

Word Order

BASIC WORD ORDER

Standard way how words are arranged **in a sentence: SUBJECT + PREDICATE**

Vital importance in English (when compared to e.g. Slavic languages)

- hence: very **STRICT**
- absence of **CASES**

Compare:

“The chicken crossed the road”

vs

“The road crossed the chicken”

„Četl jsem tu knihu“

vs

„Tu knihu jsem četl“

- Deviations from the basic word order usually have **REASON** (emotion, stress)
- can impact the meaning of what you're trying to say

Set phrases that carry special meaning ... „black and white“ ... **NOT:** „white and black“

BASIC WORD ORDER

Superordinate clause

Subordinate clause

S A V_{trans} O S V_{intrans}

[I quickly shut the door [*before* the animal could escape.]]

Clause types

Mary	is	in the house.
Mary	is	a nurse / kind.
Paul	caught	the ball.
I	put	the plate on the table.
We	have proved	him wrong/a fool.
She	gives	me expensive presents.
The child	laughed.	

TASK:

Write down the clause patterns of these sentences (S-V-? ..)

WORD ORDER OF OBJECTS

O_i O_d They showed *him* *their secret*.

(? They showed *him* *it*. - some dialects)

O_d O_i They showed *their secret* **to him** (*not to her*).

They showed *it to him*.

O S V *Poetry* he likes, but *thrillers* he hates.

This book, I, 've never read!

This relation of signified to signifier Saussure calls a linguistic sign.

O V S *Out of swá-hwá-svá'* has developed our 'who'.

WORD ORDER OF ADVERBIALS

- **Manner - Place - Time**

He was driving [*dangerously*] [*through the park*] [*yesterday*].
(*Yesterday, he was driving dangerously through the park.*)

- **Place: Smaller place — Larger Place**

He spent a lot of time *in Wenceslaus Square in Prague*.
(in Czech: ... *v Praze na Václavském náměstí.*)

- **Time: Shorter period — Longer period**

See you [*at nine*] [*on Monday*].
(in Czech: *Sejdeme se v pondělí v devět.*)

but: See you *on Monday at NINE*. (i.e. Not at ten.)

UNMARKED AND MARKED WORD ORDER

- The functional analysis of a sentence (clause) distinguishes:
 - what is being talked about - **the theme** (point of departure)
 - what is being said about it - **the rheme** (core of the message)
- In Czech, the neutral, unmarked word order presupposes that:
 - T precedes R.
 - R-T sequence renders the word order emotional, marked.
 - **Četl** jsem tu knihu. (R - T) (the intonation centre on **četl**) **marked**
- In English, the neutral, unmarked word order presupposes the grammatical sequence S-V. The deviation from this sequence renders the word order marked.
 - I've **read** the book. (S-V-O) = **unmarked**
 - The book, I've **read**. (O-S-V) = **marked**
 - She loves **Mark**. / **Mark** is who she loves.

POETIC/MARKED WORD ORDER

- In some contexts, **for dramatic effect**, the conventional word order is reversed; instead of the unmarked sequence of clause elements (S-V-O-A) a different type of sequence is employed:
 - it starts with a presentation of a scene,
 - that is followed by verbal form describing the act of appearing or the state of existence on that scene, and
 - ends with a reference to the phenomenon (i.e. the logical subject)
- **[Scene] – [Appearance/Existence] – [Phenomenon]**
[In the middle of the room] [was] [*a table*].
[Around me] [sits] [the night].

WORD ORDER TECHNIQUES (MARKED)

- FRONTING: to make the fronted element the focus of the sentence
 - ***Inside the house** Mr Summers found a family of cats shut in the bathroom.*
 - ***This** I do not understand.*
 - ***Whether Nancy was there or not**, she could not be certain.*
- INVERSION: full/operator verb placed before the subject element
 - *Best of all **would be** to get a job in Wellingham.*
 - *Not before in our history **have** so many strong influences **united** to produce so large a disaster.*
 - *Beside it was a wooden seat on which **sat** two men talking.*
- EXISTENTIAL THERE: to mark the state of existence or occurrence of something
 - ***There's** a bear sitting in the corner.*
- CLEFTING: splitting a clause in 2 parts, leaving each with its own verb
 - *It's a man I want.*