

The background features a large, faded watermark of the University of Basrah logo. The logo is circular and contains a palm tree in the center, an open book at the base, and the year '1975' on both sides. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF BASRAH' and 'COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR HUMAN SCIENCES' is written around the bottom edge, while Arabic text is at the top.

English Grammar
Fourth Year
2021-2022

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Week 1: **The Simple Sentence**

Lecture No. 2: **Basic Clause Patterns**

Basic Clause Patterns

- The clause elements (e.g. verb, complement, object, etc.) combine to produce ‘patterns’ or ‘structures’. There are a number of different possible clause patterns in English, including various sub-patterns of major patterns.
- A traditional way of describing verb patterns is in terms of the grammatical functions of the words that follow the verb in a clause. Seven major patterns can be identified which occur with single word lexical verbs.

Subject + Verb (SV)

This pattern involves the use of intransitive verbs which have no object and is usually straightforward for language learners, *e.g. Sue's cat died. I have retired.* Sometimes, however, there is an optional adverbial after the verb, *e.g. I waited outside. They left an hour ago.* This may make the pattern seem to be different. Compare, for example:

- *Our neighbors returned next day. (SV)*
- *Our neighbors returned our newspaper. (SVO)*

There are very few verbs which are typically only intransitive. Examples are *come, go, wait, sleep.* Even some of these can have transitive uses, *e.g. This bedroom can sleep three people.*

Subject + Verb + Object (SVO)

Verbs which are used transitively with one direct object are said to be mono-transitive. They take the **SVO** pattern, e.g.

- I cooked the lunch.
- Max described his new job.
- Sue didn't mention her worries.

Many verbs (e.g. *break*) can be used both transitively and intransitively, sometimes with changes of meaning, e.g.

- The glass broke. (SV) (intransitive)
- I broke the glass. (SVO) (transitive)

Subject + Verb + Complement (SVC)

- The verb (*be*) is by far the most frequently used verb in English. In some ways (*be*) is not like other verbs at all. It cannot be classified as either transitive or intransitive. In many languages there is no equivalent of the English verb *to be*. For example, in English we can say *I am a pilot* or *Fred is happy*, but in some other languages like Arabic these sentences have the form *I (a) pilot* or *Fred happy*.
- The verb (*be*) is sometimes called a *copular verb* because it links elements. The copula has almost no meaning of its own, but it functions as a link between the subject and the adjective or noun in the predicate. That is, something is needed after the copula to complete the predicate. Adjectives or nouns which complete the predicate are called subject complements. In the sentences *Fred is busy* or *Sue is the director*, the complements are *busy* and *the director*.

Subject + Verb + Complement (SVC)

In most sentences which contain the **SVC** pattern, the verb is a form of *be*. Other verbs which can occur in this pattern include *seem, feel, get, become, grow, smell, stay, taste, appear, sound, remain, look*. These verbs also need a complement, e.g. *She seems pleased. He became ill. He remained a bachelor.*

Some of the verbs that occur in the SVC pattern can also occur in other patterns, e.g.:

- Fred felt sick. (SVC) The customer felt the fabric. (SVO)
- The food tasted good. (SVC) Fred tasted the food. (SVO)

Subject + Verb + Adverbial (SVA)

In many sentences adverbials are optional. We can say *I opened the door quickly* or *I opened the door*. However, when adverbials occur after the verb *be*, they are usually obligatory, e.g. *Sam is on the committee*. Most adverbials which occur anywhere else except after part of the verb *be* are optional and can be moved to other positions in the sentence without changing the meaning, e.g. *The movie finished at 10.30* could be *At 10.30 the movie finished*.

Subject + Verb + Object + Object (SVOO)

The SVOO pattern has two object noun phrases, and is said to have di-transitive or double transitive verbs.

| S | V | O | O |
|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| I | gave | them | our address. |
| I | bought | Fred | a ticket. |

The first object (*them, Fred*) is sometimes called an indirect object preceding the direct object. The SVOO pattern can usually be changed into an SVOA pattern (Pattern 7) in the following way:

| S | V | O | A |
|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| He | gave | our address | to them. |
| He | bought | a ticket | for Fred. |

Subject + Verb + Object + Complement (SVOC)

The **SVOC** pattern is not common. The relationship between the two nouns that come after the verb is like the relationship between the nouns that come before and after the verb *to be*, e.g.

S V O C

They elected Adams President

=

S V C

Adams was President.

Sometimes the last item is an adjective instead of a noun, e.g.

S V O C

The ride made me dizzy

=

SV C

I was dizzy.

Subject + Verb + Object + Adverbial (SVOA)

In this pattern some verbs have an obligatory adverbial. The most frequent verb taking this pattern is *put*, e.g. *I put the book on the shelf* (cf. **I put the book*). For some verbs which take this pattern, however, the adverbial is not obligatory, e.g. *hold, leave, keep, send, bring, take*.

e.g :I sent a letter (to my aunt).

e.g :I left my phone number (with the receptionist).

A Point of Discussion

The *direct object, complement, adverbial* are obligatory elements of clause structure in the sense that they are required for the complementation of the verb. *However, in some cases, a direct object or an object complement could be considered grammatically optional*.*

- They are hunting. (SV) ----- They are hunting ducks. (SVO)
- They crowned him. (SVO)----- They crowned him king. (SVOC)
- He is teaching. (SV) ----- He is teaching chemistry. (SVO)
- He is teaching them chemistry. (SVOO)

This case is regarded to be a case of *conversion*, whereby a verb like (hunt) is transferred from the transitive into the intransitive category. Thus, "*They are hunting.*" is an example of clause type (SV) rather than of (SVO) with optional deletion of the direct object.

Optional Adverbials

The seven sentence patterns are expandable. They can be expanded by the addition of various optional adverbials:

- **SV:** (A) S V (A). e.g. (Usually) the bell rings (in time).
- **SVA:** (A) S V A (A). e.g. (In Iraq) all students are on vacation (in spring).
- **SVOO:** S (A) V O O. e.g. They (kindly) found the displaced shelters.