18.   The Components of a Question and a Negative Sentence

Summary

A statement or negative statement can be analysed as an explicit or implicit reply to a question, for which it has the same topic or {subject}. In a question, that part marked by {query} is therefore the comment and the rest is the topic. In a negative statement, that part marked by the {not} is the comment and the rest is the topic. A question and its replies can be categorised as either verbal, nominal, complementary, adverbial, or gerundial. A verbal sentence queries, asserts, or denies an action or state, represented by a {verb}, or queries, asserts, or denies the existence of an entity.

A nominal sentence queries, asserts, or denies the connection of a {noun} with an action or state. The {noun} whose connection is asserted, queried, or denied is the focus of the sentence and becomes its {verb}. The rest of the sentence, being the topic, is the {subject}. If the {noun} is an {object}, it may be substituted by another {noun}.

A complementary sentence queries, asserts, or denies that a sentence places an {object} in a state or condition, or reverses the state or condition of an {object}. The {complement} is the focus of the sentence and the {subject}, {verb}, and {object} are the topic.

For most sentences, the {complement} of a complementary sentence is definite. It is indefinable in the case of a preventive, a cessative and a supposition, proposal, perception, or communication concerning an event which has not occurred.

An adverbial sentence queries, asserts, or denies a state or condition of the {verb} of another sentence. A gerundial sentence queries, asserts, or denies a state or condition of the {subject} of another dynamic sentence.

The response to an enquiry word question expressly or implicitly denies an alternative response. A "yes/no" question can therefore be regarded as a form of an enquiry word question with only two possible replies. Many syntactic constructions can be best understood if {not} and {query} are interpreted as {verb}.

Terms Defined or Introduced

Verbal sentence, nominal sentence, substitution sentence, complementary sentence, reversal sentence, reversal, enquiry word, gerundial sentence.

Background

The grammatical terms formulated in Chapters 16. and 17. were devised to describe the discourse and functional analysis of non-negative existential sentences and statements. In this chapter, we consider how they apply to questions and negative sentences. To summarise the position we have reached, a non-negative statement has the structure {subject – verb – object – complement – adverbial}, where:

- A {verb} is the unique action or state which a sentence describes.
- A {subject} is that which is engaged in the action or undergoes the state described by the {verb}. {subject} and {verb} are a semantic unit.
- An {object} is that which the sentence places in a state or relationship.
- A {complement} is the state or relationship into which the sentence places the {object}.
- An {adverbial} is a non-restrictive qualifier of a {verb}.

A non-negative existential sentence has the structure {object – verb}, where the {verb} places the {object} is a state of existence, and is therefore also the {complement}.

Elements other than {verb}, {complement}, and {adverbial} are classed as {noun}. They include not only {subject} and {object}, but also further elements which may or may not be present, and may or

may not be identified with {subject} or {complement}. These are {agent}, {instrument}, {location}, {beneficiary}, {base}, {participant}, {target}, {competence}, {recipient}, and {causer}. In addition, the functions of some {noun} are identified with discourse elements: {definite}, {select}, {indefinite}, {circumstance}, and {indefinable}.

Interrogation and negation place the element {query} or {not} in front of one element of a sentence. {query} questions whether the sentence applies to that element, and {not} denies that it does. The absence of either means that the sentence is a statement. Questions can take two forms, a "yes"/"no" question and an enquiry word question:

> "Did he go to London today?" "Where did he go today?"

In discourse terms a "yes"/"no" question is a more constricted version of an enquiry word question. It could be paraphrased:

> "Where did he go today, to London not to London?"

and has two possible answers: "He went/did not go to London today," while an enquiry word question:

> "Where did he go today?"

has multiple possible answers both positive and negative:

> "Today he went to London, not Birmingham"; or
> "Today he went to Birmingham, not London."

In both cases, the question has the discourse form {definite – query – select} and the functional form {agent/object – move – query – locative – location}.

We have also noted that the elements before {query} are the topic, concerning which the question is asked, and that those after {query} are the enquiry. The basis of this chapter is that questions and their answers can be categorised by that part which is the topic and that part which is the enquiry:

- In verbal questions, the enquiry is the {verb} and the topic is its {subject}:

    "Did he go to London today (instead of staying at home)?"
    "What did he do today?"

- In nominal questions, the enquiry is a {noun} and the topic is the rest of the sentence including the {verb}:

    "Did John go to London today (instead of Mary)?"
    "Who went to London today?"

- In complementary questions, the enquiry is the {complement} and the topic is the rest of the sentence, including the {verb} and {noun}:

    "Did he go to London today (instead of to Birmingham)?"
    "Where did he go today?"

- In adverbial questions, the enquiry is the {adverbial} and the sentence is the topic:

    "Did he go to London today (instead of yesterday)?"
    "When did he go to London?"

- In gerundial questions, the enquiry is the state or condition of the {subject} and the sentence is the topic:

    "Why did he go to London today?" "He had some business there."

Incorporating the question in the response shows that it is a {gerund} and not an {adverbial}:

"Having some business in London, he went there today."

We see that in a verbal question and its possible replies: "Yes"/"No, he stayed at home," the topic and the subject of the grammatical verb coincide. In the other categories of question and response, they do not. Following the analysis in Chapter 1. (Focus), we can say that the element which is being queried, asserted, or denied (unless it is the verb) is in focus:

"Was his trip today to London?" "Yes"/"No, to Birmingham."
"Was his trip to London today?" "Yes"/"No, it was yesterday."
"Was his trip to London today for business or pleasure?" "Business"/"Pleasure."

The representation of a verbal sentence in component terms places the {query} or {not} in front of the {verb}:

{subject – query/not – verb – object – complement – adverbial}.

A nominal sentence can be represented with the {query} or {not} in front of the {noun} which is the focus of the sentence. For example, if it is the {object}:

{subject – verb – query/not – object – complement – adverbial}.

In a complementary sentence, the {query} or {not} are front of the {complement}:

{subject – verb – object – query/not – complement – adverbial}.

In an adverbial sentence, the {query} or {not} in front of the {adverbial}:

{subject – verb – object – complement – query/not – adverbial}.

In gerundial sentence, the {gerund} is a separate sentence which is itself queried, asserted, or denied:

{subject – verb – object – complement – query/not – gerund}.

We have also noted that, while a definite element can occur in any sentence and in any position in a sentence, an indefinite element cannot occur in a question or negative sentence; we cannot question or deny an entity whose identity is not known. What we can do is to question or deny whether a entity exists, such an entity being {indefinable}:

"Have we any bananas today?"; "We have no bananas today."

In the rest of this chapter, we explore these constructions further.

Verbal Sentence

If a {verb} is questioned, the action or state that the sentence describes is questioned:

"Did he clean the leaves out of the drain?" "Did Mary lend the book to John?"

The sentence can be interpreted as placing the element {query} in front of the {verb}. It has two possible answers, "yes" or "no". If the answer is "yes", it is equivalent to a statement that the action or state occurred, which can be expressed by a sentence which has the {verb} without the {query}. If the answer is "no", it is equivalent to a denial that the action or state occurred, in which the {verb} is preceded by {not}:

"He cleaned/did not clean the leaves out of the drain."
"Mary lent/did not lend the book to John."

Such a question and negative sentence can therefore be summarised as:

{subject – query/not – verb – object – complement}.

The {subject}, {object}, {complement}, and other elements remain the same between the question, the "yes" reply, and the "no" reply. We may call such a question and negative sentence a *verbal question* and a *verbal negative*. Including in the definition a non-negative answer to a verbal question, we may refer to them as a *verbal sentence*. The same analysis applies if the question and negative are not definite, as in the above examples, but indefinite:

"Did he clean leaves out of the drain?" "He cleaned/did not clean leaves out of the drain."
"Did Mary lend a book to John?" "Mary lent/did not lend a book to John."

If the poser of a verbal question is expecting a particular "yes" or "no" answer, it may be formulated as a tag question:

"He did clean the leaves out of the drain, didn't he?"
"Many didn't lend the book to John, did she?"

In addition, the action or state of a sentence can be questioned in such a way that the possible answer is not "yes" or "no", but any {verb} suitable for the {subject}:

"What did Mary do?" "She lent/did not lend the book to John."
"What happened to the book?" "It was lent/not lent to John by Mary."
"What happened to John?" "He was lent/not lent the book by Mary."

Other possible replies to the first question are: "She gave the book to John." "She went for a walk" "She wrote a letter." However, a possible reply is not "yes" or "no". Both types of verbal question are inviting the respondent to select from a range of possible answers. For a "yes"/"no" question, that range is limited to two. In discourse terms, we may represent the question and replies as:

{definite – query – select} {definite – select}/{definite$_1$ – not – definite$_2$}

if the {verb} and {object} are definite, and

{definite – query – indefinable}
{definite – indefinite – circumstance}/{definite – not – indefinable}

if the {verb} and {object} are indefinite.

In verbal negative sentences, {verb} means the action or state which does not apply to the {subject}: "not clean", "not lend/lent". {object} means that which is not in a state or relationship: "leaves", "book". {complement} means the state or relationship in which the {object} is not: "out of the drain", "lent to John". For an indefinite negative, {complement} means the indefinable state or relationship in which the {object} does not exist:

"There were no leaves cleaned out of the drain".
"There was no book lent by Mary to John."

These are evidently an extension of the non-negative meanings of the same terms {verb}, {object}, and {complement}. For many languages, this extension of meaning is an acceptable means of expressing negative sentences:

German: "Wir fahren morgen nicht ans Meer." "We're not driving to the sea tomorrow."
[We drive tomorrow not to-the sea.][1]

Arabic: "lam ʔaltaqi bihi min qablu" "I have not met him before."
[Not I-met with-him before.][2]

---

[1] Durrell, 237.
[2] Badawi et al, 473.

Indonesian:
> "Mereka tidak menolong kami." "They didn't help us." [They not help us.][3]

{not} in these negative sentences is treated as an adverbial. However, it has a quite different purpose from that of an adverbial to a non-negative sentence, which we noted in the previous chapter is either an additional sentence (an {adverbial}):

> "He cleaned the leaves out of the drain thoroughly;"
> "Mary generously lent the book to John;"

or a {circumstance} which identifies an {indefinite} element:

> "He cleaned leaves out of the drain twice a week;"
> "Mary lent a book to John which she no longer needed."

In addition, in indefinite negatives, an adverbial {not} is often combined with an article which marks the {object} as indefinable:

> French: "Il n'a pas de montre." "He has no watch." [He not has any watch.][4]

> Greek: "Κανένα του βιβλίο δεν άξιζε." "No book of his was worth anything."
> [Any his book not was-worth.][5]

> Arabic: "lam yuktašaf ḥattā l-ʔāna ʔayyu ʕilājin"
> "No treatment has up to now been discovered."
> [Not was-discovered up-to now any treatment.][6]

> Hindi: "tālāb mẽ kuch pānī nahī̃ hai" "There's no water in the tank."
> [Tank-in any water not is.][7]

As an alternative approach, other languages perceive that a negative sentence does not in fact express an action or state of the {subject}, but a denial of that action or state. Accordingly, the {verb} is the element {not} which expresses that denial, and the grammatical verb is a {noun} which expresses the action or state which is denied. This construction is found with some verb-initial languages such as Welsh and Maori, and with languages such as Finnish:

> Welsh: "Nid wyf i yn byw yn y wlad." "I do not live in the country."
> [Not am-I in living in the country.]
> "Nid oes dim car gennyf i." "I haven't a car." [Not there-is no car with me.][8]

> Finnish: "Minä en osta taloa." "I shall not buy a/the house." [I not buy house (partitive)].
> "Maasaa ei ole hallitusta." "The country has no government."
> [Country-in not is government (partitive)][9]

> Maori: "Kāhore i a Hone taku wati." "Hone does not have my watch."
> [Not at the Hone my watch.]
> "Kāhore ōu hoa i te whare kura." "Your friends are not at the school."
> [Not your friends at the school.][10]

A residue of such a {not} {verb} is found in Irish, which is also verb-initial. Certain Irish verbs have a "dependent" form which is only used after negatives, interrogatives, relative pronouns, and the

---

[3] Sneddon, 195.
[4] Fraser & Squair, 237.
[5] Holton et al, 421.
[6] Badawi et al, 474.
[7] McGregor, 43.
[8] Bowen & Rhys Jones, 25, 43.
[9] Karlsson, 83.
[10] Foster, 101.

equivalent of "that". Such a dependent grammatical verb can be translated by placing "that" in front of it. The following are non-negative and negative examples:

"Gheobhair-se litir amáireach is dócha." "You will probably get a letter tomorrow."
[You-will-get letter tomorrow is probable.]
"Ní bhfaighir aon tobac uaim-se." "You will not get any tobacco from me."
[Not that-you-get any tobacco from-me.]

Similarly, the Irish {query} particle "an" is treated as a {verb} and followed by a "dependent" form of the grammatical verb. The following examples are a statement and a question:

"Chífead Mícheál ar maidin." "I shall see Michael in the morning."
[I-shall-see Michael on morning.]
"An bhfacaís i n-aon áit iad?" "Have you seen them anywhere?"
[Query that-you-have-seen in any place them?][11]

The function of {not} as a {verb} can be seen in a prevented sentence (Chapter 15.):

"We prevented them from coming."

In this example, a {causer} "we" effects the non-arrival of "them", and such an effect can be represented by the element {not}. The sentence can be summarised as:

{causer – agent – not – indefinable}.

Similarly, the function of {query} as a {verb} appears in an interrogation sentence (Chapter 15.):

"She asked whether they would come."

In this example, an {agent} "she" executes an enquiry into the possible arrival of an object "they", and such an enquiry can be represented by the element {query}. The sentence can be summarised as:

{agent – query – object – indefinable}.

The concepts of a verbal question and verbal negative apply equally to an existential sentence:

"Is there a fly in the ointment?" "There is/is not a fly in the ointment."

We have seen that the {verb} of such a sentence is the state or condition of existence: "there is in the ointment" and the {object} is that to which it applies "a fly". In the above examples, this {verb} is questioned or negated, and the existential question and negative can be summarised as:

{object – query/not – verb}.

The question or negation make the indefinite {object} an {indefinable}.

A comparison is always a verbal sentence. A comparison between two quantities therefore compares two {verb}:

"My father lived five years longer than my mother;"
"These apples are 50 pence cheaper than those;"

as does a comparison between two actions or states:

"She rode like a whirlwind." "He lives as though there were no tomorrow."
"He was as rich as Croesus." "He was as rich as if he had won the lottery."

---

[11] Dillon & Ó Crónín, 86, 177, 179.

 2009

Nominal Sentence

The purposes of interrogation and negation are different when applied to a {noun}. In that case, the sentence is not questioning or denying the action or state of the sentence, but questioning or denying that it applies to one element. That can be the {subject}, {object}, or any other element which is not the {verb}, or (as we shall see) the {complement}, {adverbial}, or {gerund}. Since the elements in a sentence which are not the {verb} are {noun}, we may call this sentence a *nominal question* and *nominal negative*. One form is a sentence which questions or denies that the grammatical verb applies to a known entity:

"Was it Mary who lent the book the John?" "It was/was not Mary…"
"Was it a book which Mary lent to John?" "It was/was not a book…"

In this instance, the answer is either "yes" or "no". It will noticed that the answer is a focus sentence, and could be expressed:

"The lender of the book to John was/was not Mary."
"What was lent by Mary to John was/was not the book."

Each of these sentences could be an answer to a broader question, whose answer is not "yes" or "no", but any entity which can fulfil that function, whether definite or indefinite:

"Who lent the book to John?" "Mary, not Denise"; "a girl I know", etc.
"What did Mary lend to John?" "the book, not the paper"; " a book he wanted to read", etc.

These questions again have a focus construction, and could be expressed:

"The person who lent the book to John was who?"
"The thing which Mary leant to John was what?"

It is not the action or state of a grammatical verb which is being enquired into and responded about, but the identifications respectively of the {agent} and {object}. To refer to them, we may use the term *nominal sentence*. The difference between a verbal and nominal sentence is therefore not grammatical, but functional. A verbal sentence is one which questions, states, or denies the action or state of the sentence. A nominal sentence is one which questions, states, or denies, an entity connected to the action or state. Its component structure can be understood as:

{query/not – subject – verb – object – complement} and
{subject – verb – query/not – object – complement}.

Alternatively, we may say that the {subject} are "the person who lent the book to John" and "the thing which Mary leant to John", and the corresponding {verb} are "was who?" and "was what?". The answers are a {verb} in the form of:

"was Mary"; "was not Denise"; "was a girl I know", etc;
"was the book"; "was not the paper", "was a book he wanted to read", etc.

Such a component structure is expressed as:

{subject – query/not – verb}.

This is of course the same grammatical structure as we have already defined for a verbal sentence, but without the {object} or {complement}. It is also the grammatical structure which we suggested for a sentence in focus in Chapter 16. (The Subject as Topic). On that interpretation, when a sentence is in focus, whether a question or its reply, the {verb} is not the grammatical verb but the element in focus, and the {subject} is the remainder of the sentence.

Nominal sentences do not only relate to {subject} and {object}, but to all {noun} functions other than a {complement}. For instance, a {noun} can be an {instrument}:

"How did Mary lend the book?" "Through the College library service."

or a {causer}:

"Why did Mary lend the book?" "Because John asked for it."

or a {competence}:

"In what capacity did Mary lend the book?" "As librarian."

or an {attribute}:

"How many books did Mary lend to John?" "Six."

or a {select}:

"What did Mary say?" "That she had let the book to John."

or a {definite}:

"What did Mary object to doing?" "Lending the book to John."

or an {indefinable}:

"What does Mary want to do?" "Lend the book to John."

Each of these questions can be constructed as focus sentences with the enquiry word as {verb} and the rest of the sentence as {subject}:

"The means by which Mary lent the book was how?"
"The reason that Mary lent the book was why?"
"The capacity in which Mary lent the book was what?"
"The statement Mary made was what?"
"Mary disliked doing what?"
"Mary wants to do what?"

An alternative meaning of "how?" is "with what effect?":

"How did Mary lend the book?" "Politely." which can be interpreted as:

"The lending of the book by Mary had what effect?" "A polite one."

We noted in the previous section that Irish treats verbal {not} and {query} as {verb}. It also treats nominal enquiry words as {verb} by following them with a relative clause:

"Cé bheidh ag teacht?" "Who will be coming?" [Who that-will-be at coming?]
"Cá bhfuil tigh Dhomhnaill Uí Chonaill?" "Where is Daniel O'Connell's house?"
[Where that-is house of-Daniel O'Connell?][12]

Similarly, In Hausa, nominal enquiry words are followed by the relative form of the grammatical verb, indicating that it is in fact a {noun}:

"Mề ya fã`ru?" "What happened?" [What which-did happen?][13]

Maori possesses two {not} verbs, one nominal and one verbal. In the previous section we noted the verbal {not}, "kāhore". The nominal {not} is "ēhara":

---

[12] Dillon & Ó Crónín, 59, 189.
[13] Kraft & Kirk-Greene, 114.

"Ēhara tēnā i taku pukapuka." "This is not my book." [Not this at my book.]
"Ēhara a Hari i te minita." "Hari is not the minister." [Not the Hari at the minister.][14]

There is also a difference between the discourse structure of a verbal and nominal sentence. If the {verb} of both types of sentence are definite and non-negative, they {select} an entity from a range of possible definite entities. If they are definite and negative, they deny a connection with the {subject}:

"Did Mary lend the book to John?" "Yes"/"No".
"What did Mary do?" "She lent the book to John."
"What did Mary not do?" "She did not lend the book to John."

Such a sentence has the discourse structure:

{definite – query – select} {definite – select}/{definite$_1$ – not – definite$_2$}.

If the {verb} of both types of sentence are indefinite and non-negative, they select an {indefinite} entity from a range of possible indefinite entities according to a {circumstance}:

"Did Mary lend a book to John?" "Yes, she lent him a book which he wanted."
"What did Mary do?" "She lent John a book which he wanted."
"Was it a book which Mary lent to John?" "Yes, one he wanted."
"What did Mary lend to John?" "A book which he wanted."

Such a sentence has the discourse structure:

{definite – query – select} {definite – indefinite – circumstance}.

However, a {verb}can be indefinite and negative only in the case of a verbal sentence:

"Did Mary lend a book to John?" "No."
"What did Mary not do?" "She did not lend John a book."

As we noted, this has the structure:

{definite – query/not – indefinable}.

The {verb} of a nominal sentence cannot be indefinite and negative:

*"Was it a book which Mary did not lend to John?"
*"What did Mary lend to John?" "No book."/"She lent John nothing."

The sentences "No book" or "She lent nothing to John" cannot be the answer to "What did Mary lend to John?", since that question assumes that a loan has occurred, and the replies deny that a loan has occurred. They can only be the replies to the verbal questions:

"Did Mary lend John anything?" "Did Mary lend John a book?"

Of course, in an actual discourse the exchange "What did Mary lend to John?" "She lent John nothing" can occur, but only because the respondent disputes the premise of the question.

Complementary Sentence

Our component description of a sentence is {subject – verb – object – complement}, supported by other {noun} elements such as {instrument}, {recipient}, and {causer}. For many sentence types, it is possible for the {complement} to be queried, asserted, or denied independently of the {object} or {verb}. Such a sentence queries, asserts, or denies that a {verb} places an {object} in a state or condition described by a {complement}. For example:

---

[14] Foster, 102.

"What colour did he paint the fence?" "Green, not brown."
"Where did she put the vase?" "On the shelf, not under it."
"What sort of roofs were the houses given?" "Slate, not tiles."
"What did you notice about the house?" "It was old, not new."
"What did they say about the play?" "It was entertaining, not boring."
"Did Jack deny that he stole the tarts?" "Yes"/"No".
"To whom did Mary lend the book?" "John, not Philip."
"Who was appointed Prime Minister?" "Lloyd George, not Asquith."

Such a sentence is a *complementary sentence*. Its comment is the {complement} and the topic is the {subject}, {verb}, and {object}. A negative complementary sentence is one which states that a state or condition does not apply to the {object}. We have already noted one example (Chapter 15., The Negative Perception Sentence; The Negative Communication Sentence):

"What did John see about the book?" "It was by Dickens, not George Eliot."
"What did Mary remember about the date of the appointment?" "It was today, not tomorrow."
"What did John say about the book?" "It was interesting, not boring."

For other sentence types, the {complement} is not queried, asserted, or denied independently of the {verb}, and a complementary sentence is therefore a verbal sentence:

"Was the door locked?" "Yes"/"No".
"Were you pleased with the play." "Yes"/"No".
"Do you want a muffin?" "Yes"/"No".

Complementary sentences can be described by means of the component elements:

{subject – verb – object – query/not – complement}

or their equivalent in functional notation, for example:

{agent – transform – object – query/not – attribute}
{agent – possession – object – query/not – recipient}.

The discourse structure of a complementary sentence is the same as that of other types of sentence, since it is the function of all comments to select one definite or indefinite entity from others:

{definite – query/not – select}/{definite – query/not – indefinable – circumstance}.

Complementary sentences can of course be negated, although such sentences rarely arise except in formal logic or jest:

"What colour did he not paint the fence?"
"Where did she not put the vase?"
"To whom did she not lend the book?"

We have noted that a complementary sentence queries, asserts, or denies that a {verb} places an {object} in a state or condition described by a {complement}. An extension of this is a sentence which reverses a previous state or condition that the {object} was in:

"He unlocked the door." "Mary withdrew her loan of the book."
"His father got him out of debt." "The soldiers were disarmed."
"He was de-selected as candidate for the election."
"She has lost her car key."

Further examples are verbs of motion from, off, or out of a location:

"Mary took the train from Cambridge to London."
"James flew back from America."
"The wind blew the chair across the lawn."

"The lorry knocked Henry off his bicycle."
"He levered the nail out of the wood with pliers."
"She pulled the chair away from the wall."

Such a sentence can be called a *reversal sentence*, and a {complement} which is reversed can be called a *reversal*. Since both the {object} and the reversal are known entities, a reversal sentences does not contain any indefinite entities, and its purpose is to state that a state or condition is reversed rather than left unchanged:

"He unlocked the door (rather than leaving it locked)."
"She withdrew the loan (rather than continuing to grant it)."
"He was de-selected as candidate (rather than remaining candidate)."
"She has lost her car key (rather than continuing to have it available)."
"James flew back from America (rather than staying there)."
"The wind blew the chair across the lawn (so that it was not where it was)."
"The lorry knocked Henry off his bicycle (so that he was no longer on it)."

The discourse structure is therefore {definite – aorist – select}. The component structure again indicates that, in consequence of the action of the verb, the {complement} does not apply to the {object}:

{subject – verb – object – not – complement}.

There are related sentences which state that the {complement} does not apply to the {object} but are not a reversal of a previous state:

"The door was unlocked." "She did not loan the book."
"He was out of debt." "The soldiers were unarmed."
"He was not a candidate for the election."
"Her car key is not to hand."
"James is not in America."
"Henry is off his bicycle."
"The nail is not in the wood."

For these sentences, the component structure is that of a verbal sentence:

{subject – not – verb\complement – object}/{subject\object – not – verb\complement}.

Another instance of a complementary sentence is a cessative, in which an agent or instrument ceases to engage in an action or state (Chapter 15., The Inchoative and Cessative Sentences):

"She stopped writing." "She stopped being happy."
"The rain stopped falling." "The weather stopped being hot."

In this case, the agent or instrument is its own {object} and the {complement} is the action or state that it is no longer engaged in. The {verb} is the act of cessation:

{subject\object – verb – not – complement}.

We have so far been considering complementary sentences for a definite {complement}. Such a sentence queries, assets, or denies that an object is in a known state or condition, or in the case of a reversal sentence it states that a known state or condition is reversed. A complementary sentence may also refer to a hypothetical state or condition, which it queries, asserts or denies to apply to an {object}. An example which we have already observed is the prevention of a hypothetical event (Chapter 15., The Causative and Preventive Sentences):

"She stopped her secretary preparing a reply."
"They prevented the meeting from taking place."
"He avoided getting into debt."

In these examples, the preparation of the reply, the occurrence of the meeting, and the getting into debt are hypothetical events which do not occur because of the action of the sentence. Other examples are a supposition that an event will not arise and a proposal that an event should not occur:

> "I hope that it will not rain tomorrow."
> "I forbid you from seeing her again."

Further examples are a perception or communication that an event has not occurred:

> "The dog was not heard to bark in the night-time."
> "Sherlock Holmes remarked that the dog did not bark in the night-time."

These all have the same component structure, where {complement} is indefinable:

> {subject – verb – object – not – complement}.

Many languages indicate this construction by a suitable verb, an object, and a complement which indicates what is not occurring. Some also mark the complement with a negative:

> French: "J'évite qu'on ne me voie." "I avoid being seen."
> [I avoid that one not me sees $_{(subjunctive)}$.]^{15}

> Latin: "Atticus, nē qua sibi statua pōnerētur, restitit." (Nepos)
> "Atticus opposed having any statue raised to him."
> [Atticus, lest any to-himself statue be-placed $_{(subjunctive)}$, resisted.]

> Indonesian:
> "Bahasa Indonesia tidak dapat tidak terkena hukum perubahan."
> "Indonesian cannot avoid being subject to the laws of change."
> [Language Indonesia not can not get law change.]^{16}

Adverbial Sentence

In Chapter 17., we defined an {adverbial} as a non-restrictive qualifier to a {verb} and showed that it could be represented by a sentence of which the {verb} is the {subject} in the form of a verbal noun, and the {adverbial} is the {verb}, as in the following examples:

> "He cleaned the drain thoroughly." "His cleaning of the drain was thorough."
> "I firmly promise to pay." "My promise to pay is firm."
> "The houses were roofed in bad weather." "The roofing was done in bad weather."
> "We met on Tuesday, as announced." "Our meeting had been announced."
> "We were greatly surprised at the result." "Our surprise at the result was great."
> "She urgently needed shelter." "Her need for shelter was urgent."
> "She wrote the thesis in Cambridge." "The thesis-writing took place in Cambridge."

This representation of an {adverbial} is called an *adverbial sentence*. It assumes that that part of the sentence which is not the {adverbial} is the topic and the {adverbial} is the comment.

An {adverbial} may be queried, asserted or denied in the same way as a {verb}, {noun}, or {complement}. The nature of such a question and its reply places the {adverbial} in focus, so that the structure of an adverbial sentence is assumed:

> "Did he clean the drain thoroughly?"/"Was his cleaning of the drain thorough?" "Yes"/"No".
> "Did she urgently need shelter?"/"Was her need for shelter urgent?" "Yes"/"No".

The first of each pair of sentences is ambiguous as to what is being questioned: the need for shelter or its urgency? The second sentence of each pair, the adverbial sentence, focuses the question on the

---

^{15} Fraser & Squair, 311.
^{16} Sneddon, 202.

{adverbial}. Adverbial questions can take a "yes"/"no" form, as in the above examples, or employ an enquiry word:

> "To what extent did he clean the drain?" "Thoroughly."
> "To what extent did she need shelter?" "Urgently."

We also noted in Chapter 17. that {adverbial} fulfil a range of functions on {verb}, and classified {adverbial} by those functions. We now list the adverbial questions and responses for the functions we identified:

{locative}   "Did she write the thesis in Cambridge?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "Where did she write the thesis?" "In Cambridge."

{component}   "Did he clean the drain thoroughly?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "To what extent did he clean the drain?" "Thoroughly."

{time}   "Did we go home on Friday?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "When did we go home?" "On Friday."

{constitute}   "Could we go out while it was raining?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "How long could we not go out?" "While it was raining."

{effect}   "Does walking a mile every day keeps her fit?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "What keeps her fit?" "Walking a mile every day."

{causer}   "Was our meeting in the bar at 19.00 arranged?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "Why did we meet in the bar at 19.00?" "We had arranged to do so."

                  "Will you see him even if he comes." "Yes"/"No".
                  "What will not cause you to see him?" "His coming."

{depend}   "Is my seeing him dependent on his coming?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "On what condition should I see him?" "If he should come."

{compare}   "Does John run faster than Jim?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "How fast does John run, compared to Jim?" "Faster."

                  "Did she work hard enough to pass the exam?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "How adequate was her work?" "Enough to pass the exam."

{perceive}   "Did we hear about his passing of the exam?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "How was his passing of his exam learned about?" "We were told of it."

{communicate}   "Did we announce his passing if his exam?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "How was his passing of the exam communicated?" "We announced it."

{opinion}   "Were we surprised at his passing of the exam?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "How did we react to his passing of the exam?" "We were surprised."

{suppose}   "Was his passing of the exam expected?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "How was his passing of the exam anticipated?" "It was expected."

{propose}   "Was his passing of the exam promised?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "How was his passing of the exam anticipated?" "It was promised."

{constitute}   "Was Montmorency's sleep that of the just?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "What sort of sleep was Montmorency's?" "The sleep of the just."

{benefit}   "Did Henry cook lunch for his family?" "Yes"/"No".
                  "For whom did Henry cook lunch?" "For his family."

{attribute}   "Does the post come twice a day?" "Yes"/"No".
                     "How often does the post come?" "Twice a day."

Each of these sentences has the component structure:

{subject – verb – object – (complement) – (query/not) – adverbial}.

The "yes"/"no" sentence questions, asserts, or denies whether the {verb} is qualified by the {adverbial}. The enquiry word sentence questions, asserts, or denies what particular {adverbial} qualifies the {verb}.

Irish and Hausa again treat an adverbial enquiry word as a {verb}, followed by a relative clause in which the grammatical verb is treated as a {noun}:

"Cathain a ithis do dhinnèar?" "When do you have dinner?"
                     [When that you-eat for dinner?][17]

"Ìnā ka tàfi dà mōtàrmù?" "Where did you go with our car?"
                     [Where which-you-did go with car-the-our?][18]

Gerundial Sentence

We saw in Chapter 5. (Gerund) and Chapter 17. (Adverbials in Grammar) that a gerund expresses the state or condition of the subject of a sentence at the time that the sentence occurs:

"Being very suspicious, she hesitated to open the door."
"Full of regret, he apologised."
"He met his neighbour while walking the dog."
"She came running."
"When ripe, the apples should be picked before they fall."
"Although very young, he was elected to Parliament."
"As your solicitor, I would say 'Chance it'".
"Full of happiness, she played with great style."
"She excitedly opened the parcel."
"They went home to have dinner."

A gerund expresses in a concise manner a functional relationship between the state or condition of the subject and the action of the sentence. This functional relation may be shown by an alternative construction, which places the action of the sentence in subject position and the gerund as the verb. We may term this alternative construction a *gerundial sentence*:

"Her hesitation to open the door was because she was suspicious."
"His apology was because he was full of regret."
"His encounter with his neighbour occurred while he was walking the dog."
"Her advance was at a running pace."
"To prevent apples falling, picking should be when they are ripe."
"His election to Parliament was notwithstanding his youth."
"My advice to chance it is given as your solicitor."
"Her stylish play was because she was happy."
"Opening the parcel made her excited."
"Their going home was in order to have dinner."

A gerundial sentence answers the question:

"Why did she hesitate to open the door?"
"Why did he apologise?"

---

[17] Dillon & Ó Crónín, 59.
[18] Kraft & Kirk-Greene, 313.

"When did he meet his neighbour?"
"How did she come?"
"In what condition should apples be picked?"
"Despite what impediment was he elected to Parliament?"
"Your advice to me is given in what capacity?"
"Why did she play with great style?"
"What effect on her did opening the parcel have?"
"Why did they go home?"

A gerundial sentence is therefore one which queries, asserts, or denies that the subject of an action is in a particular state or condition when the action occurs. That state or condition fulfils a range of functions on the action {verb}, in a similar way to an adverbial sentence. In our component terminology, the gerund can be identified as a distinct element {gerund}:

{subject – verb – object – (complement) – (query/not) – gerund}.

The {subject} of a gerundial sentence is again the {verb} in the form of a verbal noun and the {verb} is the {gerund}. The difference from an adverbial sentence is that the {gerund} has a grammatical subject which is the same as that of the {verb}. {gerund} can be classified by the function that it performs on the action {verb}, in the same way as {adverbial}:

{causer}   "Being very suspicious, she hesitated to open the door."
                "Her hesitation to open the door was because she was suspicious."

                "Full of regret, he apologised." "His apology was because he was full of regret."

                "Although very young, he was elected to Parliament."
                "His election to Parliament was notwithstanding his youth."

                "They went home to have dinner." "Their going home was in order to have dinner."

{time}   "He met his neighbour while walking the dog."
                "His encounter with his neighbour occurred while he was walking the dog."

                "Apples should be picked when they are ripe."
                "Picking of apples should occur when they are ripe."

{style}   "She came running." "Her advance was at a running pace."

                "She spoke without hesitation." "Her speech was without hesitation."

{role}   "As your solicitor, I would say 'Chance it'".
                "My advice to chance it is given as your solicitor."

{effect}   "Full of happiness, she played with great style."
                "Her stylish play was because she was happy."

                "She excitedly opened the parcel." "Opening the parcel made her excited."

The range of functions performed by {gerund} is therefore less than that of {adverbial}.

A {gerund} and an {adverbial} can be combined in one sentence:

"Excited, she opened the parcel for her friend."
"She spoke without hesitation twice that day."

                2009