

THE VERB: VOICE. THE VERBALS

Lecture 8.

The Category of Voice

a meaningful opposition of two form classes:

Active voice	Passive Voice
<i>He asks</i>	<i>He is asked</i>
<i>He asked</i>	<i>He was asked</i>
<i>He is asking</i>	<i>He is being asked</i>
<i>He was asking</i>	<i>He was being asked</i>
<i>He has asked</i>	<i>He has been asked</i>
<i>He had asked</i>	<i>He had been asked</i>

The **meaning** of the grammatical category of voice -

- **a feature of the verb indicating whether the subject of the sentence is the agent (doer) of the action or the recipient (object) of it => the category of voice expresses the relations between the subject and the action.**

The Active Voice

shows that the subject of the sentence is the agent (doer) of the action expressed by the predicate verb, e.g.:

- *John opened the door.*
- *He took a pencil.*
- *I asked a question.*

- The subject of the sentence with the verb in the active voice cannot actually be regarded as the doer of the action:

He lost his father in the war.

She broke her leg.

- **Disagreement** between the grammatical form of the verb (**active**), and its meaning (**passive**).

Middle meaning

The concert began.

The door opened.

The book sells well.

The book reads like a detective story.

The verb in the active voice denotes an action, which is going on **in the subject itself**, but its meaning is not active either.

Reflexive meaning

John shaved himself.

The kids washed and dressed.

- the subject of the sentence denotes an agent and a recipient (doer and object) of the action at the same time.
- The form of the verb is **active**, but the meaning is **active-passive**.

Reciprocal meaning

They kissed each other.

John and Bill met in the street.

- The agent and the recipient of the action **are different persons (referents)**.
- The form of the verb is **active**, but the meaning again is not only **active**, but **passive** as well, with different referents.

Active voice in English

- active, passive, middle, reflexive, reciprocal.

The opposition

the passive voice

vs.

the non-passive (common) voice

The Active Voice. Semantics Approach.

- **Active voice,**
- **Passive voice,**
- **Reflexive voice**
- **Middle voice,**
- **Reciprocal voice.**

We cannot accept this point of view for the following reasons:

- The grammatical category is a **unity of meaning and form**. All meanings mentioned have an **active component (active, middle, reflexive, and reciprocal)**.
- It is **impossible** to use an object with the preposition *by* expressing the doer of the action: *He lost his father in the war *by the Talibs.*
- In an **overwhelming majority** of cases with the verb in the active form the subject of the sentence is **the doer of the action**.

Grammatical category of voice in English

- is a set of two opposed form classes:
 - the passive voice & the non-passive voice.
- ❑ The **Non-Passive (Common)** voice is **unmarked** and **extensive**.
 - ❑ The **Passive voice** is **marked** and **intensive**.

The Passive voice (PV)

Grammatical ways of expressing passive meanings in English

The **form** of PV is marked by the **discontinuous morpheme** {be= + -ed/n}.

The **meaning** of PV shows that **the grammatical subject of the sentence is the recipient (object) of the action** expressed by the predicate verb:

John was punished.

Our house is being painted.

Ways of expressing the meaning of the passive voice in English

Type 1. Direct passive

The subject of the passive construction corresponds to the direct object of the active construction:

***The rat** was killed by the dog - The dog killed **the rat**.*
***The letter** was written by John - John wrote **the letter**.*

Restrictions: the direct passive is not used

1. **if the object denotes the same person as the subject, or if the object is modified by a possessive pronoun referring to the subject:**
 - *He hurt himself.*
 - *He cut his finger. (reflexive meaning).*

2. when **the object is part of a set expression**:
 - *to take courage, to keep one's word, to lose one's patience.*
 - (**phraseological** character + **possessive** pronouns).

3. with *to become, to have, to possess, to lack, etc.*
 - (**the lexical meaning** of the verb, which includes the seme (submeaning) of the **agent**).

Type 2. Indirect passive

The indirect object of the active construction becomes the grammatical subject of the passive construction:

- *He was told an interesting story - Somebody told him an interesting story.*
- *She was offered a new job - Somebody offered her a new job.*

The passive verb is always followed by a direct object (**retained object**)

This construction is used only with the verb *to tell* and *to give, to show, to offer, to promise*:

- *He wasn't given a chance to explain.*
- *She was promised a higher salary.*

Type 3. The prepositional passive

The prepositional object of the active construction => the subject of the passive construction:

- *He was taken care **of** - Somebody took care **of him**.*
- ***The car** was lost sight **of** - Somebody lost sight **of the car**.*

The prepositional passive can be used with any verb taking a prepositional object, but it is **not used with verbs taking two objects: a direct object and a prepositional object** as *to explain, to dedicate*, etc.:

- *The rule was explained to us.*
- **Not** **We were explained the rule.*

Type 4. The adverbial passive

The adverbial passive is used when the subject of the passive construction corresponds to the adverbial modifier of the active construction:

- *The **bed** was not slept in - Nobody slept in the **bed**.*
- *The **house** has not been lived in for many years - Nobody has lived in **the house** for many years.*
-

The use of the adverbial passive is restricted to a few examples found in fiction.

The classification of passives is a functional (syntactic)

Its drawbacks:

- it is inconsistent;
- 4 types of passive constructions are distinguished on different principles;
- the base for this classification is the function of the passive subject in the corresponding active sentence;
- The names "direct" and "indirect" reflect the transitive-intransitive semantics of the predicate-verb - the base for this classification is **semantic**.
- The name "prepositional" refers to the part-of-speech combinability - the base for this classification is **morphological-syntactic**.

The passives should be classified:

Objective

1. Direct
2. Indirect

Adverbial

1. Prepositional;
2. Non-prepositional

Meanings of passive forms in English

Opinions differ on the status of variant meanings rendered by the combination "to **be** + participle II", which has **three distinct meanings**, e.g.:

1. *He **was awarded** the top honor for distinguished achievements* (the actional passive).
2. *He **was wounded*** (the statal passive).
3. *He **was convinced** that he was right* (compound nominal predicate).

Reasons for the use of the Passive Voice in English

- the use of the passive voice makes it possible **to change the word order** in the sentence, so as to give emphasis to new information, which is placed at the end of the sentence.
- the **end-position** (the most strongly stressed) in a sentence is connected with conveying **new information** :
- *The boy wrote a **letter** - The letter was written **by the boy** .*

The category of **voice**

- shows the **information structure of the sentence as conceived by the speaker**;
- **Is a speaker-related category.**

In **Russian** the center of communication in similar cases is also expressed by **word order**, so that new information is placed at the end of the sentence:

*Мальчик написал **письмо** – Письмо написал **мальчик***

In a majority of English passive sentences

- **the agent of the action is not mentioned.**
- when **the agent is unknown** or cannot be easily stated: *The house was broken into and a few things were stolen.* Or it is **self-evident**: *He was elected MP.*

In the absence of the *by-phrase* attention is shifted to other parts which become the **center of communication**: *The telegram was delivered on time.*
He was invited to dinner.

In Russian the so-called **indefinite- personal sentences** are found in cases of this kind:
Телеграмму принесли вовремя. Его пригласили на обед.

Summary of Voice

- There are formal and semantic approaches to the category of voice in English.
- The grammatical category of voice is a set of two opposed passive and non-passive (common) form-classes expressing the relation between the grammatical subject and the action.
- The non-passive (common) voice is unmarked both formally and semantically, it is extensive.
- The passive voice is intensive. It is marked both in the form by the discontinuous morpheme (be= + ed/n) and in the meaning, which is passive.

- The ways of expressing actional and statal variant meanings of the passive: direct and indirect.
- The passive voice is to change the word order, so as to give emphasis to new information, which is placed at the end of the sentence.
- The category of voice shows the information structure of the sentence as conceived by the speaker. It is a speaker-related category.

Summary of the grammatical categories of the Verb

The English verb has a highly developed system of grammatical (morphosyntactic) categories:

- 1) the subject-related categories: person and number;
- 2) the time-related categories: tense, aspect and phase;
- 3) the speaker-related categories: voice and mood.

- Seven morphological categories are characteristic of the finite forms, the non-finite forms expose only the categories of aspect, phase and voice
- **The most important** categories in expressing **predicative** relations are **tense and mood, person and number**.
- The categories of **aspect, phase and voice**, though important in process qualification, still do it **indirectly**: internally (aspect, voice) and relatively (phase).

NON-FINITE FORMS OF THE VERB

Non-Finite Forms vs. Finite Forms

- **Verbals** - The system of the non-finite forms of the verb (**the infinitive, the gerund, participle I & participle II**).
- This system is **opposed** to the system of the **finite** forms of the verb, the basis for the opposition being "**expression - non-expression of predication**".
- Both systems are members of the **category of finitude**.
- The **finite** forms perform the syntactic function of the predicate in the sentence,
- the **non-finite** forms may perform any function in the sentence, except that of the primary predicate.

Different systems of Non-Finite Forms

- **Traditional grammar** (H.Sweet, A.I.Smirnitsky and M.Y.Bloch:
 1. the infinitive,
 2. the gerund,
 3. participle I,
 4. participle II
- The **basis** for this approach - **the form, meaning and function.**
- All of the above forms display them in a **specific** way.

The formal approach

- denies homonymy in the language system, there are only **three non-finite forms** in Modern English:

1. **the Infinitive,**

1. **the Ing form** (traditional gerund and participle I combined);

1. **Participle** (traditional participle II).

- (E.Kruisinga, American descriptivists and L.S.Barchudarov).

Three non-finite forms (V.Y.Plotkin)

1. **the Infinitive**, which is the infinitive with the particle *to*,
1. "**half-finitive**", or "bare" infinitive,
1. **the gerund** unites both the gerund and participle I.

Participle II is on the periphery of the non-finite forms and excluded from the system.

The dual nature of Non-Finite Forms

The verbals combine the properties of:

1. **the verb and the noun (the infinitive and the gerund),**
2. **the verb and the adjective (participles I and II).**

The **dual nature** of the verbals is revealed in the principal spheres of the part-of-speech characterization: their **meaning, form and function**.

The Infinitive

Meaning	Form	
	Morphemic structure	Grammatical categories: Voice, Aspect, Phase
Name of process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) V - Ø (go)2) to V - Ø (to go)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <u>to go – to be gone</u> (voice)2) <u>to be going – to be being gone</u> (voice, aspect)3) <u>to have gone – to have been gone</u> (voice, phase);4) <u>to have been going – to have been being gone</u> (voice, aspect, phase)

Functions of the Infinitive

Combinability		Syntactic Function	Complex functions (secondary predication)
Verb-type	Nominal-Type		
	Noun-Type		
1) <u>N (obj.)</u> – <i>to have fun</i>	1) <u>N + Inf (attr.)</u> <i>The man to respect.</i>	1) <u>Subject</u> <i>To see is to believe.</i>	1) <u>Complex Object</u> <i>I expect him to come.</i>
2) <u>Adv</u> – <i>to work fast</i>	1) <u>V + Inf (obj.)</u> <i>I want to go.</i>	2) <u>Object / part of predicate</u> <i>I want to go.</i>	2) <u>Complex Subject</u> <i>He is expected to come.</i>
3) <u>V</u> – <i>must go</i> <i>to be going</i> <i>to have gone</i>		3) <u>Predicative</u> <i>To love is to forgive.</i>	3) <u>For-to-infinitive Construction</u> (subject, object, predicative, attribute, adverbial modifier) <i>There's no need for you to come.</i>
		4) <u>Attribute</u> <i>He is the person to talk to.</i>	
		5) <u>Adverbial modifier</u> <i>You should work hard to get the diploma.</i>	

The Gerund

Meaning	Form	
	Morphemic Structure	Grammatical categories: Voice, Aspect, Phase
Abstract name of a process	V-ing - <i>going</i>	1) <i>writing – being written</i> (<u>voice</u>) 2) <i>having written – having been written</i> (<u>voice, phase</u>) 3) <i>writing – being writing</i> (<u>aspect</u>) obsolete

Functions of the Gerund

Combinability		Syntactic Function	Complex functions (secondary predication)
Verb-type	Nominal-Type		
	Noun-Type		
1) <u>N</u> (obj.) – <i>playing games</i>	1) <u>N's / his, her, etc.</u> (attr.) <i>Tim's / his listening.</i>	1) <u>Subject</u> <i>Seeing is believing.</i>	<u>Gerundial Complex</u> (subject, object, predicative, attribute, adverbial modifier). N's / his + gerund <i>John's / My smoking irritates her.</i> <i>Do you mind my smoking.</i> <i>What she hates is my smoking.</i> <i>The reason of my smoking is sadness.</i> <i>Without my smoking</i>
2) <u>Adv</u> – <i>working hard</i>	1) <u>N + preposition</u> <i>means of expressing something.</i>	2) <u>Object / part of predicate</u> <i>She likes singing.</i>	
3) <u>V</u> – (link) <i>Seeing is believing</i>	3) <u>V</u> <i>I like swimming (obj.).</i> <i>Swimming is fun</i>	3) <u>Predicative</u> <i>Joking is making fun of somebody.</i> 4) <u>Attribute</u> <i>My reason for coming is...</i> 5) <u>Adverbial modifier (preposition)</u> <i>Without waiting he</i>	

Participle I

Meaning	Form	
	Morphemic Structure	Grammatical categories: Voice, Aspect, Phase
Name of a process / quality / property	V-ing - going	1) <i>writing – being written</i> (<u>voice</u>) 2) <i>having written – having been written</i> (<u>voice, phase</u>) 3) <i>writing – being writing</i> (<u>aspect</u>) obsolete

Functions of Participle I

Combinability		Syntactic Function	Complex functions (secondary predication)
Verb-type	Nominal-Type		
	Adjective-Type		
1) <u>N</u> (obj.) – <i>singing songs</i>	1) <u>N</u> <i>a visiting professor.</i>	1) <u>Attribute</u> <i>The man crossing the street is my brother.</i>	1. <u>Complex Object</u> <i>I saw him crossing the street.</i>
2) <u>Adv</u> – <i>writing carefully</i>	2) <u>Adv (degree)</u> <i>more irritating.</i>	2) <u>Adverbial modifier (no preposition)</u> <i>He sat there reading a letter.</i>	2. <u>Complex Subject</u> <i>He was seen crossing the street.</i>
3) <u>V</u> – (aux.) <i>to be writing</i>	Adverb-Type 1) <u>V</u> <i>to sit waiting</i>		3. <u>Absolute Participial Construction</u> (adverbial modifier) <i>Weather permitting, we shall go out.</i>

Participle II

Meaning	Form	
	Morphemic Structure	Grammatical categories: Voice, Aspect, Phase
Name of a process / quality / property (with implicit meaning of Passive and Perfect)	V-ed – <i>worked</i> ; V-en – <i>seen</i> ; V (vowel / consonant change <i>–drink / sent</i> ; Ø - <i>cut</i> .	<u>No explicit opposition</u> (only implicit meaning of Passive and Perfect)

Functions of Participle II

Combinability		Syntactic Function	Complex functions (secondary predication)
Verb-type	Nominal-Type Adjective-Type		
<p>1) <u>Prep +N</u> (obj.) <i>written by M.Bloch</i></p> <p>2) <u>Adv</u> – <i>carefully written</i></p> <p>3) <u>V</u> – (aux.) <i>to be done</i> <i>to have done</i> <i>done</i></p>	<p>1) <u>N</u> <i>a swollen finger.</i></p> <p>2) <u>Adv (degree)</u> <i>too surprised.</i></p> <p>3) <u>V (link)</u> <i>He is excited.</i></p>	<p>1) <u>Attribute</u> <i>He took a seat offered him.</i></p> <p>2) <u>Predicative</u> <i>He was disturbed.</i></p>	<p>1. <u>Complex Object</u> <i>I had my hair cut.</i></p> <p>2. <u>Complex Subject</u> <i>The work was expected finished.</i></p> <p>3. <u>Absolute Participial Construction</u> (adverbial modifier) <i>The talks completed, we left for London.</i></p>

Complex functions.

Secondary predication

The non-finite forms of the verb may **express secondary predication** in constructions, which include:

- the Complex Object and the Complex Subject,
- the Complex Subject is seen as passivized Complex Object (the infinitive and both participles);
- the Absolute Participial constructions (both participles) as adverbial modifiers;
- the For-To- Infinitive construction and numerous gerundial constructions, which may be interpreted as complex subjects, objects, predicatives, etc.

Secondary predication. Transformations:

- *I saw **him crossing** the street –*
I saw him when **he was crossing the street.*
- ***My smoking** irritates her –*
It irritates her that **I smoke.*
- ***Weather permitting**, we shall go out –*
If **weather permits we shall go out.*

This ability to express secondary predication - verbal nature of all the non-finites (they belong to the paradigm of the verb).

The verb in its finite and sometimes in the non-finite form - the center of predication in the sentence.

The non-finite forms

1. belong to the paradigm of the verb and expose **dual nature**: verbal and nominal.
1. have **four non-finite forms**: the infinitive, the gerund, participle I and participle II.
1. have **characteristics**: a specific meaning, form and functions are other than those of the primary predicate.
1. may express **secondary predication** in certain constructions that proves their status as verb forms.

The main problems of morphology:

1. the morpheme and the word as basic units of morphology;
2. types of inflection;
3. classification of words into parts of speech;
4. the noun and the verb, and their grammatical categories;
5. some controversial issues of part-of-speech classification (the article, the pronoun, the interjection, and the statives).