

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND GENERAL STUDIES

GEN 101 ENGLISH LANGUAGE

LECTURE 4 - SENTENCES

1. Sentence Structure and Sentence Patterns

A sentence normally has a subject and a predicate. The subject is the word or group of words that tells who or what performs or undergoes the action named by the verb, or experiences the condition named.

The predicate: the word or group of words that normally follows the subject and tells what it (i.e. the subject) does, has, is, or what is done to it, or where it is.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE
Helen	<u>is</u> laughing.
The movie	<u>starts</u> at nine.
The children	<u>have</u> a new toy.
This blade	<u>is</u> sharp.
Two tenants	<u>have been evicted</u> .
The milk	<u>is</u> in the refrigerator.

Sentence Patterns

i. Subject + Verb

The verb is part of the president, and in some sentences, as in the examples below, the verb alone stands as the predicate.

- a) Gases react.
- b) Languages change.
- c) Birds fly.
- d) Food satisfies.
- e) Education pays.
- f) We won.

This is the simplest sentence type and it is of the pattern Subject + Verb (SV).

ii. Subject + Verb + Object

Some verbs cannot occur alone but require an object to make the sense complete.

- a) Teachers **transmit ideas**.
- b) Acids **attack metals**.
- c) Oxygen **oxidizes iron**.
- d) Students **develop skills**.
- e) Demand **determines prices**.
- f) Cleanliness **saves lives**.

The object is 'affected' by the action denoted by the verb. The sentence pattern is SVO

iii. Subject + Verb + Complement

The verb may also be followed by another word that is not affected by any action but one that is required to make the sense complete by throwing more light on (or describe) the subject itself.

- a) Bombs **are dangerous**.
- b) Human **beings are mammals**.
- c) Adam Smith **was an economist**.
- d) They **became University students**.
- e) The child **is happy**.

In this case, the word that follows the verb is the complement. The sentence pattern for this type of sentence is SVC

iv. Subject + Verb + Object + Complement

A complement may also give more light on (describe) the object.

- a) He named the substance alcohol.
- b) We painted the house green.
- c) Haemoglobin makes blood red.
- d) The manager appointed her as farm manager.
- e) Culture makes us human.
- f) Homer wrote *The Iliad*, a book of poetry.

v. Subject + Verb + Adverb

The word that follows the verb may throw more light on (or describe) the action indicated by the verb. This is the adverb.

- a) Gases react violently.
- b) Languages change slowly.
- c) Birds fly high.
- d) We won convincingly.

The pattern here is SVA

vi. Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb

The verb may take both an object and an adverb

- a) We won the match convincingly.
- b) He mixed the substances quickly.
- c) The farmers harvest their crops in January.
- d) Development helps society enormously.

The pattern is SVOA

vi. Subject + Verb + Object^{direct} + Object^{indirect}

The verb in a sentence may affect two objects, one directly and the other indirectly.

- a. I gave my friend a birthday present.
- b. The agricultural officer gave the farmers some insecticides.
- c. Food costs us money.
- d. The student showed the counselor her essay.

These sentences have the pattern SVO^dOⁱ

Summary of Sentence Patterns

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Predicate</u>
S	V

S	VO
S	VC
S	VOC
S	VA
S	VOA
S	VO ^d O ⁱ

It is not enough for a sentence to conform to one of these patterns; it must make sense. The following sentences are both grammatically well-formed and form to sentence patterns SVO and SVA respectively, but they do not make rational sense.

- a) *The mango swallowed the house.*
- b) *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.*

Your language should therefore not only conform to the rules of grammar, but must also make sense.

2. Expanding Sentences

The sentences used so far are basic sentences expressing single ideas or thoughts. To convey our thoughts effectively we need to join sentences together in order to connect our ideas to each other and to bring out relations between them. In English sentences are joined together through the processes of **coordination** and **subordination**.

A. Coordination

Coordination connects words, phrases, clauses and sentences. This is done using various connecting devices or connectives. The connectives used in coordination are:

- a) **coordinating conjunctions:** and, but, or, nor, so, for, yet.
- b) **correlative conjunctions:** either...or, neither...nor.
- c) **conjunctive adverbs:** however, consequently, hence, moreover, furthermore, also, accordingly, likewise, besides, indeed, thus, meanwhile, namely, and then.

Using coordinating conjunctions, the sentences

- i) He sold his maize. He bought a new bicycle.

become:

*He sold his maize **and** bought a new bicycle.*

and

- ii. He harvested his maize. He wanted a new bicycle. He sold the maize. He got 600 cedis. He used 200 cedis to buy a bicycle.

become

*He wanted a new bicycle, **so** he harvested his maize, sold it for 600 cedis **and** bought a bicycle for 200 cedis.*

Coordination may express

- i. addition
- ii. contrast
- iii. choice
- iv. result

i. Addition

Coordination may be done to indicate that the idea that follows is an addition or is supplementary to the first.

I love him and he loves me.

Connectives used to show addition include:

<i>also</i>	<i>both</i>	<i>besides</i>	<i>moreover</i>
<i>and</i>	<i>furthermore</i>	<i>likewise</i>	<i>then</i>

ii. Contrast

Ideas may be coordinated to show **contrast** or **conflict**:

I love him but he does not love me.

He was exhausted; nevertheless, he completed the race.

Connectives used to show contrast include:

but, however, nevertheless, still, yet.

Addition and contrast

We often use a combination of sentence joining devices to make our language more effective.

- The University for Development Studies has four campuses. Each campus offers both undergraduate and graduate programs. The student population in all four campuses has grown in recent years. The facilities of the university have not expanded as fast.

Revised

- The University for Development Studies has four campuses, **and** each campus offers both undergraduate and graduate programs. The student population in all four campuses has grown in recent years, **but** the facilities of the university have not expanded as fast.

iii. Choice

Coordination may show **choice** between two alternatives;

You can sit in the verandah, or you can sit under the tree.

Other connectives that indicate choice are the **correlative connectives**:

*either ...or,
neither...nor,
otherwise*

Either you pay the money or I take back the goods.

iv. Result

Coordination may show the **consequence or result** of a preceding statement;

I love him therefore he loves me.

He sold his house; consequently, his children are now destitute.

Other connectives that show result are:

consequently, accordingly, hence, therefore.

B. Subordination

Subordination is another means by which you can put sentences together. The three sentences below express separate ideas but they are related through a common context, a football match between Ghana (the Black Stars) and Malawi.

The Black Stars will win against Malawi.

I will collect Gh¢ 200 from my roommate.

He is betting against the Black Stars.

However standing as separate sentences their relation is not very strong. Their relation can be more effectively made if they are joined by subordination.

If the Black Stars win against Malawi, I will collect Gh¢ 200 from my roommate who is betting against them.

Subordination emphasizes one idea over another; example,

Although the exam hall was very quiet, I still couldn't concentrate.

The emphasis is on – *I still couldn't concentrate* – expressed as a complete thought.

The less important idea - *Although the exam hall was very quiet* – is subordinated to the complete thought.

In subordination one sentence expresses a main idea (**main/independent clause**) and the other adds a subordinate idea (**subordinate/dependent**) clause. The subordinate clause is introduced by a **subordinating conjunction**.

- a) Before you take your seat, greet the elders.
- b) I cannot pay you until I see the goods.
- c) Though he got excellent grades, he was not admitted to his first choice course.
- d) I'll sell the car to another person since you cannot pay what I am asking for it.

The underlined parts are the subordinate clauses.

The subordinate clause cannot stand alone as a separate sentence; e.g.

- a) *Before you take your seat...*

This does not make a complete thought. Something is needed to complete it. That is why it is called a **dependent clause or subordinate clause**.

The main clause can stand alone as a complete sentence; e.g.

...greet the elders.

This is the **main clause OR independent clause**

Other examples of Subordinate clause and main clause:

- a) *You cannot vote if you are under 18 years.*
You cannot vote. Main (Independent) clause
if you are under 18. Subordinate (Dependent) clause
- b) *Before he left town last year, he sold all his property*
Before he left town last year... (Subordinate clause)
he sold all his property...(main clause)

Subordinating conjunctions.

Subordinate clauses are introduced by subordinating conjunctions including:

<i>since</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>while</i>
<i>before</i>	<i>until</i>	<i>after</i>	<i>whenever,</i>
<i>ever since</i>	<i>because</i>	<i>as soon as</i>	<i>who</i>
<i>though</i>	<i>although</i>	<i>even though</i>	<i>where</i>
<i>if</i>	<i>as long as</i>	<i>so that</i>	<i>that</i>

wherever whatever

REMEMBER.

Whenever you begin a sentence with a subordinating conjunction, remember that there must be a main clause to complete the sentence.

Subordination conjunctions express a relation of

- i. time,
- ii. condition,
- iii. result,
- iv. purpose,
- v. reason
- vi. cause

between the main clause and the subordinate clause.

i. Time:

Subordinating conjunctions that express time relationship between the main clause and the subordinate clause include -

since, when, as, while, before, until, after, whenever, as soon as, as long as, ever since.

- a) You must not leave the examination hall *until you have submitted all the completed forms.*
- b) The factory closed down *when the owner died.*

ii. Expressing Condition:

Subordinating conjunctions that express the condition under which the idea in the main clause applies include

if, provided, while, unless

- a) *If battery-powered cars become popular, the price of gas will drop.*
- b) He said he would not resign *unless he got an assurance that he will not be prosecuted.*

iii. Result or purpose

The subordinating conjunctions *in order that, so that, lest, as a result of* express the result or purpose of an idea in the main clause.

- a) I worked in a department store for a year *so that I could earn money.*
- b) It is important to have a good laboratory *so that students can carry on the relevant experiments.*

iv. Reason or Cause

Subordinating conjunctions that explain why something occurred in the main clause include *since, as, whereas, because*

- a) We postponed the meeting *because we did not form a quorum.*
- b) *Since he could not pay the fine,* he had to serve two weeks in jail.

The relative clause

This is another type of subordinate clause introduced by the relative pronouns

who, which, that, whose

A relative clause modifies or gives information about the noun that it refers to:

- My sister is an efficient manager.
- She designed a course on personal relations for her firm.

My sister, *who is an efficient manager*, designed a course on personal relations for her firm.
The player *who scored the opening goal* was playing his first game for the team.

Combining coordination with subordination

There can be more than one subordinate clause in a sentence.

- a) Keane was tackled *as he threw the pass that might have settled the game.*
as he threw the pass (subordinate clause 1)
that might have settled the game.(subordinate clause 2)
- b) I once had a cold, and it gave me a terrible headache. I went to see the doctor and he said I had a sinus infection.

Revised:-

I once had a cold *which gave me a terrible headache, and when I went to see the doctor* he said I had a sinus infection.

- c) There was a scrawny old dog, and he lived next door; he barked and howled and kept me awake all night.

Revised:

A scrawny old dog *that lived next door* barked and howled and kept me awake all night.

Emphasis

We can use the last sentence above reproduced below as (b) and a version of the same sentence (a) to further illustration the use of subordination to indicate which thoughts or ideas we want to put focus on.

- a) The dog *that kept me awake all night with its barking and howling* lived next door.
- b) A scrawny old dog *that lived next door* barked and howled and kept me awake all night.

In (a), the focus is on the place where the dog lives, hence it is made the main clause ‘the dog lives next door. In (b), the place where the dog lives is not of much importance; the important thing is the nuisance it caused all night; ‘A scrawny old dog barked and howled and kept me awake all night.’