

# **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.*
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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	1) V - Ø (go)  2) to V - Ø (to go)	1) <u>to go – to be gone</u> ( <b>voice</b> ) 2) <u>to be going – to be being gone</u> <b>(voice, aspect)</b> 3) <u>to have gone – to have been gone</u> <b>(voice, phase);</b> 4) <u>to have been going – to have been being gone</u> <b>(voice, aspect, phase)</b>

# 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	<b>V-ing</b> - <i>going</i>	1) <i>writing – being written</i> ( <b><u>voice</u></b> ) 2) <i>having written – having been written</i> ( <b><u>voice, phase</u></b> ) 3) <i>writing – being writing</i> ( <b><u>aspect</u></b> ) 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). <b>N's / his + gerund</b> <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	<b>V-ing - going</b>	1) <i>writing – being written</i> <b>(<u>voice</u>)</b> 2) <i>having written – having been written</i> <b>(<u>voice, phase</u>)</b> 3) <i>writing – being writing</i> <b>(<u>aspect</u>)</b> 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>	<b>Adverb-Type</b>  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)	<b>V-ed</b> – <i>worked</i> ; <b>V-en</b> – <i>seen</i> ; <b>V (vowel / consonant change</b> <i>–drink / sent</i> ; <b>Ø</b> - <i>cut</i> .	<b><u>No explicit opposition</u></b> (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) <b><u>Prep +N</u></b> (obj.) <i>written by M.Bloch</i></p> <p>2) <b><u>Adv</u></b> – <i>carefully written</i></p> <p>3) <b><u>V</u></b> – (aux.) <i>to be done to have done</i></p>	<p>1) <b><u>N</u></b> <i>a swollen finger.</i></p> <p>2) <b><u>Adv (degree)</u></b> <i>too surprised.</i></p> <p>3) <b><u>V (link)</u></b> <i>He is excited.</i></p>	<p>1) <b><u>Attribute</u></b> <i>He took a seat offered him.</i></p> <p>2) <b><u>Predicative</u></b> <i>He was disturbed.</i></p>	<p>1. <b><u>Complex Object</u></b> <i>I had my hair cut.</i></p> <p>2. <b><u>Complex Subject</u></b> <i>The work was expected finished.</i></p> <p>3. <b><u>Absolute Participial Construction</u></b> (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).