

SEVEN

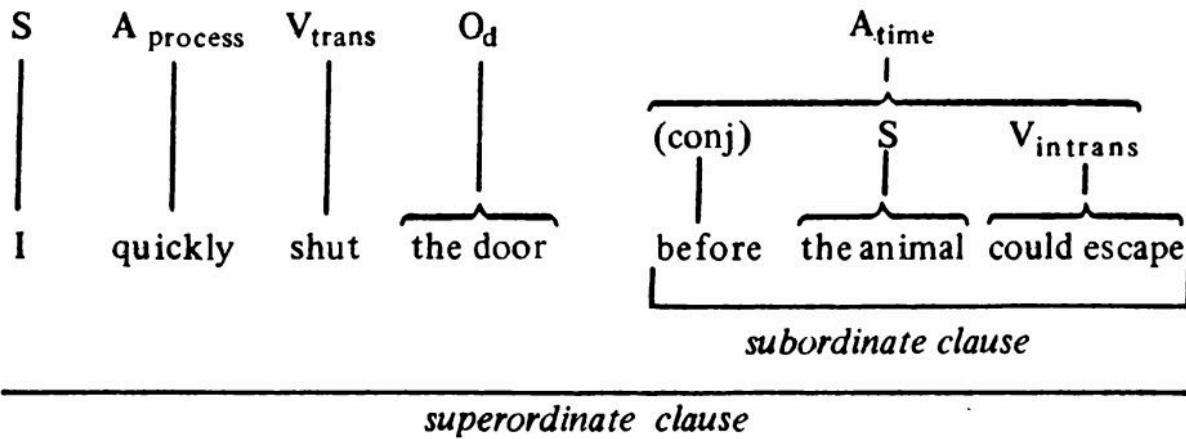
THE SIMPLE SENTENCE

Clause patterns

7.1

Simple and complex sentences

It was pointed out in 2.4 that elements such as V(erb) and O(bject) were constituents of sentences and also of clauses within sentences. From now on, we shall speak of *clauses* and *clause structure* whenever a statement is true both for sentences and for the clauses of which it is composed:



In the present chapter, however, we shall be dealing only with simple sentences: that is, sentences consisting of only one clause.

7.2

Clause types

Concentrating on those elements that are normally obligatory, we can usefully distinguish seven clause types which we may designate in italics with the abbreviations explained in 2.4-10:

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------|------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) <i>SVA</i> | S | V _{intens} | A _{place} |
| | Mary | is | in the house |
| (2) <i>SVC</i> | S | V _{intens} | C _s |
| | Mary | is | { kind |
| | | | { a nurse |
| (3) <i>SVO</i> | S | V _{monotrans} | O _d |
| | Somebody | caught | the ball |

(4) <i>SVOA</i>	S	V _{complex trans}	O _d	A _{place}
	I	put	the plate	on the table
(5) <i>SVOC</i>	S	V _{complex trans}	O _d	C _o
	We	have proved	him	{ wrong a fool
(6) <i>SVOO</i>	S	V _{ditrans}	O _i	O _d
	She	gives	me	expensive presents
(7) <i>SV</i>	S	V _{intrans}		
	The child	laughed		

Note

[a] Most obligatory adjuncts are A_{place}, but there are many cases in which the term 'place' applies only in a broad metaphorical sense:

He is *without a job*

We kept him *off cigarettes*

while some are not A_{place} at all; 'They treated him *kindly*'

[b] Among the relatively minor patterns not accounted for here, we might mention S V O_i C_s:
John made Mary a good husband (ie 'John was a good husband to Mary').

7.3

Complementation

The elements O_d, C, and A in the above patterns are *obligatory* elements of clause structure in the sense that they are required for the complementation of the verb. By this we mean that, given the use of a particular verb in a particular sense, the sentence is incomplete if one of these elements is omitted: **I put the book* (Type *SVOA*) and **He resembled* (Type *SVO*) are unacceptable. In some cases, however, a direct object or object complement in one of these patterns may be considered grammatically optional:

He's eating – *cf* He's eating an apple (Type *SVO*)

He made her career – *cf* He made her career a success (Type *SVOC*)

He's teaching – *cf* He's teaching German (Type *SVO*). He's teaching the boys (German) (Type *SVOO*)

Our approach, however, will be to regard these as cases of conversion, whereby a verb such as *eat* is transferred from the transitive to the intransitive category. Thus *He's eating* is an instance of clause-type *SV* rather than of *SVO* (with optional deletion of the object).

7.4

Optional adverbials

The patterns of 7.2 can be expanded by the addition of various optional adverbials. For example (optional adverbials are bracketed):

<i>SV</i> :	(A)	S	V	(A)	
	(Sometimes)	she	sings	(beautifully)	
<i>SVA</i> :	(A)		S	V	(A) A
	(In America)	most	students	are (now)	on vacation
<i>SVOO</i> :	S	(A)	V	O	O
	She	(kindly)	sent	us	some photographs

7.5

Transformational relations

One way of distinguishing the various clause types is by means of 'transformational' relations, or relations of grammatical paraphrase.

Clauses containing a noun phrase as object are distinguished by their ability to be converted into passive clauses, the object noun phrase assuming the function of subject (V_{pass} = passive verb phrase), the subject appearing (if at all) in an optional *by*-phrase, symbolized here as [A]:

Many critics disliked the play (S V O_d) ↔ The play was disliked (by many critics) (S V_{pass} [A])

Where the passive draws more attention to the result than to the action or agency, the 'resulting' copula *get* frequently replaces *be*, though chiefly in rather informal usage:

The window *was* broken by my younger son
I know how the window *got* broken

A more gradually achieved result can be sometimes expressed by *become*:

With the passage of time, the furniture *became* covered in dust

The following examples illustrate the passive with other clause types:

Queen Victoria considered him a genius (S V O_d C_o) ↔ He was considered a genius by Queen Victoria (S V_{pass} C_s [A])

An intruder must have placed the ladder there (S V O_d A_{loc}) ↔ The ladder must have been placed there by an intruder (S V_{pass} A_{loc} [A])

My father gave me this watch (S V O_i O_d)

↔ { I was given this watch by my father (S V_{pass} O_d [A])
This watch was given me by my father (S V_{pass} O_i [A])

As Type *SVOO* clauses have two objects, they often have two passive forms, as shown above – one in which the direct object becomes subject, and another (more common) in which the indirect object becomes subject.

There is sometimes equivalence between Types *SV*, *SV_C*, and *SVA* as is shown by occasional equivalences of the following kind:

S V ↔ S V C_s

The baby is sleeping ↔ The baby is asleep

Two loaves will suffice ↔ Two loaves will be sufficient

S V ↔ S V A

He hurried ↔ He went fast

S V C_s ↔ S V A

He is jobless ↔ He is without a job

On the whole, English prefers to avoid the plain *SV* pattern where alternatives are available.

7.6

Intensive relationship

An *SVOC* clause is often equivalent to a clause with an infinitive or *that*-clause:

I imagined *her beautiful* ↔ $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{I imagined } \textit{her to be beautiful} \\ \text{I imagined } \textit{that she was beautiful} \end{array} \right.$

This equivalence shows that the O and the C of an *SVOC* clause are in the same relation to one another as the S and C of an *SVC* clause. The relation is expressed, wherever it is expressed at all, by an intensive verb. The intensive relationship is important in other aspects of grammar apart from clause patterns. It underlies, for example, relations of apposition.

Further, we may extend the concept of intensive relationship to the relation of subject to adverbial and object to adverbial in *SVA* and *SVOA* patterns respectively.

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

She sent *Jim* a card ↔ She sent a card *to Jim*

She left *Jim* a card ↔ She left a card *for Jim*

To and *for*, in their recipient senses, are the prepositions chiefly involved, but others, such as *with* and *of*, are occasionally found:

I'll play *you* a game of chess ↔ I'll play a game of chess *with/against you*

She asked *Jim* a favour ↔ She asked a favour *of Jim*

7.7

Multiple class membership of verbs

It must be borne in mind that one verb can belong, in various senses, to a number of different classes, and hence enter into a number of different clause types. The verb *get* is a particularly versatile one, being excluded only from Type *SV* (and not even from this universally):

SVC: He's getting angry

SVA: He got through the window

SVO: He'll get a surprise

SVOC: He got his shoes and socks wet

SVOA: He got himself into trouble

SVOO: He got her a splendid present