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Synopsis

Theme: *The Verb*

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Plan:

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1. VERB: GENERAL

Grammatically the verb is the most complex part of speech. This is due to the central role it performs in the expression of the predicative functions of the sentence, i.e. the functions establishing the connection between the situation (situational event) named in the utterance and reality. The complexity of the verb is inherent not only in the intricate structure of its grammatical categories, but also in its various subclass divisions, as well as in its falling into two sets of forms profoundly different from each other: the finite set and the non-finite set.

The complicated character of the grammatical and lexico-grammatical structure of the verb has given rise to much dispute and controversy. However, the application of the principles of systemic linguistic analysis to the study of this interesting sphere of language helps overcome many essential-difficulties in its theoretical description, and also a number of terminological disagreements among the scholars. This refers in particular to the fundamental relations between the categories of tense and aspect, which have aroused of late very heated disputes.

The general categorial meaning of the verb is process presented dynamically, i.e. developing in time. This general processual meaning is embedded in the semantics of all the verbs, including those that denote states, forms of existence, types of attitude, evaluations, etc., rather than actions. *Cf.:*

Edgar's room *led* out of the wall without a door. She *had* herself a liking for richness and excess. It *was* all over the morning papers. That's what *I'm* afraid of. I *do* love you, really I *do*.

And this holds true not only about the finite verb, but also about the non-finite verb. The processual semantic character of the verbal lexeme even in the non-finite form is proved by the fact that in all its forms it is modified by the adverb and, with the transitive verb, it takes a direct object. **Cf.:**

Mr. Brown received *the visitor instantly*, which was unusual. — Mr. Brown's receiving *the visitor instantly* was unusual. — It was unusual for Mr. Brown to receive *the visitor instantly*. But: An *instant* reception of *the visitor* was unusual for Mr. Brown.

The processual categorial meaning of the notional verb determines its characteristic

combination with a noun expressing both the doer of the action (its subject) and, in cases of the objective verb, the recipient of the action (its object); it also determines its combination with an adverb as the modifier of the action.

In the sentence the finite verb invariably performs the function of the verb-predicate, expressing the processual categorial features of predication, i.e. time, aspect, voice, and mood.

The non-finite verb performs different functions according to its intermediary nature (those of the syntactic subject, object, adverbial modifier, attribute), but its non-processual functions are always actualised in close combination with its processual semantic features. This is especially evident in demonstrative correlations of the "sentence — phrase" type. Cf.:

His rejecting the proposal surprised us.— That *he had rejected the proposal* surprised us. *Taking this into consideration*, her attitude can be understood. — If *one takes this into consideration*, her attitude can be understood.

In other words, the non-finite forms of the verb in self-dependent use (i.e. if they are used not as parts of the analytical verb-forms) perform a potentially predicative function, constituting secondary predicative centres in the sentence. In each case of such use they refer to some subject which is expressed either explicitly or implicitly. Cf.:

Roddy cared enough about his mother *to want to make amends* for Arabella.→ Roddy *wanted to make amends*...→ Roddy *will make amends*... *Changing* gear, the taxi turned the sharp corner. → The taxi *changed* gear and turned the corner. *Acting* as mate is often more difficult than *acting* as captain. → One acts as mate; one acts as captain.

From the point of view of their outward structure, verbs are characterised by specific forms of word-building, as well as by the formal features expressing the corresponding grammatical categories.

The verb stems may be simple, sound-replative, stress-replative, expanded, composite, and phrasal.

The original simple verb stems are not numerous. Cf. such verbs as *go*, *take*, *read*, etc. But conversion (zero-suffixation) as means of derivation, especially conversion of the "noun — verb" type, greatly enlarges the simple stem set of verbs, since it is one of the

most productive ways of forming verb lexemes in modern English. Cf.: a cloud — to cloud, a house — to house; a man — to man; a park — to park, etc.

The sound-replacive type of derivation and the stress-replacive type of derivation are unproductive. Cf.: food —

to feed, blood — to bleed; 'import — to im'port, 'transport — to trans'port.

The typical suffixes expanding the stem of the verb are: *-ate* (*cultivate*), *-en* (*broaden*), *-ify* (*clarify*), *-ise(-ize)* (*normalise*). The verb-deriving prefixes of the inter-class type are: *be-* (*belittle*, *befriend*, *bemoan*) and *en-/em-* (*engulf*, *embed*). Some other characteristic verbal prefixes are: *re-* (*remake*), *under-* (*undergo*), *over-* (*overestimate*), *sub-* (*submerge*), *mis-* (*misunderstand*), *un-* (*undo*), etc.

The composite (compound) verb stems correspond to the composite non-verb stems from which they are etymologically derived. Here belong the compounds of the conversion type (*blackmail n. — blackmail v.*) and of the reduction type (*proof-reader n.—proof-read v.*).

The phrasal verb stems occupy an intermediary position between analytical forms of the verb and syntactic word combinations. Among such stems two specific constructions should be mentioned. The first is a combination of the head-verb *have*, *give*, *take*, and occasionally some others with a noun; the combination has as its equivalent an ordinary verb. Cf.: to have a smoke — to smoke; to give a smile — to smile; to take a stroll — to stroll.

The second is a combination of a head-verb with a verbal postposition that has a specificational value. Cf.: stand up, go on, give in, be off, get along, etc.

§ 4. The grammatical categories which find formal expression in the outward structure of the verb and which will be analysed further are, first, the category of finitude dividing the verb into finite and non-finite forms (the corresponding contracted names are "finites" and "verbids"*; this category has a lexico-grammatical force); second, the categories of person, number, tense, aspect, voice, and mood, whose complete set is revealed in every word-form of the notional finite verb.

Each of the identified categories constitutes a whole system of its own presenting its manifold problems to the scholar. However, the comparative analysis of the categorial

properties of all the forms of the verb, including the properties of verbids, shows the unquestionable unity of the class, in spite of some inter-class features of verbids.

Among the various forms of the verb the infinitive occupies a unique position. Its status is that of the principal representative of the verb-lexeme as a whole. This head-form status of the infinitive is determined by the two factors. The first factor consists in the verbal-nominative nature of the infinitive, i.e. in its function of giving the most general dynamic name to the process which is denoted by all the other forms of the verb-lexeme in a more specific way, conditioned by their respective semantico-grammatical specialisations. The second factor determining the representative status of the infinitive consists in the infinitive serving as the actual derivative base for all the other regular forms of the verb.

§ 5. The class of verbs falls into a number of subclasses distinguished by different semantic and lexico-grammatical features.

On the upper level of division two unequal sets are identified: the set of verbs of *full nominative* value (notional verbs), and the set of verbs of *partial nominative* value (semi-notional and functional verbs). The first set is derivationally open, it includes the bulk of the verbal lexicon. The second set is derivationally closed, it includes limited subsets of verbs characterised by individual relational properties.

§ 6. Semi-notional and functional verbs serve as markers of predication in the proper sense, since they show the connection between the nominative content of the sentence and reality in a strictly specialised way. These "predicators" include auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, semi-notional verbid introducer verbs, and link-verbs.

Auxiliary verbs constitute grammatical elements of the categorial forms of the verb. These are the verbs *be, have, do, shall, will, should, would, may, might*.

Modal verbs are used with the infinitive as predicative markers expressing relational meanings of the subject attitude type, i.e. ability, obligation, permission, advisability, etc. By way of extension of meaning, they also express relational probability, serving as probability predicators. These two types of functional semantics can be tested by means of correlating pure modal verb collocations with the corresponding two sets of stative collocations of equivalent functions:

on the one hand, the groups *be obliged, be permitted*, etc.; on the other hand, the groups *be*

likely, be probable, etc. Cf.:

Tom *may* stay for the televuew if he will. → Tom is *permitted* to stay. The storm *may* come any minute, you had better leave the deck. → The storm *is likely* to come any minute.

The modal verbs *can, may, must, shall, will, ought, need, used (to), dare* are defective in forms, and are suppletively supplemented by stative groups similar to those shown above (cf. Ch. III, § 4). The supplementation is effected both for the lacking finite forms and the lacking non-finite forms. *Cf.:*

The boys *can* prepare the play-ground themselves. — The boys *will be able* to prepare the play-ground themselves. — The boys' *being able* to prepare the play-ground themselves.

The verbs *be* and *have* in the modal meanings "be planned", "be obliged" and the like are considered by many modern grammarians as modal verbs and by right are included in the general modal verb list.

Semi-notional verbid introducer verbs are distributed among the verbal sets of discriminatory relational semantics (*seem, happen, turn out, etc.*), of subject-action relational semantics (*try, fail, manage, etc.*), of phasal semantics (*begin, continue, stop, etc.*). The predicator verbs should be strictly distinguished from their grammatical homonyms in the subclasses of notional verbs. As a matter of fact, there is a fundamental grammatical difference between the verbal constituents in such sentences as, say, "They began to fight" and "They began the fight". Whereas the verb in the first sentence is a semi-notional predicator, the verb in the second sentence is a notional transitive verb normally related to its direct object. The phasal predicator *begin* (the first sentence) is grammatically inseparable from the infinitive of the notional verb *fight*, the two lexemes making one verbal-part unit in the sentence. The transitive verb *begin* (the second sentence), on the contrary, is self-dependent in the lexico-grammatical sense, it forms the predicate of the sentence by itself and as such can be used in the passive voice, the whole construction of the sentence in this case being presented as the regular passive counterpart of its active version. *Cf.:*

They *began* the fight. → The fight *was begun* (by them). They *began* to fight. →(*)* *To*

fight was begun (by them).

Link-verbs introduce the nominal part of the predicate (the predicative) which is commonly expressed by a noun, an adjective, or a phrase of a similar semantic-grammatical character. It should be noted that link-verbs, although they are named so, are not devoid of meaningful content. Performing their function of connecting ("linking") the subject and the predicative of the sentence, they express the actual semantics of this connection, i.e. expose the relational aspect of the characteristics ascribed by the predicative to the subject.

The linking predicator function in the purest form is effected by the verb *be*; therefore *be* as a link-verb can be referred to as the "pure link-verb". It is clear from the above that even this pure link-verb has its own relational semantics, which can be identified as "linking predicative ascription". All the link-verbs other than the pure link *be* express some specification of this general predicative-linking semantics, so that they should be referred to as "specifying" link-verbs. The common specifying link-verbs fall into two main groups: those that express perceptions and those that express nonperceptual, or "factual" link-verb connection. The main perceptual link-verbs are *seem*, *appear*, *look*, *feel*, *taste*; the main factual link-verbs are *become*, *get*, *grow*, *remain*, *keep*.

As is to be seen from the comparison of the specifying link-verbs with the verbid introducer predicators described above, the respective functions of these two verbal subsets are cognate, though not altogether identical. The difference lies in the fact that the specifying link-verbs combine the pure linking function with the predicator function. Furthermore, separate functions of the two types of predicators are evident from the fact that specifying link-verbs, the same as the pure link, can be used in the text in combination with verbid introducer predicators. *E.g.:*

The letter *seemed to have remained* unnoticed. I *began to feel* better. You *shouldn't try to look* cleverer than you are.

Cf. the use of verbid introducer predicators with the pure link-verb:

The news *has proved to be* true. The girl's look *ceased to be* friendly. The address shown to us *seemed to be* just the one we needed.

Besides the link-verbs proper hitherto presented, there are some notional verbs in

language that have the power to perform the function of link-verbs without losing their lexical nominative value. In other words, they perform two functions simultaneously, combining the role of a full notional verb with that of a link-verb. Cf.:

Fred *lay* awake all through the night. Robbie *ran in* out of breath. The moon *rose* red.

Notional link-verb function is mostly performed by intransitive verbs of motion and position. Due to the double syntactic character of the notional link-verb, the whole predicate formed by it is referred to as a "double predicate" (see Ch. XXIX).

§ 7. Notional verbs undergo the three main grammatically relevant categorisations. The first is based on the relation of the subject of the verb to the process denoted by the verb. The second is based on the aspective characteristics of the process denoted by the verb, i.e. on the inner properties of the process as reflected in the verbal meaning. The third is based on the combining power of the verb in relation to other notional words in the utterance.

§ 8. On the basis of the subject-process relation, all the notional verbs can be divided into actional and statal.

Actional verbs express the action performed by the subject, i.e. they present the subject as an active doer (in the broadest sense of the word). To this subclass belong such verbs as *do, act, perform, make, go, read, learn, discover*, etc. Statal verbs, unlike their subclass counterparts, denote the state of their subject. That is, they either give the subject the characteristic of the inactive recipient of some outward activity, or else express the mode of its existence. To this subclass belong such verbs as *be, live, survive, worry, suffer, rejoice, stand, see, know*, etc.

Alongside of the two verbal sets, a third one could be distinguished which is made up of verbs expressing neither actions, nor states, but "processes". As representatives of the "purely processual" subclass one might point out the verbs *thaw, ripen, deteriorate, consider, neglect, support, display*, and the like. On closer observation, however, it becomes clear that the units of this medial subclass are subject to the same division into actional and statal sets as were established at the primary stage of classification. For instance, the "purely processual" verb *thaw* referring to an inactive substance should be defined, more precisely, as "processual-statal", whereas the "processual" verb *consider* relating to an active doer should be looked upon, more precisely, as "processual-

actional". This can be shown by transformational tests:

The snow is *thawing*. → The snow is *in the state of thawing*. The designer is *considering* another possibility. → The action of the designer is that he *is considering* another possibility.

Thus, the primary binary division of the verbs upon the basis of the subject-process relation is sustained.

Similar criteria apply to some more specific subsets of verbs permitting the binary actional-statal distribution. Among these of a special significance are the verbal sets of mental processes and sensual processes. Within the first of them we recognise the correlation between the verbs of mental perception and mental activity. *E.g.*: know — think; understand — construe; notice — note; admire — assess; forget — reject; etc.

Within the second set we recognise the correlation between the verbs of physical perception as such and physical perceptual activity. *E.g.*: see — look; hear — listen; feel (inactive) — feel (active), touch; taste (inactive) — taste (active); smell (inactive) — smell (active); etc.

The initial member of each correlation pair given above presents a case of a statal verb, while the succeeding member, respectively, of an actional verb. *Cf.* the corresponding transformational tests:

The explorers knew only one answer to the dilemma. → The mental state of the explorers was such that they knew only one answer to the dilemma. I am thinking about the future of the village. → My mental activity consists in thinking about the future of the village. Etc.

The grammatical relevance of the classification in question, apart from its reflecting the syntactically generalised relation of the subject of the verb to the process denoted by it, is disclosed in the difference between the two subclasses in their aspectual behaviour. While the actional verbs take the form of the continuous aspect quite freely, i.e. according to the general rules of its use, the statal verbs, in the same contextual conditions, are mainly used in the indefinite form. -The continuous with the statal verbs, which can be characterised as a more or less occasional occurrence, will normally express some sort of intensity or emphasis (see further).

§ 9. Aspective verbal semantics exposes the inner character of the process denoted by the verb. It represents the process as durative (continual), iterative (repeated), terminate (concluded), interminate (not concluded), instantaneous (momentary), ingressive (starting), supercompleted (developed to the extent of superfluity), undercompleted (not developed to its full extent), and the like.

Some of these aspectual meanings are inherent in the basic semantics of certain subsets of English verbs. Compare, for instance, verbs of ingression (*begin, start, resume, set out, get down*), verbs of instantaneity (*burst, click, knock, bang, jump, drop*), verbs of termination (*terminate, finish, end, conclude, close, solve, resolve, sum up, stop*), verbs of duration (*continue, prolong, last, linger, live, exist*). The aspectual meanings of supercompletion, undercompletion, repetition, and the like can be rendered by means of lexical derivation, in particular, prefixation (*oversimplify, outdo, underestimate, reconsider*). Such aspectual meanings as ingression, duration, termination, and iteration are regularly expressed by aspective verbal collocations, in particular, by combinations of aspective predicators with verbids (*begin, start, continue, finish, used to, would, etc.*, plus the corresponding verbid component).

In terms of the most general subclass division related to the grammatical structure of language, two aspective subclasses of verbs should be recognised in English. These will comprise numerous minor aspective groups of the types shown above as their microcomponent sets.

The basis of this division is constituted by the relation of the verbal semantics to the idea of a processual limit, i. e. some border point beyond which the process expressed by the verb or implied in its semantics is discontinued or simply does not exist. For instance, the verb *arrive* expresses an action which evidently can only develop up to the point of arriving; on reaching this limit, the action ceases. The verb *start* denotes a transition from some preliminary state to some kind of subsequent activity, thereby implying a border point between the two. As different from these cases, the verb *move* expresses a process that in itself is alien to any idea of a limit, either terminal or initial.

The verbs of the first order, presenting a process as potentially limited, can be called "limitive". In the published courses of English grammar where they are mentioned, these

verbs are called "terminative",* but the latter term seems inadequate. As a matter of fact, the word suggests the idea of a completed action, i.e. of a limit attained, not only the implication of a potential limit existing as such. To the subclass of limitive belong such verbs as *arrive, come, leave, find, start, stop, conclude, aim, drop, catch*, etc. Here also belong phrasal verbs with limitive postpositions, e.g. *stand up, sit down, get out, be off*, etc.

The verbs of the second order presenting a process as not limited by any border point, should be called, correspondingly, "unlimitive" (in the existing grammar books they are called either "non-terminative", or else "durative", or "cursive"). To this subclass belong such verbs as *move, continue, live, sleep, work, behave, hope, stand*, etc.

Alongside of the two aspective subclasses of verbs, some authors recognise also a third subclass, namely, verbs of double aspective nature (of "double", or "mixed" lexical character). These, according to the said authors, are capable of expressing either a "terminative" or "non-terminative" ("durative") meaning depending on the context.

However, applying the principle of oppositions, these cases can be interpreted as natural and easy reductions (mostly neutralisations) of the lexical aspective opposition. Cf.:

Mary and Robert *walked* through the park pausing at variegated flower-beds. (Unlimitive use, basic function) In the scorching heat, the party *walked* the whole way to the ravine bareheaded. (Limitive use, neutralisation) He *turned* the corner and found himself among a busy crowd of people. (Limitive use, basic function) It took not only endless scientific effort, but also an enormous courage to prove that the earth *turns* round the sun. (Unlimitive use, neutralisation)

Observing the given examples, we must admit that the demarcation line between the two aspective verbal subclasses is not rigidly fixed, the actual differentiation between them being in fact rather loose. Still, the opposition between limitive and unlimitive verbal sets does exist in English, however indefinitely defined it may be. Moreover, the described subclass division has an unquestionable grammatical relevance, which is expressed, among other things, in its peculiar correlation with the categorial aspective forms of the verbs (indefinite, continuous, perfect); this correlation is to be treated further (see Ch.

XV).

Auxiliary verb

In [linguistics](#), an **auxiliary** (also called **helping verb**, **auxiliary verb**, or **verbal auxiliary**) is a [verb](#) functioning to give further [semantic](#) or [syntactic](#) information about the **main** or **full verb** following it. In [English](#), the extra meaning an auxiliary verb imparts alters the basic form of the main verb to have one or more of the following functions: *passive*, *progressive*, *perfect*, *modal*, or *dummy*. The auxiliary verbs are *be* and *have*.

In English, every [clause](#) has a [finite verb](#) which consists of a full verb (a non-auxiliary verb) and optionally one or more auxiliary verbs, each of which is a separate word. Examples of finite verbs include *write* (no auxiliary verb), *have written* (one auxiliary verb), and *have been written* (two auxiliary verbs).

There is a syntactic difference between an auxiliary verb and a full verb; that is, each has a different grammatical function within the sentence. In English, and in many other languages, there are some verbs that can act either as auxiliary or as full verbs, such as *be* ("I *am* writing a letter" vs "I *am* a postman") and *have* ("I *have* written a letter" vs "I *have* a letter"). In the case of *be*, it is sometimes ambiguous whether it is auxiliary or not; for example, *The ice cream was melted* could mean either *Someone/something melted the ice cream* (in which case *melt* would be the main verb) or *the ice cream was mostly liquid* (in which case *be* would be the main verb).

4. Functions of the English auxiliary verb

Passive voice

The auxiliary verb *be* is used with a [past participle](#) to form the [passive voice](#); for example, the clause "the door **was opened**" implies that someone (or something) opened it, without stating who (or what) it was. Because many past participles are also stative adjectives, the passive voice can sometimes be ambiguous; for example, "at 8:25, the window **was closed**" can be a passive-voice sentence meaning "at 8:25, someone closed the window," or a non-passive-voice sentence meaning "at 8:25, the window was not open". Perhaps due to this ambiguity, the verb *get* will sometimes be used colloquially instead of *be* in forming the passive voice, "at 8:25, the window **got closed**".

Progressive aspect

The auxiliary verb *be* is used with a [present participle](#) to form the [progressive aspect](#); for example, the sentence "I **am riding** my bicycle" describes what the speaker is doing at the very moment of utterance, while the sentence "I **ride** my bicycle" is a temporally broader statement.

Perfect aspect

The auxiliary verb *have* is used with a [past participle](#) to form the [perfect aspect](#); for example, the sentence "Peter **has fallen** in love" differs from "Peter fell in love" in that the former implies some connection to the present — likely that Peter is still in love — while the latter does not.

Modal

There are nine [modal verbs](#): *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, *would*, and *must*. They differ from the other auxiliaries both in that they are [defective verbs](#), and in that they can never function as main verbs. (There do exist main verbs *can* and *will*, but these are distinct.) They express the speaker's (or listener's) judgement or opinion at the moment of speaking. Some of the modal verbs have been seen as a [conditional tense](#) form in English. Some schools of thought consider *could* to represent the past tense of *can*. However, according to Michael Lewis (*The English Verb*), this is not always true. "Could I get you something?" clearly is not expressing past time. Lewis instead suggests that *could* is a *remote* form of *can*. It is evident after re-examining the usage of *could* in this light that *remoteness* does describe the general meaning, e.g.

- I couldn't do it. (remoteness of time)
- It could happen. (remoteness of possibility)
- Could you do me a favor? (remoteness of relationship)

The remaining modal auxiliaries can be viewed in this same manner. Lewis covers this area in detail in his book; see the [References](#) section.

Dummy

Because, aside from the verbs *to be* and *to have*, only auxiliaries can be inverted to form questions and only auxiliaries can take negation directly, a dummy auxiliary *do* is used for questions and negatives when only a full verb exists in the positive statement (i.e. there are no auxiliaries in the positive, non-interrogative form). The same dummy *do* is used for

emphasis in the positive statement form. This is known as *do*-insertion.

For example, if the positive statement form is:

- I know the way.

the interrogative, negative and emphatic forms are respectively:

- *Do* you know the way?
- I *don't* know the way.
- I *do* know the way.

Compare this with:

- I should know the way.
- Should I know the way?
- I shouldn't know the way.
- (and the emphatic form has to be marked by intonation or punctuation).

Quasi-auxiliaries

English contains many [verb phrases](#) that function as quasi-auxiliaries, such as *be going to*, *used to*, *is about to*. These quasi-auxiliaries require an [infinitive](#). Others take a [gerund](#) (e.g. *need*, as in *need fixing*, in [American English](#)), past [participle](#) (e.g. *get*, as in *get done*), or other verb form.

In [American English](#), *go* and *come* can be quasi-auxiliaries with nothing between them and the following verb phrases, but only in their plain forms: "Come show me", "I'll go get it", and "I had to come see for myself". This use can be regarded as ellipsis of *and* — the previous are equivalent to "Come and show me", "I'll go and get it", and "I had to come and see for myself" — and [British English](#) requires the *and* to be included, as does American English when the verb is not in its plain form: "I went and saw him." (It is also possible in both dialects for *to* to be used in place of *and*, though this typically has a slightly different sense.)

Properties of the English auxiliary verb

Negation

Auxiliaries take *not* (or *n't*) to form the negative, e.g. *can't*, *won't*, *shouldn't*, etc. In certain tenses, in questions, when a contracted auxiliary verb can be used, the position of the [negative](#) particle *n't* moves from the main verb to the auxiliary: cf. *Does it not work?* and

Doesn't it work?

Inversion

Auxiliaries invert to form questions:

- *You will* come.
- *Will you* come?

Emphasis

The dummy auxiliary *do* is used for emphasis in positive statements (see above):

- I *do* like this beer!

Ellipsis

Auxiliaries can appear alone where a main verb has been omitted, but is understood:

- I will go, but she won't [*go*].

The verb *do* can act as a pro-VP (or occasionally a [pro-verb](#)) to avoid repetition:

- John never sings in the kitchen, but Mary does. (*pro-VP: replaces* sings in the kitchen)
- John never sings in the kitchen, but Mary does in the shower. (*pro-verb: replaces* sings)

Tag questions

Auxiliaries can be repeated at the end of a sentence, with negation added or removed, to form a tag question. In the event that the sentence did not use an auxiliary verb, a dummy auxiliary (a form of *do*) is used instead:

- You *will* come, *won't* you?
- You ate, *didn't* you?
- You *won't* come, *will* you?
- You *didn't* eat, *did* you?

In Scottish English

An example was made famous by [Hamish and Dougal](#)

- You'll have had your tea?

as a greeting. The implication is that I (having made the utterance) am not going to put myself in the position in which I would have to offer you tea, lest you had not had any.

More common, is the construction of the form

- You *will* not be wanting a drink?

uttered by a person who should offer you one but wishes not to.

Other languages

In [Indo-European languages](#), the verb "to have" is the most common auxiliary used for [perfect tenses](#). [Interlingua](#) has inherited this use of the verb. Some languages use "to be" for the perfect forms of some or all verbs (in [Esperanto](#), for example, *Mi estis irinta* (I was having-gone = I had gone). [French](#), [German](#), and [Dutch](#) use it for [verbs of motion and becoming](#), and (in German and Dutch) for "to be" itself, as does [Italian](#). The use of auxiliaries is one variation among [Romance languages](#). English uses "to be" only with "to go" in some senses.

[Finnish](#), a [Uralic language](#), uses *olla* (to be) for all verbs: *Sillä niin **on** Jumala maailmaa rakastanut* (Because so *is* God the world *loved*); it lacks an equivalent of the verb *to have*.

5. Conclusion

In many languages other than English, such valiancy changes aren't possible like this; the verb must instead be inflected for voice in order to change the valency.[citation needed]

A copula is a word that is used to describe its subject,[dubious — see talk page] or to equate or liken the subject with its predicate.[dubious — see talk page] In many languages, copulas are a special kind of verb, sometimes called copulative verbs or linking verbs.

Because copulas do not describe actions being performed, they are usually analysed outside the transitive/intransitive distinction.[citation needed] The most basic copula in English is to be; there are others (remain, seem, grow, become, etc.).[citation needed]

Some languages (the Semitic and Slavic families, Chinese, Sanskrit, and others) can omit the simple copula equivalent of "to be", especially in the present tense. In these languages a noun and adjective pair (or two nouns) can constitute a complete sentence. This construction is called zero copula.

Most languages have a number of verbal nouns that describe the action of the verb. In Indo-European languages, there are several kinds of verbal nouns, including gerunds, infinitives, and supines. English has gerunds, such as seeing, and infinitives such as to see; they both can function as nouns; seeing is believing is roughly equivalent in meaning with

to see is to believe. These terms are sometimes applied to verbal nouns of non-Indo-European languages.

In the Indo-European languages, verbal adjectives are generally called participles. English has an active participle, also called a present participle; and a passive participle, also called a past participle. The active participle of give is giving, and the passive participle is given. The active participle describes nouns that perform the action given in the verb, e.g. a giving person.[dubious — see talk page] The passive participle describes nouns that have been the object of the action of the verb, e.g. given money Other languages apply tense and aspect to participles, and possess a larger number of them with more distinct shades of meaning.[citation needed]

In languages where the verb is inflected, it often agrees with its primary argument (what we tend to call the subject) in person, number and/or gender. English only shows distinctive agreement in the third person singular, present tense form of verbs (which is marked by adding "-s"); the rest of the persons are not distinguished in the verb.

Spanish inflects verbs for tense/mood/aspect and they agree in person and number (but not gender) with the subject. Japanese, in turn, inflects verbs for many more categories, but shows absolutely no agreement with the subject. Basque, Georgian, and some other languages, have polypersonal agreement: the verb agrees with the subject, the direct object and even the secondary object if present.

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