

Lesson 9 / Handout 9c

4 syntactic types / sentence types = FORMS: Match the four headings and definitions below appropriately:

DECLARATIVES INTERROGATIVES IMPERATIVES EXCLAMATIVES

a) sentences in which it is normal for the subject to be present and to precede the verb:

She gave him a present.

b) sentences which have an initial phrase introduced by *what* or *how*, usually with S-V order:

*What a fine watch he received to his birthday! What a lot they charge! How very fresh everything is!
How I dislike dieting!*

c) YES – NO interrogatives: an operator is placed in front of the subject: *Did she give it to him?
Are you at home now?*

WH- interrogatives: a wh- word (+ *how*) is positioned initially and there is generally Subject-Operator inversion: *Where did you get it? How do you like him?*

d) sentences which normally have no overt grammatical subject, and whose verb has the base form: *Give it to him.*

4 discourse functions = MEANINGS: Match the four headings and descriptions below appropriately:

STATEMENTS QUESTIONS DIRECTIVES EXCLAMATIONS

a) primarily used for expressing the extent to which the speaker is impressed by something

b) primarily used to convey information

c) primarily used to seek information on a specific point

d) primarily used to instruct somebody to do something

Direct association between syntactic type and discourse function is the norm, but the two do not always match. For instance, a declarative question (*You've got the tickets?*) is syntactically a declarative but semantically a question, and a rhetorical question (*Who knows?*) is syntactically an interrogative but semantically a statement. Or: *Could you please make less noise?* is a question intended as a request, whereas *Do you want another cup?* is a question that may be intended as an offer; *Make your bed at once* and *Make yourself at home* are both directives, but the first has the force of a command and the second the force of an invitation.

QUESTIONS:

Major classes: Match the three types of questions and descriptions below appropriately:

1. **yes – no questions**

2. **wh- questions**

3. **alternative questions**

a) they expect a reply from an open range of replies; a falling intonation

b) they expect as the reply one of two or more options presented in the question

c) they expect affirmation or negation; a rising intonation

positive yes – no questions: generally neutral, with no bias in expectation towards a positive or negative response.

negative yes – no questions: are not neutral, often express surprise or disbelief, disappointment or annoyance:

Can't you drive straight? (I'd have thought you'd be able to, but apparently you can't.)

Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

Minor classes: Match the three types of questions and descriptions below appropriately:

1. **exclamatory questions**

2. **rhetorical questions**

3. **echo questions**

a) repeat part or all of what has been said: *A: The Browns are coming. B: Coming?*

A: He's a dermatologist. B: WHAT is he?

b) interrogative in structure, but have the force of a strong assertion; the speaker does not expect an answer

- a positive rhetorical *yes- no question* is like a strong negative assertion, while a negative question is like a strong positive one:

Is that a reason for despair? (Surely that is not a reason for despair) X *Isn't the answer obvious?* (Surely the answer is obvious)

- there are also rhetorical *wh- questions*; the positive question is equivalent to a statement in which the *wh-* element is replaced by a negative element:

Who knows? (Nobody knows. or I don't know.)

What difference does it make? (It makes no difference.)

c) interrogative in structure, but have the force of an exclamatory assertion; typically it is a negative yes – no question with a final falling instead of rising tone: *Hasn't she grown! Wasn't it a marvellous concert!*; they invite the hearer's agreement to something on which the speaker has strong feelings

DIRECTIVES:

Directives without a subject:

- take the form of an imperative sentence, which differs from a declarative sentence in that:

a) it generally has no subject b) it generally has a verb in the base form *Jump. Be reasonable. Go home now.*

- the imperative verb lacks tense distinction and does not allow modal auxiliaries

Directives with a subject:

- the stressed subject **you** may be added; usu expresses strong irritation or merely insistence:

You be quiet! You mind your own business, and leave this to me! You take the book.

- third person subjects are also possible:

Somebody open this door. Parents with children go to the front. Nobody move.

'Do' with positive imperatives:

- a positive imperative can be made more persuasive or insistent (esp. in BrE) by adding **do** before the verb:

Do have some more tea. Do let's go for a walk.

EXCLAMATIVES - introduced by *what* or *how*

What + a noun phrase + SV... : What a time we've had today!

How + an adjective + SV... : How delightful her manners are!

How + an adverb + SV... : How quickly you eat!

How + SV... (in this case how functions as a degree adverbial): How I used to hate geography!

References:

Greenbaum, S. and R. Quirk. (1990) *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. Harlow: Longman. Chapter 11, pp. 231-246.