The Grammatical Structure of Sentence in English and German: A Contrastive Study

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Abstract

This paper examines the grammatical structure of the sentence in English and German. It shed a light on grammar and grammatical structure. It aims to clarify the similarities and differences in the grammatical structure of English and German. The first section is concerned with the definition of grammarand structure, and the structure of sentence in English language. It focuses on the parts of speech, word order, types of sentences, verbs in English, and tense. The second section deals with the grammatical structure of German concerning parts of speech, word order, sentence types, tense, and German verbs.

Keywords: sentences, parts of speech, word order, tense, verbs, grammatical structure.

يتناول هذا البحث التركيب النحوي لجملة في اللغة الإنكليزية والألمانية. يسلط الضوء على قواعد اللغة والتركيب النحوي. يهدف البحث الى توضيح اوجه الاختلافات والتشابه في التركيب النحوي لجملة في اللغتين الانكليزية والالمانية. يهتم الجزء الأول بالبحث بتعرف التركيب النحوي وبنية الجملة في اللغة الانكليزية. يركز الجزء على اقسام الكلام، ترتيب الكلمات، انواع الجمل، الافعال، والزمن. يتناول الجزء الثاني من البحث التركيب النحوي لجملة في اللغة الالمانية اجزاء الكلام، ترتيب الكلمات، انواع الجمل، الزمن، والأفعال الالمانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الجمل، اجزاء الكلام، ترتيب الكلمات، الزمن، الأفعال، التركيب النحوي.

Introduction

The grammatical structure is significant in any language. There is no understandable sentence without its clear and organized structures. The structure of language or syntax is a branch of linguistics. It is a part ofa large system. Each language has its own grammatical structure whichis different from other languages. This paper examines the similarities and differences in the grammatical structure of sentence in English and German languages. This paper shows the part of speech, types of sentences, types of verbs,and tense. In addition to these mentioned earlier, it includes a definition of grammar and structure of a sentence.

Section One
English Grammatical Structure

1.1 Definition

Richards (1992: 161) defines grammar as " the description of the structure of language, and the in which linguistics units, such as word and phrases, are combined to produce sentences in the language".

Sentence structure can be defined as the way in which words, phrases and clauses are arranged in a sentence. The meaning of sentence depends on the grammatical structure, which is also called syntax or syntactic structure (web source 2).

1.2 Parts of Speech

Part of speech refers to the various functions that words perform in sentence (Gucker, 1966: 21).

Quirk et al. (1971: 18) state that the structures realizing sentence components are closed of units is known as parts of speech. These can be explained in English as follows:

Nouns like Jack, door, cat… etc.
Verbs such as throw, clean, be, has, read, stay, mention…etc.
Adjectives such as sad, new, big, beautiful, sunny…etc.

Adverbs such as completely, quietly, now, honestly…etc.
Articles (definite/indefinite) like "the, a, an"
Demonstratives such as "that, this, these, those".
Pronouns like "he, she, it, they, anybody, one"
Prepositions such as at the top, of, at, in, between
Conjunctions such as and, but, or, yet, although, even if
Interjections such as "oh, ah, ugh, phew".

1.3 Word Order

The arrangement of words in a sentence is known as word order. Word order in English is: **Subject** + **Verb** + **Object**. For example, *"the man ate the pizza"*. A subject might be isolated from the verb in certain cases, as in frequency adverbs or auxiliaries. For instance, *"He often comes to see me"* or as in *"she will come tomorrow"* (Alexander, 1965: 10).

Generally, Word order is significant because it makes the sentences meaningful and logical. The suitable word order is important in speaking as

well as in writing. The sentence would be unclear, ambiguous, and incorrect when it arranged incorrectly. For example, *"eats the dog popcorn"* is incorrect sentence, and it causes meaningless sentence, so the sentence should be arranged in order *"the dog eats popcor*n" (web source 4).

1.4 Open and Closed Classes

There are two main parts of speech which are commonly referred to as "open classes and closed classes". The open class involves of "verb, noun, adjectiveand adverb". The closed class consists of "preposition, determinative, coordinator and subordinator". The open class has large involvement in part of speech, whereas there are only twenty four components in closed class: a preliminary outline relatively few members; all components of closed classes are expected to involve in a grammar, on the other hand, the lexicon would have the open classes. Primary classes and subclasses are the subject of the distinction between open and closed classes. For example, nouns are classified in three subclasses: "common nouns, proper nouns or pronouns" - so that in *"Tom gave her the keys*, for example, *keys (key) is a common noun, Tom (Tom) a proper noun,* and *her (she) a pronoun"*. As it shown in the example, it can be said that from the three subclasses, the pronoun is closed while the first two are open (Huddleston, 1988:24).

Because of the acceptance of new members as the vocabulary changes according to the speakers of the language, it is called open classes. New members may be arise b applying different morphological procedures to words "(as with the verb hospitalize derived from the noun hospital by suffixation)", by using borrowing from other languages (as with the noun sputnik,from Russian) or, by creating a new words from the phonological resources of the language which is very much rarer, as the noun 'nylon', invented in the 1930s. in contrast, closed classes are highly unaffected by adding new members - nonetheless, this does not mean that such an expansion is unachievable (ibid).

Grammatical analysis shows that the open classes (and subclasses) are much easier to understand than the closed ones. The closed classes are different from those exists in traditional grammar; many structures can be set in literature. However, it is hardly possible that anyone could suggest a grammar that did not have classes corresponding fairly closely to verbs, nouns, and adjectives.

There will be variations in how adverbs are treated, but this is because the standard adverb class has several subclasses, some of which are closed.: the differences have tendency to be related with these rather than with the primary open subclass that includes words such as "carefully, quickly, surreptitiously"(ibid)

1.5 Sentence Types

1.5.1 Minor Sentences

A group of sentences is referred to as a minor sentence. "Minorsentences are types of sentences which are irregular and it does not have afinite verb". As an example, "yes" and "Hello", and expression of emotion such as,"Wow". A sentence without a verb may also be included. For example, "the more, the merrier". Minor sentences, however, are common in everyday conversation and cannot be analyzed in the same way as major sentences (web source1).

According to Crystal (2004: 101) minor sentences can be classified as follows:

1. Interjections (emotional)

   For example, "*Shhh Tut-tut. Hey! Ugh! Ow! Eh? Otch*"

2. Those that are used in social situations.

   For example, *"yes, no, hello, thanks, bye*".

3. Proverbs or pithy sayings.

   For example, *"like father, easy go, easy come, like son"*.

4. The types that are utilized in instructions, postcards, and commentaries (the abbreviated forms).
   For example, *"Mix well. Once more with feeling. Wish you were here"*.

5. Words and phrases that are employed as "exclamations, questions, or commands".
   For example, *"bother! Happy birthday! Nice day! The hell with it! All aboard! Oh for a drink of water! Taxi? No entry"*.

2.5.2 Major Sentences

Major sentence is a type of sentences that have subject and predicate, and they are regular sentences. In order to call it a sentence, it should be a meaningful sentence. A sentence can be "a statement, a command, an exclamation, or a question", and it hasone or more clauses. A clause has a "subject and verb". As in the example,*"the dog went to the park"* (Anderson, 2014: 2).

Anderson (2014: 2) states that there are four types of English sentences: "simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences".

1.   **Simple sentence**: is a type of sentences that have only one main clause (independent clause). For example, *"Amy takes her car to university"*(Hogue& Oshima, 2014:174).

2.   **Compound sentence**: is a type of sentences that has two or more main clauses (independent clauses), and these clauses are linked together by a connecters or conjunctions "(but, and, yet, so, nor, for, either or, neither nor, both.. and, moreover, however). For example, *"I like blackcolor, but my friend loves purple"* (Anderson, 2014: 2*)*.

3.   **Complex sentence:** are those sentences which have one main clause (independent clause) and one or more subordinate clause (dependent clauses). There will be at least one subordinating connecter (conjunction) in the complex sentence. For example, *"George brought went to work even though he was sick"*(ibid).

4. **A compound-complex sentence:** is a type of sentences which combined "complex sentence and compound sentence forms together". It has one or more main clauses (independent clauses) and one or more subordinate clauses (dependent clause) ". For example, *" after I graduated from college, I wanted to travel, but I had to go to work immediately"* (ibid)

1.6 Verbs in English
2.6.1 Regular and Irregular Verbs

Verbs that are fixed and do not change their form a lot called "Regular verbs" *"like talk, or offer, or decline,* has only four possible forms: *talk talks talked talking offer offers offered offering decline declines declined declining"*. Whereas, the type of verbs that are changeable are called "Irregular verbs" such as, *"see sees saw seeing seen"* (Gucker**,** 1966: 28).

2.6.2 Auxiliary Verbs

Words that can be add to the part of a verb phrase are known as auxiliary verbs. Auxiliary verb can be main auxiliaries*such as "have and be*", or the dummy auxiliary *do*, or the modal auxiliaries *will, can,shall, must, and may"* in addition to several of phrasal equivalents, and borderline auxiliaries. For example, *"dare, need, let, ought to, have to"* (Brinton, 2000: 198). For example, *"She can do her homework very fast"*.

2.6. 3 Linking Verbs and Action Verbs

Verbs are words that convey an *action* or *state of being*. Therefore, the two

fundamental types of verbs are 'action verbs' *"go, see, want, talk, behave, need"*, and "state of being or linking verbs *is, was, has been,* and *seem, smell, look, remain"*. However, in this classification verbs such as *"run, fight, sneeze"* are not the only action verbs, but words like *"rest, die, hope"*. These verbs are all referred to as action verbs. If this seems unclear, we might state the difference as follows: "An action verb tells what something is, was, will be doing" *(*Gucker, 1966: 24). For example,

"The old lady died last night".

"Mother needs your help".

"I don't recognize the name"

While, a linking verb is a verb that tells what something is, was, or will be. For example, *"Johnwill be our next captain"*.

"The salad tastes bad".

"The weather remains unsettled".

Some verbs like *"taste, smell, look, and sight"*. Depending on how they are used, they might be linking verbs or action verbs (ibid, 25).

"He looked tired, (not doing anything)"

"He looked intently at the picture, (doing something)"
"He tasted the sauce, (doing something)"
"It tasted too bitter, (not doing anything)"

2.7 Tense

Gucker (1966: 32) illustrates six common tenses in English: past, past perfect, present, present perfect, future, and future perfect.

For example,   *she cleaned the room.   (Past)*

She had cleaned the room.   (Past perfect)
She cleans the car.   (Present)
She has cleaned the car.   (Present perfect)
She will clean the car.   (Future)
She will have clean the car.   (Future perfect)

Additionally, the same six tenses forms also have progressive forms, which are composed of auxiliary verb be; in addition, the present participle (-ing) listed

as follows: (ibid, 33).

For example,   *I am reading.   (Present)*
we were playing.   (Past)
I will be reading.   (Future)

She has been dancing.   (Present perfect)
He had been studying.   (Past perfect)
They will (shall) have been playing. (Future perfect)

Section Two
German Grammatical Structure

2.1 Parts of speech

For both English and German (and based on Latin), traditional grammar assumes that there eight different parts of speech. In terms of meaning these are defined as follows:

"(1) A noun is the name of a person, place,or thing; and (2) a verb is a word that makes an assertion or indicates an action or a state". The rest of parts of speech are defined according to their relationship to other words, particularly nouns and verbs. Therefore, (3) a pronoun is a word that refers to a noun; (4) Adjectives modify nouns or pronouns; (5) Adverbs are words that modify a verb, an adjectives, or another adverb; (6) Prepositions are words used to describe the relationship between their objects and other words; and (7) A conjunction is a word used to connect words, phrases, or clauses together. Finally, a final group of words is defined on the basis of their meaning, somewhat apart from the rest of the group: (8) *interjection* is a term that states strong sensation or emotion (Kufner, 1962:49).

German nouns have similar comparable sets of *determiners* to identify them: "the spoon like der Loffel. This knife like dieses Messer , my fork like meine Gabel. which plates like welche Teller". There are large number of derivational suffixes in German nouns such as "(work)er like (Arbeit)er , (open)ing like (6ffn)ung, (child)hood like (Klnd)heit . (friend)ship like (Freund)schaft . (king)- dom like (K6nig)tum , (reac)tion like (Reak)tion, (real)ity like (Real)itat, etc" (ibid, 53).

According to Fehringer (2020: 8) in German language there are seven ways of generating plural nouns, they are illustrated as follows:

1) **(-e):** "Ding-e (t h i n g s) , H u n d e (d o g s) " .

2) **(-en):** "Kost-en (cost), Studenten (students)".

3) **(-er)** "(+ umlaut if possible): Kind-er**"**

4) **Umlaut + -e:** **"**Gründ-e (reasons)".

5) (–s): "Autos (cars)".

6) (No change): "Verbraucher (consumer), *Mädchen(girls)".*

7) (Umlaut alone): "Vater (father) – Väter, Bruder (brother) – Brüder"

2.2 Word Order

German word order is open. Word order in simple sentence can be **"subject +verb +object".** The position of subject and object can be substituted to be like this: **"object + verb + subject".** For example, *"den film kenne ich nicht* (I don't know that film)". Accordingly, the verb in German language may be placed at the end of relative clauses. For example, *"Kennst du die Frau, die da drüben auf der Bank sitzt?* (Do you know the woman who is sat on the bench over there?)".The structure of German sentence may be as this: **Subject + Object + Verb**. Moreover, in cause of using model verbs in German, it may be notice that the infinitive verb positioned at the end of a statement. For instance, *"wir mussen die hausaufgaben machen* (we need to do the homework)" (web source 6).

2.3 Sentence Types

Gucker (1966: 3) states there are two kind types of sentences (major sentences) are those that have a finite verb form in the independent clause. All the other statements are (minor sentences)

2.3.1 Minor Sentence Types

1. **Plain Minor Sentence**

    A. **No verb form. Such as:**

    "Ja   Nein   im   buro   Eine mark zwanzig"
    (yes, no, a twenty mark in the office)

    B. **Using verb form**

    1. **"Non-finite verb form".**

    a) **Infinitive.** such as:

    "Nicht hupen Recht shalten Ruhren"
    "Don't honk, just keep moving"

English does not have these types of minor sentence, even though thelack of formal explanations the phrases "keep right", "be good",and "gos low" could not have infinitives. However, English language grammarians generally agree that the verb form in these statements is imperative.

b) Participial. For instance:
"Morgen geschlossen   Parken verboten".
"Closed tomorrow, no parking".

2. The Finite Verb Form (in the independent clause).
Example: "Wenn er nur endlich   kame".

        "If only he would finally come"

This organization therefore, has tackled the irregular forms and minor sentence. In the Statistical sense, they are more frequent in informal speech, and uncommon in formal one. However, they are relatively not significant in the written forms of both English and German. Furthermore, it has been seen that in the entire instance the minor sentence in German language are corresponding with nearly identical with native language of students (ibid, 4).

2.3.2 Major Sentence Type

A. The form of Imperative verb

"Action only: Komm Komm mit Bleibt hier"

"Actor-Action: Komm du doch mit"
                "Bleib tihr doch hier"

Students face difficulties in the second type because it does not exist in English. The best way to deal with this difficulty is by practicing. Actor action imperative statements are always stressed; therefore, it should be given an actual attention (ibid).

B. Form of Non-imperative verb

1. **First position verb**

a.   **Present   subjunctive**.
Examples: **Actor-Action:**   "Seien
Siefroh (be happy)"
        "Moge es Ihnen gelingen (may it suit them)"

b. **Form   of   Non-present-subjunctive   verb**.
Examples:
Action only: "Wird hier viel gebaut (a lot is being
built here)"
 Actor-Action: "Hast du Zeit Kann er mitfahren (do you have time? can he

come with you?)"
"Sind Sie froh (are you happy)"

3. **Second position verb**

4. **a. Question expression first**. Examples:

Action only: "Wie ist dirjet ztzumuteWarum (how do you feel now)"
"ist dir so kalt(why are you so cold)"

Actor-Action: "Wer sprichtWie heist er (who is speaking? What is his name)"
"Mit welchem Zug kommt er an (which train will he arrive on)"

c. **Other expression first**. Examples:
Action only:" Din friert Mir ist kalt (you're "cold. I'm cold)"

"Jetzt wird aufgeraumt (now it's tidying up)"

Actor-Action: "Jetzt kommt sie" "(now she's coming)"
Wenn sie Zeit hat,wird sie kommen "(if she has time, she will come)"

2.4 The Verbs

2.4.1 The German verb system

There are few irregularities in German verb, whereas regular system is complex, but amazing. As a result, the German old language shows itself at its best (block, 2013: 74).

2.4.2 Primary and secondary verbs

Like English, German has two primary verb forms: "primary (strong) verbs and secondary (weak) verbs". Basically, the main verbs are verbs. The secondary verbs come from other verb, noun or adjective. For example, "Verb *sitzen 'to sit' setzten 'to set"*

"Noun die Planze 'plant'   pflanzen 'to plant'" (Block, 2013: 74).

2.4.3 The primary (strong) verbs

Like English, there are irregular and irregular verbs in German language. Along with that, Verbs in German can be classified into strong, weak, or mixed. Irregular verbs are strong verbs (web sources 5).

Block (2013: 74) listed seven categories of strong verbs:

"Group 1: i-group   *beißen   biss   gebissen"*

"Group 2: o-group   *fliegen   flog   geflogen"*

"Group 3a: liquid + consonant group   *helfen werfen halfwarf   geholfen geworfen"*

"Group 3b: nasal + consonant group   *finden singen fandsang gefunden gesungen"*

"Group 4: liquid or nasal group   *stehlen nehm enstahlnahm   gestohlen genommen"*

"Group 5: obstruent group *geben sitzen gab saß gegeben gesessen"*

"Group 6: a-group   *fahren   fuhr gefahren"*

"Group 7: ie-group   *heißen rufen hieß rief   geheißen   gerufen"*

2.4.4 Weak Verbs

As mentioned, weak or secondary verbs can derive from other verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Regular verbs are weak verbs. Past tenses of these verbs are created by adding the suffix (t) and personal endings. If there is no other inseparable prefix, the past participle may also be created by -t and ge-: "pflanzen (plant) ~ pflanzte (planted) ~ gepflanzt (planted)". In this class, new verbs will be introduced to the language as a result of its "productive" nature, for instance: "telefonieren (make calls), mailen (send)". No new strong verbs are likely to be created in the near future.

2.4.5 Auxiliary verbs in German

In German language, there are three fundamental auxiliary verbs: *"sein (to be) ,haben (to have),* and *warden (to become)"*. These verbs called" helping verbs". Moreover, auxiliary verbs can be constantly used in past, present, future. They employ, when discussing about identity and state of being. All of them are irregular .For example, "*Ich habe Hunger* (I'm Hungary, I have hunger)" (Web source 3).

Additionally, the three auxiliaries are not the only one; German also has what are known as *"dieModalverben* (the modal verbs)". They are similar to the model auxiliaries in English language. Moreover, the six verbs are "helping verbs" that areused with another verb to add personal context to a statement. For example, *"ch möchte nach Deutschlandreisen.* (I would like to travel to Germany)".

It should be consider that when utilizing a model verb, the model verb is the second element in the sentence whereas the second verb occurs immediately at the end of the sentence.

"The verbs that make up *die Modalverben* are *können* (can/to be able to), *müssen* (must/to have to), *dürfen* (to be allowed), *wollen* (to want), *sollen* (should/supposed to) and *mögen* (to like)".

*Mögen'*s subjunctive case, *möchten* (would like to), it is commonly used word in German language, and is regarded exactly like amodal verb, but is not frequently comprised in the six verbs as an example (Web source 3).

2.5 Tense
There are only two tenses in German language: "past and non-past". Moreover, preterit is another name for the past tense " (from Lat. praeteritum 'what has gone by')", and the non-past tense is what is commonly called the present. It functions to represents the present as well as future and timeless event. Auxiliaries are used to form Additional tenses: "haben, sein, 17arden". There are only two tenses in their language, in addition to subjunctive.

Conclusions
The grammatical structure is fundamental in any sentence and any language. There is no clear understandable sentence without their structureand arrangements. English and German languages structures have similarities and differences at the same time. Some of the similarities are that both languages have parts of speech, types of sentences, and verbs. Each part of these structures is different and used differently.

In English, there are primary auxiliary, different model verbs, and phrasal equivalents verbs, while n German there are only three basic auxiliaries and model verbs. English has six forms of tenses in addition too the progressive forms, whereas German has only two tenses past and non- past. The German verb system is complex and it had only a few irregular verbs, and they called strong verbs. Word order in English is fixed; on the other hand German word order is free. German verbs can be placed at middle, end, and initial position in a sentence. Some imperative verb forms in German are not found in English. In addition to that, in German, there are a few types of minor sentence that does not exist in English, such as the plain minor sentence.

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