

ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО АВТОРА

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NEW APPROACHES TO SOME PROBLEMS OF PRESENT DAY GRAMMAR

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У статті автор висловлює власний погляд на визначення артикля як повнозначну частину мови, визначення словосполучення та деяких особливостей класифікації словосполучень.

The article under consideration runs about some new approaches to the status and the definition of the article, to the definition of the phrase and some peculiar meanings of different combinations of words. The author proves convincingly that the article is a notional part of speech and the combination of the article with other parts of speech is a phrase, though the article is not the leading element.

Morphology (*morphe* = form, *logos* = learning) is a part of grammar that studies the word, grammatical classes and groups of words, grammatical categories and the system of forms in which these categories actually exist.

Syntax (*syn* = with, *tasso* = arrange) is a part of grammar that studies the ways in which words are combined and the relations between the words in combinations (syntactic units) – phrases and sentences [1:20]. These two parts of grammar are inseparable and subjected to different changes. Only a few years ago article was considered to be a functional part of speech, a noun determiner [1:74-75; 3:272], etc. But today we are able to distinguish the following features of the article as its categorical meaning of indefiniteness; different phonological forms (a, an; the [ðə, ðɪ]); some specific functions in the sentence (attribute: *I see a book. The book is thick*; subject: *A is the indefinite article*; the predicative: *The definite article is the*; object: *We use a here, not the.*); selective combinability with other parts of speech (with nouns: *a student*; adjectives: *the poor*; numerals: *the first*; and some pronouns: *the other*)

Consulting the dictionary [4:1, 1332-1332] we are able to pick up different lexical meanings of the articles: one – *I can see a tree*; each, any, every – *How many sides has a square?*; one like – *He thinks he's a Napoleon*; the same – *They are of an age*; this, that, these, those – *Please, shut the window*; best known – *Dr. X. is the specialist in kidney trouble*; only one existing – *the sun*, etc. If we substitute A for The we change the meaning: *I see a book* (якусь), *I see the book* (цю). More than that, the article can be used independently, though very rare: *What articles do you know?* – *A* and *The*. So, we see that article is characterized by the same features as the other notional parts of speech: the lexical meaning is of primary importance, the grammatical meaning is of secondary importance. Thus we are able to prove that Article is a notional part of speech and the combination: Article + Noun (adjective, numeral, pronoun) is a phrase: *a book* = a noun phrase, *the first* = a numeral phrase, *the poor* = an adjective phrase, *the other* = a pronoun phrase.

Since the 18th century many linguists were interested in combinations of words (relations between words, how to combine words, combinability with other words as the main potential ability of the word etc.). Only at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century a true scientific theory of phrase was introduced in linguistics. It was started by three great Russian scholars: F. Fortunatov, A. Shachmatov and A. Peshkovsky. A lot of grammarians have contributed much to the development of this theory, among them H. Sweet (GB), Z. Bloomfield (the USA), V. Admony, V. Vinogradov, V. Burlakova (the USSR) and many others. They defined the phrase as any syntactically organized group of words [2:100].

In the 50s of the 20th century academician V. Vinogradov and some other linguists declared that coordinate, predicative and prepositional word combinations did not constitute phrases. Only word combinations with the leading and dependent members were phrases and the rest were only word combinations (in practical English textbooks edited by Arakin you can find “Phrases and Word Combinations”). Let's see whether they were right. In the word combination “Tom and Mary” the words are connected syntactically by means of the conjunction “and”, i.e. it is a syntactic unit. This syntactic unit can be the subject of the sentence (because it is the person modifier of the predicate):

Tom and Mary got married.

The combination “Tom and Mary” is not a sentence because it does not refer to any situation. And as far as we know there are only 2 syntactic units: phrase and sentence. We have already stated the fact, that “Tom and Mary” is a combination of 2 syntactically connected words, that is a syntactic unit = a phrase.

B. Ilish, V. Zhermunsky, I. Bloomfield, V. Burlakova and a lot of other linguists are of the opinion that phrase is any syntactically organized group of words. We agree with them, only we believe that it is necessary to add one more point: “if they are not form-markers of any grammatical category”. Form-markers cannot be phrases because they mark the grammatical categories:

“have done” is the form-marker of the Present Perfect of the verb to do;

”was speaking“ is the form-marker of the Past Continuous of the verb to speak, etc. Here the grammatical meaning is of primary importance.

Thus we are able to give the following definition: *The phrase is a combination of any syntactically connected words if they are not form-markers of any grammatical category.*

If we compare characteristics of phrase and sentence we can pick up common and different features: PHRASE	SENTENCE
Two or more syntactically connected words	One word or more syntactically connected words
A syntactic unit and accordingly a unit of language	A syntactic unit and accordingly a unit of language
Not a unit of speech	A unit of speech
Not a unit of communication	A unit of communication
Made up by people	Made up by people
Has its own form and meaning	Has its own form and meaning
Doesn't refer to situation	Characterized (according to N.Orekhova) by predicativity, intonation, contour, nucleus-headed structure, communicative aspect, logico-semantic aspect, presupposition
Deep and surface structure	Deep and surface structure
A part of the sentence	
The ICs: words	The ICs: in the simple sentence – the subject group and the predicative group; in the composite sentence – clauses; in the semi-composite sentence – semi-clauses and clauses.

Having compared the characteristics of the phrase and sentence we can come to the following conclusion: Phrase is a separate syntactic unit and its theory is not ample enough; we have added some more information to it and hope it will be quite useful.

Every lingual unit in any language has some potential ability towards combinability with other lingual units. This universal typical feature of the lingual units is called *valency*. The term was derived from chemistry by the French structuralist Z. Tesniere, who was the first to introduce verb valency in linguistics. The world known scholars V. Vinogradov and V. Admony classified valency into obligatory and non- obligatory. Obligatory valency is necessary semantically and formally and is characterized by strong government. The verb “to be” can’t be used without any extension: *I am a teacher. The students are hard working.* Only once the verb “to be” was used without any extension: *To be or not to be...* (“Hamlet” by W.Shakespeare). Combinability can be dependent upon the grammar pattern: *The classmaster is Mary’s friend. The classmaster is an old friend of Mary’s.*

According to Z. Yelmslev, V. Barkhudarov, A. Mukhin [2:20], the syntactic connections in the phrase may be:

1. The elements are of the same syntactic rank (coordination): *Books and pens.*
2. The elements are interdependent (predication): *We are students.*
3. One of the elements is leading, the rest are dependent upon it (subordination): *A very smart answer.*

Due to the character of the arrangement of the words in the phrases we can differentiate the following types of phrases:

I. **Coordinate** (the elements of the phrase are of the same syntactic rank): *Now and then.*

We can’t say that the elements are equal. They may be different semantically, structurally. As a rule the first comes the word with less syllables: *Men and women.* But due to some extralinguistic factors (politeness, respect etc.). We may change the word order in the coordinate phrase: *My mother and I.* There is no nucleus in coordinate phrases. These phrases may be very long but in fact there can be 10-15 words in one phrase: *smart blue – eyed fair – haired tall young.*

II. **Predicative** (the words are interdependent: the subject and the predicate): *They read.*

The words are interdependent grammatically and semantically. Sometimes the predicate is dependent upon the subject: *They are reading* (3rd person, plural). And sometimes the subject is dependent upon the predicate: *Is he reading?* (3rd person, singular). The predicative phrase is not a sentence, because it does not refer to any situation.

III. **Subordinate** (the leading element and the rest depending on it).

They may be classified due to the leading element. The leading element can be introduced by noun, adjective, adverb, verb, infinitive, gerund, participle I, participle II, pronoun, numeral and preposition. Accordingly we may have the following phrases:

- 1) Nounal phrases (the head word is a noun): *a fishing pond, the woman of science;*
- 2) Adjectival phrases (the head word is an adjective): *very good, nice of you;*
- 3) Adverbial phrases (the head word is an adverb): *very quickly, well enough;*
- 4) Verbal phrases (the head word is a verb): *speak English;*
- 5) Infinitival phrases (the head word is an infinitive): *to answer everything;*
- 6) Gerundial phrases (the head word is a gerund): *after meeting with her;*
- 7) Participial phrases (the head word is Participle I or Participle II): *seeing you, seen at a distance;*
- 8) Pronominal phrases (the head word is a pronoun): *all of us, the others;*
- 9) Numeric phrases (the head word is a numeral): *two of us, in twos;*
- 10) Prepositional phrases (the head word is a preposition): *not on the table but under it.*

The preposition is a part of speech that has its own lexical meaning. If we change the preposition we are sure to change the thought of the sentence. The preposition *on* and *under* indicate the rheme of the sentence (the most important information). These prepositions are logically stressed. But in the sentence *There is a book on the table* the rheme is introduced by the phrase *a book* (the indefinite article as a rule is used to indicate new, most important information). The

phrase *on the table* in this sentence is a subordinate noun phrase (the head word is *table*, the preposition *on* is not stressed).

We can see perfectly well that relations between words in the phrase are different and so we are able to distinguish the following types [5: 47-50]:

- 1) agreement: *this contest, these contests*;
- 2) government: *Collect the papers*;
- 3) adjoining (the extension is not obligatory, as a rule it is used for stylistic purpose): *she nodded, she nodded her head, she nodded her head silently*;
- 4) accumulation (from Latin “*accumulo*” – нагромаджувати): *These important interesting thick books*.

Accumulation may be found in objects and attributes of different types: *to write his friend a letter, her devoted old friend*.

The word order in such phrases is rather fixed. We can't say *important these facts* or *these and important facts*. The only right order is *these important facts*. If we change the position of one element we have to change the form or combinability of the words: *to write a letter to his friend*.

One of the most interesting problems is the variety of grammatical meaning in phrases: *world peace = peace all over the world; table lamp = a lamp for tables; silver box = a box made of silver; chair legs = the legs of the chair; river sand = sand from the river; school child = the child who goes to school; alligator shoes = shoes made of the skin of the alligator*.

Different combinations of words may have different lexical meanings: *a dining-room table = a table for making meals; a billiard-table = a table for playing billiards; a substitution table = an orderly arrangement of words for substitution; at table = having a meal; turn the tables on someone = gain a victory or a position of superiority; table-cloth = a cloth spread on a table at meal times; table-linen = table-cloths, napkins, etc. used at table; table-land = a plateau; table-spoon = a large spoon used for taking vegetables from a dish; table-talk = conversation during a meal; table-tennis = ping-pong; table-wear = dishes, knives, forks, spoons, etc. used at meals; table a motion = put a proposal forward for discussion*.

Phrases are widely used in phraseology: *swan-song = a song which, according to old stories, a swan sang just before its death; the last work before the death of a poet; Vanity Fair = the world with all its vain pleasures and pursuits; the world of fashion; life led by the idle rich or thoughtless pleasure seekers; Mother earth = the planet on which we live; toy dog = a little dog (by size)*.

Sometimes phrases are used to produce some humorous effect: *The umbrella man = a man with an umbrella; The ex-umbrella man = a man who had an umbrella (the umbrella was stolen)*.

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