

# A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF VERB PATTERNS IN ENGLISH

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Most English sentences consist of one or more clauses. A clause contains a subject, a verbal phrase (perhaps of a single word), and sometimes one or more complements. The latter are traditionally described as elements needed to complete the meaning of the verb. Perhaps it would be better to think of them as elements required (or permitted) by the formal nature of the verb. There are several kinds of complements, and they may occur in various combinations. One convenient way to describe the facts is in terms of verb patterns (or more usu. sentence patterns). For example, the commonest pattern in ordinary English is probably one consisting of *a subject, a verb phrase, and a direct object*. (Or more technically, S → Nom + Aux + MV)<sup>1)</sup>

*John|ate|an apple.*

*John|should have eaten|an apple.*

There are a number of such verb patterns. Each has important grammatical peculiarities of its own and these patterns are numerous and intricate. An adequate understanding of English sentence structure must be based on a proper description of these patterns. And this is a study of these verb patterns or a classification of verbs by complement types<sup>2)</sup> (In this presentation we have studied MV, omitting Aux.)

The main verb in an English sentence generally fits into one of four classes:

(1) *be*<sup>3)</sup>, (2) intransitive, (3) transitive, (4) copulative.

Some verbs may belong to more than one class, and some classes have subclasses that contain verbs having most but not all of the features of the main class.

## I. BE

*Be* can occur before the following forms as predicates, but cannot occur with 'manner adverbials', as can many other verbs which can also form "action nominals".<sup>4)</sup>

(1) A: He is *happy (there) (now)*. The flower is *red*. (→ *a red flower*)

(2) N: He is *my friend*. but not \* *He is my friend quickly*.

nor \* *His being of my friend is quick*.

(cf.) { *He climbed the tree quickly*.

*His climbing of the tree was quick*.

(3) D or PN:

He is *in (out/away/over there/in the house/in charge, etc.)*. The party was *over*. We were *through*.

He is *from Japan*. She is *with child*. *What is it about?*

The food is *for dogs*. (→ dog food)

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Symbols mean as follows: N=noun, V=verb, A=adjective, D=adverb, P=preposition, Prt=particle, C=conjunction, Ven=past participle, Ving=present participle; subscript numbers are used to distinguish occurrences of forms. (MV=main verbs, Aux=auxiliary verbs) \* = ungrammatical, not acceptable.

- 1) Robert B. Lees, *The Grammar of English Nominalizations* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Research Center, 1960)
- 2) We have omitted verb patterns involving two or more verbs, or more technically the verbs whose complement-types are sentence transforms. (See also footnote 9.)
- 3) *Be* is morphologically very aberrant. It also behaves differently in sentences from all other verbs, i.e., syntactically it is unique also. For these reasons, among others, it is convenient to separate *be* initially from all other verbs. (We, of course, deal here with *be* only as an MV, not as an auxiliary verb.)
- 4) R. Lees, *ibid.*, pp. 64-69; Owen Thomas, *Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965) p. 168. Note also that this statement produces such non-sentences as \* *John is skinny in his new house*. However, such cases as *He is tall in Japan* could be treated as a variant of *If he were in Japan, he would be tall* → *In Japan he would be tall* → *He would be tall* (,) *in Japan* or it can be taken as a different use of the verb *be* (= count as) . . . (R. Lees, *ibid.*, p. 25) In general, A's that describe inherent properties cannot occur with locative D's. (\* *John is wise in America*.) (*ibid.*, p. 12).

(Note)

- A. We might note here that D pattern (of location) above, though not all, can be transformed into "there" construction: N be D → There be N D

The chief restriction is that the determiner, if there is one, is usually a word of non-specific meaning, like *a*, *some*, *many*, not a determiner with specific meaning, like *the*, *my*, *this*.

*A boy is in the room.* → *There is a boy in the room.*

*Some men are outside.* → *There are some men outside.*

- B. Note also that sentences with *be* produce the post-nominal modifiers by deletion of the relative plus *be*:

a. *The man is there.* → *the man who is there* → *the man there*

b. *The man is on the corner.* → *the man who is on the corner* → *the man on the corner*

c. *The man is asleep there.* → *the man who is asleep there* → *the man asleep there*

Likewise,

d. *The men who were fighting in the street...* → *The men fighting in the street...*

e. *The men who were wounded by the explosion...* → *The men wounded by the explosion...*

An appositive construction also can derive from (2) N pattern above in the same manner:

*Sam enjoyed the book.* } → *Sam, who was a great reader, enjoyed the book.* →

*Sam was a great reader.* } *Sam, a great reader, enjoyed the book.*

- C. It might be necessary to see contrasts here with passived transitives. In some cases the subject seems to be informative:

Vt (transitive)

*The money was dissipated.*

Vc (copulative)

*The man was dissipated.*

One way to distinguish *Ven-as-V* from *Ven-as-A* is to check adverbs. *Very* (and other "degree adverbials" cannot occur with *Ven-as-V*.

*Ven-as-V*: \**The man was* { *very*  
\* { *rather*  
\* { *to an extreme degree* } *shot.*

*Ven-as-A*: *The man was* { *very* *tired.*  
{ *quite*  
{ *rather*  
{ *extremely*

*Ving* implies the same problem as *Ven*.

*Ving-as-V*: \**She was very* { *smiling.*  
\* { *cooking.*  
\* { *dancing.*  
\* { *walking.*

*Ving-as-A*: *She was very entertaining.* (<She entertained him.)<sup>5)</sup>  
*The book was very interesting.* (<The book interested him.)  
*The party was very amusing.* (<The party amused him.)  
*The idea was very terrifying.* (<The idea terrified him.)

## II. INTRANSITIVE VERBS (Vi)

Intransitive verbs are defined as the class of verbs which do not have objects.<sup>6)</sup> Any words which follow a verb of this class are non-relevant modifiers, since they can always be deleted without affecting the structure of the verb. But not all intransitives are alike. In particular, some intransitives usually are followed

5) The verbs which can take N referring to human beings as objects can, in general, add the morpheme *ing* and then substitute for A following *be* and some copulas. (Paul Roberts: *English Syntax*, pp. 240-241.)

6) *Eat*, *smoke*, etc. in *men eat*, *men smoke* are not Vi's, but Vt's formed by transformation from *men eat food*, *men smoke pipes*, etc.

by adverbs of location (e.g. He stayed *home*. She went *there*), and some by adverbs of motion (e.g. The thief is sneaking *away*). Most Vi's, however, can occur with or without adverbs. (e.g. *come*, *disappear*, *shiver*, *sleep*)

#### A. Regular Vi's.

1. V: *Babies cry. The car stopped. Birds sing.*
2. V(D): *He went quickly. He died there. I dream every night.*
3. V(PN):

Here we must distinguish two sub-types of forms. The first could be called "PN of attendant circumstances"; the second, "directional PN".<sup>7)</sup>

##### a. V+PN of attendant circumstances.

These are characterized by (1) comparative ease of omission of PN, and (2) mobility of PN. The PN can usually be placed in any position in the sentence: *They passed by the house* implies *By the house they passed*. The question-word of the question to which the utterance is an implicit response is always adverbial (*where*, *when*, *why*, *how*, *how much*), although in a few instances *who*, *what* etc. may also be implied (e.g., *She slept in her bed* implies *where did she sleep?* but also *what did she sleep in?*)

Any occurrence of V+ prepositional phrase implying an adverbial question-word will be defined as an intransitive. e.g. *He lay on the sofa. The castle stands on a hill.*

##### b. V+PN of direction

Some PN's show motion to or from some goal and imply the question word *where* not in its place but rather in its two directional senses, "whither" (to what place?) and "whence" (from what place?). This suggests a similarity to "prepositional verbs" (see below III, 5); but the difference is that Vi+PN always implies an adverbial question-word, while prepositional verbs can only imply pronominal question-words.

Directional Intransitive: *He ran | into the car* (implying *where did he run?*)

Prepositional: *He ran into | the car.* (implying *what did he run into?*)

(Some more examples): *She looked | into the box.*

*She dived | into the water.*

*The sun rises | above the horizon.*

#### 4. N (=D): may be followed by nouns which function as adverbial complements.

a. He stayed *home*. / He slept *Saturday*. / He works *nights*. / He lives *next door*. / He came *full speed*. / I always travel *second class*. / I am going *your way*. / *go places* (to become successful)

b. He walked *ten miles*.

He stayed *an hour*.

We talked *a long time*.

The meeting lasted *an hour*.

The rain continued *a week*.

Wait a *minute*.

Traditional grammars treat the last element in these sentences as "adverbial objective", but this type (esp. b.) is perhaps best designated "complement of measure." Such a complement cannot be confused with a direct object because of the lack of a passive.

#### B. Completive Vi's

These Vi's are verbs which do not take objects but need some sort of completives to follow them.

##### I. Adverb-completives.

Predicates of this kind are sometimes called verb-adverb combinations (VD).

7) Seymour Chatman: The Classification of English Verbs by Object Types, 1961 International Conference on Machine Translation of Languages and Applied Language analysis, Vol. I. See also, III, 5 Two-word verbs, (1) Prepositional Verbs.

Adverb of this type often changes the meaning of the verb markedly:

He *dropped in*. (meaning "visited without prior notice") vs. He *dropped*. (meaning *sank to the ground*)

He *cut in*. (=intervened) cf. *He cut*. — This always presumes an object and therefore is to be taken as an example of a transitive with object deletion.

Other examples:

*get in, get back, get off, go away, come back, come in, walk on, look around...*

I will *go out* this afternoon.

The parade *passed by*.

It was many hours before he *came to*.

## 2. Adjective-completives.

These are a few combinations of verb plus adjective which have the same structure as the VD types above.

He *went hungry*.                      *go steady* (to date exclusively one person of the opposite sex)

He *went mad*.

The girl *ran scared*.

His dream *came true*. etc.

## 3. Noun-completives.

In expressions like, he *took part*, it *took place*, passives are impossible, and *part* and *place* cannot be replaced by pronouns, nor are the questions *what did he take?* and *what did it take?* implied. So the nouns in these expressions can in no way be considered objects.

## 4. 'Cognate' nouns.

A few Vi's may be followed by derivationally related nouns.

He *slept a peaceful sleep*.

He *dreamed a strange dream*.

He *died a painful death*.

He *whistled an irritating whistle*.

He *laughed a hollow laugh*. etc.

## 5. *It* pseudo-objects.

These consist of Vi's which occur with *it*, where *it* is clearly not a substitute for any noun but merely a verb-completive;

He *walked it*.

He *footed it*.

He *roughed it*.

*Go it* while you are young.

I've always had to *go it* alone.

If you can't *beat it*, join it.

*Beat it* before you *catch it*.

We had to *hoof it* all the way back to Lansing.

## 6. Reflexive pseudo-objects.

These are *self*-pronouns, agreeing with the subject in number and gender, which (a) are semantically empty, (b) cannot be passive, (c) cannot be replaced by any other object (hence must be completive parts of the verb), and (d) are not causatives (see below).

He *absented himself*.

He *bethought himself*.

He *bestirred himself*.

He *perjured himself*.

*Behave yourself*. etc.

### III. TRANSITIVE VERBS (Vt)

Transitive verbs are defined as the class of verbs necessarily followed by nominals which is known as the direct object. But some transitive verbs can be followed by both a direct object and an indirect object. Most transitive verbs allow the passive transformation  $N_1 V N_2 \rightarrow N_2 be Ven$  (by  $N_1$ )<sup>8)</sup>, but with some verbs it is impossible. And still other kinds of Vt's can be followed by both an object and a construction traditionally called the "objective complement". Thus we divide the Vt's into six subclasses as follows;

- |                              |               |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| (1) Regular transitive verbs | (Vt)          |
| (2) Middle verbs             | (Vmid)        |
| (3) Indirect object verbs    | (Vo)          |
| (4) Factitive verbs          | (Vf)          |
| (5) Two-word verbs           | (Vp) & (Vprt) |
| (6) Double-object verbs      | (Vd)          |

#### 1. Regular Transitive Verbs (Vt)

Except for some subtle restrictions<sup>9)</sup>, regular transitive verbs are remarkably free. They are followed by nominals first and then by nearly every kind of adverb (manner, location, time, reason, etc.).

*He played the role admirably.*  
*He rode a horse in the woods.*  
*She bought a dress today.*  
*She gave a party for me.*

(Note)

#### A. Object Deletion.

It is characteristic of transitives that in certain contexts the object may be deleted. These contexts are very rare for some verbs but quite common for others. We distinguish deleted-object transitives from intransitives by virtue of the fact that implicit questions are not adverbial — e.g., "Where (or When) did  $N_1$  Vi?" — but always pronominal; "What (or Whom) did  $N_1$  Vt?"

Here are some examples of deleted objects:

He *investigated*. (e.g., the case)  
 Stop.  
 Now I *understand*.  
 He *answered* promptly.  
 Come on, let's *eat*.

#### B. Causatives.<sup>10)</sup>

These are a subclass of transitives which participate in the following transformation:  $N_1 Vt N_2 \rightarrow N_2 V$ .

*The man rang the bell.*                         → *The bell rang.*  
*He raced the motor.*                         → *The motor raced.*

8) We use parentheses to mean that the item may, but need not, occur.

9) There are Vt's which take animate (gen. "human") subjects such as *admire, find, thank, praise*, and those which take animate objects such as *terrify, astonish, please, surprise*. (See footnote 5) There are also Vt's that can be followed by a human object plus an infinitive (such as *We selected John to go* and *He persuaded Mary to accompany him*) and those that can be followed by a human object plus a present participle (such as *They found the professor fishing* and *They caught the student sleeping*). (We have omitted, as we said (footnote 2), the verbs involving two or more verbs, i.e., the verbs whose complements are sentence transforms, including "catenatives" (W.F. Twaddell, *The English Verb Auxiliaries*, 1960) — except for, perhaps, Vf (III, (4) Factitive verbs,) as we shall see.

10) A "causative" is a verb that means "cause to do or be" something. Thus *lay* is a causative verb, for it means "cause to lie." It may be called the causative of *lie*. We still have in English several pairs of verbs, one of which is the causative of the other: e.g., *set* ("cause to sit")- *sit*; *raise-rise*; *fell-fall*. Now we usually make causatives simply by giving the intransitive form an object as we see below. The ending *-en* also has been widely used to make causative verbs from adjectives: *darken* ("make dark") *weaken* ("make weak"), etc. Seymour Chatman interestingly calls these verbs "zero-causatives" (S. Chatman, *ibid.*)

*He walked the dog.* → *The dog walked.*  
*He darkened the room.* → *The room darkened.*  
*The sun spoiled the tomatoes.* → *The tomatoes spoiled in the sun.*  
*The pilot landed the plane smoothly.* → *The plane landed smoothly.*  
 cf. *lay-lie* | *set-sit* | *raise-rise* | *fell-fall*, etc.

Other examples are:

*cook, burn, melt, feed, marry, begin, open, close, dance, hurry, march, work, grow, heal, quicken, brighten, weaken (other A-en), sink, fly, pass, sail, start, stop, etc. . . .*

- C. An intransitive modified by a prepositional phrase may be made transitive if the object of the preposition is made object of the verb. Usually there is a slight change of meaning:

{ Vi: *He fished in this stream.*  
 { Vt: *He fished this stream.*  
 { Vi: *Billy walked on the road.*  
 { Vt: *Billy walked the road.*

- D. Reflexives.

Most transitives will take a reflexive as a normal object, e.g., *He blamed himself. He killed himself.* But a special class of transitives, when the object is omitted, implies not *any* unspecified object, but specifically the reflexive object ( $N_1$  Vt  $N_1$ -self →  $N_1$  Vt). We shall call these 'reflexive transitives',<sup>11)</sup>

*Mary is dressing herself.* → *Mary is dressing.*  
*The girls washed themselves.* → *The girls washed.*  
*He shaved himself.* → *He shaved.*  
*He overeats himself.* → *He overeats.*  
*He hid himself behind a tree.* → *He hid behind a tree.*

- E. Reciprocals.

Almost every transitive construction with a plural or compound subject and the object *each other* will allow the following transformation:

$N_1 + N_2$  Vt *each other* →  $N_1$  Vt  $N_2$   
 $N_1 + N_2$  Vt *each other* →  $N_2$  Vt  $N_1$

{ He and I } greeted *each other.* → { He greeted me. I greeted him. }  
 { We } { I greeted you. You greeted me. }

But notice that the transformation is not reversible:

\* $N_1$  Vt  $N_2$  →  $N_1 + N_2$  Vt *each other*

\* $N_2$  Vt  $N_1$  →  $N_1 + N_2$  Vt *each other*

\*He greeted me. → He and I greeted *each other.*

## 2. Middle Verbs (Vmid)

- A. The second subclass of transitive verbs, generally called "middle verbs" (Vmid), (I) cannot be transformed to form a passive sentence, (2) nor can it be transformed into action nominals with *of*, as regular transitives can. (3) Many of the middle verbs also cannot be followed by adverbs of manner.

*He has money.*  
*He lacks money.*  
*Bad luck befell him.*  
*This book weighs three pounds.*  
*He resembles his mother.*

11) This can be referred to as a case of object-zeroing, rather than object-deletion, since the pronoun is always determinable, whereas in deletion one can never predict which specific noun has been omitted.

- (I) \*Money is had by him.<sup>12)</sup>  
 \*Money is lacked by him.  
 \*He was befallen by bad luck.  
 \*Three pounds are weighed by the book.  
 \*His mother is resembled by him.
- (2) \*The book's weighing of three pounds... } cf. Tom's driving of a car... (<Tom drives a car.)  
 \*His resembling of his mother... }
- (3) \*Tom has a car recklessly. } cf. Tom drives a car recklessly.  
 \*He has money quickly. }

Other middle verbs are:

*become* (Blue becomes you.), *cost*, *fail* (He failed us in our need.), *make* (This book makes good reading.), *stand* (John stood six feet.), *suffice*, *suit*, *total* (The bill totalled five dollars.) etc.

- B. *Cost*, *last*, and *take* have "a complement of measure" (cf. II INTRANSITIVE VERBS, A. 4.) and may have an additional complement, for which no label is established. The latter reminds us of the indirect object in many respects, but neither of the complements is involved in a passive transformation.

*It cost me plenty.*

*That will last me years.*

*It will take me an hour.*

(Note)

We might note here another non-passivable transitives.<sup>13)</sup> They are those taking lexically restricted but non-cognate nouns: *he lived the part*, *he looked daggers*, *he ran a race* (as opposed to the passivable *he ran the race*, meaning "he conducted the race"), etc. Although the objects are lexically restricted, these are taken as transitives rather than noun-completive intransitives, because the nouns are more like normal objects: they take articles and can be replaced by pronouns.

### 3. Indirect-Object Verbs (Vo)

- a. These are verbs which take two objects and participate in the following transformation.

$$N_1 \text{ Vo } N_2 \text{ } N_3 \rightarrow N_1 \text{ Vo } N_3 \text{ P (to or for, or of) } N_2$$

Actually, the relation of the indirect object ( $N_2$ ) to a prepositional phrase divides the Vo class into three subclasses:

- (a) She gave him money.       $\rightarrow$       She gave money to him. (*give, show, tell, write*, etc.)  
 (b) She bought him a hat.       $\rightarrow$       She bought a hat for him. (*find, make, change, save*, etc.)  
 (c) She asked him a question.       $\rightarrow$       She asked a question of him. (*ask, envy, spare*, etc.)

- b. Indirect-object verbs, unlike factitives (Vf) with N (see below), allow two passive transforms:

$$N_1 \text{ Vo } N_2 \text{ } N_3 \rightarrow N_2 \text{ be Vo-en } N_3 \text{ by } N_1 \rightarrow N_3 \text{ be Vo-en } N_2 \text{ by } N_1$$

*He gave her the gift*  $\rightarrow$  *She was given the gift by him*  $\rightarrow$  *The gift was given her by him.*

- c.  $N_1 \text{ Vo } N_2 \text{ } N_3$  has short forms which are the products of the deletion of either (I)  $N_2$ :

*I wrote (her) a letter.*

12) There are passive sentences with *have*: *Good souvenirs can be had if you are an astute shopper.* However, the idiomatic way to change this passive into an active would involve changing the verb: *You can get good souvenirs if you are.....* (H. A. Gleason, *Linguistics and English Grammar*-Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965. p. 307-8)

13) S. Chatman, *ibid.*

*Show (me) your tickets, please.*

(a shortening which all Vo's seem to permit) or (2) N<sub>3</sub>:

*He writes me (a letter) often.*

*He told me (the truth).*

*He asked me (a question).*

*He taught me (English).*

*She served me (a meal).*

*He telephoned me (the message).*

*He struck the door (a heavy blow).*

*I envy you (your success).*

*Forgive us (our sins).*

*Have they paid you (the money)?*

*I'll show you (something).*

*He wired me (something).*

(a shortening which not all verbs permit — *give, send, etc.*)

e.g. *She gave him some money.* → *She gave some money.* → *\*She gave him.*<sup>14)</sup>

#### 4. Factitive Verbs (Vf)<sup>15)</sup>

This subclass consists of those verbs in the construction N<sub>1</sub> V N<sub>2</sub> X where N<sub>2</sub> has a copula relation with the X — the “objective complement”<sup>16)</sup> — which is a nominal or adjectival.

Thus, N<sub>1</sub> Vf N<sub>2</sub> X ← N<sub>1</sub> Vf (N<sub>2</sub> *be* X), where although N<sub>2</sub> *be* X is a component of the construction, it occurs only implicitly in utterances, never actually.

Factitives can be divided into three sub-subclasses:

- 1) those which take both adjectives and nouns,
- 2) those which take only nouns,
- 3) those which take only adjectives.

##### 1) A and N as X:

*She made him {happy.  
                                } an object lesson.      They made him the scapegoat.*

*My uncle considered me {foolish  
  } a fool.*

Other such verbs are: *call, think, believe, suppose*, and so on.

cf. Here is an old joke:  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{"Call me a taxi."} \\ \text{"O. K. You're a taxi."} \end{array} \right.$   
(call=Vo & Vf)

##### 2) N only as X: *appoint, elect, choose, vote, name, call, etc.*

*They elected him president.*

14) If a verb like *give*, which normally is used as (Vo), has only one complement, this is used as a direct object. Thus, if a native speaker heard a sentence like *She gave him.*, he or she might ask: *To whom did she give him?* or *Who did she give him to?*, not *What did she give to him?* (cf. H.A. Gleason, *ibid.*, p. 306)

15) James Sledd: *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (Scott, Foresman, 1959), pp. 211-212

16) So named because the word completes the meaning of the object. The sentence “I thought him foolish.” would be incomplete if it ended with the object: *\*I thought him.* It needs a word — an objective complement — to tell what I thought him. (Paul Roberts, *Understanding Grammar* — Harper & Row, 1953, pp. 510-511)



*The club chose him secretary.*

(Note)

An indirect-object verb (Vo) and a factitive verb (Vf) are alike in having two complements (N's). However, a sentence containing (Vo) allows two passive equivalents and one equivalent with *to* or *for*; while a sentence with (Vf) allows only one passive equivalent, no equivalent with *to*, and often none with *for*.

*The Board assigned him a secretary.* (Vo)

→ *He was assigned a secretary by the Board.*

→ *A secretary was assigned him by the Board.*

→ *The Board assigned a secretary to him.*

*The Board elected him a secretary.* (Vf)

→ *He was elected a secretary by the Board.*

cf. also: *She made him a good husband because she made him a good wife.* (make=V<sub>f</sub> & V<sub>o</sub>)

### 3) A only as X.

There are two sorts of factitive verbs which only take A:

- (1) Where [N<sub>1</sub> V N<sub>2</sub> A] transforms to [N<sub>1</sub> V N<sub>2</sub> (so that N<sub>2</sub> be) A] or [N<sub>1</sub> V N<sub>2</sub> (until N<sub>2</sub> be) A]. These consist of a long list of idiom-like constructions with limited co-occurrence relations between V and A: *paint red, bend double, boil hard, beat silly, iron smooth, drive crazy, knock cold* (or *senseless*), *set free, push open, cut short, lick (the patter) clean*, etc.

Here the sense seems to be implicit in the V, and the A merely adds specification.

- (2) Where NVNA does not transform, where co-occurrence relations are less fixed and where the sense is not manifest in V, but emerges in the A;  
*take alive, leave dead, or turn* plus all adjectives:

*This turned him angry (hostile, happy, etc).*

## 5. Two-Word Verbs (Vp & Vprt)

In English, there are verbs which consist of two or more words. In fact, there are two distinct kinds of these verbs: (1) (Vp) and (2) (Vprt).

### (1) Prepositional Verbs (Vp).

These are verbs which, together with a preposition, form a structural and lexical unit which is transitive, i.e., can take a single object. These verbs function in the language as a subclass of transitive verbs (Vt). This construction is chiefly characterized by the fact that it always and only implies the pronominal question words *What? Whom?*, as opposed to those verb constructions where the PN is equivalent to an adverb. Contrast:<sup>17)</sup>

(a) *They looked at houses.* (implying "What did they look at?") → Houses were looked at by them.

(b) *They looked at noon.* (implying "When did they look?") → \*Noon was looked at by them.

cf.

(a) *She ran into her friend.* (meaning 'met by accident')

vs. *She ran into the room.* (implying "Whither did she run?")

(b) *She is waiting on the guests.* (meaning 'serving')

vs. *She waited on the porch.* (implying "Where did she wait?")

17) For the differences in stress and the location of the pause, see the paper "Stress, Rhythm & Intonation" by Eizo Ishikawa in the Taira Technical College Bulletin, Vol III, No. 1.

- (c) *They looked into the theft.* (meaning 'investigated')  
 vs. *They looked into the box.* (implying "Whither did they look?")

It is important to notice that the P remains with the verb rather than moving with the nominal. In other words, the nominals (*the problem* and *that boy*) are the direct objects of the verbs (*look at* and *speak to*), rather than the objects of P's.

- a) *Some expert should look at the problem more closely.*  
 → *The problem should be looked at more closely (by some expert).*  
 b) *The principal should speak to that boy more often.*  
 → *That boy should be spoken to more often (by the principal).*

Other Vp's are: *call on, think about, belong to, wait for, look for, insist on, rely on, count on, laugh at, send for, seek after, get over, run over, speak to, deal with, decide on, hit upon...*

a. Vp's with Fixed Objects:

There are some Vp's with fixed noun objects (or D) in which the fixed element is best considered as a part of a compound V because the whole phrase is preserved intact in passive transformations (while Vt with N<sub>2</sub> + PN<sub>3</sub> do not):

- Vp + fixed object: *She took care of the baby.*  
 → *The baby was taken care of by her.*  
 as opposed to: *She took the car of the doctor.*  
 → *The car of the doctor was taken by her.*  
 → \**The doctor was taken the car of by her.*

Other examples: *pay attention to, find fault with, give ear to, lay hold of, take notice of, make a fool of, take hold of, give way to, take part in, make nothing of, take leave of, make much of...*

b. Some Vp's are reflexives, because like Vt reflexives, they can always transform to a construction omitting N<sub>2</sub>:

- He gorged himself on goodies. → He gorged on goodies.  
 N<sub>1</sub> Vp N<sub>1</sub>-self P N<sub>3</sub> → N<sub>1</sub> Vp P N<sub>3</sub>

(2) Separable Verbs (Vprt)

Some of the peculiarities of prepositional verbs (Vp) are shared by another group sometimes called "separable verbs". In separable verbs, a verb and a following adverb (called "particle") form a unit which must be treated lexicographically. This adverbial element (Prt) can come either before or after the object.

- We looked up the words.* → *We looked the words up.*  
 cf. *They looked at houses.* → \**They looked houses at.*  
 Only one order is possible with pronouns:  
*Some girl called you up.* → \**Some girl called up you.*

Other (Vprt)'s are: *bring up, bring about, carry out, look over, take off, make up, pick out, pick up, put away, put off, put on, take up, try on, turn on, turn off, turn down, etc.*

(Note) As we saw, two-word verbs (Vp & Vprt) need to be seen in clear contrast with intransitives with prepositional phrases of the two types mentioned above.

(3) Three-Word Verbs.

A further variety of verb seems to combine features of both these last groups. They have an adverbial element of the sort found in separable verbs and a prepositional element, i.e. (V+Prt+P). These "three-word verbs" are inseparable.

Some examples:

Look out! A car is coming? *Look out for* the car.

Please go on. Please *go on with* your work.

We *look forward to* our vacations.

We can't *put up with* his nonsense.

He can't *keep up with* his class.

Other examples:

*catch up with, do away with, make up for, look down upon, fall in with, etc.*

## 6. Double-Object Verbs (Vd)<sup>18)</sup>

These are verbs which necessarily combine two objects with P in the construction  $N_1$  Vd  $N_2$  P  $N_3$ .

- a. With some Vd's — which might be called “pure” instances — the double-object is so necessary to the verb that neither  $N_2$  nor  $N_3$  may be deleted.

Thus, (1) *He based his conclusion on facts.* One cannot reduce this either to

*\*He based on facts.* or to *\*He based his conclusion.*

(2) *He put it on the table.* → *\*He put on the table.*

→ *\*He put it.*

(3) *He provided his boy with a good education.*

→ *\*He provided with a good education.*

→ *\*He provided his boy.*

(4) *Can you direct me to the station?*

→ *\*Can you direct to the station?*

→ *\*Can you direct me?*

cf.  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{He regarded me as a dangerous person.} \text{ (a dangerous person refers to me)} \\ \textit{He impressed me as a dangerous person.} \text{ (a dangerous person refers to He)} \end{array} \right.$

- b. There are, however, other Vd's which seem to allow of  $PN_3$  (which function here as adverbial complements) deletion.

He threw the paper *into the fire.* | He hung the map *on the wall.* | He invited Jane *to his house.* | He joined us *in our trip.* | I informed him *of the news.* | I thanked him *for his help.* | She spends most of her money *on clothes.* | I congratulated him *on his success.* | Help me *with the dishes.* | My cold prevents me *from going out.* | He said good-by *to her.* | We explained the matter *to her.* | May I introduce my friend *to you?* | She confided her troubles *to me.* | He described the situation *to me.* | He caught me *by the arm.* . . .

## IV. COPULATIVE VERBS (Vc)

Copulative verbs are defined as the class of verbs which take an adjective as “predicate”. The copulative verbs can usually be distinguished from the Vi plus predicate appositive on the following basis:<sup>19)</sup>

$N$  Vi A →  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{N Vi in an A manner} \text{ (etc.)} \\ \textit{N's Ving be A} \end{array} \right.$

Thus *He arose angry* → *He arose in an angry manner.*

→ *His arising was angry.*

But copulative verbs cannot do this:

*He grew angry* → *\*He grew in an angry manner.*

*\*His growing was angry.*

18) We take the term from S. Chatman, *ibid.*

19) S. Chatman, *ibid.*

All copulative verbs can be followed by A, but some can also be followed by nominals, and at least two can be followed by a locative adverbs (cf. *be*). General types of copulative verbs are as follows:

- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) Verbs of the senses (Vs):     | <i>feel, smell, sound, taste...</i> |
| (2) Verbs of appearance (Vap):    | <i>appear, look, seem...</i>        |
| (3) Verbs of action (Vac):        | <i>grow, turn, run...</i>           |
| (4) <i>become</i>                 |                                     |
| (5) <i>stay</i> and <i>remain</i> |                                     |
| (6) Idioms                        |                                     |
| (7) Others                        |                                     |

1. Copulative verbs of the senses (Vs) can only be followed by A.

<i>The pie tasted good.</i>	cf. <i>He tasted it carefully.</i> (Vt)
<i>The warm sun feels good.</i>	<i>I felt the sun on my arm.</i>
<i>The dinner smells good.</i>	<i>I smell something burning.</i>
<i>The explanation sounded false.</i>	

And these all participate in an A-Ving transformation:

*It smells good* → *It is good-smelling.*  
*It feels smooth.* → *It is smooth-feeling.*

2. Verbs of appearance (in American English) cannot be followed by nominals. They differ from (Vs) because they can take abstract nouns for subjects. They can also be followed by the infinitive *to be*.

*Her happiness seems (to be) complete.*  
*John appeared (to be) sad.*

cf. The sentence: *The detective looked hard* is ambiguous, because this could be either (1) N+Vc+A (=The detective seemed tough.) or (2) N+Vi+D (of manner) (=The detective made a careful search.).

3. Verbs of action or activity.

This third subclass of copulative verbs can be followed by adverbs of manner, whereas the first two subclasses cannot be followed by such adverbs.

<i>The night grew cold gradually.</i>	cf.
<i>The boy turned blue slowly.</i>	<i>*The pie tasted good suddenly.</i>
<i>The cow has run dry suddenly.</i>	<i>*John appeared sad slowly.</i>
<i>He fell asleep over his book.</i>	

4. *Become* can occur with adverbs of manner, like copula verbs of activity (Vac); unlike most of copulative verbs, however, it can also take nominals as well as adjectives.

*Mable became angry suddenly.*  
*Sam became a lawyer.* (cf. *That dress becomes you.* (Vmid))  
*She became a teacher unexpectedly.*  
 cf. *\*Sam turned a lawyer.*  
*\*She grew a teacher unexpectedly.*

5. *Stay* and *remain*, when used as copula verbs, seem to share all the properties of *be*. They can be followed by N, A and locative D.

*John stayed president for one year.*  
*John stayed happy all day.*  
*John stayed in the house.*  
*Helen remained true.*  
*He remained a bachelor through his life.*  
*The story will always remain in my memory.*

6. Idioms: these verbs can occur only with a limited list of A, sometimes with only one particular A.

*The door flew open.*

*They made merry.*

*He ranked third.*

*It shone bright. etc.*

7. Others: *rest, sit, fall, spring, stand*, etc. These can be distinguished from (Vi) plus A appositive phrases because they consist of only one kernel. (Vi), on the other hand, consist of two kernels.

{ Vc A *He fell ill.*

{ Vi, A *He fell, ill.* (He fell+He was ill)

{ Vc A *He stood opposed.*

{ Vi, A *He stood, opposed.* (He was standing+He was opposed)

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