distinguish the various clause types by means of "*transformational relations*", or **relations of grammatical paraphrase**. Clauses which contain object noun phrases are distinguished by their conversion capability into passive clauses, the object noun phrase assuming the function of the subject, the subject of the active sentence *may appear* in an *optional by-phrase*, symbolized as (A).

# Transformational Relations

- We watch TV every Sunday evening. (SVOA)
- TV is watched every Sunday evening. (SVpassA)
- My boss bought Fred a ticket. (SVOO)
- Fred was bought a ticket (*by my boss*). (SVpassOd(A))
- A ticket was bought for Fred (*by my boss*). (SVpassOI(A))

# Question

**Do differences in grammatical structures always entail semantic differences as well?**



# Semantic Equivalence

Although the grammatical structures of the clause patterns are different from one another. There is sometimes a semantic equivalence between clause types **SV, SVC and SVA** :

- **SV = SVCs**

The house is blazing. = The house is ablaze.

The boat is floating. = The boat is adrift.

# Semantic Equivalence

- **SV = SVA**

He hurried. = He went fast.

- **SVCs = SVA**

They were breathless. = They were out of breath.

He is healthy. = He is in good health.

He is a suspect. = He is under suspicion.

# Intensive Relationship

Both subject and object complements are in a copular relationship with another clause element. The subject complement relates to the subject, and the verb is ***copular***, i.e. it is either a ***linking verb*** or a ***verb to be***. ***The copular verb is one that is capable of showing close relationship between two clause elements.*** In SVC clause type the relationship between the subject and the complement is a very intensive one.

- ***My class is empty.***

# Intensive Relationship

In **SVOC** clause type, the object complement relates to the direct object. This kind of implied relationship between the object and the object complement can be expressed by means of **a corresponding SVC** sentence with a copular verb, **be if the object complement is a current attribute** and **become if it is a resulting attribute**.

- We find **them very pleasant**. (They are very pleasant)
- Carol made **Jim and Mark her assistants**. (Jim and Mark became Carol's assistants)



# Intensive Relationship

The concept of intensive relationship can be further extended to the relation of subject to adverbial and object to adverbial in SVA and SVOA clause types respectively.

- I put *the kettle on the stove*. (The kettle is on the stove)
- He wants *the payment in dollars*. (The payment is in dollars)

# Clause Type Transformation

**SVOO** clauses can also be transferred into **SVOA** clauses by the substitution of a prepositional phrase for the indirect object, with a change of order:

- He bought his wife a ring.(SVOO). He bought a ring for his wife.(SVOA)
- She sent me a text message. (SVOO). She sent a text message to me. (SVOA)

# Clause Type Transformation

Other prepositions, such as *with* & *of*, are occasionally found:

- I'll play you a game of tennis. (SVOO). I'll play a game of tennis with/against you. (SVOA)
- She asked Jim a favor. (SVOO). She asked a favor of Jim. (SVOA)

# Multiple Class Membership of Verbs

Some verbs can belong to a number of different classes, and hence can occur in more than one clause pattern. When this happens there is often a slight change of meaning. The verb *get* is the most versatile verb which can occur, in various senses, in six clause patterns. Other verbs range between two to three clause patterns.

- He'll get a surprise. (SVO)
- He's getting angry. (SVC)

# Multiple Class Membership of Verbs

- He got through the window. (SVA)
- He got her a splendid present. (SVOO)
- He got his shoes and socks wet. (SVOC)
- He got himself into trouble. (SVOA)
  
- *We have eaten.* (SV)
- *We have eaten* very well. (SVA)
- *We have eaten* an apple pie. (SVO)



# Structural Ambiguity

Ambiguities can arise because of the multiple class membership of verbs:

- I found him a good roommate.
- He called his wife a waitress.

The above two sentences could be interpreted either as SVOC or SVOO.