



Notes – Clauses and Agreement

- I. Clauses
 - a. A clause is the smallest syntactic unit that can stand alone.
 - b. A phrase is smaller but doesn't stand alone.
 - c. In everyday conversation we use phrases by themselves but infer more complete meaning from context.
- II. Predicate
 - a. One type of clause
 - b. verb + other stuff ("arguments") ("complements")
 - c. Roles
 - i. Agent
 - 1. Who does the action?
 - 2. *Harry* stole the money.
 - 3. Often will be in the subject position.
 - ii. Patient
 - 1. What is affected by the action?
 - 2. Harry stole *the money*
 - iii. Experiencer
 - 1. Who experiences the action?
 - 2. *Helen* felt ill
 - 3. Helen isn't specifically trying to "feel," it's something she's experiencing.
 - iv. Instrument
 - 1. Object used to accomplish the action?
 - 2. The *key* opens the door
 - v. Goal
 - 1. Destination
 - 2. He went to *Paris*
 - vi. Source
 - 1. Origination
 - 2. He went from *New York* to Paris
 - 3. She took the money from the *bank*.
 - vii. Location
 - 1. Place where action occurs – stationary.
 - 2. Goal and Source are more appropriate where movement is implied.
 - 3. He lives in *Burlington*
 - viii. Benefactive
 - 1. Who benefits from the action?
 - 2. He gave the present to *her*
 - 3. He cleaned the house for *them*
 - 4. Needs to be animate (the house is not a benefactive for cleaning)
 - ix. Temporal
 - 1. When?
 - 2. They arrived at *two o'clock*
 - d. to be
 - i. This is a special case.
 - ii. It does not really "take roles" but rather serves a linking purpose.
- III. Subject
 - a. Determines the agreement
 - b. Verb is the most important piece in the sentence, but the subject does have something to do: it determines agreement.
 - c. The subject is not always the *topic* of the sentence.
 - i. The details *we* left up to John ("the details" are the topic but not the subject)
 - ii. *Everybody* loves Sally ("Sally" is the topic but not the subject)

- d. Can fill various roles
 - i. Agent most typically
 - ii. Patient ("Joan was hurt by the car" or "The car hurt Joan")
 - iii. Experiencer ("He yawned")
 - iv. Instrument ("The key opened the door.")
- e. Subjects are usually noun phrases but sometimes not: "over the fence"
- f. Subjects in Questions
 - i. Just changing the order of a sentence doesn't *usually* change the subject
 - ii. "Are *you* going soon?" "You are going soon."
 - iii. Some question words are the subject (no inversion): "What is that?"
 - iv. Tag questions (tacked onto the end of the sentence: "*He* is smart, isn't he?")

IV. Agreement

- a. Expletive Subjects (it, there)
 - i. "There are two boys outside"
 - ii. (Not "There's two boys outside.")
- b. Rules for Agreement
 - i. If the verb is present, agrees with the subject noun phrase.
 - ii. Third person singular requires adding –s
 - iii. "to e" is, as usual, the exception
- c. Harder when the subject is separated from the verb
 - i. Groups: "The class is..."
 - ii. Coordinated noun phrases using "or"
 - 1. Agreement should be with the closest noun to the verb.
 - 2. "The workers or their boss is..."
- d. Other Potential Problems
 - i. all, any, such, none may be singular or plural depending on usage.
 - ii. "Is any of you people available to work late?"
 - iii. "Are any of you people available to work late?"
 - iv. In one we want singular, in one we want plural.