THE STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO VERB COMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract
The submitted paper deals with the structural approach to verb complementation in English, both from the theoretical and practical viewpoints. The different approaches to verb complementation presented in the sources of literature dealing specifically with the issue of verb complementation are discussed in the paper. Furthermore, the necessary attention is devoted to different terminology used by linguists discussing verb complementation in their grammar books. Various verb classes, their complementation patterns and grammatical realisation of clause elements in complementation patterns are discussed too. The paper also deals with the verbs which can be used in several complementation patterns, sometimes with the difference in the meaning. The opinions of linguists are supported by authentic example sentences.

Key words: *verb complementation, structural approach to verb complementation, types of verb complementation, complements, adjuncts, complementation patterns, grammatical realisation of clause elements*

INTRODUCTION

The paper discusses different opinions of linguists on valency and verb complementation. We focus the special attention on the distinctions in terminology used in selected English grammar books.
Crucial attention is devoted to verb complementation types, verb classes as well as complementation patterns. The notion of verb complementation is based on the fact that a valid sentence can be constituted only if the verb is complemented by a certain number of other elements. In copular complementation (SVC, SVA) the verb is complemented either by the subject complement or predication adjunct, in monotransitive complementation (SVO) the verb is followed by a direct object, in ditransitive complementation (SVOO) it is followed by both an indirect and direct object and finally, in complex transitive complementation (SVOC, SVOA) the verb is complemented by a direct object and object complement or by a direct object and predication adjunct. These clause elements are obligatory, without them the sentence is not complete. All of these obligatory elements following the verb can be grammatically realised by different types of phrases or clauses. The verb complementation theory is discussed and analysed within the scope of the example sentences taken from Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online.

1. VERB COMPLEMENTATION

In this part of the paper we aim to present the different approaches of linguists regarding the issue of verb complementation in English from several viewpoints.

Quirk et al. (1985:65) distinguish the term complementation from the term complement and define complementation as “the function of a part of a phrase or clause which follows a word, and completes the specification of a meaning relationship which that word implies. As such, complementation may be obligatory or optional on the syntactic level.”

It should be noted that the central role in verb complementation is attributed to the verb which determines the number and type of other constituents in a sentence. Quirk et al. in their definition of complementation distinguish obligatory and optional complementation. We distinguish, in contrast with them, obligatory and optional complements. The term complement is used in syntax theory in two meanings: a) complement as a clause element that follows a copular verb (a subject complement,

C_s), or complement as a clause element that follows a complex transitive verb (an object complement, C_o), and b) complement as an obligatory clause element that follows a verb.

Compare:

[1] It seems *a foolish decision.*

[2] We named our daughter *Sarah.*

In [1] the italicized part is the subject complement (C_s) expressed by a noun phrase (NP); in [2] the italicized part is the object complement (C_o) expressed by a noun phrase (NP) too.

[3] Mike's just taking *a shower.*

[4] He put *the coffee on the table.*

In [3] the verb in the SVO pattern requires complementation by one object (O_d), therefore, it is termed monotransitive. In [4], in the SVOA pattern the verb is complemented by two obligatory clause elements, by a direct object (O_d) followed by an obligatory adverbial (A).

Biber et al. (1999:141) in the characteristics of verb complementation distinguish between "one-place verbs (combining with a subject only), two-place verbs (combining with a subject and another element), and three-place verbs (combining with a subject and two other elements). However, many verbs allow more than one pattern, so we should perhaps more correctly speak of verbs being 'used with' particular valencies."

Basically, the valency theory of Biber et al. corresponds with classification of verbs into copular, intransitive and transitive. According to these linguists verbs occurring in the two-place SVP_s pattern are copular verbs, verbs used in the one-place SV pattern are intransitive verbs, and verbs in two- and three-place patterns with an O_d are transitive verbs. They also regard those verbs in the SVA pattern as copular verbs, though some grammarians would call them intransitive verbs. We agree that verbs in the SVA pattern may be regarded as copular verbs, however, it should be noted that an adverbial following the copular verb in this pattern must be obligatory. Consequently, we can also agree with those grammarians who call the verbs in the SVA pattern intransitive, but it should be added that an adverbial in this pattern is optional and follows the intransitive verb, not the copular verb.

Compare:

[5] Small cracks appeared *in the wall.*

[6] It must have rained *quite hard.*

The sentence patterns in [5] and [6] are identical – the SVA patterns. The verb in [5] is a copular verb taking obligatory adverbial, however, the verb in [6] is an intransitive verb taking an optional adverbial.

Downing & Locke (2006:83) point out that "the potential number of participants, including the subject – that is, the number of 'places' in the clause that the verb controls – is sometimes referred to as its semantic valency. Different classes of verbs have different semantic valencies. There are one-place verbs, which have a subject only, belonging in principle to the SP pattern. Two-place verbs have a subject and one other element, as in the SPC and SPO patterns. Three-place verbs have a subject and two other elements as in the SPOO and SPOC patterns. Syntactic valency refers to the number of nominal elements present in any given clause that have a direct grammatical relation to the verb."

According to Carter and McCarthy (2006:504) "verb complementation refers to items which are required to follow verbs of different types in order to complete the meaning of the verb. These items may be noun phrases, adjectives, prepositional phrases or whole clauses, functioning as objects or complements."

To sum it up, Biber et al. (1999), Downing & Locke (2006) use the term valency and include the subject amongst the complements of the verb. This is in contrast with some other linguists, e.g. Quirk et al. (1985), Carter and McCarthy (2006), who use the term verb complementation and refer only to those "items" which are dependent on the verb and which are necessary for the sentence to be complete, both from the viewpoints of its structure and meaning. Thus, the distinction is made between the term valency or valence and the term complementation. Valency includes the subject of the clause, but, on the other hand, the subject is excluded from verb complementation (excepting an extraposed subject). Biber et al. (1999), Downing & Locke (2006) use the term valency, however, they also acknowledge classification of verbs into intransitive, transitive and copular. This verb classification is also used in their analyses of the sentence patterns. Moreover, Downing & Locke use the term 'semantic valency'. They declare that "different classes of verbs have different semantic valencies" (Downing & Locke, 2006:84). Under the term semantic valency is understood the valency of a predicator from the point of view of a number and character of arguments it takes. Then, the attention should be focused on different terminology and symbols used in the sentence patterning, e.g. SVC_s, SVC_o in Quirk's et al. (1985) terminology; SVP_s, SVP_o in Biber's et al. (1999) terminology; SPC in terminology of Downing & Locke (2006), etc.

Apparently, the distinctions in the interpretation of valency and verb complementation by linguists, but also the distinctions in terminology used in different grammar books deserve certain attention and should be discussed more deeply, both theoretically and also practically, in the pedagogical process, especially at the Faculties of Arts and Faculties of Education which prepare students, prospective teachers of English, for their professional teaching career.

2. THE STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO VERB COMPLEMENTATION

The structural approach to verb complementation is closely connected to classification of verbs into major verb classes. There are three main verb classes in English: copular verbs, intransitive verbs and transitive verbs. Last verb class is further subdivided into monotransitive, ditransitive and complex transitive verbs. The verb class determines the number and type of other clause elements in a sentence. Each sentence consists of a certain number of clause elements whose presence is obligatory for the sentence to be grammatical. Thus, the presence of obligatory clause elements following the verb is determined by the verb's "ability" to bind them. There are seven basic clause patterns in English consisting of the subject and verb (SV); the subject, verb, obligatory adverbial (SVA); the subject, verb, subject complement (SVC); the subject, verb, direct object (SVO); the subject, verb, indirect object, direct object (SVOO); the subject, verb, direct object, object complement (SVOC) and finally, the subject, verb, direct object, obligatory adverbial (SVOA).

The combination of obligatory clause elements required after particular verb class with one or more optional adverbials is possible, thus, a number of other clause patterns could be created, e.g. the SVO(A), SV(A), SVOO(A) patterns, but also the other combinations.

Compare:

[7] I declare *you man and wife.*

When applying the structural approach to verb complementation on the example sentence in [7], it may be noted that the complex transitive verb in the SVOC pattern is followed by two obligatory clause elements, a direct object and an object complement. Both clause elements following the complex transitive verb in this pattern are expressed by noun phrases.

[8] Laura left *her native England to live in France.*

When analysing the example sentence in [8] according to the structural approach, it may be concluded that the monotransitive verb in the SVO(A) pattern is followed by an obligatory direct object and an optional adverbial. However, the verb *to leave* requires complementation by two obligatory elements in a sentence He left *the book on the table*.

3. TYPES OF VERB COMPLEMENTATION

When analysing the selected grammar books dealing with verb complementation, we also focused our attention at verb complementation types. We came to the conclusion that the linguists' opinions on the issue of verb complementation types are different.

As stated by Carter and McCarthy (2006:508), "complementation primarily concerns transitive and copular constructions, since the intransitive verb construction requires no complementation."
They present four general types of verb complementation: monotransitive, ditransitive, complex transitive and copular complementation.

1. Monotransitive:
   verb + direct object

2. Ditransitive:
   verb + indirect object and direct object
   verb + prepositional phrase (the transition-oblique construction)

3. Complex transitive:
   verb + direct object + object complement
   verb + direct object + locative complement

4. Copular
   copular verb (e.g., *be*, *look*, *seem*) + subject complement

In our opinion, this Carter and McCarthy's classification of verb complementation types should be accepted, however, we miss the type copular verb + obligatory adverbial (copular verb + locative complement, using the terminology of these linguists) in copular complementation.

Quirk et al. (1985), in agreement with Carter and McCarthy (2006), also claim that there are four types of verb complementation in English: copular *(John is only a boy.)*, monotransitive *(I have caught a big fish.)*, complex transitive *(She called him a hero.)*, and ditransitive *(He gave Mary a doll.)*.

Biber et al. (1999), Downing & Locke (2006) distinguish five different types of verb complementation: intransitive, monotransitive, ditransitive, complex transitive and copular complementation. Intransitive complementation is also included under the verb complementation types by these linguists taking into consideration that valency theory, not verb complementation theory, includes the subject into the clause structure.

According to Wekker and Haegemen (1985:64-65) "lexical verbs can be classified according to the type of complementation they take (that is, in terms of subcategorisation frames in which they occur)". In other words, their classification of lexical verbs according to the number and character of arguments they can take corresponds with their classification of the verb complementation types. They distinguish seven verb classes which correspond to seven verb complementation types.
Thus, the verb complementation types according to Wekker and Haegemen (1985:64-65) are the following ones:

1. Intransitive: *He laughed.*
2. Copula: *He seemed very cheerful.*
3. Monotransitive: *He killed the mouse.*
4. Ditransitive*: He gave the girl a book.*
5. Complex transitive: *He called him a fool.*
6. Intransitive + prepositional phrase: *He leaned towards the girl.*
7. Transitive + prepositional phrase: *He put his head on her shoulder*.

When analysing the verb complementation types presented by Wekker and Haegemen (19855:64-65), it should be noted that the verb complementation types, introduced under 6 and 7, focus on the grammatical realisation of the clause elements following the verbs in these example sentences. In our interpretation, the type 6, intransitive + prepositional phrase *(He leaned towards the girl.)*, is the example of monotransitive complementation in which the monotransitive verb is followed by a prepositional object (prepositional complement). The type 7, transitive + prepositional phrase *(He put his head on her shoulder.)*, is the example of complex transitive complementation in which the complex transitive verb is followed by two obligatory clause elements (obligatory complements) in the SVOA pattern.

To sum it up, the opinions of linguists to the issue of verb complementation types are different. Some linguists (Biber et al., 1999, Downing & Locke, 2006) declare that there are five verb complementation types. These linguists include intransitive complementation under the list of verb complementation types respecting the fact that valency theory includes the subject into the clause structure. We agree with those linguists who claim that there are four verb complementation types (Quirk et al., 1985, Carter and McCarthy, 2006). The focus of these linguists is only on obligatory clause elements that follow, not precede, the verb. The intransitive verb, as it has been already stated, is not followed by any obligatory element.

3.1 Copular Complementation

The structural approach to verb complementation, as it has been already declared, is closely connected to classification of verbs into major verb classes. Depending on the verb classes (copular, monotransitive, ditransitive, complex transitive verbs), different verb complementation types, various clause patterns as well as grammatical realisation of the clause elements following the verb are discussed and analysed.

There are two clause patterns in which the lexical verb is referred to as a copular (or linking) verb, namely the SVA and the SVC patterns. The verb in copular complementation is followed either by a predication adjunct or by the subject complement. Adverbials in the SVA pattern are usually space adjuncts and time adjuncts. These adverbials are also termed predication adjuncts or subject-related adverbials, without them the sentence would be grammatically and logically incomplete (Biber, 1985). The clause element following the copular verb in the SVC pattern is termed the subject complement (C_s). The subject complement may fulfil two semantic roles, the role of current attribute or the role of resulting attribute.

Compare:

[11] These are *my favourite pictures.*

In [11] the subject complement fulfils the semantic role of current attribute and occurs with a copular verb used statively.

[12] The weather became *warmer.*

In [12], on the other hand, the subject complement fulfils the semantic role of resulting attribute with a copular verb denoting change of a state.

When comparing copular complementation presented by Quirk et al. (1985) and copular complementation presented by Carter and McCarthy (2006), it may be concluded that Carter and McCarthy (2006) do not distinguish, in contrast with Quirk et al. (1985), the SVA pattern. Obligatory adverbials (or predication adjuncts) are treated by them as subject complements expressed by an adverb phrase or by a prepositional phrase. Carter and McCarthy (2006:502) also claim that "all elements in basic clauses which are not subjects, verbs, objects, or complements may be classified as adjuncts. Adjuncts are peripheral, optional, elements in the clause, and have a variety of functions. They most typically relate to circumstances of an action or event, e.g. time, place, manner, degree, frequency, intensity. Adjuncts modify the verb or the clause, but, unlike complements, they do not complete the meaning of the verb and they are not required elements". It should be noted that predication adjuncts expressed by phrases, but also by clauses, are obligatory elements in the clause structure.

Compare:

[13] The principal's *in his office.*

In [13] the italicized part is obligatory predication adjunct used in the SVA pattern. The copular verb requires adverbial complementation. Predication adjunct (or obligatory adverbial) is expressed by a prepositional phrase.

[14] The keys are *where you left them.*

In [14] the italicized part is also an obligatory predication adjunct used in the SVA pattern. Predication adjunct (or obligatory adverbial) is expressed by a clause.

In the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE), (Biber et al., 1999), last clause element in copular complementation is often referred to as the subject predicative (Ps) in the SVP_s pattern. Last clause element in copular complementation in the SVA pattern is termed an obligatory adverbial, similarly as in A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language (CGEA) by Quirk et al. (1985).

3.2 Monotransitive Complementation

The verb in the SVO pattern requires a direct object; therefore this type of complementation is called monotransitive complementation. According to Downing & Locke (2006) direct objects in the SVO pattern most typically represent an entity (a person or thing), less typically a fact or a situation within the main situation. Entities are typically realised by noun phrases, facts and situations by clauses.

Compare:

[15] This type of owl prefers *a desert habitat.*

[16] We prefer *that our teachers have a degree in early childhood education.*

[17] I prefer *to wear clothes made of natural fibers*.

In [15] - [17] the verb is followed by a direct object, thus we speak of monotransitive complementation. A direct object in [15] represents an entity (a thing), thus it is expressed by a noun phrase. Direct objects in [16] and [17] represent facts and they are expressed by clauses, in [16] by a finite clause and in [17] by a non-finite clause.

When comparing monotransitive complementation presented by Quirk et al. (1985) and monotransitive complementation presented by Carter and McCarthy (2006), it may be concluded that Quirk et al. (1985) distinguish, in comparison with Carter and McCarthy (2006), direct objects with the passive alternatives and direct objects without the passive alternatives in the SVO patterns.

Compare:

[18] Tom caught *the ball.*

[19] Paul lacks *confidence.*

In the example sentences taken from Quirk et al. (1985:1171), the verbs in [18] and [19] are followed by direct objects. Both verbs are monotransitive; however, the passive alternative is possible only in [18]. Semantically, the monotransitive verb in [19] does not allow the passive alternative. The other distinction in presentation of monotransitive complementation by Quirk et al. (1985) and Carter and McCarthy (2006) is the issue of non-finite clauses functioning as direct objects in monotransitive complementation. Quirk et al. (1985) introduce *to infinitive clauses* and *-ing clauses* in the SVO pattern in the alternative with the subject (+S as O) and also in the alternative without the subject (–S as O). Carter and McCarthy (2006), on the other hand, introduce *to infinitive clauses* and *-ing clauses* only in the alternative without the subject in the dependent clause (–S as O).

Compare:

[20] They want *us to help.*

[21] I hate *the children quarrelling.*

The verbs in [20] and [21] are followed by non-finite clauses, in [20] the verb is followed by *to infinitive clause* and in [21] by *-ing clause* in the alternative with the subject (+S as O) in the dependent clause. The example sentences are taken from Quirk et al. (1985:1171).

[22] We have decided *to move house.*

[23] She enjoys *playing squash.*

The verbs in [22] and [23] are followed by non-finite clauses too, in [22]] the verb is followed by *to infinitive clause* and in [21] by *-ing clause* in the alternative without the subject (–S as O) in the dependent clause. The example sentences are taken from Quirk et al. (1985:1171).

3.3 Ditransitive Complementation

The verb in ditransitive complementation requires complementation by an indirect object and a direct object in the SVOO pattern. Quirk et al. (1985) use the symbol *O* for both an indirect object and a direct object. Carter and McCarthy (2006), on the other hand, use the symbol *IO* for an indirect object and the symbol *DO* for a direct object. Downing & Locke (2006) use the symbol O_i for an indirect object and the symbol O_d for a direct object. Downing & Locke (2006), Biber et al. (1999), in contrast with Quirk et al. (1985), Carter and McCarthy (2006) distinguish the symbol Op for a prepositional complement.

According to Quirk et al. (1985:1208) “ditransitive complementation in its basic form involves two object noun phrases: an indirect object, which is normally animate and positioned first, and a direct object, which is normally concrete.”

Carter and McCarthy (2006:517) state that “ditransitive complementation refers to combinations of direct and indirect objects, and direct objects and oblique complements. Some verbs are followed by an indirect and direct object. An indirect object always has a direct object accompanying it. An indirect object (IO) is the entity affected by (i.e. the recipient or beneficiary of) the direct object (DO). The indirect object comes before the direct object, e.g. He gave me his number (S-V-IO-DO)”.

An indirect object in the SVOO pattern is typically expressed by a noun phrase, but exceptionally it can be also expressed by a finite clause, e.g. He gave *whoever came to the door* a small present. A direct object in the SVOO pattern can be expressed by a noun phrase and also by finite and non-finite clauses.

Compare:

[24] Tell me *your phone number.*

[25] The light tells you *when the machine is ready.*

[26] The teacher told the children *to sit down quietly.*

A direct object in the SVOO pattern in [24] is grammatically realised by a noun phrase, in [25] by a finite clause and in [26] by a non-finite clause. The dependent clause in [25] is introduced by a subordinator *when.* This subordinator typically introduces adverbial clauses of time, but in this example sentence it introduces a nominal clause functioning as a direct object. An indirect object in [24] - [26] is grammatically realised by a noun phrase.

3.4 Complex Transitive Complementation

In complex transitive complementation the verb requires complementation by two obligatory clause elements; by a direct object and an object complement in the SVOC pattern, or complementation by a direct object and an obligatory adverbial in the SVOA pattern. Adverbials that occur in the SVOA pattern cannot be moved or left out without making the sentence ungrammatical.

Carter and McCarthy (2006:523) state that "complex transitive complementation occurs when a direct object is followed by an object complement or a locative complement." They also claim (2006:526) that "some verbs, especially verbs of placement and direction, take a direct object and a prepositional phrase locating the object in terms of time or place (locative complement)".

When comparing complex transitive complementation presented by Quirk et al. (1985) and complex transitive complementation presented by Carter and McCarthy (2006), it may be concluded that the clause element following the direct object in the SVOC pattern is termed basically identically by both linguists. The only distinction is that in the analysis of clause patterns in this type of complementation Quirk et al. (1985) use the term adjectival complement for the subject complement expressed by an adjective phrase and the term nominal complement for the subject complement expressed by a noun phrase. On the other hand, Carter and McCarthy (2006) use the term *adjective phrase as object complement* or the term *noun phrase as object complement* when describing grammatical realisation of an object complement. It should be noted that terminology in the SVOA pattern is not used in the same manner by these linguists. The clause element that follows a direct object in the SVOA pattern is termed obligatory adverbial or an object-related adjunct by Quirk et al. (1985), on the other hand, the same clause element is termed locative complement by Carter and McCarthy (2006).

An object complement can be grammatically realised by noun phrases, adjective phrases, non-finite clauses in the SVOC pattern and by prepositional phrases and finite clauses in the SVOA pattern. Compare:

[27] They knew him *to be a spy.*

[28] She prefers her coffee black.

In [27] and [28] an object complement follows a direct object in the SVOC pattern. In [27] an object complement is expressed by *to infinitive clause,* in [28] it is expressed by an adjective phrase.

[29] George kept a bottle of whiskey under his bed.

[30] He left the keys where he can find them.

In [29] and [30] obligatory adverbial follows a direct object in the SVOA pattern. In [29] an object complement is expressed by *to infinitive* clause, in [28] it is expressed by an adjective phrase.

Finally, it should be noted that verbs that are listed in grammar books as verbs belonging to certain verb complementation patterns may be also used, depending on the context, in different complementation patterns, sometimes also with the differences in the meaning.

Compare:

[31] Anyone can make *a mistake.*

[32] Its beautiful beaches make this a highly popular area with tourists.

[33] I'll make you some sandwiches.

The example sentences with the verb *to make* illustrate that a verb can be used in different complementation patterns. In [31] the verb is monotransitive, a direct object is realised by a noun phrase, however, in [32] the verb is complex transitive, an object complement is realised by a noun phrase and in [33] the verb is ditransitive, a direct object is realised by a noun phrase too.

4. CONLUSION

Firstly, the paper focused on different opinions of linguists on verb complementation in English. It may be concluded that the discussed differences were related to the notions of valency (or valence) in contrast to verb complementation. The differences related to verb complementation types were discussed too. The reasons why some linguists distinguish four verb complementation types and the others five or even more verb complementation types were discussed and explained. Then, we discussed and analysed optional elements of a sentence, but also those elements which cannot be omitted without making the sentence ungrammatical. We concluded and illustrated on example sentences that only obligatory clause elements following the particular verb classes are determined by the verb and thus belong to verb complementation.

Secondly, we focused our attention on the distinctions in terminology used by linguists in selected grammar books. We may conclude that the issue of verb complementation requires more attention and should be discussed more deeply, especially at those faculties which prepare students for the professional teaching career.

Thirdly, the structural approach to verb complementation, the verb classes and complementation patterns were discussed and analysed in depth, both from the theoretical and practical points of view. The focus of analyses was again on some distinctions in interpretation of particular verb complementation types and complementation patterns. The theoretical background was supported by authentic language material taken from Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online.

Finally, we directed our attention to the grammatical realisation of clause elements in each type of verb complementation. Depending on verb classes (copular, monotransitive, ditransitive, complex transitive verbs), different verb complementation types, different complementation patterns, variations on complementation patterns as well as grammatical realisation of obligatory elements following the verb were discussed, analysed and supported by authentic language material from Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online.

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