

WORD ORDER & FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE

English Morphosyntax III

Jakub Sláma

jslama@kaj.zcu.cz

Relative



word order is

WORD ORDER IN ENGLISH

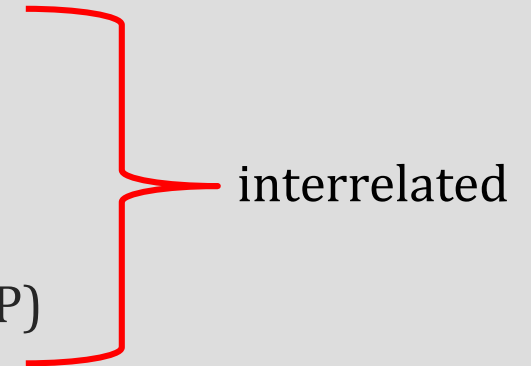
- **word order** has four basic functions

1. as a grammatical device

2. as a semantic factor

3. as a device of expressing emotion and emphasis

4. as a device of **functional sentence perspective** (FSP)



interrelated

1. WO AS A GRAMMATICAL DEVICE

- word order signals the **sentence type**

He did do it. – Did he do it?

How fast can she type? – How fast she can type!

We may live to see it. – May we live to see it!

- the position of a word in a sentence indicates its **syntactic function**

Peter likes Mary. – Mary likes Peter.

She will pick up her strength naturally.

Naturally she will pick up her strength.

1. WO AS A GRAMMATICAL DEVICE

- SVO: *I like cats.*
- the determiner precedes the head noun and modifiers & adjectival modifiers precede their head nouns: *a **cute cat***
- ordering of adverbials:

*He went **there yesterday.***

rather than **He went **yesterday there.***

- ordering of modifiers within NPs:

a lovely little wooden cabin

rather than **a wooden little lovely cabin*

1. WO AS A GRAMMATICAL DEVICE

- SVO: *I like cats.*

- the determiner precedes the head
adjectival modifiers precede the head

- ordering of adverbials:

*He went **there***

rather than **He went*

- ordering of modifiers within NPs:

a lovely little wooden cabin

rather than **a wooden little lovely cabin*

exceptions: the SV inversion, e.g.

in questions:

Do you like cats?

in conditionals:

Had I known you were waiting outside,

I would have invited you to come in.

with initial negation:

Never have I seen such a cute cat.

1. WO AS A GRAMMAR

exceptions, e.g.:
something new
the president elect
from times immemorial
flowers galore
the house ablaze
the people involved

- SVO: *I like cats.*
- the determiner precedes the head noun and modifiers & adjectival modifiers precede their head nouns: *a cute cat*
- ordering of adverbials:

He went there yesterday.

rather than **He went yesterday there.*

- ordering of modifiers within NPs:

a lovely little wooden cabin

rather than **a wooden little lovely cabin*

1. WO AS A GRAMMAR

- SVO: *I like cats.*
- the determiner precedes the head
adjectival modifiers precede their
- ordering of adverbials:

*He went **there** yesterday.*

rather than **He went yesterday **there**.*

- ordering of modifiers within NPs:

a lovely little wooden cabin

rather than **a wooden little lovely cabin*

SVOA rather than SVAO:

**They built very quickly the house.*

adverbs after the first auxiliary:

*The town has **always** been popular.*

adverbs of frequency:

*I am **rarely** in the city center.*

I rarely go to the city center.

1. WO AS A GRAMMATICAL DEVICE

- SVO: *I like cats.*
- the determiner precedes the head
adjectival modifiers precede their
- ordering of adverbials:

*He went **there** ye*

rather than **He went yesterday there.*

- ordering of modifiers within NPs:

a lovely little wooden cabin

rather than **a wooden little lovely cabin*

**usually evaluation – size – shape –
color – origin – material – purpose**

*your long, red, Chinese, silk curtains
a large oak dining table*

2. WO AS A SEMANTIC FACTOR

- the change of position of one element may bring about the change in the meaning of the whole sentence
- especially concerns the varying scope of quantifiers & adverbials

*Before supper the children **mostly** watch TV.*

*Before supper **mostly** children watch TV.*

*I **really** don't care. – I don't **really** care.*

***Clearly**, he heard what she said. – He heard **clearly** what she said.*

3. WO AS A DEVICE FOR EXPRESSING EMOTION AND EMPHASIS

- fronting as a device of emotion, emphasis or irony:

His son I have met. (contrastive)

Really good meals they serve at the hotel.

An utter fool she made me feel.

Wilson, his name is.

- with inversion (triggered by negators or intensifiers):

So excited was the dog that they had to calm him down.

4. WO AS A DEVICE OF FSP

- FSP = functional sentence perspective (aktuální větné členění)
- the basic idea: a given/known piece of information (**theme**) tends to be expressed first, new information (**rheme**) tends to be expressed at the end of a sentence:

*There was **a hand in the darkness**, and **it** held **a knife**.*

***The knife** had **a handle of polished black bone**, and **a blade finer and sharper than any razor**. If **it** sliced you, **you might not even know you had been cut, not immediately**.*

4. WO AS A DEVICE OF FSP

- **communicative dynamism**: every meaningful element pushes the communication forward
- **the degree of CD** = the extent to which an element contributes towards the development of the communication
- **basic distribution of CD**: the sentence elements manifest a gradual rise in CD in the direction from the beginning to the end of the sentence \approx **the principle of end focus**
- the degrees of CD are determined by the interplay of **FSP factors: linear modification (word order), semantic structure, context and intonation**

DEVIATIONS FROM GRAMMATICAL WO

- **the principles of end weight and of end focus:**

*they pressed **on him** **the traditional cooked ham and rich fruit cake***

*Mrs Pitt-Cowley looked **for a moment** **slightly embarrassed***

- **inversion with initial adverbials:**

Behind the ornaments were two colored photographs.

- **fronted objects:**

One of these, Buckhorn, Hazel knew well.

THEMATIC PROGRESSIONS

1. simple linear thematic progression

the rheme becomes **the theme** of the following clause:

On the cage** there is **a label

that states simply...

***Inside the cage** there sits **a small squirrel**.*

***It** has **black feet** and **it** comes **from Africa**.*

THEMATIC PROGRESSIONS

2. progression with **constant theme**

***Inside the cage** there sits **a small squirrel**.*

***It** has **black feet** and **it** comes **from Africa**.*

***It** has **no name**.*

*For the zoologist **it** presents **an immediate challenge**.*

THEMATIC PROGRESSIONS

3. progression with **derived themes**

***The legs** are too long, **the arms** are too short and **the feet** are rather strange. **The skin** is virtually naked.*

THEMATIC PROGRESSIONS

4. thematic progression with **split rheme**

*Old English nouns, pronouns, and adjectives had **four cases**. **The nominative case** was used for the subject, the complement of linking verbs like beon 'be', and direct address. **The accusative case** was used for direct object, the object of some prepositions and certain adverbial functions like those of the italicized expressions of duration and direction in Modern English. **The genitive case** was used for most of the meanings of Modern English 's and of phrases, the object of a few prepositions and of some verbs, and certain adverbial functions. **The dative case** was used for the indirect object and the only object of some verbs, the object of many prepositions and a variety of other functions that can be grouped together loosely as adverbial.*

× NOT ENOUGH TO DEFINE THE TEXT

*I sent **a letter** to my friend. **Letters** in Harry Potter were carried by **owls**. **Owls** are birds from the order Strigiformes, which includes about 200 species of mostly solitary and nocturnal birds of prey typified by an upright stance, a large, broad head, binocular vision, binaural hearing, sharp talons, and feathers adapted for silent flight. **Flight 22** is off to **Honolulu**. **Honolulu** is capital of Hawaii.*

STANDARDS OF TEXTUALITY

- intentionality
- acceptability
- informativity
- situationality
- intertextuality
- cohesion & coherence

COHESIVE DEVICES

1. **lexical** – repetition of words; the use of synonyms, antonyms, meronyms...
2. **grammatical**, e.g.
 - a) reference: *I used to have **the key**. But I lost **it**.*
 - b) substitution: *Nice **teapots!** I'll take **one**.*
 - c) the unity of tense
 - d) syntactic parallelism
3. **junction** – conjunctions, conjuncts – only those intersentential!

COHESIVE DEVICES

1. **lexical** – repetition of words; the use of synonyms, antonyms, meronyms...

2. **grammatical**, e.g.

a) reference: *I used to have **the key**. But I lost it.*

b) substitution: *Nice **teapots!** I'll take **one**.*

c) the unity of tense

d) syntactic parallelism

3. **junction** – conjunctions, conjuncts – only those

You ask me if I can forgive myself? I can forgive myself for many things. I can forgive myself for where I left him. I can forgive myself for what I did. But I will not forgive myself for the year that I hated my daughter, when I believed her to have run away, perhaps to the city.

ANY QUESTIONS?

