

# 7

## CLAUSE ELEMENTS

- 1 Identify the syntactic function of the underlined element in each of the following sentences.
  - a. Alice was getting very tired.  
subject predicative
  - b. She was sitting beside her sister on the bank.  
verbal
  - c. Her sister was reading a book.  
direct object
  - d. Once or twice she had peeped into the book.  
adverbial (circumstantial)
  - e. The book had no pictures or conversation.  
direct object
  - f. The hot day made her very sleepy.  
object predicative
  - g. Suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.  
subject
  - h. At the time it all seemed quite natural.  
subject predicative
  - i. If you drink much from a bottle marked 'poison', it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later.  
adverbial (circumstantial)

j. However, this bottle was *not* marked ‘poison’.

adverbial (linking)

k. She generally gave herself very good advice.

indirect object

2 Explain the difference in form and meaning between the members of each pair.

a. 1 The cat was teasing the magpie.

2 The magpie was teasing the cat.

There is a difference of word order in the two sentences. In sentence (a1) the noun “cat” is the head of the noun phrase that functions as subject, whereas the noun “magpie” is the head of the noun phrase that functions as direct object. In sentence (a2) it is the noun “magpie” that functions as the head noun in the subject, whereas “cat” is the head noun in the direct object. Sentence (a1) means that the magpie was the target of the teasing, while the opposite was the case in sentence (a2).

b. 1 Tom bought her a canoe.

2 Tom bought her canoe.

The most obvious difference in form between these sentences is that we find the indefinite article “a” in sentence (b1), whereas in sentence (b2) we do not. This leads to a difference in clause pattern. In sentence (b1) the clause pattern is S (Tom), V (bought), iO (her) and dO (a canoe). In sentence (b2) the clause pattern is S (Tom), V (bought) and dO (her canoe). “Her” is a personal pronoun in (b1) and a possessive determiner in (b2). Sentence (b1) means that Tom gave her the canoe that he had purchased. Sentence (b2) means that he bought a canoe that belonged to her.

c. 1 The problem has an obvious solution.

2 The problem obviously has a solution.

In these two sentences there is a difference in clause pattern. In sentence (c1) the clause pattern is S-V-dO, whereas the clause pattern in sentence (c2) is S-A-V-dO. There is also a lexical difference between the adjective “obvious” and the adverb “obviously”. The adjective is part of the noun phrase that functions as direct object in sentence (c1), while the adverb in sentence (c2) functions as a stance adverbial. This makes the elements that function as direct objects different. In sentence (c1) the direct object is realized by a noun phrase that consists of the determiner “an” (“-n” because of the initial vowel sound in the next word), the premodifier “obvious” and the head “solution”. In sentence (c2) the direct object is realized by a noun phrase

that consists of the determiner “a” and the head “solution”. Sentence (c1) indicates that there is a self-evident way this problem can be solved. Sentence (c2) basically means the same thing, but the difference is that it clearly involves the judgment or opinion of the speaker/writer (stance adverbial).

- d. 1 The bridge was closed by then.  
2 The bridge was closed by the police.

The difference between these sentences lies in the prepositional phrases that function as adverbials. There is no difference in clause pattern (S-V-A). In sentence (d1) the adverbial is realized by a prepositional phrase in which the adverb “then” functions as the complement of the preposition “by”. In sentence (d2) the noun phrase “the police” is the complement of the preposition “by”. Sentence (d1) focuses on the fact that bridge was closed by the time they came or checked (circumstantial time adverbial), while sentence (d2) focuses on the doers or agents of the action (circumstantial participant adverbial).

- e. 1 We are not best friends yet.  
2 Yet, we are not best friends.

There is a word order difference between these sentences. There is also a comma in sentence (e2), which we do not find in sentence (e1). In sentence (e1) the clause pattern is S-V-sP-A (“not” may also be regarded as a separate adverbial), and the adverb “yet” functions as a circumstantial time adverbial. In sentence (e2) the clause pattern is A-S-V-sP (“not” can also be regarded as a separate adverbial), and the adverb “yet” here functions as a linking adverbial. In sentence (e1) the use of the adverb “yet” indicates that they may very well become best friends soon, whereas the use of the adverb “yet” in sentence (e2) is used to contrast something stated before to the fact that they are not best friends.

- 3 Determine whether the underlined adverbial in each sentence is a circumstantial adverbial, a stance adverbial or a linking adverbial.
- a. You know how to behave nicely.  
circumstantial
- b. Anyway, I enjoyed these relaxed performances.  
stance
- c. I’m better off most weeks.  
circumstantial

- d. If the plant is still green, then it is probably alive.  
stance
- e. If the plant is still green, then it is probably alive.  
circumstantial
- f. Comsat also sold meteorological information.  
linking
- g. We took him to the Castle Inn.  
circumstantial
- h. They sold information to a competing firm.  
circumstantial
- i. I'm not really worried about it to be honest.  
stance
- j. For that reason he volunteered to look after Ray Marsh.  
circumstantial

4 Read the following text and answer the questions below:

Detectives investigating a drive-by style shotgun attack in Leeds have arrested a man on suspicion of attempted murder. Two men were injured when a shotgun was fired from one car at another in Maud Avenue, Beeston. Police said it was fired twice from a black BMW after it pulled alongside a Toyota Yaris at around 11pm on Wednesday. The two victims suffered minor injuries, including a pellet wound to the hand, in the shooting. A 24-year-old man was arrested as part of a planned firearms operation at an address in Beeston at 3.30am today. West Yorkshire Police's Firearms Prevent Team are continuing to carry out extensive enquiries into the shooting.

- a. What is the subject of the first sentence of the text?  
*Detectives investigating a drive-by style shotgun attack in Leeds*
- b. Find two adverbs in the text and state their syntactic function.  
*twice* : circumstantial time adverbial.  
*today* : circumstantial time adverbial.
- c. Identify circumstantial adverbials of the following types in the text: time, place, reason.  
*in Leeds* (place); *on suspicion of attempted murder* (reason); *when a shotgun was fired from one car at another in Maud Avenue, Beeston* (time); *from one car at another* (place); *in Maud Avenue, Beeston* (place); *twice* (time); *from a black BMW* (place); *after it pulled alongside a Toyota Yaris at around 11pm on Wednesday* (time); *alongside a Toyota Yaris* (place); *at around 11pm on Wednesday* (time); *in the shooting*

(place); as part of a planned firearms operation at an address in Beeston (reason); at 3.30am today (time).

- d. What is the syntactic function of the last phrase of the text (underlined)?  
direct object

5 Notes based on searches in the Corpus of Contemporary American English at <http://corpus.byu.edu/> as per June 2018.

- a. One example where *considered* is followed only by a direct object: ...they considered canceling the project... (*canceling the project* is dO)
- b. One example where *considered* is followed by a direct object and an object predicative: ...because they considered him a lowly hairdresser (*him* = dO, a *lowly hairdresser* = oP)
- c. The verb *send* can occur with either an indirect object or a prepositional phrase with *to* functioning as an adverbial. *Sent a message to* is much more common than *sent \* a message* in the corpus.
- d. The adverb *negatively* could have been used instead of *in a negative manner* in most cases, with no difference in meaning. However, there are some cases in which *negatively* would seem unidiomatic, e.g. *to behave in a negative manner*; *They listen for a heart beat and shake their heads in a negative manner*. As regards *certainly* and *in a certain manner*, the adverb tends to be interpreted as a stance adverbial, so in order to emphasize the circumstantial meaning of manner, the phrase *in a certain manner* may be a better option.
- e. The phrase *during the \** occurs with both adjectives and nouns in the place of the asterisk. The five most frequent nouns in the pattern *during the \** are *day, war, summer, course, campaign*. Some of these are also frequent after the adjectives following *during the (first, past, last, early)*.
- f. *Furthermore* occurs 14459 times in the corpus. It is most frequent in academic English (judged by frequency per million words), and least frequent in spoken English and fiction. The adverb typically functions as a linking adverbial.