AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH SYNTAX FOR CZECH STUDENTS

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PREFACE

The text *English Syntax for Czech Students* aims to help Czech students with the selected chapters from the theory of English syntax and to demonstrate the practical application on data/examples from a wide range of discourse types. The text has been prepared with the secondary curriculum in mind which, however, does not exclude the tertiary level – the students in the early days of university studies for whom it may serve as a supplementary material for their courses on English syntax. The text may also assist language teachers who are engaged in a process of continual professional development; it may also serve to all those practitioners for whom language teaching is to be a genuinely professional enterprise in their own continuing education.

After studying the text students should gain practical skills enabling them to master syntactic analysis of selected aspects of simple sentences in English. They gain a sufficient command of modern English syntax terminology and are themselves able to produce a syntactical analysis of simple sentences. Students are capable to confront English and Czech from the syntactical point of view. Since the text is intended for Czech readers, a major element of the teaching is the comparative and contrastive approach – English versus Czech: the text is primarily designed for students whose native tongue is not English (or who are studying English as their major at university level).

The text is by no way meant as a special, exhaustive and comprehensive study material on English syntax for the university students which would replace modern Standard English grammars and usage manuals. It is rather intended as an introductory, preparatory or preliminary background against which the students might find their own path to both academic and practical grammars to read and learn more about relevant topics.

Most example sentences and extracts to illustrate the phenomena in focus are taken from the parallel corpus *InterCorp*: [www.korpus.cz/intercorp](http://www.korpus.cz/intercorp).
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1. INTRODUCTION: BASIC CONCEPTS

The largest unit for grammatical analysis in English is the sentence. Since the sentence is usually regarded as a basic unit used for the analysis of distinct grammatical patterns in written language, it is formally defined as beginning with a capital letter and ending with either a full stop, a question mark or an exclamation mark. In spoken language, due to its inherent flexibility as a result of immediateness and readiness of the interaction, it is difficult to delimit the sentence formally. Instead of a rather slippery term “sentence” in the analysis of oral communication we employ the term “turn” as a basic unit which enables us to treat unfinished sentences and various strings of clauses occurring in speech. Everyday speech and conversation is thus seen as a sequence of turn-taking when one person talks at a time so a turn ends when the speaker changes.

From the communicative point of view, a sentence finds its counterpart in a parallel term of an utterance. The sentence refers to grammatically complete units treated purely formally without reference to context; they may have been invented on purpose as “examples” as it was the case in many traditional grammar books to illustrate various phenomena, or actually may have occurred in real situations. On the other hand, the utterance is viewed as a unit of communication, language-in-use, or a stretch of language used by the speaker in context to do something, a unit which is pragmatically interpretable in a given context, and it may or may not be grammatically complete or conform to grammatical norms. It is possible to claim that many utterances (though not all) are sentences, but not all sentences have been utterances.

Think about which stretch of language stands for a sentence and which an utterance and in what situation/context it may be found:

a. MILK
b. This bottle contains MILK.

In a. MILK is a communicatively appropriate and grammatically reduced „label“ which you can see on the bottle when buying the product – it is an utterance, while in b. the whole sentence to be found on the bottle of milk would illustrate a communicatively redundant but grammatically complete sentence. The „communicative reduction“ as in a. is typical of everyday conversation such as in greetings Good morning („I wish you good morning“), Nice to meet you („It is nice to meet you“), or Right („You are right“).
2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE ENGLISH SENTENCE

The sentence can be treated as a hierarchical unit which consists of clauses, the core units of grammatical analysis. According to the constellation of clauses in the sentence there are two types of „sentences“:

1. a sentence consists of one clause
   a. Peter works as my clerk.
   b. The father works as an attendant in the Catherine Palace.
   c. The world works as a determined physical system.

2. a sentence consists of more clauses – COMPOUND (a., b.) or COMPLEX (c.) sentences
   a. We can see what works and we can put into practice whatever produces the best result.
   b. His mouth continued to smile, but his eyes frowned slightly.
   c. Arthur felt the waves of pain slowly receding, though he was still aware of a dull stomping throb.

The difference between the two complementary notions of compound and complex sentences will be discussed later in Chapter 8.

The clause can be treated as having two main parts: the subject and the predicate. The subject usually:

- has a form of a noun phrase
- stands before the verb
- signals the doer or the agent of an action
- stands for what is being discussed in the clause – it is a topic of the clause (the given, „old“ piece of information)

The predicate is in fact:

- formed by the rest of the clause, i.e. the verb phrase plus other complements (objects, adverbials)
- the information to be delivered about the subject – it is a comment (a new piece of information)
- an obligatory or necessary element in any clause

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subject</th>
<th>predicate</th>
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<tr>
<td>The students</td>
<td>have got to get their money from somewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three students hanging about there</td>
<td>fell silent as Dixon passed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A stream of students</td>
<td>entered and made towards the recumbent Atkinson.</td>
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</table>
From a hierarchical perspective, a clause consists of one or more phrases. A phrase is a categorical concept which means that it subsumes a class of expressions which share the same grammatical qualities. Phrases work as “building stones” for clauses elements such as subject, predicate, or object.

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
  \text{She} & /\text{put} & /\text{her mobile phone} & /\text{on the table} \\
  \text{phrase 1} & \text{phrase 2} & \text{phrase 3} & \text{phrase 4} \\
\end{array}
\]

\text{clause}

Similarly, clauses consist of smaller “building blocks” – of one or more words. The following noun phrase can be interpreted as consisting of three words:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
  \text{her} & /\text{mobile} & /\text{phone} \\
  \text{word} & \text{word} & \text{word} \\
\end{array}
\]

a noun phrase

In this vein, the relation between a sentence, clause, phrase and word is based on subordination with a sentence being hierarchically highest element. Thus the following sentences can be analysed as consisting of subordinate units which are in a mutually subordinate relation, respectively:

\text{sentence:}

\text{James married Wendy before she found out that he had an illegitimate child.}

\text{James married Wendy}

\text{clause 1} \quad \text{before she found out}

\text{clause 2} \quad \text{that he had an illegitimate child.}

\text{clause 3}

\text{noun phrase:}

\text{a stream of students in black-and-white uniforms with light green ties}

\text{a stream of students in black-and-white uniforms}

\text{phrase 1} \quad \text{with light green ties}

\text{phrase 2}
2.1 Form (category) and function

Before we start with the grammatical analysis, it is important to outline the difference between two theoretical concepts or distinctions, form (category) and function which enable us to realize that different grammatical functions can have different grammatical forms or be of different grammatical categories. In the sentence above *A stream of students centered and made towards the recumbent Atkinson* we claimed that *a stream of students* performs the role of subject and we can also add that it has the form of a noun phrase (NP). Subject then refers to the function of the clause element while NP is a form (category). We have also verb phrases (VP) such as *have got to get* in the above example *The students have got to get their money from somewhere*, or prepositional phrases (PP) as *with light green ties*.

The concept of function helps explain how a word functions in a phrase and similarly, how a phrase functions in a clause and the way a clause performs its role in a sentence.

Consider the following examples and think about the difference form – function:

1. *His fame won’t win the election.*
2. *That his famous voice remained the same for a long time* was surprising.
3. *The car began moving along the front of the house.*
4. *I got in the car and headed home alone.*

In 1. and 2. Both expressions in bold have the same function – they are subjects, but their form is distinct – in 1. it is a NP while in 2. *That his famous voice remained the same for a long time* is a clause. In contrast, the bold expressions in 3. and 4. share the same form – they are both NPs, but their function is distinct: in 3. *The car* is a subject, while the same expression in 4. is an adjunct.

2.2 The structure of phrases

The analysis of the clause structure in English is based on the existence of a number of phrases, the basic of which are noun and verb phrases. Any phrase consists of a core element called head (one word – one head = a simple phrase) and may subsume a number of other elements (words) called dependents, which make the phrase complex. The obligatory element, the head, controls the number and type of dependents that can be attached to the head.

There are three classes of dependents: determiners, modifiers and complements. Determiners are usually realized in NPs as so-called determinatives, a class of helping words – *a, the, this/that/these/those, some, any, many, (a) few, one, first*, or ’s. The difference between the latter two classes lies in the way they are related to the head. While modifiers – as their name may suggest – add some other quality to the head (adjectives and adverbs) and are therefore rather optional elements in the phrase, the relation between the head and its complements is more tight since complements are usually required by the verb (in case of the
verb phrase) and by the head (in case of the NP). According to their position in the clause, modifiers are either placed before the head – **premodifiers**, or after the head – **postmodifiers**:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{det.} & \text{premod.} & \text{head} & \text{postmod.} \\
\text{late} & \text{group} & \text{of students} & \text{most of them wearing the yellow College scarf}
\end{array}
\]

In case of the verb phrase, the head is realized by the main verb – the obligatory element in the phrase, while the remaining auxiliaries are treated as optional elements.

\[
\text{Their future } \underbrace{\text{had}}_{\text{aux.}} \underbrace{\text{been}}_{\text{aux.}} \underbrace{\text{taken}}_{\text{main v.}} \text{ away from them.}
\]

\[
\text{aux.} \quad \text{aux.} \quad \text{main v.} \quad \text{modifier}
\]

**EXERCISES**

I. Use slashes (/\) to identify in the following main clauses subject and predicate part.

- a. That is precisely what we don't demand!
- b. I think you will not be able to avoid it.
- c. The girl in question was a certain Pasa from Dusce.
- d. Much of the old warlike instincts that remained had been awakened in an evil hour.
- e. The problem that a particular idea is rendered by different syllable counts in different languages troubles many poetry translators.
- f. The problem that presents itself is that of the relations between thought and culture.

II. In the following clauses underline all possible NPs.

- a. She is a most charming young lady indeed.
- b. Then the whole countryside became quite still and dark.
- c. Anita Vanger lived in a terrace house in the attractive suburb of St Albans, about an hour’s drive north.
- d. The girl might be rather interesting – she was a ballet student, I gather.

Answers:

Ex. I.: a. That // is precisely what we don't demand! b.I // think you will not be able to avoid it.
- c. The girl in question // was a certain Pasa from Dusce.
- d. Much of the old warlike instincts that remained // had been awakened in an evil hour.
- e. The problem // that a particular idea is rendered by different syllable counts in different languages // troubles many poetry translators.
- f. The problem // that presents itself // is that of the relations between thought and culture.

Ex. II.: a/She is a most charming young lady indeed.b/Then the whole countryside became quite still and dark.c/Anita Vanger lived in a terrace house in the attractive suburb of St
Albans, about an hour's drive north of The girl might be rather interesting – she was a ballet student, I gather.

2.3 The structure of the clause

In most clauses in English we can find these clauses elements (constituents): Subject (S), Predicate (P), Object (O), Complement (C) and Adjunct (A).

The subject is related to the predicate and usually indicates the actor, the person or thing performing the action in a clause.

Joe was a star athlete and student leader.

The predicate is related to the subject and indicates the action performed by the subject or describes a property/quality of the person/thing referred to by the subject.

Charles Darwin walked these paths as a student.

The object is related to the verb or preposition and refers to the person or thing or other entity included in the situation. There are two types of object, direct object (in the accusative case – we ask Who/What?) and indirect object (in the dative case – we ask To whom/what?):

McNeil was watching the student nurses covertly. [direct object]

It gave her an aroma of licentiousness, and she adored that. [indirect object]

The complement, as we have already seen above, tells us more about another element in the clause.

Complements as their name says complement or supplement the head; therefore there is a more intense relationship between these two classes. They are obligatory elements in the NP. As mentioned in chapter 2, we distinguish two complements, the subject (CS) and the object complement (CO).

The subject complement (sometimes called the predicative complement as it finds its place after the predicate) follows the verb to be, which is the linking/copula verb: these two terms directly signal the verb’s function to join or link the subject and the clause element following the predicate. Here are possible realizations of the subject complement (adjective, noun or past participle) and the predicate:

In the beginning the Universe was created. [Adj.]
Take it away before it gets damaged. [Adj.]
Oh God, this looks pretty bad.[Adj.]
The robot just seemed cheerful.[Adj.]
Slowly the desert world of Kakrafoon became a paradise. [N]
Work was discontinued on the teleport which subsequently passed unnoticed. [past partic.] It tastes filthy! [Adj]
The wide variety of predicates that can be used instead of the default copula to be reflects various shades of meanings of the verb to be.

The **object complement** offers more information about the direct object in a similar way as the subject complement completes the subject. In the following examples we can see that the object complement can be realized by a noun phrase or an adjective phrase.

*Two years ago they even elected me chairman of the collective.*

*You will find your progress down the building greatly facilitated.*

The **adverbial** offers some additional information regarding time, place, manner, or circumstances. It is usually related to the verb.

*The painful game would begin first thing in the morning.*

In most clauses, however, not all clause elements are present; the most central element of any clause is the predicate around which other elements, mainly the subject, gather. The minimum requirement for making up a clause is the presence of the predicate and the subject, i.e., the binary structure:

*Dixon (S) sighed (P).*

**EXERCISES**

I. Use slashes (//) to identify clause elements – state their function (subject, object, complement, adjunct).

   a. Vittori’s innate intellect and curiosity made her a captivating student.
   b. Nothing could have given me greater pleasure.
   c. Darmolatov has turned old overnight.
   d. The old man looked at him gravely.

Answers:

Ex. I: a/Vittori’s innate intellect and curiosity (S)// made(P)// her (O_D)// a captivating student (C_O). b/Nothing (S)// could have given(P)// me (O_I) //greater pleasure (O_D). c/Darmolatov (S)//has turned (P)// old(C_S)// overnight (A). d/The old man (S)// looked at (P)// him (O_D)// gravely (A).
2.4 Simple and complex sentences

In chapter 1 we claimed that the sentence is the largest unit of language used for grammatical analysis. Sentences are usually treated as **simple** and **non-simple** and there is one specific type of clauses – **semi-clauses**.

**A** A **simple** sentence contains only one clause (viz chapter 2 above) called the main clause, in which all its elements are realized by phrases only as in:

Then (A)// the whole countryside (S)// became (P)// quite (A)// still and dark (A).

As we can see in the example, a main clause in any simple sentence is never a constituent of any other clause or sentence.

**B** **Non-simple** sentences are divided into three types:

1. **Complex** – a sentence consists of one main clause plus a number of subordinate/dependent clauses, i.e. some clause elements S, O, C and A are not realized by phrases, but by clauses. These subordinate clauses (SC) cannot stand on their own but depend on the other clause elements in the main clause (MC):

   *His mother had cried when she saw the irreparable damage.*

   *His mother had cried (MC)*  
   
   *when she saw the irreparable damage (SC).*

2. **Compound** – this sentence consists of two or more main clauses which are coordinated, i.e. they have equal status. Typical coordinating conjunctions are **and**, **but** and **or**.

   *She screamed at him (MC1), but he just gaped (MC2).*

3. **Complex-compound** – this constellation of clauses consists of more than one main clause plus a number of subordinate clauses.

   *She glanced up quickly (MC1)// as if she’d been expecting to be asked this (SC2)//, but he couldn’t tell (MC3)// whether she was glad or sorry when it came (SC4).*

**C** **Semi-clauses** carry non-finite predicates which are formed by present/past participle.

*Sitting by the window twenty rows back, he ignored the memo on Indians in his lap, and admired the countryside below.*
Let’s look at the following sentences and study how the subordinate clauses which realize the clause elements S, O, C_s can also be analysed into smaller elements:

1. Arthur saw that he was twiddling with knobs on a small box.
   
   \[
   \begin{array}{cccc}
   \text{con.} & \text{S} & \text{P} & \text{C}_S \\
   S & P & C_S & O_D
   \end{array}
   \]

2. She said that I was cute.
   
   \[
   \begin{array}{cccc}
   \text{con.} & \text{S} & \text{P} & \text{C}_S \\
   S & P & C_S & O_D
   \end{array}
   \]

3. What is surprising is that he called her at all.
   
   \[
   \begin{array}{cccc}
   \text{S} & \text{P} & \text{C}_S \\
   \text{con.} & \text{S} & \text{P} & \text{O}_D
   \end{array}
   \]

4. She couldn't leave, because she had no money.
   
   \[
   \begin{array}{cccc}
   \text{con.} & \text{S} & \text{P} & \text{O}_D
   \end{array}
   \]

When subordinate clauses function as subject, object or complement, they are referred to as noun, nominal or content clauses. Adverbial clauses are realized by subordinate clauses with an adverbial function. The final type of subordinate clauses that function as modification in noun phrases are relative clauses. The underlined subordinate that-clause is a postmodifier of the head illusion. The whole sentence is thus a simple sentence consisting of one clause.

*He can maintain at some level the illusion that the girl is there because she likes him.*
3. CLAUSE TYPES

Most clauses (or simple sentences) fall into four basic categories, which are treated according to the clausal grammatical structure. These clause types are: declarative, interrogative, exclamative and imperative; the following treatment is based on syntactic forms of given clauses.

1. **Declarative** clauses (oznamovací věty) have the structure the subject + the verb, which is the signal of an unmarked word ordering. The subject is thus an obligatory clause element. The declarative clause is treated as the default, basic type or unmarked type of clause due to the absence of other special features that make other types of clauses as marked.

   *Her eyes are sensitive to light.*
   *The sunshine lay on their peach-coloured covers.*

2. **Interrogative** clauses (tázací věty) typically employ the inversion of the subject and the verb. Within these clauses, we usually distinguish between two types:
   a. **Closed interrogatives** or yes/no questions (zjišťovací otázky): they are based on subject—auxiliary inversion and employ a do-support construction if it is not possible to use another auxiliary or inversion. The only answer is either an affirmation or rejection.

   *Are you sure you mean think?* [yes or no?]
   *Has he tried to get in touch with you or anything?* [yes or no?]
   *Did she always tell her employees what they were supposed to look like?* [yes or no?]

   b. **Open interrogatives** or wh-questions (doplňovací otázky): these interrogatives contain an interrogative element who, whom, whose, which, what, when, where or how etc. This interrogative word is the first element in the clause and is followed by the verb and thus signals the inversion. These questions are used to require information about one particular clause element in the clause and the wh-element itself has the role of a clause element – it is in [ ] in the following examples:

   *Who* [S] put her in the basket and sent her downstream?
   *Who(m)[O1] did you talk to at the United Bank of Wales?*
   *Whose idea[O2] had it really been?*
   *What[O3] are you armed with?*
   *Which side [O4] of the table could show more disdain than the other?*
   *When [A] will you remove the stitches?*
   *Where [A] did you get this information!*
   *How much [D0] does he pay for this?
How [A] could you possibly know this?
Why [A] did she have to take all the photographs?

3.1 Word order in interrogative clauses

A/ As we can see in 2a. yes/no interrogative clauses employ inversion, which means that the initial element of the verb phrase (the so-called operator) is placed before the subject. In case the verb is in the present or the past tense, we use dummy do as an operator responsible for inversion.

Have you seen my new car?
Do you want me to sign?

B/ Wh-interrogative clauses make used of inversion; inversion is not employed in case the wh-element plays the role of the subject of the clause as in:

Who killed the dog? (S)
Who(m) did you want to see? (O_D)
Why did he cry? (A)

C/ Word order in interrogative subordinate clauses
In both types – yes/no and wh-interrogative subordinate clauses there is no inversion. Yes/no questions which function as subordinate clauses open with if or whether; the wh-questions keep the wh-word as the initial element of the clause.

I would like to know if you have seen my new car.
I asked him whether he wanted me to sign or not.
He asked me who(m) I wanted to see.
I wondered why he was crying.

Tag questions
These questions form a special type of questions that occupy the final position in the sentence; they are used to appeal to the listener, to force him/her agree or disagree with the speaker. Tag questions are a subtype of yes/no questions and their form is controlled by the verb operator from the previous, dominant clause. If the verb of the dominant clause is in the present or the past tense, the tag question needs do as a dummy operator. If the previous clause is positive, the tag question in negative and vice versa.

You would like to know, wouldn’t you?
Sheila has graduated, hasn’t she?
He hasn’t been to Canada, has he?
You didn’t shirk your responsibility, did you?
He never told the truth, did he?
3. **Exclamatives** (zvolací věty) – these clauses begin with an initial exclamative *what* or *how* but in contrast to interrogative clauses, in which the initial *wh*-phrase signals subject—auxiliary inversion, in exclamative clauses there is no inversion – the order is subject—predicator; however, possibly subject may be postposed and inversion subject—auxiliary employed. In *what*-clauses the initial element is followed by a noun phrase while *how* is used with all remaining structures. The underlined part is the exclamatory phrase, which is always fronted; the first two examples contain the exclamatory part only:

*What a depressingly stupid machine!*  
*What a marvellous idea!*  
*God, what a terrible hangover it had earned him though!*  
*How strong and proud he is!*  
*How they mock us!*  

4. **Imperatives** (rozkazovací věty) – these clauses contain the finite imperative predicator, which is identical with the base/plain form of the verb and which is not marked for tense and person. These clauses are frequently used without a 2\textsuperscript{nd} person subject, but it is important to realize that subjects in these clauses are not missing, but they are part of the special imperative form – we may talk of imperative mood.

*Tell me what you think I’m thinking.*  
*But do not be cast down.*  
*Don’t be so greedy.*

Sometimes you may come across imperative clauses with a 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} person pronoun such as in the following examples. These imperatives carry a hint of reproval and admonition:

*Everybody follows me.*  
*You mind your own business, Hall.*

One more type of imperative clauses subsumes the structures with *let* – *let’s*, i.e. a 1\textsuperscript{st} person plural which, however, differs from the usual form of the verb *let* – *let us*, i.e. “allow”.

*Let me tell you the whole story.* – the subject of the clause is in the objective case

Traditional *let* – “allow” : 1\textsuperscript{st} person imperative *let*

*They let us on board.*  
*Let’s get on board.*  
*He let us go to the party.*  
*Let’s go to the party.*
Negation in imperative clauses

Negative imperative clauses are formed with the help of the operator do:

*Don’t hesitate to ask questions!*
*Don’t shout!*
*Don’t be a spoilsport!*

In clauses with let we simply add not after the subject; the form with don’t is also possible:

*Let us not court disaster!*
*Don’t let us cry over spilt milk!*
*Don’t let us have an argument!*

3.2 Clause types and their discourse functions & illocutionary force

In the above section we have outlined a set of four clause types which are defined according to their syntactic make-up. Communicatively, these clause types can be treated as performing various kinds of so-called speech acts. Speech acts refer to what we „do“ with language in communication; it is a term which refers to the roles of utterances and their relations to the language behaviour of speaker and hearer in interpersonal communication. Naturally, written language we are analysing here is included as well.

Speech acts enable us to interpret a communicative activity (known as „locution“) which relates to and reflects the intentions („illocution“) of speakers/writers while speaking/writing and finally decode and study the effects („perlocution“) that speakers/writers arrive at listeners/readers.

There have been a number of speech acts such as directives (commanding, requesting, begging, inviting), commissives (promising, guaranteeing), expressives (welcoming, apologising), declarations (marrying, christening and divorcing formulas, resigning), or representatives (asserting, hypothesizing).

Now let’s have a look at the correlation of speech acts with the four clause types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause type (form)</th>
<th>Speech act (function)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. declarative</td>
<td>making a statement, give information which can be verified as true or false</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. interrogative</td>
<td>asking a question, request information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. exclamative</td>
<td>making an exclamation – express a strong feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. imperative</td>
<td>issuing a directive – request action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the situation just outlined illustrates an ideal correlation – the default state, which, in real communicative situations, does not work. Frequently, we come across examples with
the asymmetrical relation between a clause type and a speech act. Study the following examples:

a. *Could you please stop asking me how it went.*
b. *Heat ice and it will melt.*

In a. the form is interrogative but communicatively it would be interpreted and understood as a directive – due to the modal “could” and “please” as one subtype of directive, a polite request. In b. the form is inevitably imperative, but the illocutionary force behind the utterance is of a conditional bias – the “original” form may have been “If you heat ice, it will melt”.

As it is obvious, illocutionary force is frequently communicated indirectly and in this context we talk of **indirect speech acts**, i.e. when the clause type does not respect the illocutionary force as we can see in a. and b. above, or where the propositional content does not correlate with the speaker’s intention as in:

*Do you know where we are now?*

where the propositional content is “You know where we are now” but what the speaker really wants to know is “Where are we now?”.

### 3.3 Imperatives as speech acts

In everyday communication, many imperatives are generally used in the meaning of directives, wishes, conditions; directive meaning can be expressed also by non-directive forms of interrogatives and declaratives. So now we will focus more precisely on the uses of imperatives because this class represents a wide range of highly stratified speech acts.

1. As mentioned above, the default type of imperative meaning is issuing **directives**; as suggested above, these directives subsume commanding, requesting, inviting and even begging. They express various shades of requesting actions such as:
   
a. advice *Mind your words carefully. Be careful with your prognostications.*
b. request *Please come up with something else. Kindly call your office immediately.*
c. invitation *Come and take a look at this. Feel free to leave whenever you want.*
d. instruction *Cut into a circle. Press the button and follow me through.*
e. permission *Sit down and make yourself at home. Take as much money as you need.*
f. ordering *Come here, child. Keep away. No trespassing!*

1. Many imperatives are used to express a certain type of **wish**; these speech acts imply rather a hope than a directive which is under the person’s control:
   
a. *Have a good time with the artists, Jim.*
b. *Have a nice glass of wine.*

c. *Sleep well, Sister.*

2. Some imperatives may contain a “hidden” **conditional** force which, however, must be decoded or properly interpreted by the listener/reader. The “hidden” or indirect conditionals are in bold.

   a. *Study hard* and you’ll be in no trouble.
   b. *Buy one* and you’ll get a second at half off.

3. One more type of directive meaning can be expressed by non-imperative forms which may be understood as having directive meaning. In a. – b. we can see interrogative clauses used with directive force:

   a. *Will you stop talking.*
   b. *Would you call them here.*
   c. *Could you sort of listen for a moment.*

   In the following examples, we can declarative clauses with directive meaning; in d. the verb order is a performative verb; e. contains an indirect order:

   d. *I order you to return to this office and wait for security.*
   e. *You will simply take this ship and tell me how it happened.*

**EXERCISES**

1. Specify clause types and think about speech acts the clauses may perform.

   a. *Please open up this door.*
   b. *I beg you share this money with your servant.*
   c. *I begged him to share the money with his servant.*
   d. *Could you pass me that bowl of grated Arcturan Megadonkey please.*
   e. *Have a nice holiday.*
   f. *She’s reading Bakhtin?*
   g. *Where did he come from?*
   h. *Isn’t it obvious!*
   i. *What a story for Beesley and Atkinson this was going to make.*
   j. *Aren’t we happy people!*

Answers:

Ex. I.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>clause type</th>
<th>speech act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. imperative</td>
<td>request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. declarative</td>
<td>begging (performative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. declarative</td>
<td>statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td>interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi.</td>
<td>declarative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii.</td>
<td>interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii.</td>
<td>interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix.</td>
<td>exclamative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. THE NOUN PHRASE

As we have already outlined in chapter 2, a noun phrase in English is a basic analytical unit. This unit can be analysed from two perspectives: from the point of its (1) form/structure and from the point of its (2) function in clauses.

4. The noun phrase consists of one or more elements: the obligatory head (H) and the three classes of optional elements: determiners, modifiers and complements: a determiner (d) is placed before the head, a premodifier (PM) precedes the head, and a postmodifier (POSTM) follows the head. Complements in NP structure resemble to those complements (Subject complement, Object complement) mentioned above in that they are licensed by the head noun: the loss of blood (cf. with the C4 blood in He was loosing blood).

A/ The head can be formed by nouns, pronouns or adjectives:

the Western European states
You support the feudal policies of those powers.
The young and the wealthy

B/ Determiners are formed by closed-system items or more specifically synsemantic words, i.e. words with grammatical meaning (determinatives, prepositions, conjunctions). Determiners are to a certain extent obligatory elements: as the means of constituting the category of determination (e.g. articles) with nouns, they are closely tied with the head – both the and an in the following clause are obligatory since they are required by singular countable nouns and they are an expression of logical, grammatical and situational factors of the article use:

The young lady said something about an exhibition. The exhibition was visited by ...

Other types of determiners subsume helping words: a, the, this, that, these, those, whose, some, any, many, much, my, your, (a) few, one, first, last, no, all both, half for ’s. The number of determiners that can occur is limited; we usually use only one of these items and do not combine them as is the case of modifiers.

The student
This student had no hesitation in extending her questioning.
She

The noun phrase which consists of determinatives + head = BASIC NP

C/ Premodifiers may subsume a single word item or a string of words, usually of adjectival origin, i.e. open-class items (words with lexical meaning – autosemantic words), which make the NP structure very complex:

the university’s (d) dynamic (PM) and international (PM) research (PM) centres (H)
premodifiers can be made up of:

i. adjectives: the new black veil
ii. nouns: the sad road songs
iii. participles: the stolen child, an inspiring quality
iv. adverbs: the late Sultan
v. others: pseudo-science eccentrics, speak-and-record tasks

The order of adjectives before the head is relatively stable and fixed and the meaning of the whole NP then depends on the word order. In the following two examples, race and car behave both as nouns and secondary adjectives. This is possible in English due to the fact that the language lacks inflection (i.e. grammatical afixes signalling the category person, tense, singularity etc.).

The car was not new, but it was cool, with a stick shift that she worked like a veteran race car driver. [závodní auto]
The building was big enough for a stock car race. [automobilový závod]

In Czech, however, due to the typological differences such structuring of NPs is impossible and thus we need a slightly different strategy when rendering the NPs, e.g.:

Vůz sice nebyl nový, ale fantastický, protože měl ruční řadící páku, se kterou zacháze jako profesionální automobilový závodník.
V tak obrovské budově by se mohly klidně pořádat automobilové závody.

4.1 Word order in a complex NP
As we said earlier the order of adjectives before the head is relatively fixed and is subject to strict rules which are outlined and summed up in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>determiner</th>
<th>premodifiers</th>
<th>noun / head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>value</td>
<td>size</td>
<td>length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>lovely</td>
<td>new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim’s</td>
<td>pretty</td>
<td>large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The noun phrase which consists of modifiers + head = COMPLEX NP

D/ Postmodifiers of NPs may have the form of:

i. prepositional phrases: the form of a micro sub electronic component
ii. adverbs: a walk afterwards
iii. relative clauses: the instruments that controlled the photon drive
iv. non-finite clauses: a working file stolen from a lawyer’s office mothers speaking of their sons
The number of postmodifiers is not limited as in case of determiners; this is usually possible due to the multiple use of relative clauses. This almost endless extension of clauses draws on the principle of recursiveness, which must, however, be in harmony with the principle of comprehensibility:

This is the student / that lost the textbook / that he bought in the Oxford bookshop / that is situated on the corner of Reální street / that is a street leading to the cathedral / that is ...

Complex NPs in English enable us to include much information with the help of quite few words; they can be understood as a type of condenser. In this vein, we may treat NPs along with clause condensers (infinitives, gerunds and participles), and nominalization. When rendering English NPs into Czech we must usually completely “break” the NPs and restore their original meaning e.g. by means of subordinate clauses. In the following example NP we can see how a complex premodification can be rendered; notice the position of the headword pack in the Czech phrase.

online skills and language practice / pack (H): sada k procvičování jazykových dovedností a praktického jazyka prostřednictvím webového rozhraní

In terms of its function, NPs in clauses usually function as subject, (in)direct object, or subject/object complement.

The idea (S) is to teach students to use dreams.
I'm looking for a volunteer from the students. (OD)
Margaret silently offered Dixon (OD) a cigarette. (OI)
Alcohol is a colourless volatile liquid. (CS)
Each of them pronounced him (OD) a superior human being. (CO)

E/ To explain the function and role of complements in NPs, it seems useful to find parallels with the verb: the complement of the noun that corresponds to the object of the verb has the form of a prepositional phrase as in the following example:

I criticised his decision. → my criticism of his decision

Complements in noun phrase structure have the form of prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses:

their request for more input
a larger pool of potential contributors
a moderate amount of times
Complements in the form of subordinate clauses:
creative ways that attract more more audiences – finite that-clause
his ability to improved the details – non-finite to-infinitive clause

4.2 Modifiers versus the concept of attribute
The two terms basically refer to the same concepts; they rather reflect different language-analytical approaches. The term attribute as used in Czech grammars largely refers to the content of determinatives and modifiers as used in Modern English grammars. In Czech grammars attribute is treated as an independent clause element such as the subject, object or complement and has its own place within the schematic diagram. In English the attribute is part of a modifier and thus becomes part of the respective phrase (noun, adjective). Below we can see the analysis in the two languages:

**Those tired but happy student nurses** waited for their diplomas.

Subject

Unavené, ale šťastné/ sestřičky-žákyňy čekaly, až jim předají diplomy.

congruent attribute / subject

4.3 Other types of phrases
Apart from the NP as a basic unit for analysis we also distinguish an adjective, adverb, prepositional noun phrase and verb phrase.

a/ adjective P: *This year’s autumn is extremely cold. Her son is six years old.*
b/ adverb P: *Jack lived in New York until recently. The exam won’t last for long.*
c/ prep. NP: *Peter drove from Prague to Brno. Jill spent in her kitchen all day.*
d/ verb P: *The car must have been stolen. The team will be working all morning.*
5. THE VERB PHRASE

As we have already suggested in chapter 2, the verb is the central element around which other elements “orbit” or gather. Therefore, the verb determines the general organization of the clause. The verb of a clause is realized by a verb phrase, which may be either simple or complex. The simple VP contains only one word; the complex VP contains two or more words. The head word of the VP is the main, lexical verb, which always occupies the final position in the VP:

\[ \text{The car} \quad \text{must} \quad \text{have} \quad \text{been} \quad \text{stolen}. \]

modal auxiliary  perfective aspect  passive

\[ \text{The team} \quad \text{will} \quad \text{be} \quad \text{working} \quad \text{all morning}. \]

modal/future  passive

In the above complex verb phrase, the past participle form stolen is the head of the VP and the three preceding auxiliaries serve to indicate modality (must), the perfective aspect (have) and the passive voice (been). The first auxiliary – here the modal verb will – is called the operator and this is the only verb in the VP which is marked for tense and(or) person.

To communicate the meaning most verbs need complementation, i.e. one or more participants that enable its full interpretation. This quality or ability of the verb is called valency and subsumes a number of participants or arguments that communicate particular semantic roles and that are assigned certain positions within the clause. In order to identify the semantic roles, the verb must be in the active voice to analyse its verbal event action. The following clause can be analysed as having four participants: agent, patient, recipient/beneficiary and time/manner.

It gave her an aroma of licentiousness then.

\[ \text{It} \quad \text{gave} \quad \text{her} \quad \text{an aroma of licentiousness} \quad \text{then}. \]

1. Agent  an aroma of licentiousness 3. Recipient/Beneficiary

Based on the above analysis we can write down the semantic profile of the verb as follows:

GIVE: <Agent, Patient, Recipient>
To be semantically valid, the verb *give* needs 3 arguments with the semantic roles of *agent*, *patient* and *recipient*; the role of *time* is to offer possible complimentary conditions under which the action takes place and therefore this element is not semantically necessary. The semantic roles are always closely related to the character and functions of the lexical verb.

Syntactically, the verb *give* as a clause element needs the nominal element object, which is realized by a NP follows the verb.

The interplay of syntactic (grammatical; formal) and semantic (meaning) functions is illustrated in the following clause:

*Jane bought a second-hand lamp-shade.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantically:</th>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Patient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syntactically:</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Object direct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.1 Verbs and clause patterns

As we have just illustrated, the verb requires participants that are an expression of its semantic roles. Some semantic participants are obligatory:

*Peter left.* – the verb needs the subject  
*S – V*

*Sheila sold her house.* – one object – patient  
*S – V – O_D*

*They gave us the diplomas.* – two objects – patient, recipient  
*S – V – O_I – O_D*

Based on the constellation or valency of participants, which are called clause patterns, verbs are generally divided into various groups.

**A/ Linking (intensive) verbs (copulas)** subsume the verb *be* and the verbs expressing a similar meaning. The clause pattern is:  
*S + V_cop + C_S/A*

**B/ Transitive** verbs must be followed by *object*; their clause pattern is:

*S + V + O_D* or  
*S + V + O_I + O_D*

**C/ Intransitive** verbs follow the clause pattern  
*S + V [+ (A)]* and the action derives from the agent, the subject.

#### 1. Linking verbs (copulas)  
*S + V_cop + C_S*

The basic verb used in this clause pattern is *be*; it can be replaced with the verbs which express various shades of the meaning of *be* such as *seem, get, become, turn* or *grow* – all these verbs usually signal some kind of change that affects the agent in the subject. In this case the copula verb is followed by an adjective:
Jean grew old
They seemed tired
Jack turned pale

The subject complement may also be realized by past participle or by a noun:

The thieves passed unnoticed [past participle]
Mary became a teacher [noun]

The verb be may also be replaced by the verbs of senses taste, smell, sound, feel, look. The words following the verbs are interpreted as adjectives, which signal the linking relation:

Bordeaux tastes bitter
Her hair smelt sweet
Mind: Jenkins looked stern (Adj. – copula, přísný)
Jenkins looked sternly (Adv./lexical verb, přísně)

2. Monotransitive  S + V + O_D

Langdon (S) definitely (A) would have preferred (V) a car (O_D)
We (S) never (A) think of (V) things like that (O_D)
Jim (S) made up (V) his mind (O_D) then (A)
I don’t understand why women don’t wear stockings anymore (O_D – wh-clause)
Arthur decided to give up. (O_D – non-finite/to-infinitive clause)
He hates doing it. (O_D – non-finite/-ing clause)

Due to the object in the clause pattern, these verbs allow for one passive transformation:

They made up the whole thing or exaggerated to alarm them.
> passive: The whole thing had been made up or exaggerated to alarm them.

3. Ditransitive  S + V + O_I + O_D

S + V + O_D + PP

These verbs must be followed by two objects: the direct object is in the accusative case (4th case – who/what) and the indirect object in the dative (3rd case – to whom/to what). The indirect object usually precedes the direct one; if we change their word order, then the indirect object requires the preposition:

The band gave him (O_I) a musical sting (O_D)
The band gave a musical sting (O_D) to him (O_I)
Gargravarr had told him that he would have to alert his masters (O_D – that-clause)
The presence of two objects in the clause allows for two passive transformations. The active subject, the Agent, then becomes a passive with the by-prepositional object:

- He was given a musical sing (by the band)
- A musical sing was given to him (by the band)

Some verbs follow the clause pattern S + V + O_D + to-PP, in which the direct object is followed by a to-prepositional phrase:

James offered the seat to his partner.

4. **Complex-transitive** S + V + O_D + C_O

The complex-transitive character of a clause type means that the action which passes from the subject to the direct object is further complemented/specified by the object complement:

- Zaphod (S) didn’t find (V) the information (O_D) hard to concentrate on (C_O)
- The late lamented Mula Ibrahim used to drive me mad.
- A computer noticed an airlock open.

5. **Intransitive** S + V [+ (A)]

These verbs do not need any complementation because they are complete in themselves.

- It doesn’t matter.
- Welch laughed briefly.
- It was raining hard.

Intransitive verbs may be followed by the phrases which seem to function like objects, but they are adjuncts: in some grammars the phrases are referred to as cognate objects (vnitřní předměty), because the head word is semantically included in the meaning of the predicate:

- The waiter laughed a polite little waiter’s laugh.
- Ford laughed a nervous laugh.

5.2 Transitivity and intransitivity with some verbs

Some verbs can be used both as transitive and intransitive; in some cases the meaning of the verb does not change.

- You can earn some money by playing golf (O_D)
- Can I help you? (O_D)
- x You can’t play golf all day (A)
- x How can I help? (no object)
In many verbs, however, when used without the object, there is a change in the relationship between the subject and the verb: this change means that the subject is either agent of the action when used with an object; or becomes affected by the action:

Rick closed **the door** (O\_D)  x  The door **closed** (no object)
Jamie grew **potatoes** (O\_D)  x  Potatoes **grew** quickly (no object)

In the following clauses we can study how the verb *turn* may occur in more than one clause type. This is due to the neutral character of the English verb which, in contrast to the Czech verb, lacks semantic specification:

*She turned and spoke.*  Otočila se a promluvila.
*He turned a corner.*  Zahnul za roh.
*She turned her microphone off.*  Vypnula mikrofon.
*Trillian had turned white.*  Zblednul/Zesinal.

### 5.3 Number and concord

The term concord refers to agreement between words; here it primarily refers to subject-predicate agreement. This type of agreement means that a predicate (verb) in the singular takes a singular subject and a plural subject is required by a plural verb:

*He buys any government issue and then he sells it in the villages.*
*The steaks were grilling and the potatoes were baking on the coals.*

More complex is the category of notional concord which reminds us of a possible asymmetry between: the real counts are not important but it is the *idea of number* that controls the choice of a singular/plural subject to be adduced to the verb. This type of concord is usually used with collective nouns (*goods, congratulations, outskirts, whereabouts, headquarters, savings* etc.)

*But he, despite all his fine earnings, was a poor famished devil.*
*Our congratulations go to Miranda for her outstanding exam results.*

Words like *means, linguistics, politics, physics, statistics, athletics; diabetes or measles* are usually used with a singular verb, but there may be differences in the meaning of academic subjects when we employ a plural verb:

*The news was always heavily edited to fit the rhythms of the music.*
*Particle physics is the study of atoms.*  = academic subject
*Particle physics claim to prove the principles fundamental to all nature.*  = general use
*Phonetics is the least favourite subject at our department.*  = academic subject
*Sue’s phonetics are considerably poor.*  = general use
*War and peace* is a fascinating but long novel.
*William Golding’s* *The Inheritors* is a finely nuanced novel.

**With calculations, amount** and **quantity** we usually prefer a singular verb which subsumes the totality rather than individual sums:

*Here is ten pounds all in gold.*
*Twenty-four hours is a big step.*
*Three times is a threat. They feel us here, they feel the Precious.*
*Five times three is/are fifteen.*
*Twenty minus nine leaves eleven.*
*Thirty divided by six is five.*
*Two thirds of my books are English.*

**Coordinated subjects** which consist of two or more NPs linked by and usually take a plural verb:

*Jane and Tom are friends forever.*

In some cases, however, we may use a singular verb; this is when the NPs form a kind of a notional unit, or the words are close synonyms – this last possibility is used with abstract nouns. When the two NPs in the subject are joined with *with*, the verb is usually singular.

*Fish and chips is Jim’s favourite meal.* = *fish & chips as a unit*
*Bed and breakfast in that hotel was only £24.*
*Love and hatred is behind most interpersonal problems.*
*A strange man with his dog was slowly walking along the street.*

If the subject subsumes two NPs joined with *either/neither—or/nor*, the agreement is controlled by the last NPs:
*Either the lecturer or the students have to close the hall.*
*Neither the students nor their teacher doesn’t want to miss the class.*

**Indefinite pronouns as subject** – *anybody, anyone, someone, somebody, nobody, no one, everyone, everybody* are usually used with singular verbs. In colloquial speech, however, the pronouns may be followed by plural verbs. This tendency may also be understood as the result of political correct strategies to avoid mentioning whether the referent is male or female.

*Someone has left their bag behind the door.* [Someone has left his/her bag behind the door]
*If anyone knows where the lost keys are, they [he/she] should speak up.*
EXERCISES

I. Identify individual clause elements and decide about the clause type of the clauses below.

a/ They repeatedly elected Angela Merkel The Prime Minister.
b/ President Obama proved himself a strong leader.
c/ My family have always lived in the region.
d/ The shop assistant is not in yet.
e/ The garage gave his car a thorough going-over.
f/ The trees creaked and groaned in the wind.
g/ Recent press reports have been grossly exaggerated.
h/ Write your name in capital letters.
i/ Profits were at the same level as the year before.
j/ Jim was really a reliable lawyer.
k/ Jim bought a new house.
l/ The murdered then died a terrible death.

II. Observe how the verb performs the role of various types of verbs: identify individual clause elements and decide about the clause type of the clauses below; then translate the clauses.

1. She made a cake.
2. She made him a cake.
3. She made him a good husband.
4. She made a good wife.
5. She made him a good wife.
6. She made for the door.
7. He found her a good typist.

Answers:
Ex. I.: a/ They (S0 repeatedly (A) elected (P) Angela Merkel (O) The Prime Minister (C) – complex transitive.
b/ President Obama (S) proved (P) himself (O) a strong leader (C) – complex transitive.
c/ My family (S) have always (A) lived (P) in the region (A) – intransitive.
d/ The shop assistant (S) is not (P) in (A) yet (A) – intensive/linking/copula.
e/ The garage (S) gave (P) his car (O) a thorough going-over (O) – ditransitive.
f/ The trees (S) creaked and groaned (P) in the wind (A) – intransitive.
g/ Recent press reports (S) have been (Aux.) grossly (A) exaggerated (C) – intensive/linking/copula.
h/ Write (P) your name (O) in capital letters (A) – monotransitive.
i/ Profits (S) were (P) at the same level as the year before (A) – copula/linking.
j/ Jim (S) was (P) really (A) a reliable lawyer (C) – copula/linking.
k/ Jim (S) bought (P) a new house (O) – monotransitive.
l/ The murdered (S) then (A) died (P) a terrible death (A = the so-called cognate object, the only possible one with intransitive verbs) – intransitive.
Ex. II.: She (S) made (P) a cake (O_d) – monotransitive: Upekla koláč.
1. She (S) made (P) him (O_i) a cake (O_d) – ditransitive: Upekla mu koláč.
2. She (S) made (P) him (O_d) a good husband (C_o) – complex transitive: Udělal a z něj dobrého manžela.
3. She (S) made (P) a good wife (C_o) – copula/linking: Byla dobrou manželkou.
4. She (S) made (P) him (O_i) a good wife (O_d) – ditransitive: Byla mu dobrou manželkou.
5. She (S) made (P) for the door (A) – intransitive: Odešla.
6. He (S) found (P) her (O_i) a good typist (C_o) – complex transitive: Považoval ji za dobrou písařku (Byl a dobrou písařkou).
   He (S) found (P) her (O_i) a good typist (O_d) – ditransitive: Našel ji dobrou písařku.

5.4 The active and passive voice

In most languages one and the same idea can usually be expressed in two different ways – as seen from an active and a passive perspective. Passivisation is a process typical of objects: the elements which can be passivised are objects and therefore only monotransitive and ditransitive verbs are open to undergo the passive transformation. The English passive is formed with an auxiliary form of the verb be (also get or become) and the past participle form of irregular verbs or –ed form of regular verbs:

1. The hurricance scourged the garden. active
2. The garden was scourged by the hurricane. passive

In clause (1) we talk about the hurricane and say what it did to the garden, while
In clause (2) we focus on the garden and say what happened to it; the former „active agent“ has the form of a by-phrase.

The process of transforming an active clause in a passive one can be illustrated as involving these steps:

1. the patient – the direct object the garden – becomes the passive subject;
2. the active agent – the subject the hurricane – is placed after the predicate and becomes a passive agent;
3. the agent the hurricane may be adduced to the passive clause as a by-phrase if necessary;
4. the predicate undergoes the transformation: aux BE + -ED/-EN.
The hurricane scourged the garden.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{AGENT} & \quad \text{PATIENT} \\
\text{S} & \quad \text{P} & \quad \text{O}_d
\end{align*}
\]

The garden was scourged [by the hurricane].

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{PATIENT} & \quad \text{AGENT} \\
\text{S} & \quad \text{P} & \quad \text{Prep O}
\end{align*}
\]

The reasons for the choice of a passive rather than an active voice:

1. We prefer a passive when the agent is unknown, unimportant, or perfectly obvious from the context. In most cases below the agent from an active clause may be omitted.

   i. The security camera was stolen from a public access area. [unknown agent]
   
   ii. The same words can be found in both books. [agent = people in general]

   iii. Any student refusing to sign will be sent to a labour camp. [agent unimportant]

   iv. The newcomers are taught in training schools for emigrants. [obvious agent = teachers]

   v. Overtime weekly rates are being gradually reduced. [agent backgrounded = to shed responsibility]

2. In formal – academic, scientific, professional, or institutional – writing, especially when describing processes, procedures, or instructions, the passive is used to avoid mentioning the unnecessary agent.

   The comparison between the written and spoken subsets is conducted in the framework of SFL; the two subsets have been shown to be particularly salient in the given genre whose seminal features are studied from various perspectives. It is planned to enlarge the research corpus and the data will then be approached from two angles.

3. The passive is also a suitable means for information structuring with respect to ordering given information—new information. In the examples study how the given information (in bold) and new information (underlined) functions in both texts – the text in (i) operates a more natural information progression with respect to the given—new sequence:

   i. The concondancer AntConc 3.2.1 is a special program for searching large text corpora. It was used for the data analysis, and a home-built program was used to calculate the lexical density.

   ii. The concondancer AntConc 3.2.1 is a special program for searching large text corpora. The data analysis was done with the concondancer AntConc 3.2.1, and a home-built program was used to calculate the lexical density.

4. Spoken informal English prefers to employ the „general“ words as the subject – people, they, somebody, we, you. In more formal language, usually written, there is a
tendency to use passives. In (i) there is a spoken variant of (ii) in which the verb *assume* has undergone a profound change to become a noun and the passive meaning is carried by the new verb *make*:

1. *They assume* that it was in connection with information about robots.
2. *The assumption has been made* that it was in connection with information about robots.

We can omit the subject of the active verb, i.e. there is no *by*-phrase, in the following cases. In terms of information structuring and Functional Sentence Perspective, the patient becomes theme (i.e. the information taken for granted, known from the previous context, what we talk about or „old“) and the agent becomes rheme (the new information, what is said, „new“):

1. *It is supposed* to save South America. (Prý spasí Jižní Ameriku) – general agent
2. *It can be explained* patiently. (Šlo by to vysvětlit trpělivě?) – general agent
3. *Many solutions were suggested* for this problem (Vyskytlo se mnoho pokusů o řešení) – agent = author
4. *The operations are generally of two types, which will be outlined below.* (Tyto operace jsou obecně dvojího druhu; zachycuje je přehled níže) – agent = author
5. *The game schedule for the high school football team was taped to the cash register* (Oznámení o zápase středoškolského fotbalového týmu bylo připevněno na páskou pokladně) – agent = hidden
6. *The scene of the murder was searched minutely.* (Místo vraždy prohledali okamžitě) – agent = hidden
7. *Natural history is situated both before and after language.* (Přírodní historie stojí zároveň před řečí i za ní) – agent = none
8. *The poem says the elements are spread across ROME.* (Báseň uvádí, že ty prvky jsou rozmístěné po Římě) – agent = none

In some cases, however, the agent is (must be) preserved in the clause and is inevitably accompanied with the *by*-phrase. In terms of information structuring and Functional Sentence Perspective, the patient becomes theme and the agent (if really an agent) becomes rheme:

1. *The silence was first broken* by Mrs Annesley. (Ticho jako první přerušila paní Annesleyová)
2. *The students were disgusted* by her behaviour. (Její chování studenty naprosto znechutilo)
3. *A juicy cheeseburger can be seasoned* with a pinch of salt. (Šťavnatý hamburger lze dochutit špetkou soli.

It seems more convenient to understand the relation between active and passive constructions as a cline or continuum of forms expressing various shades of passive meaning rather than a black-and-white, clear-cut categories. In passive and passive-like constructions in the
examples below, see how passive meaning gradually transforms: (1) contains the default passive while in (5) the verb phrase is active but still the meaning implied is passive:

(1) *The book was sold.*

(2) *The book got sold.*

    *I’m not going to get caught* like poor Mrs. Noah on the ark.

(3) *I got Mouton de Gruyter to sell the book.*

(4) *I’ve never had the book sell* so quickly.

(5) *The book sold well.*

    *This is a story that would not sell* in America.

5.5 Passivisation in English and in Czech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Czech</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dixon saw Gore-Urquhart.</td>
<td>Dixon uviděl Gore-Urquhata.</td>
<td>active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gore-Urquhart was seen by Dixon.</td>
<td>Gore-Urquhart byl viděn/spatřen (Dixonem).</td>
<td>passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Gore-Urquharta viděl/spatřil Dixon.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table it is obvious that Czech, in contrast to English, has one more possibility to transform the original active clause so as to assign the active postverbal object *Gore-Urquhart* a new, preverbal subject position.

EXERCISES

I. Decide what kind of passive construction is used in the clause.

1. Barack Obama was elected President three weeks ago.
2. Barack Obama got his arm broken last night.
3. Virtually every person in my road has had / got a burglar alarm fitted recently.
4. I had (got) my TV and stereo taken.
5. The book sells well.

II. Explain the difference for the choice of passive – where we use a passive rather than an active:

1. a/ My car has been stolen!
   b/ Someone has stolen my car!
2. a/ They had to demolish the old palace.
   b/ The old palace had to be demolished.
3. a/ It is assumed that they’ll get married one day.
b/People assume that they’ll get married one day.

4. a/The President arrived back in Prague yesterday, and was immediately besieged by insistent reporters.
b/The President arrived back in Prague yesterday, and insistent reporters immediately besieged him.

5. a/The new authorities have introduced permanent lightning in the town.
b/Permanent lightning in the town that is to be introduced will result in considerably higher expenses for all citizens.

6. a/The patient was operated on two days later.
b/The doctors operated the patient two days later.

7. a/Lightning struck several trees in last night’s storm.
b/Several trees were struck by lightning in last night’s storm.

8. a/The aldehyde was melted and a 5% solution of KMnO₄ was added dropwise until oxidation was complete.
b/A laboratory technician melted the aldehyde and added dropwise a 5% solution of KMnO₄ until oxidation was complete.

Answers:
Ex. I.: 1. the default/standard passive; 2. get-passive, pseudo-passive; 3. have-passive, pseudo-passive; 4. have-passive; 5. medio passive

Ex. II: 1.a/ is more suitable as we focus on the result, and not on the unknown doer – the thief; 2.b/ is more suitable as the focus is on the result, the state; 3.a/ is more suitable – in case there is a general subject (people, they, we), the passive is preferred; 4.a/ is more appropriate as the passive enables us to preserve the same subject for both clauses – the president; 5.a/the doer/agent in the subject position enables us to emphasize the active – and positive – role of „the new authorities“, while in b/when mentioning negative impacts of the new facilities the agent is backgrounded; 6.a/ is more appropriate – the agent is obvious and therefore not necessary to be mentioned; 7.both are possible – the first is about lightning and we learn what it did, while in b/ we focus on the trees and learn what happened to them; 8.a/ is more natural, because in expository texts we rather focus on processes and descriptions rather than on agents who(which) logically derive from the situation.
6. Negation

To study negation in English, it is useful to approach the field comparatively: both in English and in Czech the function of negation is identical but there are quite significant differences in the repertoire of negative words (negative particles) as well as the structure of negative clause.

Generally, negative meaning in both languages can be expressed either (1) semantically or (2) partially (i.e. grammatically and lexically).

1. **Semantic** negation is implied by opposites, i.e. pairs of words with opposite meaning: man – wife, male – female, good – bad, long – short

2. **Partial** negation can be either **grammatical** – using the negative particle *not* and related structures (negative quantifiers), or **lexical** – the use of grammaticalized negation via various negative affixes (prefixes and suffixes): impossible, unnatural, disassociated, illegal, irrespective, nonsense, useless, sugar-free. This negation negates only part of the sentence, while the negation attached to the verb negates the whole clause!

### 6.1 Negative particles – English: NO – NOT versus Czech NE

**no:**  *Have you seen the local scenery? – No, I still haven’t.* *no* is a response to the yes/no question and thus negates the whole clause;

   *I have no reason to doubt them.*  – in this clause *no* has the function of a negative determiner *žádný*

**not:**  this particle is generally used to negate the predicate as in the following clause, or it may also negate any clause element as in the second example:

   *I dare not to ask.*  *Why hasn’t the teacher called me?*

   *It hasn’t been a strange experience waiting for you,” said Zarniwoop.”*  *Not pleasant for you.*

The negative particle *not* is attached to auxiliary and modal verbs; it cannot be directly attached to full meaning – lexical – verbs except for the verb *be* and *have*:

   *It can’t be that simple, Langdon thought.*

   *Well, then, you needn’t be under any alarm.*

   *Mr Jones says we must not think of moving her.*

   *She didn’t even ask how much her share would be.*  – *She not even ask...*
The structure of the negative clause:

English and Czech operate a completely different negative clause patterns. In Czech, negative particles accompany not only the predicate but also negate other clause elements that require to be covered by the so-called negative concord. English, in contrast, requires only one negation:

*Paul has never forgotten anything.* – ("Pavel nikdy něco zapomněl" = )
→ Pavel nikdy nic nezapomněl. – negative concord

*Nobody objected.* – (= „Nikdo namítal“)
→ Nikdo neměl námítky

6.3 Total/clausal negation

This type of negation subsumes two types: verbal and non-verbal negation.

1. **Verbal negation** requires the use of helping/dummy auxiliary *do*:

*Ethan didn’t get* her home until nearly one.
*He didn’t tell* me anything.

2. **Non-verbal negation** means that the particle *not* negates other elements than a verb, or we may use various negative quantifiers:

*He told me nothing.*

*He glared at nothing* and bit his lips.

*He no longer screamed or swore, but he was unable to keep still.* > *He didn’t scream or swear any more ...*

*Not a sausage, said Ford, shaking the thing.* – *No sausages, said Ford,* ....

*She does not live here any more.* > *She no longer lives here.*

### Negative quantifiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Czech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nobody</td>
<td>nikdo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no one</td>
<td>nikdo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nothing</td>
<td>nic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>nikdy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nowhere</td>
<td>nikde, nikam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neither (or)</td>
<td>ani jeden ze dvou (druhý člen opozice je “nor”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>substantive equivalent to “žádný”: <em>None came</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A specific group of words that are covertly negative are so-called approximate negators: few, little; rarely, seldom; barely, hardly, scarcely – while none suggests total negation (nonexistence, non-being), these words imply that there is still some possibility/amount/number etc:

Few of the other diners paid them any attention.
He seldom appeared really animated.
A barely audible murmur ran through the Divan.

6.4 Partial/subclausal negation

In this type of negation negative elements do not make the clause negative completely; rather one part is negated. This can be done due to negative afixes:

He found himself unwilling to meet the eye of the conductor.

Other types of partial negation are:

Jean left not a minute ago.
I don’t cook every day. > I cook but not every day.
I didn’t come to be insulted. > 2 possible interpretations: he came X he didn’t because ...
Not surprisingly, he complained. versus Surprisingly, he didn’t complain.

6.5 Negative clauses with quantifiers

Negative quantifiers can be a source of ambiguity since their scope over clause elements is in some cases open to discussion:

Paul didn’t send three emails. 1. He sent less than 3
2. He sent more than 3 > e.g. 4
3. He didn’t send any

I didn’t attend the classes for a long time. 1. I attended e.g. only 4 classes.
2. I was absent for a long time.

I haven’t done it to please you. 1. I did it but for other reasons than pleasing you.
2. I didn’t do anything so that you were happy.

Jim didn’t accept the offer because he wanted a higher salary.
1. He refused the offer totally and found a new one.
2. He accepted the offer because he’d love to work there.
6.6 Double negation

This type of negation, which is a combination of two negatives applied to the same proposition/idea, results in positive meaning. There are two ways to form a double-negative clause:

I. GRAMMATICAL + LEXICAL: it is possible to combine these two types of negation; the resulting meaning implies positive connotation:

- What she says is not unreasonable.  
  Její tvrzení není nerozumné = má smysl.

- This is not an uncommon mistake.  
  Nejde o neobyklou chybu = je to docela běžná chyba.

- The product isn’t faultless.  
  Výrobek není bezvadný = výrobek má nedostatky.

- Nothing is impossible.  
  Nic není nemožné = vše je možné.

II. GRAMMATICAL NEGATION with TWO DISTINCT LEXICAL VERBS:

- He doesn’t like doing nothing.  
  Nemá rád nicnedělání = rád něco provádí.

  BUT: He doesn’t like doing anything.  
  Nerad dělá cokoli = je lenivý.

Inversion after negative adverbs and adverbial phrases

When we begin a clause with a negative adverb or adverbial phrase, it is quite common to change the usual word order of subject and verb. The reason for this change is to emphasize the meaning of the adverb.

- Never had he seen so many people in such a small room.
- Not only was Jean good looking – she was also very clever.

We may use inversion after adverbs implying negative meaning which emphasize a time relationship at the beginning of a clause:

- Hardly had he put his head to the pillow when he fell asleep.
- No sooner had the receptionist put down the cell phone than it rang again.

In the following clauses we may also use inversion though the opening words – only then/after etc. – are not negative expressions but time phrases:

- Only then did she realize the situation she was in.
- Only after several years did he begin to visit his former wife.

We may also use inversion after negative – or rather implicitly negative adverbs – at the beginning of a clause to stress (in)frequency of the event/phenomenon/activity:
Little did I suspect him of lying so often.
Seldom is the Prime Minister out of the news.

Transferred negation and content clauses

In complex clauses which contain verbs expressing mental processes of “thinking” such as THINK, BELIEVE, SUPPOSE, EXPECT, SEEM, the negation is usually transferred to the first – initial – clause; the meaning does not change:

*I thought it didn’t matter. → rather: I didn’t think it mattered. = TRANSFERRED.*

I don’t believe she cares about it.
I don’t think that would be wise.
I don’t suppose he has any cause for complaint.

However, with verbs such as KNOW, REALIZE, CLAIM, the shift of negation from the second, dependent clause, to the main clause may result in the change of interpretation:

*I knew it didn’t matter. X I didn’t know it mattered.*

EXERCISES

I. Negate the finite verb in each of the following sentences and make other changes that become necessary:

1. The police have enough evidence already.
2. There is someone doing research in this field.
3. Excess drinking has something to do with cancer of the liver.
4. He had told it both the boss and his secretary.
5. The new law applies to some of the union states already.
6. This research has revealed something of importance.
7. The schedule helps us in our daily work, to a certain extent, too.
8. We must go a long way to find someone as intelligent as this.
9. Holmes is still living at this address.
10. Jenkins has been away from office a very long time.
11. Hundreds of pensioners can find somewhere comfortable to live.
12. The financial counsellor has sometimes given me some useful advice.
13. There are a lot of people waiting in the lobby already.
14. I can understand both of these two sentences.
15. I can understand all of these ten axioms.
II. In the following sentences, replace non-verbal clausal negation with appropriate
verbal negation.

1. Tim had told the news neither the boss nor his secretary.
2. The committee was impressed by none of the applicants.
3. The ethnic minority seldom ever in the past encountered such enormous oppression.
4. We rarely agree on what to do in such situations.
5. She seldom, if ever, goes to the movies alone.

III. Rephrase the sentences, beginning with the words underlined.

1. I have never in all my life seen such a horrible thing.
2. They seldom watch TV these days.
3. The ethnic minority seldom ever in the past encountered such enormous oppression.
4. We rarely agree on what to do in such situations.
5. She realized only then the stress the child was under.
6. A debate has rarely attracted so much media attention.
7. He has seldom seen such beauty.

IV. The sentences can have two meanings: explain the difference.

1. I don’t lend my lecture handouts to any of the students.
2. The translator hasn’t completed half the assigned translation task.

Answers:
Ex. I.: 1. The police haven’t enough evidence yet. 2. There isn’t anyone doing research in this field. 3. Excess drinking hasn’t anything to do with cancer of the liver. 4. He hadn’t told it either the boss or his secretary. 5. The new law doesn’t apply to any of the union states yet. 6. This research hasn’t revealed anything of importance. 7. The schedule doesn’t help us in our daily work at all, either. 8. We needn’t go far to find anyone as intelligent as this/ we don’t have to go far ... 9. Holmes isn’t yet living at this address. 10. Jenkins hasn’t been away from office very long. 11. Hundreds of pensioners can’t find anywhere comfortable to live. 12. The financial counsellor hasn’t ever given me any useful advice. 13. There aren’t many people waiting in the lobby yet. 14. I can’t understand eitherof these two sentences. 15. I can’t understand any of these ten axioms.

Ex. II.: 1. Tim hadn’t told the news either the boss or his secretary. 2. The committee wasn’t impressed by any of the applicants. 3. The ethnic minority didn’t ever encounter such enormous oppression in the past. 4. We don’t ever agree on what to do in such situations. 5. She doesn’t go to the movies alone.
Ex. III.: 1. Never in all my life have I seen such a horrible thing. 2. Seldom do they watch TV these days. 3. Seldom ever in the past did the ethnic minority encounter such enormous oppression. 4. Rarely do we agree on what to do in such situations. 5. Only then did she realize the stress the child was under. 6. Rarely has a debate attracted so much media attention. 7. Seldom has he seen such beauty.

Ex. IV.: 1. I lend to none; I only lend to a selected few students. 2. Half of his task is still uncompleted; he hasn’t completed even half yet.
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING


