Lecture 4. THE VERB

1. **The grammatical meaning of the verb. Classifications of verbs.**
2. **The grammatical category of person and number.**
3. **The grammatical category of tense and aspect.**
4. **Voice.**
5. **Mood.**

The grammatical meaning of the verb.

“Verb” (fr. “verbe”, Lat. “verbum”) – a “word”. “Verb” and “word” are etymologically connected

“verbal” – expressed in words;
“to verbalize” – to name or describe in word;
“verbalist” – a person, who uses words skillfully.

The grammatical meaning of the verb.

THE VERB **is the most complex part of speech.**

the predicative function

It establishes the connection between the reality and the situation named in the utterance.

The grammatical meaning of the verb.

THE GRAMMATICAL MEANING OF THE VERB

is a *process*

state

action

indication

upon the existence of an object

The grammatical meaning of the verb.

Structure:

- word-changing inflexions: -s, -ing, -ed;
- derivational structure:
re-, dis-, mis-; -ify, -ate, -ize, -en;
- verb are derived from nouns by conversion and by reversion.

!!! THE VERB is the *only* part of speech that has analytical forms!!!

I. The morphological classification

- based on the way of forming Past Indefinite and Past participle:

regular
(by ending –ed)

irregular
(by means of gradation, sometimes by ending the dental suffixes)

NOTE: This classification is full.

II. The functional classification

- based upon the ability of the verb to be used in different types of predicate.

Notional verbs

- ✔*have full nominative value;*
- ✔*this set is derivationally open*

Link-verbs

Functional verbs

- ✔have partial nominative value
- ✔this set is derivationally closed

Modal verbs

Auxiliary verbs

III. The Aspective classification

- exposes the inner character of the process

Limitive verbs

- *present a process as potentially limited*
  e.g.: arrive, come, find, stop, drop, catch.

Unlimitive verbs

- **present a process as non – limited by any boarder–point.**
  e.g.: move, go, sleep, work, hope, behave.

NOTE: ***There are verbs of double-aspective nature***
e.g.: turn.

IV The Syntactical classification

❖ based upon the valency of the verb:

Intentional ***(transitive)***

✔can not function alone, thus demand complements, e.g.: to drop something.

Unintentional ***(intransitive)***

✔can function autonomously, e.g.: jump.

NOTE: ***There are verbs of double nature e.g.: read.***

These categories refer the process denoted by the verb to the subject of the situation.

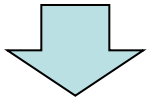
The category of person in the *Present Tense* can be divided into 3 peculiar subsystems:

modal verb subsystem
(has no personal inflexions)

the rest of the verbs
(presents the regular expression of person with the remaining English verbs, ex: -(e)s).

made up by one verb "to be"
(has 3 different personal forms – am, is, are)

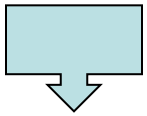
The category of person in the *Past Tense*



has distinction in the archaic form of the second singular, e.g.: Until thou hadst horses thou wert with us.

The grammatical category of number is hardly featured at all and can be seen only with the verb “to be” in Present and Past.

Agreement.



number – person relations between the subject and the predicate

Cases of Agreement

- The combination of finite verb with collective nouns (so called “multitude plural”), e.g.: The jury were listening attentively. The jury never looks at a defendant.

- When the subject has a numerical attribute: it can express the plurality of the referent (e.g.: Three years have passed.); it can be integrative (e.g.: Three years is a long period of time.).

- Presented by construction expressed by coordinative group of nouns (coordinative conjunctions: and, either…or, both…and…, as well as).

English Tenses:

- present,
- past
- future

Otto Jesperson

denied the existence of the future tense because the English future is expressed by the phrase "shall/will + Infinitive" and the verbs "shall/will" preserve some of their *original modal meaning, that of "volition".*

Ilyish

- argues that there are many cases when “will” is used as an auxiliary of the future only and the meaning of volition is excluded by the context,

e.g.: I’m afraid I will have to go back.

3 tenses in

the common and continuous aspects

6 tense-aspect forms.

Traditional Grammar:

shall+Infinitive – 1st person,
will+Infinitive – 2nd and 3rd person → **pure Future**

I will – willingness, desire;
He shall – promise, command. → **modal meanings**

Is there any difference between "I will" and "I shall"?

They form a peculiar minor *category of the voluntary future and non-voluntary future.* This category is neutralized in the contracted form "'ll".

Aspect

❖reflects the mode of the realization of the process.

- *Jesperson* denies the aspect as a grammatical category.

- *Ilyish* contrasts *the common aspect and the continuous aspect* and stresses that there is no direct correspondence between English and Russian aspects.

Aspect

Ivanova:

- ***aspect and tense in English can not be regarded as separate grammatical categories.***

Tense-Aspect category.

3 tense-aspect groups

Progressive (continuous) denotes the process of the action regardless of its beginning and end.

Perfect is the most complex group. It unites an aspect meaning – the completeness of action and a tense meaning – the priority.

Perfect-continuous shows the action as developing within certain limits: from its beginning to the end.

Blokh :

Aspect

2 Aspective Categories in English

Aspective Category of Development

continuous : non-continuous forms

- show the action in progress
- leave this meaning unspecified.

NOTE: This opposition is neutralized in some cases.
e.g.: He stood smoking a pipe.
e.g.: She is always grumbling.

Category of Retrospective Coordination.

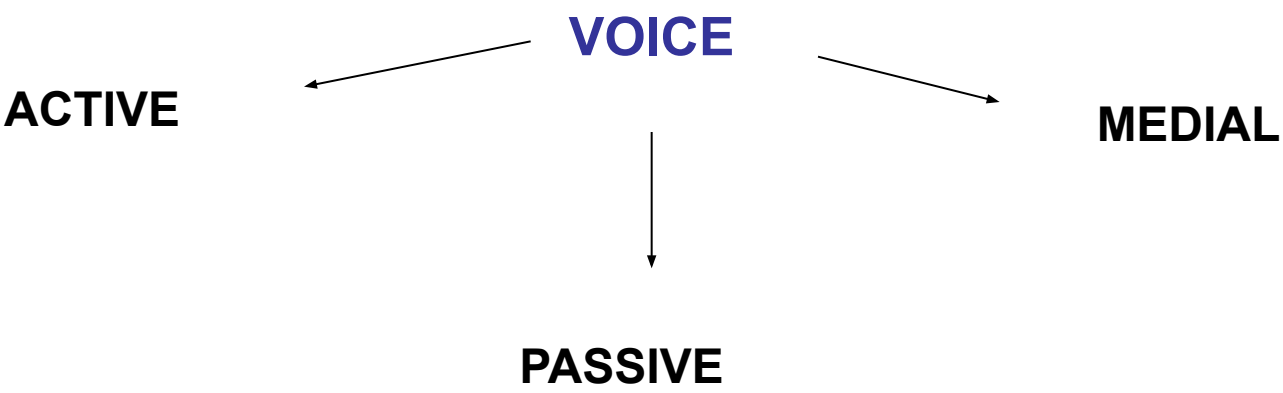
perfect – non-perfect

NOTE: This category can be neutralized in some contexts.
e.g.: I hear he has returned. I forget what you have told me.

3. The grammatical category of tense and aspect.

Voice

- shows the direction of the process regarding the participants of the situation reflected in the syntactic construction.

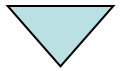


4. The grammatical category of voice.

Active Voice

- shows the action performed by the semantic subject of the sentence. The semantic and grammatical subjects coincide.

There are 2 cases in the Active voice:



- The subject can perform the action directed to the Object. E.g.: He took the book.

- The action can not be directed anywhere.
E.g.: The child is weeping.

Passive Voice

- **The grammatical Subject does not coincide with the semantic Subject.**

E.g. The letter was send by the secretary.

- **The Passive voice expresses reception of the action by the subject of the syntactic construction.**

Active and Passive Voice

- **The guards dispersed the crowd in front of the palace.**

- **The crowd was dispersed by the guards.**

The situational participants are the same
the subjective appraisal of the situation
by the speaker is changed.

features the act of the guards features the experience of the crowd.

features the experience of the crowd.

4. The grammatical category of voice.

Medial Voices

- **functioning of the voice forms in other than passive or active meanings**

Medial voices:

Middle

e.g. The book sells well.

The Subject is a pseudo-doer of the action.

Reflexive

*e.g. I'll wash and dress (**myself**) and be ready for breakfast.*

The Subject in this sentence is its own object of the action.

Reciprocal

*e.g. Nelly and Charles quarreled (**with each other**).*

The verbial meaning of the action is performed by the subjects to one another.

Passive Voices vs. CNP

BE + Participle II

Passive Voice

ACTION

e.g.: The roof was painted yesterday.

Compound Nominal Predicate

STATE

e.g.: The roof is painted red.

MOOD

- **expresses the character of connection between the process denoted by the verb and the actual reality.**

Traditional Grammar

3 moods:

The Indicative Mood
- represents the action as a real fact.

The imperative Mood
- expresses inducement; implicitly the action is not performed, yet it is desired.

The subjunctive Mood
- treats an action as an imaginary phenomenon, that is the subject of a desire, hypothesis, speculation. Subjunctive Mood

5. The grammatical category of Mood.

Subjunctive Mood

- **The Subjunctive Mood is** the most complex question**.**

There is no straightforward relation between meaning and form.

The Oblique Moods:

Subjunctive Mood I;
Subjunctive Mood II;
The Suppositional Mood;
The Conditional Mood.

Be, go
Went, were, had gone
Should go
Would/should go/have gone

A.I. Smirnitskij:

The semantic classification of the Oblique Moods:

1. **Subjunctive I** – it does not contradict the reality.
e.g.: be, go

2. **Subjunctive II** – it contradicts the reality.
e.g.: were, had been

3. **Suppositional Mood** (should + Infinitive) with any Subject.

4. **Conditional Mood** (would/should + Infinitive) functions only in the main clause of conditional sentences.

Ilyish:

4 meanings of the English Subjunctive:

- ***Inducement***
- ***Possibility***
- ***Unreal condition***
- ***The result of unreal condition***

NOTE: **Thus, there are 4 Moods or there may be 3 moods if you unite the 3rd and the 4th meaning. We may say there are 2 moods (2+3+4) – unreal moods.**

Subjunctive Mood

Blokh :

Subjunctive Mood (Integral Mood of unreality)

Indicative Mood

Subclassification

2 functional subsystems:

spective (the mood of attitudes).

conditional (the mood of appraising causal conditional relations of processes).

4 Subjunctive form-types:

1. **Subjunctive I (pure spective). Meanings: consideration, inducement. (e.g.: Do as I ask you).**
2. **Subjunctive II (stipulative). Meaning: unreal condition**
3. **Subjunctive III (consecutive). Meaning: unreal consequence.**
4. **Subjunctive IV (modal spective): may – spective, should – spective, let – spective.**

5. The grammatical category of Mood.