

**SEMINAR 1 – SENTENCE AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE (SGEL 2.2 – 2.5;  
LEG – 1.1 – 1. 21; Chalker – ex. 2,3,4)**

**sentence (subject and predicate) - sentence elements (S, V, O, A, C) - types of verbs  
(transitive, intransitive, copular) - 7 basic clause types - phrases - clause**

**SENTENCE**

“A sentence is a grammatically complete unit (i.e. constructed according to a system of rules) which can be used on its own without people feeling it to be incomplete.”

*Q1: Consider the following stretches of language. Are they sentences?*

- e.g.      a) Are playing football in the garden.      (compare: *Hrají fotbal na zahradě.*)  
            b) Rained.      (compare: *Pršelo.*)  
            c) The boys.

*Q2: What's missing in each one?*

→ a sentence comprises a subject and a predicate:

**the subject** (he, my mother, the children, one of his brothers)

**the predicate** (= what is said about the subject, i.e. all the words in a sentence except the subject)

**SENTENCE (CLAUSE) ELEMENTS**

English grammar, unlike Czech, recognizes as clause elements only those which operate on the level of the sentence structure, whether they are obligatory or optional – i.e. *subject, verb, object, complement* and *adverbial*. Czech grammatical tradition also includes the modifying (= *rozvíjející*, expanding) elements. In English these modifiers are not regarded as clause elements.

*Q3: Consider the following sentence and try to answer the questions:*

e.g.      *The beautiful young woman in the bright red dress is my best friend's cousin.*

- 1. What is the subject?*
- 2. How many sentence elements are there?*

In English, we distinguish 5 basic sentence elements:

[ S ] the **subject** is easily identifiable – by asking *who?*(or *what?*) – *he, children, my mother, someone, her younger brother, the man in the black coat, that new English-Czech dictionary, etc.*

- the predicate has a few constituents:

[ V ] - **verb** - *are playing*

[ O ] - **object** - *football*

[ A ] - **adverbial** - *in the garden* (=time, place, manner)

[ C ] - **complement** – is used after a copular verb (=a linking verb) e.g. He is *clever*.

E. g. . *The beautiful young woman in the bright red dress* | *is* | *my best friend's cousin*.  
S V C

*I* | *don't know* | *what he wants*.

S V O (here the object is expressed by a clause)

*She* | *called* | *him* | *a fool*.

S V O C

## VERBS

We distinguish 3 basic types of verbs:

a) **intransitive** – do not require an object, can be followed by an adverbial or stand on their own, cannot be used in the passive!

e.g. My head **aches**. The bus **left** (early). They didn't **arrive**.

b) **transitive** – require an object, cannot stand on their own

e.g. I **need** money. He **enjoys** parties. I **met** *him* yesterday.

\*I bought. → I bought *it / some food / a new CD*.

\* I like wearing. → I like *wearing skirts and dresses*.

(but in a different context / meaning 'buy' and 'wear' can be used as intransitive verbs)

- some verbs can take two objects – She sent *me a postcard*. – these verbs are called **ditransitive** x **monotransitive** – take one object (**complex-transitive** occur in SVOC and SVOA type)

- **direct object** (4. pád - accusative) – *a postcard*

- **indirect object** (3.pád – dative) - *me*

- c) **copular or linking – are followed by a subject complement or an adverbial**  
- the complement to the subject - tells us something about the subject

e.g. John is clever. / Mike is an architect./ Your dinner seems ready. (SVC)

He was at home. (SVA)

**most common copular verbs:** *be, seem, appear, sound, feel, taste, smell*  
+ **verbs indicating a change:** *become, go, grow, get, prove, turn*

**But! One verb can belong to more than one class, e.g. some verbs can be used both transitively and intransitively:**

Compare: *open*            The door opened. (SV)    v.    Someone opened the door. (SVO)

*answer*

*close*

## CLAUSE TYPES

- a simple sentence consists of a single independent clause
- the clause may contain a few sentence elements
- there are seven basic clause types which differ according to whether one or more clause elements are **obligatory present** in addition to the S and V

1. **SV**        My head aches. / They laughed.
2. **SVC**        My brother has become an architect.
3. **SVO**        My sister enjoyed her holiday. / That lecture bored me.
4. **SVOO**      The firm gave Sam an expensive watch.
5. **SVOC**      They made Sam chairman./ I find her advice very helpful.  
(= complement to the object, the verb is complex-transitive)
6. **SVA**        The bank is on the corner.
7. **SVOA**      You can put the dish on the table.

- intransitive verbs occur in type SV (e.g. *shine, disappear, ache*)
- transitive verbs occur in type SVO (e.g. *bore*), SVOO (e.g. *send, give*), SVOC (e.g. *find, appoint, elect*), SVOA (e.g. *put*)
- copular verbs occur in types SVC (e.g. *seem, become*), SVA (e.g. *be*)

## IN THE STUDY OF GRAMMAR THERE ARE TWO MAIN ISSUES: **FUNCTION AND FORM.**

In English grammar the sentence is described as having five levels with different units: **sentences** which consist of one or more **clauses**, which consist of one or more **phrases**, which consist of one or more **words**, which consist of one or more **morphemes**

So far we have analyzed parts of sentences in terms of their **function (=sent. elements)** – **functions are realized by various phrases**

**A phrase** – a word or more words built around **the head word**

- a) **noun phrase** – **My watch** has disappeared. (i.e. S is realized by a noun phrase)
- b) **verb phrase** - My watch **has disappeared**. (i.e. V is realized by a verb phrase)
- c) **adjective phrase** – She was **a bit doubtful**. (i.e. C is realized by an adj. phrase)
- d) **adverb phrase** – She answered **quite rapidly**. (i.e. A is realized by an adverb ph.)
- e) **prepositional phrase** – The keys were **on the desk**. (A is realized by a prepositional phrase)

## SENTENCE V. CLAUSE

In English **a sentence is an independent unit, a clause is a unit within a sentence**. In Czech we do not make this distinction. (compare: sentence and clause v. *věta*)

The **simple sentence** consists of one clause.     e.g. *I was late for school.*

The **multiple sentence** consists of two or more clauses. We distinguish two types:

- a) **compound** sentence – two or more main, syntactically independent clauses which are coordinated

e.g. *I was late for school today but the teacher wasn't angry with me.*

- b) **complex** sentence – one of the clauses is **superordinate**, the other (or others) is / are dependent, i.e. **subordinate**

e.g. *Although she needed the money, she didn't accept my offer.*

*Compare the sentences:*

- a) Jane realized her mistake and apologized at once.
- b) When Jane realized her mistake, she apologized at once.