THE SIMPLE SENTENCE IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN[1]

Abstract: *In English, most simple sentences of more than one word consist of two nuclei. The copula "to be" serves only as a link between the subject and the nominal part of the predicate. There are attributive adjuncts that qualify nouns, predicative adjuncts that qualify nouns and pronouns, and adverbial adjuncts which qualify verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Simple sentences may be divided into: declarative, interrogative, commands and exclamatory. In Romanian, the traditional classification of the sentences is made according to their communicative purpose and to the number of their structural units. Sentences can be one-member and bi-member; simple un-extended and simple extended; and nominal and verbal. The simple sentence does not contain secondary parts of the sentence.*

Key words: *attributive adjuncts; predicative adjuncts; adverbial adjuncts; one-member sentences; bi-member sentences*

Résumé *: En anglais, la majorité des phrases simples reposant sur plus d'un mot contiennent deux noyaux. La copule « to be » ne sert que de lien entre le sujet et la partie nominale du prédicat. Il existe des attributifs qui qualifient les noms, des verbes attributifs qui qualifient des noms, des pronoms et des adverbes attributifs qui qualifient des verbes, des adjectifs, des adverbes. La phrase simple peut être déclarative, interrogative, injonctive, exclamative. En roumain, la classification traditionnelle des phrases simples est faite en fonction de la visée communicative et du nombre des unités constitutives. Il peut y avoir des phrases simples à un membre ou deux membres, simple non-étendue, simple étendue, nominale ou verbale. La phrase simple ne contient pas des parties secondaires.*

Mots-clés *: attributif, verbes attributifs, adverbes attributifs; phrase à un seul membre, phrase à deux membres.*

A simple sentence is an oral or a written communication made up of one or more units, each of which containing a complete utterance formed according to a definite pattern. Usually, people consider simple sentences to be reduced to two words at the most (for instance the subject and the predicate). Although the subject and the predicate are the essential parts of the sentence, in fact most sentences (oral or written) contain supplementary elements.

In English, one-word sentences are, as a rule, intelligible only in connection with a particular situation, or with a statement made, or a question asked, in another sentence, usually by another speaker:

Why don't you smoke? – Smoke? I never do.

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Most sentences of more than one word consist of two nuclei, one indicating the person or thing about whom or which a statement is made (or a question asked), the other containing the statement or the question asked. The word or words indicating the person or thing referred to is (are) caled the subject of the sentence, while that or those containing the statement (or the question) the predicate:

There was no wind.
He a gentleman!
Has she been ill?
You don't say so!
Twenty people were killed.

As appears from the examples, the predicate may consist of one or more words, one of these being usually a finite verb. Besides the finite verb the predicate may contain one or more non-finite forms closely connected with the finite verb (*don't say, were killed, has been*). It will be found that in such verbal groups the non-finite form is usually the most important of the two as regards meaning. Three things should be observed: a. that the two-nucleus type of sentence, with a predicate consisting of or containing a finite verb, is the usual one in statements and questions intelligible by themselves; b. that this type also occurs in sentences fully intelligible only inconnection with a particular situation, or with a statement made in another sentence (*I see*.); c. that a one-nucleus sentence may consist of or contain an imperative: *Stop!; Hurry up!*.

In some sentences, such as *The dogs barked furiously, My sister married young, They saw a light*, it seems as if we have not two nuclei, but three. In the first example, however, *furiously* merely adds something to the idea expressed by *barked*; it may, therefore, be considered as part of the second nucleus. But this is not the case with the other two: *young* is just as essential as *married, a light* equally important as *saw*. Here are a few more examples ofthe second type of sentence:

a.The party arrived *safe and sound.*
The idea sounds *all right.*
b.We parted *the best of friends*.
He left home *a beggar;* he came back *a millionaire.*

We can see that, whereas *furiously* in the above example only refers to *barked,* the adjectives and nouns under *a* and *b* refer to the subject of the sentence as well as to the verbal predicate.

The verb in the second sentence of a. is to be pronounced with fairly strong stress. The sentence may also be pronounced on a less sceptical tone, in which case the emphasis shifts to the predicative adjective, and we can see the three nucleus type of sentence shifting to the commoner two nucleus type. This type is found especially after verbs like: *to get*, *to become, to seem, to keep, to lie, to feel,* etc.

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She kept very *quiet.*
It is getting *dark*.
Do you feel *tired*?

The return to the two-nucleus type with the verbal part of the predicate comparatively insignificant, apart from the expression of person, number, tense and mood, is practically complete when the verb is the copula *to be*, which serves only as a link between the subject and the nominal part of the predicate. Besides nouns and adjectives, the latter may also consist of an adverb, a pronoun, a numeral, or a noun preceded by a preposition, so long as these express a quality or condition of the subject.

Are you *tired*?
His brother was a *sailor*.
These books are *mine.*
Is Mr. Johnson *in*?
So be it.
I shall be *fifty* next Monday.

The limit to which English can go in this respect is shown by such a sentence as *He is a gentleman!* – in which the predicate-nucleus is purely nominal, a type which occurs especially in indignant exclamations and in exclamatory questions (*His father dead*?)

In sentences of the type *They saw a light* the predicate consists of a so-called 'transitive verb', followed by a noun or pronoun denoting a person or thing affected by the action expressed by the verb. This noun or pronoun is called an object. The tendency to return to the two nucleus type is also apparent in some combinations of a transitive verb + object:

She had many friends.
She had a cold.
She had breakfast.

In sentences like *I never thought of him, Father seems to disapprove the idea, He looked at her*, the verb plus preposition is practically equivalent to a single transitive verb.

Attributive adjuncts qualify nouns. Some examples are: *twenty* people, *my* sister, the *same* height, an *honest* man; to which may be added nouns like: a *brick* wall, a *village* church; nouns in the genitive, like: *my mother's* picture, *a summer's* day; an *of*-construction like: *a gem of a* poem, her *scamp of a* husband. Attributive adjuncts are subordinate to the nouns they qualify. In groups like *William the Conquerer, John the Baptist,* the bearer of the proper name is further identified by the following class-noun. The latter is said to be in apposition to the proper name, or simply called an apposition. In *the river Thames, my sister Mary,* either noun

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may be considered to further identify the other. Which of the two is regarded as the apposition depends on the speaker's or writer's intention.

Predicative adjuncts qualify nouns and pronouns without being subordinated to them. The term is usually restricted to nouns and adjectives, adverbs, preposition groups accompanying a direct object to which they are related in much the same way as the nominal part of a predicate to its subject: I like my coffe *strong,;* The headache drove me nearly *mad;* They elected him *chairman.* Predicative adjuncts may also occur in passive sentences, in which they qualify the subject: *It was made clear to me.*

Adverbial adjuncts qualify verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Examples: The dogs barked *furiously*; I *never* smoke; The letter was *nowhere* to be found; The headache drove me *nearly* mad; She plays *really well*. Adverbial adjuncts, when single words, are usually adverbs. Those of more than one word often consist of a preposition + (pro)noun, and may then be called prepositional adjuncts.These should be distinguished from prepositional objects. Examples: *They sat on the sofa; The dog lay on the floor*, with *They sent for a doctor; He listened to her.* The term "prepositional adjuncts" may also apply to attributive and predicative adjuncts introduced by a preposition. An adverbial adjunct may consist of a single noun, a noun preceded by an article or an attributive adjunct, or a noun followed by an adverb: *I have walked three miles; He died last night; They crashed head on; He won hands down.*

Sentences may be divided into *statements* or *declarative sentences, questions,* or *interrogative sentences, commands,* or *imperative sentences, and exclamations,* or *exclamatory sentences.*

As concerns declarative sentences, they may be either affirmative or negative. Negative sentences are characterized by a negative adverb or another negative word, the commonest being *not.* English differs from other languages in having a special formfor the predicate of negative sentences: *do not (don't), does not (doesn't), did not (didn't)* followed by a plain infinitive. We have to note that the presence of *not* does not necessarily make the sentene in which it occurs negative: He decided *not* to go. In 'Do you think we shall be late? – I hope *not*'. – not is equivalent to a clause (that we shall not be late) and does not negative *I hope*.

Interrogative sentences are of two types,which may be illustrated by the following examples: *Did you see her?*(a); and *What did she say?*(b). Interrogative sentences of the first type (a) open with a finite verb (an auxiliary or the copula *to be*) and usually end with a rising intonation.The answer expected is either 'yes' or 'no', or other words expressing various nuances of affirmation or denial (*certainly, perhaps, hardly, not at all*, etc.). They may be called *verbal questions*. Those of type b open with an interrogative pronoun or pronominal adverb (*Why, When, How*, etc.) and usually end with a falling intonation. The answer expected is a piece of information. They may be called *pronominal questions.*

Imperative sentences usually contain the imperative of a verb. The imperative is used in requests, which according to circumstances may range from brusque

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commands to humble entreaties, to tone generally serving as a key to the exact meaning. When a request rather than a command is intended, *please* is often added: *Shut the door!; Have a good time!; Hurry up, please!* For the sake of emphasis or specification, an imperative may be preceded by *you*, or followed (occasionally preceded) by *somebody (someone), everybody (everyone)*: *You be quiet; You mind your own business; You get out of this room; Come on, everybody!; Somebody run back!.*

To what has already been said on exclamatory sentences, it is necessary to add somethig about interjections. They may be divided into regular and occasional interjections. Occasional interjections primarily belong to other parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc.) and their use as interjections is something secondary. In a few cases, though a word may also occur as another part of speech, its use as an interjection is felt to be the primary one: *Hoity-toity!* (noun and adjective); *Boo!* (noun and verb). Interjections may also be prefixed (occasionally suffixed) to a sentence: *What a lie!; We came too late, alas!*

In Romanian, the traditional classification of the sentences is made according to their *communication purpose* and according to the *number of their structure units*.

As concerns the purpose of communication, sentences may be divided into *declarative (enunţiative) sentences, non-emphasizing and emphasizing* and *interrogative non-emphasizing and emphasizing*. The sentence classification according to the number and type of their structure units takes into account the sentence organization as a structure whose components are the *essential parts* of the sentence – the subject and the predicate and *secondary,* like the attribute, the object, the adverbial. Regarding these criteria, sentences can be *one-member* and *bi-member, simple unextended* and *simple extended,* and *nominal* and *verbal.* Supposing a finite number of states, sentences can be divided into a simple number of structural schemes:

1. subject + predicate;
2. subject +nominal predicate;
3. subject + predicate + direct object;
4. subject + attribute + predicate + direct object;
5. subiect + predicate + predicative adjunct.

The simple sentence are those sentences which do not contain secondary parts. They can be:

• sentences made up of only a predicate: Example*: Ninge, Am studiat.*

• sentences made up of a subject and a predicate: Example: *A venit toamna. George cântă*

• sentences made up of a multiple subject and a predicate: Example: *Irina, Ana si Ioana studiază.*

• sentences made up of a nominal predicate and a subject: Example: *Emil a devenit şofer*.

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• sentences made up of a predicate, a subject and a noun in vocative which has no syntactical function: Example: *Copii, a sosit iarna!*

Both bi-member and one-member sentences may be realized as simple sentences:

- *Copilul alearga; Oamenii se grăbesc.* (bi-member sentences with an intransitive verb);
- *El a ajuns inginer; Situaţia a devenit de nesuportat; Ion este cel de-al doilea.* (bi-member sentences with a copulative verb)
- *E bine; E rău; E acceptabil.* (sentences with non personal predicate);
- *Ma numesc Tudor; Te cheamă Ion.* (sentences with an identity verb);
- *Georgescu.; Hartular.* (sentences that are reduced to a nominal statement);
- *Teribilă căldură, Maria!; Mare nenorocire!* (one-member sentences with no predicate);

The one-member sentences with no predicate are, generally speaking, unique realizations, having a poetical function. They have to be analysed from a stylistic point of view, as they represent deviations from the structural norms of the syntax.

The classification of sentence structure in Romanian is but one of the systematization means as regards the communication units of language. It emphasizes their main rules of construction and detail.

In both English and Romanian, the simple sentence is a typical syntactic unit, found with great frequency and enjoying the qualities of conciseness and clarity usually required for conversation, orders, suggestions, indication, information. Simple sentences are considered to be reduced to two words at the most (the subject and the predicate). The truth is, however, that although the subject and the predicate are the main parts of the sentence, in fact, most sentences, oral or written, contain additional elements. Indeed, conversation, writing, literary and scientific works would be poor enough if sentences were made up only of these main elements.

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