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SECTION LANGUE ECRITE

A GLOSSARY of ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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A GLOSSARY of ENGLISH GRAMMAR

- **ADJECTIVE**

According to *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, an adjective typically serves as a modifier of a noun to denote a quality of the thing named, to indicate its quantity or extent, or to specify a thing as distinct from something else. Below are the characteristics of the adjective:

1. Adjectives can pre-modify nouns; in other words, they occur in an **attributive function (“*épithète*”)**, appearing between the determiner (including zero article) and the head of a noun phrase:
    - A *beautiful* sunset; the *ripe* fruit, Ø *disturbing* news.
2. Adjectives can also appear in **predicative function**, as subject or object complement (“*attribut du sujet*” or “*attribut de l'objet*”).
    - The sunset is *beautiful* (subject complement).
    - They found the sunset *beautiful* (object complement).
3. They can be pre-modified by the **intensifiers** *very, really*, etc.
    - The fruit is **too** *ripe*.
4. They can take **comparative** and **superlative** forms. The comparison can be made by inflection or by the addition of pre-modifiers *more* and *most*.
    - The bananas are *riper* than the peaches (inflection).
    - That is the *most beautiful* sunset I have ever seen (pre-modifier).

(NH)

➡ See: *Attributive, predicative*

- **ADJUNCT (« CIRCONSTANT/COMPLÉMENT CIRCONSTANCIEL »)**

An adjunct is generally an optional adverbial that specifies the time, location, or manner in which an event takes place. In particular, the term is used in syntax to refer to a secondary element in a construction that can usually be removed without the well-formedness of the rest of the construction being affected. In (1):

(1) I saw her in the park yesterday,

the phrases *in the park* and *yesterday* are adjuncts of the verb, and if they are removed, the sentence is still acceptable *(I saw her)*. The clearest examples at the sentence level are time locators, e.g. *John kicked the ball **yesterday***.
Adjuncts are sometimes obligatory. The existence of those obligatory adjuncts is understood as following from the context, rather than from grammatical factors. Consider for instance (2):

(2) ??This house was built #

This statement seems to require that something more be said while ‘*This house was built last year*’ seems to satisfy this obligation.

(YBM)

➡ See: *adverb, adverbial*

- **ADVERB**

According to *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, an adverb is a modifier of a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a preposition, a phrase, a clause, or a sentence. It expresses some relation of manner or quality,

place, time, degree, number, cause, opposition, affirmation, or denial, and in English, can also serve to connect and to express comment on clause content.

1. An adverb modifies a verb:
    - *The children played **quietly*** (here the adverb modifies the verb *played* and expresses the **manner** in which the children played).
2. An adverb modifies an adjective:
    - *The movie was **really** exciting* (here the adverb modifies the adjective *exciting* and expresses **to what degree** the movie was exciting).
3. An adverb modifies another adverb:
    - *The orchestra played **extremely** well* (here the adverb *extremely* modifies the adverb *well* and expresses **to what degree** the orchestra played well).
4. An adverb can modify an entire clause:
    - ***Unfortunately**, we missed our train* (here the adverb modifies the entire clause by **expressing a comment on its content**).

(NH)

- **ADVERBIAL ("*CIRCONSTANCIEL*")**

ADVERBIALS are phrases or clauses whose function is to modify either one element of the clause or the whole clause. This term is not to be confused with the term "adverb". All adverbs are adverbials but not all adverbials are adverbs. In French, "*les propositions adverbiales ou circonstancielles*" can only be clauses whereas adverbials, in English, can be clauses or phrases, for instance, prepositional phrases:

*(1) He found a letter **on the table**.*

(LC)

➡ *See : adjunct*

- **AGREEMENT (also CONCORD)**

Grammatical agreement corresponds to a change in inflectional form to match the properties of another constituent. The agreement of different elements in the sentence concerns number, gender, case, person and/or tense. For example in

(2) She loves you

the verb *loves* agrees with the subject (replacing *she* by *they* yields *they love you).* Or the sentence

(3) These flowers are beautiful.

illustrates agreement in number between the plural noun *flowers* and the determiner *this* and the plural noun phrase *these flowers* and the verb *be.* Consequently *to agree* (or *to be in concord)* is to take the same number, gender, person, etc. as another element in the clause or sentence.

(FDM)

- **ANAPHOR**

A word or phrase that refers back to a word already mentioned. In

(1) My cousin said he was coming.

he is used as an anaphor for *my cousin.*

(FDM)

- **ANAPHORA**

Anaphora comes from the Greek *carrying back.* It refers to a relation between two linguistic expressions such that the second one refers back to the first. In:

(1) I asked Lisa to check the proofs and she did.

she and *did* are anaphors, taking their interpretation from their antecedents *Lisa* and *check the proofs.* As the anaphoric element (or anaphor) and the antecedent have the same reference, they are *coreferential*. Pronouns are the most common anaphoric elements in English but there are other phenomena related to anaphora such as the adverb *so* or ellipsis as in:

(2) David went out, Alex too.

Anaphora is contrasted with *cataphora*, where the word refers forward. However, the term *anaphora* may also be found subsuming both forward and backward reference.

(FDM)

➡ See: *anaphor* and *cataphora.*

- **ANTECEDENT**

A word or words to which a following word or phrase grammatically refers back. Typically antecedents are noun phrases to which personal and relative pronouns refer, e.g.,

(1) My brother telephoned to say he'd be late

my brother is the antecedent of *he*.

(FDM)

➡ See: *anaphor, anaphora* and *cataphora*

- **ASPECT**

ASPECT comes from Latin *aspicere*, "to look at". The speaker indicates by means of an aspectual form that his/her own **point of view** modifies his/her presentation of a given process. The speaker thus considers the event with respect to a particular point of view.
In English, aspect is marked at the level of the verb by means of aspectual forms such as the perfect (HAVE + V-EN), BE + V-ing (a.k.a. the progressive form), and their combination. Aspectual forms are complex: they contain at least one auxiliary and a verb.

Aspect can be combined with the present tense:

(1) *I **have painted** the wall.*

(2) *Don't talk to me now, I**'m eating.***

or with the past tense:

(3) *Jenny never mentioned **she had seen** you at the pub.*

(4) *He **was working** at his computer when the power cut occurred.*

One should be careful to distinguish between the moment when the event took place and the aspectual manner in which it is presented. For instance, if you want to talk about a particular event which took place in the past, you have several options:

Event: Jeffrey/wash his car
Time: yesterday

(5) *Jeffrey washed his car yesterday.*

[simple past = Ø aspect (zero aspect)]

*(6) Look! Jeffrey **has washed** his car.*

[he did it yesterday; now it's clean]

*(7) Yesterday, Jeffrey **was washing** his car when the postman brought a parcel.*

Each example depicts the same event set at the same moment in the past (yesterday). What changes is the speaker's point of view on the event. In (5), the speaker chooses not to indicate any particular point of view on the event, hence the absence of any aspectual form. The verb is in the simple past (i.e. the VP does not contain any explicit aspectual marker) and the event is presented in a factual manner: the car is washed, the action is over. In (6), the speaker indicates that the past event has consequences that can be observed in the present: "now that the car is washed, I can see it is clean". In (7), the event is presented as in progress in the past: yesterday, the washing process was under way when the postman showed up.

(GD)

- **ATTRIBUTIVE ADJECTIVE (*"EPITHÈTE")***

An attributive adjective functions as the premodifier of a noun in a noun phrase:

*(1) A **long** journey*

(FDM)

➡ See *adjective*

- **AUXILIARY VERB**

Auxiliaries [abbreviation: *AUX*] (or "helping verbs", from Latin *auxiliaris* "helpful", from *auxilium* "aid, help") are a small subclass of verbs that include the modals *(must, can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might,* etc.), *be, have* as a marker of perfect aspect, and so-called dummy *do.* These verbs serve primarily a grammatical function (for marking aspect, voice, or modality, for example) and have very little descriptive meaning of their own. Auxiliaries thus constitute a *functional* category and may be contrasted with lexical verbs, which constitute a *lexical* category. (Lexical verbs typically have rich, idiosyncratic meanings that you can describe and that are not reducible to a function, e.g. *swim, know, peruse, lie, finish,* etc.). Whereas new lexical verbs can (and do) easily enter the language, auxiliaries constitute a closed class, which means that, unlike lexical verbs, new auxiliaries cannot be easily added to the language; rather, auxiliaries typically evolve over many centuries out of lexical verbs (cf. dummy *do*).

• FUNCTIONS OF AUXILIARIES IN ENGLISH.

Whereas lexical verbs can carry tense and agreement features by themselves, the expression of other verbal categories requires the use of an AUX in English; in particular, **perfect** and **progressive aspect**, **passive voice**, and certain types of verbal **modality** have auxiliary markers. Auxiliaries must also be used in the following contexts: (1) when the V is negated by *not (n't),* e.g. *Mary isn't coming to the party,* (2) in questions requiring subject-AUX inversion, e.g. *Is Mary coming to the party?* (3) in so-called emphatic contexts, especially when an explicit or implicit negative statement is being contradicted (the AUX is needed to carry emphatic/contrastive stress), e.g. *Mary IS coming to the party,* and (4) in tag questions and short (elliptical) answers, e.g. *--Mary is coming to the party, isn't she? – Yes, she is*. If there is no AUX inherent in the form, which is the case with non-modal verbal forms with Ø aspect in the active voice, *dummy do* is inserted. Thus, auxiliaries not only help convey a particular view of the event; they also help insert the main (lexical) verb into the grammatical structure of the sentence.

• LEXICAL VERB COMPLEMENT.

Although auxiliaries can occur alone (in short answers, tags, and other elliptical constructions), they are normally followed by a lexical verb complement, which occurs either as a participle ("past" *–en* participle or "present" *–ing* participle) after *be* and *have,* or as a plain (base) form after the modals and dummy *do.*

• *BE AND HAVE.*

The verb *be* is somewhat exceptional because even when it functions alone as a main verb, as in *She is ill,* it still maintains the syntactic capabilities of an auxiliary (cf. *Is she ill? She isn't ill. She IS ill.*). The verb *have* can also retain its auxiliary capabilities when used alone as a main verb, although it usually does not (cf. *Do you have any wool?/†Have you any wool?*). The verb *do* can either be an AUX (so-called dummy *do*) or a regular lexical verb; both can occur in a single verb form, e.g. *What does* [AUX] *Carl do* [lexical V] *for a living?*

(LP)

• **CATAPHORA**

Cataphora refers to a relation between two linguistic expressions such that the first one refers forward to the second. In

(1) If you see him, will you ask Bob to telephone me?

The pronoun *him* refers to *Bob*: they are co-referential as they refer to the same extra-linguistic item.

(FDM)

➡ See : *anaphora*

• **COORDINATION**

COORDINATION consists in connecting two or more clauses, phrases, words, or other structures with equivalent status. They are on the same syntactic level, whereas in subordination, one of the units is a constituent of a super ordinate unit.
Unlike subordination, coordination can link words, phrases, or clauses.
Here are some examples:

COORDINATED ELEMENTS	EXAMPLES
NP + NP	*get your hat and Mark's coat*
Adj.P + Adj.P	*the kind and generous people of Normandy*
Adv.P + Adv.P	*I lost my faith, slowly but painfully*
PP + PP	*on Wednesdays or on Fridays*
VP + VP	*You can't work for us and work for our competitors*

(LC)

 COORDINATOR

A coordinator is a conjunction that links units of the same syntactic level. The coordinating conjunctions are **and, or, but, yet, nor**, and **for** (some grammarians classify *for* among the coordinators; others, among the subordinators). In the examples below we will see how coordinators function as linkers:

1. Coordinators link **clauses**:

(1) Rick plays football, and his sister Carrie plays basketball.

(Here two independent clauses – units of the same syntactic level – are joined by the coordinator *and*. Notice **the comma** at the end of the first clause. Its presence is necessary when *and* or another coordinator joins two independent clauses.

(2) I called him several times, but he never answered the phone.

(Notice that the coordinator *but* establishes a contrast; the content of the second clause is unexpected in relation to what is expressed in the first).

(3) She accepted to do the job because she liked the work and because she needed the money.

(Notice that here *and* links two SUBORDINATE clauses, each one introduced by *because*. The two **subordinate clauses** are units at the same syntactic level.)

2. Coordinators link **predicates or predications (predication = operator + V)**:

(4) Bill gave the baby her bottle and changed her diaper.

(Two predicates are linked).

(5) They sat on a stoop and stared listlessly at the empty street

(Two predicates).

(6) She has cleared the table and done the washing up

(Two predications).

3. Coordinators link **phrases**:
    - **Noun phrases**: Apples *or* bananas; Paris *and* Rome; some of the adults *and* all of the children.
    - **Verb phrases**: She **can speak, *but* cannot write** Arabic.
    - **Prepositional phrases**: He dropped his dirty clothes ***in* the wash basket *and on* the floor.**
4. There are many other possible combinations. Remember: COORDINATORS JOIN UNITS OF THE SAME SYNTACTIC LEVEL.

(NH)

- **DEFINITENESS**

DEFINITENESS is a category concerned with the grammaticalization of identifiability and non-identifiability of referents on the part of a speaker or addressee. According to Leech & Svartvik (1975) definite (meaning) corresponds to a situation when both speaker and addressee know what is being talked about. They list the various contexts when definite meaning is implied:

- 2nd mention (back pointing according to Leech & Svartvik (*ibid*); strict anaphora according to Bouscaren & Chuquet, 1987)

*(1) He brought **a charge*** (1st mention) *against the Indonesian prince who held the position of Regent. **The charge*** (2nd mention) *was considered hasty and insufficiently documented.*

- when identity is established by post modification (forward pointing or cataphora)

*(2) **The centre** of the book is an account of **the events** in Lebak which led to Dekker's resignation*

We know which centre because we know the book, and we know which events because they took place in Lebak and led to Dekker's resignation.

- in the case of uniqueness (e.g. *the sun*) and shared knowledge (either in the world, the community or the immediate context or situation)

*(3) A few weeks later he left Lebak and made some attempts to be received by **the Governor-General** to put his case.*

In Indonesia (where Lebak is located), which was ruled at the time by the Dutch, there was a single Governor-General.

(MP)

• **DEICTIC**

Deictics are defined as words that point to the situation in which the speaker is speaking. *I, you, here, now, this, that, these, those, now, then* are common examples of deictics. The reference of a deictic expression can only be determined in relation to the situation of utterance, by features of the act of utterance such as when and where it takes place, and who the speaker and addressee are, e.g. ***I*** refers to the speaker, *now* refers to a time that includes the time of utterance.

(FDM)

 DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

There are **four demonstrative pronouns**:

This (singular – proximity)	**These** (plural – proximity)
That (singular – remoteness)	**Those** (plural – remoteness)

Characteristics of demonstrative pronouns:

- Demonstrative pronouns have a deictic (see **deictic**) or 'pointing' contrast.
  i. *We compared **these*** (**determiner**) *samples to **those*** **(pronoun**).
- In most cases, demonstrative pronouns, as opposed to demonstrative determiners, make reference to nouns of nonpersonal (and usually inanimate) gender:
  ii. *Did you notice **that** puppy in the garden? Did you notice **that**?* (animate but nonpersonal)
  iii. *Did you notice **that** man in the garden? Did you notice *that?* (**not acceptable** because animate and personal).
  iv. *Did you notice **that** broken vase in the kitchen? Did you notice **that**?* (inanimate and nonpersonal)

(NH)

➡ See : *deitic*

• **DETERMINER**

Name of the syntactic function of various linguistic objects whose category is:

- ARTICLE: definite *the*, indefinite *a(n),* and Ø. There is a contrast between the definite article *the* and the other two (indefinite *a(n)*and Ø) based on the criterion of definiteness (see above). There is another contrast between the indefinite article and the Ø article: *a(n)* is used with singular countable nouns, and Ø is used with plural nouns, singular uncountable nouns, and many proper nouns.
- DEMONSTRATIVES: *this, these, that, those* (definite determiners)
- POSSESSIVES: possessive pronouns and the genitive case of nouns (definite determiners). Keep in mind that **N1's** in N1's N2 (e.g. *Mary's* in the phrase *Mary's house*) has the syntactic function of determiner.
- QUANTIFIERS: *no, some, many, much, a few, a little, few, little, all, any, every, each* (indefinite determiners)

(MP)

➡ See : *possessive pronoun, pronoun.*

• **DITRANSITIVE**

A term used by some linguists to refer to a verb which can take two grammatical objects, e.g. *give* in (1):

(1) I gave him a book.

It is usually distinguished from monotransitive verbs, such as *kick* in

(2) She kicked the ball.

In (1), *a book* is a direct object and the role of recipient is assigned to the referent of *him*. In (1), the indirect object (*him*) appears before the direct object. But it may also follow it headed by a preposition (*to*) as in (3) :

(3) I gave a book to my brother

Note that:
(a) in some languages, such as English, the identification of indirect objects is problematic. If traditional grammar regards *him* in (1) and *my brother* in (3) as an indirect object, many contemporary analysts, however, disagree. Some hold that *him* is an indirect object in (1) and *my brother* an OBLIQUE (or a PREPOSITIONAL) object in (3). Others maintain that English has no indirect objects at all, only direct objects and oblique objects

and

(b) the argument with the semantic role of recipient or beneficiary is commonly expressed by a prepositional phrase (PP) headed by *to* as in (3) *supra* or by f*or* as in (4) :

(4) I bought a hat for her.

(YBM)

- **DUMMY**

Dummies fill a syntactic position that has been left empty. For example in (1) existential *there* is a proform that refers to the situation in general:

(1) ***There*** *were many people at the club.*

In (2) *it* is a dummy used to fill the subject position:

(2) ***It*** *is raining*

In contrast, in (3) *it* has a somewhat different function: it refers forward to an extraposed clause *(that they should do such a thing),* and is therefore called "anticipatory *it"* or "cataphoric *it*":

(3) ***It*** *would be inexcusable that they should do such a thing* (from Bolinger used by Khalifa, 1999)

In (4) *does* is usually considered a dummy auxiliary that allows the subject-auxiliary inversion necessary for questions:

(4) What ***does*** *John do for a living?*

➡ See : *extraposition* and *cataphora*

(MP + LP)

- **EXTRAPOSITION**

EXTRAPOSITION consists of a noun clause (also called complement clause, nominal clause or content clause) being moved to the end while dummy *it* fills the subject (1) or object (2) slot.

(1) It is clear that it will not be simple.

(2) You must find it exciting working here.

Extraposition operates almost exclusively on noun clauses. Extraposed noun clauses often involve a main clause that reports an attitude or stance (*clear / exciting)*, which can also be conveyed by a noun:

(3) It is a pleasure to meet you.

(LC)

- **FINITE/NON-FINITE**

FINITE

The term "finite" denotes a form of a verb that carries tense and person agreement; it typically carries the maximum in morphological marking for such categories (tense and person agreement). *TAKES* in (1) is finite in that it is limited to occurrence with a third person singular grammatical subject:

(1) Liza takes the bus every day

A finite clause is a clause containing such a verb form.

NON-FINITE

The term "non-finite" denotes a verb form that does not carry primary tense and person agreement features. It cannot serve as the only verb in a sentence. Non-finite forms typically include participles (see (2) and (3) below), infinitives (4) and gerunds (5) :

(2) Aunt Edythe received Jer's chaste salutations without ***moving a muscle of her old still neck***

(3) ***Puzzled and unreasonably concerned****, he followed Mary into the drawing room*

(4) She told him ***to leave***

(5) ***Swimming*** *is good exercise*

These differ from finite forms in lacking the ability to be marked for tense or agreement.
A non-finite clause is a clause containing such a verb form.
In (5), the absence of a first argument gives that sentence its syntactic compactness.
Here, ***swimming*** is the derived nominal form of the verb. This non-finite form serves as the head of a noun phrase (nominalization). Indeed, the less finite a verb is, the more noun-like it appears.

(YBM + MP)

- **GENERIC**

A term used for a noun phrase or an utterance which refers to a class of entities or a kind – a *genus* – as exemplified in (1) and (2) :

(1) ***Ø*** *Potatoes contain vitamin C and protein.*

(2) ***The*** *bat is an interesting creature.*

A generic NP does not refer to a specific individual or thing or to an entity located relative to a specific occurrence of situation. Genericness or genericity concerns the domain of possible occurrences, and precludes the construction of isolated occurrences with particular referential values. The phenomenon wrongly associated with genericness concerns utterances that do not express specific episodes or isolated facts, but instead report a general property, i.e. report a regularity that summarizes a set or a class of occurrences of situations which can be attributed to the referent of a particular grammatical subject as in (3):

(3) Betty smokes a cigar after dinner

Here *Betty* is the constituent that blocks access to a generic reading of the whole utterance as genericness is a feature of the entire utterance, rather than of any one NP in it; it is the whole generic utterance that expresses regularities which transcend particular facts.
In English, most determination markers can be used with a generic meaning beside their primary non-generic meaning. The meaning is disambiguated by the context.
Consider (4) and (5):

(4) The koala I saw at the zoo was eating eucalyptus leaves.
(5) The koala exclusively feeds on eucalyptus leaves. (generic)

In (4), the determiner indicates the noun refers to a specific occurrence or element qualified by *I saw at the zoo*. In (5), a sample (the animal that is a koala) representing the whole class is opposed to those that are not and an intrinsic property is attributed to the referent of the grammatical subject.

(YBM)

- **GRAMMATICAL FUNCTION**

Grammatical functions (a.k.a. "grammatical relations") refer to the syntactic relations between the parts of speech in a clause. In English, the main grammatical functions are the following: **subject**, **object** (direct, indirect, or prepositional), **adjunct** (of time, place, manner, etc.), and **complement** (e.g. a predicative complement: *John is a fool*). A given function can be realized by different parts of speech. For instance, the subject of a verb can be a noun phrase, a pronoun, or even a clause:

(1) [The drunk driver]$_{NP}$ lost control of his car.

(2) [He]$_{PRON}$ lost control of his car.

(3) [Getting from Paris to Lille]$_{CLAUSE}$ takes only one hour by train.

(GD)

- **INTRANSITIVE**

This term denotes a verb, or a clause containing such a verb, which occurs without a direct object as in (1) and (2):

(1) Lisa smiled Ø

(2) The rock fell Ø

Note that many verbs can have both a transitive and an intransitive use:

(3) I broke my arm / The rope broke (all by itself)

(YBM)

- **LEXICAL VERB**

Lexical verbs have a meaning of their own, which can be translated (e.g. *walk*: *marcher*, *sing*: *chanter*, etc.). There are as many meanings as there are lexical verbs. In contrast, auxiliary verbs – such as *be*, *have* and *do* – have more abstract meanings.
Verbs refer to events or states. While a noun refers to an entity such as a person, a group of people, a thing, an abstract concept, etc., a verb necessarily involves a relationship (or process):

(1) Mark is waiting outside the pub.

relationship: MARK/WAIT

(2) Joan punished her son for biting his sister.

relationship: Joan/punish/her son
Lexical verbs are commonly considered as 'doing words' or 'action words'. This is far from accurate. While it is true that many verbs refer to an action per se, such as *run*, *hit*, *sing*, *kick*, etc., there are many other verbs that do not (or not exactly):
be, *exist*, *remain* (state, existence)
stand, *sit*, (physical position)
believe, *deduce*, *enjoy*, *think*, *concentrate* (mental conditions)
deduce, *concentrate*, *think* (mental activity)
determine, *depend*, *condition*, *provoke* (dependency)

DYNAMIC VERBS

They refer to an action or a change of state. The event conveyed by the verb is characterized by a transfer of energy:

(3) *I kicked the door open (a forceful event + movement).*

(4) *We've become friends (change of states).*

STATIVE VERBS (OR STATE VERBS)

They refer to a state, that is to say a stable property. No change of state or action is involved. Some forms such as BE + V-ING, are avoided when the verb is used to describe a state:

(5) *She seems very nice: /VERY NICE/ is a property of the subject she (?is seeming)*

(6) *This car belongs to me. (~~is belonging to~~)*

Warning! Some verbs can be either dynamic or stative, depending on the context:

(7) *I think you're a liar: opinion*

(8) *I want you to **think** hard about a possible solution: mental activity*

(9) *The river always smells foul:* /smell foul/ is an inherent property of the river

(even if temporary: The river smells foul today)

(10) *I'm just smelling the meat*: a sniffing action to detect odor

(GD)

- **MODALITY**

MODALITY comes from Latin *modus*, "manner". It corresponds to the **manner** in which the propositional content of the utterance is presented. In English, modality is expressed by means of different markers such as modal auxiliaries (*may*, *might*, *can*, *could*, *must*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, *would*), semi-auxiliaries (*have to*, *be able to*, *be going to*, *be bound to*, etc.), modal idioms (*had better*, *would rather/sooner*, *is to*, etc.), marginal modals (*dare*, *need*, *ought to*, *used to*), adverbs (*probably*, *certainly*), or even adjectives (*probable*, *possible*, *impossible*, etc.).
So as to communicate, one has a certain idea of what is going to be said, and of the way it is going to be said. What is to be said is the **propositional** content of the utterance. The way it is said corresponds to **modality**.

Propositional content: YOU/SIT DOWN
Modality: permission granted (1), permission not granted (2), forbidding (3)

(1) *You may sit down.*

(2) *You may not sit down.*

(3) *You cannot/can't sit down.*

Propositional content: SHE/EAT
Modality: obligation (4), high probability (5)

(4) She is so weak, she must eat.

(5) Don't call her now, she must be eating.

Modality breaks down into non-epistemic and epistemic types. Non-epistemic modality is also called "root modality". Root modality is subdivided into deontic and dynamic modality.

• ROOT MODALITY

DEONTIC MODALITY

(Greek *deon*: "duty", extended to orders, wishes, suggestions, capacity, etc.) Deontic modality expresses meanings relating to what is required or permitted by the laws of the physical world (e.g. if you don't eat, you die, therefore you must eat) or by social principles such as regulations and moral values (ex. cheating is not permitted when you take an exam, therefore you must not cheat).

DYNAMIC MODALITY (ALSO KNOW AS 'PROPERTY MODALITY')

This type of modality is concerned with the properties or dispositions (natural or acquired) of the entity involved in the situation.

(6) She can speak Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic. (ability)

(7) I've asked him to help us but he won't. (volition)

• EPISTEMIC MODALITY

(Greek *episteme*: "science", "knowledge"). It has to do with degrees of probability:

(8) She looks young. She must be 25.

Given what the speaker knows, s/he infers with a high degree of certainty that SHE/BE 25 is validated. Note that probability judgments expressed with modals range from very weak (~1%) to very high (~99,9%). In (2), no modal is used because the speaker is 100% sure that SHE/BE 25 is validated:

*(9) I know exactly when she was born. She **is** 25.*

(GD)

• POSSESSIVE PRONOUN

The term *possessive pronoun* refers to the following forms in English: *my/mine, his, her/hers, its, our/ours, your/yours, their/theirs.* These forms are in fact the **genitive** (or possessive) case of the personal pronouns, corresponding to the ***-'s/-s'*** genitive on nouns *(Sam's, Mary's, a lady's, the boys').* More modern English grammars usually call them **pronominal genitives** (or sometimes *genitive pronouns*).

Pronominal genitives, like specifying nominal genitives, typically determine a following noun, e.g. *my book,* in which case they serve as a kind of **definite determiner**. (Note that their use precludes the use of any other central (non-quantifying) determiner (or article) in standard English (cf. *~~*the my book~~*).) In addition to marking definiteness (or identifiability), pronominal (and specifying nominal) genitives indicate some sort of "possessive" relationship (cf. *Ann's wallet/her wallet —> the wallet belonging to Ann/her*). The notion of "possession" must be understood very broadly, for the relationship expressed by genitives in English is by no means limited to ownership (cf. Larreya & Rivière 2005:240-241).

Pronominal genitives (again like nominal genitives) can also be used **independently**, i.e. as strong forms without a following noun (they are often said to be followed by *Ø*), e.g. *This book is mine* (cf. *This book is George's*); *They met a friend of hers* (cf. *They met a friend of Elizabeth's*). The second

member of each pair listed above is the independent form, i.e.: *mine, hers, ours, yours, theirs* (*its* is not normally used independently; *its own,* however, can be used). Note that in earlier stages of English, *mine,* like the archaic 2nd person singular form *thine,* was used before nouns beginning in a vowel, e.g. *†mine eyes* [contemporary English —> *my eyes*]).
Keep in mind that unlike in French, where possessives (*mes, ta, son, notre, vos,* etc.) agree in gender and number with the noun they determine, in English there is only agreement with the referent of the genitive (i.e. with the "possessor"), e.g. *sa mère [= la mère de Valentin] —> his mother, sa mère [= la mère de Valentine] —> her mother, ses parents [= les parents de Valentin] —> his parents, ses parents [= les parents de Valentine] —> her parents.*

(LP)

➡ See *: determiner*

- **PREDICATIVE ADJECTIVE ("*ATTRIBUT*")**

A predicative adjective is an adjective that occurs in the subject predicative position, following a linking (copular) verb, as in (1), or as an object predicative with a complex transitive verb, as in (2):

*(1) He seemed **tired***

*(2) I found him **tired** and **hungry**.*

(FDM)

- **PREDICATIVE RELATION**

THE PREDICATIVE RELATION, in the utterer-centered approach, is a relation between three terms or arguments, which are notions (bundles of physico-cultural properties). The second notion is the relator.
A predicative relation is not an utterance. It is neither asserted nor unasserted.
The orientation of the predicative relation determines the type of diathesis or voice, in that the choice of the first argument between the source notion and the goal notion of the primitive relation will entail, among other things, an active or passive orientation of the predicative relation:

<CAT(source notion)-EAT(relator)-MOUSE(goal notion)> = active voice

(The cat is eating a mouse.)

<MOUSE(goal notion)-EAT(relator)-CAT(source notion)> = passive voice

(A mouse is being eaten by the cat.)

(LC)

- **PREPOSITION**

A preposition is a word that introduces a prepositional phrase, linking the following noun phrase to another element in the sentence:

*(1) He locked the key **in** the car*

English prepositions include *to, from, with, of, under, in front of*, etc.
Consequently a prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and a noun phrase, considered as the prepositional complement:

(2) under my umbrella

Under is a preposition and *my umbrella* is a prepositional complement.

(FDM)

▯ PRONOUNS

Web*ster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines pronouns as any of a small set of words in a language that are used as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases and whose referents are named or understood in the context. However, grammarians consider pronouns as special types of nouns that may be the main word – or the only word – in a noun phrase. There are several classes of pronouns:

1. personal pronouns : *I, you, he, she, we, they*
2. possessive pronouns : *my, mine, your, yours,* etc.
3. reflexive pronouns : *myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves*
4. demonstrative pronouns: *this, these, that, those*
5. reciprocal pronouns : *each other, one another*, etc.
6. interrogative pronouns: *who, what, which, whose, whom*
7. relative pronouns: *which, who, that, whose, whoever, whatever,* etc.
8. indefinite pronouns: *some, none, nobody, somebody, any, anyone*, etc.

(NH)

➡ See : *determiner, possessive pronoun, reciprocal pronoun, reflexive pronoun*

• RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS

English has two reciprocal pronouns: *each other* and *one another.* They are used to indicate mutual ("reciprocal") action or a state involving reciprocity between two or more beings, e.g. *They know each other*. Like reflexives, they are typically used in object position when their (plural) antecedent is subject (but they can also be found in more complex configurations).
Reciprocals function as single pronouns even though they are written as two words. They do have genitive forms *(each other's/one another's),* but are otherwise invariable (i.e. they do no agree in person with their antecedent). In meaning they are equivalent; *each other* is somewhat more common than *one another,* which is slightly more formal and sometimes preferred when the antecedent is a set of more than two members, but in practice they can be used interchangeably.

(1) Judy and Kathy take turns looking after each other's children.

(2) The committee members must consult with one another before proposing formal changes to the by-laws.

(LP)

• REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

English reflexive pronouns are formed by adding *–self* (plural *–selves*) to the personal pronouns (genitive or accusative forms): *myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.* They have two main uses: as a complement (essentially a direct, indirect, or prepositional object), as in (1), or as a kind of emphatic modifier or adjunct, as in (2):

*(1) (a) Lisa cut **herself**. (herself* —> direct object of *cut)*

*(b) Andrew bought **himself** a new car. (himself* —> indirect object of *bought)*

*(c) The children looked at **themselves** in the mirror. (themselves* —> prepositional object of *at)*

*(2) (a) Lisa **herself** cut the turkey. (herself* —>modifier of Lisa; cf. (1a))

*(b) Do it **yourself**. (yourself* —> modifier of understood subject *you)*

As **complements**, reflexives are typically used when a grammatical object has the subject as its antecedent, i.e. when the object and the subject refer to the same being or thing, as in the examples in (1), in which case the object takes a reflexive form; if a non-reflexive were used, an entity different

from the subject would be understood. For example, if in (1a) we had *Lisa cut her* instead of *herself,* we would understand that Lisa cut some other female. In addition to these very straightforward contexts, complement reflexives are also found in much more complex syntactic configurations.
In their **emphatic** usage, reflexives are used to emphasize or reinforce the identity of their antecedent in the narrated event (that is, what is being talked about in the utterance), because someone or something else could be imagined in that role; often the antecedent of reflexive is thought to be unexpected in the role ascribed. As Huddleston and Pullum (2002) note, in meaning this usage corresponds roughly to *no other than* or *no less than.* For example, in (2a), the use of the emphatic reflexive *herself* implies that it is to some degree surprising (for whatever reason) or unexpected in the context that it was Lisa who cut the turkey. In (2b) there is the implication that it could be someone else who would do it, but the speaker is saying that instead of someone else, it should be the addressee.

(LP)

➡ See : *pronoun*

- **SPECIFIC/NON-SPECIFIC**

The notions of specific/non-specific are applied to the reference of nominal expressions (NPs). When an NP refers to (or "picks out") a specific entity or entities in the world (real or fictional), we say that we are dealing with **specific reference**. For example, in *The boy played with the marbles,* both *the boy* and *the marbles* refer to specific entities in the world. Since both of these NPs are definite (they are marked by the definite determiner *the*), we say that we are dealing with specific *definite* reference in these examples. In other examples, however, NPs may have specific *indefinite* reference; for example, in *I bought a lamp yesterday,* the NP *a lamp* refers to a specific lamp, but it is indefinite (marked by the indefinite determiner *a* since it is not yet identifiable by the addressee ("first mention")).
Keep in mind that NPs do not always refer to particular entities; they may, for example, designate an entire class, as in *Tigers are an endangered species,* where the NP *tigers* does not refer to particular tigers but, rather, designates a class; here we would say that *tigers* is generic. Note that the determiners *a, the,* and *Ø* occur with both specific and generic NPs, as shown in the following examples (the dotted underlining indicates which forms are under consideration):

(1) I bought a book/the book/(some) books/the books —> specific NPs

(2) (a) The tiger/A tiger is a ferocious beast —> generic NPs

(b) Tigers are ferocious beasts —> generic NP

Although a specific NP is necessarily non-generic, and a generic NP is necessarily non-specific, there are NPs that are neither specific nor generic, i.e. non-specific non-generic. For example, in *I want to see a movie tonight,* the NP *a movie* could refer to a specific film that I have in mind but am not naming (in which case it would be specific), or it could be that the speaker has no particular film in mind yet but has the intention of choosing one, in which case *a movie* would be **non-specific** (and also non-generic, since it is not designating a class). Ambiguous examples are common.

(LP)

➡ See : *generic.*

- **SUBORDINATION**

SUBORDINATION is the type of linkage that allows one clause to be embedded in or dependent upon another clause. There is a syntactic hierarchy between clauses, usually between a main clause (or superordinate or embedding one) and one or more subordinate clauses (or embedded ones). In the sentence *I think it was a mistake,* the clause *it was a mistake* is dependent on the main (or matrix) clause *I think.*

(LC)

- **TENSE**

In English, a clear distinction exists between:

- our conception of a succession of moments: time
- the grammatical means of expressing that chronological reality: tense(s)

In English, that distinction is marked at the level of the lexicon (2 distinct concepts = 2 words). In French, the same word (temps) is used for both chronological reality and linguistic markers, even if the distinction exists at the conceptual level (le temps chronologique vs. les temps grammaticaux).
Be careful!
The *present <u>tense</u>* does not necessarily receive a *present <u>time</u>* interpretation.

*(1) As soon as they **pay** me, you'll get your money back.*

Likewise, the *past <u>tense</u>* (+ED) does not necessarily receive a *past <u>time</u>* interpretation.

*(2) It is high time you **went** to bed.*

In (2), ED marks a non-temporal disconnection relative to the speech-act moment: YOU/GO TO BED is not yet validated. The simple past is "modal" insofar as it conveys the speaker's judgment relative to propositional content of the utterance ("you should be in bed now").
There is no such thing as a **future tense* in English. Some linguists are tempted to see the construction WILL + infinitive as the mark of the future tense. If such were the case, the following examples would be hard to analyze: *Boys **will** be boys/ My car **won't** start/ If you**'ll** tell me the truth, I'll be able to help you/ Someone's knocking at the door : that**'ll** be the doctor, etc*.

(GD)

- **TRANSITIVE**

This term denotes a verb, or a clause containing such a verb, which occurs with a direct grammatical object as in (1) :

(1) My cat killed a mouse.

It derives from Latin *trans* « across » + *ire* « go » and reflects the idea that in an elementary example like *John killed Bill* the action « goes across » from *John* to *Bill*.

(YBM)

- **VERB COMPLEMENT (*COMPLÉMENT ACTANCIEL*)**

It is used to refer to any constituent following a verb that is included in the notional definition of the process denoted by the verb. The mention of that complement (with the exception of the Agent complement) is essential to the well-formedness of the utterance. In the sentence below, *live* means "habiter"and (1) is therefore impossible as such :

*(1) *I live # (vs. I live in Marseilles)*

Note that the Agent complement can be implicit (*Marlowe was stabbed outside a pub*) as the Agent is **included** in the notional definition of *stab*. So it can always be retrieved. In (2) :

(2) Liza put the book on the table

the grammatical object *the book* and the locative phrase *on the table* are verb complements and are as such obligatory [Les grammairiens du français parlent de *complément de verbe* qu'ils opposent à *complément de phrase*].

(YBM)

- **VOICE**

A category used in the syntactic description of sentence or clause structure, primarily with reference to verbs, to express the way word order may alter the relationship between the grammatical subject and the grammatical object of a verb and may change the meaning of the sentence.
The main distinction is between *active*, *passive* and *activo-passive*, as illustrated by (1), (2) and (3):

(1) Oswald shot the President

(2) The President was shot in Dallas (short passive, i.e., with no by phrase)

(3) Pulps read easily (activo-passive)

- active: in the active clause, the role of agent is prototypically assigned to the referent of the grammatical subject and the role of patient to the referent of the grammatical object. Hence the representation of the transitive construction in the active voice: AG → PA.

When no agent is included in the notional definition of the process denoted by the verb, it is the role of patient (or cause, …) that is assigned to the referent of the grammatical subject.

- passive : a construction in which a primarily transitive verb is construed in such a way that the grammatical object of the corresponding active schema appears as its surface grammatical subject.

The grammatical subject of the corresponding active schema may be either implicit or expressed in a prepositional phrase called « *by* phrase » as in (1):

(1) This portrait was painted by Nick Sinclair (long passive)

This enunciative operation of reordering is known as passivization. Note that two kinds of passive may be distinguished: verbal and adjectival (or pseudo-passive) as in (2) and (3):

(2) He was clubbed to death with a beer bottle. (verbal)

(3) They were disappointed by his success in evading punishment. (adjectival)

- activo-passive : activo-passive sentences are held to be relatable to active sentence patterns of the most common type. Whereas the transitive use of the verb is primary, the intransitive verb is used to represent the action as quasi-automatic or self-originated with a vague idea of an agent in the background and including an expression indicating the ease or difficulty with which the event denoted by the verb takes place. Consider (4) :

(4) Grammar books sell slowly.

(YBM)

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