

## Chapter 12 (SGBSWE)

### Introduction

- The basic word order is **subject-verb-object** (SVO), however different contexts may require to put elements of the clause in different places:
- For example we use clefting when we want to emphasize something or someone or we could also use the passive.
- The four major factors that help us understand the grammatical choices that influence word order are:
  1. **INFORMATION FLOW** → If we look at a clause in its context, some elements refer to information that is familiar due to the preceding discourse (given information), and other elements present new information.
    - The typical word order in English is to start with given information and move to new. This kind of ordering is called the **information-flow participle**. Given-new order contributes to the cohesion of a text. But there are exceptions.
  2. **FOCUS AND EMPHASIS** → In any clause, there is usually at least one point of focus, that's to say a point that receives prominence. It's evident in speech because in correspondence of the point of focus the stress will grow strong lexical items in the clause.
    - This general principle is known as **end-focus**. But also the beginning of a clause (starting with something other than the subject) can be the focus. In these cases, the clause has double focus.
  3. **CONTRAST** → Contrast occurs when the focused part is highlighted to show its difference from another element.
  4. **WEIGHT** → Elements in a clause are frequently of different sizes and complexity, relating to their weight. The preferred distribution of elements is called the **principle end-weight**: long and complex (heavier) elements are placed towards the end of the clause.
    - This placement makes the message clearer. Many heavy elements also contain a large amount of new information. The information-flow principle and end-weight principle reinforce one another.

### A) FRONTING AND INVERSION

#### - WORD ORDER

The term "word order" refers to the order of elements in a clause: subject, verb, object, predicative, and adverbial.

The unmarked word order in English ( normal order) has the following characteristics:

- The subject normally precedes the verb, and the verb normally precedes its complements.
- Independent interrogative clauses normally have subject-operator inversion.
- All clause elements realized by WH-words are regularly placed in the initial position (ex. I don't know **what** you want)
- Phrases are normally continuous. This means that a phrase is not usually broken up by another element.

## - FRONTING

Fronting means placing in initial position a clause element which is normally found after the verb. Fronting is rare and is always found in declarative clauses.

### 1. FRONTING OBJECTS AND OTHER NOMINALS

The object of the clause is in the initial position. It can consist of:

- noun phrases as fronted objects → **This** I do not understand
- complement clauses as fronted objects → **What it was that changed the conclusion**, I don't remember.
- nominals with other syntactic roles as fronted objects (e.g. Subject predicative) → “pretty strange, huh. **That** it is. I nod sadly”.

### 2. FRONTING PREDICATIVES → subject predicative in initial position.

- This occurs with comparative and superlative forms and in many clauses we find subject-verb inversion. ex. **Far more serious** were the severe head injuries.
- Usually, fronted predicatives make a comparison with some element in the preceding discourse, and they form a cohesive link (which can be made with the words *also* and *such*).

#### Two special kinds of fronted predicative:

- Proportion clauses marked by pairs of phrases with *the* (heavier subject usually has subject-verb inversion) → ex. **The larger the base the easier it will be to perform the action.**
- Degree clauses with adjectives pre modified by *so* and followed by *that*.

ex. **So preoccupied** was she **that** she was an aware that Diana was standing in the doorway

→ The adjective *so* is fronted, while the *that*-clause is not.

→ When the subject is a pronoun, predicatives can be fronted but there is no subject-verb inversion.

Fronting has an intensifying effect.

### 3. FRONTED NON-FINITE CONSTRUCTIONS → Non-finite constructions in initial position.

Three kind of non-finite constructions:

A) **FRONTED BARE INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS** → a non-finite verb and its complement are fronted.

- The subject and an auxiliary verb follow in their nominal position. Emphatic *do* is used if there is no other auxiliary verb.

• This kind of fronting doesn't provide new information so it serves the information-flow principle and cohesion. However, the fronting also emphasizes the repeated element.

ex. I had said he would come down and **come down** he **did**.

### B) FRONTED ING- AND ED-CONSTRUCTIONS

They occur with long subjects. So subject-verb inversion always takes place and the heavy subject ends up in the final position. There is generally a reference to the preceding context early in the structures, and new information is introduced in the subject, which occurs at the end of the clause.

ex. **Enclosed** is a card of our permanent signature file....

ex. **Waiting** below was Micheal...

#### 4. FRONTED IN DEPENDENT CLAUSES

Fronting occurs only with the subordinators *as* and *though*. They are clauses of concession and involve some contrast.

Try **as** *they might, no one close to...*

Unsuccessful **though** *they have been*

#### 5. FRONTING IN EXCLAMATIONS

• Exclamative clauses with a WH-element have obligatory fronting, because the WH-element has to occur in pre-subject position.

*How good she is!*

• However for other kinds of exclamations fronting is optional. *Such* can be used like *what* in exclamations.

**Such** *a gift he had for gesture.*

• Sometimes, the exclamatory effect of the fronting is apparent from the use of exclamation marks.

Fronting in exclamations is often used with irony and sarcasm.

*Charming you are!*

#### → THE USE OF FRONTING ACROSS REGISTERS

• Fronting is relatively rare in all registers. It's more common in fiction and conversation.

• However academic prose prefers predicative fronting (cohesion by linking words), conversation and fiction prefer fronted objects (used for focus rather than cohesion). In fiction it is more common because it provides a varied sentence structure and stylistic effect.

#### - INVERSION

• The verb phrase or the operator comes before the subject. Two main types of inversion:

1. SUBJECT-VERB INVERSION → subject preceded by the entire verb phrase;

ex. *Best of all **would be to get a job***

2. SUBJECT-OPERATOR INVERSION or partial inversion → subject preceded only by the operator.

ex. *Never before in our history **have so many strong influences united** to produce so large a disaster.*

If there is no operator, the auxiliary verb **do** is inserted:

ex. *Never again **did I think** of disobedience*

• In general, inversion has many functions:

- **cohesion and information-flow** (especially s-v inversion)

- **intensification** (especially s-o inversion)

- **placement of focus** (both kinds of inversion)

- **end-weight** (both kinds of inversion).

## 1. SUBJECT-VERB INVERSION is most often found with:

A) **Initial adverbs** → initial place and time adverbials are especially common with subject-verb inversion. Usually they have a cohesive function. They are often tied to previous discourse. *Here* and *there* are especially common with inversion. To emphasize a sudden happening, sometimes an adverbial particle of direction is used.

ex. *For a moment nothing happened. **Then** came voices or shouting together.*

ex. ***Here** comes the first question.*

ex. ***There** is the dog.*

B) **Short intransitive/copular verb phrases, and long subjects** → most of the verb phrases are short, consisting of either a copular or an intransitive main verb.

More complex verb phrases are possible, but in those cases the subject will be heavier than the verb (according to the end-weight principle).

→ Subject-verb inversion doesn't occur with a light weight pronoun as subject.

ex. Among the sports **will be...** (long subject)

ex. Also noted **will have been...**(long subject)

ex. Then **came...**(long subject)

## 2. SUBJECT-OPERATOR INVERSION

• Apart from its regular use in making questions, it occurs under special conditions:

A) **negative and restrictive opening elements** → subject-operator inversion occurs after negative expressions (*NEITHER, NOR, NOWHERE, NEVER, ON NO CONDITION, NOT ONLY, HARDLY, NO SOONER, RARELY, SCARCELY, SELDOM, LITTLE, LESS, ONLY*).

• The force of the negative element is intensified. The expression *no way* is always found in colloquial language, triggering inversion. Negative elements trigger subject-operator inversion only when they have scope over the entire clause. eXI

ex. ***Nor** have I*

B) **Degree expressions with SO and SUCH, NEITHER and NOR** → subject-operator inversion occurs in clauses that begin with the degree adverb *so* followed by an adjectival adverb.

• And similar constructions occur with *such...that*. Clauses with initial *nor* and *neither* express parallelism with a preceding negative clause. The inversion, with both *so* and *such* and *nor* and *neither*, has a cohesive effect (the linking word refers back to given information). **N.B. With *nor* and *neither* the inversion is mandatory.**

C) **Special cases of inversion** → inversion with formulaic expressions.

Subjunctive verb forms (*SO BE IT, SO HELP ME GOD, ETC.*) express a strong wish, and their inversions give a solemn tone. Clauses with inversion opening with the auxiliary *MAY* also express a strong wish.

## INVERSION IN DEPENDENT CLAUSES

A) **Opening adverbials and opening negatives** → adverbials and negatives that begin a dependent clause can take inversion just as they do with independent clauses.

ex. *In the centre of the green was a pond, beside it was a wooden seat on which sat two men talking.*

B) **Dependent interrogative clauses with “semi-direct speech”** → dependent YES/NO interrogative clauses are usually introduced by *whether* or *if* and have ordinary subject-verb order. An informal alternative is to use subject-operator inversion. This pattern represents a compromise between direct and indirect speech.

ex. *I asked them if **they would** hurry up a bit*

C) **Reporting clauses** → are direct quotations of a person's speech or thought. They contain some kind of reporting verb, which can be a simple verb of speaking/thinking (e.g. *say, think*) or a relate verb identifying a manner of speaking (*mutter, shriek*), the type of speech act (e.g. *offer, promise*), or the phase of speaking (e.g. *begin, continue*). These clauses have subject-verb inversion.

• There is a strong preference for unmarked word order (subject before verb) under any of these three conditions:

1. where the subject is an unstressed pronoun

(ex. *'the safety record is first class', he said.*

2. where the verb phrase is complex

(ex. *'Konrad Schneider is the only one who matters', **Reinhold had answered***)

3. where the verb is followed by a noun or pronoun that names the addressee

(ex. *There is so much to live in that I did not know before, **Jackie had told her happily**.*)

## → INVERSION ACROSS REGISTERS

Inversion is a relatively rare phenomenon, although is more common in news and fiction (especially reporting clauses). Conversation has fixed patterns involving inversion ( SO AM I, HERE'S, THERE'S, etc.)

## B) EXISTENTIAL THERE CLAUSES

### -EXISTENTIAL THERE

Existential THERE is a device used to state the existence or occurrence of something. It's used with an intransitive or copular verb.

→ Its structure is:

**THERE + BE + indefinite noun phrase (+ place or time position adverbial).**

There is a bear sitting in the corner

-The noun phrase following BE is called the **notional subject**.

-Clauses with existential THERE are called **existential clauses**.

-Their main function is to introduce new information (which is presented in the notional subject (which is usually an indefinite noun phrase)).

## THE GRAMMATICAL STATUS OF EXISTENTIAL THERE

Existential there is a function word and it is different from the place adverb there:

- **phonologically**, it's normally reduced to /ðər/;
- the original place meaning is lost;
- **syntactically**, it functions as a subject rather than an adverbial.

→ Existential there is an empty grammatical element, it has no lexical meaning.

The place adverb **there** has meaning (= in that place).

> **There** is very common in conversation and rare in academic prose.

> **Existential There** is relatively common in all four registers.

## THE VERB IN EXISTENTIAL THERE CLAUSES

→ The majority of existential clauses occur with the verb **be**.

→ It may be preceded by **auxiliaries** or **semi-modals** (*has been, will be, is to be, is supposed to be, used to be, etc.*)

→ **Be** may occur in a to-infinitive complement, where the controlling verb expresses a sort of stance (*happen to be, tend to be, appear to be, is said to be, etc.*)

→ Other verbs can occur with existential there, the most common is *exist* (used in academic prose). But, this happens rarely.

• In fiction there's a wider range of variety: *come, seem, arise, ascend, break out, emerge, erupt, float, flow, flutter, etc.*

## THE NOTIONAL SUBJECT

• The **notional subject** is the logical subject of the clause and since **there** has no meaning, it's what the clause is mainly about.

• It's generally an indefinite noun phrase. Many notional subjects are structurally complex. The notional subject can also be followed by a post-modifying clause.

ex. *There won't be a mass.*

ex. *There was nobody here yesterday.*

ex. *First there was... (notional subject)*

ex. *There is also... (notional subject)*

## ADVERBIALS IN EXISTENTIAL CLAUSES

Often the important information of an existential clause is not simply that something exists, but when or where it exists, so they often contain time or place adverbials. adverbials are usually placed at the end of the clause, but initial and medial placement is also possible.

## SIMPLE v. COMPLEX EXISTENTIAL CLAUSES

It's common for existential clauses to have some kind of meaning expansion, such as:

- **post modification of the notional subject**

(ex. *In most cases..., but there are many cases [among the 558] in which the same syllable is written in more ways than one*)

- **adverbials**

ex. *(There is stuff [in here] we need)*

→ It is normal for this to happen, since **there** and **be** contain no information.

→ Existential clauses without expansion don't convey much information but they occur in all four registers, but especially in conversation.

## DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF EXISTENTIAL CLAUSES

A) **FOCUSING ON A NEW TOPIC** → existential THERE is used especially to focus on the existence or occurrence of something other than introduce "something new".

A man goes in the pub period there is a bear sitting in the corner when somebody a time there were three bears

B) **INTRODUCING A SERIES OF NEW ITEMS**

There are many types of aid to medical decision making available there are three basic rules to consider in planning of form in the price

## C) OTHER TOPICS IN WORD ORDER

### - DISLOCATION

Dislocation has to do with how information is distributed in spoken language. It involves breaking up a clause-like structure in two separate chunks. A definite noun phrase is placed at one end of the clause, and a co-referential pronoun is used in the core of the clause.

Two types of dislocation:

- **PREFACE** → the definite noun phrase is in the initial position. They can precede both interrogative and declarative clauses. The preface can be co-referential with a subject pronoun or an object pronoun. (ex. *Sharon she plays bingo, **That picture**, where is it?*)

- **NOUN PHRASE TAG** → the definite noun phrase is after the clause. They may follow both declarative and interrogative clauses. The tag normally refers to the subject of the preceding clause. (ex. *Has it got a double door, **that shop**? Did they have any, **the kids**?*)

### FUNCTIONS AND DISTRIBUTION OF PREFACES (1) AND NOUN PHRASE TAGS (2)

- (1) and (2) are common in conversation and fictional dialogue, but rare in written prose.
- Prefaces serve to establish a topic, they are also a sign of the evolving nature of conversation.
- Noun phrase tags have a clarifying function. Sometimes they serve the principle of end-weight.
- When they consist of demonstrative pronouns (THAT, THIS, etc.), end-focus gives the noun phrase more emphasis.

## -CLEFTING

•Clefting is similar to dislocation because information that could be given in a single clause is broken up.  
 •For clefting, the information is broken in two clauses, each with its own verb. Two major cleft constructions:

- **IT-clefts** -- *it's a man I want*
- **WH- clefts** -- *what I want is a man*

Clefts are used to bring particular elements of the clause into focus, often for contrast.

1. **IT-CLEFTS** consist of:

- the pronoun **it**,
- a form of the verb **be** (optionally accompanied by **not** or an adverb such as **only**) -the focus elements ( noun phrase, a prepositional phrase)
- an adverb phrase
- an adverbial clause
- a relative-like dependent clause introduced by **that, who/which, or zero**.

2. **WH-CLEFTS** consist of a:

- clause introduced by WH-words (usually **what**),
- a form of the verb **be**,
- the specially focused element can be a noun phrase or a complement clause.
- noun phrase
- bare infinitive phrase
- to-infinite phrase

Wh-clefts are less flexible than it-clefts have a double emphasis: they give emphasis both to the opening nominal clause and the element in final position.

## REVERSED AND DEMONSTRATIVE WH-CLEFTS

- **Reversed WH-clefts** look like ordinary WH-clefts except that the WH- clause and the focused element switch positions.
- **Wh-clefts'** structure has a demonstrative pronoun (usually **THAT**) followed by a form of **BE** plus a dependent clause introduced by a WH-word.

## -WORD ORDER CHOICES AFTER VERB

### THE PLACEMENT OF DIRECT OBJECTS AND INDIRECT OBJECTS

Ditransitive verbs often allow two options that are equivalent in meaning:

- **indirect object + direct object** (ex. *I'll fix [you] [some tea] later*)
- **direct object + preposition to or for + prepositional object** (ex. *I'll fix it for you*)

For the indirect object+direct object pattern, the principle of end-weight is most important.

-The indirect object is very short in most cases (ex. *the Academy never granted [him] [the membership that was his life's ambition]*).

-In the prepositional pattern, the prepositional phrase is often longer than the direct object. In addition, the prepositional phrase is often a clearer way to communicate the syntactic relationship.

-The prepositional phrase may even be placed before the direct object.

### PRONOUN SEQUENCE AS DIRECT AND INDIRECT OBJECTS

Where both the direct and the indirect objects are personal pronouns, there are three major patterns:

1. **direct object + to-phrase** (ex. Give **it to me** Paul)

→ The most common in all registers, it is the clear way to mark the syntactic relationships in the clause)

2. **indirect object + direct object** (ex. Give **me it**, you little cow)

3. **direct object + indirect object** (ex. Do let me give **it him**, she said)

[ 2. and 3. occur rarely ] convo vs fiction

### CLAUSES WITH DIRECT OBJECT AND OBJECT PREDICATIVE

A direct object usually precedes an object predicative, however:

-the object may be postponed to the end position, when the object predicative is light in comparison to the direct object (ex. *Each region has a responsibility to create and make available (op) a **collection of contemporary work** (do))*

-the object must precede the object predicative when the direct object is a pronoun or a short head-noun phrase (ex. *Each region has a responsibility to create a collection of contemporary work and make **it** (do) available (op))*

### PLACEMENT OF OBJECTS OF PHRASAL VERBS

- For transitive phrasal verbs, direct objects can be placed before or after the adverbial particle.

ex. *Why do you like picking up the **telephone** so much?*

- When the direct object is a pronoun, it's usually placed between the verb and the particle.

ex. *How fast can you pick **it** up?*

- When the direct object is an indefinite pronoun, it's usually placed after the adverbial particle.

ex. *He sent out **someone** to capture the bounty hunter.*

-In conversation 60% of occurrences have the order direct object + adverbial particle -In written registers less than 10% of the occurrences have this order.

→ Generally the placement follows the principle of end-weight with heavy direct objects placed at the adverbial particle.

→ The placement depends on the nature of the phrasal verb, some are idiomatic (*take up, make out*) and some have literal meaning (*take out, where out*):

- When the phrasal verb has idiomatic meaning, adverbial particle + direct object is preferred.

ex. *Now carry out **the instructions**.*

- When the phrasal verb has literal meaning, direct object + adverbial particle is preferred.

ex. *The Germans carried **the corpse** out*

- When the particle is followed by an adverbial, direct object + adverbial phrase is preferred.

ex. *Paul took **his friend** up to the top floor.*