

September 15, 2003

## CLASSES 5-6: CATEGORIES [EXERCISES]

### GRAMMATICAL ROOTS AND GRAMMATICALITY

1. Say whether the following sentences are grammatical (acceptable) or ungrammatical by the rules of English.

- (a) That car must have been driven by a madman.
- (b) Sally is easy to talk to.
- (c) Sally is eager to talk to.
- (d) Alana sent New York a present.
- (e) Alana sent Marna a present.
- (f) The FBI surveilled the criminal.
- (g) Who is the author Jane told Krista Harold had hoped to talk to?
- (h) It was chained to the door that I saw the dog.
- (i) It was in front of the store that I met my friend.
- (j) What classes did you sleep through?
- (k) What classes did they meet between?
- (l) The British aggressed against the Americans in the Revolutionary War.

2. (a) Which of the following would be possible words of English? Of the possible forms, if they were nouns, would they take an ‘-ez’, ‘-s’, or ‘-z’ plural?

shwem  
paynk  
mansd  
runba  
melch  
fwist

(b) Which of the following would be possible words of English? Of the possible forms, if they were verbs, would they take an ‘-ed’, ‘-d’, or ‘-t’ past tense?

pwimg  
gwit  
fiemp  
aspt  
rast  
neyz

3. Which of the following sentences violate prescriptive (regulatory) rules and which violate descriptive (constitutive) rules of English? In other words, would such a sentence be judged to be not a sentence of English or simply nonstandard or uneducated?

- (a) You should have saw that movie.
- (b) I forced that he leave.
- (c) The data is not conclusive.
- (d) She was laying in the sun all day.
- (e) Have finished your homework when I get home.
- (f) Do you feel badly about the outcome?
- (g) I saw the man coming from the bank get robbed.
- (h) We thought for him to win.
- (i) There’s too many people in the elevator.
- (j) We cleaned up it.
- (k) Abe has invited you and I to come to dinner.
- (l) Wearing nothing but a sweater, the cold wind chilled me.
- (m) When the bone stuck in his throat, he stopped to breathe.
- (n) The wet campers tried to quickly light the fire.

### NOMINAL CATEGORIES

1. Identify the meaning or function of the genitive in each of the following.

Example: *the children’s education*

Answer: objective genitive

- (a) my parents’ car
- (b) the hostages’ release
- (c) the prisoners’ escape
- (d) workers’ rights
- (e) the sayings of Mao
- (f) many hours’ delay
- (g) a relative of my mother’s
- (h) the cover of the book
- (i) a member of the class
- (j) a week’s vacation
- (k) the boys’ singing
- (l) a group of reporters

2. Identify the meaning or function of the underlined definite/indefinite article in each of the following.

Example: *It was a week after Christmas*

Answer: *a* = ‘one’

- (a) The wind is whistling around the house.
- (b) The door flew open.
- (c) The gray cat from next door ran into the house.
- (d) A cat is trapped in the cellar.
- (e) Yesterday I saw a cat. The cat was wearing a collar.
- (f) I like a long-haired cat.
- (g) A cat makes a good companion.
- (h) The “Puss” I know lives across the street.

3. Discuss what each of the following words shows concerning the formal expression of gender in nouns.

Example: *George/Georgina* Answer: separate words for m/f, but also derivationally related

- (a) count/countess
- (b) dog/bitch
- (c) male nurse
- (d) king/queen/monarch
- (e) assistant
- (f) boyfriend

4. Discuss what each of the following words shows concerning the formal expression of degree in adjectives.

Example: *more sensitive* Answer: periphrastic comparison with polysyllabic word

- (a) little/less/least
- (b) \*more open/\*opener
- (c) best of health
- (d) prettiest twin
- (e) abler/ablest
- (f) late/latter/last

VERBAL CATEGORIES

1. Identify the meaning or function of the present tense in each of the following sentences.

Example: *The chemical composition of water is H<sub>2</sub>O.* Answer: timeless statement

- (a) Still waters run deep.
- (b) Classes end November 30.
- (c) Janet bites her nails.
- (d) I think he was wrong.
- (e) Anna Karenina commits suicide.
- (f) Yesterday, I'm in a store and it's held up.
- (g) The earth revolves around the sun.
- (h) We hear that you are going to be a grandparent soon.
- (i) The early bird catches the worm.
- (j) I know the answer.
- (k) Napier passes the ball to Jones.
- (l) Phyllis teaches elementary school.

2. Identify each perfect aspect in the following as continuative or resultative in meaning.

Example: *A car accident has just occurred at the corner.* Answer: resultative

- (a) I have found some money.
- (b) We have walked around the entire lake.
- (c) I have forgotten your name.
- (d) She has sneezed all morning.
- (e) Climbers have reached the summit all day.
- (f) We have known each other since we were children.

3. Identify the meaning or function of the progressive aspect in each of the following sentences.

Example: *Someone is firing a gun.* Answer: iterative activity

- (a) Rosa is getting dressed.
- (b) The child is waking up.
- (c) It's snowing.
- (d) I'm forgetting things recently.
- (e) He's writing a paper.
- (f) They're all laughing.

4. Discuss what each of the following sentences shows concerning the formal expression of the passive.

Example: *The balloons were released.* Answer: agentless *be*-passive

- (a) The kite got tangled in the tree.
- (b) The dried mud will brush off.
- (c) Your shoes need polishing.
- (d) You should brace yourself for the worst.
- (e) That is being taken care of.
- (f) The dog became confused by the loud noises.

5. Discuss what each of the following sentences shows concerning the formal expression of the subjunctive.

Example: *Heaven preserve us.* Answer: inflected subjunctive in main clause

- (a) I suggest that she take another course.
- (b) If I were going, I could take you.
- (c) I was thinking of asking you to help.
- (d) This might do the trick.
- (e) The news is probably bad.
- (f) You're right, I'm sure.

GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES

1. Name and give concrete examples of three different formal means for expressing each of the following grammatical distinctions in English on the part of speech indicated.

Example: generic number in nouns Answer: *the + N* — The cat is an independent animal.  
*a + N* — A cat is an independent animal.  
*Ns* — Cats are independent animals.

- (a) genitive case in nouns
- (b) passive voice in verbs
- (c) future tense in verbs
- (d) dative case in nouns

**2. Identify the grammatical distinction exemplified by the underlined word and explain its meaning.**

Example: person — You never can tell. Answer: 2nd person used for generic purposes

- (a) case: The building's collapse was impressive.
- (b) tense: The moon circles the earth.
- (c) aspect: We have argued since we were children.
- (d) tense: My parents are going to visit next weekend.
- (e) definiteness: I wonder where the remote control is.
- (f) number: Rattlesnakes live in the desert.
- (g) gender: Who is it at the door?
- (h) voice: The dog's tail got caught in the door.
- (i) tense: All's well that ends well.
- (j) case: You should have given Jack the opportunity to answer.
- (k) deixis: Your umbrella is there by the door.
- (l) person: She let me copy her class notes.

**3. Identify the grammatical distinction exemplified by the underlined word and explain its form.**

Example: person: He claims to have been caught in traffic.

- (a) aspect: He has forgotten her birthday.
- (b) mood: The engineer recommended that the street be widened.
- (c) gender: The audience gave the pianist a standing ovation.
- (d) definiteness: I just had a very strange experience.
- (e) mood: Let's begin the meeting.
- (f) person: We consider Pat someone to reckon with.
- (g) aspect: The alarm has been sounding for several minutes
- (h) tense: She might have seen the movie already.

**4. Name all of the grammatical distinction(s) expressed by each of the underlined forms. Then describe the means used to express this distinction (periphrasis, inflection, word order, etc.).**

- (a) He is seeing her these days.
- (b) That bicycle is mine.
- (c) Give me a hand here.
- (d) She granted the student an extension.
- (e) He had forgotten her birthday.
- (f) Janice has several boyfriends.
- (g) I was pleased to be promoted.
- (h) The weather is pleasant today.
- (i) You could make this paper better — less verbose, clearer, and more coherent.

**DISTRIBUTIONAL AND INFLECTIONAL TESTS FOR THE CATEGORY AUXILIARY**

The following words are generally considered to constitute the category of auxiliary verbs:

- the modal auxiliaries *will, shall, can, may, must*
- the "dummy" auxiliary *do*
- the primary auxiliaries *have, be*

The auxiliary verbs (or "helping verbs") cannot stand alone in a sentence, but must always be accompanied by a main verb. **Given the (incomplete) data below, determine whether auxiliaries actually belong to the category Verb, or whether they should be put into a separate category Auxiliary (Aux).** Part 1 below applies the inflectional tests for verbs to the auxiliaries. **Do they work?** Part 2 shows the syntactic distribution of auxiliaries. **First, determine what the distribution is in each case and then decide whether auxiliaries have the same distribution as verbs.** Not all auxiliaries will meet every test. **Make note of any exceptions.** You should be aware that *be, have, and do* may also function as main verbs, as in the following sentences:

- Mary is happy about her promotion.
- John has enough money to buy a car.
- Bill does the dishes every evening.

**Decide when main verb *have, be, and do* behave like auxiliaries and when they do not.**

**1. Inflection of auxiliaries**

- (a) He said that he could/would/should/might/must help.  
He had gone.He was going.He did go.
- (b) He \*cans/\*wills/\*shalls/\*mays/\*musts leave.  
He has gone.He is going.He does go.
- (c) \*maying/\*willing/\*shalling/\*musting/\*canning/being/having/doing  
been/had/done
- (e) \*to may/\*to will/\*to shall/\*to must/\*to can/to be/to have/to do

**2. Distribution of auxiliaries**

- (a) She is not taking the exam.  
John had not seen the stop sign.  
She can/will/should/might not leave.  
I have too paid.  
I can so see the ocean.  
She is so talking too much.  
He did so turn in his paper.
- (c) She isn't taking the exam.  
John hadn't seen the stop sign.  
She can't/won't/shouldn't/mightn't leave.  
She's not taking the exam.  
She'll leave tomorrow.  
He'd better leave tomorrow.

concrete noun                      adverb                      attributive adjective  
 collective noun                    degree word                    predicative adjective

It has been **ambitious** and plucky of me to attempt to describe what is indescribable, and I have **failed**, as I knew I would. But I have **discharged my duty** to my **society**; and besides, a writer, like an acrobat, must occasionally try a **stunt** that is **too** much for him. At any rate, it is worth reporting that **long** before the circus comes to town, its **most** notable performances have **already** been given. **Under** the bright lights of the finished show, a performer **need** only **reflect** the electric candle power that is directed upon him; but in the dark and dirty old training rings and in the **makeshift** cages, **whatever** light is generated, whatever excitement, whatever **beauty**, **must** come from original sources — from internal fires of professional hunger and delight, from the **exuberance** and gravity of youth. **It is the difference between planetary** light and the combustion of the stars. (White, E.B. 1934. *Essays of E.B. White*. New York: Harper and Row, p. 145)

**SUBCATEGORIZATION AND RECATORIZATION**

1. Using inflectional and distributional tests, determine the word class of the underlined words in each set (a)–(d). How do you account for the fact that the same lexical items can meet the tests for membership in more than one word class, as shown by the more usual word-class usage in (a')–(d')?

- (a) The car idles too fast.                      (a') My time is idle.  
 She emptied the trash.                      Here is an empty box.  
 They are bettering us.                      Here is a better answer.  
 The work has wearied her.                      She is very weary.  
 (b) a newspaper reporter                      (b') the Sunday newspaper  
       a seaside resort                              the beautiful seaside  
       an office building the home o ce  
       a concrete building the wet concrete
- (c) You must up the ante.                      (c') The audience stood up.  
       Down your drink!                              The child fell down.  
       The gangster was offed.                      The handle fell off.
- (d) a juvenile                                      (d') a juvenile offender  
       a private                                      a private ceremony  
       a natural                                      a natural product  
       a daily                                        a daily paper

(**Note: One can say a concrete office building but not \*an office concrete building. Why might this be?**)

2. What do the following acceptable and unacceptable forms show you about the subcategorization of adjectives in English?

smaller                                      the small plate                      the plate is small  
 \*rounder                                    the round plate                    the plate is round

- (e) Can/will/must he help?  
 Is she working?  
 Has she worked for long?  
 Hasn't he answered your letter?  
 Can't she see me now?  
 \*Has not he answered your letter?  
 \*Can not she see me now?  
 (g) He does know the answer.(contrastive emphasis)  
 She will help, if she can.

**You might also consider the following:**

- (h) She will know the answer and so will he.  
 She will know the answer and he will too.  
 John can go, but you can't.  
 Burt won't attend, but I will.  
 She will help, won't she?  
 He left, didn't he?

**WORD CLASSES**

1. Identify the word class of *up* in each of the following:

- (a) Your time is up.
- (b) She's in an up mood.
- (c) He upped the ante.
- (d) The balloons rose up int the sky.
- (e) The dog tore up the slipper.
- (f) Life is full f ups and downs.
- (g) They live just up the street from us.

2. Identify the word class of *down* in each of the following:

- (a) Alex is feeling rather down today.
- (b) Would y u write your address down for me?
- (c) On a dare, he downed the whole beer.
- (d) That was a first down, wasn't it?
- (e) The computers are down today.
- (f) He ran down the stairs.
- (g) He looked down because he was embarrassed.

3. In the passage from E.B. White's "The Ring of Time "given below, identify the words in bold as belonging to one of the following categories:

count noun                                      auxiliary  
 mass noun                                      preposition  
 abstract noun                                    determiner

transitive verb  
 copulative verb  
 intransitive verb

- \*aliver                    \*the alive cat                    the cat is alive  
 \*mainer                    the main problem                    \*the problem is main
- (b) What do the following acceptable and unacceptable forms show you about the subcategorization of nouns in English?
- |              |               |                 |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| a pencil     | the pencil    | two pencils     |
| *a wheat     | the wheat     | *two goodnesses |
| *a goodness  | the goodness  | *two goodnesses |
| *a New York  | *the New York | *two New Yorks  |
| *a trousers  | the trousers  | ?two trousers   |
| a herd       | the herd      | two herds       |
| *a cosmetics | the cosmetics | *two cosmetics  |

- (c) Given the following behavior, how would you subcategorize the noun *pastry* and the noun *bread*?
- |                          |                            |                         |                           |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| pastry                   | pastries                   | bread                   | breads                    |
| the pastry               | a pastry                   | the bread               | ?a bread                  |
| more pastry              | more pastries              | more bread              | ?more breads              |
| a piece of pastry        | five pastries              | a piece of bread        | ?five breads              |
| a large amount of pastry | a large number of pastries | a large amount of bread | ?a large number of breads |

- (d) How do you pluralize the noun *lettuce*? Is it a count noun or a mass noun? Explain.

[INCLUDED ON CLASS HANDOUT: Exercises from van Gelderen 2002: 22-24]