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## PREDICATIVITY AND INTONATION AS THE MAIN GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF THE SENTENCE

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### ABSTRACT

*The sentence is traditionally defined as the expression of a complete thought. But this seems to be open to thought and discussion because completeness is, in fact, very relative and depends largely on the purpose of the speaker or writer as well as on the context, linguistic or situational. This article is dedicated to the study of the sentence and its main grammatical features: predicativity and intonation.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Sentence, Predicativity, Intonation, Declarative Sentence, Interrogative Sentence, Imperative Sentence, Exclamatory Sentence.*

### INTRODUCTION

The traditional definition is that a sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought is to-day often criticised on the ground that a sentence is sometimes one word and that the thought is not always complete but largely depends on the meaning of preceding sentences.

Some recent writers have attempted to make "utterance" do the work of the classical term "sentence". But this does not seem fully justified because the two terms belong to different planes, one historical and the other linguistic.

The dissatisfaction with the term seems to result from the fact that accurate studies of syntax distinguishing what is grammatically self-contained in writing, and what are the corresponding structures in actual speech, have not yet been made. This deserves special systematic description.

The sentence is the immediate integral unit of speech built up of words according to a definite syntactic pattern and distinguished by a contextually relevant communicative purpose. Any coherent connection of words having an informative destination is effected within the framework of the sentence. Therefore, the sentence is the main object of syntax as part of the grammatical theory. [1]

The sentence, being composed of words, may in certain cases include only one word of various lexico-grammatical standing.

Cf.: *Good! Look! Thanks! Away! Why? Certainly.*

The actual existence of one-word sentences, however, does not contradict the general idea of the sentence as a special syntactic combination of words, the same as the notion of one-element set in mathematics does not contradict the general idea of the set as a combination of certain elements. While the word is a component element of the word-stock and as such is a nominative unit of language, the sentence, linguistically, is a predicative utterance-unit. It means that the sentence not only names some referents with the help of its word-constituents, but also, first, presents these referents as making up a certain situation, or, more specifically, a situational event, and second, reflects the connection between the nominal denotation of the event on the one hand, and objective reality on the other, showing the time of the event, its being real or unreal, desirable or undesirable, necessary or unnecessary, etc.

A sentence is a unit of speech the grammatical structure of which conforms to the laws of the language and which serves as the chief means of conveying a thought. A sentence is not only a means of communicating something about reality but also a means of showing the speaker's attitude to it. And it possesses the following properties:

- The sentence as a linguistic expression of extralinguistic reality must be actualized. Actualization of the sentence content makes predicativity an inseparable property of every sentence.
- The sentence, just like any other meaningful language unit, has a form. Every sentence has an intonation pattern.

The function of the sentence is to model some fragment of the world. This model should be referred to the original, to a fragment of the world. It means that a sentence is to be referred to reality. This property of sentence was first proposed and described by V.V. Vinogradov in the late 1930s. V.V. Vinogradov named this feature predicativity and showed that predicativity means reference of the content of the sentence to reality indicating its time in relation to the moment of speech, the degree of probability of the fact described in the sentence, and its relation to the participants of communication. [2]

## METHODS

The sentence differs from the word-group by its relatedness to objective reality – predicativity. Every sentence shows the relation of the statement to reality from the point of view of the speaker. [3]

There are three approaches to the interpretation of predicativity:

- semantic approach interprets predicativity as a reference to a certain situation of objective reality;
- logical – interprets predicativity as reference to a proposition, which is the main form of thought;
- formal-syntactical approach rests on the interpretation of predicativity as subject-predicate relations. There is no contradiction between the suggested interpretations of predication. Each of them deals with a separate side of one and the same phenomenon.

The communicative function of the sentence distinguishes it from phrases and words, which have one function – naming.

*E.g. 1) The doctor's arrival.*

*2) The doctor has arrived.*

Both examples consist of the same lexemes and render the information about one and the same person and his action. Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference between them. The 1st example does not express an event, which refers to a particular time. The 2nd example expresses an actual fact, which refers to the past. Grammatically the 2nd example is characterized by the categories of tense and mood, by means of which this structure refers to objective reality. Thus, the 1st example is a non-predicative word-group and the 2nd example – a sentence. The correlation of the thought expressed in the sentence with the reality situation of speech is called predicativity.

The functional essence of predication has hitherto been understood in linguistics as the expression of the relation of the utterance (sentence) to reality, or, in more explicit presentation, as the expression of the relation between the content of the sentence and reality. This kind of understanding predication can be seen, for instance, in the well-known "Grammar of the Russian Language" published by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, where it is stated that "the meaning and purpose of the general category of predication forming the sentence consists in referring the content of the sentence to reality". [4] Compare with this the definition advanced by A. I. Smirnitsky, according to which predication is understood as "referring the utterance to reality". [5]

Predicativity is also expressed by intonation, which is the essential feature of the sentence as a unit of speech.

In written language a sentence is a string of words standing between an initial capital letter and the mark of punctuation at the end while in spoken language a sentence is marked by special intonation. [6]

Intonation is the combination of pitch, stress and juncture with which an utterance is spoken. [7]

Being a unit of speech, the sentence is intonationally delimited. Intonation separates one sentence from another in the continual flow of uttered segments and, together with various segmental means of expression, participates in rendering essential communicative-predicative meanings (such as, for instance, the syntactic meaning of interrogation in distinction to the meaning of declaration). The role of intonation as a delimiting factor is especially important for sentences which have more than one predicative center, in particular more than one finite verb.

Cf.: 1. *The class was over; the noisy children filled the corridors.*

2. *The class was over. The noisy children filled the corridors.*

Special intonation contours, including pauses, represent the given speech sequence in the first case as one compound sentence, in the second case as two different sentences (though, certainly, connected both logically and syntactically).

## DISCUSSION

The structural types of sentences do not have connections with any special meanings. Yet if we take a sentence and start changing its structure, we may observe that the sentence received as a result of transformations possess some common and altering meanings.

Cf.: John will come tomorrow.

Will John come tomorrow?

Come tomorrow, John!

Comparing these sentences, we can see that all of them describe one and the same event – John's arrival at a certain place. But the first sentence presents this event as a fact that is to happen, and the speaker INFORMS the listener about it. The second sentence shows that the speaker wants to know if the event will become a fact and ASKS the listener to confirm or to negate it. The third sentence also shows that the speaker demands something of the listener, this time that the listener should do so that the event should become a fact. The difference of meanings corresponds to the difference of the form of the sentences. It means that we observe here an opposition of forms reflecting a certain meaning, which corresponds to the idea of a grammatical category. The semantic basis of the category or in other words its categorical meaning is the speaker's influence upon the listener. This basis corresponds to the illocutionary meaning of speech acts. If we compare these meanings with the illocutionary classes, we can see that they reflect two most frequent classes – in formatives and directives. The first sentence embodies the informative type of speech acts and is called declarative. The other two belong to the directives and formally differentiate direction for an action (the third sentence) and has the name of imperative or direction for a special type of action – informing the speaker (the second sentence) and is termed interrogative.

A declarative sentence states a fact in the affirmative or negative form. It is generally pronounced with a falling intonation.

*Charles Dickens was born at Landport, Portsmouth. (Laing)*

*They don't want anything from us – not even our respect. (Douglas)*

An interrogative sentence expresses a question, i.e. a request for information. It is connected with an answer, forming together a dialogue unity.

There are four kinds of questions:

- a) General questions
- b) Special questions
- c) Alternative questions

d) Disjunctive questions.

a) General questions require the answer *yes* or *no* and are spoken with a rising intonation. They are formed by placing part of the predicate, i.e. the auxiliary or modal verb before the subject of the sentence.

*Do you like painting?*

*Can you speak German?*

b) Special questions begin with an interrogative word and are spoken with a falling intonation. The order of words is the same as in general questions, but the interrogative word precedes the auxiliary verb.

*Where do you study?*

When the interrogative word is the subject of the interrogative sentence or an attribute to the subject, the order of words is that of a statement, i.e. no inversion is used.

*Who lives in this room?*

*Whose book is on the desk?*

c) Alternative questions indicate choice and are spoken with a rising intonation in the first part and a falling intonation in the second part.

*Do you live in town or in the country?*

e) Disjunctive questions require the answer *yes* or *no* and consist of an affirmative statement followed by a negative question, or a negative statement followed by an affirmative question. The first part is spoken with a falling intonation and the second part with a rising intonation.

*You speak English, don't you?*

*You are not tired, are you?*

An imperative sentence serves to induce a person to do something, so it expresses a command, a request or an invitation. As Hall stated that imperative sentence commands and requests use the simple form of the verb without any stated subjects. [8]

Commands are characterized by a falling tone.

*Come to the blackboard!*

*Stop talking!*

Requests and invitations are characterized by a rising intonation.

*Open the door, please!*

*Do come to see me tomorrow.*

An exclamatory sentence expresses some kind of emotion or feeling. It often begins with the words *what* and *how*, it is always in the declarative form, i.e. no inversion takes place. It is generally spoken with a falling intonation.

*What a lovely day it is!*

*How wonderful!*

## CONCLUSION

The sentence is the smallest unit of speech that expresses a thought, both orally and in writing. In oral form, the sentence pronounced by the sound up and down and hard soft, interrupted by pauses, and ended with a final intonation followed by a silence that prevents sound assimilation or fusion or other phonological processes. In the form of writing, a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a dot (.), question mark (?), or an exclamation mark (!), And in it can be included punctuation such as a comma (,), colon (:), split (-), and spaces.

The center of predication in a sentence of verbal type (which is the predominant type of sentence-structure in English) is a finite verb. The finite verb expresses essential predicative meanings by its categorical forms, first of all, the categories of tense and mood (the category of person, as we have seen before, reflects the corresponding category of the subject). However, proceeding from the principles of sentence analysis worked out in Russian school of theoretical syntax, in particular, in the classical treatises of V.V. Vinogradov, we insist that predication is effected not only by the forms of the finite verb connecting it with the subject, but also by all the other forms and elements of the sentence establishing the connection between the named objects and reality, including such means of expression as intonation, word order, different functional words. Besides the purely verbal categories, in the predicative semantics are included such syntactic sentence meanings as purpose of communication (declaration – interrogation - inducement), modal probability, affirmation and negation, and others, which, taken together, provide for the sentence to be identified on its own, proposemic level of lingual hierarchy.

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